

January 2015

*A monthly publication
on behalf of the*



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

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News

Happy New Year,

We have celebrated the holidays and made several New Year resolutions (Remember Dear Myrt's November meeting). Now we have more time for genealogy research. Hopefully, during the holidays you had time to reminisce with relatives and share stories about our ancestors. Be sure to check out the following items in our newsletter, which can help you with your family research:

- Upcoming genealogy events (Pages 2-5)
- WMGS January 2015 Meeting Details (Page 5)
- Watch WMGS on Google+ Hangouts on Air (Page 5-6)
- Irish Church Records (Page 7-9)

We're looking forward to seeing everyone at our next meeting on Wednesday, January 7th at The Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History.

Special Note: Do we have your e-mail address to keep you posted? Have you received e-mail notices and announcements from us? If not, there's a possibility that the address we have is either outdated or simply not recorded properly. PLEASE let us know your current e-mail address so that you won't miss any WMGS announcements. Contact us at WestMassGen@gmail.com with your current e-mail address.

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WMGS Calendar of Events

January 7, 2015 – Field Trip: Join us for our first meeting of the new year from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Springfield History Library and Archives. The library is part of the Springfield Museums and located in the

Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History (lower level)
21 EDWARDS STREET
SPRINGFIELD, Massachusetts 01103

Parking: Please park in the adjacent parking lot on Edwards Street. Parking is free.

Arrival Time: We have to ask you to arrive between 5:30 and 6:00 PM. A staff member will be available during that time to allow you into building which actually closes at 5:00 PM. So please try to arrive before 6:00 PM.

For a map of the Springfield Museum Buildings, click here:
http://www.springfieldmuseums.org/the_museums/

Save the Dates

Mark your calendars. Below you will find the 2015 events for the WMGS:

February 4, 2015 – Judy G. Russell “The Legal Genealogist” will present, *“Rogues, Rascals and Rapsallions: The Family Black Sheep.”* Playing detective in court records can unmask those black sheep every family has – and it’s fun! Learn to understand the criminal process in both federal and state courts and how to find the records to put meat on the bones of the skeletons in your family's closet.

The Legal Genealogist Judy G. Russell is a genealogist with a law degree. She writes, teaches and lectures on a wide variety of genealogical topics, ranging from using court records in family history to understanding DNA testing. A Colorado native with roots deep in the American south on her mother’s side and entirely in Germany on her father’s side, she is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, the National Genealogical Society and numerous state and regional genealogical societies. She has written for the National Genealogical Society Quarterly and National Genealogical Society Magazine, among other publications. She is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Board for Certification of

Genealogists, from which she holds credentials as a Certified Genealogist and Certified Genealogical Lecturer.

March 4, 2015 – To be determined

April 1, 2015 – Lauren Forastiere will present, “The Funeral Home Industry as a Family History Resource.”

May 6, 2015 – Election of officers; Connie Reik, Archivist at Tufts University will present “Finding Your Civil War Ancestors.”

June 3, 2015 – Last monthly meeting and dinner.

For a printable version of our 2014-15 calendar and events, click here:

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mawmgs/updates.html>

Genealogy Research Clinics

Join Fran Malone, President of WMGS, and Dave Robison, Vice President of WMGS and owner of www.oldbones.co for “Genealogy Research Clinics.”

Spend some time with genealogy researchers with years of experience using the internet to help get the answers you’re looking for. Learn time saving research strategies using Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, Google and SteveMorse.org among other sites.

Sessions are held on the third and fourth Thursdays of the month in the computer room of the Agawam Senior Center. Clinics are free for WMGS members. There is a \$10 fee per session for non-members.

2015 Dates

January 15	April 16
January 22	April 23
February 19	May 21
February 26	May 28
March 19	June 18
March 26	

NERGC Conference

**NAVIGATING THE PAST: SAILING INTO THE FUTURE
15 – 19 APRIL 2015**

The Rhode Island Convention Center - Providence, RI

Register at www.nergc.org **Early Bird Deadline 28 February 2015**



The most important genealogical conference in the Northeast is the biennial “New England Regional Genealogical Conference.” Virtually all genealogical subjects will be covered in a 3 day event with a wide variety of speakers, workshops, “Ancestor’s Road Show”, banquets, luncheons and other events. For a detailed description of what has been planned, click here <http://www.nergc.org/> and then click the link **Download the Program**

Brochure. There is an “Early Bird” registration of \$120 which ends on February 28, 2015. After that date, registration is \$150. Also, the local hotels are offering special rates to conference attendees.

