

Minutes - Thursday December 7, 1995 (Continued)
Meeting held at the Connecticut State Library

Attending: Donna Siemiatkoski, Warren Buchanan, Dianne B. Lenti, Bob Bamford, Harlan Jessup, Barbara J. Mathews, Judith Ellen Johnson, Judy Plummer, Gene Siemiatkoski, Lucille Shea, Gerald M. Caruthers, Robert Rafford, Kathryn S. Black, Jonathan Galli, Carolyn M. Picciano, Asst. Librarian CT State Library, Mark Jones Archivist CT State Library, and Guest: Eunice DiBella Administrator of CT Public Records.

Business Meeting: The meeting was called to order by President Donna Siemiatkoski. On a motion by Kathryn Black, seconded by Bob Bamford, the minutes of the last meeting (2 Nov 1995) were accepted without change. The Treasurer's report through 12-06-95 was filed for audit, with cash on hand of \$716.22. Treasurer Bob Bamford reported that there are twenty memberships currently outstanding.

New members: Gene Siemiatkoski, retired from food service, is now working with Connecticut Heritage Services and looks forward to becoming an integral part of the genealogical community. Jonathan Galli, Cranston RI, is a board member of the Rhode Island Genealogical Society, President of the Italian American Society of America, and co-chair of the 1997 New England Regional Genealogical Conference. We welcome both of these new members to CPGC and were very pleased that they could attend our meeting.

Committee Reports: Warren Buchanan handed out a draft copy of the new member brochure. He requested that members call him with any corrections or changes by Saturday a.m. Dec. 9 1995.

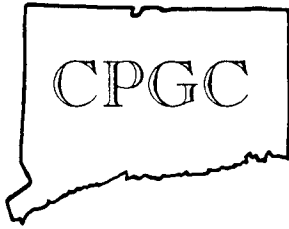
Donna Siemiatkoski reported on the December 2 1995 planning meeting for the 1995 New England Regional Genealogical Conference. CPGC was invited to join as a member of the conference, which will be held 24-27 April 1997 at the Radison Inn, Cromwell CT. The agreement form was read and discussed. On a motion by Barbara Mathews, seconded by Judy Plummer, we agreed that CPGC join the New England Regional Conference and pay the \$150.00 participation fee.

Meeting Adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

REMEMBER... IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY PAID YOUR DUES, THEN THIS MAY BE THE LAST REPORT YOU WILL RECEIVE. OUR MEMBER YEAR IS OCTOBER 1 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30.

Upcoming Events:

1. April 13 - Roots 12 Conference at Huntington , Long Island
2. July 12-13 - NEHGS Conference at Farmington CT
3. August 16-17 - FGS Conference at Rochester NY
4. April 24-27 1997 - New England Regional Gen. Conf at Cromwell CT



Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council
Post Office Box 4273, Hartford, Connecticut 06147-4273

NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 1996.
TIME: 10:00 A.M.
AT: CT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
WHERE: 150 WASHINGTON ST (CORNER OF PARK ST)
WITH: JOHN BOCCACCIO, REGISTRAR; CT VITAL REC.

PARKING: (1) WASHINGTON ST.-METERED (\$.25 F/20 MIN.)
(2) PARK ST - LIMITED 1 HOUR - FREE; PARK ST.
(3) PAID PARKING ADJACENT TO CT DEPT
HEALTH (WASHINGTON ST.)
(4) MC DONALD'S LOT ON PARK STREET.

LOCATION: WITHIN TWO TO THREE BLOCKS FROM CT
STATE LIBRARY... YOU MAY WISH TO PARK
NEAR THE LIBRARY AND WALK TO THE
MEETING. IF DRIVING TO WASHINGTON ST.;
PROCEED TO CAPITOL AVE (IMMED. VICINITY
OF STATE LIBRARY), THEN GO SOUTH ON
WASHINGTON STREET FOR TWO BLOCKS.



Minutes - Thursday, 7 December 1995
Meeting held at the Connecticut State Library

Speaker: Eunice DiBella, Administrator of Public Records [CT] gave an in-depth presentation regarding the current and future status of holdings of the Connecticut Bureau of Vital Records. The Connecticut Department of Health and Addiction Services will be moving to a new location in the next few months, which will entail (in part) the microfilming of vital records now on cards and forms. (See enclosed three pages which elaborate on this presentation and dialog.)

