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New England Historic Genealogical
Society

Plymouth County Genealogists

The Waltham Historical Society

FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S DESK

By Daphnah Sage, MGC Vice-President

As we remind you with each issue of our excellent newsletter, the Massachusetts Genealogical Council (MGC) is an umbrella organization for Massachusetts genealogical (and some historical) societies. Our aim is to be vigilant on your behalf regarding access to public records, as well as to keep you informed on strategies for genealogical research. Check out our website at www.massgencouncil.org to keep up to date.

In this issue, you will find an important article by Alan Cote, Supervisor of Public Records, in which he explains the difficulties posed by the current public access legislation being considered by the legislature. Read it thoroughly if you wish to understand just what is at stake.

Every year, at the beginning of spring, the MGC holds its annual meeting in conjunction with a day-long seminar. This year, on March 27, Helen Leary, a genealogical expert of national stature, will instruct us in the methodology of genealogical research. Look inside for details of the program. You may come for the day, or take advantage of the special hotel rates by arriving the day before or staying into Sunday for research in the Boston area. Do sign up for this extra special seminar!

IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP CURRENT?

There is a date on your mailing label. If it reads "2003", your membership has expired. You are important to us. Our ability to serve as an advocate for genealogists in Massachusetts is based on the strength and size of our membership. MGC annual dues are only \$7.50. Please renew your membership today by sending your check to: MGC, P.O. Box 5393, Cochituate, MA 01778-5393. Thank you.

MGC BOARD 2003-2004

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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 that 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 Massachusetts Genealogical Council (MGC) is composed of both Individual and Organization Members. Individual members receive the newsletter, participate in activities organized by the MGC, and may attend the Annual Meeting and Seminar at a discounted member-only rate. All Organization Members receive the newsletter. Organization Members of groups based in Massachusetts are encouraged to send a delegate to the quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors. Delegates are voting members of the Board.

Membership in the Council is open to any person or organization interested in its activities upon payment of dues. The membership year runs from 1 January through 31 December. Dues are: Individual \$7.50, Organization \$10.00, Sponsor \$15.00. Note: Dues are NOT tax-deductible.

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 March 6, 2004, and May 1, 2004, at the National Archives in Waltham, from 1 to 4 pm.

THE END OF MICROFILM

By Richard W. Eastman

The following article is from Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter [dated November 24, 2003] 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.eogn.com>.

As a part of my trip this week, I had a chance to learn about the LDS Church's plans for future images of genealogy-related records. I found the plans to be exciting and very important to future genealogists.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons) has teams of members who travel the

globe to take microfilm images of records that have genealogy interest. Such teams have been making microfilm copies since the late 1930s. The Family History Library in Salt Lake City now has millions of microfilm reels in stock for use by anyone who wishes to visit the Library. These microfilms can also be rented for a modest fee through an extensive

(cont'd on pages 3 and 4)

network of Family History Centers throughout the world. You probably have a local Center near you. If so, you can rent these microfilms and view them without trekking to Salt Lake City. With this huge investment already made in microfilm, you might expect the LDS Church to continue its use forever. That's not true, according to Wayne Metcalf, the Director of Acquisitions for the church. Wayne is the person in charge of those traveling microfilm teams, as well as the lead person for planning future data acquisition efforts. I had a chance to meet with Wayne this week.

In fact, the LDS church is moving to digital imaging. The focus now is shifting from microfilm to making digital images onsite – in the original repositories – with no microfilm involved. The teams will use a laptop PC and a scanner in much the same manner as you and I do at home, although the scanner is more sophisticated than the typical unit sold to consumers. One pilot project in Texas has already been completed, and another one overseas is about to begin. If successful, these pilot projects should lead to an all-digital data acquisition process for all future efforts.

The reasons for this change are both technological and economic. Acquisition by microfilm is becoming more and more impractical every year.

First, microfilms have not had the longevity that many expected. The original microfilms used in the late 1930s, and for a decade or two after, were found to emit a flammable gas as they aged. Spontaneous combustion was a real possibility. You can imagine the result if that happened in a storage facility containing millions of microfilm reels.

