Advice often given, but seldom followed, is that if one wants to live in peace, two topics should be avoided, namely, politics and religion. I think we might well add a third, family history or genealogy, for surely we all remember the heated atmosphere of the family circle, when perchance the member who had not come up to the standard was being discussed, and how the blame was usually shifted to some forbear. “Henry is exactly like his grandfather.” So father would declare, meaning mother’s father. If, however, mother’s chance came first, we would hear, “Henry is behaving just like your father,” this dart being directed at the paternal grandfather.

Even the pronunciation of genealogy can lead to discussion, for having been corrected at one time as to this detail, it was with the satisfaction that comes from finding oneself right that I found that in neither the old nor the new editions of the several dictionaries could be found the pleasanter sounding “Gee-nealogy” that I had been told should be used.

Perhaps the simplest definition of genealogy is that it is an account of the descent of a person or family from an ancestor, and a genealogist is therefore one who traces or writes genealogies. In this art, such terms as lineage, pedigree, and line of descent all stand for the same thing.

1 Read at a meeting of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania on April 27, 1943.—Ed.
The study of one's ancestors is a matter of great amusement to many people who delight in such phrases as "climbing the family tree," and who take it for granted that this is some form of ancestor worship wherein those interested spend most of their waking moments talking about the great people from whom they are descended. A very natural conclusion, then, is that of all boring subjects genealogy is the most deadly.

There are also those who ignore the seamy side and only claim that which is admirable or distinguished for their own particular ancestors. From this angle, one can well understand the facetious attitude of the man who said it might be wiser to refrain from having a look into the past, lest he find a forbear who had been hanged as a horse-thief.

And that too has happened, even in the best of families, according to the story told me recently by a man whose ancestors were early settlers in Virginia. A great-aunt was the keeper of the records of their family, of whose history they were all very proud. The narrator's grandfather was buried in the little cemetery on the family plantation, and near by lay two of his brothers. There was still another brother of whom the records said he had died as a young man. This Stephen had become a romantic figure in the eyes of the younger generation, but no grave in the little plot showed his burial there, so one day in idle curiosity, the one who knew all about the family was pressed for a reason. The story continued, "Aunt Eliza gathered us all about her in the living room to hear about Great-uncle Stephen, whose portrait was looking down on us from the wall. Gravely she told us of the childhood and youth of herself and her three brothers, of how handsome Stephen was, of his popularity and of his wonderful horsemanship. One day in the court town near by, Stephen saw a horse belonging to a stranger who had business at the courthouse. He simply must have that horse. He couldn't resist its beauty, so he mounted and rode away to far off Kentucky. As if Stephen were being trespassed upon instead of being the trespasser, Aunt Eliza said the owner of the horse followed and claimed his property and Stephen died. In plain language, our revered great uncle Stephen had been hung as a horse-thief in Kentucky."
Admitting that all too often those who have been successful in tracing a desirable pedigree feel that they are superior to others, it is evident that seldom do such descendants measure up to the ancestors of whom they boast. But the picture has another side, for we all know people, descended from lines that are equal or superior to those of the boasters, but who refuse to make any mention of their background. So sensitive have some such people become, that word has gone about of an association in Boston, in which a member must never be mentioned as his father’s son or his grandfather’s grandson. By completely shutting off any references to preceding generations, these men of the present proclaim that a great weight has been lifted, that now they can really be themselves. This may be but a method of getting rid of an inferiority complex, and I like better the attitude of a man in Chicago, whose people came first from the north of Ireland, settled in western Pennsylvania, later went down the river to Kentucky, and finally ended in Indiana. To judge the kind of information for which search should be made in our western counties, he was asked about its use. Here is the answer: “I am not in search of information that will enable me to join any society. My interest is merely in finding out just what place my ancestors occupied in the American scene of their day, no matter how obscure it may prove to have been.”

How wholesome and how truly American this is! What a contrast to a certain lady who was highly pleased to find she was a descendant of a passenger on the Mayflower, until in making out her papers to join the society, she discovered he had a trade—was a cooper, made barrels. Those of us who remember our history, and recall that stormy three-months voyage on that little ship, and the landing and subsequent settlement in mid-winter on the bleak shores of Massachusetts, can well appreciate the value to the little group from the Mayflower of a man who could work with his hands. Not so his descendant, for since he was not the governor, or the military captain, the lady refused to complete her papers.

Many pages could be filled with the jokes and witticisms of speakers and writers who have taken “flings” at silly pretensions that are well deserving of ridicule, but these same authorities are all too ignorant of
what is involved in genealogy and of its value in other types of research besides that of "hunting one's ancestors."

