



Penn in Hand

The Newsletter of the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania ♦ Vol. XXVIII No. 4 Summer 2011

GSP and Ancestry.com combine resources to bring you Pennsylvania Family History Day this November

The Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania and Ancestry.com are proud to announce Pennsylvania Family History Day — an all-day, multi-track conference to be held November 5 in Exton.

Late last year, GSP conducted an online member survey in which numerous respondents requested help with searching online resources in particular Ancestry.com. GSP went to the source, and after months of planning with Loretto “Lou” Szucs, Ancestry’s Vice President of Community Relations, an all-day conference was designed to help attendees maximize their online research efforts with Ancestry’s thousands of record collections.

In addition to Ancestry’s presentations, a slate of nationally recognized genealogists will present on a variety of topics. Curt Witcher, manager of The Genealogy Center of The Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, will deliver the keynote address while attendees enjoy a continental breakfast.

The conference will be held at The Wyndham Garden hotel (until recently The Inn at Chester Springs), 815 N Pottstown Pike, Exton, PA.

Twelve presentations are scheduled for the day. Four of these lectures will be in the [Ancestry track](#), and will be focused primarily on using the resources of Ancestry.com. Lou Szucs and Juliana Smith, the Senior Communication and Education Marketing Associate at Ancestry.com, will be guiding us through the basics of research with Ancestry.com, along with discussions of “Hidden Treasures” and military and death record collections on the site.

For those of you who may already be well-versed at mining Ancestry’s resources, GSP has scheduled additional speakers — the best in their fields — who will be covering

various genealogical research topics relating to methodology and also addressing specific Pennsylvania resources.

In the [Methodology track](#), Lisa Alzo, a frequent contributor to *Family Tree* magazine, will talk about researching immigrant cluster communities. Michael Hait, author of *The Family History Research Tool Kit*, will explain what constitutes a “reasonably exhaustive search.” Genealogist, lecturer and podcaster Shamele Jordon will delve into using maps to track our ancestors and help us understand how new mapping technologies can be applied to our ancestors’ migrations.

And to round out the day, Curt Witcher will present a lecture about the Periodical Source Index (PERSI), created by Allen County Public Library and one of the most beneficial, and least understood and utilized, genealogical resources available to researchers.

The [Pennsylvania track](#) offers a wealth of genealogical information from veteran genealogist and lecturer John Humphrey, who will talk about researching our ancestors in Pennsylvania and using clues to help find the more elusive Pennsylvania relations. Researcher Susan Koelble will help us understand how to track down deeds and various property records created when our ancestors finally found the place to lay their foundations.

Finally, [Kathleen Hale of the Pennsylvania State Library](#) and [Aaron McWilliams, an archivist at the Pennsylvania State Archives](#) will be on hand to guide us through the collections held at each repository. McWilliams worked with the producers of *Who Do You Think You Are* to help actor Steve Buscemi make his Pennsylvania connections.

Hale will discuss collections that are being digitized and made available online and records each repository holds useful for genealogical research but little known except by the archivists who work with them.

The lunch break also promises to be interesting as attendees will have the opportunity to hear [DearMYRTLE](#) tell her entertaining tale called, “Let Them Eat Jam.” Myrt, whose real identity is none other than Pat Richley, has been part of the genealogical community for years and is the founder of GeneaBloggers and Genea-Quilters as well as a frequent blogger and magazine article contributor. We are happy she will be with us to share some of these stories.

In addition to the Saturday conference, there will be a [Friday night get-together](#) onsite at the hotel from 7–10 pm open to all conference attendees. Hors d’oeuvres will be served compliments of GSP with a cash bar. Come talk genealogy, enter contests to win door prizes, and meet fellow attendees in an informal setting.

The vendor hall will be free and open to the public all day Saturday. A variety of exhibitors are planned including Pennsylvania-focused Retrospect and Ancestor Tracks Publishing, Roots and Branches, and Laurel Hill Cemetery.

The conference has a block of rooms available at the Wyndham Gardens for this conference at a special conference rate of \$119, so be sure to book early, using the code “Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania.”

GSP members will receive a special discount of \$20, and early bird discounts are available for all who register before September 1.

More detailed registration information is available on GSP’s website, www.GenPa.org, on the Upcoming Events page.

Luzerne County honors patriots in the 1778 Battle of Wyoming

Col. Zebulon Butler's descendents leave a legacy of public service and adventure



Repairs are being made to the monument that lists the names and marks the grave of the patriots who died in the Wyoming Massacre.

