



Middlesex Genealogical Society

SPRING 1991

Vol VIII, No. 1



**Nicki Hollander, our President, died on 16 February 1991.
We will miss her SO MUCH!
She is shown here with granddaughter Linda Kerr**

Nicki Hollander exemplified the combination of high standards, common sense, and the ability to get things done. These qualities, plus her tact and diplomacy, made her such an effective president that no deadline was missed, no kind word was left unsaid Henry Hoff

The following is an excerpt from the wonderful Memorial Service held at the United Church of Rowayton, conducted by Reverend John Livingston, with Soloist, Judy Livingston.

At the time of her death, Nicki was serving her second term as President of the Middlesex Genealogical Society. Her influence on that group alone and her personal touch added greatly to its successful endeavors and programs. She is respected in so many circles and has made such a significant difference in so many lives. Especially in the lives of her family and friends. Her spirit is very much alive.

(continued on Page 3)

MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

1991-1992 OFFICERS

Ray Bartlett
Richard Sarr
Marianne Sheldon
Fred Farwell

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer

Janet Jainschigg
Robert Fatherley

Past President
President Emeritus

DIRECTORS

Norman Adams
Pat Flowers
Raymond Gross
Ted Hubbell
Walter Jerige
Charles Scribner
Pete Wilson
Florence Wyland

TRUSTEES

Mary Freedman
Henry Hoff
Thomas Kemp
Grant Radmall

The Middlesex Genealogical Society was established for the purpose of helping those interested in genealogy to pursue the investigation of their family heritage and to provide guidance in research to that end. The Society holds at least four meetings with a program and speaker during the year, has established a Genealogy section at the Darien Public Library, provides research assistance on Saturday mornings (10-12) at the Library and publishes a quarterly Newsletter. Annual membership dues are \$10/ Individual and \$15/Couple or Family.

Original articles and notices of genealogical interest are welcomed for the newsletter. Send to the Editor:

Sherrill S. Yates
9 Wagon Rd
Bethel, CT 06801.

Correspondence to the Society:

Middlesex Genealogical Society
45 Old Kings Highway North
Darien, CT 06820



President's Report 1990-1991

Perhaps we all need to be reminded that, in spite of the loss of our President, Nicki Hollander, as she would have been the first to point out, in 1990-91 our Society continued to grow.

Thanks to our Trustee Henry Hoff's help in securing speakers, we held our statutory four programmed meetings — one the well attended Winter Workshop in which the Connecticut Ancestry Society was invited to participate. We also completed the local family cemetery survey. This updates the one taken by the Darien Historical Society in 1958. This year's joint project was almost entirely the work of our own Secretary, Marianne Sheldon.

We reached out to the community and secured the cooperation of the Boy Scout organization for the final phase of our survey of veteran's graves in Spring Grove Cemetery. Also we underwrote the publication of three pamphlets researched by Tom and Vi Kemp. These contain the birth, marriage, and death records for 1990 as printed in the Darien, New Canaan and Litchfield newspapers.

We continued to give supportive service and instruction to researchers who use our collection housed in the Darien Library. This help is provided thanks to Norman Adams and his Saturday morning volunteers.

Under the leadership of our President, we joined with the Darien Historical Society in a tour of Historic Newport, Rhode Island, whose own historical society's library has an outstanding collection of genealogical interest. The trip cemented friendships, gave pleasure and considerably aided our treasury.

Most important of all, we have now in the hands of Grant Radmall, Publications Chairman, the manuscript of our "Publication Number 5" which Nicki Hollander had completed just before her illness. It carries on, with carefully accurate research, the list of veterans buried in Spring Grove Cemetery — from the earliest Civil War soldiers to the present. Nicki has also provided an article concerning World War I and its impact on the men of Darien and their families. This is an impressive piece of work for a small new society to sponsor and a worthy memorial to our President and dear friend.

Your Board is determined to carry on the work to which she gave so much devotion and skill. We know she's in the Heaven she so firmly believed in and we'll continue to work so that she can look down upon us with approval and pride.

Janet G. Jainschigg, Acting President ❖

You see, Nicki had a tremendous ability to relate to anyone. Her grandchildren recall her for so many years using the word, divine, to express her feelings of joy. However, when she realized that divine wasn't quite the "in" word, she quickly changed and her joy was expressed by saying "cool". She would say things like, "I'm going to crash" when she was ready to call it a day. She would be the one people would turn to for advise and her life was characterized by her sense of humor, her deep faith, her dignity, her courage, her tenacity, intellect and grace as one grandchild put it.

