RIGS Goes Virtual for May 17th Meeting!

Due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus pandemic, the Rhode Island Genealogical Society has moved its May 17, 2020 meeting to the online meeting platform Zoom. The meeting is limited to 100 attendees, however, the entire program will be taped, and available within a day or two online. Members will receive an email invitation to the meeting in early May giving a link to use on the day and time of the meeting to gain access to the live presentation. You will be in the audience, not on camera. The link is for use by RIGS members only; do not share your link. A few days AFTER the meeting, all RIGS members, whether they attended or not, will receive a link to view the taped presentation online. If you do not receive your initial email invitation by May 12, contact info@rigensoc.org and request a link.

We are thrilled to present two of Rhode Island’s best-known genealogical experts! Maureen Taylor, the Photo Detective, and Cherry Bamberg, editor of Rhode Island Roots.

Photo Detective Roadshow

Have you ever wished that I could come to your meeting to look at your pictures? Well now I can. It’s a virtual show and tell. This is a totally interactive event in which members submit photos ahead of time and then meet virtually to learn about the specific clues uncovered in the photos.

I show each picture and answer their question about the image. I guide them through the telling with a few questions. Along the way, I’ll ask questions, point out identification clues, and offer theories about the picture. Don’t be surprised if there is a big reveal. I offer research advice to follow up on the new clues.

NOTE: Members should email their photo (along with their question) to info@rigensoc.org. The deadline for submission is May 10, 2020.

Maureen Taylor is an internationally recognized expert on historic photograph identification, photo preservation and family history research. Sought out by clients all over the world from as far away as New Zealand, her pioneering work in historic photo research is unprecedented, evidenced by her success in solving photo mysteries. The author of several books, scholarly articles and online

continued on page 2
Become a Virtual Volunteer

Help Transcribe the Casey Family Papers

Thomas Lincoln Casey and his son Edward Pearce Casey transformed Washington D.C. with their work on iconic buildings including the Washington Monument and the Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress. More than 40,500 pages from their professional and personal papers (part of the larger Casey Family Papers Collection) provide fascinating insight into Washington politics and the private lives of this powerful RI family.

Help make the Casey Family Papers even more accessible by transcribing the handwritten documents. Do as much or as little as you'd like, when and where you'd like. Work at your own pace and choose what interests you most from letters, diaries, financial records, military records, notebooks, legal documents, architectural drawings, and more.

Take a few moments to review their tips for transcribing, common abbreviations and spellings. Create an account, log in and select a page to transcribe and begin. In-progress transcriptions can be saved and completed later.


RIGS May 17th Meeting

continued from page 1

columns, she appeared on The View and The Today Show for completing Meredith Viera’s family tree. She has been featured in numerous publications including The Boston Globe, The New York Times, Better Homes and Gardens, and was dubbed “the nation’s foremost historical photo detective” by The Wall Street Journal.

Her focus is on helping people discover their family history one picture at a time, and is passionate about getting folks to dig deep into their family history to tell the story of their ancestors. For more than a decade, she’s searched for images of individuals who lived during the Revolutionary War but also lived into the age of photography. It’s currently a two-volume set titled, The Last Muster, and a series of three films, A Revolutionary Trio. https://maureentaylor.com/a-revolutionary-trio/ The quest for more photographs is ongoing.

Swimming on Sunday and Other Scandals: Rev. Joseph O’Hara in Providence, 1728-1730

This is a tale, at once horrifying and hilarious, about the worst missionary that the SPG (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts), ever sent to Rhode Island, Irishman Joseph O’Hara. Adrift from his own society and earlier faith (Catholicism), O’Hara had never even imagined people like Rhode Islanders. The shock was mutual. He managed to break most of the laws of God and man in the short time he was assigned to King’s Church (later St. John’s Church) in Providence. What did he do? Join the meeting, and find out!

