

Notable *Mayflower* Descendant: Gene Roddenberry of *Star Trek*

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Over half a century after its creation, *Star Trek* is undoubtedly one of the most successful and recognizable multimedia franchises in history. Gene Roddenberry created the original television series about the voyages of the *Starship Enterprise* in the 1960s. Since then, the franchise has included films, television series, animated series, novels, comic books, video games, and more. The board game Monopoly has no less than three versions based on *Star Trek*, and the characters of Capt. James T. Kirk and Spock are among pop culture's most iconic duos.

Gene Roddenberry was born in El Paso, Texas, in 1921, and was raised in Los Angeles, California, where his father was a police officer. Roddenberry piloted a B-17 bomber in the Pacific during World War II; after the war, he worked for Pan American Airways. One night in 1947, Roddenberry was aboard a flight over the Syrian Desert as a deadhead (a pilot flying as a passenger and not part of the assigned crew). A fire began in one of the engines requiring the pilot to attempt a crash landing. Roddenberry initially tried to help in the cockpit. However, the pilot asked him to manage the passengers to prevent a panic. This move would save his life. After walking down the aisle reassuring passengers and instructing them on crash procedures, he sat in the third to last row and fastened his seatbelt. As the plane attempted to land with the wheels up and skidded to a halt on the desert floor, the fuselage split in two just behind the wings. Those in the front half of the plane either died upon impact or in the resulting flames, including those in the cockpit. In the back half of the plane, with two broken ribs, Roddenberry helped save trapped and injured passengers until the flames prevented further rescues. A year later, after another near crash experience, Roddenberry resigned from the airlines.

He decided to try his hand as a television writer. As he pursued his writing career, he joined the Los Angeles Police Department and became a police officer, like his father. By 1956, he had found enough success writing that he resigned from the police department to pursue writing full time, which led to *Star Trek* a decade later. In 1985, Roddenberry became the first writer-producer to be honored with a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame. The location of the star was a bit

nostalgic for him as it was in the same area where he had served his sergeant's probation while serving on the police force.¹

Roddenberry died in 1991. A year later, some of his ashes were flown into space and returned aboard the space shuttle *Columbia*. In 1997, his ashes made a second trip into space aboard a Pegasus rocket. The ashes remained in orbit for five years before burning up in the atmosphere as the spacecraft's orbit deteriorated.² Roddenberry is credited with popularizing the exploration of space and posthumously received NASA's Distinguished Public Service Medal in 1993. The accompanying citation reads, "For distinguished service to the Nation and the human race in presenting the exploration of space as an exciting frontier and a hope for the future."³

One line of descent has been discovered for Gene Roddenberry from *Mayflower* passenger George Soule, as presented below.

1. **GEORGE SOULE**, married **MARY BECKETT**.⁴

2. **GEORGE SOULE**, married **DEBORAH _____**.⁵

3. **SARAH SOULE**, married **JOHN WHEATON**.⁶

4. **ELIZABETH WHEATON**, married **ELISHA CHASE**.⁷

5. **CHARITY CHASE**, married **STEPHEN BOURN**.⁸

6. **STEPHEN BOURN**, married **DEBORAH BOURN**.⁹

7. **JOHN BOURN**, born at Somerset, Massachusetts, 14 September 1801. He died at Somerset 26 May 1870, and was buried there at Bourn Cemetery.¹⁰ John married at Somerset 12 December 1824 (int. 20 November 1824), **CLARISSA H. MORRISON**.¹¹ She was born at Somerset 20 May 1806, daughter of James and Mary (Whitwell)

¹ David Alexander, *Star Trek Creator: The Authorized Biography of Gene Roddenberry* (New York: Penguin Books USA, Inc., 1994).

² Alexander, *Star Trek Creator*, 556; Charles M. Chafer, "How Gene Roddenberry's Ashes Were Launched Aboard the Celestis Founders Flight," blog post at Celestis.com.

³ Don Savage, "NASA Presents Public Service Medal to Gene Roddenberry," 1 Feb. 1993, NASA.gov.

⁴ *MFIP*, Soule (2011), 1–3.

⁵ *MFIP*, Soule (2011), 2, 7–8.

⁶ *MFIP*, Soule (2011), 8, 31–32.

⁷ *MFIP*, Soule (2011), 32, 135–136.

⁸ *MFIP*, Soule (2011), 135; *MFIP*, Soule, 5th gen., pt. 4 (2005), 242–245.

⁹ *MFIP*, Soule, 5th gen., pt. 4 (2005), 245.

¹⁰ Massachusetts Vital Records Deaths, 1870, 229:135 (death, with birth location); gravestone photograph at FindAGrave.com (memorial #128009085 [with birth date]).

¹¹ *MFIP*, Soule, 5th gen., pt. 4 (2005), 245; *Massachusetts, U.S., Town and Vital Records, 1620–1988*, Ancestry.com, Somerset, Births, Marriages and Deaths, Image 40, Somerset Records 1790–1858, Vital Statistics to 1855, 1:71 (marriage intention), 72 (marriage record).

