



vol. 20, no. 3 \$6.95 Fall 2019

# American Ancestors

by NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

*The  
Essential  
Guide to  
Researching  
Female  
Ancestors*



2020



# Join American Ancestors in *London!*

## English Research Tour

JUNE 21–28, 2020 • LONDON, ENGLAND

Visit the treasures of London's many genealogical repositories, including The National Archives, the Society of Genealogists, and London Metropolitan Archives. Discover each repository's unique holdings through special orientations and tours, guided research, one-on-one consultations, lectures, and time with fellow family historians.

### Tour includes:

- Seven-night stay in the heart of London
- Research orientations at The National Archives, Society of Genealogists, and London Metropolitan Archives
- Consultations with genealogists David Allen Lambert and Christopher C. Child
- Lectures by local experts
- Pre-program preparatory webinar and resources
- Group meals



DAVID ALLEN LAMBERT



CHRISTOPHER C. CHILD

Learn more at [AmericanAncestors.org/Education](https://AmericanAncestors.org/Education)  
[education@nehgs.org](mailto:education@nehgs.org) • 617-226-1226

Register by  
March 20, 2020,  
to receive special  
discounts!



Image ©www.all-free-photos.com



**American Ancestors**  
by NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY



Above: Members of the Manuscript Society view our exhibit. See page 16.

# Fall 2019

VOL. 20, NO. 3

- 25** **The Essential Guide to Researching Female Ancestors**  
Nancy G. Bernard
- 32** **Women's Voices in the Archives**  
Judith Lucey
- 35** **In Her Own Words: The Life of Elizabeth (Clapp) Withington (1816–1845)**  
Eileen Curley Pironti
- 40** **Hidden Mothers: Women Behind the Scenes in Photographs of Children**  
Maureen Taylor
- 42** **Dr. Joseph Warren: Reflection, Research & Remembrance**  
Christian Di Spigna

- Manuscripts @ NEHGS 46**  
Holman, Reed & Barclay: A Sampling of Collections by Female Genealogists  
*Timothy G. X. Salls*
- Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center Spotlight 49**  
Helpmeet: Reclaiming the Voice of Hannah Schaiman Freedman  
*Stephanie Call*
- Focus on New York 52**  
My Favorite Female Ancestor: Catalina Trico of Seventeenth-Century New York  
*Henry B. Hoff, CG, FASG*
- Research Services: Case Files 55**  
Grietje Reyniers of New Amsterdam: An Unconventional Woman  
*Sheilagh Doerfler*
- From our Collections 58**  
The Lemmon-Phillips Filigree: An Astonishing Survival from Early Massachusetts  
*Curt DiCamillo*
- Genetics & Genealogy 60**  
“How are these people my cousins?”: Solving a Wanamaker/Langley DNA Mystery  
*Christopher C. Child*

- View from the Family Tree 3**
- In this Issue 5**
- Branches of Our Family 6**
- Ask Our Genealogists 8**
- News 10**
- Programs & Tours 21**
- Online Learning Center 23**
- Staff Profile 24**
- Staff List 63**
- Family Focus 64**  
Books and family associations

**On the cover:** Kathryn Ruhan (1886–1968), a native of Milford, Massachusetts, served as an army nurse from 1918 to 1946, retiring with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Nurse Corps. Collection of Carolyn Oakley.



# How can we help you?

## Call toll-free 1-888-296-3447

### NEHGS Directory *at a glance*

**Ask A Genealogist**  
AmericanAncestors.org/  
ask-a-genealogist

**Bookstore**  
617-226-1212  
sales@nehgs.org

**Education and Programs**  
617-226-1226  
education@nehgs.org

**Wyner Family Jewish  
Heritage Center**  
617-226-1245  
jhc@nehgs.org

**Library**  
617-226-1239  
library@nehgs.org

**Member Services**  
1-888-296-3447, ext. 1  
membership@nehgs.org

**Research Services**  
research@nehgs.org

**Webmaster**  
webmaster@nehgs.org

### I want less mail! How do I go paperless?

Thank you for helping us reduce our paper usage! We provide multiple mailing options for our members. For example, you can choose to go paperless for just your renewal notices, just the *Register*, just *American Ancestors* magazine—or go completely paperless. You will still be able to read *American Ancestors* and the *Register* online at [AmericanAncestors.org/publications](http://AmericanAncestors.org/publications), and receive email notifications when new issues are posted. To update your mail preferences, contact our Member Services team at [membership@nehgs.org](mailto:membership@nehgs.org) or 888-296-3447 (choose option 1).

### Why did my member number change?

In March 2018 we upgraded our system in order to improve the user experience on our website. The upgrade process required us to assign new member numbers to all users. We sent membership cards with the new numbers to everyone who renewed over the last year. If you did not receive a new membership card or would like a replacement, please contact our Member Services team at [membership@nehgs.org](mailto:membership@nehgs.org) or 888-296-3447 (choose option 1).

### I missed an interesting webinar. Can I still watch it?

Yes! Our popular free webinars are archived at [AmericanAncestors.org/Education/Learning-Resources/watch](http://AmericanAncestors.org/Education/Learning-Resources/watch). You will need to log in to view these recordings. We also offer online courses and conferences, led by experts at American Ancestors. Those sessions, as well as accompanying course materials, are available online for three months after the live broadcast. To learn more about our online programs, visit [AmericanAncestors.org/education/online-classes](http://AmericanAncestors.org/education/online-classes).

## Visit us in Boston!

Our genealogical and historical materials number more than 200,000 titles and 28 million items—including unpublished genealogies, local histories, diaries, cemetery transcriptions, and photographs. For information on using our library and preparing for your visit, see [AmericanAncestors.org/library-guide](http://AmericanAncestors.org/library-guide).

Our research center at 99–101 Newbury Street in Boston is open Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and Thursdays through Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free for our paid members. Non-members and guests are always welcome and may purchase a day pass.

Visit [AmericanAncestors.org/visit](http://AmericanAncestors.org/visit) or call 1-888-296-3447 for additional information.

## Administration

**President and CEO** D. Brenton Simons

**Executive Vice President and COO** Ryan J. Woods

**Vice President for Advancement** Susan B. Fugliese

**Assistant Vice President for Advancement** Beth A. Brown

## Board of Trustees

### Chairman

Nancy S. Maulsby (CT)

### Treasurer

Andrew P. Langlois (CT)

### Vice Chairman

Stephen H. Case (NY)

### Secretary

Jo Anne C. Makely (MA)

### Class of 2020

Bill Griffeth (NJ)

M. David Sherrill (NY)

Sarah E. Gunderson (TX)

Diana M. Smith (AZ)

Thomas Bailey Hagen (PA)

Morrison DeS. Webb (ME)

### Class of 2021

Judith Avery (CA)

William R. Marsh (NE)

John M. Fleming (CA)

Elizabeth McCaslin Passela (TX)

Gerard A. Halpin, III (NY)

Albert J. Zdenek, Jr. (NY)

### Class of 2022

Nordahl L. Brue (FL)

Olivia Hood Parker (MA)

John E. Corcoran (MA)

David M. Trebing (DC)

Mark T. Cox, IV (VA)

Nancy Clay Webster (NE)

## Councilors

### Class of 2020

Richard D. Batchelder Jr. (MA)

George Marshall Moriarty (MA)

Ronald C. Curhan (MA)

Gregory G. O'Brien (MA)

Rose A. Doherty (MA)

Robert Russell Perry (WI)

David Hackett Fischer (MA)

David N. Smith (AZ)

Thomas F. Gede (CA)

Tracy E. Smith (FL)

Elizabeth G. Goddard (FL)

Jason H. Stevens (SC)

John A. Herdeg (PA)

Bryan C. Sykes (UK)

William R. Hausman (MA)

Jane Barrows Tatibouet (HI)

John F. Keane (MA)

Thomas Warren Thaler (MA)

Joan Bennett Kennedy (MA)

Thomas R. Wilcox, Jr. (CT)

Harold Hunter Leach, Jr. (MA)

Justin L. Wyner (MA)

Jonathan W. Montgomery (NY)

### Class of 2021

David H. Burnham (MA)

James A. McDaniel (MA)

Sara Stewart Champion (CT)

Ailsie Baker McEnteggart (CA)

Francis de Marneffe (MA)

Mark Kimball Nichols (NY)

Donald R. Friary (MA)

Michele M. Pecoraro (MA)

Deborah Campbell Hale (MA)

Patricia R. Reed (TX)

Beverly M. Hector-Smith (MA)

David E. Rencher (UT)

Robert F. Hendrickson (NJ)

Ellen C.L. Simmons (TX)

James F. Hunnewell, Jr. (MA)

Peter C. Steingraber (MA)

Brenda L. Johnson (MN)

Alexandra Esty Stocker (MA)

Gary P. Kearney (MA)

Jonathan Buck Treat (MA)

David W. Kruger (NH)

Eric N. Ward (MA)

### Class of 2022

Vernard I. Adams (FL)

Marilyn A. Moffitt (CA)

Robb A. Allan (FL)

Pamela Pescosolido (MA)

Margaret Aycinena (CA)

Eric D. Roiter (MA)

Helen H. Berkeley (NY)

Helen E.R. Sayles (MA)

Richard J. Cellini (MA)

Peter M. Small (MA)

Cheryl L. Edwards (VA)

Lionel B. Spiro (MA)

Richard C. Fipphen (NY)

Edward J. Sullivan (MA)

Arthur M. Geoffrion (CA)

Mary M. Tedesco (MA)

James R. Goetschius (FL)

Lynn Trowbridge (CA)

Beverly L. Hamilton (CA)

Kathleen Van Demark (MA)

Marjorie Turrell Julian (NY)

Elizabeth B. Vitton (CT)

Brantley Carter Bolling Knowles (VA)

Brenda M. Williams (MA)

Carol McGee (IL)

Gwill York (MA)

### Honorary Trustees

Rodney Armstrong (MA)

James Thomas Larkin (CT)

Richard H. Benson (FL)

J. Phillip London (VA)

John G.L. Cabot (MA)

Peter S. Lynch (MA)

Ralph J. Crandall (NY)

John A. Moore (CA)

William M. Crozier, Jr. (MA)

Frank C. Ripley (VA)

Allis Ferguson Edelman (FL)

Meriwether C. Schmid (CT)

William M. Fowler, Jr. (MA)

Alvy Ray Smith (CA)

Judith Waite Freeman (LA)

John Lowell Thorndike (MA)

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (MA)

Helen Schatvet Ullmann (MA)

Priscilla C. Greenlees (WA)

Judith Huber Halseth (MI)

Virginia M. Hamister (OH)

Kenneth E. Haughton (CA)

# View from the family tree

From this institution's inception nearly 175 years ago, women's voices and records have been central to our mission—long before women were admitted to membership in 1897.

Their influence is especially strong in our holdings of historical and genealogical works written, edited, and compiled by women. These works cover genealogical and scholarly topics, including the influential roles women played in their families and in society.

Women's contributions are also preserved and made accessible to researchers in the archives of the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center and R. Stanton Avery Special Collections. Through their diaries, journals, and letters, our female ancestors share intimate and detailed glimpses into their daily lives, and reveal their thoughts about hardships, accomplishments, and aspirations. In the diaries of Deidamia Bourn Swift (Mss 658), wife of whaling master Hallett Swift of Wareham, Massachusetts, Deidamia's social isolation, struggle to raise children largely on her own, and constant apprehension about her husband's return are detailed in her own words.

Our archive of materials related to nineteenth-century working women is growing, thanks to the generosity and dedication of longtime member Judith Ranta. Judith, an avid genealogist and historian, has donated letters and photographs pertaining to young women who left farming towns and villages across New England to work in the mills and factories of industrial cities like Lowell, Massachusetts. In 1846 one of these women, Hannah Lincoln, wrote to her brother, Harvey, describing her journey from Chelsea, Vermont, to Lowell to join "other Chelsea girls" in the weave room of a textile mill. We are grateful to Judith, and to the female memory-keepers who came before her.

As we look to the future, we celebrate the women of NEHGS—staff, trustees, councilors, members, and friends—who continue to enhance our collections, scholarship, and expertise. Their unique contributions are essential to fulfilling our mission to advance the study of families in America for future generations.



Brenton Simons

Brenton

Brenton Simons  
President and CEO



## From our readers

### We want to hear from you!

Email [magazine@nehgs.org](mailto:magazine@nehgs.org) or address letters to AMERICAN ANCESTORS magazine, 99–101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116. Letters will be edited for clarity and length. We regret that we cannot reply to every letter.

“Preserving Your Family History in the Digital Age” [AMERICAN ANCESTORS 20 (2019) 2:27–33] is relevant, practical, instructive, and, indeed, timely. In July I completed the NEHGS Summer Institute, “Preserving Your Family Papers,” and the organization of digital files presentation overwhelmed me with information. All necessary, of course, but a bit bewildering. This article provided material that reinforced the lessons of the Summer Institute. Somehow it made me understand that, yes, the task is daunting but it can be done! By breaking down the broad topic into four major steps (Identify, Select, Organize, Store), Sally Benny provided readers with manageable tasks. Well-written, reassuring, and informative, “Preserving Your Family History in the Digital Age” serves as a guide—and the information included in the sidebars is fantastic! Thank you, Sally, for this insight, and thank you, Summer Institute staff.

Karen Kerman, Long Beach, California

The article on digitization [“Preserving Your Family History in the Digital Age”] was extremely interesting to me—for my own genealogical research and also for our historical society, whose holdings continue to be digitized. However, it is frustrating to be following the correct and up-to-date procedures with the knowledge that these procedures will become obsolete and something new will come along. I will always love paper copies!

Kay Ables, Ridgefield, Connecticut

I read Carolyn A. Converse’s fascinating article, “Y-DNA Studies of an Early New England Family Indicate Possible Jewish Ancestry” [AMERICAN ANCESTORS 20 (2019) 2:60–62], with great interest. I am also a descendant of Edward Convers. My father’s great-grandmother was Mary Jane Converse. Her parents, Joshua Converse Jr. and Jane Bowker Damon, did not have a son survive to carry on the Converse name or Y-DNA, so I am especially grateful for the discoveries my newfound cousin has gleaned from those who did.

Alan L. Harrington, Concord, Massachusetts

I was extremely moved by Orlene Allen Weyland’s article, “Secrets and Revelations: Discovering My Jewish Family History” [AMERICAN ANCESTORS 20 (2019) 2:34–38, 43]. I want to thank Ms. Weyland for sharing her experiences. I have been doing genealogy for years and sometimes I am moved by grief or deep feelings for ancestors I never knew. I can’t imagine how overwhelming it must have been for Ms. Weyland to make some of her discoveries.

Janice Schocklin, Bridgewater, New Jersey

Wonderful issue! [AMERICAN ANCESTORS 20 (2019) 2]. I sat down and read it cover to cover and then passed it on to my husband. I love the stories.

Kaethe Maguire, East Sandwich, Massachusetts



# CONNECT WITH US ONLINE!

## Vita Brevis

Our *Vita Brevis* blog provides thought-provoking explorations of genealogical topics, and offers readers the opportunity to engage with scholars and professionals who share their unique perspectives and insights. Visit [vita-brevis.org](http://vita-brevis.org).

## Weekly Genealogist

Subscribe to our *Weekly Genealogist* newsletter for information on new NEHGS databases, online content, events, and offers. Each issue includes a survey, reader responses, a spotlight on resources, stories of interest, and more. Visit [AmericanAncestors.org/twg](http://AmericanAncestors.org/twg).

## Facebook

Keep up-to-date on our latest news and connect with more than 42,000 fellow family history enthusiasts in our online community at [facebook.com/nehgs](https://facebook.com/nehgs).

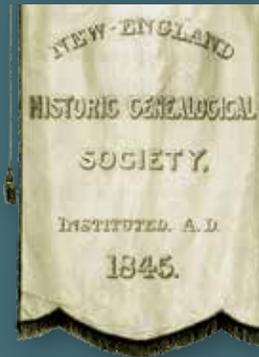
## Twitter

Follow [@ancestorexperts](https://twitter.com/ancestorexperts) for news, bookstore specials, publication announcements, and genealogy-related tweets from our staff.

## Instagram

For visual updates on our Fine Art Collection treasures, events and tours, library recommendations, and more, follow [american\\_ancestors](https://instagram.com/american_ancestors).

# American Ancestors



To advance the study of family history in America and beyond, NEHGS educates, inspires, and connects people through our scholarship, collections, and expertise.

[magazine@nehgs.org](mailto:magazine@nehgs.org)

**Managing Editor**  
Lynn Betlock

**Editor and Creative Director**  
Carolyn Sheppard Oakley

**Senior Editor**  
Jean Powers

**Assistant Editor**  
Gary Boyd Roberts

**Genetics Editor**  
Christopher Challender Child

**Contributing Editors**  
Robert Charles Anderson, FASG;  
Henry B. Hoff, CG, FASG

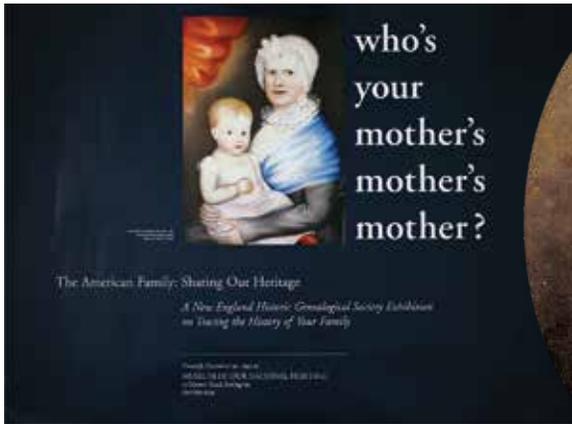
**Editors Emeriti**  
Brenton Simons; Scott C. Steward

**Proofreaders**  
Valerie Beaudrault; Cécile Engeln;  
Linda Rupnow McGuire;  
Scott C. Steward; Leslie A. Weston

**Indexer**  
Steve Cspike



This publication is also funded in part by the Francis G. and Ruth (Wellington) Shaw Memorial Fund.



## In this issue

In 1995, as part of our sesquicentennial events, NEHGS curated an exhibit at the Museum of Our National Heritage in Lexington, Massachusetts. The exhibit poster was displayed prominently at subway stations throughout the Boston area. I was a new staff member, and I paid close attention to the poster's reception. I enjoyed watching people read the text—"Who's Your Mother's Mother's Mother?"—and puzzle out the answer. (I believe I even saw some counting on fingers.)

The question was posed about a series of mothers rather than fathers for a reason. Following a matrilineal line presents many more genealogical challenges than researching a patrilineal one. In this issue we recognize these challenges and present strategies for tracing women forbears. Our coverage begins with "Our Essential Guide to Researching Female Ancestors" by Nancy Bernard and continues with recommendations from Senior Archivist Judy Lucey on finding women in archival collections. Manager of Manuscript Collections Tim Salls highlights donations to NEHGS by early female genealogists.

The lives of several women from the seventeenth century to the twentieth are explored. Eileen Pironti researched Elizabeth Humphreys (Clapp) Withington of Dorchester, Massachusetts, most specifically through her diary. Henry B. Hoff wrote about his favorite female ancestor, Catalina Trico of seventeenth-century New York; Sheilagh Doerfler offered a

Susan (Moeglein) Smith (1885–1961) of Little Falls, Minnesota, my mother's mother's mother.

counterpoint in "Grietje Reyniers of New Amsterdam: An Unconventional Woman." Stephanie Call described the life of Hannah Schaiman Freedman, a rabbi's wife and an accomplished woman in her own right.

Curt DiCamillo shines a spotlight on the Lemmon-Phillips filigree, made in 1735 by 18-year-old Mary Lemmon. In "Hidden Mothers," Maureen Taylor presents photographic evidence of actual elusive female ancestors—in this case, women who displayed their children for posterity but removed themselves from sight. These images deliver an apt metaphor for this issue's theme.

On another topic, Christian di Spigna discusses the research for *Founding Martyr*, his book on Revolutionary hero Dr. Joseph Warren, who had fallen into historical obscurity. And Genetics Editor Christopher C. Child explores how DNA research revealed an unexpected paternal line for a Wanamaker researcher.

We'd like to continue the conversation on women in the family. Which techniques and resources have proved successful in tracing your female ancestors? Let us know so we can share your strategies and advice!



Lynn Betlock  
Managing Editor  
[magazine@nehgs.org](mailto:magazine@nehgs.org)

# branches of our family

## JANE KIVLIN “All my ancestors came to New England”

I was twelve when I was first introduced to family history, through the 1879 Douglas genealogy by Charles H. J. Douglas. The book included Edwin Benajah Douglas and Naomi Tupper, my great-great-grandparents. During the Civil War they built the farmhouse in Shoreham, Vermont, where I spent my earliest years. My mother had known some of their children, so these ancestors seemed very real to me. Unfortunately, like many others, I didn't delve into genealogy until it was too late to talk to older family members, particularly on my father's side.

I moved to Salt Lake City for a job in the 1980s. After several years, I told myself that I should take advantage of being there and go to the Family History Library. A very kind volunteer there gave me my most successful day of research by showing me how to use Soundex and the micro-filmed census to find the names of my Irish immigrant great-great-grandparents.

I joined NEHGS in 1998. All branches of my ancestry—English, Irish, and German—started in New England. In my early years, I was a grateful user of the circulating library. Sanford Witherell, co-author of *A Genealogical Register of the Early Families of Shoreham, Vermont* (1984), had traced those families far beyond what was covered in that book. After he shared his research with me, I discovered how I was connected to many New England families with published genealogies. Through NEHGS I met Andrew Pierce, who researched my Irish and Yankee ancestry.

I try to visit NEHGS at least once a year, in combination with visiting family in Dedham, Massachusetts, and Vermont. I have enjoyed driving around Massachusetts, Vermont, and New York engaging in genealogical pursuits. The Sturgis Library in Barnstable, Massachusetts, has incorporated the 1644 house of Reverend John Lothrop, my ancestor, into its structure. To see his Bible and to walk on the floor of his home was remarkable. While on an English tour I added a few days to visit my ancestral towns of Crewkerne, Chard, and Yarcombe.

Even my husband and daughter, who are quickly bored by my genealogy talk, have enjoyed family history trips to Ireland and Germany. In Sligo, Ireland, we had to pretend my daughter was engaged to see the inside of an estate house—now a very upscale wedding venue—where my

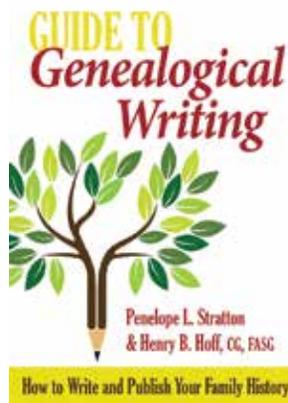


ancestors worked. Unlike my ancestors, we entered through the front door.

I completed an online course in genealogy given by Boston University, and I have taken two research trips with NEHGS to Connecticut and Albany, where I was assisted in performing reasonably exhaustive searches for my ancestors. I have been helped greatly by NEHGS staff. Senior Research Scholar Emeritus Gary Roberts told me I have more royal ancestry than he does. In general, I prefer the stories I have found over the bare facts of vital records. Of course we can't choose our ancestors, but most of mine worked hard throughout life.

I volunteered for NEHGS for a number of years, entering information from various sources into databases. I particularly enjoyed working with Marie Wells, who coordinated volunteers working remotely on database projects. Eventually, I decided that I needed to concentrate on my own family history if I ever wanted to publish my research in a book so that my family wouldn't throw it away! ♦

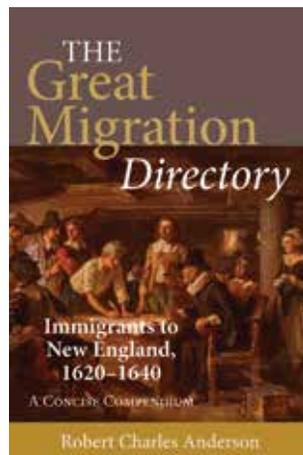
Jane Douglas Kivlin, MD, a Lifetime Member, joined NEHGS in 1998. She graduated from Boston University and the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. She was an academic pediatric ophthalmologist who served as associate professor at the University of Utah and professor at the Medical College of Wisconsin. She was president of the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus. She is happily retired, and living in Wisconsin.



## Guide to Genealogical Writing How to Write and Publish Your Family History

Penelope L. Stratton and Henry B. Hoff, CG, FASG  
7 x 10 pbk, 200 pp., illus., 2014; \$19.95, **member \$17.96**  
**E-BOOK** \$15.99, **member \$14.39**

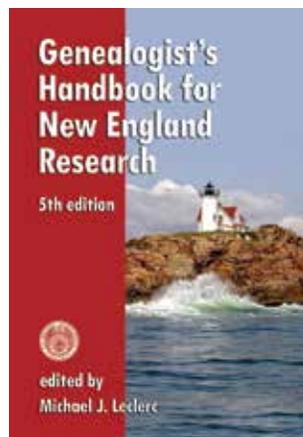
Whether you are new to genealogy or have been researching for years, this book will help you present your findings. Our experts show you how to write your family history—from building a genealogical sketch to indexing.



## The Great Migration Directory Immigrants to New England, 1620–1640 A Concise Compendium

Robert Charles Anderson, FASG  
6 x 9 hcvr, 600 pp., 2015; \$64.95, **member \$58.46**  
**E-BOOK** \$54.99, **member \$49.49**

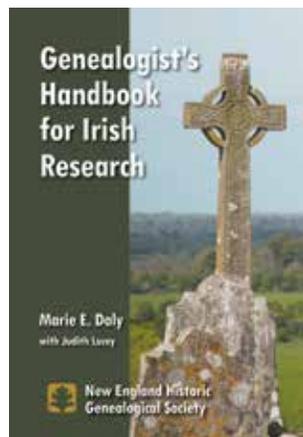
This important reference work lists all known immigrants to New England during the Great Migration. Each entry gives the name of the head of household, English origin (if known), date of migration, principal residences in New England, and the best available bibliographic citations.



## Genealogist's Handbook for New England Research

5th Edition. Edited by Michael J. Leclerc  
7 x 10 pbk, 432 pp., illus., 2012; \$24.95, **member \$22.46**

An indispensable resource for anyone researching in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont! This handbook offers a directory of repositories, libraries, and genealogical societies and contains nearly 80 state and county maps.



## Genealogist's Handbook for Irish Research

Marie E. Daly with Judith Lucey  
7 x 10 pbk, 200 pp., illus., 2016; \$24.95, **member \$22.46**  
**E-BOOK** \$19.99, **member \$17.99**

This step-by-step guide will help you trace your Irish ancestors in America, and then continue your search in Ireland. This handbook provides essential sources in America and Ireland, as well as strategies for researching your ancestors and interpreting your results.



**Melanie McComb**, *Genealogist, NEHGS Library, is a genealogist and international lecturer specializing in New England, New York, Canadian, and Jewish research; military records; DNA; and genealogical technology and social media.*

# ask our genealogists

---

[How can I find out whether my Massachusetts ancestor fought at the Battle of Quebec?](#)

The Battle of Quebec (also called the Battle of the Plains of Abraham), a pivotal conflict during the Seven Years' War, occurred on September 13, 1759. British troops decisively defeated French forces, leading to the surrender of New France to Britain. A useful resource is a database of British and French army soldiers in Quebec in 1759 and 1760 maintained by the Canadian National Battlefields Commission ([ccbn-nbc.gc.ca/en/history-heritage/battles-1759-1760/soldiers/](http://ccbn-nbc.gc.ca/en/history-heritage/battles-1759-1760/soldiers/)).