One of our local librarians remembers a man whose business it was to know old paintings, especially portraits by early American painters. For several months, he made a practice of spending many hours each day in the library, not in the art room, but with books of the genealogical collection. He explained that it would be impossible for him to make the authoritative decisions called for without the intensive study about persons and their families, in other words, the details that only a family history or genealogy could give.

More unusual was another circumstance that came to the attention of this same librarian, when one day a young boy walked up to her desk and inquired how he could find out about his ancestors. His mother had remembered that a sketch of her family had at one time been printed and thought a copy might be in the library. With this lead, the sketch was found and accompanying it was a beautifully colored coat-of-arms, so the boy went home supplied with everything he could desire from the genealogical point of view. Not many days later, two other boys came in, one plainly of Chinese blood and the other a Negro, and asked to be shown their coat-of-arms. The librarian, being an understanding person, explained that not every family has a coat-of-arms, in fact only a few. She went on to tell them about the history of armor and showed them pictures of the crusaders, thus making it a story of the past rather than a personal matter. Presently they wandered off hand in hand, apparently perfectly satisfied with such an entertaining visit to the library. If your curiosity has been aroused as to why these three boys of such different backgrounds should have come on the same errand, the answer is that they were carrying out an assignment given by their teacher in which they were to find out at home something about their families, of where their people had come from originally. From the answers to this question with a sociological bearing, it was possible to work out the origins of a mixed group in one of our public schools. When the first boy in the classroom told about a coat-of-arms, this was more tangible, and altogether more interesting than dry facts to the two little Americans of Chinese and African descent.

When and where one was born has become a burning question to thousands of Americans required to furnish a certificate of citizenship for
employment in war industries. In such cases a pedigree or proved line of descent is a treasure indeed, even if it goes back only one generation. When official vital statistics fail, as they often do, many who had scoffed at the person in the family who has preserved its traditions eagerly seek help from this source, and great is the resentment when perchance the little appreciated family Bible has disappeared and with it those elusive dates.

Records also serve to prove rights to inheritances or to help qualify for pensions, as in the case of a woman who had reached the age of sixty-five and was required to furnish proof of this in order to obtain an old age pension. Her entrance papers to the Daughters of the American Revolution were presented and accepted as furnishing proof of the date and place of her birth.

There are many people who firmly believe that a date or a statement, once printed, thereby becomes correct, and no amount of proof one can offer changes this idea. Nowhere is this fallacy more apparent than in genealogical research, and however reverent one's attitude may be as a novice in this field, all too soon do discrepancies appear and gradually one learns that a writer may be a good historian but a very poor genealogist. Bare indeed would many a publication be had not someone with a genealogical flair collected and put at the disposal of the compiler the colorful details that concern individuals and their family connections. A greater effort should be made to see that this type of material is used correctly, for inaccuracies and even glaring errors appear in all too many of our historical publications, especially county histories, and this is by no means confined to the older books. It is not only disconcerting but tends to create mistrust of other portions of an author's work, when even in recently published volumes we find incorrect statements that might easily have been checked. Excuses are of course made when these are pointed out, but one surmises that oftentimes it has been easier to copy something already in print than to go to the trouble of original research. It is thus that mistakes are perpetuated. When claims of "first" and "oldest" are set up, one should walk warily for these are only too often mere traditions based on wishful thinking.

Few of the early letter writers of our part of the state are more quoted than George Wilson, who lived first in Virginia and came thence to Pennsylvania. Passages from his letters are given in the majority of local
histories and are more used perhaps for their unique spelling and construction than for the subject matter. But poor spelling aside, they abound in genuine loyalty to any cause in which he believed, be it Pennsylvania versus Virginia in the boundary dispute or the right of a citizen of the colonies to express an unvarnished opinion concerning unpopular government officials. What he believed in he was willing to fight for with both pen and sword.

All too often do our historians omit entirely the name of this man whose letters they have used, but are wont to speak of him as one of the justices, or a Revolutionary War officer. The events of early Western Pennsylvania cannot well be understood without as full a knowledge as possible of the background of its leaders, among whom is classed George Wilson, generally known as Colonel Wilson. The reasons that prompted the writing of his various letters become clearer in the light of his family background and his several offices, civil and military. Then there are his qualities of courage in action and fearlessness in setting forth opinions even when they clashed with those of authorities, friends, and relatives.

