Massachusetts Society of Genealogists, Inc.
Monthly Newsletter

PastTimes

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Membership Renewal ends September 1st

It's easy, just log into the MSOG website and renew online.

DO NOT FORGET TO RENEW!

MSOG News

MASSOG Writing Contest

It's not too late!

There is still time to submit your entries for the 2026 writing contest and claim your price!

Your entry must be submitted as an electronic file and should not exceed 12 pages, including footnotes.

Please submit your entry by the (extended) submission deadline, **September 6, 2026**, to writingcontest@msoginc.org

2026 *MASSOG* Writing Contest

The Massachusetts Society of Genealogists, Inc., will hold its next biennial writing contest in 2026. We hope that many of you will participate. The rules will be the same as for the 2024 writing contest. There will be three prizes: $100 for first, $75 for second, and $25 for third place.

What should you write about? You could describe the solution to a brick-wall mystery or provide a brief family history related to Massachusetts. You might also relate a historical story pertaining to Massachusetts. If you have another idea and are wondering whether it would be appropriate, feel free to contact us at massog@msoginc.org.

Your entry must be submitted as an electronic file and should not exceed 12 pages, including footnotes. Please submit your entry by the submission deadline, **September 6, 2026, to writingcontest@msoginc.org.**

A few things to keep in mind:

- Complete contest rules are available at the MSOG website, under Publications.
- Your entry should cover no more than three generations of a family and must not contain vital data for living persons.
- Because all *MASSOG* articles are indexed in PERSI, please use full names of your subjects and full town and state names in your title.
- Footnotes should follow our preferred citation formats, which are relatively brief and simple. For example, a federal census citation needs only the year, place, roll, and page. These formats have been described in recent issues of *MASSOG*:
  - "Formatting Footnotes" in Vol. 42 (2017–2018), No. 2
  - "Citing Massachusetts Vital Records" in Vol. 45 (2020–2021), No. 2

Best of luck to all writers!

President's Message

Welcome to a new year for the Massachusetts Society of Genealogists!

MSOG just held a DNA Workshop in August at the Hampton Inn in Natick, in partnership with Diane Southard, the founder of Your DNA Guide. This type of seminar was a new venture for MSOG but one that might be repeated in the near future. The all-day event included a morning DNA Workshop session followed by a presentation in the afternoon on the subject of Epigenetics (the inheritance of traits beyond the DNA we get from our parents). The total of almost 40 attendees learned new approaches on using DNA matches in combination with genealogy research to find distant relatives.

The MSOG Board held its scheduled board meeting on June 7th. The minutes of this meeting will be posted on the MSOG website after their approval at our September meeting but below are some highlights.

- *We discussed trying to expand our membership through an outreach to MA libraries throughout the state. We currently have 14 institutional organizations who are members and there are over 300 libraries throughout the state.*
- *An update on the new MSOG website was provided. Our website developer vendor is working to add several new features (including a new payment method) which will be added by this fall after we complete membership renewals.*
- *A proposal by Seema Kenney to hold a DNA Workshop with Diane Southard was made and approved by the Board.*
- *An update on securing quotes for D&O Insurance was made. This type of insurance protects board members and officers from certain types of claims.*
- *The resignation of Linda MacIver as Massachusetts Genealogical Council (MGC) Delegate was announced. We will be looking for new candidates for this position.*
- *The Board was updated on the candidates running for upcoming Board Elections.*

We are still filling out the schedule of programs by our chapters for September but we start with the MSOG Book Club meeting on September 1st on the book First Family: Abigail and John Adams by Joseph J. Ellis. The Bristol Chapter will host David Allen Lambert from American Ancestors on the subject of Deciphering Old Handwriting on September 19th. The Merrimack Valley Chapter will present a one-woman performance by Rita Parisis entitled Women of '76. Look for more details in Past Times and on the website as other Chapter programs are added.

As of July 1st, MSOG members can renew their membership on our website. If you have not yet do so, please take a moment and complete your renewal. Lastly, elections for the MSOG State Board will occur this fall and information about the candidates will be provided shortly.

Thanks again for being a member of the Massachusetts Society of Genealogists!

