

## CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 811, Westminster, MA 01473-0811

# THE SEARCHERS



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January signals many things for us – a time to begin again or a time to finish what we started – a time to catch up with old friends, go on vacation or simply stay in and keep warm until the nicer weather is back.

I have given up on the “resolutions” which seem great when I am making them but are soon left by the way. This year I have decided to take each day and make a goal for that day only, in hopes that I stay more focused. I had the opportunity to attend the most wonderful week of lectures and research in Salt Lake City this past December and came away with such motivation and a sense of direction to take with my brick walls. I will let you know how this new plan works in the coming months.

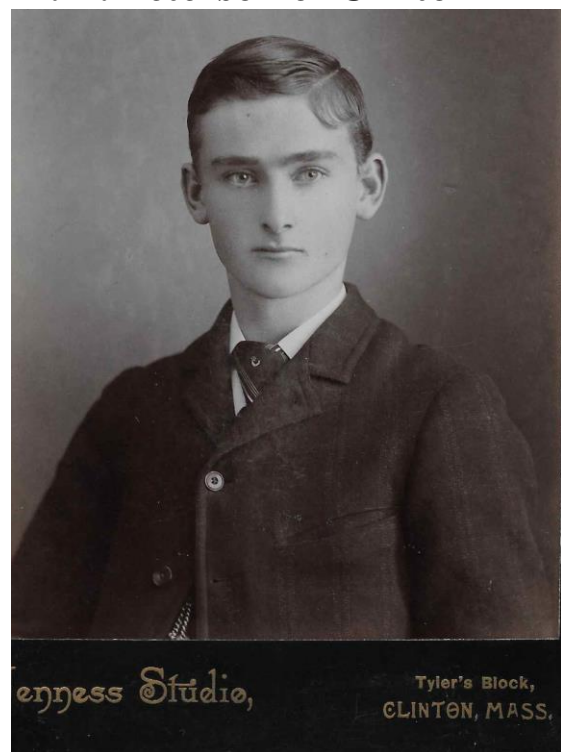
**Just a reminder** - dues are now due for the coming year - so please get your renewals in. Your membership will also open up the “new” members program C.M.G.S. will be starting in March at the Leominster Public Library. We will be offering Legacy and Family search webinars on the third Monday of the month beginning in March from 6:30-8:30 pm with discussion and individual help. Your membership can be renewed at the membership meeting, or returning the renewal form on the back of this issue of the Searchers.

### *Important Notice!!*

*If Bonnie Sweetman was doing any research for you please contact me, Carol Bosworth at [cambosworth@gmail.com](mailto:cambosworth@gmail.com), I should have the information you would be looking for.*

### **Looking for the owner of this photograph**

**R. E. Peterson of Clinton MA**



Contact Carol Bosworth if you know where this photo should go  
[cambosworth@gmail.com](mailto:cambosworth@gmail.com)

## ***Annual Meeting and Elections March 2020***

*We are looking for individuals who would be interested in becoming a Board of Director for C.M.G.S.  
We vote for the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Historian as well as Directors at large. We are in need of a Secretary but all positions are open to anyone interested. Please let one of us know if you might be interested, we welcome new ideas!*

### **Friends of Irish Research Seminars 2020**

**899 N. Main St., Brockton, MA 02301**

**Saturday, February 8** = 12:00–3:00 pm  
***World War I Research*** –

David Allen Lambert  
***Ponkapoag Tribal Heritage*** –  
David Allen Lambert & Tribal  
Leaders

**Tour of the Research Facilities** of the  
Friends of Irish Research and the David  
Allen Lambert Library – Richard Reid

A HUGE USED BOOK SALE WILL TAKE  
PLACE TO HELP FUND THE DAVID  
ALLEN LAMBERT LIBRARY.  
*NEHGS REGISTERS - MA VITALS TO 1850  
- THE GREAT MIGRATION - MAYFLOWER  
BOOKS AND MUCH MORE*

**Sunday, March 15** 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm  
***“Tiernan’s Wake”*** –

*Author Richard T. Rook*  
**Traditional Irish Music Concert** –  
Ben Reid & Friends

**Saturday, May 2** 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm  
**The 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Mayflower** –  
Linda MacIver

**A New Look at Using FamilySearch** –  
Richard Reid

## ***2020 CMGS Membership Meeting Speakers***

**January 28, 2020**

WEBINAR

**"Beginning Evernote"**

**Speaker: Lisa Louise Cook**

Lisa Louise Cooke is the owner of Genealogy Gems, a genealogy and family history multi-media company. Lisa is the author of a variety of multi-media materials available to *Genealogy Gems* Premium members and the books: *Mobile Genealogy*, *How to find Your Family History in Newspapers*, and the *Genealogist's Google Toolbox*, as well as producer of the video series *Google Earth for Genealogy* and over 60 videos at the Genealogy Gems YouTube Channel.