Cherry Fletcher Bamberg grew up in Newport and never quite got over it. She is a graduate of Brown University (BA 1965) and Linacre College, Oxon. (M.Phil. 1967) where she learned to cherish historical and biographical writing. She was elected a Fellow of the American Society of Genealogists in 2007. She has edited Rhode Island Roots, the journal of the Rhode Island Genealogical Society, since 2002 and edited or assisted with many of the books published by that organization. Cherry is author of several books, most recently co-author with Judith C. Harbold of John Clarke’s World. The two are currently working on A Cran dall Family Reader for the Crandall Family Association. While public speaking used to terrify her, she now enjoys any opportunity to persuade audiences of the delights of Rhode Island research.

Tips, Tidbits, & Events

Genealogy and the Armenian Historical Association of Rhode Island

For anyone seeking help in researching their family history, the genealogy sub-committee of the Armenian Historical Association of Rhode Island (AHARI) has access to files and information not found through the normal genealogy research sources. The committee uses those sources, as well as, other resources to help individuals with their genealogy research. The committee was formed three years ago to help people with roots or connections to the Rhode Island Armenian community find information on their ancestors. In addition, they have had speakers who provided insights into genealogy research and history such as Marc Arslan, Der Stephan Baljian and Vahe Tachjian, plus translations of Armenian script into English by Hagop and Marie Ghajanian. Plans for this year include a deep dive into DNA, more on family trees, international sources and an introduction to the genetic map of Armenians. The sub-committee meets at the AHARI offices at 245 Waterman St., Providence, RI. They are always willing to help with genealogy inquiries. Contact info@armenianhistorical-ri.org or call (401) 454-5111.

MSOG Bristol Chapter April Meeting

The Bristol Chapter of the Massachusetts Genealogical Society has moved its April 18th meeting online! "The Adopted, the Illegitimate, and DNA" presented by Michael Maglio will begin at noon on Saturday, April 18. Known as “The Origin Hunter,” Mike will guide attendees through a process using autosomal DNA to identify biological parents and missing family tree links.

You must pre-register for this event. Visit their website at: www.msoginc.org for more information.
Due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus Pandemic
Come Home to RI: Rescheduled

9th Annual Weekend of Rhode Island Genealogy
To All Of Our Out-Of-State and Out-Of-Country Members
Come Home to Rhode Island — September 24-27, 2020

The 2020 Annual Meeting of the Rhode Island Genealogical Society will be held on Sunday, September 27th. From those of us who live in RI to all of our fellow members outside of RI, we extend a warm invitation for you to come home for an extended genealogy weekend. Let us help you break through those Rhode Island brick walls.

If you are available to arrive on Thursday, September 24th, we will have a local genealogist ready to meet with you that evening and offer advice and assistance for research plans on Friday and Saturday. Please fill out the form below so we may match you up with a local genealogist who knows Rhode Island and is researching the same families.

On Friday, September 25th and Saturday, September 26th, plan to spend time tracking your ancestors through Rhode Island town halls, graveyards, historical societies, and libraries. We will be here and ready to help! We will meet for brunch on Sunday, September, 27th with more genealogy talk, followed by the RIGS Annual Meeting.

Fill out the form below to accept our invitation.
Come and have fun researching your family history in Rhode Island!

Name: ____________________________________________
Address: ____________________________________________
Phone: ____________________________________________
Email: ____________________________________________

Family or families you are researching:
__________________________________________________________

Description of what you hope to find:
__________________________________________________________

Mail form to: Helen Smith, 530 West Reach Drive, Jamestown, RI 02835
For questions, please call Helen at 401-423-0442 or email at HHSCTC@aol.com

RIGS First Annual Meeting

As we approach this Annual Meeting, we might reflect on the beginnings of our Society. The first annual meeting for the Rhode Island Genealogical Society was held May 23, 1976 at the Newman Congregational Church, Rumford, RI. Guest speaker was Phyllis C. Peloquin, Rhode Island Assistant Secretary of State. Her topic was Rhode Island Archives and the Genealogist.

Officers elected at the meeting:
President: Alden C. Saunders (Scituate, RI)
Vice President: Shirley M. Greene (Mapleville, RI)
Vice President: Webb W. Wilder (Johnston, RI)
Treasurer: Robert A. Greene (East Greenwich, RI)
Secretary: Dorothy Q. Davis (Providence, RI)
Membership: Sandra N. Calverley (Seekonk, MA)
Hospitality: Lura Sellew (East Providence, RI)

RIGS began in 1975 when 52 genealogy buffs gathered at Norwood Motors on Post Road, in Warwick, and formed our Society. Well done and thank you!


