

The Newsletter of the
**Middlesex Genealogical
Society**

Vol. XXXII, No.4

Darien, Fairfield County, CT

December, 2016

MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

2015-2016

OFFICERS

Peter Biggins	President
Leonard Christie	Vice President
Keeley Kriskey	Treasurer
Pamela Shea	Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE

Virginia Banerjee
Tara Finn Forschino
Mary Lavins

Steven Anderson	Past President
Lloyd Sturges Jr.	Past President
Charles Scribner	Librarian
John Driscoll	Newsletter Editor
Dorothy Shillinglaw	Past Newsletter Editor
Robert E "Pete" Kenyon	Past VP Programs
Dale Pollart	Past Treasurer

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/>

IN THIS ISSUE

- Presidents Message pg. 1
- NYC Directories pg.2
- 1789 Middlesex Map pg. 4
- Spotlight Fairfield County pg. 5
- Upcoming MGS Meetings pg. 6
- Upcoming Regional Events pg. 7
- Tips pg. 7

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy Holiday! I mean Happy Holiday Sale. If you have ever thought of using DNA to further your family history studies, now is a good time. Family Tree DNA has its 2016 Holiday Sale on until December 31.

Genetic genealogy may find a new ancestor for you but it is unlikely. The real advantage is deeper. I found that my Y-chromosome DNA matches most closely with men named Biggins, Beggan, Beaghan, Bigham, and Little. This confirms what the Irish surname books say: that name is derived from the Irish beag, which means little. Furthermore, we match men named McMahan, McDonald, McKenna, McGuire, and others; names whom ancient histories say are descended from three brothers named Colla who lived in 4th century Ulster.

I recommend Y-chromosome DNA tests. By testing the Y-chromosome, males can deter-

mine the origin of their paternal line. Y-DNA goes back male to male to male, like surnames. If you are a female and would like to know about your paternal line, you would have to find a male relative from that line willing to be tested, such as your father, a brother, or a cousin.

The standard Y-chromosome test is 67 STR (single tandem repeats) markers. The FTDNA sale reduces the price from \$268 to \$229. In addition, there are coupons available that further reduce the price to \$189. Let me know, and I will find you a coupon.

Here are the steps in the testing process. You sign up online for FTDNA from a surname project, specifying how many STR (single tandem repeats) markers you want to test: 12, 25, 37, 67, or 111. I recommend 67. They deduct the cost from your credit card. They send you in the mail a kit containing two scrapers that you use to swab the inside of your cheeks, four hours apart. You return the scrapers in receptacles and mailer provided in the kit. They set up a homepage for you on their website that you access with your kit number and a password. You get final results online two months later on your homepage and on the project's public results page. Your homepage gives you a list of other testers who match your DNA. Emails are provided by most, so you can contact them. Ask the administrator of the surname project about other projects you should join and further testing.

For more on DNA, see our MGS website: <http://mgs.darien.org/dna.htm>

Peter Biggins



New York City Directories Online

The following article is from *Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter* and is copyright 2016 by Richard W. Eastman. It is re-published here with the permission of the author. Information about the newsletter is available at <http://t.ymlp138.net/hbeavabbjarawyavau/click.php>.

New York Public Library is digitizing its collection of New York City Directories, 1786 through 1922/3, serving them free through the NYPL Digital Collections portal. The first batch—1849/50 through 1923—have already been



New York City Directories waiting to be digitized

scanned, and the 1786–1848/9 directories are right now being scanned. The whole collection will be going online over the coming months. Staff at NYPL are currently teaching computers to read the wobbly typeset, to interpret the strange abbreviations, and the occasionally slightly less than geometric layout of the directories to make the old print text machine readable. The goal is to make the directories text searchable in powerful new ways, in order to build datasets that will inform research in New York City history, genealogy, and beyond. More technical posts on this work will follow.

Why are city directories interesting? I wrote a post about this in 2012, *Direct Me NYC 1786: A History of City Directories in the United States and New York City*, that described what city directories are and why they are useful research tools. In summary, city directories record historical information that describes New York City and its history: the names and addresses of its residents, the names and addresses of churches, businesses, schools, police stations, courts, and other government offices, as well as the names of individuals associated with those institutions, as far back as 1786. City directories contain much more than lists of names and addresses. They record the price of travel and postage, the kinds of occupations undertaken in the city, the layout of streets, and at what time the sun was predicted to rise and set. Not for nothing were the early directories often referred to as almanacs.

In addition to textual information, city directo-

ries feature many images, including maps, illustrations of buildings, and advertisements, occasionally printed on colored or decorative paper. Directories record the city's built and commercial history.

