



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society, Inc.

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Upcoming Meetings

November 2018 Meeting



David Ouimette, CG, CGL from FamilySearch.org will be our November 7th speaker. His presentation is entitled, "*Discovering Your Ancestors Using Family Search.*"

FamilySearch has the most comprehensive collection of family history records in the world, with billions of images and billions of indexes of the best records for ancestral discovery across much of the globe. Come

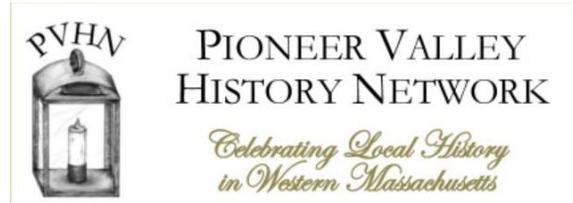


and learn how FamilySearch prioritizes, digitizes, publishes, and indexes records that tell the stories of your ancestors. With that background, we will then demonstrate effective search strategies across the FamilySearch website, covering historical records, family trees, published genealogies, the research wiki, and the FamilySearch catalog.

David manages Content Strategy at *FamilySearch.org*, prioritizing the acquisition and online publication of records worldwide for family history research. He holds BS and MS degrees in Mathematics. In addition to being a certified genealogical lecturer, he has authored the book, "Finding your Irish Ancestors: A Beginners' Guide" and many articles in genealogy magazines and journals. Many of you will remember his wonderful presentation last January titled "From Wojtowa to Chicopee: The Story of Polish Immigrant Millworkers" at the Chicopee Library which WMGS co-sponsored with the Polish Genealogical Society of Western Massachusetts. His excellent presentation is archived in our Members Only section.

December 2018 Meeting

Cliff McCarthy, archivist at the Museum of Springfield History (MOSH), archivist at the Stone House Museum of Belchertown, local historian, published author, avid genealogist, and president of the Pioneer Valley History Network, a non-profit consortium of historical institutions, will be our December 5th speaker.



Cliff will be presenting on the history of our four Western Massachusetts counties (Hampden, Hampshire, Berkshire, and Franklin) and the treasure-trove of genealogical resources for anyone doing research or with ancestors in them.

October 2018 Recap

Our speaker on October 3rd, was Susan Sit. She presented for us back in March on the topic of Welsh and other ethnic research challenges. This time she spoke on **Wales, Scotland & England – Similar but Different Research**.

Susan Davies Sit was born in North Wales and has been researching her own family tree and others' trees for almost 40 years. She also enjoys helping others in their genealogy research including her husband's Chinese American tree, which is as difficult as it sounds! Her specialty is researching in Wales, Scotland and England. She is a Professional genealogist (APG); President of the Welsh Society of Western New England (WSWNE); a member of the Gwynedd Family History Society (Wales); and the Welsh-American Genealogy Society (WAGS).



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December Holiday Gathering

Our Program Committee has so many great speakers lined up for the coming year, that there just isn't room to fit them all in! Rather than our usual potluck event in December, the Program Committee has decided to host a speaker for December, along with a holiday dessert buffet, giving us more time to enjoy each other's company, some holiday treats, and benefit from another presentation. (See the description of our December presentation with Cliff McCarthy in our newsletter above.)

We'd like to ask those members, who are able to do so, to bring a dessert or treat to share- a favorite family holiday dessert, a favorite ethnic recipe, holiday cookies, or whatever your hearts' desire.

Message from the President

Dave Robison

With all that is happening in and about the genealogy communities, I really don't know where to start!

Here's a short list of just the upcoming conferences:

- The New England Regional Genealogical Conference (NERGC) April 3rd to 6th in Manchester, New Hampshire
- The Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (SLIG) January 13-18, 2019
- The Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (SLIG) for professionals January 21-25, 2019
- February 27 – March 2, 2019 will see the largest global genealogical conference taking place in Salt Lake City, Utah. Last year, over 23,000 found their way there.
- National Genealogical Society's 2019 Family History Conference will take place from May 8th through May 11th in Raleigh, North Carolina.
- The International German Genealogy "Connections 2" Conference will be in Sacramento, California June 15-17, 2019
- The Federation of Genealogical Societies will hold their annual conference in Washington, DC August 21-24, 2019
- Institute of Genealogy & Historical Research (IGHR) July 21 – July 26, 2019 Athens, GA
- For all of you world travelers, the Auckland Family History Expo was sponsored by the Auckland Council Libraries in cooperation with the New Zealand Society of Genealogists in August 2016 but I'm sure there will be opportunities to visit New Zealand this year!

In 2019, the New England Regional Genealogical Conference opens with Librarian and Technology Day on April 3rd, and the full conference 4th through 6th of April 2019 at the Manchester Downtown Doubletree Hotel, Manchester, NH.

