



MASSACHUSETTS
GENEALOGICAL
COUNCIL

The NEWSLETTER

www.massgencouncil.org

MASSACHUSETTS GENEALOGICAL COUNCIL

WINTER 2011

President's Report *Barbara J. Mathews, CG* Winter Issue 2011

MGC AT NERGC

IN THIS *Issue*

- 1 President's Column** MGC at NERGC, MGC annual meeting & seminar, new Mass legislative session, MGC nominations sought, NARA-Pittsfield closing, new Civil Records Director & secretaries
- 2 Bios of Seminar Speakers** Part I
- 3 Civil Records Report** New Director Mary Ellen Grogan on vital records access bills
- 4 Program Report** MGC Annual Seminar in July at LaCava Conference Center
- 6 Spotlight** The Genealogical Roundtable
- 7 Brophy's Corner** Featuring Brophy, himself....

Massachusetts Genealogical Council
PO Box 5393
Cochituate, Massachusetts 01778-5393
www.massgencouncil.org
newsletter@massgencouncil.org

ISSN 1041-2409

JOIN US FOR MGC'S PANEL
DISCUSSION AT NERGC:
4:45 PM, FRIDAY, 8 APRIL 2011,
IN SPRINGFIELD

We have three distinguished panelists for NERGC 2011. Our discussion will be on the battle to maintain records access for genealogists. Our panelists will be:

- **Richard McCoy**, the registrar of vital records for the state of Vermont, who is a member of NAPHSIS, the National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems.
- **Melinde Lutz Sanborn, CG, FASG**, who serves both as MGC vice president and as President of the American Society of Genealogists.
- **Sharon Sergeant**, the "hoax buster," who specializes in investigative genealogy, longitudinal studies, and wide-ranged research planning; and who prepared the techniques and technology module for the Boston University genealogy program.

Assaults on open records have intensified in recent years and over half of the open records states had closure



bills pass last year. Come to learn about the issues we face in safeguarding our current rights.

OUR ANNUAL MEETING AND SEMINAR IS ON 23 JULY 2011

Our program committee has put together an exciting multi-track program with something for everyone, from a beginner's workshop to lectures on records, repositories, and technology in genealogy. We will have a dynamic luncheon speaker, too, and an exhibit hall with vendors. Once again, MGC members will receive a \$10 discount.

President's Column continued on p. 2

NEWSLETTER

President's Column continued

A continental breakfast and lunch are included. Parking is free. Please see the full Program report in this issue.

THE 187TH GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS BEGINS

The next two-year legislative session has begun on Beacon Hill. Bills have been submitted, committees constituted, and action initiated. Our new Civil Records Director has hit the ground running, too. She has perused the bills and determined which ones we will be watching and monitoring this year. Please see her report in this issue for the latest news.

MGC CANDIDATES SOUGHT BY NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

This year is an election year for MGC's officers. All four of us have reached our term limits. Patricia Stano-Carpenter (President of MSoG), Daphnah Sage (Past President of MGC), and Melinde Sanborn (our current V.P. and President of ASG) are the 2011 Nominations Committee. Please get in touch with them if you have some ideas about the next team of MGC leaders. Please feel free to reach them through Melinde's current email address, vicepresident@massgencouncil.org.

CLOSURE OF THE RESEARCH ROOM AT NARA-PITTSFIELD ANNOUNCED

The Archivist of the U.S. announced that NARA will be closing the Reading Room at NARA-Pittsfield. This will not result in any budgetary savings for two reasons. One reason is that the two staff members there will be transferred to other facilities. The second reason is that the building will continue to be in operation for records storage.

It's a shock to have the Reading Room closed when the staff and volunteers at NARA-Pittsfield have received national recognitions from the U.S. Vice President and from the National Genealogical Society. Clearly their competence and service were not an issue. We've posted

the Archivist's announcement on our website as well as a thoughtful response from Meldon Wolfgang explaining how administrative budget decisions are made. Check out our News area.

NEW MGC CIVIL RECORDS DIRECTOR AND SECRETARIES

We are fortunate to have the following three able and competent volunteers stepping forward to help MGC.

