

October 2010

*A monthly publication  
on behalf of the*



## Western Massachusetts Geneological Society

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### News

Greetings!

The feedback regarding our September Newsletter was extremely positive. Members were pleased to receive information on upcoming events and genealogy tips. Thank you all for your feedback.

We continue to update our website. This month, we added historical pictures to our “Images” tab. Special thanks to Jim Birchall and Fran Malone for providing these pictures. To look at the pictures, click on the following link:

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mawmgs/images.html>

Did you miss our September meeting? Links are now available with information presented at the meeting. We plan to post information after each meeting on our website. Look under our September 1, 2010 meeting for links about the Wistariahurst Museum:

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mawmgs/newsletter.html>

Lastly, our September Newsletter is now available on our website. Copies are located at the top of our “Newsletter” tab. We will continue to post our monthly newsletter once it has been sent to our members.

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mawmgs/newsletter.html>

We hope you enjoy these updates. Please continue to share your suggestions for improvement with us. We’re looking forward to seeing everyone at our next meeting on Wednesday, October 6, 2010 at the Agawam Senior Center.

## Calendar of Events

### October 6, 2010:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will hold their next meeting on Wednesday, October 6, 2010. The meeting will be from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts.

The guest speaker will be Leslie Huber. She will bring her new book “The Journey Takers” and will speak to us on the same subject.

### Saturday, October 16, 2010

NEHGS and Ancestry.com will host their second Family History Day at Seaport Hotel and World Trade Center Boston. Explore the world of genealogy, listen to engaging lectures, meet with expert staff, digitize your important family documents, and learn more about how the resources at NEHGS and Ancestry.com can help you find your family. Register early to guarantee your spot. For more info: <http://www.familyhistoryday.com/>

### Thursday, October 21, 2010

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will host a genealogy computer class. Classes are offered on the third and fourth Thursday of the month from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, located at 954 Main Street in Agawam, Massachusetts. Classes are free for members. There is a \$10 fee for non-members.

### Thursday, October 28, 2010

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will host a genealogy computer class. Classes are offered on the third and fourth Thursday of the month from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center. Classes are free for members. There is a \$10 fee for non-members.

### Thursday, October 28, 2010

**Polish Genealogical Society of MA** Fall meeting at 6:30 p.m.. *Vital Records from Southeast Poland*. Alan Doyle Horbal has been researching his family history for 30 years while working as a volunteer archivist at NARA Pittsfield. He’s made numerous trips to Poland to obtain vital records and will discuss his findings. **FREE**. Bring a friend. **Location:** *Polish Center Of Discovery & Learning*, 33 South Street, Chicopee Directions: Take exit 12 or 12a off rte. 91 to rte. 391 and follow signs for Elms College. This will take you to South Street. There is ample parking at left of Center. Talk in first floor auditorium. The center is handicap accessible. Come early to visit the display and our Genealogy Room.

### **November 3, 2010:**

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will hold their next meeting on Wednesday, November 3, 2010. The meeting will be from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts.

Steve Sorrow will be the guest speaker. He is a well known local historian and has a wealth of information about the Windsor Locks Canal.

### **April 6-10, 2011**

[Exploring New Paths to Your Roots](#), to be held April 6-10, 2011 in Springfield, Massachusetts, is the eleventh New England Regional Genealogical Conference and will build on NERGC's tradition of excellence in providing genealogical lectures, seminars and workshops; the Ancestors Road Show; a Society Fair; and banquet luncheons and dinners for new and established genealogists alike at minimal cost.

Details about the conference are now available in E-Zine #4. This is an electronic magazine which contains details about the event. Click on the link below for more information. <http://www.nergc.org/NERGC2011/page21.html>

The registration brochure is also available on-line. It contains the full conference program, plus information on available luncheons and banquets, research trips, and special events. [http://www.nergc.org/NERGC2011/Brochure\\_Searchable\\_PDF.pdf](http://www.nergc.org/NERGC2011/Brochure_Searchable_PDF.pdf)

## **Membership Update**

Just a reminder: WMGS annual membership dues should be paid by October 15<sup>th</sup>. Dues can be submitted at our next meeting on October 6<sup>th</sup>, or mailed to our PO Box listed on the Application for Membership.

In order to keep our records up-to-date, we are asking new members and prior members to complete an "Application for Membership." This will ensure that we have all of your current information on file, especially those ever-changing e-mail addresses. Thank you for your cooperation.

The "Application for Membership" can be printed from the "Join" tab on our web site. Or, follow this link to print your application:

[http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mawmgs/images/WMGS\\_application.pdf](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mawmgs/images/WMGS_application.pdf)

# Genealogy Hint

By Fran Malone

## The Name Game

In last month's newsletter under the websites I mentioned "The Name Game" and decided to discuss it briefly this month. The Name Game has frustrated all of us at some point and is probably the biggest contributor to the "brick wall" that we encounter.

In early 2010 I had the pleasure of assisting one our society members taking our Genealogy Computer Class and she was looking for the name Barako as it is recognized today. She couldn't find anything on the name before 1920. It took a little while but we came away with about seven different ways the name was indexed. I recall four of the spellings to be Baraco, Boracco, Boraco, and Borako.

