In This Issue:

- Ulster 2019 Lectures: 2
- Events: 2
- What is happening at GSP: 3
- Ulster 2018—A year later: 4
- Ulster 2019: 5
- DNA Corner: 5
- Data Collection The Marriage Register of PA: 6
- Civil War Pension Files: 17
- Excerpts from PGM Magazines: 16
- Featured County—Bedford: 19

Message from the President......

Happy New Year! Happy Genealogy New Year! After a brief Holiday break, GSP is up and running and we hope we can make your 2019 Year a good one genealogically speaking. We are resuming the monthly DNA Special Interest Group and twice monthly ROOTS Luncheons and will be scheduling workshops and lectures. In March we hope to see many of you at our Annual All-Day Irish event at Brookside Manor with speakers Fintan Mullan and Gillian Hunt from The Ulster Historical Foundation. You’ll enjoy excellent speakers focusing this year on availability of data such as wills, cemeteries, church records and more to be found online and in Irish research facilities. That plus good food and good company, free parking, the opportunity to win door prizes and purchase books from The Ulster Historical Foundation and GSP will make it a day to remember. In fact, you will find in this newsletter, authored by Joseph Roby, an account about last year’s event and how it has influenced his life and research. Find also articles about research and record preservation at NARA and research strategies and definition for online databases. I encourage all of you, as well, to take advantage of our extensive and growing online database, our onsite library, research and consultation services, and scheduling lectures for your group. Do frequently check our website for new publications and new online databases. Finally, do consider volunteering. It is a great way to interact with fellow members, learn more about genealogy and make meaningful contributing to your organization.

Carol M. Sheaffer MD, President

The GSP online newsletter

We look forward to keeping you informed by giving you dates and times of upcoming events, answering questions and being a source of information to our membership.

Share your Family Research Story

Briefly share amusing, touching, unusual, interesting or tragic stories you have unearthed in your family research - editor@genpa.org

Upcoming Events

The Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania hosts 2 lunches each month – ROOTS and ROOTS FOCUS. Both are designed to allow researchers to discuss genealogy over brown bagging lunch. ROOTS will be an opportunity to discuss all questions with each other and share research, artifacts, photos and questions. ROOTS FOCUS will offer an opportunity to discuss a specific topic. Participants need to register in advance as space is limited and bring their own lunch. GSP will provide coffee, tea and dessert. Note: Change from Tuesdays to Thursdays

The following events are held at the GSP offices, unless otherwise noted.

Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania
2100 Byberry Road, Suite 111
Philadelphia, PA 19116
267.686.2296 gsp.deborah@gmail.com

(Continued on page 2)
2019 Ulster Event Lectures

The focus of lectures offered this year by Fintan Mullan and Gillian Hunt will be on record sources available online and in Irish repositories.

♦ Lecture: An Introduction to Archives in Ireland and Their Websites

♦ Lecture: Church Records for Use in Genealogical Research
  - Part 1 Baptismal, Marriage and Burial Records

♦ Lecture: Church Records for Use in Genealogical Research:
  - Part 2 Administrative Records – Vestry Minute Books, Communicant Rolls

♦ Lecture: Using Printed Sources for Irish Family History:
  - Newspapers, Street Directories, Ordnance Survey Memoirs and British Parliamentary Papers on Ireland

♦ Lecture: Using Irish Wills and Testamentary Records:
  - Hugely valuable source for Irish Family History

♦ Lecture: The Importance of Gravestone Inscriptions for Irish Research

February

Advance Registration Required Due to Space Limitations. Registration: GSP Members Free; GSP Non-Members $5.

EMAIL to REGISTER: info@genpa.org

ROOTS: Bring Your Ancestor to Lunch
14 February 2019  12 Noon-2 PM
Note: Change from Tuesdays to Thursdays
An opportunity to meet over lunch with other researchers to discuss research questions, successes, frustrations, get new ideas and share ancestor photos and artifacts. Bring your own lunch. GSP will supply coffee/tea and dessert.

Led by Carol M. Sheaffer

DNA SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP
23 February 2019  10 AM-11:30 AM
DNA Discussion: Testing, Results, Using in Genealogical Research

ROOTS FOCUS: Irish Research
28 February 2019  12 Noon-2 PM
Note: Change from Tuesdays to Thursdays
An opportunity to meet over lunch with other researchers and discuss a specific topic.

