

## Francis Cooke Society Newsletter

### February 2009

#### Vol. 7, No. 1

#### 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

Dear Fellow Francis Cooke Society Members:

I welcome each of you to a new year with a new American President and Congress. I wish that our leaders, our members and our fellow country men will find ways to bring about a prosperous 2009 New Year.

Our American and world societies are currently in the worst economic crisis since the great depression of the 1930 era. This reminds me of the conditions Francis Cooke and his fellow Mayflower passengers had that first winter of 1620/1630. Each of our ancestors faced that first winter crowded aboard the lower deck of the Mayflower which was anchored off the Plymouth shore.

As death took its toll on that tiny band of Pilgrims, they would wait until night before they would row ashore to bury their dead in unmarked graves. They did not dare let the Native Americans know how few in numbers they had become nor how weak they were in health, food and defenses.

While still on board the Mayflower, our ancestor and his fellow passengers drew up a plan that would serve as a blue print of how they planned to govern themselves and live in the wilderness of what would later become the New England region of the United States of America.

It was by Divine Grace, their individual and collective hard work and their belief in themselves, that they established a region that would be known as New England; a much better place than the old England they had left behind. When spring finally arrived in Plymouth, none choose to return to the old England they had left behind. In years to come, their descendants would help establish the United States of America.

We are now 328 members and new members continue to join each month. I encourage each of you to determine what you individually and what we, as a Mayflower family society, can do to make our organization better.

Please feel free to contact Chris, Judd or me with your suggestions.

Sincerely,

J. Scott McKay, President

**Comments by Chris Chirokas, Publicity Coordinator and Managing Newsletter Editor, on the December Issue of Mayflower Quarterly**

I am sure many of you are members of the Mayflower Society and therefore receive The Mayflower Quarterly (MQ).

According to the December issue of "The Mayflower Quarterly," Governor General Judith H. Swan has launched a "Women of the Mayflower" initiative. One of the objectives of the initiative is to increase the gender recognition equity of the contributions of the female passengers. A committee has been formed and several projects are being considered, including "Window Into a Woman's World," which will feature lore and research concerning the historic important of the women of the Mayflower.

Of course we know that Hester Mahieu Cooke did not accompany her husband Francis on the Mayflower, arriving on the Anne in 1623, but I think she would be happy to have her Plymouth Colony friends recognized in this way. One part of the "Women of the Mayflower" project is to gather information on famous female descendants of Mayflower passengers. If you have a story you would like to share, contact Muriel C. Cushing at [flash1620@comcast.net](mailto:flash1620@comcast.net).

If you do not receive MQ and you want to read more about this article, check your local library for a copy or order a back issue from GSMD in Plymouth for \$6.00.

**Comments by Judd Taylor, Newsletter Editor**

The Boston Globe ran the following pictures and comments on their web site.

It is a reminder to me of our Pilgrim heritage, the Mayflower Compact, our Declaration of Independence and how our culture is the model for all peoples and countries in the world.

[http://www.Boston.com/bigpicture/2009/01/the\\_inauguration\\_of\\_president.html](http://www.Boston.com/bigpicture/2009/01/the_inauguration_of_president.html)

**Book Review with timely comments by Dianna Saario**

Dianna writes that she read Thanksgiving: The Pilgrims' First Year in America. She writes, "I read this book and I liked it. Francis Cooke is not mentioned, but the book gives a great history of that time period. I think I have a better understanding of our forefathers." With the author's permission a reprint from his book follows.

**Thanksgiving: The Pilgrims' First Year in America**

By Glenn Alan Cheney

They dreamed the American dream long before they saw the place. They wanted to own their own homes, an impossibility in England. They sought individual independence, but they would achieve it through cooperation. They would help each other build houses, share food, provide for the common defense, and worship in a single meetinghouse that doubled as a fort.

Before they came ashore, all adult males signed an agreement. They would stick together and honor their debt. They would remain subjects of their distant king but make their own laws as necessary. Between the lines of that "Association and Agreement," which today we call the Mayflower Compact, we can almost hear whispers of "We the People..." Those were the cultural seeds that the Pilgrims planted at Plymouth: the insistence on following the heart rather than the law; the audacity to demand authority over authorities; the wisdom of working together for mutual benefit and personal profit; the courage to pursue a better life no matter how much worse it might be. They would stick with their families. They would stand strong while reaching for peace.

Those values took hold in the stony soil of New England, and they predominate today. The American people often drift from those values, but they always drift back. Americans are and always will be what the Pilgrims were.

These were just plain people — blue collar, lower middle class. There wasn't a rich man among them, no aristocrats paying others to do the work, no one expecting to end the day with clean fingernails, no bankers, no clergy, no artists, no philosophers. And no slaves.

