



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

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Upcoming Meetings

Annual Meeting Reminder

Our annual meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 2nd, after the presentation. At the meeting, the Nominating Committee will present the slate of candidates for election as officers and directors of our society. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

The following positions are up for election to two-year terms:

Vice-President

Secretary

Asst. Treasurer

Director

Director (to complete the remaining year of a two-year term)

We will also discuss our current membership dues structure and our plans for the upcoming year.

Following this brief business portion, we will present the Founders Award to this year's nominees. Please join us at this meeting.

May 2018 Meeting

Do you want to publish a book based on your genealogy research, but have no idea how to start? On May 2nd, our 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.

June 2018 Meeting

Be sure to sign up for our Annual “June Pot Luck Dinner” during our May meeting. Not just a Pot Luck Dinner, it is our Open Mic Night as well! So, bring your favorite casserole or main dish, a side dish, or some sort of dessert, and socialize with fellow genealogists searching for their family tree. Who knows, you might even find a 5th - 9th cousin ‘X’ number of times removed; sort of like Dave Robison and Bruce Cortis (through Deacon Chapin of Springfield). After dinner, members will have an opportunity to speak and share during our Open Mic session. Members are welcome to share genealogy information including ideas, tips, suggestions, research experience, and genealogy projects. If you have a new website to share, a place to visit, or a research success story, please be sure to share it during our Open Mic session that’s how we all learn. Members are encouraged to bring a friend.

April 2018 Meeting Recap

Our speaker in April was Amy Johnson Crow and she spoke on “*Ten Years: Census Substitutes*” presenting ideas for how to locate supporting documents between census years and especially for 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.



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

Now is the time!

Back in the ancient days of typewriters, aspiring typists would use various phrases to improve their skills and their WPM efficiency. That's "Words Per Minute." Typewriters. I read an article today that the City of Chicopee is updating the information processing system at City Hall. It's been on the agenda, apparently, for quite some time. This part may or may not be true, but supposedly, they had hired a new person for the clerical staff who looked at the bulky machine on one of the desks and asked, "What's that?" I could see that happening! The good news is that the new equipment and system are on their way and Chicopee may be on the cusp of streamlining their processes.



The typing practice line was "Now is the time to come to the aid of our country." Typing students would type that over and over again. I wasn't a typing student, but my mother and my aunt told me about the typing classes they took at the High School of Commerce in Springfield. I would use it to practice cursive writing. We'll talk about cursive in another article one of these days! Another phrase was, "The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog." That ditty was a bit trickier because it uses almost every letter of the alphabet.

Back to "Now is the time." Now is the time to come to the aid of your local genealogical society. At the upcoming meeting, we will be electing a slate of officers. I offer my sincere thanks to all who have been coming to the aid of our local genealogical society, WMGS. And I want to prematurely express my sincere thanks to anyone who has offered to be presented on our slate for election.

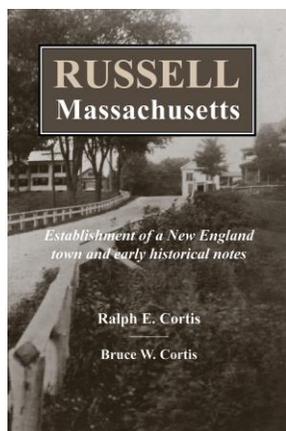
When we were a relatively small, local group meeting once a month for 10 months of the year, it was far easier to manage the 25 or 30 members. OK, maybe 40. The meetings were attended by about half the membership, sometimes less. Our natural movement to grow the society has led to a membership which will soon, over the next year or so, grow to 200 or more. Many of these members are not from Western Mass, not even from New England for that matter. So, it has become a bit of a juggernaut. Were it not for the many who have been elected and those who cheerfully volunteer their talents and abilities, we would be looking at contraction rather than growth.

This is what is drawing attention to WMGS. Our programs, our plans, but most importantly, our membership. I have many ideas as we grow: a smaller version of a NERGC conference centered around Western Mass; collaboration with other regional groups after learning a great deal with our first collaboration; for those interested in teaching or lecturing, offering them the opportunity to develop their own speaking skills and supporting them in their efforts to speak to regional societies; and there's more. Some of those ideas might even come to fruition. No one does it alone; I have many people to thank and I don't think I do it enough. So here we go: THANK YOU!

