



Middlesex Genealogical Society

Vol. XVII, No. 3

Darien, Fairfield County, CT

September 2001

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Let me call your attention to the newly available *FamilySearch* CD version of the 1880 US Federal Census that is soon to be located with our collection of CDs at Darien Library. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has organized and published this collection of 55 compact disks, plus a 56th disk that contains the search program, and they are to be complimented for their undertaking. The transcription of some 50 million records is a massive project that all genealogists and family historians can appreciate and should use.

Those of you who have used previous finding aids to census records are undoubtedly familiar with the fact that bound index volumes are available for most of the earlier decennial censuses, but not for the 1880 and later censuses. The 1790 census in a given state could be indexed in a thin volume. As the U.S. population grew, however, the census records grew and the index volumes got progressively thicker and thicker. By 1850 and 1860 states such as New York began to require multiple volumes for their index. The amount of work required to prepare such an index became so great that the 1870 census is still only partially indexed. For the 1880 census a Soundex index has long been available, but it includes only those families with children 10 years of age and younger.

The new CD transcription of the 1880 census, together with a national index, fills a long-standing need for a better finding aid to the 1880 census. If you have ever been frustrated by the inability to find one of your family members in that census, you should certainly try using the new data files.

Let me make you aware of some of the advan-

tages and disadvantages of these new CDs. Among the major advantages, there is a National Index contained on 20 disks, so that one need not start with a particular state or county. The Index records lead you to one of 35 disks that contain the record detail. Another advantage is that all households are indexed, in contrast to the Soundex records that include only families with young children. Moreover, for me, it is an advantage to have index records compiled according to regular spelling, rather than the Soundex approach of mixing surnames with similar phonetic sounds. Another plus is the fact that the original handwritten records have been transcribed into easily readable text. A feature of the CDs is that one may review records that were originally entered as neighboring records by the census taker. It could be useful to you to know who someone's neighbors were in 1880.

One disadvantage or limitation of the new CDs is that one cannot view the original handwriting. One must turn to another source if one wishes to view the handwritten record or obtain a photocopy of that hand-

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AN IMPORTANT BENEFIT OF YOUR CURRENT MGS MEMBERSHIP CARD

"During all normal business hours, members of genealogical societies incorporated or authorized to do business or conduct affairs in this state shall (1) have full access to all vital records in the custody of any registrar of vital statistics, including certificates, ledgers, record books, card files, indexes and database printouts, except confidential files on adoptions, (2) be permitted to make notes from such records and (3) be permitted to purchase copies of such records."

From Connecticut Public Act No. 96-258, Section 3; effective date, 10 June 1996.

MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

2001-2002 OFFICERS

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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>

UPCOMING MGS MEETINGS MARK YOUR CALENDARS

13 OCTOBER 2001: PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION, PRESERVATION & RESTORATION will be presented by **DAVID L. MISHKIN**, President of Just Black & White, Portland, ME, and a featured lecturer at numerous genealogical conferences. David is a member of the Genealogical Speakers Guild and is currently Vice President of the New England Regional Genealogical Conference. He is Conference Chair for the next NERGC conference in Cape Cod, MA, in 2003 and has written several articles for photographic and genealogical publications.

Those lucky enough to have tintypes may have found that they are getting so dark that the image is no longer visible. Older photographs are damaged or fading away and even pictures taken in the last few decades are changing their colors and fading. David will speak to us about what we should be doing to preserve some of our most important treasures—our family pictures. His talk will focus on conservation: the deterioration process and how to prevent it, restoration of damaged and faded photos, and an exploration of the best preservation methods for the pictures we are creating now. **Bring a photo for evaluation!**

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.

26 JANUARY 2002: ANNUAL WORKSHOP MEETING.

6 APRIL 2002. Speaker to be announced.

18 MAY 2002. Speaker to be announced.

ALL MEETINGS SATURDAY, 2 PM, AT DARIEN LIBRARY. INVITE A FRIEND TO JOIN US! ■

FAMILY HISTORY FESTIVAL

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at 800 Stillwater Road in Stamford hosted a Family History Festival on 25 August, from 1:00 to 5:00 pm. It was a very full afternoon of genealogy.

