



# Middlesex Genealogical Society

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Darien, Fairfield County, CT

March 1998

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We were pleased that the 31 January workshop was well attended, and all of us owe our thanks to those who helped to make the workshop a success (see page 7). Hopefully, you learned more about using online resources than you knew before. In addition, you probably picked up some helpful ideas from those members who displayed their efforts in family history research. As we continue our 1998 agenda with four more programs, there will be good opportunities to learn more about family history research from our speakers.

Programs on 18 April, 16 May, 17 October, and 14 November will be presented by speakers covering varied topics including New York City Research, Immigration and Naturalization, the Port of New York, and Migration Along the Susquehanna Turnpike in New York State. (See page 2.)

Many of us with New York ancestors will find these programs relevant in terms of geography and history, and almost everyone can benefit from knowing more about material that is available in source records in New York State, New York City, and the Northeast Regional Branch of the National Archives. Don't miss these meetings.

Several members have made suggestions for expanding or improving the things that we cover in our newsletter and our meetings. Your suggestions are most welcome, and we are reviewing these suggestions with an eye to implementing the most helpful ideas that fit within the constraints of our all-volunteer society. Please continue to let us have your ideas.

David L. Mordy

## MGS AT DARIEN LIBRARY

by C. Scribner

The Library of the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, Washington, DC, recently requested a subscription to the MGS *Newsletter* and copies of our back issues. We forwarded a complimentary issue, which included a membership application, and their prompt reply placed them on our mailing list. As they requested, back issues have been shipped.

On shelf 3.5 of the MGS collection, there are several books on the DAR that may be helpful to anyone interested in joining. Eligible women must be able to trace their lineage back to a Revolutionary War patriot. Annually, Darien's Goodwife's River Chapter of the DAR participates in the Memorial Day Parade, presents a Good Citizen's Award to a deserving Darien H.S. Senior, and, for the 5th graders in Darien schools, holds a History Essay contest. They are a civic-minded and patriotic group.

Two new books have been ordered from GPC of Baltimore, MD. They are *Evidence and Analysis* by Elizabeth Mills and *Netting Your Ancestors* by Cindi Howell. A brief summary of each book will follow in a future *Newsletter*. ■

## MGS SURNAME DATABASE

MGS board member Kim Paterson has volunteered to create a database of surnames with period and locality that MGS members are researching. Significant benefits can accrue to MGS members who submit data for inclusion in the database as it will encourage the sharing of research among those with similar interests. Look for a database questionnaire in your next *Newsletter*, then, please fill it out and return it promptly. ■

**MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**

**1997-1998  
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Donna Moughty	Vice President
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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 Darien Library, provides research assistance on Saturday mornings (10 am to noon) at Darien Library, and publishes a quarterly newsletter. Annual membership dues are \$15 per individual and \$20 per couple or family.

Original articles, notices of genealogical interest, and queries are welcomed for publication in the *Newsletter*.

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

Homepage: <http://www.darien.lib.ct.us/mgs>  
E-mail: [dbowley@concentric.net](mailto:dbowley@concentric.net)

**UPCOMING MGS MEETINGS**

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**18 APRIL 1998: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. SUZANNE McVETTY** will present a talk entitled "BROADWAY LIGHTS" on **NEW YORK CITY RESEARCH**.

**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 for presenting professionally reliable material in a light and entertaining manner.

**16 MAY 1998: ANNE RODDA** will talk to us about **IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION, including PORT OF NEW YORK RECORDS**.

**ANNE RODDA** is a Certified Genealogical Record Specialist with particular expertise in Irish research, New York immigration, New York City and New Jersey. She believes that genealogy is emerging as the most extensive and intensive adult education movement in the United States, and that it brings people into a lifelong learning pursuit using all methodologies, motivating individuals to explore unexpected fields of study as new depths of understanding are reached.

**17 OCT. 1998: JOAN KOSTER MORALES's** talk is entitled "A TALE OF THREE COUNTIES: MIGRATION ALONG THE SUSQUEHANNA TURNPIKE" and will cover **GREEN, DELAWARE and SCHOHARIE COUNTIES, NY**.

