



Massachusetts Genealogical Council Newsletter

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A Publication of the Massachusetts Genealogical Council Established in 1980

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT....

*~ President's Letter ~
Barbara J. Mathews, CG*



We are pleased to bring our members a national-caliber genealogy seminar this coming July 18th. The low cost to members, only \$55, includes both breakfast and lunch as well as a dynamic luncheon speaker, and access to a vendor hall with books and other items for sale. The features of a national conference but the commute of a local meeting. The best of the best.

The new legislative session brings with it new issues to confront. Budget shortfalls and the resulting restrictions of hours and access have us all on our toes. In addition, we still must fight the annual battle to keep records open. Many bills filed this year on Beacon Hill require our vigilance and attention.

We recently upgraded the MGC website www.massgencouncil.org. Check it out for information on the upcoming seminar and other important activities.

Finally, the officers of MGC were able to make a national impact on the national level. We wrote and presented a white paper to the boards of the National Genealogical Society, the Federation of Genealogical Societies, the Board for Certification of Genealogists, and the Association of Professional Genealogists. We feel that this white paper presented an open records viewpoint clearly. The President of NGS personally thanked Vice President Melinde Sanborn and me for the white paper and told us how much she learned from it. If you are interested, you can click on it on our webpage.

See you in Waltham in July! We're going to have some great presentations.

Yours, Barbara Mathews

Barbara J. Mathews

MGC Annual Seminar July 18, 2009 Bentley University, Waltham

Program Details

Sessions presented by the Massachusetts Genealogical Council (MGC)



Featured Speaker: Paula Stuart-Warren, CG

Paula is among the top national genealogical speakers. Of all of them, Paula is certainly the nicest and most approachable. Her foremost specialties are planning research and planning research trips. We're having Paula provide a speech on each of these topics.

Paula works full-time in genealogical and historical research, lecturing, consulting, and writing. A Course Coordinator for the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy, she has lectured at NGS and FGS conferences since 1993. She is an author, penning columns for several national and local genealogical publications and her own genealogy blog. Paula is co-author of *Your Guide to the Family History Library: How to Access the World's Largest Genealogy Source*.

What Next? Developing Step-by-Step Research Plans

What do you do next with those documents, letters, family stories, and other items you found or were sent by your aunt and second cousin Mary? Failure to make a research plan runs the risk of overlooking important clues in the records we already have and repeating the same research. This session includes "hands-on" exercises. A research plan is truly not a daunting task. Using the Resources of the Family History Library (FHL)

Even with all that is online we need to look at microfilmed church records, probate files, deeds, or other original sources to verify online data or fill in other ancestral family details. The (FHL) collection includes almost 2.5 million rolls of microfilmed records, more than 700,000 microfiche, 250,000 books, and a growing digitized collection. Learn how to access them in Salt Lake City and about the unique research experience at the FHL.



Luncheon Speaker: Vincent Cannuto, PhD

Vincent J. Cannuto is an associate professor of history at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. He was born in White Plains, New York, and raised in nearby Armonk, New York, receiving his PhD in History from Columbia University. At UMass-Boston he teaches courses that include immigrant and Twentieth Century history.

He is the author of the just-released book *American Passage: the History of Ellis Island*. This book has rave reviews from USA Today and other newspapers.

MGC Panel Sessions

Massachusetts Legislative Update, Melinde Lutz Sanborn, FASG, Barbara J. Mathews, CG, and Bernard Couming.

Panel Discussion: Native American Research, Paula Stuart-Warren, CG, R. Andrew Pierce, and Paul Bunnell.



Sessions Presented by the New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS)



Christopher C. Child is the Genealogist of the Newbury Street Press and the genetics column editor for New England Ancestors magazine.

Using DNA in Your Genealogy

A new field for genealogists, understanding and using DNA in your family history research means learning scientific terms and probabilities. Learn how DNA studies can unravel genealogical mysteries.

Getting the Most from NEHGS (online and offline)

NEHGS is not just a large library of printed family histories and local materials. Have you ever checked out the manuscript collection? Or delved into the myriad online databases updated weekly? Whether you are visiting the brick building on Newbury Street or clicking onto the website or attending a free lecture on Saturday, don't miss any of the ways in which NEHGS can help your family research.



D. Joshua Taylor "Josh" is a nationally known and recognized genealogical author, lecturer, and researcher. Josh has spoken for genealogical organizations throughout the United States including the Federation of Genealogical Societies [FGS] and the National Genealogical Society [NGS]. His articles have appeared in several publications including UGA Crossroads and New England Ancestors. Josh is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, where he has served on the Web Site Enhancement Committee. He is also a recipient of the Rubincam Youth Award from NGS. Josh serves on the Youth and Web Site committees for FGS, and was a member of the 2006 National Conference Committee for FGS 2006 in Boston, Massachusetts. Josh joined the staff of the New England Historic Genealogical Society in 2006 and is currently pursuing an MLS (Archival Management) and MA (History) at Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts.

