



# Middlesex Genealogical Society

Darien, CT

Vol. XII, No. 4

Fall, 1996

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our Program Director, Geoffrey Blain, has arranged an excellent program for the coming season.

First, I would like to draw your attention to the speaker for our October 12th meeting, Ms. Suzanne McVetty. She has a national reputation as a first-class speaker, and her presentation is entitled "To the Auld Sod: Finding Your Irish Ancestors." Originally, her topic was to have been "Ellis Island," but the enthusiastic response to Donna Moughty's talk on Irish Censuses suggested that more information on searching Irish records would be welcome and would probably draw a larger attendance. Please make a note of the meeting NOW and plan to attend.

The Robert Fatherley Memorial CD library is about to go on line (see page 8). Thanks are due to David Mordy and Ruth McGrath for working with our friends at the library to get this program up and running.

On a more personal basis, I spent much of my four-week visit to the U.K. doing genealogical research (see page 5). With the help of Henry Hoff and Florence Wyland, I joined the British Genealogical Society in London and have already given them my personal ancestry.

In Llangeitho, Cardiganshire, Wales, I was invited to tea at the farmhouse at Sysslit where my maternal great-grandfather was born in 1829. I also visited the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth,

a wonderful repository of Welsh records that anyone doing Welsh research should visit first.

David V. Bowley

## MGS AT DARIEN LIBRARY

by C. Scribner

**ACQUISITIONS:** We are proud to announce the acquisition of four large volumes (published in 1995) of the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register Index of Persons*. Now on shelf 1.2 in the genealogy section, they cover Volumes 51-148 (1897-1994) of the *Register*. It should be noted that early issues of the *Register*, Volumes 1 through 80 (1847-1926) are on microfilm in the Magazine Research Room.

*Pocket Guide to Irish Genealogy* by Brian Mitchell, a recent donation, is on shelf 3.3.

**SATURDAY MORNING WORKSHOPS:** Workshops resumed on 7 September 1996, and duty rosters have been distributed to volunteers. Currently, there are 10 volunteers and three substitutes who staff the workshops on a rotating basis Saturday mornings 10:00 am to noon. They provide guidance and research assistance to those interested in genealogy and family heritage. If you need help, please come with your problems. If you would *like* to help, please contact Charles Scribner at 655-4830, or any member of the Board of Directors.

**MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**

**1996-1997  
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David Bowley	President
Geoffrey Blain	Vice-President
Karen Polett	Secretary
Ruth McGrath	Treasurer

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David Mordy	Computer Services Chairman
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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 \$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, CT 06820**

**UPCOMING MGS MEETINGS  
MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**12 OCTOBER 1996: SUZANNE McVETTY --  
"TO THE AULD SOD: FINDING YOUR  
IRISH ANCESTORS."**



**SUZANNE McVETTY**, Certified Genealogist and a board member of the Association of American Genealogists, is an expert on New York City, Long Island, Irish, and Quaker genealogy. Suzanne is an accomplished speaker who is comfortable addressing audiences of different ages -- with mixed levels of training and varied experiences.

She has an uncanny knack of presenting professionally reliable material in a light and entertaining manner.

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

**8 FEBRUARY 1997: Our ANNUAL WORKSHOP MEETING.**

**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.** ■

## THERE REALLY WAS A PETER WATERBURY!

by Jane C. Edmundson

In 1958 I had lived in Darien for five years and had often noticed around town the family name of my paternal grandmother. Curiosity finally got the better of me, and I inquired of a 93-year-old great-aunt to which colony the Waterburys had come. With no hesitation she replied, "Peter Waterbury landed in Stamford, Connecticut, in 1649." A few weeks later I repeated her assertion to a Darien genealogist of my acquaintance who huffily stated that there was no Peter Waterbury. I more or less forgot about the matter until 1993 when I began work on my whole family tree.

Let this tale be a warning to all genealogists: Never feel huffily correct, because it was my almost totally blind but bright-as-a-dollar Aunt Avis whose information was more accurate.

There *was* a Peter Waterbury; there were, in fact, several of them. While it was the name of her 2nd great-grandfather that Aunt Avis remembered, it was actually her 6th great-grandfather who had arrived when and where she said, and *his* name was John. She was probably wrong in saying that he "landed," as he came here from Wethersfield, almost certainly overland, and had *landed* in Boston with his family in 1630. Her memory is still pretty impressive, however, for someone of 93 who, to my knowledge, had nothing to guide her except family tradition, a sometimes treacherous source of evidence.

