

# Middlesex Genealogical Society

SPRING 1993 NEWSLETTER

Vol X, No. 1

## **NEXT MEETING**

We planned to invite Sharon Debartolo Carmack (you will remember the great presentation she made to us last year on tomb stones) to discuss Italian-American research and found out she was scheduled to speak in Greenwich on this topic. So, we decided to join with the Greenwich Historical Society and Connecticut Ancestry for this meeting. You will have received a post card with the directions etc. for this meeting on May 2nd. and hope you plan to attend. Although the subject is Italian-American, the methods she will discuss will assist anyone doing overseas research. Looking forward to seeing you at St. Mary's Parish Center in Greenwich. Fee \$10 per person or \$15 per couple.

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** - As the program committee begins to plan the four programs for 1993-94, they need your suggestions and comments on subjects of interest to you and to advise us of interesting speakers you may have heard or have been recommended to you.

## **PRESIDENTS LETTER**

Our Society is off and running for 1993 with two well attended general meetings featuring well known speakers with fresh approaches to genealogical research.

Henry Hoff an MGS Trustee and a certified Genealogist was our key speaker for the January Workshop. His subject: "When one record is wrong but you don't know which one" was most informative and helpful. Charles Scribner, Lynn Hanks and Florence Wyland helped

beginners with examples of research methods.

Those seeking computer approaches to genealogy were enlightened by Marianne Sheldon and David Bowley. And wearing his problem solving hat, Henry Hoff was busy helping advanced researchers.

Our popular George Washington's Birthday luncheon honoring our late founding member, Leo Dunphy took place February 13th at the famed Silvermine Tavern. The fellowship, good food and a light winter snow decorating the area added up to a great day in the friendly colonial atmosphere.

The March 20th MGS Annual meeting attracted a good number of members and guests who braved the not too pleasant weather. We conducted a short business meeting and elected officers and directors for the new year. Please note the newly elected slate on the page two panel.

Then we had a real treat when New England Historic Genealogical Society's Director of Education, William H. Schoeffler, spoke on "What to look for in deeds and records". An excellent speaker and a lawyer by education, Bill gave us very instructive suggestions of how to interpret the language used many years ago. "Remember the customs of those eras" he suggested in order to understand the meaning behind those documents.

Now what can we plan to top those activities mentioned above? How about

## MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

1993-1994  
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The Middlesex Genealogical Society was established for the purpose of helping those interested in genealogy to pursue the investigation of their family heritage and to provide guidance in research to that end. The Society holds at least four meetings with a program and speaker during the year, has established a Genealogy section at the Darien Public Library, provides research assistance on Saturday mornings (10-12) at the Library and publishes a quarterly Newsletter. Annual membership dues are \$10/individual and \$15/couple or family.

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

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

some trips?

The New England Historic Genealogical Society of Boston has recently announced a new Group Visitors Program. We will look into this offer for complete details and keep you posted.

We welcome your suggestions regarding informative speakers and places to visit.

In order to make our News Letter more ``newsy`` and unique to our society we need your input. Please submit some paragraphs on genealogy work your doing ie- humorous anecdotes, startling surprises, roadblocks and solutions to problems. Don't be concerned about your literary style, we will check it out. Perhaps other readers have had similar experiences and may be researching this or related subjects. Please send them as instructed in the panel on page two of this Newsletter.

QUERIES: Yes we need Queries. If you have some ancestors to track down, let us post the data in our Newsletter. Please see the separate article on this subject for details on the type of data we require.

This is the first edition published by your Newsletter committee and they want to hear your comments on the format, articles etc...let them know what you want in YOUR Newsletter.

Ready now for distribution, our Publication #5, State Veterans Cemetery at Spring Grove, Darien, Ct. This completes the listings of veterans interred there that was initiated (In our Publication #1) by Doris (Nicki) Hollander and Jane Merchant. And included is a fine summary written by Charles Scribner of the history of the cemetery.

Meet your Newsletter Committee: Ray Bartlett -Pres. Ltr., David Bowley-Computer Corner, Lynn Hanks-Queries,

Karen Polett-Speakers and Member profiles, Charles Scribner-Library Corner, Articles-by the membership.

