



# *A Silver Sixpence from the William Nickerson Archeological Dig*

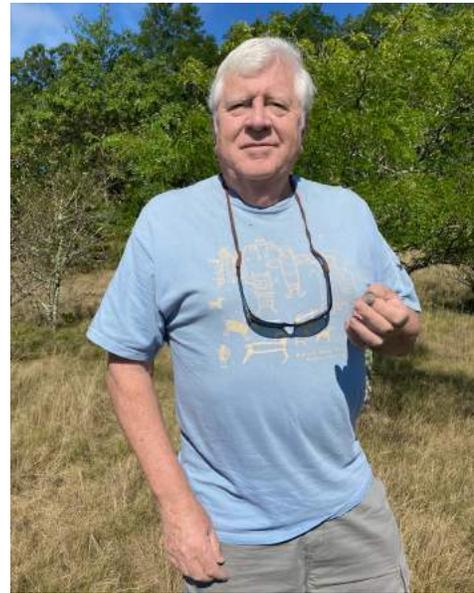
By D. Scott Nickerson, past president, NFA

**The Nickerson Family Association** has traditionally understood that our Orleans Road property in North Chatham is at or very near to the actual homesite of our forefather ancestor William Nickerson, an immigrant arriving in the Massachusetts colony in 1637 from Norwich, England. William Smith's century-old *History of Chatham* gives us compass bearings from structures then extant to the approximate location of that original house and homestead. NFA Past President Brian Nickerson took Smith's co-ordinates to plot the likely site, which seemed just barely to rest on adjacent Chatham Conservation Foundation (CCF) land.

With the acquiescence and support of CCF, beginning in 2016 archaeologist Craig Chartier explored the suspected site, soon confirmed a 17th century occupation, and over three subsequent summers executed a thorough professional archaeological dig. NFA supporters' gifts and Chatham's Community Preservation Act grants funded a complete excavation of the homesite and surrounds. Craig's very interesting yearly excavation reports provide great insight into the life and capabilities of our immigrant forefather. They can be read at [www.plymoutharch.com](http://www.plymoutharch.com).

Of the many remarkable artifacts discovered in the extensive William Nickerson homesite excavation, the most interesting to me is a silver coin discovered by a rookie volunteer digger, retired Judge Gary Nickerson. On Sept. 17, 2018 he was working at excavating an area of a presumed wooden defensive palisade, between 12 and 16 inches below surface area, carefully removing the soil before processing it through a one-quarter inch mesh shaker screen to separate artifacts from the dirt. As the soil fell away, a flat cylindrical object appeared, and Gary wondered how a washer had become buried so deep in the land. However, as he rubbed the object clean with his fingers, a VI appeared and date – 1652! He had found a coin from William Nickerson's time! Of course, excitement reigned. Pictures were texted to Craig, who was off-site that day. He thought it a prank and instructed the crew to get back to work. But soon, with the coin in hand, it was seen to be a colonial Oak Tree type Massachusetts silver sixpence.

In the mid-17th century, England was in the midst of political turmoil. In 1649 King Charles I was beheaded, the monarchy abolished, and a Commonwealth was declared. Before the monarchy was re-established in 1660, Oliver Cromwell was Lord Protector for nearly a decade and supervision of the English colonies was lax. Trade suffered from the lack of coins to use as money. Shell wampum, grains, corn, fish and other goods had legislatively-declared values, but most commercial exchanges were by means of barter. Consequently in 1652, without the sanction of Cromwell and the parliament, the Massachusetts House of Magistrates and House of Deputies approved the appointment of John Hull in Boston to mint silver coins to address the "occasion



*The Hon. Gary Nickerson holds the coin he found.*

of much counterfeit coin" and "much loss accruing in that respect." These first coins produced in our United States were sterling silver and in denominations of 3-, 6-, and 12-pence or 1 shilling.

All coins had an obverse with MASATHVSETS and a centered image of a tree, with a reverse of NEW ENGLAND AN DOM around the 1652 date and Roman numeral denomination. The Nickerson coin is an Oak Tree type, struck between 1660 and 1667, following the Willow Tree and preceding the Pine Tree types. Thus, we can determine without question that the homesite dates no earlier than 1660, and the wear on the coin suggests it being some years later.

Princeton University's Curator of Numismatics Alan Stahl, brother of CCF board member Gerry Stahl, has examined the Nickerson silver sixpence and authored a scholarly essay on this and the other three smaller coins found in the dig. He believes it to be the only Massachusetts/New England Oak Tree type coin found on Cape Cod. It is also unusual in being only the sixth known example of a VI over XII overstrike. This means that the coin was struck from a cut-down Shilling (XII pence) coin with sixpence (VI) dies. Traces of the shilling features can still be seen where they were not obliterated by the sixpence die. So this is a quite rare and special coin.

