



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

Contents

Upcoming Meetings	p 1	Calendar	p 4	About Us	p 8
July Meeting Recap	p 1-2	Member Events	p 5	Membership	p 9
President Msg	p 2-3	New Members	p 6	Newsletter Info	p 10
Articles	p 3-4	Member Focus	p 6-7	Email Updates	p 10

Upcoming Meetings

August 2017 Meeting

Our annual trip to the Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History is just around the corner. Join us on August 2nd from 6-8 PM for our highly anticipated exclusive visit for a night of research. We get the place to ourselves, but remember, you have to be a paid member to attend! Due to limited space, sign up is required. Click on this link and let us know. The first 30 get on the list with others put on a waiting list. westmassgen@gmail.com

September 2017 Meeting

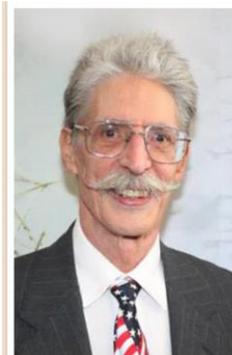
Our September meeting will feature Diane Brooks-Sherry, a genealogist, speaker, researcher and educator located in the Boston area, speaking on DP.LA (the Digital Public Library of America), a fabulous source for free digitized books.



July 2017 Meeting Recap

Our July 5th meeting was a presentation entitled “Paleography – Reading Old Handwriting” by Edwin Strickland. Paleography is the study of ancient writing systems and, in genealogy, it is an essential skill to have in order to accurately read the cursive handwriting encountered in many of the older primary documents. Edwin presented on several topics at the recent NERGC conference in Springfield including a two-hour hands-on workshop on this topic.

Edwin is a self-taught genealogist with over 40 years’ experience. He is a Past President and a Governor of the Connecticut Society of Genealogists; charter member of the Descendants of the Founders of Ancient Windsor, having served as President and as



Edwin W. Strickland II
NERGC 2017 speaker

Genealogist for nearly 30 years; charter member of the Connecticut Professional Genealogist Council where he is a consultant for the Ancestors Road Show and current Vice-President.

[Return to Contents page](#)

Message from the President

Dave Robison

Welcome to the hot and hazy days of summer! It's a blessing that all our meetings are in a modern, clean, well maintained, air-conditioned building. As our 2016 – 2017 season comes to a close, I want everyone to appreciate, as I do, the help and courtesy extended to Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society as a group and to each of us individually by the staff at the Agawam Senior Center. Our collective "Thank you" goes out to them. We wouldn't be where we are today without the ease with which we operate at their facility.

Going in the 2017 – 2018 season, we're about to embark on our annual membership renewal campaign. With a wide variety of membership options, we are striving to appeal to as many people as possible: individual, couples, students and life-time memberships. I think we've covered it all! And your \$25 individual membership cost is indeed a great genealogical value.

We continue to work hard at presenting interesting, knowledgeable speakers in a wide spectrum of subjects. In addition, we are spreading our wings by getting active in outside programs, NERGC being the greatest example. By the time you read this, we will have been a participant/vendor in the 2nd annual Pioneer Valley History Camp, held at the Kittredge Center on the campus of Holyoke Community College. The Camp is an event put together largely by the staff at MOSH, Cliff McCarthy and Maggie Humberston modeled after a similar camp in Boston. It was very well received last year at the inaugural event and sold out quickly this year.

Indexing, a critical step in allowing all of us to conduct on-line research, is so important that WMGS has begun an indexing campaign. We're meeting once a month to bring together a group of WMGS members to index records at FamilySearch.org. Family Search has just inaugurated a new, cloud-based program that makes it more than easy to set up a free indexing account which you can access from any computer with internet access. That's a step beyond the older program which required an application be downloaded to your computer. We wouldn't have been able to have our indexing group meet at the Senior Center unless everyone brought their own laptop or tablet. Now, we simply use the computers in the computer lab where we conduct our research clinics.

Getting the younger generation interested in family history while they themselves are still young is an issue that we are tackling at WMGS. Board Member Nancy Netherwood is spearheading a Boy Scout Genealogy Badge Program. There are a few Boy Scout Troops that are interested and the event should take place sometime this fall. Nancy and I participated in a similar event at the Chicopee Library earlier this year where 18 Scouts did the work and all passed all the requirements to earn their badge. At least 4 Scout Leaders led them, 2 of whom had a very high interest in family history. Some of the Scouts made a few surprising discoveries while at the Library. One young man told me he found his grandfather. When I congratulated him, I asked to see what he found, he showed me a record that indicated his grandfather was born in 1955. That puts the generational aspect into perspective!

