

Middlesex Genealogical Society

SUMMER 1991 NEWSLETTER

Vol VIII, No. 2

MGSociety News

An Executive Board Meeting was held Tuesday, July 23 at President Ray Bartlett's home. Items discussed included:

● **Programs** for the upcoming year's general meetings.

● **Library Aquisitions:**
Miles Standish, 1st American Manx given by Jane Merchant.
God's Country, a genealogical and historical biography of Pound Ridge by Jay Harris.

● Pat Flowers and Ray Gross have done an **excellent job** straightening up our section in the library. Please stop by and enjoy!

● Charles Scribner was named to represent us on the **Darien Community Council**.

● **Publication No. 5** which includes the rest of the Spring Grove Veterans' Cemetery records completed by Nicki Hollander finished just before she died is planned for late fall. We will keep you posted.

● **Mark your calendars** with the dates below and plan to **attend and support your club!**



MGS Meetings

Sep 30, 1991 Quaker Society
Jan 19, 1992 Workshop
Mar 18, 1992 Stay Tuned
May 17, 1992 Stay Tuned



MILITARY RECORDS

by Florence Bates Wyland

Some of the most exciting mail I receive are the **big brown envelopes** containing Military Records. I guess it is in seeing the National Archives, Washington, DC address, and imagining what new information I will learn about one of my research projects that thrills me the most.

This started happening for me a few years ago when I heard a talk by Tom Kemp at the Pequot Library in Southport, CT. He told how and where to write for the forms. I wrote, the form arrived quickly and I filled them out. Actually it was quite easy. Just the first and last name of the veteran, what state he lived in, when he was born, when he died, whether he served in the army or navy, or marine corp, age, and rank, if possible. Also, which war: Revolutionary War, Civil War (Union or Confederate), or War of 1812 (not World War I or II). Check the box that asks if you wish Service Records or Pension Records. (I end up sending for both,) then mail it off. In a few weeks you will receive a letter saying whether or not they have found records. If they have, you send \$10 and return the letter to them, and in a few more weeks, you should receive the big, brown envelope!

From the Civil War papers of one ancestor I sent for, I learned how old he was, when he joined, what color eyes, hair and complexion he had, how tall he was, what his commander's name was, where he served, when he was mustered out and where, and how long he served. These interesting tidbits painted a picture for me of how this young man may have looked. I learned he had fought at Chancellorsville, Antietam, and was in the Artillery (those big black canons we see on village greens.)

I requested military records for another ancestor, on a chance. I had heard from the Great Grandmother, that he had been killed in the

MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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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, notices of genealogical interest, and queries are welcomed for the newsletter. Send to the Editor:

Sherrill S. Yates
9 Wagon Road
Bethel, CT 06801

Correspondence to the Society:
Middlesex Genealogical Society
45 Old Kings Highway North
Darien, CT 06820

Civil War and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery. I sent for his records, but when I received them, they were sparse and very brief, with only his attendance record which suddenly stopped in January, 1863. It just said on one line, "in hospital" and a few lines down, said "not present, died at Poplar Grove Church, VA." What a jolt this was to me — a sudden nothingness about a young man, 19 years of age.

I learned that he left his mother in Pennsylvania to support herself, and joined the cause in September, 1861. I decided to write to the Arlington National Cemetery in VA, on the chance that he was buried there. They said no, that Arlington Cemetery wasn't even in existence at the beginning of the Civil War. They suggested I write to the Soldiers' Home National Cemetery, 21 Harewood Road, N.W., Washington D.C. 20011, as this was the **very first** Civil War cemetery, hurriedly begun at the beginning of the war in the City of Washington itself. The early casualties of the war were so much greater than expected, that this cemetery filled up quickly with over 5,000 graves. I wrote to this cemetery, and received back a very kind letter telling that our ancestor was indeed buried there. They sent a map showing the exact location of the little white stone, in a line amongst hundreds of others.

As time went by, I learned that the Congress had passed a law saying that families of veterans that had been killed or wounded in the war could apply for a pension. This led me to write again and request the Pension Records for this man. I received over a dozen pages of legal sized paper; applications from his mother, and affidavits from friends. These papers were full of family and genealogical information: names, dates, places, occupations, financial situation, addresses. She eventually did receive an \$8 a month pension, to make up for her deceased son's income.

