



Salem's first Ancestry Days will celebrate and commemorate family histories during the first weekend of May

Lectures, tours, reunions, and research opportunities are scheduled May 1-4

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Salem, MA. . . The Salem community is coming together to connect visitors and locals with genealogy research and wonderful family stories during the first Salem Ancestry Days in May. Events, which will be held at locations around Salem, will include lectures, tours, research sessions, open houses, and an "Ancestry Fair," which will be held at the Salem Waterfront Hotel & Suites.

Salem Ancestry Days was created in response to the scores of visitors who come to Salem to trace their family history. "We hear from visitors on nearly a daily basis that they are coming to Salem because their ancestors lived here, were involved in the Salem Witch Trials or were connected to Nathaniel Hawthorne," says Kate Fox, executive director of Destination Salem, "We decided to create space in the annual calendar dedicated to descendants and genealogy enthusiasts who want to learn more about the families who have called Salem home."

The weekend will feature a Land Blessing by the Massachusetts Tribe, lectures on Afro-American, Jewish, Polish, and French-Canadian ancestry, and a Preservation Road Show. Experts from American Ancestors and other genealogical organizations will offer free family history consultations at the First Church, and tours of the parish, which dates back to 1629, will be available. The Registry of Deeds will hold an open house and assist people who want to research land deeds, and The House of the Seven Gables is holding a Family Reunion for anyone who has a family connection to the Turner-Ingersoll Mansion. There are also several walking tours to explore neighborhoods with ethnic stories including a tour focusing on Italian Americans in the Gedney Street neighborhood that will be hosted by Historic New England.

Salem Ancestry Days will share a wide array of stories and family histories that are rooted in Salem. The National Park Service will host a lecture on Polish Family Histories at St. Joseph's Hall and Essex National Heritage Commission plans to host a kickoff event featuring noted author and Distinguished Professor of History, William Fowler. The Witch House will be collecting and sharing the stories of Salem's Indigenous community, and Harmony Grove Cemetery is hosting a walking tour entitled, Monuments & Movements: Abolitionists, Suffragettes, and other Social Reformers of the Day. The Peabody Essex Museum is hosting a talk by Associate Curator George Schwartz, whose new book, "Collecting the Globe: The Salem East India Marine Society Museum," offers in-depth exploration of the PEM's founding institution.

The Salem Witch Museum is hosting a lecture about, "The Life and Death of John Proctor," as well as a mixer for the descendants of victims of the Salem Witch Trials. People with connections to the twenty victims of the Trials can purchase "Descendant Packs," in the Salem Witch Museum store. These packets contain a short biography; lists of relevant locations, surviving court documents, and genealogical research.

Salem Waterfront Hotel & Suites will serve as headquarters for Salem Ancestry Days on May 2 and 3. Visitors will be able to pick up a map, get directions, and meet representatives from historical societies, vendors, and authors at the Ancestry Fair. The Salem Historical Society will be at the Ancestry Fair providing informational services to visitors, including pointing people in the right direction to learn more about their ancestors. The Salem Waterfront Hotel is offering a discounted overnight rate for visitors who want to stay overnight for Ancestry Days (please call the hotel to make your reservation and mention Salem Ancestry Days).

Additional events are in development and will be posted to the calendar on a rolling basis. Visit SalemAncestry.org or follow the event at facebook.com/salemancestry for more information.

The Salem Ancestry Steering Committee includes representatives from American Ancestors by New England Historic Genealogical Society, Artemisia Botanicals, Destination Salem, Essex Heritage, Peabody Essex Museum and Phillips Library, the Registry of Deeds, and Salem State University.

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About Salem: Salem, Massachusetts, is a destination recognized around the world for its rich history, which includes the tragic Salem Witch Trials of 1692, the glorious maritime era that left its indelible mark on Salem through architecture, museums, and artifacts, and for its month-long celebration of Halloween. Today more than one million people visit Salem annually, generating nearly \$140 million in tourism spending and supporting 1,000 jobs.

About Destination Salem: As the destination marketing organization for the City of Salem, Destination Salem cooperatively markets Salem as one of Massachusetts' best destinations for families, couples, domestic, and international travelers who are seeking an authentic New England experience, cultural enrichment, American history, fine dining, unique shopping and fun. For more information, visit Salem.org.