

WEINBERG GRANT PROPOSAL: ALEX JARRELL

In 1765 Britain passed the Stamp Act, which marked the first direct taxation on the colonists. Britain later passed the Quartering Act (1765), Townsend Acts (1767), and the Coercive Acts (1774) that also angered the colonists and contributed to the growing rifts and cleavages between them and the mother country. Colonial response to these acts, of course, is common knowledge. The Boston Tea Party and the Boston Massacre are hallmarks in American history, and colonial leaders like Samuel Adams and other Sons of Liberty are celebrated. Most recent historical research, however, has centered on how ordinary Americans in rural communities -- the majority of the colonists -- fueled the revolution for ideological and economic reasons. One such community is Windham, Connecticut. In Edmund Morgan's seminal text, the *Stamp Act Crisis*, Morgan alludes to how the community of Windham drove protest and radically opposed the Stamp Act.

My research will focus on the Windham community during the period leading up to the American Revolution. What was the political climate of Windham? What was its nature? Was the community indeed more radical? And, if so, what were the factors that contributed to and fostered this climate?

I am looking at local structures, local political cultural formations, and how they factored into the political climate of Windham. I am interested in how ordinary people experienced their own revolutionary moment.

Several Connecticut newspapers circulated in Windham in the mid-eighteenth century were known for their extreme zealotry against perceived British tyranny. Timothy Green, the publisher of the *New London Summary* (1758-1763) which became the *New London Gazette* (1763-1773), for instance, enjoyed a reputation for his vitriolic denouncement of the Stamp Act. The *New London Summary* is available on the Early American Historical Newspaper Database and the *New London Gazette* is available on microfilm at the Northwestern University Library for study.

In order to fully conduct research, I need to visit Windham to review and evaluate historical records available at the Windham Historical Society and the Windham Town Hall. Janet Clapp, the vice-president of the Windham Historical Society, said the society boasts many colonial papers and documents that are not cataloged. The Town Hall has marriage, birth, death, and land records on file that will facilitate a determination of the social-economic background of Windham. More importantly, the Town Hall has town meeting records dating back to 1687 that are available to the public. I also plan on traveling to the Connecticut State Library in Hartford, where I would use judicial, church, military and probate records. I have attached finding aids and email correspondences confirming the availability of these records.

I intend to spend fifteen business days in Windham, splitting my time between the Historical Society and the Town Hall. Next, I plan on spending fifteen business days at the Connecticut State Library. I will

This proposal's greatest strength is the knowledge of sources that Alex demonstrates, both in this paragraph and the next. To be competitive for a URG, Alex would have needed to situate his work within a short review of the relevant literature, but his preliminary legwork and archival contacts are impressive. See especially the documentation in his appendices, a tremendous asset to any proposal in the field of history.

A research timeline is useful (and essential for grant proposals), especially when the researcher must consult multiple types of sources and/or travel to different locations. In this paragraph, Alex shows awareness of how his questions might sharpen and change along the way, potentially necessitating additional visits.

Alex invites readers' interest with the broad topic of the American Revolution, but must work quickly to establish his particular research focus. He does this in the second paragraph by delineating both his geographical focus and the questions he will be asking of his sources.

Given the nature of Alex's research questions, he needs to consult multiple types of sources. Here he conveys important information about the types and availability of the sources he intends to use.

then spend three weeks synthesizing my findings, returning to any of the archives if needed to collect further information.

I am passionate about the origins of the American Revolution and I have taken several courses on early American History, including History 210-1 *U.S. to 1865*; History 102-6 *American Revolution, 1763-1787*; History 310-1 *Early American History to 1750*; and History 310-2 *Early American History: Revolution to Constitution*.

I will use this research for my honors thesis in History. Professor T.H. Breen brought Windham, Connecticut to my attention and said he would guide me through this research project.

Alex's appendices are impressive for their detail and for showing how much legwork he has already done. While titles for the appendices and brief descriptions in the proposal itself would have been beneficial, the contents are accessible and give readers a sense that Alex has a need and a plan for his research trip.

