

# GSP NEWSLETTER

Finding your Pennsylvania Ancestors



## Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania Newsletter

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### A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

In an effort to expand our capacity to assist members with their research as well as help members help each other, we have recently initiated two new Special Interest Groups (SIG): one that has a focus on Philadelphia Research and one for help with Brick Walls. They add to our existing DNA SIG and our PrePro SIG. Each of those groups have grown into a group of core attendees with others coming to meetings as needed. GSP recognizes that many of our members live at a distance and can't easily attend onsite meetings and events. I have been pleasantly surprised that many who do live at a distance, while in Philadelphia to research their Pennsylvania ancestors, come here to attend any groups luncheons or other GSP events while in the area. In addition, we have expanded one-to-one consultations to include DNA focused consultations while continuing research consultations. Member capacity to reach out for help and preserve information now also includes posting queries in our digital newsletter, posting to and reading our Facebook page, and submitting an application to First Families of Pennsylvania. Now a new opportunity is offered: submission of a brief article on an Irish ancestor and his/her family to be included in a book to be printed and sold by GSP with the title "The Irish Among Us." So whether near or far, let your organization and its members hear from you.

*Carol M. Sheaffer MD, President*



### The GSP online digital 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. You can print the newsletter if you prefer.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### GSP 2019 Events

GSP will host two lunch events 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. Participants are also asked to bring their own lunch, however, GSP will provide coffee, tea, and dessert.

Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania  
2100 Byberry Road, Suite 111  
Philadelphia, PA 19116 -  
267.686.2296 [gsp.deborah@gmail.com](mailto:gsp.deborah@gmail.com)

### REGISTRATION

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

EMAIL to Register: [info@genpa.org](mailto:info@genpa.org)

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## SAVE THE DATES

### **GSP Annual Holiday Open House December 14th**

Details to follow

### **GSP's Annual all Day Ulster Conference**

Sunday March 15, 2020 Brookside Manor

Details to follow in January 2020



## OCTOBER 2019 EVENTS

**THURSDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2019 12 NOON-2 PM NEW SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG)**

### **Brick Wall Busters Special Interest Group**

An opportunity for researchers at all levels, beginners to advanced, to find an elusive ancestor over lunch. Registrants must complete [Brick Wall Busters Form](#) available on the GSP website and bring to the meeting. Researchers present will discuss your problem and search online for answers or information to develop an effective research plan to break down that frustrating brick wall.

Bring your lunch: GSP will provide dessert and coffee  
Registration required - Call office or email [info@genpa.org](mailto:info@genpa.org)  
GSP Members: Free Non-Members: \$5.00

## NOVEMBER 2019 EVENTS

**THURSDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2019 ~ ROOTS LUNCH 12:00 PM-2:00 PM**

### **Bring Your Ancestor to Lunch**

Open Discussion of research topics, frustrations, successes  
Bring Your lunch: GSP will provide dessert and coffee  
Registration required – email: [info@genpa.org](mailto:info@genpa.org) or call the office (267.686.2296).

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### **SATURDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2019 ~ 10:00 AM-11:30 PM**

#### **DNA Special Interest Group**

Group discusses DNA discoveries, questions, data use in research

Registration required – email: [info@genpa.org](mailto:info@genpa.org) or call the office (267.686.2296).

GSP Members Free: Non-Members \$5.00

### **SATURDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2019 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM**

#### **PrePro Special Interest Group**

Registration required - Call office or email [info@genpa.org](mailto:info@genpa.org)

GSP Members: Free Non-Members: \$5.00

### **TUESDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2019 1:00 PM-2:30 PM**

#### **Philadelphia Research Special Interest Group**

Registration required – email: [info@genpa.org](mailto:info@genpa.org) or call the office (267.686.2296).

GSP Members Free: Non-Members \$5.00

### **THURSDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2019 12 NOON-2 PM SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP**

#### **Brick Wall Busters Special Interest Group**

An opportunity for researchers at all levels, beginners to advanced, to find an elusive ancestor over lunch. Registrants must complete [Brick Wall Busters Form](#) available on the GSP website and bring to the meeting. Researchers present will discuss your problem and search online for answers or information to develop an effective research plan to break down that frustrating brick wall.

Bring your lunch: GSP will provide dessert and coffee

Registration required - Call office or email [info@genpa.org](mailto:info@genpa.org)

GSP Members: Free Non-Members: \$5.00

Office hours are Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM

  
**THANK YOU**  

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**TO OUR VOLUNTEERS**

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## PENNSYLVANIA QUERIES

Seeking the names of parents and siblings of Benjamin Franklin **GREER** who was born about 1815 in Columbia County, PA and married Caroline **TOBIAS** about 1845.

Benjamin Franklin Greer was the father of nine children; three sons reached adulthood and had children. He died Nov 1901 in Watsontown, Northumberland County, PA.

Seeking parents and place of birth for John **GLENN**, born 1772 and married 13 May 1798 to Frances **RUDY** at First German Reformed Church, Philadelphia. Settled in Kensington and, after brief involvement in St George Methodist Church, was among the founding members of the Kensington Methodist Church ("Old Brick"). Employed as shipwright, as were his sons except for oldest son, James E. **GLENN**, who became a sloop captain. Died 1 May 1848 and buried in Palmer Cemetery.

