

RIGS REPORTER

Newsletter of the Rhode Island Genealogical Society

April 23, 2004

VOLUME VI No. 5

ANNUAL MEETING
Sunday, May 16, 2004 - 1 P.M.
Wickford Baptist Church
44 Main Street; Wickford, RI

Our annual meeting and Election of Officers will be held at 1 P.M. on Sunday, May 19th at the First Baptist Church of Wickford.

Directions: From I-95 or Rte. 4, take 102 south (Ten Rod Road). If exiting from Route 4, go through 2 lights (after 2nd light, the street name changes to Phillips Street). At end of Phillips St., turn left onto 1A into Wickford Village. At the end of village, turn right onto Main Street and the church will be on your left.

By popular request, Bill Leonard will speak to us again about scanning and enhancing old photographs. (He did this last for us in North Kingstown.) He will give a brief talk after the formal business meeting and then will be set up at a table where people can take their photos to learn to scan and enhance them. He will handle it much as before, gearing what he covers based on questions from the people. So no matter what level you're at, you can get your questions answered.

We will again have the Cemetery Database available for use, as well as a copy machine to use to copy any new information found from others' charts and books. Everyone should bring books, charts and ideas to share – in short, anything relating to research, old photos, etc.

Two companies that specialize in archival storage have made available their catalogues for anyone interested. Finally, Helen asks you all for your suggestions for future programs, especially our research trips.

NOTE: to out of state members: local members are ready, willing and able to sit with you on Wednesday and/or Thursday evenings (May 12 and 13) to offer help with RI research - best local places to try, etc. You may call, write or email Helen to set up the help: 401-423-0442 or HHSCTC@aol.com.

AT LAST! Our NEW DIRECTORY is Ready!

You've been waiting for these and they will be available at the annual meeting for \$6.50. If you have to have them shipped, add \$1.50 for S&H for a cost of \$8. We found that

costs of printing and postage costs have gone up since we did the last directory. Therefore: Pick-ups \$6.50; mailed \$8.

The May 2004 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY, available only to members, consists of three sections. First, a list of all members (with addresses, tel. nos., and e-mail addresses) who did not request they not be so listed. Second, a list of the RI surnames being researched by whom, and third, a listing of the New England ancestors being researched by which members.

If you would like to make changes in the next directory to your listing of families-being-researched, please notify Bill Caswell.

RI RECORDS at the STATE ARCHIVES

On the RIGENWEB site, Reference Archivist Ken Carlson responded to an inquiry from Joyce De Gruchy about Vital Records requests which may be helpful to us all. Basic points to be remembered include: Archives' responses will be sent to you through the U.S. postal service. The Archives does not send transcriptions of records via e-mail. Copies of Archives' brochures may be accessed at <http://www.sec.state.ri.us>. Click on "State Departments and Quasi-Public Agencies" and then click on Rhode Island State Archives."

VITAL RECORDS ORDER GUIDELINES

1. All requests must be made on a Vital Records Order Form.
2. Only one type of record (e.g., birth, marriage, or death) for one name may be requested on a Form.
3. No more than two Vital Records Order Forms may be submitted at one time.
4. All requests for vital records must include an approximate date for the birth, marriage, or death sought. If you are unsure of the date, we ask that you include a five year period for the search (e.g. 1870-1875) as well as any information that will assist, such as parents' names, town/city of residence, etc.
5. Requests for vital records before 1853 must include the name of the city or town since no statewide index exists to facilitate a search of the early town records.
6. Photocopies of records will be provided at a cost of \$.15 per page. Certified copies of state records (births, marriages, deaths recorded from 1853) can be provided at a cost of \$2.00 per record. Requests for certification of pre-1853 vital records must be directed to the city or town that holds the original record.

*****PLEASE DO NOT SEND MONEY***
YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED OF ANY CHARGES.**

Note: Rhode Island General Laws stipulate that all records of birth and marriage are closed for a period of one-hundred (100) years. Death records are restricted for a period of fifty (50) years. Records of birth, marriage, and death available at the State Archives are as follows: Town Vitals: Prior to 1853 - microfilm copies only.

