



# Middlesex Genealogical Society

Darien, Fairfield County, CT

November 1996

Vol. XII, No. 5

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Suzanne McVetty lived up to her reputation as a first class speaker when she spoke on searching for Irish ancestors at our first meeting of the MGS season on 12 October (see page 6). Even though the date fell within the Columbus Day weekend, we had an excellent turnout of over 40 people. As Director Charles Cotter has pointed out, if we make the effort to bring in good speakers with a national reputation we will draw genealogists from surrounding areas.

Our next meeting is 16 November when Reverend William Hart of New Canaan will talk to us about Reverend Thomas Allen, "The Fighting Parson of the Berkshires" (see page 2).

We congratulate our Trustee and "eminence grise" Henry Hoff on his great new appointment (created especially for him) as Director of Finance and Planning for the New England Historic and Genealogical Society in Boston. He has graciously agreed to continue to serve as a Trustee for MGS, but his presence at our meetings will be sorely missed.

The CD ROM disks and caddies to hold them have arrived, and we hope to get the Robert Fatherley Genealogical CD Library up and running soon (see page 3). It is not quite as user friendly as *Family Search*, and, therefore, our Saturday Morning Library Workshop volunteers will be trained to use it first. Members will then be able to try this new research tool under their guidance on Saturday mornings. This should get things running smoothly without too many teething problems for our patient librarian Maura Ritz to address. She has worked very hard to modify software so that we can run the disks from the *Family Search* workstation using a menu that is simple to access and allows us to

choose either *Family Search* or the CD ROM Library. I hope that you will use and enjoy this new capability...and let us know of any titles that you would like us to consider getting.

Happy holidays!

David Bowley



## MGS AT DARIEN LIBRARY

by C. Scribner

Recently a request was received from the Allen County Public Library in Ft. Wayne, Ind., to purchase all back issues of the Middlesex Genealogical Society newsletter, along with a one-year subscription and membership.

In order to comply with this request, an inventory was taken of our newsletters at the library and in the archives. A few issues were missing and/or in poor condition. Thanks to Florence Wyland and Em Fatherly, we were able to assemble a complete set. These will be reprinted where needed to complete the shipment and at the same time bring our own set up to date.

Upon completion of the inventory, the newsletters were removed from the plastic shelf container and placed in a white 3-ring binder. This was done for better organization and easier access. The newsletters have been returned to shelf 3.3.

To add to our growing list of books on genealogy and related research, *The Great Migration* by Anderson, has been ordered from the New England Genealogical Historical Society.

## MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

### 1996-1997 OFFICERS

David Bowley	President
Geoffrey Blain	Vice-President
Karen Polett	Secretary
Ruth McGrath	Treasurer

### MEMBERS at LARGE

Charles Cotter  
George Jordan  
Matthew Millar  
David Mordy  
Philip Morehouse  
Donna Moughty  
Marianne Sheldon

Dorothy Shillinglaw	Newsletter Editor
Florence Wyland	Newsletter Co-Editor
David Mordy	Computer Services Chairman
Charles Scribner	Librarian

### 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 \$15/individual and \$20/couple or family.

Original articles, notices of genealogical interest, and queries are welcomed for the newsletter.

Middlesex Genealogical Society  
P.O. Box 1111  
Darien, Fairfield Co., CT 06820

## UPCOMING MGS MEETINGS

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**16 NOVEMBER 1996: REV. WILLIAM HART** will speak on "REV. THOMAS ALLEN: THE FIGHTING PARSON OF THE BERKSHIRES."

Bill Hart is a retired Congregational Minister and U.S. Air Force Chaplain, who was for many years a Corporate Public Affairs Manager for General Electric. He is a graduate of Bowdoin College and Andover Newton Theological School and served in the Air Force during both World War II and the Korean Conflict. He has had a life-long interest in American history which has stimulated his interest in New England family genealogy, beginning with the families of himself and his wife, both of whom are Mayflower descendants.

