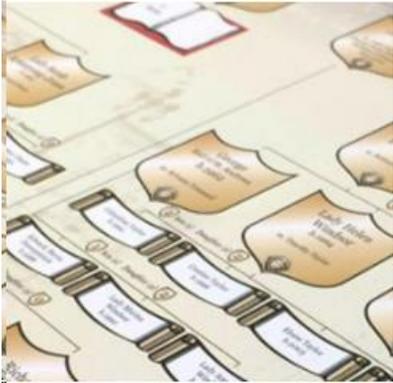




**MTGS Messenger**  
**Vol. 20, No. 2**  
**March 2024**  
**Jim Long, Editor**



### **Lining up for Lineage Societies**

The next regular MTGS meeting is [this Saturday, March 16, at 1:00pm Central Time](#), both in-person at the Tennessee State Library and Archives, and on Zoom.

**MerryAnne Pierson**, longtime MTGS member, tireless genealogy researcher and the State Lineage Research Chair for the [Tennessee DAR](#), will explain the various **lineage societies** that genealogists can join – where to find societies, basic rules of joining, and examples of what can be used for lineage proofs. Are some societies pickier on their application forms? Spoiler Alert: yes!

MerryAnne is a member of several lineage societies herself, including the National Society Colonial Dames of America, Daughters of the American Colonists, Mayflower Society, and the Daughters of the American Revolution. Learn from her personal and professional experience so that you can find - and join - a society in honor of an ancestor.

This meeting is open to the public and we hope that you can join us, either in-person or via Zoom.

The Zoom link for this meeting is <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84107945071>.

---



## Another Grand Day in Granville – July 27

The [Upper Cumberland Family History and Genealogy Festival](#) in Granville, TN will take place this year on July 27. MTGS sponsored a booth at last year's festival, and I understand that it was: (1) well-attended; (2) a bit hot; (3) a bit stormy; (4) a LOT of fun. We will be there again this year!

The photo at left was taken at the 2023 festival by MTGS own' photographer extraordinaire, Bonnie Winn. Oh, wait, Bonnie is in the photo...but she's still a great photographer, capturing the fun we have at MTGS gatherings.



## The Norfolk (England) Family History Society Wants You

If you have ancestors from Norfolk, England, and don't yet know about the [Norfolk Family History Society](#), here's an introduction. The Society welcomes people researching Norfolk ancestors and family history, with about 4,000 members worldwide. The Society operates a research library in Norwich, and members enjoy access to the Norfolk Online Record Search (NORS) database – a collection of nearly 5 million records scanned from the society's holdings. The society publishes a quarterly Journal to its members, and offers an online Members Interests (surname search) database.

## “That Line Made the Trip Worth It”

At the County Archives where I volunteer, I recently hosted a visiting researcher who, by all accounts, had little need for an in-person visit. She had researched the Archives' holdings online, had ordered copies-by-email of records that our website publicized, and had done years of personal research and DNA testing. But she explained that she just had to make an in-person visit...just in case...

She was researching surnames that were quite rare in the county – Ralston and O’Brien. She had found few records in her research, and we ourselves had few county records to offer her, most of which she’d already ordered. She was able to point primarily to an 1880 census record in which her ancestor Charles Ralston (age 27) was living with his wife Chana (age 18, maiden name O’Brien) and his widowed mother-in-law, Sarah O’Brien (age 45). There was no hint at who Mr. O’Brien might have been, but there were a couple of *Mike* O’Briens running around the county in the years preceding 1880.

She also shared a family story that the maiden name of Mrs. O’Brien might have been *Gunson* – a story that was supported by some DNA matches. When she said Gunson, I replied that it was a slightly-more-common surname, and that they did live in the same part of the county where the Ralstons and O’Briens had lived (and had left so few records).

I pulled off the shelf in the Archives’ research room a book that we had not discussed in our prior emails – the 40-year-old county cemetery book – and turned to the page where the Gunson Cemetery was listed. This entry jumped right out at her:

**O'BRIEN, Catherine--Dec. 23, 1863-Oct. 1873--dau. of M. & Sarah**

An O’Brien, about the same age as her ancestor Chana (O’Brien) Ralston and born to a Sarah O’Brien, was buried in the Gunson Cemetery.

“That line made the trip worth it,” she beamed (after her heart restarted).

---

It’s been a tough month for your humble Editor, so I must keep things short this time.