
The Falmouth Genealogical Society

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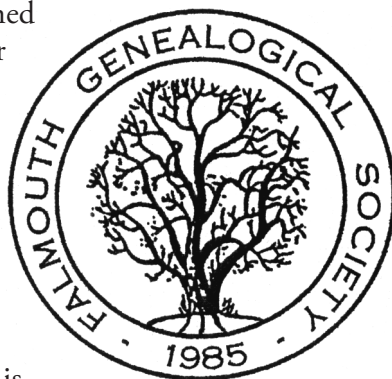
The Falmouth Genealogical Society Newsletter is published four times a year and is dedicated to news, events and ideas that will help members enhance their genealogical research.

WRITING PERSONAL MEMOIRS: WHY YOUR STORIES MATTER

Program presented by Thatcher Freund on May 9, 2015

Reviewed by Joyce S. Pendery

Thatcher Freund of Portland, Maine, published author, professional lecturer, journalist, editor and both teacher and writer of creative non-fiction, presented a program on "Writing Personal Memoirs" at the May 9, 2015, meeting of FGS. Thatcher provides assistance to those writing memoirs and will even write their memoirs for them, based on information they provide.



Thatcher asked "What Is Your Story?" There is meaning in every life. The challenge is to figure out what it is. He continued: "Everyone has fascinating stories to tell." He discussed why personal stories are important for understanding lives and the techniques for writing them down. Being an accomplished writer is not necessary. Anyone who is motivated can develop the necessary skills.

"There is a story everywhere you look" according to Thatcher. Details in stories are important in our lives. They describe what it means to be human, to meet and resolve the challenges and conflicts of daily life. Although every story is original, each is also universal. Stories are the basis of conversations. Stories connect us to the past. Everyone has been in love, but each story is different! Passing down family stories is essential for preserving family history and teaching children about their past: who they are and where they came from. Story-telling helps keep ancestors alive.

To start, ask yourself how you felt at a specific moment or during a specific event. Every experience is unique. Memories are moments of being when we learn something about our lives. Write truthfully about your experiences or thoughts. Tell some of your secrets! To give stories depth,



Thatcher Freund

place them in an historical context: a time and place, an event, a gathering, a celebration. Every story needs conflict and resolution. Every story is interesting for present and future generations. Every story is a priceless way to figure out the meaning of our lives and to connect ourselves and others to our past.

The Elements of a Good Memoir:

- Stories of the events that have shaped our lives, which require systematic reflection to uncover.



Members of Falmouth Genealogical Society man the hospitality table at NERGC

- The ideas that lie within the stories, which give them meaning.
- A structured narrative, vivid scenes, and the development of complex characters, which create the picture of a life.

FGS WEB SITE

FGS Web Master Ray Howe is redeveloping the society's web site., www.falgen.org. Keep checking it out for the latest version and up-to-date information about the Society!

GOOGLE LECTURE AT NERGC

By Joan Croce

My choice for the last afternoon at NERGC was a lecture by Lisa Louise Cooke on all the ways that Google could be used for genealogical purposes, including searching for a very common name. She used the surname "Smith" as an example for a search. By using asterisks, tildes, quotation marks, and other icons, as well as phrases for "take away," "not all," "in Boston only," "in the 17th century," "on Main street," etc., she could make Google narrow the name down to only one person – the one that fit all the categories of her input. There was more to it, of course.

But then, she told an amazing story. Once, while visiting her mother, she explained what she had been working on and the process of narrowing to find just one name. Her mother then told her that when she was young, her mother (Lisa's grandmother) was in a parade and was queen on one of the floats. She looked very beautiful! Her float won first prize! Her mother could remember seeing the film that was made of the entire parade at their Town Hall. And her mother's name was mentioned when she accepted the award for the float! She added that she would give anything to see that film again.

So Lisa plugged into Google and found the film and the name of the photographer. She contacted him, and he was so excited (after 50-plus years) that he found the film! And he bought one of the only two copies left. And then, he put it on U-Tube! Lisa's mother was so overcome that she was in tears!

It was a great talk. And there's much more in her book, *The Genealogist's Google Toolbox*, by Lisa Louise Cooke, published by Lulu Press.

NERGC



Members of Falmouth Genealogical Society who attended the NERGC meeting in May reported that speakers and their topics were excellent and the banquet meals were delicious. Members of the Society who attended also helped with hosting and hospitality, as each participating society is required to contribute twenty hours of volunteer time. Start planning ahead to attend the Spring 2017 NERGC gathering in Springfield.

