House History Part II
Who's Lived in Your House?

What did your house look like in the past?

1) Architectural surveys:
   a. The Library of Congress, along with the National Park Service has been conducting a nationwide survey of historic buildings since 1933. While coverage is limited, the collection includes an extensive series of photographs for Wethersfield as well as photos and plans for Rocky Hill Congregational Church and Academy Hall in Rocky Hill. More records may be added later. See https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/ for details.
   b. Conducted between 1934 and 1937, the "WPA House Survey" includes period photos of homes, plans, basic ownership details and more. For Berlin, visit https://cslib.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4005coll7/search/searchterm/berlin%20(conn.)%3B%20dwellings/field/subjec/mode/exact/conn/and/order/title/ad/asc. For Newington, visit https://cslib.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4005coll7/search/searchterm/dwellings%20newington%20(conn.)/field/subjec/mode/exact/conn/and/order/title/ad/asc. For Rocky Hill, visit: https://cslib.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4005coll7/search/searchterm/dwellings%20rocky%20hill%20(conn.)/field/subjec/mode/exact/conn/and/order/title/ad/asc. For Wethersfield, visit https://cslib.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4005coll7/search/searchterm/dwellings%20wethersfield%20(conn.)/field/subjec/mode/exact/conn/and/order/title/ad/asc.
   c. If your home was placed on the Historic Register, instructions for finding the application and associated survey can be found at https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm?fbclid=IwAR32tXRWNNXWG4zxAQihBI35TI-CFRVjHzoWV7-LFiBkfXjWTl8pDKx-B7k.
2) Old maps:
   a. UConn's "Magic Historic Map" Collection can help you envision what the area looked like in the past. The maps for Berlin, Rocky Hill, and Wethersfield date from 1868. There is currently no posted map for Newington. See http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/historical_maps_connecticut_towns.html.
   b. The David Rumsey Historic Map Collection, housed at Stanford University, includes a number of different maps for Connecticut. This includes the 1893 Hurd Atlas of Rocky Hill and East Berlin. There is also a 1934 "historical" map of Wethersfield. https://www.davidrumsey.com
   c. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps can help you determine the placement and construction of buildings. Older Connecticut maps can be accessed from the State Library through their databases collection. The Library of Congress

has a larger collection available at https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps/about-this-collection/. These maps were generally created for towns with large manufacturing regions. The collection includes a 1922 map of Wethersfield; a 1887 map of Berlin; a 1950 map of Rocky Hill; and a 1941 map of Newington.

   d. The Library of Congress has a number of different map collections. Particularly notable is their collection of panoramic maps, which allow you to see the town from a bird's eye view. While there are none for our four towns, there are maps for other communities in the state. See https://www.loc.gov/collections/panoramic-maps/about-this-collection/.

   e. The New York Public Library Map Collection, while New York focused, has a collection of US atlases. Some include maps of Connecticut. https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/atlases-of-the-united-states#/?tab=navigation&roots=2679d970-c5ec-012f-7012-58d385a7bc34

   f. Yale University includes some maps in their digital collections. https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/. Most maps are statewide, but there are a few more localized maps covering railroads and other specific purposes.

3) Old photos:
   a. The Connecticut Digital Archives has photos of some older homes and maps. Visit: https://ctdigitalarchive.org/ for more.

4) Reference books:
   a. Christopher Wigren profiles Connecticut properties in *Connecticut Architecture: Stories of 100 Places* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2018).
   b. To learn more about specific features of homes, review Virginia Savage McAlester *A Field Guide to American Houses* (multiple editions).

Who lived in your house? You have their names – but who *were* they?

1) The U.S. census will allow you to locate some basic information on an individual without doing a detailed "dive" into their lives. The census offers relationships, approximate dates and countries of birth, occupations and more. See the handout for more details.

2) If you want to go further, you can look for birth, death, and marriage records. Use the *FamilySearch* catalog to locate the records for the Connecticut town in question. See the handout for more details.

3) What about the stories of their lives?
   a. The website *Historic Buildings of Connecticut* provides mini profiles for historic buildings throughout Connecticut. See https://historicbuildingsct.com.

Bryna O'Sullivan
Charter Oak Genealogy
bryna@charteroakgenealogy.com
www.charteroakgenealogy.com

b. For more details, start with Sherman W. Adams and Henry R. Stiles, *The History of Ancient Wethersfield, Connecticut.* This two-volume publication can be found at *The HathiTrust Digital Library* (https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001262418). For Berlin, Catharine M. North's *History of Berlin, Connecticut* (https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008651304) should be an effective starting point.

c. For more history, contact the local historical societies:
   i. Berlin: http://berlincthistorical.org/
   ii. Newington: https://www.newingtonhistoricalsociety.org/
   iii. Rocky Hill: http://www.rhhistory.org/
   iv. Wethersfield: https://www.wethersfieldhistory.org/

d. Check the local newspapers as well. Use the State Library newspaper guide to find out when newspapers were being printed in your community: https://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/hg/newspapers.

4) Still want more?
   a. Military records may offer you details about the life someone brought back to town. Use the Connecticut State Library's website to access *Fold3.*
   b. Ask! Local churches, the historical societies, and clubs may have more details.

Bryna O'Sullivan
Charter Oak Genealogy
bryna@charteroakgenealogy.com
www.charteroakgenealogy.com