



# NORTH HILLS GENEALOGISTS

PO Box 169 • Wexford, PA 15090 • [www.NorthHillsGenealogists.org](http://www.NorthHillsGenealogists.org)

## RENEW YOUR RESEARCH AT THE ANNUAL NHG ROUND TABLE

*By Audrey Geer Masalehdan, NHG Member*

Last November, I attended NHG's Annual Round-Table Discussion, the meeting where anyone can present their genealogical brick wall and ask others for their comments and suggestions. Since this was only the second NHG meeting that I had attended, I mostly listened to others speak about their problems. When it rapidly became clear that this was a friendly group with much knowledge that they were willing to share, I brought up my own questions.

My brick wall question, which is still unanswered, was about my great-great-great-grandfather William Friesell (1829–18\_\_), who according to family lore is said to have enlisted in the Union Army from which he never returned. When I first started in genealogy, I thought this would be an easy question to answer. I assumed that he had enlisted in Pittsburgh in the early years of the war, and I assumed that he had died while serving in the Civil War. Records that I have located show that his brothers enlisted and returned home, but I haven't found William's name in any of the records. His wife remarried and was dead by November 1864, indicating that she knew something about his situation. The available records were not providing the evidence I needed.

Many helpful suggestions were provided, and I continue my search. When the meeting ended, David George, who was sitting a few chairs down from me in the large circle, asked me about the name Friesell. It turned out that he knew a family in which some of the males have the middle name Friesell, and he offered to put me in touch with them.

Seven months later in June, I had breakfast with

William Friesell Aiken, who knew very little about his family history and nothing about my great-great-great-grandfather. In spite of this, we had a wonderful conversation, and I was able to show him pictures of our most recent common ancestors: Anna Elizabeth Henrici (1807–1885) and William Friesell (1802–1877).

Anna was the sister of Jacob Henrici who was the leader of Old Economy in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, after Father Rapp's death. Henrici's family followed him to western Pennsylvania from Germany, but none of them chose to join the celibate, communistic society . . . which was lucky for Bill and myself! Bill was not familiar with the Harmonist Societies, and I had more to tell him than he had to tell me. In the meantime, the search to uncover more details about the William Friesell from the Civil War era continues.

Perhaps this story of networking will inspire you to bring YOUR brick wall to the 2015 NHG Round-table Discussion! The kinds of questions you might want to bring include which records to search to find the answer to a particular research challenge, how to find a particular type of record, how to best preserve a family treasure, or how to learn more about a particular ethnic group. You can also share research success stories, which can help educate and inspire others. Get fresh ideas and meet people who can turn you in a new direction with your genealogical research. And, please, if you are familiar with the Friesell family, contact me, Audrey Geer Masalehdan, at [audreygeer@gmail.com](mailto:audreygeer@gmail.com).

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### What's Inside

NHG Round Table	21
President's Corner	22
NHG SIGs	23
Ethnic Corner: Germany	24
Where Genealogists Meet	27
NARA Digitization Plans	29
Upcoming NHG Programs	30

## NHG BOARD MEMBERS 2015–2016

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### For more information:

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## WHO WE ARE—NHG

*We are a group of genealogy enthusiasts who meet on a regular basis to assist one another in establishing our family histories. We meet on the third Tuesday of every month, except December, at the Northland Public Library, 300 Cumberland Road, McCandless Township in the North Hills of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Tip Time begins at 6:45 P.M., and our general meeting commences at 7:00 P.M. Meetings are free and open to the public.*

*We publish a newsletter ten times a year for a nominal membership fee of \$15.00 annually. The subscription year runs from August to June.*

*We have several Special Interest Groups so members can collaborate informally to learn about various topics and ethnicities.*

*The North Hills Genealogists Board meets at 7:00 P.M. on the first Tuesday of each month in the Conference Room of the Northland Public Library. The board meeting is open to all members of the North Hills Genealogists.*

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

October is designated as National Family History Month, so I thought this would be a good time to explore applying to a lineage society. After all, when you've spent so much time researching your various ancestors, why not benefit from the bragging rights that might come with them?

