

Middlesex

Genealogical Society

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On page 3 of this issue Dorothy Shillinglaw discusses information that has come down as a family tradition in her family. Many other examples remind me of how useful it can be to locate one's eldest relatives and learn what family traditions and information might be available.

Just this week I ran across an astonishing example in a 1936 issue of the Sedan [Kansas] Times Star:

"Mrs. John Mattocks Discovers Her Living Great-Grandmother

"Recently Mrs. John Mattocks of Rogers community noted a published picture of an eastern lady of great age whose claim to fame was that she was the only person now living drawing a pension as a result of the War of 1812. Noting that the lady's name was Graham, which was her own maiden name, and having knowledge that the early roots of her family tree attached to that geographical location [Mrs. Mattocks] yielded to an impulse to write to the lady. She received a prompt reply from the venerable pensioner revealing that she was the great-grandmother of Mas. Mattocks. Her knowledge of the ancient family members extended down to overlap with information known to Mrs. Mattocks through family records of more recent date.

"The last pensioner of the struggle with England is Mrs. Lydia Ann Graham, 98, of Bush Run, Va., widow of Isaac Graham, drummer boy of 1812. Graham died in 1881."

Mrs. Graham was still receiving her pension more than 120 years after the War of 1812!

Another example: A 95-year-old lady descended from my Morgan ancestors had in her possession a probate document relating to George Morgan who died with neither a will nor descendents. The document gave the names of 58 people who were his legal heirs, mostly nieces and nephews. This document became a framework for a book on the family and led us to trace additional thousands of members of the Morgan family in later generations—all because one

lady had saved a legal document for most of her life.

Sometimes we don't pay enough attention to sources in our families that may have useful traditions, memories and documents. Why not try locating the eldest person among your distant relatives? Some surprising bit of family history may turn up.

David L. Mordy

MGS AT DARIEN LIBRARY

by C. Scribner

A microfiche reader has been installed in the Business Reference Room on the table behind the computers. It is there for our microfiche collection, which will be available as soon as storage and filing problems can be solved.

For members interested in researching Eastern Pennsylvania, we have a copy of the Spruance Library Genealogical Research Guide to Bucks County, Pennsylvania (The Spruance Library is part of the Bucks County Historical Society in Doylestown, PA.) This guide can be found in the top drawer of our filing cabinet under "S."

Four books donated by former MGS Treasurer Fred Farwell have been processed and will be added to our growing list of genealogies. They are: FPK, An Intimate Biography of Frederick P. Knepple, by David Knepple (Shelf 3.1); Inbred Yankees, Kenerson and Ryder Families and Their New England Ancestors, by E. Kenerson (Shelf 4.2); Supplement to Inbred Yankees, Kenerson (Shelf 4.2); and Memoirs of the Abbots of Old Bellevue, James Southall (Shelf 4.5).

Also new to our shelves is The Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of Connecticut (Shelf 3.5).

MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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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. Annual membership dues are \$15 per individual and \$20 per couple or family.

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

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UPCOMING MGS MEETINGS MARK YOUR CALENDARS

10 APRIL 1999: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING during which new MGS officers and board members will be elected.

Then, "USING GENEALOGY TO DISCOVER YOUR FAMILY'S MEDICAL INHERITANCE" will be the subject of a talk by ANITA LUSTENBERGER, C.G., who has worked as both a genetic counselor and a professional genealogist. She is the author of articles published in the NYGB Record and the NGS Quarterly, including "How to be a Family Health Historian."

A family can learn much about its medical future simply by examining its past. The information contained in genetic family histories can contribute to health promotion and disease prevention. Genetic factors underlie all aspects of health and disease. Many common diseases, such as coronary artery disease, osteoporosis and cancer, have a genetic basis. Learn how you can expand the health history aspect of your genealogy to benefit your immediate family, and what genetic clues are hidden in your research.

15 MAY 1999: MGS Board Member PHILIP MOREHOUSE, former Darien Probate Court Judge, will speak on CONNECTI-CUT PROBATE RECORDS. He will describe the records that are available and indicate where they can be found, and will also cover confidentiality and the special rules for adoption.

