



Middlesex Genealogical Society

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Darien, Fairfield County, CT

March 2013

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In my last message I spoke about the loss of years of research and family history records: lost photos, original documents, certificates, etc. I also mentioned that we would be doing some research on methods to safeguard our many years of hard work. My hope is that we will then be able to give to you some suggestions on ways of preserving these records against any type of disaster, be it a natural disaster such as a storm or tornado, or an electronic problem, or just plain new technology.

So far, the facts I have found are disturbing since I have been storing the results of our research on CDs and thumb drives and/or on my hard drive. These devices do have a limited shelf life and deteriorate over time. Then, as new technology develops new programs, they might not be able to read the old method of storage. I had asked our readers to send me anything they have discovered that we might share with all of you. I have received a number of suggestions and now need to understand them so that I can share them with you.

One is putting our heads in the *clouds*. I have been told a number of times that that was where my head was, but now I will have to look into it. It will be a topic to come. (I guess stones and chisels are out.) I will still continue to search for a better way and again ask that if you have the answer, share it with us and we will publish it for all to see.

Meanwhile let's look at another exciting topic. It also has to do with saving your records and research.

DIGITIZING.

My wife and I still collect documents such as birth certificates, death certificates, newspaper articles, pictures etc. and put them in binders.

We are finding that if we scan them and save them digitally, we can put them in folders under different topics, index these, and be able to find them quickly to share with others.

There are three important tools that we require in order to do this: (a) a computer, (b) a scanning device, and (c) a digital camera. The computer aids us in processing the information and enables us to stow it on whatever device we are going to use for storage, be it a CD, a thumb drive, or our hard drive. The scanning device can be part of your printer or a separate flat bed scanner. The digital camera can be used to photograph people, places or even old documents and pictures you may see and cannot take home with you.

Sometimes we hit gold mines and find tons of information, and other time we experience famine. The easier we make it to retrieve information we already have, the easier it will become to stay keyed up to continue our quest for more knowledge of our ancestors and their lives.

Lloyd R. Sturges Jr.



MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

**2013-2014
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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 (ISSN 1936-3494). Annual membership dues are \$25 per individual and \$30 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**

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

UPCOMING MGS MEETINGS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**ALL MEETINGS SATURDAY, 2 PM, DARIEN LIBRARY,
1441 POST ROAD. COME, AND BRING A FRIEND.**

**16 MARCH 2013: CRUISING LONG ISLAND SOUND—
TRACING ITS EARLY FAMILIES WITH A REGIONAL VIEW** will be presented by **FRED HART**. The program will be fully illustrated, including maps, examples of migrations within the region, etc.

Fred is a Norwalk native and graduate of Norwalk High School, Dartmouth College, and Dartmouth's Thayer School of Engineering, and is now retired from an engineering management career at Northeast Utilities. Both of his parents grew up in Rowayton—one on the Norwalk side and the other in Darien. In addition to being a charter member of the Middlesex Genealogical Society, he is also a member of Connecticut Ancestry Society, the Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council, and several other historical and genealogical organizations. Fred has been a Certified Genealogist since 1993 and was elected a Fellow of the American Society of Genealogists in 2007.

18 MAY 2013: BLOGGING YOUR GENEALOGY will be presented by **PHIL HAYES** who is the CEO of Sirius Innovations, LLC. In that position he served as Technology Solutions Consultant and Web Applications Programmer for Fortune 500 companies, large municipalities and hospitals. He is fluent in SQL, ColdFusion, PHP, and Javascript programming languages. He is also a power user of of the WordPress Content Management System, commonly used for blogging.

Combining the power of technology and the primary sources from historical documents, Philip developed his own family history Website based on the Word Press Content Management System (<http://www.hayesfamily.us>). It has inspired many people to develop an interest in the family's history and has connected Phil to several undiscovered relatives and their family stories.

Phil is a member of numerous historical and genealogy societies, including the Association of Professional Genealogists.

In 2010 Phil developed a presentation aimed at teaching amateur and professional genealogists how to document their family's history on the internet using a blog. If genealogists want to get the most out of their efforts, there are some basic strategies that must be employed. These strategies are fully covered in his program, "Blogging Your Way Into History."

THE DIGITAL GENEALOGIST —A LOOK AT FILE FORMATS

By Mary Harrell-Sesniak

During natural and unnatural disasters, documents are always lost. But they don't need to be, if time is taken to scan and create a digital copy that you can transmit far away. It's not enough to store backups on one's own computer—it's paramount that copies be shared with others so in the event of that unthinkable computer loss, you'll be able to retrieve these backups.

