

SIMSBURY

Genealogical and Historical Research Library

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The Simsbury Free Library

The Original Trustees: Part 3

Amos Richards Eno, founding benefactor of the Simsbury Free Library, was the son of Salmon Eno, a Simsbury native and a member of the fifth generation of Enos in the New World. As a young man, Salmon Eno studied under the town's Congregational minister, Rev. Samuel Stebbins.¹ Then he became a schoolteacher in the part of Berlin, Connecticut, that is now New Britain, his mother's birthplace.² There he met Mary "Polly" Richards. They married when she was almost twenty and he was twenty-six. Salmon brought Polly home to Simsbury and began to farm.³

Salmon Eno had been elected a freeman in Simsbury in 1801 and through the years he served in many town offices: surveyor of highways (who made sure that an assigned stretch of dirt road was maintained and passable), lister (who drew up a part of the tax list), fence viewer (who made sure that crops in his assigned area were fenced in and foraging animals out), grandjuror (who assisted the selectmen and constables with maintaining proper behavior among the citizens), assessor, school visitor, member of the board of tax relief and, in 1829 through 1831, selectman. A Whig politically, he and Horace Belden, father of library trustee Horace Belden, were elected to represent Simsbury in the General Assembly in 1835. He also held various offices in the Congregational Church, where both he and Polly were members.⁴

At first Salmon and Polly Eno lived in the old Colton house, where all but the youngest of their six children were probably born.⁵ The area was called Westover Plain at that time, but after the coming of the railroad in 1871 it became known as Hoskins Station.⁶ In 1818 the Enos moved a mile southward to the house built by Joseph Humphrey.⁷ Polly Eno was fond of writing poems and in one she said of the land in Simsbury:

*It was easy to plow, it was easy to reap;
It was easy to gather your grain in a heap;
It was easy to carry the grain to the mill,
And to get the grist home, that was easier still.⁸*

However, after living in Simsbury almost forty years – her "forty years in the wilderness" she often was heard to say – Polly and Salmon Eno moved to the farm in New Britain that she had inherited in 1831 from cabinet maker Aaron Roberts, her adoptive father.⁹ They both died in New Britain, Solomon Eno in 1842 and Polly Eno in 1883. They are both buried in Simsbury Cemetery.¹⁰

Of Salmon and Polly (Richards) Eno's six children, Amos Richards Eno was clearly the most successful financially. His start at age sixteen as a clerk in a Hartford dry goods store and his rise to a multimillionaire real estate investor in New York City is a well-known part of Simsbury's history. He seems to have been particularly close to his brother Salmon Chester Eno, who was younger by almost four years.

Chester Eno, as he was known, was educated at the Westover District School and in Elijah Garritt's School in New Britain. Three months as a clerk for his brother Amos in New York convinced him he would rather be a farmer.¹¹ He took over the family farm in Simsbury and, like his father, he held many town offices: assessor, member of the board of relief, constable and more. In 1848 he was also elected to represent the town in the General Assembly. Politically he was at first a Whig, then for a short time he was associated with the Know-Nothing or Native American organization before becoming a Republican.¹²

In 1845, when he was thirty-one, Chester Eno married a Simsbury girl, Sarah Cornelia Goodwin, 21, and they had four children.¹³ Sarah Goodwin Eno was also descended from James Eno, the progenitor of the family in America. Her sister Harriet was married to her husband's cousin, Chauncey Evelyn Eno. Chester and Sarah lived on the old homestead. The 1860 Federal Agricultural Census reveals that of the 203 farms enumerated in Simsbury there were probably only four or five more valuable than Chester Eno's.¹⁴

When appointing the ten trustees of the Simsbury Free Library in 1874, Amos Richards Eno named his oldest son, Amos F. Eno, and his brother Chester Eno's sons Aaron Lewis Eno and George Chester Eno. The latter two are featured in this article. They both were born in Simsbury and lived out their lives here as farmers. Aaron was the first born and George was the last, Aaron being eight years older than George. Their brother, Charles Goodwin Eno, moved to Kansas as a young man and raised a family there. Their sister, Sarah Cornelia "Nellie" Eno, who never had children, moved to New Britain after marrying Charles J. Parker, a shirt manufacturer.¹⁵

