



Vol. XXXV, No. 2

Darien, Fairfield County, CT

June 2019

## President's Message

Dear Fellow Genealogists,

June is one of my favorite months. My thoughts turn towards summer and lazy days of reading which don't always materialize but I plan for nonetheless. Some of my happiest days are spent on a beach or in a hammock with a good book, which brings me to one of this newsletter's features.

Earlier this year, at several of our presentations we asked you which books you had read which helped you to understand your family's experiences. Researching dates and events is important and exciting but fleshing out your ancestors' challenges and daily life humanizes them and brings them to life. These stories are what will pique the interest of your family members too. As a child, I first became interested in my family history after reading *The Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder.

Since most of us don't have family diaries to read, we have to read the stories of others who were making the same journey or living the same type of life. This is where your fellow members have helped, by recommending books that they have found useful and informative. In the next four issues of the MGS newsletter, we will share our members' book choices for all to enjoy. See page 2 for a list of the

books. And if you didn't have a chance to recommend a book, it's not too late, just send your book recommendation to me at [pamelashea2@aol.com](mailto:pamelashea2@aol.com).

So please, find a hammock, start reading and have a wonderful summer!

Pamela

## In this Issue

- President's Message pg. 1
- New Board Member pg. 2
- Member Suggested Books pg. 3
- An Irish Adventure pg. 4
- Reclaim the Records pg. 5
- Fixed in Time pg. 6
- Upcoming Regional Event pg. 7
- Tips pg. 7
- Trivia pg. 7
- MGS Social pg. 8
- Leave Them Smiling pg. 8

**SOME FAMILY TREES HAVE  
BEAUTIFUL LEAVES, AND  
SOME HAVE JUST A BUNCH  
OF NUTS. REMEMBER, IT IS  
THE NUTS THAT MAKE THE  
TREE WORTH SHAKING. –  
UNKNOWN**

## MIDDLESEX GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

2018-2019

### OFFICERS &

### BOARD MEMBERS

Tara Finn Forschino	Co-Pres., Social Director & Facebook Administrator
Pamela Shea	Co-President
Mary Lavins	Vice-Pres. Programs & Email Communications
John Driscoll	Treasurer & Newsletter Ed.
Steve Haywood	Secretary
Rob Martinelli	Membership Director
Robert E. "Pete" Kenyon	Past VP Programs
Sara Zagrodzky	

### PAST DIRECTORS

Peter Biggins	Past President
Leonard Christie	Past VP Programs
Lloyd Sturges Jr.	Past President

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 1111**  
**Darien, Fairfield County, CT 06820**

**Website:** <http://mgs.darien.org/>

## MGS welcomes our newest Board Member Sara Zagrodzky.

Sara is currently a Board Member for the Norwalk Senior Center Genealogy Club. She is also a member of the following: Goodwives River Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Darien Historical Society Education Committee, National Genealogical Society, Connecticut Ancestry Society, New York Genealogical & Biographical Society, New England Historic Genealogical Society and Cos Cob Genealogy Club.



She is a past Board Member of the Goodwives River Chapter NSDAR and the Darien Historical Society

Sara served as Past Chair for the Darien Memorial Day Parade and past assistant to Janeen Bjork's Norwalk Community College Lifetime Learners Beginners Genealogy Class.

She has made presentations to Norwalk Senior Center Genealogy Club on: "Spelling Varieties - checking name spellings on all records" and "Comparison of Ancestry and Family Search Ancestry DNA tree tags and ThruLines."

She works as a genealogy researcher and has attended numerous conferences around the States. We are sure she will be an invaluable addition to our board.

## MGS Members' Suggested Books

Many of you have recommended books you have found enjoyable and helpful in understanding your ancestors' journey and life. (Read the President's message for a little more background) Here is the list you can use this summer along with a summary of three of the books. In the next few newsletters we will fea-

ture a few books each time. It's not too late to add to the list. Please email [pamelashea2@aol.com](mailto:pamelashea2@aol.com) to recommend a book. Happy Reading!

