



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

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Upcoming Meetings

March 2018 Meeting

Our speaker on March 7th will be Susan Davies Sit. She was born in North Wales, UK, and has been researching her own family tree and others' trees for almost 40 years. She also enjoys helping others in their genealogy research including her husband's Chinese American tree, which is as difficult as it sounds! Her specialty is researching in Wales, Scotland and England. She is a Professional genealogist (APG); President of the Welsh Society of Western New England (WSWNE); a member of the Gwynedd Family History Society (Wales); and the Welsh-American Genealogy Society (WAGS). Some of the topics presented will be the Welsh patronymics and the difficulties when researching Welsh records including birth, marriage and death records. Many of the strategies presented can also be applied to English and Scottish Research.



April 2018 Meeting

Our speaker in April will be Amy Johnson Crow and she will be speaking on "*Ten Years: Census Substitutes*" which will help us to locate supporting documents between census years and help with the huge gap between 1880 and 1900.

Amy is a Certified Genealogist with 20 years' experience helping people discover their family history. She regularly speaks at events throughout the year, including the recent RootsTech 2018 in Salt Lake City, UT. She has served as series editor of the National Genealogical Society Guides and served on several national and state boards. She also holds a Masters degree in Library and Information Science.



February 2018 Meeting Recap



Our meeting on February 7th featured Elissa Scalise Powell, CG, CGL, with the presentation “*Rubik’s Cube Genealogy: A New Twist on Your Old Data.*” Elissa discussed 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 gave us ways 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

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.

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Message from the President

Dave Robison

Absolutely the largest gathering of genealogists, professional and otherwise, takes place every February in Salt Lake City, Utah. Think of it as a NERGC conference on major steroids! By the time you read this, more than 30,000 attendees, speakers and vendors will have been in attendance at the Salt Palace Convention Center in downtown Salt Lake City. The large group of speakers included a wide range of talents and specialties. This year’s keynote speakers included Scott Hamilton, Olympic Gold Medal Winner; Brandon Stanton of “Humans of New York;” Steve Rockwood, CEO of Family Search International; Natalia Lafourcade, Mexican pop-rock singer and songwriter; and Dr. Henry Louis Gates, host of the PBS series “Finding Your Roots.”



February 28 – March 3, 2018 | Salt Palace | Salt Lake City, UT

Karen and I decided to make a mini vacation out of the trip, so we left for Utah a week early to do some site-seeing. We have visited the Mormon Tabernacle Choir practice (open to the public on Thursday evenings) and the Mormon Temple itself in Temple Square (<https://www.temple-square.com/>); the internationally famous Family History Library just across the street from Temple Square; City Creek Center Mall in downtown Salt Lake City (<https://www.shopcitycreekcenter.com/>) which was quite an experience with a fire and water fountain display; Utah Olympic Park, site of the 2002 Salt Lake Winter Olympics; Park City, originally an old mining town, now a huge tourist attraction and site of the Sundance Movie Festival every January, and many excellent restaurants.

We were invited to a number of events including dinner at Red Iguana 2 with many of my “genie friends,” people who I’m in contact with year-round, many of whom I’ve never met in person. They are mostly genealogists who participate in broadcasts such as “Mondays with MYRT” and other genealogically oriented webinars. Many of these folks are from all around the United States, but there are quite a few I met who are from as far away as Australia, Wales, and Israel to name a few locations. By the way, anyone who reads this newsletter is welcome to join in on any of these broadcasts. “Mondays,” for example, is a program sponsored by Pat Richley-Erickson. We normally have about 10 people on the “panel” who appear on screen to discuss all things genealogy oriented: from technology to programming, to websites...anything! It’s an open forum. In addition to the panel, an unlimited number of people can simply log in to watch, listen and perhaps pose a question or make a comment in the chat box. Pat bills herself as “DearMYRTLE, your friend in genealogy.” She’s been teaching and coaching genealogists since the 1980s, maybe earlier! In addition to “Mondays,” she holds classes and study groups in technology, search strategies, archiving, recently published books such as “Albion’s Seed” about the folkways of 17th and 18th century immigrants, DNA, the “Mastering” series by Dr. Thomas W. Jones, writing citations, the Genealogy Proof Standard and many more. Nearly all of these programs are uploaded to her YouTube channel. Take a look at www.youtube.com and search for “DearMYRTLE.” There are 800+ webinars archived there now. You can also find her schedule of upcoming programs by clicking here <http://hangouts.dearmyrtle.com/calendar.html> and selecting what interests you. This link is to a calendar of web-based genealogy events that you can auto-magically add to your own calendar. Click on the event to open the description, scroll to the bottom and then click on “copy to my calendar.”

Salt Lake City or even Utah is not a “top of mind” tourist destination. But I can highly recommend it for its sheer beauty, skiing and some surprising tourist attractions.