Babysitting was provided by church volunteers who welcomed the children and supervised their activities throughout the afternoon. Church volunteers also provided an elegant buffet on the lawn where a variety of delicious foods and snacks and a fruit punch could be enjoyed at canopied tables while socializing with other genealogists.

Inside the church building one room was filled with booths for local historical and genealogical societies. MGS had its own booth, staffed by Jane Edmondson, David Mordy, Chick Scribner and Dorothy Shillinglaw.

Church volunteers gave tours of the onsite Family History Center, and offered individual help on getting started in genealogy, family displays, and advanced searches. In several rooms workshops were repeated all afternoon at half-hour intervals on:

- Online Research;
- Ellis Island Immigration Records Database; and
- Freedman's Bank Database.

Each workshop began with a brief introduction, followed by individual computer use to access the data. Even when the number of attendees made it impossible for everyone to work at a computer, much could be learned by watching over a user's shoulder.

While all of this was going on, five presentations were being given in the chapel. Because all presentations were given in one space within the four-hour period of the Festival, they were necessarily somewhat abbreviated, but also concentrated. Each presentation was loaded with useful information, and all attendees seemed to gain new insights. Four of the presentations have been described by MGS attendees.

"Where Do I Start?" by Fred Hart, Connecticut Ancestry Society.

"Birth, Marriage, Death and Cemetery Records," by William T. Stanfield, Fairfield Historical Society. Reported by Dorothy Shillinglaw.

Mr. Stanfield began by discussing the reliability of Family Bible records. If entries were made at the time of the events, they will probably be in different inks

and may be in different handwriting, but they are likely to be reliable. On the other hand, if a list was entered long after the events described, however neat and attractive it is, it may not be accurate. Be wary if all the ink and handwriting are the same, and check the copyright date in the Bible. If the copyright date is later than dates of entries, the records may only be hearsay.

Mr. Stanfield recommended becoming familiar with state laws that affect availability of vital records.

Often a "Copy of a Record of Birth" has been transcribed from a large volume, and transcription errors are possible. A photocopy of the original record would be more helpful, as it would allow you to identify words that might be transcribed incorrectly. Hopefully, however, what you get will at least contain parents' names, place of residence, place and date of birth, and location (volume and page number) of the original record.

A copy of a marriage license, which contains answers to questions about previous marriages, place and date of birth, parents, etc., would be more helpful than a certificate that merely verifies that the marriage took place.

Death records, too, may contain transcription errors. And with a death record, you must also assess the reliability of the informant. Cemetery records and monumental inscriptions can be helpful, and cemeteries will often provide maps and plot layouts to aid your search.

"Federal Census Records," by Mary E. Aillery, Family History Consultant. Reported by David Mordy.

Ms. Aillery covered basic information that every genealogical researcher needs to know. Her talk covered the Federal Census records that are available on microfilm at the National Archives branch on the 12th Floor at 201 Varick Street in New York City. (This is the Federal Building at the corner of Varick and Houston Streets.) She indicated that the National Archives offices are open from 8 am to 4:30 pm Monday to Friday. They are also open the 3rd Saturday of each month, although they tend to be crowded on Saturdays. Ms. Aillery explained the indexing system called Soundex that is used for indexing Federal Census records for 1880, 1900, and 1920. The 1880 Soundex index is incomplete as it only includes those

families with children 10 years of age or younger. The Miracode index for 1910 is similar.

She explained how to convert a surname to a Soundex code in order to locate the microfilm copy of a Soundex index entry. This index record provides the necessary information to locate a microfilm copy of the full census record—i.e., county, township and page number or Enumeration District (ED) number. (Note: See “President’s Message” on page 1 of this newsletter, which describes a new index to the 1880 census that has been compiled by the LDS Church).

“Town Records,” by Sally T. Serafino, City and Town Clerk of Stamford. Reported by David Mordy.

Ms. Serafino keeps local records that are important sources for the family historian. She described records that are available in her office and indicated that every town in Connecticut follows similar practice as to the types of information that are recorded and maintained in the office of the Town Clerk. These records include land records, vital statistics, election records, licenses, permits, maps and military records. Connecticut Public Act 146 now provides certain funds for preservation of historical records.

