



# Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

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## News

### 6 April 2016 WMGS Meeting



Please join us for our monthly meeting. Maureen Taylor, The Photo Detective, will join us virtually to present *Buns, Beards, Bodices and Bustles: Understanding Ancestors Through Clothing*.

Ancestral fashions and the industry that produced them left behind a fascinating legacy of images and information.

- Parish fashion in America: North, South, East and West interpretations
- Fashion icons from Charles Dickens to stage star Lillie Langtry
- Fashion Foibles and practical pastimes: how our ancestors designed and handcrafted accessories
- What's old is new and what's new is old? Repeating fashion trends and how to read the clues
- Labor records relating to hat, hair and accessory factories and home-work

For more information, please visit Maureen's website: [www.maurentaylor.com](http://www.maurentaylor.com)

People who can't get to the live meeting can watch virtually from home but MUST REGISTER IN ADVANCE to watch live on the date and time of the event, specifically 6 April 2016 at 6 pm. If you'd like to view from home, register for "Maureen Taylor at WMGS 6 April 2016" now by clicking <https://goo.gl/gPC4vM>". This is **ONLY** a link to a registration which will display 4 boxes across the page. It will say "Log in with" then individual boxes for "GOOGLE," "FACEBOOK," "TWITTER," or "INSTAGRAM." Choose which account you have and would want to use to log in with. The next email will have a "Join Now" button so that you can watch but you won't be able to actively participate. That can only be done from the meeting at the Senior Center. When you get the email to join, just click "Join Now." After the event, there will be another link to watch the recorded, archived version. We'll send that new link in a member's only message. That's the URL that can only go to paid WMGS members for contractual reasons, the proverbial "paywall."

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## 4 May 2016 WMGS Meeting

The May meeting will be a panel discussion which seemed well received last year (July 2015 meeting with Dave Robison and Bruce Cortis) when we did it. The room will be set up theater style with a table for 2 or 3 panelists (to be determined) who will field your research questions or help with your brick walls. So bring your questions you have about your problems or just a general question that you've been wondering what the answer is. This will also be a virtual meeting available to the membership.

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## [March Meeting Recap](#)

Posted on March 28, 2016

### **Our Speaker**

At our monthly meeting in March, **Jennifer Alford** presented *The Basics of Land Records*. If you missed the meeting, be sure to check out her presentation on our [Members Only](#) page. You may also want to visit Jennifer Alford's website at [Jenealogy.biz](#) and [The In-Depth Genealogist](#). Wondering what else happened at the meeting? Click on the "March Meeting Recap" title above to read the full blog article.

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## **Proposed Changes to the By-Laws**

The current Officers of the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society (President, Francis Malone; Vice President, David Robison; Recording Secretary, Ann McDougal; and Treasurer, Kathryn Krause) would like to notify the membership of a proposed change to our Constitution and By-laws.

### **Our current Constitution:**

#### **Article IV – Officers**

The officers of this society shall be President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer. Proposed amendment change to the Constitution: Adding 3 Directors positions to the board of Officers.

**Under the amendment to the Constitution, Article IV** would read: The officers of the Society shall be President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer and three (3) Directors. They shall constitute the Executive Board.

#### **And an addition to the By-laws under Article I:**

**Section 5** – The Directors shall assume such responsibilities as are delegated by the President.

Please consider running for one of these positions (or one of the established positions) in May.

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## **The WMGS Surname List is now available**

Our members have submitted over 200 surnames, along with locations and dates. If you are researching a family with the same Surname, and would like to contact the person who submitted the name, you may email them directly. Click on this [link](#) to go directly to our Surname List. Or you can view it on our website under the [Resources](#) tab.

If you would like to submit names to the Surname List, or make any changes to information you've already submitted, please send us an email or print out the blank form on our Members Only website page and bring it to a meeting. And remember, although anyone can view the list, you must be a member to submit names!

