

The Hour

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DAR lineage research head teaches how to trace ancestry

By FRANCIS CARR Jr.
HOUR STAFF WRITER

NORWALK — Current and prospective Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) learned how to use DAR's Genealogy Research System to trace their ancestry back to the Revolutionary War period Sunday.

At Norwalk Public Library, DAR National Chairman for Lineage Research Jolene Mullen presented information about how to use the internet to browse the group's genealogy database.

Also on hand was a collection of books of interest curated by local historian

Ralph Bloom.

During her presentation, Mullen outlined the qualifications for membership in DAR, which she called a "lineage society."

DAR members must be able to provide documented evidence that they are related by blood to someone who participated in the revolution in some capacity.

The revolutionary an-

cestor does not necessarily have to be a war veteran, Mullen said; they may have performed civic duty for the nascent American government, or committed some other act of patriotism: offering a patriotic sermon, say, paying a supply tax, donating goods to the war effort or even paying someone else to fulfill

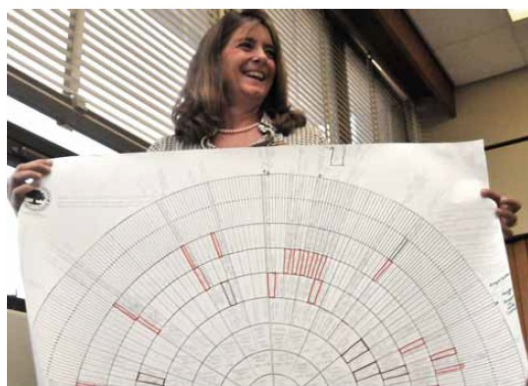
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Hour photo/Matthew Vinci

Catherine O'Hara, regent of the Village Green Daughters of the American Revolution, with speaker Jolene Mullen, who is the lineage chair of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution on Sunday at the Norwalk Public Library where genealogists and members met to research their ancestry.



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Hour photo/Matthew Vinci
Lisa Wilson, member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, with her genealogical family chart on Sunday at the Norwalk Public Library where members met to research their family ancestry.

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military duty.

Mullen also said that DAR's potential membership is more diverse than many assume.

"Not all patriots were American, Christian, Caucasian," read a slide from Mullen's presentation.

Recently the group has made an effort to recruit African-American, Native American and Jewish people whose ancestors participated in the revolution, Mullen said; even women whose Spanish and French ancestors aided the war effort from afar without setting foot on American soil — boat donors, for instance — are eligible for membership.

When searching the database, try truncating the ancestor's name to its first few letters, Mullen suggested; eighteenth century English was more

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— DAR National Chairman for Lineage Research Jolene Mullen

fluid than today's, and many early Americans were semi-literate, spelling their name differently each time they wrote it.

"(Spelling) really wasn't the issue for them that it is for us," Mullen told the audience. "Things just kind of mutated back and forth."

Carol Freding, of Norwalk, said she needs to fill one gap in her lineage to

be eligible for DAR membership. "We tracked our family back to 1635," when her ancestors lived in Derry, N.H., Freding told The Hour.

Mullen said genealogy is necessary if we want to know who we are.

"Who knows where your artistic bent came from, or your dark hair," Mullen told The Hour. "You're today's version of all your ancestors' stories."