Aaron Lewis Eno (1846-1908)

Aaron Lewis Eno was undoubtedly educated in a Simsbury district school. When he was twenty-three he was recorded in the 1870 Federal census as living on his parents' farm and working as a farm laborer. He married seventeen-year-old Harriette Humphrey Phelps, who was called "Hattie," on February 12, 1874. She was the daughter of Jeffrey Orson and Jane (Humphrey) Phelps. Her brother Jeffrey Orson Phelps Jr. was married to another Eno descendant, Bertha Adams.¹⁶

So Aaron Lewis Eno was a newly married man when his uncle, Amos R. Eno, tapped him to be one of the original trustees of the Simsbury Free Library. He would remain on the board for thirty-four years. His first assignment was to procure some hitching posts to be placed in front of the Hopmeadow District School, where the library occupied the second floor. He served as vice president of the board in 1876 and '77. Then there was a lapse in his duties until 1890 when he commenced to serve as librarian, remaining in that supervisory post until 1907.¹⁷

This lapse might be explained by the arrival of three children and a move out of town. Aaron and Harriette Eno's first child, Jane Humphrey Eno, was born in June 1875. According to her grandson Newbold LeRoy, Aaron and Harriette Eno moved to a farm in East Granby about 1876. Mr. LeRoy writes that the farm was "about half a mile south of Newgate prison at the bottom of the hill on



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Newgate Road leading to the prison” When their second child was close to term, Harriette Eno came back to Simsbury because she did not want it born “way up there” in East Granby. So, Sarah Goodwin Eno, called “Sadie,” was born in January 1877 in the house that is now the parsonage for the Simsbury United Methodist Church.¹⁸ The couple’s last child, Harry Phelps Eno, was born in June 1879, on the farm in East Granby.

The 1880 Federal agricultural census lists Aaron Lewis Eno’s farm near Newgate Prison. It had twenty acres of tilled land, 110 acres of land in permanent meadows, pastures or apple orchards and forty acres of woodland and forest. The farm, including land, fences and building was valued at \$6,000; his farm implements and machinery, \$250; and livestock, \$800. He had four horses, two working oxen, seven cows, two other cattle and two swine. He had made 700 pounds of butter on the farm the year before and collected 200 eggs. He grew hay, Indian corn, Irish potatoes and on two acres planted with tobacco, produced 2,800 pounds. He had used farm labor for fifty-two weeks in the previous year, paying \$300 in wages.¹⁹

The Chester Enos built a new house for themselves about a block south of the farmhouse sometime before 1882 and Aaron Eno and his family moved back to the old homestead and took over the running of his father’s farm.²⁰ Aaron Eno later inherited “the Home Farm” from his father.²¹ Buell B. Bassette wrote of spending the summers of 1882 and ’83 with his grandparents in the new house and going to play with his cousins on the home farm. The home farm included the present neighborhoods of Winterset Lane, Somerset Lane and Owens Place and stretched east of Hopmeadow Street. Mr. Bassette wrote in 1920 that “the spacious farmhouse and barns and the wonderful production of those broad meadows on the Farmington River were a constant wonder even to untrained eyes. The house faces Main Street while 100 feet behind ran the old canal.”²²

Charlotte Bidwell Bacon pointed out recently that the canal bed was located behind a saw mill and that the railroad crossed the farm. She said that the boys from Westminster School used to skate on the farm pond and that there was an ice house. The barns burned down in the 1960s, she said. The portrait that she has of her great-grandfather Aaron Lewis Eno shows that he had blue eyes.²³

In 1890 Aaron Eno became the librarian of the Simsbury Free Library, just in time to settle into the new building that his uncle had built for it. By this time, the trustees had hired Miss Eliza J. McRoy to tend to the day-to-day business of running the library, advising the patrons and charging out the books.²⁴ The trustees’ minutes reveal that in 1890 Librarian Aaron Eno was authorized to employ someone “to keep the building and grounds in good style” and to purchase a bulletin board so that the names of newly acquired books could be posted on it. The next year the trustees decided that the matter of library cards and the drawing of books should be left to Librarian Eno and that no one under the age of ten should be allowed to draw books under his own name.