Consequently, the LDS church switched to acetate-based microfilm materials as soon as they became available. Acetate does not create dangerous gases. For safety reasons, the older microfilms were copied to the newer technology films. The copy process induced some degradation in image quality, but that's better than a fire.

Acetate microfilms were expected to last 100 years or so. However, experience has shown that the films become brittle within a decade or two. Scratches appear quickly when these brittle acetate-

based microfilms are cranked through the typical microfilm viewer. Even making copies from acetate originals can damage the originals.

In recent years the LDS church switched to acetone-based microfilms as that technology became available. These should last much longer than the earlier microfilms. However, unexpected surprises have occurred before, so church officials keep testing these films to make sure they are not deteriorating.

Another reason for the plan to digitize is the rapidly increasing expense of microfilm cameras. The LDS church already owns a number of expensive microfilm cameras. However, these are aging devices. As technology has moved from microfilm to digital images, the companies that manufactured the cameras found their sales dropping to near zero. As a result, they stopped manufacturing the cameras for this obsolete technology. While the LDS church has sufficient units in stock today, replacements are no longer manufactured.

These cameras already owned by the church have a lot of moving parts and require some maintenance as well as occasional replacement parts. With parts no longer available from the manufacturers, the LDS Church has had to manufacture many of the parts, a rather expensive proposition.

Finally, moving these cameras around the world and making microfilms is expensive. The cameras are bulky. As a result, a lot of money and effort is required to ship these units to the far corners of the world. Carrying unexposed film is also chancy, especially in some climates. Adding to the difficulty is the entire process of shipping exposed films back to Salt Lake City, developing the films, cataloging them, and placing them into inventory. All of this adds to the time and expenses required. In fact, Metcalf reported that films typically do not become available to genealogists until a year or more after they are first created. The church also always presents a copy to the owners of the archive that was filmed. These archivists often have to wait a year for their copy.

Contrast this with digital imaging. All that is needed is a digital scanner and a laptop PC. The

scanner is a bit bulky but still much smaller than a microfilm camera. The digital scanner also has fewer moving parts and a much lower purchase price. Simple repairs can be made with readily-available parts. If extensive repairs are required, scrapping the entire scanner and purchasing a new one is cheaper than the typical repair cost of a microfilm camera.

A "film" crew can create images for a week and then "burn" a half-ounce DVD disk with the image files. They send the disk by airmail to Salt Lake City or possibly transfer the files across the Internet if a high-speed connection is available. At the same time as the files are making their way to Salt Lake City, a duplicate copy is immediately given to the owner of the archive records being imaged.

Another benefit is that the on-site filming crew can handle the cataloging, instead of tasking a cataloging group in Salt Lake City. The filming crews typically can speak, read, and write the local language, so, they can more easily create catalog records as the images are being recorded. Here again, more time is saved. Once the LDS church converts entirely to digital images, you can expect new records to become available within days or a few weeks of being imaged, instead of today's typical delay of a year or more.

Once the images are available in a digital format, all sorts of possibilities become available. Images can be stored on CD-ROM or DVD disks, or placed online for viewing over the Internet. The LDS church is watching this technology closely and is testing several possibilities. Apparently no final decisions about distribution have been made yet. However, it seems clear that such images will be available in the Family History Library in Salt Lake City as well as in Family History Centers around the world. Decisions have yet to be made about wider distribution.

The best part of the plan is in the ease of replication. Making a copy of a microfilm introduces fuzziness, or "visual noise." Then, making a copy of that copy introduces further loss of image; copying that copy adds still more, and so on and so forth. However, a copy of a digital image is identical to the original. You can make copies of copies of copies; each new

image is identical to the original with no signal loss. In short, digital imaging ensures that future generations can have the same access that you and I enjoy.

So what about the ten million-plus microfilms already in stock? The easy answer is to "convert them to digital images." Indeed, the LDS church plans to do this whenever possible. However, studies have shown that about one-third of today's microfilms are not suitable for digital conversion. The original microfilms in question sometimes do not contain sharp images. The present films may be dark or over exposed, or the original document may be difficult to read. Converting from analog microfilm to digital images will introduce even more losses in image quality. In such cases, the only recourse is to go back to the original location and re-image the documents in digital media.

