

# *Florida Society of Mayflower Descendants*



## *Stephen Hopkins Colony, Vero Beach*

Summer Newsletter 2024



Dear Stephen Hopkins Colony Members,

I hope you all are enjoying your summer and taking the opportunity to relax, visit with family and friends and catch up with your wish lists!

Our Stephen Hopkins Colony calendar is filled with many exciting events and opportunities to share your Mayflower Pilgrim heritage. We will take the example of the Mayflower Society Governor General Lisa Pennington to focus on telling our stories as the year progresses.

Mark your calendars for upcoming events! We look forward to our next Colony meeting on Monday, September 9th and our Annual Meeting on November 11th. Florida State Governor Brian McWaters invites you all to attend the FSMD Fall Annual Meetings in Estero, FL, on November 22-23, 2024. It is an opportunity to meet the leaders and other members from all over the state of Florida. Details of registration and events will be provided by FSMD.

In early August, you will be receiving a Stephen Hopkins Colony Mayflower dues notice for the 2025 calendar year. Annual dues will remain at \$54.00 and are due by November 1, 2024. Our membership includes benefits from the Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of Florida as well as the General Society of Mayflower Descendants. Membership includes the magazine, The Mayflower Quarterly, in the mail and The Florida Pilgrim newsletter by email. Most of all, we could meet our Mayflower cousins at our quarterly meetings in Vero Beach.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns about the Hopkins Colony. Enjoy the rest of your summer!

Lynne Jensen, Governor

Carolyn "Lynne" Jensen, Governor

Stephen Hopkins Colony, Vero Beach, FSMD

H: 772.781.4257 or C: 609.709.5681 Email: [Lynne.Jensen1620@gmail.com](mailto:Lynne.Jensen1620@gmail.com)

## Florida Mayflower Junior Program

DYK that as a Colony member, you may register your children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and grandnieces and grandnephews who are under 18 as Junior Mayflower Members. The child must be related to you by blood. The cost is a one-time charge of \$30.00 for each child. Your Junior will receive a beautiful certificate representing your Pilgrim(s) and recognition by the Florida Society. The Junior Membership is ceremonial and does not confer adult membership. When Juniors reach 18, they may submit regular adult membership applications. Currently, the Florida Society pays the application fee for Junior members converting to adult membership; however, the fee waiver program is reviewed periodically and is subject to change without notice. If you are interested in registering as your Junior, please contact me, and I will coordinate a junior membership application. Your Junior need not be resident of Florida but must be a blood relative to you. With 92 Junior members, our colony has one of the most active Junior Member Programs in Florida.

The current Florida Junior Mayflower Application may be found at the Florida Society website: <http://www.flmayflower.com/programs/> OR contact me and I will send you a copy.

You DO NOT need to provide vital records such as birth certificates.

Return the completed application to me at

Kurt Bressner 5721 Riverboat Cir SW Vero Beach, FL 32968-7524

Questions? Please contact me at [kbressner@gmail.com](mailto:kbressner@gmail.com) OR 561-436-2328. Kurt Bressner, Junior Chair, Stephen Hopkins Colon

## Register Your Membership at the General Society Website to Gain Access to “Members Area”

You may register at the General Society of Mayflower Descendants as a new member or as a member wishing access to the “Members Area” section of the website.

Follow this link: <https://themayflowersociety.org/forms/register/>

Fill out the form on the website.

You will need your national member number located on your approved application. If you can't find your membership number, please contact me and I will look up your membership information.

Once registered you will receive an email with your new login information. Save that information to log in again.

Kurt Bressner, Archivist, Stephen Hopkins Colony

[hopkinscolonyvero@gmail.com](mailto:hopkinscolonyvero@gmail.com)



## Behind the Scenes at Plymouth: The Evolution of the Application Process

Since I've never been one for large crowds, to celebrate the Mayflower 400th Anniversary, my wife and I went to Plymouth a year earlier, in 2019. While in Plymouth I spent a day at the General Society headquarters, where I focused mainly on the library. There I met the former Director of Genealogical Services, Marti Roberts, who gave me a tour of the back office of the library where membership applications are received, reviewed, and processed. I'm a visual learner so this tour was helpful.

In the basement of the library is a vault room storing paper copies of all approved applications with supporting documents. At the time of my visit, these application files were accessed regularly by the staff application verifiers to review past documentation or to use the earlier applications to support a Mayflower line. In another room in the basement, a volunteer busily scanned approved applications so that in the future, the paper documents could be accessed electronically. In mid-2019, about 10% of the over 100,000 application files had been scanned. In another room in the basement, several staff verifiers were at work reviewing paper membership applications. When I was introduced by Marti, several noted, "Oh, we like your applications. You do a nice job organizing and documenting the supporting information." That made me feel pleased.