A man of the frontier both in Virginia and Pennsylvania, Colonel Wilson served on the first court of Bedford County in 1771, representing Springhill Township which then included all the present Fayette County. When Bedford was divided for the greater convenience of those living beyond the mountains, George Wilson was again one of the justices for the new Westmoreland County erected in 1773.

As a military leader he was equally experienced, for as a young man he was engaged in frontier duty during the French and Indian wars, serving as the captain of a militia company in Virginia at the age of twenty-six, and finally in those early days of the Revolution, when a call came from General Washington for immediate aid in his urgent need for troops, our own Eighth Pennsylvania Regiment marched over the mountains in the dead of winter with Lieutenant Colonel George Wilson as second in command. As a man who had a considerable share in building that which became Pennsylvania and not Virginia, we owe him much. As a picturesque character he enlivens the pages of our early history, and as a perfect example of the pitfalls that await both the novice and the experienced in the field of genealogical research he is unique.
A piece of genealogical work was undertaken originally to enable a descendant of Colonel Wilson to become a member of a colonial patriotic society. I well remember that when this granddaughter of Judge William G. Hawkins handed me some sheets of foolscap in his handwriting, it seemed as if it should be smooth sailing on the genealogical sea since the eminent jurist was a grandson of our subject. However, I was to find that instead of being over, our troubles had just begun, as a comparison of the several sheets showed them to be merely an approach to a contemplated family history, or perhaps an article for publication in one of the county histories just coming into vogue. The judge, unfortunately, had all too little accurate information on which to base the story of his grandfather, for the papers varied as to names, traditions, and other essentials.

In one place, the first wife of Colonel Wilson was named as Elizabeth McCrea, and in the others as Elizabeth McCreery. The hasty flight from Ireland to escape the wrath of the irate father of the bride, who considered that his daughter had married a man beneath her in social station, described by Judge Hawkins, is also the tradition handed down in another Wilson family, early settlers in the part of Allegheny County that formerly belonged to old Westmoreland. In this family tree appears an Elizabeth McCrea, married to a Wilson, as well as a George and a Jane Wilson, the same names as those of Judge Hawkins' grandfather and mother. One can see how easy it is to fall into the error of confusing family lines because of similarity of names.

It was in the records of Virginia that the bond of the marriage of George Wilson was found as were many instances in the court records that his wife was Elizabeth McCreery and that she was the daughter of John McCreery of Augusta County. It was with a real pang that the early romance had to be relinquished. I might well have been warned that corrections would have to be made, for Judge Hawkins says of his grandfather, “of his early life or the genealogy of his ancestors I have been unable to obtain any information. Unfortunately, my attention was not turned to the subject until after the decease of my mother and the other children of Colonel Wilson.”

And certainly corrections did have to be made, for, as with the tradition of his marriage, there were contradictory accounts of the place of his
birth. According to the pedigree of one of his descendants as printed in the lineage books of the Daughters of the American Revolution, this was in Scotland and the further statement is made that he was a brother of James Wilson, one of the Pennsylvania signers of the Declaration of Independence. Some other accounts name George and James Wilson as brothers, but for this statement no proof is forthcoming, while the evidences against it are that James, born and well educated in Scotland, did not come to America until 1765, that there is no mention in the stories of his career of members of his family either preceding or following him to America, that he settled in Philadelphia and his visits to the West were apparently all in the line of government duty and not social visits to relatives. Finally there is the letter that Colonel George Wilson wrote to Colonel James Wilson, dated December 5, 1776, at the time the Eighth Pennsylvania Regiment was preparing for the march to the east where they were to join General Washington. The letter opens with the salutation, “Dear Colonall,” and closes with “Your harty well wisher and rept. svt, G. Wilson,” not exactly the expressions of an older to a younger brother. Further there are no references to members of the respective families.

The record that has been conceded to be correct was found in the Hawkins family Bible and gives the birth of George Wilson as 1729 and the place as northern Ireland.

As research progressed it seemed as if there were as many Wilsons as the proverbial Smiths and Jonses. There were Wilsons in Virginia, many of whom bore the same Christian name, while in Pennsylvania this sort of duplication proved so confusing that in one county two men were named in a court record as Mountain Thomas Wilson and River Thomas Wilson respectively, one living in the highlands and the other in the lowlands. George, especially, seemed to be a favorite name and it required much weighing of evidence and rejection of material before it could be determined which record belonged to which George.

