



Access — Education — Preservation

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2021

President's Column

By Susan O'Connor

We've been active on your behalf for the past year, organizing our MGC 2022 seminar, monitoring legislation, and participating in planning for NERGC 2023.

Your support is important to us. It helps us to pay expenses for our webpage and our educational events. Most of all, it lifts us up when we testify before the legislature on your behalf.



MEMBERSHIP

It's time to renew our memberships to MGC. The membership year runs from January 1st to December 31st. The cost is \$20 per year for both individuals and organizations. We've set up the website to accept payments with credit cards. Just click on the PayPal link and you will be able to pay either with your own credit card or through your own PayPal account. For those of you who prefer to fill out a paper form and write a check, the paper form is also available. Expect an email about membership renewal.

Renewal this year will help us to continue offering M:O.R.E. for free. Your donations are always appreciated.

CONNECTIONS: MGC'S 2022 VIRTUAL SEMINAR

Program Director Claire Smith is deep into planning our 2022 virtual seminar. What a month April 2022 will be! The 1950 US federal census will be released and we'll all be excited. Plus Claire has planned tracks on ethnic/cultural genealogy, unique records including religious records, repositories in Massachusetts, town and county records, and technology. Registration launches on in February 1st.

NERGC 2023

We're looking forward to our activities in the New England Regional Genealogical Consortium's conference this coming April. The NERGC board is planning an in-person conference in Springfield, Massachusetts. We will sponsor the Thursday luncheon.



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GENEALOGICAL
COUNCIL

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2-30 April 2022
#connectMGC2022

MGC 2022

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MGC'S NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM

On July 1, 2021, a new leadership team stepped up for MGC. We also expanded the board, adding directors for development and DNA. We split some of the big jobs. We continued to split our Civil Records position into Federal and State, and started splitting our Program Director position into M:O.R.E. events and the seminar. This expansion gave MGC the chance to add more voices to the board.

The people on the board of the Massachusetts Genealogical Council are volunteers who work hard on your behalf, monitoring legislative activities and producing quality genealogy seminars. The About section of our website provides more information about our organization as a whole, and about our volunteer opportunities.

We always need people to help with publicizing our activities, monitor bills in the Massachusetts and US legislatures, and work on our annual seminar. Don't underestimate your skills. If you can walk and lift a box, write an article or tweet about us, you're in! We need computer-savvy people, writers, legislative advocates, coordinators, organizers, and communicators. Just tell us your skills and we will fit you in. **Email President@MassGenCouncil.org.**

Send us an email if you are interested. We'd love to have you join a committee and learn about our work.

Contact MGC President, Susan O'Connor

YOUR BOARD

President: Susan O'Connor

Vice President: Cindy Ethier-Kostka

Secretary: David McRae

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Civil Records Director/Massachusetts: David Tuttle

Membership Director: Lori Lyn Price

Webmaster: Barbara Mathews

Newsletter Director: Erica Voolich

Archives Director: David Darby and Carol Gafford

Development Director: C. Yvonne Hickey

YOUR MEMBER SOCIETY DELEGATES

AAHGS-NE Delegate: Judith Allen Shaw

AAGHS-NE Alt. Delegate: Carolyn Saunders

AMG Delegate: Richard Reid

BPL: Jessy Wheeler

CMGS Delegate: open

ESOG Delegate: Barbara J. Beake

FGS Delegate: Ralph Wadleigh

FIR Delegate: Richard Reid

JGSGB Delegate: Daphnah Sage

MA Mayflower Delegate: open

MSOG Delegate: Linda MacIver

NBHS Delegate: Lee Blake

NEAPG Delegate: Susan O'Connor

NEHGS Delegate: David Allen Lambert

Old Bones Delegate: Dave Robison

TIARA Delegate: Sheila FitzPatrick

WMGS Delegate: Jeanne LeBlonde

For More Information Visit
WWW.MASSGENCOUNCIL.ORG

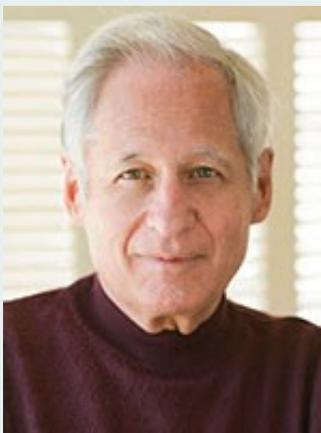
MGC's Next Seminar: April 2-30, 2022

KEYNOTE SPEAKER FOR
OPENING SESSION
ON APRIL 2ND



Our Seminar launches on April 2nd with keynote speaker John "Jack" Warner, Ph.D., MSLS, State Archivist of Massachusetts.

CELEBRATE THE
CENSUS ON APRIL 25ND



The inestimable Stephen P. Morse will highlight our census celebration day. His presentation will be live only.

MGC'S 2022 SEMINAR WILL BE VIRTUAL! SAVE THE DATES FOR CONNECTIONS

The MGC virtual seminar, Connections, is coming in April 2022. Watch presentations on unique Massachusetts records, join a workshop with an expert to find out how to use the records, and connect with other genealogists with interests like yours.

Learn about Massachusetts town records, repositories, cultural groups, and unique records you won't learn about anywhere else. Featured speakers include Michael Leclerc, CG®, Margaret Fortier, CG®, and Janis Duffy.

Registration opens on February 1st, 2022.

The seminar kicks off on April 2nd, 2022, with live sessions ending April 30th. The recorded sessions will continue to stream until May 31st, giving you plenty of time to view the recorded content.



ship becomes even more important to the family genealogist.

The state ships' lists are now in the Massachusetts State Archives. Janis Duffy and her small army of volunteers are working on creating a database for the cards created by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930s, and from the Ships Passenger List Books at the Massachusetts State Archives. The volunteers were motivated by the concern that these important stories might be lost.

