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Darien, Fairfield County, CT

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## President's Message

Dear Fellow Genealogists,

Soon, many of us will be celebrating being **Irish**, with parties, parades and green attire, but I didn't always feel Irish. Even though my mother was an avid fan of Irish music and spending weekends at Irish festivals, I knew little about my Irish ancestors and did not feel connected to my Irish roots.

Growing up, I spent lots of time with my grandparents and had asked questions, but when I started researching my family history, I realized how much more I wished I knew. My Irish lines had come to the U.S. during the great famine, when immigration records were minimal. So how was I to find my way back to their townland? Finding your ancestor's place of birth is crucial to adding more generations to the family tree and it can be very challenging. Here are the strategies that proved fruitful in my own research.

First, let me say that you are fortunate if your family came through Ellis Island. By the 1890s immigrants to NY came in through Ellis Island and those records are informative and available online at [www.libertyellisfoundation.org](http://www.libertyellisfoundation.org)

**Death records** proved to be a treasure trove for me. Death records were often completed by a close family member who knew the names of the parents and birthplace. Once you have a death date you can search the local newspa-

pers for an obituary. Don't stop at one. I have found different obituaries in different newspapers including back in a town my ancestor had moved from but where family and friends still lived. Fortunately, my ancestors lived in New York state and the obituaries I was able to find online at the [www.fultonhistory.com](http://www.fultonhistory.com) site were invaluable. This site can be tricky to use but figuring it out is well worth it if you have New York ancestors. Obituaries were often written by family members who could write in detail about the deceased's life and they can be a goldmine.

**Marriage records** are also great resources because the information was provided by the marrying individual and should be complete and accurate. Look for second marriages too. Ancestors were often married when they immigrated but with the death of a spouse there could be a remarriage and another chance to capture helpful information.

Obtain the death and marriage records for each of your ancestor's siblings! Any of their records could provide the information you are looking for.

Once you are able to find a point of origin in Ireland there are lots of resources to help in your search. Besides the many established websites, grassroots help from people living in your ancestor's hometown can be extremely helpful. There are Facebook groups for the various counties - I even met a distant relative. I have found the folks at [www.irelandxo.com](http://www.irelandxo.com) to be very helpful.

Lastly, many of the poor Irish immigrants

could not read or write and the spelling of their last names could vary. I found records for my Cahalane ancestors spelled Cahillane, Calahane, Callahan and O'Callahan. So, try different spellings too.

**Here's wishing you the luck o' the Irish in your search!**

Pamela Shea

## MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

2019-2020

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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 publishes a quarterly newsletter (ISSN 1936-3494) and co-sponsors, with Darien Library, at least four meetings with a program and speaker during the year. Annual membership dues vary from \$25 for 1 yr. or \$45 for 2 yrs. per individual and \$30 for 1 yr. or \$55 for 2 yrs. per couple or family, as well as a lifetime option at \$300. Original notices of genealogical interest and queries are welcomed for publication in the newsletter.

**Middlesex Genealogical Society**  
P.O. Box 9  
Darien, Fairfield County, CT 06820

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

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## Upcoming MGS Presentations

**SUNDAY, March 22, 2020, 1:00 pm.** Social Hour: Come Talk About Your Work.

This is an informal social hour with others who are interested in genealogy. The goal is to share experiences with fellow genealogists and hopefully gain new insights. Think of the most important question or issue that you have about your genealogy. It may be a brick wall that you are facing with one of your ancestors, a question of wanting to know where to find a particular resource, or a success that you are dying to share with the rest of us.

**Book Exchange.** This is also a good time to bring in genealogy books and periodicals that you are no longer using and make them available to people who can make use of them.

**SUNDAY, March 22, 2020, 2:00 pm.** "Jewish Genealogy Research." Presented by Linda Carlson, Professional Genealogist. In partnership with the [Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County](#).



Have you always wanted to start working on your genealo-

gy but didn't know how to get started? Have you always believed that there are no records on your family? Do you wonder where your family came from? Was your family name "changed at Ellis Island" and no one knows the original name? Come and learn how to find the answers to your questions.

This presentation will cover some of the common methods of doing genealogy from a Jewish perspective. Content will include ship records, Ellis Island, name changes, naturalization, reading gravestones, finding towns in Europe, Holocaust records, Jewish DNA, and more.