Submitted by Lee Ashcraft

Virtual Tours

Since we are all confined to our homes and just about every place we’d like to visit is closed, why not take advantage of some online tours?

The Newport Mansions
The Preservation Society of Newport County has closed all the mansions, however, that doesn’t mean you can’t visit virtually. The Elms, Marble House, and Hunter House are all available to tour online. Visit www.newportmansions.org, under Exhibitions select Virtual Exhibition Tours.

What a treat! My Great Grandfather was the Captain of The Elm’s Edwin Berwind’s yacht Truant. He received this lovely photograph of Mrs. Herminie Berwind in 1911.

Or Take a Virtual Tour of Ancestors’ Hometowns
Using Google Maps it is easy to make a visit to your ancestral homes. Using Google Street View, I’m going to take a trip around Castletown, County Cork, Ireland, to see where Captain Smith’s mother Mary (Sullivan) Smith came from.

– Rachel Peirce
Online Resources

If you have extra time at home, consider seeking out some online resources you may not have used before. In addition to Rhode Island Roots, there are numerous periodicals that might offer insight into the village, church, business or industry associated with your family’s story. For more detail on these periodicals, and how to access them, visit https://onerhodeisland-family.com/2018/07/26/periodicals-for-rhode-island-genealogists/

- Rhode Island Roots
- Rhode Island History
- Narragansett Historical Register
- Rhode Island Genealogical Register
- The Providence Society Blue Book
- Small State Big History
- The Boston Transcript
- The Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
- The Newport Mercury
- The Rhode Island Blue Book
- The Newport Historical Magazine (later The Rhode Island Historical Magazine)
- Proceedings of the Rhode Island Historical Society
- Publications of the Rhode Island Historical Society: new series
- Collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society
- Providence Magazine
- Report of Genealogical Records Committee of Rhode Island N.S.D.A.R.
- The Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations - A series of pamphlets and booklets

Request from RIGS’ President

Here is a quote from a letter that I sent to my Representative at the Massachusetts State House. This bill was introduced on January 23, 2020 and referred to the House Ways & Means Committee. I want to enlist the support of our membership in opposing this bill and encourage them to write to their MA Representatives, or to the Chairman of the House Ways & Means Committee, Aaron Michlewitz. — Steve Palmer

Re: “An Act Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2021 for the Maintenance of the Departments, Boards, Commissions, Institutions, and Certain Activities of the Commonwealth, for interest, Sinking Fund and Serial Bond Requirements, and for Certain Permanent Improvements.”

On behalf of researchers, academics, journalists, and genealogists in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New England, the Rhode Island Genealogical Society opposes Governor Baker’s proposal to severely and unnecessarily limit access to public record information that has been available, unfettered, since 1641. Rather than “update the laws governing the registration of births, deaths, and marriages and the disclosure of corresponding records to align with national best practices for the protection of personally identifiable data and confidential health information,” as the Governor writes in his budget summary, the Outside Sections listed above would place undue burdens on citizens of the Commonwealth, scholars and family historians alike.

Moreover, these restrictions would not, in reality, end access to the information they seek to protect; commercial enterprises already have access to much of it and make it available for a fee. The restrictions would instead limit public access to primary sources of information that are used each day by organizations such as ours that seek to teach families about their own history and add to the collective knowledge of the Commonwealth and the diverse groups of people who now call it home. — Steve Palmer

Making the Best of a Bad Time

If you are like me, your closets are cleaner than ever, the kitchen cupboards beautifully organized, and a dozen little tasks put off for years finally done. We can’t get to town halls and libraries for research, but we can accomplish genealogical housecleaning as well. Think about it!

- Get out those old photo albums and label the pictures. Take really good pictures with your phone or iPad, and make sure they are labeled too. Make CDs or flash-drives for Christmas presents.
- Go through your files to organize them and discard what you don’t need. I was amazed by the folders in my file cabinet full of photocopies of census pages. Wonderful as they were at the time (say, late 1990s), the information is easily available online today.
- Think about your genealogical treasures, heirlooms and letters. We are all only temporary custodians. If there is someone in your family who would cherish them, put the items in a clearly labeled box or folder. Talk to the family member so they know. It would be kind to take pictures to give to other family members who will not have the originals.