To write for Military Records, the address is:
**Military Service Branch (NNMS)
National Archives & Records Service
8th & Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20408**

Ask for Form NATF Form 80. Submit a separate form for each file you request. They will search only one file per form.

If you want to request photocopies of records relating to service in World War I or II, or subsequent service, write to:

**National Personnel Records Center
(Military Records) GSA
9700 Page Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63132.**

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RECORDS OF SOLDIERS' HOMES

Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives

The National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers were established by Congress in 1866 to provide residences for needy veterans. Honorably discharged officers, sailors, soldiers, or marines who served in the regular, volunteer, or other forces of the United States (or in the organized militia or the National Guard called into federal service) were eligible if they were disabled by disease or wounds, without adequate means of support, and incapable of earning a living. Women who had served as nurses or in other capacities were admitted to the homes under later laws. The branches of the homes, their locations, and the years of their creation are shown in the table below. After 1930, when the homes were consolidated with other agencies to form the Veterans Administration, the branches became known as Veterans Administration Homes.

Records of the homes are dated 1866 - 1938 and are part of Records of the Veterans Administration, Record Group 15. The records of greatest genealogical value generally consist of historical registers of residents (called "members") of the homes and, for some homes, hospital and death records. The National Archives has no records for the Biloxi, St. Petersburg, or Tuskegee homes.

A record of veterans admitted to the homes was kept in the historical registers maintained at the various branches. A home number was assigned to each individual upon admission. The member retained this number even if he was discharged and later readmitted to the branch. Each page of the register is divided into four sections: military history, domestic history, home history, and general remarks. The veteran's military history gives the time and place of each enlistment, rank, company and regiment, time and place of discharge, reason for discharge, and nature of disabilities when admitted to the home. The

domestic history gives birthplace, age, height, various physical features, religion, occupation, residence, marital status, and name and address of nearest relative. The home history gives the rate of pension, date of admission, conditions of readmission, date of discharge, cause of discharge, date and cause of death, and place of burial. Under general remarks is information about papers relating to the veterans, such as admission paper, army discharge certificate, and pension certificate; information also was entered about money and personal effects if the member died while in residence at the branch.

Branches of the National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (Locations and Dates Founded)

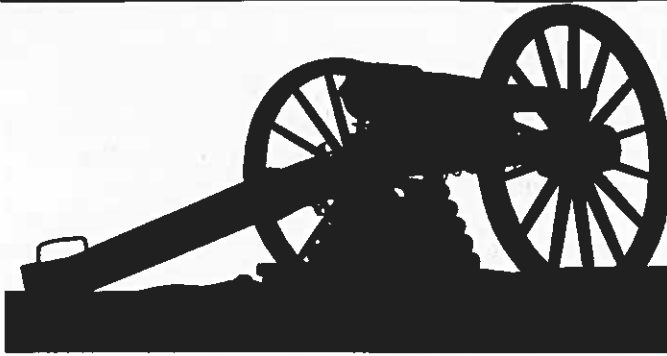
- Eastern Branch, Togus, Maine, 1866
- Central Branch, Dayton, Ohio, 1867
- Northwestern Branch, Wood, Wis., 1867
- Southern Branch, Kecoughtan, Va., 1870
- Western Branch, Leavenworth, Kan., 1885
- Pacific Branch, Sawtelle, Calif., 1888
- Marion Branch, Marion, Ind., 1888
- Roseburg Branch, Roseburg, Oreg., 1894,
(successor to the Oregon State Home at Roseburg)
- Danville Branch, Danville, Ill., 1898
- Mountain Branch, near Johnson City, Tenn., 1903
- Battle Mountain Sanitarium, Hot Sprgs, SD, 1907
- Bath Branch, Bath, N.Y., 1929, (successor to the New York State Home at Bath)
- St. Petersburg Home, St. Petersburg, Fla., 1930
- Biloxi Home, Biloxi, Miss., 1930
- Tuskegee Home, Tuskegee, Ala., 1933. *



