



Middlesex Genealogical Society

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January 2001

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Whimsical or bizarre things that turn up in genealogical research are often amusing. Let me relate to you a little of the story of Baron Von Sitler's millions.

According to one account, during the early 1700s, Baron Von Sitler was the owner of a large estate in what later became Germany. He was engaged in manufacturing silks and accumulated a fortune of at least \$50 million. The Baron was a staunch Catholic, but his sons Mathias and Dietrich, along with his daughter named Elizabeth or Margaritha, became Lutherans. Because of this change of religion, the Baron wrote his children out of his will and gave them a substantial amount of money, saying it was the last they would ever receive from him.

The children decided to go to America. At this point their father invested most of his money in 99-year bonds and wrote a will providing that when the bonds matured, the money would go to his children's children. Until then, he designated the King of Prussia as trustee of his estate.

The records are uncertain, but Mathias Sitler may have arrived in Philadelphia 3 December 1740, followed by Dieter 2 November 1744. Dieter was knocked unconscious, suffered a broken leg, and was robbed of his money aboard ship during a violent storm. He ended up as a farmer in Pennsylvania, where he assisted in building a German Lutheran church in Berks County in 1745.

The older brother, Mathias Sitler, settled in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and later moved to Baltimore where he helped to develop the city and left a large estate when he died in 1787. One of his Baltimore projects was the building of a beautiful Dutch Garden that he sold 29 July 1779 for \$60,000 in gold.

After his son Benjamin told this to General Washington, indicating Sitler's willingness to help the cause, Washington went to Baltimore where Mathias Sitler loaned him \$90,000. When the loan was later repaid, Sitler received from Washington 40,000 acres of land in the Shenandoah Valley.

Beginning in the 1840s, when the bonds in the old Baron Von Sitler's estate matured, some members of the family attempted to put in claims for their inheritance. However, by this time, the children and grandchildren of the Baron were all dead, and the descendants were frustrated by the difficulties in proving who all the heirs were.

About 1850 a representative of the German government arrived in the United States and was referred to Thaddeus Stephens, a famous lawyer and a congressman from Pennsylvania. Stephens was prepared to represent the Sitler heirs for a fee of \$2500 plus 15% of the amount received from the estate, but the family did not agree to pay this fee.

Supposedly the German government sent an agent to the United States for five months during 1885 in an effort to clear up this matter. At that time, there were

(Continued on page 4)

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership renewal was due 1 January 2001. If you have not already sent in your dues, PLEASE CONSIDER THIS YOUR RENEWAL NOTICE. You may use the form on the last page of this Newsletter to renew your membership—or become a new member. Alternatively, a piece of paper with the requested information on it will do. It is most important, however that you renew your membership promptly in order to retain the benefits of membership, which include receiving this Newsletter. ■

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: dbowley@concentric.net

UPCOMING MGS MEETINGS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

27 JANUARY 2001: "WHAT'S ON THE INTERNET FOR FAMILY HISTORIANS" is the title of a presentation by MGS Vice President DONNA MOUGHTY. Over the past year there has been a great deal of consolidation of companies in the field of genealogy. Multiple databases of information have now been combined on a few sites. This presentation will look at the type of information available to the family historian and focus on strategies for narrowing the search.

31 MARCH 2001: This joint meeting with the Connecticut Ancestry Society will focus on the resources available in Darien, both at Darien Library and the Darien Historical Society, to assist family historians with their research. Members of Middlesex Genealogical Society will be available in the library from 10 am to 1 pm to assist new researchers. At 2 pm a panel will discuss DARIEN HISTORY AND RESOURCES.

19 MAY 2001: HARLAN R. JESSUP, will present "WHEN SOURCES ARE WRONG—DEALING WITH ERRORS IN PRIMARY RECORDS." Any genealogist beyond the novice level knows that published records are subject to error and that it is always a good idea to check primary sources. But what if primary sources (or those we assume to be primary) are also incorrect? How do we recognize and make allowances for such errors? This presentation will give some interesting examples of errors in primary sources and will suggest strategies to compensate for them in our conclusions.

