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## **Genealogy Pointers (05/26/2009)**

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### **County Courthouses, Their Records, and Practices, by Elizabeth Petty Bentley**

(The following article was adapted from Mrs. Bentley's [County Courthouse Book, Third Edition](#))

The descriptions found in my new publication, the [County Courthouse Book, Third Edition](#), are based largely upon information found on the Internet and received in response to questionnaires sent to each and every county across the country. In my questionnaire I requested verification of address, telephone number, and the jurisdiction's date of organization and provenance. Of the major record groups that are of significant interest to genealogists and other researchers, I selected four—land records, naturalization records, vital records, and probate records—and asked that for each category my correspondent identify the particular office researchers should contact. (Even if a clerk or other official is listed by name, addressing his or her office is usually sufficient.) I also requested information about the dates covered in each record group as well as fees for an index search and photocopying, whether there was a minimum charge, and whether there were restrictions on the records' use (such as proof of relationship for vital records).

Some correspondents supplied more information than was requested, and I've included this additional data wherever possible in the new volume. For instance, these same offices may hold other genealogically significant records such as assessments, bonds, marks and brands, voter registrations, licenses, fictitious names, name changes, school records, divorces, guardianships, adoptions, and criminal and civil court proceedings.

For offices whose information is sketchy, the reader can refer to the summary of the state's judicial organization at the beginning of the state's listing in the [County Courthouse Book](#) and to other jurisdictions in the state to determine the pattern of record-keeping and the average fees for the area. Note especially whether neighboring counties reported having naturalization records. I made a special effort to elicit information on naturalizations from those jurisdictions that previously claimed to have none, and I was surprised at the number that reported finding some or else reported that the records had been transferred elsewhere. For some time naturalizations have been recorded only by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, so those that were recorded earlier in the general court dockets, often undifferentiated and un-indexed, are rarely consulted now and mostly forgotten.

Vital records are also somewhat under-reported, since some offices didn't realize that I meant to include marriages in that category. Many states have relegated the recording of twentieth-century births, deaths and marriages to a state office, while New England vital records continue to be kept by town clerks. Those addresses can be found in my other book, [The Genealogist's Address Book](#). Also note the information regarding a county's creation (usually carved out of a larger geographical area, but sometimes pieced together from parts of several existing jurisdictions). Events that occurred in a locality before it assumed its present boundaries should also be sought in the town, county, territory, or state from which the younger jurisdiction was formed, because the governing body that retained the area's original name usually retained

all the records created before the split. Note that territorial records are held by the federal government, and newly independent Virginia cities may have records dating from the founding of the city. On the other hand, several county governments have recently been consolidated with the governments of cities that have long existed within their borders.

This present edition of the [County Courthouse Book](#) is aimed primarily at facilitating research done by mail, not in person. So, for the most part, I've omitted the hours, per diem reading-room fees, or charges for second copies of the same document, or for unassisted photocopying (usually somewhat less than for photocopies prepared by the staff for mailing). Most agencies allow, and even encourage, individuals to come and view their records in person. However, they may require positive identification, and they usually restrict the availability of fragile originals and curtail browsing in files which contain confidential information such as adoptions or illegitimate births. It's always advisable to phone ahead for an appointment before visiting. If a personal visit is impossible, mailed requests should be kept very specific when addressed to understaffed and underfunded offices that are primarily tasked with creating current records. Answering historical and genealogical inquiries is not their function. When requesting copies, give as much identifying information as possible. Some agencies provide a search service, but it is usually limited to determining whether a specific record exists, not searching every Smith will and deed to see if a daughter who married a Jones is mentioned in one. If you have that kind of project, it's best to hire a professional genealogist or a title search company. Local genealogical or historical societies usually maintain lists of researchers and their fees.

[For more information about the new 3rd edition of Mrs. Bentley's *County Courthouse Book*, please visit the following URL:

[http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&item\\_number=425&NLC-GenPointers1](http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=425&NLC-GenPointers1)]

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### **One-Week Sale on Connecticut and Rhode Island CDs**

*(Sale prices in effect until 11:59 PM EDT, Monday, June 1, 2009)*

The southern New England states of Connecticut and Rhode Island were founded by Massachusetts Bay exiles like Roger Williams, Anne Hutchinson, and Thomas Hooker. If you are on the trail of ancestors who were living in Connecticut or Rhode Island prior to 1800, these excellent collections of compiled genealogies may help you.

