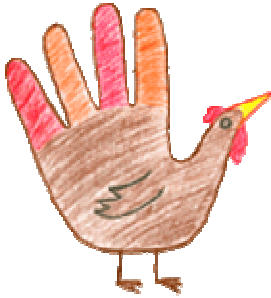


Francis Cooke Society Newsletter
October 2007
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About the Francis Cooke Society (FCS)

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.

President's Corner



Hello Cousins!

I hope you all had a wonderful summer. Now that the seasons have changed it's time to enjoy football, other outdoor activities, and be with your families.

The Society has grown to 285 members. As you know the Society also helps members with their early American genealogical pursuits. I just found out I am the 10th Cousin of Lady Diana Spencer. We are both ninth cousins once removed to Willard Mitt Romney thru the Hebert and Hibbard line. I am related to a lot of famous people, so it makes the pursuit major fun.

My best wishes for a wonderful Thanksgiving,

J. Scott McKay, President

October is Family History Month

By Chris Chirokas

Millions of Americans have an interesting in preserving their family history for future generations and genealogy as a hobby is now second only to gardening.

If you want some ideas on ways to celebrate your family history, check out this link:

http://genealogy.about.com/cs/holidays/a/family_history.htm

Ideas include recording family stories, compiling a family cookbook, assemble a family history scrapbook, visit ancestral homelands, or start a family website.

If you do not have a substantial amount of free time for a project, another idea is to join an historical or genealogical society in one of your research areas to give them financial support and possibly make some great connections.

Website Spotlight

Thanks to Dianna Saario for the following links:

www.censuslinks.com

Has 6,000 plus links to birth, death, marriage and census transcriptions, so worth a look to see if it has any links to what you are searching for.

www.recordsroom.com

Has thousands of vital record links and information available in print, CD-Rom and online.

1635 Hurricane

by Chris Chirokas

Scott McKay found an interesting article on the “Great Colonial Hurricane” in the Fall 2007 Society of Mayflower Descendants in Michigan publication. The original article was written by Larry McShane and can be read on-line at:

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15825277/>

The first major storm the Pilgrims faced, the August 1635 hurricane was what would be a Category 3 hurricane by today’s standards, with winds of up to 130 miles per hour and 21 foot sea surges.

“The Pilgrims, after landing at Plymouth Rock, endured disease, brutal winters and battles with natives. But their biggest test roared up the coast from the south, an unprecedented and terrifying tempest that convinced rattled residents the apocalypse was imminent,” McShane wrote. “And why not? The transplanted Europeans knew almost nothing of hurricanes, an entirely foreign phenomenon. Their fears of approaching death were reinforced when a lunar eclipse followed the natural disaster.”

The several thousand Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonists were left to rebuild and recover from a storm as powerful as the 1938 Long Island Express, which killed 700 people and left 63,000 homeless.

Nicholas Coch, a geology professor at Queens College and a hurricane expert, re-constructed the 1635 hurricane, using detailed colonial journals.

Coch said: "It was an extraordinary event, a major hurricane, and nearly knocked out British culture in America." The storm moved at 30 mph, three times faster than a typical southern hurricane. It was reported that 17 American Indians were drowned, while others climbed trees to find refuge.

Governor John Winthrop recalled in his Aug. 16, 1635 entry that the winds were kicking up a full week before the hurricane. Once it did arrive, the hurricane "blew with such violence, with abundance of rain, that it blew down many hundreds of trees, overthrew some houses, and drove the ships from their anchors." Winthrop wrote of the deaths of eight American Indians sucked under the rising water while "flying from their wigwams."

Plymouth's Governor William Bradford wrote: "Such a mighty storm of wind and rain as none living in these parts, either English or Indian, ever saw. It blew down sundry houses and uncovered others...It blew down many hundred thousands of trees, turning up the stronger by the roots and breaking the higher pine trees off in the middle."

Damage to buildings and crops was substantial and ships and their passengers were lost at sea. Reverend Anthony Thacher and his wife Elizabeth were the only survivors of a ship lost off Rockport, MA. Twenty-one other passengers drowned, including the couple's four children.

"Before daylight, it pleased God to send so mighty a storm as the like was never felt in New England since the English came there nor in the memories of any of the Indians," Thacher wrote in a letter home to his brother.

At the time of the hurricane, Francis and Hester Cooke would have been about 53 years old. Their surviving children ranged in age from about nine years of age to young adults who had started families of their own. I can only imagine the fear they felt and the urgency to reunite with all of their loved ones to insure everyone's safety after the storm subsided.

Membership Information

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

The 6th and 7th generation project

One of our current projects is publishing a book with the 6th and 7th generations of Francis Cooke descendants, continuing where the GSMD Silver Book left off.

If anyone has copies of wills or probate for their family from the 6th and 7th generation Cooke descendants, please consider sending copies to Dianna for inclusion in the book.

Dianna Saario is managing this project and has put an amazing amount of time into this effort. She works on verifying each line submitted, which sometimes entails quite a bit of work. Dianna and Valeria Reckert also help many Cooke descendants with their research. Thanks Dianna and Val for all the time you give to the Society and its members!

Contact Information

Members of the FCS are in communication through an e-mail group at **Francis Cooke Society@yahogroups.com**. Please go to our website for instructions on how to subscribe. This is our primary means of communication, so it is important to subscribe!

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

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

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

Back issues of the FCS Newsletter are available for viewing at www.franciscookesociety.org.