A speaker at various genealogical societies, libraries, schools and Elderhostel sessions, **JOAN KOSTER MORALES** has also accompanied small groups to New York City, lecturing en route, and assisting with on-site research. Her lectures are enthusiastic and informative, often intertwined with personal experience and history.

**14 NOV. 1998:** Our speaker will be **ROGER JOSLYN**, who is a Fellow of the American Society of Genealogists and of the Utah Genealogical Association and has received an Award of Merit from the Association of Professional Genealogists and a Certificate of Appreciation from the Federation of Genealogical Societies. He lectures on a number of subjects, and the specific topic of his talk to us will be announced at a later date.

**ALL MEETINGS: SATURDAY, 2:00 PM, DARIEN LIBRARY. COME, AND BRING A FRIEND!** ■

# PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER<sup>1</sup>

## Part 3

by Donna Moughty

I love using the Internet. The very first time I logged on was in the evening, about 10 pm. I started to "surf" and, by 2 am, had found my way to a site at Trinity College in Dublin with wonderful information on Irish research. I was hooked!

Unlike online services, such as America Online or CompuServe, there is no structure to the Internet; it is not "managed" by anyone. To find your way around, you must use a "search engine" such as Yahoo or Alta Vista. Type the word "genealogy" and within seconds get a list of thousands of sites that contain that word. To visit each site, which can be anything from a large mainframe computer to an individual PC, you simply move your mouse and click on a picture or highlighted text.

The Internet is a worldwide network of computers. Started originally by the federal government and universities during the cold war to support research, it was rarely talked about until a few years ago. The difficulty of using the Internet, with long strings of archaic commands, made it impractical for the typical user. That all changed when some college students put together a graphical interface and an entire industry was born!

How can the Internet help you with your family research? It can help you find people and businesses (online phone books for the entire U.S. and many foreign countries); search files posted by other individuals to match family members; find information on a particular locality that you can't visit; make contact with individuals in a locality who will assist you with "look ups"; learn about family research techniques, conferences and classes; and order goodies. (I recently found a copy of *The Old Pike, A History of the National Road*, published in 1894, that I wanted to purchase.) Finally, you can publish your own Web site, which will bring people to you. If you do decide to publish your genealogy on the Web, make sure that you do not include any living individuals (because of privacy issues) unless you have their permission.

What won't you find on the Internet? It is highly unlikely that you will find your entire family

genealogy. You will not (for the most part) find primary source material on the Internet. (Remember that to put the data in digital format someone has to type the information, leaving it vulnerable to errors or omissions.) Most information will be viewed in printed format created by the person that keyed in the data. You will not see the original document. Even with all its limitations, however, the Internet can save you hours, if not years, in research time and is one resource that should not be overlooked.

Having listed some of the benefits and limitations of the Internet, I must also remind you to be extremely careful about validating any information or data that you receive. Not all family historians are careful about citing their sources. You will find a little bit of everything out there, from databases provided by the National Archives of Ireland or professional organizations, to "Joe's Family." Family name organizations are very popular, as are user-submitted databases, which can usually be accessed in return for submitting *your* database to the organization. Remember this rule -- **verify everything!** If someone cannot give you a citation, evaluate the information as "tradition" or "hearsay" until you find proof.

A big advantage of the Internet is access to e-mail. Most people who post information on the Internet will provide an e-mail rather than a snail mail address. E-mail provides a quick, easy way to contact others and to stay in touch. I regularly e-mail people in New York, Texas, Florida, Washington, Canada, Ireland, England and South Africa, many of whom are "new" relatives.

Responding to "queries" is another way to use e-mail, I probably get a half dozen e-mail messages a week from people who have seen a query or surname posting of mine. Since people actively need to go to a particular location in order to see these postings, they are likely have a similar interest. For example, the U.S. GenWeb site allows people to concentrate on a particular state or county that is the focus of their research. People from all over the world who have an interest in that particular area will check the site. One site that I frequent is focused on research in County Roscommon and County Leitrim in Ireland. My ancestors with the names Mackey (Mackay) and Johnston came from this area and it is not uncommon for me to get an e-mail that says, "Hi, my name is John Johnston -- know

<sup>1</sup>

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anything about my relatives?" I usually respond with a fairly detailed, standardized explanation of my Johnstons, including birth, death, marriage dates and townland to indicate that there is some serious research that needs to be done before such a question can be asked.

