

## RIGS September 17 Meeting: Athenæums, Armories, & Greenes

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The next RIGS meeting will be held on Saturday, September 17, at the Varnum Armory in East Greenwich. As usual, our organizers have scheduled a packed and interesting program.

A representative from the **Redwood Library & Athenæum** in Newport will be with us to report on the renovations at Redwood as well as to speak to the various holdings of that library. Organized in 1747, Redwood is America's oldest lending library. After 250 years, the library is experiencing growing pains: its current facilities no longer meet the preservation needs of its historic collections.

In December 2004, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) awarded Redwood a grant to alleviate the problems. The NEH grant will be used for:

- the installation of climate control and fire suppression systems;
- improved lighting;
- building preservation and renovation; and
- a 4,500 gross sq. ft. addition to provide for more space for shelving and use of the library's humanities collection.

"This project is essential to reduce the risk of loss to our country of the Redwood's

*Cont. page 3*

### RIGS MEMBERS' MEETING & PROGRAM Saturday, September 17, 9:00am – 1:00pm

#### LOCATION:

**The Varnum Armory**  
Main Street  
East Greenwich, RI

#### AGENDA:

9:00 am **Gathering & Brief Business Meeting.**

9:30 am **Speaker: Redwood & Athenæum Library.**

10:45 am **Speaker: Roberta Humble.** Author of a book on the 18 **armories in RI**, Ms. Humble will speak about the armories and their role in RI history. (A tour of the Varnum Armory will be available to those interested.)

12 noon **Lunch.** A light lunch will be served for \$5.00. **Advance reservations are necessary.** Please send your check to Pat Chappell, 12 Highland Avenue, Narragansett, RI 02882.783-7006.

1:00 pm **Speaker: Thomas Enoch Greene.** Mr. Greene, a retired teacher and President of Nathaniel Greene Homestead in Coventry, will speak on the Greene family.

1:15 pm **Research: Greene Family.** This meeting is part of our series featuring RI families. We will be featuring the Greene family and ask that everyone bring charts, books, papers and especially their brick walls.



Nathaniel Greene Homestead,  
Coventry (Photo: Del Leu)

## Upcoming RIGS & Genealogical Events

### October 22 (Sat) HALF-DAY MEMBER MEETING & PROGRAM

12:30pm-3:30pm

See box for details. ←

### November 17 (Thurs) RESEARCH TRIP TO BOSTON

A choice of three research facilities will be offered:

- New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS),
- Massachusetts State Archives, and
- Boston Public Library.

Cost \$20. Advance reservations are required. Reserve your seat now and bring along a friend or two. Non-members are very welcome. For reservations, make your check payable to

**RIGS** and mail it to:

Helen Smith  
530 West Reach Drive  
Jamestown, RI 02835.

Be sure to include your name, address, telephone number, email address, and pick up point (Warwick Mall at 7:15am or East Providence Park-and-Ride on Rte. 44 at 7:30am). Also indicate which research facility you plan to work at. As

### RIGS MEMBERS' HALF-DAY MEETING & PROGRAM

Saturday, October 22, 12:30pm-3:30pm

#### LOCATION: Warwick Public Library

600 Sandy Lane  
Warwick, RI  
Parking is free in the library lot

#### AGENDA: 12:30pm Gathering & brief business meeting.

#### 1:00pm Speaker: Tom Kemp, Godfrey Library.

Mr. Kemp, Director of the Godfrey Library in Middletown, Connecticut, will update us on all the new and exciting changes and additions to the Godfrey collection and tell us about how we can access many databases through the Godfrey website.

#### 2:00pm Speaker: Sandra McLean Clunies CG, Association of Professional Genealogists (APG)

Ms. Clunies is President of the National Capital Area Chapter of the APG and a member of the APG Board of Directors. A professional genealogist and national speaker, she will be teaching us how to conduct research in Washington DC—right from our own home!

### CORRECTIONS

In the April newsletter we featured the new RIGS website. Unfortunately we gave the web address for the test site! The correct web address for RIGS is:

<http://www.rigensoc.org/>

Also, the heading for the April newsletter should have read Volume VII No. 5.

