



MASSACHUSETTS GENEALOGICAL COUNCIL

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NEWSLETTER



President's Column

by Mary Ellen Grogan

Join Us at NERGC! We're involved in several ways:

As a founding society of the New England Regional Genealogical Conference, MGC is proud to continue that tradition with our presence at the conference in Providence, Rhode Island.

We'll be at **Booth 51 in the Exhibit Hall** at the Society Fair and during Exhibit Hall hours. We'll hand out free health pedigrees for you and your loved ones. You'll have a chance to be heard, too, by signing the national petition— **Genealogists' Declaration of Rights**. And don't forget to enter the contest for our Massachusetts-themed door prize, including one free registration to our 2016 Seminar.

MGC is sponsoring the Saturday luncheon speaker, the dynamic **Judy Russell**, a national advocate for records access.

Right after our luncheon, we will moderate a **panel about records access** for genealogists. Joining Judy will be Helen Shaw from Maine and our own Teresa Scott. They will discuss practical (and successful) ways to make your voice heard in the legislative process.

Our Civil Records directors have been busy at what we do best—**keeping records open and accessible**. Read about the three bills we've submitted on page 5.

We've decided to put even more effort into NERGC so MGC will not hold a seminar in 2015. You can read all of the details on the back page of this newsletter.

Note! Our next seminar will be in April 2016, so this time next year when you're wondering what to do because there is no NERGC conference, think of us!

This year MGC took on chairmanship of the Exhibit Hall committee. Sharon Sergeant and I have been working for months to involve vendors and societies in the genealogical community. In addition, we've added **free events in the Exhibit Hall**. If you have family members in the area, let them know they can stop by the Exhibit Hall for free and hear these presentations. Visit http://nergc.org/NERGC_2015_EXHIBIT_HALL_PRESENTATIONS.pdf for details.

See you there!

Mary Ellen Grogan
President, MGC



We have in our midst a star!
Our own Mary Tedesco, Director of Communications for MGC, has been a host on *Genealogy Roadshow* this season, along with Josh Taylor, former MGC Director of Programs, and Kenyatta Berry (who has not held a position with MGC—maybe we should ask her!).

Lights, Camera, “Genealogy Roadshow!” By Mary M. Tedesco

Season two of “Genealogy Roadshow” (PBS) is now on the books. It was a privilege for me to be one of the hosts this season. It gave me the opportunity to share amazing family stories with our guests, which has left a lasting impression on me. The experience has helped me to better appreciate the rich cultural tapestry of America and also to experience three incredible US cities – St. Louis, Philadelphia, and New Orleans.

As I mentioned, it was an honor to be a host on “Genealogy Roadshow” season 2. But it would not have been possible without the help and encouragement of both season 1 co-hosts D. Joshua Taylor and Kenyatta D. Berry. Josh and Kenyatta both recommended me for the show and then generously took time to show me the ropes in the exciting world of genealogy on television. I owe them a lot.

Genealogy Roadshow is a wonderful forum for spreading the message of genealogy. It's fast-paced, exiting and diverse in its selection of

subjects. Just by being there, I've learned much about different family cultures and how they have contributed to our great American melting pot. Many viewers have expressed the same kind of experience. It makes them proud to be part of our diverse culture.

“Genealogy Roadshow” was a unique and gratifying experience season 2. I'm hopeful that the show will continue for many more seasons.



A province in Siena, Italy
© Origins Italy

13th New England Regional Genealogical Conference

Navigating the Past: Sailing into the Future



**RHODE ISLAND
CONVENTION CENTER
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND
15 -18 APRIL 2015**

- 60+ lectures
- Librarians' and Teachers' Day
- Society Fair
- Technology Day
- Ancestors Roadshow
- Research in Providence
- Exhibit Hall
- Special Interest Groups
- Query Column

As a participating society in the New England Regional Genealogical Consortium (NERGC), MGC is playing a key role in the 2015 Conference. MGC President Mary Ellen Grogan and Vice President Sharon Sargeant are the exhibit hall co-chairs for 2015, and you will see them and other MGC officers around the exhibit hall, ensuring that things run smoothly. **MGC will also have a booth in the exhibit hall.** Please stop by to sign the Genealogists' Declarations of Rights and say hello!



