



PITTSBURGH'S OWN...

NORTH HILLS GENEALOGISTS

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ANCESTRY.COM LAUNCHES LARGEST ONLINE COLLECTION OF RECORDS DOCUMENTING AUSTRALIA'S CONVICTED 'FOUNDING FATHERS'

80 Years of 18th- and 19th-Century Australian Convict Records Reveal the Not-So-Criminal Crimes of Those Banished to the Land Down Under; British Transportation Practice Has Roots in America

PROVO, Utah, July 25 /PRNewswire/ -- Stealing sheep or wool or cloth in 18th- and 19th-century England could land you a minimum seven-year sentence at an Australian penal colony, according to Ancestry.com's newest online collection of Australian convicts records. For those interested in uncovering the criminal ancestors lurking in their past, the world's largest online resource for family history today released the largest collection of Australian convict records, indexed and searchable online for the first time. Records detail the some 165,000 convicts transported to Australia from 1788 to 1868.

An estimated 22 percent of Australians are descended from these British exiles. Their sentences served, many convicts remained Down Under, becoming Australia's first western settlers.

The British government deemed transportation, as the practice was known, just punishment for a mixed bag of crimes from marrying secretly to burning clothes. Although "felony," "larceny" and "burglary" described the overwhelming majority of crimes, a few records include juicy details, such as, "obtaining money by false pretences," "stealing heifers" and "privately stealing in a shop." The convict records typically contain convict's name, date and place

of sentencing, length of sentence -- usually 7 years, 14 years or life -- and, sometimes, the crime committed.

"By today's standards, many of these crimes are minor misdemeanors or are no longer illegal, and the severity of punishments seem ludicrous," said Megan Smolenyak, Chief Family Historian for Ancestry.com. "No wonder Australians consider a convict in their family tree a badge of honor and seek to uncover the amusing, quirky and outrageous details in their family's 'criminal' past."

But as notorious as the Australian convicts might be, England first disposed of its felons in the American colonies. High crime rates and over-crowded jails led the English government to transport small-time criminals to British colonies. By 1775, England had shipped some 50,000 convicts to America. They worked as indentured servants, typically on tobacco plantations in Virginia and Maryland.

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WHO WE ARE NORTH HILLS GENEALOGISTS

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 Twp. In the North Hills of Pittsburgh, PA. Tip Time begins at 6:45 PM and our general meeting commences at 7:00 PM. Our meetings are free and open to the public.

We publish a Newsletter ten times a year for a nominal fee of \$15.00 annually. The subscription year runs from August to June, but anyone wishing to join mid-year will receive back issues of the Newsletter for that year. Previous years' newsletters are also available for purchase, each with helpful hints for beginners and experienced genealogists.

The NHG Board meets at 7:00 PM on the first Tuesday of each month in the Conference Room, also located at the Northland Public Library. The Board meeting is open to all members of the NHG.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

This newsletter marks the beginning of a new year for the North Hills Genealogists and brings with it a number of new officers of the organization. It will be my privilege to serve as your president for the upcoming year. I consider that an honor and appreciate the opportunity.

There are a number of challenges facing genealogy societies such as ours, many as a result of the continuing rapid technological progress enveloping the field. Since I am relatively new to this arena, I will need your help in meeting those challenges.

Your thoughts and ideas are very important to accomplishing the mission of the North Hills Genealogists. This is your society and the Board exists to serve you. We need to know what you want and expect from the NHG – ideas are what grow an organization! Please feel free to contact me at any time with those thoughts. I can be reached at 724-449-3359 or peggie@nauticom.net.

As this is my introductory newsletter, I thought it would be a good time to share my ancestral recipe with you. On my father's side, I am three parts Welsh and one part English. My maternal side consists of one-half Scotch-Irish and one-half German. As mentioned in the May newsletter's candidate bios, my great-great-grandparents came to the United States from North Wales in the 1830's.

The main focus of my current efforts is to find the home village in Wales of those great-great-grandparents. But we'll talk more about that later.