Stamford has original deeds going back to 1640. Ms. Serafino indicated that the Arnold Index is a handwritten index of births, deaths and marriages. This index is complementary to the Barbour Index with which most genealogical researchers are familiar. She described the grantor and grantee indexes to Stamford land records and the land maps that relate to those land records. Some of these maps are in poor condition, and Stamford is using funds from Public Act 146 to help preserve the maps.

Among the records in Stamford are those relating to Revolutionary War damage claims and other records relating to soldier’s discharges.

“When the Records Are Wrong,” by Harlan R. Jessup, Connecticut Ancestry Society. Reported by Dorothy Shillinglaw. (You will recall that Harlan Jessup gave a presentation on this subject at the 19 May 2001 MGS meeting.)

Primary records, which are created at the time of or shortly after an event by someone with personal knowledge of the event, should be the most accurate and valuable that are available, but even they are sometimes wrong. Harlan gave a number of examples of inaccurate primary records that he had found. He

suggested that we bear in mind that records are created by people, not all of whom are careful, and every transcription is another opportunity for introduced error. Remember that transcriptions may contain omissions, as well as inaccuracies.

When you have found and examined primary records, assess their likely accuracy by comparing them to other information available to you. Develop an understanding of the historical and cultural context of the records, and examine all available sources of the information—even obscure ones.

Harlan recommended using land records, whenever possible, to supplement vital records that are missing or suspect. He also reminded us that the 1752 calendar change may have caused confusion in dates given to the clerk charged with recording them, and urged us to be wary of family records grouped by family within “Town Records,” as they were probably created long after some of the events recorded. Always verify county lines at the time of an event, and check across the county line if it seems prudent to do so. (For example, Rye and Bedford, NY, were once part of Fairfield County!)

As Harlan said: “To err is human (the role of the record keeper); to forgive divine (the role of God); and to compensate for human error is the role of the genealogist.”

THE FAMILY HISTORY FESTIVAL was a tremendous undertaking accomplished smoothly and graciously by the church and its numerous volunteers. If there is another one next year, do plan to attend. ■

HAVE YOU TRIED “NUCKMUCK”?

No, it’s not something to keep your feet warm. “Nuckmuck” is the pronunciation of NUCMC, an acronym that stands for National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections, a Library of Congress program. Research libraries, museums, state archives, historical societies, etc. regularly receive manuscript donations. Once a year they report new acquisitions to the NUCMC program at the Library of Congress, and these acquisitions are added to the catalog. You can consult this catalog at:

<http://lcweb.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/nucmc.html>

If you find that manuscripts exist for a surname of interest, you can contact the holder of the manuscripts and then either visit or arrange for copies to be made and mailed to you. ■

GENEALOGY SCAMS

QALBERT's went out of business in September 1999; however, in April of this year your editor received a solicitation for the purchase of "The Year 2001 Shillinglaw Family Yearbook," which promised information about Shillinglaw births, baptisms, marriages, deaths, immigrations, employments, occupations and retirements, plus a complete Shillinglaw family history—all for \$44.85 (\$34.85 if ordered within three weeks) plus \$5 shipping and handling. The publisher is shown as being Morphcorp LLC, doing business as The Shillinglaw Family News—Maxwell and Christina Shillinglaw, at 1181 S. Parker Road, Suite 105, Denver, CO 80231; telephone (303) 751-0869.

Be assured that a "Year 2001 [your surname] Family Yearbook" is available or soon will be. An article on this by Linda Kleback, entitled "Buyer Beware of Genealogy Scam Artists," appeared in the *News Herald*, 16 April 2000, and can be read at:

<http://www.newsherald.com/articles/2000/04/16/tp041600.htm>

The article discusses "Maxwell and Christine's Sissom Family Yearbook," published by Morphcorp (also known as Mountain West News Service or Mountain Pacific News Service), using the above address. To keep tabs on dishonest purveyors of genealogy products, Ms. Kleback recommends regular visits to "Myths, Hoaxes, and Scams" on Cyndi's List at:

<http://www.CindisList.com/myths.htm>

AN ARTICLE entitled "Genealogy Scams on the Web" appeared in *Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter*, Vol. 6, No. 29, 18 July 2001, and can be read in its entirety at:

<http://www.ancestry.com/library/view/columns/eastman/4251.asp>

The article discusses several online Websites that have been sending spam e-mail messages offering access to "their" genealogy databases to anyone willing to pay \$40 to \$60 for the privilege. (Your editor received several of these spam e-mails, too.) What these Websites have actually done is create links within HTML frames to other Websites that provide free information. The HTML frame makes it look as though you are still at the spammer's site, but the data you are seeing is actually at another Website, where it was placed by generous people trying to make significant

genealogical information available to researchers *at no cost*. The free Websites can be accessed easily and without cost by anyone using a search engine.

Prominent among World Wide Web offenders are FamilyDiscovery.com, Genseekers.com, and Genealogy-Express.com. Comments from people who have been unfortunate enough to have anything to do with these entities can be read at:

- <http://www.imagin.net/~tracers/familydiscovery.htm>
- <http://www.gensuck.com/FEATURES/familydiscovery/index.html>
- <http://hometown.aol.com/vikkigray/parkcensus.htm>
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/badbusiness>

Complaints about these Internet scammers, or any other fraudulent, U.S.-based entity on the Internet, should be lodged with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission. at:

[https://rn.ftc.gov/dod/wsolcq\\$.startup?](https://rn.ftc.gov/dod/wsolcq$.startup?)

[Z_ORG_CODE=PU01](https://rn.ftc.gov/dod/wsolcq$.startup?Z_ORG_CODE=PU01) ■

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(Continued from page 1)

written record. Other problems relate to spelling. Sometimes one cannot locate a desired record because a surname is strangely spelled or misspelled. The unusual spelling may have been introduced during transcription. During my own searches, I had difficulty locating several family records because the transcriber made a spelling error. Eventually I found the records by trying various spellings. Nevertheless, I found the new census records so useful that I forgive the spelling errors.

In summary, I recommend the new 1880 CDs to you as an important additional resource. It should help you find 1880 Federal Census records more easily and quickly. Perhaps you will find records that have previously eluded you. You will still need to go to another source if you wish to review or copy the microfilm of the original handwritten records, but the CDs are certainly a worthwhile preparatory step that will usually save you time and effort.

David L. Mordy ■

STANDARDS FOR SOUND GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

Recommended by the National Genealogical Society

REMEMBERING ALWAYS that they are engaged in a quest for truth, family history researchers consistently:

- Record the source for each item of information they collect.
- Test every hypothesis or theory against credible evidence, and reject those that are not supported by the evidence.
- Seek original records, or reproduced images of them when there is reasonable assurance they have not been altered, as the basis for their research conclusions.
- Use compilations, communications and published works, whether paper or electronic, primarily for their value as guides to locating the original records.
- State something as a fact only when it is supported by convincing evidence, and identify the evidence when communicating the fact to others.
- Limit with words like "probable" or "possible" any statement that is based on less than convincing evidence, and state the reasons for concluding that it is probable or possible.
- Avoid misleading other researchers by either intentionally or carelessly distributing or publishing inaccurate information.
- State carefully and honestly the results of their own research and acknowledge all use of other researchers' work.
- Recognize the collegial nature of genealogical research by making their work available to others through publication, or by placing copies in appropriate libraries or repositories, and by welcoming critical comment.
- Consider with open minds new evidence or the comments of others on their work and the conclusions they have reached.

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UPCOMING SEMINARS

Connecticut Ancestry Society

- Saturday, 29 September 2001, 10:30 am: Bridgeport Public Library, 925 Broad St., Bridgeport, "Genealogy as a Hobby," with Robert W. Spiers.
- Saturday, 13 October 2001, 10:30 am: Trumbull Historical Society, 1856 Huntington Turnpike, Trumbull, "Record Repositories in Connecticut: an Overview" with Frederick W. Hart, Jr., CG.
- Saturday, 27 October 2001, 10:30 am: Cyrenius H. Booth Library, 25 Main Street, Newtown, CT, "Newtown Records: Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, and Something Blue" with Harlan R. Jessup.

After each presentation there will be an opportunity for research in the local collection with individual help available from members of the society.