Morrison. Clarissa died at Somerset 2 February 1868 and was buried there with her husband at Bourn Cemetery.¹²

8. **MALINA E. BOURN**, born at Somerset, Massachusetts, 8 June 1848.¹³ She died before 18 April 1880 (spouse's second marriage). Malina married at Somerset 25 April 1873, **WILLIAM WALLACE CUSHING**.¹⁴ He was born at Calais, Maine, 3 April 1850, son of Elijah and Eunice (Finney) Cushing. William died at Jacksonville, Florida, 13 January 1935, and was buried at Bosque Bello Cemetery, Fernandina Beach, Florida.¹⁵ He married, second, at Nassau County, Florida, 18 April 1880, Mary Caroline Martin.¹⁶ She was born 31 March 1861, probably at Bay City, Wisconsin, daughter of Noble Edgar and Harriet Celestia (Mills) Martin. Mary died 7 March 1911, and was buried at Bosque Bello Cemetery.¹⁷ William married, third, at Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada, 6 August 1912, Sarah Eliza Avar.¹⁸ She was born at Great Shemogue, New Brunswick, 7 March 1860, daughter of Joseph H. and Thomasin Spence (Dobson) Avar.¹⁹ Sarah died at Jacksonville 18 January 1940 and was buried at Bosque Bello Cemetery.²⁰

9. **CLARA MAY CUSHING**, born in Massachusetts 3 April 1875. She died at Jacksonville, Florida, 2 July 1917, and was buried at Folkston, Georgia, probably alongside her husband at Bethel Methodist Church Cemetery.²¹ Clara married at Charlton County, Georgia, 20 September

¹² Massachusetts Vital Records, 1868, Deaths, 211:140 (death, with birth location); Gravestone photograph at FindAGrave.com (memorial #128009126 [with birth date]).

¹³ Massachusetts Vital Records, Births, 1848, 34:191 (birth, with parents' birth location).

¹⁴ Massachusetts Vital Records, Marriages, 1873, 253:97 (at Fall River), also in 253:153 (at Somerset).

¹⁵ Florida Deaths, 1877–1939, online at FamilySearch.org, FHL #4031721, Image 677, 1935, Duval County, state file no. 608 (death certificate); Gravestone photograph at FindAGrave.com (memorial #55369476).

¹⁶ Florida, County Marriages, 1830–1957, FHL #7621700, Image 295, 1880, Nassau County, C:209.

¹⁷ Henry J. Martin, *Notices: Genealogical and Historical of the Martin Family of New England* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, Publishers, 1880), 84–85; Gravestone photograph at FindAGrave.com (memorial #55369475 [no death certificate on file in Florida in 1911]); *Register* 157 (2003): 82–83, identifies Mary's parents' full names. 1880, 1900, and 1910 U.S. Federal Census records all give Wisconsin as Mary's birth location. 1860 U.S. Federal Census shows Mary's family at Bay City, Isabelle Township, Pierce County, Wisconsin, nine months before she was born.

¹⁸ *New Brunswick, Canada, Marriages, 1789–1950*, database at Ancestry.com, 1880, Westmoreland County, certificate no. 1637 (marriage certificate); *Acadia, Canada, Vital and Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1757–1946*, Ancestry.com, Westmoreland, 1888–1919, p. 53, Image 1359 (marriage register). Marriage records contain both bride and groom's birth locations.

¹⁹ *New Brunswick, Canada, Births and Late Registrations, 1810–1906*, database at Ancestry.com, 1860, Westmoreland County.

²⁰ Florida Death Certificate, 1940, no. 872; Gravestone photograph at FindAGrave.com (memorial #55369474).

²¹ *Florida Deaths, 1877–1939*, online at FamilySearch.org, FHL #4026922, Image 902, Duval County, file no. 6893. Clara's birth has not been found in Massachusetts Vital Records. Her

1892, **LEON E. RODDENBERRY**.²² He was born in Charlton County 22 March 1867, son of Henry Jackson Jr. and Novenia Adella (Sheffield) Roddenberry. Leon died at Folkston 31 October 1907 and was buried there at Bethel Methodist Church Cemetery.²³

10. **EUGENE EDWARD RODDENBERRY**, born at Folkston, Georgia, 28 August 1896 or 1897.²⁴ He died at Los Angeles, California, 14 December 1969, and was buried at Rose Hills Memorial Park, Whittier, California.²⁵ Eugene married at El Paso, Texas, 3 November 1920, **CAROLINE GLEN GOLEMON**.²⁶ She was born at El Paso 3 February 1904, daughter of William Wesley and Lydia Ann (McDonald) Golemon.²⁷ Caroline died at Glendora, California, 6 May 1998, and was buried at Rose Hills Memorial Park.²⁸

death certificate gives her state and place of birth and mistakenly identifies her mother as “Clara M. Boling,” born Mass. William and Malena had a stillborn son in Fall River, Mass., on 2 May 1874, eleven months before Clara’s birth the following year. As no evidence of any other spouse of William Wallace Cushing has been found after 1874 and before his second marriage in 1880, Clara fits as the second (and only surviving child) of William and Malena, and the death certificate identification of Clara May (Cushing) Roddenberry’s mother as “Clara M. Boling” was likely some confusion of Clara’s name (or Malena’s mother Clarissa) with Bourn miswritten as Boling.

