

# NORTH HILLS GENEALOGISTS



%Northland Public Library  
300 Cumberland Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Volume 12, Number 1 - August, 2001

e-mail: [pioneerbook@juno.com](mailto:pioneerbook@juno.com)

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Vice President: Sylvan Kretz

Secretary: Kay Santa

Treasurer: Jean Taylor

Membership: Steph Valentine

Liaison: Elissa Powell

Cemetery Project: Ginny Skander

Publicity: Gary Schlemmer

Editor: Donna Booth

Mailings: Lois & Bill Daviess

Program: Tom Wiley

Subscription: \$12 per year

10 Issues - August - June

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the beginning of the North Hills Genealogists 12th year, or should I make that 12+ years? Eleven years ago I began attending the meetings about genealogy at the Northland Library. In the summer of 1990 there were between 3 and 7 people at a meeting. If twelve people came in those days it was a big crowd! The ladies who ran it (Julia Tauson, Connie Foley, Ruth Grom and Pat Willis) decided that they would like to hand the reins over to a younger crowd and invited several of us newer attendees to a meeting at Connie Foley's house. At that meeting Maureen Durstein volunteered to begin a newsletter, keep track of a treasury to support the costs of the newsletter, and to be secretary. Jim Rickey volunteered for keeping track of membership and as Vice President. That left the Presidential slot open for which I then volunteered. Dues were set at \$6 and the first newsletter of 5 pages rolled out in October 1990 to about 15 members.

Our membership grew as word spread and we had popular topics presented by our members and other local genealogists. Some of the programs the first year were on German Church Records in America; paper preservation; the LDS

Family History Library in Salt Lake City, UT; Photographing old photos; the history of Shaler Twp; and Bill May impersonating his Civil War ancestor. The latter produced a record-breaking number of attendees (70) which overflowed Meeting Rooms 1 & 2. So, in August 1991 we switched our meeting night to the third Tuesday in order to have the larger Meeting Room 3.

Our relationship with the Northland Library was always a symbiotic one. In November, 1990, our current Membership chairperson, Steph Valentine, presented several introduction programs to the public on the genealogy software package, Personal Ancestral File (PAF), version 2.1, that he had donated to Northland Library. By January, 1991 we had a mailbox at the

(continued on page 3)

### Next Meeting

September 18, 2001

From Italy to Pittsburgh - The Italian  
Immigrant Experience in Western  
Pennsylvania  
Nicholas P. Ciotola

## WHERE GENEALOGISTS MEET

**Tues., Sept. 4 - 7:30 pm - NHG Board Meeting -**  
Passavant Hospital Cafeteria. Everyone  
welcome.

**Tues., Sept. 18 - 7:00 pm - Regular NHG Meeting**  
-"From Italy to Pittsburgh: The Italian  
Experience in Western Pennsylvania". Nicholas  
P. Ciotola (see article on page 4)

### Other Meetings

**Sat., Sept. 1 - 10:00 am - 12:00 noon -**  
**POINTERS in Pittsburgh - Italian Genealogy -**  
Allegheny Intermediate Unit, 1400 Penn Avenue,  
Suite 201, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. Contact  
calabrese@alu3.net

**Thurs., Sept. 13 - 7:00 pm - Western**  
**Pennsylvania Genealogical Society -**  
"Genealogical Research in an Internet Driven  
World" - Reed B. Powell.

**Sept. 12-15 - FGS Quad Cities Conference -**  
Davenport, IA "Great River Bend Genealogy... a  
Heartland Gathering". FGS- 888-FGS-1500 or  
fgs-office@fgs.org.

**Wed., Sept. 19 - 7:30 pm - Western**  
**Pennsylvania Civil War Round Table - "The**  
Battles of Spanish Fort and Fort Blakely" -  
Richard Lewis of Pamplin Park Civil War Park in  
Petersburg. These were the last major land  
battles of the war. Edgeworth Elementary  
School.

**Mon., Sept. 24 - 7:00 pm - The Greater**  
**Pittsburgh Civil War Round Table - "Lincoln and**  
His Cabinet" - Wood Cunningham, Civil War  
Historian. The Babcock, Babcock, Boulevard.

**Sat. Sept. 29 - 1:00 - 4:00 pm - Guided Tour of**  
**the John Heinz Regional History Center's Maxo**

**Vankja exhibit and St. Nicholas Croation**  
**Church, Millvale.** Transportation provided to  
and from History Center. Contact the History  
Center to confirm dates and times.  
412-454-6372.

