



FALMOUTH  
GENEALOGICAL  
SOCIETY

# FGS Newsletter

APRIL—JUNE 2026

VOLUME 38, ISSUE 2

## Monthly Talk Recap

### I Knew I Was Adopted — How I Filled in the Story with Research



Mary O'Keeffe, FGS Member

FGS member Mary O'Keeffe presented *I Knew I Was Adopted — How I Filled in the Story with Research* on 17 January 2026. Mary shared that her passion for genealogy started more than 25 years ago. A self-identified “detective” by nature, her desire to complete her own puzzle as an adoptee began in earnest in 2018. Mary underscored that her adoptive family is, and always will be her family, but acknowledged questions about her birth family: Where did I come from? What were the circumstances of my birth family? How might my life have been different?

While Mary knew that her birth name was Karen Cullen and her birth mother's name was Ann Agnes Cullen, the 2007 Massachusetts law that allowed

her to receive a copy of her birth certificate confirming this information was a very rewarding moment. Using online resources at [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com), [FamilySearch](https://www.familysearch.org) and [American Ancestors](https://www.americanancestors.com) (particularly helpful for Irish newspapers) and DNA results from [Ancestry DNA](https://www.ancestry.com), [23andMe](https://www.23andme.com), [MyHeritage](https://www.myheritage.com) and [GED Match](https://www.gedmatch.com), Mary cast a wide net for more discovery. She also subscribed to [RootsIreland.ie](https://www.rootsireland.ie) that provided pre-1864 church records and explored Irish census records.

With methodical research, Mary learned that her mother came to Massachusetts from Ireland and lived with an aunt's family while going to nursing school. A DNA match linked her to a cousin who provided photos of her birth mother. And she discovered her Irish roots led to Leitrim. A trip to Leitrim provided an amazing opportunity to extend her knowledge of her Cullen family. And, more research and DNA work led to the discovery of her birth father, Patrick Bernard Keany. Her mother's obituary (in New Zealand) provided more information — and more research avenues. Mary's journey has been highlighted by meeting and getting to know members of her extended family.

## FGS' NEW ADDRESS

PO Box 144  
Falmouth MA 02541-0144

## Calendar of Events

Meetings are held on Saturdays at the Falmouth Public Library in the Hermann Foundation Room and virtually on Zoom unless noted otherwise. See [falgen.org](https://www.falgen.org) for updated information.

Meeting start time is 10:00 am;  
10:00–10:30 Refreshments and  
Socializing; 10:30–Noon: Program.

Please note changes in meeting  
dates due to room availability at the  
library.

**Saturday, April 4**  
(1st Saturday)

10:00 am

**How to Get Your Town Engaged  
in Cemetery Care**

Robbin Kelley

**Saturday, May 9**  
(2nd Saturday)

10:00 am

**Colonial American Migration  
Routes and Modes of Travel**

Annette Burke Lyttle, CG

**Saturday, June 6**  
(1st Saturday)

10:00 am

**ANNUAL MEETING &  
Revolutionary War Research  
Using Lineage Society Resources**

David W. Powell, FGS Member

## How Can FGS Help You?

By Tim Martin, FGS President



You've heard me say many times that we are living in an amazing time for doing genealogy. With a few key-strokes, we can access massive subscription databases, watch endless free tutorials on YouTube, or join social media groups that con-

nect us instantly. In this landscape of abundant, free information, a local society like ours must answer a difficult question: Why do we matter?

I believe FGS matters — and thrives — because we focus on what the internet cannot do.

While internet sites provide data, when we share our experiences with people we know, we find context. While social media offer comments, we offer genuine community.

We know you often need more than generic advice; you need specific guidance on discovering your unique story and help to break down brick walls rather than being offered links to more paid sites. You need a place where your discoveries are celebrated by people who appreciate the value of knowing your story.

Whether through our social time to start relationships, offering interactive workshops, hearing the stories and experiences of our members, or hybrid meetings that respect your time, we are here to serve your needs.

Let us know how we can help you. We are committed to evolving. With your input, we can respond successfully to the question: Why do we matter? Let's build a society that doesn't just survive the digital age, but fosters relationships among us, bringing us closer together. We are better together!

