



Newsletter of
The Middlesex Genealogical Society

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Darien, Fairfield County, CT

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MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

2015-2016

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

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"Many hands make light work." That best describes the work of the Directors and non-Directors who volunteer to run the Middlesex Genealogical Society. This group is in regular contact by email and meets five times a year at 7:00 pm in the Conference Room on the mezzanine floor of the Darien Library. Our first meeting of 2016 is on January 4. Anyone can come. Stop by if you're interested in seeing how we work.

Our first program of 2016 is on Saturday, January 23. The subject is Intermediate Genealogy. We start at 2:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Darien Library. Professional genealogist Tony Lauriano will highlight secondary records and source information such as: naturalization

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What Did Santa Bring? Presents Under the Tree 100 Years Ago

By MARY MULLER · DEC 20, 2013

Courtesy of the Connecticut Historical Society

"For Muriel Armstrong From Santa" These words are written on a child's easel blackboard



sitting next to a tree decorated with tinsel, beads, glass ornaments and even an American flag. Other presents, including dolls, a sewing set, Bradley's Toy Village, and "Denslow's One Ring Circus and Other Stories" surround the tree. This black and white photograph captures the Christmas morning scene for a comfortable Connecticut family about 100 years ago. We do not know many details about Muriel Armstrong, but it seems likely that she is one of two girls

who posed triumphantly next to the blackboard and tree in a second photograph. What did Santa bring to Connecticut children 100 years ago? What did the Christmas morning scene look like to eager children of that era?

A selection of photographs in the collection of the Connecticut Historical Society, taken al-



most 100 years ago, provides a visual record of some of the gifts that actually appeared under trees of the time. William Dudley, a commercial photographer working in the Hartford area in the early years of the 20th century, captured some Christmas displays of prized new books, toys, and yes – clothing. It is possible some of these intimate views may be of his own family's Christmas. These photographs also illustrate the transition from tabletop to full-length trees and changes in the way trees were decorated. Some of the gifts themselves were hung on the tree including paper cornucopias filled with candy or nuts that were left by Santa on Christmas morning. Books were apparently a favorite

gift during this period. They are displayed in several of the photographs. *Raggedy Anne*



Stories, *Peter Rabbit Goes to School*, and *The Jack and Jill Painting Book* are arranged beneath a tree decorated with popcorn chains and other homemade ornaments, including a jack-o-lantern. Around a table-top tree we can see an array of gifts including a variety of dolls, alphabet blocks, Barnyard Friends, an Old Mother Goose banner, and a set of play dishes. In another scene, a very small tabletop tree is displayed with clothing as well as toys. A lucky child in this family received a popular “Kewpie doll” – named after a comic strip character introduced in 1909. Modern electric lights appear on the tree in the final photograph which is surrounded by a lavish display of stuffed animals, dolls, a tea set, a “Farmyard Puzzle Box,” and a “Dissected Map of the United States.”

President’s Message Continued from pg.1

papers, military records, church, cemetery and funeral records, Social Security records, newspaper articles, school records, probate records, wills, foreign records and more. Join us and brush up on your skills—and maybe pick up some new ones. During the hour before Tony's presentation on the 23rd, we will have our genealogy roundtable where everyone is invited to ask questions about their research, describe brick walls, or just share a discovery. I would like to remind you that the society offers members a free page on its website to display information about their families. There is no set format. Your page can be as simple as a list of surnames and geographical areas you are researching. One of the advantages of Member Pages is that distant relatives may find you and provide you with new genealogical information. To get ideas on what to include, take a look at some of our Member Pages at: mgs.darien.org

If you are becoming a new member, fill out the membership application form on our website and send it in with your dues. If you want to save postage, just bring your renewal/donation/application to our meeting on January 23.

Peter Biggins

Research Tips

If you have been doing genealogy for years, go back to the first items you entered on your Family File. If you are like me, many of earlier "facts" may not be properly sourced or they may not be accurate. Go over the first sources you had. Did you get all the information from them? Are they listed the same way you list them now?

