

# The Parke Society Newsletter

Clearinghouse for research on all Park/e/s immigrants from the British Isles.  
*Promoting Fellowship, Genealogical Research and the Preservation of our Heritage*

## Climbing Over Our Wall: Using Traditional Research and DNA

BY TONYA PARKS PETTIT PS#1583

As previously mentioned in my earlier article ("Climbing My Brick Wall," PSNL Vol. 48, No. 3, pp. 33-37), we are a homeschooling family that is using our family history to teach history. We have been researching our brick wall ancestor Nathaniel Parks, Sr., in hopes of connecting him to a lineage line, using traditional methods, learning about land records and wills, and recently added DNA to our research methods. In the process we have learned some new lessons that we thought would be interesting to share.

Our paper trail had left us with our ancestor Nathaniel Parks Sr. living in an area of Dutchess County, New York known as the Charlotte Precinct, during the Revolutionary War, with his widow, Lydia Tallmadge Parks, being found living in Amenia, Dutchess County, New York, following the war. Here we hit a wall. Though lacking records in Dutchess County, it appeared that he did

not survive the war, yet the birth of his son Nathaniel Parks Jr. in March of 1781 seemed to indicate he at least had lived to father him nine months or so previously. We decided to look more at the family of his widow, Lydia Tallmadge Parks, to see if we could find any clues to further our search. *Lesson one: learn more about the wife's family.*

Lydia Tallmadge Parks had a sibling named Jonah Tallmadge who had also married a Parks. This was interesting, though having two siblings who marry a Parks does not always mean that the Parks are related, still, worth checking into.

Jonah Tallmadge was married to Sarah Parks, and it turned out that she was in the Parke Society database as the daughter of Daniel Park (5T198) b. 1707 Connecticut – d. 1763 Canterbury, Connecticut, married to Esther Averill. This was verified by looking for the will of Daniel Park (5T198) of Canterbury. The will was recorded in the district of Plainfield, a district that oversaw the records in that time period for many towns. *Lesson two: wills are not always in the town of residence, but sometimes overseen by a district or other designation.*

Following the recording of the will of Daniel Park (5T198) in 1763, there was a distribu-

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## THE PARKE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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**THE PARKE SOCIETY** (org. 1963) serves as a clearinghouse for research on all Park/e/s immigrants from the British Isles. Regular membership is open to any descendant. Associate membership is open to any interested person. Inquiries and requests for membership should be directed to the Registrar. Fees are:

|                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| Application Fee | \$ 15 |
| Annual Dues     | \$ 30 |
| Life Membership | \$265 |
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**ADDRESSES AND OTHER MEMBERSHIP CHANGES:** Send all changes of mailing address, name, phone number, email address, reports of deaths or other important family events to our Executive Director, **Fr. Michael (Tad) Parks** PS#425H at 70741.2122@compuserve.com, or by surface mail to him at

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Make dues payments payable to The Parke Society, Inc. (Note: please do not send these questions to the Treasurer.) **VERY IMPORTANT: BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR MEMBERSHIP NUMBER ON YOUR CHECK!**

**GENEALOGY QUESTIONS AND MATERIALS:** Send these to our Historian, **Fr. Michael (Tad) Parks** PS#425H at 70741.2122@compuserve.com, or by surface mail to

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Please also send such materials to your Lineage Leader, if you have one.

**COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, AND CRITICISMS:** Send all general correspondence of this kind to our President, **Ken M. Parks** PS#1406 at parksken49@gmail.com.

**LIBRARY:** Send all questions relating to the Library, including library loans, to **Ken M. Parks** PS#1406 at parksken49@gmail.com.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Send questions concerning Parke Society membership, requests for membership packets, and all application materials to our Registrar, **Mr. Ronald Neal Parks** PS#1458, at registrar@parke.org.

**NEWSLETTER:** Send article submissions and comments to our Editor, **Paul Jordan-Smith** PS#1451 at parkenews@parke.org. If you don't have email, send all *typed* materials to

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*Please note: handwritten submissions cannot be accepted.*

**WEBSITE:** Send all suggestions and comments to the webmaster, **Paul Jordan-Smith** PS#1451 at webmaster@parke.org.

## Climbing Over Our Wall

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tion of the widow's portion to the surviving children dated 1782. In this, Sarah Parke is named as Sarah Tallmadge, our first verified clue. *Lesson three: look for a distribution after the death of the person of their widow's portion, sometimes many years later, which gives surnames of the daughters.*

It turns out that Sarah Parke (6T1450) had a brother named Nathaniel Parks (6T1453), mentioned in the same will of Daniel Park (5T198), but how were we to prove that he was the same as ours?

When we looked at the Parke Society database, Nathaniel Parks (6T1453) b. 1747 was listed as being married to Thankful Egglestone. This had to be disproved if he were to be ours. Thankfully that was fairly easy to do, after finding the will of Nathaniel Parke of Groton, Connecticut filed in 1800 who was married to Thankful Egglestone. *Lesson four: read wills carefully for signs there are two people of the same name who have lived in the same area.*

After referring again to the will of Daniel Parke (5T198) and the widow's portion distribution of 1782, we knew this couldn't be the same person. In that distribution, property is left to the heirs of Nathaniel Parks. This infers that Nathaniel Parks (6T1453) had died prior to 1782, but not earlier than the death of Daniel (5T198), as he is listed in 1763, but not his heirs. Looking at the Frank Sylvester Parks book and finding that Nathaniel Park of Groton was the son of Thomas Park of Groton and then at an Egglestone Genealogy for Thankful Egglestone confirmed the children listed in the 1800 will of this Nathaniel Park of Groton. *Lesson five: look for many sources when disproving data in a database, making sure the research is solid.*

While genealogy books are not always correct—and there are certainly errors in the Frank Sylvester Parks book—we found enough evidence to remove Thankful as wife of Nathaniel Parks (6T1453). This freed him up to be considered our Nathaniel Parks Sr.

