



MASSACHUSETTS GENEALOGICAL COUNCIL

<http://www.massgencouncil.org>

Member Organizations

American-French Genealogical Society
Billerica Friends of Genealogy
Central Massachusetts Genealogical Society
Descendants of Whaling Masters
Essex Society of Genealogists
Friends of the Silvio O. Conte Archives
The Genealogical Roundtable
Greater Boston Chapter of the Association of Professional Genealogists
The Irish Ancestral Research Association
The Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston
The Massachusetts Society of Genealogists
The Massachusetts Society of Mayflower Descendants
The National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution
New England Historic Genealogical Society
The Waltham Historical Society

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

By Bernard J. Couming, MGC President

The Civil Records concerns we've catalogued in our recent columns have been directed at maintaining the historical public access to the vital records in Massachusetts. We have raised the alarm, alerting our constituents to any pending legislative erosion of our access.

Recently, we have met and communicated with various stakeholders in the pending legislation. We have approached representatives from the Town Clerk's Association, the City Clerk's Association, the acting State Archivist and various influential Beacon Hill persons to discuss issues of concern. Currently the major pieces of legislation remain in committee, and only when our listening posts are able to alert us will we be able to inform you of changes or movement regarding our concerns.

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MINUTES OF THE 2003 ANNUAL MEETING

By Sandra Gambone, MGC Secretary

The Annual Meeting was held at Regis College, Weston, Mass. on Saturday March 29, 2003.

The meeting was opened by President Bernie Couming. Three members were appointed to a committee to approve the minutes of this Annual Meeting – Kevin Fogarty, Bob Stone and John Thompson. The Treasurer's report was given by Treasurer Peter Viles. Secretary Sandra Gambone read the minutes from the 2002 Annual Meeting and Seminar.

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MGC BOARD 2003-2004

OFFICERS

President: Bernard J. Couming

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Programs: Sharon Sergeant

Publicity: Bobby Lyman

Ways & Means: Sheila FitzPatrick

Newsletter: If you have information, notices, etc., that you would like included in the MGC Newsletter, please send them to the Newsletter Editor, Massachusetts Genealogical Council, P.O. Box 5393, Cochituate, MA 01778-5393 or email megrogan@ix.netcom.com.

The **Massachusetts Genealogical Council** is dedicated to serving the interests of the state's genealogical community. Founded in 1980, the Council's stated aim is to develop and promote the study and exchange of ideas among persons and organizations interested in the pursuit of genealogy. Its programs and activities are designed to complement those of the many genealogical and hereditary societies throughout the state and to provide a statewide forum for genealogists.

One of the Council's leading functions is to represent the concerns of genealogists in the halls of state and local government. The Council monitors the activities of agencies which bear on genealogical interests and testifies at hearings and other forums of government. The Council promotes the preservation and publication of state and local records and also provides information about them. It guards the rights of all researchers' access to public records and educates genealogists about the proper use and preservation of these records.

The MGC Board meets four times a year. Meetings are open to all interested genealogists, and we welcome your participation. Massachusetts genealogical organizations are urged to send a representative to these meetings. Meetings are scheduled for Saturday, September 20, 2003, November 15, 2003, January 3, 2004, March 6, 2004 and May 2, 2004 at the National Archives in Waltham, from 1 to 4 pm.

POSITION AVAILABLE: Interpreter must be fluent in Klingon.

By Associated Press, May 12, 2003, 7:27 AM

The language created for the "Star Trek" TV series and movies is one of about 55 needed by the office that treats mental health patients in metropolitan Multnomah County, [Portland, Oregon]. "We have to provide information in all the languages our clients speak," said Jerry Jelusich, a procurement specialist for the county Department of Human Services, which serves about 60,000 mental health clients.