If space permitted it might be interesting as well as entertaining to go into the details of our colonel’s life in Virginia for this proved to be but a forerunner of stormy days to come in Pennsylvania. Often do we find his name both as a plaintiff and as a defendant in the court records of
Augusta County. These actions include law suits over the ownership of land, clashes over military affairs, and occasions when he expressed very forcible and uncomplimentary opinions about both people and the government. Of these a few instances must suffice.

In 1755, George Wilson, then twenty-six years old, qualified as "Captain of Horse" in a militia company mustered for the protection of the frontier in the French and Indian wars. The following year the court bound him to good behavior for having spoken disrespectfully of the government, while in 1757, George himself brought suit against a neighbor who refused to be mustered into the militia and who had brought charges against the captain. One was that "Captain Wilson, while out with his men on the frontier, wronged the country of its provisions, for he gave the provisions which belonged to the soldiers to women and children who had no right to it." This proved to be one time George Wilson came out ahead, for the verdict rendered was for the plaintiff.

Finally, in 1763 one of the burgesses of Augusta County, Israel Christian by name, brought suit against Wilson, stating in his complaint that George had said of him: "You are a liar—I will prove you one." William Preston, the Colonel of the County had ordered Captain Wilson to read a paper or discourse at the public muster field, vindicating Preston's drafting of the militia to serve on the frontier and refuting unfavorable reports made by Christian. One can well imagine that the captain undertook the task with little or no reluctance, and that he added fuel to the flames is obvious when he said in public to Christian: "You are a public liar and you impose on the public, you endeavor to raise and support yourself at the expense of others and the prejudice of the public." The records do not say in whose favor the verdict was rendered but at any rate George Wilson had shown himself to be "no respector of persons" and this same characteristic was shown when later he became involved in the controversy over the Pennsylvania and Virginia boundary.

Purchases and sales of land are on file for George Wilson as an inhabitant of Augusta County until the year 1763 when other records show he had removed from Staunton to Romney in Hampshire County now a part of West Virginia. The actual date of his settlement in Pennsylvania has not been determined but there is no doubt that he had been in the
province several times, probably on military expeditions concerned with the pursuit and return of captives and property taken by the Indians in raids on the Virginia settlements. Among the early landowners listed in the *Pennsylvania Archives* we find that under the names of George Wilson and Colonel George Wilson he had acquired several tracts of land of varying sizes in Cumberland and Bedford counties. According to a map entitled "The Genealogy of the Counties of Pennsylvania," it is clear that these lands had been progressively in four different counties, Cumberland, Bedford, Westmoreland, and finally Fayette. His plantations had not been moved but the county boundaries had been changed so that deeds for the same property may be found in the several counties. The earliest of these purchases was surveyed in 1770, but as the Pennsylvania land office was not opened until sometime in 1769, it may well be that Colonel Wilson had chosen these tracts in advance and may even have made the necessary settlement thereon. In the account of this early settler on the land bordering Georges Creek which bears his given name, Ellis, in his *History of Fayette County* gives the date of Wilson's settlement there as 1765, while Crumrine's *History of Washington County* names 1768 to 1769.

The Pennsylvania life of George Wilson proved to be as active as the one he had left in Virginia, for again there was military service in guarding the frontier. Many, too, were the disputes he helped to settle and many were the land boundaries he helped to adjust. In his own particular section, Springhill Township on Georges Creek, he officially dispensed justice in sundry forms.

Then there were the sessions of the court, and when the time came to go to Bedford Town, Colonel Wilson, living at the greatest distance away of any of the justices, mounted his horse and rode away to attend the first court of the new county, April 16, 1771. That same summer he rode off again to attend the second session of July 16. One would like to know the details of those journeys, the exact trails he traveled, where he stopped for the night, the people he met on the way, and perhaps most of all what our doughty colonel looked like.

In working out this civil service of Justice Wilson, an apparently insurmountable obstacle loomed up, for the patriotic society concerned
required a reference to an authoritative source and it was found that in volume 10, page 750, of the printed Colonial Records of Pennsylvania, John Wilson and not George was the justice named for Bedford County. It seemed as if Westmoreland County must certainly have records that would meet the requirements but again came the baffling fact that in the commission inscribed in the current volume of that county it was William Willson who was named first, George appearing only in the second mention. It was impossible to reconcile these recorded items with the many statements of accredited writers that George Wilson had served as a justice in the colonial courts of both Bedford and Westmoreland counties. However, it was an original source and not a statement in a book of history that had to be secured.

