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Darien, Fairfield County, CT

June 2021

President's Message

Charles Conklin Great-Great Grandfather



When you go looking for your great-great-grandparents, you need to start with all the typical sources. First on your list should be the census, phone books, Find-A-Grave, BillionGraves and newspapers. Next should be state archives or local history repositories, and don't forget the local library, town hall archives or the historical society.

When researching one generation back, focus on birth certificates and marriage records followed by death certificates, then go back one generation more. In my case, I knew the names of my subject's parents. But I glossed over Grandpa Charlie because his dad's extreme death was more prominently featured in the records I checked.

Once you've done some research, compile your notes and documentation. If you find your-

self hitting a wall, drive out to that cemetery and have a conversation with your ancestor. But before you go, make sure you get a cemetery map, either through a grave website or by calling the cemetery directly.

Once there, go sit by the headstone for a few minutes. Introduce yourself. Ask the stone questions. Mention if you have visited that person's children – either in person or at their own gravesites. Who knows – maybe the answer will come to you.



Cedar Hill Cemetery, Fort Pierre, South Dakota

It is a very connecting moment to stand before someone who died before you were born and let them know they are remembered. I did! Grandpa Charlie and his wife Ida were happy that I came to visit.

Sara

MGS News

On Mar 13th. Alex Ferretti, a New York City professional genealogist and board member of Reclaim the Records, gave us a new angle on genealogy. His presentation was on *Finding the Living*. Most of us are looking for deceased ancestors. This presentation by Alec, concentrated on the living and records that are available to us on these people. He described a myriad of data available; land records, court cases, divorce records, vital records, adoption, immigration and border crossings, naturalization, selective service, census (post 1940), directories, burial permits and more. These records, which can be found by different approaches can circumvent the barriers put up by various localities. He gave examples for Connecticut (MGS membership card will allow access), Massachusetts, New Jersey, Florida and according to him, the most restrictive state, New York. Alec described how to combine what we find to build a scenario on the subject of our search. The Zoom presentation was attended by 53 and was followed by a Q&A session.



On April 24th Pamela Vittorio, professional genealogist, gave a fascinating presentation of the search for Oliver Graham, her fourth great grandfather. Pamela showed, using many records both in the States and Canada, how to merge two apparently separate Oliver Gramhams into one relative. The story of Oliver, "*A Connecticut Yankee in the King's Rangers*" is of one man with two allegiances. He served with both Patriots and Loyalists. After serving in New England and New York, under the command of the Green Mountain Boys, he was wounded in 1780 and taken prisoner and removed to Canada, where after recuperating,
Continued on pg. 3

MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY 2020-2021 OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

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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 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. Original notices of genealogical interest and queries are welcomed for publication in the newsletter.

Middlesex Genealogical Society
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Website: mgsdarienct.org

In This Issue

President's message pg. 1
MGS news pg. 2
1950 Federal Census pg. 3
Fourth Cousins pg. 4
Tips pg. 5
New Books? Pg. 5
Obituary pg. 5
The New Colossus pg. 6
Pete Kenyon Pg. 8
Leave Them Smiling pg. 8

MGS news continued from pg. 2

was recruited by the Kings Rangers, maybe by the endeavors of his future father-in-law, also a member of the King’s Rangers. Residing in both Canada and New York, after the war, he was able to secure a modest pension for his military service, from New York.

Pamela has been able, due to tireless research, to determine that the two Olivers were one and the same man. She has been able to trace Oliver’s life both in Canada, New York and Connecticut, his home state, where she was able to locate his actual powder horn decorated with patriotic carvings done by Oliver himself. All in all a terrific presentation.



Our next presentation is on October 2, 2021. Subject to be announced. At this time, it unsure whether the Darien Library’s Community Room will be available, or we will still be meeting via Zoom. Watch for updates from the library. Click here [Darien Library](#)



The National Archives will release the 1950 population census schedules in April 2022, 72 years after the official 1950 census day of April 1, 1950.

We have been busy [preparing for the release for many years](#), and we encourage you to start preparing too!

Do you know where your family was living in 1950? Did you have American relatives living abroad? What did your relatives do for work? What was their household income in 1949? The 1950 census may provide the answers to these questions and more. The 1950 census won’t be released until 2022, but that doesn’t mean you

can’t start getting ready for it now.