Although created for works of fiction, Klingon was designed to have a consistent grammar, syntax and vocabulary. And now Multnomah County research has found that many people -- and not just fans -- consider it a complete language. "There are some cases where we've had mental health patients where this was all they would speak," said the county's purchasing administrator, Franna Hathaway. County officials said that obligates them to respond with a Klingon-English interpreter, putting the language of starship Enterprise officer Worf and other Klingon characters on a par with common languages such as Russian and Vietnamese, and less common tongues including Dari and Tongan.

[*Editor's Note: Just when you thought you knew all the possible problems in genealogical research...*]

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

By Georgie Hallock, Assistant Director of the Newsletter

HOUSE No. 626: 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, as appearing in the 2000 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding at the end thereof the following sentence:—"All records in the custody of the state secretary which are ninety years or older shall be open to public inspection."

[Editor's Note: A Public Hearing was held on this bill on 6/9/03; it was reported favorably by committee on 6/24/03 and referred to the committee on House Steering, Policy and Scheduling]

It is always a challenge to figure out what legislation is supposed to do. In the legislative session of 2003 the Secretary of State filed a petition House No.626. The title seems to make it seem that all records should be opened after ninety years. One might think that this is a great idea. It would be wonderful if currently closed records in the possession of the Secretary of State were to be automatically opened after 90 years. However, a little digging makes for an interesting series of thoughts. Before you can open public records in Massachusetts, they have to be closed. What records are in the custody of the Secretary of State now? What records in the custody of the Secretary of State are currently closed? This methodology seems to be granting additional access to the genealogical and research community, but if the records are now open, why do we have to reaffirm the opening? Is this a way to close the records for ninety years and seem to be opening them?

Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Public Hearing on H-2233, S-2265, S-405

A public hearing was held on 4/3/03 at the State House on various bills concerning access to public records. Approximately forty members of the genealogical community attended. H-2233 is of particular importance to genealogists because it proposes to close access to 20th century vital records. Several people spoke in favor of this bill including legislators, representatives of the Registry of Vital Records and Statistics, and the Town Clerk's Association. Some custodians believe that H-2233 would reduce the pressure on office staff without seriously impairing legitimate access to records.

Among the people who expressed their concerns about the proposed legislation were:

Allan Cody, Supervisor of Public Records: "All the bills under consideration need administrative housekeeping. However, the Secretary of State has expressed serious concerns about H-2233's reference to the closing of public records. All public records are overseen by the Secretary of State's Office of Public Records. According to H-2233, the Department of Public Health (DPU) will determine what records are open and closed. That is the responsibility of the Secretary of State, not the DPU."

Shirley Barnes, MGC Director of Civil Records: "Genealogists want to work with legislators to ensure access to records and address funding for preservation and computerization of records."

William Plant, Newspaper Publishers Association: "Fear [of identity theft] is driving us; and that will result in legislation with the unintended consequence of restrictions on historic access to records."

Bernard Couming, MGC President, pointed out that only custodians of records were involved in the writing of H2233. "The other stakeholders (newspapers, lawyers, genealogists, historians, etc.) should be involved. We see open records being closed by H-2233. MGC represents many of these stakeholders. We would be happy to meet with legislators to discuss issues related to the legislation."

Jeffrey Corkery, Corkery Genealogical Inc., testified that heir searchers and lawyers researching ownership to property need certified copies of documents to do their work. "Lawyers, bankers, mortgage companies, and others, all need access to vital records to prove clear titles to land. H-2233 will have significant impact on business and personal financial transactions."

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK: Records Resources and Issues in Massachusetts Town and Cities

By Peter Koutoujian, retired Waltham City Clerk

[Editor's Note: This is an edited transcription of the presentation Mr. Koutoujian gave at the 2003 MGC Annual Meeting. The editing has been done for space reasons only.]

City and town clerks take their jobs very seriously. Too many laws and regulations, if not properly followed, will expose them and their community to litigation. Clerks are mandated to protect the very records that genealogists want to access. There has to be a reasonable agreement and understanding between us.