The inspiration has arisen from the NFA Board that there would be interest among the membership, the Chatham community and visitors in owning a representation of this unique historical relic. The coin itself, by the agreement allowing the dig, belongs to the CCF. The CCF may decide to allow the NFA to display it and other artifacts, to auction or sell it, or to do otherwise as they wish. However, they have graciously given permission for NFA to replicate, promote and sell copies of the coin.

The task of doing this has occupied over a year, but has now been accomplished. Some manufacturers were unwilling to take on such a process, fearing trouble for duplicating money and accusations of counterfeiting although the legal entity of the English Protectorate or Massachusetts General Court was centuries extinct. Eventually we found a supplier who understood that the law allows legal replicas if each coin is clearly marked as a copy. As we proceeded, it was determined that fidelity of reproduction was quite difficult with casting or even high-quality photography. Eventually a high-resolution 3D scan process was utilized to provide an electronic exact representation for the production process and would generate a reproduction coin which could be inscribed on the rim as a copy.

So, we now have available for sale a replica which is just one step and 350 years from something that William or Anne Nickerson held in their hand. No doubt its original loss caused great consternation, as a sixpence was of great value at the time when hard money was scarce and difficult to come by. There may have been serious reproaches at its disappearance, as William in these years had been assessed several fines by the Plymouth Courts for various transgressions including the purchase from Massasoit and the Monomoyicks the tribal lands which became Chatham. To find this exceptional and rare relic reappear after 3 1/2 centuries in the hand of William Nickerson's many-times-over Great Grandson Judge Gary Nickerson is a coincidence almost too extraordinary to be believed.



*Bronze cold castings of the coin made by Gerry Stahl*



*Sixpence coin obverse*



*Sixpence coin reverse*

Please consider buying one or more of these unique coins for yourself or as special gifts for your Nickerson family.

Visit [www.nickersonassoc.com](http://www.nickersonassoc.com) for ordering information.



*George McKay*

## Mayflower Stamp

The USPS released a “forever” Mayflower stamp to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the ship’s arrival this fall. NFA Member George McKay is a also member of the Plymouth Rock Stamp Club that lobbied the USPS for several years. The commemorative stamp is titled “Mayflower in Plymouth Harbor” and features original art. The USPS says the stamp conveys ‘a scene of desolate beauty at the end of the Pilgrims’ long journey to an unfamiliar world.’ The stamp was released on Nov.17.

## Look at the Women Kin, Too

By Nancy Nickerson Corey

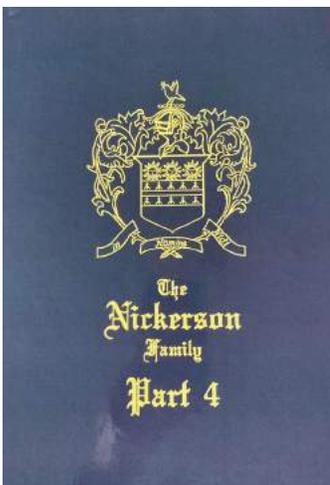
*In this newsletter we continue our profiles with a Nickerson "cousin" and a Nickerson "ancestor." I have chosen four women cousins, for our "cousin" and the ancestor of one of our newer members as our "ancestor." Please provide me with any suggestions for this ongoing column at [nancyroots@msn.com](mailto:nancyroots@msn.com).*

Meet your Nickerson cousin: Or should we say cousins? As NFA members, we sometimes tend to focus on those with the Nickerson surname. A good friend and cousin has said numerous times that "we need to look at the women, too." As a female with the Nickerson surname, I agree with her and think it behooves us to remember not all descendants of William and Anne (Busby) Nickerson carry the surname Nickerson. What of my sister-in-law, who I never knew was a Nickerson descendant until she asked me for assistance with her genealogy and came with her maternal surnames, Nickerson included? Or a good friend who, when we were talking about "cemetery digging" one day said, "um, my grandmother was a Nickerson?" Whoa! I want you to meet four Nickerson cousins who, although Nickerson descendants, do not carry the Nickerson surname: **Millie Yonkers Corey, Patti Gates Neel, Linda Springer Hermes and Karron Gull Curtis**. All four have ties to southwest Nebraska, and all four descend from Bassett Nickerson<sup>6</sup>, albeit through different lines.

