



# GENIE BYTES

Volume 4, Issue 4

Grand Strand Genealogy Club

November 2023

## Message from the Editors

### Bonnie Kishpaugh & Ann Hamilton

Editor & Assistant Editor, Genie Bytes, GSGC Members of the Board

GSGC has two candidates for president. Dick Temple has agreed to serve for a third year. At the October meeting, Gail Reynolds nominated Charlene Carson, president in 2017 and 2018, to serve for a second time. Brief biographies of the candidates will be emailed to all members on 27 Nov. Plan to attend the meeting on 9 Dec when we will vote in person via ballot or on Zoom via chat.

Jaw-dropping describes the third installment in April Havens' amazing ancestor series. We hope that April's series inspires you, our readers, to share your ancestors' amazing stories.

In another article, we celebrate our co-founder and past president Gail Reynolds' decades-long affiliation with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, aka OLLI. Funded since 2001 by philanthropist Bernard Osher, OLLI offers noncredit courses with no assignments or grades to adults over age 50 at 125 colleges and universities—including Coastal Carolina—throughout the US. Would you believe it? OLLI is but one year older than our own GSGC! ♦

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## Our Gail Goes National

### Ann Hamilton

Assistant Editor, Genie Bytes, GSGC Member of the Board

In an effort to remain viable during the pandemic, Olli's National Resource Center staff at Northwestern University envisioned an online program featuring instructors from across the nation serving students equally widespread.

By the spring of 2023, USC Beaufort was invited to participate in the fourth installment of this pilot program. Curricula in this iteration would include ethics, film noir, aliens in outer space, and Shakespeare. OLLI members in Beaufort as well as seven other OLLI's across the nation could choose from 12 six-session courses taught by highly skilled instructors from California to Illinois to, yes, South Carolina.

GSGC's own Gail Reynolds was tapped to be one of those instructors. This one-time physical then special education teacher from the greater Rochester, NY, area was intimidated by her fellow instructors' terminal degrees—but not for long. After all, Gail has taught for our local OLLI since 2001 when she stepped in for an illness-sidelined instructor. Her résumé touts her expertise with 22 genealogy tools and topics both elementary and advanced, her outreach to over 700 students and...

Gail had an unexpected ace in the hole when she taught in alliance with the PhDs. He was a Northwestern Sophomore who served as her moderator. Younger than her grandsons but very tech savvy, he Zoomed with her between classes to work out kinks and ease her technology insecurities, posted materials, monitored chats, and forwarded questions from her 26 diverse students. Their intergenerational partnership created a carefree and rewarding course.

Gail's advice to her fellow GSGCers: "Keep looking for opportunities to grow and learn. Share your passion and your skills with others!" ♦

## A Love Letter to GSGC

### Ann Hamilton

Assistant Editor, Genie Bytes, GSGC Member of the Board

I love this Club. Why? Because it's given me mentor after mentor whom I now call friend.

Phyllis Hughes' tutelage in DNA tools uncovered a match with a Saxon chemical engineer with whom I've explored over 400 years of an ancestral line.

Charlene Carson preached connectivity until this reluctant Facebooker's posting was read by a Pomeranian genealogist whose expertise unlocked vital records disclosing the European identity of my tree's tragic "mystery" woman.

Club volunteers like Charlene and Lois Butler at the *FamilySearch* Center acquainted this novice with microfilm machines and assisted me in deciphering the vital British BMD records contained on their aged and faded rolls. My reward? When I visited the Somersetshire countryside, I stood next to a fellow lifelong Thomas Hardy lover, looked over Blackmore Vale, and knew that my ancestors tilled Hardy land in the 16th century.

Bob Dahlin helped me resolve more than one genealogical head-scratcher. His Scandinavian SIG gave me a variety of tools which, collectively, enabled me to know with certitude that one of my ancestors taught with Einstein and Oppenheimer.

