



# Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society, Inc.

## Contents

<a href="#"><u>Upcoming Meetings</u></a>	p 1-2	<a href="#"><u>Brick Wall Queries</u></a>	p 6	<a href="#"><u>About Us</u></a>	p 9-10
<a href="#"><u>Feb Meeting Recap</u></a>	p 2	<a href="#"><u>News and Conferences</u></a>	p 6 -7	<a href="#"><u>Membership</u></a>	p 10-11
<a href="#"><u>President's Msg</u></a>	p 2-3	<a href="#"><u>Free Local Events</u></a>	p 7	<a href="#"><u>Newsletter Info</u></a>	p 11
<a href="#"><u>Survey &amp; Founders</u></a>	p 3-4	<a href="#"><u>Calendar</u></a>	p 8	<a href="#"><u>Contact Us</u></a>	p 12
<a href="#"><u>Articles</u></a>	p 5	<a href="#"><u>New Members/Losses</u></a>	p 8-9	<a href="#"><u>Email Updates</u></a>	p 12

## Upcoming Meetings

### March 2019 Meeting

At our March 6th Meeting, Russ Worthington will be presenting “**Recording Your Family Research - The Dash Connection.**” Russ will show us how to make better use of the features in various genealogy software programs to help make that Dash Connection, that is, the time between birth and death dates to create a story. His tips and tricks will help you on the journey, perhaps to even in writing a book on your ancestors.

Russ Worthington is an expert with Family Tree Maker (FTM 2017) as well as other genealogy software programs, student of genealogical methodology, Find-a-Grave volunteer, blogger, and public speaker. He's a real-life cousin to Pat Richley-Erickson a/k/a "DearMYRTLE," and handles the technical aspects of all of her webinars. Many of you will remember his excellent presentation on City Directories in a previous webinar visit to WMGS in October 2015.



### April 2019 Meeting

Kathy Kaldis will be our April speaker on the 10<sup>th</sup> (**note the change in date**) and her talk will be “**What’s in a Name? Strategies for Identifying Maiden Names**”. Why is it so difficult to identify maiden names?  
 ~The Recipe for Success in Finding Maiden Names: Practical Skills; Analytical Skills; Creative Use of Evaluating Evidence.



Kathleen Kaldis fell in love with genealogy at a young age, she is a professional genealogist known as *The Ancestor Finder*. Her interest in genealogy started when heard stories about how her great great-grandfather, who was born on Cape Breton Island, came to Boston to build Fenway Park. She used to be a Genealogist at the New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston and enjoyed working with the patrons. She holds a Certificate in Genealogical Research from Boston University, and has successfully completed many

genealogical institute courses through the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (SLIG) and the International Society for British Genealogy and Family History (ISBGFH). Kathleen is very active within the genealogical community serving in many leadership positions within many organizations. She is a member of the Lexington DAR and personally brought in 125 new members in two years. As a lecturer her enthusiasm will show through as she shares her passion of genealogy with the audience.

## February 2019 Recap

Pat Richley-Erickson, AKA DearMYRTLE, presented at our February 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Pat is the author of the award-winning DearMYRTLE Genealogy Blog. 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.



In her talk, *The Finer Points of FamilySearch: Six ways to Jumpstart Your 2019 Research*, Pat provided us with tips and tricks for using some of the lesser known features of FamilySearch.org, the premier research website that is consistently rated as one of the best that is also FREE to use! 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 came to us via a remote webinar from her home and offices near Salt Lake City, Utah.

[Return to Contents page](#)

## Message from the President

Dave Robison

We’ve talked about conferences many times. We’ve even had presentations about why you would want to attend a conference. My shortcut answer is this: “You don’t know what you don’t know.” Regardless of how long any of us have been researching our own families or the families of others, there’s always something new to consider, especially now in the electronic age. Don’t misinterpret that statement about the electronic age because “...it’s not all on the internet.” As a matter of fact, it has been estimated that only about 10% to maybe 15% of what’s available has been digitized and indexed to make it searchable at the dozens of websites that are available to us today. And the list includes straight-up commercial sites that charge a fee for membership, free websites such as FamilySearch.org, privately uploaded trees, and many others. In a nutshell, with the exception of FamilySearch, you get what you pay for. Many offer month-to-month subscriptions or 6 to 12 months at a time. In addition, sites like Ancestry.com further blur the options by offering graduated levels of access. European websites often offer a per document fee where you would buy a certain number of points to “spend.”

Why is the internet data so scarce? First, you are mostly blocked from seeing documents and records that haven’t been indexed. Indexing is the process handled mostly by volunteers where the words on the image are transcribed into specific fields. First name, middle name, last name and all the rest of the pertinent data that we’re accustomed to filling in on the search pages of various websites has to be made labeled so that the computer can “read” the words. Now computers don’t read words, they interpret complex arrangements of zeros and ones and convert that into the words that we, mere mortals, can read! And only digitized documents and records can be indexed in bulk. Once a record is indexed, you can type in data that can be matched against the electronic index and show it to you in the comfort of your own home.