While Massachusetts troops were involved in other military actions

during this period—most notably the siege at Louisburg in Nova Scotia and the construction of Fort Crown Point on Lake Champlain—not many participated in the Battle of Quebec. If you'd like to know whether your ancestor may have been involved in a different colonial war conflict, consult the “Colonial Soldiers and Officers in New England, 1620–1775” database at [AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org), and the Massachusetts State Archives French and Indian War muster roll index cards, 1603–1779, available on FamilySearch ([familysearch.org/search/catalog/1471369](http://familysearch.org/search/catalog/1471369)).

[A database on AmericanAncestors.org, “Massachusetts: Historical Data Relating to Cities and Towns,”](#) contains information about the history of each town in Massachusetts—when it was formed, how the boundaries changed, other names it might have been called. [Can you recommend a similar resource for England?](#)

One of my frequently used resources is *A Topographical Dictionary of England*, a two-volume set first published in 1831 and edited by Samuel Lewis. Each entry is arranged alphabetically by locality and includes a historical summary, a description, names of the parish churches (crucial for finding early English records), and names of prominent families, as well as information about the local industries, geographical features, and interesting facts. This set has been digitized and the 1848 edition

is available online at [british-history.ac.uk/topographical-dict/England](http://british-history.ac.uk/topographical-dict/England). The 1831 print edition is in our library in Boston.

Many other useful gazetteers are also available online, including the 1872 *Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales* ([archive.org/details/imperialgazettee02wils](http://archive.org/details/imperialgazettee02wils)) and the 1895 *Comprehensive Gazetteer of England and Wales* ([archive.org/details/comprehensivegaz04brab](http://archive.org/details/comprehensivegaz04brab)).

[Are there any sources that confirm the place of birth of Revolutionary War heroine Deborah Sampson? Perhaps a pension application?](#)

According to *Mayflower Families through Five Generations, vol. 22: William Bradford*, compiled by Robert S. Wakefield, FASG, and Ann Smith Lainhart (2004), pp. 137–38, Deborah Sampson was born December 17, 1760, in Plympton, Massachusetts. This birth date has been repeated in

many accounts of Deborah's life but no contemporary record has been located (*Mayflower Quarterly* 39:56–58, 48:172). Deborah's birth record is not published in the Plympton volume of the Massachusetts Vital Records, 1620–1850 series. But an unrecorded birth at the town level wasn't uncommon, and



Deborah Sampson (1760–1827) served seventeen months in the Continental Army disguised as a man. Science History Images / Alamy Stock Photo.

Fold3.com. Both files contain a number of letters that discuss the family and may be helpful in your search. (Abstracts of these files are in Virgil D. White's four-volume set, *Abstracts of Revolutionary War Pension Files* [1990–1992]; Deborah Sampson's entry can be found under her alias, Robert Shurtleff.)

Notes in Ephraim's pension application file speculate on whether he was born in Plympton or Halifax, Massachusetts. In 1734, the town of Halifax was incorporated from several Plymouth County towns,

the statewide collection of vital records did not begin in Massachusetts until 1841, eighty years after Deborah's birth.

Pension files are a great alternative resource for vital record information. Details about the birth, marriage(s), and death of the soldier are generally included in the files, as well as affidavits from family members and acquaintances.

Deborah Sampson's Revolutionary War pension application file and pension files from the National Archives have been scanned and uploaded to Fold3.com (a subscription site). In addition, Deborah's brother, Ephraim Sampson (1759–1810), also served in the Revolutionary War. His pension application file is also online on

including Middleborough, Pembroke, and Plympton. The vital records for Plympton have been digitized from the original records and are available at [FamilySearch.org/search/catalog/399477](http://FamilySearch.org/search/catalog/399477); find the other towns at [FamilySearch.org/search/catalog](http://FamilySearch.org/search/catalog).

I recommend contacting Congregational churches near Plympton to search for a baptism record for Deborah and her brother Ephraim. If a church closed, the records may have been deposited at the Congregational Library here in Boston. The library has digitized many of these records, such as those of the First Church of Middleboro, which are now online at [congregationallibrary.org/nehg/series1/MiddleboroMAFirst4970](http://congregationallibrary.org/nehg/series1/MiddleboroMAFirst4970). ♦

## Do you have a question for our genealogists?

NEHGS offers its members a free Ask A Genealogist service to answer quick genealogy or local history questions. Submit your question at [AmericanAncestors.org/ask-a-genealogist](http://AmericanAncestors.org/ask-a-genealogist).

## Do you need more in-depth help?

The NEHGS Research Services Team offers a wide range of in-depth research assistance available to everyone. Services include hourly research, lineage society applications, help with organization and evaluation, photocopying, and accessing our vast collections. Visit [AmericanAncestors.org/research-services](http://AmericanAncestors.org/research-services) to learn more.

# News



Nordahl and Suzanne Brue

## Brue family makes historic gift to NEHGS

Suzanne and Nordahl Brue have made a gift of \$1.5 million to New England Historic Genealogical Society to endow the creation of a family history learning center where visitors from all backgrounds can learn more about their ancestry. Nordahl Brue is co-founder of Bruegger's Bagels.

NEHGS President and CEO Brenton Simons stated that "This generous gift is testimony to the Brue family's sharing of our vision to inspire others to engage in history and genealogy. With a deep personal interest in family and local history, they have made a far-reaching commitment to our planned expansion. The creation of the Brue Family Learning Center at our headquarters will guarantee access to research, technologies, programs, and events by many new intergenerational visitors to our facilities and to our AmericanAncestors.org website. We celebrate their gift and the inspiration it signifies through a new center of learning bearing their name."

Read more about this historic gift at [AmericanAncestors.org/about/press-and-media](https://AmericanAncestors.org/about/press-and-media).

## NPR's Scott Simon to be honored at our Winter Dinner

On Thursday, January 30, we will honor author and broadcaster Scott Simon with our Lifetime Achievement Award at our Winter Dinner, to be held at Boston's historic Lenox Hotel beginning at 6 p.m. Scott Simon is the host of *Weekend Edition Saturday*. He has won every major award in broadcasting for his personal essays, war reporting, and commentary.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Simon will be featured in a special program at the WGBH Studio at the Boston Public Library. This free-access public event will be presented by WGBH in partnership with our American Inspiration author series.

For more information on the Winter Dinner, please contact Courtney Reardon at 617-226-1215 or [Courtney.Reardon@nehgs.org](mailto:Courtney.Reardon@nehgs.org).

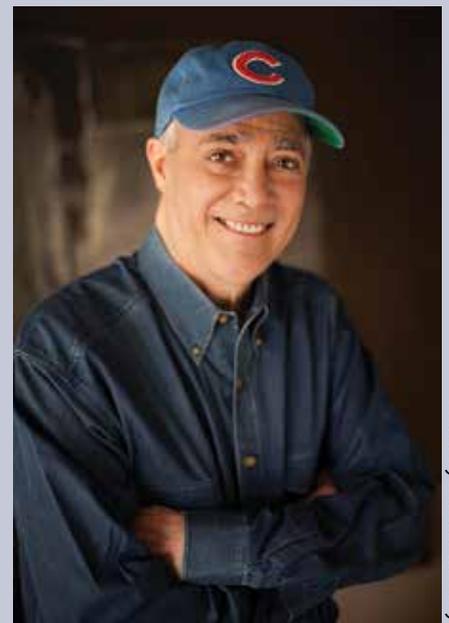
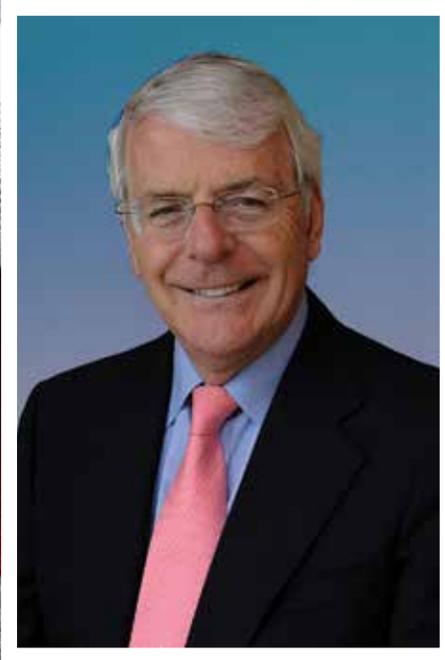


Photo by Marcus Galvany

Scott Simon



## NEHGS to host Sir John Major

Former UK Prime Minister Sir John Major will visit Boston next April to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the landing of the *Mayflower*, and the 175th anniversary of the founding of New England Historic Genealogical Society.

Sir John will receive the prestigious NEHGS Lifetime Achievement Award for Distinguished Public Service, to be presented at a dinner in April. “We are delighted to welcome Sir John Major to Boston and our *Mayflower* commemorations next year,” said Brenton Simons, NEHGS President and CEO.

In 1990, John Major succeeded Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and served in that capacity until 1997. He oversaw Britain’s longest period of continuous economic growth and the beginning of the Northern Ireland peace process. In 2005, he was made a Knight Companion of the Most Noble Order of The Garter by The Queen. “He is a statesman and an important voice not just in the United Kingdom, but in the world,” said Nancy S. Maulsby, Chairman of the NEHGS Board of Trustees.

“This is truly an international event, and Sir John’s participation highlights the many important historical, cultural, and political bonds between the United Kingdom and the United States over four centuries,” said Simons.

---

*Left:* The Rt Hon Sir John Major KG CH.

Copyright Office of The Rt Hon Sir John Major KG CH.



## Brenton Simons appointed by Governor to 400th Anniversary Commission

Governor Charlie Baker of Massachusetts has appointed Brenton Simons, our President and CEO, to the Plymouth 400th Anniversary Commission. Simons was sworn in as a Commissioner on August 5 on the Governor’s Balcony at the State House by Jordan Maynard, the Governor’s

Director of Boards and Commissions (pictured left). Simons took the oath administered by Governor Baker on October 30, 2019, on the Grand Staircase of the State House (pictured right). He looks forward to helping advance the work of the 2020 commemoration, which is being planned and coordinated by local nonprofit and business leaders, the Wampanoag Nation, and partners in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

# Presidential Historian Douglas Brinkley honored at Summer Dinner

More than 100 guests enjoyed our July 25 Summer Dinner honoring award-winning presidential historian Douglas Brinkley. The event was held at a private club in Brookline, Massachusetts. Brenton Simons presented Brinkley with an expertly prepared genealogy that revealed Brinkley's connection to three former presidents—including Richard M. Nixon, the subject of three Brinkley books. Ryan Woods presented our Lifetime Achievement Award in History and Biography, a prize for which he was nominated by NEHGS Trustee Thomas Bailey Hagen.

Brinkley delighted guests and benefactors with a discussion of “The Art of Presidential Biography.” The evening program concluded with a thought-provoking conversation on the legacy of political leaders, facilitated by Margaret Talcott, Director of Signature and Literary Events and curator of the American Inspiration author series.

The dinner's Silver Benefactors were Stephen H. Case, Thomas B. Hagen, Nancy S. Maulsby, and Welch and Forbes LLC. Gerry and MaryLee Halpin, Gary and Susan Kearney, Jo Anne C. Makely, Elizabeth and George Passela, Helen and DuWayne Sayles, Lea Sinclair Filson and Ronald Filson, Jonathan B. Treat, and Elizabeth B. Vitton were Benefactors for the evening.



*Top right:* Honoree Douglas Brinkley with NEHGS Trustee Thomas B. Hagen. *Middle:* NEHGS Councilor Elizabeth Vitton, NEHGS Chairman Nancy S. Maulsby, and Brenton Simons. *Bottom:* Douglas Brinkley speaks on “The Art of Presidential Biography.” Photo ©Pierce Harman Photography 2019.





## Free Fun Friday 2019

On July 19 we hosted another very successful Free Fun Friday. Sponsored by the Highland Street Foundation, Free Fun Fridays enable Massachusetts cultural venues to offer free admission to the general public. This year, our program included genealogy-related projects for families, introductory lectures by our expert genealogists, research assistance, database access, library tours, and membership discounts. Free Fun Friday is a great way to introduce new friends to NEHGS.



# American Inspiration

Launched in September, our American Inspiration author series has featured insightful speakers and fascinating topics. *New York Times* columnist Gail Collins shared insights on American women, the subject of her new book, *No Stopping Us Now: The Adventures of Older Women in American History*. Brian Jay Jones spoke on *Becoming Dr. Seuss: Theodor Geisel and the Making of an American Imagination*, an in-depth look at the life and work of the twentieth-century creative genius. And Susan Ronald discussed *Condé Nast: The Man and His Empire*, her biography of the visionary publisher whose life and works exemplified New York City's "café society," and whose magazines—the *New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Vogue*—continue to inform and influence to this day.



  
**AMERICAN  
 INSPIRATION**  
 A BEST-SELLING AUTHOR SERIES  
 BY AMERICAN ANCESTORS



Join us for American Inspiration, our thought-provoking speaker series that presents best-selling authors and their latest books on personal identity, families and immigration, and social and cultural history. Our winter roster features:

- December 10: **Grammy-nominated biographer Holly George-Warren** with *Janis*
- January 14: **Historical novelist William Martin** with *Bound for Gold*
- January 30: **NPR's Scott Simon** at our Winter Dinner
- March 15: **Habitat for Humanity CEO Jonathan Reckford** with *Our Better Angels*

Presented in partnership with 89.7 WGBH Boston and Porter Square Books in Cambridge. Contact [signatureevents@nehgs.org](mailto:signatureevents@nehgs.org) or 888-296-3447.

### Become an American Inspiration insider!

Subscribe to our newsletter for the latest news, reviews, and author announcements; priority registration for popular events; access to preview interviews and video clips; and more. Sign up at [AmericanAncestors.org/Inspire](http://AmericanAncestors.org/Inspire).

For more information and to register, visit  
[AmericanAncestors.org/Inspire](http://AmericanAncestors.org/Inspire)

# Announcing our 2020 Four Nation Concert Series

The landing of the *Mayflower* on the shores of Massachusetts in 1620 forever changed the history and cultures of four nations: America, England, the Netherlands, and Wampanoag. In 2020 American Ancestors and New England Historic Genealogical Society will host a Four Nation Concert Series to examine how the themes of the *Mayflower* story—exploration, innovation, religious freedom, self-governance, immigration, and Thanksgiving—have been expressed through the historical and more contemporary musical traditions of each nation. Events in February, May, August, and November 2020 will combine musical performance with scholarly discussion and feature a wide range of artists, instruments, customs, and topics.

Join us for our first concert  
on February 13, 2020!

Pilgrims' Progress:

Music of the Plimoth Colony Settlers, 1590–1650

Featuring early music ensemble Seven Times Salt, this lecture and concert follows the settlers from their homes in 1590s England to religious refuge in the Netherlands, and onward to new lives on the unfamiliar shores of New England. Seven Times Salt will perform music of the Elizabethan tavern and theater, spirited catches by Thomas Ravenscroft, selections from the Dutch *'t Uitnemen Kabinet*, stirring psalms from the Ainsworth Psalter, and vigorous tunes from Playford's *English Dancing Master*.

Learn more at [Mayflower.AmericanAncestors.org/Four-Nation-Concerts](http://Mayflower.AmericanAncestors.org/Four-Nation-Concerts).



Seven Times Salt

Matthew Stein

## American Ancestors and Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston find descendants of congregation

In planning a September 2019 event to honor the 110th anniversary of the Walnut Street Synagogue, members of Congregation Agudas Sholom wanted to identify and celebrate the immigrants who had founded it. The synagogue, or “shul,” located in Chelsea, Massachusetts, and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was erected in 1909, a year after a devastating fire reduced a third of the city to ash, including the Congregation’s original home.

The planners obtained a list of the 300 original members, but had no way to trace the families, so they asked the Jewish Genealogy Society of Greater Boston (JGSGB) and American Ancestors genealogists to help identify living descendants. The assembled team, mostly volunteers,

employed city directories, census records, local newspapers, and vital records, to piece together the family histories. By the time the Founders’ Day invitations were mailed in July 2019, over half the names on the list had been positively identified and their descendants, if any, traced.

On September 15, 2019, representatives from NEHGS and JGSGB joined 225 shul celebrants at Founders’ Day to enjoy klezmer music, admire exhibits of early Jewish artifacts and family photographs, and hear local government and religious leaders pay tribute. Keynote presentations on Jewish history and architecture capped a celebration of the history and future of an iconic building and the immigrants who built it.

## Manuscript Society visits NEHGS

The 2019 Annual Meeting of the Manuscript Society was held in Boston in April, and nearly sixty members of the Society visited NEHGS to learn more about our collections, services, and activities. Formed in 1948, the Manuscript Society ([Manuscript.org](http://Manuscript.org)) is an international organization with members across the globe, and the oldest society of autograph and manuscript collectors in the United States. Its purpose is “to encourage the association of interested individuals and institutions, to promote the mutual interest in manuscripts, to encourage the use of manuscripts for research and publication, to facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge about manuscripts, to foster the preservation of manuscript material of all kinds, and to foster ethical conduct in the commerce of manuscripts.” Members are collectors, dealers, archivists, or anyone interested in the history revealed in manuscripts.

The Manuscript Society visit began with a welcome from Library Director Jean Maguire, who provided an overview of our organization. The group heard presentations by Conservator Todd Pattison on our conservation program and priorities, and Manager of Manuscript Collections Tim Salls on our Special Collections holdings, including how we acquire items and make them accessible. The group was then invited to view an exhibit of dozens of manuscripts from our R. Stanton Avery Special Collections and Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center.

Manuscript Society member and NEHGS Life Member L. Dennis Shapiro presented NEHGS with a generous donation of a Mathew family heraldic and genealogical manuscript. Dennis had acquired the manuscript in Madrid in 1991 while browsing antiquarian bookstores, a favorite pastime. He wandered into a shop and was greeted in Spanish by the owner. Despite a language barrier, Dennis managed to indicate his interest in items written in English. The owner shook his head, thought for a moment, then suddenly smiled and held up his hand to signify that he would be right back.

He returned with a folder containing a manuscript written in Spanish covering the Mathew family’s royal descent from King “Eduardo” III of England, beginning in 1312. The 16-page manuscript, dated July 21, 1775, Granada, was attractively hand-painted with coats of arms—including the motto of Edward’s Order of the Garter, “*Honi soit qui mal y pense*” (May he be shamed who thinks badly of it). Although the manuscript showed some water stains, the color was good and the text beautifully written.



Library Director Jean Maguire with Dennis Shapiro

Dennis usually collected materials related to American presidents and political history, but he was intrigued by this manuscript. To justify the purchase, he decided to present the document to a friend with the surname Mathew. However, after a conversation with the friend revealed that his Mathew surname was of recent origin—adopted by his parents after they emigrated from Greece—Dennis decided to keep the manuscript until he could find it a proper home.

After joining NEHGS, Dennis asked our CEO Brenton Simons to take a look at the manuscript. Brenton, too, was fascinated with this unique and significant work, which he found to be both genuine and accurate. As the date for the Manuscript Society visit approached, Dennis decided to make NEHGS the home for this treasure. He is comforted by the knowledge that NEHGS will preserve his beloved manuscript, and make it available for researchers for years to come. He hopes that Mathew descendants with a deep connection to the family outlined on the document will one day use it for research.

Jean Maguire, NEHGS Library Director

## John D. Austin, Jr. 1935–2019



John DeLong Austin, Jr., genealogist, local historian, and judge, died on June 17, 2019, in Fort Edward,

Washington County, New York. He was born in Cambridge, Washington County, on May 31, 1935, to John DeLong and Mabel Cowles (Bascom) Austin.

John graduated from Dartmouth College in 1957 and then worked as a newspaperman in Glens Falls, New York. After graduating from Albany Law School in 1969 he practiced law in Warren County. He held many important positions there over several decades, culminating in his 1984 appointment as judge of the Family Court.

John was very knowledgeable about genealogy and local history in Warren County and environs, especially the town of Queensbury, where he lived. He lectured widely on New York and New England records, and had articles published in the *Register*, the *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, and *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*. In 1970 he was elected a Fellow of the American Society of Genealogists. From 1971 to 1974 he was editor of the *Register*. In 1983 he prepared “Genealogical Research in New York State, An Informal Finding List of Published Materials, with Supplementary Notes” for the Genealogical Conference of New York. He was principal researcher for the Mayflower Society’s “Silver Book” on Stephen Hopkins, now in its third edition.

John married Marcia Kay Behan on August 15, 1969, in Queensbury. She died July 28, 1997. He is survived by two children, John DeLong Austin III and Susan Behan Austin-Mallue. —HBH

## Carl Boyer 3rd 1937–2019



Carl Boyer 3rd, avid genealogist; founding father and mayor of Santa Clarita, California; longtime teacher;

sometime president and active foster parent for Heal the Children; and author of a classic text on the incorporation of new (often suburban) cities, died May 29, 2019, aged 81.

Carl was considered a major figure in American genealogy. His principal work in our field was the well-regarded *Ancestral Lines* series, 3 vols. (all still in print), covering the entire known American ancestry of his grandchildren. He compiled *Medieval English Ancestors of Robert Abell* (in two editions, the second in 2017), *Medieval English Ancestors Prior to 1300*, *Medieval Welsh Ancestors of Certain Americans* (the first work to trace a nineteenth-century Welsh immigrant to ancient Welsh princes), and *New England Colonial Families*, on Browns of R.I. and Bristol Co., Mass., plus descendants of Jared Talbot.

Carl’s *How to Publish and Market Your Family History* (1987) was for many years the definitive work on the subject. He edited a series of *Ship Passenger Lists* from journals. He also indexed and published 1989 and 1995 editions of *Ancestors of American Presidents* (later editions have been published by NEHGS), plus both volumes of *Notable Kin*, by Gary Boyd Roberts.

Carl was preceded in death by his wife Chris (Kruse) in 2018, after 55 years of marriage. He is survived by three daughters, Michele Boyer, Denise Johnson, and Danielle Vermillion; and three grandchildren. —GBR

## Charlotte Powers Paine 1919–2019



Charlotte Powers Paine, long-time friend of NEHGS, died on June 22, 2019, at the Swedish Hospital in

Seattle at the age of 99. She was born in Buffalo, New York, on August 13, 1919, to William Hugh and Sally Howell (Mulligan) Powers.

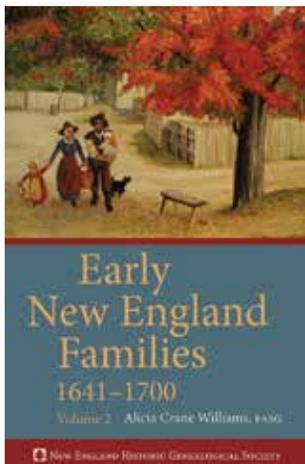
Charlotte grew up on Long Island and moved to California in 1938. After graduating from the University of California at Berkeley she enlisted in the U.S. Naval Reserve as a WAVE. While stationed in Hawaii, she met Navy ensign William Alfred Paine 2nd. She and Bill were married at St. Andrew’s Cathedral in Pasadena, California, on June 26, 1947. They lived in Boston while Bill finished college at M.I.T. and then moved to Bellevue, Washington, where their two sons were born. In 1958 the family relocated to Bainbridge Island, Washington, where Charlotte spent the rest of her life.

Charlotte made friends easily, and she connected with many NEHGS members and staff. An avid genealogist, she was a frequent attendee of NEHGS programs and trips, and participated in “Come Home to New England” for twenty years. Besides NEHGS (to which she was a generous donor, often anonymously) and the Mayflower Society, she belonged to local organizations on Bainbridge Island. A descendant of Hercules Mulligan (1740–1825), she was delighted to see her ancestor portrayed in the musical *Hamilton*, which she attended in Seattle.

Charlotte was preceded in death by her husband William in 1997. She is survived by her sons, William A. Paine 3rd and John D. Paine; her two grandsons, Michael and Stephen; and her daughter-in-law Dara. —HBH

# New Publications

[AmericanAncestors.org/store](http://AmericanAncestors.org/store)



## Early New England Families, 1641–1700, Volume 2

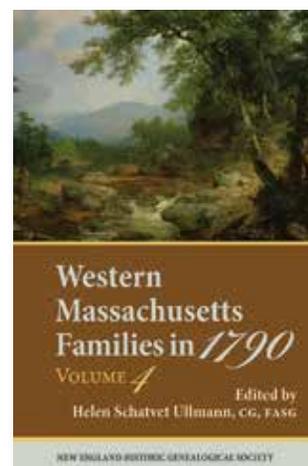
By Alicia Crane Williams, FASG  
6 x 9 paperback, 432 pages; \$32.95  
6 x 9 hardcover, 432 pages; \$49.95

Addressing the lack of compiled information on individuals who immigrated to New England after the Great Migration, the Early New England Families Study Project provides accurate and concise published summaries of seventeenth-century New Englanders. The project uses Clarence Almon Torrey's bibliographic index of early New England marriages as a guide and focuses on the families of children of Great Migration parents and on individuals who immigrated from 1641 through 1700. Volume 2 presents the second fifty sketches written for the project (first published as an online database on AmericanAncestors.org), treating families with thirty-eight different surnames.

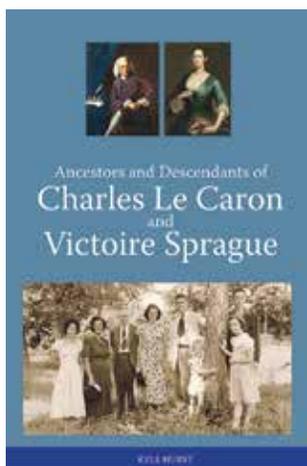
## Western Massachusetts Families in 1790, Volume 4

Edited by Helen Schatvet Ullmann, CG, FASG  
6 x 9 paperback, 590 pages; \$32.95

In 1790 western Massachusetts was a crossroads for New England families heading west into New York or north into Vermont. The transient nature of these families, especially during the post-Revolutionary War years, presents certain genealogical challenges. Building on the third volume of *Western Massachusetts Families in 1790*, published in 2017, this fourth volume contains another seventy highly detailed genealogical sketches of heads of households—along with lists of their children—living in present-day Berkshire, Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin Counties. Sketches are contributed by NEHGS members and skillfully edited and indexed by expert genealogist Helen Schatvet Ullmann, CG, FASG.



## From Newbury Street Press



## Ancestors and Descendants of Charles Le Caron and Victoire Sprague

By Kyle Hurst  
6 x 9 hardcover, 375 pages, illustrated; \$64.95

Members of the Le Caron and Sprague families and allied branches understood the importance of home, service, education, and professional dedication. The bold Henri Le Caron left home to serve in the American Civil War—but remaining loyal to his British roots, he then spied on Fenians planning to invade Canada. Earlier, the Massachusetts Spragues struggled to choose sides during the American Revolution. Many family members received a Harvard education and became doctors and merchants. Spragues sailed around the world for the family business, and three generations served as U.S. Consuls in Gibraltar. Covering both those who strayed far and those who remained close to home, this five-family study highlights the unique individuals who are the ancestors and descendants of Charles Le Caron and Victoire Sprague.



## Brick Walls *submitted by our members*

**We want to hear from you!** Send a brief narrative about your “brick wall” to [magazine@nehgs.org](mailto:magazine@nehgs.org) or to AMERICAN ANCESTORS magazine, 99–101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116. Please include your NEHGS member number. *We regret that we cannot reply to every submission. Brick walls will be edited for clarity and length. Responses will be forwarded to submitters.*

My great-great-grandmother, **Martha Elvira “Patsy” Woollen** (1827–1907) was born in Wilson County, Tennessee. I believe Patsy is the daughter of either Joshua Woollen (1787–1860) and Jean McCarried (1779–1847), or Moses Woollen (1796–1859) and Elizabeth L. Stokes (1799–1886). The available information conflicts. Two histories of the Woollen family report Joshua and Jean as Patsy’s parents, but both Ancestry.com and Find A Grave list her parents as Moses and Elizabeth. A child of Patsy’s age does not appear in the 1830 or 1840 federal census for either household. By 1850, Patsy was married. The two genealogies each cite family Bibles as their source. While family Bibles would usually be considered excellent sources, Jean seems odd to be Patsy’s mother; if her birthdate is correct, she was 48 when Patsy was born.

