



Middlesex Genealogical Society

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Darien, Fairfield County, CT

January 2006

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Here we are at another new year, and I'm writing from Florida where I am spending more time, now that my husband has retired. I went back to see what my resolutions were for last year and discovered that I hadn't given you any since I didn't expect to be writing a message this January. Yes, my term as your president was over last April; however, no one has stepped up to take on this position.

Over the years I've written many times about the need for volunteers. I know that many of you attend our meetings on a regular basis, and these meetings are only possible because your vice president and program chair, Pete Kenyon, makes the calls and the arrangements with the various speakers. For five programs a year, this is not a terribly taxing job, just one of coordination. There are a number of organizations such as the Genealogical Speakers Guild, the Association of Professional Genealogists and the Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council that have members who provide presentations. Would one of you be willing to take on this task?

We also need a secretary, as LaVerne Burzynski has moved upstate. It requires someone who will attend the four to five board meetings a year, take notes and distribute them to other board members.

We need help with our newsletter. Articles about your research experiences and ancestors would be welcomed and published. Are you willing to pick up the printed newsletters here in Darien, label and stamp them (labels and stamps provided) and drop them in the mail?

And of course, we need a president, probably the easiest job of the group. Besides conducting the four to five board meetings a year the biggest responsibility is writing this message for our four newsletters each year.

We need some new board members. Their responsibility? Attend the four to five board meetings a year and offer suggestions on how to improve our society.

Finally, we need volunteers to take on other jobs: Can you help with publicity; write an article for our newsletter; provide assistance with our computer and/or update our Webpage? Would you be willing to coordinate the goodies for our meeting and act as a greeter? All of these are required to make our society run, and some can even be done from a distance via the Internet.

Although there are other genealogical societies in Connecticut, Middlesex is unique. We don't just focus on Colonial Connecticut or put out a journal because many residents of the area are not from here. MGS looks to offer education on a variety of topics, from methodology to types of records to various ethnic groups, that can assist everyone in pursuing their family history.

If you enjoy and benefit from attending our meetings and reading our newsletter then it's time for you to step up and volunteer. Please speak to one of the board members at a meeting or contact any of us.

Happy hunting.

Donna Moughty

2006

2006 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership renewal was due 1 January 2006. By now, those of you who have not yet renewed your membership have received a letter from our treasurer, Dale Pollart. Please note that current members need *not* provide us with any information that we already have, but we would like to be informed of any significant changes, e.g., new e-mail address. You may bring your renewal to our 28 January meeting, or drop it in the mail addressed to Middlesex Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 1111, Darien, CT 06820. Annual dues are \$20 per individual, \$25 per couple or family.

For those interested in joining the society, the MGS membership application has been included on page 7 of this newsletter.

MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

2005-2006 OFFICERS

Donna Moughty	President
Robert E. Kenyon III	Vice President
Dale Pollart	Treasurer
	Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE

William Atkinson
Virginia Banerjee
Carolyn Barfuss
Philip Morehouse
Cathy O'Farrell
Marianne Sheldon
Lloyd Sturges

David Mordy	Past President
Charles Scribner	Librarian
Dorothy Shillinglaw	Newsletter Editor

TRUSTEES

Emeline Fatherley
Mary Freedman
Henry Hoff
Thomas Kemp
Grant Radmall

Middlesex Genealogical Society was established for the purpose of helping those interested in genealogy to pursue the investigation of their family heritage and to provide guidance in research to that end. The society holds at least four meetings with a program and speaker during the year, has established a Genealogy Section at Darien Library and publishes a quarterly newsletter. Annual membership dues are \$20 per individual and \$25 per couple or family.

Original notices of genealogical interest and queries are welcomed for publication in the Newsletter.