### August 30 - September 2, 2006

#### FEDERATION OF GENEALOGICAL SOCIETIES CONFERENCE

Boston, MA

The FGS 2006 Conference will be held in Boston. (For New Englanders, that's closer to home than Salt Lake City, this year's venue!) Cosponsored with the NEHGS, the theme will be "Birthplace of American Genealogy." RIGS will have a booth and a speaker.

### April 26-29, 2007 NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL GENEALOGICAL CONFERENCE

Hartford, CT

NERGC 2007 will be in Hartford at the new Connecticut Convention Center and Hartford Marriott Downtown, just off I-91, overlooking the Connecticut River.



View of Middletown, Conn., c1850, with Connecticut River in foreground.  
Wesleyan University Special Collections & Archives



## RIGS Sept. 17 Meeting (cont.)

historically significant library and its original humanities contents," a Redwood press release noted. "Successful completion of this project will result in the Redwood's humanities-centered library materials being preserved and more accessible to humanities researchers, scholars, and the general public."

The Redwood Library's special collections include the Original Collection purchased in England with the donation of £500 sterling by founder Abraham Redwood in 1749. Nearly 90% of the Original Collection's approximate 750 titles survive either in their original volumes or in replacement volumes, a number having disappeared when the library was used as a British officers' club during the Revolutionary War.

Also speaking at the September 17 meeting will be **Roberta Humble, coauthor of *The Historic Armories of Rhode Island***. Cowritten with Colonel (ret.) Howard F. Brown, the book is a pictorial view of 18 historic buildings designed for the military but often the center of community life in the towns and cities of Rhode Island. The oldest of these standing armories was built in 1835 while the youngster of this historic group was constructed in 1928. Built of brick and granite, wood and stone, these armor-

ies have survived through times where lesser architecture would have failed. "There is strength to armories; they are masculine and practical buildings, but they are also most welcoming in their architectural authority."

For most Rhode Islanders, the armories represented more than a military function. "From dances and meetings to circuses with Tom Thumb, voting, polio clinics, car shows, State Inauguration Balls—and home to the fast break in basketball—the armories have welcomed the people of Rhode Island." About half of the buildings profiled in the book have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. A tour of the Varnum Armory will be available to those interested.

After lunch, **Thomas Enoch Greene of North Providence, President of the Nathaniel**



*The completed restoration and renewal project, as depicted here in an architect's rendering, will restore and beautify the Redwood without compromising or altering its historic or architectural integrity. Much of the new addition will be below ground. The project was designed by the Boston architectural firm of Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson and Abbott.*

**Greene Homestead** in Coventry, will speak on the Greene family. We will break up into groups based on the various Greene families for the purpose of sharing information and trying to break down some of the brick walls our members have run up against while researching this old RI family. 📍



*Varnum Armory, East Greenwich, RI, will be the venue for the RIGS members meeting on September 17, as well as a program topic. The Varnum Continentals built their Armory in 1913 in the medieval architectural style. The armory is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A 1984 State Historical Building Survey described the Varnum Memorial Armory as remaining in perfect original condition. A tour of the Armory will be available to those interested.*

## RIGS Officers & Directors, 2005-2006

*At the annual meeting in Wickford on May 15, 2005, the following officers and directors were elected. These are some of your society's movers and shakers!*

*The RIGS Board of Directors is composed of six Officers, seven Directors and the Committee Chairpersons of various standing committees. The RIGS Board of Directors is elected at the annual meeting in May.*

### **RIGS BOARD OF DIRECTORS May 2005 through May 2006**

#### **President – Robert Allen Greene**

Robert Allen was one of the founding members of RIGS and over the years has mentored many Rhode Island genealogists. He is an active member of the Sons of the American Revolution, past Governor-General of the Mayflower Society, member of the Rhode Island Historical Society Advisory Board, and on the Board of Directors for the Roger Williams Family Association. His in-depth publishing and genealogical experience provides RIGS with both continuity of purpose and practical knowledge of genealogy.

#### **Past President – Leonora "Lee" Dursin**

Lee was president of RIGS from May 2003 to May 2005. A motivational leader, she was instrumental in setting up the mentoring program and reaching out to the wider community. She is active in many Rhode Island historical and genealogical groups and is an active member of the RIGS Board.