Vicki Weisfeld, Princeton, New Jersey

I am searching for the parents of my wife’s ancestor, **Lemuel H. Cole**, who was born February 8, 1789, probably in New Hampshire, and died June 26, 1861, in Windsor Twp., Eaton County, Michigan. Lemuel married three times: 1) Charlotte Mills, born 1791 at Becket, Berkshire County, Massachusetts; 2) Lurena Carleton who died before February 25, 1833, when he married 3) Elizabeth Williams in Washtenaw County, Michigan. (An interesting side note on this family is that Lemuel and Charlotte never divorced. Charlotte contested and then lost a suit against Lemuel’s estate when he died.) DNA tests on Lemuel’s descendants indicate that in spite of several claims to the contrary, he is NOT a descendant of Lt. Lemuel Cole of Plympton, Massachusetts, who married Susanna Crocker. Lemuel H. does have a DNA connection to the descendants of Samuel Kimball Cole (b. May 1794 at Londonderry, Rockingham County, New Hampshire; died January 17, 1876 at Iowa City, Wright County, Iowa).

Robert Snyder, Midland, Michigan

I have searched for the parents of my great-great-grandfather for 35 years. **Isaac Browning Decker** was born May 1816 in New York, according to his gravestone

and the 1850 and 1860 censuses. He moved to Beloit, Wisconsin, by 1844 and married Adaline Augusta Gray on January 2, 1845, in New Diggings, Lafayette County, Wisconsin. Their only child, William Henry Decker, was born in Beloit October 25, 1845. In 1850, Isaac was listed as a harness maker. By 1860 Isaac, by then a grocer, was living with his family in Milwaukee. Isaac died there on October 7, 1866. A possible brother, Abel Decker, was also a grocer who lived in Milwaukee with a son named William Henry. Abel’s first land deed gives his origin as Orange County, New York.

Sharon Stokes, Los Altos, California

I first encountered this brick wall in 1978. My ancestor **Benjamin Stiles** was born in 1805/6 in Pennsylvania. He married Jemima Elliott, daughter of Samuel Elliott, Jr., in 1828 in Franklin County, Ohio. The couple settled in Auglaize County, and are buried there, in New Knoxville. I am seeking Benjamin’s parents.

Owen R. Stiles, Gridley, California

I am looking for the parents and birth record of **George Francis Martin**. (Sheffield may have been part of his name.) According to his marriage record, George was born January 6, 1880, in Boston, Massachusetts. His father died when George was young, and George did not know his first name. His mother, Annie Cunningham, was “lost at sea” when George was about eleven. Afterwards, George lived in an orphanage on Prince Street in Boston. He had twin brothers, James and Charles, but didn’t mention whether they were older or younger. He spoke about often visiting South Braintree, Massachusetts, but never discussed relatives other than his parents and brothers. I haven’t located any information on George’s early life, or his parents or brothers. By 1900, George was living in Windsor, Kennebec County, Maine, working as a farm laborer. In 1906, he married Annie Mae Leighton in Augusta, Maine. He also lived in West Gardiner and Hallowell, Maine, before his death in 1963.

Arthur J. Bonenfant Sr., Farmingdale, Maine

# NEW Databases on AmericanAncestors.org

## Court, land, and probate records

### Massachusetts: Plymouth Colony Deeds, 1671–1673

This new database presents an e-book of Plymouth Colony deeds, which contains a verbatim transcription of *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England, Vol. III, pt. 2, 1671–1673*, completed in 2019 by Scott Andrew Bartley. (Although filed between 1671 and 1673, these deeds also refer to earlier events that span the life of Plymouth Colony, 1620–1691.) Names and places are indexed, and the preface provides a detailed explanation of how the material is presented. More than 250 pages and 2,300 indexed names are included.

### Norfolk County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1793–1900

We recently added probate file papers from 1877 through mid-1894 to this database, which now includes 796,527 pages, 30,793 cases, and 37,700 searchable names. The database was created from digital images and an index contributed to NEHGS by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Archives. This database is still in progress. When photography of the collection is complete, 35,804 probate cases through 1900 will be available.

## Study projects

### Western Massachusetts Families in 1790—13 new sketches

This study project, managed by Helen Schatvet Ullmann, CG, FASG, profiles heads of families enumerated in the 1790 census in historic Berkshire and Hampshire Counties, an area that includes modern Franklin and Hampden Counties. The newest sketches feature families from Belchertown, Colrain, Conway, Dalton, Goshen, Granby, New Marlborough, Pittsfield, and Williamsburg.

## Vital records

### Massachusetts: (Image Only) Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Records, 1789–1920—20 new parishes

We have expanded the year range for this collection to 1789–1920! Guest members can view the Archdiocese of Boston sacramental records for free in our browsable collection. The 92 new volumes include records from the following parishes: Boston Harbor Islands, St. Casimir (Brockton), St. Anthony of Padua (Cohasset), St. Matthew (Dorchester), St. Bridget (Framingham), Our Lady of Good Voyage (Gloucester), St. Paul (Hingham), St. Mary (Holliston), St. Michael (Hudson), St. Patrick (Lawrence), St. Brigid

(Lexington), St. Joseph (Lynn), Our Lady Star of the Sea (Marblehead), St. Edward the Confessor (Medfield), Mary Immaculate of Lourdes (Newton), Sacred Heart (Newton), St. Patrick (Stoneham), Blessed Sacrament (Walpole), St. John the Evangelist (Wellesley), and Holy Ghost (Whitman).

### Massachusetts: Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Records, 1789–1920—16 new parishes

The New England Historic Genealogical Society and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston are collaborating to create an online database of millions of sacramental records from over 100 parishes across eastern Massachusetts. We have expanded the year range for this collection to 1780–1920! The 91 new searchable volumes include records from the following cities and towns: Abington, Boston, Cambridge, Charlestown, Dorchester, East Boston, Everett, Melrose, Newton, Quincy, Roxbury, and South Boston.

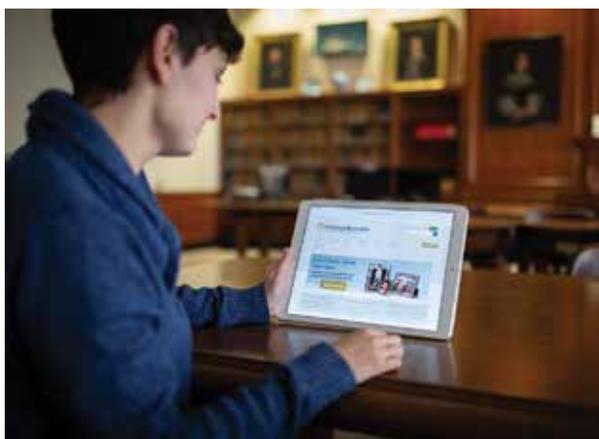
### Vital Records from the NEHGS Register—3 new volumes

This project provides an in-depth re-indexing of all the genealogical records in the “Vital Records from the NEHGS Register” database. We are reviewing every published article from the *Register* and extracting a broad set of genealogical records. This database will provide a much more detailed index of the records in the *Register* than is currently available. Volumes 4–6 have recently been added to this database.

### Ireland: The Annals of Beara—1 updated volume

Riobard O’Dwyer’s study on the families of the Beara Peninsula in Ireland contains information on families from the parishes of Adrigole and Allihies (Volume 1), Bere Island and Eyeries (Volume 2), and Castletownbere and Glengarriff (Volume 3). The family records range in date from 1776 to 1992, with the majority from 1822 to 1956. We have just released the indexed version of Volume 2, which joins the indexed version of Volume 1 and the image-only Volume 3 on our site.

©Pierce Harmon Photography 2019



## Announcing 2020 Research Tours & Programs

### Winter Research Getaway, Boston, MA

February 20–22, 2020

"The extended weekend format helped me to become comfortable working in one of the best repositories in the country. It is an experience that is both deeply humbling and deeply inspiring. Thank you!" —Research Getaway participant

Escape to Boston for three days of research, one-on-one consultations, an orientation, and social events, while exploring the rich offerings at the American Ancestors Research Center and benefiting from the knowledge of expert genealogists.

**Early member registration** by January 3, 2020: \$395

**Member registration** after January 3, 2020: \$450

**Nonmember registration:** Add \$150 to above prices

### NEW! Massachusetts Research Tour

March 29–April 4, 2020

Whether your family ties to Massachusetts date back 400 years or 40 years, it's a fantastic place to conduct genealogical research. Moving beyond the doors of our own research center, this new tour offering will help you navigate several world-class research facilities in and around Boston, providing special orientations, lectures, and guided research time. Repositories include the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston Public Library, Massachusetts State Archives, and more!

**Early member registration** by January 3, 2020: \$1,350

**Member registration** after January 3, 2020: \$1,500

**Nonmember registration:** Add \$150 to the above prices

### Genealogical Skills Boot Camp, Boston, MA

May 28–30, 2020

Take your research skills to the next level! With the sheer number of online resources at your fingertips, it's easy to dive in to your family history

research without any formal training as a genealogist. This intensive three-day program will set you on the right path to getting the most out of your family history research and teach you how to tackle genealogical problems like a pro. Topics include: strategies for analyzing records, online research, breaking down genealogical brick walls, and more.

**Early member registration** by February 7, 2020: \$550

**Member registration** after February 7, 2020: \$625

**Nonmember registration:** Add \$150 to the above prices

### Spring Research Getaway, Boston, MA

June 11–13, 2020

See description above.

**Early member registration** by March 6, 2020: \$395

**Member registration** after March 6, 2020: \$450

**Nonmember registration:** Add \$150 to above prices

### English Research Tour

London, England • June 21–28, 2020

Visit the treasures of London's many genealogical repositories, including



Old State House, Boston

### Register for American Ancestors Tours & Programs

Registration for most programs is available at [AmericanAncestors.org/education](https://AmericanAncestors.org/education).

Call **617-226-1226** to register for seminars and research tours.

To register for Online Learning Center webinars and courses, visit [AmericanAncestors.org/education/online-classes](https://AmericanAncestors.org/education/online-classes).

For more information, email [education@nehgs.org](mailto:education@nehgs.org) or call **617-226-1226**.



The National Archives, the Society of Genealogists, and London Metropolitan Archives. Throughout the week, participants will discover each repository's unique holdings through special orientations and tours, guided research, one-on-one consultations, and lectures.

**Early member registration** by March 20, 2020: \$3,800 single; \$3,300 double; \$4,050 with non-researching guest  
**Member registration** after March 20, 2019: \$3,950 single; \$3,450 double; \$4,200 double with non-researching guest  
**Nonmember registration:** Add \$150 to the above prices

### American Ancestors Summer Institute for Advanced Researchers

Contributing to *Mayflower* Scholarship  
 July 15–18, 2020

Commemorate the anniversary of the *Mayflower* landing by contributing to its genealogical scholarship. This year's Summer Institute will focus on several ways you can develop your research and findings into a scholarly project. Learn how to write a proof argument to verify *Mayflower* lineage, craft an article for *Mayflower Descendant*, manage a DNA study project, complete a genealogical sketch for sixth and seventh generations, and more. Open to

current American Ancestors members only.

**Early member registration** by April 3, 2020: \$1,200  
**Member registration** after April 3, 2020: \$1,350

### Come Home to New England, Boston, MA

August 4–8, 2020

American Ancestors and New England Historic Genealogical Society have been collecting information about families in America for 175 years. Our collections are international in scope and contain significant materials that cover the United States, especially New England and New York, as well as Canada and Europe. This research program provides the opportunity for you to “come home” to Boston and work closely with American Ancestors staff to advance your research.

**Early member registration** by May 1, 2020: \$750  
**Member registration** after May 1, 2019: \$850  
**Nonmember registration:** Add \$150 to the above prices

### Fall Research Getaway, Boston, MA

October 15–17, 2020

Autumn in Boston is about bright foliage, pumpkin pie, and research! Discover the millions of genealogical

resources at the American Ancestors Research Center and maximize your results with help from our experts.

**Early member registration** by July 3, 2020: \$395  
**Member registration** after July 3, 2020: \$450  
**Nonmember registration:** Add \$150 to above prices

### Salt Lake City Research Tour

November 8–15, 2020

“This was a really great introduction to the Family History Library. I had been afraid to tackle it on my own, but with the help of NEHGS I had a very productive week.”

—Salt Lake City Research Tour participant

Navigate the resources of the world's largest genealogy library with the help of experts from American Ancestors. With our more than 40 years of experience leading researchers of all levels to Salt Lake City, you will benefit from special orientations and tutorials, one-on-one consultations, informative lectures, and more.

**Early member registration** by August 7, 2020: \$1,785 single; \$1,575 double; \$1,950 with non-researching guest; \$850 commuter

**Member registration** after August 7, 2020: \$1,875 single; \$1,650 double; \$2,050 with non-researching guest; \$900 commuter

**Nonmember registration:** Add \$150 to the above prices

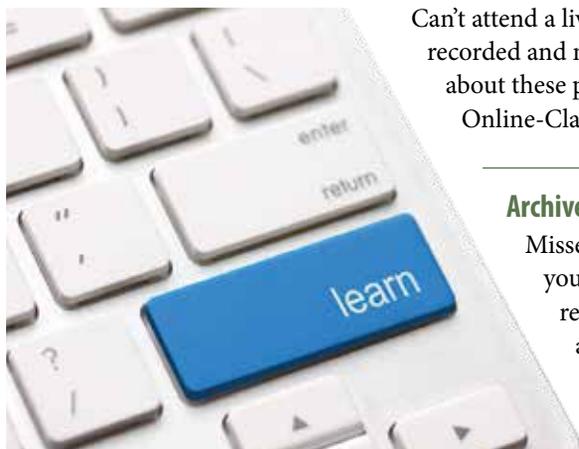
# online learning center

Over the past four years, our online educational offerings have grown exponentially. In the past year alone, our online programs reached tens of thousands of people worldwide, covered a wide range of topics, and pioneered new ways of learning by introducing Online Conferences. This coming year, we are again increasing our commitment to online education in an effort to educate, connect with, and inspire our members around the world. Here's a look ahead!

"Quality webinars like this help me think outside the box and keep me updated on current research techniques and available information."

—Webinar participant

12/4, 12/11, 12/18/2019	.....	Three-Week Online Course: Working With and Preserving Photographs
12/19/2019	.....	Webinar: Using DNA Tools in Ancestry
1/9/2020	.....	Webinar: What's New at AmericanAncestors.org?
1/16/2020	.....	Webinar: Boston Research and Records
1/22, 1/29, 2/5, 2/12, 2/19/2020	.....	Five-Week Online Course: It's In the Genes: Leveraging DNA in Family History Research
1/25/2020	.....	Online Conference: Coming to America: Four Hundred Years of Immigration and Naturalization in the U.S.
2/20/2020	.....	Webinar: Catholic Records Project
3/11, 3/18, 3/25/2020	.....	Three-Week Online Course: Verifying <i>Mayflower</i> Lineage
3/19/2020	.....	Webinar: <i>Mayflower</i> Resources on AmericanAncestors.org
3/21/2020	.....	Online Conference: Finding Irish Origins
4/9/2020	.....	Webinar: What's New at AmericanAncestors.org?
4/11/2020	.....	Online Conference: Applying to Lineage Societies
4/29, 5/6, 5/13, 5/20, 5/27/2020	.....	Five-Week Online Course: 18th and 19th Century English Research
4/30/2020	.....	Webinar: Treasures of New England Historic Genealogical Society
5/21/2020	.....	Webinar: Creating a Research Plan for Cluster Research
6/6/2020	.....	Online Conference: Researching English Eastern Canada
6/18/2020	.....	Webinar: Getting Started in Portuguese Genealogy
7/9/2020	.....	Webinar: What's New at AmericanAncestors.org?
7/11/2020	.....	Online Conference: La Mia Famiglia: Researching Italian Ancestors
7/22, 7/29, 8/5, 8/12, 8/19, 8/26/2020	.....	Six-Week Online Course: New England Research
7/23/2020	.....	Webinar: Searching the <i>Register</i> on AmericanAncestors.org
8/13/2020	.....	Webinar: The ABCs of Using School Records in Family History Research
9/17/2020	.....	Webinar: Northern New England Resources at American Ancestors
10/8/2020	.....	Webinar: What's New at AmericanAncestors.org?
10/15/2020	.....	Webinar: Using Bank Records for Family History Research
11/19/2020	.....	Webinar: Digital Collections at AmericanAncestors.org



Can't attend a live broadcast? You can still enroll! All of our online programs are recorded and made available to registrants for a limited time. To learn more about these programs and to register, visit [AmericanAncestors.org/Education/Online-Classes](https://AmericanAncestors.org/Education/Online-Classes).

## Archived Webinars, Subject Guides, Downloads, and More

Missed a past webinar? Want to learn more about a particular subject at your own pace? Looking for easy-to-use templates to help keep your research organized? Discover the hundreds of resources waiting for you at our Online Learning Center at [AmericanAncestors.org/education/learning-resources](https://AmericanAncestors.org/education/learning-resources). All of these resources are free and available to the public. You will need to log in with your member or guest account to access the content.



# staff profile

---

Meet

## SHEILAGH DOERFLER

Senior Researcher

I first became interested in genealogy during my sophomore year at UMass-Amherst when I took a class on the 1704 attack on Deerfield, Massachusetts. Not only did we learn about the events leading to this French and Native American raid, we each researched a captive. I chose John Carter, son of Samuel and Mercy (Brooks) Carter. John, who was nine at the time of the raid, was taken captive with six siblings. In total, more than 100 settlers were seized and marched north. Like some other captives, John Carter spent the remainder of his life in Quebec. He married in 1718, had a number of children, and died at Saint-Antoine-sur-Richelieu in 1772.

The class culminated in a road trip to Montreal, Quebec City, Wendake, and Kahnawake to conduct research and gather information about the parties involved in the attack. At Kahnawake, we visited with members of the Mohawks of Kahnawá:ke and learned about the history of the community and its ties to Deerfield. In Montreal, I researched at the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec and found records for John Carter, later known as Jean Chartier. I was captivated by the research process, and genealogy became one of my primary interests.

Before joining the NEHGS Research Services team in July 2013, I worked at the Essex National Heritage Commission and Essex County Greenbelt, two nonprofits based in Essex County, Massachusetts. These invaluable experiences provided me with a deep appreciation for the region.

As a researcher, I receive requests from clients that range from discovering immigrant origins to determining parentage to property research. Every day is different, which makes the job engaging. The best thing about being part of the team is working alongside my talented and dedicated colleagues. Research Services offers a very supportive and collaborative environment; someone is always available to talk strategy or listen to a theory.

During my tenure in Research Services, I have grown to love challenging cases. Piecing together bits of information is like detective work. Creativity and perseverance are critical, and with each new discovery, the picture becomes clearer. In the end, your success is all the more rewarding.

With my own genealogical research, my best discovery was identifying my great-grandmother. My grandmother was given up for adoption in Boston in 1915. After years of searching, I identified two possible candidates for her mother, but was unable to determine which was correct. Years later, a strong DNA match allowed me to identify the right woman.

This past summer, I made my first trip to the townland where this great-grandmother was born, in the parish of Clonmany, County Donegal, Ireland. After years of research, I found it a bit surreal to actually visit the parish church whose registers I had pored over online. Now I am trying to identify my unknown great-grandfather. I have made some progress but I am still waiting for that conclusive DNA match! ♦



# The Essential Guide to Researching Female Ancestors

Too many of our female ancestors suffer from historical obscurity, especially those who lived prior to the mid-nineteenth century.

For much of a woman's life, she was identified only as "daughter" or "wife." Often, a woman went directly from her father's household to her husband's, becoming even more anonymous with marriage. Many types of early records offer little, if any, information on women. Research, then, requires a deliberate approach.

The first step to finding a female ancestor is to collect all you know, and then identify and research her immediate family members. Ironically, you typically need to follow the men in her life. Fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons usually generated more records and left a more substantial historical imprint. Men owned land, wrote wills, and held local government positions, which means their names are found in deeds, tax lists, and probate and town records—and numerous other sources. Connecting your female ancestor to a male narrative helps establish and document her story.

This article presents familiar genealogical sources, viewed through a different lens. Approach the sources described below with your female ancestors in mind, and you may be rewarded with sought-after information, such as an elusive maiden name or glimpses of a long-ago personality.



**Nancy G. Bernard** is a  
*Genealogist of the Newbury  
Street Press.*

---

Miniature portrait of Caroline Jackson Thaxter (1800-1846), Thaxter Parks Spencer collection, Mss 1126.



Rose (Goldwater) Shufro, New York City, ca. 1905.  
Collection of Nancy G. Bernard.

*Prior to 1700* (a.k.a. *Torrey*)—a massive manuscript compilation by Clarence Almon Torrey available in print and at [AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org)—and its supplements are essential resources for this region and era, since each listed marriage cites the underlying sources. (Note that *Torrey* itself should not be cited; its references lead to the evidence.)

Besides listing a child's name, birthdate, birthplace, and parents' names (and sometimes a maiden name), birth records can also include parents' birthplaces, ages, and occupations. Usually, illegitimate children took the unmarried mother's surname. If you are unsure of

your ancestor's maiden name, examine the birth records of all her children to see if the information is provided for at least one birth.

Most death records contain considerable genealogical information; however, the informant did not always provide accurate facts. A death record can potentially provide birthdate and place, length of residency, parents and birthplaces, and burial information. Even the

identity of the informant can be useful, as this person might be a previously unknown relation. Death records can assist in locating obituaries and gravestones. Since some death records list a mother's maiden name, searching for the death records of a woman's children can also be worthwhile.

## Church records

Church records—baptisms, marriages, burials, and membership lists—can be a major resource, especially when vital records are not available. Baptismal records can include the mother's maiden name, and witnesses were often family members. Be aware that not all baptisms occurred close to the date of birth; often all children in a family were baptized together on the



## Vital records

Vital records can be an excellent source of information—depending on when registration began, what questions were asked, and how well the forms were completed.

Marriage records are the one source that should include the woman's maiden surname or, at the very least, her previous married surname. But marriage records may also include ages, birthplaces, residences at time of marriage, as well as parents' names and their birthplaces, residences of the bride and groom, and the number of marriages for each. (In colonial era marriage records, some women are listed as "Mrs."—then an abbreviation for "Mistress." This title does not necessarily imply widowhood.)<sup>1</sup> *New England Marriages*

[*Occupational Portrait of an Unidentified Woman With Broom*], 1840–60, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., [loc.gov/item/2004664389](https://www.loc.gov/item/2004664389).



Postcard of Emma G. Teixeira, Spain, Gilbert Thomas Swan papers, Mss 1092.

### Research tips

- Follow male family members, as their appearances in the records will help you pinpoint your female ancestors in time and place.
- Look for naming patterns and note that the name of a son may be his mother's maiden name; similarly, a daughter's middle name may be her mother's maiden name.
- Create a timeline for female ancestors' lives, and add major events for context.
- Keep a research log, and record positive and negative results.
- Remember the FAN principle: searching for friends, associates, and neighbors can help you track your ancestor.
- Exhaust all U.S. sources before researching in your immigrant ancestor's homeland.

same day and sometimes people were baptized as adults. Although church membership lists do not usually offer vital record information, they can pinpoint an ancestor's location at a particular time, and may also list a spouse. These lists can also record when someone left the church—signaling a potential migration.

### Census records

Census records help you identify the members of your ancestor's family and track their movements. Look for your ancestor in the earliest possible census and follow her in each census until her death. With each subsequent federal census, new questions were added and old questions were expanded or removed, so examine each census record closely. Although pre-1850 census records list only the name of the head of household, your female ancestor can still be traced if you have

an approximate idea of her birthplace and/or birth date, and know her father's or husband's name. If she was widowed or a single adult, she could be listed as a head of household herself. After the 1790 census, in which all free white females were grouped into one category, the next five censuses show free white females listed according to various age groups. In the same time period, slaves and colored free people were listed only by age, not gender.

Beginning with the 1850 census, everyone was named, except people in the 1850 and 1860 slave schedules. In those schedules, the name of the slave owner was given, along with the number of slaves held. The slaves were identified only by gender, age, and race. Beginning with the 1870 census, all individuals were enumerated by name. Later federal censuses included questions about years of marriage, number of children born and living, immigration and naturalization

years, naturalization status, and home ownership.<sup>2</sup> Many states had their own censuses taken in non-decennial years, but not all of them survived. These state records help fill in gaps between the federal census years, and often asked different questions. To determine what censuses are available for states and territories, visit [census.gov/history/www/genealogy/other\\_resources/state\\_censuses.html](http://census.gov/history/www/genealogy/other_resources/state_censuses.html).

In-laws may be enumerated in the same household as a female ancestor, thus revealing a maiden name. For example, in the 1855 New York state census for Moravia, Cayuga County, the household of Leandre Arnold included his wife Jane Ann, son William H., adopted daughter Edith A. Robinson, and sister-in-law, Julia Ann Stanton, who was single. Thus, we can tentatively conclude that Jane Ann Arnold's maiden surname was Stanton.

## Who was Elizabeth Smith?

Consider this case. You know the name of your ancestor Elizabeth Smith but you do not know the first name of her late husband or the names of her parents. You have found a probate record that includes her last will and testament. The document, dated April 12, 1814, shows that Elizabeth Smith of Worcester, Massachusetts, widow, bequeathed her estate to the following persons:

- Abigail Rice (wife of Benjamin Rice), Lydia Ball (wife of Daniel Ball), Sarah (Sally) Bixbe (wife of Samuel Bixbe), daughters of her late husband
- David Smith and Amos Smith, sons of her late husband
- Jonathan Flagg, Joel Flagg, Hodefer Ward, Betty Ward, and Robert Bixbe, grandchildren of her late husband
- Ruth Parker (widow of Aaron Parker) and Esther Gleason (wife of Jonathan Gleason Jr.), daughters
- Robert Smith Gleason, Elizabeth Goodale Gleason, Jonathan Gleason, Philander Gleason, Maryanne Fiske Gleason, Henry Gleason, and Charles Gleason, grandchildren of Elizabeth Smith

### What can we learn from this record?

Elizabeth was not the first wife of her late husband, as she differentiated between her husband's children and hers. She appears to have two daughters of her own, Ruth and Esther, most likely with the late Mr. Smith, since she did not identify the daughters as children of a former or deceased spouse.

Because a codicil to her will was dated February 24, 1836, and the inventory of her estate was appraised March 30, 1838, we have an approximate time frame for her death date. A death record was found for an Elizabeth Smith, age 96, widow of Robert Smith, who died in Worcester, on October 6, 1837.

We can pursue several different strategies for finding Elizabeth's maiden name. We can look for a marriage record for a Robert Smith who marries an Elizabeth in Worcester County. We can corroborate this marriage by locating Robert Smith's probate record to see if he left a will, and named heirs. We can also speculate what her name could be by observing the naming pattern for Elizabeth's grandchildren, Robert Smith Gleason and Elizabeth Goodale Gleason. And we can search for birth, marriage, and death records of daughters Ruth and Esther to see if Elizabeth's maiden name was included.



### Gravestones and cemetery records

Always search for your female ancestor's grave. The gravestone could list her maiden name, but even if it does not, cemetery research can be valuable in constructing relationships. Women were often buried with a husband and/or children. Extended family members may be buried nearby, and might offer more clues. Cemetery records may include information about everyone buried in a plot, along with death and/

or burial dates, and the name of the person who purchased the site.