My Great Grandfather James Lang (actual spelling) come into the United States in 1870 and became a US Citizen. His immigration record was indexed as James Layng and his Naturalization read as James Laing. He also appeared as James Lowe in the 1880 Federal Census.

The name Desrosiers is another name that can or has produced frustration. My wife is a Desrosiers decendant. There are about ten different Desrosiers branches with "dit" names. Among those branches are the Desilets, Dutremble, Deguire, Laniel, and Moreau. The children in these families sometimes kept the Desrosiers name and then some of them took the "dit" names. My wife comes from the Laniel dit Desrosiers and through their history you have children keeping the Laniel name and others in the same family going by Desrosiers. Adding to confusion you will find Desrosiers as Desrosier, Derosiers, Derosier, Derosia, and Durocher. There are a few other spellings for the Desrosiers also. My wife knew her Grandmother as Derosia.

There are a several reasons for the "name game", the language barrier, spelled the way it sounded, our ancestor were unable to read or write, penmanship and because of penmanship the people who transcribe the records to indexes so we can find our ancestor.

How do we as researchers get around this "Name Game"? In the majority of my searches if not all the first name stays the same. If you are looking for a William, John, Thomas, or James then that will be the first name in any of the records you search. Some might have a slight variation depending on where they came from such as Joseph. Joseph can be and will be found as Josef or Guiseppe. Take the first name of your ancestor and start searching by that. If you know that the last name begins with the letter "M" or letter "P" then jump ahead to those pages to start your search. For example if you looking in the 1880 Census for your Great Grandfather James Lang, his wife's name is Madge, they live in Portland, Maine, and they are from Ireland. The name James Lang does not give you anything so do a search for James in Portland, Maine born in Ireland. If it shows up as a James Lowe with a wife Madge then it's a good possibility that it was indexed wrong so check it out.

Good luck and remember email us at [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com) with your questions.

## Genealogy Websites By Fran Malone

### Message Boards

Leaving messages on message boards is an excellent way to let others know who you are looking for and find others looking for the same family you are. There are two message boards that I use regularly and recommend to use in your searches.

Genforum - website address: [www.genforum.com](http://www.genforum.com) Once you connect to the site you will see a block noted as "forum finder". In this block you can search my surname, state, or country. The state and country message boards give you two ways to leave messages. If using the state board and you don't know the county that your ancestor lived in then you can just leave the message/inquiry on the state board. If you do know the county then you can re-write the message in the known county. This works for the country boards also. A message can be left just on the country board but if you do know the county or region that your ancestor lived then that message can be left there also. The only requirement is to create a simple ID for you to use so you can post the messages.

Rootsweb - website address: [www.rootsweb.com](http://www.rootsweb.com) This website has several good options to use. There is a tab noted "family trees". If you click on this you can find people that have entered their families and possibly your family. For the most part the information is not sourced so it's open for errors pertaining to vital record dates. Can it be used as guide for finding your family? Yes, in most cases it will be a help but don't rely on it as a good resource. Take the information you find here and use it as a guide until you, yourself can verify the facts. This site also has links for the Social Security Death Index, the soundex Converter, blank charts and forms, and a message board. The message board operates like the genforum boards where you can search by surname, state, or country. Like the genforum you have to create a simple ID so you can post your messages.

Ellis Island - website address: [www.ellisland.org](http://www.ellisland.org) This website is an excellent source for finding your immigrant ancestor if he/she came into New York between 1892 and 1924. You can search without creating a simple ID but if you click on a name then you'll need that ID to get your results. Prior to Ellis Island in New York there was Castle Garden. The Castle Garden website is: [//castlegarden.org](http://castlegarden.org) and you [don't need to create an ID to search this site.](#)

Beware of the "Name Game" spellings. Unfortunately Ellis Island does not let you search by just the first name. They do offer a tab for close spellings or alternate spellings. If those don't work it will give you a list of possible spellings.

Good luck and feel free to email us at [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com) with your questions.

## Our E-mail Address Has Changed

The e-mail address for the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society has been updated. Our new e-mail address is [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com)

## Welcome New Members

Please welcome the following individuals who joined our society this month:

**Bernard MacArthur**

## About Us

### Meetings

We meet on the first Wednesday of each month, September through June from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, located at 954 Main Street in Agawam, Massachusetts.

Our genealogy computer classes are offered on the third and fourth Thursday of the month from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center.

### Membership information

Annual membership runs from September 1 to August 31 each year. Individuals may purchase a membership for \$20, while institutions may purchase a membership for \$25. Applications for Membership can be found on our website.

## Newsletter Deadline

Did you enjoy reading our newsletter? Do you have suggestions for articles, or have an article you would like us to publish? Our next issue of the newsletter will be November 2010. Please forward your information by October 20, 2010 to Susan Leverson and Fran Malone at: [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com)

### **Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society 2010-2011 Executive Board Members**

President: Jim Birchall  
Vice-President: Fran Malone  
Vice-President: June Cook  
Co-Secretary: Elsie Hamilton  
Co-Secretary: Marilyn Powers  
Treasurer: Susan Leverson