

Connecticut Ancestry eNews – delivered May 14, 2013

Dear CAS Members,

Another genealogy year is coming to an end. By now you have received a letter announcing the Annual Meeting which will be held at the Fairfield Museum and History Center on Sunday, May 19. Doors open at noon and the program begins at 12:30. There will be a short business meeting followed by two lectures about evidence. One deals with evidence found doing traditional research: “Can You Believe Your Eyes: Sizing Up Sources and Information” by Laura DeGrazia, CG, will help you analyze your data and decide whether it adds up to proving a relationship. “Your DNA Fingerprint: The imprint of your ancestors,” which I will present, explains DNA testing for genealogists and how it can help prove relationships when the paper trail peters out. I hope to see many of you there.

In legislative news the Connecticut General Assembly is considering two bills that would restrict access to death records. These bills, and a third one that has been dropped, were introduced in the wake of the Newtown shootings at the request of the Newtown town clerk. She decided that she needed to protect the privacy of the families of the victims and she refused to issue death certificates to anyone but the immediate families. One bill, 5421, would prevent death certificates of minors from being issued to members of the public for 6 months following the deaths. *Genealogists would also be prevented from viewing these records.* The second bill, 5733, would prevent access to a full death certificate and instead provide a certificate of death registration. This certificate would include only the name, gender, date of death and town of death and would be issued to any person who is not a surviving spouse or “next of kin” (plus certain government agencies). *This restricted access to death records would be in force for 100 years following the death.* Access by genealogists is not mentioned in this bill, and it is assumed that our legal access would not change. However, given the specific restriction provided by 5421, I am uncomfortable with this bill as well. You can read up on these bills at cga.ct.gov. Please protect the rights of genealogists and CT citizens (death records have been open and public for 400 years!) by contacting your state senator and representative and expressing your opposition to these bills.

Your CAS board has been working hard to increase the value of your membership. We are working on digitizing the indexes of every issue of the journal, and these indexes will soon be online in the members’ section of our Website. They will contain every name from every issue, and they will be searchable electronically!

Finally, watch for a big announcement in the August issue of *Connecticut Ancestry*. The society is launching a Fairfield County 1790 US Census project. We will be asking you to submit sketches about your ancestors who lived in Fairfield County and were enumerated on the first census. This project will be similar to projects already under way in New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine as well as the one being done by NEHGS for Western Massachusetts. I hope we will be hearing from members who “finished” their research long ago as well as members who are just now discovering their Colonial roots.

Please contact me through the Website if you have questions or suggestions for activities.

Nora Galvin, President