Decisions, Decisions

As I see it there are two basic choices for starting on your journey of preserving your documents. Should you scan or take a picture? This decision is likely made based on what equipment you already have available but keep in mind the type of records you are preserving and what files you want as the end result.

The choice of a camera setting or scanning format really depends upon the need for resolution, disk space and portability—and whether one image or page needs to be attached to another (for example, a book or wedding album). Taking a high quality picture is best if you want to preserve a book, whereas scanning a wedding license would likely give you a better result than taking a picture. Either way you choose, make sure to consult your owner's manual as each scanner has a different process for scanning and each camera has different capabilities, since you want to make the most of the resources you have.

Next on your journey is deciding what file format you should use. It becomes a little difficult when you are simply trying to figure out what the file extensions mean (PDF, PNG, JPEG, TIFF, etc.); it seems like another language! Once you are more comfortable with what the file types are and why you may want to use this one versus that one you'll be equipped to complete your journey.

Multiple-Page Documents

To scan collections of images or books, try Adobe's Portable Document Format (PDF). There are many free software options you can use to create a PDF formatted document. One great thing about PDF documents is that they are pretty universal and can be opened by most computer users regardless of the software that they have on their

computer—this makes sharing documents in this format very convenient.

If you have purchased a book reader, such as Amazon's Kindle, you can scan to a PDF and convert to the reader format (you'll need to purchase software) so your back-up is portable. For all of you who are book readers, these popular upcoming electronic devices are lightweight and about the size of over-sized paperbacks. They are easily toted—but are limited in sharing documents with others, who don't have the same technology.

Single Images

Images or single pages of books can be scanned or photographed in varying formats. Some formats never lose resolution upon enlarging, but most do—the trade-off being large files that waste disk space or loss of quality. In order to retain quality without gigantic images, the scanner or camera will use compression techniques to produce a “lossy” or “lossless” format (partial or no loss of quality).

Lossless compression retains all information from the original image, and lossy compression makes allowances through calculations (algorithms). For example, rather than analyze every pixel in an image, patterns may be noted, and emulated upon enlarging. Loss of quality (color or contrast) is minimal, if the enlargement is not too dramatic.

File Type Extensions

An extension designating a particular file type is added after a document/image name. Keeping a reference guide to what these formats are will be helpful when deciding how you want to save your documents.

BMP: “Bitmaps,” an early format, are rarely recommended, due to size and quality issues.

GIF: The “Graphics Interchange Format”, popular for web pages, compresses images from millions of colors to 256 or fewer (not advised for full color images).

JPG: Also known as JPEG, the “Joint Photographic Expert Group” format offers lossy compression options, and is a widely supported Web format. Generally produces quality images, although minor portions of the original are discarded.

PNG: The “Portable Network Graphic” format, an improvement over GIF, offers compression, transparency and the progressive loading of images. Resizing is reversible, since a mostly lossless format is produced by identifying patterns. Increasingly popular format.

PSD: The “Photoshop Data/Document” format is proprietary to Adobe. One major advantage is layering, which allows enhancement of one area of a picture, without affecting another. Once saved, the image cannot be reverted, so save backups in other formats (ex. TIFF). Adobe Photoshop is widely used by professionals and Adobe Photoshop Elements is a lower-cost, but high-quality product.

PSP: Similar to PSD, this is “Paint Shop Pro's” proprietary format.

RAW: RAW format is determined by camera settings. In theory, the output is lossless and has an advantage over TIFF. But since manufacturers supply their own software, the image may not be viewable in other graphic programs.

TIFF: The “Tagged information file format” is a flexible, lossless format used in publishing and high quality digitization. File sizes are large, as most images are not compressed. Not recommended for websites.

Previously published in *Rootsweb Review*, 13 May 2009, Vol. 12, No. 5.

MILITARY RECORDS RESEARCH

26 JANUARY 2013

Tony Lauriano’s presentation on this subject at our last program meeting produced many helpful hints. Here are a few:

As always, start by interviewing any family members that may know more than you do. Usually these will be older than you, but not always. Your contemporaries may have been told different stories or fuller versions than you heard. Then go through whatever paper

is available within the family, such as obituaries, prayer cards, and death certificates.

Approach the funeral director if he/she can be identified, and don’t forget to check in with the sexton at cemeteries. Both often have extensive information in their files.

Ancestry.com is a good source. For example, they now have draft cards from the Civil War through three drafts in World War I. As always, try all possible spellings of the name that you seek.