Bill will be speaking on the Rev. Thomas Allen, known as the "fighting parson of the Berkshires," who was in many ways a prototype of early American leadership. Members of Rev. Allen's family have played significant roles through all of New England history.



**8 FEBRUARY 1997: Our ANNUAL WORKSHOP MEETING;** speaker to be announced.

**19 APRIL 1997: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.** ANN SMITH LAINHART, a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, will speak on "NEW ENGLAND TOWN RECORDS," Ann has been lecturing on the local and national level for 15 years.

**17 MAY 1997: Speaker to be announced.**

**ALL MEETINGS: SATURDAY, 2:00 PM, DARIEN LIBRARY.** ■

## COMPUTER CORNER

by David Bowley

**Genealogical Software:** I continue to get questions from people looking for software. For a Mac, Reunion is recommended. For a PC, unless you are at the expert level, I recommend Parson's Technology's Family Origins which I have found to be an excellent Windows program with several nifty features such as the ability to put scanned images into family records and scrapbooks. The program will print out all your notes in book form in which the sources in the text are keyed to an index at the back which also lists persons mentioned with page numbers. Family Origins costs \$39.95 (\$10 less if you are an existing customer), and the latest Windows version is 5.0. Parson's Technology can be contacted at 1-800- 223-6925.

**The Internet:** Dick Eastman's weekly online Genealogy Newsletter which was started in January continues to be excellent. To get this letter automatically in your E-Mail in-tray each Monday, send a message to 76701.263@compuserve.com, with a one-word text, SUBSCRIBE, and nothing in the subject box. If you don't like the newsletter, send a message to the same address with the single word, UNSUBSCRIBE, in the text box. The newsletter, is of course, FREE!

Last month the newsletter mentioned Kindred Konnections, which is an ancestral record data base something like the LDS Ancestral File, except that everyone's input is kept separate and not melded.

They claim to have 2.5 million names in their data base now and access to 10 million more. I uploaded my 1200 records in a GEDCOM file, so watch for it!

They also have a free genealogical program which I downloaded and into which I loaded my records. It is a Windows program and looks a bit like Personal Ancestral File from LDS. It costs \$20 to register your ownership of this software and get technical support.

If you want to download other people's Ancestral Files from KK you have to pay a \$15 per month or \$100 per year fee. They give you a free month if you upload your own data.

### **Recommended Genealogical Web Sites.**

U.K & Ireland: <http://cs6400.mcc.ac.uk:80/genuki/>  
Helms Tool Box: <http://www.tbox.com/genealogy.html>

KindredKonnections: <http://www.kindredkonnections.com/>  
National Library Wales: <http://llgc.org.uk/>  
UK Public Record Office:

<http://www.open.gov.uk/pro/prohome.htm>  
Irish PRO: [http://www.nics.gov.uk/proni/pro\\_home.htm](http://www.nics.gov.uk/proni/pro_home.htm)

I have entered these Universal Resource Locators (URLs) and several others as bookmarks on the left-hand Internet machine at the Library and also the URL of MGS's home-page which has had more than 21,000 hits (visits) in the last year; its URL is: <http://pages.prodigy.com/CT/ctgenealogy2/ctgenealogy2.html>

All these home pages have numerous links to other genealogy pages which make the new Internet workstations at the Darien Library a wonderful addition to our genealogical resources...use them and **ENJOY!**

The URL for my own home page is:

<http://pages.prodigy.com/CT/ukgenealogy/ukgenealogy.html>  
**Surf and search on the internet!** ■

---

## FATHERLEY CD ROM LIBRARY

by David Mordy

As an aid to research, a number of compact disks have been added to the Fatherley CD ROM collection at the Darien Library. These disks include a Master Name Index that can lead you to other index disks in the Darien Library, such as census indexes for various states and years.

It is important for users to understand that the purpose of these disks is to prepare for further research -- the viewing of source material on microfilm. Index entries from our CD collection generally do not contain any birth, death, or marriage information, but rather help you locate pertinent source material.