~Dave

REFLECTIONS

By: Steph Valentine

Recently, the passing of time was brought into extreme focus. My cousin's husband, Bruce, has just been diagnosed with the onset of Alzheimer's. During my last visit, I noticed that he just didn't seem right but, nonetheless, we had interesting conversations although he was silent when I was talking to my cousin. This man took part in D-Day and served as a Navy doctor on an LST (Landing Ship, Tank). His ship evacuated the wounded from the beaches to England. He was proud of the fact that under his care, no men died during the transit back to England. We discussed what he did, where he was, how he felt and what his ship did. I was able to track down his ship and found that it was turned over to the South Vietnamese Navy around 1970. He got a chuckle out of that.

This brings home the point made by our July speaker, Deborah Lichtner Deal, on the importance of obtaining oral history. Time marches on. When we visit my cousin and her husband, Bruce, later this year, will we be able to hold a meaningful conversation? I plan on writing down questions to ask him before he retreats behind the fog of Alzheimer's. I hope I'll be successful. In addition, I'll pray that my elderly cousin can handle his dementia. I'll be talking with his kids to see how they are handling this disease along with help and care for my cousin. Shortly, if not sooner, all the memories of this man will be lost and I hope that I'm not too late.

I've embarked on a small project to scan the pictures and negatives that fill our photo albums. I've scanned onto CDs all the Navy pictures that I'd taken when I was stationed on board the USS Trepang, USS Larson and when I was stationed in Vietnam. My next step is to attempt to reconnect with my shipmates and share those pictures with them, as we were young once. When you serve with a group of men for several years, you form a connection that is hard to break. I'm curious how life has treated them since we served together.

Once that project is done, I plan to scan the negatives of pictures that I took during high school and college. I hope to accomplish the same connections and share laughs with my classmates from years gone by. I've managed to miss my high school fortieth reunion. I hope that I won't miss my college fortieth.

I mentioned in a previous article that I'm also attempting to contact my second cousins. My mother was an only child and my father had only an older sister. Consequently, I have only two first cousins. On the other hand, my grandparents had multiple siblings and therefore I have lots and lots of second cousins. I'm curious to find out about those sides of the family. I'll keep my fingers crossed but so far, I have only heard from two out of the ten cousins I've attempted to contact. I guess I'm doing OK.

SOCIAL SECURITY DEATH INDEX (SSDI) REACHES THE 80 MILLION RECORD MARK

By: Tom Kemp, Rootsweb.com

August 14, 2007 - The SSDI went over 80 Million records today and now contains more than 80 Million death records. The only place you can see all of them is at www.GenealogyBank.com.

The *GenealogyBank* site is the only provider of the SSDI death records that is updated weekly and has all of these records online now.

You'll find Americans from all 50 States and those that died overseas too.

If the Social Security Administration has a record of their death, then they are in the index.

Other great enhancements provided by GenealogyBank are that the record gives the day of the week of the person's birth and death as well as their complete age, expressed in years, months and days. The site also provides the latitude and longitude for those wanting to add GPS tracking to their genealogical records.

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SSDI REACHES 80 MILLION RECORD MARK

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The SSDI includes all deaths registered with the Social Security Administration from 1937 to the present. Other sites are updated monthly, quarterly and some are seldom updated.

There are just under 20 Million Americans born in the 19th Century in the SSDI and contrary to popular belief there are well over 3,120,000 deaths recorded before 1965 in the SSDI.

The SSDI is the most popular starting point for beginning genealogists. It allows them to quickly gather information about their relatives that passed away in the past 70 years. It is easy to retrieve every "Johnson" from across the country (there are 595,681) or to narrow the search to just the "Johnson" death records for Nome, Alaska (there are 6).

You may search the SSDI on GenealogyBank for free and get a brief record. You do need to subscribe to the service to see the entire record.