It was with a sense of deep satisfaction, then, that a visit to Bedford courthouse proved the claim for George Wilson to be correct and the version published in the Colonial Records wrong for on the first page of the first deed book appears the name of George Wilson as one of the fifteen justices appointed for Bedford County in April, 1771. A certified copy of this commission was obtained and accepted as ample proof. Greensburg furnished additional years of similar service, for a comparison of the volume now in use with the original records preserved in the basement of the courthouse showed that in the old document a portion of the page was missing and at the exact place where the christian name for Wilson should have been. As the name George Wilson appears later, it is reasonable to suppose that the error was made in transcribing the old record into the new volume and with this opinion the Recorder agreed. The error in the printed archives would not have caused me so much anguish of mind had I been familiar with an article on their history in which the writer says of the Colonial Records: "The original journals are now in the Archives Division of the Pennsylvania State Library where they may be examined if necessary, but for ordinary purposes there is no need to consult them. They were not edited, the printer setting his type directly from the manuscript."

There is a lack of correct and detailed information about the early justices of our western counties and the need for material giving proof of statements and dates has been expressed by the genealogical department
of the State Library at Harrisburg. As a small contribution to the history of our section, the results of the research on one of these worthies have been placed in a typed compilation, a copy of which will be available in the collections of our Society. While this may not be entirely complete it does establish the identity of Colonel George Wilson and his service to his generation.

In this material there are copies of the several letters written by and to him as well as accounts taken from printed publications. From them we learn of his journeyings to Philadelphia as the bearer of letters from his fellow justices to Governor Penn; of his unswerving loyalty to the authority of Pennsylvania; of his seizure and forced journey to Wheeling in a leaky rowboat; and of many other incidents of that unruly time when Pittsburgh might easily have ended as a settlement of Virginia instead of Pennsylvania.

Copies of deeds tell us something of his land holdings, of the plantation he developed on Georges Creek, of Mt. Moriah, the Presbyterian church not far from his home of which he was a trustee, and of special interest are the records of the property sold by his sons after his death to Albert Gallatin as a site for the town of New Geneva.

Included is a copy of his will in which he sets forth in great detail the disposition he desired to make of his estate. From this we learn the names of the children of his first marriage. Named also is his second wife, born Sabina Stuart of Virginia, and their little son. The will also makes a bequest to his nephew who is named as the son of his oldest brother. This brother was the Captain Samuel Wilson of Virginia who was killed in the famous Point Pleasant Battle with the Indians.

But of still greater interest for this sketch is his daughter Jane, a young girl of sixteen at the time her father made his will, who later married William Bullitt. After his death she took for her second husband William Hawkins, the father of Judge William G. Hawkins, and finally after being twice widowed, married for her third husband Colonel John Minor of Greene County for whom this was also a third venture in matrimony. During her second widowhood, her brother William George Wilson deeded her a piece of property and on the Warrantee Map of

\[2\] See p. 104.
Fayette County this plantation is designated "Jane’s Hope." Colonel Minor, called the most outstanding man of Greene County, died and Jane was left a widow for the third time. In his will bequests are made to his two stepsons, Jane’s sons by her first two husbands. Five sets of children are spoken of in this will, and if they were all living on peaceable terms under the same roof, this would be truly remarkable.

The typed compilation already referred to contains some additional facts about the children of Colonel Wilson, for to them or their heirs were given grants of land in recognition of his service in the Revolutionary War. These were in the military districts of the present state of Ohio, where the bounty lands of Virginia were located. The record reads: "Gov. John Floyd allows the heirs of George Wilson land bounty for three years service as a Lieut. Colonel of the Virginia State Line."

His widow, Sabina Stuart Wilson, was granted a pension by Pennsylvania and so even after his death do we find George Wilson’s affairs mixed up with both Virginia and Pennsylvania.

As the years went by the family scattered and located in Kentucky, Ohio, and farther West. Few are the descendants of Colonel George Wilson in Pennsylvania today.

His own story ended when the Eighth Pennsylvania Regiment, its ranks decimated by exposure and sickness, reached Quibbleton, New Jersey. A letter written on February 28, 1777, by Timothy Pickering, Adjutant General and later Quartermaster General of the Revolutionary Army, says: "I desired the Dr. by all means to visit them. They were raised about the Ohio, and had travelled near five-hundred miles, as one of the soldiers who came for the Dr. informed me. For over 150 miles over mountains, never entering a house, but building fires and encamping in the Snow. Considerable numbers, unused to such hardships have since died. The Colonel and Lieutanant Colonel among the dead. The Dr. informed me he found them quartered in cold shattered houses."

