



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, Inc.

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

THE SEARCHERS

—Innovative—Enlightening—Enriching—Enjoyable—

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE,

by Susane Navarre

A long summer vacation wandering through historic European towns and visiting history museums, has reminded me of how much great information can be found in those museums. For example, a relatively new museum of the Resistance and Deportation in Lyon, France is collecting family information of those who were Resistance fighters or deportees from the city during World War II; every day, they have more names identified and records archived. And much smaller towns have received funding to expand their family outreach and online resources.

Plus, in this world of online information, history centers and museums offer records online that you could not find even a few years ago. That means that you don't have to wait until you visit the towns and villages that your ancestors arrived from: you can find the historical context that shaped their lives through resources available online. Even if you checked it three or 5 years ago, it may be worth creating a plan to visit all those online websites again: new information is being loaded up every day! I'd like to raise up a glass to toast hurrah to Lynn Houston, who has been doing a fantastic job organizing all our monthly club program speakers for many years now. She's

preparing to take a break at the end of 2026, for some well-deserved rest and a heavy schedule of volunteering for us at the NERGC conference. In the meantime, thank you to Diane Sanabria, who will take on the job of finding and organizing our program speakers in January 2027. If you'd like to help her out by proposing a good speaker or workshop presenter, she'd love to get the information from you. Just give her a call or drop her a line.

Volunteers who have been at the Leominster library and the Fitchburg Historical Society on Main St. Fitchburg will be off the month of August. They are available for 1:1 appointments at the Leominster Public Library in August. Please call the library at 978-534-7522 to set up an appointment. We will resume our hours in September 2026. May 13, 2026.

Summer is in full swing fast approaching the beginning of fall. We will be able to return to hybrid meeting at the Hope Lodge this August. If you know of some one who would be interested in attending the zoom portion of the meeting please have them contact me at www.cmgsorg1@gmail.com

NERGC
Portland Maine
April 15-17, 2026
NERGC.org

If you are considering whether or not to join us in Portland ME. This year please visit the web site for all the information on the topics and speakers who will be there. Early bird registration is \$200.00 and will be available until January 15, 2027. Full registration will be \$250.00 after that date.

Previous Meetings 2026

May 26, 2026
Hope Lodge Gardner, MA
7 PM
Hybrid
Presented by
Bill Duke

From Archives to Audiences: Engaging Your Family through AI Generated Videos

Does the mention of "census schedules", "pension files", or "vital records" make your relatives' eyes glaze over? You've spent countless hours unearthing the fascinating stories of those who came before us, but sharing a stack of old records doesn't always capture the imagination of the next generation. This session explores how to use AI Applications to transform raw genealogical data into engaging, short-form videos. Storytelling bridges the gap between rigorous historical research and modern storytelling, ensuring your family's legacy is not just preserved, but watched.

June 23, 2026
Hope Lodge, Gardner, MA
7PM
Hybrid

Sara Campbell.
Unearthing 1776 –
a deep dive into the lives of
Revolutionary Era Ancestors.

July 28, 2026
Virtual only
7 pm
**Holiday Witches: Folklore and
Seasonal Traditions from Ireland,
the UK, and Beyond**
Speaker: Debra Dudek

This lecture explores the full calendar year of holidays where witches and other strange creatures are celebrated, reviled, or feared. From quirky, kindhearted witches to folkloric entities who prowl the night, get ready to enjoy a bit of festive fun.

“UPCOMING MEETINGS”

****Zoom Links will be sent the
Sunday before the scheduled meeting
to everyone on our mailing list****

August 25, 2026

7 PM

Hybrid

Hope Lodge Gardner MA

**Streamlining Genealogical
Research Plans with AI: A Step-by-
Step Guide**

Speaker: Diane Elder

AI is a tool to enhance, not replace,
traditional genealogical research
methods. Always verify information
and maintain high research standards.
Diana Elder is a professional genealogist

September 28, 2026

7 PM

Hybrid

Hope Lodge Gardner MA

**Tea with Claire
High Tea and the Low Down: A
Guide to Misunderstanding British
English**

Speaker: Claire Evans &
Debra Dudek

October 2026

7 PM

In Person only

Leominster Public Library

QUABBVIORIN RESVIOR

Maria Beiter-Tucker
DCR Interpretive Services Supervisor
of the Quabbin.

**AROUND WORCESTER
COUNTY
Gardner News**

Thursday, April 1, 1926

Athol

The funeral of **Delia T. Smith**, 82 who died in Gardner, was held in the chapel of the J. F. Higgins Co., this afternoon at 1 o'clock with Rev. **Howard T. Joslyn**, pastor of the First Baptist church, officiating. Mrs. Smith was the wife of **George Smith** and up to three weeks ago had been a resident of Orange for years. She was born in Millbury to **Loren Foster** and **Lucy Gamell**. She leaves two sons, **Andrew Smith** of Orange and **Albert Smith** of Gardner. The burial will be in Silver Lake cemetery.