Mary Ellen Grogan was appointed Civil Records Director, filling a spot opened by the retirement of Bernard Couming. Mary Ellen is a past Program Director and Newsletter Editor for MGC. As editor, she wrote "Access to Records in Massachusetts," which examines Massachusetts laws pertaining to records access and is now available on our website. She currently handles contract negotiations with outside transportation providers for the MBTA. She can be reached at records@massgencouncil.org.

Alexandra Stocker moved into the new position of Membership Secretary. This non-board position fills a longstanding need in the organization. She is a professional genealogist who holds a certificate in genealogical research from Boston University and runs Tracelines Research in Hanover, Massachusetts. She can be reached at membership@massgencouncil.org.

Christine Sharbrough, CG, was appointed Recording Secretary of the Council, a position left open by the creation of the Membership Secretary position. In the past, Christine volunteered with MGC on the Program Committee and as Newsletter Editor. She was Program Co-Chair of the NERGC 2007 and 2009 conferences. She is a Board-certified professional genealogist, a reference librarian, and an Associate Trustee and Archivist at the Cyrus E. Dallin Art Museum in Arlington, Massachusetts. She can be reached at secretary@massgencouncil.org.

Bios of Seminar Speakers part I

We'll be featuring the bios of all the speakers at the MGC seminar over this and the next issues.

David Dearborn, "Researching Families from Massachusetts"

David Curtis Dearborn is a Genealogist. Originally from Andover, Massachusetts, [he] joined the NEHGS staff in 1976 and has been interested in genealogy since the age of eighteen. David graduated with a B.A. in History in 1971 from the University of Massachusetts at Boston. He received his M.A. in History in 1974 from Northeastern University. He received his M.S. in Library Science in 1982 from Simmons College.

Eric Jay Dolin, "Fur, Fortune and Empire"

BA and BS from Brown University; Masters of Environmental Management from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies; and a Ph.D. in environmental policy and planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Work as a fisheries policy analyst at the National Marine Fisheries Service, a program manager at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, an environmental consultant stateside and in London, an American Association for the Advancement of Science writing fellow at Business Week, a curatorial assistant in the Mollusk Department at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology, and an intern at the National Wildlife Federation, the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management, and the U.S. Senate. ericjayd@aol.com

Dick Eastman, "Genealogy Searches on Google"

Dick Eastman has been involved in genealogy for more than 30 years. He has worked in the computer industry for more than 40 years in hardware, software, and managerial positions. By the early 1970's, Dick was already using a mainframe computer to enter his family data on punch cards. He built his first home computer in 1980. In the mid-1980s, Dick actually went

Speaker Bios continued on p. 7

Bills relative to birth records and access to birth records need monitoring and, in some cases, clarification and possibly intervention with legislators

Civil Records Report *Mary Ellen Grogan, Director of Civil Records*

BILLS PROPOSED IN 2011/2012 SESSION DEALING WITH ACCESS

The following bills of interest to genealogists are listed on the Massachusetts General Court website as of March 1, 2011. Not all bills submitted for the legislative session appear to have been added to the online system as of this date. The following terms were used to search: birth, marriage, death, vital records, vital statistics and Joint Committee on Public Health.

Bills which have not yet been assigned a number are searchable only by their title, not by their content. These bills are listed at the end of this article.

House 603, submitted by James Miceli of Wilmington

Title: An Act Relative to Birth Records

Existing Legislation Reference: Chapter 262, Section 34

Summary: This bill adds a new section to Chapter 262, Section 34. This section specifically refers to the fees that Town Clerks may charge for documents. The legislation limits the people who may obtain a copy of a birth certificate to: registrant, parent, guardian, child, grandchild, brother, sister, spouse, domestic partner, attorney, agent of a funeral home.

Comments: This is clearly not the correct Chapter for this kind of legislation. This has no time limitation on it, so that it might be considered to supersede other regulations that release birth records to public view.

Action: We should contact Rep Miceli to discover his concerns. If his concerns are principally identity theft, the result could be better achieved through regulations than legislation. He may also be concerned about out-of-wedlock births (see House 609 and House 1843). Nonetheless, we should pursue the issue.

