



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society, Inc.

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Upcoming Meetings

November 2020 Meeting



Edwin W. Strickland II has over 40 years of experience as both an amateur and professional genealogist. Raised on a farm owned by the Strickland family since 1789 and surrounded by family artifacts and stories, Ed developed a sense of heritage at an early age. His own research has focused on his ancestral lines, the descendants of Jacob Carter of Branford, Connecticut, the Strickland families of New England, and the families of Otis, Massachusetts.

Ed is a charter member of the Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council, past president of the Connecticut Society of Genealogists, Inc., past president and genealogist for the Descendants of the Founders of Ancient Windsor, Inc., and charter member of the National Society of the Descendants of Textile Workers of America, Inc. He's also a longtime member of WMGS.

He's a frequent lecturer at libraries, as well as historical and genealogical societies. In addition to presenting several lectures for WMGS in the past, he also presented at NERGC regional conferences many times.

At our **November 4th** monthly meeting, Ed will be presenting "**The Rise and Fall of Hampshire County (Massachusetts).**" Following a discussion of the steps from exploration to incorporation in New England, Ed will follow the history of Hampshire county (which at times extended from Worcester, Massachusetts west to the Hudson River and from within present Connecticut into Vermont) from its creation in 1660 onward. He will cover the various state boundary disputes, discuss the division of the four present counties of Western Massachusetts, and provide a guide to finding their records.

December 2020 Meeting



Join us at our monthly meeting on **Wednesday, December 2nd** for a fascinating webinar, **“Using Emigrant Guides for Genealogical Research,”** presented by Julie Miller, CG, CGL, FNGS. Julie is a full-time researcher, lecturer, and writer. Her articles have appeared in the NGSQ (National Genealogical Society Quarterly) and NGS Magazine. She’s a member of the NGS conference committee, a fellow of the National Genealogical Society, and was a volunteer at NARA-Denver for 21 years.

Emigrant guides provided essential information and practical advice to our ancestors about travel routes, weather, opportunities, and much more. Learn how to use emigrant guides for insight into the how’s and why’s of an ancestor’s preparation and journey across an ocean or the country.

If you have ever wondered how your ancestors managed to venture across our country, perhaps in a covered wagon, or wondered how they were able to navigate from tiny villages in distant countries to come to the United States, you’ll want to attend this presentation.

NOTE: Until our regular meetings resume, our events will be held virtually, as much as possible..

How to Participate: Members will receive an email notice in advance of the monthly virtual meeting. You will be required to pre-register via a link in the email. After that, you will receive another email with the link to join the meeting via Zoom at the broadcast time. Monthly meetings will be broadcast at 6 PM.

Do you have questions about using Zoom or need assistance to join our meetings and trainings? Just send us an email at westmassgen@gmail.com. We’re available and willing to help our members to access everything that WMGS has to offer!

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Message from the President

by Jeanne Leblond



Thanksgiving has always been one of my favorite holidays. It’s a wonderful time to gather with family and friends, reflect on our blessings, and enjoy a delicious meal made using family recipes. This year, we face a new challenge of how to connect with family and friends, yet staying socially distanced and safe.

Recently, I read an article about how our ancestors would spend entire Sundays at church services held in the local meetinghouse. They’d sit on wooden benches in an unheated building for hours. Between morning and afternoon services, they would socialize to get family news, discuss politics, and perhaps strike up a romantic relationship. I wonder what our ancestors would think of attending church services or dating via Zoom. Perhaps our challenges with staying connected are not so great, after all.

In this edition, I know you'll enjoy reading about Fran Malone's efforts to reunite WWII dog tags with two soldiers' descendants. Fran's genealogy work was a perfect way to honor our Veterans. Fran and many of our members are Veterans. We thank you for your service to our country, and we wish you a lovely Veterans' Day.

