

Massachusetts Genealogical Council Newsletter

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A Publication of the Massachusetts Genealogical Council Established in 1980

THE MGC ANNUAL MEETING & SEMINAR APRIL 26, 2008



***Sail with us to the LaCava Center
at Bentley College in Waltham
for a day of lectures, education,
camaraderie, shopping & a bit of
fun too!***

Each year we try to make the experience better than the last year. It is so great to meet with other members of the MGC and visitors and keep up with all the news of the genealogical world. Please review the *insert* in this Newsletter and send it on to us with your check. Register early to get your membership discount!

From the President of the MGC.....

We have finished our plans for the Annual Meeting and Seminar. With three tracks and a total of twelve speeches, I'm sure everyone will find great choices and topics that they really want to hear.

Our Vice President, Melinde Sanborn, FASG, highly recommends "Winters of the Revolution" by John Horrigan. He will present a captivating lecture describing the historical impact of meteorological events on Colonial America from 1774 through 1782. Learn how your ancestors might have fared in the bleak conditions during the Crossing of the Delaware, the twenty-foot snow drifts of the Quebec Campaign, the "Most Hard and Difficult Winter" of 1780 or the encampment at Valley Forge. Ever wonder why the oldest buildings in Boston aren't down by the waterfront? Then make sure to hear John's lecture on "Great American Fires of the 19th Century."

If you are as surprised as I am by how many good resources are now available on the internet, you will want to attend the lectures by Josh Taylor and Michael Leclerc, both on the staff of the New England Historic Genealogical Society. Genealogists use technology in a variety of ways - come hear about great uses of technology to benefit your research. Then, learn how technology

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REPORT OF THE MGC DIRECTOR OF CIVIL RECORDS

Our bill (H2154) to revise Mass. General Law (MGL) Chapter 46, known as the "Registry of Births, Marriages and Deaths" statute, continues to sit "in committee" at the Joint Committee on Public Health and has yet to be vetted for approval (or not) of the committee prior to submission to the houses of the general court for passage. Although it is disappointing that more action has not occurred, there are two pieces of good news there. One is that we have not had a negative report to date. The second piece is that our opponents' bills also are languishing in the same limbo with no action to date.

One other piece of legislation which we supported has however been passed and signed into law. It is the "opening" of (limited) access to the original birth certificates of adopted children. As outlined below, this legislation came through the Joint Committee for Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities and was sponsored by the senate majority leader and the assistant minority whip in the house.

In September 2007 Gov. Deval Patrick of Massachusetts signed this "birth certificate" law amendment to MGL Chapter 46. The entire text (three pages) can be found under Senate Bill No. 63. See <http://www.mass.gov/legis/>, click on "Text of Senate Bills" and enter "63".

This amendment provides for (limited) access to the original birth certificate of (certain) adopted persons. Due to an "expectation of anonymity" that existed in adoption procedures beginning in 1974, those adoptions from 1974 through 2007 are exempted from the new open access amendment.

This approved amendment further provides that "the Registry ... shall establish and maintain an adoption contact information registry for the purpose of connecting parents listed on the initial birth certificate to any of their children who were adopted by others. The adoption contact registry shall at a minimum be capable of recording updated address and other information supplied by parents and adoptees needed for one to contact the other, *contd.next column*

... Registration shall be entirely voluntary and participation may at any time be terminated through proper notification to the registry."

Also, "the information and indices held by the department of public health with respect to the adoption information contact registry are confidential and shall be exempt from the mandatory disclosure requirements of clause Twenty-sixth of section 7 of chapter 4 and section 10 of chapter 66," (The Public Record Statute).

FROM THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Did you ever start a new job? Well I just did and it is being the Editor of the MGC Newsletter. Not that I am a neophyte but it does take a bit of time and work to organize both the concept of this Newsletter as well as creating my own stamp on the product. As you will see in this issue we are trying to make your reading more enjoyable and interesting, with a few additions. We are commencing a **Letter to the Editor** column where you can express your opinions or just send us an announcement you want to make. Since I have no letters for this edition this column will start with our next release. We are also adding something of a lighter note, a **Genealogy Comic Review** which will hopefully make you laugh on a dreary day. We are also going to have a column entitled, *News from the World of Genealogy*. And finally, we are opening a permanent portal for you to contact me, editor@massgencouncil.org This amazing thing we called the internet is open 24/7 so feel free to attack your keyboard anytime and let me know what you think.

Arthur Roberts

A Great Deal for MGC Members! Just fill out this coupon and mail with your check made out to "Everton Publishing" to MGC for a one-year subscription of ***Everton Genealogical Magazine for only \$19.95*** for the year:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Send to: MGC, P.O.Box 5393, Cochituate, MA 01778-5393

Continued from page 1: provides multiple facets for genealogists to network and communicate with one another. Come see how this world can impact your personal research and genealogical knowledge as you begin to connect with genealogists across the world.

We are very pleased to have tempted Ann Lainhart to lecture in our Records track. She is one of the most accomplished of Massachusetts genealogists; her published works attest to her expertise in local records. Ann's lectures will be on state censuses (yes – there is something beyond federal censuses) and on the records of state institutions. Fascinating stuff, really, when you figure out how many institutions played a part in our ancestors' lives. Joining Ann in this track is Peter Zhuetlin, a freelance journalist who has published in the nation's leading newspapers. Peter will take us on his journey to find records on the world's first international female sports star.