Terry

September 2026 MSOG Meetings-at-a-Glance

To pre-register for these events: https://msoginc.org/eventListings.php?nm=107

MSOG Book Club

Tuesday, September 1
7:00 p.m.
Virtual Only

First Family: Abigail and John Adams
by
Joseph J. Ellis

MSOG Members-only event

MSOG Webinar

None scheduled for September

MSOG Members-only event

Worcester & Middlesex

Saturday, September 12
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Attend in person or virtually via Zoom

As part of our celebration of our nation's 250th anniversary, the HANE (Historical Ambassadors of New England) group's historian (Philip Messier) will be in costume as an 18th-century British soldier, discoursing upon the social angle of the American Revolutionary War: how it impacted people day-to-day in New England, both military and civilians.

10:00 am Socializing & refreshments
10:30 am Presentation

Community Room, McAuliffe Branch, Framingham Public Library
746 Water St., Framingham, MA

This meeting is open to the public.

Bristol

Saturday, September 19
12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Attend in person or virtually via Zoom

David Allen Lambert
Presents

Deciphering Old Handwriting
Somerset Public Library
1464 County St, Somerset, MA

This meeting is open to the public.

"This program has applied for support from the Somerset Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency."

Merrimack Valley

Saturday, September 26
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Attend in person only

Performance by Rita Parisi:
Women of '76

Georgetown Peabody Library
2 Maple St
Georgetown, MA

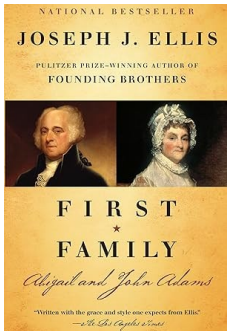
This meeting is open to the public.

Genealogy Discussion Group

Wednesday, September 30 at 7:00 p.m.
Virtually Only
This is open to the public

MSOG Members-Only

For More Information: https://msoginc.org



Members-Only Book Club

Tuesday, September 1
7:00 p.m. *Virtual Only*

First Family: Abigail and John Adams
By Jospeh J. Ellis

In this rich and engrossing account, John and Abigail Adams come to life against the backdrop of the Republic's tenuous early years.

Drawing on over 1,200 letters exchanged between the couple, Ellis tells a story both personal and panoramic. We learn about the many years Abigail and John spent apart as John's political career sent him first to Philadelphia, then to Paris and Amsterdam; their relationship with their children; and Abigail's role as John's closest and most valued advisor. Exquisitely researched and beautifully written, First Family is both a revealing portrait of a marriage and a unique study of America's early years. (Amazon Review)

You must be logged in as a Member to register for the Book Club
https://www.msoginc.org/members.php

Go to "Event Registration" to register for the book club.

Upcoming Book Club Readings:
October 6, 2026 - Lineage: Genealogy and the Power of Connection in Early America by Karin Wulf
November 3, 2026 - American Passage: The History of Ellis Island by Vincent J. Cannato
December 1, 2026 - March by Geraldine Brooks

MASSOG Journal is looking for your contributions!

Preserve your research and tell the stories of your ancestors - *MASSOG* is always looking your submissions - ancestor profiles, brick wall solutions, and other manuscripts of interest to genealogists. Do you have private manuscripts, old records, bibles, or documents you've found in your research that others would benefit from? We'd love to help you transcript and publish them. First-time authors are always welcomed!

Contact massog@msoginc.org with your ideas - we look forward to hearing from you!

Welcome New Members

Bristol

Betsy Rohaly Smoot

Emily Brown

Merrimack Valley

Treva Clark Fry

Ronald Nelson

Middlesex

Frank Cullison

Catherine & Roger Manwaring

Trina Massel

Worcester

Thomas Adams

Harmony Paticoff

Michele McCarthy

Tracey Pinkham

MSOG Chapter Meeting

For More Information: https://msoginc.org



Bristol Meeting

Saturday, September 19

12:00 pm to 1:00 pm
Attend in Person or virtually via Zoom

David Allen Lambert

presents

Deciphering Old Handwriting

While we might wish all our ancestors' records were typed in a standard format and perfectly legible, that simply isn't the case. Many of the records family historians turn to are handwritten and may be faded, use archaic terminology, unfamiliar abbreviations, or are just plain illegible. This online lecture will provide practical strategies for approaching handwritten documents, understanding and deciphering hard-to-read handwriting from different time periods, so that you can make the most of these important resources in your family history research.

