



Middlesex Genealogical Society

Vol. XXV, No. 3

Darien, Fairfield County, CT

October 2009

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Wow! Where did the summer go, or did it even begin? Because of the weather we had, it sure did not feel like we had any summer at all. I trust you all had good hunting during this time, and that your summer research went well for you.

My summer was fruitful, as I managed to work with a number of families and even got the children interested in not only doing some research work, but trying their hand at writing down some stories about their families.

Great news for Swedish people: FamilySearch and Svensk Arkivinformation, a Division of The National Archives of Sweden, have announced a project of indexing the historic parish records of Sweden. Two hundred years of Swedish History from the Swedish church records (over 400 million names) have been microfilmed and digitally scanned and are now being indexed. These indexes will be available online. Yes, you will have to learn to read Swedish.

I did spend a few day here at the Darien Library over the summer. While sitting at the MGS Genealogy Computer (wearing an MGS nametag). I found that quite a number of library patrons were curious about how they could get started finding out who their ancestors were, how to keep track of them, and what records to keep. It is really exciting when you can help someone get the genealogy bug. I really would like to try having some of us spend an hour or two in the library, available to show interested library patrons how easy it is to get started in this very exciting program. If any one of you would like to help with this project, please e-mail me at lrskooter@optonline.net or call me at 203-438-9105.

Our next program meeting will be Saturday, 21

November 2009 at Darien Library. Toni McKeen from Ridgefield will speak to us on immigration records (see page 2). Hope to see you all there.

Lloyd Sturges Jr. ■



2010 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership renewal is due 1 January 2010. **Please consider this to be your renewal notice.** You may use the application form on page 7 of this newsletter if you wish, or a plain piece of paper, marked renewal, with your name and address on it. 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 address, e-mail address, etc.

You may bring your renewal to our 21 November meeting or drop it in the mail addressed to Middlesex Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 1111, Darien, CT 06820.

Please note: Since the new Darien Library building opened on 10 January 2009, a charge of \$150 has been levied by the library for each MGS program meeting. This fee covers use of the mezzanine conference room where our program meetings are held and the library-required presence of a library IT person. Because of these increased costs for our lecture presentations, as well as the recognition that dues have not changed since 2003 while other costs have risen, your board has voted that annual dues be increased by \$5.00. Dues for 2010, therefore, will be \$25 per individual and \$30 per couple or family

MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

2009-2010 OFFICERS

Lloyd Sturges Jr.	President
Robert E. Kenyon III	Vice President
Dale Pollart	Treasurer
Joan Rinaldi	Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE

Jim Baker
Virginia Banerjee
Peter Biggins
Leonard Christie
Philip Morehouse

Donna Moughty	Past President
Charles Scribner	Librarian
Dorothy Shillinglaw	Newsletter Editor

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, CONFERENCE ROOM (on the mezzanine, above the 2nd floor, elevator button "M"), AT THE NEW DARIEN LIBRARY, 1441 POST ROAD. COME, AND BRING A FRIEND.

21 NOVEMBER 2009. TONI McKEEN will follow up her 3 October presentation on census records available through HeritageQuest and Ancestry.com with a talk on **NAVIGATING SHIP'S MANIFESTS: RESEARCHING IMMIGRATION RECORDS LIKE A PRO.** Toni has also prepared a short Power Point presentation on Ellis Island immigration records.

Toni has been passionate about genealogy for over 20 years, during which she has researched her huge Italian family, as well as her husband's Irish family. Her research has led her to the ancestral homes of her grandparents in Sicily, Calabria, and the Amalfi Coast of Italy, where she made several trips in search of documents. For more than five years Toni has taught several levels of genealogy at Founders Hall in Ridgefield, CT. She has also given numerous lectures on genealogy in New York and Connecticut.

