



The
MAYFLOWER
QUARTERLY
Magazine

VOL. 92, NO. 2

SUMMER 2026

General Society of Mayflower Descendants

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2023-2026

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THE MAYFLOWER QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

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HELP TELL THE PILGRIM STORY

The Mayflower Meetinghouse Project



Find out more at:

www.TheMayflowerSociety.org/give/the-mayflower-meetinghouse-project

Cover Art: The Stars and Stripes flying over the front steps of the Mayflower Society House with *Mayflower II* flying the Flag of King James in the distance, Plymouth, Massachusetts. Photo: Doug B.

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Submissions: To submit to *The Mayflower Quarterly Magazine*, please e-mail MQMEditor@TheMayflowerSociety.org. All articles submitted should be sent as Microsoft Word documents; photographs submitted should be sent as 300 dpi resolution or higher. All articles must contain endnotes for researched material referenced in the article. The following is a link for *Chicago Manual of Style* where endnote formatting information can be found:
www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/book/ed17/frontmatter/toc.html.

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VOLUME 92, NO.2
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the 2026 summer issue of *The Mayflower Quarterly Magazine*. As this is the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America, it is only fitting that our summer issue highlights the way some of the pilgrims and their descendants helped shape our country.

Inside you will find several America-themed pilgrim history articles. Peggy Baker has provided two wonderful articles, one about pilgrim descendants who were patriots and one about pilgrim descendants who were loyalists. Rounding off the articles, Patrick Browne shares the fascinating history of the Plymouth Panic of March 21, 1776.

In addition, the issue contains Member Society News articles, General Society Updates, an article by Dale Cook on National Park Service records that are useful for genealogy and some exciting new products available for our members.

Lastly, with the Forty-fourth General Congress quickly approaching, we have provided an informative look at the event's schedule.

I hope everyone has a great summer, and I look forward to seeing many of you at Congress this September!

- Doug

▼ Juvenile bald eagle on utility pole located at Plymouth Harbor, near the *Mayflower II*. Photo: Doug B.



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Governor General's Message

LISA PENNINGTON, GOVERNOR GENERAL



FROM COMPACT TO CONSTITUTION: INSPIRING THE REVOLUTIONARY GENERATION

From the beginning, the Pilgrims showed an independent streak in both their religion and their government that became famous by the Revolution.

When the *Mayflower* landed in Cape Cod, the Pilgrims were uniquely vulnerable. They did not have a royal charter, nor a patent establishing their right to settle in New England. This weakness meant they had to agree to combine themselves into a civil body politic "for the general good of the colony." No colony had ever before created their own government, elected their own leaders, or made their own laws.

In England, only five percent of men could vote, and none of the men on the *Mayflower* had that right. But in 1620, forty-one landless men, including three servants, voted to elect their own governor and make and enforce their own laws. This experiment would inspire their descendants to fight for those rights centuries later.

The Pilgrims continued to govern their colony without crown interference and did so very well. By 1636, the Pilgrims created an extraordinary document that is little known in America today. It is called the 1636 *General Fundamentals*, and it outlines a general frame of the duties, rights and powers of the freemen and government officers. According to legal historian George Haskins, "it also sets forth a rudimentary bill of rights, ...the first in America, antedating by five years with the one adopted by the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the Body of Liberties of 1641."

The Plymouth colonists, as "free born Subjects of the Kingdome of England," viewed certain fundamental liberties as belonging to them because of the 1215 Magna Carta, and they outlined them in the 1636 *Fundamentals*, amending them from time to time until 1691. The following represent some of the provisions of this first bill of rights:



Due Process of Law:

The Fundamentals established that a man could not be arrested or imprisoned except by the lawful judgement of his peers and the law of the land.



Trial by Jury:

The code mandated that all serious cases "be Tried by a Jury of twelve good and lawful men, according to the custom of England."



Access to Justice:

Like the Magna Carta's provision of 1215, the Plymouth code stated that "Justice and Right be equally and impartially Administered unto all, not sold, denied or causelessly deferred..."



No Taxation Without Consent:

The Plymouth code stipulated that any taxes had to be levied without "partiality" and that the freemen could not exempt themselves.



Rule of Law:

The Fundamentals enshrined the principle that the *government* is subject to the law. The code explicitly stated that any laws or ordinances had to be "Enacted by consent of the body of Freemen or Associates."

The Fundamentals established that the people, through their representatives, made the laws—and neither the King, nor his government, was above it. If Charles I had known about this document, he would have crushed the Pilgrims because he believed in the Divine Right of Kings, and that he was above every law!

The Pilgrims saw these rights not as new inventions, but as long-standing English liberties they were entitled to as free men. By 1776, these sentiments would be demanded and won by their descendants!

Executive Director's Update

CHERYL SOARES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As Plymouth comes into bloom and the first flowers begin to brighten the landscape, we find ourselves preparing for the energy and excitement that summer brings. Our campus will soon be a flurry of activity as we welcome many of you back to connect with your Pilgrim stories and with one another. The roses will be in full display, and the colonial revival gardens on campus will once again offer a beautiful setting that reflects the spirit and history of this place.

We look forward to seeing you in the months ahead, whether you are joining us in Plymouth as part of your own Pilgrim journey, taking a tour, capturing a photo with your commemorative brick, visiting our Research Center, or attending our upcoming Congress. Each visit strengthens the shared history and community that make this place so meaningful. And if you are not able to travel to Plymouth, we are grateful to have members around the world who remain deeply connected to this story and community from afar. We will continue to communicate with you through *The Pilgrim Press*, *The Mayflower Quarterly Magazine*, *Notes from the Boat*, our social media channels, and our YouTube channel, and we always welcome your calls and the opportunity to hear from you.

You may notice a change to the front yard on campus. It is with some sadness that we share that the beautiful Linden tree is no longer thriving and will need to be removed. This tree is believed to have been planted by a daughter of Edward Winslow, who built what is now known as the Mayflower Society House. The Edward Winslow referenced here was the great grandson of Governor Winslow, passenger on the *Mayflower*. Unfortunately, as was common in the early 20th century, the tree was treated under the practice of "structural integrity," in which hollow or decaying heartwood was filled with solid material and cavities were sealed to block moisture and decay. We have discovered significant cement within the tree along with internal decay, contributing to its decline.

While its loss is significant, we are hopeful that we can preserve its legacy by cultivating saplings for future planting—ensuring that its story continues.

From old stories often come new discoveries. I have recently been learning Pilgrim stories that were previously unfamiliar to me through films shared by our Governor General on our YouTube channel. Some may be well known, while others offer fresh insight. These are the kinds of stories we are eager to share more widely through the Mayflower Meetinghouse. If you have not yet seen them, I encourage you to visit the General Society of Mayflower Descendants YouTube channel.

We also have exciting news regarding The Meetinghouse—please see the accompanying article for more details.

We are excited to host our second Member Society Silent Auction Challenge! Last year's auction raised more than \$28,000 in support of the Meetinghouse, and we look forward to building on that success together.

Information has been shared with all Member Society Governors by our Secretary General. We invite you to participate by completing and submitting your forms.

Please send completed forms to Christine Wood at ExecutiveAsst@TheMayflowerSociety.org. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out at 508-746-3188 ext. 25.

In addition, we are pleased to introduce our Research Services team. Whether you are working through a genealogical "brick wall," exploring a potential Pilgrim lineage, or assisting someone beginning their journey toward membership, our team is here to help.

We look forward to a vibrant and meaningful season ahead!



Mayflower Meetinghouse Update

CHERYL SOARES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On March 31st, The Mayflower Society's Executive Committee gathered to break ground on the final phase of construction for the Mayflower Meetinghouse in Plymouth. Work will formally begin on May 4th and continue over the coming months and into early fall to fully restore the interior of the Meetinghouse, preserving the historic Sanctuary and transforming the lower floor into an Exhibition Hall that celebrates the stories and history of our Pilgrim ancestors. This milestone marks an exciting step toward bringing the entire project to completion and opening these renewed spaces to members and visitors alike.

There will be opportunities during Congress in September to visit the Meetinghouse, and we hope to see all of you there. If you have not yet registered, we encourage you to do so.

This progress would not be possible without the generosity of more than 1,000 Mayflower Society members. We are deeply grateful for your support, yet the work is not finished. As we move forward, we have raised just over \$10.7 million toward our \$17 million capital goal. We also plan to raise an additional \$3 million to seed an endowment that will ensure the long-term success and stewardship of the Meetinghouse. Realizing this vision for a Mayflower Meetinghouse where we can all gather and share this history is something we can only achieve together.

Please reach out to Cheryl Soares, Executive Director, if you would like more information, to arrange a visit, or to discuss potential support.



The Executive Committee with David Peck and Former Governor General Lea Sinclair Filson, breaking ground on the final phase of the Mayflower Meetinghouse Project.

Strengthening Our Future: Enhancements to the Mayflower Lineage Match Program

MARTIN W. BEERMAN, SECRETARY GENERAL

For more than a century, the General Society of Mayflower Descendants has served as both steward and storyteller—preserving the legacy of the Mayflower voyage of 1620 while welcoming new generations into that story.

Today, one of the most important pathways into membership—the Mayflower Lineage Match (MLM) program—has been thoughtfully refined to better support both prospective members and the long-term vitality of our Society.

These updates are more than procedural changes. They are strategic tools designed to remove barriers, encourage follow-through, and ultimately grow our membership.

A STRONGER BRIDGE FROM CURIOSITY TO MEMBERSHIP

Members know well that many individuals begin their journey with curiosity: a family tradition, a hint in a genealogy, or a long-held suspicion of Mayflower ancestry. The MLM program has long served as the first

point of contact—offering a reliable way to determine whether a proposed lineage aligns with our well-documented records.

What has changed is how effectively that initial curiosity is now being converted into completed memberships.

TWO KEY ENHANCEMENTS

1. Updated Fee Structure: \$100 Per Submission

The MLM service is now offered at \$100 per proposed lineage submission. This adjustment reflects the expertise required to evaluate each submission against the Society's extensive genealogical resources, including the *Mayflower Families through Five Generations* series and previously approved applications.

2. A Direct Incentive to Complete the Membership Journey

The most significant enhancement is the introduction of a membership conversion incentive. When a prospective member receives a positive MLM result and proceeds to submit a membership application—ultimately gaining approval—their \$100 MLM fee is fully rebated.

This rebate is delivered via a coupon issued with the MLM results, which the applicant returns following approval.

In practical terms, this transforms the MLM from a stand-alone service into a first step toward membership with no net cost for those who complete the process.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO OUR SOCIETY

This change addresses a long-standing challenge: many individuals who receive positive MLM results never take the next step toward membership.

By creating a financial incentive tied directly to application completion, the program now actively encourages prospective members to move forward—benefiting both the applicant and the Society.

For Member Societies, this means:

- A stronger pipeline of qualified applicants;
- Higher conversion rates from inquiry to membership; and
- Increased engagement with individuals already predisposed to join.

For the General Society, MLM represents a strategic investment in sustainable growth—ensuring that the descendants of the Pilgrims continue to find their place within our fellowship.

WHAT MEMBERS SHOULD KNOW

As ambassadors of the Society, current members play a vital role in sharing this opportunity. When speaking with friends, family, or prospective members, you can now confidently say:

- The MLM offers expert-reviewed insight into a potential Mayflower lineage;
- The process remains simple and accessible, with results typically provided within eight weeks; and
- Most importantly, those who go on to become members will have their MLM fee refunded.

CONTINUING THE WORK OF STEWARDSHIP

Every new member represents more than a completed application—each represent the continuation of a story that began in 1620 and lives on through each of us. With these enhancements to the Mayflower Lineage Match program, we are not only making it easier to discover that story—we are also making it easier to join it.

And in doing so, we strengthen the future of the Society we all serve.

Forty-fourth General Congress

MARTIN W. BEERMAN, SECRETARY GENERAL

PLYMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS SEPTEMBER 11-16, 2026

The General Society of Mayflower Descendants invites all members to gather in Plymouth, Massachusetts, for the Forty-fourth General Congress, September 11-16, 2026, where America's founding story unfolds at its source. Walk the very ground where the Pilgrims settled in 1620, and experience a town where history is not preserved behind glass, but lives in the landscape itself.

From Plymouth Harbor and the iconic *Mayflower II* to Burial Hill, Pilgrim Hall Museum, and the Forefathers Monument, Plymouth offers an immersive journey into the courage, faith, and perseverance that shaped a nation. At the heart of this experience stands the Mayflower Society's own National Pilgrim Memorial Meetinghouse, a place of reflection, gathering, and living legacy for descendants—connecting past, present, and future in one sacred, historic and inspiring space.

September brings crisp coastal air and golden light, ideal for exploring historic sites, seaside paths, and centuries-old streets. Join fellow descendants in a place of profound meaning, where shared heritage, reflection, and fellowship come together in the town that began it all. Plymouth is not merely a destination—it is a homecoming for all Mayflower Descendants!



SCHEDULE

Schedule is subject to change. See the Congress registration website for schedule updates and details about all meetings, special events and tours. Visit the Congress registration website by logging into the Members Only section of the GSMD website at www.TheMayflowerSociety.org and select Members Only Events.

Friday, September 11

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Credentials pick up.

8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Tour: Plymouth County Register of Deeds and Burial Hill, including lunch at the Mayflower Society House.

10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Pilgrim Henry Samson Kindred.

3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Soule Kindred in America.

4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The Warren Cousins (Plimoth Patuxet Museums).

5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. DNA Committee (Governor General's House).

5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The Pilgrim William White Society.

5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The Pilgrim John Howland Society Banquet (Plimoth Patuxet Museums).

Saturday, September 12

7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Breakfast on your own at Hotel 1620 Bistro.

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Credentials pick up.

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. SOLD OUT
Tour: Salem, including Witch Museum, House of Seven Gables, Richard More grave, Witch Trials Memorial and lunch on your own.

8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
Executive Committee Meeting
(Executive Officers only).

10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. DNA Workshop with The Genetic Genealogist Blaine Bettinger, including lunch.

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Thomas Rogers Society
(Plimoth Patuxet Museums).

11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Winslow Heritage Society.

12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
The Pilgrim John Howland Society Annual Meeting
(Plimoth Patuxet Museums).

1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Pilgrim Francis Cooke Society/Society of Myles Standish Descendants.

3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Meetinghouse Construction Sneak Peek (National Pilgrim Memorial Meetinghouse).

4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Billington Family Society.

4:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The Elder William Brewster Society.

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Descendants on Deck at *Mayflower II*.



Sunday, September 13

7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Breakfast on your own at Hotel 1620 Bistro.

8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Credentials pick up.

7:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. SOLD OUT
Church Service at Plimoth Patuxet Fort/Meetinghouse, including transportation and breakfast.

10:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Pilgrim Progress –
Mayflower Society House.

11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Opening Ceremonies –
Plymouth Memorial Hall.

12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Mayflower Society House
Colonial Gardens Reception.

2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Insignia and Sales.

3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Treasurers Meeting.

4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Mayflower Guard Meeting and Rehearsal.

4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Historians Meeting.

6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. General Board of Assistants Meeting.
Required attendance for GBOA (GSMD Officers, DGGs and AGs).