Seeking proof that Margaret **HEPPICH**, born circa 1790, was the daughter of Christopher (Christian) **HEPPICH** (Happich, Habig) and Elizabeth Catherine **ETTLEY** (Etele, Etelein, Etly, Ettle). Siblings were baptized at St Peter's Lutheran Church, Middletown, Dauphin County, PA. Margaret **HEPPICH** married John **DENNIS** and resided in Middletown, Dauphin County, PA. Ch: David, Catherine, Phillip, Jacob, Henry and Sarah.

Queries regarding Pennsylvania ancestors may be submitted to [editor@genpa.org](mailto:editor@genpa.org) for inclusion in the Pennsylvania Queries section of The GSP Newsletter. Queries should be brief, specifying an individual or family, origin of same, and PA residence if known with actual or approximate dates for vital information.

Responses to queries will be forwarded to the contributor by the Newsletter Editor.



## GSP ON WWDB AM RADIO

On December 20, 2018, Nancy Nelson and Carol Sheaffer were interviewed on the show Interesting People about GSP and genealogy. We were invited back this year for a second segment, which aired on Thursday October 3, 2019. Lots of things were covered about our organization and family history research topics. Both interviews are available on the WWDB website as podcasts which can be listened to at any time and/or downloaded for later listening. <https://wwdbam.com/shows/interesting-people/podcasts/>

*Carol M. Sheaffer MD, President*

## OCTOBER 31

### PGM Vol. 2. No. 3

#### REGISTER OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH, BURLINGTON, N .J.

Married

— James JUSTICE & Martha NORTON, both of Mount Holly, were married October 31. 1771

Baptized

— 6th Ann, of Bowes & Margaret REED— Bom October 31th 1784 Married by Revd Andrew Fowler October 31st 1797 at Mount Holly William CROMPTON and Elizabeth NEALE

### PGM Vol 3 No. 2

#### INSCRIPTIONS ON THE TOMBSTONES IN THE FREE QUAKERS' GRAVEYARD

Sacred / to the memory of / Benedict TIBBALS / Son of / Benedict & Mary TIBBALS / who was born at / Milford, Connecticut / October 31<sup>st</sup> 1791, / and departed this life / October 14th 1820. / Aged 28 years 11 months / and 17 days.



### PGM Vol 4 No. 3

#### EXTRACTS FROM THE REGISTER OF THE ANCIENT CHAPEL OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, NEAR MILTON, DELAWARE

Annarietta PALMORE, Daughter of Stephen Paramore & Sarah his wife was Born October 31, 1809. Baptised 25. December 1814

#### VARIOUS BIBLE RECORDS

William SUTTON, son of William and Ann SUTTON was Born October 31 Anno Domini 1727 and was Married to Sarah TURNER JANAY ye 6th Anno Domini 1753

### PGM Vol 5 No. 2

#### INSCRIPTIONS FROM THE BURIAL GROUND OF THE THIRD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA

Anna E. WALTERS, Born October 26, 1819, Died October 31, 1901

Hugh BROTHERTON. Bom Sept. 21, 1782, Died October 31, 1852

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**ABSTRACTS OF WILLS OF PHILADELPHIA COUNTY**

CHRISTOPHER MILLER, Philadelphia; dated November 30, 1752; mentioned wife Louisa; witnesses, Joh Casp. RUBEL, minister, at Philadelphia, Henry BASSLER and John Jacob HEINTZ; administration to John BECKER who married Louise, widow of Christopher MILLER, October 31, 1754, the widow having renounced the administration.

MICHEL EMMERT; dated October 31, 1732; mentioned five children of the first wife; mentioned wife and the six children ; youngest son Batthas EMMERT; youngest daughter Anna Barbara; witnesses, Bernhard ROSER, George Peter HILLEGUS and Michel HILLEGUS; proved December 6, 1732

RICHARD ARTHUR, seaman, on board the United States Frigate Philadelphia, in Malta Harbour ; dated December 26, 1801 ; mentioned George HODGE, boatswain of said frigate ; witnesses, John A. BLAIR, ships steward, Matthew BROWNE, carpenter and Henry STEAD; administration to Ann HODGE, October 31, 1804.

**PGM Vol 5 No. 3****ABSTRACTS OF WILLS OF PHILADELPHIA COUNTY**

EDWARD GREEN, Philadelphia; dated October 31, 1818; wife Mary GREEN, she to provide for his children; executor, Lawrence HIPPLE; witnesses, William G. ROBERTS, Archibald CURRY; administration to Mary GREEN, widow, November 10, 1818

FREDERICK DAVID SCHAEFFER, late Pastor of the German Lutheran Congregation in Philadelphia, now in city of Frederick, Maryland; dated June 26, 1835; legacies to son, David Frederick; daughter Mary Ann, wife of Rev C. R. DERNE; son Charles FREDERICK; grandson Charles W. SCHAEFFER; children of deceased son Frederick Christian; children of deceased son Frederick George; daughter in law Elisabeth SCHAEFFER; daughter in law Susanna SCHAEFFER; executors, sons David Frederick and Charles Frederick Schaeffer; witnesses, John BALTZELL, Frederick LOEHR and G. BALTZELL; administration to David F. SCHAEFFER, of Frederick City, Maryland, October 31, 1836

*History.com—Halloween is an annual holiday celebrated each year on October 31, and Halloween 2019 occurs on Thursday, October 31. It originated with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts.*