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Summarizing Your Family Tree

By Peter Biggins

You have been working on your family tree for a few years now. You have learned a lot about your family, or you and your wife's family. You have complete information on three generations: your own, your parents, and your grandparents. You have fairly complete information on your great-grandparents. You are missing some information on your great-great-grandparents, but you have most of it. That's five generations. You may have some information on some of your great great-great-grandparents, but you're missing the majority. This is where I find myself.



Five Generations. It dawned on me that I have enough to produce a summary of results for five generations, ending with the generation of myself and my wife and starting with our 32 great-great-grandparents. I averaged the year of birth for each generation, rounded the results, and came out with 1820, 1850, 1880, 1910, and 1940. I used these years to label my five generations.

Family Histories. I have been able to write family histories for the all the families in the 1940, 1910, 1880, and 1850 generations, but for only 10 of the 16 families in the 1820 generation.

European Origins. The 32 great great grandparents from the 1820 generation were all born in Europe, 20 were Irish, eight were German, and four were Swiss. Our children, therefore, are 5/8ths Irish, 1/4th German, and 1/8th Swiss (German-speaking). Ireland was actually ruled by England. Germany was separate kingdoms of Prussia, Bavaria, and Württemberg, and the Electorate of Mainz (later added to the Grand Duchy of Baden).

Homes in Europe. Only two specific places have been found in Europe where our ancestors lived: the Foy farm in Derreenascooba (Ireland) and the Druecke house in Ostentrop

(Germany). Both were found as a result of travel to the places.

Immigration to America. All of the immigration to America occurred within a 50-year period, 1830 to 1880. They came on sailing ships to New York and Baltimore. They eventually settled in Chicago, Illinois, and Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Life Span. My and my wife's ancestors lived an average of 69 years, ranging from 27 to 91 years. My maternal grandmother was 91 when she died. Her mother was 27. Those two define the range of life spans. Note that the 69 years is an average for people who had all reached child-bearing age.

Family Size. The families in the five generations had 1 to 10 children, with an average of 4.5. (We had four children. Our three married children have two, three, and two children.)

Religion. All the families in the five generations were Roman Catholic.

Occupations. The breadwinners in the five generations were all males. They had 15 different occupations: carpenter, consultant, contractor, farmer, grocer, laborer, liquor dealer, manufacturer, musician, policeman, railway mail clerk, sales manager, saloon keeper, teacher, and undertaker. I have excluded gold prospector. A great-great-grandfather was a 49er, but that only lasted a few years.

Education. The first known high school graduates were in the 1880 generation. The first college graduates were in the 1910 generation. The first post graduates were in the 1940 generation.

Surnames. The surnames in our family tree include: Alleman, Berles, Biggins, Bitter, Breen, Carroll, Conway, Drueke, Fassnacht, Flannery, Foy, Gibbons, Grady, Graham, Green, Hartigan, Hauck, Hauser, Heller, Hesse, Higgins, Kenny, Knoche, Koch, Krämer, Lavo, McDonald, McNally, Meyers, Murray, O'Malley, Schickell, Schmitt, Schumm, Smith, Spiekermann, Stanton, Starke, Struck, Tracy, Walsh, Wittenmeier, Zugelder.

Member Page. For more about my and my wife's family tree, see our Member Page on the MGS website: <http://mgs.darien.org/members.htm>

Good Wife's River Chapter DAR Dedicates Patriot Memorial Marker

On Saturday, September 19, 2015, the Good Wife's River Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution dedicated a monument to the Memory of the Patriots of Middlesex Parish, now Darien, who suffered, fought and died during the War for Independence 1775-1783. This new Memorial Marker is located at Veterans Memorial Circle in front of the Darien Town Hall at 2 Renshaw Road.

National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution Curator General, and former CT DAR

State Regent, Jennie May Rehnberg

brought greetings from both the National Society DAR in Washington and Connecticut DAR officers. Good Wife's River Chapter Regent, Katherine Love served as Master of Ceremonies.