**Sat. Oct. 6 - Soldiers' & Sailors' Memorial Hall -**  
**Open House -** Civil War art, re-enactors, Union &  
Confederate, free tours. Contact S&SMH for  
more information. 412-621-4253

**Sat., Oct. 6 - 9:00 am - 3:00 pm - The Tarentum**  
**Genealogical Society - Genealogy Conference**  
**2001 -** Clarion Inn, New Kensington. Speakers:  
Luanne R. Eisler, "Newspaper Research"; Jean  
O. Morris, "Beyond Wills and Deeds"; Audrey  
Iacone, "Researching Orphanages"; Blanche  
McGuire, "Building Bridges Across Miles and  
Years". Registration forms on the "freebie"  
table.

**Oct. 31 - Nov. 3 - Czechoslovak Genealogical**  
**Society International (CGSI) and Western Pa**  
**Slovak Cultural Association (WPSCA) - 8th**  
**Genealogical/Cultural Conference - Pittsburgh,**  
**PA.** - Hyatt Regency Pittsburgh International  
Airport Hotel - Keynote address: His Excellency  
Martin Butora, Slovak Ambassador to the U.S.  
Many tours, programs and entertainment  
planned. Check out their website for more  
details. <http://www.cgsl.org>.

Genealogy Classes - Both CCAC, North and Butler  
County Community College, Cranberry -  
beginning September. Each set of classes is 5  
weeks long and covers everything to start you on  
your way or to give you hints on where else to  
look for information on your ancestors. No  
surcharge for residents outside of the home  
county. For more information please call CCAS  
412-237-2670. Registration taken until Sept. 14  
for Sunday afternoon classes beginning Sept. 23.  
For more information on the Saturday morning  
class beginning Sept. 22, please call  
724-772-5520.

### President's Message (continued)

Library and began using their address for our mail. We have always given genealogical books to Northland's collection in thanks for the services they provide our society and community. We will be giving them more books at our August meeting. Look for them on the shelves in the weeks to come.

As any good genealogist knows, it is important to know where you have been in order to know where you are going. I hope this has given you a glimpse into how the North Hills Genealogists has increased tenfold in membership and attendance at meetings. Whether there are 7 people or 70 at a meeting, please do make yourself part of this group by volunteering your opinion, your time and your talent.

R.I.P. Julia Tauson, Ruth Grom and Veerna Swint. Thank you, ladies, for giving us our Roots.

Elissa Scalise Powell, CGRS

### THANK YOU

Just a few lines to say thank you to all of you. It has been a pleasure to serve you these past two years as your president. Thank you for trusting me with the stewardship of your organization. The experience has been rewarding for me far in proportion to my input. The rewards have come in many ways, from getting to know so many of you, to assistance with my own search when I had difficulties or was stalled. I have found the fellowship of the group encouraging, and the many stories of your individual searches has been enlightening.

I want to extend special thanks to all the board members and committee chairpersons who served so faithfully during my term as president.

They have all been unselfish and willing to roll up their sleeves and pitch right in when the need

beckoned. Without them I (and the organization) couldn't have functioned. Jean and Patsi as treasurer kept the books straight, and Kay and Shirley faithfully scribed the record of the proceedings. And there's Bill and Lois Daviess who see to it that you get your newsletter each month. Steph Valentine has silently been keeping the membership roster current. And I want to thank my vice-president Ginny, our Liaison Elissa, and past-president Gary. A special mention to Donna for work as editor of our very fine newsletter, and to Melinda, who as program chair did such a great job arranging the programs for the monthly meetings. Thank you all.

The organization is in good hands with Elissa as your new president. As for me, I'll still be a part of the board as combination past-president and vice-president. I'll be at all the meetings and affairs, because I believe this is a really good organization. Again, a great big thank you to all of you.

Sylvan

### NHG OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

President	Elissa Powell
Vice President	Sylvan Kretz
Secretary	Kay Santa
Treasurer	Jean Taylor
Cemetery Project	Ginny Skander
Membership	Steph Valentine
Program	Tom Wiley
Publicity	Gary Schlemmer
Mailings	Lois & Bill Daviess
Editor	Donna Booth

### CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to our former Program Chairperson Melinda Merriman on her marriage to Dennis Marn on July 27. They will be living in Cleveland.

