

MOUNTAIN HERITAGE

The Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc.

March, 2025

Volume 13, Issue 1

Did Your Ancestors Sail on the Mayflower?

Barbara J. Dover



The Mayflower at Sea
Gilbert Margeson, painter (1852-1940)
pilgrimhall.org

In September of 1620, the Mayflower set sail from England with 102 passengers and their hopes of starting a new life in the New World. They landed in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and settled the first colony in New England, creating the future of the American colonies.

The Mayflower was a merchant ship that usually carried goods and provisions, but its most famous cargo was the group of pilgrims destined to settle in Plymouth. The ship first set sail in August 1620 alongside another merchant ship called the Speedwell. After the Speedwell began to leak, both ships returned to port, and all the passengers boarded the Mayflower.

The Mayflower left England in September, putting them in the middle of storm season for their voyage. With cramped quarters and rough seas, many passengers were constantly seasick and several passengers died at sea. After two hard months, passengers reached the shore, and for the following months, the Mayflower served as a source of shelter for many of the pilgrims during their first winter.

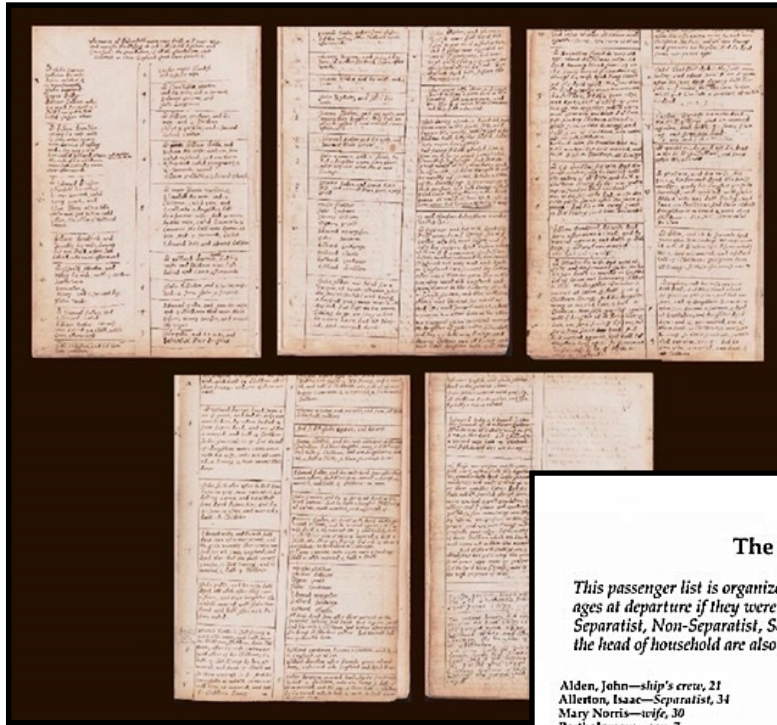
Many of the pilgrims came to America in search of religious freedom. At this time in history, England required its citizens to belong to the Church of England. Many people that wanted to practice other religious beliefs fled to the Netherlands where laws concerning religion were more flexible. After several years there, fearing the loss of their native language and cultural heritage, they decided to set out for the New World and build a new life. With the help of the Virginia Company's financing, the pilgrims boarded the Mayflower.



Did Your Ancestors Sail on the Mayflower?

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William Bradford's Hand-written Manuscript of the Mayflower Passengers
archives.lib.state.ma.us



Not all the passengers on the Mayflower were seeking a separation from the Church of England. Some were merely sympathetic to the cause and wanted a new life. Others were skilled workers, such as craftsmen or soldiers, contracted workers, and servants of separatist families. And there were 2 unnamed dogs, a female English Mastiff and a female English Springer Spaniel.

The Mayflower Passenger List

This passenger list is organized by alphabetized surname and includes the passengers' ages at departure if they were known. The heads of each family are labeled as a Separatist, Non-Separatist, Servant, or Ship's Crew. Family members' relationships to the head of household are also given. Passengers with asterisk (*) died at sea.

The Mayflower was supposed to land in Virginia, but storms shifted the ship's course north to Cape Cod, Massachusetts. After exploring the area, the Mayflower pilgrims eventually decided to stay, possibly due to the continued harsh seas and dwindling supplies. The famous explorer John Smith had previously named this area "Plymouth," and since their ship departed from the Plymouth port in England, the pilgrims decided to keep the name found on their maps and formed Plymouth Colony.

Because the Mayflower landed in Massachusetts, the charter allowing the pilgrims to join the Virginia Colony became invalid. Naturally, pas-