When exploring information using the search term *Hereditary Societies*, the very first selection I opened listed hundreds of organizations that require extensive research to join. I found such names as Society of Friends, General Society of Mayflower Descendants, National Society Sons and Daughters of the Pilgrims, Descendants of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, First Families of Ohio, First Settlers of the Shenandoah Valley (I would qualify for the last two), and even those who descended from "the other side of the blanket" would qualify to join the Descendants of the Illegitimate Sons and Daughters of the Kings of Britain, but that last one is by invitation only. Then there are the most well-known organizations, the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) and the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). I honestly feel that if you are able to find an ancestor who lived during the Revolutionary War, the time period that these two organizations represent, then the ancestors were probably soldiers or supported the war effort in some way. If you have found that someone relocated to Canada, then you can bet they were Tories or British sympathizers.

I don't know exactly what requirements are necessary to apply to other societies but as a member of the DAR, I can give you some insight into the application process for lineal societies. The main requirement for any lineal organization is to make sure that you can connect each generation from yourself back to the specific person of interest. That means finding various census, birth, marriage, death or even Bible records to prove the life events of each person. Once you compile all of the necessary documents, you need to submit them with a completed application to a chapter registrar to be looked over for errors or missing details.

Anyone can research a name on the DAR website at [www.DAR.org](http://www.DAR.org). Once on the DAR website, you

can watch the DAR Genealogical Research System (GRS) tutorial to learn how to look up a patriot. The GRS is a collection of databases that provide access to many materials amassed by the DAR. Access to the databases is through the tabs along the top of the search screen. They include “Ancestor”, “Member”, “Descendants”, *Genealogical Records Committee Reports* “GRC”, and a new collection, “Bibles”.

Research can be done from your home by opening the Ancestor tab and completing the required sections of the template, such as name, state of service, birth, and death dates. Include as much as you know. The resulting link will give you information about applications that were previously submitted. Wherever you see a green “purchase” button, you can click it to purchase a record copy, or pay online with a Visa or MasterCard, and the copy will be downloaded directly to your computer as an Adobe Acrobat PDF.

This past summer Lois Lang and I spent four days researching a number of ancestors at the DAR Library in Washington, DC. We spent most of that time in the Library’s Seimes Technology Center where we could enter a patriot’s number into the database to see all of the digitized document images in the GRC collection that had been submitted for that person by every applicant. We could quickly eliminate a result if it was not applicable or unreadable. If it did connect to an ancestor, we could make a copy of what we wanted to add to our research for only twenty-five cents per page. Instead of paying for only one record copy, we had access to all of the digitized source materials submitted for any patriot and paid only twenty-five cents. Of course in considering a trip to the DAR in DC, figure in the cost of staying in the area, travel, etc.; however, we felt that the trip was well worth the expense. Lois was even able to find a woman she was directly related to who was also a patriot. Don’t forget that women would also qualify as a patriot; for example, Betsy Ross has many descendants who became DAR members through their connection to her name.

This article presents only a brief overview of what you can do to research the DAR records. A few of our North Hills Genealogists members are already DAR members. If you are

considering the possibility that you have a Revolutionary War patriot, I’m sure any one of them would be more than happy to help you get started. Before beginning the application process to any lineage society, find the website for that organization and explore the required documentation and collect it in advance of filling out forms.

As a final note, don’t forget that the NHG Fall Conference is just a few days away. It’s not too late to send in your registration. We’re looking forward to a very informative two days of presentations by Judy Russell and Michael Leclerc, so make sure you sign up and join us at the new venue, the beautiful Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church.

~ Sharon  
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## NHG SIG NEWS

At their September meeting, **Pennsylvania SIG** members highlighted their genealogy discoveries over the last two months. Among the highlights were Allen County Public Library’s assistance in placing self-published genealogies in their collection, the Findmypast free weekend, and a roundtable discussion of DNA records. Their next meeting will be Wednesday, October 28th at 6:00 P.M. at the Shaler Public Library.

During the last **German SIG** meeting, members practiced using the Meyers Orts Gazetteer in order to locate information about German places of origin. Wendy Uncapher’s book *How to Read and Understand Meyers Orts-und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs* was used to help decipher the entries and the information contained. Using the Meyers Orts Gazetteer in tandem with Kevan Hansen’s set of books *Map Guide to German Parish Registers* (found in the Pennsylvania Room at the Carnegie Library in Oakland) can be quite helpful in learning more about a village and what records are available. The next meeting has not been scheduled.