You'll share in the excitement that Hillary Schau experienced when she broke down a long-standing brick wall in her family. Her article also includes some tips on the importance of researching the entire family, along with reminding us not to give up searching.

Though the weather was ominous with threats of having power outages or loss of internet access, we were able to have our postponed annual meeting and election on October 7th. A summary of the meeting is included in this newsletter. Please join me in congratulating Dave Lapierre, Vice President, Dorothy Cichonski, Secretary, Jeanne Lockhart, Assistant Treasurer, and Carol Lynne Bagley, Director who were elected to complete two-year terms. I am always thankful for their hard work and grateful for their friendship as well. I know that our membership also appreciates their efforts to keep WMGS going, especially during our quarantine.

I hope that you can find a safe way to connect with family and friends this holiday season. Be confident and hopeful that our pandemic will end sooner, rather than later, our families and friends will be safe, and our bonds will be that much stronger.

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Annual Meeting Recap 2020

Our Annual Meeting, postponed from May 6th, was held on October 7th following our presentation by John Putnam. The meeting was held virtually on Zoom.

Following the Treasurer's Summary presented by Deb Woodford, Treasurer, our annual elections were held. Members of the Nominating Committee appointed included Deb Woodford, Chairperson, Terry Pearsons, Director, and Bob Whitney, WMGS member. Deb described the role and responsibilities of the Nominating Committee and presented the slate of nominees for election to terms which will expire at the May 2022 annual meeting. The proposed slate included:

Vice President: Dave Lapierre
Asst. Treasurer: Jeanne Lockhart
Secretary: Dorothy Cichonski
Director: Carol Lynne Bagley

There were no nominations offered from the floor. Voting was conducted by anonymous electronic polling. The slate was unanimously approved by those members in attendance.

Jeanne Leblond, President, congratulated those members re-elected and thanked them for their work to make WMGS such a successful society.

Following the election, there was discussion of the draft proposed Bylaws revisions. These Bylaws revisions were approved by the Board at the last in-person board meeting in March, before the board started meeting virtually. Several members recommended additions and a motion was made and approved to refer the draft

Bylaws to committee for further refinement. After that happens, the proposed Bylaws revisions will again need to be approved by the Board. They will then be presented to the membership for final approval.

Because of our state-ordered quarantine, our annual audit continues to be postponed for safety reasons. The Board also decided to postpone our annual Founders Award presentation until we can do so in person.

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Membership Update

by Deborah Woodford

Thank you to everyone who has renewed their membership! We look forward to sharing the upcoming year with you! Annual membership to WMGS, Inc. runs from September 1st through August 31st of the following year.



On October 15th, the confidential WMGS members password was changed. Current members were given this new password via email on that evening. If you haven't renewed yet, now is the time to renew your membership! We also welcome new members from near and far! We'd love to include you in the exciting presentations we have planned! Renewing or joining will give you access to our Zoom presentations, which enable you to participate from the comfort of your home. Members enjoy exclusive access to the Members Only feature of our website with archived meeting presentations and handouts, 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 former newsletter, the American Elm.

There are 2 options for renewing or becoming a member:

- Mail your check (made out to WMGS) to our society at:

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

New members need to include a completed Membership Application found on the website with your check.

- Renew or join via PayPal through our website.

Here's the link to the Join page: <https://westmassgen.com/join/>. Simply scroll down the page, 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. **If you are a new member joining via PayPal, please email us at westmassgen@gmail.com to provide us with your name, mailing address, phone number, and email for our membership records. Or you may fill out the membership application found on our website, scan or photograph your completed form, and email it to us as an attachment.**

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Member Only Benefits

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) & Trainings

November 19 – 7 pm - How to Find Living Relatives



Your living relatives might have stories, photographs, heirlooms, and other information that can help you in your genealogical research. But how do you find them? In this presentation by Lisa Louise Cooke, you will learn the strategies that may just lead you to someone who has the answers you need!

