



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

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Upcoming Meetings

June 2018 Meeting – Pot Luck and Open Mic Night

On June 6th we will be having not only our Pot Luck Dinner but an 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. Members are encouraged to bring a friend.



POTLUCK DINNER

That's how we all learn.

July 2018 Meeting – Skills Sharing Event

Perhaps you're just beginning work on your family genealogy, maybe you've been working on it over the years when time allows, or maybe you're a seasoned veteran trying to put the finishing touches on your family history. Well, we're betting that everyone will enjoy this evening!

We're working on plans for a Skills Night featuring displays of genealogy tools and tips and special interest discussion groups. Some of the ideas we are hoping to showcase include photo scanning and organization tools, ways to record family memories, software program comparisons, and ways to find hidden records and more on Family Search and Ancestry. Besides that, attendees will have an opportunity to have a personal consultation about their research problems with one of our own professional genealogists, our own version of "Ancestors Roadshow".

Our July meeting will be informal with attendees being able to freely move around stations to check out the displays and join special interest groups. And, we'll have a sign-up sheet for personal consultations.

We're still working on plans for the event and more details will be coming in our next newsletter. We welcome our many multi-talented members to pitch in and to share their knowledge as well. So, if you have a topic that you'd like to facilitate for the discussion groups or would like to have a display of genealogy tools and tricks, or have something else that you'd like to share, please let us know. You can email your idea to: westmassgen@gmail.com or let us know at our June gathering.

Important Note: Our July meeting will be held one week later on **July 11th** at 6 PM at the Agawam Senior Center due to the July 4th holiday closure.

May 2018 Meeting Recap

On May 2nd, our speaker, Linda Roghaar, provided a road-map to get us started with the task of publishing all our hard work. She explained publishing terms and the process by which your manuscript becomes a finished book. We learned the important steps to preserve our 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.

Annual Meeting Recap

At our annual meeting on May 3rd, the Nominating Committee presented a slate of officers and directors for consideration for this year's election. No nominations were offered from the floor. Elected for two-year terms were:

- Jeanne Leblond – Vice-President
- Estelle Stasz – Secretary
- Katy Krause- Asst. Treasurer
- Dave Lapierre- Director
- Eddie Bowen-Wilcox – Director to fulfill remainder of term, (one year)

Dave Robison, President, congratulated those elected and welcomed our new members to the Board. He also extended the Board's thanks for their service to members leaving the Board: Ann McDougal, Secretary; Fran Malone, Director, and Nancy Netherwood, Director who resigned in February.

Dave also presented a proposal from the Board to increase dues for the single and couple's membership by five dollars for the upcoming membership year. The reason for the increase is to provide WMGS with more revenue to offer quality programming and other opportunities for members, to pay for 501(c)3 Federal tax status filing, to purchase liability insurance for the society, an increase in cost for the Ancestry database

available at our Research Clinics, and other operating expenses. In addition, WMGS dues would be in line with what other comparable genealogy societies are charging. The proposal was approved by members.

The Board has also recommended that anyone who renews their membership by August 31st, would pay the current rate. New membership and renewals received after September 1st would be at the increased rates of \$30 for a single membership and \$45 dollars for a couple's membership. Student and lifetime membership rates will not change.

Survey from WMGS

In an effort to keep our membership involved in the future direction of WMGS, we have sent out our annual survey. The annual survey is your opportunity to tell us about your specific 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.

Paper surveys will also be available at the June meeting.

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Message from the President

Dave Robison

The past few months have probably been one of the most intense times for the board and all of the volunteers at Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society. We have had many interesting speakers, many technical challenges, many new members, electing or re-electing board members, and many new programs such as the "members only" DNA Boot Camp.