ALL MEETINGS: SATURDAY, 2:00 PM, DARIEN LIBRARY. COME, AND BRING A FRIEND!

DR. ROBERT K. WRIGHT JR.

Dr. Robert K. Wright Jr., who will soon retire from the U.S. Army Center of Military History, is looking forward to renewing his interests in genealogy and the nation's early military history—and to becoming a member of MGS. Dr. Wright is the individual who was responsible for getting the Connecticut National Guard a battle streamer for the Tory Hole Raid in what is now Darien. He has also compiled records of the Connecticut militia and active duty troops from 1636 to the end of the Revolution, and has cards for each of the officers with various facts, such as when they were commissioned by the legislature. When he can convert his handwritten records to electronic form, he will offer access to them. In addition, Dr. Wright has lots of other cards on colonial and Revolutionary era military personnel and—even before retirement—is willing to offer suggestions to those researching U.S. military records of any era. You may e-mail Dr. Wright at: wrightrk@erols.com

EVERY SATURDAY, 10:00 AM TO 12:00 NOON, DARIEN LIBRARY: RESEARCH GUIDANCE IS AVAILABLE.

ARE FAMILY STORIES RELIABLE?

by Dorothy Shillinglaw

In 1955 my husband, Selwyn, traveled to Edinburgh where he stayed with a first cousin of his father's and met several other family members. He came home with some names, dates and addresses, and a story about the origin of the Shillinglaw name. According to the story, the original Shillinglaw had been a cadet of the house of Kerr, became a follower of Bonnie Prince Charlie, got in trouble for stealing horses from the prince, and ran away and changed his name to "Sheilinghill," which eventually evolved into Shillinglaw.

This was a wonderful story, and we cheerfully shared it with many people over the years. As I researched the family, however, poring over old records that took me back in time through six generations of Shillinglaws, it became clear that the family's name had existed before Bonnie Prince Charlie's arrival in Scotland. As told, the story could not be true. Nevertheless, I wasn't quite ready to discard it entirely because my experience has been that there is usually *some* basis for the existence of such a story. I put it aside and hoped for enlightenment at some future time.

Recently, I received a scrapbook that had belonged to Selwyn's grandfather George Shillinglaw who was born in Edinburgh in 1859 and emigrated to the United States in 1883. The scrapbook, begun around 1873, contains a mixture of poems and news items that caught his interest, miscellaneous odds and ends, and some items that relate to the family.

I eagerly went through the family items, such as visiting cards, announcements, invitations to a few weddings—and found one small peripheral mystery, but no great surprises. Then, I started to read an unsourced and undated newspaper clipping about Earlstoun (now Earlston), the place where George's father, Thomas Shillinglaw, had been born in 1813. Here, I struck gold.

The typeface used in this article appears to match that of *The Weekly Scotsman*, an Edinburgh publication to which George subscribed. There is no headline, but the first paragraph begins "EARLSTOUN—NOTES NEW AND OLD," and internal evidence indicates that it appeared during the period that the Messrs. Lawton's section of the Berwickshire Railway was being built.

The article summarizes construction progress on the new line and expresses regret that the loss of some charming scenery is attributable to the work. Construction of the first road built in the district in 1745 is mentioned, and the conclusion is drawn that even with the unfortunate changes that the railroad brings, it is as necessary to the district as was that first road.

The article then goes on to relate what it terms an interesting and little known story in connection with the 1745 road. It seems that Joseph Shillinglaw of Brideshaugh Milne in Legerwood, Berwickshire (Selwyn's third great-grandfather, age 20 at the time), was the contractor for the section of the road extending from Blainslie (near Lauder) down the west side of Leader water, passing Hawickshiel, Kedzlie, Earlstoun, and Drygrange, to the Fly (ferry) at Leaderfoot.

According to the article, when Bonnie Prince Charlie's army marched from Edinburgh to Carlisle in 1745, it started off in two sections. The prince and one group traveled along the coast to Berwick; the rest moved south through Midlothian, then turned eastward, past Langshaw, to Earlstoun. There, they came upon Joseph Shillinglaw, working on the new road and employing 40 horses in its construction. The prince's followers promptly confiscated all 40 horses

in the name of the prince and drove them off to Berwick where the men were to rejoin their leader and the rest of the army.

