



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

Contents

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

Upcoming Meetings

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

March 2018 Meeting

Susan Davies Sit, President of the Welsh Society of Western New England, lives in Connecticut and will joining us on March 7th to present on Welsh Genealogy

January 2018 Meeting Recap

On Wednesday, January 3rd, David Ouimette, CG, CGL from FamilySearch.org presented a live webinar on “*From Wojtowa to Chicopee: The Story of Polish Immigrant Millworkers*” at the Chicopee Library. This presentation was 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.

[Return to Contents page](#)

Articles

Accessing Free Library Resources from Home

By Erin Binney, with research by Jeanne Leblond

Looking to continue your genealogy research without spending a bundle on subscription fees? Good news! You can do a lot with just a library card and a computer.

You may already know that many public libraries subscribe to online genealogy databases such as Ancestry, allowing patrons to access records for free while visiting the library. This can be both cost-effective and convenient—until you are inspired to do research at 10 p.m. or during a snowstorm.

Luckily, many libraries offer additional genealogical and historical resources that can be accessed from home, just by entering your library card number. (Some databases don’t even require that.) These resources range from genealogical databases to newspaper archives to digitized high school yearbooks to dictionaries of family names—and much more. So how can you find out what resources a library offers? Most libraries list their free resources on their websites under Online Resources or a similar name. Be sure to check out all of the categories, as some tools are located under Genealogy, History, Newspapers, or another term.

Under the Resources tab on [the Springfield City Library’s website](#), for example, there is a section called Local History and Genealogy, which lists several online tools that can be accessed from home. Examples are digital versions of Springfield directories and archives for the *Springfield Republican* and other newspapers.



Additional resources can be found in the eLibrary section under the Resources tab. These include:

- HeritageQuest Online, a collection of genealogical and historical sources;

- Gale U.S. History in Context, which provides searchable information on historical events, people, and topics; and
- Gale World History in Context, which does the same on a global scale.

To access some of the resources on the Springfield City Library website, you need to log in with either a Springfield City Library or C/W MARS library card number. It is worth noting, however, that a few C/W MARS libraries have opted not to participate in these programs, according to an employee at the Springfield City Library; if your library card originated at one of these libraries, you won't be able to gain access. (This was true of my card, which I got from the Emily Williston Library in Easthampton.) If you run into this problem and are a Massachusetts resident, you may obtain a Springfield City Library card by visiting any branch.

Even smaller local libraries may surprise you with their wide range of free online resources. A few examples:

- The [Clapp Memorial Library](#) in Belchertown offers access to HeritageQuest; 10 local online newspapers; and MA Digital Treasures, a digital repository focusing on the history of Central and Western Massachusetts.
- The [Agawam Public Library](#) provides access to HeritageQuest as well as Agawam High School yearbooks with scanned images from 1927 to 2010.
- [Forbes Library](#) in Northampton offers links to HeritageQuest; America's Obituaries & Death Notices; and BiblioBoard, which houses historical documents, images, and more.

As with the Springfield City Library, you may need to enter a valid C/W MARS library card number to access resources from these and other local libraries remotely.

Don't limit your search to libraries within the region. At [the Boston Public Library's \(BPL's\) website](#), one of the options in the Quick Links drop-down menu is Genealogy Resources. These tools include:

- Gale Biography & Genealogy Master Index, which contains biographical sketches for more than 5 million people;
- Obituary Database, an index of obituaries that appeared in multiple Boston newspapers for various time periods;
- Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland, which contains entries for more than 45,000 English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, Cornish, and immigrant surnames in the U.K. and Ireland; and
- Dictionary of American Family Names, a three-volume set compiled in 2003 that claims to contain information on 85% of American surnames.



Some of the resources on the BPL's website, such as the Obituary Database, are accessible to everyone. Other resources, such as the historical newspapers database, require you to log in using an eCard number and password. You may [sign up to receive a free eCard](#) at the BPL's website. This eCard can be used on some local libraries' websites as well.

If you have ancestors from outside Massachusetts, check out what libraries in other states might have in terms of free online resources. The Brooklyn Public Library, for example, partnered with Newspapers.com to develop a digital archive of Brooklyn-based newspapers, including *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. The database is available through [the library's Brooklyn Newsstand portal](#). No login necessary!

So, the next time the research bug hits at an odd hour or you're unable to get to the library, don't despair. Just pour yourself a cup of hot tea and start clicking!

[Return to Contents page](#)

News

Upcoming Survey from WMGS

In an effort to keep our membership involved in the future direction of WMGS, we will be sending out our annual survey. This is your opportunity to tell us about your genealogical interests and needs. We're interested in knowing your opinions on our monthly meetings and presentations, other offerings, and would like to know what areas you'd like to see included in future programs.

Keep your eyes open for this survey and send in your responses. We want to hear from you.

WMGS Founders Award Nominations

At our June 2016 Meeting, WMGS proudly presented its first Founders Award to Diane Duquette Ascioti, 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, 7 February 2018 - 8 PM	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
Wednesday, 7 March 2018 6 - 8 PM	WMGS Meeting – Susan Sit
Thursday, 22 March 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 29 March 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.