Harlan Jessup has been a professional genealogist specializing in Connecticut for about six years. Although he covers all areas and all periods in Connecticut research, he is especially fond of Colonial research in western Connecticut towns. He spends much of his time at the State Library in Hartford and is on their list of accredited researchers. He is also president of the Connecticut Ancestry Society and a member of many others.

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

MISSING FROM DARIEN LIBRARY

A recent inventory has revealed that six issues of the *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* are missing from the Genealogy Room at Darien Library. They are: Vol. 123, No. 3, July 1992; Vol. 128, No. 4, October 1997, Vol. 129, No. 2, April 1998; Vol. 129, No. 4, October 1998; Vol. 129, Index, 1998; and Vol. 130, No. 1, Jan. 1999. It is sincerely hoped that these issues will be returned promptly. ■

BACK TO BASICS, PART 2

USING CENSUS RECORDS

by Donna Moughty

So, now you've worked on your Pedigree Charts and Family Group Sheets. Are you hooked yet? You probably used the holiday time to check in with all your relatives to gather additional family information and stories.

After vital records, one of the most common resources used by genealogists is census records. In the United States our Constitution specifies that a nationwide enumeration or count of the population be done every 10 years. The first Federal Census in the United States was done in 1790, and, as you know, the most recent was done in 2000. Not all of the recent census records are available to the public; the most recent Federal Census available for research is 1920. United States privacy laws require that census data be kept confidential for 72 years, so we are all waiting for 1 April 2002 when the 1930 Census will become public.

As with all of your research, it's important to start with what you know and work back. You can probably find either your parents or grandparents in the 1920 Census. This census gives the greatest amount of information about the family unit, i.e., the head of the household, the relationship of everyone in the household to the head, age, marital status, year of immigration, whether naturalized, occupation, place of birth and native language of each individual and his or her parents. It was the 1920 Census that told me that my grandfather, who's death certificate stated he was born in Vienna, Austria, was probably not Viennese; his native language was Polish!

Once you find your family, continue to work back through earlier censuses. This will usually allow you to match someone other than the head of the family to make certain you are tracking the correct family. The 1890 Census was almost completely destroyed, so you will probably have a 20-year gap from 1880 to 1900. There will be less information as you work back through earlier censuses, but until you reach 1850 you will continue to see each individual in the household listed. From 1840 back to 1790, only the head of the household is listed with statistics regarding the age and sex of individuals in the household.

To find your family in a census you will need to use some finding aids. From 1880 to 1920 we use the Soundex method for finding individuals. Information on how to use the Soundex is available in most genealogical how-to books and is also available where you find census records, e.g., National Archives and Family History Library. To overcome problems such as handwriting misinterpretation or transcription errors, the Soundex coding system groups names that sound alike together, using the first letter of the surname followed by a three-digit numerical code. All vowels and double letters are removed from the name and the next three consonants after the first letter are assigned a number. This allows for alternate spellings (i.e., Daly, Dailey, Dalley, Daily) all to be coded the same way (D400). Printed indexes, by state, exist for censuses prior to 1880.

Each bit of information you obtain can lead you to another question. Don't forget your basics; always write down everything you find (or don't find), and *cite your sources!* A typical source citation for a census record might read:

¹ Ralph Splatt Household, 1920 U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Homestead Borough, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania; E.D. 142, S. D. 24, Sheet 5B (continued on 6A); Dwelling 90, Family 115; National Archives, Waltham; National Archives Micropublication T625, Roll 1513; Viewed 10 March 1998. (Copy filed in folder 30/31.)

Lots can be learned from census records, but beware. The information contained is generally secondary information. A census can place a family in a certain place at a particular time; however, the person giving the information to the census taker could have been anyone in the household, or even a neighbor.