In fact, the LDS church does hope to revisit many archives and make new images, using digital scanners. However, this expensive process will require many years to complete. Decisions also need to be made on a case-by-case basis: do they send a crew to make digital images of something already available on microfilm, or do they send the crews to a new site to make images of records that are still unavailable on microfilm? Resources are not infinite; the expenditures must be made where they will do the most good.

As a result of all the above considerations, you can expect that genealogists will still be cranking microfilm readers for many years to come. (Of course, I should point out that microfilm readers are also becoming rare.) We can expect to see a "blended solution" for many years: some records will be available only on microfilm while others will be in digital format only. A few records may be available in both formats.

Yes, we will have an all-digital solution some day. The LDS church officials are not making any timeframe predictions, but I am guessing that microfilm will still be here for another decade, possibly two decades, with digital images slowly becoming more and more common during that time.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

National Archives in Waltham Offers Genealogical Workshops

The workshops will be offered at the Regional Archives building, located at 380 Trapelo Road in Waltham, MA according to the following schedule. Participants will learn what they need to know in order to locate records as well as what one might expect to find in the records. Additionally, behind the scenes tours of the archives will be given at 1:30 before workshops marked with an asterisk (*). A new format for 3 workshops will be included this season. "Genealogical Roundtable: Open Forum for Genealogical Quandaries" will allow attendees to address their particularly difficult genealogical questions to a panel of National Archives staff.

January 6, 1:30 pm	Census, Naturalization, & Passenger Lists*
January 15, 6:30 pm	Passenger Lists and Canadian Border Crossings
January 21, 2:00 pm	Genealogical Roundtable: Open Forum for Genealogical Quandaries
February 3, 1:30 pm	Beyond the Census: Local History in Federal Records*
February 12, 6:30 pm	Records Relating to African-American Research
February 18, 2:00 pm	Genealogical Roundtable: Open Forum for Genealogical Quandaries
March 2, 1:30 pm	Census, Naturalization, & Passenger Lists*
March 11, 6:30 pm	Documenting Our Mothers
March 17, 2:00 pm	Genealogical Roundtable: Open Forum for Genealogical Quandaries

Workshop and tour space is limited to 20 participants. Call (866) 406-2379 to register and for more details. There is no fee. Light refreshments or coffee will be served.

The National Archives Northeast Region (Boston) has more than 25,000 cubic feet of archival material dating from 1789 to the 1970s, including primarily textual documents but also some photographs, maps, and architectural drawings. These records were created or received by the Federal courts and over 80 Federal agencies in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Hours of operation are Monday, Tuesday, and Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m., and the first and third Saturday of each month 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., excluding all Federal holidays.

GENTECH 2004: Where Genealogy Meets Technology

GENTECH, the premier "technology in genealogy" event in the world, was last held in 2002 in Boston. It was a wonderful conference, as many of you know. The 2004 conference will be held in St. Louis, Missouri.

Dates: January 22 to 24, 2004

Place: Millennium Hotel

Registration: \$190 for 3-day registration or \$100 for a 1-day registration

Website: http://www.eshow2000.com/ngsgentech/conf_program.cfm

serving genealogists. New for this conference will be several two-hour, hands-on tutorial sessions on Thursday afternoon. The main GENTECH program will take place on Friday and Saturday, January 23 and 24. We will explore a variety of topics focused on teaching us all how to use various technologies in our family history research, as well as the future of genealogy and technology. Speakers include: Cyndi Howells, Curt Witcher, Sandra MacLean Clunies, Dick Eastman, Elizabeth Shown Mills, Robert Charles Anderson, and many others.

The conference begins on Thursday, January 22, with a program focused on librarians

THOUGHTS ON HB2233

*By Alan Cote, Supervisor of Public Records,
Office of the Secretary of State, Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

[Editor's Note: This article first appeared in the "Public Recorder", the newsletter of the Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association. I have emailed Mr. Cote twice requesting permission to reprint this article since the information is so important to our readership, but I have not yet received a response. The article is reprinted here exactly as it appeared in the "Public Recorder"; no editing changes have been made. HB2233 is the House Bill that MGC is concerned would result in the closure of many of the vital records currently available to us.]