Believe me when I say clerks and their staffs would rather help you and me with research than do anything else – it's fun, it's a challenge and you're pleased to get any information that you can. But there are other duties that take priority. For clerks, processing births, deaths and marriages is a priority. The daily mail, with requests to satisfy social security insurance claims, welfare, veterans' benefits, passport applications, etc., is a priority. The thousands of pieces of mail, phone calls and individuals at the counter are priorities in Waltham. City Council meetings, agendas, minutes, public hearings and all of the processing to make government work are mandated priorities. Voter registration, elections, and an annual census are priorities.

What can you do to help your city or town clerk?

Get an introduction to your clerk through your selectman, city councilor, alderman, school committee member or state representative. Just make an appointment for a few minutes. This will make it easier for the next genealogist that comes to your town and may give you an introduction to other city and town clerks that you may need.

When you are requesting information:

- Write out as much information as possible.
- Make your request as concise as possible.
- Call before you drop in, especially if you need to do some serious work.

- With your written request, include your address, phone number and/or email address – if there's a question someone can get back to you.
- If a clerk says, "I don't know when we can get to this list", say something like "I'll check back on Thursday – is 10am a good time?"

Offer to Help Catalogue and Conserve Records

Restoration of books is incredibly expensive and in most cities and towns may never be done. Nashua, New Hampshire has an "Adopt-a-Book" program in which businesses provide funding for one or more books to be restored and microfilmed. Maybe this can be done in your community.

Now take Sheila FitzPatrick. She got me talking about my records. I was bemoaning the fact that there was no time to sort and identify probably more than a hundred old books – many bindings had deteriorated, but the rag bond paper has lasted for 200 and 300 years under terrible conditions of extreme heat and humidity. Next thing I know, Sheila was in my downstairs vault. She labeled the spine of all of our books and wrote up a brief description of what was in each one. We had two copies of microfilm done, one for City Hall and one for the library. Sheila made it easy for me.

Many town offices don't like or want volunteers, but a specific task like this is perfect. You'll be doing your city or town a huge favor. Many communities are looking for meaningful work for seniors who are interested in participating in the senior tax abatement program and never think along the lines of record preservation. When money is tight, historical preservation is a low priority. Take this opportunity to help and benefit your family, and your town history.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK (continued from Page 1)

You do deserve a summary of the objectives we have tried to impress on our legislators. The following is that summary.

MGC Objectives:

Mission: Our interest is in the access, preservation and automation of vital records.

- 1) All birth, marriage and death records, except records that currently require judicial orders for release, shall be available for public inspection.
- 2) Indexes are pathways to the records, are not records, and should not be included in any proposed legislation.
- 3) The examination of death records may be from an automated database, or if requested, from the original record.
- 4) For transfer to the Archives, a term of 90 years for births and 50 years for marriages and deaths

shall be stipulated, rather than specific dates. Records are to be transferred in five year increments. We support adequate funding for the Archives for the transfer and usage of these records.

5) Special certified copies stamped "For genealogical purposes only" shall be available and unrestricted.

6) A vital records regulation committee shall be established, comprised of the Registrar, all records custodians and members from the public industries and associations that use the vital records. The committee's function will be a) to draw up regulations that will be promulgated by the DPH after a public hearing (s); and b) to monitor the modernization trust fund.

Continuing information will be posted to our website <http://www.massgencouncil.org>

MINUTES OF THE 2003 ANNUAL MEETING (continued from Page 1)

Shirley Barnes, Director of Civil Records, summarized the bills on the vital records in the legislature. Hearings will be held at the State House on Thursday, April 3rd. Members were urged to attend the hearings if possible to show support of our bill, S405. The fees at the Registry of Vital Records will double on April 1st. President Couming presented Shirley Barnes with a Lifetime Achievement Award and flowers for her 25 years of hard work and tenacity in keeping our mission before the State House.

The Nominating Committee presented the slate of candidates for the Board of Directors. These are the same Officers and Directors that are in place now. The current Assistant Director of Civil Records, Georgie Hallock was nominated to the position of Assistant Director of Newsletter, and Jack Gracey was the lone non-incumbent, nominated to the position of Assistant Director of Civil Records. President Couming asked for any other nominations from the floor, which there were none. A voice vote was taken and the candidates were approved.

