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## The Welles Family Genealogy: Work Continues

By Barbara J. Mathews, CG

I had the privilege of visiting Donna Siemiatkoski just three days after her doctors had changed her health status to “hospice care” last July. She was resting on a couch in her living room, surrounded by boxes of her work. She was deeply involved in organizing her three major projects so that she could pass them on to other genealogists to complete them. She passed her Foote family project to Ed Strickland, her Windsor resources project to Dick Roberts, and her Welles project to me.

In the sixteen or more years that Donna worked on the Welles family genealogy, she had amassed a huge amount of material. My van went home filled with large white file storage boxes. They break down somewhat like this: 1 and ½ boxes of family group sheets; 3 and ½ boxes of correspondence; 1 box of photocopies and softcover family genealogy books; 1 box of research notes; and 1 box of related projects such as English research.

But the most important part of the project was the package of six diskettes. Each diskette contained a wedge-shaped slice of the book: all the descendants of just one of the governor’s children.

Donna also included an itemized list of the next steps to take to complete the book. Foremost on this list was taking these six individual monographs and putting them together in one book. This means taking, for example, the third generation of each of six books and putting them into one file to cover all the third-generation descendants of Gov. Thomas Welles and his wife Alice Tomes.

This was my first task. It alone took nearly 60 hours just to put the materials into files by chapters and to do associated word processing. Each published work-in-progress book had used a different numbering system. The three unpublished daughters also used different approaches to numbering. I carefully went through the chapters and formatted the paragraphs and the numbers. When I was done, the book was over 800 pages long, with over 100 additional pages of index. Finding a five-inch binder to put it all in took some effort.

When I look at the large binder on my desk, I am overwhelmed by how much work Donna accomplished in those sixteen years. She has thousands of descendants and spouses, around ten thousand names in the index alone. Each family has a list of references in addition to embedded citations to vital records, church records, and headstone inscriptions. It is truly a great accomplishment.

We have several more steps ahead of us to complete this book and ready it for printing. In many places, Donna underlined reference notes, showing me that we still need to find a page number

or a more complete citation. The Executive Committee has authorized me to hire a records searcher for this task. Her name is Kathryn Smith Black and she is an accomplished genealogist who will help me because my available library time is so limited.

Another step is to eliminate duplications caused by cousin marriages. Those of you who have more than one line to the Governor will probably realize that certain of your ancestors appeared in both the John and Samuel books, as mine did, or in other combinations. I now have to go through and ensure that each family appears only once.

We must renumber all the descendants, so that the numbering system runs sequentially through the book. It is unlikely that the numbers used in Volume 1 will continue as a few people have been added or eliminated. The numbering system that we will use is that of the *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, the same system used in Volume 1. In addition, there are editorial tasks ahead, such as ensuring that the citations and references are consistent and complete. To do that, I literally have to word-process my way through every paragraph of every page of the book, stopping often to check references against a bibliography master list.

Donna also directed further research in England. In her last *Wellesprings* column, you saw some of the results of that research. She left three additional articles on various aspects of the Welles family in England. With the permission of Gene Siemiatkoski, Donna's husband, we are submitting them for publication in a leading journal. We also plan to use this material to expand the chapter on the English origins of the Welles and Tomes families.

In looking over the wealth of work and information in the next volume of the Welles genealogy, I want to ask people to make an alteration in nomenclature. Previously we had thought of this work as Volume 2, but we will republish the first four generations so that we can include corrections. After all, the genealogical treatment of the descendants of Gov. Thomas Welles took up only 142 pages of the original volume, less than 10% of what we now face. So, please begin to think of this volume as "the Second and Expanded Edition" of the Welles genealogy.

Now, the question on everyone's mind is probably, "When will the second edition be completed?" I wish I could answer this with exactitude, but I cannot. From my vantage point, it will take a couple of years due to the large amount of material to cover. Books less than one-third this size take about one year to prepare for publication. We still have some work to do to get to the stage of pre-publication editing, but we will work as hard and as fast as we can.