

SIMSBURY

Genealogical and Historical Research Library

Volume 8 Issue 3

Winter 2001-02

Albert Carlos Bates (1865-1954)

His Contribution to Local Genealogical Resources

Anyone who researches a family who lived in Colonial Simsbury, or one of the towns that sprang from it after the Revolutionary War, will inevitably encounter the name Albert Carlos Bates. Bates's book *Simsbury, Connecticut: Births, Marriages and Deaths Transcribed from the Town Records*, commonly called the Simsbury vital records, is perhaps the reference book most used by researchers who come into the Simsbury Genealogical and Historical Research Library (SGHRL). The many transcriptions of public and private records that Bates published during his tenure as Librarian of the Connecticut Historical Society in Hartford both preserved and made much more accessible the raw material from which genealogy and history are written.

Albert Carlos Bates is the only person to merit an entire chapter in Christopher Bickford's book *The Connecticut Historical Society, 1825-1975: A Brief History*. In summary, Bates was a native of East Granby, Connecticut, a farm boy who showed an extraordinary interest in history and genealogy. This caught the attention of his neighbor Frank Butler Gay, who was the librarian for both the Watkinson Library of Reference and the Connecticut Historical Society. In the nineteenth century these two institutions were adjacent to each other at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford. When running both libraries became too much for him, Frank Gay recommended that the historical society hire Albert Bates.

Bates was twenty-seven years old in January 1893 when he accepted the position of Librarian and for the next forty-seven years he devoted himself almost wholly to developing collections and publishing works that are familiar assets of the historical society today. His contribution to research has proved invaluable to generations of historians and genealogists.

Bates's first publication as Librarian of the Connecticut Historical Society was the printed transcription of the handwritten document that he named *Records of the Rev. Roger Viets, Rector of St. Andrew's Simsbury, Conn., and Missionary From the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts: 1763-1800*. The Connecticut Historical Society published one hundred copies of this eighty-four page volume in 1893. The Simsbury Free Library (which opened to the public in 1874) obtained one of the copies and it is still there in SGHRL.

Bates prefaced the volume with a caution that some original document's pages were missing. Thirty years later he found them "on file at the Pension Bureau in Washington, where they had been sent as evidence in a claim for a pension." Having solved the mystery of what had become of them, in 1923 he published an indexed transcript of the pages at the end of his book *Records of Rev. Ransom Warner, 1823-1854, Rector of St. Andrew's Simsbury and Bloomfield,*

St. Peter's Granby and St. John's East Windsor.

In the front of the 1893 book, Bates also included a "Historical Sketch" and a glossary of twenty place names which the reader would encounter in the text. As you would expect, the body of the book contains the record of marriages, christenings, confirmations, and funerals that Roger Viets performed. At the back of the book are an index of people and an index of places. This format is generally characteristic of all of Bates's books and it makes his works most informative and easy for researchers to use.

The second book prepared by Albert Carlos Bates and published by the Connecticut Historical Society was *Rev. Dudley Woodbridge, His Church Record at Simsbury in Conn., 1697-1710*. A hundred copies were printed in 1894 and SGHRL has one of them.

Bates's introductory remarks tell how this manuscript was almost lost. In his book *History of Simsbury, Granby and Canton from 1642 to 1845* (published in 1846), Noah A. Phelps quoted from the Woodbridge manuscript, but the document subsequently disappeared. It turned up at a paper mill where it was about to be ground into pulp to be recycled, as we say today. Bates wrote, "The manuscript owes its present existence to the fact that its extremely tattered and aged appearance caused it to be singled out and preserved from the fate of its companions." Someone showed it to an antiquarian in Middletown, who alerted the First Church of Christ (Congregational) in Simsbury, which, says Bates, "obtained possession of it."

For this book Bates wrote a short introductory history, which includes a summary of the early days of Simsbury's Congregational Church and a brief biography of Rev. Dudley Woodbridge. He also printed a complete transcript of the 1710 inventory of Rev. Woodbridge's estate, a bonus for all local historians. Bates states that the handwriting in the manuscript is that of Thomas Slater, Senior, who was clerk of the church. Also of interest, Bates cited Lucius I. Barber, M.D. as "an authority on Simsbury history" (see the article on the Lucius Barber/Barbours on page five).