By 1894 they wanted him to provide additional shelf room. According to a report to the American Library Association, the 20x48 foot book room was originally fitted with wall cases for books, with alcoves to be added later. The maximum capacity of the room, the report said, was 8,000 books.²⁵

Aaron Lewis Eno died on September 24, 1908 at age sixty-one. His obituary in the *Farmington Valley Herald* said, “He was a very successful farmer and was of a kind, genial disposition that made him friends of all that knew him. He will be particularly missed by the young with whom he had a faculty for getting along in a remarkable degree.”²⁶ The trustees appointed Joseph R. Ensign to his seat.

George Chester Eno (1854-1935)

George Chester Eno, Aaron Eno's younger brother, was not quite twenty years old in August 1874 when his uncle Amos R. Eno appointed him to the Simsbury Free Library's Board of Trustees. He had been educated at the Hop Meadow District School, the high school in New Britain, the Gunnery School in Washington, Connecticut, and he would graduate in the Class of 1875 from Hartford High School.²⁷ His future wife, Miss Nellie Selina Goodrich of Simsbury, graduated with him.²⁸ They married three years later and lived on the home farm for a time until they moved to the farm known as the Moses Ensign Place, which he bought in 1894 from his wife's widowed mother, Martha Abigail (Ensign) Goodrich.²⁹ Mrs. Goodrich and her daughter Juliette lived there with them for a few years.³⁰

One biographer said of George Eno, "For fourteen years he was in the United States railway mail service, between New Haven and Williamsburg, and Springfield and New York City. In 1889 he negotiated for the right of way for the Central New England & Western railroad between Tariffville and the Massachusetts State line. At present [1901] he is extensively engaged in general farming and tobacco culture, and is a licensed dealer in leaf tobacco, while he also represents some of the best insurance companies in the country."³¹ He was a notary public and his brother Aaron was a justice of the peace, as was trustee Alonzo G. Case.³²

The George Chester Enos had three daughters, Amy Bird (1881-1903), who never married; Alice Goodrich (1883-1942); who married Richard Huntington Cole, a vice-president of the Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, and lived in Hartford; and Margaret (1889-1961), who married Dr. Karlton Goodsell Percy and lived in Brookline, Massachusetts.³³

George Chester Eno became the longest serving member of the Simsbury Free Library board. When he died at the age of eighty he had been on the board over sixty years. His first position was librarian and he was appointed to that post almost consecutively until his brother Aaron became the librarian in 1890. He was the board's secretary for a year and served on the book committee for several years. While the library was still in the second floor of the Hop Meadow District School he was authorized to procure rubber buttons to be placed on chair legs. He also purchased a new stove and an oil tank and burner.³⁴

There was a period from the late 1880s until 1918 when Mr. Eno continued on the board, but held no office. Then he became vice president in 1918 and continued in that position until the time of his death in 1935. He was elevated to first vice president when the post of second vice president was created in 1928.

Mr. Eno resumed the post of librarian in 1920, replacing Horace Belden who had resigned. As soon as he became librarian, Mr. Eno presented the board with a letter "showing some needs of the library in way of toilet accommodations, more room for books, shingling, possible home for librarian, etc."³⁵ The second story of the library had been built with the idea that it would someday be used to house a librarian, but it was never used for that purpose. Neither was it considered for library purposes during George C. Eno's lifetime. In the 1920s the upstairs was modified to accommodate the Simsbury Historical Society and the Board of Education, both of which rented their rooms from the Simsbury Free Library board.

Apparently Mr. Eno's letter was mailed to several other members of the extended Eno family and eventually Mrs. Antoinette Eno Wood agreed to underwrite the building of a one-story addition to the rear of the original library building, which had been donated by her father, the late Amos R. Eno.