### Monthly Talk Recap

## Falmouth's Whaling Heritage

On Saturday, 14 February 2026, Joe Mattingly, a Falmouth Museums on the Green docent, presented *Falmouth's Whaling Heritage*. With an engaging, story-telling style, Joe took listeners on a journey when Falmouth was the home port of 13 whaling ships that made 52 whaling voyages, mainly to the Pacific between 1820 and 1864. He said that while Falmouth had a total population of no more than 2,600, the town produced an astounding 65 ship captains. He added that six whalers were built in Falmouth, most at Bar Neck Wharf in



**Joe Mattingly, Docent, Falmouth Museums on the Green**

Woods Hole, under the oversight of Elija Swift, considered the patriarch of Falmouth whaling.

Joe reminded the audience that men undertook the dangers of whaling — along with the extended absences from family — for the bounty of whale oil for lighting and lubrication, spermaceti for candles, ambergris for perfumes, and Baleen, the plastic of the day. He added that whaling was important to Falmouth's overall economy relying on many trades, including coopers, carpenters, blacksmiths, sailmakers, and more. While little

evidence of these industries remains, the Woods Hole Candle

*Continued on Page 11*

## Monthly Talk Recap

# Planning a Trip to Your Ancestral Home — A Case Study to a German Town

Jeff Schiebe presented *Planning a Trip to Your Ancestral Home — A Case Study to a German Town* on Saturday 21 March 2026. In his inspiring and detailed presentation, Jeff outlined how to get the most out of a trip with detailed pre-planning. He also provided guidance on maximizing the actual visit and doing the trip follow-up. While he used a personal trip to Germany as a case study, his process is easily applicable to U.S. and international destinations — and even virtual visits.

Jeff took us to his maternal ancestors (the Klemms) roots in Wernigerode, Germany. Throughout his talk, he stressed that he pursues this travel genealogy so that he can better understand the people, the times in which they lived, and perhaps what might have influenced their decisions. In short, he said “I want to go beyond the dates”.

He stressed the importance of pre-trip planning. He advised travelers to learn about their destination within the timeframe of their ancestors, collect and confirm what they already know, and identify what new questions they’re trying to answer. And, make a detailed itinerary, checking for open days and times of desired stops.

Jeff strongly recommended hiring a local genealogist to help throughout the process. [Author’s note: a quick



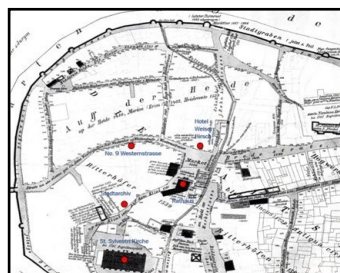
**Jeff Schiebe with a book he found in a local book store mentioning his 4th great grandfather's butcher shop.**

Google search suggests the Association of Professional Genealogists (APG) as a good starting place.] He said that the consultant’s familiarity with the place and available resources leads to effective and efficient research. A specific tip: if you need to send money abroad, try [www.wise.com](http://www.wise.com).

He also encouraged listeners to use AI to do trip planning research, especially for identifying research sites and potential sources. Jeff used AI to learn about and identify sources for Guild records since the Klemms were master butchers. He also used AI to search for old photographs of Wernigerode from his ancestors’ timeframe.

As with any genealogical research, Jeff said travel genealogy leads to more questions and more research. From this trip, he knows he needs to do more research on Guilds, delve into Archion church records, and hone his skill reading German script.

With Jeff’s presentation and helpful handout (available at [www.falgen.org](http://www.falgen.org) in the Members section), begin planning your “bucket list” trip today.



**1639 Map of Wernigerode, another bookstore find.**

## FGS Talks on YouTube: Members Only Benefit

Miss a monthly talk? Want to rewatch a presentation? Need a speaker’s handout? FGS Members can access most recorded monthly presentations and speaker handouts in the “Members Only” section of the FGS website at [falgen.org](http://falgen.org). If you need the password, contact Tim Martin at [fgspresident@gmail.com](mailto:fgspresident@gmail.com).

## FGS Website: First Stop Resource

The FGS Website ([falgen.org](http://falgen.org)) is an outstanding resource for its members and the community. You can find a myriad of helpful links to genealogical research resources as well as documents to download.

## Keep Learning: On-Line Programs

On-line lectures and courses, many free, are available on a multitude of genealogical topics. Check out the following for classes to expand your family history research.

**The Massachusetts Genealogical Council**  
[massgencouncil.org](http://massgencouncil.org)

**American Ancestors**  
[americanancestors.org](http://americanancestors.org)

**Cape Cod Genealogical Society**  
[wcapecodgenealogy.org](http://wcapecodgenealogy.org)

**National Genealogical Society**  
<https://conferencekeeper.org/calendar/>



**[falgen.org](http://falgen.org)**

## How One Woman's Adoption Story Became My Genealogy Origin Story

By Danielle Beardsley



**Edith Belle (Jones) Born (1898-1962),  
Danielle Beardsley's great-grandmother.**

Edith Belle (Jones) Born and Marycarol (Born) Beardsley. These women are my origin story for how and why I not only became interested in genealogy but can be found at the help desk in the Falmouth Public Library every Tuesday afternoon.

