
SIMSBURY

❖ Genealogical and Historical Research Library ❖

Volume 4 Issue 3

AUGUST 1997

MISS IRENE WELDEN CONTRIBUTES BOOKS

The Library's Board of Trustees are most grateful to Miss Irene Welden for her gift of about four hundred books. Miss Welden built her collection of genealogical books as she researched her own family history. The books, which generally cover subjects in the northeastern United States, have been catalogued and shelved and each bears a bookplate honoring Miss Welden as the donor.

Miss Welden was born in Simsbury in 1903 and her family has been a part of the town since 1876. Her father, Reuben "Will" Welden, ran a sporting goods store on Hopmeadow Street and her uncle, Samuel T. Welden, ran the Welden Hardware Store on Station Street. He was also well known as an early tobacco grower and he was a florist with five greenhouses. Miss Welden's mother, who was from Arlington, Pennsylvania, was a Bidwell from the Bidwell family that was among the founders of Hartford.

Miss Welden herself was head of the savings department in the original Simsbury Bank and Trust Company, retiring after thirty-nine and a half years of service. She is a lifelong member of the Simsbury United Methodist Church, where she sang in the choir and served as organist for more than six years.

Miss Irene Welden



Photograph by Andrew W. Springman

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Besides being a valued member of the Simsbury Genealogical & Historical Research Library, she belongs to the Simsbury Historical Society to which she has made many gifts, including rare historical photographs of the town and her grandfather's civil war uniform. She is also a devoted member of the Abigail Phelps Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

by Mary Jane Springman, Trustee

COUNTRY DOCTORS IN CONNECTICUT

Medical care in the small towns of Connecticut during the late 17th centuries was chancy. Few physicians attended a medical school, and those who did were severely limited by the appalling lack of accurate medical knowledge. Doctors relied heavily on pain killers (opium, morphine, laudanum, alcohol), phlebotomy (bloodletting), and blistering with hot plasters. The drugs prescribed were a curious mixture of folk remedies, such as comfrey and bloodroot; and lethal sounding potions of mercury, cyanide and oxgall inspissated.

There were no standards or state regulations for physicians. A medical license from the General Court was optional. Some doctors were self-taught, such as **Robert Howard** of **Windsor**. He emigrated from England in 1653, a miller by trade. He also practiced medicine from 1660 until his death in 1684, when his son, Ephraim, inherited both the mill and the medical practice. Other prospective doctors of that era read the few available medical texts under the guidance of established physicians. The medical student then went on rounds for a year or two with his mentor.

In 1717, **Samuel Higley** of **Simsbury** completed his apprenticeship with the highly respected **Hartford** physicians, **Thomas Hooker** and **Samuel Mather**. They praised Higley in a document to the Connecticut General Assembly, recommending that he be licensed to practice, "physick and chirurgery, considering ye great want of learned and faithful physicians amongst us."

Medicine was not yet a lucrative profession. Doctors received rather meager fees, being paid by the mile; one shilling (13 1/2 cents) for under two miles and one shilling for each additional mile. To augment their incomes most doctors had other jobs. The Howards were millers, and Higley, who had multiple occupations, was best known for minting the famed Higley Copper.

Early doctor-patient relationships were entirely based on house calls. People did not call in a doctor until all home remedies had failed and the patient was seriously ill. Therefore, it is not surprising that he went to the patient's home often staying all night.

Medicines were prepared and sold by the doctors (the glass vials were returnable for credit). Diagnosis was rudimentary and treatment seemed to be guesswork; often the medicine was changed at each visit. Patients were dosed with peculiar concoctions of arsenic, mercury, camphor and turpentine.

Illnesses were often lengthy in this time before antibiotics. A patient might suffer for several months and require 40 or more visits from the doctor. Vigorous medical treatment frequently resulted in the death of the patient. Most country doctors were conservative and depended on rum, opium and time for a cure.

A doctor also became a trader, because most of his business was done on the barter system. Very

Continued on page 3

Gene Hint: Always be prepared to take advantage of spur of the moment genealogical research opportunities. Keep a list of ancestors and their dates with you when you travel.

COUNTRY DOCTORS. . . continued

little cash actually changed hands. He was paid in food and labor; the cooper gave a barrel, the cobbler made shoes, the blacksmith repaired his sleigh and the tailor sewed a vest.