- Alden, John—ship's crew, 21
- Allerton, Isaac—Separatist, 34
- Mary Norris—wife, 30
- Bartholomew—son, 7
- Remember—son, 5
- Mary—daughter, 3
- Allerton, John—ship's crew
- Billington, John—non-Separatist, 38
- Eleanor—wife, 33
- John—son, 16
- Francis—son, 14
- Bradford, William—Separatist, 30
- *Dorothy May—wife, 21
- Brewster, William—Separatist, 54
- Mary—wife, 40
- Love—son, 9
- Wrestling—son, 6
- Richard More—ward, 6
- Mary More—ward, 4
- Britteridge, Richard—non-Separatist, 39
- Browne, Peter—non-Separatist, 20
- *Butten, William—servant to Samuel Fuller
- Carter, Robert—servant to William Mullins
- Carver, John—Separatist, 33
- Katherine White—wife, 30
- Laper More—ward, 7
- *Chilton, James—Separatist, 64
- Mrs. Chilton—wife, 58
- Mary—daughter, 13
- Clarke, Richard—non-Separatist
- Cooke, Francis—Separatist, 37
- John—son, 13
- Crackstone, John—Separatist, 45
- John—son, 20
- Dorothy—servant to John Carver, 18
- Doty, Edward—servant to the Hopkins family, 21
- Eaton, Francis—non-Separatist, 25
- Sarah—wife, 21
- Samuel—son, 1
- *Mr. Ely—ship's crew
- English, Thomas—ship's crew
- Fletcher, Moses—Separatist, 55
- Fuller, Edward—Separatist, 45
- Mrs. Fuller—wife, 35
- Samuel—son, 12
- Fuller, Samuel—Separatist, 40
- Gardiner, Richard—non-Separatist
- Goodman, John—Separatist
- Hooke, John—servant to the Allerton family, 13
- Holbeck, William—servant to the White family, under 21
- Hopkins, Stephen—non-Separatist, 38
- Elizabeth Fisher—wife, 25
- Constance—daughter, 14
- Giles—son, 12
- Damaris—daughter, 2
- Oceanus—son, born on the Mayflower
- Howland, John—servant to John Carver, 21
- Langmore, John—servant to the Martin family, under 21
- Latham, William—servant to John Carver, 11
- Leister, Edward—servant to the Hopkins family, over 21
- Margesson, Edmund—non-Separatist
- Martin, Christopher—non-Separatist, 38
- Mary Prower—wife, 35
- Solomon Prower—stepson, 14
- Minter, Desire—servant to John Carver, 15-18
- Mullins, William—non-Separatist, 52
- Alice—wife, 48
- Priscilla—daughter, 18
- Joseph—son, 14
- Priest, Degory—Separatist, 41
- Rigsdale, John—non-Separatist
- Alice Rigsdale—wife
- Rogers, Thomas—Separatist, 48
- Joseph Rogers—son, 17
- Soule, George—servant to Edward Winslow, 21-25
- Standish, Myles—non-Separatist, 23
- Rose Standish—wife, 27
- *Thompson, Edward—servant to the White family, under 21
- Tilley, Edward—Separatist, 32
- Agnes Cooper—wife, 35
- Henry Samson—stepbro, 16
- Humility Cooper—niece, 3
- Tilley, John—Separatist, 49
- Joan Hurst—wife, 53
- Elizabeth—daughter, 13
- Tinker, Thomas—Separatist
- Mrs. Tinker—wife
- Boy Tinker—son, unknown
- Trevore, William—ship's crew
- Turner, John—Separatist, 30
- Boy Turner—son, unknown
- Boy Turner—son, unknown
- Warren, Richard—non-Separatist
- White, William—Separatist, 30
- Susanna Jackson—wife, 25
- Resolved—son, 5
- Peregrine—son, born on Mayflower
- Wilder, Roger—servant to John Carver, under 21
- Williams, Thomas—Separatist
- Winslow, Edward—Separatist, 25
- Elizabeth Barker—wife, 23
- Elen More—ward, 8
- Elias Story—ward, under 21
- Winslow, Gilbert—non-Separatist, 20

FamilySearch.org

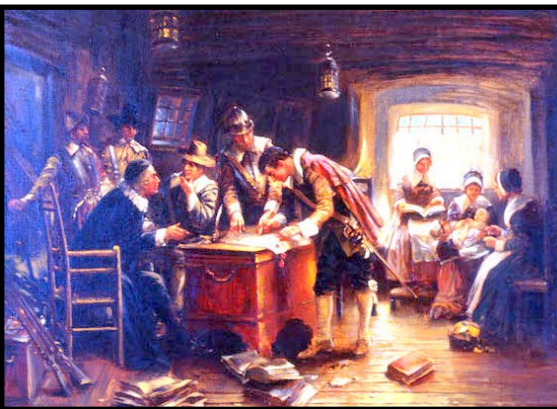
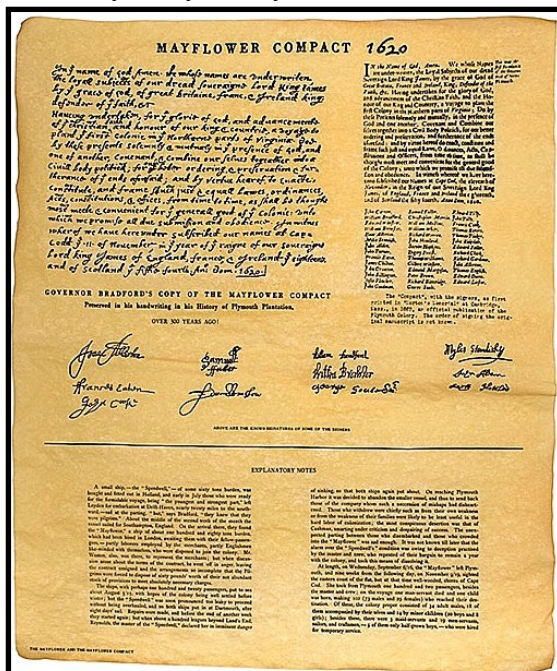


Did Your Ancestors Sail on the Mayflower?