#### **1st Vice President – Patricia Chappell**

For many years Pat has been an energetic member of RIGS, the friendly face that greets new and old RIGS workshop attendees and part of the RIGS Reporter newsletter distribution committee. Over the years her search for French Huguenot ancestors has taken her to France and she has accumulated a wealth of information on Rhode Island Huguenots.

#### **2nd Vice President – Helen Smith**

Helen's interest in genealogy began early as she helped her mother gather research information at family reunions and picnics, and she still enjoys the "people side" of genealogy. She plans RIGS bus trips to various regional research facilities, finds speakers for RIGS programs and organizes special interest workshops.

#### **Treasurer – Otis C. Wyatt**

Although not officially a genealogist, Otis has been the RIGS Treasurer for the past six years and is the RIGS delegate to the New England

Regional Genealogical Conference (NERGC). Recently he was elected president of NERGC.

#### **Recording Secretary – Tom Clarke**

For the past fifteen years Tom has been the one and only member of the Transcription Committee and has recorded most of the RIGS quarterly and annual workshops. He will continue in that capacity, as well as documenting the various RIGS meetings. Many of Tom's Clarke ancestors were colonial era Rhode Island residents so his family research has taken him through 200+ years of Rhode Island history.

#### **Corresponding Secretary – Marion Willey**

Even though Marion has been a member of RIGS for many years and is a longtime Rhode Island resident, she does not claim to be a genealogist. Her husband, Bert Willey, was the family genealogist and wanted Marion to research her side of the family. Shortly after they married, Marion pointed out that most of her ancestors are buried in just one upstate New York cemetery, so it didn't take Bert long to conclude that Marion didn't need to be a research "expert." Although she's not a genealogist, Marion has contributed countless hours in support of RIGS.

#### **Director – Term to 2008 - Neil Dunay**

The fresh new look of the RIGS Reporter is the work of Neil Dunay. For more than fifteen years Neil has been researching his Rhode Island ancestors and in 1996 he completed the National Genealogical Society's American Genealogy course. His research on the Shippee family of East Greenwich was published in Roots in June 2000. Neil has also served as President of the Cocomscussoc Association (Smith's Castle), Wickford.

#### **Director – Term to 2007 – Patricia Wyatt**

Pat's genealogical research expertise, developed over the past fifty years, is recognized both nationally and regionally. For the past six years Pat has written and edited The RIGS Reporter and also published a column, "From the Treetop," for the Narragansett Times. She was president of RIGS from May 1999 through

## RIGS Leadership (from p4)

May 2003. RIGS is a successful genealogical society because of her past leadership and tireless efforts on our behalf.

### **Director – Term to 2006 – Geraldine "Geri" Clarke**

In addition to participating on the RIGS Board of Directors, Geri Clarke has indexed Rhode Island Roots for the last ten years. Her index to the entire series is an invaluable part of the CD, entitled Twenty-Six Years of Rhode Island Roots 1975-2000, sold by RIGS.

### **Director – Term current year appointment – Pat Long**

A family funeral and the discovery that her Sheldon family roots could be found only a few blocks away from her home jumpstarted Pat's interest in genealogy. Born and bred in New England, Pat brings 30+ years of research experience to the RIGS Board. She is a welcome new addition to the Board.

### **Director – Term current year appointment – Lois Sorensen**

A retired high school teacher, Lois began her family research three years ago after reading old letters written by her great grandmother. She has progressed quickly and now maintains a website that documents her family's past. She fields many queries through her website and helps people figure out where they fit on the "tree."

### **Director – Term current year appointment – Tom Wilber**

In conjunction with Geri Clarke, Tom has placed the 26-year index to the Rhode Island Roots on a CD in a digital format that allows readers to easily search for specific surnames and information. Currently Tom is transcribing all the Federal Censuses and developing an "all-name" index for the town of Voluntown, Connecticut.

