



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

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Upcoming Meetings

September 2018 Meeting



On September 5th, join us as Marian B Wood presents on the topic **Using Facebook and Twitter for Genealogy** – She will reveal the fun, benefits, and mechanics of Facebook and Twitter to connect with family-history researchers in areas where ancestors lived, request assistance, obtain translations, and learn more about genealogy sources, technology, and methodology. The many forms of Social media are easy to use and offer the opportunity for more immediate response compared with traditional surname message boards--to jumpstart genealogy efforts at any level.

Marian B. Wood is a popular genealogy speaker and hosts a blog entitled [Climbing My Family Tree](#). She has also written a book “Planning a Future for Your Family’s Past” available at the meeting and also at smile.amazon.com.

October 2018 Meeting

Our speaker on October 3rd, will be Susan Sit. She presented for us back in March on the topic of Welsh and other ethnic research challenges. This time she will be speaking on British research.

Susan Davies Sit was born in North Wales 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).



August 2018 Recap – MOSH Trip



Our annual trip to the Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History was very popular this year. We had a full house on August 1st from 6-8 PM for our exclusive visit for a night of research. We got the place to ourselves! Due to limited space, not everyone who wanted to, was able to attend. We are currently working with MOSH to have multiple trips so that more people can attend.

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A bit of a change....

Many of our members have mentioned that they'd like WMGS to offer opportunities both to socialize more at meetings and to learn some new skills. So, we're going to try a new format for our meetings.

Following our presentations, we'll try to offer a mini-class on a specific topic each month. Perhaps we'll check out various genealogy programs, or review some new websites, or head up to the Computer Lab for a tour of our library resources.

Also, we know that our members enjoy an opportunity for something sweet at our meetings. Rather than asking members to sign up in advance to bring a baked good as we've done for the last few years, we're going to try a new approach.

We'll leave it up to you! If you feel like sharing your Grandma Millie's cookies, bake up a batch for our meeting. See a new recipe that you're dying to try, bake it up and we'll be happy to taste test. Inspired by the fall apple crop? Or, the local supermarket is having a Buy 1/Get 1 offer on cookies. Bring the extras!

So, stay a bit longer after our meetings to visit, perhaps learn a new skill, and have a sweet treat!

Help Wanted

Looking for someone to conduct an oral history interview with an elderly African-American gentleman in Springfield. This is a perfect opportunity to use the **StoryCorps** phone app to upload an interview to the Library of Congress. We'll be glad to provide more details about the project, questions to ask, and the process, as well as how to use the **StoryCorps** app.

If you are interested, please send an email to: westmassgen@gmail.com. Please put the words "StoryCorps Interview" in the subject line.

Membership Renewal Time!

As we all should be aware, the annual membership to the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society runs from September through August of the following year. Now is the time to renew your memberships for the 2018-2019 season. Remember the membership cost goes from \$25 to \$30 on September 1st, so renew soon to avoid the increase.

There are three ways to join or renew your membership:

- Via our secure PayPal button on our website (you do not need to have a PayPal account, just use your debit card or credit card)
- Here's the link to our Join/Renew page: <https://westmagenealogy.com/join/>
- By printing out and mailing an application (if a new member) or just the check to WMGS, PO Box 418, West Springfield, MA 01090-0418
- Paying by cash or check at a monthly meeting

Our new season starts in September and you won't want to miss a thing. We're planning on a fantastic schedule of speakers. In addition to all of our usual member benefits, we're also planning after-meeting sessions and more local resources available in our Members-Only section on our website.

Remember our individual and family memberships will be increasing by \$5.00 on September 1st.

Don't delay! Renew now!

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Message from the President

Dave Robison

New season...new schedule! The 2017-2018 season has seen some of the greatest growth in many years as our membership approaches the 200 level. We "refined" our webinar techniques by using more advance technology and the experiences have helped a great deal as well.

We were fortunate to be able to acquire Thomas McEntee's DNA Boot Camp featuring DNA expert Mary Eberle. There are 12 2-hour recordings where Mary presents all aspects of DNA, DNA testing companies, analyzing results and more. A group of WMGS members have been meeting at the First Church in Ludlow to hear Thomas and Mary share their experience. During each session, we were able to pause, digest the information and ask questions that allowed the entire group to learn. We even went so far as to extract DNA from strawberries with simple household tools.

One of the hands-down most popular programs this past year was our Skills Night. Participants had a great deal of very positive things to say about the experience. We're looking forward to repeating that one!

Our annual trip to the Museum of Springfield History and Archives was a success, despite our need to limit the number participants. But we have a plan to overcome that as well. We're talking to the staff at MOSH about the possibility of having a morning session as well as the usual evening session. With groups of 25 members who could attend, at least 50 could take advantage of this unique experience.