## LIBRARY NEWS-CHIC SCRIBNER

As your new Library Liaison, my first order of business is to recognize the fine work done by my predecessor, Pat Flowers. She is responsible for organizing the Middlesex Genealogical Society's section of the Darien Library, spending countless hours coordinating and indexing books periodicals, microfiche etc. This work also included the Genealogy collections of the Darien Library and the Darien Historical Society. The many new books listed in previous Newsletters and the Surname index of ancestor charts are a direct result of her efforts. Pat's work has not gone unnoticed and is greatly appreciated.

### LIBRARY BOOK COLLECTION INVENTORY AS OF MARCH 1993

#### MISSING BOOKS

- Shelf 3.4-Don't Cry Timber by Michael.
- Supplement to New England Marriages prior to 1700 by Torrey.
- Glovers Marblehead Regiment of the Revolution by Gardner.
- Fitch's Home for Soldiers and their Orphans.

Please check your materials to see if you have any of these books. If so, please return them to the Library.

#### NEW BOOKS

- The Descendents of Segar--Greene Genealogy by Wright.

The Saturday morning workshop crew welcomes our new volunteers: Karen Polett and Marianne Sheldon. Also a special thanks to Eversley Ogden, a volunteer, who recently resigned after many hours of helping people with their genealogy questions on Saturday mornings.

## COMPUTER CORNER-DAVID BOWLEY

COMPUTER CORNER. Several years ago my brother, who lives in England, gave me a copy of some sheets from a Family Bible & also notes on a search done in 1858 by one of my Fathers' Great-Aunts, who lived in Leicestershire during that period. I also inherited a rough Family Tree, which had been put together by my Father. I had some interest in putting some proper records together & met Dick Saar, who told me about the Middlesex Genealogical Society microfiche records in the Darien Library and also the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Family History Center Genealogical Computerised Data Base in New Canaan. For those of you who have not made use of the Mormon Church computer facilities I would strongly suggest that you give them a try. The staff there are friendly & knowledgeable & you don't need to have sat down in front of a computer before. I have seen novices of all ages starting to do a useful search within minutes. Last week Dick Saar used what they call the "Ancestral File" & put in a name and date, he asked the machine to build a an "ancestral chart" & within minutes the machine printed out a listing & Family Tree going back into the Seventeenth century in England, we were both amazed at what could be done & also amused as it turned out that we both had ancestors who lived in the little town of Cossington in Leicestershire! In forthcoming issues topics which I hope to cover will be: Choice of Genealogical Software Genealogical Computer Bulletin Boards Downloading data from the Mormon Church Computers In the meantime give me a call at 655-2734 if you have any genealogical computer topic which you wish to discuss! NOTE! The Family History Center on Rte 124 in New Canaan (1 mi North of the Merritt) is only open Thursday from 6.0 to 9.0 pm

Call 966-1305 to book a 30 min session, if its your first session they will usually allow you an hour. ?

## QUERIES-LYNN HANKS

Policy: Queries may be sent to the Middlesex Genealogical Society, 45 Old Kings Highway North, Darien, Ct. 06820. If an answer or acknowledgement to your query is requested please include a stamped self-addressed envelope. Queries should be as brief as possible using abbreviations. Your query will be published in the next issue of our Newsletter. Answers may be mailed directly to the person making the query.

CODES--b-born, d-died, m-married, ans-ancestors, bp-baptized, bro-brother, bur-buried, ca-circa, ch-child, dau-daughter, par-parents, rel-related, desc-descendants, d.y.-died young.

## QUERIES

**BOWMAN/SMITH:** Seek info about Emily Bowman who m. Chester Smith in 1840 and d. 1858 at age 37 in Waitsfield, VT. (contact Diantha Howard, 57 East Shore North, Grand Isle, Vt. 05458-2316).

**JOYCE/HOYT:** Seek info about Susanna Joyce, who m. 2 June 1646 to Nicholas Hoyt of Windsor, Ct. son of Simon. (contact Diantha Howard, 57 East Shore North, Grand Isle, Vt. 05458-2316).

