



Middlesex Genealogical Society

Vol. XIX, No. 1

Darien, Fairfield County, CT

January 2003

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's New Year's Eve and I'm thinking about my New Year's Resolutions. I'll start with the same ones as last year—lose 10 pounds, exercise more, eat healthy—but what about my genealogy resolutions? Since I'm now working as a professional genealogist (a career change in the last year), what am I going to do differently this year?

I've discovered that working on my own family limited my research to specific areas and record types, mostly Ireland and western Pennsylvania. I've used vital, census and military records, but limited land and probate records since my ancestors never seemed to own anything or have anything to leave! As I've begun doing research for clients, I've expanded my experience with various records and learned a great deal. What I've found is that the general research methodology doesn't change, but the specifics do. Using the Internet and the Family History Library Catalog I can research the materials and resources that are available for a specific area or timeframe, and educational resources such as Ancestry or Genealogy.com let me learn more about specific record types. Some other excellent resources are the numerous genealogy magazines and journals.

So that brings me back to my resolution: I resolve to learn something new each month. That means by the end of the year I'll know about twelve different research strategies or record types that I don't know about now.

Do you have a genealogy resolution? Perhaps it's to solve a specific problem, to get organized, to create a scrapbook of pictures and documents, or to write the family history of one of your lines. Whatever it is, set that resolution, create a plan and work on it month by month. You can attend the upcoming lectures and

seminars at MGS (see page 2) or attend one of the major conferences where you can not only learn about specific research strategies, but also talk with people who may have done similar research (see page 5).

Whatever it is, don't procrastinate! Start now and by this time next year you will have completed your task and will be able to set a new resolution for 2004.

Happy hunting!

Donna Moughty

1 FEBRUARY MEETING TIME

REMINDER: Our 1 February meeting time is 1 PM at St. Luke's, Darien (see page 2).

LINCOLN CENTER FHC CLOSED TEMPORARILY

The Lincoln Center Family History Center in New York City closed temporarily 1 December for renovations that will include construction of a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints temple. The Lincoln Center FHC is expected to reopen in the spring.

2003 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership renewal was due 1 January 2003. *This is a reminder* for those who have not yet renewed. You may use the form on the last page of this newsletter, or any piece of paper with the requested information on it. You may bring your renewal to our 1 February meeting in the Parish Hall at St. Luke's Church, Darien, or drop it in the mail addressed to Middlesex Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 1111, Darien, CT 06820.

MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

2002-2003

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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 and publishes a quarterly newsletter. Annual membership dues are \$20 per individual and \$25 per couple or family.

Original 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: mgs2@optonline.net

UPCOMING MGS MEETINGS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

All meetings are scheduled for 2 PM at Darien Library, EXCEPT for our 1 February 2003 Workshop meeting (see below), which will be at 1 PM in the Parish Hall of St. Luke's Church, 1848 Post Road, Darien. COME TO A MEETING, AND BRING A FRIEND!

1 FEBRUARY 2003: ANNUAL WORKSHOP MEETING. SUSANNAH BENSON, M.Ed., a Creative Memories Consultant for more than 11 years, will conduct a hands-on **HERITAGE SCRAPBOOK ALBUM WORKSHOP** at 1 PM in the Parish Hall of St. Luke's Church, 1848 Post Road, Darien. Bring six or eight photos with you—old or recent—and create your first album page with Susannah's assistance, using archival materials that will be provided. (*Note: To cover the cost of materials a fee is being charged. Advance registration is required.*) For more information, contact Donna Moughty, (203) 359-1113; or Marianne Sheldon, (203) 655-6637.

5 APRIL 2003: BARBARA MATHEWS, C.G., will present "NOT QUITE RIGHT: RECOGNIZING ERRORS IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DOCUMENTATION." Using ample samples from her own pedigree, Barbara discusses the types of errors found in all sorts of documents, from vital records to deeds and probate records; from obituaries to cemetery stones; and throughout published family genealogies. Her lecture includes some hints on how to let your instincts tell you when something is not quite right.

