



The Newsletter of

Middlesex Genealogical Society

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Darien, Fairfield County, CT

June, 2020

President's Message

Dear Fellow Genealogists,

If you are like me, you are tired of hearing about the virus and hoping we can go back to “normal” soon. It’s easy to get lost thinking about the worst. I’ll never be able to go to a ball-game, hug a loved one, travel freelyattend a genealogy presentation. But then I think about our ancestors who lived during the Influenza epidemic of 1918 also called the Spanish Flu. I imagine what it was like to be fighting a war on more than one front with the war against the flu being deadlier. In fact, more U.S. soldiers died from the 1918 flu than were killed in battle during the war. (1)

Like today, there were different thoughts on how to handle the disease which was quick moving, deadly and unfortunately hit young healthy people and children particularly hard. Unlike today, there were no vaccines and drugs being developed. The first licensed flu vaccine didn’t appear in America until the 1940s. (1) And so, the epidemic just ran its course until people either died or developed an immunity.

When I think about the courage it took our ancestors to endure that period in history I figure if they could do it then so can I. Fortunately, our hardships are eased by the technological advantages we enjoy. When I miss hugging my family I can at least visit with them via Face Time or Zoom.

Watch for freebies online. Organizations are

offering free webinars and complimentary access which MGS members post about on our Facebook page ([Click Here](#)). Also, until we are able to meet again safely, MGS in partnership with the Darien Library will be offering virtual genealogy presentations. Watch for more information.

So, if you are like me and are tired of hearing about the virus remember that years ago our country emerged from a far more challenging pandemic and was able to go back to “normal” which we too will enjoy again soon.

Stay safe and stay tuned.

Pamela

(1) [https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-](https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-1)

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MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

2019-2020

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Peter Biggins	Past President
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Tara Finn Forschino	Social Director and Face- book 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

**MGS has a new domain
name!**

mgsdarienct.org

Upcoming MGS Presentations

**Thank you for your patience
during the pandemic.**

As you know, the March 22nd presentation, Jewish Genealogy Research with Linda Carlson and May 16th presentation with Pamela Vittorio had to be postponed. We hope to reschedule them as soon as possible.

The next scheduled MGS presentation is on Oct. 3, 2020, "Finding Your Ancestors in NYC Vital Records," presented by Susan B. Miller, Director of Programs and Outreach, NYG&B.

Keep in mind that we may have to change things as the Covid-19 situation dictates. More in the September newsletter.

Please look for our email updates and check the MGS website often at our new domain name mgsdarienct.org for changes.

Our presentations are given at the Darien Library and depend on the library's ability to provide a safe venue for the audience. When the library reopens it may be a "soft reopening" allowing only small groups to gather. Please refer to their website www.darienlibrary.org

Mailing Notice

Due to the Covid-19 virus, we regret that we are unable to mail out the print version to those who subscribe to it at this time. We will send it out as soon as we are up and running again.

Two MGS Members who lost relatives in the Spanish flu of 1918

The majority of deaths during the influenza pandemic of 1918-1919 were not caused by the influenza virus acting alone, report researchers from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National In-

stitutes of Health. Instead, most victims succumbed to bacterial pneumonia following influenza virus infection. The pneumonia was caused when bacteria that normally inhabit the nose and throat invaded the lungs along a pathway created when the virus destroyed the cells that line the bronchial tubes and lungs.

Peter Biggins

On October 16, 1918, my Aunt Emily Biggins died at age 13 from the Spanish influenza epidemic. She was in 8th grade at St. Vincent's Grammar School in the Lincoln Park section of Chicago. The Spanish flu epidemic killed 8,500 in Chicago. October was the peak month. As a young boy 25 years later, my parents taught me to pray for her every night when I went to sleep.