More positive evidence of Peter's existence is a copy book<sup>1</sup> found in the house of his grandfather John, on Hollow Tree Ridge Road, Buttonwood Farm, now owned by Ramsey and Sally Joslin. Finding Peter's place in the family was a bit more difficult because of the "surplus" Peter Waterburys, but some sifting through material sent by a distant relative, along with the not-too-reliable *The Descendants of Jonathan Waterbury* (MGS collection at the Darien Library), an obituary from the Massena, New York, *Observer* conscientiously sent by the town historian, various documents at the Ferguson Library, and the IGI and Ancestral Files, has led me to propose the following line: (1) John, born 1621, Sudbury; (2) David, born 1655, Stamford, Conn.; (3) John, born 1681/82, Stamford; (4) Sylvanus, born 1730/35, Stamford; (5) Peter Cooke (as he is almost always called), born 1760, Stamford; (6) Shadrack, born 1780, Stamford; (7) William, born 1830, Massena, N.Y.; (8) Kilissa (Avis's sister), born 1862, Augusta, Wis.; (9) my father, Harold Cox, born 1886, Augusta; (10) me, born 1925, Minneapolis, Minn.; (11) my son Tucker (Thomas Dunham Edmundson), born 1958, Stamford; and (12) my granddaughter, Chloe Sinclair Edmundson, born 1994, Stamford.

It was a shock to my patriotic soul to find that Sylvanus and his sons Sylvanus and Peter were loyalists, so imagine the wrench such a defection must have been to their immediate family. The elder Sylvanus was a much younger brother to Darien's most famous patriot, General David Waterbury, and at the age of 14 had chosen David as his guardian.

There seems to have been a religious as well as a political division in the family, as the three younger

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<sup>1</sup> The book is inscribed in a remarkably mature and florid hand for a 13-year-old boy -- reminiscent of my father's (Peter's 3rd great-grandson's) handwriting. The only really legible page says:

Peter Waterbury's Book

Begun at Stamford, January 12th, AD 177(3?)

Thomas Hait, Schoolmaster

A scrap of another page has arithmetic problems and refers to yards and gallons with "Proof" after each problem.

children of John and Susannah Newkirk Waterbury were christened in the Anglican church, while the older children had been christened in the Congregational church.

Sylvanus was a Mason. It has been suggested that he was influenced by British soldiers who were Masons and with whom he would have come in contact as a seaman in this area. When he deserted and went to New York, he became a pilot on HMS Fowley, and his knowledge of the local waters must have served the British well.

His property at Main and Spring Streets in Stamford was confiscated and sold 1 July 1779. Although Abraham Bates (either his brother- or son-in-law) represented him in London, records do not show that he ever received compensation. He would have had to appear before a commission in London, but he was without means because he had been paralyzed by a disastrous detention in an American prison. His wife, Sarah, also petitioned, but, unfortunately, her maiden name is not mentioned on such records -- or elsewhere -- and is unknown.

Their son Peter fared considerably better. He had served as a cornet of cavalry and was given a large land grant in New Brunswick. After his wife, Mary Slawson, died, he returned to New York with several children, and, with the proceeds from the New Brunswick land, he bought a large tract in St. Lawrence County, New York. My great-grandfather William Henry Waterbury (7) eventually inherited part of this land and reinvested in land and a retail business in Wisconsin. The last of this inheritance provided me with my first house in Darien where, completely unaware of my family's ever having lived here, I had settled.

Thank you, King George, and thank you, Aunt Avis, for leading me to this interesting bit of my family's past. ■

## NOTES FROM YOUR EDITOR... UPDATE ON HALBERT'S

If you read this newsletter last spring, you are already familiar with some of Halbert's offers. Since then I've learned of another of those letters proclaiming "exciting news!" about their new "World Book" of Eastmans, Wylands, Smiths, etc. Knowing about the recent court settlement in which Halbert's agreed to no longer use misleading advertising, Dick Eastman (manager of the Genealogy Forum on CompuServe) decided to purchase this "book" and gave me permission to let our newsletter readers know the details. (Your editor has received two of these letters since June and has sent both of them to the Postmaster in her town with "SCAM" written on the envelope.)

The original ad stated, "You can reserve your copy(s) for a deposit of just \$5.00 per book....Remember, you risk nothing. You send just \$5.00 now."

Dick Eastman sent the order form and a check for \$5.00 in early June, and was surprised three weeks later to receive an *invoice* in the mail for the remainder of the purchase price -- *before* receiving the book that would enable him judge the value of the supposedly risk-free merchandise.

The invoice has provision for check or money order payment, as well as spaces for a credit card number, expiration date, and signature for that method of payment. For the first time, however, a toll-free telephone number (1-800-423-1097) was listed. Dick called to ask why he was being billed for merchandise not yet received. The woman who answered assured him that the invoice was actually just an acknowledgment and that no money would be due until after arrival of the book. He has read this invoice several times since then and finds nothing on it about payment not being due until after the book is received.

Stay tuned. ■

## SEARCHING IN WALES

By David V. Bowley

My mother, Elsie Mary Williams, was Welsh. By some miracle of timing, I, the first-born, arrived on March 1st, which, as you may not know, is the birthday of the patron saint of Wales, St. David!