Linda, Karron and I are second cousins; both of their moms and my dad being first cousins. Linda lives in Texas, and Karron in Florida. I remember spending time with both of them when younger, when attending "cousin reunions." Linda was my first introduction to genealogy and Karron has a photo album of her mom's I would love to digitize! Both are married, have grown children and grandchildren and love to travel. Karron does make it back to this area occasionally and we play "catch up." The three of us stay in touch mostly, though, via phone and Facebook. On the other hand, both Millie my sister-in-law and Patti, a good friend, live within four miles of me and I see them on a regular basis. I knew both of them for years before becoming aware of our Nickerson connection. Again, both are married with grown children and grandchildren. They are third cousins to each other and fifth cousins to me. Our Nickerson line: William<sup>1</sup>, William<sup>2</sup>, Thomas<sup>3</sup>, Nathaniel<sup>4</sup>, Issacher<sup>5</sup> to Bassett<sup>6</sup> is clear, but branches off at that point. Linda, Karron and I through Bassett's son: Bassett<sup>7</sup>, Horace<sup>8</sup>, Jesse<sup>9</sup> before again branching off from three of Jesse's children; Millie and Patti through Bassett<sup>6</sup>'s, son Andrew before branching off further for both of them. The fact that we all ended up in southwest Nebraska shows the diversity and migration within our country. We all grew up within 40 miles of each other, all Nickerson descendants and most of us not knowing the other's Nickerson connection.

I hope you enjoyed meeting these cousins and I also hope you will think of your non-surname Nickerson descendants and how we can draw them into the NFA.

## The Perfect Gift For Home Library and The Holidays!



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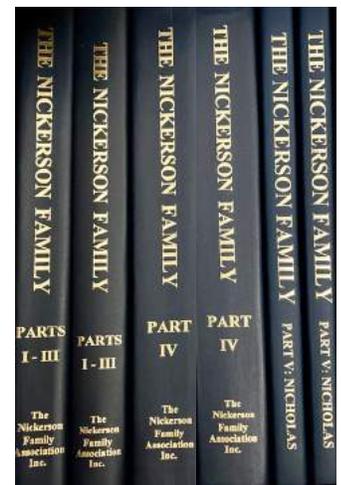
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## Part of the “Clan”?

By Nancy Nickerson Corey

The NFA recently received a query concerning the spelling of the name Nickerson. Specifically, are individuals with the surname “Nickeson” part of the “Nickerson clan?” This sent me on a mission to show Joe Nickeson that he is, indeed, part of the clan. Joe provided me with some family names and locations to aid me in my mission. Searching our digital files turned up some of his names and locations, but they were not linked to each other, nor did they show a link back to William and Anne (Busby) Nickerson.

Turning to the WEN (William Emery Nickerson) papers I found a goldmine in a 17-page packet of genealogical information and correspondence between NFA genealogists and various NFA members. Using this information, along with various other sources, I was able to trace Joe’s Nickerson line back to Jeremiah Nickerson, the son of William and Anne’s son Joseph, who had left the Cape in 1711, migrating to Kent County, Del.-- one of our more difficult lines to trace. This line continues from Jeremiah Nickerson through Joshua, and John to William, all in Delaware. William left Delaware sometime between 1803, the death of his father, and 1812, the death of his sister Elizabeth, apparently from a dispute over his inheritance being under the control of a brother. William migrated to Washington County, Penn., probably dying there in 1854. His son, Solomon, appears to be where the spelling changed from Nickerson to Nickeson. Solomon was born 14 Dec 1815 and died 4 Jan 1881 in Green County, Penn. He

was laid to rest in the Windy Gap Cemetery in West Finlay, Washington County, Penn. with his wife Phebe. The name engraved on his marker is “Nickeson.” This cemetery is also the resting place of many of his 13 children and numerous other descendants. It is interesting to note, however, that two of his children who predeceased him are buried under the surname of Nickerson next to their parents in this same cemetery.



*Dawn & Lilly Bordeleau, daughter and granddaughter of past president James M. Nickerson visit the NFA campus in July.*

Joe’s Nickerson line then continues under the surname of Nickeson from Samuel: John Zook, Bert Ross, and Ralph C. to Joe. I was able to relay this information to Joe, showing him that he is, indeed, part of our “clan.”



*NFA Campus*

I want to thank Joe for allowing me to include his family story in this article.

