

Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

May 2018, Issue 268

Doris Hempstead Genealogy Collection

Necessity is the mother of... getting newsletters out earlier than usual. A two day window before a three week vacation to England is the only chance of getting this account of this past Monday's meeting to you.

A sunny May day in the mid'70s greeted Rich McAneny, Bill Ottinger, Stephanie Krasney, Linda Marks, Lew & Sue Knott, Rich Hempstead & Sandy Fuegmann, John Palmer, Al Hulick, Bob Shaw, Ken Mabey, Rhonda Hempstead, Rick and Sharon Pugsley, Denise Pugsley Taber, Don Baker, Marvin Smith, Bette Welter, Kathy Smith, Edna Huffman, Rachel Ceasar, Richard Ceasar, Gloria Duncan, David Dorpfeld, Sally Staunch, Ann & Bob Hallock, Christine Mickelsen, Stephanie Ingalls, and Don Teator.

Two purposes of the evening's meeting were to demonstrate the scope of Doris Hempstead's genealogy project and to mark the transfer of the collection to the Greene County Historical Society.

Beginning in the 1950s and continuing for forty-plus years, Doris commenced researching her family history, starting a data collection system that she sustained for many years. Doris (1922-2002) was the daughter of Clarence and Anna (Powers) Blakeslee and wife of Everett Hempstead. Her initial research followed these families. However, as most genealogists know, stopping at three or four lines is nigh impossible.

While Doris checked her own lines, others in the genealogy circle traded notes and leads with her. Of course, families live in communities, and data about families in those towns invited more research. And then requests started coming in, first, for certain surnames, then for Greenville area seekers, and then as her acclaim spread, to Greene County, Mountaintop, and out-of-state families.

After fifteen minutes to peruse the collection, Don gave an index card to anyone willing to imitate Doris Hempstead and to appreciate the process.

Hers was a simple style. Fetching a 3x5 index card, Doris would first note the surname, then copy down the info in front of her, and finally list the source, thus completing one card.

One by one, month after month, year after year, Doris would record: an obituary from a newspaper and cross reference; a clipping from a Fifty Years Ago column; a church record of interest; her transcription of a stone from one of the many cemeteries she just had to find; the information from a request sent her way; a personal family event; knowledge of a community happening; and on it went.

Handwritten index cards from the Doris Hempstead Genealogy Collection. The cards are on lined paper and contain names, birth and death dates, and family relationships.

Hempstead	Richard Bruce	Freehold NJ	b. 1959
"	Everett		b. 1922 + Doris May Blakeslee b. 1922
"	Herman E.		b. 1896-1967 + Ethel Maxwell 1894-1972
"	Almea		1867-1962 + Alice Garrison 1872-1944
Garrison	Dennis		d. 1921 + Mary Emily Pierce 1846-1924
Pierce	Seth W.		+ Mary E. Chesbro d. 1849 - 25 yrs.
"	Sylvester		d. 1829-82nd Yr + Patience d. 1858-98 yrs
			bur. Twin Durham Gr Co NY-RT. 67 nr Carter/Barnowbridge

Doris' four children—Sharon (Pugsley), Rhonda, Gloria (Duncan), and Rich ("Dickey" in younger days)—bore testimony to their mother's determined efforts. This hobby was a daily presence, showing in the 4' x 6' side room off the kitchen. A four inch pile sat next to the six piles of cards; underneath the folding table were shoe boxes and single-tray filing drawers stuffed to almost overflowing; and piles of the aforementioned filled a tall file cabinet.

In particular, the youngest, Gloria and Rich, were the "willing" companions on many of the jaunts Doris needed to take. They endured many a stone rubbing in many a cemetery.

Upon Doris's passing, the family found a home for the collection with the local history group. It was delivered as Doris left it -- in the piles described above.

An assessment from family friend and Town Historian Don Teator saw the need for an organization that would allow genealogists to utilize the information. Over the course of a half-year nearly a dozen years ago, members of the Greenville Local History Group spent an estimated a hundred person-hours alphabetizing by surname the thousands of cards that kept pouring forth from the archives. Every so often, we took one of Doris' surname-tabbed cards and appropriately placed them. These names might indicate major family compilations but could just as easily represent a suitable dividing spot. Over 200 cards serve this purpose, with hundreds more found in between.

After years of safe, but seldom used, placement in the Greenville Historian's files, it was recognized that this collection needed a home that would allow wider public use.

Which leads to me to guest **John Palmer, the new archivist of the Greene County Historical Society's Vedder Library**. After a few comments about the importance of such a project, John

accepted the Hempstead collection on behalf of GCHS, to be physically transferred in mid-June where a wider audience can share in Doris's work. Thank you, John, for venturing to Greenville.

And so the efforts of Doris Hempstead live on.

The next meeting is June 11, with a retrospective of **Schmollinger's Pleasant View Lodge**. **Barbara Brumell**, wife of the late Ralph Schmollinger, assisted by Ralph's sons Erik and Arjay, will present photos, artifacts, and accounts of one of Greenville's most recognized boarding houses/resorts.

After a start as classic 1940 farmhouse turned boarding house, PVL grew into one of the area's largest resorts, also offering community events and golf. It is now part of the Sunny Hill Resort complex. All are invited to share memories of PVL days or simply to listen and learn about a history whose physical existence is almost gone.

A thank you goes to Stephanie and Christine for the generous supplying of the light refreshments I keep promising.

Take care,



The transfer of Doris Hempstead's collection