



Middlesex Genealogical Society

Vol. XXX, No. 4

Darien, Fairfield County, CT

December 2014

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the New Year.

Every January we ask our members to renew their membership. If you're already a member just mail your check to our post office box (see boxed notice in the next column). If you want to become a member please fill out the membership form that is on page 7. If you want to save postage just bring your renewal/application to our presentation on Saturday, 24 January. We would like to ask everyone to renew their membership during the month of January.

Speaking of our January presentation, we have an interesting program that deals with Intermediate Genealogy with Tony Lauriano, on Saturday 24 January, at 2:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Darien Library. Join us and brush up on your skills—and maybe pick up some new ones.

We will begin our session with a brief (I promise) Annual Meeting. It will be no more than a few minutes.

As always at 1:00 PM on the 24th we will continue our genealogy round table where everyone is invited to ask questions about their research, describe brick walls, or just share a discovery. This is open to all members and prospective members.

We continue to offer genealogy assistance on Wednesdays, from 9:00 a.m. till 12:00 noon at the Darien Library. The purpose of this program is to help members and prospective members get started on their family history research. Please see me at the meeting to set up an appointment.

Steven A. Anderson

GENEALOGY ROADSHOW

From descendants of the infamous pirate Blackbeard to heroes of the Holocaust, PBS's Genealogy Roadshow uncovers family secrets in the series' second season, Tuesdays, 13 January through 24 February at 8:00 p.m. on Chanel 13. The program combines history and science to uncover fascinating stories of diverse Americans in and around St. Louis, Philadelphia and New Orleans. Each individual's story links to a larger community (and in some cases national) history to become part of America's rich cultural tapestry.

2015 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership renewal is due 1 January 2015. ***Please consider this to be your renewal notice.*** You may use the application form on page 7 of this newsletter if you wish, or a plain piece of paper marked renewal with your name and address. Please note that while you do not have to provide us with any information that we already have, we would like to receive any significant changes, e.g., new e-mail address. You may bring your renewal to our 24 January meeting, or drop it in the mail addressed to Middlesex Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 1111, Darien, CT 06820. Annual dues are \$25 per individual, \$30 per couple or family

MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

**2014-2015
OFFICERS**

Steven Anderson	President
Leonard Christie	Vice President
Keeley Kriskey	Treasurer Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE

Virginia Banerjee
Peter Biggins
John Driscoll
Tara Finn Forschino
Timothy Gordon
Peter Riordan

Lloyd Sturges Jr.	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. COME, AND BRING A FRIEND.**

**REMEMBER: PROGRAM MEETINGS ARE PRECEDED AT
1 PM BY AN INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION OF GENEALOGI-
CAL CONCERNS AND PROBLEMS. ALL ARE WELCOME.**

24 JANUARY 2015: "INTERMEDIATE GENEALOGY" will be presented by **TONY LAURIANO**, who will show you how to search for secondary records and sources, to go beyond the basics, and to learn more about your ancestors' lives. You will learn to find and explore: naturalization records; military records; church, cemetery, and funeral records; Social Security records; newspaper articles; school records and yearbooks; and foreign records (in your ancestor's home land). Anthony Lauriano is a member of the Assn. of Professional Genealogists, a graduate of the University of Florida and of St. Francis College, New York. He has been lecturing on genealogy since 2007 and has published numerous articles on genealogy in the Italian Genealogical Group newsletter.

16 MAY 2015: "CIVIL WAR RESEARCH" will be presented by **LAURA W. CONGLETON**, who has been doing family history research for more than twenty-five years. She is a member of Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, the DAR, and several genealogical societies. She has access to a number of excellent repositories, and is currently compiling a book about Civil War veterans from Owego, Tioga County, New York. She specializes in Civil War research and preparation of lineage society papers.

RANDOM ACTS OF GENEALOGICAL KINDNESS

This organization, also known as RAOGK (<http://raogk.org>), is being revived. The original RAOGK had more than 4,000 volunteers, throughout the U.S. and in many international locations, who promised to do at least one free, local genealogical research task per month at the request of people who lived elsewhere. The volunteers were never paid for this service, but did expect to be reimbursed for whatever expenses they incurred. In October 2011 computer and health problems caused suspension of activities, but now a strong effort is being made to rebuild the service. Do visit their Website and consider becoming a volunteer.