**LANE/ADDIS:** Need info on Lane family. Edwin E. Lane, m. Nancy M. Lane, he was one of 5 boys and 5 girls. Hiss son was George W. Lamb b. 1836 who m. Catherine Addis, b. 1834. Lived in the Killingworth, Ct. area. (contact Mrs. Merle (Patricia) Shaffer, Johnstone Dr., RD 2, box 6B, Seneca, Pa. 16346).

**SCRIBNER/GRAY/BEERS:** Need anc. Ebenezer Scribner, b. 1774, in Norwalk/Wilton, Ct. d. 1 Mar. 1850 Wilton, Ct. m. 1800, Thirza Gray or Beers, b. 1775, d. 12 Jan. 1851, Wilton, Ct. Had maybe 10 ch. Stephen, Jacob, David, Polly, Martha, Sarah, George, Hannah, Charles and Ruth. (contact Charles Scribner, 7 Fairfield Ave. Darien, CT. 06820.)

**WHITNEY/FILLOW/WHITLOCK:** Seek info. Legrand Whitney b. 1774, in Norwalk/Wilton, Ct. d. Mar. 1864 in Darien. Was postmaster & third selectman in Darien in 1863. Maybe worked as shoe maker for Carrier & Whitney. First wife was Hester Whitlock. Second wife Nancy, who married David Morehouse Fillow, selectman in Norwalk, after d. L. Whitney. (contact Ann D. Demsky, 39333 Park Ave. Naugatuck, Ct. 06770).

**WILSON/HOYT:** Seek info about Mary(?) Wilson, Second wife of David Hoyt, son of Nicholas, of Windsor, Ct. and Hadley, Ma. They m. circa 1676-8 and she d. before 1691. (contact Diantha Howard, 577 East Shore North, Grand Isle, Vt. 05458-2316).

## SOME CT. HISTORY

### DARIEN SUBMARINE CONNECTION

During the Revolutionary War the towns along the Connecticut shore were constantly harassed by whale boat incursions, manned by British and Torey raiders. These invaders were bent on ransacking the homes and barns of the residents, stealing live stock and plundering. From time to time they would kidnap leading patriots and turn them over to the British.

Darien, then called Middlesex Parish, suffered its share of these attacks. Because he was such an ardent and outspoken patriot, the Reverend Moses Mather, a Congregational Minister, was kidnapped twice by Tories. Historical accounts tell how he and four of his sons were first abducted in August of 1779. The second abduction, one of the best known episodes in the history of Darien, occurred on July 22, 1781. At this time the Rev. Mather and a number of his parishioners were captured and taken from their church at Middlesex. They were imprisoned in New York, where they spent several months before being released.

The least known of all the incidents involving kidnapping occurred on May 6, 1779. On this date Torey raiders landed at "Middlesex near Norwalk," looking to capture a Captain Selleck. When Selleck could not be found they decided not to go back empty handed and took three residents and a fourth man who was a stranger in town. The stranger, apparently unknown to his captors, was one of the most important patriots of the Revolution. If the British had known his identity he would have been put to death. This man was so important to the rebel cause that immediately after learning of his capture the rebel leaders proceeded to arrange for a prisoner exchange to secure his release. This was accomplished without arousing British suspicions. The stranger's name was Dr. David Bushnell, the inventor of the "famous water machine of Connecticut".

David Bushnell was born on August 30, 1740 in Saybrook, Connecticut and received a Master's degree from Yale University. He was considered a genius by his peers and revolutionary

leaders, but was thought to be some sort of a devil by the British. His guerrilla activities were well known by General Washington and Governor Trumbull of Connecticut.

The first recorded attempt to sink an enemy warship by underwater attack was made by a little one man submarine, invented by David Bushnell. This underwater boat, called the Turtle was developed and constructed in Connecticut. It was designed to maneuver by means of a rudder, or steering oar, and two hand-driven screw propellers, one each for horizontal and vertical movement. Immersion was accomplished by taking in water ballast to a point where the remaining positive buoyancy could be overcome by the downward thrust of the vertical screw. While working on the TURTLE he also developed a way to explode gunpowder underwater. He demonstrated this to a few people he could trust, arguing that such an explosion, if properly attached to the underwater hull of a ship would be disastrous.

