



# Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

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## Upcoming Meetings

### August 2018 Meeting

Our annual trip to the Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History is just around the corner. Join us on August 1<sup>st</sup> from 6-8 PM for our highly anticipated exclusive visit for a night of research. We get the place to ourselves, but remember, you have to be a paid member to attend! Due to limited space, sign up is required. Email us at [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com) and sign up today (put MOSH in the subject line). The first 30 get on the list with others put on a waiting list.



### September 2018 Meeting



On September 5<sup>th</sup>, join us as Marian B Wood presents on the topic **Using Facebook and Twitter for Genealogy** – She will reveal the fun, benefits, and mechanics of Facebook and Twitter to connect with family-history researchers in areas where ancestors lived, request assistance, obtain translations, and learn more about genealogy sources, technology, and methodology. The many forms of Social media are easy to use and offer the opportunity for more immediate response compared with traditional surname message boards--to jumpstart genealogy efforts at any level.

Marian B. Wood is a popular genealogy speaker and hosts a blog entitled [Climbing My Family Tree](#). She has also written a book “Planning a Future for Your Family’s Past” available at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com).

## July 2018 Recap – Skills Sharing Event

Our first ever Skills Night on July 11th was a great success! So much fun and so much to learn! We even broke our meeting attendance records with the highest number of members and visitors yet.

As promised, there was something for everyone. Our volunteer genealogy experts offered presentations on Irish, British Isles, Canadian, Upstate New York, Military, and Palatine research. There was information on using free and fee-based sites to improve research, and other tools ranging from Western Mass genealogy resources, to social media tools, like Facebook. Add the presentations on genealogy software programs & organizational tools, scanning tools and other techniques to record and preserve family memories, and charting options to record your family findings. Then add the opportunity to consult with one of our professional genealogists about brick wall research problems. It was a great night! In fact, according to the evaluations complete by attendees, there wasn't nearly enough time to visit each of the stations and experience all the options!

The WMGS Board and Program Committee will pore through the wonderful comments and helpful suggestions in the evaluations completed that night. We promise to repeat the event, as many members requested, and use your comments and suggestions to improve our next Skills Night!

This event came together because of the efforts of our volunteers and their willingness to share their genealogical skills. Thank you to all of our presenters, including Bruce Cortis, Fran Malone, George Podmore, Edie Bowen-Wilcox, Wayne Weatherwax, Dave Lapierre, Jim Bianco, Jeanne Leblond, Hillary Schau, Deb Woodford, Bob Whitney, and our two professional genealogists, Ed Strickland and Dave Robison who offered their consultation services. Thank you!!

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## Membership Renewal Time!

As we all should be aware, the annual memberships to the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society run from September through August of the following year. Now is the time to renew your memberships for the 2018-2019 season. Remember the membership cost goes from \$25 to \$30 on September 1<sup>st</sup>, so renew soon to lock in the lower rate.

The most efficient way to take care of this is through our website. Here's the link to the "Join" page: <https://westmagenealogy.com/join/>. Now you don't have to join again, just renew. To do that, simply scroll down the page and click on the PayPal link. YOU DO NOT NEED A PAYPAL ACCOUNT to use this secure, convenient and simple method.

Let's take a brief review of some of the benefits of membership:

- Membership in one of the oldest genealogical societies in New England
- Availability to attend, free of charge, regularly scheduled research clinics (non-members pay \$10 per session)
- Regular year-round meetings with experts, both live and in virtual presentation.

- Access to previously recorded meeting in the Members Only section of the website (NOTE: some have time limitations due to speaker's requests)
- Access to the DNA boot camp videos and handouts, also in the Members Only section
- Many fellow members willing to assist or advise you in your research efforts
- Volunteer opportunities
- Opportunity to meet and mingle with likeminded people

Dues are the life-blood of any society, especially smaller societies such as ours. You are the members and the dues you pay helps us to continue to bring interesting programs to you.

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## Articles

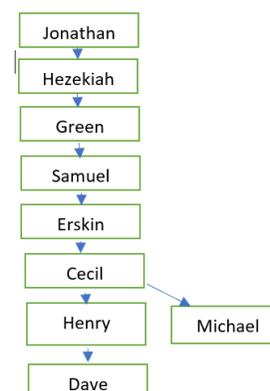
### We're All About DNA These Days!

By Dave Robison

Ever since we learned about deoxyribonucleic acid in high school biology class, most of us have been scratching our heads about "What the heck is a deoxyribo...whatever?" It's only in the past decade or so that it has hit the ground running and in the past 2 or 3 years seem to have taken on a life of its own. No pun intended!