Led by Carol Sheaffer

March

Sunday March 10th  9:00 to 4:30
The Ulster Historical Foundation 2019 North American Lecture Tour.

https://genpa.org/events/Tickets
GSP HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

December 8th was indeed a joyous day at the GSP Office as GSP Members, Office Staff and Board Members gathered to celebrate the holiday together. Handcrafted ornaments were brought in by attendees for our tree, the most creative being a DNA ethnicity ornament made by Joseph Roby and a miniature genealogy fan chart made by Florence Gallagher. There was abundant food, good company and much talk of ancestors and family, past celebrations and traditions. The event inspired me to remember and record the many Christmases I have experienced, the traditions that were so meaningful to me in my family, school, church and hometown as I grew up. This year I used that material for my annual Christmas genealogy letter and inserted it in outgoing Christmas cards. I am looking forward to our 2019 Open House.

Carol M. Sheaffer MD, President

GSP ON THE AIR

Nancy C. Nelson, Vice President of GSP and Chair of the First Families of Pennsylvania Program and myself were interviewed in December by radio station WWDB for their half hour show entitled “Interesting People”, which aired on December 20th. The show has been downloaded to the GSP Facebook Page and can be accessed via the radio station’s website. The interview focused on GSP, its history and mission, current services and activities as well as genealogical research in general.

Moving ahead, GSP has been asked to appear on the WHYY “You Oughta Know” show to talk about DNA. Taping at their studio will take place on January 29th.

Tune in! Carol M. Sheaffer MD, President

COMING SOON: NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR LIBRARY

Thanks to various members for their donations, we have some new titles being added to the library:

♦ Celebrating the Family: The MyFamily.com Guide to Understanding Your Family History
♦ Tracing Your Family History: How to Get Started
♦ NGS Research in the States Series: Pennsylvania
♦ The Johannes Schwab Family: 240 Years in America
♦ Finding Your Roots: How to Trace Your Ancestors at Home and Abroad
♦ Genealogy Is More Than Charts
♦ Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives
♦ The Great Ancestor Hunt: The Fun of Finding Out Who You Are
♦ Professional Genealogy: A Manual for Researchers, Writers, Editors, Lecturers, and Librarians

Jane Benner, Library
Last Year’s Ulster Event Changed My Life!

I know the title of the article sounds like a line from a late-night infomercial, but it is actually a true statement. There are many reasons why, some of which have little to do with the fact that it was an event on researching Irish ancestors, I consider this event a turning point in my genealogical research and career.

I had joined GSP only about four months prior to the Ulster Historical Foundation’s North American Lecture Tour stop outside of Philadelphia in March 2018. This was my first GSP event and my first-ever event focused solely on family history. Early in 2018, I decided to begin formally educating myself in order to pursue a career as a professional genealogist. I knew I needed at least a few years of instruction. I thought the best place to start was to join a local genealogical society and begin attending some small-scale events.

I knew absolutely no one when I arrived at the Brookside Manor. One of the smartest things I did that day was to go up to a few of the GSP volunteers at their table. I introduced myself as a new member. I remember specifically talking with Valerie-Anne Lutz, a member of GSP’s board. She could not have been nicer and treated me as though I had been a member for years. She encouraged me to come to the business meeting later that month, where I volunteered to write for the newsletter. And here I am! I love to write about genealogy and history. I hope to continue writing, possibly as part of my professional career as a genealogist.

Getting back to the actual event, I was hoping to come out of the full day of presentations with two main research goals completed: to understand the complicated land divisions in Ireland and to come away with some census substitutes. The amazing lecturers from the Ulster Historical Foundation, Fintan Mullan and Gillian Hunt, did not disappoint. It is almost a year later, and I still haven’t had a chance to put all the information which they presented into practice. It was a little much for one day, but here is one big tip: take lots of notes! The handouts are fantastic; however, you need to pay attention to Fintan and Gillian because they give some great tips which are not included in the handouts.

Because of what I learned at last year’s event I was able to take the research on my Irish ancestors (and there are many) to the next level. I feel like I now have so many more resources at my disposal. Consequently, I was a step or two ahead when I went to other lectures and courses. Getting involved with GSP and the genealogical community in general has probably been the best reward from attending the Ulster event last year. I’ve met some wonderful people in the past year. I hope to see you this year on March 10 at Brookside Manor.

Joseph Roby, Contributor
**DNA CORNER**

Our DNA special interest group continues to meet the 4th Saturday of the month. Our next meeting is Saturday, February 23, 2019, 10 am to 11:30 am, at the GSP offices. The meeting is free for members and $5.00 for non-members. If there is a topic you would like covered or if you have questions email info@genpa.org. We would be happy to post the findings in our next newsletter.

