

Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council
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JULY 1998 MINUTES

CPGC Minutes - Thursday, July 2, 1998. Attending Donna Siemiatkoski, Fred Hart, Robert Rafford, Judith Plummer, Tom and Virginia Howard, and Dr. Mark Jones, Connecticut State Archivist.

Meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. by President, Donna Siemiatkoski.

Dr. Mark Jones, CT State Archivist, at the CT State Library, made a presentation on
CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY - NEW ARCHIVAL PROGRAMS

Mark Jones spoke about archival databases that might be of particular interest to genealogists, since they either are or can be organized by surname, making access a simpler task. He highlighted four particular databases, providing illustrative handouts for each:

1) **Fitches Home for Soldiers, Connecticut's first veterans home in Noroton**, generated the **Deceased Veterans Discharge Files, 1882-1936**. Most of the approximately 2,300 files were for veterans of the Civil War but some had served in the Spanish-American War. Although Fitches Home was located in southwestern CT, veterans who died there came from all over the state. This resource can offer significant information on these individuals, during a sometimes difficult time period to trace them. The computer generated index is available in book form at the main reference desk in the History and Genealogy Reading Room, and must be used to locate the file for use.

2) **Railroad Accidents and Deaths, Surname Index, 1858 - 1893**. The Public Utilities Commission had the task of investigating and reporting on all incidents involving the railroad, creating a collection of 6,319 reports. Railroad accidents involving other trains, cars, pedestrians, and witnesses to these accidents, and other incidents make for an interesting, informative database, with the volumes now accessible through the newly created surname index. This index can be accessed at the main reference desk in the History and Genealogy Dept.

3) **Record Group (RG) 12: World War I, Council of Defense, CT, War Records Dept.**, verification of service. In 1919, questionnaires were sent to returning World War I soldiers, asking for enlistment information including date and place of birth and names of parents, places of service, battles fought, and finally, two subjective questions about the soldier's impressions of service. 14,000 to 16,000 of these questionnaires were returned, and are grouped by soldiers' towns, but a surname index has been created making this useful material more readily available. The index will also be available on the History and Genealogy Database.

4) **General William H. and Henrietta M. Noble Collection, RG 69:50.** This collection involving pension applications for veterans assisted by the Nobles, has been available for some time via a little index book available at the reference desk in the History and Genealogy Dept. Most of the 1,695 files were for veterans of the Civil War, but the Revolutionary War and the Spanish American War are also represented. This under-utilized collection is being re-folded and re-boxed, and a more detailed explanation is being prepared.

Mark Jones also spoke of two further archival projects currently under-way:

5) **Indian Papers for New London County.** Because these papers have been so over-used, the handling has damaged the stability of the original documents. They have been removed from availability, and are now being arranged chronologically by tribe and county. Xerox copy will be available at the reference desk. The Schaghticook Indian Papers are done, and the copies available at the reference desk. Be sure to note that the oversized Over Seer Reports, late 1700's to 1825, are encapsulated and in large drawers.

6) **Post 1820 Government Papers,** being chronologically arranged by session by Bruce Stark, and a Container Guide will be created. This guide will not be as detailed as a surname index, but will include the kinds of cases handled by the General Assembly. These materials, which include petitions by individuals, a circular letter from Brigham Young and one on slavery and Nullification in South Carolina, as well as rejected bills (1800 onwards), are hard to use but Bruce Stark is writing a helpful explanation to make them more useful. Mark Jones reported that there is a great amount of material on Indians.

Mark Jones concluded by saying that he would let us know when these projects were completed and available for use.

Business Meeting at the conclusion of Mark Jones' presentation.

Secretary's Report of June 4, 1998 was accepted as distributed on a motion by Tom Howard seconded by Fred Hart.

Correspondence: Two pieces of advertising were received. Lucille Shea has resigned as Corresponding Secretary.

Treasurer's Report: was given and placed on file for audit with cash on hand \$906.09. Robert Rafford made the point that in the first five months, expenses exceeded income by over \$200, and suggested that either a special collection for the brochures be used or that the dues be raised sufficient to cover expenses. Family membership could also be reconsidered.