First, a short story about my uncle. My father and my entire paternal lines had a southern accent. The alleged progenitor of our clan might have been Jonathan Robertson, possibly my 5<sup>th</sup> great grandfather. He likely arrived a Scotts-Irish immigrant sometime in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. One of his children was Hezekiah Robinson/Robertson/Robison...you can pick your favorite spelling! Hezekiah was probably born in Virginia as evidenced in a few census and other records that I have found. In addition to the census records in which he appears, I have a plethora of land, probate, military, and death records. But no birth record that might name his parents. I should be so lucky!

Anyway, back to my story. Hezekiah had at least 12 children that survived. I descend from Green Coleman Robison. Green to Samuel, Samuel to Erskin, Erskin to Cecil, Cecil to Henry and Henry to me. Cecil's only son with his first wife Mary Virginia Dunn was my father, Henry. Shortly after his divorce he married Hilda May Smith with whom he had 4 sons and a daughter. His oldest son, Michael Lee Robison, is the target of this story. My father was very close to his oldest half-sibling. Well, as close as he could get considering that my father was shipped all over the south, seemingly to get him out of everybody's hair. Seriously! In the 1930 census, his parents are enumerated in Anniston, Alabama, at an address that is clear across town from the household of three African-American domestics where you will find Henry Dunn Robison! I heard little of my father's past from my father or anyone as he came to Massachusetts immediately after his discharge from the Navy after World War II as his mother had moved up here during the war.



Separated by such a distance, Henry nonetheless kept in close touch with Michael. I remember my father calling his father every Christmas. That conversation lasted about the time of a commercial on the Ed Sullivan show! But his annual call to Michael was different. I was very young and never interfered or asked any questions. And Henry was wont to discuss his estranged relationship with his apparently dysfunctional family.

Michael didn't come to the phone in 1964. He had the misfortune of driving into a lake in Durham, North Carolina. He was a victim of alcohol and that evening, leaving his wife at home, he and his "friend" were having a great time in Durham. It's was a Chappaquiddick situation but neither he nor his girlfriend survived.

So, I told you all that to tell you this. After meeting one of Michael's brothers in Anniston about 12 or 13 years ago (that's another story!), "Uncle" Bill showed me Michael's yearbook and several other documents revealing the fact that Michael was a doctor working in a lab at Duke University in Durham, NC. Not only that, a sister, my half-great aunt, handed me a 12-page pamphlet that Michael had co-written describing his work in DNA! Well, knock me over with a feather! I'd be happy to share it with anyone who'd like a copy. Then maybe someone can explain it to me!

Now I can say that I have DNA in my DNA! I know that makes no sense but it's fun to say!

Many WMGS members have been participating in Thomas MacEntee's DNA Boot Camp and we're all learning the answers to questions we didn't even know enough to ask! We even extracted DNA from strawberries in one of our sessions. We have several more sessions to go and while I realize we're not coming out of this with doctoral degrees, we will at least have a greater understanding of how to use DNA testing to supplement our research.

The real inspiration for this message comes from the amazing things that are happening as a result of all the newest research; research that I know Uncle Michael would have been deeply involved with. This month, I've run across not only many more stories of the capturing of some hard-core criminals, but of other amazing, sort of off-the-wall stories. I won't repeat them here but I'll provide links to a few that I thought were fascinating.

One comment, however, that puts a damper on some of the most intriguing uses of DNA technology. CRISPR/Cas9 is a new science whereby specific parts of "defective" DNA can be extracted, repaired, and reinserted into the nucleus. CRISPR is an acronym for "Clustered Regularly Interspersed Short Palindromic Repeats." Aren't you glad you asked? It's bizarre and really isn't a genealogical topic. But it was, at first, quite dramatic. Yesterday, I read a startling report that CRISPR/Cas9 may be causing some very unwanted changes in a person's DNA. Again, rather than going into detail, here are a few links:

So, what do we have today? Follow these links to some interesting DNA stories:

- Read "This Man Failed a Paternity Test" here: <https://bzfd.it/2JvRqDL>
- Read "An 11-Year-Old Got Most of Her Genes from Her Dad" here: <https://bzfd.it/2L4V8dh>
- Read "Uncombable Hair Syndrome is Real" here: <https://bzfd.it/2JB0Fmw>
- Read "CRISPR Technology Explained" here: <http://bit.ly/2zNuO21>
- Read "CRISPR Gene Editing Controversy" here: <http://bit.ly/2zWISb1>

Now the "editing" controversy is exactly what it says, a controversy. As with any new science, it's going to require years of research to resolve. In the meantime, I won't be visiting any CRISPR clinics anytime soon!

