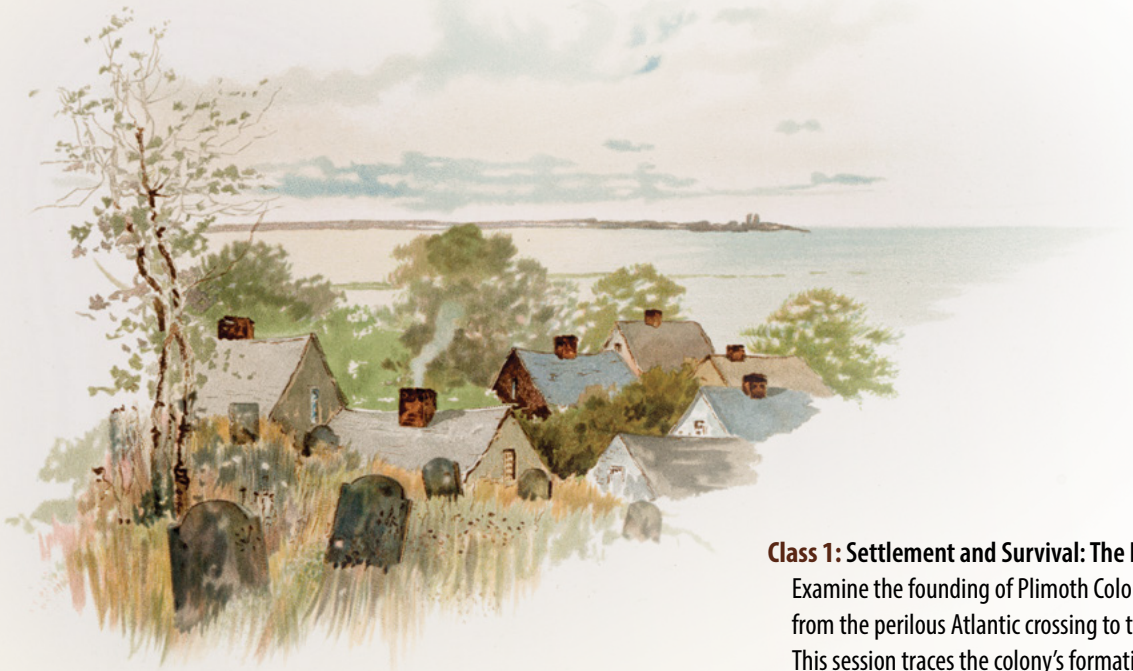


# American Ancestors

Spring 2026 vol. 27, no. 1 \$6.95



## Exploring Scottish History, Heritage & Roots



# Beyond the *Mayflower*: History, Culture, and Encounter in Plymouth Colony

Thursdays, July 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30, 6–7:30 p.m. ET

Go beyond the familiar *Mayflower* story and step into the lived experiences of Plymouth Colony. This five-week online course explores the colony's early struggles, relationships with Native peoples, religious diversity, and everyday life—including the roles of women and the power of literacy and belief. Designed for family historians, *Beyond the Mayflower* offers essential context to better understand the world your 17th-century ancestors knew.

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Examine the founding of Plymouth Colony and its earliest challenges, from the perilous Atlantic crossing to the harsh realities of settlement. This session traces the colony's formative years, highlighting key events, leadership, and the fragile path to survival.

## **Class 2: Encounter and Exchange: Native Peoples and English Settlers**

Explore the complex relationships between Indigenous communities and Plymouth colonists. Moving beyond simplified narratives, this session considers diplomacy, conflict, adaptation, and the perspectives of Native peoples during moments of encounter and change.

## **Class 3: Faith and Practice: Religious Life in Plymouth Colony**

Delve into the religious world of Plymouth's settlers, from Separatist beliefs to broader expressions of faith in early New England. This session examines how religion shaped governance, community life, and individual identity.

## **Class 4: Women of Plymouth: Roles, Realities, and Resilience**

Uncover the lives of women in Plymouth Colony, whose labor, relationships, and resilience were essential to the colony's survival. This session highlights both everyday experiences and the ways women navigated social and cultural expectations.

## **Class 5: Learning and Legacy: Literacy, Education, and Influence**

Investigate the intellectual life of Plymouth Colony through its emphasis on literacy, education, and influential texts. This session explores what colonists read, how ideas circulated, and the writings that shaped leaders like William Bradford.



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THE BRUE FAMILY LEARNING CENTER



vol. 27, no. 1

# Spring 2026

Family Heritage Experience Guide Beck Green (left) interacting with visitors in our Jonathan “Dutch” Treat Gallery, March 2026.

## 18 Unlocking the Stories of Scottish Soldiers Deported to New England

Christopher M. Gerrard and Andrew R. Millard

## 24 Clans, Families & Chiefs

Bruce Durie

## 29 Scottish Connections

*Weekly Genealogist* Readers

## 30 Getting Started with Scottish Genealogical Records

David Allen Lambert

## State Spotlight 34

North Carolina, a Haven for Highlanders Between Rebellions, 1745–1776  
*Kyle Hurst*

## Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center Spotlight 42

“Modern Young Ladies” and the Mandolin: Stories from the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center Archives  
*Madeline DeDe-Panken*

## Genetics & Genealogy 51

Unexpected DNA Connections Between Abruzzo and Pennsylvania  
*Alessandra Mencarelli*

## 37 More than a Name: Jacqueline Lemelle’s Life of Enslavement and Freedom in French Colonial Louisiana

Raymond Moore

## 46 Proving a Henshaw Connection in Connecticut

Eleanor Motley Richardson

## 48 Resting in Pieces: Fanny Marsh’s Gravestone in Sharon, Vermont

Deborah Stewart Adams

## A Message from the President & CEO 2

In This Issue 5

Your Member Benefits 6

Your Photo Submissions 8

Programs & Tours 10

News 14

10 Million Names 54

Special Event

Highlights 55

On the Road and at Home with American Ancestors 56

Highlights from our 2025 Annual Report 58

Obituaries 60

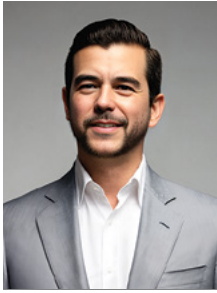
Branches of our Family 61

Staff Profile 62

American Ancestors Staff 63

Member Notices 64

*On the cover:* Eilean Donan Castle in the Highlands of Scotland. Shutterstock.



## A Message from the President and CEO

Family history often begins with a place, an anchor that sparks a connection to the past. For millions of Americans, that place is Scotland, a country whose story is woven deeply into the fabric of the United States.

Today, an estimated 25 million Americans claim Scottish ancestry. From the seventeenth century onward, Scots crossed the Atlantic in significant numbers seeking opportunity, stability, religious freedom, or simply survival. Some immigrants came as merchants, artisans, and farmers determined to build new lives. Others arrived due to the upheavals of war and empire, including Scottish prisoners of war who were unwillingly transported to North America in the 1650s. Over time, descendants of these Scots spread throughout the colonies and then the nation, shaping communities, institutions, and families that remain part of the American story.

Yet the fascination with Scottish ancestry extends beyond numbers alone. Part of its enduring appeal lies in Scotland's traditions of identity and memory. Names, places, clans, and family stories carry deep historical resonance. Even those with only a passing knowledge of genealogy may recognize a Scottish surname in their family tree or recall a tradition passed down through generations. These fragments of memory, sometimes no more than a name or a distant place, often spark a deeper pursuit of family history.

That journey from memory to evidence is one of the most rewarding aspects of genealogical research. Scottish research illustrates this particularly well. Scotland possesses one of the richest documentary traditions in Europe. Sources such as parish registers, statutory civil registrations, and detailed census returns allow genealogists to trace families across generations with remarkable clarity. These records reveal lives shaped by events both local and global, from the political upheavals of seventeenth-century Britain to the migrations that carried Scots throughout the Atlantic world. When paired with American sources such as passenger lists, colonial records, land deeds, and family papers, these materials provide powerful opportunities to reconnect



people with the places and circumstances from which their ancestors came.

At American Ancestors, these discoveries are supported by the extraordinary resources of the Brim-DeForest Library and the R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, among the most important family history research collections in the country. Our holdings include rare genealogies, heraldic works, migration studies, and specialized research guides relating to Scotland and the broader British Isles. Combined with our digital resources and the expertise of our research staff, these collections help bring the documentary record of Scotland within reach for members and researchers around the world.

Scottish genealogy reminds us that family history rarely stops at national borders. It moves across oceans and generations, linking individual lives to the wider currents of history. Family history, at its best, does more than trace lineage. It restores individuals to the historical record and reminds us that the great events of the past were lived by real people whose lives continue through their descendants. Sometimes the path to understanding who we are today begins with discovering where our ancestors once stood. For millions of families, that place is Scotland.

Warmest regards,

Ryan J. Woods, President & CEO

American Ancestors Scottish Research Tour participants in Edinburgh, July 2023.

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## From our readers

We want to hear from you! Email [magazine@americanancestors.org](mailto:magazine@americanancestors.org) or address letters to American Ancestors magazine, 97 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116. Letters will be edited for clarity and length. We regret that we cannot reply to every letter.

Rhonda R. McClure's article in the last issue, "Mining the Treasures in Newspapers" [AMERICAN ANCESTORS (2026) 4:22–26] was superb. While her article was focused on digital collections of newspapers, I would like to recommend an additional online resource that I consider to be the ultimate finding aid for New York State newspapers. The New York State Library offers a website with microfilm and print holdings of newspapers held by the New York State Library as well as other institutions statewide. The URL is [nysl.nysed.gov/nysnp](http://nysl.nysed.gov/nysnp).

Field Horne, Saratoga Springs, New York

Reading Rhonda R. McClure's "Mining the Treasures in Newspapers," I was curious about the image reproduced on page 24, an 1899 listing of fees and bills paid by the Ellis County, Kansas, commissioners. I was surprised to see that the last line of the clipping happened to mention my great-great-grandfather William Griffin! Evidently, William had traveled a couple of counties north of his home in Montgomery County, Kansas, and collected an \$8 bounty for "coyote scalps." This information reminded me of an 1944 article about William's grandson Ira (my grandfather) featuring the headline, "Ira Griffin Kills That Big Bad Wolf, But Slips on Shot." Ira was known for his ability to hit the eye of a rabbit, but that day he missed the eye of a wolf by a fraction.

Marilyn Turner, Friendswood, Texas

I totally enjoyed the winter issue about newspaper research. After 50+ years of searching in vital records, census records, town clerk offices and cemeteries, I seemed to be running out of things to find. Newspaper research has opened up a vast pool of family history stories. I learned that my great-grandfather's brother moved to Minnesota and joined the Union Army. He was mortally wounded, lived about a year, and was buried in Hastings, Minnesota. Then, a few nights later, his body was exhumed and stolen! I also discovered some key information. I located the death date and place of my fourth great-grandmother in an 1861 issue of the *Christian Repository* of Montpelier, Vermont. And my first search of Early American Newspapers returned a "mortuary notice" for my ancestor Sally Luce in the May 10, 1803, issue of *Spencer's Vermont Journal*. The notice provided her place of death, and the name of her husband, and the name of her father. That last fact toppled a decade-long brick wall.

K. Alan Wallace, Waterbury, Vermont

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## In this issue

The idea for a Scottish-themed issue began a year ago. In May 2025, I was one of several American Ancestors staff members who met with Christopher Gerrard, professor of archaeology at Durham University in the UK, and his colleagues Project Officer Dr. Caroline Smith and PhD student Megan Olshefski. Professor Gerrard led the Durham University team that excavated a 1650s mass grave of Scottish prisoners found on the grounds of Durham Cathedral in 2013. That event led to intensive study on prisoners from the Battles of Dunbar and Worcester.

Professor Gerrard and his team were in New England to visit sites connected with some of these Scots prisoners who were sent to Massachusetts, conduct research, and give lectures. All of us from American Ancestors were intrigued by their stories and research on these exiled Scots. In this issue's lead article, "Unlocking the Stories of Scottish Soldiers Deported to New England," Gerrard and fellow Durham University Professor of Archaeology Andrew Millard share their findings with American Ancestors readers.

(An article about one of these Scottish soldiers ran in the winter 2026 *Register*. Members can read "From MacDougall to Douglass: Descendants of Alexander MacDougall [later Douglass]—a Scottish Prisoner from the 1650 Battle of Dunbar—in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut" by *Register* editor Robert Battle at [AmericanAncestors.org/publications/register](https://AmericanAncestors.org/publications/register).)

Other Scottish topics are explored in this issue. Scottish genealogy and heraldry expert Bruce Durie, who spoke at our 2024 International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences, explains the history behind "Clans, Families & Chiefs." In her State Spotlight, Kyle Hurst writes on "North Carolina, a Haven for Highlanders Between Rebellions, 1745–1776." David Allen Lambert provides a guide to "Getting Started with Scottish Genealogical Records." We also share brief stories about Scottish ancestors from *Weekly Genealogist* readers.

We present a number of other engaging features. Of particular note is Raymond Moore's article, "Jacqueline Lemelle's Life of Enslavement and Freedom in French Colonial Louisiana." Although Moore faced numerous research challenges, he successfully reconstructed Jacqueline's life—and evoked her strong personality.

The Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center Spotlight by Madeline DeDe-Pankin describes two young women caught up in the "mandolin craze." In our genetics column, Alessandra Mencarelli explores an unexpected DNA link between Abruzzo, Italy, and Pennsylvania. Eleanor Motley Richardson relates how, despite an initial setback with her Mayflower Society application, she proved a Henshaw connection in Connecticut. Finally, Deborah Stewart Adams recounts her painstaking work to restore her ancestor's gravestone in Vermont.

I wish you success in your own family history pursuits!



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



## American Ancestors

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





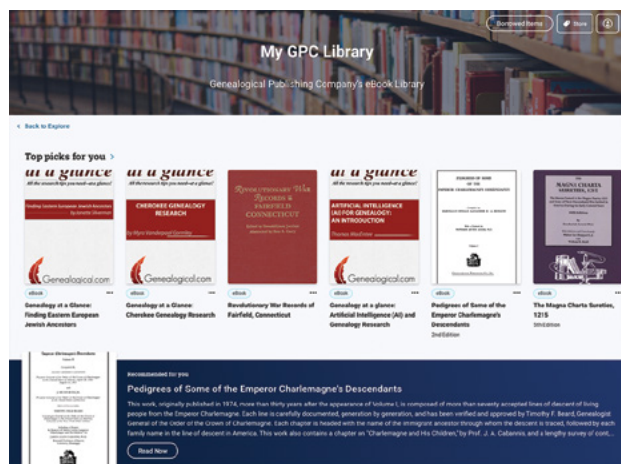
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#### Parchemin

Created by the Société de recherche historique Archiv-Histo, the Parchemin database includes an index of notarial minutes recorded in Québec between 1626 and 1799. These records include marriage contracts, deeds, wills and inventories, labor contracts, and more. Other collections in Parchemin include notarial minutes for Acadia, Newfoundland, and the Western Forts.

Users can search by date, name, location, profession, or type of notarial record. An abstract of each record provides the date, the notary, and a summary of the document. This information allows researchers to obtain copies of original notarial records. Users can access a limited number of downloads.

#### Genealogy Québec

Genealogy Québec offers over fifty million images of birth, marriage, and death records; censuses; obituaries; headstones; notarial records; city directories; and yearbooks. The collection not only features records for Quebec, but also for Acadia, Ontario, New Brunswick, and portions of the United States.



CHAPELLE DES JESUITES, QUEBEC CITY. WILFREDOR/WIKIMEDIA.

The LAFRANCE birth, marriage, and death search feature allows individual, couple, and parish queries that span the years 1621 to 1997. Applicable returns may be linked to Programme de recherche en démographie historique (PRDH), a database of Catholic baptisms, marriages, and burials. PRDH also serves as a genealogical dictionary, linking Quebec's early families and detailing their descendants.

Resources and search tools for Acadian families in the colony of New France (modern-day Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick) are also included within Genealogy Québec, making the database a powerful tool for connecting with Acadian primary sources.

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## Brick walls

Send a brief narrative (under 175 words) about your “brick wall” to [magazine@americanancestors.org](mailto:magazine@americanancestors.org) or to AMERICAN ANCESTORS magazine, 97 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116. Please include your member number. We regret that we cannot reply to every submission. Brick walls will be edited for clarity and length.

My brick wall concerns the origins of my ancestor **Lawrence Lynch**, who was apparently born in Ireland in 1735. An oft-recited bit of family lore claims he was a son of Sir Henry Lynch, the 5th Baronet of Galway, who ran away from home. However, I have found no documentation for this tale, the names of his parents, or the circumstances of his arrival in New England. Nothing is known of his life prior to his appearance in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Published histories indicate that he may have arrived in Stockbridge from Brookfield, Mass., in 1752 with Joseph Dwight, a local military and civic leader. Lynch is well-documented in Stockbridge, where he purchased property, participated in town government, and served in the French and Indian War. He and his wife, Dorcas (Root), had fifteen children. Lynch died in Stockbridge on November 5, 1815.

Sara Carbonneau, Winchester, New Hampshire;  
[SLcarbonneau@gmail.com](mailto:SLcarbonneau@gmail.com)

My brick wall is the father of my ancestor **Sarah (Almy) Stevens**. Sarah was born in Washington County, New York (probably in Cambridge), in 1795. She married Ebenezer Stevens of Schaghticoke, New York, in Cambridge in 1814, and died in Marlboro, Stark County, Ohio, in 1884. An 1880 census record shows that Sarah's parents were born in Rhode Island. *The Genealogy of the Fort Family in New York State* (1924; rev. ed. 1993) lists Sarah as a daughter of Elizabeth Worden and \_\_\_\_\_ Almy. Elizabeth was born in Rhode Island in 1778 and moved to the Cambridge, New York, area with her family, probably by 1790. Elizabeth (Worden) Almy married her second husband, John Fort, in 1799. My research has produced no records of an Almy male marrying Elizabeth Worden or dying shortly after 1795.

Nishele Lenards, Prior Lake, Minnesota; [nlenards@gmail.com](mailto:nlenards@gmail.com)

I am trying to solve the mystery of when, where, and how my great-great grandparents died. **Freeman Bennett** (born Firmin Benoit in 1829 in Yamaska, Quebec), **and his wife, Eliza** (born Marie Anne Eloise Truchon in 1834 in Chambly, Quebec), died between June 1863 and June 1865. The family was enumerated in the 1860 census in Preston, Minnesota, and Freeman registered for the Civil War draft there as a married farmer in June 1863. But by the time of the 1865 state census Freeman and Eliza's four children were scattered. Joseph C. Bennett (8) and Emma D. Bennett (4) were living in West Boylston, Massachusetts, with their uncle Charles L. Truchon (Eliza's brother) and his wife, Luella. Alexander L. Bennett (11), my great-grandfather, was in Berkley, Massachusetts, with the Charles and Emma Bissett family (possible relatives). Francis (Frank) E. Bennett (7) remained in Preston with Jeremiah and Elizabeth O'Brien, who were not related to him.

Anne Ryan Gauer, Billings, Montana; [anne.gauer@spotlightads.com](mailto:anne.gauer@spotlightads.com)

I am searching for the death date and place of my granduncle **Sumner Carty**. He was born in Digby, Nova Scotia, on July 8, 1856, to Wellington George and Hannah (Ward) Carty. He was listed in Sandy Cove, Digby, in the 1871 and 1881 censuses, first as a farmer and then as a seaman. His 1918 Massachusetts naturalization declaration stated that he arrived in Massachusetts in 1876 on the brig *Clara* from New Brunswick—but because he was enumerated in Canada five years later, he must have continued to travel between the two countries. Sumner applied for seaman's protection in New York on August 16, 1918. That is the last record I can find for him.

Dianne Carty, Chicago, Illinois; [delsy.carty@gmail.com](mailto:delsy.carty@gmail.com)

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In the early 1950s, Stephen and Marie (Ramseyer) Joyce visited the Statue of Liberty with their children Bill, Bonnie, Ted, Peter, and Stephen Jr.

Amy Joyce, West Roxbury, Massachusetts, Stephen Jr.'s daughter

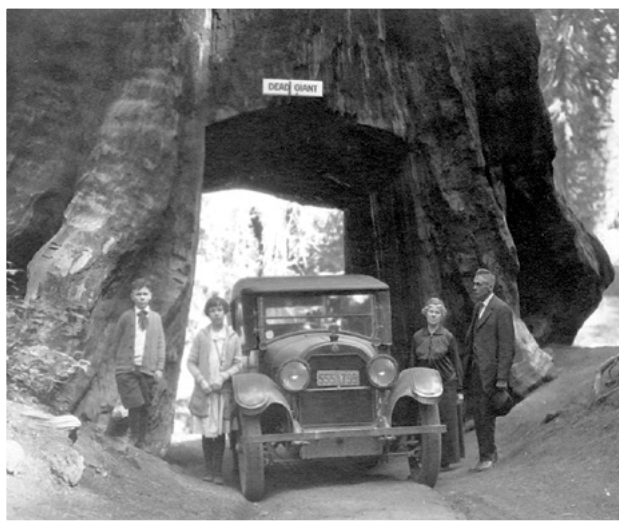
## *Famous places*

Thank you to the many members who submitted their great photos! We wish we had room for more.



Arena M. (Woodman) Foley (1920–1998), a descendant of thirteen *Mayflower* passengers, posed on the portico of Plymouth Rock in Plymouth, Massachusetts, on July 4, 1939.

Barbara-Lee Kelly, Plymouth, Massachusetts, Arena's daughter



In September 1925, George and Genevieve Corbin accompanied their grandparents George Henry and Ruth (Slayton) Corbin on a road trip from Oakland, California, to Yosemite National Park. They stopped for a photo at the magnificent Dead Giant tree—the very first tunnel tree—in Tuolumne Grove.

Steve Corbin, Boston, Massachusetts, George's son



William Hallett on Cemetery Hill (with Culp's Hill in the background), Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, September 1964.

Bill Hallett, Kingston, New Hampshire, William's son



Kate Mifflin Loud (left), her daughter Dorothy Loud Longley, and her grandsons William and John Longley visited the Grand Canyon in 1923.

Wendy Erisman, Austin, Texas, Kate's great-great-granddaughter



George A. Walsh (1873-1943) (left) and a friend named Tom in front of the Elk on the Trail Monument along the Mohawk Trail in Florida, Massachusetts. Circa 1930.

Aidan Walsh, Boston, Massachusetts,  
George's great-grandson



Carl and Anna Mae (McClelland) Villiger (left), their daughter Marion, and Anna's sister, Georgia Kidd. In 1924, the Villiger family drove from East St. Louis, Illinois, to Wheeling, West Virginia, where they picked up Georgia Kidd, and then continued on to Niagara Falls. The group camped out the whole trip and picnicked by the side of the road.

Margaret Rutledge, Costa Mesa, California, Marion's daughter

## WANTED

### Photos relating to the American Revolution!

Send us your high-resolution photos of your ancestors or relatives commemorating the American Revolution or celebrating Independence Day (along with captions of no more than 50 words). We'll feature a few of the most striking images in our summer issue. Email [magazine@americanancestors.org](mailto:magazine@americanancestors.org).

SENIOR EDITOR JEAN POWERS IN A FOURTH OF JULY PARADE IN HARWICH, MASSACHUSETTS, CIRCA 1982.