*Samhain is a pagan religious festival originating from an ancient Celtic spiritual tradition. In modern times, Samhain (a Gaelic word pronounced "sow-win") is usually celebrated from October 31 to November 1 to welcome in the harvest and usher in "the dark half of the year." Celebrants believe that the barriers between the physical world and the spirit world break down during Samhain, allowing more interaction between humans and denizens of the Otherworld.*

<https://www.history.com/topics/halloween/history-of-halloween>

<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/samhain>



## WAS YOUR ANCESTOR ALL THERE?

We genealogists work very hard to find data about our ancestors – for example, birth, marriage, death, military, religious, occupational, land, and probate records. We want locations, ages, relationships, parents and children. We like to fill in the blanks and leave no stone unturned in doing so. Yet, it is the stories that our living non-genealogy relatives are most willing to hear if we tell them and, indeed, are what we likely find of much interest ourselves. We like to put “meat on their bones”. Stories enable us to learn about the lives of our ancestors, the times in which they lived, the successes in their lives, and the problems in their lives and how all of that influenced the way in which they lived.

Many of our ancestors dealt with chronic and acute medical problems, surgical interventions like amputation, impaired vision or hearing to name but a few. Do you have ancestors thus afflicted? Have you found records about such infirmities for your ancestor? Chances are good that the answer is “Yes” or will be once you start looking. There were thousands who served in the Civil War and returned from war having had arms and/or legs amputated. Thousands returned home from that war suffering with a chronic, and eventually fatal disease like tuberculosis. My ancestor WILLIAM MURPHY suffered from the latter and writes in his pension application that he no longer had the physical strength and stamina he had prior to the war and could not return to his usual occupation in order to support his family. He died in 1880 after continuing his post-war decline. Another ancestor, JOHN L. SHEAFFER, was denied a Civil War Pension when he complained of reduced ability to work. He stated he had been left weakened physically because he had to sleep in cold, damp trenches. His tendency to speak less than the truth (pretended he was 14 years old in order to enlist in the Union Army when he was really only 12 years old) and his arrest on a charge of desertion (a charge reduced to being AWOL when he testified at courts martial he “just wanted to see my mother”) probably left those who managed pension applications unsympathetic. In 1899, however, he designed blueprints for a mechanical patient lift showing a woman being moved from bed to chair and back. At that time his mother-in-law was suffering from the effects of a stroke. So, was his “weakness” driving his creativity to help find a way to lift someone when he was no longer strong enough to do that unassisted? Was he telling the truth about being impaired by the war after all? We all have come across many examples of such problems and sources of information about them.

**JACOB GLENN**, of Philadelphia, PA and Trenton, NJ, for example, found himself in Chicago when the Civil War began and enlisted there in the 153rd Regiment, Illinois Volunteers. During the War, he was encamped with his unit in the south when confederate women came into that camp selling home baked fruit pies in order to raise money to support themselves and their children. The men readily bought and ate the pies. They were, alas, laced with arsenic. Many of the men died as a result of ingesting the arsenic, although Jacob survived. Arsenic can cause multiple problems in those who do not die, including skin lesions, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, abnormal heart rhythm, muscle cramps,

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tingling of fingers and toes. Jacob mentions some of these effects in his pension application. Adding to his impaired functioning due to arsenic, he was, after the war, likely exposed to mercury poisoning as well. Jacob went to work in a family owned hat business. The felt used to make hats was cured with mercury and workers often inhaled vapors that led to severe and uncontrollable muscular tremors and twitching limbs called “hatter’s shakes” and other symptoms that included distorted vision and confused speech. The phrase “Mad as a Hatter” developed out of this situation.

Jacob spent most of his adult years declining instead of growing older and wiser and ended up in a soldier’s home in Tagus, Maine, with a diagnosis of arsenic poisoning and a court appointed guardian. His life and that of his wife and daughter were all made difficult by the effects of arsenic and mercury.

**JOHN GLENN (1884-1934)**, unrelated to Jacob Glenn above, was, in 1897, working in Thorn’s Cracker Bakery in Trenton, NJ. On April 27th, The Trenton Evening Times reported a tragic event. John’s arm became caught in a dough mixer and was badly damaged. His hand and forearm were crushed to within a few inches of his shoulder and a major artery was severed, resulting in much blood loss. Dr. McCullough thought initially the arm would need amputation, but then decided to try skin grafting. With tissue donated by his mother, John’s arm healed and he regained use of same. He appears in the World War I Draft records without any mention of a disability.

**FITHIAN STRATTON (1738-1817)** owned a Bible printed in 1791 by Isaac Collins of Trenton NJ. He made use of blank full and half pages in the Bible to journal about his life in Port Elizabeth, Cumberland County, NJ and the Kensington Section of Philadelphia where he lived in the “house of Jacob Pristine near the Methodist Meeting House”. He mentions details of his participation in The French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War, his conversion from Presbyterianism to Methodism and many other topics. His entries regarding his eyesight demonstrate how he dealt with loss of same:

June ye 8th, 1806

“Last November I was 67 years old...and I can read without spectacles although I have not been able to read one line for more than 20 years past...”

August ye 4th, 1807

“my sight has come to me again notwithstanding. I could not see one letter plain without specs for twenty-five years past, till about one year past.”

November ye 7th, 1814

“The Lord is good. I am within 19 days of being 76 years old and have not had one sickness for 10 years past or one hour’s pain.”