David Allen Lambert, Chief Genealogist has been on the staff of American Ancestors/NEHGS since 1993 and is an internationally recognized speaker on the topics of genealogy and history. He has authored many articles in the New England Historical and Genealogical Register, the New Hampshire Genealogical Record, Rhode Island Roots, Mayflower Descendant, and American Ancestors magazine; and is the author of eleven books including A Guide to Massachusetts Cemeteries and Vital Records of Stoughton, Massachusetts, to the end of the year 1850. David is an elected Fellow of the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston, Mass., and a life member of the New Hampshire Society of the Cincinnati and the General Society of the War of 1812. David also serves as the tribal genealogist for the Massachusett Tribe at Punkapoag in Massachusetts. His areas of expertise include New England and Atlantic Canadian records of the 17th through 21st century; American and international military records; DNA research; and Native American and African American genealogical research in New England.

Somerset Public Library
1464 County St., Somerset, MA 02726

Business Meeting 11:00-11:30 am
Member Sharing 11:30-11:55 am
Presentation Begins at Noon.

This program is FREE and OPEN to the Public
For more information contact: bristol@msoginc.org
Schedule of Events Available at: https://msoginc.org

Mass Cultural Council

Those who wish to attend virtually, should pre-register at msoginc.org—Events.
https://msoginc.org/eventListings.php?nm=107

"This program has applied for support from the Somerset Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency."

MSOG Chapter Meeting

For More Information: https://msoginc.org

Worcester & Middlesex Meeting

Saturday, September 12

10:00 am to 12:00 pm
In person or virtually via Zoom

Our Nation's 250th Anniversary

As part of our celebration of our nation's 250th anniversary, the HANE (Historical Ambassadors of New England) group's historian (Philip Messier) will be in costume as an 18th-century British soldier, discoursing upon the social angle of the American Revolutionary War: how it impacted people day-to-day in New England, both military and civilians.

Historical Ambassadors of New England (HANE) is a community of educators, performers, and public historians that specializes in elevating the public engagement efforts of mission-driven institutions.

Indeed, for a crowd disposed to genealogy and legacy, that human experience is often a footnote compared to the major documents and battles. HANE suggests that it's now more important than ever to consider the colonists in rebellion,

In person:
Community Room at McAuliffe Branch,
Framingham Public Library
746 Water St,
Framingham, MA 01701
https://framinghamlibrary.org/mcauliffe-branch

10:00–10:30 am: Socializing and refreshments
10:30 am: Presentation begins

Those who wish to attend virtually, should pre-register at msoginc.org—Events.
https://msoginc.org/eventListings.php?nm=107



MSOG Chapter Meeting

For More Information: https://msoginc.org



Merrimack Valley Meeting

Saturday, September 26

10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Attend in Person Only

Performance by Rita Parisi
Women of '76

Merrimack Valley Chapter proudly presents a one-woman performance by Rita Parisi of Waterfall Productions (www.waterfallproductions.com) entitled Women of '76:

Experience the untold stories of courage and conviction from FIVE remarkable WOMEN who witnessed and shaped the American Revolution!

Join the Merrimack Valley Chapter at the Georgetown Peabody Library as we celebrate America 250 for this in-person only performance. This meeting kicks off the genealogy season and marks the second year that Merrimack Valley Chapter is participating in the Essex County Trails & Sails (www.trailsandsails.org) event.

Georgetown Peabody Library
2 Maple St
Georgetown, MA

This program is FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Massachusetts Genealogical Council

Tuesday September 29, 2026

Bonnie Wade-Mucia - *Warning Out! Following the Unwanted in Colonial New England*

Check their website for more details https://www.massgencouncil.org/m-o-r-e

MSOG Genealogy Discussion Group (Zoom)

Wednesday September 30, 2026

7:00 PM EST

This months topic will be "What to keep to pass on to the next generation".

Check the MSOG Events page to register.

This program is FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

MSOG News

For More Information: https://msoginc.org

MSOG Member Sharing

We want to know about your Mass/Maine Roots - especially prior to 1820.
Send Names, dates, location to Middlesex@msoginc.org.

Get organized now so we'll have a beautiful display in our booth at NERGC 2027 in Portland, ME!

MSOG Board has decided to, once again, have a booth in the NERGC Exhibit Hall. We're looking to share your Ancestors information. Our booth theme is

"Massachusetts: the birthplace of Maine"

We'd like to highlight the connection between Maine and Massachusetts. To do this, we would like to gather information about your ancestors who lived there before 1820 as well as members who lived, vacationed, or otherwise spent time in Maine.