By Norman D. Nicol
GSP Board Member

On July 3, the people of the Wyoming Valley in Luzerne County celebrated the 233rd anniversary of the Battle of Wyoming and the Wyoming Massacre. The Wyoming Valley was part of the American frontier in 1778, hardly touched by the events of the Revolution up to that point.

The small communities and farms along the Susquehanna River in the broad, fertile valley, whose name was derived from the Munsee name meaning "at the big river flat," had been settled by people from Southeastern Pennsylvania and Connecticut.

Toward the end of June 1778, a large force of British Loyalists and mostly Indian allies from New York moved on the Wyoming Valley, posing a serious threat to the settlers. During the first days of July, a series of engagements between the invaders and the defenders took place, culminating in a general rout of the colonists on July 3.

Many of the local militia members were killed and those who attempted to flee were hunted down and scalped. Some captives

were tortured and otherwise cruelly treated. Forts, farms, and homes were burned and the Valley rapidly became depopulated. As word and rumor of the battle and its aftermath spread, the news shocked people throughout the colonies.

The memory of these events became ingrained in the American psyche of the early 19th century, due in no small part to the publication in 1809 of Thomas Campbell's lengthy poem about the battle, *Gertrude of Wyoming*. This collective memory continued for decades after the event and even the future state of Wyoming was given the name when it was still a territory.

The battle has been commemorated at the memorial since the centennial year of 1878. The principal speaker of that first commemoration was President Rutherford B. Hayes. The monument itself lists 178 names of the fallen Patriots and contains the bones of many of them.

One of the main characters associated with the Battle of Wyoming was Zebulon Butler, a colonel in the Continental Army, appointed by Washington to command the militia in the Wyoming Valley. Zebulon was born in Massachusetts in 1731 and grew up in Connecticut. He engaged in the family farming and merchant business, but also gained military experience during the French and Indian War, where he saw action in some of the major engagements of that struggle.

He also served in the British challenge to Spanish rule in Cuba in 1762. After returning to civilian life, Zebulon looked for new business opportunities and joined the Susquehanna Company, migrating to the Wyoming Valley in June 1769. He gradually built up his fortune, only to see it all go up in flames in July 1778.

Butler had already seen action in the Revolutionary War as a lieutenant colonel in the Continental Line and was promoted to full colonel in September 1778, serving to the end of the war. He became a founding member of the Society of the Cincinnati, an organization Washington instituted for his officers at war's end in 1783. Zebulon died in the Wyoming Valley in 1795.

Zebulon Butler was married three times and had children by all three wives. If there is such a thing as a "success gene," the Butler progeny had it and passed it on the Zebulon's many descendants down to the present day. Butler men of succeeding generations found rewarding careers as businessmen, merchants, lawyers, government officials both appointed and elected, military officers, academics, physicians, and a few led adventurous lives in far-off places around the globe.

Butler women usually married well and their husbands led similar careers to those of their in-laws. Some of Zebulon Butler's interesting descendants are as follows.

Lord Butler: Zebulon's eldest son served in the Revolutionary War, was a prominent businessman in the Wyoming Valley, the first sheriff of Luzerne County, an officer in the local militia and rose to the rank of brigadier general.



Col. Zebulon Butler

Rachel Mallery (great-granddaughter): Wife of William Strong, Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court

and later an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Sarah R. Butler (great-granddaughter): Wife of Stanley T. Woodward, law judge of the Luzerne County courts.

Chester Pierce Butler (grandson): Member of the Luzerne County bar, member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for several terms between 1831 and 1850.

Henry H.H. Woodward (3rd great-grandson): Flew in the Lafayette Escadrille during World War I. Shot down over France.

Emily S. Griffin (great-granddaughter): Married in 1857 Karl Emil von Lengwieke, an officer in the army of Saxony. Lived the rest of her life there.

George Butler Griffin (great-grandson): Civil engineer whose first wife and two children

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died young. Went to Colombia, South America in 1867 and subsequently filled several engineering posts for the Colombian government. Married a Colombian woman and had three children in that country. Became involved in a revolution in 1876, lost his land, and was exiled, ending up in San Francisco the next year. He and his wife had five more children in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Mary Ann Robinson (granddaughter): Wife of Hendrick B. Wright, who was admitted to the Luzerne County bar in 1831 and was later Speaker of the House of Representatives in Harrisburg.

George G. Butler (grandson): Proprietor and principal of several female seminaries in Mississippi, Kentucky, and later, in Pottstown, Pennsylvania.