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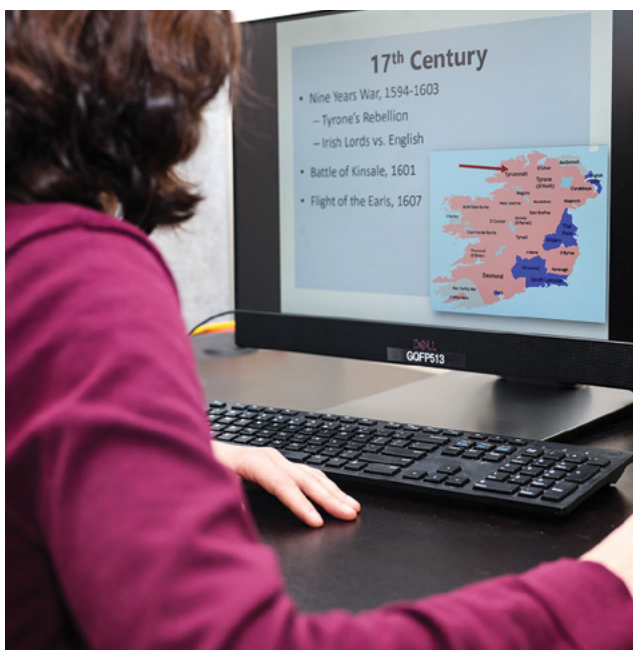
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- 5/7 | Open House** Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center Open House **FREE**
- 5/7 | Online American Inspiration Author Event** *More Than Enough* with Anna Quindlen \$
- 5/8 | Online Lecture** Forged in Revolution: The Story of Paul Revere's Sons of Liberty Bowl **FREE**
- 5/9 | Tour** Brim-DeForest Library Tour **FREE**
- 5/9 | Hands-On History** Creating a Family History Slideshow, Boston, MA **FREE**
- 5/12–16 | Research Tour** Upstate New York Research Tour, Albany, NY \$ (see page 12)
- 5/16 | Hybrid Lecture** Revolution in the Records: Germans in the Revolution: Hessians and Patriots \$
- 5/18 | Online American Inspiration Author Event** *A Fate Worse Than Hell: American Prisoners of the Civil War* with W. Fitzhugh Brundage **FREE**
- 5/20 | Lecture & Tea** Murder Mysteries & The English Country House, Boston, MA \$

### June

- Starting 6/3 | Online Seminar** Land Records Unlocked: A Genealogist's Guide to Deeds and Other Records, 5 classes \$
- 6/4–6 | Research Tour** Research Getaway, Boston, MA \$ (see page 12)
- 6/9 | Online American Inspiration Author Event** *COMBEE: Harriet Tubman, the Combahee River Raid, and Black Freedom during the Civil War* with Edda L. Fields-Black **FREE**
- 6/11 | Online Lecture** Understanding Plimoth Colony Through Bradford's Writings **FREE**
- 6/12 | Online Lecture** Avery, Gottlieb & Rothko: By the Sea **FREE**
- 6/13 | Tour** Brim-DeForest Library Tour **FREE**
- 6/20 | Hands-On History** Photography Identification, Boston, MA \$
- 6/20 | Concert** Revolution in the Records: From Plimoth to Yorktown Concert \$
- 6/23 | Online American Inspiration Author Event** *The Wreck of the Mentor: A True Story of Death, Despair, and Deliverance in the Age of Sail* with Eric Jay Dolin \$
- 6/26 | Online Lecture** Murder Mysteries & the English Country House \$
- 6/27 | Lecture** Getting Started in Family History, Boston, MA \$
- 6/27 | Group** Roots & Branches: A Research Club for American Ancestors Members, Boston, MA **FREE**

## July

**Starting 7/2 | Online Seminar** Beyond the *Mayflower*: History, Culture, and Encounter in Plimoth Colony, 5 weeks \$

**7/8 | Online American Inspiration Author Event** *All We Say, The Battle for American Identity: A History in 15 Speeches* with Ben Rhodes \$

**7/10 | Online Lecture** Classical Architecture & Decorative Arts in British Houses, Part II \$

**7/11 | Tour** Brim-DeForest Library Tour **FREE**

**7/11 | Hands-On History** An Introduction to Hand Sewing, Boston, MA \$

**7/14 | Online Lecture** Top Resources for Atlantic Canadian Research **FREE**

**7/18 | Hybrid Lecture** Revolution in the Records: Drums, Diaries, and Duty: The Roles of Children in Revolutionary America \$

**7/21 | Online Lecture** Confirming Parentage \$

**7/21 | Online American Inspiration Author Event** *Grandma Joy and Me: A Journey of Healing, One National Park at a Time* with Brad Ryan **FREE**

**7/25 | Lecture** Getting Started in Family History, Boston, MA \$

**7/25 | Group** Roots & Branches: A Research Club for American Ancestors Members, Boston, MA **FREE**

## August

**Starting 8/3 | Online Seminar** Tides of History: Tracing Family History in Atlantic Canada, 5 classes \$

**8/5 | Online American Inspiration Author Event** *This Land is Your Land: A Road Trip Through U.S. History* with Beverly Gage \$

**8/7 | Online Lecture** A Room with a View: A Tour of Merchant Ivory's English Movie Locations \$

**8/8 | Tour** Brim-DeForest Library Tour **FREE**

**8/8 | Hands-On History** Preservation Show & Tell, Boston, MA \$

**8/11–15 | Research Tour** Come Home to New England, Boston, MA \$ (see page 12)

**8/15 | Hybrid Lecture** Revolution in the Records: Conscience and Conflict: The Quaker Experience in the American Revolution \$

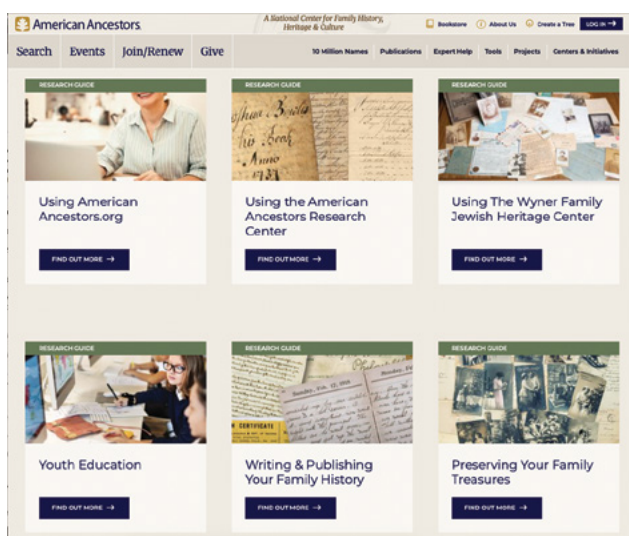
**8/18 | Online American Inspiration Author Event** *The Bright Edges of the World: Willa Cather and Her Archbishop* with Garrett Peck **FREE**

**8/21 | Online Lecture** Lost Mansions of Philadelphia's Main Line **FREE**

**8/22 | Lecture** Getting Started in Family History, Boston, MA \$

**8/22 | Group** Roots & Branches: A Research Club for American Ancestors Members, Boston, MA **FREE**

\*Schedule is subject to change. \$ indicates a paid program.



## 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. (You will need to log in with your member or guest account to access the content.)

- ▶ Watch instructional videos and archived webinars at our video library: [AmericanAncestors.org/video-library](https://AmericanAncestors.org/video-library)
- ▶ Read research guides on a variety of topics: [AmericanAncestors.org/tools/research-guides](https://AmericanAncestors.org/tools/research-guides)
- ▶ Download charts, family group sheets, and other organizing templates: [AmericanAncestors.org/tools/research-templates](https://AmericanAncestors.org/tools/research-templates)

# Programs & tours

[AmericanAncestors.org/events](https://AmericanAncestors.org/events)



SCAN ME

## Upcoming Research Tours & Programs\*

Not all records for family history research are online! A goldmine of resources awaits you at archives, libraries, and other repositories across the country. Whether you are just starting your genealogical journey or have been researching for years, let American Ancestors be your guide. Benefit from special orientations and tutorials, one-on-one consultations, informative lectures, and more. Register at [AmericanAncestors.org/events](https://AmericanAncestors.org/events).

### Research Getaway at American Ancestors, Boston, MA

June 4–6, 2026

Escape to Boston for three days of research, one-on-one consultations, orientations, lectures, and social events. You will explore the rich offerings at American Ancestors and benefit from the knowledge and assistance of our expert genealogists.

**Members:** \$700; **Non-Members:** \$850

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

August 11–15, 2026

American Ancestors has been collecting information about families in America for more than 180 years. Our collections span the globe and cover the United States, especially New England and New York. Devote almost a full week to leveraging the resources and expertise at American Ancestors. In addition to daily lectures, one-on-one consultations, and orientations, this special “Come Home” program will include a walking tour of Revolutionary Boston.

**Members:** \$1,300; **Non-Members:** \$1,450



“It was a wonderful group of people, and a huge joy to immerse myself in hard-core genealogy for an entire week with no distractions, surrounded by fellow genealogy geeks. What a pleasure!”

— Salt Lake City Research Tour participant

### Salt Lake City Research Tour

Salt Lake City, Utah

September 13–20, 2026

Navigate the resources of the world’s largest genealogy library with help from American Ancestors. Our experts have more than forty years of experience guiding researchers of all levels through the vast resources of the FamilySearch Library. Benefit from our special orientations and tutorials, one-on-one consultations, informative lectures, and more!

**Early bird pricing until May 31, 2026!**

**Members:** Single \$2,325; Double \$1,775; Double with Non-Researching Guest \$2,475; Commuter \$1,200; **Non-Members** Single \$2,475; Double \$1,925; Double with Non-Researching Guest \$2,625; Commuter \$1,350.

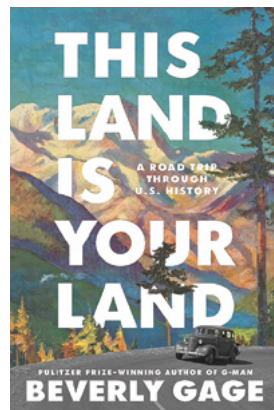
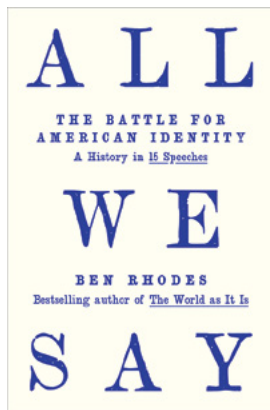
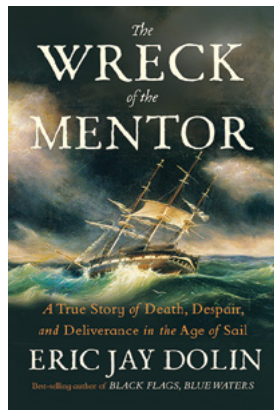
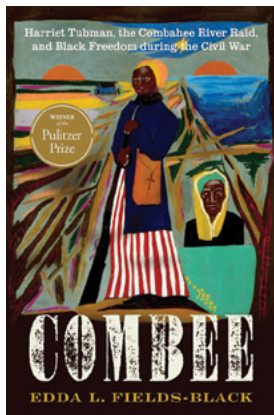
**Add \$100 to all pricing above if registering after May 31, 2026.**

\*Schedule is subject to change.



# AMERICAN INSPIRATION

A BEST-SELLING AUTHOR SERIES  
BY AMERICAN ANCESTORS®



See American Inspiration events in our calendar listings on page 10.

Hosted by Director of Literary Programs Margaret M. Talcott, our American Inspiration speaker series presents engaging discussions on newly published histories, biographies, and memoirs from renowned authors.

Our spring and summer American Inspiration book talks will explore aspects of our history and national identity. On May 18, W. Fitzhugh Brundage will discuss *A Fate Worse Than Hell: American Prisoners of the Civil War* with Senior Genealogist David Allen Lambert. On June 9, Edda L. Fields-Black will talk about her Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *COMBEE: Harriet Tubman, the Combahee River Raid, and Black Freedom during the Civil War*, with Kendra Field, Chief Historian of 10 Million Names.

On June 23, Eric Jay Dolin presents *The Wreck of the Mentor: A True Story of Death, Despair, and Deliverance in the Age of Sail*. Maritime historian William M. Fowler will moderate the event.

We'll welcome Ben Rhodes on July 8 for a discussion of *All We Say: The Battle for American Identity: A History in 15 Speeches*. On July 21, Brad Ryan and his 96-year-old grandmother will share their family-affirming travels, chronicled in *Grandma Joy and Me: A Journey of Healing, One National Park at a Time*.

We join Yale University historian Beverly Gage on August 5 for a discussion of *This Land is Your Land: A Road Trip Through U.S. History*. Garrett Peck guides us through Willa Cather's New Mexico with *The Bright Edges of the World: Willa Cather and Her Archbishop* on August 18. Nicolasa Chavez, New Mexico Deputy State Historian and curator at Santa Fe's Museum of International Folk Art, will moderate the event.

On September 9, we will explore the science, history, and psychology of accents and their impact on identity and culture with Valerie M. Fridland, author of *Why We Talk Funny: The Real Story Behind Our Accents*.

Our literary programs are often presented in partnership with other anchor cultural organizations, including the Boston Public Library, Massachusetts Historical Society, Peabody Essex Museum, and Porter Square Books. Thanks also to series sponsors Susan K. and John D. Thompson.



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## Catch up with American Inspiration!

Visit [AmericanAncestors.org/inspire](https://AmericanAncestors.org/inspire) to learn about upcoming events and view our video archive including:

- *Belonging: An Intimate History of Slavery and Family in Early New England* with author Gloria McCahon Whiting and moderator Kyera Singleton
- *Claire McCardell: The Designer Who Set Women Free* with author Elizabeth Evitts Dickinson and moderator Petra Slinkard
- *To Die For: A Cookbook of Gravestone Recipes* with author Rosie Grant and moderator Judy Lucey

# News



A. HRONISCHER

*You are invited!*

## Jewish Heritage Center Benefit Dinner will honor Rochelle Walensky

You are cordially invited to join the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center (JHC) in Boston on June 4 for our 2026 Benefit Dinner. This special evening will feature a cocktail reception and dinner and a program with honoree Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH, who served as the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention during the Covid pandemic.

A specialist in infectious diseases, Dr. Walensky will be in conversation with Dr. Kevin Tabb, CEO of Beth Israel Lahey Health, about her leadership during the pandemic; her medical career and groundbreaking contributions to AIDS research, treatment, and policy; and her Jewish family history. The JHC will present Dr. Walensky with the 2026 Tzedakah Lifetime Achievement Award.

To learn more and register, visit [JewishHeritageCenter.org/Benefit2026](https://JewishHeritageCenter.org/Benefit2026) or contact Special Events Manager Lauren Vitacco at [signatureevents@americanancestors.org](mailto:signatureevents@americanancestors.org).

## The Lisa Stewart Family Fund brings our youth education program back to Maine

Thanks to an \$80,000 gift from the Lisa Stewart Family Fund, our youth education program will return to Maine in 2026. First piloted in Maine in 2023, the program has served more than 1,500 students statewide through genealogy workshops and teacher training. This program helps students trace their family stories and appreciate history as something lived and personal. With this gift, the program is expected to reach approximately 2,500 students in rural communities in Aroostook, Hancock, Somerset, and Washington Counties.



American Ancestors teacher workshop in Maine, 2023.

## American Ancestors partners with Company One Theatre

In January, we were delighted to once again partner with Company One Theatre. Their winter 2026 production of *The Great Privation*, a new play by Nia Akilah Robinson, was set in 1832 and the present day. Parallel stories and interconnected timelines centering around two sets of mothers and daughters in Philadelphia were used to examine our country's complex racial history and ask, "How do we go on living with a history we cannot change?"

At the play's final performance, Chief Genealogist David Allen Lambert led a post-show discussion on the history of burial practices in Massachusetts, with a focus on African American burying grounds and traditions. Audience members were invited to study tombstone reproductions from various Boston cemeteries in the lobby of the theater.

Founded in 1998, Company One connects Boston's diverse communities through live performance, the development of new plays and playwrights, arts education, and public programming. American Ancestors first partnered with Company One Theatre in the summer of 2025 for B. Elle Borders's play *The Meeting Tree*.



American Ancestors Chief Genealogist David Allen Lambert in discussion with Jessie Baxter, Director of Development & Connectivity at Company One Theatre.



Homeschool educators at our January workshop.

## Bringing family history to homeschool educators

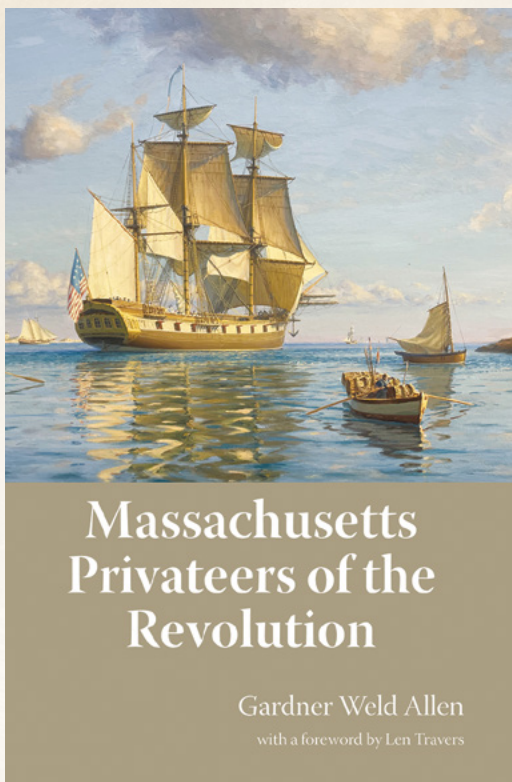
In January, American Ancestors hosted a two-day workshop for homeschool educators serving grades four through eight across Greater Boston and eastern Massachusetts. The workshop reflected the mission of the American Ancestors Youth Education Program to make genealogy accessible to all students.

Participants attended sessions on fostering historical thinking skills, analyzing primary sources, and implementing inquiry-based lessons using our Family History Curriculum. Senior Genealogist Melanie McComb presented strategies for conducting family history research, and educators received a behind-the-scenes tour of American Ancestors to learn about professional research methods.

**This workshop was sponsored by Liberty Mutual and the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region Program, coordinated by Waynesburg University.**



# New Publications



## Massachusetts Privateers of the Revolution

By Gardner Weld Allen, foreword by Len Travers  
6 x 9 paperback, 420 pages; 2026; \$39.95

During the Revolutionary War years, maritime rules required ships and cargoes captured by privateers to be certified as lawful in court before they could be auctioned or divided among the privateer's owners and crew. Author Gardner Weld Allen estimates that about 1,200 such "prizes" were brought to court for judgment during the American War for Independence. In this work, originally published in 1927, Allen recorded each vessel's name, type (from tiny sloop to three-masted ship), number of guns, crew size, captain's name, and many more interesting details.



## Portable Genealogist: Polish Research

By James Arthur Heffernan  
8½ x 11 laminated, 4 pages; 2026; \$10.95

This quick-reference guide will benefit descendants of Polish immigrants to America by sharing strategies and resources from our Central and Eastern Europe expert, James Arthur Heffernan. Of particular note are the many useful records from the former Russian, German, and Austrian Empires that survived territorial shifts, periods of social and political upheaval, and two world wars.

Order online at  
[shop.AmericanAncestors.org](https://shop.AmericanAncestors.org)



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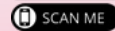
# Research with our experts at the FamilySearch Library in Salt Lake City

September 13–20, 2026

Navigate the resources of the world's largest genealogy library with help from American Ancestors. Benefit from our special orientations and tutorials, one-on-one consultations, informative lectures, and more.

## Program includes:

- Pre-program preparatory webinar, consultation, and other resources
- Seven-night stay at the Holiday Inn Express Salt Lake City Downtown
- FamilySearch Library tour and orientation
- Daily lectures
- Consultations with expert genealogists
- Group meals (daily breakfasts, opening and closing dinners)



Visit [AmericanAncestors.org/events](https://AmericanAncestors.org/events) to learn more



# Unlocking the Stories of the Scottish Soldiers Deported to New England

Jon Cryer (*Two and a Half Men*), Sam Claflin (*Hunger Games*), and Kate Upton (*The Other Woman*). What do these actors have in common? All three are descended from Scots prisoners of war transported to New England in 1650.

In May 2018, a somewhat unusual burial service took place in the English city of Durham. A single woven casket containing the remains of twenty-eight anonymous individuals was lowered into the ground and covered with soil brought from East Lothian in Scotland. Echoing seventeenth-century traditions, the ceremony included readings, metrical psalms, and prayers led by clergy from Durham Cathedral and representatives of the Church of Scotland. Durham was the final resting place for these soldiers, who, more than 350 years ago, were captured at the Battle of Dunbar on the southeast coast of Scotland, starved and force-marched eight days to Durham, and imprisoned in the city's cathedral, which was then empty and disused.

We were among the small group of archaeologists present at the graveside that day. For us, the ceremony marked the culmination of years of research. That work

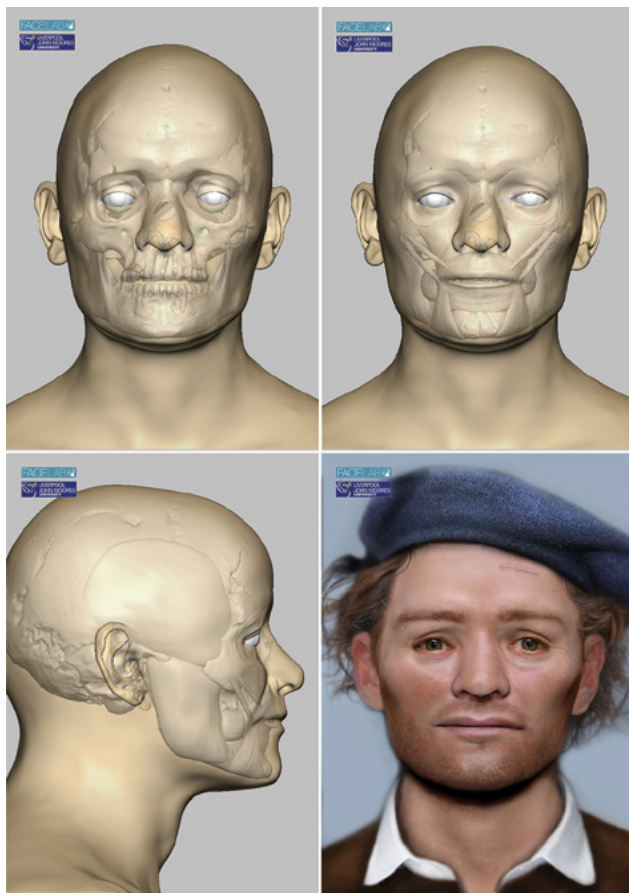
had begun in November 2013, when disordered tumbles of skeletons were identified in two mass graves during construction of a new café at Durham University's Palace Green Library at the heart of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. With no artifacts to provide the clues archaeologists normally rely upon, the remains were initially believed to be much older, perhaps the bodies of medieval monks or victims of an outbreak of plague. Over the next few years, a jigsaw of evidence was pieced together so that we now know these individuals were some of the 1,700 Scottish prisoners who died in Durham in the months that followed Oliver Cromwell's victory at Dunbar on September 3, 1650.

