



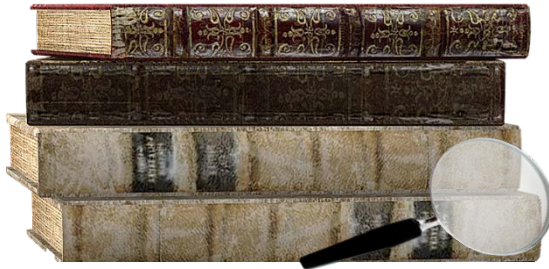
# NYSFHC Session Syllabus

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# Identifying the Wife of Jacob Lasher of Germantown, Columbia Co., New York



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*What happens when information is just copied without verifying?*

## Introduction

A family history was published in 1904 identifying the wife of Jacob Lasher (1773–1857) of Germantown, Columbia County, New York. This publication does not identify the source for the information. In the over one hundred years since then this information has been copied and repeated many times.

## The Problem

Three different names have been used to identify the wife of Jacob Lasher: Maria Saulpaugh, Maria Ham, and Mariah Finger. Not all of them can be correct.

## Resolving Conflicts [BCG, *Genealogy Standards*, Standard 48]

- Identify evidence that supports each side
- State with sound reasoning why all but one side should be eliminated (excluded??)

## Jacob Lasher and his wife, Mariah

Jacob and Mariah had eight children: Anna (1797–1874); Maria (1800–); Jacob (1801–1850); Elizabeth (1805–); Elias (1808–1848); Thomas (1812–1881); Sally (1815–1886); and Ephraim (1818–1883).

## Mariah Finger Research

Routine research using original records created by knowledgeable informants proves Mariah's identity:

- Baptisms of daughter, Anna
- Conrad Finger's will
- *History of Columbia County, New York*

Additional supporting documentation:

- Baptismal witnesses and sponsors for three of Jacob and Mariah's children
- Tax rolls
- Road District list
- Federal census
- New York state census
- Map

### **Conflicting Information**

One of the first steps when researching a new person of interest is to look for information in published sources and online databases. This could save a great deal of time, especially if the information includes sources.

In the case of Jacob Lasher, entries stating that his wife was Maria Saulpaugh were found in three published family histories, one area compilation, numerous online family trees, and entries on an Internet grave site. Three entries in an 1887 publication says Jacob's wife was Maria Ham.

The number of sources that list Maria Saulpaugh and Maria Ham as Jacob's wife far outnumber the sources that list Mariah Finger. However, sources with the same information cannot be trusted based only on quantity. Are the sources independent of one another or are they simply copied and then republished?

The genealogy book published in 1904 appears to have been the only published account of the Lasher family for many years. This book, though well intended, did not provide source information for the data. It is likely that much of the information for later Lasher family books and online family trees was copied from this 1904 publication. Key information omitted from the 1904 book and repeated in the later sources led to the wrong conclusion about the identity of Jacob Lasher's wife.

**Information from the 1904 book was repeated without checking for proper documentation and without citing sources.**

### **TYPES OF PUBLISHED GENEALOGIES**

- ✓ Compiled Genealogies
- ✓ Compiled Histories
- ✓ Biographies

### **PLACES TO FIND PUBLISHED GENEALOGIES:**

- ✓ Family Members
- ✓ Family Associations
- ✓ WorldCat
- ✓ Family History Library (catalog and digitized Family History Books)
- ✓ Local public libraries and historical society libraries
- ✓ Library of Congress-

- ✓Periodical Souces Index (PERSI)
- ✓InternetArchive
- ✓GoogleBooks
- ✓HathiTrust
- ✓Subscription Web sites
- ✓Manuscripts



### **Fraudulent Genealogies**

Genealogy has had its share of scams and frauds throughout the years. Sometimes they are easy to identify but often they appear to be legitimate. Be aware that these genealogies exist so you don't fall into the trap of using them.

Three famous authors of fraudulent genealogies are Gustave Anjou, Horatio Gates Somerby, and Harriett Banbridge de Salis. The works of these genealogists and others like them do not always have a beware sign. Use caution.

### **ONLINE FAMILY TREES**

Online family trees connect one generation to the next. They are mostly user submitted trees that become part of a genealogy website's database. The data may be downloaded using GEDCOM or by using the sites tree building tool. Many of the websites are free but some require a subscription. Online trees can also be found on family or surname websites.

Using online family trees is a time saver when doing genealogy research. They also help with connecting to others working on the same families.

However, caution should be used. The information in these online trees range from good to questionable. A frequent problem encountered is with the sources. Many trees either lack sources or cite unreliable sources. A common practice with online trees users is to copy information from another tree without verifying its accuracy. This results in inaccurate information being repeated over and over.

#### **EVALUATE GENEALOGIES & TREES**

- ✓ Scope
- ✓ Arrangement
- ✓ Accuracy
- ✓ Sources
- ✓ Index
- ✓ Authority
- ✓ Reviews

#### **VERIFY**

Compiled works use many sources. The authors interpret those sources to arrive at conclusions. It would be a mistake to blindly trust the analysis of others. Verification of every source is the responsibility of each individual researcher.

**Published genealogies and online family trees are part of reasonably exhaustive research.  
We use them to lead us to original records and primary information**

## SELECTED RESOURCES

### Published Genealogies and Online Trees

- Board for Certification of Genealogist. *Genealogy Standards*, 50th Anniversary Edition. Nashville, Tennessee: Ancestry.com, 2014.
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