## SEPTEMBER NHG MEETING

### FROM ITALY TO PITTSBURGH: THE ITALIAN IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

**Nicholas P. Ciotola**

Why did Italian immigrants leave their homeland and come to the United States? What was the experience of immigration really like? In what parts of Western Pennsylvania did Italians settle?

How did individual immigrants adjust and assimilate to life in Western Pennsylvania? This presentation will use slides of artifacts and historical photographs collected by the Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center in order to answer these and other questions about the Italian immigrant experience in the Pittsburgh region. Handouts and bibliographical material related to Western Pennsylvania's Italian American history will be available for those interested in learning more about their Italian roots.

Nicholas P. Ciotola is a Curator at the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania's Heinz History Center and teaches courses in Italian American studies at the University of Pittsburgh. His articles on the Italian American experience have appeared in *Western Pennsylvania History*; *Journal of Sport History*; *New Mexico Historical Review*; *Fra Noi*, *F&L Primo Ambassador*, *Heritage Quest* and other history journals and magazines.

### TOWN OF McCANDLESS 150TH ANNIVERSARY

**Sat. September 8 - Noon to 9:00 pm**  
Town Hall

5K Race, Food, Crafts, Entertainment, Parade,  
Fireworks

### WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

September 13, 2001 7:00 pm  
Lecture Hall, Carnegie Library

#### Genealogical Research in an Internet-Driven World

Reed B. Powell

The ever-expanding volume of genealogical data available on the Internet has changed many of our research strategies and methods. This talk will examine a handful of the most useful Internet websites. It will also address the use of technologies other than the World Wide Web, including e-mail distribution lists, newsgroups, CD-ROM libraries, etc. An open question and answer session will follow the presentation.

Reed Powell is a frequent columnist for WPGS *Jots from the Point* and is chairperson for the project to computerize the ancestor charts of WPGS members.

#### QUERIES

Compiled by Sylvan Kretz, Query Editor

**TUTTLE**, Bakerstown, PA, **WELDON**, Ligonier, PA, **MULLIGAN**, Sharon, PA, **McCANN**, Cool Springs, Mercer, PA. Contact: **Kathleen Richardson, 324 Heather Hill Drive, Gibsonia, PA 15044**

**IMMEL**, **JACOBS**, **ACHESON**, **LOZIER**, Westmoreland Co., PA, **BOOTH**, Washington and Allegheny Co., PA, **SALVATORA**, **PELLOW**, **IMMEL**, Allegheny Co., PA, **McNAUGHTON**, **STEVENS**, Clarion and Venango Co., PA. Contact: **Lois Salvatora, 5522 Bauer Drive, Gibsonia, PA 15044**

**HERBERT**, **CADMAN**. Contact: **Ruth McCartan, 9380 Cromwell Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15237**

## **FAMILY HISTORY TELEVISION SEEKS YOUR INPUT**

The following article is from Eastman's Online Genealogical Newsletter and is copyright 2001 by Richard W. Eastman. It is re-published here with the permission of the author

The Studio, Inc. has a major project underway that will be of interest to genealogists all over the United States. Now they are seeking your input.

The Studio, Inc. isn't exactly a stranger to genealogy. In the past 13 months they have produced more than 20 genealogy and family history videos, using several well-known genealogy experts as hosts.

During the NGS 2001 conference, crews from The Studio conducted interviews with experts in attendance and documented some of the convention. Producer Stephen Lemmon of The Studio plans to develop a television series dealing with the subject of family history. Several well-known genealogy experts are involved with this potential new television show.

The Studio is looking for input in a short survey. They would like to know if you are interested in such a Family History Television program, what type of content you would like to see, and whether you prefer it to be carried on cable, satellite or both. They are NOT collecting any personal data or e-mail addresses for marketing in any way. You will notice that they never ask for your name, address, telephone number or e-mail address.

If you would like to see television programming for Family History become available, please take a minute and fill out a short on-line survey at <http://www.familyhistory.tv/survey>.

## **TIME TO GATHER FAMILY INFORMATION**

Submitted by Steph Valentine

What church, if any, do you attend regularly?

Describe your religious beliefs.

Do you believe in an after-life?

What was the most stressful experience that you ever lived through? What helped you get through it?

What is the scariest thing that has ever happened to you personally?

What kinds of musical instrument(s) have you learned to play?

Would you consider yourself creative?

What things have you made that others have enjoyed?