Public Records Administration Policy and the Move of the State
Department of Vital Records

Background: Through the ongoing discussions of the CPGC and John Boccaccio, State Registrar of Vital records, we learned during the fall of the upcoming move of the Vital Records Bureau to a new site on Capitol Avenue. The site is considerably smaller than the current site, which impacts the way in which vital records will be stored. In advance of this move the state has contracted with a firm to microfilm the collection of Connecticut births, marriages, and deaths, which began to be reported to the State by the towns of occurrence on July 1, 1897. When the records are all filmed according to high archival standards, the pre-1948 records, on file cards, will be placed in permanent storage. The post-1948, which are photocopies of records generated and kept at the town level will be destroyed. The idea of destruction of records concerned the genealogical community. As a result, two meetings were scheduled for the CPGC, whose members include leaders of virtually all the genealogical societies in Connecticut. Today's meeting was with Eunice DiBella, State Public Records Administrator, and Mark Jones, State Archivist, who are overseeing the microfilming process, to discuss how this move fits with public records administration policy. Next month's meeting will be with John Boccaccio who will discuss more of the mechanics of the move itself. Presented here are notes on the hour-long dialogue based on notes made by our secretary:

- * Microfilm readers may be needed at the State Health Dept (SHD)
- * New vault for vital records would be too large and too costly if built to hold all the records as they currently exist. Funds for a new vault are limited.
- * Microfilming is archivally acceptable.
- * Public records office is studying microfilming standards and guidelines, developing specifications for this project.
- * The central registry was set up by the State in 1897. Records were collected in the towns since colonial times [by order of the General Court in 1640].
- * The pre-1948 records, which are on file cards, will be accessioned by the State Library and stored in an off-site location used for archival storage. These will be shipped in cartons with labels. Warren Buchanan, who, with others, has worked as a volunteer at the State Health Department on various Fridays since the summer, stressed that these files have gotten badly out of order over the years of mis-filing a bit at a time. Some are folded slips of paper, and difficult to find. Others who have also volunteered strongly agreed. Mrs. DiBella was glad to be made aware of this situation as she had assumed that the records already were in alphabetical order and was unaware of this problem.

- * A microfilm copy of the pre-1948 records will be available at the SHD. If a card is illegible, a researcher may request to see the original. However, the intent of developing the standards for microfilming is to insure that all cards are legible and in order.
- * CPGC members present requested that the State Library also have a copy of the pre-1948 microfilm. Mrs. DiBella raised the confidentiality issue but was reminded that this argument is irrelevant as all marriage and death records are open in Connecticut.
- * Post 1948 records (which are paper copies of forms held in the town of occurrence) will be destroyed after filming. Warren Buchanan noted that these records are separate pieces of paper, bound by year, with the index to certain years on a microfiche. Marriages are bound by year and indexed separately by bride and groom. No overall index to marriages exists beyond the index to each yearly volume. The Death Records have an index on a microfiche.
- * The question was raised about records held at Town Halls--at some point in the future will these records be filmed and destroyed also? Records at the local level will not be destroyed. The records at the local level are in fact the originals, the state records are only copies. State law has strict regulations on the destruction of local public records and the destruction of vital records is expressly forbidden by state law.
- * The tumor registry, the oldest in the nation, is on microfilm at the SHD. They have a hard copy, which the State Library will accession.
- * The SHD holds divorce records. No mention has been made of what will happen to them.
- * Dr. Jones commented that a nationwide study of all states revealed that CT receives the least amount of the budget for the State Archives and the least amount of staff (two), ranking just above West Virginia, although CT is the richest state per capital in the nation. Another study showed the library's relative lag of modern technology. [For example, Maine's state archives can be accessed by computer.]
- * The projected microfilm will have computerized assisted retrieval (an index).
- * Mrs. DiBella had been informed that the vital records 1897 to 1906 were indexed, that 1907-1948 were in alphabetical order by year by birth, marriage, and death; that general preparation work would be done before the filming begins. She had been unaware of the disarray of the card/form order.

- * Mrs. DiBella is preparing directives for the project. She will request 1) that the microfiche index is useable and searchers have access to it; 2) that the microfilming company specify on each target the volume and page and not split volumes between rolls of film; 3) that the records be in alphabetical order.
- * CPGC members present agreed that they would be glad to volunteer time to put all pre-1948 vital record cards in alphabetical order.
- * Dr. Jones, State Archivist, will request that all pre-1948 cards be prepped properly prior to turning them over to the State Library.
- * Dr. Jones further stated that CT Colonial Records can be found in the Winthrop collection and in the Trumbull papers.
- * He further stated that the State Archives now holds records from the Meriden School for Boys.
- * On a case by case basis council members and probably other genealogists would bring the concerns of the public records office and the state archives to the General Assembly in appropriate times and ways.
- * State officials (EDiB, MJ, JB) want the microfilming to proceed with a minimum disruption of public access.

Mrs. DiBella, Dr. Jones, and the members of the CPGC agreed that the meeting had been both mutually enlightening and productive. Council members found that the decision to microfilm was driven by space considerations caused by the lack of state funds to build a suitable vault for the growing amount of paper; that safeguards are being developed to insure a high quality product on the microfilm; that the original copies will continue to be accessible in the various towns and cannot be destroyed by state law. Mrs. DiBella and Dr. Jones were able to communicate these factors to the council members and to hear of problems of the conditions of the records of which they were unaware, and were anxious to correct the problems brought to their attention. The hour-long meeting enabled all participants to see that we have the same goal--the preservation of the information on the vital records of the state of Connecticut and the maintenance of access to those records under existing state law. Mrs. DiBella and Dr. Jones will amend their specifications to reflect several of the issues which arose in this conversation. All parties agreed to stay in communication over the issues in which they are mutually interested.