Upcoming Meetings

March 2017 Meeting

There is a cemetery in every town and whether it is a colonial burial ground from the beginning of our country or the modern memorial garden on the outskirts of the city; it holds the history of that town. It tells the story of the people, their attitudes towards death, and the industries in which they worked. The cemetery can even show us the geology of the local landscape. These outdoor museums to the average man hold a wealth of information which is accessible and open to the public. The stones reveal the stories, even the mysteries of the town, through the monuments to the people who lived there and whose stories are written in stone.

Ta Mara Conde is a monument conservator with Historic Gravestone Services with over 18 years’ experience in her field. During her presentation “Stories in Stone”, she will share some of the stories she has found hidden on the stones. Ta Mara Conde is President of Historic Gravestone Services in New Salem Massachusetts and has been preserving gravestones for over 18 years in cemeteries across the US and Canada. Previous projects include an African – American cemetery created by freed slaves in Sharpsburg, MD and gravestones in the Old Burial Ground in Plymouth, Massachusetts as they prepare for the 400th year anniversary in 2020.

Ta Mara serves on the board for the Friends of Historic New Salem and the New Salem Cemetery Commission. She is an active member in the American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works, The Stone Foundation, Preservation Trade Network and Association of Gravestone Studies, where she previously served on the Board and Chaired the Conservation Committee.

Photo courtesy of http://historicgravestone.weebly.com
April 2017 Meeting

Our meeting in April will be a presentation by Steve Hartwell entitled “Building a Custom Website for your Family History”

Pedigree charts may be an interesting way to share our genealogy, but what about the “rest of the story” - our family letters, photographs, heirlooms, tales, etc.? How can we share our ancestral stories online with everyone in our extended family? Learn how to bring your stories to life by using an easy building-block approach to create a custom website. You will see techniques and examples to give you ideas on how best to showcase your own family history.

Steve Hartwell lives in North Reading, Massachusetts, and has been researching his family for over 30 years. He retired from a long career at IBM in 2014 and has since become a professional genealogist specializing in both ancestral research, particularly in New England, and custom website design. Steve is a graduate of the Boston University Genealogical Research Certificate Program and the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy, and is a board member of the Society of Essex Genealogists. His website can be found at shartwell.com/services.

February 2017 Meeting Recap

Our meeting on February 1st featured a team of speakers, Sara Campbell and Shari Strahan, with a presentation entitled “Did Gramma Have a Filling Station? Married Women’s Businesses.”

Shari and Sara have been research partners for a variety of projects in Western Mass since solidifying their common interest while working as census takers in 2010. They are relentless in finding the story behind the document and have brought many forgotten families to light with their research. Sara has been active in the Polish Genealogical Society of Mass, while Shari’s ethnic specialty is in French Canadian genealogy, as well as the families of Historic Deerfield, where she lives.

Sara Campbell is a lecturer and educator in Western Massachusetts where she has been active in the genealogical community for 25 years. Her background as a civil engineer sometimes gives her a unique perspective on her research, she blogs about history at http://rememberingancestors.blogspot.com/ and will be presenting this talk at the NERGC 2017 Conference in Springfield, MA.
Why should you attend genealogy seminars and conferences? I just happen to have a few reasons for you to ponder! So, let’s get started.

- **YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT YOU DON’T KNOW** - It would appear to some that there must be an end to genealogical education. You’ve learned good search habits to use on Ancestry.com. You may use any of the many library editions available to you or perhaps you have your own subscription. You know the difference between various types of records. And you’ve had some success at piecing together you family’s story. But there’s that inevitable “brick-wall.” Frustration ensues and you’ve come to the end of the line. Should you pack it in or should you look for answers somewhere else? Just reading the titles of the presentations and the speakers at various conferences could be a tremendous help. Are you researching Irish ancestors? Polish? Caribbean? Chinese? You are sure to find these subjects covered somewhere. Of course, the conference you want may be out of reach for many people. Many conferences, such as RootsTech, leave videos of their presentations on line to view for a limited time. You won’t be able to access everything as the “premier” programs would be restricted either by conference management or the nature of the contract with the speaker. All, and I mean all, subjects can be found at most of these gatherings. From pedigree charts to DNA triangulation; whatever is your need.