The following is an example of the data contained in a full SSDI record from GenealogyBank:

Name: Charlie Delaine

Date of Birth: Thursday December 28, 1933

Date of Death: Friday August 03, 2007

Est. Age at death: 73 years, 7 months, 6 days

Last known residence:

City: Darlington County: Darlington

State: South Carolina

ZIP Code: 29532

Latitude: 34.3125 *Longitude:* -79.8501

Confirmation: Proven

Social Security details:

State of Issue: South Carolina

Number: 251-50-6484

ERROR IN ARKANSAS LAW ALLOWS KIDS TO MARRY

By Andrew DeMillo, Assoicated Press

August 18, 2007, LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) - A law passed this year allows Arkansans of any age, even infants, to marry if their parents agree,

and the governor may have to call a special session to fix the mistake, lawmakers said Friday.

The legislation was intended to establish 18 as the minimum age to marry but also allow pregnant teenagers to marry with parental consent, bill sponsor Rep. Will Bond said. An extraneous "not" in the bill, however, allows anyone who is not pregnant to marry at any age if the parents allow it.

"It's clearly not the intent to allow 10-year-olds or 11-year-olds to get married," Bond said. "The legislation was screwed up." The bill reads: "In order for a person who is younger than eighteen (18) years of age and who is not pregnant to obtain a marriage license, the person must provide the county clerk with evidence of parental consent to the marriage."

A code revision commission - which fixes typographical and technical errors in laws - had tried to correct the mistake, but a group of legislators said Friday the commission went beyond its powers.

"You're either pregnant or you're not pregnant," Sen. Dave Bisbee said. "Rarely will that be a typographical error." The Arkansas Legislative Council asked the independent commission to reverse its correction. Several lawmakers said a special session may be necessary.

"We need a special session to fix this," Sen. Sue Madison said. "I am concerned about pedophiles coming to Arkansas to find parents who are willing to sign a very young child's consent."

Before the new law took effect July 31, girls could get married with parental consent at 16 and boys at 17.

The Legislature formally adjourned its session in May and is not scheduled to meet again until January 2009, unless Gov. Mike Beebe calls a special session. Beebe said he wanted to look at all options for correcting the error before deciding whether to call a special session.

FAMILY TIES LEAD BACK TO THE GALLOWES

By Kristin D'Agostino, Malden Observer

Thursday, August 9, 2007 - Malden, MA - In 1692, 71-year-old Rebecca (Towne) Nurse, a bedridden invalid and mother of eight, went to the gallows — accused of witchcraft by townspeople who just weeks earlier had sung hymns with her in church. Nurses' two sisters, Mary Estey and Sarah Bridges Cloyse, were also accused, and Estey soon followed her sister to the gallows.

Now, centuries after this family's tragedy, the Towne Family Association, a group of families who are descended from Nurse, her husband, and her accused siblings, will gather for their 27th annual reunion at the Rebecca Nurse Homestead in Danvers.

From Sept. 13 to Sept. 15, instead of barbecued hotdogs and volleyball, there will be visits to the Salem Witch Trials Memorials in Salem and Danvers, and a graveside ceremony on the homestead at Nurse's marble memorial. (Nurse's remains are believed to be somewhere on the homestead's 25 acres though her true burial place is unknown as witches were not entitled to a marked grave which was part of a Christian burial.)

The Towne Family Association began in Danvers back in 1980 as a small group of 25 descendents and has expanded through the decades to a group of between 400 and 500 members, who refer to themselves as "cousins." Many are Salem residents. Two thirds of the members are related to William and Joanna Blessing Towne, Rebecca's parents who immigrated from Yarmouth, England around 1635; the rest are unrelated history buffs who enjoy subscribing to the association's quarterly newsletter and keeping up genealogy and annual events.

Among these "adopted cousins" is Glenn Mairo, the reunion's host, a self-taught historian and classical musician who first stumbled onto the

Rebecca Nurse Homestead 11 years ago when he was working for the Danvers Alarm List Company as a costumed musician doing revolutionary reenactments.

