



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society, Inc.

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Upcoming Meetings

November 2019 Meeting

We're pleased to be bringing genealogist Kathy Kaldis back to WMGS for our November 6th meeting to help us prepare for the upcoming 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims' landing on our shores. Kathy's presentation, *Land Ho! Calling All Mayflower Descendants*, will focus on how to find Mayflower ancestors and how to apply to a Mayflower lineage society. She'll tell us about plans for the 400th anniversary and celebration as well.



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 she 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 through 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.

December 2019 Meeting

We're excited to be bringing nationally-known Thomas MacEntee, Founder & CEO of High-Definition Genealogy, LLC, to our December 4th meeting.

It isn't often that we get a "do-over" when it comes to stuff that matters in life. When you first got started researching your family history, did you do some things that now are just plain "embarrassing" such as name collecting, not citing sources and more? Well now there's hope since genealogists from beginner to advanced are employing new research methodologies and documentation practices. Follow genealogist Thomas MacEntee as he basically starts his genealogy research from scratch but includes sound research practices and methodologies as well as new templates, tools, and the latest technology to create a better body of family history research.



October 2019 Recap

At our October meeting, Maria Beiter-Tucker, the Visitor Center Manager at Quabbin Reservoir, presented *Exploring the History of The Quabbin Valley Through Gravestones*.

Maria took our members on a virtual walk through the Quabbin Park Cemetery to explore the history of the former Swift River Valley towns and some of its residents. The Quabbin Park Cemetery was developed in the early 1930s for the reinterment of those who were buried in cemeteries in the flooded towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich, and Prescott. Nearly 8,000 graves were moved from the four towns' 34 cemeteries, but not every family chose to have their ancestors buried in the newly created cemetery. Maria then explained to us what happened to them.

Maria's presentation provided resources to help you locate ancestors who lived in the Swift River Valley. Whether or not you have ancestors who lived there, her presentation was intriguing for anyone with Massachusetts roots.

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Message from the President

Jeanne Leblond

We're well on our way through the fall season and in a few short weeks, we'll be headed towards the holidays. If you're like me, you enjoy this time of year. One reason is that most of the yard work is done and there's more time for genealogy. Another is that the holidays have so many family memories associated with them. Whether it's family recipes that you'll be enjoying, traditions that you'll continue, or the opportunity to get together with family and friends, it's a wonderful time of year!

In November, we have a chance to honor our veterans, especially our ancestors who served our country, and a chance to give thanks for the freedoms that we enjoy because of their sacrifices. If you didn't read Fran Malone's article last month about his efforts to help a former classmate honor her brother, check it out. His story was heartwarming.

And at Thanksgiving we can recreate those family traditions and recipes, so that they'll continue through future generations. Thanksgiving is the perfect time to share a family story at the table, interview a family member, and jot down memories for the next generation.

Perfect for the season, our November speaker will be Kathy Kaldis, who will present on the topic of researching Mayflower ancestors. Even if you don't have ancestry that traces back to the Pilgrims, you'll enjoy Kathy's presentation and learn a few tips to help whatever type of research that you do. And, you'll want to start preparing for the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrim's landing, which our nation will be celebrating next year!

Of course, this season is when we give thanks not only for our ancestors who paved the way for us, but also for the genealogy community, which provides us with the skills to be able to find them. WMGS is especially grateful for the many volunteers who give their time to keep our society growing and vibrant. We also thank each of you, our members, for supporting our society through your membership.

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Membership Renewal Time!

Annual memberships to Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society, Inc. run from September 1st through August 31st of the following year. There are 3 options for renewing.

- Join or renew at a monthly meeting with cash or a check.
- Mail your check (made out to WMGS) to our society at: WMGS, Inc., P.O. Box 418, West Springfield, MA 01090-0418.
- Join or renew through our website. Here's the link to the Join page: <https://westmassgen.com/join/> Simply scroll down the page and select a single, couple, student, or lifetime membership. Then click on the PayPal link. **YOU DO NOT NEED A PAYPAL ACCOUNT** to use this secure, convenient, and simple method.

Don't delay! You won't want to miss another exciting season at WMGS, including monthly presentations, our new Special Interest Groups, and trainings. Members enjoy exclusive access to the Members Only feature of our website with archived meeting presentations, our DNA Boot Camp videos, our list of Western Massachusetts and Massachusetts Genealogical Resources (with links), previous editions of our current newsletter, and archived editions of our original newsletter, the *American Elm*. The password to our Members Only section **has been changed** and current members have been notified by email of the updated confidential password.