How to Participate: Members will receive an email notice in advance of the training sessions. You will be required to pre-register via a link in the email. After that, you will receive another email with the link to join the Zoom webinar at the broadcast time.

Note the time change for training sessions only. Training sessions will be held at 7 PM.

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Articles

The Holidays are Coming - Need a Special Gift? - Like Saving Money? - Read On.....



Need a special gift for that tough-to-buy-for person on your list? How about a FREE copy of Vivid-Pix RESTORE? With the upcoming holiday season, VividPix is once again offering a **Buy One/Gift One offer until January 31, 2021.**

Last spring, WMGS signed an Affiliate Agreement with VividPix/RESTORE which offers benefits to our members and to our society. Not only do WMGS members save 20% when they purchase Vivid-Pix RESTORE software, but for each purchase that members make using our discount code, WMGS earns 20% in revenue. Normally, the software sells for \$49.95. Using our 20% member discount code, members pay only \$39.95. WMGS earns 20% of each sale or \$8.

With the holidays promotion, you will get a copy at the reduced price of \$39.95, WMGS will earn \$8, and you will get a gift coupon code to send to whomever you choose giving them a FREE copy of Vivid-Pix RESTORE. It's like getting 2 for less than the price of 1!

If you missed Dave Lapierre's training session on using VividPix this past September, you can watch the video and download the handout and slides. It is available in the Training & SIGS Handouts section of the Members Only page on the website. Dave demonstrated the many features that VividPix offers for restoring both pictures and documents. Dave demonstrated how he restored several pictures and documents that were submitted by members.

The special promotion code/hyperlink will be posted to our website by the time you read this article in the November newsletter. You will find it in the Member Discounts, Coupon Codes & Free Downloads section of the Members Only page. Let the shopping begin!

WW2 Dog Tags Find Their Way Home

by Fran Malone

Happy Veterans Day to everyone, especially the Veterans, and to all your families. As the year 2020 nears its end we all find ourselves hoping for a brighter New Year. I'd like to share with you an experience that I was fortunate to have during the last week of July 2020. The experience: getting a pair of lost military dog tags home. It gave me hope for better things to come and it made things a little brighter as we move towards 2021.

When I started this experience, it was to make sure the Veteran's dog tags did not get lost/thrown away and that somehow, they made it back home. As the search progressed, it turned into a genealogy research project. A project that ended up reuniting two families as well getting the dog tags home.

For those of you that don't know me, I'm a Veteran and anything relating to the military is important to me. I hope this article gives you a little hope, a brighter end to 2020, and a better beginning for 2021. I'm also writing this without the names of those involved to keep their privacy so the only names mentioned are the ones on the WW2 dog tags of Chester W. Nowak and his brother Theodore T. Nowak.



On Monday night July 27th, I saw a post on Facebook by a woman I will refer to as Mrs. Palmer from Palmer, Mass. Mrs. Palmer posted a picture of the dog tags pictured with this article and stated that her mother made a purchase at a flea market over the weekend. When her mother got home, she discovered the WW2 dog tags belonging to Chester W. Nowak and the Coast Guard dog tags belonging to Theodore T. Nowak were included with her purchase.

Mrs. Palmer posted on Facebook asking for help to get the dog tags back to the family or families of the two Veterans. I read through her responses and suggestions and she had well over 60 directions to go in.

I figured I would intervene and tell her that I belong to the Western Mass. Genealogy Society, that I was a Veteran, and I had a number of resources that I could use to find the families. After we exchanged a few messages I told her to check her Facebook private messages for a couple of documents.

While exchanging messages with Mrs. Palmer, I was checking the website GenealogyBank.com and discovered the obituary of Chester W. Nowak in a Charleston, SC newspaper and the obituary of Theodore T. Nowak in the Springfield, Mass. newspapers. I sent these two obits to her Facebook private message so she could view them.

