

# FAMILY FINDER

Dedicated to Helping English-Speaking  
Family Historians in Europe  
Help Each Other

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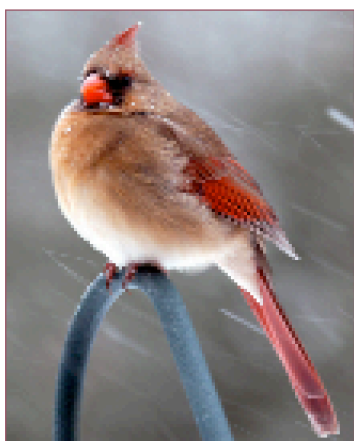
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March 2007

## Events



Please reserve the  
following dates  
on your calendar.

All meetings are held at  
6 PM at the Makedonia  
Restaurant, Heidelberg,  
unless otherwise noted.

**22 March 2007** Program and Presenter:

*"Searching Italy for Ventura"*

Tom Prost will report on more of his  
family research.

**26 April** Program and Presenter:

*"Discussing Their Current Findings."*

Members will have the spotlight in  
"Discussing Their Current Findings."

**24 May** Program and Presenter:

Unless some other member steps forward to  
deliver a presentation, we will continue the  
program format from April.



Happy  
Saint  
Patrick's  
Day!

Re-Introducing Our Elected  
Leaders For 2007



from left to right:

**Sandra Donohue, Treasurer**

**Lucille John, President**

**Ruth Weiershaeuser, Secretary**

**Tom Prost, Vice-President**

**THANK YOU FOR SERVING AGAIN!**

**We Are Attempting to Make it Easier  
For You to Get the Newsletter**

Alan Reed, Database Manager

Every month we will send out an eMail notifying  
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GAESRE website. The February Quick Notes have  
been posted. The last edition of each publication  
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<http://www.rootsweb.com/~eurgaesr/>

## **Cherokee Nation Withdraws Membership From Descendants of African Slaves**

Television and radio networks, as well as the internet and newspapers reported widely on the shocking vote on 3 March 2007 by 76.6 percent of the Cherokee tribal citizens in favor of changing the tribal constitution, now limiting citizenship in the tribe to descendants of "by blood" tribe members. The "by blood" tribe ancestors will be determined by whether those ancestors are listed on the special census of the "Five Civilized Tribes" long known as the "Dawes Rolls" of over 100 years ago.

The *FAMILY FINDER* has reported previously, on how it came about that descendants of African Slaves have been full members of the Cherokee Nation for over 100 years. According to a broadcast carried by AFN radio on 26 February 2007 by reporter Frank Morris, "The Cherokee tribe has always been one of the largest....and was also once one of the wealthiest. In recent times, however, many Cherokees have lived in deep poverty." Before the civil war, some of its members held slaves on plantations in the South. The Cherokees fought on the losing side in the civil war, and were compelled by treaty with the US government to guarantee their newly freed slaves citizenship in the tribe, as partial reparations for their subjugation of the Africans.

Descendants of the freedmen feel that the growing influence of Casino money is one of the reasons that the drastic measure of disfranchising the "Black Indians" of the Cherokee tribe was implemented.

Last year, a Cherokee tribal court ruled that Cherokees must recognize their freedmen descendants as citizens of the Cherokee Nation. Membership issues in Native American tribes affects not only "Black Indians" but also many White residents. In families where one marriage partner is a registered member of the tribe but the other is not, has led to many other conflicts regarding eligibility for tribal benefits and inheritance rights. This kind of conflict often occurs where tribal custom and laws define membership according to which parent is a "blood member." Those tribes who trace "degree of Indian blood" via the mother will go through difficult times trying to unravel their status in a tribe. Some Indian individuals fear that these conflicts are a danger to the existence of the tribes themselves, as time goes by and more and more people cannot qualify for tribal membership recognition.

The NPR report on the Cherokee Freedmen quotes Marilyn Vann, President of the Descendants of Freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes Association, who said "the 1966 treaty's protection outweighs the tribes claims of sovereignty on this issue. And besides, the Cherokee tribe has always been a diverse nation, not a race.... There never was such a thing as the Cherokee race. Cherokee was a citizenship." The Cherokee Freedmen maintain that their ancestors helped sustain the tribe through the very worst of times. Now that conditions have improved Freedmen descendants shouldn't have to fight to call themselves Cherokees.