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

Homepage: <http://mgs.darien.org>

E-mail: mgs3@optonline.net

UPCOMING MGS MEETINGS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

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

28 JANUARY 2005. CONNECTICUT'S BARBOUR COLLECTION OF VITAL RECORDS: MORE (AND LESS) THAN MEETS THE EYE will be presented by **HARLAN JESSUP**. Connecticut statutes have required vital records to be kept since 1640, and these records to about 1850 have been compiled in the Barbour Collection. Understanding and using this collection depends on understanding the history of record-keeping statutes in the colony and state and on understanding how the collection was created by Lucius B. Barbour, the sponsor, and James N. Arnold, the remarkable compiler of these records. Groups of records from several towns were missed, and sources for these will be disclosed.

Harlan Jessup is a professional genealogist whose research focuses on Connecticut, western Massachusetts, and the lower Hudson Valley. He is editor of *Connecticut Ancestry* and past president of that Society. He is also an accredited researcher at the Connecticut State Library, and he has published the Civil War letters and diaries of his Virginia ancestors.

25 MARCH 2006. RESCUING THE PAST, a discussion of how to memorialize in print the researched genealogy of your family, will be presented by **EDITH GLASS**. The objective of this lecture is to encourage the listener to keep the past alive by recording the meaningful events of a family's history. Sample memoirs will be read.

Edith has been teaching memoir writing since 1979, first in the Byram Hills School District in Armonk, New York, and then in the Chappaqua Neighbors organization, Quest (an adult education program affiliated with the City University of New York), and the Chappaqua Library. Edith has been a guest lecturer at senior citizen organizations, libraries, and genealogical organizations throughout the area. She has been a docent at Caramoor since 1996, and is now manager of the Caramoor Museum Shop.

13 MAY 2006. HIDDEN IN VAULTS: LESSER KNOWN TREASURES FOUND IN TOWN HALLS will be presented by **THOMAS V. HOWARD**. Local governments have for years collected and stored many diverse and valuable genealogical gems. We know about vital records and land records, but towns have touched citizens in many other ways leading to significant and sometimes illuminating paper trails.

A retired high school teacher, Tom is now a full time professional genealogist. He has taught genealogy classes, lectured at social studies regional and national conferences and most recently at the NERGC

(Continued on page 8)

*The lobby of the Program Room has been designated by the library as a "Teer Center." As a consequence, all MGS activities, including refreshments and socializing, must take place within the Program Room.

USING
LOCAL FAMILY HISTORY CENTERS
CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS
by Lloyd R. Sturges

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon) has the world's largest collection of genealogical records. This great source of information for researchers includes more than 2.4 million rolls of microfilm, 742,000 microfiches, 310,000 books, serials, and other formats, 4,500 periodicals, and 700 electronic resources, and is being added to daily. It is available to all researchers free of charge.*

These records include birth, death, marriage, census, land and many more categories. They also contain many genealogies that other researchers have entered into the databases.

There are many ways for the researcher to gain access to this vast store of information:

1. You can go to Salt Lake City and visit the Family History Library and use its facilities.
2. You can visit www.familysearch.org on the Web.
3. You can visit a local Family History Center located in many of the local Latter Day Saints Chapels.

At a local Family History Center you will find volunteers that are trained to answer questions and help to guide you to sources and give you strategies to help you search for your ancestors. You will also find other Patrons that are knowledgeable and are willing to share their experiences and give tips to help you. There, you will be able to use computers, printers, microfilm readers, and microfiche readers, and find many books and reference materials. You can order microfilms and microfiches from the main library at Salt Lake City for a small shipping fee and research them at the local Family History Center.

With the help of trained volunteers you can look at the databases in the computers and go online to search.

Before going to a Family History Center you should, first, prepare a pedigree chart with all the information that you already have. Second, go online to www.familysearch.org and see if you can get a film number for where and what you want to research.

In this area, the local Family History Centers are:
New Canaan

682 South Ave.
New Canaan, CT
Tel. 203-966-8475

Director, Steve Eldridge

Open Wed. 9-12 AM and Thurs. 6-9 PM

This FHC specializes in Irish Genealogy and has a large collection of Irish microfilms.

