

The
Hancock Historian

Newsletter of the
Hancock County Genealogical Society

Volume 25, No. 6
November 2019
(not really a typo)

**Hancock County Genealogical Society Minutes
November 2019**

The November meeting, which was the annual meeting and election of officers, was held on Saturday, November 9, in the Riverview Room of the Ellsworth Public Library. Due to a lack of attendance, election of officers was postponed until the January meeting. The three members there discussed the *Ellsworth American* online, which will be talked about in detail at the meeting on January 11, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene Fox Clemons, Secretary

From the President

Happy holiday to everyone!

Over the last few years, we have had one member come forward to hold an office in HCGS. Of the last several years, we have been running without a Vice President, and all other officers have continued to hold their current office. It's time for a change. We need new officers with new ideas. Currently we have about 45 members with only about 4 to 5 members active in 2019. During our November meeting, which is when our election of officers for next year would have happened, it was tabled to January 11, 2020, because of lack of attendance at the meeting.

It is very important that the members of HCGS step up and become officers of HCGS and keep it alive and continue to support the organization, genealogy, and local history. Some of our officers have held their positions for over 15 years and it's time to give them a break. As per Maine State Law, a non-profit organization must have a President, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. Please come to the meeting on Saturday, January 11, at 10:00 a.m. at the Riverview Room at the Ellsworth Public Library, step up, and take an office of the organization.

As for the newsletter, the officers of HCGS have decided to reduce the *Hancock Historian* to 4 times a year from the currently published 6 times a year.

If you cannot attend the meeting, please email any opinions or suggestions to me at:

cvfd4208@outlook.com – Ralph Harris, President of HCGS

Thank you, Max!

In August we accepted the resignation of our treasurer of 17 years, Max Brenninkmeyer. His expertise will be missed by us all. His guidance, commitment, knowledge of genealogy (both United States and European) and the help he so generously gave others has been an asset to our chapter.

While not having any Maine ancestry in his own family, Max took on the task of documenting his wife's family and has kept us updated on the family research of the Moses Hammond family giving his last update at the August meeting, and the Bonsey family both of the Ellsworth and Surry areas.

A big THANK YOU to Max for his dedication to the Hancock County Genealogical Society from all the society members.

We wish Max and his wife Ruth the best in whatever their retirement years hold for them in their new home in Maryland where they have children nearby.

Jean Boynton has been elected to fill out Max's term. We thank Jean for being willing to take on the job and look forward to working with her.

– Ralph Harris

FROM THE LIBRARY

We recently had the gift of a "1947 Who's Who in Maine". I had never seen anything like this before and spent time reading through it. There are people from all walks of life and all parts of the State including some from the Ellsworth area. I do hope you will take a look at it when you are in the library. I found it interesting to see what was considered important in a person's life in 1947.

If you have been in the genealogy area recently, you have probably seen the signs that we are doing some recataloging. This is due to two factors. First the library will be moving to a new circulation system in the not too distant future. The new system requires a different barcode numbering system from the one we used back in 1995 when we originally went online with our collection. Second, for some time I have been unhappy with the cataloging in the 929.3 – vital records and 929.5 – cemetery records sections. About nine years ago I was convinced to separate out these records by county and state with the goal of making finding the records easier. More recently other librarians have begun to agree with me that this actually makes finding records more difficult if you don't know the county a small town is in. Since I have long felt that way, I am going back to the old way of cataloging these materials. All vital records will be 929.3 and all cemetery records will be 929.5. It is a laborious process and since my time to work on the project is limited to times when I don't have new materials to process, it will take the next several weeks or perhaps months to finish, but in the end I think it will make it easier for all concerned. So in the meantime, I hope you will bear with me and if you need help finding something, come see me in my office anytime. I am always happy to help.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a genealogically successful New Year,

– Charlene

Notes On DNA Testing

by Charlene Fox Clemons

There are several reasons why a person chooses to take a DNA test. No matter the reason, be it ethnicity, proving paper genealogies, prospects for future health issues, taking the test to help another person prove a relationship, or finding birth families and half siblings, we all get results. Some of us are pleased with our results – some not so much. Hopefully, we can take the results and move forward.