Census records can be found at the National Archives or the Family History Library. Microfilmed census records can also be borrowed for use at a local Family History Center, and your local library may be able to borrow National Archives film for use by its patrons. In addition, many libraries have census films for their geographic area. Within the past few years, companies such as Heritage Quest have been putting images of the census films onto CD's that can be read on your personal computer. In the Genealogy Room of the Darien Library you will find CD's for Federal Censuses in Connecticut. Finally, Ancestry.com has

begun a project to digitize the census films for the Internet. Presently, the 1790 Census and the 1920 Census for some states have been completed, and they intend to have all records digitized before the end of 2001. This is a very costly project, so be aware that there is an annual subscription for viewing these census records online.

Resources:

Census forms can be found in many how-to books or on the Internet. Check out the Reference Section in the Genealogy Room at Darien Library.

- Croom, Emily Anne, *The Genealogist's Companion & Sourcebook*, Betterway Books, Cincinnati, 1994.
- Church of Jesus Christ, Latter Day Saints, *Using a Branch Genealogy Library: How to Use the U.S. Census* (video available at the Darien Library).
- Cyndi's List, "U.S. Census":
<http://www.cyndislist.com/census.htm>
- National Archives and Records Administration, "The Soundex Indexing System":
<http://www.nara.gov/genealogy/coding.html> ■

CRUISING LONG ISLAND SOUND

by Donna Moughty

On 8 November 2000 Fred Hart, CG, a member of Middlesex Genealogy Society, discussed early migration patterns that used Long Island Sound as a major migration route.

Long Island Sound's geography and history combine to make a unique region for genealogical study. Travel across the Sound was facilitated by many small harbors and protection from the open ocean. Because of the relatively short distances, sailing across in a day was usually a simple matter.

Fred first defined the types of early migration. In some cases Long Island Sound was used simply as a route to allow movement from New England down to New York City, which he refers to as "passing through." In other instances, entire groups moved from one area to another, sometimes for political, religious or economic reasons. Finally, individuals, such as pastors, schoolteachers, politicians or military leaders, moved back and forth across the Sound.

After setting the stage, Fred used maps to demonstrate the movement of specific groups, families and individuals between New England and Long Island during various time periods.

If you are researching either early New England or Long Island families, it is important to use a variety of resources on both sides of Long Island Sound. ■

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

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

hundreds or thousands of potential heirs. A little later several people in the family formed societies to pursue their inheritance, and began a rather disorganized effort to gather information from cemeteries and church records. They found that many grave stones were illegible, and many records had been burned. Apparently, they never gathered enough information to compile a real genealogy of Sitler descendants.

In 1897, a New York newspaper carried a notice purporting to come from the American consul in Berlin: "Wanted. Heirs to inherit a vast estate left in Germany by Mathias Sitler, Sr." By this time, the fortune was rumored to be as much as \$350 million.

We have the minutes of the "Dietrich Sitler German Society" held at Lockport, New York, 21-22 August 1901, which detail efforts to pursue the Sitler fortune. At the afternoon session, 143 people had enrolled. The president of the Mathias Sitler German Society reported on his investigations. Over the years, agents who had been sent to Germany a couple of times to gather information came back with vague representations that "the money is there." The minutes include an appeal to the members to collect and forward genealogical information so that a complete list of heirs could be compiled, along with appropriate documentation. The minutes also name some 350 people believed to be heirs.

None of these efforts came to fruition, and apparently the purported vast estate of the Baron Von Sitler escheated to the German government before World War I. My wife's family is still waiting for its money.

