
The Falmouth Genealogical Society

Newsletter

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

Program Notes From November and December Meetings

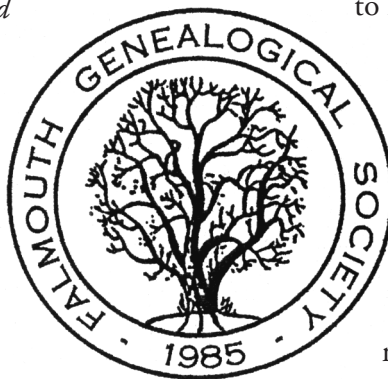
Where to Find Court Records

Talk presented by Diane Rapaport, NEHGS, on November 13, 2004

by John Caspole

Diane Rapaport is an attorney and historian from Lexington, Mass and writes for *New England Ancestors* and has an interest in genealogy. Her theme is that court records are a time machine which provide us a window into the past and are loaded with genealogical clues. People don't know where to look and don't realize that society in old New England was very litigious. She is writing a new book soon to be published, *New England Court Records: A Research Guide for Genealogists and Historians*. Her book is on court systems in New England and includes a section on where to court records. She hopes it will help people demystify court records.

Ms. Rapaport began by recounting the story of the "Purloined Pigs" as an example of running into a stone wall. She was researching a Wm. Munroe of Lexington



in 1652 but could not find anything. She decided to look at variant spellings and found the gentleman as Mr. Roe, not an uncommon abbreviation in those times. Mr. Roe was in litigation about his stolen pig. Pigs represented wealth in those days. In pursuing the case Ms. Rapaport then discovered a note about an earlier case that led to the further discovery of a family scandal, a love affair between a married man and a servant. All this opened up the brick wall.

She then described how the American legal system evolved from the common law system with each state having its own system and federal courts having a presence in each state. She noted that in early times court cases were frequently held in local public houses

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Calendar of Meetings for 2005

Saturdays, 10 a.m., Falmouth Public Library

January 8	Workshop for Beginners and Others
February 12	Panel on the Internet – Live On Line
March 12	Quakers on Cape Cod, Especially Falmouth – James Gould
April 9	Some Cape and Island Family Connections – Catherine Mayhew
May 14	Getting Organized in Your Research – Marcia Melnyk
June 11	ANNUAL MEETING and Anne Hutchinson – Eve LaPlante

Common and Uncommon Organizations of Our Ancestors

Talk presented by Joyce Pendery, CG, on December 11, 2004

by Joyce Pendery

Many of our ancestors who lived in America between about 1860 and 1960 belonged to one or more fraternal organizations, often called “lodges.” The term refers to organizations for women as well as for men. This talk provided an historical and cultural overview of these organizations, explained why they were important to our ancestors, and how learning about them could flesh out those bare ancestral bones. Also discussed was evidence of membership our ancestors left behind and how to learn more about organizations of interest.

The principal types of organizations discussed were fraternal secret societies and fraternal benevolent societies that provided some insurance to members. These organizations used democratic procedures and followed the lodge system. Members usually shared secrets and while not required to have a religious affiliation, usually needed to declare belief in a Supreme Being. Organizations were usually nonpolitical, nonprofit, and conservative in nature.

Organizations can be informally grouped into categories:

- **Wildlife Orders**, including the well known Moose, Elks, Eagles, Independent Order of Owls, but also Order of Mules, Fraternal Order of Bears, Fraternal Order of Beavers, Order of Bugs, Improved Order of Deer, and many others
- **Rustics**, with an emphasis on rural life and/or nature, including Society of Red Men, Improved Order of Red Men, Ancient Order of Foresters, Patrons of Husbandry or The Grange, Modern Woodmen of America
- **Drinking or social groups**, including Concatenated Order of Hoo-Hoo, E Clampus Vitus, and Ye Ancient Order of Jolly Corks!
- **Masonic Groups**, numbering at least 30 different organizations
- **Groups significantly influenced by Masonry**, including International Order of Odd Fellows

