



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society, Inc.

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Upcoming Meetings

April 2019 Meeting

Kathy Kaldis will be our April speaker on the 10th (**note the change in date**) and her talk will be **“What’s in a Name? Strategies for Identifying Maiden Names”**. Why is it so difficult to identify maiden names?

~The Recipe for Success in Finding Maiden Names: Practical Skills; Analytical Skills; Creative Use of Evaluating Evidence.



Kathleen Kaldis fell in love with genealogy at a young age, she is a professional genealogist known as *The Ancestor Finder*. Her interest in genealogy started when heard stories about how her great great-grandfather, who was born on Cape Breton Island, came to Boston to build Fenway Park. She used to be a Genealogist at the New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston and enjoyed working with the patrons. She holds a Certificate in Genealogical Research from Boston University, and has successfully completed many genealogical institute courses though the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (SLIG) and the International Society for British Genealogy and Family History (ISBGFH). Kathleen is very active within the genealogical community serving in many leadership positions within many organizations. She is a member of the Lexington DAR and personally brought in 125 new members in two years. As a lecturer her enthusiasm will show through as she shares her passion of genealogy with the audience.

May 2019 Meeting

Our May 1st meeting is our annual meeting but after all the administrative tasks, we will be having a presentation on the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) by Dave Robison and the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) by Hillary Schau. You know our two presenters as the WMGS president, Dave, and our



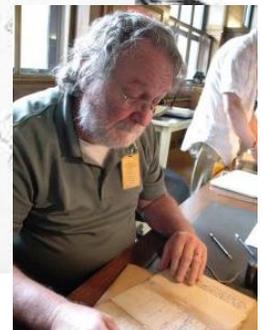


Newsletter Editor, Hillary. Each of our presenters is very knowledgeable about their organization. If you have branches that go all the way back to the 1700's and were curious about the process of applying to the SAR or DAR, there will be a Q&A session after their presentation. If your ancestors do not go back that far in the US, there are many other lineage societies that you can consider. Cyndi's list [here](#) is a good place to explore.

Dave Robison and Hillary Schau are both professional genealogists working as speakers on genealogical topics and as researchers for individual clients. On top of this, both Dave and Hillary volunteer with their respective lineage societies to help prospective members to assemble documents for their applications. Dave Robison is the Registrar in the Pomeroy Chapter of SAR. Hillary Schau has been the Registrar at the Mercy Warren Chapter of DAR for the past three years.

March 2019 Recap

At our March 6th Meeting, Russ Worthington presented “**Recording Your Family Research - The Dash Connection.**” Russ showed us how to make better use of the features in various genealogy software programs to help make that Dash Connection, that is, the time between birth and death dates to create a story. His tips and tricks gave us many ideas to help us on the journey, perhaps to even in writing a book on our ancestors.



Russ Worthington is an expert with Family Tree Maker (FTM 2017) as well as other genealogy software programs, student of genealogical methodology, Find-a-Grave volunteer, blogger, and public speaker. He's a real-life cousin to Pat Richley-Erickson a/k/a "DearMYRTLE," and handles the technical aspects of all of her webinars.

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Introducing a New “Members Only” Benefit!

We've created a helpful list of **Western Massachusetts & Massachusetts Genealogical Resources** for anyone doing genealogical research in Western Massachusetts or even the entire state of Massachusetts. Information on these resources is now available in our **Members' Only** section on our website.

You'll find helpful information in a variety of categories, including:

Vital Records

- Links to City and Town clerks in Massachusetts
- Links to Cities and Towns in the four Western Massachusetts counties

Massachusetts State Resources

- Links to the Massachusetts State Archives, Massachusetts State Library, Registry of Vital Records, Digital State Archives, Online Digital Commonwealth, and more!

Historical Societies and Museum

Links to the Massachusetts Historical Society, Western Mass Historical Societies, Museum of Springfield History (MOSH), and the Springfield Preservation Trust, which offers photographs of most buildings in the city of Springfield taken during 1938 & 1939.

Libraries

Links to the Berkshire Athenaeum (now housing the books and microfilm collection previously available at the Sylvio Conte Branch of the National Archives in Pittsfield) , the Springfield Public Library (on-site and remote access to WMass newspapers), the Westfield Athenaeum, the Chicopee Public Library (a Family Search Affiliate library), the Holyoke Public Library (housing microfilmed copies of the Holyoke Transcript, which is not available online), and the Forbes Library (home of the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum).

