



# THE DUTCHESS NEWSLETTER

*Dutchess County Genealogical Society*

P. O. Box 708, Poughkeepsie, New York 12602-0708

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• **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

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A DCGS member has noted that some New York counties have a combined "Department of Archives and History", where one can go to see not only official documents like vital records, old deeds and court records, etc, but also collections of published indexes, church records, county histories and biographies, maps, and other genealogical materials. He asks if Dutchess County has such a facility.

Dutchess County does have a Records Management Center and Archives that first opened in 1989, and is presently located at 170 Washington St., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 (tel# 845-486-3445). Visiting hours at the Archives are 9:30 - 12:30, 1:30 - 4:30, Monday through Friday. It is necessary to make an appointment before visiting because there is usually only one full-time clerk employed in the archives with some part-time help.

The NY State Archives has developed schedules that local governments use in developing their own policies about when to dispose of official agency records or how long they should be stored in a suitable facility. According to state law, local governments need written approval from the State Archives to dispose of records created before 1910, regardless of the retention period listed in a State Archives retention schedule, because these records may have continuing historical or research value. The purpose of the Dutchess County Records Management building seems focused more on the legally-mandated storage of official records than archival support for, and retrieval of, historical documents.

The greatest volume of material at the Archives consists of the records of modern county agencies that are legally required but of little genealogical interest to us. Historical materials that were once housed by the County Clerk have been moved to the Archives (for example, the Ancient Documents), as well as some old tax lists, county marriage

records 1908-1935, records from the Board of Elections, etc. The Research Room in the Archives where the public can examine documents also has bookshelves holding miscellaneous materials that once belonged to the County Historian's Office, which is currently vacant.

Other facilities in the county that have historical/genealogical collections include the Dutchess County Historical Society in Poughkeepsie with over 10,000 books, documents, maps and photographs; Adriance Memorial Library (the Poughkeepsie public library) which has a Local History Room and a non-circulating genealogy collection; and our own DCGS Library in the Poughkeepsie LDS Family History Center (where we have virtually no shelf space left).

Local public libraries in towns around the county also have smaller collections relating to their locality, and there are a number of historical sites with museum exhibits and collections, including the Roosevelt Library & Museum, on the grounds of the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site in Hyde Park which has many old original documents pertinent to the local area because President Roosevelt was interested in local history.

However, county government gives minimal support to the history/genealogy interests of Dutchess County - the County Historian's Office has been vacant for years for lack of funding and there are no professional archivists on staff at the Archives. The historical society, Adriance, and our own library have very limited space constraints.

So, in answer to the question of whether Dutchess County has any kind of large centralized facility with professional staff and adequate space to collect both primary and secondary historical and genealogical materials (much less a state of the art facility), I would have to say that, unfortunately, the answer is "No".

• **WEB THREADS -  
LOCATING VITAL RECORDS IN DUTCHESS  
COUNTY**

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**Coming to our Website Soon** - Soon you will be able to check our website regarding the availability of various vital records from the specific towns, villages, and cities that are in

Dutchess County. This information will be added to the website over the next several weeks. Be sure to check out our new Vital Records section of the website and visit often for new additions. The website is at <http://www.dcgsgen.org>.

With few exceptions, records held in Albany and those held in municipalities do not begin before 1880 requirement. At first, compliance was sporadic. However, if the record you want exists at the municipality, contacting the local town or village directly may offer a speedier alternative than the State which often has backlog delays.

Specifically, we have recently surveyed each town, village, and city in Dutchess County regarding their vital records. We asked questions such as: what records do they have, what years are the records from, how does one request a record, what fees are involved, and in what form can one expect the data (photocopy of original? transcription?). Many thanks go especially to Linda Koehler, our president, for all her hard work on this project.

Now, much of this is in and we are in the process of compiling it and getting it onto the website. In the coming weeks you can expect to see detailed information about vital records from these towns, villages, and cities:

We are happy to be adding this information to the website and think it will prove helpful to many of our members and visitors. As always, we are open to new ideas regarding the website and new volunteers to help with projects. Please get in touch with us at the website if you have any suggestions or would like to help!

• **RESOURCES:**

**SOME LOCAL GENEALOGISTS**

Nancy Kelly reporting

The work of local genealogists in Dutchess County is a valuable source of information that is often overlooked.

One of the earliest is **Edward M. Smith**, a historian and journalist whose work was published in the late 19th Century. He wrote newspaper columns about various families in Rhinebeck and at least two books. His best known work, "Documentary History of Rhinebeck" incorporates much of the genealogical information he collected. His "History of Kipsbergen", recently republished, is a genealogy of the early Dutch settlers in Rhinecliff. The DCHS has a scrapbook containing many of his articles as published in the Rhinebeck Gazette. Chancellor Livingston Chapter, NSDAR has a collection of Edward Smith's papers in the DAR collection at the Starr Library, Rhinebeck.

**George Van Vliet** of Clinton Corners was an early member of the DC Historical Society and active in the Holland Society. His scrap books and genealogy papers centered on Clinton and Rhinebeck families. The collection is now at the DCHS with photocopies in our own DCGS library.

**Helen W. Reynolds** did extensive family research for her book on Dutch Houses in the Hudson Valley. Her files on the families involved are at the local history room, Adriance library and contain much information that is often overlooked.

