



Past Times

A Publication of the
Massachusetts Society of Genealogists, Inc.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Dear Members,

Happy New Year! May your year be filled with health and happiness, and answers to all your research with maybe one or two challenges to keep the year interesting.

This year may be the year to think about stretching yourself to learn new skills to meet those challenges. It could be in the art of asking questions or organizing your material in a format that is easier to read. Perhaps it's time to write an article. Is it time to learn a new technology that will help with your research? Maybe it's time to research new websites, blogs, and databases or revisit some of those websites and databases you let lay dormant.

When was the last time you visited NARA, the Massachusetts Archives or other archives pertinent to your research? You could take time to update yourself on library holdings and the historical society in the area where your ancestor lived. You may want to read about the life and times that your ancestor may have experienced. Another thought is to plan a research trip to visit an area where an ancestor lived. Maybe plan that trip around a national conference.

If you haven't yet been on MSOG's Facebook page, come to see what's happening and meet the many members who may be asking a question, or searching for a strategy to find answers, or trying to connect with others who are researching the same line. They may be posting information about what is happening in the genealogy community such as the recent shutdown of the Social Security access genealogists have used in their research and work. If you haven't attended other MSOG chapter meetings, you might like to take the time to hear a speaker or join an activity that you think will be of benefit to you. Let's not forget meeting other MSOG members and networking with people who "talk" your language.

It may be a year in which you give back to the genealogy community. You might like to answer someone's question, or teach someone about using a software program or one of those new technology gadgets. You could help with writing a letter to your government official about keeping records open for our genealogical research. Or you could think about giving a fellow member a ride to and from a chapter meeting or to an area to do research.

I've listed many things. Reading between the lines may plant an idea or two for you to think about for the coming year. By this time next year wouldn't it be fun to sit back and reflect on all that we've done to extend ourselves in our pursuit of genealogy?

I wish you the best for 2014.
Patricia Stano-Carpenter
President

WORCESTER CHAPTER—JANUARY 4

When: Saturday, January 4, 2014 10:00AM

Where: Zion Lutheran Church, 41 Whitmarsh Avenue, Worcester

What: **Webinar Demo: How to Find and Watch a Webinar**

Who: Chapter Officers



There will be a short meeting and then the chapter officers will give a webinar demo along with research assistance to members!

For more information, contact Seema-Jayne Kenney, worcester@msoginc.org

MARTHA'S VINEYARD—JANUARY 8

When: Wednesday, January 8, 2014 7:00PM

Where: Family History Center, Vineyard Haven

What: **Bah Humbug Ghosts, Gossip & Downright Scandal: The Secret History of Martha's Vineyard.**

Who: Elizabeth Villard



For more information, contact Marna Waller, marthasvineyard@msoginc.org

MIDDLESEX CHAPTER—JANUARY 11

When: Saturday, January 11, 2014 1:30-4:00PM

Where: Acton Memorial Library, 486 Main Street, Acton

What: **Using the Writing Tool Scrivener**

Who: Julie Michutka, Path Bridge Genealogy Research Services



For more information, contact Sharon Christenson, middlesex@msoginc.org

BRISTOL COUNTY—JANUARY 18

When: Saturday, January 18, 2014 12:30PM

Where: Somerset Public Library, 1464 County Street, Somerset, MA

What: Charts and Trees with Betty-Ann Kile

Who: Members of Bristol Chapter



For more information contact, Kathleen Rubano, bristol@msoginc.org

MERRIMACK VALLEY—JANUARY 25

When: Saturday, January 25, 2014 10AM-12PM

Where: Great Room (upper level of library), Nevins Memorial Library, 305 Broadway, Methuen, MA

What: Research at the Concord National Guard Museum & Archives

Who: Keith Vezeau, Archivist, Concord National Guard Museum & Archives

For more information contact at merrimackvalley@msoginc.org & <http://www.msoginc.org/merrimackvalleynews.php>

DID YOU KNOW?....

The National Archives at Boston will hold a workshop titled:

Starting Your Family History

Tracing your roots is a journey of discovery for you and a legacy you can leave for those who will follow. But how do you get started? And how do you put it together? This workshop will provide you the strategies for collecting and organizing what you have and the methodology for embarking on this meaningful and engaging pastime.



January 7, 2014 at 1PM

It is free but registration is required.

For more information call 781-663-0130 or Email boston.archives@nara.gov

Or visit online at www.archives.gov/boston

National Archives at Boston, 380 Trapelo Road, Waltham, MA 02452

HOPE'S TECH TIDBITS



Your window to the Internet world is the browser you use to connect. Keeping your browser up to date is free, easy, and worthwhile to do on a regular basis.

For most webhosts, you choose which web browser you are going to use, Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, or Safari, and will want to stay with it not matter what because you have grown used to it. You may not realize that changes are being made behind the scenes that may make your life easier or more difficult.



Older operating systems, such as Windows XP, may not be able to use the latest browser versions. This is generally more of a problem with Internet Explorer than other browsers and may give you a reason to change browsers.

Browsers are continually issuing updates, and it is advisable to keep your browser up to date for four main reasons: security, speed, compatibility, and improvements in your web experience.

The primary reason you will want to update your browser is for security: fixing security holes in your current browser as well as protecting you against viruses, phishing, and other web intrusions better. Internet Explorer problems may be more severe and more slowly fixed than problems in Chrome, Firefox or Safari. Use as few add-ons as necessary because of the added security risk they bring, and make sure to get the updates to the add-ons as well as the browser, to keep them safe. The second reason to upgrade is to improve the speed of your web browsing. Every new generation of software has an improvement in speed. The third reason is for compatibility so that your browser can display what you are searching for more correctly, as websites add new technologies. Older browsers may not be supported by some websites.