This upcoming season will bring the most exciting series of presentations we've ever had. The biggest reason? We've listened to you, the members. The subjects we'll cover are virtually all suggested by you: Social media, DNA, assisting adoptees, New England research, British research, French-Canadian research, Irish and European research, research skills in general, effectively using various web sites, military subjects such as the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, lineage societies such as DAR and SAR... And the list goes on and on!

As of the end of August, we have tentative plans through the end of 2019 and touching on 2020. (Yikes!! Did I just say "2020"??) When we finalize the schedule, we still must plan for last minute changes.

Another exciting development: We have re-established WMGS as a 501(c)3 tax-free corporation. There will be more news on this coming soon. It will allow for a great deal of flexibility regarding soliciting contributions and donations will now be tax deductible. It also affords us increased credibility.

Finally, and I think I'm speaking for the entire board when I say how much we appreciate our members, our committees, our directors, our planners, the Agawam Senior Center, First Church in Ludlow, and the Museum of Springfield History and Archives. Our thanks go out to all!

I'm excited...how 'bout you??

Articles

US Seamen's Protection Certificates

By Michael John Neill

Under a US Congressional act of 1796 (the Act For The Relief and Protection of American Seamen (1 Stat. 477) signed into law on May 28, 1796), American seamen were periodically issued certificates to hopefully prevent them from being illegally impressed by ships from other nations. These documents can appear in one of three formats:

- registers—listing certificates that were issued—not all are extant, some are held by the National Archives and others by local historical societies
- applications—proof and evidence—generally held by the National Archives, available on microfilm or digitally and usually arranged by port
- certificates—usually kept by the sailor himself

The Mystic Seaport Museum has a [database of entries from the Custom Houses of Fall River, Gloucester, New Haven, New London, Newport, Marblehead, and Salem](#).

FamilySearch includes these databases:

- [Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Seamen's Proofs of Citizenship, 1791-1861](#)
- [Maine, Bath, Seamen's Proofs of Citizenship, 1833-1868](#)
- [browse items in the FamilySearch catalog that match a keyword search for "seamen certificates"](#)

Selected *Ancestry.com* databases:

- [Applications for Seaman's Protection Certificates, 1916-1940](#)
- [Indexes to Seamen's Protection Certificate Applications and Proofs of Citizenship](#)
- [Register of Seamen's Protection Certificates from the Providence, Rhode Island Customs District, 1796-1870](#)

National Archives research guide on the "[Seamen's Protection Certificates](#)." (PDF file)

(c) Michael John Neill, "Genealogy Tip of the Day," <http://genealogytipoftheday.blogspot.com>, 23 Aug 2018

The Mystery of Mercy Standley Woodbury: The Vital Record was Wrong??

By Hillary Schau

One of my ancestors (4th GG) was William Woodbury (1772-1860) who married Mercy Standley, daughter of David and Elizabeth Standley. William and Mercy lived their lives in the town of Beverly, MA. William Woodbury died in July 1860 in Beverly, and he appears in the *Ancestry.com* record set of *Massachusetts Deaths, 1841-1915*.

DATE OF DEATH.	NAME, SURNAME AND COLOR OF THE DECEASED.	AGE.			RESIDENCE, AND PLACE OF DEATH.	DISEASE, OR CAUSE OF DEATH.	SEX AND CONDITION. WHETHER SINGLE, MARRIED, OR WIDOWED.
		Year.	Months.	Days.			
July 3	William Woodbury	88	10		Beverly	Old Age	male married
" 7	Mary S. Safford	28			"	Epilepsy	female single
" 15	Mercy Woodberry	83	1		"	Paralysis	widow of Obed Woodbury

William was on line 1 of the page. Mercy appears to be on line 3 of the same page, dying 12 days later. Except the record states that Mercy was not the widow of William but instead the widow of Obed (short for Obediah).

Research into Obed Woodberry in the Beverly Vital Records showed that he did indeed marry a Mercy, but it was Mrs. Mercy Roberts Goodridge on 11 Sep 1827. Hunting down this Mercy revealed that Mercy Roberts married David Goodridge in April 1810 in Beverly, but he drowned 5 years later in Manchester on 26 Aug 1815. Then she married Obed in 1827 in Beverly. After Mercy Roberts Goodridge Woodbury lost her husband Obed in 1854, she appeared in the 1855 Massachusetts State Census in Beverly living along. Her age and the neighbors matched.

