



Middlesex Genealogical Society

Vol. XVII, No. 4

Darien, Fairfield County, CT

November 2001

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Please excuse some personal reflections. My interest in family history, and I hope yours as well, is stimulated not only by curiosity as to whom my ancestors were, but also by the lives of these ancestors among the tangled skeins of history in the larger sense of world history. Although we may occasionally find a disreputable character in the family tree or an embarrassing episode relating to some ancestor, our ancestors were often bit players in the tides of history. These people were part of the mosaic of building a better society or, in some cases, destroying parts of society.

I have been really motivated to learn more about my ancestors who came to Virginia, Massachusetts and Connecticut in the early seventeenth century in order to escape religious oppression and to take advantage of opportunities in the British colonies. Among my early American ancestors were an Indian princess in Virginia and two English ancestors who were ambushed and killed by the Indians.

Theodore Roosevelt, in *Winning of the West*, describes the trials and tribulations of my ancestors in Kentucky who were involved with Daniel Boone in settling that area and were also involved in several related Indian wars.

Some of my Connecticut ancestors were founders of Hartford and Saybrook. They participated in the Pequot Indian War of 1637, a war that many historians now regard as a brutal massacre of Indians by white settlers. Ancestor John Clark traveled with the governor to Stratford in 1661 to try Goody Basset on a charge of witchcraft. The same John Clark was one of the 19 patentees to whom King Charles II issued his Royal Charter of 1662. It was research of the family genealogy that triggered my interest in the

history of Connecticut, including both atrocities and civic building.

Others of my ancestors were early Quaker settlers who fled Ireland in an effort to build a peaceful settlement in Pennsylvania. Three ancestors that I know of became Revolutionary War soldiers. That was the tide of the times.

The larger tide for three hundred years between wars, or even during wars, was western migration—"Westward ho." From Europe the settlers came to New England and the Atlantic colonies. Later they went west to Kentucky and the Northwest Territory, to western New York along the Erie Canal and then to the Midwest. Two of my relatives were on the Lewis and Clark expedition, including Sgt. Charles Floyd, who was the only member of the expedition to die en route. (Virtually all of the history books ascribe the wrong parents to Sgt. Floyd, so one genealogical challenge for our family is to try to set the record straight. Imagine how difficult it is to correct misinformation that has been in print for 200 years.)

During the War Between the States, also known as the Civil War, the War of the Rebellion, or the War of Northern Aggression, some of my relatives fought with the North and others fought with the South. During June 1863, my grandmother was away from the family

(Continued on page 4)

2002 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership renewal is due 1 January 2002. *Please consider this to be your renewal notice.* 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 17 November meeting, or drop it in the mail addressed to Middlesex Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 1111, Darien, CT 06820. ■

MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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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 \$15 per individual and \$20 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: sdshillinglaw@prodigy.net

UPCOMING MGS MEETINGS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

17 NOVEMBER 2001: ORGANIZING YOUR RESEARCH FOR PUBLICATION will be presented by **FREDERIC J. DAVIES**, author, retired educator and amateur genealogist.

This program will help you take the next step in the genealogical process when you make the decision to publish your research. In speaking of his own experience in producing *The Davies Border Alliance*, Fred said, "This was one of the most daunting tasks I had faced—just the idea of how to approach pulling everything together and deciding on a format or structure." The organizational process of taking all our accumulated genealogical information from whatever storage medium we have used and converting it into a useable, publishable form will be the focus of this talk. Fred will cover software to help in this process, as well as what types of materials should be included and how everything should be presented. By publishing we ensure that all of our years of hard work will not be lost but will continue to benefit others who will, in turn, further extend the research we have begun.

2 FEBRUARY 2002 (note changed date, time and format): MGS board member **DONNA MOUGHTY** will give two presentations: **12:30 pm, HOW TO GET STARTED IN GENEALOGY; 2:30 pm, RESEARCHING AN IRISH FAMILY.**

6 APRIL 2002: PANEL DISCUSSION on **WHAT'S NEW IN GENEALOGY.** Panelists: **FRED HART JR., C.G.**, professional genealogist and author; **PHEBE KIRKHAM**, Reader Services and Information Department head at New Canaan Library; and **NANCY MALLING**, MGS board member and leader of the genealogy group at New Canaan Senior Center.