- **Knightly Orders**, including Knights of Pythias, Knights of Malta, Knights Templar, Knights of the Maccabees, and Knights of Columbus, the largest religious fraternal benefit society for Roman Catholic men
- **B’Nai Brith**, a Jewish fraternal organization
- **Ethnic benefit societies (provided a death benefit to members)**, including Order of Ancient Hibernians, Sons of Scotland, Croatian Fraternal Association, Sons of Norway, Sons of Italy
- **Benefit societies with open membership** (also providing a death benefit), including Ancient Order of United Workmen, the oldest and largest (now defunct) and American Benevolent Society
- **Patriotic or Military groups**, including Society of the Cincinnati, Columbian Order, Grand Army of the Republic, Patriotic Order of the Sons of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion
- **Religious, Mystical, Magical orders**, including Rosecrucian Orders, Theosophical Societies, American Order of Druids

Although most organizations were founded by and for men, many had women’s auxiliaries. PEO is the only women’s fraternal secret society not affiliated with a men’s organization.

Evidence of an ancestor’s membership might be found in regalia or jewelry that displays an organization’s symbols, such as hats, aprons, swords, pins, rings, and watch fobs. Membership applications or certificates or insurance benefit certificates or death claims might indicate when and where a member joined or died. Photos of individuals in lodge regalia or groups of lodge members are another source of information. Emblems of organizations were sometimes carved on member’s gravestones or membership might be mentioned in obituaries. Personal papers such as letters or diaries might also mention participation in lodge activities, and

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Fraternal Organizations

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of course, family lore often provides information about your ancestors' interests and activities.

The first fraternal secret society in America was a Freemasonry lodge organized in Boston in 1733. Other 18th century organizations included Sons of Liberty, Saint Tamina Society, Phi Beta Kappa, Society of the Cincinnati, several Masonic groups including Prince Hall Freemasonry for African-Americans, and the Columbian Order. The Society of Red Men (1813) and IOOF (1819) were the earliest non-Masonic, 19th-century organizations. The number of organizations grew slowly until after the Civil War, and then increased rapidly until the 1920s. It is estimated that one of every two adult Americans belonged to at least one organization during the peak years of the 1920s, when there were more than 800 such organizations.

Reasons for the popularity of these organizations were multiple: the Industrial Revolution helped to create leisure time, more people were living in cities where they met others with similar interests, immigration created a need among new arrivals for support groups, and better means of transportation enabled people to go places farther from their homes. Personal reasons include the desire for fellowship with like-minded people, enhancing status and making business contacts, finding a personally rewarding and socially acceptable way to spend leisure time or a family tradition of membership. There were very few amusements and distractions until the 1920s: no radios, movies, TVs, organized sports and no rapid transportation to take people out of town.

Decline began with the Depression of the 1930s and World War II, due to lack of time and money and other concerns. By the 1950s, there were new ways to spend leisure time, people were moving around more and not putting down roots, and many preferred to do their own thing. Many organizations failed to keep up with changing times by modifying their rituals and membership requirements. Once Social Security was in place and many employers offered medical and life insurance, the need for benefit society death payments also declined.

To learn about organizations of interest, consult one of the books listed below or go to google.com and enter the organization's name. To determine if the organization is extant, also try google.com. If extant, first try to locate the local lodge or society in the place your ancestor was a member. If that does not work, try to contact the state chapter that may have membership records, archives and/or a library. Contact the national organization as a last resort, as they are unlikely to have records. Many local and state historical societies serve as repositories for organizational records, and some organizations have their own archives.

Bibliography:

- Axelrod, Alan. *The International Encyclopedia of Secret Societies and Fraternal Orders*. New York: Facts on File, 1997.
- Betit, Kyle. "Fraternal and Benevolent Societies," *Family Chronicle*, January/February 2001, pp. 46-55.
- Carmack, Sharon De Bartolo. *Your Guide to Cemetery Research*. Cincinnati: Betterway Books, 2002.
- Hedbled, Alan, editor. *Encyclopedia of Associations* (3 parts). Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Publishing, 2003.
- Lewis, Gail Ann Hodges. "My Papa Was a Woodman," *FGS Forum*, v. 15 (Fall 2003), p.1.
- Schmidt, Alvin J. *Fraternal Organizations: The Greenwood Encyclopedia of American Institutions*. Westport, Ct: Greenwood Press, 1980.

