

SIMSBURY

❖ Genealogical and Historical Research Library ❖

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From left: Mrs. Charlotte Bubsey, Past Regent & current Corresponding Secretary; Mrs. Susan Chiarello, Treasurer and Mrs. Avis Edwards, Regent pose with their newest donation to the Library.

SIMSBURY DAR CHAPTER DONATES FUNDS TO PURCHASE NEW MICROFILM READER-PRINTER

The Abigail Phelps Chapter of the National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution found itself in a unique position this year and able to fulfill the Library's need for a new Canon 90 Microprinter. This machine is the latest technology for reading and printing microfilm and microfiche. Many original records used in genealogy are only available in these forms and the serious researcher often needs a paper copy. (Our previous printer made reverse copies that were difficult to read.) The Canon-90 was chosen based upon library industry standards. This purchase is just one of a long list of contributions that the local chapter has made to the Library.

The Simsbury N.S.D.A.R. Chapter is named for Abigail Pettibone who was born on April 22, 1706 and died on October 17, 1787. She married David Phelps on April 25, 1731. They had ten children: David (who died in infancy), David, Abigail, Elisha, Noah, Rachel, Ruth, Sarah, Susannah and Louisa. Abigail became a widow on

the 9th day of September 1760 when David Phelps succumbed to smallpox. Their three sons distinguished themselves in the American Revolution.

The most famous of these sons was General Noah Phelps who lives on in history as the spy at Ticonderoga. His famous adventure into the British ranks at Fort Ticonderoga in New York State ostensibly for a shave gave the American forces much needed information as to the strength of the enemy army.

Abigail's eldest son David enlisted in June of 1776 and rose to the rank of First Lieutenant. In 1779 he was commissioned Captain of the 18th Connecticut militia. Capt. Elisha Phelps, built a house in Simsbury which served at one time as a canal tavern and can be visited these days at Massacoh Plantation operated by the Historical Society in the center of town.

There were many notable descendants of couple including Gifford Pinchot and our own Antoinette Eno Wood who served as a Regent of the Chapter at the turn of the century and to whom the Simsbury Free Library owes a deep debt of gratitude.

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The National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution is one of the best recognized hereditary societies in the United States. [An hereditary society relies upon genealogical connection for its membership. In order to join one must produce evidence that an ancestor participated in the particular event or that one is descended from specific person.] It was formed in 1890 as a reaction to the Sons of the American Revolution refusing to admit women to their membership. Begun in Washington, D.C., the organization soon spread to several states including Connecticut. The Abigail Phelps Chapter was organized on November 11, 1893.

Today the Chapter supports many projects in town which embody the three objectives dictated by the National Society: historic preservation, promoting education and patriotic endeavor. In the recent past, the Chapter has supported the Simsbury Historical Society's building fund and the Granby Land Trust. They sponsor an American Essay Contest in the local elementary and middle schools with the winners receiving US Savings Bonds. Annually, three seniors from Simsbury, Granby and East Granby High Schools are chosen to receive the DAR Good Citizen Award.

Monthly meetings of the Phelps Chapter are held the third week of the month. Information on membership may be obtained by contacting the Regent, Mrs. Avis Edwards (658-6014); the Registrar, Mrs. Jean Bishop (658-7994) or the Membership Chairman, Mrs. Elnora Case (658-1244).

MORE ABOUT HEREDITARY SOCIETIES

Among the Library's holdings are:

Seventeenth Century Colonial Ancestors (Colonial Dames)
Register of the the CT Society of The Colonial Dames of America - 1893-1922
The DAR Magazine - issues from 1915 to 1995 (early years are incomplete)
DAR Lineage Books - 1891-1916
Index of the Rolls of Honor in the Lineage Books of the N.S.D.A.R.
The Sons of the American Revolution Magazine - 1984-1997
Founders of Early American Families (Founders and Patriots of America)
Founders and Patriots of America Index
The Order of The Founders and Patriots of America Register 1896-1993
The Hereditary Register of the United States of America 1972
Mayflower Families Through Five Generations Vol. 1
Mayflower Ancestral Index Vol. 1
Society of the Descendants of the Founders of Hartford Register 1996

Genie Hint: NEW LONGER HOURS AT NATIONAL ARCHIVES IN PITTSFIELD Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Wednesday: 8:00 AM to 9 PM. The archives are located at 100 Dan Fox Drive (near the airport) Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Their telephone number is 413 445-6885.