The obit for Chester W. Nowak was dated July 3, 1959 and gave me his wife's name and the names of his two daughters and son. At this time none of the children were married so I still had to look for more information. The obit for Theodore was dated Jan. 1, 1982 and it gave his wife's name and named his three sons. Two of Theodore's sons were listed as residents of Chicopee, and one was listed as a resident of Lodi, California. I tried to find information on the sons in Chicopee and found one was deceased and no information on the other. That left me with the son who resided in Lodi, California to make any connections with.

I then found an obit for Chester W. Nowak's wife in Charleston dated July 1, 1976. By 1976 the two daughters were married and were listed with their marriage names and their husbands. The obits helped me with establishing the families and where they were.



To continue my research, I switched to Ancestry.com and concentrated my search on Theodore's son who lived in Lodi, California. I put the sons name into the search along with his residence Lodi, California. When I got my results, I clicked on "The U.S. Public Records Index 1953 to 1993" and gained an address for Theodore's son. I then clicked on the file "The U.S. Phone and Address index for 1993 to 2003" and from this file I got a phone number and his residence up to 2003. I was still 17 years away from the present time. Was this a good address and a good phone number? I still needed to find something in current time.

In order to verify the phone number and address I tried the "White Pages" online directory which gave me Theodore's son's name in Lodi, California with an address that matched 2003 but it didn't give me a phone number. The next website I tried was "Anywho" which is a phone directory also. I found that I could do a phone number search so I took the phone number from 2003 and did the search. The phone number came up the same as in 2003 at the same address. As an extra bonus it gave me a list of FAMILY MEMBERS so now I had about 10 different family names to work with.

Where do I look now? What genealogy website can give you current information? Facebook of course! Yes everyone, I said Facebook. I started putting the names into the search block on Facebook to get the pages of the individuals, and from the individuals' pages I determined who was who in the family. I started sending the family members messages on the dog tags being found and that Mrs. Palmer was looking to send them back to the family.

It was now Wednesday July 29th with 6 messages sent to the family of Theodore's son in Lodi. I also gave Mrs. Palmer a quick update that I found the family in Lodi, California and I sent messages to six family members.

While waiting for the replies to my messages I repeated the same search process on Chester W. Nowak's family in Charleston. I went back to Ancestry to use the "Public Records Index" and the "Phone and Address Index" bringing me up to 2003. I then needed to use the White Pages and Anywho again as I looked for Chester W. Nowak's children with the married names of the daughters. Again, success! The Anywho White

Pages came through with the phone numbers, addresses, and a list of the family members. It was now back to Facebook where I sent about 7 messages to the South Carolina Family.

It was now Thursday July 30th and a touch of real success came on the dog tags belonging to Theodore T. Nowak. I got my first response from the oldest grandson of Theodore followed by a response from the oldest grandson's brother. The two grandsons confirmed their father's address and phone number and they were extremely happy that I reached out to them.

In my conversation with the oldest grandson I found out that they weren't aware of the cousins in South Carolina and said they would like to make contact with them. After WW2 Chester W. Nowak left Chicopee and went to Charleston, SC while his brother Theodore stayed in Chicopee. Meanwhile Theodore's son went to Lodi, California to live and contact between the two families was lost.

Friday night July 31st made the search completely successful when the granddaughter of Chester and the daughter of Chester's son contacted me saying her father was thrilled with my effort to contact them and he would gladly take his father's WW2 dog tags. I got the same message from Chester's granddaughter that they would like to make contact with their California cousins that they weren't aware of. I gave both families the contact information for each other, and I gave Mrs. Palmer the addresses to mail the dog tags.

On Saturday August 1st Mrs. Palmer mailed Theodore's Coast Guard dog tags to his son in Lodi, California and Chester's WW2 dog tags to his son in Charleston, SC. On Wednesday August 5, 2020, I got word from South Carolina that the dog tags were received, and on Thursday August 6, 2020, word was received that the dog tags had made it to them.