Original records are maintained by the individual cities and towns.

Births and Marriages: 1853-1898 (statewide index available)

Deaths: 1853-1948 (statewide index available)

RE NEHGS NUTMEG LECTURES

Audio tapes of some of these lectures are now available for loan from the NE Historic Genealogical Society. Note the list of lectures in the last newsletter, but check for tape availability at www.newenglandancestors.org/libraries/sydneyplus.asp.

DID YOU SEE...?

The column by Edward Oliver in the January newsletter of the Genealogy Society of Southern Illinois. He's kept track of the most common surnames in the US from the 1790 and the 1990 US Census and reports as follows: For more, see http://genealogy.about.com/library/weekly/aa_common_surnames.htm.

<u>1790</u>	<u>1990</u>
1. Smith	1. Smith
2. Brown	2. Johnson
3. Johnson/Johnston	3. Williams
4. Davis	4. Jones
5. Jones	5. Brown
6. Clark	6. Davis
7. Williams	7. Miller
8. Miller	8. Wilson
9. Wilson	9. Moore
10. Moore	10. Taylor

NEHGS LIBRARY HOURS RESUMING

The NEHGS Research Library resumed regular operating hours on April 1. The library will now be open until 9 p.m. on both Wednesday and Thursday evenings. The library hours are as follows:

Monday closed

Tuesday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Wednesday 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Thursday 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday Noon - 5 p.m.

Please note that the library will be closed on Sunday, April 25, for an administrative meeting.

FGS CONFERENCE

Registration materials are out for the FGS national Conference, Sept, 8-11 in Austin, TX. Registration (early, before July 26) is \$159, (later) \$189 and the single day as low as \$81. There are too many important speakers to list them all but the "Legends Live Forever" materials list perhaps seven courses an hour to choose from. Register at fgs-office@fgs.org and remember that RIGS is a member of this society.

NGS CONFERENCE

After a shake-up in the structure of the National Genealogical Society, registration materials are available for the May 19-22 Annual Conference to be held in Sacramento, CA. Conferences are so important for sharpening and adding to your skills, not to mention the opportunities for networking.

Four-day late registration for non-members is \$240. Meals and some workshops not included. This is still arguably the most important national conference even though it is held on the west coast of America. Registration: www.ngsgenealogy.org.

GIMA – Genealogical Institute of Mid America

Should your vacation take you in that direction, there is another noteworthy conference in Springfield, IL, July 11-15, 2004. Speakers include Lloyd deWitt Bockstruck, Paul Milner, Sandra Hargreaves Luebking and Michael John Neill.

Registration is formidable at \$400, but it includes meals and shapes up as an outstanding program, including an all day session on England and Wales. Register with Dr. Gary Hargis, ISGSGIMA@aol.com or 217-789-1968.

OTHER NGS NEWS

The National Genealogical Society is pleased to announce the appointment of Sharon DeBartolo Carmack, CG, as the new editor of the NGS NewsMagazine. Beginning with the June 2004 issue, Carmack will bring a new look and new content to the Society's magazine.

According to Carmack, the new mission of the NGS NewsMagazine is "Helping NGS Members Discover and Preserve Their Family History." The magazine will offer advice, guidance, instruction, and perspective, along with the latest NGS news and events, to create a society magazine with mass appeal. With readable and friendly articles.

Sharon DeBartolo Carmack is a Certified Genealogist who brings her vast experience in genealogical writing, editing, and publishing to the NGS NewsMagazine. As Executive

Editor of Family Tree Books (formerly Betterway Books), Sharon is also a contributing editor for Family Tree Magazine, America's #1 selling genealogy magazine, boasting a circulation of 143,000. . .

Sharon welcomes article queries from all writers, and especially previously unpublished writers. You can e-mail her at sdcarmack@juno.com. Writer's guidelines are available upon request.

