

Francis Cooke Society Newsletter
January 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.

Website Spotlight

By Christine Chirokas and Scott McKay

1. The Pilgrim Hall Museum website has compiled transcriptions of 17th century records that pertain to Francis Cooke.

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

The site also includes transcriptions of his will and inventory.

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

2. The Pilgrim Fathers UK Origins Association celebrates and brings together the heritage of the original Separatists in England and the Pilgrim Fathers who settled in Plymouth, Massachusetts. It's an interesting website for any Mayflower descendant, but is particularly helpful for those planning a trip to England. It includes information on what is called the Mayflower Trail, a tour featuring historical buildings, including relevant churches and William Brewster's home. A festival weekend for the fall of 2007 is planned to mark the 400 year anniversary of the Separatists leaving England for Holland.

<http://www.pilgrimfathersorigins.org/>

3. The Pilgrim Archives website contains data pertaining to the Pilgrims' time in Leiden, Holland.

http://www.pilgrimarchives.nl/html/pilgrimarchives/tpa_eng.html

Information includes the history of the Pilgrims' time in Leiden, planning a trip to Leiden, some holdings of the Leiden archives, and wonderful photographs of surviving buildings from that time.

4. The Massachusetts Vital Records to 1849 (often referred to as the "Tan Books") are now available on-line at Rootsweb. This project is still a work in progress, so not yet a complete database. Searches can be performed by town or by surname.

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~maessex/VitalRecords/>

Book Spotlight

By Christine Chirokas

I recently read "King Philip's War, The History and Legacy of America's Forgotten Conflict," by Eric B. Schultz and Michael J. Tougias, 1999, The Countryman Press, Woodstock, VT, and recommend it to anyone interested in the history of that time period

King Philip's War was one of America's first and costliest wars. It began in 1675 as an Indian raid on several farms in Plymouth Colony and quickly escalated into a full-scale war.

The book combines an in-depth history that is easy to read, not dry as some historical accounts can be. What distinguishes this book from others on the war I have read is that it serves as a guide to the historical sites where the ambushes, raids and battles took place, often with accompanying photographs.

It briefly mentions several of Francis Cooke's descendants. His son John Cooke's garrison was several miles from Totoson's camp (sachem of the Matapoissett) in what is now Fairhaven, Massachusetts. The site is marked by a bronze tablet set into stone that stands on the north side of Coggeshall Street, just west of Garrison Street. It reads:

This Boulder
Marks the Spot Where Barracks
Were Placed for the Purpose of
Protecting the Early Inhabitants
During the Indian Wars
These Barracks Were Erected by John Cooke
The Last Surviving Pilgrim of Those
Who Came Over in the Mayflower
and the First White Man to Settle
In This Town

An 1899 history of Bristol County mentions that the garrison walls "were in good preservation until recent times," though nothing remains today. A 1904 paper written for the Old Dartmouth Historical Society informs that "among the relics preserved in the rooms of our society are various arrowheads, spoons and cooking utensils dug up on the site of Cooke's garrison." John Cooke's burial spot is marked not far away, on Pilgrim Avenue, west of Main Street in a small park overlooking the Achushnet River and New Bedford Harbor.

The man whose gun failed to fire when confronting King Philip on 12 August 1676, was thought to be Caleb Cooke (son of Jacob Cooke and Damaris Hopkins, grandson of Francis Cooke). Alderman, the Pocasset with Cooke, shot and killed Philip. A 19th century stone marking the location of King Philip's death is set in the woods of Bristol, Rhode Island, but is now believed to mark more of a general location of his death and not the exact spot.

Member Query

From Leonard Witkin (husband of Constance Cooke Witkin):

We need are searching for the parents of Louis (Lewis) Leander Cooke born 16 June 1808 in Lewiston, New York (my father-in-law was his namesake). He died in Decorah, Iowa, 30 August 1893. He was my wife's great-great-great grandfather.

We have a great deal of information about him but do not have the names of his parents. They are our link to Francis Cooke of the Mayflower. Most documents have been destroyed due to fire (such as his Cook County IL marriage certificate). He married Carolyn Eastwood in Chicago on 1 September 1843. His father's birthplace was Connecticut and his mother was born in New York. We have his ivory handled cane with an inscribed silver band that is difficult to read because of wear, but we think we can read the words "provost captain" and "Lewiston."

We have other information but it is too detailed to go into it here. If someone out there has done the research, we would love to hear from you.

If anyone has information or suggestions to share with Leonard, please contact him at: fishtchr@yahoo.com. Thank you!

Membership Information

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.

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. Dianna Saario is managing this project and has received over 150 submissions from members who are kind enough to share their research with us. Dianna is hoping to reach 200 submissions before going to print, so if you want to have your line included please contact her soon.

Anyone with approved Mayflower Applications that connect to Francis Cooke are acceptable. Example: Stephen Hopkins' daughter Damaris and Jacob Cooke. A copy of the application with the connection is appreciated.

If you want your ancestors to be included, please contact Dianna at dsaario@comcast.net. She will gladly send you submission guidelines or answer any questions you may have about the project.

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. This is our primary means of communication, so it is important to subscribe!

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

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