I sat and talked with her many times as she sat in the church office folding and stuffing bulletins for our Sunday service. Whenever I talked with her, I felt as though she really embodied the life of faith. I recall so vividly the time she found herself sitting in her car upside down in the stream right outside her home. It was a very frightening time for many. Nicki, she was amazing. As I knelt down and talked with her, she was more concerned with my getting my pants wet than she was about herself. Her love and her concern for others really sustained her throughout her life.

Just a few hours before she died, she was saying to the family members gathered around her, "I'm sorry, it's taking so long to die." Selflessness and true love. Nicki loved to pray a certain prayer which she kept by her side. It really captures this quality. The prayer is this:

*I said a prayer for you today
And know that God must have heard,
I felt the answer in my heart
Although he spoke no word.
I didn't ask for wealth or fame
(I knew you wouldn't mind),
I asked Him to send treasures
Of a far more lasting kind!
I asked that He'd be near you
At the start of each new day,
To grant you health and blessings
And friends to share your day!
I asked for happiness for you
In all things great and small,
But it was for God's loving care
I prayed for most of all!*

That was Nicki. That was her prayer. In a recent letter to Nicki, her granddaughter, Liz, remembered how she and Nicki used to read together a book of prayers. So she recently sent her one so that they could continue to read together in spirit. Linda expressed Nicki in her life so well when she wrote that Nicki was a person that had

sewn a seed in each of us and the most joyous thing we can do in her memory is to tend to it and to give it as tender loving care as we possibly can. To water that seed every day. To let it bask in sunshine and smiles and let it grow in our hearts so that our heart is filled with everything she believes in: faith, courage, a sense of humor and good wishes for all that surrounds us every day.

I remember Nicki telling a story and then how she laughed at her own story. It seems so appropriate to share it now.

She told me that there were two men who were very good friends. Such good friends that they promised one another, since they were such avid baseball fans, that if one were to die before the other that they would somehow make it back to earth to tell if there was baseball in heaven, which was very important to them. Sure enough one did die before the other. The one left on earth waited and waited and waited and finally his friend appeared. He said, "What took you so long to get back and tell me the news?" He said, "Well, you know time is different for us here in heaven, but I am here now and I have good news and I have bad news. The good news is there is baseball in heaven and it is wonderful. The bad news is you are scheduled to pitch next Saturday."

Well, friends, I have some good news and some bad news. The bad news, Nicki is no longer with us physically. The good news: she is pitching now, she's pitching!

Someone once wrote, *she achieves success who lives well, laughs often, who leaves the world better than she finds it, who always looks for the best in others and gives them the best she has.* In this respect, Nicki Hollander's life was most successful.

If Nicki could share one last thought with us today. I believe it would be something like this.

*The time has come for me to say goodbye,
but no sad farewells will we share,
for you will live within me and I will live in you.
No words can say how much we care.
We walked together on the dusty roads of life,
but kept our eyes upon a star.
We've laughed at the little things and cried along the way.
I've come to know the friend you are.
So walk in the world for me, sing a happy melody
and keep my memory not far away.
May you find that life will bring all the best of
everything.
Take special care of you for me, today.*



A Connecticut Yankee with Roots in South Carolina???

by Florence E. Wyland

Imagine my great dismay when I discovered I once had ancestors living in South Carolina. Me, a Connecticut born and raised native, with direct lines back to the Mayflower, steeped in New England and Quaker traditions, suddenly discovered the Dickie's of "Ninety Six Creek", South Carolina.

Hector Dickie, Sr. came to America on the brig "Chichester" December 25, 1767. He was then 23 years old. (Revill, Janice. *A Compilation of the Original Lists of Protestant Immigrants to South Carolina 1763-1773*. Baltimore, 1968)

He probably started from England or Northern Ireland, heading to the new world with his mother Sarah, and brother Robert. They landed in Charlestown, S.C. and headed about 130 miles through the great swamps of South Carolina to settle on a piece of land in the "up-country" or "back country", far back from the coast. Nearby was the Indian town Keowee, chief settlement of the Cherokee Indians. Ninety Six District comprised all the land between the Savannah and the Saluda Rivers.

