

SIMSBURY

Genealogical and Historical Research Library

Volume 10 Issue 3

Fall 2003

The Connecticut Historical Society's Genealogy Collection

Third of a Three-Part Series on the CHS Collections

Very early in his forty-seven year tenure as Librarian of the Connecticut Historical Society, Albert Carlos Bates had the foresight to recognize the significance of genealogy in the Society's library. In 1893 Bates implemented the purchase of the D. W. Patterson library, thus establishing a core genealogical collection on which the Society has continuously built.

For many years, family historians have comprised at least seventy percent of the Connecticut Historical Society Library's visitation, making genealogical materials the most heavily used portion of the library's collections. For this reason, the reading room is set up for the convenience of genealogical researchers. Standard reference works, census and genealogical indices, military listings, genealogical periodicals, local histories for New England, and family genealogies are on the reading room shelves and can be retrieved for use by the patrons themselves. While the collection focuses on Connecticut, researchers will find that it also includes a very strong Massachusetts section, as well as sections on the other New England states, New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio. The Library also has, in closed stacks, a reasonably good collection of British records, including the Victoria Histories and several series of civil and parish records.

Also available in the reading room are microform collections which include the Barbour Index (Connecticut vital records), the Charles R. Hale Index (Connecticut cemetery inscriptions), the U.S. Federal Census for Connecticut through 1930 (with the Soundex indexes for 1900 and 1920), the Mormon 1880 and '81 census CD-ROM collection, and the Holbrook Collection of Massachusetts vital records. Newspapers on microfilm include the *Hartford Courant* from 1764 through the present (indexed through 1820) and the *Boston Transcript* genealogical columns.

Materials not kept in the reading room can be accessed through a combination of the main card catalog, the new online catalog and the genealogical card catalog. The genealogical card catalog includes family histories catalogued before 1895 and the genealogical manuscript collection.

The most unique aspect of CHS's genealogical collection is the manuscript collection, which is grouped either by town or by surname. While some of it reflects materials already in print, much of the information in its collection is unpublished and represents the work of many compilers.

The town manuscript collection contains abstracts of various materials relating to most of the 169 Connecticut towns. These include abstracts of cemetery inscriptions; probate records; vital, church and land records; town minutes; a few court records; and newspaper marriage and death notices. These records are by no means complete. In most cases, they are limited in scope, in time

frame, and by the interest of the compiler. Anyone wishing to do extensive research in these types of records should go the Connecticut State Library or to the town itself. Nevertheless, patrons often find details in this collection helpful to their research.

The family manuscripts are grouped by surname, and the collections vary in size depending on the number of compilers who worked on any given surname. Surnames for which there are sizable collections include Barnes, Case, Durant, Gillette, Meacham, Parmelee, Royce, Smith, Sykes, Tuller, Waterman and Whittlesey, as well as a prolific "Miscellaneous" family. A standard caveat applies when using this collection: Researchers **MUST** verify the information they find in these manuscripts.

The Library's genealogical manuscript collection is the result of many years of acquisition, and some of the material in the collection has never been superseded by more recent research. (In other words, these manuscripts have never been weeded.) Also, errors in print are often perpetuated through repetition. Because of insufficient documentation, it is not always possible to determine if the source of the compiler's information is original research or something already in print. One other problem stems from the fact that there has been less restriction of public access to this collection than to the historical manuscript collection. Because of this, collections sometimes have been mixed or misfiled by careless patrons.

In spite of these problems, the manuscript collection is a valuable resource that contains some fine original research by some excellent genealogists. The focus is, again, on Connecticut families, but of necessity it branches out to include the rest of New England and, to some degree, parts west. While the entire collection represents the work of many hands, there are some significant contributors to this collection whose work deserves special attention.