Recently I received an e-mail from Peter Beighton in South Africa. He had found my e-mail address at a site called "Wilkinsons on the Web." (My maternal great-grandfather, William Beighton of Derby, England, married Elizabeth Wilkinson.) Peter, a physician and geneticist at the University of Cape Town, had information on the Beighton family of Derby, from which he was also descended. I received a package in the snail mail that included a copy of a marriage register for William's parents, my great-great-grandparents.

Mailing lists (sometimes called ListSrvs) are another way of getting information on a particular topic or geographic area. You "subscribe" to a list that is of interest to you and automatically receive copies of all messages sent by other members of the list. A word of warning here: Once you are a subscriber, you may begin to receive anywhere from a dozen to hundreds of messages a day. When subscribing, always make sure you keep the information on how to "unsubscribe." In addition to individual messages, most lists offer a "digest" version, a single compilation of all of the messages sent throughout the day. I highly recommend this option. I currently receive three digests each day which I review for topics of interest. This is a wonderful way to get geographic or historical information on a particular place that will help you to understand better when and where your ancestors lived. It was through one of these digests that I found a reference to the book mentioned earlier, *The Old Pike*. It turned out that this book contained numerous references to my great-great-great-grandparents! Had I not seen this information on my list, I might never have heard of this book.

*You never know where pieces of the puzzle will come from!* ■

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### RAY BARTLETT

Past President Ray Bartlett is now at home following a recent stroke. Ray's many friends at MGS join in wishing him a full and speedy recovery. ■

## COMPUTER CORNER

by David V. Bowley



This is a great time to buy computer equipment. I know because the price of the Compaq Presario 1610 laptop which I bought in November 1997 has now dropped by 25%. Peripherals, such as color flatbed scanners, are also a bargain at less than \$100 with the rebates being offered. I bought one for \$149 with a \$50 rebate, then I saw one advertised in a New York City newspaper for \$69 after a \$20 rebate. I called to order it and was told that with shipping it would be \$104. I protested, and it turned out that the "6" should have been a "9" in the advertisement. The merchant honored the lower price, however, and I was able to return the one I had already bought! (A scanner is great for adding pictures to your family history, but make sure that you have at least 16 MB of memory.)

I hope that you enjoyed Donna Moughty's presentation on the use of the Internet for family history research. I was in "sunny" Florida so I missed it, but by all accounts it went well and the library staff was very pleased with the heavy turnout. Thank you, Donna.

Donna has a listing of her favorite family search links on the web, copies of which are available near our workstation. One of the biggest sites, "Cyndi's List," has been so successful that it was picked up by a commercial sponsor, Generations. The new address is: <http://www.CyndisList.com/sponsor.htm>

Richard Eastman's *Online Genealogical Newsletter*, which I have mentioned in previous articles, just gets better and better. Since its inception, I have been printing out copies each week and leaving them in a box next to our *FamilySearch* workstation. I have also bookmarked the *Newsletter* on the library Internet terminals. More and more people now have access to the Internet, however, and they can find all past issues available at:

<http://www.ancestry.com/home/eastarch.htm>

so I will no longer be printing copies. The newsletter is commercially sponsored by Ancestry HomeTown which is a site you should watch as they provide free access to a most interesting range of maps and data bases daily and a lot of the new CD ROM data disks which can also be accessed free for a short period before they are released for sale. Ancestry HomeTown is at: <http://www.ancestry.com>

For those searching in the United Kingdom, I have contacted a number of county family history societies on the Web, and most of them will allow you to post the names that you are searching for by e-mail even if you are not a society member. Using these and my own homepage and the pages of the journals of societies I have joined in Cumbria, Wales and the Channel Islands (Jersey) I have been surprised at the large number of contacts I have made in a short time, some of which have resulted in finding relatives. The Internet is indeed changing the face of genealogical searching. ■

## GENEALOGICAL CERTIFICATION

Abstracted from brochures published by ASG and BCG.