Gail Reynolds' and Claire Fleming's presentations taught this introvert a very important lesson. Good storytelling required me to circulate. I would have to reacquaint myself with elderly cousins I now barely knew in order to exchange invaluable remembrances and photographs. I would also have to sit down with total strangers--residents of small towns my ancestors called home from Massachusetts and New York to Wisconsin and Minnesota. My reward? Invariably, they looked me in the eye and said, "You won't believe what we've found for you!"

GSGC and its mentors fuel my passion and give me the tools to realize all this and more. I know GSGC's given—and will give if we preserve it—all of you much the same. Volunteer. Vote.

Help us. You know in your heart of hearts WE HAVE HELPED YOU! ♦

## Call for Genie Jar Donations

Members of the GSGC last met solely in person in March of 2020. Expenses such as maintenance of our website and Zoom subscriptions as well as payment of speakers and the *Ancestry* subscription for Chapin Library continue. Please help us. Mail your check or money order to Grand Strand Genealogy Club, 6529 Valene Court, Myrtle Beach, SC, 29572. Thank you, in advance, for continuing to support YOUR GSGC! ♦

## Who Are My Parents???

### Charlene Carson

Vice President, GSGC Executive Board Member

While seemingly a very simple question to answer, it's not so simple if you've been adopted. The laws and regulations related to adoptions vary greatly from state to state. While improvements are starting to occur, the process remains painfully complicated allowing critical information continuing to remain elusive for the adoptee.

Where does an adoptee begin their search? The answer – it depends! Most frequently, the search begins by determining in which city or state adoption took place. Once that information is known, one can determine which agency or court has jurisdiction over the records. The list of "where/what next" goes on and on!

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services created a website – [\*\*Child Welfare Information Gateway\*\*](#)\* – which provides several options for finding information about adoption.

At the website, choose TOPICS and then ADOPTION. Find links to information for a variety of adoption-related questions. To locate specific requirements or restrictions by state, choose the STATE RESOURCES topic and then choose STATE STATUTES. Next, select the state itself. Finally, under that state's ADOPTION topic, select Access to Adoption Records.

While this website doesn't have ALL the information an adoptee may need to start their search, it does provide a great starting point and hopefully helps to set expectations on the type of information that may be available.

\**The Child Welfare Information Gateway* provides information on a variety of topics related to child welfare. ♦

# A Seer, a Faith Healer, and a Magician cum Fortune Teller

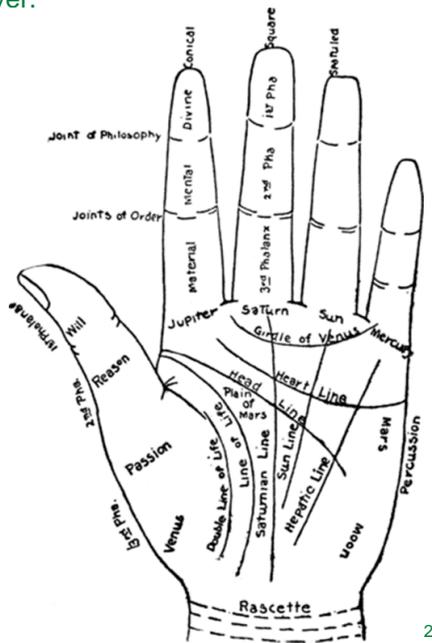
**April Havens**

Member, GSGC

## Part 3 of 3: A Magician cum Fortune Teller

**Magician** – a person who performs tricks for entertainment.

**Fortune Teller** – one who has the ability to predict a person’s future utilizing a crystal ball, palmistry or cards. According to the article “Fortune Teller: Keen Judge of Personality,” there must be an element of the mysterious. “To tell fortunes,” writes the article’s author, Dr. Atkinson, “a person must be a shrewd judge of human nature for it takes a keen understanding of human personalities to make a successful soothsayer.”<sup>1</sup>



Shrewd was the word for my great-great-grandfather, Jerome Haskew/Hasque McCormick, when he fled Patrick County, Virginia, for Johnson City, Tennessee. He was a horse length ahead of revenuers about to arrest him for moonshining. Fearing prison as punishment for bootlegging liquor, he left the area with some members of his family to begin a new life. His new life—at least in the beginning—was both sustaining and satisfying.

