

# RIGS REPORTER

*Newsletter of the Rhode Island Genealogical Society*

August 23, 2004

VOLUME VII No. 1

## OCTOBER MEETING

The full day October meeting of the RI Genealogical Society will be held on **Saturday, OCTOBER 2, 2004 at the United Congregational Church** on Valley Road, Middletown.

Directions: Take Miantonomi easterly to the traffic light where the name changes to Green End Lane. Proceed a bit further and the church is on the corner beside the John Clark Retirement Center.

There will be a catered light lunch for a nominal fee (\$5.). Make your reservation with Mrs. Mary Ostiguy: 165 Buena Vista Drive, North Kingstown, RI, 028511-6305 or 401-294-4035.

9:00 A.M. Gathering

9:30 A.M. Brief Business meeting

Beginning at 10 A.M., the morning session will consist of three programs:

***How to Read Old Script*** – Cherry Bamberg. Bring an example of something you have difficulty reading.

Sue Maddox, author of a local history column in the Jamestown Press and a librarian of the Jamestown Public Library, will talk about ***how to do local history research***.

Researching Local History by columnist James Garman, recently retired from the Portsmouth Priory, will talk about ***how to find and research old photos***.

After lunch, we will focus on the Clark/Clarke family. This is the first in a series. A couple of times a year, we will pick a Rhode Island family and focus on it. Bert Lippincott, Librarian at the Newport Historical Society, will talk about the Clark/Clarke family: **John, Walter, & Jeremy**. (Interesting sidelight: The site of the church once belonged to the Rev. John Clark.)

This will be followed by a round table discussion for all those interested in one of these families. We would like everyone to bring their Clark/Clarke charts, books, research notes and most important, their questions. We are hoping by talking and sharing information and ideas, people will walk away with new information and ideas for further

research and perhaps, if we are lucky, a few may even find a hole in one of those brick walls.

### **FALL BUS TRIP**

**Wednesday, September 15<sup>th</sup>** - Helen Smith has arranged another of her popular bus trips to Boston (\$20 per person). You will have a choice of spending your time at the Massachusetts State Archives or at NEHGS, the New England Historic Genealogical Society. Reserve with Helen at [HHSCITC@aol.com](mailto:HHSCITC@aol.com), 401-423-0442, or at 530 West Reach Drive, Jamestown, RI 02835-2233.

NEHGS is presenting a free program that day at 10 a.m., titled Cape Cod Genealogy, by Timothy Salls. You are all invited.

### **OTHER DATES TO SAVE**

**Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>** – RIGS half-day fall program

**January 29<sup>th</sup>** – RIGS half day meeting

Date and program for the Spring program to be Announced – March 19<sup>th</sup>?

**March 31-April 3. NERGC conference**

To be held at the Holiday Inn by the Bay in Portland, Maine. RIGS will have a booth in the exhibit hall. RIGS is pleased to announce that Ranger John McNiff of the Roger Williams Monument will be the RIGS sponsored speaker on the subject of the *first Settlers of RI or the Twelve First Families*. This dynamic speaker speaks fluently on Roger Williams and his contemporaries. Watch for details.

**April 27<sup>th</sup>** – Bus trip to Worcester, MA.

Your choice: Worcester Historical Society, or the Antiquarian Society. Someone said that this latter facility owns 2 of every 3 items published in this country. They have an extensive card catalog.

American Antiquarian Society  
185 Salisbury Street  
Worcester, MA 0609-1634  
(508) 755-5221  
[www.americanantiquarian.org/](http://www.americanantiquarian.org/)

Founded in 1812, this private library holds books, pamphlets, broadsides, manuscripts, prints, maps, directories, and newspapers. It also is the repository for the largest single collection of printed source material relating to the history, literature, and culture of the United States prior to 1876. The primary purpose of this institution is to accommodate academic scholars in their research. Therefore, it is necessary to obtain permission to use the facility. Before you visit, be sure to consult their online catalog and usage policies, as

it is essential to know in advance what you are seeking and determine if the Society has the materials. Prospective researchers must fill out a form describing their project and meet with a staff member who will assist the researcher in finding the appropriate materials. (Thanks to Maureen Taylor)

**SATURDAY, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005 Annual**

Meeting. Note change of day of the week from Sunday to Saturday!