I never met my Great Gramma Edith, but I saw her every day, as her stunning childhood portrait hung in Gramma's living room above the fireplace, where she still watches over things to this day. We would say hello and talk to her as if she were the one sitting in the rocking chair next to the hearth. As for Gramma Marycarol, I was lucky enough to have her in my life until she passed in 2012.

Gramma Marycarol was never shy about how she came to be Great Gramma Edith's daughter. According to the family lore, Marycarol was left on a church doorstep as a baby before being adopted by Edith and

Emile Born. There is some confusion as to whether she was born or adopted in North Dakota or Indiana, and without any official documents found yet, that mystery is still unsolved. But she lived in Indiana for as long as I knew her, in the same home that is still in the family today.

I always wondered how Great Gramma Edith came to adopt Gramma Marycarol. But the other questions rambling around in my head were about Gramma MC herself. Did her biological parents ever know what happened to her? Did she have more family out there somewhere, looking for her? The search for Gramma MC's birth family — if they were still around — pushed me to stumble into the Falmouth Public Library one Tuesday afternoon. At a little table tucked behind the library service desk sat a group of brilliant-looking folks who immediately started diving into my family tree.

At the end of the help session, I walked away with more questions than I walked in with, as well as an understanding that I was getting in over my head. But I came back, week after week, to discover what I could and to learn how to uncover more. Crazy enough, I found out certain ancestors were first settlers and founded various areas of New England and New York, were — allegedly — associated in some way with Al Capone and Lucky Luciano, made it possible for Connecticut to have a zoo, and may have had a part in the beheading of Mary, Queen of Scots.

I still have no idea who gave Gramma Marycarol up to the kindness of Edith Born, how Edith came to take Marycarol in, or anything about Gramma Marycarol's birth family.



**Marycarol (Born) Beardsley (1934-2012),  
Danielle's grandmother pictured with her  
adoptive Grandmother, Mary Elva  
"Minnie" (Stilwell) Jones (1861-1955).**

With the help of the CIA-level researchers of the Falmouth Genealogical Society, I have, however, shaken skeletons loose, uncovered secret family members, and rediscovered family members we thought were long gone who were living a secret life a few hours away. While not everyone who comes to the help desk will find such riveting, television miniseries-level drama in their family tree, it happens from time to time.

I thought I was going to ask one or two questions and walk out with the answers that day. Easy peasy! How little did I know. Three years later, here I am, now a person those hopeful faces look at when they come with a question they think will be answered in one help session. While I still do not have the answer to the original question that drove me to start my genealogy journey, I can't wait for the next week to see who walks behind the service desk to our little table. And, hopefully, one day I'll be able to untangle the knot of Marycarol and Edith.

## FGS News and Noteworthy

Send your brief update to Caroline Anderson at [caroline@gregandcaroline.net](mailto:caroline@gregandcaroline.net)

### In remembrance of Jan Zlatev (1940-2025)

by *Ralph Wadleigh*



On 17 January 2026, Wenda Windbigler and I represented the Fal-

mouth Genealogical Society at **Jan Zlatev's** memorial service at Falmouth's First Congregational Church, held to celebrate her life upon her passing on 1 November 2025. As some of you will recall, Jan was a member of the FGS Board of Directors for many years representing FGS's Library Committee until she resigned in 2022. She also was a faithful member of our Help Desk where she served as our Swedish expert. Jan was a warm generous individual, always ready to help others. She brightened her surroundings with a lovely smile and gentle manner. At her memorial, her daughter Anita recalled her service to others through her many activities at the First Congregational Church. One of her precepts was to always be busy, either by working on craft projects, researching her Swedish heritage, or by caring for her cat. We also learned that despite being a chemistry major, she did not like to cook. Who knew? We miss you, Jan. Rest in Peace.