Westminster

Eight little friends of **Ivan Cousins**, Jr., called at his home on the state road Tuesday afternoon to give him a surprise. The occasion was his eighth birthday anniversary. Gamers were enjoyed and refreshments served. The favors were little baskets filled with Easter eggs. Ivan received numerous gifts. Those present included **Charlotte Merriam**, **Arthur Merriam**, Jr., **Lester Kelty**, Jr., **Herman Viewig**, **Marion** and **Eugenia Marsh**, **James Flynn**, Jr., and **Joseph Kivelan**.

Fred Slade has left the employ of Dawley & Shepard and has a position at a garage in Fitchburg.

Ashburnham

Carl Vorbeau, aged 81 years, died suddenly of heart disease Tuesday afternoon in his home on Chapel Street. Mr. Vorbeau had been in feeble health for some time but was up and about the house as usual Tuesday forenoon. He was born in Germany, Jan. 15, 1845, and came to this

country about 40 years ago. He moved to Ashburnham about 16 years ago after being burned out in the Chelsea fire, when he retired from active business. His trade was that of a dyer. At one time he operated a dye-house in Fitchburg.

Besides his wife, he is survived by a son and three daughters, one of whom, Mrs. **H. Peter Jensen**, resides in Ashburnham. He also leaves seven grandchildren. The funeral will be held in the home tomorrow afternoon at 2:30 o'clock. Burial will be in the family lot in the Old cemetery on Meetinghouse hill.

Mrs. **Elson Manning** of Fitchburg, who was able to leave Burbank hospital Sunday after many weeks illness, is recuperation in the home of Mr. Mannings mother, Mrs. **Annie Manning**, Lawrence Street. **Robert Manning** had been staying with his grandmother during his mother's illness.

Winchendon

A pretty home wedding took place yesterday afternoon in the residence of the bride's parents, 149 River street, when Miss **Pauline May Derby** became the bride of **Leonard Durley Akers**, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. **Henry F. Akers** of East Templeton. The rooms were decorated with forest greens, cut flowers and crepe paper and the ceremony was performed under a large bell of Easter lilies by Rev. **A. Clarke McGilton** of the First Methodist church, and the double ring service was used.

Miss Derby was given in marriage by her father, and the bridesmaid was Miss **Barbara Derby**, a sister of the bride. The best man was **Clayton Wells** of East Templeton. The bride was gowned in empire blue georgette and hat to match; she carried a shower bouquet of white carnations and Easter lilies. The bridesmaid wore palmetto green crepe de chine, with hat to match and carried pink carnations.

At the close of the ceremonies a reception and luncheon was held attended by members of the immediate families. Mr. and Mrs. Akers left on an afternoon train for Worcester and Springfield. Later they will live in East Templeton, where Mr. Akers is employed as an inspector by the Children's Vehicle Corporation.

Hubbardston

Mrs. **Julia (Myers) Griffin** and son, **William Jr.**, of Rutland are guests of her sister, Mrs. **M. J. Nolan**.

Nicholas Nolan and Mr. and Mrs. **Matthew J. Nolan** were called to Worcester yesterday to attend the funeral of **Frank Silk**, a nephew of Mr. Nolan, and formerly a resident of this town.

Home News

Three still alarms kept the Lake Street fire station crew busy yesterday afternoon and early last evening. The first was early in the afternoon, for a chimney fire in the home of **David Joyce**, 194 Pleasant Street. The other two alarms came shortly after 5 o'clock, also for chimney fires. One was in the tenement house owned by **Thomas Brazell** at 197 Pleasant Street, and the other at 32 Halford Street, in the home of **Alexander Fournier**. No damage was caused by any of the fires.

Sigfrid Erickson, son of Mr. and Mrs. **Evert Erickson** of 21 Abbott street, has been forced to give up his studies at Tufts college, and go to Rutland for a rest and treatment.

June Williams #64

The Long Road to Discovery: Solving Robert's Family Mystery

By Aimee Rose-Haynes -

www.aimeerosehaynes.com

Towards the end of 2019, I was scrolling through Facebook late one night when I came across a post that caught my attention. A man named Robert was searching for help to identify his maternal grandfather. He was desperate and willing to accept assistance from anyone who might offer it. I reached out, explaining that I was still new to DNA sleuthing and learning the ropes of helping people reconnect with their birth families. He didn't care... he just wanted answers. What I didn't realize at the time was that Robert also had a search angel working on his case. I told him to keep quiet about my involvement and to feed them the information I discovered as I pieced things together. We began working closely, tackling the complicated web of DNA matches and family connections. We had so many late nights searching through American, Panamanian, and Colombian records along with trying to verify DNA matches. It was a struggle but because of this, we became friends.

So, I was working on his case secretly while the search angel was doing her best. At one point after about 2-3 weeks, Robert's search angel told him there was both good news and bad news. The good news? He had been right about his maternal grandfather being Colombian. The bad news? She didn't have enough information to determine exactly who the man was. She added that his grandfather would have been half Dutch as well which made no sense to me with what I could see in the DNA matches and the family tree I was building.

