



The Newsletter of
Middlesex Genealogical Society

Vol. XL, No. 1

Darien, Fairfield County, CT

March, 2024

President's Message

We hope you have had a great winter. Please join us as we meet for social hour before the March and May lectures. We had a wonderful chat time sitting in our chairs in January - come chat with us.

Sara

**MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
2024
OFFICERS &
BOARD MEMBERS**

Sara Zagrodzky	President & Programs Director
Open	Vice President
John Driscoll	Treasurer & Newsletter Ed.
Peter Biggins	Secretary & Webmaster
Tara Finn Forschino	Social Director & Communications
Pamela Shea	Past President
Robert E. "Pete" Kenyon	Past VP Programs
Leonard Christie	Past VP Programs
Joan Killian Gallagher	Member at Large

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. 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: mgsdarienct.org

JOIN US!

On Monday, April 29, 2024, at 6:00 pm, at the Darien Library,

for a presentation given by Mark Olsen, Genealogy Community Ambassador for Family Tree Maker genealogy software.

"Customizing! A very important often unused feature."

The event will be held in the Conference Room on the third floor and will be a Zoom presentation by Mark to a live audience. This will be an informative event for both those who already use FTM and those who are thinking of it.

Also learn about Family Tree Maker 2024 [Click here](#)

FTM will provide a door prize for one lucky attendee.

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MGS News

Together with the Darien Library, Middlesex Genealogical Society held its first presentation of 2024 on January 20th. One of our favorite presenters, Toni McKeen, gave an in-depth talk about "Navigating the Ship's Manifests." She began by stressing the importance of studying *all* of the information listed on ship manifests. Many manifests contain two pages and list things like marital status, occupation, who the immigrant is coming to see, the town they came from, etc. and can give the family historian leads to do further research. Some manifests are even marked with naturalization information that was added later when the immigrant filed.

She described the trip from the old country to the new. Getting to the point of departure was

probably walking to the port or by cart. Waiting days or weeks at that port for a ship, gathering food for the long voyage and the trip itself that before the age of steam could take many weeks with horrible sleeping and sanitary conditions.

Toni explained the three major divisions of immigration, pre-1820, when no records were required, 1819-1891, when the main entry points were New York and Philadelphia and 1892 to present. This last era had the most information on the manifests, growing from six columns to over twenty in fifteen years. The main NYC points of entry were Castle Garden and when that was overwhelmed, Ellis Island. Toni told us about the experience of steerage class passengers. How after first and second class were disembarked in New York, they were ferried to Ellis Island where they were examined before being allowed to enter the United States.

Other manifests listed Aliens working their way across as crewmen and those held for special Inquiry, (Women travelling alone, medical, no means of support, senility etc.) Ellis Island kept no records, ship manifests were filled out at the point of embarkation. When using these records, compare them to others (censuses, directories, draft records, birth, death and marriage certificates) for accuracy.

As usual, Toni gave a very informative straightforward presentation.

MGS members attended the Wreaths Across America Ceremony at the Veterans Cemetery in Darien, on December 16, 2023.

From left to right, Darien's First Selectman, Jon Zagrodzky, Board Member, John Driscoll and his wife Joanne, President of MGS, Sara Zagrodzky and Board Members, "Pete" Kenyon and Pam Shea.



Upcoming MGS Presentations

Saturday, March 16, 2024, 2:00 pm. "The Killian Homeplace." Presented by Joan Killian Gallagher.



On June 20, 2023, The Irish Family History Foundation announced that The Killian Home place Family History Centre has been appointed as the County Longford centre for the IFHF. The Killian Homeplace, winner of the 2013 All Ireland Pride of Place in the Diaspora category, is located in Fermoy, just outside Lanesborough in County Longford. Founded in 1998 by Joan Killian Gallagher, the centre is housed in a meticulously restored cottage and is a sustainable tribute dedicated to the memory of her great, great grandmother, Anne Furey Killian, who against all odds, purchased the farm from the Land Commission in 1893. She was 82 years old and had been widowed for over 30 years. Joan reconnected with Killian cousins in Longford and Roscommon in 1996 when she took her father to the Notre Dame - Navy game in Dublin. This was the beginning of a journey of joy and discovery that Joan hopes to share with those in search of their own family history and place of origin in County Longford. It is this life changing cultural and educational exchange that is the mission of The Killian Homeplace Family History Centre.