**Tom Brewer's** work to uncover a link to the Mayflower began with family lore. With the family name Sparrow and a Sparrow house in Plymouth, his mother believed they were descendants. As Tom said, "she was right, sort of". With research assistance from American Ancestors, the



true lineage took shape with a surprise find — a name change. Sometime between 1835-1851, Warren Rogers (Tom's 2nd great-grandfather) assumed his mother's maiden name of Sparrow and became Warren Sparrow. With this piece of information and DNA confirmation, Tom successfully documented that he descends from Mayflower passengers Thomas Rogers and his son Joseph Rogers (his 9th and 8th great grandfathers respectively) and received his certificate of membership from the General Society of Mayflower Descendants.

Kilmacthomas, County of Waterford, Ireland, the birthplace of John J. Donahue (1871-1957) taken by his granddaughter, **Shirley Lombardo** during a December 2025 trip. Shirley added that in the 1890s John was a champion heel and toe walker in Worcester County with a personal best time of a 6 minute, 58 second mile.



## Welcome Members

We are eager to learn more about your family history research. Please join us for our monthly programs or visit us at the Tuesday Help Desk. If you have questions about your membership, contact Caroline McKee Anderson at [fgsmembership@gmail.com](mailto:fgsmembership@gmail.com) or 206-300-7020 .

**Devin B. Hunt**  
**H. Carter Hunt**  
**Laurinda Morway**  
**Loretta O'Brien**  
**Frances Shibata**

## Membership Counts

FGS Memberships expire May 31 each year. Watch your mail in early May for your membership renewal packet. See article on page 9 for more information.

## Volunteer Today

FGS needs you and your talents! To explore volunteer opportunities, contact Dottie Priestley at [rpriest1567@comcast.net](mailto:rpriest1567@comcast.net).

## Join the FGS Facebook Group

Engage with others who share your interest in genealogy and family history. Click with Control key on Facebook Logo to go to FGS page.



## Up Next:

### We're Asking You.

Share a wedding photo from your family collection.

Who are the bride and groom? Where and when was it taken? Is there a story behind the smiles?

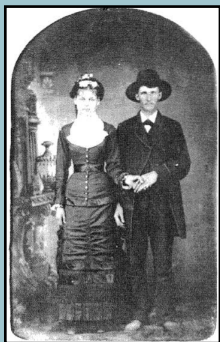
Include how you're related to the happy couple.

Please send your photos and short summary (75 words) to Caroline Anderson at [caroline@gregandcaroline.net](mailto:caroline@gregandcaroline.net)

### Wedding day photos for Tim Martin's maternal grandparents and great grandparents.



Grover Manson Mood and Bertha Izora Crum were married on 26 January 1908 in Monroe County, Indiana.



John Wesley Mood and Martha Weaver were married on 3 December 1882 in Greene County, Indiana.

## We Asked. You Responded.

We asked you to provide a favorite baby photo from your collection. Thank you to Sue McGuire, Denise Nicas, Charlet Emery Roskovic, Wenda Windbigler, Ann Worthington and Caroline Anderson for providing these adorable and treasured images.

### FROM CHARLET ROSKOVICS



Kenneth Orris "K.O." Emery (1914-1998), Charlet Roskovic's father. Charlet wrote that her father was born in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, Canada but spent most of his youth in Fort Worth, Texas where she suspects these photos were taken. In 1962, after teaching geology at the University of Southern California for 16 years, he moved his family to Woods Hole joining WHOI's Geology Department and retired in 1969 after becoming the first Dean of the WHOI/MIT Joint Graduate Program.

### FROM SUE MCGUIRE



LaVerne Eberwein Rumberger (1914-1981), Sue McGuire's mother. Sue writes that the photo of her mother atop the milk can is so fitting to the life she lived growing up on a farm in Missouri — and showcased her grandfather's sense of humor.

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FROM ANN WORTHINGTON



Joseph Clifford Ridings Stone (1886-1970), Ann Worthington's maternal grandfather. Ann wrote that Joseph was born in Waltham, Mass., son of William Harrod Stone and Alice Ridings. She added that she has the "dress" Joseph wore in the photo and that it was used as a slightly large baptismal dress for one of their grandsons.



Leon Grover Chase (1885-1977), Ann Worthington's paternal grandfather. Ann wrote that Leon was born in Boston, Mass., son of Edward F. Chase and Emma A. Fuller. He was the only child of three to survive into adulthood. She included touching photos of a poem, titled "To Leon from Papa" and a handwritten note, "Lock of Leon's Hair cut by himself Jan 23-1889-".

FROM DENISE NICAS



Denise Nicas writes that this photo of cousins was likely taken around 1901. From left to right: Howard Ashworth Lamb (1897-1951), Denise's grandmother Florence May Ashworth (1898-1998), Ruth Lindley Ashworth (1896-1982), and Ralph William Ashworth (1897-1970).