During the project, a facial reconstruction brought us face-to-face with one of these lost men for the first time. Through the study of their skeletal remains, we are able to say how the men died, what they ate in their last few years, how their diet had changed during their lives, and how they moved from place to place. We can also relate the severe stresses in their physical condition to episodes of plague and famine in the first half of the seventeenth century. It is remarkable and rare to be able to make such



Christopher M. Gerrard and Andrew R. Millard are both Professors of Archaeology at Durham University, UK. Andrew is the co-administrator of the Scottish Prisoners DNA Project. They are co-authors of the book *Lost Lives, New Voices: Unlocking the Stories of the Scottish Soldiers from the Battle of Dunbar* (2018), which described the finds in Durham and the lives of the prisoners in New England.

Opposite: *Durham*, featuring Durham Cathedral on the right, by an unknown artist, 1795. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.



A collage showing the facial depiction process for a Scottish soldier. Images by Facelab, Liverpool John Moores University.

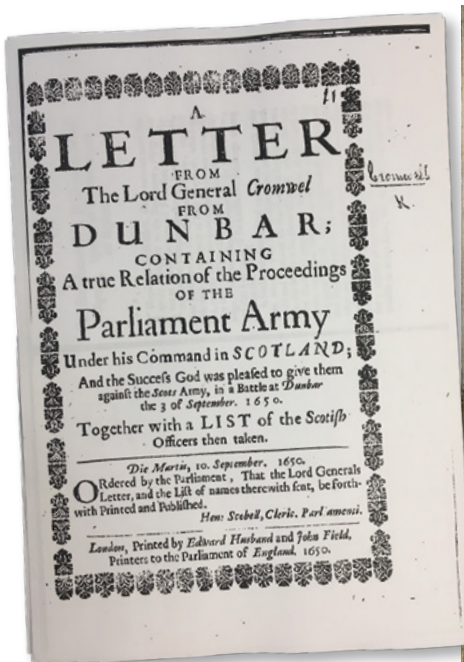
precise links between scientific evidence and the historical record in this way, and our team grasped the opportunity to come to an understanding of the men's lives and the events that led to their imprisonment and death.

Sadly, these Scots seem to have succumbed to dysentery or diarrheal diseases, the "flux" as it was called then; there was no evidence of battle injuries. Although Cromwell had pleaded that "humanity be exercised towards [the prisoners]," for many the situation slipped catastrophically out of control. While generous donations were being raised back in Scotland from local congregations for "the sad condition of our prisoners in England through famine and nakedness," physicians in Durham were prescribing boiled milk with water and bean flour to the sick men. These remedies did little good.

### Survivors

Of the approximately 1,300 prisoners who survived the winter of 1650, a handful were still imprisoned as late as July 1652. The rest were released from Durham and forced into service. About 500 men sailed from Newcastle for France, probably as mercenaries, though we do not know what became of them. Others were sent to work in local coal mines or salt works or to make "Scotch-cloth." Many more went to dig long canals to drain wetlands near the city of Ely in the east of England.

All of these forced labor projects were endorsed by the new republic—the king, Charles I, had been executed in January 1649—and financed by ambitious



*A Letter to Parliament from the Lord General Cromwell from Dunbar* (1650). Via Early English Books Online 2, <https://name.umdl.umich.edu/A80929.0001.001>.



*Cromwell at Dunbar*, 1886. Andrew Carrick Gow. Tate, Presented by the Trustees of the Chantrey Bequest 1886. © Tate. Photo: Tate.



A waterwheel at Saugus Iron Works, Saugus, Mass. Photo by Chris Gerrard.



The McIntyre Garrison in York, Maine, was built in 1713 by John McIntire, a son of Micum McIntire, a Scottish prisoner of war captured at the Battle of Dunbar. Photo by Chris Gerrard.

consortia of Parliamentarians known as “adventurers.” Setting their sights on investment opportunities on the other side of the Atlantic, one consortium paid the government for the rights to a group of Dunbar Scots and sent them to New England as labor.

On November 11, 1650, after many changes of plan, 150 “sound” Scots boarded the Boston-built ketch *Unity*. The cold-weather voyage must have been challenging. The Scots, who were unlikely to have been experienced sailors, traveled in a ship better suited to local cod fishing than a transatlantic voyage. Even so, the ship docked in Boston just six weeks later—a remarkable achievement. On arrival, the men were dispersed. Some were sold into domestic households, but the largest group was taken to the ironworks at Hammersmith (now the Saugus Ironworks National Historic Site) or further north into the timberlands of southern Maine and New Hampshire to work in the sawmills there.

Exactly one year after the Battle of Dunbar, the Battle of Worcester took place. Again, Cromwell captured thousands of Scottish prisoners. Some were deported to New England, arriving in early 1652. These men were also sold into indentured servitude.

Were these men now “enslaved”? Although their service was certainly enforced and their labor could be bought and sold, the Scots’ circumstances were neither permanent nor heritable; children did not follow

parents in the same role. After serving their terms, indentured servants could expect to regain the same rights and privileges as freeborn citizens. Individual experiences of servitude varied greatly and could include brutal treatment. While the Scots prisoners were forced into servitude, some English indentured servants came willingly, having been recruited through family networks and negotiated their contracts. What is certain is that the role of indentured servants is greatly underrepresented in historical accounts and the Scots were not the only indentured servants.

### Landscapes of indenture

Thanks to the pioneering excavations supervised by historical archaeologist Roland Robbins at Hammersmith (Saugus) in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and a ream of historical paperwork documenting the decline of the seventeenth-century ironworks (which provides a precious list of thirty-seven names), we know a good deal about the tasks undertaken by the Scots. The noisy, bustling Hammersmith complex produced cast iron and refined bars and nails in its blast furnace, forge, and rolling and slitting mills. From here, company boats carried iron products of all kinds to its Boston warehouse—everything from blades for sawmills; plough shares; cooking implements such as kettles; and tools such as hammers, nails, and spikes for building houses. The whole operation was in some respects a forerunner of America’s mill towns, with industry, water power, housing, and food stores all provided at a single site.

Some Scots were employed on the farm, while others mined the bog ore with shovels, baskets, and

wheelbarrows. Still others worked at the furnace or were trained as blacksmiths. (One Dunbar Scot, John Stewart, was brought from Saugus to Springfield by John Pynchon and set up as a blacksmith there in 1658.)

Today, the activities and reconstructed buildings at the Saugus Ironworks National Historic Site convey an authentic sense of the daily life experienced by the Scots—including the whooshing of the waterwheels that provided the power, the crashing hammers, the puffing of the leather bellows, and the asphyxiating heat. “At the Iron Works wee founde all the men with smutty faces and bare armes working lustily,” noted one observer.

Most of the Dunbar men worked in the woods, cutting timber for new buildings but mainly making charcoal from hardwood trees like oak and elm. An inventory of stock and tools in September 1653 listed sixty axes for thirty-seven Scottish laborers. These, plus the “saues for ye Scotts” and “logg chaines,” would have been used for cutting down trees, floating timbers downstream, and haulage. The charcoal produced was essential for driving up temperatures in the hearths, with large quantities required for the blast furnace. Further north in New Hampshire and Maine, where other Scots served their indentures, abundant timber helped meet an insatiable demand for shipbuilding materials, construction boards, and wine barrels.

## For more information

- *Unlocking the Stories of the Scottish Soldiers from the Battle of Dunbar, 1650*, [AmericanAncestors.org/video-library/unlocking-stories-scottish-soldiers-battle-dunbar-1650](https://AmericanAncestors.org/video-library/unlocking-stories-scottish-soldiers-battle-dunbar-1650)
- *The Involuntary American: A Scottish Prisoner's Journey to the New World* (2018), Carol R. Gardner
- *Landscapes of Indenture: How Scottish Prisoners of War Shaped New England* (2023), Christopher Gerrard, Althea Davies, Megan Olshefski, Emily Murphy, and Emerson Baker, [youtube.com/watch?v=W58BzhD2hO8](https://youtube.com/watch?v=W58BzhD2hO8)
- *Lost Lives, New Voices: Unlocking the Stories of the Scottish Soldiers at the Battle of Dunbar, 1650* (2018), C. Gerrard, P. Graves, A. Millard, R. Annis, and A. Caffell
- Scottish Prisoners DNA Project, [familyreedna.com/groups/scottish-po-ws/about](https://familyreedna.com/groups/scottish-po-ws/about)
- Scottish Prisoners of War Society, [spows.org](https://spows.org)

Less than two-thirds of the Dunbar men are accounted for in the ironworks and sawmills. The indentures of the remainder were sold to private individuals across New England and most worked as farm laborers. These men are harder to see in the historical record, but we get occasional glimpses of Scots such as Duncan Macall, whose remaining years of service to John Hardy of Salem were valued in Hardy's 1652 probate inventory.

The prisoners from the Battle of Worcester were not indentured into the ironworks. Some were sent to the northern sawmills and others worked for individual colonists. But many of the names on their passenger list do not recur in New England records. These Scots may have been taken on to the southern colonies or the Caribbean. We have not looked in detail at these men as a group, and they deserve further historical work.

## New lives

Once they were freed from the terms of their indenture after a period of about seven years, the Scots were at liberty to marry or, in principle, to return to Scotland. The fact that they were granted land after their servitude perhaps ensured that none of them did so—although, as their probate records show, not all of them prospered. Perhaps debts tied them to people and places, or, equally likely, the Scots had become invested in new possibilities for the future, both financially and personally.

Certainly, members of the group routinely found themselves on the wrong side of the law, as might be expected of young men living on the frontier who were not Puritans. But there is more to their story than a



The 1713 gravestone of John Burbeen, who fought at Dunbar and was transported to New England in 1650, First Burial Ground, Woburn, Massachusetts. By kind permission of Jack Parker.

rebellious nature and court cases. Once they were free men, the Scots became neighbors, occupying plots of land side-by-side.

Very few seventeenth-century buildings survive across New England in anything close to their original condition but, even so, fragmentary evidence of the Scots's homes has been found. Robert Mackclafflin's home in Wenham, Massachusetts (now part of Wenham Museum)—a single-room dwelling for Robert, his wife, Joanna, and four of their children—was originally occupied after Robert moved to Wenham in 1662, though the building has been significantly altered by later occupants. Further north, the colonists sometimes took refuge at times of danger in sawn log houses known as “garrisons.” The McIntire Garrison overlooking the York River near York, Maine, sometimes referred to as the Maxwell or “Scotland” garrison, was built in 1713 by the next generation of Scots. This remarkable building, designated a National Historic Landmark in 1968 and now under the stewardship of the Old York Historical Society, still stands proud.

Thanks to the research of Durham University PhD student Megan Olshefski and partners at Salem State University and the University of New Hampshire, as well as the dedication of a small army of enthusiasts, we have been able to locate and record some of the cellar holes from the Scots' houses. These features are all the visible remains of what were probably one- or two-room pine-framed houses with a hall and parlor—just a single

heated space for eating, cooking, and living—and a loft above.

Wills and probate inventories list fireplace furniture such as tongs (to move burning embers), fire pans, shovels, spits, trammels, andirons, and a range of cooking wares, including gridirons, iron and brass kettles of different sizes, skillets, frying pans, and iron pots suspended on pot hooks. The many kettles indicate that foodstuffs like maize were boiled, but fried and roast meats such as beef and pork were clearly popular, too, and might be served on pewter platters, woodenware, and earthenware. Robert Mackclafflin's penchant for a pipe at least hints at some moments of relaxation; eighteen pounds of tobacco was recorded in his inventory after his death.

We have been able to identify some Scots family burial grounds, often quite close to their dwellings. Other grave sites can still be visited in cemeteries across New England. In fact, entire “Scots” landscapes are waiting to be discovered, like those along the banks of the Salmon Falls River on the boundary of New Hampshire and Maine. New aerial reconnaissance techniques like LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) allow us to see through the tree canopy and map the boundaries between historic properties. Documents fill out the picture with mentions of livestock and orchards.



### Scottish Prisoners of War Society

In 2007, Teresa Rust and Eleanor Hall started an email list for family historians researching Scottish prisoners captured after the Battles of Dunbar and Worcester. The group incorporated as the Scottish Prisoners of War Society in 2016. The society consists primarily of family historians who discovered an ancestor transported to the New World after these battles and other interested researchers. Members share stories and discoveries through a lively Facebook group and email list, and research results are presented on the group's website. Anyone with an interest in these men is invited to join. For details, visit [spows.org](http://spows.org).



Megan Olshefski recording the grave of a Scottish soldier at Grant's Point Cemetery, South Berwick, Maine. Photo by Chris Gerrard.

These remnants of Scottish lives in New England bring a human dimension to this story that we need to continue to recover. No better example exists than the Scots Charitable Society. This “poor box society” dedicated to helping the needy was founded in January 1658—the year in which many of the Dunbar Scots’ indentures expired. Of the twenty-eight founders, at least thirteen were Dunbar men and six were Worcester men. The Scots looked after each other in their new land.

### Future work

Every archaeologist has a wish list and here is ours. We need high resolution LiDAR to recover the seventeenth-century New England landscape. We want to know what kinds of trees and crops existed and to document the changing exploitation of natural resources and landscape using new, high-resolution paleoecological and geochemical records that we can extract from ponds and wetlands. Ideally, we would like to excavate to recover some of the objects that go unmentioned in documents—these items are crucial measures of ethnicity

and identity. We could learn about foodways and health, including the effects of early New England industries and their pollution legacies. We want to know more about the Scots houses and garrisons, and their animal husbandry and foodstuffs. The sample of seventeenth-century New England archaeology we currently have to work with is not large enough to examine the archaeological visibility and environmental impacts of early European communities. There is much work yet to be done.

Above all, perhaps we need to be better at telling the stories of these Scottish soldiers who settled in New England. How could podcasts, film documentaries, and heritage trails connect places and people on both sides of the Atlantic and provide opportunities for wider community involvement in fieldwork? We have a special opportunity to tell a compelling tale of war, tragedy, endurance, and survival. We can amplify the lives of ordinary individuals caught up in extraordinary events at a turbulent period in history. We owe at least that to the Scottish prisoners and to their descendants. ♦

## Scottish Prisoners DNA Project

Finding a genealogical connection to the Scottish prisoners can be difficult. Although there is a list of the 272 men transported after the Battle of Worcester, no passenger list exists for the 150 prisoners from Dunbar who were on the *Unity*—although our Scottish Soldiers project at Durham University identified a list of likely names from New England records. Once the men were in New England, the English-speaking scribes mangled names spoken in Scottish accents, creating a whole variety of creative spellings. None of these men have recorded places of origin in Scotland. To help overcome these barriers, the Scottish Prisoners of War Society sponsors a DNA project at FamilyTreeDNA.

By analysing the Y-chromosome DNA of male-line descendants of suspected and known prisoners, this project aims to connect descendants of the Scottish prisoners, confirm their lineage within America, and possibly identify places of origin in Scotland.

Some connections have been found and others disproved. Alexander Stewart (d. 1731) of Charlestown and Marlborough and Duncan Stewart (d. 1717) of Rowley were previously claimed to be sons of Duncan Stewart, 3rd of Invernahyle. However, DNA

disproves this. Alexander descends from James, 5th High Steward of Scotland (c. 1260–1309), although the intervening generations await identification, and Duncan is not descended from the royal Stewarts. In another case, the claimed descendants of William Cahoon (d. 1675) of Block Island and East Rehoboth can be sorted into four genetic groups. Three of these are probably connected to different immigrant ancestors with the same surname. For many other prisoners, more tests will be needed before conclusions can be drawn.

DNA was also extracted from some of the skeletons found in Durham. We hoped to make connections between the men who died in Durham and the descendants of their brothers and other relatives who were transported. The results show that DNA is preserved, but low-resolution analyses did not yield matches to the descendants. However, tentative matches were made to members of FTDNA’s Scotland Project. As ancient DNA techniques have developed tremendously in the last ten years, it would be worthwhile to reanalyze the extracts to further examine the origins of these men.

Learn more about the Scottish Prisoners DNA project at [FamilyTreeDNA.com/groups/scottish-po-ws/about](https://www.familytreedna.com/groups/scottish-po-ws/about).

# Clans, Families & Chiefs



Anyone attending a Scottish Games or Gathering in the USA or Canada could be excused for thinking that everyone Scottish is in a clan. Some tents around a Games field bear names like “Clan X Society,” while in fact X is not a clan in Scotland, but a Borders or Lowland family. To understand these differences, it’s important to have a grasp of Scottish ethnic history.

Scotland is a mosaic of a nation. The original inhabitants—Britons called *Caledonii* by the Romans and later known as the Picts—were joined by a number of other ethnic groups, including more Britons, Gaels, Angles, Norse, Anglo-Normans, and the Flemish.

To this day, Scotland is geographically, linguistically, and culturally divided between the Gaelic-speaking Highlands and Islands (north and west), the Scots-speaking Lowlands (the central south, and the east as far north as Aberdeen and beyond), and the Scots and English-speaking Borders (south of the Lowlands). The West March of Dumfries and Galloway, in the extreme southwest, is a special case as the people there were later Gael arrivals but traditionally spoke Scots.

## Are we a clan or a family?

The clan is a territorial/kinship/quasi-military social structure of the Highlands and Islands, although the “Riding Families” in the Borders had many

commonalities. But the majority of Scotland’s population lives (and always has lived) in the Lowlands, which has never had a clan system. Nor did Lowlanders go in for kilts and tartans. Somewhere between sixty and sixty-six percent of all Scottish immigrants to North America were Lowland Scots, many via the Ulster Plantations. (This latter group became known as Scots-Irish—a term invented by a New York newspaper intended as an insult.)

Clans were a consequence of grafting the Anglo-Norman feudal system onto preexisting territorial holdings. The new system featured a military elite, and the prior socialistic form of shared land stewardship became a top-down hierarchy. Chiefs loved it, of course, especially if their office came with a feudal dignity such as Baron and a call to sit in Parliament.

Scotland had about 330 ancient families whose chiefs were recognised by the Crown. Some of these are Highlands clans, some Lowland families, some from the Borders or the West March. There are partial lists of clans, such as the 1587 list reproduced on page 26 that takes pains to distinguish the Highlands and Borders from the Lowlands, which had no clans.

Except for in the arable Central Lowlands and the coastal areas of the Northeast, the staple crop was whatever would grow on the strath (the land beside a burn



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A page from the Travel Album of Hieronymus Tielsch, c. 1603–1616, HM25863, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California. This image is claimed to be the earliest known work showing Highlanders wearing tartan. Originally, tartan patterns typically represented districts, and only much later came to be associated with surnames and clans.

or small river running through a glen) or on marginal hillsides, supplemented by seasonal common grazing of livestock. Raiding the neighbors' cattle was a national sport, which led to defended glens that opened out to a river, a loch, or the sea, and served as natural defensible stock-pens and thus homelands.

The chief and his military *fine* (the warrior elite, who were often—but not necessarily—close family) kept order and provided defense in return for tribute. The individual glens, straths, and lochsides were looked after by lesser “gentry.” This system took naturally to feudalism. Genetic relationships were less important than fealty—anyone on the land could and would call themselves by the chief’s surname, regardless of any actual kinship.

Clans were territorial, accepting the authority of the dominant local group and acknowledging that chief as the patriarch, head, main landowner, defender, military commander, and dispenser of justice. Dependent families and individuals often adopted the clan name as

an indicator of affiliation and fealty to the chief, so very often there is no genetic descent from a common ancestor or from the chiefly house—a problematic issue in these days of Y-DNA tests and genetic genealogy. (The Lowlands were also feudal, but with much less emphasis on lands given over to kin. The hierarchical relationship was essentially economic, regardless of surname.)

### The origins of the clan system

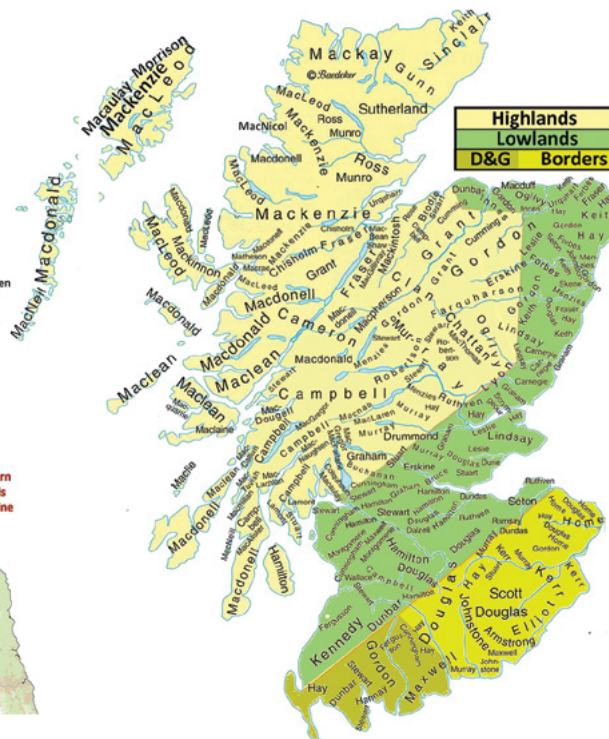
The first known divisions of Scotland were territorial, but with some reference to kinship. Large tribal districts were sensibly determined by the topography—based around islands and along rivers and lochs, etc. Actual kinship was not the issue so much as geographical co-locality.

The original concept of Highland clan heritage did not include a surname. At this point, and well into the thirteenth century, surnames (that passed unchanged from fathers to sons) were a rarity. Instead, patronymics were used; Iain’s son, Fergus—Fergus MacIain or Johnson—had sons who were all known as Fergus’s son—MacFergus or Fergusson. The more important concept was *duthchas*—the right of the chiefs and senior members of the clan to inhabit and control territories. In exchange for the rule and protection provided, all clansmen recognised the personal authority of the chiefs

Map of Scotland showing geographical regions



Clan and family map



and his captains as the clan's trustees for the lands, honor, and patrimony. The growing power of the king of Scots was expressed in the granting of charters to the chiefs and lairds that defined the lands held—known as their *oighreachd* (or *eiraght*, meaning “heritage” in the sense of stewardship and inheritance, over and above mere ancestry).

### Feudalism in Scotland

The feudal system was a natural outcome of the imposition of Anglo-Norman concepts that David I (r. 1124–1153) imported into Scotland when he took the Scottish throne. David I was familiar with the system in England, where he had spent years at the court of his brother-in-law, Henry I. He saw the possibility of feudalism to harness but also reward the powerful *mormaers* (“earls”) and

other large landowners, including chiefs. The basic feudal concept is a hierarchy of heritable possession; while all land ultimately belonged to the Crown, parcels were granted in perpetuity to tenants-in-chief, termed barons.

In exchange, barons originally owed a stated amount of military service by so many armed men, and then, eventually, payment in cash or kind—farm produce, fish, wood, etc. Barons themselves could parcel out heritable parts of their estate to others, whether family or not, again in return for service or payment of some kind, even if only nominal (“peppercorn”). As chiefs naturally wished to bind their relatives and supporters to them, and because the clan's warrior elite (the *fine*) naturally wished to become landowners and thereby territorial warlords, the system suited the Highlands and



## The list of Clans in the Act of 1587, 8 July, Edinburgh, Parliamentary Register

The full document can be read in the original Scots or in a modern translation at *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707* database ([rps.ac.uk](https://rps.ac.uk); search the translated version for “disordered subjects” and select the relevant 1587 entry).