**President: Leonora A. Dursin** leedursin@att.net

**Editor:** Patricia Wyatt PWyattRIGS@aol.com

**Membership:** William Caswell, Jr. WSCaswell@aol.com

Annual Dues (Jan. – Dec.): Single: \$19 - Dual: \$28.50

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

On a warm and humid afternoon last June, I happened to accompany a friend to an old Providence cemetery. We were searching for information of early immigrant ancestors, chiefly the descendants of Patrick Hackett, who arrived in Rhode Island from Ireland in 1842. Although we found little to further illuminate the life of the Hackett family, we did sadly learn of the cemetery's dismal condition. It was heartbreaking to see so many headstones faced down and broken, keeping secret bits of information that might otherwise have revealed the lives and origins of their human counterparts. The records for this particular resting place are apparently contained in one old register carted out to the site when needed. This June expedition was a wake-up call for me personally, as to the precarious state of many of our historical and genealogical sites and records, and the apparent lack of attention and caring by many of us, when the records aren't about our family, our town, or state.

There are many members of RIGS, however, who have been involved in preserving and recording such information for years. Their work is diligent and passionate for they know that time and its passing is a formidable enemy. The reality is that time is short. No effort we put forth can be too little and the need is great.

A prime mission of RIGS is to support the identification and preservation of vital records on the state and local level. On a national level, the FGS/NGS Preservation and Access Committee is attempting to increase its effort to advise us on "ensuring proper access to vital records, on means to effect legislation, and on supporting strong records, preservations, and policies." RIGS will be delegating a state liaison to the FGS/NGS Committee. We wish them well.

RIGS is offering to our members and non-members a wonderfully varied and challenging program. Interesting bus trips, and the possible inclusion of monthly lectures are on the menu. New publications are in the works. The NERGC Spring Conference in Portland, Maine, will hopefully see many of us not only attending, but involved in its potential

success. It would be great if all of us could lend some time and energy to our organization. It is well worth the effort.

I look forward to seeing and hearing from you,

- Lee Gilson Dursin

**CALLING ALL RIGS MEMBERS:**

A suggestion has been made that RIGS sponsor monthly meetings on a Saturday morning. One idea that has been proposed is round-table discussions about particular family surnames that members descend from, research or have interest in. For Example, participants would be asked to bring inquiries, a short pedigree or a descendant tree about a particular family surname. A RIGS coordinator would then begin discussion about the surname. Members could then exchange information about those ancestors. This would assist them in genealogy pursuits. If you are interested in such program, would like to attend, or have ideas of surnames to discuss, please write:

Gail Gardiner  
361 Hillard Avenue  
Warwick, RI 02886.

If enough interest is generated, the monthly meetings will be scheduled. Given that the RI Historical Society library's hours have been reduced, including the elimination of Saturdays, the month meetings could provide a great service to our members!"

– Gail Gardiner

**KUDOS!!**

To our sharp-eyed members! The book on South Kingstown Cemeteries by John Sterling and Jim Wheaton is indeed finally in. You won't take this five pound, 688 page book to bed to read but it's in ample time for Christmas gifts. See inside back page. Impressive work.

**NEHGS to Celebrate Forty Years on Newbury Street With Open House**

NEHGS will hold an open house at 101 Newbury Street for members and the public on Thursday, September 23, 2004, from 2 to 6 p.m. The theme is "Celebrating Forty Years on Newbury Street," in recognition of the Society's move to its present location in the fall of 1964.

A series of small events is being planned, including tours, remarks by staff representatives, light refreshments, and a special discount on books (at our Newbury Street location only). More details will be available shortly from NEHGS or on their website.

**PHOTOS SEEKING GOOD HOMES**

We have received a photo of a white haired and bearded gentleman, labeled "**Uncle James Gould...**" taken by Horton Bros. Studios, Westminster St., Providence. If you're interested, write us at Box 433, Greenville, RI 02828.

Also RIGS has been sent a photo of **Ida Brown** taken at the S. B. Brown Photographers on Westminster Street in Providence. President Lee Dursin is holding this one for anyone making suitable identification.

