

New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS)  
and General Society of Mayflower Descendants (GSMD)  
Announce Collaboration

NEHGS to Digitize the Fifth Generation  
of *Mayflower* Descendants from GSMD “Silver Books”  
and 50 Years of *Mayflower Quarterly*

*Mayflower* Databases to Be Searchable on [AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org)

GSMD Members to Enjoy Discounts on Membership  
in New England Historic Genealogical Society

July 13, 2017 – *Boston, Massachusetts* – New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) has partnered with General Society of Mayflower Descendants (GSMD) to bring invaluable genealogical resources to their members. New searchable databases – to be found on [AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org) – will be created from authenticated *Mayflower* Pilgrim genealogies and from 50 years of published *Mayflower* passenger scholarship from the *Mayflower Quarterly* as the program advances. In addition, GSMD members will enjoy generous discounts on new memberships in NEHGS, the founding genealogical organization in America.

Known as the “Silver Books” because of their distinctive covers, the *Mayflower Families Through Five Generations* series from the GSMD meticulously documents the first five generations of descendants of *Mayflower* passengers who arrived in 1620. This essential resource for studying family relationships resulting from the 25 families of the *Mayflower* who were known to have American descendants, has previously been accessible only in print format in publications produced by GSMD and available through the Bookstore at NEHGS. As a result of this new partnership, the fifth generation portion of these will be available online on [AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org) for use in family history research by members of both organizations.

Brenton Simons, NEHGS President and CEO, made the announcement of the collaboration together with Lea Sinclair Filson, GSMD Governor General. At a signing ceremony to commemorate the historic partnership at the Massachusetts State House in Boston, Simons

stated “We’re pleased to announce that NEHGS is partnering with GSMD to bring the fifth generation data online. We estimate that the project will include 7,750 fifth generation descendants, along with spouses and children, and approximately 150,000 birth, marriage, death, and deed records. Under the supervision of our Web team, the material will be digitized and made name searchable on AmericanAncestors.org by members of NEHGS and GSMD.”

GSMD Governor General Lea Sinclair Filson added, “This partnership with NEHGS will contribute enormously to the availability of our publications to family historians around the world. It will greatly facilitate genealogical research and help preserve GSMD’s history and diligence in spreading the *Mayflower* Pilgrim story.”

The “Silver Books” series is comprised of 31 volumes, of which the fifth generation of each will be brought online as a database as the digitization is completed. Fifty passengers on the *Mayflower* are known to have living descendants, however, the “Silver Books” treat the twenty-five families that left American descendants.

NEHGS’ Senior Genealogist of the Newbury Street Press and *Mayflower* Descendant Editor Christopher C. Child noted “When working with people on possible *Mayflower* ancestry, I am often searching through several volumes of the “Silver Books” to check their validity. Having the most recent documented generation online and searchable will greatly aid people seeking to verify this part of their *Mayflower* lineage.”

### **Partnership to Include Digital Indexing of *Mayflower* Quarterly**

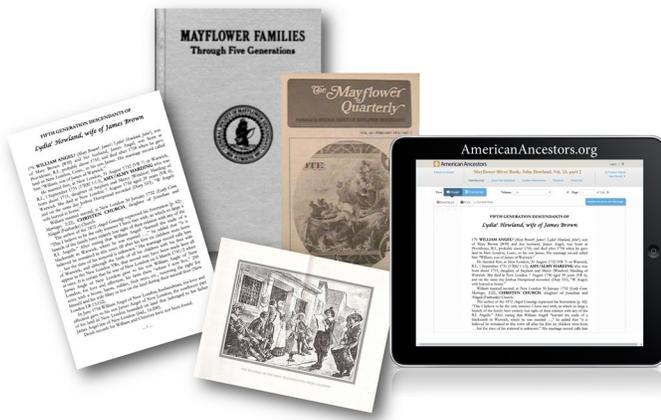
As an important additional element of the historic partnership between the two organizations, NEHGS will also undertake indexing of content published in the first fifty years of the *Mayflower Quarterly – A Journal of Pilgrim History and Genealogy in Colonial New England*. GSMD published this predecessor to the current *Mayflower Journal* from 1935 through 2015. Fifty volumes of the *Quarterly*, those issues published between 1935 and 1984, are to be indexed by article title and by the names included in them. They will be made available as page images on AmericanAncestors.org.

Updates concerning availability of these new databases to be offered exclusively by NEHGS may be found in announcements in the weekly e-newsletter of NEHGS, the *Weekly Genealogist*, or by registering at [dbnews.AmericanAncestors.org](http://dbnews.AmericanAncestors.org).

### **Membership Benefits**

NEHGS and GSMD are both member-based organizations. Benefits of discounted annual membership subscription fees will be offered by NEHGS to all active members of GSMD, as

the two entities collaborate on these historic projects. With a growing collection of more than one billion online records on its website [AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org), original scholarship, and unique educational resources, NEHGS offers tools and expertise needed to uncover and document the many *Mayflower* Pilgrim and related ancestral stories that the GSMD has diligently celebrated for more than 100 years. Its commitment to research on the lineal descent of the *Mayflower* Pilgrims and to education about them – how they shaped western civilization, and what their 1620 voyage means today – will be advanced through this new partnership with NEHGS and its more than 220,000 constituents worldwide.



(Above) New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) and General Society of Mayflower Descendants (GSMD) have announced a historic partnership to digitize the fifth generation of Pilgrim descendants from the GSMD “Silver Books” and fifty years of issues of the venerable *Mayflower Quarterly*. These new databases will be available exclusively on [AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org), the website of NEHGS.