### Newspapers

Newspapers contain much more than marriage announcements and obituaries. You can also find notices of probate court dates and land sales. The community news and gossip columns may identify friends, neighbors, or visiting relatives, and supply social and historical context.

A local news item from the July 8, 1938, *Hammond [Ind.] Times* allows us to determine the maiden name of Mrs. William Barrett. The notice reports, "Mrs. William Barrett of Cambridge, Mass., has been in town visiting her mother on Bauer street, having come back with her sisters, Mrs. Anne Hoffman and Miss Gene Carroll who

Daguerreotype of an unidentified woman from the Adams, Cate, and Witherle family collection, Mss 1155.



motored east and spent several weeks in New York City and Cambridge, returning by way of Canada.” Since a sister, Miss Gene Carroll, was unmarried, the family surname for “Mrs. William Barrett” is likely to be Carroll. A Margaret E. Carroll married William J. Barrett in Lake County, Indiana, on October 19, 1928.<sup>3</sup>

### Wills and probate records

Ideally, when your ancestors left wills, they named spouses and children—including the full names of married daughters! Wills are a key resource for identifying adult daughters before vital and post-1840 census records. Wills can provide proof of parentage and marriage as well as residency; conversely, if a spouse or child is not mentioned, you should consider whether that spouse or child may have died. If a parent died intestate—without a will—you still may

be able to extract information about family members, as a relative was often appointed as administrator by the court. The resulting record could contain a distribution of property to heirs. Prior to 1800, few women made wills. You may find them for widowed or wealthy single women, but it was not until “the mid-nineteenth century, [that] most states passed legislation giving married women rather than their husbands the ownership and control over all personal and real property they had inherited or been given.”<sup>4</sup>

If parents did not leave a will, search for grandparents’ probate records, as they may have named grandchildren. In addition, the wills of unmarried aunts and uncles often named nieces (sometimes with a married surname) or nephews.

### Naturalization records

Before 1922, a woman became an American citizen as part of her husband’s or father’s naturalization process. Naturalization records for male relatives can include relevant information on female family members. The Expatriation Act of 1907 required a U.S.-born woman who married a foreigner to assume the nationality of her husband, therefore losing her own American citizenship. Between 1907 and 1922, an American-born woman who married an alien eligible for citizenship could regain her own American citizenship, but only by going through the entire naturalization process as if she were a newly arrived immigrant. The steps included providing character witnesses and taking the Oath of Allegiance. The Cable Act,

passed September 22, 1922, repealed the 1907 law, but women who had married aliens and lost citizenship during the Expatriation Act still had to submit to the full naturalization process.

In 1936, a new act allowed a woman who had lost her citizenship through marriage, a “marital expatriate,” to apply for repatriation, provided she was no longer married to her alien spouse—whether through death or divorce—by submitting her U.S. birth, marriage, and divorce records (or her husband’s death certificate), then taking the Oath of Allegiance. On July 2, 1940, a new act allowed all women who lost their citizenship by marriage to repatriate—regardless of marital status. But they still had to take an Oath of Allegiance and swear that they had continually lived in the United States since their marriage. Women could repatriate at any District Court, and these repatriation applications are part of Record Group 21 at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) branch holding records for that District Court.<sup>5</sup>

### Court records

Court records can be extremely valuable for female ancestors, especially for establishing their whereabouts at a particular time, identifying a maiden name, and determining family relationships. Below are some examples of information revealed in colonial New England court minutes:

“Administration granted to Elizabeth Gowen alias Smyth of the Estate of her husband William Gowen alias Smyth, deceased, with whom Capt. Frost, her brother, and Nicholas frost stand bound in an obligation of five hundred pounds that sd Elizabeth Frost shall bring a true Inventory of her husbands Estate aforesd, & Administer according to law.”<sup>6</sup>

“Mary Breedene bonds being Continued to this Court for being with Child with a bastard Child, She Appearing & own'd the fact & Said that James Oliver who She is now Married to is the father of the Sd Child & he also appearing & own'd the fact...”<sup>7</sup>

“Twenty first Day of November 1763...To the Constables of... Raynham...Whereas John Ingley of Taunton with his Wife Mehitable & four Children Namely William, Mary, Fileeny & Deborah have Intruded...by Coming to Live...on the fifth Day of July AD 1763 at a house of Mr. Amos Halls in said Raynham...Warn... Depart...even to Taunton...first Day of March...1764.”<sup>8</sup>

Court records encompass a variety of documents useful to genealogists seeking female ancestors: warnings out, divorces, adoptions, fornication and bastardy cases, and more. Court records include minutes that report on what occurred during a court session; dockets that summarize official court case proceedings and contain case files numbers for criminal and civil cases; and court orders. Court records can be found at local, county, state, and federal levels. State libraries and archives, in addition to court jurisdictions, may hold these records.<sup>9</sup>

The Family History Library has microfilm copies of many court records, and with digitizing underway, many are now available to search online. Many early court records have also been transcribed, published, and sometimes digitized. The NEHGS library holds a sizable collection of these published court record transcriptions, and AmericanAncestors.org offers an extensive collection of searchable Massachusetts county court records. If you have questions about access, contact the county court clerk.

### Widow's pension and federal land records

After the Revolutionary War, the government provided various pensions

for veterans, widows, or their children—depending on the date and circumstances. Pension applications include service details, death date of veteran, proof of marriage, residency, and more. Fellow veterans, family members, friends, and neighbors could be deposed or submit affidavits with pertinent information. If your female ancestor filed an application, look under her husband's name and the state where he served; her name will also be listed with a “W” and a file number. If she remarried, her new surname and her status as a former widow will be noted on the record.

Women could also apply for federal land, but “very few lands that were sold through private land companies and public land offices were purchased by widows and female heads of families between 1811 and 1830. . . . Under the land act of 1841, widows could apply for federal land, but a married woman could not apply for land in her own name.”<sup>10</sup> Subsequent land acts modified the requirements for widows and single women. For more information, see the Bureau of Land Management/General Land Office ([gloreCORDS.blm.gov](http://gloreCORDS.blm.gov)) and the National Archives Records Administration ([archives.gov/](http://archives.gov/)).

### DNA testing

Although DNA testing cannot replace genealogical research, your test results can be matched with relatives, allowing you to identify possible relationships. Mitochondrial DNA (MtDNA)



Mary Fitzgerald Johnson, 1889–1957, Milford, Massachusetts. Collection of Carolyn Oakley.

is passed from mother to child, and testing can be used to trace matrilineal ancestry and find shared matrilineal forebears. (Note that a male relative must be tested for a woman to discover her patrilineal line.<sup>11</sup>)

### Additional sources

- Published genealogies and local histories for towns, counties, and states.
- Town records, which include tax rolls, land grants, constable records, and sometimes court record abstracts.
- Deeds and dower releases. (A dower release indicated a wife's consent to a land transfer or sale by her husband. This practice occurred before the mid-nineteenth century.)
- Affidavits in legal documents.

- City directories, which usually list adult males, single women, and widows.
- Archives and manuscript collections for diaries and journals.
- Historical societies and local history collections at libraries have material not (yet) online, including family histories, diaries, scrapbooks, local business records, and photographs.
- Compiled genealogies in journals like the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*.
- Christina Kassabian Schaeffer's book, *The Hidden Half of the Family: A Sourcebook for Women's Genealogy*, is a useful resource, especially for various government record groups and state-specific laws regarding marriage and divorce, property and inheritance, and citizenship.
- Living descendants of relatives often have letters or remember the stories told by older family members.

Although tracing female ancestors can be a challenge, discovering new information about the women in your family is an attainable goal. The records and sources discussed in this article provide the necessary elements for extensive research. But researching female ancestors also requires a shift in mindset, creativity, and “thinking

outside the box,” especially to uncover the personal details that make each life unique. ♦

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Barbara Jean Evans, *A to Zax: A Comprehensive Dictionary for Genealogists & Historians* (Alexandria, Va.: Hearthside Press, 1995), 179.
- <sup>2</sup> For a list of the questions asked for each census, see [census.gov/history/www/through\\_the\\_decades/index\\_of\\_questions/](http://census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/index_of_questions/) and Ann S. Lainhart, *State Census Records* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1992.)
- <sup>3</sup> *Indiana Marriages, 1811–2007* (From original records held by the Indiana Commission on Public Records, Indianapolis).
- <sup>4</sup> “United States: Inheritance Laws in the 19th and 20th Centuries,” The Law Library of Congress, [loc.gov/law/](http://loc.gov/law/). The New York Married Woman's Property Act of 1848 became the basis for other states to pass laws allowing women to own and control property.
- <sup>5</sup> Meg Hacker, “When Saying ‘I Do’ Meant Giving Up Your U.S. Citizenship,” *Prologue* 46, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 56–61, [archives.gov/files/publications/prologue/2014/spring/citizenship.pdf](http://archives.gov/files/publications/prologue/2014/spring/citizenship.pdf); Nancy Bernard, “A Woman's Nationality,” *Vita Brevis*, May 2, 2017; Rhonda R. McClure, *The Portable Genealogist: U.S.*

*Naturalization* (Boston: NEHGS, 2013); Marian L. Smith, “Women and Naturalization, ca. 1802–1940,” *Prologue* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 146–153, [archives.gov/publications/prologue/1998/summer/women-and-naturalization-1.html](http://archives.gov/publications/prologue/1998/summer/women-and-naturalization-1.html).

- <sup>6</sup> Robert E. Moody, ed., *Province and Court Records of Maine, Vol. III* (Portland: Maine Historical Society, 1947), 3:231; citing Court of Sessions, Barwicke [sic], York Co., Maine, May 21, 1686.
- <sup>7</sup> Neal W. Allen Jr., ed., *Province and Court Records of Maine, Vol. VI* (Portland: Maine Historical Society, 1975), 6:256; citing Court of General Sessions, York Co., Maine, August 8, 1727.
- <sup>8</sup> *Bristol County, MA: Extracts from Court of General Sessions of the Peace, 1697–1801* (online database: AmericanAncestors.org/DB483/rd/0, NEHGS, 2012. Helen S. Ullmann, CG, FASG, ed.), 110.
- <sup>9</sup> “United States Court Records,” in FamilySearch Wiki, at [Familysearch.org](http://Familysearch.org).
- <sup>10</sup> Christina Kassabian Schaeffer, *The Hidden Half of the Family: A Sourcebook for Women's Genealogy* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1999), 12–13.
- <sup>11</sup> Christopher C. Child, *The Portable Genealogist: Using DNA in Genealogy* (Boston: NEHGS, 2014).



Group of young women, Patricia Woodbury Proctor MacFarland Collection, Mss 1283.



# Women's Voices in the Archives

*"I was born on November 9, 1895, in a log house back in a hollow on what is now known as the Virgil Gillingham Farm"*

—Vera Gillingham Peckham (1895–1982)

Tucked away on a shelf in the R. Stanton Avery Special Collections is a single archival box containing a series of recollections by female descendants of the Gillingham family who settled in Richland County, Wisconsin.

The Phyllis Gillingham Hansen Papers, Mss 201, traces some of the descendants of Yeamans Gillingham (d. 1722), a Quaker who settled in Frankford, Pennsylvania, now part of Philadelphia. Phyllis Gillingham Hansen (1912–1995) lived most of her life in Richland Center, Wisconsin. From a young age, she showed a great interest in her Gillingham family history and in 1973 published *Thomas Gillingham Descendants*, written by her uncle, William Elmer Gillingham. Thomas's son, Harvey Gillingham, was the first Gillingham to settle in Richland County, in the early 1850s.

Phyllis gathered over forty personal family histories for her own manuscript, "Gillingham Descendants." She requested that histories be narratives, her preference for "telling about the family life." These first-person accounts of life in the Midwest and West from the early nineteenth century to the late 1970s, were mostly written by women. Perhaps unintentionally, Phyllis created a collection with a dominant female voice. Phyllis gave copies of her manuscript to family members, donated a

copy to her local library in Richland Center, and included a copy with the papers she donated to our manuscript collection in 1986.

Traditionally, women's stories and experiences were hidden from the historical record, and their perspectives were often overlooked or deemed to be of little importance. In the last fifty to sixty years, scholars, archivists, and many others have worked to give a voice to long marginalized groups, including women.

Women are usually the more genealogically challenging half of our ancestry. As we move further back in time, we often find increasingly less about our female ancestors. Frequently referred to as "the wife of" or "Mrs. Smith" or not mentioned at all, these women can be difficult to trace.

Perhaps you've searched exhaustively in published and online sources for your elusive female ancestor, yet information is still missing. Using archival material can provide interesting details about ancestors that might not be found in public records or published sources. Archival research differs from library research. While libraries and archives both exist to make their



**Judith Lucey** is Senior Archivist at NEHGS.

holdings available for use, archives differ in types of material and access. Archives seek to preserve history for posterity.

Archives collect unpublished and published materials in a variety of formats, including manuscripts, audio and visual files, artwork, books, and photographs. Collections are usually created by a person, organization, or government body. Archival holdings are unique, one-of-a-kind items and therefore have specific usage guidelines to protect the materials from physical damage and theft.

Before you search for archival materials, think about your research goals. This process will help you determine what type of records will be useful. You may be working on a lineage application and need birth, marriage, or death information, seeking a maiden name, or trying to learn more about a female ancestor's life.

Next, summarize what you know. In addition to surnames, places, and time periods associated with your ancestor, note other important information, such as religion, ethnicity, and possible membership in organizations, societies, or clubs. Many fraternal organizations had female counterparts. If your great-grandfather was a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF), was your great-grandmother a member of the Rebekah Lodge, the IOOF female auxiliary?

The search for archival material should always begin in the area where your ancestor lived. Local historical societies, libraries, colleges, universities, and museums often collect materials relating to a specific region, and are frequently staffed by people knowledgeable about their holdings and the area. Check websites for online finding aids (inventories), or at least a catalog or list of their holdings.

The McLean County Museum in Bloomington, Illinois, for example, organizes their finding aids into categories such as African American, Religion, and Places. Under Organizations, Clubs, and Hobbies, several collections pertain to women, such as the Blooming Grove Ladies Aid, Gold Star Mothers, and Ladies Auxiliary of World War I Veterans. The materials include letters, scrapbooks, photographs, newspaper clippings, and much more. If you have questions about holdings or are unable to travel to a repository, contact the staff archivists.

Our own female ancestors may not have left diaries, journals, or letters, but their contemporaries did. Look for materials created by other women who lived in the same time and place.

Here at NEHGS we have been collecting, preserving, and providing access to manuscripts and photographs for nearly 175 years. Our collections represent New England and many other regions. Our manuscript holdings include handwritten and typed family histories and charts, Bible records, family papers, and materials containing vital statistics data, such as town, church, and cemetery records.

To search for your female ancestor within our Special Collections, focus on materials on specific surnames or locations. Because our collection is strongest in eighteenth-through mid-nineteenth-century materials, identify relevant records created by men. Look for records of the clergy, physicians, and justices of the peace in the

areas where your female ancestors lived. These men lived in the communities they served, encountered many people, and frequently traveled to neighboring towns or counties. If they left records, these documents are usually rich in detail about local men and women.

Account books can place ancestors in a specific place in a specific time. Account books that predate the federal census can be used as census substitutes and identify where ancestors lived at certain times. Although account books were usually created by men, with men's names dominating the entries (except for a few widows), we can still learn about the lives of our female ancestors by the items purchased.

The account book for the general store owned by William Burnham and Sons of Cherryfield, Maine (Mss 465), for the years 1844–1849 offers a good example. William Flynn of Cherryfield, a frequent customer in 1845, often purchased items related to cooking (flour and ginger) and sewing (buttons and flannel). While the entries never mention his wife or family, the purchases provide some insight into the activities of the females in the household.

The account book (Mss A 1044) of Reverend Samuel Wigglesworth (1689–1789) covers the years



*Opposite page:* NEHGS Library at 9 Ashburton Place, Boston, ca. 1925–30. *Right:* “Aunt Susan” (on left) and an unidentified woman working at Arcade Cafeteria, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Betty Lou Morris Collection, Mss 1282.

1710–1753 and 1767–1768. Prior to entering the ministry, Wigglesworth briefly practiced medicine in Ipswich, Massachusetts. His earliest entries, 1710–1712, list what he charged for medical care. The accounts are listed under men's names, but details can be gleaned about women in the household. Wigglesworth made several visits to the Ipswich home of Matthew Whipple, a weaver, in the spring and summer of 1710. On March 26 he treated Matthew's daughter Dorcas. In July he treated an unnamed daughter, as requested by "his wife," no name given. In 1711, he visited the household of William Teale of Malden, attending Teale's daughter Abigail on August 7 and daughter Elizabeth on August 12. Although Wigglesworth names daughters in many households, he never names wives.

Several women did have their own accounts—Sarah Killane and Sarah Thompson of Ipswich, and Hannah Parker of Malden. These women do not appear to be widows, as Wigglesworth used the term widow with a surname—"Widdow Low" of Ipswich or "Widow Mary Green"—for those accounts.

When you search in archives, look for records related to your ancestors' communities. Someone may have written about town events when your ancestors lived there—and perhaps added a few details that a published record might not include.

On August 24, 1797, Catherine Whitney, daughter of Ezekiel Whitney, died in Watertown, Massachusetts. Her death was not recorded in the town's pre-1850 vital records, but a local resident, David Livermore (1769–1827), noted it in his *Book of Records*, Mss A 8100,<sup>1</sup> along with other deaths he had recorded since June 1794. Even after Livermore died in 1827, others continued to record events in his book until 1837. Livermore also recorded some

marriages, noted events such as fires, and named people who had moved away. His record of Catherine's death also includes the cause: "unfortunately found deade in the well." He didn't list Catherine's mother's name, but a search of the Watertown vital records identifies her as Katherine Draper, in her 1763 marriage to Ezekiel and the births of her children.

Consult genealogical collections that focus on a specific surname. The compilers frequently traced not only their own ancestral line but also all descendants of a specific forebear. These collections usually contain vital record extracts, family group summaries, and charts, but the genealogical gold often lies in the surviving correspondence between the compiler and other descendants from across the country. Research for many of these collections predates the Internet. Imagine discovering a letter written by a female ancestor, or one with information about your ancestor!

Sometimes an online collection description fails to describe the contents adequately. Contacting an archivist for more information can be worthwhile. If you looked in our online library catalog entry for the Azel Ames Papers, you would find no description of the contents, just a "skeletal" record that provides minimal information. However, if you used the collection in our research library, you would discover the collection is a treasure trove containing not only extensive genealogical research but also original documents dating to the Revolutionary War.

The Azel Ames Papers (SG AME [214])<sup>2</sup> focuses on all male descendants of William Ames (1605–1635) of Braintree, Massachusetts. The compiler, Azel Ames, M.D. (1845–1908), conducted much of his research through correspondence in the 1880s and 1890s. Dr. Ames, like many compilers of genealogical collections at the

time, traced only male lines. But in order to trace the men, he undertook extensive research on wives and daughters. Each folder for a male descendant contains a family group sheet with sections devoted to the research on wives and daughters.

John Ames (1734–1816) and his wife Deborah Ellis (1740–1816) of Barre, Massachusetts, had five children, four daughters, and one son. Their youngest daughter, Anna, was born in 1773, married Lemuel Wheeler in 1793, and died in 1846 in Hardwick, Massachusetts.

In a letter dated December 18, 1890, a former resident of Hardwick responded to Dr. Ames's inquiries about this family and provided interesting details about Anna (Ames) Wheeler's death. "Mrs. Lemuel Wheeler [Anna Ames], dying as she did in the Hardwick poor-house, had no grave-stone to mark the place of her burial." Anna's death is recorded in published vital records as "Anna widow of Lemuel, b. in Barre, d. Dec. 4, 1846 age 80 y.," with no mention of the poor house. This 1890 letter, which adds some "flesh to the bones," would be valuable for a genealogical researcher.

By carefully preserving the records created by and about our female ancestors and relatives, archives ensure that their lives will not be lost to history. Making these unique documents and photographs accessible for research guarantees women's stories will be discovered by future generations. ♦

## NOTE

<sup>1</sup> These records have been transcribed and published. See Scott Andrew Bartley, "Watertown, Massachusetts, Marriages, Deaths, and Other Events, 1797–1837," *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 165 (2011): 200.

<sup>2</sup> This collection was a major source for Ann Theopold Chaplin, *Descendants of William Ames of Braintree, Massachusetts* (Boston: Newbury Street Press, 2004).



# In Her Own Words

The Life of  
Elizabeth (Clapp) Withington  
(1816–1845)

*Oh! Long absent, too long neglected friend. Once more I look upon thy pages. Through what scenes have I passed since I last upon thy fair leaves, communed with thee.*

—Diary entry of Elizabeth H. (Clapp) Withington, April 11, 1839

For the past four years, my husband and I have had the unique opportunity to work as live-in caretakers at the William Clapp House in Dorchester, Massachusetts. Four generations of William Clapp's family resided there for nearly 150 years, from its construction in 1806 until the death of great-grandson Frank L. Clapp in 1953.<sup>1</sup> Currently the house serves as a museum and headquarters for the Dorchester Historical Society. While giving tours of the building and grounds, my husband and I frequently field questions about former residents. Not surprisingly, finding details about the women who lived in the house during the early to mid-1800s can be challenging.



**Eileen Curley Pironti** is a Genealogist of the Newbury Street Press.

Elizabeth Humphreys (Clapp) Withington is one of the women who had remained a mystery to me. Elizabeth was born September 18, 1816, in Dorchester—probably in the Clapp House—to William and Elizabeth (Humphreys) Clapp.<sup>2</sup> She married Reverend Hiram Withington on November 19, 1844.<sup>3</sup> Sadly, Elizabeth died only a year after her marriage, on December 3, 1845, in Leominster, Massachusetts, at age twenty-nine.<sup>4</sup> Her death from puerperal fever followed the birth of her only child, William Clapp Withington, on November 24, 1845.<sup>5</sup> Although vital records established a general timeline for Elizabeth's short life, I wanted to know more.

Then, two years ago, a Clapp descendant donated Clapp family photographs and documents, including three of Elizabeth (Clapp) Withington's diaries, Sunday school notebook, and her sketchbook, materials dating from the

Augustus Day, artist, [Silhouette of a woman wearing an Empire dress facing right], 1829–33, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., [loc.gov/item/2004661810](http://loc.gov/item/2004661810). Background: A page from Elizabeth Clapp's diary, 1838. Dorchester Historical Society.

early 1830s to the early 1840s. Once I began to read Elizabeth's diaries, I found them difficult to put aside. Details about Elizabeth's life finally emerged—in her own words.

## Early diary entries

Elizabeth first wrote in her diary on September 18, 1831, her fifteenth birthday. Early entries provided brief accounts of her daily activities: chores; school lessons in geography, history, philosophy, and astronomy; visiting relatives and friends; and church services on Sundays. She continued her lessons at home after leaving school in November 1831.<sup>6</sup>

Elizabeth kept a list of books she read. In September 1831 she read the "Young

Ladies Book,” likely referring to *The Young Lady’s Book: A Manual of Elegant Recreations, Exercises, and Pursuits*, which provided instruction on topics from entomology to the art of letter writing.<sup>7</sup> In addition to her studies, Elizabeth spent several hours each week sketching and painting. Her earliest drawings date from 1831, and tucked in the back of her beautifully preserved sketchbook are pencil renderings of flowers, fruit, and butterflies.

## 1838–1840 diaries

As a young adult Elizabeth believed that keeping a journal was “chiefly valuable as a mean [*sic*] of moral and intellectual improvement.”<sup>8</sup> In her diary entries she scolded herself for shortcomings such as postponing her chores<sup>9</sup> and losing her temper.<sup>10</sup> Apparently she was frequently

provoked by Charlotte Tuttle, who came to live with the Clapp family in 1827 when Charlotte was about eight and Elizabeth about eleven.<sup>11</sup> On several occasions, Elizabeth used her diary to pour out her frustrations. During one argument Charlotte told Elizabeth that Elizabeth should take on more duties, while she, Charlotte, should have a lighter workload.<sup>12</sup> Reflecting on the need for restraint, Elizabeth wrote “Mutual forbearance is very essential in families. Bear and forbear is a good maxim.”<sup>13</sup> (Charlotte later married Elizabeth’s brother Lemuel, on June 9, 1840.<sup>14</sup>)

Elizabeth provided a touching account of her older brother Thaddeus imparting brotherly advice. He stopped by her room one afternoon and began a conversation by noting that he thought they shared several character traits. Thaddeus advised Elizabeth to

“strive to have a way of [your] own . . . be dignified and please from a desire to do good and make others happy.”<sup>15</sup>

The two siblings appeared to have been close; she writes in her diary of sending and receiving letters from Thaddeus during a sojourn in Louisiana, and upon his return home “talking on many subjects of mutual interest” late into the evening.<sup>16</sup>

Elizabeth also wrote about her struggle to keep her Christian faith at the forefront of

her daily life: “Gratitude to God ought to be the predominant sentiment of my heart. . . . I was selfish and thought too little of my gifts and the Giver of them.”<sup>17</sup>

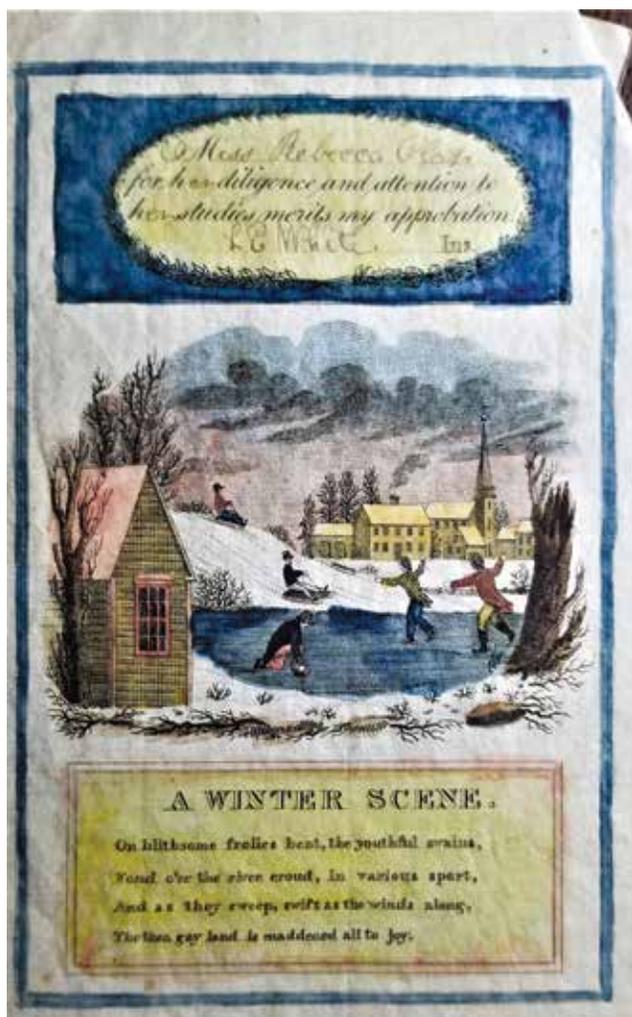
On June 17, 1839, the anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill, Elizabeth recorded an anecdote about her paternal grandmother, Rebecca (Dexter) Clap.<sup>18</sup> That morning at breakfast Elizabeth and her family reflected on her grandmother’s experiences on that day in 1775:

My grandmother Clapp went out of doors and ascended [*sic*] a little hill not far from home to see the smoke of the burning of Charlestown and listened to the report of the cannon. What emotions filled her breast, her husband absent, the probability that they must abandon her home. . . . When our grandmother, deprived of sleep by the sickness of one of her children, in going from one room to the other she was obliged to step between the bodies of soldiers who lay in unconsciousness sleep on the floor, ready at a moment’s warning for the march.