Massachusetts Cemetery Directory and links to Quabbin Cemetery

Pioneer Valley History Network

MAGenWeb

And there's so much more!! Whether you need information on finding vital records, want to learn more about the history of your ancestors' cities or town, access to newspapers, or want to find documents or pictures to add to your ancestors' stories, you'll find helpful resources here. You might be surprised at the genealogical resources available at these organizations and their websites.

When you visit our **Members Only** site, you'll find a description of each organization or society, and more information on the resources available at each. And to make accessing these resources easier for our members, we've provided direct links to the resource on our website.

To access the **Western Massachusetts & Massachusetts Genealogical Resources** list, go to the **Members Only** section of our website and log in with the password provided to our members. Then, click on the pull-down menu to access the categories of resources available.

We hope that you will enjoy browsing through the resources and that they will benefit your research. Having these resources available in one location is just another benefit to being a WMGS member!

Annual Meeting is Coming Up in May

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

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

Positions that are up for election this year are:

President, Treasurer, and two Directors. All terms are for two-years.

Secretary and Assistant Treasurer (to complete one-year terms expiring in May 2020).

Our Assistant Treasurer stepped down in January and a temporary appointment was made by our President. Our current Secretary is also stepping down. Our bylaws require that these positions be filled to serve for the remainder of the terms in a special election, which we will hold in conjunction with our annual election in May. Both of these positions will expire in May 2020.

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

Board Position Opening

WMGS is looking for someone willing to serve as Secretary of WMGS, as Estelle Stasz has informed us that she needs to step back from the Board because of other responsibilities. The position is for the remainder of a two-year term, with the term expiring in May, 2020.

The Secretary's responsibilities include recording the minutes of the monthly membership meetings, May annual meeting, and Board meetings, which usually are held on the 2nd Monday of the month (no Board meetings in July, August, or December) and other duties as the office requires.

We wish Estelle well and thank her for her service to WMGS.

If you are interested in the position or would like more information on the duties, please send a note to us at westmassgen@gmail.com or speak to any of the Board members at our monthly meeting.

WMGS Founders Award Nominations

At our May 2018 meeting, WMGS proudly presented its Founders Award to two individuals - Ralph Cortis and John O'Connor. Our Founders Award is given annually to those individuals who have made significant contributions to WMGS and/or the local community or to the field of genealogy.

We invite all members to review the nomination and award policy below and to consider making a nomination. Here is the official policy and process:

Criteria:

An individual nominated for this award must meet one of the following criteria:

1. The individual has provided significant service to the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society or to the local genealogical community through time, talent, action, or dedication.

2. The individual has contributed in a significant way to the field of genealogy through leadership or other benefit.

Eligibility:

Any member in good-standing of the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society or an individual in the community, who meets the criteria for this award, is eligible.

Judging Criteria:

Board members will select the recipient(s) based on:

- The degree to which their services/action have made a lasting or meaningful contribution or impact.
- The length and degree of their service.
- The extent to which their service or action might be considered above and beyond the call of duty.
- The extent to which their action would be recognized and valued by the genealogical community or by their peers and community leaders.

Nomination and Selection Process:

Any member of the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society may nominate an individual. Criteria for the award will be posted in the January and February newsletter. Nominations will be accepted until April 1st. The Board will select the award recipient(s) at the April Board meeting and announce their selection in the May newsletter.

Presentation of the Award:

The award will be presented at the annual meeting in May.

Please consider nominating someone for the award. As noted in the policy, nominees do not have to be a member of the society, but nominations may only be made by members. Nominations will be accepted from January 1st until April 1st. Members may send their nominations to the WMGS Board via the **Contact Us** link on our website or by sending an email to: WestMassGen@gmail.com.

Articles

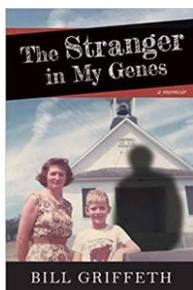
Celebrate DNA Day with a Story About Genealogical Findings

List compiled by Erin Binney.

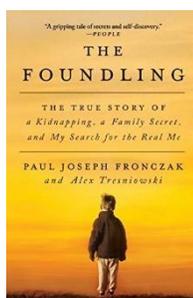
DNA has become a valuable element of genealogy research. It can prove hunches, solve mysteries, connect you to previously unknown cousins, and help you locate your ancestral home. It can also uncover some pretty big surprises. In honor of DNA Day on April 25—which commemorates the completion of the Human Genome Project in 2003 as well as the discovery of the double helix in 1953—here are five books that explore personal stories highlighting the intersection of DNA and genealogy research.