TELL THEM WHO YOU WERE

by John Driscoll

Don't you wish your ancestors had left you a personal letter? A tale of their life? How they lived day to day, their hopes and joys, sorrows? Their everyday experiences? Well, you can do that for your descendants. It can start out as a letter to them and if you wish, add to it as you go along until you have a short story, book or saga. I began writing mine in January 2009. I am still adding to it as I remember certain events.

Start by making a timeline. List your earliest memories. make sure you add stories told to you by your parents aunts and uncles. Add school, sports, hobbies, friends, anything you can remember. When the timeline is complete, you will have an outline for your letter to your descendants. I found that when I began actually writing my letter, that many more memories arose. These I added to my timeline and later incorporated them into the story.

The acceptable social norms of the past are very different from those of today. What was acceptable in 1815 or 1915 may not be in 2015. In 2115 or 2215 what will the norm be? How can any-one have justified the past? Gladiators killing each other for the amusement of an audience, the Inquisition, slavery, the virtual extinction of the American bison, war, etc., etc. There are too many things that happened in the past that I, and I am guessing you, would condemn. But they, those who lived through the times, did not condemn them. They were the norm. Society changes slowly, hopefully for the better, as our species ages.

Will the practices of today be equally criticized? Explain to your descendants your views, political, religious, environmental, etc. How did you feel during the Vietnam War, for instance? History may rewrite it all, so your view will be appreciated as a family member who was actually living at the time. Tell them about your reaction to traumatic events. Can you imagine if your ancestors told you about their feelings when Abraham Lin-

coln was assassinated, or the USS Maine was blown up? Tell them where you were when the Challenger exploded, or John F. Kennedy was killed (if you are that old).

As I wrote my own narrative, I added "side notes", from time to time, outlined in bold print. I would stop my story and tell them, for instance, of the miraculous landing in the Hudson River of the Airbus 320 in 2009 after it hit a flock of geese, and how it was a breath of fresh air in a litany of bad news in the press. I believe these notes lock in a time and place, so that your descendants can actually visualize you as you tell your tale.

Tell them of your growing up; about your friends, your first bike, what you watched on TV, your grandfather's funeral. Tell them everything about yourself, How much you weighed, that you were an all-star baseball player or last to be picked for the team. (You can embellish a bit; after all, it is *your* recollection. But try to stick to the truth.) What kind of car did your parents have? What did you drive? Did Dad buy you a BB gun over Mom's protests? Did you play stickball, and what were the rules?

Tell them about your parents; were they strict or lenient, did they like to go to the movies, the Chinese restaurant? What was Christmas like at your home? What did Dad do for a living? What were his best/worst jokes? You must have great stories to tell about the schools you went to, the people you dated, movies and music you enjoyed, books you read, etc.

It is so hard to imagine what my 2nd great-grandfather lived like. I can read about the 1800's and imagine it a bit, but the day-to-day life eludes me. What time did he get up for work and what kind of a day did he have? Let your descendant get into your head! Devote one paragraph to a typical day for you. Start when you rise, what you have for breakfast, what paper you read, your commute to work, the day itself, coming home, shopping for food, what you cooked for dinner, what TV you watched, etc.

Your great-great-grandchildren and theirs will thank you for it.

15 NOVEMBER 2014

FINDING YOUR ROOTS IN EASTERN EUROPE WITH EMPHASIS ON POLAND, UKRAINE AND BELARUS PART I

Jonathan Shea and Matthew Bielawa gave an excellent presentation on this subject.

This area has been in a state of flux for centuries. The borders of countries have changed, and countries to which areas once belonged may have changed or no longer even exist. It is essential that before you begin to look for records in Europe you know the exact name of your ancestor *in his/her native language*, and that you determine the name of the specific village from which your ancestor came and something of its history. Knowledge of the language your ancestor spoke can help you to sort out that information. You don't have to be fluent; a vocabulary of about 200 words commonly used in vital records can be enormously helpful, e.g., name, birthplace, age, etc.