## *Palatinate Populace Counts German President as "One of Ours"*

According to Ms. Anke Herbert, editor of the daily newspaper, DIE RHEINPFALZ, writing in it's Südwestdeutsche Zeitung section on 22 December 2006 the tendency of the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr. Horst Köhler, to steadily look at his fingers, is a sure sign to the people of the Pfalz "that can only be one of theirs." Ms Herbert described the efforts of German genealogist, Dietmar Alex, who studied the family histories of German immigrants to Bessarabia, a region in the Southwest of Europe. Herr Alex, actually an expert on Schwäbian family history, established that the roots of President Dr. Köhler, are in the little city of Obermoschel, in the Pfalz. The article credits Herr Alex with success in building a "Familiensippenbuch" ( a genealogy report on President Köhler's "clan") with the help of his world-wide connections. Others had taken on the task in the past, only to get nowhere with their research.

Ms. Herbert refers to the observation of Herr Holger Wierich, the Mayor of Obermoschel, a city in Donnersberg County, a mountainous area in the Pfalz not far from the city of Ludwigshafen am Rhein. Herr Wierich had heard vague indications that the great- great grandfather of President Dr. Köhler had roots in Obermoschel. However the city could not be sure of this, because no one had ever taken the initiative to document the case. The

residents of Obermoschel today have grounds for pride that the ancestors of Dr. Köhler, Germany's "first citizen" came from their city. This fact could also, now be the basis for the city fathers' to enhance their marketing of the little municipality to tourists and investors. Mayor Wierich is not surprised that his city can boast such a prominent son as the President of Germany. He was quoted as saying, "we have other distinguished personalities to be proud of.." He cited the artist, Gernot Rumpf; and the homeland poet, Richard Müller.

Ms. Herbert's article deals next, with the issue: Why did the forebearers of Dr. Köhler leave the NordPfalz and wind-up in Bessarabia. The answer to that question can be provided by the Institute für pfälzische Geschichte und volkskunde in Kaiserslautern ( in addition to the genealogical work of Dietmar Alex ). In 1999 the Deputy head of the Institute, Herr Roland Paul, wrote an article about the migrants from Obermoschel to Galizien. Among those identified among the migrants was one, Andreas Köhler, however Herr Paul could not have known then, that this was the patriarch of the future President Dr. Köhler. GAESRE members know Herr Paul, who has generously spoken to our group, giving fascinating information about German immigrants to America from the Pfalz.

Family history investigators clarified that as the 18th Century was coming to an end, and at the invitation of Austrian Emperor, Josef II thousands of Germans came as settlers to the province of Galizien. Among these settlers was the said, Andreas Köhler, who was born 24 July 1775 in Obermoschel. Herr Paul discovered Herr A. Köhler's Certificate of

Baptism in the Speyer Archives of the Evangelical Church of Rheinland-Pfalz; more exactly: the Lutheran Baptism book of the Obermoschel church are stored in Speyer. The archive now already holds a copy of the Baptismal Certificate of the Federal President, Dr. Köhler.

One of the German settlements in Galizien was the village of Brigidau, where farmer Andreas Köhler died in 1816. His wife's roots were in Hunrück, in Germany, and together they had seven Children. One of the grandchildren and other family members in 1865 settled in Bessarabia, the territory which was south-east of Galizien. The group founded the village of Ryschkanowska there. In 1904 the carpenter, Eduard Köhler, was born in Bessarabia.

At the start of the World War I many men in Bessarabia were drafted into the Russian Army. Others and their families were moved to Siberia; while those with German ancestry were expelled to Austria. After 1918 many of these came back to Ryschkanowska, among which were members of the Köhler family.

The genealogy report on President Köhler's ancestors continues, disclosing that Carpenter Eduard married Elisabetha Bernhard in in the 1920s. Her roots were in Unkenbach, a place neighboring the localities of Obermoschel and Gimmeldingen. Then came World War II and another uprooting of the German settlement, obliging the Köhlers to again leave Bessarabia. At first, they lived in German occupied Poland, where Eduard and Elisabetha's seventh child, Horst was born. After 1945 the family returned to the Federal Republic of Germany.