Finally, we have two very interesting lectures in our Ethnic track. Ruy Cardoso, under a multi-year arrangement with the Family History Library, prepared databases covering 35,000 Portuguese parish records, including baptisms, marriages, and deaths from the 1600s to the 1800s. His session will give tips for finding the relevant parishes, describe how they are organized, and provide extensive details on the information included in the records. Marian Pierre-Louis is presenting "Poor, Black and Landless in New England: The Case Study of Ishmael Coffee." Discover how this African American and former slave left behind a wealth of records for his descendants to find. This research strategy is of use to anyone with landless ancestors, no matter what their ethnicity.

MGC directors will also bring us up to speed in several areas. Michael Brophy is right now interviewing people important in the early history of MGC itself for his speech, which takes us from past accomplishments (such as when we got the bill passed 25 years ago) to the places we can go in the future. Bernard Couming will present the MGC session on current legislative bill status.

Yours, Barbara Mathews, CG

GENEALOGY COMIC REVIEW

1. Only a genealogist regards a step backwards as progress!
2. All the really important information is on the missing page!
3. My hobby is genealogy; I raise dust bunnies as pets!
4. Many a Family Tree needs pruning!
5. Genealogists live in the PAST lane!
6. Any family tree produces some lemons, some nuts and a few bad apples!



Epitaph

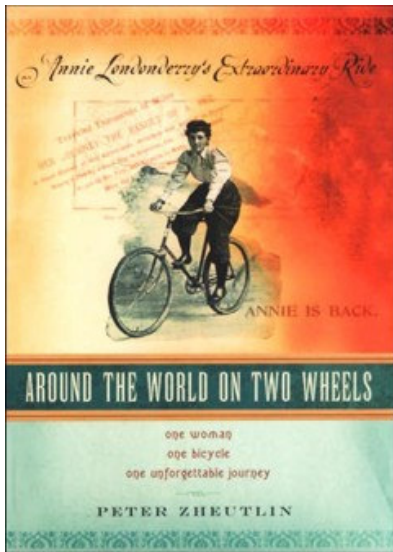
"Gone to see for myself"

Report on the February 2nd Board of Directors Meeting

From our news desk:

The Board of Directors met on Saturday, February 2nd, at the National Archives building in Waltham. The meeting, after reports by the various department leaders, was spent discussing the final organizational plans for the April 26th conference. It seems that everything is well in order and even the menu for the breakfast and luncheon was confirmed. Board members also discussed seeking corporate sponsors to help defray the expenses next year. That special "V" word, volunteers, was also talked about, so if anyone has a day they would like to donate to the greater good of genealogy please contact MGC at Info@massgencouncil.org.

Genealogy is the only study that makes looking at dead people fun!



Editors Note: Peter Zheutlin is a freelance journalist and the author of *Around the World on Two Wheels* a story about Peter's great, great grand aunt Annie. The book is a must read. Peter will be lecturing at the MGC Conference on April 26th. The following is an excerpt from the book:

It was, declared the *New York World* on October 20, 1895, “the most extraordinary journey ever undertaken by a woman” -- an audacious, solo, ‘round the world race against time on a bicycle – and the woman who made it was a working class Jewish mother from Boston, Annie Cohen Kopchovsky. Yet, for more than 100 years, the story of the woman who transformed herself into the world’s first international female sports celebrity was lost. How did she do it?

It was Annie’s genius to concoct a scheme that put her at the center of three of most powerful social trends of her time: the women’s suffrage movement, the bicycle craze and an intense period of globalization brought on by advances in communications and transportation technology. And she was a brilliant self-promoter.

She called herself Annie “Londonderry,” a pseudonym she took from her first corporate sponsor, the Londonderry Lithia Spring Water Company of New Hampshire. She claimed to be making the journey to settle a wager between two wealthy Boston merchants over the question of women’s equality. The bet was \$10,000 to \$5,000 that a woman could not circle the globe by bicycle, as Thomas Stevens had a few years before. The wager required Annie not only to circle the earth by bicycle in 15 months, but to earn \$5,000 en route, as well. This was no mere test of a

woman’s physical endurance and mental fortitude; it was a test of a woman’s ability to fend for herself in the world.

Traveling with only a change of clothes and a pearl-handled revolver, Annie earned her way, in part, by turning her bicycle and her body into a mobile billboard, carrying advertising banners and ribbons through the streets of cities around the world. Thus adorned, and, for most of the journey, riding a men’s bicycle and a man’s riding suit, Annie turned every Victorian expectation of female propriety on its ear.

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

By Arthur Roberts

The title of this column, one that will be in every Newsletter, is a bit misleading. Not only will the column review books pertinent to Genealogy but also magazines and articles. We hope it is interesting to you.

Our first suggestion is where to go to purchase used, new or out dated books. Most of you may already know this but **alibris.com** is a great source. As for your reading pleasure:

The Handybook for Genealogists: United States of America, Edited by George Everton

Designed for the beginner or the experienced genealogist. This book helps one understand the methods and manners one should use in doing research and offers new avenues for one to seek out in research. Used copies can be purchased for as low as \$15.00

The Naked Quaker, by Diane Rapaport

If you are interested in factual, armchair type stories, this book is a pleasant read. Not very long, it is a great book to read while you are on vacation. The author, **Diane Rapaport**, has recently been on the lecture circuit and has some interesting things to say at her lectures. Some of the stories appeared in the “Tales from the Courthouse” column of *New England Ancestors*.

Beware of many of the books that you can download from various websites. Many are written by authors not at all knowledgeable in genealogy and you only find that out once you have paid for the book. Of course, if you want databases, the **NEHGS** has enough records to keep one busy for a lifetime.
