

ISSUE 3

JULY 2016

# THE PILGRIM PETER BROWN SOCIETY

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## RESEARCHING YOUR FAMOUS PILGRIM ANCESTORS

### Be Your Family Genealogist

Genealogy is the study of your family: your parents, grandparents, great-grandparents and all preceding generations. It can be a fun, fascinating and occasionally frustrating occupation. There are many good books, magazines, classes and computer programs available which will help you in researching your family, but here are some quick tips.

- **Start with what you know.** The temptation is to begin with a possible ancestor and try to trace down to the present. Instead, start with yourself and your parents and work backwards.
- **Carefully research each generation.** Don't skip or assume a link.
- **Document your information thoroughly as you go along.** Record exactly where each piece of information was found.

A **pedigree chart** shows your direct ancestors. It includes spaces for birth, marriage, and death information for each individual. The chart should be filled out with the name of the husband on the top line and the name of the wife on the line underneath.

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Editor -Sandra Sauers	

## **20 HELPFUL SOURCES TO TRACING YOUR ANCESTORS**

### **Census Records**

**For more than 300 years the world's nations have kept a count of their population on a regular basis. From the United Kingdom to the United States, census records are an essential tool for family history research.**

#### **1790 Census**

**The first United States census performed was in 1790 and with little exception is available for research every ten years thereafter up to the 1940 census (released on April 2, 2012). Census records often include the names of all members of a household, their ages and birthplaces, and other important information.**

### **Birth, Marriage and Death Records**

**Birth, marriage, and death records (otherwise called vital records) are key tools for anyone searching their family tree. The United States keeps its vital records by state (no nationwide index exists). In most cases, vital records were recorded from the 1880s to the present, though there are some exceptions.**

**Some states, such as Massachusetts began officially recording vital records in 1841, though birth, death, and marriage records exist from the state dating from 1620. Birth, marriage and death records can be accessed through online collections.**

### **Family History Stories**

**In many cases terrific and unique sources for family history exist in your own home – or in the homes of relatives family bibles, letters, diaries, and other materials might be stored on bookshelves or in attics and contain priceless information. Obtaining copies of these materials is an important part of your research.**

**In many families a distant relative might have worked previously on the family tree and might have these (and other) materials close at hand, so make sure you reach out to the extended family for help in your research.**

### **Military Records**

#### **Search World War I Draft Registration Cards**

**Enlistment records can include information on birthdates and birthplaces, while also providing a clear physical description of an ancestor. People with UK ancestry will want to search British Army records and Irish Military Service records, which also include detailed information documenting an ancestor's life, including their military service, family, and occupations.**

**the most part churches kept their own records, usually by parish or congregation. Confirmation, marriage, and burial registers for many of the world's churches exist and can be used for family history research.**

## 20 HELPFUL SOURCES CONTINUED

### Church Records

The religious affiliations of a family offer important clues for researchers. For the most part churches kept their own records, usually by parish or congregation. Confirmation, marriage, and burial registers for many of the world's churches exist and can be used for family history research.

### Passenger Lists

Tracing the arrival of an ancestor to the United States is an important project for family historians. While passenger lists were not widely kept during the colonial times, many historians and other researchers have worked to reconstruct these lists. On the contrary, Outbound passenger lists leaving the UK are comprehensive sources to find ancestors from all reaches of the world travel to new homes and new opportunities in the U.S., Canada, UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and beyond.

The majority of immigrants to the U.S. came through the port of New York (New York (Castle Garden and Ellis Island) though thousands others came through other major ports such as Baltimore, Boston, New Orleans, Philadelphia and San Francisco.

### City Directories

Directories for cities, towns, and counties offer a wealth of information for family historians including addresses, occupations, and other details. Local advertisements for various services including local blacksmiths, auctioneers, doctors, and more provide a glimpse at the lives of our ancestors. City directories can also sometimes include religious and political affiliations, marital status, and other personal details not found in other sources.

### Court and Prison Records

Records from the nation's courts are important resources for family history. Whether your ancestor was a plaintiff, defendant, witness, or juror member court records can play a key role in research. Other key materials found within court records include adoption, guardianship, name changes, and divorce records. Multiple courts (including county, municipal, federal, and state) exist throughout the United States and each provides their own unique set of records to search.