It was Herr Paul that called the attention of the local historian of Altenbamberg (in County Bad Kreuznach), Karl-Ernst Laubenstein, to the Schwabian genealogist's book. That is the principal reason it is now known that the roots of President Dr. Köhler really lie in Obermoschel. Family History researcher, Dietmar Alex personally gave a copy of his report in 2006 to President Dr. Köhler, during his visit to the locality of Backnang. The spokesperson for the President responded that Dr. Köhler has great interest in family history research. However he will only have time to pursue it when he is no longer in Office.

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Ms. Editor Herbert's article is supported  
by explanatory notes on BESSARABIA

Bessarabia is a historic area in Southeastern Europa, bounded by the Black Sea on the South; the river Pruth in the West, and the Dnjestr the the East. For hundreds of years Bessarabia was a buffer region between the major neighboring powers of Russia, Austria, and Turkey. Up to 1812 , Bessarabia was in the principality of Moldau, which became part of Russia in that year. The majority of the population was of Rumanian ethnicity. After 1917 the area became an Eastern province of Rumania until World War II when It became a part of the Soviet Union. Today the area is part of the Ukraine.

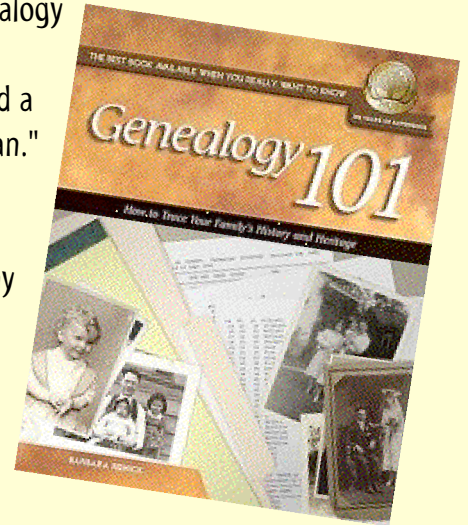
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The Brockhaus Atlas reports that during the height of the German settlements in Bessarabia (from 1814 - 1842) there were around 80,000 German immigrants, mostly from Southern Germany (i.e. The Pfalz and Wüttemberg).



## ***Judy Palmer Leads Members Through "Genealogy 101"***

Judy Palmer's review of the new book "Genealogy 101" by Barbara Rennick was presented on 25 January 2007 before the largest gathering of GAESRE members in a long time. "Genealogy 101" is another in the series of books published by the National Genealogical Society (NGS) on methods of performing family history. GAESRE members did a group review of an earlier NGS book last year: "The Organized Family Historian." Judy was instrumental in also bringing that work to our attention.



The issue raised early in the book, and maybe we've all heard it: "Why do people spend so much time searching for dead ancestors?." Ms. Rennick discussed several potential motivations such as:

- 1) adoptees searching for more details on their identity.
- 2) the search is a way we honor our ancestors.
- 3) the urge to trace and write-up one's family tree.

### ***The audience smiled knowingly, as it was recognized that***

- 4) people active in politics can count on their opponents doing a lot of the genealogical research for them, in the hope of digging up something unfavorable on them.

The world just saw an example of that phenomenon, when a "news story" appeared last week on presidential candidate, Senator Barak Obama (D-Ill.) asserting the false report that as a young child, he had attended a Muslim "Madrassa" school in Indonesia. CNN was moved to investigate the "story" and found that the elementary school Sen. Obama attended, while his parents were working in the Asian country, was an ordinary, public school with no religious sponsorship. We can also recall the "swift-boat" re-telling of Presidential candidate John Kerry's personal Navy war record.

Much of Judy's presentation dealt with technical terms used as family history is pursued. An example is the essential search for the basic three events in the lives of ancestors called: BMD (Birth, Marriage, and Death) records. These are basic records sought by family history researchers in tracing their ancestors.

Among the research tips underlined by Judy were:

- a) be aware that sometimes old records already collected and in our files, can yield what seems like "new" information to us, that we may have at-first overlooked.
- b) to keep all records ( such as birth certificates) and other government issued documents in a box until we get them filed, and
- c) make copies of "anything & everything" we find essential to being able to show citations of our sources, in our genealogical report.