November ye 20th 1814

“This day I am 76, my eye sight is so gone, I cannot read but one line.”

January ye 1 1815

“I am still healthy but my sight is gone so bad that I cannot read one line or see when I have

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wrote to read one line. Glory be to God. I am blessed with divine peace---I am in my seventy-seventh year and when I think death is near it gives me great pleasure.”

**MARY ELIZABETH BURNS SHEAFFER (1881-1944)** married in 1898 and began having what turned out to be seven children. Early in the life of the family she was creating, her parents and her brother George all developed tuberculosis. The family story is that she felt, being the only healthy member of her Burns Family, that it was her responsibility to care for those who were ill. She brought her parents and brother George into her home. She housed them in a separate section of the house, used separate linens and dishes for them, all in an effort to give them care but simultaneously prevent her children and husband from contracting tuberculosis. It obviously required lots of work but was well worth the effort. Those who were ill gradually died comfortably; Mary, her husband and children remained healthy. Late in her life, Mary, then a widow, with most of her grown children moving out of the home on their own, often expressed her worry about who would take care of her when the need arose. There was no need to worry...her youngest son and his spouse lived with her until the end.

**FANNY MARTIN (1878-1952)**, daughter of Amos and Catherine Glenn Martin was, according to the family story, born prematurely. She was so small that a pillow was used for her rather than a cradle or crib. Fanny was considered to be fragile. She was handled physically in a careful manner and, as she grew up, demands on her were minimal. Her older brother Amos Martin, Jr never married but devoted his life to looking after Fanny especially after their parents died, Amos Martin, Sr in 1870 and Catherine Glenn Martin in 1918. Amos Martin, Jr took care of his “frail” sister until his death in 2 November 1945. Fanny, it seems, outlived them all!

These are but a few examples of ancestors who had to deal with physical problems during their lives which certainly must have helped shape their lives and the lives of their family and friends. There are undoubtedly many out there for you to find and records to help you do it. These examples were found in Civil War Pension Records, newspapers, one person’s journal, and family stories. There are countless other sources such as census records in 1850-1890 and 1910 US which asked if the person was deaf, census records that identified someone in a school for special needs or living with their family with mention of a disability, wills that provide for the care of a son or daughter with a disability, military records regarding amputations and provision of artificial limbs, some death registers in which entries are made under the “A” section as in “amputated arm of John Jones” rather than in the “J” section under “Jones, John”.

So, what problems did your ancestor and his/her family has to deal with and how did they do that? Share your ancestor’s story with fellow GSP newsletter readers!

*CAROL M. SHEAFFER MD, PRESIDENT*

November 2019

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## THE PENNSYLVANIA GENEALOGICAL MAGAZINE



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## The Political Side of Pre-Civil War Naturalizations

Jefferson M. Moak

**D**URING THE PAST DECADE, staff and volunteers at the Philadelphia City Archives have been slowly indexing all of the declarations of intention and petitions for citizenship in the various city and county courts. Eventually, this comprehensive index will virtually replace the old W.P.A. index, which was republished as “Philadelphia Naturalization Records” in 1982.<sup>1</sup>

Naturalization is, of course, the process by which immigrants to the United States may gain full citizenship rights. In the nineteenth century, however, there were no “illegal aliens,” green cards or restrictions by aliens to hold jobs, own land, marry, etc. Many aliens waited years and decades before beginning the process, if they ever became citizens at all. There is documentary proof that some aliens resided in this country for 25 years or longer before filing for citizenship. Samuel Jenkins, a native of Wales, arrived through the port of Philadelphia in 1801 and received his citizenship in 1870.<sup>2</sup> Jenkins is only one of many immigrants who postponed a final decision on receiving full United States citizenship benefits.

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<sup>1</sup> P. William Filby, ed., *Philadelphia Naturalization Records: An Index to Records of Aliens' Declarations of Intention and/or Oaths of Allegiance, 1789–1880, in United States Circuit Court, United States District Court, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, Quarter Sessions Court, Court of Common Pleas, Philadelphia* (Detroit: Gale Research Company. ca. 1982). The original W.P.A. volumes were completed about 1940 under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission. For a related article about the use of this index, see Jefferson M. Moak, “The W.P.A. Index of Naturalizations: An Explanation,” *Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine* 36, no. 2 (1989), 109–16.

<sup>2</sup> Philadelphia County District Court, petition no. J–2 of 1870 (9/19/1870). Mr. Jenkins petitioned as a “minor.”

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*The Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine*

The only major restriction was that aliens could not partake in the political process, either by voting or holding elective office. As the franchise was opened and more offices were elected directly by the voters, rather than by the legislators, the naturalization process became more politicized. The tie between naturalization and politics also accounted for the absence of female participation in the naturalization process, since women were not accorded the right to vote until the early twentieth century. Indeed, the preprinted forms used by all courts in Pennsylvania bore the pronoun "he."