He settled there and married Sarah, (possibly Sarah Bell, who was also a passenger on the "Chichester" who was about the right age), and started a family that eventually reached 12 children. But shortly after the first three children were born, the American Revolution broke out. Hester fought on the side of the British and became a Commissary in Lord Rawden's Loyalist Regiment in S.C. Hector fought many bloody battles through and around the great swamps he knew so well. Much to my amazement, there were many, many battles fought for Independence in the Carolinas, and not until it was over, did we realize how many hundreds of families stayed loyal to the English, from this state. (Clark, M.J. *Loyalists in the Southern Campaign of the Revolutionary War*, 3 Vol. Baltimore, 1981-Vol 1)

After the war, these people then became exiles and had to leave their homes and properties.

Captain Dickie helped form the Loyalists into groups at Charlestown, and organized the preparations to ship them out to other lands. Some went to Jamaica, Nassau, St. Augustine, Florida and others decided to start the long voyage to the cool maritime provinces of Canada, part of the great English Empire. Here they were given a grant of land of 2,000 acres as a reward for staying loyal.

My Hector Dickie, Sr., wife Sarah, and three children, Jane, Martha and Robert, were among those who after suffering three hurricanes in Jamaica decided to head for Canada

instead. They received a grant of land in New Brunswick, then part of Nova Scotia, and became leaders in their new community, helping to form an Anglican Church at Bloomfield where he was Vestryman near where he had settled in Norton, Kings County, New Brunswick, by the Kennebecasis River on a rise of land which was later named Dickie Mountain.

It was here they started over again. The long, cold winters were a lot different than the warm climate of the south, but to be finally settled on their own piece of land was reward enough, and they worked hard and prospered. They had 12 children and old Hector, Sr. lived to be almost 100 years old.

Four generations later, my mother, Jessie Alice Pierce was born on this mountain. She joined many other cousins and ancestors of early settler families, such as Kierstead, Baxter, Sherwood, Picket, Doyal, Rupert, Walker, etc.

Hector Dickie Sr. and his wife Sarah, had a daughter named Martha, born Oct. 23, 1777 and Martha married our great, great grandfather, Henry Pierce (born 1790, died 1820). The Pierces had also been granted a piece of land on the mountain. That marriage of Dickie and Pierce brought the two families together and this marriage finally gave me the connection of how a Connecticut Yankee of 1991 found she had roots in the deep south of 1767.



My Mini Meander in Missouri

by Sherrill Yates

The latter part of March, I visited my sister in Overland Park, Kansas (a suburb of Kansas City). She and I took a day to drive over to Missouri to try and locate the tombstone of our great great (maternal) grandmother, Ruth (West) Tobey.

In trying to obtain information about Ruth West Tobey, I had discovered that in 1901 the Camden County Missouri Courthouse had burned destroying all Vital, Land and Probate Records. I knew, therefore that locating information about her would be more difficult. At the Family History Library in New Canaan, I was able to locate a microfilm of the Macks Creek Cemetery done by Elizabeth Prather Ellsberry in 1935, but it listed her death date as 1877. I knew that this could not be as Nathaniel had remarried about 1861 and produced 7 more children (to add the the 14 children he had with Ruth. I actually have 5 more children making it 19, but so far can't substantiate them. She evidently died exhausted if not from exhaustion at age 41! So, I felt compelled to try to find my poor grandmother's tombstone to see for myself the actual dates.

My sister and I set off on a nice early spring day in March and drove towards the Lake of the Osarks in search of Macks Creek, Camden Co., MO. After stopping at several antique and crafts places, all of which were unique and fascinating, we arrived in Macks Creek. It was about 1 P.M. and we were starving. We found it just a little burg off State Highway 54. There, in a nice neat row, was everything one could want on a trip like this: The Macks Creek Police Department, the Macks Creek Town Hall, the Macks Creek Library and Bill's Cafe where all the locals seemed to be having lunch.

I first noted that the library was closed on Tuesdays (it was, of course, Tuesday). We then decided to try the local flavors offered in Bill's Cafe and found it a delight. True to a Southern Cafe, we found giant glasses of iced tea, all you could drink for \$.48. Then, we discovered that they had as the special of the day, Chicken Fried Steak, Mashed Potatoes with White Gravy, Creamed Corn, Tossed Salad and Texas Toast. Talk about heaven!!! All of this came to us for the monumental price of \$3.85! I know, all you born and bred Yankees have no idea what I am talking about! Sorry about that!

Anyway, back to the project at hand: After enjoying our feast, we asked the waitress if she knew where the Macks Creek Cemetery was, explaining that we were looking for a tombstone of the 1850 vintage. She turned around and asked

two other locals and we then got into a discussion involving the entire Cafe about how the town was founded and who the original settlers were, etc. One lady got up and went next door to the "closed" library and brought back a copy of a publication on the Camden County cemeteries which the Lion's Club had sponsored. I bought it for \$5.

