

Paisley Family Research and News

2025 Annual Meeting of Paisley Family Association

The Paisley Family Association held their annual gathering on July 26, 2025 in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Jay and Diane Langston hosted the meeting and provided lunch. Thirty people traveled from across Virginia and North Carolina, with the guest speaker flying in from Washington state. President Don Paisley opened the meeting. Vice-president Catilin Paisley read a database report from Gary Paisley, who could not attend due to the recent arrival of twin grandsons. Secretary Kelly McCollum read the minutes from the last meeting. Jenette Lineberger gave the treasurer's report. Diane Langston reported on the latest Paisley Family DNA Project results. The floor was turned over to Mark Ulmer, a retired lawyer, and a meticulous researcher. Mark is a descendant of William Paisley, the 1736 Tyrone County Ireland immigrant, and his American born son Robert. Mark has possession of the Robert Paisley family Bible which has the first entry dated 1739.

Mark took his audience on a journey from Tyrone County Ireland, to Londonderry, along the southern trade route to Lisbon, to Madeira Spain, to the Caribbean, and up the North American coast to the port at Philadelphia. His research skills were evident in his explanation of shipping, land leases and tenant farming by the Paisley, McLean, Landy, and Marshall families near Norriton, Pennsylvania. Interwoven in the family details was the history of the Ulster Irish and their excitement and struggles to carve out a life in the wilderness of America. Added to his information on Paisley family members, Mark brought in local history and historical background. He presented a robust story of how our Paisley ancestors fit within society and survived.



Paisley—From Ulster to Pennsylvania

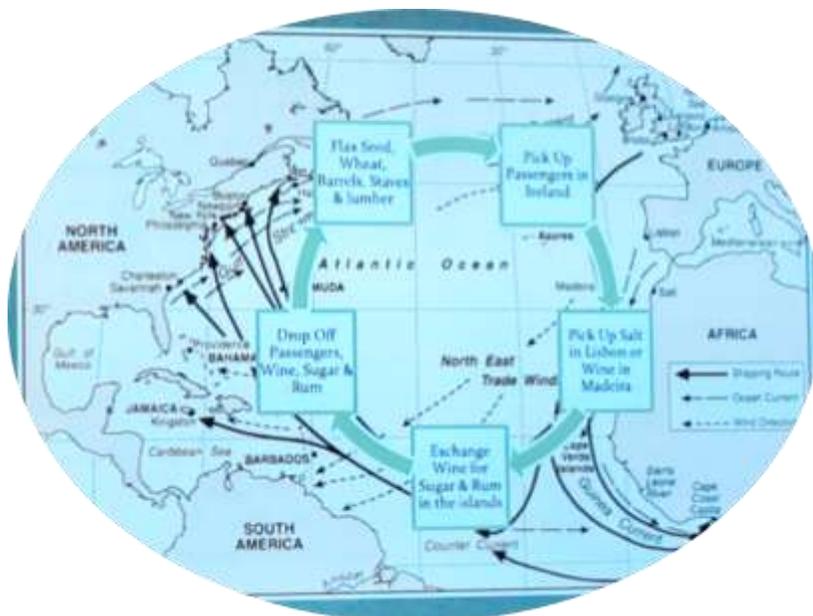
by Mark Ulmer

Readers are urged to go online and watch the entire presentation by Mark on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YcjCLvuWyB4>

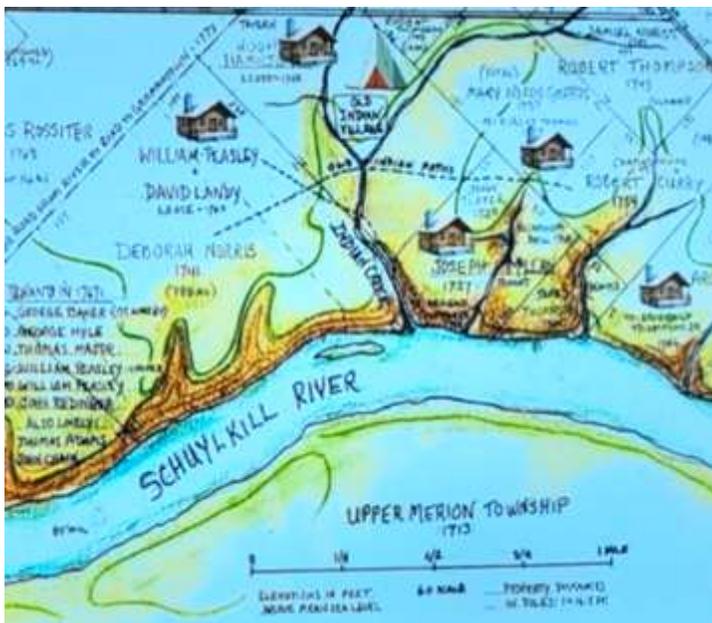


Some important take-aways from Mark's presentation:

- Using Y-DNA results that connect the Rev. Ian Paisley's ancestors as close kin to the ancestor of immigrants William and John Paisley, and using published genealogy research into Rev. Ian Paisley's ancestry, we surmise that our Paisley family came to Ulster Ireland with the first wave of Scottish settlers in the early 17th century. They settled in the townland of Bracky, just outside of the village of Sixmilecross, Tyrone County. Later, some Paisleys would move to the town of Dungannon.
- An analysis of the ships that left the Londonderry port and arrived December 1736 in Philadelphia, suggests that the Paisley and McLean families sailed on the St. Andrew, a brigantine vessel. Aboard the ship were Joseph & Mary McLean, daughter Margaret and her husband Thomas Major; daughter Elenor "Nellie" and her husband Will Paisley; son John McLean age 12; son Joseph McLean age 11; daughter Mary McLean age 9; and daughter Isabella McLean age 6. Also on board would be Mary Paisley and, most likely, Mary's soon-to-be husband David Landry. It is possible that Will's brother John Paisley was also onboard. The ship would have gone in its normal clockwise route to Maderia Spain, the Caribbean, and then up to the Delaware River in the American colonies.



- The McLeans came from Isle of Mull Scotland to Ulster and settled in Londonderry. It is probable that William Paisley went to Londonderry and there met Elenor Paisley. Elenor's parents were Joseph (NOT John) and Mary McLean. The Joseph McLean family left Ireland, and in Pennsylvania met up with family members Archibald and William McLean who had arrived in the colony a few years earlier.
- A look back at the original 1850 letter from Rev. Samuel Paisley raises the question of who he was referring to with the sentence: "Grandfather, William Paisley, had several brothers and sisters but one other only came to this country." It was always assumed that Rev. Paisley was referring to John, but it can be documented that William's sister Mary Paisley came over with Will and the McLean's. Mary's marriage record from March 1737 places her in Pennsylvania just after the McLeans and Will Paisley would have left the ship. Brother John Paisley may have sailed with them, married, and then returned to Tyrone. There are court records that show that John came from Ireland in 1751 to claim his wife's inheritance in Delaware.
- Extensive research into land leases, Norris family records, and Pennsylvania records by Mark Ulmer led to his construction of a detailed map of Indian Creek and surrounding areas showing the location of Joseph McLean, Will Paisley and others in Pennsylvania. Mark flew into Philadelphia a few days ahead of the PFA meeting and walked and photographed the land of our Paisley ancestors.



A Norris family descendant build a house on the site of the Paisley cabin and established the Norris family cemetery which is still preserved in West Norriton, Pennsylvania.

Attendees of the 2025 Paisley Family Association meeting [see photo on page 1]

Front seated left to right: Diane Langston, Judy Gallagher, Clyde Llewellyn and Billie, Jenette Lineberger
 Standing left to right: Jay Langston, Mark Ulmer, Karen Paisley, Caitlin Paisley, David Langston, Tom Paisley, Don Paisley, Sheldon McCollum, Kelly McCollum. Bryce Jones, Dwaine McCollum, Faye Robinson, Paul McCollum, Becky Whitley, Barry Jones, Christy Jones, Taz Whitley, Bruce Jones, Danny Llewellyn, Harvey McCollum. [not shown, Debra Adams, and Amanda Pelletier.

Clan Paisley Database
Excerpts from the July 2025 Report
Administrator - Gary V. Paisley



Overview: The Clan Paisley Database provides family history researchers a digitized library of genealogical information on persons surnamed “Paisley” (by any recognized spelling) and their descendants. The database is the property of the Paisley Family Association and can be found at Ancestry.com (viewable with specific permission). In addition to ancestral facts, the database contains scanned copies of documents, links to various online records, photographs, etc., making it a complete historical archive.

History & Current Status: The project to develop the database was commissioned at the July 2017 annual meeting of the Paisley Family Association. The database itself was originally seeded with a portion of member Gary Paisley’s personal digitized family tree containing approximately 24,000 Paisley descendants (all in the so-called “Ireland A” family group). Several additional contributors subsequently provided their own family trees which were merged with the initial data, such that, within 3 years, the database had grown to 50,000 individuals in multiple Paisley family groups. Since then, a steady process of history/document collection and digitizing has enlarged the database to its present size.

The aggregate size of the Family Tree Maker version of the database, including the primary database (plus internal back-up), media gallery (plus internal back-up), and raw media file, is now 8.5 gigabytes (+2.6 gigabytes in the previous year).