Please don't interpret this as a complaint. These are welcomed challenges that, with the assistance of the volunteers who help run WMGS, will be handled professionally to the benefit of all. For example, the DNA Boot Camp had many behind-the-scenes defugalties that only showed up when the second presentation froze! Fortunately, Katy Krause and Dave Lapierre were able to make them available, as we planned, at the members only tab at www.westmassgen.com. The initial response was nearly overwhelming! About 30 members had signed up and I hope that we're all learning a great deal as we move through the 12 presentations.



There's plenty to be excited about over the next several months. The June pot-luck/open mic evening is always a popular event. Table topics in July should prove successful. Modeled on a similar event at the biennial NERGC conferences, our choice of topics and the folks who will take on each topic will be a great night of education for all. Topping off the 2017-2018 season will be the annual trip to the Museum of Springfield History and Archives in August. I spend a lot of time there, but I still find it interesting and always learn something new from Maggie Humberston and Cliff McCarthy.

A "heads-up" on membership. Please keep in mind that at a recent meeting of the Board of Directors, it was proposed that, to continue to improve the quality of the services we provide, our annual dues will rise by \$5.00 for new memberships and renewals that take place on September 1st and after. We will honor the old rate for any new memberships or renewals that come in prior to the last day of this season. This remains a tremendous bargain in the world of genealogical societies. I have first-hand experience here as I belong to way too many here and a few in the EU and the UK!!

Finally, a surprise or two. Apparently, we have failed to make everyone aware of our social media presence. But first a question for you: Are you on Facebook? Taking security issues into account, be aware that there are over 11,000 genealogically oriented Facebook pages, WMGS is just one of them! There are pages covering specialized subjects (17th

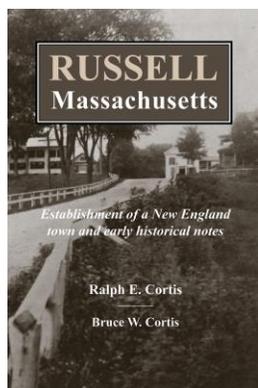
Century Research, The O'Connor Family, Ulster Migration, Italian Research, etc.) that can be helpful in many ways. All you would need to do is type your topic into the search bar and from the results, select the page that you believe might suit you. Bruce Cortis and I each administer a number of Facebook pages.

- Facebook is definitely the busiest. Click here: [WMGS Facebook](#) for a look at our content. “Like” the page and “Join” the page.
- For our Google+ page, click this link: [WMGS Google+](#). Here, you may have to request “membership” after which you would be able to post relevant information or comments on posts that are already there.

Ideas, thoughts, constructive criticism? We're listening. Email us at westmassgen@gmail.com.

Founders Award Recipients

At our Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 2nd, WMGS proudly presented our second annual **Founders Award** to Ralph Cortis and John O'Connor. Both of these individuals have provided significant and lasting service, not only to WMGS members, but to the entire genealogical community. Family and friends were in attendance at the award ceremony as they received their awards and were made lifetime members of WMGS.



Ralph Cortis, a long-time member of WMGS, 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.”

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 of 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.

John O'Connor, a life-long resident of Springfield, Massachusetts, was a long-time employee at the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum and later the Museum of Springfield History and its archives, starting his tenure in the early 1990's. He is an expert in local resources, Irish research, and French-Canadian ancestry. John created a 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, John wrote the monthly column “Family Tree” for the Springfield Republican newspaper 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.

WMGS and its members were proud to honor these individuals for their work and contributions to the genealogical community.

Articles

Educational Levels

By Michael John Neill

For those with US ancestors...

Have you looked at the amount of schooling your relatives had in the 1940 census? Just to see if my thoughts were correct, I looked up the claimed educational level of all my living ancestors at the time of the 1940 census. Anna Habben's 4th grade education coincides closely with the family's immigration to the United States from Germany.

