

NORTH HILLS GENEALOGISTS



North Hills Genealogists
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10 Issues - August - June

Liz Reilly

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy 2004! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season. It seems like just last year that we were celebrating the millenium. Time sure does fly.

2003 was a busy year for genealogy in Pittsburgh, with the NGS Conference in the States being held here in May. I hope you were able to attend. Again, the members of NHG stepped up to the plate and volunteered to help at this conference.

This coming year NHG has some great programs planned. On April 17, 2004 WPGS will have it's annual Spring Conference. This year's speaker will be John Colletta. If you haven't heard him speak, you have really missed an informative and entertaining speaker. Mark this date on your calendar now. Also, this year WPGS will be celebrating its 30th Anniversary. Plans are in the works for a special event to celebrate this anniversary. Watch for more information later.

I really appreciated all the wonderful help from the members of NHG in submitting articles and information for the newsletter. I hope you will continue again this year. Remember, this is

YOUR newsletter.

Have you made any genealogy-related resolutions for 2004? There is one I certainly hope you have made and that is to immediately make a back-up copy of all your family files. I'm not talking about a hard copy printout. I'm talking about backing up your files on disk or CD. Fortunately, I had done this and when I had to reformat my harddrive (which erased my family files) I was able to use my backup copies to restore them. Don't wait until it is too late. Do it now!

For those of you with German ancestors, you won't want to miss the February program. See the write-up later in the newsletter.

I hope you all had a chance to get together with family over the holidays and maybe fill in some of those "blanks" in your information. Family gatherings are a great time to do this. Are you planning a family reunion this year? We had ours this past August. Unfortunately, two months later we lost one of our cousins, so we were really glad that we had had a chance to spend a day with him before he passed on. We've already picked a date for this year's reunion.

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WHERE GENEALOGISTS MEET

(all are free and open to the public unless noted)

Tuesday, February 3, 2004 - 7:00 pm - NHG Board Meeting - UPMC Passavant Hospital cafeteria. Everyone welcome.

Tuesday, February 17, 2004 - 7:00 pm - Regular NHG Meeting - "Coming From The Reich" - Ruth Kittner (see writeup)

Other Meetings

Monday, January 26, 2004 - 7:00 pm - Greater Pittsburgh Civil War Round Table - "Rebels from West Point" - Gerard A. Patterson (see article) - The Babcock, Babcock Boulevard.

Saturday, February 7, 2004 - 12:00 pm - 3:30 pm - Western Reserve Historical Society, 10825 East Blvd., Cleveland, OH. Beginner's Genealogy Class: Exploring Family History. Contact Roger Ellsworth (216) 283-6451, wrhsgen@juno.com for more information (fee applies)

Saturday, February 14, 2004 - WPGS Monthly Meeting - 11:00 am - Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. Tour of their newest exhibit "The American Presidency". NOTE: This meeting is restricted to WPGS members. Fee applies. Contact Marilyn Holt at Carnegie Library to register before February 6. 412-622-3154

Monday, February 23, 2004 - Greater Pittsburgh Civil War Round Table - "The Making of Cold Mountain" - Michael Kraus.

COMPLETE GENEALOGY JUST CAN'T BE -- THERE IS ALWAYS MORE.

President's Letter (continued)

NHG had our annual Christmas Social on Saturday, December 6, 2003 at the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. We had a private tour of their Civil War exhibit "Eye of the Storm" and a private introduction to the library. This was followed by lunch at the Reymer's Old Fashioned Deli on the first floor of the History Center. Even a big snowfall the night before did not stop the NHG members from attending the Social.

We look forward to seeing all of you at the 2004 meetings of NHG. Invite your friends to come.

NHG February 17, 2004 Meeting

Coming From the Reich

Ruth Kittner

A discussion of where the German immigrants to Pittsburgh (and vicinity) came from in the 18th and first half of the 19th centuries. What and where was das Heiliges Romisches Reich? What pushed immigrants out and what pulled immigrants to Pittsburgh? Special focus will be on the foundation of the Voegtly Evangelical Church in Old Allegheny and how this congregation interacted with other German-speaking congregations in southwestern Pennsylvania, and the re-discovering and reinternment of the occupants of the Voegtly Cemetery.

Ruth Kittner is currently working on her PhD in German history at CMU. Relevant papers: Butchers, Bakers and Shoemakers: German-speaking immigrants at the Three Rivers, 1820-1840 (May 2002)

GREATER PITTSBURGH CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE - JANUARY 26, 2004

Gerard A. Patterson will discuss his book "Rebels From West Point", the story of the 305 graduates of the United State Military Academy who fought for the Confederacy.

