

The
Hancock Historian

Newsletter of the
Hancock County Genealogical Society

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HANCOCK COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY MINUTES

Secretary's Report, June 11, 2022

The June meeting of HCGS was held virtually on June 11, 2022. The meeting was called to order by President Ralph Harris.

Minutes from the March and April meetings were read with apologies for the missed May meeting.

The treasurer reported April beginning balance of \$3,916.51 with the only activity the addition of \$.04 cents interest leaving April with an ending balance of \$3,916.55. In May there was a payment of \$13.92 for postage and \$.03 interest. The closing balance on May 31 was \$3,902.66. The report was accepted as read.

Under new business it was decided to try a hybrid meeting in July. The meeting will be live at the Ellsworth Public Library and also available on Zoom for those who are not able to attend. We decided Ralph and Charlene and Wayne would do a practice run on Tuesday morning, June 14th at 9:00am to make sure everything works.

The website was brought up and a committee was formed to work on updating and improving it. Shannon Byers was kind enough to volunteer to head it up along with Kevin, Ralph and Wayne. Shannon will start by bringing our meetings up to date and adding the *Hancock Historians* that are missing.

Kevin talked about the webinars his Southern California Genealogical group produce and is sending a list to Ralph to send to anyone interested.

Ralph and Wayne discussed options for his *Ellsworth American* index once it is finished in the next couple months. A digital version will be made available and Ralph will look at the cost for publishing a print version, possibly with a CD included so people could search the database.

The current issue of the newsletter was discussed and Wayne renewed calls for articles, items, etc. for future additions. Merle recommended a book on Plymouth by Ernest Gebler and Charlene recommended Nathan Dylan Goodwin's two series of DNA mysteries. Wayne suggested a book review column for the newsletter.

A general discussion of what everyone was doing followed.

The meeting was adjourned at about 11:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Fox Clemons, Secretary.

Hancock County Genealogical Society

Secretary's Report

July 9, 2022, we held our first hybrid meeting at the Ellsworth Library. Five members attended in person with others joining us via Zoom.

Cheryl Patten of Maine Old Cemetery Association presented a program on MOCA's history and mission of preserving the oldest cemeteries and gravestones. Several cemetery projects were discussed. Cheryl who is a long-time MOCA member was very informative and answered questions from the group.

On Saturday, August 13, 2022, our own Wayne Smith gave a talk on the obituary records he has been indexing. The records are from the Ellsworth American office and comprise many decades of obituaries. We are grateful to the Ellsworth American for loaning the books to Wayne and to Wayne for spending so much of his busy schedule compiling the index. Also, a big thank you to Ralph Harris for proofreading Wayne's index.

September 10th 2022, Judy Granger was our guest speaker. Once again, we had a hybrid meeting with three of us meeting in person at the Ellsworth Library and others joining on Zoom. Ms. Granger's talk was "Finding Pomp Russell: How an enslaved Infant grew to become a citizen of Berwick" the story of a baby born into slavery in Massachusetts was purchased and brought to Maine to live with a white family.

This was part one of two presently available. The second part was scheduled for the October 8th meeting, however technical difficulties prevented that meeting from being held. Ms. Granger will give the second part on Pomp Russell's wife at our January 14, 2023 meeting.

The November meeting will be held on Saturday the 12th at 10:00am and will be our annual meeting with election of officers for the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene Fox Clemons, Secretary.

From the Library – Autumn 2022

With the approach of the long dark days of winter in Maine, I thought this month I would actually play librarian and suggest some books to keep you entertained when you take a break from your genealogy research.

Many of you, I am sure, remember Bill Griffeth's 2016, ground breaking book, "The Stranger In My Genes" in which he recounted taking a DNA test because his cousin asked him to and finding out he was the victim of an NPE (non-paternal event). The family he had grown up in and researched quite thoroughly was not his paternal family. He shared the ups and downs of dealing with this sort of trauma. Well, Mr. Griffeth is back with the sequel, "Strangers No More." He has resolved his hesitancy to pursue researching his biological paternal family.