My mother's sister, who is still in full possession of her wits at 94, lives on at Old Colwyn, Denbighshire, in North Wales. I have relied on her for most of my Welsh ancestry so far. A month's visit to the U.K this summer, however, provided the opportunity to visit the places where my ancestors had lived and to verify the records.

The Welsh records are remarkable. Unlike the Scottish, the Welsh used the same record-keeping system as the English. They did not suffer from the mass migrations forced on many Scots by the Highland clearances and on the Irish by the potato famine, nor did they suffer the depredations of the English who were responsible for fires leading to the loss of records. As a consequence, Welsh records go back in an unbroken chain into the mists of time. The only trouble is that they had but a handful of surnames and used patronymics extensively!

Wales's genealogical jewel is the National Library of Wales set high above the sea at Aberyswyth, Cardiganshire, which is half-way up the beautiful West Coast of Wales. My wife, MaryEllen, and I spent two days in their genealogical section which is a most remarkable facility. The Library has the original registers of over 500 parishes and copies of many more. Diocesan Records include the Bishop's Transcripts of every Welsh diocese going back as far as 1661. There is an excellent map section and a number of special indexes, such as a farm index by place name.

As my Welsh second great-grandparents were farmers in the 1830s, I found the 1836 Tithe Commutation Act had required that detailed records be

made, both in schedules and maps, to show who owned what property and to set a value on it so that the requirement to make tithes to the local rector would be "stopped" (commuted) and a tithe-rent charge of money levied in its place. The maps and apportionment schedules, some of which are leather-bound works of art, are an excellent resource for the researcher.

Futher Information can be obtained from:

The National Library of Wales  
Dyfed, Wales SY23 3BU  
Tel: 011-44-0970-623816  
Fax: 011-44-0970-615709  
E-Mail: T-GOLD(LA-NET)LLA 2092

Anyone searching for ancestors in Wales should make the National Library the first stop! ■

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### *ANCESTORS & DESCENDANTS OF DANIEL MORGAN & POLLY FROST*

MGS Board member David L. Mordy has co-authored, along with Jean W. Perney and Betty L. Storey, *Ancestors and Descendants of Daniel Morgan and Polly Frost*. This 569-page hard-cover book lists 7,000 people in its Genealogy Index and contains more than 10,000 vital record citations. It includes chapters on Edmund Frost, Nicholas Cady, John Upham, Thomas Crosswell and Richard Dana of Massachusetts; and William Pratt and John Clark of Connecticut; and there is some material relating to Genesee, Erie, Niagara, and Orleans Counties, NY. The book, a limited edition, is about to go to press and is expected to ship in December. David will be contributing a copy to MGS. If you would like your own copy, however, please send your order to: Jean W. Perney, 10121 Orchard Park, W. Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46280-1516, along with a check. The price is \$33.50 for orders placed before 30 September 1996, \$40.00 for orders placed after that date. ■

## HENRY HOFF MOVES TO NEHGS

MGS Trustee Henry Hoff is moving to Boston during September 1996 to become Director of Finance and Planning at the New England Historic Genealogical Society, a 16,000-member nonprofit organization that is the largest genealogical society in the U.S. He expects to continue as Editor of *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* and Co-editor of *The NYG&B Newsletter*. Henry's many friends at MGS join in expressing their gratitude for all his generous help and wishing him success in his new post. ■

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### *Family Search's* SCOTTISH CHURCH RECORDS

A new CD ROM disk labeled "Scottish Church Records" -- part of *Family Search*, but currently being distributed only to Family History Centers -- contains almost 10 million names of people who lived in Scotland from the late 1500s through 1854. The time period covered varies from parish to parish, and there are gaps because some of the original records were damaged or missing. Nevertheless, it is an extremely valuable resource for anyone interested in Scotland. And, once you know which parish your ancestors lived in, you may find that they were also mentioned in *unindexed* Kirk Session Records and Burial Records, often on the same microfilm reel that contains indexed marriage and christening records. Using the Scottish Church Records disk only, one family's recent search quickly uncovered the locations of christening records for a great-grandfather (22 September 1813), a great-great-grandfather (12 October 1756), and a great-great-great-grandfather (12 January 1726), along with christening records of 19 of their siblings, and the marriage record for a set of great-great-great-grandparents (17 June 1747). It's well worth a trip to New Canaan -- or even New Haven if you want to copy original records from microfilm! ■

## UPCOMING NEHGS RESEARCH TOURS

**SALT LAKE CITY:** Join the New England Historic and Genealogical Society's popular Salt Lake City Research Tour 27 October through 3 November 1996. Research daily along with other participants and NEHGS staff at the Family History Library. Accommodations will be at the Salt Lake City Marriott just three blocks from the library. Whether you are a first-time visitor to the library, or are a returning participant, you'll enjoy a week full of research, consultations with NEHGS staff, and special group meals and activities. Register early! Write to: *Salt Lake City Research Tour, NEHGS Education Dept., 101 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02116-3007* for details.