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Pilgrim Isaac Allerton Society/Pilgrim Hopkins Heritage Society.



Monday, September 14

7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Breakfast on your own at Hotel 1620 Bistro.

8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
Credentials pick up.

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Insignia and Sales.

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Tour: America250 Celebrating Lexington and Concord.

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. First Congress Business Session.
Assigned seating for GBOA officers and Member Society Delegates. Silent observers are allowed as space permits, seated at the rear of the room.

12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. Lunch.



Tuesday, September 15

7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Breakfast on your own at Hotel 1620 Bistro.

8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Credentials pick up.

8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Insignia and Sales.

8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tour: Boston Tea Party Museum, JFK Library and lunch on your own at Quincy Market/Faneuil Hall.

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Second Congress Business Session. *Assigned seating for GBOA officers and Member Society Delegates. Silent observers are allowed as space permits, seated at the rear of the room.*

12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. Lunch.

6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Indian Pond Country Club Cocktail Reception and Banquet/ Installation of Officers with Keynote Speaker D. Brenton Simons, President Emeritus and Chief Stewardship Officer at American Ancestors.

Wednesday, September 16

8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. New Executive Committee Meeting (*Executive Officers only*).

11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Governor General's 1620 Club Event – Plimoth Patuxet Museums (*1620 Club Members only*).

IMPORTANT DATES

\$100 Registration Fee ends May 31, 2026.
\$125 Late Registration Fee ends July 15, 2026.

**NO REGISTRATIONS AFTER JULY 15.
NO ONSITE REGISTRATION.**

All attendees are required to register and wear the official badge to all meetings, events and tours. The official registration badge serves as your tickets and your paid receipt.

To register, login to the Members Only section of the GSMD website at www.TheMayflowerSociety.org and select Members Only Events.

If you have already registered, please review your registration confirmation. Contact SecretaryGeneral@TheMayflowerSociety.org to get a copy sent to your email. If you don't have a confirmation, you are not registered. Please confirm you are registered if you are planning to attend.

CANCELLATION POLICY

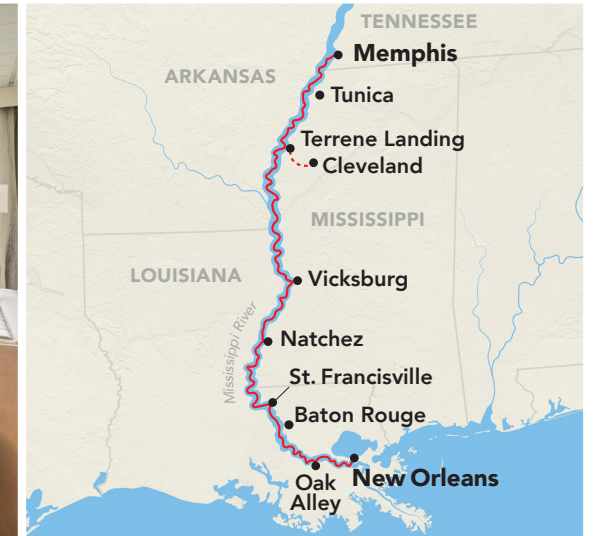
- Registration Fees are not refundable. NO EXCEPTIONS.
- Requests for Salem, Lexington/Concord and Boston Tours cancellation must be received by June 15.
- Requests for refunds on other events, excluding the three tours above, must be received by July 15. Cancellations incur a 10 percent fee. No refunds after July 15. NO EXCEPTIONS.
- Congress registrations are not transferable by the registrant. Contact SecretaryGeneral@TheMayflowerSociety.org with cancellation questions.

All Mayflower Society members are welcome at Congress!

Mayflower Congress isn't just for General Society Officers. All Mayflower Society members and family/guests are welcome in Plymouth to enjoy fantastic tours, listen to interesting speakers and connect with Mayflower cousins from near and far.

Questions? Email Secretary General Martin Beerman at SecretaryGeneral@TheMayflowerSociety.org

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MEMBER SOCIETY FEES AND DUES FOR 2026

Member Society	Application Fee	Annual Dues	Life Membership Fees	Supplemental Fee	Junior Registration Fee	Number of Junior Members
Alabama	\$200	\$60	N/A	\$200	N/A	N/A
Alaska	\$210	\$50	N/A	\$160	N/A	N/A
Arizona	\$227	\$52	N/A	\$175	\$25	67
Arkansas	\$250	\$45	N/A	\$150	\$5	49
Australia	\$180	\$85	N/A	\$180	\$25	6
California	\$245	\$75	N/A	\$185	\$60	312
Canada	\$215 CDN	\$75 CDN	N/A	\$215 CDN	\$25 CDN	35
Colorado	\$180	\$50	N/A	\$175	\$75	76
Connecticut	\$315	\$65	Sliding	\$250	\$50	262
Delaware	\$200	\$65	\$520-\$1300	\$175	\$20	81
D.C.	\$150	\$65	Sliding	\$200	\$25	13
Europe	\$280	\$70	N/A	\$210	N/A	N/A
Florida	\$190	\$54	Sliding	\$190	\$30	913
Georgia	\$315	\$65	N/A	\$150	\$40	12
Hawaii	\$210	\$60	N/A	\$190	\$25	0
Idaho	\$200	\$45	N/A	\$200	\$25	0
Illinois	\$250	\$75	Sliding	\$175	\$15	132
Indiana	\$265	\$80	\$800	\$185	N/A	N/A
Iowa	\$200	\$45	N/A	\$150	\$15	239
Kansas	\$223	\$53	N/A	\$170	\$20	292
Kentucky	\$175	\$60	\$1,200	\$175	\$25	17
Louisiana	\$250	\$75	N/A	\$250	\$75	26
Maine	\$200	\$50	N/A	\$175	\$35	384
Maryland	\$350	\$65	N/A	\$225	\$50	42
Massachusetts	\$350	\$95	Sliding	\$300	\$100	547
Michigan	\$212	\$52	\$110-\$569	\$160	\$10	510
Minnesota	\$290	\$65	N/A	\$225	\$45	33
Mississippi	\$200	\$50	Sliding	\$175	\$5	45
Missouri	\$225	\$50	N/A	\$150	\$25	137
Montana	\$220	\$45	N/A	\$175	\$25	14
Nebraska	\$175	\$45	N/A	\$175	\$15	20
Nevada	\$175	\$50	N/A	\$175	\$25	93
New Hampshire	\$275	\$75	N/A	\$200	\$30	135
New Jersey	\$275	\$50	\$1,200	\$200	\$10	221
New Mexico	\$220	\$56	N/A	\$200	\$10	67
New York	\$150	\$150	\$3,000	\$150	\$100	74
North Carolina	\$200	\$50	N/A	\$200	\$35	56
North Dakota	\$175	\$60	N/A	\$175	\$15	43
Ohio	\$180	\$56	N/A	\$170	\$25	326
Oklahoma	\$205	\$55	N/A	\$150	\$6	41
Oregon	\$200	\$50	N/A	\$200	\$20	88
Pennsylvania	\$245	\$70	N/A	\$175	\$0	72
Rhode Island	\$200	\$35	\$2,000	\$200	\$3	55
South Carolina	\$230	\$70	\$275-\$2300	\$230	\$50	132
South Dakota	\$235	\$60	Sliding	\$150	\$15	107
Tennessee	\$200	\$50	N/A	\$150	N/A	N/A
Texas	\$220	\$50	\$1,500	\$170	\$15	162
Utah	\$175	\$60	N/A	\$150	N/A	N/A
Vermont	\$200	\$55	Sliding	\$200	\$10	120
Virginia	\$200	\$75	N/A	\$200	\$10	100
Washington	\$175	\$49	N/A	\$175	\$15	377
West Virginia	\$190	\$40	N/A	\$150	\$15	15
Wisconsin	\$245	\$50	Sliding	\$195	\$25	507
Wyoming	\$200	\$70	N/A	\$175	\$5	17

GSMD MEMBERSHIP TOTALS, 2016-2025

Member Society	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Alabama	208	212	201	243	254	256	271	256	240	226
Alaska	55	59	63	60	61	59	66	64	68	66
Arizona	303	333	350	360	358	402	406	384	387	382
Arkansas	85	81	83	100	99	123	112	126	117	129
Australia	51	51	57	49	43	37	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
California	2,030	2,045	2,523	2,615	2,512	2,615	2,392	2,410	2,404	2,476
Canada	227	231	246	264	245	239	267	254	249	245
Colorado	494	523	617	595	591	619	540	513	492	492
Connecticut	1,284	1,451	1,497	1,452	1,488	1,514	1,444	1,404	1,379	1,363
Delaware	170	172	173	176	183	184	172	193	186	187
D.C.	451	442	442	429	414	413	420	440	439	410
Europe	69	68	62	64	59	60	68	65	61	59
Florida	1,484	1,557	1,507	1,564	1,548	1,539	1,570	1,526	1,451	1,390
Georgia	316	300	359	324	396	383	354	369	373	362
Hawaii	51	52	62	72	74	93	95	99	92	90
Idaho	159	154	153	157	151	154	143	144	133	142
Illinois	1,031	1,043	1,087	1,110	1,101	1,106	1,120	1,097	1,085	1,066
Indiana	425	427	417	427	414	432	445	452	428	433
Iowa	346	332	364	329	331	369	379	376	371	374
Kansas	387	388	402	407	440	451	436	439	404	384
Kentucky	184	246	241	228	210	198	201	194	190	187
Louisiana	160	154	159	178	172	176	169	171	164	154
Maine	1,011	1,050	1,098	1,113	1,108	1,097	1,088	1,108	1,091	1,090
Maryland	482	489	517	506	488	471	424	474	444	407
Massachusetts	3,727	3,774	3,796	3,883	3,879	3,892	3,706	3,628	3,526	3,381
Michigan	1,029	1,020	1,024	1,035	986	928	858	828	821	823
Minnesota	348	418	440	457	476	465	463	466	450	445
Mississippi	156	174	184	184	176	179	184	190	183	177
Missouri	305	275	304	306	322	309	304	306	302	303
Montana	104	106	106	109	118	119	123	116	116	117
Nebraska	205	212	240	269	271	269	277	296	284	290
Nevada	157	162	177	177	178	178	169	159	158	150
New Hampshire	587	590	606	603	571	593	593	595	566	540
New Jersey	730	744	789	786	764	831	825	786	792	804
New Mexico	149	142	150	144	144	153	185	176	171	164
New York	1,409	1,495	1,643	1,590	1,568	1,513	1,396	1,437	1,404	1,294
North Carolina	351	350	350	352	541	567	574	581	597	696
North Dakota	115	110	109	111	105	113	121	118	123	115
Ohio	942	935	939	900	984	999	932	946	916	891
Oklahoma	194	192	195	186	190	170	275	267	256	258
Oregon	255	264	269	272	257	263	246	235	215	218
Pennsylvania	778	795	818	852	819	801	758	776	757	741
Rhode Island	465	475	505	494	491	504	490	478	474	448
South Carolina	412	414	448	462	431	440	403	385	377	405
South Dakota	303	306	328	326	309	308	315	309	296	283
Tennessee	202	192	189	194	242	243	233	212	195	199
Texas	1,144	1,200	1,285	1,427	1,442	1,424	1,472	1,414	1,344	1,300
Utah	224	253	254	316	301	285	294	255	266	293
Vermont	449	459	467	473	616	606	606	556	581	596
Virginia	581	705	869	948	891	847	782	774	748	725
Washington	346	369	362	362	351	400	459	441	451	423
West Virginia	43	48	53	58	58	60	53	46	45	46
Wisconsin	516	538	547	626	641	641	621	581	557	538
Wyoming	60	53	61	78	81	101	104	108	107	107
TOTAL	27,749	28,630	30,187	30,802	30,943	31,191	30,403	30,023	29,326	28,884

MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS



AUSTRALIA AND OHIO

What do the Australia, Ohio, Hawaii, South Dakota, Illinois, and Arizona Mayflower Societies have in common?

Quite a lot, it turns out.

Thanks to the initiative of Australia Governor Bill Elliott and Secretary Connie Riley, these societies come together every second month for a virtual *Cousins Coffee Chat*, held on Saturday mornings in Australia and Friday evenings across the contiguous United States. Now running for over a year, these engaging one-hour sessions provide a valuable forum for sharing ideas, strengthening connections, and fostering collaboration across the Mayflower community.

Each meeting explores a wide range of topics from educational programming and operational improvements to strategies for increasing interest and membership. For the newer Australia Society in particular, these discussions have proven especially beneficial.

Participants consistently gain insight into both the shared and unique challenges faced by their respective societies, and make each session a genuine “meeting of the minds.”

A recent discussion in March highlighted Australia’s efforts to recruit new members. Governor Elliott and his team outlined their approach to building connections with heritage organisations across the country, including outreach to groups linked to Gold Rush-era immigrants. The lively exchange of ideas not only generated practical strategies but also inspired the submission of an article to *The Mayflower Quarterly Magazine*.

While some challenges differ by region, many are surprisingly similar and reinforce the value of collaboration and shared experience.

As Governor Elliott reflected:

“As a new society, we in Australia have so much to learn, and we greatly value the contributions of members from across the Mayflower world. Sharing their experiences helps guide and strengthen our growth.”

These conversations continue to demonstrate the power of connection—bringing together Mayflower descendants from across continents in the spirit of learning, cooperation, and community.

Submitted by: Beth Anderson, Ohio Governor and Bill Elliott, Australia Governor

examples of Freedom, Virtue, and Faith. With the upcoming 250th Anniversary of the birth of the United States of America, we enjoyed a timely subject with an audience of all ages who were excited and committed to education!

Submitted by: Barbara Wright, DCMD Assistant Secretary



▲ Left to Right: Captain and Social Media Assistant Aaron Bradford and Education Chairman David Bradford.



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

From Compact to Independence



▲ Suzy T. Mulligan, DC Governor with Daniel J. Earnshaw, Maryland Governor.

On September 14, 2025, the District of Columbia (DC) and the Maryland Mayflower Societies were honored to welcome 185 members and guests to the historic Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC, for our marquis luncheon program, “From Compact to Independence, 1620 to 1776,” commemorating the 405th Anniversary of the Mayflower Compact. It was

a memorable afternoon of fellowship, reflection, and appreciation for the enduring influence of the Compact on self-rule and democratic principles in America. We were especially honored by the presence of Governor General Lisa Pennington, whose participation added great meaning to the occasion, and by our guest emcee, and DC Mayflower Society member David Trebing. We were also pleased to welcome representatives and guests from fellow hereditary and patriotic organizations, including the Colonial Warriors, National Society of the Colonial Dames of America, The Order of the Foundations and Patriots of America, Sons of the American Revolution, and Daughters of the American Revolution, whose presence reflected the shared importance of this history across many societies.



▲ Top: Guest speakers at the “From Compact to Independence, 1620 to 1776.” Right: Old Guard Fife and Drum.



We were honored to have The Old Guard present the colors, followed by a stirring performance by The United States Army Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps, which added wonderful ceremony and patriotic spirit to the afternoon. We are deeply grateful to all who attended and helped make this such a special and successful gathering.

