



Middlesex Genealogical Society

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Darien, Fairfield County, CT

September 2011

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have addressed in the past the making of family stories about our ancestors and the fact that this makes our family history not only more real and interesting to us, but also to other members of the family. One day I was talking to someone in Norwalk, Conn., who had read the message and asked me how to get this type of information if all his Old Folks had passed away? What a super question, one that did not enter my mind because I had so many generations of my ancestors living (five at the time that I was born) that I did not think about it. (By the way there are still five generations, but now, instead of my being the youngest, I am in the No. 2 slot.) So how do we find some interesting information about those old folks?

I suggested looking for old records and diaries left by a grandparent or aunt, etc. His answer was, "Look, Lloyd, let's face reality. In today's economy, and considering the failing health of the older generation, most of them have to go to a home where they can get 24-hour care. Their home is sold to pay the cost and all the contents are put in a dumpster, all diaries, etc., are lost. So I again ask where do I go now?"

I pondered that question and then, when looking at some old genealogy magazines, I found an answer: newspapers. Yes, we have looked at old newspapers before; we looked in birth announcements, obituary notices and wedding announcements. But remember that our ancestors were more involved with community activities than we are today. Go back and carefully reread all of the articles looking for something that your ancestors did. Perhaps they received an award, won a trophy, played in a ball game, took some scouts on a

hike, were installed as a club president. Look for something they did that would get them mentioned in a newspaper. You will find some information to start your family stories. That is becoming easier to do as many newspapers are now online. Some can be seen at no cost; others charge a fee. Ancestry.com, Familysearch.org, New York Times.com and Google are some of the places you can go to see these papers.

Lloyd Sturges Jr. ■

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

We welcome two new members to MGS's Board of Directors. They are Steve Anderson and Keeley Kriskey, who were elected at the annual meeting on 14 May 2011. ■

ELECTRONIC VERSION OF OUR NEWSLETTER

Work is continuing on electronic production of our newsletter. Look for more information in our next issue. ■

PRESERVING YOUR GENEALOGICAL RECORDS DIGITALLY

Gray Wright of FamilySearch recently completed a thorough revision of his paper on preserving family history records digitally. The revised paper can be found at <http://goo.gl/vDwAZ>. ■

MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

2011-2012 OFFICERS

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

BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE

Steven Anderson
Jim Baker
Virginia Banerjee
Peter Biggins
Leonard Christie
Keeley Kriskey
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, DARIEN LIBRARY, 1441 POST ROAD. (Our 1 October meeting will take place in the Community Room on the first floor.) COME, AND BRING A FRIEND.

1 OCTOBER 2011: TONI McKEEN will present **EFFECTIVELY USING ANCESTRY.COM IN RESEARCHING YOUR FAMILY**. In this lecture, Toni will show us how to research efficiently and successfully using this powerful site. She will also share helpful tips in finding those elusive relatives, which parameters to use, and how to prevent looking at thousands of names in search of the one person you are trying to find. She will also show us some little-known and seldom-used options.

Toni has been doing genealogy research on her own extensive Italian family and her husband's Irish family for the last 27 years. For the past seven years she has also been teaching several levels of genealogy in her hometown of Ridgefield, Conn., and has been a popular lecturer at various genealogy societies in the New York, Connecticut, Boston, and Long Island areas.

19 NOVEMBER 2011: DONNA MOUGHTY, past president of MGS, professional genealogist and former regional manager for a national technology company, will present **SOURCES FOR IRISH RESEARCH**. She will separate reality from myth in identifying and evaluating those records that survived the 1922 Public Records Office fire, and she will also explain Irish civil jurisdictions. The 1901 and 1911 Irish censuses will be covered, and Griffith's Valuation and the Tithe Applotment, as well as church, civil and other records. She will also offer suggestions for ways to uncover missing information about your ancestors in this country before attempting research in Ireland.