MGC-Sponsored Luncheon

Roadblocks, Red Lights and Detours: Records Access for Genealogists
with Judy G. Russell, CG, FASG

This was supposed to be the Age of the Information Superhighway. Instead, even as so many records are coming online, doors are being slammed shut on so many more – often records that aren't and won't be online, now and perhaps ever. As a community and as individuals, learn what we can do to protect records access.

Immediately after the luncheon MGC will present a panel on Access to Records. As genealogists, we should advocate for our use of records. Learn how you can help keep those records available. Leaders in the field will lead a panel discussion on hot issues about records access in 2015. How can we navigate into a future world of better records access?

Membership Update

By Brigid O'Donnell

Winter doldrums are behind us and now there is a burst of pent-up energy heading into Spring! We all have a to-do list that languished in the cold, dark days we are now happy to have blur into a distant memory. Our website software upgrade was completed earlier in 2015. So now is the time to check off all the things you meant to do in January, including **renewing your MGC membership!** We value your participation in MGC and encourage you to **renew today!**

Remember that our new incorporated status changed the language a bit, so that the former “Member” category is now called “Individual Supporter” and the “Organization” category of the past is now “Supporting Organization.” The changes do not directly impact the membership and all benefits remain the same.

Affiliations are based on a calendar year and renewals can be made conveniently online or via mail.

Online: On the home page, log in, go to “Click here to renew your support for MGC,” and follow the online instructions. New members and those wishing to renew by mail should go to the options in red on the left sidebar. Clicking “Join or Renew by Mail” leads you to the printable Supporter Form.

By mail: Fill out the form on page 7 of this newsletter or visit www.massgencouncil.org to find the Supporter Form.

Your support is critical to MGC’s continued mission to safeguard public records access, advocate for and monitor pertinent legislation and provide related educational opportunities to individuals and genealogical organizations alike, including next year’s MGC Genealogy Seminar in Mansfield, MA. So please RENEW and mark your calendars!

Any questions can be addressed to membership@massgencouncil.org.

The following were organizational supporters of MGC in 2014. Some, but not all have renewed. Can we count on your support for 2015? Thank you!

Boston Public Library—Serials Receipts
Cape Cod Genealogical Society
Central MA Genealogical Society
DAR Library—Serials Department
Falmouth Genealogical Society
Jewish Genealogical Society
Massachusetts Society of Mayflower Descendants
Massachusetts Society of Genealogists
New England Chapter, Association of Professional Genealogists
New England Historic Genealogical Society
Scituate Town Library (<i>NEW</i> in 2015!)
The Genealogical Roundtable
The Irish Ancestral Research Association

Some of you may be asking, “Why is MGC skipping this year’s seminar?” Well, after a careful look at the amount of work board members were putting into NERGC, along with the work required to monitor the legislative session and to follow new federal regulations for access to the Social Security Death Index, we realized that we couldn’t begin to put on our own seminar a mere three months later.

We’ve decided not to hold our seminar in 2015 but to give our all to NERGC. Then we all will have a year to put together a great 2016 MGC Seminar. A dozen presentations are planned for Saturday, April 16th. PLUS, the day before, we’ll run two all-day workshops to provide even more educational opportunities. Please join us!

MGC Proposes Three Bills in the 2015 Massachusetts Legislature

Senator Kenneth Donnelly, the Massachusetts Assistant Majority Whip, submitted three bills for MGC for consideration in the 2015-2016 legislative session. These would open records in the possession of the Secretary of State that are older than 90 years; would remove the way in which vital records policies not stigmatize the records of those born out-of-wedlock; and would permit genealogists to obtain lower-cost non-certified copies of vital records.