As you can well imagine, the loss of 40 horses was not something to be borne lightly. Joseph Shillinglaw, determined to recover the horses and certain that only the prince could effect that happy end, followed the prince's men to Berwick, where he

sought and obtained an interview with the prince himself. Joseph's presentation of his grievance to the prince must have been extremely effective, because the outcome of the meeting was the return to him of all 40 horses. (I find this quite astonishing.)

So, how reliable was the family story that Selwyn brought home from Scotland in 1955? Not very. Clearly, the events described had become somewhat garbled in the 210 years that had passed since they occurred. Even so, the story did contain elements of truth. Horses were, indeed, "stolen," and Joseph Shillinglaw did, for a very brief time, "follow" Bonnie Prince Charlie.

Regrettably, the origin of the family name remains obscure. Moreover, it certainly would be nice to know where the newspaper found *its* information.

MGS WORKSHOP MEETING

by David Mordy

Some 50 to 60 people attended the Darien Library "Family History on the Web" program at noon and the MGS Annual Workshop Meeting at 2 pm on 6 February.

For the second year in a row, MGS Vice President Donna Moughty joined Darien Library staff in presenting the noon program. She reminded us that, while the Internet is a great place to search, you will almost never find primary source information on it. Information available may have been copied from previously published books or entered by individuals, and may well be third-, fourth- or even fifth-hand. And then there is the problem of transcription error. Always verify Internet information by consulting primary sources.

Donna concentrated on Internet information that relates to surname and geographical resources. She explained how to focus information requests by using comprehensive genealogy sites, such as Cyndi's List, Tool Box, Genealogical Site Finder, Genealogy Home Page, Ancestry, and Family Tree Maker. For example, Cyndi's List indexes surname sites alphabetically, and also provides links to geographic and other categories. Ancestry has a comprehensive online database for which users must pay a modest fee, but the organization also provides a brief period of free access to new databases as they are added. U.S. Gen-Web is arranged by state and county and provides information that has been entered into the system by local volunteers in each area.

Should your search fail to uncover the information you seek, it might be useful to submit a query to relevant Internet message boards. Be as specific as possible in your query: name, date (even if approximate), location (country, state, county, town), and event. Then, be patient.

At our 2 pm Annual Workshop Meeting, Donna covered various hardware and software relating to genealogy, text processing, and photographs. She uses *Reunion* software as her genealogy program on an Apple Macintosh computer, but also discussed PC programs such as *Ultimate Family Tree* and *Master Genealogist*. (Data can be transferred from one program to another using the GEDCOM format, although notes and sources may be degraded in the

process. Find the genealogical database that meets your needs.) Output from one of these programs can be used as input to a word processing program, such as WordPerfect, MS Word, Word Pro, and Appleworks, for further editing.

Donna explained and demonstrated (using a projector attached to her computer) programs that perform photo retouching, such as *Kai's Photosoap*. She recommends saving photos in JPEG format, which can be read by any computer (both PCs and Macs) as this allows sharing. JPEG files also tend to be smaller, which makes them easier to send over e-mail or to post on the Web.

If you're in the market for a scanner, Donna feels that a full-size flatbed makes more sense than a small roll or photo scanner. The full-size flatbed gives you more flexibility in scanning old photos, odd-size documents, clippings, and photo post cards that were popular at the end of the 19th century.

Owning a scanner makes it easy to share photos. If you have a scanner and someone else has a photo that you would like to have, borrow the photo, scan it, and take the file to Walgreens where you can print it out on their Kodak printer for \$6.99. (This machine reads JPEG files on a PC-formatted disk.) If you have a photo that someone else wants, scan the photo, copy the file to disk, and send the disk. Donna also demonstrated how to capture photographs with a digital camera. Just snap the picture and plug the camera into your computer to display it on your screen.

Your computer can enhance your genealogy and make it lots of fun to share your research with others. Don't limit yourself to one software program; explore lots of options!