- **Little House on the Prairie** by Laura Ingalls Wilder, a nine book series
- **Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War** by Nathaniel Philbrick

- **The Boy Who Fell Off the Mayflower, or John Howland's Good Fortune** by P.J. Lynch
- **The Winthrop Woman** by Anya Seton
- **Women's Diaries of the Westward Journey** by Lillian Schlissel
- **Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars: Life and Culture on the Lower Eastside 1890-1925** by Elizabeth Ewen
- **Gerard Keegan's Famine Diary, Journey to a New World** by James J. Mangan
- **A Tree Grows in Brooklyn** by Betty Smith
- **The Emigrants** by Vilhelm Moberg
- **The Emigrants - Book 1**
- **Unto a Good Land - Book 2**
- **The Settlers - Book 3**
- **The Last Letter Home - Book 4**
- **Angela's Ashes** by Frank McCourt
- **'Tis** by Frank McCourt



### **Little House on the Prairie**

by Laura Ingalls Wilder

The adventures of Laura Ingalls and her family as they leave their little house in the Big Woods of Wisconsin and set out for the big skies of the Kansas Territory. They travel for many days in their covered wagon until they find the best spot to build their house. Soon they are planting and plowing, hunting wild ducks and turkeys, and gathering grass for their cows. Just when they begin to feel settled, they are caught in the middle of a dangerous conflict. (Member's great great aunt said this was exactly like her early life in Nebraska.)

The **nine books** in the timeless Little House series tell the story of Laura's real childhood as an American pioneer and are cherished by readers of all generations. They offer a unique glimpse into life on the American frontier and tell the heartwarming, unforgettable story of a loving family.

### **Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War**

by Nathaniel Philbrick

How Did America Begin? This simple question launches acclaimed author Nathaniel Philbrick on an extraordinary journey to understand the truth behind our most sacred national myth: the voyage of the *Mayflower* and the settlement of Plymouth Colony. As Philbrick reveals in this electrifying new book, the story of the Pilgrims does not end with the First Thanksgiving; instead, it is a fifty-five-year epic that is at once tragic and heroic, and still carries meaning for us today.

### **The Emigrants**

by Vilhelm Moberg

Considered one of Sweden's greatest 20th-century writers, Vilhelm Moberg created Karl Oskar and Kristina Nilsson to portray the joys and tragedies of daily life for early Swedish pioneers in America. His consistently faithful depiction of these humble people's lives is a major strength of the Emigrant Novels.

Moberg's extensive research in the papers of Swedish emigrants in archival collections, including the Minnesota Historical Society, enabled him to incorporate many details of pioneer life. First published between 1949 and 1959 in Swedish, these four books were considered a single work by Moberg, who intended that they be read as documentary novels. These editions contain introductions written by Roger McKnight, Gustavus Adolphus College, and restore Moberg's bibliography not included in earlier English editions.

**The Emigrants - Book 1** introduces Karl Oskar and Kristina Nilsson, their three young children, and eleven others who make up a resolute party of Swedes fleeing the poverty, religious persecution, and social oppression of Smaland in 1850.

**See *Emigrants* on pg 6**

## An Irish Adventure

By John Driscoll

This is a story of a wonderful Irish experience we had a number of years ago. My wife Joanne's grandparents immigrated in the late 1890s and early 1900s. One of them was Thomas Gillen who we knew was born in 1883 in Longford, Ireland. His wife's naturalization papers stated the he was born in Corlea, Ireland and his

birth record stated that his father resided in Corlea. Other sources of his origin were vague with the most detailed naming Longford as his birthplace.

Jo and I were planning our second trip to Ireland and wanted to find the town Tom Gillen came from. I am by no means an expert on Irish parishes or townlands and when I found Corlea in the Civil parish of Kilcommock with a Thomas Gillen from there, I was sure I had the right place. We left from Athlone and asked directions along the way in churches and bars. (Which I am told are the only two reliable places to get directions in Ireland). We were getting nowhere and just about ready to give up when we stopped at the Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre, a pre-historic road of large oak planks dating to 148 BC, near the village of Kenagh in County Longford. Here we met Breda Mollaghan who told us we were looking in the wrong place. At this point I tore up my notes and decided to call it a day. Breda convinced us to wait and she



called a local Historian/Genealogist who, with what information we had, was able to determine that we wanted Corlea in the Catholic Parish of Killoe, not the Civil Parish of Kilcommock. He also said that Corlea may have merged with another townland. By the time I got off the phone, Breda had taped my notes back together. She then gave us directions and our quest continued.