If passed as written, it could prevent genealogists from accessing birth records now available to them.

Status: The bill was referred to the Joint Committee on Public Health on 2/14/11.

House 607, submitted by Elizabeth Poirier of North Attleborough

Title: An Act Preserving Dates of Birth from City and Town Records

Existing Legislation Reference: Chapter 7, Section 4, Clause 26

Summary: This legislation adds the requirement that the date of birth must appear in town records.

Comments: There appears to be an error in the legislation. It refers to Chapter 7, section 4, clause 26, which does not exist.

Action: We should contact the Representative's office to determine what they were trying to do.

Status: The bill was referred to the Joint Committee on Public Health on 2/14/11.

House 609, submitted by Elizabeth Poirier of North Attleborough

Title: An Act Relative to Access to Certain Birth Records

Existing Legislation Reference: Chapter 46, Section 2A

Summary: Limiting access to records of persons born out of wedlock shall apply only where the infant was given up for adoption or where the name of the father is not listed.

Comments: This would open up records concerning out-of-wedlock births. This has become a significant problem in recent years as the result of social changes in our community. Many committed couples have chosen not to marry. Their children are considered

illegitimate and access to their records is restricted. This causes difficulties that were not originally anticipated to children, parents and guardians.

Action: We should monitor this legislation to make sure that it is not amended in a way that will negatively affect access to records.

Status: The bill was referred to the Joint Committee on Public Health on 2/14/11.

House 1843, submitted by James M. Murphy of Weymouth

Title: An Act relative to proper identification when requesting copies of birth certificates.

Existing Legislation Reference: Chapter 46, Section 2A

Summary: Copies of birth records of persons born out of wedlock may be given only to those persons or to the people (guardian, parent, attorney, etc.) listed in Chapter 46, Section 2A.

Comments: This legislation only refers to out-of-wedlock births. It will clearly be impacted by House 609.

Action: We should monitor this legislation to make sure that it is not amended in a way that will negatively affect access to records.

Status: The bill was referred to the Joint Committee on Public Health on 2/18/11.

Senate Bills:

The following items are listed on the Senate Docket but no numbers have yet been assigned. The text is not yet available.

An Act Relative to Vital Records, submitted by Thomas P. Kennedy

An Act Relative to the Signing of Death Certificates, submitted by Thomas P. Kennedy

NEWSLETTER

Program Report: MGC 2011 Annual Seminar *by Christine Sharbrough, CG*

Massachusetts Genealogical Council
2011 Annual Seminar
"Chronicling the Bay State"

23 July 2011

LaCava Conference Center

Bentley University

175 Forest Street, Waltham, MA 02452

\$65 for members, \$75 for non-members or walk-ins

We have finalized the program for our 2011 Annual Seminar. We are returning to Bentley University's LaCava Conference Center for a full day of lectures. Our exhibit hall will include vendors as well as information tables from member societies. You will be able to use your choice of registration systems: either online or with a form and check. You can download our program brochure from www.massgencouncil.org. It includes a registration form on the back.

This program is so big, that we will cover half of the sessions in this newsletter issue and the other half in the next issue!

TRACK: TECHNOLOGY

Carol Smith will be in Utah while she uses modern technology to present her lecture, "FamilySearch: A Library Without Walls."



FamilySearch is the single most used free resource online. Learn how to use the FamilySearch Research Wiki, Forums, Indexing, and Community Collaboration in order to make your research quicker, faster, and more

efficient. Learn about the challenges FamilySearch faces as they move forward in their online digitizing efforts.

Beau Sharbrough will present two lectures, "Amazing Stories from Newspapers Online" and "Amazing Stories from Revolutionary War Pension Files."

Every day, more historical newspapers become available online. They contain birth announcements, wedding announcements, obituaries, and stories. There are 80,000 Revolutionary War pension files that can include pages from family Bibles, letters from descendants, and great stories as

told by your ancestors themselves. Make sure that you don't miss these great resources when documenting your own family!



Dick Eastman, "Genealogy Searches on Google."