Bill 1: An act relative to records open to public inspection.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Section 7 of Chapter 66 of the General Laws, is hereby amended by adding the following sentence:

“All records in the custody of the state secretary which are ninety years or older shall be open to public inspection.”

Bill 2: An act to lower the cost of creating record copies for historical researchers.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Section 19 of Chapter 46 of the General Laws, as appearing in the General Laws, is hereby amended by adding the following section:

“Section 19D: The custodians of birth, marriage, and death records will provide non-certified copies of records on plain paper rather than safety paper. These copies will be marked "for research purposes only, not to be used as evidence." The cost will be 20% of the cost of a certified copy.”

Bill 3: An act to end the stigmatization of out-of-wedlock births.

Section 2A of Chapter 46 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out, in the first sentence, the words “children born out of wedlock or” and “or those of persons born out of wedlock”.

Section 2A. Examination of records and returns of ~~children born out of wedlock or~~ abnormal sex births, or fetal deaths, or of the notices of intention of marriage and marriage records in cases where a physician’s certificate has been filed under the provisions of section twenty A of chapter two hundred and seven, ~~or those of persons born out of wedlock,~~ or of copies of such records in the department of public health, shall not be permitted except upon proper judicial order, or upon request of a

person seeking his own birth or marriage record, or his attorney, parent, guardian, or conservator, or a person whose official duties, in the opinion of the town clerk or the commissioner of public health, as the case may be, entitle him to the information contained therein, nor shall certified copies thereof be furnished except upon such order, or the request of such person. The provisions of this section shall not apply to such records, returns or notices recorded or filed prior to January first, eighteen hundred and forty-one or to such copies thereof.

Many bills are introduced because legislators are worried about identity theft. We in the genealogy community do not accept that vital records are the causes of identity theft.

The main causes of identity theft are hacking into major databases; theft of wallet or mail; credit card, in-store or on-telephone transactions being hijacked; and computer spyware. We need ongoing education for legislators and regulators.

Have you signed the
Genealogists' Declaration of Rights?

Sign Now at <http://bit.ly/gen-declaration>



SIGN HERE!

TO KEEP RECORDS OPEN AND ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC

THE GENEALOGISTS' DECLARATION OF RIGHTS



MASSACHUSETTS
GENEALOGICAL
COUNCIL



Have you heard about the Records Preservation & Access Committee (RPAC)'s Genealogists' Declaration of Rights? It is a statement advocating open access to federal, state, and local public records. The Declaration affirms America's long history of open public records, which has been threatened the last few years over concerns about identity theft and privacy. RPAC has worked with state and federal legislators as well as local public officials for more than twenty years in support of legislation and regulations that achieve a balance between access and privacy. The Declaration of Rights has been approved by the board of directors of the three sponsoring organizations: The National Genealogical Society (NGS), the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS), and the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS).

Now is the time to make your voice heard! Genealogists and anyone interested in open access to public records, please sign this petition! Thousands of professional genealogists do

research everyday on behalf of clients, government agencies, and attorneys. Of particular note are the many forensic genealogists who assist the Department of Defense in locating next of kin for the repatriation of remains from previous wars; assist county coroners in the identification of unclaimed persons; work with attorneys in locating missing and unknown heirs involving estates, trusts, real estate quiet title actions, oil and gas and mineral rights, and other similar legal transactions; trace and track heritable medical conditions where finding distant cousins can facilitate early treatment and possibly prevent a premature death; research stolen art and artifacts for repatriation; and identify American Indians, Native Alaskans, and Native Hawaiians to determine eligibility for tribal benefits.

Over the past year, the Declaration has traveled to the 34th IAJGS Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Salt Lake City, and the Federation of Genealogical Societies Conference in San Antonio, Texas, 27–30 August 2014.

Visit our booth in the exhibit hall at NERGC to sign the Declaration.



**MASSACHUSETTS
GENEALOGICAL
COUNCIL**

SUPPORT MGC!

SUPPORTER FORM

Safeguarding access to public records since 1980 and providing related educational opportunities.