FROM CAROLINE ANDERSON



Left: Robert Roy McKee, Jr. (1898-1967), Caroline McKee Anderson's paternal grandfather. Robert was born in Brooklyn, New York to Robert Roy McKee, Sr. and Elizabeth Snow Wilson. Right: Dorothy Lloyd Curtis (1900-1976), Caroline McKee Anderson's paternal grandmother. Dorothy was born in Brooklyn, New York to Benjamin Franklin Curtis, Jr. and Jennie A. Clarke.



Caroline wrote that while Robert and Dorothy may have known each other from their Brooklyn neighborhood, they both attended and graduated from Erasmus Hall High School. They were married on 29 April 1925 at the First Reformed (Dutch) Church, Brooklyn.

FROM WENDA WINDBIGLER



Elwood Bernard James (1863-1901), Wenda Windbigler's great-grandfather, worked for M&M James & James Mercantile, one of the largest outfitters for pioneers heeding the call to "go West".

## The Reading Room

Send book (or movie) recommendations to Caroline McKee Anderson at [caroline@gregandcaroline.net](mailto:caroline@gregandcaroline.net)

For this issue, we share what we're reading.

**Falmouth's Civil War Service: A History and Roster** (2025) by Tom A.C. Ellis, Jr.: A comprehensive resource detailing the 1861-1865 contributions of Falmouth, Mass., including a detailed roster, biographical sketches of soldiers and the roles and contributions by women and men of African descent from the town.

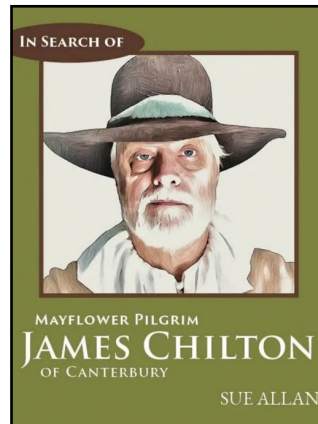
**The Demon of Unrest** (2024) by Erik Larson: A gripping account of the tumultuous months between Abraham Lincoln's election and the start of the Civil War.

**Filled with Fortitude: Pilgrim Elizabeth Tilley** (2025) by Sally Hobert Whiting: A detailed historical novel that centers on Elizabeth's experiences as a teenager on the Mayflower in 1620, surviving the first harsh winter which killed her parents, marrying fellow passenger John Howland, and becoming a matriarch in Plymouth colony.

## Book Review

# In Search of Mayflower Pilgrim James Chilton of Canterbury by Sue Allan

By Ralph Wadleigh



*Cover artwork used with permission of the author.*

Search of" books published by American Ancestors of Boston. While at first this book might appeal only to Chilton's descendants, the research methodology employed by Sue Allan exhibits steps that should be followed by all genealogists confronted by a paucity of recorded facts about a particular person. James Chilton was one of the oldest Mayflower passengers sailing with his wife and youngest daughter Mary. Both he and his wife died in the first winter, but Mary survived supposedly being the first to jump ashore at Plymouth.

Many amateur family historians stop researching when they have discovered the immigrant ancestor and fail to continue research into the "old country". In this volume, Allan assembles information from previous researchers and combines it with her own to provide a picture of the life and times of James Chilton in Canterbury and Sandwich, England as well as Leiden, Holland. Sources include numerous deeds, church records, court records and archival holdings. Allan places Chilton's grandparents and parents within small separatist groups which had

I was drawn to this publication because my late wife was a descendant of Mayflower passenger James Chilton. It is one of several "In

developed in the Canterbury and later Sandwich areas.

Chilton and his immediate forebears lived in challenging times. He himself was born about 1555/6 and lived during the reigns of Queen Mary, Elizabeth I, and James I, featuring almost continuous violence between Catholics and Protestants.

Besides religious turmoil, residents of his home area in Southeastern England, were continually threatened by Spain until 1588 when the Spanish Armada failed. Allan also notes the stresses of plague, drought, and a 1580 earthquake.

In 1620, James Chilton was about 64. Why would a man of that age decide to seek an unknown future in America together with a similarly aged wife? Allan makes the case that he chose to leave because he was attacked in Leiden by a mob of young ruffians angered at his identification with the English separatists. Furthermore, she proposes that he saw no future in Holland because he had no surviving sons to inherit his assets.

For the writer, this volume developed valuable insights into the life and times of an important family ancestor. It made the Chiltons, both men and women, more human and less simply names and dates, a worthy objective for all genealogical research.