Barbara is a certified genealogist who works as a verifying genealogist for the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Society of Colonial Dames of America; as a researcher for the Great Migration project; and as a book editor. Her specialty is Colonial Connecticut, but her lineage work stretches across the U.S. and to recent times.

10 MAY 2003: HELEN SCHATVET ULLMANN, C.G., will present "HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU HAVE THE RIGHT PERSON?" Is your ancestor John Smith the same John Smith who is the son of Frank and Mary (Jones) Smith? Real-life examples illustrate how various sources, from vital records through land and probate to compiled genealogy and manuscripts, can be combined to confirm the connection between generations.

Helen is Associate Editor of the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* and specializes in Southern New England and Norwegian research. Her book *Descendants of Peter Mills of Windsor, Connecticut* won the 1999 Donald Lines Jacobus award. She is a librarian at the Nashua, NH, Family History Center. ■

THE LETTER

by Charles Scribner

An old letter was recently found in a home here in Darien that had been the original homestead of my maternal grandparents, John and Rosa Wood Lee. The home was purchased by them in 1918 and had been in the Lee family until it was sold in October 2002. The letter contained information of genealogical significance to me about my grandfather's family in England, dating back to my fourth great-grandfather Lee. At least one page is missing at the end, but there is enough information to give me a jumpstart on the genealogy of my English ancestors.

John Lee, Sterling House, Ombersley, Droitwich, England, wrote the letter to his grandson John Lee of Noroton, Connecticut, on January 28, 1907. The letter follows, with a minimum of editing and a few parenthetical remarks by yours truly:

"I will begin with your great-grandfather's family. His father's name was John Lee and he lived at Mirfield in Yorkshire. He had several sons and daughters, my father among them who was taught to be a shoemaker. He was billeted into the militia and in a short time went into the regular army and helped the Dutch to drive the French out of Holland. He returned to England with his regiment, the 33rd West Riding Regiment commanded by Colonel Wellesley, afterwards Lord Wellington. He soon had to march again to Brussels to prevent Napoleon from capturing it. He was present at the battle of Waterloo and received a medal and was promoted to Corporal. After peace was proclaimed he came back to England with his regiment and afterwards married Margerite Nicholson, my mother, and marched with his regiment to Ireland. In 1821 he was ordered to embark at Cork and he sailed with his regiment for Jamaica. After a few days I was born (December 26, 1821) and when I was 28 days old the ship ran on to a coral reef on the north side of the island of Antigua. It happened at night causing a little alarm among the women and children. When daylight came all were thankful that the ship was near shore and no wind. The soldiers and sailors got all the women and children ashore and built canvas huts and landed food and water. I was baptized by Capt. Thaine, an officer of the regiment, and because I was born at sea and the name of the ship was the *Ocean of London* I was christened John

Ocean Lee. The ship was hauled off the rocks and taken round to the south side of Antigua, repaired, and took the regiment to Jamaica. After 7 years stay on the island my father died of yellow fever. My mother married again to a Sergeant in the regiment named Wilson who was a kind stepfather to me. After residing altogether 10 years in Jamaica, the regiment returned to England. After marching about in England and Ireland, I was sent to live with my stepfather's brother in the north of England where I was apprenticed to a Beasfounder[?]. As soon as I was old enough [21 years], I enlisted into the 1st Royal Dragoons and soon got promoted to Corporal, then Sergeant. My stepfather was still serving in the army as Quartermaster Sergeant and had a very comfortable situation. Since I was quartered at Dublin and my parents at Cork, I got a month leave and spent the time with them. It was here I met your grandmother who was living with my mother as a companion. She was the widow of an officer who died in Jamaica, and we grew fond of each other and agreed to marry as soon as I was promoted to Sergeant. After a time my promotion came and we got married. In a few years I worked my way up to Regimental Sergeant Major. I was then as high in rank as was possible to be without a commission. A war with Russia took place and my regiment was ordered to sail with other cavalry regiments to Bulgaria, and when the whole army had assembled at Varna we were sent to the Crimea and the Russians attacked us at Balaclava, but we drove them back. Your grandmother with your father, who was then four years old, was living in Mirfield in Yorkshire and fearing to hear of my death as the mails came in from Crimea, but God spared me to live through it all and after two years absence, the army returned to England and my regiment was sent to Ireland. I should have stated that after the battle of Inkerman the Queen gave two commissions to the non-commissioned officers of each Cavalry regiment and as I was senior of my regiment I was promoted to a Cornet [similar to our Ensign or 2nd Lieutenant]. I was also made adjutant of the regiment and had to teach the officers and men their duties. We returned to England and...."