Elizabeth’s grandfather, Captain Lemuel Clap, served during the Revolutionary War. During the Siege of Boston, a number of men under Clap’s command were stationed at his house.

## Participation in the Abolitionist movement

Elizabeth Clapp’s diary reveals how her family and religious upbringing shaped her views on various social causes. The Clapp family belonged to First Parish Church in Dorchester, headed by Reverend Nathaniel Hall for forty years. A supporter of the abolitionist movement, Hall hosted Theodore Parker and William Lloyd Garrison at his church.<sup>19</sup>



“A Winter Scene” print awarded to “Miss Rebecca Clap for her diligence and attention to her studies.” Dorchester Historical Society.

Elizabeth took an active role in the abolitionist movement by joining the Dorchester Female Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>20</sup> This society, established in December 1836 with ninety-three members, was founded on the belief that “the system of slavery, as it now exists in these United States, to be a sin against God, a scourge to our nation, and a direct violation of the natural and moral rights of more than two and a half million” slaves.<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth was one of the original members of the society and served as its first recording secretary,<sup>22</sup> until she resigned on December 10, 1839.<sup>23</sup>

In a poignant diary entry dated July 4, 1839, Elizabeth reflected that some people marked the holiday by traveling to the country “in retirement from bustle and confusion,” while others sailed around the harbor, picnicked or listened to speeches. She then noted, “And other crowds not so numerous meet to recount and weep over the miseries and unrequited labor of nearly 3 million of coloured Americans, to whom this anniversary must seem a solemn mockery, an unmeaning farce.”<sup>24</sup>

## Tragedy in the Clapp household

The most moving entries in Elizabeth’s diaries detail the family tragedy that unfolded in late 1838. On October 19, a doctor thought that Elizabeth’s brother Frederick had a “settled fever,” diagnosed as “Typhus Fever” three days later.<sup>25</sup> By October 24, Frederick was so ill that everyone feared he would soon die. He remained critically ill for the next few days but eventually regained his health.

On November 5, Elizabeth wrote that she and her sister Rebecca cared for Frederick, and in the afternoon entertained a friend who came to the house for a visit. This brief account was her last entry for many months.



Elizabeth did not return to her diary until April 11, 1839. Her pain and grief are palpable in her explanation for her five-month absence, written as if addressed to a dear friend: “The associations and ideas conected [*sic*] with the time when I last rote [*sic*] made it painful and unpleasant for me, to again come to thee for that purpose.”<sup>26</sup>

Elizabeth recalled that Rebecca fell ill on November 6. A chill grew progressively worse; within a few days Rebecca couldn’t leave her bed. At one point during her ordeal, Rebecca suddenly sat up in bed “in joy saying she had seen two Angels who had come for her, but she told them she could not be spared yet.”<sup>27</sup> Toward the end of her illness, Rebecca began to speak incoherently but she seemed to be at peace. By this time several aunts and family friends were helping to care for stricken members of the Clapp family, including Elizabeth’s mother. Rebecca died on November 13, 1838, one month shy of her twenty-first birthday.

Elizabeth’s brother Alexander began to feel ill the same day as Rebecca, lacking an appetite and feeling a constant chill. His health quickly worsened and he, too, was unable to leave his bed. During one episode he became so agitated with fever that he repeatedly attempted to reach for the bedposts and wall. Shortly before his death, he suddenly tried to sing a verse (“Oh! It

was a joyful . . .”) several times. He died at age seventeen, on the same day as Rebecca. Elizabeth went to their funerals, but the illness that pervaded the household had now affected her. She suffered from severe back pain, which forced her to remain seated for most of the funeral and prevented her from attending the graveside services.<sup>28</sup>

Elizabeth’s brother James was also stricken. Elizabeth nursed him, and her last memory of him was the anxious look on his face as he told her to leave him so that she would not become ill. By then, Elizabeth had become infected, and she and her older brother Lemuel were sent to stay with family members for a few days. She was not present when James died on November 17, a month before his nineteenth birthday, and wasn’t able to attend his funeral.

Elizabeth returned home a few days later, but still suffered from the effects of grief and illness. On November 27 she attended church services with her father, but the rest of the family could not attend. She felt overwhelmed from the events of the past few weeks, “I was so lonely. I went to meeting all day. Home seemed so changed that I wished to go from it. But it was too much.” That night she suffered from severe back pain and chills. Elizabeth—and Charlotte—remained



Lemuel and  
Charlotte (Tuttle)  
Clapp, circa  
1860. Dorchester  
Historical Society.

upstairs in bed for several weeks slowly recovering.<sup>29</sup>

The deaths of her siblings, particularly Rebecca, had a profound impact on Elizabeth. Six months after Rebecca's death Elizabeth became the teacher of her sister's former Sunday school class. "What a vast responsibility, what a solemn duty is mine. To be the teacher of those little girls who a few months since shared the faithful instructions of my sister. . . . I now occupy the place of her who is now no more."<sup>30</sup>

Elizabeth purchased several mourning pins and placed locks of her siblings' hair in them.<sup>31</sup> She also gave locks of Rebecca's hair to several friends and family members, including Rebecca's former Sunday school students.<sup>32</sup> Elizabeth first visited her siblings' gravesite on the anniversary of Rebecca and Alexander's deaths, writing, "This is a date the mention of which methinks while memory endures will not fail to recall to mind the day on which the loved sister and brother connection with earth ceased. I have visited the tomb, alone. I went

preferring the society of my thoughts, and that I might indulge my feelings unobserved."<sup>33</sup>

### Courtship of Elizabeth H. Clapp and Hiram Withington

Hiram Withington first appears in the diary on September 18, 1838, Elizabeth's twenty-second birthday. She reports that she received kind and affectionate birthday wishes from her "friend" Hiram, and that a conversation with him inspired her to take up her diary again.<sup>34</sup> At the time, Elizabeth had not written any entries for more than a year. She does not mention Hiram earlier, so how they became acquainted is unknown. Both Elizabeth and Hiram taught Sunday school in Dorchester, so perhaps they met through that connection.

Elizabeth's feelings for Hiram intensified that fall. On September 29, she wrote, "My friend [Hiram] called to see me and stayed to tea with us. If my affection for him increases, may

my love for my Saviour much more increase."<sup>35</sup> Hiram visited Elizabeth several times a week, occasionally bringing her floral bouquets and poems as tokens of his affection.<sup>36</sup> Hiram supported Elizabeth during the difficult time when typhus struck the Clapp household.

In April 1839 Hiram left for Northborough, Massachusetts, to teach and prepare for the Harvard Divinity School program.<sup>37</sup> He visited Elizabeth whenever he had the opportunity, but she clearly missed him:<sup>38</sup>

A glorious sunset. Thoughts of my dear absent Hiram this loving and loved object of my earthly affections occurred [sic] on viewing it. Many miles separate us, but together we may meet in spirit at the Throne of Grace. May God guard and guide him, bless and do him good.

Elizabeth was overjoyed when Hiram surprised her with a visit on his birthday, confiding to her diary, "I hope I shall profit from what he has said. May we indeed be guides, helpers, and

supporters to each other in travelling through this wilderness world to the heavenly Canaan.<sup>39</sup>

The following week Hiram invited her to travel with him to Hanson, Massachusetts, approximately twenty miles away, to visit his sister. Elizabeth did not sleep much the first night of the trip, likely, she wrote, due to fatigue and the novelty of having never traveled that far from home.<sup>40</sup> In Hanson they visited several of Hiram's friends and relatives, going for walks and picking berries. Reflecting on their trip, she noted "The rocks and the scenery around were beautiful, but the greatest pleasure arose from being accompanied by the friend of my heart, to whom my destiny is linked."<sup>41</sup> The couple married November 19, 1844.

## William Clapp Withington

After the deaths of Elizabeth (Clapp) Withington in 1845 and her husband Hiram in 1848, William Clapp became legal guardian of his grandson William Clapp Withington. Although grandfather William Clapp provided financial support, Elizabeth's brother Frederick and his wife Martha (Blake) Clapp raised young William. They lived next to William Clapp and themselves had several children, including a son William's age.

William Clapp Withington married twice. His first wife, Josephine Wesson, died less than a year after their marriage, four days after the birth of their only child, William W. Withington. Baby William died six months later.<sup>42</sup> William Withington married Anna Laughton in Dorchester on March 21, 1871. Their only child, Maud Louise

Withington, was born in Boston August 29, 1879.<sup>43</sup> William worked as an expressman for the Dorchester Express Company and Neponset Express.<sup>44</sup> He died of pneumonia in Milton, Massachusetts, December 23, 1913 at age 68.<sup>45</sup>



Reading Elizabeth's diaries provided a vibrant and meaningful link to her life and the history of the William Clapp family. Her entries about her sister Rebecca and her sister-in-law Charlotte Tuttle provide insight into their lives as well. Sometimes when I enter one of the rooms in the William Clapp house, I am reminded of the young woman who walked those halls almost two hundred years ago, and I feel fortunate to have made her acquaintance. ♦

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Frank L. Clapp death notice, *Boston Herald*, June 27, 1953, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth H. Clapp diary, September 18, 1831, Clapp Family Papers, Dorchester Historical Society, Dorchester, Mass., 0099.012; Find A Grave (findagrave.com) memorial pages accessed September 8, 2019 for Elizabeth Humphrey Clapp Withington (18 September 1816–3 December 1845), memorial 37277017, Dorchester North Burying Ground, Dorchester.

<sup>3</sup> *Massachusetts: Vital Records, 1620–1850* (online database: AmericanAncestors.org, NEHGS).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth H. Clapp diary [note 2], November 2, 1831.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, September 20, 1831. "C. [possibly a friend named Catherine] brought me a book to read called the Young Ladies Book which I hope to finish in two month [sic]." See *The Young Lady's Book: A Manual of Elegant Recreations, Exercises, and Pursuits* (London: Vizetelly, Branston and Co., 1829); archive.org/details/youngladybookma00bostrich.

<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth H. Clapp diary [note 2], September 25, 1838.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, September 21, 1838.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, September 28, 1838.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, September 15, 1839. "Charlotte calls this the anniversary day. It is now 12

years since she became one of our family."

Charlotte's mother, Sarah (Austin) Tuttle, died in childbirth in 1824 when Charlotte was about five. Her father, Charles Tuttle, left with several young children, chose to place Charlotte with the Clapps. He died in 1843.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, December 2, 1839.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, June 27, 1839.

<sup>14</sup> *Massachusetts: Vital Records, 1620–1850* (online database: AmericanAncestors.org, NEHGS).

<sup>15</sup> Elizabeth H. Clapp diary [note 2], July 22, 1839.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, July 14, 1839.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, July 17, 1839.

<sup>18</sup> William Clapp's surname is commonly spelled "Clapp," while the surname of his parents and earlier generations is typically spelled with one "p."

<sup>19</sup> "Our History," firstparishdorchester.org/connection/our-stories/history/.

<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth H. Clapp diary [note 2], December 5, 1839.

<sup>21</sup> Meeting minutes, Dorchester Female Anti-Slavery Society, 1836–1843, Dorchester Antiquarian and Historical Society Collection, 1635–1874, NEHGS, Boston, Mass., Mss 624.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth H. Clapp diary, December 10, 1839.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, July 4, 1839.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, October 22, 1838.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, April 11, 1839.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, May 5, 1839.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, June 10, 1839.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, October 18, 1839.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, November 13, 1839.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, September 18, 1838.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, September 29, 1838.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, October 17, 1838; October 29, 1838.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, April 11, 1839.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, June 16, 1839.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, July 29, 1839.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, August 20, 1839.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Massachusetts: Vital Records, 1841–1910* (online database: AmericanAncestors.org, NEHGS); "Deaths," *Boston Journal*, August 26, 1868, 3.

<sup>43</sup> *Massachusetts, Town and Vital Records, 1620–1988* (online database: Ancestry.com).

<sup>44</sup> *U.S. City Directories, 1822–1995*, 1880 Boston City Directory, p. 1027, and 1894 Boston City Directory, p. 1486 (online database: Ancestry.com).

<sup>45</sup> *Massachusetts: Vital Records, 1911–1915* (online database: AmericanAncestors.org, NEHGS).



## HIDDEN MOTHERS

### *Women Behind the Scenes in Photographs of Children*

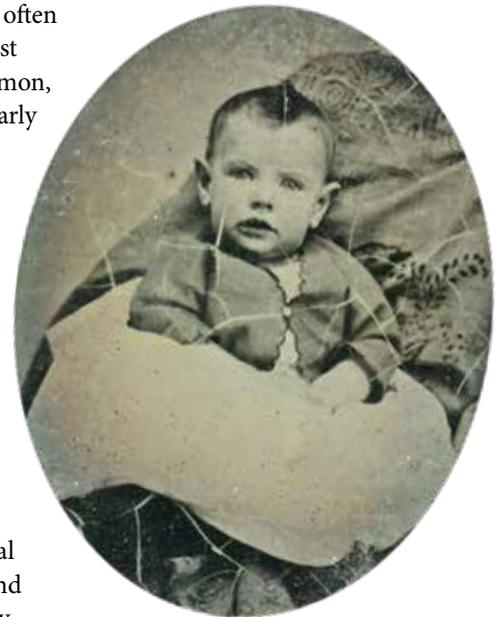
*Above:* This circa 1910 amateur photograph of a family picnic shows a baby cradled on the mother's lap, with a portion of the father visible on the right. Based on the angle, this photo was likely taken by an older child. At the time, snapshot cameras were popular for children. From the author's collection.

*Below:* In this 1860s tintype image, a child sits on a woman's lap, with a draped piece of fabric covering the woman's dress.

Have you ever seen a photograph showing babies or small children posed with mysterious disembodied arms, hands, or pieces of clothing?

These elusive background figures are often referred to as hidden mothers or ghost mothers. Such scenes are not uncommon, particularly in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century images.

Capturing a perfect portrait of an infant or toddler has tried the patience of many a photographer. At the beginning of the daguerreotype era, extended exposure times meant any movement resulted in a blurry pose. Wiggly children were difficult to photograph. The posing apparatus used for adults essentially clamped a person's head still—not a comfortable or feasible option for little ones. A more practical solution had a helper extending a hand to support the child or holding a baby upright on a lap. While this technique resulted in children holding a pose without crying, the helper was usually at least partially visible in the photograph.



**Maureen Taylor**, *The Photo Detective™*, has a popular podcast, *The Photo Detective*, and is the author of several books on photo history and genealogy. See [maurentaylor.com](http://maurentaylor.com) for more information.

Right: Some photographs in the collection of Washington, D.C., photographer C.M. Bell at the Library of Congress depict babies with loving mothers either blurred or cut mostly out of the frame. Bell used the same plain cloth to frame the babies, even covering up mothers' clothing to create a backdrop. This image of the "Davenport baby" was taken in 1894. C. M. Bell Studio Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., [loc.gov/item/2016696563/](https://www.loc.gov/item/2016696563/). Far right: Mrs. Shepley brought her eight-week-old son John for a portrait circa 1880. Baby John looks content sucking on his bottle as his mother's hand rests on the back of the chair. Bottom: In this early 1880s tintype, a slightly smiling toddler in striped stockings snuggles with a woman. The photograph was taken in an elaborate studio with a fringed chair and a backdrop painted to imitate a parlor.



Beginning in the 1870s, photographers advertised their skills capturing images of babies and children. The *Springfield (Massachusetts) Republican* of June 14, 1879, contained a short article: "The success which W. B. Miles, in the Pynchon bank block, has in photographing babies is astonishing. His price is only \$2 per dozen, and he never fails, or hardly ever." The unpredictability of children likely accounted for the qualifier at the end of that sentence. Other studios, like Coleman of Providence, Rhode Island, distributed pamphlets asking parents to withhold sugar until after the picture-taking session ended, thus leaving the responsibility for a perfect portrait with the mother rather than the studio.

Some of the oddest types of "hidden mother" images show an entirely draped figure, or perhaps only a bulging rug or piece of drapery to indicate an extra presence. No hands are visible, although sometimes a child is being clutched through a covering. Look

closely, and you might see a dress hem at the edge of the photograph.

So who's posing with the baby? While it's easy to think that the hidden figure is the child's mother, that assumption might not always be correct. A May 23, 1873, article in the New York newspaper *Jewish Messenger* about a photographer on Sixth Avenue mentioned that children are "attended by a train of obsequious mammas, elder sisters, and French *bonnes*." Depending on the family circumstances, a relative, a nanny, or a photographer's assistant could be under the rug. And don't rule out fathers. Every so often, I spy a man's sleeve in these pictures.

No matter who performed the behind-the-scenes role, one shared goal prevailed: to capture the very best photograph of the child for posterity. Hidden mother images not only provide us with those treasured childhood images, but also give us tangible proof of a mother's pride and love. ♦



Do you have an image of a hidden mother to share? If so, please email it to [magazine@nehgs.org](mailto:magazine@nehgs.org).



Joseph Warren by John Singleton Copley, circa 1765. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Reproduced with the express permission of Dr. Carolyn M. Matthews, M.D., Trustee.

## Dr. Joseph Warren *Reflection, Research & Remembrance*

Not often does such a pivotal figure in American history as Dr. Joseph Warren (1741–1775) fall into historical obscurity. Although numerous reasons can account for this neglect, Warren’s mostly forgotten status is in many ways simply inexplicable.

Compared to other founding fathers and revolutionaries, Warren left little written material. Few documents survive in his hand, so writing a complete biography is difficult. Most of the icons of the Revolutionary era who lived into their golden years left vast collections of papers and letters. These circumstances partially explain why only a handful of Warren biographies have been published since his death nearly 250 years ago.

Dr. Warren’s relatives, including his nephew, Dr. John Collins Warren, claimed that Joseph Warren had destroyed many of his own papers and

letters because his resistance activities against the Crown and his covert role at the helm of a vast patriot spy network were treasonous. Many of Warren’s other papers were lost, and two separate nineteenth-century house fires destroyed what little remained. A prior Warren biographer declared that “any biographer of Warren is confronted with . . . difficulty at getting at his personal life. . . . A personal, belletristic biography of Warren cannot be written.”<sup>1</sup> Given this lack of available sources, other works have reimagined portions of Warren’s life in fiction.

Why, then, even attempt a new biography of Joseph Warren?

I first became interested in Warren more than twenty years ago, after reading an 1835 book about him by his niece.<sup>2</sup> Learning that he had been involved in so many of Boston’s key pre-Revolutionary events made me realize that Warren was among the most vehement and dedicated patriot agitators. My curiosity turned to fascination and I started to read all the available published material about him. Nonetheless, I was left with many unanswered questions. Fortunately, with no deadlines or pressure to publish, I had the luxury of time to pursue new research. I would need to cast a wide research net across several hundred years, throughout the American colonies and across the Atlantic.

My first goal was to learn about Joseph Warren’s world. I had a broad range of questions, from the mundane



**Christian Di Spigna**, a writer based in New York City and Williamsburg, Virginia, is the author of *Founding Martyr: The Life and Death of Dr. Joseph Warren, the American Revolution’s Lost Hero* (2018). Di Spigna is a regular speaker and volunteer at Colonial Williamsburg.

to the philosophical. I wondered about the typical diet, popular music, entertainment, taverns, and how people bathed, dressed, and traveled in the colonial era. I was curious about social and cultural traditions, slavery, diseases, medicine, prostitution, and class structure. I wanted to know which businesses thrived in Boston, the extent of the city's resources, and the role of its port. How important was religion and education? How had the history of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the local topography influenced the town? Did the colonial political structure mirror that of Parliament? What about laws, local ordinances, and crime and punishment? How important were family connections? Of course, I was also deeply curious about Warren's elusive personal life.

I knew I needed new sources. But where to start? By the early twentieth century the literature had begun to claim that Warren no longer had living descendants. With help from the New England Historic Genealogical Society, I found evidence to the contrary. Then I learned that the trustee of the Warren painting in Boston's Museum of Fine Arts was Dr. Carolyn Matthews, Warren's fifth great-granddaughter. I was soon in contact with the Warren family historian, George C. Wildrick. This connection with descendants allowed me to deconstruct Warren's life in an unprecedented way. In the following years, phone calls and visits led me to documents, artifacts, and pieces of material culture previously unknown to the public.

These family heirlooms offered new insights into Warren's personal life. Comparing an original Warren family tree owned by descendants with baptismal records at Boston's Brattle Street Church, I discovered that Warren and his wife Elizabeth (Hooton) lost a child in infancy. The family collection

included a silver porringer handle that John Adams gave to Joseph Warren for the baptism of one of Warren's children, underscoring the fact that the two men were much closer than previously realized.

By studying the Warren's family history and eighteenth-century Boston, I understood more about Warren's views and relationships. Warren's maternal grandfather, Dr. Samuel Stevens, was financially ruined in the Land Bank controversy of the late 1730s and 1740s. Warren was close to his grandfather and witnessed Stevens's two decades of financial hardships. A similar fate befell the father of Samuel Adams. Both Adams and Warren came to resent the Crown's early meddling, which contributed to the financial downturns experienced by their families. A rediscovered document shows that Joseph Warren gave Samuel Adams a significant amount of money to help keep Adams out of debt.

Given that payment, I wondered about the relationship between these two men. For years, scholars have claimed that Samuel Adams was Warren's mentor, but the men seem to have been on



Joseph Warren's tall case clock, 1772–74, made by Benjamin Willard of Roxbury, Mass. Courtesy of the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum and Library, Lexington, Mass., collection of the Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts, GL2004.4498, photograph by David Bohl.



N. Currier, *The house in Roxbury, Mass: (as it now stands, August, 1840.) in which General Joseph Warren was born in the year 1741, published 1835–56, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., loc.gov/item/2002699673/.*

a more equal footing than previously realized. In his 1768 medical ledger entry, Warren had misspelled Adams's name as "Adames." I was surprised that Warren referred to Adams as the "Honourable Speaker of the House"—when, in fact, Adams was never the Speaker; he was the clerk. If Adams was an early mentor to Warren, Warren would certainly have known that Adams was not the Speaker. These new clues suggest that the relationship between the two men should be re-evaluated, and that Warren was already entrenched in his radical political philosophies before his association with Samuel Adams.

Additional new information about Warren came from newspapers; I searched papers from every colony, from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century. Reading about items owned by Warren aided in my understanding of his personal life. I discovered that Warren commissioned an ornate mourning ring in memory of his wife Elizabeth, which further highlights Warren's wealth and his close relationship with his wife. I also learned that Elizabeth wore a bracelet made from Joseph Warren's hair, which provided more evidence of the couple's devotion. Warren's eight-day clock on display in the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum and Library in Lexington, Massachusetts,

further demonstrates Warren's elevated social status and taste for luxury, and helps to recreate his home environment.

Warren's residence for most of the 1760s and 1770s has remained a mystery. Fortunately, information I gathered from various primary source documents helped to fill some of those gaps. Court documents show that on April 18, 1775, Warren dispatched Paul Revere and William Dawes from a different house in Boston than previously thought. By 1772 Warren had left the home he had rented from the Green family on Hanover Street and moved into a house owned by Peter Chardon, located at the "Head of Wing's-Lane near the Flesh and Fish Markets."

Documents in the Boston Public Library familiarized me with Warren's mansion in West Boston, and described many custom construction upgrades. A number of invoices presented to the administrators of Warren's estate listed specific work and services. From these papers, we know much about the house's interior and exterior, including the quantity of planks purchased, the number of dormers installed, and the paint colors of the rooms—and even a carriage. Warren had his carriage painted vermilion—the most expensive color in the colonies and in high fashion in London at the time. Not only was

Warren living the life of a gentleman, he was also very fashion conscious. From the single word "vermillion" we can extract clues about Warren's personality and social and economic standing.

At the Massachusetts Historical Society, I pored over Dr. Warren's medical ledgers, as well as diaries and letters written by Warren descendants. At the Boston Athenaeum, I analyzed apothecary John Greenleaf's ledgers, which chronicled ten years of Warren's purchases for his medical practice. The New England Historic Genealogical Society provided vital records—baptisms, marriages, and deaths. At the Suffolk County Probate Court I found various wills and lists of personal items Warren owned, including now archaic terms such as "montieth" and "cricket." (A montieth was used to chill glasses, which implied considerable entertaining at home. A cricket was often used as a small foot stool in church, and implying Warren's dutiful attendance at church.)

Reading the will of Warren's father-in-law, Richard Hooton, I discovered that Hooton had owned half of Hooton's Wharf in Boston. This was significant because the wharf was inherited by Warren and his wife, thus connecting Warren to the seafaring community of ship captains, sailors, and dock workers, and offering additional evidence about Warren's involvement in helping to plan the Boston Tea Party.

Extending my research in neighboring towns around Boston—and beyond—proved fruitful. Many libraries and local historical societies held relevant information within their archives. Letters written by Warren's friends, political associates, family, and



Warren's medical ledger entry for Christopher Monk, sixth victim of the Boston Massacre, 1771. From the author's collection.

his fiancée, Mercy Scollay, contributed useful insights. The Mercy Scollay Papers at the Cambridge Historical Society consists of ninety letters written by her. In a previously undiscovered July 1780 letter at the Library of Congress, Mercy thanked Benedict Arnold for sending nearly £3,000 for the care of Warren's four orphaned children—an incredible monetary gift from a man soon to be accused of putting coin above country. In the letter, Scollay provided information on Warren's children and described her belief that some of the founders abandoned Warren's children in their darkest hour.

I did not want to limit my research to libraries, museums, and historical societies. I searched used book stores when I could, and kept informed about relevant auctions. In 2008 I bought a Joseph Warren lot of items that included a lost portion of Warren's missing medical ledger. This ledger includes an entry for treatment that Warren provided to Christopher Monk, the sixth victim of the Boston Massacre. Also noted were services that Warren rendered to the Isaac Royall Jr. family—then the largest slaveholding family in Massachusetts. These discoveries underscored Warren's large medical practice, and an additional connection between Warren and the Boston Massacre.

Uncovering all these new and re-discovered sources posed challenges. Some terms and vocabulary I encountered were so old and obscure they could not be easily deciphered or understood. Warren's medical ledgers

were akin to ancient hieroglyphics, full of Latin abbreviations and archaic terminology. For years I visited Colonial Williamsburg and consulted their experts. At the apothecary shop I learned how to deconstruct the ledgers, and many other Colonial Williamsburg period scholars, including the wig-maker, gunsmith, wheelwright, cobbler, archaeologists, architects, and paint experts, generously shared their knowledge with me.

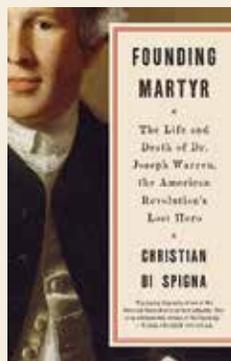
I soon came to view Colonial Williamsburg as my personal time machine, so I moved to Williamsburg with my family and began to volunteer for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. I wanted to learn even more about eighteenth-century life and viscerally experience the past, by smelling wood-burning street fires, tasting colonial recipes, listening to fife and drum marches, riding in a horse and carriage thundering down

a winding road, and much more. I combined these experiences with my travels to Boston to walk in Warren's footsteps.

Having spent over two decades in pursuit of Joseph Warren, I believe that to study the life of a historical figure, one must be immersed not only in source documents but also in material culture, prevailing socio-economics and politics, and virtually all aspects of that particular time and place. Eighteenth-century events must be viewed from an eighteenth-century mindset. Research comes in many forms, and following any and all suggestions is important—even though many leads will inevitably be dead ends. Some ideas, however, will become the gems that illuminate figures from the past and tell a more complete story about their lives and times. ♦

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> John H. Cary, *Joseph Warren: Physician, Politician, Patriot* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1961), ix.
- <sup>2</sup> Rebecca Warren Brown, *Stories About General Warren in Relation to the Fifth of March Massacre and the Battle of Bunker Hill by a Lady of Boston* (Boston: J. Loring, 1835).



