



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society, Inc.

Contents

Upcoming Meetings	p 1-2	Calendar	p 10-11
Website News	p 2	New Member	p 11
President's Message	p 3	About Us	p 12-13
Member Only Benefits	p 4	Membership	p 13-14
Articles	p 5-8	Newsletter Info	p 14
Brick Wall Queries	p 8-9	Contact Us	p 15
Local Events	p 9-10	Email Updates	p 15

Upcoming Meetings

March 2020 Meeting



Lisa Louise Cooke is CEO of Genealogy Gems, a genealogy education company featuring The Genealogy Gems Podcast, available at iTunes, and the Genealogy Gems app. Her books include *Mobile Genealogy*, *The Genealogist's Google Toolbox Second Edition*, *How to Find Your Family History in Newspapers*, and she has published 100+ videos at the Genealogy Gems YouTube Channel. She also produces The Family Tree Magazine Podcast, regularly writes for the magazine, and teaches for Family Tree University.

Lisa will be our featured speaker at our Wednesday, March 4, 2020 meeting. Her presentation is titled “**Get the Scoop on Your Ancestors with Newspapers.**” Yearning to “read all about it?” Newspapers are a fantastic source of research leads, information and historical context for your family history. Learn the specialized approach that is required to achieve success in locating the news on your ancestors. Lisa’s presentation includes 3 Cool Tech Tools that will get you started.

Everyone will want to check the incredible resources available at Lisa’s website at <https://lisalouisecooke.com>.

Mark your calendars and plan to join us for an exciting presentation!

April 2020 Meeting



At our April 1st monthly meeting, we'll be welcoming back Sara Campbell. Sara is a popular lecturer and educator in Western Mass where she has been active in the genealogical community for over 25 years.

Sara is the author of a recently released book, *Six Generations in Otsego*, the story of the Colman family, spanning 150 years from the early years of the Republic in the late 1700s, to the mid-twentieth century. She maintains a blog about history and genealogy at <http://rememberingancestors.blogspot.com>.

An expert on maps and their historical significance for genealogists, Sara has a background as a civil engineer, which gives her a unique perspective on her research. Sara will be presenting “**Historic Massachusetts Maps**” to our society at our Wednesday, April 1st meeting. Mark your calendars for an interesting presentation!

[Return to Contents page](#)

Website News

by Dave Lapierre, Website & Technology Coordinator

Our website, www.westmassgen.com, has numerous resources you may not know about, or may have forgotten about. As the Website Coordinator, I make numerous updates to the website each month, both content that is visible, as well as behind the scenes updates to keep the website running smoothly.

In the very near future (hopefully by the beginning of April) there will be a What's New section added to the site, so you can see what has changed recently and what items have been added since your last visit to the website.

Some recent updates include:

- a link to the Holyoke Preservation Trust (which can be found by navigating to Members Only / Western Massachusetts & Massachusetts Genealogical Resources / Historical Societies and Museums)
- February and March Trainings and SIGs (Special Interest Groups) which can be found on the Calendar
- an installation of our SSL certificate, to provide secure transmission of data
- a new SSL certificate seal at the footer of our website
- updates to 5 WordPress plug-ins and our website theme
- update to PHP (the programming language used to build and maintain WordPress) so that our website will run faster and more securely, with improved performance

There are many more updates coming soon!

As always, if you have ideas or suggestions for the website, or if you encounter any broken links, please let me know either via email or at our monthly meeting.

[Return to Contents page](#)

Message from the President

by Jeanne Leblond

Are you looking forward to spring as much as I am? This winter has been a long one. December was a pretty month with snowfall, but the frequent ice storms and lack of sunshine since the holidays have not been enjoyable. Winter has its benefits though, as I seem to have more time for family research and learning new genealogy skills when it gets dark early.



And there's lots of learning opportunities at WMGS. To add to our increasing list of offerings to our members, our Board has purchased a society package subscription to Lisa Louise Cooke's Genealogy Gems. This subscription will allow us to select from a large list of webinars to show during our training sessions. We'll also be able to archive the handouts for 6 months. Lisa will be our speaker at our monthly meeting this month as well. She's a nationally known lecturer, a frequent keynote speaker at conferences, and the creator of over 200 free podcasts on a wide variety of genealogy topics.

Our new subscription is a great addition to the list of trainings that we've offered our members. We'll continue with our member-hosted SIGS and trainings, but we're excited that we can add a greater variety of learning opportunities for our members.

