



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society, Inc.

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Upcoming Meetings

January 2019 Meeting

Our January 2, 2019 presenter will be Katherine R. Willson of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Katherine is an engaging & dynamic lecturer at local, regional and national conferences. She's the founder and president of the Virtual Genealogical Society, member of the Board of Directors for the Association of Professional Genealogists, President of the Michigan Genealogical Council, Secretary for the Genealogical Speakers Guild, Social Media Manager for GRIP /Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh, and member of the National Genealogical Society. In addition, she is the author of [The Genealogist's Guide to Grand Rapids, Michigan](#) (published in 2018 by [The In-Depth Genealogist](#)).



She's also recently updated her list of over 13,200 Facebook genealogy links and has created a list of 100+ instructional genealogical channels on YouTube. (both available on her website [here](#))

Katherine's presentation to us at the Agawam Senior Center is titled: ***Seeking Dead People: Getting the Most from Cemetery Research Online & In Person.*** Katherine will discuss cemetery, funeral home, and online research and provide tips and techniques to help locate photos, family trees, obituaries, and death certificates, and more

February 2019 Meeting



Pat Richley-Erickson, AKA DearMYRTLE, will be presenting for us during our February 6th meeting. Pat is the author of the award-winning DearMYRTLE Genealogy Blog, which is consistently among the top 5 family history blogs internationally, where her focus is on beginning genealogy topics. She also hosts several weekly hangouts including *Mondays with*

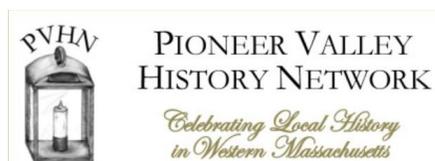
Myrt, Wacky Wednesday and moderates more intense study groups including Beginning Genealogy, Mastering Genealogical Proof, The Written Conclusion, and Genealogy and the Law.

Of the 100's of on-line genealogy search sites, few rise to the top of the list. Imagine having access to a premier research website that is consistently rated as one of the best that is also FREE to use! Welcome to FamilySearch.org. In a constant state of being updated with new collections of historical records, Family Search is the “go-to” site for thousands of family researchers around the world.

DearMYRTLE will be coming to WMGS via a remote webinar from her home and offices near Salt Lake City, Utah. She will share her deep knowledge of the website and how to use it effectively. Finding the records that you need and doing it in a logical, step-by-step manner can be a huge time saver. WMGS is very fortunate to be able to bring her to our virtual “doorstep” and take advantage of her broad and deep experience.

December 2018 Recap

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, was our December 5th speaker.



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

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Message from the President

Dave Robison

Welcome to 2019! Here's a confession: When I was, well, much younger, say around 1964, just trying to imagine 1980 or 1990 was well beyond any frame of reference. And the year 2000? Forget it. No one is going to be around THAT long! Well it's a good thing that we all made it to 1980, 1990 and shot past 2000. Now we're here at the dawn of 2019. So happy holidays to everyone!

We have witnessed untold wonders in our world these past few years. Just 100 years ago, we were coming out of “The Great War,” the automobile industry was just getting on a roll, domestic telephone service was getting popular, the field of medicine was about to take off with new treatments for all sorts of illness and disease, the first Tarzan film, “Tarzan of the Apes,” is released, the United States government established time zones and the much-loved Daylight Savings Time concept (can we change that?), and the beginning of the end of Prohibition by the establishment of the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment (it only took another 15 years to repeal).

And a few neat things happened in the field of genealogy...I'm sure!

What excites me today is this: the plans we've been putting together for 2019 for you, the membership at Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society, Inc. You, the membership, have helped us tremendously by using our meeting evaluation forms to critique the speakers, the venues, providing suggestions for topics in general or specific speakers. We're all about continuous improvement. If it were possible, we could fill up 2 meetings a month. Fortunately, that's not happening any time soon!

