

GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF VERMONT

NEWSLETTER

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August 1999 Whole No. 23

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dates to remember

Saturday, October 9, 1999

Genealogical Society of Vermont meeting The Inn at Essex 70 Essex Way Essex Junction, Vermont

Registration and refreshments starting at 9:30 a.m. Business meeting will convene about 10:00 a.m. Three speakers are planned on areas of interest to Vermont family historians, among them Marcus McCorison, retired director of the American Antiquarian Society library and leading expert on the history of printing in Vermont. Registration fee \$13.00 for GSV members, \$15.00 for non-members. A registration form is enclosed. A post card with more details will be in your mail later as the date approaches. Plan now to enjoy peak fall color season at one of Vermont's outstanding meeting places and take advantage of an excellent GSV program.

May 31 - June 4, 2000

New England Regional Genealogical Conference, combined with National Genealogical Society conference, Providence, Rhode Island. Thanks to the GSV members who have volunteered to spend some time helping out at this large and ambitious conference. More information and registration materials will be mailed to all members in due course.

Tentative dates for GSV meetings in 2000 are **May 6** and **October 21**. We will keep you informed.

Town Clerk of the Year award

We eagerly solicit nominations for the GSV Town Clerk of the Year award. Have you encountered a Vermont town clerk who went out of his or her way to accommodate the needs and peculiarities

of genealogists? Tell us about it by August. The award is announced at the Vermont Municipal Clerks Association meeting on September 20.

Volunteers needed: Webmaster and Correspondence Assistant

Can you spare a little time to help with two important GSV activities?

Webmaster - Coordinates the GSV Web Page. So far, our Web Page has been used to announce Society activities, show the Contents page of the current issue of *Vermont Genealogy*, and provide links to other useful Web information. We'd like to include other sections, such as the indexes to recent volumes of *Vermont Genealogy*, queries submitted to *Vermont Genealogy* by members, and many other possibilities. We need someone with a little bit of time and talent and some imagination to make our Web Page into something spectacular.

Correspondence Assistant - We get mail - lots of it at times. Much of it can be responded to quickly with a copy of our Society brochure or a letter telling how to find professional genealogical assistance in Vermont. Some communications take a little more effort. A member or two with some time, a few writing skills, a little knowledge of the Vermont scene (although we can help with that), and preferably e-mail capabilities could help GSV officers out a lot by handling some of the correspondence that comes in. In the process you would help members and others who write in and might very well discover someone with common interests, something we always enjoy doing.

As I write this, I anticipate meeting with GSV members in Anchorage, Alaska in a couple of weeks for an informal discussion of what is happening in Vermont. I can't offer to travel to every spot in the country where GSV members live, but I am certainly reminded of how widespread interest in Vermont family history is

GREAT MIGRATION DIARY

by Melinde Lutz Sanborn, F.A.S.G.

In 1849, two hundred years after the Middlesex County [MA] court opened its doors, Thomas B. Wyman felt the urge to gather materials for a genealogical history of Charlestown, Massachusetts. An admirer of symmetry, he no doubt appreciated his two-century perspective and hit on a system of abstracting useful genealogical data. Two modest bound volumes in his jagged, analytical hand grace the shelves of the NEHGS manuscript collection, entitled simply "Abstract of Middlesex Court Files from 1649."

Nothing to get excited about, you say? Au contraire! Almost 150 years after Wyman began his task, his fading ink on darkening brown pages is too frequently all that remains of bickering neighbors, debtors, drunkards, thieves, rapists, opportunists, and fornicators. Good riddance, you say? Perhaps, but consider, each of these cases required someone to bring charges, witnesses to the deeds, and a jury or judge to hear them. The wealth of material in such a system is unequalled by anything but probate records for genealogical information.

Like most NEHGS genealogists, I started with Wyman's abstracts, and assumed that

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News, articles and comments should be mailed to:

Mrs. Margaret R. Jenks 24 Mettowee Street Granville, NY 12832-1037 (518) 642-1894 e-mail: mjenks@capital.net

Deadlines for information are: Dec. 15, Mar. 15, June 15 & Sept. 15 for the February, May, August and November issues of the *Newsletter*. when I was ready to check the original materials they would be at the Middlesex courthouse waiting for me. Little did I know.

In the WPA era, the original papers were "arranged" and folio numbers assigned. The same WPA folks found the old handwriting so challenging that they wrote what they thought was the subject of each case on a scrap of paper and inserted it with the original. In 1974, when the Family History Library microfilmed these papers, the scraps were filmed as well, often nowhere near the originals they tried to describe. Worse, many of the names on these supposedly helpful scraps were read incorrectly. The resulting jumble has always been tough to decipher.