Donna teaches classes for beginners and lectures on a variety of subjects, including the Internet, Irish research and computer topics. She also provides consultations, research assistance and training. She is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists and served as chair of the Professional Management Conference from 2005 to 2008, Treasurer of the Genealogical Speakers Guild from 2004 to 2009, and a delegate to the Federation of Genealogical Societies. Her genealogical blog can be found at www.moughty.com.

21 JANUARY 2012: TONI McKEEN will return to MGS to present **LETTING CITY DIRECTORIES WORK FOR**

(Continued on page 8)

USING ROOTSWEB: BLASTING THROUGH ROADBLOCKS

Bill BLOCK started doing family history research many years ago—long before the days of computer genealogy programs and before the availability of Internet resources for his research. Over the years, Bill amassed a rather lengthy family tree going back 10 to 15 generations with well-documented sources for many of his lines.

However, one stumbling block has always bothered Bill. His own surname of BLOCK proved to be just that—a roadblock! Of all the research he has done it is somewhat ironic that the BLOCK surname is the one obstacle he hasn't been able to smash through. In fact, Bill had put the BLOCKs on the back burner about 10 years ago and never picked them up again except for a brief attempt in the early days of the Internet to find other people looking for his ancestral line. Nothing—no contacts and no search results.

Bill decides as one of his New Year's resolutions to revisit the BLOCK research and try to examine what he already knows vs. what he wants to learn with a fresh new outlook. He begins by searching resources he hasn't checked in some time:

- RootsWeb/Ancestry message boards (<http://boards.rootsweb.com/>);
- RootsWeb's mailing list archives (<http://archiver.rootsweb.com/>); and
- WorldConnect databases (<http://wc.rootsweb.com/>).

Bill realizes that it is quite possible that there are new researchers out there today who didn't have access to computers or simply hadn't begun their searches yet at the time he last checked the lists, boards, and GEDCOMs.

He next checks other online resources, such as the USGenWeb archives (<http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/>), for new databases that might have been added since he last looked.

After Bill is certain that he has checked out all "new" resources, he then turns to the data he gathered over the years and looks carefully at some of the conflicting information in his files. He knows that Samuel BLOCK married Mary WILSON, but the only evidence he has to prove she is Mary "WILSON" is an undated paper tucked into the family Bible.

Bill decides to check census records again and finds Mary WILSON on the 1860 census, a few years after Samuel BLOCK died. Fortunately two of the BLOCK children were still living with Mary in 1860 which enabled Bill to prove he had found the right Mary. She is listed as a widow. However, this would seem to conflict with WILSON being her maiden name. But might it indicate that he'd overlooked the possibility that Mary had remarried after Samuel's death and the surname WILSON was, in fact, the name of her deceased second husband and not her maiden name after all?

Bill digs into some online marriage records and cemetery databases and finds that Mary BLOCK, widow, did indeed remarry after Samuel's death to Joseph WILSON who died in 1859—just a year before Mary appeared with the surname WILSON on the 1860 census. This new discovery leads Bill to search again for Samuel's marriage record to a Mary (but not necessarily to a Mary WILSON as he had assumed in the past). Voilà! He finds it. Samuel BLOCK married Mary BRYANT the year before their first child was born.

Bill contemplates what possible new information this discovery of Mary's maiden name might lead to. He resolves to examine every piece of conflicting information or information that might not be what it seems on the surface in his reopening of the brick wall search for his BLOCKs.

So he goes over information in his files on Samuel BLOCK's siblings and takes notice of who the siblings married. How interesting! Not only had he just established that Samuel's wife's maiden name was BRYANT and not WILSON -- he now notices that Samuel's brothers, George and Christopher, also married women with the surname BRYANT. Is it possible that three BLOCK brothers had married three BRYANT sisters? Bill doesn't know for sure but he vows to follow up on that new avenue of research and investigate the collateral BRYANT line.

Unlike his dead-end BLOCK line he easily locates extensive BRYANT research online and finds pedigrees for the BRYANT ladies (and, yes, they are sisters) in WorldConnect databases. Bill anxiously dashes off e-mail queries to the submitters of the GEDCOMs on the BRYANT family.

