

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.

President's Corner

Dear Members:

I thought I'd share some of my Mayflower doings. I am a lifetime member of the Mayflower Society and have been to four meetings in my 34 years as a member. I was 22 when I became a member in Iowa and attended a meeting with my grandmother. I remember there were a lot of older people at that meeting. I knew some of the members through Cub Scouts and the YMCA, but I didn't know they were GSMD members. Later I moved to Nashville and went to one meeting there, at which GSMD President Kay Lapham was a speaker. I moved to Michigan and one time they had the national meeting just 25 miles away, but I was unable to go because of work. I have since moved to Florida and last year I went to the General Society Congress in Plymouth, and at the party on the final night I sat with Ed Sherman (South Carolina State Historian), his wife and the Michigan delegation. During the Congress I also attended the Naples Mayflower Society Meeting and the people were still older than me!

Francis Cooke is my only Mayflower ancestor, but I am related to a lot of famous people. My latest discovery is a connection to Thomas Alva Edison. Genealogy really is a great hobby!

I wish all a Happy Halloween and a peaceful holiday season.

Sincerely,
Scott McKay, scottsfamilytree@aol.com

Television Special

The History Channel is airing a three-hour special on the Pilgrims' troubled journey and the founding of Plymouth Colony, *Desperate Crossing: The Untold Story of The Mayflower*, on Sunday, November 19 at 8 pm ET.

It's a story familiar to most of us from school. And in many ways, the story of the passengers on the Mayflower is like that of every immigrant who has come to America to start a new life. Yet the true story of the Pilgrims is far more complex than the one most of us learned as children – and also more intriguing. This is a decades-long epic tale, filled with real drama, tragedy, and inspiration. (Description from press release.)

As the FCS newsletter editor, I was given a copy of *Desperate Crossing* to review, and I recommend it to any Mayflower descendant or history buff. It is similar to other History Channel projects in how it was made: there is a narrator, a good amount of the story is acted out and interviews with historians and other experts (including the Wampanoag perspective) are sprinkled throughout.

The story unfolds from the early days of the Separatists secretly gathering at William Brewster's home in Scrooby, England, to the move to Leyden, the voyage on the Mayflower and the scrubbed journey of the Speedwell, the landing at Provincetown, and finally the settling at Plymouth up until the time of the "First Thanksgiving."

Much of the story centers on William Bradford and his wife Dorothy and the actor portraying Bradford reads from *Of Plymouth Plantation* and whether Dorothy's death was suicide or an accident is addressed. Other people the program focuses on include: Brewster, Robinson, Winslow, Standish, Carver, Cushman, Alden, Billington, Hopkins, Weston, the Mayflower crew, Squanto, Samoset, and Massasoit. In addition to Dorothy Bradford, the wives of Hopkins, Brewster and Winslow are also portrayed in the program. Alas, no mention of Francis Cooke is made.

Often when I read or view something about the Pilgrims, I do not really learn anything new, but I found quite a few tidbits of new information and perspectives in *Desperate Crossing* and found it most enjoyable to watch. I do think including *The Untold Story of the Mayflower*, is a bit of a stretch, however.

Website Spotlight

--*The Pilgrims and the Ancient Church* website contains information about the Pilgrims and other non-Conformists in Holland circa 1600-1630. It includes Pilgrim records from Leyden, Pilgrim guarantors, some Pilgrim marriages, and members of the Ancient Exiled English Church who became members of the Pilgrim congregation in Leyden.

<http://westerly-journies.com/pilgrims/pilgmain.html>

--Duane Cline's site, *The Pilgrims and Plymouth Colony: 1620*, is organized into lesson plans for teachers by subject, but it is an excellent resource for anyone interested in the Mayflower passengers. He covers a wide range of subjects from the background of the Separatists in England and Holland, to the voyage of the Mayflower, to the settling of Plymouth (including the First Thanksgiving). Also included are links to other websites and suggested reading.

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~mosmd>.

--Linkpendium is a website featuring links to genealogy-related websites, divided by U.S. state, county, local resources as well as surnames.

<http://www.linkpendium.com>

To focus on Plymouth area links go to:

<http://www.linkpendium.com/genealogy/USA/MA/Plymouth/>

--The Massachusetts State Archives has put its death indices for 1841-1910 on-line. The information provided is minimal (name, place and year of death, volume and page number), but records can be ordered from the archives.

