



# Middlesex Genealogical Society

Vol. XXX, No. 2

Darien, Fairfield County, CT

May 2014

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We want to encourage all of you to join us in our final program for the spring season on Saturday, 17 May 2014, at the Darien Library at 2 p.m.. Virginia Banerjee will present a case study concerning women of color before and after the Civil War.

Just before the formal presentation, at 1 p.m. we will hold our second Round Table series (actually the tables are rectangular). This forum allows members and visitors to informally share their successes, pose questions, or ask other members about problems/issues with your genealogical research. We would love to have you join in the conversation.

We look forward to seeing you.

Steven A. Anderson

## WE WELCOME NEW MGS MEMBERS

Seonaid B. Corbishley  
Barbara Fisk Gibson  
Amanda Goodman  
Anne W. Gwaltney  
Mary L. Lavins  
Marcy D. McKee  
Peter S. Riordan  
Gavin W. Watson  
Sara K. Zagrodzky

## NEW PROJECT AT FAMILY TREE DNA FOR MGS MEMBERS

by Peter Biggins

A project has been started at Family Tree DNA for members of the Middlesex Genealogical Society who have had Y-chromosome DNA tested at FTDNA for themselves and family members. The goal of the project is to share DNA information with other members, help members understand their testing results, and suggest avenues for further testing.

You can see the project on the FTDNA website at: <https://www.familytreedna.com/public/MiddlesexGenSoc>.

The MGS website has a section called Member DNA on a page called Member Pages at: <http://mgs.darien.org/members.htm>.

Y-chromosome DNA is inherited male to male like surnames. Family Tree DNA is the biggest Y-DNA tester and has public results pages for surnames and DNA types. A test of at least 67 markers is recommended. Test yourself if you are a male, and any male relative whose ancestry you want to learn more about. Y-DNA testing is going to tell you about your distant ancestry rather than fill in your family tree. You are not very likely to find people for your family tree because only a very small percentage of people have had their DNA tested. Many people gain insight into their distant ancestry. There is always a chance that you will not learn much if the person tested has an uncommon DNA type.

If you would like to learn more about Y-DNA testing, see "How to Test Your DNA and Why" on page 3 of the MGS Newsletter for October 2010. Or, contact Peter Biggins at: [pabiggin@optonline.net](mailto:pabiggin@optonline.net)

## 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.**

**17 MAY 2014: VIRGINIA BANERJEE** will present a **CASE STUDY: SEARCHING FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR.** The case study concerns women of color before and after the Civil War. Virginia will share information about an unusual family: free women of color with substantial assets. Two free



mulatto women, born in Georgia, appear in the 1850 Ohio census with \$5,000 in real estate. Virginia, although unrelated, inherited the property from a granddaughter of the family who died at age 104½. The program includes Virginia's first-hand memories of the last generation of the family, as well as things that they remembered...such as seeing the Lincoln funeral train! Exhibits include photos, as well as documents. Virginia will also offer ideas and methodology gleaned from her experience with searching for persons of color.

Virginia is a board member of our society as well as Frisbie/Frisbee Family Association of America. She is a professional family historian with more than 40 years research experience. She teaches and lectures throughout the region and has been published by several genealogical organizations. She has proven three First Families of Western Pennsylvania. She has completed research and private publication of a book on Indian history and her late husband's Indian family.

## SAVING MONEY ON SUBSCRIPTIONS

Do not allow your Ancestry subscription to renew automatically. If, instead, you call every year to renew it using your AARP member number, you will save 30%. (Visit <http://discounts.aarp.org/offer/ancestry-com/deal/707823/uSource/MTEFP>.) You can also save \$40 a year on Fold 3 if you are an Ancestry subscriber.

If you subscribe to *Family Tree* magazine, you can save 50% a year on My Heritage.

Even if you are told on the phone that a particular discount is no longer available, be sure to ask what other special pricing is in effect. It is always possible that an even better deal awaits you.

## AN AMERICAN STORY

### THE TALE OF WILLIAM O'SHEA

by John Driscoll

Some parts of this story are conjecture by the author.

William O'Shea was born on August 21, 1901, in the townland of Ballyrobin (Lattin), County Tipperary, Ireland. Lattin was described then as a village of about twenty houses, in the parish of same name, barony of Clanwilliam, 4 miles west by south from Tipperary and "a good butter making district."