As a direct result of the connection between naturalization and the political process, there were definite peaks and valleys in the number of petitions filed. More naturalization petitions were filed in the various courts during a presidential election year than the off-years. As the following table shows, petitions peaked on a four-year cycle with a secondary peak on the years in which the federal House and Senate elections were held. This table lists numerically the petitions filed in all city and county courts between 1820 and 1863.<sup>3</sup>

1820	90	1831	239	1842	614	1853	1,423
1821	44	1832	853	1843	445	1854	2,515
1822	62	1833	279	1844	1,721	1855	2,470
1823	268	1834	1,332	1845	591	1856	7,377
1824	112	1835	364	1846	1,340	1857	1,119
1825	264	1836	1,398	1847	843	1858	4,107
1826	252	1837	559	1848	1,905	1859	1,965
1827	313	1838	1,458	1849	302	1860	8,736
1828	818	1839	626	1850	809	1861	425
1829	242	1840	2,577	1851	1,790	1862	1,236
1830	477	1841	352	1852	3,245	1863	1,251

A total of 59,208 petitions were filed in the courts during this period. A drop of the numbers occurred during the Civil War. Although a final count of the naturalizations after the war has not been made, preliminary estimates indicate that the same pattern continued as in the pre-war years.

<sup>3</sup> This table is a count of the total petitions filed in the Common Pleas Court (1793–1863), Philadelphia County District Court (1812–1863), Quarter Sessions Court (1800–1863), Mayor's Court (1794–1838), Criminal Sessions Court (1838–1840), General Sessions Court (1840–1843) and Recorder's Court (1836–1838). The list does not include those petitions filed in the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania or either of the federal courts located in Philadelphia.

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## *The Political Side of Pre-Civil War Naturalizations*

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The process for naturalization generally consists of two steps: the declaration of one's intention to renounce allegiance to one's native country and monarch, and the petition to have final citizenship granted. The first step may be taken anytime after reaching United States soil—the applicant must wait five years before achieving citizenship. In addition, a two year waiting period has to occur between the two steps. (Prior to 1828, this was a three-year period.)

The applicant was accompanied by a person who swore that he was currently a citizen of the United States, that he knew and was "well acquainted" with the petitioner and that "to his knowledge he (the petitioner) has resided in the United States five years, and one year last past in the State of Pennsylvania, immediately preceding his application to be a Citizen; that during the said period he has behaved as a man of good moral Character attached to the principals of our constitution, and well disposed to the good order and happiness of the same." This person is often referred as the voucher for the applicant.

The rise of political parties during the nineteenth century mirrored the interest in naturalization during major election years. It was not unusual for the parties to have naturalization committees organized to assist immigrants and aliens with the process. In many cases, members of these committees would accompany the applicant to the courthouse to vouch for them, whether they were familiar with the petitioner or not. Indeed, after the war, the committees had small forms which they gave to the applicant asking the court to naturalize them.

Unlike modern times, vote registration procedures during the nineteenth century were non-existent. Today, the voting lists are closed approximately one month before the primary or general election. This does not appear to be the case during most of the nineteenth century. Of the 7377 petitioners in 1856, only 50 received their citizenship after the presidential election on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November, many of whom were naturalized during the week immediately preceding the election.

Indeed, with one major exception, one will find that most naturalizations in each year will occur during the months of September and October generally during the election campaign. This one exception is 1860. Over 4,400 petitions were granted during April and May and another 3,800 in September and October. The political crisis leading to the Civil War definitely had an effect upon the political scene, enfranchisement, and naturalizations.

The 1840 election between William Henry Harrison and Martin Van Buren saw some of the worse cases of naturalization abuse in the city's

history. Historians remember this election as one of the most hard-fought campaigns prior to the Civil War. Indeed, Harrison won the City of Philadelphia by a vote of 7,643 to 4,783 but lost the County of Philadelphia by a margin of 10,200 to 13,293. Overall, Van Buren won the combined City and County of Philadelphia vote by less than 250 votes: 18,076—17,843 in the election held on 30 October 1840.<sup>4</sup>

On 19 October 1840, eleven days before the election, the justices of the General Sessions Court were asked to rule upon the legitimacy of six naturalizations filed in that court. What they saw disturbed them.<sup>5</sup>

In order to comply with the two-year waiting period, approximately 75 declarations had been backdated and carefully inserted in the Quarter Sessions Court declaration volume for 1838 in order to appear as though the applicant had indeed waited the full two years. Inspection of the volumes quickly uncovered this fraud. Not only was it clear that the additional pages had been pasted, but the form itself was printed on a different type and size of paper from that of the original volume.<sup>6</sup>

The Court ruled on 21 October 1840 “that hereafter in all applications for citizenship no certificate of naturalization shall be granted, until the voucher has been specially examined by one of the Judges and the application has been approved and signed by the Judge.” On the same day, the Grand Jury of the General Sessions Court requested all of the naturalizations papers filed in August, September, and October of 1840 and the declaration of intention volumes to compare them. The Court ordered the clerks of the Quarter Sessions and General Sessions Courts to turn over all the naturalization papers and dockets of these courts and of the old Mayor’s Court.<sup>7</sup>

Three days later, upon review of the papers, the Court voided the naturalizations of those applicants whose declarations had been backdated.<sup>8</sup>

The Quarter Sessions Court declaration volume for 1838 is the only volume that still contains the voided declarations. There is an indication that the clerks of the courts may have placed backdated declarations in other volumes. Rody McManus petitioned the General Sessions Court on 29 September 1840 stating that “he declared on oath before the

<sup>4</sup> Philadelphia County Commissioners, Election Returns, 1820–1858. Philadelphia City Archives. Record Series 1.18.

<sup>5</sup> Philadelphia. Quarter Sessions Court. Minutes. 19 October 1840.

<sup>6</sup> Philadelphia. Quarter Sessions Court. Declarations of Intention, volume Q.S.–16: 339.