ITALIAN AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Italian American Historical Society has announced a full day's program to be held at the Radisson Hotel, 20081 Post Road, Warwick, on Saturday, May 8th. They are bringing Sharon DeBartolo Carmack (see above) to Rhode Island to help you start your Italian-American research.

Included will be sessions on oral history, the immigrant experience, and their history and culture. The \$35 cost includes the program, continental breakfast, and lunch. For details and reservations, call Maria DeLuca at 401-943-2678 or Marie Truppa at 401-353-2153.

INVITATION FROM NARA

The National Archives-Northeast Region is offering free genealogical workshops during the spring.

The beginner level workshops will be offered at the Regional Archives building, located at 380 Trapelo Road in Waltham, MA according to the following schedule. Participants will learn what they need to know in order to locate records as well as what one might expect to find in the records. Behind the scenes tours of the archives will be given at 1:30 before workshops marked with an asterisk (*). The workshop will follow the tour at 2:00 PM.

Thurs April 22, 6:30 PM

Passenger Lists and Canadian Border Crossings

Tues May 4, 1:30 PM*

Census, Naturalization, & Passenger Lists

Thurs May 13, 6:30 PM

Census, Naturalization, & Passenger Lists

Wed May 19, 2:00 PM

Genealogical Roundtable: Open Forum for Genealogical Quandaries

Tues June 1, 1:30 PM*

Beyond the Census: Local History Resources in Federal Records

Wed June 9, 2:00 PM

Genealogical Roundtable: Open Forum for Genealogical Quandaries

Thurs June 17, 6:30 PM

Military Pension Files (Revolutionary War and Later Files)

* Behind the scenes tours available.

Workshop and tour space is limited to 20 participants. Call (866) 406-2379 to register and for more details. There is no fee. Light refreshments or coffee will be served.

The National Archives-Northeast Region consists of three separate facilities. In Waltham, MA hours of operation are Monday, Tuesday, and Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m., and the first and third Saturday of each month 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Excludes all Federal holidays.

In Pittsfield, MA (microfilm research only) hours of operation are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Wednesdays 8:00 – 9:00 p.m., and the first Saturday of each month 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Excludes all Federal holidays.

In New York City, hours of operation are Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., and the first and third Saturday each month 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Microfilm research only during evening and weekend hours in Waltham and New York. Excludes all Federal holidays.

WESTERLY'S LOCAL HISTORY ROOM

Vera Robinson tells us that this well known repository of the Westerly Public Library will be closed – due to repairs to the Vault – until June or July of this year. You may wish to call ahead.

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Rick Stattler has posted to the RI GenWeb page a message explaining that due to attrition and budget cuts, he will be alone in the manuscripts dept. for a while. This will mean greater difficulty in scheduling your appointments, but don't give up. We trust things will improve - even though he notes that the governor's budget proposal for next year is half of the usual allocation for the RIHS.

PASSENGER LIST SITES- EMIGRATION

For those of you serious but frustrated about this subject, try:
<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/5978/Emigration.html>.

FYI: - FAMILY CHRONICLE

In June 2003, Family Chronicle published what has become one of the fastest selling genealogy books in recent years: 500 Brickwall Solutions to Genealogy Problems. The book featured stories from 400 different genealogists on how they solved tough problems tracing their own ancestors using unconventional techniques, and included a comprehensive index that made it easy to find stories that might suggest solutions. The

initial print run, expected to last three years, sold out in less than six months and the book had to be reprinted before Christmas.

"We attribute the success of the book to the wide variety of skills of our readers," says Halvor Moorshead, publisher of Family Chronicle. "Genealogists tend to be generous at sharing ideas and love to talk about the problems they solved. 500 Brickwall Solutions acted as a forum where people could tell these stories and share them with other people."

500 Brickwall Solutions has been so successful that Family Chronicle is now planning a second edition with all new stories and is seeking contributions. Genealogists whose stories are accepted will receive two copies of the book for every story published (the book sells for \$25) even if stories are not used, the submitter will receive a discount voucher towards the purchase of the book.

