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Darien, Fairfield County, CT

March 2021

President's Message

Out of despair, hope!

by Sara Zagrodzky

We have all been impacted by these difficult times. Some of us have made it through relatively unscathed, while others have had a much harder time. If you find yourself in this latter group, I sincerely hope that things get better soon.



As genealogists, it is natural to reflect on how our ancestors might have handled the situation we face today. Would they have been tougher, more resilient? Would they have complained less? Would they have had the British resolve to “keep calm and carry on?” Or would they have folded under the weight of the myriad emotions we see afflicting so many – fear, despair, boredom, a longing for more normal times?

I gave all this some thought and concluded that we may never really know how they might have managed. Instead, we should use the interest we have in our ancestors to refocus our minds on something positive. There is nothing like a fascinating research question, a new discovery or a missing piece of information finally found to restore enthusiasm. Genealogy is not about wondering what our ancestors might have done, it is about finding out what they actually did. Who they were. How they lived. And how

we are connected to them.

Are you feeling down as a result of this pandemic? Depressed about the present? Worried about the future? I cannot resolve these feelings, but I can offer a prescription that might help. How about focusing on some genealogical questions that might be relevant to our situation today? How many different ancestor reflections has this past year brought to mind? What records can you find?

The point is that genealogy is valuable at any time, but in a pandemic, when the mind is distracted or fearful, focusing on the research we love can be a great way to bring back a positive mental attitude. How about these research questions to get you started? Can I challenge you to take your memories one step further?

- Can you find a record that connects an ancestor to the Spanish Flu pandemic?
- Do you have an ancestor on the manifest of the Mayflower or other ship of that era? Find the manifest!
- Can you find records of land leased or bought by an ancestor?
- How about a death certificate or military record after 1921 that names your ancestor?
- What about Ellis Island? Did any of your ancestors arrive there?

I tried to answer some of these questions myself. It turns out that I have several relatives who were passengers on the Mayflower – the Tilley's, Mr. Howland and Mr. Doty. I also have a land record for a family farm in Wisconsin. I can trace a family back to Ireland at the time of

the Great Famine, when there were “too many mouths to feed.” And I can trace the baptisms and immigration routes of the Mormon branch of my family.

You surely have interesting stories of your own waiting to be discovered. Do not let this pandemic get or keep you down. Use your passion in genealogy to pull yourself back up. A few discoveries will help bring back a positive mindset! And when you find them, please share on our [Facebook](#) page or email us news-lettermgsdarien@gmail.com. We will publish the best submissions in a future newsletter.

All the best! SZ

MGS News

Jack Murray 1933-2021

It is with great sadness that we say farewell to former member of MGS, John Francis Murray, Jr., known as "Jack" He died peacefully at his home with his wife Ceci by his side on February 10, 2021. Jack was born June 5, 1933 in New York City to the late John Francis Murray and Agnes O'Connell Murray and grew up in Yonkers, NY. Jack was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather.

Workshop

On December 19, 2020 MGS held a workshop on lineage societies and how to join them. MGS president Sara Zagrodzky ran the workshop, which was attended by eleven participants. Sara explained the requirements to join a lineage society and showed a variety of sources including *The Heredity Society Blue Book*, the annual social register of hereditary, lineage and patriotic societies, and the Silver Books of the Mayflower Pilgrim descendants.

Presentation

On January 31 MGS and the Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County jointly presented

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MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY 2019-2020 OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

Sara Zagrodzky	President & Programs Director
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Tara Finn Forschino	Social Director and Facebook Administrator

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 publishes a quarterly newsletter (ISSN 1936-3494) and co-sponsors, with Darien Library, at least four meetings with a program and speaker during the year. Annual membership dues vary from \$25 for 1 yr. or \$45 for 2 yrs. per individual and \$30 for 1 yr. or \$55 for 2 yrs. per couple or family, as well as a lifetime option at \$300. Original notices of genealogical interest and queries are welcomed for publication in the newsletter.

Middlesex Genealogical Society
P.O. Box 9
Darien, Fairfield County, CT 06820

Website: mgsdarienct.org

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Upcoming MGS Presentations

Currently, presentations are via Zoom. Please look for our emails for updates, changes, or cancellations.

Saturday, March 13, 2021, 2:00 pm "Find the Living." Presented by Alec Ferretti.

Learn about the tools genealogists have to research individuals who lived in the late 20th and early 21st century. Although privacy restrictions limit how we can find people who lived in the modern era, there are yet countless record sets we can leverage, some of which are similar to those with which we are traditionally familiar, and some of which are completely new!