Previously the directories for New York City (i.e. what we now might call Manhattan) were available only in the Library, either on microfilm, or via subscription databases, the original print directories now being too delicate to be regularly served to patrons. One or two could be found on the Internet, but coverage there was patchy. In many instances, the directories were reproduced from microfilm only. The Library has, where possible, scanned the directories, presenting them as hi-res, color surrogates of the original print copies. Now anyone and everyone will be able to access the directories free of charge, online.

Initially the city directories will be browseable, through NYPL Digital Collections, but the Library wants to make the directories work harder, to integrate them with other digital collections: maps, deeds, census records, family histories, prints, photographs, and so on. The directories will eventually be text searchable, enabling researchers to create new datasets. For instance, and I'm speaking theoretically here, researchers might be able to track addresses across directories. Where, for instance, were theaters on Broadway located overtime? Where did people live and work? Can we see in datasets derived from the information in the directories a history of commuting? Where were cemeteries located in New York? What types of business were most prevalent? What were the different types of family names listed in New York City? How many people were listed in the directories? Where did our ancestors live in the city during the years covered? The potential for new knowledge creation is limitless. Expect to hear more on these datasets, and their implications for the Library's NYC Space/Time Directory soon.

Accessing the directories

So what do we have now? Initially the city directories can be accessed and browsed through Digital Collections. Eventually around 175,000 pages of information, featuring the names of millions of New Yorkers, will be online. Here are some viewing tips

- Go to "New York City Directories."
- Select a directory.

To browse the directory like a book, click the "View as Book" icon. Tip: it's the icon to the left of the image that looks like an open book. Click each page to turn to the next, until you find the page you want. You can scoot ahead lots of pages by opening the drop down "Jump to" menu and clicking the page you want, or by dragging the pointer at the bottom of the page, from left to right. Once you have found the page you want, I recommend clicking the individual page link at the top of the browser, above the corresponding page, to look at that page on its own. I recommend this because this option allows you to use the Scroll Wheel Zoom, to zoom right in on the text.

Index

Next is the Index to the Appendix (the Appendix was later expanded and renamed the *City Register*, a classified listing made up of business card-style advertisements). This is a useful index for finding the names and addresses of asylums, banks, churches and burial grounds, courts, foreign consuls, hotels, newspapers, police stations, post offices, schools, and more besides.

Next is an Alphabetical List of Nurses (might one of these nurses have delivered your ancestor? Or be your ancestor?). Then an almanac, tables showing the times that the sun and moon set and rose (vital information in 1850), followed by Names Too Late For Insertion, Removal, & C, which is just that: genealogists might consult this page if you can't find a name listed in the main city directory section.

Directory

Following a key to the abbreviations used in the directory (al. for alleyway, n.r. for North River, ct. for court, etc), we see listed the names, occupations, residential addresses, and business addresses of our New York ancestors. Business addresses are usually listed first. Some entries even describe how business was done. The next section, the Street Directory, describes the streets and cross streets of New York City. This information is useful to anyone
See Directories on pg. 6

1789 Middlesex Map

By Peter Biggins

In 1789, Christopher Colles published a series



of route maps for the United States. Included was Middlesex, Connecticut, after which the Middlesex

Genealogical Society is named. Middlesex is now Darien, Connecticut. The map is of the Country Road, which is now Old Kings Highway North, Old Kings Highway South, and the portion of the Post Road south of the intersection with Old Kings Highway South.