Our current search is into the land records of Canterbury, Connecticut, to see if the heirs of Nathaniel Parks are named in land deals there. A cousin is poring over the microfilm for us, so while waiting, we thought we would pursue another form of research for clues. *Lesson Six: research takes time and sometimes tedious work to follow a hunch.*

We were approached about the Y-DNA Parks Study, and my Dad agreed to test at the 12 marker level. While waiting for the results, we also had him tested for autosomal DNA through Ancestry.com. *Lesson seven: when testing, be patient for the science to be done... there will be plenty of time to explore the results when they come in.*

When the results of the Y-DNA test came in we were excited to find that Dad was a match at the 12 marker level with other participants who were descended from the Robert Parke of Massachusetts 1630 line. This seemed to verify the research we have already done, as Daniel Parke (5T198) is a descendent of this Robert Parke. *Lesson Eight: Y-DNA can help tell what line you are descended from but not how, still, very welcome when there are no more clues in the paper trail.*

In the autosomal DNA testing on Ancestry.com, Dad had suggested matches to descendants of several collateral lines in the Tallmadge family ancestors, which helped to verify our paper trail up to our brick wall, but did not yet bring us over the wall. There are, however, suggested matches for others who have tested from the location of Canterbury, Connecticut, and looking closer at those suggestions and their ancestors may help us as well. *Lesson nine: good research is needed when a relationship is suggested from an autosomal match, especially when surnames are changed by marriage.*

We have learned a great deal about DNA and its possibilities in helping us complete our research, and found it to be a great tool to add to traditional research. The Y-DNA and autosomal DNA have helped confirm carefully done research, and each had different questions to answer, and different limita-

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## **Climbing Over Our Wall**

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tions. Using DNA to research other branches of our family, we have been able to solve an orphan line from New York City on my maternal side, and connect with cousins who are also researching, some of whom have pictures or other mementos of interest to us. While we are waiting to complete the paper trail with the land records, we are now confident that our Nathaniel Parks Sr. is at least descended from the Robert Parke of Massachusetts 1630 line, and is very probably the son of Daniel Park (5T198) of Canterbury, Connecticut. ☺

## **From the President's Desk**

by Ken Parks, PS #1406

### **Back in the saddle again**

As I write this at the end of January 2017, life is beginning to return to what passes for normal here. The contractors finished up a few days before Christmas, and we've been finishing up with our own punch list of chores such as painting, getting furniture and clothing out of storage, hanging pictures and, most importantly for me, setting up a dedicated office space for myself! What this means for me is, it's now catch up time in a major way. Parke Society matters as well as DNA project business, both long-neglected, will begin to be addressed in the coming weeks and I look forward to creating a bit of forward momentum in both areas.

### **Looking outward**

Something we've discussed at past business meetings seemed ripe for exploration now that more time is available in my day. With a few Park/e/s DNA participants living overseas with no roots in the United States or Canada, we've wondered how to make use of the genetic connections that might occur between these and future foreign Park/e/s par-

ticipants and participants with roots in North America. A recent inquiry from a gentleman in Australia who expressed an interest in the DNA project, but also asked about joining the Parke Society, sparked a discussion among the core staff as to how we should reply. While we agreed the DNA results would be a welcome addition to the database, we concluded that the Society, with its focus on North American Park/e/s lineages, really had nothing to offer such a gentleman. Add to that the cost and logistics of dealing with foreign currency exchanges and potential mailing costs, and it seemed best to look for some alternative.

In an attempt to reach out to foreign Park/e/s descendants with an interest in their roots, I recently joined The Guild of One-Name Studies (GOONS.) Any of you may do the same, as they only accept individual members, though societies such as the Parke Society may join as subscribers. However, there is really no upside to having the Parke Society subscribe. There is a fee and no additional benefit that my own membership doesn't already confer. I have registered the four common surname variants (Park, Parke, Parks, Parkes) as well as Pershouse, since we now know from DNA evidence that Pershouse is a genetically proven variant of our surname.

Though I intend to lay low for the time being in terms of GOONS, I will be a contact person should anyone abroad wish to join and contribute information about their particular lineage, either in the British Isles or in other countries to which their Park/e/s family may have emigrated. I have contacted the gentleman in Australia with this news and will encourage him to join and share his family information with me through that venue, leaving the Parke Society uninvolved organizationally.

With our hope that more foreign male Park/e/s will be Y-DNA testing in the future, the possibility of matching up genetically related lines from North America with foreign lines opens up the possibility of finding connections not otherwise possible. In my own case, a Y-DNA test by a gentleman living in Eng-

land with Parks ancestry in County Armagh, Northern Ireland, has given those of us in our genetic group a valuable clue as to the location of our common Parks ancestry. It's my hope that membership in GOONS will provide a forum for exploring those connections.

### **Looking Ahead**

It is my hope that as this issue reaches you, the Parke Society will be moving ahead with renewed vigor. It is my expectation that our next issue will bring news of progress on several fronts. As they say in the journalism world, "watch this space!"

## **From the Executive Director: Society Business**

by (Fr.) Michael (Tad) Parks+, PS #425H

### **Dues Renewals**

By now, each of you active members of the Society will have received your annual dues renewal notice, showing your status, whether you are a Life member, have already paid for 2017, or are still owing for the current year. We always appreciate the prompt handling of that notice as it saves us the additional work of having to follow up on the renewals. Having that renewal notice still in hand should be the tickler that you need to get your dues payment into the Society now.

The mailing label on this newsletter envelope will more or less show your current membership dues status. But that may not be fully up to date, as those labels are actually generated several weeks prior to you getting the newsletter into your hands. Which means that yes, you may have paid but the label won't necessarily indicate that. There's not much we can do about that. It is just an outcome of timing while processing of the renewals and the creating of the mailing labels. The Society has posted the January receipts, but nothing for February.

By the way, it should also be noted that the Secretary does the bank deposit for dues once a month, usually in the first few days of the subsequent month of receiving your

checks. So if you sent in a check in the very early part of the month, it probably won't clear your bank until the middle of the following month. Being a small, all volunteer organization, doing bank deposits only once a month makes for easier financial controls as both the Secretary and the Executive Director keep track of the renewal status of members and reconcile our numbers on a regular basis.

