

Francis Cooke Society Newsletter

April 2005

Vol. 3, No. 2

About the Francis Cooke Society (FCS)

The FCS was formed in 2003 when it came to the attention of several founding members that there was no existing family society named in Pilgrim Francis Cooke's memory. In addition to honoring Francis Cooke's contributions to Plymouth Colony, FCS serves as a forum for members to exchange information and assists descendants of Francis Cooke in acquiring acceptable proofs of eligibility for membership in the General Society of Mayflower Descendants.

Contact Information

Members of the FCS are in communication through an e-mail group at:
Francis_Cooke_Society@yahoogroups.com.

The FCS Website: <http://www.FrancisCookeSociety.org>

President: J. Scott McKay, scottsfamilytree@aol.com

Interim Membership Chair: Dianna Saario, dsaario@comcast.net

Secretary and Genealogy Coordinator: Valeria Reckert, LadyGenes@comcast.net

Cooke Historian: Richard Worthington, rlworthi@wisc.edu

Publicity Coordinator and Newsletter Editor: Christine Chirokas, chirokas@comcast.net

President's Corner

Hello Everyone: It is hard to believe but the Francis Cooke Society is now two years old! We can always use more help from our members to help our society grow and improve. If you are interested in lending a hand, please contact me.

The area I most need assistance with at this point is designing a Francis Cooke Society brochure. At September's General Society Congress in Plymouth there will be a table set up with information on family societies, and I'd really like to have something on our society to hand out. I'm talking with another newly formed family society to explore having our meeting at the same time and location in order to reduce expenses and to meet other Mayflower descendants.

Thank you to Dianna Saario for volunteering to coordinate the Francis Cooke 6th and 7th generation project. Our goal is to continue compiling those generations of descendants, beginning where the GSMD five-generation "silver" book left off. If you have questions or would like to submit your information (with sources, please), contact Dianna at dsaario@comcast.net.

Happy Spring, J. Scott McKay

Scott can be contacted at the above e-mail address or by mail at 9492 Boca River Circle, Boca Raton, Florida, 33434.

General Society Congress

By Chris Chirokas

Chirokas@comcast.net

There has been a great deal of recent communication on the Cooke e-mail list about the General Society Congress taking place this September in Plymouth, MA. Scott McKay is planning on attending and hopes to have the first meeting of the Francis Cooke Society to coincide with the Congress, as is the practice of many other family societies. If you plan on attending, please let me know so I can keep a list to see if we have enough members going to hold a meeting. Thank you!

Information about the Congress, including registration forms, is available in the March 2005 issue of "The Mayflower Quarterly." Delegates from each state society attend the business meetings on September 12 and 13, but there are other activities planned from the 9th to 4th that will interest researchers with Massachusetts roots.

The General Congress Planning Committee will offer tours to Newport RI, Marshfield, Boston, and Duxbury MA. There is also a boat and walking tour, ghosts and legends lantern tour, as well as a Clark's Island adventure. There will also be a banquet with a keynote speaker.

On Sunday, September 11, the Pilgrim Progress will take place, where members in period dress participate in activities on a walk to Cole's Hill (aka Burial Hill) for a wreath laying and the reading of the names of the 51 Mayflower passengers who died during the first winter. The procession then continues to Old Courthouse Square, followed by the opening ceremonies at the First Parish Church. A reception at the Mayflower Museum House and Garden will take place Sunday afternoon. Advance registration is required for many of these events. A trolley shuttle will operate between the Radisson Hotel at Plymouth Harbor, the John Carver Inn and the Governor Bradford Motor Inn to and from the Mayflower Museum House for the Pilgrim Progress, the Opening Ceremonies and the Congress Reception.

The MQ also has a list of hotel accommodations available in the Plymouth area, information on transportation options and a complete itinerary for the Congress.

September is a great time of year to visit Plymouth, as the summer traffic has died down but the days are typically sunny and warm. Some of the local spots of interest for family historians include:

--Plimoth Plantation, see website at <http://www.plimoth.org/>. Obviously one of the most common destination points in Plymouth!

--Pilgrim Hall Museum, www.pilgrimhall.org, 75 Court Street, Plymouth. (508) 746-1620. The museum features a collection of authentic possessions of Mayflower passengers.

--The Mayflower II, <http://www.plimoth.org/visit/what/mayflower2.asp>. Plymouth Rock is nearby.

--Mayflower Society Museum, overlooking Plymouth Harbor at 4 Winslow St., Plymouth (508) 746-2590, <http://www.mayflower.org/museum.htm>. Built in 1898, the house is noted for its architecture, antiques and English garden. The Mayflower Library is in a separate building on the property.

--Plymouth Public library, 132 South Street, Plymouth, (508) 830-4250, <http://www.plymouthpubliclibrary.org/>.

--Plymouth county courthouse for probate records and deeds, 11 South Russell Street Plymouth, MA 02360, (508) 747-6204.

