

# CUMMINGS CHRONICLES

FOR THE DESCENDANTS OF ISAAC CUMMINGS (1601-1677)

## SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS: SITE OF THE 2019 ICFA NATIONAL REUNION

PHOTO TAKEN FROM INSIDE  
THE HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES  
GARDEN WITH HOOPER-HATHAWAY  
HOUSE TO LEFT AND NATHANIEL  
HAWTHORNE BIRTHPLACE TO  
RIGHT. [WIKICOMMONS]



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# Where Did Isaac Cummings Live in Massachusetts?

**T**he very early immigrants to New England such as Isaac Cummings mostly came from Eastern England, often from the counties of Suffolk and Essex where the families of Isaac lived in the 16th and 17th centuries (see “Where Did Isaac Live in England?” in the Spring 2018 *Cummings Chronicles*). Isaac and his wife Anne and their young family came from the village of Mistley in Essex about 1635.

They arrived only fifteen years after the Mayflower Pilgrims, but they were part of a rapidly growing migration that by 1640 had brought 40,000 English settlers to the colony. New towns and villages were being established at a rapid pace. Colonists often moved around Massachusetts as new opportunities arose. Owning land was an objective of many if not most, and established residents profitably sold property (some of which they may have received as grants from the Crown or local authorities) to newer settlers, Isaac among them.

Historical records indicate that the family settled first in **Watertown** (part of today’s Waltham), about 10 miles west of Boston. The earliest known colonial mention of Isaac says that in July 1636 he was among a group of 120 “respectable men” who received land grants as part of a program called the Great Dividends. His parcel was 35 acres in size. Colonial era researcher Jack Long re-

ports that it was in or near what is today called Prospect Hill Park. Though he seems to have retained ownership of the property, within a few years he relocated to **Ipswich** and then **Topsfield**, adjacent towns about 20 miles north of Boston.

By 1638 Isaac owned a planting lot in Ipswich. About the same time he also owned a house lot in Ipswich village on a street called the East End and sold seven acres of land to a neighbor. By 1639 he owned land partly located in Ipswich and partly in Topsfield. These two places largely defined Isaac’s life in Massachusetts.

In 1652 he bought 150 acres of land in Topsfield/Ipswich from Samuel Symonds that appears to have been the northeast corner of Symonds’ farm called “Ollivers”. The parcel was bounded on the west and north-west by land owned by John Winthrop, on the south and west by land owned by Francis Peabody, and on the south by the land of Daniel Clark. The property began near what is called the Cummings-Hobbs-Bell place (Hobbs and Bell were later owners of the property) on today’s East Street and continued down both sides of the outlet of the nearby marsh southward to Howlett’s Brook. One hundred acres were on the westerly side and fifty acres were on the easterly side and the parcel probably joined other land belonging to him.



It is worth noting that this land and the 1639 land both adjoined the land of a neighbor named John Winthrop. This was probably the son of John Winthrop who was a founder and governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The younger John, who later became governor of Connecticut, was a “chief founder” of Ipswich in 1633.

A 1912 Bell deed on the property notes that it stretched westward to the Newburyport Turnpike (U.S. Route 1). Most or all of Isaac’s land on the north and east side of East Street from Howlett Brook to Route 1 appears to be part of today’s Willowdale State Park.

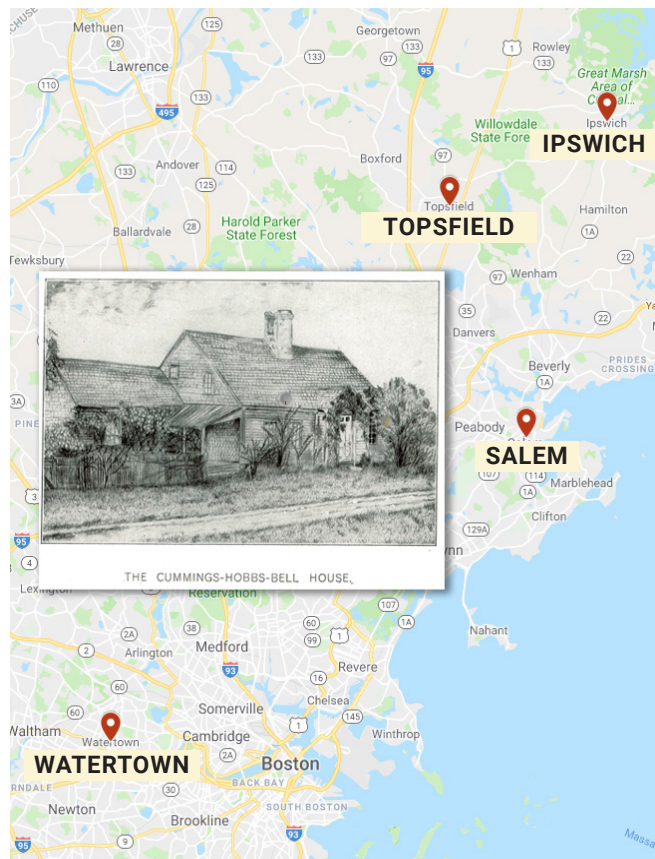
Researcher Leigh Cummings believes that at some point Isaac may have lived in a house located across East Street on the other (east) side of the outlet then called Winthrop Brook, and this residence may have predated the Cummings-Hobbs-Bell house, where his son Isaac lived.