Joe’s use of the word “clan” sent me looking for a dictionary definition of the word. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines clan as: “a group of people tracing their descent from a common ancestor.” As the above indicates, we all descend from a common ancestor but the spelling may have changed throughout the years. As I told Joe, in the 17th and 18th centuries there was no standard spelling of names; names were spelled the way they were heard by the recorder, i.e. the census taker, tax man, court judge, county clerk, minister, etc. Add in different dialects, accents and sometimes I think it’s a wonder we can trace ancestors at all! Personally, I have a legal document from the late 1700s wherein Issacher Nickerson’s surname is spelled three different ways, yes, within the same document. In the above reference to Joe’s family I found this family enumerated in censuses prior to Solomon’s death as Nickerson, Nickison and Nicholson. The NFA digital genealogy files contain approximately 1000 individuals, descendants of William and Anne, with surnames other than Nickerson: Nicholson, Nichols, Nickison, Nickason, Nichason, Nicheson, Nickerson, Nickson and Nixon, among others.

So, in answering the first question: Are individuals with the surname Nickeson part of the Nickerson clan? I believe that answer is a resounding yes! I believe this also shows we should not get hung up on spellings in our searches for family and ancestors. It is imperative we also look at locations, dates, migrations, names of children, other relatives, etc., keeping an open mind while searching for our ancestors.

# □ BOOKS □

## *Who Was W. Sears Nickerson?*

By Debra Lawless

One of William and Anne Nickerson's tenth-generation descendants is also well-known as a prolific published author and a descendant of no less than nine *Mayflower* passengers. In this 400th anniversary year of the *Mayflower*'s landing, we might ask: Who was Warren Sears Nickerson?

A look at documents on *Ancestry.com* and an interview with Nickerson's grandson, Warren Nickerson Marble, offer some answers. Nickerson was born in East Harwich on 5 December 1880, a son of Warren J. and Mary Atkins Nickerson. He was the youngest in a family of twelve.

After he completed the tenth grade at Orleans High School, Nickerson took on the life of a sailor. When he returned to the Cape, he became a steeplejack. He was back in Harwich on 15 July 1905, when he married twenty-three-year-old Imogen Howes Small, also of Harwich. Nickerson, twenty-four, listed his occupation on the marriage license as an insurance agent. They became the parents of two daughters, Mary E. (who died in 1912 at age six after an operation for appendicitis) and Elizabeth W. (born about 1911). The marriage ended in divorce and on 1 September 1918, Nickerson, now thirty-seven, married a twenty-five-year-old teacher from Wolfeboro, N.H. named Donna M. Corliss.

On his World War I registration card, filled out the same month as his second marriage, Nickerson checked off boxes indicating he was a tall man with a medium build. His eyes were blue, and his hair was brown. He was, by then, working as an undertaker in Harwich Port and received "great satisfaction in making someone look good in death." He later reminisced that he had once been sent to the nearby railroad tracks with a basket to pick up the remains of someone hit by a train, Marble recalled.

In the late 1920s, when he was about age forty, Nickerson had a heart attack which would perhaps prove crucial to his writing career. By the time of the 1930 census Nickerson, his wife and three daughters Dorothy, ten, Mary (not to be confused with the earlier Mary), eight, and Jean, five, were living in Wellesley. His occupation is oddly listed as "none" on the census, perhaps because he was still contemplating what to do next. But we know that at this point he may have completed writing *Land Ho! 1620: A Seaman's Story of the Mayflower, Her Construction, Her Navigation, and Her First Landfall*. The book was released in 1931 by the eminent publisher Houghton Mifflin Company.

After his heart attack, Nickerson's doctor advised him to seek a salubrious climate away from the snow, and he moved with his family to Poinsettia Road in Daytona Beach, Fla., where the family was listed on the 1940 census. Nickerson was then fifty-nine. His occupation was given as "merchant." In fact, he ran a gift shop on Main Street in Daytona Beach where he said he worked for 84 hours during the week of 24 to 30 March 1940 and for fifty-two of the fifty-two weeks in the previous year. Perhaps his strong work ethic explains why the gift shop survived both the Great Depression and World War II. Yet somewhere in there, Nickerson also had time to research and write his books. (Donna was then working as a teacher at Mainland Senior High School.)

On 27 June 1950 Nickerson and Donna traveled to Southampton, England aboard the *S.S. America*. The couple also traveled to the Grand Canyon, probably along Route 66, with a canvas bag in the front of the car in case the car overheated in the Mojave Desert. Nickerson retired in 1952, when he was seventy-two, and it was during this period that his grandson came to know him well during family trips to Florida and at the "Nick Shack" in Harwich, overlooking Pleasant Bay. It was "the most charming place to spend the summer," Marble says.

"I remember him as this warm, gentle, wonderful man," Marble adds. "I got two-thirds of a name of a really great guy." Marble's mother was Nickerson's fourth daughter, Mary (1921-2007).

