

Genealogy, Liberty, and Independence Day

A letter to a Grandson

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Dear David: I'm happy that you examined our pedigree so carefully. Keep in mind that like in science and law, if it isn't documented, it didn't happen. I have been worrying that your generation might not produce the next family genealogist so I am pleased that you show an interest in how we came to be here.

I have been collecting family interviews, letters, photographs, charts, histories, genealogies, hiring genealogists, going to cemeteries, photographing gravestones, writing to probate courts, visiting the National Archives, visiting genealogy libraries, doing Google searches, using Ancestry.com, visiting lost relatives, and writing narrative summaries on our family since I was 15 years old. Your father, Dan, has been participating since he was 15 and he wrote mountains of family charts and pedigrees before computers. Most of our collection is now online for you to study.

My computer program is Ancestral Quest from the Church of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons). Dan wrote his own program and has independently gathered his mother's line. I linked us to the Mayflower via a published book of the Stone genealogy.

I made sure that each of my 14 grandchildren is an official member of the General Society of the Mayflower Descendants. I am also an official member of the Sons of the American Revolution (S.A.R.) where we had three ancestors, one of whom was a Minuteman at the battle of Lexington and Concord, the Society of the War of 1812, and the Sons of the Civil War. Therefore you are officially eligible to be a member of those also. I am also a member of the American Legion.

My purpose has always been to appreciate our heritage and to inculcate in all of you a feeling of identity with your forbearers who lived here and promoted our liberty. Liberty is not free, but must be worked for and fought for in each generation. As it says every Passover, each generation finds another freedom to win and to keep. We are the only nation of all the nations. Think of that! Isn't that amazing when there are six and a half billion people on the planet that America is the only place where all peoples live under one flag? I appreciate that. I appreciate meeting those from far off places just to reflect that we are indeed but long lost cousins.

We invented modern democracy. Ponder this: before America there was only tyranny and monarchy. Nowadays, most countries try to emulate our system of government. Lincoln said it is imperative that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth. I believe that. We should always study and know the difference between Liberty and Tyranny.

I am researching the War of 1812, having found that we had three ancestors in uniform in that war. The War of 1812 was a continuation of the Revolution. Our ancestor Wren Grayson fought in the last battle of the War of 1812 at New Orleans under General Andrew Jackson.

That's why Wren's grandson, who fought in the Union Army at the battle of Shiloh and thus helped free the slaves, was named Andrew Jackson Grayson.

I am still making discoveries. For example: 1.) I discovered that my great grandfather Aaron and his brother Moses came here in 1852 at the ages of 18 and 16 on the Clipper ship Orpheus. You don't know this, but some of your relatives were murdered in the Holocaust in WWII just because they were Jewish. Remember Moses and his brother Aaron escaped Egypt and slavery to go to the Promised Land in the bible? Our Aaron and Moses came to the Promised Land. I mean here. THIS is the Promised Land.

Now it is your turn.

Love, Grandpa