There are errors and omissions in the WPA cards. For example, when Hinde Herzberg arrived in the Port of Boston on 21 January 1891 on the *S.S. Michigan*, she brought two children, Leah 11 and Tired 9. If you search using FamilySearch's Boston Ships Manifests, only Hinde's name appears in the search results. If you search the Massachusetts Archives site, all three family members appear. An example of an error would be Koppel Manilow, who is indexed in the WPA cards with the surname and given name reversed.

Janis told us about a gap that state records fill. She said, "The Federal records are not complete for 1874-1888/1889, The State records are really important."



Close the Gap royalty-free image from Dreamtime.

There are 1,143,577 cards in the Works Progress Administration index to the state's copy of the passenger lists for the Port of Boston. This doesn't mean that it covers exactly that number of passengers. Hinde's two children are an example of passengers who do

not have their own cards. In addition, the indexing project has discovered triplicate or duplicate cards.

Getting back to Janis's example of Koppel Manilow, he appears in the FamilySearch WPA card index. He does not yet appear in the Massachusetts Archives list of the 21 January 1891 passengers on the *S.S. Michigan*. There are 23 people in the state database but the manifest itself shows that the ship carried 45 passengers. Indexing for this last year of the state ships' manifests is incomplete.

Have you volunteered yet to help close the gap? As Janis told us, "We are so close to the finish. It is well-worth doing, we want to find our ancestors."

Janis has led a small army of volunteers, but with life events and the pandemic, the "army" is dwindling. We need to send reinforcements. The project of entering these cards into a database is not complete, so there are still chances to join the volunteers. If you want to volunteer, contact Janis at sorchaodubh@gmail.com.

Name	Koppel, Manilow	Age	27	Sex	M
Arrived (Port)	Boston	S.S.	"Michigan"		
Arrived (Date)	Jan. 21, 1891				
If in U.S. before	No	Occupation	Laborer		
Birthplace (Nationality)	Russia				
Country of which citizen	Russia				
Last residence	Russia				
Destination (State of which intend to become inhabitant)	New York				
Mental and bodily condition	Good	List No.	37		
mtm					

The federal immigration records index card for Koppel Manilow, indexed by his given name Koppel instead of his surname Manilow.

MGC Responds to NARA's Strategic Plan

August 20, 2021

Re: Feedback on National Archives Draft 2022-2026 Strategic Plan

The Massachusetts Genealogical Council is an umbrella organization for genealogical and historical societies in Massachusetts. In this role, the Council wishes to express concern about two areas of the draft strategic plan that impact historians and genealogists. We compare the current draft plan to the 2018-2022 final strategic plan when the current draft lacks specificity.

Make Access Happen

The goal of adding a half-billion digitized images has slipped by two years between the last plan and the current draft, from 2024 to 2026. No proposed strategies are in the draft plan. More funding as well as more innovation is clearly needed, especially for the provisioning of digitization equipment mentioned in the 2018-2022 plan. There is no way to sugar-coat this. Failure to implement a viable digitization strategy is detrimental to genealogists, historians, educators, sociologists, journalists, and the many other constituencies of NARA.

For the goal of having 95% of customer requests ready in the promised time, it is important for us to point out that the time allotment is set by NARA itself to meet its organizational needs. It is disingenuous to imply that such a goal meets the needs of NARA's constituencies. If Civil War pensions were digitized and indexed, then researchers themselves could find and download those pensions without using NARA staff time, gaining immediate access. As it is now, we wait for two or more months for records such as these to be delivered to us electronically, sometimes at the cost of several hundred dollars. Achieving 95% of the time a goal of two months is not serving the customers when the organization is missing the bigger picture. Online records are a better service.

Connect with Customers

Missing from the 2022-2026 draft is goal 2.3 from the 2018-2022 plan, "By FY 2025, NARA will have 1 million records enhanced by citizen contributions to the National Archives Catalog." This is a glaring omission. In April 2022, the 1950 federal census will be released to the public. One would

expect another outpouring of public effort to fully index this census, equivalent to the stunning effort that took three months less than a year to fully index the hundreds of millions of names in the 1940 census. NARA is failing its public duty and customer commitment if it fails to connect to this volunteer effort upcoming in 2022.

In a world in which genealogists can unite to donate indexing for hundreds of millions of records, NARA fails to fully clothe them as "customers" in the strategic plan.

NARA has a broad remit, to serve all federal agencies (including those with classified information) as an archive, but also to serve the public, including genealogists, historians, journalists, academic researchers, and educators. Calling us all customers as if their interactions were at point-of-sale registers does little to meet our needs. The strategic plan needs to include specific methodologies to solicit patron, client, and customer needs, be it town halls, surveys, immediate satisfaction feedback, etc., to meet the goal of: "By FY 2026, NARA will demonstrate enhanced organizational understanding of internal and external customer wants, needs, and expectations to support the design and delivery of world-class services." Nothing beats face-to-face opportunities to provide feedback. Just as federal agencies have the ability to provide feedback, individuals researching in the archives should have the frequent opportunity to identify their needs and to state how well their needs are being met.

From a doctoral student researching Nineteenth Century federal bankruptcies for a thesis, to a member of the Lexington Minutemen marching in the presidential inauguration parade after obtaining an ancestor's Revolutionary War service, to a daughter obtaining a copy of her mother's naturalization after fleeing Hungary at age 16, we the members of the public at large turn to our National Archives for the information that connects us to history.

We want access. We want clear and usable catalogs and finding aids. We have advocated for increased funding for NARA and NHPRC with our legislators. We need NARA and NARA needs us.

Sincerely,
Susan M. O'Connor
President, Massachusetts Genealogical Council

Federal Records Report for Fall 2021

*Barbara J. Mathews, CG® Emeritus, FASG
Federal Records Director*

MGC RESPONDS TO NARA'S DRAFT 2022-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) posted a draft [link: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/08/06/2021-16850/draft-fy-2022-2026-strategic-plan>] of their five-year Strategic Plan and they invited feedback from staff, public and Government customers, stakeholders, and colleagues in the archival, historical, and records management communities.