## Founding Martyr

“Without Joseph Warren, who combined the passionate eloquence of Thomas Jefferson with the leadership abilities of George Washington, the American Revolution might have never even gotten started. Christian Di Spigna has written a laudable and carefully researched biography of the Founding Father history forgot.”

—Nathaniel Philbrick, author of *Valiant Ambition* and *Bunker Hill*

*Founding Martyr: The Life and Death of Dr. Joseph Warren, the American Revolution's Lost Hero* (Crown, 2018) by Christian Di Spigna is available from Amazon and many other booksellers. Learn more at [FoundingMartyr.com](http://FoundingMartyr.com).



Timothy G. X. Salls is Manager of Manuscript Collections.

## Holman, Reed & Barclay: A Sampling of Collections by Female Genealogists

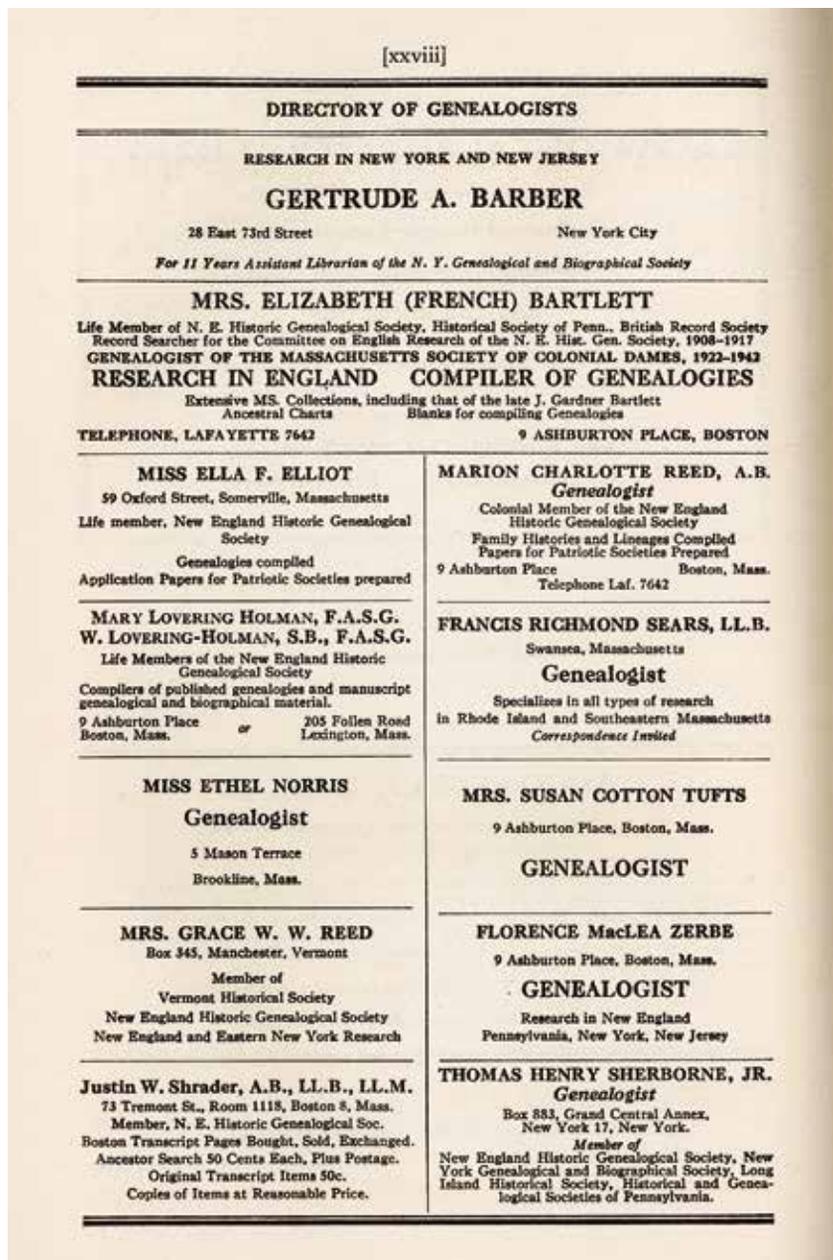
Women have long made significant contributions to NEHGS manuscript collections. Our institutional archives

holds a vellum copy of the act to enable women to become members of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, passed by the Massachusetts General Court and signed by Governor Roger Wolcott on April 10, 1897. In an article in the spring 2011 issue of this magazine, "Women in the NEHGS Archives: Two Pioneers in American Genealogy," Archivist Judy Lucey described NEHGS manuscript material produced by Emma Story White (1846-1909) and Elizabeth Josephine Wilmarth (1858-1927), two of the first thirty-six women voted into NEHGS membership in 1898. Other prominent early female genealogists who donated material to NEHGS include Elizabeth French Bartlett (1877-1961), Lucy Hall Greenlaw (1869-1961), Lucy Mary Kellogg (1899-1973), Anna Chandler Kingsbury (1870-1943), and Susan Browning Cotton Tufts (1869-1943). This column will focus on three additional collections in the R. Stanton Avery Special Collections compiled by five prominent and influential female genealogists.

### Holman

The Mary and Winifred Holman papers, Mss 920, contains typewritten genealogical research summaries by Mary and Winifred Holman, both professional genealogists. The summaries

The October 1944 *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* (p. xxviii) contains "research for hire" ads placed by several women mentioned in this article.



typically trace the line from a client to an immigrant ancestor. The collection, donated to NEHGS in 1974–75, consists of some 1,300 folders on more than nine hundred families.

Mary Campbell Lovering Holman, daughter of Daniel and Helen (Griffin) Lovering, was born October 20, 1868, in Roxbury, Massachusetts, and died August 17, 1947 in Belmont, Massachusetts. Both she and her husband, George Ulysses Grant Holman (1866–1942), were graduates of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Their daughter Winifred Lovering Holman was born June 4, 1899, in New York City and died April 7, 1989, in McLean, Virginia. She was the second wife of Frank Riley Dodge (1895–1996). Mary Holman was elected a Fellow by the American Society of Genealogists (#11) in 1941, and Winifred (#19) in 1942.

The Holmans' research is important because of their use of primary sources (especially wills and deeds), data analysis, suggestions for further research, and lists of sources. Work is underway to make the collection's finding aid accessible online.

The Winifred Lovering Holman papers also include twenty-four bound unpublished typescript genealogies, entitled: Rev. William Adams, Andover Ancestry, Nathan Bowen, Major Appleton, The Bradfords Father and Son, The Brewsters Father and Son, Collins Lineage, Devereau Descent, Domett–Fracker, Fisher Family, Francis Family, Goodrich of Wethersfield, Lt. George Ingersoll, Mears, Mitchell Family, Pettes–Bass, Poole, Porter, Raymonds, Root–Sprague, Rumrill Family, General George Stillman, Welles of Wethersfield, and The Wrights. The first half of these titles have been scanned, and digital images are available to NEHGS members through the NEHGS Digital Collections website ([digitalcollections.AmericanAncestors.org](http://digitalcollections.AmericanAncestors.org)).

In addition, Mary and Winifred donated separate collections on the Bentley, Clark, Endicott, Fletcher, and Merrill families. The Fletcher

Collection, SG FLE 7, is a 1,084-page handwritten genealogy on the descendants of Robert Fletcher, an early settler of Concord, Mass., compiled by Winifred Holman between 1940 and 1950. The Fletcher genealogy was fully transcribed by a team of fifteen volunteers. We are currently working on adding the transcribed version to the NEHGS Digital Collections website. NEHGS Special Collections also holds thirty-nine manuscript genealogies by Mary, and about two hundred and thirty such genealogies by Winifred, separate from the Holman papers and thus cataloged individually. These genealogies are also a digitization priority.

## Reed

Professional genealogist Marion Charlotte Reed, daughter of Elwin F. and Mabel (Porter) Reed, was born March 29, 1906, in Newport, New Hampshire, and died August 5, 1966, in Brookline, Massachusetts. Marion Reed, often described as Winifred Holman's protégé, was elected a member of NEHGS in 1928 and became a life member in 1936. Her estate donated her collection to NEHGS on September 27, 1967. The Marion Charlotte Reed papers, Mss 921, contain 1,694 folders on about 1,300 families. The folders typically contain a mix of compiled genealogical data, notes, and correspondence. The most significant research was for the Budd, Caldwell, Dayton, Gardner, Hayden, Hook, Hubbard, Husselman, Linnell, Love, Millet, Reed, Slater, Spear, Stewart, Stillman, Sutton, Waugh, Wetherbee, White, and Whitcomb families.

## Barclay

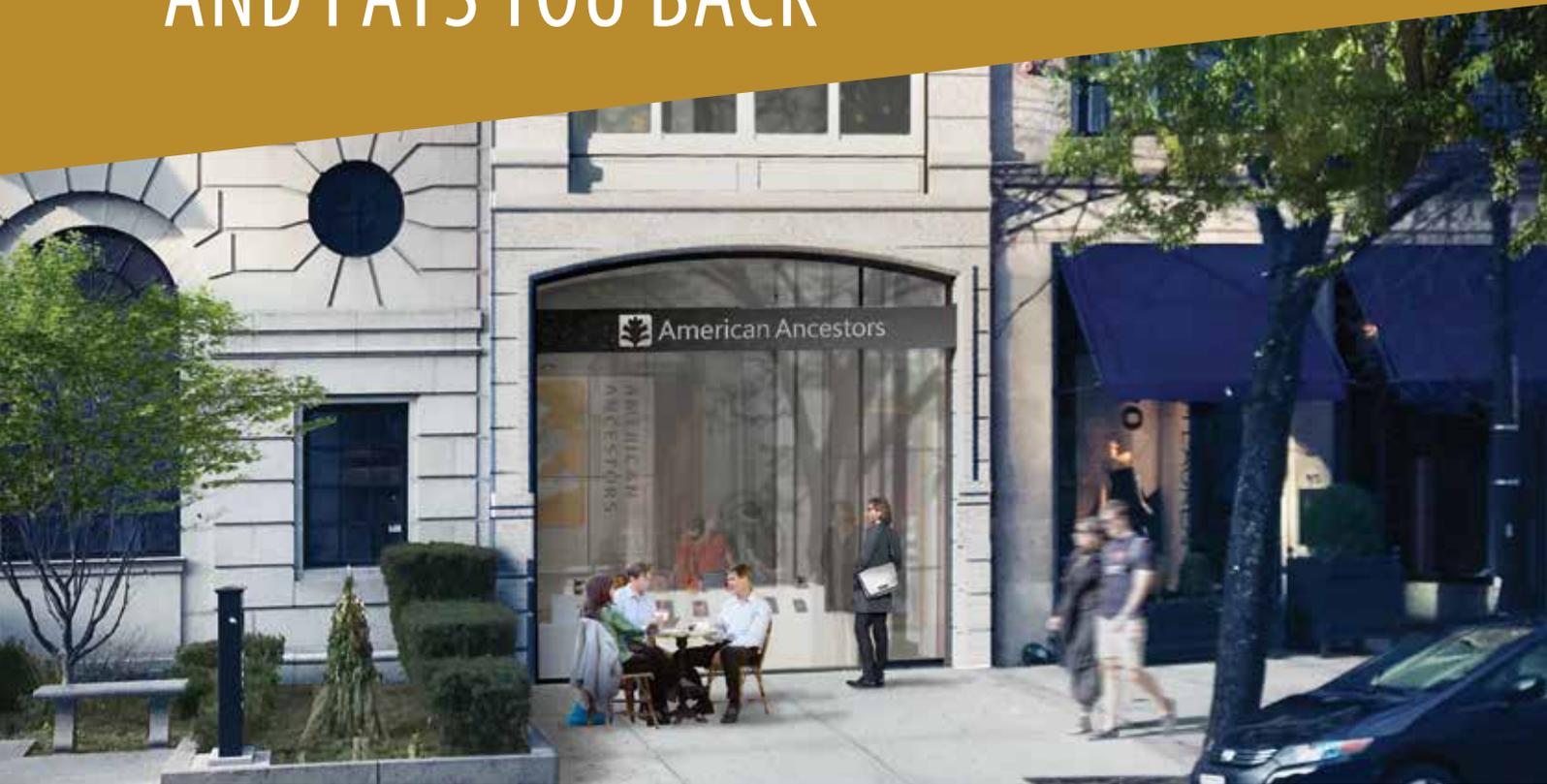
Processing has recently begun on the Florence and Rachel Barclay papers, Mss 1279, donated to NEHGS on July 3, 1996. Florence Isabelle (Harlow) Barclay, daughter of George and Minnie (Bartley) Harlow, was born June 5, 1889, in Whitman, Massachusetts, and died December 1, 1980, in Whitman; she married John Edward Barclay

(1893–1946). Their daughter Rachel Elizabeth Barclay was born April 9, 1917 in Whitman, and died October 31, 1999 in Norwood, Massachusetts. Both Florence and Rachel were professional genealogists. Florence Harlow Barclay (#68) was elected a Fellow by the American Society of Genealogists in 1955 and Rachel E. Barclay (#82) in 1965. Their collection consists of eight banker boxes of genealogical data, and folders typically containing a mix of compiled genealogical data, notes, correspondence, and analysis of primary source data.



The R. Stanton Avery Special Collections holds more than fifty multi-box manuscript collections compiled by women genealogists. Previous manuscript columns have included descriptions of the large collections donated to NEHGS by Rudi Ottery on the Brotherton Tribe (Spring 2005) and Katharine F. Richmond on the Hayes family (Holiday 2005), as well as Myrtle Stevens Hyde and Christine Rose (Spring/Summer 2016). Additional collections frequently consulted by NEHGS members and staff include genealogical papers by Jane Blinn on the Blinn family, Shirley Bickel and Helen S. Ullmann on the Coman family, Phyllis Whitten on the Fogg and Osborne families, Mildred Chamberlain on the Mosher family, Trella M. Hall on the Sweet family, Nancy Garvin on the Usher family, and the research Melinde Lutz Sanborn (now Melinde Lutz Byrne) conducted for Dean and Roberta Smith. We continue to seek donations of collections by genealogists such as the Holmans, Reed, and Barclay because of the valuable genealogical data they contain. In addition, these collections document expert genealogical research methodology, and thus also serve as excellent examples for future genealogists to emulate. ♦

# A GIFT THAT PAYS IT FORWARD AND PAYS YOU BACK



If you are looking for ways to support New England Historic Genealogical Society and receive a steady income stream, a Charitable Gift Annuity may be your answer.

A Charitable Gift Annuity is a simple contract between you and NEHGS. In exchange for a gift of \$25,000 or more, NEHGS will provide stable fixed payments for life. NEHGS subscribes to annuity rates recommended by the American Council on Gift Annuities.



## Other benefits include the following:

- You support NEHGS with a substantial gift.
- Payments you receive are partially tax-free for a period of time.
- You receive a charitable deduction in the year of your gift.

## How much income will I receive with a gift of \$25,000?

Age	Payment Rate	Annuity	Deduction
65	5.1%	\$1,275	\$6,995
69	5.4%	\$1,350	\$8,489
73	5.9%	\$1,475	\$9,700
78	6.8%	\$1,700	\$11,055

To learn more about estate planning and establishing a charitable gift annuity, visit:

**[Legacy.AmericanAncestors.org/CGA](https://Legacy.AmericanAncestors.org/CGA)**

Ted MacMahon, CFRE, Senior Gift Planning Officer | [tmacmahon@nehgs.org](mailto:tmacmahon@nehgs.org) | 617-549-0300



**Stephanie Call** is Associate Director of Archives and Education at the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center at NEHGS.

# Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center Spotlight

## Helpmeet:<sup>1</sup> Reclaiming the Voice of Hannah Schaiman Freedman

*“Amongst the Jews, however, women were regarded as helpmates and companions. They were released from performing the same religious duties as men so that they could have more time to devote to their homes and families. We have but to turn to the Bible and we find Jewish women who have left an everlasting impression upon life and thought. . . .*

*It is not necessary, however, to go back into the past in order to see what important roles women have played in Jewish cultural life and communal work, nor is it necessary to make an intensive study in order to unfold the rich and multi-coloured picture of interest and observation on our part in this field, and we see that woman shines out in every sphere of human endeavor.”*

—Mrs. A. H. Freedman [Hannah Schaiman Freedman]<sup>2</sup>

Published in *The Jewish Woman: A Symposium* and read at the Durban [South Africa] Women Zionist League meeting in the first half of the 1940s, this excerpt by Hannah Schaiman Freedman highlighted the role of Jewish women in the community. The essay reflected not only the society and era in which it was written, but also the mindset of its author, a Rabbi’s wife trying to balance supporting her husband’s work and broadening her own life experiences. Hannah Freedman had much to say about women’s roles in the Bible, and the role of women in the world at large. Her words, in essays, speeches, and correspondence, came to the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center as part of a collection of papers created by Avraham Hirsch Freedman—a prominent rabbi, and Hannah’s husband.

Donated by the couple’s children, David Freedman and Kadimah Freedman Michelson, the Avraham Hirsch and Hannah Schaiman Freedman Papers were originally thought to include only Rabbi

Freedman’s papers and were named the Papers of Avraham Hirsch Freedman. This situation is not uncommon. Women’s voices in the archive—and often in our own archive at the Jewish Heritage Center—have struggled to be heard. Whether their identities have been lost behind their husbands’ names, or whether the majority of a family collection relates only to the husband, we are often challenged to tell the story of Jewish women in our collections. Our archive is not the only one that suffers from these types of “archival silences.”<sup>3</sup> For us, these silences result in a predominant focus on the history of Jews of Ashkenazi descent<sup>4</sup>—a history often told only through the lens of men. Women’s voices, however, do exist in our collections: we just need to work harder to find and amplify them.

In 2017, NEHGS Manager of Member Services Kathleen Mackenzie, then a student in the graduate program at Simmons University, served as a Jewish Heritage Center intern. Her assignment was to process the newly donated papers of Avraham Hirsch



Hannah Schaiman Freedman in an undated portrait. From the collection.

## City Mother, Son To Receive University Degrees Together

When David Freedman, 21, son of Rabbi Avraham H. Freedman of the Beth Israel Synagogue and Mrs. Freedman, receives his bachelor's degree in chemistry at the University of Maine Sunday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock, his mother will be there too wearing her mortar board and gown as she receives her bachelor's degree in education.

Mrs. Freedman, who is a housewife and charming hostess, returned to college two years ago and terms these years "the happiest of my life". She received her earlier college work at Maxwell Teacher Training School in New York City.

### Son's Future Certain

Mrs. Freedman said Thursday that her return to college was "primarily because I wanted to broaden my educational horizons," she hasn't decided yet whether she will teach or do graduate work. Her son David's future is certain as he has accepted a position with the Thiokol Chemical Corporation in Huntsville, Ala., and will commence work shortly after graduation.

While his family have been

"cracking the books" Rabbi Freedman has not been confining his time to his spiritual duties alone. He too has been studying at the university.

A graduate of Yeshiva University in New York City, Rabbi Freedman has been doing graduate work at Maine in recent months and has also attended the University's Summer School for the past few years.

### Another Degree

The fourth member of the family Mrs. Kadimah Freedman Fields of Cambridge, Mass., recently received her master's degree from Banks Street College, Boston. She is an elementary teacher in Cambridge. Her husband, recently received his master's degree from MIT and is an associate physicist with the Avco Corporation.

The Freedman family came to Bangor from South Africa 10 years ago. Both Kadimah and David were graduated from Bangor High School.

Rabbi Freedman, in addition to his rabbinical duties, has found time to contribute to the civic and cultural life of the city as has his wife.

THE UNION OF JEWISH WOMEN (Durban Branch)  
DURBAN WOMEN'S ZIONIST LEAGUE  
DURBAN JEWISH WOMEN'S GUILD

cordially invite you to attend an

## AFTERNOON TEA

to bid bon voyage to

MRS. A. H. FREEDMAN

on TUESDAY, 17th MAY, at 3.30 p.m.  
at the DURBAN JEWISH CLUB, OLD FORT ROAD.



Freedman. Soon Kathleen realized that the papers held more than the history of Rabbi Freedman's professional life.

The collection also contained the story of Rabbi Freedman's wife, Hannah. Born on July 13, 1911, in Brooklyn, New York, to Morris and Rebecca (Shapiro) Schaiman, Hannah graduated from the Maxwell Training School for Teachers in Brooklyn in 1931. She married Avraham Freedman on January 15, 1935, and the couple had two children, Kadimah and David. In 1936, the Freedmans moved from Ottawa, Canada, to Durban, South Africa, where David Freedman served as rabbi at the Durban United Hebrew Congregation. The family remained in Durban through World War II, with Avraham serving as a chaplain for troops stationed there. According to Kadimah, South Africa's Jewish community was greatly influenced by Great Britain and quite formal; although her mother felt uncomfortable due to a lack of secular and Jewish higher education, she was creative and a quick study who appeared to adapt effortlessly to her new home and expectations: "I honor that reality now in ways

I had never quite appreciated, and find it poignant how much she had to learn and absorb on so many different levels; and I marvel at her success. I didn't always," wrote Kadimah.<sup>5</sup>

Hannah served as president of the Durban Jewish Women's Guild, and oversaw the work of the Guild during World War II, as well as undertaking the duties of a rabbi's wife. Her annual speeches focused on the threat of Nazism to world Jewry while simultaneously underscoring the important work of Durban's Jewish women in caring for the sick, the scores of Jewish refugees held on ships in Durban's harbor, and Jewish soldiers recuperating in Durban's hospital. As Rebbetzin<sup>6</sup> during one of the darkest times for European Jewry, Hannah's annual guild speeches show a steely resolve, intended to imbue her listeners with purpose and faith.

The following excerpt is from her 1944 speech:

During the past year the free peoples of the world have been watching a great and mighty miracle unfold itself, the miracle of Hitler's defeat. The mighty German war machine with its genius for evil and cruelty is being beaten and crushed by the mills of a merciful G.d.

Left: Clipping (likely from a Bangor, Maine, newspaper) recognizing the college graduations of Hannah Freedman and her son, David, 1959. Top: Invitation for an event honoring Hannah Freedman, 1949. Below: Hannah and Avraham Freedman (with cigar) at a reception for Prime Minister of South Africa General Jan C. Smuts (with beer stein), July 1948. All items from the collection.

When we compare 1944 with 1940 we must surely stand in awe and reverence too in the full right of G.d.'s retribution and justice.

There is a providence which shapes our destiny and for centuries to come 1944, will be recognized as the turning point in human history as the year of human salvation. For who can doubt that Hitler's evil prophesy, that humanity would be enthralled and enslaved for a thousand years nearly came true.

As members of the free world our hearts are full of gratitude but as members of the Jewish people we are still in mourning, in mourning for the dead, in mourning for the millions of our people who were so brutally and foully put to death. We are incensed

too at the heartlessness of—and inhumanity of our friends. They who have themselves known the yoke and ruthlessness of German might, they could have felt and understood some of our pain and some of our immediate needs. What help they will yet give we shall gratefully accept for our unhappy people and for the rest we will carry on with the faith that G.d. will remember us even as he remembered them.

It is right that we as Jewish women and as members of the Guild whose function it is to cater for the needy to become conscious and aware of our wider and if I may so put it our greater responsibilities.<sup>7</sup>

The Freedmans returned to the United States in 1949, and settled in Bangor, Maine. Rabbi Freedman served at Congregation Beth Israel in Bangor until he retired in 1969. There Hannah earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Maine in 1959—the same year as her son David. Returning to school in the 1950s, as a wife, Rebbetzin, and mother, was not typical, and helped Kathleen, as the processing archivist, decide that Hannah deserved to be more explicitly represented in this collection.

After Kathleen expressed an interest in renaming the collection to better acknowledge the contributions of Hannah Freedman, I introduced Kathleen and Kadimah. I wanted permission to call the collection “the Papers of Avraham Hirsch and Hannah Schaiman Freedman.” In her introductory email to Kadimah, Kathleen outlined what drew her to Hannah: her return to college as a non-traditional student, her ambitions for herself and her community, and her writing and speeches about Jewish faith and history. “As I went through her papers,” Kathleen wrote, “I couldn’t help but think how remarkable she must have been to venture from Canada to South Africa, and then on to Maine and Brookline, all the while finding ways to contribute meaningfully to her community and to grow intellectually. Her papers seemed to represent a unique and important experience in history,

and I was sure that future researchers would feel the same.”<sup>8</sup> Hannah’s family agreed.

When provided with the opportunity, archivists need to ensure that a silence does not go unnoticed. In her role as the processing archivist, Kathleen represented Hannah’s history in a meaningful way. Helping Hannah’s voice be heard in this collection also facilitated a valuable connection between Kadimah and her mother. Kadimah wrote, “I really was delighted at the opportunity to put her life into a new perspective even though it has been roughly twenty years since her death. Although who she was has become obviously static, the reality is that I have changed over the years, especially as I pass through the ages she did. Sharing in her age-relevant experiences allows me to have an empathy and understanding toward her that I could not have had earlier.”<sup>9</sup>

For the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center to tell the full history of Boston and New England’s Jewish communities, we need to be better at telling the stories of women who contributed to that history. We can begin this process with the simple act of renaming a collection to recognize the contributions of one woman, which sends a signal to researchers and historians that, yes, there is a story here to be told. We acknowledge that this under-represented history is vital to our understanding of the past, and the influence of the past on the present. As we continue to grow and expand our collections, we look towards dissolving silences, and amplifying all voices. ♦

[Special thanks to Kathleen Mackenzie for her work on this collection. I am also grateful to Kadimah Freedman Michelson z”l, for sharing her memories of her mother, Hannah Freedman, in her correspondence with Kathleen.](#)

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> From the Book of Genesis, the term helpmeet (help mate) refers to a companion or helper and, in many cases, a spouse.

<sup>2</sup> Excerpt from an essay by Hannah Schaiman Freedman, published in an article, “The Jewish Woman: A Symposium,” with an unknown publication place and date but most likely written between 1941 and 1945. From the Avraham Hirsch and Hannah Schaiman Freedman Papers, JHCP-0002, Box 7, Folder 4. The finding aid is available online at [jewish-heritagecenter.org/guide-avraham-hirsch-and-hannah-schaiman-freedman-papers](https://jewish-heritagecenter.org/guide-avraham-hirsch-and-hannah-schaiman-freedman-papers).

<sup>3</sup> Archival silence is a term indicating that gaps exist in the original record. Rodney G. S. Carter writes, “The notion that archives are neutral places with no vested interests has been undermined by current philosophical and theoretical handlings of the concept of the ‘Archive’; it is now undeniable that archives are spaces of power. Archival power is, in part, the power to allow voices to be heard. It consists of highlighting certain narratives and of including certain types of records created by certain groups. The power of the archives is witnessed in the act of inclusion, but this is only one of its components. The power to exclude is a fundamental aspect of the archive. Inevitably, there are distortions, omissions, erasures, and silences in the archive. Not every story is told.” Rodney Carter, “Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence,” *Archivaria* 61 (2006): 215–3; online at [archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/12541](https://www.archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/12541).

<sup>4</sup> Ashkenazi Jews are from France, Germany and Eastern Europe. Sephardic Jews are from Spain, Portugal, North Africa, and the Middle East. Within Sephardic Jewry is the further division of Sephardim—Jews from Spain and Portugal—and Mizrachim, Jews from the Middle East and North Africa. Although Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews share the same religious tenets, cultural and language differences exist.