Internet Websites for Family History Research

Get the most out of the Internet while researching your family history. Discover websites, online databases, university projects, online archives and other resources for researching your American ancestors online.

Sessions Presented by the New England Chapter of APG:

Beginner's Workshop, Lori Lyn Price

The basic research process will be presented, as well as basic record types that are the backbone of genealogical research, including vital records, the federal census and probate records. Local repositories and online resources will be examined. The lecture will conclude with tips on how to become a better genealogist.

Lori Lyn Price been interested in both colonial history and genealogy since she was a teen and has worked on her family genealogy for the past 10 years. She moved to Boston several years ago and loves living in an area that is rich in colonial history and the home of several of her colonial ancestors. She has volunteered at local family history centers and has taught beginning genealogy classes through the family history center. She specializes in colonial New England research.

Panel Discussion: Becoming a Professional Genealogist, R. Andrew Peirce, Barbara J. Mathews, CG, Polly Kimmitt, CG

Sessions Supported by The Irish Ancestral Research Association (TIARA)



Irish-American Catholic Genealogy, Michael Brophy

The lecture will start with the central event in the history of Irish genealogy, the destruction of the Public records Office in Dublin on June 30, 1922 near the end of the Irish Civil War. As a result unique challenges and realistic expectations for Irish ancestral research will be discussed. The lecture will cover existing vital records and census records, research materials available on-line and through film rental, and repositories including the holdings of the Catholic Archdiocese of Boston, New England Historic and Genealogical Society, and the National Archives.

Michael Brophy is a professional genealogical researcher, columnist and lecturer in the Boston area. He is currently Publicity Director of the Massachusetts Genealogical Council and past Treasurer of the New England Chapter of the Association of Professional Genealogists. He holds an MBA degree from Suffolk University (1996) and a BBA from the University of Massachusetts- Amherst (1987).

Rescuing the Relatives: TIARA's Foresters Project, Fraternal Life Insurance Records of the Massachusetts Catholic Order of Foresters, Susan Steele

Susan will discuss the genealogical goldmine discovered within the insurance policies of a Massachusetts benevolent society. Destined for the shredder, the records were saved by a group of TIARA volunteers. The work is still in progress as the volunteers continue to prepare the records for digitization.

Susan Steele, Director of TIARA's Foresters Project has given lectures in the Boston area and at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth.

First Generation Irish, Margaret Sullivan

Documenting our first generation ancestors can yield surprising details about their lives and their immigrant parent's story. With an emphasis on Massachusetts sources, we will consider the daily lives of Irish-American families through records of their employment, social and charitable organizations, education, military service, political activity, and death.

Margaret R. Sullivan is Records Manager and Archivist for the Boston Police Department. She is Publicity Chair for TIARA and a member of the TIARA Board of Directors.



Under the Golden Dome, Genealogical Resources in the State Library of Massachusetts, Eva Murphy

Eva will examine the various resources available to family researchers at the State Library of Massachusetts.

Eva Murphy is Reference Librarian at the State Library of Massachusetts. She is the Volunteer Coordinator for TIARA and serves on the TIARA Board of Directors.

Schedule of Events

Special Workshop: 9:15 am--11:15 am **Beginning Genealogy Workshop**, *presented by Lori Lyn Price, sponsored by NEAPG*

9:15am - 9:45am	Opening Session, Annual Meeting, and Other Business			
10:00am - 11:00am	Session 1	Using the Resources of the Family History Library <i>Paula Stuart-Warren, CG</i>	Getting the Most from NEHGS (online and offline) <i>Christopher C. Child</i>	Irish-American Catholic Genealogy <i>Michael Brophy</i>
11:15am - 12:15pm	Session 2	Panel Discussion: Becoming a Professional Genealogist <i>Paula Stuart-Warren, CG, sponsored by NEAPG</i>	Internet Websites for Family History <i>D. Joshua Taylor</i>	Rescuing the Relatives: TIARA's Foresters Project Fraternal Life Insurance Records of the Massachusetts Catholic Order of Foresters <i>Susan Steele</i>
12:30pm - 1:45pm	Lunch	American Passage - The History of Ellis Island <i>Vincent J. Cannato, Ph.D., (author of American Passage)</i>		
2:00pm - 3:00pm	Session 3	Using DNA in Your Genealogy <i>Christopher C. Child</i>	Panel Discussion: Native American Research <i>Paula Stuart-Warren, CG, R. Andrew Pierce, and Paul Bunnell</i>	First Generation Irish <i>Margaret Sullivan</i>
3:15pm-4:15pm	Session 4	What Next? Developing Step-by-Step Research Plans <i>Paula Stuart-Warren, CG</i>	Massachusetts Legislative Update <i>Melinde Sanborn, FASG, Barbara J. Mathews, CG, and Bernard Couming</i>	Under the Golden Dome, Genealogical Resources in the State Library of Massachusetts <i>Eva Murphy</i>



CIVIL RECORDS REPORT TO THE MGC BOARD OF DIRECTORS JUNE 20, 2009

Our MGC bill is S-822, lead sponsor being Senator Thomas P. Kennedy, and as placed into the legislative database, co-sponsored only by Rep. Michael Brady of 9th Plymouth. Inasmuch as the identification of co-sponsorship is managed totally by the Senate or the House Clerk's database of legislation, correction of the error that omitted Rep. Koutoujuian from co-sponsorship is unlikely.