Consider whether you want some to go to a repository like Rhode Island Historical Society, South County History Museum, or Newport Historical Society where they will be conserved for future generations of researchers.

- What about your books? Which ones do you really need? Which can you consult easily online? Could you donate some to a library? Just think how much room you will have for new books!
- Email distant relatives, partly to touch base and partly to ask questions about their memories of family events.

If you are like me, these tasks could help you survive a really long lockdown. We shall meet again (as the Queen said) at town halls and historical societies, but in the meantime, let’s get busy.

— Cherry Bamberg
Is There a Worden in Your Line?

Is there a Worden in your line or are you interested in finding out more?

You are invited to attend the Worden Family Association Meeting October 1-4 in Warwick, RI. Watch for details!

Samuel Worden (1646-1716)

“Dr. Sam” as he is known by Worden genealogical researchers was the first of his line to come to Rhode Island. His father Peter I (c1576-1638), the first of this line in America, was alive in Yarmouth MA 1638/9 (will) and died by 5 March 1638/9 (probate).

The earliest record of Samuel in the Plymouth Colony Records was in 1665 when his wife Hopestill Holley was named in her father’s will. The last record in MA was when he inventoried an estate in 1689. The scene now shifts to Rhode Island. While Samuel very likely served in the militia in the Plymouth Colony, he is not listed as a soldier in King Phillips War. Yet in a RI deed on 19 September 1693, Worden Pond is named so he must have been known in the area before then.

The first purchase of land in RI was of 50A south of Mink Brook and 200A north of Mink Brook from the estate of Benedict Arnold, late governor of RI, deceased for the sum of two hundred and fifty pieces of eight. At the end of this deed is this statement: “The above Deed of Sale was Acknowledged by the Sd Benedict & Josiah Arnold to be their Act & deed that they So did Signe… & deliver unto the Sd Samuel Worden… The date of 1695 given for this deed indicates that it was presented and recorded several years late, typical of those days when it was difficult to appear for recording.

Samuel and his son Samuel were named on the first list of freemen in Kingstown in 1696. He was active in organizing Kingstown.

There are multiple records of purchase and sale of land in RI by Dr. Sam. Areas in RI which are mentioned are around Mink Brook, Mumford lands south of Wordens Pond, land on the Great Neck, Rodman Lands, lands along the Pawcatuck River and the Saugatuck-et River.

In 1709, Dr. Samuel purchased land in Stonington, Connecticut, and moved and died there.

Children of Samuel and Hopestill:
Peter III (1668-1732), Dr. Nathaniel (>1669-<1738), Samuel II (>1670-1727), Isaac (>1670-<1718), Dr. Thomas (1675-1759), Mary (c1677-<1728), Hopestill (c1678-<1745), Rose (c1679-?)

Peter III and Samuel Jr. are the only two sons who remained in RI. Peter died in Warwick in 1732. His son Judah died in CT, in 1727 and son Peter IV died in Westerly in 1745. Of Peter IV’s sons Gideon lived in Newport and was lost at sea, John L. died 1779 in Charlestown, Peter V, Sylvester, and Elisha, all went to VT. Samuel II died in South Kingstown in 1727. Of Samuel II’s sons Samuel III, James and Jerimiah remained in RI. In the 1774 census there were a total of 40 people in seven households. Perhaps there are still some descendants in RI.

– Pat Warden, WFA Archivist

Loss of a Member

We are sad to announce the recent passing of longtime RIGS member Wilton “Skip” Kingsley. Many, who may not have known his name, would recognize Skip for his signature blonde “Mohawk,” purple shirts with matching shoe-laces, and his stellar sense of humor. Always interested in genealogy and in each speaker’s topic, Skip kept many of us on our toes at each meeting with his humorous observations on life, liberty, and the pursuit of ancestors! He is much missed by his wife, Lisa, his cat Coco Chanel, and his many friends in RIGS.

Son of the late Wilton J. and Jeanette (Soucy) Kingsley, he grew up at the Grace Church Cemetery in Providence, where his father was caretaker.