The real records, written on everything from jagged strips to enormous sheets, resided casually in the courthouse until the last decade, when they were transferred to the Massachusetts Archives. Now, what survives rests in long rows of Hollinger boxes in acid-free folders, carefully numbered and in climate-controlled storage. Mercifully, someone has removed the scribbled descriptions.

I remember using the originals at the courthouse in the 1970s. The supervision was poor, and an appalling number of items walked away. I never realized how many until I needed them.

Armed with Wyman's abstracts as a guide, I searched the microfilm fruitlessly for several items from the 1650s that would clinch the identification of people like Hannah (Cutler) Coller (see *NEXUS* 15 [1998]:202=3). It was right in Wyman, so why couldn't I find it? Finally, I bought a copy of the film so that I could look at it in a more leisurely manner. Still no luck.

This summer, judicial archivist Libby Bouvier kindly rolled out a cartful of Hollinger boxes and turned me loose on the originals and I realized just how bad the situation had become. Even between the 1974 filming and the 1990s transfer to the Archives, many originals had disappeared. I searched enough to be sure that it was not simply a matter of rearrangement. The papers were gone.

Frustrated again, I had been reading the court minute book, which lacked the

genealogical minutiae we all crave, when a chance conversation with former NEHGS Trustee Robert H. Rodgers alerted me to a new source. Robert, in the final throes of proofing the forthcoming Probate Records of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, 1649-1660, was planning a trip to Harvard University Law Library, to see a selection of Middlesex Court papers photostatted in the 1930s. Flabbergasted, I invited myself along. Intrigued, Bob Anderson invited himself along. If the Special Collections librarians were surprised that Professor Rodgers was actually three people, they hid it well. We were courteously introduced to both the negative and positive photostats of volume after volume of court papers, in which I found Hannah Coller's deposition along with a half-dozen long-sought items now missing in the original.

In the spirit of cooperation, the Special Collections librarians were more than willing to allow Professor Rodgers to pay for a master microfilming of the photostats. They were also happy to accept my check for three copies of the film, one for [the forthcoming] Great Migration [second series], one for the Massachusetts archives, one for me.

Are all the records Wyman saw among the photostats? No. Even prior to 1937, originals had disappeared. I've had the film for a week now and I keep hoping to see a pattern in what's gone. Was someone lifting all the papers pertaining to Concord...or all the signatures of Samuel Adams... or bowdlerizing all the cases of infanticide...or collecting all the witchcraft items? So far, I haven't figured it out, but I'll let you know when I do.

Editor's note: Let this be a lesson to all of us when using original records. Also, lets get all the originals preserved on film before more are lost.

NEHGS *NEXUS*, Vol. XVI, No. 1, p. 32, permission to reprint granted by Scott C. Steward, editor.

BOOK REVIEW POLICY

Books for review should be sent to John A. Leppman, 29 Oak Hill Terrace, Bellows Falls, VT 05101

Branches and Twigs Indexing Project Update

by Bob Murphy

Progress on this project since my last report has been terrific. As of May 30, 1999, 64 issues of Branches & Twigs (out of a total of 96) have been indexed, bringing us to just over the 60% complete mark. At an average rate of 10 issues per month, the indexing should be finished by the end of September. Actual assembly and editing of the complete document will then begin, with the merging of 96 separate computer files, a task that I anticipate with some trepidation. The final product will also include a separate index to the Ancestry Service (Apple Orchard feature) and a complete title/author index to book reviews

Some statistics: Of issues checked to date, there is an average of 1933 index entries per issue, or a total of 114,045 entries. Individual issues have ranged from 479 to 3635 entries.

Some have observed that when the index is published, there may be a demand for reissue of the entire *Branches and Twigs* series. Only limited numbers of issues are currently available in printed form. It has been suggested that publishing the entire series on a computer CD should be considered. This has been discussed by the Publications Committee but a decision at this time has not been made.

FAMILY REUNIONS

Announcements of family reunions must be received by the editor no later than March 15 each year to be included in the May Newsletter. Be sure to include date, place, name & address of contact person. Announcements received after March 15 will used in the August Newsletter if they are for reunions held after September 1.

The Sikes/Sykes Families Association Annual Reunion will be held September 17, 18, & 19, 1999 in Dorset, Vermont. Descendants of Richard and Phebe Sikes will use the Barrows House as our meeting place. Contact Art Sikes, 1175 River Blvd., Suffield, CT 06078-1416, (860) 668-0414 or e-mail: ArtSikes@aol.com.

Town Name Change

As of 27 April 1999 the Town of Sherburne, Rutland County, Vermont has reverted to the name Killington which it had from its charter in 1761 until November 4, 1800. The post office has retained the Killington name all these years.