Keynote Speaker: Lisa Louise Cook – Genealogy Gems
Keynote Speaker: Judy G. Russell – The Legal Genealogist

- 60+ lectures
- Technology Day
- Librarians’ and Teachers’ Day
- Ancestors Roadshow
- Society Fair
- Exhibit Hall
- Special Interest Groups
- Query Column
- Research in Providence

Also speaking at NERGC 2015 will be one of our own, **Dave Robison of Old Bones Genealogy of New England and Vice President of WMGS**. He will present “Search Strategies You Never Thought Of---Search Sites You never Heard Of!” which is scheduled for Saturday afternoon, April 18th from 1:45 – 2:45 pm, track #S-321

Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NERGC

Genealogy with Dave Robison

Upcoming events by Dave Robison of Old Bones Genealogy of New England. More information is available at http://oldbones.co/?page_id=3679

January 21, 2015 at 3:00 pm: A one hour presentation of the popular *“The ABC’s of Family Research.”* Attendees at Armbrook Village, 551 North Road, Westfield, MA will be introduced to the basics of genealogy research, how to find your “long lost cousins”, building a family tree from scratch, interesting and productive search strategies when using genealogy web sites. Also, since “it’s all not on the internet,” you’ll learn where you might go when the search sites just don’t have the answers!

April 15 – 19, 2015, Dave will be presenting *“Search Strategies You Haven’t Tried --- Search Sites You Never Thought Of”* at the biennial conference of the New England Regional Genealogical Consortium (NERGC) in Providence, RI. Dozens of speakers from around the United States will be presenting a broad variety of programs. “Early Bird Registration” is \$120 per person but ends 28 February 2015. Regular registration will be \$150 as of 1 March 2015.

Do you know of an upcoming genealogy event? If so, let us know, and we’ll include it in the WMGS monthly newsletter.

Watching WMGS on Google + Hangouts on Air by Dave Robison

Over the next several months, we will be hosting occasional meetings with genealogy guests from around the country and, actually, from around the world! Many of you experienced Maureen Taylor, the Photo Detective, Dick Eastman, an internationally known genealogist and, of course, November's "Dear Myrt, your friend in genealogy" who challenged us to set goals and stick to them! Here's a goal for everyone! February's meeting with Judy G Russell should be as entertaining as educational. See Judy's blog at [The Legal Genealogist](#).

I should also mention that when we have these types of meetings from now on, they will be archived at YouTube and password protected for the exclusive use of

our members. Pretty neat!

We're excited to be able to offer this new feature as a member benefit to broaden our horizons in more ways than one. These broadcasts will best be viewed right from our meeting room, but soon, we may be able to watch them from a remote location such as your home computer, an important fringe benefit in bad weather. Of course, watching from home is cozy and convenient, but would lack the camaraderie enjoyed by being with your fellow WMGS members at the Senior Center.

Now on your first time getting into a Hangout, Google will ask you to install a very small program to run the audio and video portions. It's small and harmless, so please don't worry about the installation. If anyone has any questions, feel free to get in touch with me at dave@oldbones.info.

Thanks for your cooperation! It's a little effort to get started but it will be well worth it in the long run!

There's a "short" learning curve for most of us which I've tried to provide to everyone here. It's not a huge undertaking and following a few steps should make it a simple process to join Google+ after which you can "request" membership in the WMGS Community: <http://bit.ly/How-To-Join-Google-Plus>

BONUS!! Once you're on Google+, we can "invite" you to our WMGS Google+ where, similar to Facebook, you can read posts from other members of our Community from around the world or add you own posts. We have 136 WMGS Community members from Canada, Australia, Germany, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, the Netherlands and Brazil as well as from nearly all 50 states! It's very easy and a lot of fun to be a part of it!

If you'd like to see the Community, here's a link to that as well:
<https://plus.google.com/communities/109742774980945180341>
Any questions? Feel free to contact me at dave@oldbones.info.

Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society's Google+ Community

In addition to Facebook, Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society has a presence on "Google+ Communities" where anyone who is a member can read and submit posts. If you have a Google+ account, you can be easily added to the Community by requesting membership or responding to an "invitation." This will be the place where we will promote any Google+ Hangout to accommodate a virtual guest. "Google+ Hangout" is the medium by which we listened to Dick Eastman and DearMYRTLE. We can post the link to the virtual meeting in the Community so that you can participate wherever you may be at the time. It is also the place where you will be able to comment or ask questions of the presenter in case you're unable to be present at the Agawam Senior Center.

Irish Church Records

National Library of Ireland Announces its Most Significant Ever Digitization Project for Irish Genealogy

The project will make almost 400,000 images of Catholic parish register microfilms available online for free.