(Above) Officials of New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) and General Society of Mayflower Descendants (GSMD) held a ceremony recently at the Massachusetts State House commemorating the signing of the historic partnership between the two organizations. (L-R) Gen. George P. Garmany, Jr., MD, GSMD Assistant Governor; Brenton Simons, President and CEO of NEHGS; Lea Sinclair Filson, GSMD Governor General; and Ryan J. Woods, SVP and COO of NEHGS.



## New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) and GSMD Partnership Project FAQs

*Key information about the digitization projects resulting from the recent agreement between NEHGS and the General Society of Mayflower Descendants (GSMD)*

- Q: What is the focus of the project?

The project is focused on providing a full family index of all the fifth-generation descendants of the Pilgrims who came on the *Mayflower* in 1620.

- Q: What will be included in this project?

NEHGS will post images from the “Silver Books” for all fifth-generation descendants with a complete index including: birth, marriage, death, and deeds for these descendants, their spouses, and children on AmericanAncestors.org.

NEHGS will also create indexes on content within the first fifty years of issues of the *Mayflower Quarterly* (1935 through 1984) for all article titles and names included in that publication and post images on AmericanAncestors.org.

- Q: What kinds of records will be searchable in the index?

The “Silver Books” provide biographical and genealogical information on the *Mayflower* Pilgrim descendants. The index will provide records that include: Baptism, Birth, Marriage, Marriage Intentions, Deeds, Death, and Burial Records. Page images for these individuals will be provided so the biographical information can be read, downloaded, or printed.

- Q: How expansive is this project?

This database will involve 31 volumes of the “Silver Books” comprising about 11,800 relevant pages. Our preliminary calculations indicate that the index will have about 7,750 fifth generation descendants, along with their spouses and children. The actual record count will not be known until the indexing is completed, but more than 150,000 birth, marriage, death, and deed records in total are estimated.

- Q: How will this database be rolled out?

American Ancestors will create one database for the *Mayflower* “Silver Books,” and, as the indexes are completed for each volume, they will be made available. We

expect this part to begin during the summer of 2017. The entire “Silver Books” project will be completed sometime in 2018.

The *Mayflower Quarterly* indexing work will start after the “Silver Books” are completed. This portion of the project is expected to take up to 18 months to complete.

- Q: How can I find out when these volumes are available?

NEHGS will announce each new volume via the *Database News* blog and email provided by the AmericanAncestors.org Web team (subscribe by visiting [dbnews.AmericanAncestors.org](http://dbnews.AmericanAncestors.org)). NEHGS will also include updates in our weekly e-newsletter, the *Weekly Genealogist*. To subscribe to the e-newsletter, visit [AmericanAncestors.org/browse/publications/the-weekly-genealogist](http://AmericanAncestors.org/browse/publications/the-weekly-genealogist).

- Q: Will access to this database help me with applying for membership to the Mayflower Society?

Yes. If you can trace ancestry to one of the indexed descendants in this new database, you can be certain that that person will be accepted by the state chapter of the Mayflower Society, when the appropriate application is submitted.

- Q: Can NEHGS help me with a Mayflower Society application?

Yes. The Research Services division of NEHGS can provide all services required, including exploration of any individual’s relationship to a *Mayflower* Pilgrim, documenting it as required for the appropriate state chapter of the GSMD, and completing the full application with records and citations. For more information, visit [AmericanAncestors.org/Services/Lineage-Society-Applications](http://AmericanAncestors.org/Services/Lineage-Society-Applications).

- Q: Does American Ancestors have other databases with *Mayflower* passenger information?

Yes. These include: *The Mayflower Descendant: A Journal of Pilgrim Genealogy & History*, *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England 1620–1633* series, Plymouth Church Records 1620–1859, and Barnstable, MA Probate Records 1685–1789.

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### **About American Ancestors and New England Historic Genealogical Society**

New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) is America’s founding genealogical organization and the most respected name in family history. Established in 1845, it is the nation’s leading resource for family history research. NEHGS provides comprehensive family history services through an expert staff, original scholarship, educational opportunities, world-class research center, and award-winning website, AmericanAncestors.org, to help family historians of all levels explore their past and understand their families’ unique place in history.

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A member-based, nonprofit institution serving more than 220,000 members, NEHGS is dedicated to advancing the study of family history in America and beyond, by educating, inspiring, and connecting people through our scholarship, collections, and expertise.

NEHGS's resources, expertise, and service are unmatched in the field and its leading staff of onsite and online genealogists includes experts in early American, Irish, English, Scottish, Italian, Atlantic and French Canadian, African American, Native American, Chinese, and Jewish research. AmericanAncestors.org, the most-used genealogical society website in the world, offers more than 1.4 billion searchable family history records spanning twenty-two countries covering the United States, the British Isles, continental Europe, and beyond. The NEHGS library and archive, located at 99-101 Newbury Street in downtown Boston, is home to the largest collection of original family history research materials in the country with more than 28 million items dating from the fourteenth century to the present, including diaries, letters, photographs, books, and microfilm.

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### **About the General Society Mayflower Descendants (GSMD)**

Founded in 1897, The Mayflower Society, or General Society of Mayflower Descendants (GSMD), is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with national headquarters in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Membership requires proof of lineage from one of the passengers who travelled to America on the *Mayflower* in 1620. Its mission includes educating the public about the story of the Pilgrims, as well as maintaining the highest standards possible for genealogy research into the lineage of the Pilgrims. The Society operates a genealogy research library at its Plymouth headquarters and publishes the *GSMD Silver Books*, a series of genealogy books that follow the descendants of the *Mayflower* passengers. It also operates and offers tours of the historic Mayflower Society House in downtown Plymouth.

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