

The Stillaguamish Star

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE STILLAGUAMISH VALLEY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

PO BOX 34, ARLINGTON WA 98223

360.435.4838
www.stillygen.org

6111 188TH PL NE, ARLINGTON WA 98223

Celebrating Stillaguamish Valley Genealogical Society's 40th Anniversary 1985-2025

**SVGS requests the honor of your presence at
the celebration of our
Ruby Anniversary.
Refreshments will be provided.**

- **Date- November 1st , Saturday**
- **Time- 2:00 - 5:00 PM**
- **Where- SVGS Library**
- **Who- Members only event**



Since its founding in 1985 by Marrietta Roth, SVGS has experienced remarkable growth. Over the years, the society has seen an increasing membership, reflecting its expanding community reach. The library collection has also grown substantially, offering a broader range of resources for research and discovery. Additionally, SVGS has relocated numerous times, creating more space to accommodate its growing activities and collections.

Upcoming SVGS Events:

Tuesday November 11th

1PM

Kathie Webber will present: **Creating A Virtual Cemetery**

One of my favorite things about studying my family history is to learn where my ancestors have been buried. Twenty years ago I discovered an online tool called findagrave.com. This website and the accompanying app has enabled me to organize and expand my cemetery research. I will share with everyone the many things I have taken advantage of in findagrave as well as other options that are available.

I've been doing genealogy for over 40 years. I've researched in Washington State, Massachusetts, California, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Ireland. My favorite notable ways to research include visiting cemeteries, family history centers, online research, Facebook groups, and travel.



Kathie Webber

Tuesday January 13th

1PM

Teresa Townsell will present: **Writing A Family History Book Using A.I.**

Have you ever wanted to use A.I. in your genealogy work? Is it finally time to turn your family research into a book your relatives can enjoy? Are you waiting until your research feels “finished” — or unsure where to begin with A.I.? This process meets you where you are.

All you need is an Ancestry.com account and basic WORD skills (or the Apple equivalent).

Teresa will teach you a simple, step-by-step process to write your family history book using A.I.

(ChatGPT)—a process that's easier, faster, and a lot more fun than you might imagine!



Teresa Townsell

You'll leave with:

- A clear understanding of how to collaborate with A.I. for writing and organizing your history.
- A structure and outline you can use as a template for your own family history book.
- Confidence to start writing and finally share your story—as soon as you get home!

VETERANS DAY



HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

November 11, 2025

The ID Bracelet of Ralph P. Janes

By Bill Allen

Both of my wife's (Ruth) parents served in the military for the majority of World War II.

Her mother, Marie, was a feisty Irish girl from Boston, who graduated from nursing school in 1938. Marie joined the Army Nursing program in 1942 and was shortly sent to North Africa with the 38th General Hospital Corps.

Ruth's father, Ralph, joined the Army in October of 1940, where he was sent to Officer Candidate School and became a pilot for the Army Air Corps. He too was sent to North Africa in 1942 where he flew C-47's for paratroop drops, medical and supply missions.

At some point (the date is lost to history), Marie and Ralph met when they were both stationed at an air base in Egypt. Eventually they both ended up back in England and started planning to get married. Their chosen date, before either knew of it's significance, was June 6, 1944. When Ralph asked his CO for a couple days of leave to get married, he was told that the date probably wasn't a good idea, with no explanation!

Marie landed at Normandy the afternoon of June 6 with the 16th Field Hospital, and Ralph flew 3 missions during the night before and the day of D-Day. At some point during his last mission, his plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire, where he received a chunk of shrapnel in his backside. It wasn't serious enough to bring down his plane, just enough to take him out of action for the day.

Ralph and Marie were married exactly two months later on August 6, 1944 in a small chapel in La Cambe, France. Their honeymoon suite consisted of a U.S. Army-issue tent for two somewhere in the north of France...



Again, the time and date are lost to history, but at some point Ralph gave Marie his ID bracelet as a token of his love, and they were then sent off on their respective deployments until the end of the war. If you look closely at the above picture, the ID bracelet is there on his right wrist.