David L. Mordy ■

MGS CD ROM HOLDINGS AT DARIEN LIBRARY

Family Tree Maker

CD #	Title
116	Census Index: Ontario, Canada
117	New England Families #1
118	Canadian Genealogy Index, 1600s-1900s
146	Military Records: U.S. Soldiers, 1784-1811
160	State Index: Upstate NY, 1685-1910
162	Virginia Genealogies #1, pre-1600s to 1900s
163	Pennsylvania Genealogies #1, pre-1600s to 1900s
164	Mortality Index: United States, 1850-1880
174	Virginia Vital Records #1, 1600s-1800s
179	Connecticut Genealogies #1, 1600s-1800s
285	Census Index: Western Pennsylvania, 1870
310	Census Index: Colonial America, 1607-1789
311	Census Index: U.S. Selected Counties, 1790
312	Census Index: U.S. Selected Counties, 1800
313	Census Index: U.S. Selected Counties, 1810
314	Census Index: U.S. Selected Counties, 1820
315	Census Index: U.S. Selected Counties, 1830
316	Census Index: U.S. Selected Counties, 1840
317	Census Index: U.S. Selected Counties, 1850
318	Census Index: U.S. Selected States/Counties, 1860
319	Census Index: U.S. Selected States/Counties, 1870
320	Census Index: U.S. Selected States/Counties, 1880
350	Complete Book of Emigrants, 1607-1800s
354	Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, 1600s-1800s (donated by D. Pollart)

New England Historical and Genealogical Register
The Register from 1847 to 1994 on nine disks of which Disk 9 is a condensed index—to be used FIRST

Family Quest Connecticut Federal Census Series
For the following years: 1790, 1800, 1810, 1820, 1830, 1840 (2), 1850 (2), 1860 (4), 1870 (4), 1900 (5), 1910 (4), 1920 (6).

LDS FamilySearch (Note: These disks are to be used only in the old computer and must remain in their caddies when they are inserted in the CD drive.)

IGI: British Isles (9), Germany (4), Mexico (4), North America (5), Finland/Iceland (2) Central Europe (2), Denmark (1), Sweden (1), Norway (1), South

America (1), Addendum (17).

Ancestral File (9).

Social Security Death Index (3).

Military Index (1).

Family History Library Index, 18th Edition (1).

Note: Numbers in parentheses indicate number of disks. ■

WORKSTATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE NEW GENEALOGY COMPUTER

by David V. Bowley

A number of improvements have been made to our computer arrangements at Darien Library, and, for the benefit of our members, I would like to describe how to use the various programs.

The library has provided a second workstation for our genealogists with a new computer that is much faster than the old one. It has been located back-to-back with the old machine, and it has its own laser printer.

The first thing that you should know is that some items on the first menu require CD ROM disks to run, and these disks can be found in the small drawers to the left of the computer. To use one of these, take the appropriate CD out of its jewel case and insert it into the computer's CD ROM drive.

To start the new machine, use the mouse to point the arrow to the start button at the bottom left-hand corner of the screen and click the left-hand mouse button once. This will display a menu of genealogical programs.

1. Ancestry.com (online).

Using the mouse, point the arrow at the ancestry.com icon on the menu, click the left-hand mouse button twice and wait for the name entry box to appear. It is not necessary to log in as we are fully paid up members. (If you do click on "Log in," you will get the message "Welcome Darien Library.") Enter the name to be searched for, and the program will search all its databases and show you which ones contain the name that you are looking for. Using the mouse, point to any underlined database that you are interested in, click the left-hand mouse button once, and the program will return details that can be printed out by pointing at the print icon and clicking the left-hand button once. THIS PROGRAM INCLUDES PERSI.

2. The Family Archive Viewer (compact disks).

Point the mouse arrow to the Family Archive Viewer icon and click the left-hand mouse button twice. Take the CD to be searched from the small drawer to the left of the monitor, remove the CD from its jewel case, find the CD drive in the computer tower on the floor to the left, press the small button to open the CD drive, insert the CD (label side up) in the tray, and press the small button again to close the drive.

When the family data entry screen comes up, IGNORE IT and any entries which it may contain. Proceed to the next screen and point the mouse arrow to the top right-hand icon in the power-bar (looks like a disk with a magnifying glass on top) and click the left-hand mouse button once.