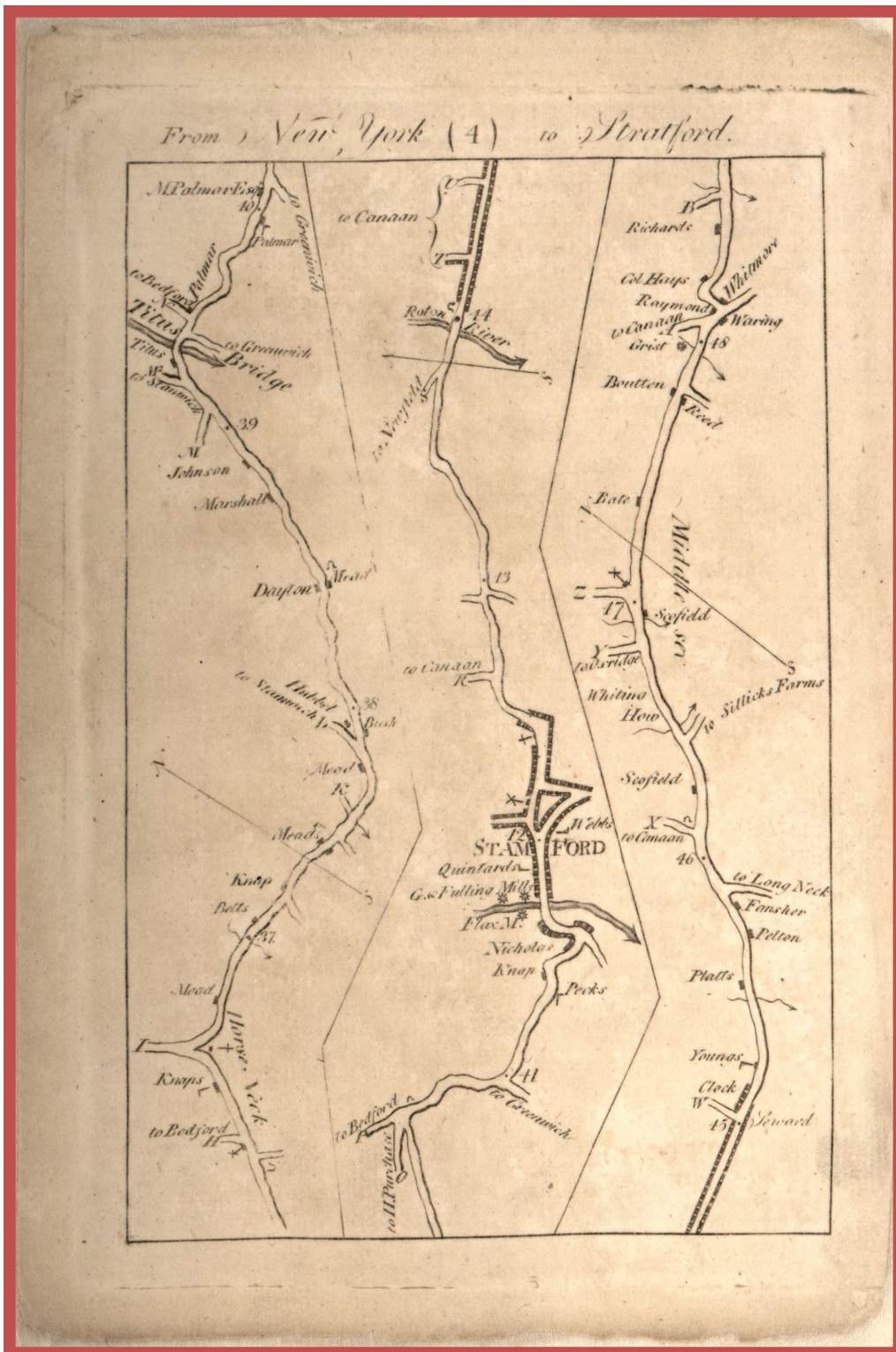
The map page is the 4th of seven pages covering the route from New York City to Stratford, Connecticut. Middlesex is the top of the second panel and most of the third panel. The large numbers 44 to 48 in Middlesex are miles from Federal Hall on Wall Street in New York City. In 1789, Federal Hall is where the U. S. Congress met and where President George Washington had his office.

The map can be viewed on the Library of Congress website,

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3701pm.gct00276a/?sp=7>

Following are present-day points of interest on the 1789 map along the Country Road in Middlesex, with mileage from Federal Hall approximated.

48.0 Five Mile River marked by a squiggly arrow on map. The Five Mile River is the border between Norwalk and Middlesex. The Country



Colles 1789 Map of the United States — New York to Stratford page 4

Road is now called Old Kings Highway North in Darien and Flax Hill Road in Norwalk.

47.9 The Old Red Mill marked by "Grist **" on map. Built in 1692 on the Five Mile River and dismantled in 1908. Remains can still be seen of the dam, mill pond, mill run, and front foundation of the mill. I live here.

47.8 Raymond Street marked by an unnamed street.

47.1 The Congregational Church, built in 1744, marked by "x". It was the Meetinghouse of Middlesex Parish. As a patriot during the Revolutionary War, Reverend Mather was imprisoned by British soldiers twice, the second time, along with 50 members of the congregation.

47.0 Brookside Road marked by "Z" and "to Canaan."

47.0 Darien Historical Society marked by "Scofield."

46.9 Goodwives River marked by a squiggly arrow.

46.8 Sedgwick Avenue marked by "Y."

46.6 Where the New Haven Railroad in 1848 separated the Country Road into two streets called Old Kings Highway North and Old Kings Highway South.