Some of our topics (subject to change) will include:

- Fine-tuning your research strategies at FamilySearch.org
- Fine-tuning your use of Family Tree Maker
- Protecting your data for future generations – and in case of emergency!
- Resources at the Berkshire Athenaeum including the former NARA collection
- “Seeking Dead People”
- Applying for membership in legacy societies, specifically DAR, SAR and CAR
- A return of our hugely popular Skills Night
- Deep Diving into Cemetery Research (no pun intended!)
- Our annual trip to MOSH will be extended to 2 trips: daytime and evening sessions
- What can you find at the New England Historical Genealogy Society (NEHGS)

The speakers will be a combination of local experts and nationally known genealogy educators. Most are locked-in, but we'll have to wait to make “official announcements.” Can you stand the suspense??

Membership fees alone have allowed us to continue. That combined with some very advantageous arrangements such as the free use of the Agawam Senior Center, have held us together since 1972. As you may be aware, WMGS, Inc. is now officially a 501c3 corporation. As such, not much will change other than it gives anyone who may be so inclined to make unlimited, tax deductible contributions to insure the continued operation and growth of our society. We will graciously accept contributions of any amount either with public acknowledgement or kept confidential. Your choice.

I'd also like to take the time to once again thank all who have contributed their time and talents to the Society. Programs, collections, meetings, raffles, website development... everything that makes us tick. Thank you...thank you very much.

That being said, we are always looking for others who are willing to join an enthusiastic group of volunteers. That's how we survive; that's how we grow! Ideas, actions, constructive criticism, and plain old enthusiastic energy. I believe I speak for the board and all committee members that contributing to WMGS is a rewarding opportunity to help others in their pursuit of genealogical research excellence. If you're interested, contact any of our board members. We are currently seeking to replace a board member who has reluctantly given notice due to the obligations of a growing family. Family...that's a concept we're all familiar with! See you in 2019!

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WMGS Founders Award Nominations

At our May 2018 meeting, WMGS proudly presented its Founders Award to two individuals - Ralph Cortis and John O'Connor. Our Founders Award is given annually to those individuals who have made significant contributions to WMGS and/or the local community or to the field of genealogy.

We invite all members to review the nomination and award policy below and to consider making a nomination. Here is the official policy and process:

Criteria:

An individual nominated for this award must meet one of the following criteria:

1. The individual has provided significant service to the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society or to the local genealogical community through time, talent, action, or dedication.
2. The individual has contributed in a significant way to the field of genealogy through leadership or other benefit.

Eligibility:

Any member in good-standing of the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society or an individual in the community, who meets the criteria for this award, is eligible.

Judging Criteria:

Board members will select the recipient(s) based on:

- The degree to which their services/action have made a lasting or meaningful contribution or impact.
- The length and degree of their service.
- The extent to which their service or action might be considered above and beyond the call of duty.
- The extent to which their action would be recognized and valued by the genealogical community or by their peers and community leaders.

Nomination and Selection Process:

Any member of the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society may nominate an individual. Criteria for the award will be posted in the January and February newsletter. Nominations will be accepted until April 1st. The Board will select the award recipient(s) at the April Board meeting and announce their selection in the May newsletter.

Presentation of the Award:

The award will be presented at the annual meeting in May.

Please consider nominating someone for the award. As noted in the policy, nominees do not have to be a member of the society, but nominations may only be made by members. Nominations will be accepted from January 1st until April 1st. Members may send their nominations to the WMGS Board via the **Contact Us** link on our website or by sending an email to: WestMassGen@gmail.com.

Articles

The “dit” Names

Reprint – American Elm, Vol 28, No 4, Winter 1999

What are dit names

A “dit name” is an alias given to a family name. Compared to other aliases or a.k.a. that are given to one specific person, the dit names will be given to many persons. It seems the usage exists almost only in France, New France and in Scotland where we find clans or sects.