### Immigration and Naturalization Records

Starting in 1790 the United States allowed immigrants to the country to become naturalized citizens. Though the process has changed over the years, naturalization records still remain a fundamental resource for tracing your family history. While the process was difficult, these records can include detailed information relating to an individual's arrival in the United States, include the date and ship used. Other personal information can include the birthdate and birthplace, the town and country of origin, names of relatives or other acquaintances.

## **20 HELPFUL SOURCES CONTINUED**

### **Photographs and Scrapbooks**

**Photographs and other memorabilia are important resources for those researching their family history as they provide a personal “look” into the lives of our ancestors. For example, the clothing and furniture in a photograph can yield clues regarding someone’s occupation or trade, place of origin, or other details. Albums and other collectible items are often treasured and passed down to family members through the years.**

### **Oral Histories**

**Living relatives are a rich source for family history materials. While their stories can provide names, dates, and relationships – they often provide a unique personal perspective of an individual. Recording and sharing the memories of living relatives is an essential source for anyone pursuing their family history.**

### **Workhouse and Union Records**

**Records which detail the daily activities of an individual can be key to identifying relationships, missing dates and places, and in exploring the lives of our ancestors. These family history records include the records of businesses, union records, poorhouses, and workhouse organizations.**

**See United Kingdom Education and Work records for information on apprentices, the merchant navy, workhouse and other records that depict your ancestors' daily lives.**

### **Tax Records**

**Taken on a frequent basis, tax records are important for researchers. As some tax lists were taken each year, they are often used as a substitute when census records have been lost or destroyed. Many of our ancestors paid real and personal property taxes, as they were taxed for any land they owned (real property) as well their livestock, equipment, and other items such as personal property.**

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## 20 HELPFUL SOURCES CONTINUED

### Cemetery Records

Tombstones often include birth and death dates of our ancestors. Therefore cemetery listings are important tools for genealogists. As some tombstones have been lost or destroyed, historical cemetery transcriptions can provide important information not available anywhere else. Other information found in cemetery records includes names of spouses or children, countries of origin, religious affiliations, military service, and other personal details.

### Compiled Genealogies

Starting in the 1850s thousands of family histories have been published containing millions of names, dates, stories, and interest connections. Many of these genealogies focus on a specific surname – or immigrant to the United States – and trace their descendants throughout the United States and the world. While many of these publications require verification against other records (such as vital records) they provide an important starting point for many interested in family history.

### Wills and Probate Records

Wills provide a goldmine for anyone researching their family history and are often used to link generations together and identify other siblings or children of an ancestor. If an ancestor died without writing a will (intestate) probate courts were charged with identifying and locating their heirs, leaving a trail of information useful to every family historian.

Other wills and probate records include estate inventories, often listing furniture, clothing, books, and other possessions in a household and guardianship records, which document any court-appointed guardians for underage children of the deceased.

### Land Records

Records which detail the sale and transfer of property hold important clues for genealogists. Land records can often document the relationships between two individuals, or be used to tell individuals with the same name apart from one another. Deeds, often found in local court-houses document the transfer of property between two parties and are an excellent “first step” when looking for land records relating to an ancestor.

### Local Histories

Often covering specific towns or counties, local printed histories offer a vast array of genealogical and historical information. Some publications include sections of family sketches and can include information not readily found in other sources. Other chapters might include details on local churches, cemeteries, military heroes, early settlers, and other relevant facts.

### Funeral Home Records

While not widely available online, the records of funeral homes and mortuaries often provide unique tidbits for family history researchers. Copies of obituaries, funeral programs, and lists of relatives are often found within these materials. Records are sometimes passed on when a business closes and can be available to examine when researching onsite.

## **RESEARCHING TO FIND OUR ANCESTORS**

### **PETER BROWN'S PROOF**

**By Elizabeth Werner**

**As long as I could remember, I knew I was a descendant on my mother's side of the family of Mayflower passenger Francis Cooke through his daughter Mary who married John Tomson (Thompson). Thirty years ago, long before the Internet, my family discovered that we also descend from Peter Brown. Peter's daughter Mary married Ephraim Tinkham. Mary and Ephraim Tinkham's daughter Mary married John Tomson, grandson of Francis Cooke.**

**Eight years ago I joined the New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS), hoping to use their services to help me join the Mayflower Society. I was sure that my line back to Francis Cooke would be easy to prove. It was a straight line of Tomson's from my grandmother back to John Tomson, husband of Mary Cooke. The book *A Genealogy of Descendants of John Tomson of Plymouth, Mass*, by Charles Hutchinson (1890) documented my line. Peter Brown would also be easy to prove.**