The structure of the Cummings-Hobbs-Bell House was moved nearby in 1922 and burned down two years later. Near the original foundation can be found a hand dug well and part of another foundation that may have been the Hobbs Blacksmith Shop. Leigh discovered a piece of iron imbedded in stone that he believes was used in the shop.

It is thought that both Isaacs and some Cummings family members are buried in Topsfield in the Cummings-Lamson-Smith Cemetery between a house at 83 Asbury Street and the Ipswich River. This cemetery contains the remains of more than 100 of the earliest residents of Topsfield/Ipswich, probably including the ancestors of Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism.

You can view these Topsfield areas by entering the addresses 115 East Street and 83 Asbury Street into an internet map search or the Google Earth application. The East Street terrain view clearly shows Winthrop Brook (unlabeled) weaving south to Howlett Brook. The Asbury Street satellite image view clearly shows the stone walls around the graveyard. ♪

This summary draws on research by former ICFA President Leigh Cummings, Jr. and other sources. Leigh has written several previous *Chronicles* articles about Isaac Cummings’ properties.



**TOPSFIELD IMAGES.** PREVIOUS PAGE, A SPRING SCENE ALONG RIVER ROAD [JOHN PHELAN [CC BY 3.0 WIKICOMMONS]; MAP INSERT, CUMMINGS-HOBBS-BELL PLACE [PUBLIC DOMAIN]; ABOVE, PARSON JOSEPH CAPON HOUSE [THOMAS T. WATERMAN, PUBLIC DOMAIN]



## PRESIDENT'S NOTE

by DAVID ROLAND

Hello again, everyone,

Welcome to another *Cummings Chronicles*, where we try hard to expand your genealogy knowledge and boost your enthusiasm about the descendant families of Isaac Cummings.

This is an especially exciting issue of *Chronicles* because it marks the countdown to July's National ICFA Reunion in Salem, Massachusetts. You already know about the event from Reunion Chair Darla Jarvis, and there is updated information in this edition. Don't forget to download the handy 1-page registration form also attached to the email message that delivered this PDF newsletter.

Two stories in this edition relate to main Reunion themes of early Massachusetts history and tracking the different American branches of our Isaac Cummings families. There is an article about where Isaac and his family lived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony (sites we will visit on a Reunion bus tour) and an update on recent findings from our Y-Chromosome DNA research project that ties in to a reunion program by genetics genealogy expert John Cleary (who is joining us from Scotland). Among other topics we anticipate that John will be presenting new data about where Isaac's ancient families lived in Europe before arriving in England.

This issue also brings you fascinating stories about Isaac descendants – FDR's crime busting Attorney General Homer Stiles Cummings from Connecticut, and Army Private John B. "Jack" Cummings from Wisconsin. Jack was killed in Europe in the final days of WWII but his remains were not identified and buried next to his parents until last year. This is the remarkable story of his long road home. Also included is an update to our 2018

piece about 19th century baseball great William Arthur "Candy" Cummings, the inventor of the curveball, who, remarkably, is still being honored for his achievements.

These descendant stories raise the perennial matter of other high-achieving Isaac descendants, a list that includes actress Lucille Ball and poet ee cummings. But who are some others known for their accomplishments, celebrity, fame (or infamy)? Do you know of candidates in your direct-line family? We can't tell their stories if we don't know about them, and we need your help to do that. Send us names, please.

Finally, I want to remind us all that the time has come in the lifecycle of our fine organization to focus on our future. Where do we go from here? We will discuss the matter at the Reunion, but it is already clear that we need new members and fresh talent who are as passionate about our mission as our founders were a quarter-century ago. I see two big questions: what do we – YOU – want the Association to accomplish in the future, and what role are you personally prepared to play in the effort?

Our current leadership group still includes members who were present at ICFA's founding or shortly thereafter. We need to soon find energetic replacements to assist with the fun and rewarding things that we do on your behalf. One solution is to go outside the organization for certain time-consuming functions and our Board recently approved plans to get professional help with our financial and communications needs. But we still need volunteers to guide and perform our core functions. The work doesn't take much time, but it calls for a commitment. This is your volunteer national family association. If you can't play a role, then help us identify candidates who can. Send us your children. Send us your relatives. We'll take good care of them.

Enjoy this edition of *Chronicles*, sign up for the Reunion, and let us hear from you. See you in Salem.