As Supervisor of Records for the Commonwealth, I am statutorily mandated to take all necessary measures to put the records of the commonwealth, counties, cities or towns in the custody and condition required by law and to secure their preservation. This statutory mandate will be nearly impossible to carry out if HB2233 is enacted. If HB2233 passes, it will be in direct conflict with six (6) current statutes. The new law or these six others would then need to be extensively amended or repealed.

Presently, there is no current mandate by the federal government to develop an electronic vital records system. The collection and reporting of vital statistics is purely a State function. Massachusetts is not alone in dealing with Vital Records matters. Barely a handful of States have any working electronic system or have completed the re-engineering project currently being coordinated by the National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems (NAPHSIS). In fact, NAPHSIS itself estimates that they are still 9 to 18 months away from finalizing their recommendation for the BASICS of the "MOVER" system (Model Vital Electronic Registry).

The Secretary recognizes that the "Evitals" initiative is extremely important. We applaud the proactive approach that DPH has taken towards developing such a system. We applaud Dr. Nyberg's efforts as a member of NAPHSIS and the work he is achieving as a member of the IT Committee of the re-engineering project, but this bill is not needed to accomplish the goals of this initiative.

The re-engineering project is happening throughout the United States and was necessitated because the first attempts at creating an electronic system failed miserably. The creation of a fully integrated, networked and electronic database and reporting/collection system is extremely complex and could potentially cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to create and maintain. Any new system must be engineered to be verifiable, modifiable, understandable, correct and complete. It must be open-ended to accommodate changes in technology and government. This bill is silent on every single aspect of this system. It is silent on when and how the system is to be created. It is silent of the cost of this system and it is silent on the funding mechanism by which the initiative is to be maintained.

This initiative is far too important to be given this type of treatment. It is an incredibly complex project which must be completely examined and understood. It deserves to be introduced on its own merits as a separate bill and initiative. It deserves to be debated openly.

Transfer of records

This bill is not needed to bring about a transfer of records from DPH to the Archives. A very efficient method is already clearly established through a statutory framework involving the Records Conservation Board. DPH only needs to submit a single piece of paper for consideration at the next RCB meeting and the records will be transferred.

Identity fraud and security

Everyone understands and appreciates the seriousness of identity fraud in America today. Privacy concerns are certainly running high in the post 9-11 world; however, this bill does nothing to effectively reduce identity fraud and birth certificate abuse. Presently, DPH may freely promulgate Regulations

concerning the issuance of Certified Copies. They are free to enact policies to further secure the issuance of official documents and they may, without asking any permission, establish security features into their certified record copy program similar to those incorporated into our currency system, at any time. The security of our vital records system is not dependant upon the passage of this bill.

Open State

Massachusetts is one of approximately 13 “open record states.” This means that anyone may obtain a copy (not a certified copy. DPH controls certified copies) of anyone else’s birth certificate upon request. The sunshine laws of this Commonwealth have been carefully crafted and they rely upon a sophisticated system of legislative exemptions. In Massachusetts, the term “Public records” means all books, papers, maps, photographs, recorded tapes, financial statements, statistical tabulations, or other documentary materials or data, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by any officer or employee of any agency, executive office (INCLUDING DPH), department, board, commission, bureau, division or authority of the commonwealth. VITAL RECORDS ARE PUBLIC RECORDS.

Pursuant to G.L. 66, 10, “...Upon the determination by the supervisor of records that the record is public, he shall order the custodian of the public record to comply with the person’s request.” Some vital records are restricted by statute and this office is empowered with determining which records are restricted and which records are not. If the intent of this bill is to close certain records and to restrict access to others, this bill is the wrong mechanism to employ.

Open government is a topic of great concern to many people in this State. The proponents of closing records and restricting access thereto should stand before the people and make their proposals in the light of day. Encouraging and stimulating discussion on the merits of an idea is the American way; burying the restrictive language among the verbiage of a ten-year-old bill is not.

