



## Brenton Simons Receives an Honorary OBE

November 6, 2023 – Boston, Massachusetts – For his work over thirty years in service to Anglo-American history, D. Brenton Simons, President and CEO of American Ancestors/New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS), has been accorded a special honor from the United Kingdom. He was appointed an honorary Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) by King Charles III, which was [announced as part of the King's 2023 Special Honours on October 26, 2023](#). The OBE award recognizes distinguished achievement in any field by a notable practitioner and is part of a British order of chivalry established by King George V in 1917.

In response to the OBE award, Simons replied that he was filled with gratitude to “a wide array of talented colleagues . . . on both sides of the Atlantic who have inspired me and made my work a joy of the last three decades.”

Simons's longtime efforts in advancement of Anglo-American history have included an array of scholarship, programming, and outreach activities. He has led this far-reaching work at NEHGS, including new books, heritage and research tours, online databases, educational programs, public relations, and other projects dealing with the British peopling of New England, the UK ancestry of Americans, and activities in recognition of important UK cultural figures.

“I cherish our historical ties to the United Kingdom, just as I also am very proud of our groundbreaking work in reaching diverse peoples of all backgrounds, ethnicities, and cultures, and providing new pathways for everyone to engage in history and genealogy,” Simons said.

A ceremony of investiture for Simons will occur in 2024 when he will be presented with the gold OBE medal; he can now use the post-nominal acronym OBE in recognition of the special honor from the United Kingdom.

On October 19, 2023, Simons also received the Washington Irving Medal for Literary Excellence from the Saint Nicholas Society of the City of New York. This award especially noted his books *Witches, Rakes, and Rogues* and *Boston Beheld*, and it was conferred upon him in a ceremony in New York City. Past recipients of the Washington Irving Medal include past NEHGS honorees and authors David McCullough, David Hackett Fischer, and Nathaniel Philbrick, among many others.

In addition to serving as President and CEO of NEHGS, Simons is also President of the American Patrons (formerly the American Friends) of St. George's and the Descendants of the Knights of the Garter, a charity that supports the historic fabric and living community of St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle; and he is President of the International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences, which will host its first-ever Congress in the United States in Boston, September 24–28, 2024.

## **About American Ancestors®**

American Ancestors is a national center for family history, heritage, and culture based in Boston, Massachusetts, and one of the world's top destinations for family history research, according to USA Today. American Ancestors is the global brand of New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS), America's oldest and largest genealogical society (founded in 1845). American Ancestors serves more than 400,000 members and millions of online users engaged in family history nationally and around the world through its website [AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org) with more than one billion names in its databases. Located in Boston's Back Bay, American Ancestors is home to a world-class research center and archive, an expert staff, and the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center. It maintains a publishing division that produces original genealogical research, scholarship, and educational materials, including the Register, the flagship journal of American genealogy since 1847, and American Ancestors, its award-winning magazine.

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