Joan is a board member of MGS and the founder of Warden-Brooks Ltd. New York, Makers of the Original Banker Bag. She is the proud recipient of the Enterprising Women of the Year Award.

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Saturday, May 11, 2024, 2:00 pm. "Untangling the Fishing-line Mess of Your Family Tree or a "Do-Over" Process." Presented by Sara Zagrodzky

Topic will cover multiple ways to look at your tree for accuracy, duplicates located, and sepa-

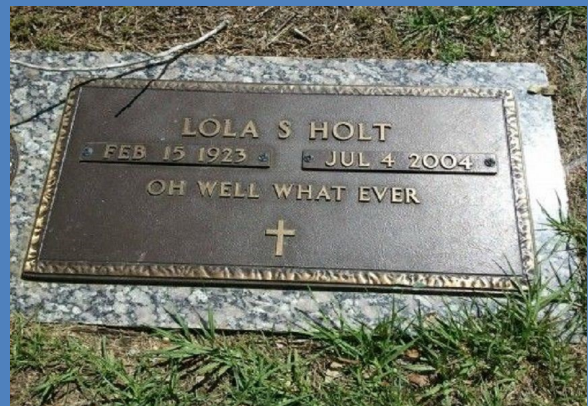
rating people of the same name. The focus will be on the use of sources and time and place.

Sara is currently President of Middlesex Genealogical Society, a Board Member for the Norwalk Senior Center Genealogy Club. She is also a member of the following: Goodwives River Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Darien Historical Society Education Committee, National Genealogical Society, Connecticut Ancestry Society, New York Genealogical & Biographical Society, New England Historic Genealogical Society and Cos Cob Genealogy Club. She is a past Board Member of the Goodwives River Chapter NSDAR and the Darien Historical Society. Sara served as Past Chair for the Darien Memorial Day Parade and past assistant to Janeen Bjork's Norwalk Community College Lifetime Learners Beginners Genealogy Class. She has made presentations to Norwalk Senior Center Genealogy Club on: "Spelling Varieties - checking name spellings on all records" and "Comparison of Ancestry and Family Search Ancestry DNA tree tags and ThruLines." She works as a genealogy researcher and has attended numerous conferences around the United States.



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LEAVE THEM SMILING



Member Recommended Books

Middlesex Genealogical Society Members' Suggested Books

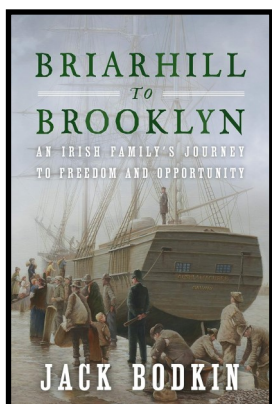
Please email your book recommendations to
newslettermqsdarien@gmail.com



Briarhill to Brooklyn: An Irish Family's Journey to Freedom and Opportunity

By Jack Bodkin

For three years a mysterious potato blight



devastated Ireland's clacháns, townlands, and cities. Nearly a million died. Was it the prospect of starvation, the snows of Black '47, or the fear of typhus that made the Bodkins leave? Or was it the dream of America's freedom and opportunity that drove the family from Galway onto an Irish coffin ship

known as Cushlamachree? Their destination was Brooklyn. An unimaginable hurdle confronted the seven young Bodkin siblings, only days after docking in New York. Would the "fever" get them, too? But they managed to survive into adulthood as they were led by their two oldest brothers—Dominic and Martin. Dominic—a fledgling surgeon on the Alabama battlefields of Spanish Fort and Fort Blakely—spends thirty-five years delivering and caring for thousands of Brooklyn babies. Martin—a Civil War veteran, and later an ironmonger with his own shop—ultimately is the progenitor of a large family of New York Bodkins. *Briarhill to Brooklyn*, is a novel, grounded in facts, in which Jack Bodkin tells the story of his Irish Catholic family's 1848 migration from County Galway, Ire-

land, to Brooklyn, New York, in the era of the Irish Potato Famine.

