



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

Contents

News	p 1	Methodology	p 5	About Us	p 8
Calendar	p 3	Technology	p 5	Newsletter	p 9
Member Events	p 3	Member Focus	p 6		
Articles	p 4	Membership	p 7		

News

3 February 2016 WMGS Meeting



Hillary Schau, a genealogy researcher since 1986 and an active member of WMGS, will present “Organizing Your Family History.” A native of Springfield, Massachusetts, she has lived in numerous locations around the world. After returning to Springfield, she began many genealogical ventures including volunteering in the genealogy lab at the [Chicopee Public Library](#) where she taught her first class. A graduate of the Boston University “Genealogical Research Certificate Program” she is currently leaning toward Genealogical Organization as a specialty. We wish her “Good Luck!” See Hillary in action as she presents “RootsMagic™ Essentials – The Free Version” at the Chicopee Library Tuesdays 16 and 23 February and 1 March 2016. Sign up at (413) 594-1800 ext. 3. Hillary is looking into forming a RootsMagic™ User Group.”

[Return to Contents page](#)

9 February 2016 A New Daytime Genealogy Research Clinic

Susan and Katy announce a new Daytime Genealogy Research Clinic. It will be Tuesday, 9 February 2016 from 12:30 - 2:30. If you work at night, or simply cannot come out at night, this is the Genealogy Research Clinic for you. Please join Katy and Susan.

[Return to Contents page](#)

From Around the Genealogy Global Community

There are quite a few places to learn more about what we love to do. Check out [Cyndi’s List](#) and [GeneaWebinars](#) for listings.

[Return to Contents page](#)

Discoveries at the WMGS Clinic

by Henry R. Lafleur

At a recent WMGS clinic in Agawam Dave Robison asked the group if one of us, the attendees, would write a story for the newsletter. He wanted a story of a great discovery attributed to attending the clinic. After several seconds of no takers my mouth opened and for some unknown reason said “I will do that”! I have made some interesting discoveries at the clinic, but suspect that many readers have had similar experiences. I will share those discoveries, but not before sharing my greatest discovery by attending the clinic.

Dave Robison and Fran Malone are two gentlemen who graciously give their time and vast genealogical experience at these clinics. They have answered my dumbest questions, and subscribe to the belief that the only dumb question,” is the question not asked” – a sign of great teachers. They have shared techniques and methods of research that I would never have thought to use. They willingly offer their paid subscription sources to help attendees of the clinic. Their demeanor is always friendly and interlaced with humor. My greatest discovery at the clinics is the assistance that Fran and Dave graciously provide. I take this opportunity to offer my thanks.

I was using a city directory to research my family and was surprised to see the names of the husband and wife listed separately, and separated by many other names. Furthermore, they lived at the same address. Usually, I observed, husband and wives were listed together. I asked Fran Malone if he knew why they were listed in this manner, he explained that at that time this was the practice when both worked. This is an example of the kind of knowledge that is available at the clinics.

I was shown a newspaper article that reported the drowning of one my ancestors. However, this contradicted other information I had regarding this ancestor. Dave helped me find the death certificate of person who drowned and the surname was different. It seems the newspaper made a grave error, what’s new! As an aside, my wife recently had her picture in a newspaper and the caption had the name of a completely different person!

I was having little success researching three brothers that were born in Western Massachusetts. By using Google, we found an obituary that placed them in Eastern Massachusetts. From this obit, I was pleased to find a vast amount of information about this family. I learned that the Registry of Deeds is a good source of genealogical information. In the Registry of Deeds I found the death certificate of one of these brothers and discovered that their parents were completely different from the Western Massachusetts family. The obituary led me to the wrong family.

At a society meeting the officers of the society, including Fran and Dave, provided a question and answer session. Someone asked how many sources are needed to verify a discovery.

Someone quickly answered three! Dave was quick to respond that we can never find too many. The above two stories testify to that advice from Dave.

Ancestry.com Library Edition is now available at the clinics. This pleases me because I am frugal (cheap) and do not subscribe to Ancestry. I take advantage of Ancestry available at Libraries and now the WMGS clinics at the Agawam Senior Center, held on most 3rd and 4th Thursdays of the month. Recently, Katy Krause and Susan Levenson have scheduled additional clinics at the Agawam Senior Center on Tuesday afternoons.

Copyright © 2016 Henry R Lafleur. Used with permission by Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society.

