
SIMSBURY

❖ Genealogical and Historical Research Library ❖

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SPRING OPEN HOUSE TO BE HELD MAY 10TH 10 AM - 3 PM

Gather your charts and notes and bring them to the Open House from 10 AM to 3 PM on May 10th. Librarian Stephen Simon will be joined by volunteers to help get beginners started and assist the more advanced genealogists with those thorny problems that can stall research.

This is the ideal time to introduce a neighbor or friend to the fine facilities at The Simsbury Genealogical and Historical Library. Share the excitement of "digging" for your family's roots. Whether descended from the first citizens of Simsbury or any other area of the country or world, the resources of the Library can help everyone get started.

Explore the new offerings of the Library. If it has been awhile since you have stopped in you might want to check the Maine, New Hampshire or Massachusetts histories and genealogies on CD-ROM for those elusive ancestors. Or browse the shelves or card catalogue for books you may have missed. Try out the new microfilm reader/printer.

Stop by for a visit and enjoy a cup of coffee or tea and refreshments. The \$3.00 daily use fee will be waived and all admitted free.

A POST OFFICE WITH A PAPER TRAIL

Arthur Conan Doyle's fictional character, Sherlock Holmes, solved his "cases" because he had the good sense not to take up genealogical mysteries. If he had undertaken even one quest to place a family in a specific geographical location or find that family in between census decades, the difficulty might have made him give up detective work altogether. Family researchers must constantly exercise the "detective" in themselves when they hit dead ends in locating ancestors. "Where do I go from here", is a common lament. How about the the post office?

An overlooked resource exists in the documentation of incoming and outgoing mail and post office account books. Postmasters and mistresses were required to keep

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A POST OFFICE WITH A PAPER TRAIL *CONTINUED*

track of not only the mail received and sent but to send financial accountings to the general post office in Washington, D.C. as well. The Postmaster General would then return corrected copies of these filings. These lists, when they exist and many do, give us important clues and help us pick up the "scent" of the trail for our constantly moving ancestors. For the Simsbury Post Office many of these original lists exist either at The Simsbury Historical Society (SHS) (800 Hopmeadow St. 860 658-2500 *By Appointment only*) and The Connecticut Historical Society (CHS) (1 Elizabeth St., Hartford 860 236-5621 *Mon - Sat 9-4:45PM*).

A casual reading of the returns filed by Noah Amherst Phelps and his son, Jeffrey O. Phelps, both Postmasters of Simsbury, shows mail be sent to the "southern" and "western" destinations as well as many towns within Connecticut. The form, *Account of Mails Received at the Post Office at [Simsbury]*, exists at SHS for 1808, 1809, 1810, 1811, 1814, 1817, 1818, 1820, 1823, 1824 and 1825.

In 1809, mail came in from Poughkeepsie and Delhi, NY and Providence, RI. 1810 finds mail from Granville and Sandisfield, MA along with Hillsdale, NY. In 1811, the returns list Coventry and Albany, NY, Warren, RI, Delaware, OH and Baltimore, MD. By 1812 mail from Worthington, OH, a town with a large population of former Simsbury residents, begins to appear.

Other account books list the newspapers being received at the Simsbury Post Office. *The Advocate* from New York was very popular and in 1833 the *Farmer's Journal* from Charlotte, NC is being read. Also, in the SHS Post Office collection are two books listing the post offices of the United States in 1811 and 1848. These were published each year and reflect the growth of the nation. They are helpful in sorting out which towns were established and had post offices at a particular time in U.S. history.

A check with libraries and historical societies in the area you suspect your ancestors may have emigrated to may unearth similar records with Simsbury, CT mail or a Hartford area newspaper listed. Thus, a circumstantial link may be strengthened

Too often researchers assume that there was not much movement until the advent of rail transportation. A reading of these records and other original sources shows us that people were constantly moving away from and returning to their focus community. If these moves were made in between or before censuses, an overlooked primary source may be the only way to prove it. Spend a little extra time seeking out the obscure and you can often make some amazing discoveries.

Genie Hint: When copying pages from a book or pamphlet be sure to make a copy of the title page and staple the pages together, saving needless backtracking later on.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF NOAH WESTON

Many beginning genealogists are easily seduced by secondary sources. They find a book or a history on their "family", copy down the pertinent pages and feel that everything has been done. While some authors go to great lengths to research and verify the information in their compilation, others indiscriminately accept any information handed along by descendants or from other secondary sources such as the IGI without checking its accuracy. Original or primary sources such as vital records, church registers, archival materials, deeds or probate records should be obtained for each person listed in a compiled genealogy. If not how can we "trust" the information? Many ancestors recollections are enhanced by a need for social prestige or a desire to gloss over uncomfortable family facts.