Take the 70-year old woman who discovers she is not her father's daughter. When her younger sister comes up as a half-sister, and multiple cousins on Dad's side don't match with her and she has a raft of first and second cousins she has never heard of, she has to take a long hard look at who she is and what she is going to do. She has to tell her husband, children and grandchildren. Hopefully they will be there to support her decision to search further or not. She has to make the difficult decision to contact the new cousins and figure out who might be her father. It doesn't happen quickly or inexpensively if she asks new family members to test and pays for the tests herself, as she should. Time and again, the man or woman tested who was suspected of being a half sibling, comes back as a cousin. Sometimes other family secrets are uncovered, like the brother and sister who discovered they were half siblings. As my discovered half-sister said "It is what it is! Nothing we can do about it but go on from here." It is a discouraging process at best and at times she must step back for a couple months, breathe and then start over again or eventually opt to give up the search. So far she is continuing her search. And she has met some wonderful new cousins who are supporting her search.

There are people who take the test, perhaps it was given as a gift or someone asked them to do a test. They might look at the results or they might not. I have two tests that I manage, both taken to help another person prove a family connection, neither of whom have ever seen the test results and have no interest in contacting or being contacted by new cousins. That is fine, that is their right, and it was wonderful of them to agree to do the tests. In both cases, I have answered questions from some of their matches on ancestors without revealing the identity of the tested people. I have answered any emails that came in for them which I did not mind doing and made some interesting contacts along the way. Sad to say, not everyone does that.

People who take the tests, hoping to prove or clarify a relationship, need to remember that unless the other person has tested, there is not going to be a match. One person tested an 80 plus year old person and could not understand why there were no parent matches for this person. Not much chance of that happening at that age. Another woman suspected that her cousin was actually a half- sister. She was disappointed that she did not even come up as a cousin. When I asked if the second lady had taken the test, she said no. Well of course she could not be a match if her DNA was not there.

Much of the confusion is due to the advertising we are bombarded with – "I took the test and then I had all these leaves pop up and my whole family tree was there." Nope it does not work that way! You have to do the old fashioned research and create a tree, and perhaps several other private trees for matches in order to figure out what the test results mean. Ancestry and some of the other testing sites are great for showing you "possible ancestors" – remember those are usually from another person's tree, and need to be thoroughly researched for sources before adding them to your tree. This is true of Ancestry's ThruLines. Yes, they show how the matches may be connected to your family and how many DNA matches you have

on that line. If you have a good well-sourced tree, as I am sure yours is, you can be sure of your matches, but not everyone is as meticulous as you and I are. So double check everything before adding it to your tree and source it – make a note of where you found the information so you can go back later and confirm what you found.

Remember that DNA testing does not lie. However, it also does not give you all the answers. If a deceased person had no children and had no siblings, you are not going to get a sibling or cousin match on this line. It just is not possible. In this case you have to rely on more distant cousins to confirm a relationship to this person. Are his cousins or their children and grandchildren related to you and at what level? Recently a fourth cousin match came up that proved a great-grandparent relationship. Fourth cousin is a ways out, but in this case it was what was needed and I now have proof of this relationship that I only suspected previously. Incidentally, this match, who lives in Europe, brought two other matches in the same line onto the branches of the tree and even came with photos and letters from the American side of the family. He knew only that some Americans from Mount Desert Island had visited his grandmother in the 1920's and what their last name was but not that they were related to his family.