The 2003-2004 Board of Directors are: President - Bernie Couming; Vice President - Daphnah Sage; Treasurer - Peter Viles; Secretary - Sandra

Gambone; Director of Ways and Means - Sheila Fitzpatrick; Director of Programs - Sharon Sergeant; Director of Publicity - Bobby Lyman; Director of Newsletter - Mary Ellen Grogan; Asst. Director of Newsletter - Georgie Hallock; Director of Civil Records - Shirley Barnes; Asst. Director of Civil Records - Jack Gracey; Director of Archives - Ann Dzindolet

A motion was made and passed by members to approve expenditures for monitoring legislation in the state house. Volunteers were solicited to help with MGC's web site.

President Couming adjourned the meeting at 10:05.

The program consisted of the following speakers and topics:

- Peter Koutoujian, *Records, Resources and Issues in Massachusetts Town and Cities*
- Ruth Thomasian, *Using Photographs to Gather Oral History*
- Sharon Howland, *Grass Roots Organizations for Record Preservation*
- David Allen Lambert, *Read Between the Lines: Getting the Most Out of Newspaper Research*

NORFOLK PROBATE AND FAMILY COURT MOVED TO CANTON

The Norfolk Division of the Probate and Family Court relocated to Canton (from the basement of the Registry of Deeds building in Dedham Square) on Monday, April 7, 2003. Judge Elizabeth Donovan, Norfolk Superior Court, determined that the Dedham facility was an imminent health threat to court employees. Studies show court workers suffered from respiratory ailments like bronchitis and pneumonia at rates far higher than the general population. Employees complained of poor air quality, inadequate space and fire code violations. The new location, an office building at 35 Shawmut Road in Canton, has been leased for a five-year term. The probate court is expected to move back to the Registry of Deeds building in Dedham after it is rehabilitated.

The new location, telephone and fax numbers are: Probate and Family Court, Norfolk Division
35 Shawmut Road
Canton, MA 02021
Tel: (781)830-1200
Fax: (781)830-4310

REGISTRY OF VITAL RECORDS AND STATISTICS

Research hours and fees have changed at Vital Records. A 50% increase in fees at the Registry was mandated in the FY2004 Massachusetts budget effective 7/1/03. This followed a 100% increase earlier this year. This has resulted in a 300% increase in the cost of accessing vital records in the last three months.

Research hours are: Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. & 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Effective July 1, 2003, the cost for research is now **\$9.00 per hour**. The Registry of Vital Records and Statistics maintains birth, death and marriage records that occur in Massachusetts from 1911 to the present. [Older records have been transferred to the Massachusetts Archives.] Researchers are given unlimited access to the public indexes to birth, death, marriage and divorce records. Researchers then request permission to examine the full birth, death and marriage records. Researchers are permitted to extract and transcribe information from these items which are considered public records. Photocopying is not permitted. Be aware that certain Massachusetts records (primarily related to illegitimate births) are restricted to the public. Identification may be required for processing some orders.

Certified Copies of records may be purchased at the counter during the following hours: Monday - Friday: 8:45 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. The cost for each certified copy of a record is **\$18.00** at the Registry counter which includes a ten-year search if the exact date and place of event is not known. Note that **only Certified Copies** of records are issued by the Registry of Vital Records and Statistics, regardless of intended use. There is no discount for genealogical research. Copies of many of the vital record indexes are also available at the NEHGS library.

MASSACHUSETTS STATE ARCHIVES

Please note the Archives will be open two Saturdays per month through August 2003. The hours will remain 9am to 3pm. Open Saturdays: July 12, July 26, August 9, and August 23, 2003.

CEMETERY NEWS

By Georgie Hallock, Assistant Newsletter Editor

There is an old joke that says the cemetery is the most important spot in town, people are dying to get in.