Notes:

- The largest single source for the yet-to-be-digitized data are the skeletal, typewritten notes of Eugenia Paisley Vogel, which are now also kept by Gary Paisley
- The historic volume, “Paisley & Allied Families”, the first definitive research of Paisley genealogy published in 1972, contained genealogical profiles on approximately 7,000 individuals, mostly of the Ireland A family group (approximately 1/20th the size of the current database)
- The PFA’s database project is advancing in parallel with the PFA’s separate DNA research project managed by member Diane Langston. In the previous year, several contributors provided 700+ marker yDNA test results which led to the conditional consolidation of some family groups within the database, from 20 groups one year ago to 17 currently. Former groups, Ireland K, Ireland S, and Ireland V are now included in Ireland A. Further consolidations may be possible if more yDNA contributors are found who agree to take the 700+ marker “Big Y” DNA test now offered by FamilyTreeDNA.

Gary’s July 2025 report shared that 1.25 million facts (vitals, occupations, military service, etc.) are included in the database. The other statistics shown to the left are updated numbers for January 2026.

Summary

👤 People	142341
📷 Photos	8466
📄 Documents	249
📁 Records	37399



Curtis Roland Kennedy

On December 1, 2025, Curtis Roland Kennedy, age 103, passed away. Curtis was born on April 1, 1922, on his family farm in Moore County, NC. He attended **Rankin High School in Greensboro, where on Graduation night, he saw “the prettiest girl he had ever seen” and persuaded her to go out on their first date. Mary “Lib” Paisley Kennedy then became his wife of almost 70 years upon her passing.**

Curtis began his career in the electrical field at Starr Electric in Greensboro. He served in WWII in the United States Navy as an electrician supporting radar for the naval fleet. After the war he returned to Starr Electric. He became the Chief Electrical Inspector for Guilford County. He was named the first Executive Director for the NC State Board of Examiners of Electrical Contractors in 1970, and **later Chairman of the Board, with “The Kennedy Board Room” in Raleigh named in his honor.** He continued to serve on the Board well past retirement, winning

many Honors, Achievements, and Distinguished Service Awards.

Curtis loved the Lord and the church. He was a faithful member of Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church since 1946. He served in many capacities, including a Sunday School teacher, Staff Parrish, Chairman of the Administrative Board, and many other committees. He kept the lights on and electricity flowing whenever called upon. He **received recognition from the church with “The Cross and Flame Award”, Mission Recognition Pin, and “Layperson of the Year”.**

Curtis was active in his community. He was instrumental in the establishment of the McLeansville Volunteer Fire Department and served as Chairman of the McLeansville Fire District Commission. He was a charter member of the McLeansville Lions Club, from 1960 until his **passing. “The Lion Curtis Kennedy Stew Room” is named in his honor. He received the highest award in Lionism, “The Melvin Jones Fellow Award” along with many other recognitions. He was a Mason in the P.P. Turner Masonic Lodge #746 and was the first to be raised to degree of Master Mason in 1969. He loved the Boy Scouts of America and in 1947, became the first Scout Master for the troop at Mt. Pleasant UMC. He guided 68 young men to the rank of Eagle Scout. In 1970, he received the highest honor bestowed upon an adult in scouting, the Silver Beaver Award.**

Curtis did all this while enjoying his family, and his loves of gardening, golfing, playing Rook, and traveling. His family loved his famous Red Hots and pancakes, at their big family breakfasts. **“PawPaw” gave driving lessons to the**



Lib Paisley Kennedy and Curtis Roland Kennedy

grands and great-grands, first on lawn mowers, then real cars on the “ball diamond” yard. He never sold a vegetable but loved to share all he grew with everyone...especially his watermelons!

God welcomed Curtis home for a glorious reunion with his beloved wife Lib; his parents, Joseph Astor and Sarah Sanders Kennedy; his brothers Bill, Richard, and David Kennedy, his sisters Marie Strickland, Myrtle Strickland, and Dot Kivett; as well as his precious daughter Mary Frances “Fran” Kennedy Sherrill and her husband Jerry. Left to cherish his memory are his devoted son Curtis “Roland” Kennedy, Jr.; his grandchildren Deana Sherrill King and husband Randall, Curtis “Curt” Sherrill and wife Robin, and Jennifer Kennedy Vail and husband Drew; and his great-grandchildren Andrew and Ethan King, Lance Dodson, and Addison and Zachary Sherrill. He was also blessed by his many nieces, nephews, and their children. Curtis will be remembered for his warmth, helpfulness, and the positive impact he made on all those around him.

Funeral services were held Friday, December 5th with burial services following in the church cemetery at Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church, 5120 Burlington Road, Greensboro, NC 27405. Any donations may be bestowed upon Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church.

Curtis was a beloved and active member of the Paisley Family Association and the Clan Paisley Society USA. He served as Chaplain for many years. Son Roland shared that his daddy was grateful that he was accepted into the Paisley family when he met Lib Paisley. Curtis enjoyed trips stateside and across the pond for Paisley family events and enjoyed learning more about the Paisley family history.