<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcsrch/VitalRecordsSearchContents.html>

Book Spotlight

--*The Mayflower and Her Passengers* by Caleb Johnson.

Many of you may be familiar with Caleb Johnson's MayflowerHistory.com website. Mr. Johnson edited the latest edition of William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* and his new book *The Mayflower and Her Passengers* is now available.

The book begins with original, never before published information about the Mayflower ship itself, and its history before and after she became the famous vessel that brought the Pilgrims to America. The remainder of the book consists of short biographies of each passenger or family group that came on the Mayflower--

the first attempt to create individual biographies for each of the passengers or family groups. This is a great genealogical and biographical resource for anyone interested in the Pilgrims. This book is not an attempt to retell the history of Plymouth and the Pilgrims, but rather to humanize the "mythical" Pilgrims by providing individual biographies--whether it is William Brewster's experiences in Queen Elizabeth's court, or Stephen Hopkins' experiences shipwrecked on the Bermudas, John Howland's experiences falling off the Mayflower, or Edward Doty's civil lawsuits, or Peter Brown's recently discovered English origins in Dorking, it's all here. This book contains extensive endnotes referring the reader to the original primary source materials that were used. All copies sold from Mr. Johnson's web pages are autographed by the author. (Note: Description of the book is from Caleb Johnson's website.)

The book can be ordered at www.mayflowerhistory.com or at Orders@Xlibris.com, Cost for the softcover is \$19.99; hardcover \$29.99.

--*Pilgrims at Prayer*, published by the General Society of Mayflower Descendants, Edited by Alice C. Teal and Harry P. Folger 3rd. A 48 page pocket-size booklet of Prayers for all occasions; invocations, blessings, benedictions, service of remembrance for departed members; and a Wampanoag prayer of Thanksgiving. It also includes the Pilgrim Pledge, Mayflower Compact, Order of a Meeting with Ceremony, Presentation of Flags, Installation of Officers and a list of passengers and crew. To order send \$6.00, which includes postage, to GSMD, PO Box 3297 Plymouth, MA 02361-3297.

--*Giving Thanks*, by Kathleen Curtin, Sandra Oliver and Plimoth Plantation. Food historians Curtin and Oliver trace the history of the Thanksgiving holiday, from the real story of the First Thanksgiving to the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and beyond. The second half of the books contains sixty traditional and modern recipes, from New England mincemeat pies to Chinese Rice Dressing.

When you order through www.plimoth.org, you will receive a book signed by the authors with a personalized inscription if desired. Hardcover, \$19.99.

Holiday Gift Ideas

If you are shopping for a fellow Mayflower descendant this holiday season, the books mentioned above might make nice gifts. Some other ideas:

--Plimoth Plantation's site, www.plimoth.org, has other gift ideas, including a 2007 wall calendar with a beautiful color photo of Mayflower II under sail on the cover. Cost is \$9.95 plus shipping.

--The Pilgrim Hall Museum offers a gift basket that is suitable for a Thanksgiving or Christmas hostess gift. It includes : List of *Mayflower* passengers, copy of the Mayflower Compact, the book *Five Girls Aboard the Mayflower*, Pilgrim Hall Museum mug, Pilgrim doll, cranberry soap, cranberry tea towel, salt water taffy, and Cape Cod chocolate with cranberries, all in a charming Cape Cod basket. The basket costs \$36.95 and ordering information is available at <http://www.pilgrimhall.org/sh-gifts.htm>.

--A membership to a genealogical or local historical society. This is a win-win since the recipient will benefit and you will be contributing to a society that can use your financial support. Many historical societies offer a variety of gifts items as well.

--A subscription to a genealogy magazine, journal or newsletter. I know I always feel a bit of guilt when I pay for all my subscriptions!

--NEHGS has an assortment of CD's for sale at www.newenglandancestors.org. Mayflower descendants may be interested in *Plymouth (County) Church Records* or *Plymouth (County) Church Records*.

My personal pledge is to print out family history books for my family for Christmas this year. I've always put this off because I feel none of my lines are "done enough," but will start with the simplest branch of my family to take a stab at doing this now.

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>

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

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