The event was recorded, and you can catch a glimpse of the event at our DC Mayflower Society YouTube channel at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BlgwTsvCrfo&t=63s>.



Recordings of each guest speaker will be coming along soon and posted to the DC Mayflower YouTube channel.

Submitted by: Suzy T. Mulligan, Governor



DELAWARE

Delaware Society Attends Delaware Home Education Convention

On Saturday, March 14th, the Delaware Mayflower Society Education Chairman David Bradford and Captain and Social Media Assistant Aaron Bradford delivered a Pilgrim to Patriot Presentation at the Delaware Home Education Convention. The presentation gave the perspective of how the Patriots who founded the United States understood American Liberty. The Founders were inspired by the Pilgrims and their friendship with the Wampanoag Indians and the Founders remembered practical



EUROPE

Europe Society to Celebrate Tenth Anniversary of its Original Charter

The Europe Society is preparing to celebrate a birthday: the double-digits are upon us. This summer the Society of Mayflower Descendants (Europe) Ltd. will celebrate the amazing accomplishment of a ten-year anniversary. We will celebrate and I would love to invite you to our party!

A fabulous three-day, totally epic feast for the mind and senses is planned. I never, ever thought that I would be associated with anything half this wonderful. We have world-class speakers. We have tours. We have gorgeous scenery, historic buildings, and special access to all the wonderful things. All the festivities take place in a part of England that I have never explored. Even if I had already visited, I know that the very best people will be in attendance, and I want to



which is structural and necessary, though sometimes rather tedious.

It is that third leg of the stool that I want to talk about now, though. It is the reason that the SMD(E) is willing to reckon with the forces of law and order. It is why we have a bank account and a budget and get insurance. It is what the GSMD provides after the lineage checks. Really, it is the over-riding purpose of our Society. And I forgot that.

The third leg of the stool is the membership, the community, and the people. It is the individuals and relationships that connect us all. It is an ephemeral, precious thing, difficult to quantify, but desperately mourned if lost. It is tenuous and at-risk in our distanced, screen-focused, socially-awkward world. We must consider it. One person has done so on behalf of my Society for my entire SMD(E) membership. Quietly and without fuss, my Secretary, Donna Heys, has faithfully, ferociously done this job.

Almost three years ago, we came up with a plan. We wanted to connect people to a community, one that was as personally engaging as possible. We could not ask too much of busy people, but we also could not offer too little. We wanted the impossible, really, especially confronted with Europe's peculiar time-and-space-equation.

The impossible has happened. Over the last three years, Donna has connected our SMD(E) membership, drawing them together into a community. People happily recognise each other and look forward to connecting, online and in person. They know when to expect events and can plan to be with us. We gather in gorgeous places and host internationally-known speakers. Everyone always knows the necessary details—who, what, where, how, when, and why. Donna has learned to create websites, especially on our behalf; she has edited and emailed and organised at a full-time pace. With grace and diligence, she has brought forth something from nearly nothing.

But I worry. The trend, everywhere, is for membership and participation in social institutions to decline. The lapse of connection is not healthy, not for us as an organisation, and not for the society at large. Humans are finding it difficult to connect with other humans. Generally and statistically, loneliness is endemic, as is depression. We are designed to thrive in a state of connection and community. We have somehow made a problem that spans generations and locales.

Yet I hold on to the idea that we are actively offering a solution to the problem. By my reckoning, our Society helps make things better. We gather together because of something shared. We interact with other people. We

▲ Carmen Kew, SMD(E) Governor (in yellow) and Donna Heys, SMD(E) Secretary at The Pilgrim Father's Church, Delfshaven, The Netherlands.

see them. Also, I have been told that I can invite all the people I want. I am inviting you, in case you had not guessed. I am so excited.

I have a confession, though. This is not what I planned to write, you see. I was going to produce a very important piece. It was supposed to be about something like banking, governance, budgeting, insurance, etc., although I am sure you are all very tired of hearing about such things from me. I lost track of what I am really doing, I think.

Now, I found my own little drawing—and I remember.

I like a good, strong theoretical basis for most things. I am also quite visual, and I think best with a pen in my hand. So, when I was first elected as Governor, and I was entirely out at sea as to what I was supposed to be doing, I started reading a great deal and drawing pictures to try to figure out what being Governor of a Member Society was about. What I ended up with, finally, was a drawing of a three-legged stool, complete with structural struts.

My stool is how I think of our Member Society. One leg is the General Society of Mayflower Descendants (GSMD). Without GSMD we cannot verify lineage and would therefore have no members. Ergo, the GSMD is very important. The second leg is governance. It brings us in line with the external rules and regulations of the real world, keeps us out of prison, and puts us in good repute with our members; governance is what I have been so taken up with lately. There is a third leg, too, one which balances the other two, and which I will get to in a moment. Finally, there are the struts, binding all three legs together safely. The struts are a matter of money,

offer a place in a community. This is both simple and profound.

Therefore, this is my plea: show up, participate, be there, and do not forget, as I have, what is important. Do not have business meetings just to have meetings; do not create impressive governance and finance plans that forget the people that they are intended to serve.

You do not have to do much more than smile and be present. Perhaps also say, 'Please,' and 'Thank you,' and do not grab. But when wonderful, dedicated people like my Secretary try to make you happy—cooperate. Reward their efforts. Turn out and turn up. Make it worth their while to put in all that work.

This Mayflower Society connection is rare and precious—protect and nurture it. Make an effort, even when you are tired, lonely, and depressed. We all need you—and you need us, too.

Information regarding SMD(E) Associate Membership and our July 2026 Scrooby Conference can be found here: <https://mayflowersmde.wixsite.com/mayflowereurope>.



Submitted by: Carmen Kew, Governor



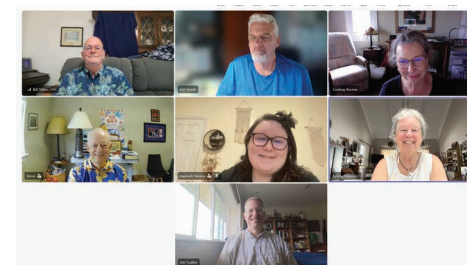
HAWAII

Hawaii Society Uses Online Meetings to Connect Far-Flung Members

The Society of Mayflower Descendants in Hawai'i continues its journey "imua"... moving forward... way out here in the middle of the Moana Pākīpika (Pacific Ocean)! Since about two-thirds of our members live on various Hawaiian Islands and about one-third live across the mainland in more than ten different states (including several on the east coast), ALL of our meetings are held via Teams (like Zoom). Despite not easily being able to meet in person, Teams allows our many far-flung members to join in our activities. We encourage ALL our members (especially our far distant members) who have not yet joined in on our online meetings to do so in November for our Compact Day meeting! Reminders for all meetings and the meeting invitations are sent by email to all members about two weeks before the scheduled meeting.

Our Historians continue to be busy assisting folks with new and supplemental applications. They currently have a total of seventy-four prospective members in widely varying phases of their applications.

The Hawaii Society is actively seeking new Board members to join us in service. We have a variety of



▲ Members of the Hawaii Mayflower Society meeting digitally.

positions open, including some that require only a minimum of time, effort, and responsibility. We try to ease new Board members into relatively simple positions to allow them to learn more about the Society and to grow their knowledge and confidence. If any of our Hawaii Society Members are interested in joining the Board, please email Governor@mayflowerhawaii.org for more information. We would love to hear from you! Also, if you have not done so recently, check out our website at <https://www.mayflowerhawaii.org>, especially the Gallery and the Educational Material pages!

The Hawaii Society very much enjoyed participating in a joint Zoom presentation on April 25, 2026, with a number of other Member Societies, coordinated by Member-at-Large Beth Lambright. Technical support was provided by Oregon Society Governor Deb Sorensen. This joint presentation featured guest speaker Richard Pickering, the Chief Historian and a Re-enactor at Plimoth Patuxet Museums! He spoke on "Revolutionary Ideas Started Here"—that is, the seeds of democracy and a free government that 250 years ago sparked an American Revolution that BEGAN in PLIMOTH COLONY. Pickering's speech covered a great topic that helped celebrate this year's America250! We had a great turnout for this presentation!

Three of our Board members are registered for Congress at Plymouth in September 2026! The attendance is a record number for our small society! Governor/AG Bill Stiles, DGG Lynda Hylander, and Secretary Hannah Dennis are all looking forward to attending the events and tours, and meeting our Mayflower cousins! A hui hou!!!

Submitted by: Bill Stiles, Governor



INDIANA

Indiana Report

The following is a short memoir written by Monique Caraman, one of the Indiana Society's 2025 scholarship winners.

"This February I had the honor of being able to represent my school by working at the Milano Cortina Winter Olympic Games. I am a media communications student at Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky. I worked with the Olympic Broadcasting Services and learned about the biggest multiple camera television event in the world. I helped as a student assistant on the audio crew at the Cortina Sliding Center.

I left the US for Italy in early February arriving a week before the games started. They placed me in a beautiful hotel in Dobbiaco, a quaint alpine village near Cortina. I started work the next morning. The Sliding Center, where I worked, held the Luge, Skeleton, and Bobsleigh events. I started by assisting the crew in setting up the microphones on the track. They put down over ninety! Once the games started I learned how to operate the boom microphone and assisted the audio crew wherever needed.

We worked long days, but on my days off I got to go explore Cortina. I saw the Olympic flame, the



▲ Photos courtesy of Monique Caraman, taken in Cortina, Italy, during her experience at the Winter Olympics.



rings, and the Dolomite mountains. I walked around the town eating lots of traditional foods and coffees. I met many Italian students, athletes and some celebrities! The experience was amazing. I learned about Italy, media and an event that brings the world together for a few weeks."

Submitted by: Diana Soule McDowell, Corresponding Secretary, on behalf of Monique Caraman



NEW JERSEY

Mayflower Regional Leadership Meeting and Compact Day Meeting

Two years ago, the Governors of five Mid-Atlantic Mayflower Societies, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, formed a regional group to share ideas, to address common issues, and to develop best practices. On Saturday, March 14, 2026, these five societies held their first Regional Leadership Meeting in New Castle, Delaware. The meeting, hosted by the Delaware Society, focused on Membership and Education and included a dozen participants from the various societies consisting of Society Governors, Deputy Governors, and Board members focused on Membership and Education.

As part of the focus on Membership, the participants were treated to a Zoom presentation by Beth

Lambright, General Society Member-at-Large, in which she outlined a multitude of meeting themes and other ideas to engage members. Several board members who could not attend in person joined the meeting via Zoom to see and participate in Lambright's presentation. After the presentation, the gathering split into separate Membership and Education breakout groups to discuss their current practices and objectives; thereafter, the groups reconvened to



▲ New Jersey Mayflower Society Board of Assistants at work.

share their ideas. The Membership group focused on member recruitment, retention, engagement, and development of future leaders. The Education group discussed scholarship programs and methods of engaging with the public in general, and school children in particular, concerning Mayflower history and genealogy.

All came away from the day with fresh perspectives on how to grow our societies, to better engage with the public, and to enhance the membership experience. Many thanks to the Delaware Society for hosting such a successful event. Planning will begin shortly for a second conference this coming fall.

On Saturday, November 22, 2025, the New Jersey Society held its Fall Compact Day Meeting and Luncheon at the Forsgate Country Club in Monroe Township, New Jersey. As an outgrowth of the bonds formed in March at the Mayflower Regional Leadership Meeting, Maryland Governor Daniel Earnshaw and Pennsylvania Governor James Campbell, arranged to join the New Jersey Society meeting. Unfortunately, because Earnshaw and Campbell needed to travel to Pennsylvania to attend that Society's Compact Day dinner that evening, they could not stay to hear the program entitled "After the Mayflower: The Voyage of the Fortune (1621)" presented by Canadian Society Governor Reverend



▲ Left to right: Maryland Governor Daniel Earnshaw, New Jersey Governor Edward Horton, and Pennsylvania Governor James Campbell.



▲ Left to right: Back row – Edward Horton (NJ), John Crosson (DE), Ken McKeever (NJ); Front row – Christopher Lee (NJ), Suzy Mulligan (DC), James Campbell (PA), Tom Frank (MD).

Becket Soule. Many thanks to Governors Earnshaw and Campbell for traveling to visit us and for their ambitious plan to attend two Mayflower events in one day! The New Jersey Society was honored to have four Member Society Governors in attendance at its Compact Day Meeting.

Submitted by: Edward Charles Horton, Governor



TEXAS

Texas Society commemorated America250 at its Annual Meeting

The Texas Society of Mayflower Descendants held its Annual Meeting on Saturday, March 28, 2026, and commemorated the 250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence this year.

At the Saturday luncheon, a Mercy Otis Warren reenactor entertained us with her portrayal of Revolutionary War era activist, poet, playwright and pamphleteer Mercy Otis Warren. Mercy first had to write under a pseudonym so that the writings would be received without prejudice. She was a descendant of Mayflower passenger Edward Doty, and her husband was a descendant of Mayflower passenger Richard Warren. Mercy was born September 14, 1728, in Barnstable, Massachusetts. She is buried on Burial Hill, Plymouth, Massachusetts, with many Mayflower ancestors and cousins.

Also, during the luncheon, the 2026 Texas Society Scholarship winners and their families were recognized. The Texas Society was able to award a total of \$13,000 between four individual scholars through our Scholarship Program. Congratulations to the Texas Society scholarship recipients for receiving a scholarship and for their extraordinary achievements!

Compact to Constitution Project Co-Chairs, Steve Williams and Kimberly Florsheim, presented the six videos from this project during the meeting. These videos and study aids are free for all to enjoy. They are geared to homeschool, public and private educators and students. The concept and full funding in the amount of \$100,000.00 was generously provided by The Texas Society of Mayflower Descendants. We commissioned Plimoth Patuxet Museums to produce the videos and educational materials. The website for this curriculum is www.CompactToConstitution.org. Please spread the word and share the website

information with everyone. The videos are a treat to watch, learn and enjoy!

We were honored with the presence of Governor General Lisa Pennington, who gave the Keynote address at our Saturday evening Banquet. She gave an insightful and interesting talk on some of the lesser-known facts about many of our Pilgrim ancestors. Her information included many examples of “firsts” that our ancestors had, including Veterans’ benefits, “welfare” for widows and children, widow’s property rights and what may be one of the first uses of an “in terrorem” clause to discourage the contesting of wills utilized in George Soule’s will.

The Governor General also installed our new Texas Governor Kathleen Pierce and Deputy Governor Mike Byrne. Thank you, Lisa!

Here in Texas, we are still warmly remembering the 2025 General Board of Assistants meeting last summer and getting to meet so many of you. We hope you all are having a wonderful summer and that we will get to see so many of you at the Congress in Plymouth this September 2026!

Submitted by: Nancy Freeman Powers, Past Governor

UTAH RootsTech 2026

The General Society of Mayflower Descendants was pleased to welcome a steady stream of visitors to its booth during the RootsTech 2026 conference. More than fifteen dedicated volunteers from GSMD and the Utah Society generously contributed their time, expertise, and enthusiasm for Mayflower heritage with attendees from around the world.