The addition, designed by the Hartford architectural firm of Smith & Bassett, was completed in 1824. Mrs. Wood also donated many items for the interior decoration of the library.³⁶

In addition to proposing the idea of the addition, which was moved forward by President Alexander T. Pattison and other members of the board, Mr. Eno oversaw the opening a branch library in the Tariffville School. He was aided in both these projects by Miss Julia Pattison, who had become *de facto* librarian some time before 1920. When he decided to resign as librarian in 1928, he advised the board to change the title of the post to supervising trustee. This was done and Chester D. Thompson was elected to replace Mr. Eno.

George Chester Eno remained first vice president of the board of trustees until his death on April 26, 1935. His long and eventful tenure was marked by a resolution written by the board and Mrs. Oliver D. Tuller (Theona Holcomb Tuller) was appointed to replace him.³⁷

By Mary Jane Springman

Notes

1. *Commemorative Biographical Record of Hartford County* (Chicago: J.H. Beers & Co., 1901), 671.
2. Douglas C. Richardson, *The Eno and Enos Family in America: Descendants of James Eno of Windsor, Conn.* (Sacramento, Calif: by the author, 1973), 112, 255. In 1785 the town of Berlin separated from the town of Farmington. Berlin comprised three parishes: Worthington, Kensington and New Britain. In 1850 New Britain was made a separate town. See *New Britain, Connecticut, 1850-1950* (New Britain: Centennial Committee, 1950), 12, 17.
3. Buell Burdell Bassette, *One Bassett Family in America....* (New Britain: n.p., 1926), 267.
4. *Ibid.*, 267-70. *Commemorative Biographical Record*, 671.
5. Henry Lane Eno, *The Eno Family in America*, (n.p.: Princeton University Press, 1920), 26. Abigail Eno Ellsworth says on page 81 of her book *A Record of the History of Some of the Old Homes of Simsbury* (Simsbury: Abigail Phelps Chapter DAR, 1936) that this house at 1243 Hopmeadow Street was built in 1790 by Eliakim Colton. It is now a part of the Wagner car dealership.
6. The Central New England Railroad went from Hartford into New York State by way of Litchfield County. In Simsbury it ran from Tariffville Station to Hoskins Station to Simsbury Station to Stratton Brook Station, then on to Canton, where the last spike was driven in September 1871. See Gregg M. Turner and Melancthon W. Jacobus, *Connecticut Railroads: An Illustrated History* (Hartford: The Connecticut Historical Society, 1986), 132-34.
7. Abigail Eno Ellsworth, on page 111, says a board found in the house says "Built by Joseph Humphrey 1800." Bassette, on page 267, says the house was built about 1760 but gives no evidence. This house, at 987 Hopmeadow Street next to The Simsbury Bank, contains the Dowling law offices.
8. Bassette, 278.
9. Bassette, 267, 274, 277. He quotes from page 223 of Alfred Andrews, *Genealogy and Ecclesiastical History of New Britain, Connecticut* (Chicago: A.H. Andrews, 1867). He takes the quote "forty years in the wilderness" from her obituary published in the *New Britain Herald* on September 30, 1883.
-10. Joyce A. Cahill, comp., *Simsbury Cemetery Gravestone Inscriptions: Simsbury, Connecticut, 1688-2000, Volume I: The Old Section* (Simsbury: Simsbury Free Library, 2001), 148-49.
11. *Commemorative Biographical Record*, 671-72.
12. *Ibid.*, 672.
13. By the time of his marriage, Chester's older brother Aaron was dead, his brother Amos was married and living in New York City and his three sisters, Emeline, Mary and Lydia Jane had also married and moved away.
14. *Eighth Census of the United States. Original Records of the Assistant Marshals, Agriculture for the year 1860 in Connecticut, "Simsbury,"* 7-8. Microfilm, Connecticut State Library, History and Genealogy Unit.
15. Bassette, 282. Richardson, 269.
16. Richardson, 268.
17. *Original Minute Book of Trustee's Meetings of Simsbury Free Library, 1874-1944* (photocopy), 4-56.
18. Newbold LeRoy III, "Enos From the Early 1400s to the Late 1900s" unpublished manuscript, excerpt supplied electronically April 17, 2007, 8-9.
19. *Tenth Census of the United States, Original Records of the Assistant Marshals, Agriculture for the Year 1880 in Connecticut, "East Granby,"* 11. Connecticut State Library, History and Genealogy Unit.