Marble, who grew up partly in Dennis and Orleans and now lives in Westminster, Col., reminisced last spring about his grandfather and the summer weeks they shared in the "Nick Shack" overlooking Pleasant Bay. Some of Marble's first cousins still live in the local area and the "Nick Shack" remains in the family.

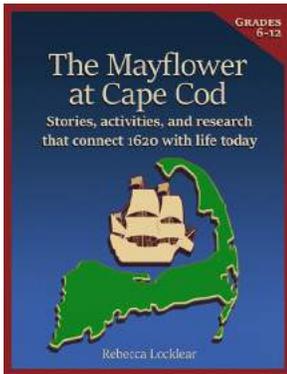
The "Nick Shack" was a wondrous place with interesting souvenirs such as "the world's largest arrowhead—" a two-by-one-foot slab of rock in the shape of an arrowhead. Also there was a whalebone about eight feet long that Marble's mother had picked up while sailing on the Outer Beach.

All three of Nickerson's books are available through the Nickerson Family Association. See order form.

# NFA Member Publishes Mayflower Book for Young Readers

Just in time for the 400th anniversary of the landing of the Mayflower this fall is a new book by NFA member Rebecca Locklear.

Locklear, a native of Chatham and Orleans who now lives in Oregon, wrote “*The Mayflower at Cape Cod: Stories, Activities, and Research That Connect 1620 With Life Today*” (Skaket Books and Art, 2020). The workbook can be used with students in grades six through 12.

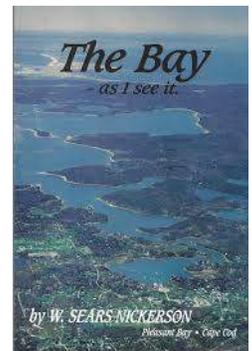
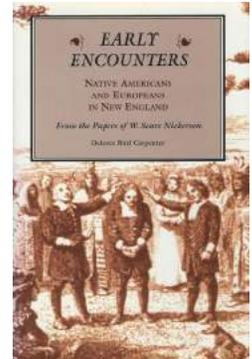
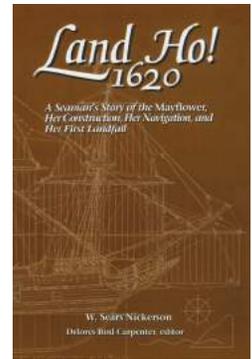


The creative book poses the question: What happened when the Mayflower anchored off Cape Cod for five weeks in 1620? In particular, the book focuses on the First Encounter between the Pilgrims and the Nausets.

Locklear, a teacher for 37 years, wrote the book because she learned from the Eastham 400 Commemoration Committee that “there is not curriculum out there for middle and high school students about the Mayflower story that includes the latest historical information,” she says. Unlike many authors, Locklear examines varied aspects of the Mayflower story including cross-cultural communication, the environment, epidemics, freedom, immigration, marine mammals, migration, self-sufficiency, slavery, tribal issues and wilderness survival, to name a few.

Divided into seven lesson units, the book contains directions for 70 creative activities in various arenas, including cooking foods such as cranberry muffins and seafood “stuffies” in shells. Locklear ventures into fascinating areas such as the comet that appeared in 1618, two years before the Pilgrims set sail. “Why was it called the ‘Angry Star?’ What did Christians imagine was happening?” And she ranges into diseases that ultimately decimated the native population, asking students to name the diseases and to compare how many Europeans as opposed to natives died of the diseases. Of particular interest today as the coronavirus continues to affect our daily lives might be the section on epidemics, where Locklear asks students to contemplate modern-day epidemics.

For more information about “The Mayflower at Cape Cod,” including purchasing information, [www.rebeccalocklear.com](http://www.rebeccalocklear.com). The book is available in both a digital PDF and print edition.



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## *A word from President Robert E. Nickerson...*

### **We All Have Our Own Nickerson Story to Tell**

Dear Nickerson Cousins:

Thank you so much for being a part of the Nickerson Family Association. We are fortunate to have supportive members like you who are interested in their Nickerson ancestral line(s). While we all have hundreds of forbears, as a Nickerson descendant we all trace ourselves to a common link, William and Anne.