A user may print a list of index entries that cite a few, or perhaps several dozen microfilms that contain, hopefully, relevant source information. The source microfilms can often be obtained by the Darien Library on an interlibrary loan, or they may be viewed at various other sites, such as National Archives Branches. A trip to view census information at a National Archives Branch can be twice as productive if the user is armed with a list of citations from the indexes.

**Some important advice:** When using these index disks, you should focus single-mindedly on (1)

selecting index entries for which you plan to view the source microfilm, and (2) printing a list of those index entries which you can take away with you. Instructions are available at the library.

It will be to your advantage to ignore most features that you see on the viewing screen, other than selecting and printing index entries. The company which publishes these disks has, unfortunately, provided newly "improved" software that includes dozens of confusing and useless features. Some of these features are designed to transfer index entries from the index disk to the user's family records in the Family Tree Maker program (*a bad idea* -- it is undesirable to clutter up your records with unevaluated index references that contain no vital data and may refer to the wrong person).

Please ask a reference librarian or Head of Information Services Maura Ritz for availability of these disks and assistance in using them. If you find instructions that are inadequate, please leave a note for Dave Mordy, and he will try to modify and improve the instructions. We also want feedback as to additional CDs that would be widely useful and might be added to the collection. Individual contributions of additional CDs to the collection can also be considered. ■

---

## RUSSIAN RESEARCH

Even today, after the breakup of the Soviet Union, researching Russian ancestors may seem like a daunting task, but there are resources available to those with Russian roots who have as yet been unable to access the contents of Russian archives.

**Russian Telephone Directories:** The Library of Congress has a collection of Russian telephone books that includes the cities of Baku, Bukhara, Donetsk, Dushanbe, Irkutsk, Kharkov, Kiev, Kishinev, Leningrad/St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, Riga, Simferopol, Tallin, Tashkent, Tbilisi, Uzhgorod, Vilnius, and Yerevan. The years covered vary, and some are over 15 years old.

**Census Records:** *The Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History*, Vol. 6, edited by Joseph L. Wiczynski, includes a comprehensive article outlining the various censuses conducted from

the early 18th century to 1959, naming 137 provinces and towns where censuses took place before 1917.

**Libraries and Archives:** Descriptive guides to regional Soviet archives were printed in small quantities in the Russian language. There is a collection of these guides on microfilm at the Library of Congress. See the 17-page article, "Library and Archival Resources on Russia, The Soviet Union, and Eastern Europe in the Washington, DC, Area," by D.H. Kraus of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

**Maps:** The best collection of gazetteers and maps in this area is in the Map Room of the New York Public Library -- over 360,000 maps and 14,000 atlases and books. Their Army Map Service Collection for Eastern Europe (1:250,000) includes a fairly complete set for the former Soviet Union.

The Library of Congress has an extensive collection of maps for every part of the world, including Russia, and some are so detailed that individual houses are shown.

**Photographs:** The National Archives in Washington, DC, has indexed files of photos of various cities and towns in the former Soviet Union, which were taken both at ground level and from the air.

Boris Feldblyum of Potomac, Maryland, has a large collection of photos taken in the former Soviet Union between 1963 and 1979, plus a substantial number of historic photos from the early 1900s.

**Publications:** A series: *Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the USSR: Moscow and Leningrad*; *Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the USSR: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Belorussia*; and *Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the USSR: Ukraine and Moldavia*. All three are by Patricia Kennedy Grimsted.

**Importers of Russian Publications:**

- Four-Continent Book Corp., 149 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.
- Imported Publications, 310 West Ohio Street., Chicago, IL 60610.
- Victor Zamkin, Inc., 12224 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, MD 20852.
- Znanie Book Shop, 5237 Geary Blvd., San Francisco, CA 94118. ■

## OLD WETHERSFIELD

by Florence Wyland

Exploring Connecticut's Farmington Valley along the beautiful, winding Farmington River, I discovered Simsbury, a typical New England town. Right on Simsbury's Main Street, in a restored schoolhouse, is a gem of a library for the genealogical researcher, The Free Library. In one large room with loaded bookshelves, IGI and microfilm equipment, I found a computer hooked up to the Connecticut Genealogy Society in Hartford, and willing helpers.