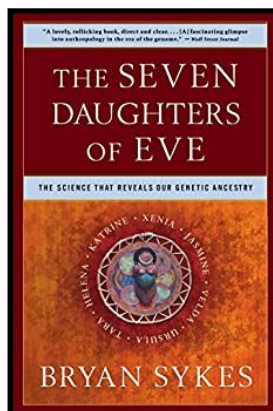
The Seven Daughters of Eve

by Bryan Sykes

Presents the science of human origin in Africa

and their dispersion to a general audience. Sykes explains the principles of genetics and human evolution, the particularities of mitochondrial DNA, and analyses of ancient DNA to genetically link modern humans

to prehistoric ancestors.



Following the developments

of mitochondrial genetics, Sykes traces back human migrations, discusses the "out of Africa theory" and casts serious doubt upon Thor Heyerdahl's theory of the Peruvian origin of the Polynesians, which opposed the theory of their origin in Indonesia. He also describes the use of mitochondrial DNA in identifying the remains of Emperor Nicholas II of Russia, and in assessing the genetic makeup of modern Europe.

The title of the book comes from one of the principal achievements of mitochondrial genetics, which is the classification of all modern Europeans into seven groups, the *mitochondrial haplogroups*. Each haplogroup is defined by a set of characteristic mutations on the mitochondrial genome, and can be traced along a person's maternal line to a specific prehistoric woman. Sykes refers to these women as "clan mothers", though these women did not all live concurrently. All these women in turn shared a common maternal ancestor, the Mitochondrial Eve.

The last third of the book is spent on a series of fictional narratives, written by Sykes, describing his creative guesses about the lives of each of these seven "clan mothers." This latter half generally met with mixed reviews in comparison with the first part.

Why Was the Information Removed from Online?

The following article is from *Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter* and is copyright 2023 by Richard W. Eastman. It is re-published here with the permission of the author. Information about the newsletter is available at <http://www.eogn.com/>

NOTE: This is a slightly updated version of an article I published a few years ago. A couple of newsletter readers have sent messages to me in the past few days expressing dissatisfaction with records that were available online on various genealogy web sites but recently have disappeared. I am offering this republished article as an explanation on why we should not be surprised when that happens. I will also offer a suggestion as to making sure you keep your own copies of online records that are valuable to you.

Two newsletter readers sent email messages to me recently expressing dissatisfaction that a set of images of vital records has been removed from a popular genealogy site. Indeed, removal of any online records of genealogical value is sad, but not unusual. Changes such as these are quite common on FamilySearch, MyHeritage, Ancestry.com, Fold3, FindMyPast, and many other genealogy sites that provide old records online. Removal of datasets has occurred dozens of times in the past, and I suspect such things will continue to happen in the future. I thought I would write a brief explanation.

In most cases, information of genealogical value obtained from government agencies, religious groups, museums, genealogy societies, and other organizations is provided under contractual agreements. The contracts specify what information is to be provided, how it is to be made available, and what price the web site has to pay to the provider for the records. All contracts also have a defined expiration date, typically 2 years or 3 years or perhaps 5 years after the

contract is signed.

When a contract nears expiration, the two parties usually attempt to renegotiate the contract. Sometimes renewal is automatic, but more often it is not. Maybe the information provider (typically an archive) decides they want more money, or maybe they decide they no longer want to supply the data to the online genealogy service. For instance, in the time the information has been available online, the information provider may have learned just how valuable the information really is. The information provider may decide to ask for more money or may even refuse to provide the information any more since the provider may have a new plan to create their own web site and offer the same information online on their new site for a fee.