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sengers were not sure what to do, and there was confusion and fear. There were "mutinous speeches" from some of the passengers which lead to the creation of the "association and agreement" to "combine together in one body" that we now call the Mayflower Compact. On November 11, 1620, before leaving the ship, 41 adult male colonists, including two indentured servants, signed the Mayflower Compact. Although the document was not called The Mayflower Compact at the time, it was believed to be written by William Brewster with help by John Carver and others. Although the original document is lost, a translation was later included in *Of Plimoth Plantation*, William Bradford's journal of life in the colonies.

Replica of William Bradford's Copy of the Mayflower Compact from his journal "Of Plimoth Plantation"



The Signing of the Compact in the Cabin of the Mayflower
Edward Percy Moran, painter (1862-1935)
pilgrimhall.org

Although the document was not called The Mayflower Compact at the time, it was believed to be written by William Brewster with help by John Carver and others. Although the original document is lost, a translation was later included in *Of Plimoth Plantation*, William Bradford's journal of life in the colonies.

The Mayflower Compact

November 11, 1620

In the name of God, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread Sovereigne Lord, King James, by the grace of God, of Great Britaine, France and Ireland king, defender of the faith, etc. having undertaken, for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, and honour of our king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the Northerne parts of Virginia doe by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civill body politick, for our better ordering and preservation, and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enacte, constitute, and frame such just and equall laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete and convenient for the generall good of the Colonie unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape-Codd the 11. Of November, in the year of the raigne of our soveraigne lord, King James, of England, France and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fiftie-fourth. Anno. Dom. 1620."

- | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| John Carver | Thomas Rogers | George Soule | John Crackston |
| Edward Tilley | Edmund Margeson | Samuel Fuller | Thomas English |
| Degory Priest | Issac Allerton | John Turner | Richard Warren |
| William Bradford | Thomas Tinker | Richard Clarke | John Billington |
| John Tilley | Peter Browne | Christopher Martin | Edward Dotey |
| Thomas Williams | Myles Standish | Francis Eaton | John Howland |
| Edward Winslow | John Rigdale | Richard Gardiner | Moses Fletcher |
| Francis Cooke | Richard Britteridge | William Mullins | Edward Leister |
| Gilbert Winslow | John Alden | James Chilton | Stephen Hopkins |
| William Brewster | Edward Fuller | John Allerton | John Goodman |
| | | William White | |

The Mayflower Compact Transcript
Family Search.org



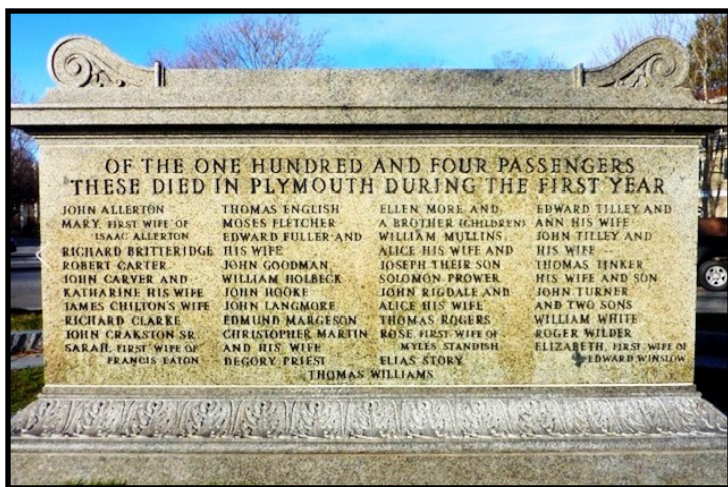
Did Your Ancestors Sail on the Mayflower?

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Under the Mayflower Compact, the pilgrims agreed to work together toward the success of Plymouth Colony. The compact also established rules and voting practices that helped in founding the colony's government. This compact was the first form of self-governance in the colonies.

Once the colonists agreed to work together, the hard work began. They elected John Carver as governor on November 21, 1620. Carver had helped gain financing for the Mayflower journey and had served in a leadership role during the voyage to America.

After settling in Plymouth, more than half of the pilgrims died of disease, lack of shelter, and starvation during that first harsh winter. Some historians believe the Mayflower Compact's role in promising the pilgrims' dedication to each other and their mission was critical to those that survived.



Monument on Cole Hill, Plymouth, MA, of Mayflower Passengers Who Perished in 1620-1621
findagrave.com

Governor John Carver survived the hard winter of 1620 but died in April 1621, and the colonists chose William Bradford to replace him. Under his leadership, Plymouth Colony started to thrive. As more and more settlers arrived and colonized the surrounding areas, a General Court was established. Each town elected representatives to attend the court, thereby creating an early representative government. The Mayflower Compact remained active until 1691 when Plymouth Colony became part of Massachusetts Bay Colony, however its principles have remained as an integral part of the United States of America's democratic government for over 400 years.



The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth
Jennie A. Brownscombe, painter (1850-1936)
pilgrimhall.org



Did Your Ancestors Sail on the Mayflower?

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Books have been written about Plymouth Colony and the pilgrims that journeyed from England to the New World, including the First Thanksgiving and the lives of the passengers. While nearly half of the 102 Mayflower passengers who arrived on the shores of Massachusetts died during the first winter, 26 families of passengers are known to have left descendants.