Albert Carlos Bates turned to secular records for his third book, *Simsbury, Connecticut Birth, Marriages and Deaths, Transcribed from Town Records*, published in 1898. He says in his opening "Explanatory Note" that Gen. Lucius A. Barbour of Hartford, a descendant of several early settlers of Simsbury, became interested in having the records printed, and he offered "substantial encouragement."

For this ambitious work, Bates culled dates from the late 1600s to the 1830s from five handwritten volumes of the Simsbury Town Records. Simsbury town clerks had interspersed notations of births, marriages and deaths of Simsbury residents almost randomly among other types of records—deeds, town meeting minutes, earmarks for cattle, and such. Bates's transcript amounted to 296 printed pages, to which he added an index of forty-six pages.

The index lists both people and places, and married women are double-indexed to identify them by both their maiden and married names. For more than a hundred years now researchers have been able to pick up Bates's volume and immediately find the names of an ancestor or research subject rather than having to make trips to the Town Hall to pore over the original five volumes, saving the originals much wear and tear and the researchers much travel time.

In 1901 Bates began his four-part Turkey Hills Series with *Records of the Society or Parish of Turkey Hills, now the Town of East Granby, Connecticut, 1737-1781*. The original records had been missing for many years, Bates says in his introduction. In 1876, during the country's Centennial, an inquiry and search resulted in their being discovered "in the garret of the late Deacon Oliver Hayden." In 1900 Bates received permission from the Society to publish a seventy-eight page indexed transcript.

This Bates followed in 1903 with the forty-seven page, indexed *Records of the Second School Society in Granby, now the Town of East Granby, Connecticut, 1796-1855*.

Then in 1907 came *Records of the Congregational Church in Turkey Hills, now East Granby, Connecticut, 1776-1858*. Bates says in his introduction that all the church records before 1776 had been lost. The copy of this book in SGHRL was originally Charlotte Phelps Crofut's personal copy and she added many notes to the text. Crofut, the daughter of Jeffery O. Phelps Jr. and Jane Humphrey, was a descendant of Simsbury's Revolutionary War hero Noah Phelps. She was elected a member of the Connecticut Historical Society in 1906 and was in 1911 one of the founders of the Simsbury Historical Society.* She also served on the board of the Simsbury Free Library.

The final volume of the Turkey Hills Series did not appear until 1947, when Bates published *Sundry Vital Records of and Pertaining to the Present Town of East Granby, Connecticut, 1737-1886*. In this volume he compiled vital records from the town records, cemetery inscriptions, the sexton's records, family records and data from private records and journals. This four volumes series is a remarkable compilation and a gift to his native town.

In 1912 Bates published in the *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society*, vol. 14, "Original Distribution of the Lands in Hartford Among the Settlers, 1639." SGHRL has the two volume facsimile reproduction of this work, published in 1989 by Heritage Books under the title *Hartford, Connecticut Land Records: 1639-1688 and Births, Marriages and Deaths: 1644-1730*. The synopsis on the back cover says that the work contains "a verbatim transcription of all the extant early land records kept by the town of Hartford" and that the records are "an excellent source of names of residents" for the genealogist.

Bates's determination to make records available inevitably extended to military records. In 1903 and 1905 in the *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society*, vols., 9 and 10, he published "Rolls of Connecticut Men in the French and Indian War, 1755-1762." In his introductions to the two installments, Bates tells the story of how State Librarian Charles J. Hoadley, with the help of the antiquarian Judge Sherman Wolcott Adams, acquired the bulk of these rolls after they had been sold to a second hand dealer by the descendants of Col. Thomas Seymour. Why so many original rolls of men who fought in the French and Indian Wars had languished unnoticed in an old desk and boxes for more than a century in the old Seymour house in Hartford was a wonder, but an examination of Col. Seymour's account book revealed how they got there. His accounts "show that he was paid to make copies of provision accounts

* The Connecticut Historical Society no longer elects members. Now membership is encouraged and open to all with payment of dues. The Simsbury Historical Society also has open membership with payment of dues.

and muster rolls and possibly of billeting rolls to be sent to England," Bates wrote. Seymour, who continued to reside in the family homestead until he died in 1829 at the age of ninety-four, kept the originals. The copies that the Connecticut Colony sent to England had disappeared, and were probably destroyed after payments were made, Bates conjectured.

