

Blazing New Trails - Review of the 57th Annual Ohio Genealogical Conference



2018 OGS Conference
Guide

Review of the 57th Annual Ohio Genealogical Society Conference - Blazing New Trails - Columbus, Ohio; April 11-14, 2018.

Having attended my first Genealogy Conference, I felt compelled to write a review and summary of this event.

I have been researching my family lineages for years, beginning as a teen when I took a 4-H project on Genealogy. This has been a life-long interest of mine and this year decided to take my hobby to the next level by attending the 2018 Ohio Genealogical Society's Annual Conference, held this year at the Hyatt Regency in Columbus Ohio.

While I cannot speak of the hotel facilities (having stayed elsewhere), I can review a few of the classes I attended. This event began on Wednesday evening, April 11 with prepaid workshops to any attendee who had registered in advance. I began my conference experience the next day, Thursday, April 12 and proceeded throughout the next three days to attend a total of 19 sessions. Hey, I figured I spent the money to be there for three days, so I would take advantage of as many sessions as possible. Each session lasted one hour with 10 minutes break in between and a 1-1/2 hour lunch break. It was fast-paced with no time for boredom and barely time for coffee breaks.

The event was well planned out, thanks to Conference Chairs, Stacey Adger and Marleen Applegate, and from an attendee point of view, everything ran smoothly with the exception of a few computer glitches (which were rectified quickly by the knowledgeable IT staff on hand).

There was an exhibit hall with organizations from all over Ohio and elsewhere, such as various Ohio County Genealogy Societies, [The OGS](#), several authors of Fiction and Historical Fiction, [“FunStuffForGenealogists”](#) (who gladly took my money), some War Societies, DNA Research, Libraries and Lineage Societies, to name a few.

The conference kicked off with an entertaining keynote session by [J. Mark Lowe, CG, FUGA](#), entitled, “Pistol Packing Grandma.” Apparently, his grandma was a lively woman who, although you wouldn’t know by looking at her, took no guff from anyone, including the two hobo’s caught stealing clothing from the family. It was a great way to start the conference.

Every hour, experts in the field offered us a choice of five different sessions teaching various topics relevant to the study of Genealogy. Some memorable sessions I took were, “A Critical Step in Evaluating Old Documents” by LaBrenda Garrett-Nelson, JD, LLM, CG. She gave valuable insight into the interpretation of old hand-written documents and explained the importance of tracking down original documents rather than settling for the transcription of someone else. Her skills in transcription are incredible. Her website is: www.LaBGarrettGenealogy.com.

Another session which left an impression on me was, “Going Wayback: Using the Internet Archive in Your Research,” by Daniel A. Earl, MS. Did you know The Wayback Machine has archived the internet since 1996? Mr. Earl gave an entertaining discussion on all the resources you can find on the internet. He can be found at: <https://familyhistoryguy.weebly.com>

Then there were two sessions by the author, James M. Beidler, on German Naming Patterns and Pennsylvania Taxes and Census Records. Of course, I just had to buy his book, “Trace Your German Roots Online - A Complete Guide to German Genealogy Websites.” It will be an invaluable resource as I dig deeper into my German roots. He has a great website at: <http://www.jamesmbeidler.com/>

Other sessions by knowledgeable speakers gave us insight into resources and documents for finding ancestors that are not commonly thought of, such as, Land Deeds, Probate Court Records, Coroners Inquests, Life Insurance Policies, School records and Immigrant Ship Lists, to name a few. Additional favorite sessions were on [Scotland Resources](#), Becoming a professional Genealogist, [DNA testing](#)

[basics](#) and [Genealogy Strategies](#). I attended far too many great sessions to review them all here.

In addition to the sessions, there were banquets and evening workshops for those who chose to attend.

Overall, I have to say that I thoroughly enjoyed everything about my first conference. It met and exceeded my expectations with the abundant information which was crammed into this three-day event. Anyone interested in going beyond the hobby stage of family research would benefit from attending a conference such as this.

Genealogy conferences are held all over the country. Living in Ohio, I feel lucky that we have the largest State Genealogical Organization in the United States. The library in Bellville is phenomenal. Check it out if you want to learn more about your family history. But be prepared to spend a whole day. It is amazing how quickly time flies when you are lost in the past. www.ogs.org

My Grandpa's Barn

My grandpa's barn is a memory. Weeds now stand where cows used to be.



Dad, his brothers and father, abt. 1949.

Bark is clinging to hand-hewn logs, cut by timbermen long ago. Daylight glows through weathered walls. Cobwebs adorn the walls like haphazardly hung Christmas swags. Loose straw covers the wide-plank floorboards.