## **TOMBSTONE SYMBOLS**

### **Animals**

**Birds** - Eternal Life or Resurrection

**Butterfly** - Short life

**Dog** - Implies a good master worthy of love

**Dove** - Seen in both Christian and Jewish cemeteries, the dove means innocence and/or peace

**Lamb** - usually marks the grave of a child and means innocence

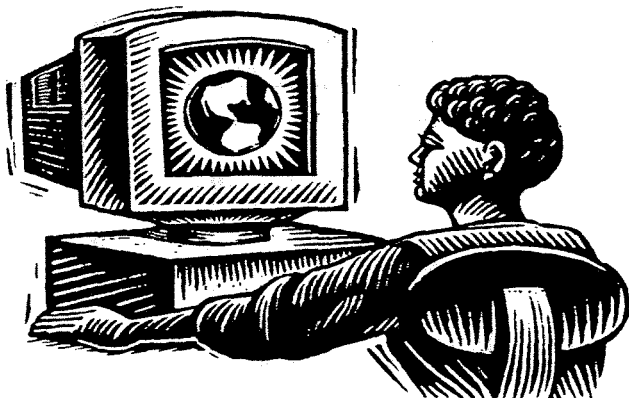
**Lion** - the lion's eternal watch guards the tomb and stands for courage

**Rooster** - Awakening - Resurrection

**I don't have to look up my family tree, because**

**I know that I'm the sap.**

**Fred Allen**



## WEB WANDERINGS

Note: All start with <http://www>. unless otherwise noted

Free DAR Patriot Lookup Service

[dar.org](http://dar.org)

Homewood Cemetery, Pittsburgh, PA

Genealogical Section - Catalogue of Proprietors

Lists the owners names, sections and lot numbers  
for the entire cemetery

<http://homewoodcemetery.org/>

## PENNSYLVANIA DIGITAL STATE ARCHIVES

The following news release is from the Pennsylvania  
Historical and Museum Commission (PMHC)

On behalf of Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge,  
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum  
Commission (PHMC) Executive Director, Brent D.  
Glass announced Pennsylvanians now - for the  
first time - can access historical records through  
the PA PowerPort.

The Archives Records Information Access System  
(ARIAS) will enable Pennsylvanians and  
researchers from around the world to utilize  
resources of the Pennsylvania State Archives  
right from their homes or local libraries. The  
records can be accessed through the PA  
PowerPort at <http://www.state.pa.us> or  
directly at the Commission's site at:  
<http://www.phmc.state.pa.us>

"With the click of a mouse, students, teachers,  
family researchers and history buffs will be able  
to view online historical records maintained at  
the State Archives in Harrisburg", Glass said.  
"Our goal is to provide easy, cost-free access to  
historical records that constitute our most  
valuable window to the past. We think of it as the  
'Digital State Archives'."

Currently, ARIAS offers approximately 200,000  
images relating to the participation of  
Pennsylvanians in the Revolutionary War,  
Spanish American War and World War I.

The Revolutionary War records are arranged  
alphabetically by the surname of each soldier,  
with information on service in the Pennsylvania  
Militia, Pennsylvania Line and the Navy; the  
name and rank of soldier; active or inactive duty;  
county of residence; battalion in which served;  
and the archival record from which the  
information was extracted.

More than 300,000 Civil War and Mexican  
Border Campaign service card images also are  
being loaded into the system.

Eventually, millions of digitized records, ranging  
from 19th century county birth, death and  
marriage dockets to collections of photographs  
illustrating every aspect of the Pennsylvania  
experience will be added.

"Genealogists are hungry for access to records  
such as these", said James Beidler Exec. Director  
of the Genealogical Society of PA. "The beauty of  
the resources found in ARIAS is that they will  
lead researchers to the original source  
documents, which is what every family historian  
yearns to find about his or her ancestors."

## THE STORY BEHIND THE NAMES OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

Reprinted from John M. Roberts' & Sons advertising in the  
Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph, late 1940-early 1950. Submitted  
by Bernice Broniecki

### **Mercer County**

Mercer County was created by an Act of March 12, 1800 and named in honor of General Hugh Mercer, companion of young Washington in the Braddock campaign, and the indomitable American patriot who died of wounds received in the Battle of Princeton. Counties in six other states have been named for this hero.