William was the second oldest of the eight children of Michael O'Shea (1868-1927) and Mary Maloney (1878-1958). He was six feet tall, blue-eyed, with brown hair and a fit 165 lbs. with a fair complexion. The family story goes that he lost an eye either in the Irish War for Independence or the ensuing Civil War. That story also has him traveling to the United States to avoid retribution or arrest. Whether true or not, he was the first of his family to immigrate to the United States, arriving in the port of New York aboard the *S.S. Republic* on 9 November 1924. He travelled to Albany, NY, and lived there for a year before coming back to Brooklyn. In the following six years, he saved his earnings to bring his entire family over from Ireland one by one; a classic "Chain Migration."

Just two months after his arrival, William declared his intention to become a US citizen. He



***S.S. Republic***

took a job as a carpenter in Brooklyn and saved enough in a year and a half to pay the passage for his older brother, John, born 1899, to come to the United States. John arrived aboard the same ship as his brother did, on 30 June 1926 and went to live with him. This set a pattern that followed for the rest of the family.

With the two brothers working together, the next brother, Patrick, born 1907 was sent for, arriving on 22 January 1927 on the *S.S. President Roosevelt*. Then tragedy struck. The patriarch of the family, Michael, died of cardiac disease and the flu on 27 March 1927 in Tipperary.

There was an urgency now, without his father to provide for them, to bring the rest of the family to New York. His sisters, Mary, born 1903; Hanora, born 1905; and Margaret, born 1910; immigrated on separate ships about a month apart in 1928. The whole family worked to save money. John was a fireman on a train, Patrick an accountant, and the girls were cooks or domestics for private families.

Anne, born 1913 came to the United States aboard the *S.S. President Roosevelt* on 9 August 1929, followed by Michael (born 1915) on the *SS President Harding* five months later on 10 January 1930.

On 27 August 1930, William and his siblings had saved enough to reunite the rest of the family. His mother Mary and the two youngest children, twelve-year-old Joseph and Christina, seven, arrived on the *S.S. President Harding*.

Like William, John and the rest of the brothers became U.S. citizens; of the sisters, only one, Anne, was naturalized. William was listed as the head of the family in the 1930 and 1940 Federal Censuses. He remained in carpentry and was eventually instrumental in forming a new union, Local 1536 International Dock Builders Union, part of the carpenters union.

In 1941 he married Amelia Mildred Penczar and they had four children. He died on 23 March 1970 and was laid to rest in St. Charles Cemetery, Farmingdale, Long Island.

15 MARCH 2014

## FINDING ELUSIVE FEMALES

Toni McKeen gave an excellent presentation on this difficult subject. The very first thing she told us was that we must gather every single vital record on parents, grandparents, and all family members as quickly as we possibly can because they are becoming more and more difficult and more and more expensive to obtain.

Females in this country usually take their husbands' name after marriage, and if you do not know the name of the person a woman married, it may seem as though she has simply disappeared. Also, in many cultures women were prevented from owning property, holding a job, writing a Will. All of this makes tracing female ancestors difficult, but not impossible.

You have got to start with census records. Do your homework and be very methodical. Start with the 1940 U.S. Census. Where was your family in 1940? Then go to the 1930 and the 1920 and so on. Each census record will tell you something different. One will tell you how old they were at their first marriage. The next census might ask how many years they have been married. If the numbers match, you have an idea of when they got married. Census records tell you when they emigrated and whether or not they were naturalized.

Ask questions of other family members. Even if the previous generation is gone, an older cousin may remember things that you do not. And also, sift through whatever papers you have at home. You need to find as many documents as you can from all potential sources.

When you have a census record in front of you, read every column and every line on it. The presence of a mother-in-law or sibling of the wife in the home can give you her maiden name.

Do they own their home or are they renting it? This is something else you can find on the census, and it will help you to understand your family's economic situation.

People tended to live among other members of their family and among other people of their national origin. In addition to checking the schedule on which your ancestor appears, check other schedules both before and after that one. Chances are that you will find other familiar names.

Do not only look for individual names; look for the family. A woman's name could change several times over a period of years, and you could miss an individual easily if you confine your search to a single name.

Vital records are very important. If you do not know your grandmother's maiden name, you may find it on the birth certificate of one of her children. You should also find it on the marriage certificates of her children. If you still have not found your grandmother's maiden name, check her death certificate; it should be there. And it should also be on the death certificates of her children. When you find the documents, read every word on them.

