



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

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Upcoming Meetings

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!

Our Skills Night will feature 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.

See the **Topics, Tools, and Tidbits!** article below for more details.

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.

August 2018 Meeting

Our annual trip to the Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History is just around the corner. Join us on August 1st from 6-8 PM for our highly anticipated exclusive visit for a night of research. We get the place to ourselves, but remember, you have to be a paid member to attend! Due to limited space, sign up is required. Email us at WestMassGen@gmail.com and sign up today (put MOSH in the subject line). The first 30 get on the list with others put on a waiting list.



June 2018 Meeting Recap – Pot Luck and Open Mic Night



POTLUCK DINNER

On June 6th we had not only our Pot Luck Dinner but an Open Mic Night as well! Everybody brought so much wonderful food from appetizers to desserts and we all socialized with fellow genealogists searching for their family tree. After dinner, members shared challenges and successes and lessons learned during our Open Mic session.

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Message from the President

Dave Robison

Is there a suspect among these cousins?

What we're witnessing today in terms of solving serious crimes, very serious crimes, is nothing short of astonishing. Hardcore criminals who have committed the most heinous acts have escaped the "long arm of the law" for decades and likely many have escaped altogether in cases that outlive the suspects.

How do we balance privacy with the desperate need to bring criminals to justice; bring closure, where closure is possible, to the families deeply affected by crime. When the Golden State Killer case was cracked with the arrest of Joseph James DeAngelo, there was an initial outcry of violations of privacy. A family member was seen on TV who, in my mind, was simply trying to grab some publicity for himself and possibly make a case for damages. Good luck!

Personally, I never expected that getting my DNA tested would lead to astonishing results in the world of criminal justice. But having read of the amazing results that are taking some very dangerous people off the streets and locking them away, I'm all for it. I have personally tested with numerous companies for a variety of reasons, none of which had anything to do assisting cold case files. If any of my relatives could be proven guilty of any of these crimes, I would be very glad that I might have played a part in their capture.

So how did this all come about? The first thing you need to realize is that the DNA results that are being used come mostly from GEDmatch.com, an open source data base, where anyone who has tested can upload their raw data for comparison to the millions of other tests that have been submitted. They do it with the intent of locating cousins, identifying biological families, proving or disproving relationships, and plain old curiosity. No one has explicitly stated that they would allow their results to be used for criminal justice. But the "terms and conditions" don't spell out that purpose and don't preclude or prohibit that use. The information is out there.

How does it work? Police departments have been collecting DNA evidence for decades. The science in the 1970's was certainly not anywhere near as advanced as it is today. For example, a simple test of just a small portion of the human genome may have cost thousands of dollars. Now, the cost of DNA tests in general is a mere fraction of what it had been

just a few years ago. Factor in the enormous interest in DNA research. Ancestry.com alone has an estimated 7 million test results in their data base.

So, the results of DNA tests taken from crime scenes are compared to known data bases and the hunt is on. In one of the recent cases, the suspect may have been one of two brothers. Police followed both. When DNA was collected from a napkin in a fast food restaurant left by one of the brothers, he was ultimately arrested and charged with crimes that had taken place 30 years ago or more.

The question is this: Knowing what we know today about the power of DNA analysis, would you be more or less inclined to submit a sample? Your motivation may not be for the purpose of aiding a criminal investigation, of course. Your motivation may be far different than someone else's. Many will test out of sheer curiosity, looking for general information on the origins of their ancestors. Others may be seeking biological families. A personal friend of mine recently took one of my DNA classes in South Hadley. I've known her for a at least 30 years. But I never knew she had been adopted. The "prize" I had offered was a drawing to win a DNA test kit at the end of the class. She won. She seemed to be overly excited about the possibilities that she could uncover. It was at that moment when I discovered that she had never known her bio family. The short story here is that the test has led her to discover and connect with dozens of half-siblings, cousins, and others who are equally excited about getting some answers.