Now, consider the millions upon millions of documents that are generated each and every day! Babies are born, couples get married, folks die, people join the armed forces, apply for pensions, and so on creating a myriad of records that we will be searching for some day. Can you imagine the size of the backlog of paperwork we're creating in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

So, what does all this have to do with conferences? Searching websites is mostly a self-taught process. Conferences offer the knowledge and advice of professionals who can dispense a wealth of education to large groups of interested people. At genealogical conferences, for example, there is a very broad range of topics and speakers to deliver the messages. Lots to learn! From internet search strategies to off-line sources such as libraries, repositories, archives, DNA (WOW, that's a hot topic these days), court house research, interviewing relatives, cemeteries, European research as well as other foreign countries, military records and the list goes on and on.

There is so much interest in certain topics that the classes or workshops offered with the best of intentions often fill up the first- or second-day registration is open!

The whole point here is to encourage you to seriously consider registering for as many conferences that would be reasonable for you. It's not free, of course, and they're not always in the next town over! So, there are many considerations especially with regard to time and expense.

Some of the largest conferences are held in the larger cities in larger venues than what is generally available to us here. RootsTech is a good example. Last year, over 25,000 people showed up! The initial registration is a little pricey and attendance would require an airline ticket and hotel accommodations for us folks here in New England.

But there's an important, well-attended "bargain" of a conference right here in New England. The New England Regional Genealogical Conference is a bargain.

Featured speakers at the 2019 conference include Thomas D Jones, PhD, CG, CGL; Blaine Bettinger a/k/a "The Genetic Genealogist"; and Cyndi Ingle, who manages "CyndisList" a comprehensive web site with links to over 70,000 genealogy web sites.

The 2019 conference is being held in Manchester, New Hampshire at the Manchester Downtown Doubletree Hotel at 700 Elm Street. Many more details including registration information is available at [www.nergc.org](http://www.nergc.org). Registration will be open until March 30, 2019.

## Annual Survey

Next month, WMGS will be sending out our Annual Survey via email to our members. We hope that you will take the time to complete the survey.

During the last year, WMGS officers, board members, and volunteers have been working hard to improve our society, to provide quality programs that meet your needs, and to increase our membership. We value your input to let us know how we're doing, your ideas to move us forward, and your participation.

## 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 1<sup>st</sup>. 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 1<sup>st</sup> until April 1<sup>st</sup>. 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](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com)**.

## Articles

### Newspaper Finds

*By Hillary Schau*

I was looking for an obituary in *Newspapers.com* and came across an amusing article on *Newspapers.com*. It was published in the Hartford Republican newspaper from Hartford, Kentucky, 21 Jun 1895, page 4. It read

*In a country near a large city there is seen the following inscription upon a tombstone:*

*“In Loving Remembrance, this stone is erected to the memory of Rebecca Sniff by her loving and heart-broken husband, Isaac Sniff, who can still be found at 817 Benstine Avenue with a first-class line of second-hand clothing and furniture, etc. The Lord taketh away; Blessed be the name of the Lord. Highest market price paid for bones, rages, and feather”*

### Maiden Name Obituary Search

*By Michael John Neill*

**Mrs. Thomas M. Graves Dies**

**Mrs. Thomas M. Graves, 80 years old, passed away Monday evening at 10:45 at the home of her daughter, Mrs. George Cartwright on Main street, with whom she had made her home a number of years.**

**Sarah Ellen Newman, daughter of William and Rebecca Tinsley was born May 21st, 1851 near Milroy, Ruth County, Indiana. She moved near Carthage, Ill. with her parents in 1864. She was married to Thos. M. M. Grave in 1874; to this union five**

When searching old newspapers for obituaries, consider searching for the woman's maiden name. The 1931 obituary of Sarah Graves in a Macon, Missouri, newspaper refers to her twice: once as Mrs. Thomas M. Graves and once as Sarah Ellen Newman (her maiden name). About every other reference to her is "she." Not all obituaries will list a woman the way Sarah is in this obituary, but it was a common practice during this time period. Searching for parents' names as well may be a good idea—even if they had been dead for fifty years and had never lived in the area.

[www.genealogytipoftheday.com](http://www.genealogytipoftheday.com)

(c) Michael John Neill, "Genealogy Tip of the Day," <http://genealogytipoftheday.blogspot.com>, 23 Feb 2019

## Brick Wall Queries

### How to Submit or Respond to a Query:

**Submitting:** Queries and responses should be sent via email to [westmassgen@gmail.com](mailto: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.

## 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](http://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.

## Free Local Events

Several local libraries are hosting presentations on genealogy topics. Check with your local library and let us know so we can note it here. These presentations are funded by the libraries and free to the attendees. All you have to do is register.

- For DNA, Dave Robison is presenting Mysteries of DNA, Part 1 and Part 2 at the Holyoke Library. The dates are March 23 and 30 (Saturdays) from 10 AM – noon. This is an introduction to DNA for genealogy research. Register by calling 413-420-8107.
- Tuesdays, April 9, 16, 23 and 30 from 9:30 - 11, free four-part Beginning Genealogy Class at the Indian Orchard Public Library with Hillary Schau. If you or a friend/family member wants to get a good foundation in genealogy, from vital records to DNA. Register by calling 413-263-6846.