# ICFA NATIONAL REUNION

## JULY 11-14, 2019 IN SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

Anticipation is building for our Isaac Cummings National Family Reunion July 11-14 in Salem, Massachusetts. It has been 18 years since ICFA last visited historic Salem, located in the heart of Colonial and Revolutionary-era Isaac Cummings country just north of Boston where our Cummings heritage began nearly 400 years ago. Don't forget to register for three exciting days of programs and tours (see the schedule below).

You have already received reunion announcement and registration materials in two emails from Reunion Chair Darla Jarvis. **A copy of the registration form is attached to the email containing this PDF issue of *Cummings Chronicles*.** Just open, print, fill out and return it to Darla by mail with your registration fee, and then follow the instruction to reserve your lodging and you will be all set.

In the past we have held our reunions at hotels. This time we are trying a new approach. We will be staying in comfortable campus housing at Salem State University and holding our programs in pleasant university meeting spaces. In response to your many requests, housing and meal costs will be much lower than our previous get-togethers, and we will have access to the University's library, bookstore, cafeteria and campus grounds.

Here's a brief first look at the exciting schedule of activities we're planning for you:

### THURSDAY, JULY 11

- 9:00-4:00 PM**     **Arrival and Registration**
- 6:30-8:30 PM**     **Program.** *Colonial Massachusetts in Isaac's time and a Salem overview with David Goss.* David is a well-known early colonial historian and Salem expert who teaches at nearby Gordon College.

### FRIDAY, JULY 12

- 9:00-5:00 PM**     **Professionally Guided Bus Tour.** Topsfield and Ipswich (morning) and important Salem area sites (afternoon). A reasonable fee subsidized by ICFA will be charged.
- 6:00-7:30 PM**     **ICFA Executive Board Meeting**

### SATURDAY, JULY 13

- 10:00-12:00 PM**   **Program.** *ICFA's Y-DNA Project Research Results with John Cleary.* John is an internationally recognized genealogical DNA expert who teaches at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, Scotland and advises ICFA on its DNA Project.
- 1:00-2:30 PM**     **Presentation.** *Hall-of-Famer Candy Cummings with Stephen Katz.* Stephen, an ICFA member, has written and spoken extensively about Isaac descendant Candy, who invented the curveball, and other early Massachusetts baseball greats.
- 3:00-5:00 PM**     **ICFA General Meeting**
- 6:00-7:00 PM**     **Social Hour**
- 7:00-9:00 PM**     **Buffet Dinner and Traditional Auction.** Donated Cummings memorabilia and fun items.

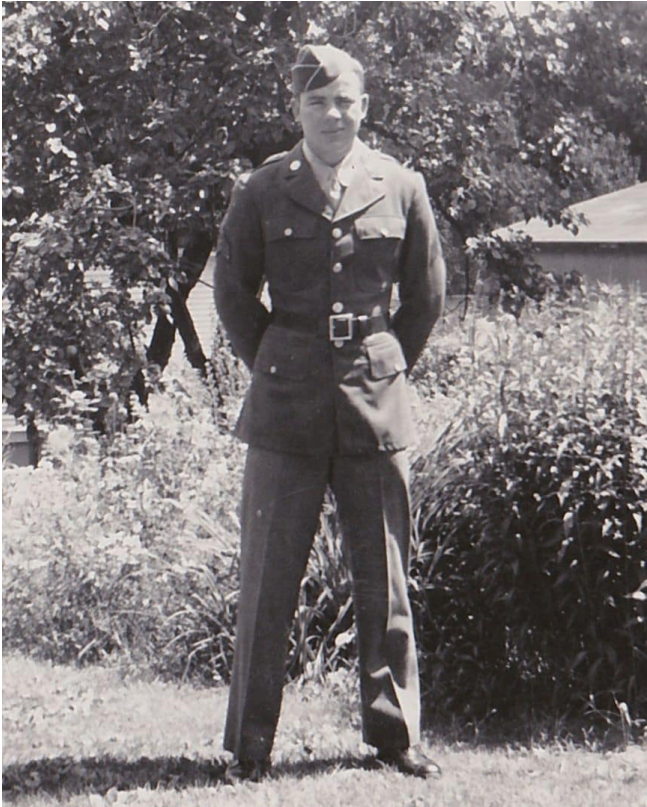
### SUNDAY, JULY 14: Departure

Those who have attended past reunions know how enjoyable they are. The ICFA national reunion is a chance to renew old and make new acquaintances. Most importantly, it is an opportunity to have a good time while learning about our shared Cummings ancestors and heritage. Our members come from far and wide and putting names and faces together brings us closer together as a family organization and as friends.

So put the July 11-14 Reunion on your calendar and send in your registration now. Please contact Darla directly if you have questions or need assistance at [darjarv@comcast.net](mailto:darjarv@comcast.net). We're really looking forward to seeing you in Salem.