WORTHINGTON, OHIO

NEW ENGLAND IN THE WILDERNESS

The town of Worthington, in Ohio, was settled in 1802-3 by forty families from Granby, Simsbury and several other Connecticut and Massachusetts towns including Granville. They were led by James Kilbourne.

Kilbourne was a remarkable man. On his own from the age of fifteen; he worked, educated himself, became an Episcopalian minister and a successful businessman. For a time he lived in Granby and owned a store located near the Crags of Granville Road. He married Lucy Fitch, the daughter of John Fitch, inventor of the steamboat.

The reasons for the emigration were varied. The rich virgin soil of Ohio enticed farmers weary of battling the rocky hills of New England. An emigrating local farmer supposedly remarked. "The soil in Granby is all wore out and it weren't any good to begin with."

Worthington was also the answer to the "American Dream"; a chance to build a moral unspoiled community - "a new Eden". Religious freedom was a third reason. Most of the settlers were Episcopalian; suspected of being Royalists by the American Revolutionaries and, as a minority, not allowed to hold public office.

Each of the forty families invested \$500; the total, \$20,000, was enough to buy 16,000 acres "upon the Whetstone River" (now Olentangy). Most new towns grew up around a trading post or crossroads, but Worthington was different. Kilbourne planned the entire town before anyone left New England.

The town was neatly laid out around a "New England Green". The boundaries were North and South Streets. Each family had an acre lot for a home and a 100 acre country lot to farm.

A small group came out to buy supplies and start the settlement. They first built a log meeting house on the Green to serve as a church, school and community building. A bell purchased in Fort Pitt was installed to call people to meetings or warn of danger.

This bell was moved to the brick Worthington Academy in 1810, which later became Worthington College in 1819. It was moved again in 1938 to a new school on Granville Road and rang out in celebration on July 4, 1976.

The next to head west, on 1803, included Dr. Josiah Topping and family, his brother Zaphar's wife and seven children, all from Granby. Cherished possessions had to be abandoned. There was only room for necessities; farm implements, cooking pots, a little furniture. Kilbourne's wagon was late in arriving at Worthington because he stopped in Pennsylvania where Lucy gave birth to their 6th child, a little girl named Orrel.

Worthington was described in a diary by a 15 year old daughter of William Thompson. "There were just enough trees cut down to build the cabins we went into. They were of rough, unhewn logs without windows, with

WORTHINGTON, OHIO . . .continued

puncheon floors, no chimney, only an opening in the roof for smoke to escape. We sadly missed the comforts of our eastern home and and suffered many privations, but the novelty of the things made it rather interesting and amusing especially to us young folks.”

The settlers of Worthington worked hard through the long winter and welcomed the summer of 1804. They wanted to celebrate the 4th of July the New England way with cannons, but gunpowder was scarce. Instead, 17 large trees were cut almost through and on the 4th, all 17 were brought crashing down with a resounding boom, one for each state. Ohio had just become the 17th state in the Union.

The town grew and prospered. New homes were built, a newspaper was published, factories made a variety of goods and a college was established. The tiny settlement in “a howling wilderness” became a city much larger than Granby.

But the New England heritage was not forgotten. The Village Green is surrounded by colonial homes. The streets have familiar names: Hartford, Granby, Blandford and the misspelled Sinsbury Road. The names in the graveyard are Granby names; Levi Hayes, Job Case, Thomas T. Phelps, Zophar Topping. Levi Buttles was caught in a blizzard in 1805 and died from an ensuing fever. There is a Buttles Road in Granby named fro those who stayed home.