Member Only Benefits

Nov. 14th – Canadian (Quebec & Provinces) Special Interest Group (SIG) meeting

Our agenda for this session will be a hands-on exploration of research in Canada. Whether you have Quebec or Provinces ancestry, hosts Jeanne Leblond and Dave Lapierre will help you find the information that you need. This will be a hands-on exploration of Canadian resources, so bring your research questions and brick wall problems. Please bring your ancestor's name and whatever facts that you have discovered, such as date and place of birth, marriage, death, spouse's name, children, and parents. If you have a success story, bring that along as well, so we can share our knowledge!

Nov. 21st Special Interest Group (SIG) - Irish Research

Join host Fran Malone as he explains how to find more about your Irish ancestry. Fran will explain how to find the information that's needed to get across the ocean to Ireland. He'll cover resources available on this side of the Atlantic, and then he'll cover the many resources that are available for Irish research, including Ireland's National Archives, Griffith's Valuation, the Tithe Applotment Books, and other resources and websites. If you'd like help with a research problem, bring your ancestor's name and whatever facts that you have already discovered. Bring your research questions and brick wall challenges!

*Feel free to bring your laptops, as the Agawam Senior Center is wi-fi equipped.
Please join us!*

Articles

Research the Known

By Michael John Neill

We all have ancestral mysteries that we want to figure out. Sometimes the best way to get insight into our "confusing people" is to go back and work on the ones that are already done or that we think are already done. That review may cause us to learn about new approaches or sources or remind us of things that we've forgotten.

Many of my maternal families are well-documented in the United States. Double checking that information in vital records, land records, probate records, court records, etc. has confirmed most of what I was told. I learned a few new facts about them and corrected some errors. That's good.

But it did more than that.

Those searches taught me more about all those records. It helped me to understand those records better. It helped me to see how to use those records better. That helped me when searching for those records for individuals where I "didn't know as much."

And reviewing the lives of those families; their migrations; their interactions with local government, state, and federal governments; their church memberships; their interactions with their neighbors; how the family spread out (or didn't); etc. gave me ideas on my more confusing ancestors.

Building your skills on people you think you know can help you research those you know that you don't.

(c) Michael John Neill, "Genealogy Tip of the Day," <http://genealogytipoftheday.blogspot.com>, 02 Oct 2019

Finding Ancestors on Facebook

By Joanne Mason

Feeling hesitant about using Facebook for your family tree? Let me share an experience that brought down a brick wall and connected me to long-lost relatives I now stay in touch with.

Over the years, I've used Facebook in a number of ways for genealogy. I've gotten help from local historical societies, libraries, and discussion groups for certain locations (upstate New York, for example) and time periods, like the Great Migration.

But perhaps the simplest way I've used Facebook to learn more about my tree started with a direct message.

I'd been researching my Dad's maternal side in central Maine, specifically the Pond family. My great-grandmother was Minnie Pond Beane, and I see her father in census records, but beyond that, I am stuck. There are some clues that the family might have been Loyalists that moved from South Carolina to New Brunswick, Canada. But I haven't confirmed that.

Minnie's daughter, my grandmother Gladys Beane Mason, had an older sister, Florence, whom I met several times as a child. Every family trip to Maine included a visit to Aunt Florence. On the way, we crossed the Piscataquis River on a covered bridge that I was deathly afraid of. (I was convinced that we would fall off the other side until my father gently took my hand and walked me to the end, proving that the road did continue.)

My grandmother died when I was 9. For some reason, my family lost touch with Florence. We didn't know when she passed away, and we knew little about her children and grandchildren.

Decades later, in 2015, I was searching online for Minnie. On one site, I noticed a post from a woman whose name included Florence's married surname. I figured it had to be a relative, so I did some more digging and found her on Facebook.

Now came the awkward part. Should I contact her? Would she mind being sought out by a stranger out of the blue?

So I started with the usual, "Um..hi...you don't know me, but...."

Soon after I got a response. She was Florence's granddaughter!

Over time, I got to know other members of Florence's family and was invited to join a Facebook group for that branch. Brick walls quickly collapsed as group members generously shared their research. I was happy to post photos, records, and autograph book pages that they had never seen before.

But perhaps the best part was the messages I received. Many members of the group remembered my grandmother. She was called "Aunt Gladdie." Her house in Abbot Village had a summer kitchen. She was a lot of fun!