Colonial Dames Collection. Between 1894 and 1914, the Manuscript Committee of the Connecticut Society of Colonial Dames undertook the copying of early Connecticut church records. Under the supervision of Mary Kingsbury Talcott, the records of 106 parishes were transcribed and, between 1935 and 1956, were bound and deposited with the Connecticut Historical Society. The 111 volumes of the collection include predominantly Congregational church records dating from 1639 to 1910, plus transcriptions of a few cemeteries.

D.W. Patterson (1824 - 1892). As noted earlier, Albert Carlos Bates was responsible for the Society's acquisition of the library of D. W. Patterson. David Williams Patterson was born in 1824 in Union, New York, and died in 1892 in Newark Valley, Tioga County, New York. In 1865, Dr. Patterson gave up his West Winsted, Connecticut, dental practice, moved to Newark Valley and devoted the rest of his life to genealogical research.

The Connecticut Historical Society purchased his sizable library [from his estate??] for \$5,000. It arrived at the Society on January 23, 1894 "carefully packed in 38 boxes and 2 barrels." The collection included at least 2200 books and pamphlets and a large collection of manuscript material containing transcriptions of church, cemetery, and vital records, plus notes on specific families. In addition, there were three compilations for specific geographical areas: a ten-volume compilation on Tioga County, New York, families; one volume on the Ridgefield, Connecticut, area; and Dr. Patterson's work on East Haddam families. The East Haddam collection was apparently commissioned by Robert E. Day of Hartford, and includes two sets of notebooks. The first includes six volumes and is apparently a first draft or working notes. The second set contains

nine volumes and has a letter to Mr. Day tipped into the first volume. The letter is dated 1888 and it explains the differences between the first and second set of manuscripts, which is helpful to the researcher examining both sets.

William L. Weaver (ca. 1815 - 1866). On February 4, 1896, Thomas S. Weaver of Hartford presented to the Society manuscript genealogies of 144 families of ancient Windham. An article appearing in the *Hartford Courant* the next day stated that these manuscripts were "the research of his father, the late William L. Weaver, who at the time of his death in 1867 was engaged in compiling a history of Windham which was to include the genealogies of the early families as much as possible." The first and only volume of these genealogies (A-Bil.) was published in 1864.

Julius Gay (1834 - 1918). Julius Gay was born in Farmington, Connecticut, in 1834. He was trained in engineering at Yale and worked as a civil engineer for fifteen years before going into banking. He pursued his interest in local history and genealogy on the side, becoming an expert on Farmington history and abstracting records not only from Farmington, but also from all over New England. When he died in 1918, his widow donated his manuscript material to the Connecticut Historical Society.

Included in this collection are about forty volumes of abstracts of vital records, miscellaneous epitaphs, church and bible records, and several volumes of Farmington records (including vital, church and probate abstracts). In addition to these large volumes of abstracts, there are sixty-nine pocket notebooks of cemetery inscriptions copied by Mr. Gay over a period of years. Julius Gay's records of individual families, most of which are early Farmington families, are usually well documented, often from primary sources.

Erastus Ely Case (1847 - 1918). One of the collections for which the Library receives numerous requests is the Case Collection. This is the work of Dr. Erastus Ely Case, a homeopathic physician who, according to Mr. Bates, "had methodically devoted the spare time of a score of years of his busy life" to this endeavor. Apparently through the use of letters and questionnaires sent to Cases all over the country, Dr. Case attempted to trace the descendants of John Case of Simsbury, a large and very complicated family. Unfortunately, the sudden death of Dr. Case in 1918 precluded the completion and publication of his manuscript. The manuscript was given to CHS by Dr. Case's widow, and originally comprised thirty-three typewriter paper boxes of family sheets (each box virtually full), one hollinger box of miscellaneous notes, and two indices, one for given names of Cases, and the other for their marriages.

[Editor's note: A book based on these manuscripts was published by Ruth Cost Duncan while she was a volunteer at CHS. It is for sale at SGHRL.]