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Cochituate, MA 01778-5393

Thank you for your interest in MGC

<p>Individual Supporter benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct updates on legislative action • Participation in MGC’s board meetings • MGC’s Newsletter <i>online</i> • Discount on MGC Seminar 	<p>Supporting Organization benefits also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicity on MGC’s website, newsletter and blog • A visit to your organization to discuss threats to record access • One free vendor table at MGC seminar
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*** PLEASE NOTE ***

- The new incorporated status of MGC requires “supporters” rather than “memberships”
- **THE FAMILY CATEGORY HAS BEEN ELIMINATED EFFECTIVE 2015**
 - Supporter year runs the calendar year, January 1 to December 31
 - MGC dues are NOT tax deductible
- **Email addresses are required and must match online profile**
- MGC communicates almost exclusively via email and our website

APPLICATION FOR: **NEW SUPPORTER** **RENEWAL SUPPORTER**

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL FIELDS

<input type="checkbox"/> INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTER	<input type="checkbox"/> \$10 per calendar yr.
Name:	
Email address: (must be consistent with your online profile)	
Address:	
City/State/Zip	
Phone:	<input type="checkbox"/> home <input type="checkbox"/> cell <input type="checkbox"/> work

<input type="checkbox"/> SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20 per calendar yr.
Name of Organization	
Address	
City/State/Zip	Phone:
Website:	Email:
President’s name:	Email:
Named Delegate to MGC:	Email:

Pay by Mail:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make check payable to: Massachusetts Genealogical Council • Print form and mail to: Susan Tellier, Treasurer 206 Beacon Park, Webster, MA 01570
Pay Online:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Log onto www.massgencouncil.org with user name and password • Follow onscreen instructions or email info@massgencouncil.org for help • Electronic payments are made via PayPal, but you can use a credit card and do not need a PayPal account

MGC is an all-volunteer organization. Can you help in these areas?

- Monitoring Legislation** **Education & Events** **Publicity** **Newsletter**



MGC Seminar 2016

April 15-16th

Save the date!
We're skipping 2015
and switching to
April in 2016!!

Mansfield Holiday Inn—Mansfield, Massachusetts

Don't miss this opportunity to join with members of the genealogical community in a fun day of learning and networking. The MGC Seminar 2016 features multiple tracks of genealogy lectures on a variety of topics from fundamentals to advanced! Experienced researchers know that knowledge comes from lecturers and fellow genealogists. This is an opportunity to talk to others and learn how they solve the problems that you share.

Both days feature continental breakfast and buffet lunch!

Friday—Choice of two specialized all-day tracks

- DNA: The use of DNA in genealogy research
- IRISH: Researching Irish ancestors

Saturday—Three tracks (12 lectures)

- Marian Pierre-Louis: Looking After the Poor: Finding Your Ancestors in NE Poverty Records
- Margaret Sullivan: A Needle in a Haystack: Case Study in Identifying 19th Century African Americans
- Walter Hickey: TBD
- Helen Ullmann: Tips for Using FamilySearch Effectively
- Sharon Sergeant: Breach of Promise Cases: bringing color into your family story
- David Lambert: Records for Civil War Ancestors in the Union Army
- Diane Rapaport: Finding Your Ancestors in Court Records
- Polly FitzGerald Kimmitt: Identifying and Repatriating our Military Dead
- Barbara Mathews: Getting All Sherlock: Using Your Sources as Evidence
- Pam Eagleson: Obituaries in Genealogical Research and Their Role in American Culture
- Diane Gravel: Internet Genealogy: Separating the Trash from the Treasure
- Rhonda McClure: Using your Computer for Genealogical Analysis



We are very pleased to announce that our luncheon speaker on Saturday will be the well-known genealogist, Mrs. Letitia Featherstonehaugh (née Cholmondeley), Fellow of the Gustave Anjou Institute of Genealogical Research. Her topic is sure to generate discussion: "Can't Find a Document You Need? Make your Own: an introduction to practical genealogy."