Look for obituaries. Ancestry has many. If the one you are looking for is not yet there, look for the obituary of a brother or sister who died earlier. That might already be on Ancestry. Expand your horizon; look farther afield to increase the likelihood of success.

Visit cemeteries and read tombstones. Some cemeteries are very helpful in providing information and their personnel will cheerfully look up records for you. Others are not and will make no effort to help you until you have paid a large fee.

Look for old ethnic newspapers, some of which are online. Often you can figure out the content, even if you do not speak the language. If the language is difficult for you, take a copy of the article of interest to a local high school or college. Someone there may be able to translate it for you.

Military records are full of information. Even if a man was too old to serve in the armed forces, the "Old Man's Draft" (a valuable skills in-

ventory for the older male population) may have a registration for him.

Civil War pension indexes are online and cover more than you might think. Our government lumped pension records from the Spanish-American War and World War I with the already existing Civil War pension records index, which as a consequence goes up to 1934. Always read the description of the database that you are accessing!

City directories can be very helpful. If you consult one, start at the beginning, which will contain lots of potentially useful information about the community. You should also find at the beginning the meaning of any abbreviations used.

Naturalization papers contain a lot of information—country of origin, section of that country, name of passenger ship, date of arrival, etc. Remember that in some other cultures women retain the use of their maiden name throughout life, so do not be surprised if the children you are looking for are with a woman with a different surname. It is her maiden name.

Although names were frequently Americanized, e.g., Luigi to Lewis, on arrival here, only very rarely were names changed. And nobody's name was changed at Ellis Island! Inspectors at Ellis Island did not create passenger lists; they utilized the already written-out manifests created at the point of departure.

The Social Security Death Index will give you a lot of useful information, including a woman's maiden name, where she came from, her date of birth, her mother's maiden name.

Always ask for an actual copy of an original document, even if it costs more. If you are dependent on someone else to fill in information on a form, that person may misinterpret handwriting on the original.

There are various additional databases. Some of them post public family trees and invite their customers to contribute their own family trees. Toni strongly recommends that we do not do so and that we keep our personal family

trees private. If you do contribute your information, at the very least exclude anyone that is not already dead.

Some of these databases:

- FamilySearch.org is an excellent free database created by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints available online and at the LDS Family History Library and LDS Family History Centers. If you need to see LDS microfilm of records, remember that Darien Library can borrow it for you.
- If you have ancestors who have ever lived in any of the five boroughs of New York City, visit the Italian Genealogical Website at <http://www.italiengen.org/>. This site only contains indexes, not the actual NYC vital records, but it is free and a huge timesaver in tracking down records. And, again, read the description of the database before consulting it so that you know what its limitations are.
- The USGenWeb is another database, run by a group of volunteers working together to provide free genealogy websites for genealogical research in every county and every state of the United States. Organization is by county and state, and this website provides you with links to all the state genealogy websites which, in turn, provide gateways to the counties. Results can be uneven, depending on the quantity and quality of local volunteer efforts, but some of it is truly excellent. Visit the site at <http://usgenweb.org/>. And be inspired to become a volunteer.
- Then there is Ancestry.com. (If you do not have a subscription, it can be used at no cost on Darien Library computers.) When you open this site do not begin your search on their home page. Click on "Search" at the top of the screen, then scroll down to fill in what you can on the form. If you want vital records rather than census records, click on the state of interest. Vital records should be available on both the community and the state level. As

always read the description of what each database contains. Doing so will save you an enormous amount of time.

- Find a Grave at <http://www.findagrave.com/> is adding a million graves a month and now has 113,000,000 graves listed, all added by volunteers. It started free and it is still free, but as it has been bought by Ancestry, it may not stay that way. In addition to the gravesites and tombstone wording, some kind volunteer genealogists have added photos and obituaries. When looking for an obituary, check both the place where the individual spent most of his or her life and the place retired to. The obituary may be in either or both.
- And don't forget to "Google" a name. You never know what will turn up until you try it.
- Allvitalrecords.com is not a research site. You can, however, find the proper address to use when sending requests for vital records, as well the cost of the search and the records. Also, click on the state and use the telephone number given to verify that the information shown is still accurate. That may save you from enduring another long waiting period.

## UPCOMING SEMINARS

**National Archives and Records Administration, Northeast Region, New York City**, Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House at One Bowling Green, New York, NY 10004. Their *Finding Family* programs, which are held in the Learning Center on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, are free and open to the public, and take place the second Tuesday of each month, from noon to 1 p.m. Seating is limited so registration is required and can be accomplished by telephoning 866-840-1752 or e-mailing [newyork.archives@nara.gov](mailto:newyork.archives@nara.gov). "**Finding Family: Using *FamilySearch***," will be presented 10 June.