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## WMGS Launches New Website

We are pleased to announce that the new website for the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society is now available. WMGS members took a sneak peek at the site at our March meeting. The site is now available for everyone to use.

You can access the site through the following link: [www.westmassgen.com](http://www.westmassgen.com)

We invite you to take a look around. Some of the new features include:

- A larger font size which is easier to read
- A [Calendar](#) which you can export to your Google Calendar or iPhone/iPad Calendar
- An expanded [Resources](#) area with pages of genealogy links
- A [Photo](#) album with slide shows
- A [Blog](#) where new articles and information will be posted
- A Members Only Section with:
  - videos of some of our meetings
  - meeting handouts
  - special documents
  - past issues of the American Elm, a WMGS electronic newsletter 1972-2007
  - list of books available in the WMGS library
  - instructions for submitting names for our Surname Project
- An expanded social media presence on Pinterest and Twitter

To access the Members Only content, members received a password via email. Not a member? Not a problem. We invite you to view our [Join](#) page, where you can submit your dues via PayPal, or download an Application for Membership.

If you have our old (Rootsweb) website saved to your bookmarks, please be sure to update the bookmark. **We will no longer update our previous website which was hosted on Rootsweb.**

Special thanks to everyone who assisted on the new site. WMGS members Susan Levenson, Katy Krause and Dee Peterson built this site and delivered it ahead of schedule. They worked with board members Dave Robison, Fran Malone and Ann McDougal. Even a few experts from around the globe weighed in. It was a true team effort.

We hope you enjoy the new site. Be sure to follow us on the following social media sites:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Google+](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [Twitter](#)

Lastly, please feel free to provide us with your feedback by sending us an email, or sending us a private message from the [Contact Us](#) page of the website.

We would love to hear from you. Enjoy!

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## Calling All WMGS Members - Do You Have a Website?

By Dee Pederson

In the vein of being responsive to our members' needs, we are also planning to have a page that has **your personal genealogical websites**. If you would like to have your genealogical website posted on the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society's website 'Resources' pages, please submit it to the [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com) address.

The redesign team for the new website will continue to expand the resources pages to include many of the usual hyperlinks (i.e. - Ancestry, GenealogyBank, USGenWeb, MyHeritage, US National Archives, etc.). We're also working on other lists of resources; but if any of the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society's members have a website suggestion that they find very useful they should send it to [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com). Please include a sentence or two about your suggestion; we'll include an edited version of your suggestion on the proper website's resources page. We want to make the resources web page as responsive to the Society's member's needs for genealogical research.

We hope to get many good suggestions and personal genealogical websites for the membership's use.

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## Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
Wednesday, 6 April 2016 from 6-8 PM	<b>WMGS Meeting</b> – with presenter Maureen Taylor, The Photo Detective: <i>Buns, Beards, Bodices and Bustles: Understanding Ancestors Through Clothing</i> (virtually) at the Agawam Senior Center
Tuesday, 12 April 2016 from 12:30-2:30 PM	<b>Daytime Genealogy Research Clinic</b> at the Agawam Senior Center with Katy and Susan
Thursday, 21 April 2016 from 6-8 PM	<b>Genealogy Research Clinic</b> at the Agawam Senior Center w/Dave and Fran
Thursday, 28 April 2016 from 6-8 PM	<b>Genealogy Research Clinic</b> at the Agawam Senior Center w/Dave and Fran
Wednesday, 4 May 2016 from 6-8 PM	<b>WMGS Meeting &amp; Election of Officers</b> With <b>Panel Discussion</b> presentation, at the Agawam Senior Center
Wednesday, 1 June 2016 from 6-8 PM	<b>WMGS Meeting – with guest presenter TBD</b> , at the Agawam Senior Center
Wednesday, 6 July 2016 from 6-8 PM	<b>WMGS Meeting – with guest presenter TBD</b> , at the Agawam Senior Center
Wednesday, 3 August 2016 from TBD	<b>Field trip to the Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum (Springfield Archives)</b> at the Springfield Museums, Springfield, MA
26-29 April 2017	<b>NERGC 2017: Using the Tools of Today &amp; Tomorrow to Understand the Past</b> , at the Mass Mutual Center, Springfield, MA

Genealogy Research Clinics are free to WMGS members. There is a \$10 fee per session for non-members. Annual WMGS membership is just \$25.