Ruth Ann Butler (granddaughter): Wife of John Nesbitt Conyngham. Their grandson, John, established the extensive farm now the

nucleus of the Wilkes-Barre campus of the Pennsylvania State University.

Lord Nelson Butler (grandson): Married Abi W. Slocum in 1832, niece of Frances Slocum who was abducted at the age of five from her family near Wilkes-Barre by a band of Delaware Indians. Found 59 years later living on a reservation in Peru, Indiana but hardly remembered anything of her former life in the Wyoming Valley.

Joseph Lord Butler and Ziba Bennett Butler (great-grandsons): Two sons of Lord Nelson Butler, they fought on opposite sides during the Civil War. Joseph was trained as an engineer and served in the Union Navy. Ziba was visiting his uncle, Zebulon Butler, in Port Gibson, Mississippi when the war began. He joined the Confederate Army and saw action in several battles. Neither brother lived to see the end of the war. Joseph died in Wilkes-Barre of tuberculosis in 1862 and Ziba succumbed to typhoid dysentery at Port Gibson. ♦

Free program makes it easy to record family history

Ask Granny is an innovative genealogical outreach program designed to be presented by genealogists at places where seniors gather or at family reunions.

Funded entirely by contributions, the authors provide free specially formatted materials and instructions via e-mailed PDF files.

The copyrighted program is different from a beginning genealogy course. Using only pencils and paper, the Grannies and Grandpas who attend the seminars record their memories of family names, dates, and places on a chart labeled "A Genealogical Gift to my Family."

For more information visit the Ask Granny website, www.askgranny.us, or send an e-mail to ask.granny.us@gmail.com.

Did you know?

The William Penn Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution won national recognition for its project of recording information from the original headstones of the Old Graveyard of St. Thomas Episcopal Church.

The chapter was honored with 3rd place by the NSDAR after winning on the state and Eastern Division levels for its outstanding project in historic preservation.

The history of the church, located at Bethlehem Pike and Camp Hill Road in Whitmarsh, Montgomery County, dates from 1683. The cemetery covers 15 acres. The chapter members participating in the yearlong project transcribed and indexed 480 names from 418 headstones.

National first, second, and third place chapter and state society winners are presented with certificates at the Historic Preservation Forum at Continental Congress each June. The winter 2011 edition of Penn in Hand contained an article detailing the endeavor.

After the success of last year's program, GSP has decided again to collaborate with

the National Archives this summer to run the Student Family History Project.

Students from Philadelphia area high schools were selected for a ten-week program to learn about genealogical records, tour local repositories, and work one-on-one with GSP staff and volunteers to explore their personal genealogies.

The students' hard work has already started to pay off with many findings. For example, two of the students have discovered that their families may have been neighbors in one South Carolina county. Another has traced her heritage back to a somewhat famous Jewish community in Buenos Aires.

At the end of the project, the students will create an interactive, multi-media website to show what they've learned. In addition, they will present their research and experiences at a special reception to be held at the National Archives.

If you'd like to attend to support the students, please check our website for the date of the reception. GSP has enjoyed working with these bright high school students and hopes to continue the project in the future to continue developing the next generation of genealogists!

The students and their research interests are listed below:

Jazmine Babuch. Constitution High School. Philadelphia, Poland, Argentina, Russia, Middle East

Sherron Brookins. Constitution High School. Philadelphia, African-Americans

Donte Johnson. Constitution High School. Philadelphia, North and South Carolina, Virginia, African-Americans, Native Americans

Ayanna Robinson. Science Leadership Academy. Philadelphia, North Carolina, Mexico, New York

GSP thanks the following people who made donations from January to June of this year.

Elizabeth Kintzing Beck
Karen Bennett
Edwin Conroy
Alma Forman
Eleanor Nunan
William Wilcoxson



Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania
2207 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-3010

Register for the GSP/Ancestry.com
Pennsylvania Family History Day
on November 5 in Exton. Visit [www.
GenPa.org](http://www.GenPa.org) to learn more.

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Information about the
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How to be part of the
new GSP website

Genealogy of those
who fought in the
Revolutionary War battle
known as the Wyoming
Massacre

Volunteers work to save
Philadelphia's Mount
Moriah Cemetery

Mount Moriah Cemetery, one of the Philadelphia area's largest and most historic burial grounds, has been abandoned. While the courts are deciding who is responsible for the cemetery's upkeep its 85,000 graves are facing neglect and ruin.

