



## *Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society*

Greetings,

We are pleased to announce that WMGS is revamping its logo, its website and its newsletter. We hope you will like the changes and more importantly, the additions we are adding to make your membership richer. We will be incorporating more of the things happening in the world of Genealogy both locally and abroad to increase your knowledge base and your available resources and enhance your research experience. Dee Pederson has written an article to introduce some of our enhancements while becoming our first Member Focus profile.

**DO NOT FORGET!** October is Family History Month. Come celebrate with us at our October meeting by bringing a story about your family. (See Katy's challenge in Articles)

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We look forward to seeing everyone at our next meeting on Wednesday, October 7, 2015 from 6-8pm at the Agawam Senior Center!



On 7 October, we will be visiting with our "old friend" Russ Worthington. Russ is DearMyrtle's cousin who has assisted us in our Google+ Hangouts. Russ has quite a list of accomplishments in many fields including genealogy, Find-A Grave and Family Tree Maker/Ancestry.com. He will be giving us an in depth understanding in the use of City Directories, which should be a vital part of everyone's search strategies. He will be coming to us from his home in New Jersey via a Google+ Hangout.

On 4 November, Al and Betsy McKee from the Association of Gravestone Studies will be giving a presentation on causes of death recorded on gravestones.

On 2 December Holiday Dinner: Join us for a pot luck dinner. Socialize with fellow genealogists while dining to holiday music. Participate in "Open mic" session to share your genealogy research tips, websites, and suggestions.

## News

So many things are happening all around the world in the genealogical community:

DearMyrtle is giving a 30-day focus on how to "SHARE A MEMORY" in her blog *30 Ways in 30 Days: SHARE A MEMORY*. If you have wanted to start a blog or just share information with other family members, here is a great way to do it. (<https://www.youtube.com/user/DearMYRTLE> and DearMyrtle's Genealogy Community on Google+)

Randy Seaver in his blog at [www.geneamusings.com](http://www.geneamusings.com) talks about NY Probate records on Ancestry and Family Search and gives examples of how best to use these databases for New York State research.

A new genealogy book is available on Amazon®, *Unofficial Guide to FamilySearch.org* by Dana McCullough. It is available in paperback for \$18.56.

Lisa Louise Cooke, [www.genealogygems.com](http://www.genealogygems.com) has a new video out to help you get your non-genealogist family members interested in what you are doing.

**NERGC 2017:** Using the Tools of Today & Tomorrow to Understand the Past  
 April 26-29, 2017 MassMutual Convention Center, Springfield, Massachusetts  
[www.nergc.org](http://www.nergc.org)

We need volunteers to assist us in the planning and execution of this magnificent event coming to a city near us. Please contact Dave Robison if you would like to help: [www.oldbones.co](http://www.oldbones.co)

Next month, there will be even more happenings and doings in our newsletter.

## Calendar

Coming soon to a Google Calendar – for instant access to society and nearby genealogical events.

### October 2015

2nd and 3rd – Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Northeast's Annual Conference at Central Connecticut State University, 1615 Stanley St, New Britain, CT [www.pgscne.org/ConferencesEvents.aspx](http://www.pgscne.org/ConferencesEvents.aspx)

5<sup>th</sup>- Genealogy research clinic at the Agawam Senior Center from 6-8pm

7<sup>th</sup>- Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society Meeting with Russ Worthington (see events above)

10th – 8:30 AM – 4 PM – The Polish Genealogical Society of MA, *A Day of Research Tools and Tips* with Steve Morse ([www.stevemorse.org](http://www.stevemorse.org)) Elms College, Mary Dooley College Center, 291 Springfield St, Chicopee, MA 01013. Per-registration is required. <http://www.pgsma.org> Admission is \$10 for members of the PGS \$20 for non-members

15<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>- Genealogy research clinic at the Agawam Senior Center from 6-8pm  
 More events forthcoming.

## Member Events

### October 2015

6th, 13th, 20th, and 27th – Four Tuesdays (10 AM – 12 PM) *Pulling the Person out of the Paperwork: More than Just Names and Dates!* Dave Robison, \$85, Members; \$100, nonmembers of the Springfield Museums, Lyman & Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History

**November 2015**

3rd – 6:30-7:30 PM followed by Q&A *Search Strategies You Never Thought of...Search Sites You Never Heard of*, Dave Robison, Morse Institute Library, 14 E Central St, Natick, MA 01760 [http://oldbones.co/?page\\_id=3679](http://oldbones.co/?page_id=3679) Please register for planning purposes with Karol Bartlett, Morse Institute 508-647-6520.

## Articles

### **Living History by Katy Krause**

As genealogists, we enjoy studying our ancestors, and part of that is studying where they came from. Whether it is our own backyard or somewhere foreign, it is always fascinating. If we are lucky, we get to go visit those places. We can take all those stories grandma used to tell us as kids of when she was growing up and see first-hand through her eyes. However, sometimes what the older generations remember is drastically different than today. That is certainly the case with the Blasket Islands.