There are two villages in Killoe and we headed off to the first, Ennybegs, about 15 miles away. It is a very small hamlet, consisting apparently of a Tavern and a Church. We arrived



St. Mary's Church on the right with Begley's Public House on the left.

and first went to St. Mary's Church, which was empty. We crossed the street to Begley's Public House and asked where we could find the priest and were told the house next to the tavern was the rectory. Jo and I found no one at home, so we

went to the local cemetery and found quite a few Gillens. Upon returning to the Tavern to leave word for the priest, we were told he had just returned.

Father Sean Casey invited us in, sat us in his parlor and we chatted. He then took us into the dining room and brought us the original church records for us to look at, while we enjoyed glasses of lemonade. We found and photographed baptismal and marriage records of Jo's grandfather and his family. Father Sean then piled us into his car and drove us around Ennybegs. He took us to visit some Gillens and went to the house where Jo's grandfather was



they were due in court, and Ganz won the first public copies of the index to New York City marriage licenses for 1908-1929 on 48 rolls of microfilm. This was the first time that an American genealogist had ever successfully sued for the return of genealogical records to the public. The case proved that the Municipal Archives' holdings were indeed subject to New York's FOIL.

In January 2016, Reclaim The Records filed another FOIL request that became another Article 78 lawsuit, this time filed against the New York City Clerk's Office. They too settled with the group, providing 110 reels of microfilm and copies of a digital database they had created for in-house use. The city also paid the organization's attorneys fees.

In November 2016, Reclaim The Records filed a third lawsuit under the Missouri Sunshine Law against the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services for access to the basic index to births and deaths in the state. During the course of the lawsuit, it was discovered that the Missouri DHSS had been selling this same data to researchers for years, but was unwilling to provide copies to the public. The case is still pending.

Reclaim The Records was formally incorporated in December 2016 and was granted 501 (c)(3) non-profit status by the IRS in February 2017.

Go to: <https://www.reclaimtherecords.org/>

To see their collection, go to: <https://archive.org/details/reclaimtherecords>

*Emigrants continued from pg. 3*

**Unto a Good Land - Book 2** opens in the summer of 1850 as the emigrants disembark in New York City. Their journey to a new home in Minnesota Territory takes them by riverboat, steam wagon, Great Lakes steamship, and ox-cart to Chicago County.

**The Settlers - Book 3** focuses on Karl Oskar and Kristina as they adapt to their new home-

land and struggle to survive on their new farm.

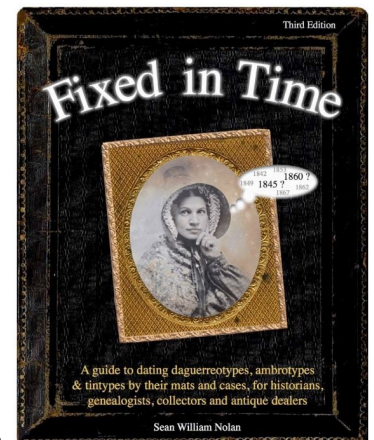
**The Last Letter Home - Book 4** portrays the Nilsson family during the turmoil of living through the era of the Civil War and Dakota Conflict and their prospering in the midst of Minnesota's growing Swedish community of the 1860s-90s.

## Fixed in Time

Sean William Nolan

*Fixed in Time* is a guide to dating Civil War era and earlier photographs by their mats and cases, for historians, genealogists, collectors and antique dealers. It is available as a free PDF or as a print-on-demand book.

*Fixed in Time* illustrates a thousand daguerreotype, ambrotype or tintype mat and case styles, each dated according to the years they were used. Some mats and cases were used for only a brief time, allowing you to date some early photographs to within a year. The dates provided are based on my own research, a five-year labor of love, where I located nearly 5,000 objectively dated early photographs. You can get 'Fixed in Time' at <https://fixedintimebook.blogspot.com/> For the free PDF file click [HERE](#)



My free guide to dating early photographs is has recently been updated and corrected. If you already have a printed copy, please pick up the one page errata sheet of corrections, found at the above link. If you have the free PDF, you can pick up an updated copy.