MGS NEWSLETTER

Although our MGS Newsletter is officially a quarterly publication, we have actually published five issues in each of the last two years. This year we plan to adhere to our quarterly publication schedule, and, as a consequence, this is the last issue you will receive until September. Your editor is grateful to those who have contributed during this active season: to David Mordy, Chick Scribner and David Bowley for their regular columns; and to Diantha Bartlett Howard and Valentine J. Wolfe Jr. for their significant contributions. Please send us your story for use next season.

COMPUTER CORNER

by David Bowley



A number of improvements have been made to our computer arrangements at Darien Library, and, for the benefit of our members, I would like to describe what

can be found in our own "Computer Corner."

First of all, the library has provided a second work station for our genealogists, including a new computer that is much faster than the old one. The new computer has been located back-to-back with the old machine and has its own laser printer.

We have decided to use the old machine for FamilySearch only. The new computer will be used for our CD ROM disks and will also feature access to the Internet for the exclusive use of genealogists. (Don't tell anyone!)

To give you some guidance on the material available on the new machine:

- 1. The Family Archive Viewer: This viewer (already loaded into the computer) enables you to view all of the Broderbund Family Tree Maker disks. These are the disks that were bought with part of the Robert E. Fatherley donation, and are primarily census index material for some of the states. The guidebook for this collection will assist you in locating and printing out directions to the relevant source material.
- 2. PERSI, Version 2.0: This is an index to all the genealogical periodicals held by the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana. It is comprehensive and will help you find the periodicals by name or subject. For example, if you want to search the Middlesex Genealogical Society newsletters for all articles written by Robert E. Fatherley, the PERSI Index will identify them for you. Armed with the appropriate reference, you can then call the library in Fort Wayne, and they will send you a copy of the article that you are interested in for a nominal fee.
- 3. The Ancestry Catalog. This is a commercial catalog of Ancestry's services, which can be accessed by placing the PERSI disk in the computer. These services include CDs, books, maps and all levels of paid-for searches, mainly in their 90-million-person database. The CDs are interesting; for example, #410 (priced at \$69.95) gives you

4,000 pages of *The Source, Ancestry's Red Book*, an index to the Library of Congress, a guide to the National Archives and the American Biographical Library.

- 4. The Internet Explorer with genealogical FA-VORITES: Click the Internet Explorer button with the mouse, and then click FAVORITES when the Explorer screen comes up.
- 5. Netscape BOOKMARKS: Does the same thing for the Netscape Browser. Click the Netscape button with the mouse and then click on the BOOKMARKS button when the Netscape screen comes up.

We will keep these Favorites/Bookmarks updated so that you will be able to find everything from the MGS website to Cyndi's page. Enjoy!

ROBERT FATHERLEY CD COLLECTION

It is good to see that a number of members have taken my suggestion and donated their Family Tree Maker CD ROM disks to the society. We now have the following titles, in addition to those listed in the manual located next to the new computer:

- 116 Census of Ontario, Canada
- 117 Family History of New England Families, 1600s-1800s
- 118 Canadian Genealogy Index
- 162 Virginia Genealogy #1, pre-1600-1900s
- 163 Family History, Pennsylvania Genealogies #1
- 174 Virginia Vital Records #1, 1660-1800s
- 179 Family History, Connecticut Genealogies #1
- Complete Book of Emigrants, 1607-1776
- 350 Family History Guide (CD version of the LDS publication *The Source*

GENEALOGY FOR CHILDREN

If a child in your family has a school assignment involving genealogy, or if you would like to awaken an interest in genealogy in a young person, consider helping the child to visit U.S. GenWeb Kidz at:

http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgwkidz/

You will find graphics appropriate to children, hints on how to get started, links to other sites,

and the Kidz Forum where queries and questions have been posted by other children—and your own young genealogist has the option of posting his/her queries and questions, too.



GENEALOGY '99

This annual, all-day event sponsored by the Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich, the Stamford Historical Society, and the Connecticut Ancestry Society took place at Christ Church in Greenwich on Saturday, 27 February 1999, with about 200 attendees.