23 JANUARY 2009. To be announced.

20 MARCH 2010. To be announced.

15 MAY 2010. To be announced ■

MGS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We welcome two new members to our board of directors, Peter Biggins and Leonard Christie, who were elected to three-year terms at our 16 May 2009 annual meeting. At the same time two current members, James Baker and Philip Morehouse, were reelected to three-year terms. ■

CAROLYN GIDDINGS BARFUSS

It is with sadness that we report the death 21 July 2009 of Carolyn Barfuss who served on the MGS board of directors for some years. We remember Carolyn as always being helpful and cheerful and generously sharing her time and talents. We extend to her family our deepest sympathy. ■

LEARNING THE SPANISH SYSTEM OF SURNAMES

by José Casas y Sánchez

For time immemorial in Spain the Catholic church and the civil government (since the middle of the 19th century), have been using the same system for registering and ordering the last names of a given individual, its use extending to Latin America, since the Colonial Days.

The high number of last names a person may use (four, eight or more) does not make that person an aristocrat or more elegant or a member of the nobility; it only shows that the ancestors are known to that family or that individual in particular; it is basic genealogy. In the titled families these records are very carefully kept and most of the nobility knows by heart the cadency of their "illustrious" last names.

As most of us are Catholic, we have been baptized in our local parishes and also have been registered in the Civil Registry offices of our towns or cities, and both, the baptism certificate and the civil birth certificate, clearly state the two last names of father and mother and sometimes also the two last names of the four grandparents, that is, if the priest of that particular parish or the civil servant of the registry office was more or less educated and did not make a mistake during the registry of the names. In the larger parishes of the cities, like cathedrals or basilicas, the errors were much less frequent than in the small town parishes, so if you are lucky, in your baptism certificate you have your first eight last names. You only need to get the baptism or civil certificates of your four grandparents, and with much luck, Bingo! You have your 16 last names.

The system is simplicity in itself; let's see it through a living example. This way it will be easier to understand. I have 16 last names, which are: Casas-Sánchez-Castaños-Loeza-Domenech-Díaz-Echeverría-Escobedo-Tarrago-Gil-Morera-Barreiro-Bazosabal-Caldelas-Yspizua-Ortiz.

The order or cadency of the last names goes by relationship:

1	Father	Casas
2	Mother	Sánchez
3	Paternal Grandmother	Castaños
4	Maternal Grandmother	Loeza
5	Paternal Maternal Grandmother	Domenech

6 Maternal Maternal Grandmother Díaz
And so on.

How did I get my 16 last names? Examining the baptism and the civil certificates of each and every one of my ancestors, that is, beginning with father, then mother and so on, I wrote down all of their last names. Then, to follow the correct order or cadency of the mentioned last names one has to intercalate them, male-father, female-mother, male-grandfather, female-grandmother, etc. The certificates showed the following:

J. Casas's father's eight last names:

- Casas-Castaños-Domenech-Echeverría-Tarrago-Bazosabal-Morera-Yspizua.

J. Casas's mother's eight last names:

- Sánchez-Loeza-Díaz-Escobedo-Gil-Caldelas-Barreiro-Ortiz

This system is logical, practical, simple and effective, it is less hard to make mistakes when investigating the family history, doing genealogical research and quartering the blazons in family heraldry.

One of the most important aspects in the Spanish system for last names is that the women never, ever lose their last names. They have exactly the same last names of their brothers. When the woman marries she only adds the last name or names of her husband. For example: My wife's name is Ana East Sans. When she married me, she became: Ana East Sans de Casas, (of). For practical reasons she only uses Ana East de Casas. If she was a widow (not yet), she would be: Ana East viuda (widow of) de Casas. If she was divorced (not yet), she would return to use of her original name Ana East Sans.

This system allows the woman to keep forever her last names, I think it is very fair and logical. It is hard for us to understand the American or British system that dictates that the woman loses her last name completely and definitely when she marries, even if she becomes a widow. And all of this in a modern, liberal, women's rights society!

Another important point is that, by law, we have to use our first two last names always when legal documentation is involved or when signing legal affairs or writing bank checks of a certain amount above a limit, etc., etc.

The custom of always of using our two first last names is quite practical. This way we can differentiate as to father or son when the first or Christian

name is the same without using the "Jr." Some people (men or women) use their second Christian name. This is quite common, in official documents where it is obligatory to use it, that is, if one has the names registered in the official birth certificate.

You will find in some, not very common, cases the letter "y" between the two last names. This is done in order to separate the two last names (father and mother) and not to confuse a double last name that is composed of two words. In English this is done using a hyphen.