There was one last thing to do to make this complete. I informed Mrs. Palmer of her good deed with a successful ending. Due to her "act of kindness," the dog tags were returned to the families and in the process reunited two families that lost contact with each other.

Not So Easy Search

by Hillary Schau

The first and most challenging roadblock I encountered was the common Irish name problem. My paternal great grandmother was Margaret Connor. She married Charles Squires in 1885 in Springfield, MA. The marriage register said she was 22 years old, born in Longmeadow, and her parents were **John and Margaret**.

09 Apr. 26	Charles H. Squires	Springfield	Springfield	22
1885	Maggie E. Connor		Longmeadow	22

James B.	Emma
Longmeadow	John & Margaret

I thought it would be easy, knowing the approximate birth year and town and name of parents but there were too many possibilities. Same names and places. Possible moves. Changed names: Connor, Connors, Conners, O'Connor, O'Connors, etc. John and Margaret were everywhere. I abandoned this branch to work on others but came back often, hoping to find a definite answer.

Then I got a subscription to GenealogyBank, the newspaper archive, and was looking up Charles Squires and suddenly . . . I found articles about **Patrick and Margaret Connor**. Twice. The first was a 50-year anniversary party describing their lives together, all their children including daughter Margaret, wife of Charles Squires of Springfield!

husband. Their seven children, with the exception of the oldest, Mrs James Reavey, are all living. They are Lizzie, wife of Peter Greaney; Maggie, wife of Charles Squires, both of this city; Jane, wife of Michael Carroll of Greenwich, Ct.; John, who is in Northampton, and Thomas, at home, are twins. Katie, employed at the D. H. Brigham company, also lives at home. Mr and Mrs Conners have eight grandchildren living.

It gave Patrick's birthdate, the town in Ireland that he came from, when he arrived, and that they lived in the same house for about 48 years (Now I'd have all the census records!). But the articles said "Patrick," not John. It is possible that he went by his middle name John instead of the very Irish name of Patrick to avoid discrimination for being Irish and changed O'Connor to Conners, much more English.

I then found Patrick's obituary that listed the cemetery, went there, found him (as Patrick O'Connor) along with the plots of collateral family members! On FamilySearch I even found his death certificate with parents' names.

In March of 2015, I travelled to County Clare, Ireland to explore further but encountered a block due to lack of records that far back. A few tax records and land, but no birth or death.

I then searched on what I knew and discovered that Ancestry had a tree descended from the same parents, a brother for Patrick and cousins for me. With photos! **Eureka**. Add to that, DNA matches soon followed to confirm the paper trail. **Happy Dance!**

So, remember – don't give up. Something will pop up and help break through your brick wall. Keep looking.



MASSACHUSETTS
GENEALOGICAL
COUNCIL

demand
M:O:R:E.

MGC: Open Records & Education

An evening with
Judy Fambrough-Billingsley
Author of *Too Brown to Keep*

Thursday, October 29, 2020 at 7:00 PM via Zoom

MGC is pleased to co-sponsor this event with WMGS. Please join us for this free event! Judy Fambrough-Billingsley joins us to discuss her newest book *Too Brown to Keep: A Search for Love, Forgiveness, and Healing*. In addition to sharing her unique story, Judy will describe some of the tips and lessons she learned while researching and discovering her ancestry.

This presentation is free, but registration is required!
For more information, go to www.massgencouncil.org/m-o-r-e



Tours on Other Topics in Holyoke

(Note: This information is provided by the Holyoke Preservation Trust. Please verify dates and times!)

Click [HERE](#) for more details and to register for any of these FREE tours

2020 Holyoke Massachusetts guided tours and presentations —FREE and OPEN to the public. Keep checking back since information will change. Tours and presentations are by Robert Comeau unless stated otherwise.



Forestdale Cemetery Tour – Saturday October 31, 2020 from 10:30 AM until noontime) Park within the cemetery. Hosted by the Holyoke Preservation Trust. This will also be a virtual tour on Facebook and on YouTube.