We as genealogists are definitely stakeholders in the accessibility and contents of the National Archives. We use those records to trace family histories, solve genealogical "brick walls," reunite families with formerly unidentified soldier's remains, and discover links back to family origins around the world, for example. Access is very important.

The letter above was electronically sent to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) by Susan O'Connor in response to their request for feedback on their next five-year strategic plan as it was published in the Federal Register.

41 US CONGRESSMEN ADVOCATE FOR NARA FUNDING

Records Not Revenue, the group that got us organized to respond to the U.S. Customs and Immigration Services fee increases, is now advocating for an increased budget for NARA. Their goal is a 15% budget increase rolling out over the next few years. They point out that NARA's budget has been essentially flat for more than 10 years now. The only increases were one-time events for the two presidential libraries founded during that period. Their thinking is that an increase in funding could lead to an ability to accession USCIS records that are not yet indexed.

This is why we were heartened to learn that on April 28, 2021, several U.S. Congressmen sent a letter to House Financial Services and General Government Committee Chair and Ranking Member requesting \$433 million for NARA operating expenses for the next year. In all, 41 members signed. Richard Neal was the only member from the Massachusetts delegation to sign.

RPAC ADVOCATES FOR ACCESS TO AN ACCURATE, TIMELY AND COMPLETE FACT-OF-DEATH INDEX

The Records Preservation and Access Coalition continues to advocate for the return of an open fact-of-death database for genealogists. (Fact-of-death files include the Death Master File known to genealogists as the Social Security Death Index, the EVVE system of the National Association of Public Health Statistics Information Systems, and the Do-Not-Pay registry of the Treasury Department.) RPAC hopes that there will be public hearings in front of committees or subcommittees on this topic during 2022. MGC monitoring this effort closely and cooperating with RPAC.

WHAT ARE NHPRC & SHRAB?

Part of NARA's budget is used for the preservation and/or publication of historic records. The unit within NARA tasked with this effort is the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). The committee is chaired by the U.S. Archivist and has 15 members. Through grants they steer funding to local states for preservation and archival activities. See <https://www.archives.gov/nhprc> for more information.

That grant money is steered to a specific entity in each state, the State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB). In Massachusetts, our SHRAB is chaired by John Warner, the Massachusetts Archivist. The MA SHRAB has a roving archivist who consults on archival needs. The Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library, as well as the cities of Boston, Somerville, and Lawrence, several colleges, WGBH's audio and visual recordings, etc., have all benefited from SHRAB funding.

To see a full list of the archival funding by state, check out <https://www.archives.gov/nhprc/projects/states-territories>

2021 Shirley M. Barnes Records Access Award Winner is Jan Meisels Allen

It was announced on Sunday, May 15, 2021, that Jan Meisels Allen of International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) received the 2021 Shirley Barnes Records Access Award for her years of hard work on behalf of genealogists everywhere. We took the opportunity to do this at the New England Regional Genealogical Conference's Society Fair. Members joined Jan and her family in our NERGC virtual booth as we made the announcement.

Since 2003 Jan has been the chairperson of the Public Records Access Monitoring Committee (PRAMC) of IAJGS. She served on the IAJGS Board of Directors from 2004-2013. Since 2004 she has represented IAJGS as a sponsoring member on the Records Preservation and Access Coalition (RPAC). In 2015 she was awarded the IAJGS Volunteer of the Year award. In 2013, the National Genealogical Society (NGS) awarded Jan the President's Citation. In addition to her international and national work, she has served the boards of local Jewish genealogical societies in California. She continues to research her own Polish, Hungarian, and Galician roots. Jan's work for records access is seen in her frequent Records Access Alerts on behalf of PRAMC. In recent years, Jan's support of MGC in her letters citing law and precedent have been instrumental in our successes.

Jan's successes include letters she wrote on behalf of PRAMC to the chair of the Massachusetts House Ways and Means Committee a few years ago. In the middle of the budget, while balancing the vital records bill submitted on behalf of Town and Municipal Clerks, the committee chair remarked that his staff came in on Monday to find their fax machines overflowing. He even noted the international nature of feedback on the bill, pointing to Jan's letter.

Each time Jan writes to a state government on behalf of local genealogists, both in Massachusetts and elsewhere, she carefully researches the laws pertaining to records access in that state. Her letter explains how changes to the law will affect genealogists. We in Massachusetts are grateful for her work on our behalf.

Who was Shirley Barnes?

A little slip of a woman, frequently donning an inviting smile, and a big orange "Save Massachusetts Records" button, Shirley M. (Armstrong) Barnes was committed to advocating for record preservation and access. Weekly she rode the commuter rail from Concord to Boston to walk the statehouse, visiting with legislators. Her work brought about the 1983 Massachusetts vital records law which



Jan Meisels Allen.

mandated the transfer of vital records to the state archives in five-year intervals. After 25 years of dedicated service as MGC's Civil Records Director, Shirley tirelessly stayed on the board, mentoring her successors, until attending meetings became a physical challenge. [Shirley passed away on August 24, 2018](#), at the age of 95, only eight months after her husband. She is survived by two children and a genealogy community that she had served for decades. Shirley's efforts served to establish a model for other New England states to follow in protecting access to public records for research.

The Shirley M. Barnes Records Access Award

The Massachusetts Genealogical Council, at the annual meeting on February 17, 2019, established an annual award to be given in memory of Shirley M. Barnes at a luncheon, held in odd years at the New England Regional Genealogical Conference and in even years at the MGC Annual Seminar. The award recognizes people who emulate Shirley's volunteer spirit and whose dedication to records access has made a significant impact for genealogists. See www.massgencouncil.org/shirley-barnes-records-access-award for more information.

