



THE DCGS NEWSLETTER

Dutchess County Genealogical Society
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<http://www.dcgs-gen.org>

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1

Contents

President's Notes	1
Census notes	1
Spring meeting – Members helping members	2
Fall 2009 meeting photo	2
NEHGR adds an Annual Supplement	2
Dutchess genealogy in other journals	3
NYG&B – news items & upcoming	3
Membership (the list is separate)	4
Call for contributions	4

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

By Valerie LaRobardier

I have been busy these days working outside my office for the US Census Bureau. Right now I am in the main local office in Pawling, NY, helping to get the enumeration process ready for counting those residents of group homes in Dutchess, Putnam and Ulster Counties. Most of these locations have already been visited to see if they are occupied, to learn what the best time is to return for enumeration, and to verify the contact person and about how many residents are expected on April 1. Another process that has begun is called Update/Leave. The homes in areas considered remote get a questionnaire hand delivered in case it does not come in the mail. At that time the resident can be told a little about the requirement to fill it out. My home was visited last Thursday and a questionnaire was dropped off. There are centers located in each region to assist people filling out their questionnaires.

We genealogists all rely so heavily on the census of our distant past. I find it fascinating to learn of the similarities and differences then and now.

Notes on the Census

Valerie LaRobardier

Since 1790 the United States Federal government has attempted to count every man, woman and child each decade. The population is enumerated as it exists on a specific day—this time that day is the first of April, as it has been every ten years since 1930. Before that the day varied as well as the time allowed for counting, but one thing has never changed—the count is supposed to represent the population as it existed on the day chosen as Census Day. So, for 2010, a child born April 2 will not be enumerated this decade, even if the information is physically taken on April 10.

The rules were not always necessarily clearly understood by those interviewed. The information could also be supplied by neighbors who might not be sure when the person next door had given birth or died. Thus, our challenge as genealogists is intensified by not knowing for sure how much weight to place on any one piece of information. For that reason we attempt to track the family over several decades to get a more accurate picture. We sometimes find that a four-year old daughter one decade will become a teenage son with similar name the next.

Prior to 1850, the census did not give names for each individual. Rather the head of household was named, and the others living in the home were represented with tally marks in age, gender and race columns. In 1790 there were only five columns, white males 16 and older, white males under 16, white females, slaves and “all other free persons”. As the decades progressed the age groupings became more specific, such as “5 and under” or “10-19”. Additional columns for occupation appeared in some years, telling how many were engaged in agriculture, manufacturing, commerce, navigation and so forth. The 1840 census gave the name and age of any war veteran residing in the home, helpfully identifying for us many Revolutionary War soldiers. With the

scarcity of other early vital record data we must make the most of the information we extract from these marks.

Though the tally marks with approximate age groupings are obscure clues, if tracked over several decades we can tell quite a bit about an individual, by working back and forth. Find the first census where a known ancestor appears as head of household and list the marks as people. You may not know much about these people at first, and may have to use names like “wife” and “son 1”. Be cautious in assuming family relationships, as some folks in the household could be relatives or farm hands. But, you must begin with a few assumptions. Then search the available local and family histories, cemetery transcriptions and available church and vital records for clues about people with that surname. The process is slow but rewarding. You may find a fragment in a published local genealogy that says a certain man “married a daughter of [your ancestor] and settled in [nearby town name]”. You can then search out the census of 1850 and later for that man, find his wife’s name and year of birth, and plug that name into a mark in your ancestor’s household. In this way you continue to learn more and more about your ancestor’s family.

Though personally identifiable information taken in the census is not released for 74 years, demographic statistics are. These data are used to help determine your representation in government, as well as how federal funds are spent in your community. Demographic statistics are heavily relied upon to determine what areas are “good” target areas to market specific types of products. In modern times we may consider it unlikely that current census records will someday be used to reconstruct the details of a family's composition. Though technology has dramatically changed the information gathering process as well as increased the detail captured, today, as in 1790, much work is still completed by individual enumerators, in person, making lists.

Members Helping Members

by Valerie LaRobardier

Our traditional January meeting on Jan. 19 was an informal, open forum where attendees discussed their research problems to see if others had suggestions to help them. Attendees were also invited to

share research breakthroughs and tell how they made them.

A picture from the Fall 2009 general meeting –



Photo by Betty Griffin

From left to right:

Valerie LaRobardier, President
 Gil Leach, Corresponding Secretary
 Christine Crawford-Oppenheimer, V.P. Projects
 Daniel M. Lynch, Our Guest Speaker
 and author of *Google Your Family Tree*
 Roland Ormsby, V.P. Membership

New England Historical and Genealogical Register Adds an Annual Supplement

Christine Crawford-Oppenheimer

The NEHGS Register has added a new annual section to its October issue, called ‘American Ancestors Journal.’ According to the Register, “The creation of this new vehicle for communicating valuable scholarship beyond New England will serve our geographically diverse audience with first rate content and, at the same time, broaden our institutional reach.... ‘American Ancestors Journal’ provides readers genealogical content of national scope, with an emphasis on New York State and out migrations from New England....”

So, if your New York ancestors came from New England, this new section may provide something useful for you, or you may want to write up an article about them to submit for this section. Another reason to join NEHGS!

Dutchess County in Other Genealogical Magazines

Christine Crawford-Oppeneimer

Cummings, Abbott Lowell. "Revolutionary War Captain Cornelius Wiltsie of Pittstown, New York. The New England Historical and Genealogical Register 163 (October 2009): 353-367.