Stamford

834 Stillwater Rd.
Stamford, CT
Tel. 203-324-9575
Director Joann Raguseo
Open Wed. 6-8 PM

Newtown

16 Saw Mill Rd.
Newtown, CT
Tel. 203-426-1752
Director Francis DeVegnee
Open Tues. and Wed. 9-2 AM and 7-9 PM; Thurs. 9-2 AM and 7-10 PM

*Although use of these materials is free of charge, costs are incurred in shipping borrowed microforms back and forth from the Family History Library in Salt Lake City to your local Family History Center where you can use them. The fee to cover these costs for microfilms has just been increased from \$3.25 to \$5.50, the first increase in nine years. The fee for microfiches remains 15¢ for each microfiche. ■

"Political correctness makes for a new—not very new—kind of prudery and notes that 'It is a mistake to exclaim over past wrong-thinking before at least wondering how our present thinking will seem to posterity.'"
Under My Skin, Doris Lessing, quoted in the *New York Times* Book Review Section, 6 Nov. 1994, p 42.

UPCOMING SEMINARS

Westchester County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 518, White Plains, NY 10601. On Sat., 11 Feb., 10 AM, WCGS, is offering a talk by Kathleen Dodds, entitled **The Use of Catholic Sacramental Records in Genealogy Research: Looking for Family in All the Right Places**. The meeting will be held at the Aldersgate Methodist Church, 600 Broadway (across from Mercy College on Route 9), Dobbs Ferry, NY. There will be refreshments and genealogical networking starting at 9:30 AM. Guests are welcome, but a \$3 donation is requested.

Kathleen Dodds currently works at the Msgr. William Noé Field Archives and Special Collections Center at Seton Hall University. She will present examples of different registers, as well as offering help in deciphering Latin entries and dealing with archaic handwriting. For more information, visit <http://www.rootsweb.com/~nywcgs/> or call Philomena Dunn at 914-953-9173.

New York Genealogical & Biographical Society, 122-

126 E. 58 St., New York, NY 10022; telephone 212-755-8532. NYG&B is offering on-site, in-depth introductions to the holdings of some of NYC's most genealogically relevant collections:

- **New York Public Library**, Wed., 15 Feb., 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM.
- **The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society Library**, Wed., 22 Feb., 4:00-7:00 PM.
- **National Archives Northeast Region**, Tues., 7 March, 4:00-8:00 PM.
- **New York City Municipal Archives**, Fri., 10 March, 1:30-4:15 PM.

The registration fee for all four programs is \$75 members/\$100 nonmembers; each program \$25 members/\$35 nonmembers. For more information visit the NYG&B Website at <http://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/> or call 212-755-8532, ext. 36, or e-mail Education@nygbs.org

New England Historic Genealogical Society, 101 Newberry Street, Boston, MA 02116; toll-free 888-286-3447.

NEHGS is offering a **Research Week in Washington, DC**, Sun.-Sun., 5-12 March 2006. Three of the major genealogical repositories in the United States will be utilized: the Library of Congress (LOC), National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), and the Library of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). NEHGS staff will be available at each site for a week of intensive genealogical research and consultation, and the staffs of the three libraries will review the rich resources accessible to program participants.

NEHGS is also offering a **Spring Weekend Research Getaway** in Boston, Thurs.-Sat., 23-25 March—a program devoted to old documents as well as guided research, one-on-one consultations, lectures, and special access to collections. Presentations will include the care of old books and manuscripts, handwriting analysis, court records and photo analysis (bring an old photo with you). For more information visit http://www.newenglandancestors.org/education/main/spring_getaway_2006.asp or e-mail Amanda Batey at tours@nehgs.org

Brigham Young University, Conferences and Workshops, 136 Harman Continuing Education Building, Provo, UT 84602, telephone 801-422-4853. BYU has announced that their ninth annual **Computerized Genealogy Conference** is scheduled for Friday and Saturday 10-11 March 2006. This conference is designed to be a how-to guide for everyone, including beginning, intermediate, and advanced researchers. The focus of the conference is to learn how new computer programs and advancements in existing programs can help you to be

more effective in genealogy and family history work. For more information visit their Website at:

<http://genealogyconferences.byu.edu>
or send an e-mail to cw136@byu.edu

Western Connecticut State University, Center for Adult Education. MGS board member Virginia Banerjee will teach an eight-hour course entitled *Finding Your Ancestors*. Whether you are a beginner or more experienced, this course, focused on American research, will enhance your research skills.