MGC Welcomes New Board Members

Last year's elections marked a significant turnover of board members. Several retirements were aided by position changes so that — in the end — only two people returned to their old positions, both of them named David. After altering our bylaws to divide the board in half, assigning terms of one or two years in order to stagger election years in the future, we at least assured ourselves that no future Nominating Committee would work as hard. We salute Susan O'Connor (who resigned from the committee before the final vote on the slate), David McRae, and Terry Pearsons. Job well done!

This is the first installment of board biographies.



Mark Doherty, Treasurer

Mark Doherty is serving his first term as treasurer of the MGC. Hailing from Taunton, Massachusetts, Mark is a junior in the Commonwealth Honors College at UMass Amherst, where he is majoring in political science. Coming from a large family with a number of avid genealogists, Mark developed an affinity for genealogy early in his life and has taken it on as a hobby.

Besides genealogy, Mark also enjoys many other activities, including hiking in the Berkshires, learning languages, cycling along the Cape Cod Canal, cooking, and spending time with his friends and family.

Cindy is a 5th generation Brocktonian with Massachusetts roots that date back to the Mayflower on her father's side. Her mother's roots date back to the pioneers that settled in West Virginia. She began working on her genealogy at the age of 17 sitting at the kitchen table of a great aunt in WV. She knows the value of vital records access because she has spent countless hours in libraries, court houses, state and federal archives, town clerk's offices and has walked miles in cemeteries. Now over 35 years later, through websites like Ancestry.com she has continued her research with over 60,000 people in her data base. She is also working on an ancestry of the founders of the town of North Bridgewater, now the City of Brockton.

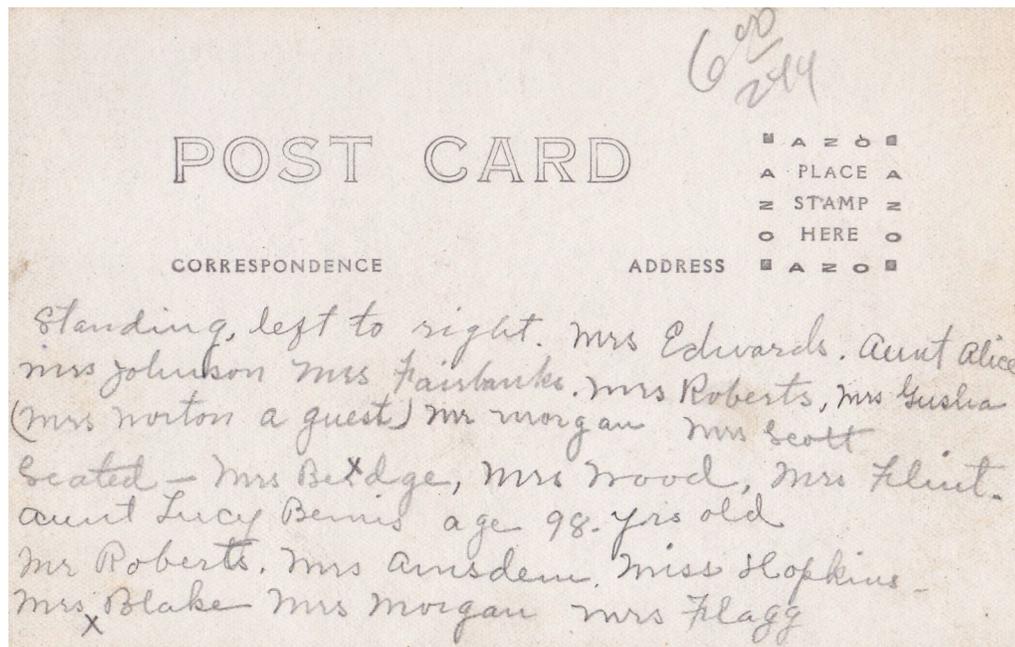
Cindy E. Ethier-Kostka, Vice President



Cabinet Card Mysteries

MGC Secretary David McRae recently found several photographs for sale. He is challenging us to identify these photos. We have enough for a few issues. Presented here are two challenges. Meet us on FaceBook to discuss them.

THE "VERMONT O.E.S. FAMILY" POSTCARD

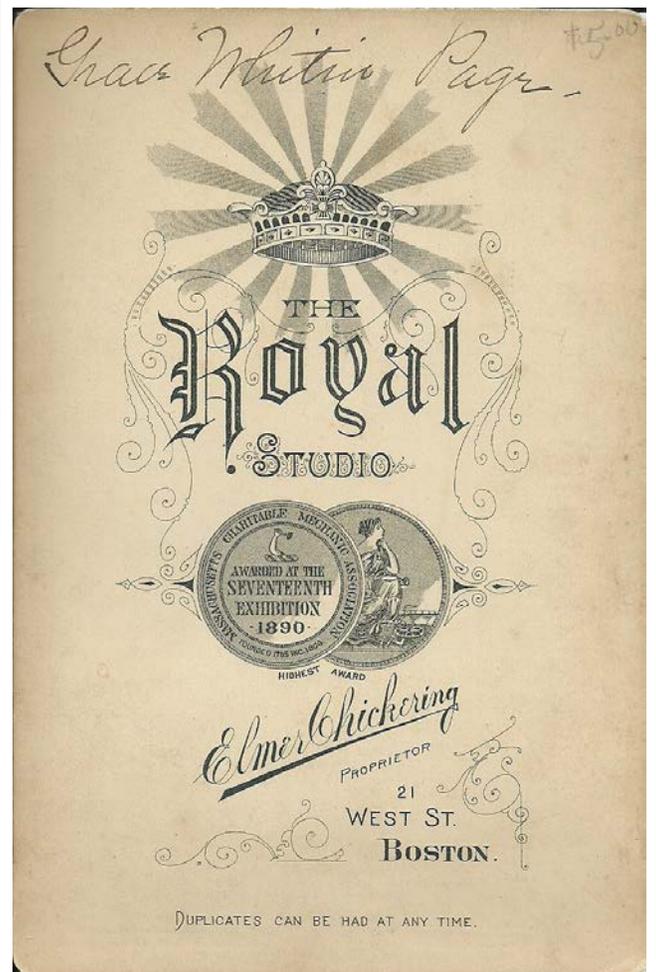


Follow and participate in the discussion about this photo at <https://www.facebook.com/massgencouncil/posts/6797085340362522>

Cabinet Card Mysteries



**GRACE WHITIN PAGE, PHOTOGRAPHED IN
THE ROYAL STUDIO, BOSTON**



Please join us on FaceBook to discuss these photos and figure out what to do with them!

