

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AT PHILADELPHIA

August 2016 Newsletter



Collection Spotlight: Party Like It's 1951

Recently, while processing records of the National Park Service, our staff ran across a fun set of photographs. In a folder of correspondence sent from Shenandoah National Park to the Park Service's Southeast Regional Office, we found a memorandum sent by Shenandoah's new superintendent to his boss, the Regional Director. The park superintendent attached photos of the annual party of the Shenandoah Employees Association, held at the park's Big Meadows Lodge on April 13, 1951.

The National Archives
at Philadelphia

August 2016

The National Archives at
Philadelphia is located at:

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Park

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The National Archives at
Philadelphia research room is
open to the public Monday
through Friday from 8:30 am to
3:30 pm. Researchers can also
call to schedule an appointment
to view textual records in our
text research room.

Most of the photos show the park's employees, the park's concessioners, and their spouses playing a number of party games, including:

An "egg relay," in which participants needed to beat one another to the finish line while balancing raw eggs on demitasse spoons;

A "husband guessing contest," in which women were blind-folded and had to figure out which of the men seated in front of them were their husbands, but could only use their sense of touch to do so;

A "cracker eating contest," in which party guests tried to whistle "Yankee Doodle" while eating crackers;

And the game pictured in the photo here, in which some of the men present were challenged to remove oranges tucked between the neck and shoulders of some of the women, without using their hands.

It's hard to imagine that in the days before social media, any of these partygoers would have believed that a photographic record of their antics that evening could resurface 65 years later.

Curious to know what else you might uncover in our National Park Service holdings? You can make an appointment to view them in our research room by calling us at 215-305-2044 or e-mailing us at philadelphia.archives@nara.gov.

Citation: Photograph titled "The Tall and the Short of It"; Attachment to a memorandum from Guy D. Edwards, Superintendent, Shenandoah National Park, to Regional Director, Region One, dated April 26, 1951; Box 75; General Files of the Regional Director; Southeast Region (Region 1); Record Group 79, Records of the National Park Service; National Archives at Philadelphia (Record Entry ID: PH-3521) (NAID: 1308690).

Text Researcher Spotlight: Tammy Hepps



Tammy A. Hepps of Pittsburgh is researching the Jewish community from the steel mill town of Homestead, Pennsylvania (<http://HomesteadHebrews.com>).

To learn more about one of the community's most famous sons, historian Jacob Rader Marcus (1896-1995), she came to NARA in search of the 1907 bankruptcy records of his father, Aaron, a clothing merchant.

By searching the Bankruptcy Act of 1898 Index, Dockets, and Case Files for the Western District of Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh Term, she was rewarded with 285 pages of court filings and transcripts detailing many fascinating aspects of how Aaron's business went under, from his indebtedness to friends and family, to the role of the Panic of 1907. His file also provides a rare window into business operations from the turn-of-the-last-century. For example, Marcus had 76 different creditors

from 13 different states, which gives a sense of the wide reach of the wholesalers. And his testimony about how he unloaded some of his goods to itinerant jobbers illuminates little-known aspects of the interdependencies between the different levels of peddlers, jobbers, merchants, and wholesalers.

In the index she found many more names from Homestead's Jewish community. She is continuing to review their records to understand more about how these businesses operated and what opportunities and risks they faced. Another merchant she encountered, for example, extended more in credit to his customers, the town's Hungarian steelworkers, than he owed his creditors. His situation demonstrates the economic dependence of the Jewish merchants on the town's steel mill.

Although these bankrupts were singular in their failures, their business are typical examples of how Jewish immigrants gained an economic foothold in the U.S. More than a century later, very few records from such businesses survive. Bankruptcy files add specificity to a slice of history usually encountered only in generalities.

This article was written by Tammy A. Hepps herself, a regular researcher at the National Archives at Philadelphia.

Citations:

Dockets, 1898-1977, Pittsburgh, Western District of Pennsylvania, United States District Court, Record Group 21, National Archives at Philadelphia (Records Entry ID: PH-663) (NAID: 580017)

Indexes, 1898-1980, Pittsburgh, Western District of Pennsylvania, United States District Court, Record Group 21, National Archives at Philadelphia (Records Entry ID: PH-662) (NAID: 2824879)

Upcoming Events and Initiatives:

The National Archives at Philadelphia does not have any upcoming onsite events. However, we will be participating in the following local program:

Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia Annual Genealogy Fair:

Date: September 11, 2016

Time: 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Location: Congregation Keneseth Israel
Old York Rd (Route 611), at Township Line (Route 73)
Elkins Park, PA

More than fifteen stations with information to help you trace your ancestry. Free parking and admission. For more information about the Genealogy Fair, please see the following website: <http://www.jsgsp.org/index.html>

Additionally, there are many NARA programs available online. See a notable example below:

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“AMENDING AMERICA”

A notable NARA initiative is the Amending America program, which is highlighting the remarkably American story of how we have amended, or attempted to amend, the Constitution in order to form a nation that more closely mirrors our ideals. 2016 marks the 225th anniversary of the Bill of Rights, one of our nation's early attempts to form "a more perfect union." In honor of this milestone, the National Archives encourages the nation to engage in thoughtful debate and discussion of how our ancestors sought to create a more just society and how we do so today.

Through our series of *National Conversations on Rights and Justice*, we invite Americans to explore a range of contemporary issues, addressing the tension between individual rights and collective responsibilities, a process that began with the Bill of Rights.

Want to learn more? Tune in to hear the Know Your Records series video, [U.S. Constitutional Amendments](#), during which co-curator Christine Blackerby discusses the records in our new exhibit, “Amending America.”

Reminders

All research and public access areas in every archival facility across the National Archives network, except the Presidential Libraries and Federal Records Centers, will be closed to the public on September 15, 2016.

 Follow the National Archives at Philadelphia on [Facebook](#) and [Tumblr](#) for featured highlights from our collection! We'll be commemorating the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service throughout 2016 by highlighting some of our many NPS records.

Are you on the National Archives Mailing List? If the answer is “no,” then e-mail us with your contact information to Philadelphia.archives@nara.gov. *Per the Privacy Act of 1974 we will not share your personal information with third parties.*