There are many local historical houses that offer tours. Many in Plymouth and surrounding towns are listed on <http://www.seeplymouth.com/do/histhouse.asp>. Some of interest are:

--Jabez Howland House, <http://www.southshorebackroads.org/howland.htm>. Built in 1667, it is the only Plymouth house still standing where a Mayflower passenger is known to have lived.

--The 1640 Sparrow House, www.sparrowhouse.com. The home of Richard and Pandora Sparrow and their son Jonathan.

--The Plymouth Antiquarian Society owns and operates three historic houses in Plymouth (<http://www.visit-plymouth.com/antiquarian.asp>): the 1749 Spooner House, the Harlow Old Fort House Museum and the 1809 Hedge House.

--The Jenney Grist Mill, www.jenneygristmill.com, a reconstruction of a working gristmill, on the site of the original mill built in 1636 by John Jenney.

--The Alden House in Duxbury maintained by the Alden Kindred of America, http://www.alden.org/our_house/index.htm.

Of course there are cemeteries such as Burial/Cole's Hill in Plymouth that might be relevant to your research.

Visit the Plimoth Plantation website for other ideas what to see and do in Plymouth. Some other helpful websites: <http://pilgrims.net/plymouth/> and <http://www.mayflowerhistory.com/SocietiesMuseums/societiesmuseums.php>. Susan Roser, published author and Deputy Governor/Historian of the Canadian Society, has information on the Congress and suggestions for other things to do in the area on her website at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~canms/Plymouth2005.html>.

If you rent a car, you may want to visit nearby Cape Cod for additional research or NEHGS library in Boston (less than an hour's drive). If your ancestors lived in surrounding towns such as Duxbury, Carver, Scituate, and Plympton, a quick google search will turn up places of interest in those towns as well.

Committee Updates

Charter and Bylaws: A committee is reviewing draft bylaws. One person on our committee with significant experience with the development of bylaws is Jill Sybalsky. Unfortunately Jill has been dealing with a series of illnesses this year and we all wish her a speedy recovery. We will keep members informed on the status of this endeavor and resulting activities, such as election of officers.

Membership: If you are interested in becoming a member of FCS (no fee) or are a member who has not completed a membership form, please contact Dianna Saario at dsaario@comcast.net or 1449 E Vassar Drive, Visalia, CA 93292 and she will send you a brief membership form.

Publicity: Information about FCS has been sent to many of the state chapters of the Society of Mayflower Descendants. Since I live in Massachusetts, I saw our listing in the winter 2005 newsletter. If anyone sees the information listed in his or her local newsletter, I would really appreciate your letting me know. Thanks!

We have also had our listing published several times in the past year in "The Mayflower Quarterly" and "New England Ancestors," an NEHGS publication. We are also listed on several websites. If you have any other ideas on how to spread the news about FCS, please contact Chris Chirokas at chirokas@comcast.net.

Recommended Websites

Our historian Richard Worthington has found these websites helpful in his research:

--For the "bookish" Cooke descendant: <http://oll.libertyfund.org/ToC/0064.php>

The Works of John Robinson, Pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers, with a Memoir and Annotations by Robert Ashton, 3 vols (1851). Please note that these are very large Acrobat (pdf) files.

--Bradford's History "Of Plimoth Plantation." The complete 645 page version is available online at <http://www.americanjourneys.org/aj-025/index.asp>.

Chris Chirokas recommends:

Paul Bumpus' amazing website <http://www.geocities.com/psbumppo.geo/index.html> features information on the descendants of Edouad Bompasse, Abraham Samson, Myles Standish, and John Alden. It also offers a treasure trove of information for people researching other Plymouth County families, most notably photographs of many old gravestones.

Included on the site are photographs of the stones of Francis 4 Cooke (1696-1724, son of Francis Cooke and Elizabeth Latham) as well as those of his mother and daughter at Kingston. Direct link to those pictures is:

<http://www.geocities.com/NatBumppy/FrancisCooke.html>. Francis' beautiful old slate stone is broken, lying somewhat embedded in the ground and face up to the elements. If anyone has any advice for Paul on restoring the stone, he would love to hear from you. Contact information is available on his website.

Early American Life Magazine

Richard Worthington discovered that the current issue (June) of the magazine "Early American Life" has an article on heirloom lilacs, which features a lilac planted by Pilgrim William Brewster in Duxbury, Massachusetts!

In Memoriam

The members of the Francis Cooke society would like to express our deepest sympathy to Judy Hughes. Judy is the Membership Chairwoman and has been very active in FCS since its inception. Her husband, Robert Lloyd Hughes, passed away March 9, 2005.

Newsletter Contributions

If you have any contributions or suggestions for the quarterly newsletter, please send them to Chris at the e-mail address below. Our next issue will come out in July. Content is limited to items connected with Francis Cooke, his descendants, and the areas they lived in.

Newsletter editor:

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