You might use Google often, but are you using it to the best advantage? Learn tips and tricks for your genealogy searches on Google.

TRACK: WORKSHOPS

Lori Lyn Price, "Beginning Genealogy: Climb Your Family Tree, Part One" and "Part Two"



This interactive lecture is a comprehensive beginner's guide to genealogy that will give you the tools to begin climbing your family tree. We will cover basic research forms, top list of websites, and repositories that will help you begin your research.



Marian Pierre-Louis, "What is a Blog Anyway?"

Blogs are a great way to share genealogical information and to connect with distant cousins. This talk introduces genealogists to blogging, how to set up a blog, and tips for keeping it going.

Connie Reik, "Using Zotero: the Free Citation and Note Manager for Citation Logs"



Make your research easier to record, document and access with Zotero, a plug-in for Firefox, online and off. Download and create citations from information from the web and elsewhere, attach notes to citations, create standalone notes to record ideas, etc., as you research.

MGC Seminar continued on p. 5

MGC Seminar will include tracks on Technology, Workshops, Records, and Repositories and feature a luncheon speech on "Fur, Fortune and Empire" by Eric Jay Dolin

MGC Seminar continued

TRACK: RECORDS

David Lambert, "The 150th Anniversary of the Civil War: New Resources for Genealogists"

David Dearborn, "Researching Families from Massachusetts"

Thomas Howard, "Hidden in the Vaults: Gems Found in Town Halls and other Public Places"

Mary Ellen Grogan and MGC Board Members, "Massachusetts Legislative Update"

TRACK: REPOSITORIES

Meldon Wolfgang, "Don't Miss the One-of-a-Kind Gems You Can Find at an Archives"

Elizabeth Bouvier, "Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Archives"

James David Moran, "Holdings of the American Antiquarian Society"

Zachary Enright, "Treasures at the City of Boston Archives"

LUNCHEON SPEECH

Eric Jay Dolin, "Fur, Fortune and Empire"



Dolin shows how the fur trade, driven by the demands of fashion, sparked controversy, fostered economic competition, and fueled wars among the European powers, as North America became a battleground for colonization and imperial aspirations. Populated by a larger-than-life cast—including Dutch governor Peter Stuyvesant; President Thomas Jefferson;

America's first multimillionaire, John Jacob Astor; and mountain man Kit Carson—"Fur, Fortune, and Empire" is the most comprehensive and compelling history of the American fur trade ever written.

Seminar Schedule • 23 July 2011

LaCava Conference Center • Bentley University • 175 Forest Street • Waltham, MA 02452

9-9:30	Registration, Continental Breakfast, and Check-in			
9:30-10	Welcome and MGC Annual Meeting			
	Repositories Track	Technology Track	Records Track	Workshops
10-11	<i>Archival Research: Finding Unique Treasures for Family History</i> , Meldon Wolfgang	<i>What's Happening at FamilySearch: Wiki, Indexing, and Playing in the Sandbox</i> , Carol Smith	<i>The 150th Anniversary of the Civil War: New Resources for Genealogists</i> , David Lambert	<i>Beginning Genealogy: Climb Your Family Tree, Part One</i> , Lori Lyn Price
11:15-12:15	<i>Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Archives</i> , Elizabeth Bouvier	<i>Amazing Stories from the Revolutionary War Pension Files</i> , Beau Sharbrough	<i>Researching Families from Massachusetts</i> , David Dearborn	<i>Beginning Genealogy: Climb Your Family Tree, Part Two</i> , Lori Lyn Price
12:15-1:45	Luncheon Fur, Fortune and Empire, Eric Jay Dolin			
1:45-2:45	<i>Holdings of the American Antiquarian Society</i> , James David Moran	<i>Amazing Stories from Newspapers Online</i> , Beau Sharbrough	<i>Hidden in the Vaults, Gems Found in Town Records</i> , Thomas Howard	<i>What is a Blog Anyway?</i> Marian Pierre-Louis
3-4	<i>Treasures at the City of Boston Archives</i> , Zachary Enright	<i>Genealogical Searches on Google</i> , Dick Eastman	<i>Legislative Update</i> , Mary Ellen Grogan and MGC Board Members	<i>Using Zotero, the Free Citation and Note Manager for Firefox</i> , Connie Reik

Register Online: www.regonline.com/mgc2011

www.massgencouncil.org

NEWSLETTER



Spotlight on Member Societies: The Genealogical Roundtable

text adapted from
<http://genealogicalroundtable.com/>

The board of MGC continues to be enriched by the presence of our first Civil Records Director, Shirley Barnes. She came to the board as the delegate from the Genealogical Roundtable. Our spotlight this month focuses on this longstanding local group.