The [National Library of Ireland \(NLI\)](#) has today (01.12.14) unveiled details of its most ambitious digitization project to date. The project will see the Library's entire collection of Catholic parish register microfilms made available online – for free – by summer 2015.

The records are considered the single most important source of information on Irish family history prior to the 1901 Census. Dating from the 1740s to the 1880s, they cover 1,091 parishes throughout Ireland, and consist primarily of baptismal and marriage records.

Commenting today, Colette O'Flaherty, Head of Special Collections at the NLI, said: "This is the most ambitious digitization project in the history of the NLI, and our most significant ever genealogy project. We believe it will be of huge assistance to those who wish to research their family history. At this stage, we have converted the microfilm reels on which the registers are recorded into

approximately 390,000 digital images. We will be making all these images available, for free, on a dedicated website, which will be launched in summer 2015.

“Anyone tracing Irish family history will be able to access this site – from anywhere in the world – and search for the parish in which they are interested. They will be able to see a list of registers for that parish, and will be able to click on whichever registers they like to browse through the images contained within.

“The information in the registers varies from parish to parish but, typically, includes the dates of the baptisms or marriages, and the names of the key people involved, including godparents or witnesses. Obviously, such information is extremely valuable for both amateur genealogists and professional researchers.

“The microfilms have been available to visitors to the NLI since the 1970s. However, this project means that, for the first time, anyone who likes will be able to access these registers without having to travel to Dublin.”

Contribution of the Catholic Church

Ms. O’Flaherty said the registers are a wonderful legacy of the Catholic Church to Ireland.

“The role of the Catholic Church in creating and maintaining these records during some of the most turbulent times in Irish history must be acknowledged and praised,” she said. “Most census records from this period were destroyed in the Four Courts fire of 1922, so these parish registers are the most comprehensive surviving source of information on Irish families in the 1700s and 1800s.

“The NLI has worked with the Catholic Church to preserve these registers since the 1950s, when we were initially invited to make microfilm copies. Now, in the 21st Century – and in keeping with our aim of enhancing accessibility through making our collections available online – we are delighted to embark on this major digitization project.”

What Type of Information Will be Available?

The 390,000 digital images due to be published by the NLI will be searchable by parish location only. They will not be transcribed or indexed by the NLI, and the

images will be of the microfilms of the original registers, which – in some cases – were in poor condition when the microfilming took place. The images will be in black and white.

“Anyone who has traced their family history knows it can sometimes be frustrating due to illegible handwriting on original records or poor-quality reproductions or transcriptions,” said Colette O’Flaherty. “Unfortunately, we do not have the resources to transcribe or index the images we are making available.

“We are fortunate, though, that the network of local family history centres throughout the country holds indexes and transcripts of parish registers for their local areas. We would envisage direct access to the digitized registers will complement the work of these local centres by enabling researchers to cross-reference the information they uncover, and assisting them in uncovering wider links and connections to their ancestral community.”

Further details of this digitization project will be announced by the NLI in the coming months.

Note: The mission of the National Library of Ireland is to collect, preserve, promote and make accessible the documentary and intellectual record of the life of Ireland and to contribute to the provision of access to the larger universe of recorded knowledge. It is open, free of charge, to all those who wish to consult the collections for material not otherwise available through the public library service or an academic library. The Genealogical Office, the Office of the Chief Herald in Kildare Street, and the National Photographic Archive in Temple Bar are all part of the National Library.

WMGS President’s Note: This will be a separate website from the National Library and there is no specific date other than the Summer of 2015. These will be the actual recordings compared to the website www.irishgenealogy.ie that was released in 2009. I think the two sites will be a great compliment to each other even though the records on this new site will not be indexed. It sounds like those searching will be able to narrow it down to the county and the parish before they have start scrolling through the records. The website in 2009 only covers County Kerry, Cork, Carlow, and Dublin but those records are indexed.

Fran

About Us

Meetings:

We meet on the first Wednesday of each month, September through June from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, located at 954 Main Street in Agawam, Massachusetts.

Our genealogy research clinics are offered on the third and fourth Thursday of the month from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center.

Membership information

Annual membership runs from September 1 to August 31 each year. Individuals may purchase a membership for \$20. Applications for Membership can be found on our website at www.WestMassGen.com

Newsletter Deadline

Did you enjoy reading our newsletter? Do you have suggestions for articles, or have an article you would like us to publish? Our next issue of the newsletter will be February 2015. Please forward your information by January 20, 2015 to: WestMassGen@gmail.com

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