Articles

Flesh on the Bones

Reprinted from American Elm, Vol 26, No 1, Spring 1997

The Internet provides genealogists with the ability to correspond with a large number of people, and the questions asked and answered on the Internet sometimes are worthy of reprinting for others to savor. The following letter was found in an on-line genealogy digest; the author, Ardis Parshall, kindly gave her permission for reprinting.

An amateur genealogist (somewhat shyly) asks for suggestions on getting to know her ancestors as people, rather than bloodless “nameanddateandplace”. Here is Ardis’ response:

Once in a great while, you can find a diary or detailed newspaper story or something that gives you personal details. More often, you have to use your imagination. Here are some of the things that I do:

Always look for every record your ancestor may appear in, even if you don’t “need” it. I didn’t “need” the early New York state censuses, but those are the ones that told me how many sheep my family owned and how many yards of fabric the family had woven in a given year – a little imagination told me that it was the mother and her daughter who were

doing all the weaving, along with most wool preparation and final sewing, so I learned something new about what their lives were like. I didn't "need" the later New York state censuses but looking at the agricultural census not only told me what kind of work the family was doing, but gave me a pretty clear idea of their diet.

Look for records of their belongings. An estate file that gives an inventory (sometimes room by room, so you can visualize their homes) tells a lot about their belongings and their lives. Tax records, like the "luxury" tax assessments during the Civil War or the local taxes for keeping a hunting dog, give a glimpse into their lives.

When a man died in this country, his widow was usually allowed to select the particular property that constituted her share before the rest of the goods were divided among the heirs. Why would a woman choose the carriage horses, or the children's schoolbooks, or whatever, as her share? Put yourself in her place and see if her choices suggest something about her character.

Look at land records, including mortgages. Did the family struggle, and have to repeatedly mortgage the farm? Or did they regularly purchase new pieces of land to add to their holdings? Which generation shows full signatures instead of the "X"? -- that may be the signal that your family became literate in that generation. Do the same people regularly witness deeds and wills? If so (and if they aren't family), you have either discovered a very good friend, or at least an obliging neighbor. (Nice to know stern old grandpa had friends, isn't it?)

Look at records that don't promise much in the way of genealogy, if you have access to them. Scan jury lists and church member rolls and newspaper accounts of lodge activities or union strikes or war bond drives. If you find a family member, you'll know something new that was important to them.

Try to find county histories. If you're lucky, your family will be mentioned. If not, you'll still have a description of what activities were going on in their neighborhood.

If your family lived in a rural area, try to find the local newspaper. Lots of small newspapers published notes every week on people's health, who was visiting whom, and other incredibly personal details that don't show up in bigger papers.

Consider the verses they engraved on tombstones. Were they sentimental? Classic quotations? Very religious? Maybe that suggests something about the family.

Look for books like "Everyday Life in ..." (time or place). These can give ideas about how your family treated illness, what they wore, what kind of music they may have heard.

Analyze anything odd you find. Did grandpa deed land to each son on the son's 21st birthday? When he died, did grandma suddenly deed land to all of the daughters? Could that signal a longstanding argument between them? Or: Did grandpa seem to have trouble hanging on to even small parcels of land, mortgaging and selling small pieces every year? Maybe he had money troubles – or maybe he was a carpenter building houses, which he then sold. Did your family come to America within weeks after the death of an older family member? Maybe it was the inheritance that financed the voyage, or maybe they were just waiting for Mama to die before they left home.

Do you have photographs? What objects are in the photo with your grandfather? Is his hair combed or not? Are the kids wearing shoes?

I know this isn't nearly as personal as finding a well-written family history complete with interviews of all your ancestors, but who is ever lucky enough to find that? Still, if you stop to consider every detail you find, and ask What does this tell about their lives? Why would she have done this? Why did he move there? You can get glimpses that will turn the names and dates back into real people.

And don't forget to post questions on ROOTS-L – ask if anybody knows a good book to recommend about the time and place of your particular family. If you can't figure out what an occupation was, or what the disease on the death certificate was, or whatever, go ahead and ask. **SOMEBODY** always seems to have an answer!

Good luck.

Submitted by Carol Blais # 149

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Brick Wall Queries

Q.1 FOLEY, Michael Seeking dates and birthplaces of parents of Michael Foley, gravestone lists him as born in Parish English County, Waterford, Ireland, abt. 1820. On Michael Foley's death certificate, parents are listed as Jeffery Foley and Hannah ?, possibly Honora/Hanner. (Submitted by Margaret Carsley)

Q.2 HICKEY, Mary Seeking birthplace in Ireland of Mary Hickey, married to Michael Foley in Northampton, MA, Nov. 2, 1854. Father listed as James Hickey. Mother unknown. (Submitted by Margaret Carsley)

Q.3 FOLEY, Michael & HICKEY, Mary Suggestions needed to determine if this couple were the same Michael Foley and Mary Hickey (M. 11/2/1854) who lived in Belchertown with their children from 1855-1890. (Submitted by Margaret Carsley)

How to Submit or Respond to a Query:

Submitting: Queries and responses should be sent via email to westmassgen@gmail.com or submitted through the Contact Us section on our website. Members may also bring their prepared queries or responses to our monthly meeting or to one of our research clinics. Non-members should submit their payment (\$5.00 per query) via the Donate tab on the website. Members are entitled to post three (3) queries per month. As a reminder, be sure to periodically check out our Surname List for updates and to see if you recognize any names. The Surname list is updated quarterly.