A more thorough examination of the BRYANT GEDCOMs on WorldConnect shows that the BRYANT family had migrated from one location to another almost in lock-step with the BLOCKs and

belonged to the same churches along the way. The BLOCK and BRYANT men also practiced the same occupation—they were all tanners for several generations.

More research on these BRYANTs indicates that they seem to have been closely allied through intermarriages to families with the names: CUTTER, CROSS, and DEMOSS. In a light-bulb moment it dawns on Bill that these are also names that appear as witnesses to deeds, co-executors of wills, and sponsors at baptisms for his BLOCK family. Bill had photocopied various census pages from microfilms years ago and scrolling through them again with his new-found information, he realizes that these are also names appearing as neighbors to his BLOCKs.

He's very pleased with his new leads. Bill delights in the fact that one new discovery made by re-examining his old files has opened a whole raft of possibilities that may finally enable him to get past the roadblocks in his BLOCK family research.

Previously printed in *Rootsweb Review*, 11 January 2006, Vol. 9, No. 2. ■

ARCHIVES.COM ADDS THE U.S. CENSUS TO ITS WEBSITE

Announced by Archives.com:

REDWOOD CITY, Calif., Sept. 1, 2011 / PRNewswire/ — Today Archives.com, the web's most affordable and easy-to-use subscription-based family history site, announces the addition of the U.S. Federal Census, the single most valuable collection of U.S. historical records. The U.S. Census collections were made available by FamilySearch International, the world's largest genealogy organization, as part of a joint effort to introduce more records to family historians worldwide. In conjunction with the census effort, Archives will also embark on a joint project with FamilySearch to digitize tens of millions of additional historical records, the majority of which are not currently online. Archives has pledged a minimum of five million dollars to this important project which will positively impact the entire community.

Archives CEO Matthew Monahan notes,

“We're extremely excited to bring this comprehensive collection of U.S. Census records and images that have been enhanced by the FamilySearch volunteer community to Archives.com. We're dedicated to bringing users new and compelling content, and that's why we're happy to contribute at least five million dollars to similar ongoing community projects. Archives already provides members with exceptional value for an extremely low price—adding the U.S. Census and other unique collections as part of this initiative with FamilySearch will be a game changer.”

Archives has integrated the full set of U.S. Federal Population Census indexes from 1790 to 1930 consisting of over 500 million names along with 3 million images from census years 1850, 1870, and 1900. In the near future, the full set of census images will be accessible. Leading the effort is former FamilySearch veteran Anne Roach AG®, CG(SM) as Director of Content Development.

Jay L. Verkler, president of FamilySearch, said, “U.S. Census records are the most searched collections for North America. We are pleased when companies like Archives.com join in the collective goal to make more historic records available online quickly and cost effectively. We look forward to working with the entire industry to facilitate these types of contributions.” Verkler noted that the daunting challenge to digitize and provide access to the world's genealogical records can only be accomplished with community support and participation from dynamic companies like Archives.com.

While the addition of the entire U.S. Census and the ongoing digitization projects will bring enormous value to Archives members, the company plans to maintain its low annual fee. Already one of the highest trafficked family history websites, the company anticipates massive growth as a result of these enhancements, which clearly make Archives.com the premier destination for low-cost subscription-based family history research. For regular updates about the census integration and digitization project, visit <http://www.archives.com/census>.

About Archives:

Archives.com is a leading family history website that makes discovering family history simple and affordable. The company has assembled more than 1.5 billion historical records in a single location, and makes them available at a price that's up to 80 percent less than the leading competitor. Archives

also partners with other leading family history websites to provide integrated record collections, discounted memberships, official certificates and other special promotions. Archives.com is free to try for seven days, allowing anyone to explore the benefits of membership without risk or obligation. Archives.com is owned and operated by Inflection, a fast-growing data commerce company. Find more information at www.Inflection.com.