Finally, here's a very interesting program. I think that everyone is aware that I'm a big proponent of recording your own history. My favorite line in my ABC's of Genealogy class is "Raise your hands if you'd like to talk to your great grandparents!" Needless to say, everyone raises their hand. "So why don't you allow your great grandchildren and the rest of your descendants to talk to you?" I then launch into suggestions on interviewing yourself. Record your voice, video yourself, write your story...whatever. A month or so ago, a patron at the Springfield Library asked if she could be directed to someone who could help her record the story of her life as an African-American growing up in post-World War II Springfield. The librarian contacted Maggie Humberston at MOSH and Maggie then asked me if I knew someone. Yes, I did: Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society to the rescue! Jeanne Leblond and I have had an initial interview with the patron and will have a few follow-up visits. Our plan is to record her story using the StoryCorp which will then be uploaded to the Library of Congress where her descendants and anyone, for that matter, can access her voice and her story.

I'm very excited about this one!!

Please consider renewing your membership today before you forget. Access the "JOIN" tab at www.westmassgen.com and click the category of membership below the PayPal button. And remember, you DO NOT NEED a PayPal account, just your own credit/debit card. Anyone renewing would not need to fill out a membership application. Otherwise, renew at the next meeting in August (if you've signed up to attend the MOSH visit), mail a check to WMGS, PO BO 418, West Springfield, MA 01090-0418, or bring a check or cash with you to the September meeting.

See you soon!
Dave Robison
President

[Return to Contents page](#)

Articles

Where were they in 1860?

By Hillary Schau

So much of the time we research individuals and families, collecting census records for who was what age and where but if you look closer, you will discover there is often an overlap of families providing information of what is happening in their lives.

In 1860, Wenham, MA, the federal census described a household (no relationships listed yet) as

David White.	58
Abigail White.	59
Achsah Smith.	24
Timothy C Smith	28
Georgianna Smith	4
John H Bailey	16
Madeline A Woodbury	14

David, Timothy and John were all listed as shoemakers. Four different surnames. Plus, looking further to the right of the census, both Timothy Smith and John Bailey were listed as "deaf."

Reviewing my earlier research, I identified the people as:

Abigail, born Abigail Woodbury

She first married John Lennon and had the following three children

- Anna Lennon
- Abigail Jane Lennon
 - Married Paul Hill and had 5 children
 - Married Henry Bailey and had 2 more children including **John Henry Bailey**
- William Woodbury Lennon (my ancestor)

After John Lennon died, Abigail married **David White** and had one more child

- **Achsah White**
 - Married **Timothy Smith**. They had one child.
 - **Georgianna Smith**

As a start, the household consists of Abigail, her second husband David, daughter (from David), son in law and granddaughter. Also, living with them is a grandson from her first marriage (John H Bailey). In 1850, ten years earlier, John was living in Beverly, MA, with his mother, Abigail, and her second husband along with 6 other children. The household was getting crowded? Or John didn't get along with his step-father? John's mother and step-father were still living in Beverly in 1860 with 6 children, his, hers and theirs (including a baby). Since John was deaf, he might have needed some extra care that the White household could provide? So many possible scenarios.

And who was **Madeline Woodbury**? She ended up being Abigail's niece from her brother Herbert Woodbury. Herbert and his wife Lucy lived two doors down. Herbert was also a shoemaker but why was Madeline not living with her parents? That's another story. Maybe to help care for Georgianna? Tension in her family?

These people long ago had complicated lives, just like now. Children moved in with relatives and, with different surnames, identification is critical to see who is who. Take the time to look and you may be surprised at the different family structures you can discover.

Copyright © 2017 Hillary Schau Used with permission by Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society.

[Return to Contents page](#)

e

Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
Wednesday, 26 July 2017 6 - 8 PM	Indexing Project – Continue Indexing for FamilySearch.org at the Agawam Senior Center – once a month after this
Wednesday, 2 August 2017 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Meeting – Field Trip to MOSH! Read the description above and sign up to reserve your spot
Thursday, 17 August 2017 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 24 August 2017 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Wednesday 6 September 2017 6 - 8 PM	WMGS Meeting - Diane Brooks-Sherry presenting on DP.LA (Digital Public Library of America)
Thursday, 21 September 2017 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 28 September 2017 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center

Genealogy Research Clinics are free to WMGS members. There is a \$10 fee per session for non-members. Annual WMGS membership is just \$25.