### FALL PROGRAMS AT NEHGS

- September 1 - 12 noon & 6 p.m. Getting Started in Genealogy Lecture and Library Tour
- September 8, 11 - 10 a.m. Getting the most from Family History Library Resources - David Allen Lambert
- September 8 - 11:30 a.m. Introduction to Using the NEHGS Website: NewEnglandAncestors.org. Darrin McGlinn
- September 12 - 2 p.m. Getting Started in Genealogy Lecture and Library Tour
- September 15, 18 - 10 a.m. Cape Cod Genealogy. Timothy Salls
- September 22, 25 - 10 a.m. Irish Immigration to New England from 1815 to 1845. Marie E. Daly
- September 29, Oct 2 - 10 a.m.

*Nutshell Lecture:* Taking a Bite Out of the Big Apple: New York City Search - David Dearborn

- October 6 - 10 a.m.

*Nutshell Lecture:* Family Treasures in Your Attic: Bring Your Books - Ken Gloss

- October 6 - noon and 6 p.m. Getting Started in Your Family History at NEHGS
- October 13, 16 - 10 a.m. *Nutshell Lecture:* The Collections of the State Library of Massachusetts - Eva Murphy
- October 13 - 6 p.m. Introduction to Using <NewEnglandAncestors.org> - Darrin McGlinn
- October 20 - 10 a.m. *Nutshell Lecture:* Researching Quebec Ancestors - Michael J. Leclerc
- October 27, 30 - 10 a.m. *Nutshell Lecture:* Witch's Brew: Researching Boston Witchcraft -D. Brenton Simons

NEHGS has also announced the addition to their library of the published Vital Records to 1850 for Halifax, Malden, Medford, Mendon, and Sudbury. Also the latest additions to their database are the vitals for Sherborn (Middlesex Co.), Lynnfield (Essex Co.), Warren (formerly Western, in Worcester Co.) and Princeton (Worcester Co.).

### OUR NARA

We can concede that our government has a lot of "bean counters," a situation shared by many of our repositories. This is attested to by the fact that in most places we must sign in and out.

With the advances being made in the Internet offerings, it is also a fact that we do more and more from the comfort of our own homes. This creates a problem for our repositories and especially our federal archives. Attendance is falling.

NARA is countering this by offering more convenient hours and special programs. They are making extra efforts to open the "behind the scenes" special materials to our use. These include old naturalization records and passenger arrival lists. Military service and pensions records. WWI and WWII draft registration cards. Land bounty grants. Native American and African American records. And many items of odd interest.

Therefore, please think about what is unique about these collections in the federal archives. Mention these to your "genie" friends and then make an honest effort to utilize these unique offerings. Use them or we could find these doors closing to us!

P.S. This message from Stuart Culy: "Effective Wednesday September 1, 2004, the National Archives in Waltham will no longer be open Wednesday evenings after 4:30.

"We will continue to offer evening hours every Thursday from 4:30 - 9:00 PM, and we will remain open on the first and third Saturday of every month.

"This change is due to the cost of remaining open on an evening with limited patronage. Please contact the Archives Director by e-mail at [stuart.culy@nara.gov](mailto:stuart.culy@nara.gov). or toll free on (866) 406-2379 with your concerns."

**The NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY REPORTS ON:  
The National Archives to Preserve Official Military Personnel Files**

"On July 8, 2004, during an important ceremony in the Jefferson Room of the National Archives Building, Under Secretary of Defense David S. C. Chu, and John W. Carlin, Archivist of the United States, signed an important agreement under which the National Archives will preserve the Official Military Personnel Files (OMPFs) of 56 million veterans who served the nation since the late 1800's. This milestone event ensures that the records of our military service veterans will be protected and ultimately enshrined in our nation's archives.

"The modern military personnel files occupy over 1.5 million feet of shelf space at a federal storage facility in St. Louis. The earliest files date back to 1885, when the Department of the Navy and the United States Marine Corps were the first to create individual personnel files to chronicle in one place all aspects of a service member's military career. The War Department followed this model early in the twentieth century with the development of the '201 File.'