The roll of the clans that have captains, chiefs and chieftains whom on they depend, often times against the will of their landlords, as well on the borders as highlands, and of some special persons of branches of the said clans

### BORDERS

**Middle March (Roxburghshire, Selkirkshire, Peeblesshire and sometimes Liddisdail)**

Armstrong  
Crosier  
Elliott  
Nixon

**West March (Dumfries & Galloway)**

Bateson  
Bell  
Carruther  
Glendinning  
Graham  
Irving  
Jardine  
Johnston  
Latimer  
Little  
Moffat  
Scotts of Ewesdale  
Thomson

### HIGHLANDS AND ISLES

Clan Andrew  
Buchanan  
Clan Cameron  
Campbell of Inverawe  
Campbell of Lochnell  
Clan Chattan  
Clan Donachie in Atholl and parts adjacent  
Clan Dowell of Lorne  
Ferguson  
Fraser  
Graham of Menteith  
Grant  
Clan Gregor  
Clan Ian  
Clan Kenzie  
Clan Kinnon  
Clan Laren  
Clan Leod of Harris  
Clan Lewis of the Lewis  
MacFarlane, Arrochar

MacIntosh in Atholl  
Clan MacKean of Ardvorlich  
MacNab  
Clan MacThomas in Glenshee  
Menzies in Atholl and Apnadull  
Munro  
Murray in Sutherland  
Clan Neil  
Clan Ranald in Lochaber  
Clan Ranald of Knoydart, Moidart and Glengarry  
Spalding  
Stewart of Balquhitter  
Stewart of Lorne or of Appin  
Stewarts of Atholl and parts adjacent

Highland targe [shield], 1700–1750.  
Metropolitan Museum of Art.

the Borders well. David I also used this system to reward his Anglo-Norman, Flemish, and French supporters by inserting them into the landed society.

The old Gaelic clans and families now rubbed shoulders with and intermarried Anglo-Normans, particularly where the Highlands met the Lowlands—such as the Earls of Strathearn and the Cheyne (Le Chene) family in Perthshire—in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Gaelic was by no means the predominant culture or language in Scotland by the twelfth century. Normanization—a process started by the elite generation that included the royal parents of David I—meant that the landed classes spoke Norman French and the clergy and scribes necessarily knew Latin, but the native language was more similar to Northumbrian English influenced by Angles and Danes and the earlier Pictish/Cumbric, similar to Welsh.

### Development of the clan system

The clan system as we know it probably developed after the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314—there is no mention of the word “clan” in any of the chronicles describing the Wars of Independence fought by Robert Bruce at that time. The system was based in earlier kinship groupings inherited from Irish-Gaelic society, ca. 1000–1100, as evidenced by various genealogies of the time. David I (1084–1153) imposed feudalism on Scotland after 1124, as did the many charters granted during the reign of David II (1324–1371), beginning in 1364.

Clans were especially mentioned in an act of the Scottish Parliament on July 29, 1587, when an act passed “for

the quieting and keeping in obedience of the disorderly persons, inhabitants of the borders, highlands and isles” referenced the “Chiftanis and chieffis of all clannis . . . duelland in the hielands or bordouris,” and helpfully provided a listing of these clans. (See opposite page.)

Most clans were small. They could field in battle only a few hundred men, suggesting a total clan membership typically in the range of 500–1,500.

### Suppressing the clans

In various records of Parliament and of the Privy Council from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, “clan” was used to denote surname-based alliances, usually tempestuous ones, that officialdom wanted to quell in some way. The word was used pejoratively, much as we might refer to a “gang.”

The Statutes of Iona, passed in 1609, imposed a series of agreements on Highland chiefs, which included banning hospitality, strong drink (nice try!), the sheltering of fugitives, the existence of bards, and other aspects of the traditional culture. The chiefs were also required to have their heirs educated at Protestant “Inglische”-speaking (meaning Scots rather than Gaelic) schools in the Lowlands.

The Disarming Act of 1715 didn’t have the desired effect, although a later one in 1746/47 did. The Battle of Culloden in 1746 resulted in the defeat of the Scottish Jacobite uprising led by Charles Edward Stuart, “Bonnie Prince Charlie,” by a British government determined to crush the power of the clans and tame Scotland. (In fact, more Scots fought at Culloden against Bonnie Prince Charlie than were on his side.)

A chief once had great legal and administrative powers (as a baron or hereditary sheriff) but the Heritable Jurisdictions Act 1746 removed most of the chief’s legal powers over his clan. (Lowland barons and chiefs were equally affected.) A Proscription Act in 1747 against wearing tartan (unless in a Highland regiment of the British army, such as the Black Watch) also greatly diminished the prominence of the clans. ♦

*The Last of the Clan* (1865) by Thomas Faed. Image courtesy of the Fleming Collection. Depicting Scots left behind after the departure of a steamship of emigrants, the painting laments a lost way of life.



# Clan Q&A

## Is everyone in a clan related?

Not necessarily. Every person who has the same surname as the chief is considered to be a member of that chief's clan or family. Additionally, anyone who offers allegiance to a particular chief is recognised as a member of that clan or family unless the chief decides otherwise. Also, it is a convenient fiction in heraldry—and accepted as no more than that—that everyone with the same surname as a chief is heraldically related.

The best-known example of unrelated people bearing the same surname is that of Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat (ca. 1667–1747), who offered a boll (about six bushels) of meal to those nearby who pledged their allegiance to him and took the name Fraser as their own. Thus, Scottish clans could consist of “native men” (who had some kin relationship to the chief and each other), and “broken men” (individuals, or groups from other clans, who sought the protection of the chief and offered fealty to him).

By the way, ignore the non-historical nonsense of “sept lists”—lists of surnames associated with particular clans—that were largely dreamed up by author Frank Adam, who wrote on the topic in *Malaya* just before 1900.

## Is a clan better than a family?

No, the two have the same status, as do their chiefs. And it is important to note that not everyone living in the Highlands is or was part of a clan. Some Highland families cannot claim clan status, as they had no extensive following, no defined lands, no military structure, and no history of acting as a clan. For example, the MacSporrans were hereditary purse-bearers to the Lords of the Isles rather than a clan in their own right.

Somehow, “clan” came to be regarded as higher in status and more authentically Scottish than “family.” In reality, chiefs of both clans and families—whether from the Highlands, Lowlands, or Borders—are of equal standing. Some families have older and more distinguished origins than some famous clans. For instance, the Chief of Bruce (Andrew Bruce, Lord Elgin) is adamant that Bruce is not a clan but a Lowland family, and the same goes for Durie, Wallace, and many other great names. Yet they all have a chief, and an honorable and ancient history.



Major Alan MacGregor Whitton wearing a MacGregor tartan and plaid, Scotland, September 1950. Photo by Toni Frissell. Library of Congress.

## But the Lord Lyon says we're a clan!

The Lord Lyon—who regulates heraldry in Scotland—says no such thing. Lyon's jurisdiction is heraldic and can only recognise a “Chief of Name and Arms.” Lyon

may, when granting arms, allude to “... of Clan MacX,” but this is only a recording or acknowledgment of a chiefship by attestation. Lyon cannot declare clan status judicially, and no Scottish court can determine disputes of competing claimants to a chiefship. A chief's authority derives from being chosen by his or her own following. However, the Lyon Court does take a hand in choosing a chief, by virtue of the Family Convention mechanism, which has replaced the earlier *derbhfine*—the choice of chief determined by several “armigerous or landed gentlemen of the Clan.”

## So, if we're not a clan, why does our society have “clan” in its name?

You'd have to ask whoever started the society. But use of the word “clan” likely came from the mistaken idea that everyone in Scotland lived in the Highlands and wore kilts and tartans and rushed around the glens wielding a claymore.

After the 1820s, when the idea of clans was romanticized, some Lowland surname societies in North America begin to attach “clan” to their names. The recurrent interest and enthusiasm for clans stems from the writings of Sir Walter Scott, Highlands tourism in the nineteenth century, late-Victorian “Celtic” Romanticism, and, more recently, the excesses of *Brigadoon*, *Braveheart*, *Outlander*, and so forth. Modern clans, augmented by Scots overseas, can now number their members in the thousands.

## Is there an official list of clans and/or families anywhere?

Not yet ... but a few of us are currently working towards that goal! ♦

# Scottish Connections

In January, we asked readers of our *Weekly Genealogist* newsletter to share stories about their Scottish ancestors. A selection is presented below.

**Michael Hogan, Georges Mills, New Hampshire:** My ancestor William Munro was born to Robert Munro and his unidentified wife in Aldie, Scotland, about 1625. William was a descendant of Donald Munro who founded the Munro Clan in 1025. William fought on the losing side of the 1651 Battle of Worcester and was captured and transported to Boston. He was bound into indentured servitude and hired out to a farmer in what was later Lexington. His descendants became proprietors of the famous Munroe Tavern on Lexington Common.

**Jody Barrett, South Palm Beach, Florida:** In October 1770, my ancestor John Ramsay and his wife, six sons, and two nephews were one of sixty families on board the barque *Annabella* of Campbelltown, Kintyre, Scotland, when it wrecked off Princetown, Prince Edward Island. The ship's passengers lost all their possessions but found welcome shelter in local homes. Descendants of these settlers have played an important part in PEI's history.

**Cerelle Bolon, Phoenix, Arizona:** When reading *Outlander*, the popular novel by Diana Gabaldon, I was amazed to see a footnote that named my ancestor Alexander Clark as one of the author's inspirations for her lead character, James Alexander Fraser. In 1736, Alexander Clark brought several immigrants who had suffered religious persecution from the Isle of Jura, Argyll County, Scotland, to North Carolina.

**Janice M. Moerschel, Spokane, Washington:** My father, Charles Brown, was born in Holytown, Scotland. His father, a coal miner, died in 1925 when Charles was only nine. His widowed mother brought three sons and a daughter to West Virginia in 1926. Coal mining was the major industry, and a stepbrother had already settled there. The family relocated permanently to New York City in about 1931. I

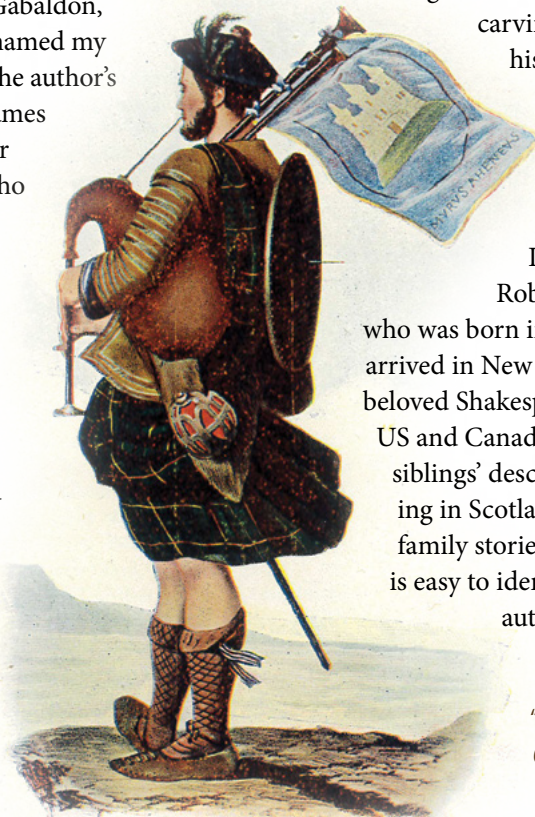
am proud of my Scottish heritage. I visited Scotland in 2013 and located my grandfather's headstone.

**Mary Hall Kelly, Prescott, Arizona:** I have eight Dunbar Scot prisoners of war ancestors who were transported to New England in 1650 on the *Unity*. In my father's line are William Furbish, William Gowan, and John Neale; in my mother's line are Alexander Cooper, Peter Grant, George Gray, and John Taylor. Both of my parents descend from James Warren. Most of these men were indentured at the Great Works sawmill in South Berwick, Maine. They settled on or near the Salmon Falls River. Generations of my family have lived in "the Berwicks," where I grew up.

**Lisa Folger, Warren, New Hampshire:** My ancestor William Campbell was recruited by Simon Frasier in Scotland in 1757 to be a soldier during the Seven Years War. His regiment was deployed to New France and became known as Frasier's Highlanders, the 78th Regiment of Foot. William remained in Canada. Even before the war ended, he married a French-Canadian woman, Josephe Chartier; had two children (five more followed); and purchased land near Montreal.

**Kim Brown, Moberly, Missouri:** Two of my husband's great-grandfathers worked in the stone industry in Aberdeen, Scotland. One of them, James Will, a granite carver, traveled between Aberdeen and Barre, Vermont, for several seasons before settling in Barre in 1892. The granite in both places was similar. His carvings included a gravestone for his wife and himself. Sadly, James died of silicosis from breathing the rock dust—the fate of many in that industry.

**Laurie Sisson, Alexandria, Virginia:** In 1878, my great-grandfather Robert Bruce Mantell (1854–1928), who was born in Irvine, Ayrshire, Scotland, arrived in New York at age 24. He became a beloved Shakespearean actor who toured the US and Canada. My mother and I traced his siblings' descendants and attended a gathering in Scotland. We spent long nights telling family stories and we still keep in touch. It is easy to identify cousins—like us, they have autographed photos of him. ♦



"Mac Cruimin," from *McLan's Costumes of the Clans of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1899), opp. 246.

# GETTING STARTED WITH Scottish GENEALOGICAL RECORDS



Over its long history, Scotland has experienced numerous political and social upheavals, including rebellions, conflicts with ruling monarchs, and periods of hardship. One effect of these many displacements was emigration away from Scotland.

Group portrait detail with John Adamson, Mrs. Adamson, and unidentified individuals in Scotland, ca. 1867. Object number 84.X0.940.8.24. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

Fitzgerald (family) tartan, STA ref. 1419, [tartanregister.gov.uk](http://tartanregister.gov.uk).



David Allen Lambert is Chief Genealogist at American Ancestors.

Some of the first Scots who arrived in North America were involuntary immigrants. Approximately 400 Scottish soldiers captured by Oliver Cromwell's forces at the Battle of Dunbar (1650) and the Battle of Worcester (1651) were transported to New England as indentured servants (see page 18). Voluntary migration from Scotland to North America increased significantly during the eighteenth century, driven largely by rising rents, forced clearances, and other economic pressures. The most concentrated settlement of Scots in America both before and after the Revolution was in North Carolina's Cape Fear Valley (see page 34). In the nineteenth century, as the Industrial Revolution took hold in the United States, Scottish immigrants left not only because of conditions in their homeland but also due to the many available jobs and opportunities across the Atlantic.

In the United States, tens of millions of people have Scottish and Scots-Irish heritage. Whether your forebears emigrated from the Highlands or Ireland's Ulster province, determining the exact place of origin of your Scottish ancestors can be the most challenging part of your search. Knowing the history of Scotland and the characteristics of the many waves of Scottish emigration may assist you in narrowing down possible origins. Records kept in America—such as immigration, naturalization, civil records, and more—may also provide helpful information.

With a town of origin—or at least a shire (county)—your chances of success will be much improved as you begin your research in Scottish records.

## Church records

Scotland's vital records fall into two main periods: pre-and post-1855. Records created before 1855 were maintained by parish churches and are known commonly as "Old Parish Registers" (OPRs). These registers typically document births, marriages and marriage banns, and occasionally deaths or burials. The term "Old Parish Registers" applies not only to Church of Scotland records but also to pre-1855 records kept by other Presbyterian denominations, many of which joined (or rejoined) the Church of Scotland. The records are indexed and searchable on several websites, including FamilySearch and Scotland's People.

## Church of Scotland records

Except for two periods in the 1600s when it was Episcopal, the Church of Scotland has been Presbyterian. The Old Parish Registers (OPRs), covering 1553 to 1854, are indexed by surname and given name. From the nearly 900 parishes

located across Scotland's thirty-three counties, only approximately 3,500 registers survive.

Kirk session books are among the most useful Church of Scotland records for family historians. Containing the minutes of parish meetings held by the minister and church elders, the records document relief to the poor, the parentage of illegitimate children, disciplinary cases, and other church business. The session books may also contain births, marriages, and deaths not recorded in the parish registers. The National Archives of Scotland is currently digitizing kirk session books and other records. Session records of selected parishes are available on microfilm from the FamilySearch Library.

### Catholic Church records

The Catholic Church was the established church in Scotland until the Scottish Reformation in the 1650s. The earliest Catholic records date from 1703 but those are limited in number; most date from the late eighteenth century. Catholic Church records document births, marriages, and deaths, and may also include sacramental dates, sick visits, and lists of parishioners. The Catholic Archives of Scotland has digitized and indexed all their records prior to 1855, as well as most of the subsequent records. These records are available on Scotland's People.

### Nonconformist church records

Other Protestant denominations in Scotland are known as Nonconformist. These include Episcopalians, the Society of Friends, Baptists, Free Church, Methodists, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church. While many Nonconformist registers were turned over to the National

Records of Scotland (which manages Scotland's People), few have been digitized. You may find published abstracts via the FamilySearch Library, and a very few are digitally available via Ancestry and FindMyPast.

### Jewish records

The first Jews arrived in Scotland during the seventeenth century, mostly as students, teachers, and craftsmen. The first Jewish communities in Scotland were established in the late nineteenth century. The Scottish Jewish Archives Centre ([sjac.org.uk](http://sjac.org.uk)) has preserved synagogue member lists, register books, and other information on Jewish communities in Scotland.

### Civil records of birth, marriage, and death

Eighteen years after England and Wales began civil registration, an Act of Parliament required Scotland to follow suit. Civil registration of births, marriages, and deaths began January 1, 1855; records from that date forward are available on Scotland's People.

The law required that births be registered within twenty-one days or parents would be subject to a financial penalty. From 1855 to 1918, birth registers indicated illegitimate births. These entries may have a notation to the left of the entry that corresponds to a record in the Register of Corrected Entries, which identified the fathers of these children. Records may show whether a marriage was regular (the banns were properly proclaimed and the ceremony was performed by a minister) or irregular (a declaration was made by the couple in the presence of witnesses). Death records did not include the name of the deceased's spouse until 1861.

### Census

Scottish census and census substitutes can provide key details about ancestors and immediate family members. The first census was taken in Scotland in 1801 and has occurred every ten years since.



The Church of the Holy Rude and the surrounding kirkyard, Stirling, Scotland. Shutterstock.

### Pre-1841 census

Between 1801 and 1831, Scottish census records contained only statistical information, not individual or family entries. These records summarized occupations, housing, and population figures for each parish, often noting changes from previous censuses and providing explanations. Some parishes also produced separate population lists that included names and occupations.

Some of these pre-1841 census and population lists are available at FindMyPast. Their *Scotland Pre-1841 Censuses and Population Lists* database has records for six parishes: Jedburgh, Greenlaw, Ladykirk, Melrose, Applegarth, and Sibbaldbie.

### Pre-1841 census substitutes

A variety of pre-1841 census substitutes may allow researchers to place ancestors in a specific location, learn about the taxes they paid, and better understand their social statuses. Unfortunately, these substitutes do not survive for every county in Scotland. Many of these records are provided at no charge by Scotland's People.

- Land tax, 1645–1831
- Hearth tax, 1691–1695
- Poll tax, 1694–1698
- Window tax, 1748–1789
- Male servant tax, 1777–1798
- Inhabited house tax, 1778–1798
- Carriage tax, 1785–1798
- Cart tax, 1785–1798
- Female servant tax, 1785–1792
- Horse tax, 1785–1798
- Shop keeper tax, 1785–1789
- Clock and watch tax, 1797–1798
- Dog tax, 1797–1798
- Farm horse tax, 1797–1798

Some surviving church census material can be found in kirk session records, which are also accessible through Scotland's People. Another census substitute, *Rolls of Male Heads of Families, 1834–1845*, can be accessed on Ancestry.



Group of Cameron Highlanders, ca. 1911. Library of Congress.

### Post-1841 census

The 1841 to 1921 Scottish censuses offer a wealth of genealogical detail that generally includes place of birth, age, occupation, and family structure. With this information, you will be better equipped to search church and vital records.

All Scottish censuses from 1841 to 1921, with images, are available at Scotland's People. Ancestry offers transcribed copies (without images) of the 1841 to 1901 censuses. Searchable indexes and images for the 1841 to 1891 censuses and the 1901 name index are at FindMyPast. Currently, Scotland's People is the only provider of searchable records and images for the 1911 and 1921 censuses. The complete 1931 census returns are scheduled to become available in 2031.

### Wills and probate records

Your Scottish ancestors may or may not have left wills—there was no legal requirement to create one. Due to Scottish inheritance laws, probate records are often less informative than American probates. Prior to 1868, names of relatives were frequently not included, and a testator could include only moveable property—items that could be physically transferred, such as money, livestock, and household goods.

An index to wills and testaments for 1513 to 1925 and the original records are available at Scotland's People. Wills registered between 1925 and 1999 have not been digitized and can only be consulted at the National Records of Scotland in Edinburgh. The annual printed *Calendar of Confirmations*—essentially a national will and probate index—is available at ScotlandsPeople and Ancestry for 1876 to 1936. Refer to the National

Records of Scotland's guide to wills and testaments for additional details. In addition, the Scottish Archive Network provides a thorough overview of Scottish wills and testaments from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries ([yourscottisharchives.com/wills-and-testaments](http://yourscottisharchives.com/wills-and-testaments)).

### Military records

Prior to the 1707 union that created the Kingdom of Great Britain, Scotland maintained its own military force, which was raised only when needed and was not a permanent standing army. As a result, few

pre-1707 records survive. FamilySearch provides a detailed listing of military records on both free and subscription-based sites ([familysearch.org/en/wiki/Scotland\\_Military\\_Records](http://familysearch.org/en/wiki/Scotland_Military_Records)).



Family historians with Scottish roots are fortunate to have such a wide range of accessible records that document their ancestors' lives. We hope this guide is helpful to you as you navigate these resources. ♦

If you've made a significant find in a Scottish record, share it with us at [magazine@americanancestors.org](mailto:magazine@americanancestors.org).

## Online resources for Scottish family history research

### American Ancestors

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

Two Scottish databases ([AmericanAncestors.org/browse-database](http://AmericanAncestors.org/browse-database)) are available: *Scotland: Births and Baptisms, 1564–1950* and *Scotland: Marriages, 1561–1910*. The American Ancestors Video Library ([AmericanAncestors.org/video-library](http://AmericanAncestors.org/video-library)) offers the following free programs:

- [Getting Started in Scottish Research](#)
- [Scotland: The Global History, 1603 to the Present](#)
- [Scotland Sublime: Great Houses & Gardens of the Scottish Borders](#)
- [The Scots-Irish in America: Origins and Migrations](#)
- [Tartan Tales: Stories from Historic Scottish Houses](#)
- [Unlocking the Stories of the Scottish Soldiers from the Battle of Dunbar, 1650](#)

### The Court of the Lord Lyon

[courtofthelordlyon.scot](http://courtofthelordlyon.scot)

Scotland's heraldic authority is responsible for all matters related to Scottish heraldry and coats of arms.

### Family Search Library Wiki

[familysearch.org/en/wiki/Scotland\\_Genealogy](http://familysearch.org/en/wiki/Scotland_Genealogy)

This resource provides numerous links to Scottish research topics and records. Two FamilySearch guides are particularly useful: "Finding Your Ancestors in Scotland before 1855" ([FamilySearch.org/en/wiki/Finding\\_Your\\_Ancestors\\_in\\_Scotland\\_before\\_1855](http://FamilySearch.org/en/wiki/Finding_Your_Ancestors_in_Scotland_before_1855)) and "Finding Records of Your Ancestors, Scotland, 1855–1901" ([FamilySearch.org/en/wiki/Finding\\_Records\\_of\\_Your\\_Ancestors\\_in\\_Scotland\\_1855\\_To\\_1901](http://FamilySearch.org/en/wiki/Finding_Records_of_Your_Ancestors_in_Scotland_1855_To_1901)).