The first two CDs are based on a plethora of family history articles that first appeared in the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* and were then consolidated and indexed for easy use. The next two CDs, covering Connecticut military records and local and family histories, consist of many of the most important reference works in all of Connecticut genealogy. The CD entitled [The Ricker Collection](#) must certainly be regarded as the centerpiece of this group in that it encompasses, among other things, the million Connecticut town vital records transcribed by former Connecticut Examiner of Public Records Lucius Barnes Barbour. The final CD, [Connecticut Vital Records: Marriages & Deaths, Selected Years](#), which was produced by The Generations Network, contains a vast miscellany of Connecticut vital records, many of which post-date the genealogies or source records found in the other five CDs.

For the next seven days (until 11:59 PM EDT, Monday, June 1, 2009), you can purchase any/all of these extraordinary collections for \$10.00 or more off the retail selling price:

#### [GENEALOGIES OF RHODE ISLAND FAMILIES](#) (Low in stock)

This CD contains images of the pages of *Genealogies of Rhode Island Families*, a two-volume work containing articles extracted from *The Register*. It features many of the best genealogical articles of the past 140 years. Referencing some 46,000 individuals, most of the articles consist of genealogies, vital records,

and cemetery inscriptions. An informative introduction by Gary Boyd Roberts presents a comprehensive picture of the current state of Rhode Island genealogy.

**Was \$39.99 Now \$29.99**

#### [GENEALOGIES OF CONNECTICUT FAMILIES](#)

This Family Archive CD contains a collection of articles that were originally published in *The Register* and reprinted under the title *Genealogies of Connecticut Families*, as well as images of the pages of *Families of Ancient New Haven* by Donald Lines Jacobus. This combination CD includes genealogies of almost every founding family of Connecticut and the complete ancestry and relationships of 35,000 residents of 18th-century New Haven. The CD references more than 127,000 individuals and generally includes documented genealogies as well as birth, marriage, death, probate, land, and court records.

**Was \$39.99 Now \$29.99**

#### [CONNECTICUT MILITARY RECORDS: Soldiers and Officers](#)

This CD contains images of the pages of various books published by GPC that provide a complete record of 167,000 Connecticut persons who served in the French and Indian War, the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Mexican War, with emphasis on Connecticut soldiers in the Revolution.

**Was \$39.99 Now \$29.99**

#### [CONNECTICUT LOCAL AND FAMILY HISTORIES](#)

This two-disc Family Archive CD contains the largest collection of Connecticut genealogies available--in this format or any other. Naming some 450,000 individuals, the CDs are based on a collection of books published by GPC that cover the early families of the towns of Fairfield, Guilford, Hartford, Milford, Wethersfield, Windsor, Woodbury, and others, as well as books that cover the genealogical history of the entire state.

**Was \$49.99 Now \$39.99**

#### **Technical requirements for the above four CDs:**

- CD-ROM drive
- Family Archive Viewer (version 4.0 or higher), which is available as a free download at <http://www.genealogical.com/content/dlfav6.html>, or Family Tree Maker for Windows, version 4.0 or higher, which can be ordered from [www.FamilyTreeMaker.com](http://www.FamilyTreeMaker.com).

#### [THE RICKER COMPILATION of Vital Records of Early Connecticut](#) (1,500,000 entries!)

This CD consists of an alphabetized and edited list of birth, marriage, death, and related vital records bearing on the inhabitants of the towns of early Connecticut. It is based extensively on the Barbour Collection of Connecticut Town Vital Records, the chief resource in Connecticut genealogy, and it covers the period from approximately 1633, when these statistics were first recorded, to around 1850.

In addition to the celebrated Barbour Collection, compiler Jacquelyn Ricker's database also includes vital statistics from the following Connecticut towns not covered by Barbour: Bolton, Coventry, Enfield, Mansfield, New Haven, Vernon, and much of Norwich and Woodstock, as well as information gleaned from lists of source records, Bibles, and church records held in the Connecticut State Library in Hartford. *The Ricker Compilation*, moreover, includes tombstone transcriptions from more than 400 cemeteries that were originally published in *The Connecticut Nutmegger*, a publication of the Connecticut Society of Genealogists formerly edited by Jacquelyn Ricker herself.

Overall, the amount of data in this CD is staggering—one-and a-half million names! Another great feature—the CD's search engine, based on the popular Adobe Acrobat platform—allows you to search the records by name or keyword.

