

The Falmouth Genealogical Society

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Newsletter
February – April 2010

President: Ralph Wadleigh
Editor: Janet Burt Chalmers
JanetBChalmers@aol.com

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.

Program Notes From Meetings

Joint Meeting of the Cape Cod and Falmouth Genealogical Societies – November 14, 2009

Research Techniques for Genealogists & Breaking Through Brick Walls

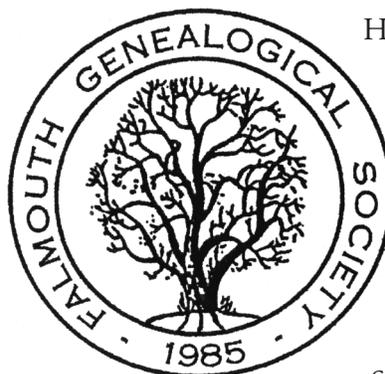
Presented by Michael LeClerc, NEHGS

by Ralph Wadleigh and Janet Chalmers

The Falmouth and Cape Cod genealogical societies held their third annual joint meeting on Saturday, November 14, 2009 at the West Barnstable Community Center. The program featured two excellent presentations by New England Historical and Genealogical Society staff member and eNews editor Michael J. LeClerc.

Michael's first presentation, titled "Research Techniques in Genealogy," focused on the importance of going to the original records. He encouraged us to go beyond the published vital records to search for such things as account books showing debits and credits, business records, farm records, undertakers' reports, doctors' reports of death, gravediggers' records and collections of

family papers. He indicated that in trying to establish a person in a time and place you discover his status and add a layer of texture to the image you hold.



He recommended using Family History Library films of town, church and probate records. He said that New England church records can sometimes help with baptisms, marriages and deaths (burial records). He said that "original returns of deaths" are documents filed by doctors and used by the town clerks to complete a death certificate. Sources such as old account books and diaries are records in appeals courts.

Michael's second talk was titled "Breaking Through Brick Walls in Genealogy." He noted that brick walls

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Calendar of Meetings for 2009 – 2010

Saturdays, 10 a.m., Falmouth Public Library

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|---------|---|
| Feb. 13 | Mary Lou Botelho – A Trip to the Azores to Find Ancestral Connections |
| Mar. 13 | Peter Cook – Preserving your family artifacts, photos, slides & videos – at Falmouth Senior Center |
| Apr. 10 | Drew Bartley, Mass. Society of Mayflower Descendants, "Out Migrations from Cape Cod" |
| May 8 | Michael Marx – "Advanced Googling for Genealogists" |
| Jun. 12 | Marion Pierre-Louise - "Don't Call Your Relatives, Let Them Call You!" |
| Jul. 10 | FGS Members – "Tales of our Ancestors" – stories of individual research |

Holiday Food Fair & Genealogical Swap – December 12, 2009

By Ralph Wadleigh

On Saturday December 12, 2009, FGS members and friends enjoyed a Holiday Food Fest and Swap. About a dozen members prepared holiday sweets and treats from ancestral family recipes. Each preparer gave a brief history of the recipe and the family member who first originated the dish. Needless to say, a delicious time was had by all. Some of the preparers were:

- Joyce Pendery – Christmas wreath cookies



Breaking Through Brick Walls

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can be breached by writing up a sketch in Register style, summarizing all known info including source citations, documenting everything, then examining what's missing, and finally searching records that might fill in the missing links. Michael noted that research can be broadened by looking at siblings, parents, cousins and neighbors. He said to make sure to check all spelling variants and question everything. Try to see if anything you have might be wrong. He suggested you might even have too much information!!

He said that cemetery records can show lots of things: who else is buried with the family? Are their burials not marked with a stone? Not all stones survive.

Michael also suggested using maps from different times since political boundaries have changed.



- Judy Wadleigh – Grandmother Grace's devil's food cake.
- Ed Shibata – Inari Sushi
- John and Barbara Peri – roasted chestnuts, pfeffer-nuss, stuffed dates
- Jacqueline Webster - Dad's cookies, a traditional Canadian holiday cookie
- Marianne Shafer – Babush's Slovakian Nut Roll
- Bebe Brock – printouts of some family recipes



The reporter begs forgiveness since he knows a few recipes and dishes are not included above. He should have written them all down, but he was too busy eating! Thank you for all those who participated.