18 MAY 2002. Speaker to be announced.

ALL MEETINGS SATURDAY, DARIEN LIBRARY. Meeting times: 2 pm on 17 November 2001, 6 April and 18 May 2002; 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm on 2 February 2002. COME—AND INVITE A FRIEND TO JOIN US! ■

MGS AT DARIEN LIBRARY

The *FamilySearch* CD version of the 1880 Federal Census, described in the President's Message in the September 2001 issue of our Newsletter, is up and running. The Resource File Viewer, containing the search program, has been installed on the C drive of the genealogy computer and is now stored in the filing cabinet. The loose-leaf binder containing the 55 data discs, including the index records, is located next to the computer along with our other CDs. To access, click "Start," then click "Program," followed by "Family History" and, finally, click "Resource File Viewer." ■

FAMILY SEARCH SERENDIPITY

by Dale Pollart

My ancestors on my father's side immigrated to the United States only three generations ago. Yet, I had almost no information about the family history in Europe when I started my search. Conversations with my brothers, cousins, nieces, nephews and only remaining aunt yielded only a few morsels—the ancestor who emigrated from Europe was named Cornelus (spelling uncertain), he was born in or near Roermond, Netherlands (date uncertain), was married in that same region to Beatrix Thoolen (again, spelling uncertain) in April 1861, and they immigrated to the U.S. in 1863. A little more than a year later, thanks to a combination of extraordinary coincidences and incredible luck, I had a complete history of my ancestors in Europe back before 1300.

For several years of my business career, I traveled regularly to the Flemish region of Belgium. As a result, I had a number of friends and former colleagues whose native language is Flemish/Dutch. One in particular, Hugo Beesemans, who I knew quite well and with whom I had continued to correspond, had expressed an interest in my ancestry.

I sent an e-mail to Hugo outlining the above information and asked if he would make a few telephone calls to the Town Hall or to some of the churches in Roermond to see what he might find. Hugo made some calls and quickly learned that the vital records for the time period in question had been collected in Maastricht, the regional capital for the Province of Limburg. He and his wife, Jeanine, made two trips to Maastricht and found not only Cornelus and Beatrix's marriage record but also Cornelus's birth certificate, his draft certificate, his application for emigration and another tax-related document. It was thrilling to receive photocopies of these original handwritten documents along with Jeanine's translation. "In the year 1827, the 10th of the month of January...presented himself...Antoon Pollaert, clog maker by profession...who declared a male child, born today...belonging to him and Helena Bouten, his housewife, and to which he wanted to give the name Cornelus..."

At the same time, unknown to me, Hugo posted an e-mail note on the Netherlands Query Forum asking if anyone could help with information regard-

ing a Pollart/Pollaert family in the Roermond area that had emigrated to the U.S. in 1863. After a few weeks, Wiel Pollaert in Eindhoven, Netherlands, replied that two members of his family had done an extensive ancestry search. A few weeks later he sent a copy of this family history, a marvelous compilation totaling about 100 pages, to Hugo and to me.

There are numerous branches of the Pollaert family in this document, several in the Roermond area, but not a Cornelus in the mid-1800 era.

Soon after receiving this information, my wife and I made a trip to Belgium. Accompanied by Hugo and Jeanine, we went to the Roermond area to see if we could develop a connection to Wiel's family tree. As you go back into this time period, the records are not in Maastricht but are in the various villages where the particular events took place. We visited the village near Roermond where Cornelus was born and two other nearby villages where, in the limited time that we had, we did identify Cornelus's father and his grandfather. Unfortunately, going back two generations still did not connect with Wiel's ancestry.

Subsequently, Hugo and Jeanine made two more trips to the area and were able to trace Cornelus's family back two more generations. At that point, they struck pay dirt. They had found the family in which one of the brothers was Weil's ancestor and another brother was mine. With this connection, we had my family history!

I do not have a complete translation of the history, but do have most of the basics. The earliest written record of the name was a Gheraert van Pollaer who was killed in a battle near Cologne in 1288. The name comes from the ancient village of Pollaer/Pollare about 20 miles west of Brussels. Over the years, the various branches spread in many directions but our branch seems to have migrated slowly east. They were in the Roermond area but still on the west (Belgium) side of the Maas River by 1600. They remained on the west side of the river in various neighboring villages into the 1800s when Cornelus's father moved to the village of Merum on the east (Netherlands) side. Like most families, there were a number of Dukes and castles along the way, but Cornelus's father, as noted above, was a clog maker. Cornelus was a "plow man" in his early years; later he, too, became a clog maker. His official reason for requesting emigration was "economic improvement." In the U.S. he once again

turned to farming.