Marie was assigned to the 16th Field Hospital and moved across Europe with it, eventually ending up near Assenheim, Germany. April 1, 1945 was a fateful day for the new Mrs. Janes and her companions in the field hospital. Cutoff and retreating German SS Nord troops overran their position early that morning. The Germans, being very short on medical supplies and vehicles, gladly took everything they could and they took the doctors and nurses as prisoners. Without need of the prisoner's personal property, it was unceremoniously dumped on the ground of the forested area where they were captured.

Since the Germans were retreating, they took the prisoners with them, although in the words of the German Commander Krüger, "You are not prisoners of war but merely under the protection of the Third Reich until the tactical situation changes."¹

As it turned out, the situation changed rather quickly and only lasted until about 4:30 that afternoon. Realizing that they didn't need the nurses on their retreat back to their lines, they left them sequestered (but unguarded) in a barn. At about 4:30, a platoon of American soldiers happened upon the farm and were immediately set upon by the joyous group of nurses. They were quickly re-united with the others in the field hospital and went back to work.

The war ended a month later on May 8, 1945. Ralph and Marie returned to the United States where they set out to start their family and raise three wonderful daughters: Cathy, Mimi and Ruth. Ralph stayed with the Army Air Corps a while longer, becoming a flight instructor to new Army pilots and Marie went to work at Long Beach Memorial Hospital in California.

Fast forward to June, 1993 when Marie passed away and Ralph passed away 10 years later in March of 2013. My wife Ruth, created memorial pages for them both on FindAGrave.com, moved on with her life and rarely returned to FindAGrave.

In 2019, she received an email from FindAGrave stating that someone had sent her a private message. Returning and logging-in, the message was from a man claiming that he had something that had belonged to her father Ralph P. Janes. As first, she thought it was a crank or from some nut-case, but he quoted her father's service number as well, which she knew from his service records. This was more than a crank, so she contacted the man directly. It turned out he lived in Germany.

¹ "In Final Defense of the Reich", Stephen M. Rusiecki, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2010.

Continued from page 5

There is a popular hobby in Germany of recovering war artifacts and memorabilia, cataloging them and trying to track their provenance. This man had a very large collection of memorabilia, among which was this piece:



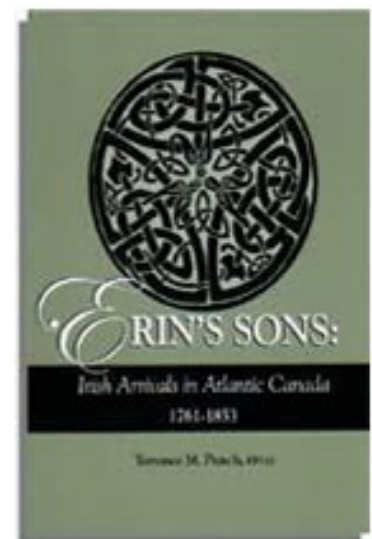
The placard roughly translated is "American wristband with name and service number, could be from pilot who lived near Altstadt". We don't know exactly what the writer was referring to, as there were no U.S. Air bases near Altsadt after the war. Apparently the finder had no idea it dated from World War II until he contacted Ruth about it. Once they corresponded, he graciously returned it to her with an explanation as to how he had found it in the forest outside Assenheim, precisely where the SS Troops had dumped it so many years before. It is indeed unfortunate that neither Marie nor Ralph lived long enough to tell the tale of the ID bracelet.



*"The Potato Famine Was Not the
Exclusive Cause of Irish Emigration to
North America"*
by Terrence Punch

In the popular imagination, the Irish Potato Famine of the late 1840s is considered the main explanation for Irish emigration to North America. However, for much of Atlantic Canada, this was not the case. Except for Saint John, New Brunswick, no other major port in the region was inundated with Famine refugees. Contemporary records make it clear that large numbers of Irish had reached the region well before the 1840s. Without downplaying the importance of the Famine, my four-volume series of books, *ERIN'S SONS: Irish Arrivals in Atlantic Canada, spanning the period [1751-1863]*, emphasizes the earlier Irish presence in the four easternmost provinces of Canada.