**February 25, 2020**

**"The Pierce Mansion in South  
Gardner"**

**Speaker: Ken Watson**

The S.K. Pierce Haunted Mansion is a 6,661 square-foot Victorian. It was built in 1875 by Sylvester Pierce, across the street from his successful furniture business, S.K Pierce and Sons Furniture Company. People inside the hours over the years have claimed to see the ghosts of S.K. Pierce, his wives, and a pair of young children. People allege they've heard voices inside the house, doors slam and felt the presence of otherly beings when alone in a room.

**March 24, 2020**

**Annual Meeting**

**Elections and awards**

**"Are Your Ancestors on Facebook?  
Using Social Media for Genealogy"**

**Speaker: Sara Campbell**

Sara began teaching workshops in Genealogy at Greenfield Community College about 2001. Interest in the community has grown,

topics expanded to include Beyond the Shaking Leaf (internet research), Missing Persons (census research), They Didn't Change His Name at Ellis Island (immigration research), Using Land Records, Overlooked Municipal Records, One Cotton Sock, Unfinished (Probate Files), Digging into Women's History, Did Grandma Own a Filling Station? (married women's business certificates, and a Civil War Case Study. Sara has presented programs for the Pioneer Valley Institute, Central Massachusetts Genealogical Society, Massachusetts Society of Genealogists, Wistariahurst Museum, Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts, Lowell Genealogy Club, and local area libraries. Several of the topics were sponsored by Local Cultural Councils under the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

### **Ever Want to Pick Out Your Own Gift for the Holidays????**

**Here is a wonderful suggestion for this year!!**

**(This is mine for 2020 again)**

### **A Memorable Genealogy Tour**

“It is over already?!” That was our collective comment as we three, Joanie Bonner, Carol Bosworth, and I, enjoyed the pie and ice cream social on Saturday night, December 14<sup>th</sup>. We had spent the past week immersed in Genealogy during the Salt Lake City Christmas Tour 2019 – the tour’s 35th year. The week passed quickly for all of us. The planning for the 2020 tour actually began on that same night since we filed our applications with a small refundable deposit. There are many Salt Lake City genealogy trips advertised...in fact I see more than ever lately...but when I read the trip details, I am convinced that this Christmas Tour is unique. I first began attending five years ago, thanks to Joanie’s enthusiastic comments about the tour. This tour provides more than a dozen professional genealogists, specialists in a

variety of topics, as instructors offering more than 30 classes. These professionals also provide one-on-one assistance for at least one half hour intervals ...and you can sign up more than once for each or any of these professionals! All this is the topping on unlimited use of the Family History Library and all it contains. The library opens at 8 AM Monday through Saturday and closes at 9 PM most nights. They are currently renovating, which did not interfere with our research, and the interior renovations are scheduled to be completed by the tour in 2020. One of the upgrades includes double screen work stations. Oh yes, research databases are all free of charge.

On each of the 5 levels there are rows and rows of computers, help desks, copy machines and a copy center, library helpers of all ages and with all stages of experience, and even translators – if you are lucky there will be one to help in your language. One-year Joanie enlisted help from a Polish speaker.

Digitization is an ongoing project, but that is not a problem - the library still has amazing books, microfilm and fiche. If your resource is in storage, with enough lead time, you can have that too. A genealogist’s dream place, whether you are only beginning or have been working on family history for years.

The attendees come from all over the United States and Canada. We have special “name tags” and these tags are well known among the library personnel. We also have distinctive shirts with the SLC Christmas tour logo, with a saying on the back that sums it up: “I may not find my ancestor, but I always find a friend.” Donna, aka our mother hen, calls it a family, and that is exactly what it becomes year after year I haven’t even mentioned the breakfasts each morning provided by two of the best folks on the tour –a fine array of fruit, yogurt, cereal, bread, bagels, juice, tea, coffee, and more. Oh, and did I mention we stay at the Salt Lake Plaza, immediately next door to the Family History Library? And across the

street from Temple Square adorned in thousands of lights?