*Valerie Lutz, Treasurer*

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**Upcoming GSP Events**

[https://genpa.org/events/](https://genpa.org/events/)

2nd and 4th Thursdays – 12:00 –2:00
Bring your Lunch to GSP  *(WaWa now open next to GSP office)*

Register: info@genpa.org

**ULSTER HISTORICAL FOUNDATION**

**2019 NORTH AMERICAN LECTURE TOUR**

**SUNDAY MARCH 10, 2019**

9:00 AM—4:30 PM *(REGISTRATION 8:30 AM)*

Place: Brookside Manor– 50 Bustleton Pike
Trevose-Feasterville, PA 19053

Early Bird:  $80 GSP members, $93 Non-members until February 15th
After February 15th $104 per person

Fee includes all lectures, handouts, continental breakfast, Irish themed hot buffet luncheon and dessert bar, free parking, door prizes and is accessible..

**TICKETS**
The Marriage Register of Pennsylvania is a 54 page document in the Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine, Volume 37, Number 3, 1992. The full article includes over 50 marriage records and is available to members of GSP.
The Marriage Register of Pennsylvania, 1683–1696

Jeffrey L. Scheib

As part of his many plans for the colonization of Pennsylvania, William Penn, in May 1682, issued a proposed code of laws for the government of his new province. One of the provisions in that code called for civil registration of all marriages to be solemnized in the colony. As later enacted into statute by the Pennsylvania Assembly, Penn’s proposal for registration of marriages led to the creation of one of the most fascinating documents to survive from the first two decades of Pennsylvania’s history, the register general’s Marriage Register for the years 1683 through 1696.

Introduction

Penn’s proposal for civil registration of marriages in his colony drew its inspiration from two sources. In England since 1538, the incumbent minister of each parish in the Anglican Church was required to keep registers of all baptisms, marriages, and burials that he performed. At the same time, the Quakers, as Dissenters from the Established Church, refused to be married or buried by Anglican clergymen and had become meticulous keepers of their own records of births, marriages, and burials. Quaker meetings in Pennsylvania could and did continue the English practice of keeping careful records, but, with no parochial structure in the colony comparable to the English model, what was to be done about that segment of the population who were not Quakers? Since marriage was a civil contract that involved questions of property and inheritance, some sort of registration was desirable and useful as a way of documenting that a marriage had taken place. The obvious answer was to require by law...
that all marriages be recorded by the civil government, regardless of
the married couple’s religious persuasion.

Following Penn’s proposal, the first Pennsylvania Assembly, in
December 1682, enacted that there would be a registry for marriages
in the colony, and also for births, burials, wills, and letters of admin-
istration, but it neglected to provide a mechanism for registration.\(^5\)
That oversight was remedied in the spring of 1683, when the Assembly
passed a law decreeing that a certificate of marriage signed by the
married couple and at least 12 witnesses was to be brought for
recording to the register general’s deputy in the county where the
marriage had been solemnized.\(^6\) The legislation was further refined
in 1684 and re-enacted as part of a general re-enactment of the
provincial laws in 1693.\(^7\) The 1693 legislation was the last enactment
during the period covered by the Marriage Register.

The Marriage Register documents 54 marriages that were cele-
brated in Pennsylvania between February 1683 (New Style) and
March 1694 (New Style).\(^8\) Four of the marriages were solemnized in
Chester County, the remaining 50 in Philadelphia County. In view of
the requirement of the 1683 law that marriages be registered in the
county where they occurred, the overwhelming number of Philadel-
phia County weddings suggests that the register was probably a
Philadelphia County record book rather than a book for the entire
province. The title affixed to the document, “Marriage Register of
Pennsylvania,” is thus probably a nineteenth-century misnomer.\(^9\) Dur-
ing the period in which the register was created, all of the registers
general were residents of Philadelphia and could have kept Philadel-
phia County’s records themselves rather than by deputies. Nor, of
course, should it be supposed that these 54 marriages were the only
weddings that took place in the colony in the period. No attempt has
been made to determine the total number of marriages solemnized
in Pennsylvania as a whole between 1683 and 1694, or even to
determine the number that took place in Philadelphia for compar-
ison with the number of marriages recorded in the register. To name
only one very notable example of an unregistered wedding, however,
the marriage of the prominent Quaker merchant and politician
Samuel Carpenter to Hannah Hardiman on 12 December 1684 was
not recorded in the register.\(^10\)

In actuality, the paucity of registered marriages is not too surpris-
ing. Despite the intentions of William Penn and the Assembly, there
was no mechanism for enforcing the laws regulating marriages. The statutes of 1683, 1684, and 1693 all imposed fines on persons marrying or performing marriages contrary to the law. Nevertheless, unless someone, perhaps a jilted suitor, an uncooperative parent, or a neighborhood busybody, complained of an unlawful marriage to the county grand jury, there was no way to call to account anyone who violated any of the requirements of the marriage laws, including the provision for registration.\textsuperscript{11}

The Marriage Register is a thin volume consisting of 48 sheets of paper (86 pages). The pagination, contemporary with the records, is irregular, the changes no doubt reflecting the changes in the register general’s office during the period in which the register was created.\textsuperscript{12} Page numbers are used for pages 1 through 46; thereafter, folio numbers are used. The numbers jump from folio 61 to folio 67, but it is not known whether any pages are actually missing at that point; the continuous nature of the pagination elsewhere in the volume suggests that the register has survived essentially intact. From page 1 through page 12, both sides of each sheet have writing on them. Thereafter, from page 13 through folio 69, only the obverse of each sheet was used. Folios 70 and 71 have writing on both sides.