Along the way he uncovers hidden family secrets. This book will keep you reading into the wee hours. A fitting ending to his story.

Another biographical book, this one from 2013 "Philomena: The True Story of A Mother and the Son She Had to Give Away" by Martin Sixsmith was made into a movie starring Dame Judy Dench. Judy Stars as Philomena an unwed mother in Ireland, put into a Catholic home for unwed mothers where she was forced to give up her son. The book parallels her search for the son in Ireland and his search for his birth mother from his home in America.

"The Lost Family, How DNA Testing Upended One Family," by Libby Copeland traces one woman's relentless search for the truth behind her unusual results. Ms. Copeland does an excellent job of explaining the testing history and process as well as what each company has to offer clients. All the while uncovering a long held secret affecting many lives.

For those who enjoy a good mystery, historian and genealogist Nathan Dylan Goodwin has two phenomenal series going. His Forensic Genealogist series, set in Rye, England follows Morton Farrier as he endeavors to solve genealogical mysteries for his clients as well as the mystery of his own birth father. The series has nine books, most available as audio or eBooks as well as paperback. The Venator series, his second series takes place the United States and centers on genealogists using DNA and genealogy to solve cold case crimes. Detective Clay Tyler is tasked with going over his department's cold case files and contacts the Venator Group for their assistance. "The Chester Creek Murders" focuses on the cold case of three young women brutally murdered in dumped in Chester Creek by a serial killer. A spine tingling, page turner you will not want to put down. Book two in the series, "The Sawtooth Slayer" is due out October 28th. I guess you know where I will be spending that weekend!

For someone experiencing unexpected DNA results, "NPE, a Story Guide For Unexpected DNA Discoveries" by Leanne R. Hay offers down to earth advice for handling the emotional turmoil, how to contact new relatives, and how to tell the relatives you have grown up with. Having lived the event herself and with counselling, Ms. Hay is uniquely qualified to write on this much needed topic.

Happy Reading! Charlene

"SO I DID A BLOOD TEST ON A GARDEN FROG TO EXTRACT ITS DNA AND CONFIRM ITS IDENTITY. I DISCOVERED THE FROG WAS 70% BRITISH, 20% FRENCH, 7% ITALIAN, 2% DUTCH...

AND A TAD POLE."

President's Corner

I hope that our members have enjoyed this year of meetings and speakers. New genealogical information and records are coming online at a fast pace. Seeing new records online gives us all a better chance of finding our ancestors. Keep looking. You never know where the information you need may appear or give you a better clue of finding it.

Speaking of new records becoming available, Wayne's 4+ year project of indexing the deaths of Hancock County from the ledgers of the *Ellsworth American* is essentially done. He and his cousin Holly Hendricks are putting the final touches on the data using an Excel program. When completed, you can find a printed copy at the Ellsworth Public Library. This will be a fantastic index for researching deaths in Hancock County. Thanks, Wayne.

We are approaching the close of another year. The elections of officers will be part of our November meeting. We will continue to be on Zoom and some meetings may be a combination of in-person and Zoom. Looking forward to seeing you all next year.

Ralph H.

New genealogical material

Sorry, it's not Hancock County, but...

Bangor, Maine. Two city ledgers somehow made it to the Georgia/Florida state line and have been returned home. They have been donated to the Bangor Public Library. The first is a ledger of Bangor becoming a city, and the second is Bangor Property tax and liens on the property. Both of the ledgers are from the mid-1800s.

Other new records available are the Edward Funeral Home Records 1901-1996, an almost 8000-name index and the actual ledgers. Edward Funeral Home is in Madison, Maine. The records are currently at Taconnett Falls Genealogical Library in Winslow, at the Madison Historical Society, and at the Norridgewock Historical Society.

If anyone is interested in the Bangor Ledgers, I have a digital copy. The books themselves are not indexed, but if anyone needs a lookup of a name in the Funeral Home Records, I can help there also.