The year 2015 marks the 125th anniversary of the founding of the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, and the 55th anniversary of the local DAR Chapter. This Patriot's marker is a way to honor both the Darien Patriots and the Daughters of the American Revolution. This is the first marker endorsed by the NSDAR and erected in Darien by the Good Wife's River Chapter. It will serve as a perpetu-



DAR Memorial Dedication Ceremony To The Patriots Of Middlesex Parish ,
Good Wife's River Chapter Daughters and Special Guests

al reminder to all in promoting the three DAR fundamentals of preserving history, providing education, and promoting patriotism. The dedication coincided with Constitution Week, September 17-23.

The new DAR Memorial marker was designed to match and enhance the existing monuments at Darien's Veterans Circle which currently consists of three large natural stones bearing

bronze plaques displaying the names of those from Darien who died in all the country's wars since the Civil War. The new Revolutionary War Marker will complete the Veterans' Circle.

The Good Wife's River Chapter DAR raised the total amount of the Patriots' Memorial through fundraising from the local chapter, two very generous donors from the National Society, a private foundation, company matching funds, and the Masonic Club of Darien, Inc. No public money was used.

DAR membership is open to any woman over the age of 18 who can trace her direct lineage to a patriot whose last act was to have fought or have given material aid to the cause of American independence during the Revolutionary War. For more information and applications, Contact Karen K. Polett Registrar: 203-656-0857.

History of Veterans Day

U.S Dept. of Veterans Affairs

World War I—known at the time as “The Great War” - officially ended when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919, in the Palace of Versailles outside the town of Versailles, France. However,

fighting ceased seven months earlier when an armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. For that reason, November 11, 1918, is generally regarded as the end of “the war to end all wars.”

In November 1919, President Wilson proclaimed November 11 as the first commemoration of Armistice Day with the following words: “To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country’s service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and be-

cause of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations...”

The original concept for the celebration was for a day observed with parades and public meetings and a brief suspension of business beginning at 11:00 a.m.



Soldiers of the 353rd Infantry near a church at Stenay, Meuse in France, wait for the end of hostilities. This photo was taken at 10:58 a.m., on November 11, 1918, two minutes before the armistice ending World War I went into effect.

The United States Congress officially recognized the end of World War I when it passed a concurrent resolution on June 4, 1926 .

An Act (52 Stat. 351; 5 U. S. Code, Sec. 87a), approved May 13, 1938, made the 11th of November in each

year a legal holiday—a day to be dedicated to the cause of

world peace and to be thereafter celebrated and known as "Armistice Day." Armistice Day was primarily a day set aside to honor veterans of World War I, but in 1954, after World War II had required the greatest mobilization of soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen in the Nation’s history; after American forces had fought aggression in Korea, the 83rd Congress, at the urging of the veterans service organizations, amended

the Act of 1938 by striking out the word "Armistice" and inserting in its place the word "Veterans." With the approval of this legislation (Public Law 380) on June 1, 1954, November 11th became a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

Later that same year, on October 8th, President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued the first "Veterans Day Proclamation" which stated: "In order to insure proper and widespread observance of this anniversary, all veterans, all veterans' organizations, and the entire citizenry will wish to join hands in the common purpose. Toward this end, I am designating the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs as Chairman of a Veterans Day National Committee, which shall include such other persons as the Chairman may select, and which will coordinate at the national level necessary planning for the observance. I am also requesting the heads of all departments and agencies of the Executive branch of the Government to assist the National Committee in every way possible."

On that same day, President Eisenhower sent a letter to the Honorable Harvey V. Higley, Administrator of Veterans' Affairs (VA), designating him as Chairman of the Veterans Day National Committee.

In 1958, the White House advised VA's General Counsel that the 1954 designation of the VA Administrator as Chairman of the Veterans Day National Committee applied to all subsequent VA Administrators. Since March 1989 when VA was elevated to a cabinet level department, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has served as the committee's chairman.