The marriages documented by the Marriage Register have been known to generations of genealogists and historians. In 1878, evidently just as the eighth volume of the Second Series of the Pennsylvania Archives was going to press, marriages abstracted from the register were added to the beginning of that volume as pages v–viii.\textsuperscript{13} The archival publication has since been reprinted.\textsuperscript{14} However, both the initial publication in the Pennsylvania Archives and the reprintings contain errors of both transcription and printing.

Whoever abstracted the marriages for the Pennsylvania Archives had only an imperfect understanding of late seventeenth-century handwriting. For example, the clerk who recorded the certificate of William Fisher’s marriage to Bridget Hodgkins on folio 47\textsuperscript{r} of the register wrote Fisher’s surname as “ffisher,” using the then-common “ff” for a capital “F.” The nineteenth-century abstractor, however, used both a modern capital “F” and a lower-case “f,” transcribing Fisher’s surname as “Ffisher,”\textsuperscript{15} using two “f’s” where only a modern capital “F” is needed. Similarly, the abstractor gave the occupation of Isack Rickatts, whose marriage to Elizabeth Palmor was recorded on folio 56\textsuperscript{r}, as “snuf-maker,” whereas the original register gives Rickatt’s occupation as “stuf maker,”\textsuperscript{16} that is, in late seventeenth-century

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parlance, a manufacturer (a weaver) of “stuffs,” a light-weight woolen fabric,\textsuperscript{17} quite a difference from an artisan who processed tobacco. Also, the year of Daniel Hodgson’s marriage to Hannah Holme (folio 68r in the original), was printed and reprinted as 1789 rather than the correct 1689.\textsuperscript{18}

Aside from the errors contained in the previous publications of marriages from the Marriage Register, none of the earlier published versions included the names of the witnesses to the marriage ceremonies. The names of the witnesses, which form a significant part of the original manuscript, were copied by the recording clerks into the register in all but a handful of instances. The lists of witnesses form a valuable scholarly resource that has hitherto been available only to users of the original manuscript. The witness lists, at the most basic, serve as documentation for the presence of the witnesses in Pennsylvania at the time the marriages they witnessed took place; conceivably in some instances that could be the earliest documentation of an individual’s presence in the colony. The lists might also help to identify spouses,\textsuperscript{19} as often husbands and wives both served as witnesses, or to reconstruct families. The witness lists can also serve more sophisticated scholarly purposes. It has previously been shown that the roll of witnesses to the marriage of Daniel Hodgson, a Philadelphia physician, to Hannah Holme, on 4 April 1689 (see below, folio 68r), forms a roll call of the major political opponents, including Governor John Blackwell, of the then-dominant Quaker political faction led by Thomas Lloyd.\textsuperscript{20}

Scholarship would have been served only poorly, at best, by publishing only new, expanded abstracts, including the witnesses, of the marriages documented by the Marriage Register (not to mention the aesthetic violence abstracting does to an original manuscript). Publication of the full texts of the recorded certificates, however, enables readers to determine whether or not a particular marriage was a Quaker ceremony. Of the 54 marriages included in the register, only 31 were definitely Quaker weddings, a reminder that not all of the earliest inhabitants of the Quaker colony were Quakers. Of the remaining 23, some may have been Quaker ceremonies but cannot be identified as such because the wording of the certificate was ambiguous, because the entire text of the certificate was not recorded, or because of damage to the manuscript. At least one of the remaining 23 marriages, that of John Moon to Martha Wilkins (original page 17, below), was that of a Friend who had been disowned by Philadelphia
Monthly Meeting.\textsuperscript{21} Also, John Holme, whose marriage to Mary More was recorded on folio 58r, was a prominent Baptist; his marriage was certainly not a Quaker ceremony, nor was that of his daughter Hannah to Daniel Hodgson, mentioned above.\textsuperscript{22} Generally, the certificates of Quaker marriages noted that the couple had received the approval of several men’s and women’s monthly meetings. Also, Quaker marriages usually took place in the meetinghouse, but not necessarily; William Bethell and Helenah Claypoole (folio 59r) were married in a Quaker ceremony at her widowed mother’s home.