About FamilySearch:

FamilySearch International is the largest genealogy organization in the world. FamilySearch is a nonprofit, volunteer-driven organization sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Millions of people use FamilySearch records, resources, and services to learn more about their family history. To help in this great pursuit, FamilySearch has been actively gathering, preserving, and sharing genealogical records worldwide for over 100 years. Patrons may access FamilySearch services and resources free online at FamilySearch.org or through over 4,600 family history centers in 132 countries, including the main Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah. ■

IRISH ARCHIVES RESOURCE

The Irish Archives Resource is a portal website that will enable researchers/users to search for publicly accessible archival collections that are located in Ireland. The IAR is funded by the Heritage Council of Ireland and is supported by the Archives and Records Association (Ireland). Further institutional partnerships may also be secured in the future.

The IAR consists of an online database which contains searchable archival descriptions that are created in accordance with national archival guidelines and international archival standards, with web links from each descriptive entry to repository home pages, detailed item level finding aids, databases, or digital objects.

The purpose of the IAR Portal is to:

- Allow users to locate archival collections that are relevant to their research.
- Stimulate the increased use of archival collections across the whole of Ireland by directing

researchers to the relevant repositories/archives services.

- Encourage the development and publication of comprehensive, standardised archival descriptions.
- Facilitate access to documents/items by linking to detailed finding aids/descriptive lists, web pages, or digital objects, that are held, for example, on the website of each repository/archives service.

The archive collections are now accessible online at www.iar.ie. Among the featured collections are the Irish Film Archive, the Guinness family archives, archives from UCC's Boole Library and a large number of city and county council archives. The Irish Archives Resource site links to wherever these archives are digitized and searchable online. Please note that this is an ongoing process and that not all archives have been digitized.

For materials not yet digitized the Irish Archives Resource site also carries detailed descriptions of what is in every archive listed and where it can be accessed physically. ■

ILLINOIS STATE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY DEBUTS NEW GUIDE FOR FAMILY HISTORIANS WITH PRAIRIE STATE ANCESTORS

The Illinois State Genealogical Society (ISGS) recently announced the debut of the *Insider's Guide to Illinois Genealogy*—a handy reference guide for family historians and genealogists. With the *Insider's Guide* researchers will find everything they need to get started to find Prairie State ancestors.

The *Insider's Guide To Illinois Genealogy* laminated "quick card" contains:

- An overview of Illinois history in a timeline format;
- A section on migration patterns related to how Illinois was settled;
- Helpful research strategy tips for the beginning genealogist; and
- Over 130 different links to websites covering different aspects of Illinois genealogy, over 26 subject sections including Census Records, Vi-

tal Records, Obituaries, Military Records, and more.

The guide can be purchased online at <http://bit.ly/ISGSguide> for \$7, which includes shipping and handling.

ISGS Publicity Chair and Webmaster Thomas MacEntee notes: "ISGS is one of the first large genealogy societies to publish a research guide in this popular format. The 'quick card' is laminated, light-weight and can be slipped into a backpack or laptop bag for genealogy research trips."

The *Insider's Guide To Illinois Genealogy* was produced with the help of several ISGS board members who collected links to many online resources. In addition, attention has been given to archives, libraries and repositories for "in person" research.

Janice Fritsch, ISGS President, states: "One of the purposes of ISGS is to disseminate information about Illinois. The *Insider's Guide to Illinois Genealogy* not only helps ISGS in accomplishing its purpose, but also provides genealogists with an easy-to-use, 'hands-on' tool for finding Illinois ancestors. ■

UPCOMING SEMINARS

National Archives and Records Administration, Northeast Region, New York City, 201 Varick St. Programs run from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and are free, but space is limited. Register by calling toll-free 866-840-1752, fax 212-401-1638; e-mail: newyork.archives@nara.gov:

- 11 Oct., "Preserving Your Family Papers." Learn about proper storage of family documents, photographs, home movies, digital images, and other items to ensure that these treasures will survive for future generations. Attendees are welcome to bring one item for conservation advice in an open forum at the end of the lecture. This program is part of NARA's annual Open House, which runs from noon to 3 p.m.
- 8 Nov., "Civil War Draft Records." Archival staff members demonstrate how to research your New York and New Jersey ancestors using the records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau. The records document arrested desert-

ers, men enrolled for the draft, and enlisted volunteers, and include compiled statistics on the physical condition of recruits and military casualties.