### **Director – Term current year appointment – Barbara Maggiacomo**

Twelve years ago a trip to the Warwick LDS center to help a friend introduced Barbara to the world of genealogy and she has been "hooked" ever since. For the past several years Barbara has served as the recording secretary for RIGS and is also very active in other Rhode Island organizations. She is a volunteer for the

Providence Performing Arts Center, sits on the advisory board for the Salvatore Mancini Resource and Activity Center and serves on the North Providence St. Lawrence Church Parish Council. Barbara is interested in both Rhode Island Irish and French Canadian genealogy.

The foregoing were all elected to serve you but there are many others, appointed if you will, also to serve you. There is **Cherry Bamberg** who contributes countless hours editing our quarterly, RI ROOTS. **Sally Hilton** chairs the committee that provides our delectable foods and gathers the committee that prepares the RI Reporter. **Meredith Sorenson** is no longer our mainstay in the reference department of the RI Historical Society as she has accepted a position with Brown University. **Deby Nunes** presides over your queries to RI Roots and **Mary Ostiguy** chairs a committee that selects the nominees for our awards. And...and... We thank them, one and all, for their very real contributions. ▲

### **YOUR SOCIETY WANTS YOU!**

RIGS is in need of a **Membership Chair**. If you think you might be interested or if you have a nomination, please call the President (home 403-789-1677; off. 403-884-7530).

Former membership chair Bill Caswell has done a wonderful job and carefully restored order to our records but now wants to proceed to other things. Duties of the RIGS Membership Chair include:

- Maintain the membership list (adding & dropping members, address changes, and family research information);
- Print and mail member renewal forms (750-800 each fall with a follow-up during the winter for those still outstanding);
- Process renewals and provide membership cards;
- Provide mailing lists for Roots (quarterly) and the newsletter (5 times per year); and
- Prepare the member directory when needed.

The membership information is kept in an Access database. Therefore, the membership chairman should have a working knowledge of Microsoft Access.

## Tips & Tidbits

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM RECENT GENEALOGICAL MAGAZINES

The summer magazines of 2005 have much to recommend them.

- The September issue of **History** has a series of articles on the years 1050-1099.
- The July-August issue of **NGS NewsMagazine** tackles the Civil War, including an article on Civil War photographs.
- The June **Family Chronicle** contains an outstanding article of "101 Records You Might Have Missed."
- The summer issue of **Forum** has descriptions and a chart of "Major Epidemics of the 19th Century in North America."
- The October **Family Tree** explains in great detail how you can research "Old School" records.
- The July/August issue of **Ancestry** tells you how to approach WPA records and offers a superlative article on "Ships, Boats and Shipbuilding in Early America." (See the chart of various ships, such as barks, frigates, and clippers.)
- Earlier in the year, **Everton's Genealogical Helper** of January/February has an article on "Living History Illuminates Ancestors' Lives" (blacksmithing) and one on beginning your Scots-Irish research.
- The Winter issue of

**Heritage Quest** had a good article on "Recording German Place Names" and Germanic research.

- Even the **New England Historical and Genealogical Register (NEHGR)** has something for us: "New England Articles In Genealogical Journals in 2003."

There's something for everyone. Hie thee thither to a decent library!

### OPENING OF MILITARY PERSONNEL RECORDS AND ARCHIVAL RESEARCH ROOM

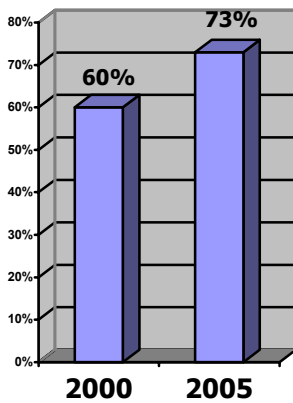
On Saturday, June 11, 2005, the National Archives National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis formally opened nearly 1.2 million official military personnel files of former US Navy and Marine Corps enlisted personnel who served between 1885 and 1939. This first opening also includes 150 "persons of exceptional prominence," including presidents, famous military leaders, celebrities, entertainers and professional athletes who served in the military and have been deceased for at least 10 years. Notables include Charles Lindbergh, President John F. Kennedy, General George S. Patton, Steve McQueen, Clark Gable, and Jackie Robinson. The National Archives National Personnel Records Center is located 9700 Page Avenue, in suburban north St. Louis County.