<sup>7</sup> Philadelphia. Quarter Sessions Court. Minutes. 21 October 1840.

<sup>8</sup> Philadelphia. Quarter Sessions Court. Minutes. 24 October 1840.

Clerk of the Mayor's Court Alien Docket page 35 on the 14th day of July A D. 1835. . . ." A check of the Mayor's Court declaration docket shows no Rody McManus on this page, or indeed even in the volume at all. However, a close inspection of the pages reveals indications that there may have been a supplemental page inserted between pages 34 and 35 which was later removed. It is possible that Rody McManus' declaration may have been one of these backdated declarations, especially as no declaration paper accompanied the petition.<sup>9</sup>

There were potentially many other abuses of the system, including false ages in order to qualify for citizenship as a minor. This would eliminate the need for a declaration of intention and the two-year waiting period required between the declaration and petition. Another ploy was the "lost" declaration. The petitioner would claim that he lost his declaration of intention. Upon searching the records, the clerk would find a declaration filed in the same name. The petitioner would then use this declaration as his own, even though he knew that it was false. One will find a number of instances in the naturalization records in which a person appeared to have been granted citizenship twice based upon the same declaration of intention. Upon searching the actual records, one finds the original declaration filed with the true declarant and either a duplicate declaration or a statement listing the volume and page in which the original declaration was filed attached to the pretender's petition.

Similar to this action is the creation of a declaration with the wrong first name or date. One instance is that of John Corr who petitioned for citizenship in the Philadelphia County District Court on 28 September 1839 using a declaration allegedly dated 31 May 1837 in the Court of Common Pleas.<sup>10</sup> Upon checking the Common Pleas declaration dockets, one finds that there was a John Corr who declared not on 31 May 1837 but 31 May 1839. The true John Corr eventually received his citizenship in 1845 in the Quarter Sessions Court.<sup>11</sup> There is also a petition on 8 October 1840 in the District Court for James Coyle, who declared upon 10 October 1836 in the Common Pleas Court.<sup>12</sup> A duplicate declaration was given to James Coyle in 1840 to attach to his petition. Upon

<sup>9</sup> Philadelphia. General (Quarter) Sessions Court. Petition #Mc-176 of 1840.

<sup>10</sup> Philadelphia County District Court. Petition #C-3 of 1839 (9/28/1839).

<sup>11</sup> Philadelphia. Quarter Sessions Court. Petition #C-12 of 1845 (10/12/1845); Philadelphia. Common Pleas Court. Declarations of Intention Volume C-7: 566.

<sup>12</sup> Philadelphia County District Court. Petition #C-12 of 1840 (10/8/1840).

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researching the declaration docket again, one finds that John Coyle, not James Coyle, declared his intention in 1836. John Coyle was already a citizen by 1840, having successfully petitioned the Quarter Sessions Court in 1839.<sup>13</sup>

There are probably many more examples of these types of abuses in the court records which have not yet been catalogued.

Occasionally the abusers of the procedures were caught and prosecuted. There are three cases in the Quarter Sessions Court in 1849, two against Francis McKenna and one against Timothy Morley, for creating false naturalization certificates and “unlawfully and wickedly contriving . . . an alien and not entitled to vote at any election in the said commonwealth procure and get the said . . . unlawfully and fraudulently to vote. . . .” McKenna issued false certificates (with false dates of declaration and petitions) for a Michael Quigley and Francis Quigley; Morley issued his certificate to Bartholomew Thomas.<sup>14</sup>

As the table on page 210 shows, over 2,500 legitimate petitions for naturalization were filed in the Common Pleas Court, [County] District Court, Quarter Sessions Court and General Sessions Court during 1840. Not until 1852, another presidential election year, would this yearly figure be surpassed.

Naturalizations were on the increase during the 1850s owing to the increase of Irish immigrants and the Native American sentiment that arose as a backlash. The American Party, also known as the Native American or “Know Nothing” Party, traced its origins to a meeting in Germantown in 1837. Its principal goals included repealing the existing Naturalization Law of 1790, extending the period of residency to 21 years before naturalization, and barring all foreign-born citizens from holding any position of public trust.

As one member of the party stated, “The rapid influx of foreigners into the country, and the facility with which their votes could be secured by political wire-pullers, had become the subject of most serious consideration, and of no little alarm. It was well known that the Naturalization Laws, even as they then existed, were a mere dead letter, and that men were yearly brought to the polls, and their votes received, who had not been sufficiently long in the country to have lost the odour of the steer-

<sup>13</sup> Philadelphia. Quarter Sessions Court. Petition #C-15 of 1839 (9/18/1839); Philadelphia. Common Pleas Court. Declarations of Intention. Volume C-7: 144.

<sup>14</sup> Philadelphia. Quarter Sessions Court. February Sessions 1849 #265 (Commonwealth vs. Timothy Morley); February Sessions 1849 #273 (Commonwealth vs. Francis McKenna); April Sessions 1849 #160 (Commonwealth vs. Francis McKenna).



age of the ships that brought them across the Atlantic.”<sup>15</sup> The writer continued by complaining of the participation of the foreigners in the American election process, both as voters and as office-holders. It was these nativist and anti-Catholic sentiments that sparked some of the riots in Kensington and South Philadelphia during the early 1840s.