Val Greenwood in *The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy* suggests that we think of primary sources as primary or "best" evidence. "It is the best evidence available to prove the fact in question, usually in an original document or record", he concludes. A birth certificate would qualify. Before mandatory birth registrations, a contemporary parish register or Bible might suffice. When we look at secondary sources or evidence, the questions of 1) how far removed from the original event is it; 2) for what purpose was the evidence created and 3) who was responsible for creating it become very important.

Over a year ago, a researcher from Texas contacted SGHRL asking for help to prove his descendancy from the **Weston** family of Massachusetts. He had lost the trail in **Middletown, Connecticut** with a **Noah Weston** whose will was probated there in the 1760's. He had come across a **Noah Weston** in **Simsbury** in the 1800 Census and thought this might be his son. The initial request was for copies of the relevant pages from *The Humphreys Family in America* by Frederick Humphreys, M.D. et al and *The Case Family* compiled by Ruth Duncan -two secondary sources that are heavily used by those with Simsbury roots. Disparities in both soon made it apparent that some real sleuthing in original sources was required.

Both books gave the information that **Celia Humphrey** (14 Apr 1771 - 27 Mar 1853), daughter of **Joseph** and **Annis Humphrey** married first, a **Noah** [or John in *The Case Family*, which a review of the original manuscript at the Connecticut Historical Society proved it to be a typographical error] **Weston** and second, **Capt. Ariel Case**. *The Humphreys Family in America* claimed four children were produced during her marriage to Noah Weston: **Horace** (Abt 1791), **Loren** (6 Sept 1792-10 Jul 1857), **Laura** (5 Oct 1800) and **Almira**.

A search of Simsbury's Vital Records showed nothing on this family. The Barbour Collection of statewide vital records turned up only a marriage for **Almira** to **Harvey Lattimer** 11 Apr 1820 in Windsor. The records of The Hopmeadow Cemetery showed no burial of Noah. They did list his son, **Loren** (with two of his daughters) and his wife, **Celia Humphrey Weston Case**. [*The Humphreys Family in America* contained an incorrect death date for Celia and incorrectly had her marry Ariel Case two years before his current wife had died.] [*The Case Family* picked up the incorrect date of death.]

The Disappearance of Noah Weston *CONTINUED*

Was Celia the widow of Noah ? Could there have been a divorce? A check of divorce packets in the Connecticut State Archives turned up a petition by a **Seley Weston** of Simsbury, wife of Noah Weston in February 1808. The petition claimed that Noah had deserted her about the 10th of October 1800 and provided no subsequent support. Apparently, it was suggested that she try a little harder to find him by advertising for him. This done, she was finally granted her divorce in 1809. It was in this year that her father, Capt. Joseph Humphrey died and left her a bequest.

Who was Noah Weston and where did he go? Research of original sources in the archives of the Simsbury Historical Society and the land deeds at Town Hall places Noah in the community from 1791 until 1801. He was a shoemaker, leathersmith and farmer. In 1791, Noah and his wife purchase from **John Calvin Owen** (according to an account book) rum, taffeta, gingham and lawn fabrics, a quire of paper and a penknife. He also rents a horse to go to Barkhamstead. In 1795, he appears on the town tax rolls with an assessment of 5 pounds for: one poll, 1 cow and 1 horse over three years old, 13 acres of plow land, 1 acre bogmeadow, 3 acres bush pasture, 2 acres timberland and 1 fireplace. By 1798, he has added 2 oxen, 1 horse, 10 acres of land, 2 third rate houses and 1 fourth rate house to his holdings. 1799 finds mention of Noah Weston in **Ebenezer Dutton, Esq.**'s account book as having a case against **Capt. Seth Case** in which Dutton represented him. By 1800, Noah Weston is selling off his land and last appears on the tax rolls in 1801. Noah Weston's own account book has survived and shows Noah last settling an account in September of 1800. Celia settles accounts in May of 1800 through Jan of 1802. The account book is recycled to Celia's brother, **Luke Humphrey**.

Although Celia claims that Noah deserted her in October of 1800 (a date which coincides with the birth of their daughter, Laura) further digging proves that Noah was still in Simsbury as late as spring of 1801. In papers of **Noah Amherst Phelps**, a neighbor of Celia and Noah's, there are writs and deeds to which Noah Weston serves as witness at that time. If Noah Phelps is calling upon Noah Weston to witness documents, he must have been considered reliable and available to confirm the transaction at a later time.