WMGS has a financial commitment in this conference. It's one of the 24 sponsoring societies that put up the "seed money" to get the conference off the ground. Total expenses will be in the neighborhood of \$100,000! And that doesn't count speaker fees, featured speaker airfare/hotel accommodations and a shopping list of peripheral expenses like printing, tote bags, badges, and more. Seed money is a good thing. The important part for WMGS is our commitment to provide a minimum of 25 volunteer hours during the conference. I will also sign up for the many volunteer opportunities for which many of you have already offered to provide.

Finally, as a result of the combined efforts of the supporting societies of NERGC over the years, they have been able to build their reputation and attract interesting and knowledgeable speakers, both local and national. NERGC 2019 will feature 3 outstanding genealogy personalities: Blaine Bettinger PhD., J.D., Dr. Thomas Jones, PhD, and Cyndi Ingle sole owner of Cyndi's List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet. Cyndi is the 2018 recipient of the Prince Michael of Kent Award for outstanding contributions to the field.

As we move our way through 2019 and beyond, I would like to extend my continued gratitude for the support provided by each and every one of you!

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Articles

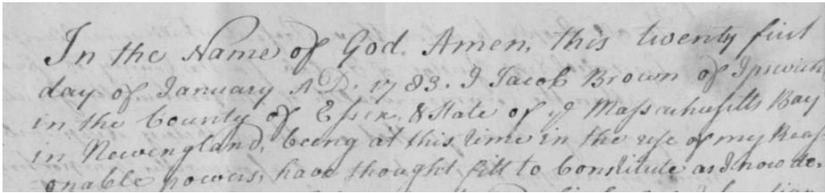
Of Sound Mind, But Infirm Body

Reprinted from The American Elm, Vol 29, Issue 3, Fall 2000

By Frank Beacon

Wills are one of the “snapshot” records that genealogists find so valuable and informative. Like a census record or a family group sheet, a will often provides a sort of picture of the family at a singular point in time. A will gives us a snapshot picture of a family by allowing us to see it as it existed at a certain date in time.

Wills and testaments are also among the most intriguing records we see as we discover our family’s heritage. Just as a census record is colored by the census-taker’s need to get the answers to specific questions, a will is colored by the reaction of the testator to his or her imminent death.



Of all the legal instruments that one makes during a lifetime, a will is somewhat unique in that the principal person involved will have no recourse once it is executed. A deed, an

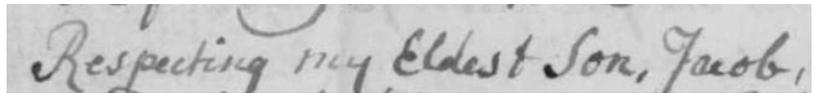
apprenticeship, a military enlistment, or even a marriage contract can all be reconsidered and subject to legal action by the parties involved. But there is no such possibility for a testator. Once his or her will is “proven,” that’s the end of it. Maybe not for the people who were (or were not) mentioned in the will, but since a will is not proven until the testator is dead, his or her part in the transaction is over.

That certainly can give a person pause for reflection.

Some testaments can be rushed by events. The about-to-be-deceased is suddenly faced with imminent demise from disease or accident and has to quickly order his thoughts to affect some sort of distribution of his worldly goods after he has no further need of them. In such cases the ways of the will may seem frenetic – a swift setting down of almost random thoughts about what may to the testator seem insignificant items (in comparison to his current suffering.)

But most wills are made after some deliberation. The testator knows his life will be ending and has taken the time to carefully consider how his death will affect others. The term “famous last words” is taken to heart, and the will reflects the messages the testator wants to send to those he leaves behind.

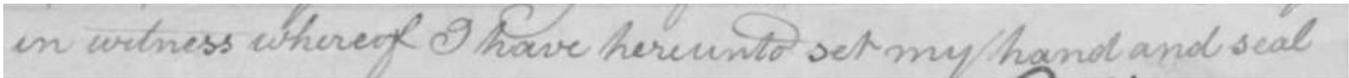
Decoding those messages is one of the more interesting facets of family history research. A legacy of one thousand dollars can appear to be quite a lot, until you read that the other children are getting ten thousand dollars apiece. Was the one child stiffed because he had offended his father? Or had he received the rest of his inheritance while his father was still alive?



I know of one will in which each household item, down to the garden gate, was specifically given to each of the children. The mother was told that she was to receive nothing. A cruel husband? Further research revealed that she was his second wife and that she had been cruel to his children by his first wife. He felt that the only way he could protect them after his death was through his last will and testament.

Because of its finality, a testament will often include words of advice that the deceased wanted his heirs to remember. Even those whose physical effects were few can leave extensive wills, bulging with words of advice or solace to those who were left behind.