Mayflower Passengers With Known Descendants

John Alden	Samuel Fuller
Bartholomew Allerton	Samuel Fuller (son of Edward)
Isaac Allerton	Constance Hopkins
Mary (Norris) Allerton	Elizabeth (Fisher) Hopkins
Mary Allerton	Giles Hopkins
Remember Allerton	Stephen Hopkins
Elinor Billington	John Howland
Francis Billington	Richard More
John Billington	Priscilla Mullins
William Bradford	William Mullins
Love Brewster	Degory Priest
Mary () Brewster	Joseph Rogers
William Brewster	Thomas Rogers
Peter Browne	Henry Samson
James Chilton	George Soule
Mrs. James Chilton	Myles Standish
Mary Chilton	Elizabeth Tilley
Francis Cooke	John Tilley
John Cooke	Joan (Hurst) Tilley
Edward Doty	Richard Warren
Francis Eaton	Peregrine White
Samuel Eaton	Resolved White
Sarah () Eaton	Susanna (Jackson) White
Moses Fletcher	William White
Edward Fuller	Edward Winslow
Mrs. Edward Fuller	

themayflowersociety.org



Did Your Ancestors Sail on the Mayflower?

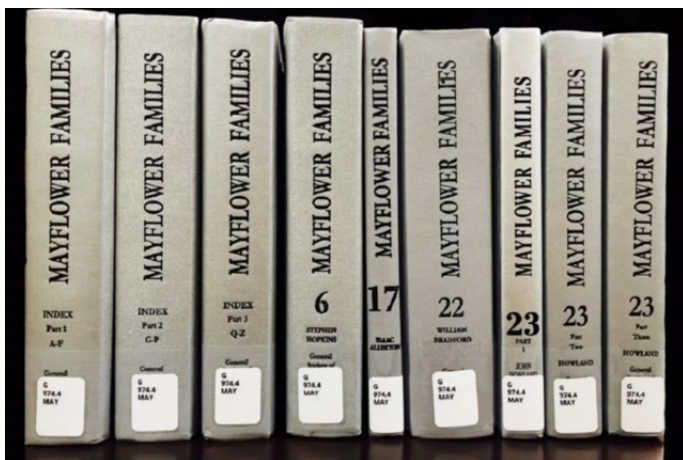
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In 1876, while America was celebrating its centennial, many Americans became interested in perpetuating the memory of their ancestors who helped found our country. To commemorate the spirit and contributions to American democracy of the Mayflower pilgrims, several northeastern states began to create lineage societies for descendants.

The first Society of Mayflower Descendants was established in New York City on December 22, 1894 as a society for lineal descendants of the Mayflower pilgrims. Three more states followed and delegates from the existing societies met on January 12, 1897 in Plymouth, Massachusetts, to form the General Society of Mayflower Descendants. Mayflower Societies quickly formed across the nation, and since its founding, the Mayflower Society has welcomed over 100,000 members worldwide who could prove their lineage to Mayflower passengers.

The mission statement of The General Society of Mayflower Descendants reads “The General Society of Mayflower Descendants is committed to research on the lineal descent of the Mayflower pilgrims and education about the pilgrims who traveled aboard the Mayflower in 1620. The Society provides education and understanding of why the Mayflower pilgrims were important, how they shaped western civilization, and what their 1620 voyage means today and its impact on the world.”

One of the values of The Mayflower Society is to “Engage and promote new Pilgrim scholarship, research, and publications.” This society’s research has resulted in the publication of books that provide lineage through 4, 5, or 6 generations from Mayflower pilgrims and their families. Known as “The Silver Books,” the Gilmer County Genealogical Society has purchased the 3-volume index of these books and donated them to the Gilmer County Library. The organization is continuing to purchase and donate the volumes of Mayflower Families books that list descendants of the original pilgrims, their families, those families’ families, and so on. These books list descendants back several generations from each pilgrim and are often published in more than 1 part.



*Mayflower Silver Books at Gilmer County Library
Photo by Barbara J. Dover*



Did Your Ancestors Sail on the Mayflower?

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The Mayflower pilgrims' Silver Books currently on the shelves of the Family Research Room in the Gilmer County Library are: **Volume 6, Stephen Hopkins; Volume 17, Isaac Allerton; Volume 22, William Bradford;** and **Volume 23, John Howland, Parts 1,2,3.** These Silver Books are on order: **Volume 11, Edward Doty, Parts 1,2,3; Volume 18, Richard Warren, Parts 1,2,3; Volume 21, John Billington, Parts 1,2,3; and Volume 24, William Brewster, Parts 1,2,3.**

Many genealogical researchers in Gilmer County might think that their early ancestors who immigrated to the New World wouldn't have settled in ports of New England due to the geographical location compared to Jamestown, or Charleston, or Savannah, or New Orleans, or ports that were closer in proximity to Gilmer County in the mountains of North Georgia. But just like America itself, Gilmer County's residents are descended from their ancestors worldwide, and part of the Gilmer County Genealogical Society's purposes is to promote awareness of one's personal family history and the awareness of the Family Research Center in the Gilmer County Library.

This Family Research Center in Ellijay, Georgia has the reputation far and wide as a great location for genealogical research, and descendants have been known to travel many miles to trace their lineage. Sharing the knowledge that the Gilmer County Library is a location with the Mayflower Silver Books will enhance genealogical research from both local residents and visitors.