Each of us has our own Nickerson story. Here's mine. My paternal roots are strongly tied to Cape Cod. My Nickerson line runs through William and Anne's son Joseph. Joseph was born in Yarmouth in 1647 and lived there prior to moving to Harwich. In 1675 Joseph and his wife Ruhamah had their first child, Jeremiah, in Harwich; their son William (my line) came three years later. Three more boys filled out the family. Since 1675, my entire line was born in Harwich. While I was born in Boston, I now live in the home that my family has owned continuously since 1880. It was built by Anthony Phillips in 1796. At the time the house was built, the Phillips family owned 42 acres bounded by Nantucket Sound on the south. From recent research it appears this is one of the oldest extant houses in Harwich Port. In 2018 we finished a complete restoration including three fully functioning original hearths/fireplaces. We are looking into hosting a local "Nickerson" home tour in concert with our 2021 Annual Reunion and hope to invite you to visit our restored 1796 home.



*1796 House*



COVID-19 has changed all of our lives and how we interact. Despite the challenges of keeping the “Nick House” and Caleb Nickerson Homestead closed this year, we are moving forward. For several months Vice President Bill Walker and other board members worked with the Chatham Historical Commission, Preserve Our Past (POP) and the new owner, Joe Giacalone, of what is deemed to be the oldest house in Chatham-- William Nickerson Jr.’s c. 1700 homestead. Our common goal is to save the house from demolition. We hired an archaeologist and a well-recognized expert on historic structures to determine the approximate age of the home and their investigation did confirm the age as early 1700s. Early on, the NFA was considered as a possible new location for the house, but it appears that the owner intends to move the house within his property and also to restore its exterior. We are thrilled that the structure will be saved.

Another exciting project is the reproduction of the Massachusetts silver sixpence of the ‘oak tree’ series, bearing the date 1652. This was one of four coins found during the dig. The coin reproduction used 3-D imagery to create the coin which is available for sale by the NFA. How exciting, having a coin that is identical to the one found at the dig site of William and Anne’s homestead! Just like the unearthed coin which was slightly bent, the reproduction is, too. “No other find of a silver Massachusetts coin has been reported for Cape Cod,” archaeologist Craig Chartier says.

Much more is to come in 2021. Thanks again to all those who were able to help us in “Solving NFA’s Pandemic Puzzle.” We appreciate your support and most importantly your membership and involvement with the NFA.

Wishing all a wonderful holiday season and the very best for 2021!

Please visit our website at:

<http://nickersonassoc.com>

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# ROOTS AND BRANCHES

## FALLEN BRANCHES

### Ralph Crowell

NFA Past President Ralph “Eph” Crowell, 93, of Chatham died on May 30, 2020. Ralph attended our reunion in 2019 and received an award for “oldest” attendee. A son of Frederick W. and Helen Eldridge Crowell, Ralph served in the U.S. Army Air Force in WWII and in the Korean War as a tail gunner. He worked for the family business, Frederick Crowell Construction with his brother, Frederick Crowell Jr. Ralph was deeply involved in the community in many ways, including 23 years with the Chatham Fire Department. A cranberry grower who was also a hunter and fisherman, he caught his first bluefin tuna at the age of 87. Ralph’s wife Irene Cahoon Crowell predeceased him in 2006. He is survived by his children Karen Miller, Martha Schiffner, Robert Crowell, Cindy Cronin and Amy Crowell; six grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

### Elizabeth A. Nickerson-Power

Elizabeth A. (Raggi) Nickerson-Power, 34, died on Aug. 12 in Hingham, Mass., after a courageous four-year battle with cancer. She leaves her husband, Michael E. Nickerson-Power, daughter Isadora Aubrie Nickerson-Power, and mother-in-law Phyllis Nickerson Power of Chatham. She was the niece of Barbara Nickerson and Nick and Holly Nickerson of Chatham. Beth was born and raised in New York. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from Adelphi University with a B.A. in psychology. She later earned a master’s degree in art therapy and mental health counseling at Lesley University. In 2015 she opened her successful private practice, Reflective Tides, in Rockland and Hingham. She loved growing flowers and organic vegetables and also advocated for rescue dogs. Beth worked tirelessly to ensure whatever she touched was left better than she found it.

### Sanford T. Young

Sanford T. Young, 83, died on April 12, 2020 in Rye, N.Y. after an extended struggle with dementia. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Margaret Luce Young; sons Eugene and Roland, and three grandchildren. He was pre-deceased by his parents Chesley and Sada (Tyler) Young in Chicago, Ill. He fondly recalled many summers as a young boy on Cape Cod swimming and sailing, even during WWII. He earned a degree in chemistry at the University of Illinois and a Ph.D. in organic chemistry from the University of Rochester. Beginning in 1961 he worked with FMC Corporation’s Agricultural Chemical division for 34 years as a research chemist. Sandy and Margaret upon retirement traveled widely and sailed. Sandy is commemorated in the South Dennis town cemetery alongside his parents and close to other ancestors buried there over the centuries.