Ashley Reservoir Tour – Saturday November 7, 2020 from 10 AM to 12:30 PM. Park at the Elks Club of Holyoke on Whitney Avenue. Hosted by Holyoke Preservation Trust. Bring water and bug spray and also be ready to walk up to 4 miles.

Veteran's Park Tour – Saturday November 14, 2020 from 1 to 2:30 PM. Meet at the Hampden Street side of the park. Hosted by the Holyoke Preservation Trust. Topics include the Saint Jerome Church campus and the veterans' memorials but there are many other topics. This will also be a virtual tour on Facebook and on YouTube.

Holyoke Canal System Walking Tour – Saturday November 21, 2020 from 1 to 3 PM. Meet alongside the Dwight Street side of Holyoke Heritage State Park. Be ready to walk about 2.50 miles in all. This will also be a virtual tour on Facebook and on YouTube.

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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. 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 2018-Q1, Oct 2018-Q2) Answers submitted should include the source(s) of information found or specific information on a website or database. WMGS will forward the response to the person who asked the question, post it in the next newsletter, and archive it on our website.

Note: Because of space limitations, WMGS reserves the right to limit the number of queries that are listed per newsletter. When necessary, queries will be posted in the next available issue. WMGS and its members are not responsible to conduct research, to provide answers for the query, or for the accuracy of the information posted or received. Always verify any information received by checking its source.

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Free Online Offerings

October 28th!

Holyoke History Room

The Holyoke History Room will offer “A Case Study in French-Canadian Genealogy,” a virtual talk with Jack Keane on Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at 4:00 pm. [Register here.](#)

November Virtual Tours

We may not be able to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower’s landing in person, but we can still explore museums related to the Pilgrims both across the sea and here in Massachusetts. Then, celebrate the arrival of our more recent immigrant ancestors by touring Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty.

Leiden American Pilgrim Museum – Leiden, Netherlands

Located in a beautifully preserved house built ca 1365-1370 near the clock tower of the Hooglandskerk, the Leiden American Pilgrim museum tells the stories of the founders of New England, the Pilgrims. Furnishings from Pilgrim times show aspects of daily life, while events involving the Pilgrims themselves are illustrated with a remarkable collection of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century maps and engravings by such artists as Gerard Mercator, Adrian van de Venne, Adriaen van Ostade, and Jacques de Gheyn.

Plimoth Plantation- Plymouth, MA

Visit the early 17th century Pilgrim village and witness the day-to-day life of a Wampanoag homesite.

Plymouth 400th 1620-2020

400 years of Wampanoag history is offered by the non-profit Plymouth 400th, Inc. through a long list of videos. The Wampanoags were the first tribe encountered by the Pilgrims when they landed in Provincetown harbor.

Statue of Liberty - New York

Ellis Island- New York

View the Great Hall, baggage room, hospital, and dormitories where our ancestors may have first stepped on American soil. Take a 360-degree tour of the island, view historic photos, explore the museum, and search for your family in the Family History Center.

See also: <https://www.statueofliberty.org/ellis-island/national-immigration-museum/>

Other Offerings

Take a tour, attend a free presentation or webinar, explore a new resource, or just relax with the ducks at the park. There's so much available without having to leave home! (New listings added monthly.)

[American Battlefield Trust – Washington, D.C.](#)

Tours, videos, and historical resources about the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Civil War.

[Amherst Historical Society](#)

You'll find archived videos of their popular lunchtime History Bites lecture series, links to online books and documents pertaining to Amherst's history, links to city directories from 1889-1923, and several films related to local farming and the 160th anniversary of the Morrill Land Grant Act to establish the University of Massachusetts.