Family Records From a Bible Donated by Tom Killeen

The family records below are written in a copy of the *Holy Bible* published in New York in 1867 by the American Bible Society.

Marriages

Sylvester Curtiss
 Eveline A. Horton August 25th 1840
 Willis A. Hamlin
 Josephine A. Curtiss Nov 15th 1863
 Washburn G. Mills
 Eliza Eugenic Curtiss Dec 6th 1865
 Waldo L. Curtiss
 Mary E. Camp Aug 20th 1872
 Grosvenor W. Curtis
 Ella C. Birdsey Feby 24th 1875
 Waldo L. Curtiss
 Antoinette M. Root Dec 25th 1878
 Sylvester Curtiss
 Mrs. Julia Wright 1883

Births

Sylvester Curtiss March 5th 1817
 Eveline A. Horton May 8th 1823
 Josephine Adelaide Curtiss Nov 13th 1842

Eliza Eugenia Curtiss Oct 20th 1844
 Waldo Loren Curtiss Dec 1st 1846
 Truman L Curtiss May 11th 1849
 Grovenor Williams Curtiss Feb 22nd 1851
 Ernest L. Hamlin Mar 4th 1865
 Waldo C. Curtis Jan 25th 1875
 Josephine E. Mills Aug 28 1876
 Maud Curtiss Jan 23rd 1880
 Mills Curtis Lanc Dec 1 1908
 William Charles Lane July 28 1911

Deaths

Truman S. Curtiss Died May 24th 1849
 Mary Camp Curtiss Died Feby 5th 1875 Aged 27 yrs
 Willis A. Hamlin Died Jan 30th 1877 Aged 39 yrs
 Eveline Horton Curtis June 15th 1882
 Josephine Hamlin Curtis Died Feb 6th 1885
 Sylvester Curtis Died Mar 7th 1889
 Eliza Eugenic Curtis Died Feb 24, 1914

20. Charlotte Bidwell Bacon recalls that her granduncle, Harry Phelps Eno, Aaron L. Chester Eno's son, used to live in this beautiful Victorian house, which stood about where the Ironhorse Inn is today. Telephone interview, May 10, 2007.

21. Salmon Chester Eno left his son Aaron Lewis Eno "the Home Farm" in his will dated March 21, 1898. The estate was in probate from 1905 to 1909. Far more valuable than the farm were Mr. Eno's shares of New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad stock. Simsbury Probate Records, 26:151; 27:25, 27.

22. Bassette, 267-68, 282.

23. Charlotte Bidwell Bacon interview.

24. Miss McRoy's obituary says that she lived on Hopmeadow Street in the house next to the Methodist parsonage with her brother and sister, Robert McRoy and Miss Carrie McRoy. She attended the Congregational Church. See the *Farmington Valley Herald*, November 21, 1913, 2.

25. *Tenth General Meeting of the American Library Association Held at Saint Louis, May 8-11, 1889* (Boston: Library Bureau, 146 Franklin Street, 1889), 27.

26. Obituary of Aaron L. Eno, *Farmington Valley Herald*, September 25, 1908, 2.

27. *Commemorative Biographical Record*, 681.

28. *Quadrennial Catalogue of the Hartford Public High School, 1904* (Hartford: The Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company, 1905), 78, 79.

29. Abigail Eno Ellsworth, 141. Mrs. George C. Eno was one of four members of the Abigail Phelps Eno DAR who assisted Mrs. Ellsworth with compiling the land records for this invaluable study. The house is at 835 Hopmeadow Street and now is known as the ABC House.

30. 1900 United States Federal Census.

31. *Commemorative Biographical Record*, 681.