If you have a story about a problem you have solved involving unusual techniques, you can submit it to Family Chronicle, Brickwall Solutions, 2045 Niagara Falls Blvd., Niagara Falls, NY 14304-1675. Full details can be found on the website: <http://www.familychronicle.com/NewBrickwallsSubmissions.htm>

Stories may also be e-mailed to brickwallsolutionsii@familychronicle.com

For more information contact Halvor Moorshead, Publisher Family Chronicle (888) 326-2476, Ext 105, publisher@moorshead.com

JR., SR., II AND III – WHO'S WHO?

This article was supplied us by Valerie Felt who found it in the Mar/Apr 2004 newsletter of the CT. Soc. of Genealogists. They in turn had found it in the Seattle Gen. Soc. Bulletin, Vol. 48, No. 4, Summer, 1999:

"You find an ancestor by the name of John Smith, Jr. And then you come across one named John Smith, II or 2nd. And then there is John Smith, III or 3rd, and John Smith, Sr.

"Who is related to whom, if the rules of usage of these names suffixes were followed (and they weren't always). Note that when any of these suffices are used, they should have been applied only if the whole name is exactly the same as the original names – first name, whole middle name (not just the initial) and surname.

"John Smith, Sr., is the eldest. Often the "Sr." was not used at all, except by his widow after his death to differentiate her from her daughter-in-law.

"John Smith, Jr., is the son of John Smith (or John Smith, Sr. Normally, when his father dies, his son became plain John Smith, dropping the 'Jr.' shortly thereafter. However, in older pre-1830 records, occasionally 'Jr.' was used to differentiate the younger of two men with the same name in the same area, and who may have been only distant relations or maybe weren't related at all.*

"John Smith, III, is the son of John Smith, Jr. and the grandson of John Smith, Sr.

"John Smith II is not the son of John Smith, Sr. He has been named for someone else in the family – his grandfather or great-grandfather, or perhaps an uncle.

"Things become confusing, however, when the original John Smith dies, as noted above. Everyone moves up a notch, John Jr. becomes plain John, and John III becomes John Jr. That is why the genealogist must be particularly careful in watching dates connected with a family in which this situation occurs, and why some records may seem to be confused to not make sense. Make sure information is attributed to the right individual, who may have gone through several phases of the common name over time.

"These 'rules' were commonly accepted in earlier days, but that doesn't mean your ancestors always followed them. In rare instances, particularly in a family with a famous name, the dynastic approach was used (as with Kings - Henry III, Henry IV, Henry V), and even when 'Sr.' died, the younger generations held onto their respective 'numbers' *ad infinitum* or until finally someone grew tired of it all and the numbers were dropped."

* [Ed. Note: See brief discussion of this problem ("snarl") by David Kendall Martin, "Untangling the Ancestry of Samuel Allen ...", (esp. p. 42, f.) in the March 2004 issue of the *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*.]

LIBRARY of the Peabody Essex Museum

The Essex Society of Genealogists' spring newsletter reports that this library in Salem, MA, is "virtually closed," it is now open so few hours each week. Check their website, www.pem.org, or call ahead before you make the drive.

MORE SPELLING VARIATIONS

Recently I found my 2 great-grandfather in the 1850 census. John MYERS had been eluding me for a year, and I thought I had tried all the spelling variations, but I had missed one. John MIRES was working as a farm laborer just a page away from his future bride's family.

Today while searching for another elusive ancestor I came across the surname CHRYSJONSON. How many CHRISTIANSONS would look for that spelling? It seemed to be a quirk of the census taker, because other persons were listed with the given names of Chrystopher and Chrysjon.

Connie Trier
RootsWeb Review, March 17, 2004, Vol. 7, No. 11

ANOTHER THOUGHT ON DISAPPEARING ANCESTORS:

"When researching your ancestors and their families, it is commonplace to find individuals who seem to disappear. A record of birth or baptism is found, but marriage, death, burial, and other information is elusive. Sometimes these individuals died as children, but it is especially puzzling to find children living with the family to young adulthood in census records only to vanish without a trace. All too easily many make the assumption that the individual died without leaving a record. But there are other possibilities as well. The child may have left home and gone to a distant place or they may never have married. One possibility that is frequently overlooked is that the child entered the priesthood or religious life."