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How to Search Records in the Barnstable County

Probate and Family Court – January 9, 2010

Presented by Anastasia Welsh Perrino, Barnstable County Register of Probate

by Janet Chalmers

Barnstable County Register of Probate Anastasia Welsh Perrino gave an informative presentation to members and guests at the Falmouth Genealogical Society meeting on January 9, 2010. The keeper of the records, she outlined how to view both Probate and Divorce records at 3195 Main Street in Barnstable. She encouraged people to search www.barnstablecountypfc.com and visit the Registry of Probate office Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 4:30.

She handed out an outline highlighting the major points of presentation: 1) Probate Records, 2) Divorce Records, 3) Case Scanning, 4) Other types of cases in

the Probate and Family Court, and 5) Questions and Answers. This report is based on the information from that outline.

Talking first about probate records, Anastasia noted that records can be reviewed from 1637 to the present. She said that all records are public, unless there is a specific court order to impound the record. The red index books in the Registry of Probate office contain case numbers for probates by alphabetical order from 1638 to 1980. The card catalogues in the office contain information on probates from 1980 to 1991. After 1991, the records are in the office computer. No public records are online.

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Holiday Food Fest & Exchange

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The second part of the meeting featured an exchange of genealogical books, magazines, software and other tools deemed surplus by their owners. A number of books donated to FGS by the Janice Dorchester and already in the Falmouth Public Library collection, were auctioned for the benefit of the Society. Thanks to all who donated material for the swap.



From the President

Ralph Wadleigh

whplar@comcast.net

Greetings.

The first objective of The Falmouth Genealogical Society as contained in the bylaws is to promote an interest in genealogy and family history. Over the past few weeks, I have discovered two projects that will help us towards this mission. First, I was invited to join several other Falmouth organizations in a brainstorming meeting to focus on a project for which a grant would be sought from the National Parks Service through its Preserve America Program. You may recall that last fall Falmouth was the first Cape town to receive Preserve America status. Many worthy ideas were advanced, some of which involved cemeteries and local historical repositories. The grant would seek funds to plan a suitable tourism/history related project to celebrate the town's 325th birthday in 2011. A subcommittee is cur-

rently preparing a grant application. We will hear more of this in the coming months.

The second project to promote an interest in genealogy and family history is an opportunity to become an advisor to scouts seeking to achieve a genealogy merit badge. The genealogy merit badge requires a good deal of work and analysis and is a wonderful way to interest some younger persons in their history and in our field. Of course we need a volunteer or two to act as merit badge advisors to monitor the scouts as they work to meet the badge's requirements. If this is of interest to you, please let me know.

Participation in either or both of these projects will bring positive attention to FGS and will foster more interest in genealogy and family history.



Barnstable Probate Records

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Divorce records may be viewed from 1922 to the present. All records are public except for any financial records in the divorce, which are only available to the parties or their attorneys. Also, court ordered guardian ad litem reports are impounded and not for public viewing. (These are reports ordered by the court and usually prepared by an independent social worker in the context of contested custody proceedings.)

The blue books in the Registry of Probate office contain divorce cases from 1922 to 1980, and the card catalogues in the office contain divorce information from 1980 to 1992. After 1992, all divorce information is contained in the computer. Anastasia noted that due to case volume, the Barnstable County Registry of Probate is looking to move older documents offsite.

Since January, 2009, the Registry of Probate office scans all documents in the computer that were filed after that date. Staff can readily access these documents without the need of pulling the file. In the future, the public will be able to access court documents from the computer;

however, this is a long time away as many of the probate and family court documents contain sensitive information.

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Letter to the Editor

An elusive GRANDFATHER. For the past thirteen years we've been trying to find out where he went. The family "story" was – he was born on the boat coming from Sweden and died in the War. War records came up empty. We found his birth certificate in Brockton and have the marriage certificate to our grandmother.

Enter – Anastasia Welsh Perrino who spoke at the January 9th meeting on Probate Records, So – off to the courthouse we went and in his mother's will – pay-dirt – our GRANDFATHER and where he lived.

*Anne & Marilyn Carlson
Jan. 2010*

Genealogy of a House

by Shirley Dunkle

Although neither my husband nor I have any Barnstable County ancestors, our 200-year-old house in North Falmouth has a unique history and has required actions by the Probate Court several times.