During the years when the Marriage Register was created, Pennsylvania was growing rapidly. Nevertheless, it was still a frontier colony, and Philadelphia was a raw country town, straggling along the Delaware from Dock Creek north to Pegg’s Run, extending not much farther west than Third Street. For the reader, the texts of the certificates recorded in the Marriage Register vividly evoke both the place and the period as they depict the marrying couples standing together before witnesses in the plain, unadorned meetinghouse, taking each other by the hand, and solemnly promising to be loving and faithful spouses (and, in the case of the women, also obedient) until death should separate them. Even after 300 years, the simple dignity of these ceremonies retains the power to move.

The Marriage Register of Pennsylvania was presented to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania on 27 January 1845 by Joshua Francis Fisher, an important early scholar of American history and a prominent early member of the Historical Society.\textsuperscript{23} No attempt has been made to trace the provenance of the register before Fisher gave it to the Historical Society. Undoubtedly the history of the register itself from 1696, when the last certificate was recorded, until 1845 would make fascinating reading.\textsuperscript{24}

\textbf{Editorial Method}

In this transcription, each marriage record is preceded by its page or folio number in the original manuscript placed in [square brackets]. Each certificate begins with a paragraph indent. Marginalia have been brought into the body of the text and placed in {braces}. The name of the marrying couple immediately follows the text of each certificate, set flush right. A heading, [Witnesses], has been supplied
before the names of those present. In the original manuscript, the witnesses’ names appear in columns. In this transcription, in order to conserve space, each column of witnesses has been placed in paragraph form, with the names separated by commas inserted by the editor in the interest of readability. The first paragraph of witnesses’ names represents the first column of names in the original manuscript, the second paragraph the second column, and so forth, across the original manuscript page from left to right. Readers should note that the last paragraph of witnesses’ names sometimes, but not invariably, consists of the names of close relatives of the bridal couple; for example, on folio 56r, the last group of witnesses to the marriage of Isack Rickatts and Elizabeth Palmor comprised the stepfather, mother, and brothers of the bride.25

Spelling and capitalization in this transcription follow the original, except that the usage of “u” and “v,” used interchangeably in the period when the Marriage Register was created, has been standardized according to modern usage, as has the usage of “i” and “j.” Also, all personal and place names have been capitalized in accordance with modern usage. The double “f,” i.e., “ff,” has been rendered as “F” where appropriate. The capitalization of the letters “c,” “k,” “p,” “s,” and “w” in documents of the period is often a matter of judgment. The editor makes no claims to infallibility.

All words, including names, that were abbreviated with a tilde have been expanded with the missing letters enclosed in <angle brackets>. Words and names that were abbreviated without a tilde have been expanded with the missing letters enclosed in [square brackets]. Where the page has been torn or otherwise become illegible because of stains or bleeding through of the ink, an effort has been made to supply plausible missing letters in [square brackets] with a question mark included within the brackets. Where it has not been possible to reconstruct plausible missing text, [torn] appears. All superscripts have been brought to the line, and all raised brevigraphs have been lowered and expanded to –or, –ur, –our, –er, or –re as needed. The thorn has been rendered as “th” to prevent confusion with “y”; superscript contractions attached to the thorn have been lowered and expanded. The tailed “p” has been expanded as necessary to per-, pro-, or pre-. The ampersand has been retained. Any other changes are explained in end notes.
In this transcription original punctuation has been retained. Any punctuation inserted by the editor has been placed in [square brackets] (except as noted above in connection with the names of the witnesses). Interlineations have been silently brought to the line and inserted where the recording clerk indicated. Strike-through, or crossed-out, deletions have been silently eliminated on the grounds that the writer’s act of crossing out words indicates that those words were to be eliminated.

The various clerks who had a hand in the creation of the Marriage Register were not consistent in their method of recording the names of witnesses who made their marks rather than sign their names to the original certificates. In this transcription, all such witnesses have been standardized. In each case where the witness made a mark, the word [mark] in square brackets appears between the given name and surname of the witness. All phrases such as “the mark of,” “his mark,” or “her mark” have been eliminated. The fact that the individual witnessed by a mark rather than a signature is of more interest and importance than the clerk’s method of indicating that fact. Readers should, however, keep in mind that in all cases these marriage records are government copies of the original certificates that were given to the married couples. All names are thus in the hands of the various clerks. They are not the signatures of the witnesses.

Dates have been retained as in the original. Readers should remember that during the period covered by the Marriage Register, the Julian (Old Style) Calendar was still in use in Britain and her colonies, and the Old Style legal year began 25 March. Quakers and others often used numbers for months instead of the “heathen” names. March was the first month and February was the twelfth month. Thus a date written “3d 1st mo[nth] 1687” is 3 March 1688 in modern form. Double dating was sometimes used for the year date between 1 January and 24 March.

