
Founders News

Newsletter of the Society of the Descendants of the Founders of Hartford November 2014

Founders Council Requests Change in Bylaws

What is a Founder of Hartford?

That question, central to our Society's existence, was answered in the Bylaws adopted when the Society of the Descendants of the Founders of Hartford was organized in May 1931. The Bylaws say a Founder is someone "who settled in Hartford before February, 1640, as evidenced by the Book of Distribution of Land."

That definition was fine 83 years ago, but recent scholarship, largely by our Genealogist, Timothy Jacobs, has uncovered authentic and reliable sources that list several other British people as having settled in Hartford before February, 1640. The Founders Council has decided that these people are, and ought to be considered, Founders of Hartford, along with those named in the Book of Distribution of Land.

But to do so will require a change in the Bylaws, and that can only come about – again, according to the Bylaws – by a vote taken at the Annual Court and Dinner, which next year is May 12. All members are urged to read the suggested change to the Bylaws (below) and attend the Court and Dinner to vote. For those who cannot attend, voting by proxy is permitted.

The present wording in the Bylaws is this: "Any person above the age of eighteen (18) years of



Founder Samuel Stone

good moral character and good reputation shall be eligible to membership in the Society provided he or she be descended from an ancestor who settled in Hartford before February 1640, as evidenced by the Book of Distribution of Land, the judgment of the Council in such matters to be determinative."

The suggested change to this wording is: "Any person above the age of eighteen (18) years of good moral character and good reputation shall be eligible to membership in the Society provided he or she be descended from an ancestor who **owned property or** settled in Hartford before February 1640, as evidenced by the Book of Distribution of Land **or other authentic and reliable historical source**, the judgment of the Council in such matters to be determinative."

The Founders Council recommends a YES vote on this change. Proxy votes may be mailed to: Founders of Hartford, P O Box 270215, West Hartford, CT 06107-0215.

Our Genealogist To Speak in May

Perhaps you have envisioned the brave group of men, women and children who trekked through the wilderness from Massachusetts to form the infant Hartford Colony as a peaceful community of mutual believers drawn together by the harshness of the New England winters and the steaming hot summers that they had not known back in England.

But is that what it really was like? Professor Timothy Lester Jacobs, our Society's Genealogist, who has studied early Hartford history intensively, will lift up some of the rocks that so thoroughly covered New England, and show you what lurked under those rocks: the realities of early Hartford life.

Prof. Jacobs will speak at the 2015 Court and Dinner of the Society of the Descendants of the Founders of Hartford, which will be held Tuesday, May 12, at the Town and County Club on Woodland Street in Hartford. More details will be sent in the early spring.

Join the Council

The Society of the Descendants of the Founders of Hartford is always looking for members willing to serve on its Council (executive board).

Council meetings are held twice a year in Hartford, so a requirement of Council membership is that a person live close enough to Hartford to be able to attend meetings.

Anyone interested should contact Governor Bob Hall at the Founders post office box: Founders of Hartford, P O Box 270215, West Hartford, CT 06107-0215 or by writing him at rshallct@gmail.com.

Meet the Society's Newest Members

Thanks to the hard work of Genealogist Timothy Jacobs, we are pleased to welcome six new members to the Society of the Descendants of the Founders of Hartford. They are:

No. 1880, Daryl Vincent Verstrete Jr. of Newark, N.Y., descended from *Thomas Bliss*; No. 1881, William Frederick Judd of Pawleys Island, S.C., descended from *Deacon Thomas Judd*; No. 1882, Melvin Leroy Heritage of Leland, N.C., descended from *Elder John White*.

Also, No. 1883, Nancy Engel Barlow of Rehoboth Beach, Del., descended from *James Olmstead*; No. 1884, Mary Elizabeth Marvin Peterson of Westport, Conn., descended from *Matthew Marvin*; and No. 1885, Jennifer Lynn Hart of Del Mar, Calif., descended from *Stephen Hart*.

We extend a warm welcome to all our new members!

Donations Made To Organizations

This past year, the Society of the Descendants of the Founders of Hartford has made donations totaling \$1,500 to organizations that support and promote Hartford history. They are:

\$500 to the Connecticut Historical Society;

\$500 to History Day in Connecticut, co-sponsored by the Connecticut Historical Society and Hartford's Old State House;

\$500 to the Hartford History Center at the Hartford Public Library.

The Society always welcomes suggestions from its members about organizations that would benefit by a donation from the Society of the Descendants of the Founders of Hartford.

If you have suggestions, please write Governor Bob Hall at rshallct@gmail.com.

Show Your Pride With Insignia

Three types of insignia are now available to members of the Founders of Hartford.

The rosette costs \$15. Small medals, about the size of a dime, made of enameled silver, are \$60 by mail or \$55 at the annual Court and Dinner.

Large medals, about the size of a half dollar, are \$135 by mail or \$125 at the dinner. Each medal has a ribbon attached. To order by mail, send a check payable to "Founders of Hartford" to the Society of the Descendants of the Founders of Hartford, P.O. Box 270215, West Hartford, CT 06107-0215.

Consider Membership For Your Descendants

Looking for the perfect gift for a child, grandchild, or great-grandchild? How about lifetime membership in the Society of the Descendants of the Founders of Hartford?

If you are a member, it's easy for your descendants to join. All they, or you, need are your membership number, proof that the person is descended from you by blood, and the lifetime membership fee.

All the "heavy lifting" of proof establishing your descent from a Founder of Hartford has already been done, so all your child, grandchild, or great-grandchild need do is prove descent from you. That can be done using birth certificates, easily obtained from the town of birth.

Wouldn't it be a meaningful gift to a newborn to have a lifetime link to Hartford's earliest days?

Membership information may be found on the Society's website, foundersofhartford.org (select "Membership"). Or a prospective member may write us at the post office box shown elsewhere in this newsletter.

Monument Featured

The Founders Monument in Hartford's Ancient Burying Ground was featured in the Hartford Courant this fall as part of its series on statues and other memorials in the capital city.

A photo of the Monument appeared October 23 along with information on its being placed to commemorate Hartford's 350th anniversary.