Throughout the three-day conference, volunteers assisted prospective members by answering questions, providing informational materials, and guiding individuals as they explored their family lineages in anticipation of submitting applications to GSMD. Many meaningful conversations centered on the importance of family connections, the discovery of ancestral roots, and the responsibility of preserving and passing on one’s legacy to future generations.

Visitors were encouraged to plan a visit to Plymouth to experience firsthand the Mayflower Society House and other historic sites associated with the Pilgrims’ story. Volunteers also highlighted the Society’s many resources and opportunities, including the GSMD Research Library, the Silver Books, scholarship programs, *The Mayflower Quarterly Magazine*, and Members Only events.

Over the three days of the event, we met many who were interested in their Mayflower heritage. We were able to get contact information for over 150 individuals who visited the GSMD booth to explore a possible Mayflower connection. Of these, 99 were from Utah, while 51 visitors traveled from outside the state. United States participants represented a broad geographic range, including



▲ Utah DGG Thomas Portlock and Utah member Pam Smith.

◀ Left to right: Secretary General Marty Beerman, Utah DGG Thomas Portlock, Utah Governor Ted Arnoldus, Historian General Michael Denney, Utah Historian Coleen Bensen, Utah Elder Jay Ashworth, and Berti Loken.

Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming, with additional international participation from Alberta, Canada.

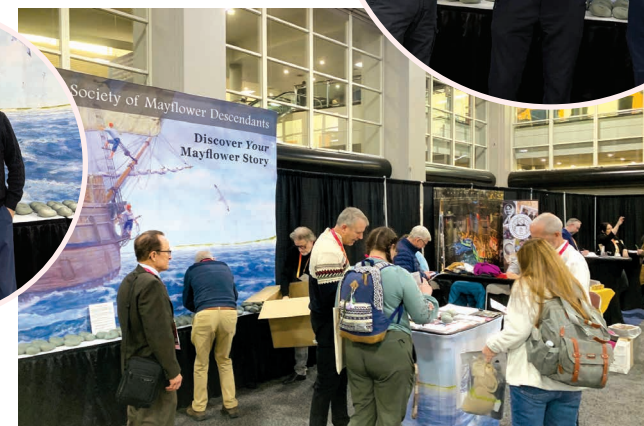
The Utah Society extends its sincere appreciation to all GSMD leadership and volunteers whose participation ensured a successful and engaging presence at the conference.

The Society looks forward with anticipation to RootsTech 2027.

Submitted by: Thomas Portlock, Utah Deputy Governor General



▲ Utah Secretary Lori Liljenquist and Historian General Michael Denney.



▲ Utah DGG Thomas Portlock, Utah Elder Jay Ashworth, and Rick Liljenquist showing off Plymouth Rock.



WASHINGTON Washington Society Spring Lunch Meeting



▲ Guest Speaker Jeff Lightburn.

March 8, 2026, was a typical late winter/early spring day in the Pacific Northwest that began windy and rainy and then turned warm and sunny by the late afternoon. Sixty-five of our cousins

gathered for our spring meeting and luncheon at one of our favorite venues, the Tacoma Yacht Club.

After our opening ceremonies and a rousing roll call of ancestors, Governor Ken White updated our members on our Society’s involvement in the Washington State America 250 Celebration including our efforts to coordinate promotion of the Washington Mayflower Society at local fairs with local chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Sons of the American Revolution. We have added our Society’s name to the state’s America 250 webpage in hopes of gaining additional members.

Governor Ken announced the addition of two new Board members: Nancy Nulph and Dennis Burman, and then acknowledged the work of all the volunteers

who help run our Society. Other society business was discussed, including the planning of events at upcoming local historical sites this summer and fall so that we can continue to engage with all our members across the state.

After a delicious lunch, Special Guest Speaker Jeff Lightburn presented his excellent lecture entitled “Remember Who We Are.” Jeff kept us riveted to our seats as he took us on a historical journey from 1620 to the present, while also sprinkling in some of his rebel ancestor stories.

Jeff Lightburn is a past President of the Fort Vancouver Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution. Lightburn is also an active member of many other genealogical societies and is a US Air Force Veteran. Lightburn’s love for genealogy and history pertaining to the formation of our nation ably prepared him to talk about what has bound us together from 1620 to 1776 to 2026.

Our fun and educational afternoon wrapped up with a raffle for several historical books with the raffle proceeds going to our “A Letter Home” scholarship fund. Our cousins left the meeting with full bellies, enlightened minds, and a renewed pride in our ancestors.

Submitted by: Barb Doughty Maghirang, Evergreen Log Editor

A Connecticut Yankee in Revolutionary Pennsylvania

PEGGY M. BAKER

In 1778, the Revolutionary War came to Pennsylvania's Wyoming Valley. By then, this rich agricultural area, lying within the more extensive Susquehanna Valley, had already endured a hundred years of intermittent violence. The earliest battles had been between Native Americans and European colonists; more recently, the battles were between Pennsylvania settlers and incomers from Connecticut. One of those incomers was Constant Searle, who left Stonington, Connecticut, in the mid-1770s and migrated some 250 miles west to the promised lands of the Wyoming Valley. The move would place his family in jeopardy and cost Constant his life.

Constant, the son of Nathaniel and Elizabeth (Kinnecutt) Searle, was a sixth-generation descendant of *Mayflower* passengers Thomas Rogers, John Alden, and Priscilla Mullins.¹ He was born 17 June 1728, at Little Compton, now Rhode Island.² On 16 May 1751, he married Hannah Miner at North Stonington Congregational Church,³ settling in his bride's hometown. Nine children were born, eight of whom survived infancy. Constant then decided to move his family to the west. He purchased land in the Wyoming Valley from a company authorized, not by Pennsylvania, but by Connecticut.

Connecticut's 1662 royal charter had defined its eastern boundary as the Narragansett River, its northern border as the colony of Massachusetts, and its southern boundary as the Atlantic Ocean. No western boundary was given, making the Pacific Ocean (theoretically) the Colony's limit.⁴ In reality, Connecticut's westward expansion was limited by the then-Dutch colony of New Netherland. When, in 1674, New Netherland became the English colony of New York, certain lands were conceded to Connecticut to create a cleaner boundary between them. Seven years later, William Penn received a royal grant for what would become Pennsylvania, on the westward side of New York, further blocking Connecticut's theoretical expansion westward to the Pacific. The three colonies

co-existed for over seventy years. By 1750, however, Connecticut's burgeoning population was creating an appetite for new lands. Connecticut, encompassing only 4,842 square miles, began to cast its eye to the west, looking past New York to Pennsylvania's more lightly populated 44,742 square miles. In May 1755, the Connecticut legislature, claiming ownership of lands in Pennsylvania situated between Connecticut's existing northern and southern latitudes, authorized the formation of the Susquehanna Company to develop them.⁵ The company sent a committee to the Susquehanna Valley to purchase likely sites from their Native owners, and then to survey and lay out towns.

This committee irritated the government of Pennsylvania, which had not only outlawed private purchases of land from the Native population, but also denied that Connecticut and its Susquehanna Company had any rights at all in the territory. It angered the Native population, who feared it would worsen their existing issues with the Pennsylvania settlers. And it alarmed already-established Pennsylvanians, who began to purchase land simply to keep it out of interloping "Yankee" hands. The French and Indian War (1754–1763) temporarily halted the whole imbroglio. In the late 1760s, however, Connecticut families again began moving into the area—and the ongoing sporadic violence between the two settler groups recommenced.⁶ The situation was further inflamed when, in 1774, the Connecticut General Assembly voted to officially annex the area, naming it the District of Westmoreland, Litchfield County, Connecticut.⁷

The Searle family were among the Connecticut settlers who settled in the newly created District of Westmoreland, in the township of Kingston. The marriages of the three oldest Searle children illuminates the timing of the family's westward move. Daughter Elizabeth married Dethik Hewitt at North Stonington Congregational Church in July 1773; oldest son William married Philene Frank there in October of the same year.⁸ In February 1776, daughter Hannah

married Henry Harding "at her father's house in Kingston."⁹ Each of the young couples chose to live near their parents in the Kingston area.¹⁰ The five younger Searle children, Constant (Junior), Rogers, Ruth, Sarah, and son Miner, continued living with their parents.

The incoming Connecticut settlers had built a series of small forts in the Wyoming Valley; one of the largest and strongest was "Forty Fort" (named in honor of the area's original forty Connecticut settlers). Built in the early 1770s, it encompassed an acre of ground on the west bank of the Susquehanna River, directly north of the Searle's home in Kingston.¹¹ The Valley's defenses were strengthened in May 1775, when the Connecticut General Assembly authorized the formation of a local militia, the Twenty-fourth Regiment, placing it under the command of local resident Colonel Zebulon Butler.¹² Participation was mandatory for men between the ages of 16 and 45; two Searle sons, William and Constant (Junior), and two sons-in-law, Dethik Hewitt and Henry Harding, were in this demographic.

In December 1775, with the Revolutionary War well underway, the continuing hostility between the Connecticut settlers and those who had settled under the aegis of Pennsylvania drew the attention of the Continental Congress. Acutely aware that this internal conflict would "be very prejudicial to the common interest of the United Colonies," it resolved that "the contending parties immediately cease all hostilities, and avoid every appearance of force, until the dispute can be legally decided."¹³ A year later, in August 1776, the Continental Congress resolved that, in addition to the existing militia regiment, "two companies, on the continental establishment, be raised in the town [sic] of Westmoreland, and stationed in proper places for the defence of the inhabitants of said town and parts adjacent, til farther orders from Congress... and that they be liable to serve in any part of the United States, when ordered by Congress."¹⁴ Many of the District's younger men, including Constant Searle Junior and Henry Harding, left the local militia and joined the Continental companies. In December 1776, less than four months after their formation, Congress ordered the companies to leave the Valley and "march with all possible expedition and join General Washington," then in New Jersey. The now-diminished militia was

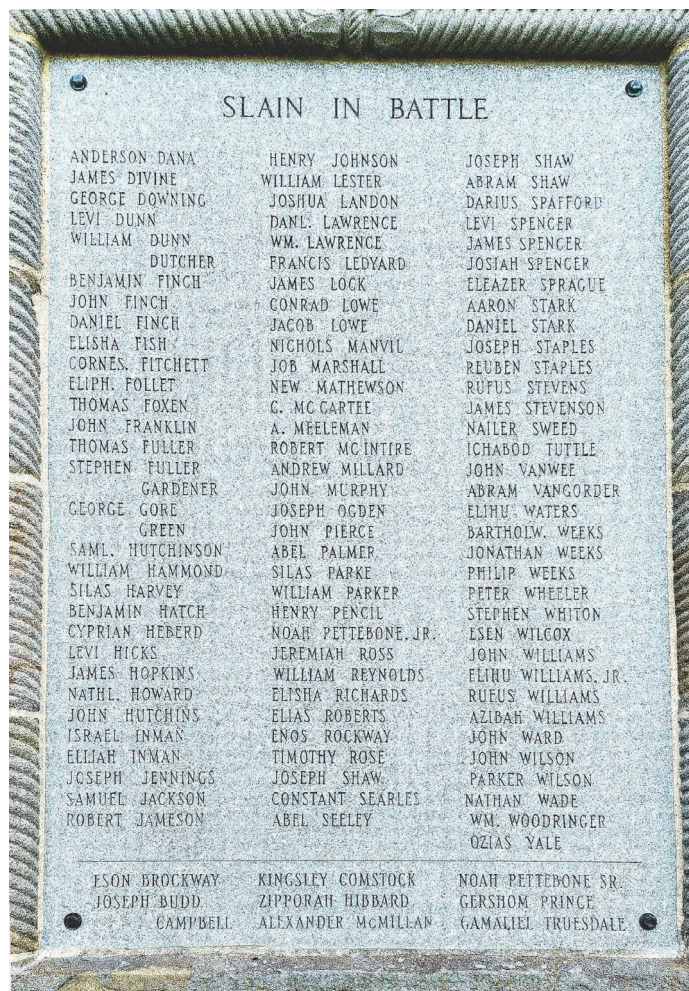
further weakened in early 1777 when its colonel, Zebulon Butler, accepted a commission in the 2nd Connecticut Regiment.¹⁵

The now vulnerable valley became the target for Loyalist forces the next year. The threat came from Major John Butler, Deputy Superintendent of the British Indian Department. A firm Loyalist (and not related to Patriot Zebulon Butler), he had been working with the Iroquois Nations in opposition to the American rebels, as well as raising a fierce and dedicated troop of Loyalist rangers, known for their discipline and their ability to navigate the wilderness. In early 1778, John Butler was making plans "to fall on the enemy" in New York province with his corps of Butler's Rangers, in conjunction with a large force of Iroquois warriors. Before he arrived in New York, however, he intended to "break up the back settlements of Pennsylvania and Jersey and other parts of the Province of New York in order as well to distress the enemy as to draw their attention from his main purpose."¹⁶

Although John Butler downplayed his intended attack on the Wyoming Valley, it was far more than a diversion. As the *Philadelphia Evening Post* reported (on 30 July 1778, after Butler's attack), "The lands are exceeding good, beautifully situated along both sides of the Susquehanna, navigable for flat bottom boats, and produced immense quantities of grain of all sorts, roots, fruits, hemp, flax, &c., and stock of all kind. The settlement had lately supplied the Continental army with three thousand bushels of grain, and the ground was loaded with the most promising crops of every kind. The settlement included upwards of a thousand families, which had furnished our army with a thousand soldiers, besides the garrisons of four



▲ Wyoming Battle Monument. Photo by Linda Molitoris.



company for the Valley's defense. Colonel Zebulon Butler, home on leave from the Continental Army at the time, was placed in charge. Forty-six men enlisted, probably including the oldest Searle son, William. Dethik Hewitt, husband of Constant Searle's daughter Elizabeth, was appointed Captain.

Congress then resolved, on 23 June 1778, to detach the two previously raised Westmoreland companies, then stationed with the main Continental Army in New Jersey, and send them home for the defense of the frontier.¹⁸ Washington released the companies but, in this age of slow communication and even slower transportation, it was too little, too late. Several Wyoming men had not waited for permission; they had resigned their commissions and returned home immediately. The entire community was now on the highest alert.¹⁹

On 30 June 1778, John Butler arrived in the Wyoming Valley. He stationed his 500 Rangers and Natives "... on an eminence which overlooks the greatest part of the settlement, from whence I sent parties to discover the situation and strength of the enemy."²⁰ His first targets were two small outlying stockades, which immediately surrendered, setting off alarms throughout the greater community.

By now, the Kingston settlers had hurried north to the safety of Forty Fort. Constant Searle and his 15-year-old son Rogers joined son William and son-in-law Captain Dethik Hewitt in preparing for the battle to come. (Son Constant and son-in-law Henry Harding were still en route from New Jersey.) Constant's wife Hannah, his married daughters Elizabeth Hewitt and Hannah Harding, and the younger Searle children Ruth, Sarah, and Miner, took shelter in the fort. Leadership was in the hands of Colonel Zebulon Butler. John Butler sent articles of capitulation to Forty Fort. Zebulon refused the conditions. Instead, for reasons that are not entirely clear, the men in Forty Fort, although aware they were outmanned, decided (against Zebulon's advice) to challenge Butler's battle-hardened warriors. On July 3, they emerged from behind the stockade walls and marched into battle.