So look at the last item in the top line of the mailing label on your Newsletter envelope, barring the timing issue mentioned above, it indicates your membership status (as of the creating of the mailing label). If a year is indicated there, and it is other than 2017 or perhaps 2018, and you haven't just mailed in your renewal, you probably still need to take care of that. Again prompt attention to your renewals is always appreciated.

### **Renewal notices to Life Members?**

A question has been raised as to why we send renewal notices to Life Members. Considering our efforts to control expenses, isn't this a needless added expense?

While that is true, those notices do serve a very useful purpose. Other than the Newsletter mailings, we aren't necessarily in direct contact with the vast majority of our members throughout the year. The Dues renewal mailing, especially those that go to the non-annual dues members, gives our members a chance to update us on their mailing and other contact information. The renewal mailings always bring us a ton of changes that we would not otherwise have known. It also sometimes brings us information about the health and well-being of members, sometimes informing us of their passing. And occasionally, Life members take this as an opportunity to make a financial contribution to the operations of the Society. So it is very useful for us to include all active members in that first Dues renewal mailing, and is well worth the small additional expense.

### **And what is the dues rate?**

It is a truism that the devil is in the details. Something we once again learned with this

## Notes from the Executive Director

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most recent Dues Renewal mailing. While the printed renewal labels showed the proper amount of annual dues (\$30), elsewhere on the envelope there was an incorrect older dues amount (\$25) shown. When we recently reprinted those dues renewal envelopes, somehow we overlooked this little disconnect, and several people paid the older amount. Unfortunately, there's not much we can do about the mistake now, other than to caution those who haven't already renewed to pay the current rate regardless of what else may be printed on the envelope itself. We aren't going to bill you for the difference. However if you want to make up the difference with another check, we won't reject that either. We will have a temporary fix for the offending data before the second Dues Renewal mailing goes out later this month.

### Temporarily Away and other mailing issues

As a general rule the Newsletter is mailed out to our members as Standard Class mail matter. This class of mail has had various names over the years: Third Class mail, Merchant Mail, or, perhaps best known, Bulk Mail (as in all those ads you receive in your mail box and that you probably promptly throw away).

For the Society the cost savings is obvious. Were we to mail you your Newsletter via First Class mail, it would cost us \$1.64 each, whereas by sending it as Standard Class mail matter, it costs us at most 55 cents per piece. As you can see, the savings are substantial and it helps us to keep the Society Dues at a reasonable level. The only time that we must use First Class mail is for the newsletter mailings going to Canada or other foreign addresses.

But that cost savings comes with some downsides. First, there is no automatic forwarding of your newsletter should your address change, and we don't always get notified as to the non-delivery of your newsletter. If we do receive notice and the newsletter is actually returned to us, we're charged a substantially larger amount, usually around \$3.76.

Another issue that gives the Society headaches is when mail is returned marked "Temporarily Away." This happens when a member becomes a "snowbird," and asks the USPS to hold their mail for a specified period of time until they return. The exact details on how this works is a bit of a mystery, but the long and short of it is that your newsletter is not delivered (it gets trashed) and we get a notice that you are "Temporarily Away." There is not much we can do other than to send you another newsletter via First Class mail, and hope that it gets through to you: again, additional work and expense for the Society.

### Solving these problems

The best way to resolve these problems is to receive the Newsletter electronically. If you have an email address, you can receive an email from the Editor with the current issue of the Newsletter attached. Just click on the attachment and up pops the PDF version of the newsletter. When we started offering the Newsletter in electronic form, I insisted that there was to be no link and downloading necessary, that it would be right there instantly available.

Besides avoiding any and all the USPS problems, you also will be getting your Newsletter about a week before it is even printed and mailed out to all the other members. And it will contain perhaps more color than the printed edition, as it costs us nothing to include color pictures in the electronic edition. If you are interested in changing over from hard copy to the electronic version, just let either the Editor or myself know, and we will accordingly code your membership record.

### Going paperless

We continue to digitize the Lineage Application Binders, and are now completing the 1100 series. We have tripped over several issues concerning individual applications, which will take research to sort out in the future. And we still need to set up the mechanism for getting revisions to the various holders of these digitized files. Maintenance of these files is key to keeping them useful.

We are still contemplating what to do about the 55 Lineage Key Binders which contain all of the Park/e/s family group sheets belonging to the Society. Digitizing them would be a huge task. Much bigger than what we are doing with the Lineage Application Binders. What we are going to do in the meantime, is to create an digital version of the current hard copy Lineage Key Abstracts. The Abstract will basically be the first three generations of each Lineage Key, together with its cover sheet. We will start work on that once we have completed the Application Binders.

Back in 1982, when we met in Salt Lake City, the LDS handed over to us over 3000 family group sheets pertaining to the Park/e/s surname. Apparently, we indexed most but not all of those sheets. We are reviewing that work, and making sure that it is complete. Eventually we will be scanning all of those sheets into digital form.

When we were building the original GIVE-NAME INDEX, we included both the materials in the Lineage Key Binders and as well as the information from the LDS Sheets in that index. Later on, for reasons I do not now recall, we separated the two groups of data, creating two databases. What we have realized was that we were not normally looking at both of the databases when doing given name searches. So a couple of months ago we successfully re-merged the two sets of data, eliminating the possibility of missing a database match. One file, one lookup process.

### **My current status**

The year 2016 will go down as the year of medical issues. In the last issue I happened to mention that I had taken a tumble from the main stair case on August 15th, breaking my right fibula and ankle, and ending up in a cast for 8 weeks, which sort of slowed me down a bit.

But we were not done. On December 11th I crashed to the floor finding that all of a sudden I could not walk. Following two weeks of trying to figure out what was going on, I was rushed into emergency surgery for Cauda Equina Syndrome, a rare but extremely

serious spinal cord condition. The choice was either surgery or never walk again. No arguments there! Following three weeks of inpatient rehab, I returned home for some in-home PT, and soon I will start outpatient rehab.

The intense inpatient rehab has gotten me to the point where I can walk with some assistance of a cane, and the continued PT is helping to strengthen my leg and thigh muscles. I am once again driving and early in February I was once again back at the parish.