Follow and participate in the discussion about this photo at <https://www.facebook.com/massgencouncil/posts/6797110187026704>

1950 CENSUS TO BE RELEASED ON APRIL 1ST

Barbara Mathews, CG® Emeritus, FASG, and Erica Voolich

Time for YOU to prepare to find your family, or for some of us even yourself, in the 1950 Census. I know it seems like we just finished the collecting and the releasing of the 2020 US Census and the redistricting that has resulted. But, the federal government holds for safe keeping and doesn't let anyone see the results for 72 years. $1950 + 72 = 2022$.

Ten years ago when the 1940 US Census was released, it was not indexed. You could *not* go to FamilySearch or Ancestry, for example, type in your ancestor and expect to find your grandmother. The National Archives released the scans of the actual pages of the census, and it wasn't indexed by the names on the pages. To find each of our families, we needed to know the state, county, town and the address in order to use the finding aid that Steve Morse developed to help you find the Enumeration District. If you didn't know the exact address, but did know approximately where they lived, you could use Steve Morse's hints to get nearby and then scan over page after page until you arrived at the actual listing. What a wonderful feeling it was, joy to see your grandparents and learn about what they were doing and where they lived. You might even be surprised by the next door neighbor. We are almost to that point again with the release of the unindexed 1950 US Census.

IPUMS.org provides census and survey data from around the world integrated across time and space. For research purposes,

IPUMS has posted

- the 1950 census form (<https://usa.ipums.org/usa/voliii/form1950.shtml>); and
- the 1950 guide for enumerators (<https://usa.ipums.org/usa/voliii/inst1950.shtml>).

People and organizations are also getting ready for the release.

- NARA through its Citizen Archivists portal provided background on the 1950 census at <https://historyhub.history.gov/community/citizen-archivists/blog/2021/04/09/countdown-to-the-1950-census>
- NARA lacked a full set of 1950 census maps. Genealogist Joel Weintraub scanned them and donated them to NARA.

- Steve Morse, who developed the wonderful passenger list website, has updated his Census Enumeration District locator to include the 1950 Enumeration Districts (ED). He did this by working with Joel Weintraub and volunteer genealogists who used the maps to determine streets in each ED. If you have a street address from a city directory, Steve's website will provide the 1950 ED. <https://stevemorse.org/census/unified.html>
- DearMYRTLE hosted CensusGenie Zoom meetings which are available at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLR41jOFxoDYyJoSCHHCboM8z-Tx2t8ufA>
- DearMYRTLE's blog post on her CensusGenie efforts has many useful links including a handout by Joel Weintraub. <https://blog.dearmyrtle.com/p/censusgenie.html>

Ten years ago, when the 1940 Census was released, there was an organized effort to index the census. It was all done in nine months.

NARA recently announced that they were using software to read handwriting. There will be a way for us to correct the index entries. "The new website will include a name search function powered by an Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning (AI/ML) and Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology tool." See <https://www.archives.gov/news/articles/1950-census-access> for more information.

Genetic Genealogy

Pamela Guye Holland

The Genetic Genealogy Committee consists of Pam Holland, Konnor Crewe, and Raymond Wing. Pam is serving in the newly created role of Genetic Genealogy Director. The committee will be reviewing the DNA information found on the Records tab of the MGC website and making any needed updates.

Raymond has submitted an article to the *Mayflower Quarterly* (published by the General Society of Mayflower Descendants) discussing using DNA evidence to accept lines into the GSMD even when the lineage has documentary gaps. He also submitted an article to the *Mayflower Descendant* (currently published by the New England Historical Genealogical Society) regarding Capt./Dr. Matthew Fuller of Barnstable that uses Big Y-700 DNA testing of almost a couple dozen Fuller descendants to document that Matthew could NOT have been Edward's son.

If anyone comes across DNA stories, articles, or record-associated information they would like to share with the committee they can send it to dna@massgencouncil.org.

MAYFLOWERDNA.ORG WIKI

Raymond T. Wing

The MayflowerDNA.org wiki (<https://mayflowerdna.org>) is a collaborative effort to identify the Y-DNA and mtDNA haplogroups for Mayflower passengers, their spouses, the spouses of their sons and daughters, and even their grandchildren's spouses.

The General Society of Mayflower Descendants (GSMD <https://themayflowersociety.org>) and Family Tree DNA (FTDNA <https://www.familytreedna.com>) teamed up to create a Mayflower DNA Project (<https://www.familytreedna.com/MayflowerSociety/about>). The FTDNA Project format does not provide a mechanism to go into any depth on issues outside of the raw data (i.e. STR and SNP results). The wiki format of the MayflowerDNA.org project is designed to provide a wider variety of information, mostly limited to the contributor(s)/editor(s) rather than hardware/software constraints at FTDNA.

The DNA results are broken down in four parts:

- Y-DNA of male Mayflower passengers
- mtDNA of female Mayflower passengers (and spouses of male Mayflower passengers)
- Y-DNA of "Allied Families" (i.e., sons and daughters in-law as well as spouses of grandchildren)
- mtDNA of "Allied Families"

Each section is broken down by Mayflower passenger, noting which individuals have no living Y-DNA or mtDNA descendants. Many individuals with living DNA descendants have their own pages linked in the section page. Each individual page gives a very brief biography of the individual (with source citations) and (when known) their English ancestry. It gives their marriage, spouse, and children. For Y-DNA it then lists at least two additional generations of direct male-line descendants while for mtDNA it lists at least two additional generations of direct female-line descendants. The bottom of the page gives a list of external references and links which provide information not presented in the wiki.

