

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

by John A. Leppman

Vermont Genealogy is pleased to offer our readers the following reviews to help them evaluate recently published books and CD-ROMs of interest. Notices are given to reprints of out-of-print books. If you produce or sell something you would like reviewed, please mail a review copy to John A. Leppman, Book Review Editor, 20 Thwing Lane, Bellows Falls VT 05101-1608. Reviews or notices of books and CD-ROMs appear at the discretion of the editor.

REVIEWS

Virginia Immigrants and Adventurers 1607-1635: A Biographical Dictionary by Martha W. McCartney (Baltimore, Md., 2007), clothbound, 833 pp. Order from Genealogical Publishing Co., 3600 Clipper Mill Road, Suite 260, Baltimore MD 21211-1953; toll-free number for orders 1-800-296-6687. \$49.95; add \$4.00 postage and handling for the first book, \$2.00 each additional book. Maryland residents add 5% sales tax; Michigan residents add 6% sales tax.

With much publicity about the four hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the Jamestown colony, we are reminded that English settlement in the present-day United States did in fact precede the *Mayflower* by thirteen years and more. New Englanders in particular have trouble paying attention to that fact, partly because of regional bias, no doubt, but partly because the folks at Plymouth did so much better at keeping records of themselves. Besides, they were, by and large, a group of families who settled down from the beginning to have a community and to be fruitful and multiply. Jamestown's settlers were, in a far greater percentage of cases, single adventurers and their servants whose commitment to the long term prospects of being American ancestors was far less evident.

But the Virginians did persevere, often against odds that made the perils of Plymouth seem rather mild by comparison, and there are records which identify many of them. This reference book will easily take its place as the best effort to list those who were in America by 1635 and to tell what is known of each of them. No effort is made to trace descendants, so this is not in and of itself a genealogical document, but family historians will turn to it for documentation of the presence and role of hundreds of ancestors. As those who have studied early New England settlement know well, there are numerous ties between Virginia and New England; for example, John Clark, the navigator on the *Mayflower*, had been to Virginia as early as 1610. He may have left descendants in Plymouth Colony – the connection is not thoroughly proven – for whom his 1610 arrival date represents the first appearance of their family tree on American soil.

Although there will surely be additions and corrections to this compilation, its appearance is much to be commended, and it makes a fine tribute to the Jamestown anniversary.

The Founding Families of Craftsbury, Vermont by Betty Davison Post (Lake-wood, Colo., 2006), paperbound, [4], 375 pp. Order from the compiler at 2984 Routh Circle, Lakewood CO 80215. \$27.50 including shipping and handling. May be ordered on line from lulu.com, which provides an option to download the text for \$5.00.

Add another title to the library of genealogical reference books for Vermont towns. The Northeast Kingdom town of Craftsbury has no comprehensive published history, with or without genealogical content, so this thorough genealogical and historical account of its proprietors and early settlers will attract well deserved interest.

Thirty-five town proprietors are described and given genealogical sketches; the actual number of sketches is smaller because some were siblings to each other. Many of these did not actually settle in Craftsbury. Understandably, the longest of these sketches is of Ebenezer Crafts, from whom the town takes its name, and who lived there from 1791 until his death in 1810. (A Yale alumnus, Crafts is the subject of a sketch in the useful CD "Colonial Collegians," published by NEHGS and reviewed previously in this column.)

Forty-two families were listed in the 1800 census of Craftsbury, including eight who had been original proprietors. Most of these families came from Sturbridge, Mass., and there were various interrelationships among them. These families are covered in as much detail as records permit. There are also selected accounts of families who arrived after 1800 and whose significance to subsequent Craftsbury family history is felt to justify their inclusion. Included here are a number of Scottish and Irish families who came in the nineteenth century.

Many of the sketches include brief summaries of ancestry of the proprietor or settler, done in the kind of running shorthand format which is used by Gary Roberts in his accounts of ancestors of the rich and famous. It is a format that takes a little getting used to, but it takes up less space than the more formal and conventional *Ahnentafel* style. There are not detailed citations of each and every statement about ancestors – and it would have taken up a lot of space to do that here – but there is a comprehensive list at the back of the book of "genealogies researched," and the sources of most of the data can probably be surmised rather easily. Likewise, descendants of the proprietors and settlers are sketched out, when records permit, with various internal citations of sources but without formal footnotes or endnotes.

Researchers with Craftsbury interests will certainly want to be aware of this useful resource. While many of the families listed here probably have more to be said about them, the basics are here, and in many cases much more than that.