Charles Lewis Nichols Camp (1854 - 1922). The work of Charles L. N. Camp of New Haven was purchased by the Society after Mr. Camp's death in 1922. The collection consists of both record abstracts and family data. His genealogical notes cover approximately 1500 families in varying degrees of completeness and, as noted by Mr. Bates, "may be contained on a single page or may, as in the case of the Smith family with its almost 40 branches, cover more than 500 pages." Camp relied heavily on secondary sources, but often included information gathered from primary sources. Secondary sources, though abbreviated, are usually noted at the upper right hand corner of each sheet.

Edna Miner Rogers (1862 - 1933). Some of the best research on New London County families is found in the manuscripts of Mrs. Edna Rogers of Norwich, which were purchased by the Society in 1935. Mrs. Rogers was active in the Colonial Dames, Daughters of the American Revolution and

the Founders of Norwich, serving as registrar of the latter two organizations. She also worked professionally as a genealogist throughout most of her adult life. Her obituary stated, "In her research work along genealogical and historic lines she was most diligent and careful in her endeavor to secure a correct report, always having referred to original sources for her information." Her use of primary sources is clearly evident in the documentation of her research notes. Among her manuscripts are extensive studies of the Edgerton, Rogers, Stevens and Welch families.

Lucius Barnes Barbour (1878 - 1934). Anyone familiar with Connecticut genealogical sources will recognize the name of Lucius Barnes Barbour. Since Barbour served so long as Examiner of Public Records for the State of Connecticut, it sometimes surprises people to find that the Connecticut Historical Society holds an extensive collection of his manuscripts, some of which were deposited by Mr. Barbour himself, and some donated by his family after his death. Abstracts of vital records and copies of cemetery inscriptions can be found among the town manuscript collection. Filed with the Hartford town collection are ten volumes of probate abstracts covering the period from 1750 to 1800, for which two CHS library volunteers compiled a cumulative index. Family group sheets (primarily eastern Connecticut) and some abstracts of bible records are filed with their respective family manuscript collections. Barbour also compiled an extensive study of his own ancestry and this study, entitled "The Barbour Pedigree: Royal and American Ancestry of Lucius Barnes Barbour," is included in the family manuscript collection.

Donald Lines Jacobus (1887 - 1970). Last, but by no means least, are the manuscripts of Donald Lines Jacobus, the dean of American genealogists. Born in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1887, Jacobus developed his interest in genealogy and historical research as a very young man. He published his first article in the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* in 1905 while a freshman at Yale University. When he enlisted in military service in 1918, he deposited his first collection of manuscripts at the Connecticut Historical Society; a collection that consisted of forty-seven sets of notes on families and towns in New Haven and Fairfield counties. Perhaps fearful that he would not survive the war, Jacobus required the Society to charge a fee for the use of his manuscripts that was to be paid to his mother, for whom he was the sole financial support. When he returned from military service, the fee was removed.

Throughout the remainder of his life, Jacobus periodically deposited portions of his manuscripts with the Society, reserving the right to remove them for the purpose of amplifying and correcting them. In 1969 the Society negotiated a purchase of the genealogical material still in Jacobus's possession. Included were his client files, some published genealogies and his six-volume manuscript on the descendants of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, described by John Insley Coddington as Jacobus's "hobby."

Jacobus's meticulous work can be found in both the town and family manuscript collections. His town materials include an eight-volume compilation of pedigrees of New Haven County families, containing carefully constructed pedigree charts as well as transcriptions of predominantly 17th and 18th century vital, church and cemetery records. His family manuscripts, covering over 1300 surnames, include research notes and carefully typed client reports, drafts of articles for *The American Genealogist* (often written on the backs of galley sheets of *TAG* articles in print), and little notes, or what the CHS staff affectionately call "scraps."