The National Archives holds Federal military service records in two repositories:

- The National Archives Building in Washington, D.C.: for the Revolutionary War to 1912.
- National Military Personnel Records Center (NPRC), 1 Archives Drive, St. Louis, MO 63138; telephone 314-801-0800, fax 314-801-9195: for WW I to the present.

Also check NARA’s Microfilm Catalog, or contact the Northeast Regional Archives in our area, as the Regional Archives may have the military service records that you seek on microfilm.

There are specific forms for requesting information from the government, and these can be downloaded from NARA. Be sure that you also download the back of the page, which may contain additional blank spaces and instructions for submission. Do not look for a quick response, however, because it may be as long as six months before you will receive one.

Military records can be very informative and often have more information than the researcher expected, but a pension file will contain even fuller information about the veteran and family if you are fortunate enough to find one.

Replacement awards and decorations can also be obtained by the veteran or his/her next of kin from the specific branch of service. NRPC does not issue these, but will verify awards for Air Force and Army personnel. These, too, may contain information not available elsewhere.

Tony illustrated his talk with records that he discovered when he researched two men, one of whom had been in the Army, and the other in the Navy.

UPCOMING SEMINARS

National Archives and Records Administration, Northeast Region, New York City, is now located in the Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House at One Bowling Green, NYC 10004, where you will find:

- A Welcome Center to introduce you to the National Archives and the depth and diversity of Federal Records.
- A Research Center for scholars, genealogists, and the general public to conduct their own research using original records and microfilm holdings. Researchers will have free access to resources, including online subscription services such as Ancestry, Fold3, HeritageQuest, and ProQuest.
- A Learning Center to welcome educators, school groups, and families, and to encourage them to explore National Archives records through workshops, field trips, online access, “Archival Adventures,” and more.

Programs, which are held in the Learning Center on the 3rd floor, are free and open to the public, and take place Tuesday afternoons from noon to 1 p.m. Seating is limited so registration is required and can be accomplished by telephoning 866-840-1752 or e-mailing newyork.archives@nara.gov.

- 12 March, “Introduction to Census Records.”
- 9 April., “Introduction to Passenger Arrival Records Research.”
- 14 May, “Introduction to Naturalization Records Research.”
- 11 June, “Researching Military Records.”

National Archives and Records Administration, Constitution Ave. NW (between 7th & 9th Sts.), Washington, DC 20408.

- Wed., 13 March, at 9:30 a.m., Library (Penn. Ave. entrance). “Genealogy Research Using the National Archives Online.” Archives specialist Nancy Wing teaches a 90-minute hands-on workshop about navigating the National Archives website (www.archives.gov). Registration is required. Sign up at the Library, or email nancy.wing@nara.gov.

cy.wing@nara.gov.

- Wed., 27 March, at 9:30 a.m. **Above program** repeated, in the Library (Penn. Ave. Entrance).
- Sat., 16 March, at 10 a.m. Room G-25, Research Center (Penn. Ave. entrance) “Beyond the Basics Genealogy: Revolutionary War Records.” Claire Kluskens, archivist, discusses military service during the American Revolution including pension, treasury, and other records in the National Archives.
- Saturday, March 16, noon to 4 p.m., Room G-25, Research Center (Penn. Ave. entrance). “Help! I’m Stuck” Genealogy Clinic. Has a genealogical problem stumped you? An archivist is available from noon to 4 p.m. to answer your research questions. Sign up for a 20-minute appointment at the Research Commons desk on Saturday.
- Wed., 20 March, at 11 a.m., Room G-25, Research Center (Penn. Ave. entrance). “Beyond the Basics: Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789.” Constance Potter, reference archivist, will discuss how the papers of the Continental Congress relate to genealogy, including journals and reports of the Congress, its committees, and members.

National Archives and Records Administration, Northeast Region, Boston, Frederick C. Murphy Federal Center, 380 Trapelo Road, Waltham, MA 02452-6399, phone 781-663-0130, fax 781-663-0154, e-mail boston.archives@nara.gov. Programs are free, but reservations are required. Telephone toll-free 866-406-2379 or e-mail the address above.

- Thurs., 21 Mar, 6 p.m., “The 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry (Colored) 150th Anniversary.”
- Tues., 2 Apr., 2 p.m., Researcher Forum: Resources, strategies, services, and navigating the world of 21st century research.
- Thurs., 18 Apr., 6 p.m., Patriots’ Day Program.
- Wed., 24 Apr., 10 a.m., “History for Kids” (Gr.

3-8 & chaperones): Get ready for Patriots' Day.