One thing to remember, and perhaps to learn, is how to address an Hispanic person; by word or in writing, the rule is always to address the person in question by the first last name, never by the second. When in doubt, address the person by using both names. Lots of people, educated ones but ignorant of our system, keep addressing me as Mr. Sanchez, when I am Mr. Casas, or Mr. Casas y Sanchez. But, when I must correct the person that makes this involuntary error, I always try to do it in a diplomatic way in order not to hurt feelings.

Previously published in *RootsWeb Review*: Vol. 5, No. 18, 1 May 2002, and written by José Casas y Sánchez, pepecasas@prodigy.net.mx, Chapala, Mexico. ■

ANCESTRY.COM vs. HERITAGE QUEST 3 October 2009

Diane McKeen gave us an excellent talk on this subject. She used census records as the basis of her comparison and pointed out the advantages and disadvantages of both data bases. Because of the differences between these data sources, Diane recommends that both be used. Sometimes the name sought is found in one and not the other.

Heritage Quest has a limited number of data categories. It is, however, straightforward and easier to use than Ancestry. Moreover, it is free in all Connecticut libraries and can be accessed from home at any hour by logging onto www.iconn.org with your Connecticut library card number. There are only six core data sets in Heritage Quest:

- U.S. Federal Censuses, which feature the original images of every extant federal census in the United States, from 1790 through 1930,

with name indexes for many decades. In total, the collection covers more than 140 million names.

- Genealogy and Local History Books, which deliver more than 7 million digitized page images from over 26,000 family histories, local histories, and other books. Titles have been digitized from microform collections, as well from the American Antiquarian Society via an exclusive partnership.
- Periodical Source Index (PERSI), published by the Allen County Public Library, is recognized as the most comprehensive index to genealogy and local history periodicals. It contains more than 2 million records covering titles published around the world since 1800.
- Revolutionary War Records. These original images from pension and bounty land warrant application files help to identify more than 80,000 American Army, Navy, and Marine officers and enlisted men from the Revolutionary War era.
- Freedman's Bank Records: With more than 480,000 names of bank applicants, their dependents, and heirs from 1865-1874, these records offer valuable data that can provide important clues to tracing African American ancestors prior to and immediately after the Civil War.
- LexisNexis U.S. Serial Set Records: the memorials, petitions, private relief actions made to the U.S. Congress back to 1789, with a total of more than 480,000 pages of information.

In using Heritage Quest for census research, you will find the sorting options offered advantageous. For example, it is possible to limit your search to a single year, state, county, surname, given name, and birthplace. It is also possible to sort by age.

On the other hand, **Ancestry.com** actually offers too much information. Instead of a few possibilities turned up by a search, you are likely to get many pages of names to sort through and eliminate one by one. It is also very expensive to subscribe to, but there is a subscription that you can use at no cost on the MGS computer at Darien Library. (Remember our user name, **mg society**, and login, **middlesexgs**.)

Ancestry.com, of course, offers much, much more than censuses. You will find vital, immigration, naturalization, military, historical, court,

land, Wills, and financial records. You will also find the Social Security Death Indexes, all sorts of directories, newspapers, periodicals, photos, maps, etc., etc., etc.

Follow Diane's advice, and check both Ancestry.com and Heritage Quest. Diane gave us another very important piece of advice. *Always write down your source. If you print something out, write the source on the back of the printout.* ■

UPCOMING SEMINARS

Cos Cob Library, 5 Sinawoy Rd., Cos Cob, CT. On **12 Nov., 10:30 AM**, MGS president Lloyd R. Sturges, Jr., will present "**The Newest Family-Search.org: worldwide original records and free digital images of your ancestors.**" The workshop is free and open to the public, and no reservation is required. For more information, call Mary Cameron, Genealogy Programs Chair, 203-869-0364.

National Archives and Records Administration, Northeast Region, 201 Varick St., 12th Floor, New York, NY 10014. Lectures are free, but space is limited. Register by calling 866-840-1752, or e-mailing newyork.archives@nara.gov

- Tues., 10 Nov., 12:30-1:30 PM, Finding Family: Using Ancestry.com
 - Tues., 8 Dec., 12:30-1:30 PM, Finding Family: Next Steps for When You Hit the Brick Wall.
- Feel free to bring lunch.