[Return to Contents page](#)

Member Events

Dave Robison has scheduled a number of classes, workshops and presentations so far this year and there are more to come! They include single presentations, four and five session programs and at least two (2) intermediate to advanced courses in genealogy research. Please click here to search the calendar for scheduled events "[Calendar](#)" that he will be presenting throughout Massachusetts.

Regional Events

If you have ancestors from Canada and would like to go on an awesome vacation/hunt this October, check out the [Great Canadian Genealogy Summit](#). Many speakers at this conference are unknown to us but have alternative ways of looking at problems in genealogical research as well as strategies for using record sets and archives unique to Canada. Plus, you'd have a chance to connect with fellow genealogists up North.



New WMGS Members

The Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society (WMGS) welcomes our five newest members:

Gary MacQueston
Deborah DuBock
John-Paul Boisvert
Kimberly Longridge
Norma McCain

We hope that they will avail themselves of all that WMGS has to offer and that they find success in the hunt for family ancestors.

Member Focus

Barbara Tessicini

By Jeanne Leblond

Born in Agawam, but returning to this area after being widowed after 53 years of marriage, Barbara Tessicini joined WMGS along with her brother, Ken Grady several years ago.

Barbara developed an interest in her family's history years ago, but only dabbled at it until about 4 years ago. The past always interested her, but she recalls that a visit to a Cape Cod gift shop located in an old house spurred her into beginning her research into her own family. While others browsed, she asked about the history of the original owners of the house.

Barbara's inspiration for her research was her mother's revealing two years prior to her death, that she did not know who her birth father was. Promising to find that information, Barbara and Ken began their research.

When Barbara and her brother were children, their mother had told them a story about being shot in the hand as a child. They were aware of a scar on her hand, but when questioned about it, the only information that her mother provided was that her father had shot at her mother and had hit his daughter in the hand.

They started their search to find their mother's birth father at the Providence, RI, archives. Unable to find their grandmother's death certificate, they were surprised when a clerk produced a marriage certificate for her second marriage to Thomas Curley.

They have discovered that their maternal grandmother, Mary Loretta Serror, who was born in Greenville, Ontario, Canada, was first married to Joseph Reilley in Providence, RI, in 1905. Widowed in 1913, Mary married a second time to Thomas Curley. They suspected that he was their mother's birth father, but a comparison of DNA results from Thomas' descendants and Barbara's family indicates that they are not related. They were hopeful that there was a connection, as Barbara's DNA results list Irish and English heritage.

Thomas Curley's niece has told them that he was jailed for a domestic reason, so they're planning to make a return trip to Providence, RI, to search out his incarceration records or a newspaper article about the shooting. A previous trip to the Providence, RI, City Hall Archives to research their maternal line was interesting, but since they were novices, they were unsure of questions to ask. But, it was a memorable genealogical trip, as the dusty attic archives reminded them of "Hogwarts" in J. K. Rowlings' Harry Potter novels.



They are also researching their paternal grandmother, Margaret Roach/Roche who immigrated from Ireland as an indentured servant about the 1870's. Her parents are still unknown. She was the only grandmother that they knew, so focusing on her Irish ancestry become an interest.

One memorable find was the obituary of their maternal uncle, "Father Nick" Serror, who was the head of the biology department at Providence College. Two of his notable achievements were helping to develop a cure for ringworm and helping to develop Eclipse Coffee Syrup, a New England favorite. Still sold today, Barbara will attest that it makes fantastic coffee milk shakes.



DNA results have led to contacts with many new relatives and a connection with a cousin, whom she hadn't seen for over 50 years. They're hopeful that a distant cousin found through DNA may give them a clue to the identification of their mother's birth father. Another trip to Providence, RI, to research court records on the shooting is planned, as well as a trip to Prescott, Ontario, where her maternal grandmother was born. And, of course, a trip to Ireland is on their agenda!

Barbara is blessed with 3 children, 7 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild, and another one on the way. She plans to create a family tree poster with names and photos to pass down to her descendants.

Despite the brick walls, Barbara has some sage advice to share. She says, "Don't give up, but take a break when you start getting confused on names, dates, etc." She suggests evaluating your earlier work and checking your information on ancestors. Either confirm them with sources or delete them from your database. Many ancestors can have the same names, including middle names. The hardest task is finding sources to confirm them, but it is crucial. She's also suggests that when planning a research trip to an archive or city hall, do your homework in advance by developing a list of questions to be researched.

And, as we've all discovered, information that has been passed down in families may or may not be true.