# An empty foxhole, an anonymous grave, and a World War II mystery solved after 74 years



By Michael E. Ruane  
*The Washington Post*, November 12, 2018

Jack Cummings posed on the lawn in his uniform, hands clasped behind his back, his Army cap perched on his head at a jaunty angle.

His father, Leo, or his mother, Helen, had probably said, “Stand over there, Jack, while I take a picture.”

John B. “Jack” Cummings was 22, a handsome college man headed off to World War II from Juneau, Wisc., where his family, no doubt, prayed he would return.

But on Dec. 31, 1944, near the French village of Neuhaeusel on the Rhine River, he vanished from his foxhole, leaving behind a bloody piece of his skull and a helmet with a bullet hole in it.

**ARMY PVT. JOHN B. CUMMINGS**, who was killed during World War II and who was listed as unrecoverable, was buried with honors beside his parents after his remains were found and identified this year. (Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency) (N/A/Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency)

For the next 74 years — until this summer — he was missing in action, his body declared non-recoverable. He existed largely in old military files filled with dental charts, plaintive letters from his mother, and typed reports about the Army’s futile attempts to account for him. “Complete negative findings,” a 1947 Army report stated.

But a year earlier, the solitary grave of a slain GI had been discovered across the Rhine River in the German town of Iffezheim.

He had been killed near Neuhaeusel by an enemy raiding party that had attacked across the river. His body had been brought back over the Rhine and buried under a wooden cross that read “Hier Ruht ein U.S.A. — Soldat gef. am 31.12.1944”: “Here rests a U.S.A. soldier,” who fell on Dec. 31, 1944.

For seven decades, as his parents mourned, aged, and then passed away, and his sister, Mary Ellen, married and had 12 children, no one knew that the anonymous “U.S.A.-Soldat” was John B. Cummings.

Last month, after using state-of-the-art computer data and mapping programs, and DNA comparisons, the Defense Department announced that it had identified Cummings in July and that he had been quietly buried with honors on Oct. 13, beside his parents in Hazelhurst, Wis.

Cummings had been one of 72,797 Americans unaccounted for from World War II, according to the Arlington-based Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA).

His case illustrates how one GI could disappear in the chaos following the gigantic war, and how technology and a dogged government historian found him.

In the beginning, even the date of Cummings's death was not clear. The Army listed it as Jan. 4, 1945. But the Germans who had buried him, and knew firsthand, had put it at Dec. 31, 1944.

On that date the German army launched Operation North Wind, often called the second Battle of the Bulge, in which massed enemy forces surged across the Rhine River to attack the relatively green and under-strength U.S. Seventh Army, of which Cummings was a member.

Before it ended in American victory, thousands of GIs had been killed and wounded or had just disappeared.

Cummings and other men of Company A, of the 276th Infantry Regiment, had reached the banks of the Rhine River on Dec. 29, 1944, according to a memoir by Frank H. Lowry, an A company veteran. They were strung out in foxholes along the river and told to keep an eye on the Germans on the opposite bank.

They were also told to get rid of any letters and remove their unit patches to deny information to the enemy should they be captured. This would bedevil identification efforts later.

On that frigid New Year's Eve, Cummings, armed with a Browning automatic rifle, was stationed alone about 10 yards from the river bank. Two members of his squad reported that he was okay when they saw him that night. Later, gunfire was heard, and when his buddies made their way back, he was gone.

"Only his helmet was found nearby with a bullet hole through it," an Army report stated. "A blood-stained piece of his skull bone was also found, but his weapons and equipment were missing. ... A path was found which indicated that his body was dragged to the river. ... It can be presumed that ... Cummings was killed by the enemy and his body thrown into the Rhine River."

"Further search for the remains of this soldier would be futile," the report states.

His parents had received a telegram on Jan. 23 saying that Cummings was missing in action. "If further

details or other information are received you will be promptly notified," it said.

Many months passed with no word.

In 1947, his mother wrote the Army, wondering whether the service might help her offer a reward in Germany for information about John. "I would gladly furnish the reward," she wrote. The Army said it couldn't help.

Meanwhile, in 1946, across the Rhine River, a soldier scouting for the American Graves Registration Command was told by the mayor of Iffezheim that a GI was buried nearby. The graves registration soldier went to the site, which was just behind a German pillbox, about 30 yards from the river. He also interviewed a local German soldier who had helped bury the dead American that night.

The body, almost a complete skeleton, was exhumed on May 10, 1946. There were only remnants of clothing, according to Army records, and no dog tag. With no identifying information, the body was designated X-6454 and reburied with thousands of other U.S. soldiers in what is now the Lorraine American cemetery in Saint-Avold, France.

The years went by. Cummings's father died in 1963. His mother passed away in 1972. The family seldom discussed John, according to his nephew, Mark Hartzheim, of Minocqua, Wis.