Alec Ferretti is a New York City-based professional genealogist, who works for the Wells Fargo Family & Business History Center, researching family histories for high-net-worth clients. He recently graduated from NYU and LIU's dual masters program, with degrees in archives and library science. Alec specializes in the genealogy of 20th century immigrants to the United States alongside Italian genealogy, while dabbling proficiently in Latin American and Jewish Genealogy. Alec is a regular lecturer at genealogical societies in the New York area, and has presented at numerous conferences around the United States. He serves as the President of the New York Genealogy & Technology Group, an informal organization which meets bimonthly to discuss topics brought forth by members. Alec was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the Association of Professional Genealogists and serves actively on the Board of Reclaim the Records, a nonprofit dedicated to wrangling public records from restrictive government agencies. Alec's passion is records access, and he dedicates much of his spare time to projects - sanctioned through Reclaim the Records or independently - which seek to ensure public records remain public.

To register for this presentation, [click here](#). All registrations must be in by Noon on Friday,

March 12, 2020. Registered participants will receive an email with log in credentials on that Saturday in the afternoon.

Saturday, April 24, 2021, 2:00 pm. "Special Online & Hidden Collections in NY Genealogical Societies--Demos and Discussions," Presented by Pamela Vittorio, Professional Genealogist/Historian.

Pamela Vittorio is a professional genealogist and an Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of English Language Studies/Parsons School of Design at The New School University in NYC. She holds an MA from NYU in Middle Eastern Languages and History. Pamela frequently gives presentations on the social and cultural history of U.S. canals, women's studies, the Civil War, Colonial period Canada/U.S. connections. She is the author of several books on English language learning, and has published articles on history and genealogy related to the Erie and NY State Canals. Her background includes a certificate in genealogical research from Boston University. She has a certificate in Librarianship and is currently completing the Canadian Studies (PLCGS) programs at Toronto University, National Institute of Genealogical Studies.



Pamela has taken courses at Salt Lake City Institute of Genealogy (SLIG), Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh (GRIP) and IGHR (Georgia) in subjects such as Advanced Genetic Genealogy/DNA and Analysis, Land Records, Advanced Writing for Genealogists, and Advanced Genealogical Research Methods, and the Genealogical Proof Standard. She has been a presenter for the Capitol District Genealogical Society, Central NY Genealogical Society, Genesee Area Genealogists, Heritage Hunters of Saratoga County, Association of Professional Genealogists, NY State Family History Conference, and the National Genealogical Society (NGS). She holds memberships in the NY-APG, New England-APG, National Genealogical Society, NYG&B, Erie Canal Museum, and various other genealogical and historical societies. She is also a member and Trustee at Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum.

Pay it Forward

By John Driscoll

In my youth I was a stamp and coin collector. None of my three sons, nor my seven grand-



children have an interest in collecting these items, so I had a problem of to whom I should leave them. I decided to give them to one of my sons to pass on to one of my great grandchildren. In gathering these collections in my attic, I came across some old letters, from a prominent family in town, that I somehow obtained when I was a child and thought to myself "These should be reunited with the family."

The Hendrickson and Higbie families were es-

tablished in Springfield Gardens, Queens, NY, where I grew up. I never knew any of them, but we used to play ball in "Hendy's field", an overgrown sandlot that we cleared each spring and made a makeshift diamond on. We all knew Hendy was Hendrickson and somehow, that family owned the property. Kids don't delve more deeply into these things.

How I got the letters and postcards of the Hendrickson's family I don't recall, but they had some old stamps on them and I suspect that was the reason I have them. Most were letters to and from Mamie Hendrickson, nee Higbie, to her friend in Geneseo, NY and dated from 1898 to 1903, with some later postcards. When you read the letters, you get the feeling you are there a hundred and twenty years ago. They are **Continued on pg.5**

Partial letter

Geneseo, N.Y.
July 23. 98.

Dear Mamie,

This is an unusual time for me to be writing a letter at ten o'clock in the morning. I think I shall have to drive to the village this afternoon so thought I would get my letter ready. I guess it is the first time this week that I have had the time to sit down in the forenoon. I really haven't the time now. I am just taking it that's all.

I haven't been to see any one since I came home only across the road for

a minute. Every one keeps asking me why I don't come but I have got home now I like to stay.

It is a busy time of the year for farmers so I have a good deal to do.