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## Member Events

Dave Robison has scheduled a number of classes, workshops and presentations so far this year and there are more to come! They include single presentations, four and five session programs and at least two (2) intermediate to advanced courses in genealogy research. Please click here for the current [“Scheduled Events”](#) that he will be presenting throughout Massachusetts from Springfield and Northampton to as far away as Falmouth at Cape Cod.

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### Daytime Research Clinic Scheduled for April 12

Please join **Susan Levenson** and **Katy Krause** for a *Daytime Genealogy Research Clinic*.

**Date:** Tuesday, April 12, 2016

**Time:** 12:30 – 2:30

**Location:** Agawam Senior Center – Computer Lab

They will expand on the WMGS April meeting by discussing photographs. Do you wish you had more photographs? Join us and learn how to search for pictures of family members and the places they lived. There will also be plenty of time to access the Library Edition of Ancestry.com and Susan and Katy will be available to assist you.

This event is free for WMGS Members and \$10 for non-members. Or, consider joining WMGS for just \$25.

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### **NERGC UPDATE**

For those who are planning to attend NERGC 2017 in Springfield, WMGS is a sponsoring society and is in need of volunteers to assist with numerous activities. If you're interested, please contact [Dave Robison](#) or [Hillary Schau](#). We are starting a list of potential volunteers and will shortly post a list of the duties.

## Technology

### **Roots Tech**

by Ann Royal

Roots Tech is a multi-day conference put on by Family Search. It is an amazing amalgamation of new technology and software to aid in genealogical research, inspiring speakers, and breakout sessions. Some of these include: *Facebook: A Tool for Genealogy Research* by Thomas MacEntee and *Voila: 101 Ways to Design a Pedigree Chart* by the Chart Chick herself, Janet Hovorka. The best thing is, you do not have to go to Salt Lake City to participate. Here is the link to [Roots Tech Archive 2016](#). Check out the speakers and other goodies that await you. Who knows, maybe you will be inspired to attend Roots Tech 2017.

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## Articles

### TREASURES IN THE BERKSHIRES – THE BERKSHIRE ATHENAEUM

Dave Robison of Old Bones Genealogy of New England

The building housing current Berkshire County Registry of Deeds and Probate Court was the original location of what has always been known as the Berkshire Athenaeum. Founded by local influential families in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century it was once not only a library but a museum. Not long after its opening, the building proved too cramped for the enormous collections of books and artifacts that came to reside there. The Crane family (think of the paper on which our currency is printed) funded the construction of what we know today as the Berkshire Museum in 1903. The phenomenal early growth is attributed to Harlan Ballard, the first Director. Since its inception, the Athenaeum has been a haven of literacy, research, children's activities, and a number of other public services.



The transition from private to public funding began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1979, a young woman came to work at the Athenaeum as a “benefitted part time evening assistant” and since 2000 has served as the Local History & Melville Collections Supervisor.



Kathy Reilly has been the guide for many initiatives at the Athenaeum. It is safe to say that Kathy is largely responsible for the depth and breadth of the

collections available, not the least of which involves the acquisition of the records of National Archives and Records Administration formerly housed at the Silvio Conte Center which was defunded by the Federal Government several years ago.