- **NETWORKING** - There are hundreds or even thousands of like-minded people who attend these conferences. And 99.9% are required to wear name badges. Glance over and see someone who is from Minnesota or Canada and just strike up a conversation. I’d say that genealogists relish the opportunity to speak to a living person after spending so much time seeking out the dead! Who can you find? Well, if it’s a RootsTech affair, there are usually over 30,000 people from all over the world in attendance! You should be able to find a new friend in a group that size. But 30,000, at least to me, is a mind-boggling number of people to deal with. Local or regional conferences are usually much smaller, easy to navigate, and your next best friend might be attending as well. You just haven’t met them yet.

- **SPECIALTIES** – What are you looking for? DNA? I can vouch for the fact that DNA is probably the single most sought out subject. From the basics to genome matching, it’s out there. Or how about 17th century Scottish records? Finding the women in your family? For the most part, women change their names with every generation. Sometimes, as in early 20th century and earlier, when the husband died, the obituary simply reads “…survived by his wife, Mrs. J. T. Smith…” The obit then goes on to name the children. But what was her name? There are ways to flesh them out of the paperwork. How about land records, deeds, property transfers, marriage intentions and marriage certificates, adoption, guardianship petitions, immigration, naturalization, court records, genealogy and the law, writing up your research, applying for certification or perhaps, a lineage society. It’s one thing to find the records and quite another thing to learn how to glean all the data out and make sense of it all. Just about any subject you can think of can probably be found at one conference or another.

- **SYLLABUS** – Every conference you attend will provide syllabi of every presentation. They will contain a synopsis of the material from every speaker and their presentation. Printed copies or electronic copies are generally available for a fee. More often than not, a syllabus can be downloaded from the internet either a few days before the event or certainly when you get home. I strongly advise springing for a printed copy. I like to carry them around for note-taking. It’s hard to take notes on a thumb drive that can’t be edited. The thumb-drive or CD syllabus has its uses. For example, there will probably be hundreds of websites listed and it’s easier to click on a link in an electronic version rather than having to copy the URL out of the printed book.
• **WORKSHOPS** – Workshops are a more intense version of a presentation and allow for easier interaction with the speaker. Again, there are a wide variety of subject matter available depending on the conference. And seating will be limited. If there’s a workshop you’re interested in attending, register early! True, they may be a little more intense than sitting, listening and taking notes, but what you take away from a workshop will be vastly more detailed and will “stick” with you longer.

• **GET YOU OUT OF THAT RUT** – Here’s what happens to every genealogist at every level: They get bored because they’re always doing the same type of research day in and day out. Conferences can shake you out of your habits, get you to look at things in a new and different way. Talking with like-minded people, you’ll be exchanging your stories and glories. Much of that will help you broaden your thinking so that when you get home, you can take another look at all you’ve done and, perhaps, get you off on a more productive path.

• **EXHIBIT HALL** – At first you might say, “That’s something I don’t want to bother with.” But I’m here to advise you that you should spend some time with the vendors of a wide variety of products or be introduced to genealogical societies that may spark your interest. Let’s say you have family who migrated to New York State (or should I say the “Black Hole” of research) in the mid-19th century. You might already know that you have to be some kind of magician to turn up anything useful. There’s a pretty good chance, especially on the east coast, that there will be either a New York specialist or a genealogical society from New York who can empathize with your predicament and advise you in what direction you should go. There are also books and various gazetteers of many states including New York that can provide you with very useful information.

Do you have any conference experiences that you’d like to share? Did a conference or workshop help you in any way? Was there a speaker with whom you were particularly impressed? We’d love to hear from you! Feel free to share at the next meeting or write it up so that all of our members will be able to benefit from your experience.

Conferences can get expensive. I get it! But everyone who is researching at any level will benefit from attending at least one at least once in a while!

Speaking of that one conference you should experience, the New England Regional Genealogical Consortium’s (NERGC) conference is coming to Springfield this year. There’s still plenty of time to register for the conference itself, various luncheons and banquets with keynote speakers, sign up for a history tour of some of the more interesting places in the Pioneer Valley, perhaps win a door prize! I know of one vendor who is offering a few cash prizes ranging up to $4,000! It’s easy to sign up. See [www.nergc.org](http://www.nergc.org) which has the “Register Now” link right on the front page. Interested in volunteering? Email Mary Choppa at mchoppa@myfairpoint.net. See you there!
The last leg of winter slowly approaches, but while animals continue to sleep, your board of directors has been hard at work! Some of the things we’ve been working on include: an indexing project, a coordination project with the Boy Scouts, updating our bylaws, next year’s slate of speakers, and so much more. And the board would like to extend an invitation for members to help. We have a lot of member participation opportunities coming up. In May, we will have our annual meeting and with it, our election of officers. I hope each of our members will consider a position on the board. All you need is a little time, a lot of enthusiasm and the rest is easy. Our next newsletter will have more information about positions, terms, and everything in between (there will be more than just board positions!). So, don’t be shy if you’d like to be more involved because we certainly won’t be shy about asking you to help.

