



# THE DCGS NEWSLETTER

Dutchess County Genealogical Society

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<http://www.dcgs-gen.org>

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## President's Message

*Valerie LaRobardier, President*

### Using genealogy to enhance historical events and displays

Genealogists know the value of historical records and local histories in researching a family tree. As town historian I have re-



cently needed to consult genealogy research to provide historical answers. The town recently received a donation of property adjacent to the Dover Stone Church. This acquisition will be managed by the Dutchess Land Conservancy. They are building an information kiosk to be added for the June 6<sup>th</sup> ribbon cutting ceremony and they reached out to me hoping I could provide local agricultural history. I did

know that the Vincent Farm has been in continuous operation for seven generations, and as luck would have it I did have a photograph of the home of the first owner, Absalom Vincent, but I needed to check with the family to make sure I had the number of generations correct. I learned that the family donating the property was also descended of Absalom Vincent, and that the Vincent family had at one time owned many contiguous farms on that side of the valley. Absalom's brother, Isaac was born in Union Vale and came to Dover, operating the first store at Chestnut Ridge, where he was also the first postmaster. The farm and store passed to his son Edgar, and then later to his daughter Phebe Ann who married Obed Wing. Obed himself was the postmaster for many years as well as Town



Supervisor in 1861, 1862 and 1872. Obed's father Jackson Wing and his wife Hannah Preston had the drovers inn in Wingdale, now gone. Jackson's sister Amy and Hannah's brother John operated the inn now known as Old Drovers that served as the first town hall. Jackson Wing's cousin Mahlon and his wife Sally

Tabor lived in the current home of the Dover Historical Society, the Tabor-Wing House. And so it comes full circle, right back to two of our neighboring sites on the National Register of Historic Places, the Tabor-Wing House and the Dover Stone Church.

### Six degrees of separation

As a companion event the Dover Historical Society will hold an open house and sign dedication at the Tabor-Wing House, conveniently located across the street from the Dover Stone Church. The main display will feature the history of the Stone Church regarding the Legend of Sassacus and how it came to be passed down to Benson Lossing. For fact checking my content I turned to a Native descended of three Schaghticoke families to make sure my information on Eunice Mauwee was correct. In the process I was exposed to family trees and genealogy documents as well as historical references. Imagine my surprise when the name of one of my ancestors, Austin Bearse of Barnstable, jumped out at me from the pages of the document. I still have to check my sources to make sure that I am in fact also descended of Austin Bearse, but it seems there is a fair chance I may have just a wee bit of Native blood. This would please my father who grew up in northern Maine and always claimed this to be the case.

### Civil War leader John Henry Ketcham's family

Dover is hosting a county wide history fair and Civil War Weekend June 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> at Thomas Boyce Park in Wingdale, NY,. We plan to feature displays on the people involved and their everyday life. With that thought in mind I began to research the family life of General John Henry Ketcham of the 150<sup>th</sup> "Dutchess" Volunteer Regiment of the New York Infantry, a native



and lifelong resident of the Town of Dover. I began with the census but the entries there were not as detailed as I had hoped so I turned to Ancestry family trees and found one that had wonderful portraits for J. H. Ketcham's wife and children. I wrote to the owner to get permission to use these photos and was rewarded with considerable additional family information. We were also delighted to hear that the family may be able to attend, though they no longer live nearby.

### Membership

*Roland Ormsby, Membership VP*  
[reormsby@optonline.net](mailto:reormsby@optonline.net)

The 2014/2015 Surname Index has been updated and released to the Members-only Content of the Dutchess County Genealogical Society web-site.

## Volunteers Needed

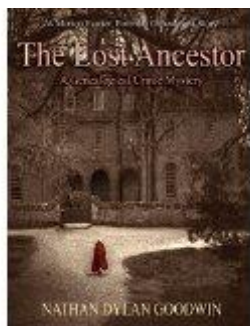
*Valerie LaRobardier, President*

We are still looking for individuals who would like to help out by transcribing for our members only page. This activity can be handled remotely so any member might apply. If you would like to learn more please send an email to [dcgsinfo@aol.com](mailto:dcgsinfo@aol.com) with "Volunteer inquiry" in the subject line.

## Book Review

*Valerie LaRobardier, President*

### ***"The Lost Ancestor" by Nathan Dylan Goodwin***



Genealogists love a good mystery—detective work being the main ingredient and perhaps the most compelling facet of genealogy work. The Lost Ancestor is the second

in a series featuring forensic genealogist Morton Farrier. It can easily stand alone, and I did not need to read the first of the series in order to enjoy this book; but I will tell you that I plan to collect the series and read the first one next.

The book is partly set in present day England where Morton works as a freelance genealogist using his skills to solve mysteries. His house mate and love interest is a police detective, providing both a help to Morton and a challenge when she disappears of his occasionally stepping a bit

outside the lines conducting his research. For this case Morton tries to discover what happened to Mary Mercer, the great aunt of his client. Mary was the client's grandmother's twin who disappeared in 1911. She had been employed at a nearby Downton Abbey like estate as a maid. The narrative shifts back and forth between present day and 1911 Blackfriars. Part of the story is revealed in the telling of Morton's methodical research conducted both on line and on site at the estate and nearby government archives. Then the scene shifts into the past to give us a closer look at Mary's life and the characters that were important to her leading up to her disappearance.

Morton's client is quite ill and does not have long to live. This, coupled with unknown forces that apparently do not want the details of Mary's disappearance to come to light, adds suspense and urgency to the search, elements that we do not normally find in genealogy research. There is not much more I could say about it without revealing too much, thus spoiling the fun of reading it yourself. The book is well written and would certainly appeal to the non-genealogist as well.

## VP of Publications Position Open!

*Valerie LaRobardier, President*

Board Member Ellie Shortle has served the Society long and well and now she wishes to take her well-deserved retirement. The society needs someone willing to stuff envelopes 4 times a year, fill out a form online for the USPS and take the envelopes to the Poughkeepsie post office before

noon. Beth Schneider is willing to help with the envelope stuffing part. The quarterly dates for mailing *The Dutchess* are: Sept 15th, Dec 15th, March 15th and June 15th. We usually delay the Sept mailing until the first week of October to allow for annual member subscription renewals to be logged. The position also may include preparing content for *The Dutchess*, if this board member so wishes. Although this work is needed just four times a year, it is critical to our success!

**Announcement from Dutchess  
County Historian Will Tatum  
(and great news for genealogists!)**

*Valerie LaRobardier, President*

The first 12,000 pages of the Ancient Documents Collection (Dutchess County Court Records) have been digitized. The County is now in an alpha test with the online search portal for these records. We anticipate this portal going live for the general public late this year. This project will provide free universal access to the Ancient Documents via the Internet and a keyword search. Phase II imaging, which will add another 25,000 pages of material to the online archive, is currently underway. We are applying for Phase III funding to image another 25,000 pages of material, which will take us into the nineteenth-century portion of the collection, never before indexed or digitized.