### National Library of Scotland

[nls.uk/digital-resources](http://nls.uk/digital-resources)

This website provides access to over 400,000 digital maps, a digital gallery of family history resources, and catalogs to the National Library of Scotland's many collections.

### National Records of Scotland

[nrscotland.gov.uk](http://nrscotland.gov.uk)

Online offerings include catalogs of records held by the archives and many helpful finding aids. Of particular note are guides on conducting research in Scotland ([nrscotland.gov.uk/learning-and-events/research-guides](http://nrscotland.gov.uk/learning-and-events/research-guides)) and wills and testaments ([nrscotland.gov.uk/learning-and-events/research-guides/wills-and-testaments](http://nrscotland.gov.uk/learning-and-events/research-guides/wills-and-testaments)).

### The Register of Tartans

[tartanregister.gov.uk](http://tartanregister.gov.uk)

Thousands of designs are available in this searchable register. Users can also register new tartans.

### Scotland's People

[scotlandsppeople.gov.uk](http://scotlandsppeople.gov.uk)

This official government site is an essential resource for Scottish family history research. Holdings include a range of church, civil, and census records, plus a variety of other useful collections. While many resources are free, users must register and purchase credits to access some individual records.

### Scottish Handwriting

[scottishhandwriting.com](http://scottishhandwriting.com)

This resource offers guidance on reading historic Scottish manuscript records from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries.



## North Carolina, a Haven for Highlanders Between Rebellions, 1745–1776



When considering eighteenth-century Scottish settlements in America, North Carolina often comes to mind first. Diana Gabaldon’s *Outlander* books and the subsequent television series offer a striking representation of the experiences of Scottish Highlanders who made their way to the North Carolina interior in the years between the failed Jacobite Rising of 1745—the final attempt by the House of Stuart to regain the British throne—and the American Declaration of Independence of 1776.

Cape Fear Valley was the hub of settlement for Scottish Highlanders. From the North Carolina ports of Wilmington and Brunswick, the Scots could sail up the Cape Fear River. Settlers branched outward along its tributaries throughout the sand hills in this coastal plain region.<sup>1</sup> For four consecutive decades, at least one cohesive emigration party departed Scotland and resettled as a unit in North Carolina. By the time immigration halted with the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, an estimated 12,000 Scottish Highlanders lived in this region of the colony.

The earliest organized emigration from the Highlands to Cape Fear occurred prior to the events of 1745.

A party of 350 emigrants left Kintyre, a peninsula in southwestern Scotland, aboard the *Thistle* and arrived at the mouth of Cape Fear River in September 1739. That winter, the group’s leaders successfully petitioned for a ten-year tax exemption, and, in June 1740, heads of families received land grants along the river in what was then Bladen County. There, in an area later dubbed “Valley of the Scots,” the Argyll Colony was established.<sup>2</sup>

In 1754, Cumberland County was formed around the most densely settled part of the Upper Cape Fear region. That same year, the most notable group of immigrants to the Cape Fear Valley in the years following the Jacobite Rising of 1745 arrived from the Isle of Jura, off the coast of Argyll. These Scots had ties to the 1739 group. Piecing together data from manifests (of goods and passengers) for the *Mary of Glasgow* and Argyll sheriff court records, historian Alexander Murdoch identified many of these immigrants. One important source was a list of 139 “souls” who were listed in a petition, “A Note of the people intending a Voyage for Cape fair in North Carolina.” Rising rents had forced out these emigrants, and the prospect of losing their rent payments caused



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A view of the Cape Fear River shoreline at Carolina Beach State Park, in North Carolina. Shutterstock.  
North Carolina “geographical conversation card,” 1824. Library of Congress.

their landlord, Archibald Campbell, to petition against the emigration.<sup>3</sup> Although Campbell ultimately dropped his resistance in favor of compensation, the court documents preserved the names of many early Scottish immigrants.

During the 1760s, the towns of Cross Creek and Cambellton were established along Cross Creek, a tributary of Cape Fear River. (The towns merged in 1783 and became Fayetteville, which remains the seat of Cumberland County.) Scottish immigrants continued to arrive in the area that decade, including settlers from the Isle of Jura who landed at Brunswick, North Carolina, on November 4, 1767. A list of acreage allotted in Cumberland County identified heads of household who were part of this group and noted the number of people in each family. For these fifty settlers, a total of 5,040 acres was granted. Many of the patents assigning ownership were issued in December 1769 and April 1770 for lands along Upper Little River and nearby waterways.<sup>4</sup>

In the five years prior to 1776, a “Carolina mania” brought over shiploads of Highlanders. In March 1771, North Carolina passed “An Act to encourage the further settlement of this Province” by exempting European immigrants from paying taxes for four years. According to Governor William Tryon, an estimated 1,600 Scottish immigrants had arrived in the colony in a three-year span, citing high rents as their primary reason for leaving their homeland. Soon thereafter, letters and a pamphlet promoting North Carolina were circulated around the western isles of Scotland.<sup>5</sup>

Fortunately, the resulting surge of Scottish Highlanders into North Carolina was well tracked on both sides

of the Atlantic Ocean. Lists of passengers departing for North America were recorded in Scotland and England from December 1773—when British customs officials received instructions to name all those departing from their ports—until 1776. While serving as Secretary of the North Carolina Historical Commission in the 1930s, A. R. Newsome extracted and transcribed the lists of those destined for North Carolina ports. He counted “nearly five hundred names ... [in] nearly one hundred family groups” leaving primarily from three counties, Argyle, Caithness, and Sutherland.<sup>6</sup>

The rent issue continued to sway people to emigrate. Nearly all of the ninety-three passengers aboard the *Ulysses* sailing from Greenock, Scotland, to Wilmington, North Carolina, in August 1774, for example, cited “high rents and oppression” as their reasons for leaving. The passengers on the *Bachelor of Leith*, who underwent extra questioning during a weather-related stopover in the Shetland Islands in May 1774, detailed how rising rents and the cost of bread directly and personally impacted their families. Many of them chose North Carolina based on encouraging letters sent by friends and family already living there.<sup>7</sup>

In North Carolina, the number of lands granted to and purchased by Scottish Highlanders spiked. Between 1732 and 1775, at least 691 grant recipients bore Scottish Highlander names, and the majority of those patents were issued during the 1770s.<sup>8</sup>

Ship manifests and land grants provide the foundation for researching Scottish Highlanders who settled in the Cape Fear Valley throughout the four decades of the mid-1700s. Transcriptions and data extracted

## North Carolina resources

- State Archives of North Carolina (SANC), at [Archives.ncdcr.gov](https://Archives.ncdcr.gov) and [Digital.ncdcr.gov](https://Digital.ncdcr.gov)
- North Carolina Land Grant Data and Images, at [NCLandGrants.com](https://NCLandGrants.com), operated by North Carolina Historical Records Online ([NCHistoricalRecords.org](https://NCHistoricalRecords.org))
- DigitalNC by the North Carolina Digital Heritage Center, at [DigitalNC.org](https://DigitalNC.org)
- David Dobson’s *Directory of Scots in the Carolinas, 1680–1830*, at [Ancestry.com/search/collections/48518](https://Ancestry.com/search/collections/48518)



The Cape Fear River drainage basin. Fayetteville, a major center for Scottish settlers, is marked. Kmusser/Wikimedia Commons.



Flora McDonald College, May Day Scottish dancers doing the Scottish Fling, 1910–1916. From the Barden Collection, North Carolina State Archives ([Flickr.com/photos/north-carolina-state-archives/2348111892](https://www.flickr.com/photos/north-carolina-state-archives/2348111892)).

from these record sets have been published as digitized records. Researchers can start with a name-based compilation like David Dobson's *Directory of Scots in the Carolinas, 1680–1830* and follow the source citations.<sup>9</sup>

For records concerning ships traveling between Scotland and the colony of North Carolina, researchers should check both departure and arrival locations. Original passenger manifests (and related records) during this time period typically were created at points of embarkation and thus are held by the UK National Archives ([NationalArchives.gov.uk](http://NationalArchives.gov.uk)). Meanwhile, North

Carolina ports kept cargo manifests, and many of those that survived can be accessed via North Carolina Digital Collections ([digital.ncdcr.gov/spotlights/nc-ports](http://digital.ncdcr.gov/spotlights/nc-ports)).

Colonial North Carolina land offices granted patents to settlers beginning in 1729. Land grant files and land patent books, stored by the State Archives of North Carolina (SANC) in Raleigh, are digitally accessible at no cost at [NCLandGrants.com](http://NCLandGrants.com). In addition to featuring a flexible method of searching by name, this website also offers a location query. Searching for a specific waterway, for example, will show everyone who settled nearby at any given time. Since so many Scottish Highlanders migrated together, neighboring grants can produce clues to a family's kinship network and origins.

The first wave of migration between the Scottish Highlands and North Carolina halted due to the Revolutionary War. Many former Highlanders actively supported the Loyalist cause. Although some Highlanders chose to leave the area following the British defeat, the Upper Cape Fear region still counted the Scots as their largest population through the early 1800s. North Carolina's Scottish heritage continues to be celebrated today through cultural societies, museums, and festivals. ♦

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Duane Meyer, *The Highland Scots of North Carolina 1732–1776* (University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 54–101.

<sup>2</sup> A. I. B. Stewart, "The North Carolina Settlement of 1739," *Scottish Genealogist* 32, no. 1 (March 1985):7–13; Meyer, *The Highland Scots* [note 1], 72–82; J. P. MacLean, *A Historical Account of the Settlements of Scotch Highlanders in America Prior to the Peace of 1783* (Helman-Taylor Co., 1900), 104–107; and William L. Saunders, ed., *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, 10 vols. (Raleigh, 1886–1890), 4:453–454, 489–490.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Murdoch, "Two Scottish Documents Concerning Emigration to North Carolina in 1754," *North Carolina Historical Review* 93, no. 4 (Oct. 2016):361–385, at [jstor.org/stable/44114474](http://jstor.org/stable/44114474).

<sup>4</sup> Meyer, *The Highland Scots* [note 1], 75–81, 86–96; Saunders, *The Colonial Records* [note 2], 7:543–544; and N.C., Cumberland County Land grants, file nos. 949–959, 964–965, 973–977, 980 and Land patent books, 20:532–534, 544, 564–565, 567, 573, at [NCLandGrants.com](http://NCLandGrants.com).

<sup>5</sup> MacLean, *A Historical Account* [note 2], 107–122, 419–422; Meyer, *The Highland Scots* [note 1], 37–44, 84–86, 91–94;

Alexander Murdoch, "A Scottish Document Concerning Emigration to North Carolina in 1772," *North Carolina Historical Review* 67, no. 4 (Oct. 1990):438–449, at [jstor.org/stable/23519133](http://jstor.org/stable/23519133); and Saunders, *The Colonial Records* [note 2], 8:525–526.

<sup>6</sup> A. R. Newsome, ed., *Record of Emigrants from England and Scotland to North Carolina 1774–1775*, rev. ed. (North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 2007); "Weekly Emigration Return" and "Emigration Returns, Scotland to North America," 1773–1776, T [HM Treasury] 47, Bundles 9–12, National Archives, Kew, England, in *Early Emigration From Britain, 1636–1815*, at [FindMyPast.co.uk](http://FindMyPast.co.uk).

<sup>7</sup> Newsome, *Record of Emigrants* [note 6], 13–25; "Emigration Returns, Scotland to North America," 1774–1775, T 47/12, National Archives, Kew, England, in *Early Emigration From Britain, 1636–1815*, at [FindMyPast.co.uk](http://FindMyPast.co.uk), images 44–60, 72–74.

<sup>8</sup> Meyer, *The Highland Scots* [note 1], 89–101.

<sup>9</sup> David Dobson, *Directory of Scots in the Carolinas, 1680–1830*, 2 vols. (Genealogical Pub. Co., 1986–2004).

# More than a Name



A detail of *Map of Louisiana, View of New Orleans, 1720*.  
Drawn by de Beauvilliers. Library of Congress.

## Jacqueline Lemelle's Life of Enslavement and Freedom in French Colonial Louisiana

**My ancestor Jacqueline was just a name to me when I began my research on her. All I knew was that she was enslaved in colonial Louisiana and freed in 1772 by Jacques Lemelle, her former enslaver and the father of three of her children. She adopted his surname and lived with him and their children until his death. But I knew Jacqueline had more to her life story, and I was determined to know her as best I could across centuries.**

My interest in genealogy began later in my life, in the late 1990s, after my mother had died. Her brother Gilbert Lemelle had pursued our family history for decades, following our line back to one of Jacqueline's daughters, Marie Jeanne Lemelle (1750–1834). But he could go no further. We knew something of our French ancestors, the Lemelles, who could be traced back to Paris in the late 1600s. But the lives of our earliest



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ancestors of color were little more than cardboard stereotypes—enslaved people (some of whom were later freed) who had no known history. I was determined to learn more about them. Not for grand purposes, just for me.

Identifying Jacqueline as Marie Jeanne's mother was relatively easy. Marie Jeanne's 1772 emancipation record referred to her as the "hija de otra mulata numbrada Jacquolina"—"daughter of another mulatress called Jacqueline." However, the details of Jacqueline's life came more slowly, only after I analyzed old French and Spanish probate, property, and church records, and countless other documents. And only after learning an invaluable lesson. I learned the hard way that secondary and tertiary sources should be taken with a grain of salt. A sketch of Jacqueline's life was published<sup>1</sup> and other authors referenced her in passing, but her actual history did not emerge until I disregarded these accounts and started from scratch.

Jacqueline's story begins with an Acadian named Jean Labbé. Labbé had a farm at Cannes Bruslées (present-day Kenner), north of New Orleans, where he lived with his wife, Christine (Allard), and their children, Jean, Jeanne, Charlotte, and Jean Baptiste. When Labbé first settled in the area in the mid-1720s, he held no enslaved people, according to the local French census of 1727.<sup>2</sup> But by 1737, Labbé had become heavily indebted to the French Company of the Indies—a monopolistic trading company that was a major importer of slaves, settlers, and supplies to Louisiana. Labbé owed "7520 livres" for "negroes and advances of money."<sup>3</sup> One of these "negroes" was Jacqueline's mother.

After Labbé's death on March 7, 1738, his widow was elected as tutrix, or guardian, of the minor children. A family friend, Pierre Joseph Delille dit Dupard, a neighbor in the 1727 census, was elected as undertutor, an additional secondary guardian.

Three of Labbé's children married before his estate was settled in 1746. In 1739, 16-year-old Jeanne married Pierre Laurent Ducoder, an officer of the militia and man of some status in the young colony. Largely due to the decisions of Delille dit Dupard, the Labbé estate contributed a dowry in advance of Jeanne's inheritance equivalent to 3,000 livres in enslaved people and property. In December 1744, Charlotte Labbé married Guillaume Vincent DuPre<sup>4</sup> and, in October 1745, Jean Labbé married Jeanne Julie Ozenne.<sup>5</sup> Neither of these siblings received advances comparable to those provided to Jeanne.

Given the disparity, concern arose that Guillaume Vincent DuPre and Jean Labbé might challenge the distribution of assets. To stave off litigation, a settlement was reached on June 6, 1746, between the Labbé estate and these households. As part of that agreement,

Guillame and Charlotte Vincent DuPre received two enslaved siblings—"a mulatress named Jaqueline, a Creole age about eighteen years, and Jean, a mulatto, her brother, age about 11 years."<sup>6</sup>

This young woman was Jacqueline. With this record and her November 1772 emancipation record indicating she was 42, I had an approximate time frame for her birth. I searched surviving baptismal records for the area and only one record matched. Comprised of a single line of text, the January 17, 1730, entry stated that "Jacquemine," "a mulatress girl of a Negresse belonging to Mr. Labbé, inhabitant" was baptized.<sup>7</sup>

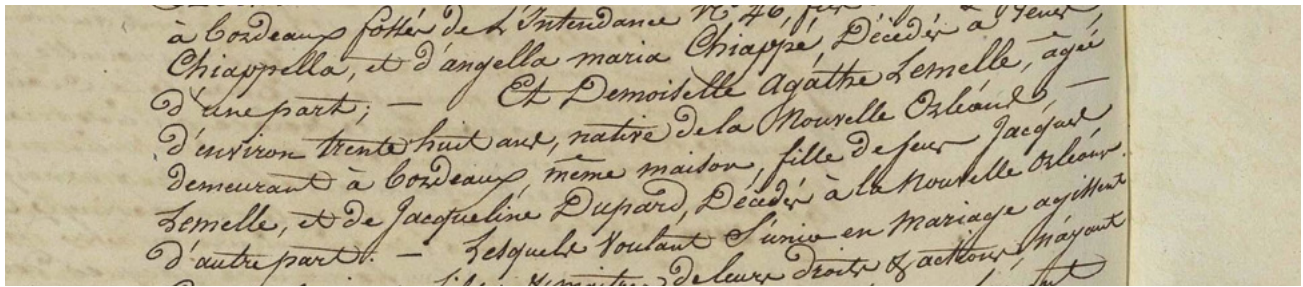
After living in the Labbé household for eighteen years, Jacqueline was separated from her mother, who was presumably later sold in connection with the final disposition of the Labbé estate. Jacqueline became the property of Charlotte (Labbé) Vincent DuPre, who was no more than four years her senior and perhaps a former playmate. Within a few years—by April 29, 1750—Charlotte's husband died.<sup>8</sup>

In about 1750, around the time of Charlotte's marriage to Michael Paquet,<sup>9</sup> Jacqueline had her first



Plan de la Nouvelle Orleans, 1764. Created by cartographer Jacques Bellin. Tulane University Special Collections.





A detail from the 1810 Bordeaux, France, marriage record of Agathe Lemelle and Jerome Chiapella. The record is the only one to provide Jacqueline's original surname as Dupard, thus identifying Jacqueline's father.

confirmed to him by Sr. Braud, his brother-in-law, who could not correct her misbehavior toward the Lady, his mother, who is aged and infirm. The said mulatress Jaqueline responded to the smallest thing asked of her that she would not do it, that she does not have to follow the orders of any person, that she is free, and that upon my return she would go away on her own. Sirs, I beg you, that my intention is not to grant this freedom, if you please, inasmuch as the aforementioned mulatress Jaqueline by her continuous pattern of behavior and performance in my absence did not act at all in accordance with my will. Thus, I want to annul the said liberty and make her my slave again.

This second petition was granted, and Jacqueline's freedom was revoked. Jacques sold Auguste, Jacqueline's son with Gasparde Gardelle, to Gardelle on July 19, 1767, requiring him to free the child upon maturity.<sup>16</sup>

Jacqueline had two additional daughters (Jeanne "Tonton" Françoise and Adelaide) with Jacques in 1769 and 1771. Their baptismal records describe Jacqueline as the "mulatresse slave of Mr. Lemelle."

Jacques's anger towards Jacqueline softened over time. On November 10, 1772, he freed her and their three daughters. Less than a month later, on December 5, 1772, Jacqueline financed the emancipation of her daughter Marie Jeanne and her granddaughter Julia from François Lemelle.<sup>17</sup> Other researchers have overlooked the fact that on the same day, for an additional payment, François also freed a mulatto man named Jean. Jean, who upon emancipation took the name "Jean Paquet," was almost certainly Jacqueline's brother.

Jacqueline and her daughters lived with Jacques for the rest of his life. Plus, the 1778 New Orleans census revealed another member of the Lemelle household—a mixed race, male child less than age 13. This child was likely Auguste, Jacqueline's son with Gasparde Gardelle. According to the 1767 sale document, the child would be permitted to remain with Jacqueline after six months if Gardelle paid a daily fee.

Jacques Lemelle died in 1784. In his will, he left a substantial portion of his estate—both enslaved people and real property—to Jacqueline and their daughters. Jacqueline died by 1794.

The final records documenting Jacqueline's life story were created after her death. In 1810, Jacqueline's daughter Agathe married a white man, Jerome Chiapella, in Bordeaux, France (because interracial marriages were not permitted in Louisiana). The marriage register described Agathe as a "native of New Orleans" and a daughter of "Jacques Lemelle ... and Jacqueline Dupard."<sup>18</sup>

This source was the only one to provide a name for Jacqueline's father. "Dupard" was undoubtedly Pierre Delille dit Dupard, a friend and neighbor of the Labbé family and the undertutor of the Labbé children in the 1730s. Dupard had a clear attachment to the name Jacqueline. It was his wife's name, and he likely chose it for his enslaved daughter Jacqueline when she was born about 1730. In 1732, Dupard even gave the name to his daughter with his wife.

Jacqueline's mother was likely Angélique Perret, who was enslaved by a man named Jean Perret and freed by him sometime prior to 1772. The evidence is persuasive. When Jacqueline's brother, Jean Paquet, died in 1788, he left a will that directed his wife to care for his mother, "Angélique Perret, a free Negro." In 1746, when the Labbé family holdings were finally settled, four enslaved adult black women were part of the estate. These women were likely brought from Africa and sold to Labbé by the Company of the Indies. One was a woman named Angélique.<sup>19</sup>

After Angélique Perret's death, on June 4, 1805, her property now known as at 519 Royal Street in New Orleans was sold.<sup>20</sup> The sellers were two groups of free people of color that were owners "by right of succession"—Angélique's heirs. The first group was represented by Louis Dusuau—Jacqueline's second child—and included all of Jacqueline's children—by Davion, Dusuau, Lemelle, and Gardelle.

Jacqueline knew her parents and her history and passed this knowledge to her children. She was the first of her maternal line born in Louisiana, an original Creole. Her mother was an African who was freed before she was. Her father was a white man who likely separated her from her mother to settle his neighbors' estate litigation.

During her lifetime, Jacqueline was both enslaved and an enslaver, a free woman of color, a victim, a property owner, and a daughter, a sister, a mother—all of this and more. Strong-willed and determined, Jacqueline resolved that she, her children, and her brother would be free. She accomplished her goals for herself and her descendants, one of whom would become Pope Leo XIV. (The Pope is a descendant of Jacqueline's oldest child, Marie Jeanne, and François Lemelle.) Now, with her story more fully recovered, Jacqueline's spirit and dedication to family can echo down through the centuries. ♦

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> L. Virginia Gould, "Urban Slavery—Urban Freedom: The Manumission of Jacqueline Lemelle" in *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas*, eds. David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine (Indiana University Press, 1996).
- <sup>2</sup> Charles R. Maduell, Jr., *The Census Tables for the French Colony of Louisiana from 1699 Through 1732* (Clearfield Company, 1972).
- <sup>3</sup> "Records of the Superior Council of Louisiana, No. XI," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 4, no. 2, 244.
- <sup>4</sup> "Records of the Superior Council of Louisiana, XXII," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 7, no. 2, 338. (Guillaume Vincent DuPre was sometimes known as Guillaume Vincent.)
- <sup>5</sup> "Records of the Superior Council of Louisiana, XLVI," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 13, no. 2, 329 (Charlotte's Labbé's marriage); and "Records of the Superior Council of Louisiana, LII," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 14, no. 4, 588 (Jean Labbé's marriage).
- <sup>6</sup> Settlement transaction, Collection of the Louisiana State Museum Historical Center, RG #1, #1746060601.
- <sup>7</sup> Eglise catholique. Paroisse de Nouvelle-Orléans (Louisiane), Registres paroissiaux, 1720–1734, DGS 8105965, image no. 126, FamilySearch.
- <sup>8</sup> As a baptism sponsor or godmother at New Orleans's St. Louis Cathedral, she was recorded as "Charlotte Labbe, Widow Vincent." Earl C. Woods and Charles E. Nolan, eds., *Sacramental Records of the Roman Catholic Church of the Archdiocese of New Orleans*, vol. 1, 1718–1750 (Archdiocese of New Orleans, 1987), 25.
- <sup>9</sup> Although no marriage record has been found, she was recorded as Charlotte Labé Paquet in a July 24, 1754,

baptismal record when she was a godmother at St. Louis Cathedral. Earl C. Woods and Charles E. Nolan, eds., *Sacramental Records of the Roman Catholic Church of the Archdiocese of New Orleans*, vol. 2, 1751–1771 (Archdiocese of New Orleans, 1988), 38, 66.