Sloinnte Gaedheil Is Gall: Irish Names and Surnames by Patrick Woulfe (1923; rep. Baltimore, 1967, 1969, 1993, 2007, clothbound, xlvi, [2], 696 pp. Order from Genealogical Publishing Co., 3600 Clipper Mill Road, Suite 260, Baltimore MD 21211-1953; toll-free number for orders 1-800-296-6687. \$50.00; add \$4.00 postage and handling for the first book, \$2.00 each additional book. Maryland residents add 5% sales tax; Michigan residents add 6% sales tax.

Those interested in Irish family background will find this long-popular compilation a useful and interesting addition to the bookshelf, although it will probably not tell much about specific people on the family tree. The author

meticulously searched sources of information about Irish given names and surnames in the first quarter of the twentieth century and presents here a thorough list of names, rendered in both English and Gaelic script. He offers some history of the appearance and use of the various names, without any pretense of genealogical detail, and without the documentation found in, say, Reaney's study of English surnames or Black's of Scottish ones.

Woulfe contends here that the customary use of hereditary surnames dates back longer in Ireland than it does, particularly in non-noble classes, in England and certainly in Scotland. (Modern surname customs came quite late to the Scottish highlands.) Understanding that, one still has to be careful of pretenses of direct lineage from early Medieval "founders" of a surname clan on the basis of nomenclature alone. Any careful genealogist can find examples of shifts in surnames over centuries in any nation or culture, and the study of how names change, as well as how they stay stable, is one of the fascinating pieces of family history research. Writing before much of this sort of thing was done with scientific care, Woulfe can be excused not trying to work out all the stories, and his book still provides some interesting history and insights. I suggest spending a little time on the parts that explain Gaelic typography and pronunciation before really delving into it.

Rutland County Vermont Probate Extracts: Rutland District: Part 2: Volumes 9-12, 1814-1827 ... and ... Rutland County Vermont Probate Extracts: Rutland District: Part 3: Volumes 13-16, 1827-1838 by Margaret R. Jenks and Danielle L. Roberts, edited by Dawn D. Hance (Granville, N.Y., 2007), softcover, spiral-bound, Part 2, pp. [viii]-xii, 115-265; Part 3, pp. [xiii]-xviii, 234-381. Order from Margaret R. Jenks, 24 Mettowee Street, Granville NY 12832-1037. \$25.00 each volume, postpaid. New York residents add sales tax.

These volumes continue a series initiated with Part 1, reviewed in *VG*, 12: 2 [April 2007]: 95-96. As noted in the titles, they carry records up to approximately 1838. As previously mentioned, it takes a long time to settle some probate matters, so the date of recording of material may occur long after the death of the person whose estate is involved. Additional volumes are anticipated by the summer of 2007, covering years up to about 1850.

As in the previous volume, the records are carefully and comprehensibly extracted and abstracted. A fair amount of abbreviating is done, which surely reduces the number of pages to be printed, but at times seems cumbersome. Each volume is well indexed, a necessary feature which will do much to uncover family connections not previously known.

QuickSheet: Citing Online Historical Resources by Elizabeth Shown Mills (Baltimore, Md., 1st rev. ed., 2007), [4] pp., laminated paper. Order from Genealogical Publishing Company, 3600 Clipper Mill Rd., Suite 260, Baltimore MD 21211; toll-free number for phone orders 1-800-296-6687. \$5.95; add \$2.00 postage and handling if ordering just this lightweight item; otherwise \$4.00 for the first item and \$2.00 each additional item. Maryland residents add 5% sales tax; Michigan residents add 6% sales tax.

This is a modest revision of a reference item previously noted in this column in *VG*, 11: 3 [July 2006]: 194-195. Mills, whose well regarded reference book *Evidence! Citation & Analysis for the Family Historian* provides a high standard for genealogical citations, offers guidelines for citation of a type of resources which, when many of us were learning this sort of thing originally, had not yet been invented.

The Nicholas Robbins Family: A Genealogical History of the Family through the Eighth Generation by Lawrence G. Robbins (S.I., 2006), clothbound, vi, 369 pp. Order from the author at riaresearch@pocketmail.com. No price information given.

Nicholas¹ Robbins is generally thought to have arrived in New England aboard the *Blessing* in 1635. He settled first at Cambridge and later at Duxbury in the Plymouth Colony, where he died in February or March 1650/1. He had at least five children, from two of whom lines of descent can be traced.

This carefully compiled and documented book takes Robbins descendants down to the eighth generation, generally going well into the nineteenth century and touching on the twentieth. Vermont, notably Windham County, appears in many places in the account. In addition to Plymouth Co., Mass., lines of the family are also found in Nova Scotia, Maine, and various places in New York State, among other places.

The genealogy is well organized and uses a minor variant of *Register* format. Documentation of each family group is presented carefully. There is a thorough index. There is enough biographical information to make the sketches interesting and lead the interested researcher to more detail if desired.