While browsing I found a cabinet full of microfilms, several of which related to counties in Pennsylvania that I was interested in, so I spent an hour or so looking at them. Then, as I got the feel of the room, I started on the book collection. Several geographic areas seemed to be covered, including much of Connecticut and some of Canada. The book that I found most interesting was the large *Memorial History of Hartford County, 1633-1884* by J. Hammond Trumbull, L.L.D.; E.L. Osgood Pub., Boston, 1886. This book covers early towns in Connecticut, and I zeroed in on one of the earliest, Old Wethersfield, which was settled in 1634 by several adventurers and their families who had come from Watertown, Mass., seeking more land. Also see *The History of Ancient Wethersfield, Connecticut* prepared by Henry R. Stiles, two volumes, New York 1904. The second volume has the biographical and genealogical sketches of Wethersfield inhabitants.

The land in Wethersfield was divided into rectangles that backed up to the oxbow-shaped, wide, "Great River," now known as the Connecticut River. These lots were not very wide, but about two miles deep with great marshes in most of the back land, and gave each family access to the river. Some of the properties even extended across the river, allowing the farmers to own even more land on the other side. A ferry boat ran back and forth across the river to accommodate them.

The main street of Old Wethersfield was called Broad Street and still is today. There is a large green dividing the road with many of the old homes restored and still standing today, including Francis House, Hurlbut-Durham House, Keeney Memorial, Old Academy, Standish House Restaurant, and Cove Warehouse.

Some of the people named below also came to Old Wethersfield from Watertown, Mass.

Robert Abbott	William Palmer
Caleb Benjamin	Edward Pierce (?)
Robert Bates	John Pierce (?)
Roger Betts	Thurston Raynor
Samuel Clark	John Reynolds
Robert Coe	Robert Reynolds
Rev. Richard Denton	Lt. Robert Sweeney
Leonard Dix	William Swayne, Gent.
John Goodrich and William	Edmond Sherman
Goodrick, brothers	Samuel Sherman, son of
George Hubbard	Edmond
Samuel Hubbard, son of George	Samuel Smith
Lewis Jones	John Thomson
John Livermore	Jonas Weede
Edward Mason	Thomas Whitmore
Henry Palmer	

More information on early inhabitants can be found in *The History of Ancient Wethersfield, Connecticut*, prepared by Henry R. Stiles, published in two volumes in New York in 1904.

I'd been searching for a John Bates of Huntington, Long Island, and I had a land deed, dated 1664, relating to his farm in Huntington. I also had a document saying that a John Bates who was married to \_\_\_\_\_ Boardman lived in Old Wethersfield, Conn., in 1644, and that he and his wife had sold their farm and moved to Huntington, Long Island, in 1664. This circumstantial evidence inclined me to believe that there might be a connection -- a theory I later abandoned.

I have long wondered where the Long Island John Bates in my family originally came from and have gone over the many early Boston records of Bateses, but could find no evidence that any of them had moved to New York -- and little evidence that they might have come directly from England to Long Island. A boat, however, could easily sail down the river from Old Wethersfield and continue across Long Island Sound to Huntington Harbor, perhaps on its way to New Amsterdam (NYC). ■

### NEHGS LIBRARY: WINTER CLOSING

New England Historic Genealogical Society's research library at 101 Newbury Street in Boston is scheduled to be closed for renovations from December 1996 to March 1997. ■

## TO THE AULD SOD: BEGINNING YOUR IRISH GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

Those of us fortunate enough to attend Suzanne McVetty's lecture on this subject 12 October learned a great deal about Irish immigration to this country, particularly about those Irish immigrants who came during the 19th century as a result of the potato blight and the great hunger that followed.

Most of the Irish debarked in Boston and New York City, although smaller numbers came through other ports. Unless you know the year of arrival or name of the ship and month, however, it will be difficult to find the record of any individual passage.