Articles

Is your Family Name shared by a Member from our Society?
By Fran Malone

Back in January I did an article titled "It’s a Small World" after I assisted Ellen Janik on her O’Neil family and discovered that her Aunt Mary had married into the Bovat Family. The Bovat Family is one of the families that my wife Nadine descends from and, as the article stated at the end, Ellen’s Bovat Cousins, her first cousins were my wife's third cousins. The article showed that many families over time can touch each other in so many ways.

While assisting Ellen, I also began helping Alyce Chagnon, another member of our society, on her roadblocks to the past. As I write this, I’m still assisting Alyce on the second part of her request. It's a request that has a history connecting her with one of my wife's families back in Quebec during the 1670’s.

Alyce's original request was last September when she was trying to get past her Ducharme Family in the mid 1800's. It was on an 1850's marriage that gave the Surname as Tetreau dit Ducharme. Records after the 1850's went by Ducharme and records before 1850 went by Tetreau dit Ducharme until it got back to the French Immigrant who was listed as Pierre Tetreau. Anyone that has researched their French Heritage can and will tell you that the "dit" names can be quite frustrating.

Along the journey back, Alyce also had another name she was trying to follow and that was the Robert surname. In the Computer Research Clinic in January I resumed my search for the Robert Family. It was after the second clinic and after I got home that I found the path for the Robert Family backwards to her French Immigrant.

I used the 'Drouin Collection’ that you can find on ancestry and the PRDH website that has vital record information to work backwards. I went generation by generation back to the French Immigrant. Each marriage in the Drouin Collection will give the parents of those marrying. I then looked for the birth of that child with the same parents and then use the collection to find the next marriage/birth back. The PRDH website was basically verifying what I discovered in the Drouin Collection.

As I researched back, I came to a Prudent Robert dit Lafontaine born June 12, 1686 in Boucherville, Quebec, and at that time I paused and asked myself where did I see that name before. I then looked at the family tree, my wife's side, and went to her 4th Great Grandmother Marie Charlotte Robert who married Jean-Baptiste Menard in 1815. I proceeded to follow the Robert Family back from Marie Charlotte till I got back to Jacques Robert born March 15, 1693 in
Boucherville, Quebec. Jacques Robert was the younger brother to Prudent Robert and their parents were Louis Robert dit Lafontaine and Marie Bourgery who married January 25, 1665 in Trios Riveres, Quebec.

Louis Robert dit Lafontaine and Marie Bourgery are my wife’s 8th Great Grandparents that she shares with Alyce Chagnon. The relationship calculation between my wife and Alyce still needs to be done. Best guess is that they are at least 7th cousins. Louis Robert dit Lafontaine was the French Immigrant. He was born August 12, 1638 in Ste Marguerite Larochelle, Aunis, France, and his parents were Andre Dit Lafontaine Robert Lafontaine and Catherine Binin. By the time you read this I will have shown Alyce her Robert Family and told her of the connection to my wife. Also, as you can see or read the "dit" name was part of the Robert name as well.

Has your genealogy mind started to wonder yet? Could that member sitting next to you be a distant cousin? Look forward to seeing you on the third and fourth Thursday’s at our Research Clinic’s.

Epidemics in the United States 1657-1918
Reprinted from the American Elm, V27 No 3, Fall 1998

As we are going through the cold season with different versions ‘going around,’ remember that our ancestors had it a lot tougher with many of the illnesses resulting in death. Here is a reprint from one of our old newsletters, available on our members only site.