Every city and town has a municipal burying ground. Many communities have private religious cemeteries as well. Each year the Commissioner of Cemeteries must file a report with the community listing the amount of activity within their cemetery. It's true that the cemetery, graveyard, burying ground, churchyard or memorial garden is a popular place. As time goes by, there are more and more pressures on the cemetery land. We are not making any new land, so creative ways must be found to increase capacity. Family Historians are grateful for the cemetery records in book or on stone. These little memorials make all the difference in the research process. Who has not cried over a stone labeled "Child"?

In many Massachusetts communities one can not purchase a cemetery plot unless one has a body to bury. You can purchase multi-lots with room for future burial, but the initial purchase has to be for a "Current Need". One of the greatest gifts that the older generation can give to the younger ones is a thorough explanation of what kind of final arrangements they wish to have made. The average funeral in Massachusetts costs \$7,500.00. The additional costs for opening the cemetery plot, examination by the medical examiner, vault lining, and publishing can make a funeral more expensive than buying a car.

Many old New Englanders would cringe at the elaborate traditions and expenses which have come to be part of the way of death. The simple religious traditions from our past no longer serve the community as a whole. When the country was new, important people were entombed under the aisles of the church. The lesser mortals were on the outside in the yard and your status could be read by the location of your grave. The era of the family plot on the back of the farm has passed on. Today there are health and sanitation and overcrowding issues. Many people are reluctant to even consider what would happen to their remains should they die. It is an emotionally charged issue. That is why when you are in good health and of competent mind, you need to think about what you want done when you die.

Most Americans are embalmed and buried in coffins encased in a vault and have a headstone erected above them. (That is another set of expenses.) In New Orleans the burial of remains is done above ground in vaults. Cremation is available and it's inexpensive. The remains can be put in an urn and buried at a selected space above a coffin. Ashes spread at a favorite spot can be a problem but the local Health Department can issue special licenses for disposal. There are memorial gardens and walls where urns are encased and plaques are attached to make a wall of the dead.

Tracing the ownership of unused plots is becoming more and more of a need. Some families donate extra space to the community, or sell the spaces back to the cemetery. The title to the plot traces through direct blood lines only. Some lots can be reused with a coffin below and ashes above. Contemplating the disposal of your mortal remains is not usually a dinner table topic of discussion. Perhaps it should be....

Tokyo Cemetery Plots Priced at \$86G *[Editor's Note: edited due to limited space]*

By KOZO MIZOGUCHI, Associated Press Writer, Jul 2, 1:19 PM EDT, TOKYO (AP)

The city government began taking applications Wednesday for the 50 newly opened spots at Aoyama Cemetery - the first such sale in 43 years. Smaller plots at Aoyama start at \$30,000, with a 40-square-foot lot going for \$86,000. "This is a rather reasonable price," city government official Chieko Sugisaki said. "This is a very famous cemetery so we expect a large number of people to apply."

ACCESS TO RECORDS OUTSIDE MASSACHUSETTS

OHIO

The Ohio budget for FY04 (July 2003 through June 2004) included the following legislative changes. [Note: Because the state charges \$10 for a certified copy, the minimum fee the local registrars can charge is \$10 (not \$7). This is before the \$5 surcharge, effectively making the minimum cost of a certified copy \$15. Prior to this legislation, "uncertified copies" were available for a charge of \$.05 plus postage. A "certified copy" of a vital record was \$10.00, and the charge for a 10-year search of the records was \$3.00.]

Fees for Vital Records

The fee for any of the following must be no less than \$7: a certified copy of a vital record or certification of birth, a search of records or files pursuant to a request for information, or a copy of a record pursuant to such a request. The bill prohibits the board of health of a city or general health district from prescribing a fee for issuing a copy of a vital record or certification of birth that is less than that charged by the Office of Vital Statistics.

The bill requires the Office of Vital Statistics and health district boards of health to collect an additional \$5 fee for each certified copy of a vital record or certification of birth... The bill provides that the revenues generated by this additional fee must be used solely toward the modernization and automation of Ohio's vital records system.