Our Interview with Janis Duffy

Not only did Janis Duffy tell us about the state ship manifests, she also told us about her experiences as a genealogist. It was a privilege to get to know her better. We are sure we all can relate to her story.

What made you volunteer at the Massachusetts Archives? How long have you volunteered there?

I was at the archives so much for my research that Dr. Whitaker, the State Archivist, would come down and tell me to “go home and feed your children.” Since I was there to do my own research, I was hooked and Dr. Whitaker suggested I could volunteer. I would respond to the letters when people would write in and ask for birth, marriage, or death records. I would go to the indexes to get the volume and page, then I would get the microfilm and type up the certificates.

In 1990 there was a job opening in the archives and I applied but didn't get it because I didn't have a history degree. However, 80% of the clients at the archives are genealogists, not historians. The second time I applied I stated that fact and was hired in 1994.

How and why did you start indexing the Boston Passenger Lists?

When I first started, every day I would go into the vaults and peruse the collections. I wanted to understand the historical records. I'd look and figure out what they were used for, and I came across the Boston Passenger Lists. They were big, huge books and I fell in love with them. By reading these books, my ancestors became real people.

People would come to the archives and ask to find their family in the passenger lists. They would look through the index cards to find possible ancestors. Then they would go to the microfilm of the list to verify that they were their ancestors. One day, I was in the vault bent down, on the floor, trying to get the cards in the file cabinets' bottom drawers. I walked the State Archivist, Dr. Whitaker, and he laughed. That's when I knew we had to do something with the cards.

I talked with the Curator and we developed a form to record the information from the 1,143,577 cards. When the volunteers come in, we take the cards and enter them into the database. There are lots of mis-

spellings and misinformation in the transcription from the manifest.

Tell us about yourself, especially your genealogical interests and experiences.

I started genealogy research in 1989 after both of my parents died. I grew up in Dorchester, near Columbia Point. I dabbled a bit, then more and more, and then took a genealogy class.

All sixteen of my grandparents are from various parts of Ireland, so I wasn't surprised when my DNA came back 100% Irish. Originally it said 6% Iberian Peninsula. But now, I'm all Irish.

In a class with Jim Hoban from TIARA, he said I should join that organization and I did. I would sit quietly in the back of the room at BC and one day Sheila Fitzpatrick introduced herself. Wait, I'm a Fitzpatrick. We aren't related but we still became good friends.

I did extensive research in the state vital statistics office with the vital records. In those days, we would fill out three request slips and stand in line to get the books and take them to a table. Then repeat. I took my youngest daughter with me and had her stand in line repeatedly to get more books while I worked on the records on the table. She required a trip out for lunch at McDonalds in trade. Unfortunately, she didn't want to keep returning.

I kept researching federal and state archives and then decided to volunteer, eventually getting a job at the State Archives.

I was elected corresponding secretary of TIARA. We used to get mail requests. I would take the letters home and send the folks information as to where they could get the records that they were seeking.



Then, I was asked to be the Vice President. I knew Judy Barrett who was running for President and figured I could work with her. I had a good rapport with her and we arranged for some good speakers. Then

Interview with Janis Duffy (continued)

Judy got ill, and I had to step up and hold both offices for the rest of our terms. Then, I was elected President and my friend Mary Choppa became my Vice President. Mary and I complemented each other with coming up with good ideas; it was wonderful. There is a limit of two terms of two years each, but I ended up serving five and a half years as president.

Now I'm working on the Celtic Connections 2022 Conference. We had a good partnership for three conferences, with [spell out IGSI] (IGSI). However, they needed a break. Now, I'm the chair of Celtic Connections 2022. Unfortunately, Mary Choppa passed away, leaving a big hole. I'm working with Anne Patriquin, Susan O'Connor, and Greg Atkinson.

What is the significance of your email address, sorchaodubh@gmail.com?

When I went to Ireland, I met a young woman named "Sorcha." Her name means brightness, light; bright, luminous, cheerful (also it is Irish for Sarah). "Dubh" means darkness, night, black (also it is Irish for Duffy).

Who worked on this project of indexing?

Originally, we had thirty volunteers some from TIARA. I sold it as "Go to the archives and enter the names you are interested in." Then I talked to other groups, and one volunteer processed the Jewish names. Once through the names with lots of interest, we then needed to do the more tedious job of going through all the drawers to finish all the names.

We started with thirty volunteers but the number of volunteers came down — some got too old to drive or passed away, for example. In 2011, I retired to go to another job at Mass Maritime Academy. Still there was a group of fifteen volunteers who continued working for next seven years.

Right now, there are 250,000 cards in the process of being edited; once done there will be 800,000 in the database. To finish we need Volunteers! The Archives is open every day but practically no one comes, thanks to COVID.

What is involved in processing the records?

Come in as a volunteer and take a group of cards that you want to check. Take the printout of what

someone else has done and check it against the original file cards and make any corrections. A second volunteer will check the printouts and make the corrections in the database. A third volunteer will go over the database to check for any unusual name spellings and then check them against the microfilm copies of the manifests. I will then do another final look to make sure that everything is correct before putting them into the passenger database. This is a life-long process.

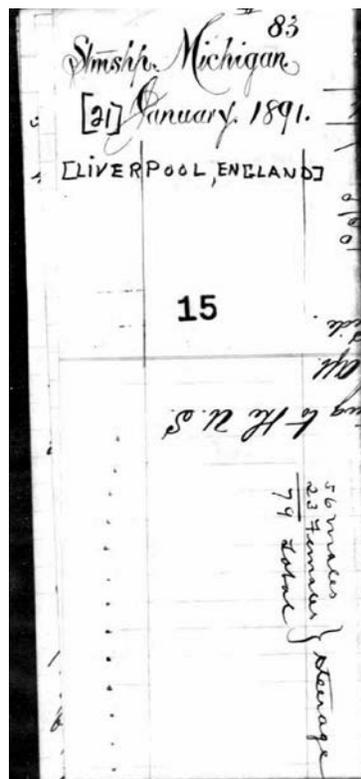
What's left to do on the passenger list index?