### Grace Connolly

Grace Connolly, 97, died in Erie, Mich. on April 3, 2020 in the home where she had lived since 1964. Grace was active in civic affairs, serving on the Mason Board of Education and the Erie Park and Recreation Commission. In 2014 the South Erie Grace Connolly Park was named after her. The oldest of three children, she was born to Leonard and Grace Andrews in Taunton, Mass. She graduated from high school in 1940 and spent the war working at Metals & Controls. She met her future husband, Timothy Connolly, when he was stationed at Camp Myles Standish in Taunton. After the war, they moved to Dearborn, Mich., where they raised their eight children. Surviving Grace are her sons Timothy, Andrew, Francis, Daniel and Arthur Connolly; daughters Sandra DeMars, Tara Connolly-Jones and Janet Connolly; 16 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

### Robert Thrift Kendall Jr.

Robert Kendall, 95, died Feb. 3. A native of Jackson, Mich., he met his future wife, Sallie, while in grade school. Subsequent to service in the U.S. Army Air Corps, where he served in WWII as a B-17 bombardier based in England, he returned to the University of Michigan, receiving A.B. in 1948, a J.D. in 1951 and an L.L.M. in 1955. He taught at Oregon State University School of Business and Michigan State University School of Business. In 1956 he joined the National Bank of Jackson as a trust officer and eventually established the bank’s first corporate legal department as general counsel.

### Muriel Nickerson

Muriel Nickerson, 92, died on April 21, 2019, in Berlin, Md. Born in Weymouth, Mass., she was preceded in death by her husband, Robert Nickerson, in 1993, and her daughter Penny Jane Nickerson in 2018. She is survived by her son Phillip Nickerson, daughters Pamela Bechill, Paula Jo Kennedy and five grandchildren. Muriel was a graduate of the University of Maryland and Benjamin Franklin University where she studied accounting and law. Muriel was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution.



## Two Members Look Back at the 1918 Pandemic

In 1918 my maternal grandfather was practicing medicine in Leechburg, Penn. as a recent GP graduate of a Pittsburg medical college. His four brothers always accused him of doing medical training because he was too lazy to farm.

As related by my mother, due to the influenza he was extra busy with office work and house calls and enough people could pay bills that he ended up with a bit of extra income. So he decided to spend some of the windfall on getting a grandfather clock like those he had always admired. He commissioned a local craftsman to build a cabinet of cherry wood to house the works and movement which were ordered from the local jeweler. I remember it so well as a child of five or six, a huge seven-foot tall pendulum clock standing in Grandma's entry hallway.

The other remarkable event of 1918 for this family was the birth of a new baby, my own mother. As I learned of this terrible time in our country's history, I wondered if Grandpa had been infected with the influenza and survived, or whether he somehow avoided the virus. There were certainly no distancing advisories mandated, no PPE, and surgical masks and gloves were a very new concept, as was even the new appreciation of a connection between microbes and disease.

Times change. Challenges are comparable.

--D. Scott Nickerson, Big Horn, Wy.



My grandmother, Elsie (Scott) Sweetman, born in 1896, contracted Spanish flu while teaching in Marshfield, near Welland, Ontario. She returned to her parents' home in Highgate, Ontario. She must have recovered quickly as she married Stanley M. Sweetman on 27 August 1919, having met him after he returned from the war. Elsie's parents were William Wilberforce Scott and Deborah (Nickerson) Scott.

--Debra Sweetman, Ontario, Canada

### What's In a Name?

By Gail Blankenau, NFA genealogist

For genealogists, names are what we start with, and if we are unaware of name changes, we can go down time-consuming, research rabbit holes. The "scent" of our trail—whether sweet or not—begins with names.

Where do historians find evidence of name changes? Records may not always exist, particularly in cases in which people migrate and establish a new identity. However, there are documentary sources to which we can turn. In addition to naturalization records, for males, military records, especially pensions, may contain a record of aliases.

Fortunately, for those with Massachusetts roots, researchers have a valuable resource in the book, *List of Persons Whose Names Have Been Changed in Massachusetts 1780-1893*.

For Gail's article, please visit  
[www.nickersonassoc.com](http://www.nickersonassoc.com)



Many thanks for local clock expert Barry Hutchinson for donating a clock in memory of his friends Richard and Audrey Nickerson late of Orleans, Mass.

# Celebrating ‘The Turning Point’ Mayflower Descendants Gather In Chatham

by Tim Wood

CHATHAM - On a warm, sunny November Monday, more than two dozen descendants of Mayflower passengers gathered at the Lighthouse Overlook to mark the day 400 years ago when their ancestors sailed by just offshore. Twice.