At that time, each new membership application and supplemental application had to be prepared in paper form. My task in Vero Beach was to prepare each application form and print it up on legal-sized, acid-free paper. I organized supporting documents, also in paper form, starting with the latest generation (the applicant) and working back in time to the Mayflower. I hand-marked each record with key information items underlined or marked in red ink so that the verifier could quickly see the relevant information on the document that supported the line. The applications were then bundled up and mailed to Plymouth by Priority Mail. This process was laborious and time-consuming.

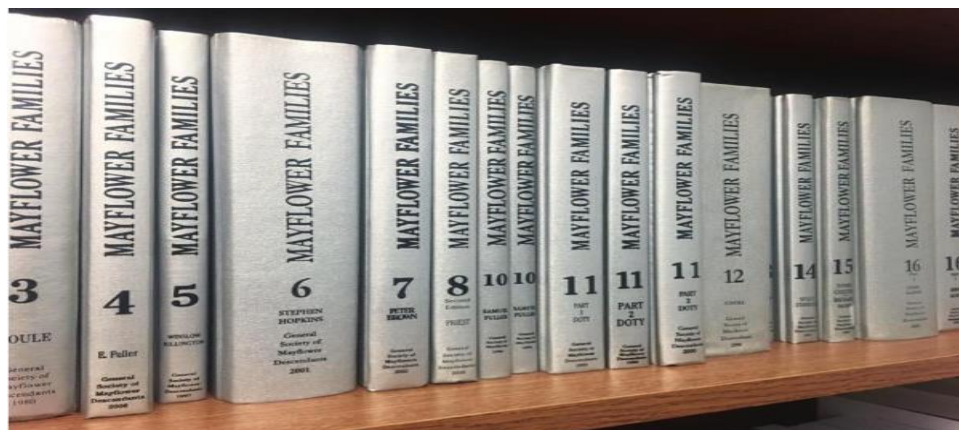
Per Plymouth, there are three goals of review for each generation in an application:

1. One or more documents (e.g., birth, marriage, or death records) must name parents in a way that connects each generation with the next.
2. One or more documents must show that it is the same person at marriage who is listed as a child of the parents.
3. Places and dates must be supported in the documents.

During the COVID quarantine period in 2020, General Society staff verifiers were required to work from home. Access to digital applications and supporting documents became crucial. For those records not yet digitized, the paper files had to be “checked out” and taken to the home of the verifier for use, not ideal from a security perspective. Also, application reviews slowed, exactly when there was a crush of interest in Mayflower membership for the 400th Anniversary.

All these factors — a “perfect storm” — forced changes in procedures and practices for the General Society. The application process steadily evolved to verifier staff accessing and using digital file application documents. Eventually, the paper copies of application files Member Society Historian mailed to Plymouth were scanned on arrival. The verifiers then used digital versions of applications to review. Back home however, I (and other Historians) continued printing, hand-marking, and mailing applications and supporting documents to Plymouth.

By 2022, electronic application submission was beta-tested. Although I was not part of this test, I watched its progress with interest. Finally, in late 2023, all Member Societies were given access to the digital application files at Plymouth and were authorized to file membership and supplemental applications electronically.



Although I still use the three Plymouth principles to guide my work and what I ask applicants to provide, I strongly believe that electronic preparation and submission fine-tunes the admission process. By skipping the printing and hand-marking process, electronic application provides ease, clarity, and neatness, which helps prevent confusion for verifiers. Does it save time? The current electronic application review time is about 2-3 months, a tremendous improvement over the paper application process of 6-8 months.

The road to Mayflower Membership may still be challenging, but with electronic application and submission, journey there can be smoother.

Kurt Bressner, Co-Historian, Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of Florida



HEAR YE!      HEAR YE!      HEAR YE!

Your Fundraising Committee is putting together a beautiful Thanksgiving Gift Basket, which will be on display at the September and November meetings.

The signature item of the Basket is a magnificent bottle of Jack Daniel's Single Barrel Select Tennessee Whiskey especially created in celebration of the 400th Anniversary of the Mayflower.

More items are needed to fill the basket to make it an appealing display of gifts for the drawing that will take place at the Thanksgiving meeting.

If you have an item to donate, please contact Lisa Tompson via email at [lisa.tompson@gmail.com](mailto:lisa.tompson@gmail.com) and thank you!