My sister Louise left for Vineland New Jersey Monday night to spend her vacation. Uncle was anxious to have her come. She isn't well at all and we thought the change would do her good. The journey to Philadelphia was direct, only one change and there she was met by a friend of Uncle's.

Mamma spends the greater part of her time sewing and working in the flower garden also in

Tips

When searching newspapers.com, sometimes a name will not be found. This does not mean it is not there. If you are looking for an obituary for instance and you know the death date and city, search instead for "Died" or "Deaths" on the date or a few days after. Go through the list of the deceased for your relative. If that doesn't work and you know the date, BROWSE the paper. My second great grandfather died on March 7, 1883 in Brooklyn, NY. I could not find his obituary in newspapers.com by searching his name and all the key words. So, I browsed the Brooklyn papers

and found it in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle. Why Newspapers.com could not locate it, I do not know. The obituary contained more than one key search word.

If available, compare different versions of the same census. Three copies of most federal censuses were created. The local census taker first created a draft copy as he walked from house to house to question the residents. He later copied by hand a second draft for the state, and a third copy for the federal government. Copying errors often resulted in slight differences between the various copies. Only a few of the local or state copies have survived. Occasionally, large cities were enumerated twice in the same year when an undercount was suspected the first time. - www.familysearch.org

MGS news cont'd from pg. 2

Linda Carlson's Zoom presentation, courtesy of the Darien Library, on Jewish genealogy. It was attended by 54 participants. After an introduction by Elissa Kaplan of the JHSFC, Linda used her own family research to demonstrate how she researched repositories. She explained such things as naturalizations records and what each included and how they differed from time to time, departure as well as Arrival manifests, additional information if an immigrant was detained aboard ship, how names were possibly Americanized in stages. Holocaust records and Steve Morse for translation from Yiddish to English. The presentation was followed by a Q&A which participants sent in during the event and asked by Elissa.

Pay it Forward cont'd from pg 4

simple and heartfelt words between friends. They speak of the weather, religion, household chores, farm life and daily ups and downs. A pleasure to read.

I first tried to find a public family tree on Ancestry. I did, but the owner told me "Hendrick Elmer Hendrickson was the brother-in-law of the sister-in-law of the niece of the husband of my 2nd great aunt." Other Hendrickson/Higbie combinations were also too distant to be useful.

Knowing the family was a prominent one in

NYG&B Record July 1934, Vol 65 Issue 3

Queens, I went to the NYG&B New York Record online and found references to the Hendricksons. One in particular, July 1934, mentioned a will of Heerman Hendrickson in 1700, who was from Foster's Meadow. A search revealed that the area I grew up in was indeed part of Foster's Meadow, a German farming community begun in the 1850's. Previously,

Dutch families lived there.

A search then led me to the Fosters Meadow Heritage Center. ([Click here](#)) where I contacted Raymond Hoeffner. Although he had no connections to the families I was trying to locate, he knew the Hendricksons had been in Fosters Meadows for a long time and was able to steer me to a Hendrickson descendant, Richard Totten. It turned out that Richard was a direct Hendrickson descendant and very possibly related to the Mamie Hendrickson Higbie of my letters. Ray had suggested I donate the letters to the Valley Stream Historical Society, but I decided to give them to Richard and let him donate them after he was done with them.

After having these letters for over half a century, it feels good to be able to reunite them with their proper family. If I had not had these letters in my attic all these years, I wonder if they would have been discarded decades ago.

Upcoming Virtual Events

Friday March 19 and Saturday, March 20, 2021, 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., North Carolina Genealogical Society Virtual Conference.
8 Speakers, 2 Days, 90 Days access to recordings!

Featuring Jeanne Bloom, LaBrenda Garrett-Nelson, J. Mark Lowe, Sunny Morton, Craig Roberts Scott, Diahna Southard, Jean Wilcox-Hibben, and Ari Wilkins. For info click [HERE](#)

Thursday, April 1, 2021, New England Regional Genealogical Consortium (NERGC)
The main conference website is [here](#). More information about conference sessions is [here](#), or download our [conference brochure](#), which contains all the details regarding the speakers, schedule, and format for the conference. We hope you'll join us for a great conference! Registration is now open for our first-ever, Virtual NERGC Conference, which will be taking

place from April 1–May 31, 2021! Click [HERE](#)

Friday, April 23, 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday, April 24, 2021, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
The Colorado Genealogical Society – Crista Crown, DNA and Ancestry.com

Crista will present four programs via Zoom: Two on Friday on DNA and two on Saturday on using Ancestry.com. Both days are free, but you must register separately for each day. Each day is limited to 500 participants. Click [HERE](#) to register for Friday and [HERE](#) to register for Saturday.