The letter ends here because the last page (or pages) is missing.

Also found with the letter was a newspaper article that appeared in the *Worcestershire* (England) *Echo*,

circa 1912. The article verified much of what was written in the letter and added some important dates and other facts from the life of John O. O. Lee. "He was promoted to Lieutenant in February 1856 and Captain on May 10, 1871, and after his retirement in June 1871 he became Adjutant of the Worcestershire Yeomanry [mounted militia] with the honorary rank of Major and the thanks of H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief, for his services. He won the Crimean and Turkish War medals with clasps for Balaclava, Inkerman and Sebastopol." The article further states, "His soldierly bearing distinguished him as one who had faced no ordinary difficulties, and, indeed, had raised himself by sheer personal merit from the ranks, and was recognized as a gentleman in every sense of the word." He passed away January 15, 1912, at the age of 90. ■

GENEALOGICAL TREASURES IN THE NEW YORK COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE, DIVISION OF OLD RECORDS 16 November 2002 Meeting

Leslie Corn, who gave the presentation on this subject at our 16 November meeting is an excellent speaker and extremely knowledgeable about the Division of Old Records. Much of Leslie's knowledge was gained during her years working as a volunteer at this archive. She recommends volunteer work to those with the time and the interest. Most archives welcome the extra help, and it's a good way to build expertise.

The Division of Old Records is located in Room 703, 31 Chambers Street, New York City; telephone: (212) 374-4376. Hours are due to change to Monday-Friday, 9 AM-3 PM, but it is best to call ahead.

Leslie listed some of the records and indexes available in the Division of Old Records: (*Note: Not all records are indexed, but there are card indexes for many of them.*)

- New York State Censuses for New York County.
- Naturalization Records—New York State Supreme Court of New York County for the years 1868, 1896-1906, and 1907-1924.
- Trow's City Directories (1850-1933, with gaps).
- Change of Name Petitions and court orders for changes of name, 1848-1936.
- Case files for New York County Supreme Court

civil actions, 1799-1940, 1978-1990. (*Note: Records of divorces and other matrimonial actions can only be researched after 100 years, although indexes can be searched. Commitments for incompetence and adoption records are permanently sealed.*)

- Business records, such as Certificates of Incorporation (1804-1946); limited partnerships (1822-1948); and trade names (1900-1924).
- Admissions to the Bar, Indexes, 1754-1895.
- Assignments of Bankrupt Businesses, Indexes, 1860-1917.
- Chancery Court Records, Indexes, 1700-1847.
- Computer Index: Judgments, Court of Common Pleas (1786-1895) and Superior Court (1828-1895); includes divorces in these courts. Searchable by plaintiff and by defendant.
- Judgment Dockets, Mayor's Court, 1787-1819 (5 vols.).
- Judgments, Superior Court, 1828-1895.
- Marriage Records, 1830's-1850's.
- Matrimonial Actions, Index, 1784-1910, Supreme & Chancery Courts.
- Mayor's Court Papers, 1600s-1775.
- Mayor's Court, Ancillary Wills, 1787-1883 (5 vols.).
- Mayor's Court/Court of Common Pleas, Judgments, 1786-1895.
- Minutes of the Common Council of NY, 1784-1831.
- Miscellaneous, 1812-1934 (Powers of Attorney, Hotel Registrations, Apprenticeships).
- Parchments, 1680-1847.
- Pleadings, Indexes, 1700-1820's (predominately Supreme Court).