New England Historic Genealogical Society

NEHGS plans two back-to-back research tours to Salt Lake City, 28 October-4 November and 4 November-11 November, so that participants can attend one or the other, or both. In addition to time for personal research, tours will include:

- An orientation and guided tour of the Family History Library conducted by library staff on the first day of the week (Monday).
- Daily morning lectures on genealogical research and methodology.
- Guidance from NEHGS staff while in the Family History Library.
- Four half-hour consultations with the NEHGS staff genealogist of choice.
- Comfortable lodging at a hotel close to the library.
- Bus tour of Salt Lake City.

For more information, contact NEHGS at 101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116, or call toll-free 1-888-286-3447. ■

MGS BOARD CHANGES

David Bowley has left the MGS Board because of his recent move to Massachusetts. We owe a tremendous debt to David for all that he has done for MGS over the years, and he is sorely missed.

Donna Moughty remains on the board, but has been unable to continue as vice president because of other commitments. Chick Scribner, as he does whenever a need exists, has stepped into the breach. ■

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.

126. **SQUIRES—BATES.** Seek information on Samuel SQUIRES and his wife, Annie BATES. Samuel, b in Connecticut 1740s (probably 1749), served in the American Revolution, along with six brothers, and appears in the 1790 Federal Census in Salem, Washington Co., NY. Samuel and Annie had two sons, John W. and Samuel, and two daughters, names unknown. *Buzz Squires, 97 General Fellows Road, Greenwich, NY 12835-4509.*

127. **DUNHAM.** Need names/dates for parents and 1st wife of Edward DUNHAM, b 24 July 1753 in Great Mine Partners, Dutchess Co., NY. Before the Revolution, in which he served, he lived in Columbia Co., NY. After the Revolution, he and at least one son, David, migrated to Saratoga and Madison Cos. and Barre in Orleans Co. Edward's son David (by his 1st wife) had two sons, Van Rensselaer ("V.R.") and Archibald Roland DUNHAM, who moved on to Michigan and Wisconsin. Edward married 2nd wife, Mary Dannak, in Madison Co. in 1803. He d 1844. (Speculation: Edward's parents moved to Dutchess Co. from New Jersey, to which one son of John DUNHAM, the immigrant ancestor, had removed.) *Jane Edmondson, 35 Bridge St., #302, Westport, CT 06880.* ■

CALIFORNIA DEATHS OF CONNECTICUT PEOPLE

From Eleanor Borkenhagen in California, death notices for people with Connecticut connections:

Los Angeles Times:

Helen Christina BLAU, born 14 April 1908 in

Derby, CT, died 12 February 2001 in San Pedro, CA.

Edward Walter BUCHANAN, Jr., born in Stamford, CT, died 4 December 2000 in Ventura Co., CA.

Robert T. CASSIN, born 28 October 1924, grew up in Westport, CT, and Larchmont, NY, died 25 October 2000 in Palos Verdes, CA.

Daniel A. WILLIAMS, born 27 August 1927 in Stamford, CT, died 15 February 2001 in Altadena, CA.

Orange County Register:

Myrtle S. DiNOVI, a resident of Newtown, CT, died 8 May 2001 at the home of her daughter in Laguna Beach, CA. ■

"In early March, 1667/8, there arrived at New York...Colonel Francis Lovelace, successor to Nicholls as governor....Though hardly of Nicholls's stature, he brought to his post certain respectable qualities, of which the most conspicuous was an initiative tempered with caution....Significantly, it was his [Nicholls's] first consideration to present Lovelace to Winthrop [John Jr.], a pleasant encounter which took place amid the spartan facilities of Stamford, Connecticut, before the end of March. (Winthrop later expressed his gratitude that the visitors 'could excuse the unsuitable [sic] accommodations [sic] of such a village.')"

The Younger John Winthrop, Robert C. Black III, Columbia University Press, New York & London, 1966.



WE WILL REMEMBER ALWAYS.

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER
16 OCTOBER 2001**

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

2002 MEMBERSHIP

- Renewal
 New

ANNUAL DUES

- Individual (\$15)
 Couple (\$20)

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, 13 OCT. 2001, 2 PM
DARIEN LIBRARY