I hope the articles will be helpful rather than overwhelming. It's easy to say that even a cursory understanding of what DNA is and can do is important to any family researcher, especially with families carrying certain diseases or conditions, adoptees, proving or disproving family myths. Just be thankful that we don't have to say "deoxyribonucleic acid" every time!

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## Establish Parameters

By Michael John Neill

Hasty research increases the chance that incorrect conclusions are made and that we include records for our "person of interest" who is not really our person of interest.

To reduce the chance mistakes are made, take the records that you "know" are for your person of interest and estimate whichever items you do not have specifically:

- a time frame for when they were born
- an approximate location for where they were born

- a time frame for their marriage
- an approximate location for their marriage
- a time frame for their death
- an approximate location for their death

For all of these approximations, include your reason why you think the time frames and locations are reasonable—you should have at least one source document. These reasons combined with the records are key.

Then look at the “new” records you think are for your ancestor. How closely do they match your expectations? Is the difference reasonable? Is it possible your conjectures were wrong?

It may also cause you to question whether the records that you were “sure” were for your ancestor are really your ancestor at all.

We’ve simplified the analysis process here—but this general framework, armed with analysis and contemplation, is a good start.

*(c) Michael John Neill, “Genealogy Tip of the Day,” <http://genealogytipoftheday.blogspot.com>, 24 Jun 2018*

## Changes to our Surname List

We’ve made some changes to our Surname List to institute some privacy controls. Going forward, our Surname List will include Surnames, Location, Time Frame, and the membership number of the person who submitted the name. We will no longer list members’ names or their email addresses on the list which is posted on our website.

We’re making this change as some members have expressed a reluctance to submit surnames and their contact information and to insure everyone’s privacy.

Anyone wishing to contact a member researching a Surname can send an email to WMGS at [westmassgen@gmail.com](mailto:westmassgen@gmail.com) along with the Surname and Member Number. We’ll forward the email to the member.

Don’t forget to periodically browse our Surname List to see if another member is researching the same name or location. Many of our members are researching the same ethnic group or locality and may be able to help you. We’ve even had a few cousin connections formed from the list.

WMGS members are allowed to list up to eight (8) Surnames on our list. If you would like to submit Surnames or make changes to your current listing, you can pick up a Surname Submission Form at our Welcome Table at a membership meeting or find the form on our website under Resources in the Members Only section.

And, don’t forget to take advantage of another tool to possibly help in your research. Members are permitted to post up to three (3) Queries in our newsletter each month. Just send an email to WMGS with your query information or pick up a Query Submission form at a monthly meeting. Queries are archived on our website.

## 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. Members may also bring their prepared queries or responses to our monthly meeting or to one of our research clinics. 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 2018Q1, 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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## News and Upcoming Conferences

### "A Summer of DNA" eConference

August 4, 2018

Speakers and topics will include:

**Diahan Southard** - *Your Tree is Full, There is Still Room for DNA*

**Sam Williams** - *Ancestry DNA Tools*

**Michelle Leonard** - *Adoption and Unknown Parentage*

**Kitty Cooper** - *Segment Triangulation*

The online sessions will begin at **9am Central Time on August 4th**. Some answers to common questions that people have asked us:

1. Yes, the sessions are live. These are not pre-recorded, so if you have questions, then please ask them in the chat during any of the sessions and we'll get them answered.
2. Yes, there are door prizes.
3. No, you don't have to be logged on to the live session to win.
4. Yes, recordings of the sessions will be available for 30 days after the eConference so even if you can't make the live session, register so that you can watch the recordings.
5. Yes, we use our webcams. You don't have to watch slides all the time. You also get to see people.

[Register](#) and get your questions answered by some of the most popular genetic genealogy educators! Price is only \$24.99.

More information is available on the website: <http://www.familyhistoryfanatics.com/summerdna>

Feel free to let any friends, family, or genealogy society members (or anyone else who may be interested) know about this great opportunity.

## Swedish American Genealogical Conference

Featuring Kathy Meade, from ArkivDigital

October 5 – 6, 2018 at the Sturbridge Host Hotel, Sturbridge, MA

366 Main Street, Sturbridge MA 800-582-3232 (mention SARA for special rate)



***Find your way back to Sweden*** Find your relatives in America and follow your Family in Sweden

2 Days of enjoyable Skill Building with fellow Swedish - American Genealogists. Maybe meet unknown cousins. Research help will be available

Welcoming reception Thursday evening, October 4, 2018

CONFERENCE COST (\$244) *INCLUDES*: Breakfast, lunch and Banquet, each day and all sessions.  
Hotel separate

For more information: Contact: [saraconference2018@aol.com](mailto:saraconference2018@aol.com) Annual Dues \$15 To see a brochure with detailed schedule and more information, click [Here](#)

*Family—a Link to the Past &*



*a Bridge to the Future*

**April 3–6, 2019**

**Radisson Hotel**

**Manchester, New Hampshire**

Join us for the New England Regional Genealogical Consortium's 15th conference! NERGC 2019 will feature special tracks on Wednesday and regular conference presentations Thursday through Saturday. When you're not attending sessions, check out the Exhibit Hall, Ancestors Road Show, Society Fair, and other fun and educational events.