I thanked everyone, telling them my family had always wondered what happened to Florence and her family.

"We'd been wondering about your family, too, Joanne," one wrote back.

Was that Really Her Maiden Name?

By Michael John Neill

What someone indicated was great-grandma's "maiden" name may not have been the last name of her biological father. It could also have been the last name of her:

- step-father
- adopted father
- foster father
- first husband
- someone else that someone incorrectly thought was her father

Sometimes what someone thinks is someone's maiden name may not be, especially if the person in question (or her mother) was married more than once.

(c) Michael John Neill, "Genealogy Tip of the Day," <http://genealogytipoftheday.blogspot.com>, 13 Oct 2019

Inward – Outward Commons

Reprinted from *American Elm*, 1976 October Vol 5 No 3

William Brooks had a problem. His problem was property. Real estate. How could he possibly use his real estate! As it was the year 1685, Mr Brooks had just been allotted his share of the "Outward Commons" of the town of Springfield.

Actually, he had received five shares – each one about four miles long and eight feet nine inches wide! He could maybe pitch a very small tent, but if he were a restless sleeper he might trespass on his neighbor's land! Moreover, his shares were not that close to each other, one being in Wilbraham, one in Hampden, plus two on the west side of the Connecticut River, probably in Westfield and Southwick!

For when Springfield had been first settled 49 years previously, the town was about 25 miles square, bisected by the Connecticut River, with the southern border about five miles south of the present Connecticut line. The lands near the river were called the "Inward Commons" and the two outward strips of the square, one on the west and one on the east, were called the "Outward Commons." Almost fifty years after the settlement the outward lands still had not been assigned to individuals. So, Sir Edmund Andros, governor of Massachusetts, ordered that unless it was speedily divided, the land would revert to the king. The colonists did some fast arithmetic. The eastern section was roughly 12 miles from north to south, 4 miles from east to west, while the western section was a little less. So that everyone would presumably have some chance at the best land, the "Outward Commons" on the east was divided into three sections, and that on the west into two sections. One strip in each was reserved for the ministry, one for the schools and the rest was divided among the 123 heads of families. Each strip was about four miles across. The width was estimated by the "estate and number of poll" in each family. Each son, whatever his age was (Women's Libbers, tak note) counted as a poll. This gave the Pynchon family, for instance, five strips 133 rods wide while poor Mr. Brooks (who must have had neither property nor sons) had to make do with five strips eight feet nine inches wide!

Of course, the purpose of this allotment was to quickly foil Governor Andros and subsequent swapping and selling no doubt gave everyone a practical piece of land. At least he had a choice of five locations!

We do not know how Mr. Brooks actually solved his problem, but we do know that some of Deacon Samuel Chapin's family reserved some of their share in Hampden, for members of the family are still living on it, while Margaret Bliss' descendants still own some of her Hampden share.

In the Academy Hall Museum of Hampden, there hangs on the wall a five-foot map of the town showing all of the original "Outward Commons" strips numbered.

Mr. Clifford Attleton recently gave to the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society a map showing those strips in Wilbraham and Hampden. Frances Stockton Jones, #38

Reference – Historical Address – Town of Wilbraham – 1864 by Rufus P Stebbins, D.D.

Brick Wall Queries

New:

Q-18 TIBBLES, Ann Eliza - Seeking information about the parents of Ann Eliza Tibbles, who later became the wife of Nehemiah Wood. She was born about 1846 and died about 1883. I believe she spent much of her life living in Putnam and Seneca Counties, New York. Her son, John Seymour Wood, was born in Seneca Falls, New York in 1868. (submitted by Joanne Mason)

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. If you know of an event happening at a local library, let us know so that we can include it here. These presentations are funded by the libraries and free to the attendees. Registration is sometimes required.

- Wednesdays, Oct 16-Nov 6, 4:30-6:30 PM, Holyoke Public Library, “Jumpstart your Genealogy” by Hillary Schau and Jose Mendez (bilingual research assistance at each class as needed)

Limited seating. Register by calling (413) 420-8107 and leave your telephone and email address. You will receive a call back to confirm your registration.

- Genealogy with **Colleen Fitzpatrick**, Monday 4 Nov 2019, 6-7:30 PM, Chicopee Library.