I have a photocopy of a 1471 land record rented by my ancestor Barthelemy Hugon dit Jarret which is called Bartelemeo Hugonis alias Jarreti in this record and some others. There is another Jarret in the area at this time with another dit name, so we can say the dit name was given, in that case, to distinguish the 2 different families. Barthelemy was living in Dauphine, like many soldiers of Carignan Regiment who came here in 1665-1668. While they were not the only ones nor the first to use dit names in New France, it seems those soldiers are responsible for the great extent the dit names reached in Quebec compared to France, Acadia or Louisiana. This would explain, for example, why there is a concentration of families with dit names around Lac St-Pierre where seigneuries belonged often to retired officers from Cargnan regiment (Vercheres, Sorel, Contrecoeur, etc. to name a few).

Among some reasons of dit names, we find:

- Surname used in the army (can also be combined with another reason)
- Place of origin (Breton, Langlois, Langevin, etc.)
- Land owned or inhabited by an ancestor (Beauregard is an example)
- The full name of the ancestor (Gaston Guay → Gastonguay → Castonguay)
- The first name of an ancestor (Vincent, Robert, etc.)
- Keeping the original name (in local language) during the process of standardizing names to French
- Miscellaneous

How to deal with them

A generic person’s name is built like this:

Joseph Jarret dit Beauregard

Joseph is the first name

Jarret is, in this case, the patronym or ancestral family name

Beauregard is, in this case, the dit name

After some generations, it is no more obvious what is the specific patronym or dit name, so we will find Beauregard dit Jarret. Moreover, it is also possible both family and dit names are switched the first time someone used a dit name.

In the records, dit names are actual aliases, that is, they can be legally used to replace the original patronym. Because of this, one will find the same person known as:

Joseph Jarret

Joseph Beauregard

Joseph Jarret dit Beaugard
Joseph Beaugard dit Jarret

What this means? If you are looking for the marriage of a Joseph Beaugard married with Jeanne Joachim, you may find it as Joseph Jarret married with Jeanne Laverdure (a dit name for Joachim).

Other name variations

Dit names are not the only method of combining or changing family names.

There are also errors like switching the first name and family name in one record (for example, I have a Richard VINCENT who is actually Vincent RICHARD), changing a first name to a family name (there is a Claude VINCENT who is Claude-Vincent MENNESON). The only difference with dit names in this case is that the combination happened only one time. There are spelling variations so that a Bourgault would be named Beaugard in a record. There is also a modern concept in Quebec that consists in giving both the names of the father and the mother.

I proposed to use the following convention to distinguish usage:

- = for specific dit names (Beaugard=Jarret)
- / for spelling variation (Jarest/Charest)
- For other kinds of name combination (modern combining of names)

I would suggest this when using standardized names (i.e. not names found in the record, but names that a searcher would look for) in databases when you are building them in view of exchanging them. You should also write the actual name as found in the record and good genealogy software programs should allow for both names (standard name for search and actual name for printing of charts). If your software supports one name, I suggest to write the standardized name and to put the name read in the record in a note; if it supports many names, the first name would be the standardized name and the next would be alternatives. How to find what shall be the standardized name? Micheline Lecuyer, who worked with Rene Jette to produce a list of dit names (Repertoire des Noms de Famille du Quebec” des Origines a 1825) suggests, when the name is not in the Jette’s dictionary, to use a phone book (usually Montreal or Quebec City) and to select the more common form.

When the Site Dishes Up Results, You Must Determine If It is Mystery Meat or Fine Cuisine

By Michael John Neill

A search for a relative on a “big” genealogy website may search records from a wide variety of sources and instantly pull up an image with the name of interest. Before you assume you’ve hit the genealogy jackpot there are some warnings:

- ***The image may not refer to your relative.*** The image may come up because the name is “close,” the location is “close,” or someone else thought the record was about your ancestor. The name may not really be the same, the location may be too far off, or that other person may be incorrect. If the search parameters were set too loosely, the “match” may make absolutely no sense. Search results are not divinely inspired.



- ***The transcription may not be correct.*** The original may be difficult to read or the transcriber may have made a mistake. Transcriptions made on *Ancestry*, *FamilySearch*, etc. are not officially sanctioned transcriptions. They are not gospel. Do not treat them as if they are. Read the document yourself. Ask someone for assistance on one of the many genealogy groups online (Facebook, etc.).