"They just never talked about this much," he said in a telephone interview on Oct. 23. "That was typical I think of people from that generation. They compartmentalized things and internalized them and didn't dwell on them. ... But I'm sure it haunted them and troubled them the rest of their lives."

Several years ago, Hartzheim became curious about the fate of "Uncle Jack." He began to do research, and in 2014 signed up to attend a meeting in Minneapolis hosted by the government for families of men still missing in action. He thought the chances of an ID were nil. After he signed up, a government historian, Ian Spurgeon, now with the DPAA, was asked to revisit the case. Spurgeon, in an Oct. 24 telephone interview, said Cummings's files had not been examined in decades. Using the National Archives and other sources, he started to piece together the story.

He turned to a DPAA database of places where the bodies of unidentified World War II servicemen had been recovered in Europe. He compared that to a DPAA database of known locations where GIs had disappeared. Right across the Rhine River from Neuhaeusel, where Cummings had vanished, he saw the lone gravesite at Iffezheim.

“The hair on the back of my neck stood up,” Spurgeon said.

He called up the associated files for Cummings and for the grave across the river. “I’m thinking, historically, all the boxes are being checked off,” he said. “The location, date, the circumstances.”

Then began a process of research to get permission from the Army to exhume the X-6454 body from the cemetery at St. Avold to conduct scientific tests.

Spurgeon said he had to prove that there was a better-than-50 percent chance that X-6454 might be Cummings to have the body exhumed.

Spurgeon probed further, studied the related battles, and ruled out other candidates. He recommended that the remains be disinterred. Officials granted approval, he said. The remains were exhumed in 2016 and shipped to a DPAA laboratory at Offutt Air Force Base, outside Omaha, for analysis.

DNA from the remains was compared with DNA from Cummings’s family, and the bones were studied by anthropologists.

“This year, after all the historical work had been put forward, after anthropology and the DNA [studies], it came back and confirmed ... that the remains ... [were] John Cummings,” Spurgeon said.

On July 23, Mark Hartzheim was taking his 7-year-old son, Danny, to an afternoon movie. “We’re driving down the highway going to ‘Ant-Man and the Wasp’ [and] my phone rings, and I get this call,” he said. “I shouted three times, ‘Oh my God!’ and I started to cry. My son is in the back of the car...in his booster seat. ...He’s mystified.”

“Danny, these are good tears,” he said he reassured his son. “This is a good thing.” ?

Special thanks to Michael Ruane for permission to use this lovely piece. Learn more about Isaac 10th generation descendant Jack Cummings on Facebook at *John B. Cummings Memorial Page*.

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

**Dirk Cummings and Meg Stadtler**  
Henderson, NC

**Jeffrey Cummings**  
Perham, ME

**Rachel Cummings and Jason Roland**  
Melrose, MA

**Stephen and Julie Hesler**  
LaGrange, GA

**MaryKay Hintenach**  
Pennfield, NY

**Anne Jones**  
Wilmette, IL

**Virginia and James McCormack**  
Pawcatuck, CT

**Lawrence and Harriett McManus**  
Anthony, FL

## CANDY CUMMINGS ENTERS ANOTHER HALL OF FAME



**CANDY CUMMINGS.** COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL  
BASEBALL HALL OF FAME LIBRARY, COOPERSTOWN, NY.

Baseball great William Arthur “Candy” Cummings continues to be honored nearly a century after his death in 1924. ICFA Member Stephen Katz (a scheduled speaker at our Salem reunion), who has written a book about Candy and crafted a story on the legendary hurler for our Spring 2018 Chronicles, reports that Candy was inducted into the Western Massachusetts Baseball Hall of Fame in January.

Candy was an Isaac Cummings descendant born in Ware, Massachusetts in 1848. He is already in the National Baseball Hall of Fame at Cooperstown and known as the big league pitcher who invented the curvball. For more information on Candy, his career and family line, contact Stephen at [warebaseballhistory@gmail.com](mailto:warebaseballhistory@gmail.com).





# Wisconsin Regional Reunion Report

BY TOM REDLIN

More than 100 people (see photo above) attended last June's Witt Cummings Hillman Reunion in Menomonie, Wisconsin. The exciting day-long event was for the descendants of Phebe Louise Cummings Witt, her husband August Ferdinand "Fred" Witt, and Ann Elizabeth Hillman Wold, the wife of their son Freddie Witt. Participants came from as far away as Arizona and Florida to join in the festivities.

The saga of our Menomonie Cummings families traces to Patriarch Isaac's son John (1630-1700), his son John (1657-1732) and his son John (1682-1759) who was born in Middlesex, MA. The next four male generations were also all born in Middlesex County: Thomas Sr. (1714-1787), Thomas Jr. (1734-1818), Thomas III (1757-1845) and Jeremiah (1776-1859).