[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.

Hillary Schau will be presenting her free three-part, hands on Intro to RootsMagic at the Chicopee Library on Front St. in Chicopee, on February 8, 15, and 22 from 3-4:30. If you missed the earlier presentation and are interested, call the library at **594-1800 ext 3** and sign up. Seating is limited but they are willing to hold a second class, if there is enough interest.

Hillary will also be presenting a free five-part beginners class for Genealogy at the Holyoke Library on Wednesdays, from February 21 to March 21. It will run from 1-2:30 and will have hands on opportunities to explore the record sets being discussed. If you'd like an introduction or to fill in gaps in your hunt, contact the Holyoke Library by calling (413) 420-8107 and *leaving your telephone and email address*. You will receive a call back to confirm your registration. The class size is limited to 12, so register soon.

More details can be found at <http://www.holyokelibrary.org/historynews.asp>

*** Looking for members of WMGS who would like to speak on Genealogy topics ***

We've been getting inquiries from different organization looking for people to speak about Genealogy. Some organizations are looking for volunteer speakers, but others may offer a fee. Do you feel comfortable speaking in front of an audience? Let us know. Include your name and email along with the geographic area you prefer and topics you are passionate about. (The best speakers are ones who are passionate about their topic). Reply to westmassgen@gmail.com and we will forward inquiries to the most appropriate, interested member, based on skills and location.

New England Regional Genealogical Consortium Conference 2019 (NERGC 2019)

WMGS will again be participating in the next NERGC conference to be held in Manchester, NH, in April 2019.

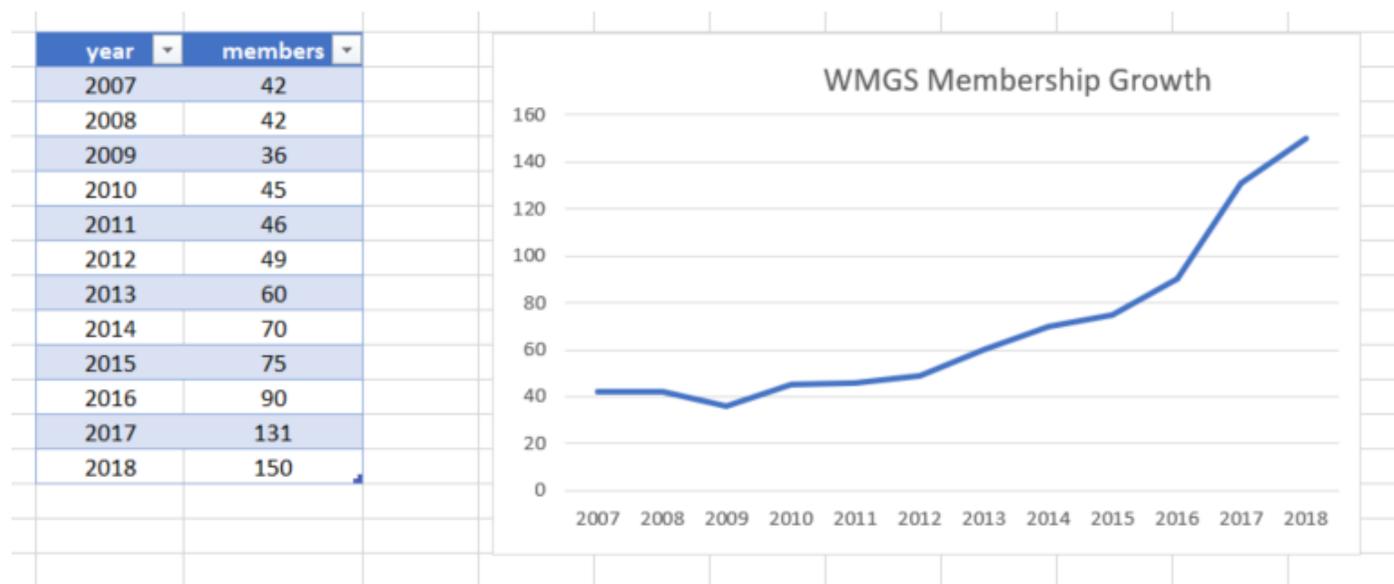
As part of WMGS' participation agreement as a NERGC sponsor, we are required to either sponsor a speaker of our choice or pay a fee to sponsor a speaker chosen by them.

If you are interested in submitting a proposal to be a speaker at NERGC, the deadline is in late March. Please contact WMGS to learn the requirements for speaker proposals (westmassgen@gmail.com). WMGS will be selecting a speaker to sponsor in late March. Please let us know if you would like to be considered for our sponsorship.



New WMGS Members

The Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society (WMGS) has been growing quickly in the past years due to the increasing interest in the study of family history.



We hope that you are all having great success in your continuing search for the stories of your ancestry. Please encourage friends and family to join us in the amazing journey. Helping each other and sharing frustration and success is what brings us together as a genealogical family.

About Us



genealogists. Please join 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

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!

[Return to Contents page](#)

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.

[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

Newsletter Deadlines

Please submit all information to be included in the next newsletter by 15 February 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.

[Return to Contents page](#)