<sup>5</sup> Kadimah Freedman Michelson in an email to Kathleen Mackenzie, September 6, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Rebbetzin is Yiddish for “wife of the Rabbi” but also refers to a woman who studies or teaches Torah.

<sup>7</sup> Hannah Schaiman Freedman, “Forty-First Annual Report of the Durban Jewish Women’s Guild held at the Durban Jewish Club, Wed, Oct 18th at 3 p.m.” from the Papers of Avraham Hirsch and Hannah Schaiman Freedman, Box 7, Folder 3. Finding aid available online at <https://jewishheritagecenter.org/guide-avraham-hirsch-and-hannah-schaiman-freedman-papers>.

<sup>8</sup> Kathleen Mackenzie, in an email to Kadimah Michelson, September 6, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Kadimah Michelson, in a letter to Kathleen Mackenzie, September 6, 2017.



**Henry B. Hoff, CG, FASG, is**  
editor of the Register.

# focus on New York



## **My Favorite Female Ancestor: Catalina Trico of Seventeenth-Century New York**

Anyone with colonial Dutch ancestry in the lower Hudson Valley or northern New Jersey is likely to be descended from Catalina Trico. She and her husband, Joris Janszen Rapalje, had eight children who married and left a huge number of descendants.<sup>1</sup>

Catalina was born about 1605, probably in the village of Prisches, near Valenciennes, in the Spanish Netherlands (now in the Département du Nord of France), daughter of Jeronimus Trico and his wife, Michele Sauvage, widow of \_\_\_\_ Flamen.<sup>2</sup>

During the early seventeenth century many inhabitants of the Spanish Netherlands fled north to the Protestant-controlled Netherlands. By 1624 Catalina was living in Amsterdam with her older half-sister, Marie Flamen. On January 21, 1624, Catalina married there at the French/Walloon Church, Joris [George] Rapalje, from Valenciennes, a cloth worker. Four days later the couple sailed for New Netherland on the *Eendracht* [Unity], owned by the Dutch West India Company. This ship and one other brought the first European settlers to New Netherland, but only the Rapaljes and three other families are known to have left descendants there.<sup>3</sup>

Catalina and Joris settled first at Fort Orange [now Albany], where their oldest child Sara was born in 1625. In 1626 the settlers were moved by the Dutch West India Company down the Hudson to New Amsterdam [now New York City], where all the younger Rapalje children were born, from 1627 to 1650. The family lived in a house

on Pearl Street. In 1637 Joris bought land from the Indians at the Wallabout across the East River, site of the present-day Brooklyn Navy Yard. However, the family did not move there until about 1654, when their house on Pearl Street was sold.<sup>4</sup>

On January 2, 1645, Catalina made a rare appearance in court: “Catalyn Trico vs. Pauwels vander Beeck, slander; defendant declares he cannot prove his assertions [that she was a whore and a wampum thief], and that he know nothing of the plaintiff but what is virtuous and good, and, as he struck her, will pay her 2½ guilders.”<sup>5</sup>

In 1641 Joris served as one of the Twelve Men to advise the Dutch West India Company’s Director General. After the family had moved to the Wallabout, Joris was a judge of the Brooklyn court in 1655–1657 and 1660. In 1662 he and Catalina joined the Brooklyn Dutch Reformed Church.<sup>6</sup> Joris was said to have died on February 21, 1663,<sup>7</sup> and Catalina was a widow for more than 25 years, living in her own little house at the Wallabout.

To quote George Olin Zabriskie, “Catalina Jeronimus Trico was a remarkable person. She did not read or write; at least we must assume so, since she signed her marriage intention and a deposition by mark. Starting out as an 18-year-old French-speaking Walloon bride on a Dutch ship bound for a little known land, she observed and retained for over sixty years many unusual details of the voyage to America.”<sup>8</sup> In 1684/5 and again in 1688 she gave depositions about the early

settlement of New Netherland, with details that have been confirmed. In the 1688 deposition, her testimony was recorded as “Catelyn Trico aged about 83 years born in Paris [*sic*] doth Testify and Declare that in the year 1623 [*sic*] she came into this country with a ship called the Unity.” The deposition ended with the following statement: “In the year 1626 the Deponent came from Albany and settled at New York where she lived afterwards for many years and then came to Long Island where she now lives.”<sup>9</sup>

Even fifty years after her emigration Catalina had not lost contact with her relatives in the Netherlands. Two notarial documents, dated August 19, 1677, and October 11, 1677, gave power of attorney to Jan Jans van Lint to claim for her the half-share due to her from the estate of her sister, Margaret Trico, widow of Isaac Minuicts. Catalina’s share came to 2,741 guilders, of which 2,000 were delivered to van Lint. (This latter amount was about what a master carpenter would earn in four and a half years!<sup>10</sup>) As a result, Catalina was a rich woman, but evidently she did not change her lifestyle.

Catalina may have already inherited from her older half-sister, Marie Flamen, who left a will dated October 15, 1624, that included a bequest of 1,000 guilders to their mother, Michele Sauvagie. If Marie’s mother predeceased her, the bequest was to go to the “brother and sisters” of the testatrix in equal parts.<sup>11</sup> Marie died in 1670,<sup>12</sup> so under this will Catalina could have inherited something—although no evidence of this inheritance has been found.

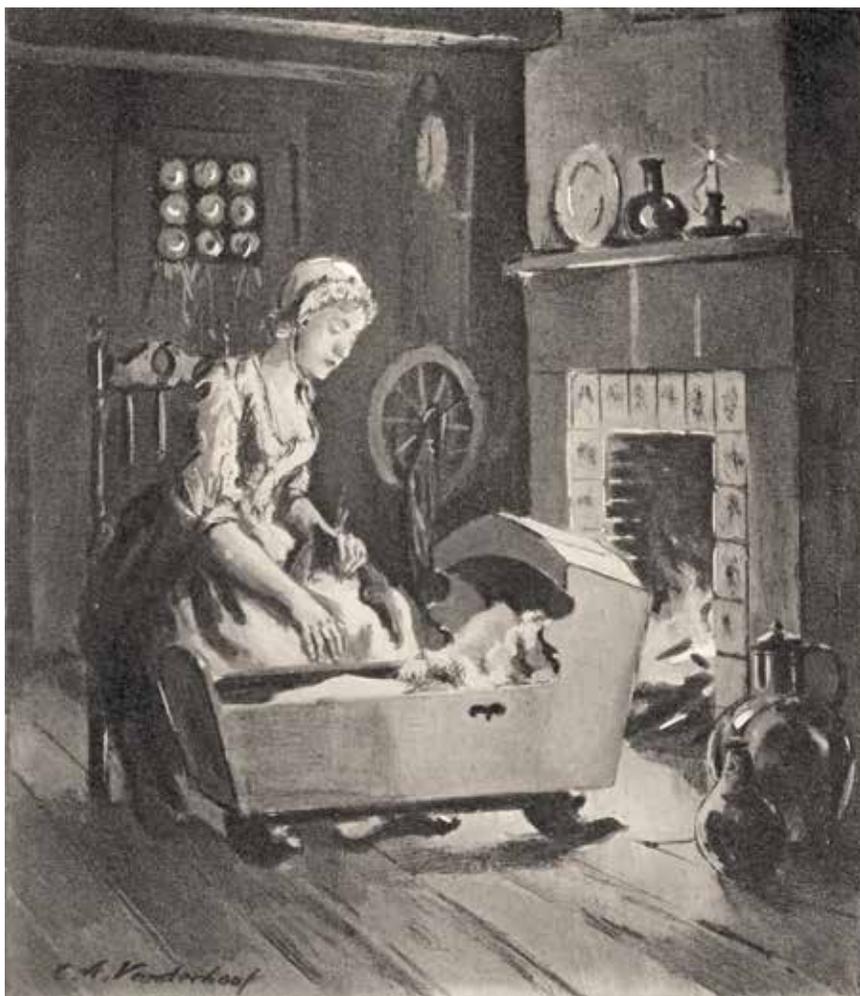
The identities of Marie’s husband and their descendants were unknown to Americans before 1867, when the diary of Jasper Danckaerts was

published.<sup>13</sup> His diary entry for May 30, 1680, refers to Catalina as an aunt of Arnoldus de la Grange:

M. de la Grange came with his wife to invite me to accompany them in their boat to the Wale Bocht, a place situated on Long Island, almost an hour’s distance below the city, directly opposite Correlaers Hoeck. . . . He had an old aunt and other friends living there. . . . This aunt of de La Grange is an old Walloon woman from Valenciennes, seventy-four years old. She is worldly-minded . . . living with her whole heart, as well as body, among her progeny, which now number 145, and soon will reach 150. Nevertheless, she lives alone by herself, a little apart from the others, having her little garden, and other conveniences, with which she helped herself.

Only in 1996 did researchers Dorothy A. Koenig and Pim Nieuwenhuis determine the relationship between Catalina and Arnoldus de la Grange:<sup>14</sup> Catalina was the great-aunt of Cornelia de la Fontaine dit Wicart, Arnoldus’s wife. Cornelia was the daughter of Philippe de la Fontaine dit Wicart and his wife Cornelia Hartmans, Philippe was the son of Philippe de la Fontaine dit Wicart and his wife Marie Flamen, Catalina’s older half-sister, with whom Catalina lived in 1624 before her marriage to Joris Rapalje.

Catalina had astonishing connections through the descendants of Philippe de la Fontaine dit Wicart and Marie Flamen, some of whom rose in the world. John Blythe Dobson has shown they were ancestors of Prince Dmitrius Augustine Galitzine (1770–1840), the first Roman Catholic priest ordained in America, and of Georg



“The Rapeleye Cradle,” in Mrs. M. P. Ferris, ed., *Dutch Nursery Rhymes of Colonial Times* (New York: The Holland Society of New York, 1890).



Friedrich (von Brandenburg), current head of the Royal House of Prussia.<sup>15</sup>

Catalina died September 11, 1689,<sup>16</sup> presumably at home at the Wallabout, remembered by many of her descendants, even to the present day. Russell Shorto, author of *The Island at the Center of the World: the Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony that Shaped America*, declared that Joris Rapalje and Catalina Trico

“comprised the Adam and Eve of the colony”; today their descendants have been estimated at upwards of one million.<sup>17</sup> Not surprisingly, most of her children—and many descendants—named a daughter Catalina.

Catalina is my favorite ancestor because she left records, had a good memory for detail, even into her eighties, and kept in touch with her relatives back in the Netherlands.

Detail of Hugo Allard’s 1674 *Totius Neobelgii Nova et Accuratissima Tabula*, which depicts the city of New Amsterdam. Commons.wikimedia.org.

She made sure, no doubt, that her descendants remembered that Sara, her oldest daughter, was the first child of Europeans to be born in New Netherland.<sup>18</sup> ♦

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For a summary of her descendants, see George E. McCracken, “Catalyntje Trico Rapalje,” *The American Genealogist* 15 (1959):193–202.

<sup>2</sup> Dorothy A. Koenig with Pim Nieuwenhuis, “Catalina Trico from Namur (1605–1689) and Her Nephew, Arnoldus de la Grange,” *New Netherland Connections* 1 (1996):55–63 [the authors opine that Catalina was born in Pri, a village in the present-day Province of Namur in Belgium, but later changed their minds]; Dorothy A. Koenig, “Further Information about Catalina Trico,” *New Netherland Connections* 1 (1996):89–93 [includes the first time the name of Catalina’s mother was given in print]. *New Netherland Connections* is available online at [AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org).

<sup>3</sup> George Olin Zabriskie, “The Founding Families of New Netherland, No. 4 – The Rapalje–Rapelje Family,” *de Halve Maen* 46:4 (Jan. 1972):7–8, 16; 47:1 (April 1972):11–13; 47:2 (July 1972):11–14; Harry Macy, Jr., “375th Anniversary of the Eendracht and Nieuw Nederland,” *The NYG&B Newsletter* 10:1 (Winter 1999):3–4.

<sup>4</sup> Zabriskie, “Rapelje–Rapelje Family” [note 3], *de Halve Maen* 47:2:11–12.

<sup>5</sup> Frank Allaben, *The Ancestry of Leander Howard Crall* (New York: Grafton Press, 1908), 269–98, 390–400, at 291, 298 n. 46. This case was summarized from records in Albany that

were evidently destroyed in the 1911 fire at the New York State Library. All that survives of the case is the declaration of Egbert van Borsum on 11 or 12 January 1645 (*Register of the Provincial Secretary, 1642–1647*, New York Historical Manuscripts: Dutch [Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1974], 286).

<sup>6</sup> Zabriskie, “Rapelje–Rapelje Family” [note 3], *de Halve Maen* 47:2:12.

<sup>7</sup> According to John A. Bogart, *The Bogart Family: Tunis Gysbert Bogaert and His Descendants* (Scranton, Pa.: privately printed, 1959), 64, which does not cite a source. The date is misquoted as 21 February 1662 in Zabriskie, “Rapelje–Rapelje Family” [note 3], *de Halve Maen* 47:2:12.

<sup>8</sup> Zabriskie, “Rapelje–Rapelje Family” [note 3], *de Halve Maen* 47:2:12.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 47:1:11; Koenig and Nieuwenhuis, “Catalina Trico” [note 2], *New Netherland Connections* 1:55–56.

<sup>10</sup> See *Money in the 17th Century Netherlands*, online at [vanosnabrugge.org/docs/dutch-money.htm](http://vanosnabrugge.org/docs/dutch-money.htm). What became of the remainder of Catalina’s half-share is unknown.

<sup>11</sup> Koenig and Nieuwenhuis, “Further Information” [note 2], *New Netherland Connections* 1:92.

<sup>12</sup> The anonymous author of “Fontaine (de la)–Hartman,” *De Nederlandsche Leeuw* 56 (1938):cols. 569–70, alludes to, but does not cite, a document stating that Marie

Flamen “had on 10 June 1670 been dead 3 or 4 weeks.”

<sup>13</sup> Jasper Danckaerts and Peter Sluyter, *Journal of a Voyage to New York, and a Tour in Several of the American Colonies in 1679–80* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Long Island Historical Society, 1867; repr. as *Journal of Jasper Danckaerts, 1679–1680* [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1913]), 235–36.

<sup>14</sup> See note 2.

<sup>15</sup> See [JohnBlytheDobson.org/genealogy/famous/Galtzine/html](http://JohnBlytheDobson.org/genealogy/famous/Galtzine/html), and [JohnBlytheDobson.org/genealogy/famous/Brandenburg/html](http://JohnBlytheDobson.org/genealogy/famous/Brandenburg/html). My thanks to Mr. Dobson for his help with various aspects of this article.

<sup>16</sup> James Riker, Jr., *The Annals of Newtown in Queens County, New-York* (New York: D. Fanshaw, 1852, repr. Lambertville, N.J.: Hunterdon House, 1982), 268, says 11 September 1689, but with no relevant citation.

<sup>17</sup> Russell Shorto, *The Island at the Center of the World: the Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony that Shaped America* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 41, 300.

<sup>18</sup> I am among the “upwards of one million” descended from Catalina, with lines from her daughters Sara and Jannetje, and son Daniel.



**Sheilagh Doerfler** is a  
Senior Researcher.

# research services: case files

---

## Grietje Reyniers of New Amsterdam: An Unconventional Woman

During my tenure in Research Services, I have researched quite a few interesting people. Of them all, Grietje Reyniers stands out as the most memorable.

Probably the most infamous woman in New Amsterdam, Grietje Reyniers is still notorious today. She was the subject of *The Drowning Room* (1995), a fictionalized account of her life by Michael Pye, and she was featured in Russell Shorto's *The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony that Shaped America* (2004). Described by many as a quarrelsome and immoral woman, and possibly a prostitute,<sup>1</sup> Grietje quarreled and clashed with her neighbors. History has not been kind to Grietje Reyniers and, some four hundred years later, her true character is elusive. Was she really this disagreeable? Was her past really that sordid? Or was she misunderstood?

Grietje was born about 1602, probably in Wesel, in what is now North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. In 1626, at age 24, Grietje married Aelbert Egberts in Amsterdam; her new husband was "of Haarlem" and she was "of Amsterdam" (probably indicating her residence but not her origin). On December 15, 1629, at age 27, Grietje married Anthony Jansen Van Salee in Amsterdam; in the marriage intention the 22-year old groom was listed as being from Cartagena, Spain, and the bride from Wesel. Anthony, often referred to as "Anthony the Turk," was likely the son of Jan Jansen Van

Haarlem, a Dutch pirate who became Morat Rais, Admiral of the Sultan of Morocco's fleet at Sale, and an unidentified mother. Anthony and Grietje's marriage intention noted that the couple received a certificate allowing them to marry "on board," indicating that they likely set sail soon afterwards and arrived in New Amsterdam in 1630.<sup>2</sup>

Anthony first appeared in the Council Minutes of New Amsterdam in the spring of 1638; both Grietje and Anthony would make frequent appearances in those pages. In the summer of 1638, Reverend Everadus Bogardus sued Anthony for not paying the required contribution to the minister's salary, which totaled 319 guilders, a sum Anthony did not refute. Instead of paying the claim, in September 1638 Anthony then sued Bogardus for 74 guilders. Bogardus initially denied the claim but then admitted under oath that he did owe Anthony seven guilders. The court agreed with Bogardus, and dismissed Anthony's claim. Anthony was forced to pay Bogardus the 319 guilders.<sup>3</sup>

Frustrated by the court's decision, Grietje and Anthony made their feelings known throughout New Amsterdam. As a result, slander charges against the couple were brought before the court on October 7, 1638. Several people testified before the council that they had heard Grietje insult and defame Bogardus. Symon Dircksen Pos said that Grietje had claimed that Bogardus owed her money, while Hans Schipper and Jochem Beekman reported she had

declared that Bogardus had made a false claim before the court, and still owed her money. That same day, Philip de Truy, a neighbor with whom Anthony had clashed, recounted how he heard sailors call her a whore and, that in response to the sailors, Grietje had lifted her petticoats and pointed to her backside. As it was unrelated to the conflict with Bogardus, de Truy's lurid testimony was likely brought before the court to sully her reputation further. Later that day, Anthony made a derogatory comment about Anna Jans, Bogardus's wife; the two men seemed involved in a lively tit for tat.<sup>4</sup>

Undoubtedly, the residents of New Amsterdam perceived these incidents instigated by Grietje and Anthony as scandalous. Challenging a neighbor was one thing, but challenging Everardus Bogardus, the town's minister, was quite another. In 1643 the population of New Amsterdam was still relatively small, numbering not quite 500 people,<sup>5</sup> and the town occupied a relatively small space, mostly confined to what is now the southern tip of Manhattan. The town's residents must have been fully aware of everyone else's character and actions, and gossip must have run rampant. Clearly a non-traditional woman, Grietje Reyniers might have been a victim of hearsay and speculation because of her perceived differences—or she might have been her own worst enemy.

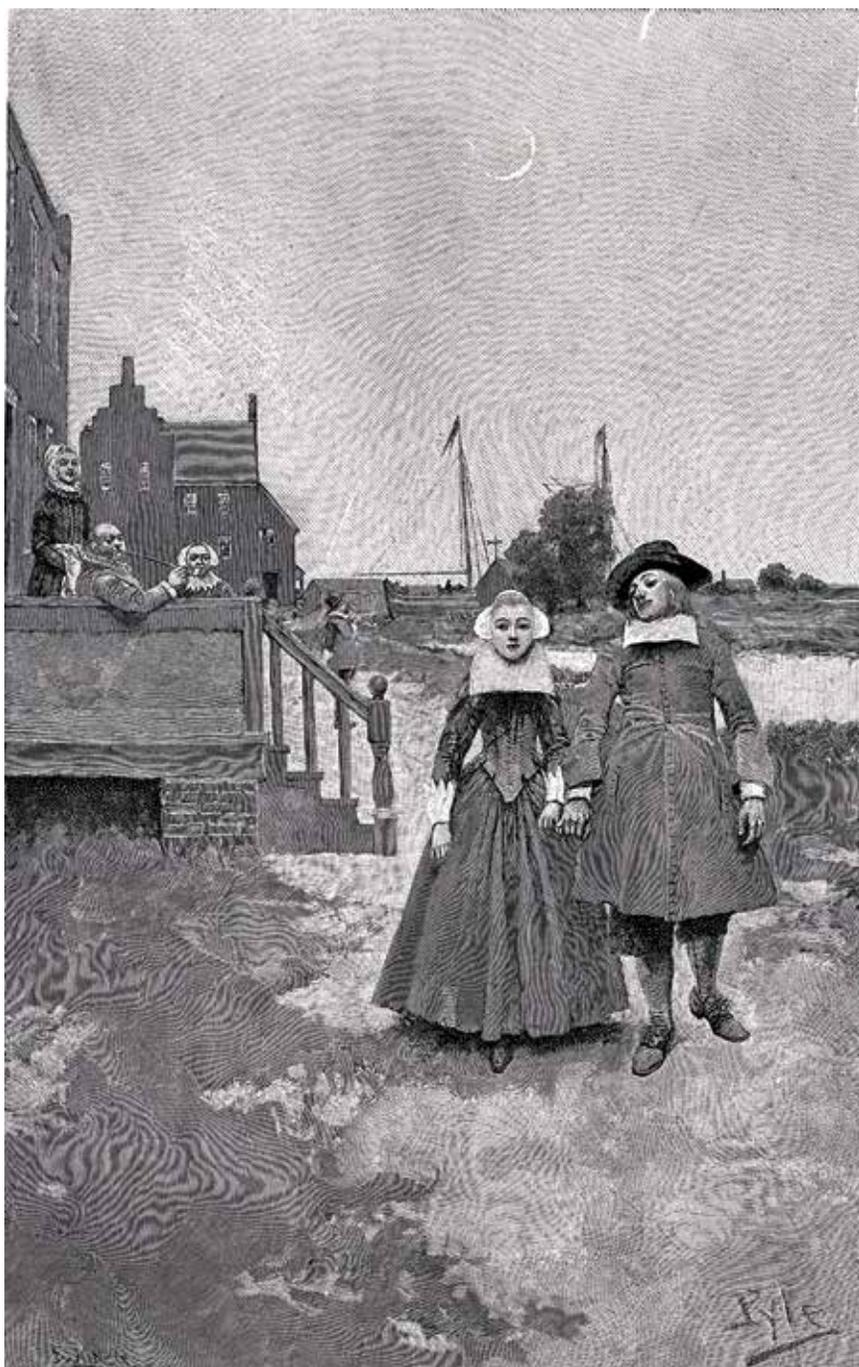
On October 16, 1638, just nine days after her last appearance, Grietje Reyniers went before the court and made a public apology. Her motivation was probably to avoid being heavily fined for slandering Bogardus. Grietje declared, "I lied what I said regarding Domine Bogardus, namely, that the same was a perjurer, and I pray God, the court and Bogardus for forgiveness, promising that I shall hereafter

comport and conduct myself in such a way that the commander and council and everybody else shall be satisfied."<sup>6</sup>

Apparently unable to fulfill her promise, Grietje—and Anthony—appeared in court again in April 1639 to face a variety of accusations from sixteen witnesses. The charges levied against Grietje included inappropriate conduct with sailors, both aboard a ship and in her home. Her husband was accused of aiming a loaded pistol at Jacob Soffelsen and "daily mak[ing]

new and unheard of trouble, speaking evil of every one." The couple was also charged with public drunkenness. The court banished the pair, giving them six months to remove themselves from New Amsterdam.<sup>7</sup> Clearly, the authorities had grown tired of the antics of Grietje Reyniers and Anthony Jansen Van Salee.

After Grietje and Anthony were exiled from New Amsterdam, they settled at Gravesend Bay at the western end of Long Island, where they raised



Howard Pyle, *Along the Canal in Old Manhattan*, 1893. Lebrecht Music & Arts / Alamy Stock Photo.



their four daughters: Annica, Cornelia, Sara, and Eva.<sup>8</sup> Despite his exile, Anthony Jansen Van Salee continued to purchase land in New Amsterdam, and gradually increased his Long Island holdings. He continued to butt heads with neighbors and, especially, his son-in-law Thomas Southard.<sup>9</sup> Grietje apparently settled into a more peaceful existence and was not accused of inappropriate conduct after she left New Amsterdam.

Grietje Reyniers died prior to 1670, when Anthony Jansen Van Salee married a widow, Metje Gravenraet.<sup>10</sup>

Grietje's four daughters each named a daughter Grietje, or its equivalent, Margaret. Most unusually, none of them named a son Anthony. Many people descend from Grietje Reyniers and Anthony Jansen Van Salee, including Cornelius Vanderbilt.<sup>11</sup>

Although she was a controversial and even notorious figure during her lifetime, Grietje Reyniers is remembered more sympathetically today as an unconventional woman who challenged societal norms. Her vivid life story reminds us that our female ancestors didn't always play by the rules. ♦

Detail of *New Amsterdam (now New York)* as it appeared about the year 1640, New York Public Library Digital Collections.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Russell Shorto, *The Island at the Center of the World* (New York: Doubleday, 2014), 85–86.

<sup>2</sup> Hazel Van Dyke Roberts, "Anthony Jansen Van Salee 1607–1676," *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* 103 (1972), 16–17; Henry B. Hoff, "Additions and Corrections," *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* 103 (1987), 210.

<sup>3</sup> *New York Historical Dutch Manuscripts, Council Minutes, 1638–1649*, (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1974), 4:13, 25; Roberts, "Anthony Jansen Van Salee" [note 2], 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 4:26.

<sup>5</sup> "New Amsterdam," New Netherland Institute, [newnetherlandinstitute.org/history-and-heritage/digital-exhibitions/a-tour-of-new-netherland/manhattan/new-amsterdam/](http://newnetherlandinstitute.org/history-and-heritage/digital-exhibitions/a-tour-of-new-netherland/manhattan/new-amsterdam/).

<sup>6</sup> *New York Historical Dutch Manuscripts, Council Minutes* [note 3], 4:28.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 4:46–47.

<sup>8</sup> David M. Riker, *Genealogical and Biographical Directory to Persons in New Netherland from 1613 to 1674*, 4 vols. (Salem, Mass.: Higginson Books, 1999): Vol. 1 Barkeloo [Cornelia]; Vol. 2 Emans [Sara]; Vol. 3 Southard [Annica], Vol. 4 Van Salee and Van Sickle [Eva].

<sup>9</sup> Roberts, "Anthony Jansen Van Salee" [note 2], 18–22, 27.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>11</sup> Scott C. Steward and Richard Evans, "Notable Kin: Family Connections of Cornelius Vanderbilt (II) and Alice Gwynne Vanderbilt," *NEHGS NEXUS* 13 (1996), 23.



**Curt DiCamillo** is Curator of Special Collections at NEHGS.

## from our collections

---

### **The Lemmon-Phillips Filigree: An Astonishing Survival from Early Massachusetts**

NEHGS has, in its Fine Art Collection, an exceptionally rare piece of early American heraldic art called the Lemmon-Phillips Filigree. This eighteenth-century armorial is made of quilling, also called paper filigree, an art form that begins by rolling strips of paper into coils that are then pinched into shapes and glued together to create decorative designs.

This lovely piece of American art was made in 1735 by 18-year-old Mary Lemmon of Charlestown, Massachusetts, who combined the Lemmon and Phillips coats of arms of

her parents into one of the earliest surviving examples of American armorial work. The date and Mary's initials are prominent at the bottom.

Quilling probably began during the Renaissance, when Italian monks and nuns used the art form to decorate book covers and religious items. The most commonly used paper consisted of strips trimmed from the gilded edges of books. Mary worked with the same type of paper, although she added extra bling by gluing pieces of mica around the edges to create sparkle.