The Uniform Holiday Bill (Public Law 90-363 (82 Stat. 250)) was signed on June 28, 1968, and was intended to ensure three-day weekends for Federal employees by celebrating four national holidays on Mondays: Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Columbus Day. It was thought that these extended weekends would encourage travel, recreational and cultural activities and stimulate greater industrial and commercial production. Many states did not agree with this decision and continued to celebrate the holidays on their original dates.

The first Veterans Day under the new law was observed with much confusion on October 25, 1971. It was quite apparent that the commemoration of this day was a matter of historic and patriotic significance to a great number of our citizens, and so on September 20, 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed Public Law 94-97 (89 Stat. 479), which returned the annual observance of Veterans Day to its original date of November 11, beginning in 1978. This action supported the desires of the overwhelming majority of state legislatures, all major veterans service organizations and the American people. Veterans Day continues to be observed on November 11, regardless of the day of the week on which it falls. The restoration of the observance of Veterans Day to November 11 not only preserves the historical significance of the date, but helps focus attention on the important purpose of Veterans Day: A celebration to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

UPCOMING MGS MEETINGS MARK YOUR CALENDARS

November 14th 2015 1:00 PM

Come Talk About Your Work. This is an informal one-hour discussion session/roundtable in which all are invited to participate. Think of the most important question or issue that you have about your genealogy. It may be a brick wall that you are facing, with one of your ancestors, a question of wanting to know where to find a particular resource, or a success that you are dying to share with the rest of us. The goal is to share your experiences and to help your fellow genealogists and, hopefully, gain new insights.

November 14th 2015 2:00 PM

Researching Our German Ancestors

The Middlesex Genealogical Society and the Darien Library will present a free genealogy program, "Researching Our German Ancestors", with Joseph Lieby on Saturday, November 14, at 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. at the Darien Library, 1441 Post Road, Darien, CT.



Finding our German ancestor's European origins may be difficult, but is usually possible. What tools will you need?

Mr. Lieby will help you trace your ancestors using tools and techniques based on what you know about them. Knowing where our German ancestors lived in Europe and when they came to America, should be the goal of anyone interested in their family history. Finding out when they came can usually be determined using research tools we already know. Their European origins may be more difficult to find, but is usually

possible using those same tools. Tracing our German-speaking ancestors beyond that will call for a new set of research tools that need to be acquired, including some German vocabulary, ability to decipher German script and a little about German geography.

Joseph Lieby is the current President of the Palatines to America National German Genealogy Society. He retired as a school district administrator, and has over twenty years experience in genealogical research in the New York/New Jersey area. He has spoken at national and regional societies and has published articles on his research interests in his blog, palatine-notes.blogspot.com, and in the New York Palatines newsletter of which he is the editor.

Join us at 1:00 p.m. and discuss your family history project. This is an informal one hour roundtable discussion; in which you are invited to seek help for your problems and to share your experiences with others. For additional details, see: <http://mgs.darien.org/meetings.htm>. This program is free and open to the public.

January 23, 2016, 2:00 pm.

"Intermediate Genealogy." Presented by Tony Lauriano.

March 12, 2016, 2:00 pm.

"Using Facebook for Genealogy." Presented by Marian Wood.

May 14, 2016, 2:00 pm.

"Finding Italian Records—Italian Genealogy." Presented by Toni McKeen.

Research Tips continued from pg. 3

Census indexing is still incomplete - recheck often, ... Check different databases for the same census; Ancestry, Family Search, Heritage, etc. Different indexers see different names. Make sure to vary search criteria to include searching by first name only with spouse/child, etc. don't forget the 1890 NYC Police census.

Back up your Genealogy files on DVD, flash drive, portable hard drive or in the cloud. Keep them separate from your computer. Make multiple copies and continually make sure your back-up methods are current. Remember floppy discs? DVDs are on the same road.