Incorporated in 1855, Mount Moriah's 380 acres, nestled in Cobbs Creek Park in southwest Philadelphia and neighboring Yeadon, contain the graves of some of the area's most prominent residents and Civil War veterans and well as the recently buried whose loved ones were unprepared for the cemetery's unexplained closure in April.

Despite being placed on Preservation Pennsylvania's Most Endangered Historic Properties List in 2004 and on The Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia's Endangered Properties List in 2005, the cemetery continued to decline.

GSP and Friends of Mount Moriah are sponsoring cleanup days. See www.GenPa.org for details. If our members know of other cemeteries or graveyards suffering similar fates, please contact us to see if we can help preserve these important parts of our ancestry.



GSP Requests Member Photographs for New Website

By Anita Sheahan Coraluzzi
GSP Project Manager

Since the beginning of the year GSP has been working behind the scenes to design and build a new online presence for the society: one that will give GSP the ability to expand our digital holdings and incorporate and reflect the evolving world of online genealogy research and the exciting changes taking place.

The overwhelming success of the first annual RootsTech conference held in Salt Lake City in last February, coupled with the inspirational *Who Do You Think You Are* television show, has led a new generation of enthusiasts to seek their own family stories.

GSP embraces this enthusiasm and, while mindful of traditional genealogical research principals, welcomes a new generation of ancestral researchers and seeks to reach them where they are most comfortable, via the electronic media within which they conduct their lives in 2011.

But Facebook, Twitter, and webinars are just part of this contact: GSP is aware the society needs a vital online "home base" that will serve its members while offering guidance to all genealogists who need assistance with their Pennsylvania research.

Work is steadily progressing on the new website but as happens with many construction projects, inevitable delays have occurred. But at this stage of development GSP is asking our members to provide family photographs to help illustrate the new site. These photographs will serve to visually highlight the pages on which records of our ancestors will be found.

GSP is particularly interested in photographs of your ancestors at work, in whatever occupations they pursued in any time period: be it pictures of working on the farm, as merchants, in the military, in the mines, or slaking the thirsts of working men in a saloon. We are interested in photographs of families from all over the state of Pennsylvania and this includes family group images as well.

Our ancestors made time in their busy lives to gather on Sundays after church, or annually at grange fairs and festivals for a variety of celebrations. At many of these celebrations group photos were taken and these too would be welcome for the website!

Please see instructions regarding submission of photographs, and please note that not all images submitted are guaranteed to be used on the site. However, photos not used now may be used at a later date.

The Board of Directors and staff of the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania recognize the society is in existence because of its members. This is *your* GSP; show us your ancestors!

To submit photographs by mail:
Please send only copies of original photographs and no more than 2 or 3 photos.

With a photo pen or marker, please include the following information on the back of each photo or on an attached paper:

- Your name, address, phone number, and/or e-mail address
- Name of person(s) in the photo and their relation to you

- Location of photo
- Date of photo
- Any other relevant information needed to explain the subject in the photo
- Include brief note giving GSP permission to use your images on the GSP website, with your signature and date.

Mail to:
Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania
Member Photos
2207 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103

To submit photographs by e-mail:

We are delighted to accept digital copies of your photos. Please attach two or three scanned photographs to your e-mail and send to: gsp.memberphotos@gmail.com

Please be certain to identify photos carefully to avoid mistaken identities, dates, etc. You can do this by including information on back of each photo with a photo marking pen and scanning the back as well as the front of the photo and naming the files accordingly (i.e., Photo No. 1 Front; Photo No. 1 Back).

In your accompanying e-mail please identify photos with names of persons in photo and their relation to you, location of photo, date of photo, and any other relevant information pertaining to the image.

In your accompanying e-mail please include brief statement giving GSP permission to use your images on the GSP website with the date and your full name. Your electronic submission will be used in lieu of your signature, but this statement must be included. ♦

A Letter from the President



GSP President Carol M. Sheaffer being interviewed by a KYW Newsradio reporter Tim Jimenez while a volunteer at a cleanup day at Mount Moriah Cemetery.

By Carol M. Sheaffer
GSP President

Being the avid genealogists we are, we readily spend hours online and in archives, libraries, and courthouses to say nothing of cemeteries, the attics of our relatives, and churches — really, any place we can think of to go — in search of ancestors.

There are always the facts of a person's life to find: birth, marriage, death, occupation, religion, military service, education, residence to name a few, and of course, documents to prove the facts.

While we strive to fill in all the blanks on the Family Group Record and Pedigree Chart, we long to put flesh on the bones: that is to say, learn about the ancestor's character, attitudes, and values. Sometimes that really is possible when we come upon an ancestor who left a wonderfully robust paper trail.