Note: All indexes are available onsite, but some records are stored elsewhere and must be ordered ahead of time.

Leslie discussed how to search for select records, interpret their contents, and use the findings. She used case studies to illustrate. She was able, for example, to build a comprehensive picture of Irving Berlin's life through items found in the Division of Old Records—from his arrival as an immigrant named Israel Balin through naturalization and census records, name change records, business records, court actions, etc. If you had ancestors in New York City, the Division of Old Records is well worth a look. ■

UPCOMING SEMINARS

Darien Continuing Education, 3 and 10 February 2003, Darien, CT.

MGS president Donna Moughty will present two classes in the current Darien Continuing Education series:

- "Family History: Putting the Pieces Together." One session, 7-9 PM, 3 February 2003. This is an excellent program for beginning genealogists.
- "Family History on the Web." One session, 7-9 PM, 10 February 2003. This class will demonstrate how to get started using the Web to trace your family history.

For more information, call (203) 656-7467, or visit the Darien Board of Education offices between 9 AM and 4 PM.

National Genealogical Society Conference in the States, 28-31 May 2003, Pittsburgh, PA.

The 2003 NGS Conference in the States will take place 23-31 May at the brand new David L. Lawrence Convention Center in downtown Pittsburgh, PA. Offerings cover a truly dazzling variety of topics presented by renowned speakers, as well as special banquets and vendors' presentations, plus the opportunity to socialize with 2,000 other genealogists. For more information, including the complete program and travel/lodging resources, visit their Website at: <http://www.eshow2000.com/ngs/>

Federation of Genealogical Societies 2003 Conference, 3-6 September, Orlando, FL.

The FGS 2003 Conference will be held at Marriott's Renaissance Orlando Resort at SeaWorld, Orlando, FL. Theme of the conference is "Countdown to Discovery: A World of Hidden Treasures." Planned topic tracks include:

- Society Development and Management.
- Board for Certification of Genealogists Track.
- APG Professional Management Conference
- Basic Genealogy Instruction.
- Methodologies and Problem-solving Techniques.
- Alternate Record Types and Research Methods.
- Eastern and Southeastern U.S. Research.
- Florida Research.
- Ethnic/Religious Research in such areas as African American, Native American, Jewish American, Asian American, Hispanic American, Huguenots, etc.
- International Research in such areas as Canada, the British Isles, Ireland, Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Spain, Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, Russia, Central and South America, the Caribbean, Australia, Asia, and elsewhere.
- Military Records.
- Ships' Passenger Lists.

- Immigration and Naturalization Records.
- Use of Libraries, Archives, and Other Special Collections, with emphasis on Eastern U.S. repositories.
- Computers and Using the Internet.
- Writing and Publishing.
- Professional Research.
- Genetics and Family Medical History.

For more information, telephone FGS at (888) FGS-1500, or visit the conference Website at: <http://www.fgs.org/2003conf/FGS-2003.htm>

New England Regional Genealogical Conference, 6-9 November 2003, North Falmouth, Cape Cod, MA.

The seventh annual New England Regional Genealogical Conference, featuring nationally known speakers, will take place at the Sea Crest Resort and Conference Center in North Falmouth on Cape Cod, 6 through 9 November 2003. (*Note:* MGS president Donna Moughty will present two lectures at this conference: "Using the Internet for Effective Family Research" (beginner); and "I Know It's There Somewhere! Finding What You Want on the Internet.") The agenda includes:

- **Thursday, 6 November:** Genealogy Workshop 101, Beginners and Advanced Beginners; Photograph Workshop, Photographic Restoration, Dating and Identifying your Family Photographs; New England Ancestors; Ethnic Genealogy; Computer & Technology Workshop, Beginners and Advanced Beginners; Society Fair; Ethnic Interest Group Meetings.
- **Friday, 7 November:** Genealogical Records; Ethnic Genealogy; Archives & Library Records; DNA; Writing Your Family History.
- **Saturday, 8 November:** New England Genealogy; Migration and Immigration; Ethnic Genealogy; Skills and Methodology; Computers and Technology.
- **Sunday, 9 November:** The Quaker Faith and Its Origins in New England, followed by the replication of an early New England Quaker Sunday Meeting.