Selected Organization Websites:

- Ancient Order of Hibernians: www.aoh.com
- Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks: www.elks.org
- Daughters of Isabella: www.daughtersofisabella.org
- Eastern Star: www.easternstar.org
- Freemasonry: web.mit.edu/dryfool/Masonry
- Fraternal Order of Eagles: www.foe.org
- Improved Order of Redmen and Pocahontas: www.redmen.org
- Independent Order of Odd Fellows: www.ioof.org
- Knights of Columbus: www.kofc.org
- Modern Woodmen of America: www.modern-woodmen.org
- Order of the Sons of Italy: www.osia.org
- PEO: www.peointernational.org
- Patrons of Husbandry (Grange): www.nationalgrange.org
- Rebekah Lodges: www.ioof.org/rebekahs.htm
- Sons of Norway: www.sofn.com

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From the President

John M. Caspole
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Why Attend NERGC 2005?

Good question! How about: “to benefit from world class genealogical lectures and events at a most affordable price.”

The New England Regional Genealogical Conference was organized twenty years ago specifically to bring cutting edge genealogical education within the reach of New England genealogists. Twenty-nine genealogical societies joined together to produce genealogical conferences which would feature nationally and internationally known speakers in the six New England states.

Each of the seven New England Conferences held so far has achieved this objective. The most recent conference, held in Falmouth, MA in November 2003, was attended by over 500 genealogists from over twenty states – and the upcoming NERGC #8 promises to do even better.

Where else would you have the opportunity to hear Elizabeth Shown Mills, Cyndi Howells, Tony Burroughs and Craig Scott – and to meet them personally in informal surroundings – in one location close to home?

The same is true for the 40 other speakers who will be at the Conference – and the hundreds of fellow genealogists you will have the opportunity to meet and share knowledge and experience with.

And the price is right! At \$99, (until March 1 only!) NERGC is one of the best bargains on the entire genealogy conference circuit.

In future issues we will tell you more about the lecture tracks, the Society fair, exhibit hall special events (ancestors). But you don't need to wait – to see the entire program go to the NERGC website, NERGC.org. The registration form is printed on pages 9 and 10 of this newsletter.

In Memoriam: We regret to announce the passing of long-time member Ceola B. Harris in October and her husband in December. She was a very active and faithful member.

Recent New Members: Ed Shibata, Hector Sepulveda, David and Joan Walston Chase. We welcome you and hope we can help you in your research.

NERGC Conference: Our society, as a participating member of the conference is obligated to supply 20 hours of volunteer service. If you are planning to attend please advise Ralph Wadleigh and contribute an hour or two. This assures that we will participate in any sharing or profits from the conference. Thanks

Electronic notices: Each month before the society meeting I send out an email reminding you of the meeting and the subject. Periodically I forward some important info on legislation, meetings or important and time-sensitive news. If you are not receiving these emails please send me your email address so you can be kept up to date. [Jcaspole@adelphia.net](mailto:jcaspole@adelphia.net).

Our Website – www.falgen.org: In our website we have many of the surnames our members are searching for. Please check that your listing is up to date and the email contact address is current. If the surnames you are currently searching are not listed please send the data direct to our webmaster at: <kona@konadesigns.com>

Fraternal Organizations

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Supreme Lodge of Knights of Pythias: www.pythias.org

Supreme Temple Order of Pythian Sisters: www.pythias.org/sisters

Woodmen of the World: <http://www.woodmen.com>

Website Describing Swords of Fraternal Organizations

hometown.aol.com/machood/frat.html

Website Describing Emblems

www.phoenixmasonry.org/masonicmuseum/fraternalism.unidentified.htm *unidentified.htm*