2. FULL NAME *Emily Maria Biggins* 3. SEX *Female* 4. COLOR OR RACE *White* 5. MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED *Single* 14. DATE OF DEATH *October 16, 1918* 15. I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended *in person* in *Chicago*, 1918, to *Oct 16*, 1918, and that I last saw *alive* on *Oct 16*, 1918, and that death occurred, on the date stated above, as *follows*: The CAUSE OF DEATH* was as follows: *Influenza*

6. DATE OF BIRTH *March 25, 1905* 7. AGE *13* 8. OCCUPATION *Student*

Pete Kenyon

Zella M. (Kenyon) Dryden was my paternal grand aunt. She was born 18 September 1894 in Chicago, IL to Edwin Marcellus Kenyon and Mary I (Bush) Kenyon, and never left the greater Chicago area. She was married 5 Jun 1917 in Winnetka, IL to R. Perry Dryden, a graduate of the University of Chicago, who was in the finance business in Chicago. Zella died of pneumonia 19 December 1918, a victim of the "Spanish Flu" Pandemic, and was buried 2 days later in Winnetka. My grandfather, Robert Edwin Kenyon, told me once that his sister had died very quickly, and never spoke of it or her again.

DRYDEN—Zella K. Dryden, beloved wife of Perry Dryden, sister of Georgina Thackery and Robert Kenyon, daughter of Edwin M. Kenyon, Dec. 18, of pneumonia. Services at Graceland chapel, 4 p. m., Friday, Dec. 20.

Chicago Daily Tribune 12/20/1918

Upcoming VIRTUAL Events

Here is a list of Mostly Free virtual webinars and presentations to keep you busy while you can't attend the real thing.

BYU Family History Library

<https://fh.lib.byu.edu/classes-and-webinars/online-webinars/>

Vivid-Pix Education

<https://vivid-pix.com/education>

Association of Professional Genealogists

https://www.apgen.org/event_list?