46.45 Locust Hill Road marked by "to Sillicks Farms."

46.4 Where I-95 was built in 1955 over Old Kings Highway South.

46.1 Leroy Avenue and blacksmith marked by unnamed road and horseshoe

45.8 Goodwives River Road marked by "to Long Neck". On Armistice Day in 1932, an historic marker was placed there saying that George Washington passed by in 1756, 1776, and 1789. Next to it is a Mile marker showing 17 miles to Fairfield (Fairfield is mile 63 on the Colles map). The Darien Library is a few hundred feet away on the new Post Road built in 1806.

45.4 Stony Brook marked by a squiggly arrow.

45.3 Where Old Kings Highway South meets the new Post Road built in 1806

45.2 Young's Tavern marked by "Youngs" and a tavern sign.

45.0 Noroton (Roton) Avenue marked by "W" and "to Canaan."

44.4 Gardiner Street marked by "U" and "to Canaan."

44.2 Hollow Tree Ridge Road marked by "T"

and "to Canaan."

44.0 Blacksmith, marked by a horseshoe.

44.0 The Noroton River marked by a large squiggly arrow and "Roton River" on map. The river is crossed here by the Country Road, now the Boston Post Road in Darien and East Main Street..

Spotlight: Fairfield County, Connecticut, Resources

by Valerie Beaudrault, Assistant Editor

Reprinted by permission of the New England Historic Genealogical Society. *The Weekly Genealogist*, Vol. 19, No. 40, Whole #813, October 12, 2016. Visit AmericanAncestors.org for information about *The Weekly Genealogist* and the New England Historic Genealogical Society.

Shelton Library System, Connecticut

The city of Shelton is located in Fairfield County in southwestern Connecticut. The Shelton Library System's website provides a number of local history resources.

Burial lists for five area cemeteries--Coram, East Village, Long Hill, Lower White Hills, and Upper White Hills--have been transcribed and uploaded to the library website. Click the cemetery name link to access the list.

Additional resources of interest are two scrapbooks that have been digitized and uploaded to the website. The Library Scrapbook comprises clippings of articles about the library that were published in the local newspaper, covering the period from 1923 to 1930. The Servicemen's Scrapbook of Shelton Men & Women Serving in World War contains news clippings about local service persons for the period from 1943 to 1945. The scrapbook is organized in alpha-chronological order.

Oak Lawn Cemetery & Arboretum, Fairfield, Connecticut

Oak Lawn Cemetery, founded in 1865, is located in the town of Fairfield. The cemetery's website includes a database of more than 23,000 burials. Click the Search Records tab to search the database by first and last name. After clicking on the search link, you will need to scroll to

view the search results. The data returned includes the full name of the deceased, the date of death, and grave location information. You will also find a link to a cemetery map on the homepage.

UPCOMING MGS MEETINGS

Saturday, January 21 and Saturday March 11 2017, 1:00 pm. Social Hour: Come Talk About Your Work.

This is an informal social hour with others who are interested in genealogy. The goal is to share experiences with fellow genealogists and hopefully gain new insights. 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.

Saturday, January 21, 2017, 2:00 pm.

"Finding Foreign Records from Home." Presented by Tony Lauriano.

Provides detailed information on obtaining genealogy records from Europe, Great Britain, Israel, and more. The lecture includes websites, private search firms, and more, all from your home.

Tony holds a 2 year degree from the University of Florida and a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting from the University of Florida.

He has taught Genealogy since 2007 in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Currently he is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists and a member of the Italian Genealogy Group in Bethpage, Long Island, New York.

His motto in teaching Genealogy is – "Their history is your history".

Saturday, March 11, 2017, 2:00 pm. "Irish Genealogy." Presented by Jonathan Shea.

Jonathan, a native of New Britain Connecticut, is a professor of foreign languages in the Connecticut Higher Education System. His academic preparation in the field of languages and linguistics has been enriched by living experience in Europe and study at the Universidad de Madrid in Spain, St. Petersburg State University in Russia and the Uniwersytet Jagiellonski in Poland.



In addition to being a foreign language educator, Shea is a trained archivist and professional genealogist with specialization in Eastern Europe and Ireland and frequently lectures and presents workshops internationally on the topics of document translation and other linguistic issues, immigration history and European archival resources. The founding President of the Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Northeast, Inc., he now serves as its Reference Archivist and as the long-time editor of its journal, *Pathways & Passages*.