British subjects in the British Isles were British subjects still in British North America, so there are no naturalization records. Either through indifference, or from feeling overwhelmed, local officials failed to create and retain passenger lists and records of landed immigrants. Governments seldom kept the records genealogists hope to find, such as birth and death information. Even marriage records tend to be spotty well into the 19th century. Not all the early census records survive, and many of those were household, rather than nominal, enumerations. In an effort to repair some of these deficiencies, I combed a wide variety of records in search of people who had come from Ireland. The end result of this research are my four books, *ERIN'S SONS*.



Several matters of wider impact turned up in my research. In the late 1700s, having lost the thirteen colonies, British courts had to look for other places to ship convicts sentenced to transportation for terms ranging from seven years to life. For a time, Atlantic Canada was such a destination. The wreck of a shipment of Irish convicts off Cape Breton Island in 1789, however, became the proverbial "last straw" that persuaded Britain thereafter to transport its convicts to Botany Bay, thus beginning the European settlement of Australia. For many Australians, having a convict ancestor is as good as being a "Mayflower" descendant is to North Americans!

In 1798, the United Irishmen, led by patriots such as Robert Emmet and Lord Edward FitzGerald, staged a rebellion against British authority in Ireland. In the aftermath, British authorities sought fugitive rebels. One record of this hunt showed up at Halifax, Nova Scotia--the result of the interrogation of the passengers on an Irish ship to determine whether any was a rebel.

Another result of the failed rebellion was passage of the Act of Union, by which the Irish parliament voted itself out of existence in exchange for a set number of seats for Irish constituencies in the Parliament at Westminster and a pledge to remove the remaining civil disabilities from Roman Catholics. The Union took place in 1801, but the promise was dishonored, and Ireland seethed with resentment.

Daniel O'Connell led a popular movement to gain Catholic rights, a victory he won in 1829. The other matter, the annulment of the Union, agitated Ireland from then until the Famine began in 1845. Across the Atlantic, in cities and towns of the U.S. and eastern Canada, Repeal societies were formed wherever there was a settled Irish population. Lists of Repealers, often with their place of origin, were published in newspapers in Atlantic Canada, enabling present day researchers to discover for the first time the origins of some of the Irish immigrants.

Another major event impacting the region was Britain's long war against the expansionist policies of Napoleon. When the war ended in 1815, the British began to dismember their huge military establishment. Hundreds of Irish were among the thousands of servicemen discharged in British America, and many others had gone AWOL in the previous 15 years. Those who were given their discharge were often granted land as part of the plan to settle the colonies. Not a few of those who had deserted the British military headed for the U.S. and eventually became American citizens.

Since thousands of other immigrants passed through Atlantic Canada to points beyond the immediate region, my books, *ERIN'S SONS*, offer researchers the potential of genealogical discovery far beyond eastern Canada. While all too often a record says merely that someone came from Ireland, the sources used to prepare these books break new ground by looking for details in such unexplored places as regimental depot succession and description books, newspaper lists of Irish Repealers, and an array of other contemporary documentation. It is no exaggeration to claim that some of the clues revealed in these books have never before seen printer's ink.

Happy Holidays!

The SVGS Annual Holiday Potluck will be held December 9th at NOON. Please bring one of your family's favorite dishes. Due to an over abundance of the same items in past potlucks, if possible we'd like you to bring an item based on the following parameters:

**If your last name
begins with:**

A to I

J to R

S to Z

Please Bring:

Main Course

Dessert

Salad

**Another option that anyone may choose is to
bring Appetizers or Drinks**

We all have stories to tell.

How about writing a few paragraphs about your favorite or memorable Holiday story, to be shared at our December potluck? Feel free to write about Halloween,

Thanksgiving, Hanukah, Christmas, New Years or more than one.

You can send your stories to info@stillygen.org, drop them by the library when you're in the neighborhood, or bring them with you (and a dish to share) when you come to the potluck. And if for some reason you can't attend, send a story anyway and someone will read it for you.

Send us your submissions!

If you have a story that our readers might enjoy, please send it to us!

Newsletter submissions for the **Jan/Feb** issue should be sent
to newsletter@stillygen.org by **December 27th**.



Find us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/stillygen/>



Check out our Blog:

<https://stillygen.wordpress.com/>



Stillaguamish Valley Genealogical Society
PO Box 34
Arlington, WA 98223

The Stillaguamish Star

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2025