Upcoming Regional Events**Connecticut****Saturday, November 14, 2015 - Boy Scout Genealogy Badge Workshop, Hartford (Connecticut Historical Society)**

[Boy Scout Genealogy Merit Badge Workshop](#)
10:00 am - 3:00 pm Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford

Scouts, discover your family's history and earn your genealogy merit badge at the Connecticut Historical Society. Working with staff in the Waterman Research Center, Scouts will learn the basics of genealogy, analyze primary documents, and research their family tree in this hands-on, interactive workshop. This workshop is a part of the Connecticut Rivers Council's STEM Merit Badge Experience.

Cost: \$30 per scout, \$3 per adult. To register visit www.ctrivers.org/stem/stemctrivers. For more information contact Jake Gotimer, CT Rivers Council Program Director, at (860) 913-2751.

Saturday, November 14, 2015 - Polish Genealogy Presentation, Meriden 1 PM - 3 PM Meriden

Public Library, Griffin Room This event is free, but [pre-registration is required](#).

Prof. Jonathan D. Shea of Housatonic Community College is the founding president of the Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Northeast, Inc. He now serves as the group's reference archivist and translator, and as the long-time editor of its journal, *Pathways & Passages*. He has over 20 years of experience in the field of genealogical research, researching his own family (with roots in the former provinces of Lomza and Grodno, Poland, and Counties Offaly and Mayo, Ireland) and others. The Family History Library in Salt Lake City has recognized him as an Accredited Genealogist in the field of Polish research; he has on-site personal research experience in archives in the U.S., Canada, Poland, Lithuania, Ireland, Wales, England and is involved in cemetery projects and transcription of geographical data from Polish-American parish registers.

In addition to being a foreign language educator, Prof. Shea is a trained archivist and professional genealogist with specialization in Eastern Europe and Ireland and frequently lectures and presents workshops nationwide on the topics of document translation and other linguistic issues, immigration history, and European archival resources.

His recent publications include the two-volume series *In Their Words: A Genealogist's Translation Guide*, volume 1 Polish, volume 2 Russian. In addition to the languages he teaches, Spanish, Polish and Russian, Prof. Shea also speaks Italian and French and has reading knowledge of Portuguese, Belarusian and Ukrainian.

Wednesday, November 18, 2015 - Naturalization Records Presentation, Newtown

Toni McKeen will be presenting the topic "Researching and Ordering Naturalization Records" to the Genealogy Club of Newtown.

The Genealogy Club of Newtown was inaugurated September 12, 2001. Genealogist Harlan

Jessup envisioned a club where interested genealogists could share experiences and learn from one another. The club supports the efforts of the Cyrenius H. Booth Library in the area of genealogy and assists in the upkeep of the library's genealogy room collection.

The Genealogy Club meets at the Cyrenius H. Booth Library at 7 p.m. the second Wednesday of each month except July and August. All are welcome to attend.

Saturday, November 21, 2015—Heirlooms Workshop/Event, Hartford (Connecticut Historical Society)

[Grandma's Mixing Bowls: Saving Family Treasures, Telling Family Stories](#) 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford

Every family has objects that are special to them, but might not seem special to anyone else. But will they still seem special to future generations? How do you make sure those items are preserved, and that the stories of the people who used them and loved them are saved, as well? Downsizing often adds pressure to these decisions, but Professional Organizer Regina Sanchez will share strategies to separate the treasure from the clutter and to save the story with the mixing bowls. CHS staff will also be on hand to tell you what you need to know if you're considering donating your treasure to us or another museum. We can't promise that your minimalist grandkids will want your collection of commemorative dashboard ornaments, but we can help you tell a great story about them around the holiday table.

Regina Sanchez is a Professional Organizer and Certified Home Movie and Photo Organizer. She loves teaching clients how to bring order into their home or small business by showing them methods and systems to stay organized. Working with clients to help them preserve their memories is another part of her business that fulfills her with incredible joy as she helps individuals tell their stories, preserve

their memories and create a legacy that will last forever.

This program is free with general admission and open to the public. It will be held in conjunction with our Collecting Day for Growing Up in Connecticut. Be sure to bring an object to loan us for the exhibit! If you contribute an object, image or story, we'll give you free admission to the museum galleries for the day.