Georgia Genealogical Society

<https://www.gagensociety.org/webinar-schedule/>

Wisconsin State Genealogical Society

<https://wsqs.org/eventListings.php?nm=316>

Legacy Family Tree

<https://familytreewebinars.com/upcoming-webinars-multireg.php>

Southern California Genealogical Society

<http://scsgsgenealogy.com/webinar/jes-index.html>

Minnesota Genealogical Society

<https://mngs.org/eventListings.php?nm=38>

Ontario Ancestors, The Ontario Genealogical Society

<https://ogs.on.ca/events-calendar/>

The Pima County Genealogical Society

<https://azpimagensoc.org/>

Jewish Genealogy Society of Illinois

<https://jgsi.org/Events-calendar>

Germanic Genealogy Society

<https://ggsmn.org/cpage.php?pt=94>

American Ancestors by NEHG

<https://www.americanancestors.org/education/online-classes#webinars>

Family Fanatics History

<https://www.familyhistoryfanatics.com/econference>

Utah Genealogical Association

<https://ugagenealogy.org/>

200th Anniversary of Darien

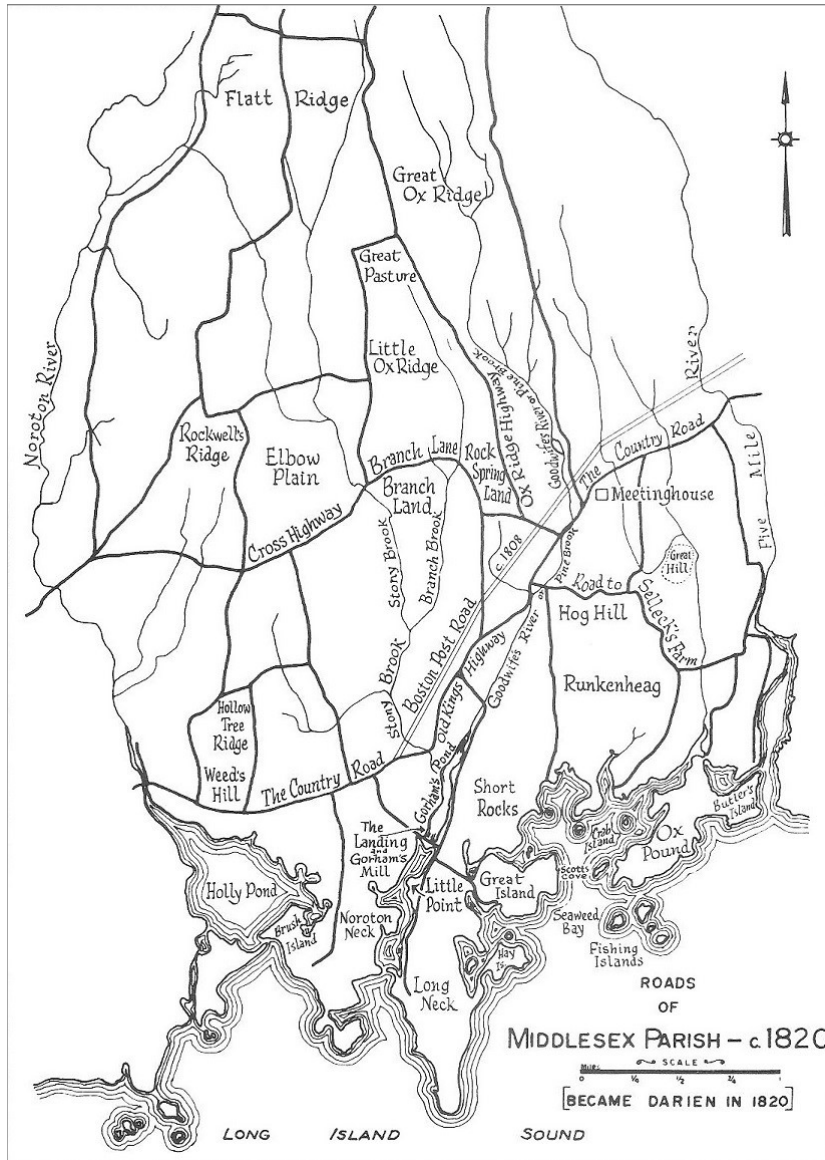
By Peter Biggins



Two hundred years ago, on June 12, 1820, we lost our name. That was the day that the land between the Noroton River and the Five Mile River became the Town of Darien instead of a part of Stamford called Middlesex.

The Middlesex Genealogical Society was established in 1982. The name "Middlesex" is derived from Middlesex Parish, the original name by which Darien was known before becoming incorporated in 1820. The society's founders were from Darien and chose "Middlesex" to honor the town.

Middlesex Parish was founded in 1737. The first minister was Moses Mather. The first Church, Middlesex Meetinghouse, was built on the site of the present-day Congregational Church on Old Kings Highway North (the old Post Road), across from the Darien Historical Society (the Bates-Scofield House). Middlesex Parish included parts of Norwalk and present-day Stamford, as well as present-day Darien.



The Middlesex Genealogical Society draws members from all over Lower Fairfield County. The largest number comes from Darien, but Norwalk is a close second. The two towns are separated by the Five Mile River from the Long Island Sound up to the Post Road. At that point, the border is a straight line that runs 37.5 degrees northwest. The 37.5-degree line is called a perambulation line. I guess someone walked

it off with a compass and marked a few stones. In 1820, the line started where the Five Mile River was crossed by the Post Road. Before 1807, the line had started where the Five Mile River was crossed by the old Post Road (now Old Kings Highway North in Darien and Flax Hill Road in Norwalk).

During the years leading up to incorporation in 1820, some people in Middlesex wanted the new town to include Rowayton and West Norwalk. And, some people in Norwalk wanted part of present-day Darien to be part of Norwalk.

Why was Middlesex Parish called "Middlesex?" Perhaps because it was in between Stamford

and Norwalk, as Middlesex was between Wessex and Essex in England.

For information about the 200th Anniversary, see: <http://darienct.gov/2020>

Middlesex Genealogical Society Members' Suggested Books

Please email your book recommendations to newslettermgsdarien@gmail.com



Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars: Life and Culture on the Lower East Side 1890-1925

by Elizabeth Ewen

At the turn of the century, millions of European women set sail with their families for the United States. Behind them stood a world of peasant agriculture and small town life. Ahead lay the concrete metropolis, swept by the winds of industrial development. *Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars* tells the story of the Jewish and Italian women who came to inhabit New York's Lower East Side during this period of massive migration. By looking at two generations—mothers born in the Old World, and daughters born in the new—and making extensive use of oral histories, Elizabeth Ewen presents the compelling tale of a metamorphosis in life and in perception.

