



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

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Upcoming Meetings

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 Master’s degree in Library and Information Science.



May 2018 Meeting

Do you want to publish a book based on your genealogy research, but have no idea how to start? Our May speaker, Linda Roghaar, will provide a clear road-map to get you started, and explain publishing terms and the process by which your manuscript becomes a finished book. You will learn the important steps to preserve your work in a professional, permanent book that will be read and enjoyed by generations to come.

Linda Roghaar has spent decades in book publishing. In 2007, she recognized that advances in technology could benefit authors; she then developed an exciting, collaborative platform that combines standards of traditional publishing with today’s innovative publishing tools. She founded Genealogy House Publishers and now helps genealogists get their stories written, edited, and published as a printed book.



March 2018 Meeting Recap

Our speaker on March 7th was 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. She presented many strategies which can also be applied to English and Scottish Research

Annual Meeting is Coming Up in May

Whether you're a seasoned veteran or a relative newbie to genealogy, please consider running for an open position at our annual elections at our May meeting.

If you are interested in serving on our Board, all it takes is a commitment to seeing Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society maintain its status as a respected member of the genealogical community. Our Board is a group of friendly people who are enthusiastic about WMGS.

Positions that are up for election this year, based on expiring terms, are:

- Vice-President,
- Secretary,
- Assistant Treasurer,
- and one Director.

All terms are for two-years.

Two additional positions will also be open

- Our current Treasurer will be stepping down
- and a vacant Director's position needs to be filled.

Both positions will be elected to serve for the remainder of their terms, which expire in May 2019. Our bylaws require that these positions be filled in a special election, which we will hold in conjunction with our annual election in May.

At our April meeting, Dave Robison, our President, will appoint a Nominating Committee which will be responsible for coming up with a slate of candidates for presentation at the annual meeting. If you would like information on the responsibilities of any of the positions, please contact someone from the Nominating Committee or any of our current Board members. You can also send an email to westmassgen@gmail.com. Please consider joining our Board!

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

Why should you attend genealogy seminars, webinars and conferences?

Here are a few reasons for you to ponder:

- **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 your 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 these days. From the basics to genome matching, it's out there. Or how about 18th 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, military records/pensions, 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 a syllabus of each 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 by writing it up so that all of our members will be able to benefit from your experience. You can email it to westmassgen@gmail.com.

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 conference (NERGC) is coming to Manchester, New Hampshire, in April of 2019. That's not far away! There will be plenty of time to register for the conference itself, various luncheons and banquets with keynote speakers Blaine Bettinger, Thomas W. Jones, and Cyndi Ingle, sign up for a history tour of some of the more interesting places in the Manchester, perhaps win a door prize! I know of one vendors who have offered a few cash prizes ranging up to \$4,000! It's easy to sign up. Check www.nergc.org which will have a "Register Now" link right on the front page. Interested in volunteering? There will be a link to sign up for that as well.

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Articles

Poem on Starting Anonymous

Reprinted from American Elm, Vol 27, No 1, Spring/Summer 1998

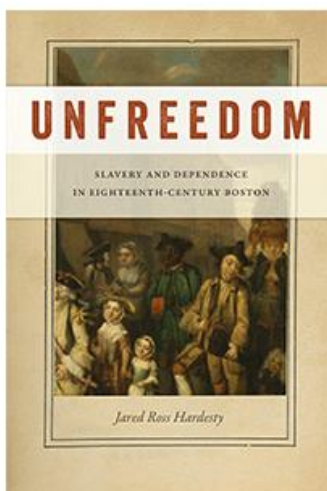
I started out calmly tracing my tree
To find if I could, the making of me,
And all that I had was a great grandfather's name,
Not knowing his wife or from whence he came.
I chased him across a long line of states
And came up with pages and pages of dates
When all put together, it made me forlorn,

I proved that poor grandpa had never been born.
 One day I was sure the truth I had found,
 Determined to turn this whole thing upside down
 I looked up the record of one uncle John,
 But then found the old man was younger than his son.

Then when my hopes were fast growing dim,
 I came across records that must have been him
 The facts I collected made me quite sad.
 Dear old grandfather was never a dad.
 I think maybe someone is pulling my leg.
 I'm not at all sure I wasn't hatched from an egg.
 After hundreds of dollars spent on my tree,
 I can't help but wonder if I'm really me.

Book Review

UNFREEDOM – *Slavery and Dependence in Eighteenth-Century Boston* By Jared Ross Hardesty Reviewed by Dave Robison



Slavery is not a pleasant word; it is not a pleasant institution. The tragic events that it invokes is beyond horrific. And yet, the knowledge we mostly possess of slavery as an institution in this country or anywhere is at best superficial. Unless you are a student of history, sociology, racial relations or other cultural disciplines, we can define the word but likely have little more understanding of the implications.

Along comes Jared Ross Hardesty. I have always admired anyone with the ability to reach deep into the record and come out with relevant supportive documentation in order to present a history logically and dispassionately. Hardesty is quite adept at this strategy. Citing cold facts will generally not do much to give the reader a true understanding. Weaving the fabric of the lives, the culture and the attitudes of a population that lived over three centuries past is a talent few possess.