Long ago, industrious ancestors built this barn with the help of neighbors and family. The festive day brought crowds from miles around. With each person given a job to do, all worked together to build this solid piece of architecture, creating the stately focus of livelihood and survival which would serve for

generations to come.

In Grandpa's barn, creaky narrow steps lead below to the coolness of the milking stalls. Mewing cats wait expectantly for streams of warm milk squirted deftly by my grandfather's swift hands. With the rhythm of a clock, strong hands urge the milk to flow into the metal pail. Cows come in peacefully, waiting their turn. Grandpa's stool is just the right height. Tails swish back and forth, flicking flies with precision. The wooden walls absorb grandpa's singing.

Barn swallows scold as they dive at our heads, beaks making contact with an occasional lazy cat. Sheep wander back from grazing, baaing in the pen, seeking shelter and rest from the hot summer sun.

Grandpa's barn may not stand where it used to, but it has found a new place and purpose, just miles from where it began. Grandpa sold it to an Amish family who painstakingly tore it down, moved it, and rebuilt it on the foundation where their barn used to stand....

Grandpa's barn still houses cows and sheep, cats and chickens. Spiders spin their garland and swallows dive for flies while scolding the farmer who steadily milks with firm and gentle fingers. Walls echo with new voices, with my grandpa's voice, and of those who came before.

Life in the barn is a peaceful place, built long ago by strong and steady hands. The blood in those hands passed on to my grandpa, to my father, and to me.



Grandpa's Barn moved to an Amish farm, painted white.

~Karen Glenn Farr 2017

In honor of my dad and grandfathers on Father's Day.

Doors of Life

✘ “Will you chose Door Number 1, Door Number 2, or Door Number 3?”

Many recognize this stressful question from game shows on TV. The prizes varied from something magnificent - like a dream car or vacation, to something mundane - like cleaning supplies. How many contestants choose wisely? Was it a matter of wisdom, luck or psychic ability possessed by the player?

In life, I have seen and participated in many game-show style door choices. Some have led to adventurous vacations and others have led to job loss. However, I have grown to appreciate what is behind all the doors. These doors have molded me into the person I am and the one I will be. I have had my hand on many doorknobs throughout life. Some doors I should have opened, but did not. Some I shouldn't have - but did.

Now that I find myself headed down the slope of life with retirement years looming ahead, I see people differently than I did 20 years ago.

Everyone is playing the big game of life, making choices. A few people seem to be blessed with good luck at opening doors. The rest of us do the best with the choices we have made. I find myself to be less critical of people's choices than I once was. Maybe this is the result of doors I have gone through.

In my possession is a special door. This physical object connects me to my family history - A Door - Through this door dozens of family have passed. It was once a kitchen door to the house my father, his father, and his father all passed through. Quite possibly, my Great, Great Grandfather hung this door. We may never know. Most importantly however, all the family members who grew up there went in and out that door. Hands touched the doorknob. Visitors came and went. Then, a remodel, and the door was no longer required. I could not say no. To touch the same doorknob that my ancestors touched is probably the closest I will ever get to meeting them here on earth. There is a sense of respect, appreciation and gratefulness when I touch the door. I am grateful for the choices they made that influenced my presence. Many do not stop and think about the generations to

come and how our choices will affect them. But they do.

I am thankful to have been born into a loving family of believers in God.

I am grateful for family get-togethers that connect us.

I am blessed to have opened the most important door of all...

“Behold I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.” Revelations 3:20

Welcome Door 2017. May you be filled with happiness, health, adventure and love.

ksgf010617

To Till or Not to Till

✘ When I first started gardening about 26 years ago, my neighbor owned a fantastic rototiller that he pulled behind his Ford tractor. Every spring I'd lay out my garden plot and then be surprised after work with freshly turned soil. It was wonderful and I was spoiled. Then he moved.

The next few years I managed by using a borrowed rototiller, and another neighbor even brought his walk-behind tiller over a few times. He tilled, my husband tilled, my dad tilled, I tilled.... With my 50th year on God's great earth came the realization that I was no longer young. In addition, raking and tilling by hand made my bones and muscles ache for days. Something had to change.

So I explored various methods of gardening used throughout the country. I came across writings of a woman by the name of [Ruth Stout](#). She explained something called Mulching or Layer gardening. After reading about it, I remembered working with an older gentleman in my past who used similar methods. He allowed the city to dump collected leaves all over his garden. I saw his garden


once. It was a mess. Do people still use that word to describe an unorganized, disheveled look? Mounds of leaves were piled between the rows; some piled high, some in various stages of decay. I was used to seeing finely cultivated brown earth between manicured rows of vegetables. Frankly, the appearance of a layered vegetable garden is not as pretty as one with the soil turned over and raked fine. Still, I was intrigued. I wanted to find a way to plant a garden without breaking my back.