Responding: Please send your response directly to WMGS. To aid in matching answer to question, please Identify the question you are answering by using the month of the Newsletter and the question number. (example Oct 2017Q1, Oct 2017-Q3) Answers submitted should include the source(s) of information found or specific information on a website or database. WMGS will forward the response to the person who asked the question, post it in the next newsletter, and archive it on our website.

Note: Because of space limitations, WMGS reserves the right to limit the number of queries that are listed per newsletter. When necessary, queries will be posted in the next available issue. WMGS and its members are not responsible to conduct research, to provide answers for the query, or for the accuracy of the information posted or received. Always verify any information received by checking its source.

News and Upcoming Conferences

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.

eConference

Moments of Their Lives

Saturday, March 24th
8:30 am - 3:00 pm (MST)

Join Melissa Barker, Diane L Richard, Lisa Toth Salinas, and Michael L Strauss during their live presentations from the comfort of your home! Topics include:

- Loose Records in an Archive
- 4 Discoveries Found in Post Office Records
- Finding Ancestors in Catholic Records
- Work Skills of Old: Justice of Peace Records



Proceeds benefit the
Lake Havasu
Genealogical Society

Register Today

5 hours of instruction for
\$19.99, if you register by
March 14th. \$24.99 after.

familyhistoryfanatics.com/LakeHavasu



Pioneer Valley History Network

proudly announces the 3rd annual



Your Homespun History Un-Conference

Saturday, July 28, 2018 at the

Kittredge Center at Holyoke Community College.

This will be a gathering of history enthusiasts of all ages for a day of learning and sharing. This will be PVHN's 3rd annual History Camp Pioneer Valley, based on the "un-conference" model developed by [History Camp Boston](#). What is an "un-conference"? In short, it's a self-organizing conference. People who share a common interest get together and create the framework for the event:

- The topics that are presented are the ones of interest to the presenters.
- No committee will "screen" the topics and requesting a time-slot is easy. Anyone can present.
- The sessions that are well-attended are the ones that are of interest to the attendees.
- It's an incredibly democratic way to gather and share information.

The cost will be low -- the goal is to break even. There are no paid staff, no paid speakers, and no one will profit. We want your participation.

There will also be plenty of opportunity for networking and an exhibit area for selling books and other history-related products. There is no specific theme, but please, no political diatribes or sales pitches for commercial products or services. Other than that, the sky is the limit.



Registration will begin on or around Patriot's Day (April 18). To Register to Attend or Present, go to: <http://historycamp.org/pioneer-valley> For more Information, contact us at: pioneervalleyhistory@gmail.com

New England Historic Genealogy Society (NEHGS) Webinar

The New England Historic Genealogy Society (NEHGS) offers a wealth of online training sessions and webinars. Some require a fee, but a number of them are offered to the general public at no charge.

On Thursday, March 15th, NEHGS is offering a free webinar entitled “Creating a Research Plan: Tips from NEHGS Research Services.” Check out their website to register for this program and to find information about other offerings. The link to their online classes is: <https://www.americanancestors.org/education/online-classes>.

Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
Wednesday 7 March 2018 6 - 8 PM	WMGS Meeting – Susan Sit will present on strategies for researching UK ancestors with a focus on Welsh challenges
Thursday, 15 March 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 22 March 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Wednesday, 4 April 2018	WMGS Meeting – Amy Johnson Crow will speak on the topic of “ <i>Ten Years: Census Substitutes</i> ”
Thursday, 19 April 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 26 April 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 nine newest members:

Margaret Carsley
Anna Cole (Calhoun, Louisiana)
Nancy Evans
Henry Fairlie
Pam Heald (Acton, MA)
Jennifer Randolph (Hanover, NH)
Patricia Reed (Houston, TX)
Marilyn Vincent
Pauline Merrick

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, Hillary Schau, and vacancy - 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

Solved all of your brick walls?

Remember - WMGS offers two opportunities to seek assistance in solving them.

- Our newsletter **Queries** feature allows members to post up to 3 Queries per edition. Non-members may submit Queries for a small fee through our website.
- Our **Surname List** features family names that our members are researching. The list is updated quarterly and is available on our website.

Queries and Surname forms are available on our website and at our monthly meetings. Queries can also be submitted via the Contact Us page on our website.

Not sure how to frame a Query? Instructions are available on our website. You can also send us a message or ask for assistance at a monthly meeting. We're here to help!

Queries are published in our newsletter, which has almost 500 subscribers who might be able to help. They are also archived on our website, along with our Surname list, so a visitor might just have the information that you need.

Newsletter Deadlines

Please submit all information to be entered into the next newsletter by 15 March 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, mailing address and/or phone number. 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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