Linda Carlson was born and raised in New York City until age five when she moved to Long Island. She is a descendant of Jewish immigrant grandparents. She moved to Connecticut in the 1970's to attend the University of Hartford and never left. Linda began her genealogical research at age 15 as part of a school project and now keeps the many branches of her family connected. Her husband is descended from English, Irish, Danish and Swedish immigrants which has allowed her to expand her research skills into these areas. Linda assists the public with their genealogy problems at Genealogy Road Shows with the Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council.

After beginning her career as a Special Education teacher, Linda is now the Educational Director at a private high school with a Master's in Educational Technology from the University of Connecticut and a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in School Administration from American International College. She has been working as a Professional Genealogist for the past few years specializing in doing research in the Hartford area for information that is not available online. She is a member of the Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council and on the Board of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Connecticut, and the Connecticut Society of Genealogists.

**Saturday, May 16, 2020, 2:00 pm.** Pamela Vittorio, Professional Genealogist/Historian. **Topic to be announced.**



Pamela Vittorio is a professional genealogist and an Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of English Language Studies/Parsons School of Design at The New School University in NYC. She holds an MA from NYU in Middle Eastern Languages and History. Pamela frequently gives presentations

on the social and cultural history of U.S. canals, women's studies, the Civil War and Colonial period Canada/U.S. connections. She is the author of several books on English language learning, and has published articles on history and genealogy related to the Erie and NY State Canals. Her background includes a certificate in genealogical research from Boston University. She has a certificate in Librarianship and is currently completing the Canadian Studies (PLCGS) programs at Toronto University, National Institute of Genealogical Studies.

Pamela has taken courses at Salt Lake City Institute of Genealogy (SLIG), Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh (GRIP) and IGHR (Georgia) in subjects such as Advanced Genetic Genealogy/DNA and Analysis, Land Records, Advanced Writing for Genealogists and Advanced Genealogical Research Methods and the Genealogical Proof Standard. She has been a presenter for the Capitol District Genealogical Society, Central NY Genealogical Society, Genesee Area Genealogists, Heritage Hunters of Saratoga County, Association of Professional Genealogists, NY State Family History Conference and the National Genealogical Society (NGS). She holds memberships in the NY-APG, New England-APG, National Genealogical Society, NYG&B, Erie Canal Museum, and various other genealogical and historical societies. She is also a member and Trustee at Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum.

## Larry

Genealogy.....that fun hobby of research and detective work. Finding your deceased ancestors and making a family tree, replete with photos, documents, family stories, whatever you can assemble to pass down to future generations. The detective in you loves to uncover clues that lead to new discoveries. For the most part, you are working with relatives you did not know. Every now and then though, someone you love dies. When that happens, a sense of your own mortality settles in.

I have often half-jokingly said "One day I will be added to my family file as an ancestor." Then, last week, came a brutal reminder that we are all here on a one-way ride. My older cousin, Larry, was the brother I never had. He and I were very close. We both had the same sense of humor and we would match puns with each other ad nauseum, until our wives groaned. We traveled together and had the same interests. He was my main supplier of his parents' and four sisters' genealogical information. Whenever a grandchild was born, he was the one to give me the name, time and place of birth, etc., so I could add it to the file. He had a bad heart, having suffered a heart attack at the age of 39 in 1979. My wife and I took a CPR course in case something happened on one of our trips with him and his wife. Even though we knew the probability of this happening, it was a total shock when he had massive heart attack and died.

Now I am left to "add him to the file. His obituary, funeral mass, burial." All of the sudden, genealogy is a job, not a hobby.

When I began my interest in genealogy most of my parents' generation had already passed, so it wasn't personal. Larry is not the first relative I have had to add this way, but certainly the one that hurts the most, the one closest to me.

I will miss you Larry, see you on the other side.

John Driscoll 1/17/2020

## Legislation In New York Allows for Adoptees, Their Direct Descendants or Lawful Representative to Receive a Certified Birth Certificate

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo signed legislation allowing adoptees for the first time to receive a certified copy of their birth certificate when they turn 18-years-old. This measure (S3419/A5494) helps ensure that all adult New York adoptees will have the unimpeded right to information about their birth and biological parents. The law went into effect January 15, 2020. Click [HERE](#) for more information

## Middlesex Genealogical Society Members' Suggested Books

Please email your book recommendations to [newslettermgsdarien@gmail.com](mailto:newslettermgsdarien@gmail.com)