APPENDIX 1

From: Jeannie Sherman" <JSherman@cslib.org>
To: Alex Jarrell
Date: Wed, 14 May 2008 8:59:38 PM +0000
Subject: RE: Windham Colonial Records

Dear Alex,

This is in response to your e-mail to the Connecticut State Library regarding what records we may have for the town of Windham that covers the 1760s. Many of the records listed below are on microfilm, and are available during regular library hours. Please see: <http://www.cslib.org/hours.htm>
Archival materials, such as Judicial records, are subject to the "Rules and Procedures for Researchers Using Archival Records and Secured Collections:" <http://www.cslib.org/arcrules.htm>

Here are some sources that are available:

Church Records

We have a Guide to Church Records at the State Library that is arranged by town. I have listed below those records which cover Windham for the 1760s.

First Congregational Church. The Knell of a Record of the Deaths in the First Society of Windham, from 1751-1814 [Film number 650]

First Congregational Church Records, 1700 -1924. [Film number 79] These records are included in our state-wide Church Records Index, please see: <http://www.cslib.org/church.htm>

Military Records

Military records for this time period are not really broken down by town. Several Series of the "Connecticut Archives" would be a good place to begin research. I have cut and pasted information from our "Research Guide to Manuscript Military Resources at the Connecticut State Library," [<http://www.cslib.org/miltrec.htm>] below.

The Connecticut Archives collection comprises the records of the General Assembly to approximately 1820, and is grouped into broad topics. The series pertaining to military records include:

Connecticut Archives: Colonial Wars, Series I, 1675-1775.

Connecticut Archives: Colonial Wars, Series II, 1689-1806.

Connecticut Archives: Militia, Series I, 1678-1757.

Connecticut Archives: Militia, Series II, 1747-1786.

Connecticut Archives: Militia, Series III, 1728-1820.

Connecticut Archives: Revolutionary War, Series I, 1763-1789.

Connecticut Archives: Revolutionary War, Series II, 1756-1856.

Connecticut Archives: Revolutionary War, Series III, 1765-1820.

A collection of bound index volumes to the Connecticut Archives is available for use in the History and Genealogy Reading Room. Documents are indexed by subject and by names of individuals, providing volume, document numbers, and page numbers. Although there is no bound index volume for Revolutionary War, Series II, researchers may ask the librarians for the slip index covering this series. Researchers may retrieve microfilm copies of the documents from a cabinet adjacent to the bound indexes. The films are arranged alphabetically by series title.

Another place to research those from the town of Windham who may have fought in Colonial Wars would be our Veteran's Death Index. This index is arranged both by name and by the town from which the veteran served. For more on the Veteran's Death Index, see: <http://www.cslib.org/halecol.htm#vet>

Cemetery Inscriptions

Here at the State Library is the Hale Collection of Cemetery Inscriptions, which covers inscriptions from the colonial times to circa 1934,

[<http://www.cslib.org/halecol.htm#halecem>]. In addition to the state-wide surname index, there are individual volumes by town. Within the Windham volume the following cemeteries are listed:

Ancient Cemetery

Old

New St. Joseph's

North Windham

Windham

Creek

Barber-Brook

Land Records

We have microfilm copies of most towns' land records from the inception of the town to about 1900. Windham Land Records, 1753-1770, can be found on Film number 5037. There is usually some sort of index included in the land record volumes. There is also a general index to Windham Land Records that covers the 1760s on film number 5032

Probate Records

Connecticut has two sets of probate records: estate papers (original documents generated or received by the courts in connection with a probate case) and probate court record books (court clerks' transcriptions of major probate documents). Because a document will sometimes appear in one set of records but not in the other, it may be useful to consult both. For more on our Probate Estate Index, see: <http://www.cslib.org/probate.htm>

>From our Finding Aid to Probate Districts: [<http://www.cslib.org/probate/districtsw.htm>]

Windham Probate District was constituted during 1719 October Session, from the Hartford and New London Probate Districts. Windham Probate District currently serves Scotland and Windham.