**Mayflower Family Series (Silver Books)
Gilmer County Library Family Research Room
(As of February, 2025)**

Mayflower Families Series
(Silver Books:) Index in 3 Parts:
Part 1 (A-F); Part 2 (G-P); Part 3
(Q-Z;) around 2000 total pages

Mayflower Families Through Five
Generations (Silver Books:) Volume
Six, Stephen Hopkins

Mayflower Families Through Five
Generations (Silver Books:) Volume
Eleven, Edward Doty (Part 1-Edward
Doty thru Edward2 and John2; Part
2-Edward Doty thru Thomas2,
Samuel2, Desire2, and Elizabeth2;
Part 3-Edward Doty thru Isaac2,
Joseph2, Mary2) (on order)

Mayflower Families Through
Five Generations (Silver Books:)
Volume Seventeen, Isaac Allerton

Mayflower Families Through
Five Generations (Silver Books:)
Volume Eighteen, Richard
Warren (Part 1-Four Generations
Naming Fifth; Part 2-Fifth
Generation Descendants of
Mary2, Anna2, and Elizabeth2;
Part 3-Fifth Generation
Descendants of Abigail2,
Nathaniel2, and Joseph2.) (on
order)

Mayflower Families Through Five
Generations (Silver Books:) Volume
Twenty-one, John Billington (Part 1-
Mayflower Families Through 5
Generations; Part 2-Mayflower
Families 6th Generation
Descendants 2017; Part 3-
Mayflower Families 6th Generation
Descendants 2018.) (on order)

Mayflower Families Through Five
Generations (Silver Books:) Volume
Twenty-two, William Bradford

Mayflower Families Through Five
Generations (Silver Books:)
Volume Twenty-three, John
Howland (Part 1-John Howland
thru four generations naming fifth
through Lydia2, Hannah2,
Joseph2, Jabez2, Ruth2 and Isaac2;
Part 2-John Howland thru 5
generations of his daughters Lydia
and Hannah; Part 3-John Howland
thru 5 & 6 generations of his sons
Joseph and Jabez

Mayflower Families Through Five
Generations (Silver Books:)
Volume Twenty-four, William
Brewster (Part 1-Generations 1-4;
Part 2-Generations 5 and 6
Through His Son Jonathan; Part 3-
William Brewster.) (on order)



The President's Post

Barbara J. Dover

When you read this, two months of 2025 will have already passed and in that time, quite a bit has been going on in the GCGSI world. But first, we can't leave out the last month of 2024. In December, 2024, we sponsored a tree in the annual *Festival of Trees* at the Gilmer County Library, and the festivity continued at our Holiday Luncheon on December 14. Our spirits were bright as we enjoyed fabulous food, happy fellowship, and fun giveaways in a beautifully decorated setting.

In addition to the party atmosphere, Anita Summers became a First Families of Gilmer County member and former GCGSI President Mary Jones officiated the installation of the 2025 GCGSI Board in a beautiful rose ceremony. Thanks go out to Brenda Cochran, Lydia Bassetti, Erin Brandy, Debby Brown, and their helper elves for the planning, purchasing, decorating, and food/beverage setup. And everyone that provided sides and desserts deserves a round of applause!

The GCGSI Board met on January 9, 2025 to take down the Christmas tree at the library; discuss goals and plans for the year; and set the annual budget to help financially achieve those goals. As we are a 501c3 organization, we use the monies from membership dues, our book sales, and patron donations to fund projects such as purchasing books for donation to the library; sponsoring luncheons for members and library staff; funding the reprinting of our own publications; sponsoring genealogical workshops; mailing newsletters to members without internet access; securing speakers for meetings; and more.

Some goals for 2025 are to diversify meeting programs with a variety of subjects including local family ancestry and stories, cemetery restoration, and mountain heritage. We hope to sponsor workshops in the summertime when we don't hold monthly meetings and increase our presence in our Gilmer County community. But most of all, we hope to increase involvement from you, the member, as we seek help with ideas and activities and have fun with our common interest in genealogical research of our differing ancestry.

Our January and February monthly meetings saw Julia Huff Lund, Mary Ellen Davis Dill, and Joseph Waldon Davis become First Families of Gilmer County members; Patricia Henson gave book talks about two of the GCGSI-published books *Days Gone By* and *Reflections on Mountain Heritage;*) and we gleaned information of the lineage of two local families, the Chastains and the Whitakers.

Ellen Canup Hale took us to France on January 18, and we followed in the footsteps of Huguenot Pierre Chastain as he made his way to America, and eventually, as his descendants made their way to Ellijay, Georgia. After the meeting, the Georgia chapter of the The Huguenot Society of the Founders of Manakin in the Colony of Virginia donated the book *Turff and Twigg, Vol. 1* to the Gilmer County Library in honor of Ms. Hale as its outgoing President.

On February 15, Dennis Stewart brought the Whitakers and their descendants from Ireland to Cherry Log, Georgia. Mr. Stewart also brought books that he authored and, at the end of the meeting, he gifted them to attendees. For upcoming meeting dates and programs, check out our website www.gcgisi.org or the Bulletin Board at the end of this newsletter.