[Return to Contents page](#)

Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
Wednesday, 3 February 2016 from 6-8 PM	WMGS Meeting – with presenter Hillary Schau - Organizing Your Genealogy Research (in person) at the Agawam Senior Center
NEW!!!! Tuesday, 9 February 2016 from 12:30-2:30 PM	First Daytime Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center with Katy and Susan
Thursday, 18 February 2016 from 6-8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center w/Dave and Fran
Thursday, 25 February 2016 from 6-8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center w/Dave and Fran
Wednesday, 2 March 2016 from 6-8 PM	WMGS Meeting – with guest Jennifer Alford - The Basics of Land Records (Virtual) at the Agawam Senior Center
Wednesday, 6 April 2016 from 6-8 PM	TBD Bus Trip to the Berkshire Athenaeum Pittsfield, MA will be April or May 2016
Wednesday, 3 August 2016 from TBD	Field trip to the Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum (Springfield Archives) at the Springfield Museums, Springfield, MA

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, 4 and 5-session programs and at least 2 intermediate to advanced courses in genealogy research. Please click here for the current [“Scheduled Events”](#) that he will be presenting throughout Massachusetts from Springfield and Northampton to as far away as Falmouth at Cape Cod.

DATE/EVENT	PLACE/INFORMATION
Tuesdays 16 and 23 February and 1 March 2016 Hillary presents: RootsMagic™ Essentials – The Free Version	Chicopee Library 449 Front Street Chicopee, MA 01013 Sign up at (413) 594-1800 ext. 3.
Save the Date: 9 - 10 September 2016 Royal Genealogy Enterprises presents: First Annual Western Massachusetts Genealogical Conference	UMASS Hotel 1 Campus Center Way Amherst, MA
Save the Date: 26-29 April 2017 NERGC 2017: Using the Tools of Today & Tomorrow to Understand the Past	Mass Mutual Center Springfield, MA

[Return to Contents page](#)

Articles

My Incredible Family Reunion

By Jeanne Leblond

I am incredibly lucky in that I have already made two trips to my Slovak grandparents' village in Zdiar. In 2000 and 2002, eight members of my family went on family heritage tours sponsored by a Slovak minister from Pennsylvania. We toured five central European countries, including Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, Poland, and the Czech Republic. On each trip, the minister arranged for us to spend several days in Zdiar visiting relatives, and we hosted a family reunion at a restaurant. Imagine being greeted in the lobby by forty people who look exactly like all your relatives. Though we had a translator, we did not need one for sharing hugs and tears. We were all given gifts and I was fortunate to be given an authentic Slovak Kroj costume. Several women dressed me in the costume, pinning my hair up under the hairpiece. After several toasts with homemade Slivovica, a plum brandy, I was coaxed onto the dance floor to dance a jig with a male cousin who was also in costume.

We visited the homes that my grandparents were born in, the Church where they were baptized, and the cemetery next to it. I sprinkled rose petals from my grandmother's yard on her mother's grave site. My grandmother used to tell us how her father would bring their sheep and other livestock into a small courtyard attached to the house at night, to protect them from wolves. She also told us how they would put their lambs on a stucco hearth to keep them warm. The hearth, courtyard, and house was exactly as she described! We were so fortunate to be able to make both of those journeys. Thanks to the internet, some of the younger cousins are maintaining correspondence with us, so the bond will not soon be broken.

Copyright © 2016 Jeanne Leblond. Used with permission by Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society.

[Return to Contents page](#)

Writing Contest

What a great story by Jeanne! For the next six months, we will be having various writing contests that will culminate in a narrative story by members. Start thinking now about which family members whose story you would like to write. At least fifteen members need to participate, there will be prizes for the winners. Details to follow!

Methodology

A Series of Articles and Contests

We are very happy to announce that we will be having a series of writing contests based around methodology. These contests will require participation of at least fifteen people and prizes will be granted. There will be a series of five articles that will cover the GPS, the Genealogical Proof Standard. After the publication of each article, there will be a writing assignment. Some will be simple, your version of a research log with all the required information, while others will require a lot more effort – a proof summary or argument. The final part of the contest will be the writing contest announced above in [Articles](#). We will start with basics and proceed to the more complex, so no one will feel they cannot participate. The goal of this contest is three-fold – increase participation of the society, teach techniques to make genealogy easier and more fruitful, and to help our members start getting their family stories written.

Copyright © 2016 Ann Royal Used with permission by Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society.

[Return to Contents page](#)

Technology

Scrivener

By Ann Royal

[Scrivener](#) is a program that can help you write your family history – a recurring theme for this month's newsletter. For all you Mac people out there, you will be happy to know that Scrivener was originally written for Mac. For us PCs, the Scrivener people went all out and re-wrote the program “from the ground up” for compatibility with Windows 10. They wanted PC/Windows people to be able to experience the richness of the program in the same manner as the Mac people.

Scrivener helps you start your project right from that first undeveloped idea, straight through to the final draft. It gives you the tools to write down your thoughts, research them, and then expand them into sentences, paragraphs, pages, chapters, and a whole book. It has tools within to help you structure your thoughts and finding the right arrangement, e.g. a corkboard, where you can put story ideas and reshuffle them to suit the story you are telling.