The book is available at the American Ancestors bookstore: <https://shop.americanancestors.org/collections/sue-allan> where you can also find publications by Sue Allan on Susanna White-Winslow, William Brewster, William Bradford, and Edward Southworth.

## Get Equipped: Genealogy Tips

### Getting Started with Genealogy

By Tim Martin

Getting started in Genealogy and finding the identity and stories of your ancestors can certainly feel overwhelming. Here's some encouragement.

1. Start with yourself. It will be important as you move back in time that you avoid mistakes that result in entire branches of your tree being found to be incorrect. Collect identifying facts that allow you to uniquely identify each person. Find dates and places as possible for at least births, any marriages, and deaths.
2. Move backward in time, collecting information on both parents and their additional spouses when present. Find and identify all siblings.
3. Formulate and stick to specific plans and questions. This allows you to focus in the midst of complexity.
4. Develop a consistent and functional filing system.
5. Seek Original Records. Whenever possible seek out original records, not "derivative records" that are often compilations made years later.
6. Evaluate your sources. Who created the record, and when? Were they in a position to accurately know the stated "facts"?
7. Create citations for important facts and records that allow someone to later recover the record you found.
8. Study Social History to develop the story and context of your ancestors. In addition to books and specialty websites, AI agents like ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Claude are excellent at general and localized history.
9. Ask for help! Find people and institutions who do genealogy in the area you are working. Most genealogists love to be helpful.
10. Performing your work on a computer or website greatly helps!



## Membership Renewal Campaign Begins 1 May 2026



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The Falmouth Genealogical Society membership year runs from June 1-May 31. Watch your mail in early May for your membership renewal packet. Your renewal by 1 June is greatly appreciated.

We have made a few changes to membership for 2026-2027.

Membership dues and additional gifts provide the essential support that sustains our programs and activities. Thanks to the generosity of members, we are proud to offer our monthly talks, library Help Desk sessions, and community outreach free of charge.

To maintain this standard of excellence and keep pace with rising operational expenses, we have made a modest increase in annual dues — the first since 2016. Individual and Family memberships for 2026-2027 will

be \$35. This adjustment ensures we can continue to provide the high-quality programming and resources you value.

We are also introducing enhanced membership levels, offering members additional ways to support and strengthen our work. We encourage you to consider renewing at the Silver (\$100) or Gold (\$250) level. Your increased investment will help enhance our programs, expand our services, and secure our long-term financial stability.

Your membership — at any level — is a meaningful expression of commitment to our shared mission. We are deeply grateful for your continued involvement and generosity, and we look forward to another year of *Connecting People with Their Family and History*.

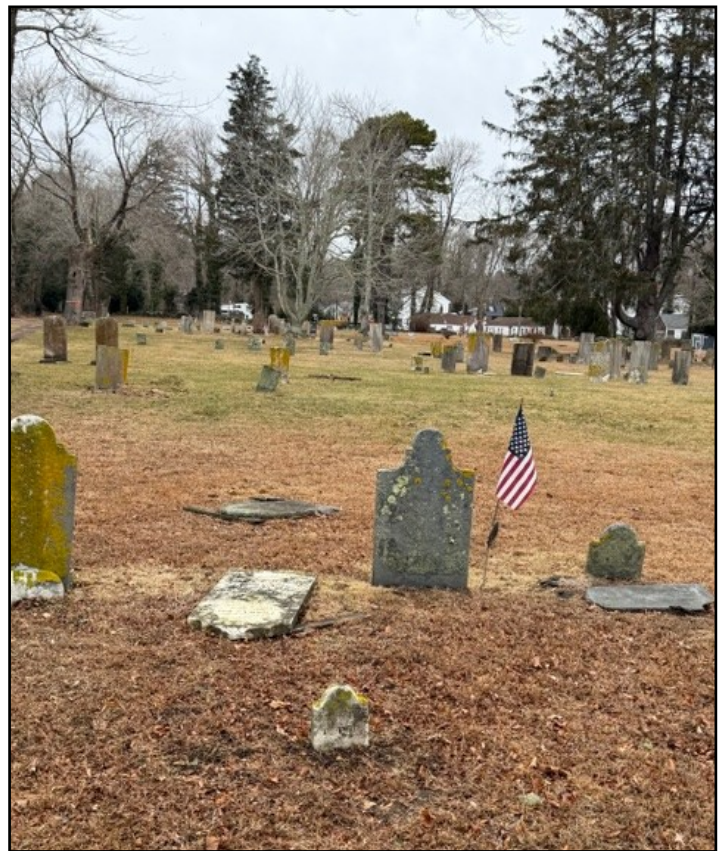
# Falmouth Cemetery Project Update

By Linda Heald

In the winter months, the cemeteries are by and large quiet. The stones mostly stand above any snowfall, this year that was not the case with the February 22-23 snowstorm. Like many Cape residents, our roads were not plowed, and driving was curtailed so getting out to take photos was nearly impossible. I'm sure there are cemeteries with many branches down. Pictures after the storm would capture a silent ruggedness that one could witness as these headstones could tell us about earlier big storms that "they" have seen over the decades.

