

Connecticut Microfilms at NEHGS, Part 2

By Barbara Jean Matthews, CG

This is the second installment of my discussion on the microtext records for Connecticut research available at the NEHGS Research Library. Part one covered vital records and gravestone inscriptions. This column will cover the general index to probate records and the probate packages as well as the Connecticut Military Census, and those bits of Connecticut treated in the Corbin and Cooke collections. All of the microtext covered in this article can be found on the fourth floor microtext room in the NEHGS Library in Boston.

The General Index to Probate Records - (F93/C69)

This is a card index that resides in the hallway of the History and Genealogy Unit at the Connecticut State Library. It covers probate packages deposited at the state archives by local probate judges. These packages have been microfilmed and are also available at NEHGS.

Each index card contains the name of the deceased, his or her town of residence, the year the probate file was opened, the name of the probate district in which the case is filed, the docket number, and information on just what types of documents are in the file. Each probate package folder includes a cover sheet listing the number and types of documents included. An example might be a probate package that includes 1 Will, 1 Inventory, 2 Accounts, 1 Bond, etc.

Probate Packages to 1880 - (F93/C69)

The probate packages are the loose papers associated with an estate filing. The loose papers often include the original will, bonds, accounts, distributions, and receipts. They are arranged in order by probate district, then by docket number within each probate district.

The docket numbers roughly correspond to an alphabetic sequence with the exception of guardianships. Guardianships for a family of children are often filed under one child's name. The docket number could either follow the deceased parent's number or it could turn up under the child's name. Fortunately, this should not be confusing because docket cards were filed under each child's name referencing the docket number under which the paperwork is actually filed.

Not every probate district in Connecticut was included in the microfilming of these files. Districts that did not contribute their older files to the state archives were excluded. Missing from the sequence are a few very old districts, such as Greenwich and Stamford.

Probate Packages 1881-1915

This second round of microfilming is not yet complete. The NEHGS Library currently has films only through to the New Haven Probate District.

Connecticut Military Census, 1917-1918 - (F96/C66)

This little gem was a special census made in order to ready America for entry into World War I by compiling personal information to be used by draft boards. Every man in Connecticut between the ages of 16 and 38 had to fill in one of these forms. Thus, if you have a male ancestor or relative born between 1879 and 1901, you should be able to find information on him here.

The single-page form contains identifying information on top followed by a checklist questionnaire detailing job skills that might be pertinent. For example, from his check-offs, I learn that my grandfather was not able to drive either a team of horses or an automobile. After all, he was a city boy living in Bridgeport. However, he had attended a business school. Later, this particular set of skills made him a bookkeeper in Pershing's headquarters. He was 5'10" tall, 148 lbs., and had brown eyes and blond hair.

There are two sets of microfilm reels that comprise the Connecticut Military Census. The first is on 16-mm reels and is an index. The second is on 32-mm reels and contains the actual census returns.

The index is arranged by town and alphabetical by name within each town. So, to get started with the Connecticut

Military Census, you need to know the town in which your ancestor lived in 1917-1918. Each index entry is a card that includes the number of the census form that person filled out. With this information in hand, you can consult the forms themselves. The 32-mm forms films are in order by form number.

The little-known Nurses Census is filed separately under LOC number F93/C67.

Connecticut Towns in the Rollin H. Cooke Collection - (F72/B5/C66s)

The Rollin H. Cooke Collection consists of 66 volumes of typescript produced by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) from the manuscripts of Mr. Cooke, a banker and genealogist from Pittsfield, Massachusetts. While the works focus mainly on Berkshire County, Massachusetts, Cooke did include some Connecticut records in his original ledgers.

- Barkhamsted, Congregational Church Records, 1794-1850, reel 49
- Canton, Genealogical Records, 1740-1850, reel 51
- East and West Hartland, Congregational Church Records, 1762-1880, reel 55
- East Windsor, Cemetery Records, 1730-1805, reel 59
- Hartford, Stanley Collection of Death Records, 1790-1840, reel 54
- Middle Haddam, Congregational Church Records, 1740-1800, reel 53
- North Granby, Church Records, 1794-1843, reel 52
- Salisbury, Congregational Church Records, 1740-1891, reel 56
- Turkey Hills, Church Records, 1776-1860, reel 58

Connecticut Towns in the Walter E. Corbin Collection

Over the course of thirty years, Walter E. and Lottie S. Corbin of Northampton, Massachusetts copied vital, town, church, deed, cemetery, and private records for their own use. The collection concentrates mainly on central and western Massachusetts, but does include some Connecticut towns, all on reel 43:

- Gilead, First Congregational Church, 1752-1900
- Norwalk, Vital Records from Edwin Hall's *Ancient Historical Records of Norwalk*
- Stafford:
 - Crystal Lake Cemetery, 1786-1925
 - Leonard District (Stafford Village) Cemetery, 1760-1929
 - First Congregational Church, 1757-1806
- Stamford, Vital Records from E. B. Huntington's *History of Stamford*
- West Stafford:
 - Second Congregational Church, 1781-1848
 - Old Cemetery on the Hill
 - New Cemetery on the Hill
 - Center Cemetery
 - Woodworth family cemetery
 - Davis family cemetery
- Willington, Village Cemetery