For more information, visit the conference Website at: http://www.rootsweb.com/~manergc/conference_information.htm ■

RESEARCH TRIP TO SALT LAKE CITY

In June of this year Donna Moughty will lead a six-day research trip to Salt Lake City for those who would like to utilize the superb resources of the Family History Library. If you are interested, contact Donna by telephone at: (203) 327-7699; or e-mail at: moughty@mac.com ■

ARTICLES OF INTEREST IN PROLOGUE

Two articles of interest to genealogists appeared in a recent issue of *Prologue*, Quarterly of the National Archives and Records Administration (Fall 2002, Vol. 34, No. 3).

The first article, "Remember Me: Six Samplers in the National Archives" by Jennifer Davis Heaps, appears on page 185 of the above issue.

Wives and children of Revolutionary War veterans applying for pensions based on the veterans' service during the war were required to submit proof of relationship. Paper documentation was not always available, however. While affidavits from witnesses to the event were accepted by the U.S. government, sometimes no living witness could be found. In six cases samplers stitched at an earlier time by young girls in the family were submitted with pension applications as substitute documentation for marriages and births, and the pensions were granted. The samplers were retained in the pension files as part of the permanent record. Eventually, in order to protect these fragile relics, transcriptions of the samplers replaced the originals in the pension files, but the samplers remain in the custody of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The complete article can be accessed at: http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/fall_2002_sampler

The second article, "An Overview of Records at the National Archives Relating to Military Service" by Trevor K. Plante, begins on page 230 of this issue.

Most military records can be found at either NARA, or at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis. There is, however, no simple answer to the question of where to find the records of interest to you. This article should be enormously helpful, however, as it reviews what can be found where and suggests starting places for various categories of records, e.g., regulars or volunteers, officers or enlisted, service branch, specific war, time frame, etc. Not all military records at NARA have been microfilmed, and those that have not are only available at the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C. The article explains how to request copies of records from both NARA and NPRC by filling out and submitting the proper form.

Be aware that if you are looking for records of state or local militias or National Guard units that were not federalized, state archives may have to be consulted.

Unfortunately, this article is *not* available at *Prologue's* Website, so you will need to locate a copy of the magazine in order to read it. ■

BSA's GENEALOGY MERIT BADGE

An interest in family history among young people can be fostered by encouraging sons, grandsons, neighbors, or friends who are Boy Scouts to earn a Genealogy Merit Badge. To earn the badge, a Boy Scout must:



- Explain the meaning of *genealogy* and *genealogical resources*.
- Begin a pedigree chart with himself and fill it in as far as he can at the beginning of his project. Add any additional names, dates, or places that he finds.
- Show himself as a child on a family group record form, and show one of his parents as a child on another family group record form.
- Interview an older relative to obtain information about his family. This interview may be in person, by telephone, or by letter. Add any information obtained in the interview to his pedigree chart and family group records.
- Obtain at least one genealogical document showing proof of some information on his pedigree chart or family group records. This document may be located in his home, a courthouse, an archive, or library, etc.
- Tell how he would evaluate genealogical information.
- Do ONE of the following:
 - Do a time line for himself or a close relative.
 - Keep a journal for six weeks, writing in it at least once weekly.
 - Write a short history of himself or of a close relative.
- Do ONE of the following
 - Tell how the development of computers is affecting the world of genealogy.
 - Tell how the development of photography (including microfilming) has influenced genealogy.
 - Tell how personal and family histories have begun to influence the way society looks at local, national, and international history.
- Contact ONE of the following and ask a question relating to its genealogical services. Report the results:
 - A lineage society.
 - A surname organization.
 - A professional genealogist.
 - A genealogical education facility or institution.
 - A genealogical record repository of any type (courthouse, genealogical library, state archives, state library, national archives, etc.)
- Tell where he would find current information about genealogical records and research methods. ■

Reginald Wilfer is a name with rather a grand sound, suggesting on first acquaintance brasses in country churches, scrolls in stained-glass windows, and generally the DeWilfers who came over with the Conqueror. For it is a remarkable fact in genealogy that no DeAnyones ever came over with Anybody else.