The premise behind a no-till garden is not the same as you hear about on agricultural farms where the fields are sprayed with herbicides and then planted with no-till Drills after the weeds have died. In layer gardening, you do just what it sounds like. You build up and strengthen the soil with layers of organic matter.

That first year, I laid down newspaper and shredded paper from work, followed by leaves. My garden has a mixture of clay, loam and gravel on one end and a high concentration of gravelly soil on the other. The gravel end needed work. At the end of the growing season, I was pleased to see more earthworms on the gravel end than previous years. I mowed the bed, spread a 12" layer of leaves evenly over the garden and waited til spring.

It was amazing. The softness of the soil under the leaf mold was as though I were digging in the forest floor. The soil was soft enough to drag a hoe through the pegged rows and plant seeds without all the backbreaking preparation. It was a lot faster too.

Every fall I rake leaves and spread them on the garden. I no longer use shredded paper because I discovered that it takes a long time to break down. And since I grow an organic garden, I realized paper from unknown sources may not be ideal. One year I added a layer of organic mushroom compost. Another year I added a layer of composted horse manure. I had a lot of new weeds come up in the garden that year. Usually, with using just leaves from my yard, there aren't many weeds and those that do come up are easily extracted. The earth is so soft that my weed pulling time has been slashed by more than half.

I will continue to use layer gardening because it is good for the soil, easy on my back and a time saver. I do miss feeling the cool soft earth under my feet and watching the spiders dodging my hoe. The crunchy, dusty leaves also get a  little annoying, but the yield from the vegetables has been no different from

the tilling method.

At my age, I'm open to change if it makes my life easier.

Ksgf101816

“You Don't Have Enough Points, Sir”

“You don't have enough points, sir.”

❌ “But I'm looking at my card right now and it says 4525. I thought I only needed 4500?”

The girl with highlighter blue hair at the gate looked at me with her equally vibrant blue eyes and blinked slowly. “Nope.” She said. “You got 15 hundred points.”

I looked at her in disbelief. Her face softened, and she added, “I'm sorry?”

“I guess there is no point in arguing,” I sighed, turning away. Someone must have hacked my account and used my points within the past half-hour, otherwise my card would have updated. I think they update every hour.

How will I get home now? My mind is whirling with thoughts as I wander aimlessly through the crowded streets. Everyone else is going the opposite direction, headed home, I presume. Not me. No. I will be homeless tonight in this high-rise wasteland, unless I can find shelter.

What will 1500 points get me? Maybe I can buy water and a sandwich. I've never stayed in the metro area after dark. It's like being in a foreign city.

The temperatures are dipping. “It will get cold tonight too,” I said to no one in

particular. The setting sun casts long shadows of the skyscrapers onto the roads and sidewalks. This concrete land of commerce looks as though it could swallow me whole if I step into it. The darkness calls to me, beckoning with the shadowy fingers of the lamp post reaching....

My hand slips into the shadow of the lamp post and something tugs at me. I pull it away in astonishment. Slowly I reach for it again and let my hand slip inside. The icy cold fingers grab at me urging me to follow.

Startled, I pull my hand back and look around; there is no one in sight. When did the streets empty out? How did everyone disappear so quickly? I must have been lost in thought longer than I realized.

Curiosity is getting the better of me. I'm 55 years old and have done nothing exciting in my life. Should I find out what is in the shadow? But what if it's dangerous? "Yeah, it probably is," I say. "Well, are you going to go into the shadow or not?" My conscience wrestles with me.

"All right, I'll do it!" Looking around, I notice a shadow that doesn't seem as dark as the others. That one looks less sinister. Stepping forward, my nerves are on edge. Am I making the biggest mistake of my life? It might be the best decision I've ever made. I will find out soon enough.

Reaching my hand forward into the darkness, I feel the same cold icy fingers wrapping around my own. I let them tug on me for a moment. Cautiously I step into the shadow. The wind is spinning around me. I am being pulled into the unknown. Closing my eyes, I let it happen. Falling, I am pulled into the darkness. Everything went black.

Waking up, I realize it's no longer dark. I'm lying on the ground. The ground.... it's not the cold concrete I expected. It is warm and soft. This is DIRT. I haven't seen soil since I was a kid at my grandparent's tiny house on the outskirts of town. They were the last hold-outs. Everyone else had moved into the apartment district. Buried memories come flooding back to me. What is this place, and what is that sound? It's the murmuring of people speaking. Looking around, I see them. Normal looking folks are walking, talking, laughing....