Your Update Choices

Update to a newer generation of browser, e.g. from Internet Explorer 10 to 11. The newer generation should be safer and more reliable, and also you may be able to do things you can't do now on websites you use.

Update to the same generation of browser. The Newer generation should be safer and more reliable, as the reason for updates within a generation is for bug and security fixes.

Update to a different browser, from Internet Explorer to Google Chrome: You will have a slightly different experience, and you should give yourself a little time to get used to the differences.



“**Check for updates**” can generally be found under the Help menu.

You might want to update your browser for any of several different reasons. Maybe you heard that there is a new version and you'd like to try it out. Or perhaps you're dealing with a problem and other troubleshooting steps haven't worked. Regardless of the reason, it's easy to update your browser.

INTRODUCING....PAUL KEELER

Timothy Kennard Fiske (1831-1916) of Lexington, Massachusetts, my 2nd great grandfather, appears to be primarily responsible for saving a significant amount of documents and letters pertaining to the family and their friends and/or associates. Fortunately, the documents and letters were not deposited in the town land-fill and came into my possession, if for no other reason, than a lack of interest by other family members. As a genealogist, one knows the value of family documents and letters as significant sources of primary and secondary information. In addition to genealogical information, however, the greater value of personal letters in particular, is that the letters create a window of a better understanding of the person(s) behind the names and vital statistics recorded on the family tree. Included in Timothy's collection are Civil War letters written to him by his brother Joseph Alexander Fiske and John Peters, his brother-in-law. When one hears of Civil War letters, one usually thinks of letters such as these that are written by a soldier to a family member but there are other types of Civil War letters. One Civil War letter is written to Timothy's mother, Mary Fiske by Elizabeth Hanscom, an old friend from South Acton, Massachusetts. Elizabeth writes to Mary to inform her that Elizabeth has just lost her second and only remaining son to the Civil War. Elizabeth's Civil War letter is simple, sincere and powerful emotional letter that needs to be read by everyone today in order to understand the loss of life from a mother's perspective. The letters in the collection contain many names and places that describe and clarify relationships. Of more value than names and dates are the stories the letters tell of everyday life and the insight into the feelings and emotions of ordinary people in the past. Preserving and organizing the letters and documents collected by Timothy Fiske will continue to provide me with an "endless" source of genealogy projects...and perhaps, the stories that will result from the preservation project will make other family members understand the treasure that has been given to us by our ancestors.

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome new members :

Susan Broderick -

**Merrimack Valley
Chapter**



Massachusetts Society of Genealogists, Inc.
MASSOG Writing Contest for 2014

http://www.msoginc.org/massog/writing_contest_rules_2014.php

The Massachusetts Society of Genealogists, Inc. announces its Writing Contest for 2014. The goal of this biennial contest is to encourage and recognize amateur writers from our membership.

If you would like to tell your family's story, please submit your entry according to the guidelines below. A judging committee will select the winning writers and their entries based on accuracy of documentation and clarity of interpretation. First and second place awards will be presented at the Annual Meeting in 2014. All entries may be published in *MASSOG* with writers' approval.

Information to be observed by contest participants:

1. All submissions must be received by August 15, 2014.
2. Send your submission as an attachment to msogwritingcontest@msoginc.org.
3. Submissions should include a three-generation family study, tell an interesting story about parents and children, or provide a brief solution to a genealogical problem.
4. Articles should conform to current standards of documentation and, if it is a genealogical compilation rather than a straight narrative, the final version should use *Register* style. See the references suggested below.

Contestants may find links to free references at the upper left of the *Register* page of <http://www.americanancestors.org/the-register>. From related links, choose especially "Writing a Family Sketch in *Register* Style," and also "Download a *Register* Style Template for Microsoft Word," or "A Guide to Some Basic *Register* Citation Formats." See also *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

A small book, *Genealogical Writing in the 21st Century*, edited by Michael LeClerc and Henry Hoff, provides many helpful guidelines. It's available at www.americanancestors.org.

"Writing Register Style Using Newer Versions of Word," a useful article by Worcester Chapter President Seema Kenney, published in *MASSOG*. A PDF of the article is available here: http://www.msoginc.org/feature/massogvo137no2_kenney.pdf.

For any questions about the Writing Contest, contact Sara Costa at

msogwritingcontest@msoginc.org

Membership Information

- The newsletter, *Past Times*, is on the MSOG website free to all. If you prefer to have *Past Times* mailed to you, there is a \$7.95 fee per year for the postal service. Members also receive free *MASSOG* Journals, free queries, participation in the Member's Surname List and free attendance at the Annual Meeting.
- Membership is from September 1st to August 31st, with membership renewals due by July 1st. INDIVIDUAL dues are \$25.00 per year; FAMILY dues are \$30.00 per year. Membership applications received July 1st and thereafter will be applied to the following year's membership.
- Membership choices are BR/Bristol, MVI/Martha's Vineyard, MV/Merrimack Valley, MX/Middlesex, WR/Worcester.
- Chapter affiliation is at the complete discretion of the member, regardless of residence. (The membership application is on our website at <http://www.msoginc.org>.) Send your application and check to the treasurer or membership person of the chapter you wish to join. Addresses are below.

Past Times Information

- *Past Times* is published monthly (except for July & August) by the Massachusetts Society of Genealogists, Inc.

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