All three generations of Thomas' participated in The American Revolution and received lands in Oswego County, New York for their contributions. Jeremiah, who served in the War of 1812, went first to Oswego and then on to Wisconsin where he and some of his children are buried in Dunn County, where our reunions are held. Our branch of the family is now the tenth generation since Jeremiah arrived here and Cummings cousins still live on his land. Our Cummings roots still run deep here.

The next regional Witt Cummings Reunion is being planned for June 13, 2020 at the same Wakanda Park in Menomonie, Dunn County. Details can be found at [WittCummingsReunion.com](http://WittCummingsReunion.com). I can be reached at [tomredlinaaf@gmail.com](mailto:tomredlinaaf@gmail.com).

## ICFA ARCHIVES REMINDER

Password protected access to the private ICFA Research Archives is one of your key benefits as an active status member. Our unique database collection consists of detailed family tree records contributed by members over the past quarter century. It contains more than 34,000 individuals, 12,000 families and 4,500 unique surnames. It also holds a photo scrapbook of ancestor photos, lists of men who served in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Civil War, and a useful Research Bibliography. Queries about the Archives and database use should be addressed to Database Chair Sherry Milham at [smilham@yahoo.com](mailto:smilham@yahoo.com).

## RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Don't forget to renew your membership for 2019. If you've already renewed, please consider buying a gift membership for a member of your family who shares your interest in Cummings Family genealogy. ICFA is actively seeking members from families not currently involved with the Association and from additional persons in families who have been longtime members. Younger members are especially welcome as we recruit and identify our next generation of participants and leaders.

A Member Application/Renewal form is available online and on the last page of this issue.

# When Homer Freed Harold

Like other murder stories with surprise endings, the case of Harold Israel did not end in the courtroom.

By Dana D. Cummings



1956 PHOTO OF DANA AND HOMER. COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR'S ARCHIVES.

Isaac Cummings descendant Homer Stille Cummings was a famous American lawyer best known for serving as FDR's Attorney General. He first came to national attention much earlier in his career when he served for a decade as State Attorney for Fairfield County, Connecticut.



1924 HEADLINES. PHOTOGRAPHED BY WBUR'S LYNN JOLICOEUR.

The 1924 case that first brought him fame involved a homeless Army veteran named Harold Israel who had been indicted for the murder of a popular parish priest in the town of Bridgeport. Local police were under great pressure to solve the case and eventually produced a great deal of evidence, including a confession, that pointed to Israel. Homer was the prosecutor and not surprisingly was himself under pressure to convict Israel. But in a shocking reversal that made national headlines, he determined that Harold Israel was innocent of the crime and dismissed the indictment.

Like other murder stories with surprise endings, the case of Harold Israel did not end in the courtroom. In 1947 Elia Kazan directed the Oscar-nominated film *Boomerang!* with an all-star cast including Lee J. Cobb, Karl Malden and Jane Wyatt. Dana Andrews played the Homer Cummings character and Arthur Kennedy played the indicted killer.

Recently, nearly a century after Homer's decision, journalist Ken Armstrong of the nonprofit Marshall Project, a news organization focusing on the U.S. criminal justice system, examined the case's original documentation in the archive of Homer's papers housed at the University of Virginia. The story of Ken's research, including the backstory of *Boomerang!* can be read in the January 2017 issue of *Smithsonian Magazine* at: [tinyurl.com/homer-harold](http://tinyurl.com/homer-harold)

In addition, WBUR-FM in Boston collaborated with the Marshall Project to bring the story to NPR with the title "When Homer Freed Harold: Justice for the Innocence and a Friendship Forged." As Homer's great granddaughter and our family archivist, WBUR visited me and poured over my clippings and Homer memorabilia. They also interviewed both my father, his grandson, and me. The NPR story is available at: [www.wbur.org/all-things-considered/2016/12/20/harold-israel-homer-cummings](http://www.wbur.org/all-things-considered/2016/12/20/harold-israel-homer-cummings)

A distilled clip of my interview is available on YouTube: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7rA7\\_AfZxg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7rA7_AfZxg)



# Y-DNA Project Update

BY JOHN CLEARY AND TIM CUMMINGS

In 2015 the Isaac Cummings family Association (ICFA) launched its Y-chromosome DNA surname project. The program now hosts nearly 50 men, most from member families. In this summary John Cleary and Tim Cummings, guest administrators and advisors to the Project, continue their series of reports on the findings of the project to date. John will be joining us at the Salem reunion.

A critical goal of a Y-Chromosome DNA research effort is to identify shared genetic markers (that is, tested locations on the chromosome) among a group of tested men that establishes a genetic signature. This is evidence that those men descend from the same common ancestor. As reported in our initial 2018 report, the project has done that for the descendants of Isaac. A second key goal is to find signature markers that divide the lineage into branches that can be more narrowly traced to that of a common ancestor's sons, then his grandsons and great-grandsons and so on down the male lines. We're now at the sons and grandsons stage of exploration.