- 13 Dec., "Using NARA's Online Catalog." Online Public Access is still growing in content one year after NARA piloted it as the online public portal to their records and information about their records. Learn how to search OPA and how to access all interrelated catalogs. This presentation will provide participants with an overview on how to find genealogical information within it.

New York Genealogical & Biographical Society, 36 W. 44th Street, 7th fl., New York, NY 10036-8105; telephone 212-755-8532; FAX 212-754-4218. The NYG&B's Education Committee is offering two programs jointly sponsored by NYG&B and the New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. in NYC.:

- 24 Sept., "Cutting Edge Genealogy: Using New Technology & Thinking." Are you getting the most out of your internet searches? Are you aware of the amazing resources that you may access through your library? Do you know there is genealogically pertinent information on many "nongenealogy" sites? Are you using the most up-to-date software? If you answer "no" to any of these questions, you owe it to yourself to join a full-day program designed to enhance your online genealogical searches on Sat., 24 Sept., in the South Court Auditorium at the NYPL on Fifth Ave. at 42nd St..
- 18 Oct., "Beyond the Draft: World War I Records in the National Archives. Marie Varrelman Melchiori, CG, is the expert on the military records of the National Archives. She will provide a "how-to" on finding World War One soldiers' service and pension records. This lecture will take place in the South Court Classrooms of the NYPL on Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.. Free. No registration is necessary.

The NYG&B's Education Committee is also offering:

- 3-5 Nov., "Research in Albany 2011". This will be a three-day trip, during which you will visit the New York State Archives and Library. The NYG&B has been providing guided programs and expert advice in Albany since 1993.
- 17 Nov., "Researching Your Irish Ancestors:

Locating Famine Emigrants Using Griffith's Valuation." Fire and government destruction of early census records left a void for Irish researchers, but creative genealogists have learned to use Griffith's Valuation (the first full-scale valuation of property in Ireland, published between 1847 and 1864) as a key resource in finding famine emigrants.

New England Historic Genealogical Society, 99-101 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02116, 888-296-3447.

- 25 Sept. to 2 Oct., Sun. to Sun., English Family History Research Tour to London. Discover the wealth of information available in London's repositories. Explore your English ancestry with consulting genealogists from NEHGS staff Christopher C. Child and David C. Dearborn and genealogists from the Society of Genealogists, including Else Churchill.
- 30 Oct. to 6 Nov., Sun. to Sun., 33rd Annual Salt Lake City Research Tour. NEHGS staff will guide you through a week of research, consultations, lectures, group meals, and other activities as you explore the collections of the largest genealogical library in the world.

For more information and to register visit www.americanancestors.org.

Westchester County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 518, White Plains, NY 10601, presents speakers on genealogical subjects on the second Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. (Premeeting networking starts at 9:30 a.m.) Meetings are at Aldersgate Memorial United Methodist Church, 600 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry, NY (across from Mercy College on Route 9). There is a \$3 fee for nonmembers.

- 8 Oct., Joe Schiavone will present "The Last of the Old Put: New York Central's Putnam Division."
- 12 Nov., Toni McKeen will present "20th Century Military Records."
- 10 Dec., Patrick Raftery will present "The Cemeteries of Westchester County."
- 14 Jan. 2012., Nora Galvin will present "Special Schedules of the U.S. Census."
- 11 Feb., Tony Lauriano will present "Overcoming the Brick Walls in Your Research."
- 10 Mar., Joe Buggy will present "Researching Irish Ancestors in New York City."
- 14 Apr., Marian Wood will present "Genealogy

Web Message Boards and Blogs."