Clients evaluated him as “pretty good at his work” and mere days before his death “a large crowd ...[was] on the porch waiting to have their fortunes told.”<sup>3</sup>

According to the article below from the *Johnson City Chronicle* of Jun 1, 1934, “The aged man had lived alone for about twenty years...and had made his living by telling fortunes and doing tricks of magic for a large number of persons in this vicinity. He charged twenty-five cents for each fortune and evidently made a good living from his trade.”<sup>5</sup>

The article describes in gruesome detail the stench in the room and the decomposing and mutilated body examined by the police.

“When found, McCormick’s body was clad only in underwear and a shirt and was horribly contorted as if the man suffered intensely before dying. The corners of his mouth were completely eaten away by rats as was the left ear and left eye. A deep hole had been eaten in the left wrist. What was left of the upper lip was curled back over the teeth giving further evidence of intense suffering.”<sup>6</sup>

McCormick’s death was originally charged as a murder and the authorities arrested a young man for the crime. In the end the young man was acquitted and it was decided by the coroner that Jerome died of natural causes.

I hope *Genie Bytes* readers have found these stories about my three eccentric crystal-ball-gazing ancestors worth a read. I did!

[Note from the editors. We did, too!]

(continued on next page)

## Decomposed Body Of Aged Fortune Teller Found; Lived Alone 20 Years

Badly decomposed with numerous parts eaten away by rats, the body of Jerome Haskew McCormick, 77-year-old self-styled fortune teller and magician, was found early Thursday morning by neighbors and police officers at his two room shack, 317 West Chilhowie Avenue. Authorities at first were of the opinion the man had met with foul play, but following an inquest at the Appalachian Funeral Home, it was decided he died from organic heart leakage and "mital regurgital." McCormick had been dead about three days.

The coroner's jury was composed of Coroner A. B. McCorkle, Dave Netherly, J. P. Slonaker, J. E. McCracken, S. T. Williams, C. W. Milhorn, F. Arnold Lowry, W. L. McNeas and Dr. J. T. McFaddin.

### Body Mangled

When found, the body was clad only in underwear and a shirt and was horribly contorted as if the man suffered intensely before dying. The corners of the mouth were completely eaten away by rats as was the left ear and left eye. A deep hole had been eaten in the right wrist. What was left of the upper lip was curled back over the teeth giving further evidence of intense suffering. The left leg was twisted into a grotesque shape and was in a vertical position.

Officers and other authorities who answered the call were unable to enter the room for several minutes due to the offensive stench resulting from the decomposition. An ambulance was called and the body was removed to the Appalachian Funeral Home where the inquest was held.

### Discovered By Patrons

Actual discovery of the body was made by Gertie Stair, 41, and Margie Willis, 31, both of Abingdon, Virginia. The Stair woman stated she had previously paid McCormick to tell her fortune and do some tricks for her, but she was unable to make the visit until Thursday. The two women arrived in Johnson City by late Wednesday night, but did not make the actual visit until Thursday morning.

"He was pretty good at his work," said the Stair woman, "and said I would go to New Jersey and the next week I was there."

"We went to the house Thursday morning about eight o'clock and knocked several times, but no one answered the door. I looked in and saw him lying on the bed, but I did not know he was dead. I

called several of the neighbors and asked them to go into the house and when they refused I called his daughter, Mrs. J. T. Rakes. We all went in and found his body and then we called the police."

Loretta Rakes, small daughter of Mrs. J. J. Rakes, said she had gone to her grandfathers home on Wednesday night to deliver milk, but when her grandfather failed to come to the door she left the milk on the porch and returned to her home. "When I left," she said, "a large crowd of persons were on the porch waiting to have their fortunes told."

### Ill Health Lately

Mrs. Rakes, who lives at 412 West Ninth Avenue, stated her father visited her last Friday and at the time said he was sick and had been feeling bad for some time. "I tried to get him to stay for supper," she said, "but he said he had plenty of food cooked at his home. That was the last time I saw him until his body was found this morning."

