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NEHGS DISCOVERS THAT BEN AFFLECK AND MATT DAMON ARE COUSINS

October 9, 2009 (Boston, MA) – Researchers at the New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) recently uncovered family lines that link the Hollywood duo. Ben Affleck and Matt Damon are 10th cousins, once removed. Both are decedents of William Knowlton, Jr. (1615-1655) of Ipswich, MA.

William Knowlton Jr. was born in England and arrived with his parents to the U.S. in the early 1630s. He was bricklayer by trade. William Jr.'s two children that Affleck and Damon descend from are Thomas and Mary Knowlton, born in the 1640s.

The Hollywood duo each descends from Knowlton's two children; Affleck from Knowlton's son Thomas, and Damon from daughter Mary. Working on the research were NEHGS staff genealogists Chris Child, who specializes in early New England and Presidential research, and Rhonda McClure, who has done genealogical research for many celebrities. Longtime NEHGS genealogist Gary Boyd Roberts also contributed to the research.

Affleck, who was born in California but grew up in Boston, is also related to 16 U.S Presidents including Barack Obama, as well as the late Princess Diana.

About NEHGS

Founded in 1845, New England Historic Genealogical Society is the country's oldest and largest non-profit genealogical organization, with more than 23,000 members nationally. NEHGS collects, preserves, and interprets materials that help make accessible the histories of families in America. The NEHGS research center, located at 99 Newbury Street, Boston, one of the most respected genealogical libraries in the field, is home to millions of books, journals, manuscripts, photographs, microfilms, documents, records, and other artifacts that date back more than four centuries. The award-winning web site www.NewEnglandAncestors.org offers access to more than 110 million names in 2,400 searchable databases. NEHGS staff includes some of the leading expert genealogists in the country, specializing in early American, Irish, English, Italian, Scottish, Atlantic and French Canadian, African American, Native American, and Jewish genealogy.