-Michael LeClerc writing in the NEHGS eNews #159 of March 26th, 2004

ANOTHER SNAG NOTED:

Peggy Ferrell notes that relying on family memories is not infallible: "I have found several instances where there was a first child that died very young and who was not known to the later members of the family, or a child was born and died when the siblings were too young to remember.

"The birth of that child was denied by a brother, but his mother confirmed it. Lack of photos or other evidence is not necessarily conclusive.

"We have had some listed on the census as dead before this census, as in how many children have you had? How many still alive? This information was also requested on my birth certificate in" TN.

- RootsWeb Review: Vol. 7, No. 12, 24 March 2004

CEMETERY TIDBITS

The winter (2003) issue of the newsletter of the Essex Society of Genealogists has some interesting perspectives on cemetery research:

On stone orientation, they state that "Cemeteries from 1600 to the late 1800s oriented their stones with the inscriptions facing west. If you stand at the front of the stone reading the inscription, then the body will be buried with the head nearest this headstone. It was believed that when God returned to raise the dead, he would come calling from the east and the dead would sit up in their graves facing east to greet him."

In contrast, they note that "The Egyptians and other ancient people believed that when you died you (sic) soul followed the path to where the sun set. The Afterlife began when earthly life left off at the end of the day. With that belief system, they buried their dead oriented to the west, facing and heading toward the new life."

Also offered are some definitions, such as: Tympanum – the top third of a stone with symbolic carving of symbols, such as winged skulls, weeping willows, etc. For more on this subject, see that newsletter or try www.GravestoneGirls.com.

THE CANADIAN CENSUS

The battle to open some later Canadian census enumerations seems still underway. From Gordon Watts, this quote: "email sent to some of our Parliamentary representatives (both MPs and Senators) has resulted in what I assume is an automated response that their message was 'was deleted without being read'. No reason for the deletion of the message is given." (Gordon A. Watts gordon_watts@telus.net. Co-Chair, Canada Census Committee, Port Coquitlam, BC <http://globalgenealogy.com/> Censusen français http://globalgenealogy.com/Census/Index_f.htm)

While there may be possible scenarios for such responses, they do seem both arrogant and self-defeating. This has already been a long road and we applaud the patience and tenacity of our Canadian colleagues!

FAMILY REUNIONS

The **Cole** Family Reunion will be held at Colt State Park on June 19, 2004 - the area of the park near the gazebo and restrooms. Picnic tables and space reserved. Bring yourselves and your own lunch. For further details: trainer304@cox.net.

The **CRANDALL** Family Reunion is slated for Saturday, July 17th at the First Hopkinton Seventh Day Baptist Church Parish House in Ashaway, RI. Optional church service at 11. Catered lunch. Family photograph will be taken at 3. p.m.

The **Steere** Family Reunion will be held in Chepachet, August 13-15. Opens Friday evening with a Dutch treat dinner at the Wright Farm. For details and reservations, Otis Wyatt, OCWyatt@aol.com or 401-789-1666.

The **TAFT** family is holding its every-five-years reunion on Saturday, August 7th at the "New England Steak and Seafood," 11 Uxbridge Road, Mendon, MA. The 12:30 Buffet-style dinner is \$24. Reservations: Berneta DeVries, PO Box 406, Mendon, MA 01756.

The **WING** Family of America, Inc. will host its annual reunion from June 18th - 20th at Sandwich, MA. Membership in the WFA is not required to attend the reunion. The family hopes to have Volume One of its new "Wing Genealogy" available at the reunion. For more information contact <http://www.wingfamily.org>.

Note: If your summer family reunion has not yet been listed, be informed that the next issue of this newsletter will not be out before late August.

FOREIGN ABBREVIATIONS

If you're wrestling with the correct abbreviations for foreign countries, states, etc, try this website: <http://helpdesk.rootsweb.com/codes/>. With thanks to Bob Letson.