This house was built about 1810 (or earlier) by the Nye family and occupied by James and Almira Nye and their three children, all of whom predeceased their parents. James died in 1871 at age 78.

The will of JAMES NYE, written Dec 1867 and probated Aug 8, 1871 declares: I, James Nye of Falmouth, County of Barnstable, State of Massachusetts, give and bequeath to the Congregational Church and Society in North Falmouth my house lot, dwelling house, and other buildings standing thereon, together with my garden and orchard adjoining, the same to be held, and used by them and their successors, for, and as a Parsonage forever, possession of the same to be had after the decease of my wife. And it is my desire that the said Church and Society keep said premises in good repair, the outlay to be met by the annual rental to be by them fixed and determined.” (clause 5)

The will of James Nye was duly proven and allowed by the Honorable Court on September 12, 1871.



Barnstable Probate Records

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Anastasia said that there are many types of cases in the court other than probates and divorces. These cases include guardianship, conservatorship, paternity (out of wedlock birth), modifications of court orders, grandparent visitation, abuse prevention, change of name, and any type of equity matter.

All matters are public except for financial statements filed by the parties and out-of-wedlock birth cases prior to 1998. The court has general equity jurisdiction. If there is no statute or a remedy at law, the court has jurisdiction to hear the case. These cases are usually very interesting.

On June 18, 1872 the Honorable Court appointed Commissioners to make partition of all of the real estate of James Nye. The Commissioners did set-off to Almira Nye, widow of the said James Nye, certain real estate. The Commissioners partitioned the described real estate agreeable to the requisition of the will of James Nye, deceased.

The Honorable Court did enter a decree in August 1872 accepting, confirming and establishing that the premises be assigned as described and set-off to the several parties therein named.

Almira Nye died in 1890 at age 89. Her will was written May 13, 1888 and probated in 1890. There is no mention of the house in her will although she did leave money “for the support of the Gospel forever” to the church. She also left her husband’s pew, second pew from the front on the north side of the church, to her husband’s nephew Francis A. Nye. (You never know what interesting information you are going to find in probate records!)

The house was indeed the parsonage of the North Falmouth Church, occupied by nineteen ministers and their families, until 1958 when the church elders decided that it would be better to build a new parsonage closer to the church than to put a lot of money into much needed repairs and updating of this old house. About this time, we were looking for a fix-it-up house to buy. However, before the church could sell this house they had to petition the court to clarify the intent of James’ will.

Equity Petition in October 1958 to the Honorable Judge of the Probate Court in the County of Barnstable: The North Falmouth Congregational Church Trustees represent that under the will of James Nye, late of Falmouth, deceased, certain real estate was devised to the North Falmouth Congregational Church.

Your Petitioners further represent that the real estate in question has been kept and maintained by them since 1872 and is impractical for a parsonage and would require extensive renovations and that an advantageous

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Bookends

Notes from the Library Committee

Janice Zlatev, Chair



Falmouth Public Library has added some new books that may be of interest to our members.

I am reading *Social Networking for Genealogists* by Drew Smith. Drew is an academic librarian at University of South Florida

in Tampa and an expert in digital genealogy. His book writes about services available online which may be used by genealogists to share information with family and with other researchers.

The first chapters are a basic introduction with terminology. Each of the later chapters deals with a specific service such as message boards, blogs, wikis, even podcasts and “Facebook.” Author suggests how to set up free accounts to access areas of interest and possibly find fellow researchers. I am finding it quite educational as I have not been involved with these kinds of sites before.

It can be found at REF GENEALOGY 929.10285 SMI.

Other new titles are:

- The 2009 edition of *Ancestors of American Presidents* by Gary Boyd Roberts can be found at REF GENEALOGY 929.373 ANC. This is an update of the 1989 edition.
- The R-S volume of *The Great Migration: Immigrants to New England 1634-1635* can be found at REF GENEALOGY 929.274 AND / vol. 6.
- The *1858 Map of Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket* can be found at REF ATLAS 912.744 EIG. The 1858 map was originally produced for display in government, civic and business offices.
- The *Greenwood Encyclopedia of Daily Life in America* can be found at REF 973.03 GRE. This is a four-volume set. Volume 1 covers the years 1763-1861; volume 2 covers the years 1861-1900; volume 3 covers 1900-1940; volume 4 covers 1940 to the present. The books may present some interesting information about the times our ancestors lived and increase our understanding of them.
- *Erin's Sons: Irish Arrivals in Atlantic Canada 1761-1853* by Terrence M. Punch can be found at REF GENEALOGY 929.1072 PUN.