In an earlier column, I mentioned two rules we need to live by, to which I add another four. First, always be aware of where you are before suddenly changing direction. Second, after a certain age, see your doctor if you take a tumble. Once we become senior citizens, we don't bounce as well. Third, look beyond the presenting injury; you may have injured something more than originally thought. I obviously did. Finally, if you're hurting, don't procrastinate: see your doctor to figure out what's going on. Case in point: had I not gone into ER that evening, I probably was guaranteed never to walk again.☺

## **Historian's Corner**

by (Fr.) Michael (Tad) Parks+, PS #425H

### **An alert!**

Over the past couple of decades the genealogy avocation has been blessed with the widespread availability of records and materials of all kinds on the internet, and (usually) a more open attitude by government employees (at all levels), giving us access to materials that have not yet been digitized. What used to require letters, phone calls, and personal visits, can often now be handled in the comfort of our home office. In some ways we may have been in the golden era of genealogical research.

But that may be coming to an abrupt end as funding priorities change and organizations are either down sized or eliminated

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## Historian's Corner

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completely. The following is not met to be partisan (though it may sound like that). To quote an on-line blogger, it is not meant to be left, right, alt, or liberal. Its information we should all consider in light of the new administration in Washington, DC.

### The Social Security Death Index

Bills that are passed by congress, and signed into law by the President are often very voluminous, running to hundreds of pages. It is generally impossible for any one individual to know what all is hidden in the depths of a particular bill. This is especially true of what are known as Budget Bills. While policy is not supposed to be part of a budget bill, it often is.

The Social Security Death Index (SSDI) has been a handy tool to help in tracking down individuals connected to genealogical lines that we were researching. If you found them listed in the SSDI, you could find what was their last residence, and then searching with that information finding death notices or obituaries, which could give you additional information about their family. Further, you could order the SS-5, the individual's original application for a social security number which often gave you important additional information about them, like parent's names including the mother's maiden name. Here at the Society, we often used the SSDI to track down members who had disappeared from our active rolls, especially Life Members.

A budget bill signed in the closing days of 2013, had one of those hidden surprises buried deep within its pages. The provision established a three year moratorium on new entries into the SSDI effective 1 January 2014. That is, no new entries would be added to the SSDI until three calendar years had passed. Add to this some policy decisions made by the Social Security Administration, the usefulness of information obtainable has further diminished. For example, requested SS-5 Forms might come with exactly the information blocked out that you were hoping to get redacted. That's no fun.

The proponents of these changes sold it to the Congress as a purported revenue enhancing measure, and as a measure to save up to \$60 billion in fraud losses by preventing identity theft and the filing of false tax returns (it didn't, and in fact it did just the opposite because organizations had no way to check for recent deaths). There was also a supposed revenue item in charges for getting information from the SSDI. To the best of my knowledge nothing further has happened, and there is no indication when data will again be added to the SSDI.

### Current proposals and their effects on genealogical research.

A number of budgetary proposals that will directly affect historical and genealogical research are being discussed in committee. They supposedly will save taxpayer money, but in truth, they won't and the damage that they will cause will be a detriment to all future research. Here are just some of the agencies that are on the chopping block, and what their effect will be on us as genealogists. Further discussion of these points can be found on the @RogueNutfieldGenealogy blog from which much of this verbiage has been quoted.

- **National Endowment for the Humanities.** Budget \$150 million, cost per American \$0.46. The NEH funds research at institutions like museums, colleges, and libraries. These are the grants for small town museums and historical societies that genealogists depend on for local information. These are the grants that larger institutions need for oral history projects, preservation of documents and ephemera, research, digitization projects and other great ideas. Think of all the historic homes, archives and repositories that would be affected by this budget cut.. And the Congress wants to shut down this program permanently, not just reduce its funding. They see this as a frivolous expenditure.
- **National Endowment for the Arts.** Budget \$150 Million, cost per American \$0.46. The Republican Study Committee

states "The federal government should not be in the business of funding the arts." This is another case of not just reducing the funding, but eliminating the entire department. Where would family historians be without terrific historical projects like the documentaries by Ken Burns, or memorial projects like the Vietnam War memorial? Both were funded by NEA grants. Many historical societies have received NEA grants to preserve culture such as local music or art from immigrant or ethnic groups. Many films were funded in part by the NEA to preserve the voices and stories of people such as holocaust survivors, immigrants, families from the Japanese internment camps or the Armenian genocide. NEA grants have supported the preservation of archival and historic materials all over the USA. Perhaps the RSC should listen to George Washington who said "The Arts and Sciences, essential to the prosperity of the State and to the ornament of human life, have a primary claim to the encouragement of every lover of his country and mankind." Again the NEA is being viewed as a frivolous expenditure.

- **The National Archives.** Budget cuts risk public access to records. Cuts here are the worst of all for genealogy and family history. This is a violation of the Freedom of Information act (FOIA), for providing access. NARA took a big hit on their budget during the Great Recession a few years ago. Many regional NARA centers were closed, programs were reduced or eliminated, hours and days were reduced. Additional budget cuts will prove to be very detrimental to public access. These cuts affect genealogists in every aspect of their research. The most basic genealogy searches include federal records such as census, military and immigration records held at NARA. This is not just bad news for genealogists, but for researchers all across the board and in all disciplines and occupations.
- **The Library of Congress.** While there are no rumors of particular cuts to the LOC,

they did take substantial cuts in the 2013 and 2014 budgets, which slowed down digitization projects and caused backups for copyrights. Slow-downs in conservation projects meant that endangered manuscripts continued to decay instead of being preserved. Further cuts in this department could mean that new works and copyrights will linger instead of being registered with the LOC and preservation projects might be completely cancelled instead of being just delayed. Historians, genealogists and citizens will experience cuts in access as well as physical access to collections in the buildings in Washington, DC.

More announced budget cuts are happening every day. But just listing them, complaining and whining is not enough. Reach out to your senators and representatives. Reach out to the staff of these departments and organizations under consideration for elimination or budget cuts to see how you can make a difference. Reach out to your colleagues, research friends, and genealogists from both sides of the aisle about resolving these issues amicably. Continue to patronize these institutions and help spread the word about their contributions to American society. Get involved. Keep informed. Vote.