A quiet burying ground on Rt. 189 and Day Street in Granby, has an eternal tie to Worthington. Here is the small grave of a child born to James and Lucy Kilbourne, who died in 1800 at the age of 11 months. It was another little girl named Orrel.

By Carol Laun

Curator, Granby Historical Society and member SGHRL

LEARNING MORE ABOUT WORTHINGTON. . .

Dr. Virginia McCormack has written an extensive genealogy of the Worthington settlement entitled *Scioto Company Descendants*. A copy is in the Library's Collections. The Simsbury Historical Society has original documents from the Company in their archives. More information is also available at the Connecticut State Historical Society in Hartford. Worthington, Ohio has an historical society and publishes *The Intelligencer*.

Simsbury Historical Society
800 Hopmeadow Street
Simsbury, CT 06070
860 658-2500
Archivist: Mary Nason

Connecticut State Historical Society
1 Elizabeth Street
Hartford, CT 06105
860 236-5621
Librarian: Judith Ellen Johnson

Worthington Historical Society Library
50 West New England Avenue
Worthington, OH 43085
614 885-1247

THE SCIOTO COMPANY

The Scioto Company was organized in 1802 by a group of New Englanders which included Simsbury residents. The purpose was to settle a town in the northwest area of what is today known as Ohio. James Kilbourne and Nathaniel Little visited the area in search of a possible area for settlement. Through the Chillicothe land office they became acquainted with Thomas Worthington, the government land agent. He was instrumental in helping them choose a location.

Returning to Connecticut, they met with company members and reported on their search. The company decided to contact Jonas Stanbery, a land speculator who was involved in Simsbury land transactions at that time. The company limited their membership to forty persons and agreed to purchase some 16,000 acres. The group finally decided to purchase land north of the settlement originally proposed by James Kilbourne. The land was 75 cents per acre less and was bought sight unseen on Jonas Stanbery's recommendation.

An advance party went out in May 1803 and began construction of houses and common buildings. James Kilbourne had selected the site on the eastern bank of the Whetstone River and ten miles north of the Franklin County seat. By August 1804, thirty eight proprietors shared in the division of property. It is interesting to note that even before the town was settled, a subscription library was established at a meeting in Simsbury.

Some of the Simsbury- area people who settled in Worthington were:

Levi **Buttles** (son of Jonathan Buttles & Jerusha Dibble)

Desiah **Case** (daughter of Elijah Case & Paulina Case)

Ambrose **Case** and his wife, Ruth **Curtis**

Israel **Case** and his wife Joanna **Case**

Job **Case** and his wife Mary **Holcomb**

Ezra **Griswold** and his wife Ruth **Roberts**

Levi **Hayes**

Lemuel Gordon **Humphrey** and his wife Dorcas **Case**

Abner, Chester and Azariah **Pinney** (sons of Abner Pinney and Ruth Gillet)

Zophar **Topping** and his wife Lois **Roberts**

William **Vining** and his wife Huldah **Pinney**

Roswell **Wilcox** and his wife Dorcas **Pinney**

The desire for land led to the formation of many land companies and speculation in the late 1700's and early 1800's in America. Simsbury residents participated in some of these schemes and emigrated west through New York State to Ohio and on to other midwestern states.

*First Settlers of Simsbury***MICHAEL HUMPHREY (Abt 1620-Abt 1695/6)**

One of the best known of the Simsbury settlers, Michael Humphrey came to America before 1643. It is believed that he was born in Lyme Regis, England - the son of Samuel and Susannah Humphreys. Various compiled genealogies claim that he was a passenger on the John and Mary but there does not appear to be any supporting evidence of this fact. It seems more likely that there is some confusion with his wife **Priscilla Grant's** father, Matthew who was indeed a passenger on the ship. The claim that he originally settled in Dorchester, Massachusetts is also unproveable based upon the existing records.

The first mention of him comes in 1643 as being engaged in the manufacture of tar and turpentine at Massaco (Simsbury) with John Griffin. The pine forests to the east of Windsor offered plentiful resources for this trade and the English Crown encouraged the production of these for use by its navy. [It was the penalty against the native Indians for a member of the tribe setting a fire at John Griffin's tar and pitch works that led to the Manahanoose deed and the eventual settlement of Simsbury.]