We are so close to the finish. It is well worth doing. We want folks to find their ancestors.

What are your needs?

We need more computers. Right now, there are only two and they really need more to be able to get these records uploaded to the archives website. But right now, there is a priority for the history of the state, not for genealogical records, in the mind of the Secretary of State's Office.

We need an armada of people. Just tell me when you want to come in and I will be there to greet you. We can't do this remotely because we are working on original cards which cannot be removed from the Archives.



If you want to be part of this historic project, please contact Janis Duffy at: sorchaodubh@gmail.com

News From Our Member Organizations

Falmouth Genealogical Society

Ralph Wadleigh

Falmouth Genealogical Society has been busy through the pandemic, offering programs utilizing Zoom and hosting TeamUp sessions at the now-open Falmouth Public Library to help individuals with genealogical searches and issues. It still has monthly board meetings via Zoom. It is partnering with Cape Cod Genealogical Society for their annual November joint meeting, again on Zoom. It has recently offered programs on the following topics: (1) understanding when and where vital records were recorded in southern New England, (2) the benefits of WikiTree and (3) how not to build your own brick walls. Its website has continually expanded to offer detailed info on upcoming programs. It offers the ability to join or renew membership online with PayPal. Besides Massachusetts Genealogical Council and Cape Cod Genealogical Society, it partners with NERGC, the Falmouth Public Library (cosponsoring several programs), the Falmouth Historical Society, the Boy Scouts of America (on its genealogy merit badge), and Falmouth's Oak Grove Cemetery.

Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston

During the coming winter season, JGSGB has three Zoom meetings and one Zoom book club planned. You can find links to register for these events at <http://www.jsgsb.org/events/>

- On Sunday, January 23rd, from 1:30 to 2:30 PM Eastern time, Serafima Velkovich will present "Tips for Using Genealogical Sources at Yad Vashem."
- On Sunday, February 27th, from 1:30 to 4:30 Eastern time, Ellen Kowitt will present twice: "Jewish Resources Comparison of the Giants: Ancestry, FamilySearch, FindMyPast, JewishGen, & MyHeritage;" and "Creative Strategies for Ukraine Research."
- On Sunday, March 23rd, from 1:30 to 3:30 Eastern time, Meredith Hoffman presents "'Solomon Cohen' through the Censuses, 1790-1940: The Census as Evidence and History."
- Our Book Club meets on Tuesday, February 8th,

from 7:30 to 9:30 PM Eastern time. Under discussion will be *Miriam's Kitchen* by Elizabeth Ehrlich.



Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society, Inc.

Jeanne Leblond

Since we've moved to hosting virtual meetings and trainings, we've been thrilled that more members around the country have been able to attend our

events. If there's a silver lining in the pandemic, being able to connect virtually has been it.

WMGS has continued to increase the resources available to members with over 45 recorded webinars and training sessions, and over 55 handouts now available in our Members Only section. Our speakers include nationally known genealogists and local favorites, as well. Recently, we've introduced two new member benefits: our new American Elm Newsletter Database and a Members Only Facebook help group. The American Elm Newsletter Database is a searchable index of 35 years of our original newsletter, the American Elm. The newsletter contains how-to articles, 5-generation charts, local cemetery listings, vital records, queries, stories, surname listings, and much more. Our new Members Only Facebook group provides a forum for members to connect with each other, post and answer queries, share information on helpful resources and websites, post information on local events, and perhaps help each other solve long-standing genealogical problems.

Learn more at <https://westmassgen.com/>

David Allen Lambert Library, Brockton

Richard Reid

You can more easily plan your trips to the David Allen Lambert Library now that our catalog listing is online and updated regularly. Be sure to check this listing at:

<https://cloud.collectorz.com/DavidAllenLambertLibrary/books>

Celebrating One Year of M:O.R.E.

Susan M. O'Connor



Susan O'Connor

After the success of its 2020 Virtual Seminar, the MGC Board approved a new type of programming designed to keep MGC visible and active between Seminars. By October 2020, the program called M:O.R.E. was launched with strategic branding, cost, scheduling, and outreach strategies.

The branding “demand M:O.R.E.” succinctly incorporated MGC’s mission into a ten-second elevator speech while clearly defining what MGC is all about. Programs were scheduled only during months with a fifth week so as not to conflict with other society meetings and to allow flexibility for MGC to have a regular schedule but not have to commit to monthly programs. All sessions were offered virtually through Zoom meetings and were free with closed captioning thanks to generous donations and memberships from MGC members and corporate sponsors. MGC organizational members partnered with MGC to co-sponsor programs at no cost.

The first M:O.R.E. presentation debuted on 29 Oct. 2020 with **Judy Fambrough Billingsley**, *Too Brown to Keep: A Search for Love, Forgiveness, and Healing*, describing the emotional and psychological effects of being biracial, abandoned, an internationally adopted baby, and the heart-wrenching, very public rejection she suffered at the hands of some of her newly discovered family. A total of 140 people registered for this session with 80 actually attending—numbers which exceeded our wildest expectations.

Five additional sessions took place throughout this inaugural year:

Brooke Schreier Ganz discussed the work of Reclaim The Records to secure open access to public records. Brooke talked about resources that have been returned to the public and how genealogists can access and use them for free. She also described the quest and fight to obtain access to these records so that we can all feel excited and empowered to get involved in this effort and to support the work of Reclaim The Records.

Amy Whorf McGuigan, *Finding Emma: My search for the Family My Grandfather Never Knew*, took us on a compelling genealogical journey of discovery, well beyond the names and dates on vital records, to reclaim the lost branches of John Osborne’s ancestry. Amy described how she gained access to both public and private institutional records in Massachusetts, which are often considered unavailable. She probed the question of whether learning and knowing something that was previously unknown—and that one has gone

through life blissfully unaware of—actually matters.