There is so much more, but you really have to be there to experience the feelings of warmth and acceptance among fellow genealogists, regardless of the level of expertise. I was hooked after my first year, and Carol says she is too.

Speak to any of us for more information. Or check out “Salt Lake Christmas Tour” online <https://sites.google.com/site/saltlakechristmastour/home/salt-lake-christmas-tour-schedule>.

Leland and Patty Meitzler are the organizers of this well-run experience. We hope to see you there in December 2020

Submitted by Simone Blake # 309

## “Who Knew?”

When the *Mayflower* Pilgrims arrived in Plymouth in the early 17th century, they didn’t smell terrific, according to Native American. Unlike the Wampanoag, these individuals didn’t bathe regularly. A surviving member of the Patuxet nation named Tisquantum (or “Squanto”) even tried and failed to convince them to start washing themselves, according to a 1965 biography. “Bathing as you and I know it was very, very uncommon [among western Europeans] until the later part of the 18th century,” says W. Peter Ward, a professor emeritus of history at the University of British Columbia and author of the new book “*The Clean Body: A Modern History*”.

This went for people of all social classes. Louis XIV, the 17th-century king of France, is said to have only taken three baths in his entire life. Both rich and poor might wash their faces and hands on a daily or weekly basis, but almost no one in western Europe washed their whole body with any regularity, says Ward. The Separatist Pilgrims and the Puritans who followed them may have even thought that submerging their whole body in water was unhealthy, and

that taking all of their clothes off to do so was most immodest.

“The idea of being clean wasn’t closely associated with water in the 17th century anywhere in the western world,” Ward says. Although bathhouses did exist in the colonies, they were not for bathing in the modern sense. Rather, bathhouses were thought of as a kind of medicinal cure, or else a place for wealthy people to relax. In the 1770s, the royal governor of the Colony of Virginia used his bathhouse to cool down on a hot day. And the handful of baths Louis XIV took? Those were on the advice of a doctor, to treat his convulsions. “Cleanliness, to the extent that people thought about it in the 17th century, had much more to do with what we now call underwear than anything else,” Ward says. Colonists kept themselves “clean” by changing the white linens under their clothes. The cleaner and whiter the linens, the cleaner the person—or so the thinking went.

“It was thought that the linen underwear was what really kept the body clean...because it was assumed that the underwear itself was the agent that cleaned the body; that it absorbed the body’s impurities and the dirt and the sweat and so on,” he says.

These linens were supposed to be a little visible around the collar, so that others could see how clean and morally pure the person wearing them was. A Puritan “minister’s distinctive display of white linen marked him as not only a man of God but also a gentleman,” writes Kathleen M. Brown, a professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania, in *Foul Bodies: Cleanliness in Early America*.

“In an age not characterized by regular full-body bathing,” she continues, “no gentleman wearing white linen at the neck could neglect to change it regularly, for a collar worn for too many days would display his skin’s effusions to the world.”

Puritans also thought that keeping their bed linens clean was a way of keeping their bodies clean. Going to bed without taking off one’s outer clothes was considered

unhygienic and immoral. In a letter from 1639, a colonist in Maine accused his maid of being “sluttish” for going “bed with her Clothes & stockings,” thus dirtying her bed linens.

The Native Americans that colonists encountered had different priorities in terms of hygiene. Like the Wampanoag, most Native Americans bathed openly in rivers and streams. And they also thought it was gross for Pilgrims to carry their own mucus around in handkerchiefs.

Most Native people’s teeth were also in much better shape than Pilgrims’. Native people cleaned their mouths using a variety of methods, including brushing their teeth with wooden chew sticks, chewing on fresh herbs like mint to freshen their breath and rubbing charcoal on their teeth to whiten them. In contrast, most Pilgrims who came over may not have brushed their teeth at all, and had a diet that was generally worse for their oral health.

The colonists’ lack of hygiene was more than just a smelly inconvenience to the Native Americans they encountered. It also posed a very real danger. Unwashed colonists passed along microbes to which Native Americans had no prior exposure, and therefore no immunity.

Historians estimate that European diseases wiped out more than 90 percent of the Native people in coastal New England before 1620, the year the Pilgrims arrived. Over the next few decades, European diseases would wipe out millions more.