Others are looking for that long-lost family that my friend was able to discover whether or not they have been adopted. Still others want to prove or disprove family myths. What about health concerns. Companies like 23andMe can help uncover the propensity for certain health related issues with their optional health test.

All the clamoring for test kits has done one thing to our advantage: competition generally drives prices down. And we have seen a lot of competitive pricing that seems to go on just about every month. The merchandising departments of these companies really know how to get the message out there. Be cautious in choosing which company you want to test with. Analyze your needs first and then go shopping. There are plenty of sites that you can find that will compare the services of these companies and based on your motivation, you can make an intelligent decision. Just Google something like "Compare DNA testing companies." I did that exact search just now and got 4,260,000 results in 0.47 seconds!

WMGS members have access to a DNA Boot Camp. We're currently bringing together about 25 members to a presentation of the recorded webinars and I believe that many are learning a lot. There are 12 sessions altogether and in July, we'll be presenting sessions 6 and 7 of the 12. It's not too late to join the group. We're meeting the 2nd and 4th Thursdays from 6 to 8 pm in the Fellowship Hall at First Church in Ludlow, 859 Center Street, Ludlow, Mass. The church is about a mile and a half north of exit 7 off the Mass Turnpike. Let me know if you're interested.

It's a new world today and getting more and more complex. DNA and all that it can do for us is just one more aspect of that new world. What will it help us with next?

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Articles

Topics, Tools, and Tidbits!

We're finalizing plans for our July Skills night event, which we're calling "Topics, Tools, and Tidbits!" This event is planned to be an opportunity to explore a variety of topics, tools, and tidbits that will assist you in your genealogy research. This will be an informal event with attendees being able to freely move around stations, with facilitators at each station to chat and answer questions.

There will be something for everyone, whether you're a beginner or a seasoned pro. Need help with general research? Want to know more about using Facebook for genealogy? Or, maybe you need information on free & fee-based websites. We've got these covered!

Would you like to know more about capturing family memories, interview questions, and recording methods? We'll cover that, along with displays of photo & document scanning tools, including free scanning apps for your phone.

Are you in the market for a genealogy software program or want to know more about a variety of tools to organize your research? Would you like to learn how to use pedigree charts and family group sheets to help in your research? We'll even show you how to maximize your searches and find hidden records on Family Search and Ancestry.

Do you focus your genealogical research on Ireland, Quebec and other provinces in Canada, Western Massachusetts, upstate New York, Palatine research, or the Revolutionary War? Do you need help with general resources for these topics? Or, would you like to chat about a specific research problem? If so, bring a description of the problem and you'll be able to talk with researchers who might be able to help.

And, we'll be offering our own version of Genealogy Roadshow, with 15-20-minute consultations on research problems and brick walls with two of our professional genealogists, Dave Robison and Ed Strickland. If you would like to sign up for a personal consult, remember to bring your research problem and whatever relevant documentation that you have for our experts to review. We'll have a sign-up sheet, so everyone will have an opportunity for a consult.

Don't forget that our July meeting will be moved one week later to **Wednesday, July 11th** from 6 to 8 pm, due to the holiday. Mark your calendars! We hope that you will join us for this evening.

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

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.

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

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](#)

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. We look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
Wednesday, 11 July 2018 6 - 8 PM	WMGS Meeting – Skills Sharing Event ***Meeting Delayed one week due to holiday***
Thursday, 19 July 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 26 July 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Wednesday, 1 Aug 2018	WMGS Meeting – Field trip to MOSH
Thursday, 16 Aug 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 23 Aug 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.

DNA Boot Camp – 2nd and 4th Thursdays
First Church in Ludlow, 859 Center St., Ludlow, 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 July. These classes will be held as two series. The classes 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 two newest members:

Carol A. LaPlante
Tina Aurnhammer

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 Ascoti – 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 (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 (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 July 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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