John D. “Jack” Warner, Ph.D., Archivist of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, described his work and how his current responsibilities impact the preservation of and access to Massachusetts records, both of keen interest to genealogists everywhere.

Nicka Sewell-Smith, *Held in the Balance: The Trask 250*, explained how she used DNA shared by over 300 people descended from slaves in Mississippi and Louisiana owned by the Trask family of Massachusetts together with traditional family research to create a family history project documenting more than 5,000 people.

David J. Silverman, *This Land is Their Land*, shed new light on the events that led to the creation and bloody dissolution of the alliance between the Pilgrims and the Native Americans who helped save them during the first winter in Plymouth while tracing the Wampanoags struggle for self-determination to this very day.

In the first year of M:O.R.E. MGC has provided over **1393 hours of programming to 855 individuals!** Many have attended multiple sessions with 19 coming to all 5 presentations. MGC’s reach has extended to 44 states, Canada, and Great Britain.

This success would not have been possible without the support of those MGC organizational members who co-sponsored these programs and who publicized them to their members through newsletters, journals, and on social media.

- Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, New England Chapter
- The David Allen Lambert Library
- Essex Society of Genealogists
- Friends of Irish Research
- Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston
- Massachusetts Society of Genealogists
- New England Chapter of the Association of Professional Genealogists
- The Irish Ancestral Research Association
- Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

Remember, your dues support M:O.R.E. Please renew your membership — and think about adding an additional donation. This will help us keep M:O.R.E. free for all attendees.

We hope you will join us on Monday, January 31st, when **Paul Joseph Fonczak**, author of *The Foundling*, will discuss his new book, *True Identity*. His relentless work to solve his own DNA mystery now includes his search for a missing twin sister named Jill. The program is free, registration is required <https://www.massgencouncil.org/m-o-r-e>.

MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORT

Lori Lyn Price

We have had five new memberships or renewals since July 1 2021 and currently have 129 members. Our current Members hail from thirteen states in the United States (CT, FL, GA, IL, MA, ME, MI, NC, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VA), and also from Ontario, Canada. We also have several societies and libraries who are members.

2021 INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Paying Individual Members 104

Free Memberships (for 2020 Seminar donors) 25

Total 2021 Individual Memberships 129

2021 MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS and SPONSORS

Paying Organization memberships 9

Free Memberships (2020 Seminar Sponsors) 5

Free Membership (corporate sponsor) 1

Total 2021 Organizational Members 15

Afro-American Historical Genealogy Society-New England Chapter

Alliance of Massachusetts Genealogists

American Ancestors (NEHGS)

Central Massachusetts Genealogical Society

Essex Society of Genealogists

Falmouth Genealogical Society

Friends of Irish Research

Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston

Massachusetts Society of Mayflower Descendants

Massachusetts Society of Genealogists

New Bedford Historical Society

Plymouth County Genealogists, Inc.

Old Bones Genealogy of New England

The Irish Ancestral Research Association (TIARA)

Western MA Genealogical Society

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2021 MEMBER LIBRARY SUBSCRIPTIONS

Boston Public Library, Daughters of the American Revolution Library, David Allen Lambert Library



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 • safeguarding access to public records since 1980 •
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access • education • preservation

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PLEASE COMPLETE ALL PERTINENT FIELDS

<input type="checkbox"/> MEMBER – INDIVIDUAL OR ORGANIZATION January 1-December 31		<input type="checkbox"/> \$20	<input type="checkbox"/> Other \$ _____
Name of INDIVIDUAL:			
Email address:			
Address:			
City/State/Zip			
Phone:	<input type="checkbox"/> home	<input type="checkbox"/> cell	<input type="checkbox"/> work
Name of ORGANIZATION:			
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City/State/Zip		Phone:	
Website:		Organization Email:	
President's Name:		President's Email"	
MGC Delegate:		Delegate's Email:	
<small>Contact president@massgencouncil.org for more information re: Organizations/Libraries</small>			
<input type="checkbox"/> LIBRARY - SUBSCRIPTION ONLY		Newsletter via online link or paper <input type="checkbox"/> \$20.00	
Library Name:		Email:	
Contact Person:			
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<input type="checkbox"/> INDIVIDUAL		<input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> ORGANIZATION		<input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> EVENT SPONSORS		• Individual or Organization •	
• monetary and/or in-kind gift supporting specific MGC event		• tangible benefits vary by category	
Gold \$500 and over	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____	Silver \$250 and over	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____
Bronze \$100 and over	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____		

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

Monitoring Legislation Education & Events Publicity Newsletter Fundraising

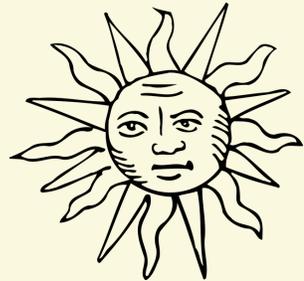
WHY DO WE HAVE A SUN SHINING ON DEED BOOKS AS OUR LOGO?

Several types of records genealogists use are open to us through Sunshine Laws. These include property records, probate records, tax records, poll records, military service records, public cemetery records, and town meeting records. Many a genealogist has broken a brick wall using these types of records.

Sunshine laws are laws that require government agencies and bodies to allow the public to attend their meetings and have access to their records. Sunshine laws are enacted at the state level and vary by state.^[1]

One type of record we use — the vital record — is not a public record. Vital records are among types of records prevented from disclosure by other laws which also vary from state to state. In most states, records not specifically deemed through law to be private are open records.

We not only watch for legislation that might change vital records access. We look for legislation or regulations that might impact genealogists in other ways, such as making records copies more expensive, or limiting the times during which research is permitted, or extending embargo periods.



[1] “Sunshine Laws and Legal Definition,” *USLegal.com* (<https://definitions.uslegal.com/s/sunshine-laws/> | viewed 12 June 2019).

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