### **Preserving your genealogical records**

We've talked about this a number of times over the years. The Society even volunteered to take over your materials if you had no one else to pick up or to safeguard your research. And indeed we do have a couple of collections of genealogical materials from former members.

Unfortunately, we find that this is not a very practical solution to your problem. We really don't have the room to store additional materials that might not be immediately pertinent to our work as a Society. And this space situation is in view of the fact that I live in a big house, with one quarter of the lower level already dedicated to the Parke Society. Who will have that kind of space in the future when I retire from active participation in the Society? So we really can no longer offer that solution.

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## Historian's Corner

*cont'd from p. 29*

What we have, we have, and we will hold on to those collections, but you as individual researchers need to be looking for individuals and places that can take your work and preserve it. Regardless of your present age and health, you need to be thinking about the future. If you have dedicated a lot of time and effort to your genealogy, you owe it to yourself and to future generations to do the right thing.

At the same time, you need to ask yourself, in what condition are my genealogical materials? Putting yourself on the other side of the table, are the materials organized and in an order that your successor can clearly see what you have done, and in what directions you have been proceeding? You need to rid your collection of irrelevant materials, duplications, and hand written notes with no obvious connection to your work. There is nothing worse than having to sort through boxes and boxes of unidentified papers, attempting to figure out if they have worth or not. Organize you materials now. Get rid of the clutter.

Remember that circumstances can suddenly change. In a flash. Don't put it off, start asking yourself now: Who might or could take over my collection? Is it more or less ready to be handed over to someone else?~

## Park/e/s in the Arts – Hildy Parks by Ken Parks PS#1406

Hildy Parks, a name familiar to those of us who worked in the theatre, may not be widely known to the general public today, but she was by no means an unknown in her day. Actress, Emmy Award-winning writer, producer (with husband Alexander H. Cohen) of Tony Award nominated shows, her career spanned more than five decades.

### Early Life

Hilda DeForrest Parks was born in Washington, D. C. on 12 March 1926, the only

daughter of Steve McNeil Parks and Cleo Lenore Scanland. The circumstances of her birth and early life are somewhat sad. Her father was from Mississippi, and met her mother in Washington, D. C. while he was in the army during World War I. Her mother's family was from Arlington, Virginia, just across the river from the nation's capital. Her mother was a concert singer (a mezzo contralto), and I found several notices in The Washington Times in the early 1920s regarding her recital work. Her parents married in Washington, D. C. on 10 June 1925 and the couple moved to Sumner, Mississippi, where Steve M. Parks was working as a high school principal.

Steve McNeil Parks died on 16 August 1925. According to a death notice in The Daily Herald, Biloxi and Gulfport, Mississippi Coast dated 21 August 1925, Steve M. Parks bled to death when scissors, which he was using to cut roses, pierced his arm, severing an artery, when he became overbalanced and fell. Only thirty years old and married five months, a life cut short by a tragic accident. His widow, by then pregnant with daughter Hildy, moved back east to live with her widowed father, Nathan Scanland, in Arlington, Virginia, where we find them in the 1930 census. Unfortunately, her mother died of breast cancer on 12 October 1935 at the age of thirty-seven, leaving Hildy an orphan at the tender age of nine, never having known her father at all.

Though her grandfather lived until 1947, the 1940 census finds fourteen year old Hildy Parks living in Richmond, Virginia in the household of Peyton M. Chichester, a medical doctor with the state board of health. Though there may have been some family connection, she is listed as a ward. She later attended the University of Virginia, and shortly after graduating went to New York to make her stage debut as Curley's wife in "Of Mice and Men" at the New School.

### Acting Career

Hildy Parks made her Broadway debut in 1947 in "Bathsheba" with James Mason. In 1948 she appeared in the original cast of Tennessee Williams's "Summer and Smoke."

She made numerous other appearances in Broadway shows during the 1950s, and at the same time began to appear on a number of early television drama anthologies, most of them then based in New York, such as “Armstrong Circle Theatre,” “Kraft Theatre,” “The Philco-Goodyear Television Playhouse,” and “General Electric Theatre.” She created the role of Ellie Crown in the original cast of the soap opera “Love of Life” from 1951—1955.



With a charming personality and quick wit, she began to appear as a panelist in the mid-1950s on several TV quiz shows, such as “Down You Go,” “News Game,” and the first season of “To Tell the Truth.” As an interesting aside, while researching this aspect of her career, I

stumbled upon a news item in The New York Times dated 10 December 1956. The article reveals that the original title for “To Tell the Truth” was “Nothing But the Truth” and that the producers, Goodson-Todman Productions, wanted Walter Cronkite as the host of the new program, which was to appear on the CBS network. However, the network denied Cronkite permission to take the job, claiming a policy against its newsmen working on entertainment shows. Thus, the show, under its new title, debuted with Mike Wallace as the host of the pilot, succeeded immediately by Bud Collyer. The regular panelists included Polly Bergen, Dick Van Dyke, and Hildy Parks. Mike Wallace and John Cameron Swayze alternated as the fourth panelist, though others (such as Hume Cronyn in the episode referenced below) occasionally substituted. A search on YouTube for “Hildy Parks” will turn up several examples of her appearances, but the one listed here will give you an excellent glimpse of Hildy Parks’s charm and personality: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BlIvf6AV3X0>

The bulk of Hildy Parks’s acting career took place on the stage and television, but she did make a number of film appearances. Her film debut was in “The Night Holds Terror” (1955) with Jack Kelly and Vince Edwards, about a family held captive for ransom. She also had roles in “Fail Safe” (1964), “Seven Days in May” (1964), and “The Group” (1966).

### Personal Life

Though all the biographies consulted only mention two marriages for Hildy Parks, it would appear she was actually married three times. Her first marriage was to a man named Sydney Morse, whom she divorced on 10 August 1949. I can find no record of the marriage or the divorce other than an article in The New York Times dated 14 March 1950 about the impending marriage of Hildy Parks to Jackie Cooper which gives the name of her first husband and the date of their divorce. There is a Sydney Morse who was a writer for many of the early television shows in the 1950s, some of the same ones on which Hildy Parks appeared as an actress, so this could be the same individual.