*** WMGS Announces its 2018 Founders Award Recipients ***

At our Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 2nd, WMGS will be presenting our **Founders Award** to two individuals who have provided significant and lasting service, not only to WMGS members, but to the entire genealogical community. Each of them has contributed to the genealogical field through their time, research, and dedication.

This year's recipients are Ralph Cortis and John O'Connor.



Ralph Cortis, a long-time member of WMGS, is one of this year's Founders Award recipients. Ralph spent over 40 years conducting hands-on research at libraries, cemeteries, city clerks' offices, and other archives to create a genealogical treasure of the early history of the town of Russell, Massachusetts. He and his son, Bruce, compiled their research into their book titled, "Russell Massachusetts: Establishment of a New England Town". Using local and regional sources, the book covers the history of the town from its founding in 1792, through the early 1900's. It includes information on Russell's settlers and early inhabitants, as well as its town boundaries, roads, schools, churches, industries, military veterans, including its Civil War veterans, providing an incredible source of information for anyone researching Russell ancestors.

Ralph has been noted for his willingness to give of his time, sharing his research and wealth of knowledge with others, and encouraging those who are searching for their ancestors, sometimes even personally taking them on tours of local cemeteries and ancestral locations.

He has compiled a multi-generational data base on the Palmer, Cortis, and other families who resided in Russell over the last 200-plus years. His approach to genealogy research is that its value is in sharing it with others.

For his significant, lasting, and meaningful contributions to the genealogical and historical community, we are proud to present this award to him.

John O'Connor, a life-long resident of Springfield, Massachusetts, only recently retired and moved to East Longmeadow. He was a long-time employee at the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum (photo on right) and later the Museum of Springfield History and Archive, starting his tenure in the early 1990's. But his interest in family history began many years before that. He is an expert in local resources, Irish research, and French-Canadian ancestry. He created a huge database of local Catholic cemetery records, contributed over 20,000 memorials to the Find-A-Grave website project and solved hundreds of family mysteries over the years for people, many of whom were from locations far and wide.



Beginning in 2004, he wrote the monthly newspaper column "Family Tree" for the Springfield Republican about his experiences in researching his own family, shared stories about his successes in helping others to find their ancestry and shared his knowledge about research databases. He encouraged others to pursue their ancestry and make family connections.

John has more friends in Western Massachusetts than he probably realizes. His knowledge and enthusiasm for family history has fed the genealogical appetites of many people over a long period of time. For this reason, Western Mass Genealogical Society is pleased to honor him tonight.

We are pleased to be honoring both Ralph Cortis and John O'Connor. Please join us at the presentation of their awards at our Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 2nd at the Agawam Senior Center.

Articles

Download Those Images

By Michael John Neill

Download images of genealogical records as you find them. Do not assume that they will always be there or that you will always have access.

- you may decide to cancel your subscription to that site
- the site may use the ability to host the images
- the image may get moved to where you can't find it
- you may forget how you got it in the first place

Once you download it, you have it. Back it up. File it in a way that you can find it again. Make certain the file name describes the image.



(c) Michael John Neill, "Genealogy Tip of the Day," <http://genealogytipoftheday.blogspot.com>, 17 Mar 2018

WMGS Research Clinics

Have you attended one of our Research Clinics yet? If not, we'd like to tell you what they're all about.

Our Research Clinics are held in the Computer Room (1st floor) at the Agawam Senior Center on the 3rd & 4th Thursdays of the month from 6pm to 8pm. The clinics are staffed by friendly WMGS volunteers with years of experience in genealogical research. Clinics sessions are free for WMGS members and \$10 for non-members.

What can they do for me?