The Blasket Islands is a small group of islands off the west coast of County Kerry, Ireland. They have an interesting history and certainly do not resemble the islands grandma would have remembered, or more accurately, Michael Carney. Michael, who recently passed away in East Longmeadow, Hampden County, Massachusetts, was the last living native of the Blasket Islands. He would have told his grandkids stories about growing up in the 1920's and 30's in a very small farming and fishing community that spoke only their native Irish, not English.

Today, the Blasket Islands are no longer inhabited. The last of the islanders left in the 1950's. These days, the main island is a museum, a glimpse into what it was, as Michael knew it. The museum is an amazing way to see into the past, but it lacks the personalization, the living element that only a person can bring to history. In honor of October being Family History Month, what better time to talk to your older, living relatives and hear a first-hand account of where they came from or where their grandparents came from.

I challenge every person who reads this newsletter to gather a first-hand family story from a relative and submit it to us to include in the November newsletter. It does not have to be long, a paragraph is fine, and it does not have to be a "professional" write up. It just has to bring history to life for you.

Please send your stories to [westmassgen@gmail.com](mailto:westmassgen@gmail.com) or mail them to PO Box 418, West Springfield, MA 01090 by October 20th to be included in the November newsletter.

### **Surname Project by Jeanne Leblond**

We are in the process of updating our Surname List. Our goal is to connect fellow genealogists who are researching the same family names, so that they may share information on common lines.

It has been several years since we have updated our Surname List. If you would like to be included, please provide up to eight names, dates, and locations that you are researching. Also, include your name, as you want it to appear, and your email address. We can send a sample form upon request. Even if you have previously submitted names, please take the time to update your information.

You may either return the completed form via email or print it and bring the completed form to one of our meetings. By submitting this information, you are giving WMGS permission to publish it. We hope to have the updated Surname List completed soon.

The completed list will be available on our website, on our Goggle+ community, and on our Facebook page. We will not publish any information until we have received your permission. Please note that you may request removal of your information from the surname list by contacting our society at any time. If you have any questions or comments, please let me know. When emailing, please write "surname list" in the title. Once the Surname List is posted on our website, members may request the addition or deletion of surnames at any time by contacting WMGS.

Please note that only paid members of WMGS can submit names for the Surname List. If you have not paid your 2015-2016 dues, we will not add your submitted information until you have. However, anyone may use the Surname List to connect with those listed once published.

Thanks, Jeanne Leblond  
Surname Project Coordinator  
[westmassgen@gmail.com](mailto:westmassgen@gmail.com)

## Methodology

This is a new section to our newsletter. I will be writing and adding articles on best practices in doing genealogy. These will not be highbrow methodologies, but simple techniques, that will make your research easier.

### Research Logs by Ann Royal

What are research logs and why would I want to use one? Research logs are simply a way to know what you looked at, where to find it (if you need to return to it) and what was and sometimes more importantly what you did not find in that source. How many times have you looked at a book or film, only to re-order it or go back to it to look for the same information? If we are honest, most of us have done exactly that sometime in our research career. This is where a log can come in handy.

Let me demonstrate what a simple log from AmericanAncestors.com looks like. The first piece of information is the **repository**, the location of where you got the source (a library, the Family History Library, or Ancestry.com). The second piece of information is the **date** you found this information. A chart follows which asks for simple information – **Source Information** (title, author, publisher, published date, etc.), **Call Number** (file #, URL, etc.), **Objective** (what were you looking for), and **Results** (what you did and/or did NOT find). Many times, we forget to write down or note somewhere what we did NOT find, and this can be very helpful in solving brick walls. If information cannot be located in sources where we expected to find it, this can tell us that our ancestor may have been located elsewhere, used a very different name, or that we are asking the wrong question, etc. Here is a link to the AmericanAncestors.com version:

<http://www.americanancestors.org/education/learning-resources/download>

You should not have to log in or be a member to access this and many more of their learning resources.

## Technology

This section is to inform you of new technologies, old but useful technologies, and other cool gadgets and software to make your research easier.

### **Evidentia by Ann Royal**

Evidentia is a program that can help you look at all the information you have collected on an ancestor and analyze that information more easily. Have you ever been confused by all the conflicting information you have collected? This very simple program can help alleviate some of that confusion. Evidentia is by Ed Thompson. <http://evidentiasoftware.com/about-evidentia/>

Ed created this program out of a need to help solve his challenges that was not being addressed by any other program. He noticed that others were having the same problem. His slogan is "Give a voice to your sources". We often look at a document or source to find what we expect to find and do very little with the rest of the information. What if there was a tool to record all the information that was available in a document, ONCE? Let us look at how we can do this. The first thing Evidentia asks is to document a source. You use drop down menus and fill-in forms to finish this part. You then catalog claims. You type in all the information that the document contains. Take a birth certificate for example - the birth certificate for Holyoke, Hampden County, Massachusetts in 1966. The document tells you that the certificate was created on a certain date, who the certificate is referencing - my name, the date I was born -day, month, 1966, my gender - female, my condition - (twin or other information, in my case ---), color - w, place of birth - Holyoke, Name of Father - (my dad's name), Maiden name of mother (my mom's full name with maiden surname), residence of parents - (our home address), occupation of father - Design Draftsman, Birth place of father - (dad's birthplace), birth place of mother - (mom's birthplace), date of record - when it was recorded in the register, and the signature and seal of the clerk. You would record each piece of this information into claims. So you can see, you record all the information in a record. This would include other family members, such as in a census, friends and neighbors. -FAN, etc. You also specify if this information was primary, secondary, or indeterminate, and then specify to whom that claim pertains. After entering all the documents, you then analyze the data. This asks you pertinent questions to answer about your data, and assists you in deciding the best and most accurate information. The software uses Gedcom to send information to your current software and vice versa. The software costs only \$29.99, and is downloadable.