GAS LIGHGING - Wade Hone

In the dark about some of your ancestors? Ever since man's ability to harness fire, opportunities for enlightenment have extended far beyond the simple rising and setting of the sun. While there are numerous forms of illumination that could be addressed, one is chosen for this particular blog—Gas Lighting.

As early as 1786, attempts were made to use gas for internal lighting, first in England and Germany. By 1792, it was finally put into manageable use, as William Murdock of Britain introduced the world to conveniences never to be rescinded in either private or commercial settings. It was a one-way street that began with lighting of roadways and alleys, progressing almost as fiercely as electricity, telephone and the computer.

The first public street lighting with gas took place in Pall Mall, London on January 28, 1807...In the United States, Baltimore was the first city to light its streets with gas...The first introduction of gas lights in Rembrandt Peale's Museum in Baltimore, in 1816, proved to be such a sensation and success that Peale quickly organized a gas company to light the city. The city council passed an ordinance June 1816, permitted Peale to manufacture gas, lay pipes in the streets, and contract with the city for street lighting. This was the first gas company founded in the United States. To learn more, visit www.gaslite.com/history.html.

Look at your pedigree. Which ancestors would have experienced this new invention with awe and amazement? Would they have thought it frivolous? Would they have considered it dangerous and absurd? Which ones were as much in the literal dark themselves as we are about them?

BLOG

<http://www.genealogyblog.com>. [Ed. Note: Save this link/address for further reference!]
From their FAQs: What is Genealogy "Blog?"
Genealogy Blog (short for "Web log") is a place for the genealogy community to come and share information. It is written by genealogists for genealogists. The blog covers the latest news in the genealogy field, provides announcements, quick reviews of new products, and provides useful information and tips for genealogists.

FAQs – 3rd Installment

Cherry F. Bamberg

Q: How do I understand this old will when I find it?

A: The pages of closely spaced lines of handwriting with plenty of legalize can look pretty daunting. Where to start? Well, simple as it may sound, start by writing down the volume and page numbers as well as the dates the will was made (probably in the last couple of lines) and then proved (when the will was accepted by the probate court). It's easy to get excited by the content and forget these critical details. Then at the beginning look at the name of the testator (person making the will) to check his town and to see if by any chance he has included a profession. The first few lines will explain why he or she

is making the will, usually in fairly formulaic terms, e.g., "being mindful that it is given to all men to die" or "being sick and weak in body." Every once in awhile one will come across the man who made his will before he left for war or a long voyage.

After this paragraph you will usually find convenient indents. The word "item" will be written on the left, followed by text in a hanging indent. The first item is a direction to bury the body in a decent manner and to pay all just debts. The second will typically be bequests to the "dearly beloved wife," although some people put this one last. The wife was often given a great deal of the estate as long as she should remain a widow, but when she remarried or died, that legacy reverted to the other heirs. If there is no mention of a wife, then she had already died. After the wife, the testator will list his sons and then daughters, set within their group in order of birth. Married daughters are called by their married names, often with the given name of their spouses. After the children, grandchildren of deceased children will be listed, then other relatives and friends. The last item will typically be the designation of the executor and the revocation of all previous wills. On the left next to the testator's signature will be the names of the witnesses. Even if these names mean nothing to you now, write them down—next month or next year you may uncover the connection.

If your ancestor died intestate (without a will), that doesn't mean that there will necessarily be no paperwork. If he or she was head of a household, the town appointed an administrator for the estate, and an inventory of personal estate was presented. Sometimes you will find a division of property among heirs; sometimes there will be a list of creditors of the estate. All of these items can yield important genealogical clues for men and widows.

Q: I find all sorts of Victorian town and county histories with lots of genealogy but no indexes. How can I ever find my ancestors in thousands of pages?

A: Use J. Carlyle Parker's *Rhode Island Biographical and Sketch Index* (Turlock CA: Marietta Publishing Co., 1991). This alpha index of names directs you to the page and volume number of myriad sources, though not to the entry itself. Not only does it occasionally take you to the specific answer you are seeking but it also introduces some little-known but valuable reference materials.