Like most genealogy stories, there is no end to this one. There is so much we don't know—why did Cornelus come here when he did, how did he choose where he was going, why was he the only one of his family that left, and so on and so on—but it is incredible how much we did learn thanks to the diligent effort of two distant “cousins” the willingness of another “cousin” to share his family archives and the personal interest of two exceedingly generous, wonderful friends who also had the right language. I wish all searchers could enjoy an equal measure of good fortune. ■

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (Continued from page 1)

farm south of Gettysburg—she was attending school in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. On 7 July, the day after the Battle of Gettysburg, she traveled back to Gettysburg. Her diary describes the thousands of Union soldiers that she met. They were supposed to be chasing Lee's army, but didn't chase him soon enough to capture the army, something that Lincoln considered an inexcusable military blunder. Grandmother got back to the family home that had been used to quarter Kilpatrick's Cavalry. Like all the other houses in the area, the home had been used as an emergency hospital, and the family dining table had been used for amputating the arms and legs of wounded soldiers. From various accounts we know that there were carloads of amputated arms and legs. Over the next three months, thousands of dead soldiers and dead, putrid horses were buried in shallow graves, many of them to be reburied the following spring. I say we know this from various accounts because Grandmother's diary contained no entries from the day she arrived home in Gettysburg on 7 July until the next entry on 4 September 1863, a period of more than eight weeks. My own interpretation is that she simply could not bear to describe the horrific scene.

The war passed and my ancestors went on with their lives—farming, ranching, teaching school, going to church and so forth. Over the years, they helped build local institutions wherever they went—schools, churches, towns. One ancestor who fought in dozens of battles in the War Between the States went west to

homestead. He built a log cabin in Kansas, then returned to Illinois for his wife and two infant daughters. On their return to Kansas, he discovered that claim jumpers had stolen his cabin. They showed him a wall of the cabin lined with rifles and said, “We think you better move on.” Four years of fighting had been enough for him, so he moved on and built a second cabin. When the area was surveyed, it proved to be located on railroad land, so he moved again and built a third cabin that was the family home for him, his wife and eleven children.

These are only a few examples. These ancestors struggled, out of self-interest, to improve the lot of their families and communities. In the United States many of our ancestors had the luxury of proceeding beyond narrow self-interest to real civic progress—that is, town building, city building, state building and nation building—the effort to make things better for all of us and those who come after us. From time to time, this constructive building of society was interrupted by various forms of “man's inhumanity toward man,” such as World War I, World War II, etc.

Now, as the world is again in crisis and civilization is being attacked, I am hopeful that the current war against terrorism will eventually be followed by a wave of progress. History shows a human desire to struggle for improvement. I am optimistic that this desire can and will overcome the mountains of obstacles that the world now faces.

David L. Mordy ■

CIVIL WAR DESCENDANTS' SOCIETY

The Civil War Descendants' Society, P.O. Box 233, Athens, Alabama 35611; Webpage:

<http://www.civilwardescsoc.com>

informs us that they have Union Army *and* Confederate Army military unit histories. They offer a research service for a modest fee. If you do not know your ancestor's unit, for \$15 they will search all Union or Confederate Military Rosters and send photocopies of all relevant findings to you. If they do not find any data, you will receive a full credit or refund. If you know your ancestor's unit, for \$10 they will search official records and/or other compendia of the Union and Confederate Armies and you will be sent the story of the war experiences of your ancestor's military unit. ■

PHOTOGRAPHIC CONSERVATION, PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION

13 October 2001 Meeting

David Mishkin, president of Just Black & White, Portland, Maine, and a frequent speaker at genealogical conferences around the country, gave a lively and informative presentation on this subject—one that is surely of broad interest.

The first thing to remember is that black and white photographs will last much longer than color. Even with proper environment and storage, color photographs cannot be expected to last more than 50 years, whereas black and white photographs with proper environment and storage can be expected to last at least 100 years. This is because color prints are commonly made from organic dyes that fade. Black and white prints, on the other hand, are produced using the metal silver, which deteriorates much less rapidly. There are extremely expensive color print processes (using pigments rather than dyes) available today to professional photographers, but expect to pay at least \$20 for a 5x7 print. If a photograph is important to you, store it in a protective environment and display a copy.

It is worth noting that a true sepia print will last even longer than a black and white print. This is because sepia toning converts the metallic silver in a photograph to a sulphide, which significantly increases the life of the photograph. Unfortunately, so called "sepia" prints made today by some photographic labs are actually produced on color paper, which makes them far less stable than black and white.

Some considerations about modern media: Today's video tapes only last 10-15 years, and anything harmful to photographs is also harmful to videos. Deterioration will be seen as "static" when playing the tape. To save existing tapes, rerecord them every 8-10 years. CD ROM is the best system today for storing data archivally. Unfortunately, future technology changes may make today's digital data and imaging unreadable.