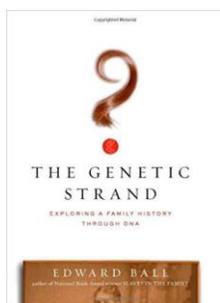
Finding Family: My Search for Roots and the Secrets in My DNA by Richard Hill is the highly suspenseful account of an adoptee trying to reclaim the biological family denied him by sealed birth records. This fascinating quest, including the author's landmark use of DNA testing, takes readers on an exhilarating roller-coaster ride and concludes with a twist that rivals anything Hollywood has to offer.



Bill Griffeth, longtime genealogy buff, takes a DNA test that has an unexpected outcome: “If the results were correct, it meant that the family tree I had spent years documenting was not my own.” In *The Stranger in My Genes*, Griffeth undertakes a quest to solve the mystery of his origins, which shakes his sense of identity. As he takes us on his journey, we learn about choices made by his ancestors, parents, and others, and we see Griffeth measure and weigh his own difficult choices as he confronts the past.

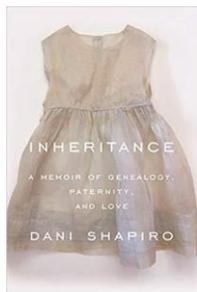


The Foundling: The True Story of a Kidnapping, a Family Secret, and My Search for the Real Me by Paul Joseph Fronczak tells the incredible and inspiring true story of Paul Fronczak, a man who recently discovered via a DNA test that he was not who he thought he was—and set out to solve two fifty-year-old mysteries at once. Along the way he upturned the genealogy industry, unearthed his family's deepest secrets, and broke open the second-longest cold case in U.S. history, all in a desperate bid to find out who he really is.



The Genetic Strand: Exploring a Family History Through DNA is the story of Edward Ball's investigation, using DNA science, into the tale of his family's origins. In 2000, after a decade in New York City, Ball bought a house in Charleston, South Carolina, home to his father's family for generations. In one old desk he was startled to discover a secret drawer, sealed perhaps since the Civil War, in which someone had hidden a trove of family hair, with each lock of hair labeled and dated. The strange find propelled him to investigate: what might DNA science reveal about the people—Ball's family members, long dead—to whom the hair had belonged? Part crime-scene investigation, part genealogical romp, *The Genetic Strand* is a personal odyssey into DNA and family

history.



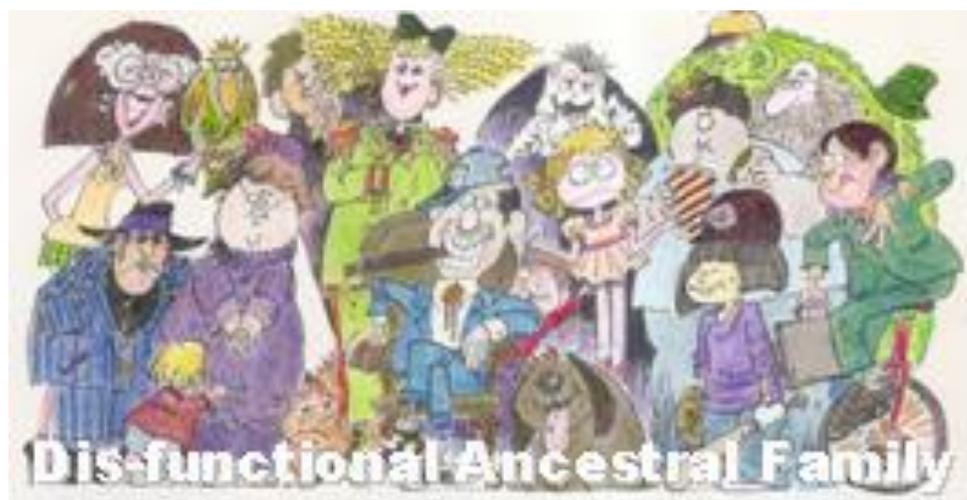
In the spring of 2016, through a genealogy website to which she had whimsically submitted her DNA for analysis, Dani Shapiro received the stunning news that her father was not her biological father. *Inheritance: A Memoir of Genealogy, Paternity, and Love* is the story of a woman's urgent quest to unlock the story of her own identity, a story that had been scrupulously hidden from her for more than fifty years, years she had spent writing compulsively on themes of identity and family history.