He begins with the Introduction: “A World of Unfreedom” in which 18th century Boston and its economies, social strata, attitudes and practices along with civic and religious conventions are described through the histories of several individuals who lived, worked and wrote about their world during these formative years. Hardesty discusses the upper class (with its newly evolving monarchical society) through the conventional working classes down to the slaves, indentured servants and bondsmen; how they interacted and, to some degree, how this system, which we find anathema today, was actually an integral part of the success of an important colonial town.

The next area is “Origins” where we learn what brought about the acceptance of Unfreedom as a social institution. Boston as a trade center attracted people not only from England and other European countries, but merchants who did regular business in the Caribbean. From Europe to the West African nations to the West Indies to the eastern seaboard, the trade routes that developed brought goods (including the human variety) as well as the many cultures of the people from those parts of the world.

In the section titled “Deference and Dependence,” the life of the unfree was certainly not pleasant but, in Boston at least, not without certain accepted latitudes. For example, many slaves were allowed to travel for social or even for romantic reasons. As long as the servile class accepted their lot in life and deferred to the rules of the master and his household, everything was relatively peaceful. However, there were many situations that caused turmoil from escaping to tragic events such as absolute household upheaval to murder of the masters or his family members. The slaves were still and always would be dependent on the relative goodness of their masters and their sustenance such as it was.

“Social Worlds” discusses the sub-culture of those entrapped in the world of Unfreedom, the vicious cycle of earning a living or, more to the point, earning an existence. The broad spectrum of types of households illustrates the lengths to which the upper class would go to strike a balance between control and their own strict Puritan beliefs which were rapidly developing toward a broader vision of the world thanks mostly to the interaction of other cultures.

In “Laboring Lives,” a more enlightened culture emerges. Much to my own surprise, slaves in Boston were able to exert a reasonable amount of control over their working environments. Such was the value of their skilled and semi-skilled labors. Anything less may have caused a complete collapse of the economies of the time. In many circumstances, comparing the working lives of the free or at least non-indentured population, slaves and the indentured were able to carve out a reasonable existence devoid or nearly devoid of the torturous conditions that we normally associate with the typical vision of what slavery was all about. From my perspective at least, these historical observations are enlightening. Not to the point of excusing Unfreedom as a cultural institution, there is some measure of relief knowing that my own ancestors did not treat their slaves as sub-human, thoroughly dependent individuals not worthy of ever attaining the equality or social status of even the lowest layer of society, either in civil or religious circles.

Read “Appropriating Institutions” and discover, surprisingly, that there were a great many individuals who actually felt “saved” by being brought out of the heathen cultures of West Africa and Caribbean into which they were born and now enlightened by the Christian faith and philosophies of 18th century Bostonians. By “appropriating institutions,” Hardesty describes how enslaved populations were cleverly able to use the very culture and beliefs of the white populations of Boston to improve their own lots in life. By relying on the strong religious convictions of the upper class, the fervent belief in the principles as outlined in the Bible and preached by the ministers of the time, the Unfree were able to temper their treatment by most masters and live relatively peaceful, productive lives, marry and raise families and carry on with a modicum of dignity.

Hardesty summarizes in “Afterword: The Fall of the House of Unfreedom,” that the events of the day, namely the fight for freedom that sparked the Revolutionary War, had a “revolutionary” effect on the culture of late 18th century Boston. The unfree were certainly still unfree, indentured apprentices remained indentured, and bondsmen were still held to their responsibilities. But there is a definite sense of and justification for the softening. The *Commonwealth v. Jennison* generated the previously unimaginable ruling that slavery was incompatible with the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780. The path to freedom in Boston is enlightening, inspiring and educational. Jared Ross Hardesty’s work may even have the positive effect of renewing our faith in human nature, in spite of the fact that that degree of enlightenment may take a century or two to take hold.

Is the subject of Unfreedom not relevant today? Perhaps and then again, perhaps not.

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Brick Wall Queries

Q-10 HICKEY, Mary - Seeking death certificate for Mary Hickey, widow of Michael Foley, listed in census records and city directories as living with daughters at 13 Main St, Amherst, MA after 1895. (Submitted by Margaret Carsley)

Q-11 POND, John R. – Seeking information on birth of John R. Pond. Obituary states he was born in Great Barrington, MA in 1852. Died in San Bernardino, CA in 1931. Married Florence Gotto in Lake City, CO in 1876. Had 11 children. Worked as a rancher and blacksmith. (Submitted by Scott Andrae)

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.

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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.

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

Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
Wednesday, 4 April 2018 6 - 8 PM	WMGS Meeting – Amy Johnson Crow will speak on the topic of “ <i>Ten Years: Census Substitutes</i> ”
Monday, 9 April 2018 6-8 PM	WMGS Board Meeting
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
Wednesday, 2 May 2018	WMGS Meeting – Annual Meeting plus Linda Roghaar will speak on publishing genealogy
Thursday, 17 May 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 24 May 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.

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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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

One of our key 'member benefits' is access to the members-only page containing archived recordings of speakers from around the US: Judy G Russell, Maureen Taylor, Connie Fitzpatrick, Elissa Scalise Powell, Dr. Shelley Murphy, Nora Galvin, 'DearMYRTLE' a/k/a Pat Richley-Erickson, Russ Worthington, Melissa Barker, Jennifer Alford and our own Panel of Pros. The page also includes the handouts from most of those meetings and historical copies of 'American Elm,' the original WMGS newsletter publication.

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 April 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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