**PHILADELPHIA:** "NEHGS Comes to Philadelphia's Main Line" at the conveniently located Radnor Hotel in St. David's, Penn., 15 and 16 November. The conference will feature over twenty genealogical presentations by special guest speakers and the NEHGS staff. Some of the topics covered will be "Researching Colonial German Immigrants," "Major Migrations from New England to New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the Old Northwest Territory" (Jerome E. Anderson); "Genealogical Repositories in Southeastern Pennsylvania and How to Use Them" (Jane Adams Clarke); "Finding your Ancestors Using Urban Sources" (David C. Dearborn); and many, many others. For more details, write to the above address in Boston, Mass.; or see me -- Florence Wyland -- for a registration form. ■

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### ANCESTORS

*Ancestors*, a new family history series, created for PBS by KBYU-TV, is scheduled to air in January 1997. ■

## RELATIVELY SPEAKING

Anonymous

When speaking of our ancestry,  
My mother's eyes would shine;  
And proudly she would tell us all:  
You're of the Tudor line.

But father with a smile would say,  
While bearing that in mind,  
You keep your eyes on goals ahead,  
Not those that lie behind.

You have a noble ancestry,  
But all are dead and gone.  
'Tis you who have to prove your worth,  
Not those who've journeyed on.

And back along that Tudor line,  
'Tis sorry truth I state,  
There may be some you can't approve,  
And even some you'd hate.

The way to prove your ancestry  
Is what you are yourself,  
Not by the charted family tree  
In books upon the shelf.

So try to be an ancestor,  
Within the time allowed,  
Of whom your children's children  
In the future can be proud. ■

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## ANCESTOR CHARTS

Please feel free to submit your Ancestor Charts to MGS. We have a large black three-ring notebook, located on one of our shelves, called "Middlesex Genealogy Society Ancestor Charts." In it you may find someone else's Ancestor Chart that connects with yours! ■

## COPYRIGHT LAWS

*We are reminded...by the Connecticut Society of Genealogists (SGS Newsletter #86) that copyright laws establish that anything published before 1906 is public domain. Anything published after January 1978 is copyrighted for the life of the author plus 50 years. If you quote fewer than 400 words, in total, from one book, you can use the quotation without permission; however, it is always wise to get permission to use excerpts. Permission is necessary for tables, charts, and figures. ■*

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## CAUSES OF DEATH MISSOURI STYLE

These causes of death were listed on Missouri death certificates found by a researcher.

1. Died suddenly -- nothing seriously wrong.
2. Went to bed feeling well -- woke up dead.
3. Worn out.
4. Don't know -- never been fatally ill before.
5. Don't know -- died without the aid of a physician.
6. Blow on the head with an axe. Contributory cause, another man's wife.

Reprinted from *Cornstalk*, quarterly of the Genealogical Society of DeKalb Co., Ill., Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 3. ■

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## CANADA

The Internet address of Ontario Cemetery Finding Aid (OCFA) is:

<http://www.islandnet.com/homepage.html>

You can search for individual names in this database, which contains over one million names. ■

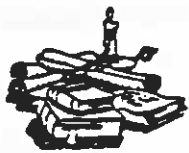
## ROBERT FATHERLEY MEMORIAL CD LIBRARY

The Robert Fatherley Memorial CD Library is about to go on line with the following census index disks purchased by MGS: Colonial America, 1607-1789; U.S. Selected Counties, 1790; U.S. Selected Counties, 1800; U.S. Selected Counties, 1810; U.S. Selected Counties, 1820; U.S. Selected Counties, 1830; U.S. Selected Counties, 1840; U.S. Selected Counties, 1850; U.S. Selected States/Counties, 1860; U.S. Selected States/Counties, 1870; U.S. Selected States/Counties, 1880; Western Pennsylvania, 1870; and Ohio, 1880. Military Records of U.S. Soldiers, 1784-1811, has also been purchased. Additional disks have been donated to the collection by David Mordy, including Accelerated Indexing Systems' master index. ■

## ST. CATHERINE'S MOVE

Those experienced in researching ancestors in the United Kingdom are probably familiar with St. Catherine's House in London, where many vital records for England, Wales, and Scotland are stored. Word from a meeting of the Society of Genealogists held in London in June indicates that the indexes and the census records at St. Catherine's House are to be moved to Middleton House, Roseberry Avenue. No date was given for the move. ■

**Deadline for  
next newsletter  
28 Oct. 1996**



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

MEETING 12 OCT. 1996  
SATURDAY, 2 PM  
DARIEN LIBRARY