Getting started with Census Records and Resources

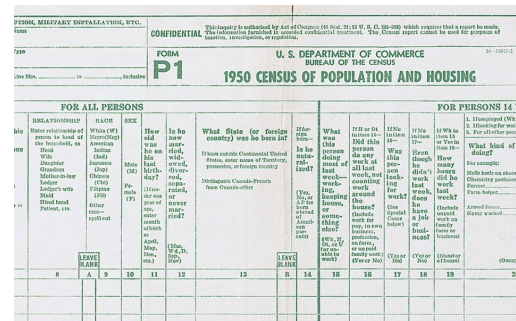
[Census records](#) can provide the building blocks of your research, allowing you both to confirm information and learn more. While you wait for the 1950 Census release, we encourage you to browse our online resources and informational posts; ask questions and find answers on History Hub.

Browse [History Hub for genealogy](#) related information, [Census fun facts](#), a closer look at the [1950 Census](#), as well as information about previously released Census schedules.

Review 20 Tips for Census Research: [Genealogy: 20 Tips for Census Research Success](#)

For more information about Census records at the National Archives, see our Census Records web pages: [Search Census Records Online and Other Resources](#)

History Hub is our support community for researchers, genealogists, history enthusiasts, and citizen archivists. Ask questions, share information, work together, and find help based on experience and interests. Researchers can ask—or answer—questions on [History Hub](#), or search to see if a question has been asked before.



Click [HERE](#) to view a larger image

The first Federal Population Census was taken in 1790 and has been taken every ten years since. There is a 72-year restriction on access to the Census—the 1940 Census was released on April 2, 2012. The 1950 Census will be released on April 1, 2022. Read more about the “72-Year Rule” [History - US Census Bureau](#)

Fourth Cousins

by Hildegard Drüke Hurford and Peter Biggins

In April 2021, Hildegard "Hilge" Drueke Hurford



surprised Peter Biggins with a phone call saying she was a distant Drueke cousin, born in Schönholthausen, Germany, and calling from her home in

New York City.

Turns out we are fourth cousins.

Hilge was born in 1945. Schönholthausen is a small farming community in the Sauerland hills of south Westphalia. Hilge's parents were Fritz Drüke (1886-1978) and Elisabeth Wortmann (1906-1987). Hilge Drüke worked as a dressmaker in Hagen, Düsseldorf, and Heidelberg, Germany, for seven years, then emigrated to New York City in 1969. In 1981, she married John Boyce Hurford (1938-2000) in 1981. John was an investment adviser and foreign affairs expert.

Peter was born in 1939 in Kalamazoo, Michigan, but grew up mostly in the Chicago area in Illinois. Peter's parents were John Alfred Biggins (1910- 1979) from Chicago, and Jane Marie Drueke (1914-1998) from Grand Rapids, Michigan. Peter married Marilyn Carroll (1940-2020) in 1964. They moved to Darien, Connecticut, in 1972.

Hilge and Peter share the same great great grandparents: Johann Drüecke (1743-1798) and Elisabeth Bitter Drüecke (1770-1835), who lived in a house in Ostentrop, a neighboring town of Schönholthausen.

Hilge is descended from their first son, Johann Joseph, born in 1791.

Peter is descended from their second son, Johann Wilhelm, born in 1793.

Hilge's ancestor Johann Joseph inherited the house in Ostentrop.

Peter's great grandfather William Peter Drueke emigrated to New York City in 1871 at age 18, nearly 100 years before Hilge. He came with his sister Anna Sophia Drueke and her new husband Frederick Wurzburg. After a year, all three moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan. William Peter Drueke started a wholesale liquor business that lasted until it was shut down in 1918, by Michigan's prohibition law. Frederick Wurzburg started a large department store that lasted until 1972.

In 1992, Hilge got a letter from Peter's cousin Carole Drueke in Michigan trying to find out if they were related. Last month Hilge came across the letter and searched the Internet for Drueke. Peter's genealogy website came up and Hilge called him.

Peter started looking into genealogy when he retired in 2002 and started a genealogy website in 2005. Early on, he made contact with a third cousin, Toni Wurzburg Viertel, who was very helpful in leading him to his ancestry in Ostentrop.

In 2007, Peter and his wife Marilyn toured Germany, Switzerland, and Italy with Marilyn's sister and her husband Johnny Varro, who was playing piano at jazz clubs around Stuttgart for a couple weeks. Before the tour, Peter and Marilyn visited a few towns in Germany looking for Peter's ancestry. The last town was Schönholthausen, site of the Mariä Himmelfahrt Church.

They knocked on the door of the rectory. Pastor Franz Rinschen answered the door. Peter told him he was from America and looking for information about his ancestors named Drueke.