To locate ancestral information while still here in the U.S., consult U.S. church records (record of every sacrament received, including matrimony, should be with the baptismal record), censuses, passenger lists, naturalization records, obituaries (did not exist for poor people until the 1920s), cemetery records, tombstones (Ukrainian tombstones are often bilingual), passport applications, civil records, military records, fraternal organization records, newspapers in the language your ancestor spoke, etc.

Remember that each of the United States has its own rules about which records can be viewed, when, and by whom. As it is also unlikely that the clerk recording the information spoke the same language as your ancestor, misunderstandings may have resulted in errors in words and in spellings. Remember, too, that

your MGS membership card entitles you to see vital records in any Town Clerk's Office in the state of Connecticut.

Each federal census differs slightly in the questions asked. And sometimes the questions were asked of a person not well qualified to answer, i.e., child or neighbor. People tended to grow younger, too, as census years came and went. Rarely did the census taker speak the same language as the people he was interviewing. They are, however, an invaluable resource. If they are available, also check state censuses which were usually taken halfway between federal censuses.

Coroner's records could prove useful. If a person died at home, alone, even under non-suspicious circumstances, the coroner would come, and then file a report.

During World War I there was a Polish army founded in the U.S. These records are at the Polish Museum in Chicago, and a copy can be purchased for \$33.

Before such programs as Workman's Compensation, Social Security, etc. fraternal societies were often joined by immigrants because they functioned frequently as an early form of insurance.

Major ports of entry for immigrants were New York, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New Orleans, and Vermont for people coming from Canada. Major Canadian ports were Montreal, Halifax, St. John's, and Brunswick. (Remember that Ellis Island only functioned from 1892-1954.)

If you find a birthplace check with a map, atlas or gazetteer to make sure the name is spelled correctly. When you look for an individual, be sure that you know which was his first and which his last name. Even so, remember that a clerk could have reversed the order and scrambled the letters. If you cannot find someone where he should be, try reversing the name that you are using and perhaps reordering the letters within the name.

To be concluded in our next issue.

UPCOMING SEMINARS

National Genealogical Society, 3108 Columbia Pike, Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22204; toll-free phone 800-473-0060; fax 703-525-0052; e-mail conference@ngsgenealogy.org; Website www.ngsgenealogy.org. The National Genealogical Society 2015 Family History Conference, **Crossroads of America**, will be held 13–16 May 2015 in the St. Charles Convention Center, One Convention Center Plaza, St. Charles, Mo. The convention center and all hotels offer free parking. For more information or to register visit the organization's Website (see above).

Federation of Genealogical Societies The Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) and RootsTech are teaming up for a one-time special genealogy event at the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City, Wed.-Sat., 11-14 Feb. 2015. FGS and RootsTech will share the expo hall, general sessions, activities, and more, while each conference offers its own program of sessions. (Also see information on the organization's first genealogical cruise, page 6.) For more information, visit the FGS Website at <https://www.fgsconference.org>.

New York Genealogical & Biographical Society, 36 W. 44th Street, 7th fl., New York, NY 10036-8105; telephone 212-755-8532; fax 212-754-4218.

- **New York Public Library Repository Tour:** Programs will take place Tues., 3 March, and Sat., 28 March, both at 10 a.m., at the New York Public Library, Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street, NYC. Kate Cordes, Comanager of the Irma and Paul Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy and the Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, will provide an overview of their rich resources. A guided tour of the Milstein Division, including the microfilm room, and Map Division will follow. The tour will take approximately 60 minutes, after which, individuals may conduct their own research.

NYG&B's **New York State Family History Conference** will take place Thurs., 17 Sept., 9:00 a.m., to Sat., 19 Sept. 2015, 5:00 p.m. at the Syracuse/Liverpool Holiday Inn, 441 Electronics Parkway, Liverpool, N.Y. Sponsors of the conference include the Federation of Genealogical Societies,

Family Search, New England Historic Genealogical Society, the New York State Library and Archives. NYG&B will also be scheduling a pre-conference research day.

- **NYG&B's annual research trip to Albany** is Thurs. to Sat., 29 to 31 Oct. Join the New York experts for three days of research concentrated in the vast resources of the New York State Archives and the New York State Library. If you need additional information please email education@nygbs.org or call (212) 755-8532, x211.