Town of Windham, Probate District chronology:

May 1692-October 1719 New London County Court & District

May 1692-October 1719 Hartford County Court & District

October 1719-Present Windham District

Estate Papers,

Indexes: 1719-1917 included in General Probate Index at CSL.

Originals: 1719-1917 at CSL.

Microfilms: 1719-1880 at CSL, and available through LDS Family History Centers.

Probate Court Record Books

Originals: None at CSL, contact probate court.
Microfilms: 1719-1918 at CSL, and available through LDS Family History Centers.

Judicial Records

Many Judicial Records are broken down by County. I have listed the Windham County materials for the time period you are researching that are available below.

An Archives Pass is required to use Judicial Records. For more information see: <http://www.cslib.org/arcrules.htm>

Windham County Superior Court

Dockets, 1726-1850

Boxes 39-40

Files, September 1756 - March 1761 through March 1769 to September 1772

Boxes 175-178

Papers by Subject, 1726-1907

Includes:

Appointments to Office, 1752-1873; Boundary, Lebanon-Norwich, 1755; Confiscated Estates and Loyalists; Costs, 1748-1897; Court Expenses, 1735-1883; Divorces, 1726-1907 (Alphabetical by name) (microfilm); Executions, 1730-1901; Insolvents, 1763-1901; Jurors, 1726-1887 (Alphabetical by town); and Travel, 1760-1901. See container list Windham Superior No. 5 [container list is available here at the State Library].

Windham County Court Records 1726-1855

1755 -Dec. 176, through June 1767-Dec. 1771, Volumes 8 through 12

The Finding Aid to Judicial Records at the Connecticut State Library is available at the following link:

http://www.cslib.org/archives/Finding_Aids/judicial.pdf

(Windham County begins on page 42).

I hope this information is of help to you. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to e-mail me or telephone the History & Genealogy Unit (860) 757-6580.

Sincerely,

Jeannie C. Sherman, Librarian 1

Connecticut State Library

History and Genealogy Unit

APPENDIX 2

From: Correna Bibeau <cbibeau@windhamct.com>

To: Alex Jarrell

Date: Thu, 15 May 2008 3:16:14 PM +0000

Subject: RE: Windham Colonial Records

Alex,

All vital records (death, marriage, births) over one hundred years old are open to the public. Any land records & Town meeting minutes are open to the public. Copies of any vital records are ten dollars each. Copies of land records are a dollar a page. Town meeting minutes copies are fifty cents a page. Birth records within one hundred years are confidential. Marriage & deaths within one hundred years are public accessible, however some information on them is not available to the public. Any questions, feel free to contact us. (860-465-3015 or email)

-----Original Message-----

From: *****@northwestern.edu

Sent: Wednesday, May 14, 2008 11:42 AM

To: cbibeau@windhamct.com

Subject: Windham Colonial Records

Dear Correna,

I wanted to follow up on our earlier conversation about Windham colonial records from the 1760s. Can you confirm that I would have access at Windham Town Hall to Birth, Death, Marriage, and Land Records? Also, you mentioned that you had just cataloged Town Hall meeting records that date back to 1686? Would I have access to these records as well?

I really appreciate your help!

Best,

Alex Jarrell

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Secondary Sources:

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- Willingham, William F. "Deference Democracy and Town Government in Windham, Connecticut, 1755 to 1786" *The William and Mary Quarterly*. 3rd Ser., Vol. 30, No. 3 (July 1973): pp. 401-422

Primary Sources:

Windham Historical Society

Phone: 860-456-2316

Windham Town Hall – Ex. Town Meeting Records, Birth, Death, Marriage, and Land Records

Phone: 860 465-3013

Connecticut State Library (Hartford) – Ex. Court, Probate, and Death Records

Phone: 860-757-6580

New London Summary (1758-1763)

New London Gazette (1763-1773)