At the close of the Revolutionary War, northwestern Pennsylvania, north of Pittsburgh and west of the Allegheny River, was set aside for the fulfillment of the promise made to the soldiers and officers of the Pennsylvania Line of certain donations of land, as reward for their enlistment and service. Several land companies played an important part in the settlement of Mercer County, among them the Holland Land Company, and the Pennsylvania Population Company. The earliest actual settlers were citizens of Allegheny County. The first adventurers into this wilderness were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.

**Mercer**, the county seat, was incorporated from **Finley Township**, March 28, 1814. It was a former Indian village of considerable importance.

No white settlement was made until after Wayne's victory in 1795. The Junkins built the first mill in 1805. General Lafayette was entertained here in 1824.

**Sharon** was granted a city charter in 1916, and became a third-class city in January, 1920. First settled in 1802 by Benjamin Bentley, laid out in 1815 by William Budd and given the Biblical name of Sharon, in 1819.

**Farrell** was incorporated as a borough from **Hickory Township** in 1901, as the borough of **South Sharon**. In 1911, the name was changed to **Farrell**, in honor of James A. Farrell, president of the United States Steel Corporation.

**Greenville**, seat of Thiel College, established in 1871, was laid out in 1819 by Thomas Bean and William Scott and called **West Greenville** in honor of General Nathaniel Greene, changed to **Greenville** in 1865. Grove City, originally **Pine Grove**, because of the abundance of pines, was incorporated from **Pine Township** in 1883 and is the seat of Grove City College. **Sharpsville**, named for George Sharp, original owner of the land, was first settled by Jonathan Dunham in 1798. The Sharpsville furnace was built in 1846.

Mercer County is an area of 700 square miles, with two cities, fourteen boroughs and thirty-two townships.

### **HEAR YE! HEAR YE! HEAR YE!**

The Western Pennsylvania Genealogical Society invites you to the National Genealogical Society's 100th Anniversary Conference in Pittsburgh, PA, May 28-31, 2003 at the new Pittsburgh Convention Center. Come help us celebrate their one hundred years of providing education, support and guidance to family historians.

Ed. Note: This notice of the NGS 100th Anniversary Celebration comes from Barbara Guffey, one of NHG's newest members. Barbara is a past president (1999-2000) of WPGS and has been elected to be WPGS President for next year (2002-2003) for the NGS's visit to Pittsburgh. She hopes many of you will volunteer to help with the conference.

Barb is third grade teacher in Shaler Schools as well as a member of the Board of Trustees at Westminster College in New Wilmington, PA.

## **CALL TO ACTION FOR DECLARING OCTOBER FAMILY HISTORY MONTH**

For the past several years, October has been designated Family History Month. An idea that originated with the Monmouth County Genealogical Society has spread into a nationwide campaign with the endorsement of the National Genealogical Society and the Federation of Genealogical Societies.

Now we have the opportunity to make this a national event. Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah is sponsoring a Family History Resolution to have October officially declared Family History Month. The resolution has been drafted and a letter sent from Senator Hatch's office to all the other Senators to solicit their support. This is a great opportunity for the genealogical community at large to receive national recognition for their efforts.

To support the passage of this measure, contact your State Senators and urge them to support and vote for Senator Hatch's Family History Resolution. Let's remind them of the widespread interest in family history and the contribution it makes to our American heritage.

### **PA Senators**

Rick Santorum  
120 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
(202) 224-6324

<http://www.senate.gov/~santorum/#email>

Arlen Specter  
711 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
(202) 224-4254  
<http://specter.senate.gov/webform.htm>

## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS**

Have you renewed your membership in NHG for 2001-2002? If not, this is the last newsletter you will be receiving. Membership is \$12 a year. Renewal forms are available at the meeting, or send them to the address on the front. Please mark the envelope "Membership Chairperson". Do it now before you forget. Don't miss any issues of the Newsletter.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

Don't miss any of the 2001-2002 NHG meetings. Mark the following dates on your calendar now. The second date is the deadline for submitting any Newsletter material.

### **2001**

September 18 (8th)

October 16 (6th)

November 20 (10th)

December - Christmas Social - no meeting

### **2002**

January 15 (4th)

February 19 (10th)

March 19 (10th)

April 16 (6th)

May 21 (10th)

June 18 (8th)

July 16 - no newsletter

## **2000-2001 NEWSLETTER SUBJECT AND SURNAME INDEX**

Copies of the Newsletter Subject Index and Surname Index will be available at the meetings. If you are unable to attend the meetings and would like copies, please send a SASE (separate envelope for each index) to NHG and mark the envelope either "Subject Index" or "Surname Index" and copies will be sent to you.