Genealogy of a House

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offer has been received from William M. Dunkle, Jr. for the purchase of the premises described in the will of James Nye, for ten thousand eight hundred dollars. Your Petitioners are in doubt whether or not the clause in the will of James Nye and the subsequent partition proceedings have created a trust or an absolute gift to the Church of the real estate.

We pray that the Honorable Court construe and interpret the said clause of the will of James Nye and determine if a trust were created or if the said real estate was an absolute gift to the Church and further instruct us whether, if the said premises were an absolute gift to the Church, the petitioners may sell and convey the same and use the proceeds of such sale to build a new parsonage.

On the 10th of March 1959, the Probate Court in the County of Barnstable ordered and decreed that clause 5 of the will of James Nye be construed and interpreted as permitting the Church to rent or sell the premises; and the Court did hereby authorize, empower and direct the Church to sell and dispose of the existing Parsonage, free from any trusts, and to use the proceeds from such sale towards the purchase, erection and maintenance of a new Parsonage, which Parsonage shall be known as the James Nye Memorial Parsonage, to be held by the Church under the same terms as the Church holds its existing Parsonage.

Ground was broken for the new parsonage in October 1958 and the “nearly completed” home for the minister and his family was dedicated on Sunday, April 5th, 1959. We moved into the old parsonage on April 17th, 1959 and have been here ever since.

A Germany Trip

by Claire Arthur Wagner

My husband, Bob, is 1st generation American. His mother and father emigrated to the U.S. from Germany without family or knowing English. They came from different villages and did not meet for several years. Bob had never met his grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins, and had no contact after his parents died.

Our oldest daughter decided to do some family research as a Christmas gift to her dad about twenty years ago. Taking a chance on old addresses, she found some of each family. There has been contact ever since, and they have begged us to visit. Over a year ago, we began to talk about making that visit, and plans were set for July of last year.

We flew from Boston to Washington-Dulles to meet our daughter and granddaughter to fly together to Frankfurt where we were met by Joachim and Marian Schmitt. Joachim's grandfather and Bob's father were brothers. Joachim and their two daughters all spoke English, and had a dictionary handy to look up words they couldn't think of or understand from us.

The four days we stayed with them in Kindsbach were full of getting acquainted and touring, but the most important was meeting Joachim's brother and sister, and going to Labach where Bob's father was born. The house, though modernized, and the only church, (built around 1300), where the children undoubtedly were baptized, are still there. A neighbor remembered stories of the family, probably because Grandmother Wagner was widowed at a very young age and left to raise four boys and a girl by herself. Also, we saw the home of Bob's great grandmother. The church graveyard revealed markers of relatives.

We learned an interesting fact about the cemeteries in Germany: a family is only able to keep a plot for thirty years unless other family members are buried on top of the previous ones. Germany is small, and space for graveyards is scarce. Few stones have dates.

The second home we stayed in was in Tamm, near Stuttgart, with a cousin on Bob's mother's side. Birgit's mother is Bob's first cousin. Birgit, her husband, and

two daughters all speak English, and also had a dictionary handy. After several days of getting acquainted and touring, this family took us to the home of a first cousin, Elisabeth, and her husband, Werner, in Rossbrunn. They do not speak English, but with the help of their two grandchildren and Birgit's family, we got along just fine.

From this home, it was a short drive to Hettstadt where Bob's mother was born. Her home had few changes, so was easy to recognize. On another street we stopped at two homes owned by Bob's mother's maternal grandmother's family. They had not expected us, and were so excited they had to bring out a tray of schnapps at 10:30 in the morning for a toast. They, also, had a scrapbook with a picture of Bob's mother. The church was nearby, with a graveyard all around, and many family markers. Elisabeth told us there is an unspoken competition of who has the prettiest garden around the family stone.