Websites Listing Abbreviations Found on Gravestones and Elsewhere

<http://www.obitcentral.com/cemsearch/initials.htm>

www.savinggraves.com/education/bookshelf/abbreviations.htm

Bookends

Notes from the Library Committee

Ralph Wadleigh, Chair



Our partnership with the Falmouth Public Library (FPL) is really paying off! Holders of Falmouth Public Library cards can now access Heritage Quest On Line from their home computers, bringing census records, a digital library, PERSI, and a Revolution-

ary War Index into the home work space without going outside and without spending those precious genealogy dollars for paid subscriptions. Access requires a PIN number which can be obtained at the FPL circulation desk. If you already renew books on line, the same PIN works to access Heritage Quest. Another interesting data base reachable through your library card is Reference USA. This is helpful in locating living relatives through either a location search or a reverse phone number search. Give it a try!

As we proudly noted last issue, the FPL is now a wireless zone, meaning you can bring your wireless-equipped laptop computer in and use it, rather than a

library machine to reach the internet. To take advantage of this new wireless zone, we have equipped the Falmouth Genealogical Society's library computer with the requisite hardware to enable it to be used for internet access. This will help us a great deal on Tuesdays by eliminating trips to the FPL computers when helping people with individual queries.

Do you have a wish list of books that you'd like to own? I do, but surprisingly, I wasn't aware of how many of these books I don't have to own. They're in the Library just waiting to be used! For example, Mayflower researchers might want to look up early land deeds. Well, the library has *Indian Deeds: Land Transactions in Plymouth Colony 1620-1691* by Jeremy Dupertius Bangs. Persons with a Germanic heritage might like to know that the FPL has *A Genealogist's Guide to Discovering Germanic Ancestors*, by S. Chris Anderson and Ernest Thode, and *In Search of Your German Roots*, by Angus Baxter. In some cases, these books may even be borrowed for use outside the library. Future "Bookends" articles will feature more of these hidden gems!

Book Review

Joyce S. Pendery, CG

A Guide to the Library of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, edited by Maureen A. Taylor and Henry B. Hoff (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2004. xvi + 329 pp., index. Softcover, regular price, \$21.95; special members price until February 28, 2005, \$19.95, plus \$4.00 shipping.). Order from NEHGS Sales Dept., P.O. Box 5089, Framingham, MA 01701; tel. 1-888-296-3447; website NewEnglandAncestors.org/NEHGS Store or email sales@nehgs.org.

The goal of the editors of this recent NEHGS publication is "to provide readers with background information and research perspectives that would let them take full

advantage of the general holdings at 101 Newbury Street...." This handsome volume includes several articles previously published, as well as original material. Contributors include NEHGS staff members whose names are familiar to many genealogists: Marie E. Daly, David Curtis Dearborn, Henry B. Hoff, David Allen Lambert, Michael J. Leclerc, Julie Helen Otto, Gary Boyd Roberts, George F. Sanborn Jr., and others. Several sub-sections were written by genealogists who are experts on specific topics. These include Joseph C. Anderson II, Cherry Fletcher Bamberg, Scott Andrew Bartley, Sherry L. Gould, Joyce S. Pendery, Maureen A. Taylor, and Helen Schatvet Ullmann.

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Court Records

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and that from 1657 to 1713 the first court was held in the Green Dragon Tavern. She described various court subsystems: domestic, criminal, property, tort law, commercial and bankruptcy courts.

Some knowledge of the types of records is helpful, from dockets to record books to file papers. Dockets are either the court calendar or a list of cases. Record books contain basic facts on completed cases and are sometimes indexed. She noted that a "Writ of Execution" found in the file papers is a good genealogical source.

Other salient points were: at Mass. Archives ask to see County Notebooks as they contain more specific information; early Maine records are likely to be in Mass. Archives. As to right of access, you have the right to see the records but not the right to see them right away. Ms. Rapaport suggests calling ahead of your visit. You may have a chance to see very early adoption records but not current ones.

We look forward to the forthcoming publication of her book and its addition to our library collection.