During the October meeting of the **British Isles SIG**, members discussed Griffith’s Valuation, which established the value of the land and buildings in Ireland from 1848 to 1864. The different subdivisions of land—county, barony, townland, etc.—were also fleshed out. Additionally, members discussed some of their

recent findings and how they made their discoveries. The next meeting will be Wednesday, November 4th at 11:00 A.M. at St. Catherine of Sweden Church. The program will be a discussion of the previous weekend's North Hills Genealogists' Fall Conference.

The **Eastern European SIG's** discussion during their September meeting was about working methodically through records. They talked about capturing a generation in its entirety, including all of the vital events for both parents and children, and mining records for other clues like house numbers, godparents, etc. Alternative names of Polish villages of origin were also a topic of interest. The next meeting, featuring further discussion of ancestral places of origin in Eastern Europe, will be Wednesday, October 28th at 6:30 P.M. in the Northland Library's Board Room.

The **Writing Special Interest Group** is being organized. If you are interested in joining this SIG, but haven't let us know, please send us an e-mail at [Info@NorthHillsGenealogists.org](mailto:Info@NorthHillsGenealogists.org). Please put "Writing SIG" in the subject line.

For contact information, please refer to the Special Interest Groups section of our website, [www.NorthHillsGenealogists.org](http://www.NorthHillsGenealogists.org).

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## ETHNIC CORNER: GERMANY

*By Bobby Egelston, NHG German SIG Co-leader*

For those who are just beginning to research their German-speaking ancestors, the basic starting point is to begin with what you know and work backwards. Some websites to help the beginner are:

- [http://wiki-en.genealogy.net/FAQ\\_sgg#How\\_can\\_I\\_start\\_researching\\_my\\_German\\_or\\_German-American\\_family.3F](http://wiki-en.genealogy.net/FAQ_sgg#How_can_I_start_researching_my_German_or_German-American_family.3F)
- [www.Cyndislist.com](http://www.Cyndislist.com) which is a list of genealogy sites on the Internet arranged in categories and cross-referenced.
- [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) Use the Wiki to research "New to Genealogy" and The Research Process.
- [www.genteam.at](http://www.genteam.at) Databases made by and for genealogists. After registering you may use these databases free of charge.

You'll also need to understand the history of the area referred to as the German Empire, which did not come into existence until 1871. Remember, not all German-speaking people came from what we today call Germany. The country's history is marked by divisions in boundaries and religion, wars among local rulers, power struggles, and shifting allegiances. For a time line of key dates and events in German history, go to: [https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Germany\\_History](https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Germany_History).

There are three major challenges with researching German speaking ancestors:

- Locating the correct village of origin
- Identifying where the church and civil records you are seeking are kept
- Reading the old German script

The first goal is to locate an ancestor's village of origin. Begin by searching through the records kept in the United States. The village of origin might be found in church records, civil death records, obituaries, county histories, newspaper articles, naturalization records, etc. Because village names were often recorded phonetically in records in the United States, you'll need to verify the spelling and name of the village. Two helpful websites are:

- Fuzzy Gazetteer <http://isodp.hof-university.de/fuzzyg/query/> This database covers the entire world, not just German-speaking areas.
- JewishGen <http://www.jewishgen.org/Communities> Two databases on this site can be helpful. One is the JewishGen Communities Database and the other is the JewishGen Gazetteer. This database contains each community's name in various languages and political jurisdictions during different time periods. Your family does not have to be Jewish for you to find useful information.

Once you've identified the correct village of origin, determining where the church and civil records are kept is next.

The region from where an immigrant came is often listed on US censuses after 1850. There are no centralized depositories for all German records, so it is not possible to search for records just by region. You must know the name of the

village of origin. However, many village names are repeated in Germany (just like Portland or Springfield in the US) and some were changed to other languages. Because borders and rulers changed frequently, you need to also know the region your village was located in at the time the records you are seeking were recorded.