[Boston Public Library](#)

The Boston Public Library offers several online events each month through its Local & Family History Lecture Series. This one may be of interest to genealogists:

- **History of the Hub: Resources for Local and Family History at the Boston City Archives**
(October 27, 2020 at 6 pm)

See more information [here](#).

[Commonwealth of Massachusetts State House – Boston, MA](#)

Tour the Great Hall, Senate Chamber, Office of the Speaker of the House, and more. You'll also find pictures and descriptions of artifacts and documents.

[FamilySearch](#)

Follow these steps to find webinars on this site:

- On the home page, click on the **Search** tab.
- Go to the **Research Wiki** section.
- In the **Getting Started** section on the left side of the page, click on **Family History Library**.
- Scroll down to the **Family History Library Information** section.
- Click on **Classes and Online Webinars** and **Current Month Schedule**.

Or use the link below:

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Family_History_Library_Classes_and_Webinars

[Franco American Portal Project: Beta](#)

This is a new, collaborative, five university project focusing on archival material related to French-Canadian, Quebecois(e), and Acadian diaspora communities in the Northeast. In its initial stages, the free public database will bring together archival material from around the world. The beta test version is available now.

[Historic Deerfield](#)

Join their email list to view short video tours of Historic Deerfield and their collections and to learn about upcoming virtual events and tours.

[Historic Northampton](#)

Historic Northampton has several collections of historical material related to Northampton and the surrounding area, including photographs, maps, atlases, and Northampton State Hospital information. Their website includes virtual exhibits, online research material, and digital collections.

[History Hub](#)

A research support community for genealogists, historians, and citizen archivists, History Hub is maintained by the National Archives. If you have a research question, are looking for specific documents to help your genealogical research, or find blog posts related to your topic, check out this site.

[John Adams Historical Museum - Adams National Historical Park, Quincy, MA](#)

Take a virtual tour of the birthplaces of both John Adams and John Quincy Adams, America's first father and son presidents, at this national historical park and see some of the artifacts and collections associated with this family. See also: <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/adams-national-historical-park>

[Joseph Allen Skinner Museum – South Hadley, MA](#)

Short tour of the museum founded by the famed industrialist and owner of the Skinner Silk Mills.

[Legacy Family Tree Webinars](#)

Legacy Family Tree offers free webinars, but you must register for them. If you can't watch the webinar at the scheduled time, they are available for free for one week. If you become a member, they are free long-term. Seven free webinars are planned for November. Topics include:

- **How to Connect with Your Pilgrim Ancestors to Join the Mayflower Society**
(November 4 at 2 pm)
- **Why I Love — and How to Use — the Newspaper Collections at MyHeritage**
(November 10 at 2 pm)
- **Separating and Merging Identities of Same-named Men** (November 17 at 8 pm)

See the entire list at <https://familytreewebinars.com>

[Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York City](#)

This site provides a fascinating glimpse of life in ethnic immigrant communities in New York City in the 19th and early 20th centuries through virtually guided tours of two tenement buildings. In addition, there are featured stories of immigrant families into the 1950's.

[Massachusetts Historical Society](#)

Fascinating collection of material about the various time periods in our history, starting from the colonial period up to the present.

[McCord Museum – Montreal, Canada](#)

View online collections of items related to Canadian culture, including items related to the daily lives, work, and leisure activities of residents from Quebec province and throughout the country. Then, check out the historical and genealogical material in their archives.

[New England Historic Genealogical Society \(NEHGS\)](#)

NEHGS has a large number of free webinars and training material available on their website. See registration information and other online programs here: <https://www.americanancestors.org/education/online-classes>

Free NEHGS offerings for November include:

- **Navigating the Digital Library & Archives at AmericanAncestors.org** (November 19 at 3 pm)

Other interesting resources from NEHGS are available here:

<https://www.americanancestors.org/education/learning-resources/watch>

[Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge, MA](#)

This museum offers virtual exhibitions, videos of the museum experience, an online gallery, and a lovely collection of Storybooth sessions of immigrant experiences.