In his book, Patterson makes the case that this small body of men was, probably, most responsible for turning the Civil War into the nation's costliest conflict, for without their leadership the South could not have fielded the formidable armies that it did. Though these officers had virtually nothing to do with starting the war, serving the Confederacy cost them their careers, and in 72 cases, their lives.

"Rebels From West Point" was reissued last year for the bicentennial of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point and is now both a History Book Club and Military Book Club selection.

REQUEST FROM THE EDITOR

A member of NHG borrowed my copy of the NGS Conference in the States syllabus. I would appreciate having it returned at her convenience. Thank you.

MICROFILM/MICROFICHE READER FOR SALE

Dan Poland, NHG member, has a microfilm/microfiche reader he would like to sell.

The following is a description of the equipment. If you are interested, please contact Dan directly at 412-367-2279. (Note: NHG has no financial interest in this sale.)

Micron 770 microfilm/microfiche reader, equipped with image rotation, dual lens housing, a manual roll film carrier capable of handling microfiche, 16 mm and 35 mm open spool roll film. Original cost in 1997 - \$604. Will sell for

\$300 or make offer.

See picture of machine on last page.

POPULAR BABY NAMES FROM THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

The Social Security Administration published a brief study in 1998 on the distribution of given names of Social Security number holders. At their site you can search for a specific name in tables as listed below.

Top 5 Names by State

Select sex of baby - male/female

Select year of birth

Go to table

Top 10 names by year of birth for years 1880-1997 based on a 1% sample.

1880-1919

1920-1959

1960-1997

Top 1000 names by decade based on a 5% sample. Names are limited to births in the U. S. A. Covers 1900's - 1990's.

Go to the following website to access this information:

<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/OACT/babynames>

SYMPATHY

We want to extend our sympathy to the family of Sr. Mary Ann Busovicki, NHG member. Sr. Mary Ann died on Tuesday, January 13. She has been ill for several years and hasn't been able to attend many meetings lately. She really loved doing her family genealogy and a friend told me yesterday that one thing she had said was she hoped she lived long enough to finish it. Please keep her family in your thoughts.

CENSUS CONCENSUS

Family Tree Magazine E-Mail Update - January 8, 2004

Anyone researching US ancestry knows that census records will aid genealogical efforts. But the same researchers tend to forget about this basic resource when faced with research outside the United States. Don't forget that many other countries had censuses too, such as:

Canada - The first official Canadian census was taken in 1871. Censuses were repeated every 10 years until 1971 and every five years thereafter. At present, you can access the 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901 censuses. Prior to 1871 search on the province level - provinces sometimes took it upon themselves to count their citizens.

England - The first census of genealogical value took place in 1841. One of the peculiarities of that census is the rounding down of ages, so a person who was actually 43 years old would have been listed as 40. Later census takers did not do this.

France - The earliest French census was taken in 1771. Censuses from 1795 to 1816 are statistical and don't include names. From 1836 to 1936 France took a census every five years, except 1871 (taken in 1872) and 1916 (which was skipped entirely). Unfortunately, France's census records haven't been microfilmed or indexed so they're not easily searched. Focus on church and civil records instead.

(Excerpted from The Genealogist's Companion by Rhonda McClure [Betterway Books])

QUERIES

The North Hills Genealogists Newsletter accepts queries from both members and non-members. They are published free of charge. We publish them as space permits. Send them to the address on the front of the newsletter.

NEW YEAR, OLD SCAM

The following article is from Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter and is copyright 2004 by Richard W. Eastman. It is published here with the permission of the author.

One of the top stories in 2003 in this newsletter was the arrest of Elias Abodeely, a 23 year old in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, who ran a string of pseudo genealogy sites. His arrest didn't seem to deter him. 2004 started off with a rash of the same advertising.

For those who missed it, let's briefly recap this scam. The sites involved included GenSeeker.com, GenSeekers.com, genealogyfinders.net, genlocator.com, genealogy-express.com and probably many others. Abodeely would send out spam mail from one site, then collect money until the complaints mounted, and his site eventually would be shut down by the hosting service. A week or two later he would appear with a new name and a new site on a different hosting service conducting essentially the same business. To access his sites, the hapless buyer paid \$40 to \$60 (the exact amount varied from time to time). None of these sites contained any genealogy information; they simply had pointers to free sites where information could be found. In other words, the buyer paid \$40 to \$60 to access something that was already available free of charge.