**National Archives and Records Administration, Northeast Region**, Boston, Freder-

ick C. Murphy Federal Center, 380 Trapelo Road, Waltham, MA 02452-6399, phone 781-663-0130, fax 781-663-0154, e-mail [boston.archives@nara.gov](mailto:boston.archives@nara.gov). Programs are free, but reservations are required. Telephone toll-free 866-406-2379 or e-mail the address above.

"**Passenger Lists, Censuses & Naturalizations: The Big 3 Sources for Family History**," will be presented 8 July In this workshop you will learn how to locate and use NARA resources. Then you will be free to start your research with the assistance of archives staff and volunteers.

**New York Genealogical & Biographical Society**, 36 W. 44<sup>th</sup> Street, 7<sup>th</sup> fl., New York, NY 10036-8105; telephone 212-755-8532; fax 212-754-4218. Programs at the New York Public Library, Stephen A. Schwarzman Bldg., Fifth Ave., between 40th and 42nd Sts., NYC, sponsored by NYG&B:

- "**Looking for Your New York Tenant Farmer: Little-Used Resources**," Tues., 20 May, 5:30 p.m.
- "**The Essential Role of Gazetteers in Genealogical Research**," Wed., 28 May, 5:30 p.m.
- **Research in Albany 2014**, Wed., 29 Oct., 6 p.m., to Sat., 1 Nov., 5 p.m.

**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](mailto:conference@ngsgenealogy.org); Website [www.ngsgenealogy.org](http://www.ngsgenealogy.org). The NGS 2015 Annual Conference will be held in St. Charles, Mo., Wed.-Sat., 13-16 May 2015. More information will be forthcoming.

**New England Historic Genealogical Society**, 101 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02116-3007, toll-free telephone 888-286-3447, Website [www.NewEnglandAncestors.org](http://www.NewEnglandAncestors.org).

- **Nantucket: "That Famous Old Island,"** Thurs. to Sun., 12-15 June. Experience the incomparable beauty and rich history of this island.
- **Nova Scotia Research Tour**, Sun. to Sun., 22-29 June. Trace your ancestors in Atlantic Canada with the assistance of NEHGS experts and local historians. The tour includes lectures, consultations, and group events.
- **Albany, NY, Research Tour**, Wed. to Sun.,

23-27 July. Explore the vast resources of the New York State Library and New York State Archives.

- **Heritage Tour—Coastal Maine: Remarkable History, Magnificent Beauty**, Thurs. to Sun., 11-14 Sept. Encounter the various legacies left by Maine's noteworthy inhabitants.
- **Salt Lake City Research Tour**, Sun. to Sun., 2-9 November. This will be NEHGS's 36th annual research tour to Salt Lake City. The organization is experienced.

**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/~nywgs>. "**Fire Up Your Research: The Digital Genealogist is Here**" will be presented 14 June by Philip Hayes.

**Federation of Genealogical Societies** will hold its annual conference Sun., 27 Aug. to Wed., 30 Aug. in San Antonio, Tex. For more information, visit the organization's Website at <https://www.fgsconference.org>.

**MGS Past President Donna Moughty** will again lead a research trip to Ireland in 2014. The trip to **Dublin** will take place 12-19 October. While in Dublin, time will be spent at the National Library of Ireland, General Register Office, National Archives of Ireland, Registry of Deeds, and the Valuation Office. More information on this trip can be found at <http://www.moughty.com/2014-irish-research-trip/dublin-research-trip-brochu.pdf>.

Should there be sufficient interest, Donna will also escort researchers to **Belfast** 5-11 October, where time will be spent at the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, General Register Office of Northern Ireland, and the Linen Hall Library. More information on the Belfast portion of the trip can be found at <http://www.moughty.com/2014-irish-research-trip/belfast-research-trip-broch.pdf>

**Palatines to America**, which specializes in researching German-speaking ancestors (from Germany, Austria, Alsace Switzerland, Luxemborg, Lichtenstein, Poland, Russia, Denmark, Netherlands, East Prussia, Pomerania, Brandenburg, Silesia, Galicia, Bohemia, or any other German-speaking area), has scheduled a national conference at the Ramada Plaza Columbus North, 4900 Sinclair Rd., Columbus, Ohio, from Wed., 25 June, to Sat., 28 June 2014. For more information visit the organization's Website at <http://www.palam.org>.