National Archives Medical Records

Genealogical Society of Central Missouri Newsletter

When submitting forms to the Federal Archives for military records, you should include the wording "Send complete medical file." Medical records are not filed with the military records. If the veteran was injured, hospitalized or received a medical discharge, there could be helpful information in the medical file, but **YOU MUST REQUEST IT.** *



SOLDIERS' HOME NATIONAL CEMETERY

21 Harewood Road, N.W.
Washington, DC 20011

Entrance gates will be open and visitors permitted in the cemetery throughout the year during the following hours:
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. everyday
8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Memorial Day

At Soldiers' Home National Cemetery, well-kept grounds and ordered rows of white marble headstones bespeak the care and attention given to the cemetery to assure that the resting place of the honored dead may be kept sacred forever. Events of more than a century ago dictated the establishment of this cemetery during a time when the very existence of the United States as a nation was imperiled.

The siege and surrender of Fort Sumter in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina, in April 1861 signaled the onset of armed hostilities between the people of the North and those of the South. For many on both sides, hopes were high that the war would be of short duration. Perhaps all would be over in a matter of months. These hopes were rudely shattered during the summer of 1861 as casualty lists of dead and wounded emphasized the stern realities of armed conflict. For the city of Washington, the capital of the United States, the rout of Union forces following the battle of Bull Run or First Manassas on 21 July 1861 brought the war very close to home. Union forces engaged in that battle numbered some 28,452 men and their casualties included 481 killed, 1,011 wounded, and 1,216 missing.

The national government at Washington now found itself faced with many tasks and heavy responsibilities incident to the prosecution of the war. Not the least of these responsibilities were matters concerned with burial of the dead and care of the wounded and sick from among the steadily increasing forces under arms for the defense of the Union. Many churches and public buildings were requisitioned to serve as military hospitals among with hastily erected hospital buildings located throughout the city.

Burial of the dead from these hospitals soon became a very real problem. Within days after the battle of Bull Run, the United States Military Asylum (Soldiers' Home) offered to the Secretary of War six acres of land within the grounds for use as a burial place for officers and soldiers both regular and volunteer. The offer was acknowledged and accepted by the Adjutant General's Office of the War Department. The first burials in this area were made on 3 August 1861.

Old burial registers for Soldiers' Home National Cemetery show numerous soldier burials during the late summer and early fall of 1861. In many instances burial within the cemetery at the Soldiers' Home marked not only the end of a young man's life, but also the conclusion of an even shorter career as a military man. Perhaps for some this was their first separation from isolated farms and small communities in the north, the first parting from families and friends at home.

At Soldiers' Home National Cemetery one may locate Grave 1330, Section F, the last resting place of Private John Williams, Company G, 71st New York Infantry, who died on 3 August 1861. Nearby in Grave 3887, Section G, are the remains of Private Lowell W. Gibson, Company K, 3rd Vermont Infantry, who also died on 3 August 1861. Private Robert McKenney, Company K, 2d Maine Infantry, another soldier far from home who died 8 August 1861, is interred in Grave 656, Section F.

The events and battles of 1861 were, in a sense, but preliminary to other acts and scenes yet to come in the awesome drama of a nation at war. Days during which there were no burials in the six-acre plot at Soldiers' Home were few indeed. Finally in 1864 there appeared to be no more space available for burials. This circumstance was an important and contributing factor leading to the establishment and development of another and larger national cemetery across the Potomac in Virginia. The area so chosen was the Arlington estate and home from which Robert E. Lee took his leave in April 1861 as he resigned his commission in the United States Army to take up arms in defense of his native Virginia and of the Confederacy to which the state had pledged allegiance.