²² Georgia, County Marriages, 1785–1950, online at FamilySearch.org, FHL #5191067, Image 131, Charlton County, Marriage Ledger, A (1854–1892): 218.

²³ Alex S. McQueen, *History of Charlton County* (Atlanta, Georgia: Stein Printing Company, State Printers, 1932), 250, 252; 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Georgia, Charlton County, Folkston, household no. 25, Henry Roddenberry household; Gravestone photograph at FindAGrave.com (memorial #53054145, inscription includes birth date and death location).

²⁴ Texas, County Marriage Index, 1837–1977, FHL #4640131, Image 493 (birth date and location); U.S., World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940–1947, online at Ancestry.com (birth date and location); 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Georgia, Charlton County, Traders Hill, household no. 4, Leon Roddenberry household. Marriage record and draft registration give 1897 as birth year. 1900 U.S. Federal Census, death records and gravestone all give 1896 as birth year. Alexander, *Star Trek Creator*, 10, states that Eugene’s “age was a guess, because it was learned in later years that he had three birth certificates, each bearing a different date of birth.”

²⁵ *El Paso Herald-Post* (El Paso, Texas), 16 December 1969, p. 19 (obituary); Gravestone photograph at FindAGrave.com (memorial #194624455); Los Angeles Co., California Death Certificate, 1969, no. 7097-051552.

²⁶ Alexander, *Star Trek Creator*, 13; Texas, County Marriage Index, 1837–1977, FHL #4640131, Image 493.

²⁷ Texas, County Marriage Index, 1837–1977, FHL #4640131, Image 493, marriage record gives birth date and location; Alexander, *Star Trek Creator* 9, identifies parents; *Texas, U.S., Select County Marriage Records, 1837–1965*, database at Ancestry.com, parents’ marriage license identifies mother’s maiden name; California, U.S., Death Index, 1940–1997, online at Ancestry.com, record for each parent identifies their middle names.

²⁸ U.S. Social Security Death Index; Los Angeles Co., California Death Certificate, 1998 no. 9020250 (as Caroline Glenn Roddenberry); Gravestone photograph at FindAGrave.com (memorial #194624432).

11. **EUGENE WESLEY “GENE” RODDENBERRY**, born at El Paso, Texas, 19 August 1921.²⁹ He died at Santa Monica, California, 24 October 1991.³⁰ Gene married, first, at Kelly Field, San Antonio, Texas, 20 June 1942, **EILEEN ANITA REXROAT**, daughter of Frank Estes and Maude Therese (Westphalen) Rexroat.³¹ He divorced Eileen in 1969,³² and married, second, at Beverly Hills, California, 29 December 1969, **MAJEL LEE HUDEC (AKA MAJEL BARRETT)**.³³ She was born at Columbus, Ohio, 23 February 1932, daughter of William Roland and Gladys Viola (Cotterman) Hudec, and died at Los Angeles, California, 18 December 2008.³⁴ Gene and Majel were originally married in a Shinto-Buddhist ceremony in Japan on 6 August 1969, however, the marriage was not legal as Gene’s divorce from Eileen was not yet final. Majel Barrett was known for playing various Star Trek characters and sometimes referred to as the “First Lady of Star Trek.”³⁵

RICHARD HALL is a member of the Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of Illinois and a descendant of *Mayflower* passengers John Alden, Myles Standish, Edward Doty, George Soule, Stephen Hopkins, and possibly John Billington. He is also founder of the genealogical websites FamousKin.com and MayflowerKin.com and can be reached at richhall@famouskin.com.

²⁹ Alexander, *Star Trek Creator*, 9; Texas, U.S., Birth Certificates, 1903–1932, online at Ancestry.com, El Paso County, Certificate No. 46968, gives his middle name as Westley; U.S., *Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936–2007*, database at Ancestry.com.

³⁰ Alexander, *Star Trek Creator*, 1–8; Los Angeles Co., California Death Certificate, 1991, no. 39119044805.

³¹ Alexander, *Star Trek Creator*, 44, 55, 322; Bexar Co., Texas Marriage license dated 13 June 1942, Certificate No. 173866, aff. No. 37849; U.S., World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942, online at Ancestry.com, gives Frank Estes Rexroat’s full name; U.S., *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Church Records, 1781–1969*, database at Ancestry.com, church confirmation record gives Maude Therese Westphalen’s full name.

³² Alexander, *Star Trek Creator*, 327–330; *California, U.S., Divorce Index, 1966–1984*, database at Ancestry.com.

³³ Alexander, *Star Trek Creator*, 372; Los Angeles Co., California Marriage Certificate, no. 61718; Ohio Birth Certificate, 1932, state file no. 126152a B-2473 (Majel Lee Hudec).

³⁴ Los Angeles Co., California Death Certificate, 2008, no. 3200819051941.

³⁵ Alexander, *Star Trek Creator*, 370–372.