Even original sources can be misleading. Celia's divorce petition lists her marriage date as "about the year of 1795" and the presumption is that she gave this information to the preparer of the petition. However, this date is about four years after the birth of her first child, Horace. Since no vital records existed of the family, a clarification of this seemed hopeless. Yet, one day another original source yielded up the answer. A box of **Jeffrey O. Phelps** papers at CHS produced a letter written by **J. Douglas Woodward** of Plattsburgh, NY asking for an affidavit from a Simsbury resident, Celia Weston, (unaware that Celia had divorced and remarried Capt. Ariel Case) attesting to **Clarrisa Case Marvin's** marriage in Simsbury on 4 Mar 1787 so that she might claim her husband's Revolutionary War pension. This clue led to the National Archives in Pittsfield where microfilms of the Revolutionary War pension packets exist. In the **John Marvin** packet was indeed the letter from Celia Humphrey Weston Case written 3 November 1838 not only attesting to the marriage of Clarissa and John performed by **Noah Phelps, Esq.**. The last line of the letter states "I was married October 11th Seventeen hundred ninety."

So, what happened to Noah? Did he sell out in anticipation of a move to another part of the state or country or even back to his hometown? Did Celia refuse to move or did he *forget* to send for her? Could we look to the children for answers? Might they have gone to settle near their father once they attained their

The Disappearance of Noah Weston CONTINUED

majority? Unfortunately nothing regarding Noah ever appears in any of the areas the children settled. The name Noah is never again used in the family. Perhaps one day while digging through dusty boxes, we'll find a clue that will solve the mystery of Noah Weston.

Noah Weston married **Celia Humphrey** 11 Oct 1790. They were divorced in 1809. They had the following children:

1. **The Rev. Horace** (Abt 1791 - 1848) m. **Elizabeth Briggs**. According to family obituaries they supposedly had ten children. Research has only turned up nine of them: **William** (Abt 1827 - 1901); **Daniel** (Abt 1829 - 1896); **John** (Abt 1830-?); **Almira**(Abt 1831-?); **Minerva** (Abt 1833-?); **Horace** (Abt 1835-?); **Elinor** (Abt 1838 - ?); **Marilla** (Abt 1843-?) and **Loren** (1845-1926) [*The Humphrey Family* said there were eight children.]

He was a Methodist preacher and circuit rider in Ulster and Sullivan counties in New York State approximately 1816. After settling in Ellenville, NY around 1822 and marrying Betsey, Horace gave up circuit riding and began first a brickworks and then a pottery works. He sold his goods along the Delaware and Hudson Canal. He died in 1848 after contracting a fever at Honesdale, PA while supervising the construction of a second pottery factory. The pottery works were continued by his eldest son, William. His son, Daniel, continued to run the Ellenville works. Horace's widow married **James Brigham Child** (son of **Timothy Child** of Woodstock, CT) in 1861.

2. **Loren** (6 Sep 1792 - 10 Jul 1857) m. **Rachel Lury Case** (daughter of **Capt. Ariel Case**) 22 Mar 1815 in Simsbury, CT. They had seven children: **Rachel Amanda** (1816-1829); **Lury Mariett** (1818-1829); **Ariel Case** (1823- 1908?); **Lucy Jane** (1820-?); **Phineas Emerson** (1827-1890?); **Mary Amanda** (1834-?); **Ellen Maria** (1838-1914)

Loren became a tinner and worked for his uncle, **Oliver Tilley** and other tinsmiths in the area. He went to Baltimore shortly after his marriage and returns to Simsbury by 1820. In 1835, guardians are appointed for his children by the Probate Court in Simsbury possibly to handle and inheritance from the Case family. In 1848, he sells property to his children. He is buried with two of his daughters who died in childhood. His widow, Rachel, relocates to Fountain County, Indiana where she lived with daughter, **Lucy Jane** and son-in-law **Charles Terry**.

3. **Almira** m. **Harvey Lattimer** 11 Apr 1820 in Windsor, CT by **Rev. Asa Bushnell** (a Methodist minister).

They moved to Ashtabula Co., OH and then Painesville, OH where she died.

4. **Laura** (5 Oct 1800 - 30 Oct 1874) m. **Lott Pinney** 5 Jun 1822 in Simsbury by Rev. Allen McLean. [Two secondary sources both copying from a journal of the **Rev. Allen McLean** list her husband as **Lott Pomeroy**. A search of the original probate records at SHS shows Laura to be the widow of Lot Pinney in 1838 and her brother, Loren, lending her money until the estate is settled.]

*First Settlers of Simsbury***MAJOR JOHN TALCOTT and CAPTAIN BENJAMIN NEWBERRY**

No history of the early settlers of Simsbury would be complete without mention of these two men who, although they did not actually reside in the town, are closely linked with it. They were both original patentees of Simsbury. Major Talcott was responsible for obtaining the deed from the original Native-American owners of the land to validate land claims of the early settlers while Capt. Newberry laid out the land.