The American Party emerged as a dominant force in local and national politics in 1854 when its candidate for mayor, Robert T. Conrad, captured 20 of 24 wards of the newly consolidated City and County of Philadelphia. (Two of the four wards that he lost, the 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, each went to Richard Vaux by only eleven votes each. Only the 17<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> Wards, which comprised much of Kensington, gave overwhelming support to Vaux.)<sup>16</sup>

As one can see by the chart on page 210, the reaction to this anti-immigrant vote was immediate in the rise of the number of petitions filed for naturalization during the remainder of 1854 and for the next two years. Before 5 June 1854, only 627 petitions had been filed in the various courts. Almost 1,900 petitions were filed during the remainder of the year, a year marked by virtually no summer lull, as is often the case. The pace did not slacken during 1855, an off-election year.

At the height of the movement, in the 1856 election, James Buchanan won the city and state over his competitors, Millard Fillmore and John C. Fremont. The American Party split during the year over the slavery issue, and thus there were two American parties that year: the North American and South American. Fillmore was supported by the Whigs, members of the South American Party and renegades from the North American Party. John C. Fremont benefitted from a coalition between the Republicans and North American Party. Buchanan won the state over the combined efforts of his competitors. He polled 230,500 votes statewide to Fremont's 147,447 and Fillmore's 82,229. In the City of Philadelphia, Buchanan received 38,222 votes to Fillmore's 24,084 and Fremont's 7,893.<sup>17</sup>

The overwhelming increase of naturalization requests in 1856 over previous years reflected the new political strength of the Irish immi-

<sup>15</sup> John Hancock Lee, *The Origin and Progress of the American Party in Politics: Embracing a Complete History of the Philadelphia Riots in May and July, 1844, With a Full Description of the Great American Procession of July Fourth, And a Refutation of the Arguments Founded on the Charges of Religious Proscription and Secret Combinations.* (Philadelphia: Elliott & Gihon, 1855) 13–14.

<sup>16</sup> Philadelphia. County Commissioners. *Election Returns. 1820–1858.*

<sup>17</sup> Philadelphia. County Commissioners. *Election Returns. 1820–1858.*

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as Ireland. If all of the petitioners voted that year, then the new citizens cast over 10% of the votes in the City of Philadelphia. (A total of 70,199 votes were recorded.)

A man named Philip Rump, who was listed in the city directories as an employee of the U.S. Custom House, a highly politicized office, appeared as the voucher for 32 applicants between 6 October and 25 October 1856. Twenty-two of the 32 petitions for whom he was the voucher have disappeared from the files—it is conceivable that the court voided the naturalizations later but did not note these actions in the index. James Callahan, whose petition remains, wrote to the Common Pleas Court on 22 September 1880 stating:

James Callahan being duly sworn according to law doth depose and say that he was naturalized in the District Court for the County of Philada. In the year 1856 that his voucher was a man named Rump at that time a waiter in the Girard House, that the certificate of said naturalization has since been lost and is not now in possession of said deponent he therefore prays that the prothonotary issue a new certificate.<sup>18</sup>

Note that Rump was remembered by Callahan as a waiter at the Girard House and not as a Custom employee. One assumes that Callahan's and Rump's acquaintance was minimal and not as extensive as presumed on the petition.

The staff at the Philadelphia City Archives has also noted numerous cases throughout the early nineteenth century in which two petitioners would vouch for each other. Since the voucher had to be a citizen of the United States, both petitions were technically fraudulent, even if they were not treated as such. Although the Quarter Sessions Court attempted to put a stop to this practice in 1840, it survived into the post-Civil War period.

Although the information found on most of the naturalization declarations and petitions is generally accurate, genealogists should be aware that abuses of the system were common during this period. One must be careful in assessing the information found in these records.

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<sup>18</sup> Philadelphia County District Court. Petition C-391 of 1856 (13 October 1856).

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*Editor's Note.* Readers will also be interested in the book recently compiled by Jefferson M. Moak and published by the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania: *Military Petitions for Naturalization Filed in the Philadelphia [County] District Court, 1862-1865*. For ordering information, see the GSP ad on page 327.

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## GSP INVITES YOU TO SHARE YOUR IRISH OR SCOTS-IRISH ANCESTORS

Many GSP members have Irish or Scots-Irish ancestors. Many of you join together in March each year for the all-day GSP event with speakers from the Ulster Historical Foundation to learn about researching such ancestors.

We will meet again on 15 March 2020 and we would like to celebrate by publishing and selling a book preserving and honoring the lives of your ancestors, entitled *The Irish Among Us*.

Write and send an article about your Irish or Scots-Irish ancestors for inclusion in the book. Send with it your written permission to print the article in the book.

Carol M. Sheaffer

[editor@genpa.org](mailto:editor@genpa.org)



### Share your Research or Family History Story



Briefly share amusing, touching, unusual, interesting or tragic stories you have unearthed in your family research -Submit your story in plain text to [editor@genpa.org](mailto:editor@genpa.org)

### Q&A

Do you have questions about Pennsylvania genealogy? We have answers! For example, we can answer questions such as “**Where\How** can I find marriage license records?” or “**When** did Pennsylvania start recording birth certificates?” We’ll feature the question and answer in the newsletter. Submit your questions (not family specific research) to: [editor@genpa.org](mailto:editor@genpa.org)

## PENNSYLVANIA FEATURED COUNTY - CARBON COUNTY

Pennsylvania became a state December 12, 1787. There are 67 counties and 2561 municipalities. Carbon County was established on 13 March 1843 from a parts of Northampton and Monroe Counties. The county seat is Jim Thorpe (formally Mauch Chunk).

