

A Thread in Time

July 2019

President's Message

I hope everyone has found the Summer season to be going well. We held our Annual meeting on July 6, 2019 in Killingly, CT. This was traditionally the week that our factory worker relations would have had off in observance of the July 4th holiday. Sadly, at our meeting, our Secretary Ida Ransom has resigned. She has handed off her flashdrive to me and has prepared her minutes of the last meeting.

It was suggested to me that I put out a poll about how we should proceed with our Newsletter and Yearbook. If you would like to receive your materials by PDF please email me at textileworkersofamerica@gmail.com. I look forward to beginning this form of delivery for our Society for both cost savings and tree saving measures.

A big thank you to Bernice Rocque for her article for our Newsletter! I really appreciate her sending in an article. If anyone else would like to submit an article they are always welcome! Also a big thank you to Muriel Young for keeping me updated with the Slater Museum articles. There is a Slater Museum opening in Webster, MA. They had Spring of 2019 as their tentative opening date but their website says they haven't opened yet. Here is the link if you'd like to follow it yourself. <https://samuel Slater Museum.org/>

Hoping this newsletter finds you happy and well!

Sincerely,

Dawn Darche

Dues Notice

Yearly dues are \$10. Please mail your yearly dues to Nancy Merwin, 284 Chesterfield Road, Oakdale, CT 06370.

Executive Board

President	Dawn Darche
	textileworkersofamerica@gmail.com
Treasurer	Nancy Merwin
	nancyamerwin284@gmail.com
Secretary	
Genealogist	Mary Brown
	mbrown06239@gmail.com

Treasurer's Report

As of July 6, 2019

Liberty Bank Checking:	\$ 886.51
Liberty Bank Savings:	5,086.35
Liberty Bank CD #1	1,131.69
Liberty Bank CD #2	1,584.36
Total, all accounts	\$ 8,688.36

Welcome New Members!

#95 Mr. James Conway, Rochester, NY
#96 Ms. Carol Gallup Pawleys Island, SC

Budget

We developed a budget for 2019 at the annual meeting:

Website	\$100
Newsletter	\$190
Yearbooks	\$100
State Inc. Fee	\$ 75
Meeting Exp.	\$100
Total Operating Expenses:	\$565

Call for Articles

If you have an article, an idea for an article, or would be willing to write an article please send them to Dawn Darche, 27 Apple Hill Drive, North Scituate, RI 02857 or send to textileworkersofamerica@gmail.com. If you use google docs you can share with them with me there.

Nominating Committee

A Nominating Committee is being developed as we need to elect our officers in 2020 at our annual meeting. If you would like to hold an office please respond to textileworkersofamerica@gmail.com with what office you would like to hold and what experience you have. It doesn't matter where you live as we could explore skype or some other conference/electronic meeting.

Audit

If you would be willing to review our Treasurer's books please send an email to textileworkersofamerica@gmail.com as we need to have our books audited. This would entail making sure that our records are accurate.

Gifts of the Journey – Writing about Family History

©2019 Bernice L. Rocque.

All rights reserved. This article was recently posted on the author's 3Houses.com Blog.

NSDTWA is reprinting it here, with permission from the author, a new member.

INTRODUCTION

Fifteen years ago I started to write stories about my family. It was a desperate move, really, an emotional reaction triggered by the slow goodbye with my parents. I hated the thought that who they were as people would be lost—in a relatively short time. Records exist for people who lived centuries ago. The “essence” of most people, though, disappears in 3-4 generations. Just ask ten people older than fifty to describe what their great-grandparents were like as people. I had researched my family history for decades, yet failed to comprehend the implications of this fading phenomenon—until it became personal. This epiphany about “essence” hit with a thump and set me thinking. What could I do to preserve the essence of my loved ones for future generations? Within days, I spotted a notice. The three writing groups at my local public library's were welcoming new members. The next step I took brought many unexpected gifts.

THE FIRST GIFT: membership in a writing group.

Member discussion about writing pieces, topics, and exercises acts like a magnifying glass and a wide-angle lens at the same time. Providing feedback, insights, ideas, and encouragement during more than a decade, this fellowship fed my efforts to capture the essence of my family members. I began with nonfiction story vignettes, next wrote a fiction novella with its Author's Notes, and most recently penned a memoir about my mother.

THE SECOND GIFT: writing stories became a passion, like gardening and genealogy.