Michael Humphrey married Priscilla Grant (daughter of Matthew Grant and Priscilla ?) on 14 October 1647 in Windsor, Connecticut. Their seven children were born there. By October 1669, Michael is listed as a freeman of Windsor "now stated inhabitant of Masaco, and this yeare are left out of Windsor list of Estates yet an owned free men of this jurisdiction". When Simsbury burnt to the ground during King Phillip's War, Michael and his family were among the fleeing victims. Yet, they return to rebuild in Simsbury.

Michael's manufacturing and exporting business was carried out with his brother, Samuel from St. Malo, Brittany (France) and there is mention in documents of Michael traveling to the West Indies. It would appear that he moved into the mercantile trade and shipped the tar and pitch back to England and France and returned with goods for the colonies.

A prosperous member of the Church of England the move to Simsbury may have been inspired by the religious tolerance that then existed in the new settlement. He went on to become a deputy to the General Court for Simsbury. He owned land in the Weatogue area of Simsbury and appears to have been active in civic affairs. Although his date of death is unknown, a division of his estate occurred on 19 March 1695/6.

**Next month
this series will
feature:**

John Griffin

and

Luke Hill

*First Settlers of Simsbury***MICHAEL HUMPHREY** *continued*

The children of **Michael Humphrey** and **Priscilla Grant** were:

1. **John** b. 7 June 1650 d. 14 Jan 1697/8 m. **Hannah Griffin**. They had issue:
John, Mary, Thomas, Abigail, Nathaniel, Samuel and Joseph.
2. **Mary** b. 24 Oct 1653 m. **John Lewis** of Windsor 16 June 1675 at Hartford.
They had issue: **Samuel and John.**
3. **Samuel** b. 15 May 1656 d. 15 June 1736 m. **Mary Mills**. They had issue:
Mary, Elizabeth, Samuel, Jonathan, Abigail, Hannah, Charles and Noah.
4. **Sarah** b. 6 March 1658 married **John Burnham** of South Windsor 11 June 1680. They
had issue: **Hannah, Rebecca, Mercy, Mary, Richard, Martha, Esther,**
Charles, Susanna and Michael
5. **Martha** b. 5 Oct 1663 m **John Shipman**
6. **Abigail** b. 23 March 1665 d. 27 June 1697 m. **Lieut. Benjamin Graham** of Hartford 12 Feb
1684
7. **Hannah** b. 21 Oct 1669 m. **Captain John Bull** of Hartford

Sources:

The Humphreys Family in America by Frederick Humphreys, M.D.
The New England Historic Genealogy Register Volume 5, April 1851
A Digest of Early Probate Records by Charles William Mainwaring
The History of Ancient Windsor by Henry R. Stiles
Simsbury Connecticut: Births, Marriages and Deaths from Town Records by Albert C. Bates
SGHRL Family Files
(All available at the Simsbury Genealogical and Historical Research Library)

****UPCOMING EVENTS****

RESEARCHING TOWN RECORDS SEMINAR

Saturday, October 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 Town Clerk, Carolyn Keily and Probate Judge, Glenn Kneirim 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.

FAMILY OPEN HOUSE AT THANKSGIVING

Saturday November 29th 10 AM -3 PM

Thanksgiving seems to get us thinking about our roots. It is an ideal time to start a genealogy project when relatives are here and the conversation naturally turns to family history. Bring your friends and relatives in for a visit. Spend time together sorting out those problem ancestors. Our resources are extensive and expanding all the time. Our staff will be on hand to help you get started. Admission is free. Refreshments will be served.



SIMSBURY FREE LIBRARY

749 Hopmeadow St.

P.O. Box 484

Simsbury, CT 06070

860 658-5382

E-mail: genehist@miracle.net

<http://www2.miracle.net/~genehist>

Open Thurs-Sat 10 AM - 3 PM

Stephen E. Simon, Librarian

Dawn Hutchins Bobryk, Newsletter Editor

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