Have you ever wondered what those initials following a genealogist's name stand for?

Until the American Society of Genealogists (ASG -- 3421 M Street NW, Suite 905, Washington, DC 20007) was founded in 1940 by Arthur Adams, John Insley Coddington and Meredith Colket, no method existed to honor significant achievement in the genealogical field or to certify competent genealogists. ASG is an honorary society that promotes the highest standards of genealogical scholarship and is limited to no more than 50 lifetime members at any given time. Members are designated as "Fellows" and are entitled to add the initials "FASG" after their names. As vacancies occur, any Fellow may propose the name of a genealogist believed to meet ASG's exacting standards. Election is by the membership and is based on the superiority of a nominee's published genealogical scholarship.

In 1964 ASG created the Board for Certification of Genealogists (BCG -- P.O. Box 5816, Falmouth, VA 22403-5816) as a professional accrediting body for genealogists. BCG, now an independent organization, has since its beginning promoted the highest standards of competence and ethics in genealogical research on both personal and professional levels. It administers qualifying examinations; maintains a register of certified persons; and provides this register to libraries, archives, societies and individuals that seek its guidance. Its credentials are universally recognized, and its associates qualify as expert witnesses in courts of law.

Successful applicants for certification must demonstrate to BCG excellence in research and

communication -- including the ability to express thoughts clearly and grammatically, to follow instructions, to abstract and transcribe materials properly, to read the handwriting of earlier eras, and to interpret terms and information found in historical documents. They know the records available within their specialties and meet the standards of documentation and evidence analysis set by BCG.

Applicants for certification must submit a portfolio in which they complete testing materials furnished by BCG, discuss the merits and shortcomings of resources frequently used in their specialties and submit samples of their research reports and other works. Case studies, audiocassettes, visual aids and handout materials are required where appropriate.

Certification is granted for a five-year period. In order to retain certification beyond that time, a renewal application that provides evidence of continued quality and growth is necessary.

Certification categories are:

- Certified Genealogical Record Specialist (CGRS): Searches original and published records; understands all sources of a genealogical nature relating to the chosen areas of specialization; and provides accurately detailed information concerning the contents of the records examined.
- Certified Genealogist (CG): Is proficient in all areas of genealogical research and analysis; is qualified to resolve pedigree problems of various types; and is experienced in the compilation of well crafted family histories.
- Certified American Indian Lineage Specialist (CAILS): Conducts research to determine descent from an historical Indian tribe indigenous to North America, being well versed in the pertinent materials and applicable standards within this specialized field.
- Certified American Lineage Specialist (CALs): Reconstructs a single line of descent and prepares hereditary society applications. The work of a CALS is based upon sound knowledge of pertinent resources and skilled appraisal of the authenticity and acceptability of both original source records and compiled printed material. (*American*, as used here, is not limited to the United States.)
- Certified Genealogical Instructor (CGI): Plans and conducts a full course of genealogical instruction covering all aspects of genealogical

methodology and sources. CGIs must also pass requirements for CG.

- Certified Genealogical Lecturer (CGL): Gives public addresses of an educational nature on specific genealogical topics or on related subjects pertinent to the tracing of family relationships. CGLs must also pass requirements for CGRS. ■

## GENEALOGY SEMINAR '98

Annually sponsored by the Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich, Stamford Historical Society and Connecticut Ancestry Society, this daylong seminar, which took place 28 February, was, as always, excellent. The four topics covered were:

### New NEHGS Library: New Research Opportunities

Maureen Taylor, until recently Director of User Services at NEHGS (101 Newberry Street, Boston, MA 02116-3007), began the day by explaining physical changes made during recent renovations at the library and suggesting ways to prepare for a research trip to the facility.

Four floors accessible to handicapped users are now open to researchers. All have copiers, lockers, coat racks, rest rooms and water coolers. Docents (volunteers) are prepared to answer your questions, and there are reference desks on three floors.