Informative talk about genealogy and DNA with Colleen Fitzpatrick, PhD. Dr. Fitzpatrick is the founder of IdentiFinders International and is widely recognized as the founder of modern forensic genealogy. She has worked dozens of cold case homicides for law enforcement using genetic genealogy analysis.

Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
Wednesday, 6 Nov 2019 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Meeting at the Agawam Senior Center - Kathy Kaldis presents <i>Land Ho! Calling All Mayflower Descendants</i> ***
Thursday, 14 Nov 2019 6 - 8 PM	Canadian (Quebec & Provinces) Special Interest Group (SIG) meeting at the Agawam Senior Center
Monday, 18 Nov 2019 6 - 8 PM	WMGS Board Meeting at the Agawam Senior Center - Open to Members ***
Thursday, 21 Nov 2019 6 - 8 PM	Special Interest Group (SIG) - Irish Research at the Agawam Senior Center
Wednesday, 4 Dec 2019 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Meeting at the Agawam Senior Center - Thomas MacEntee, Founder & CEO of High-Definition Genealogy, LLC
Thursday, 12 Dec 2019 6 - 8 PM	Using Twitter for Genealogy training at the Agawam Senior Center

*** *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. Allow extra time to your travel or seek alternate routes.*

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.

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 187 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.

Jeanne Leblond – President
Dave Lapierre – Vice President
Deborah Woodford – Treasurer
Jeanne Lockhart – Assistant Treasurer
Dorothy Cichonski – 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

Carol Lynne Bagley, Hillary Schau, and Terry Pearsons – Directors

Meeting Details

We generally meet year-round for our monthly meeting on the first Wednesday of each month, from 6pm to 8pm at the Agawam Senior Center, located at 954 Main Street in Agawam, Massachusetts. On rare

occasions, a holiday or other significant event may disrupt that schedule causing a meeting to be held on the second Wednesday. You will be informed of date changes well in advance.

Our Special Interest Group meetings and training sessions are typically held on the 3rd & 4th Thursdays of the month from 6pm to 8pm, also at the Agawam Senior Center. However, some of these sessions are held on different days of the week, depending on the availability of each session's host. Check our monthly calendar for each month's schedule.

Occasionally, inclement weather causes the Agawam Senior Center to close. If our presenter is coming to us via a webinar and gives us permission to do so, we will broadcast the presentation live to our members via the internet, using a web-based platform, such as ZOOM. Members will be emailed the link before the meeting.

Also, when a speaker allows us to record a presentation or a webinar, we archive the presentation in the Members Only section of our website. Many of our monthly presentations have been recorded, along with handouts, and are available in the Members Only section of our website.

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

Inclement Weather Policy

In case of bad weather, please check the following areas for a cancellation notice for our monthly meeting, trainings, or Special Interest Group meetings:

1. If the Agawam Senior Center is closed, then our meeting is canceled. This information can be found on most 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 information on our website.
3. Email – We will send an email out to our mailing list, if time permits.
4. [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/WestMassGen) – We will post a note to let you know if our meeting will be canceled.

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Membership

The Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society is a growing group of members, both local and from around the United States. We welcome you to join our society!

Reasons to Join Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society:

1. Meet people with similar interests in family history and genealogy.
2. Attend monthly meetings featuring local, regional, and national presenters.
3. Attend our Special Interest Groups meetings, trainings, and classes.

4. Receive access to our archive of previously recorded presentations and handouts, DNA Boot Camp videos, Western Massachusetts and Massachusetts genealogical resources (with links), and handouts in the Members Only section of our website.
5. Receive assistance from our members on your family research.
6. Access our library of resources including books and CDs.
7. Serve as a volunteer, coach, or as a member of the Board of Directors.
8. Join us on exclusive WMGS field trips.

One of our key "member benefits" is access to the **Members Only** section of our website, which contains archived recordings of our previous speakers from around the US: Judy G. Russell, Maureen Taylor, Colleen Fitzpatrick, Elissa Scalise Powell, Dr. Shelley Murphy, Nora Galvin, 'Dear MYRTLE' a/k/a Pat Richley-Erickson, Russ Worthington, Melissa Barker, Jennifer Alford and many more! Our Members Only section also includes handouts from many of those meetings and historical copies of the *American Elm*, the original WMGS newsletter publication, which contains genealogical material and family trees from our early members. Once we receive your membership application, we will send you a welcome letter with the confidential password to access the Members Only section of our website.

Membership Dues:

Annual membership runs from September 1st to August 31st 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 November 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.



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The editor reserves the right to edit all contributions.