Class meets at the Midtown Danbury campus on four Saturdays April 1-29 (no class on April 15), 9-11 AM. **Register by March 25th** to avoid class cancellation. Class code # 41591. Registration and information available at www.wcsu.edu

The National Institute on Genealogical Research (NIGR), held at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. and College Park, Maryland, is an intensive program offering on-site examination of federal records. Designed for experienced researchers, it is *not* an introduction to genealogy. The next institute will be held Sun.-Sat., 16-22 July 2006, and will focus on immigration, military, land, cartographic, postal, African American, legislative records, and more. One day at Archives II and optional evening sessions at the Library of Congress and the DAR library are included.

Enrollment is limited. Application brochures will be mailed in February, and the class fills very quickly. Tuition is \$350 for applications postmarked by 15 May, or \$400 thereafter. Scholarships are available. For more information or to receive an application brochure, see the institute's Website at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~natgenin/> and add your name to the mailing list; or e-mail NatInsGen@juno.com or write to NIGR, P.O. Box 724, Lanham, MD 20703-0724.

Federation of Genealogical Societies, P.O. Box 200940, Austin, TX 78720-0940; 888-FGS-1500. The annual conference of FGS will take place in Boston Wed.-Sat., 30 Aug. to 2 Sept. 2006. For more information, visit the conference Website at <http://www.fgs.org/2006conf/FGS-2006.htm> ■

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

TAXATION RECORDS and HOW TO USE THEM

19 November 2005

by Virginia Banerjee

This article summarizes the lecture presented by the author at the 19 November 2005 meeting of MGS.

Tax records are an important resource for genealogists that are not used as often as they should be. Much information can be gleaned from careful and thorough analysis of extant tax and related records. While tax records may offer very little specific genealogical data, there are often abundant clues as well as insight into the times and circumstances of our ancestors. Their examination is well worth the effort required.

Tax records can fix a person in time and place, provide information that may predate censuses, offer information between censuses and can serve as a census substitute. These records allow us to glimpse into what a person owned and how the taxpayer's holdings compared to their neighbors. The researcher may find clues to marriage, death, removal and land sales. An estimate of age may sometimes be deduced from the time a person reached majority and thus was taxed or when he became exempt due to old age.

There may be still other benefits. A person owning no land but who owns taxable personal property (i.e. a horse) may also be listed. Following tax records over time can assist in distinguishing persons of the same name but whose possessions and property are quite different.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that not everyone was taxed. Women rarely were taxed, nor were slaves, minors, or servants. At some times some professions, such as ministers, were not taxed. In Connecticut, even some Yale students were not taxed!

Tax records are often indirect sources of information from which other information can be inferred, or they offer clues to be followed. Thorough genealogical research demands that we exploit tax records. The following comments deal with *direct* taxes rather than excise or duties which, while being forms of taxation, ask for somewhat different research techniques than those being discussed here.

In order to successfully use taxation records, it is

critical to understand the level of government which levied the tax, who was taxed (and who exempt) and what was taxed. Background reading to answer these questions can usually be found in the repositories which archive tax records or libraries. Good "how-to" genealogy texts offer definitions of key words pertaining to taxation. For example, *head*, *poll*, *capitation*, *rateable*, and *tithable* are all words that refer to the person taxed. An understanding of the land system in the time and place of your interest is also important to successful tax research since land was the most commonly taxed possession. Who could own land, how was it described (metes and bounds or townships and ranges) and how was it transferred?

