



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society, Inc.

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Upcoming Meetings

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. Tom will be presenting his popular talk, **"The Genealogy Do-Over: A Year of Learning from My Mistakes."**

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. Join us for Tom MacEntee's presentation on Wednesday, December 4th. He's a dynamic and fun speaker!

January 2020 Meeting



In January, our presenter will be Katherine R. Willson of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Katherine is an engaging and dynamic lecturer at local, regional, and national conferences. She's the founder and president of the Virtual Genealogical Society, a member of the Board of Directors for the Association of Professional Genealogists, the Publicity Chair for the Federation of Genealogical Societies 2019 Conference, and a member of the National Genealogical Society. In addition, she is the author of *The Genealogist's Guide to Grand Rapids, Michigan* (published in 2018 by The In-Depth Genealogist). A noted expert on the use of Facebook for genealogy, she's continually updating her list of Facebook genealogy/history links on her website, with a current total of over 14,500 links. She also maintains a list of 160+ links to instructional genealogical channels on YouTube on her site. Her

website at <https://socialmediagenealogy.com/resources/> contains those lists, as well as a variety of other resources.

Katherine's presentation to us at the Agawam Senior Center is titled **“They Didn’t All Come Through Ellis Island! Finding & Analyzing Passenger Arrival Lists.”** As Katherine says, “If as many ancestors came through Ellis Island as families are led to believe, the island would have sunk!” She will explain the multiple points of departure from Europe, ports of entry into the U.S., how to find passenger arrival lists online, and how to analyze these lists as a means of filling in your ancestors’ life stories.

Be sure to join us for Katherine Willson’s presentation on Wednesday, January 8th, 2020!

November 2019 Recap

We welcomed 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,”** focused on how to find Mayflower ancestors and how to apply to a Mayflower lineage society. She also filled us in about plans for the 400th anniversary and celebration.



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.

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Message from the President

by Jeanne Leblond

The holiday season is now in full swing. What better time is there to celebrate family history, enjoy old memories, and make new ones.

There’s a saying that genealogists are the family’s story keepers. I know that many of us take that responsibility to heart. Even though there might not be time to work in databases on our family genealogies at this time of year, there’s much we can do.

The holidays are a perfect opportunity to share what we know about our family history and to carry it forward. Ask your relatives a few questions or share a bit of what you know with younger generations. And make sure to record the information that’s provided.

Enjoy and share your family recipes, traditions, and stories. Print up copies of family recipes to distribute. Share a tradition or story with the younger generation. They may seem to ignore you, but each time a tradition or story is repeated, it makes its way deeper into someone's memory.

Perhaps you'll display cherished family decorations around your house. Once a year, Christmas provides me with an opportunity to display a cherished item from my childhood. It's a hard-wax snow-covered castle with a tiny sleigh and reindeer on the lawn. My godmother gave me the castle when I was a young child. It's stored in the same Forbes & Wallace box that it came in. Each Christmas, I tell my grandchildren about the item, even though they may not ask. Eventually, they may remember the story and one of them will cherish the castle as I do.

To make sure that the story is preserved, I plan on writing the information and placing it in the bottom of its storage box. It's something that we should be doing for all of our family treasures.

And, if you no longer write a list to Santa, that's okay. I'm not sure that Santa would understand a request for a DNA kit, a subscription to a genealogy website, a magazine, the latest genealogy book, a scanner, or software. Take advantage of holiday sales and treat yourself or someone else!

However you celebrate your holidays, we wish you a happy and joyous season, good health, and many family discoveries in the New Year.

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Member Only Benefits

December 12th Training – Using Twitter for Genealogy

You have probably heard about “tweets” coming from celebrities and elected officials, but did you know that Twitter can be a helpful resource for genealogy research?

In our December 12th training session, we'll talk about what Twitter is, how it differs from Facebook, and how you can use it to connect with other researchers. You'll find out how to set up an account, follow other genealogists, and work with hashtags to narrow down your findings. You'll also get a list of Twitter “handles” you might follow, including accounts for Ancestry, Family Search, and American Ancestors.