A screen will appear with a number of entries of the database, one of which is highlighted. Ignore this, and point the mouse at the "Search Expert" and click once. This will bring up the search inquiry screen on which you should type in the name for which you are searching, hit the enter key, and a facsimile of the page will appear. To "tag" this document, press the space bar. To print all documents that you have tagged, point to File, select Print and click once; click OK on the print screen.

To read the **BELL FILE**, point the arrow to the index button in the power bar (far left) and an alphabetical pull-down list of all 17,000+ names will appear. Type the required name in the space provided at the top of the screen. If the name typed belongs to one of the people in the database, the index will immediately move to that name. Point the arrow to it, and click the left-hand mouse button to bring up the family page for that person.

3. LDS FamilySearch (online).

Point the mouse arrow at the *FamilySearch* icon and click on the left-hand button. When the search screen appears, enter just the name of the person for whom you are searching. If you are not sure of the exact date of an event, estimate the year and choose a wide spread; you can always refine your search later. The program now allows you to filter by country and, in the U.S.A., by state. (*Note:* To uncover the search button, you must scroll down by pointing the mouse arrow at the downwards pointing arrow in the right-hand frame and pressing the left-hand mouse button. Further scrolling down can be done by placing the arrow on the scrolling arrow and keeping the mouse button de-

pressed, or by dragging the scroll "elevator button" for rapid movement up or down.

Any underlined text is a link to additional information and can be clicked to display an additional screen. Note that the source of the information is shown, e.g., IGI or Ancestral File, and in the latter case details of the submitter can be obtained. All screens can be printed out if required. Links are also provided for Websites that include the name being searched for.

4. Family History Vital Records (compact disks).

These are "strays" that have been put onto disks by LDS. They are baptisms and marriages from the U.S., U.K., and Canada, and are additional to the data in the IGI and Ancestral File.

Point the mouse arrow at the "Family History Vital Records" icon and click the left-hand mouse button twice, respond to the viewer by choosing the database required with a single click of the mouse button. Pick any CD from the U.S. or U.K. databases and insert it in the CD drive as described in 2, above.

Enter a name to be searched for, keeping the inquiry as general as possible, and the program will return the results. If there are too many results to go through, you must refine your research parameters. Go through the records as described in 3, above.

5. Internet Explorer, MGS, and other favorite Websites.

Point the mouse arrow at the Internet Explorer icon and double-click the mouse's left-hand button. This displays the MGS Webpage. Scroll down, using the downward-pointing arrow in the frame to read the page and click once on any underlined links.

6. New England Historical and Genealogical Society Register.

The *NEHGS Register* through 1994 is now available on CD ROM disks. This duplicates early microfilm and almost two shelves of hard-copy volumes. The CD ROM disk version allows word search and displays the pages containing the word searched for. To open the *Register*, find Disk 9, Index, and insert it into the CD ROM drive. When you enter the name you are searching for, the program will tell you which disk to use. The program operates in the same way as the Family Archive Viewer (2 above), so reread this section to get full use out of the program. If it is used correctly, the program will give you full-page facsimile, printable copies of pages of the *Register*. ■

QUERIES

Instructions:

Genealogical queries will be published in the *MGS Newsletter*, space permitting, and at the editor's discretion, giving preference to Fairfield County, other Connecticut counties and nearby Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess Counties in New York. Queries that are too vague or general will not be used. Make queries brief, but include known dates, places and other identifying information. Don't abbreviate, as we will do that.

Query Fee: Member queries under 50 words, free. Over 50 words, or nonmembers, \$5.

Address: Query Editor, MGS, P.O. Box 1111, Darien, CT 06820-1111. Please include your name, address, and e-mail address, if any.

Please note: All locations are in Connecticut unless otherwise specified. Queries are also posted on the MGS Website.