Irish immigrants took comfort in living near other Irish, particularly if they were family members or came from the same townland in Ireland. Many of them settled in cities and moved frequently within a small area, which can often be tracked from year to year in city directories. If you find a relative, it is likely that your ancestor lived nearby.

Male Irish immigrants were often classified as laborers and found work in construction. They became the builders of canals, railroads, and tunnels, and often settled near their worksites, e.g., along the canal or railroad they were building.

One way that Irish immigrants kept in touch with one another was through the "Making Friends" column that appeared in the *Boston Pilot*. The columns have been republished in five volumes, indexed by individual name.

New York City newspapers that carried news about Irish immigrants were:

- |                              |           |           |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| • <i>Irish World</i>         | published | from 1876 |
| • <i>The Gaelic American</i> | "         | 1903-1957 |
| • <i>New York Tribune</i>    | "         | from 1841 |
| • <i>New York Post</i>       | "         | from 1801 |
| • <i>New York Sun</i>        | "         | from 1833 |
| • <i>Brooklyn Eagle</i>      | "         | from 1841 |

The first piece of information needed to trace an ancestor in Ireland is where that ancestor lived: province, county, barony, parish, and townland. A number of records are available in this country that *might* provide that information: naturalization, marriage, cemetery headstone, obituary, probate, and vital records of ancestors and children. All too often the question "where born" was answered "Ireland," but there are valuable exceptions.

Once you have that vital parish/townland location, check:

- Index to Griffith's Valuation

- Civil registrations
- Church records in parish
- Valuation Office records
- Newspapers (best collection of Irish newspapers, from 1827 on, is at the National British Library)
- Applotment Books
- Estate records and deeds
- Telephone directories
- APGI (Association of Professional Genealogists of Ireland)

Suzanne McVetty recommends:

### *Periodicals:*

- *Irish Roots*, quarterly. Tony McCarthy, ed. Belgrave Pubs., Belgrave Avenue, Cork, Ireland.
- *THE IRISH At Home and Abroad*. Kyle J. Betit and Dwight A. Radford, eds. Salt Lake City: THE IRISH At Home and Abroad, 1993 to present.

### *Building an Irish library:*

- Begley, Donal F., ed. *Handbook on Irish Genealogy: How to trace your ancestors and relatives in Ireland*. 6th ed., rev. Dublin: Heraldic Artists Ltd., 1984.
- Betit, Kyle J. and Dwight A. Radford. *Ireland, A Genealogical Guide for North Americans*. Salt Lake City: THE IRISH At Home and Abroad, 1995.
- Falley, Margaret Dickson, F.A.S.G. *Irish and Scotch-Irish Ancestral Research, A Guide to the Genealogical Records, Methods and Sources in Ireland*, 2 vol., rep. Baltimore.
- *A Guide to Irish Churches and Graveyards*. Baltimore: GPC, 1990.
- Grenham, John. *Tracing Your Irish Ancestors: The Complete Guide*. Baltimore: GPS, 1992.
- *Irish Genealogy: A Record Finder*. 2nd ed. Dublin: Heraldic Artists Ltd., 1987.
- *Irish Surnames*. Dublin: Irish Univ. Press, 1973.
- Lewis, Samuel. *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland, 1837*. Reprint. Baltimore: GPC, 1984.
- McLysaght, Edward. *Irish Families, their names, arms & origins*. 3rd ed., rev. New York Crown Publishers, 1972.
- Mitchell, Brian. *A Guide to Irish Parish Registers*. Baltimore: GPC, 1988.
- Ryan, James G. Ph.D. *Irish Records, Sources for Family & Local History*. Salt Lake City: Ancestry Publishing, 1988.
- Woulfe, Rev. Patrick. *Irish Names and Surnames*. 1923, rep. Baltimore: GPC, 1993.

