



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

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Upcoming Meetings

January 2018 Meeting

On Wednesday, January 3rd, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM, David Ouimette, CG, CGL from FamilySearch.org will be presenting a live webinar on “*From Wojtowa to Chicopee: The Story of Polish Immigrant Millworkers*” at the Chicopee Library on Front Street. This presentation is a collaborative presentation funded by both WMGS and the Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts (PGSMA)

David manages Content Strategy at FamilySearch, prioritizing the acquisition and online publication of records worldwide for family history research. He holds BS and MS degrees in Mathematics. In addition to being a certified genealogical lecturer, he has authored the book, “Finding your Irish Ancestors: A Beginners’ Guide” and many articles in genealogy magazines and journals.



Seating is limited to 100. Please call (413) 594-1800 x 3 to reserve a seat. If seating is not available at the library, contact westmassgen@gmail.com for the link to view the event live. WMGS members will have access to the recording in the members only link at www.westmassgen.com.

February 2018 Meeting



Our meeting on February 7th will feature Elissa Scalise Powell, CG, CGL, with the presentation “*Rubik’s Cube Genealogy: A New Twist on Your Old Data.*” Elissa will be exploring the additional information we can discover from the patterns of the names, dates, and places we have been collecting in our pedigree charts and family group sheets. She will help us to see life events in the context of history and geography, and reveal the new questions to research and stories that appear with the use of timelines, genograms, and other data presentation tools and strategies.

Elissa is a western Pennsylvania researcher, a Trustee for the Board for Certification of Genealogists; an instructor for Boston University's on campus and online Genealogical Research Certificate courses; coordinator for the Professional Genealogy Course at the Samford University's Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research and an instructor for Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy. She is co-director of the Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh (GRIP). She is a regional and national speaker on methodology, Pennsylvania records, professional development, and society management

December 2017 Meeting Recap

December 6th our monthly meeting was the annual Pot Luck Dinner and Show & Tell.

It was last meeting before the holidays and many joined us for this wonderful meal. After dinner, we hosted an “Open Mic” session for members to share their genealogy tips, ideas, and projects (many documents/pictures were brought for sharing!).



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Message from the President

Dave Robison

Yes, the date on this message is January 2018! I can remember, clearly remember, trying to imagine what it would be like to “experience” 1964, 1975 or 1999. And the hysteria over the millennial year 2000 (which was the last year of the 20th century not the first year of the 21st!) resulting in unprecedented and highly unnecessary fits of panic and preparation. But tempus fugit. And thank you, Virgil, for your sage advice.

So, what have we been up to behind the closed doors at the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society board meetings? (Actually, our door is usually open, we only closed the door last month for the first time due to the music playing in the Zumba class going on in the Veteran’s Room.)

We have so many projects on the table, it’s hard to decide on an order of priority. For everyone’s edification, the board is comprised of some very energetic, clever, and forward-thinking people who bring an impressive amount of talent to the table. Some of our ideas remain on a list of things to do and talk about. Some of my own ideas are often looked at with, well, “curiosity!” Other ideas are in the planning stages and still others are happening as we speak. For example,

the cooperative effort with the Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts may be a harbinger of other cooperative efforts in the future; we're already in the planning stages for NERGC 2019; we started a group indexing project (and we hope that many of you are continuing that effort at home); a mini-conference but on a much smaller scale than that of a NERGC conference; alternate meeting locations; expansion of the WMGS library; expanding our status as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization which will facilitate tax-deductible donations; and many more that the board suggested I don't talk about...yet!

As exciting as it will be to be a part of the expansion of WMGS in 2018, 2019 and beyond is also shaping up quite well.

FYI: WMGS has long been a genealogical staple in Western Mass and, more specifically, the greater Springfield area. But as a result of social media and a number of successful programs, we're developing a national presence. I'm not mentioning this to brag. Rather I'm mentioning it to underscore the fact that having that degree of exposure allows us to bring in some very popular speakers to share their expertise with us. We've seen Judy G. Russell, "Dear Myrtle" and "Cousin Russ," Maureen Taylor, Dick Eastman, Colleen Fitzpatrick, all with national and international reputations. There's more to come in 2018. I'm not saying that every meeting will be a Google Hangout or a GoToWebinar event. We will continue to schedule local "talent" who will physically be with us at the meetings.

