

# The Falmouth Genealogical Society

## Newsletter

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*The Falmouth Genealogical Society Newsletter is published four times a year and is dedicated to news, events and ideas that will help members enhance their genealogical research.*

## Falmouth Genealogical Society

*FAMILY ARTIFACTS DAY, APRIL 13, 2013*

### Reviews by Joyce Pendery

Fascinating stories about fabulous family artifacts were fantastic! If you were not present, you missed a good show and tell presentation.

MURIEL LOCKLIN brought her collection of cooking artifacts: scoop, scales, molds, cake decorating tools, and other items that had belonged to her great great grandfather Louis Joseph Adolph Blondin. For a long time, he was her brick wall, until one day she found information about him and his descendants in a genealogy at Woonsocket, Rhode Island. At age 15, he had immigrated by train from Quebec to Rhode Island, where he worked as a baker in Central Falls. Later, he had a convenience store where he sold goods he had baked, as well as other items, and probably used these tools, as have other family members

MARY LOU BOTELHO explained that she had shared a bedroom with her grandmother until she was

16, when her grandmother died. In 1896, at age 13 to 14, her grandmother, whose name was Maria Jacente Soares, crossed the island of San Miguel in the Azores on foot to reach the port of Ponta Delgada, bringing with her only one, large wicker basket with a lid that held her possessions. She boarded a ship and traveled by herself to New Bedford, where she was to work in a mill. Her grandmother taught Mary Lou many handcrafts. After she died Mary Lou became interested in genealogy, took out the basket and sought information about it. She was told that it could not be over a hundred years old. In 2007 Mary Lou and her husband went to San Miguel and in the museum of a tea factory, they saw similar baskets on display and learned that they had been used as lunch baskets for workers in the tea fields and that many were well over 100 years old. Mary Lou also brought a painting of the basket that her husband recently had a Mashpee artist paint for Mary Lou, and now Mary Lou is learning to make Nantucket baskets!



## Calendar of Meetings for 2013

Saturdays, 10 a.m., Falmouth Public Library

Apr 13: Artifact Day (Rescheduled from February 9th.): Members bring in a family artifact and discuss the ancestor who originally owned it.

May 11: Lori Lyn Price: Internet Genealogy In Your PJ's

Jun 8: Annual Meeting and Election of Officers

Jul 13: Al Knight: A Personal History featuring the Crocker Family of Cotuit

Aug 10: Tales of Our Ancestors - Members give a presentation on a featured ancestor. (Need three volunteers!)



Mary Lou Bothelho's basket



Virginia Gregg's doll house



Mary Barry's Trunk



Donna Walchov's sword



Dottie Priestly's Irish lace doll dress



David Burt's Panama Canal pictures



MARY BARRY, about a month ago, discovered an old steamer trunk in the corner of an attic. In April 1907 her young paternal grandmother Mary Andersen had immigrated from an isolated island off the coast of Norway, where she lived with her widowed mother, to Hoboken, New Jersey, on the maiden voyage of the U.S. steamship *United States*. There, she was to be met by an old friend of her mother's. Inside the trunk were two wool suits Mary's great grandmother, a skilled seamstress, had made for her daughter. To be recognized, she was to wear one when disembarking. After working in New York for two years, she came to Falmouth in 1909, where she married. Because of stickers pasted on the outside of the trunk and information found inside, Mary is sure this was her grandmother's trunk.

DOTTIE PRIESTLY has learned a good deal from her recent research on her great grandmother Julia Herlihy who was born in Bandon, County Cork, Ireland and immigrated during the 1850's. She died in Stoneham in 1976. Dottie showed a tall doll wearing a lace dress, possibly the model for a wedding dress, that her great grandmother, who had learned to make lace in a convent school, had made. Dottie has many other lace items her grandmother also made. She had an interesting life: marrying twice and having six children with her first husband, who died while she was pregnant with the sixth child, seven children with her second husband, and an illegitimate son between husbands!

VIRGINIA GREGG and her husband found his great grandmother's doll house from the 1870's stored in a family attic. The doll house had belonged to a series of Ediths, beginning with his ancestor Edith 1 Emerson, daughter of Ralph Waldo Emerson. In the photos Ginny brought, one see first, a wood cabinet. Opening the door of the cabinet, one then sees four rooms, on two levels. Ginny brought one of the four rooms with its miniature, hand-made furnishings, as well as many furnishings for the other rooms. Her daughter Edith 2 also played with the doll house. She had six brothers and when she was 13, a sister was born, who unfortunately did not survive diphtheria at age one. Ginny showed a portrait of the two sisters, possibly painted posthumously by their mother Edith 1.

DONNA WALCHOVY was in high spirits as she demonstrated movements with a Union Civil War sword that had belonged to her distant relative President Wil-

liam McKinley, who was shot in Buffalo in 1901. She also showed the elaborate decorations on the hilt and blade. McKinley's gun and sword both came to Donna's ancestors, and because of her interest in genealogy, she got the sword!