Please know that your GCGSI board, Barbara Dover, Debbie Wilcox, Rebecca Burrell, Anita Summers, Susan Noles, Patricia Henson, Erin Brandy, and Lydia Bassetti, will be continuing to work for you throughout the year. You can always contact us at gilmergenealogy@gmail.com with your ideas for projects and activities and let us know how you would like to volunteer for our organization.





First Quarter Highlights 2025

December, 2024



Gilmer County Genealogical Society

Holiday Luncheon & Installation of 2025 Board

Saturday, December 14, 2024
12:00 noon
Gilmer County Library

GCGSI will provide the protein, beverages, and paper products. Attendees are asked to bring side dishes and/or desserts to share. Please RSVP to gilmergenealogy@gmail.com with name and number of those attending.

Photos for First Quarter Highlights submitted by Rebecca Burrell, Brenda Cochran, and Barbara J. Dover.



Non-group photos clockwise from bottom left: Mary Jones, Brenda Cochran, Erin Brandy, and Lydia Bassetti.



2025 GCGSI EXECUTIVE BOARD
(Left to Right)

- Barbara J. Dover ~ President and Publications, Publicity, & Program Committees' Chairperson
- Debbie M. Wilcox ~ Vice President
- Susan O. Noles ~ Treasurer & Membership Committee Chairperson
- Rebecca H. Burrell ~ Corresponding Secretary & Historian
- Anita D. Summer ~ Recording Secretary
- Erin Brandy ~ Events Committee Co-Chairperson
- Lydia Bassetti ~ Events Committee Co-Chairperson
- (Not Pictured: Patricia H. Henson ~ First Families of Gilmer County Committee Chairperson)



First Quarter Highlights 2025 -continued-

January, 2025



See First Quarter Highlights 2025, page 11.



First Quarter Highlights 2025
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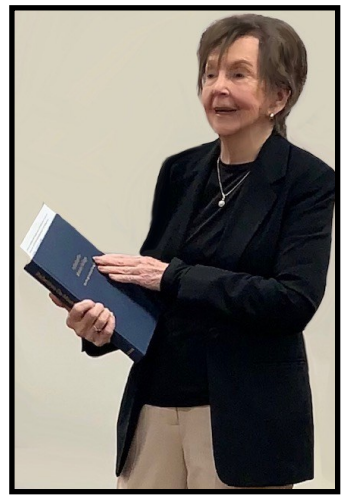
February, 2025

Gilmer County Genealogical Society

The Whitaker Family of Gilmer County

Speaker, Dennis Stewart

Saturday, February 15
Gilmer County Library
2:00 p.m.





First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia

Patricia Hyatt Henson, First Families of Gilmer County Chairperson

The First Families program is designed to honor those pioneers who settled in Gilmer County in 1840 or before, and to recognize their descendants upon becoming members of this program. We encourage anyone who is directly descended from early settlers whose names appear on the 1840 or any prior Gilmer County Census to apply. Discovering your Gilmer County roots can be challenging and exciting; and your research can serve as a source of information for generations to come. Applicants are not required to currently reside in Gilmer County. Once approved, members receive a certificate and pin acknowledging this Gilmer County ancestor. Come and join our 253 descendants who are currently members of First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia! For more information, please visit our website at: www.gegsi.org.

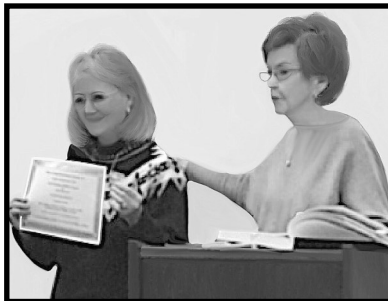


First Families Members Added During the First Quarter of 2025

New Members	Ancestor(s)
Anita Davis Summers	Milton Davis and Absolom Pence
Julia Huff Lund	Absolom Pence
Mary Ellen Davis Gill	William Allen, Jr.
Joseph Waldon Davis	Robert Ray



Anita Davis Summers was accepted into the membership of the First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia, on Saturday, December 15, 2024. Her ancestor Milton Davis was listed on Gilmer County's 1834 census, and ancestor Absolom Pence was listed on the 1840 census. (From left, Gilmer County Genealogical Society's President Barbara J. Dover presents certificates of membership to Anita Davis Summers.)



At the January 18, 2025 meeting of the Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Julia Huff Lund was proudly accepted into the membership of the First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia. Absolom Pence, one of her several early Gilmer County ancestors, was listed on the 1840 census, and in her application for membership, she provided documentation of her lineage back to him. (From left, Julia Huff Lund receives certificate and pin of membership from First Families of Gilmer County's Committee Chairperson Patricia Henson.)



At the February 15, 2025 meeting of the Gilmer County Genealogical Society, the First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia organization received two new members, Mary Ellen "Mimi" Davis Dill and her brother Joseph Waldon Davis. Mary Ellen "Mimi" Davis Dill submitted documentation of her lineage to Gilmer County pioneer William Allen, Jr., and Joseph Waldon Davis's pioneer ancestor was Robert Ray. Pictured are Patricia Henson, First Families of Gilmer County Committee Chairperson (on left;) Mary Ellen Davis Dill (center;) and Joseph Waldon Davis (right.)



Books, Books, and More Books!



The Georgia Chapter of The Huguenot Society of Founders of Manakin in the Colony of Virginia recently donated a copy of **Turff and Twigg, Volume 1, The French Lands** to the Gilmer County Library in honor of the organization's Past President Ellen Canup Hale.