- Charles Neill (great-grandfather-St. Albans Twp.)-8th grade.
- Fannie Neill (great-grandmother-St. Albans Twp.)-8th grade.
- Fred Ufkes (great-grandfather-Bear Creek Twp.)-8th grade.
- Tena Ufkes (great-grandmother-Bear Creek Twp.)-6th grade.
- John Ufkes (grandfather-Bear Creek Twp.)-4 years of high school.
- Mimka Habben (great-grandfather, Prairie Twp.)-8th grade.
- Tjode Habben (great-grandmother, Prairie Twp.)-8th grade.
- Dorothy Habben (grandmother, Prairie Twp.) 3 years of high school (she graduated the 4th year the next year).
- Cecil Neill (grandfather, Prairie Twp.)-8th grade.
- Ida Neill (grandmother, Prairie Twp.)-8th grade.
- Anna Habben (great-great-grandmother, village of Elvaston, Prairie Twp)-4th grade

(c) Michael John Neill, "Genealogy Tip of the Day," <http://genealogytipoftheday.blogspot.com>, 15 Mar 2018

Changes to our Surname List

We've made some changes to our Surname List to institute some privacy controls. Going forward, our Surname List will include Surnames, Location, Time Frame, and the membership number of the person who submitted the name. We will no longer list members' names or their email addresses on the list which is posted on our website.

We're making this change as some members have expressed a reluctance to submit surnames and their contact information and to insure everyone's privacy.

Anyone wishing to contact a member researching a Surname can send an email to WMGS at westmassgen@gmail.com along with the Surname and Member Number. We'll forward the email to the member.

Don't forget to periodically browse our Surname List to see if another member is researching the same name or location. Many of our members are researching the same ethnic group or locality and may be able to help you. We've even had a few cousin connections formed from the list.

WMGS members are allowed to list up to eight (8) Surnames on our list. If you would like to submit Surnames or make changes to your current listing, you can pick up a Surname Submission Form at our Welcome Table at a membership meeting or find the form on our website under Resources in the Members Only section.

And, don't forget to take advantage of another tool to possibly help in your research. Members are permitted to post up to three (3) Queries in our newsletter each month. Just send an email to WMGS with your query information or pick up a Query Submission form at a monthly meeting. Queries are archived on our website.

Brick Wall Queries

New:

Q-13 GILBERT, Samuel- Seeking info on Samuel Gilbert, b. September, 1683, in Springfield, MA; parents Thomas Gilbert (1659-1698) & Abilene (Marshfield) Gilbert (1664-1689). Brother of Capt. Thomas Gilbert, 1681-1753, who removed to Brookfield and is buried there. Searching for any information about Samuel's life and death (did he die young??). (Should not be confused with his 2nd cousin Samuel Gilbert (b.1687 at Hartford), son of Capt. Samuel Gilbert.) (Submitted by Christopher Childs)