"HEY, you okay," shouted a young woman into my ear? It was the highlighter blue girl from the gate! "We've been waiting for the right moment to bring you here.

Don't worry. I took your points on purpose."

The End. 3025 Points to Eternity

kgf070516

[Writer's Digest](#) is a website for information and resources for the writing community. Several times a year, they have a variety of different writing contests, ranging from poetry and photo captions to short stories. This is my entry in contest #75 (unfortunately, I did not place). It was a fun piece to write, and I decided to share it here. The requirements were to keep the story under 700 words and begin with the sentence: "[You don't have enough points, sir.](#)"

Farm Life Then and Now

If you want to see what farming was like 100 years ago, just take a trip to [Amish Country](#).



Horse Drawn Binder

Back when my grandpa was a boy, the Amish and ["English"](#) both farmed using the same methods. This was the pre-tractor era. Every farm had workhorses and horse-drawn implements. You walked or rode behind the horse as they dragged the plow, rake or binders through the field.

It was hard work.

There is a feeling of peacefulness looking at a field of [wheat or corn shocks](#). Calmness rides on the backs of butterflies as they gracefully flit about the fence rows. These images invoke memories of quiet summer days in the hot sun, swatting flies while beads of sweat rolled down the face, taking quiet rest under the trees, and listening to bees and birds while drinking cold water or lemonade to refresh and rejuvenate the body and soul.

Driving by a field of standing rows of golden wheat bundles, I wonder about the hands who labored there, guiding the horses as they cut the ripe grain, gathering and stacking bundles of wheatone by one....all in a row....

The contrasting image of technology is exciting as it rumbles through the field, slashing swaths ten feet wide at a time, while tumbling and pulsing the grain through sharp heads, separating kernels that human hands will never touch.



Combining Wheat

Life is so much faster on the modern farm. It kept up with technology as the world progressed with a pace that threatens to lose touch with the ground we stand on.

But, I believe that all farmers are tied together in unity, as the shocks of wheat stand in a row, bound by a love of the earth and the goal to nurse the soil and seed into producing sustenance for both man and animal.

It is the seed that connects us to one another, whether farmer, gardener, balcony grower or consumer. We cycle through this earthly life, beginning as seeds ourselves, cultivated by the choices we make and the fields we plant ourselves in. Some prefer the slower, quiet lifestyle while others race along feeding their souls with excitement driven by numerous inventions.

In the end, these outer husks end up back in the earth, regardless of the plots where we grew. *However, we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed* ([1 Cor 15:51](#))...Because a *seed cannot grow until it first dies*. ([1 Cor 15: 36](#)).

We are all connected- man, animal, vegetation, water, soil, and air, being brought into existence by a mosaic word from our Creator, with the goal to teach us about love and acceptance, forgiveness and eternity. ~KSGF072316



Wheat Shocks

Independence Day



48 Star Flag of the United States of America

How many people in the United States of America know the history of our Independence Day celebrations? I bet a large portion of the population don't even know it's called Independence Day. They know it as 'the 4th of July'.

There were thirteen original colonies which claimed their independence from England on July 4, 1776. On June 7, in 1776, Richard Henry Lee presented this famous resolution to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia:

“Resolved: That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.”

On July 2, 1776, the Congress secretly voted for independence from Great Britain. Two days later, on July 4, 1776, the final wording of the Declaration of Independence drafted by Thomas Jefferson was approved and published. Not all the colonies voted to adopt the Declaration of Independence. Nine voted in favor, Pennsylvania and South Carolina voted no, Delaware was undecided and New York abstained from the vote.

The original document is kept at The National Archives in Washington DC, with John Hancock's name being the largest signature so “King George can read that without spectacles.”

The [DAR \(Daughters of the American Revolution\)](#) is a women's organization which strives to keep history alive in the United States by honoring our ancestors who fought for independence from Great Britain. The organization was founded on

October 11, 1890 and has had more than 950,000 women join in membership since the inception. Ground was broken for DAR Constitution Hall on June 22, 1928. The cornerstone was laid by Mrs. Calvin Coolidge on October 30, 1928, using the trowel George Washington used to lay the cornerstone at the Capitol in 1793.

Any woman who has an ancestor who was a patriot or in service to the colonies is eligible to join, but must provide direct lineage proof leading back to that ancestor. Men may join the [SAR \(Sons of the American Revolution\)](#).