The town is very mountainous with 4,380 foot Mount Killington on the Mendon town line and Pico Peak, 3,917 feet, beside Mt. Killington. Settlement began in 1785. The town was not organized until 1794. Because of the mountains, lumbering, dairy farming and maple sugar were the major industries. Today it's skiing.

New Library

It has been announced in the *Rutland Herald* that a branch Family History Library has been opened on North Shrewsbury Road in North Clarendon, Rutland County, Vermont. There is a stop light at the corner of Route 7 and North Shrewsbury road.

The hours are: Thursday and Friday 6:30-9:00 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m.-12 noon, Phone 802-773-8346.

Vermont Families in 1791 Project Update

See the May 1999 issue and contact Scott Andrew Bartley, Vermont Families Project, 258 Shawmut Ave. #4, Boston MA 02118-2143, e-mail: SoEndDrew@aol.com.

A REMINDER

Please look at your address label. Your membership expires on the date shown on the label. Send your check in US funds to:

Genealogical Society of Vermont,

PO Box 1553

Saint Albans, VT 05478-1006

Dues are \$20 for US addresses Canada and Mexico \$25, foreign \$30

For the latest information on meetings and GSV, visit us on our Internet home-page at: http://ourworld.compuserve.com/home pages/induni_n_j.

ARE YOU MOVING? REPLACEMENT COPIES

Please notify the Society in advance of any address changes (including summer and winter addresses). Your copies of *Vermont Genealogy* and *The GSV Newsletter* are forwarded to you by the Post Office with additional charges to the Society if you have filed a forwarding notice with the Post Office.

We will send you replacement copies of *Vermont Genealogy* by first class mail for a small replacement fee of \$3.25 for each issue. Replacement copies of *The GSV Newsletter* will be forwarded at no charge. Thank you for letting us know of any address changes in advance. This helps keep costs down.

Janet Induni, Treasurer

B & T BACK ISSUES

Each issue is \$2 (including postage). Currently available are: Volumes 12:5; 14:1,3,4; 15:3; 16:1-2, 18:1,2,3; 19:4; 20:1-4; 21:1-4; 22:2,3,4; 24:1-4.

VG BACK ISSUES

Each issue is \$5 (including postage). Currently available are: Volumes 1:1-4; 2:1-4, 3:1-4

Your checks should be payable to GSV and sent to: GSV Back Issues, PO Box 1553, St. Albans, VT 05478-1006.

Contributions to the Computer Fund Harmon Remmel 252

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Please send your donations to GSV, P.O. Box 1553, St. Albans, VT. 05478-1006, Please mark your check "Permanent Fund" or "Computer Fund."

Janet Induni, Treasurer

MEETINGS

NEHGS GETTING STARTED

This program is offered the first Wednesday of every month from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at 101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA.

This free program gives an introduction to NEHGS, its services and ways to help you find your family roots. Tips on how to begin your own family research, tour of the newly renovated library and a chance to meet the library staff. No registration is required.

NEHGS IRISH GENEALOGICAL CONFERENCE

September 17 and 18, 1999 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

NEHGS is hosting this conference held at Lombardo's in Randolph, Massachusetts. The conference will feature nineteen lectures specifically on Irish genealogical topics. Participants may register for either day, with or without meals.

NEHGS COMPUTER RESOURCES FOR GENEALOGISTS

September 24 or 25, 1999 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

This seminar is designed to introduce and expand your knowledge of the many resources available to the family historian. Lecture topics include *Electronic Sources* for Genealogists and Effective Searching on the Net.

GENEALOGY 101 AT 101 Newbury Street

LEARN HOW TO PROVE YOU'RE THE RIGHTFUL HEIR TO THE ESTATE OF A

BEVERLY HILLS BILLIONAIRE!

(Or just the lucky recipient of your late Uncle Fred's prize tractor) October 7, 14, 21, and 28, 1999 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. NEHGS Library, Boston, MA

This course, taught by Marcia Melnyk, focuses on how-to methods and concentrates on using NEHGS holdings and accessing data at other repositories. Topics covered include: Getting Organized, Oral Histories & Home Sources; Library

Sources; Vital Records; Probate & Land Records, and Census and City Records.

NEHGS RESEARCH TOUR TO SALT LAKE CITY

14-21 November 1999

A week of research at the Family History Library. Orientation, lectures by NEHGS staff, ample research time, personal consultations.

Pre-registration required for the above programs. Contact: The New England Historic Genealogical Society, 101 Newbury St., Boston, MA Education Department at (888) 286-3447 or (617) 536-5740 Ext. 202. Or visit the Web Site at www.nehgs.org.

WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS -GATEWAY TO THE WEST

This seminar, sponsored by the Berkshire Family History Association, Inc., will be held Saturday 2 Oct. 1999, at Quality Inn, Routes 7 & 20, Lenox, MA.

Topics to be covered include: Dissecting a Document - Abstracting Versus Transcribing, by Marcia Melnyk; Nineteenth & Twentieth Century Immigration, by Michael LeClerc; Creating a Comprehensive Biography of a Colonial Ancestor, by David F. Stoddard; Beyond Probate -Family History & Other Court Records, by John D. Austin; and Home Sources for Family History Research, by Arthur Sniffen.

For additional information, write to Berkshire Family History Assn., P.O. Box 1437, Pittsfield, MA 01202-1437; (413) 445-5521; e-mail: bfha@berkshire.net or http://www.berkshire.net/~bfha/index.htm

FALL VOCA MEETING

The fall meeting of the Vermont Old Cemetery Association is planned for Fairfield, VT on October 2, 1999. The spring meeting will be held in Williamstown, Vermont on May 6, 2000.

VOCA grants funds for repairing old cemeteries. This year the grants are \$500 to be matched with volunteers or money.

Workshops may be scheduled to teach grave stone repair. Please visit VOCA's web page at: http://homepages.together. net/~btrutor/voca/vocahome.htm.

THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF VERMONT WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW AND REINSTATED MEMBERS:

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PAID ADVERTISING

The Newsletter is now accepting paid advertising at the rate of \$3.00 per column inch. All advertising must relate to genealogy, preferably Vermont genealogy, and must be received before the deadline of the issue the ad is to appear in. Checks must be made out to GSV but sent to the Newsletter editor along with the exact wording for the ad. GSV offers no warranty on the services of the advertisers.

Registration for GSV Fall 1999 Annual Meeting

at the Inn at Essex, Essex Jct., VT

| Name |
|--|
| Membership Number |
| Mailing Address: |
| I am/we are members of () GSV and/or ()Non-members and will be attending the October 9, 1999 meeting. Enclosed please find a check for the meeting and luncheon: \$13 for GSV members (\$15 for non-GSV members); made out to GSV and marked "Fall Meeting" for person/people in the amount of \$ |

Mail this coupon and your check, postmarked by October 4, 1999, to: Genealogical Society of Vermont, PO Box 1553, St. Albans, VT 05478-1006

VERMONT FAMILIES IN 1791, Volume 1

Edited by Scott A. Bartley

This award-winning first volume of a projected long series has stimulated research and guided many people to sources useful to establish their own ancestry. The goal of this series is to describe in detail the families listed in the First Federal Census taken in Vermont in 1791, the year Vermont joined the Union. Special Publication No. 1, 1992. xxvii + 281 pp.

Volume 2

Edited by Scott A. Bartley

This volume covers 107 families and has improved formatting and more complete information of the third generation. Special Publication No. 5, 1997. xlviii + 304 pp.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

The directory lists addresses & interests of a majority of GSV members. Published for GSV members only. \$3.00 from our post office box address.

VITAL RECORDS OF PUTNEY, VERMONT TO THE YEAR 1900

Compiled and edited by Ken Stevens

This is not just a verbatim listing of such events, but a complete, concise and accurate compilation from all primary sources available in the town. This material is augmented by the ministerial records of the pastors who served from as early as 1776. Special Publication No. 2, 1992. x + 406 pp.

GEORGIA, VERMONT VITAL RECORDS

Edited by Peter S. Mallett

The first of its kind for northern Vermont, this volume presents all births, baptisms, marriages, deaths and burials recorded in the town. All the civil books were transcribed as well as the records from the Georgia Plains Baptist Church, Congregational Church, Emmanuel Episcopal Church, and Methodist Church of Georgia and North Fairfax. GSV Special Publication No. 4, 1995.

VITAL RECORDS OF ROCKINGHAM, VERMONT AND THE RECORDS OF THE FIRST CHURCH OF ROCKINGHAM

Reprinted from the rare first editions of 1908 and 1902, this is an important source for one of Vermont's oldest towns, chartered in 1752. The town records extend to 1845, church records from 1773 to 1839. New to this publication is an indispensable index of nearly 10,000 names, constructed by Christopher T. Norris and Scott A. Bartley. GSV Special Publication No. 3, 1994. 323 pp.

Each of these five books is \$30.00. Please add \$3.50 for postage for the first book, \$1.00 for each additional book in the same order to the same address. Please add the Vermont Sales Tax of 5% (\$1.50/book) for books mailed to a Vermont address. Mail your checks, payable to GSV, to:

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