If you know your mother's line but are not sure of your father's line, take the matches that you know are on your mother's side and mark them – Ancestry makes this easy with either a yellow star or colored dot you can put by each match along with a note section where you can jot quick notes about how they fit onto the family tree. After you have pulled all of them, start looking at who is left. See if they have viable trees (more than two or three "private" people!), and see if there is a common ancestor for the matches. Contact your match, make a note of when you contacted them and if you haven't heard back in a few weeks (I usually allow a month) then contact them again. Some people never answer, others do. If they answer, start a conversation, explain what you are looking for, show you have done your homework and are serious about your search by giving a short rundown of your own ancestry, ask how they might be related to the family you believe might be yours. If they have no tree, ask if they have one elsewhere they can refer to in order to answer your questions. Many people have only three or four generations on the testing sites, while maintaining literally thousands of names in a tree on their personal computers.

Most of all, remember: no matter what the results of the tests show, the sun will still set tonight and rise again in the morning. Lives will go on and quite possibly one day you will have your answers.

"Bar Harbor Hen Thief Shot By Officer Reed" (From the *Ellsworth American* of 23 July 1941)

Wallace Tracy, aged 35 of Bar Harbor, was shot and killed in the early hours of Friday morning while in the act of stealing hens at the William DeLaittre farm at Salisbury Cove. The fatal shot was fired by Police Officer Alfred Reed of Bar Harbor, who was on watch at the farm where hen thieves had been frequent visitors.

About 2 o'clock in the morning, Officer Reed saw two men enter the henhouse. He followed them, and when he called upon them to submit to arrest, one of them struck him, first with a hen and then with a club. The officer fired first a shot in the air, and then as Tracy followed up his attack, he shot him.

Tracy's companion, David Lambert of Bar Harbor, was arrested. In Bar Harbor municipal court, he pleaded guilty to a charge of breaking and entering in the night time with intent to commit larceny. He was bound over for the September grand jury in the sum of \$500, which was furnished.

• "The average life of a farmer is 66 years. At 65 he may safely begin to return borrowed tools, pay old debts, and ask forgiveness for cheating in horse trading."

• "Our ancestors may be a great honor to us. But it is better if we are an honor to them." (Both from *Sullivan Weekly Bulletin*, Saturday, 17 July 1880.)

Marriage Notices from the "Maine Farmer" 1833-1852 by Elizabeth Keene Young and Benjamin Lewis Keene, Heritage Books, Inc. c. 1995, p.95:

"Cunningham, Elizabeth a smiling lass of 60 & William Fly a youthful swain of 80 on 3rd inst. by E. Cunningham, Esq. at Edgecomb, Maine." (17 June 1844)

Membership

It is that time of year again. Dues for 2020 are due in January. Those who have already paid their dues for 2020 and lifetime members should have already received their cards in the mail. If you believe that you have already paid and have not received your card, please contact me either by email (foxtail10000@yahoo.com) or by post at the address below.

Dues may be sent to:

HCGS/Charlene Fox Clemons
96 Mud Creek Road
Hancock, ME 04640

The Missing Cemetery Mystery – SOLVED!

Back a few years, when the Myrick Street area was being developed, there was a great deal of discussion about a small family cemetery located in the area of what is now the Camden National Bank shopping center. Stories abounded about the cemetery being either moved or buried with nobody seeming to know what actually happened.

Recently, during a Woodbine Cemetery board meeting someone mentioned graves that had been moved to Woodbine. Lauri Fernald went on to tell us that D. W. Small had owned the land and paid Jordan-Fernald to dig up every bit of bone, caskets, clothing – any possible remains of this family – and had them moved to Woodbine. He then paid to have all the names inscribed on the monument that was also moved.

The funny part is that I had searched for this Sargent family last year for an elderly lady in Southern Maine. It was her family and she had never been able to find the grave when she visited the area. When I finally found it I could not understand why it was in the area – the newer part of the cemetery – with this obviously old monument on it. There is even a Civil War veteran's stone on the lot. Now I know!

And we can all rest assured that this family cemetery was handled with respect and honor. Would that there were more people out there like Mr. Small.

– Charlene Fox Clemons





**Photograph taken at the James Leach Cemetery in Penobscot
- the gravestone of a dedicated genealogist!**

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