**Was \$59.99 Now \$49.99**

**System Requirements for the Ricker Compilation CD:**

- Windows: Pentium-class processor; Microsoft Vista, Windows 98SE, ME, NT4 (Service Pack 5 or 6), 2000, or XP; 64 MB of RAM; and 70 MB of available hard disk space.
- Macintosh Classic: PowerPC processor; Apple Mac OS 8.6, 9.0.4, 9.1, or OS X 10.0.4; 32 MB of RAM; and, 40 MB of available hard disk space.
- Macintosh OS X 10.2.2 or higher: PowerPC G3 or later processor; Apple Mac OS X 10.2.2, 10.2.4 or higher; 64 MB of RAM; and, 70 MB of available hard drive space.
- Adobe Acrobat Reader is needed to access this CD

**[CONNECTICUT VITAL RECORDS: Marriages & Deaths, Selected Years](#)**

If you're looking for marriage records for your pre-1800 progenitors or death records for 20th-century Connecticut inhabitants, this CD is a great place to begin your search. The contents include 1,315,000 records from 8 Connecticut counties (Fairfield, Hartford, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven, New London, Tolland, and Windham Town); marriages to 1800; and a death index covering 1949 to 1996.

**Was \$16.95 Now \$9.99**

**Technical requirements for the Connecticut Vital Records CD:**

- 486/33 processor (Pentium recommended)
- Windows 95 or better
- 16mb RAM, 15mb hard disk space
- 2X CD-ROM
- Monitor with 800x600 pixel display, 16 bit color or higher

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**"The Quakers and Quaker Genealogy," by Ellen and David Berry**

(The following article is excerpted from the Introduction to Ellen and David Berry's book, [Our Quaker Ancestors](#).)

The Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers, has a rich storehouse of records kept from its beginning in the mid-1600s to the present. There are vast differences among Quaker records, and the genealogist must know which ones to use. The study of Quaker records is mechanically different from that of other religious organizations. More emphasis must be placed on historical context, because organizational history and record-keeping are closely related. Unless you are careful--and knowledgeable--you can become hopelessly lost and find yourself giving up on one of the richest sources of genealogical records you could ever hope to find.

Across the U.S. are small towns with names that have a certain rhythm or quality of sound. As you move south and west from the eastern seaboard to the Mississippi River and beyond, through Virginia and the swamplands of the Carolinas to Georgia, you will see names like Radnor, Concord, Salem, New Garden, Goshen, Cedar Creek, and others which combine Biblical and geographical origins. These names are a part of one of the most interesting facets of early American history. They indicate that, at least at one time, the area was populated by The Religious Society of Friends. The Quakers were once an influential part of their communities. They moved from their early settlements in the original eastern colonies and called their new homes by familiar names, much as they had done when they arrived from England and Wales. In some of these towns, you might find a rectangular building, usually stretching east to west and facing south, which might still be used as a meetinghouse. In all probability, it will have the same name as the village or town.

If you were to visit any of these meetinghouses today, you might find a record of almost every event that took place at that location from the time of its establishment. These records include information on births, marriages, and deaths, but they also note the names of residents moving to and from the area and their places of origin, as well as committee actions on a wide variety of topics, including requests to individuals to leave the meeting and the reasons for the request. In addition, there would be records of announced intentions of marriage, followed by the actual wedding record naming not only the bride and groom but all

of those present, among whom may be found the parents, brothers, sisters, and perhaps other relations of the newlyweds. If the old records are not at the meetinghouse itself, it is possible to determine where they have been sent and where the original records or microfilm copies can be used by the general public. In other words, you will find a genealogist's dream. There is an amazing number of these records in existence. You only need to know where they are and how to use them. This is the focus of [our] book.

The Religious Society of Friends began in the same religious turmoil of 17th-century England that produced the Puritans. The Quakers also immigrated to America to escape severe religious persecution. Although Quakers first saw American shores during the 1650s, it was not until 1682 that large numbers started to emigrate from the British Isles and smaller numbers from continental Europe. It was in this year that William Penn landed just south of what is now Philadelphia to exercise his proprietorship of the present states of Pennsylvania and Delaware. Because of their stubbornness or strong-mindedness (depending upon how you view it), the Quakers' influence far exceeded their numbers. They were a study in contradictions. Although they espoused religious freedom, they required their own members to worship in a specified manner. No organization had more rules regarding removal from approved status than the Quakers. By today's standards, these rules seem trivial and even arrogant. It now seems ironic that it was precisely this dictatorial image that the Society wanted to avoid at all costs. They were truly "plain people," but at the same time they were shrewd merchants. Their honesty in personal and business dealings was renowned. Their treatment of the Indians is a classic study in how other white Americans should have conducted themselves. However, even in this area they were not completely faultless. They abhorred slavery, but some families owned slaves. They were against war of any kind, but still some fought in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars.