In John Butler's words,

At two o'clock we discovered the rebels upon their march in number about four or five hundred. Between 4 and 5 o'clock they were advanced within a mile of us.

Finding them determined, I ordered the [already-captured small] forts to be set on fire, which deceived the enemy into an opinion that we had retreated. We then posted ourselves in a fine open wood and for our greater safety lay flat upon the ground, waiting their approach.

When they were within 200 yards of us they began firing. We still continued upon the ground without returning their fire till they had fired three volleys. By this time they had advanced within 100 yards of us, and being quite near enough, Saingerachta ordered his Indians, who were upon the right, to begin the attack upon our part, which was immediately well seconded by the Rangers on the left. Our fire was so close and well directed that the affair was soon over, not lasting above half an hour from the time they gave us the first fire till their flight.

In the action were taken 227 scalps and only five prisoners.²¹

Among those killed in battle were Constant Searle and his son-in-law Captain Dethik Hewitt. Young Rogers Searle escaped by swimming across the Susquehanna River to safety.

The next day, the remaining defenders surrendered, accepting the articles of capitulation offered by John Butler.²² John Butler sent word to British headquarters that the defenders had

... lost one Colonel, two Majors, seven Captains, thirteen Lieutenants, eleven Ensigns, and two hundred and sixty eight privates. On our side are killed one Indian; two Rangers and eight Indians wounded. In this incursion we have taken and destroyed eight palisaded forts and burned about 1000 dwelling homes, all their mills, &c. We have also killed and drove off about 1000 head of horned cattle and sheep and swine in great numbers. But what gives me the greatest satisfaction is that I can, with great truth, assure you that in the destruction of this settlement not a single person has been hurt of the inhabitants but such as were in arms. To those, indeed, the Indians gave no quarter.²³

What Butler neglected to mention in his official communique was that many of the combatants killed had recognized the hopelessness of their situation, and had either thrown down their arms in an attempt to surrender or had been fleeing.²⁴ Although officially named the "Battle of Wyoming," the events of July 3 swiftly became known as the "Wyoming Massacre."

The surviving civilians, who had lost husbands, fathers, and brothers as well as their farmhouses and livestock, were terrified. Remaining in the Wyoming Valley was, for them, out of the question. As many as a thousand refugees, mostly women and children, left in the aftermath of the battle.²⁵ Constant's son William, who had been confined to the Fort during the battle by a bullet wound received during a scouting expedition,²⁶ gathered up a small contingent of twelve women and children, including his widowed mother Hannah Searle, married sister Hannah Harding and her 15-month-old

child, 15-year-old brother Rogers Searle, and sisters Ruth and Sarah.^{27, 28} With William as leader, they set off on foot from Forty Fort searching for safety.

William's sister Hannah recorded the group's odyssey in the pension application she submitted in January 1839 as the widow of Revolutionary War soldier Henry Harding. Hannah was then 85 years old; more than 60 years had passed since the Wyoming Massacre. According to Hannah, she

... left Kingston in company of her widowed mother (her father having been killed in the engagement with British and Indians while fighting under Col. [Zebulon] Butler), one brother in his fifteenth year, two sisters, and several neighbors who started on foot for the nearest eastern settlement then nearly forty miles distant; having no teams or horses, she was compelled to carry her child, then fifteen months old, and provisions; and that, before they got through the forest, her husband overtook her ... with three horses and two loaves of bread; that her husband accompanied them one day, then he returned to his company.²⁹

Thanks to requisition documents issued to the group at their stopping places during the long journey, we know the route the travelers took.

Their first stop after leaving Forty Fort was at Fort Penn in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, a journey of some 50 miles. There, on 14 July 1778, Colonel Jacob Stroud gave permission to "Sergt Wm Searle with Twelve Weomen and Children In Company With him" to pass unmolested to Connecticut, "they Being Part of the Unhappy Distrest People Drove of From Wyoming By the Tories and Indians." They went on their way with Stroud's written recommendation that commissaries along their way issue provisions and other necessities for relief on the road. By 18 July 1778, the little group had reached Newton, New Jersey, 35 miles northeast of Stroudsburg. There, it was noted on their pass that "Wm Searle & twelve Persons drew Provisions of Bread at this Post for three days."³⁰ Hannah left the group near Newton, writing in her pension application that

... she continued her journey with her mother and family towards Connecticut, travelling but slowly, and about twenty miles east of the North River she again met her husband, who had been to Connecticut on Continental business and was then returning to his company at Wilkes-Barre. She returned with her husband to his brother at Orange County, New York.³¹

Hannah had journeyed, with her small child, for some 120 miles.

The rest of the Forty Fort contingent continued on to Fishkill, New York, some 65 miles northeast of Newton.

▲ Wyoming Battle Monument, roster of the slain including "Constant Searles." Photo by Linda Molitoris.



▲ Wyoming Battle Monument, list of survivors including Roger Searle. Photo by Linda Molitoris.

forts, in the townships of Lackawana, Exeter, Kingston, and Wilkesbury. One of these forts was garrisoned by upwards of four hundred soldiers, chiefly of the militia, the principal officers in which were Colonels Dennison and Zebulon Butler.¹⁷

When news of hostile forces moving on the New York/Pennsylvania frontier was received in early 1778, Congress ordered the formation of a new independent

There, on 30 August 1778, Daniel Brown certified that “Wm. Searle & Nine Persons have drawn allowance of Provisions for two days.” From Fishkill, they moved some 90 miles northeast to Hartford, Connecticut, where, on 14 September 1778, John Hall certified that they had delivered “the within Persons Provisions.”³² At this point, the group (minus Hannah and her child) had travelled some 240 miles. From Hartford, as Ruth Searle specified in her letter of support for her sister Hannah’s pension application, “she, the deponent, returned, with her mother, to Stonington in the State of Connecticut.”³³ Ruth, age 13, and her widowed mother Hannah, probably with siblings William, Rogers, and Sarah, had successfully travelled 250 miles to find peace and safety in their old home town.

While Hannah Searle and her children did indeed find safety there, they did not remain in Stonington. William returned, probably almost immediately, to the Wyoming Valley and eventually settled in Pittston, some 15 miles north of Kingston. When peace returned to the Valley, so did the more vulnerable family members. Hannah (Miner) Searle died in Pittston on 16 July 1813, age 82.³⁴

The dispute between Pennsylvania and Connecticut was settled shortly after the end of the Revolutionary War. In late 1782, the Pennsylvania legislature asked Congress for a special court to reach a decision on which state had authority over the lands. A board of seven commissioners decided unanimously for Pennsylvania. Westmoreland District, Litchfield County, Connecticut, was now Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania then confirmed the land titles of over 5,000 Connecticut settlers, the Searles among them.³⁵

Constant Searle was not forgotten. Immediately after the Battle of Wyoming, Constant and many of the other dead were buried at the site in a mass grave.³⁶ In 1832, an impressive obelisk was erected there as a

monument and the bodies reburied in a vault beneath it.³⁷ The names of all the dead, including Constant and his son-in-law Dethik Hewitt, were engraved on the monument, with a separate plaque commemorating the survivors, among them Roger Searle (although clearly named “Rogers” in earlier Connecticut records, he seems to have become “just Roger” during his later years in Pennsylvania). In 1878, the Wyoming Commemorative Association was formed to mark the centennial of the battle. Every year since then, a ceremony of remembrance has been held at the monument on July 3rd, the anniversary of the battle, to honor those who fought, and those who fell, in the cause of independence.

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1. Constant Searle’s Rogers lineage: Nathaniel⁵ Searle, Sarah⁴ Rogers, John³⁻², Thomas Rogers. Constant’s Alden/Mullins lineage: Nathaniel⁵ Searle, Sarah⁴ Rogers, Elizabeth³ Pabodie, Elizabeth² Alden, John Alden and Priscilla Mullins.
2. Little Compton, Rhode Island, Births, marriages, and deaths, “Town and vital records, 1697–1907” ([FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org)), 1:62. Little Compton, originally part of Massachusetts Bay Colony, joined Rhode Island in 1746.
3. North Stonington, Connecticut, Congregational Church, “Church records, 1720–1887” ([FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org)), 1:77.
4. “Charter of Connecticut – 1662,” online at https://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/ct03.asp; The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy, New Haven, Conn.
5. Charles J. Hoadley, ed., *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut* (Hartford, Conn., 1890), 10:378.
6. Paul B. Moyer, *Wild Yankees: The struggle for Independence along Pennsylvania’s Revolutionary Frontier* (Cornell University Press, 2007), 14–20. Glenn F. Williams, *Year of the Hangman: George Washington’s Campaign Against the Iroquois* (Westholme Publishing, 2005), 102–105.
7. Hoadley, *Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut*, 14:218.
8. North Stonington ChR, 1:71, 72.
9. Rev. War Pensions, W.16815 for Henry Harding, Pa.
10. “Taxables for the Town and County of Westmoreland, 1776 – 1780,” *Proceedings and collections of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society* (Wilkes-Barre, Pa., 1858–1938), 5: 211–12, 241. Constant Searle, William Searle, and “Dothik Huit” appear on the August 1776 tax list for Kingston, Westmoreland District, Connecticut. Henry Harding’s name as a landowner appears in August 1780.

11. Williams, *Year of the Hangman*, 109.
12. Hoadley, *Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut*, 15:12.
13. *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789* (Washington, D.C., 1904–1937), 3:439–40.
14. *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789* (1904–1937), 2:187–90; 5:698–99, 701, 706; 6:1024.
15. Rev. War Pension & Bounty, W.5955 for Zebulon Butler, Conn.
16. William A. Smy, ed., *The Butler Papers: Documents and Papers Relating to Colonel John Butler and his Corps of Rangers 1711–1777* (Victoria, British Columbia, 1994), online at Brock University at <https://dr.library.brocku.ca/>, Vol. 2: Letters of 10 April 1778, 4 June 1778 (unpaginated).
17. *Pennsylvania Evening Post* (Philadelphia), 30 July 1778, 1:1.
18. *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 10:261; 11:634.
19. Williams, *Year of the Hangman*, 114–15. Henry P. Johnston, ed., *The Record of Connecticut Men in the Military and Naval Service during the War of the Revolution, 1775–1783* (Hartford, Conn., 1889), 263.
20. *The Butler Papers*, Vol. 2, Letter of 8 July 1778.
21. *The Butler Papers*, Vol. 2, Letter of 8 July 1778.
22. Isaac A. Chapman, *A Sketch of the History of Wyoming* (Sharp D. Lewis, 1830), 174.
23. *The Butler Papers*, Vol. 2, Letter of 4 June 1778.
24. Lloyd A. Brown and Howard H. Peckham, eds., *Revolutionary Journals of Henry Dearborn, 1775–1783* (The Caxton Club, 1939), 157–59.
25. *Royal Gazette* (New York), 1 Aug. 1778, 3:3.
26. Charles Miner, *History of Wyoming, in a Series of Letters, from Charles Miner to his son William Penn Miner* (J. Crissy, 1845), Appendix: 44.
27. Rev. War Pension, W.16815. Ruth’s account of the aftermath of the “Capture of the Fort (commonly called Wyoming) in which engagement her Father was killed” was included in her sister Hannah’s pension application.
28. It is unclear where, in the immediate aftermath of the battle, Hannah’s newly-widowed sister Elizabeth (Searle) Hewitt, youngest brother Miner Searle, and sister-in-law Philene (Frank) Searle, were. It is possible that Hannah, telling her story some 60 years after the events, had forgotten some details; some of the unaccounted-for family members may have been in the group.
29. Rev. War Pension, W.16815.
30. “Echoes of the Massacre of Wyoming,” *Proceedings and collections of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society* (Wilkes-Barre, Pa., 1858–1938), 7: 78–105.
31. Rev. War Pension, W.16815.
32. “Echoes of the Massacre of Wyoming,” 7: 78–105.
33. Rev. War Pension, W.16815.
34. *The Gleaner* (Wilkes-Barre, Pa.), 20 Aug. 1813, 3:3.
35. Albert E. Van Dusen, *Connecticut* (Random House, 1961), 170.
36. Brown and Peckham, *Revolutionary Journals of Henry Dearborn*, 157–59.
37. Wesley Johnson, ed., *Wyoming: a record of the one hundredth year commemorative observance of the battle and massacre, July 3, 1778–July 3, 1878* (Wyoming Commemorative Association, 1882), 193.

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The Other Side of the Revolution: The Gilbert Brothers of Bristol County, Massachusetts

PEGGY M. BAKER

Two hundred and fifty years ago, the Continental Congress declared that all men had “certain inalienable rights,” among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Few residents of the thirteen colonies would have disagreed with those stirring words. There was, however, disagreement over exactly how to balance personal liberty with the effective functioning of a central government. Some Americans did not believe that a declaration of independence, with war as the inevitable consequence, was a necessary or even a reasonable step in resolving the colonies’ disagreements with the King and Parliament. These dissenters, representing twenty percent or more of the population, were the Tories or Loyalists.¹ Among them were brothers Thomas and Samuel Gilbert.

Thomas was born at Taunton, Bristol County, circa 1714, Samuel some ten years later. Sons of Nathaniel and Hannah (Bradford) Gilbert, the brothers were sixth generation descendants of Mayflower passengers Thomas Rogers, and John Alden and Priscilla Mullins, and fifth generation descendants of William Bradford.² Apart from service in the French and Indian Wars (1754–1763),³ Thomas and Samuel devoted most of their adult lives to expanding and improving their property holdings and raising their families. Thomas married Mary Godfrey in 1737;⁴ the couple became the parents of three sons (Thomas, Peres, and Bradford) and four daughters (Molly, Bathsheba, Hannah, and Deborah).⁵ Samuel married Sarah Dean in 1752;⁶ they raised two surviving daughters, Jerusha and Sally.⁷ By 1775, Thomas was the owner of a 400-acre farm straddling the town line between Taunton and Berkley, with two houses, a barn, and outbuildings. He also owned 300 acres in Freetown (also Bristol County) with two houses, a warehouse, a blacksmith’s shop, a wharf, and a shipyard. In Thomas’ estimation, the total value of his properties, including seven enslaved Black “servants for life,” was some £11,000. Samuel’s properties were more modest. In 1775, he owned a 255-acre farm in Berkley with three houses thereon, as well as three other lots of land and assorted livestock, which he valued together at some £2,900.⁸

Thomas, in addition to his agricultural and commercial enterprises, established himself as a political force in southeastern Massachusetts.