Improving access

Similarly, this bill is not needed to open records or allow greater access to records. Many of the records DPH claims will now be “open or “unrestricted” are already open and unrestricted as mandated by the G.L. ch. 4, 7(26) and G. L. ch. 66. A history of non-compliance with these statutes by DPH should not be a basis for promoting this bill. If the goal of this bill is to grant greater access to currently restricted records, it again is the wrong mechanism to employ. An amendment or repeal of the statute that restricts a particular record is the proper means for removing the restriction and opening the record, not some ambiguous language in the bowels of a poorly written and overly broad bill with an identity crisis.

Conclusion

The Secretary and I support the eVitals initiative and respectfully requests that DPH and all other proponents join with him in creating legislation that properly launches the eVitals project.

The Secretary and I support tightening security of Certified Copies of Vital Records to reduce identity theft and birth certificate fraud and invite DPH, law enforcement, Homeland Security and public safety personnel to promulgate regulations to ensure the integrity of the vital records system.

The Secretary and I support DPH in their endeavor to enact legislation which will provide them with much needed ministerial and administrative power in order to effectively and efficiently carry forth the responsibilities of the Department of Public Health.

The Secretary and I support open and active discussions regarding the “openness” of records in the Commonwealth and we encourage all persons to be involved in the dialogue concerning the balancing of personal privacy and open government.

The Secretary and I DO NOT SUPPORT H2233 in any form for all of the reasons stated herein and we respectfully request that you withhold your support as well.

A VISIT TO THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

By Georgie Hallock, Assistant Newsletter Editor

The Library of Congress is a beautiful building. Inspired by an ornate Italian Palace, it has colored marble halls, gold decorations, ornamental statuary, inlaid tiles, mosaics, and portraits. It is designed to impress the eye, and it certainly does that. Taking a full tour was a delight to a book lover like me. One of the displays shows a Gutenberg Bible. There are exhibits about the Louis and Clark Expedition, letters from Timbuktoo, and a George Gershwin room. The main reading room is a great circle with galleries and niches filled with exotic books. Deep in the bowels of the earth under the library there are over 500 miles of stacks with books on the shelves. Copyrights are issued by the Library of Congress, and they keep two of each book that is copyrighted. Some of the books are sent to the shelves, and some are shared with other libraries.

In August I became a card-carrying Reader at the Library of Congress. Everything is free, even the rest rooms. The process was easy: an ID photo, answer a few questions, and then I was allowed in. The Library has interesting security: you are checked in and checked out. If you bring something, keep it simple. The genealogy area permits you to bring in your own paper and pencils, and you can keep your purse with you. Other sections require you to check all of your bags. When you leave the library, they look through all of your materials to make sure you have not taken any of their treasures. A host of their materials are on sale at their shop, but since you have already been through security, there is no problem.

The Genealogy and Family History section is very well used. A large room down one hallway and across from another, it is easy to miss the spot. There are several tables with seats numbered for identification purposes. There are a few open stacks with general reference books on them. There is a large section with a card catalog from which you can order older books. They have a bank of computers with every possible genealogical reference site available for free. The internal research capacity is awesome. One can put a phrase on the screen and receive millions of responses almost instantly. The staff is very helpful. I did not find an actual list of the Kentucky legislators for 1860, but I did find out where the information is stored.

If you need something, just ask, and they will give you all the time and effort that you need. The staff excels at gently reminding errant researchers that they must fill out all of the information on the call slip.

Sitting at the computer table, I was sure my skills were going to be tested, but the staff kindly showed me the way to begin looking for information. By using one of the websites, I was able to find that my GG Grandfather entered this country in 1848 through New York. I have been looking for that information for fifteen years. The addenda to the Passenger Immigration lists may have had the information, but I was not in the right place at the right time to be able to review all of the information until I hit the Library of Congress.

If you wish an actual book, you fill out a request form. They will take up to ten requests an hour from the readers. The request is filled out in duplicate, time stamped, and a copy is returned to you. When your book is located they put it at your chair or hold it on the shelf for you. Every request is filled, even if the text is not on the shelf, that information is so noted. Material is kept out for researchers until closing time unless a time extension or later delivery date is requested.