Dying as he had lived, always at the call of his country, this soldier of both the Indian and the Revolutionary wars lies buried in a grave in far off New Jersey. His family, in their home on the Georges Creek plantation back in southwestern Pennsylvania, received the first intimation of the disaster that had befallen them when the Negro servant who had
accompanied his master came down alone over the hill one day leading
the horse that had borne Colonel George Wilson away.

This paper has been written for the purpose of showing something of
the possibilities, difficulties, surprises, and rewards of genealogical research
as exemplified in the career of one man.

A genealogical problem in its simplest form is somewhat like a jig-saw
puzzle, for where names and dates can be obtained from material already
verified, like the pieces of the puzzle, these need only be fitted together
logically to obtain a complete picture.

A more complex case may be compared to a cross-word puzzle where
one is constantly seeking a word, or a name, and in the genealogical sense
for a clue, anything that will serve, as a lead, be it only an unpublished
letter or diary.

Still more interesting and much more challenging is the study of a
family in relation to the world in which it lived. Such a genealogical study
has been described as a mosaic of recorded facts. To examine, to com-
pare, and finally to prove conclusively, especially under conflicting claims
of tradition, printed page and genuine source material, is one of the most
satisfying of experiences. For the genealogist, it is also the reward of
many hours of hard work in which one must employ much knowledge
of history. One must know something of the early religious bodies, be an
instinctive mathematician, and perhaps as important as anything else have
a sense of humor.

This last becomes somewhat dimmed at times when persons expect
their whole family history to be available at a moment’s notice. Many
letters and inquiries come to libraries and historical societies, some being
couched in considerate and understanding terms, while others carry re-
quests that would entail research covering many hours, and that further
expect the secretary to send this material on to them immediately.

The place of public libraries and historical societies in the field of
genealogical research is most important, for in their collections are to be
found many tools useful for this work. In our own city, the Carnegie
Library through its Pennsylvania Room and the adjoining genealogical
section seeks to serve those who may find help through published books.
Such service often takes the form of answering genealogical inquiries, and
where the answers are to be found in their collection of printed sources, an amazing amount of genealogical work is done. Their collection of county histories of Pennsylvania is very complete and books of other sections are constantly being added. A trained staff of librarians equipped to supply anything that is on their shelves is of course an asset that the smaller Historical Society does not have. But the Historical Society, too, has a genealogical service to render, for in its collections should be gathered the family papers that a public library has not the space to house, family histories published and in manuscript should be featured and especially should those engaged in research of this type be encouraged to use this specialized material.

This Society has on its shelves many genealogical books, the printed histories of families usually the gift of the compiler. There are the complete editions of the Pennsylvania Archives. We have many issues of historical magazines published by historical societies throughout the country. All of these contain material that is valuable to those who seek information about people and families.

In addition we have census returns which are highly important in establishing family relationships. The first federal census taken was that of 1790 and this is the only one that has been made available in printed form. The original schedules are preserved in Washington, in twenty-six bound volumes and it is interesting to find that there was no uniform size and style of paper used, each head furnishing his own. If your forbears, one hundred and fifty-three years ago lived in what then constituted New Jersey, Delaware, Georgia, or Virginia, you are indeed out of luck, for the returns for these states were either lost or destroyed by the British in the attack on Washington during the War of 1812. There are no census returns, therefore, for the first three of these in the printed collection of 1790. For Virginia, a volume based on earlier records has been compiled and printed but this covers only thirty-seven out of seventy-eight counties. A contribution from one of our patriotic societies has given us photostats of the census of Allegheny County taken in 1800 and also for 1810.

Tax books are of great value as by them proof can be obtained that a man lived in a definite locality and was a substantial citizen to the extent
either of owning taxable property or of paying a trade tax. This Society has many Allegheny County tax-books on its shelves and copies of a few of the very rare older volumes that have survived fire and loss by careless handling. Lists of church records, passengers who came to Pennsylvania on early ships, maps, county histories, and even samplers showing the date and the name of the maker are all useful in this work.

This is but a brief summary of the varied and valuable materials to be found in the collections of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania and available for genealogical research. The officers and staff are most desirous that this be better known and more frequently used. Perhaps it may be that among our readers there is one who may find something among its pages to help him climb his own family tree.