Allen, Madeline McLaughlin. "Ancestry of Solomon4 and Susannah (Delamater) Goodrich of Sharon, Connecticut. The New England Historical and Genealogical Register 164 (January 2010): 23-35

NEWS FROM THE NYG&B

<http://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/>

Dozens of photographs from the September "New Netherland Roots" and the November "Research in Albany 2009" programs have been posted to our web site. Please visit the Home page for links to both sets of photos.

The New-York Historical Society Tour: Wednesday, March 18, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Joseph Ditta, Reference Librarian, will provide an orientation on the genealogically pertinent holdings at the Historical Society. Registrants will have time for research on their own.

Registration - \$25 members/\$40 non-members. You may sign up via NYG&B online store or by calling 212-626-6853.

NYG&B & NYPL JOINT LECTURES AT NYPL

These lectures will be accompanied with Power-Point presentations, and will run about 50 minutes with handouts and time for questions afterwards.

Lectures are free and no registration is required. They will be held at 5:30 at the New York Public Library, 5th Ave, between 40th & 42nd Streets, in the South Court Classrooms, First Floor (off Astor Hall):

Of City-Slickers and Straphangers: Researching Urban Ancestors, March 24, 2010, at 5:30 p.m.

Researching urban ancestors is fraught with difficulties. Dealing with large populations, multiple people by the same name, and the tendency of many city-dwellers to move frequently demands a unique approach to research and an understanding of which records will be most useful.

**Laura Murphy DeGrazia, CGSM,
member of the NYG&B Education Committee,
and president,
Board for Certification of Genealogists.**

Trace Your Roots with DNA April 13, 2010, at 5:30 p.m.

DNA is the latest in a growing number of tools to find your family origins and connections. Learn how DNA testing may help advance your research.

**Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak,
member of the NYG&B, and
Chief Genealogist for Ancestry.com**

ONGOING EXHIBITS

New-York Historical Society Lincoln and New York 9 Oct 2009 - 25 Mar 2010

This Lincoln Bicentennial exhibition of original artifacts, iconic images, and documents, many in Lincoln's hand, fully traces for the first time the evolution of Lincoln's relationship to New York: from his 1860 Cooper Union address, to his efforts to preserve the Union, and to the wartime threat to civil liberties.

Brooklyn Historical Society Pages of the Past: The Breukelen Adventures of Jasper Danckaerts 6 Jun 2009 - 2 May 2010

Jasper Danckaerts came to New York in search of land for a religious colony. For 200 years

Danckaerts' meticulously written and illustrated diaries lay undiscovered until found in 1864, in an Amsterdam book store. Now an important part of the BHS collection and an invaluable primary resource for scholars, the diaries are featured in an installation at BHS in celebration of the 400 Years of the Dutch in New York.

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Mapping New York's Shoreline, 1609-2009
25 Sep 2009 - 26 Jun 2010

D. Samuel and Jeane H. Gottesman Exhibition
Hall (First Floor, NY Public Library)

Mapping New York's Shoreline celebrates the Dutch accomplishments in the New York City region, especially along the waterways forming its urban watershed, from the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound to the North (or Hudson) River and the South (or Delaware) River.

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Online Exhibit:

The Deadly Virus: The Influenza Epidemic of 1918

<http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/influenza-epidemic/>

Ed. note: this site works in IE7, but not in Netscape!

It is an oddity of history that the influenza epidemic of 1918 has been overlooked in the teaching of American history. Documentation of the disease is ample, as shown in the records selected from the holdings of the National Archives regional archives. Exhibiting these documents helps the epidemic take its rightful place as a major disaster in world history.

Partner Program, April 20, 2010 at 5:30 p.m.:

Do you have an ancestor who was a Mayflower passenger and have an interest in joining the **Society of Mayflower Descendants** in the State of New York? Sarah Morse, Executive Director, will explain in detail the process for documenting your application and becoming part of that organization. This program meets in the NYG&B's lovely new headquarters at 36 West 44th Street. Tickets include refreshments and are \$15 for G&B members/\$25 non-members. A credit will be applied towards the cost of joining the Mayflower organization if you begin the application process before May 1. Reservations are required and attendance is limited to 30.

Book via NYG&B online store or call NYG&B at 212-755-8532, ext. 211.

Membership

The complete member list will be printed separately from this Newsletter.

DCGS members! This is your Newsletter!

You are invited for every issue to submit interesting news items, experiences, comments, etc.! (Actual genealogies and Queries go to The Dutchess.) If you attend a genealogy meeting somewhere, you can send a report of what you experienced, things that might be helpful to someone else – particularly interesting speakers or subjects, associated activities like vendor booths or city tours, and so on. Photographs are always of interest. Experiences doing, or trying to do, research in various facilities locally and farther away, and your impressions of how well served you were on such visits and what others might do in preparation for visiting a facility might be helpful. Stories from your family traditions and how they pointed you toward actual or possible research might help others, and suggestions on interviewing family members – all the little things that would not go into a more formal journal are candidates for the Newsletter.

Your editor (that's me right now) may edit your submissions, and may contact you (usually by email!) to help optimize your material for the Newsletter. But this is your chance to pass on to others some of your genealogical wisdom so it won't be lost.

If you aren't sure whether something might be of interest, send it along and find out! "Snail mail" is OK, but I work best by email and can use material from a message directly as well as most kinds of attachments for writing or images. You will be helping your colleagues-in-research, our readers.

J. Douglas Leith, Newsletter editor

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