This is just a small sampling of the work Albert Carlos Bates did to preserve and disseminate historical records during his forty-seven year career. By his own count, as chairman of the historical society's publications committee he "compiled, edited and saw through the press more than twenty volumes and fifty pamphlets of the society's publications." He also had monographs published by institutions such as the Acorn Club, the American Antiquarian Society, and by the Connecticut Law Journal. In 1920, he received an honorary degree of M.A. from Trinity College in Hartford.

On the personal side, when he was forty-seven he married forty-year-old Alice Morgan Crocker. Mrs. Bates had been head cataloguer and acting assistant librarian at the Hartford Public Library. After his retirement in 1940, Bates continued to work at his desk at the society as Librarian Emeritus for years until his eyesight failed. At the beginning of his obituary in 1954, the *Hartford Times* lauded Bates as "Connecticut's most distinguished authority on its early history." Today an oil portrait of him hangs on the east wall of the Connecticut Historical Society library's reading room. There patrons can see a trim, mustachioed gentleman with a pleasant, clear-sighted gaze and a manuscript in his hand.

By Mary Jane Springman

The author would like to thank Jean Bishop and Irene Welden for information regarding Charlotte Crofut. She is also grateful for research assistance from the staffs of the Connecticut Historical Society, Connecticut State Archives History and Genealogy Unit, Hartford Public Library, and Simsbury Public Library. In addition to the sources named in the text of this issue's two articles, the author used the following:

Annual Report of the Connecticut Historical Society: Reports and Papers Presented at the Annual Meeting, May 21, 1935. Hartford: By the Society, 1935.

Barber, Donald S. *The Connecticut Barbers: A Genealogy of the Descendants of Thomas Barber of Windsor Connecticut*. 2nd ed. Utica, Kentucky: McDowell Publications, 2001.

Bates, Albert Carlos. *Ancestral Line for Eight Generations of Capt. Lemuel Bates, 1729-1820, With Some Records of his Descendants*. Hartford: By the Author, 1943.

Connecticut Historical Society, 1825-1950. 125th Anniversary booklet.

White, John Barber. *Barber Genealogy: Descendants of Thomas Barber of Windsor, Conn., 1614-1909*. Press of the Nichols Print, 1909; reprint ed., Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books, 1994.

Obituaries in the *Hartford Courant* and the *Hartford Times*.

"*Daughters of the American Revolution Application for Membership/Charlotte Wilcox Phelps Crofut*" manuscript.

On Saturday morning May 4, at 11 A.M. Judith Ellen Johnson, the Genealogist for the Connecticut Historical Society, will be at SGHRL to explain all the many wonderful materials that the Society's Library has to help people with their family history. Her slide presentation is free and everyone is welcome. Bring your questions.

Correction

In the Summer/Fall 2001 newsletter on page thirteen, Ezekiel Phelps should have been listed as having lived in Turkey Hills, rather than Salmon Brook. SGHRL regrets the editing error.

The Lucius Barber/Barbours

Researchers of local history and genealogy soon learn to distinguish Lucius Israel Barber (1806-1889), who lived in Simsbury, from Lucius Albert Barbour (1846-1922) and his son Lucius Barnes Barbour (1878-1934), both of whom lived in Hartford. Simsbury's Lucius I. Barber was a medical doctor. He published *The Burning of Simsbury: A Bicentennial Address, in Commemoration of that Event, Delivered in the Congregational Church in Simsbury, Connecticut on Sabbath Evening, March 26, 1876* and he wrote the chapter on Simsbury for J. Hammond Trumbull's *The Memorial History of Hartford County, Connecticut*, published in 1886. Barber's major work was the 429-page book *A Record and Documentary History of Simsbury*, published posthumously in 1931 by the Abigail Phelps Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Lucius A. Barbour of Hartford had an illustrious business career. According to obituaries in the Hartford newspapers, he was president of the Charter Oak National Bank and of the Colonial National Bank, both of which were absorbed by the Phoenix National Bank. He served on the boards of directors of other financial institutions and was president and treasurer of the Willimantic Linen Company until it became part of the American Thread Company.