Not only is our board comprised of many who can be classified as "movers and shakers," our membership is also replete with talent. As the months and years go by, it is my dream that more folks will be able to assist in volunteer roles, future board members and committee chairpersons to help keep the genealogical fires burning here in Western Massachusetts.

Thank you to all who have made the past year productive and interesting.

Articles

What is Genealogy

Reprinted from American Elm, Vol 28, No 4, Winter 1999

Genealogists are like monkeys; always in the trees.
Genealogists are time unravelers.
Genealogists do it generation after generation.
Genealogists live in the past lane.
Genealogists never lose their jobs, they just go to another branch!
Genealogy in the buff, no I mean . . . A genealogy Buff!
Genealogy goes on. . . and on . . . and on . . .
Genealogy is like Hide & Seek: They Hide & I Seek!!!
Genealogy is not a hobby, it is a disease!
Genealogy: A hay stack full of needles. It's the threads I need.
Genealogy: Chasing your own tale!
Genealogy: The marriage of a jigsaw puzzle to a dungeon & dragon game.
Genealogy: Tracing descent from someone who didn't.
Genealogy: Where you confuse the dead and irritate the living.

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WMGS Founders Award Nominations

At our June 2016 Meeting, WMGS proudly presented its first Founders Award to Diane Duquette Ascoti, one of the original founders of the society in 1972. The WMGS Board has finalized a policy to make this an annual presentation.

The policy includes criteria, eligibility, judging criteria, and details about the nominations and selection process. Going forward, this award will be presented annually at our May meeting.

We invite all members to review the policy below and to consider making a nomination.

Here is the official policy and process:

Criteria:

An individual nominated for this award must meet one of the following criteria:

1. The individual has provided significant service to the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society or to the local genealogical community through time, talent, action, or dedication.
2. The individual has contributed in a significant way to the field of genealogy through leadership or other benefit.

Eligibility:

Any member in good-standing of the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society or an individual in the community, who meets the criteria for this award, is eligible.

Judging Criteria:

Board members will select the recipient(s) based on:

- The degree to which their services/action have made a lasting or meaningful contribution or impact.
- The length and degree of their service.
- The extent to which their service or action might be considered above and beyond the call of duty.
- The extent to which their action would be recognized and valued by the genealogical community or by their peers and community leaders.

Nomination and Selection Process:

Any member of the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society may nominate an individual. Criteria for the award will be posted in the January and February newsletter. Nominations will be accepted until April 1st. The Board will select the award recipient(s) at the April Board meeting and announce their selection in the May newsletter.

Presentation of the Award:

The award will be presented at the annual meeting in May.

Please consider nominating someone for the award. As noted in the policy, nominees do not have to be a member of the society, but nominations may only be made by members. Nominations will be accepted from January 1st until April 1st. Members may send their nominations to the WMGS Board via the **Contact Us** link on our website or by sending an email to: WestMassGen@gmail.com.

Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
Wednesday 3 January 2018 6 - 8 PM	WMGS Meeting – David Ouimette, CG from FamilySearch.org presenting on <i>From Wojtowa to Chicopee: The Story of Polish Immigrant Millworkers</i> at the Chicopee Library
Thursday, 18 January 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 25 January 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Wednesday, 7 February 2018	WMGS Meeting – Elissa Scalise Powell, CG, CGL, with the presentation “ <i>Rubik’s Cube Genealogy: A New Twist on Your Old Data.</i> ” at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 15 February 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 22 February 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
	Indexing Project – Continue Indexing for FamilySearch.org at the Agawam Senior Center – Date to be determined

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

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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.

New WMGS Members

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

Cheryl Funk
Barbara Kulig
Virginia Atwood
Charles Johnson
James Moran
Gerald Davis
Nina L. Sitron

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.

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 145 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!

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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.

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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 January 2018.

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.

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