"Drüecken!" he said, "I think I have something you're going to like." He had done genealogical house histories for Schönholthausen and Ostentrop. He directed their attention to the Drüecke house which was owned by Peter's great great grandparents, Johann and Elisabeth Bitter Drüecke. The house, designated by Pastor

Continued on pg. 7

Tips

For those of us who do not subscribe to Fold3 – Military Records or Ancestry All Access. Fold 3 Library Edition is available online for free with your CT State Library card. Click [HERE](#). Go to Collections, then click on Databases. Go to Fold3 Library Edition and sign in with your library card number.

Sometimes relatives seem impossible to find in a census. Misspellings and transcription errors sometimes make it difficult to locate them. If you cannot find a relative in a census, find him/her in a directory for the same year or as close as possible. Take note of the neighbors. Look for the neighbors in the census and see if your relative is living near them.

How many times have you done extensive research only to find you are following the wrong family and did this a few years ago? Keep a “Ruled Out” folder” Keep everything you have found in that folder on the wrong family. This will make it a lot easier to correct you search path early.

The Sanborn maps at The Library of Congress provides a searchable database of the fire insurance maps published by the Sanborn Map Company housed in the collections of the Geography and Map Division. The online checklist is based upon the Library's 1981 publication *Fire Insurance Maps in the Library of Congress* and will be continually updated to reflect new acquisitions. Click [HERE](#)

Do you want the Darien Library to acquire new books on Genealogy?

Below are books being offered by the National Genealogical Society. Let us know you would like these or other genealogy books on our shelves.

A Genealogist's Guide to Discovering Your African-American Ancestors Author: Smith, Franklin Carter, Emily Anne Croom - [READ MORE](#)

Polish Roots. Second Edition Author: Chorzempa, Rosemary A. - [READ MORE](#)

Ancestral Trails. The Complete Guide to British Genealogy and Family History Second Edition Author: Herber, Mark D., with a Foreword by John Titford – [READ MORE](#)

Finding Italian Roots. Second Edition The Complete Guide for Americans Author: Colletta, John Philip - [READ MORE](#)

German-English Genealogical Dictionary Author: Thode, Ernest – [READ MORE](#)

New Pocket Guide to Irish Genealogy Author: Mitchell, Brian - [READ MORE](#)

Welsh Family History A Guide to Research. Second Edition Author: Rowlands, John, Sheila Rowlands - [READ MORE](#)

Tracing Ancestors in Barbados: A Practical Guide Author: Lane, Geraldine – [READ MORE](#)

Email your choices to
mgsvolunteer@gmail.com

Marilyn Van Sciver

1935-2021

It is with great sadness to announce the passing of longtime member Marilyn Van Sciver who died peacefully at home on April 24, 2021. Marilyn was an MGS member since 1989 and will be greatly missed.

The New Colossus.

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
 With conquering limbs astride from land to land,
 Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
 A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
 Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
 Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
 Glows world-wide welcome, her mild eyes
 Command
 The air-bridged harbor that twin-cities frame.

"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
 With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
 Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
 The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
 Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
 I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Emma Lafarge.

November 2nd 1883.

Fourth Cousins Continued from pg.3

Rinschen as HAUS 08, appears on pages 39-43 of his unpublished 1998 history of approximately 30 houses in Ostentrop. See: <http://www.peterspioneers.com/ostentrophouse.htm>

Pastor Rinschen also showed them a copy of handwritten book of accounts of Johann Drücke. The book of accounts indicates that Johann was a trader and transporter. He bought cured hams from processors in the Schönholthausen and Ostentrop area and transported them by horse and wagon to Münster, 66 miles to the north, and to Frankfurt, 107 miles to the south. He also dealt in mineral

water from the town of Selters (where the name seltzer water originated). Selters is on the route between Ostentrop and Frankfurt, 68 miles from Ostentrop. According to a modern-day ham processor by the name of Abraham, "The production of ham has scarcely changed over the centuries. Westphalian ham has its very own typical shape and flavour. It is salted on the bone for five weeks, then smoked for another four to five weeks over beech wood and juniper twigs. The bone is only removed after a total maturing period of two to three months: only then does the ham achieve its typically seasoned Westphalian flavor."

