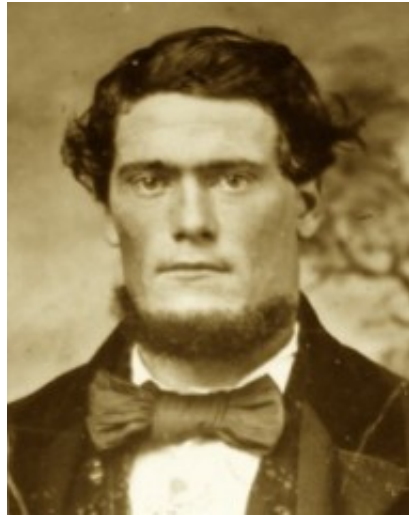


## NEW: Family History Workshop: Learn how to climb your family tree, in two steps



*Phil Hayes and Jonathan Beattie, his other great-great-grandfather*

March 4, 2011

*by Christine Yeres*

Chappaqua native Phil Hayes became hooked on genealogy at an early age, after learning his great-great-grandfather, Henry William Lewis, had

witnessed the shooting of Abe Lincoln at a performance of *Our American Cousin* at Ford's Theater on April 14, 1865. Hayes' family had passed on a copy of a 1897 newspaper article, "Saw Lincoln Murdered," in which Lewis told a reporter what he'd seen that night. Hayes is coming to help get you started on your own family's story in a two-part series at the **Chappaqua Library on March 8 and 15, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.**

The motivation to search, says Hayes, "is not just about knowing who your ancestors are, but what life was like for them." As a kid growing up in New Castle, he'd visited Philipsburg Manor in Sleepy Hollow, but by the time he visited there with his own children, he'd learned that his wife's family, the Yerks, had been among the earliest Dutch tenant farmers to inhabit Philipsburg Manor. "To see, on a tour," said Hayes, "the very door where her ancestors would have brought the grain to the owners was such a different experience than my visit there as a kid."

Hayes knows where all the bones are buried. There is, for example, a site called [findagrave.com](http://findagrave.com). He knows his way around the internet, microfiche and primary sources in Westchester County and in New York City down on Chambers Street, where an entire facility is dedicated to research for New York City ancestors. Newspapers are an endless source of interest when it comes to getting a real feel for how different life was in the old days. For example, said Hayes, he's amused by newspaper notices published in the local paper reporting, for example, when someone undertook a trip from Mt. Kisco to Somers, reporting "So-and-so traveled from Mt. Kisco to Somers to visit his grandmother."

NCNOW asked Hayes whether a much-advertised site called Ancestry.com would be useful. “It’s a great starting place,” he responded, “and I would encourage anyone getting going to use it as a tool, and you might actually find someone out there digging towards *your* family tree, but sometimes there’s wrong information. You need a lot more work and avenues. But from there, you might go next to some census records.”

### *Don't overlook the ordinary*

“Your own family may not realize they know something,” said Hayes. “My dad had an address book of his mother’s sitting in my mom’s closet that might have been thrown out when she passed away. But there were addresses in there for tons of cousins and relatives of hers that helped find where they were.” Hayes will bring with him to the workshops a set of handouts with suggested avenues of exploration such as family Bibles, address books, letters.

### *And be persistent*

Don’t give up, Hayes advises. “I asked my mom a hundred times whether she had any photos of her grandfather or grandmother. Her response was always “not that I know of”. One of my favorite finds was a piece of jewelry that my Mom inherited from her mother when she passed away. I found it when I asked if she had any old family jewelry that she could show me. She pulled out a bag of things that belonged to her parents. I pulled out each piece and she told me what they were. When I pulled out a gold locket, she told me it belonged to her father. It was given to him as a birthday present. Apparently my mom never bothered to open it, so imagine my surprise when I found two pictures inside that turned out to be her grandmother and grandfather.” Visit Hayes’ blog on his family at <http://www.hayesfamily.us>.

**Two Part Series on Genealogy: March 8 and 15 from 10:00- 12:00**

### **Genealogy...Researching History – March 8**

**Come learn about the tools and information you need to jump start your own family history project. Learn about genealogy basics, storage and record keeping, what records and information to look for, where to find the sources, and socializing your research through Facebook and Twitter. “I’ll**

have tons of examples,” Hayes promises, “showing people how we put things together.”

**Walking in the Footsteps of our Ancestors - March 15**

In this presentation, Hayes will guide you through four of his favorite family history stories and show you how he researched and documented them.

**Call the Chappaqua Library to register at 238-4779**

*This program is sponsored by the New Castle Historical Society and the Chappaqua Library*

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