- <sup>10</sup> After she was freed in 1772, Marie Jeanne used the surname "Lemelle," the name of her former enslaver and the father of her children. When her oldest sons married, they reported her surname as Davion.
- <sup>11</sup> The sale document no longer exists but in Jacqueline's November 1772 emancipation record Jacques noted that he purchased her about "ten years ago" from a "Monsieur Paquet. Notarial Acts of Andres Almonaster y Roxas, November 10, 1772. Orleans Parish Clerk of Court. Gould [note 1] and others have misread Paquet as beginning with an L. A detailed review of the entire record and of the handwriting of Roxas in other documents makes clear that this is a P, written with a footer.
- <sup>12</sup> St. Louis Cathedral: Baptisms, 1753–1759, Archdiocese of New Orleans Online Records. [nolacatholic.org/church-records](http://nolacatholic.org/church-records).
- <sup>13</sup> Upon adulthood, Louis was freed by his father. In Joseph Dusau's 1794 will, he acknowledged Louis as his son and "the natural son of Jacqueline Lemelle free 'mulata' deceased."
- <sup>14</sup> The declaration to the priest was likely one not taken lightly, despite the absence of legal force. The statement may suggest how the child was raised, perhaps with a degree of freedom not typical for an enslaved person.
- <sup>15</sup> Jacques Lemelle to Messieurs Aubry and Foucault, 1 767, James Brown Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Brown, a lawyer in New Orleans in the early 1800s, presumably was hired by one of Jacqueline's daughters with Jacques and, intentionally or not, kept the proof of Jacqueline's re-enslavement.
- <sup>16</sup> "Cash Sale of Infant Quadroon," Collection of the Louisiana State Museum Historical Center, RG #1, #1767071901. This is the only known record to document the Gardelle child's given name.
- <sup>17</sup> Marie Jeanne and François had seven children. Louis, Marie Jeanne's firstborn son (b. ca. 1773), married and was the father of Celeste Lemelle, Pope Leo XIV's great-great-grandmother.
- <sup>18</sup> *Church Marriages and Civil Marriages*, citing Etat-civil—Archives de Bordeaux, France. MyHeritage.
- <sup>19</sup> "Account Rendered of Succession of Deceased Jean Labbe by His Widow Christine Allard," Collection of the Louisiana State Museum Historical Center, RG #1, #1746060602.
- <sup>20</sup> Acts of Pierre Pedesclaux, June 4, 1805, vol. 50, 536–37. Orleans Parish Clerk of Court.

# WYNER FAMILY JEWISH HERITAGE CENTER SPOTLIGHT

## “Modern Young Ladies” and the Mandolin: Stories from the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center Archives

Within the extensive archives at the Jewish Heritage Center sits a slightly unusual instrument case, about the size of a violin but shaped like a guitar. Once open, the case reveals a delicate mandolin from the early 1900s. A fleur-de-lis inlay adorns the front, and the bowl-shaped back features dozens of bright stripes against the mahogany grain. While attractive and well-made, the instrument itself is not particularly notable. Its value comes primarily from its importance to its original owner, a Jewish American woman named Pearl Bornstein. Although its four sets of double strings are now too rusted to play, the mandolin was beloved enough to be preserved for more than one hundred years and then donated to the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center (JHC) as part of a collection of family papers.

Exploring the JHC’s collections as the new Historian in Residence—and having recently taken up the instrument myself—I was immediately curious when I came across Pearl’s mandolin. What could this instrument reveal about its owner and the period in which she lived? I have since learned that the mandolin reflects a burgeoning phenomenon of early twentieth-century social and cultural life that empowered young women to find self-expression and community.

In the decades before and after the turn of the twentieth century, the mandolin had a moment: a “mandolin craze” took hold in the 1880s and lasted through the 1930s. According to most accounts, the U.S. tour of the Spanish folk musicians Estudiantina Espanola Figaro



**Madeline DeDe-Panken is the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center Historian in Residence.**



Pearl Bornstein’s mandolin.

ignited this interest. From their first performance at Boston’s Park Theater on January 2, 1880, the group became a sensation. Although the musicians played bandurrias, not mandolins, the idea of a small, accessible stringed instrument gained wide appeal.<sup>1</sup>

Mandolins were relatively accessible and affordable. The one housed at the JHC likely cost ten dollars, the equivalent of approximately \$130 in 2026. The instrument was conveniently portable, and learning basic techniques was straightforward. The mandolin lent itself to a variety of genres, from vaudeville to folk to classical. Multiple mandolins sounded melodious together and could easily be arranged alongside banjo, guitar, and vocal parts.

Mandolin ensembles, especially female ones, sprang up throughout the nation. The mandolin was considered particularly suitable for women, partly due to its small size and delicate shape, and because musicians could play while seated. Most standard orchestras prohibited

women musicians, notably in woodwind and brass sections. Handheld string instruments were seen as more appropriately feminine, though still novel.

Playing the mandolin gave women cultural license to perform in public, circumventing gendered social boundaries that had long associated the stage with questionable virtue. This was a decorous artistic outlet. For some women, even the mandolin itself became a fashion statement as they toted cases through bustling city streets. One music school advertised lessons as a means for “good times, popularity, companionship, travel and education.”<sup>2</sup>

While allowing players to retain feminine respectability, the mandolin was part of the expansion of women’s roles and opportunities during this era. At the recently established cohort of women’s colleges, mandolin clubs became *de rigueur*. According to music historian Walter Carter, the mandolin era had “the widest participation by women of any popular music movement in history.”<sup>3</sup>

Pearl Anne Bornstein was one of those women. Pearl was born in 1902 in Medford, Massachusetts. Her parents, Philip and Minnie (Fischman) Bornstein, had each come from Ukraine with their families in the 1890s, part of a major wave of Jewish immigrants fleeing poverty, discrimination, and violence in Eastern Europe. Philip and Minnie met in Boston and married in 1895, settling in Medford in 1899. Philip worked numerous jobs as a peddler, junk dealer, and grocer to keep the family afloat before his eventual success as a contractor, opening educational and social opportunities for their children.

Pearl, the youngest daughter, was a bright, eager student. Her school papers, held in the Bornstein collection (JHCP-045), were diligently composed and received

high marks. After graduating from Medford High School in 1920, she enrolled in the new Boston University Secretarial School. Located in the city’s bustling Back Bay neighborhood (a few blocks from American Ancestors today), the school opened in 1919 as the only Boston University college exclusively for women. It was steadfast in its dedication to professional training alongside an intellectually rigorous liberal arts curriculum.

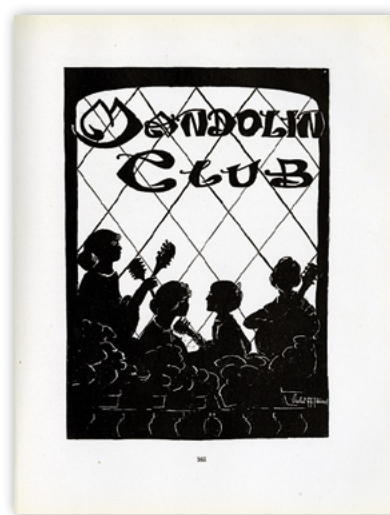
Bornstein’s attendance places her in the coterie of the progressive “New Woman” pursuing higher education and broader public roles. Career preparation and academic instruction for women were hallmarks of societal shifts toward gender equity. Active supporters of what they termed “the triumph of equal suffrage,” the college sought to serve the “woman of today who is alive to her new opportunities and responsibilities.” One article noted that their courses training women to manage their own money and property “would have attracted adverse criticism ten years ago as unfeminine.”<sup>4</sup> English professor E. Charlton Black pronounced the school “more than merely another professional, technical or vocational institution.” Instead, it aimed to “deepen and brighten life and kindle creative thought,” including “cultivation of the . . . imagination.”<sup>5</sup>

The mandolin club serves as evidence of this type of creative commitment. The club comprised about twenty college women, including Pearl. The group played together regularly and performed at charitable events, supporting women’s movement organizations like the Frances Willard Settlement House, which provided social services to working-class women.<sup>6</sup>

In November 1923, the club secured a coveted slot at Keith’s Theatre, a renowned Boston vaudeville



“50 B.U. Girls Appear at Keith’s Next Week,” *Boston Post*, November 10, 1923.



“Mandolin Club,” *Sivad*, Boston University College of Secretarial Science yearbook, 1924, 165–166. Both images are from the Bornstein Family Papers, JHCP-045.

venue. Performing on such a major stage must have felt momentous; Pearl saved multiple clippings about the gig. The revue included classical and contemporary tunes supplemented by dancers. Advertisements crowded about the special appearance of the “girls’ troupe” and a local newspaper announced the show with a large photograph. Indicating the mandolin’s role in newly emerging models of womanhood, the promotional article praised the group for having “the ambitions of modern young ladies.”<sup>7</sup>

Pearl earned her Bachelor of Secretarial Science in 1924, as part of the second graduating class. Although it is not known whether she continued performing formally, she held on to her mandolin for the next seven decades until her death in 1992, when it passed to the safekeeping of her family. Her love for music endured for the rest of her life, including as part of her family. Her husband, Joseph Mandell, was a gifted jazz trumpet player who had earned college tuition funds through local gigs. Their family’s interest in music can be seen in the multitude of concert programs, sheet music, and personal recollections in the Bornstein collection.

A few boxes over, the Sterling and Selesnick Family Papers (P-1040) contains a striking photograph of a young woman perched on a cut-out moon. Her gaze is serious, her jaw set. But there is movement playing at her fingertips, where she strums a mandolin. This is 16-year-old Rose Shapiro Katz in 1917.<sup>8</sup>

Rose Shapiro was born in 1901 in New York City and grew up in Lynn, Massachusetts, the youngest and—according to her son-in-law Herb Selesnick—by far the most theatrically expressive of the eight Shapiro children. Other pictures show a bright-cheeked young woman with a vivid smile and eye for the camera. A performer at heart, Rose eagerly took advantage of the robust musical program at the local Young Women’s Hebrew Association (YWHA).

The YWHA offered young women a vibrant center for Jewish life. Lynn’s YWHA was founded in 1913 as part of a consortium of New England branches. Never merely a derivative of the Young Men’s Hebrew Association, YWHAs were independent organizations essential to Jewish immigrant life, promoting recreation and education, while, in the words of early superintendent Sophia Berger, “preserving the essential Jewishness of our people.”<sup>9</sup> That included maintaining a synagogue onsite and placing emphasis

on Jewish history, Torah study, and Hebrew and Yiddish language skills. Equally, the YWHA held social occasions and provided English courses, domestic training, and creative opportunities.

Key programming featured the performing arts, including pageants, recitals, plays, dances, and music classes. Each year, the Lynn YWHA staged numerous shows in a range of styles, from vaudeville to musical theatre revue to classical concerts. Herb Selesnick recalled, “Rose was an enthusiastic participant in all of them—she sang, danced, acted, and played the piano.” Her portrait indicates a working knowledge of the mandolin and a preference for it.

At first, finding Pearl Bornstein’s and Rose Shapiro’s mandolin-related materials in the JHC archives seemed like a coincidence. But the prevalence and significance of the mandolin for young women during this period helps explain why both Pearl and Rose gravitated toward the instrument. Further research reveals how it also connects to Jewish cultural heritage. While many



Rose Shapiro Katz, “Girl on Moon,” 1917, Sterling and Selesnick Family Papers, P-1040.

credit the “Golden Age of Mandolin” to the Estudiantina Espanola Figaro and the Italian bands that followed on their heels, another strain of mandolin history is specifically Jewish.

Mandolin playing is part of a longstanding tradition of communal music beloved in Jewish Eastern European culture. For generations, the mandolin helped kindle social unity and joyous endurance. Yiddish, Hasidic, and Klezmer music regularly featured mandolin. Informal and formal mandolin groups were “at one time ubiquitous” throughout Jewish communities, “strongest in Tsarist-era Russian and Ukraine, where the balalaika and domra [similarly small string instruments] sat at the forefront of a national folk music culture.” The Ger Mandolin Orchestra—the revival of an early 20th century Polish group lost to the Holocaust and reestablished thanks to Israeli American Avner Yonai’s genealogical research—has dubbed it the “quintessential Jewish musical form.” Yiddish schools taught mandolin, and many sustained their own ensembles. From a young age, Jewish children encountered the instrument.<sup>10</sup>

For immigrants, the mandolin’s small size made it feasible to take on what were often long, arduous, and uncertain journeys. Once in America, many Jewish immigrants continued to find personal enjoyment, cultural preservation, and even class solidarity in their playing. Recent scholarship has discussed the ways that piano was essential in early twentieth-century Jewish households, despite its expense and physical footprint.<sup>11</sup> The mandolin offered another, more easily attainable outlet. With many households experiencing crowded living conditions, it was “popular with apartment dwellers as a quiet instrument that wouldn’t disturb the neighbors.”<sup>12</sup>

The musical traditions Jewish immigrants brought with them sustained and informed the Golden Age of the Mandolin.

Amateur pursuits are not regularly featured in music history or biographical accounts. Yet the ways people chose to use their often-limited free time to sing, play, and express themselves provides vital insight into their daily lived experiences. Music is a form of resilience, connection, and pleasure. Neither Pearl Bornstein nor Rose Shapiro went on to music careers, but both young women found significance in their mandolin playing—enough to keep musical mementos for the rest of their lives and preserve them for future generations. Sometimes, an archival coincidence is just that. More often, however, a multiplicity of data points illuminates historical harmonies. A closer look at these archival standouts at the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center brings new histories of American and Jewish culture to light. ♦



View our webinar on this topic, **In Concert: How Jewish Women Built Community Through Music:**

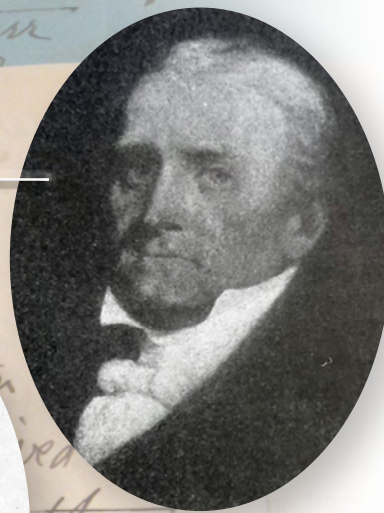
[AmericanAncestors.org/video-library/concert-how-jewish-women-built-community-through-music](https://AmericanAncestors.org/video-library/concert-how-jewish-women-built-community-through-music)

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Amy Kreitzer, “Sweet Harmonies from Little Wooden Boxes: Mandolin Playing in Minneapolis and St. Paul,” *Minnesota History* 57, no. 5 (2001): 218–37; and Paul Sparks, *The Classical Mandolin* (Clarendon Press, 1995).
- <sup>2</sup> Mariette Stephenson, “Women’s Contributions to Guitar Orchestras Prior to 1930,” *Wilfrid Laurier University Music Faculty Publications* 44, Winter 2021.
- <sup>3</sup> Walter Carter, *The Mandolin in America* (Backbeat Press, 2016).
- <sup>4</sup> “Women Studying Business Methods,” *Springfield Weekly Republican*, October 23, 1919.
- <sup>5</sup> *The Secretarius*, 1921. Bornstein Family Papers, box 2, folder 6, Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center.
- <sup>6</sup> “Frances E. Willard Settlement Day Program, Thursday, May 1, 1924,” *Trio of Philanthropies*, 1924. Bornstein Family Papers, box 2, folder 31, Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center.
- <sup>7</sup> “50 B.U. Girls Appear at Keith’s Next Week,” *Boston Post*, November 10, 1923. Bornstein Family Papers, box 2, folder 9, Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center.
- <sup>8</sup> Sterling and Selesnick Family Papers, box 2, folder 11, Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center.
- <sup>9</sup> David E. Kaufman, “Young Women’s Hebrew Association,” *Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women*, March 20, 2009. Jewish Women’s Archive.
- <sup>10</sup> Alexander Gelfand, “Plucky Move: A Picture of his Polish Grandfather’s Mandolin Orchestra Inspired Avner Yonai to Start His Own,” *Tablet Magazine*, October 28, 2010; and Eric Stein, “The Ger Mandolin Orchestra a Window on a Once-popular Form of Community Musicmaking,” *Ludwig Van*, November 2, 2013.
- <sup>11</sup> Sarah Litvin, “In Her Own Hands: How Girls and Women Used the Piano to Chart Their Futures, Expand Women’s Roles, and Shape Music in America, 1880–1920,” (2019), *CUNY Academic Works*.
- <sup>12</sup> Robert M. Zecker, “‘A Mandolin Orchestra Could Attract a Lot of Attention’: Interracial Fun with Radical Immigrants,” 1920–1955, *American Communist History* 17:2, 2018, 141–161.



HENRY W. CUNNINGHAM  
BRUSH HILL ROAD  
READVILLE, MASS.



## Proving a Henshaw Connection in Connecticut

Two years ago, inspired by a lecture at the Collier County Genealogical Society in Naples, Florida, I decided it was time to prove my *Mayflower* connection. I enjoyed the research challenge and submitted my John Alden line of descent to Florida Mayflower State Historian Louise Rumnock.

Unfortunately, an issue arose with one of my ancestral couples, Lemuel and Sarah (Henshaw) Hayward, the parents of my ancestor Charles Hayward (b. August 18, 1787). Louise Rumnock wrote, “I have encountered a major problem with your line in generation 6 that I have not been able to resolve. There is credible evidence that shows Dr. Lemuel Hayward was also married to Sarah Savage, the daughter of Thomas and Sarah (Cheever) Savage. If that is so, then which Sarah is the mother of Charles Hayward (generation 7)?”<sup>1</sup> My ancestor Sarah

Henshaw, an Alden descendant, was Lemuel Hayward’s second wife.

Dr. Lemuel Hayward (1749–1821) had studied with Dr. Joseph Warren, the hero of Bunker Hill, and served as a surgeon in the Continental Army during the Revolution. Hayward practiced in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, and at nearby Roxbury Hospital, where he specialized in inoculation and treatment of smallpox. According to *Major Thomas Savage of Boston and his Descendants*, Sarah Savage married Dr. Hayward in 1776. She died “without issue” five years later.<sup>2</sup> The book failed to note that after Sarah (Savage) Hayward’s death, Lemuel Hayward married Sarah “Sally” Henshaw (1768–1849) on March 6, 1785.<sup>3</sup>



Eleanor Motley Richardson lives in Rockland, Maine. She is a retired organ builder and the author of eight books on local and family history. She and her husband, Rev. Peter Tufts Richardson, transcribed eighty years of family diaries, which they published as a 1,067-page book, *The Ingraham Diaries, 1795–1875* (2018).

Left: "Mrs. Lemuel Hayward" in Lawrence Park, comp., *Gilbert Stuart; an Illustrated Descriptive List of his Work* (1926), 3:232.

Right: "Dr. Lemuel Hayward" in Samuel F. Batchelder, "Harvard Hospital-Surgeons of 1775," *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* 22 (1920), 506.

Center: Photo of a miniature of Charles Hayward. Collection of the author.

Background: Letter in the Henshaw Folder, Frank Farnsworth Starr Genealogy Collection, Middlesex County Historical Society.

Louise's letter continued, "You will need to find a source for Charles Hayward that gives Sarah's maiden name ... Unfortunately, until you are able to prove exactly which Sarah is the mother of Charles (generation 7), we cannot proceed."

I cast about for answers. I hoped Lemuel Hayward's will would settle the issue. The will did refer to Lemuel's wife Sarah and his son Charles, but it incorrectly identified Sarah's father as Joshua, rather than Benjamin, Henshaw.<sup>4</sup> This error made the situation worse, not better.

Preparing for our April migration from Florida to Maine, my husband, Peter, said he wanted to stop along the way in Middletown, Connecticut—a new destination for us—to wander through *his* family graveyards. In an amazing coincidence, as we were packing up, I realized that my Henshaw family had also lived there.

Days later, I found myself in Middletown at the Middlesex County Historical Society. Executive Director Jesse Nasta quickly produced a 100-year-old folder of Henshaw family material full of colorful new details. I had wondered how Lemuel and Sarah met. According to a letter in the file, "Family tradition has it that [Lemuel] met [Sarah] when she was at a boarding school near Boston."<sup>5</sup> She was 16 and he was 35. My theory is that Lemuel was the school's physician.

The file included the 1880 to 1930 correspondence of Frank Farnsworth Starr (1852–1939), a town clerk and respected professional genealogist in Middletown who researched the Henshaw family for more than fifty years. Frank's letters mention other researchers who questioned the identification of "Joshua" Henshaw as Sarah (Henshaw) Hayward's father in Lemuel's will. The letters reference sources that prove Sarah Henshaw's father was Benjamin Henshaw, including this excerpt from a land record:

Know ye that I Benjamin Henshaw of New Hartford in the County of Litchfield & State of Connecticut in Consideration of the Love & affection I bear to my dear surviving Children but more especially for the annual Sum of Ninety Five Pounds to be equally paid or secured to be paid to me by my Sons Benjamin Henshaw Jun' of

New Hartford aforesaid & Daniel & Joshua Henshaw & John Meigs for my Daughter Elizabeth of Middletown in the County of Middlesex & Lemuel Hayward for my daughter Sarah of Boston in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which sum is to be paid on or before the first Day of December annually during the Term of my natural life ...

Signed in Middletown by Benjamin Henshaw,  
March 10, 1790<sup>6</sup>

Jesse Nasta then brought out the 1788 Henshaw family Bible that had belonged to Joshua and Esther (Burnham) Henshaw, Sarah's brother and sister-in-law. Sarah Henshaw's birth name, her marriage to Lemuel Hayward, and their eight children (including their second child, Charles) were carefully recorded.<sup>7</sup> My unexpected trip to Middletown had produced all the information I needed.

I photographed the relevant pages and sent them off to Louise Rumnock. In October 2024, I was elated to open my acceptance letter from the Mayflower Society.

The next summer, I was cleaning some dusty books in our house in Maine and came across another large family Bible. It turned out to be Charles Hayward's Bible, which clearly stated the exact same information as the Henshaw Bible. The solution to my brick wall had been on my own bookshelf all along! ♦

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Email from Louise Rumnock, Florida Mayflower State Historian, to Eleanor Motley Richardson, March 23, 2024.
- <sup>2</sup> Lawrence Park, *Major Thomas Savage of Boston and his Descendants* (Press of David Clapp and Son, 1914), 22. Viewed on [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com).
- <sup>3</sup> Frederic W. Bailey, *Early Connecticut Marriages Prior to 1800* (Bureau of American Ancestry, 1904), 6:106. Viewed at [catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001873800](https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001873800).
- <sup>4</sup> Will of Dr. Lemuel Hayward, *Massachusetts, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1635–1991*. [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com).
- <sup>5</sup> Letter from Henry W. Cunningham to Frank Farnsworth Starr, May 15, 1930. Henshaw Folder, Frank Farnsworth Starr Genealogy Collection, Middlesex County Historical Society, Middletown, Connecticut.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Frank Farnsworth Starr to Henry Cunningham, May 20, 1930, quoting Middletown, Conn., land records, Vol. 28, 324–325.
- <sup>7</sup> Brown, John, *The Self-interpreting Bible: Containing the Sacred Text of the Old and New Testaments* (New Haven, 1788). Henshaw Folder [note 5].