Saturday, November 21, 2015 - Land Records Research Tutorial, East Hartford

Join us and Edwin W. Strickland II for "More than Metes the Eye: Using Land Records in Your Research" at the Connecticut Society of Genealogists' Library on Saturday, November 21st.

Time: 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Cost is FREE.

Please preregister by Tuesday, November 17th so we may plan appropriately.

For questions or to preregister please call 860-569-0002 or email csginc@csginc.org. In case of inclement weather go to the WFSB (Channel 3) website at www.wfsb.com and check under Closings & Delays.

Tuesday, December 29, 2015—"Discover Your Roots" Family Program, Hartford (Connecticut Historical Society)

[Winter Break Family Program: Discover Your Roots](#)

Tuesday, December 29 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford

Looking for a family-friendly activity during winter break? Visit the CHS December 29-31 for a series of programs all about celebrating families. We invite kids, parents, and grandparents to come and share their stories about what makes your family special.

On Tuesday, December 29th, discover the stories of your unique history with a family tree activity! Kids and adults will work together to make a family tree of the people and stories that make

up their family. This drop-in program is free with general admission. For more information, call (860) 236-5621 x222 or email corinne_swanson@chs.org.

Massachusetts

Tuesday, December 1, 2015 - Oral Histories of Local Women, Worcester

"In Their Shoes: The Experiences of Worcester's Extraordinary Women"

Worcester Public Library Saxe Room—Main Library 5:30 p.m - 7:30 p.m

Contact: Maureen Ryan Doyle, (508) 735-3217 or MRyandoyle@aol.com

Charlene L. Martin and Maureen Ryan Doyle, Co-Chairpersons of the Worcester Women's Oral History Project (WWOHP), will read excerpts from their new book, *In Their Shoes: The Experiences of Worcester's Extraordinary Women*. This book is the culmination of research into the more than 300 oral histories that WWOHP has collected, preserved, and shared since its inception in 2005.

The permanent repository for these oral histories is the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at Radcliffe Institute of Harvard University.

This event is free and open to the public.

New York

Saturday, November 21, 2015 - Buffalo, Erie County, New York

Western New York Genealogical Society presents "Researching House History"

Location: The Buffalo History Museum, 1 Museum Court, Buffalo, NY 14216.

Program Schedule: 10:00—10:20 a.m. – Welcome and Society Business/Annual Society

Elections; 10:20-12:00 p.m.—Presentations; 12:00-1:00 p.m.—Optional Docent-Led Museum Tours

Cost: Free for WNYGS and Buffalo History Museum members. Guests - \$10.00.

Genealogy is the story of people and locations. As we explore the lives of our ancestors, we reveal the story of place and, more specifically, the buildings they called home.

Join the Western New York Genealogical Society as librarians Rhonda Konig of the Buffalo Erie County Public Library, Grosvenor Room and Cynthia Van Ness of The Buffalo History Museum as they explain methods for piecing together a house's history. They will discuss useful resources both online (*a little*) and offline (*a lot*).

During the second half of the presentation, Ms. Konig and Ms. Van Ness will highlight genealogical resources available to researchers at both institutions.

As a special bonus for attendees, The Buffalo History Museum will be offering optional docent-led tours of the museum immediately following the presentation.

Registration:

Seating for this special event is limited, and advanced registration is required. To RSVP, contact Megan MacNeill, TBHM Program & Engagement Coordinator, at mmacneill@buffalohistory.org or 716-873-9644 ext. 320. All registrations must be received by November 11. Visit the [Society's website \(http://wnygs.org\)](http://wnygs.org) or WNYGS Facebook Group for the most up-to-date information on this and other upcoming events.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS DUE JANUARY 1, 2016

Annual dues: \$25/individual—\$30/couple or family

add \$5 if you require a printed version of the newsletter.

Please consider an additional donation to help us fund our presentations.

We are a 501c3 nonprofit and your additional donations are tax deductible and may be matched by your employer.

Send checks to:
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