Skip lived a full and eventful life, graduating from Classical High School and Rhode Island College. He spent a year in London, and worked at a variety of jobs over the years.

Please visit murphyfuneralhomes.org for his full obituary. Donations in his memory can be made to his church: St. Kateri Tekakwitha Church, 84 Exeter Rd., Exeter, RI 02822.

Springing From the Past Into the Future

2021 Conference New England Regional Genealogical Consortium (NERGC)
Wednesday, April 21, 2021 through Saturday, April 24, 2021
Springfield, Massachusetts

RIGS is a charter member of NERGC and will be supporting and participating in this conference with an exhibit booth, speakers, prizes and more. Mark your calendar and plan to join the fun. Visit the website: http://www.nergc.org for details and to receive the conference email magazine (ezine). Your RIGS representatives for conference planning are Lee Ashcraft and Bobbie Cummings.
Relief Clews Wilcox Town
I am working on a research project about a RI family (the Wilcox/Baker/Weeks clan) that moved from somewhere in central RI to Halifax, VT in the 1760s, and I am baffled by the design on this gravestone of Relief Clews Wilcox Town, b. 1768/1813, buried in the Weeks Cemetery in Halifax, VT. The elements aren’t so unusual, it is the way they are laid out that is so different and no one around here (NH and VT) can recall having seen anything like it and wondered if it was something the family got from RI.

Contact Gail Golec at admin@thesecretlifeofdeath.com.

Allen-Sheldon Query
Josiah Allen married Priscilla Sheldon (1753-1792) in 1778 in Rehoboth, MA. Priscilla was the daughter of William Sheldon and Lydia Munro of RI. Josiah and Priscilla had four children: Lydia b. 1779, William b. 1781, Stephen b. 1783 and Josiah b. 1785. Who were Josiah Allen’s parents and where and when was he born or died?

Helen Smith
hhsctc@aol.com

Theodore Foster Civil War Certificate
Above is a picture of a framed Civil War certificate that I recently acquired. It was signed in 1869 by the then governor of Rhode Island, Ambrose Burnside. It was given to Theodore H. Foster in appreciation of his service during the war. I believe Mr. Foster could be a distant ancestor or married to one, but I have not yet been able to prove it.

A search for him has revealed that he was a bugler when he mustered out, and that he also applied for a pension in 1921. I don’t know anything else including his date of birth or date of death. I have a question concerning whether this certificate was a mass-produced type of document given to anyone from Rhode Island who participated in the war or perhaps something more special and unique. I am hoping your group can help. I look forward to any information that can be provided.

Mary Portwood Artley
maryartley@gmail.com

A DNA Mystery?
Trying to solve a DNA mystery, I am seeking male-line descendants of the following Smiths from northern Rhode Island: Stephen (1799 - 1883), Simon (1802-1882), Esek (bef. 1757-aft 1811), Oliver (1757-1843), Joshua (ca. 1725-1814), Caleb (ca. 1725-aft 1800), Thomas (1697-1777).

Contact Rebecca H. Smith
acelinebarrett@aol.com

Please send your queries to: Rachel Peirce, 122 Pleasant Street, North Kingstown, RI 02852 or email: newsletter@rigensoc.org.
Rhode Island Genealogical Society pursues an active program of publishing source material for the study of Rhode Island families, such as diaries, cemetery transcriptions, compiled genealogies, and transcriptions of original papers. We are proud to offer the following books published by RIGS and classic sources by society members. All are well illustrated and carefully indexed. Prices are shown for members of Rhode Island Genealogical Society (M) and nonmembers (NM). Your purchase supports the publication of future books.

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<td><strong>The Diary of Capt. Samuel Tillinghast of Warwick, Rhode Island, 1757-1766,</strong></td>
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RIGS Events Calendar in Brief

May 17th (Sun.)  RIGS Online Members’ Meeting
Online at Zoom (See page 1 for details)

September 24th - 27th  Come Home to Rhode Island Weekend

September 27th (Sun.)  RIGS Annual Meeting and Book Sale
North Kingstown United Methodist Church

November 14th (Sat.)  RIGS Members’ Half Day Meeting
TBA