Genealogical researchers here in Western Mass are well served by the Athenaeum. The most important asset, of course, is a knowledgeable staff who are ready, willing, and able to assist anyone's research needs. Most is available on a

self-serve basis. The shelves are chock full of collections: vital records of many cities and towns in Massachusetts, family genealogies, the catalogs of several Massachusetts genealogical societies, transcribed cemetery records, immigration records, the Drouin and Hale collections, naturalization records and much more. Other collections are searchable in digital indices. Search a large collection of vertical files containing such interesting collections as the 18<sup>th</sup> century sermons of Rev. Thomas Allen 1743-1810, written in a code yet to be deciphered!



The acquisition of the records of the NARA could be considered a “coup de généalogie”! All but parts of the Civil War and Spanish American War are available. These records are accessed only by staff. Much like retrieving records in Washington DC, you make a request and a few minutes later, it will be on the table for you.

Those of you familiar with NARA records will recognize the files shown here. They are the same files once housed at the Silvio Conte Federal Building in Pittsfield. The finding aid was written by Jean Nudd, an employee of NARA who now works out of the Waltham facility.



Pittsfield was the home of the famed author, Herman Melville. He lived on an estate he called “Arrowhead” which had been occupied by the Melville family until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is now owned and operated by the Berkshire Historical Society. The Athenaeum houses one of the world's largest collections of Melville memorabilia is housed here. Many of his books, pieces of his scrimshaw collection, whaling artifacts and even a passport that contains the signature of his friend, Nathaniel Hawthorne.

The Berkshire Athenaeum, a worthy destination!

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Library image from [www.pittsfieldlibrary.org](http://www.pittsfieldlibrary.org) with other photos by the author

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PO Box 418, West Springfield, MA 01090 [www.WestMassGen.com](http://www.WestMassGen.com) [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com) 6

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## The Many Names of Stella

by Katy Krause

Meet Stella. My husband's great grandmother. This is a picture of her on her wedding day in 1916. Stella was a complicated woman. At least as far as her name went. Stella is a good example as to why you can't rely on name consistency in genealogy. Stella was born in Poland with the last name Ludwinski. Shortly after the family immigrated to New York, they changed their name to Lewane. But it didn't stop there. At age 16 she married Polish born Benjamin Kowalski and took that name. Ben however also decided to change his name. In the 1920 census they go by the last name of Kryza (thank heaven for soundex or I might never have found **THAT** census!). And by the time Ben dies in 1929, they are now going by Krause, as it still is today. Now a note about the name Kryza. While it might look like a “how the heck did they come up with that” name, it actually isn't. On a whim, I asked a Polish born friend of mine to pronounce Krause in Polish, and it phonetically sounded like Kryza. So in 1920 when the census taker came knocking and Ben answered the door and said his last name was “Krause”, he pronounced it in Polish (Ben did not speak English yet and never learned to read or write), the census taker wrote what he heard. Stella, who did speak English and could read and write, eventually got the “English version” of the desired name. Sometimes I wonder if our ancestors purposely did these things to try to trip us up! Do you have an ancestor like Stella? We'd love to hear their story.



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## Membership

Like most things in life, membership is not free - but for our reasonable annual membership fees, you get a lot for your money.

### Reasons to Join our Society

1. Meet people with similar interests of family history and genealogy
2. Attend monthly meetings featuring local and national presenters
3. Receive assistance from our members on your family research
4. Attend our free genealogy research clinics held twice per month (\$10/session non-members)
5. Share our library of resources including books and CDs
6. Opportunity to serve as a volunteer, coach or member of Board of Directors

### Membership

Annual membership runs from 1 September to 31 August each year. Individuals may purchase a membership for \$25, while institutions may purchase a membership for \$30.

Join by mail, email, or in person at our monthly meeting: Click [here](#) for the WMGS Application  
[Continued on next page]

for Membership; the image is to your right to view, save, and print. Payments may be made online on our [Join Page](#), by mail at the address listed below, or brought in person to one of our meetings.

**Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society**  
**P.O. Box 418**  
**West Springfield, MA 01090**

## Meetings

We meet year-round on the first Wednesday of each month at the Agawam Senior Center, located at 954 Main Street in Agawam, Massachusetts.

Our genealogy research clinics are offered on the third and fourth Thursdays of the month from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center. The cost of the computer class is \$10 for non-members; free for members of the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society.

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

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## 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!

We currently have about 100 active members, approximately 80% living in the Western Massachusetts area. The other 20% are residents of other states but with ancestry from Massachusetts or New England.

We receive numerous inquiries each month via U.S. & e-mail from people looking for information on area families. Our members are happy to volunteer to research these requests.

Fran Malone – President

Dave Robison – Vice President

Katy Krause – Treasurer

Ann McDougal – Secretary

Hillary Schau – NERGC Delegate

Susan Levenson, Katy Krause & Dee Pederson – Website Redesign Team

Ann Royal – Newsletter Editor

Susan Levenson – Webmaster

Jeanne Leblond – Surname Project Coordinator

Carolea Hayden – Refreshment Coordinator

Diane Ascoti – Founder

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## Newsletter Deadlines

Please submit all information to be entered into the next newsletter by 15 April 2016.

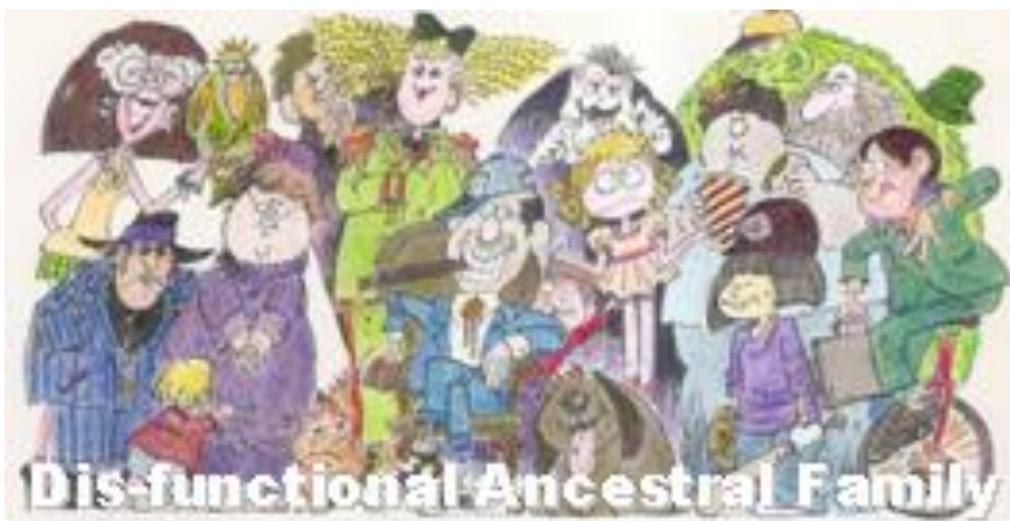
We are looking for articles written by our members. Have you been to a repository? Have you been to where your ancestors lived? Have you tried a new gadget or software? You do not have to write the article yourself. If you would like to do an interview about a subject, that would be helpful as well. What are you interested in? Tell us. [Return to Contents page](#)

### **FAMILY TREE POEM**

**From WMGS American Elm Newsletter Vol. 31- Winter 2002**

**Author Unknown**

**Graphic by D. Pederson**



I climbed our family tree and found it wasn't worth the climb  
And so I scampered down, convinced it was a waste of time.  
Some branches of the tree, I found were rotten to the core,  
and some of the trees were full of sap and hung with Nuts galore.  
I use to brag of my kinfolks before I made the climb,  
But truth compels me not to tell of those not worth a dime.  
And, I beg of friends who boast aloud of their ancestors great--  
to climb their tree, and learn of those who weren't so straight.  
I learned what family trees were like and then I scampered down.  
They are like a 'tater vine' because the best is underground.