In 1812 Yale established a two-year medical school. The lectures of **Dr. Nathan Smith of London**, "Professor of the Theory of Physic Surgery and Obstetrics," reveal how little was really known about the human body. Dr. Smith advised more bleeding to cure a hemorrhage, electricity to treat palsy, flagellation for hysteria, leeches for eye problems, and he suggested that typhoid fever victims be doused with cold water.

Smith's prescribed treatment for pneumonia resembles medieval torture. Frequent bloodletting (every six to eight hours) was the principal remedy, "until the patient's face is pale." Then an emetic was given, a large hot plaster was placed on the chest over the lungs, antimony was administered to promote sweating and, mercifully, opium for the cough.

These notes were taken in 1822 by student **Jarius Case of Barkhamsted**. He graduated the following year and opened a practice in **Torrington** and then **Granby**.

Some aspiring physicians only stayed in Yale one year. **Justus D. Wilcox of Simsbury** was a student in 1823. He was a noted physician in West Granby for over 50 years and received an honorary degree from Yale in 1855.

The dark ages of medicine were not that long ago. Even the most respected physicians were poorly trained and ignorant. Charlatans and quacks preyed on the helpless, promising cures for cancer and epilepsy. Treatments were often worse than the illness. Surgery was brutal. The best medical treatment was a combination of superstition, hearsay, guesswork and experimentation.

The records of the village doctors show cautious rather than aggressive medical treatment, probably resulting in less harm done. They were treating friends, neighbors and relatives. They seldom resorted to surgery. They fought sickness and death with morphine and brandy.

Perhaps the cherished image of the country doctor was forged in the realization and frustration of medical ignorance-- leaving only caring and compassion.

*by Carol Laun,
Genealogist-Curator
The Salmon Brook Historical Society in Granby, CT
and member of SGHRL*



Special Q-T's (quiet thanks) to our volunteers who continue to give their time and effort to support this wonderful facility: Joyce Cahill who took over the gardens in front and they have never looked lovelier; the members of the Cemetery Committee who have endured heat and humidity this summer to record the tombstones in the "new" section across Plank Hill Road, Catharine Sherman, Margaret Lindauer and Betty Shaw for their weekly efforts; Dawn Bobryk for our new web page and continuing to find something interesting for every newsletter and all our members who add to our financial support.

MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN SIMSBURY

It is often impossible to account for that elusive ancestor who settled for a period of time in between or before census records let alone what church they attended. The tax lists of a town can often help us place the individual in a community. The Higley Collection of tax lists (in the archives of Simsbury Historical Society) contains records of the taxes collected by Brewster Higley 3rd. In his 1759 and 1775 accountings, he separates the members of the Church of England from the members of the Congregational Church or First Society. The Edict of Toleration, passed in the 1730's, ended the mandatory support for the Congregational Church. The Scotland area of present day Bloomfield and home to St. Andrew's Church was within the boundaries of Simsbury until 1835.

1759

Reuben Slater
 John Terry
 Solomon Terry
 William Case
 Capt. James Case heirs
 Amasa Case
 Joshua Moses
 Joseph Adams
 Matthew Adams
 Lt William Eno
 Samuel Eno
 Abel Eno
 Isaac Eno
 Francis Loomis
 Jonathan Pinney
 Capt. Abner Pinney
 Abraham Pinney Jun.
 Sanders Moor
 James Tuller
 William Roberts
 Ezekial Roberts
 William Tuller
 William Mitchel
 Widow Deborah Roberts
 Lt. Andrew Robe
 John Slater Jun
 Lt. Hez. Phelps
 Henry Molton
 Eliphalet Mitchelson

1775

Judah Hutchinson
 Widow Hester Case
 Moses Lilley
 Isaac Case
 Richard Lilley
 Isaac Case Jr.
 Ezra Pratt
 Joseph Grimes
 William Andrews
 John Slater Junr
 Asahel Andrus Junr
 Jacob Davis Junr
 Shubael Adams
 Maskel Bacon Junr
 Lieut. Andrew Robe
 Ezra Pratt *addition*
 Jonathan Adams
 Abraham Pinney Jr.
 Jonathan Pinney
 James Tuller
 Eli Tuller
 Reuben Tuller
 Joel Eno
 Capt. Abraham Pinney
 Aaron Pinney
 Levi Pinney
 Abner Pinney
 Francis Loomis
 Francis Loomis, Junr.
 Eliphalet Mitchelson