## Need Help with Your Research?

Come to one of our research clinics! WMGS offers research clinics on the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays of each month from 6pm-8pm at the Agawam Senior Center. This is a free benefit for WMGS members, with a \$10 fee for non-members.

Can't make a clinic or need more help? Then head over to the Chicopee Public Library to take advantage of their research clinics. Some of our own WMGS members are volunteers at the clinics. You just might run into Dave Robison, Hillary Schau, or Edie Bowen-Wilcox, who are eager to help you, as they give back to the genealogical community.

The Chicopee Public Library sponsors Open Genealogy Labs, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am-3pm, and again from 6pm-8pm. Check the library's website at [www.chicopeepubliclibrary.org](http://www.chicopeepubliclibrary.org) or call them at 413-594-1800 to confirm that the clinic is being held.

The Chicopee Public Library is a FamilySearch Affiliate Library, which means that they have a large collection of microfilm which was previously on permanent loan at the now-closed Ludlow Family History Center. You may also view digitized records that are only available at a FamilySearch Affiliate Library.

## Calendar

DATE/TIME	EVENT/PLACE
Wednesday, 6 Mar 2019 6 – 8 PM	<b>WMGS Meeting</b> – Russ Worthington, <i>Recording Your Family Research - The Dash Connection</i> ***
Monday, 11 Mar 2019 6 – 8 PM	<b>WMGS Board Meeting - Open to Members</b>
Thursday, 21 Mar 2019 6 - 8 PM	<b>Genealogy Research Clinic</b> at the Agawam Senior Center. ***
Thursday, 28 Mar 2019 6 - 8 PM	<b>Genealogy Research Clinic</b> at the Agawam Senior Center. ***
Wednesday, 10 Apr 2019 6 – 8 PM	<b>WMGS Meeting</b> – Kathy Kaldis, <i>What's in a Name? Strategies for Identifying Maiden Names</i> ***
Monday, 15 Apr 2019 6 – 8 PM	<b>WMGS Board Meeting - Open to Members</b>
Thursday, 18 Apr 2019 6 - 8 PM	<b>Genealogy Research Clinic</b> at the Agawam Senior Center ***
Thursday, 25 Apr 2019 6 - 8 PM	<b>Genealogy Research Clinic</b> at the Agawam Senior Center ***

\*\*\* *Please be advised that there may be travel delays related to construction on the Morgan Sullivan bridge leading from West Springfield into Agawam through 2020. Currently, traffic is limited to one lane in each direction. It is recommended that members and visitors allow extra time to their travel or seek alternate routes.*

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

**Kathleen (Kate) Blanchard  
Daniel Marchant  
Richard (Dick) Roberts**

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.

## In Memorium

Several of our members have passed during the past year:



- Alyce Chagnon of Agawam, passed away in Jan 3, 2019. Alyce was born and raised in Holyoke and later moved to Longmeadow and then Agawam, so she was a lifelong “Western Massachusetts” resident.



- Marilyn Powers of Wilbraham, one of our **Life Members**, passed away in June 2018. Marilyn was born in Holyoke but spent much of her life in Wilbraham. She was also a lifelong “Western Massachusetts” resident.

- Dee Pederson, another Life Member, passed away in January 2019. Dee had been very involved in the group and attended most of our meetings. Although she was very private and did not ever wish to have her photo taken, her graphics for the newsletters will be sorely missed. She was very creative with the monthly designs.

The members of WMGS extend our condolences to their family and friends.

## 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  
 Ginny Atwood – Assistant Treasurer

Estelle Stasz– Secretary  
 Dave Lapierre – Webmaster & Technology  
 Coordinator

Hillary Schau – Newsletter Editor  
Jeanne Leblond – Surname & Queries Editor  
Ellen Janik – Facebook Administrator

Bob Whitney – Fundraising Coordinator  
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!

[Return to Contents page](#)

## 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.

[Return to Contents page](#)

## Membership

Like most things in life, membership is not free - but for our reasonable annual membership fee (\$30), 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 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 March 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.

## How to Contact Us:

Have a question, comment, or suggestion for someone at WMGS?  
Need information about your membership status or how to access our Members Only material?  
Want to send in a query or provide an answer to one?  
Have a comment or suggestion for us?

### **There are two options available for contacting us via email:**

Our **Contact Us** page on our website has an easily completed form to use. Just enter your name, email address, topic, person to whom email is being sent, write your message, and click on Submit.

Or, you can send an email directly to us at: [westmassgen@gmail.com](mailto:westmassgen@gmail.com) .

Of course, you can also correspond with us by sending mail to:

WMGS, Inc.  
P.O. Box 418  
West Springfield, MA 01090-0418

**Note: Please do not write directly to any board member's personal or business email. For legal reasons, our board members cannot conduct WMGS business using emails, other than through WMGS. Thank you for your consideration.**

## 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).

[Return to Contents page](#)