# Resting in Pieces



In 2019, after years of research and collaboration, the author had this replacement gravestone for her ancestor Fanny (Durkee) Marsh installed at the Pine Hill Cemetery in Sharon, Vermont.



Deborah Stewart Adams retired as a special event designer and currently manages the historic Alumni House at the Independent Association of Framingham State Alumni in Framingham, Massachusetts. She has written for a number of publications, including the *Illuminating Engineering Society* magazine, and *American Ancestors*. Her email address is [setsail69@yahoo.com](mailto:setsail69@yahoo.com).

## Fanny Marsh's Gravestone in Sharon, Vermont

Probably no one saw the huge pine tree fall and snap the marble gravestone of my third great-grandmother into two weathered pieces. Passing through Sharon, Vermont, in August of 2015, I stopped to visit Pine Hill Cemetery for the second time and again enjoy the artistic imagery on the stone.<sup>1</sup> I was depressed to find it broken in half.

Finding Fanny Marsh's gravestone had been the ultimate discovery for me. Several years before, after decades of cemetery explorations in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New York, I was excited when I first saw the stone with its intricate carving and its poignant inscription. Fanny's short life ended in 1821 when she was 36. Nearby were the gravestones of her husband, Timothy Marsh, and his second wife. Fanny's stone, the smallest of the three, was the most elaborately carved.

The detailed carvings on Fanny's gravestone were fascinating and included every symbolic funerary theme of the time: a weeping willow bending over a classic urn; a face of death with a benign, accepting expression; tapering ionic columns supporting an arch over the memorial text; rays of sunshine to symbolize the resurrection; a flourish of fabric draping the top arch; a line of circular flowers; and vines with flowers.

As an amateur calligrapher, I was intrigued by the font. The "A" in April looked very distinctive. An online search led me to a phone conversation with Margaret Ruth Jenks, a noted genealogical researcher (now deceased) who had documented all the gravestones in Rutland County, Vermont. The marble industry in the eastern part of Rutland County and the slate on the Vermont–New York border had drawn large numbers of gravestone carvers and dealers to Vermont in the 1800s.

Like me, Margaret thought the distinctive capital "A" might offer a clue to the carver and she pointed me to her voluminous research notebooks held by the Rutland Historical Society.<sup>2</sup> My husband, Dave Adams, and his grandniece Sarah Tollett joined me in scouring every

page of them. We learned that Margaret had discovered this carver earlier and photographed his letter styles, but, unfortunately, had been unable to identify him or where he worked.

I had some information about my ancestor Frances (Durkee) Marsh, who was born in Pomfret, Vermont, in 1784, a daughter of Ransom and Hannah (Vail) Durkee. Frances married Timothy Marsh on December 4, 1808.<sup>3</sup> Timothy was a descendant of Isaac Marsh of Plainfield, Connecticut, who wintered in the area alone in 1764–65 to fulfill the settlement requirement for founding the town of Sharon.<sup>4</sup> Fanny and Timothy had four children: Frances, Emeline, George D., and Charles D. Frances's name was passed down in five successive generations.

I found no other stones in Pine Hill Cemetery with the distinctive style seen on Fanny's marker. I next searched for the gravestones of Frances's parents and maternal grandparents. Her parents and grandmother were living in Pomfret when Fanny died on April 15, 1821,<sup>5</sup> of an unrecorded cause—perhaps childbirth or ensuing complications. Unique features on several family markers in Hewittville Cemetery in Pomfret clearly indicated that the carver of Fanny's stone also created less elaborate gravestones for her parents and grandparents.<sup>6</sup> I theorized that Fanny's bereaved parents had commissioned a local carver to use his creative talents with all his richest imagery for Fanny's beautiful stone.

### Recreating Fanny's gravestone

I began to wonder how Fanny's gravestone, in place for over 180 years and now eroded, broken, and stripped of

some of its carvings, could be saved. I contacted Rock of Ages, a renowned granite quarry monument company in Barre, Vermont.<sup>7</sup> I spoke with Steve, an account specialist who had worked his way up in the company and knew the entire production process. Seeing my enlarged photos of Fanny's broken and weathered headstone, Steve was intrigued by the beauty of the original carving and the challenge of reproducing its look—the thick and thin lines and the drop shadows of the imagery—using today's manufacturing techniques.

In June 2018, Steve and Greg—the draftsman assigned to the project—decided that the actual broken pieces might show more detail than my photos and transported them to Rock of Ages. Greg had intended to use his computer drafting app, but seeing the stone and the many photos I had enhanced with Photoshop Elements convinced Greg to draft the project by hand. Given the level of difficulty, he could undertake this painstaking work for only a few hours at a time. Greg's contribution was a labor of respect for a woman who died too soon and for the artistry of the original unknown carver. For Rock of Ages, the project offered an opportunity to acknowledge the craftsmanship of the many anonymous and unsung gravestone carvers of the past.

Fanny Marsh's original 1821 gravestone.

A detail from the carving.



In January 2019, when I received Greg's full-scale drawing, I realized that an exact replication of the old carving on a new piece of polished granite would look strange. In addition, the mechanized sandblasting method used today takes away granite to make the design stand out, instead of carving the design into the stone. We all agreed that the solution was a balance between the original design and one created with today's precise drafting and production techniques.

With Steve's guidance, we held meetings and exchanged emails for many months. On a printout of Greg's drawing, I carefully marked my interpretations of the original design's spacing, symmetry, letter shapes,



The author and her husband, Dave Adams, admiring the finished gravestone on the factory floor at Rock of Ages. July 2019.



Fanny's new gravestone after being snapped off at its base during a winter storm in 2024.

the vines, and the expression on the skull's face. Greg realized that the flower was red clover, the Vermont state flower, and not a thistle, as I had thought. When he drafted the blossom's missing parts with the clover in mind, the result was perfect. I realized how lucky I was that Steve and Greg appreciated the stone's finer details as much as I did. Steve commented that in some ways this undertaking had become an art project.

Finally, in July 2019, Dave and I visited the impressive Rock of Ages factory floor with Steve and Greg to see a huge crane gently lower the completed, four-inch-thick gravestone right in front of us. Seeing our vision brought to life gave the four of us the feeling that this project was so much larger than all of us.

Unfortunately, the story doesn't end there. Nearly five years later, on March 31, 2024, after a pleasant family Easter dinner, Dave and I stopped by Pine Hill Cemetery to enjoy viewing the beautiful gravestone once more. We made a horrific, almost unexplainable, and deeply depressing discovery. Once again, a giant pine tree had fallen over during a winter storm, cracking and breaking Fanny's new stone. The pine had neatly missed all the adjacent stones, damaging only Fanny's marker.

Pine Hill Cemetery's sexton cleared the tree debris as soon as the snow melted and watched over the stone until July 2024, when patient Steve brought it back to Rock of Ages. The new challenge is how to repair Fanny's stone so it can be returned to Pine Hill. As usual, Steve has some problem-solving ideas. The question is whether nature will allow Fanny's memorial stone to remain intact and undisturbed in the future. ♦

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Pine Hill Cemetery (also known as Sharon Village Cemetery), Sharon Valley Road (Rt. 14), Sharon, Vermont.
- <sup>2</sup> Rutland Historical Society, 96 Center Street, Rutland, Vermont; rutlandhistory.com.
- <sup>3</sup> Birth and marriage records for Frances Durkee, *Pomfret, VT: Vital Records, 1778–1860*, citing a 1929 unpublished typescript. AmericanAncestors.org.
- <sup>4</sup> Lewis C. Aldrich and Frank R. Holmes, *History of Windsor County, Vermont* (Syracuse, New York, 1891), 749. See also [dbnews.americanancestors.org/2019/01/18/new-early-vermont-settlers-1700-1784-ske](https://dbnews.americanancestors.org/2019/01/18/new-early-vermont-settlers-1700-1784-ske).
- <sup>5</sup> *Vermont, Town Clerk, Vital and Town Records, 1732–2005*. FamilySearch.org
- <sup>6</sup> Hewittville Cemetery, Old Pomfret Road, Pomfret, Vermont.
- <sup>7</sup> Rock of Ages Quarry, 558 Graniteville Road, Graniteville, Vermont; rockofages.com.

## Unexpected DNA Connections Between Abruzzo and Pennsylvania

While there are no exact statistics on the total number of Italians who have taken a DNA test, the practice remains far less common in Italy than in the United States. Historical and cultural differences have resulted in contrasting levels of genealogical interest. Generally, only Italians who are seeking to identify family relationships for legal or practical purposes participate in DNA testing.

Stefania Lignini, 60 years old and born and raised in Umbria, is one of a growing number of Italian genealogy enthusiasts. Her story begins with a DNA test she took in hopes of finding relatives in her mother's birthplace in the Abruzzo region.

Stefania tested with MyHeritage, the most well-known DNA testing company in Europe. Unsurprisingly, Stefania's primary ethnicity was 65.6% South Italian. The shocking part was her genetic group: Stefania was assigned to "Eastern Pennsylvania—Group ID: 6065."<sup>1</sup> The brief MyHeritage description of this group—"German and some French, English, Swiss, and Italian settlers in the United States"—didn't match Stefania's ancestry, which is fully documented as Italian in multiple family lines dating to the late 1600s in Abruzzo.

### A modern paradox

According to MyHeritage, "Genetic Groups break down MyHeritage's ethnicity results into 2,114 geographic

View of Crognaleto, 2008. Luciodem/  
Wikimedia Commons.

regions. These results allow you to zoom in on your family history, pointing to specific provinces, districts, or regions that your ancestors came from."<sup>2</sup> In this case, the Genetic Group proves exactly the opposite of what the tool intends, as it points to the location of some of Stefania's ancestors' other descendants but not her own family line. This apparent inconsistency reveals the history and impact of massive emigration in the twentieth century. This genetic map points not backward but forward, indicating a significant location where a new family community formed.

Stefania's assignment to the "Eastern Pennsylvania" group was not a random error. It was clear evidence of the enormous and widespread migration flow from Abruzzo (and particularly from the province of Teramo within it) to the United States. The MyHeritage database detected the Abruzzese "genetic trace," found mostly among descendants of people whose communities emigrated to Pennsylvania.



Map of Italy showing Abruzzo.  
TUBS/Wikimedia Commons.



**Alessandra Mencarelli, a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists (APG), is a professional genealogist with over fifteen years of experience. Her research focuses on central and southern Italy, particularly the regions of Lazio, Umbria, Marche, and Abruzzo. She has a particular passion for onomastics and its application to family history. Her email address is [alessandra.mencarelli85@gmail.com](mailto:alessandra.mencarelli85@gmail.com).**



Italian passport, 1909. Library of Congress.

Lewis Wickes Hine, "Italian immigrant family on ferry, leaving Ellis Island," 1905. Library of Congress.

### Emigration as an escape

In southern Italy, the post-unification period (1870–1915) was characterized by a depressed economy and intense social tensions. Unlike migrants from many other nations, southern Italians, particularly the lower classes, were part of an exodus driven purely by poverty and lack of economic opportunity. Abruzzo was severely impacted during the period of brigandage, or lawlessness, that followed unification. The region was ungovernable, which intensified emigration. People fled these harsh conditions, searching for better lives and job opportunities, largely in the northeastern United States.

Stefania's ancestors hailed from Crognaleto in the province of Teramo. Crognaleto, a small "scattered" municipality on the Gran Sasso, is composed of numerous tiny mountain villages. Today, it has approximately 1,027 inhabitants.<sup>3</sup> The relentless depopulation that began in the late nineteenth century was so severe that in 1962 the newspaper *La Stampa* proposed an unconventional solution. "[T]he fellow villagers who emigrated to the United States" were asked to send girls back as wives for the many bachelors left in Frattoli (one of the municipality's centers).<sup>4</sup> This anecdote shows the strength of the migratory link between the small Abruzzo mountain community and Abruzzian destinations in America.

### Pennsylvania, the new "promised land"

Abruzzo, and particularly Teramo, contributed significantly to the wave of Italian emigration to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The emigrants, often shepherds or farmers, were primarily

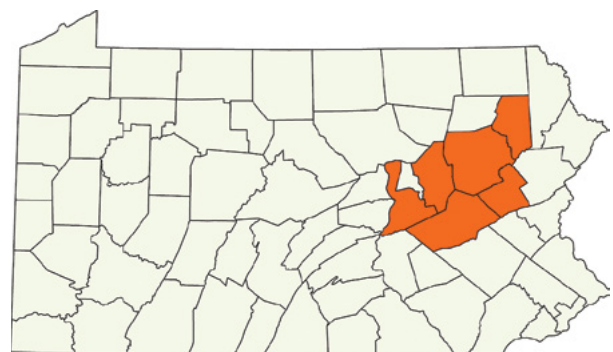
employed in unskilled jobs upon arrival. The industrial and mining centers of the northeastern United States became a powerful magnet for the Abruzzese. Despite the difficult work and precarious living conditions—especially in the coal mines, which represented a fundamental but extremely dangerous source of employment—the immigrants did not abandon hope for a better future.<sup>5</sup>

Most of the Abruzzese who settled in Pennsylvania were drawn by opportunities in the coal, steel, and textile industries. Cities and towns across the Coal Region—six counties in northeastern Pennsylvania with anthracite coal reserves—saw a significant influx of residents from Teramo. The sheer scale of the exodus was enormous. About 10% of Crognaleto's population emigrated between 1904 and 1907 alone.<sup>6</sup>

The Genetic Group assignment is thus explained by history: millions of Teramo descendants in the US have created the dominant "genetic trace" that Stefania's DNA now matches.

### Researching emigrants from Abruzzese and beyond

Beyond consulting passenger lists, tracing Abruzzese roots requires targeted research strategies, especially because of pervasive surname and place name spelling errors. When giving information to officials, many immigrants provided the names of their small villages, not the larger towns. For example, residents of Crognaleto, a scattered municipality composed of sixteen distinct hamlets, often named their village—such as Frattoli or Aiello—rather than the town name. The name of the municipality itself was frequently misspelled on manifests as "Croyusleto," "Croqualetto," or "Croguoletto," or



The six counties comprising the Anthracite Coal Region of Northeastern Pennsylvania (Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland, and Schuylkill). Wikimedia Commons.

abbreviated to “Cor..., Teramo.” When possible, researchers should search for both an ancestor’s town and village—as well as any possible variations.

Police records created during the emigration process can reveal compelling personal details and stories. These documents, which often tracked the movements of people seeking passports, frequently ended up in large police headquarters and are now mostly held by Italian state archives.

The State Archives of Teramo contains the Questura di Teramo collection (approx. 1860–2004), which includes passport requests. Searching for a passport application (an emigration requirement) in this collection is the most direct way to verify an origin and destination.<sup>7</sup> The State Archives of Naples, in the Questura di Napoli collection, contains a “Repertory of Documents Regarding Italian Emigration.” Documented cases found within an archive can reveal stories like that of Luigi Ciccandelli of Tossicia (near Crognaleto). Luigi was reported for theft by a fellow villager, who told the police Luigi intended to flee to America. The resulting police investigation confirmed that an arrest warrant existed and that Luigi held a regular passport for “Filadelfia.”<sup>8</sup>

The police and passport records described above—which, unfortunately, are not available online—often provide context that is frequently missing from birth and death records. The following sources of emigration-related records are also useful:

- CISEI (International Center for Italian Emigration Studies); [ciseionline.it](http://ciseionline.it)
- FamilySearch: New York, Passenger Arrival Lists (Ellis Island), 1892–1924; [FamilySearch.org/en/search/collection/1368704](http://FamilySearch.org/en/search/collection/1368704)
- Immigrant Ancestors Project (BYU); [iap\\_testing.byu.edu/AdvancedSearch](http://iap_testing.byu.edu/AdvancedSearch)

This excellent site allows users to search individual names within archive collections (containing passports and other relevant documentation), particularly from Genoa, Naples, and Turin.



In a 1999 article, historian George R. Gilkey captured the essence of the southern Italian migration to Pennsylvania: “They descended from their ancestral mountaintops to Naples and elsewhere, by train or carriage or both, crossed a sea and ocean they had never seen before and knew nothing about, and worked at almost anything to earn the cherished dollars to send home to Italy in anticipation of building homes, buying farms, and providing a better life for their parents and families.”<sup>9</sup>

This history of emigration—driven by both necessity and hope—has profoundly shaped the identities of millions of Italian Americans. Today, DNA testing can provide genetic evidence of their connections to their Italian homeland. Italian-born Stefania had the opposite outcome. Her DNA linked her to northeastern Pennsylvania, where a new Teramo-Abruzzese community was forged across the Atlantic. Stefania’s unexpected result serves as a powerful reminder that genetic legacies and cultural ties can cross the ocean in both directions. ♦

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> “Ethnicity Estimates for Stefania Lignini,” database report, *MyHeritage DNA*, [myheritage.it](http://myheritage.it).
- <sup>2</sup> Genetic Groups on MyHeritage, *MyHeritage Knowledge Base*, [education.myheritage.com/article/genetic-groups-on-myheritage](http://education.myheritage.com/article/genetic-groups-on-myheritage).
- <sup>3</sup> Bilancio demografico mensile e popolazione residente per sesso, anno 2025, Istat – Istituto nazionale di statistica, [demo.istat.it/app/?a=2025&i=D7B](http://demo.istat.it/app/?a=2025&i=D7B).
- <sup>4</sup> “Un paese di soli uomini invoca da anni una donna,” *La Stampa* [Torino], April 11 1962, 5; [archiviolastampa.it/component?option=com\\_lastampa/task/search/mod,libera/action/viewer/Itemid,3/page,5/articleid,1567\\_02\\_1962\\_0086\\_0005\\_23709313](http://archiviolastampa.it/component?option=com_lastampa/task/search/mod,libera/action/viewer/Itemid,3/page,5/articleid,1567_02_1962_0086_0005_23709313).
- <sup>5</sup> Pietro Berardi, “L’Abruzzo migrante dall’Unità d’Italia alla Grande Guerra,” *Archivio Storico dell’Emigrazione Italiana*, August 15, 2011; [asei.eu/it/2011/08/labruzzo-migrante-dallunita-ditalia-alla-grande-guerra](http://asei.eu/it/2011/08/labruzzo-migrante-dallunita-ditalia-alla-grande-guerra).
- <sup>6</sup> Direzione generale della statistica, *Statistica della emigrazione italiana per l’estero* (Roma, 1906), 68; accessed on Google Books. See also Direzione generale della statistica, *Statistica della emigrazione italiana per l’estero* (Roma, 1908), 71; accessed on Google Books.
- <sup>7</sup> SIAS, Teramo State Archives, Questura di Teramo, [sias-archivi.cultura.gov.it/cgi-bin/pagina.pl?TipoPag=comparc&Chiave=522500&RicVM=ricercasemplice&RicProgetto=as%2dteramo&RicSez=complessi&RicFrmRicSemplice=questura](http://sias-archivi.cultura.gov.it/cgi-bin/pagina.pl?TipoPag=comparc&Chiave=522500&RicVM=ricercasemplice&RicProgetto=as%2dteramo&RicSez=complessi&RicFrmRicSemplice=questura).
- <sup>8</sup> Archivio di Stato di Napoli, Questura di Napoli, *Repertorio di documenti riguardanti l’emigrazione italiana*, fascicolo n. 4067.639: 1909, riguardante “Ciccandelli Luigi di Marco,” Denuncia di reato (1909); [banchedati-archiviodistatonapoli.it/patrimonio/f1667613-3276-4f47-a704-e8297b78e1b7/4067639-1909-ciccandelli-luigi-di-marco-denuncia-di-reato-1909](http://banchedati-archiviodistatonapoli.it/patrimonio/f1667613-3276-4f47-a704-e8297b78e1b7/4067639-1909-ciccandelli-luigi-di-marco-denuncia-di-reato-1909).
- <sup>9</sup> George R. Gilkey, “From Pennsylvania to Italy: The Letters of Angelo di Angelantonio,” *The Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine* 41 (1999): 5.

# 10 Million Names

 AmericanAncestors.org

10 Million Names aims to recover the names and restore information to families of the estimated 10 million people of African descent who were enslaved in America before 1865.

[10MillionNames.org](http://10MillionNames.org)

## Preserving a sacred history: processing the Mother Emanuel AME Church records

The Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture at the College of Charleston in South Carolina is processing the Mother Emanuel AME Church papers and artifacts. These records help safeguard the long legacy of one of the most historically significant Black congregations in the United States. As part of the 10 Million Names initiative, American Ancestors is funding a multi-year archival internship to support the processing and rehousing of this important collection. The project will culminate in the creation of a detailed finding aid. This work represents a critical step forward by enabling researchers, genealogists, and historians to understand more fully the scope and contents of the Mother Emanuel collections—and, importantly, to improve their accessibility and long-term use.

The Avery Research Center, an archival repository under the umbrella of the College of Charleston Libraries, serves as a vital caretaker of African American history in South Carolina's coastal Lowcountry and beyond. The Avery Research Center collections preserve personal papers, organizational records, and community histories that illustrate the Black experience in South Carolina. Through its partnership with 10 Million Names, the Avery plays an important role in making these materials more accessible for genealogical and historical research.

Mother Emanuel AME Church has long been a spiritual, cultural, and political pillar in Charleston. Founded in the early nineteenth century, the church community has endured natural disasters, persecution, and racial violence. While the 2015 massacre that resulted in nine deaths remains a painful chapter in its history, that tragedy is only one component of a much longer story of resilience, fortitude, and leadership.

The church's archival collection reveals generations of faith, activism, and community engagement. Burial documentation, membership records, and congregational documents provide valuable insight into local families and networks in Charleston, offering researchers



Sofia Kryshtalowych and Shania Damon at work.

essential references for reconstructing African American lineages.

Currently, two dedicated first-year student interns, Sofia Kryshtalowych and Shania Damon, are working diligently to preserve this collection. Their work involves rehousing fragile documents into archival-quality folders and boxes designed to prevent further deterioration. The interns are also removing materials such as rusted staples and paper clips, which can stain paper and cause it to deteriorate over time. Each document is handled with precision and care, ensuring these documents will be preserved for future researchers.

This meticulous and time-consuming process is necessary for both organizing these fragile historical materials and restoring access to stories that could otherwise be overlooked. When the collection is completed, it will be housed in the Mother Emanuel historical museum, located across the street from the church. By safeguarding the records of Mother Emanuel AME Church, 10 Million Names continues its mission to honor the lives, families, and legacies embedded in this historic location.

— Veer Mehta is an archival professional at the Avery Research Center for African American History & Culture.



Members and guests view our new website, [RevolutionaryRoots.AmericanAncestors.org](https://RevolutionaryRoots.AmericanAncestors.org).  
Photo by Pierce Harman.