An online catalog that can be accessed on three floors describes material added since 1987, but card catalogs must be used for materials acquired before that date. On the sixth floor are:

- Library of Congress Catalog (white labels): Books, rare books, and microfilms cataloged between 1974 and mid-1994.
- Old Genealogies Catalog (gold labels): Those cataloged prior to 1974, alphabetically by author and family. Family cards are chronological by date of publication.
- Old Local Histories Catalog (blue labels): Cataloged prior to 1974, alphabetically by state, then county and town.
- Old General Catalog (white labels): alphabetically by author and subject.
- Parish Registers (white labels): English Parish Registers arranged alphabetically by county, then parish. A second part is organized by parish.

The fifth floor Reading Room contains:

- Old Manuscripts Catalog (green labels): Guide to manuscript material received before 1976.

- New Manuscripts Catalog (pink labels): Guide to manuscript material received after 1976.
- Manuscript Inventories.

Various departments of the NEHGS Library have issued "Guides" that can be requested before a visit, and there is also a consultation service that can be arranged by calling Jonathan Galley at (617) 536-5740, ext. 233.

### Reflex Genealogy: Knowing What to Do Next

Kathleen W. Hinckley, CGRS, advocates developing reflexes that will deepen research. The answer to one question should suggest a number of other questions. She recommends attention to:

- Math: A little arithmetic may indicate a first or second marriage, other children, military service.
- Geography: Explore counties and states bordering areas of interest. Elusive records may be there.
- Chronology: Summarizing chronologically the history of a family or a life will suggest questions.
- Migration: Using a map, highlight the migration route of a family or individual. Relevant records may reside along that route.
- History: Why migrate? What happened from a military or political point of view? When were churches built?
- Death records: Even if you have a certificate, check for an obituary, and look for funeral home, cemetery and probate records.
- County histories: Check the index and look for newspapers, churches, cemeteries, military references, in addition to names.
- City directories: Check *every* year, and look for other people with the same surname at the same address. Look at the householder directory (sometimes called a crisscross) for information about ownership and neighbors.
- Censuses: Check for *all* variations of a name or initials, and consider nicknames. (Ms. Hinckley told of an unsuccessful Soundex index search for a man with the first name "Napoleon." She decided to check *every* card with his surname code and found him -- under the nickname "Poley.")

### Why Bother With 20th Century Research?

Kathleen Hinckley gave this talk, too, and reminded us that we are *never* done. Even if we think we know what has happened in our families in this century, there will still be surprises.

Also, records (employment, pension, etc.) that might be very significant to a family member are

being destroyed because they are relatively unimportant to the larger community and expensive to store.

Check newspapers around significant dates in your family. A story may have been done on the occasion of a marriage, birth, job change, important anniversary, retirement, etc.

Ms. Hinckley recommends requesting Social Security applications for deceased family members through the Freedom of Information Officer at the Social Security Administration, and also accessing Railroad Retirement and World War I Draft Registration records where relevant.

#### Dating Family Photographs Through Women's Clothing, 1840-1910

Nancy Rexford, Curator of the Danvers Historical Society, gave an absolutely marvelous illustrated talk on this subject. There is, unfortunately, simply no way to compress the enormous amount of specific detail provided by her to fit within these pages. If you have an interest, try to find Joan Severa's book, *Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion*, Kent State University Press, Kent, Ohio, 1996. Ms. Rexford considers this book to be the single best treatment of the subject. ■

### UPCOMING SEMINARS

New York Genealogical and Biographical Society offers a one-day course for beginners "Tracing Your Family Tree: The Essential Elements" Saturday, 16 May 1998, 9:30 am to 4:00 pm, in the NYGBS Auditorium, 124 E. 58 St., NYC. For more information, call (212) 755-8532, ext. 11.

New England Historic Genealogical Society's two-day Summer Conference focusing on New England research will take place 17-18 July 1998 at the Hartford Marriott Hotel, Farmington, CT. For more information, call toll-free 1-888-AT-NEHGS, ext.202.