Glenn Alan Cheney author of ***Thanksgiving: The Pilgrims' First Year in America***

See the following web site for a review of this timely book: <http://nllibrarium.com/>

This informative book explains how our Mayflower ancestors came together, bowed their heads and give thanks for their first harvest. This book is much more than a description of an event that later became an American national holiday. It starts with a history of the Pilgrims' journey that began as a business and religious incorporation by London merchants and those men & women seeking religious freedom.

### **"From The Trunk" by Judd Taylor**

It is timely that as I type this late edition of the 2009 newsletter, it is American's President's Day. We, in this country, are celebrating President Abraham Lincoln's birthday today. Our new President Obama is making speeches reminding our fellow countrymen about his hero, Abraham Lincoln.

I mentioned my visit to Washburn-Norlands (see the fall 2008 Newsletter for details). It was there that our famous cousin, Elihu B. Washburn, and his famous siblings grew up in the 19th century. I went there to determine if any of his private papers mentioned my direct line ancestor, Salmon Washburn, and his part if any, in the newly elected President Lincoln efforts to avoid a civil war.

Unfortunately the Elihu Washburn papers had been placed in storage in an attempt to preserve them from a leaking roof at the Washburn-Norlands library. Let me mention that the non profit Washburn-Norlands is collecting donations to repair that library's roof. I hope they are successful, for I want to look at those papers.

Scott and I have been emailing each other with suggestions about other ways to find additional information on Salmon Washburn, Major US Military, Alabama State Senator and a founder of an Alabama Male & Female College. Did Salmon Washburn take his second wife and young children to Middleborough, MA in the fall of 1860 to visit family? Did he make contact with his cousin Elihu Washburn, a mentor of Abraham Lincoln? What was the cause of Salmon Washburn's death in Middleborough, MA in the fall of 1860?

Well, more on all of this in a latter edition of this Newsletter. Plus I want to share more with you including a picture of my Grandmother's old family trunk; how her Grandfather told her about the first ancestor to come to this country. "I think he said his name was John Washburn, but I do not really remember. I was only five or six years old in 1906 when he told me!" "My grandfather said our ancestor had to leave England because he would not agree with the way the King wanted the Bible to be interpreted." Note when John Washburn, The immigrant, came to Plimoth Plantation, King James of the King James version of the bible had recently been crowned King of England.

Thank you for any comments about this our President Day's special edition and any other topic included in the Francis Cooke Newsletter.

**Judd Taylor**

**Francis Cooke Newsletter Editor**

### **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](mailto:dsaario@comcast.net).

### **New Members**

Welcome to our newest members:

**Pollyanna Gregg** of Circleville, OH. She descends through Jane Cooke and Experience Mitchell

**Margret Bryant VanOrden Maloney**, Bluffton, SC, also through Jane and Experience  
**Erin Kelley**, Mesa, AZ, through Mary Cooke and John Tomson

There are places on this web site & people in our society that can aid you in your search for genealogical information. We are glad your joined our group!

### **The 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Generation Project**

One of our current projects is publishing a book with the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> generation Cooke descendants, or has genealogy books or papers to contribute, please contact Dianna. She is especially in need of resources from Connecticut and Maine.

Dianna has had great success in finding information through Google Books. <http://books.google.com/>, particularly town histories and vital records.

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

### **Website Spotlight**

The 12 volume "Records of the Colony of New Plymouth In New England," edited by Nathaniel B. Shurtleff and David Pulsifer, is available online (except for volume 10) at Google Books. Dale Cook is in the process of creating a consolidated index to all 12 volumes, as one of the challenges of using the volumes is that each is indexed separately. He has four volumes (Court Orders from 1633-1668) indexed at <http://plymouthcolony.net/resources/files/PCR.pdf>. Mr. Cook is the Plymouth County Coordinator for the USGenWeb Project and Administrator of <http://plymouthcolony.net>.

The Allen County Library in Indiana has a large project underway, scanning rare texts including books that are of interest to genealogists. You can search the available books at <http://www.archive.org/index.php>, click on "texts, browse by key word," then click on Allen County Library and enter your search words. You may also view an article about the Allen County Library project at <http://www.journalgazette.net/apps/pbes.dll/article?AID=/20081226/LOCAL/812260323>.

### **Contact Information**

Members of the FCS are in communication through an e-mail group at [Francis\\_Cooke\\_Society@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Francis_Cooke_Society@yahoogroups.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:**

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#### **Registrar, head of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Generations Project, and Genealogy Coordinator:**

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Back issues of the FCS Newsletter are available for viewing at [www.franciscookesociety.org](http://www.franciscookesociety.org)