- 12 May, Maureen Wlodarczyk will present "One Thing Leads to Another: The Continuing Journey of Genealogical Discoveries."
- 9 June, Dorothy Dougherty will present "Searching the 1940 U.S. Census."

You can visit the society's website at: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~nywcgs>.

National Genealogical Society, 3108 Columbia Pike, Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22204-4304; telephone 800-473-0060:

- 2011 NGS Research Trip to Salt Lake City will take place Sun. to Sun., 16 Oct. to 23 Oct. The trip will be led by Sandra MacLean Clunies, CG, and Shirley Langdon Wilcox, CG, FNGS. For more information contact Shirley Wilcox at slwilcox@juno.com.
- The 2012 Conference in the States theme is *The Ohio River: Gateway to the Western Frontier*. The conference will be held Wed. to Sat., 9-12 May at the Duke Energy Convention Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. Registration forms and more information can be found at: http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/cs/conference_info.

Worldwide Cruises invites you to "Explore Your Roots" during lectures on a broad number of subjects aboard Royal Caribbean's *Freedom of the Seas* from Sat. to Thurs., 22-27 Oct., a five-night Bermuda cruise (from Cape Liberty, New Jersey). Lecturers include Megan Smolenyak, Shamele Jordan, Lisa Parry Arnold, George G. Morgan, Lesley Anderson, Duff Wilson, Crista Cowan. Seminar bonus: Each participant will have a private 30-minute consultation with one of the professional genealogists. For more information contact: Lynn Polgar, Cruise Consultant, 15090 White Ave., Allen Park, MI 48101; 313-294-2107; e-mail cruiselynn@gmail.com. Visit their Website at: http://www.wwcruisehq.com/index_files/WorldwidecruiseHeadquarters_Family_History_Cruise.htm.

Wholly Genes is hosting a Genealogy Conference and Cruise aboard Holland America's *Westerdam*, which will tour the Southern Caribbean from Sun. to Sun., 13 to 20 Nov. Stops will be made at Half-Moon Cay in the Bahamas, Oranjestad in Aruba, Willemstad in Curacao, and Fort Lauderdale in Florida. The 15+ hours of genealogical

lectures take place at sea and are completely software-neutral. They are presented by preeminent experts in their fields, including John T. Humphrey, CG, professional genealogist and expert in German and Pennsylvania research; Audrey Collins, author and Family History Specialist at The National Archives, UK; Rick Sayre, MA, CG, professional researcher, lecturer, author, and expert on land records, military records, and mapping tools; Pam Boyer Sayre, CG, CGL, professional researcher, lecturer, writer and expert on U.S. National Archives (NARA) and computer tools; Craig Scott, MA, CG, publisher, speaker, and military record expert; and Dick Eastman, technology guru and newsletter publisher. In addition to classes, there will be opportunities for one-on-one consultations and casual meals with professional researchers.

For more information and registration, visit the Website at <http://www.whollygenes.com/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?screen=CRUISE>. ■

MGS PROGRAM SCHEDULE *(Continued from page 2)*

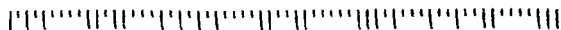
YOU. Learn how and where to find these records, the important and surprising clues they hold, and their use in finding those missing census and vital records.

17 MARCH 2012: To be announced.

12 MAY 2012: To be announced. ■

NEED HELP WITH RESEARCH? E-mail mgsvolunteer@gmail.com, and an MGS volunteer will contact you to schedule a help session at Darien Library

**Deadline for next newsletter
1 November 2011**



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Peter Biggins
230 Old King's Highway North
Darien, CT 06820-

**MEETING
1 OCT. 2011, 2 PM
DARIEN LIBRARY**

*Middlesex Genealogical Society
PO Box 1111
Darien CT 06820-1111*