Directories continued from pg. 2

researching real estate and house histories, and, from 1870 on, searching the U.S. Federal Census for Manhattan by address. The Street Directory helps researchers locate historical buildings, and addresses. Street names and numbers have a habit of changing over time. If you find a record that says your ancestor lived at 35 East 14th Street in 1850, it does not necessarily go that they lived at the site of the current 35 East 14th Street. Historical street directories help us pinpoint a place in time, especially useful when there is no property map to go by.

So there you have it. An exciting new collection, and a free digital gateway into researching New York City history and genealogy. I hope that this post has described to you why this digitization project is great news, and how the directories connect to a wealth of other materials in the Library's collections: maps, photographs, newspapers, books, microfilm and more besides. As we move forward, as the directories are turned into datasets, researchers will be able to build new tools with the (free) data that the Library makes available.

Libraries and researchers working together to create new knowledge.

Upcoming Regional Events

Thursday December 15, 2016 - Reclaim the Records: Using Freedom of Information Laws for Genealogical and Archival Research, the Center for Jewish History, Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute, 15 West 16th St. New York, New York

Brooke Schreier Ganz, founder of Reclaim The Records, states: "Tired of being told by archives, libraries, and government agencies that the records they hold are unavailable to the public, only available behind a paywall, or only available to view if you can visit them onsite? We were too, so we figured out how to do something about it." We're Reclaim The Records, a new not-for-profit activist group. We use state Freedom of Information (FOI) laws to obtain copies of previously inaccessible archival record sets, which we then freely post online, without any copyrights or usage restrictions. Our work has enabled the first-ever public access to millions of archival records from New York and New Jersey, from marriage records to registered voter lists to tax rolls. This presentation will walk through the history and legal basics of FOI laws, and will teach researchers how to file their own state FOI requests for any genealogical or archival records they may want to see returned to the public domain.

Time 6:30 PM Ticket Info: Free, reservations required

Saturday December 17, 2016 - New Visitor Tour NEHGS, 99-1-1 Newbury St. Boston, Massachusetts

This free orientation and tour introduces you to the resources available at the NEHGS research facility. Founded in 1845, NEHGS is the country's oldest and largest nonprofit genealogy library and archive. With more than 15 million artifacts, books, manuscripts, microfilms, journals, photographs, and records—and expert staff to help you navigate it all—NEHGS provides the access you need to research your

Tips

- Anyone who has used Old Fulton NY Post Cards knows that it is a free-to-use site for mostly New York State newspapers. If you search for a specific person or event, you will get hundreds or even thousands of hits. But, if you know what city in New York you want to search, there is a simple way to narrow down your results. Say for instance you are looking for the obit of Robert E. Noonan and you know he lived in Rochester. Go to the website: <http://www.fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html> If you search for "*Robert E. Noonan*" died, you will get 914 hits; a lot to wade through. Since you know he lived in Rochester you can click on the "FAQ_HELP_INDEX" icon and then, in the first paragraph, click on "here". Search for the paper you want, in this case the Rochester NY Daily Record. Now search for "*Rochester NY Daily Record*" "*Robert E. Noonan*" died. Your results are narrowed down to fourteen.
- When asking relatives for old family photographs, letters, bibles and such, **perseverance** is the key. Women are usually the keepers of family heirlooms. With this in mind, I contacted my cousin Fred, in Florida, the son of my Aunt Ruth. She was the only female sibling in my Dad's family. He said he had photos and letters from our grandparents and promised to share them with me. After a year and quite a few times reminding him, I finally said I was about to print my family story and needed more pictures. He finally sent them and it was a virtual treasure trove that my Aunt had saved.

family history. You do not have to be a member to participate. Tour attendees are welcome to use our resources following the tour. No registration necessary. **Time** 10:00 AM to 11:00AM
Cost-Free

Saturday February 18, 2017 - Getting the Most Out of Attending Genealogical Conferences, East Hartford, Connecticut.

Please join us for this special event just in time to prepare for the 14th New England Regional Genealogical Conference coming up in April. Presented by Janet Horton Wallace and Olivia Patch, both long time conference and program attenders. We'll have an open discussion, sharing how to get the most out of a genealogical conference. **Time:** 1:30 to 3 p.m. **Cost -FREE** but please pre-register by emailing or calling the Connecticut Society of Genealogists Office at 860-569-0002 so we may plan appropriately. Watch this site for updates. CSG Library, 175 Maple Street, East Hartford, CT 06118

REMINDER—DUES DUE JANUARY 1ST—ADDITIONAL DONATIONS NEEDED AND WELCOME.

LEAVE THEM SMILING



**2017
JANUARY 21,
NEXT MEETING**

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