Abodeely eventually ran into lots of legal difficulties. On August 1, 2003, he was arrested in Cedar Rapids, Iowa on felony charges of first degree theft, money laundering and ongoing criminal activity. He was released later that day, and a court appearance on those charges still has not yet been scheduled.

His arrest did not slow Abodeely very much. A month later he appeared selling "self-renewing" genealogy CD-ROM disks under the name GenealogyTechs.com. That site actually was registered to Andrew Abodeely. I obtained one of
(continued on next page)

these "self-renewing" genealogy CD-ROM disks and wrote about it in detail in the September 29, 2003 newsletter. GenealogyTechs.com was shut down the day after my article was published.

Things have been quiet for the past three months, but on January 2, 2004, a number of newsletter readers reported receiving some fishy-looking spam mail messages. In fact, the messages appear to be word-for-word the same as the old ads for "self-renewing" genealogy CD-ROM disks sent earlier from GenealogyTechs.com - except that the new ads are coming from GenealogyTechs.net. That's right, the only difference is the previously shut down dot-COM is now replaced by a newly-registered dot-NET.

A quick check of the WHOIS information shows that GenealogyTechs.net is registered to the same address as GenealogyTechs.com (1013 Agate Street, Suite B, San Diego, CA 92109), the business address of Andrew Abodeely. This is also the same address that ships the worthless "self-renewing genealogy CD-ROM disks.

In short, the Abodeelys seem to have reappeared after a three month hiatus. Elias Abodeely's earlier arrest for felonies doesn't seem to have fazed either of the Abodeelys at all. At the time these words are being written, <http://www.genealogytechs.net> is up and running and looks almost identical to the previously shut down <http://www.genealogytechs.com>.

It is also interesting to note that the new site is like the old one in several respects, especially in that it cannot handle credit cards, instead the buyer is suckered into paying by an "e-check" that extracts money directly from the buyer's checking account with no credit card involved. Beware! This is one method by which the earlier sites allegedly extracted money time and again from a buyer's checking accounts! Several

buyers thought they paid once, but after examining their end-of-month checking account statements, found that they had been charged time and again without permission. That is one of the actions that led to Elias Abodeely's arrest.

Why would a company not offer payment by credit card? That is extremely rare in the online world. The answer is simple: the owner's credit rating is so poor that he cannot obtain the merchant account required to be able to accept credit cards. In this case, he cannot even obtain a PayPal account, which is easy for most people to obtain. No credit card service will give a merchant account to someone awaiting trial on charges of money laundering by using credit cards! Without access to a credit card merchant account, the Web site only is forced to resort to online checks, a risky method for any buyer considering an online purchase.

Send a check to a con artist? You lose.

If you receive a spam mail from GenealogyTechs.net or any similar-sounding scam, please forward it to the Cedar Rapids, Iowa Police Department's Financial Crimes Division at k.washburn@cedar-rapids.org. I suspect they have an interest in the "business activities" of this person, who is awaiting a court appearance after being arrested by that department. Please feel free to enclose a copy of this article.

Ed. Note: Let's hope the courts finally put an end to this young man's scams. In the meantime, be very careful when purchasing any genealogy-related materials over the Internet. Deal only with well-known groups/companies. I do not recall every seeing this "company" advertise in any genealogy publication, only on the Internet. They realize how many people doing genealogy use the Internet. Also, I'm sure the hardcopy publications are onto them by now.



(Note: all start with <http://www>, unless otherwise noted)

Do you have a favorite website? Is there a specific place you would like to find a website for? If so, please send a note to the Editor at the address on the front or by e-mail at DJBooth@worldnet.att.net.

Albumen Photographs: History, Science and
Preservation
stanford.edu

(put the word Albumen in the search box)

American Civil War Portal
americancivilwar.info

Ancestor Genealogy Photo Archive
ancestorarchive.com

Cemetery Transcription Library
interment.net

City Directories of the United States of America
uscitydirectories.com

Eye of the Storm
musarium.com/eyeofthestorm/main/htm

Family OldPhotos.com
familyoldphotos.com

Tips for Preserving Your Photographs and
Documents
maine.com/photos/tip.htm

BOGUS GENEALOGIES ONLINE

The following article is from Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter and is copyright 2004 by Richard W. Eastman. It is re-published here with the permission of the author.

I have written a number of times about the problems of accuracy in various online databases. This "problem" is not limited to any one database; it seems common in all of the Web sites that contain genealogy information contributed by the general public.