So, out the door we went with our new found friends wishing us luck. We drove around the bend and over the hill and into the cemetery. We located the tombstone and found sitting next to it, Lucy Wheeler Tobey's tombstone, Nathaniel's mother. The tombstone said Ruth died in 1857 and Lucy died in 1855. Needless to say, we were delighted with our find. We took pictures and put some plastic flowers next to the stones. The flowers were found in the corner of the fence where the wind had, no doubt, deposited them. After stopping once again by Bill's Cafe to pick up two more glasses of iced tea for the road, we were off once again. There was, after all, more antiquing to be done!

I tell you about my day out in Missouri to hopefully inspire you to do the same. These small jaunts can be fascinating, fun and very fruitful. So, as the daffidils and crocuses peak up at us and begin to grow and blossom, pick out some small side trips and have an adventure or two. Happy hunting! ❀

MGS Publications For Sale

Publication No. 1: **Spring Grove Cemetery Records of Connecticut Volunteers** which includes the veterans who were residents of Fitch Home.

Publication No. 2: **Index to Births, Engagements, Marriages & Obituaries from the Darien News Review during 1989.**

Publication No. 3: **Index to Births, Engagements, Marriages & Obituaries from the New Canaan Advertiser during 1989**

Publication No. 4: **Index to Obituaries from the Litchfield County Times during 1989.** Publications No. 2, 3, & 4 were compiled by Vi and Thomas Kemp.

All publications may be obtained by writing the society (see page 2). The cost is \$5 each.

Great-great-grandfather was a what?!

by Richard Phalon
Forbes, April 15, 1991

The passion for genealogy is hardly a new pursuit. But nowadays fewer folks are combing archives to see if they belong to the General Society of Mayflower Descendants or if they qualify for membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution. These days people seem to revel in discovering forebears who arrived in steerage or a relative hanged as a horse thief.

Thanks to computers, the search is getting easier and cheaper all the time.

"It's all about family values," says *Bon Appetit's* Cleon T. (Bud) Knapp, owner of Knapp Communications. Knapp has hired professional genealogists to map out his family tree. "We came over here broke, probably as indentured servants, and we've done well. But in these days of the nuclear family, it's important we remember where we came from."

The microchip has made access to such documentary treasure troves as the Mormon Church's International Genealogy Index literally as simple as punching a keyboard. It has taken much of the drudgery out of the paper chase through such basic sources as birth and death certificates, census records, military pension applications, passenger ship manifests, wills and deeds.

Access to the records of ordinary folks who immigrated to this country through Ellis Island will also be a lot easier, thanks to the efforts of the nonprofit Ellis Island Restoration Commission, headed by Philip Lax. Its \$15 million computer system, just off the drawing board, will generate vital basics on the 17 million immigrants whose first stop in the U.S. was the century-old immigrant gateway in New York Harbor. Ellis Island opened in 1892 and closed in 1924 for mass immigration purposes, and has recently reopened as an exquisitely restored museum.

"We hope to be on-line next year," says Lax. "We're trying to insure that the records of people who contributed so much to the country won't remain dust in the attic."

Henry Hoff, 45, is an accountant by trade but a genealogist by avocation. And one of his specialties is tweaking hereditary groupies who measure their worth by the importance of the ancestral names they can drop, often on shaky grounds.

While majoring in British history at Yale in the Sixties, for example, he debunked a couple of traditions long cherished in his own family line. "I was a little suspicious right away," he says of one old family legend. "What was a prosperous

Burlington County, N.J.

farmer doing claiming gentry ancestry based on a coat of arms dated 1786?" Hoff discovered there was no such blue blood in the family tree.

He has been busy shaking out family trees ever since. Over the years, he has managed to turn out a thigh-thick file of scholarly work, including coauthorship of the recently published, 12-generation genealogy of the Roosevelt family. Hoff is distantly related to Theodore Roosevelt (a third cousin of his grandmother).

Hoff and his coauthor, Timothy Field Beard, former reference head of the New York Public Library's genealogy division, unearthed several branches of the

family omitted from an earlier treatment "because they didn't do very well in life," chuckles Hoff. Robert B. Roosevelt, for example, an uncle of Theodore, had two families at the same time—one by his wife and another by his mistress.