Authored by: Betty Little and printed in History.com™

Submitted by Bonnie Bohnet #330

## Did You Know?

“Reclaim The Records” a strategic Partner of the New York Adoptee Rights Coalition (NYARC)

Announced that starting on 15 January 2020 individuals adopted in the State of New York and the descendants can apply for a copy of

the original and unredacted birth certificate. For more specific details visit <http://nyadopteetights.org>

## Fact or Science Fiction? Putting DNA Rumors to the Test

By Diahana Southard **PREMIUM**

REPRINTED FROM FAMILY TREE MAGAZINE



Each day brings a new story of a successful family reunion brought about by DNA. Adoptees find their birth families, donor-conceived children call up their biological fathers, and genealogists break down brick walls to uncover their ancestral origins.

But other stories caution you against taking the test, claiming **your privacy is at risk** or casting doubt on the test’s accuracy. But with information about the three kinds of DNA tests (mtDNA, Y-DNA, and autosomal DNA) flowing freely from a myriad of sources, not every news reporter has all the facts.

It’s time to set the record straight. We’ll examine six pervasive myths about DNA tests and what they can or can’t do, allowing you to set realistic expectations.

### **1. You only need one kind of DNA test.** **Status: Plausible**

#### Autosomal DNA

We most often hear about autosomal DNA (atDNA), as it is the kind that reveals our biogeographical origins (ethnicities) and



connects us to living cousins. You get half your atDNA from your mother and half from your father. Thus, it can help you with genealogy questions on *both sides of your family*. However, because of the way it is inherited, autosomal DNA can only help you back about *six generations*.

**Read: [Making Matches with Autosomal DNA](#)**

### Y-DNA

DNA on the Y chromosome (also called Y-DNA) is passed virtually unchanged from father to son. So a great-grandfather should have the same Y-DNA as his son, his son's son and so on. You can use Y-DNA to trace your *direct paternal lineage*, which is represented by the top line of a pedigree chart. Y-DNA testing can help you sort out individuals with the same or similar surname into family groups, or help you find a surname for a foundling or adoptee. Better still: Y-DNA can help you answer family history questions back at least *10 generations!*

Because women don't have Y chromosomes, a female researcher who wants to trace her direct paternal line will need to turn to someone with the same Y-DNA as her biological father. She could ask her father, brother, paternal uncle, a male cousin (her father's brother's son) or a nephew (her brother's son) to take a Y-DNA test.

**Read: [Why to Choose a Y-DNA Test](#)**  
mtDNA

Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) is used to trace a *direct maternal line*. Mothers pass their mtDNA to all of their children, but only daughters pass mtDNA on to the next generation. Genealogists can use mtDNA in much the same way as Y-DNA. mtDNA mutates more slowly than Y-DNA does, making it even harder to predict when you should look for your connecting ancestor. But like Y-DNA, it can give you information about your ancestors up to *10 generations* in the past.

Typically, genealogists use mtDNA to explore their ancient ancestry or to weed out

people who aren't related through their maternal lines, rather than those who are. You might be able to document a relationship between two exact mtDNA matches, but two people with one or more differences in their mtDNA usually can't determine their shared ancestor in a genealogical useful time frame.

## **2. You can get DNA from stamps or hair samples.**

**Status: *Confirmed***

We can confirm this myth with a caveat: Yes, but we can't quite use it yet. Just a couple of years ago, this myth had a hard no. While you can find DNA on licked stamps and envelopes, used razors, and in the root of uncut hair, it can be tricky to extract for genealogical purposes. This category of samples (called "special samples") defy the process historically used by genetic genealogy companies.

But the science continues to evolve, and some services now offer special sample testing. While expensive, the tests allow for a direct comparison of the DNA from a postage stamp to that of a living person. Test takers can then use this information to determine genetic relationships, such as between parents and their children.

Despite these scientific advancements, the big genetic genealogy companies don't currently offer testing using special samples. Nor do they compare that kind of data with their databases to find genetic matches.

However, in one special case, **LivingDNA** used DNA collected from a postage stamp to help a woman found as a baby in a blackberry bush to locate her family. And the company has indicated it's interested in eventually offering these services.

Though not one of the well-known companies, Australia-based **To The Letter DNA** now offers DNA extraction from your stamps and letters. However, no company can truly guarantee a usable DNA profile, and the service is expensive: Customers pay more than \$200 to even find out if they have

a workable sample. If the sample is viable, customers will have to pay hundreds of dollars more to have it analyzed.