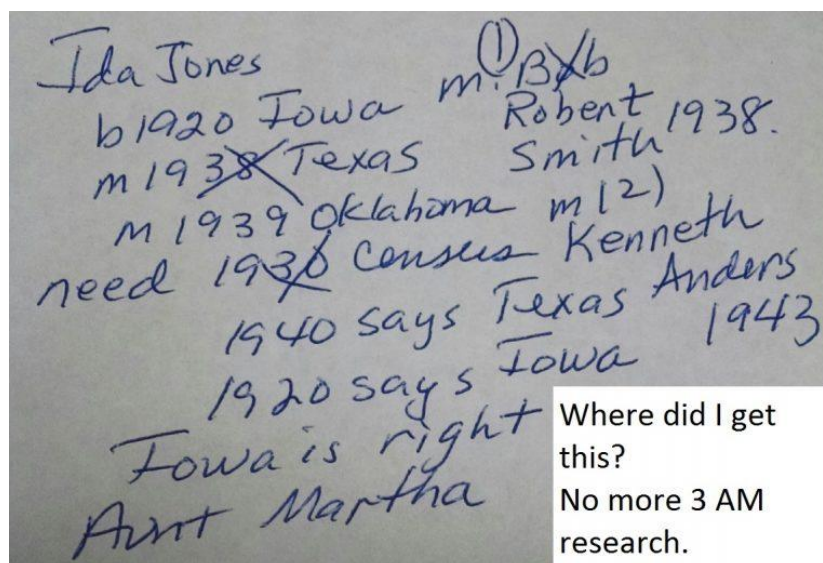
The training takes place Thursday, December 12th from 6 pm to 8 pm in the Handcraft Room at the Agawam Senior Center. The Handcraft Room is located on the 1st floor at the end of the hallway, to the left of the reception desk.

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

Articles

Clean Up Those Notes

by Michael John Neill



Do your notes look like this? Scribbles on what looks to be an index card? Little things written down while you are madly clicking away on one genealogy website after another?

While it is great to make discoveries, try and include enough information so you know where you found the information and what your thought process was. The notes in the illustration are a little unclear and where the information was obtained isn't indicated either. It's fun to be "hot on the trail" of a connection, but include enough detail so that you can go back and locate the information again. In the illustration it would have been helpful to know where Ida was located in the 1940 and 1920 census even if a complete citation couldn't be created at the time. The location of where the apparent marriage information to Smith and Anders would have been helpful as well.

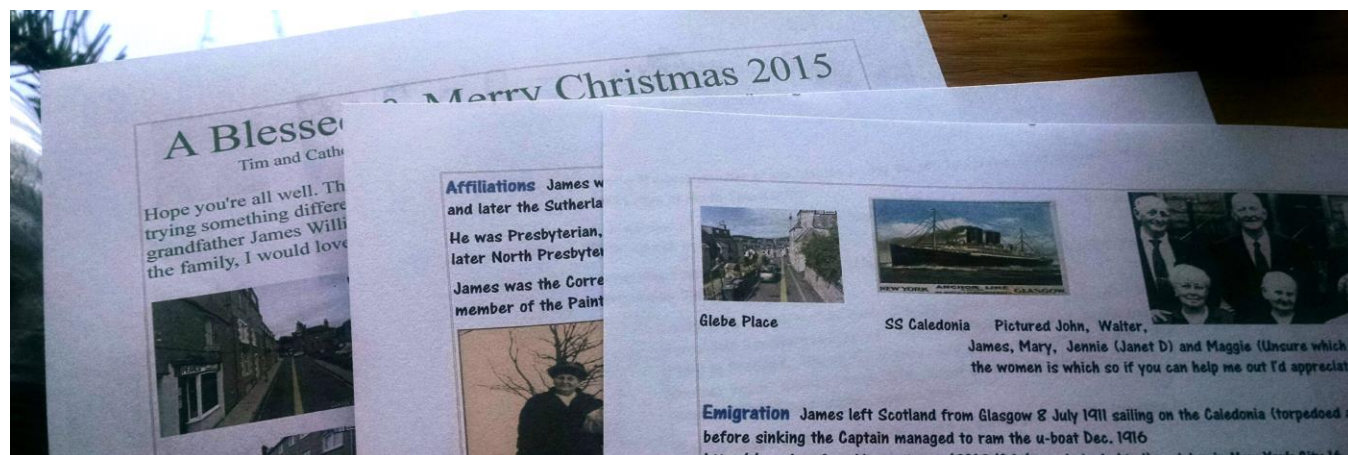
Even a cursory citation will make it easier to determine if your three in the morning research was done correctly and nothing was overlooked. Tracking some of your thought process will also allow you to know if the caffeine that induced your research frenzy was a brand worth purchasing again or not.

(c) Michael John Neill, "Genealogy Tip of the Day," <http://genealogytipoftheday.blogspot.com>, 10 November 2019

Family History in the Annual Christmas Letter?

What a Great Idea!

by Lisa Cooke



Why not share the gift of family history story in this year's Christmas letter or holiday cards?