Neighbors said they had missed the man, but thought he was probably off on a trip and would return later. A check-up of several persons living in the neighborhood revealed that the man had probably been dead since sometime during Monday of this week.

### Lived Alone

The aged man had lived alone for about twenty years, the neighbors stated, and had made his living by telling fortunes and doing tricks of magic for a large number of persons in this vicinity. He charged twenty-five cents or each fortune and evidently made a good living from his trade.

During the past several years he has been subject to blind, staggering spells, according to his daughter, but had not suffered so frequently during the past few months.

Evidently realizing his condition, he had told the Stair woman to see him as soon as possible as he "did not think he would live very long."

He is survived by three daughters and four sons: Mrs. J. T. Rakes, 412 West Ninth Avenue, Johnson City; Mrs. Bertie Rex, Dublin, Virginia; Mrs. Lizzie Hall, Stewart, Virginia; Will McCormack, Spring, North Carolina; George E. and Leeb McCormack of Stewart, Virginia; and Ed McCormack, Winter Street, Johnson City.

Funeral arrangements have not been completed and will be announced later.

## Did You Know?

And speaking of OLLI, did you know it's in full swing at CCU? Fall classes include America's 1492 – 1865 history, memoir writing, ballroom dance, the Vikings, retirement, and the life and music of George Gershwin. Register for spring semester in February for a similar smorgasbord of subjects—including popular repeats. ♦

Charlene Carson reminds our readers that Chapin Memorial Library is a Family History Affiliate Library? If you use [FamilySearch](#) for your genealogy research at home and get the message "You must be at a Family History Center to view this record," visit Chapin Memorial Library and try looking at the records there. As an affiliate library, Chapin "looks like" a Family History Center. Most, but not all, records that are locked from home viewing, can be viewed at Chapin. ♦

Another Charlene TIP for accessing *FamilySearch* records at Chapin. Public computers at Chapin currently have two-hour time limits on their use. If you use your personal laptop/tablet on the Chapin network, *FamilySearch* "thinks" you're using a library computer but you are not on a time restriction. **BONUS:** you can download your "finds" to your PC for later review! ♦

\*\*Have a tip/tidbit you'd like to share? Please submit it to [genieclub2002@gmail.com](mailto:genieclub2002@gmail.com) – Subject: "Tip/Tidbit." We'd love to hear from you. \*\*

## Featured Websites

Charlene Carson asks. "Have you found the best database on which to research your Polish ancestors?" If you haven't, this page is for you. At the [FBPGG](#) you can view collections, databases, archives, and tools for Polish research.

This site was developed, is maintained, and is continually enhanced by the generosity of the administrators, moderators, and members of the Polish Genealogy Facebook page. It's the very best! ♦

For Italian genealogy research, Dick Temple suggests you try [Antenati Italiani](#). ♦

## Featured Book

Croom, Emily Anne. *The Sleuth Book for Genealogists: Strategies for More Successful Family History Research*. Genealogical Publishing Company, 2009. What do you do when you hit the proverbial brick wall? Expert genealogist Emily Croom encourages you to blend literary methods of deduction with genealogical expertise. ♦

<sup>1,2</sup>*The Commercial Appeal* [Memphis, TN], 6 Mar. 1938, p. 43. *Newspapers.com*.

<sup>3</sup>*Johnson City Chronicle* [Johnson City, TN], 1 Jun, 1934, p. 4. *Newspapers.com*.

<sup>4</sup>Jerome Hasque/Haskew McCormick and Martha Jane Willis McCormick. Photograph. ca. 1914 Digital image. Privately held by April Havens, Dameron, Maryland.

