



# THE DCGS NEWSLETTER

Dutchess County Genealogical Society

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

Vol. 23, No. 2

Winter 2015

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## President's Message

*Valerie LaRobardier, President*

Dutchess had a melting pot very early on in our history. Dutch settlers worked their way north from Manhattan or south from Albany and Kingston and settled along the river. As the patents opened up lease farming they moved west throughout the county. Quakers came from Rhode Island, Long Island and Queens and settled throughout the county...Nine Partners, Oblong, Oswego, Clinton Corners, Poughquag, Dover, Crum Elbow, Little Nine Partners, West Branch in Lagrange and Stanfordville were all established before 1800. Congregationalists from Massachusetts and Rhode Island settled in Stonington Connecticut eventually pushed west across the state settling in the Oblong. Palatines settlers came from Germany in 1709 and settled in Columbia County and in the northern Dutchess towns. Quakers freed their slaves long in advance of the Abolitionist movement, so Dutchess also had many free African American families by 1800. Later Italian masons came and the Irish built the railroads.

Upon this patchwork quilt of ethnicities the dramas of our early history played out. Populations shifted and developed and families left the county migrating over a variety of routes. Some headed west right from here and moved across Pennsyl-

vania to Ohio and points west while others went north along the river or along the eastern state border and then moved west from some other point, or continued north to Canada, always pushing forward into new frontiers. Of course, Dutchess is not the only stepping off point for these various migrations...and yet it is truly surprising how many people throughout the country tracing their ancestry eventually find themselves looking in Dutchess County for their roots.

## 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.

## DCGS Board News

*Valerie LaRobardier, President*

Your board has recently been experimenting with meeting via web conferencing to supplement our face to face meetings as more and more of us have difficulty regularly settling on an appropriate time when we are all free. We are hoping to continue physical meetings...but as they seem to get more widely spaced on the calendar we feel that adding short web meetings focused on a single agenda topic will better move our work forward. If any of you have an idea you would like us to discuss at a board meeting, please forward it to us at [dcgsinfo@aol.com](mailto:dcgsinfo@aol.com). The Society has recently purchased a new computer and are in the process of setting it up at the Family History Library. We still have

not received enough responses to our survey to learn how best to revise our general meeting schedule and venue. If you have not yet taken the survey please do so as soon as possible by clicking the survey link on our home page at <http://dcgs-gen.org/> We are also producing a flyer to circulate to all the area libraries, historical sites and societies to advertise this survey with the idea in mind of increasing our audience as so many of our talks are of equal interest to historical and genealogical researchers.

### Dutchess County in Other Publications

*Christine Crawford-Oppenheimer, Vice President - Program*

From the Editorial in The New England Historical and Genealogical Register 168 (October 2014): [243]: William A. D. Eardeley's Abstracts of Wills, Administrations and Guardianships in NY State, 1787-1835<sup>1</sup> (database on AmericanAncestors.org) is known to extend into the 1840s. However, in rather haphazard fashion, he included some earlier material for at least Albany and Dutchess Counties. The title page to his manuscript says 1691-1835, but he included pre-1691 material for Albany County (although much of it is available elsewhere).

Rowe, Chip. Family Data Extracted from Bibles for Sale on E-bay:

<sup>1</sup>Hallock-Northrup. The New England Historical and Genealogical Register 168 (October 2014):378-379.

### DNA Research by Surname

*Timothy Holmes, DCGS Member*

Learning one's DNA is widely recommended. Family Tree DNA's Surname, Lineage and Geographical Projects include many surnames being researched by members of our society. 8,075 projects are currently running. FTDNA is a leading center of research in DNA studies. Joining projects is voluntary to FTDNA customers. There is a fee for the DNA analysis; then availability of studies and results is continuous. Information on participating in a project can be found at: <https://www.familytreedna.com/projects.aspx>.

### Getting the Most out of an Obituary

*Christine Crawford-Oppenheimer, Vice President - Program*

The following is a summary of a November 2014 meeting presentation by Christine Crawford-Oppenheimer.