Prior to the formation of the German Empire in 1871, there were princes ruling semi-independent territories where allegiances and religious affiliations shifted. Your German-speaking ancestors may also have come from areas outside of the German empire, so it is critical to know where they lived in order to find the church and civil records for these ancestors. Maps are essential for identifying the location of records. Good sources for historical maps include:

- David Rumsey Map Collection [www.davidrumsey.com](http://www.davidrumsey.com)
- Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps) Historical, Thematic, Topographical and Country maps of Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic.
- HGIS Germany - Historisches Informationssystem der deutschen Staatenwelt 1820–1914 [www.hgis-germany.de](http://www.hgis-germany.de) Maps on the development of the German federation between 1820 and 1914; thematic maps, historical statistics of states, etc. While it is in German, there is an English user interface.
- Index of German-Polish and Polish-German names of the localities in Poland and Russia [www.atsnotes.com/other/gerpol.html](http://www.atsnotes.com/other/gerpol.html)

A key resource is the *Ravenstein Atlas des Deutschen Reichs* <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/German.RavenAtlas>. This atlas includes Germany and surrounding areas where German-speaking people lived. The title page has a map of the entire area included in the atlas. To deal with the changing place names and variety of political jurisdictions, you need to compare the Ravenstein atlas to a modern atlas or map.

Find the village or town in the gazetteer section

of the Ravenstein atlas. Go to the corresponding place on the appropriate page. You will need to open the map as a PDF to zoom in on a specific area. There is a link above each map you can use to open the PDF.

Once you have found the town or village on a map, look for geographic features like rivers or mountains or a larger town that is nearby. Go to a modern atlas and locate the same feature or larger town. The modern map will have the current jurisdiction for the area where your ancestral town or village is located. Now that you know the current jurisdiction, you can use other resources, such as genealogical handbooks or wikis, to determine which repository holds the records of interest to you.

Another resource researchers of German-speaking ancestors should be familiar with is the *Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs*, known as the Meyers Orts Gazetteer. This gazetteer is based on the 1871 map of Germany with regards to boundaries and where church and civil records are found. It describes approximately 210,000 cities, towns, hamlets, and dwelling places in the German Empire prior to World War I and includes information on where civil and church records can be found. You must know the abbreviations used to understand Meyers Orts. Wendy Uncapher's *How to Read & Understand Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs* is the best guide for this. The gazetteer is available in digital form in the following places:

- FamilySearch: You can find the Meyers Orts Gazetteer in two volumes using the FamilySearch Catalog, found at <https://FamilySearch.org/catalog-search>. Search for "Meyers Orts" (without the quotation marks) as a title. The FamilySearch Wiki has an article titled "Step-by-step guide: Using Meyers Gazetteer Online" at [https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Step-by-step\\_guide:\\_Using\\_Meyers\\_Gazetteer\\_Online](https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Step-by-step_guide:_Using_Meyers_Gazetteer_Online) with detailed instructions.
- Ancestry.com: Listed as Meyers Gazetteer of the German Empire in the card catalog. This version is also searchable. For the best results, use the Keyword rather than the Location search box.
- The HathiTrust: This version provides

bigger, clearer images, and most city maps are in color. You can download each volume as a PDF.

Other helpful resources include two series of books, *Place Name Indexes* (19 volumes) by Roger P. Minert, Ph.D., and *Map Guide to German Parish Registers* (46 volumes) by Kevan Hansen.

Once you've identified the location of the records, there are several possibilities to access them. Civil records vary by location. However, if you are lucky, the church book you want may be online, as in these examples:

- [www.archion.de](http://www.archion.de) A German site that includes records from Evangelical (Protestant) church books from ten archives. They are: Landeskirchliches Archivs in Bayern, Westfalen, Hannover, Karlsruhe, Kassel, Stuttgart, Zentralarchiv der evangelischen Kirche der Pfalz, Zentralarchiv der evangelischen Kirche in Hessen und Nassau and both the Zentralarchiv and Landeskirchliches Archiv in Berlin. Subscription site: 19.90 Euros/month; 178.80 Euros/year
- <http://icar-us.eu/cooperation/online-portals/matricula> for Passau, Germany, Austria, and Poland
- [www.portafontium.cz](http://www.portafontium.cz) for Czech Republic (formerly Bohemia) A guide in English for using this website is at <http://czechgenealogy.nase-koreny.cz/2014/03/portafontium-website-guide.html>

FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org>) has microfilms that you can order and digital images for some civil and church records. Their cataloging and indexing is based on the location designations found on an 1871 map or what one would find in Meyers Orts. If no records are accessible in this country, you may have to hire a professional genealogist to do research in the area your ancestors' place of origin.

If you are able to access the records, reading the old script used in record keeping is your next challenge. Practice writing your family's surnames in old script. You can find help at:

- German Gothic Handwriting Guide:

[www.feefhs.org/guides/German\\_Gothic.pdf](http://www.feefhs.org/guides/German_Gothic.pdf)

- German script tutorial: <https://script.byu.edu/Pages/German/en/intro.aspx>
- *Deciphering Handwriting in German Documents* by Roger P. Minert (Northland Public Library has a copy of this book.)