This software looks more intimidating than it is, and can really make sure that you do not miss a single detail of a document. I will be happy to demonstrate the program, and Ed offers a trial period without the need of a credit card.

## Member Focus

Dee Pederson

Do any of you members remember the 27 July 2015 survey that WMGS put out to you? It asked about various things that you would like to see the organization do, what kind of programs or speakers to have at our meetings, in what way you might be able to help WMGS, etc. Well, I was one those people who responded to the survey. About two weeks (10 August 2015) after I responded to the survey I was contacted by the Society's treasurer (and 'wearer of many hats'), Katy.

Katy started out with this:

*On the survey, you said you would be willing to help with newsletter and website related things. This news is very much welcomed! Before I overwhelm you with my enthusiasm...*

She went on,

*... So now to make your head spin!*

She continued on explaining what WMGS needed: help with the newsletter and then the things for updating WMGS's website.

After Katy said:

*If I haven't yet sent you screaming for the hills,*

Well, I believe in paying it forward/back for any help I have received. I have been working on my family's genealogical history for over 30 years, and because of WMGS, I have been able to push a line of my family's history back to the 1500's in Denmark. This is something I do not think would have happened otherwise.

Most of you do not know me as I have only been a member for a little over a year. My name is Dawn but I go by my nickname, Dee. Because of the help of WMGS, I want to 'Pay It Forward' by using my niche talents to help the WMGS. This is something that many of the membership should also think about doing.

It is in this vein of moving things forward that the WMGS has under taken widespread change - to help make the member genealogical searches easier and to keep the members informed on the newest/latest genealogical trends. So you can see that WMGS is moving forward as an organization/group by its undertaking this major revamping on all levels of the organization.

First and foremost, WMGS now meets year-round on the first Wednesday of the month. Previously, WMGS only met starting in September through June of the following year. Another new resource for our monthly meetings is the use of Google "Hangouts" or SKYPE to bring the members speakers from the area and nationally. WMGS has a page on Facebook and in our Google+ Community, if you prefer the social media, and a number of our monthly meetings are available online as well.

Over the coming months, you the members will be seeing changes to the newsletter and website as Katy, Susan, Ann and me, institute changes to these things. These updates are long overdue and signal more of the organization's movement forward into the 21st century. You may have already noticed changes to the newsletter and websites. By the New Year (2016), we expect to finish these changes.

One of the changes to the website has been the addition of a PayPal button so now you can pay your membership online. WMGS is instituting a new banner logo - an apple tree with roots and the WMGS text. There is also a color change involved with the newsletter and website, another sign that WMGS is moving forward. WMGS has worked hard to bring the Ancestry Library Edition software to the Agawam Senior Center. Only WMGS members can use it as it is protected under username and password for exclusive use. WMGS holds computer research/help workshops on the 3rd and 4th Thursday of the month. Cannot make it to these Thursday night workshops? WMGS is exploring additional days during the week for more research workshops in the Agawam Senior Center's computer lab led by Katy and Susan.

WMGS has volunteers that also help on Thursdays at the Chicopee Library's genealogy computer lab. All these changes help people with their genealogical research, and are signs of WMGS's commitment to moving forward and serving its members. All this can be yours with the small yearly fee of \$25.00.

These upgrades signal to the membership that we are moving forward as an organization/group, and are things which are leading up to WMGS's being a major part of the sponsorship of the NERGC convention/conference coming up in 2017 in Springfield.

## 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 per session for 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 September 1 to August 31 each year. Individuals may purchase a membership for \$25, while institutions may purchase a membership for \$30. To Join: To join on-line, simply click on the PayPal button on <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mawmgs/join.html> and follow the on-screen directions. You do not need a PayPal account to use this PayPal feature.

Join by mail or in person at our monthly meeting: Click on the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society Application for Membership image to your right to view, save, and print your application. Payments along with the form should be sent to us at the address listed below.

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



## About Us

The Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society was founded in Springfield, Hampden County, Massachusetts in 1972, and officially incorporated on February 6, 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!

Our genealogy research clinics are offered on the third and fourth Thursday of the month from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center. We also have an extra class on Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm 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 currently have about 80 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

Ann Royal-Newsletter Editor

Susan Levenson-Webmaster

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

Jeanne Leblond-Surname Project Coordinator

Carolea Hayden-Refreshment Coordinator

## Newsletter Deadlines

Please submit all information to be entered into the next newsletter by 20 October 2015.

We are looking for articles written by our members. Have you been to a repository that would be cool? 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. In what are you interested? Tell us.