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

~~~ **PGSMA Summer Meeting** ~~~

**A Polish Odyssey**

by Sara Campbell

Thursday, June 7, 2018, 6:30 pm

**Chicopee Public Library**

**449 Front Street**

**Chicopee, MA 01013**

The Connecticut River Valley, home to many immigrants from Eastern Europe, opened up opportunities for jobs in factories and on farms far away from War-torn Europe. Cities like Springfield, Chicopee, Holyoke, and Ware experienced a building boom from the late 1700s to the mid-1960s.

On Thursday June 7, local Genealogist Sara Campbell will share her story of the Rzewski Family who immigrated to Western Massachusetts. The Chicopee Library will host Sara's talk as she highlights documents, census information, military records, and life in Western Massachusetts for those who have an interest in immigrant history.

Free Admission, please bring a friend.

Prior to the presentation at the Library, the Polish Center of Discovery and Learning at 33 South Street in Chicopee, will be holding a "Get Acquainted Open House" for their Genealogical Research Library, from 4:-6:00. Stop in and meet the docents and discover all the treasures located there. This local treasure can help you with your Polish Surnames, locating your ancestor's villages, and discovering what their lives were like. Check out their website at [www.PGSMA.org](http://www.PGSMA.org) to learn more about them and to find a link to their "Request for research Assistance".

Light snacks and beverages will be available. Admission is free, please bring a friend



**Swedish American Genealogical Conference**

Featuring Kathy Meade, from ArkivDigital

October 5 – 6, 2018

at the Sturbridge Host Hotel, Sturbridge, MA

366 Main Street, Sturbridge MA 800-582-3232

(mention SARA for special rate)

***Find your way back to Sweden***

Find your relatives in America

Follow your Family in Sweden

2 Days of enjoyable Skill Building with fellow Swedish - American Genealogists  
Maybe meet unknown cousins !!!!!!!!  
Research help will be available

Welcoming reception Thursday evening, October 4, 2018  
CONFERENCE COST (\$244) *INCLUDES*: Breakfast, lunch and Banquet, each day and all sessions.  
Hotel separate

For more information: Contact: saraconference2018@aol.com  
Annual Dues \$15

To see a brochure with detailed schedule and more information, click [Here](#)

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*Family a Link to the Past &*



*a Bridge to the Future*

**April 3-6, 2019**  
**Radisson Hotel**  
**Manchester, New Hampshire**

Join us for the New England Regional Genealogical Consortium's 15th conference! NERGC 2019 will feature special tracks on Wednesday and regular conference presentations Thursday through Saturday. When you're not attending sessions, check out the Exhibit Hall, Ancestors Road Show, Society Fair, and other fun and educational events.

Manchester is a vibrant city with world-class entertainment and fine dining, all within walking distance of the conference hotel. Explore museums or visit a spa in the mill district along the riverfront, or take in live music and nightlife at Irish, Mexican, Asian, and American establishments.

For more information, go to [nergc.org](http://nergc.org). We look forward to seeing you at the conference!

## Calendar

| DATE/TIME                          | EVENT/PLACE                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wednesday, 6 June 2018<br>6 - 8 PM | <b>WMGS Meeting – Annual Pot Luck</b> at the Agawam Senior Center                                                    |
| Monday, 11 June 2018<br>6-8 PM     | <b>WMGS Board Meeting</b>                                                                                            |
| Thursday, 21 June 2018<br>6 - 8 PM | <b>Genealogy Research Clinic</b> at the Agawam Senior Center                                                         |
| Thursday, 28 June 2018<br>6 - 8 PM | <b>Genealogy Research Clinic</b> at the Agawam Senior Center                                                         |
| Wednesday, 11 July 2018            | <b>WMGS Meeting – Skills Sharing Event ***Meeting Delayed one week due to holiday***</b>                             |
| Thursday, 19 July 2018<br>6 - 8 PM | <b>Genealogy Research Clinic</b> at the Agawam Senior Center                                                         |
| Thursday, 26 July 2018<br>6 - 8 PM | <b>Genealogy Research Clinic</b> at the Agawam Senior Center                                                         |
|                                    | <b>Indexing Project</b> – 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.

**DNA Boot Camp – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays**  
**First Church in Ludlow, 859 Center St., Chicopee, MA**

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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 as two series. The first one in June on Fridays (June 8, 15, 22, and 29), from 12 noon until 2 PM. A second identical 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 seven newest members:

**Joanne Marcotte**  
**Mary E. Glover**  
**Ann Della Bitta**  
**Richard (Skip) Taylor**  
**Philip Johnson**  
**Linda Mullen**  
**Linda Roghaar**

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 Treasurer  
Estelle Stasz – Secretary  
Hillary Schau – Newsletter Editor

Dave Lapierre – Webmaster  
Jeanne Leblond – Surname Project Coordinator  
Ellen Janik – Facebook Administrator  
Carolea Hayden – Refreshment Coordinator  
Diane Ascioti – Founder

Edie Bowen-Wilcox, Hillary Schau, and Dave Lapierre – Directors

## 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 (3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> 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 (rising to \$30 on 1 September)
- \$40 for a couple of the same household (rising to \$45 on 1 September)
- \$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 June 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](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com).

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