There are others, of course, who won't be found! It may sometimes seem like they entered The Witness Protection Program and had their identity completely changed. Those who can be found, those who did leave records, provide a real glimpse into their lives and times.

So how did our ancestors leave behind the kind of records that go beyond the facts and tell us about their character, what they believed in, and how they put their beliefs into action? They, of course, volunteered!

They volunteered for the military because they believed in freedom and in protecting their community. They volunteered to serve

on committees in their church perhaps to raise money for church construction or prepare food for the poor and needy in the community. Perhaps they volunteered to help a neighbor build a new barn.

All of their good works can be found in military and church records, town minutes, newspapers to name a few sources. All tell us what good citizens they were. Our ancestors loved to volunteer for the good of all.

So, therein, lies the challenge to us. What records of volunteerism will we leave behind for future generations to find so that they may know our character? A very good question that now will lead to a commercial.

Your organization needs your volunteerism — to help in the office, to help with research for others, to help table at conferences and community events, to help plan for and work at GSP events, to serve on committees, to keep all informed of genealogical happenings around the state.

GSP stands ready to help you find your volunteer niche and records of your work will be kept for descendants to find. So, in the spirit of your ancestors, contact the GSP office and let us know what you can do.

UPCOMING EVENTS

1:30–3 pm. Sat., August 6. *Chronicling America: The Pennsylvania Newspaper Digital Project.* Christ Church Great Hall, 20 N. American St., Philadelphia. Funded by a grant from the Library of Congress and the National Endowment for the Humanities, the *Chronicling America* newspaper project has expanded the number of newspapers available to researchers by providing free access to millions of historic newspaper pages from fifteen states (including Pennsylvania) and the District of Columbia, with publication dates between 1860 and 1922.

The site can be searched online at <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>. Pennsylvania newspapers currently include the *Evening Public Ledger*, *Scranton Tribune*, and *Pittsburg [sic] Dispatch*, among others. The Library hopes to eventually represent newspapers from all fifty states.

Penn State University Libraries are the overseers of the Pennsylvania project, and GSP is pleased to welcome them to talk about their efforts in depth. Project Manager Karen Morrow and staff will discuss:

- The history of the National Digital Newspaper Program and *Chronicling America*
- The origin of the Pennsylvania project

- Title selection, digitization, and uploading of the images
- How to use the *Chronicling America* website for your genealogical research
- Other online newspaper resources available to researchers

Free to GSP members, \$5 for non-members.

8 am Sat. August 13 and September 10. *Mount Moriah Cemetery Cleanup Days.* 62 St. and Kingsessing Ave., Philadelphia. GSP, the Friends of Mount Moriah, and other community groups are working together to help clean up and restore this historic Philadelphia cemetery. Tasks include raking, pruning, and photo documentation with headstone transcription. E-mail Emily.Shaw@GenPa.org to register and receive full details.

10:30 am–4:30 pm. Wed., August 17. *Summer Research Series. Session 3.* Special Collections Division, Paley Library, Temple University, Philadelphia.

9 am–3:45 pm. Sat., September 10. *Mining Online Catalogs: Tools and Techniques for Successful Historical and Genealogical Research.* Join GSP and NARA for a day-long program dedicated to understanding and digging through online catalogs. Free, but registration required. (This is an encore of the sold-out event of last April.) National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Mid-Atlantic Region, 900 Market St., Philadelphia.

9 am. Sat. September 24. *Bucks County Ancestry Fair.* Bucks County Visitors Center, 3207 Street Road, Bensalem. Join GSP for the fifth annual Ancestry Fair. This event is free to the public and will feature workshops and lectures and website research assistance as well as a vendor area for browsing. Visit our website for a list of speakers and directions to the Center.

Sun. November 13. *First Person Arts Festival: Family Secrets Revealed.* Christ Church Neighborhood House, 20 N. American St., Philadelphia. Part *Antiques Roadshow*, part *This is Your Life*, *Family Secrets Revealed* is an exclusive opportunity to learn the facts behind old family tales. Bring a family story and experts from the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania will crack open their treasure trove of information to try to help you unearth details about your family tree. \$35. \$28 for First Person members. Visit www.firstpersonarts.org for more details.

For more information and registration for coming events visit www.GenPa.org.

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PIH Editor, Deborah Coombe Haas, Editor@GenPa.org. GSP Associate Director Joyce Homan, ExecDir@GenPa.org.