Congress first declared July 4 to be a national holiday in 1870, almost a hundred years after the Declaration was written. Let us join in remembering and honoring those men and women who fought for our freedom.

~KSGF040316

Cicada Summer

In the year 2033, the [17 year Cicadas](#) will emerge from the soil. This cycle is a long and dangerous one for the cicada who lives above ground only a few short weeks.



Brood V cicada

I would be remiss not to mention that this year, 2016; Ohio is experiencing an emergence of these cyclic insects. Not everyone experiences them with the same intensity. Some yards are full to overflowing to the point where garden rakes and shovels are required to remove their dead bodies and discarded exoskeletons. Other yards only bare a few in the tops of the trees and have scattered remnants of outgrown shells.



Cicada ravaged tree

They don't appear to cause much damage to vegetation, other than the new growth on tree branches where the female has pierced the tender growth and laid her eggs with her sharp ovipositor. As you drive down the road, you can see the damage to the trees. Dead branches fringe the trees and there is a blanket of broken, leaf filled twigs haloing the tree trunks.

Cicadas make a peculiar sound. It is not an easy one to write in the English language; however, if I were to try to subscribe letters to this sound, it would be something like: Hee-Uoo t-t-t-t-t-t-t, Hee-Uoo t-t-t-t-t-t-t. Singularly, a lone cicada isn't too loud, but put hundreds and thousands of them together and the chorus sounds like the hum of a C-130 airplane three miles away, warming up for takeoff. Someone described it as White Noise. As you drive down the road, going past pockets of cicada swarms, the sound is loud enough to permeate your closed car windows. Cicadas bounce off the windshield as they clumsily fly in apparent confusion. Why and where are they going? They are following the laws of nature to find a mate and perpetuate this mysterious 17 year cycle, of course!

The birds and wildlife are eating well this summer. ©Karen Glenn Farr 2016



Cicada exoskeleton

Showing Vs. Telling

I have spent nearly 30 years working in male dominated environments. One thing I've learned is to keep things brief. 'Just the facts, Ma'am.' It's true, most men don't really care that you bought a lovely lavender blouse and found the perfect shoes to go along. They could care less you spent eight hours planting your garden full of peppers, tomatoes, green beans, beets, onions and radishes. They just want to know that you planted your garden...and when will it produce food.

Maybe they want to know that last part. Probably they don't, they just want to know what's for dinner.

So, I've been writing a little fiction and have received some valuable advice from authors, teachers and friends who tell me I need to put more emphasis on [showing rather than telling](#). This baffles the practical me. All these years of learning to glean the fact from the fluff so all that's left is the juicy truth—and now I'm being told to embellish a little bit more.

Years of writing business letters and reports may have ruined me. To be honest, I get a little annoyed by all the squishy *showing* words and tend to skip over them. I find them to be space filling words which limit my own imagination. But I will practice some more and try harder to add imaging to my stories since many people prefer I show them—'my feet wet from the morning air which sparkled on the grass and turned the field into a kaleidoscope of color'—rather than letting their minds picture it for themselves by simply saying, 'the sun dawned on the damp grass.' ©kgf061716

2016 Cleveland Writing Workshop

On June 4, I attended the [2016 Cleveland Writing Workshop](#) presented by [Writer's Digest](#) and organized by [Jessica Bell](#). The Keynote speaker was [Chuck Sambuchino](#). The focus of the workshop was *Getting Your Writing Published* and was packed full of tips and helpful instruction.

Various topics were discussed, such as: traditional vs. self-publishing options, finding and connecting to the right agent for your book, writing query letters and book proposals, marketing your book and creating a media platform (this is your visibility to your target audience) and the top ten tips on how to get published. Chuck Sambuchino is a very entertaining speaker and the day passed too quickly.

There was a "Writer's Got Talent" segment where we enjoyed listening to the first page of random attendee's manuscripts with critiques by agents in attendance. This was a very interesting portion of the day as we were able to learn what it is

that turns an agent off and what propels them to keep reading.

It was nice to meet Mr. Sambuchino, and of course I could not resist purchasing his book, [*Formatting and Submitting Your Manuscript*](#). He graciously autographed it for me.

I was able to pitch my picture book to agent, [Vickie Selvaggio](#) from The DeChiara Literary Agency in New York City. I was nervous, this being my first real agent pitch, but she was very nice and easy to talk to. She liked the concept I presented and asked me to send it to her for review. Step one in the many stages of getting a book published, completed! I hope she likes it and we are a good match. Finding an agent is not an easy task or something to enter into lightly.

Maybe a year from now, I will be putting my book up here for all to see!