Isaac had two sons, John and Isaac. From them there were at least 13 known grandsons (6 of whom have descendants in the DNA Project), and at least 29 known great grandsons (12 have descendants in the project). In most cases Isaac's sons and grandsons do not have signature markers of their own, but we now think there is a signature for one of Isaac's grandsons.

As a reminder, Y-DNA test markers usually refer to patterns of DNA called *short tandem repeats* (STR's), and those markers can be categorized into three types:

- (a) *modal* values, where most project testers share the same value;
- (b) *unique* markers, when one tester has a different value that no one shares; and
- (c) *shared or signature markers*, when two or more testers share a different value to the majority modal values, which may have been passed down from a common ancestor.

In our second full report for ICFA, which we hope to publish soon, we will discuss some of the signature mutations (mutations are changes in the DNA at a marker location) within the Isaac Cummings lineage and which male ancestor they may have occurred in. In our first report we identified some clear signature markers that are shared by closely related Isaac descendants including the descendants of James Cummings (b. 1759) who share a mutation from 11 to 12 at marker DYS531, and the descendants of Allan Tewkesbury Cummings (b. 1820) who share a mutation of 17 to 18 at marker DYS570.

We also commented on a striking 2-step mutation that a number of ICFA's testers have on the multi-copy marker DYS413 (this means that two copies of the marker exist on the Y and both are read in the test). While most testers have the common value of 23 on each of the pair of markers (that is, 23-23), some testers have the value 21-23. We are now quite sure that this mutation occurred in either the Founder Isaac's grandson, John Cummings b. 1657 (the son of John b. 1630), or his son John (b. 1682) and all their subsequent male line descendants should have this interesting marker, which will be a main theme of our second report.

ICFA's archives and records are an impressive collection of genealogical information about the lineages of families that have proven or believe that they descend from Isaac Cummings. So the natural question to ask at this early point in our project is whether these genealogical records match our genetic findings to date. In a few cases so far the answer is, umm, maybe not.

Some small number of member family trees submitted over the years seem to ascribe their ancestry to an incorrect early Cummings ancestor and may need to be restructured when more genetic evidence has been collected. What we know so far is that all of the nearly 50 testers in ICFA's project descend from Isaac. It is possible that a small number of descendant families who believe they descend from Isaac's son John may instead descend from Isaac's son Isaac, or from a different grandson than their family history has long said.

When you think about it from the distance of 12 or 13 generations, these kinds of errors seem not only understandable but unsurprising. In our experience, only a very tiny number of family trees in any family have been carefully enough documented to be rock solid over the centuries. Most families work with non-contemporaneous information that was collected later and based on the work of other researchers who in turn had relied on the work of still others. At some point the fog of family history arrives and we're just not sure which brother or sister was really our direct line ancestor.

The good news is that sometimes genetic science can help us see into that fog and provide us with clues and answers otherwise unavailable. That's what we're trying to do for you.

## REMEMBERING LAURA

Each edition of *Cummings Chronicles* endeavors to acknowledge and remember the passing of ICFA members.

With this issue we are sad to report that our Past President Laura Prescott passed away in August 2018 after her long battle with cancer.



Laura became a member in 1999. Over the years she utilized her talents to enhance our organization by serving as Newsletter Editor, Reunion Chair, Membership Chair and guest lecturer on ancestry research. While she was a leading national genealogy figure, our members will remember her kindness and willingness to help on a personal level.

Our Database Chair, Sherry Milham speaks for those of us who considered her a friend and colleague: "Years ago, as I was learning the importance of proper genealogical research and documentation, Laura Prescott was one of my mentors. Laura was living in Salt Lake, Utah, where I spent several days a year at the LDS Family History Library researching and documenting Cummings and related lines. She was always available to answer my many questions, pointing me toward this or that source for answers. We greatly enjoyed our time together, sharing meals, discussing our projects, and talking about life in general. I'll miss her and always be grateful to her."

## NEW WEBSITE

ICFA's website at [isaaccummingsfamily.org](http://isaaccummingsfamily.org) has recently been redesigned by Jillison Parks at Sans Sheriff Studios (who also produces this newsletter).

The warmest of thanks go to longtime member and webmaster Glen Allen Cummings for his many years of service as our volunteer online master-of-all matters. Have a wonderful retirement, Allen.

## CUMMINGS CHRONICLES

ICFA publishes the *Cummings Chronicles* newsletter as a member information forum. It features historical reports about Isaac Cummings and his twelve-plus generations of American descendants, provides information about local and national family reunions, explains new findings from the Association's expanding private DNA Project, and keeps member families connected as part of an active network of Cummings genealogical researchers.

Members and friends of ICA are encouraged to submit articles and news information of interest to Rosemary Byrnes Doyle at [rosemary@doylearabians.com](mailto:rosemary@doylearabians.com).