He was perhaps even better known for his service in the Connecticut military. In September 1865 at the age of nineteen he enlisted as a private in Battery D (Hartford City Guard) which was attached to the First Regiment of the Connecticut National Guard. He rose through the ranks until he was placed in command of the regiment. In 1879, when he was a member of the Connecticut House of Representatives, he was in charge of Battle Flag Day, when the colors of the Connecticut Civil War regiments were removed from the old arsenal and, with the longest parade anyone could remember, were placed in the State Capitol. In 1881 he was highly praised for his part in the celebration of the centennial of Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown. In 1916 he was marshal of the parade to celebrate the return of Connecticut men from the Mexican War.

More important to the genealogist, Gov. Morgan G. Bulkeley appointed him Adjutant-General of Connecticut in 1889 with the rank of Brigadier-General. That year the General Assembly published the *Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the War of the Revolution, War of 1812, Mexican War* and the *Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the Army and Navy of the United States during the War of the Rebellion*. He and the three Adjutants-General preceding him oversaw the compiling and publication of these two major military reference works.

It is interesting to know that Lucius I. Barber and the Lucius Barbours shared common ancestors. They were all descended from Thomas Barber, who emigrated from England to Windsor, Connecticut, in 1635 in the company led by Francis Stiles. His son, also Thomas, was one of the first settlers of Simsbury. Lt. Thomas Barber is best known today for having had the first gristmill and sawmill in the town and for having built the first meeting house. It was with his sons that the two lines diverged. Lucius I. Barber was descended from Lt. Thomas's son Thomas and the Lucius Barbours were descended from Lt. Thomas's son Samuel.

Samuel's widow Sarah and her six children moved to the Parish of West Simsbury (now Canton) in 1738. SGHRL owns Lucius A. Barbour's personal copy of Abiel Brown's 1856 book *Genealogical Sketches of the Early Settlers of West Simsbury, Now Canton, Conn.* to which he added notations in an attempt to correct errors and enlarge upon the printed information. These notations are helpful to researchers because, although there has been a facsimile reproduction of Brown's book, there has never been a second edition, which could have included corrections and additions.

Lucius A. Barbour's son, Lucius B. Barbour, was a 1900 Yale graduate who shared his father's

Continued on page six.

Some Recent Acquisitions

The Barbour Collection of Connecticut Town Vital Records: Rocky Hill 1765-1854, Roxbury 1796-1835, Salem 1836-1852, Salisbury 1741-1846, Saybrook 1635-1850, Sharon 1739-1865, Sherman 1802-1850, Simsbury 1670-1855, Somers 1734-1850, Southbury 1787-1830, Southington 1779-1857, South Windsor 1845-1851, Sterling 1794-1850, Stratford 1639-1840, Stamford 1641-1852, Stonington 1658-1854, Stafford 1719-1850, Tolland 1715-1850, Suffield 1674-1850, Thompson 1785-1850 edited by Lorraine Cook White (All volumes donated by the Abigail Phelps Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution)

A Genealogical Register of the Descendants in the Male Line of Robert Day of Hartford, Conn. Who Died in the Year 1648, Second Edition (reprint)

Kentucky 1890 Census Index of Civil War Veterans or Their Widows (Second Edition) compiled by Bryan Lee Dilts

Mary Payne McLean, 1820-1906 by William Roger Greeley (donated by Martha Daniels Austin)

Record of the Descendants of James Ensign and His Wife Sarah Elson compiled and published by Martha Eunice Ensign Nelson (donated by Jim Holcombe)

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

The Seventeenth-Century Town Records of Scituate, Massachusetts, vols. 1-3, by Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs

Ye Countie of Albemarle in Carolina: A Collection of Documents, 1664-1675 edited by William S. Powell (donated by Celia A. Roberts)

Your Guide to the Family History Library by Paula Stuart Warren and James W. Warren (donated in memory of Catharine Sherman by Alix Paull Schultz)

Vital Records of Charlestown Massachusetts to the Year 1850, vol. 2, parts 1 and 2, compiled and edited by Roger D. Joslyn

Continued from page five.

enthusiasm for both military service and history. His business career included positions with several companies, including the paving and concrete contractors The Edward Balf Company, where he was vice-president and treasurer, and Roy T. H. Barnes Company. In the military he was captain of Company K First Connecticut Infantry. He also served as the commander of the First Company, Governor's Foot Guard and he served as Quartermaster-General with the rank of Brigadier-General on Gov. Everett J. Lake's staff.