Copyright © 2017 Jeanne Leblond Used with permission by Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society.

[Return to Contents page](#)

About Us



The Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society was founded in Springfield, Hampden County, Massachusetts in 1972, and officially incorporated on 6 February 1973. We are devoted to the research and documentation of our family ancestry and history. We also assist others in the pursuit of discovering their ancestry.

We meet year-round on the first Wednesday of each month from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, located at 954 Main Street in Agawam, Massachusetts. We welcome non-members and beginning

genealogists. Please join us!

We currently have about 100 active members, approximately 80% living in the Western Massachusetts area. The other 20% are residents of other states but with ancestry from Massachusetts or New England.

We receive numerous inquiries each month via U.S. & e-mail from people looking for information on area families. Our members are happy to volunteer to research these requests

Dave Robison – President

Jeanne Leblond – Vice President

Deborah Woodford – Treasurer

Katy Krause – Assistant to Treasurer

Ann McDougal – Secretary

Hillary Schau – Newsletter Editor

Susan Levenson – Webmaster

Jeanne Leblond – Surname Project Coordinator

Ellen Janik – Facebook Administrator

Carolea Hayden – Refreshment Coordinator

Diane Ascoti – Founder

Fran Malone, Nancy Netherwood and Hillary Schau - Directors

Susan Levenson, Katy Krause & Dee Pederson – Website Redesign Team.

Meeting Details

We meet year-round on the first Wednesday of each month at the Agawam Senior Center, located at 954 Main Street in Agawam, Massachusetts.

Our genealogy research clinics are offered on the third and fourth Thursdays of the month from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center. The cost of the computer class is \$10 for non-members; free for members of the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society.

We look forward to you joining us at our next meeting!

[Return to Contents page](#)

Membership

Like most things in life, membership is not free - but for our reasonable annual membership fee, you get a lot for your money.

Reasons to Join Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

1. Meet people with similar interests of family history and genealogy
2. Attend monthly meetings featuring local and national presenters
3. Receive assistance from our members on your family research
4. Attend our free genealogy research clinics held twice per month (3rd & 4th Thursday of month - \$10 / session non-members)
5. Share our library of resources including books and CDs
6. Opportunity to serve as a volunteer, coach or be a member of the Board of Directors

Membership Dues

Annual membership runs from 1 September to 31 August each year. Membership rates are:

- \$25 for an individual membership
- \$40 for a couple of the same household
- \$15 for students
- \$500 for Lifetime membership

Join by mail, email, or in person at our monthly meeting: Click [here](#) for the WMGS Application for Membership; the image is to your right to view, save, and print. Payments may be made online on our [Join Page](#), by mail at the address listed below, or brought in person to one of our meetings.

Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society
P.O. Box 418
West Springfield, MA 01090

Membership Renewal Time!

As we all should be aware, the annual memberships to the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society run from September through August of the following year. Now is the time to renew your memberships for the 2017-2018 season. The most efficient way to take care of this is through our website. Here's the link to the "Join" page: <https://westmagenealogy.com/join/>. Now you don't have to join again, just renew. To do that, simply scroll down the page and click on the PayPal link. YOU DO NOT NEED A PAYPAL ACCOUNT to use this secure, convenient and simple method.

Let's take a brief review of some of the benefits of membership:

- Membership in one of the oldest genealogical societies in New England

- Availability to attend, free of charge, regularly scheduled research clinics (non-members pay \$10 per session)
- Access to Ancestry Library edition at the clinics
- Regular year-round meetings with experts both live and in virtual presentation.
- Access to previously recorded meeting in the Members Only section of the website (NOTE: some have time limitations due to speaker's requests)
- Many fellow members willing to assist or advise you in your research efforts
- Volunteer opportunities
- Opportunity to meet and mingle with likeminded people

Dues are the life-blood of any society, especially smaller societies such as ours. You are the members and the dues you pay helps us to continue to bring interesting programs to you.

Newsletter Deadlines

Please submit all information to be entered into the next newsletter by 15 August 2017.

We are looking for articles written by our members. Have you been to a repository or a federal or state archive? Have you been to where your ancestors lived? Have you tried a new gadget or software? You do not have to write the article yourself. If you would like to do an interview about a subject, that would be helpful as well. What are you interested in? Tell us, share your knowledge.

E-Mail Update

Please let us know if you have changed your e-mail address. We want to make sure that you continue to receive all of our updates, meeting reminders and electronic newsletters. Just send your name and new email address to us at WestMassGen@gmail.com.

[Return to Contents page](#)