"Today in St. Louis, there are 56 million files, over 5 billion pages, for Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard veterans.

"As a result of the Records Schedule signed on July 8, all OMPFs will be designated as permanent and will be transferred from the Military Services to the National Archives 62 years after separation or discharge from service. Pre-1960 records are arranged alphabetically and will be accessioned in groups based on filing dates.

"Protecting the files is important because they contain essential evidence needed by veterans and their families to claim life-long rights and entitlements that accrue from military service. Preserving the files for future generations is equally important so that family members, genealogists, biographers, and historians can research the history of those who served and often sacrificed for our country."

### **Appeal from allen county public library**

The Allen County Public Library (temporary location: 200 E. Berry, Fort Wayne, Indiana - until late 2006) writes: "we are always interested in obtaining more of these valuable documents--particularly school yearbooks, old alumni directories, professional and occupational directories, and church directories and yearbooks. We are especially interested in school yearbooks (from grade school to college) and the periodic church directories that are published by thousands of denominations and churches across the country.

"We fear that many individuals and families have a limited interest in these directories as they get older and more worn. Children often aren't interested in their parents' school directories; and when some families get a new church directory, the old one is recycled. We invite you to send us your unwanted directories and yearbooks of all types. Give us your "poor and tired" directories--and we will find a great home for them! Simply send them to the attention of the Historical Genealogy Department. Thanks in advance!"

### **RI-CT BORDER – STILL IN LIMBO**

The Rhode Island legislature has again adjourned for the summer without acting on this dispute. Instead they put the matter on hold pending a "survey." This survey cannot be begun, according to RI-DOT, until the legislature reconvenes and approves the [\$1 million] funding.

### **IN MEMORY:**

Sad news is the passing on 6/4 of longtime RIGS member, **Miss Violet Kettelle**, 99. She survived her sisters but is survived by many cousins. Our deepest sympathy to her family.

### **THE CANADIAN CENSUS**

This year's renewed effort to open the Canadian census to researchers has revealed that, due to new legislation, new petitions with new wording are necessary. Further information and the new petitions can be downloaded from: <http://globalgenealogy.com/Census>. Remember that almost all RIGS members are non-residents of Canada.

Gordon Watts of the Canadian Census Committee writes that the Post 1901 Census info has been posted this morning. It may be accessed at: <http://globalgenealogy.com/globalgazette/gazce/gazce106.htm> FYI.

### **FROM NGS' UPFRONT:**

TreEzy, A New Genealogy Search Engine Released FamilyToolbox.net, Inc., a pioneer in online genealogical research, today announced the release of TreEzy, a new genealogically focused search engine. The search engine indexes the full-text of genealogical and historical sites to assist genealogists and family historians in finding their roots. The free search engine is located at <http://www.treezy.com>.

### **Creating Golden Queries**

You can best accomplish the goal of discovering new information if your query clearly and concisely states what facts you already know, and plainly asks for the information you wish to learn.

1. Find a list or board devoted to the topic of your query in order to find the "experts" on that topic. (Try: <http://lists.rootsweb.com>. or <http://boards.rootsweb.com>.)
2. Choose an eye-catching and informative, yet brief, subject. Don't let your query be overlooked. Subjects are like an advertising banner
3. Get to the crux of the matter - and avoid abbreviations. Leave no doubt, spell everything out. Review the wording of your query. Ask yourself whether you would understand your query if you were not familiar with this family or ancestor. Take another run-through to check for spelling errors and incorrect dates and for anything that might be extraneous to the basics of your query.

Regarding the point of your query, perhaps a lookup in the 1900 census - someone, even someone unconnected to your ancestors, might just keep reading long enough to realize they can help you.

A well-constructed query can be as valuable as gold.

Above excerpted from RootsWeb Review: RootsWeb's Weekly E-zine, Vol. 7, No. 22, 2 June 2004, <http://www.rootsweb.com> Editor Myra Vanderpool Gormley, CG.