The Connecticut Historical Society Library will always strive to meet the needs of its patrons. It will continue to collect published genealogies and replace existing materials as current

Abigail Phelps Chapter, DAR, Honors Namesake

To celebrate the 110th anniversary of its founding, Simsbury's Abigail Phelps Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution has erected a monument to memorialize Abigail Phelps, the mother of three distinguished Revolutionary War soldiers. The brownstone boulder with its bronze plaque in Simsbury Cemetery is near the graves of her first husband, Lt. David Phelps, and their three sons, Capt. David Phelps, Capt. Elisha Phelps and Maj. Gen. Noah Phelps. Abigail Phelps's own grave is in the Bolton Center Cemetery next to her second husband, Deacon David Strong.

On October 19 the chapter held a dedication ceremony, which was moved from the cemetery to the auditorium in Eno Memorial Hall because of rain. Regent of the Abigail Phelps Chapter, Joyce A. Cahill, who spearheaded the two-year campaign to erect the monument, welcomed Phelps descendant Charlotte Phelps Bidwell Bacon and many local dignitaries. Thomas Vincent, First Selectman, three members of the Board of Selectmen, representatives of the Simsbury Cemetery Association, Simsbury Historical Society, Simsbury Free Library, American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars attended. Caroline Taylor, Vice Regent, and Carol Strong Nelson, Chaplain, represented the Connecticut DAR. Coincidentally, Chaplain Nelson is a descendant of Deacon Strong.

The program included an invocation and benediction, the singing of the National Anthem, recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance and the American's Creed, and greetings from the Connecticut DAR. James Fleming, a director of the Simsbury Cemetery Association, spoke briefly about the on-going relationship between the DAR and his association. Mary Jane Springman, a trustee of the Simsbury Free Library, gave the keynote address, "Abigail Phelps And Her Patriot Sons." A Sweet Adelines Quartet then sang a patriotic medley.

Regent Joyce Cahill closed the dedication ceremony by presenting a slide showing the monument with its plaque honoring Abigail Phelps. A reception, organized by Vice Regent Jennifer Vazquez and her committee, followed in the Abigail Phelps Chapter Room in Eno Memorial Hall.

The dedication ceremony was video taped by Maral Johnson for SCTV.

Continued from page four.

copies deteriorate. As compilers make their manuscript materials available, they will be added to the CHS collections. In an effort to keep up with modern technology, the library will make available electronic resources as budgetary circumstances allow. The Connecticut Historical Society Library is proud of its long history and looks forward to serving its audiences for generations to come.

By Judith Ellen Johnson

Judith Ellen Johnson is the genealogist at the Connecticut Historical Society. This is the third article of three based on the presentation she made in the spring of 2002 at SGHRL.



For Your Holiday Gift List



Titles Available For Sale In The Library

- The Barns of East Granby: Our Architectural Heritage* by Betty Guinan and Ted Holly....\$15.
- Beneath These Stones: More Granby Cemeteries* by Carol Laun....\$25.
- Bloomfield* (Images of America Series) by the Wintonbury Historical Society....\$19.99.
- The Browns of Wintonbury, Makers of Brown Drums* by Frederick A. Hesketh....\$10.
- Burials in the Granby Center Cemetery, Granby, Connecticut, 1740-1997* by Carol A. Laun....\$25.
- East Granby: The Evolution of a Connecticut Town* by Mary Jane Springman and Betty Finnell Guinan....\$35.
- From Wintonbury to Bloomfield* pub. by the Wintonbury Historical Society....\$16.50.
- History of Simsbury, Granby and Canton, From 1642 to 1845* by Noah A. Phelps...\$20.
- The Gavel and the Book: The Simsbury Town Meeting, 1670-1986* by Evan W. Woollacott....\$28.
- John Case and His Descendants* compiled by Ruth Cost Duncan....\$32.
- A Record and Documentary History of Simsbury, 1643-1888* by Lucius I. Barber....\$30.
- Simsbury Cemetery Gravestone Inscriptions, Vol. I: The Old Section* compiled by Joyce A. Cahill....\$26.50.
- A Tempest in a Small Town: The Myth and Reality of Country Life, Granby, Connecticut, 1680-1940* by Mark Williams....\$35.
- "...To Settle Ourselves in Gospel Order...": A History of First Church of Christ at Massaco, Simsbury, Connecticut* by Lyman G. Potter....\$22.50.
- Wintonbury Church Records (Bloomfield, CT)* by Carol Laun....\$25.