The Hoff-Beard study also acknowledges a number of other illegitimate Roosevelts, including at least one conceived with a housemaid. "A painful disclosure to some," says Hoff, "but a lot of the fun in genealogy is that you never know where it's going to take you."

Hoff himself is known as the "Bastard-in-Chief" in his capacity as president of the Descendants of the Illegitimate Sons and Daughters of the Kings of Britain. As its coat of arms suggests (a horned helmet—a symbol of cuckoldry—rampant over a cuckoo, a breed notorious for laying eggs in other birds' nests), the group is, of course, a send-up.

Hoff's commonsense advice for new genealogy enthusiasts:

1 Read some basic "how-to" literature.



Henry Hoff

! Join a local genealogical society where you can gather information at lectures or classes.

! Consider joining regional groups like the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society for top-drawer library and publications backup.

! Put together a three or four generation family chart based on marriage, birth, death certificates and any other documents that you can pull together on your own.

You'll want to start with such a chart, even if you are going to rely on a professional to do the rest of the legwork. That's how Bud Knapp got the ball rolling three years ago, when he put a Salt Lake City genealogist on the family case. She's still tracing the Knapp line through "eight or nine families." So far, the trail has led from the East Coast through Michigan and Minnesota, to Arizona and California; and backward to England, Scotland and Germany.

The search has produced some surprises. "There were some outlaws, and one guy was hanged, but nothing really drastic," laughs Knapp. "My kids can't wait to see how it comes out." ✦

The Darien Historical Society donated their volumes of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society Record and the New England Genealogical and Historical Register to our collection at the Darien Public Library. While we had some issues of these valuable research books, this wonderful gift will help us towards completion of this resource. Thanks DHS!!!

We have requests to begin a Queries and Answers Column in our Newsletter. If you would like to submit Queries, please send them to the Editor. Address on Page 2.

Punching up your past

THE Latter Day Saints Family History Library in Salt Lake City is invaluable to genealogy researchers.

The Mormon Church, in keeping with its doctrine that non-Mormon ancestors should be "sealed" retroactively into the eternity of their families, has been photographing birth and marriage records from all over the world for over 50 years now.

The 150 million names reposing in the Church's International Genealogical Index can be tapped through a computer system that links 1,100 local Mormon centers in the U.S. and Canada with the repository in Salt Lake.

Anyone can walk into a family history center and do a search; the service is available for free. (You can find Mormon centers in the phone book.)

The network allowed this writer to pull out birth and marriage dates on probable forebears who had emigrated from Ireland during the 1840s to work the silk and wool mills in Paterson, N.J.

Clues of that sort can be reinforced or discarded by correlation with millions of other documents—census and probate records, mortgage abstracts and tax lists—held on microfilm or microfiche.

The Church plans to computerize much more of this material. Because of the potential liability for invasion-of-privacy suits, the photographic records of the main genealogical index do not cover years later than 1910.

If you want to hire someone to do a search for you, be aware that there are a lot of scamsters around. Membership in the Association of Professional Genealogists is one good screen. This self-policing trade group provides an arbitration service for unhappy customers. For a roster of members and specialties, send \$2 and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the APT, P.O. Box 11801, Salt Lake City, Utah 84147.

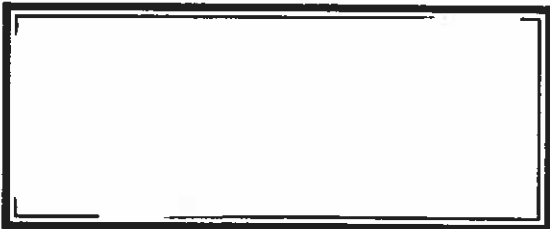
The major accrediting agencies are the LDS Family History Library (35 N. West Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150) and the Board for Certification of Genealogists (P.O. Box 5816, Falmouth, Vt 05403).

It's important to spell out the parameters of a search from the start. Do you really want to trace the family back to Ethelred the Unready, or is it enough to know where you come from in the old country?

The meter can run up quickly. Hourly rates in the New York area, according to Harry Macy Jr., director of information services for the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, run around \$20 to \$30; nationally from "under \$10 to as much as \$50."

"It all depends on whether you want a Honda or a Rolls," says Macy.

-R.P. ✦



Middlesex Genealogical Society
45 Old Kings Highway North
Darien, CT 06820



Middlesex Genealogical Society
45 Old Kings Highway North
Darien, CT 06820

Application for Membership
Single (\$10) _____
Couple (\$15) _____

Name _____

Address _____

Zip _____

Phone _____