In searching for our ancestors, we have often hit people and periods when large numbers within the same family died in a short period of time. Many times, this was due to major epidemics of the particular time period. People who have just “disappeared” from the records can often be traced to dying during an epidemic or moving away from the affected area. Below are listed some of the major epidemics in the United States

1657 Boston: Measles
1687 Boston: Measles
1690 New York: Yellow Fever
1713 Boston: Measles
1729 Boston: Measles
1732-33 Worldwide: Influenza
1738 South Carolina: Smallpox
1739-40 Boston: Measles
1747 CT, NY, PA & SC: Measles
1759 North America (areas inhabited by white people): Measles
1760-61 North American & West Indies: Influenza
1772 North America: Measles
1775 North America (esp. hard in New England): epidemic (unknown type)
1775-76 Worldwide: Influenza
1781-82 Worldwide: Influence (one of the worst flu epidemics)
1788 Philadelphia & New York: measles
1793 Vermont: Influenza and a “putrid fever”
1793 Virginia: Influenza (kills 500 people in 5 counties in 4 weeks)
1793 Philadelphia: Yellow fever (one of the worst)
1783 Delaware (Dover): “extremely fatal” bilious disorder
1793 Pennsylvania (Harrisburg & Middletown) many unexplained deaths
1794 Philadelphia: Yellow Fever
1796-97 Philadelphia: Yellow Fever
1798  Philadelphia: Yellow Fever (one of the worst)
1803  New York: Yellow Fever
1820-23  Nationwide: “fever” (starts on Schuylkill River, PA, and spreads)
1831-32  Nationwide: Asiatic Cholera (brought by English emigrants)
1832  New York & other major cities: Cholera
1837  Philadelphia: Typhus
1841  Nationwide: Yellow Fever (very severe in the South)
1847  New Orleans: Yellow Fever
1847-48  Worldwide: Influenza
1848-49  North America: Cholera
1850  Nationwide: Yellow Fever
1850-51  North America: Influenza
1852  Nationwide: Yellow Fever (New Orleans: 8,000 die in summer)
1855  Nationwide (many parts): Yellow Fever
1857-59  Worldwide: Influenza (one of disease’s greatest epidemics)
1860-61  Pennsylvania: Smallpox
1873-75  North America & Europe: Influenza
1878  New Orleans: Yellow Fever (last great epidemic of disease)
1885  Plymouth, PA: Typhoid
1886  Jacksonville, FL: Yellow Fever
1918  Worldwide: Influenza (high point year) More people hospitalized in WWI from influenza than wounds. U.S. Army training camps became death camps with 80% death rate in some camps.

[In the 1920 census, I found a 5-year-old boy with a different last name living with my ancestors. Research revealed that his mother was the sister of the wife in that household and that the boy’s parents both died in the epidemic in 1918. His father was a physician]

Double Dates – They’re Not What You Think!
Dave Robison
Old Bones Genealogy of New England

So, you've found that elusive colonial era document and you see that your ancestor was born 22 January 1688/89. Your first impulse might be to ignore it, or maybe just assume that someone in the 17th century wasn’t really sure of the exact year.

Actually, 1688/89 is absolutely correct! But it’s a little complicated to explain. (There’s a small but clever chart toward the end that will help). Way back in the early Roman Empire, those BCE years, civilization had a difficult time keeping a calendar year lasting, well, a calendar year. In the very early days, September, which has a root word meaning “7”, was the 7th month. Thus, October, the 8th month; November the 9th month; December, the 10th month. You see, the problem was that 10 months of 30 days or so each didn’t “last” a full year based on the very natural occurrence of the vernal equinox. So the powers that be would do the simplest thing they could: Add however many days you needed to keep this running smoothly. However, things didn’t really run smoothly.

So, the length of the year is finally long enough to last a year, right? Wrong! So again, the empire took the easy way out: If you need to add a few days here, a few days there…no problem. As long as the pesky calendar would last a full
year! After all, they had to perform certain rituals at certain times of the year to appease the gods. You had to keep the gods happy for a whole spectrum of reasons: no flooding, bountiful crops, fertility, natural disasters like volcanoes (Where did the good people of Pompeii do wrong?) and various other human calamities.

The irregularity affected so many aspects of life in the empire that somebody had to do something. Along comes the **Roman emperor Julius Caesar**. First we have a good reason to add at least 2 months to the calendar: July for Julius and August for Augustus. We can discuss exactly how these came about but it’s not relevant to this discussion. While Julius was responsible for many great achievements, he’s also credited for the **Julian Calendar**. 12 months, 365 days with a leap year every four years.