121. FOSTER. Need maiden name and parents of William FOSTER's wife Patience ?. William was born 17 April 1753 in Ridgefield, Fairfield Co., married Patience in 1774/5, and died 23 April 1836. After the Revolutionary War they lived in Marcellus, Onandaga Co., NY. Their daughter Sylvia married Elijah BOWEN (1782-1861) in 1804. *Jane Edmundson, 35 Bridge St., #302, Westport, CT 06880.*

122. HUBBARD. Seek maiden name and parents of Rebecca ? who m Benjamin HUBBARD (b 1716 in Pomfret, d 17 June 1789). Their daughter Susanna (1743-1799) m Ephraim WARREN. *Jane Edmundson, 35 Bridge St., #302, Westport, CT 06880.*

123. EAGER/AGER/AGUR. Seek information on James Eager/Ager/Agur and Rhoda Stewart, both b about 1770, who married each other in East Haddam, Middlesex Co., around 1796. James Eager was a school teacher who probably taught in this area in the 1780s and 1790s. Rhoda was the daughter of James Stewart and Rhoda Graves. Details on the marriage and children born to them in 1796, 1798, 1800, 1802, and 1804 (sex and names unknown) are needed. *Don Eager, e-mail: Donea1999@aol.com* ■

CALIFORNIA OBITUARIES

Our California correspondent, Mrs. Eleanor E. Borkenhagen, has sent us another batch of obituaries for people born in Connecticut who died in California.

Born in Naugatuck 4 Nov. 1913, Elisabeth S.

HERLOCK died in Alhambra, CA, 8 Oct. 1998.

Born in New Haven: Marvin BEST died at age 80 on 3 June 1999 in Los Angeles. Kathryn Louise (POWELL) BRONSON (b 16 May 1921) died 17 Nov. 1998 in Los Angeles. Arvine (Marc) HENRY (b 9 Aug. 1916) died 6 March 1999 at Diamond Bar, CA. Joseph Jerome KAUFMAN, M.D., (b 10 Feb. 1921), long associated with UCLA Medical School, died 11 March 1999 near his home in Maui, Hawaii. Rudolph KOEPKE (b 21 July 1920) died 13 May 1998 in Costa Mesa, CA. Gertrude L. (MAHN) ROSIEN died 20 Feb. 1999 in Los Angeles. Edward J. SULLIVAN (b 15 July 1927) died 19 Nov. 1998 in Corona, CA.

Born in Waterbury: Anna Patricia MAHER (b 23 Nov. 1919) died 28 Oct. 1998 in Costa Mesa, CA. Robert James NORGREN (b 24 Aug. 1934) died in Fullerton, CA, 29 May 1999.

Thank you, Mrs. Borkenhagen! ■

UPCOMING SEMINARS

3 February, Fairfield Public Library: MGS Vice President Donna Moughty will present an **Introduction to Family History Research on the Internet**. To register, visit:

<http://www.fairfieldpubliclibrary.org/techtraining.htm>

27 February, Genealogy 101 On-the-Road with Marcia Melnyk from New England Historical and Genealogical Society will take place at the Stamford Historical Society. For more information, visit:

<http://www.newenglandancestors.org/calendarsection>

3 March: Connecticut Ancestry Society will hold a workshop from 10 am to 2 pm at the Fairfield Historical Society. Speaker to be announced.

May 27 to June 3: Alaskan Seminar Cruise will feature John Colletta and Helen Leary sharing their genealogical knowledge with guests aboard the Regal Princess. Participation must be booked through Pam Ruiz of GenCruise.com at (877) 290-6500 (toll-free). Application forms and additional information can be found online at: <http://www.gencruise.com> ■

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER
24 APRIL 2001**

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

2001 MEMBERSHIP

- Renewal
- New

ANNUAL DUES

- Individual (\$15)
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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
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MEETING
SATURDAY, 27 JAN. 2001, 2 PM
DARIEN LIBRARY