James Eno
 John Moses
 Robert Mason
 Jared Ingraham
 Abel Loomis
 Elisha Griswold
 Widow Deborah Griswold
 Isaac Eno
 John Roundy
 Samuel Eno Junr.
 Widow Frances Eno
 Abel Eno
 Mathew Adams
 William Adams
 Abel Adams
 Joseph Adams
 Joseph Adams Junr
 Richard Adams
 Widow Amasa Case
 Rhodrick Adams
 Stephen Terry
 Solomon Terry
 John Terry
 John Gridley Terry
 Reuben Slater
 Reuben Slater Junr
 Benjamin Slater

Additions
 John Moses

Church of England. . . cont.

There are anecdotal stories of taxpayers claiming membership in Church of England to avoid paying the rates assessed for the Congregational Church as well as moving back and forth between them to avoid taxes altogether. This tends to make the genealogist discount an ancestor's religious affiliation with the Episcopal Church. The sacramental nature of the Church is apparent when you have a family attending the Congregational Church yet their baptisms, marriages and burials were performed by the Episcopal priest. This suggests that proximity may have been the reason for the family to attend a Congregational Church but that its roots were elsewhere.

In the collections of the Library are *Records of Rev. Roger Viet's Rector of St. Andrew's, Simsbury, Conn. 1763-1800* and *Records of Rev. Ransom Warner 1823-1854 Rector of St. Andrew's Simsbury and Bloomfield* as well as the records of the cemetery of St. Andrew's.

The Archives of the Diocese of Connecticut are located the Episcopal Diocesan House, 1335 Asylum Avenue, Hartford (860) 233-4481 They are under the care of the Rev. Dr. Robert G. Carroon, Archivist and Historiographer of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut. A listing of the parochial records in their holdings was published in four issues of *The Connecticut Nutmegger*; June 1990, September 1990, December 1990 and March 1991. [All four issues are in the Library's periodical collections.]

DHB

Note: All of these lists are being transcribed with all notations included and will be available soon.

Simsbury, CT Marriages

* Listed in the same order as in the original book in Simsbury Town Records

23 July 1854	George F. Hardy Jane Smith		Paper Maker	Watertown, NY Ireland
5 Sept. 1854	Seymour C. Brown Lavinia D. Noble	25 24	Machinist	
27 Sept. 1854	George W. Harmon Mary St. John	32 22	Farmer	West Suffield Simsbury
15 Nov. 1854	Charles R. Arnold Ann Wilcox	29 28	Farmer	Rhode Island Canton, Ct
22 June 1854	Otto Staunmyer Julia Murray	28 25	Laborer Servant	Germany Ireland
9 July 1854	Archibald Campbell Catharine Laggin	27 25	Laborer Servant	Ireland Ireland
9 July 1854	Michael Hayes Ann Lynch	24 18	Laborer Servant	Ireland Ireland
6 Aug. 1854	John Vaughn Margaret Doneghen	26 23	Laborer Servant	Ireland "
1 Oct. 1854	Patrick Keough (?) Bridget Wall	28 26	Laborer Servant	Ireland Ireland
31 Dec. 1854	James Prine Mary Gulvan	27 26	Laborer Servant	Ireland "
31 Dec. 1854	Peter Dungan Catharine Scott	29 24	Laborer Servant	Ireland "

First Settlers of Simsbury

SGT.PETER BUELL (1644-1729)

Born in Windsor, Connecticut 19 August 1644, he was the third child and second son of William Buell and Mary (various researchers have claimed that she was either Thomas or Post). It appears that Peter, along with his brothers, William and Samuel, came to Simsbury. William and Samuel did not settle here permanently but rather moved out towards Litchfield County before 1669.

Peter is listed on 7 October 1669 as a Freeman of Windsor but a "stated inhabitant of Masaco" according to an original list published in Volume 5 of *NEHG Register* in April 1851. From *A Record and Documentary History of Simsbury*, by Dr. Lucius Barber, comes the following information on Peter. In 1669, he joins fellow returning settlers and signs a petition to the General Court pleading for relief from taxes while rebuilding their homes following the burning of Simsbury 26 March 1676. They wanted to compell the non-resident proprietors to pay their full share of taxes and the Court agreed and for the following three years granted tax relief to resident proprietors.