She died in Feb 1860 and appeared in the death register for Manchester, MA. The Manchester record said she died in Beverly but was living in Manchester at the time, the town of her birth. The death appeared in the Salem Observer on 3 Mar 1860, pg 3. (GenealogyBank.com)

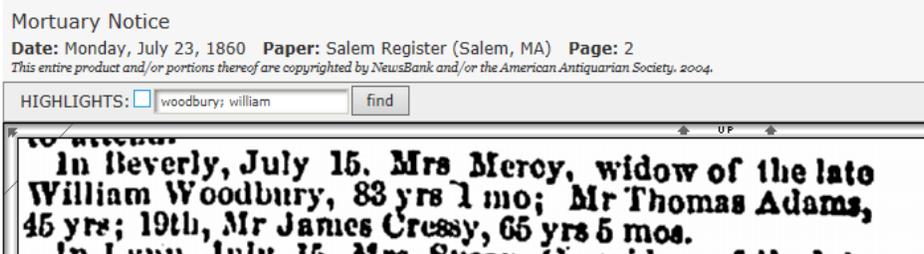
Mortuary Notice
 Date: Saturday, March 3, 1860 Paper: Salem Observer (Salem, MA) Volume: XXXVIII Issue: 9 Page: 3
 This entire product and/or portions thereof are copyrighted by NewsBank and/or the American Antiquarian Society, 2004.

HIGHLIGHTS: manchester: Woodbury

Getener, aged 17 mos, 12 days.
 At Beverly, Mrs Mercy, widow of late Mr Obed Woodbury, 70; 22d, Mary Ann, wife of John F. Standley, 25; 23d, Mrs Betsy, wife of Hezekiah Foster, 73½ years; 24th, Miss Nabby, daughter of late Jeremy Woodbury, 82.

Since Mercy, wife of Obed, died in February of 1860, the Mercy who died on 15 July 1860 in Beverly wasn't her. An error was made with the two Mercy Woodburys.

My belief that the Mercy who died in July was the wife of William Woodbury was confirmed when I located a mortuary notice in the Salem Register of 23 Jul 1860, pg 2. (GenealogyBank.com)



Conclusion: Even when the vital records are clear and easily read, they can be wrong. Remember, records were written by humans and humans make errors. A little extra hunting will clarify snags that you come across in your research.

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Volunteer Opportunities

As WMGS grows, so do the tasks needed to run our society. That's hardly a complaint, because it means that there are numerous opportunities for our members to be involved in our society and to contribute to its growth!

Our Board has recently created a list of committees to address the various tasks that are needed to run our society. A Board member has been assigned to chair each committee and to coordinate the committee's work. And, we've defined the tasks that need to be done, hoping to make the workload a bit less for everyone on a committee.

Do you have a few extra hours that you could help out each month? If so, please let us know. We'll let you know what opportunities are available.

Some of the volunteer options include:

- coming a bit early to our meetings to help set up our welcome table with forms, badges, handouts, etc.
- helping to welcome our members.
- sitting with new members and visitors to welcome them and answer questions
- distributing and collecting speakers' evaluations
- copying handouts and forms

We're also in need of members who can help with publicity, such as sending press releases to local media and posting news and pictures on Facebook and other social media. If you have experience in marketing or community outreach to offer, we'd love to talk to you.

And, we're always looking for members to submit short articles for our newsletter.

If you can help out in any of these areas, please let us know. We'd love for you to join our volunteer team.

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 2018Q1, Oct 2018-Q2) 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

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 and 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. If you have not yet made your hotel arrangements do it soon, rooms are filling fast. Call (603) 625-1000 and mention the NERGC conference for the discounted rate. That rate is NOT available if you register on line; by telephone only, directly with the front desk at the hotel. We look forward to seeing you there.

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 a free class entitled **Introduction to RootsMagic** at the Chicopee Library, located at 449 Front St, Chicopee, in September. This program is presented over three sessions and will take from initial installment of the program through adding or importing information and printing out reports and charts. The classes will be held in September on Fridays (**Sept 14, 21, and 28**) from 1-3. If you are interested in learning about this free software program for organizing your tree, register by contacting the Chicopee library at 413-594-1800 ex 3 or stop in to sign up. Space is limited.

Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
Wednesday, 5 Sep 2018 6 - 8 PM	WMGS Meeting – Using Facebook and Twitter for Genealogy presented by Marian B Wood
Monday, 10 Sep 2018 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Board Meeting - Open to Members
Thursday, 20 Sep 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 27 Sep 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Wednesday, 3 Oct 2018	WMGS Meeting – Susan Davis Sit will present on British Research
Monday, 8 Oct 2018 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Board Meeting - Open to Members
Thursday, 18 Oct 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 25 Oct 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center

Genealogy Research Clinics are free to WMGS members. There is a \$10 fee per session for non-members. Annual WMGS membership is just \$30.

DNA Boot Camp – 2nd and 4th Thursdays
First Church in Ludlow, 859 Center St., Ludlow, MA

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New WMGS Members

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

William Bray
Susan Post
John Putnam
Mark Jenkinson
Jayne Smith
Nancy A. Ritchie
Dawn Maynus
Sue Cole

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. Access to the DNA boot camp videos and handouts in the members only section of the website
7. 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 (rising to \$30 after Sept 1)
- \$40 for a couple of the same household (rising to \$45 after Sept 1)
- \$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 September 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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