'Tis

by Frank McCourt

The sequel to Frank McCourt's memoir of his Irish Catholic boyhood, *Angela's Ashes*, picks up the story in October 1949, upon his arrival in America. Though he was born in New York, the family had returned to Ireland due to poor prospects in the United States. Now back on American soil, this awkward 19-year-old, with his "pimpley face, sore eyes, and bad teeth," has little in common with the healthy, self-assured college students he sees on the subway and dreams of joining in the classroom. Initially, his American experience is as harrowing as his impoverished youth in Ireland, including two of the grimmest Christmases ever described in literature. McCourt views the U.S. through the same sharp eye and with the same dark humor that distinguished his first memoir: race prejudice, casual cruelty, and dead-end jobs weigh on his spirits as he searches for a way out. A glimpse

of hope comes from the army, where he acquires some white-collar skills, and from New York University, which admits him without a high school diploma. But the journey toward his position teaching creative writing at Stuyvesant High School is neither quick nor easy. Fortunately, McCourt's openness to every variety of human emotion and longing remains exceptional; even the most damaged, difficult people he encounters are richly rendered individuals with whom the reader can't help but feel uncomfortable kinship. The magical prose, with its singing Irish cadences, brings grandeur and beauty to the most sorrowful events, including the final scene, set in a Limerick

### **Gerard Keegan's Famine Diary, Journey to a New World**

by James J. Mangan

1847 ... Gerard Keegan, a schoolteacher, and his young bride left County Sligo to travel aboard the new infamous coffin ships to Canada. In his diary Gerard Keegan charts the reality of famine and emigration-relatives seeking his advice, the walk from Sligo to Dublin, fever on board ship, a fight with the first mate, a catch of fish, storms, sighting whales, the passengers' first sight of land--and the bittersweet fate of those who survived to reach the promised New World.

#### **Tips**

- When looking at census records, look for gaps in the birth of children. Gaps may indicate a young death or stillborn child.
- Save a digital copy of every document you find, even if you are not sure you can use it. You may someday make a connection to your family. Websites change what you can use for free and what you have to pay for.

### **Donna Moughty's Irish Genealogy Resources**

The 2020 Research Trips to both Dublin and Belfast have now been scheduled. The Belfast trip will be first, from Saturday, October 10 to Saturday, October 17 staying at [The Belfast Hilton](#). The week's research includes the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), the Ulster Historical Foundation, The Mellon Centre for Migration Studies, and the North of Ireland Family History Society. The Belfast trip also includes a trip to the Ulster American Folk Park in Omagh, Tyrone.

The trip to Dublin will run from Saturday, October 17 to Saturday, October 24, 2020. We will again be staying at [Buswells Hotel](#). The week's research includes The National Library, The National Archives, The Valuation Office, The Registry of Deeds and the General Register Office. Additional repositories can be scheduled on an as needed basis. The Dublin trip also includes a visit to EPIC--the Irish Emigration Museum, the Irish Family History Centre and a Pub Night with dinner and Irish music. In order to register, you *must know* where in Ireland your ancestors lived. All research in Ireland is dependent on time and place and unless you know that location, your research is not likely to be successful. Registration for each trip is limited to the first 15 researchers (non-researching companions are welcome to join you). If you're not sure if you are ready for the trip, consider scheduling a consultation.

Click here for more information [2020 Research Trips](#)

Donna M Moughty

Website: <https://www.irishfamilyroots.com>

Facebook: [DonnaMoughtyGenealogy](#)

Twitter: [@DMoughty](#)

## Irish Genealogy Research



### The Connecticut Irish American Historical Society (CTIAHS)

Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society  
P.O. Box 185833 Hamden, CT 06518

**Archives collection** The Ethnic Heritage Center (at Southern CT State University)  
270 Fitch St. New Haven, CT 06515 **Phone**  
(203) 392 6126

**Web** [www.ctiahs.com](http://www.ctiahs.com) and [www.southernct.edu/about/ehc](http://www.southernct.edu/about/ehc)

CTIAHS has a genealogical group designed to give members who are interested in family history opportunities to exchange ideas, to learn from experts in the field and to make field trips. They sponsor family history workshops focusing on such topics as using census records, vital statistics, church records, military records, research here and in Ireland, computer programs and internet information.

CTIAHS maintains archival collections and a library of books about Irish history, culture and genealogy at the Ethnic Heritage Center at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, Conn. The library contains many aids for historical and genealogical research, such as a set of old New Haven city directories, New Haven school records, personal interest collections and family histories that have been donated to us by Irish people throughout Connecticut.