**Prominent People:** Asa Packer, Kerry Gertz, Dick Marcinko, Keith McCall, Josphe Seligman, Denny Seiwel, Edward Kalbfus, Betty Brey and Mike Holovak

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 (under Genealogy)

### Finding Family and Historical Records in Carbon County

I. Recorder of Deeds in Carbon County:

<http://www.carboncounty.com/index.php/2-uncategorised/40-recorder-of-deeds>

II. Register of Wills in Carbon County: <https://www.carboncourts.com/REGWILL.HTM>

III. Family Search Wiki on Carbon County:

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Carbon\\_County,\\_Pennsylvania\\_Genealogy](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Carbon_County,_Pennsylvania_Genealogy)

IV. Mauch Chunk Historical Society in Jim Thorpe: <https://www.facebook.com/mauchchunkhistory/>

V. *History of Carbon County, Pennsylvania* by Frederick Charles Brenckman (free eBook):

<https://archive.org/details/historyofcarbonc00bre>

VI. *History, Government and Geography of Carbon County, Pennsylvania* by A.E. Wagner

(free eBook): <https://archive.org/details/cu31924028852436>

VII. *A History of the Sabbath School of the First Presbyterian Church, Summit Hill, Carbon County, Pennsylvania* by various authors: <https://archive.org/details/historyofsabbath00unse>

VIII. Chronology of Pennsylvania Counties: <http://buckscountyhistory.com/chronological.htm>

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

Angie Indik, 2nd Vice President and Copy Editor

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## BRICK WALL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

Our exciting new SIG Group was officially launched in September. The format requires those who want brick wall help to complete a simple, [one page form](#) which is available on our website and let us know you are coming to the meeting by calling the office or sending an email to [info@genps.org](mailto:info@genps.org). Those who come bring their laptops and go to work researching the internet to help break through the brick wall or develop a research plan for the researcher which just might provide answers. Our first official meeting was attended by a researcher from Missouri who came to Philadelphia to do research and came to GSP to use our library on the day of the meeting. Lots were discussed by the seven brick wall busters attending. Hopefully, it was helpful. In a meeting the previous week, actually a meeting of The Philadelphia Research SIG, 2 women from Monmouth County, NJ showed up and we did a practice run on brick walls they have been struggling with. Connecting with online sources of historic maps of Philadelphia helped locate properties their ancestors owned and possibly, the previously unknown parents of one individual.

The Brick Wall Buster SIG Group will meet again on Thursday October 24, 2019, 12 Noon-2 PM  
Do come and see what he Brick Wall Busters can do for you !

Carol M. Sheaffer



## PHILADELPHIA RESEARCH SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

Meeting monthly, this group continues to explore and discuss research facilities and sources in and around Philadelphia. As you will note, in the Brick Wall Busters report, 2 women from Monmouth County, NJ came to the September meeting. At the meeting, this group focused on sources in the region that would help them identify properties owned by their ancestors. Historic maps naming property owners and other historic maps without such names are available online. Do explore Mapping West Philadelphia 1777 and The Greater Philadelphia Geo History Network by simply googling them. Both are wonderful sources.

Carol Sheaffer

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

E-mail at [info@genpa.org](mailto:info@genpa.org) or [editor@genpa.org](mailto:editor@genpa.org) or call the office 267-686-2296

**Newsletter:** Joseph Roby, Angie Indik-Copy Editors, Nancy Janyszeski, Carol M. Sheaffer

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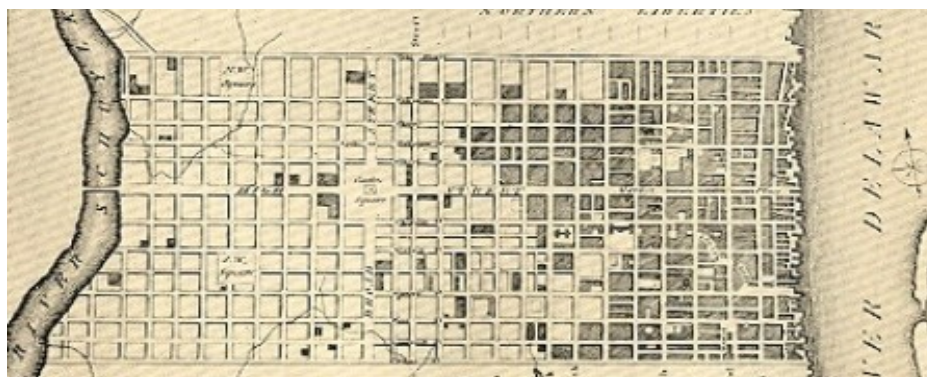
GSP does not offer phone consultations. We require that all research requests be in writing. Request Form – [PDF Document](#)

Check the Research page on our website for additional information. <https://genpa.org/research/>

E-mail research requests to [info@genpa.org](mailto:info@genpa.org)

The GSP **Pennsylvania Resource Guides** can help answer where to find great Pennsylvania research sources.

<https://genpa.org/public-collections/pennsylvania-resources/>



The Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania  
2100 Byberry Road—Suite 111  
Philadelphia PA 19116 267.686.2296  
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