## **QUAKER RECORDS DATING**

Records of the Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers are included with the town records. The Quaker records are identified by the unique formatting of dates. Ellen Thomas Berry and David Allen Berry describe the Quaker system of dating in *Our Quaker Ancestors* (GPC, 1987):

"Another pitfall for the purist can be the unique way the Quakers dated events. They did not use names for days of the week or months of the year since most of these names were derived from the names of pagan gods. A date such as August 19, 1748 will never be found. Rather it would be written '19th da. 6th mo. 1748.' Sometimes this will be written as 6mo 19da 1748. Why 6th month since August is the 8th month? The Quakers, along with everyone else in the American Colonies and England did not begin using the Gregorian calendar until 1752. Under the Julian calendar the year began on March 25th; March was the first month and February the twelfth month. This is something of a problem when an event occurred in the months of January, February, or up to March 25th, for then the date is given as 1748/1749... If exact days, months, and years are wanted, the old Quaker records must be used with great caution. Remember that until 1752 '1st mo' is March."

## **ANOTHER LOOK AT DATING**

From Rootsweb Review this offering from Karyl Hubbard:

"I was told by a respected local historian once that the reason for putting age at death rather than year of birth was because life is fleeting and every day was counted as precious. Even more so a century or two ago, when 45 was a ripe old age. Makes sense to me."

A note: an excellent "birthdate calculator" Ben Buckner's at:  
<http://web2.airmail.net/bhende19/b-date.htm>

## **NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY**

613 Pleasant St.  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
(508) 991-6275, ext. 15  
[www.ci.new-bedford.ma.us/services/library/library2.htm](http://www.ci.new-bedford.ma.us/services/library/library2.htm)

This public library has microfilm of newspapers, passenger lists for the port of New Bedford, city directories, periodicals, and many volumes of local history. New Bedford was an important whaling town in nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the library acknowledges this history by featuring a searchable online database containing a comprehensive index to the men that went on the whaling voyages and the ships that they sailed on from 1810 to 1860. The information in the database is a direct word for word transcription of crew lists, shipping papers, and contracts for the voyages. You may

search by crewman name, ship name, remarks, departure date, port of registry, and whaling ground. You can also find information on individual crewmen, when searching by residence, rank, even hair and skin color! The staff at the library is very helpful and has created guides to many of their collections to make your research easier. - RIGENWEB

### SEARCHING FOR A VETERAN?

Patrick McKenney writes in RootsWeb Review: RootsWeb's Weekly E-zine Vol. 7, No. 17, 28 April 2004: "I came across a good site in the U.S. Stars and Stripes newspaper regarding a searchable database for burials (and memorial markers) in military cemeteries." It's at: <http://www.cem.va.gov/>

This is not infallible. There were several men we could not find. But it may prove helpful to you.

### SMILE FOR THE DAY

**Grandma:** "You know, I used to be young once, too."

**Grandchild:** "Wow, grandma. You sure have an incredible memory!" NGS Magazine; Nov./Dec. 2003

### FOR EUROPEAN RESEARCH

Juan J. "John" Lins-Morstadt, a RIGS member, sends us this message: "On a fluke I found the websites listed below which are very useful for people researching information in Europe."

"Brandenburg-L" [brandenburg-l@genealogy.net](mailto:brandenburg-l@genealogy.net), [lorraine\\_trois\\_frontieres@yahoogroupes.fr](mailto:lorraine_trois_frontieres@yahoogroupes.fr), [hanover-l@genealogy.net](mailto:hanover-l@genealogy.net), "trier" [TRIER-ROOTS-L@rootsweb.com](mailto:TRIER-ROOTS-L@rootsweb.com)."

"The 'Hanover-L@genealogy.net' was very helpful. It is an open and bilingual (English and German) website. I posted a query regarding one of my ancestors, and within days I had contact and was referred to a German genealogist in the Hanover area who kept the parish register which contained the name of my relative. He sent me an extract from the register with five generations.

"People are very helpful in finding information or making suggestions on where to look. They also offer to make translations of letters to be sent to people in Germany. And one young man who was most helpful to me found some relatives dating back to 1510. I speak German but for people who do not, this is an ideal site."

A later e-mail from him cites these also: [bergisches-land-l@genealogy.net](mailto:bergisches-land-l@genealogy.net) and [hessen-l@genealogy.net](mailto:hessen-l@genealogy.net).