There are many websites that can aid those researching their German-speaking ancestors:

- Germanic Genealogy Society [www.ggsmn.org](http://www.ggsmn.org)
- Foundation for East European Family History Studies (FEEFHS): [www.feefhs.org](http://www.feefhs.org)
- For those with Polish, Russian, or Lithuanian ancestors: [www.kartenmeister.com](http://www.kartenmeister.com)
- German Genealogy Group, Kings Park, New York: [www.germangenealogygroup.com](http://www.germangenealogygroup.com) They assist members in finding their "roots" through help sessions, finding aids, lectures, mentoring, a monthly newsletter, translation services, an extensive CD and book lending library, and a forum to meet and discuss research problems and solutions. Membership is \$15 per year.
- Society for German Genealogy in Eastern Europe, Alberta, Canada: [www.sggee.org](http://www.sggee.org) Focusing on Germans from Russia, Poland, and Volhynia; Membership is \$40 per year.
- Sacramento German Genealogy Society: [www.sgggs.us](http://www.sgggs.us) Useful links on the left hand side of the home page. Membership is \$30 per year.
- [www.lagis-hessen.de](http://www.lagis-hessen.de) An information portal created by the State Office for Regional History of Hesse in Marburg. Includes maps, historic towns, and information about Hessian soldiers.
- [www.genealogy.net](http://www.genealogy.net) This is a portal to several databases covering German-speaking regions all over the world. All offer family genealogies/trees. Three of the databases are:
  - Metasearch (far right tab) will send requests to all databases simultaneously. One can search for a surname. Better results are given

- when the place name is left blank.
- GedBas is the first choice in the top bar. Many of the family trees posted here are from Germany.
- OFBs (top bar) Find the area in which you are searching and click the village name. To the left click the language you would like to use, then click in the upper box, “Complete List of Surnames”, then find your surname and click to see what information has been submitted.
- Online German Genealogy Indexes and Databases [www.germanroots.com/germandata.html](http://www.germanroots.com/germandata.html).
- You might also try Google searches for the German town or parish name.

For those who like to read reference books, some good choices are:

- *The German Research Companion*, 3rd edition, by Shirley J. Riemer, Roger P. Minert, Jennifer A. Anderson, (ISBN 0965676161)
- *Researching in Germany : a Handbook for Your Visit to the Homeland of Your Ancestors* by Roger P. Minert; Shirley J. Riemer; Susan E. Serrine (ISBN 0965676137)
- *Ancestors in German Archives* by Raymond S. Wright III & others (ISBN 9780806317472)

Connecting with others doing research in your area can also help the researcher. Some options include:

- Mailing lists at [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~maillist/#about](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~maillist/#about) i.e., German-Bohemian group, Bavarian Ancestors group, etc.
- Facebook groups: German Genealogy as well as specific regional Facebook pages.
- Most importantly, join the German SIG group that meets the third Saturday of most months at 9:00 A.M. at St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, 1965 Ferguson Road, Allison Park, PA 15101. Contact Linda Loewer ([loewer@verizon.net](mailto:loewer@verizon.net)) or Bobby Egelston ([bjegelston@gmail.com](mailto:bjegelston@gmail.com)) for more information.

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## WHERE GENEALOGISTS MEET

### **21–22 October 2015 NATIONAL ARCHIVES VIRTUAL GENEALOGY FAIR**

NARA will be broadcasting lectures live via YouTube. The speakers will give tips and techniques for using federal records for genealogical research. The list of sessions and more details are available at [www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-fair](http://www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-fair).

### **Wednesday, 21 October 2015 6:30 P.M. LAWRENCEVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Lawrenceville Historical Society will feature Brian Charlton, curator and archivist of the Donora Smog Museum and Historical Society as a speaker. During the week before Halloween in 1948, a severe temperature inversion had settled over the river valley at Donora, Pennsylvania. As a result thousands were ill, hundreds needed medical attention, and soon twenty-seven were dead. Event takes place at the Carnegie Library, 279 Fisk Street, Pittsburgh. No reservations required.