DAVID BURT knows little about the life of his grandfather, Luther White Burt, born in Hartford in 1848. Luther was married twice and died in 1921, about the time his youngest child was born. He was a surveyor and had apparently worked on construction of the Panama Canal. David brought nine large, framed panoramic views of various stages of construction of the canal which had been found, rolled up among his grandfather's belongings.

JAY SHERLOCK showed a hand-held noisemaker that had been used by his great great grandfather Frances Johnson Day during the Civil War to wake up troops without signaling the enemy. Other uses of similar noisemaker have been to assemble church goers and to scare birds away from fields or trees.

JOYCE PENDERY showed a miniature water color on ivory portrait of a probable ancestor of her husband. The painting was signed "T. Young," the name of a well know artist who painted such portraits in Rhode Island. But Joseph Perkins, the probable ancestor lived in Kensington, New Hampshire! Judging by the man's clothing and haircut, the portrait was painted in the early 1800's. Joyce found it among her mother-in-law's things and was told it came from her father. The subject had a prominent nose, as do some family members! Joyce decided to have the frame opened to see if the name of the sitter was inside. She sent it to a specialist in restoring miniatures, but there was no information there.



Jay Sherlock's noisemaker

## The East/West Barter System is Alive and Well!

### Charlet Emery Roskovics

The following is a sampling of a letter exchange which came about because I made a Find A Grave memorial ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)) from the Cape Cod Times for James Contonio who died in Dennis, MA.

April 20, 2013

Hi Charlet,

I am a researcher for the Contonio family. I recently saw that you created a Find A Grave page for the late James "Jim" Contonio, who just died April 12, 2013 and was buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery, South Dennis, Barnstable County, MA. I read that James' brother, Guerino Contonio, was buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery as well as his parents, Anthony and Angelina. Do you have any information on these other Contonio family members buried there, for example, cemetery records or tombstone pictures? I am anxious to locate information on Guerino, Anthony and Angelina. Do you or anyone else do lookups for this cemetery?

Thank you for your help,  
Clarissa

Los Angeles, California

April 20, 2013

Hi Clarissa,

Sorry--I live in North Falmouth and simply copied the obituary for Jim Contonio from the newspaper for Find A Grave. South Dennis is quite a drive from where I live so I wouldn't visit a cemetery in that area.

If you know the dates of death it is possible there would be obituaries in the Cape Cod Times that could be researched...

Good luck,

Charlet

After thinking about it overnight, I had a thought:

April 21, 2013

Clarissa, hi again!

I have a proposition for you: if you could furnish the death day, month and year of the Contonio family members you are seeking, I would be pleased to help you obtain Cape Cod Times obituaries through Falmouth Public Library microfilm, if they were written, and e-mail them to you.

I've been trying to find Alice Jane (Bard) Stephenson's

obituary (my grandmother's sister) but believe there likely was never one written. I know she died 16 May 1951 in Orange, California and have a death record to prove the fact. If you could come up with an obituary or, at least, a cemetery where she is buried, I'd be happy to research the Contonio family for you.

I've attached the death record for Alice Jane (Baird) Stephenson.

Sincerely,

Charlet

April 24, 2013

Hi Charlet,

Today started with a wild goose chase at the Orange County Genealogical Society Collection, and they were of absolutely no help. They had no newspapers back to 1951, no obituaries, no cemetery records; it was ridiculous. So then I decided to head to the Orange County Clerk's office for the State of California. After swearing to them that Alice was my great-aunt and paying them \$16, they printed off her actual death certificate for me! Victory! It lists all the usual info about parents and husband, then it goes on to list her city of death (San Clemente), house address (211 Valencia St, San Clemente), and burial information! She was buried in the Melrose Abbey Memorial Park Cemetery in Anaheim, Orange County on May 19th, 1951. I will mail this certificate to you, if you provide your address. I have a doctor's visit near the cemetery around the 3rd week of May, so I would be happy to drop by the cemetery and try to photograph the headstone for you if you want. I already called the cemetery to find out what part of the cemetery she is buried in to save a little time.

Okay, I hope this is the info you wanted! I was so happy when I got the certificate that tears were in my eyes!  
Clarissa

So--out of this whole exchange, we both got what we wanted!!! I researched four Cape Cod Times Contonio obituaries and cemetery records for family members buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery, South Dennis plus eight additional cemetery records for their relatives buried in St. John's Cemetery, Worcester, MA. The Worcester Public Library offers free obituary lookups if the researcher is a Massachusetts resident so I'm still hoping to obtain additional obituaries for Clarissa! And, having enlisted Bebe Brock into this project, she found--and is offering--a Contonio Family Tree that she found on [www.Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com) Home Edition!