David discussed the causes of photo deterioration, which can be divided into four categories:

- **Chemical.** Prints not fixed properly will darken. Those that have not been washed properly will lighten.

- **Physical.** Mishandling causes abrasions or breaks. Fingerprints leave oil and acid behind.
- **Biological.** Photos are made from gelatin and cellulose. These are attractive to insects and rodents.
- **Environmental.** Ideal storage temperature is $68^{\circ} \pm 2^{\circ}$. Ideal relative humidity is $50\% \pm 5\%$. Cyclic conditions found in unheated attics and basements cause the gelatin in photos to separate from the underlying paper. This creates a condition known as frilling, with the image flaking off.

David recommends the use of archival supplies in connection with photographs. Such materials are used commonly by museums and libraries to extend the lives of their holdings, but infrequently by the general public. As a consequence, they must usually be obtained through a catalog rather than at a store. Additional recommendations:

Do not use:

- Polyvinyl chloride;
- Blotters, other than special photographic blotters;
- Rubber, rubber bands, or rubber cement (contains sulphur which destroys photos rapidly);
- Hygroscopic (water absorbing) adhesives or those containing iron, sulphur or other impurities;
- Pressure-sensitive tapes and mounting materials;
- Acid inks and porous-tip marking pens that use water-base dyes;
- White envelopes containing bleach;
- Kraft paper envelopes;
- Glassine envelopes;
- Any paper or cardboard containing sulfur;
- Paper clips;
- Center seam envelopes.

Do not mount prints on:

- Plywood;
- Masonite;
- Or any composition board.

Do not store prints in:

- Boxes or cabinets made of wood or any composition board (contains bleaches and other chemicals);
- Attics or basements;
- Temperatures above 77° F and relative humidity above 50%;
- Files with newspaper clippings;
- Flat stacks.

Do not touch emulsion side:

UPCOMING SEMINARS

- Avoid contamination by human oils and perspiration—applies equally to negatives and prints.

Do not expose prints to:

- Fumes from floor varnishes, linoleums, oil-base paints, etc.;
- Carbon monoxide (garages);
- Photocopiers which produce strong light, heat and ozone (a bleach);
- Certain kinds of insulation;
- Sunlight.

Safe storage can be achieved by using safe papers or plastics to encapsulate or interleave your photos. Use only **paper** that is lignin-free (i.e., acid-free, unbuffered paper) to store photographs or as interleaving paper in albums. Any of the following **plastics** is safe to use in storing photographs, negatives or documents: polyester, Mylar, polypropylene, polyethelene, Tyvek and cellulose triacetate. (A thrifty hint: Read the contents on packages of plastic bags found in your grocery. You may find some that are made from plastics on this list.)

The foregoing will help you to preserve what you have. Many of us, however, have photographs that are already seriously compromised. Do not despair. David showed us a number of before-and-after slides to illustrate what can be done to restore or enhance images that seem hopeless. David's professional attention produced miracles.

Photo restoration has traditionally been done using an airbrush, which allows the restorer to fill in lost details with great control. A work print is made, and the airbrushing is done on the work print, not the original, which is preserved untouched. The work print is then copied photographically, providing a new negative from which additional prints can be made. Today, many restorations are being done by computer, but results are often less satisfactory and, of course, no negative is created, which limits options.

Photo enhancement is used to bring out detail in badly faded photos. Even photos too far gone to be scanned into a computer can be enhanced photographically through the use of different developers, filters and film to recover a good image.

David Mishkin maintains a Website at:

<http://www.maine.com/photos>

which contains a great deal of valuable information. ■

New York Genealogical & Biographical Society

The NYG&B has scheduled a series of four workshops during the winter months on New York City repositories—to be held at the repositories:

- **National Archives Northeast Region**, 201 Varick St., NYC; Thursday, 17 January 2002, 4-8 pm.
- **Municipal Archives of the City of New York**, 31 Chambers St., NYC; Friday, 8 February 2002, 2-4:30 pm.
- **NYG&B Library**, 122-126 E. 58th St. (between Park and Lexington), NYC; Tuesday, 26 February 2002, 5-8 pm.
- **New York Public Library**, Fifth Avenue at 41st St., NYC; Tuesday, 12 March 2002, 9:30-11 am.