President **Franklin D. Roosevelt** was interested in local history and genealogy. The collection he amassed is at the F.D.R. Library in Hyde Park. The library is often thought of as a source for the study of his presidency but should be seriously considered for local research and access to National Archive microfilm.

**Alvah Frost**, who died in the 1960's, studied many Clinton and Rhinebeck families and compiled many notebooks filled with information. Originals are in the DCHS library with copies in the DAR collection, Starr Library, Rhinebeck.

**Clifford Burnett**, was a Rhinecliff genealogist who died about 1968. His life's work, notebooks and papers were about to be discarded when rescued by members of the local DAR. A typewritten copy of his notes was made by Arthur Kelly and has been fully indexed.

Several living genealogists have extensive private papers. **Clifford Buck**, a longtime member of the DCHS and DCGS has specialized in research through the use of land records. His book, "18th Century Documents of the Great Nine Partners Patent", written with William McDermott, covers families from the central part of the county and is well indexed. He has an extensive personal file of local families resulting from his years of research and correspondence.

**Frank Dogherly** has focused on the Town of Beekman. The first book of a series, "The Settlers of the Town of Beekman", contains much important background material. The next book of the series will include specific family information. His attention to detail is apparent.

**Christine Crawford-Oppenheimer's** *Long-Distance Genealogy* (Cincinnati, Ohio : Betterway Books, Sep. 2000, 246 p. : ill.) will show you how to make the world a smaller place--one in which the information you need waits no further than a post office, library or keystroke away. Christine Crawford-Oppenheimer, MLS, librarian, archivist, genealogist, author and lecturer, is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists and the Genealogical Speakers Guild. She has spoken at several national conferences, and her articles have appeared in the National Genealogical Society Quarterly, the Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine, the Western Pennsylvania Genealogical Society Quarterly, and Everton's Genealogical Helper. (this par. added by "ed." from various sites)

**Arthur C.M. Kelly** has been compiling source books such as church vital records, newspaper marriage and death notices and cemetery records for the past twenty-five years. These are intended to make original source material more accessible to researchers and more easily used via indexes. As a professional researcher, he has collected extensive family files.

This is only the beginning! Apologies to other genealogists who have not been mentioned here. We will try to cover their work in future columns.

- **LIBRARY REPORT**

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The Library was closed for several weeks at the end of August but we have now returned to our regular hours: Tuesday 9am - 2pm, Wednesday 59pm, Thursday 9am - noon and 7-9pm. The DCGS librarian is always at the library on Tuesdays. If you are coming from a distance to visit the library, it is advisable to call ahead to check on the hours, since the library is manned by volunteers and cannot always be covered in the event of an emergency. Or if DCGS members know they will be visiting in the area but the hours are not convenient, call the librarian and we can arrange to open the library by appointment (Linda Koehler, home telephone # 845-462-2361, e-mail <lckoehlr@optonline.net>).

We are in the process of computerizing our card catalog. Most of the books in the library are now on the computer and we are adding other media (microfilm and microfiche, CD-ROMs) as we have the time. We believe that this will make it easier for everyone to consult the catalog, which in the crowded conditions of the library was somewhat hard to reach in the past. This is for use on the computers in the FHC, we do not have any on-line capabilities.

**New materials in the library -**

*Ostrander. A Genealogical Record 1660-1995.* By Emmett Ostrander, et al. Ostrander Family Association, 1999. 931pp, photos, indexed. Donated by the OFA. From Peiter Pieterzen of Amsterdam who arrived in America in 1660 and settled in Ulster County, this book traces more than 17,500 descendants in fifteen generations well into the 20th century. Some of the earliest generations lived in Dutchess & Columbia County before spreading west and north. Documentation is sparse but having so many lines followed into the present time, as well as recording unconnected families, should be a great help to anyone researching their connection to this family.

*New York: Dutchess County 1930 population census schedules.* United States Bureau of the Census. 15th census. 3 rolls of 35 mm. microfilm of original records in The National Archives, Washington, D.C. NARA Series T626, Rolls 1419-1421 (ED #14-1 to #14-90). There is no index to the 1930 census for Dutchess County. However, we do have descriptions of the Dutchess County Enumeration Districts (gives the north, east, south and west bounds of a district) and a modern-day street atlas of the county, so if you have an address or approximate location you may at least be able to reduce the amount of film you need to browse through in searching your family.

Shirley Learned sent us the following note: "My cousins and I have been preparing an updated record of the descendants of **Isaac Vail (1814-1884) and his wife Phebe Ann Mitchell (1817-1878)** who raised a family of ten

children on a farm in Dutchess County during the middle 1800's. Right now the draft is 21 pages of single-spaced size 14-point print, printed on both sides of 8-1/2 x 11 bond. We have been unable to locate some descendants and wonder if there might be any still in the Dutchess County area.... When the update is finally done, a copy will go to the DCGS and to each of the contributors."

Shirley has deposited a copy of the draft in our library for any interested parties to read and in the hopes of contacting other descendants. She asks that anyone who has additional information contact her directly by mail, e-mail or phone.

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- **MEMBERSHIP**

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Membership listings are a benefit of membership. Updates are published in the written versions of this newsletter which are distributed to all current members

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