**When I checked the vital records on NEHGS, I found that the marriage record for my great -great-grandfather Ezra Thompson said he was "from Savannah in the State of Georgia!" Ezra's birth record listed as him born in Plymouth County to the correct parents, but NEHGS did not have his death record. I had to verify that my Ezra was from Massachusetts and in my Thompson line back to Peter Brown and Francis Cooke. Meanwhile, I found that Ezra's wife Cynthia Gifford descended from Francis Cooke's daughter Esther. Documentation from Cynthia's line enabled me to join the Mayflower Society in 2012.**

**I still wanted to prove Peter Brown as a Mayflower supplemental. By doing so, I would also substantiate my Thompson line as descending from Francis Cooke. The NEHGS Research Services found the will of Ezra's father Isaac Thompson and also a land record which both proved Ezra as a son of Isaac. Google Books had a membership list for the First Church of Christ (Congregational) in Middleborough that listed Isaac and Lucy Thompson, as well as his son Ezra and his wife Cynthia. I found Ezra's death record on FamilySearch.org and his cemetery record through the DAR Genealogical Records. What about Ezra's Savannah connection? He was a merchant, and must have lived there for a while before his marriage. The evidence from NEHGS, FamilySearch, DAR, and Google Books enabled me to prove Peter Brown as a Mayflower Society supplemental in 2014 and also gave proof that my Thompson line goes back to Francis Cooke through Mary and John Tomson.**

**IN 2020 WE WILL BE CELEBRATING THE  
400TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
LANDING OF THE MAYFLOWER.**

## **Saving Our Ship**

**Plimoth Plantation, in collaboration with the Henry B. duPont Preservation Shipyard at Mystic Seaport, is undertaking a five year, multi-million dollar restoration of Mayflower II in preparation for 2020, the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims' arrival in Plymouth.**

**Source Plimoth Plantation**

**Please consider donating to the Mayflower II restoration. Mayflower II will be moved back to Mystic Seaport in December for further repairs and necessary restoration. Visit the Plimoth Plantation Website [www.plimoth.org](http://www.plimoth.org) for additional information and make your Donation online. Thank you from the Board Members of the Pilgrim Peter Brown Society.**



## **MAYFLOWER II RESTORATION**

**Mayflower II is owned by Plimoth Plantation and is undergoing a multi-year restoration in the Henry B. duPont Preservation Shipyard at Mystic Seaport. The restoration of the nearly 60-year-old wooden ship is being carried out over several years with the ship spending winter and spring at Mystic Seaport and returning to Plymouth each summer and fall. The project is scheduled for completion prior to 2020—the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims' arrival.**

**Source Mystic Seaport Website**



**Source Mystic Seaport Website**

## **MAYFLOWER II DEPARTURE**

### **JUNE 5**

**The ship Mayflower II is scheduled to depart Mystic Seaport on the morning of Sunday, June 5 for her return trip to Plymouth, MA. The ship will be towed down the Mystic River by the tugboat Jaguar and pass through the drawbridge in downtown Mystic en route to Fishers Island Sound.**

**Source Mystic Seaport Website.**

**The full-scale reproduction of the ship that transported the Pilgrims to Massachusetts in 1620 is owned by Plimoth Plantation and has been at Mystic Seaport as part of a multi-year restoration at the Museum's Henry B. duPont Preservation Shipyard. She is expected to return to Mystic to continue the work in December.**