The Genealogical Roundtable was founded in 1969 in Concord, Massachusetts, by local genealogists and historians, to stimulate general interest in genealogy and family history. Activities of the society provide a source for information and the development of skills in genealogical research.

The Genealogical Roundtable serves the people of Acton, Ashland, Auburndale, Bolton, Boston, Boxborough, Chelmsford, Concord, Framingham, Harvard, Hudson, Lexington, Littleton, Marlborough, Maynard, Natick, Saugus, Shrewsbury, Sudbury, Waltham, Wayland, Westford, and surrounding areas.

The Genealogical Roundtable is a society of people whose interest lies in discovering their families' roots. The group is very diversified in the areas they are researching, such as the British Isles, France, Italy, Canada, Sweden, and, of course, the United States.

The Roundtable meets at 1:00 P.M. on the 4th Monday of the month in September, October, November, February, March, and April. The Annual Meeting of the society is held on the 4th Monday in May unless otherwise notified. The meetings are usually held at one of the local libraries. Guests are always welcome.

It was Mrs. Ruth Backus and thirteen other ladies of Concord who originally founded The Genealogical Roundtable in 1969. Though run informally, Mrs. Backus did write out the objectives of

this organization: to further genealogy work; to encourage others to begin genealogy; to encourage enlargement of the genealogical materials in the Concord Public Library, and to donate such materials to the library; and to assist the reference librarian.

In 1970, to accomplish one of these objectives, a gift was made to the library of the quarterly, *The American Genealogist*. The tradition continues to this day. Other books have been purchased and donated throughout the years. The first newsletter was started by Louis Beauregard in 1993, with six issues published annually.

The Roundtable continues its tradition of research trips to record repositories and interesting places of history, such as American Antiquarian Society, Strawberry Bank in Portsmouth, NH, Massachusetts State Archives, National Archives & Records Administration, New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston Public Library, National Parks,

Massachusetts Military Institute, Saugus Iron Works, Family History Centers (LDS), Historic Districts, and libraries, cemeteries, and historical societies too numerous to mention.

Programs are intended to be instructive as well as entertaining. They include field trips, workshops, guest speakers, research trips, and information exchanges on the tools of genealogical research, such as the use of forms and checklists in preparing a family history, planning a research trip, and computers in organizing data. Members share their knowledge with others in the society.. Some of the past programs include speakers from NARA and NEHGS.

The society is wholly dependent on donations and memberships. Membership dues, of \$15.00 per year, provide the primary support for the wonderful programs we offer and a subscription to *aROUNDtheTABLE*, the bi-monthly newsletter of the Society. Membership year is from July 1 to June 30.



Concord Free Public Library, 1873 By Augustine H. Folsom
[Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

The Genealogical Roundtable is still going strong after more than forty years;
Brophy's Corner features Mike Brophy & his notes on local Catholic records

Brophy's Corner



Michael Brophy
program@massgencouncil.org

With Mike's permission, this month "Brophy's Corner" features Mike, himself. This article from the *Boston Pilot*, about his upcoming talk at the Boston Public Library, provides a look at his genealogical career and information about some of the records he specializes in.

The following article appeared on the *Boston Pilot* web site on 18 Feb 2011.

Local genealogist to lecture on tracing Catholic roots

By Jim Lockwood

Posted: 2/18/2011

BRAINTREE -- Those interested in learning how to use archdiocesan resources to trace their Catholic heritage can see how to do so at an upcoming presentation.