## Mayflower Tidbits

### The Revolutionary War and Mayflower Descendants

The Boston Port Act, established by the England's Parliament, went into effect June of 1774 and closed Boston Harbor. This Act was a result of the Boston Tea Party and was accompanied by the demand for reparations for the tea loss and property damages. The Boston Port Act, along with the Intolerable Acts, would serve to put the War of Independence into motion.

The colonies began to forge together as a union by financially supporting Boston's residents who had relied on income from the Boston ports, boycotting British goods, stockpiling weapons, reviewing local militia readiness and calling the meeting of the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia.

Benjamin Brewster was born in Preston, New London, CT on 15 April 1736. He was a 1st Lieutenant and served under Captain William Belcher, also of Preston, and Colonel Samuel Selden. To protect New York City and Long Island in September of 1776, Colonel Selden was tasked to defend New York Island at Kips Bay, located on the east shore of Manhattan. The regiment was spread along the Kips Bay area and Lt. Benjamin Brewster was stationed with his men at the Stuyvesant mansion. However, General Howe launched a naval attack, and the patriots were quickly routed. During their retreat, the regiment was confronted by a large body of Hessians and after a skirmish, the surviving patriots were taken prisoner. The Livingston Sugar House, one of several sugar houses in Manhattan, was previously used to store sugar and molasses. Sugar houses and churches were used by the British as makeshift prisons to house prisoners of war, and the Livingston was supervised by a particularly cruel British officer named Sergeant Waddy. The prison area was open to the weather, they were given little to eat, subject to reported cruelty and beatings, and suffered from sickness. Benjamin Brewster survived his ordeal and died in Preston, CT in 1786. He was 50 years old.

Nan Ball

## Book Corner: Flight of the Sparrow

by Amy Belding Brown

I've always enjoyed reading historical fiction, learning about those who lived very different lives in very different times. It was also an escape of sorts from my busy elementary teaching career. With more freedom to read these days, I find myself delving into the facts behind the historical fiction I'm reading and taking notes about the people in the story - real or fictional, and the events - true or altered. The Old English words are sometimes unfamiliar, and Google search makes it easy to jot down their definitions while reading.

After I read Will Gardner's *The Coffin Saga*, I was drawn to Geraldine Brooks' *Caleb's Crossing*, about the early Martha's Vineyard Wampanoags and the Thomas Mayhew settlement. I discovered there is a huge gap in my adult understanding of the time following the settlements of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, Plymouth colony, and other Massachusetts settlements. The specific events and details of King Philip's war were conspicuously absent from my historical understanding. I decided to read more about this time era.

Amy Belding Brown's *The Flight of the Sparrow* caught my attention. Also, historical fiction, it's about the capture of Mary Rowlandson by Wampanoag natives in 1676 in the early settlement of Lancaster, MA. The story, expectantly harrowing, details her eleven weeks of captivity while her captors moved continuously around north central Massachusetts trying to survive. Mary was a minister's wife, deeply trained in the Puritan ways of living and thinking. During her ordeal, the character Mary began to question her beliefs, the meaning of slavery, and personal freedom. In the story, she witnessed the murder of many, the burning of her town, relentless cruelty and yet some kindnesses. Many small towns are mentioned as "praying towns" such as Natick and Marlborough. Weetamoo, Quinnapin, King Philip, John Eliot and James the Printer are also part of this fictional account. Several of these names were unfamiliar to me, as was the existence of 'praying towns.' I also do not recall ever being taught of the capture and imprisonment of many natives on Long Island and Deer Island in Boston Harbor; some Wampanoags were sold into slavery and sent to the Caribbean. After finishing this novel, I decided to read Mary's own account of her journey.

The title of her account is *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*. The events she experienced were woven into the Sparrow novel, but Mary's account was, of course, written for a different audience – her religious community and its social expectations after her "ransom" was paid. Organized by "Removes" instead of chapters, each "remove" concluded with a Biblical reference. She often referred to her captors as heathens. Nowhere in her narrative did she acknowledge a wavering of her Puritan beliefs, or her desire for more personal freedom, which Brown strongly suggested in her novel. Brown also added details about Mary's specific relationships with Weetamoo, James the Printer and King Philip, perhaps exercising some poetic license in those tumultuous days of captivity.

After reading these two books consecutively, I think that I will read historical fiction much more analytically, continue to take notes and pursue the facts behind the real story. Who knows – maybe I'll start reading more non-fiction first!