Uncertified vital records

The bill eliminates the availability of uncertified vital records.

Ohio genealogist **Amy Johnson Crow, CG¹**, reported on the Association of Professional Genealogists Mailing List (APG-L, 6/6/2003):

"With HB95, we lose uncertified copies of vital records and certified copies have an additional \$5 surcharge (making the cost of a certified copy a minimum of \$15).

¹ CG and Certified Genealogist are service marks of the Board for Certification of Genealogists®, used under license by board-certified associates who meet genealogical competency standards prescribed for those programs.

I know that we are still "fortunate" (and I use that term loosely) in Ohio in that the records are not restricted in other ways. However, based upon conversations I have had in recent days with officials with the Ohio Department of Health, the next step will be to restrict access – either with a time restriction and/or an access restriction (only qualified parties can get a copy of the record).

We tried our best. We gave them good, reasonable, logical explanations as to why eliminating uncertified copies will do nothing to prevent identity theft. We gave them possible alternatives so that uncertified copies would no longer be a financial hardship on the agencies involved. I would be willing to bet that genealogists were the only group that contacted the senate that was willing to accept a fee increase! But our arguments and concessions were apparently not enough."

VIRGINIA

Virginia genealogist Barbara Vines Little, CG, reported on the APG List (APG-L, 5/20/2003):

Archival Funds Diverted by Governor

Virginia Governor Mark Warner, without advising the Library of Virginia or key legislators, transferred \$2.8 million of this year's Circuit Court Records funds and \$300,000 of next year's funds, to the general budget. This was done by a line-item entry in the back of this year's Commonwealth budget bill.

In 1990, the General Assembly added a special \$1.00 fee on all deeds and deeds of trust (mortgages) recorded in Virginia with such fee to go to a special Circuit Court Records Preservation Program. In 2001, under Governor Gilmore, the fee was increased to \$1.50 per instrument. These fees totaled \$1.8 million in 1999, \$1.6 million in 2000 and 2001, \$3 million in 2002 as a result of the increased fee and refinancings (with a similar amount expected in 2003). *(cont'd on page 9)*

ACCESS TO RECORDS ISSUES OUTSIDE MASSACHUSETTS (continued from page 8)

Virginia (cont'd from page 8)

These preservation funds have been roughly split each year between the Library of Virginia and local circuit court clerk's offices. The local circuit court clerk's offices have used the funds to help preserve records in their offices, through measures such as rebinding of volumes, improved fire and theft security systems, and copying of heavily used current records.

The Library of Virginia has used its portion of the funds to commence processing of the 18th and 19th century chancery court records from local counties. The Library has until now sought to process records first (filing and organizing original records in acid-free folders and indexing them), to make them accessible, but following up with microfilming for long term access and preservation (and planned digitization, to make the original records available online). The Governor's raid on these funds which were intended for preservation of Virginia's heritage will force the Circuit Court Records Program to grind down to a crawl.

TEXAS

As of September 1, 2003, copies of birth and death certificates are confidential under Texas law for 75 years (was 50 years) years for birth certificates and 25 years for death certificates from the date of the event. If the death was less than 25 years ago or the birth was less than 75 years ago, the certified copies can only be obtained by *qualified applicants*.

A *qualified applicant* is defined as the registrant, or immediate family member either by blood or marriage, his or her guardian, or his or her legal representative. Local, state and federal law enforcement or governmental agencies and other persons may be designated as properly qualified applicants by demonstrating a direct and tangible interest in the record when information in the record is necessary to implement a statutory provision or to protect a personal legal property right. A

properly qualified applicant may also be any person who has submitted an application for a request to release personal information and has been approved as outlined in the Texas Administrative Code, Section 181.11.

CANADA

By Sharon Sergeant, MGC Director, Program

Do you have Canadian ancestors? The Canada Census Campaign Needs You!