New England Historic Genealogical Society, 101 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02116-3007, toll-free telephone 888-286-3447, Website www.NewEnglandAncestors.org.

- **"Scotland Sublime: Great Houses and Gardens of the Scottish Borders,"** in Scotland, Thurs., 4 June, to Wed., 10 June led by renowned country house expert Curt DiCamillo, editor of the *DiCamillo Companion*. A half dozen great houses will be visited.
- **Belfast, Northern Ireland**, Sun. to Sun., 21 to 28 June, the organization's second trip to Belfast. Delve into the resources at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) and other repositories. Track down your ancestors in Northern Ireland through individual consultations, educational opportunities, and expert assistance.
- **Salt Lake City, Utah**, Sun. to Sun., 25 Oct. to 1 Nov. NEHGS returns to Salt Lake City and the Family History Library for its 37th annual research tour, which includes individual consultations with NEHGS genealogists, lectures, and other special events.
- **Come Home to New England**, Tues. to Sat., 4 to 8 Aug. The NEHGS Library holds millions of documents, manuscripts, records, books microfilms, photographs, artifacts, electronic resources, etc. At NEHGS Headquarters explore these treasures with personalized assistance and guidance from their expert staff.
- **Research Getaway**, Thurs. to Sat., 15 to 17 Oct. Enjoy three days of research, consultations, lectures, and social events, while using the NEHGS Library and knowledge of its staff.

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.) Unless otherwise indicated, meetings are at Aldersgate Memorial United Methodist Church, 600 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. (across from Mercy College on Route 9). A \$3 donation is requested of nonmembers. Visit the society's website at: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~nywcfgs>.

- **“French Genealogy in France and in Quebec,”** 14 Feb. 2015, will be presented by Francoise Lampe.
- **“African-American Cemeteries of Westchester,”** 14 March, will be presented by Patrick Raftery. **Please note:** This program will take place at **Westchester County Archives**, 2199 Saw Mill River Rd. in Elmsford.
- **“The Immigrant Experience,”** 11 April, will be presented by Toni McKeen.
- **“Researching and Preserving the Fish-kill Supply Depot,”** 9 May, will be presented by Lance Ashworth.
- **“Getting the Most Out of Digital Newspapers Search,”** 13 June, will be presented by Philip Hayes.

Ulster Historical Foundation is offering a weeklong program entitled **“Tracing Your Irish Ancestors,”** Sun. to Sat., 6 to 12 Sept. Assisted personal research, talks, tours and sightseeing are all part of the eclectic mix. Expert genealogists will guide you at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) and the archives in Dublin, including the National Archives, the Registry of Deeds and the RCB Library. Queries should be addressed via e-mail to: enquiry@uhf.org.uk.

Genealogy Cruises

Federation of Genealogical Societies 2015 Alaskan Cruise will set sail from Seattle, Wash., aboard Royal Caribbean's *Jewel of the Seas* in the organization's first genealogy cruise, Fri., 28 Aug., to Fri., 4 Sept.. Among the speakers will be Elizabeth Shown Mills, David E. Rencher, Judy G. Russell, and D. Joshua Taylor. Ports visited will include Juneau and Skagway in Alaska, and Victoria in British Columbia. Conference registration opens 1 April 2015. (Please note: cruise ship reservations are also required.) For more information, visit:

<https://www.fgsconference.org/cruise/>

Visit the **Unlock the Past cruises'** website: www.unlockthepastcruises.com. Download their 16-page catalogue giving details of each of their 2015-2016 cruises at:

www.unlockthepastcruises.com/catalogue

- **Baltic cruise** (8th Unlock the Past Cruise) on the Celebrity *Eclipse*, Sat., 11 July, to Sat., 25 July 2015—departing Southampton and visiting Bruges (Belgium), Berlin (Germany), Tallinn (Estonia), St Petersburg (Russia), Helsinki (Finland), Stockholm (Sweden), and Copenhagen (Denmark). Presenters include Cyndi Ingle and Paul Milner (United States), Chris Paton and Janet Few (UK), Shauna Hicks and Carol Baxter (Australia) and many more.
- A **Transatlantic cruise** (9th Unlock the Past Cruise), on the Celebrity *Eclipse*, Sun., 1 Nov., to Mon., 16 Nov. 2015—one way from Southampton to Miami visiting Boston, New York, Bermuda and Port Canaveral. Learn from Dick Eastman (USA), Else Churchill, Alec Tritton and Kirsty Gray (UK), Shauna Hicks (Australia) and others.
- A short two-night cruise from **Brisbane** (10th Unlock the Past Cruise), Tues.-Thurs., 8-10 December 2015, on the *Legend of the Seas*. Lead presenter is Stephanie Ryan (State Library of Queensland).
- **New Zealand to Australia** (11th Unlock the Past Cruise), on the Celebrity *Solstice*, Sat., 14 Feb., to Tues., 3 March 2016. The cruise commences in Auckland (New Zealand) and finishes in Fremantle (Perth, Western Australia), visiting many New Zealand and Australian ports. The cruise will have an international team of presenters with Judy G Russell (USA), the *Legal Genealogist*, as the lead presenter.
- You might team the previous cruise up with a seven-night cruise to the **Great Barrier Reef, Queensland** (12th Unlock the Past Cruise), 6 to 13 March 2016 departing Brisbane on the *Legend of the Seas*. Carol Baxter (Australia) will present her highly acclaimed eight-lecture series on researching and writing history and genealogy; other presenters include Helen Smith, Judy Webster, and Er-

(Continued on page 8)

MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
Post Office Box 1111
Darien, CT 06820

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Annual dues: \$25/individual, \$30/couple or family. Photo I.D. (e.g., driver's license), required. If joining/renewing in person, show photo I.D.; if via mail, send copy of photo I.D. Please consider adding a contribution to support our genealogical resource expansion.

Code of Ethics: In consideration of being accepted as a member(s) of the above society and in order to protect the integrity of Public Records and Library Books, I/we am/are ethically bound and hereby agree that I/we will research Vital Records for Genealogical or Historical purposes only. I/we also agree:

- 1. That I/we will treat with the greatest care and respect all Public Records and Library Books that may be made available for my/our use;
2. I/we will respect the privacy of the individuals whose information I/we may encounter in my/our research;
3. I/we will respect the custodians of the records.

This pledge is freely made by me under penalty of forfeiting my membership in the society.

Signature of applicant Date Previous Member Yes No

Signature of co-applicant Date Previous Member Yes No

(Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.) Full Name of Applicant (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.) Full Name of Co-applicant

Street Address (mandatory):

Mailing Address:

Telephone: Town: State: 9-digit Zip: E-mail:

Date and Place of Applicant's Birth:

Date and Place of Co-applicant's Birth:

Occupation of Applicant:

Occupation of Co-applicant:

I/we belong to the following Historical Societies:

I/we belong to the following Genealogical Societies:

I/we belong to the following Lineage Societies:

Reason for interest in genealogy:

Dues enclosed:

Contribution enclosed:

MGS use only. Photo I.D. checkbox

UPCOMING SEMINARS

(Continued from page 6)

ic and Rosemary Kopittke.

- **European river cruise** (13th Unlock the Past Cruise)—a seven-night cruise on the Rhine from Amsterdam to Basel, Fri., 31 July, to Fri., 7 Aug. 2016, on *Tranquility II*.

For more information on any of these cruises, visit their Website at www.unlockthepast.com.au.

family tree magazine, along with **Insight Cruises**, is sponsoring an eight-day genealogy cruise to Norway, Sat., 16 May to Sat., 23 May 2015, aboard Holland America's *Ryndam*. Speakers include Lisa Louise Cooke, Diana Crisman

Smith, Gary M. Smith, and D. Joshua Taylor. After departing London (Harwich) on Sat., 16 May, the ship will spend a full day at sea, then visit Oslo, Kristiansand, Stavanger, and Ulvik, and spend another full day at sea before returning to London (Harwich) on Sat., 23 May. Pre-cruise excursions to Windsor Castle, Hampton Court, Stonehenge, and Salisbury Cathedral are also available. For more information visit: <http://insightcruises.com/events/ft01/>.

**Deadline for next newsletter
January 2015**

**MEETING
24 JANUARY 2015
DARIEN LIBRARY**

**Middlesex Genealogical Society
P.O. Box 1111
Darien, CT 06820-1111**