- Tues., 7 May, 2 p.m. "Our Town: Discovering local history in the archives."
- Thurs., 16 May, 6 p.m., "Finding Our Jewish Ancestors: Jewish history, migration, and genealogy." Generalist Meredith Hoffman of the Jewish Genealogical Society presents.
- Tues., 4 Jun. 2 p.m., "They Went Down to the Sea in Ships: 19th c. crew lists, shipping articles, & more."
- Thurs., 20 Jun., 6 p.m., TBA.
- Tues., 9 Jul., 2 p.m., "Introduction to Genealogy: Everything you need to get started."
- Thurs., 18 Jul., 6 p.m., "Introduction to Genealogy: Everything you need to get started."
- Tues., 6 Aug., 2 p.m., "Census, Passenger Lists, and Naturalization Records."

New England Historic Genealogical Society, 101 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02116-3007, toll-free telephone 888-286-3447, Website www.NewEnglandAncestors.org.

- Washington, D.C. Research Tour, 10 March, 3 p.m.—17 March, Noon. Discover family history resources in the nation's capital with NEHGS. Visit the National Archives and Records Administration, the Daughters of the American Revolution Library, and the Library of Congress during this intensive week of guided research, individual consultations, lectures, and group events.
- Hartford, Conn., Research Tour, 10 April, 1 p.m.—14 April, 11 a.m. Explore the repositories of Hartford at the Connecticut State Library and Connecticut Historical Society. NEHGS staff and local experts will provide consultations, lectures, and the information you need to get the most out of Hartford's genealogical offerings. The trip includes individual consultations, expert lectures, a reception, and a group dinner.
- Albany, N.Y., Research Tour, 24 July, 1 p.m.—28 July, 11 a.m. Our extremely popular trip to Albany is now in its third year. Join NEHGS as we explore the vast resources of the New York State Library and the New York State Archives in Albany. The trip includes individual consultations, expert lectures, a reception, and a group dinner.

- **London Research Tour**, Sun., 19 May, 3 p.m.—Sun., 26 May, 11 a.m. Experience the wealth of information available in London's archives as NEHGS returns to the U.K. Participants will enjoy one-on-one consultations, guided research at the Society of Genealogists and The National Archives, and two group dinners. Daily educational activities include lectures and tours by the experts at The National Archives, the SoG, and NEHGS.
- **Essex, Norfolk, & Suffolk County Record Offices Research Tour** at Bury St Edmunds, England, 27 May, 4 p.m.—31 May, 11 a.m. For the first time, NEHGS will lead a tour of county record offices in England, including trips to the archives of Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk and opportunities to learn from local experts. The trip, which immediately follows our London Research Tour held from May 19—26, will be based in Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk, with day trips to the county record offices in Bury St. Edmunds, Norwich, and Chelmsford.
- **Great Migration Tour: The Winthrop Fleet**, Suffolk, England, 14 August, 8 a.m.—24 Aug., 9 a.m. Robert Charles Anderson, director of The Great Migration Study Project, leads a reprise of this very popular tour to Suffolk and its environs, focusing on the immigrants to New England who sailed in the Winthrop Fleet of 1630.

New York Genealogical & Biographical Society, 36 W. 44th Street, 7th fl., New York, NY 10036-8105; telephone 212-755-8532; fax 212-754-4218.

NYG&B's annual series of repository tours continues:

- **Manuscripts and Archives Division of NYPL**, Wednesday, 13 March, 6—7 p.m., at The New York Public Library, Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, Fifth Ave. between 40th & 42nd Sts, NYC. Thomas Lannon, Assistant Curator, will provide an orientation to the extensive holdings of the Manuscripts and Archives Division of the NYPL. Documents, manuscripts, and photographs spanning four centuries of N.Y. history will be on display and attendees will be instructed on using the catalog and retrieving materials.

- **National Archives at New York City**, Tues., 26 March, 2:00—4:30 p.m. Dorothy Dougherty, Director of Public Programs, will provide a tour of and an introduction to the brand new quarters in the Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House in lower Manhattan. The Archives moved in late 2012, but Hurricane Sandy delayed the opening date. Program attendees will be given an overview of the holdings and assistance in their research by Education Committee members and NARA staff.
- **Center for Jewish History**, Thurs., 11 April, 1:30—4:00 p.m. New to our repository line-up last year, the center has extensive resources for both Jewish and non-Jewish research. Learn about the many collections of the five organizations housed at the center. Staff will provide descriptions of the facility's five divisions from 1:30-3:00, p.m. followed by an orientation by a Jewish genealogy expert. Participants will have time for research after the formal program.