A proposed S-13 amendment to the Canadian Statistics Act is being promoted as a compromise between privacy and research for Post 1901 census information. The proposed S-13 restrictions and censure of historical research would prohibit full disclosure for 112 years after the census was taken and seriously impair the information available for our descendants in upcoming census collections.

You can review the proposed S-13 amendment online at

http://www.parl.gc.ca/37/2/parlbus/chambus/ho use/bills/government/S-13/S13_1/90215bE.html

Oddly enough, S-13 restrictions are not the jurisdiction of Statistics Canada. The S-13 amendment borrows language from the Privacy Act that is designed for much more recent personal information collected by the Canadian government. The Privacy Act already provides for unrestricted access to personal information in the census as the earlier of 20 years after death of an individual or 92 years after the census was collected.

I have prepared an overview of the existing law provisions online at

<http://bostonstates.rootsweb.com/S13Contra venesPrivacyAct.htm>

You will find detailed information on the current status of this saga at

<http://globalgenealogy.com/globalgazette/gazce /gazce96.htm>
<http://globalgenealogy.com/Census/>

UPCOMING CONFERENCES/SEMINARS

The Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) Annual Conference: A World of Hidden Treasures

Dates: Wednesday, September 3rd to Saturday, September 6th, 2003

Location: Renaissance Orlando Resort at SeaWorld, Orlando Florida

Registration: \$189

Meals have an additional charge.

Hotels: \$115 per night at the Renaissance Orlando Resort

Website: <http://www.fgs.org/2003conf/>

Description: The conference includes 197 presentations by 96 speakers. Presenters include nationally known speakers such as Mary McCampbell Bell, Sharon Carmack, John Coletta, Helen Leary, Marie Melchiori, Elizabeth Shown Mills, David Mishkin and Curt Witcher. Massachusetts makes a contribution in presentations by: Michael LeClerc, Laura Prescott, and Maureen Taylor. Tracks include: Skills and Strategies, British Isles and Europe, United States and Canada, Ethnic and Religious Research, Records Research, and Technology and the Internet.

On Wednesday, four tracks focus on society management: event planning, publications, operating a library, the duties of the Secretary, etc. These presentations are always excellent and are highly recommended. If you are not involved in the operation of your society, there are also four tracks focusing on records and research skills.

Also on Wednesday, the Association of Professional Genealogists (APG) will hold their Sixth Annual Professional Management Conference (PMC) in conjunction with the FGS conference. The PMC is designed for practicing professional genealogists and is advanced in scope. Presentations include discussions of ethics in genealogy, writing skills, client research, privacy issues, and more. You do not have to be a member of APG to attend the PMC. There is an additional registration fee: \$120 for APG members (\$95 if postmarked by July 15th), and

\$135 for non-members. Complete information can be found at <http://www.apgen.org>

New England Regional Genealogical Conference (NERGC)

Dates: Thursday, November 6 to Sunday, November 9, 2003

Location: Sea Crest Oceanfront Resort & Conference Center in Falmouth, MA

Registration: \$99 per person for the entire conference; special workshops and meals have an additional charge.

Hotel: The NERGC Group Rate is \$99.00 per night, + tax for a single or double. Call 800-225-3110 (mention NERGC)

Website: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~manergc/conference/information.htm>

ABBREVIATIONS FOR GENEALOGISTS

APG	Association of Professional Genealogists
BCG	Board for Certification of Genealogists
FGS	Federation of Genealogical Societies
FHC	Family History Center
FHL	Family History Library (Salt Lake City)
LDS	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormans)
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration (Federal Government)
NEHGS	New England Historic Genealogical Society
NGS	National Genealogical Society
NGSQ	<i>National Genealogical Society Quarterly</i> (aka <i>The Quarterly</i>)
Register	<i>New England Historical and Genealogical Society Register</i> (Editor's Note: The Society is Historic, but the scholarly publication is Historical. Important trivia!]