He served as colonel of the local militia and as Freetown’s representative in the Massachusetts’ General Assembly from 1760 to 1764 and again from 1771 to 1774. Thomas’s views, however, were increasingly in the minority. He was among the 4 representatives out of 113 to oppose a motion brought before the Assembly in May 1773 to establish a provincial Committee of Correspondence in order to

... obtain the most early and authentick Intelligence of all such Acts and Resolutions of the British Parliament or Proceedings of Administration, as may relate to, or affect the British Colonies in America; and to keep up and maintain a Correspondence and Communication with our Sister Colonies respecting these important Considerations...⁹

The following year, in February 1774, he was one of only nine representatives to vote against impeaching Peter Oliver, the Tory Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Superior Court of Judicature.¹⁰ As an increasingly outspoken supporter of the British-appointed government, Thomas was now drawing adverse attention in Bristol County; 1774 would be Thomas’ last term in the Assembly. According to a Boston newspaper,

Such is the Spirit of this County. They seem to be quite awake, and to have awoke in a Passion. It is more dangerous being a Tory here than at Boston...¹¹

Opposition only served to energize Thomas. In the autumn of 1774, due (in Thomas’ words) to his “extensive influence in the County of Bristol,” he was called on

... to support the Kings government against the popular encroachments which preceded the Rebellion, and at the request of General Gage, then Governor of the Province, in the autumn of the year 1774, he associated and commanded a Body of about 300 Loyalists, who were armed for the purpose of keeping the Neighbourhood in subjection to the King’s authority.¹²

The strongly-Patriot *Newport Mercury* now began to monitor Thomas’ activities, reporting 26 December 1774,

The week before last Thomas Gilbert ... [with six others], having proved themselves great enemies to their country, fled from Freetown to Boston, to take shelter under the wing of Gen. Gage. We hear one of the above Tories hung up his coat and shot one or two bullets through the skirts, then put it on to wear to Boston, pretending he had been shot at by some of the people.¹³

The story so outraged the residents of Berkley, where the shots were said to have been fired, that their Town Meeting not only appointed a committee of inquiry, but sent the ensuing report to the press.¹⁴ According to the committee, the story was

... wholly without Foundation, and to be ranked with other malicious and libelous Stories, daily invented and retailed out by the said Gilbert and his Freetown Myrmidons. – This Committee are fully sensible, that were the Character of Mr. Gilbert (especially with respect to Veracity) as well known to the Public as to those in the Towns near where he resides, it would be needless to take this Notice of him; But lest any unfavourable Impressions should be produced in the Minds of the ignorant and unwary, we think it necessary to acquaint the World that the said Gilbert, beside his Disregard for Truth, is a rank Tory, and a professed Enemy to his Country.¹⁵

The *Mercury* gleefully followed up in late February 1775, reporting that

Last Wednesday Col. Thomas Gilbert, of Freetown, and about 30 more vile traitors to their county, marched armed to the town of Berkley, with a determined resolution, as they thought, to cut down the liberty pole in that town; but when they had got within a little distance of it, some lads, who saw them, discharged a musket, and gave three beats upon an old drum-head, which struck those redoubtable HEROES with such terror, that they fled, some one way and some another, helter-skelter, as though the D---I had been after them.

The situation had, by now, gone beyond the political to the personal. When Thomas cancelled his subscription to the *Mercury*, the editor printed Thomas’ letter, noting, “I am sorry there should be such horribly degenerated human creatures existing in any part of God’s creation...”¹⁶

As Thomas became increasingly newsworthy, and the activities of “Gilbert and his banditti” increasingly belligerent, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress took up the matter. It proclaimed in April 1775 that

The part acted by Col. Gilbert respecting the common cause ... leaves no American room to hesitate in pronouncing him an inveterate enemy to his country,



House of Col. Thomas Gilbert (Probable), since demolished. Photo. Archives MS, V13-Freetown. From the collections of the Old Colony Historical Society, Taunton, Mass.

to reason, justice, and the common rights of mankind; and, therefore, whoever has knowingly espoused his cause, or taken up arms for its support, does, in common with himself, deserve to be instantly cut off from the benefit of commerce with, or countenance of, any friend of virtue, America, or the human race.¹⁷

Four days later, matters came to a head. Thomas heard he was about to be attacked by a mob of local “Malcontents,” and requested assistance from General Gage in Boston. When none arrived, Thomas decamped for Newport, where the HMS *Rose*, a British man of war, was anchored. In his absence, his home was invaded by some 2500 men (by his estimate), who plundered it of “valuable papers furniture money and effects.”¹⁸ According to the *Mercury*, these were armed parties of Minute Men from every town in Bristol County, who had met at Freetown to search out Thomas. Finding him not at home, they targeted other Tories who had joined Thomas’ force of armed Loyalists. The *Mercury* reported that twenty-nine Tories were captured,

... 18 of whom made such humble acknowledgments of their past bad conduct, and solemn promises to behave better for the future, they were dismissed; but the other 11 being obstinate & insulting, a party was ordered to carry them to Simsbury Mines [the mines, near Hartford, Connecticut, were used as a Patriot prison]; but they were sufficiently humble before they had got 14 miles on their way thither; upon which they were bro’t back the next day, and after signing proper articles to behave better for the future, were escorted to Freetown.¹⁹

Among the eleven obstinate men was Thomas’ brother Samuel Gilbert who, unlike Thomas, had been at home when his house was attacked. One of the

Newport Mercury

- ▲ When Thomas Gilbert, angered by the Newport Mercury's relentless criticism, cancelled his subscription, the *Mercury* of 6 March 1775 printed his letter with pride.

Massachusetts Gazette & Boston Post Boy

- ▲ Stories about Thomas Gilbert's activities were carried by newspapers from Boston (Massachusetts Gazette & Boston Post Boy, 27 March 1775) to Philadelphia (Pennsylvania Ledger, 8 April 1775).

Pennsylvania Ledger

Royal Gazette

- ▲ New York's *Royal Gazette* promoted Nova Scotia as a desirable new home for the Loyalists (Royal Gazette, 1 February 1783).

- ▲ The first page of many pages submitted by Thomas Gilbert to the Loyalist Relief Commission. His Memorial was ultimately successful.

“armed Rebels” had struck him on the head with his firelock, depriving him permanently of the sight in his right eye.²⁰

Samuel had no intention of honoring the agreement to “behave better,” forced upon him while suffering the partial loss of his sight and a fourteen-mile march. Instead, he joined Thomas in Newport, where they both boarded the HMS *Rose*, procuring safe passage to Boston. From there, on 4 May 1775, Thomas wrote to his sons,

... I expect to stay [here] till the Rebels are subdued, which I believe will not be long ... as the Ships and Troops are daily expected. My greatest fears are, you will be seduced or compelled to take arms with those deluded people. Dear sons, if those wicked sinners, the Rebels, entice you believe them not, but die by the sword rather than be hanged as Rebels, which will certainly be your fate sooner or later if you join them, or be killed in battle, and will be no more than you deserve.²¹

Thomas and Samuel remained in Boston until March 1776, when the British troops under Sir William Howe evacuated the city, sailing north to Halifax, Nova Scotia. The Gilbert brothers sailed with them.²² After several months in Halifax, Howe and his British troops sailed south, capturing American-held New York City. Samuel accompanied them. He “remained at New York and Rhode Island during the whole war.”²³ Instead of joining him, however, Samuel's wife Sarah and their teenage daughters remained in Bristol County. What prompted this decision is unknown. Sarah may have disagreed with Samuel's political beliefs. She may have been unwilling to undertake life as a refugee, concerned for her own welfare and that of her two daughters. She and Samuel may have reached this decision together, in an attempt to protect the family's financial assets. Samuel's intriguing reference to visiting Rhode Island may indicate that he was able to occasionally reconnect with his nearby family.

Thomas reported only that he had “remained with the King's Troops accompanied with his three Sons, all constantly employed (tho' not as soldiers) in defense of the King's Cause against his Rebellious Subjects.”²⁴ Like Samuel, Thomas had also probably left Halifax in 1776, sailing to New York City with Howe and his British troops. On his arrival, less than five thousand Loyalists were living in New York City; the number doubled in less than six months. Soon, there were twenty-five to thirty thousand Loyalists in the city.²⁵ At some point, Thomas' wife Mary and their daughter Deborah joined him. Life in New York would not have been easy for the Gilberts. Not only were their personal resources extremely limited but, as the city was now essentially under military occupation, the British military command's need to provide lodging, food, and discipline for its thirty-two thousand soldiers outweighed civilian concerns.²⁶ Restrictive and uncomfortable as it was, though, New York City provided a welcome refuge.

Massachusetts, in the meantime, had not forgotten Thomas and Samuel Gilbert. In October 1778, two and a half years after the Gilberts had sailed out of Boston with the British army, the Massachusetts legislature passed the “Banishment Act.” Thomas and Samuel were among over 300 individual “absentee” Loyalists named.²⁷ The next year, on 7 April 1779, Massachusetts passed “An Act for Confiscating the Estates of Certain Persons Commonly Called Absentees.” Many of Thomas' properties had already been sold to pay his creditors; his remaining properties were now confiscated and sold piecemeal. Only two-thirds of Samuel's properties were sold, however, thanks to a proviso in the law that

...where the wife, or widow, of any of the persons aforesaid, shall have remained within the jurisdiction of any of the said United States... she shall be entitled to the improvement and income of one third part of her husband's real and personal estate (after payment of debts), during her life and continuance within the said United States.²⁸

Sarah Gilbert, now with a life interest in a third of

Samuel's property, could at least continue to support herself and her daughters in Bristol County.

Ultimately, a stalled British military effort, ending with the American victory at Yorktown in October 1781, led to an end of hostilities in February 1782. That summer, New York was buzzing with news of the peace negotiations. Preliminary wording of the treaty reached the city in February 1783. Loyalists were to be given the liberty to “remain in America without molestation, or to dispose of their property if it has not already been confiscated,” but no provision was made for those whose property had already been taken and sold.²⁹

With the British army preparing to evacuate New York City, the Gilberts had a significant decision to make. Should they remain in the new United States and try to rebuild their lives among a now-hostile people, or should they relocate to Nova Scotia? A poem of the time, entitled “The Tory's Soliloquy,” asked,

“To go or not to go” – is that the question?
Whether tis best to trust the inclement sky,
That scowls indignant o'er the dreary Bay
Of Fundy, and Cape Sable's rocks and shoals,
And seek our new domains in Scotia's wilds,
Barren and bare; – or stay among the Rebels! –
And, by our stay rouse up their keenest rage...³⁰

New York's *Royal Gazette* published a more positive message from seven King's Rangers living on Prince Edward Island, addressed “To those LOYAL REFUGEES who either have already left, or who hereafter may leave their respective Countries, in search of other Habitations.” It praised Canada's soil, climate, fishing opportunities, and low taxes, exulting that there was “ROOM for TENS of THOUSANDS, and Lands in the finest Situations, on Harbours, Navigable-Rivers, and Bays, to be had exceedingly reasonable.” Originally published 29 January 1783, the message was republished some fifteen additional times in that newspaper over the next three months.³¹

In early 1783, Thomas and his family opted to settle

in Canada. According to Thomas, “soon after the Cessation of Hostilities he removed with his Family consisting of his wife, three sons, one Daughter and Six Grand Children to [Nova Scotia].”³² His brother Samuel sailed with them. The extended family was granted one last, unanticipated glimpse of their native shoreline. Not long after leaving New York City, their ship was unexpectedly forced to put in at Dartmouth, Bristol County. Massachusetts Governor John Hancock did not order the vessel impounded, instead sending orders to allow it to depart for Nova Scotia at the first favorable wind.³³

The Gilberts were part of an enormous nautical exodus. According to an evacuation return from New York City, dated October 1783, a total of 27,009 people had sailed from there to Nova Scotia; a return dated 24 November 1783 raised the total to 29,224.³⁴

Less than a year after their arrival in Nova Scotia, in February 1784, some 300 Loyalists, including Thomas and Samuel, were granted rights to a 65,600 acre tract of land in Digby, then Annapolis County. Thomas and Samuel each received 200 acres.³⁵ Two and a half years later, Thomas was granted another 1,000 acres in Digby, 950 of them bordering on St. Mary's Bay.³⁶

In addition to outright grants of land, Thomas and Samuel received compensation for their losses in Bristol County. In 1783, Parliament had established a Loyalist Relief Commission to investigate the loss of property and income by individual Loyalists due to their adherence to King and Parliament. When the process was concluded in 1790, over 3,000 claims for a total of over £8,000,000 had been examined, with some £2,100,000 allowed for compensation.³⁷ Much of what we know about Thomas and Samuel's activities and changing financial status during the Revolutionary War is derived from, or confirmed by, their narratives. Thomas submitted his Loyalist claim, or “Memorial,” in November 1783; he received £3,830 on his claim of £11,000. Samuel submitted his claim of £2,900 in October 1786 and received £1,195.³⁸ While the compensation may seem low, land in Canada was considerably less expensive than in Bristol County. In

September 1785, Thomas Gilbert, “gentleman,” was able to buy 200 additional acres for £6.³⁹ In April 1788, Thomas bought a tract of land on the Saint John River in Queens County, in the newly-created province of New Brunswick, for £95.⁴⁰ He purchased an additional 600 acres fronting on the river, in the newly named “Gagetown,” as well as a 200-acre island for £600 in May 1788. In July of that year, he bought another 232 acres of riverfront property for £235, purchasing further acreage there in 1789.⁴¹

While Thomas was developing his now-extensive properties in Gagetown, younger brother Samuel quietly returned to Bristol County. At the war’s end in 1783, this would have been unthinkable. Abigail Adams wrote to her husband John on 7 May of that year, “The spirit which rises here against the return of the Refugees is violent.”⁴² Massachusetts, however, quickly became more tolerant of its errant former residents. Many Loyalists had been respected and valued members of their communities, differing little from their Patriot neighbors. By the time of Samuel’s return, circa 1790, fears and resentment had faded.⁴³ Samuel’s reintegration was undoubtedly eased not only by his lower profile during the tendentious lead-up to the Revolution but by the continuing presence of his wife and two daughters.

Samuel was probably not yet in residence on 22 September 1789, when Sarah Gilbert bought, in her own name, a parcel of land in Freetown adjacent to that she had received as her dower right in Samuel’s property, for £120.⁴⁴ Samuel did appear in the 1790 census, as head of a household in Berkley consisting of one male over the age of 16 and two females (wife Sarah and as-yet-unmarried daughter Sally).⁴⁵ On 29 December 1790, Samuel Gilbert of Berkley, gentleman, sold his rights in some 18 acres of land in Taunton’s North Purchase for £11; on 6 May 1795, he bought some 5 acres of land in Freetown for some £34.⁴⁶

Samuel died 7 August 1796. The Freetown acreage was the only land listed in the inventory of his estate; it is not known what became of his property in Nova Scotia, or his compensation from the Loyalist Relief Commission. His inventory did include clothing that reflected his former status as a prosperous gentleman farmer: a velvet waistcoat and a pair of velvet breeches, a ruffled shirt, an ivory-head staff, silver shoe and knee buckles.⁴⁷ His brother Thomas died at Gagetown on 1 July 1797, in his 84th year, and was buried in St. John’s Anglican Church Cemetery there two days later.⁴⁸ Thomas’ estate was significant, and he was able to leave generous bequests of land and currency to his family.⁴⁹

Samuel Gilbert’s tombstone in Taunton reveals little of the man, being inscribed only with his death date, age, and a pious sentiment.⁵⁰ The gravestone Thomas Gilbert shares with his wife Mary, however, proudly acknowledges both their origins and their choices.

