



THE DCGS NEWSLETTER

Dutchess County Genealogical Society

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President's Message

Valerie LaRobardier, President

Family Legends and Oral Histories

One problem I have wrestled with as a genealogist is how much stock to place in the 'family remembrances' that are passed down. They frequently are a source of clues, but more often than not they are filled with distorted and corrupted histories. And yet, recently I have found histories and multi-generational genealogies that are passed down with a high degree of detail. Evaluating what to accept and what to doubt can be daunting. But written records we have all seen can also be incorrect, so regardless of whether written or oral one must carefully analyze and evaluate the sources that we use. There will always be a degree of subjectivity in the acceptance or rejection.

Every culture has family history and traditions passed down to some degree. In the case of peoples who record their genealogy in town and church records and Bible pages the written records may become lost. But each generation recalls some story or another that they heard in their youth, and then when in old age a younger person asks them "Where did your grandmother come from?" they may relate what they think they heard. This type of passing on the family history leads to corruption with each generation and gives rise to family legends that the careful genealogist can and should look askance at. These stories are accidentally passed on with a bit of guesswork involved, and from a time distant enough to not be able to answer questions. There usually are clues contained therein that may help sort out the actual story when more facts are uncovered, so this type of family remembrance is valuable...but it is not accurate by itself.

Another type of family history is passed down orally through family remembrance, however, and this type is intentional rather than accidental. It occurs in cultures that have not always had written languages and are careful to preserve their history by training someone in each generation to memorize the stories, preserve them among their own generation, and pass them on to the next generation. Because this oral history was their only history, its completeness and accuracy was important. For that reason these family remembrances are very different than the ones that were called up later from having heard something that may or may not have been intended for future generations. My feeling is that these oral family histories must be given the same credibility as those that were written down by cultures that recorded in the ledgers and journals of their day.

Membership

Roland Ormsby, Membership VP
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Membership lists are shown in the printed version of the Newsletter, but not in the web version.

Volunteers Needed

Valerie LaRobardier, President

We are still looking for individuals who would like to help out by transcribing for our members only page. This activity can be handled remotely so any member might apply. If you would like to learn more please send an email to dcgsinfo@aol.com with "Volunteer inquiry" in the subject line.

Books Added to our Library

Mary Colbert, VP Library

New York Family History Research Guide and Gazetteer, New York Genealogical and Bibliographical Society, 2015

A comprehensive guidebook to the genealogical resources of New York State; Part 1 is a guide to record groups and resource resources and Part 2, a guide to research resources in each of New York State's 62 counties.

Names, Names, & More Names, Locating Your Dutch Ancestors, Arthur C. M. Kelly, Ancestry, 1999

Schultzs Account Book, Schultzville, Dutchess County, NY 1795-1811. Transcribed and Indexed by Arthur C. M. Kelly, Kinship, 2015

Schultzs Account Book, Schultzville, Dutchess County, NY 1851-1861. Transcribed and Indexed by Arthur C. M. Kelly, Kinship, 2015

Genealogy Classes

Mary Colbert, VP Library

Look for us on the East Fishkill Community Library site. Register with Cindy Dubinski by calling 845.221.9943 x225 or emailing dubinski@eflibrary.org

Genealogy Basics and Beyond – Beginning your Search

September 21st 10:30 am to Noon

Members of the Dutchess County Genealogical Society will offer several classes on the *Basics and Beyond of Genealogy*. The first session will be led by **Mary Colbert**, Librarian of the Family History Library in Poughkeepsie. It will focus on *Beginning Your Search*: In this class we will talk about finding information in your own home and by talking to relatives; documenting your sources; online resources; visiting repositories; types of genealogical records; analyzing records; and how to organize materials and information.

Registration is required and class is limited to 36 participants

Watch the web site for **Christine Crawford-Oppenheimer** on October 19th with 'A Vast Online Library: Finding Family History in [Free!] Books on the Internet' and **Valerie LaRobardier** with 'When Vital Records Fail: Finding Your Ancestor in Court Records' on November 16th.