Wills can also contain exceptional nuggets of unexpected information. Since the testator will be dead when the document appears in court, he may use his will as a way to disclose facts he diligently kept hidden during his life. Such as property in another state. Or a wife, or a child, or a complete family unknown to those who thought they knew him best.



It's unfortunate that so many family historians tend to ignore probate records in their research, preferring to focus their efforts entirely on censuses or certificates. There may be few wide-area indexes to wills and other probate records but using them to find the unique insight they can offer into the minds of your own ancestors can be among the most important and rewarding aspects of your genealogical research.

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The “Three Source Rule” and Magic

By Michael John Neill

“I put something in my tree if three sources agree.” I see that kind of statement on a regular basis—implying that “three” is somehow a magic number. Analysis of information is not quite that simple. Might does not make right.

Three sources can easily agree if the information was provided by the same person, regardless of whether they were correct or not. John Trautvetter’s church record of his marriage says his wife’s maiden name was Franciska Haase. The county courthouse record of the marriage indicates his wife’s maiden name was Franciska Haase. And his wife is living the the Haase family shortly before her marriage as their child.

Problem is that Franciska was not the child of Mr. Haase. He was her step-father.

There is no “magic” number of sources to make something “right.”

(c) Michael John Neill, “Genealogy Tip of the Day,” <http://genealogytipoftheday.blogspot.com>, 01 Nov 2018

Volunteer Opportunities

As WMGS grows, so do the tasks needed to run our society. That's hardly a complaint, because it means that there are numerous opportunities for our members to be involved in our society and to contribute to its growth!

Our Board has recently created a list of committees to address the various tasks that are needed to run our society. A Board member has been assigned to chair each committee and to coordinate the committee's work. And, we've defined the tasks that need to be done, hoping to make the workload a bit less for everyone on a committee.

Do you have a few extra hours that you could help out each month? If so, please let us know. We'll let you know what opportunities are available.

Some of the volunteer options include:

- coming a bit early to our meetings to help set up our welcome table with forms, badges, handouts, etc.
- helping to welcome our members.
- sitting with new members and visitors to welcome them and answer questions
- distributing and collecting speakers' evaluations
- copying handouts and forms

We're also in need of members who can help with publicity, such as sending press releases to local media and posting news and pictures on Facebook and other social media. If you have experience in marketing or community outreach to offer, we'd love to talk to you.

And, we're always looking for members to submit short articles for our newsletter.

If you can help out in any of these areas, please let us know. We'd love for you to join our volunteer team.

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

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. If you have not yet made your hotel arrangements do it soon, rooms are filling fast. Call (603) 625-1000 and mention the NERGC conference for the discounted rate. That rate is NOT available if you register on line; by telephone only, directly with the front desk at the hotel. We look forward to seeing you there.

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 on **Using the Census as a Foundation for Your Tree** to be held Saturday, November 7 at the Holyoke Library from 10-12. [More Info and registration link](#)

Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
Wednesday, 7 Nov 2018 6 - 8 PM	WMGS Meeting – David Ouimette is presenting on " <i>Discovering Your Ancestors Using Family Search.</i> "
Thursday, 15 Nov 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center. **There will be No research clinic on the 22 nd , Thanksgiving**
Monday, 26 Nov 2018 6 - 8 PM	WMGS Board Meeting - Open to Members
Wednesday, 5 Dec 2018 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Meeting – Cliff McCarthy will present on " <i>The History of our four Western Massachusetts Counties</i> "
Thursday, 20 Dec 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 27 Dec 2018 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center

Genealogy Research Clinics are free to WMGS members. There is a \$10 fee per session for non-members. Annual WMGS membership is just \$30.

New WMGS Members

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

Sylvia Starkie
Michael Engel

We hope that they will avail themselves of all that WMGS has to offer and that they find 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 (3rd & 4th 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:

- \$30 for an individual membership
- \$45 for a couple of the same household
- \$15 for students
- \$500 for Lifetime membership

If you are new to our organization, click [here](#) for the WMGS Application for Membership; the image is near the bottom. Click to open the pdf to view, save, and print.

There are three ways to join or renew your membership:

- Pay by cash or check at the monthly meeting
- Print and mail an application, found on the Join/Renew page of our website (if a new member) along with your check, or, if renewing, just the check to
WMGS, PO Box 418, West Springfield, MA 01090-0418
- Use the secure PayPal button on our website (you **do not** need to have a PayPal account, just use your debit card or credit card). Here's the link to our Join/Renew page: [JOIN](#)

Note: All first-time members must submit an application by mail or in person at a meeting, even if using PayPal, so that we have all the necessary information for our membership list.

Newsletter Deadlines

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

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