Spring has arrived and the winter cleanup begins in earnest. New headstones can be placed. The cemeteries will gear up for Memorial Day. The cemeteries will be busy with visitors and trades alike.

On April 6 at Falmouth Town Meeting, there will be a vote up or down to award Community Preservation monies to Oak Grove Cemetery and the Old Burial Ground (OBG) Phase II. Extensive conservation efforts at OBG will include repairing broken headstones, erecting fallen headstones, cleaning headstones, and providing new signage. We are also in the planning stages to include work on the entrance gate, and the removal of some stumps and invasive plants in OBG. This effort has been needed for a very long time. OBG is town-owned thus DPW has the lead. Ralph Wadleigh and I are working closely with them. Phase I will be performed this Spring which includes 22 headstones on the Historical Society walk of notable Falmouth people.



Fallen headstones surround this Revolutionary War soldier's grave at Old Burial Ground.

## FGS in the Community

On 2 March 2026 , FGS members attended the Falmouth Community Veterans Center (FCVC) Genealogy Group during its weekly meeting. Tim Martin provided a brief "Introduction to Genealogy". They also shared information about FGS programs and resources and explored ways the two groups could collaborate. FGS members participating were Mary Anne Conboy, Deb Martin, Tim Martin, and Diana Stadtmiller.



## Falmouth's Whaling Heritage

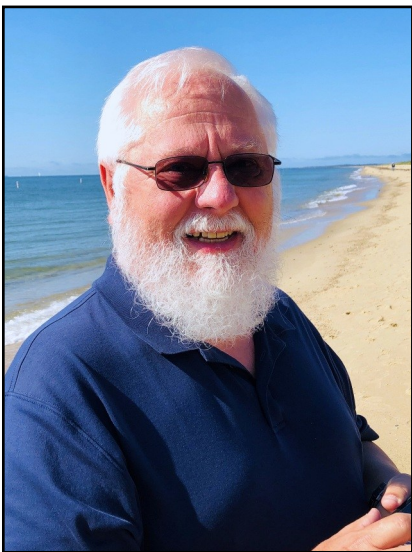
Factory on Water Street was built in 1841-1842 to process spermaceti oil into candles.

Joe introduced us to many of the whaling captains and their families — most with very familiar names: Lewis and Eunice (Davis) Lawrence, and Mary (Chipman) Lawrence, Henry and Harriet (Butler) Gifford, Silas and Harriet (Robinson) Jones, Warren Nye Brown, Ephraim Eldridge, and Elijah Swift. Of note, he recommended reading Mary (Chipman) Lawrence's journal, *The Captain's Best Mate*, that chronicled a four-year trip to the Pacific.

Elijah Swift, a prominent Falmouth whaler, like many town residents, returned from the south with rice, indigo, and most important live oak trees that were used to build ships. With a navy contract, Swift prospered and became the owner/part-owner of seven whalers.

Joe detailed the hardships endured—low or no pay, illness, deplorable living conditions, desertions, and drownings. And with vivid imagery, Joe took us on the harrowing chase for the whale, the long and difficult trip back to the ship with the captured whale in tow, and the dangerous multi-day task of processing the whale.

## Introducing Tom Brewer, FGS Web Manager



William T. (Tom) Brewer, III

We are delighted to introduce Tom Brewer as FGS's Web Manager. This is a key volunteer role as FGS has embarked on the exciting but daunting task of migrating to a new web platform. While having limited free time, Tom was looking for an outside activity where he could meet new people. He has been working on his genealogical journey for years. So, when he discovered that FGS was a true genealogy group, not focused solely on Falmouth history, he joined. Tom has an extensive background in computer technology both at a major computer manufacturer and as an owner of a small computer consulting company, both

located in the Hudson Valley of New York. While he admits that becoming web manager makes him a bit nervous, he says that it pushes him to learn new things and allows him to be creative again. In tackling the new website project, Tom hopes to create an inviting and attractive environment that will make FGS' work shine. He believes that if we can accomplish this, membership will continue to grow. He quotes Ray Kinsella, played by Kevin Coster in the 1989 film *Field of Dreams*, "If you build it, he will come." (Often misquoted as "If you build it, they will come.").