The Stolen Village: Baltimore and the Barbary Pirates

by Des Ekin

In June 1631 pirates from Algiers and armed troops of the Turkish Ottoman Empire, led by the notorious pirate captain Morat Rais, stormed ashore at the little harbor village of Baltimore in West Cork. They captured almost all the villagers and bore them away to a life of slavery in North Africa. The prisoners were destined for a variety of fates -- some would live out their days chained to the oars as galley slaves, while others would spend long years in the scented seclusion of the harem or within the walls of the Sultan's palace. The old city of Algiers, with its narrow streets, intense heat and lively trade, was a melting pot where the villagers would join slaves and freemen of many nationalities. Only

two of them ever saw Ireland again.

The Sack of Baltimore was the most devastating invasion ever mounted by Islamist forces on Ireland or England. Des Ekin's exhaustive research illuminates the political intrigues that ensured the captives were left to their fate, and provides a vivid insight into the kind of life that would have awaited the slaves amid the souks and seraglios of old Algiers.

The Stolen Village is a fascinating tale of international piracy and culture clash nearly 400 years ago and is the first book to cover this relatively unknown and under-researched incident in Irish history.

North and South

by Elizabeth Gaskell

The novel is set in the fictional industrial town of Milton in the north of England. Forced to leave her home in the tranquil, rural south, Margaret Hale settles with her parents in Milton. She witnesses the brutal world wrought by the Industrial Revolution, seeing employers and workers clashing in the first strikes. Sympathetic to the poor (whose courage and tenacity she admires and among whom she makes friends), she clashes with John Thornton: a nouveau riche cotton-mill owner who is contemptuous of his workers. The novel traces her growing understanding of the complexity of labor relations and their impact on well-meaning mill owners and her conflicted relationship with John Thornton. Gaskell based her depiction of Milton on Manchester, where she lived as the wife of a Unitarian minister.

**Congratulations to
Pete Kenyon,
Winner of the Family Tree "Family
Finder" DNA test drawn on
March 29, 2020**

History of 1918 Flu Pandemic



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

The 1918 influenza pandemic was the most severe pandemic in recent history. It was caused by an H1N1 virus with genes of avian origin. Although there is not universal consensus regarding where the virus originated, it spread worldwide during 1918-1919. In the United States, it was first identified in military personnel in spring 1918.

It is estimated that about 500 million people or one-third of the world's population became infected with this virus. The number of deaths was estimated to be at least 50 million worldwide with about 675,000 occurring in the United States. Mortality was high in people younger than 5 years old, 20-40 years old, and 65 years and older. The high mortality in healthy people, including those in the 20-40 year age group, was a unique feature of this pandemic.

While the 1918 H1N1 virus has been [synthesized and evaluated](#), the properties that made it so devastating are not well understood. With no vaccine to protect against influenza infection and no antibiotics to treat secondary bacterial infections that can be associated with influenza infections, control efforts worldwide were limited to non-pharmaceutical interventions such as isolation, quarantine, good personal hygiene, use of disinfectants, and limitations of public gatherings, which were applied unevenly.

Following is a historical timeline of major events that took place during this time period:

April 1917

- U.S. enters World War I with 378,000 in the armed services.

June 1917

- A draft is established to increase the number of soldiers; Army begins training recruits at 32 large camps, each housing 25,000 to 55,000 soldiers.

March 1918

- Outbreaks of flu-like illness are first detected in the United States.
- More than 100 soldiers at Camp Funston in Fort Riley, Kansas become ill with flu. Within a week the number of flu cases quintuples.
- Sporadic flu activity spreads unevenly through the United States, Europe, and possibly Asia over the next six months.

April 1918

- First mention of influenza appears in an April 5 weekly public health report. The report informs officials of 18 severe cases and three deaths in Haskell, Kansas.

May 1918

- By May, hundreds of thousands of soldiers travel across the Atlantic each month as they are deployed for World War I.