The National Institute on Genealogical Research once again invites experienced researchers to take an in-depth look at federal records of genealogical value located primarily in the Washington, DC, area, during its 13-18 July 1998 very full program. With the exception of several evening programs (e.g., at the Library of Congress and DAR Library), all classes will be held in Room 410 of the National Archives. Contact the National Institute on Genealogical Research, P.O. Box 14274, Washington, DC 20044-4274, for further information.

The Federation of Genealogical Societies will present "Immigrant Dreams: The Settlement of America" 19-22 August 1998, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Focus will be on the reasons and methods of immigration, migration patterns, and the settlement of America. Contact the Federation of Genealogical Societies, P.O. Box 830220, Richardson, TX 75083-0220, for further information. ■

### SCOTTISH RECORDS ON THE INTERNET

The General Register Office for Scotland has announced that at 1 pm UK time, Monday, 6 April 1998, Scottish record indexes will become available on the Internet. The GRO(S) stated that: "The service will provide World Wide Web access to a fully searchable index to births/baptisms and banns/marriages from the Old Parish Registers dating from 1553 to 1854, and births, marriages and deaths from the Statutory Index for 1855 to 1897. An index to census records for 1891 will also be provided; 1881 census data will be made available later this year." For more information, visit the GRO(S)'s Website:

<http://www.open.gov.uk/gros/groshome.htm> ■

### 8th ANNUAL MGS WORKSHOP

Saturday, 31 January, was a red-letter day for MGS. We had *two* major events at the Darien Library and, once again, attracted a large audience.

Proceedings began at noon with an excellent program presented jointly by Maura Ritz (Head, Information Services, Darien Library), and Donna Moughty (MGS board member). Maura Ritz began by explaining how to use the Internet and discussed Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and browser software. Although the library Internet connection was down, Donna Moughty was able to make a connection through a telephone line to her own ISP. Using her Macintosh laptop computer and projecting its screen contents for all to see, Donna then demonstrated how to find some of the large number of sites that can help a family historian fill in holes in the family's story, giving concrete examples of many of her own adventures on the Internet. (Also see page 3.) Both Maura and Donna generously stayed long after the program ended to answer questions.

The MGS workshop meeting began at 2 pm. After MGS President David Mordy's welcome, Donna

Moughty gave a brief presentation on "Getting Started With Your Family History." Then, attendees were invited to visit five sites where MGS members displayed their research and demonstrated some of the many ways to organize family information.

Charles Cotter displayed books assembled for his grandchildren that include color photos of family members, anecdotes, events, and photos and illustrations of areas important in the family's history.

Donna Moughty set out reference notebooks, samples of reports and old photos. She shared some of the work she has done on Eastern European and Irish relatives who emigrated during the 20th century, and some of the fruits of a recent three-week research trip to Ireland.

Chick Scribner and Dick Sarr's focus was local. They displayed materials about Fairfield County towns and, also, the effects of the Revolutionary and Civil Wars on this area -- and they provided helpful material on local repositories.

Marianne Sheldon shared her work on Holland, Germany, England, the Isle of Jersey (in the Channel Islands), and the USA (New England, New York and Ohio). She also offered help with LDS holdings and the use of Family History facilities.

Florence Wyland concentrated on Centre County, PA, during the 1800s: vital statistics, research sites, county and town histories, newspapers, obituaries, cemeteries, churches, maps, court houses, etc., illustrating the value of taking an in-depth look at a single locale.

The tremendous success of the Internet demonstration and Workshop meeting was entirely due to the generous help of those who contributed their time and their talents to help us all. ■

### MGS BOARD

Continued poor health has made it impossible for Pete Kenyon to fulfill his commitment as MGS Vice President and program director. Board member Donna Moughty has agreed to serve in his stead. Pete will continue to serve as a board member. ■

**REMEMBER: Every Saturday morning, 10:00 am to noon, an MGS volunteer is waiting at Darien Library to help you with your research.**

**Deadline for next newsletter  
25 April 1998**



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

**MEETING 18 APRIL 1997  
SATURDAY, 2 PM  
DARIEN LIBRARY**