Her second marriage was to the actor Jackie Cooper, the famous child actor who went on to have a long career as an adult. They appear to have married in New York City on either 18 or 19 March 1950. The couple met when they were both appearing in “Magnolia Alley” on Broadway, a show that lasted for a grand total of eight performances. The marriage lasted slightly longer, ending in divorce in Florida on 1 February 1954. There were no children from either of her first two marriages.

In 1953, Hildy Parks appeared on Broadway as Gwendolyn Holly in “Be Your Age,” a comedy that only lasted for five performances. One of the producers was Alexander H. Cohen, and he became Hildy Parks’s husband in a civil ceremony in Arlington, Virginia on 24 February 1956, a marriage that would endure for forty-four years, ending only at his death in 2000. The couple had two sons, Gerald Cohen and Christopher Alexander Cohen.

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## Park/e/s in the Arts

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### Writer-Producer

With her husband, Alexander H. Cohen, Hildy Parks embarked on a new career as a writer and producer, working in the theatre and television. Her earliest credits on the production side begin in 1965, and continue up to around 1998. In addition to the many shows the couple produced, they are well-known for having produced the first telecast of the Tony Awards in 1967, with Hildy Parks writing the script for the show. They would go on to produce every Tony Award broadcast from 1967 to 1986, again with Hildy Parks writing the script for each telecast. They were nominated for Emmy Awards several times for this, winning an Emmy in 1982. They also produced two Emmy broadcasts and won another Emmy for their 1982 special, "Night of 100 Stars," a star-studded event to celebrate the centennial of the Actors Fund. In the theatre, they won two Tony Awards and two Drama Desk Awards over the years. Hildy Parks would do her own research for her Tony scripts, digging through the archives in the Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts.

### Parks Lineage

Though the recent generations of her lineage were not in our Parke Society database, we do have others who share a common descent, which is designated as LK=D. As mentioned earlier, Hildy Parks was born Hilda DeForrest Parks on 12 March 1926 in Washington, D. C. Here is her direct Parks lineage:

Steve McNeil Parks, b. 16 September 1894 Lee Co., Mississippi-d. 16 August 1925 Tallahatchie Co., Mississippi, m. Washington, D. C. 10 June 1925 Cleo Lenore Scanland

George DeForrest Parks, b. 9 March or 29 May 1868 Lee Co., Mississippi-d. 15 December 1942, m. Maude Cypert

William Thomas Parks, b. 18 March 1838 Laurens District, South Carolina-d. 19 August 1921, m. Pontotoc Co. Mississippi 16 January 1865 Martha E. Williams

(04D5) William Parks, b. 17 March 1808 South Carolina-d. 31 January 1895 Union Co., Mississippi, m. abt. 1837 Elvira Allgood d/o DeForest Allgood

(03D1) William Parks, b. 22 October 1771 South Carolina-d. 5 March 1815 Georgetown, South Carolina, m. South Carolina 1797 Nancy Dillard

(02D1) Thomas Parks, b. abt. 1750 Amelia Co. Virginia-d. 27 December 1831 Laurens District, South Carolina, m1. abt. 1770 Rachael White

(01D1) Samuel Parks, b. 1734 Scotland-d. 1796 Amelia Co., Virginia, m. bef. 1750 Mary [--?--]

Given the circumstances of her father's untimely death, it is unclear whether Hildy Parks had any significant contact with her Parks family back in Mississippi. I have made efforts to contact her sons in order to learn whether she, or they, maintained ties with that side of the family and whether they know much about their Parks heritage, but as of our press deadline have not been successful in reaching them.

### Later Life

From a few available sources online, one gains an impression that Hildy Parks and her husband, Alexander H. Cohen, had a wonderful relationship, both personally and professionally. There are references to a home in Mougins, France, where Hildy Parks planted a garden, as well as one behind their midtown Manhattan apartment. In 1996 her husband gave her a gift of another garden, this one on the rooftop of a building in Times Square which had been a decrepit welfare hotel, but was converted into an apartment building. He named it the Hildy Parks Garden, but joked that he was tempted to name it the Hildy Parks Park! Since the dedication of the garden fell on their fortieth wedding anniversary, he planned to have the Manhattan borough president on hand to conduct a wedding ceremony to renew their vows. Mr. Cohen joked, "Now the only question is, 'Will she say yes?'" She might just get up and leave."

Hildy Parks was an avowed liberal Democrat, and political events would often make their way into the Tony Award scripts she penned. She was very active in causes like housing for the homeless, Greenpeace, and animal rights (often bringing home animals that appeared in shows they produced to become family pets.) She was involved in Community Board 5 in Midtown Manhattan, and was prominent in the effort to acquire landmark status for all the Broadway theatres. She even went so far as to give up limousines for bicycles, cheerfully waving to her husband as he went by in his big black car! She and her husband were also active supporters of the Actors Fund, a charitable group founded in 1882 to provide assistance for all professionals in the entertainment field. In fact, the "Night of 100 Stars" events they produced were fundraisers for the Actors Fund. It is fitting, then, that after her husband died in 2000, she was living at the Lillian Booth Actors Home in Englewood, New Jersey, an assisted living and skilled nursing care facility run by the Actors Fund, when she passed away on March 15, 2004 from complications following a stroke. I deeply regret not being more actively involved in genealogy and the Parke Society earlier when I was still active in the business and lived in Manhattan, as I would have made an effort to meet Hildy Parks in person. She was a remarkable person and even though our Parks lines are not likely related, I'd proudly claim her as a cousin anyway!☺

## **Raymond D. Parks and the Founding of NASCAR**

by (Fr.) Michael (Tad) Parks+, PS #425H

Longtime member Gerald Michael Parks, PS#610, recently called my attention to Raymond D. Parks (1914-2010) who was one of the founders of the NASCAR organization and who was just inducted into the NASCAR Hall of Fame on 20 January 2017 at Charlotte, North Carolina. As Jerry Parks said, "While I am not a close follower of auto racing this story might be of interest to our members."