### **3. DNA tests can pinpoint locations where your ancestors lived.**

#### ***Status: Busted***

Locating your ancestors' tribe or location is the holy grail of genetic genealogy. Unfortunately, much like the grail itself, it is quite elusive. Even just the word *ethnicity* is enough to get some geneticists' dander up, as there are conflicting opinions about what that word even means. As a result, a handful of factors stand in the way of ethnicity estimates being able to reveal where your ancestors lived in detail. Scientists can make inferences about your ancestry based on trends among populations, but they currently can't say for sure that your ancestors lived in a specific country, much less a specific town.

#### **The importance of movement**

Some of the categories defined by DNA companies are purely geographical, like Northern Europe or the British Isles. Others are cultural, like Jewish or Inuit. As Shannon Combs-Bennett points out in her webinar, "What's Up With My Ethnicity Estimates?", ethnicity reports are based on a modern interpretation of ethnicity and culture.

If your ancestors and their offspring had stayed in one geographic region and never allowed outsiders to enter, we could easily distinguish their DNA (and yours) from the DNA of people living in other regions. Over time, all of the inhabitants of your region would come to share specific genetic mutations (usually harmless changes in DNA). This would identify them as a distinct population, in much the same way as a surname identifies members of a family.

But our ancestors didn't stay in one place. For thousands of years, humans have moved about, leaving their genetic imprints wherever they procreated. This makes it increasingly difficult for geneticists to distinguish one region's population from

another's.

#### **Understanding reference populations**

Testing companies analyze a person's genetic makeup by comparing his or her DNA to a reference population of DNA samples from modern individuals living in various regions. This is key to understanding ethnicity estimates: We are using modern-day populations to help us make predictions about where our ancient ancestors lived.

The "Big 5" companies (**23andMe**, **AncestryDNA**, **Family Tree DNA**, **LivingDNA** and **MyHeritage DNA**) are doing their best to use statistical data in conjunction with historical information about populations and migrations to give us these estimates. But in the end, they are just estimates—best guesses as to where you might find your ancestors thousands of years ago.

Of the Big 5, LivingDNA comes the closest to pinpointing specific geographic regions for those with ancestry in the British Isles. They break down the United Kingdom into more than 40 geographic subregions, making it the only to provide that level of distinction. (Though, of course, this analysis is limited to those with English, Scottish, Welsh or Irish ancestry.)

In a somewhat similar vein, AncestryDNA offers an interesting view of your origins with its Migrations tool. Migration groups show you where your ancestors were, not thousands of years ago, but between the years 1750 and 1900. By defining this timeline, they are often able to better deliver origins results that match up with what you already know about your family history.

#### **Apply ethnicity estimates**

##### **The best way to use your ethnicity estimates**

is to combine them with traditional genealogical research methods. As more people get tested and contribute both their DNA test results and their family trees to online databases, scientists will be able to identify additional patterns and draw more accurate conclusions.

#### **4. The results of ancestral DNA tests are 99.9% accurate.**

##### ***Status: Plausible***

In the previous section, we discussed how biogeographical results are just estimates, so they aren't meant to be precise. The methodology isn't an exact science, and testing atDNA (which is inherited from both mothers and fathers) muddies the waters when trying to uncover family information. With that in mind, your ethnicity results are not 99.9% accurate, nor can the testing companies provide you that high level of confidence.

However, atDNA test takers also receive a list of DNA cousins, and these results are generally more reliable. Cousin-matching also isn't an exact science, but (with careful analysis) you can learn valuable information about your family.

atDNA test results can accurately determine close genetic relationships. In general, cousin-matching can identify relationships between close family members (parents/children, siblings, half-siblings, aunts and uncles) with a high degree of accuracy.

But, for other relationships and tests, you'll need to analyze your results before drawing any solid conclusions. You'll need additional sources of information to correctly determine these more-distant relationships. Paper records can help you determine how you and your "1st–3rd cousin" match relate to each other, for example.

mtDNA and Y-DNA matches are a different story. For one thing, these tests don't provide estimates for how you and your matches relate, as Y-DNA and mtDNA cannot specifically define relationships. Y-DNA matches could be brothers, or they could be sixth cousins. mtDNA matches are even worse; they could be sisters, or 20th cousins.

Instead, you'll have to analyze how many markers you and your mtDNA or Y-DNA share. The more markers you share (or,

conversely, the fewer mutations you have from each other), the closer you're related.

For example, men can choose from Y-DNA tests that examine between 12 and 111 markers (or locations) on the Y chromosome. The more markers tested, the more accurately the test can establish how closely related the participants are. If two men have the same surname and the same Y-DNA test results (or results with only one or two differences), there's a good chance they're related within a genealogically significant time period.