WILL OF GEORGE WILSON

In the name of God, Amen, I, George Wilson of the County of Westmoreland and province of Pennsylvania being of sound mind and memory (Thanks to God) calling to mind the mortality of all flesh and that its appointed for all men once to die—do this Tenth day of September in the year of our Lord Seventeen Hundred Seventy Six make and publish this my last will and testament in the way and manner following first and principally. I recommend my soul to God that gave it and my body to the dust nothing doubting that I shall receive the same again at the general Resurrection of all flesh according to the mighty power of God, and as touching my temporal estate, with which it has pleased God to bless me I will and bequeath it in the way and manner following. Imprimis after funeral expenses is paid I allow all my other just debts to be paid also I will and bequeath to Sabina my beloved wife that tract of land formerly bequeathed to her father situate in Augusta County and Colony of Virginia, her and her assigns forever also the one third of all my moveable estate (negroes excepted) likewise I bequeath to her one feather bed and furniture also her riding horse and a new saddle this time bespoke and paid for to John Mcdowaugh in Stauntown Virginia, also her choice of any one of my unsold lotts of ground in Stauntown to be occupied by her during her natural life.

3 Westmoreland County Records of Wills (Greensburg), 1:39 (original), 1:429 (transcript). Colonel Wilson made this will on September 10, 1776; he died in February, 1777; and the will was probated on September 25, 1790.
life and the use of my negroe man Pompey and my negro woman Silvia during the life of her widowhood. And I will and bequeath to my daughter Agnes Humphries Fifty pounds Currant money to be paid her and her heirs by my executors, within one year after my decease. Secondly, I will and bequeath to my son John that Tract of Land that he now lives on, described in the following manner, beginning at the end of twenty five perches on a due South line from the house he now lives in and running a Northwest course untill it streaks the Monongahila River, then from the beginning, with a Southeast Course, to the extremity of the Tract, also that tract of land situate on the south branch of Potomack River, whereon there is a mill formerly—known by the name of Powers Mill excluding Faints and Rule's former Devison of said place, and also a small improvement joining the lately purchased from John Brown to him and his heirs forever. Thirdly I will and bequeath to my Daughter Elizabeth Kenkade, that plantation whereon Samuel Kinkade now lives together with the flat and one half of the Ferry across Cheat and Monongahela Rivers she paying the one half of the annual Rents due or about to become due to the Proprietary the same. And I also bequeath to her my said daughter Elizabeth one house and Lot of land situate in the town of Rumney in Hamshire County, Virginia formerly the property of Hugh Murphy and by me purchased from him to Her and her Heirs forever. Fourthly I will and bequeath to my daughter Jane, that Tract of Land I purchased from Andrew Davis situate in this County also her Horse and one sorrel mare, and this last spring mare Coalt of hers that now runs with her, also her saddle and bridle and one bed and furniture and likewise I will and bequeath to her my said daughter Elizabeth her choice (After my beloved wife Sabina has first taken her choice) of any of my unsold lotts of land situate in Stantown Virginia to her and to her heirs forever. Fiftithly I will and bequeath to my daughter Mary Ann that Tract of Land I purchased from William Pettyjohn situate in this County also a Young Bay two year old mare known by the name of Bassey's Filley also a saddle and Brindle with seven pounds ten shillings to be paid by my executors out of my personal estate also one bed and furniture and her next choice to her sister Elizabeth of any one of my unsold lotts of land in Stantown Virginia To her and her Heirs forever. Sixthly I will and bequeath to my son William George the mill and plantation whereon I now live including that part of Cantaeels Tract adjoing the lines before ascribed betwixt my son John and him my son William George also my part of a tract of land warranteed in the proprietary's Office in Phila da in mine and John Swearingins names said land joining the said Swearingins land and the lines of this tract I now live on
and one bay Two year old mare by the name of my former wife's mare's Filley and my Riffie Gun and a saddle and Briddle worth five pounds to be paid for my Executors out of my personal estate to him and his Heirs forever. Seventhly I will and bequeath to my daughter Sarah that Tract of Land I bought from one Ashbroke situate in this County also a tract of land I bought from Andrew Link also situate in this County and one lott of ground situate in the town of Pittsburgh bought from John Ormsbey to her and her Heirs forever. Eighly I will and bequeath to my Daughter Phebey that lott of ground situate in the Town of Rummey, Hampshire County Virginia formerly the property of John Katton with a survey of land entered and warranted to the Lord Fair Fax's Land Office there unto adjoining, or lying contiguous to said Town and also a survey of land lying on the west side of the Junction of the Rivers Cheat and Monongahela, Surveyed and returned unto the Propriators Land Office by William Hendrick, surveyor. Also a Negro girl named Hannah to be continued with her my said daughter wherever she resides, which I would desire to be with my wife Sabina to her and her heirs