Raymond D. Parks led a long and very interesting life. He was born on 5 June 1914, in Dawsonville, Dawson County, Georgia, the eldest child of six of Alfred Porter Parks and his first wife Leila Orr. After Leila's death Alfred married her sister Ila Orr, and proceeded to have another ten children.

Raymond's life was a study in contrasting extremes in that he ran away from home at the age of 14 and got involved in illegally running liquor (in very fast cars). Like other legends of the sport, Parks got into big trouble for transporting the moonshine from his hometown of Dawsonville to Atlanta. "He knew it was an illegal business, but he made it as legal-like as anybody could" said his longtime friend and fellow race promoter David Sosebee. He eventually got caught, convicted and was imprisoned for nine months of his one year and one day sentence at the Chillicothe, Ohio federal prison in 1936-1937.

If nothing else, Raymond Parks was a born business man, buying an uncle's Hemphill Service Station and Northside Auto Service by the age of 19. Over the next 70 years, Raymond multiplied those early businesses into a successful business empire in real estate, convenience markets, and vending machines. If you played a pin ball machine, dropped a coin in a jukebox, or bought cigarettes from a machine, you had just dealt with Raymond Parks. Raymond continued his business in Northwest Atlanta to become a well-known leader and an honorary mayor of his part of town. Serving his country during World War II he was part of the 99th Infantry Division during the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium.

Following the war, he returned to his businesses, which continued to do very well. During his life though, Raymond's favorite pastime was auto racing which later turned into a successful career. It all started with a win that the very first race at Lakewood Speedway and continued through the formation of NASCAR.

In 1947, he, Bill France, Sr., and other stock car enthusiasts took part in a meeting at

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## Raymond D. Parks and the Found of NASCAR *cont'd from p. 33*

Daytona Beach's Streamline Hotel at which the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) was founded. In 1949, the new organization's first season, he was the team owner for "No. 22," the 1949 Oldsmobile coupe that Red Byron drove to the Inaugural Championship in NASCAR's top tier, now known as the Sprint Cup Series.



Mr. Parks also fielded cars for drivers Lloyd Seay, Fonty Flock, and Curtis Turner before deciding to curtail his participation in racing, scoring two NASCAR wins, 11 top five finishes and 12 top-10s in 18 events over four seasons (1949, 1950, 1954, and 1955).

Raymond Parks was known for being well-dressed, always in a suit and tie and wearing a fedora. He was always the gentlemen, always insisting that his race cars be polished and their dents smoothed out before each race. His impact on the sport came not behind the steering wheel, but behind the scenes. Without his financial backing, NASCAR probably wouldn't have survived the early years.

He was the last living member of the group of eight drivers inducted in the first class of the Georgia Racing Hall of Fame in 2002, and was inducted into the International Motorsports Hall of Fame in 2009. He was a finalist for the NASCAR Hall of Fame when it opened in 2010, but it took another seven years for that to finally happen. Many of his trophies and other racing memorabilia are on display there. His first NASCAR entry, No. 22, is on

permanent display at the NASCAR Hall of Fame in downtown Charlotte, NC.

Known for his benevolence, caring, and kindness, Raymond signed autographs and gave interviews until just prior to his death on 20 June 2010 at Atlanta, Georgia.

Raymond was preceded in death by his son, Raymond E. Parks. He is survived by his wife Violet (Parsons) Parks, three grandchildren, a stepson, and a foster child, several brothers and sisters. Funeral services were held on the 23rd of June 2010 at the Peachtree Christian Church in Atlanta, Georgia, with entombment at the Arlington Memorial Park Mausoleum.

Raymond Parks was an 8th generation descendant of Thomas (01C1) Parks (ca. 1670-1760) of Virginia, LK=C, through his son John (02C1) and Mary (Sharp) Parks, to Benjamin (03C8) and Elizabeth (Branch) Parks, Linsfield (04C47) and Elenore D. (Thomas) Parks, Alfred (05C354) and Arie (Barnes) Parks, Virgil Henry (06C1068) and Martha Jane (Vaughters) Parks, Alfred Porter (07C2195) and Leila (Orr) Parks, to Raymond (08C4401) and Violet (Parsons) Parks.☞

## In memoriam

We note with regrets and sympathy to the surviving families the following members who have passed away.



Longtime Member Lena Mae (Windham) Leigon, PS#551, of Houston, TX, passed away on 8 November 2014 at the age of 91.

She was born 5 April 1923, in Clifton, Bosque County, Texas, the fifth child of William Willis Windham and Lena Caroline Parks. She married Walter A. Leigon at Clifton, TX on 19 March 1943. He died in their 59th year of marriage on 29 June 2002.

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She was active in Church and community affairs, and loved to sing and play the piano, which inspired her sons to become involved in music.

But Lena's true passion was genealogical studies. Her bookshelves and computers are full of volumes of histories, albums of photos, documents, and correspondence that she had collected and shared.

She is survived by sons Larry Alan Leigon and William Lindsay Leigon, four grandchildren, three great grandchildren, and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins. She was buried at Memorial Oaks Cemetery

Lena Mae (Windham) Leigon is a 9th generation descendant of Thomas<sup>1</sup> Parks of Virginia (VA, 1728) LK=C, through his son, John<sup>2</sup> who married Mary Sharp, thence to John<sup>3</sup>, Henry<sup>4</sup>, John<sup>5</sup>, Thomas<sup>6</sup>, William Henry<sup>7</sup>, Lena Caroline<sup>8</sup> Parks who married William Willis Windham, to member, Lena Mae<sup>9</sup> (Windham) Leigon.☺



It was with great sadness that the Society learned of the death of Corabelle Eunice (Parks) DeClerg, PS#842, on 4 November 2016 at the Ingham Medical facility, just five weeks short of her 100th birthday. She was

the long time Society Archivist, and was awarded the Society's Distinguished Service Award in 2002.