The book, written by Priscilla Harriss Cabell, is a comprehensive study of the Huguenots (French refugees) who settled in Manakintowne on the southern bank of James River in the Colony of Virginia in 1700. It contains families' names and a plethora of information about them, such as the land they received in the New World, wills, descendants, and more.

Pictured with the book are, from left, Ellen Canup Hale; Virginia Cowdan, a Past Vice President and Chaplain for The Georgia Chapter of The Huguenot Society of Founders of Manakin in the Colony of Virginia; and Glenda Garland of the Gilmer County Library.

The Gilmer County Genealogical Society recently donated several to be placed in the Gilmer County Library's Family Research Room. Published by the Pierre Chastain Family Association, the books are **Pierre Chastain and His Descendants, Volume I, First Five Generations; Pierre Chastain and His Descendants, Volume II, Sixth Generation; and Chastain Families of Manakintowne and Pierre Chastain, Revisited**. Shown with the donated books are, from left, Barbara Dover, GCGSI President; Alex Thomerson, Gilmer County Library Manager; and Susan Noles GCGSI Treasurer.



The Evolution of Ellijay, Georgia
1921 - 2021
A Century of Change
Barbara J. Dover
with stories by
Edith Hopper Patten, Leavelle Brenda Carlson,
Janice Pennington Sharpless, Glenda Garland,
Glenda Debra Spivey, Janice Diane Watson

It has been said that the only thing that remains constant is change. Depending on age and generation, that old book on days gone by would be hard to read and difficult to understand. We can hope that this book inspires the reader to record their personal evaluations, regardless of location or age, because descendants eventually become ancestors, and your descendants deserve to know your life's story.

The popularity of our latest GCGSI publication, **The Evolution of Ellijay, 1921-2021, A Century of Change**, has prompted the board to approve a third printing. This book provides a history of the city of Ellijay and includes an annotated and indexed map of the downtown structures.

The map and index serve as a reference to locations and their different buildings and businesses through the years. Along with the historical information are personal reminiscences of Ellijay written by Gilmer County natives.

Designed as a portable publication, affordable and easily used for a self-guided walking tour of downtown Ellijay, it may be purchased at the GCGSI meetings, via mail order, at local bookstore Walls of Books, and at The Tabor House Museum. If you don't yet have a copy, get one or more today. And this unique book will make a perfect gift!



Celestine Sibley (1941-1999)

Celestine Sibley (1941-1999) won many awards and served many humanitarian causes during her career as a journalist, columnist, and author, becoming an iconic adopted daughter of Georgia. Born in Florida, she moved to Alabama as a child and began working as a cub reporter for *The Mobile Press Register* when she was 15. She became a full-time reporter there after graduating high school in 1933.

While she was at *The Press*, Sibley married colleague and journalist James Little and they had three children. James's jobs required them to move from Alabama, but she always found work at newspapers, the first being *The Pensacola News-Journal*, and the next was *The Atlanta Constitution* when James took a job in Atlanta for the Associated Press. She began work at the *Atlanta Constitution* in 1941, covering the federal beat, but things changed just a few months later when Pearl Harbor was bombed. The staff was depleted by the war so Sibley moved up through the ranks quickly, and she became the first female editor in the male-dominated field of journalism. She covered all the high-profile stories of the day and received her first column in 1944.

Her reporting featured many topics, but for many years, she wrote about politics, the Georgia Legislature, the trial of James Earl Ray who was convicted of assassinating Martin Luther King, Jr., the 1976 presidential election of Jimmy Carter, as well as serving as a Hollywood correspondent for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution's* Sunday magazine. She later became a syndicated columnist, writing about Southern life, people and everyday events with knowledge, compassion and humor. Sibley also began a career as an author, first in the True Confessions and True Detective genre, and then wrote a series of Kate Mulcay mysteries. Sibley wrote 25 books and earned a large and loyal following after the book *Dear Store*, the history of Rich's department store.

Celestine Sibley loved Georgia and Georgia loved her. She raised public awareness of many issues, inspiring political leaders as well as home-spun folks. She retired from reporting in 1990, but she continued to write. Her final column appeared in the *Atlanta Constitution* only 20 days before her death in 1999.

Over the course of her career, Sibley was recognized with significant honors. In the 1990's, she received the Ralph McGill Award for Lifetime Achievement in Journalism. (She considered Ralph McGill her mentor when she first arrived in Atlanta.) Sibley received two honorary degrees during her career, one in 1993 from Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama, and another in 1996 from Emory University in Atlanta. And she was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Society of Newspaper Columnists a few months before she passed.

After her death in 1999, the Press Gallery in the Georgia House of Representatives was named in her honor. She had spent 20 years covering politics, courts, and the Georgia legislature, including the annual forty-day Georgia General Assembly, which became one of her favorite assignments. Sibley's legislative reporting was considered fair, unbiased, and accessible to the general public. It is the only space in the Capitol designated and named for an individual. In 2007, Celestine Sibley was inducted into the Georgia Writers Hall of Fame, and in 2010, the Georgia Women of Achievement.



Monday, May 27, 1957

Celestine Sibley



Waiting For the Jury

ELLIJAY—The jury was out—my favorite time on any assignment. This will undoubtedly change if and when I become a defendant, but so far it is the time of waiting I like best.