Genealogy Gems podcast listener Catherine just sent in this fantastic idea about including family history in her annual Christmas letter. I thought I'd share it while it can inspire those whose holiday cards or letters are still on their "to-do" list. (Already done? Think about it for next year!) Here's what she wrote:

"I've always been intimidated by the idea of writing [family history]: where to begin, what to write about, what to include, how to say it. When it was time to sit down and write the family Christmas letter and not having much to report, it struck me. Why not write a family history letter to the cousins about our common maternal Grandfather?"

It may not be an original idea but it was new to me, so, deep breath, I took the plunge and the result was a letter that I truly enjoyed writing. I included some fun facts from immigration records and census information, family pictures, a couple of stories and even Google Earth pictures from my Gramp's birthplace in 'the Old Country.' I sourced the letter and added webpage links in case I hooked someone into wanting to know more."

Thank you Lisa for speaking about Google Earth Pro and my new best friend, Evernote for Genealogy! I can't wait to see what the family reaction will be. I'm planning some follow up letters and may even go for the big one (gulp)—a blog! I was so inspired I even made two of your wreaths, one for my mother-in-law and one for my best friend, also a genealogy junkie."

Wow, I love to see how Catherine has taken what I've been teaching—from keeping track of sources in Evernote to making wreaths—and RUNNING with it! She says, "Thanks for the great ideas, inspiration and support," but I want to thank HER for writing in with her enthusiasm and clever ideas. I LOVE the idea of adding the gift of family history—complete with crowd-pleasing Google Earth pictures and proper citations—to your annual Christmas letter. That's on MY list for next year!

© Lisa Louise Cooke, from Lisa Louise Cooke's Genealogy Gems at www.GenealogyGems.com, home of the free Genealogy Gems Podcast. 21 December 2015

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. 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. All you have to do is register.

Chicopee Public Library

The Chicopee Public Library offers genealogy open labs every Tuesday and Thursday from 10 am to 2 pm, and again from 6 pm to 8 pm. Experienced volunteers are available to answer questions and help you use the library's genealogy resources, which include Ancestry, Fold3, Heritage Quest, FamilySearch microfilm, books, and more.

Please note! There will be no labs on Tuesday, December 24 and Tuesday, December 31.

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.

Westfield Athenaeum

The library in Westfield holds genealogy classes every other Tuesday evening at 6:00 pm, focusing on the resources available at the library and how to search online for records. Register at <http://www.westath.org>.

In December, the class will be held on Tuesday, December 3 and Thursday, December 17. *There will be no class on December 31.*

Holyoke Public Library

The Holyoke Public Library is thinking about holding a 3-week class on Roots Magic as well as an Organizing Your Genealogy workshop. Both events are being considered for January 2020.

Are you interested? Please send an email to historyroom@holyokelibrary.org and specify the days and times (morning, afternoon, or evening) that would work best for you. The organizers would like to get a sense of participant interest before scheduling anything definite.

Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
Wednesday, 4 Dec 2019 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Meeting at the Agawam Senior Center - Thomas MacEntee, Founder & CEO of High-Definition Genealogy, LLC presents "The Genealogy Do-Over: A Year of Learning from My Mistakes."
Thursday, 12 Dec 2019 6 - 8 PM	WMGS Training – Using Twitter for Genealogy at the Agawam Senior Center.
Wednesday, 8 Jan 2019 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Meeting at the Agawam Senior Center - Katherine R. Willson presents "They Didn't All Come Through Ellis Island! Finding & Analyzing Passenger Arrival Lists."
Thursday, 16 Jan 2019 6 - 8 PM	Stay tuned for our new events. More information is coming in the next newsletter.
Thursday, 23 Jan 2019 6 – 8 PM	Stay tuned for our new events. More information is coming in the next newsletter.

***** 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.

New WMGS Members

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

Dawn Brock-Belford
Richard Belford
Martha Issod
Susan Lanucha

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!

Most of our membership is from the Western Massachusetts area, but a number of our members live all over our country and have ancestors from Massachusetts or New England.

We receive numerous inquiries each month via U.S. mail and 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 – Webmaster & Technology Coordinator
Dave Lapierre – Vice President	Hillary Schau & Joanne Mason – Newsletter Co-Editors
Deborah Woodford – Treasurer	Carol Lynne Bagley & Joanne Mason – Facebook Editors
Jeanne Lockhart – Assistant Treasurer	Jeanne Leblond – Surname & Queries Editor
Dorothy Cichonski– Secretary	Bob Whitney – Fundraising Coordinator
Deborah Woodford – Membership	Diane Ascioti – 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 6 pm to 8 pm 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 6 pm to 8 pm, 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 U.S.: 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, P.O. 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 December 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. First enter your name, email address, topic, and the name of person to whom the email is being sent. Then, 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.