There may be several versions of the same or related tax records. They might have names such as assessment book, duplicate lists, list of tithables, delinquent register or reassessments. They may contain similar but not identical information, so it is important to examine as many versions as can be located. As with all genealogical research, examining the ORIGINALS, if at all possible, is important. Tax assessors *very* often made notes on the bottom or back of pages to guide their efforts from year to year as they prepared the assessment lists. Different versions of the same tax year's records often contain different or additional information. These notes and variants (and sometimes even whole columns containing important information) almost never find their way to microfilm, microfiche, transcripts or indices of such records.

Locating tax records may require some searching. They may still be maintained by the jurisdiction where the tax was levied, i.e. town, county or state. But it is just as likely that they (especially very early ones) have found their way to other repositories such as historical societies, libraries, or archives. In addition to background reading, searching for published materials concerning the geographic areas and time period of your interest may shorten and facilitate your research but should not substitute for seeking and analyzing the originals if at all possible.

Early county histories often contain lists of taxpayers at a point in time. In today's technological environment, Internet searching may locate such materials and repositories or, if you are lucky, some tax lists! An increasing number of early tax records are being

digitized and can be found on the Internet. Search the library catalogs of libraries and historical societies in the geographic area of interest for background information and clues to extant tax records and their location. In addition to local and state tax records, there are a few federal records, i.e. *The Direct Federal Tax of 1798*. Few of these are extant (those for Pennsylvania are), but where they are they offer interesting information. Foreign tax records can also give you insight into the lives of our ancestors before they emigrated from their country of origin. The catalog of the Family History Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon) is a good place to get an idea of what is available for the counties of your interest.

Land records are an adjunct to tax records, and they should be explored together. Land records are *active* records in every jurisdiction while tax records may be nearly invisible. Thus it may be easier to locate the person of interest in land records in order to fix a time frame for locating tax records pertaining to the individual.

Tax record research is slow, tedious and time-consuming, and it is *not* where you should begin your research. It can be very rewarding, however, producing information not available anywhere else. To be fully effective, tax research often requires on-site research. Gaining maximum benefit from tax records requires a careful and complete analysis. Researching tax records cannot be a hasty, slipshod process. Remember to mine every record for every scrap of information it contains. If you have learned to do this in census research, you will find the same techniques effective with tax research.

Over a period of time tax records trace each household and its changing development in a way no other source does. Learn to use tax records and you will find that it is worth the effort. ■

NEWS FLASH: 1852 NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS SOLVE GENEALOGICAL MYSTERIES

It is New Year's Eve 1852 and Henry HYDENWELL sits at his desk by candlelight. He dips his quill pen in ink and begins to write his New Year's resolutions.

1. No man is truly well educated unless he learns to spell his name at least three different ways within the same document. I resolve to give the appearance of being extremely well educated in the coming year.
2. I resolve to see to it that all of my children will have the same names that my ancestors have used for six generations in a row.
3. My age is no one's business but my own. I hereby resolve to never list the same age or birth year twice on any document.
4. I resolve to have each of my children baptized in a different church—either in a different faith or in a different parish. Every third child will not be baptized at all or will be baptized by an itinerant minister who keeps no records.
5. I resolve to move to a new town, new county, or new state at least once every 10 years—just before those pesky enumerators come around asking silly questions.
6. I will make every attempt to reside in counties and towns where no vital records are maintained or where the courthouse burns down every few years.
7. I resolve to join an obscure religious cult that does not believe in record keeping or in participating in military service.
8. When the tax collector comes to my door, I'll loan him my pen, which has been dipped in rapidly fading blue ink.
9. I resolve that if my beloved wife Mary should die, I will marry another Mary.
10. I resolve not to make a will. Who needs to spend money on a lawyer?