Conversely, mtDNA changes relatively slowly, you'll often find exact matches with whom you do not actually share recent common ancestry. In that sense, mtDNA is not very accurate at telling you if you do or don't share common ancestry with someone else.

#### **5. DNA can tell you how you're related to someone else.**

##### ***Status: Plausible***

DNA tests can be great tools in helping you find your living relatives. However, you'll need to supplement your results with good ol' fashioned genealogy research.

An atDNA test can help you identify genetic relatives, but it can't tell you *exactly* how you are related to someone else. Your results will provide a relationship estimate (e.g., "3rd cousins"), some of which are vague (e.g., "3rd–5th cousins"). You'll have to figure out the details yourself.

This is no small feat. For example, you and a third cousin should share a common set of great-great-grandparents. But you have eight sets of those! You'll need to do heavy genealogical legwork to determine which set connects you and your newly found relative.

You could also use Y-DNA to help you in your search. However, even a perfect Y-DNA match can't prove whether you're related through your great-great-grandfather or a more distant ancestor. You'll need to find records to test your hypothesis.



Likewise, you could employ mtDNA in certain cases, but you would have to significantly target your search. For example, if you've documented that Janice is a direct maternal descendant of a great-great-grandparent couple who is also your direct maternal ancestors, then you could compare Janice's mtDNA to your own. If you match, there is a good chance that you are on the right track. But if any of those caveats aren't true (e.g., if any of that research is incorrect), mtDNA won't be able to help you.

**6. The government or insurance companies can use your DNA against you.**  
*Status: Busted*

Are you nervous that your DNA test results end up in an online database? You can take some comfort in knowing that testing companies take your privacy seriously, and they won't integrate your results into their online matching databases without your consent. And if you do want to make your information available to genetic cousins, you can determine how much personal information you want to reveal. You don't even have to use your real name.

Testing companies safeguard customers' DNA specimens by attaching a bar code (not personal information) to each sample, making them difficult to trace back to you. In addition, you can choose to **have your specimens destroyed**.

Furthermore, health insurance companies are forbidden by law to use genetic information to deny coverage or charge higher premiums. Congress passed the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) in 2008, forbidding discrimination based on genetic predisposition to diseases. Even if insurance companies were to get your genetic information (which is highly unlikely, as each company's database is private), they wouldn't be able to use it for nefarious purposes.

You should also note that there are differences between each company's private database and the more public online

databases. In situations like the **Golden State Killer case**, law enforcement used the public database at GEDmatch to make their query, rather than requesting DNA information directly from a testing company. So before you consider uploading your results to third-party platforms like GEDmatch, make sure you understand how your results might be used.

Be aware that companies sometimes offer new features or update their terms. For example, Family Tree DNA earlier this year announced it would begin allowing law enforcement agencies to use its DNA data to solve certain cold cases.

Shortly after, the company updated its policy so users had to opt in to this feature, but the change is a reminder to regularly check your testing company's terms of service to make sure nothing is appearing that shouldn't. Read every form, and be sure you fully understand what a company can and cannot do with your DNA.

A version of this article appeared in the **October/November 2019 issue of *Family Tree Magazine***.

TIME TO RENEW YOUR  
C.M.G.S. MEMBERSHIP FOR  
2020



**Central Massachusetts Genealogical Society, Inc.**  
P. O. Box 811  
Westminster, MA 01473-0811  
**\*IMPORTANT\* NEW WEB SITE ADDRESS**  
**www.cmgso.org**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**TIME TO RENEW YOUR C.M.G.S. MEMBERSHIPS FOR 1 JANUARY 2018**

*Central Massachusetts Genealogy Society, Inc.*  
*P.O. Box 811*  
*Westminster, MA 1473-0811*

**TYPES OF MEMBERSHIPS**

(check one)

- Individual - \$15.00/yr
- Family \* - \$20.00 / yr.
- Organizational - \$25.00/yr

\*Please list full name of spouse:

\_\_\_\_\_

You are invited to join any of the following committees:

- ◆ Membership
- ◆ Nominating
- ◆ Publication
- ◆ Technology
- ◆ Library
- ◆ Publicity
- ◆ Newsletter
- ◆ Programs
- ◆ Historian
- ◆ Hospitality

Monthly meetings the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday,  
January – November from 7-9 PM

Revised 10/17