He participated actively in the town affairs. In 1684, he was chosen Clerk of the train band and in 1686, he was chosen Sargeant, the title he has been known by since. On 29 December 1687, Peter Buell was elected Deputy to the General Court and received twenty shillings for his expenses. He is listed as being of Hopmeadow in 1688 when the Exchange of Allotments occurred. This was done to fill the vacant land in the center of Simsbury and provide more protection against Indian raids. In 1703, he joins other Hopmeadow men in protesting common fields.

By the time of his death 8 January 1729, he has provided land to each of his sons and leaves land to his six surviving daughters. His old musket he leaves to his son, Samuel, according to Vol. 2 of *Manwaring's Digest of Early Connecticut Probate Records*.

Peter Buell was married three times and widowed twice. It is his second wife, **Mercy Strong**, who has the dubious distinction of having the oldest remaining tombstone in the Center Cemetery on Hopmeadow Street.

Peter Buell first married **Martha Coggan** (d. 22 May 1686), possibly of Taunton, MA, 31 March 1670 in Windsor, CT. They had the following children:

1. **Peter** died in infancy
2. **Abigail** b. 17 May 1673 d. 30 August 1727 m. **Thomas Barber** 25 May 1699.

**Next month
this series will
feature:**

**Michael
Humphrey**

*First Settlers of Simsbury***Peter Buell . . . continued**

3. **Martha** b. 27 Dec 1675 d. 6 Sept 1760 m. **Lt. Nathaniel Holcombe** 1 Nov 1695
4. **Mary** b. 23 Dec 1677 d. 21 Jun 1720 m. **Sgt. Jonathan Holcombe**
5. **Sarah**
6. **Peter** b. 7 Apr 1681 d. 25 Oct 1703 probably unmarried
7. **Ephraim** b. 20 Feb 1682 d. 16 Jan 1718/19 m. **Mary Holcombe**
8. **Hannah** m. **Richard Saxton** 20 Jun 1706
9. **Samuel** 10 May 1686 d. 11 Mar 1740

Secondly, Peter married **Mercy Strong** d. 4 Jul 1688 no known issue. The inscription on her tombstone provides this epitaph:

“Though Mercy’s dead and buried
yet let us ever mind.
Let God be just, all him who trust,
Shall surely Mercy find.”

Thirdly, he married **Mary Gillet** (d. 19 Aug 1734) widow of **Jacob Bissell** on 30 Jun 1699 in Simsbury, CT. They had the following children:

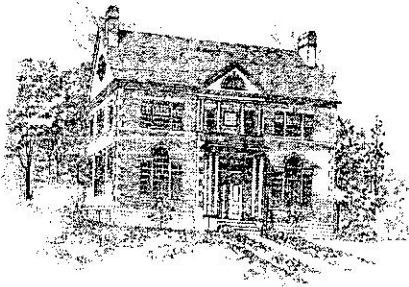
1. **Miriam** b. abt. 1699 m. **Thomas Stevens** 30 Mar 1719
2. **William** b. abt. 1701 d. 14 Sept 1734
3. **Jonathan** d. 13 Oct 1734
4. **Esther[Hester]** b. 24 Nov 1705 m. **Daniel Holcombe** 1 Jan 1735/36

Editor's Note: The genealogies used in this series are prepared from primary sources whenever possible. Secondary sources are used only when they can be considered accurate. All material used to prepare these articles is deposited in our Family Files and maintained for use by our members and visitors. We welcome submissions by descendants.

GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES with your family research? Join our fall classes and learn how to organize, do research and overcome those dead-ends. Beginning on Wednesday, September 24th there will be both a daytime (10 a.m. to 12 noon) and evening (7 - 9 p.m.) class at our library. This four week class will cover everything you need to know to get started or back on track. For information or to enroll contact:

Continuing Education Dept.
754 Hopmeadow Street
Simsbury, CT 06070
860 658-3870

“RESEARCHING TOWN RECORDS” Seminar Sat. Oct. 18th at 1 p.m.
We will be offering an expanded version of the S.M.A.R.T. weekend event. Joining us as speakers will be Simsbury officials who can answer questions on how and how not to approach these valuable resources. Space is limited. Reservations may be made by calling Steve at 658-5382.



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