Corabelle was born on 10 December 1916 at Byron, Genesee County, MI, the eldest child of Wellington (Wella) and Florence (Morse) Parks. She married Maurice DeClerg on the 23rd of February 1937 at Chesaning, MI. He passed away in 1962. They had no children.

Both were in the class of 1934 Durand graduates. During the next 36 years, Gamble Stores located in Portland, Carson City, and Fowler, MI operated under the DeClerg franchise. They also built and operated the Skylit Motel in Clearwater, Florida for five years.

Corabelle enjoyed her career and home; she especially enjoyed her extensive world-wide traveling experiences and her compelling motivation with genealogy.

She is survived by her sister-in-laws, Virginia Parks, of Sharpsburg, KY and Bernice DeClerg of Durand, MI and several nieces and nephews. She was laid to rest at the Greenwood Cemetery, in Vernon, Michigan.

She was a long time member of the Parke Society and shared much of her research with the Society. Until the last few years, Corabelle could be counted on to be in attendance at our Annual Convocations, often driving herself, well in to her late 80s. She had a wonderful sense of humor, and was always a pleasant companion at meals. She told many stories about their experiences at Gambles and as motel keepers. The Society will miss her radiant smile and cheerful countenance.

Corabelle Eunice (Parks) DeClerg was researching a Park/e/s Fragment line LK=CU, starting with a Silas Leonard<sup>1</sup> Parks, born circa 1801 in Vermont who married Elizabeth Brown, and who journeyed to Genesee and Shiawassee Counties of Michigan. Thence her line goes to William J<sup>2</sup>, Charles A<sup>3</sup>, Wellington L<sup>4</sup> to Corabelle<sup>5</sup> (Parks) DeClerg.

The Society recently learned of the death of The Rev'd Mary Frances (Lyster) Hitt, PS#208, late of Providence, Rhode Island, on 8 November 2016 at the Philip Hulitar Hospice Center at the age of 91 years.

Born 22 December 1924 in Garfield, UT, she was the daughter of Arthur Frederick and Marion Aurilla Mirrill (Brown) Lyster. On 2 June 1947 she married the Rev'd Mortimer Glover Hitt, an Episcopal Priest, in Champaign, IL. To this marriage there was born four children. Fr. Hitt died in June 1994.

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## In memoriam

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Mary Francis was ordained an Episcopal Deacon in 2001, and was assigned to St. John's Episcopal Church in Ashton, RI. She assisted at other parishes and managed the Cathedral House Bookstore and worked in the

Diocesan Office for years.

A world traveler and lover of nature and animals, she was active in many causes including Childhood Lead Action Project of Providence; the Environment Council of RI; and the Social Justice Ministry of the Diocese of Rhode Island.

She is survived by her four children, Monica Hitt and Mary Victoria Hitt, both of Kansas City, MO, Jeremy Hitt of Amherst, NH, and Geoffrey Hitt of Providence, RI, and two grandchildren. She was buried from St. Peter's and St. Andrew's Church in Providence.

Mary Frances Hitt has two intersecting lines of descent from Robert<sup>1</sup> Parke (MA, 1630) through his son Thomas<sup>2</sup> Parke, LK=T. The first line is Chart #12, through Thomas's son Nathaniel<sup>3</sup>, to Margaret<sup>4</sup> Park, who married Nathan Spicer to Desire<sup>5</sup> Spicer, Asa<sup>6</sup> Holmes, Reuben<sup>7</sup> Holmes, Sarah<sup>8</sup> Holmes, Frank Douglas<sup>9</sup> Brown, to Marion Aurilla Morrill<sup>10</sup> Brown, to Mary Frances<sup>11</sup> Lyster.

The second line is Chart #3, through Martha<sup>3</sup> Park, the daughter of Thomas<sup>2</sup> Parke, who married Isaac Wheeler, to Elizabeth<sup>4</sup> Wheeler, Martha<sup>5</sup> Gallup, Mary<sup>6</sup> Douglas, Sarah<sup>7</sup> Clark to Douglas Clark<sup>8</sup> Brown who married Sarah<sup>8</sup> Holmes (as above), thence to Frank Douglas<sup>9</sup> Brown, to Marion Aurilla Morrill<sup>10</sup> Brown, to Mary Frances<sup>11</sup> Lyster.

## WELCOME, NEW MEMBER!

### 1657 Darryl Wayne Parks

Kernersville, NC

Lineage is the fragment line LK=NW, commencing with Samuel<sup>1</sup> Parks (1759, NY –1847, IN) who married Mary Doughzenbery (Dusenbery) (1761, NY – 1825, KY) 1786, in Dutchess Co., NY, thence to Seth<sup>2</sup> (1800, NY – 1851, KY), to Samuel J<sup>3</sup>, Harmon Brown<sup>4</sup>, Richard Claude<sup>5</sup>, to Richard Wayne<sup>6</sup>, to member<sup>7</sup>.

A second "cousin line" has been traced to the member from Samuel<sup>1</sup> Parks, to Seth<sup>2</sup>, Samuel J<sup>3</sup>, Jesse Lee<sup>4</sup>, Mary Lee<sup>5</sup> Parks, Mary Ann<sup>6</sup> Bennett, who married Richard Wayne<sup>6</sup> Parks, to member<sup>7</sup>.

This fragment line appears to be connected to the Lt. Richard (02Q1) lineage. yDNA may soon confirm that connection.

This member is cousin to a Parkes Society member with the same name, Darryl Wayne Parks, PS#1655 (see below for lineage information, previously published in the Parke Society Newsletter Vol. 53, No. 1).☺

### 1655 Darryl Wayne Parks

Anna, IL

Lineage is the fragment line LK=NW, commencing with Samuel<sup>1</sup> Parks<sup>1</sup> (1759, NY –1847, IN) who married Mary Doughzenbery (Dusenbery) (1761, NY – 1825, KY) 1786, Dutchess Co., NY, thence to Henry<sup>2</sup> (1815, NY – 1873, NY), to Walter<sup>3</sup>, Oscar<sup>4</sup>, Walter Donald<sup>5</sup>, to member<sup>6</sup>.☺

The next editorial due date is  
**June 1, 2017**