Organization, Organization, Organization...

Today the archives had a steady stream of visitors making use of our computers. Although a few needed some assistance in searching for their ancestors I mainly helped one lady with her files. She has been working on her family for a few years, visiting us at the archives about once a week. She walked in with quite an armful of papers and notes that she had accumulated over time but she's never really sat down and gone it all. As an aside, she has a computer program but hasn't entered all the data as of yet. So I sat down with her and we went through what I called the "possibles" and the "probables."

Early on in her research she was looking for any variation of her family's names in just about any location. She really didn't have much to go on and she printed out all those assorted records. But, as she learned more she never went back to sift through those records and they are now erroneous. For instance, she had found her gg-grandmother in the 1880 census as a widow, thus her gg-grandfather was dead. So any records that she had found early in her research for her gg-grandfather as a "possibility" for 1880, 1900 or later is void at this point. Those records are now in our recycling bin :).

She still has a lot of "possibilities" for passenger arrivals and other census records which we kept in a stack, clipped them together with a big "?" on top. She can keep this pile to the side and go through them as she finds more hard evidence. The other pile that she now has contains her notes and verified evidence. She'll now be able to find her data a more accessible.

Remember that our conference in September will be talking about organization! I hope to see you there. Or find me at the archives...

~ Michelle