Bristol Chapter Visits BPL

Sindi Broussard Terrien

On May 16, 2026, several members of the Bristol Chapter enjoyed a beautiful day in Boston with a tour of the Washington and Elliot Rooms, home to the genealogy collections at the Boston Public Library (BPL). Their guide, Jessy Wheeler, introduced the group to the wide range of resources available there.

In the Washington Room, visitors can access microform machines, newspaper collections not yet online, city directories, telephone books from 1890 through the 1950s, and a microfilm catalog of books published before the 1970s. Requested materials are picked up at the Book Delivery Desk after a form is completed. MyHeritage also includes a portion of BPL's newspaper holdings.

The Elliot Room, home to local and family histories since 2023, features an old-fashioned card catalog with entries for family histories and heraldry resources. Many items can also be found on HathiTrust and Archive.com. Genealogist who conduct New England research may notice that the familiar "tan books" are now red—many heavily used local and county histories have been rebound in sturdy red covers with white lettering. Researchers may pull these reference books directly from the shelves, but the books must remain in the room.

2027—2029 MSOG Board Nominees

The Nominating Committee is delighted to present the 2027-2029 slate of nominees for the upcoming Massachusetts Society of Genealogists, Inc.'s election this fall.
Update: We will notify you as soon as we have finalized the dates in October to hold the Elections for our Society Officers. If you would like to participate in the voting, you will need to be a member in Good Standing before voting begins.

The candidates are:
President: Terry Dugan (incumbent)
Vice President: None offered
Treasurer: Diane Laferriere
Secretary: Blaine Bettinger (bio below)
Historian/Archivist: Dick & Kathy Knowles (incumbents)
Membership: Erik Swanson (bio below)

Blaine Bettiner:
As a professional genealogy educator and author, I have extensive experience creating and maintaining accurate, well-organized records. I am deeply committed to the integrity and preservation of records, which aligns directly with the responsibilities of this role. I would be proud to serve MSOG's members and Board in this capacity.

Erik Swanson:
Erik started researching his family over thirty years ago and was lucky enough to know four of his great-grandparents. He has English, Sicilian, Irish, Canadian, German, and Swedish ancestry. He's a member of the Worcester Chapter of MSOG, the New Hampshire Society of Genealogists, the Maine Genealogical Society, the Essex Society of Genealogists, the Genealogical Society of Nova Scotia, American Ancestors, the New York Genealogical & Biographical Society, and the National Genealogical Society. He currently serves as co-editor of MASSOG, and as social media coordinator for NHSOG.

Annual Meeting
Saturday, November 7, 2026
9:00 am to 5:00 pm
John Boyle O'Reilly Hall, 17 Willow St, Westborough, MA

We are changing locations and hope you will appreciate some of the other changes to make this an affordable event for all.

Registration will open in October.



Massachusetts Society of Genealogists, Inc.
P.O. Box 215, Ashland, MA 01721-0215

Statement of Purpose

MSOG's mission is to promote and encourage Massachusetts genealogical research at all levels - beginner, amateur, and professional. MSOG is a Massachusetts nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. The corporation was formed for the following reasons:

To bring together all persons interested in genealogy - beginner, amateur, and professional;
To set standards of conduct, to ensure public access to records, to provide education in genealogical research;
To act in whatever manner needed to promote genealogy and family history; and
To bring together families both past and present. (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 6 June 1975)

Membership Information

Membership is from September 1 to August 31, with the membership renewal period beginning each July 1.
INDIVIDUAL dues are **$30** per year. FAMILY dues are **$40** per year
The membership application is on our website: https://msoginc.org/onlineJoin.php

State Officers and Board Members 2025-2027

President	Terence Dugan
Vice President	Diane Laferriere
Treasurer	Paul Brueggemann
Corresponding Secretary	Vacant
Recording Secretary	Anne Borg
Membership Director (interim)	Diane Laferriere
Co-Historian/Archivists	Dick & Kathy Knowles

For more information go to https://msoginc.org/about.php

MASSOG Editors	John Manning & Erik Swanson
Past Times Editor	Vacant
Webmaster	Deb Cardoni
Bristol President	Bonnie Mendes
Merrimack Valley President	Wendy Sheppard
Middlesex President	Seema Kenney
Worcester President	Greg Paris

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