September 1918

- The second wave of flu emerges at Camp Devens, a United States Army training camp just outside of Boston, and at a naval facility in Boston.
- Between September and November, a second wave of flu peaks in the United States. This second wave is highly fatal, and re-



Seattle Police - September 1918

- sponsible for most of the deaths attributed to the pandemic.
- New York City's Board of Health adds flu to the list of reportable diseases, and requires all flu cases to be isolated at home or in a city hospital.
- By the end of September, more than 14,000 flu cases are reported at Camp Devens—equaling about one-quarter of the total

camp, resulting in 757 deaths.

October 1918

- The 1918 flu pandemic virus kills an estimated 195,000 Americans during October alone.
- In fall of 1918 the United States experiences a severe shortage of professional nurses, because of the deployment of large numbers of nurses to military camps in the United States and abroad, and the failure to use trained African-American nurses.
- Chicago chapter of the American Red Cross issues urgent call for volunteers to help nurse the ill.
- Philadelphia is hit hard with the pandemic flu viruses—more than 500 corpses await burial, some for more than a week. Cold-storage plants are used as temporary morgues, a manufacturer of trolley cars donates 200 packing crates for use as coffins.
- Chicago, along with many other cities across the United States, closes theaters, movie houses and night schools and prohibit public gatherings.
- San Francisco's Board of Health requires any person serving the public to wear masks and issues strong recommendation to all residents to wear masks in public.
- New York City reports a 40 percent decline in shipyard productivity due to flu illnesses in the midst of World War I.

November 1918

- The end of World War I enables a resurgence of influenza as people celebrate Armistice Day and soldiers begin to demobilize.
- Salt Lake City officials place quarantine signs on front and rear doors of 2,000 homes where occupants have been struck with flu.
- By the end of World War I the U.S. military grew in size from 378,000 soldiers in April 1918 to 4.7 million soldiers.

December 1918

- Public health officials begin education pro-

grams and publicity about dangers of coughing and sneezing; careless disposal of “nasal discharges.”

- Committee of the American Public Health Association encourages stores and factories to stagger opening and closing hours and for people to walk to work when possible instead of using public transport to prevent overcrowding.

January 1919

- A third wave of influenza occurs in the winter and spring of 1919, killing many more. Third wave subsides in the summer.
- In San Francisco, 1,800 flu cases and 101 deaths are reported in first five days of January.



Open Air Barber Shop 1919

- Many San Antonio citizens begin complaining that new flu cases aren't being reported, and that this is fueling another influenza surge.
- 706 cases of influenza and 67 deaths are reported in New York City, triggering fear of a recurrence of severe flu activity.
- Trustees of the Boston City Hospital ask mayor for a special appropriation of \$3,000 to study the treatment of influenza.

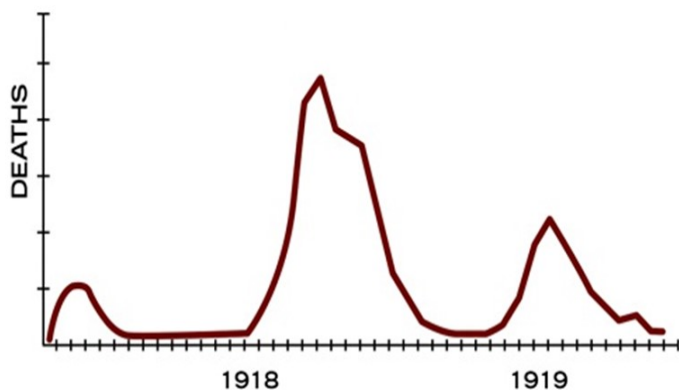
February 1919

- Influenza appears to be nearly eradicated in New Orleans as number of reported cases drops.
- Illinois passes a bill to create a one-year course to become a “practical nurse,” an ef-

fort to address the nursing shortage the pandemic had exposed.

April 1919

- At Versailles Peace Conference, while negotiating the end of World War I with other world leaders, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson collapses. Some historians speculate he was weak from influenza, which was still rampant in Paris.



There were three different waves of illness during the pandemic, starting in March 1918

and subsiding by summer of 1919. The pandemic peaked in the U.S. during the second wave, in the fall of 1918. This highly fatal second wave was responsible for most of the U.S. deaths attributed to the pandemic.



**2020
OCTOBER 3,
NEXT MEETING**

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