We're also starting to plan this year's Skills Night which will be held on June 3rd. We're looking for new presenters and ideas. Do you have an idea or a topic you'd like to share? Let us know.

And if you're looking for even more information on new skills, resources, and learning opportunities, be sure to check out our Facebook page where we share information on new resources, topics, and free webinars.

If you've missed any of our meetings, trainings, or SIGS, be sure to check out the Members Only section of our website for archived material. It keeps getting better and better.

We're working very hard to add as much value as possible to our memberships. We hope you enjoy them.

[Return to Contents page](#)

Member Only Benefits

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) & Trainings

March 19 - 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. Be sure to bring your research questions and brick wall problems! In addition, please bring your ancestor's name and whatever facts that you have discovered, such as the following:

- dates of birth, marriage, and death
- places of birth, marriage, and death
- names of spouses, children, and parents

If you have a success story, bring that along as well, so we can share our knowledge!

March 26 - Google Earth for Genealogy – Training



This training session will feature a webinar with Lisa Louise Cooke titled “**Google Earth for Genealogy.**” Learn how to use Google Earth’s free software to bring depth and perspective to your research. Explore the places where your family lived, your family home or homestead, their neighborhood, and town. Find churches, schools, shops, places of employment, cemeteries, and more. All of this and more can be done for free and without leaving your home.

This is a recorded webinar, not a live presentation. After the webinar, we’ll have time for questions and answers, along with hands-on practice.

SIGs and trainings are held 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!*

[Return to Contents page](#)

Articles

MGC Seminar – Origins and Destinations!



MASSACHUSETTS
GENEALOGICAL
COUNCIL

The Massachusetts Genealogical Council will hold its 2020 Seminar “Origins and Destinations” on April 4 –5, 2020 at the UMass Lowell Inn and Conference Center in Lowell, Massachusetts.

The weekend’s program features lectures on a variety of topics, including the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims’ arrival in Plymouth, researching ethnicities, and Massachusetts repositories.

On Saturday, April 4, attendees will have an opportunity to visit the Tsongas History Education Center to learn more about the lives of mill workers. And on Sunday, April 5, two Lowell mill girls will speak about their lives a century ago.



Please see full details and registration information [here](#).

Expand Your Research with a Boston Public Library E-Card by Joanne Mason

Did you know you can browse most of the Boston Public Library’s online resources and databases without leaving the comfort of your home? All you need is a computer, an internet connection, and a BPL e-card!

The BPL offers e-cards to any person who lives or works in Massachusetts. Part-time residents attending school and people who own property in Massachusetts are also eligible.

It’s easy to get started! Just go to the Boston Public Library website (www.bpl.org). From there, navigate to the eCards page: <https://www.bpl.org/ecard/>.

You will receive an email with your assigned card number. Use this number, along with a 4-digit PIN that you create, to access your account and the available online offerings.

The [Online Resources](#) page is a helpful first stop.

Below, you’ll find lists of BPL databases of interest to genealogists and family historians. For detailed descriptions of each database, click on the heading.

Biography and Genealogy

- 19th Century US Newspapers
- Biography And Genealogy Master Index
- Gale Academic OneFile Select
- Gale Virtual Reference Library
- New York Times (1851-2016)
- Obituary Database
- OmniFile Full Text Select
- Gale In Context: Biography
- ArchiveGrid
- HathiTrust Digital Library
- HeritageQuest Online

History and Political Science

- 18th Century Collections Online
- AP Images
- Archive Finder
- Archives Unbound
- Artemis Primary Sources
- Boston TV News Digital Library
- CQ Researcher
- Gale Academic OneFile
- Gale General OneFile
- Gale Newsvault
- Gale OneFile: News
- Gale Virtual Reference Library
- JSTOR
- Listener Historical Archive (1929-1991)
- Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center
- Readers' Guide Retrospective (1890-1982)
- Slavery and Anti-Slavery
- Slavery in America and the World: History, Culture & Law

Historical Newspapers

- 17th & 18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers
- 19th Century US Newspapers
- American Indian Newspapers
- Boston Globe (1872-1988)
- British Library Newspapers
- Chronicling America
- Harper's Weekly (1857-1912)
- Irish Times (1859-2018)
- Jewish Advocate (1905-1990)
- New York Times (1851-2016)

- Sunday Times (London) Digital Archive (1822-2006)
- Times (London) Digital Archive (1785-2012)

[U.S. History](#)

- American Antiquarian Society Historical Periodicals Collection
- Congressional Record
- Gale In Context: U.S. History
- Index to Early American Periodicals (1741-1935)
- Sabin Americana (1500-1926)
- The HistoryMakers

[World History](#)

- AtoZ World Food
- Financial Times Historical Archive (1888-2010)
- Gale In Context: World History
- Making of the Modern World

[Return to Contents page](#)

WMGS Founders Award Nominations

At our May 2019 meeting, WMGS proudly presented its Founders Award to longtime member, Wayne Weatherwax. 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, February, and March newsletters. 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 by sending an email to: WestMassGen@gmail.com or submitting them at a monthly meeting.