Sure, that stinks for those of us who would like to have free information everywhere; but, it makes sense to most everyone else. I am sure the budget officer at most any state or local government archive thinks it makes sense.

Every contract renegotiation is different, but it is not unusual to agree to disagree. The contract ends, and the web site provider legally **MUST** remove the information from their web site. The same thing frequently happens to all the other online sites that provide old records online.

Moral of this story: If you find a record online that is valuable to you, **SAVE IT NOW!** Save it to your hard drive and make a backup copy someplace else as well. If there is no option to save, make a screen shot and save it on your hard drive or some other place where it will last for many years. Just because you can see the record online today does not mean that it will be available tomorrow.



2024 VIRTUAL FAMILY HISTORY CONFERENCE

EXPANDING POSSIBILITIES

16-18 MAY



Save the Dates: 16-18 May NGS 2024 Virtual Family History Conference

Mark your calendars for the National Genealogical Society (NGS) 2024 Virtual Family History Conference: Expanding Possibilities, 16-18 May. The program focuses on innovation and finding creative ways to solve problems in genealogy.

Virtual Expo Hall: 16-18 May

FOCUS on Genealogy Organizations: 16 May

Main Conference: 17-18 May

Participants can watch up to fifty lectures and get their questions answered by the nation's premier genealogists. With ten BCG Skillbuilding sessions; the James Dent Walker Memorial Lecture Series on African-American research; lectures on artificial intelligence in genealogy; and a wide variety of topics of interest to all genealogists, you are sure to learn something new and expand your possibilities.

New in 2024: Registrants can view all fifty sessions through 15 August 2024.

Pre-Conference Workshops: 15-16 May (Wednesday-Thursday)

Workshops include the BCG Education Fund Workshop and others to be announced soon. Workshops require additional registration fees.

Pre-Conference Events: Thursday, 16 May

Before the conference kicks off, NGS offers programming for leaders and volunteers from genealogical societies, libraries, archives, and museums. Organizations can learn about outreach and enhanced community engagement through programs and events that inspire interest in genealogy and family history. Events include

- Delegate Council Meeting
- FOCUS on genealogy organizations
- SLAM! Idea Showcase

Look for the complete program coming soon online at conference.ngsgenealogy.org.

STRANGERS IN THE BOX

**Come, look with me inside this
drawer,
in this box I've often seen,
At the pictures, black and white,
faces proud, still, and serene.
I wish I knew the people,
these strangers in the box,
their names and all their
memories,
are lost among my socks.
I wonder what their lives were
like.
How did they spend their days?
What about their special times?
I'll never know their ways.
If only someone had taken time,
to tell, who, what, where, and
when,
these faces of my heritage,
would come to life again.
Could this become the fate,
of the pictures we take today?
The faces and the memories,
someday to be passed away?
Take time to save your stories,
seize the opportunity when it
knocks,
or someday you and yours,
could be strangers in the box.**

Tips

Do you have a tip to share with your members? Send it to: newslettermgsdarien@gmail.com and have it printed in the MGS newsletter.

Don't assume that your immigrant ancestors arrived at Ellis Island. In addition to searching the [Ellis Island database](#), try databases for other ports. Travelling to Canada and then to the United States was also less expensive than going to New York City.

When using a general search engine, such as Google, put your ancestor's name in quotation marks to limit search results.

When you work for a long time searching for one family member or ancestor, you may need to take a break. Work on another line. Too much attention to a single end can bring on fatigue, especially if you are not getting any results. A new search or picking up on one you were previously working on may bring new findings. You have a lot of ancestors to choose from.

Remember that each generation doubles the number of ancestors. It's easy to get lost if you don't plan ahead for your trip. Focus on one or two families. The others will still be there when you get to them.

Did you remember to renew your membership for 2024?

[Click Here](#)

2024
MARCH 16,
NEXT MEETING

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