As my skill improved, it was clear that writing stories was illuminating the essence of family members, with a visual and emotional similar to those fascinating holograms from the movie, Star Wars. The greater surprise, though, was that the PROCESS of writing gladdened my heart.

THE THIRD GIFT: writing projects research reconnected me with my relatives.

Working on my books, *Until the Robin Walks on Snow* and *The Ponemah Years: Walking in the Footsteps of My Mother* took me “home” to Norwich, Connecticut for interviews with family and others, as well as to conduct research at the Otis Library. Telephone calls and emails with an uncle, aunts, and cousins caught us up on each other's lives while generating information and reflections for the writing in progress and future stories. During one visit, my uncle and I gazed at a 1920s family artifact I did not know existed. He explained how my great-grandfather made liquor from mash in this large copper pot. A few weeks later my uncle surprised me with a small model of the distilling system. His engineering mind drew on the memories of a “child” whose hands had carried the snow inside to cool the vapor stream! What do you think are the odds—that the artifact and liquor-making process will turn up in the sequel to “Robin?”

THE FOURTH GIFT: a change in research pattern from “vertical” to “horizontal.”

What a pleasure to plop myself down in an era, like my cousins and I once did in the meadows of our youth. So, instead of “vertical” research to further my family tree back in time, the “horizontal” approach has concentrated on life in the 1900s. I used an iterative method to develop my vignettes and books—alternating waves of interviews, writing, impromptu telephoning or email, and library-type research. Residing in the light of a narrow time period deepened my understanding of

everyday life, producing numerous authentic details. It also yielded bonus items. During interviews, sudden diversions in memory recall, such as my uncle remembering the fingerlocks that secured the farm building doors, led to useful conversations, colorful details for future stories, and my uncle's construction of an actual fingerlock... just for me.

THE FIFTH GIFT: a second "aha." Fiction was less difficult to write than I imagined.

Writing *Until the Robin Walks on Snow*, was easier for me than writing a strictly factual narrative. I knew where the story would start and end, but chose not to prepare a detailed outline. The process of recreating an event from my family history did feel organic. The facts suggested the skeleton. The family history and research (medical, setting, history, and weather) provided the organs and blood vessels. Knowledge and impressions of the characters (reconstituting their essence) fleshed out the book's muscular tissue. Much like sinew, fictionalized plot deductions and dialogue, as well as literary devices, connected the story's body parts. The book's finished format and cover acted like skin. With a little patience, and sometimes a "sleep on it" approach to fictionalization dilemmas, the most logical story emerged.

THE SIXTH GIFT: the discovery of other works of fiction based on family histories.

If like me, you are interested in reading historical fiction based on family history, take a look at the Goodreads List, "Fiction Based on the Author's Ancestors." Authors and readers collaborated with me to assemble it, and to them I am indebted. If you are a Goodreads member and know of other novels of this type, please add them.

https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/34292.Fiction_based_on_the_Author_s_Ancestors

THE SEVENTH GIFT: experiencing the genealogy "well."

Many of us began our genealogy work with interviews of family members (and possibly close family friends). After that, my family history cache grew mostly through informal conversations when I saw relatives, often at weddings and funerals, and later with targeted research connected with my writing. For *The Ponemah Years*, I needed to talk with my maternal aunts. The questions were far different from those posed when I was a young woman. I wanted to know more about my mother, weaving, and life in a mill village. I have been astounded how much information my 90-something aunts could recall, much of it new to me. The book narrative is richer, thanks to their specific recollections. In addition, my aunts volunteered stories about the highs and lows of their own lives, perhaps with more openness—because now I am a senior, too. The new information has helped me to better understand my family's historical dynamics, as well as the varied essence profiles of our "characters." During the journey of writing this memoir about my mother, I learned the well never goes dry.

THE EIGHTH GIFT: the generosity of authors and readers.

Ongoing communication with family members, readers, and authors from all over the globe has inspired me, as I acclimated to this new creative endeavor—writing the stories from my family's history. I hope my writing will outlive me and shine a light on some of the remarkable people that came before me. I am grateful for the gifts of this writing journey and the validation from many directions that preserving the "essence" of those we love is a valued activity.

A final thought... When the New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) honored Doris Kearns Goodwin

with their 2014 Lifetime Achievement Award, she said:

"The people we love will live on so long as we pledge to tell and retell the stories of their lives."