Calendar of Meetings for 2015

Saturdays, 10 a.m., Falmouth Public Library

June 13	30th Anniversary Celebration, 9:30 a.m. brunch at Coonamessett Inn, and Annual Meeting
July 1	Joint meeting with Cape Cod Genealogical Society Sturgis Library, Jill Morelli, speaker
July 11	"Navigating Through Ancestry.com"
August 8	Tales of Our Ancestors – attendees present stories from their families
September 12	"Sturgis Library Collection", Antonia Slivens
October 10	"Conserving Our Personal Collections", Shelly Morehead
November 14	Joint meeting with Cape Cod Genealogy Society; John Colletta, speaker
December 12	Annual Holiday Food Fest with recipes and antique cookbooks

BOOK REVIEW

Swan Song, Poems and Memoirs by Adelaide Cummings in celebration of her 100th birthday!, Published June 6, 2014, King Printing Company, Inc. www.kingprinting.com, 172 pages, ISBN 13: 978-0-9855696-6-3, Reviewed by C. David Burt, editor



Adelaide Cummings, the reigning poet laureate of Falmouth is approaching her 101st birthday. *Swan Song* is a collection of her poems and memoirs reflecting on her life and showing a mirthful and positive attitude toward achieving a great age. Thatcher Freund's recent program on personal memoirs dealt with some of the blocks that people run into when trying to write their memoirs. With Adelaide Cummings this is apparently not a problem because she still seems to wake up every day with a new poem in her head, and they rhyme! Most are short, and some are two-lines like:

Abomination

What's the worst poetic crime?

To strain for rhyme!

Throughout the poems one gets a feel of the thinking and attitude of this grand old lady from the South, who still has the whimsical feelings of a much younger woman. There is great humor, deep insight, and profound confidence as she faces the end. What more can you ask of someone writing her memoirs than to let us glimpse into how she thinks? The prose section of memoirs is an equally interesting chronological retrospective on her life. Here too the poet's gift of introspection allows her to comment on her own life in a way that shows tremendous maturity of soul. There are great affirmations of faith in the prose section, just as there are in the poems. Her final poem, *Swan Song* ends with this:

Still, I sense with certainty

That somewhere there's a place for me.

Though Life her glorious gifts bestows

That I've enjoyed, right to my toes,

At long, long last I can disclose

A blessing that just grows and glows...

I who have known the highs, the lows,

Am wrapped in sunset's sweet repose.

Such a gift! Who would expect it?

May my life, dear God, reflect it!

LIBRARY HELP NEEDED

If you could spare an hour or two on Tuesday afternoons between 2 and 4 p.m. to come to the Falmouth Public Library to help genealogists who come in for research assistance, you would be VERY welcome! Old timers will show you the resources and how to help the visitors who seek genealogical information. A very small group has been providing this service for years, and they would like to have some newcomers participate so they could take some time off.

Agenda for the June 13, 2015, FGS Annual Meeting

Call to Order—President

Reading and Approval of 2014 Annual Meeting Minutes—Secretary

Nominations from the Floor and Approval of Officers—Chairman, Nominating Committee

Election of 3 members to Nominating Committee—Chairman, Nominating Committee

Presentation of Financial Report for 2015—Treasurer

Presentation and Approval of 2016 Budget—Treasurer

Submission of Reports by Officers—President

Adjourn Meeting—President

FALMOUTH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY DUES ARE PAST DUE!!

JOINT MEETING OF FALMOUTH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY AND CAPE COD GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

On July 1, 2015, from 9:30 to noon, Falmouth Genealogical Society and Cape Cod Genealogical Society will hold a joint meeting at Sturgis Library at 3090 Main Street on Route 6A in Barnstable. (Directions can be found online.)

The guest lecturer will be professional genealogist Jill Marelli of Seattle, Washington, who will present two talks: “Soldiers and Sailors” and “Push and Pull.” Jill is a specialist in the history and genealogy of the Civil War era. She is especially interested in women’s roles during this time period.

NEGATIVE EVIDENCE

On Board, the newsletter of the Board for Certification of Genealogists, recently featured an article on “Negative Evidence” or the absence of evidence in places where information might be expected to be found. Such places include birth records, church records, marriage and death records. Genealogists then try to develop hypotheses about the event. Did a birth or marriage take place in an unexpected place or did death occur during an epidemic of illness or when the person was not at home? These hypotheses need to be tested and proved or disproved.

PUBLISHED MILITARY RECORDS AT FALMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY

If any of your ancestors served in military units, especially in Massachusetts, you might find information in one of the volumes of military records at Falmouth Public Library. These include:

Massachusetts Soldiers & Sailors in the Revolutionary War, 17 volumes; a compilation from the Archives; Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1899. These volumes contain brief biographies and accounts of military service.

Massachusetts Soldiers, Sailors and Marines in the Civil War, compiled and published by the Adjutant General, Norwood, MA: Norwood Press, 1931.

There are several Massachusetts Regimental Histories for the Civil War.

DAR Patriot Index, Centennial Edition; 3 volumes. Washington D.C.: National Society of the DAR, 1994.

Register of the Genealogical Society of the War of 1812. Washington D.C.: General Society of the War of 1812, 1972. Contains biographical sketches and lineages of members from several states.

Women Patriots of the American Revolution: A Biographical Dictionary by Charles E. Claghorn. Metuchen, NJ and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1991. Contains selected biographies.