When viewing any image of a record, **ask yourself** the following questions:

- what record did this image come from?
- is there more to this record?
- what was the purpose of this record?
- am I using an image of the original record or a transcription of the original record?
- who originally created this record and where are those originals?

If you don't know what on earth you are looking at, how on earth are you going to understand and analyze it?

Don't just ask those questions and ignore them. **Get the actual answers.** If you do, you are likely to:

- make fewer mistakes
- save yourself time
- discover even more information

[In reference to the title of this post, I realize that some readers are vegan. If so, replace "mystery meat" with "plant of unknown origin.]

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

Openings on the Board

WMGS is looking for a someone willing to serve as Assistant Treasurer of WMGS, as Katy Krause has informed us that she needs to step back from the Board because of other responsibilities. The position is for the remainder of a two-year term, with the term expiring in May, 2020.

The Assistant Treasurer's responsibilities include assisting the Treasurer and handling accounts payable duties for WMGS. Katy is willing to offer extensive training to her replacement.

We wish Katy well and appreciate her many years of service to WMGS. Thankfully, she's not going too far and will continue to assist with our website and other tasks.

If you are interested in the position or would like more information on the duties, please send a note to us at westmassgen@gmail.com or speak to any of the Board members at our monthly meeting.

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

NEW

Q-17 - MOORE/MOOR - Seeking birth date and parents of Daniel Moore/Moor, b. abt. 1780, possibly in NH. Need marriage record for Daniel and Lydia Way, possibly married in Lyman, NH. Daniel Moore was buried in Lyman, NH in 1846. Lydia Way Moore buried in Lyman, NH in 1828. Children of this couple noted to be Samuel (died bef. 1846), Daniel, Wm (d. 1848, Ludlow, VT), David (b.1816, Lyman, NH, d.1868, Ludlow, VT) and Margaret.

Submitted by Janet Ross

How to Submit or Respond to a Query:

January 2019

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.

Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
Wednesday, 2 Jan 2019 6 - 8 PM	WMGS Meeting – Katherine R. Willson will present " <i>Seeking Dead People: Getting the Most from Cemetery Research Online & In Person</i> "
Monday, 14 Jan 2019 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Board Meeting - Open to Members
Thursday, 17 Jan 2019 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center.
Thursday, 24 Jan 2019 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center.
Wednesday, 6 Feb 2019 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Meeting – Pat Richley-Erickson, AKA Dear Myrtle, <i>Researching at FamilySearch.org</i>
Monday, 11 Feb 2019 6 – 8 PM	WMGS Board Meeting - Open to Members
Thursday, 21 Feb 2019 6 - 8 PM	Genealogy Research Clinic at the Agawam Senior Center
Thursday, 28 Feb 2019 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

Janet Rogge
Thomas Raymo

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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Inclement Weather Policy

In case of bad weather, please check the following areas for a cancellation of our monthly meeting or genealogy research clinics:

1. If the Agawam Senior Center (ASC) is closed, then our meeting with a live presenter is canceled. However, if the event was set up as a webinar with a remote speaker, WMGS will notify everyone that the broadcast will be viewable at home through an easy to use webinar platform. The web address (URL) will be provided along with the VERY simple instructions on how to join. This is a unique WMGS membership benefit. The closing of ASC will be broadcast on **local TV stations** such as WWLP (Channel 22) and WGGB (Channel 40). It will be posted at the bottom of the screen, along with the other school and activity cancellations.

2. **WestMassGen.com** – We will post cancellation or webinar instructions on our website.
3. **Email** – We will send an email to our mailing list, if time permits. If the meeting can be broadcast as described above, that information will be provided
4. **Facebook** – We will post the status as described above: a full cancellation or the webinar instructions.

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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 recordings of many past WMGS meetings and to the recent DNA boot camp 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 January 2019.

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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