Christine began by saying that "Obituaries can be very good sources, or very poor sources. You need to read an obituary very carefully, and follow up on every clue that's mentioned in it." She first spoke about how to find obituaries, if you don't already have an obituary for someone in your collection. Sources may include:

- Family document collections (stuck in old family Bibles, scrapbooks, etc.)
- The local or county public library or the local newspaper office for local newspapers
- Newspaper databases (available through some libraries and genealogical societies)
- Ancestry.com (subscription database) Click on "Search" at the top the page and choose "Card Catalog." On the next screen, about halfway down the left side, choose "Newspapers & Publications." On the left side, you can then filter by location: for example, choose "North America," then "USA," then "[state]," then "[county]."
- GenealogyBank.com (subscription database) <http://www.genealogybank.com/gbnk/>
- Books of abstracts of articles from newspapers from your ancestral area.

Obituaries as we know them didn't develop until around the 1860s or 1870s. Before that, you are more likely to find a death notice that is really a news article. It may be something as simple as "Robert Walker, an old settler of this county, died last Saturday."

A transitional type of obituary includes more information, but is still more of a news notice than a biography. These obituaries discuss who preached at the funeral, on what Bible verses, and what hymns were sung; they might mention the church where the funeral was held, and where the deceased was buried. They might also mention the cause of death and duration, if any, of the affliction that killed the person.

These two earlier types of obituary might include information about the person if he or she had participated in some significant historical event, was particularly notable in the community, etc.

Finally, there are more modern obituaries that are like a short biography. What types of things might you learn from them (and sometimes from older obituaries)? Read an obituary carefully. Each fact in an obituary may give you a clue for further research.

- Date and place of death: can lead you to a death certificate and /or estate file
- Date and place of birth: can lead you to a birth certificate or alternative record, such as a baptismal or confirmation record.
- Date and place of marriage: can lead you to a marriage licenses and/or alternative records such as religious records of the marriage, newspaper notices, etc. Either of these types of records may give parents' names or the wife's maiden name.
- Funeral home that handled arrangements: if the funeral home is still in business, its records may include more information than a death certificate,
- Names of parents, including the maiden name of the mother, and possibly the maiden name of a wife. These may open new avenues of investigation.
- Surviving and predeceased family: you may find new names of people to follow up on. Even if you knew about these people already, you may find married names of daughters or sisters. Perhaps you thought that one or more siblings or children had disappeared from the face of the earth; the obituary might tell you where they moved to. Once you've found them, you can look for records about them that might help your research, such as a marriage certificate or death certificate of a sibling.
- Number of children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren that the person had.
- Spouses other than the one you knew about! Surprise!
- Cause of death? Or does it request contributions to an organization related to a health problem? If the death was the result of an accident, find out whether there's a coroner's report available.
- The person attended a particular church or the funeral was held at a particular church. Check this church for records for the family.
- Cemetery where the ancestor was buried: visit the cemetery, or investigate the availability of cemetery records and gravestone readings, which may include more information on the person or the family.
- Military service gives you clues to hunt for service and pension records for the person.
- Organizations to which the person belonged: some organizations maintain files of information on members. Consider contacting these organizations, especially hereditary organizations, to see if they have any information that might help you.
- Prior residences of the deceased you weren't aware of: you now know that you

need to check in those locations for records about his life.

- Any odd things in the obit? Follow up (maybe look for other articles in the paper).

However, remember that many times, some of the information in an obituary is not correct. GASP! Incorrect information in a newspaper?!? The person giving the information for the obituary is suffering from the shock of the death of a family member, and may not get the facts straight, so if you have solid evidence that something in the obituary isn't correct, if possible, verify information in an obituary with other documents such as birth, death, or marriage certificates or other genealogical sources.

### **Exciting News for Dutchess County Researchers**

*Valerie LaRobardier, President*

Volume 12 of Settlers of the Beekman Patent is printing now. You may order CD or print copy at the web site <http://www.beekmansettlers.com/> or by mailing a check to Frank Doherty at 1830 Billingshurst Ct, Orlando, FL 32825 through about 25<sup>th</sup> of April, and after April 25<sup>th</sup> to 181 Freedom Road, Pleasant Valley, NY 12569. . Also note that the 12 volume CD now costs \$125, down from old price of \$190 for the 11 volume CD. Volume 12 covers the SMITH, SNEDEKER, SNYDER, SOPER, SOULE, SOUTHWICK, SOUTHWORTH, SPAULDING families, as well as additions and corrections to previous volumes.