MGS Trustee and New England Historic Genealogical Society Library Director Thomas Jay Kemp began a talk entitled "Let Me Show You—Resources on the Worldwide Web" by saying that the Web has opened up easy access to second- or third-level records rarely used before now. He pointed out that 200 million items have been made available by ancestry.com and discussed some of the useful databases that they have made available free, such as the Social Security Death Index.

He told us that the Family History Library in Salt Lake City has plans to make its *FamilySearch* software accessible for online search, and in another year expects to put up its CDs. Eventually, LDS would also like to make its microfilms searchable online.

He discussed the large number of archives now online, such as: the National Archives and Records Administration, Library of Congress, New York Public Library, his own library at NEHGS (will soon have URL list and do a global search for manuscripts online), and the many state libraries and historical societies throughout the country. A useful site is Repositories of Primary Sources, at http://www.uidaho.edu/special-collections/Other.Repositories.html which has links to 3100 websites (34 for Connecticut alone!) of significant repositories, holding manuscripts, archives, rare books, historical photos, etc.

Among the international sites mentioned were:

- Australian Family History Compendium: http:// www.cohsoft.com.au/afhc/
- Canadian Genealogy and History: http:// www.islandnet.com/~jveinot/cghl.html
- Federation of East European Family History Societies: http://feefhs.org/
- GENUKI, UK & Ireland Genealogical Information Services: http://www.genuki.org.uk/
- National Archives of Ireland: http:// www.nationalarchives.ie/
- General Register Office for Northern Ireland:

- http://www.nics.gov.uk/nisra/gro/
- Public Record Office of the United Kingdom: http://www.pro.gov.uk/
- General Register Office for Scotland: http:// www.origins.net/GRO/

In a second talk, "Let Me Tell You—Keeping Current With the Latest Tools in Print and on the Computer," Tom discussed the many excellent how-to, background and resource books available and how to use them effectively. There are far too many to list here (five pages), but you will be happy to know that many are available on our shelves at Darien Library.

Leslie Smith Collier of Dallas, Texas, proved to be a remarkably informative and entertaining speaker. She gave a talk on "In Deeds I Trust...and So Should You" that clarified the enormous amount of information that can be gleaned from land records. When land changes hands, there is always a record. Land initially passes from government into private hands via a grant or patent. Thereafter, every time property changes hands, it is by deed recorded at the county level. Many counties have, at some time, indexed their deed books under both sellers' (grantors') and buyers' (grantees') names, facilitating searches. Often, the books themselves have been microfilmed.

Leslie Smith Collier, researching a very common maiden name, sometimes in counties with few vital records, has found that deeds can often substitute for death, marriage, and even birth records. For example, women's dower rights insure that they are listed on a deed if the owner is married and his wife is still living. When land changes hands after a death, an approximate date of death and names of the inheritors (usually children of the deceased) can be learned. Leslie urges keeping track of witnesses whose names appear on deeds because they are often neighbors that intermarry with the family you are investigating. Land transactions tend to be within families or among close friends, so you should read all deeds with your surname. List every name that appears on these deeds, and then read and copy or abstract every deed made by anyone on this list.

Leslie's second talk of the day was entitled "Sherlock Holmes and the Write Way to Research." She urged us to focus on one problem at a time; define it clearly; list assumptions; compare those to what is normal for the area and the time, and form a theory. Prepare a problem statement worksheet that

will help you to break your problem into bite-sized pieces. Make good use of sources available to you, and use a research log to record exactly what you find—or do not find—to avoid duplicating your efforts at a later date. "Write your way to success."

At the end of the DAY an announcement was made that there would be no Genealogy 2000 next year. The feeling among the sponsors of this local genealogy series is that it would be wiser to promote attendance at the National Genealogical Society Conference, entitled "New England—a Bridge to America," which will take place from 31 May to 4 June 2000, fairly close to home in Providence, RI.

THE LOST 1890 CENSUS

NARA has posted a very thorough article on this subject, "First in the Path of the Firemen," by Kellee Blake, which originally appeared in *Prologue: Quarterly of the National Archives and Records Administration*, Spring 1996, Vol. 28, No. 1, at: http://

www.nara.gov/publications/prologue/1890cen1.html It is well worth reading.