The problem is that not everyone who contributes information is a conscientious genealogist. Not everyone checks for accuracy, and not everyone checks for logical data. In fact, not everyone cares. On almost any online genealogy database that contains information contributed from the general public you can find claimed births of white children in Massachusetts or Virginia in the 1500s or in Kansas in the 1700s. Those are only the more obvious errors, the ones that really "jump out" at you. Sadly, there are thousands more that look as if they are plausible but yet are not backed up by source citations or any facts.

In recent months I am told that the quantity of such junk has actually increased. You can find online pedigrees back to Adam and Eve, ones that link Winston Churchill and Saddam Hussein, and many, many others with just plain old made-up information.

For a quick example, go to familysearch.org and conduct a search for John Allen, born 1600 (plus or minus 20 years) in Massachusetts. You will find many such entries. The first one on the list shows a man of that name born in 1589 in Gloucester, Essex County, Massachusetts. One problem: that area was inhabited only by Indians in those days, according to every reputable history book. Spend a few more minutes looking for other impossibilities, and I bet you will find them.

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I don't mean to pick on FamilySearch.org; it simply is an example that everyone can see easily. In fact, all of the other online genealogy databases that contain information contributed by the general public also contain similar fairy tales. The bogus data may not be for something in the 1500s; it could as easily be for the 1890s and still be equally wrong. The sad part is that some people actually believe this stuff and will insert it into their own genealogy databases, then pass it on to others. The misinformation replicates itself time and again.

Sometimes I think that the source citation for these erroneous entries must be the National Enquirer.

Fairy tales abound in online genealogy databases.

Of course, this is nothing new. Similar fiction has existed in published genealogy books for more than a century. The age of the personal computer only changed the quantity of this stuff. Experienced genealogists have always accepted such junk for what it is: a clue that may or may not be accurate. All such clues need to be verified before being accepted as facts.

I do not wish to condemn all online genealogy databases. In fact, there are thousands of examples of scholarly online efforts, mostly containing records extracted from primary sources or high-quality secondary sources. Such databases were created by trained genealogists who cared about their work. You can find many such databases on FamilySearch.org, Ancestry.com, Genealogy.com, NewEnglandAncestors.org, RootsWeb.com and thousands of smaller sites across the world. Some of the same Web sites also contain other databases holding information contributed by the general public, information that does not conform to the same standards of quality.

My recommendation is simple: Consider the source! Any time you use any online genealogy

database, ask yourself, "Where did this data come from?"

Ed. Note: How many times have you heard someone say "But I got it from the Internet" as the reason why they have placed some information in their database that they have not actually researched and found in primary records themselves? Remember, anything you can't prove with a source is just a "clue", not a "fact."

GENEALOGY LIBRARY GUEST BOOKS

When you visit a genealogy library or another genealogical group's location do you check to see if they have a mechanism for recording your family surnames?

I know that Western Reserve Historical Society has a card file of names people are researching. They are in drawers just opposite the main desk in the library. I've filled out cards to be place in this section with the hope that someday someone will visit there and look and see my cards. I've also completed cards in other libraries in Ohio (where my father's family settled). In fact, at one of them I found the name of someone researching one of my names and after contacting them several years ago, we found that we share a gr-gr-grandfather. Our gr-grandfathers were brothers. We've spent time together (in Ohio and at the NGS conference). We have now formed a "research group" with three others who are also connected in the hope of breaking through a major brick wall.

I just saw an article in a book on breaking down brick walls published by *Family Chronicles* magazine. One man had checked a guest book at a library and found a connection and has added numerous generations to his files.

NHG has a surname card file you can add to and WPGS has a surname book at their library.

WHAT ARE THOSE FLOWERS ON THAT TOMBSTONE?

In the November-December newsletter we provided pictures of some of the common flowers that appear on tombstones. We are providing more in this issue. We hope they help you when you go to the cemetery to search for ancestors (or help Jo and Irene with NHG readings)



Calla Lily
Majestic beauty,
marriage



Shamrock
The Trinity, national
flower of Ireland.



Hollyhock
Nature, fruitfulness,
productiveness,
ambition.



Pansy
Thoughtful recollection,
remembrance,
meditation.



Ivy
Friendship, faithfulness,
eternal life, undying
affection.



Passion Flower
Christ's suffering, the
Passion and the
Crucifixion.

PIONEER CEMETERIES BOOKS BY NORTH HILLS GENEALOGISTS

North Hills Genealogists has published two volumes of their Pioneer Cemeteries books. Both books are now available for purchase.