Features include multi-document editing which allows you to see and edit multiple documents. This is excellent for transcribing an obituary, a record, or other documents. The corkboard

mentioned above, an outliner which allows you to structure your story, full-screen editing to help eliminate distractions, scriptwriting – ever wanted to make a play, snapshot – so you can return a document to its previous content and format, and Compile for Export or Print. The program allows you to work on various parts of your document.

Several well-known genealogists have started pages, blogs, teaching videos, or groups. [The Armchair Genealogist](#) has created videos to help the genealogist get the most out of the program. Kimberly Powell, genealogy expert, has a YouTube video – [Writing Tools and Software for Genealogists](#) out as well. Dave also suggested, a Facebook group, Julie Michutka's, [Scrivener for Genealogists](#). Genealogy.about.com has an article on how to use [Using Evernote with Scrivener](#). Thomas MacEntee of Hack Genealogy ran a mini-boot camp for using Scrivener with your family history; you can purchase this boot camp on his [site](#).

Copyright © 2016 Ann Royal Used with permission by Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society.

[Return to Contents page](#)

Member Focus

Jeanne Leblond

By Jeanne Leblond

Two years ago, I joined the ranks of the happily retired after a career in mental health counseling and school nursing. My husband and I have been married for forty-six years and have two sons and five grandsons, ranging in age from thirteen down to three.

My husband and I both grew up in French-Canadian neighborhoods in Chicopee. He has Quebecois and Acadian ancestry, while I have Quebecois and Slovak ancestry. My Southern daughter-in-law has English, Irish & Scottish heritage going back to the American Revolution. My other daughter-in-law has Italian and Newfoundland, possibly Loyalist, heritage.

In 1998, one of my husband's distant cousins sent a copy of their paternal line going back to the early 1600's. He included photocopies of pictures of four generations of grandparents. It got me started on genealogy.

I have been working on writing my stories down. I am not a writer, so just in case I never write our family history, I have started a file on my computer with snippets of family memories and stories.

My favorite genealogy story is one that I will never forget. My genealogy buddy and I had hit a brick wall trying to find the parents and birth of my gr-gr-grandfather, Frank Buskey, so we could answer a family question of whether our family name was English or French. Over the years, some family members used the name Bousquet and others used the Anglicized version.

Back in the heyday of family forums, I posted a query asking if anyone had any information on him. I received a response from a man in Quebec, who said that he had identified seven Francois Bousquets in the appropriate time frame, and had marriage and death records for all but one. We suspected my guy was number seven, but still did not have proof. I decided to order a copy of a pension request he made based on his oldest son's Civil War service. When the packet arrived, it

contained affidavits from him, his brother, and several neighbors outlining all the births, marriages, and deaths we needed for proof. The bricks fell rapidly after that. That was so exciting. We celebrated by going out to dinner and sharing a bottle of champagne.

In fact, we had found his baptism on a microfilm several years before, but had discounted it, because it was 5 years too early for our estimate from his death certificate. From that experience, I've learned that periodically reviewing data is a worthwhile effort and to cautiously use information from secondary sources.

My maternal grandmother is my hero. She emigrated to the US when she was only 14 years old, along with several people from Zdiar, Slovakia, a small village in the Tatra mountains. She must have known that she would probably never see her parents or siblings again. She raised 8 children, grew & canned food, baked the most delicious bread and kolache ever, and maintained a household without modern appliances. She loved all her grandchildren unconditionally, and never uttered a complaint about her life.

I would love to interview my brick wall gr-gr-grandfather, to find out why he immigrated to upper Vermont sometime before 1840. Was it to escape prosecution for participating in the Rebellion of 1837, which was a small uprising against British rule in four Quebec villages? He lived in one of the villages at the time. Some participants were jailed, others hung, and some deported to the wilds of Australia. The only records of participants that survive are of those who were prosecuted.

Copyright © 2016 Jeanne LeBlond Used with permission by Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society. [Return to Contents page](#)

Membership

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

Reasons to Join our 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 (\$10/session non-members)
5. Share our library of resources including books and CDs
6. Opportunity to serve as a volunteer, coach or member of Board of Directors

Membership

Annual membership runs from 1 September to 31 August each year. Individuals may purchase a membership for \$25, while institutions may purchase a membership for \$30.

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

Meetings

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](#)

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.

Fran Malone – President

Dave Robison – Vice President

Katy Krause – Treasurer

Ann McDougal – Secretary

Hillary Schau – NERGC Delegate

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

Ann Royal – Newsletter Editor

Susan Levenson – Webmaster

Jeanne Leblond – Surname Project Coordinator

Carolea Hayden – Refreshment Coordinator

Diane Ascoti – Founder

[Return to Contents page](#)

Newsletter Deadlines

Please submit all information to be entered into the next newsletter by 15 February 2016. We are looking for articles written by our members. Have you been to a repository? 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.

[Return to Contents page](#)