FAMILY TREE POEM

From WMGS American Elm Newsletter Vol. 31- Winter 2002

Author Unknown

Graphic by D. Pederson (reprinted from April 2016)



I climbed our family tree and found it wasn't worth the climb
 And so I scampered down, convinced it was a waste of time.
 Some branches of the tree, I found were rotten to the core,
 and some of the trees were full of sap and hung with Nuts galore.
 I use to brag of my kinfolks before I made the climb,
 But truth compels me not to tell of those not worth a dime.
 And, I beg of friends who boast aloud of their ancestors great--
 to climb their tree, and learn of those who weren't so straight.
 I learned what family trees were like and then I scampered down.
 They are like a 'tater vine' because the best is underground.

You Can't Share Significant DNA with Every Distant Cousin

By Michael John Neill

The amount of DNA you have is not infinite. You cannot share significant genealogical amounts of DNA with every far-flung distant cousin you have. Humans have a lot of DNA, but the amount stays the same with every generation. You don't get every "drop of DNA" every one of your ancestors had. [There is a 69.8% chance that you and a 5th cousin have no detectable DNA relationship.](#) That *does not* mean you and that 5th cousin do not have the same ancestor.

You just don't have a big enough DNA chunk to prove it.

(c) Michael John Neill, "Genealogy Tip of the Day," <http://genealogytipoftheday.blogspot.com>, 17 Mar 2019

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.

Free Local Events

Several local libraries are hosting presentations on genealogy topics. Check with your local library and let us know so we can note it here. These presentations are funded by the libraries and free to the attendees. All you have to do is register.

- April 8, 22, 29 and May 6: 4-sessions of “*ABCs of Family Research*,” Worcester Technical High School, Adult Education, 1 Skyline Dr, Worcester, MA 6:00 – 8:00 pm (Dave Robison)
- Tuesdays, April 9, 16, 23 and 30; 4-sessions, free four-part *Beginning Genealogy* Class, Indian Orchard Public Library with Hillary Schau. If you or a friend/family member wants to get a good foundation in genealogy, from vital records to DNA. 9:30 am – 11am
- April 25: Single session of “*ABCs of Family Research*,” Hubbard Memorial Library, 24 Center St, Ludlow, MA 6:30 – 8:00 pm (Dave Robison)
- May 9: Single Session of “*Pulling the Person out of the Paperwork*” Hubbard Memorial Library, 24 Center St, Ludlow, MA 6:30-8:00 pm (Dave Robison)
- May 25: Single Session of “*ABCs of Family Research*” Goodwin Memorial Library, 50 Middle St, Hadley, MA Noon to 2 pm (Dave Robison)

Need Help with Your Research?

Come to one of our research clinics! WMGS offers research clinics on the 3rd & 4th Thursdays of each month from 6pm-8pm at the Agawam Senior Center. This is a free benefit for WMGS members, with a \$10 fee for non-members.

Can't make a clinic or need more help? Then head over to the Chicopee Public Library to take advantage of their research clinics. Some of our own WMGS members are volunteers at the clinics. You just might run into Dave Robison, Hillary Schau, or Edie Bowen-Wilcox, who are eager to help you, as they give back to the genealogical community.

The Chicopee Public Library sponsors Open Genealogy Labs, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am-3pm, and again from 6pm-8pm. Check the library's website at www.chicopeepubliclibrary.org or call them at 413-594- 1800 to confirm that the clinic is being held.

The Chicopee Public Library is a FamilySearch Affiliate Library, which means that they have a large collection of microfilm which was previously on permanent loan at the now-closed Ludlow Family History Center. You may also view digitized records that are only available at a FamilySearch Affiliate Library.

Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
Wednesday, 10 Apr 2019 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Meeting – Kathy Kaldis, <i>What's in a Name? Strategies for Identifying Maiden Names</i> ***
Wednesday, 17 Apr 2019 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Board Meeting - Open to Members
Thursday, 18 Apr 2019 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center. ***
Thursday, 25 Apr 2019 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center. ***
Wednesday, 1 May 2019 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Meeting – WMGS Annual Meeting and presentations by Dave Robison and Hillary Schau on SAR and DAR lineage societies
Monday, 13 May 2019 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Board Meeting - Open to Members
Thursday, 16 May 2019 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center ***
Thursday, 23 May 2019 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center ***

*** *Please be advised that there may be travel delays related to construction on the Morgan Sullivan bridge leading from West Springfield into Agawam through 2020. Currently, traffic is limited to one lane in each direction. It is recommended that members and visitors allow extra time to their travel or seek alternate routes.*

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

Ride Sharing

Are you driving to our meetings from a distance? Would you like to form a carpool with other members? Do you need a ride, because you are no longer able to drive when it's dark?

We'll have a form at our Welcome table for members to list their names, city or town, and contact information, along with their interest in ride sharing, their need for a ride, or their willingness to pick up another member.

If you would like to participate, but can't make it to meetings without a ride, send us an email at westmassgen@gmail.com, along with your name, city or town, and contact information. With your permission, we'll add your name to the list.

And don't forget to look at the form each month for any updates.

New WMGS Members

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

Richard Reid
Clarke Moore
Peter Weston
Peter H. Ostrander

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
Ginny Atwood – Assistant Treasurer
Estelle Stasz – Secretary
Dave Lapierre – Webmaster & Technology
Coordinator

Hillary Schau – Newsletter Editor
Jeanne Leblond – Surname & Queries Editor
Ellen Janik – Facebook Administrator
Bob Whitney – Fundraising Coordinator
Carolea Hayden – Refreshment Coordinator
Diane Ascoti – Founder

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

Meeting Details

We generally meet year-round on the first Wednesday of each month. On rare occasions, a holiday or other significant event may disrupt that schedule causing a meeting to be held on the second Wednesday. You would be informed of date changes well in advance. Other than our annual trips to MOSH, our meetings are held 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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Inclement Weather Policy

In case of bad weather, please check the following areas for a cancellation of our monthly meeting or genealogy research clinics:

1. If the Agawam Senior Center (ASC) is closed, then our meeting with a live presenter is canceled. However, if the event was set up as a webinar with a remote speaker, WMGS will notify everyone that the broadcast will be viewable at home through an easy to use webinar platform. The web address (URL) will be provided along with the VERY simple instructions on how to join. This is a unique WMGS membership benefit. The closing of ASC will be broadcast on **local TV stations** such as WWLP (Channel 22) and WGGB (Channel 40). It will be posted at the bottom of the screen, along with the other school and activity cancellations.
2. **WestMassGen.com** – We will post cancellation or webinar instructions on our website.
3. **Email** – We will send an email to our mailing list, if time permits. If the meeting can be broadcast as described above, that information will be provided
4. **Facebook** – We will post the status as described above: a full cancellation or the webinar instructions.

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Membership

Like most things in life, membership is not free - but for our reasonable annual membership fee (\$30), 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 recordings of many past WMGS meetings and to the recent DNA boot camp 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:

- \$30 for an individual membership
- \$45 for a couple of the same household
- \$15 for students
- \$500 for Lifetime membership

If you are new to our organization, click [here](#) for the WMGS Application for Membership; the image is near the bottom. Click to open the pdf to view, save, and print.

There are three ways to join or renew your membership:

- Pay by cash or check at the monthly meeting
- Print and mail an application, found on the Join/Renew page of our website (if a new member) along with your check, or, if renewing, just the check to
WMGS, PO Box 418, West Springfield, MA 01090-0418
- Use the 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: [JOIN](#)

Note: All first-time members must submit an application by mail or in person at a meeting, even if using PayPal, so that we have all the necessary information for our membership list.

Newsletter Deadlines

Please submit all information to be entered into the next newsletter by 15 April 2019.

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.

How to Contact Us:

Have a question, comment, or suggestion for someone at WMGS?
Need information about your membership status or how to access our Members Only material?
Want to send in a query or provide an answer to one?
Have a comment or suggestion for us?

There are two options available for contacting us via email:

Our **Contact Us** page on our website has an easily completed form to use. Just enter your name, email address, topic, person to whom email is being sent, write your message, and click on Submit.

Or, you can send an email directly to us at: westmassgen@gmail.com .

Of course, you can also correspond with us by sending mail to:

WMGS, Inc.
P.O. Box 418
West Springfield, MA 01090-0418

Note: Please do not write directly to any board member's personal or business email. For legal reasons, our board members cannot conduct WMGS business using emails, other than through WMGS. Thank you for your consideration.

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.