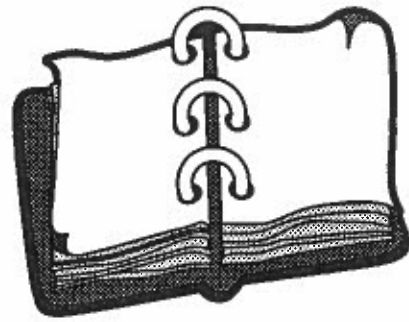
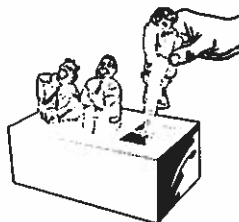
During the period 1861-1864 more than five thousand interments were made in the area which had become Soldiers' Home National Cemetery. Burial records show that nearly all of the Civil War casualties interred therein were men of the ranks - privates, corporals, sergeants, storekeepers, cooks, musicians, and ambulance drivers. The District of Columbia and 17 of the 25 loyal states of the Union are shown as the home locations of these men. *

Military Records Pointers and Pitfalls

Shaking Your Family Tree
by Dr. Ralph Crandall

1. Military records provide another resource to help you close the "gap" in American genealogy — the century between the Revolution and the late nineteenth century.
2. As federal records, military records are frequently more uniform and reliable than local records.
3. Although finding aids for federal records are meager, some of the most genealogically valuable military records have been well indexed.
4. *The Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives* will introduce you to military records and their indexes.
5. There are two basic types of military records: those that provide evidence of military service (service records) and those that provide evidence of veterans' benefits (pension and bounty records).
6. To use service records, you must know when and where your ancestor served and whether as an enlisted man or an officer. There is no comprehensive index for service records.
7. The files for pension and bounty records are arranged alphabetically by surname of veteran. They often contain information you need to use service records.
8. Most Colonial service records are filed in the state archives of the original thirteen colonies. Some are found among papers in private institutions.
9. Consolidated indexes exist for military service records of army "volunteers" from each war and conflict except the Civil War.
10. Reminder: For regular army units and for other branches of the military (the navy and marine corps), there are no compiled service records or consolidated indexes.
11. Any service record created during the past seventy-five years is restricted. You will need written consent from the veteran or his or her next of kin to gain access.
12. Muster rolls are valuable because they often contain personal information such as soldiers' physical descriptions, residences, and occupations.
13. Pension application files are highly valued because they focus on a veteran's life after he left the service and may contain various materials intended to prove his service.
14. Widow's pension applications are sometimes even more valuable because they contain information about the veteran and his widow and/or children.
15. Pension files and indexes are combined with those for bounty applications. *

**Be careful!!
Don't automatically plug
ancestors into slots.
Always double check your
sources!!!**



Why Publish Your Family History?

From *How to Publish your Genealogy*
by L. J. McGrady

FIRST, because you care.

You want to preserve the poignant struggles of those immigrants whose colorful lives and events of history combined to bring you to this point in time. You want to write the story of your ancestors as a labor of love.

You don't want your forebears to silently slip into the ranks of forgotten kinfolk. Through the years, much has been written about kings and queens, and about the rich and famous; but you have the information and opportunity to make the past come alive so that ordinary people are not forgotten.

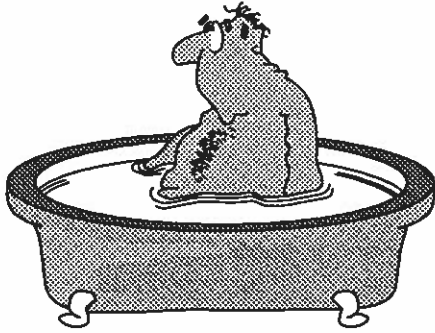
Think of all those who will be able to read about and appreciate the hardships, accomplishments and disappointments of your progenitors because you made the effort to compose your story and distribute it in published form. It is exciting that you can share inside information on local history, migrations and customs. You are contributing to the knowledge of our past.

Maybe you should ask yourself; "If I don't publish and preserve my family history, who will pass on the rich heritage of some wonderful people — my own people?"

There is a sad consequence of common disaster which is often overlooked: Years of irreplaceable data can be wiped out, for example by fire or flood. Unexpected illness or mental deterioration not only interrupt unfinished work, but spell the loss of untold information stored only in the memory of the researcher.

Too often genealogical information still in notebooks end up in the hands of heirs who lack the ardor, time or expertise to pick up the loose ends. The accumulation of data ends up in an attic, or — even worse — in someone's trash.