Mayflower descendant Bill Horrocks points out to sea where the Mayflower would have passed by Chatham 400 years ago Monday. TIM WOOD PHOTO

On Nov. 9, 1620, land was sighted from the deck of the Mayflower for the first time since the ship left Plymouth, England, 10 weeks earlier. The Pilgrims arrived off the east coast of Cape Cod and were looking at the Nauset Heights, probably in modern day Eastham or Wellfleet. With a charter to settle along the Hudson River, the Pilgrims turned the Mayflower south, passing just off shore of Chatham for the first time.

In “Of Plymouth Plantation,” William Bradford, later governor of the colony, wrote that after a half day’s sail along the coast, the Mayflower “fell amongst dangerous shoals and roaring breakers, and they were so far entangled therewith as they conceived themselves in great danger; and the wind shrinking upon them withal, they resolved to bear up against the Cape and thought themselves happy to get out of those dangers before night overtook them, as by God’s providence they did.”

In other words, the ship turned back north – an event now known as “the Turning Point”– rather than risk the “dangers” of unknown waters. And for a second time that day, the Mayflower sailed past modern day Chatham. The next day, “they got into the Cape Harbor where they rid in safety,” Bradford wrote of the Mayflower’s arrival in today’s Provincetown Harbor on Nov. 11.

The “dangerous shoals and roaring breakers” of Pollock Rip, about seven miles south, three or four miles east of Monomoy, proved to be the “turning point” that cemented the fate of the Mayflower passengers. After spending several weeks exploring the Cape and across the bay, the 102 passengers and crew landed the Mayflower in Plymouth on Dec. 20 and established their colony.

A plaque at the Lighthouse Overlook reads: “Had the Mayflower been able to continue to the Hudson River area, there would be no Cape Cod, Plymouth or New England Pilgrim story. Nor would there have been a Mayflower Compact, the first self-governing document written in the New World.”

Bradford was the only one of the passengers who wrote about that day, and he left precious little, said Bill Horrocks a descendant of Bradford. The passengers were likely anxious to end the voyage. “They’d had this incredibly terrible voyage, they were all crammed into this absolutely stinking ship,” he said Monday afternoon. “Everybody wanted to get off.” Should they look for a place to land, or head toward their goal? “Well, they decided that they would continue to where they wanted to go.”

The Pilgrim headed into Pollock Rip at an inauspicious time. Particularly when there is a northeast wind, the shoals kick up large and unpredictable breakers. Horrocks used National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration tools that show tides, currents and other factors in the past to check conditions that day. The Mayflower arrived at Pollock Rip on a northeast wind, when the current was flowing from the south, and at low tide, when conditions would have been at their most dangerous.

“On top of finding themselves in the breakers, the nice northeast wind quit and a southerly came in,” he said. “They scrambled out of there and ended up going back up around the top of the Cape.”



Mayflower descendants gather at the Chatham Lighthouse Overlook Monday, the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower’s “Turning Point,” when shoals on Pollock Rip forced the southbound vessel to turn north and seek shelter in what is today Provincetown Harbor. TIM WOOD PHOTO

Ron Nickerson, who put together a group of Mayflower descendants to coordinate local events around the anniversary, said because the wind direction changed just as the vessel ran into rough waters, allowing the ship to sail north to safety, the “Pilgrims, as you know, were very religious, and they said divine providence has saved us.”

A Native American standing on the bluff above Lighthouse Beach on Nov. 9, 1620, would have seen the Mayflower sail past going south, and a short time later seen it sail back north. “They English have no idea where they’re going, they’re lost, they have no idea how to get there,” might have been the reaction, said Nickerson, who is descended from Stephen Hopkins, John Howland and Elizabeth Tilley.

Today there are millions of descendants of the Mayflower passengers, the nearly 30 who stood on the bluff Monday marking the anniversary of “The Turning Point” just a tiny fraction of that population.

Most Mayflower anniversary events have been postponed or will be held virtually due to the pandemic. Nickerson said the local group will continue to meet and plan events for next year, which will coincide with the 400th anniversary of the first Thanksgiving.



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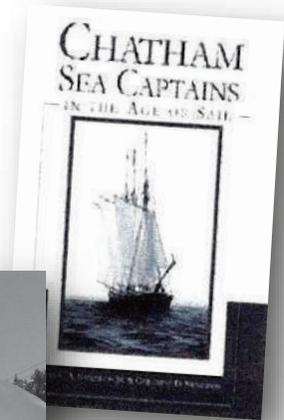
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