**Source Mystic Seaport Website**

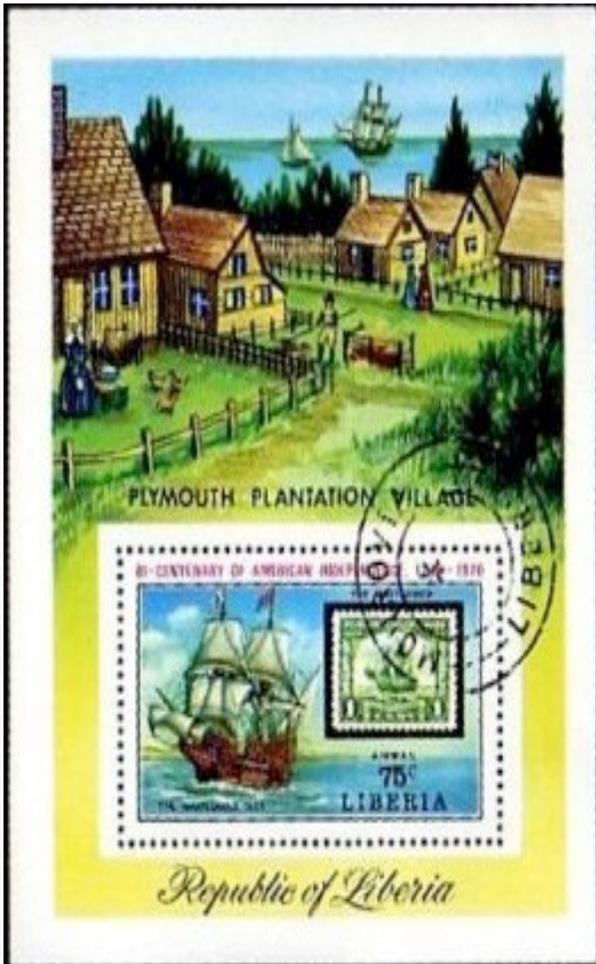
### PLIMOTH PLANTATION

If you have not been to Plimoth Plantation, you have missed a wonderful historical experience. I would encourage all readers and members to visit Plimoth Plantation when you are in Plymouth, Mass. The village houses are a duplication of what our pilgrim ancestors would have lived in. The actors who play our ancestors dress, speak and answer only as our ancestor would have in 1620. The Houston Colony chapter of the Mayflower Society of Texas was privileged to have Vicki Oman and Richard Pickering from Plimoth Plantation who provided members with a program entitled "Afternoon with the Allertons" and gave a first person account of the lives of the Allertons while in England, Holland and on the Mayflower. Vicki portrayed Mary Allerton and Richard portrayed Isaac Allerton. We also were pleased to have Courtney Roy-Branigan, Director of Development at Plimoth Plantation speak to us about the funding needed for repairs and restoration to Mayflower II. More information on the restoration will be given on page 7 and 8 of this newsletter. We also asked Vicki, Richard and Courtney if they would consider having an actor portray Peter Brown. She said they did in the past but would make sure it was brought up again and possibly do something with regards to the dogs portrayed in his story. PPBS is listed on the Plimoth Plantation website.

By Sandy Sauers

POSTCARD FROM THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA FEATURING PLIMOTH PLANTATION VILLAGE.

VICKI OMAN AND RICHARD PICKERING RE-ENACTORS FROM PLIMOTH PLANTATION WITH BOARD MEMBERS, SANDRA SAUERS AND SHERYL SCHILLING AT THE HOUSTON COLONY MAYFLOWER SOCIETY OF TEXAS LUNCHEON



## **WEBSITES**

[www.themayflowersociety.org](http://www.themayflowersociety.org)

[www.plimoth.org](http://www.plimoth.org)

[\\_www..pilgrimhallmuseum.org](http://www.pilgrimhallmuseum.org)

**Facebook.com (PilgrimPeterBrownSociety)**

### **PILGRIM FAMILY SOCIETY WEBSITES**

[www.pilgrimpeterbrownsociety.org](http://www.pilgrimpeterbrownsociety.org)

[www.alden.org/](http://www.alden.org/)

[www.isaacallerton.com/](http://www.isaacallerton.com/)

[www.franciscookesociety.org/](http://www.franciscookesociety.org/)

[www.edward-doty.org/](http://www.edward-doty.org/)

[www.thefullersociety.org/](http://www.thefullersociety.org/)

[cromartiefamilyassociation.com/](http://cromartiefamilyassociation.com/)

[www.pilgrimjohnhowlandsociety.org/](http://www.pilgrimjohnhowlandsociety.org/)

[www.thomasrogerssociety.com/](http://www.thomasrogerssociety.com/)

[www.soulekindred.org/](http://www.soulekindred.org/)

[www.bartlettsociety.com/](http://www.bartlettsociety.com/)

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

There were many State Conferences these past few months and some that are upcoming. Members please let us know if you want them posted for your states and if you have any photographs of your conference, scan them or mail to the editor who is also the Recording Secretary. Information can be found on this website for email addresses of the Board Members. We would also like our members to contribute interesting stories for the Newsletter. Our members all have had to search and find links to prove that they are a descendant of Peter Brown or any of the other pilgrims who they might be related too. Let us know your story.

**WELCOME TO ALL OF OUR NEW MEMBERS! We hope to be mailing certificates out soon. The design of the certificate is based on ideas and pictures that were submitted by some of our Junior members.**

**Sheryl Schilling, Historian PPBS**