Readers should note that only pages 1–4, which are torn in the original, and folio 52r, where the clerk did not record the entire text of the marriage certificate, have been transcribed line-for-line. They are indicated as transcribed line-for-line following their page and folio numbers. Also, a double slash (//) indicates the ends of the lines in the original manuscript.
The Marriage Register of Pennsylvania, AM .3045, in the manuscript collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, is published here in its entirety with the permission of the Historical Society.26

The Marriage Register of Pennsylvania, 1683–1696

[page 1; transcribed line for line]

168427

For as much as Thomas Baldwin & Mary Lim// of Chester in Pensilvania, have according to a Law// up a writeing upon the Court House Doore, to signif[y?]/// Marriage each with other, which hath been done & the// abovesaid, for the space of a whole Month Legally,// any, why they should not proceed in their Intended// consent of their Relations or nearest Freinds & Kind[red?]/// month being the 7th day of the weeke before & in the// Sufficient Witnesses, they Solemnly tooke each other /// wherein Michaell Izard lately dwelt in the County aboves[] aid? // whereof wee the abovesaid parties have subscribed our names/ //

Tho[mas] [mark] Ba[l]dwin?
Mary [mark] Ba[l]dwin?

Christopher Taylor Register Generall28

witnesses to the same 22 as by the said order of Marriage ap[ears]/ //

Whereas William Clayton of Chichester in the County of Chester // of Pensilvania Carpenter And Elizabeth Beazer of the same place, // province aforesaid Semspster Did take each other as husband & wife // of the 12th Month called February in the yeare 1682 in the // William Hewes in Chichester aforesaid in the presence of // To which order of Marriage they the said William Clayton // Elizabeth Clayton & the witnesses aforesaid have sett their hands; as // by the said ord[er?]/ // appeareth/ //
IRISH GENEALOGY—NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF IRELAND

If you are searching for Irish ancestors and they lived in Ireland between 1864 and 1968, there is an excellent web site that you should check out: irishgenealogy.ie. This is a free, government-run site, which was started in 2016 by the National Archives of Ireland. There are both civil and church records available, however the church records are rather sparse. It is best to check the website for a separate list of both their civil and church records.

At this time, the website is most valuable for its civil records. They include the historic records of births, marriages, and deaths from the General Register Office. The records are subject to privacy laws. Records are released following these guidelines: births after 100 years, deaths after 50 years and marriages after 75 years. Currently the following records are available: births from 1864 to 1918, marriages from 1864 to 1943, and deaths from 1878 to 1968. Most records include images from the registers. The birth records give the name of child, date of birth, parents’ names (including the mother’s maiden name), registration district, and usually the townland. The death records give the name of the deceased, age, date of death, and registration district. The marriage records give the name of the bride, groom, date of marriage, registration district and the names of the father of both the bride and the groom.

When you first enter the website, click on the tab indicating which subset of records you want to search: church or civil. Enter the search information such as, first and last name, the Registration District, type of vital record you’re looking for (e.g., birth, marriage, and/or death). The site will then ask you to sign in. It’s a free site but they require you to sign in and agree to their terms of service. You can search without entering anything in the Registration District block and it will return records for all of Ireland. When the records are returned, you click on the record to open it. Then click on the term “image” and it will open up the image. This is an excellent site for locating siblings of your ancestors, their marriages, births of nieces and nephews, and death records.

Learn how to get the most out of this website and other Irish resources and records at the Ulster Historical Foundation North American Annual Tour. GSP is hosting this year’s lecture on Sunday, March 10, 2019. Special pricing for Early Bird Registration is available until February 15th. See additional information elsewhere in this newsletter and on our website: https://genpa.org/events/.

Frank Straup, GSP Board Member
Excerpts from PGM Magazines

PGM Volume 7, No. 3 page 284—March 1920

CAREY. ANTHONY CAREY of Donaghadee, county Down, Ireland, born 1716; died 1 June 1809; married circa 1753, Jane WRIGHT, born circa 1729; died 4 June, 1812, of the same place. Had eldest son Thomas CAREY, and a younger son, Andrew CAREY. The latter, born at Donaghadee, November, 1762; died at Wilmington, Delaware, 1 October, 1845; married at Donaghadee, twenty-two miles from Belfast, 18 February, 1791, Mary Ann BIGGAR, born 4 November, 1770; died at Wilmington, 9 June, 1824. For proof of the name of Anthony CAREY’s father and family connection with the English or Irish branches of the CAREY’s, the sum of one hundred dollars will be paid.