## DONATIONS TO NORTHLAND LIBRARY

The following books are being donated to Northland Public Library as part of our support for the Library. These new books have a retail value of \$202.99 and should be on the shelves after they are catalogued. Your subscription to the North Hills Genealogists newsletter not only lets us provide the programs at our monthly meetings, but allows us to provide these books for everyone's use through the Library. Suggestions for future purchases should be given to the book committee: Patsi Lee, Steph Valentine or Elissa Powell.

Newman, John J. **Uncle, We Are Ready! Registering America's Men 1917-1918**. North Salt Lake, UT: Heritage Quest. 2001 Includes CD-Rom ISBN 0-944931-63-4 \$29.95

Hatcher, CG, Patricia Law. **Producing a Quality Family History**. Salt Lake City, UT.; Ancestry, Inc. 1996. ISBN 0-916489-64-7 \$19.95

Szucs, Loretto Dennis. **Family History Made Easy**. Salt Lake City, UT: Ancestry, Inc. 1998. ISBN 0-916489-72-8 \$12.95

Hansen, Kevan M. **Finding Your German Ancestors: A Beginner's Guide**. Salt Lake City, UT: Ancestry, Inc. 1999 ISBN 0-91-64898-3 \$6.95

Helm, Matthew L. & April Leigh Helm. **Genealogy Online for Dummies**. Foster City, CA: IDG Books Worldwide, Inc. 2001. ISBN 0-7645-0807-5 \$24.99

Richley, Pat. **The Everything Online Genealogy Book: Using the Web to Discover Long-Lost Relations, Trace your Family Tree Back to Royalty, and Share Your History with Far-Flung Cousins!** Holbrook, MA: Adams Media

Corp. 2000, ISBN 1-58062-402-2 \$12.95

Kemp, Thomas Jay. **The American Census Handbook**. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc. 2001. ISBN 0-8420-2925-7 \$29.95

Rimmel, William M. **The Allegheny Story**. Pittsburgh, PA: The Guttendorf Press, 1981 (Limited Edition) \$10.35

Schaefer, Christina K. **Guide to Naturalization Records of the United States**. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1997 ISBN 0-8063-1532-6 \$25.00

Dollarhide, William. **Grow a Family Tree! Seven Simple Steps**. North Salt Lake, UT: Heritage Quest, 2000. ISBN 0-944931-42-1 \$24.95 (with CD-ROM)

Repeat Performance. **Genealogy Cassette Tapes: Your World's Largest Genealogy Audio Resource Catalog**. Hobart, IN: Repeat Performance, 2001 \$5.00

Federation of Genealogical Societies. **Membership Directory 2000**. Austin, TX: Federation of Genealogical Societies, 2000

### DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES FOR SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 8, 2001

Send to the library, marked "Newsletter" or to  
Editor at DJBooth@worldnet.att.net

**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.**

# **NORTH HILLS GENEALOGISTS**

**C/O Northland Public Library**

**300 Cumberland Road**

**Pittsburgh, PA 15237**

## **FIRST CLASS MAIL**

### **DATED MATERIAL**

#### **FROM ITALY TO PITTSBURGH: THE ITALIAN IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA**

**Nicholas P. Ciotola**

**September 18, 2001**

#### **HISTORY IN DECAY**

**How the city and county are neglecting our  
heritage**

This is the title of the front page article in the Sunday, August 12, 2001 issue of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. The article was written by Marylynn Pitz. The first paragraph states: "A large chunk of Allegheny County's history is rotting away in an old Serta mattress factory on the North Side. More than a million pounds of records, packed in 50,000 numbered boxes, are stacked on aisle after aisle of shelves, where they sizzle in the humid summer heat."

The article talks about the county's lack of interest in preserving these documents. For years many of these records were stored in the Court

House attic, subjected to a leaky roof, insects and pigeon droppings. After being moved to Manchester in 1992 many were damaged in a flood in the late 1990's. Included in these files are docket books which show the grave sites of the region's war veterans, marriage licenses, naturalization papers and county records dating to 1788.

Ken White, director of the archives of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh is quoted as saying that the value of these records is that they "tell us where we are now and how we got here."

If you missed this article, check out <http://www.post-gazette.com>. If your ancestors are from Allegheny County, you will want to cry at this sad situation.