But the Reginald Wilfer family were of such commonplace extraction and pursuits that their forefathers had for generations modestly subsisted on the Docks, the Excise Office, and the Custom House, and the existing R. Wilfer was a poor clerk. So poor a clerk, through having a limited salary and an unlimited family, that he had never yet attained the modest object of his ambition: which was, to wear a complete new suit of clothes, hat and boots included, at one time.

Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, The Heritage Press, New York, 1957. Ch. IV, The R. Wilfer Family.

MGS TRUSTEE TOM KEMP'S NEW BOOK ON THE 1930 CENSUS

Tom Kemp of the Godfrey Memorial Library in Middletown, CT (and also an MGS trustee), is the author of *The 1930 Census: A Reference & Research Guide*, which was published recently by ProQuest. This is a core reference work that describes in depth the 1930 Federal Census, which was begun on 1 April 1930 and took until 6 August to complete. More than 100,000 enumerators documented the 124 million U.S. residents in 17,000 villages, towns and cities across the country.

The book describes in detail how the census was taken, the records that are now available, and tips on what researchers should look for. To make it easier for genealogists to interpret the records, it gives examples of the handwriting, abbreviations and key terms used in the census. In addition to the Census of Population, special censuses on Agriculture, Merchant Seamen, Religious Bodies, Consular Schedules, Special Municipal Schedules, and the Bureau's special reports on birth, marriage and death statistics for that year are all included. There is additional information on Native American tribes/groups, military installations and veteran's facilities, and also maps produced by the Census Bureau of major metropolitan areas. ■

FEDERAL CENSUSES 1900-2000

The U.S. Census Bureau has posted an extensive report (222 pages) on U.S. demographic trends in the 20th century based on the 11 Federal Censuses taken between 1900 and 2000. For example, in the early 1900s the largest segment of the population was composed of males under 23 years of age; in 2000 it was females over 35. Population tripled in those hundred years, and populations grew more quickly in western states than in other states. There are now fewer married-couple households and more one-person households than there were a hundred years ago. If you would like to know just how much our population has changed in the last hundred years, you can read the entire report at:

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/censr-4.pdf> ■

FOUNDATION FOR MIEVEAL GENEALOGY

The Foundation for Medieval Genealogy is a new English society dedicated to medieval genealogical research and publications. The main Website has open access and gives details of current projects, including a revision of Turton's *Plantagenet Ancestry*. Registration and a modest fee (£5 or approximately \$8) are required for access to the online database. The Website is at:

<http://fmg.ac/> ■

MGS NEWSLETTER

Every member of Middlesex Genealogical Society has stories to tell—about family and research experiences (both successes and failures)—that would be of interest to other members of the society. Please consider sharing yours by writing about them for these pages. Submissions need not be in final form as considerable help is available. Call Dorothy Shillinglaw at (203) 655-8350 for assistance. ■

NEED HELP WITH RESEARCH? Make an appointment through the Information Desk at Darien Library for a personalized consultation with an MGS volunteer.

**Deadline for next newsletter
11 March 2003**

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

2003 MEMBERSHIP

- Renewal
 New

ANNUAL DUES

- Individual (\$20)
 Couple (\$25)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Please consider adding a contribution toward our genealogical resource maintenance and expansion, e.g., FamilySearch, subscriptions, books, CDs, etc. _____



Middlesex Genealogical Society
PO Box 1111
Darien CT 06820-1111

MEETING
SATURDAY, 1 FEBRUARY, 1 PM
ST. LUKE'S HALL, DARIEN