BIGGAR-PONSONBY. Joseph BIGGAR of or near Belfast, Ireland, married circa 1758-1769 Sarah Ponsonby, a relative of the Earl of Beseborough; daughter of Sir John Ponsonby. Had son, Ponsonby BIGGAR . One hundred dollars will be paid for the place of and evidence of the above marriage.

PGM Volume 4 No. 1 page 78—March 1909

Deaths

ZEBLEY, Keziah 2/17/1826, in Wilmington stabbed by an Irishman named Monahan & died a few days after

ZEBLEY, Jacob 1/24/1828

PGM Volume 15 No. 1 page 28—October 1945

The William Young Burying-Ground

The visitor to Arlington Cemetery, in Upper Darby township, Delaware county, in passing through the Bethany Section, comes to a large lot in which are many low granite markers, uniform in size and style, each bearing an inscription. These stones mark the resting-place of the remains of those originally interred in the burying-ground established by William Young, in Kingsessing township, Philadelphia county; and their inscriptions duplicate, as nearly as possible, those on the original stones remaining in the old burying-ground at the time of its removal in 1907.*

Elizabeth LEECH; daughter of John and Christiana (YOUNG) LEECH; m: August 13, 1789, John Furlong, an Irishman by birth. They removed, the same month, to their own home in Marple township, Chester county. In 1794, they sold this property, and bought a lot in the city.

Children:

John; b. December 9, 1790.
Thomas; b. September 8, 1792; d. June 4, 1798.74
Civil War Pension Files

Civil War pension files can be a treasure trove of genealogical information. A claimant for a Civil War pension could be the veteran, his widow, his minor children, or other dependent. There could be several applications for pensions based on the service of one individual. For example, the veteran could apply for a pension based on an injury or disability he received while in the service of the United States military. His widow could also apply for a pension after his death. Minor children could apply if they became orphans. All applications based on the service of one individual are usually kept in the same file. Documents submitted in support of some pension claims include affidavits attesting to service, pages from family bibles, and copies of records of birth, marriage, and death. A Civil War pension file may also include Bureau of Pensions questionnaires sent out in 1898 and 1915, which contain genealogical information.

A recent road trip to the National Archives in Washington D.C. allowed me to delve into several Civil War Pension files that I believed belonged to three of my GGGrandfathers. All three of my ancestors lived in Philadelphia and had common names. The names were Henry Wood, John Clark, and James Thomas. Researching Clark and Thomas yielded no results. Pension files gave me more information on Henry Wood and I was able to go back a generation further. He was the only one of the three that I was sure had served in the Civil War. I searched Civil War Pensions on Ancestry.com and found the record for Henry Wood. I found several records for John Clark and James Thomas as well. Using the little information, I knew about Clark and Thomas, I was able to narrow down the records to a single one for each Clark and Thomas. It was not a sure thing, but I felt that the odds were better than 50 percent that these files belonged to my ancestors. So off to Washington I went.

The only information that I knew about James Thomas was from the 1870 census and the death certificate of his son. These documents listed his parents as James Thomas and Mary Ann Johnson. I obtained Pension file #166923 for James Thomas. Affidavits submitted for his pension stated that James Thomas entered the British Merchant Service as a boy. He spent five years at sea before settling in Philadelphia in early 1863. Thomas boarded the ship with his aunt and uncle for a little over a year. He then enlisted in Company G, 3rd Regiment, PA Heavy Artillery Unit on March 17, 1864, at the age of 18. A year later he came down with a heavy cough and was sent to the hospital in Hampton, VA in March 1865. He was discharged from the service on June 15, 1865. In August 1865, James returned to England and married Mary Ann Johnson on December 18, 1865. He stayed in England until his return to Philadelphia in March 1869. Thomas became sick with pulmonary consumption and applied for a pension in 1871. James died from consumption on March 8, 1872, prior to being allotted a pension. His widow, Mary Ann pursued an application for a Widow’s Pension after his death. She submitted a marriage certificate from Saint Simon’s Parish Church, Salford, England, to verify their marriage. Mary Ann also submitted an affidavit from her physician to verify the birth of their only child, Edward, born January 6, 1870. To say the least, I found this file to be very informative with information I doubt I could have found anywhere else. This endeavor also opened some avenues for future research.