Fixed? No! After a few centuries, they began to realize that a year was now a year plus! How did they know? Back to the natural arrival of the vernal equinox. It was off by about 10 days in 1582. By the 16th century, the addition of approximately 3 days every 400 years was once again causing havoc with the calendar. So along comes Pope Gregory and his advisers. They actually shortened the year and made a huge one-time adjustment. Suffice to say that what we now know as the **Gregorian Calendar** works, sort of. But that’s yet another story. We have to get back to our double dates or no one will finish reading this post!

Most European countries adopted the Gregorian Calendar with the notable exception of the **British Empire**. Remember that “thing” between Henry VIII and Rome? The English were not ready to jump on a plan that was generated by the **Roman Catholic Church**. So the British Empire including all of her colonies were staunch “Julians”. Also, a big factor in double dates had to do with a simple problem: When did the new year start? With all the Gregorian adapters, January 1st was the conventional start of the new year. But those cheeky English continued to celebrate the new year on March 25th, or “Lady’s Day”.

So we’re finally at the end of the story and I’m ready to put the last pieces in the puzzle. If the British considered March 25th the new year, but everybody else considered January 1st the new year, then it makes sense that some people thought that 22 January 1688 was really 1689 because January 1st was the start of the new year; 1688 became 1689. But the British considered January 22nd to be 1688 because the new year, 1689, didn’t start until March 25th. To part of the world, January 22nd was 1688 and to everyone else January 22nd was 1689. Thus, you’ll see January 22nd written “22 January 1688/89” or “January 22, 1688/89”.

Because the British new year was March 25th, double dates are only used from approximately 1582 until 1752 and only on the days between January 1st (The new style new year) to March 24th (The 25th was old style new year). Why 1752? That’s the year the British finally adopted the **Gregorian calendar** for the entire empire including the American colonies. Maybe this will help:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Julian</th>
<th>December</th>
<th>January 1st</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March 24th</th>
<th>March 25th</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1688</td>
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“Julian”: 1688 lasts all the way up to March 24th. March 25th is the first day of 1689. “Gregorian”: 1688 ends at the end of December. January 1st marks the start of 1689. This is where “Double Dates” can occur. But only from 1 January up to 24 March of any year up to 1752 in the British Empire, including the Colonies.
A couple of “small” details: 1) The change in calendar necessitated that 12 days would vanish! The day after September 2, 1752 was September 14, 1752; 2) Russia didn’t “Go Gregorian” until 1918. The Russian Empire kept itself pretty much isolated for a very long time! They also had a little problem with Rome. Then they had this revolution problem! 3) Greece (finally) converted in the 1920's a little after their revolution problems…

**Calendar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE/TIME</th>
<th>EVENT/PLACE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 1 March 2017</td>
<td>WMGS Meeting – Ta Mara Conde will present on “Stories in Stone”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 8 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, 16 March 2017</td>
<td>Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 8 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, 23 March 2017</td>
<td>Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 - 8 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 5 April 2017</td>
<td>WMGS Meeting - Steve Hartwell will present on “Building a Custom Website for your Family History”</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 – 8 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, 20 April 2017</td>
<td>Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 - 8 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, 27 April 2017</td>
<td>Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center</td>
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Genealogy Research Clinics are free to WMGS members. There is a $10 fee per session for non-members. Annual WMGS membership is just $25.

**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. Dave was also chosen to make 2 presentations at the NERGC 2017 conference in Springfield: “The Rich Research Resources of Western Massachusetts” and “Gathering the Family Stories: Non-Confrontational Strategies.” There are 79 speakers who were chosen to make a total of 137 presentations.
NERGC Volunteering

Many WMGS members have generously offered to help us fulfill our 20-hour volunteer commitment to be performed during the NERGC conference. You DO NOT have to be a paid, registered attendee to make a volunteer commitment. For those of you who plan to attend, keep in mind the Early Bird deadline is the last day of February. But don't wait! Register today! Use this link for volunteer information and registration: http://www.nergc.org/volunteers/. Thanks!

Member Focus

William Lashua

By Jeanne Leblond

William Lashua’s first entry into genealogy was back in 1968, when his wife’s sister who lived in Canada asked him to do some research on their Corey line in Rhode Island. After completing the project, he put genealogy aside to raise his family. He and his late wife had three children, and he now has five grandchildren. Since his retirement from AgriMark in West Springfield, he’s resumed his genealogical pursuits.