### AMERICANS' FASCINATION WITH FAMILY HISTORY IS RAPIDLY GROWING

The popularity of family history is officially on the rise. That's the outcome of a June 2005 poll by Market Strategies, Inc. (MSI) for MyFamily.com, Inc. According to the poll, 73 percent of Americans are interested in discovering their family history. This figure represents a 13 percent increase over a similar Maritz Poll that was conducted in 2000, in which 60 percent of Americans said they were interested in discovering their family history.

Of the people surveyed, 65 percent said their interest is due to simply hearing stories from relatives. Thirty-five percent have had their interest piqued after attending a family reunion or family event. Talking to a friend, colleague or family member who was researching their family history got the ball rolling for 29 percent. And 25 percent of respondents became interested in family history after just searching for their surname online.

Of those interested in discovering their family roots, almost a third (29 percent) have created a family tree. Some have taken their interest even further—15 percent of respondents have traveled to an ancestral hometown or country and 11 percent have written a personal or family history.



Interest in family history is on the rise, according to a poll taken in June on behalf of MyFamily.com.



**SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS of the RHODE ISLAND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**

ID	Title	Price	Quantity	Total
DIR2004	<b>2004 RIGS Membership Directory</b> <i>Shipped (no need to add additional shipping on this item)</i>	For Members Only: \$ 8.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
TIL	<b>The Diary of Capt. Samuel Tillinghast of Warwick, Rhode Island, 1757-1766</b> Cherry Fletcher Bamberg (hardcover, 528 pp)	NonMember Price: \$ 29.00 Special to Members: \$ 25.00	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
GOR	<b>Elder John Gorton &amp; the Six Principle Baptist Church of East Greenwich, RI</b> Cherry Fletcher Bamberg (hardcover, 630 pp)	NonMember Price: \$ 36.00 Special to Members: \$ 29.00	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
ELM	<b>Elm Grove Cemetery of North Kingstown, Rhode Island</b> Althea H. McAleer (hardcover, 392 pp)	NonMember Price: \$ 35.00 Special to Members: \$ 27.00	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
NBG	<b>North Burial Ground Providence, Rhode Island Old Section 1700-1848</b> John E. Sterling (hardcover, 480 pp)	NonMember Price: \$ 39.00 Special to Members: \$ 31.00	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
SOK	<b>South Kingstown, Rhode Island Historical Cemeteries</b> John E. Sterling & James L. Wheaton IV (hardcover, 653 pp)	NonMember Price: \$ 39.00 Special to Members: \$ 35.00	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
STD	<b>Daniel Stedman's Diary, 1826-1859</b> Henry Clay Oatley, Jr. (softcover, 424 pp)	NonMember Price: \$ 37.00 Special to Members: \$ 32.00	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
HUL	<b>Huling Genealogy: Descendants of James &amp; Margaret Huling</b> Esther Woodworth Barnes (hardcover, 692 pp)	Special Offer: \$ 30.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
CD26	<b>Twenty-Six Years of Rhode Island Roots, 1975-2000 (CD)</b>	NonMember Price: \$ 39.95 Special to Members: \$ 31.00	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

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## RIGS Events Calendar in Brief

**MARK  
YOUR  
CALENDAR  
TODAY!**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>
<b>Sept. 17</b> (Sat)	9am-1:15pm	<b>RIGS Regular Meeting &amp; Program</b> Program includes Redwood Library, RI Armories, & Greene family Varnum Armory, East Greenwich, RI
<b>Oct. 22</b> (Sat)	9am-1:15pm	<b>RIGS Regular Meeting &amp; Program</b> Program includes Godfrey Library (Middletown, CT) & researching DC records from home Warwick Public Library, Warwick, RI
<b>Nov. 17</b> (Thur)	7:15am-7:30pm	<b>RIGS Bus Tour</b> Research Trip to Boston: - New England Historic Genealogical Society - Massachusetts State Archives - Boston Public Library

**For full program details on these events, see pp 1-3.**



**RHODE ISLAND  
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**  
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### **The RIGS Reporter**

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