This was the first census to use Herman Hollerith's electric tabulation system and the first that did not require all or part of the schedules to be deposited in county clerks' offices, and so the *only* copies were forwarded to Washington. As there was no permanent Census Bureau until 1902, the schedules were placed in custody of the Department of Commerce.

In March 1896 fire severely damaged the original 1890 special schedules for mortality, crime, pauperism and benevolence, special classes (deaf, dumb, blind, insane), and portions of the transportation and insurance schedules, and these were destroyed by Department of Commerce order. The general population schedules were undamaged, however, and in 1903 a census clerk reported them to be in good condition.

On 10 January 1921 the 1890 general population schedules were stored in stacks on closely spaced pine shelves in an unlocked basement file room of the Commerce Building. Smoke was noticed about 5:00 pm and fire was reported at 5:30 pm. Firemen poured 20 streams of water into the basement area, continuing until 10:30 pm, although the fire had been declared out about 9:45 pm. The next morning Census Director Sam Rogers estimated that 25% of the 1890

schedules had been destroyed, with 50% of the remainder damaged. Mr. Rogers reported that no salvage work could be done, however, until insurance companies completed their evaluation of the damage. Controversy raged over the cause of the fire, and support built for a safe national archives building. No appropriations were made for salvage, however, and the records were piled in a large warehouse until May of 1921 when the new Census Director, William Steuart, arranged for their transfer to the census building—to be bound where possible, but at least put in some sort of order for reference.

In December 1932, "Schedules, Population, 1890... Original" was item 22 on a list of papers "no longer necessary and scheduled for destruction" sent by the Chief Clerk of the Bureau of the Census to the Librarian of Congress with a request that the Librarian identify any item that should *not* be destroyed. *No* item on the list was identified by the Librarian of Congress as necessary to retain, so the list was forwarded to Congress, which, on 21 February 1933, authorized destruction of all items on the list. The 1890 census was then destroyed, probably sometime during 1935. With the exception of some fragments found in 1942 and 1953, the 1890 census was completely gone.

Vigilance can protect and preserve records.

UPCOMING NEHGS EVENTS

New England Historic Genealogical Society has announced several upcoming events:

- Dr. George Redmond will lead the Annual Heritage Tour to Wales 11-21 May 1999.
- Two research trips to the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, guided by NEHGS staff, will take place 30 May to 6 June 1999 and 14-21 November 1999.
- Two sessions of "Come Home to New England" are scheduled in Boston. The first will take place 20-27 June 1999 at the historic Little Building, Emerson College, 80 Boylston Street; the second 8-15 August 1999 at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel (within four blocks of NEHGS), 64 Arlington Street, adjacent to the Public Garden.

Additional information can be obtained at NEHGS's website at www.nehgs.org or by making a toll-free telephone call to 1-888-AT-NEHGS.

NARA'S GENERAL INFORMATION LEAFLETS

The National Archives and Records Administration offers useful General Information Leaflets—at no cost—which may be ordered from: Product Development and Distribution Staff, National Archives and Records Administration, Room G-7, 700 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC, 20408; telephone 1-202-501-5235 or 1-800-234-8861; fax 202-501-7170). Among these are:

- GIL 5. "Using Records in the National Archives for Genealogical Research." 27 pp.
- GIL 7. "Military Service Records in the National Archives." 14 pp.
- GIL 30. "Information About the National Archives for Prospective Researchers." 24 pp. Focuses on research in the Washington, DC, area facilities.

CHARLES SCRIBNER

by David Mordy

Chick Scribner is stepping down from his duties as MGS Librarian after many years of quietly doing his job superlatively. The Saturday morning genealogical help sessions will be taken over by our new board member, Jane Edmondson, and David Bowley will be handling the remainder of Chick's duties. Happily, Chick will remain on the Board of Directors. We thank him for the great job he has done and wish him good health.

DID YOU KNOW? IN A SINGLE STACK, THE NATIONWIDE HOLDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE 378 MILES HIGH!

Deadline for next newsletter: September 1999