To further bring the current status up to date, as of today, June 19, 2009, S-822, and several other Vital Record bills will be the subject of a Public Hearing, under the Joint Committee on Public Health, currently scheduled for Tuesday, October 27, 2009. Stay tuned for any timetable revision.

All bills are available on the legislature's website, <http://mass.gov/legisl/> where you can "click on" TEXT OF SENATE BILLS or HOUSE BILLS.

To go directly to our bill, go to <http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/senate/186/st00/st00822.htm>.

Other "groups" of proposed bills of some interest to genealogy include 46 bills that affect "medical record retention schedules", limiting the publication of "the annual street lists", processing death certificates and other funeral director regulations, regulating birth certificates of adoptees, Native Americans, free name change certificates, the "crisis" of Identity Fraud, compelled disclosure, electronic health records, various bills to affect the "Public Records Law", electronic recording of real property, municipal records. Should any member of the MGC be willing to review the proposals in one or more of these "groups", I'd be happy to coordinate and provide the bill numbers.

Other bills directly treating Vital Records include the following :

BillNO.	Primary Sponsor	Relavent Name	MGCchoice
S-820	Sen. Patricia Jehlen	"Restrict Access"	Opposed
H-2064	Rep. Lida Harkins	"Verify I.D.& Secure VR's"	Opposed
H-2124	Rep. James Murphy	"Proper I.D.to Request VR copies"	Opposed
H-2133	Rep. Elizabeth Poirier	"certain Birth Records"	Opposed
H-2134	Rep. Elizabeth Poirior	"preserves Dates of Birth from Town Records"	Opposed

Comments and questions are invited.

Bernard Couming

Director of Civil Records

Ben Franklin Needed a Better Lawyer

We have all heard stories of messy and often ugly family feuds involving money from ill conceived wills and trusts. Recently however, when I heard that one of our founding fathers descendants were involved in a similar mess, I had to investigate.

When Old Ben died in 1790 he was very generous to the two cities that shaped him the most. You may recall that he was born in Boston, Milk Street to be exact, but is mostly associated with the city of Philadelphia. In an unusual codicil in his will he left 5000\$ to the City of Philadelphia and 5000\$ to “the town of Boston.” He goes on to say that “I was born in Boston, New England, and owe my first instructions in literature to the free grammar schools established there.” The gifts were to be held in trust by the cities for the first hundred years, with interest used to make loans to young married artisans getting started in their trades. After the first hundred years, Franklin specified, the proceeds would be used to build waterworks in Philadelphia and any public works project in Boston that the city may deem necessary.

Ah, but here is the rub. Franklin’s descendants, both wealthy and poor, say the money was not used according to the terms of the will and went to court seeking the money. By 1902 the Philadelphia fund had grown to \$90,000 and the Boston fund \$380,000. In 1890 the wealthy E.D. Gillespie filed a bill in equity against the City of Philadelphia with the best legal talent available and lost in court. It appears that Franklin did not know that the gifts that he made in his will were illegal under Pennsylvania law. Under the rule of perpetuities under common law, which prevents a testator from controlling a gift for remote descendants, the gifts were maintained by the City of Philadelphia. No action was ever brought against Boston. In the Philadelphia case, Judge Penrose wrote:



Had Dr. Franklin been a lawyer, and not merely a great statesman and profound philosopher, it is probable that, instead of arbitrarily specifying 100 years as the period for which the money given to the City of Philadelphia should be accumulated, he would have measured the term by the duration of a number of well-selected lives with twenty-one years &c, superadded after their expiration, and thus have accomplished the same thing without the possibility of a controversy.

As a layman, however, he was unaware of the rule against perpetuities that the validity of future limitations is determined by possibilities, and not be actual results;

The judge assumes that Franklin wrote the will himself or received poor or absent advice from his advisors. Three men witnessed the signing of the document. Francis Bailey, a Revolutionary War soldier, printer of the Declaration of Independence and old friend of Franklin’s from the printing business. Thomas Lang was an old friend from the printing business. Abraham Shoemaker was a “scrivener” or the equivalent of a clerk or notary today. A scrivener could have done some professional writing and drawn up the document for filing in court. Legal advice to clients, however, was not a function of the position.

Did Franklin’s ego get in the way of good judgment when drawing up his wishes his estate? After all, this is the man who helped draft the Declaration of Independence with Jefferson; surely he could handle his own will! Can we blame the lawyers again for this one? As we genealogists say all too often: More research is needed.

As an epilogue, the Boston fund help create the Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology, a technical college on Berkeley St in Boston. The Philadelphia fund provides scholarships to students seeking post secondary education in the trades, crafts, or applied sciences.

By: Michael Brophy