In 1911 the General Assembly appointed him Examiner of Public Records, a post that he held for the rest of his life. He produced the monumental work that is now known as *The Barbour Collection of Connecticut Town Vital Records* that fills many slip file drawers in the Connecticut State Archives History and Genealogy Unit (see "Some Recent Acquisitions" on page six). He also contributed to the State Archives the *Lucius Barnes Barbour Genealogical Collection* that contains his notes and manuscripts dealing with all manner of records, including gravestone inscriptions, church records, land records and the like, from towns all over the state. This collection is so large that the entries for it take up more than two inches in the card catalogue drawer. In 1977 the Connecticut Society of Genealogists used some of Barbour's notes to produce the book *Families of Early Hartford, Connecticut*.

SIMSBURY MARRIAGES

Date	Name	Age	Farmer	Birthplace
Mar. 6, 1867	Frederick Ellsworth	34	Farmer	Windsor
	Ellen Fuller	29		Simsbury
Apr. 21, 1867	Fredcrick H. Lampson	21	Farmer	Granby
	Maggie A. Andrews	25		Enfield
Apr. 28, 1867	Michael Dillon	43	Farmer	Ireland
	Margaret Gorman	31		Ireland
May 26, 1867	James Morrison	21	Farmer	Scotland
	Mary Connors	19		Ireland
May 5, 1867	Cornelius Keliher	24	Farmer	Ireland
	Mary Murphy	23		Ireland
June. 25, 1867	Patrick Sloan	24	Farmer	Ireland
	Mary McWilliams	20		Ireland
June. 20, 1867	Asa Hoskins	43	Farmer	Simsbury
	Adella L. Case	24		Simsbury
July 2, 1867	Samuel Ashwell	23	Farmer	Bloomfield
	Josephine S. Shepard	21		Simsbury
Apr. 21, 1867	Thomas Donahue	26	Farmer	Ireland
	Sarah Riley	25		Ireland
July 11, 1867	Luther Reed, Jr.	21	Farmer	Simsbury
	Jennie E. Woodruff	15		Avon
Aug. 31, 1867	Edward M. Merriman	24	Joiner	Hartland
	Ella Post	22		New York
Sept. 11, 1867	Augustus H. Warner	29	Unknown	Bristol
	Mary E. Siddelle	21		Simsbury
Sept. 25, 1867	Edward S. Smith	24	Unknown	Bridgeport
	Belle G. Marks	23		Simsbury
Oct 15, 1867	Porter E. Bacon	19	Farmer	Simsbury
	Ophelia A. Case	16		Barkhamsted
Jan. 1, 1868	Andrew Jones	21	Farmer	Pennsylvania
	Sallie Hennison	20		Richmond
Jan. 1, 1868	Charles Harris	26	Farmer	Fredericksburg, Va.
	Elizabeth Johnn(?)	27		Salsbury, N. Carolina

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

GENEALOGY TALK WITH SLIDES

"Genealogical Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society"
Judith Ellen Johnson

Judith Ellen Johnson, the genealogist at the Connecticut Historical Society in Hartford, will present an hour-long lecture with slides, "Genealogical Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society." She will speak not only about CHS's vast genealogical collections, but also about its manuscript collections, which are often overlooked as sources of genealogical information.

Ms. Johnson developed this presentation for the 1994 biennial conference in Farmington, Connecticut, of Boston's respected New England Historic Genealogical Society.

Saturday, May 4, 2002
11 A.M.
At the Library

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



SIMSBURY FREE LIBRARY

749 Hopmeadow Street

P.O. Box 484

Simsbury, CT 06070

860 658-5382

E-mail: genehist@micro-net.com

Open Thurs.-Sat. 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Stephen E. Simon, Librarian & Genealogist

Mary Jane Springman, Editor

FIRST CLASS