Shipping and handling is \$3.50 for one book and \$1.50 for each additional book.

Save the Date: The *Spring Talk* will be Saturday, May 22, 2004, at 11:00 A.M. in the library. Jean Nudd, the archivist of the National Archives and Records Administration, Northeast Region, in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, will speak about "Finding your Immigrant Ancestors." She will bring us up to date on the archives' genealogy-related holdings and answer questions. Please plan to attend.



Holiday Closing: The Library will be closed from December 21st to January 2nd.

SIMSBURY MARRIAGES

Date	Name	Age	Occupation	Birthplace
June 3, 1874	William W. Ennis	32		State of Maryland
	Julia G. Merwin	29		East Granby
June 10, 1874	Lucius I. Barber	67		Simsbury
	Abbie S. Case	28		Simsbury
July 16, 1874	Elmore Cooper	26		Alstead, N. H.
	Myra G. Carpenter	23		Holyoke, Mass
Nov. 10, 1874	Smith W. Toles	27		Otega, N. Y.
	Ida L. Gates	18		Simsbury
Nov. 12, 1874	Julius R. Miller	26		Avon, Ct.
	Rebecca M. Cook	23		Simsbury
Dec. 24, 1874	Charles White	23		Mass
	Selinda Harding	35		New Jersey
Jan. 4, 1875	William W. Case	40		Canton, Ct.
	Hattie Irene Dexter	27		Coventry, Conn.
Jan. 5, 1875	Alfred C. Case	36		Wolcottville, Ct
	Abbie J. Hoskins	24		Simsbury, Ct
Jan. 20, 1875	Wm Landreth	32		New York City
	Mary Rutherford	24		Ireland
Feb. 13, 1875	Aaron L. Case	28		Simsbury
	Harriett H. Phelps	18		Simsbury
Feb. 15, 1875	Robert D. Carter	23		Simsbury
	Emily C. Booth	25		Simsbury
March 23, 1875	James E. Hack	22		Granby
	Julia Hill	18		Simsbury
April 27, 1875	Hugh Hart	21		New Haven, Ct
	Mary Case	21		Avon
April 27, 1875	Andrew O'Neal	30		Ireland
	Agnes Cairns	20		Ireland
May 6, 1875	Henry N. Penfield	19		New Britain
	Harriett M. Blake	19		Westfield, Mass.
May 25, 1875	Benadam [Benjamin] Kasson	61		Canton
	Adella [?] Case	33		Granville

This continuing series on Simsbury's early marriage records has been copied by Stephen E. Simon from microfilmed records at the Connecticut State Library.

Some Recent Acquisitions

Descendants and Ancestors of Adam Overpeck and his Wife Elizabeth Mann of Sussex and Warren Counties in New Jersey; Bucks, Northampton, Pike, and Bradford Counties in Pennsylvania.... compiled and written by Norris Philip Wood (donated by the author)

The Descendants of Andrew Warner compiled by Lucien C. Warner, M.D., LL.D. and Mrs. Josephine Genung Nichols (donated by the Abigail Phelps Chapter, DAR)

The Great Migration: Immigrants to New England 1634-1635, Volume III, G-H by Robert Charles Anderson

History of the Town of Marlborough, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, From Its First Settlement in 1657 To 1861; With A Brief Sketch Of The Town Of Northborough, Genealogy Of The Families In Marlborough To 1800.... by Charles Hudson (donated by the Abigail Phelps Chapter, DAR)

History of Windham County, Connecticut edited by Richard M. Bayles

Mansfield Four Corners: What It Used To Be & George Washington Didn't See by Rudy J. Favretti (donated by Joy P. Favretti)

Third Supplement to Torrey's New England Marriages Prior to 1700 by Melinde Lutz Sanborn

Holiday Closing

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