Mairo confessed a big part of his connection with the Towne family stems from his enchantment with the Nurse Homestead itself. For members of the Towne Family Association, Mairo reflected, visiting the homestead is akin to making a "pilgrimage" back to their ancestral roots. For him, being on the ancient property is about indulging his love of history, music, and archeology. The most magical part of the lush green space for him is the winding driveway leading up to the house.

"When you drive down it," he said, "You separate from the 21st century and go back to a simpler time. Time stands still."

Unearthing the past

Among those attending the family reunion is state Rep. John Keenan, D-Salem, whose paternal grandmother's name was Nurse. Keenan says it wasn't till his grandmother passed away and genealogical papers were found in her house, that he discovered his familial ties to Rebecca Nurse.

More evidence was discovered last summer when Keenan's father sold his home and the basement which contained some of his grandmothers belongings, was being cleaned out. In the backyard Keenan discovered his 7-year-old son playing with something that appeared to be a silver basket.

"It turned out to be a fiftieth anniversary gift engraved with the names Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Nurse, marked 1840-1890," Keenan said. "He was putting dirt inside it."

Arthur Towne, a retired civil engineer who lives in Hamilton, discovered his ties to Rebecca Nurse 30 years ago, when his daughter began researching an eighth-grade family history project. His wife Jean began doing genealogy

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FAMILY TIES LEAD BACK TO THE GALLOWS

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and learned her husband was descended from Edmund Towne, Rebecca Nurse's brother, a farmer who was a founder of the town of Topsfield.

Towne, whose family has lived on the North Shore for generations, felt an instant connection with his provincial ancestor, saying he himself enjoys farming and is a member of the Topsfield Fair's Poultry Committee. Towne added that being a member of a historically renowned family has an addictive quality.

"You kind of get hooked on it," he said. "Your ears are up all the time listening for anything that might be related to it."

Keenan also has been affected by his ancestral ties, drawing upon them as inspiration in his work for the state. In November 2005, when the Judiciary Committee was debating whether or not to reinstate the death penalty in Massachusetts, Keenan urged the committee to reject the measure. He pointed out a mural painted on the walls of the chamber, part of the Milestones to Freedom series, which depicted Judge Samuel Sewall repenting for his role in the witch hysteria.

"I am a descendent of one who was wrongly prosecuted and wrongly executed," Keenan told the committee. "It is through that connection that I want to remind this body that now legal process that involves humans can ever be infallible."

Last month Mairo, a vocational archeologist, launched a summer long archaeological field school for Phillips Academy students. Already the students have unearthed relics that date back to prehistoric times including fragments of pottery and tobacco pipes believed to have been used by the Nurse family in the late 17th century. Mairo will be sharing these objects with Towne family members at the reunion, and anticipates that many will have an emotional reaction upon seeing them.

"It's their history coming up out of the ground," he said. "(The Townes) are not like other families. They've known persecution ... they've survived the powers of the crucible."

INTERNET RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH IN ENGLAND

Price and Associates, a professional genealogy and family history service company, has made available on their website a comprehensive list of Internet sites targeted for English Family History and Genealogy. The links to Internet sites are free to use, and the links are also color coded to let the researcher know in advance if the linked site is a "free" or "fee." The site includes links for:

- Archive Cataloges
- All counties in England
- Civil Registration for birth, marriage and Death certificates
- Census and Census Substitutes
- Burial Indexes
- Baptism Indexes
- Court Records
- Genealogy Encyclopedia
- Heraldry and Nobility
- Immigration Records
- Local Histories
- Marriage Indexes
- Maps and Gazetteers
- Monumental Inscriptions (Tombstones)
- Military Records
- Migration Records
- Networking with Other Researchers
- Occupations
- Old Handwriting Aids
- One-Place Studies (Locales in England)
- Probate Records
- Religions

If you have research needs in England, this site is a goldmine of information. If you don't count ancestors from England in your pedigree, this site is still valuable for general genealogical information and resources. Thanks to our Vice President, Amy Arner for passing along this great Internet resource!