William served in the Army as a medic and was stationed in Stuttgart, Nurenberg, and West Berlin, Germany for 2 ½ years, just after the Berlin Wall was erected in the early 1960’s. Because of political conditions at the time, he only had the opportunity to make short trips to nearby towns and villages.

When he first started researching his wife’s Corey line, he discovered that she descended from William Corey, who was born in Bristol, Gloucestershire, England, about 1634, and who died in Newport, Rhode Island about 1682. An early settler of Portsmouth, RI, Corey’s occupations have been listed as carpenter, miller, proprietor of a public house, and a captain of the militia. Descendants of William Corey settled in Stanbridge East, Quebec, Canada and one of them, a John Corey, donated a stained-glass window to a local church. No history was available on John Corey. William was able to trace John Corey’s ancestry and link him to William Corey, the first immigrant to the New World. A few years back, William donated several books and papers on the Cory Family to our library.

Having long worked to research his Lashua heritage, he’s beginning to branch out from the Lashua line back to its French-Canadian origins. He’s recently found that his great-great-grandfather, Zebedia Lashua, was born as Eusebe Lajoie in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec. Zebedia’s father was Francois Drogue dit Lajoie who immigrated to Vermont in the 1830’s. After living in Vermont and New Hampshire for a time, many of Francois’ descendants settled in the Gardner/Ashburnham area of Worcester County, MA.

Photo: from right to left my Aunt Rose, Uncle George, Uncle Ernest, and my Aunt Mary. My Grandmother is standing behind
Cemetery research has been William’s greatest interest. He’s researched both Lashua’s and Corey’s in many cemeteries from Rhode Island, Massachusetts, to Canada. He’s enjoyed searching out the cemeteries, finding family connections, listing his findings, and taking pictures of the gravestones. Recently, he’s been sharing some of his discoveries on the Ancestry website. One of his interesting finds was an intersecting street sign for Lashua Way and Corey Lane at a family cemetery in Ashburnham. On his agenda is research into whether he and his late wife share Lashua and Corey ancestry. Research into the Lashua family in the Ashburnham area led him to an 1870 census listing several great uncles living on the same street. That clue will allow him to pursue cluster research into more family members.

Another find was a 1924 newspaper article in the Boston Herald noting the 61st wedding anniversary of his great-grandparents, Eber & Laura Lashua in Ashburnham. They were noted to have one of the largest families of children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren in New England at the time – a total of 96 descendants. In the article, Eber Lashua is noted to be an “inveterate walker”, recently walking twenty miles to a neighboring town. It seems that Eber handed down his walking stamina, as William says that in good weather, he frequently walks 3-6 miles, 2-3 times a week.

William’s future plans include compiling the information that he’s discovered on the Lashua-Drogue dit Lajoie family into book form for his family and to continue his cemetery research, especially in the Ashburnham area. He’s eagerly awaiting results of DNA testing. Family rumors say that their bloodline includes French, English, Native American, and Irish ancestry.
New WMGS Members

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

Cynthia Forte  
Tracy Perez  
Patricia Moriarty  
Robert Whitney  
Beth Brown  
Erin Binney

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.

Members who have passed
In Remembrance: Albert Roy and Art McLaughlin

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  
Fran Malone – Vice President  
Katy Krause – Treasurer  
Ann McDougal – Secretary  
Hillary Schau – Newsletter Editor  
Susan Leverson – Webmaster  
Jeanne Leblond – Surname Project Coordinator  
Ellen Janik – Facebook Administrator  
Carolea Hayden – Refreshment Coordinator  
Diane Ascioti – Founder  

Jeanne Leblond, Nancy Netherwood and Hillary Schau - Directors  
Susan Leverson, 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!

Inclement Weather Policy

In case of bad weather, please check the following areas for a cancellation of our monthly meeting or genealogy research clinics:

1. If the Agawam Senior Center is closed, then our meeting is canceled. This information can be found on most local TV stations such as WWLP (Channel 22) and WGGB (Channel 40). It will be posted at the bottom of the screen, along with the other school and activity cancellations.

2. WestMassGen.com – We will post cancellation information on our website.

3. Email – We will send an email out to our mailing list, if time permits.

4. Facebook – We will post a note to let you know if our meeting will be canceled.

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

Newsletter Deadlines

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