

Francis Cooke Society Newsletter

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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@yahoo.com. Please go to our website for instructions on how to subscribe.

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

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

Interim Membership Chair and head of the 6th and 7th Generations Project: 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

Dear Members:

What a year we have embarked on. Our fellow Americans have had very trying times, as have people all over the world. Our prayers go out to them. I went to the Mayflower Triennial meeting in Plymouth last month and 16 new members joined FCS. I distributed our new Francis Cooke brochure and talked to prospective members. One new member wanted the Cooke Society to have a meeting at the next Triennial Mayflower meeting and said she would help organize it, which is very welcome. I went to Francis Cooke's house in Plymouth Plantation, but Francis was out woolcombing!

Are there any members who could help the Francis Cooke Society file for nonprofit status? We have a few people on a committee to develop bylaws, but we really need someone with experience to head up the group. We currently do not charge a membership fee and filing for non-profit status is costly. We do accept donations towards our expenses (such as website fee and printing brochures), but we cannot give any tax deductions until we are officially a non-profit organization. One goal we have is to send out hard copies of our quarterly newsletter through the mail, since not everyone has computer access. Other goals include a searchable CD containing members' Francis Cooke lineages and to publish the 6th and 7th generations of Francis Cooke descendants.

Dianna Saario is doing a wonderful job with this project. Thank you to everyone who has contributed information so far and to the other FCS project leaders.

As we continue to grow we welcome your ideas, suggestions and involvement in FCS. Please contact me, or the appropriate person in your area of interest.

Our next newsletter comes out in January, so my best wishes for a peaceful holiday season,

Scott McKay, scottsfamilytree@aol.com

Membership News

The Francis Cooke Society has grown to 185 members. If you are interested in joining the Society (there is currently no fee charged) or are a member who has not filled out the membership form, please contact Dianna Saario at dsaario@comcast.net.

King Philip's War

By Christine Chirokas

I've always been interested in learning about the wars and conflicts my ancestors took part in, as it's one way to add dimension to the names and dates and to learn more about a period in history. In reading about my early Plymouth Colony ancestors, I frequently see references to those that served in King Philip's War.

My direct line of descent from Francis Cooke is through his daughter Hester, who m. Richard Wright. Richard and Hester had six children. Their sons John, Isaac and Samuel died between 7 Dec 1675 and 7 June 1676, possibly while serving in King Philip's War. If anyone has found evidence of this, please consider sharing it with me and I will publish it in a future newsletter.

Another of my ancestors, Robert Wixon, served on a jury that found three natives guilty for the murder of Sassamon, a Harvard-educated Native who served as liaison between the two groups. Some historians state that the way the colonists put the natives on trial and meted out the punishment they saw fit enraged the Natives, contributing toward the breakdown in Colonist/Native relations that led to war.

I am intrigued by the relationships between the Natives and the English that settled what is now Plymouth and Barnstable Counties as some of my ancestors, including the Wixons, are said to have Native blood. This is always a subject that gets some people riled up, mostly because of some of the more fanciful stories of English men marrying Indian Princesses, something I personally don't put much stock in.

King Philip is the English name given to Metacom, a Wampanoag who was chief after the death of his brother Wamsutta, who ruled following the death of their father Massasoit. After years of co-existing fairly peacefully, albeit uneasily, under the leadership of Massasoit and Gov. Bradford, tensions started to mount between the English settlers and the Natives after the passing of the first generation of leaders. They

did not understand each other's cultures and had divergent views on the ownership of land. Friction increased further because of an increased competition for resources and the collapse of the local fur trade. The English treated the natives in ways that can certainly be perceived as arrogant, unyielding and unfair, exemplified in the case of the above-mentioned murder.

The war broke out in Swansea in 1675 and spread to other areas in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Connecticut. Some Natives who had converted to Christianity fought alongside the English, helping them to win the war, which ended in 1676 when Metacom was killed by a Wampanoag fighting with Captain Benjamin Church.

The war was one of the costliest and bloodiest in America's history as one in ten soldiers on both sides was injured or killed. It took the area a long time to rebuild, especially the 12 towns that were destroyed. The after-effects were devastating to the Natives as many who had fought against the English were executed or sold into slavery abroad or forced to become servants for the colonists.

If you are interested in learning more about King Philip's War, check out these web sites for more information:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~massasoit/bodge.htm>

<http://www.massmoments.org/moment.cfm?mid=184>

<http://www.uswars.net/1675-1676/>

<http://www.pilgrimhall.org/philipwar.htm>

For a more thorough understanding of King Philip's War, consider these books:

Lincoln, Charles H. 1913. *Narratives of the Indian Wars*. Barnes & Noble, Inc., New York, reprinted 1966.

Johnston, D. H. L. 1909. *Famous Indian Chiefs*, Books for Libraries Press, Freeport, New York, reprinted 1971.