## HELP WANTED

ICFA is searching for candidates to fill two key officer roles, those of **Vice President** and **Secretary**. Officers are usually voted on at the Annual Reunion which this year is in Salem, MA, July 11-14. The Vice President's slot became vacant when David Roland assumed the Presidency due to Laura Prescott's illness, and the Secretary's role is now being temporarily filled by Darla Jarvis who is also holding down the Membership and Reunion Chair positions.

ICFA board activity is a fun, collegial, almost no-pressure activity with a lot of support from experienced other officers, committee chairs and former board members. Neither role calls for extensive commitments of personal time and mostly involve quarterly Executive Committee board calls lasting about an hour and providing occasional consultation with the president and other board members. Remember, we are all volunteers with limited time on our hands trying to make the Association work for its members.

The Vice President's role is an especially critical one for ICFA since the office holder has traditionally moved into the presidency, so some organizational leadership experience is useful. The Secretary's position only requires being familiar with ICFA's uncomplicated By-Laws and the taking and preparation of board meeting minutes. Attention-to-detail thinking and note-taking experience are useful skills.

The organization is also seeking candidates interested in serving as **Social Media Coordinator(s)**. Having more than one person work as a team would be a fine approach. The new function will help us determine what role ICFA should play in the social media space and is a good fit for anyone having experience with Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and other popular platforms. Please contact President David Roland at [davidroland@outlook.com](mailto:davidroland@outlook.com) to inquire further or suggest candidates for these openings.

### ICFA LEADERSHIP

#### OFFICERS

David Roland – President  
(Vacant) – Vice President  
Darla Jarvis – Secretary (Temporary)  
Tamara Larson – Treasurer

#### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Rosemary Byrnes Doyle – Newsletter  
Darla Jarvis – Membership and Reunion  
Sherry Milham – Database  
Beth D. Rosenquist – Historian

#### TRUSTEES

Sheila Arestad  
Lincoln Cummings  
Barry Moravek

#### PAST PRESIDENTS

Laura Prescott (2015-17)  
Lincoln Cummings (2011-15)  
Leigh E. Cummings, Jr. (2009-11)  
David L. Cummings (2001-03 and 2007-09)  
Sherry Milham (2005-07)  
Darla Jarvis (2003-05)  
Barry C. K. Moravek (1997-2001)



**A NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL ORGANIZATION FOR DESCENDANTS AND RESEARCHERS OF  
THE EARLY AMERICAN COLONIST ISAAC CUMMINGS (1601–1677)**

**ABOUT ICFA**

Isaac Cummings arrived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony with his wife and family from Essex, England, about 1635. He died in Topsfield, Massachusetts, in 1677. His American descendants today number in the hundreds of thousands. The Isaac Cummings Family Association (ICFA) was organized in the mid-1990's by a small group of these descendants who were serious family historians independently exploring their Cummings family ancestry. Their objective was to organize and share their efforts to discover, collect, and preserve information about the history and genealogy of Isaac's American families and honor them as nation-building pioneers. For the past quarter century, ICFA has helped Isaac's descendants and researchers find and understand their shared Cummings heritage and family connections. ICFA holds national reunions, publishes a newsletter, operates a DNA testing project, maintains an online genealogical database and archive, and supports traditional and genetic research into the history of Isaac and his English ancestors.

**MEMBERSHIP**

Membership is open to descendants of Isaac Cummings and anyone who is interested in Isaac's descendant families and the ICFA. Annual memberships are \$20 for an individual and \$25 for a family including spouse and children under 18. Membership runs for a full calendar year beginning January 1 and entitles members to access the private ICFA Genealogy Database, receive the *Cummings Chronicles* newsletter, Reunion information and other communications during the membership period. Membership funds are used to defray the Association's operating costs. Members who do not pay dues by January 1 become delinquent and are placed on the inactive list.

**If you have a child, grandchild or relative who can help us, give them a surprise gift of an ICFA membership and get them involved as an active member of the ICFA family.**

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**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL**

**Check one:**  New Member  Renewal    **Type of Membership:**  Individual \$20.00  Family \$25.00

Name (s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Your email address will be used only for ICFA newsletter and other communications purposes.



Please make your check or money order payable to Isaac Cummings Family Association and send both form and check to:

**Darla Jarvis  
98 Bee Hole Road  
Loudon NH 03307**

For more information, please email at: [icfamembership@gmail.com](mailto:icfamembership@gmail.com)

**NOTE: This application is also available online at ICFA's Web site ([isaaccummingsfamily.org](http://isaaccummingsfamily.org)) where dues payment can be made using your PayPal account.**

*ICFA is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization and my contribution may help defray expenses involved in operating ICFA. I understand that membership is from January 1st to December 31st of each calendar year. I acknowledge that ICFA may have access to my contact information. Furthermore, I trust the honest intent of the Association's volunteer board members and other leaders and hold them harmless of any actions and obligations.*