[Return to Contents page](#)

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.

[Return to Contents page](#)

Free Local Events

Several local libraries and organizations are hosting presentations on genealogy topics. If you know of a free, local event coming up, please let us know so that we can include it here.

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.

In March, the Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts (PGSMA) will hold its spring talk at the Chicopee Public Library:

- **Introduction to Probate & Family Court Records and Their Genealogical Uses** – with Lori Landers-Carvalho, Esq., Tuesday, March 31, 2020 at 6:30 pm.

Connecticut Society of Genealogists, Inc.

The Connecticut Society of Genealogist has 2 free events planned over for March and April. All events will take place at the Connecticut Society of Genealogists, Inc. Library, 175 Maple St., Hartford, CT. Please pre-register at csginc@csginc.org or call 860-569-0002.

- **The Connecticut-Caribbean Connection** - with Sandra Taitt Eaddy, March 21, 2020 at 1:30 pm.
- **More Than a Will: Understanding Probate Records** - with Edwin W. Strickland II, April 18, 2020 at 1:30 pm

Holyoke Public Library

The Holyoke Public Library is offering one class in March:

- **RootsMagic** – Wednesdays - March 4, 11, and 18, 2020 from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm

Registration is required. Please send an email to historyroom@holyokelibrary.org or call (413) 420-8101.

Southwick Public Library

The town of Southwick is marking its 250th anniversary this year! As part of the celebration, the Southwick Public Library is offering several genealogy events between now and October. All events are held at the Southwick Public Library. Please call (413) 569-1221 to register.

- **Getting to Know Ancestry** – planned for March, date and time to be determined
- **Genealogy and the U.S. Census** – Wednesday, April 1, 2020 at 6:30 pm

Westfield Athenaeum

The library in Westfield will hold genealogy classes on the following days:

- Thursday, March 12, 2020 at 2:00 pm
- Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 6:00 pm

Both classes will focus on the resources available at the library and how to search online for records. Register at <http://www.westath.org>.

Wilbraham Public Library

A demonstration of Ancestry Library Edition will take place on Thursday, March 5, 2020 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. Participants may use library computers or their own laptops to access Ancestry's databases. [Registration is required](#), as there are only 17 spots available.

Special thanks to Dorothy Cichonski for her help compiling these listings!

Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
Wednesday, 4 Mar 2020 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Meeting at the Agawam Senior Center - Lisa Louise Cooke presents “ Get the Scoop on Your Ancestors with Newspapers. ” ***
Monday, 9 Mar 2020 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Board Meeting at the Agawam Senior Center. Open to Members! ***
Thursday, 19 Mar 2020 6 – 8 PM	Special Interest Group (SIG) - Canadian (Quebec & Provinces) Genealogy at the Agawam Senior Center in the Handcraft Room (Members Only) ***
Thursday, 26 Mar 2020 6 – 8 PM	Skills Training – Google Earth for Genealogy (previously recorded webinar) at the Agawam Senior Center in the Handcraft Room (Members Only) ***

Wednesday, 1 Apr 2020 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Meeting at the Agawam Senior Center – Sara Campbell presents “ Historic Massachusetts Maps. ” ***
Monday, 13 Apr 2020 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Board Meeting at the Agawam Senior Center. Open to Members! ***
Thursday, 16 Apr 2020 6 – 8 PM	Stay tuned for our new events. More information is coming in the next newsletter.
Thursday, 23 Apr 2020 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 Member

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

Pamela Bryant

We hope that she will avail herself of all that WMGS has to offer and that she finds success in the hunt for family ancestors.

[Return to Contents page](#)

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

[Return to Contents page](#)

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 March 2020.

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.



Copyright © 2020 by the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society, Inc. All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any way without written permission of WMGS. For permission to reproduce any article in this newsletter, contact the editor at westmassgen@gmail.com.

The editor reserves the right to edit all contributions.