

Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council

2 March 1995
Diocesan House
The Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut

Attending: Bob Bamford, Kathryn S. Black, Warren D. Buchanan, Jerry Carroon, Harlan Jessup, Judith Ellen Johnson, Jack E. Kuras, Dianne Lenti, Barbara J. Mathews, Kelly A. Nolin, Robert L. Rafford, Donna Siemiatkoski, Neil Sundt.

Speaker:

The Rev. Robert C. Carroon, Archivist and Historiographer of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, is a past President of the Connecticut Society of Genealogists. He welcomed us to the meeting room of Diocesan House, which had kindly supplied pastries and coffee for our enjoyment. Rev. Carroon provided an overview of church history and a map [enclosed] of the dates of founding of the Episcopal Churches of Connecticut. According to Rev. Carroon, the record books of Connecticut's Episcopal churches are stored in Record Group 8. Most have been microfilmed (LDS) and these films are available at Diocesan House. Rev. Carroon published a listing of the Episcopal churches and the disposition and availability of their records in *The Nutmegger*, vol. 23, issues 1-4. A very small handful of church records have not been microfilmed and are stored at Diocesan House. CPGC members urged Rev. Carroon to continue in his plans to publish a supplemental note in *The Nutmegger*.

In addition to the parish records, there are two other groups of original records available at Diocesan House. The first of these are the records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. This society funded many of the earliest churches in Connecticut as well as other British colonies around the world. Regular reports from the society's contacts can help to trace the history of individual churches. These records are also at the Library of Congress and in London. Secondly, Diocesan House also has the con-association records of the Congregational Church in Connecticut for the 1700's as a courtesy, in order to support them in a better climate control than available at the Congregational archives.

In addition to the extensive vault, the library at Diocesan House has complete runs of several journals of the Episcopal church, as well as records from confirmations made by bishops through the history of the church. In a tour of the vault, Rev. Carroon showed us the confirmation record book kept by Samuel Seabury, the first Episcopal Bishop in America. In response to questions, Rev. Carroon noted that records for cemeteries associated with individual churches have been kept by the rectors in those churches.

Business Meeting:

The business meeting was called to order by President Donna Siemiatkoski. On a motion by Jack Kuras seconded by Bob Rafford, the minutes of the last meeting were accepted without change. Furthermore, members gave thanks for them to Helen Ullmann.

New member Bob Bamford was welcomed. Bob runs the Heritage Bulletin Board System in Bristol. This electronic BBS carries full Fidonet genealogy echoes as well as a vast file area containing worldwide genealogical information. Finally, Heritage has online access to census indexes for New England. There is a small annual membership fee to support Fidonet costs although this is discounted for members of certain genealogy organizations. Bob serves as President of the Bristol Genealogical Society. Barbara Mathews agreed to send an ASCII file on the next CPGC meeting to Heritage.

The Treasurer's Report was submitted and filed [enclosed].

Warren Buchanan reported on the activities of the Legislative Committee. On Friday, February 24th, there was a budget hearing regarding future funding for the Connecticut State Library. The budget goals submitted by the library are for level funding through the next two years. This funding would be supported through the elimination of 6 positions at the library. Warren was unable to attend, as were other members of the committee, so Warren sent a letter to the hearing chairman on behalf of the Executive Committee of CPGC. His letter describes how vital it is to maintain access to the records at CSL.

Donna Siemiatkoski described further communications with John Boccacio, the Registrar of Vital Records, and with the Town Clerks Association.

Members of CPGC were informed that the Vital Records office of the Department of Public Health will soon be moving from its current location within walking distance from the State Library. The new location will be down Capitol Avenue and is considered to be too distant for access by foot from the State Library. In addition, the new location will not have any nearby public parking. Members expressed their concerns about these problems, but also expressed hope that the larger space will make it possible for the division to make indexes and other open records more accessible.

Members from Massachusetts also reported that the Massachusetts Vital Records office was moving from Tremont Street to a new location at 470 Atlantic Avenue, 4th floor, in Boston. They urged people needing access after February 27th to call ahead to verify that the office is again open for research: 617-727-8600 is their new telephone number. They will be open for research 9-12 and 2:30-4:30, Mon., Tues., Thurs., and Fri. for a fee of \$3/hour. The counter remains open 8:45-4:45 five days a week.

Warren Buchanan reported that Tom Langdon continues to work on the pamphlet regarding vital records access but lacks time to make real progress right now. Donna reported that the entire Legislative Committee is now working together on the next draft. Bob Rafford expressed concern that we move faster on this as problems continue to crop up in gaining access in certain communities. Problem communities reported over the past four months are: Middletown, Bridgeport, Newtown, Middlebury, and Norwalk. We discussed that this pointed out the need to place at highest priority establishing better communication through the Town Clerks Association.

Warren Buchanan has also been working on the next version of the Member List. Warren plans to add a cross-index by speciality area and to increase its size from three-fold to four-fold. He also pointed out printing problems and suggested quite strongly that the next version be typeset. Both Bob Bamford and Barbara discussed the possibilities of creating an encapsulated Postscript (EPS) file that could be sent to a typesetter and thus keep typesetting fees as low as possible. Barbara Mathews will send to Warren those changes noted by members who paid their dues before November 1st. She also agreed to place a note in the next set of minutes suggesting that people return the new form for the Member List even if they have already submitted changes with their dues, as the new form will help Warren with the information needed for the cross-index.

On a motion from Warren Buchanan seconded by Kathryn Black, we agreed with one abstention to assess members an additional \$5 to cover printing the Member List.

We had a brief discussion about the clarity of the current statutes regarding access. After this, the meeting adjourned.

Our next meeting will be on April 6, 1995, at 10:00 AM at the Connecticut Historical Society. We will receive progress reports on the various committees and will discuss plans for future meetings.