Arrangements can be made to attend individual workshops, or all four. For more information, telephone (212) 755-8532; or visit NYG&B's Website at:

http://www.nygbs.org/ed/ny_repositories.html

GENTECH 2002

GENTECH 2002 will take place at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston's Back Bay on Friday and Saturday, 25 and 26 January 2002. The Convention Center is part of an indoor complex that includes three hotels, two shopping malls, restaurants, and much more, so there is no need to worry about the weather. The theme of this year's conference is "Family History at the Speed of Light," and the local host organization is New England Historic Genealogical Society. GENTECH's address is P.O. Box 140277, Irving, TX 75014. More information on the conference, including the entire program and a registration form, can be found at <http://www.gentech.org>

Aha! Seminars, Inc.

Aha! Seminars has announced that its Genealogy Cruise 2002, A Mexican Adventure, aboard the *Regal Empress* out of Port Manatee in Tampa Bay, Florida, will take place Tuesday to Sunday, 5-10 March 2002. Speakers will be George G. Morgan, who is president of Aha! Seminars, author, and a regular columnist for Ancestry.com; and Pamela Cooper, who heads the History and Genealogy Department of the Indian River County (Florida) Main Library; and is also president of the Florida State Genealogical Society. On this cruise the *Regal Empress* will visit two ports

in Mexico, Cozumel and Costa Maya. (Note: Your editor participated in Genealogy Cruise 2001, which was described in the MGS Newsletter, Vol. XVII, No. 2, May 2001.)

For additional information, visit Aha! Seminar's Website at: <http://www.ahaseminars.com/> Reservations are handled through Jim Garciga Travel Agency, 3021 W. Azeele Street, Tampa, FL 33609; telephone (800) 881-3600; e-mail JimGarcigaTravel@cs.com ■

1901 BRITISH CENSUS ONLINE

In an effort to make its services and records more broadly available, the Public Record Office will place online, as of 2 January 2002, the 1901 census returns for England and Wales. These census returns contain information on over 32 million people, and the index will be searchable free of charge by surname, forename, place, address, institution or vessel. If an individual of interest is found in the index, for a modest fee (payable by credit card) you can view a digital image of the original census page from the enumerator's book (75 p), or the transcribed details for an individual (50 p). Once you have "bought" an image, you can save it to disk and/or print it out. A copy can be ordered by mail, but an additional charge would be incurred for the cost of mailing. Because small charges are uneconomical for the provider, there is an initial minimum charge to your credit card of £5 for a 48-hour period of image access, and the cost of images viewed is deducted from that. If you use up the initial £5, any additional charges within the 48-hour period will be pay-as-you-go for each transaction. More information can be found at:

www.census.pro.gov.uk ■

PROTECTING YOUR DOCUMENTS

In a letter to the *London Times*, 16 December 1999, archivist John Byrne stated: "Metal paperclips...damage paper. As an archivist I spend half my days removing them from sheets which they have worn, punctured or, through oxidization, stained. Staples, embedding themselves the more deeply, are even worse." Consider using a piece of scrap paper as protection under metal paperclips if they must be employed, or using only plastic-coated paperclips in your own files. ■

CHARLES CHANLER COTTER

We report with deep sadness the death of long-time MGS board member Charles Cotter on 26 September. Born almost 79 years ago in New York City, Charles was the son of the late Dr. Lawrence and Dr. Beatrice Cotter. He was a graduate of Middlebury College and the Fletcher School of Diplomacy and served in the U.S. Army in France during World War II. Charles worked for Mobil Oil Corp. for 25 years, primarily in West Africa and Europe, and was president of Mobile Chemical Group in the Netherlands at the time of his retirement. Later he served as regional vice president for Dravo Engineering International in Italy.

In addition to MGS, Charles was also a member of the Darien Senior Men's Association and the Society of Colonial Wars. He was a knowledgeable genealogist who generously shared his expertise with others, and his great good sense and dry wit will be acutely missed at MGS. Charles wrote some excellent articles for our Newsletter (see Vol. XVI, No. 3, Sept. 2000; Vol. XI, No. 3, Sept. 1995), and he also produced his own book, *Ancestry of Beatrice Fairbanks; Noyes, Van Kleeck, Leeds*. He donated a copy of the book to the society, and it is on our shelves at Darien Library. We extend our sincere sympathy to his wife, Jeanette, and his two sons and three grandchildren. ■

MGS BOARD CHANGES

Nancy Malling and Ken Reiss have recently been elected to the Board of Directors of Middlesex Genealogical Society. Both have considerable experience of great value to MGS. Nancy leads a genealogical club at the New Canaan Senior Center, and Ken is president of the Darien Historical Society. ■

QUERIES

will return in subsequent issues.

Deadline for next newsletter
8 January 2002

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

2002 MEMBERSHIP

- Renewal
 New

ANNUAL DUES

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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, 17 NOV. 2001, 2 PM
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