National Archives and Records Administration, Northeast Region, 380 Trapelo Rd., Pittsfield, MA 02452-6399. Lectures are free, but space is limited. Register by calling 866-406-2379 or e-mailing waltham.archives@nara.gov

- Tues., 1 Dec., 2 PM, Census, Passenger Lists & Naturalization Records.
- Tues., 5 Jan. 2010, Preserving Your Permanently Valuable Records.
- Tues., 2 Feb., 2 PM, African-American and Under-Documented Populations.
- Wed., 17 Feb., 10 AM, Genealogy for Kids (Gr. 3-8 and chaperones).
- Tues., 2 March, 2 PM, Census, Passenger Lists & Naturalization Records.
- Tues., 6 April, 2 PM, Genealogy Research: What's Online; What's Not Online.

- Wed., 21 April, 10 AM, Genealogy for Kids (Gr. 3-8 and chaperones).
- Tues., 4 May, 2 PM, Records Related to Military Service in the 18th, 19th & 20th Centuries.
- Tues., 1 June, 2 PM, Finding Your Ancestors in Maritime Records.
- Tues., 6 July, 2 PM, Census, Passenger Lists and Naturalization Records.
- Tues., 3 Aug., 2 PM, Introduction to Genealogy.

New York Genealogical & Biographical Society in cooperation with the **New York Public Library** is offering **What Next? Planning Your Research** on **17 Nov.** at 5:30 PM. This free lecture will last about 50 minutes with a question period to follow. It will be held at the NY Public Library, Fifth Ave., between 40th & 42nd Streets, in the South Court Classrooms, first floor (off Astor Hall). Registration is not necessary.

The speaker will be Laura Murphy DeGrazia, CGSM, who is president of the Board for Certification of Genealogists (BCG). She specializes in New York City-area research and the Irish in New York.

New England Historic Genealogical Society, 101 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02116 (Website www.newenglandancestors.org) has scheduled its Fall Research Getaway for Thurs., 12 Nov.—Sat., 14 Nov. Learn how to effectively use Ancestry.com, NewEnglandAncestors.org, and Footnote.com for your research during three days of lectures, research, and consultations at NEHGS. For more information contact Ryan J. Woods, Director of Education, at 617-226-1226 or email rwoods@nehgs.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 AM. (Premeeting networking starts at 9:30 AM.) Meetings are at Aldersgate Memorial United Methodist Church, 600 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry, NY (across from Mercy College on Route 9). A \$3 donation is asked of nonmembers. You can visit the society's website at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~nywcgs>

- 14 Nov. Growing Up in Yonkers by Eddie Dee.
- 9 Jan. 2010, 20th Century Probate Research: Confirming Relationships and Finding Family, by Debra Braverman.
- 13 Feb., History of the Hudson River and

Henry Hudson by Dr. Raymond E. Phillips.

- 13 March, Cemeteries of Westchester County by Patrick Raftery, Assistant Librarian at Westchester County Historical Society.
- 10 April, What's Up Doc? by Jo Heffernan.
- Who Were the Parents of...? by Joe Lieby
- 12 June, Writing the Family Narrative by Tony Lauriano.

National Genealogical Society, 3108 Columbia Pike, Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22204-4304, 800-473-0060, <http://www.ngsgenealogy.org>

- The **2010 NGS Research Trip to Salt Lake City** will take place **Sun., 24 Jan.—Sun., 31 Jan. 2009**, directed by Marie Varrelman Melchiori, CG, CGL, and Shirley Langdon Wilcox, CG, FNGS. For more information, visit: www.ngsgenealogy.org/cs/research_trips
- The **2010 NGS Family History Conference, Follow Your Ancestral Trail**, will be held **28 April—1 May 2010**, in Salt Lake City, Utah. The online searchable conference program is now available at <http://members.ngsgenealogy.org/Conferences/2010Program.cfm>. Registration will begin 1 Nov. To register online, visit the NGS website, click on Conferences & Events, Annual Conference, and then Attendee Registration. You can also choose to mail-in your registration by downloading the form, filling it in, and mailing it to NGS.