If you have a chance, do go to look at the Library, and take the time to stay and check up on some of those missing roots.

INTERESTING WEBSITES

British Wills from 1384 to 1858 Now Available Online

<http://www.documentsonline.pro.gov.uk/default.asp>

All Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) wills spanning the period 1384-1858 are now available online at DocumentsOnline (formerly PRO-Online)

Documents Online allows you online access to the Public Record Office's [now the National Archives] collection of digitised public records, including both academic and genealogical sources. Searching the index is free, and it costs £3 to download a digital image of a document. The first phase of enhancements is complete and they will continue to improve the website over the next few months.

The PCC Wills held by the Public Record Office cover the period up to 1858. Until that date, all wills had to be proved (formally approved) by church and other courts. The Prerogative Court of Canterbury, the most important of these courts, dealt with the relatively wealthy individuals living mainly in the south of England and most of Wales (what was originally the ecclesiastical province of Canterbury).

You can now access the entire collection of PCC wills on DocumentsOnline, comprising more than 1 million wills covering the period 1384 to 1858. You can search the wills by first and last names, place, occupation and date. Wills are on average a page long, although they can range from a mere five lines to more than twenty pages.

Your will might not be at the start of the image you ordered - the PCC clerk did not usually begin a new will on a new page, but began copying it immediately after the preceding will. You could also find the beginning of another will immediately after the will you ordered.

In some instances a will may consist of a codicil (an addition to a will) only. An earlier will may not necessarily exist.

A will beginning with the word 'memoranda' means that the will was spoken and may well have been given on a person's deathbed.

Prior to 1804, sentences as well as wills appear in this series of records. In this context a sentence is a judgement about a disputed will given at the conclusion of litigation. A sentence does not necessarily contain the same details as a will so we have differentiated between the two. Therefore, when you search, your search results will be described as either a will or a sentence.

Dates have been converted to the modern reckoning for wills prior to 1752.

For more background information on wills and testaments throughout the UK, see the FamilyRecords.gov.uk website.

[Your Editor tested the search engine for this service and it is fabulous! It is a wonderful toy for genealogists. You can just print in "Massachusetts" under place name and you will see a list of people from Massachusetts whose wills were probated in the PCC. I doubt if the residence of legatees is indexed, but it certainly is a wonderful start.]

The Massachusetts Genealogical Council is proud to present a full day seminar by renowned genealogist and noted educator

HELEN LEARY

*Certified Genealogist, Fellow of the American Society of Genealogists,
Fellow of the National Genealogical Society*

Saturday, March 27, 2004
Best Western Hotel, Waltham, MA

PROGRAM

8:00am-10:00am: Registration in the Grand Ballroom, Vendors Open, Refreshments

8:45am-9:30am: Massachusetts Genealogical Council Annual Meeting

9:45am-10:45am: **Is This the Same Man, or a Different One With the Same Name:** Proving that our ancestors are who we say they are is essential to proving that they are related to who we claim are their kinfolk. But sometimes everybody in the county has the same name (or at least it seems so to us). How do we separate them from each other, especially when there do not appear to be enough records to do it reliably?

11:00am-12:00pm: **Time-Lines and Real Lives — Using Ancestor's Life Patterns to Find Their Parents:** Each event in an ancestor's life occurred at a specific place on the time line between his or her birth and death. Those occurrences form a pattern. Mrs. Leary describes how to chart the time-line, identify the patterns, and use them to find the ancestor's parents.

12:00am-2:30pm: **Hot Buffet Lunch in the Terrace Dining Room** (included in the Registration Fee): Caesar Salad, meatballs, vegetable lasagna, pasta with chicken and broccoli, grilled vegetables, garlic bread, coffee or tea, dessert. [Please advise us of any special dietary requirements.] Members of the **Association of Professional Genealogists** will be hosting the tables in the dining room. Bring your questions and be ready for a discussion with other interested genealogists. Possible topics include LDS records, Irish, Colonial New England, Jewish, Italian, etc. We welcome your suggestions; make a note on the registration form. Since it is a buffet, you can table-hop!