As a footnote to this story, I'd like to add that when I received the snail-mailed death certificate from Clarissa, she had put on the envelope a return address of "RPV, CA 90275". Not recognizing the letters, I then googled the zip code and was amazed to find it to be Rancho Palos Verdes. When I was 16 years, prior to moving to the East Coast in 1962, my family lived in Rolling Hills which is located nearby Rancho Palos Verdes. Clarissa lives 4.75 miles and/or ten minutes from our old house!

## Book Review

Megan Smolenyak has written a new book entitled *Hey, America, Your Roots Are Showing*. We are probably all familiar with her from her work on the TV show "Who Do You Think You Are?" In this book Megan has written about the many other ways she has used her genealogical training to solve mysteries.

For a decade Megan has done forensic genealogy for the U S Army. She has worked with the military to identify remains that have been recovered and to try to find the primary next of kin. Many military personnel records were destroyed in a fire in 1973 so there was the need for the research skills of a genealogist to trace the families. Many were from World War II or the Korean Conflict, but the oldest was from the USS Monitor sunk in the Civil War in 1862.

As Megan writes about her quests, she also includes comments on the value of different types of records, the ease of research in various states and countries, and a few tips on getting around "dead ends". In addition to her research for the military, she also expands her skills into other areas. Before becoming a professional genealogist, Megan was a management consultant who travelled a lot and made contacts in many places. Sometimes these contacts have been invaluable in her research as they, in turn, lead her to other contacts for local research. She also tries all the different DNA tests available to check for accuracy using her own extended family.

Megan has done research on the roots of famous people, sometimes in a matter of days for a TV show, as well as research to find relatives of unclaimed persons whose names are known, but nothing else. Her final chapter is about Annie Moore, the first arrival at Ellis Island, and how her identity was "stolen". Megan also

reiterates that names were not changed at Ellis Island. The names are from the ship manifest compiled at the port of embarkation.

All together a very interesting read.  
Janice Zlatev

## FALMOUTH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

### MONTHLY MEETING

Saturday, May 11, 2013

10 a.m. – Noon

PROGRAM: Genealogy in Your Pajamas: Put Your  
Library Card to Use

LOCATION: Falmouth Public Library, 300 Main  
Street,

Falmouth, MA 02540

On Saturday, May 11, Lori Lyn Price, a professional genealogical speaker, will present a program on the electronic resources available free to Massachusetts residents through the Boston Public Library. She will also cover some of the more popular electronic resources that might be available through your local library (each library decides which databases they will carry).

Ms. Price focuses on connecting with ancestors via social history, bringing ancestors' traditions and culture to life. She has been working on her personal genealogy for over ten years and is currently working on a graduate degree in history from the Harvard Extension School.

Those attending the May meeting will be treated to an informative session where it will be evident that Lori Lyn Price loves sharing her knowledge and passion of both genealogy and history with others.

Everyone interested is invited to attend. For further information please call 508-548-3408 or 508-548-4418.

## *From the President*

Ralph Wadleigh

# FGS Annual Meeting

Hello. It's getting closer to the time when we have to again elect officers and directors for the next year. The Annual Meeting will be held June 8. I would like to pull together a nominating committee and am open to volunteers join in this effort. It appears this committee should be led by the Nominating Chair, Donna Walcovy. Personally, I have been President for two consecutive terms and I do not wish to continue as President. I would however like to stay on the board. For the record, here is the current roster of officers and directors as chosen in June 2012:

### FGS Officers and Directors 2012-2013

President	Ralph Wadleigh	June 30, 2013
First VP	Richard Harbison	June 30, 2014
Second VP	Mary Barry	June 30, 2014
Secretary	Sue Hutchinson	June 30, 2013
Treasurer	Ed Shibata	June 30, 2014
Membership	Joan Croce	2014
Library	Jan Zlatev	2014
Newsletter	Janet Chalmers	2013
Nominating	Donna Walcovy	2014
Program	Ralph Wadleigh	Volunteered/also Pres.
Publications	David Burt	2014
Publicity	Marianne Shafer	Volunteered/also board member
Budget & Finance	Ed Shibata	2014
At Large	Joyce Pendery	2013
At Large	Marianne Shafer	2014
Website	Jeramie Hammond	2014

## New Members

We welcome the following new members of the Falmouth Genealogical Society:

#429: Harriet Swift of New Orleans, Louisiana, researching Swift and Bourne.

#430: Gerald Luby of North Falmouth, MA. researching Luby in Ireland (1830-1847), Lacsse of Canada (1800-1900). Corbit of Scotland (1800-1900), Lyons of New England (1800-1920s), Markakis of Greece (1810-1910).

#431: Joseph L. Ferreira of East Falmouth, MA, researching Ferreira and Mayne.

#432: Lorraine Nagy of East Falmouth, MA.

#433: Alice Miller Batchelor of Falmouth, MA. She is researching Weed of Marblehead, Massachusetts, and Phelps and Danforth of Massachusetts.

#434: John C. Checklick of East Falmouth, MA, researching Checklick of Galicia prior to 1909, Megles of Slovakia from 1890, and Childs of Waquoit from the 1700s.