Ralph H.

An Unwelcome Visit from Hurricane Ian

On September 28, 2022, Hurricane Ian was almost a direct hit on my city of Fort Myers with rain and winds up to 160 mph at times, just shy of a Category 5 hurricane. I live about 6 miles from the West Coast, 2.5 miles from the Calashuasha River, and about 20 Miles from Fort Myers Beach, and 23 miles to Pine Island.

I decided to drive to Fort Myers Saturday, Oct. 8 and arrived Monday night. The longest part of the drive was from Jacksonville to Fort Myers which usually takes about 5 hours. I hit Jacksonville at 7 am and reached home in Fort Meyers at 9 pm. I-75 was a roadblock from Bradenton to Fort Myers at 1 mph. So I called back to Maine to see what the problem was. I-75 was closed due to flooding. So, I headed east to Arcadia and took the back roads to Fort Myers. No dice: washout, all 3 of the main roads were flooded. I drove 45 miles back to Bradenton, and called again to find a route on the west side of I-75. Traveling about 50 miles on Route 641 and Route 41 to I-75 was a 4-hour tour. No street lights, no gas, no nothing but power trucks. In Venice, the emergency power crews took over the Walmart parking lot for trucks, campers, and 18-wheelers of diesel fuel and huge generators for the hybrid trucks. It was a little city in a city. I knew when I left Maine there would be no power, so I packed up my camping gear, cans of soup, and crackers and unhooked the whole house generator and the chainsaw, and drove off into the sunrise behind me.

Fort Myers Beach had a storm surge of 17 feet. That's almost the height of a two-story building. From the coastline of the Beach to Estero Blvd. is about 400 feet. In this, 400 feet of the building were flattened and trees were wiped out. Also, across the Blvd. buildings were lost. Most of the island was underwater at one time.

Pine Island is in about the same condition but the bridge to the island was also destroyed, and a temporary bridge is currently in place.

As to the famous Sanibel Island, the causeway to the island was washed out in several places. The island is allowing residents and business owners back to the island by obtaining a special pass. There are no services for water, sewer, etc. available at this time. And people who obtain a pass to go to the island must get transportation on and off the island by boat only.

As to Fort Myers, where I winter, most of the damage was residential: shingles lost, trees, and lanai. Clean-up has begun by the residents and the roadsides look like dumping grounds waiting for the city to pick up. The city has started the process, not by the usual means of a large garbage truck, but using pulp trucks and cherry pickers for agricultural waste.

My personal losses were shingles to half of the roof, a lanai which is now twisted and the main support beam is broken, four screens to the windows, and water damage finally appeared a few days ago inside, and also a palm tree. Most of the roofs in the area are colorful, blue, green, and brown traps; mine is green for 54 ft.

The next morning, two of my neighbors and I had a tailgate party each morning with HOT perked coffee and waffles and strawberries for three days. Finally, power returned to the residents, and on 10/17 we received Internet and TV back on. Oh, and the scammers are out in full force wanting to put a new roof on. I've had one a day for the last week.

Returning to Maine on 10/20 and then returning to Florida for the winter.

- Ralph H.



Hancock County Genealogical Society 2023 Membership Application

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Families/Areas being researched: _____

Please list any queries that you have:

Dues for 2023: \$10.00 per individual or family: _____

Additional tax-deductible contribution: _____

Total enclosed: _____

Please print out this form and mail it with your payment to:

Hancock County Genealogical Society
c/o Charlene Clemons
96 Mud Creek Rd.
Hancock, ME 04604



Please check one of the following:

I give permission for my contact info to be shared with Society members.

Please do not share my contact info.

Monthly meetings are held the 2nd Saturday of each month at 10:00 A.M. except in December. Until the Covid-19 pandemic is over, most meetings are being held via Zoom. Meetings are open to all those who have paid their dues for the current year. Invitations to the Zoom sessions will be sent out a few days before each meeting.

Please remember to notify Charlene of any email or address changes at:

hcgsmembership@yahoo.com

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