[Old Sturbridge Village](#)

Take a virtual tour of Old Sturbridge Village to learn what life would have been like for your ancestors in the 1830s.

[Quabbin Park Cemetery](#)

This website includes a short virtual tour, map, and historical pictures collection of the cemetery, which was created in the early 1930s to hold the remains of 6,601 graves that were removed before the creation of the Quabbin reservoir.

Be sure to check out the handout from our Oct. 2, 2019 presentation on the cemetery for more information.

[Salem Witch Museum – Salem, MA](#)

This tour allows you to view sites around Essex and Middlesex counties that are related to the Salem Witch events of 1692. There are over 120 links to museums, historical societies, cemeteries, and historical markers in the cities and towns associated with key figures in the trials. Included is a link to a list of resource material and helpful websites.

[Smithsonian's National Museum of American History – Washington, D.C.](#)

Where to begin? There's so much available here.

[Stanley Park Webcams – Westfield, MA](#)

View live activity at the Covered Bridge, International Bridge, and the Ozzie Memorial. View pictures of the colonial-era village, greenhouse, and gardens to delight your senses between your ancestor searches.

[Strawberry Banke Museum – Portsmouth, NH](#)

Time travel through almost 400 years of the Puddle Duck neighborhood, established along a tidal inlet in Portsmouth in 1623.

[Westfield Athenaeum](#)

You'll find a browsable online collection includes an impressive array of material related to the Woronoco Indians, early maps, early records of Westfield's settlers, documents, town meetings, ministers' sermons, and military documents.

[Wistariahurst Museum](#)

The Wistariahurst Museum in Holyoke has an extensive collection of historical material to add to your ancestors' stories. Here are two:

[Online collection of Holyoke postcards](#)

[Online history exhibits including the Holyoke Street Railway, Wm. Skinner & Sons silk manufacturing, Holyoke & Pioneer Valley history resources](#)

[Worcester Historical Museum](#)

Here, you'll find an online collection of Worcester city directories, city directories, Worcester magazine (1901-1914), historical photos, and items from the Worcester Society of Antiquity Collection

WMGS Monthly Presentations and Trainings

Join our upcoming presentations and trainings from home. Our schedule of webinars and trainings is available in our newsletter and on [our website](#). Members will receive an email with a link to join the presentation at the

scheduled time. Be sure to join in at that time, as some presentations can't be placed on our website per the contract with our presenter.

In addition, catch up on archived presentations in the Members Only section of our website. There are over 25 videos available of our monthly presentations and 12 individual training videos from the DNA Boot Camp from Hack Genealogy.

Special thanks to Jeanne Leblond for her help compiling these listings!

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Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
November 4, 2020 6 PM	WMGS meeting online! Edwin W. Strickland II presents "The Rise and Fall of Hampshire County (Massachusetts)."
November 9, 2020 7 PM	WMGS Board Meeting via Zoom
November 19, 2020 7 PM	Zoom training: "How to Find Living Relatives" presented by Lisa Louise Cooke (recorded webinar)
December 2, 2020 6 PM	WMGS meeting online! Julie Miller presents "Using Emigrant Guides for Genealogical Research"
December 10, 2020 7 PM	Stay tuned for our new events. More information is coming in the next newsletter.

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New WMGS Members

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

Paul Judy
Rick Smith

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	Joanne Mason – Newsletter Editor
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 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 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.

(Note: Until further notice, WMGS will hold meetings online. Please watch your email for instructions, and feel free to contact us at westmassgen@gmail.com with any questions.)

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 and are available, along with handouts, in the Members Only section of our website.

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

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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:

- o \$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 complete and submit an application by mail with your check, or as an attached link in a separate email to us when using PayPal as your payment, so that we have all the necessary information for our membership list.

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Newsletter Deadlines

Please submit all information to be entered into the next newsletter by November 15, 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.

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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.

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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.