Robert was confused. He questioned the search angel, "So you're saying he was Panamanian and Dutch? Are you sure?" He began texting me, frustrated and venting that

this woman seemed to "not know what she was doing." She explained that since New York City was colonized by the Dutch, his grandfather's lineage could be part Dutch and part Panamanian Colombian. The contradictions between what Robert and I was seeing in his DNA results and what the search angel was saying left him questioning her competence. Still, I urged him to give her grace. This wasn't an easy case, and even experienced researchers could hit roadblocks.

Meanwhile, I worked late into the night building out Robert's family tree. I traced his maternal DNA lines and quickly realized that the Dutch ancestry the search angel kept focusing on was part of a different grandparent line we already knew. When Robert pointed this out to her, she finally got on the right track... though she remained a few steps behind us.

Remember, I was still very new to DNA research. I lacked confidence in my skills, and I was learning as I went. Robert, however, trusted me. He used his Spanish-speaking skills to reach out to relatives, gathering information I wasn't able to extract myself. One day, he returned with a hand-drawn family tree that felt like Christmas morning to me! This new information helped solidify my suspicions within this family tree on where Robert and his momma belonged. I told Robert what to tell his search angel regarding the new information.

Despite these breakthroughs, the search angel seemed stuck. She told Robert she was working on other cases and checked out for several days. When she returned, she claimed his case probably wasn't solvable with 184 cM DNA match as his highest match. I had already landed on the name of a suspected birth father and placed him in New York at the time Robert's mother was conceived. Robert shared the name with the search angel, but she remained focused on

the Dutch connection, completely missing the bigger picture. Robert was growing more frustrated.

Finally, he told the search angel, “My mom’s dad is from Panama and Colombia. Can you talk to Aimee? Maybe she can explain what’s going on here.” I stepped in and broke down the Dutch DNA lines were actual to the maternal line and how the paternal matches fit into the common ancestor I had identified. It was a complex case involving an inflated DNA match that resulted from a niece-uncle marriage... a detail that made the puzzle even harder to solve. The highest match at 184 cM was the grandchild to that marriage.

I sent over visual diagrams, highlighting the connections with green checkmarks, red X’s, DNA symbols, placeholder images, and showed exactly who I suspected Robert’s grandfather was. We had narrowed it down to four brothers, but my gut said it was most likely Jose Apolinar. At last, something clicked for the search angel. After looking at the images I sent, she finally understood.

Robert, always quick with a snarky comment, couldn’t resist asking, “Make sense now?” It made me chuckle.

In the end, the search angel admitted, “You’re way better at this than me. You did a great job.” It felt amazing to hear that, especially since I had been so unsure of myself when we started.

Robert reached out to Jose Apolinar, and DNA testing confirmed what I suspected... Jose was his maternal grandfather. What none of us knew at the time was that Robert would only have four short years to spend with his newly discovered grandfather. During those years, Robert formed a deep bond with Jose and his large, welcoming family. He listened to Jose’s stories about growing up in Panama and adjusting to life in the United States. Jose shared memories of being a car guy, fishing, gardening, and living in a home made from mud bricks.

Since reuniting with him, Robert has embraced his heritage, discovering where he comes from and strengthening his ties with family in Panama. He has already visited twice, deepening those connections, and now, his next adventure awaits... traveling to Colombia to explore even more of his family roots.

And then came one final surprise. About a year after Robert found his grandfather, a new match popped up on 23andMe... another unknown child. It turned out that Jose Apolinar had fathered a son who had been placed for adoption. This newly found son’s daughter took a 23andme test and found herself realted to a huge family. This case was one of the hardest I’ve ever solved, but it taught me so much about persistence, teamwork, and the power of DNA to uncover hidden family stories. This case also brought me a life long friend who is eager to learn how to help others as I helped him.

In loving memory of Jose Apolinar Ceballos. You are remembered and missed every day.

NERGC 2027
**Genealogy in the Age of AI :
Innovation Meets
Responsibility**
Featured Speakers

 
Blaine Bettinger **Mark Thompson**

Holiday Inn, Portland By the Bay
April 14-17, 2027
**88 Spring St,
Portland, ME**

 



Thinking Ahead to the Holidays

Some suggestions for that genealogy buff

Available at NERGC.org

1. A day at the NERGC conference in Portland, ME
2. A night at the Holiday Inn, Portland By The Bay at the conference
3. A special meal for someone attending the conference
4. Admission to a day of streaming the conference for someone who will be unable to attend in person
5. An annual 2027 membership to CMGS for someone is also a great gift

Central Massachusetts Genealogy Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 811

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www.cmgs.org

TYPES OF MEMBERSHIPS (check one) ☐ Individual - \$20.00/yr ☐ Family * \$25.00 / yr ☐
Organizational - \$30.00/yr

You are invited to join any of the following committees: ♦ Membership ♦ Publicity Nominating
♦ Newsletter ♦ Publication ♦ Programs ♦ Technology ♦ Historian ♦ Library ♦ Hospitality

Monthly meetings the 4th Tuesday, January-November from 7-9 P

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____

e-mail: _____