They were born in the County of Bristol, Boston Government, New England... They lived together Man and Wife more than 61 years. He was known for his Loyalty to his King in the year 1775.⁵¹

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My thanks to the Thomas Rogers Society for their support of the Silver Books project and my ongoing research into the 6th and 7th generation descendants of Mayflower passenger Thomas Rogers.

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29. *Royal Gazette* (New York, N.Y.), 12 Feb. 1782, 1; 15 Feb. 1782, 1–2.
30. *Massachusetts Spy* (Worcester, Mass.), 10 December 1783, 3.
31. *Royal Gazette*, 29 January 1783, 1.
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33. *Continental Journal and Weekly Advertiser* (Boston), 3 April 1783, 3.
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36. Nova Scotia Archives, <https://archives.novascotia.ca/land-papers/archives/?ID=791&Doc=certificate&Page=201106749>.

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A Night of Fear and Flame: The Plymouth Panic of March 21, 1776

PATRICK T.J. BROWNE

In March 2026, Boston and communities across Massachusetts marked the 250th Anniversary of one of the most celebrated moments of the American Revolution: the evacuation of British forces from Boston on March 17, 1776. Evacuation Day has long stood as a defining early triumph of the Patriot cause. The siege had ended, British authority was driven out, and American resistance, for the moment at least, seemed fully vindicated.

But the story did not end there. The British did not simply disappear over the horizon. For days afterward, their fleet still hung off the Massachusetts coast. In Plymouth, that lingering presence would produce a night of real terror.

When the evacuation finally came, it was enormous. Roughly 120 ships were packed with nearly 9,000 of the King's troops, plus more than 2,000 civilian loyalist inhabitants, including women and children fleeing their homes. These were not merely soldiers sailing away in neat order. They were an uprooted army, a vast amount of supplies and thousands of civilian refugees. The sudden withdrawal was defined by haste and confusion.¹

Though ultimately bound for Halifax, Nova Scotia, this great fleet lingered for ten days in Nantasket Roads just outside Boston Harbor. Part of the delay was due to the weather as they waited for favorable winds that stubbornly refused to cooperate. Also, there must have been some transfer of people and supplies from one ship to another as they sorted out the confusion.

From the American shore the delay was deeply unnerving. On March 23, Massachusetts General Joseph Ward wrote that the ships still "lye in Nantasket Road waiting for a fair wind," and that Massachusetts kept "a vigilant eye over them lest they should make an attack on some unexpected quarter."² George Washington himself remained unsure where British General Howe meant to strike next.

For the past year, the people of Plymouth, Massachusetts, had lived under a steady weight of fear and uncertainty. In the days following the evacuation, the movements of the British fleet set in motion a chain of events in Plymouth Bay that

would erupt into one of the most dramatic (yet least remembered) episodes of the Revolutionary War in Massachusetts: a night of alarm, confusion, and panic that the town would remember for years to come.

To understand the extraordinary nature of that night's reaction, one must understand Plymouth's position in the war. Plymouth Bay was not a quiet backwater. It was a strategic maritime gateway, connected to Boston, Cape Cod, and the wider Atlantic world. Its sheltered harbor made it an ideal place to fit out vessels, receive captured prizes, and support the growing American war effort at sea. Plymouth and the neighboring towns of the bay also possessed a range of maritime resources that would have been tempting targets, including shipyards, stores of timber and naval supplies, ropewalks, anchor forges, and a modest fleet of fishing and merchant vessels. Not least among these were provisions: foodstuffs that were in constant demand by British forces during the Siege of Boston. At the same time, that very accessibility made the harbor dangerously exposed.

British naval power dominated Massachusetts Bay in 1775 and early 1776. Warships cruised freely along the coast, projecting force wherever they chose. In theory, a single frigate could enter a harbor, land troops, seize vessels, and withdraw before meaningful resistance could be organized. Plymouth, Kingston, and Duxbury lay stretched along an open shoreline, with few natural defenses and limited inland support.

The people knew it. Even before the fighting at Lexington and Concord, Plymouth's leaders were already warning of their vulnerability. In March 1775, anticipating war, the town's Selectmen wrote urgently to the Massachusetts Provincial Congress:

We have an open harbor, on which lie the towns of Plymouth, Kingston and Duxborough, extending twelve or thirteen miles, in almost every part of where it is extremely easy for troops to land, commit ravages, and retreat, unless a sufficient force continually on duty to watch and repel them... The inhabitants of this town, apprehensive of danger, have been on almost constant duty, without being able to attend to their private affairs: the consequence of which must produce great distress,

*if not ruin, unless they can be relieved. Another very peculiar circumstance attending us is, that in case we should be attacked, no immediate aid can come to our assistance from the back country, we being surrounded by a wilderness, extending several miles, without any inhabitants at all, and several more miles with very few and scattering ones.*³

In a subsequent letter to the same body, written shortly after the outbreak of hostilities, the Plymouth Committee of Correspondence again appealed to Massachusetts for support, warning that the towns of Plymouth Bay "lie open to the ravages of our enemies, and that it will be no difficult matter for them to plunder and destroy us." The situation was already taking a toll. The fishing fleet, they explained, had been forced to remain in harbor for fear of capture, cutting off both food and income and plunging many families into hardship. "These poor people," the Committee added, "consist principally of women and children, their husbands and parents having enlisted themselves into the service of the colony."⁴

While they waited for some sort of response or aid from Massachusetts, Plymouthers took matters into their own hands, voting on March 27, 1775, to improvise defenses. Acting on recommendations from its Committee of Safety, the town established small earthwork fortifications known as redoubts. These were placed on Cole's Hill overlooking the town's wharves and at Barnes's Point (today the site of the Plymouth Yacht Club). These were modest works, intended to mount a few cannons. But their effectiveness was limited: given their location, they could only engage enemy ships coming close into the harbor, by which time a landing might already be underway.

The true key to securing Plymouth Bay lay at Gurnet Point, a promontory that commands the entrance to the bay. Any vessel approaching Plymouth had to pass within its range, making it the natural site for a defensive work. A well-placed fortification there could exert significant control over the bay and help protect the surrounding towns. Recognizing this, the towns of Plymouth, Kingston, and Duxbury joined together in 1775 to erect a makeshift fort, mounting whatever cannon they could obtain. Eventually, Massachusetts would come around to the realization that Plymouth Bay was of "great importance to America in general and to said towns in particular" and would construct a proper and substantial fortification at the site beginning in July 1776.⁵ But for the first year of the war, the inhabitants of Plymouth Bay were left to rely on their improvised defenses.

It was not much comfort. Month after month during the war's first year, British cruisers hovered off Plymouth Bay. William Watson, acting as naval agent in Plymouth for the Continental Army, wrote General Washington in February 1776, "...our enemies are very vigilant, and in good weather, are seen every day from this shore."⁶

That statement alone was certainly enough to keep Plymouth on edge. But anxiety deepened on March 15, 1776, when HMS *Niger*, a 32-gun frigate, approached Plymouth Bay in pursuit of an American schooner, chasing her all the way toward the Gurnet. Unable to overtake the American vessel, Captain George Talbot brought his large ship to anchor in Saquish Cove, scarcely half a mile from the Gurnet lighthouse and fort, well within sight of mainland Plymouth. Talbot then sent a boat into the harbor to take soundings, an unmistakable act of reconnaissance and an effort to locate the channel for a possible future incursion. The gunners at the Gurnet Fort eventually opened fire on the warship. The *Niger* answered in kind, her cannon roaring across the water, and for hours (by Talbot's account, until six in the evening) an irregular exchange of fire continued between ship and shore before the frigate finally turned and stood out to sea.

No calamity had occurred, aside from some damage to the lighthouse, but the encounter was chilling nonetheless. A British warship had entered the harbor, probed its defenses, and engaged the town's



▲ The view of Plymouth Harbor from the Gurnet Fort Marker on Coles Hill.



▲ The Coles Hill marker about the Gurnet Fort.

defenders at close range. And it seemed there was little the defenders could do to stop it. Under such conditions, every distant sail invited speculation, and every strange light offshore at night seemed the beginning of something worse.⁷

Only six days after this unnerving episode, on March 21, 1776, trouble came swiftly.

The HMS *Diligent*, part of the British Naval force in Nantasket Roads supporting the British evacuation out of Boston, received a signal warning of reported action nearby. Under orders to investigate, the *Diligent* slipped away from the fleet and soon closed upon five “rebel privateers” descending on an “English brig.” The small American warships and privateers almost blundered into the massive British fleet. Wisely abandoning pursuit of the English brig, the American vessels quickly turned about and “bore away for Plymouth” according to Lt. Edmund Dodd of the *Diligent*.⁸

Among the American vessels was the schooner *Lee*, commanded by Captain John Manley of Marblehead, one of the most celebrated Patriot sea captains of the war’s opening year. Manley had already made his reputation preying on British supply ships during the siege of Boston, and Plymouth was a harbor he knew well, one where his prizes had often been brought in and adjudicated. As he was familiar with Plymouth Bay, it is not surprising that Manley would head there, and the other American vessels followed. These vessels took refuge in a friendly port, having narrowly avoided absolute calamity.

But that is not what Plymoutheans thought they were seeing when the sails suddenly appeared. From shore, in the dark of night, people saw four or five sizable, armed vessels entering the bay in haste, allegedly with fire visible in the distance and

guns being heard. In the emotional conditions of late March 1776, with news of the British fleet on the move, that the armed vessels looked like an invasion. If a fragment of the British fleet meant to plunder Plymouth, this is exactly how it might begin. James Thacher, writing later in his *History of Plymouth*, described the result as it was told to him: “All was confusion and alarm, military music was heard in the streets, the minute-men were summoned to arms, and sentinels were posted at their stations...soon the town was filled with armed men...”⁹

The most vivid account of this chaotic night comes from Sarah Sever of Kingston, just north of Plymouth, writing on March 23: “Thursday evening we had a new alarm,” she recorded, “that the lighthouse and dwellings upon the Gurnet were in flames, upon which I looked out and discovered two large fires, which appeared exactly in the range of those buildings; supposed the enemy had landed and fired them...”¹⁰ Although alarmed, Sever also tried to reason with herself: if the British meant wider destruction, she wondered, why would they begin by burning those buildings, thereby warning the whole countryside?¹¹

Sever herself went to bed in her Kingston home, “tolerably well composed.” But Plymouth did not. The next day, Sever learned through a Plymouth friend of the fearful tumult. Guns were heard around the same time as the fires appeared. Plymouth assumed, as Kingston had, that the enemy had fired the fort at the entrance to the harbor.

A boat was sent down to discover what could be seen. When it returned, the news was dreadful: there were “three or four large ships within the Gurnet,” and they were said to be landing men “very fast.” In reality, this news was almost certainly a mix of poor visibility and frightened exaggeration. It is unlikely that Captain Manley or any of the friendly vessels landed troops. The gunfire Sever described was probably part of the Gurnet’s alarm system, which used specific patterns of cannon fire to alert the town. The fires at the Gurnet are harder to explain, but they may have been set by alarmed and confused men at the fort as an additional measure to warn the town. Whatever their origin, the combination of cannon fire, flames, and reports of enemy landings swept through Plymouth with the force of truth.¹²

And now the town tipped fully into panic. A warning fire was kindled on Burial Hill. This triggered the alarm beacons up and down the South Shore—on Monk’s Hill in Kingston, Captain’s Hill in Duxbury, and beyond. Messengers rode to surrounding towns, some as far as Wareham and Middleborough, to summon the militia. Armed men poured toward Plymouth. Thacher

described them crowding into private houses and expecting to be fed as the town’s defenders.

Meanwhile, families tried to do the opposite: get out. Women and children were sent away, and furniture hurriedly removed, as much as could be managed in the dark and confusion. From our point of view, it is easy to call this an overreaction. But for a town that had been on the edge for months, these were people reacting with the expectation that British soldiers might be upon them any minute.

Sever’s friend who reported this, a Mrs. Otis, spent the night fully dressed, including winter cloak, waiting with chairs propped against the doors, and unable to do anything more. From half past ten at night until half past four in the morning, they were ready to flee “in a moment.”

Then morning came, and with it the truth. The “fleet” that had thrown Plymouth into such consternation was not a British raiding force at all. It was Captain Manley and four other American privateers, driven into the harbor by the evacuating British fleet. No landing party was storming ashore. No sack of Plymouth had begun. The terrifying ships inside the Gurnet were friends, not enemies. As Sever concluded with dry understatement, “so ended this mighty affair.”¹³

Yet the episode is more than a false alarm or good anecdote. It tells us something essential about how the Revolution was actually lived on the Massachusetts coast. Even after the triumph of Evacuation Day, people in places like Plymouth did not feel secure. They knew a town might be attacked, stripped of supplies, and possibly burned. Under those conditions, rumor did not have to be rational to be powerful. On the night of March 21, 1776, Plymouth did what frightened wartime communities often do: it saw the war coming and reacted before it could be sure.

The story of Evacuation Day is often told as a clean moment of American victory—the British gone, Boston free, the first great success of the war. But in Plymouth, four days later, the war still looked terrifyingly unfinished.

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1. The numbers and details pertaining to the evacuation are taken from, “I have the Pleasure to inform you ...”: General Washington spreads the news of the evacuation of Boston,” Massachusetts Historical Society, <https://www.masshist.org/object-of-the-month/objects/march-2026>.
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4. *Journals of Provincial Congress of Massachusetts*, 400–401.
5. “Report of a Committee Appointed to View the Sea Coast to the Southward,” June 17, 1776, *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*, vol. 5 (Washington, DC: Naval History Division, Department of the Navy, 1968), 583–84.
6. William Watson to General George Washington, *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*, vol. 4, 36.
7. Journal of HMS *Niger*, March 15, 1776, *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*, vol. 4, 349.
8. Lt. Edmund Dodd, Log of the *Diligent*, March 21, 1776, *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*, vol. 4, 435. This event is also described in Peg Baker’s, “Sailing off to Serve,” Pilgrim Hall Museum, https://www.pilgrimhall.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Sailing_Off_To_Serve.pdf.
9. James Thacher, *History of the Town of Plymouth*, 214.
10. Sarah Sever letter to unknown, March 23, 1776, *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*, vol. 4, 474.
11. Sever, March 23, 1776.
12. Sever, March 23, 1776.
13. Sever, March 23, 1776.

Resources of the National Park Service

DALE COOK

INTRODUCTION

Administered since 1933 through cooperative agreements with the National Park Service, the Library of Congress, and the private sector, ongoing programs of the National Park Service have recorded America's built environment. Those programs are multi-format surveys comprising more than 581,000 measured drawings, large-format photographs, and written histories. They cover more than 43,000 historic structures and sites dating from Pre-Columbian times to the twentieth century. The Library of Congress online presentation of the HABS/HAER/HALS collection includes digitized images of measured drawings, black-and-white photographs, color transparencies, photo captions, written history pages, and supplemental materials. Since the National Park Service's HABS, HAER and HALS programs create new documentation each year, documentation will continue to be added to the collections.

For those unfamiliar with the HABS, HAER, and HALS acronyms, they are:

- The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS);
- The Historic American Engineering Record (HAER); and
- The Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS).