2:00pm-3:00pm: **Our Ancestors' Voices — Getting the Records To Tell Us *Everything* They Know:** Seemingly minor details in a record can be of major importance in solving an otherwise insoluble genealogical problem. Mrs. Leary will discuss (and illustrate) techniques for getting more information from records than seems to be there.

3:15pm-4:15 pm: **The Hemings-Jefferson Connection: A Genealogical Evaluation of the Evidence:** Sally Hemings, slave of Thomas Jefferson, is known to have had at least six children. Was their father Thomas Jefferson, another Jefferson, or a collection of unidentified Virginians? Impartial evaluation of **all** the evidence, including that derived from DNA comparisons among Hemings and Jefferson descendants (real and imagined), points inexorably to a single conclusion.

IMPORTANT: Room Set-up

The front of the Grand Ballroom will be set-up “classroom style” with long tables and chairs. The rear of the room will have only chairs. **The “classroom” rows will be reserved for the first 100 registrants.**

HOTEL: The Seminar will be held at the Best Western Hotel, 477 Totten Pond Rd., Waltham, (http://www.bestwestern.com/prop_22009). Rooms are available at \$79 (\$86.61 including tax and continental breakfast) per night from Thursday through Sunday. Rooms can sleep up to 4 people. The heated indoor pool is open until 10:00pm. Call 781-890-7800 or 1-877-852-4683 (toll free).

The hotel is located at exit 27A on Interstate 95 (aka Route 128), easily accessible from all directions. It is a 5-minute drive from the National Archives. Note that the New England Historic Genealogical Society library in Boston is now open on Sunday. If you would like more detailed directions, or information on the local area, please email seminar@massgencouncil.org or send a letter to the Local Arrangements Chair, Massachusetts Genealogical Council, P.O. Box 5393, Cochituate, MA 01778-5393.

VENDORS: We are working hard to make sure that there will be a good selection of vendors at the Seminar. See our website for details.

FRIDAY EVENING: An informal dinner will be held in the hotel restaurant. Talking with your fellow genealogists is one of the primary benefits of a conference. Your friends and relatives may not care how you found great-aunt Gertrude’s death record, but **we** do!! Make a note on your registration form, and we will contact you with details. Registration materials will be available on Friday evening for guests staying at the hotel. ***See you there!***

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Name: _____
Street: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____

Individual Members of the Massachusetts Genealogical Council (paid for 2004) are entitled to register for the Seminar at a special rate. Annual dues are \$7.50, and you may join now. Please circle the correct option.

Membership

I am a fully paid member for 2004: yes/no
I would like to join/renew MGC: \$7.50

Seminar Registration

Registrations must be received by 3/24/04.

Early Registration (must be received by 2/29/04)

Member: \$40
Non-Member: \$50

Registration (received 3/1 through 3/24/04)

Member: \$50
Non-Member: \$60

TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

Make check payable to:

Massachusetts Genealogical Council

Mail to: Massachusetts Genealogical Council,
P.O. Box 5393, Cochituate, MA 01778-5393.

Cancellation Policy: The Registration fee may be refunded up to 30 days before the event minus a \$5.00 administration fee. There will be **no** refund within 30 days of the event.

Comments: _____

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

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 editor@massgencouncil.org.

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MGC 2004 MEETING & EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 2004

The MGC By-Laws require us to hold, at the minimum, an Annual Meeting of the Members and to conduct an Educational Seminar. For 2004, the Officers and Directors decided to make a very special speaker available to our members and guests:

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

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. Both NGS and FGS (national conferences) will be held in the West in 2004. For most of us, this will be our primary opportunity to hear a lecturer of Mrs. Leary's caliber in 2004. Don't miss it.

We are holding the seminar in a hotel in order to give our members the option of staying overnight, rather than driving early in the morning. The Best Western has been recently renovated. The rooms are comfortable and attractive (and very reasonably priced). We have already begun to talk to vendors. You will be pleased with the research materials that will be available for purchase. Genealogy conferences aren't just about the lectures; they are about the value of talking to your colleagues. Take advantage of this opportunity to make new contacts with other researchers; to share problems and find solutions; and to make friends in an informal setting. **Please join us.**