After meeting with Peter and Marilyn for an hour and a half in his study, Pastor Rinschen took them to the Drücke house in Ostentrop. The Drücke house was built around 1740. It was

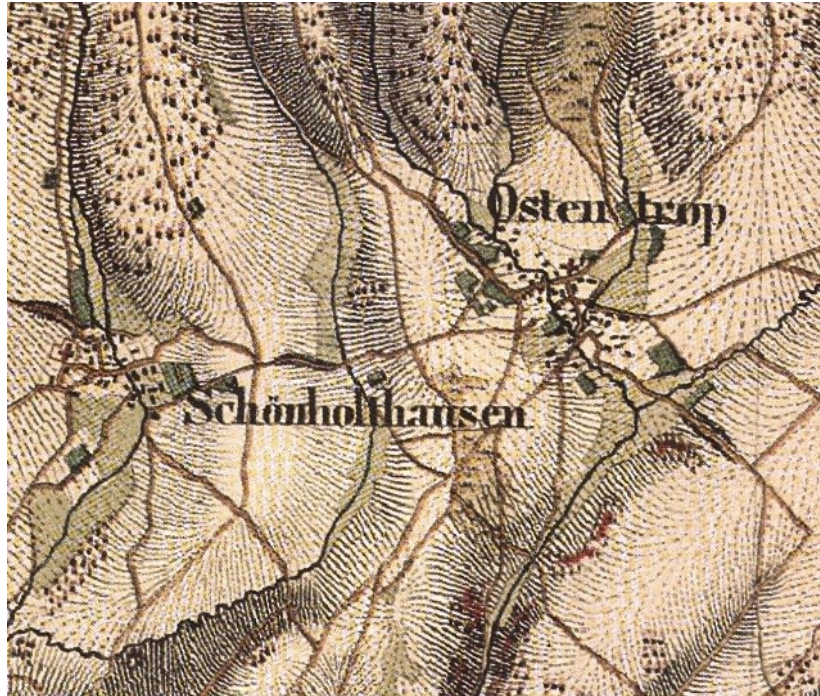
the home of Hilge's and Peter's great great great grandparents from 1790 to 1798. The current owner took Peter and Marilyn on a tour of the house.

In December 2013, a 20-page article was published on Hilge's and Peter's great great great grandfather, Johann Drücke. The title was "Johann Drücke – ein Händler (trader) und Fuhrunternehmer (transporter) aus Ostentrop." It appeared in the magazine of the local historical society, "An Bigge, Lenne und Fretter - Heimatkundliche Beiträge (local history magazine) aus der Gemeinde (from the municipality) Finnentrop." The municipality of Finnentrop includes the Bigge, Lenne, and Fretter riv-

ers. The Bigge and Fretter flow into the Lenne, which flows into the Ruhr, the Rhine, and the North Sea. The magazine is published, twice a year in June and December, by the local history society of Finnentrop, Heimatbund Gemeinde Finnentrop. The article was written by the magazine's editorial director, Volker Kennemann.

See: <http://www.peterspioneers.com/traderandtransporter.htm>

Peter learned of the article from Mark Riggelman. Mark had just gotten results from his Y-chromosome DNA test at Family Tree DNA showing that he matched the Saxon DNA of Peter's first cousin Paul Druেকে. Seeing that Paul's most distant paternal ancestor was Johann Drücke, he Googled that name and found Peter's family history for Johann Drücke at <http://www.peterspioneers.com/JEBD.htm>



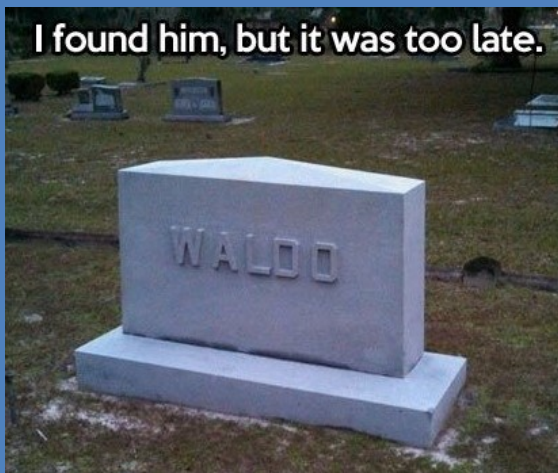
1841 map of Schönholthausen and Ostentrop

The article says that the original of the book of accounts is in the possession Liesel Hümmler. By meeting Hilge, Peter learned that Liesel Hümmler is Hilge's older sister in Schönholthausen--another fourth cousin!

Congratulations!
MGS board member
"Pete" Kenyon
Grand Marshall
2021 Darien Memorial Day Parade

LEAVE THEM SMILING

I found him, but it was too late.



Have a great Summer!

**2021
 OCTOBER 2,
 NEXT MEETING**

**Middlesex Genealogical Society
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