NHG – UPCOMING PROGRAM SPEAKERS

September 18: *Angel Migliozi* **Creating Digital Albums**

Angel Migliozi shows us how the newest technology enables us to create digital albums and reproduce them for multiple loved ones in one easy step. Angel is a Creative Memories Consultant with 16 years of experience teaching people how to organize and display their family photos and create traditional scrapbook albums that include photo journaling, memorabilia and photos to log an entire heritage.

October 16: *Lisa A. Alzo, M.F.A.* **Demystifying Eastern European Research**

Anyone who has attempted to trace their ancestors back to Eastern Europe understands how border changes, language differences, and exotic-sounding surnames often complicate the research process. But researching your Eastern European ancestors is not as difficult as you may think. This talk will cover the 10 most common myths and misconceptions about Eastern European research and how to bust them using the best traditional and online resources available. Even if your ancestors didn't hail from Central or Eastern Europe, this talk will include many universal tips for busting your own brick walls. *Lisa A. Alzo, M.F.A.* grew up in Duquesne, Pennsylvania. She is the author of six books: *Three Slovak Women*, *Baba's Kitchen: Slovak & Rusyn Family Recipes & Traditions*, *Finding Your Slovak Ancestors*, *Pittsburgh's Immigrants*, *Slovak Pittsburgh*, and the recently released *Sports Memories of Western Pennsylvania*, as well as numerous articles for genealogy magazines and journals. Lisa serves on the Board of Directors for Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International and as Second Vice-President for the Federation of Eastern European Family History Societies. She teaches online genealogy courses for GenClass.com and the National Institute for Genealogical Studies, and is a frequently invited speaker for national conferences, genealogical and historical societies.

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ANCESTRY.COM LAUNCHES LARGEST ONLINE COLLECTION OF RECORDS DOCUMENTING AUSTRALIA'S CONVICTED 'FOUNDING FATHERS'

Tired of England deporting unwanted citizens to America, Benjamin Franklin suggested sending rattlesnakes to England in return -- a sentiment shared by many Colonial leaders. The American Revolution ended convict banishment to the United States, and the British began shipping their criminals some 15,000 miles to newly discovered Australia.

Unique Attributes of Australian-Bound Convicts:

- A vast majority of Australia-bound convicts were English, Irish and Scottish men between the ages of 20 and 24.
- Women accounted for some 15 percent of Australian convicts but were outnumbered by men, six to one.
- 39 percent of male and 35 percent of female convicts had no prior convictions
- The oldest convict transported was approximately 60, and the youngest nine.
- 1,321 convicts were from other parts of the British Empire.
- The majority of convicts were illiterate and convicted for crimes of poverty (theft).
- In the first years of transportation, convict ships were unsanitary and disease ridden; conditions improved in the later years.
- Convicts typically served their sentence building roads, bridges and buildings or for free settlers.
- When transportation ended, convicts made up 40 percent of Australia's English-speaking population.

Pioneer Cemeteries of Franklin Park Borough and Marshall Township

Preserving cemetery information in the northern Allegheny County area of **Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**, this hardcover, library-quality book includes unpublished church records; previous readings; and full tombstone descriptions with color, condition, symbols, and stone carvers' names for all burials. Indexed and cross-referenced with maiden names, military units, and funeral home directors; maps; directions; histories of each cemetery; illustrations; photos enhance this volume.



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CREATING DIGITAL ALBUMS

Presented by: Angel Miglioizzi

Angel Miglioizzi will show us how the newest technology enables us to create digital albums and reproduce them for multiple loved ones in one easy step.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2007

DEMYSTIFYING EASTERN EUROPEAN RESEARCH

Presented by: Lisa A. Alzo, M.F.A.

This talk will cover the 10 most common myths and misconceptions about Eastern European research and how to bust them using the best traditional and online resources available. Even if your ancestors didn't hail from Central or Eastern Europe, this talk will include many universal tips for busting your own brick walls.

THIS MONTH -- TUESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2007

MY OLD LIFE TO A NEW BEGINNING

Presented by: Dorota Kayman Saad

Dorota will speak on what her life was like in Poland and her immigration experience coming to the United States in the 1990's.