In September of 1776 the TURTLE was used in an attempt to sink a 64-gun British flag ship named Eagle, which was anchored in the Hudson River at New York City. This marked the first time in history that submarine navigation combined with torpedo warfare. A cannister of 150 pounds of gun powder was carried on the outside of the boat. The method of attack was to maneuver the submarine close to the bottom of the ship and to attach the cannister to the hull. This was done by means of a large screw driven into the planking by a mechanism operated inside the submarine. A clock controlled fuse was used for detonation in order to allow time for the submarine to move clear. This attempt failed when the screw hit an iron bar connecting the rudder hinge to the stern, missing wood by inches. The operator had to return to shore because of approaching daylight.

When this and subsequent attacks failed, Bushnell tried another method to sabotage the enemy. Using his newly developed ideas on underwater explosives he journeyed to Philadelphia to put his theories to work. Sets of kegs, loaded with gunpowder, were tied together by lengths of rope, long enough to allow the kegs to wrap around a ship. They were designed to explode on contact. a dozen or so of these sets were let loose in the Delaware River, up stream

from Philadelphia. Bad luck continued to follow Bushnell when a keg blew up a barge alerting the British. Confusion and panic developed resulting in many weird rumors being spread around town and among the sailors. The British began shooting at the kegs, destroying most of them. For days afterward they would shoot at anything floating by. Many a piece of driftwood was destroyed. This incident was recorded in history as the "Battle of the Kegs". Although not as successful as planned, the attack proved that warfare could be waged with floating mines.

The above episodes and the technologies involved attest to the fact the man was a genius. His extraordinary inventions showed him to be many years ahead of his time. For obvious reasons, Bushnell had a passion for secrecy, Many Connecticut residents were Loyalists or were in sympathy with the Crown, making it imperative his whereabouts and activities be kept as quite as possible. This may explain why the incident involving his capture at Middlesex has been missed by local historians. Because he worked hard at remaining anonymous and avoiding publicity it may never be known what he was doing at Middlesex in May of 1776.

This article was researched and written C. Scribner

References-Submarine Fighter of the American Revolution by Frederick Wagner. Town of Darien by Henry J. Case and Simon W. Cooper and Encyclopedia Americana.

## *HITHER & THITHER*

### THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Researchers planning to use the National Archives in Washington during the next few years should be aware that there will be some disruption in service resulting from the move of some materials to a new facility in College Park MD.

Archives II is intended to augment the National Archives Building in Washington. It will house all special media, non-textual records. military

records from World War II to the present (except Navy records) and all executive branch civilian agency records.

Records relating to genealogy, old military (prior to World War II) the Navy, the courts, the Congress and selected series of American Indian records, will remain in Washington.

The record transfer will begin Dec. 1993 and should be completed by Dec. 1995.

Records remaining at the National Archives will be consolidated following the move and, as a result, genealogical related records are expected to be closed between Nov. 1995 and July 1996.

Since many factors can cause changes in the move schedule, researchers should check several weeks before traveling to Washington. Write to the Textual Reference Division, Office of the National Archives, Washington DC 20408. Or telephone the Reference Services Branch at 202-501-5400.

### STRETCHING A POINT?

An article in a unknown newspaper came to my attention that brings up many points--accuracy, detective work, humor, absurdity or is someone making a point. Who am I to doubt a Professor! You be the judge.

Headline: King Tut Ancestor of Abraham Lincoln, Professor Announces. dateline feb.5 New London, Ct. Abraham Lincoln was a descendent of King Tut, one time Egyptian Ruler, Prof. Henty I. Lawrence Jr. told his history class at the Ct. College for Women.

Professor Lawrence said that the family of Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks had been traced back to England and down to the Roman conquest. He said the Romans used Egyptian troops in the conquest and occupation of Britain. One of the officers bearing the name of Ankh (a descendent of King Tut Ankh Amen) decided to settle in Britain. He married, started a family that later changed the name to Hanks according to Professor Lawrence.



A man wanted to have his family tree traced, and asked a professional genealogist how much it would cost. "That depends on how far back you go and how tough it is to search records. It might be several hundred dollars or several thousand."