Caroline Anderson, Tim Martin, and Dottie Priestley are delighted to be working with Tom on the web project.

## Get Help with Your Family Research

### Monthly Talks

Each month FGS hosts a talk on some aspect of genealogy or history. Expert speakers — drawn locally and nationally — dive into a wide range of topics from research strategies to interpreting DNA results. Meetings also provide an opportunity for members and guests to meet others interested in family research. Programs are held one Saturday each month from 10:00 am–noon at the Falmouth Public Library. Most talks are also available via Zoom. View the calendar at [falgen.org](http://falgen.org).

### Research Help Desk

Just getting started in family history research? Have you hit a brick wall? Want to learn how to research at [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com) or [FamilySearch](http://FamilySearch)? Visit the FGS Research Help Desk.

FGS volunteers assist both members and community individuals with their genealogical questions. Sessions are held every Tuesday afternoon from 2:00–4:00 pm at the Falmouth Public Library on Main Street. No appointment is needed for this complimentary drop-in session.

### Team Up

Team Up offers personalized, focused genealogy help. Through one-on-one consultations or small-group sessions, experienced FGS researchers help answer questions, break through brick walls, introduce new tools, and suggest new strategies to move your family history research forward.

Based on your question, we'll identify one or more members with expertise in this area of research. FGS members have priority for free Team Up sessions. To schedule a consult, contact Tim Martin at [fgspresident@gmail.com](mailto:fgspresident@gmail.com).



FALMOUTH  
GENEALOGICAL  
SOCIETY

## Falmouth Genealogical Society, Inc.

### NEW ADDRESS:

PO Box 144  
Falmouth MA 02541-0144  
[falgen.org](http://falgen.org)

### Officers

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*Clerk*  
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*Past President*  
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Linda Heald  
Dottie Priestley

### FGS Newsletter

Caroline Anderson, Co-Editor  
Dottie Priestley, Co-Editor  
[rpriest1567@comcast.net](mailto:rpriest1567@comcast.net)

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

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## Meet Your Board

### Ralph Wadleigh, Clerk



Ralph Wadleigh believes that genealogy and history are inexorably linked. And he comes to both disciplines by lineage and by education. He got his start when he received a family tree chart compiled by his mother and aunt when they were in high school. “They did a good job, you could say I’ve been proving their chart ever since,” said Ralph. The education link — a B.A. in history from Brown.

Ralph has been a member of FGS since 2003. He’s done it all — programs, NERGC representative, President and more. He currently serves on the Board as Clerk. His favorite activity is the Research Help Desk on Tuesdays at the Falmouth Public Library. He said, this is where we can really help people and inspire their interest in family history. Whether they’re planning a trip to an ancestral homeland or want to apply to a lineage society, we usually can provide some assistance, he added. At the Research Help Desk, Ralph is also the “history guy”, rattling off dates, places, and people related to historical events — providing important context to ancestors’ lives.

For Ralph, this context is central to his approach to genealogy. He says that when you explore the detail of peoples’ lives — occupations, economic circumstances, events like wars — you bring them to life. In short, these ancestors become people rather than just a series of dates.

Personal letters are among Ralph’s favorite genealogical sources and often lead to adventures or interesting research projects. A “letter of introduction” for his 4th great-grandmother, Sibella Trill, led to an amazing trip to Kirkwall, Orkney, Scotland for Ralph and his late wife Judy. In another letter, parents were looking for their son who had gone missing from a whaler. With a bit of research, Ralph “found” him on Nantucket and was able to reconstruct a bit of his story.

Ralph and Judy, who died in 2024, were partners in music, genealogy, work, and travel. As Ralph said, they met in a church choir and sang together throughout their lives. Beyond genealogy, Ralph enjoys reading and attending concerts and theater performances. Ralph and Judy have two sons and four grandchildren.

Ralph retired in 2001 after a 35-year career in International Banking that included exciting stints in Venezuela, Thailand, Toronto, and New York before returning to Massachusetts — and eventually to Cape Cod.

When asked what he would say to someone thinking about genealogy, he replied, “Just Do It! You’ll be surprised by all you learn.



Ralph and Judy Wadleigh (left foreground) at Orkney, Scotland