Registration brochures will also be available for download from the NGS website beginning 1 Nov. To receive a print copy of the registration brochure by mail, e-mail Erin Wood at: registration@ngsgenealogy.org The brochure includes information about workshops, lectures, sessions, luncheons, speakers, registration times and rates, as well as general conference and exhibit hall information.

The 2010 Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy will be held **Mon., 11 Jan.—Fri., 15 Jan. 2010** at the Radisson Hotel (located at 215 West South Temple) in downtown Salt Lake City. This is a week-long educational experience taught by expert genealogists. Classes finish in the afternoon each day allowing research time at the Family History Library, located just two blocks away.

In addition, there are 15 optional evening classes on topics ranging from maximizing Internet searching to organizing what you find to solving research problems. Evening classes are \$10

each, payable at the door or online.

The special early bird price ends 16 Nov. For more information or to enroll online, visit www.infouga.org ■

FAMILY HISTORY ARCHIVE

The Family History Archive is a collection of published genealogy and family history books. The archive includes family, county and local histories, “how-to books” on genealogy, genealogy magazines and periodicals (including some international), medieval books (including histories and pedigrees), and gazetteers. It also includes some specialized collections such as the Filipino card collection and the “Liahona Elders Journal.” The books come from the collections of the FamilySearch Family History Library, the Allen County Public Library, the Houston Public Library - Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research, the Mid-Continent Public Library - Midwest Genealogy Center, the BYU Harold B. Lee Library, the BYU Hawaii Joseph F. Smith Library, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Church History Library.

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) is used to convert texts to a machine readable format. (The files in this collection are displayed using Adobe Reader. If you have not already downloaded it, you'll need to do so at: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/otherversions/>) In the OCR process a computer program looks at the scanned images of the pages and tries to “read” the type and convert it into a computer file that can be searched. The effectiveness of OCR is directly related to the quality of the image. Results may not be good in the case of some of the older histories, many of which were originally typescripts, carbon copies, mimeographs, etc. There are two things you should keep in mind while doing research:

1. There is a lot of text to be searched.
 2. The text is not always 100% accurate.
- You should always carefully examine the family histories and not depend completely on full-text search results.

Family History Archives can be accessed at: <http://www.lib.byu.edu/fhc/index.php> ■

Help Wanted: MGS Newsletter Editor

MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Post Office Box 1111

Darien, CT 06820

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Annual dues: \$25/individual, \$30/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.

CONN. SOCIETY OF GENEALOGISTS 2010 LITERARY AWARD CONTESTS

The Connecticut Society of Genealogists has announced the 23rd Annual Literary Award Contest. Prizes will be given in four categories: Genealogy, Family History, Genealogical Resource, and Fledgling Essay. You do not need to be a CSG member to enter.

- **Genealogy category:** Must have New England content. Begin with a person(s) and move forward in time with descendants in succeeding generations. A prize of \$1,000 will be awarded.
- **Family history:** Must have New England content. Begin with a person(s) and moves backward in time tracing lineage. A prize of \$500 will be awarded.
- **Genealogical resource:** Could be any compila-

tion or tool of value in aiding New England genealogy, e.g. cemetery abstracts, compilations, court records, headstone photographs, research tools, etc. A prize of \$500 will be awarded.

- **Fledgling Essay:** High school (grades 9-12) student essays with relevance to New England. A wide variety of possible topics is acceptable including interviews with family members, family traditions, personal observations or experiences, etc. Students are encouraged to be creative in topic selection. A prize of \$250 will be awarded.

Entry Forms for the 2010 Literary Awards are now available to download from http://www.csginc.org/Literary_Files/csg_contest_entry_2010.pdf.

Deadline for entry is Feb. 15, 2010. Winners will be notified by April 1, 2010. Awards will be made at the CSG Annual Meeting in May 2010. ■

Deadline for next newsletter
December 2009

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06820+2685

Peter Biglins
230 Old King's Highway North
Darien, CT 6820

MEETING
21 NOV. 2009, 2 PM
DARIEN LIBRARY

Middlesex Genealogical Society
PO Box 1111
Darien CT 06820-1111