**NEW WEB SITE FOR BRITISH ARCHIVES.** (Thanks to Bob Letson)

Some of you who have recent immigrant ancestors may find some significant help at:  
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>.

**SOME MORE USEFUL WEBSITE ADDRESSES (from the NY Times):**

(AOL will not open these for us.)

The Farber Gravestone collection for graves in "the Northeast" (most before 1800):  
[www.davidrumsey.com/farber](http://www.davidrumsey.com/farber).

To learn about Usenet discussion groups and identify "answer people:"  
[www.netscan.research.microsoft.com](http://www.netscan.research.microsoft.com).

For **Irish** heritage and genealogy: [www.otherdays.com](http://www.otherdays.com).

For **Danish** research: [www.lklundin.dk/gedcom/english.php](http://www.lklundin.dk/gedcom/english.php).

**For Welsh Research**

Were some of your Welsh ancestors mariners? Search this online index of 20,000 welsh merchant masters, mates and engineers who were active from 1800 to 1945:  
<http://www.welshmariners.org.uk/index.php>

For links to many other Welsh genealogical resources try:  
<http://www.walesontheweb.org/cayw/index/en/929/all>

**FOR ARIZONA RESEARCH**

Rich Nolan shares a new, useful Arizona site for birth and death records:  
<http://genealogy.az.gov>.

**THE NCA (National Cemetery Affairs) WEBSITE**

If you have an ancestor who you think may have been buried in a national cemetery, you should check out the Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration (NCA) website (<http://rd.bcentral.com/?ID=1873222&s=32433571>). The site maintains a searchable database, which you can use to locate your veteran ancestor's gravesite, in addition to providing historical information on the establishment of the national cemeteries.

**MORE QUAKER RECORDS**

Robin Young reports that South County Museum, which has huge archives, just got a very large set of Quaker records that date back into the 1850's at least.

## NBC & MY FAMILY

NBC announces another "Extreme" program in partnership with My Family and LMNO TV: Extreme Reunion. If you are seeking someone significant in your past – be it family, loved one, military buddy, or your Best Man, go to [www.ExtremeReunion.com](http://www.ExtremeReunion.com) and tell your story.

If selected, you may be reunited with that person, have at the least an amazing experience, and you may get to share it all on TV. Reunions CAN happen! (Pass this on to your friends and acquaintances.)

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## Special Publications --- Rhode Island Genealogical Society

| <u>ID</u> | <u>TITLE</u> | <u>Member</u> | <u>Nonmember</u> |
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***DIR 2004 - 2004 RIGS MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY – MEMBERS ONLY***

Shipped (No need to add additional shipping.) **\$ 8.00**

***TIL - The Diary of Capt. Samuel Tillinghast of Warwick, Rhode Island, 1757-1766***

Cherry Fletcher Bamberg (hard cover, 528 pp.) Special member price **\$25.00 \$29.00**

***GOR - Elder John Gorton & the Six Principle Baptist Church of East Greenwich, RI***

Cherry Fletcher Bamberg (hard cover, 630 pp.) Special member price **\$29.00 \$36.00**

***ELM - Elm Grove Cemetery of North Kingstown, Rhode Island \$35.00***

Althea H. McAleer (hard cover, 392 pp.) Special member price **\$27.00**

***NBG - North Burial Ground Providence, Rhode Island Old Section 1700-1848 \$39.00***

John E. Sterling (hard cover, 480 pp.) Special member price **\$31.00**

***SOK - South Kingston, Rhode Island Historical Cemeteries***

John E. Sterling & James L. Wheaton IV (Hard cover, 653 pp.) **\$39.00** Special Member Price **\$35.00**

***STD - Daniel Stedman's Diary, 1826-1859 \$37.00***

Henry Clay Oatley, Jr. (soft cover, 464 pp.) Special member price **\$32.00**

***HUL - Huling Genealogy, Desc. of James & Margaret Huling***

Esther Woodworth Barnes (hard cover, 692 pp.) Special Offer **\$30.00**

***CD26 - Twenty-Six Years of Rhode Island Roots, 1975-2000 (CD)*** \$39.95 Special member price **\$31.00**

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