"That seems like a lot," the man said. "Is there a cheaper way to trace my past?"

"Well" replied the genealogist, "the cheapest way is to run for public office."



The 1993 National Genealogical Society Conference in the States will held in Baltimore, Maryland 2-5 June 1993. Call Dick Sarr (655-9630) for details.

## DO YOU KNOW BOB?

### Member Profile

Robert E. Fatherley

When the Middlesex Genealogical Society Newsletter Committee met recently, the suggestion was made to include a member profile in each edition. The first name that came to mind was that of Robert E. Fatherley, a founding member of our Society, as well as the founder of the Darien Historical Society.

I sent Bob a few questions designed to elicit responses I could weave into a story about him. The prompt return of his answers made me realize there was much more that I wanted to know about this interesting man. This led to a visit to his Point O' Woods Road home, and lengthy conversation with Bob and Em about his early life, what motivated his interest in genealogy, and his career in the military. At this point, I have enough information to write a book about Bob, and I suggested to him that he really should commit his story to

paper. Space limitations here will only permit us a beginning .

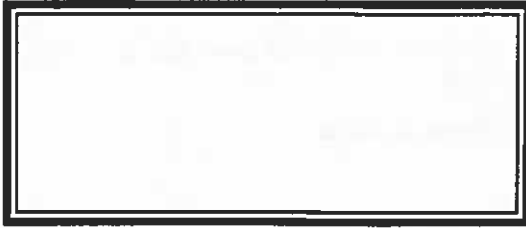
Bob credits three people with inspiring his interest in preserving the past for our future generations. First, among these was Bob's father, who was born in England and came to America at age 16. He became a Methodist minister, and married Bob's mother, who traced four or five of her ancestors ( John Alden, Francis Cooke, etc.) back to the Mayflower. Bob's dad encouraged him to follow-up his mother's New England background, which he did. Another inspiration was Bob's great-aunt Mary Elizabeth Taggart Johnson. Bob remembers this small, immaculate, Aunt Libby, who "always spoke glowingly of her ancestors," and told Bob about East Bridgewater, Mass. where she visited . Bob's third motivation came after he met and married Emeline, his wife. Her father, Dr. Claude F. Walker, was very family-oriented. His ancestors came to this area in 1641, and founded the Darien Congregational Church. Dr. Walker made available to Bob, a speech made in 1894 at the 150th Anniversary of the founding of this Church. In the speech, his grandfather, Charles Grandeson Morehouse lamented the fact that Darien was changing into a large town, was no longer a small village, and should record " the many notable events treasured in the memories of its citizens well worth preserving for the benefit of future generations." The impetus from these sources led Bob to pursue his own genealogical roots and the formation of historical and genealogical societies in Darien.

According to Fatherley, the single most valuable resource for a genealogist is the love of people and events, and keeping and organizing their "stuff" as they relate to each other. "My advice would be to first get a \$1.00 notebook, not a loose leaf, and start writing names, places, and events. Write to everyone you can contact in the family, no matter how remote, because they may be as anxious as you are to explore family matters; or they may already have started and will welcome you; and they may die before you get started and you will have lost out," explained Bob, when I asked about his advice for beginners.

Over tea served in an elegant white and gold floral tea service, a wedding gift to Bob's grandparents in 1854, we discussed some of Bob's other activities throughout the years. These included his years flying in the Navy during World War II, where he traveled to Japan, the Middle East, and finally we talked about the evacuation of Wake and Marcus Islands, in 1945. Once home in Darien, Bob was a member of the Darien Housing Authority from 1946-1952. Living next door to Margaret Bourke-White, Bob was her trusted friend, and even carried chapters of her books from Darien to her publishers in New York City, when Bob owned a fabric business there. Bob is currently a member of Darien's newly-formed Monuments and Ceremonies Committee, charged with locating, cataloging, and preserving town memorials. Bob is also co-Town Historian with Louise McLean. It seems fitting that Bob continues his devotion to our town with his work on this committee. How

fortunate we are to have him as a member of our Society as well.

Karen K. Polett



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



### Application for Membership

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

Single (\$10) \_\_\_\_\_  
Couple (\$15) \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_