John Talcott (Bef 1636-23 Jul 1688) was born in Braintree, MA and came to Hartford, Connecticut with his father around 1636. He married **Helena Wakeman** of New Haven 29 Oct 1650. In Hartford he was a freeman, townsman, deputy and succeeded his father as treasurer, post he held until 1676. At that time, he put in command of the troops raised for King Phillip's War. He made a name for himself as an "Indian" fighter and was quite successful at it. He is named as a patentee in the Charter of 1662.

The early inhabitants of Simsbury called upon him frequently to intervene on their behalf with the Native-Americans regarding land claims. He also help sort out problems regarding the placement of the meeting house, calling of ministers and land distributions. The original land had come to **John Griffin** as the payment for damage done by a Massaco tribe member, **Manahannoose**. The title was in question since the laws of the Colony had not been observed. The original participants from the Massaco tribe were no longer alive. Maj. Talcott entered into negotiations with the heirs and successors of the original signers and for an exchange of land and money secured a legal deed to not only the original land but also managed to nearly double the amount. For his services he received 300 acres of land in the Canton area.

Capt. Benjamin Newberry (Bef 1630-11 Sep 1689) was the son of **Thomas Newberry** of Dorchester, MA and settled in Windsor after the death of his father. He married **Mary Allyn** 11 Jun 1646 and had nine children. He was an original patentee of Simsbury. The area of land he owned became known as Newberry's Plain and later, Westover's Plain and Hoskins Station. In 1663 he was appointed by the General Court of Connecticut to lay out the remaining lots so that they might be given to those in Windsor who desired to come to Massaco.

After the burning of the town on 26 Mar 1676, he again helped to decide where the returning settlers should build based upon their personal safety. Those returning settlers were required to rebuild homes within six months of the committee's determination. Interestingly, Capt. Newberry was summoned to court in 1681 to explain why he had not yet built a "mansion house". Eventually, Newberry sold his land in Simsbury and lived out his life in Windsor.

**Next month
this series will
feature:**

Peter Buell

Simsbury, CT Marriages

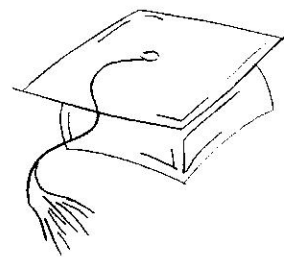
* Listed in the same order as in the original book in Simsbury Town Records.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Names</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Birthplace</i>
1 Jan 1854	Charles Juniper Elizabeth Follis	21	Wheelwright	England England
2 Jan 1854	Robert Donaldston Elizabeth Beach		Carpet Weaver	England England
11 Jan 1854	Ferdinand R. Edwards Salina Sperry		Carpenter	Suffield, CT Granby, CT
5 Feb 1854	Ruel E. Moses Harriet E. Judd		Farmer	Barkhamstead Canton
12 Mar 1854	James Whitham Elizabeth Smart		Weaver	England England
15 Mar 1854	Seth Merriam Morse Amelia R. Andrus	27	Cigar Maker	Avon, CT Simsbury
2 May 1854	Henry A. Goodman Sarah Cornelia Tuller	27 25	Carriage Maker	Bloomfield Simsbury
5 Jun 1854	Melvin C. Godard Sarah Jane Brown	22 18	Carpenter	Granby Canton
2 Jul 1854	Edward M. Hubbard Fanny M. Wells	31 18	Mechanic	Bloomfield "
2 July 1854	Eli Esther Mary Ann Yates		Paper Maker	England England
2 July 1854	Alfred Yates Sarah Smith		Weaver	Simsbury Simsbury
4 July 1854	James C. Rodwell Catherine Lacy		Mason	Bloomfield Windsor

Copied by Stephen Simon

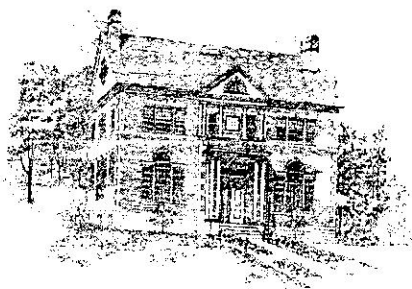
CONNECTICUT COMMON SCHOOL REGISTERS

TARRIFVILLE, CT 1866-68



A recent gift to the collections of the Simsbury Historical Society of several school registers provides researchers with another way to track their ancestors in the Simsbury area. Ruth Cost Duncan, a member of the Library and the Historical Society has copied the entries from the registers and compiled an easy to use booklet listing the children in alphabetical order. Along with the name of the child is the age and the period they attended the Tarrifville School. The Library was presented with a copy by Mary Nason, Archivist for the Society.

For those researchers trying to prove that a family was in Tarrifville even briefly, these should be very helpful. Other Simsbury school registers exist in the collections of the Historical Society for other area schools but have not been abstracted as yet. With the move of the archives to more spacious quarters, research of these original sources should be an easier task.



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