



Horse & Plow

Published by the Salem County Clerk's Office
SalemCountyClerk.org



Spring 2012

Clerk's Corner

We are celebrating the arrival of spring! The interesting articles in this newsletter taken from the County Clerk Archives feature the history of traditions and experiences from prior years.

Salem County is unique as one of the first settlements in the "New World". Our connection to the founding fathers, slavery and the Revolutionary War is well documented in our collections of record books dating back to the 1700's and 1800's. We also have original newspapers dating to the middle 1800's. The original newspaper announcing the assassination of President Lincoln is in our archives. The licenses of female physicians in Salem County in the 1800's are interesting to note.

Our county history is alive within the walls of "The Archives Room". We invite our residents to come in to enjoy reading and learning about our communities.

I wish to announce the introduction of the Salem County Clerk's "Tribute to Grandparents" which begins shortly. The official tribute will take place in September, 2012. Our office will be requesting photographs of all grandparents, including grandparents and great-grandparents of long, long ago. The photos will be featured on our website (www.salemcountyclerk.org). They will also be displayed on the walls of the Courthouse and/or new County facilities building. Grandparents are deserving of this recognition. We invite your participation. Thank you.

Gilda T. Gill
Salem County Clerk

Love is in the Air

At last! It is once again Spring in Salem County. Color is returning to the plants and trees. One can hear the sweet song of the sparrow. Love is in full blossom.

The following article was taken from the front page of the *National Standard*, Wednesday, March 29, 1854.

Kissing

The editor of the Wilmington (Del.) *Herald*, who appears to know all about the matter, thus discourses about kissing: "Of course you must be taller than the lady you intend to kiss. Take her right hand in yours and draw her gently to you. Pass your left arm over her right shoulder, diagonally across her back under her left arm, and press her to your bosom. At the same time she will throw her head back, and you will have nothing to do but lean a little forward and press your lips to hers, and the thing is done. Don't make a

noise over it, as if you were firing percussion caps, or trying the water cocks of a steam engine, nor pounce down upon it like a hungry hawk upon an innocent dove, but gently fold the damsel in your arms, without deranging the economy of her tippet or ruffle, and by a sweet pressure upon her mouth revel in the sweet blissfulness of your situation, without smacking your lips on it as you would over a roast duck." We never tried it, but from the description above it must be very soothing.

Wedding Traditions

This brings us to our next topic of wedding traditions and how they are changing. June weddings and bridal bouquets: June has been the most popular choice for weddings for centuries. That's because during the 1400 and 1500s, May was the month in which the

'annual bath' occurred. Back then people only bathed thoroughly once each year. As such, the over-all population smelled relatively fresh in June, making it a good time to hold a special event like a wedding. Body odor was further masked by brides picking flowers and



"A kiss seals two souls for a moment in time."

~ *Levende Waters*

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Valentine's Day in Salem

This year marked the 10th anniversary of our annual tradition of Valentine's Day weddings. The Honorable Gilda Gill presided over the ceremony as seven couples were married and two couples renewed their vows.

"The annual Valentine's Day marriages have provided the opportunity to share the joy and happiness that occurs when two people join together in matrimony. I am proud and happy to be part of that experience."



Love is in the Air

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forming a bouquet on the way to the wedding.

Bridesmaid dresses and the groom standing to the right of the bride: These traditions evolved during the time of bridal dowries and bridal capture. A bride with a handsome dowry was sometimes kidnapped on her way to the wedding. She would be forcibly married to her captor, then raped to consummate the marriage and the father would then have to pay the captor the dowry. Being a bridesmaid during these times was most definitely not an honor. The bridesmaid was dressed in the exact same clothes as the bride so as to confuse any potential captors. Since it became more difficult to steal the bride on the way to the wedding, a band of men would storm the church and use force to capture the bride during the ceremony. The groom stood on the right of the bride so he could wear a sword on his hip — if someone tried to steal the bride, he could draw his sword and not cut off the bride's head in the process.

Father giving the bride away: Until very recent history, women were widely considered chattel, owned by their father or their husband. Marriage was a business arrangement. The suitor would ask for the bride's hand in marriage knowing he would get a large sum of money or land dowry along with the bride. The father would choose his daughter's husband based on how desirable a match the two families would make. The deal was sealed when the father would literally hand over the daughter to her new owner at the pulpit.

One tradition that is evolving is the father walking the bride down the aisle. Today either both parents walk the bride down the aisle or the bride walks down alone.

Queen Victoria was the first Royal to wear an all-white dress. She liked that white symbolized purity and chastity. This trend has stuck...yet the white dress was never intended to judge whether or not the bride was a virgin - that was the role of the veil. The veil is the measure of purity. If a bride covers her face with a veil, she is saying she is a virgin. A bride with a child or a second-time bride is never to wear a veil past her cheeks.

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Published by the
Salem County Clerk's Office

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The War of 1812

This year is the 200th anniversary of The War of 1812. As with all wars, we here in the Clerk's Office want to pay tribute to those who lost their lives defending this great nation of ours. We must never cease to realize that freedom isn't free.

Twenty-nine years after the end of the American Revolution, conflict between Great Britain and the young United States flared up once again. The War of 1812 broke out for a variety of reasons, including Britain's seizure of American ships, impressment of American sailors into the British navy and restriction of trade between the United States and France. In June 1812, James Madison became the first U.S. president to ask Congress to declare war. Fought in three theaters, the conflict ended with the Treaty of Ghent in 1815. In one of its most memorable episodes, as British troops entered the capital to burn the White House and other government buildings, first lady Dolley Madison refused to evacuate the White House until a portrait of George Washington was rescued. The lyrics of "The Star-Spangled Banner," the U.S. national anthem, are another important legacy of the War of 1812. They were penned by the amateur poet Francis Scott Key after he watched American forces withstand the British siege of Fort McHenry.



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Salem, Jan. 7th, 1852.

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