At the end of our visit, Elisabeth and Werner hosted a party for as many family members as were able to attend. There were eight first cousins, some spouses, children, and three grandchildren. Most did not speak English, but enough did that we got along very well. Bob took a stack of unmarked family pictures with us, and some were identified. He learned some medical history, stories about his mother, and corrections were made on the family lineage chart. We, also, heard how grateful the families were for the care packages during and after the War.

We will never forget the kindness and generosity of everyone we met. They made us feel comfortable immediately, and treated us like royalty. They were so pleased that we made the effort to visit, and said what a blessing it was. Bob has learned to do translations through Google, so we are in closer touch with many of the families.

**March 13th meeting
will be at the
Falmouth Senior Center**

FGS Welcomes New Members

#381 Maureen Macklin, 5 Melrose Avenue, Falmouth, is researching Ayres, Sayre, Dowd, Harlow, Franke, McMillan, Waite, and Daniels in Northeastern U.S. and England, Ireland, and Germany.

#382 Mary Lou Botelho, 3 Starfish Lane, East Falmouth, is researching Botelho, Medeiros, Souza, Tavares, and Sabino in Sao Miguel, Azores, and Martins in Pico, Azores, in the time period 1850-1900.

#383 Paul Riemer, 64 Streeter Hill Road, North Falmouth, is researching Riemer/Dumschott in Russia, Poland, and Germany in the 1800s, Ryan/Collins of Ireland before 1910, Perry/Butterworth in New England and Virginia, Caruthers/Nye in New England to Oklahoma, and Blackburn/Simmons in Virginia.

#385 Marilyn McMillan, 5 Melrose Avenue, Falmouth, is researching the same families as #381, Maureen Macklin.



Census Takers Needed For Cape Cod

An urgent call has come from the Federal Census Office Manager for Cape Cod, for recruits to come forward for involvement in the enumeration of the 2010 Census. The Hyannis office, serving Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, needs over 1500 applicants for conducting interviews with community residents who do not return the mailed census questionnaires that will appear in mailboxes on April 1 this year. Schedules are flexible and individuals can work weekends and evenings near their homes. Pay averages \$15 per hour, and any driving mileage can be reimbursed. Interested persons are asked to call 866-861-2010 to schedule an appointment to take the required employment test. The federal government is trying very hard to have a complete 100% count of the population this year. This role could be highly interesting to genealogists in terms of gaining insight into the process and possible errors that can occur in all census-taking; this work in turn will help genealogists to further understand how to interpret and consider the veracity of past censuses that they are using in their own family research.

#386 Phyllis Day, 126 Old Barnstable Road, East Falmouth, is researching Doherty and Logue from Malin Head, Ireland, Whelan (Whalen) and Killoran from Ireland, and Martel from Prince Edward Island (French Mi'kmaq).

#387 Jennifer Herlihy Rakeman, 16 Joy Street, Barrington, Rhode Island, is researching Dimmick/Dimmeck in Falmouth/Barnstable in 1620-1760.

#388 Courtenay Barber III, 6 Crown Avenue, Falmouth, is researching the Robert Williams Watson family of New Jersey and New York and the Adeline Finnigan family of Northern Ireland.

#389 Arden Edwards, P. O. Box 41, Woods Hole, is researching Edwards in Scotland and Neill and Snedecker in Ireland.

#390 Joan Croce, 107 Harriette Road, East Falmouth, is researching the Dr. Micah Allen family of Pembroke/Halifax back to George Allen; and in Nebraska, a James M. Smith family of Hastings, back to Richmond, VA.

#391 Linda Louise George, 178 Brick Kiln Road, East Falmouth, is researching Gallerani of Italy.



In Memoriam



Dorothy E. (Lefevre) Sandlin, age 90, of Teaticket, died Sunday, Jan. 24, 2010, at her home after a long illness. A life-long resident of Falmouth, hers was a familiar face at Falmouth Genealogical Society meetings where she greeted members and guests as she took care of the society's nametags.

Dorothy was FGS member #23, a Life member who joined in 1985, the year that is on the FGS logo.



Mark Your Calendars for NERGC

Mark your calendars now for NERGC 2011 to be held from 6 to 11 April 2011 at the Sheraton and Marriott hotels in Springfield, MA. FGS is a sponsoring partner in this conference and we will surely benefit if we personally take part. Join in the fun!