The second pension file I obtained was for John Clark, file #1065064. I had a little knowledge on John Clark from the 1870 and 1880 census records. I lost track of him around 1890 and was unable to find further information on him. Affid-
davits and documents submitted for his pension included information that John Clark served 2 years, 6 months in Company G, 20th PA Cavalry. He served from January 1863 to July 1865. John applied for an Invalid Pension in 1891. His reason for the pension was that he was unable to perform any manual labor as a result of injuries to both of his knees, causing a partial loss of both knee caps. John stated that he was working as a policeman in Philadelphia in 1870 and was sent to disperse a group of males involved in a “rock fight”. He was struck in the right knee with a rock, which broke his kneecap. In 1878 he was working and slipped on a patch of ice and broke his other kneecap. By 1891, he was unable to do any manual labor as a result of these injuries. I also learned that about that same time John became estranged from his family, it was possibly due to alcoholism. There was a date of death for John about 15 years later than I had suspected. As a result, I was able to obtain a copy of his death certificate which listed his parents. There was a marriage certificate showing that John Clark had married Catherine Campbell on November 17, 1867 at St. Theresa’s Church in Philadelphia. There was a letter from Catherine, dated 1899, stating that they had twelve children together with six still alive. This conflicted with the information on her 1910 census record which stated she had sixteen children with six still alive.

The last file was for Henry Wood, pension file #846362. Henry served Company C, 95th PA Infantry from September 16, 1861 to November 17th, 1864. He filed for a pension in 1890. The new information that I learned from this pension file was that Henry was a widower prior to marrying my GGGrandmother. He had one child as a result of his previous marriage. He was a widower for 9 years before remarrying. Wood's second marriage produced three additional children. Unbeknownst to me previously was this prior wife and child.

I hope my road trip enlightens researchers to the various types of information that you can obtain from Civil War Pension files. It is certainly worth the effort to research any possible Civil War ancestors and see if anyone applied for a pension as a result of their service. In addition, if you have an ancestor who died in the Civil War and they were not married nor had any children, check to see if their mother applied for a Mother’s Pension.

If you are thinking of making a trip to the National Archives to research a pension file, I would like to suggest a new program that the National Archives, in Washington D.C., has started. They have set up a separate room called the Innovation Hub. In this room, you are able to use their high-resolution scanners to scan your files. In order to use this room, you have to agree to use their protocols, which includes scanning everything in the files, front and back. The National Archives will set you up, show you how to use the scanners and allow you to work individually to complete your scans. When you are finished they will give you a copy of the scanned files, free of charge, by either downloading the files to your personal thumb drive or a CD that they will provide. In addition, which is something I like, they will add the scanned files to their online catalog and make the file available to any researcher that has online access. The advantages of using the Innovation Hub is that you do not have to bring anything with you, no computer, scanner or camera. Just show up with a thumb drive. All of the oversized documents that are in the file fit in their scanners and you leave with a professional scanned copy of your file at no cost. The disadvantage of using the Innovation Hub is that it can be time consuming due to the fact you must scan the entire file. It took me, on average about two hours of scan time per file. The scan time is dependent on the size of the files and some contain more documents than others.

Frank Straup—GSP Board Member
Pennsylvania Featured County - Bedford

Pennsylvania became a state December 12, 1787. There are 67 counties and 2561 municipalities. Bedford County was established on March 9, 1771 from part of Cumberland County. The county seat is Bedford.

Prominent People: Dean Koontz, Joseph Franklin Biddle, Dick Hess, William T. Martin, Jeanne Clemson and Mosheim Feaster

Microfilm copies of county records along with the tools to help research county records are available at the Pennsylvania State Archives - PHMC > Archives > Research Online > County and Municipal Records

Finding Family and Historical Records in Bedford County


II. Bedford County Vital Records: http://www.vitalrec.com/pacounties2.html


IV. Bedford County Historical Society: http://www.bedfordpahistory.com

V. History of Bedford and Somerset Counties, Pennsylvania with genealogical and personal history (1906) (Free eBook): https://archive.org/details/historyofbedford03blac

VI. Bedford County, Pennsylvania 1779 Tax List and 1784 Census: https://books.google.com/books?id=ZRKgtpJwwRkC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Bedford+County+PA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwimz9Pl9fL4AhVinuAKHYwICvUQ6AEILjAB#v=onepage&q=Bedford%20County%20PA&f=false

VII. Indian Eve and Her Descendants: An Indian Story of Bedford County, Pennsylvania (Free eBook): https://archive.org/details/indianeveherdesc00repl/page/n7

VIII. Farquhar's Official Directory of Bedford County, Pennsylvania, 1878-1879; containing a history... (Free eBook): https://archive.org/details/farquharsofficia00unse

IX. County Atlas of Bedford Pennsylvania: from recent and actual surveys and records (1877) (Free eBook): https://archive.org/details/countyatlasofbed00beer

X. Chronology of Pennsylvania Counties: http://buckscountyhistory.com/chronological.htm

XI. Pennsylvania Resource Guides: https://genpa.org/public-%20collections/pennsylvania-%20resources/

Angie Indik, Contributor
GSP NEWSLETTER
Finding your Pennsylvania Ancestors

Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania Newsletter

GSP has a number of volunteer opportunities at home, in the office or on location.
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