There's nothing you can do but wait. You don't dare leave. The jury might come in. You can't start another task. For a little—or a long—space of time you are bound to that place, united with those people who also wait.

It was pleasant in the Gilmer County courtroom the other day. Gilmer's courthouse is probably unique in that it used to be a hotel and the courtroom itself was the hotel dining room, with remnants of its past remaining in the fireplace back of the clerk's desk. A particularly handsome hand-carved mantel still graces the fireplace and a pair of iron fire dogs continue to hold burning logs when winter closes in and the courtroom heater needs help to warm the big room.

The talk is always good while the jury is out. Lawyers and court officials tell of other days and other trials. J. Hines Wood, of Canton, who has been the official court reporter in the Blue Ridge Circuit for 30 years, has a fund of marvelously funny stories gleaned from years of listening to mountain folks "law" one another.

Bill Westmoreland, youthful clerk of Gilmer Superior Court, has a wondrously keen appreciation of the old documents which fall into his hands for safe-keeping. While we waited the other day we looked at deeds dated 1832 and bearing quaint beeswax seals, which hang from them pendant fashion instead of being stamped on the paper itself. The clerk's office keeps copies of the county newspaper on file and one which bemused me for long moments while the jury was out was a copy of the *Ellijay Courier* from 1890.

I guess the reason I enjoyed that paper so much was that it had a big advertisement for the Ellijay Seminary, which was one of the oldest and finest schools in the mountains. The seminary, situated on a hilltop in the town of Ellijay itself, was run by a Baptist minister, the Rev. W. D. Allen, and Prof. J. E. Tallant. Old-timers recall Prof. Tallant as a tall, string-bean thin man who whiled away the twilight hours by playing the flute. The thin, sweet music of his flute floated across the valley in the evenings, undoubtedly making many a hard-working mountain mother stiffen her spine and work all the harder to get her children in school.

But the difference in the curriculum and the standards of behavior in that school and the schools of today makes you laugh and makes you wonder. Many a modern-day parent has been uneasy about the current fashions in sex education. Schools have gone out for the facts of life in a great big way in recent years and whether this is good is beyond me. I suppose a great deal depends upon the skill of the teacher and the quality of instruction, and sometimes I wonder if the school had not better just skip the whole subject and leave something for mama to teach.

It's a cinch the problem of dating and how old you should be when you hold hands in the park and whether or not prostitution is a good thing didn't disturb the teacher of the Ellijay Seminary in 1890. The curriculum in those days included orthography (I think that's spelling), reading, English grammar, mathematics, Caesar, Virgil, geology and Greek.

It was an interesting picture of another day—and a pleasant way to wait for a jury.

newspapers.com
Photo submitted by Rebecca Amerson



Bulletin Board



*Forsythia and Pear in Bloom, 1968 (oil on canvas)
Fairfield Porter, American (1907-1979)*



In Memorium

GCGSI Member
Judy Jesse Kelley

Nov. 5, 1946—Nov. 16, 2024

2025 GCGSI Officers and Committee Chairpersons

Barbara J. Dover: President, Publication, & Publicity Committees' Chairperson, and Program Committee Co-Chairperson
Deborah Wilcox: Vice President, Program Committee Co-Chairperson
Rebecca Burrell: Corresponding Secretary & Historian -
Anita Summers: Recording Secretary
Susan Noles: Treasurer & Membership Committee Chairperson
Patricia Henson: First Families of Gilmer County Committee Chairperson
Lydia Bassetti and Erin Brandy: Events Committee Co-Chairpersons



Mountain Heritage Newsletter
Published by **Barbara J. Dover**
Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc.
President, Publications and
Publicity Committees' Chairperson, and
Program Committee Co-Chairperson

March 2025

- **Sunday, March 9 - Daylight Saving Time Begins**
- **Saturday, March 15 - GCGSI Monthly Meeting**
Gilmer County Library - 2:00 p.m.
You Can Do It! Gravestone Cleaning Made Simple
Speakers: Rebecca Amerson, Beverly Hill Ratcliff, Susan Noles
- **Monday, March 17 - St. Patrick's Day**
- **Thursday, March 20 - First Day of Spring**

April 2025

- **Tuesday, April 1 - April Fool's Day**
- **National Library Week - April 6-12, 2025**
Library Staff Appreciation Luncheon
Tuesday, April 8, 2025 - 12:00-2:30 pm.?
Gilmer County Library Upper Level Meeting Room
- **Saturday, April 19 - GCGSI and GCHSI Combined Meeting**
Gilmer County Library - 2:00 p.m.
Welcome to The Tabor House
Speakers: Doug and Judy Piette
- **Sunday, April 20 - Happy Easter!**
- **Tuesday, April 22 - Earth Day**

May 2025

- **Monday, May 5 - Cinco de Mayo**
- **Sunday, May 11 - Mother's Day**
- **Saturday, May 17 - GCGSI Monthly Meeting**
Gilmer County Library - 2:00 p.m.
Food is Love: Our Ancestors' Recipes
Speakers: GCGSI Members
In honor of Mothers' and Fathers' Day, this meeting is a "Show and Tell" program with cooking stories featuring recipes passed down from our ancestors. Members will bring samples of the food created with love from the ancestors' recipes. Food samples will be shared after the presentations
- **Monday, May 26 - Memorial Day**


The Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc.
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