The importance of talking with "old timers" in town was emphasized by Judy. Such contacts can be valuable in giving leads to information, even when those leads turn out not to be completely accurate. We are strongly urged to "back-up" our data, as a protection against the loss of records stored on a computer, if (when) it fails. One effective computer accessory for backing up data is the external-hard-drive, in Judy's experience. However, she is not satisfied with the gadget's operation which does not over-write a record, but rather continues to add to files already there.

Several web sites recommended by the author were discussed by Judy. Among these was [www.vitalcheck.com](http://www.vitalcheck.com), a site useful primarily to you or your family's immediate members. This is considered a problem-site, because of some of it's serious limitations.

Many web sites useful for data gathering were discussed during Judy's presentation. The web site: [ohanasoftware.com](http://ohanasoftware.com) offers several different programs useful in checking databases, writing your personal history, and one specifically for locating counties in the US at any period of time - this is called Animap. Another site which can be helpful in the search for geographic names (especially if those names have changed, over time) is: [geonames.usgs.gov](http://geonames.usgs.gov). The site gives the county code, as well as amap name.

Judy called our attention to another book on the many issues associated with methods of doing citations. The book is, Evidence! Citations and Analysis For Family Historians by Elizabeth S. Mills. We were reminded that help is available for free at the web site: [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org). This site offers a free download of PAF (Personal Ancestral File) - a wonderful genealogy program, providing very easy to "fill-in" charts to help you get started. This site and additional assistance at Family History Center's are free services of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. To locate the nearest Family History Center you may access the above site or visit [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org).

Many family historians, as are a lot of others, are reticent about using the internet because of security concerns: intrusions by "hackers, or loss of control over personal data. Judy pointed out that despite the reticence of some to use the internet, it has surpassed "snail mail" as a way to access resources rapidly and with less cost in postage. Judy's view, *"a good technique always beats the new technologies."*

***We thank Judy for sharing her review of the book, "Genealogy 101" along with her expert commentary on the challenges of doing family history research.***

### **Genealogist's Pox**

**WARNING:** Very contagious to adults.

**SYMPTOMS:** Continual complaint as to need for names, dates, and places. Patient has a black expression, sometimes deaf to spouse and children. Has no taste for work of any kind, except feverishly looking through records at libraries and courthouses. Has compulsion to write letters. Swears at mailman when he doesn't leave mail. Frequents places such as cemeteries; ruins; and remote, desolate country areas. Makes secret night calls, hides phone bills from spouse, and mumbles to self. Has a strange, faraway look in eyes.

**NO KNOWN CURE.**

**TREATMENT:** Medication is useless. Disease is not fatal, but gets progressively worse. Patient should attend genealogy workshops, subscribe to genealogical magazines, and be given a quiet corner in the house where he or she can be alone.

## Anonymous Sperm & Egg Donors Must Now Reveal Their Identities

Our January 2007 FAMILY FINDER carried an article about the brisk online sperm-bankbusiness in the USA and other countries. It discussed some of the genealogical implications to children born to anonymous fathers and mothers. A further development was reported on the Tuesday, January 30, 2007 radio show, "Marketplace" from public radio. The title of the show was *"Virginia's Not For Donors (at least not anonymous ones)."*

The show participants said that *"in every state in the country (USA), people who donate their sperm or their eggs can remain anonymous."*

It was reported that the State of Virginia is considering a bill that would make those people reveal their identities. One of the discussants said that has already happened in some other countries, such as Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

The Program revealed that as a result of the growing demand that anonymity be no longer allowed, fertility clinics have seen a big decline in sperm and egg donors. With this, has come a large rise in fees for prospective parents trying to conceive. One of the reasons for the reluctance of donors to come forward, according to the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, is that many sperm donors value their privacy most of all. A spokesman for the Society was quoted as saying that sperm donors now receive small compensation, but clinics are not sure that large amounts of money would attract more donations, if they can no longer remain anonymous.

It was reported that at one

Virginia, only 10 percent of donors agreed to reveal their identities. The sponsor of the Virginia legislation was quoted as saying he wants to protect donor-conceived children who may later want to know about their origin.