forever. Ninthly I will and bequeath to my son Samuel Stewart that Tract of land situate in the Forks of Cheat and Monongahela River together with one half share of the Ferry at said place together with a negro child that my negro wench Hannah is now with and my small sword to him and his Heirs forever. Tenthly I will and bequeath to my son John my negro woman Hannah and should it so happen that she shall have any increase I allow that he shall give his sister Mary Ann and brother William George and Sister each one young negro to be delivered to them respectively and in order as they are herein mentioned at the age of six years, and in case that he my said son John should die before the above bequeathment to comply with I allow that my executors may see that the same is truly complied with to be to them my said children John, Marey Ann, William George and Sarah and their Heirs Respectively forever. Eleventhly I will and bequeath to my son William George after the day of the death or the day of the marriage of my beloved wife Sabina my negro man named Pompey, to him and his Heirs forever, and to my son John I will and bequeath likewise after the day of the death or the day of the marriage of my beloved wife Sabina my negro woman Silvey to him and his heirs forever with this proviso that should one or either of them, my sons John or William George chuse to sell to each other the Negro man or Negro Woman, they shall hereby be tolerated so to do notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein mentioned as the negroes are married and I allow that they may continued con-
venient together for that reason and should it so happen that the negro woman Silvey should have any increase I hereby will and bequeath one of the negro children to my daughter Jean to be delivered to her at the age of six years. That is to say the 1st the wench shall have that lives to the age before mentioned anything to the contrary of this bequeathment beforementioned notwithstanding, to her and her Heirs forever. And further I will and bequeath to Elizabeth Price a bay yearly mare with her increase to be kept clear of cost or expenses and delivered to her when she comes of age agreeable to her indenitures together with a saddle and briddle worth five pounds to be paid for out of my personal estate and delivered to her the said Elizabeth Price at the time before mentioned — and for sundry reasons to myself known I hereby will and bequeath Fifty Pounds to be paid into the hands of William McCleary for purposes I have to him communicated to be paid into the hands within a year from my decease and in case he should refuse to receive it then it is to be added to the residue of my estate, and further should the said Will McCleary Die or be removed out of this part of the world, so as to put out of his power to comply with my request I will and allow that the said fifty pounds shall be paid to his order —. And I hereby will and allow my executors to convey and make over under a county of Augusta and town of Stantown in Virginia a part of a lot to Matthew Reed for an Alley for the use of said town to be conveyed and enrold at the proper expense of said county and town. And lastly I hereby will and allow all my unbequeathed capital lands to be sold after the best way and manner my executors can and the money arising from such sales to be added to the residue of my unbequeathed personal estate etc. and the whole after all the costs and necessary charges is paid in securing said unbequeathed Lands, that then the amount of the whole shall be equally divided amongst my children and notwithstanding all my foregoing bequeathments I hereby will and bequeath unto my oldest Brother's Son, named Ralph Willson a tract of land situate in this county joining to that Tract of Land hereby bequeathed to my daughter Sarah which I purchased from John Wilkinson to him and his Heirs forever anything before mentioned to the contrary notwithstanding and also I hereby will and bequeath each of my children part of the before mentioned personal estate to them and their Heirs, forever as it is my sole desire hereby to entail the whole of their Inheritant upon them and their heirs forever, and the profits if any on each of their respective shares after paying all necessary expenses shall be applied towards defraying the expense of their education and maintenance. And I hereby constitute and appoint my beloved wife Sabina my
son John, Captain John Stewart of Augusta County Virginia, William McCleary and Thanphilius Philips Executors to this my last will and Testament hereby revoking and making void all former wills ratifying and confirming this and this only to by my last will and testament in witness whereof I have here unto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

(Signed) Geo. Wilson—(Seal)

Signed sealed and acknowledged by the Testator to be his last will and Testament in Premiums of us who are subscribing evidences thereunto.


EXCERPT FROM A RECORD IN THE HAWKINS FAMILY BIBLE

Maternal Ancestor Grandfather George Wilson, born in the County of Tyrone, Ireland in the year 1729, and died at Quibletown, New Jersey in 1777. He had issue, twelve children by Elizabeth McCreery, his first wife, and one by Sabilla Stewart, his second wife. 4 by his first wife died in infancy. Nancy, John, Elizabeth, Jane, Mary Ann, George, Sarah and Phebe lived to years of maturity.

Jane was born 27th of April, 1761.

Samuel Lewis, the child by second wife, died in infancy.

Grandfather Wilson had one brother in this country, named Samuel, he was killed by the Indians at Kenhor—[Kanawha River, at Point Pleasant].