The Quakers were a more mobile society than most religious groups that came to early America. Whether their travels through the South to the Midwest were prompted by religious fervor, the clash of political and religious beliefs (e.g. slavery), or simply the desire for land and opportunities is now a moot point. The fact is they did move in large numbers, and in doing so they left a trail of records unsurpassed by any other religious organization.

There is another side to this story. The same doctrine that required record-keeping also forbade religious rituals and any form of self-aggrandizement. In the early years even grave markers were prohibited, as were personal histories (although some histories do exist, particularly of people prominent in the movement). Therefore, it is often difficult for a genealogist to place an ancestor in the proper historical perspective. However, the voluminous records more than make up for these deficiencies. It is always safe to say that anyone interested in tracing ancestors is indeed fortunate if a connection can be made with Quakers, for it means there is a good chance that comprehensive primary records can be found.

In our travels throughout Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and North and South Carolina, and in conversations with Quaker librarians, it became apparent that research in Quaker genealogy would be greatly facilitated by a definitive handbook describing the differences that exist between Friends' records and denominational church records; in particular, we hoped to delineate the methods necessary to locate and interpret data critical to genealogists.

Before there can be any clear understanding of Quaker records, one must know something of the history of The Religious Society of Friends. There was no question of whether or not to keep records; it was a dictate from the Society's founder, George Fox, that records be kept. This idea is so foreign to modern denominational church practices that some introduction to Quakerism is necessary, and the next chapter is intended to fulfill this need. [END of Introduction]

NB. Quaker researchers would be well advised to begin their research in Quaker source records with the CD-ROM version of William Wade Hinshaw's multi-volume work, [Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy](#).

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## Two CDs by Peter Wilson Coldham Cover Virtually All Extant English Colonial Passenger Records

British scholar Peter Wilson Coldham has devoted more than 30 years to the study of the passenger trade between Great Britain and the North American colonies. He is the author of seventeen books that reveal the identities of tens of thousands of individuals who emigrated to the colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries.

At the risk of oversimplifying, Mr. Coldham's publications may be divided into two categories: (1) passenger and related records pertaining to persons who voluntarily left for the Americas; and (2) records concerning felons (many of them mere handkerchief thieves) who were forcibly removed by the British government. This latter group is the subject of our recent CD-ROM publication based on Mr. Coldham's scholarship: [British Emigrants in Bondage, 1614-1788](#).

### [BRITISH EMIGRANTS IN BONDAGE, 1614-1788](#)

To put matters into context, few colonizing powers relied so heavily and consistently on the wholesale deportation of their prison population as did England through two-and-a-half centuries of imperial expansion. As Mr. Coldham has written, "An Elizabethan Act of 1597 which provided for the banishment of rogues and vagabonds constituted the legal framework under which convicts of the 17th century were dispatched as slave labor to the American colonies." The ports of disembarkation for these bonded passengers varied over time. For instance, during the second half of the 17th century, most prisoners were destined for the West Indian plantations; after 1718, however, "Maryland and Virginia became the almost invariable landing places. By the time America made her Declaration of Independence in 1776, the prisons of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland had disgorged some 48,000 of their inmates—most of them petty criminals—to the colonies, where most of them survived and, with their descendants, populated the land of their exile."

Since 1974, Mr. Coldham has worked to identify the names of all persons who were part of this diaspora. He captured the majority of the records of this vast movement for his book *The Complete Book of Emigrants in Bondage, 1614-1775*, and its two *Supplements*. In recent years he has added to that foundation new records gleaned from a detailed examination of previously unexplored sources. With the cooperation of many of the best-qualified American historians and genealogists, moreover, he has also assembled a totally new listing of records, entitled *Irish Transported Felons and Runaways*, which identifies some 5,700 immigrant Irishmen and, in many cases, links their names with their likely place of origin. Researchers will find all of this information available on this new CD.

[BRITISH EMIGRANTS IN BONDAGE, 1614-1788](#) supersedes all of Mr. Coldham's previous works on the subject of BONDED passage. Besides the records themselves, the CD features a definitive essay on the British transportation system, an exhaustive breakdown of the records used in the compilation of the CD, and a complete list of convict ships that sailed to America between 1671 and 1788. Any student of the colonial passenger trade from Great Britain to North America will want to own a copy of this remarkable CD.