*Opposite page:* The Lemmon-Phillips Filigree. *Right:* Detail of pelican. Mary Lemmon, 1735. NEHGS Fine Art Collection.



By the eighteenth century quilling had become popular throughout Europe. Like needlework, quilling was considered an appropriate activity for aristocratic ladies, as it was believed that the activity would not tax their minds. From England the art form spread to the American colonies, where it was adopted by young ladies from wealthy families like Mary Lemmon.

Quilled art can be found on cabinets, work baskets, ladies' purses, picture frames, tea caddies, and, of course, coats of arms. Today quilling is enjoying a resurgence in popularity, and can be found on wedding invitations, birth announcements, greeting cards, scrapbooks, jewelry, mobiles, and boxes.

Mary Lemmon, the daughter of Joseph and Elizabeth (Phillips) Lemmon, was born on October 19, 1717, in Charlestown. She married Joseph Lynde, son of Nicholas and Dorothy (Swanton) Lynde, on February 24, 1736. Joseph was born in

Stonington, Connecticut, on January 7, 1703, and graduated from Harvard College in 1723. The couple had seventeen children together.<sup>1</sup> Joseph and Mary were admitted to the First Church of Charlestown on July 12, 1761.

The Lyndes had a brush with history when their home on Lynde's Point (today occupied by Bunker Hill Community College) was at the center of the Battle of Bunker Hill. Fought on June 17, 1775, Bunker Hill occurred during the Siege of Boston in the early stages of the American Revolution and became a seminal battle in the war for independence. The Lynde family fled

to Worcester, Massachusetts, where they remained for the rest of their lives. Mary died in Worcester on November 12, 1798, at the age of 81; her husband predeceased her by ten years, dying in December of 1788.

The Lemmon-Phillips Filigree was donated to NEHGS by Mrs. Frank M. Clark in 1940 and restored in 2003 through the generosity of Betty Ring, the famous American needlework expert. It hangs in pride of place in our Treat Rotunda on Newbury Street in Boston. ♦

#### NOTE

<sup>1</sup> Mary and Joseph were great-grandparents of reformer and humanitarian Dorothea Lynde Dix (1802–1887). For her ancestry, see Gary Boyd Roberts, *Notable Kin, Volume One* (Santa Clarita, Calif.: Card Boyer 3rd, 1998), 209–210, 212–13, 215.



Genetics Editor **Christopher C. Child** is a Senior Genealogist of the *Newbury Street Press* and Editor of *Mayflower Descendant*

# genetics & genealogy

---

## **“How are these people my cousins?”: Solving a Wanamaker/Langley DNA Mystery**

Several years ago, I discovered some unexpected DNA results in my own family, which resulted in the *AMERICAN ANCESTORS* article “Genetic Surprises at 77.”<sup>1</sup> After I gave a lecture on this topic, NEHGS member Kevin Wanamaker approached me and shared his own surprising DNA results. We kept in touch and together eventually reached a startling conclusion about his ancestry. This article summarizes our findings.

Initially, Kevin told me his AncestryDNA test showed that he had a match, “J. Langley,” who was predicted to be his first or second cousin—but their ancestral charts showed no possible kinship. Kevin’s father’s family was from Rhode Island, and his mother’s ancestors came from areas along the Maine/New Brunswick border. Both Kevin and J. did, however, have ancestors born in Blaine, Aroostook County, Maine.

I suggested several possibilities that could explain a misattributed parentage, but most of these scenarios implied a connection too distant to explain the predicted first to second cousin kinship. I recommended that Kevin ask at least one first cousin on his father’s side, as well as one first cousin on his mother’s side (Kevin’s parents and all their siblings are deceased), to take an AncestryDNA test, so we could at least determine which side of Kevin’s family matched to J.

Two of Kevin’s cousins took the test and the results showed that both of his cousins were predicted to be his

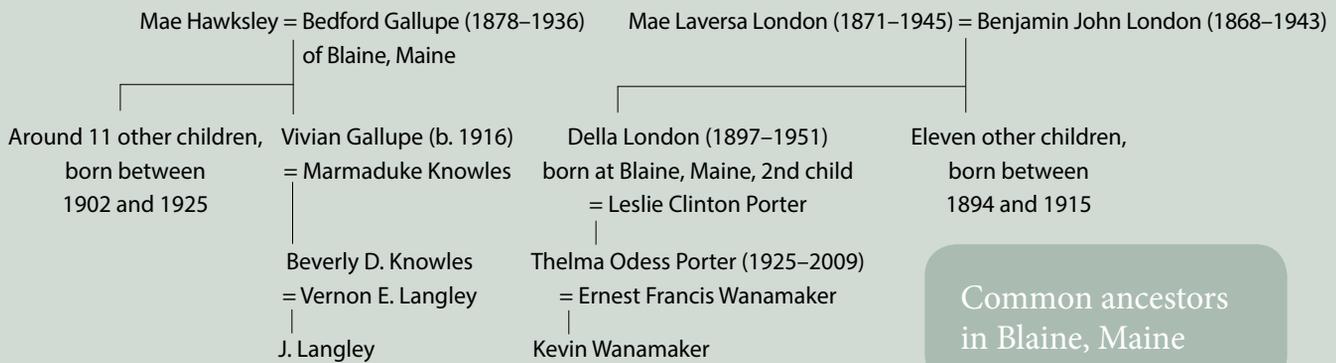
cousins—but neither one was related to J. Langley! To explain a result like this a careful examination of “centimorgan” matches is required.<sup>2</sup>

Kevin and J. Langley had 378 centimorgans in common across 15 segments. Although AncestryDNA predicted their kinship as “first to second cousins,” these numbers are actually too low for a first cousin relationship. Possible kinships could be second cousin, half first cousin, or first cousin once removed, among others.

Kevin and his maternal first cousin, Bruce, shared 943 centimorgans across 42 segments, results which are perfectly consistent with a first cousin kinship.

Kevin and his paternal first cousin Virginia, however, shared only 244 centimorgans across 10 segments. Another paternal first cousin, Larry, shared only 233 centimorgans across 9 segments. Both sets of numbers were substantially less than expected for first cousin kinship. However, Virginia and Larry shared 743 centimorgans across 44 segments, numbers much more consistent with first cousins.

Over time, several additional “shared matches” emerged for Kevin. The most useful was “D.R.,” who matched Kevin at 265 centimorgans across 13 segments. D.R.’s maternal grandfather was Clayton *Langley* (1909–1976). The “Blaine, Maine” connection (through J. Langley’s mother) was a false lead. D.R. and J. Langley were actually second cousins, twice! An additional issue then had to be considered. J. Langley’s father’s parents—Winfield Langley



and Maud Langley—were first cousins, which potentially inflated the predicted kinship between Kevin and J. Although D.R. was less of a match to Kevin than J., examining the Kevin and D.R. match was somewhat easier, since D.R.’s ancestry did not have the complication of a first-cousin marriage. I believed that Kevin had to be a descendant of George and Clara (Shorey) Langley, the great-great-grandparents of D.R. and J. Langley (see chart on page 62).

I also realized that—based on the shorter match that Kevin had with his paternal first cousins and that D.R. and J. Langley were cousins via the Langley family—these DNA tests could reveal that Kevin’s father was not the son of his presumed father. Kevin’s father, Ernest Francis Wanamaker, born in Providence, Rhode Island, on June 22, 1923, was the fifth and youngest child of his parents, William Edward and Hope Weidman (Potter) Wanamaker. His father was 57 and his mother was 22. (The mothers of his cousins

Virginia and Larry were the first and third children in the Wanamaker family.)

Kevin told me that on GEDMatch he had been linked to a Wanamaker third cousin so he didn’t believe that his grandfather was not a Wanamaker. I said that the match to his third cousin was low (and third cousins sometimes are no longer genetically related) and that sometimes a match could be from an unexpected part of the family. I suggested that Kevin take a Y-DNA test to see if he matched Wanamakers or Langleys. Kevin’s results showed several matches to Langley men.

Now the only problem with the identification of Ernest’s biological father as a Langley was geography. Ernest’s mother lived her whole life in Rhode Island, while all of the possible genetic candidates in the Langley family were in Maine. How did a connection occur?

Researching this Langley family, I narrowed the field of possibilities

to two men alive in 1922 who could have fathered a child. The first was Frank Elmer Langley (1877–1953), the great-grandfather of D.R. and J. Langley, as well as J. Langley’s great-grand-uncle. Frank apparently lived his entire life in Caribou, Aroostook County, Maine. The second candidate was Frank’s eldest son, Wallace Langley, born at Caribou on December 24, 1900. Wallace appeared with his parents in the 1910 census, and in a border crossing list from the U.S. to New Brunswick on March 31, 1917, listed as age 15 (he would have been 16). After this date, Wallace Langley vanishes.

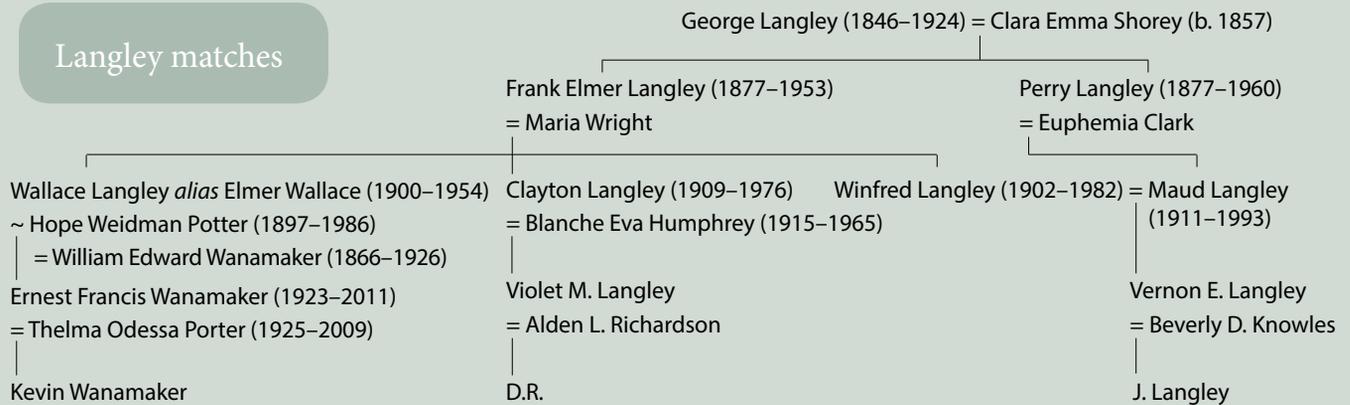
Wallace’s vanishing act struck us as peculiar. Oddly enough, in our

---

Detail of *[Civic center of the city of Providence, R.I.]*, ca. 1915, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., [loc.gov/item/2007662750/](https://www.loc.gov/item/2007662750/).



## Langley matches



Kevin and J. are predicted to be first to second cousins (378 cM along 15 segments).  
 Kevin and D.R. are predicted to be second to third cousins (265 cM along 13 segments).

endless searches for Wallace Langley, we found a gravestone at Highland Memorial Park in Johnston, Rhode Island, for a Wallace and Effie Langley, with no dates. In searching for this Rhode Island couple, I found a curious entry in the 1935 Rhode Island state census for Johnston: Effie G. Wallace (born Maine, April 9, 1877), and her (much younger) husband *Elmer Wallace* (born Maine, December 24,

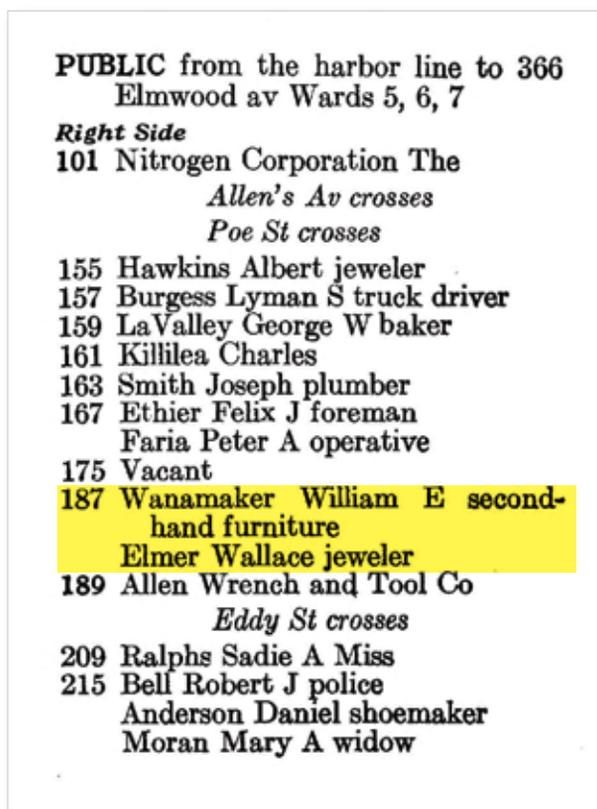
1900). Discovering that Elmer Wallace and Wallace Langley shared a birth-date solved this puzzle. Wallace had changed his first and last names, and his father's middle name became his first name. Wallace died in Johnston on November 14, 1954, and his death record showed his name as "Elmer Wallace Langley," with his parents given as Frank Elmer and Maria (Wright) Langley.

and certainly placed "Elmer" in close proximity to William's wife. Kevin's father Ernest was born at 187 Public Street. Elmer moved elsewhere in the city after 1923, and we can only wonder whether William E. Wanamaker suspected anything.

Kevin concludes, "I was a little shocked and hurt to find that my grandmother had an affair and my father was the result. I think my dad would have been the most hurt by this information, but he passed away in 2011. As for me and my family, life goes on. I may not be a Wanamaker through my DNA, but I'm a Wanamaker through my family and my one-year old grandson. I would tell people who want to take a DNA test to be ready to learn something you may not want to know. DNA does not lie." ♦

### NOTES

- 1 Christopher C. Child, "Genetic Surprises at Age 77" *American Ancestors* 16 (2015):2:54–56.
- 2 Centimorgan is a unit for measuring genetic linkage, and the International Society of Genetic Genealogists website (isogg.org) has very useful tables for autosomal DNA statistics from Blaine Bettinger's shared cM Project. Autosomal DNA statistics are available at [isogg.org/wiki/Autosomal\\_DNA\\_statistics](http://isogg.org/wiki/Autosomal_DNA_statistics).



Now that we knew Wallace Langley used the alias "Elmer Wallace," and lived in Johnston, Rhode Island, in 1935, locating him in other Rhode Island records was fairly easy. I found him in several earlier city directories in Providence, including the crucial years of 1922 and 1923. At the time, he lived at 187 Public Street—the same residence as William E. Wanamaker! Finding the two men living in the same building was amazing,

A detail from page 573 of *The Providence House Directory and Family Address Book, 1923–24* (Providence: Sampson & Murdock Co., 1922).



# American Ancestors and NEHGS Staff

## ADMINISTRATION

### President and CEO

D. Brenton Simons

### Executive Vice President and COO

Ryan J. Woods

### Vice President for Advancement

Susan B. Fugliese

### Assistant Vice President for Advancement

Beth A. Brown

### Executive Assistant

Meredith Makowski

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND SALES

### Director of Business Development

Donald C. Reagan

### Marketing Manager

Henry S. Hornblower

### Sales Coordinator

Rick Park

## CREATIVE SERVICES

### Director of Creative and Digital Strategies

Claire Vail

### Graphic Designer

Amy Joyce

### Communications Manager

Jim Power, Jr.

## DEVELOPMENT

### Senior Gift Planning Officer

Edward G. MacMahon

### Senior Philanthropy Officer

Steven L. Solomon

### Director of Development

Stacie Madden

### Development and Stewardship Coordinator

Kaitlin Hurley

## EDUCATION AND PROGRAMS

### Director of Education and Online Programs

Ginevra Morse

### Education Coordinator

Tricia Labbe

## FACILITIES

### Director of Facilities

Matt Ottinger

### Building and Maintenance Assistant

Michael McIntyre

## FINANCE

### Chief Financial Officer

Bruce Bernier

### Senior Accountant

Michael Forbes

## Accountant

Megan Peterson

### Accounts Payable Associate

Melane Barrios

### Accounts Receivable Associate

Emma Brightbill

## FINE ART

### Curator of Special Collections

Curt DiCamillo

## HERITAGE TOURS

### Director of Heritage Tours

Cy Britt

## HUMAN RESOURCES

### Director of Human Resources

Michelle Major

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### Director of Information Technology

Steven Shilcuskus

### Tessitura Database Manager

Wes Matthews

## LIBRARY

### Library Director

Jean Maguire

### Library Patron Services Manager

Alice Kane

### Consultation and Copy Services Coordinator

Cheryl Gilmore-Thys

### Chief Genealogist

David Allen Lambert

### Senior Genealogist

Rhonda R. McClure

### Genealogists

Tom Dreyer

Ann G. Lawthers

Melanie McComb

Tricia Healy Mitchell

### Manager of Manuscript Collections

Timothy G. X. Salls

### Senior Archivist

Judith Lucey

### Curator of Digital Collections

Sally Benny

### Project Archivist

Gaia Cloutier

### Library Collection Services Manager

Anne Meringolo

### Library Collection Services Assistant

Olga Tugarina

### Conservator

Todd Pattison

### Library Assistant

Alyssa Brophy

## MEMBER SERVICES

### Manager of Member Services

Kathleen Mackenzie

### Member Services Associates

Shannon Lavoie

Kyle Lindsay

### Visitor Services Representatives

Valerie Beaudrault

Maria Kuntz

## PUBLICATIONS

### Publishing Director

Sharon Buzzell Inglis

### Editor-in-Chief

Scott C. Steward

### Assistant Publishing Director

Cécile Engeln

### Publications Design Manager

Ellen Maxwell

### Managing Editor

Lynn Betlock

### Editor and Creative Director

Carolyn Sheppard Oakley

### Senior Editor

Jean Powers

### Editor of the Register

Henry B. Hoff, CG, FASG

### Senior Genealogist of the Newbury Street Press

and Editor of *Mayflower*

### *Descendant*

Christopher C. Child

### Senior Genealogist of the Newbury Street Press

Kyle Hurst

### Genealogists of the Newbury Street Press

Nancy Bernard

Eileen Curley Pironti

Meaghan Siekman

## RESEARCH SERVICES

### Director of Research Services

Lindsay Fulton

### Researchers

Jennica Bayne

Hallie Borstel

Geneva Cann

Maureen Carey

Lesley Chidester

Danielle Cournoyer

Susan Donnelly

Zachary Garceau

Pam Guye Holland

Chloe Jones

Andrew Krea

Laura Mills

Michelle Norris

Elizabeth Peay

Jennifer Shakshober

## Senior Researchers

Sheilagh Doerfler

Katrina Fahy

James Heffernan

### Research Services Manager

Sarah J. Dery

## SIGNATURE AND LITERARY EVENTS

### Director of Signature and Literary Events

Margaret M. Talcott

### Events Coordinator

Courtney Reardon

## VOLUNTEERS

### Volunteer Coordinator

Helen Herzer

## WEBSITE DATABASES AND SYSTEMS

### Associate Director

Don LeClair

### Systems Architect

Andrew Hanson-Dvoracek

### Database Services Volunteer Coordinator

Rachel Adams

### Digitization Assistant and Facilities Coordinator

John Phlo

### Digital Database Coordinator

Molly Rogers

### Web Content Coordinator

Thomas Grebenchick

### Digital Collections Administrator

Samuel P. Sturgis III

### Genealogist

Alicia Crane Williams, FASG

## WYNER FAMILY JEWISH HERITAGE CENTER

### Director

Rachel King

### Associate Director, Archives and Education

Stephanie Call

### Archives Outreach Coordinator

Judith A. Garner

### Reference Archivist

Kelsey Sawyer

### Collections Archivist

Lindsay Sprechman

### Digital Projects Archivist

Brittany Contratto

## Genealogies

**Clarke** *The Descendants of Joseph Clarke, A Founder of Rhode Island, in Lewis County, New York*, Stephan P. Clarke (the author: 2019). Softcover, \$22.95. 196 pp. Name index, references, illustrations. Detailed lineage of descendants of Joseph Clarke who migrated to Lewis County, New York, 200 years ago. Information on spouses, children, and DNA links is included. Available from TheBookPatch.com.

**Martin** *Our Acadian Martin Family History: The First Four Generations, 1650–1800—from Barnabé Martin and Jeanne Pelletret of Port Royal, Acadia, to Simon Martin and Geneviève Bourgoin of Saint Basile, New Brunswick*, George L. Findlen (Madison, WI: Books for Generations, 2019). Softcover, \$19.99. 336 pp. Illustrations, name index, endnotes, suggested reading. Detailed genealogy and contextual history of a line of Acadian Martins who began in Nova Scotia and moved to New Brunswick and Northern Maine. Available from Amazon. Contact findleng@gmail.com.

## Other books

**Cape Cod** *Let Go To Listen*, L. Ray Sears, III (Yukon, Okla.: Sears Family Association, 2019). Softcover, \$10. 130 pp. A series of ruminations about the author's experiences on Cape Cod as a summer kid and now as Sears family historian. Available from lulu.com. Contact LRSears@gmail.com.

**Research Strategies** *The Micro-Historian's Guide to Research, Evidence, & Conclusions*, Reginald W. Bacon (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018). Softcover. 112 pp. Appendixes, bibliography, index. A step-by-step guide to research planning and execution. Rowman.com.

## Family Associations

**Cox/Hussey/Bachiler** Brandywine Crucible, Inc., is a lineage, research, and fellowship organization for descendants of Solomon and Naomi Hussey Cox and related families. Notable ancestors are Capt. Christopher Hussey and Rev. Stephen Bachiler/Bachelor. Annual reunion and membership meeting: Lampasas, Texas, June 5–7, 2020. Contact Ada Stump, 405-751-9475, Bluesday13@aol.com; or Joe Cox, 512-392-2097, jandhcox@grande-com.net. Online: sites.rootsweb.com/~brandywi.

### Submit your book notice

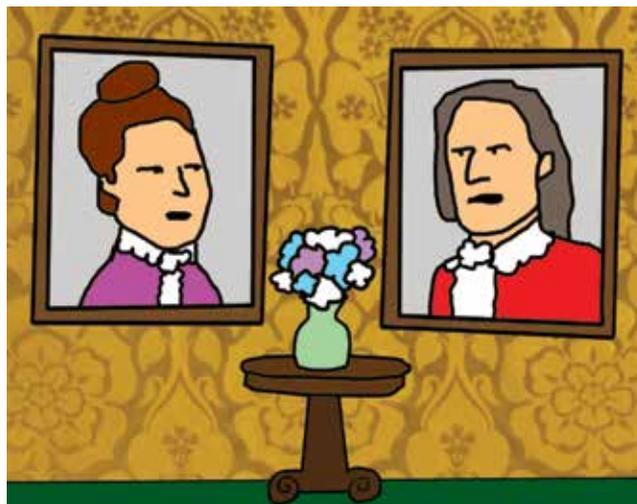
Members may submit their relevant books published within the last year. Donation of one copy to NEHGS is required. Please provide: surname (genealogies) or subject (other books); title; author(s)/editor(s)/compiler(s); place of publication; publisher/self-published; year of publication; hardcover/softcover/other; price; page count; specify if index, illustrations, or appendixes are included; description in 25 words or less; contact/ordering information.

### Genealogies in Progress, Family Associations, and DNA Studies in Progress

Members may submit notices of 75 words or less. The same notice will be published only once per year. Submit Family Association notices at least six months in advance.

To place your listing, email [magazine@nehgs.org](mailto:magazine@nehgs.org). Send book donations to Family Focus, AMERICAN ANCESTORS magazine, NEHGS, 99–101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116.

## The NEHGS cartoon



“Either this wallpaper goes or I do.”

Submitted by Michael J. Walz. Drawing by Jean Powers.

AMERICAN ANCESTORS: NEW ENGLAND, NEW YORK, AND BEYOND, incorporating NEW ENGLAND ANCESTORS, Copyright © 2019 (ISSN 2154–6533), is published quarterly by the New England Historic Genealogical Society, 99–101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116-3007; tel. 617-536-5740; email [magazine@nehgs.org](mailto:magazine@nehgs.org). Periodicals postage is paid at Ripon, WI 54971, and at additional mailing offices. All rights reserved. All editorial content of this magazine is archived for member access at [AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org). No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the permission of AMERICAN ANCESTORS. The periodical's name and logo and various titles and headings herein are trademarks of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, a nonprofit corporation qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. **Postmaster:** send address changes to Member Services, NEHGS, 99–101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116-3007.

**Submissions:** AMERICAN ANCESTORS invites the submission of articles. Submissions should be directed to AMERICAN ANCESTORS, 99–101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116, or to [magazine@nehgs.org](mailto:magazine@nehgs.org). Opinions and statements expressed herein are attributable solely to individual authors and are not endorsed by AMERICAN ANCESTORS or the New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS).



NOTICE: The name of the New England Historic Genealogical Society is a trademark belonging to the New England Historic Genealogical Society and may not be used without the express permission of the Society's Board of Trustees.



By kind permission of the trustees of the Weston Park Foundation.

*Join* the nation's premier heritage tours,  
led by internationally renowned experts

May 16–22, 2020 Palladio in America

June 1–7, 2020 *Mayflower* Embarkation

June 17–21 and September 2–6, 2020 A New England Sojourn

October 12–18, 2020 Villas & Gardens of Rome

December 1–6, 2020 An English Country Christmas

For more information, please contact us at [HeritageTours@nehgs.org](mailto:HeritageTours@nehgs.org) or 617-226-1267 • [AmericanAncestors.org/Heritage-Tours](http://AmericanAncestors.org/Heritage-Tours)



**American Ancestors**  
by NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY





**American Ancestors.**

by NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

99-101 Newbury Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116-3007

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
New England Historic  
Genealogical Society

# This holiday season, give the gift of discovery!

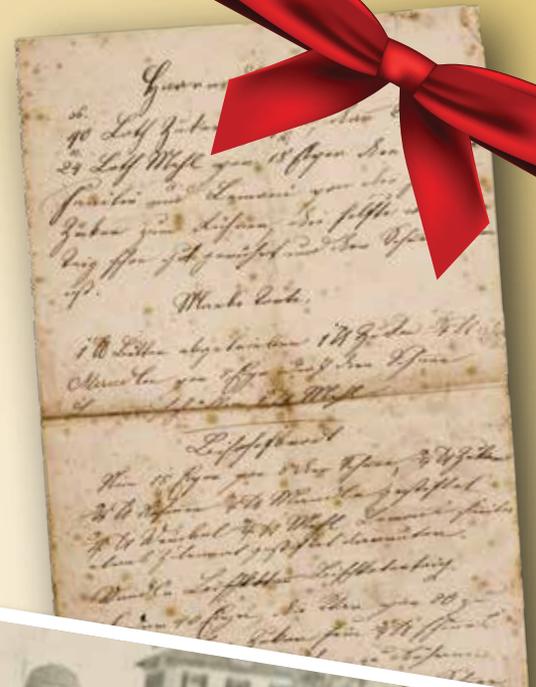


**American  
Ancestors.**  
by NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC  
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

**American Ancestors offers  
gift memberships to help new  
and experienced genealogists  
explore their past and discover  
their family's unique story.**

Membership provides full access to AmericanAncestors.org, subscriptions to our quarterly publications, unlimited use of our research center, and special member discounts. Members also receive access to American AnceSTREES, an online family tree program.

To purchase a gift membership, visit [AmericanAncestors.org/gift-membership](https://AmericanAncestors.org/gift-membership) or contact our Member Services team at 888-296-3447 (choose option 1).



[AmericanAncestors.org/gift-membership](https://AmericanAncestors.org/gift-membership)