On Feb. 23, at 6:30 p.m. in the Boston Public Library, local genealogist Michael Brophy will speak about using sacramental records to trace one's ancestry. Specifically, Brophy will inform attendees about the advantages and benefits of sacramental records over civil record and share resources available in the Archdiocese of Boston's archives based in its Pastoral Center in Braintree.

"It's basically going through what information will be contained in the

Featuring Brophy, himself...

baptismal and sacramental records of the archdiocese," said Brophy, a genealogy lecturer, researcher and columnist based in Abington.

His lecture will also discuss key events in the archdiocese's history.

Brophy is the program director for the Massachusetts Genealogical Council, and also served as a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists.

He specializes in Irish-Catholic history, specifically Irish Catholics in Massachusetts. His other research specialties include immigration and naturalization, the Civil War, historic sites, land records, court documents and military history.

Time period specialties include the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, and geographic specialties include New England, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island in Canada, and Ireland.

He was the lead researcher in Massachusetts for the recently-released book "The Remains of Company D: A Story of the Great War," by James Carl Nelson. He also recently compiled research for "Who Do You Think You Are?," a television program on NBC.

Brophy holds a master's degree in business from Suffolk University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

Brophy is a member of St. Bridget Parish in Abington.

He said the top reason people perform genealogical research is that it "gives us a true sense of identity -- who we are and where we've come from."

"It gives us a new perspective on ourselves," he added.

[www.thebostonpilot.com/article.asp?ID=12967]

The title of the talk, which Mike presented on 23 Feb 2011 at the BPL, was "Genealogical Materials at the Boston Roman Catholic Archdiocese."

Here's Mike's summary of the talk, taken from the announcement on the BPL web site:

"Catholicism has been practiced in New England since shortly after the American Revolution. The Archdiocese holds more than 1,300 original sacramental registers that are open to research. The records reveal unique information not found in any other source and are not available online. Cemetery and school records can provide rich information on ancestors. These records have recently been made available to the public."

Speaker bios continued

knocking on the door of a rising online star called CompuServe to propose a genealogy forum: a move by which he built a community of family historians over the next 14 years. In late 1995, before most people had heard of the World Wide Web, Dick had a conversation with Pam Cerutti and expressed an interest in creating a weekly newsletter that he could e-mail to genealogists all over the world. Pam replied, "You'll need an editor." Dick agreed, and Pam instantly became that Editor. On January 15, 1996, the two launched Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter as an e-mail publication and announced it to 100 surprised friends and acquaintances.



1853—Public Library, Boston, Mass.



MASSACHUSETTS
GENEALOGICAL
COUNCIL

Membership Form

Membership privileges include:

- Subscription to MGC's eNewsletter
 - Discounted rates for MGC's Annual Seminar
 - Participation in MGC's board meetings
 - Access to the Members Only section of the MGC website
- Organizational Membership also includes:
- URL link to the organization's website from MGC's website
 - One table in our vendor hall at the Annual Seminar

Membership Status (Membership Year runs January 1 - December 31):

- New
- Renewal

Membership Category:

- \$10 - Individual
- \$15 - Family (must reside in same household, two family members eligible for Annual Seminar discount)
- \$20 - Organization

Save a Tree
(and save MGC postage)
By default, the newsletter will be emailed. If you require a paper copy, please initial here: _____.

NAME(S) _____

EMAIL _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____

ORGANIZATION (if applicable) _____

PRESIDENT _____ EMAIL _____

DELEGATE TO MGC _____ EMAIL _____

Make checks payable to: **Massachusetts Genealogical Council**
Mail to: **MGC, P.O. Box 5393, Cochrane, MA 01778-5393**

MGC has a number of committees that work on various projects. If you are interested in getting involved, please indicate your interest(s) and we will contact you!

_____ Legislative (vital record access issues) _____ Publications (newsletter, website)

_____ Education & Events (annual seminar) _____ Membership & Publicity

www.massgencouncil.org

MASSACHUSETTS
GENEALOGICAL
COUNCIL



PO Box 5393
Cochran, Massachusetts
01778-5393
www.massgencouncil.org
newsletter@massgencouncil.org