Q: How can I find out about military records?

A: The standard source for military service before 1850 is undoubtedly Joseph J. Smith, *Civil and Military List of Rhode Island* (Providence, RI: Preston and Rounds Co., 1900). This set of three volumes (1647-1800, 1800-1850, index) includes military duty of officers only as well as such civil appointments as justice of the peace, deputy to the general assembly, prison inspectors, etc. For the vastly larger number of men who served in militias as common soldiers visit the Rhode Island State Archives, 337 Westminister St., Providence or inquire from Kenneth S. Carlson by phone at (401) 277-2353 or by e-mail at reference@sec.state.ri.us. Howard M. Chapin's book *Rhode Island in the Colonial Wars* (repr., Baltimore MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1994) combines two

earlier volumes of 18th century records. The Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations has published numerous muster rolls and other original documents.

For the Revolutionary period the Archives has a strong collection of muster rolls as does the manuscript department at Rhode Island Historical Society. Remember to make an appointment with Rick Stattler at (401) 331-8575 or rstattler@rihs.org to use the latter resource. Kathryn M. Gunning's *Selected Final Pension Payment Vouchers 1818-1864*, (Westminster, MD: Willow Bend Books, 1999) is a useful guide to those Rhode Islanders who met the stringent requirements for a pension. It should lead you to the microfilm of the original records at the nearest National Archives Record Center.

Not having the slightest experience with Civil War records, I can only recommend starting with the Rhode Island Archives and its card file of service records. Brig. Gen. Elisha Dyer's *Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations for the Year 1865* (2 vols., Providence RI: E.L. Freeman & Sons, 1893-1895) is a flawed but still useful source.

What about legal records?

Legal records are kept at the Rhode Island Supreme Court Judicial Records Center, 5 Hill St., Pawtucket. Two recent books by Jane Fletcher Fiske, *Gleanings from Newport Court Files 1659-1783* and *Rhode Island General Court of Trials 1671-1704* (both Boxford, Mass.: The Author, 1998) are an invaluable resource. Some scattered original records can be found in the manuscript collection of Rhode Island Historical Society.

Q: Where can I find early guardianships and adoptions?

A: Before the early nineteenth century guardianships in Rhode Island were decided by the local town council. When a man, even a married one, died leaving children under the age of 14, the council would appoint a guardian. The mother was considered the "natural guardian," but frequently lacked the means to care for her family. Boys 14-21 and girls 14-18 appeared before the council and asked for the right, always granted, to choose their own guardian. The process was far from complete, however, at that point: the guardian chosen had to agree to accept the position and post bond to complete it faithfully. When the ward came of age, the guardian had to render a complete accounting of his or her management. Generally speaking, it is hard to winkle the guardianship appointments out of unindexed, largely unpublished, difficult-to-read council records even when you have the date of the father's death and the town in which the family lived.

I am unaware of official adoptions in the colonial period. Maureen Taylor's booklet *Name Changes in Rhode Island 1800-1880* (Boston MA: NEHGS, 1995) offers many clues about adoptions in that era.

Q: Where are the apprenticeship records?

Although apprenticeship may have been an important fact in your ancestor's life, it is rare to be able to prove it in Rhode Island. Apprenticeships appear in town council records only when the arrangement was made by the town. While many apprenticeships were private arrangements for vocational training, eighteenth-century council records show that they were a commonly used tool for relief of the poor in that period. Privately arranged apprenticeships are often unrecorded in any official sources, though a few original indentures may be found in manuscript collections or private hands. Sometimes apprenticeships did not work out. Maureen Taylor's *Runaway, Deserters, and Notorious Villains*, vols. 1 and 2 include many advertisements in Rhode Island newspapers for runaway apprentices, often with vivid descriptions of their personal appearance and dress.

[Ed. Note: we wish to acknowledge this huge effort by Cherry to make RI records more comprehensible to us all. Three cheers!

We might also note that there are pages of information on researching in the MA Archives at: www.state.ma.us/sec/arc/arcgen/genidx.htm#1841]