Doesn't such a thought emphasize the urgency of writing your family history NOW! *



Are You a Lukewarm Genealogist?

by Debbi McKay
ABT PAF, Apr-Jun 1991

There is no such thing as a lukewarm genealogist. It's true that a run-of-the-mill family tracer methodically jots down what someone gives or sends him, doesn't get very excited about the mail and can put genealogy aside in favor of going to lunch with a friend. But a true family tree nut will hide the telephone bill from the spouse, buy stamps by the sheet, not operate well until mail time, then hate the mail man if nothing genealogical is delivered, beat the typewriter (or computer) until 2 a.m. and get up the next day ready for more.

A real genealogist will plod through cemeteries looking for tombstones in pouring rain and winter's winds with fingers and toes numbing, flout in poison ivy and, after finding that the film was not winding through the camera, as happened to me, travel many miles to the same cemetery under the same conditions.

A genealogy bug collects papers full of possible information until that end of the house where they are stored sags, then hesitantly suggest a room be added, all the while being the steadiest customer of the public library, where he is recognized as the one who resembles a pack horse.

A genealogist dislikes others who want to drone on about their family tree and findings, loves anyone who is researching one of his names, even if it is Smith or Jones, is always going to get things filed tomorrow but never does, thinks his knee-high piling (as opposed to filing) system is justified no matter who has to wade through it or fall over it, likes to drone on and on about his family tree and findings, and can't bear to part with even the tiniest scrap of paper. After all, that might contain the missing link.

A genealogist can best be described as a loner, a mediator, a lover of clutter, a collector of dimes (or quarters) for copy machines and a constant student of history, especially migration routes of his forebears. He tolerates non-genealogists and the people who refer to genealogy as a "hobby" —

after all he is discovering his personal history and recording it all in one spot. If certain diseases follow him from one generation to the next, he can possibly assist the doctor with a diagnosis. He (or she) abhors those who say they started but found a skeleton in the closet. He knows they never tried, granted, there may be skeletons, but we can't be responsible for them. He knows, too, that the very person who thinks genealogy is silly will, some day, eat humble pie and ask, knowing that the answer will be there. *



WHAT TO DO WHEN THE COURTHOUSE HAS BURNED AND YOU ARE ALL OUT OF MARSHMALLOWS!

taken from a program for the
Oklahoma Genealogical Society, February 4, 1985,
given by Mrs. Lois M. Cople
reported in ABT PAF, Apr-Jun 1991 by Kristi Gross

1. The courthouse may not have burned totally. Some records may have been saved because they were in an annex or wing that didn't burn. Don't always rely on what the *Handy Book for Genealogist* or the court clerk says.
2. There may be/have been 2 courthouses in the same county.
3. The records may have been reconstructed or re-recorded, and remember that deeds sometimes are not recorded for years after the transfer. (Also check with county abstract offices.)
4. Check neighboring counties for deeds, probate records and marriages. It may be necessary to go out a second or third county away for a marriage record. People who elope do not go to their own town courthouse for the license.
5. Check everything in the courthouse where the family went to and the county where they came from if the county is known. Many sold land to relatives before moving on.
6. Check the parent county/counties land records and the state land records for those counties. In the case of territory claimed by two states, check both state records. If your problem is in the Fire Lands or a Military District, check the parent state's records.
7. Check the progeny (those that were formed from your county) county/counties for land records that may have been recorded at a much later date. *

**Taken from the
Connecticut Society of Genealogists
Newsletter, July - August 1991**

**NATIONAL ARCHIVES
NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL ARCHIVES**

Good news for historians and genealogists in New York, Vermont, New Jersey, Western Massachusetts and Connecticut. As a result of the work of U.S. Representative Silvio O. Conte (Republican - Massachusetts, recently deceased) a branch of the New England Regional Archives of the National Archives and Records Administration will be established in Berkshire County, Mass. An opening date in 1992 is expected.

John M. Scroggins, Jr., Director of the Regional Archives System, has been receptive to suggestions for records for which copies may be provided in this archives. In addition to copies of the regional and national records such as are now housed in Waltham, area residents have recommended that this archives house copies of records now in the Northeast Regional Archives at Bayonne, NJ, making them more available to upstate New Yorkers and New Englanders. Suggestions included immigration and naturalization records, ship manifests, and crew lists.