Registration: You may sign up via NYG&B's online store or by calling 212-755-8532, ext. 211. Cost: Each program \$20 NYG&B members, \$30 nonmembers; any three programs \$50 members, \$80 nonmembers; all six programs \$90 members, \$150 nonmembers.

Significantly Advance Your Research Skills with Online Legend Steve Morse.

NYG&B presents Stephen P. Morse, originator of a series of "One-Step Websites," for a full day of lectures and discussions Sat., 27 April, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., about getting the quickest and most effective use from online data sources. This event will be useful to people at all levels of expertise, because the applications discussed are, from the researcher's perspective, easy to use. The event takes place in the South Court Auditorium of the New York Public Library's Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, Fifth Ave. between 40th & 42nd Streets, NYC. Seating is limited, and this program will sell

out; book a prepaid reservation in advance. Cost: NYG&B members \$60, nonmembers \$90. Register: online at newyorkfamilyhistory.org or call 212-755-8532, ext. 211. For additional information e-mail education@nygbs.org.

Westchester County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 518, White Plains, NY 10601, presents speakers on genealogical subjects on the second Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. (Premeeting networking starts at 9:30 a.m.) Meetings are at Aldersgate Memorial United Methodist Church, 600 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. (across from Mercy College on Route 9). A \$3 donation is requested of nonmembers. Visit the society's website at: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~nywcgs>.

- 9 March, "Civil War Research" will be presented by Laura H. Congleton.
- 13 April "Blogging Your Genealogy" will be presented by Philip Hayes.
- 11 May, "Finding Your Female Ancestors" will be presented by Tony Lauriano.
- 8 June, "Kleindeutschland: Researching Your Ancestors in Manhattan's Little Germany," presented by Joseph Lieby.

Ancestor Seekers Mon., 17 June—Sat., 22 June, Salt Lake City Research Week. Visit their Website at www.ancestorseekers.com/slcrtevent.php?id=36 for more information.

Friends of Cos Cob Library. The library is at 5 Sinawoy Rd., Cos Cob, Conn. (located behind the firehouse on East Putnam Ave.); telephone 203-622-6883. Friends of Cos Cob Library have two genealogy programs scheduled in April:

- Sat., 13 April, 10:30 a.m., Joseph Buggy will present "Researching Your Irish Ancestors in New York City." Our speaker, a native of Kilkenny, Ireland, and a current resident of New York City, is a professional genealogist and adjunct professor of sociology at the State University of New York, Westchester Community College. Previously, Joe worked as an historical tour guide at two 13th century religious heritage sites in Gowran and Kilkenny, Ireland, as a sociologist at Trinity College, Dublin, and as a college professor at Carlow Institute of Technology, Ireland.
- Sat., 27 April, 10:30 a.m., Marcos Tomo, owner of Images of Old Greenwich, will lead a genealogical workshop entitled "Preserving Your

Past: The Care and Preservation of Photographs and Documents.” His specialties are the restoration of photographs and images, which he will illustrate during his talk. Usually genealogy is thought to be a collection of birth, marriage and death records, often in poor condition. Mr. Torno’s presentation will demonstrate how to care, preserve and restore these precious family heirlooms.

Genealogy Cruises

The 10th Annual Legacy Genealogy Cruise, to be held 22 Sept. through 7 Oct. 2013 aboard Celebrity Cruise Line’s *Millennium*, starts in San Diego, Cal.; stops at Cabo San Lucas and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico; Puerto Quetzal, Guatemala; and Puntarenas, Costa Rica; then transits the Panama Canal; stops at Colon, Panama, and Cartagena, Columbia, and ends in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. Featured speakers include Megan Smolenyak, Karen Clifford, Geoff Rasmussen,

Randy Seaver, Steve Salisbury, Dave Berdan, Ken McGinnis, and Luc Comeau. For additional information, visit Legacy’s Website at www.legacyfamilytree.com/Cruiseinfo2013.asp.

Australian-based genealogy venture Unlock the Past (www.unlockthepast.com.au) has outlined prospective plans for two further family history cruises in 2014 and 2015. The 2014 cruise will be a 9-day round trip from Sydney and back again, taking in Melbourne, Adelaide and Hobart. Of greater interest, perhaps, on this side of the globe is the proposed 2015 cruise. No firm itinerary has been confirmed as yet, but the intention is to try to organize a two-week cruise from the U.K. to the Baltic.

**Deadline for next newsletter
29 April 2013**