**Irish Records (many available in U.S.):**

- *An Index of Surnames of Householders in Griffith's Primary Valuation and Tithe Applotment Books.* Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1963.
- Griffith, Sir Richard, Commissioner of Valuation. *General Valuation of Rateable Property in Ireland.* Dublin: Alexander Thom, print. 1848-1864.
- Matheson, Sir Robert E. *Special Report on Surnames in Ireland.* Dublin: Alex. Thom & Co., Lmt., 1909.

**Repositories in Ireland:**

**Taxes:**

- The Valuation Office, 6 Ely Place, Dublin 2, Ire.
- Public Record Office of N. Ireland (PRONI), 66 Balmoral Ave., Belfast, BT9 6NY, N. Ireland.

**Civil Registration:**

- General Register Office, Joyce House, 8-11 Lombard St. East, Dublin 2, Ireland.
- General Register Office, Oxford House, 49-55 Chichester St., Belfast, Northern Ireland.

**Libraries and Archives:**

- Nat. Library of Ireland, Kildare St., Dublin 2, Ire.
- National Archives, Bishop St., Dublin 8, Ireland.
- Genealogical Office, 2 Kildare St., Dublin 2, Ire.
- Linen Hall Library, 17 Donegal Sq., Belfast, BT1 5GD, Northern Ireland

**Registry of Deeds:**

- Registry of Deeds, Henrietta St., Dublin 1, Ire.
- Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, 66 Balmoral Ave., Belfast, Northern Ireland. ■

---

## ENTERTAINMENT BOOKS

MGS is again selling ENTERTAINMENT books as a fundraiser. The money we raise goes toward maintenance of the *Family Search* program at the Darien Library and to buy additional genealogical CD software.

ENTERTAINMENT '97 books contain hundreds of two-for-one discounts for fine family dining in Fairfield County and up to 50% savings on fast food, movies, sports and children's activities, travel, special attractions, car rentals, hotels, local businesses and more. They make wonderful gifts for the holidays -- corporate or personal -- perfect for "the person who has everything." The books will pay for themselves with just one or two uses!

ENTERTAINMENT '97 books sell for \$30.00 with \$6.00 of that going to MGS. Please help the

society by selling a few of these to your friends and neighbors or buying one or more yourself. If you would like to order a book or take some to sell, please call Marianne Sheldon at 655-6637 (home) or 221-0275 (work). Remember, sales will benefit the society's growing computer research programs. ■

---

## CHARLES F. LEMONS

MGS members were saddened to learn of the death 16 October of Charles F. Lemons who was a founding member of the society.

Born 81 years ago in Bloomsbury, NJ, he was the son of the late Ashby and Anne Overfield Lemons. Before moving to New Canaan five years ago, he had lived in Darien for 27 years. He was a retired CPA with Deloitte & Touche, and had served in World War II in the U.S. Army Finance Corp. In addition to his membership in MGS, Charles Lemons was a charter member of the Darien Senior Men's Association, a longtime member of Kiwanis of Darien, a volunteer for Meals on Wheels, and an elder and deacon of Noroton Presbyterian Church.

The membership joins in extending its deep sympathy to his wife, Virginia, and all his family. ■

---

## NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Since I started digging into my family's past a few years ago, I have been amazed by the generosity of genealogists with their time and experience in helping a novice find her way through the maze of information sources. Successful searches often result from someone else's suggestions.

Each of our members has valuable experience to share, experience that, *if shared*, might point one or more of our readers in a new direction and ultimately save a great deal of time -- and frustration.

Please write up *your* experiences and results -- both fruitful and barren -- so that others can benefit from your efforts, and send/give them to either Dorothy Shillinglaw (655-8350) or Florence Wyland (762-3993). This is *your* newsletter! ■

---

Deadline for next newsletter 7 January 1997

**Application for Membership**

Annual Dues  
 Individual (\$15)  
 Couple (\$20)

Middlesex Genealogical Society  
 P.O. Box 1111  
 Darien, CT 06820

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_



***Middlesex Genealogical Society***  
***PO Box 1111***  
***Darien CT 06820-1111***

**MEETING 16 NOV. 1996**  
**SATURDAY, 2 PM**  
**DARIEN LIBRARY**