### **Saturday, 24 October 2015 8:30 A.M. UKRAINIAN HISTORICAL AND EDUCATIONAL CENTER OF NEW JERSEY**

*Nashi Predky—Our Ancestors* will feature lectures on Ukrainian and Eastern European genealogy. It will be held at the Ukrainian Cultural Center, 135 Davidson Avenue, Somerset, NJ 08873. For more information and to register, please visit <https://www.ukrhec.org/civicrm/event/info?id=22&reset=1>.

### **Monday, 26 October 2015 6:30 P.M. SALEM PUBLIC LIBRARY**

The third presentation in Salem Public Library’s *What’s Up Your Family Tree* series is “Bridging the Decades: Little-used Clues from the Census” and will be presented by Elissa Scalise Powell, CG, CGL, in the Quaker Room of Salem Public Library, 821 E. State Street, Salem, Ohio. The federal

census, taken every ten years from 1790 to present, is publicly available seventy-two years afterward. A researcher is able to “walk around” the neighborhood with the census taker and discover more clues to our ancestors when each census is fully analyzed. Census records can point to other records or be compared with others to discover more about a family or individual. With various questions each year they need to be examined closely to “wring the data dry.” To attend this free program that is open to the public please register online at [www.salem.lib.oh.us](http://www.salem.lib.oh.us) or call the library for assistance at 330-332-0042.

### **27–28 October 2015 LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**

*[Editors' Note: Even though this event is geared toward educators, genealogists can benefit from some of the information being covered.]*

LOC is holding its first online conference for educators. Fifteen sessions will be broadcast over two days. Of particular interest to genealogists are three sessions—“Preserving Our Communities with Photography”, “Veterans History Project”, and “What's New at the Library of Congress?” The event is free, however you must register for any sessions you wish to attend. For more information, please visit [www.loc.gov/teachers/professionaldevelopment/webinar/online-conference-2015.html](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/professionaldevelopment/webinar/online-conference-2015.html).

### **Wednesday, 28 October 2015 6:00 P.M. CRANBERRY GENEALOGY CLUB**

Note that this meeting will start at an earlier time than normal. Local author Mary Frailey Calland will discuss the explosion at Allegheny Arsenal in Pittsburgh, which happened 17 September 1862. She will have copies of her book, *Consecrated Dust*, to sell and autograph. The meeting, which is free and open to the public, will be held in the rear section of the Franklin Station Meeting Room of the Cranberry Public Library, 2525 Rochester Road, Cranberry Township, PA 16066. For more information, please visit [www.cranberrygenealogy.org](http://www.cranberrygenealogy.org).

### **Thursday, 5 November 2015 2:00 P.M. GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA**

The topic for the next GSSWPA meeting is “Slave and Farm Census”. It will be held at the Citizens Library, 55 South College Street, Washington, PA. For more information, please visit [www.genealogicalsocietyswpa.com](http://www.genealogicalsocietyswpa.com).

### **Saturday, 14 November 10:00 A.M. HEINZ HISTORY CENTER**

The Heinz Center's Museum Conservation Center will hold a “Textile Care Clinic.” There will be a demonstration of various conservation techniques. The cost is \$20 for center members and \$25 for non-members. Pre-registration is required for this event. For more information, please visit [www.heinzhistorycenter.org/events](http://www.heinzhistorycenter.org/events).

### **Saturday, 14 November 2015 10:00 A.M. WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**

Mary Jo Sonntag will present “Write, If you Live to Get There: Tracing Westward Expansion through 120 Years of Family Letters” at the next WPGS meeting. It is based on her book *Write, If You Live to Get There*, which speaks of a family who chronicled more than a century of living in the letters they wrote to each other, from Pennsylvania and Vermont to California and places in between during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The program is free and open to the public. The event will be held at the Carnegie Library Lecture Hall in Oakland. For more information, please visit [www.wpgs.org](http://www.wpgs.org).

### **Sunday, 15 November 2015 2:00 P.M. BALTZER MEYER HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The next meeting will feature geologist Carl Webberking. His lecture will be “The Ice Age in Western Pennsylvania”. The event will be held at the BMHS Center, 642 Baltzer Meyer Pike, Greensburg, PA 15601. Details can be found at [www.baltzermeyer.pa-roots.com/Pages/index.html](http://www.baltzermeyer.pa-roots.com/Pages/index.html).