Jackie Jette Recording Secretary



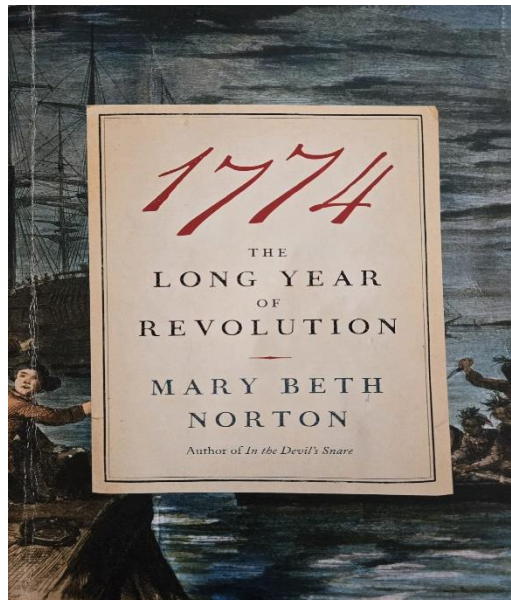
## Revolution 250

The year 2025, will mark the 250TH Anniversary of the American Revolutionary War. However, celebrations will begin in 2024. This recognizes that events during 1774 led up to eventual support for independence. Most American colonists were loyal to the English until 1774, when events such as the Stamp Act, the Townsend Acts, and the Boston Tea Party caused many colonists to question British rule. Plymouth was involved in the revolution prior to Lexington and Concord. The Mayflower Society has joined with Revolution 250 to promote history and to show how the story is still important today. It is also important to teach how the history of the Mayflower passengers has a great deal to do with the American Revolution. For example, the Mayflower passengers left Europe to settle in the New World to worship freely under their own rules, much like the way the colonists separated from English rule. There are many other examples which are described in “The Mayflower Quarterly,” Summer 2024.

Stephanie Rubin

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## TEACHING HISTORY TO CHILDREN THROUGH COINS

I am a proud descendant of Mayflower Pilgrim George Soule. I share this honor with some famous people in American history. I share this distinction with Mary Edwards Walker who is featured now in a special series of quarters being produced by the United States Government Mint. The American Women Quarters Program is a special four-year program that celebrates the accomplishments made by women of the United States in diverse fields. In all 20 outstanding women in our history will be recognized on these specially minted quarter coins available in general circulation. On June 17, 2024, the U.S. government started releasing beautiful new quarters to the public featuring my famous “cousin!” [DO WATCH FOR THEM]



Dr. Mary Edwards Walker was a Civil War era surgeon and a women’s rights advocate. She is the only woman to be awarded the United States Medal of Honor. Mary’s father and brother were doctors, and she had the goal of being one also. This was nearly an impossible task for a woman in the mid-1800’s, but she would not be stopped. Mary was one of very few women admitted to medical school, and in 1863 she finally was allowed to serve as the first female surgeon ever in the United States Army. She treated all soldiers, both from the North and South, as well as wounded civilians!

We all try to teach young people about their history, but the traditional approaches may not always work. Have you tried to share some special coins with your grandchildren to spark their interest in the past? The website: <https://www.usmint.gov/learn/coin-and-medal-programs> offers suggestions. You may recall the special (expensive!) gold and silver collector coins released in 2020 to honor the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower voyage. The coins you share with youngsters need not be that costly! I can’t wait to give shiny new Mary Edwards Walker quarters to each of my young cousins (and old cousins, too!). They are going to learn about setting high goals for themselves from Mary’s exemplary example. They’ll also learn some U.S. history. Of course, Pilgrim George Soule’s role in family history will also come up in my explanation!

Janice Sly -Director

## Officers and Board Members for 2023-2026

Governor – Carolyn “Lynne” Jensen

Vice Governor – Vacant

Treasurer – Elizabeth “Beth” Dewey

Membership/Corresponding Secretary – Marsha Adams

Captain – Jeffrey “Jeff” Rogers

Archivist – Kurt Bressner

Elder – Rev. Donald “Lorne” Coyle

Recording Secretary – Jacquelyn “Jackie” Jette

Past Governor – Sharon Paugh

Director – Janice Sly

Director - Brian McWaters

Director - Sharon Paugh

## OTHER COLONY POSITIONS

Education Committee Chair - Stephanie Rubin

Junior Chair- Kurt Bressner

Newsletter Editor - Etta Ocker

Webmaster - Debbie Dalrymple

Member Nametag Coordinator - Bobbi Mallett

Stephen Hopkins Colony Website: <https://stephenhopkinscolonyflmayflower.com/>

Stephen Hopkins Colony email for questions or help: [hopkinscolonyvero@gmail.com](mailto:hopkinscolonyvero@gmail.com)