Discussion ensued about the possible money to be realized through CPGC participation in the NERGC Conference, to be held in Portland, ME, in October. While CPGC is given a whole advertisement page, Tom Howard moved that individual members who wish to have their business cards reproduced on a second page ad, may do so by sending their business card and a check for \$20, made out to CPGC, postmarked by July 25 to Thomas Howard, 59 Old County Rd., E. Granby, CT 06026. Fred Hart seconded, so voted.

Government Relation: Donna Siemiatkoski reported that on the proposal to move the History, Genealogy and Archives Collections, plus the original Vital Records and some Museum artifact, to the Newington facility formerly rented for the Lottery Agency, a meeting was held on June 24 with Pat Owen, Interim State Librarian, the Commissioner of Public Works, and the owner of the building. While the Commissioner of Public Works was "non-committal", the owner of the building has received the requirements sent by Pat Owen, and is agreeable to paying for the necessary renovations but wants an architect to make a study, supported in this by Pat Owen. That is the next step in the process. There is no time line for the entire proposal.

It was also noted that the State Library is in the process of selecting a new head for that library, a process which also takes time and has no deadline.

The question of death records and social security numbers will be studied over the summer, including a question of Joe Brisse of Records Preservation and Access of FGS as to what other states do about this.

NARA Record Center discussions will be held in New York City on August 6th. A conversation with Jim Owen of the Waltham branch clarified that all microfilm places are to continue to exist. The issue involves original, regional one-of-a-kind documents being centralized in a specific location, ie. Kansas City. While microfilming or digitizing these records is promised, that is an expensive proposition and one that has inherent problems of its own, such as the treatment given the New England immigration cards when they were microfilmed. The result would be that these regional records in their original form would have to be accessed at the central location, necessitating considerable travel and expense by researchers.

Discussion followed about the importance of original records staying within their regions, and the fact that these repositories generate tourist dollars as genealogists come to use them. It was suggested that letters to CT's two senators might be useful in alerting them to this situation.

Old Business: Pro Bono work for legislators was discussed at some length, with numerous difficulties noted, including the \$25 limit on "gifts" to legislators. It was suggested that since CPGC goal is to raise the awareness of these documents and materials used by researchers, individual projects focussed on the documents, perhaps related to the legislator's town or special interest, might be more useful. Targeting those legislators who serve on Public Health (VR), Education (over-sight for CSL), and the leadership might be more effective. It was suggested that over the summer, individual members might be able to identify a person and a project.

Nest Meeting: September 3 at 10 AM at the Polish National Home in Hartford. Speaker will be Gary Waite, CT Historical Society on Quaker Records.

The meeting was adjourned.

Coming Events: Saturday, July 11, CSG Bus Trip to NEHGS - \$36 (Waltham - Sep 10)
July 12, 1 PM: Picnic at Robert Rafford's home on Clear View Knoll, Middlebury.
Saturday, July

Judith Plummer, Acting Secretary

THANKS to Judy for taking over the minutes - and my apologies for the late mailing of same.

Rogaine Lute

NEXT MEETING - SEPTEMBER 3, 1998 - 10 a.m.

DIRECTIONS TO JULY 2 MEETING - POLISH NATIONAL HOME (Phone 860-247-1784):

From I-91, north or south. Exit 29A, (Capitol area), onto the Connland Highway, take the very first exit to Columbus Boulevard. At the end of the exit ramp, turn left onto Columbus Boulevard, at the second light, turn right onto Charter Oak Avenue. At the first light turn right into the Polish National Home parking lot.

From I-84 West take Exit 54 (downtown Hartford), stay left. At the first light, turn left onto Columbus Boulevard. At the fifth light take a right onto Charter Oak Avenue. At the first light turn right into the Polish National Home parking lot.

From I-84 East take Exit 48B (Capitol Avenue), at the end of the ramp, take a left onto Capitol Avenue, (pass the State Library). At the fourth light Capitol Avenue meets Main Street. Turn right onto Main Street, go one block and turn left onto Charter Oak Avenue (opposite South Congregational Church). At the second light turn left into the Polish National Home parking lot.

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10-98

Barbara J. Mathews CG
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NEXT MEETING

*Sept 3, 1998
Quaker Records*

**Polish National Home
Hartford, Connecticut**