Previously published in *RootsWeb Review*: 28 December 2005, Vol. 8, No. 52. ■

NYG&B's NEW eLIBRARY

The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society has announced a major expansion of the society's Website. The eLibrary will contain digitized copies of material from the society's NYC library. Their goal is to digitize as many of their paper holdings as possible, with priority given to materials unique to the NYG&B library, as well as other material in the library not currently available on the Web. Initial contents of the eLibrary are drawn from their large collection of transcripts of New York State cemetery and church records. More material will be added to the eLibrary each week.

Access to the eLibrary is restricted to members. If you have an interest in material already in, or eventually to be added to the eLibrary, membership could be a sound investment. ■

MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Post Office Box 1111

Darien, CT 06820

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Annual dues: \$20/individual, \$25/couple or family. Photo I.D. (e.g., driver's license), required. If joining/renewing in person, show photo I.D.; if via mail, send copy of photo I.D. Please consider adding a contribution to support our genealogical resource expansion.

Code of Ethics: In consideration of being accepted as a member(s) of the above society and in order to protect the integrity of Public Records and Library Books, I/we am/are ethically bound and hereby agree that I/we will research Vital Records for Genealogical or Historical purposes only. I/we also agree:

1. That I/we will treat with the greatest care and respect all Public Records and Library Books that may be made available for my/our use;
2. I/we will respect the privacy of the individuals whose information I/we may encounter in my/our research;
3. I/we will respect the custodians of the records.

This pledge is freely made by me under penalty of forfeiting my membership in the society.

Signature of applicant

Date

Previous Member Yes No

Signature of co-applicant

Date

Previous Member Yes No

(Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.)
Full Name of Applicant

(Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.)
Full Name of Co-applicant

Street Address (mandatory):

Mailing Address:

Town: _____ State: _____ 9-digit Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Date and Place of Applicant's Birth:

Date and Place of Co-applicant's Birth:

Occupation of Applicant:

Occupation of Co-applicant:

I/we belong to the following Historical Societies:

I/we belong to the following Genealogical Societies:

I/we belong to the following Lineage Societies:

Reason for interest in genealogy:

Dues enclosed:

Contribution enclosed:

MGS use only.
Photo I.D.

MGS CALENDAR

(Continued from page 2)

regional conference in North Falmouth. He has lectured on genealogical topics to the MGS, DAR, Westchester County Genealogical Society, Descendants of the Founders of Ancient Windsor, Connecticut Society of Genealogists, Southington Genealogical Society, and Naugatuck Valley Genealogical Club and others. He is chairman of the Connecticut Genealogical Coalition, a founding member of the Town Clerks and Genealogists Action Group, president of Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council, and is on the board of directors of NERGC and Connecticut Society of Genealogists. He will co-chair NERGC's 2007 Hartford conference. He is a member of APG, NEHGS, Connecticut Ancestry and many other genealogical or historical organizations. He is a former president of the East Granby Historical Society and currently is president of the East Granby Land Trust. He and fellow genealogist wife Virginia have two adopted children whose birth parents they have researched successfully. ■

VOICES OF THE IRISH IMMIGRANT

In the two decades preceding the Famine, there was already a considerable Irish immigration to North America, and, given the limited communications of the time, it was easy to lose track of relatives and friends who had crossed the Atlantic. "Information Wanted" ads in newspapers were a means of locating these lost individuals. Diane Fitzpatrick Haberstroh and Laura Murphy DeGracia have transcribed and indexed all the ads in surviving 1825-1844 issues of *The Truth Teller*, NYC's first Catholic newspaper. The ads mention the names of several thousand immigrants living all over North America, and, best of all for the genealogist, the ads also mention 1,000 places of origin in Ireland. The book, *Voices of the Irish Immigrant*, is available from the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, but may also show up in local libraries' genealogical collections. If there were Irish immigrants in your family that arrived in this period, this book might be helpful. ■

WANTED!
Your story to appear in these pages.
All contributions gratefully received.

Deadline for next newsletter
18 April 2006

MEETING
 2 PM, 28 JAN. 2006
 DARIEN LIBRARY

Middlesex Genealogical Society
 PO Box 1111
 Darien CT 06820-1111