Curtis front and center in his green jacket, at a 2005 Clan Paisley gathering at the Westerkirk Church in Scotland.

Helen Ruth Paisley Sockwell



Helen Paisley Sockwell passed away December 9, 2025 surrounded by the love of her family and the faith that guided her life. She was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, educator, author, historian, and faithful servant of God whose life touched generations within the McLeansville community and beyond.

Helen was preceded in death by her father, Fred Paisley; her mother, Florence Gordon Paisley; her sister, Barbara Paisley; and her daughter, Laura Jo Sockwell. She is survived by her husband, William “Boyd” Sockwell; her son, Lance Sockwell (Shervawn); her grandchildren, Sierra Sockwell Doyle (Darren), Lakota Sockwell, and Easton Boyd Sockwell; and her great-grandchild, Turner Stout Doyle.

Helen married the love of her life, William “Boyd” Sockwell, in 1967. Together they shared many years of marriage, faith, family, service, and spirited conversation. Raised in McLeansville, she graduated from McLeansville High School in 1961, earned her Bachelor’s degree from High Point College in 1965, and later completed her Master’s degree at North Carolina A&T State University. Her love of learning became the foundation of a lifelong career in education that shaped thousands of young lives. Helen taught at Randleman Elementary School, Northeast High School, and Eastern Guilford High School, instructing students in English, History, and Yearbook. Known for her remarkable storytelling ability, she brought lessons to life—so much so that nearly every former student could recall a favorite “Helen story.” She was honored as Teacher of the Year and extended her influence beyond the classroom through many years of Sunday School teaching and mentorship.

Her passion for preserving local heritage led her to author *Life, Lore, & Legend of McLeansville*. What began as a history of Mount Pleasant United Methodist Church quickly grew into a broader community history as Helen collected stories and records that were far too rich to confine to a single institution. The result became an invaluable record of McLeansville’s people, culture, and past—one that continues to educate and inspire.

Helen loved traveling with her husband Boyd, especially on trips connected to his golf outings. Together they visited Florida, California, Kentucky, Indiana, Texas, and New Mexico. Some of her most treasured journeys were to Oklahoma to visit beloved family members. One of her favorite adventures was a 30-day family camping trip that covered nearly 20 states, creating lasting memories and reflecting her love of discovery and time spent with family.

Helen’s love of home and tradition was evident in her extraordinary talent for decorating. She kept an entire room filled with tubs organized by season and holiday, with flags and decorations for every room inside and outside the house. She decorated for Easter, the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Fall, Spring, Summer, Halloween, and St. Patrick’s Day—but Christmas was her masterpiece. Easter was never complete without the



family egg-dying party, where Helen prepared dozens of eggs and introduced new techniques for the children and grandchildren. At Christmas, she created a special tree for each grandchild and great-grandchild, adding meaningful ornaments every year. Even Boyd had his own NC State tree.

A lifelong member of Mount Pleasant United Methodist Church, Helen’s faith guided every part of her life. She taught Sunday School, served as a youth counselor, chaired and served on numerous committees, and gave countless hours to the ministry and mission of the church. Her steady presence, compassion, and leadership left an enduring legacy within her church family.

Above all, Helen will be remembered for her gentle spirit, unwavering faith, devotion to her family, love of learning, and lifelong commitment to serving others. Her influence lives on in the many students she taught, the church family she served, the community she helped preserve through her writing, the citizens she supported through her civic service, and her beloved family who carry her legacy forward.

The funeral service took place on December 14, 2025, at Mt. Pleasant UMC, with burial following in the church cemetery.

Helen was a beloved member and a huge asset to the Paisley Family Association. She had many stories to tell and many times she was a tour guide to Paisley-related sites around McLeansville. In 2019 at the 50th Anniversary of the PFA , Helen narrated the bus tour of Guilford County.



Helen at the 1989 Paisley family reunion with her stepmother Mildred and her father Fred Paisley

Paisley Family Association

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Websites of interest to the Paisley Family

Paisley Family Association: <https://paisleyfamilyassociation.com/>

Clan Paisley Society: <http://www.paisleyfamilysociety.org.uk/>

Paisley Family Society USA Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Paisley-Family-Society/195070730565352>

Paisley Family DNA Project web page:

<http://www.familytreedna.com/public/paisley/>

Paisley & Allied Families Autosomal DNA Project :

<https://www.familytreedna.com/groups/paisleyallied-autosomal/about>

2026 Calendar Dates:

- The 2026 Paisley Family Association meeting will be Saturday July 18th in McLeansville NC at Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church. This event will highlight the Paisley family archives and the Revolutionary War contributions of our ancestors.
- September 12-13—Clan Paisley Society USA will sponsor a tent at the Middle Tennessee Highland Games & Celtic Festival, Hendersonville TN, just outside of Nashville.