Family Heritage Experience and the Brim-DeForest Library. A special selection of American Revolution items from our R. Stanton Avery Special Collections was on view for the group. Artifacts included a 1783 muster roll from the 8th Massachusetts Regiment; a naval commission for Lemuel Weeks of the armed ship *Protector* signed by Governor John Hancock; the journal of soldier Samuel Hawes describing the Battles of Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill; and Robert Rogers's 1784 Society of the Cincinnati diploma signed by George Washington and Henry Knox.

## American Ancestors hosts Society of the Cincinnati in the State of New Hampshire

On December 8, 2025, American Ancestors welcomed approximately sixty members and guests of the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of New Hampshire to our Boston headquarters for a reception and program. The Society's president, Randall Hammond, joined speakers Ryan J. Woods and American Ancestors Board Chair David Trebing in welcoming guests. Attendees then toured our



## A midwinter conversation with Dr. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich

On January 29, American Ancestors honored Dr. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich with a Lifetime Achievement Award in American History at a virtual event hosted by American Ancestors President & CEO Ryan J. Woods. Audience members engaged in a thoughtful Q&A with Dr. Ulrich. She reflected on her groundbreaking scholarship and her fascination with women's history and the often-overlooked stories of everyday people. She shared how studying daily life helps us better understand the broader human story, reminding us that ordinary experiences often shape history.



ORGANIC MOMENTS PHOTOGRAPHY.

## American Ancestors reception in Palm Beach

On February 5, members and friends gathered at the Palm Beach Yacht Club for a reception celebrating 180 years of American Ancestors. Guests enjoyed an evening filled with connection, reflection, and shared discovery. Event host David Sherill, our Board of Trustees Vice Chair, spoke about our organization's remarkable legacy and enduring mission to help individuals explore their roots and understand their heritage. The Palm Beach Yacht Club provided a picturesque backdrop for this memorable occasion.

Ryan J. Woods (left) with Howard and Lynn Schecter.

# ON THE ROAD AND AT HOME

## with American Ancestors

See page 10 for upcoming programs and tours.



### Knowsley Hall 2025 Christmas Tours

In December of 2025, Curator of Fine Art Curt DiCamillo led two successful Heritage Tours to England. Sold out a year in advance, these Christmas-focused tours were based at Knowsley Hall in Lancashire, home to the Stanley family since the fifteenth century. The current owners are Teddy and Caroline Stanley, the nineteenth Earl and the Countess of Derby. Lord and Lady Derby hosted our groups for dinners, musical performances, fireside talks, and tours of their treasure-filled ancestral home and its divine Capability Brown–designed park.

Day trips took participants to museums and historic sites in Liverpool—including the monumental Anglican cathedral—and to many country houses in the area. Of particular note was Gresgarth Hall, home of internationally renowned garden designer Lady Arabella Lennox-Boyd, who, for our visit, opened her house and garden to a group for the first time. Excursions to Combermere Abbey, Tatton Park, Cholmondeley Castle, the model village of Port Sunlight, and the Lady Lever Art Gallery rounded out a remarkable series of memorable experiences.



### “Hands-On History”: Learning about military memorabilia and calligraphy

Just prior to Veteran’s Day last November, American Ancestors members and visitors gathered in our education center to learn how to identify military medals, uniforms, and other memorabilia as part of our “Hands-On History” series. Chief Genealogist David Allen Lambert provided instruction and showed items from his private collection and our R. Stanton Avery Special Collections. Attendees were invited to bring their own military mementos to share with the group. These interesting artifacts included letters sent by soldiers, a Canadian World War I uniform, scouting maps from World War II, and a carved cane owned by a veteran of Gettysburg.

We marked Valentine’s Day with a new “Hands-on History” event, “Written with Love: An Introduction to Calligraphy.” Esther, founder of Maker’s Favourite Designs, discussed the history of calligraphy and provided instruction on basic letter formation. Twenty-six participants traced and wrote letters with brush calligraphy pens—and were encouraged to write love notes. Each attendee received a tutorial packet for practice at home.





## California Genealogical Society visits American Ancestors

In February, American Ancestors welcomed fourteen members of the California Genealogical Society for a week of research and genealogical exploration at our Brim-DeForest Library in Boston. The group received a tour and orientation from Library Services Coordinator Aidan Walsh and enjoyed a presentation on using our manuscript collections by Senior Archivist Judy Lucey. Judy's talk was accompanied by a special display of highlights from our R. Stanton Avery Special Collections, including a multi-volume set of mid-nineteenth-century San Francisco epitaphs and original letters written by a man who sailed from New Haven, Connecticut, via Valparaiso, Chile, to California during the Gold Rush.

## American Ancestors welcomes groups!

Our customized group experiences can include:



Scan Me

- A guided tour and orientation
- Research in our world-class Brim-DeForest Library
- A docent-led tour of the Family Heritage Experience
- An onsite lecture by one of our experts
- Private event hosting in our newly renovated meeting spaces

Learn more at [AmericanAncestors.org/about/research-center-group-and-school-visits](https://AmericanAncestors.org/about/research-center-group-and-school-visits).

## Commemorating Martin Luther King Jr. in Stoughton, Massachusetts

On January 19, Chief Research Officer Lindsay Fulton participated in the town of Stoughton's 2026 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration, "Pursuing Your Purpose: Lead Your Community with Courage." Lindsay spoke about the mission of the 10 Million Names project and its ongoing study of Patriots of Color. Through this initiative, 10 Million Names genealogists, working in partnership with the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR), are creating documented family trees for seventy-five Patriots of Color who served in the American Revolution. This group of Patriots represents all thirteen colonies. Among those featured is Quork Matrick, who was born in Africa; lived in Stoughton, Massachusetts; and served as a private under Colonel John Bailey, Captain Adam Bailey, and Captain Daniel Shays.



## American Ancestors at RootsTech 2026

This year's RootsTech conference was held in Salt Lake City, Utah, from March 5 to 7. American Ancestors experts joined thousands of online and in-person participants for this annual "family discovery event." Our staff greeted members and the public at our booth in the expo hall.

Chief Genealogist David Allen Lambert presented on "New Englanders to Nova Scotia, Canada: Soldiers, Settlers and Refugees," "Joining the Muster: Applying to Various American Revolutionary War Lineage Societies," and "Researching Your Colonial American Ancestors Accused of Witchcraft." Senior Genealogist Melanie McComb discussed "Researching Your Loyalist Ancestors in United States and Canada" and "Using AI in Family History Research."

# Enriching Lives, Inspiring Legacy



## Highlights from our 2025 annual report

Founded in 1845, American Ancestors began with a powerful idea: that insight into our origins enriches our lives and deepens our understanding of the American story. In 2025, we marked our 180th anniversary—an opportunity to reflect on how this vision

has evolved. What began with early New England families now encompasses a broader effort to document the full diversity of the American experience.

Today, our holdings also include Catholic parish records, immigrant aid society archives, Jewish family and institutional collections, and records that illuminate the lives of enslaved people, free Black communities, Indigenous groups, and other people of color long absent from the historical record. Together, these sources reveal a fundamental truth: the American story has always been complex, diverse, and deeply personal.

Family history is more than names and dates. It is a life-enriching experience—and an opportunity to discover something about oneself while connecting to a larger human story. When we recover an ancestor's name, we restore agency and humanity. Names connect generations, spark conversations, and make history immediate and relevant.

Millions of Americans were written out of the historical record. For generations, the names of enslaved men, women, and children were forgotten or lost. Recovering those names is not simply scholarly work—it is a moral responsibility at the heart of 10 Million Names, our initiative to restore the identities of the estimated ten million people of African descent enslaved in pre- and post-colonial America. Through archival discovery, digital scholarship, and technology, this work reconnects descendants with long-lost stories. This year, our researchers recovered more than one million names across fifteen databases, spanning twenty-one states.

While expanding the historical record remains central to our mission, access is equally important. We partner with archives, libraries, and cultural institutions nationwide to digitize materials and make them widely available. We also invest in technology, education, and outreach, so discovery is not limited by geography or background.

A defining institutional milestone occurred in April 2025 when we opened the Family Heritage Experience (FHE) in Boston. The FHE reimagines how people encounter their past through interactive exhibitions and hands-on research tools that teach history—and how to uncover it. The FHE reflects a truth we see every day, that family history and civic history are inseparable. When you trace an ancestor's life you begin to appreciate how personal decisions intersect with public events.

Nowhere is this overlapping history clearer than in our exploration of the American Revolution. As we approach the 250th anniversary of American independence, the Revolutionary era is a central focus for us. Often remembered as a struggle for liberty, the war also divided families and communities. Roughly forty percent of American colonists supported independence, about twenty percent remained loyal to the Crown, and many others navigated the uncertain ground between those positions. Our collections, publications, and databases help bring this complexity into focus.

At its core, the work of American Ancestors is about belonging and perspective. Discovering ancestral roots provides identity and connection, strengthening families and fostering deeper understanding. As we reflect on this milestone year, we do so with gratitude and purpose. Family history reminds us that the past is not so distant—it lives in our families, our communities, and the records and stories we preserve together. ●

## Educate

Education remains central to our mission. During the past year, we presented 250 programs, engaging 34,618 attendees through lectures, conferences, workshops, and public programs. Thousands more participated through archived lectures and online materials. Our commitment to genealogy education for young learners continues to grow, and we've added student field trips to the Family Heritage Experience. Since its launch, our curriculum has been downloaded more than 1,800 times in all fifty states, and we have trained more than 175 teachers nationwide. The Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center (JHC) expanded its impact through preservation, scholarship, and public programming. The JHC hosted Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey's Jewish American Heritage Month celebration. Our publishing team released thirteen new books and continued to publish the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* and *Mayflower Descendant*. The magazine team produced four issues of *American Ancestors*.

## Inspire

American Ancestors continues to inspire new audiences through dynamic public programming that connects family history to broader cultural and historical conversations. Our American Inspiration author series remains one of our most successful public programs. Since its 2019 launch, more than 192,000 people have connected with over 300 distinguished authors. During fiscal year 2025, the series attracted more than 13,000 live attendees, with thousands more viewing recorded programs. Our beautifully illustrated Art & Architecture lecture series reached wide audiences with programs exploring art, design, and cultural history.

## Connect

At the heart of American Ancestors is our extraordinary staff of genealogists, historians, archivists, and other professionals. This past year, our researchers conducted more than 1,120 consultations, helping members overcome research challenges, discover new sources, and develop effective research strategies. Our staff, members, and the public worked onsite in the Brim-DeForest Library, home to one of the nation's most important collections for genealogical scholarship and a cornerstone of our institutional mission. Our Heritage Tours offered a powerful way to engage with family history by combining learning with the exploration of historical landscapes. In these ways and many others, we connected with the American Ancestors community and new audiences to illuminate the shared human experience that binds us all.

A Look at  
Fiscal Year  
2025

Total revenue  
\$23,372,770

Total membership and  
subscribers  
423,335

Members and  
subscribers across the  
world  
All 50 states and  
139 countries

Headquarters  
28 million items in our  
world-renowned library and  
archive  
1,120 Ask-A-Genealogist  
Live Chat Sessions

Brue Family Learning  
Center  
250 programs  
34,618 attendees

Social media  
1,991,538 Facebook  
impressions  
134,644 YouTube video views  
1,524,000 minutes watched  
JHC TikTok page 50,000  
interactions

Published  
scholarship  
13 new American  
Ancestors and Newbury  
Street Press books  
4 *American Ancestors* magazines,  
4 issues of the *Register*, and  
2 issues of *Mayflower  
Descendant*  
52 issues of *The Weekly  
Genealogist*

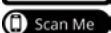
Wyner Family Jewish  
Heritage Center  
More than 4 million records and  
more than 700,000 searchable  
digital documents

Vita Brevis blog  
Over 175,000 page views  
27 new articles

AmericanAncestors.org  
505 unique searchable  
databases  
More than 10 billion total  
searchable records  
Over 4 million new  
searchable names



View our complete annual report at [AmericanAncestors.org/annual-report](https://AmericanAncestors.org/annual-report). Want a print copy mailed to you? Email [advancement@americanancestors.org](mailto:advancement@americanancestors.org) to request a copy.



## Judith Caroline Avery, 1938–2026



Judith Caroline “Judy” Avery of Palo Alto, California, died January 29, 2026, aged 87. She was born on February 12, 1938, in Los Angeles, California, to R. Stanton and Dorothy (Durfee) Avery.

In 1954, after graduating two years early from South Pasadena

High School, Judy enrolled at Stanford University at age 16. She received a BA in history in 1959.

Judy married Russell K. Lawler on February 20, 1960; they had two children together. After the couple divorced, Judy and the children moved to Santa Monica, where she met Joel H. Newkirk. They were married on October 18, 1968. They had two children together, and raised all four children in Santa Monica. After the marriage ended, Judy moved to San Francisco, where she lived for twenty years before settling in Palo Alto in 2020.

Judy became a member of New England Historic Genealogical Society (now American Ancestors) in 1981. In 1994, Judy—then in her fifties—received an MA in History with a specialty in historic resources management from the University of California at Riverside. Judy was required to complete an internship; she chose to work with the American Ancestors manuscripts department.

That same year, Judy became an American Ancestors Trustee, beginning a long and important relationship between the Avery family and American Ancestors that led to our manuscripts department being renamed the R. Stanton Avery Special Collections in 1998. Both R. Stanton Avery and Judy Avery were passionate supporters of our institution.

Judy joined the American Ancestors Advisory Council in 2001, and then served again from 2010 to 2016. She served in various Trustee roles, including Vice Chair, through 2023, when she became an Honorary Trustee. Judy was a Life Member and a member of the Henry Bond, Benjamin Franklin, and Founders’ Societies. Her dedication to American Ancestors and the study of family history will benefit generations of future researchers and historians.

Judy was a frequent participant in our educational tours and programs. Our staff and her fellow tour participants were charmed by her kindness and sunny disposition. She will be missed.

Judy is survived by her children Michael Newkirk, Carrie Avery, Jonathan Newkirk, and Diana McKee; ten grandchildren; and her brother Russell Avery. She was predeceased by her brother Dennis Avery.

## Herbert Boothroyd, 1928–2025



Herbert “Herb” Boothroyd of Gainesville, Florida, died November 11, 2025, aged 96. He was born in Mason City, Iowa, on December 23, 1928, to Herbert and Clara (Smith) Boothroyd. After graduating from Mason City High School in 1946, he spent a year in Tokyo,

Japan, creating maps for the U.S. Army as part of the post–World War II reconstruction effort.

Herb attended the University of Michigan, where he studied mathematics. He earned a BA with Honors in 1952 and a Masters in 1953. He was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa academic honor society and the Theta Delta Chi fraternity.

Herb became an Actuary (FSA) and built his career at New England Mutual Life Insurance Company in Boston, Massachusetts, where he met Barbara Dunne. The couple married in Boston in February of 1962. They went on to have two children.

In 1977, Herb was appointed Senior President of Pension Operations. In 1983, he became Executive Vice President of Group Operations, President of New England General Life, and a member of the Board of Directors. He served on the board until his retirement in 1987.

Herb’s work at New England Mutual Life Insurance led him to New England Historic Genealogical Society (now American Ancestors), which opened on Newbury Street—directly across from his office—in 1964. He enjoyed spending his lunch breaks researching in our library.

Herb joined our organization on January 29, 1970. He later became a Life Member, a member of the Charles Ewer Society for lifetime giving, and a member of the Henry Bond Society for legacy philanthropy. He served on our council from 2010 to 2019. At the time of his death, Herb had been a member for fifty-five years. He was also a member of Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) and the General Society of Colonial Wars.

Herb traced his ancestry more than ten generations to medieval Europe. He wrote a biography of his great-great-grandfather Adam Nichols, who served in the Revolutionary War. His research will be donated to American Ancestors to aid others in learning about their ancestors.

Herb is survived by his wife, Barbara; his daughter, Diane; his son, John; and his grandchildren, Adam and Abby.

# Branches of our Family



## Lynn Bryan Trowbridge My Family History Research Journey

My lifelong interest in family history came out of an interest in stories. My mother, grandmother, and other family members were interested in genealogy and enjoyed sharing their stories with me.

In the mid-1980s, personal computers started to become available. My family members thought it would be a good idea if I “got all of their research on the computer.” At the time, I was living in California and traveling to Boston frequently for meetings. I began flying into Boston a day or two before my meetings in order to spend time researching at New England Historic Genealogical Society (now American Ancestors).

Over time, I made friends with American Ancestors staff and fellow researchers at the library. I attended a Come Home to New England educational program for a concentrated five days of research and learning. My genealogy hobby was turning into something more serious.

In the 1990s I began to carve out time to travel with American Ancestors. My first tour was to the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. Between visits to the library and educational programs, I recorded and organized my findings. I was learning and making progress.

As my ability to dedicate time to genealogy increased, I participated in more tours and attended a seminar on writing for genealogical publications. That led to the publication of an article in the *Register*.

I became more dedicated to American Ancestors and served as a Councilor, a Trustee, and I am now an Honorary Trustee.

My research has taken me to locations in the US that are significant to my ancestors, as well as to Canada, England, Scotland, and Ireland. (Fortunately, all the places I wanted to visit had golf courses that were on my husband’s travel list.)

In my 70s, I began to think about my legacy. I had shared my research with my family, but I wanted to contribute in a more wide-reaching way. My first donation to the American Ancestors archives was a collection of letters dating back to the 1700s from my husband’s seafaring ancestors. I then donated a collection of Civil War letters from my paternal side of the family. I wanted these invaluable items preserved and shared with others and I entrusted American Ancestors with that task.

After many years of research, I needed to publish my findings. I didn’t have time to properly write and source a book, so I enlisted the help of Newbury Street Press. Together, we created a book that authenticated much of my research on four grandparents’ lines as well as my husband’s grandparents’ lines, added additional information, and documented my source material. The 700+ page book was written by Kyle Hurst, Senior Genealogist for Newbury Street Press.

I am glad that other researchers will have access to my findings—especially the lines that trace back to 1600s and 1700s Jamestown, Virginia, and parts of New England. The book also includes migration maps from my husband’s and my earliest immigrant ancestors through our own times and places of birth. Beyond the facts gleaned from primary sources, these books tell the stories of our families in pictures, anecdotes, and contemporary historical accounts. There is even a bit of DNA research included. Upon the book’s completion, I donated my original documents, Bible records, and correspondence to the American Ancestors archives.

I count myself lucky to have learned from the experts at American Ancestors and to have worked with and alongside so many dedicated family historians for so many years. ♦



## meet Christine Bachman-Sanders Senior Researcher

I began working at American Ancestors in 2023 in the Research Services Department and was promoted to Senior Researcher in 2025. I specialize in writing family history books for clients. My particular expertise is in early New England, the Midwest, Scandinavia and Northern Europe, and African American research (which includes researching the descendants of enslaved individuals).

My journey to American Ancestors has been circuitous, but the destination feels like a natural culmination of my experiences. I graduated from Middlebury College with a degree in Sociology and Feminist Studies; earned a Master of Arts in Media, Culture, and Communication from New York University; and completed a PhD in American Studies from the University of Minnesota.

My dissertation work introduced me to genealogical research when I set out to identify a long-anonymous cyclist whose diary is in the UK's National Cycle Archive. Finding this woman's name—Ada Florence Smart—and building her family tree was not only intellectually satisfying but also emotionally fulfilling. I liked that my work acknowledged the personhood of a long-forgotten woman in the archives.

My educational and professional background reflects the value I place on an interdisciplinary approach to studying human lives and history, and the diverse ways we can access and honor untold stories.

Genealogy at its best invites us to understand history on a deeply intimate level, and build connections between people of disparate places and times to create empathy and compassion. For this reason, I find

personal archival narratives—diaries, oral histories, letters, and memoirs—to be some of the most fruitful and impactful sources, especially when paired with robust historical and record-based research. I strive to deliver that balance in each project.

Recently, I discovered in a client's papers a collection of memoirs written by her great-grandmother, great-great-grandfather, and great-great-great-grandmother—personal narrative sources for three generations dating to 1845. These recollections revealed valuable information about these ancestors' characters, values, relationships, challenges, and triumphs that enhanced the basic details gleaned from vital records and land deeds.

Like many of my colleagues at American Ancestors, my passion for family history began at a young age. In 8th grade, I was assigned a family tree project and eventually turned in an 8 x 39-foot scroll that wrapped around the entire classroom. I had an advantage: as a descendant of Brigham Young, much research on his branch had been completed for me. However, this wealth of information made me hungry to learn more about other, less-researched ancestors.

One longstanding brick wall in my family was the identity of the parents of my paternal third great-grandfather, a Jewish immigrant from Germany who settled on the Utah frontier in the 1870s. By tracing records of two of his siblings who settled in New York and California, I finally discovered the names of their parents and their town of origin in Bavaria. Recently, I was thrilled to share this information with my ninety-four-year-old grandfather and his ninety-nine-year-old sister. ♦



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### GENEALOGY

*The Family of Anthony Morse and Huldah Taylor*, Charles Towne (the author, 2026). Hardcover \$25.87. 414 pp. Name index, ninety-eight illustrations. This genealogy covers five generations of the family of Revolutionary War soldier Anthony Morse (1753–1803) of Massachusetts and Vermont, and his wife Huldah Taylor (abt. 1756–1826). Available from [Lulu.com](https://www.lulu.com).

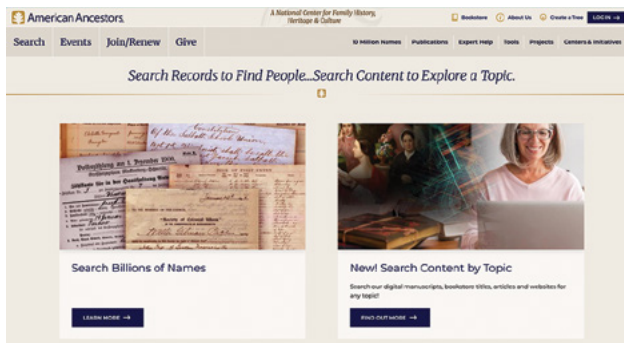
### OTHER BOOKS

*Anneke Jans in the New World: A Novel*, Sandra Freels (She Writes Press: 2026). Softcover \$17.99; eBook \$12.99. 185 pp. Based on actual events, this is a fictional biography of Anneke Jans Bogardus, who immigrated from Amsterdam to New Netherland in 1630. Available from [sandrafreels.com](https://www.sandrafreels.com).

*Pioneers, Farmers, & Patriots: Roots in New England*, Priscilla L. Partridge (Oak Hollow Press: 2025). Softcover \$24. 168 pp. Illustrations, photographs, endnotes, index. Adventurous women pioneers from the Brown, Davis, Everett, Ingalls, Jones, and Youngman families traveled across New Hampshire and Vermont during 1700s and 1800s. Some lineages and Revolutionary War Patriots are included. Contact [oakhollowpress@gmail.com](mailto:oakhollowpress@gmail.com). Available from [Bookshop.org](https://www.bookshop.org).

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## Most popular databases on AmericanAncestors.org, March 2026

1. *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*
2. Massachusetts Vital Records: 1620–1850
3. *The American Genealogist*
4. Essex County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1638–1881
5. Massachusetts: Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Records, 1789–1920
6. Suffolk County, MA: Probate File Papers
7. Massachusetts Vital Records: 1841–1910
8. Middlesex County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1648–1871
9. General Society of Mayflower Descendants Membership Applications, 1620–1920
10. *Mayflower Descendant*

## The American Ancestors cartoon



"That's not how my grandmother used to make it!"

Caption submitted by Jerilyn Marshall. Drawing by Jean Powers.

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