Book Review

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The library guide is divided into eight sections:

- **Using the Library** (includes directions for traveling to the library, where to park, maps of the library, and information on using the catalog, web site, and research service)
- **Genealogies** (includes information on compiled genealogies, on names, on numbering systems, and a list of Gary Boyd Roberts' 20 favorite New England genealogies)
- **Rare Books and Manuscripts** (includes identifying and using easily overlooked rare books and manuscripts of potential interest)
- **New England** (includes for each New England State, a detailed list of all the resources for that state available at NEHGS)
- **Beyond the Northeast** (includes information on migration out of New England and on resources at NEHGS for New York State and beyond)
- **Canada** (includes an introduction and information on resources at NEHGS for the Maritime Provinces)
- **British Isles and Ireland** (includes general information and resources available at NEHGS)
- **Special Research Approaches** (suggestions for research on selected topics)

With this book at hand, the researcher can quickly determine the resources available at NEHGS for any topic of interest that relates to the Northeastern United States, Canadian, and British Isles genealogy, as well as glean helpful hints on researching specific and general topics. Resources are listed by category, such as vital records, church records, military records, land records, etc. Unusual resources that might not come to mind are listed, as well as the resources one would expect to find in the nation's leading library for genealogical research for this area.

Reasons for Attending NERGC 2005

Portland, Maine, March 31-April 3

- Unique opportunity to meet several leading genealogists and learn from them how to improve your skills
 - Learn more about topics and areas of interest to you
 - Enjoy the fellowship of meeting other genealogists with similar interests and sharing information
 - Learn about other genealogical organizations
 - Find out what's new as well as tried-and-true in genealogy: books, CD Roms, software, research aids
- Register by March 1st to get special rate of \$99.

Online Tips/FYI

by Marge Gibson

New Bill Will Close Records to Genealogists

Dec. 8 issue of *RootsWeb Review*. HR10, which was mentioned in the 13 October issue of *RootsWeb Review*, has passed out of the U.S. House of Representatives and is now part of S.2845. The amendments suggested by David Rencher in his letter to the bill's sponsor, Congressman J. Dennis Hastert, were NOT incorporated into this legislation. Thus, the terms of HR10 will now be considered by the Senate, as part of S.2845.

If S.2845 becomes law, as now written, family historians will face some real challenges in attempts to obtain birth records, even on long-deceased individuals. Specifically, what genealogists need to do is suggest to their lawmakers the addition of Sec. 3061(b)(1)(A)(iii) that would read: "who is alive on the date that access to their birth certificate is requested."

This addition would clarify that the legislation (soon to be law) applies ONLY to birth certificates of CURRENTLY LIVING PERSONS.

If you do not know your U.S. Senator's email address, you can find it at <http://www.senate.gov/>

This bill can be found online at <http://thomas.loc.gov/> Put in S.2845 (in the bill number window) and then select item No. 3; and go to Subtitle B—Identity Management Security; Chapter 2—Improved Security for Birth Certificates.

Better Than Ever

From Family Tree News Service Nov. 11, 2004:

The Ellis Island Web site (<http://www.ellisland.org>), home to a free database of 22 million Ellis Island passenger records, has relaunched with a more efficient ancestor search.

When the database debuted in April 2001, researchers logged on to the tune of 10 million hits per day. The site has remained popular, though genealogists have noted problems catching variations of their ancestors' names. And some researchers have felt hamstrung by the site's first name/last name/gender search: They could narrow results by characteristics such as ship name and port of origin, but couldn't search on those terms.

Ellis Island's new refined search – still in test phase – lets you frame your query around what you actually know about your relative, and effectively narrow or broaden your results. The search offers 11 data fields:

- first name (you can enter parts of a name)
- last name ("sounds like" and "alternate spellings" options help catch variations)
- gender
- marital status
- approximate year of birth
- year range (expands range for year of birth)
- approximate year of arrival
- year range (expands range for year of arrival)
- town or village of origin
- name of passenger ship
- ethnicity

Spelling variations are easier to find, but the problem won't disappear. Transcribers copied passenger names as they appeared on ships' lists. To preserve the integrity of those historical records, site administrators don't alter correctly transcribed names in the database. But if you believe you've found a transcription error, you can notify Ellis Island staff via an email link on the Passenger Record page.