<sup>5,6</sup>*Johnson City Chronicle* [Johnson City, TN], 1 Jun, 1934, p. 4. *Newspapers.com*. ♦

## State Guides

### Hawaii

(Source: State Guide Hawaii by Posz, D. H. Originally published in the Sep/Oct 2023/Vol.24, Issue 5, P. 33 of *Family Tree Magazine*)

Statehood: 1959

First federal census: 1900

Birth and death records begin: 1896, with earlier local coverage

Marriage records begin: 1896, with earlier local coverage

Contact for vital records:

HI Dept. of Health. ♦

### Massachusetts

(Source: State Guide Massachusetts by Brophy, M. Originally published in the Sep/Oct 2023/Vol.24, Issue 5, P.37 of *Family Tree Magazine*)

Statehood: 1788

First federal census: 1791

Birth and death records begin: 1639 (town); 1841 (state)

Marriage records begin: 1639 (town); 1841 (state)

Contact for vital records:

MA Registry of Vital Records and Statistics. ♦

## Dear Miss Genie

No questions received this quarter. ♦

\*\*Do you have a question for Miss Genie? Why not send it to her at [genieclub2002@gmail.com](mailto:genieclub2002@gmail.com) – Subject: "Miss Genie." She would love to hear from you. \*\*

### SOUTH CAROLINA GRAND STRAND GENEALOGY CLUB (SCGSGC)

#### OFFICERS

President: Dick Temple

Vice President: Charlene Carson

Secretary: Dennis Fitzgerald

Treasurer: Anne Laymon

#### BOARD MEMBERS

Historian: Lois Butler

Membership: Pat Bernschein/Michelle Kozinetz

Newsletter: Bonnie Kishpaugh, Ann Hamilton

Past President: Darla Williams

Programs: Cheri Passey

Technical Support: Danny Sullivan

Webmaster: Judy Phillips

► Become involved. Shadow a Board member. We welcome you. ◀

\*\*Lanyards (\$5 ID Badge Holder; \$2 Ribbons + \$.25 each additional ribbon) – See Marie Peacock or email the Club at [genieclub2002@gmail.com](mailto:genieclub2002@gmail.com) to order\*\*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### GSGC MONTHLY MEETINGS

PLACE: CHAPIN MEMORIAL LIBRARY/VIA ZOOM

TIME: 10 AM

Presentations:

- November: No Meeting due to Veterans Day
- December 9: Return of the Problem Ancestor
- January 13, 2024: She Did What? Putting Your Ancestor into Historic Context — Sara Gredler, CG

### GENEALOGY MEETINGS/CONFERENCES

**Roots Tech 2024** – February 29 - March 2, 2024. The conference will be in person in Salt Lake City (\$99) and virtual (FREE!). Registration now open. Check website for details. ♦

**National Genealogical Society 2024 Virtual Family History Conference – Expanding Possibilities** – May 16-18, 2024.

Premier annual event for family historians, professional genealogists, hobbyists, and history buffs. Check website for updates and new information as it becomes available. ♦

**Ontario Ancestors 2024 Conference: An Interactive Experience: Explore, Engage & Enjoy!** – June 14-15, 2024.

This will be the first in-person (Toronto) OGS Conference in five years, with an emphasis on *doing!* Registration opens November 15<sup>th</sup>. They are delighted to announce their first confirmed marquee speaker is DNA evidence specialist Blaine Bettinger! Check website for further details. ♦

\*\*Due to the Coronavirus most – if not all – meetings/conferences are being held virtually. Please visit [ConferenceKeeper](#) for the most complete "Calendar and Collection of Genealogy Events" on the Internet. This is your chance to attend a meeting virtually you may have been unable to attend onsite because of its distance or cost. \*\*

### MEETINGS

2nd Saturday of each Month 10:00 AM at:

Chapin Library (*FamilySearch* Affiliate Library)

400 14th Avenue North, Myrtle Beach, SC 29577

\*Meetings held both at Chapin Library and via ZOOM\*

**Email - [genieclub2002@gmail.com](mailto:genieclub2002@gmail.com)**

**Website - [www.scgsgc.org](http://www.scgsgc.org)**

### GENIE BYTES NEWSLETTER

Editor: Bonnie Kishpaugh

Assistant Editor: Ann Hamilton

Published: Quarterly (February, May, August, November)

**Note:** Please send your questions/suggestions/feedback to [genieclub2002@gmail.com](mailto:genieclub2002@gmail.com) - Subject: "Newsletter."

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