Friday, May 7, and Saturday, May 8, 2021, Heartland Family History Conference

We have some great things planned for our **2021 Virtual Heartland Family History Conference**, and you can participate in all of it from the comfort of your own home! No more difficult choices of which of the concurrent sessions to attend. After our “live” days on May 7-8, you'll have 3 months to view the more than 30 recorded conference sessions whenever you want. No travel time or expense! Regional, national and international speakers on a wide range of family history topics! It's convenient, affordable, and packed full of great learning opportunities and time for socializing and networking! Click [HERE](#) to register.

Saturday May 15, 2021 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Internationally known Genealogy Speaker Judy G. Russell JD, CG®, CGL(SM) is coming to Cobb County, GA

Her topics for the day:

Finding the Law:

Time and time again, we're told as genealogists that we need to look at records in the context of the law at the time and in the place where the records were created. Easier said than done! With 50 states and the federal government all passing laws, how do we find the laws we need?

Death by Undue Means:

From colonial times to today, death not attributable to natural causes required investigation. Elected or appointed coroners worked with local juries to determine more about what caused each death. Learn more about coroner's records and how to use them in genealogy.

The Discriminating Genealogist

Telling Good Evidence from Bad - The "best evidence" rule in law requires the presentation in court of an original rather than a copy, and a copy won't even be admitted if the original is available. In genealogy, our rules require us to do the same: to discriminate, choose in favor of, prefer certain types of evidence to others, certain bits of information to others, certain sources to others.

DNA and the Golden Rule:

The Law and Ethics of Genetic Genealogy - Whose permission is needed to test a child or an adult unable to consent? Who owns our DNA? What can we disclose about a cousin who has tested? The rules of the road for the ethical challenges facing genealogists interested in using DNA evidence as part of their family history research. Learn how applying the Golden Rule can guide us through many if not most of the situations in which we as genetic genealogists find ourselves. Click [HERE](#) to register and pay

Monday, May 17 to Friday May21, 2021, National Genealogical Society Virtual 2021 Family History Conference

Plans for NGS's forty-third annual conference include a full week of virtual events for individuals, societies, and organizations Find the full schedule of events and registration information click [HERE](#)

*Welcome New Member
Kristi Bates*

HELP MGS DECIDE WORKSHOP TOPICS

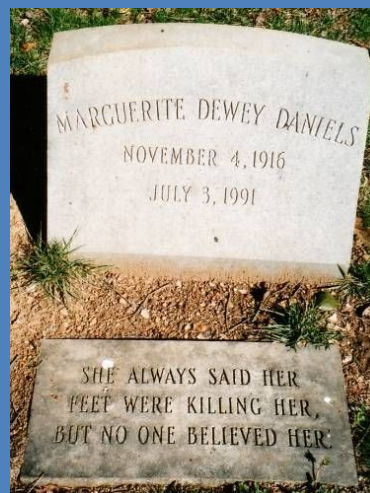
Rootstech 2021 by Family Search took place February 25-27. Over 500,000 fellow genealogists participated in the event from over 200 countries.

There are over 600 genealogy sessions in English, that can be viewed free for a year after the live event.

MGS would like to choose some of these videos to talk about at our workshops. This is a list of sessions available in English. Click [HERE](#)

Click [HERE](#) to create a playlist for you to watch, choose which ones interest you the most and send your recommendations to us at our Facebook page, click [HERE](#), email, click [HERE](#) or Twitter, [@MGS_Genealogy](#)

LEAVE THEM SMILING



Thanks to all our members for supporting MGS in 2021

*Irene Adsuar
Kristi Bates
Ann Marie Bello
Peter Berg
Peter Biggins
Janeen Bjork
Mary Jane Cameron
Wilfred M Cameron
Leonard Christie
Nancy B Cross
Lisa B D'Alton
John Driscoll
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Diane S Drugge*

*Richard J Farrell
Terence Fitzgerald
Tara Forschino
Debbie Garber
Carol S. Heubeck
Kathleen O'Neill Kenyon
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Esther Sturges
Lloyd Sturges
Rosemary Mead Trompeter
Kathleen Turner
Barbara Van Demark
Marilyn Van Sciver
Carole L Weed
Carol Wilder Tamme
Sara Zagrodzky*

If you haven't renewed your membership yet, It's not too late!

**2021
MARCH 13,
NEXT MEETING**

**Middlesex Genealogical Society
P.O. Box 9
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