This book would not have been possible without the assistance of the many institutions, collectors and antique dealers who shared their expertise and their dated images, provided illustrations, and made many suggestions and corrections. Thank you, all.

Sean William Nolan

## Upcoming Regional Event

**Wednesday, June 12, 2019 - 2:00pm to 4:00pm, The New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at Richard Gilder Way (77th Street), New York, NY 10024**

Explore New York history and discover techniques to find your own family's history. The New-York Historical Society and the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society invite you to attend a joint program that explores both New York's history and family history research.

In this program you will learn some historical context and then learn skills to improve your family history exploration—all in one afternoon.

2:00 - 2:30 pm: A museum docent leads your tour to discover family histories told through extraordinary and everyday objects from the New-York Historical Society's collection.

2:30 - 3:00 pm: Learn how to conduct genealogical research in the special collections at the Patricia D. Klingenstein Library at New-York Historical Society. Guided by an experienced reference librarian, learn about the vast collections at their esteemed research library as well as how to register and conduct research of your own and how to locate and contextualize primary and secondary resources.

3:00- - 4:00 pm: You've gotten inspired by New York history and learned how and where to research—so what's next? In the family history experience you learn 10 essential steps to discover your family's story from a New York Genealogical and Biographical Society expert.

This experience is ideal for those who are just starting their own research. Tickets are \$50 per person, and \$40 for N-YHS members.

Registration required in advance. [Click Here](#)

## Tips

Enumerators can make mistakes! In the 1920 Federal Census, Anna Fratangelo is listed with her husband James Perillo. She is actually married to Vincenzo Fratangelo, who is not recorded in the census. Other documentation shows the Fratangelo family in the same place at about the same time. James Perillo was listed as "Head" of family 2. Anna was then listed originally as "Head" but changed to "Wife." Mistakes in her surname, (Tratangelo,) her age, (off by 10 years) and naturalization as (unknown,) indicate that the data was supplied by someone else. There are other slip-ups on the page. It looks like the enumerator may have stepped out to lunch mid-family and resumed at the next family.

			Continued															
191	4268	Perillo	Stephen	Head	18	M	W	44	M	1904	Al							
			Rose	Wife		F	W	34	M	1901	Al							
			Louis	Son		M	W	18	S	1904	Al							
			Caroline	Daughter		F	W	13	S									
			Lilla	"		F	W	12	S									
			Anna	Son		M	W	10	S									
191	69	James	Head	20	18	M	W	33	M	1904	Al							
		Anna	Wife	18	18	F	W	39	M	1904	Al							
		Grace	Daughter			F	W	7	S									
		Rose	Son			F	W	6	S									
191	4370	Perillo	James	"		F	W	2	S									
191	701	Perillo	Antonio	Head	18	M	W	61	M	1844	Al							

## Tree Trivia

1. How many immigrants came to the U.S. between 1824 and 1924?
2. What does "P.O.E." stand for?
3. What does the Latin term "materfamilias" mean?
4. How many immigrants came through Ellis Island?

Answers on pg. 8

## Join Us!

**For the third annual MGS Social Wednesday, June 12, 2019  
Clubhouse Grille at the Oak Hills Golf Club, 165 Fillow St. West Norwalk, CT.  
6:00 to 8:30 PM See <http://mgs.darien.org/> for details.**

## LEAVE THEM SMILING



1. More than 34 million people immigrated to the United States between 1824 and 1924.
2. P.O.E. stands for Port of Entry. To learn more abbreviations that you might come across in your research, see [Abbreviations Found in Genealogy](#).
3. Some older family records might contain Latin terms like "materfamilias," which means the female head of the household.
4. Between 1892 and 1924, the peak years of immigration to the United States, 22 million immigrants entered the country through Ellis Island and the Port of New York.

### Tree Trivia Answers

**2019  
OCTOBER 5,  
NEXT MEETING**

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