The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) preserves items such as photographs and architectural drawings, as well as accounts and descriptions of them. The Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) overlaps HABS to an extent, but has a wider range, covering not only buildings, but also structures such as bridges. It tends to focus more closely on advances in engineering in its subjects. The Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) does not cover natural landscapes, such as the view from the rim of the Grand Canyon. Its subjects are man-made landscapes, such as parks and cemeteries. It is perhaps the least informative of the three for genealogical research.

Readers of *The Mayflower Quarterly Magazine* should understand the importance of historical research to

genealogical research. HABS and HAER are among the largest and most heavily used collections in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress. The written works published by and used by HABS and HAER are perhaps the most useful starting points in those collections for genealogical and historical research.

LEARNING ABOUT THE COLLECTION

To familiarize yourself with HABS, HAER, and HALS, you should visit the Library of Congress page about the collection.¹ It documents achievements in architecture, engineering, and landscape design in the United States and its territories.

Although it is a large work, the best (and most thorough) introduction to HABS and HAER is Alicia Stamm and C. Ford Peatross, *Historic America: Buildings, Structures, and Sites* (Library of Congress, 1983), downloadable from the Internet Archive.² Because you can download this volume free of charge I encourage all of you to do so, in order to familiarize yourself with the collection.

There are many ways to explore the HABS/HAER/HALS collection through different searches. For photographs and prints, the Library of Congress site has a main search page,³ as well as specialized searches for subjects⁴ (such as types, purposes, or features of buildings or landscapes), places⁵ (alphabetized by state, county, and city, town, or village), and names⁶ (such as Frederick Law Olmstead Sr. and Jr., the landscape architects who designed many landscapes around the country).

For many genealogical researchers a principal interest would be buildings or structures connected to their ancestors. Using the places search would be the best starting point, so you can explore the feature of places where your ancestors lived. One of my ancestors, Zaccheus Packard (son of 1638 immigrants Samuel and Elizabeth Packard), was the first settler in what is now Brockton, Massachusetts, in 1679. Because I have so many generations of ancestors in that city, I have intensively explored online resources for the city. In the places search mentioned above, those for Brockton are found under "Massachusetts - Plymouth County - Brockton."

Although seeing images of structures and landscapes can be fascinating, images of only a fraction of the subjects of HABS, HAER, and HALS have images online. For me, the meat of the collection is found in its literature, and much of that has not been published by HABS, HAER, and HALS, but has been collected and utilized by them.

FINDING HABS, HAER, AND HALS PUBLICATIONS

The starting point for finding documentation published by, and utilized by, HABS and HAER, was compiled by James C. Massey, Nancy B. Schwartz, and Shirley Maxwell, *Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record: An Annotated Bibliography* (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1992). Although I have found no site where you can download this volume, you can read it online, free of charge, at the HathiTrust Digital Library,⁷ in a digitized version from any one of three university libraries.⁸ You can download individual page images, which can save you from making detailed notes about sources which you may wish to pursue.

Browsing the alphabetical list of national and regional documentation, pages 27–30, and the list of state and local documentation, pages 31–64, will give you a feel for the types of sources which may interest you. When I first browsed those sections, one which caught my eye was on page 29. It was by Theodore A. Sande and Robert Vogel, *The New England Textile Mills Survey: Selections from the Historic American Buildings Survey, No. 11* (Historic American Buildings Survey, 1971). It has proven to be a valuable resource for my work as Mill Lists Coordinator of the Society for the Preservation of Old Mills (SPOOM), and for my genealogical research of people involved with textile mills.

The bibliography also has a section listing publications by HAER and HAER cooperators, listed by region, and then by state, alphabetized by title on pages 117–137. A publication which I spotted in that section is on page 124. The publication is by Patrick M. Malone, editor, *The Lower Merrimack River Valley: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites* (Historic American Buildings Survey, 1976). It has also proven useful for my work with SPOOM and in genealogy.

Finding sources listed in the bibliography may take a bit of work, and this is where saving page images while browsing the bibliography online may prove very useful. I have found scans of works at HathiTrust, in the Internet Archive,⁹ at Google Books,¹⁰ occasionally on the Library of Congress site and other library sites, and at FamilySearch via their catalog.¹¹ Note that you will need to sign up for a free login at FamilySearch to explore its resources. All of those can best be searched using the titles of works found in the page images you saved while browsing the HABS and HAER bibliography at HathiTrust.

As with any major online resource, HABS, HAER, and HALS will require some time and effort to become proficient in its use. I hope the time and effort will prove as useful in your research as it has in mine.

Dale H. Cook webmaster@plymouthcolony.net serves as the Massachusetts State Coordinator for the USGenWeb Project, and specializes in Plymouth Colony families, especially those of Bridgewater, MA. Dale is a member of The Mayflower Quarterly Magazine staff as Contributing Genealogist.

1. <https://www.loc.gov/collections/historic-american-buildings-landscapes-and-engineering-records/about-this-collection/>
2. <https://archive.org/download/historicamericab0000unse/historicamericab0000unse.pdf>
3. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/>
4. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/index/subjects/>
5. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/index/places/>
6. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/index/names/>
7. <https://www.hathitrust.org/>
8. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002618082>
9. <https://archive.org/advancedsearch.php>
10. <https://books.google.com/?hl=en>
11. <https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/catalog/>

Commemorative Memorial Certificate

MARTIN W. BEERMAN, SECRETARY GENERAL

A LEGACY REMEMBERED, A STORY PRESERVED

There is something quietly powerful about seeing a name set down with care—especially one that carried a family forward across generations, across oceans, and into the present moment.

The General Society of Mayflower Descendants is pleased to introduce a new way to honor those who came before us: the *Commemorative Memorial Certificate*. Thoughtfully designed and formally issued, this certificate recognizes a loved one whose place in your approved Mayflower lineage is already established—now given a lasting tribute worthy of that connection.

Each certificate bears the name of the departed, linked directly to the member through whom their Mayflower descent is recognized, and acknowledges their place in the enduring story of the Pilgrims. It is both personal and historical—part remembrance, part affirmation that

their life is woven into a larger American narrative that began in 1620 and continues today.

This offering is available for a donation of \$250 and may be created only from an approved membership application, ensuring that every name honored rests on a verified and documented line of descent. The result is more than a certificate. It is a quiet act of stewardship—preserving memory with the same care we bring to preserving history.

For many families, genealogy begins with names and dates. But over time, those names gather weight. They become voices, sacrifices, choices made, and lives lived. The Commemorative Memorial Certificate gives us a way to pause, reflect, and say—this life mattered, and it is not forgotten.

To order, visit The Mayflower Society website at www.TheMayflowerSociety.org or contact Executive Assistant Christine Wood at 508-746-3188, ext. 25.

Because remembrance, like lineage, deserves to endure.

In Memoriam

Former Surgeon General George J. Hill, MD passed away on April 22, 2026. His full In Memoriam will be published in the fall issue of *The Mayflower Quarterly Magazine*.

Former Historian General Ann Smith Lainhart passed away on April 5, 2026, at the age of 73. Lainhart served the General Society of Mayflower Descendants (GSMD) as Historian General from 2005 to 2008, and was a member of the GSMD *Silver Books* team. Lainhart also served the Massachusetts Society as Historian from 1999 to 2005, Secretary from 1983 to 1984, Captain from 1982 to 1983, and Board Assistant from 1981 to 1982 and 1996 to 1998.

Lainhart was known for her expertise in genealogical research and as a genealogical speaker. She authored *The Rose Cottage Chronicles* and *State Census Records*, as well as dozens of valuable transcriptions—1855 and 1865 Massachusetts state censuses, church records, and ancient Boston city directories. Her career included a position with HistGEN in Boston.

Lainhart was a descendent of Mayflower passenger Richard Warren. She is survived by her brother Steve Lainhart and his family.

Michael J. Hodnett of Waco, Texas, passed away on December 15, 2024, at the age of 77. Hodnett served the Texas Society as Governor from 2001 to 2003. He was a descendant of Mayflower passenger Francis Eaton. Hodnett is survived by his partner Marshall Swindall and his sister Judy Hodnett.

Glen Ganel “Bud” Irwin of Anchorage, Alaska, passed away on May 28, 2025, at the age of 91. Irwin served the Alaska Society on the Board of Assistants beginning in 2001 and served as Deputy Governor from 2002 to 2005. He was a descendant of Mayflower passenger John Billington. Irwin is survived by his daughter Evelyn Raymond, son Richard Irwin, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Mary Catherine Howden of Appleton, Wisconsin, passed away on January 30, 2026, at the age of 83. Howden served the General Society as Deputy Governor General from 2002 to 2005, and Assistant General from 1999 to 2002, and served the Wisconsin Society as Governor from 1996 to 1999, and Deputy Governor from 1993 to 1996. Howden was a descendant of Mayflower passengers Samuel Fuller, Francis Eaton, Isaac Allerton, and John Billington. Howden is survived by her brother Michael Howden, nine nieces and nephews and eleven great nieces and nephews.

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Celebrate Mercy Otis Warren, Plymouth, MA

SALES

Celebrate America's 250th Anniversary with items inspired by *Liberty's Pulpit!*

A painting by American artist Jean Leon Gerome Ferris (1863-1930), which depicts a Patriot standing on Plymouth Rock.



Pilgrims to Patriots T-Shirt

Super soft and lightweight tri-blend shirt (50/25/25 polyester/cotton/rayon material), with rib-knit crewneck collar and short set-in sleeves. Unisex. Available in either blue or red.

New Items!



\$95

Mayflower Meetinghouse Brooch

Brooch in the shape of the Mayflower Meetinghouse, made exclusively for GSMD by Pamela Wright Designs. Can also be worn as a necklace pendant (chain not included).

Measures approximately 2.5" x 1.75".



\$99.95

Voyage of the Mayflower Woven Blanket

100% combed, natural cotton. Woven in America on a Jacquard loom. Image is woven into blanket, not printed. Measures 54" x 70". Made by the History List.

Care instructions: Hand or machine wash in cool water using a mild detergent on a gentle cycle. Hang to dry or dry on a cool cycle.

Visit TheMayflowerSociety.org/shop for these items and more!



\$12

Pilgrims to Patriots Lapel Pin

Features one of the Meneely bells from the Mayflower Meetinghouse, as well as the historic "Bunker Hill Flag" and the GSMD flag. The Meetinghouse bells were made at the foundry of silversmith Andrew Meneely, who at age 15 apprenticed under Julius Hanks, whose father had worked with Paul Revere. Nickel finish. Clutch back pin. Measures 1.25"



GIFT OF \$75



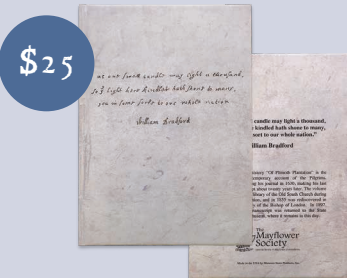
GIFT OF \$135

Pilgrims to Patriots Necktie

Made of silk, necktie measures 3.25" x 58".

Pilgrims to Patriots Scarf

Double-sided silk scarf, measures 42" x 42".



\$25

Hardcover Journal

Hard bound journal with soft-touch laminate cover. Comes with 100 pages of lined ivory paper, and ribbon page marker. Measures 6" x 8.25".

Image is a reproduction of the cover of William Bradford's original journal, as well as a quote from the journal in his handwriting.



\$125

Mayflower Society Charm Bracelet

Custom designed for GSMD, with five enamel charms each with their own lobster clasp for easy customization. Bracelet length is approximately 7", and each charm measures about 1". Gold plated.

Charms are the Mayflower Meetinghouse, the GSMD Seal, a pink mayflower, the cupola of the Mayflower Society House, and the *Mayflower* ship.

Premium Donor Gifts

To benefit the restoration of the Mayflower Meetinghouse.

INSIGNIA

Mayflower Ship Tie Bar

Handcrafted in your choice of a Gold Plated, Gold Filled or Sterling Silver Mayflower.



Ship emblem centered on either a Gold Plated or Sterling Silver alligator clip tie bar measuring approximately 2" x 1/4".

Ship emblem measures 3/4" in diameter.

Ship Drop Earrings

Constructed with gold or sterling silver charms dangling from French ear wires.

Charms measure 3/4" in diameter.

For 14K gold, please email for prices.



Woman's Filigree Ring

Custom-made. Please state size and allow 8-14 weeks for delivery.

Inside ring engraving is available - limited 8 spaces depending on style and size.

Choose from Sterling Silver, 10K or 14K Gold or 14K White Gold and without a stone, with a Pink Zircon, with a Cubic Zirconia or with a .05ct Diamond.

For 10K gold, 14K gold, and 14K white gold, please email for prices.

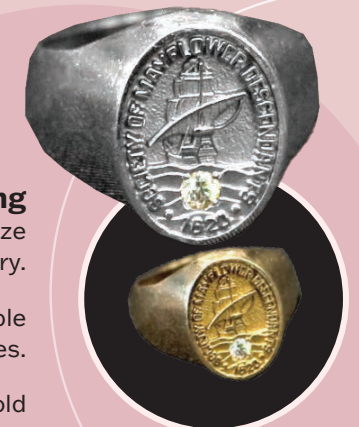


Man's Ring

Custom-made. Please state size and allow 8-14 weeks for delivery.

Inside ring engraving is available - limited to 8 spaces.

For 10K gold, 14K gold and 14K white gold options, please email for prices.



Visit TheMayflowerSociety.org/shop for these items and more!

To order please visit our web shop or contact:

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Membership and Sales Manager
508-746-5058
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To order Insignia and gravemarkers, please visit our web shop or contact:

Meg Averett
Insignia Chair
Insignia@TheMayflowerSociety.org

Great news: Our web shop can now accept international orders! Please see our website for details: TheMayflowerSociety.org/shop.

BEFORE THE LAST BRICK IS LAID

There is a beautiful space behind the Mayflower Society House in Plymouth where time softens.

The Garden Walkway is not simply a path. It is a collection of names—hundreds of them—each engraved into brick, each placed with purpose. Since 2011, more than 600 bricks have been installed, creating a lasting tribute to families, ancestors, and the enduring story of the Pilgrims.

Now, that story is nearing a milestone.

Only 80 bricks remain.

When the final bricks are placed, the walkway will be complete. No further additions. No second chances.

For those who have already participated, their names are now part of The Mayflower Society's living landscape—woven into a setting that connects generations. For those who have not yet done so, the moment has arrived.

Each brick represents something deeply personal: a remembrance, a celebration, a declaration that we were *here*—and we remember.

RESERVE YOUR PLACE ON THE PATH

For a **\$175 tax-deductible donation**, you may inscribe your name—or the name of someone you wish to honor—on a permanent brick in the Garden Walkway.

- 4" x 8" engraved brick
- Up to three lines of text (20 characters per line)

Orders must be submitted by mail. Visit the Garden Walkway Project on the GSMD website to download the order form, or call Executive Assistant Christine Wood at 508-746-3188, ext. 25, to place your order.

Only 80 bricks remain. Once they are gone, this opportunity closes forever.

Do not miss your chance to become part of this lasting tribute at The Mayflower Society House.

Note: Additional availability—twenty-seven spaces in the Octagon (reserved for Society officers) and 200 spaces in the Historians Walkway (reserved for Historians).

