

"New Resources Available at the Society's Library"

Carroll County Times article for 11 August 1996

By Jay A. Graybeal

The Historical Society's research library has recently expanded its holdings of genealogical research materials. Most of the new materials are for use on the new computer project begun this year in cooperation with the Carroll County Genealogical Society.

Through the generosity of one of our members, The Historical Society Library can now offer a powerful research tool, The New England Historical and Genealogical Register. This quarterly journal of the New England Historical and Genealogical Society was first published in 1847 making it the oldest of its kind in the United States. More than 56,000 pages from this important source have been transferred to CD-ROM disks which allows the researcher to search the nearly 150 years of the Register in a matter of seconds. After searching the index easy to use software allows a patron to read or print pages of text from the Register.

The Register contains a wealth of information about New England families and history. Issues contain historical and genealogical articles, along with cemetery, church, bible, and vital records, diary transcriptions, biographies and memoirs. The vastness and depth of the material makes the Register an indispensable tool for anyone with New England ancestry or an interest in New England history.

While New England may seem far from our primary focus of Carroll County history, there are interesting connections. Even in the earliest days of our county people frequently moved to different regions in search of new opportunities. Our local records are sprinkled with references to families that moved elsewhere or married someone from another region.

For instance when I was compiling a record of the people who had once lived in the Society's Sherman-Fisher-Shellman House in Westminster, I found a reference that one resident had been born in New England. Mrs. Mary Pauline Perry Reese, wife of Dr. James W. Reese, was born in Bangor, Maine in 1840. She later attended Thorndale Academy near Taneytown and after her marriage to Dr. Reese in 1868 she lived the rest of her life in Westminster. Checking the index to the Register for a reference to her took less than a minute. Although I did not locate a reference to a Mary Pauline, I found many references to Mary Perrys one of which may have been her. In less than an hour I could have searched all of them and perhaps learned more about her. Having the Register at my fingertips allows easy research of local people like Mrs. Reese and others who were born or lived in New England.

Obviously, the Register will be most useful to local patrons who descend from New England families. The donor had this in mind when she gave the Register in memory of Mrs. Margaret Rockwell Price who died in 1994. Mrs. Price was local High School history teacher, a member of the Historical Society, where she served as the chair of the Library Committee for many years, and the Carroll County Genealogical Society. She was an avid genealogical researcher with a particular interest in the Rockwell family which settled in New England in about 1630. Like others who research their New England roots, she made extensive use of the Register. Prior to the publication of the new CDs, however, users had to locate a set of published Registers and then search each index, a time consuming process.

The CD version of the Register is available for use during the Library's regular hours (Tuesday-Friday, 9:30-12:30 and 1:00-4:00 and on Saturdays from 9:00-12:00 noon. Although an appointment is not necessary, patrons are advised to call the Society at 848-6494 to reserve a time to use the computer. By calling ahead you will be sure that the computer will be available when you arrive. If you know you have New England roots or ever wanted to check the Register is a great place to start.

The Historical Society has also purchased a new plain paper microfilm reader/printer for use in our library. Patrons can now make copies from our microfilm holdings of local newspapers, Federal Census records, family histories and miscellaneous records. The new reader/printer is also available for use during the regular library hours mentioned above.

Photo Caption: Mrs. Mary Pauline Perry Reese, a one time resident of the Historical Society's house museum, was born in Bangor, Maine in 1840. A new genealogical resource at the Historical Society allows easy research of New Englanders. Historical Society of Carroll County Collection, gift of Rev. Paul Reese, 1941.