NORTHEAST REGIONAL ARCHIVES

The move of the Northeast Regional Archives from its present location at Bayonne, NJ into Manhattan is now scheduled for late spring or early summer of 1992, according to Director of the Regional Archives System John M. Scroggins, Jr. The new location will be 201 Varick Street, Manhattan making the archives more accessible by public transportation. This Archives houses, among others, the records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Customs Service, and the U.S. District Court of Appeals, as well as copies of the most used records such as the U.S. census, 1790 - 1910.

1920 FEDERAL CENSUS

A reminder: The 1920 federal census will be opened March 2, 1992 - the end of the seventy-two year closure period.

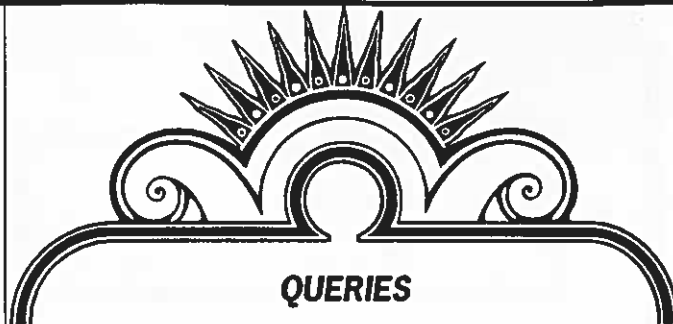
The 1920 census exists only on microfilm and consists of 2,076 rolls of population census schedules and 8,590 rolls of Soundex index. Every state in the 1920 census is indexed which will simplify access for family historians. The microfilm catalog for the 1920 census will be similar in format to the 1910 census catalog with the inclusion of additional information about legibility problems on individual roll listings and a new appendix outlining the data elements.

Reservations will be taken starting 1 September of this year for rental of microfilm copies of the census at a cost of \$3.00 per roll for the first four rolls with a thirty day rental period. Address the

**National Archives Microfilm Rental Program,
P. O. Box 30,**

Annapolis, MD 20701

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QUERIES

Seek parents of Fanny Waterbury,
b. ca. 1800.
Moved Orange County, New York, mid 1820's.
m. James Smith
d. 1873, burial, Orange County

Raymond A. Smith
4 Kilmer Avenue
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Seek genealogy info on George Roden who settled in Bronx, NY. Others in family include Agnes, James, William, & Mary. There was some talk by my father of a move from our original settlement in Lancaster Co., PA. I am not a genealogist, but seek to find my English ancestry and family heraldry info.

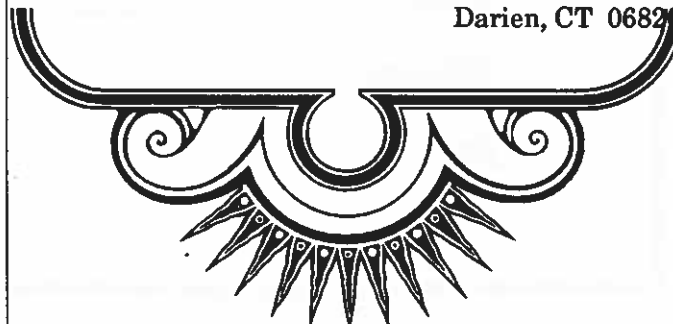
Robert Roden
397 Rowayton Avenue
Rowayton, CT 06853

Seek information about James Howe,
b. 1771
m. Mary Boody of Dover, NH
lived Strafford, NH, then Lowell, MA

Seek ancestry of Catherine Knights
of Claremont, NH,
born ca. 1781
m. ca. 1800 to

Richard Kneeland of Waterbury, VT
d. 22 Aug 1853, Waterbury, VT

Ray Bartlett
15 Hillside Ave.
Darien, CT 06820





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



Application for Membership

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

Single (\$10) _____

Couple (\$15) _____

Name _____

Address _____

Zip _____

Phone _____