The relaunched Ellis Island Web site also features other improvements, including streamlined navigation; the Genealogy Learning Center; the Ellis Island Society Links Network to connect site visitors with societies specializing in their research areas; and new Ellis Island histories, old photos, famous passenger information and visitor information

Meeting of Minds

Genealogy blogger and New England Historic Genealogical Society computer expert Dick Eastman has created a free online reference service called the Encyclopedia of Genealogy at <http://www.eogen.com>. This searchable, user-maintained database features how-to articles contributed by genealogists like you on a wide array of family history topics.

"It provides reference information about everything in

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Online Tips/FYI

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genealogy except people,” Eastman says. He’d eventually like to build the site’s current 200 articles to 5,000.

Any registered user can edit an article in the database, or add an article using a tool called EditMe editor. Other site visitors instantly will see the edits and new pages.

Eastman cautions that the articles you contribute can be reprinted anywhere. “If you want to retain copyright of your words,” he says, “please do not post them on the Encyclopedia of Genealogy.”

Immigration Collection Update:

From Ancestry Weekly, Nov. 20, 2004: Baltimore Passenger Lists, 1892-48 (Images and index) Update adding 1906-07

This database is an index to the passenger lists of ships arriving from foreign ports at the port of Baltimore, Maryland and will eventually cover the years 1892-1948. In addition, the names found in the index are linked to actual images of the passenger lists, copied from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) microfilm, M844, rolls 1-150. This database also contains a few records of immigrants who entered the U.S. at other ports or border crossings and were later asked, when they were living in Baltimore, to fill out immigrant arrival information on passenger lists. Therefore, you may find individuals in this database whose port of arrivals are, for example, St. Albans, Vermont; Portal, North Dakota; Port Huron, Michigan; Tampa, Florida; and others.

Information contained in the index includes given name, surname, age, gender, ethnicity, nationality or last country of permanent residence, destination, arrival date, port of arrival, port of departure, ship name, and microfilm roll and page number. If a name of a friend or relative who the individual was going to join, or a place of nativity was provided, that information is included in the index as well. Many of these items may be used to search the index in the search template above.

The microcopies of the passenger lists found at NARA are arranged chronologically by arrival date of vessel. If

you do not wish to search this database using the search template, the images may be browsed following the chronological arrangement. To browse the images first select the “Year” in which you would like to search, followed by the “Month” and finally the “Ship Name.”

Ancestry.com subscribers with access to the Immigration Collection can view this database at:
<http://www.ancestry.com/rdprodredir.asp?sourceid=4717&key=D8679>

Crossing the Pond

From the Family Tree Magazine News of 12-02-04: A new pay-per-view Web site for British records is in its final testing phase and was to have launched Dec. 9, according to site spokesperson Charles Murdoch.

Familyrelatives.org (<http://www.familyrelatives.org>) will offer more than 300 million General Register Office (GRO) records of birth, marriage and death indexes for England and Wales.

Transcriptions of more than 150 million records from 1866 to 1920 will be fully searchable by surname, first name, district or area, year and depending upon the period, by mother’s maiden name, spouses name, date of birth and age at death. Transcriptions of records for 1921 to 1983 are searchable on surname and first name.

Sixty credits, called units, cost \$10; visitors will spend one to four credits to access a record.

The 1837 to 2002 indexes also are available from 1837Online.com (<http://www.1837online.com>)—you can view, save and print up to 50 pages of images for about \$9. The subscription site BMD Index (<http://www.bmdindex.co.uk>) has the index, too, as well as birth records from 1880. A year’s access costs about \$28. The indexes on both sites are searchable by first and last name.

More Good Stuff

Just ran across a great website for English info. Take a look at it — lots of stuff there. www.ukvillages.com
From Family Tree News Service 11-11-04

Also, see www.cem.va.gov for 3 million names in veterans’ cemeteries.