### Genealogy Cruises

The **5<sup>th</sup> Unlock the Past Cruise—British Isles Discovery** ([www.unlockthepast.com.au](http://www.unlockthepast.com.au)) will take place 19-29 July 2014 aboard the *Marco Polo*. Departure will be from Tilbury, London; with stops at Invergordon, Scotland; Kirkwall in the Orkney Islands; Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides; Tobermory, Isle of Mull; Dublin, Ireland; St. Mary's, Isles of Scilly; St. Peter Port, Guernsey; Honfleur, France; and return to Tilbury, London. Although talks will not be scheduled while the ship is in port, it is expected that about 40 genealogical topics will be covered in 25 sessions while at sea.

The **6<sup>th</sup> Unlock the Past Cruise** will be a four-day cruise in the waters near Sydney, Australia, Thurs. to Sun., 23 Oct. to 26 Oct. The program will offer 25 topics in up to two streams, with an optional 5-day tour of Norfolk Island to follow Mon. to Fri., 27-31 Oct.

The **7<sup>th</sup> Unlock the Past Cruise** will be a five-day cruise in the waters of southwestern Australia around Freemantle, Albany, and Esperance, and will take place Mon.-Sat., 19-24 Jan. 2015. Again, they expect to offer 25 topics in up to two streams. Fifteen different sessions are anticipated.

The **8<sup>th</sup> Unlock the Past Cruise** will sail from Southampton, England, on Sat., 11 July 2015, to Bruges (Zeebrugge), Belgium; Berlin (Warnemunde), Germany; Tallinn, Estonia; St. Petersburg, Russia; Helsinki, Finland; Stockholm, Sweden; Copenhagen, Denmark; and return to Southampton, England, on Sat., 25 July 2015. The genealogical program will be led by presenters from three continents and will cover 100 topics in 50 sessions.

Unlock the Past plans a European river cruise in 2016, probably June or July. It will be a one-way trip from Amsterdam, Netherlands, to Basel, Switzerland.

For more information on any of these cruises, visit the organization's Website at [www.unlockthepast.com.au](http://www.unlockthepast.com.au).

### **Cruising With Legacy Family 2014—Legacy Asia:**

- **First Cruise, 26 Oct.-9 Nov. 2014;**
- **Second Cruise, 9 Nov.-23 Nov. 2014.**

The first cruise will be packed with genealogy classes on each sea day. The second cruise has no genealogy classes. It is for those who want to continue on and see more of Asia.

The first cruise will depart from Tokyo (Yokohama) on Sun., 26 Oct. 2014 and visit Mt. Fuji (Shimizu), Kobe, Kagoshima, and Nagasaki, all in Japan; then visit Shanghai (Boashan), China, Taipei (Keelung), Taiwan; and Hong Kong, China, where the first cruise ends Sun., 9 Nov. 2014.

The second cruise starts at Hong Kong, where and when the first cruise ends. (If you are doing both cruises, you simply stay in the same stateroom.) The second cruise departs Hong Kong Sun., 9 Nov., then visits Hanoi, Hue (Halong Bay); and Ho Chi Minh (Phu My), all in Vietnam;

Bangkok / Laemchabang, Thailand; and Singapore, where the cruise ends Sun., 23 Nov. 2014.

For more information on either or both of these cruises, visit:

[www.legacyfamilytree.com/CruiseInfo\\_2014.asp](http://www.legacyfamilytree.com/CruiseInfo_2014.asp)

**Eastern Caribbean Genealogy Cruise** will take place Sun.-Sun., 7-14 Dec. 2014 aboard the Celebrity *Silhouette*. There will be genealogy events every day, hosted by Gary and Diana Smith, with special guest speakers Dick Eastman and Jana Sloan, CG. The cruise will depart from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., 7 Dec., then visit San Juan, PR; Basseterre, St. Kitts; and St. Maarten; before returning to Fort Lauderdale on 14 Dec. For more information, call Cruise Everything Today! at 800-959-7447 or 239-275-1717 or visit: [www.cecruisegroups.com/genealogy-cruise-2014.html](http://www.cecruisegroups.com/genealogy-cruise-2014.html)

**Deadline for next newsletter  
September 2014**

**DARLEN LIBRARY  
17 MAY 2014  
MEETING**

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