### Sperm Donor Father Ends His Anonymity

By Amy Harmon  
February 14, 2007

There is no established ritual for how an anonymous sperm donor should contact his genetic children. But for Jeffrey Harrison, Valentine's Day seemed as good an occasion as any.

"It's a short life," he said, "and these children need to have some kind of resolution. I thought I could send a little valentine, kind of, to everyone, just saying hello."

Mr. Harrison had been thinking about getting in touch since reading in an article in The New York Times 15 months ago that two teenagers whose mothers had used his sperm to conceive were looking for him. The headline, "Hello, I'm Your Sister, Our Father Is Donor 150," made him choke on his coffee, said Mr. Harrison, who made \$400 a month donating sperm under that number twice-weekly during the late 1980s.

But California Cryobank, the sperm bank that had promised anonymity to its customers and to Mr. Harrison, proved unresponsive to his repeated requests for assistance. Besides, he had misgivings. What if the girls were disappointed by his humble circumstances?

Once one of the sperm bank's most-requested donors, with a profile that described him as 6 foot and blue-eyed with interests in philosophy, music and drama, Mr. Harrison, 50, lives with his four dogs in a recreational vehicle near the Venice section of Los Angeles.

"I make a meager living," Mr. Harrison said, taking care of dogs and doing other odd jobs. Still, he said he thought he could explain to the girls why he had taken an unconventional life-path. Their grandfather was an Ivy League-educated retired financial executive, he would tell them; their grandmother was a former volunteer president for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Six weeks ago, Mr. Harrison logged on to the Donor Sibling Registry, the Web site devoted to facilitating connections between donor-conceived offspring, where the two girls, Danielle P. and JoEllen M. had initially found each other. Four more teenagers from his sperm samples had since surfaced, he saw on the logs. How many could he handle, he wondered?

As Valentine's Day approached, though, Mr. Harrison resolved to get in touch with them all. Last Saturday night, Mr. Harrison e-mailed a picture of his birth certificate to Wendy Kramer, the founder of the sibling registry, to confirm his identity. Several dozen donors have contacted offspring on the registry, Ms. Kramer said, but none have been brave enough to come forward with such a large group of teenagers.

"You don't know what to expect," Ms. Kramer said. "How do we define this family, and what are we to each other?" Danielle and JoEllen called Mr. Harrison together the next day. The moment that had preoccupied their fantasies for years began in a more prosaic fashion than they had anticipated. But they said they were not disappointed.

"The first thing he said was, 'Holy moly,' " said Danielle, 17, who has spent several hours on the phone with Mr. Harrison in the last three days. "He's sort of a free spirit, and I don't care what career he has. I got to talk to his dogs."

Mr. Harrison met a third daughter, Ryann M., in Los Angeles yesterday afternoon. His other newfound offspring, who live in Colorado, Florida, New York and Pennsylvania, are busy marveling over their shared love of animals and the distinctive forehead evident in the pictures he has e-mailed.

## Meeting Minutes

22 February 2007

The President called the meeting to order at 1910, with 10 and 2 guests attending. The minutes of the 25 January 07 meeting were read and approved.

### Old Business:

1. The audit is in preparation.
2. The new distribution system for the newsletter will now go into effect, with an email to members announcing its availability on the website.

### New Business: None.

The meeting was adjourned at 1955, followed by Lucille John's presentation on many interesting and unusual historical finds from her family's attic. The next meeting will be held on 22 March 2007 at the Makedonia.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ruth Weiershaeuser, Secretary



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The Genealogical Association of English-Speaking Researchers in Europe (GAESRE) publishes Family Finder ISSN-1040-4821 6 times a year: January, March, May, July, September and November. The associations newest publication, "Quick Notes", will alternate with Family Finder: February, April, June, August, October and December. Copy deadline for ALL publications is the 30th of the month preceding publication. However, material for publication is accepted at any time. Materials submitted may be edited at the discretion of the editor. GAESRE is not responsible for errors in the content of this newsletter.

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An Association of family historians  
dedicated to helping each other find  
their roots. Whether you are a beginner,  
or an advanced researcher, we want  
to hear about your experiences!

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