Manchester is a vibrant city with world-class entertainment and fine dining, all within walking distance of the conference hotel. Explore museums or visit a spa in the mill district along the riverfront, or take in live music and nightlife at Irish, Mexican, Asian, and American establishments.

For more information, go to [nergc.org](http://nergc.org). We look forward to seeing you at the conference!

## Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
Wednesday, 1 Aug 2018 6 - 8 PM	<b>WMGS Meeting – Field trip to MOSH</b> – limited space, registration required
Monday, 13 Aug 2018 6 – 8 PM	<b>WMGS Board Meeting</b>
Thursday, 16 Aug 2018 6 - 8 PM	<b>Genealogy Research Clinic</b> at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 23 Aug 2018 6 - 8 PM	<b>Genealogy Research Clinic</b> at the Agawam Senior Center
Wednesday, 5 Sep 2018	<b>WMGS Meeting – Using Facebook and Twitter for Genealogy</b> presented by Marian B Wood
Thursday, 20 Aug 2018 6 - 8 PM	<b>Genealogy Research Clinic</b> at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 27 Aug 2018 6 - 8 PM	<b>Genealogy Research Clinic</b> at the Agawam Senior Center
	<b>Indexing Project</b> – Continue Indexing for FamilySearch.org at the Agawam Senior Center – Date to be determined

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

**DNA Boot Camp – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays**  
**First Church in Ludlow, 859 Center St., Ludlow, MA**

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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 to search the calendar for scheduled events "[Calendar](#)" that he will be presenting throughout Massachusetts.

Hillary Schau will be presenting a free class entitled **Introduction to RootsMagic** at the Chicopee Library, located at 449 Front St, Chicopee, in September. This program is presented over three sessions and will take from initial installment of the program through adding or importing information and printing out reports and charts. The classes will be held in September on Fridays (Sept 14, 21, and 28) from 1-3. If you are interested in learning about this free software program for organizing your tree, register by contacting the Chicopee library at 413-594-1800 ex 3 or stop in to sign up. Space is limited.

## New WMGS Members

The Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society (WMGS) welcomes our newest member

### **Georgianna Rouleau**

We hope that she will avail herself of all that WMGS has to offer and that she finds 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!

We currently have about 165 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

Dave Robison – President  
Jeanne Leblond – Vice President  
Deborah Woodford – Treasurer  
Katy Krause – Assistant Treasurer  
Estelle Stasz – Secretary  
Hillary Schau – Newsletter Editor

Dave Lapierre – Webmaster  
Jeanne Leblond – Surname Project Coordinator  
Ellen Janik – Facebook Administrator  
Carolea Hayden – Refreshment Coordinator  
Diane Ascoti – Founder

Edie Bowen-Wilcox, Hillary Schau, and Dave Lapierre – Directors

## **Meeting Details**

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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## Membership

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

### Reasons to Join Western Massachusetts Genealogical 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 (3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of month - \$10 / session non-members)
5. Share our library of resources including books and CDs
6. Access to the DNA boot camp videos and handouts in the members only section of the website
7. Opportunity to serve as a volunteer, coach or be a member of the Board of Directors

One of our key 'member benefits' is access to the members-only page containing archived recordings of speakers from around the US: Judy G Russell, Maureen Taylor, Connie Fitzpatrick, Elissa Scalise Powell, Dr. Shelley Murphy, Nora Galvin, 'DearMYRTLE' a/k/a Pat Richley-Erickson, Russ Worthington, Melissa Barker, Jennifer Alford and our own Panel of Pros. The page also includes the handouts from most of those meetings and historical copies of 'American Elm,' the original WMGS newsletter publication.

### Membership Dues

Annual membership runs from 1 September to 31 August each year. Membership rates are currently:

- \$25 for an individual membership (rising to \$30 on 1 September)
- \$40 for a couple of the same household (rising to \$45 on 1 September)
- \$15 for students
- \$500 for Lifetime membership

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

## Newsletter Deadlines

**Please submit all information to be entered into the next newsletter by 15 August 2018.**

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.

## 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](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com).

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