### The Connecticut State Library – History and Genealogy Dept.

231 Capitol Ave. Hartford, CT 06106  
**Phone** (860) 757 6580

**Web** [www.ctstatelibrary.org/](http://www.ctstatelibrary.org/)

Visit the library's website to search the catalog. Visitors can also gain access to online databases through the library. For more information visit

<https://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/hg/home>

### Connecticut Society of Genealogists (CGS)

**Library address** 175 Maple St. East Hartford  
CT 06118

**Phone** (860) 569 0002

**Mailing address** CGS Inc. P.O. Box 435 Glastonbury, CT 06033

**Web** <https://ctfamilyhistory.com/>

CGS strives to encourage and promote genealogy with its Research Library, website, speaking events and publications. The library holds genealogical books, manuscripts, archival material and member ancestry charts.

### The Irish Ancestral Research Association (TIARA)

2120 Commonwealth Ave. Auburndale, MA  
04266

**Web** [www.tiara.ie](http://www.tiara.ie)

TIARA does not promote individual genealogical research services, but rather is an organization that develops and promotes the growth, study and exchange of ideas among people and organizations interested in Irish genealogical and historical research and education.

### New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS)

99 101 Newbury St. Boston, MA 02116

**Phone** (888) 296 3447

**Web** [www.americanancestors.org](http://www.americanancestors.org)

NEHGS holds over 200,000 titles and 28 million items related to history and genealogy. They offer genealogies, reference guides, genealogical journals, rare books, local histories, etc. The NEHGS library catalog is available online and some records are available for members to view online.

## Upcoming Regional Events

### NYPL - Genealogy Essentials

The New York Public Library can help you with your genealogy research! This series will help you get started on your family history with detailed classes on the research strategies, best practices, and specific records and documents that help us explore and understand our ancestors' past.

#### First come, first served

- Wed, March 11 @ 2 p.m. **Researching Naturalization Records** Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, South Court Classroom A
- Thu, March 12 @ 4 p.m. **Researching Census Records** Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, South Court Classroom A
- Tue, March 17 @ 4 p.m. **Researching Vital Records** Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, South Court Classroom A
- Thu, March 19 @ 2 p.m. **Getting Started in Genealogy Research** Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, South Court Classroom A
- Thu, March 26 @ 6:30 p.m. **Ellis Island Genealogy: an absolute beginner's guide** Seward Park Library, Adult Learning Center
- Thu, April 9 @ 2 p.m. **Researching Ship Passenger Lists** Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, South Court Classroom A
- Wed, April 15 @ 2 p.m. **Finding Clues in Family Photos** Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, South Court Classroom B
- Thu, April 16 @ 4 p.m. **Getting Started in Genealogy Research** Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, South Court Classroom A
- Thu, May 7 @ 2 p.m. **Beginning Irish Genealogy Research at the New York Public Library** Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, South Court Classrooms
- Tue, May 19 @ 2 p.m. **Introduction to African American Genealogy** Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, South Court Classroom A
- Wed, May 20 @ 2 p.m. **Getting Started in Ge-**

**nealogy Research** Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, South Court Classroom A  
Tue, May 26 @ 2 p.m. **Advanced Steps in African American Genealogy** Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, South Court Classroom A

## Did your grandmother tell you about the first time she voted?

**June 2020 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary women getting the power of the vote in the United States**  
**19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution of the United States**

Passed by Congress June 4, 1919. Ratified August 18, 1920.

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

**Tell your fellow MGS members about her story. Have it printed in the June 2020 newsletter. Send your story to [newsletter-mgsdarien@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter-mgsdarien@gmail.com)**

## Congratulations Terence Fitzgerald!

**WINNER**  
of the Family Tree DNA "Family Finder" test that was drawn on January 13, 2020 from a group of all paid Middlesex Genealogical members.



## AN IMPORTANT BENEFIT OF YOUR CURRENT MGS MEMBERSHIP CARD

Public Act No. 96-258

[https://www.ctfamilyhistory.com/pdf/  
Public Act No 96-258.pdf](https://www.ctfamilyhistory.com/pdf/Public_Act_No_96-258.pdf)

“All records of vital statistics including births, marriages and deaths in the custody of any registrar of vital statistics or of the Department of Public Health shall be open for research to any member of a [legally incorporated] genealogy society Incorporated or authorized to do business or conduct affairs in this state and such societies shall be permitted to incorporate statistics derived therefrom in their publications.”

**Have you renewed your membership  
for 2020?**

*Welcome New Members*

*Jonathan Brown*

*Mary B. Preston*

*Debbie Garber*

### LEAVE THEM SMILING



**2020  
MARCH 22,  
NEXT MEETING**

**Middlesex Genealogical Society  
P.O. Box 9  
Darien, CT 06820**