



**MICHIGAN GENEALOGICAL COUNCIL**

**P.O. Box 80953**

**Lansing, MI 48908-0953**

**<http://mimgc.org>**

June 1, 2010

Re: SB 1154

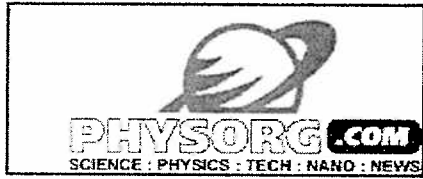
Last August the Michigan Genealogical Council (MGC) rallied in front of the Capitol and marched over to the Michigan Library and Historical Center surrounding the building with genealogists, historians and librarians holding a green ribbon. We were protesting the Governor's Executive Order breaking up the Michigan Department of History, Arts, and Libraries. Language in the EO also threatened the scattering of what was termed the "non-Michigan Genealogical Collection". We were also active participants in the Michigan Library Association rally in September. This second rally took place the day after the Governor amended her original EO.

This year while we have been less visible, we have not been inactive. The MGC has been actively seeking a solution and participating in the process with the Michigan Center for Innovation and Reinvention (MCIR) Board, which the Governor charged to find the best uses for the Michigan Library and Historical Center Building. We have been looking for solutions that will:

1. Keep all of the genealogy collections under the same roof at the Michigan Library and Historical Center.
2. Keep the collections accessible to researchers.
3. Keep these collections under the protection and control of State government.

The current boilerplate language in SB 1154 is too restrictive in helping the Library reach these goals. Negotiations have been taking place that satisfy each of three goals. The MGC is concerned if the bill advances in its present form, the best solution that has been placed on the table will be prohibited by this very well meaning yet overly restrictive language inserted with the intent of preserving the collection. There is no funding in place to staff, maintain, and continue to develop the collection.

At each of the MCIR Board meetings, our representative, Dr. Frank Boles, Director of the Clarke Historical Library has been present. In addition to Frank, at the March 15 meeting, Curt Witcher, Manager of the Genealogy Center at the Allen County Public Library in Ft. Wayne, Indiana was also on hand to offer his expert testimony about a genealogy collection being utilized as a magnet for tourism. Curt and his team have effectively transformed Ft. Wayne into a destination for family history buffs from every state. His message was, if Ft.



## Genealogical tourism redefining leisure travel market, professor says

March 4th, 2010 in Other Sciences / Social Sciences



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Recreation, sport and tourism professor Carla Santos, right, and graduate student Grace Yan found that genealogical tourism reflects contemporary tourists' preference for authentic, lived experiences over the bubble-like environment of an all-inclusive resort or a pleasure cruise. Credit: L. Brian Stauffer

**For the work-weary, the word "vacation" may conjure images of leisurely, carefree days at the beach sipping umbrella drinks. But according to published research by a University of Illinois expert in tourism and recreation, genealogical tourism is one of the fastest growing markets in vacation travel because it represents a conscious shift away from relaxation and into the realm of personal enrichment and fulfillment.**

The increase in popularity of genealogical tourism reflects contemporary tourists' preference for authentic, lived experiences over the bubble-like environment of an all-inclusive resort or a pleasure cruise, says U. of I. recreation, sport and tourism professor Carla Santos.

"Genealogical tourism provides an irreplaceable dimension of material reality that's missing from our postmodern society," Santos said.

Traveling to the old church where one's great grandparents used to worship in rural Ireland, or buying a loaf of bread from a tiny grocery store in the village where one's grandmother was from in Greece create a critical space to imagine and feel life as a form of continuation, says co-author and U. of I. graduate student Grace Yan.

The study, published in a recent issue of the *Journal of Travel Research*, also asserts that the popularity of genealogical tourism is due to living in a world where mediated, inauthentic experiences have become such an ingrained part of everyday life that we're almost unaware of it.

"Genealogical tourism capitalizes on this by allowing individuals to experience the sensuous charms of antiquity, and provides a way of experiencing something eternal and authentic that transcends the present," Santos said.