INTERESTING WEBSITES

The Proceedings of the Old Bailey [London]

<http://www.oldbaileyonline.org>

The Old Bailey Proceedings Online Project is creating a digitized collection of all surviving editions of the Old Bailey Proceedings from 1674 to 1834 and making the records available on the Internet free of charge for non-commercial use. This is a fully searchable online edition of the largest body of texts detailing the lives of non-elite people ever published, containing accounts of over 100,000 criminal trials held at London's central criminal court. In addition to the text, accessible through both keyword and structured searching, this website provides digital images of the 60,000 original pages of the Proceedings, advice on methods of searching this resource, information on the historical and legal background to trials at the Old Bailey, links to descriptions of published and manuscript materials relating to the trials covered in the Proceedings, and a special section for schools.

New SSDI Search Engine

<http://www.familytreelegends.com/ssdi>

The following article is from Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter and is copyright 2003 by Richard W. Eastman. It is re-published here with the permission of the author. Information about the newsletter is available at <http://www.RootsForum.com>. [Editor's Note: this article has been edited for length.]

Cliff Shaw, one of the developers of Family Tree legends, has now announced the newest and most powerful SSDI search engine yet. It has all the features of every other SSDI search engine, plus 4 entirely unique ones:

- Name Prefix Search - Enter from 3 to 5 characters for the last name and select the Prefix option... it will search on that last name prefix.
- Year Range Searches - For both the Death Year and Birth Year, you can select to search a range of years instead of the year needing to be exactly right.
- Age at Death Search - You can enter the age at which the person died. This is really effective if you don't have any idea what year they were born or died but you do know their age at death.
- You can click on the places that are returned in the results and get latitude and longitude, region information, aerial photos, maps, and more.

You can access the free Family Tree Legends Social Security Death Index database at:

<http://www.familytreelegends.com/ssdi>

E. B. Luce Photographic Archive

<http://www.ebluce.com/eblucecollection>

Edwin Bradbury Luce established his first portrait studio in Millbury, MA with a branch in Holliston in 1881. In 1888, Mr. Luce started to incorporate industrial-related scenes, machines, tools and employees in his photographic work, primarily for the purpose of record keeping for his customers. Each negative was numbered and filed, enabling customers to easily reorder prints and serving as a historical record of the companies. Through the years Edwin B. Luce recorded many Worcester businesses which, along with his street views, became a valuable documentation of Worcester [and the surrounding area] at the turn of the century. E.B. Luce has documented the architecture, businesses, and people of this fascinating time in amazing detail and style. Rather than have it collecting dust, this incredible treasure trove of images has at last been brought out into the light and made available for viewing and purchase world-wide. This web site shows only a small percentage of what's available.

Massachusetts Genealogical Council,
P.O. Box 5393, Cochrane, MA 01778-5393

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SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, April 3, 2004

MGC Annual Meeting and Educational Seminar

SPEAKER: Helen F.M. Leary, CG, CGL, FASG, FNGS

MGC is very pleased to give our members the opportunity to attend four lectures by one of the premier genealogists, Helen Leary. If you have never had a chance to attend a national genealogical conference, you have probably never had the privilege of hearing Mrs. Leary discuss the use of methodology in genealogical research. Our southern cousins don't always have the variety of records that we do in Massachusetts. They have instead focused on the methods needed to find and prove relationships. It is methodology that you need to find that elusive "lost" ancestor. We've all done the easy part; now let's focus on the rest!

Helen F. M. Leary is a professional researcher, writer, and speaker. She is past-president of the Board for Certification of Genealogists and has served as a Trustee of that organization since 1980. Mrs. Leary was editor of, and contributing author to *North Carolina Research: Genealogy and Local History*, *The BCG Genealogical Standards Manual*, and a contributing author to *Professional Genealogy: A Manual for Researchers, Writers, Editors, Lecturers, and Librarians*, the *NGS Quarterly*, *The American Genealogist*, and the *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*. She is Coordinator of Course 5A: "Genealogy as a Profession" and Course 5B "Genealogical Writing" at the Samford University Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research in Birmingham, Alabama.

Complete information on this seminar and registration information will be in the fall newsletter.