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# ANNOUNCING NARA'S DIGITIZATION PRIORITIES

Press release (partial) 2 October 2015

Washington, DC—We asked! You told us!

A few weeks ago, we asked the public for suggestions and feedback about NARA's digitization priorities to help us develop an agency-wide priority list. This list will guide the work of the digitization program over the next couple of years. After putting out that call, responses flooded into us with comments here on NARAtions, emails to [digitization@nara.gov](mailto:digitization@nara.gov), and votes left in our first ever online town hall on Crowd Hall. We were excited by all of the responses and it was fun and interesting to see what you, the public, wanted to see NARA digitize.

Overwhelmingly, people asked us to digitize records of genealogical interest, including immigration and ethnic heritage records; military and veterans records, especially those from World War I and II; and, of course, records that had preservation concerns. People also suggested that we digitize records that relate to specific research themes, including diplomatic relations, law enforcement, and intelligence. When specific records were cited, we assessed the feasibility of digitizing those records and adding them to the list. In one case, the public demand for the "Helper Files" in RG 498, Records of Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army (WWII), was so great that those records were added to the list.

Public feedback—and public use of our records—was an important factor in determining what was included in the agency-wide digitization priority list. The following represents our top priorities—it is by no means the entire list of what we would like to digitize over time; however, these projects will be our primary focus over the next 18–24 months. Please note, list order does not reflect order in which projects will be undertaken.

## Record Group/Collection – Title

- Multiple – Microfilm Publications
- Multiple – Records of the U.S House of Representatives and U.S. Senate, 1789–

1817 (records from the first 14 Congresses)

- 21 – All Naturalization Records
- 21 – Bankruptcy Dockets (within certain parameters)
- 26/36 – Seamen Records / Crew Lists
- 24 – Naval Muster Rolls
- 24 – Logbooks of U.S. Navy Ships, 1801–1940
- 24 – Logbooks of U.S. Navy Ships and Stations, 1941–1978
- 24 – Bureau of Naval Personnel Casualty Case Cards, 1964–1977
- 129 – Inmate Case Files (Leavenworth) – first 10,000 case files only
- 226 – Office of Strategic Services Personnel Files, 1942–1945
- 59 – Department of State Name Index, 1910–1959
- 59 – Department of State Central Decimal Files, 1910–1929
- 15 – Case Files of Disapproved Pension Applications of Veterans of the Army and the Navy Who Served Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain, 1861–1934
- 15 – Case Files of Disapproved Pension Applications of Widows and Other Dependents of Veterans of the Army and Navy, 1861–1934
- 109 – Record Books of Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Offices of the Confederate Government, 1874–1899
- 29 – 1950 Census Enumeration District Maps
- 373 – German Flown Aerial Photography, 1939–1945
- 145/114 – Indexes for Aerial Photography of Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, 1934–1954 / Indexes for Aerial Photography of the Soil Conservation Service, 1934–1954
- 210 – Drawings of Relocation Centers, 1942–1945
- 111 – Signal Corps Photographs of American Military Activity, 1918–1981
- 80 – General Photographic File of the Department of Navy, 1943–1958

If you have any questions about the digitization priority list, please email [digitization@nara.gov](mailto:digitization@nara.gov).

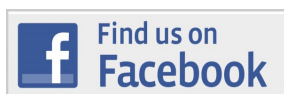
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## UPCOMING PROGRAMS FROM NHG

## Mark Your Calendars!

### **Tuesday, 17 November 2015** **Annual Round-table Discussion**

*NHG Members*

If you missed last year's, you missed a great exchange of information and ideas! Join the group as we ask questions of each other and share information about anything in genealogy. Remember, no question is too basic or obscure. We are here to help each other!

### **Saturday, 5 December 2015** **Annual Holiday Social**

This year's social will find NHG members and their guests touring Clayton, Henry Clay Frick's family home in Point Breeze. Docents will lead informative tours of the lower floors of the mansion, dressed in its holiday décor. Note the special day: Saturday, December 5th at 10:00 A.M. After, we will have lunch and social time at a restaurant. Details to follow.

## **THIS MONTH'S PROGRAM – Tuesday, 20 October 2015** **Beginning Genealogy Research**

*Rebecca Kichta Miller, NHG Member*

Miller will speak about how to begin your genealogy research, emphasizing good methodology to avoid making errors that can cause many headaches and heartaches later on. This is also a good refresher program for more experienced researchers.