- Help you learn the basics to get started on your research
- Help you plot strategies to move your research forward
- Help you get past a road block by recommending strategies to overcome a brick wall
- Help you get started in ethnic research, including Irish, French-Canadian, and other areas
- Help you learn more about the extensive and free resources on Family Search and other websites

- Teach you about the free and less-well known databases on Ancestry, and give you tips on getting the most out of your subscription

The Computer Room has 6 computers with access to AncestryLibrary edition. There are also several other computers available for general internet access. Members who attend the clinics are free to research on their own, or to work with one of the volunteers.

If you don't have a subscription to Ancestry, or had one that's expired, or would like to search at a world level (much more expensive if you get it yourself) come to a Research Clinic! Or, maybe you'd like to learn about FamilySearch.org or the many other free resources offered on other websites!

Stop by and see what they can offer you!

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Brick Wall Queries

New:

Q-12 RIDER, Benjamin - Seeking birthdate, place, and parents of Benjamin Rider, (b. abt 1794, d. between 1860-65), possibly to Daniel Rider b.1758 & Nancy Makee, who lived in Belchertown, MA in early 1800's. Benjamin Rider and Daniel Rider are both listed on 1810 tax list for Belchertown. Benjamin lived in New York in 1830's, purchased property in Winnebago, Illinois in 1844. (Submitted by Michelle Carroll)

Answered:

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)

Answer – Q-10 Mary Hickey Foley's death certificate can be found in the Massachusetts, Death Records, 1841-1915 database, which is available on Family Search, Ancestry, and several other websites. Mary died on June 1, 1905 in Amherst, MA and was buried alongside her husband on June 3, 1905 in Palmer, MA. A picture of their gravestone is available on the FindAGrave website. The gravestone lists Michael Foley as being a native of parish Aglish, Co. Waterford, Ireland.

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



Pioneer Valley History Network

proudly announces the 3rd annual



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, 2 May 2018 6 - 8 PM	WMGS Meeting – Annual Meeting plus Linda Roghaar will speak on publishing genealogy
Thursday, 10 May 2018 6 - 8 PM	DNA Boot Camp session 2 – at the First Church in Ludlow, 859 Center St., Chicopee, MA– WMGS Members Only (still time to sign up and attend)
Monday, 14 May 2018 6-8 PM	WMGS Board Meeting
Thursday, 17 May 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 17 May 2018 6 - 8 PM	DNA Boot Camp session 3 – at the First Church in Ludlow, 859 Center St., Chicopee, MA – WMGS Members Only
Thursday, 24 May 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Wednesday, 6 June 2018	WMGS Meeting – Annual Pot Luck at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 14 June 2018 6 - 8 PM	DNA Boot Camp session 4 – at the First Church in Ludlow, 859 Center St., Chicopee, MA – WMGS Members Only
Thursday, 21 June 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 28 June 2018 6 - 8 PM	DNA Boot Camp session 5 – at the First Church in Ludlow, 859 Center St., Chicopee, MA – WMGS Members Only
Thursday, 28 June 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.

Hillary Schau will be presenting **Free Beginning Genealogy Classes** at the East Springfield Branch of the Springfield Library, located at 21 Osborne Terrace, Springfield, in June and July. These classes will be held in June on Fridays (June 8, 15, 22, and 29), from 12 noon until 2 PM. A second series will be held in July on Saturdays (July 7, 14, 21, and 28) If you or a friend would like a good overview or introduction to Genealogy, register by contacting the library at 413-263-6840 or watch for it on their event calendar.

New WMGS Members

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

Melissa Blowers-Curran

Kelly Fox

Elaine Hitchcock

Carol Landers

Helene O'Connor

Christine Fowles

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 165 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 Ascioti – Founder

Fran Malone, Hillary Schau, and vacancy - Directors
Susan Leverson, Katy Krause & Dee Pederson – Website Redesign Team.

Meeting Details

We meet year-round on the first Wednesday of each month at the Agawam Senior Center, located at 954 Main Street in Agawam, Massachusetts.

Our genealogy research clinics are offered on the third and fourth Thursdays of the month from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center. The cost of the computer class is \$10 for non-members; free for members of the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society.

We look forward to you joining us at our next meeting!

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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 currently:

- \$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 May 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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