### [THE COMPLETE BOOK OF EMIGRANTS, 1607-1776](#)

The researcher who wants to own the *entire* collection of English colonial passenger references based on records housed on the other side of the Atlantic must also purchase Mr. Coldham's [The Complete Book of Emigrants, 1607-1776](#). While there is some duplication of bonded passenger listings in the two Coldham CDs, only this CD contains the records of those passengers who voluntarily left Britain for the American colonies.

With approximately 140,000 names, this CD contains the most comprehensive list ever published of the men, women, and children who emigrated from England to America between 1607 and 1776. Combining Mr. Coldham's four-volume *Complete Book of Emigrants* and the one-volume *Complete Book of Emigrants in Bondage* and its *Supplement*, this CD contains virtually every reference to English emigrants that can be found in extant English records, such as port books, shipping registers, apprenticeship lists, plantation

records, Treasury and Chancery records, and records of forced transportation and exile.

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### "Fair Use" Explained in [Carmack's Guide to Copyright & Contracts](#)

When you find information in a book, article, or online source and you want to quote or paraphrase it in your genealogy, when must you cite the source? If you quote the information and cite the source, can you use as much of the information as you want? The answers to these questions fall under the copyright principle of "fair use."

According to *The Copyright Permission and Libel Handbook*, by Lloyd J. Jassin and Steven C. Schechter, "Fair use is a privilege. It permits authors, scholars, researchers, and educators to borrow small portions of a copyrighted work for socially productive purposes without asking permission or paying a fee."

Sharon DeBartolo Carmack addresses these and other concerns of fair use in her book [Carmack's Guide to Copyright & Contracts: A Primer for Genealogists, Writers & Researchers](#). According to Ms. Carmack, U.S. copyright law weighs four factors in determining fair use:

1. The purpose and character of the use. Is it for commercial or non-commercial purposes?
2. The nature of the work. You can quote less from a song than from a novel.
3. The amount and substantiality of the portion used. You shouldn't reveal that "the butler did it" if you are quoting from a new mystery book.
4. The effect of the use on the potential market, that is, its economic value.

While the guidelines of fair use are applied uniformly, as Ms. Carmack demonstrates, "the devil is in the details." For example, while it is generally sufficient to cite the source you use, in some cases you must actually request the permission of the copyright holder. Similarly, even though a work may be in the public domain (e.g., the papers of George Washington), if the originals are owned by an institution or an individual, you may need to obtain permission and/or to pay a royalty fee before you can refer to the work in your family history.

Fortunately, you can learn a lot more about the nuances of fair use and other important aspects of copyright law—especially as they impinge on the genealogist—in [Carmack's Guide to Copyright & Contracts](#).

In scarcely 100 pages, [Carmack's Guide](#) informs its readers about all aspects of copyright law. Each chapter lays out a specific principle of copyright or contracts and then addresses the topic with situations specifically applicable to genealogists. Subjects covered in this fashion include: (1) Copyright Basics, (2) Fair Use, the Public Domain, and Seeking Permissions, (3) Illustrations, Images, Photographs, and Maps, (4) Works for Hire, (5) Collaboration Agreements, (6) Journals/Magazine Contracts, (7) Book Contracts, (8) Electronic Contracts, and (9) Self-Publication Contracts. The author also provides an extremely useful glossary of terms found in contracts and matters of copyright. Rounding out the volume are an up-to-date bibliography, a resource directory of websites, links, and online articles, and an index to the book's contents.

Vetted by copyright attorney Karen Kreider Gaunt, [Carmack's Guide to Copyright & Contracts](#) is the first comprehensive guide of its kind written expressly for genealogists. Available at [www.genealogical.com](http://www.genealogical.com), it is the only book on copyright you are ever likely to need. Order your copy today!

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### **Blog: Searching for Treasures at the National Archives**

Bonnie Lynn Cary, this week's guest columnist on our blog, [www.genealogyandfamilyhistory.com](http://www.genealogyandfamilyhistory.com), shares some wonderful stories from her experience in conducting genealogical research at the National Archives

in Washington, D.C. Her personal accounts are guaranteed to entertain you, and her tips about the holdings and finding aids available at or from the Archives will help you in your own research. Don't miss her article, "Searching for Treasures at the National Archives"!

*Note: This newsletter includes time-sensitive special offers previously announced only to e-mail subscribers of Genealogical.com's Genealogy Pointers. To sign up for this free weekly newsletter, [click here](#).*

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To order other than online, you can:

1. Order by mail: 3600 Clipper Mill Road, Suite 260 - Baltimore, Maryland 21211-1953
2. Fax your order to 1-410-752-8492
3. Call toll-free to our sales department at 1-800-296-6687