32. *Register & Manuel of the State of Connecticut, 1891*, 144, 166; 1900, 187.

33. Richardson, 169-70.

34. *Original Minute Book*, 4-39.

35. *Ibid*, 89.

36. *Ibid*, 97, 112, 115.

37. *Ibid*, 132.

⌘A SIMSBURY ROMANCE⌘

The front page of the *Hartford Courant* of August 10, 1899, announced "A SIMSBURY ROMANCE." The article revealed that just after midnight Mr. Charles P. Case, 29, (son of library trustee Alonzo Grove Case) had come to the newspaper office to place an item in that day's paper announcing his marriage earlier that year to Miss Sarah Goodwin Eno, 22, (daughter of library trustee Aaron Lewis Eno).

Mr. Case had just attended the funeral of Jeffrey Orson Phelps and was on his way back to New York City, where he was a bookkeeper in the Fulton Market. Sensing there was a story to be told, the *Courant* investigated and found that the couple had been engaged for some time, but their marriage plans had been opposed by her parents and especially by her maternal grandfather, the late Jeffrey Orson Phelps. No reason for the opposition was given.

Mr. Phelps's obituary in the *Courant* described him as a "wealthy resident of Simsbury [who was] almost as well-known in [Hartford] as in his native town." It also called him "a farmer and a capitalist." He was a director of the Hartford & Connecticut Western Railroad and had been a director of the National Exchange Bank in Hartford. Simsbury Free Library trustees William H. Whitehead, Horace Belden and George C. Eno were among the six pallbearers at Mr. Phelps's funeral.

The August 10 article said that Miss Eno had paid a visit of some length to friends of the family in South Norwalk, and "it was at this time that she visited New York, and the marriage knot was tied, without the knowledge of a soul in Simsbury." It concluded that Mr. Phelps's death "relieved the young folks of the necessity of further secrecy in the perfectly honorable attachment and they attended the funeral of Mr. Phelps yesterday as recognized affianced lovers. At the same time no one suspected that they were already married and the announcement this morning will come as a genuine surprise to every one in the old town. It will, however, be hailed with considerable satisfaction by relatives and near friends, as Mr. Case is highly thought of and many were desirous of seeing the uniting of two hearts, where opposition had kept them so long apart." Mrs. Case, it said, would soon join her husband and they would make New York their home.

A biographical sketch of Civil War veteran Alonzo Grove Case appeared in the Winter 2006-07 issue of this newsletter. Jeffery O. Phelps's obituary and articles on the secret marriage and the funeral were accessed electronically through Proquest Historical Newspapers Hartford Courant (1764-1922). The site is on iCONN available on the Simsbury Public Library Web site: www.simsburylibrary.info

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★ **Talk on Genealogy Saturday, June 9, 2007, 11:00 a.m. in the Library** ★
★
★ Jean Nudd, Archivist for the National Archives and Records Administration in Pittsfield, ★
★ Massachusetts, will speak on two topics of interest to genealogists and family historians. ★
★ Free and open to the public. See page 8 for details. ★
★ ★★ ★
★ The SGHRL Web site is now online. Learn what's at the library and what's new by ★
★ going to www.sghrl.org ★
★ ★★ ★
★ Have you see the Web site that reports on DNA results for the Humphrey Family? It is at ★
★ <http://humphreygenealogy.com> Many thanks to Tom Sharpless for this information. Michael ★
★ Humphrey and John Griffen were the first settlers of Simsbury. ★
★

Jean Nudd to Talk on Genealogy
Saturday, June 9, 2007
11:00 a.m. in the Library

Jean Nudd, Archivist for the National Archives and Records Administration in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, will return for a third time to our library on June 9 to speak on two topics of interest to genealogists and family historians.

- 11:00 a.m.: **Using Pre-1850 Census to Find Family Relationships**
- 12 Noon: Break. Refreshments will be served.
- 12:30 p.m.: **Using Canadian Border Crossing Records**

There will be a question and answer period after each talk. Advance notice of your intention to attend one or both of the talks would be appreciated.

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