Pioneer Cemeteries of Pine & Richland Townships (Allegheny County, PA)

This definitive work documents the final resting places of many suburban Pittsburgh settlers and their descendants. It includes complete tombstone readings for all the old cemeteries of the two townships, as well as other information, such as church records, when available. Every stone has been recorded exactly as the information appears with dates, relationships, epitaphs, stonecarvers' names, symbols and other notations. An every-name index includes maiden names, military service units when known, and funeral homes. This 496 page hardbound, library quality book contains many gravestone photos, along with area maps and histories.

PRICE: \$39.95 (\$29.95 for members) plus 7% sales tax for PA residents and \$4.00 shipping & handling.

Pioneer Cemeteries of Hampton township (Allegheny County, PA)

Pioneer Cemeteries of Hampton Township, Allegheny County, PA includes not only complete readings for the Pine Creek, Depreciation Lands and Hampton Cemeteries, but also the lot owners' book for the latter and a guide to the other cemeteries in Hampton township. Each stone has been recorded exactly with dates, relationships, epitaphs, stone carvers' names, and other notations. An every name index includes maiden names when known. This hardbound,

library-quality book is over 200 pages and contains many photos of gravestones, history of the area and maps.

PRICE: \$19.95 (\$14.95 for members) plus 7% sales tax for PA residents and \$3.00 for shipping and handling.

Send order with payment to:

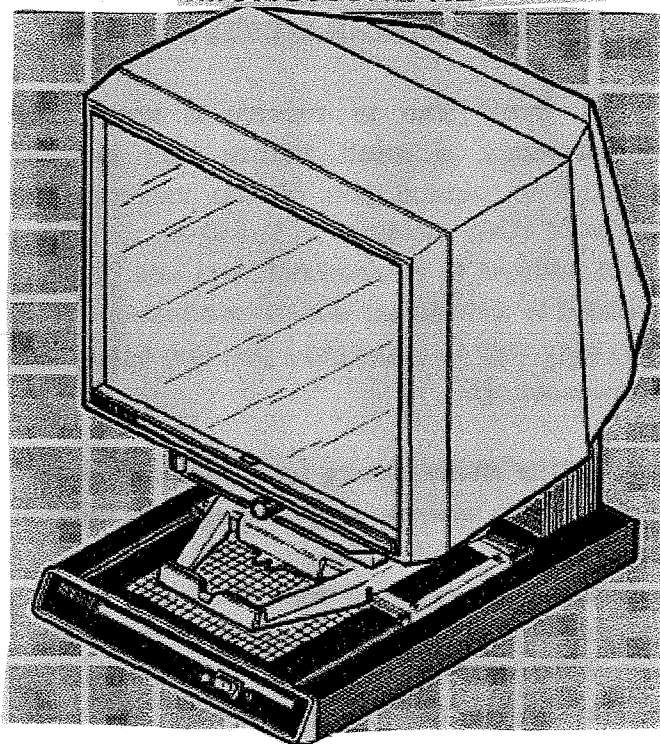
North Hills Genealogists
P. O. Box 304
Ingomar, PA 15127

Special Offer

Purchase BOTH books for a special package price of \$50.00 (\$40.00 for members) plus 7% PA sales tax (if applicable) and \$5.00 shipping and handling.

If you would like to order by credit card, go to our website (<http://www.northhillsgenealogists.org>) and order by credit card.

700A Series MICROFICHE READERS



NORTH HILLS GENEALOGISTS

C/O Northland Public Library

300 Cumberland Road

Pittsburgh, PA 15237

FIRST CLASS MAIL

DATED MATERIAL



COMING FROM THE REICH

Ruth Kittner

February 17, 2004 - 7:00 pm

E-MAIL MEETING NOTIFICATION

If you would like to receive a notification approximately a week before our monthly meetings to remind you of the meeting, and notices of other meetings in the area, send your e-mail address to pioneerbook.com and you will be added to the regular e-mail notification. Here is an easy way to make sure you don't miss any future meetings.

North Hills Genealogists is a group of people who share an interest in genealogy and meet to share their knowledge. NHG does NOT maintain a library and does NOT do research for others. An individual member may choose to handle research requests, but NHG will not be responsible for the quality of the work

performed or any fees charged.

NECROLOGY REPORT

We recently learned of the death of NHG member Robert Jackson. As has been the practice when a member dies, we made a donation in his name to Northland Public Library toward the purchase of some genealogy-related resource for the library.

We want to extend our sympathy to Mr. Jackson's family.