

# Notable national genealogist Timothy Field Beard, 84, has died

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**GREAT BARRINGTON** >> Author-researcher Timothy Field Beard, formerly of Sheffield and one of the preeminent genealogists in the United States, died on Feb. 13. He was 84.

Beard is best known for his critically-acclaimed book, "How To Find Your Family Roots," a 1,000-page tome published in 1977 by McGraw-Hill of New York City.

Beard was one of the 50 Fellows of the American Society of Genealogists, an organization that honors the finest genealogical researchers in the country. That post is a lifetime honor, granted to only 50 researchers at a time. Beard was elected in 1997.

He was a member of a host of prestigious genealogical organizations, serving as president of the Order of Colonial Lords of Manors of America; a member of the Society of Colonial Wars; past register general of the Sons of the Revolution; past president of the Order of the Crown of Charlemagne, a member of the Society of Cincinnati in the State of Maryland; commander of the Order of Indian Wars of the United States and past president general of the Saint Nicholas Society of New York City.

Beard was the great-great-great-grand nephew of David Dudley Field, who compiled the first history of Berkshire County. His grand-uncle was Sir James Stuart-Menteth, third baronet of Mansfield House, New Cumnock, Ayrshire, Scotland, according to Eagle files.

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"Since early childhood, he has been absorbed with the histories of both his extended families and those of others, tracing some of them to seemingly impossible lengths back to the days of Charlemagne, the monumental eighth-century Frankish king who founded the Holy Roman Empire," Kathryn Boughton [wrote in a 2010 profile of Beard](#) for The Register Citizen in Torrington, Conn.

In that interview, Beard — who was named for his named after his great-great-great-grandfather, Timothy Field — said, "When you teach history without names, it becomes just dry facts. ... People were the ones who lived history. When people say they don't like history, well, it's the way they teach it."

Born on Dec. 19, 1930, in Great Barrington, he was the son of Stuart-Menteth Beard II and his wife, Natalie Sudler (Turner) Beard. The family lived in Sheffield, and owned and operated the Sheffield Inn for many years, according to Eagle files.

Beard graduated from The Indian School in Lakeville, Conn.; Berkshire School in Sheffield and in 1953, became a graduate of Williams College, where he earned a bachelor of arts degree in history.

He returned to Sheffield following graduation and helped his family run the Sheffield Inn before moving briefly to England. Upon his return he attended Columbia University in New York City, earning a master's degree in library science.

In 1963, he married the former Annette Knowles Huddleston of Clanton, Ala. She died in New York City in January of 1995.

Beard was employed by the genealogical department of the New York Public Library for 21 years. Following that, Beard served as director of the Minor Memorial Library in Roxbury, Conn.

A veteran of the Korean War, Beard served as supply officer at the Bordeaux-Mérignac Air Force Base in France during that conflict.

Monica Pattangall of Lenox, who has also been involved in genealogy and who notified The Eagle of Beard's passing, said that Beard, "spent nearly all of his life within shouting distance of US 7, from Sheffield to Williamstown to Roxbury."

"I am among the many who will miss him," she said.

Funeral arrangements were incomplete as of press time.

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