

Local Spotlight: Repository Holdings OldNewark.com

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On May 11, 2022, the Special Projects Group met virtually with Glenn G. Geisheimer. Glenn told us that growing up in Newark, New Jersey, his parents had never talked about the extended family and he never realized that his grandparents were buried in the the cemeteries he frequently passed. In the 1990s a relative shared some family genealogy with him and as he said, "the world opened up". He began searching for other Geisheimers in Ancestry and in Rootsweb, discovering that in the 1860s, four brothers had come to America in different years and two settled in Newark. He learned that his maternal branch had come originally from Maryland. As he gathered more information about the family and the city that they settled in, he decided the place he would to keep all his findings would be on a Website. In 1998 he started the site, first called *Virtual Newark, NJ*, which later was changed to *Old Newark*.



In the beginning, Glenn heard from many people that the times and places in Newark were changing so fast that memories were being lost. He then began a section on his *Old Newark* site where people could send in first-person stories about early life in New Jersey's big city. In this section, "Memories", currently there are over 1,100 stories. There is an Alpha list as well as a list of the newest fifty stories. If your ancestor didn't write their memory, there might be a contributor's story on this site that would add details to your own family story. Glenn, a self-taught computer whiz does all the site work.

This *Old Newark* site is a terrific source of information on many different facets of past city life. A most interesting section includes all types maps. Check out the "Links of Interest" for the following: Sanborn Insurance Maps, One Page General Maps – starting from 1666 to 1944 showing sections of the city, Census and Genealogy. The Sanborn maps are so easy to access and cover all parts of the city. As we looked through them, Glenn gave us a running commentary on the buildings and businesses, as well as the changes that have occurred. We traced the path of the Morris Canal, which when filled in became Canal Street with the city subway built on the frame of the old canal, and then ultimately it became Raymond Boulevard. A feature of the map section is that if the

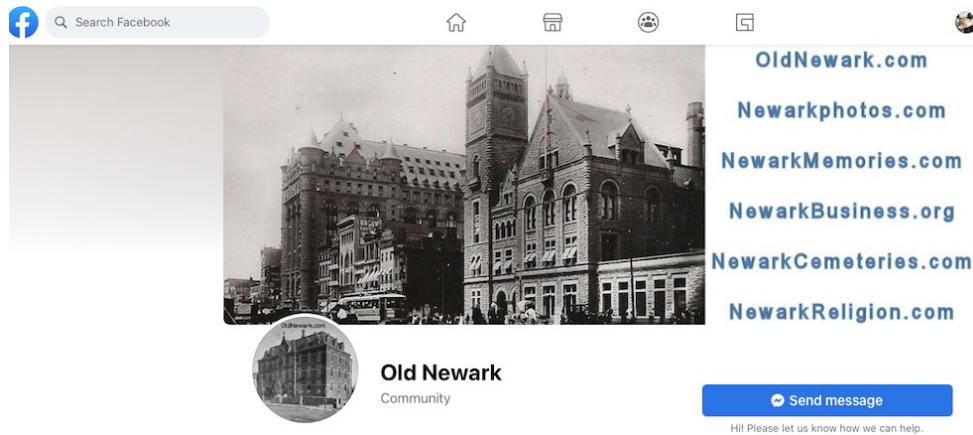
original street name has been changed, the old is listed with the new name. There are so many different types of maps available and all are organized in a finder- friendly manner.

If you are searching for the locations of and information about any Newark synagogues or churches of all denominations, just look on the *Old Newark* website under Religion. There you will find a gold mine of helpful information, the churches in each religion are listed and when you locate the correct one, you will find many details about the history of the church, its location, ministers who served there, and any connected photos and newspaper articles.

The site has many sections: Areas/Points of Interest, Associations, Biographies, Births, Business & Industry, Care Facilities – Hospitals & Orphanages, Cemeteries, Census, Civil Servants, Communities, Deaths, Education, Events, Future Newark, Historical Areas, Historical Newspapers, Historical Odds & Ends, Links of Interest, Maps, Marriages, Memories, Military, Newark Photos, Parks, Photo Essays, Pictures of You, Print (Newspapers), Public Buildings, Public Housing Projects, Religion, Resources, Sports, Streets, Wards & EDs, Vailsburg, Waterways & Bridges, and Your Newark Memories.

There are also many links to various YouTube videos of Newark over the years. One called Sightseeing in Newark, N.J., is a 1926 video which shows what life was like at that time. We watched a short one from the 1940s showing Newark, New Jersey with color shots from a train which gives a view from a different perspective. The photo archive is amazing with many different sections, currently containing over 20,000 photos. People frequently copy pictures from this site, and Glenn asks that if you do, please credit OldNewark.com.

Glenn's knowledge of the history of Newark is extensive. He has so many Newark facts and stories he could fill several books. He told us about the races they used to have at Weequahic Park, and the Barracks the WWII soldiers lived in there. We learned that in 1840 it was determined that dead bodies caused diseases and therefore cemeteries had to be built a mile from Newark's city center, which was Broad and Market. This is why Mt. Pleasant, Fairmont and Woodlawn Cemeteries are located where they are. He talked about the Vailsburg's Velodrome where they raced bicycles. The Newark Beer Baron Kruger, who owned all manner of buildings and businesses and had his finger in so many aspects of Newark life. Glenn spoke about the waves of immigrants that came to Newark and left their imprint on the city. Our SPG group thoroughly enjoyed our visit with Glenn and learning about OldNewark. If you have any photos or stories from Newark, please send them to Glenn by clicking on "Contact Old Newark" on OldNewark.com



Also, regularly check out the Old Newark Facebook page.

The Special Projects Group (SPG) members have been visiting local repositories to learn what genealogy related materials might be available for review by our members in researching their ancestors and/or gaining historical context to enhance their stories. In the series of articles, we share the main features of our interviews with repository members spotlighting the information, collections and features available for research at each location. Visit the *Special Projects* page at <https://mags-public.weebly.com/> to read the twenty-five previous spotlight articles and to view the compiled inventories.