Leach, Douglas E., *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War*, Parnassus Imprints, East Orleans, MA, 1958.

Lepore, Jill, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity*, 1998, Knopf Publishing.

Schultz, Eric B. and Tougias, Michael J., *King Philip's War: The History and Legacy of America's Forgotten Conflict*.

Ellis, G.W. and J.E. Morris, *King Philip's War*, The Grafton Press Publishers, New York, 1906.

Drake, James David, *King Philip's War: Civil War in New England, 1675-1676 (Native Americans of the Northeast)*, 1999 University of Massachusetts Press.

Kawashima, Yasuhide, *Igniting King Philip's War: The John Sassamon Murder Trial*, 2001, University Press of Kansas.

Thanksgiving Discussion

Thanksgiving is a very special day for Mayflower descendants. It is also a holiday that is not without controversy, especially among some New England Native Americans who call it a "National Day of Mourning," and also because of some of the inaccurate things many of us were all taught in our childhood history classes.

Historian Dr. Jeremy D. Bangs examines some of the myths and misconceptions in a three part article, "Thanksgiving on the Net: Roast Bull and Cranberry Sauce." It is available at

http://www.sail1620.org/discover_feature_thanksgiving_on_the_net_roast_bull_with_cranberry_sauce_part_1.shtml.

It is a thought-provoking article but may not be of interest to those who hold a more idealized view of the first Thanksgiving or just want to share a special day with family eating turkey and trimmings without any great debate.

The First Thanksgiving Proclamation

Written while King Philip's War was still raging, June 20, 1676:

"The Holy God having by a long and Continual Series of his Afflictive dispensations in and by the present Warr with the Heathen Natives of this land, written and brought to pass bitter things against his own Covenant people in this wilderness, yet so that we evidently discern that in the midst of his judgements he hath remembered mercy, having remembered his Footstool in the day of his sore displeasure against us for our sins, with many singular Intimations of his Fatherly Compassion, and regard; reserving many of our Towns from Desolation Threatened, and attempted by the Enemy, and giving us especially of late with many of our Confederates many signal Advantages against them, without such Disadvantage to ourselves as formerly we have been sensible of, if it be the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, It certainly bespeaks our positive Thankfulness, when our Enemies are in any measure disappointed or destroyed; and fearing the Lord should take notice under so many Intimations of his returning mercy, we should be found an Insensible people, as not standing before Him with Thanksgiving, as well as lading him with our Complaints in the time of pressing Afflictions:

The Council has thought meet to appoint and set apart the 29th day of this instant June, as a day of Solemn Thanksgiving and praise to God for such his Goodness and Favour, many Particulars of which mercy might be Instanced, but we doubt not those who are sensible of God's Afflictions, have been as diligent to espy him returning to us; and that the Lord may behold us as a People offering Praise and thereby glorifying Him; the Council doth commend it to the Respective Ministers, Elders and people of this Jurisdiction; Solemnly and seriously to keep the same Beseeking that being perswaded by the mercies of God we may all, even this whole people offer up our bodies and soulds as a living and acceptable Service unto God by Jesus Christ."

Source: www.law.ou.edu/hist/. This excellent University of Oklahoma website has a chronological listing of the text of important American documents.

The 6th and 7th generation project

One of the goals of FCS is to compile and publish the 6th and 7th generations of Francis Cooke descendants, continuing where the GSMD Silver Book left off. Dianna Saario is managing this project and has received 102 submissions from members kind enough to share their research with us.

If you want your ancestors to be included, please contact Dianna at dsaario@comcast.net. We are using the Mayflower Society's standards for documentation to insure the information in the book is well-documented: "The best documentation to look for is vital records such as the birth, marriage, and death certificates for each person. Other documentation might be published genealogies, family documents and other official records."

From John S. White, who is not a FCS member but a contributor to the project:

"I recently purchased a memorial headstone for Mary Cooke, the daughter of Francis and Hester Cooke who was born in Plymouth about 1626. She married Lt. John Thomson, and they we my 9Xgrandparents. They are both buried in Nemasket Hill Cemetery in Middleboro, Mass. John had a headstone that was placed over grave by a descendent in the 1950's (I think), but Mary had none, so I had a local monument company make some similar to John's and place it over her grave."

Website Spotlight

<http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/>

Allows you to download "zip" files for the US census in Adobe Acrobat format. (Thank you to Richard Worthington for recommending this website.)

<http://www.capecodgravestones.com/>

Robert Carlson has done extraordinary work documenting ca 1683 - 1860 gravestones at Cape Cod cemeteries, including many photographs.

<http://www.gravematter.com/>

Another great cemetery website, has gravestone transcriptions from cemeteries in northeast Massachusetts, southern New Hampshire and southern Maine. Also includes some photographs and historical information.

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