

December 2011

*A monthly publication  
on behalf of the*



*Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society*

P.O. Box 418 • West Springfield, MA 01090

Web Site: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mawmgs/index.html>

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## News

Greetings,

We hope that everyone has recovered from the October 29<sup>th</sup> snowstorm. The heavy, wet snow caused trees and limbs to fall across Massachusetts and Connecticut. It left thousands without power for a week or more. Our November meeting was canceled, and the Agawam Senior Center was transformed into a warming center to help those in need. We have lived through some unusual weather for New England this year, with tornados, hurricanes, and even an earthquake. Let's hope the weather gets back to normal for 2012.

Last call: Do you have something you'd like to share with our group? On December 7<sup>th</sup>, we will host our annual holiday meeting. After our pot-luck dinner, we will have time for individual speakers to share tips, ideas, and projects. (See Page 5 for further details.)

We're looking forward to seeing everyone at our next meeting on Wednesday, December 7, 2011 at the Agawam Senior Center.

Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season.

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## Calendar of Events

### **Wednesday, December 7, 2011:**

The monthly meeting for the Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will be held from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts.

Last meeting before the holidays. Come to our "Pot Luck" dinner and enjoy holiday music while you dine. There will also be time for our members to speak. To reserve your spot, please contact us at [westmassgen@gmail.com](mailto:westmassgen@gmail.com) to sign up.

### **Thursday, December 15, 2011:**

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will host a genealogy computer workshop. Individuals are encouraged to bring their research and questions. Workshops 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, December 22, 2011**

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will host a genealogy computer workshop. Individuals are encouraged to bring their research and questions. Workshops 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.

### **Wednesday, January 4, 2012:**

The monthly meeting for the Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will be held from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts.

Cliff McCarthy from the Springfield Museums Genealogy Library will speak to us.

The meeting is free and open to the public. Members are encouraged to bring a friend.

Do you know of an upcoming genealogy event? If so, let us know, and we'll include it in our newsletter.

## Save the Dates

Upcoming meetings for the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society:

**February 1, 2012** - Leslie Huber "Getting the Most out of Familysearch.org."

**March 7, 2012** - Sarah Campbell - "Meet Your Civil War Ancestors"

**April 4, 2012** – Speaker to be determined

**May 2, 2012** – Election of officers; Denise Martinez from Chicopee City Clerk's Office will speak

**June 6, 2012** – Last monthly meeting and "Pot Luck Dinner"

## National Archives

### Free Genealogy and History Lectures

Tues. Dec 6, 2011	2:00 P.M.	The A-Files: Alien Registration Files
Tues. Jan 3, 2012	2:00 P.M.	Census, Passenger Lists, and Naturalization Records
Thurs. Jan 19, 2012	6:00 P.M.	They Came From . . . TBA: Ethnic History & Genealogy
Tues. Feb 7, 2012	2:00 P.M.	Researching African-American and Under Documented Populations
Thurs. Feb 16, 2012	6:00 P.M.	They Came From TBA: Ethnic History & Genealogy
Wed. Feb 22, 2012	10 A.M.	Genealogy for Kids (Gr. 3-8 and chaperones)
Tues. Mar 6, 2012	2:00 P.M.	Introducing the 1940 Census
Thurs. Mar 15, 2012	6:00 P.M.	Equality in Boston's Public Schools: Remembering Morgan v. Hennigan

The workshops take place at the National Archives at Boston, 380 Trapelo Road, Waltham, MA. Reservations Required. Call (866) 406-2379 or e-mail [boston.archives@nara.gov](mailto:boston.archives@nara.gov) to register and for more details. All lectures are free and open to the public. For more information, please see their website: <http://www.archives.gov/northeast/boston/public/workshops.html>

## A-Files and the National Archives

The Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society recently received an e-mail from the National Archives. It contains a good description about A-files, along with some detailed information about the Waltham, MA branch of the National Archives. We have included the information below, and hope you find it helpful.

Records of 20th century immigrants, called Alien Registration Files, or A-Files, were created as a result of the Alien Registration Act, which provided for the registration of all aliens over the age of 14 living in the United States. Originally created as temporary records by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (formerly INS), in 2009 they became permanent records that are preserved by the National Archives (NARA). The total volume of the A-Files is approximately 500,000 cubic feet. However, to protect privacy, the records become available 100 years after a person's date of birth. The A-files and additional records can provide a treasure trove of information about our families and help tell us where we've come from and who we are.

On Tuesday, December 6, 2011, at 2:00 P.M. the National Archives at Boston (Waltham) will feature a free workshop "The A-Files and More: Researching the Alien Registration Files." The workshop, taught by popular archivist and genealogist Walter V. Hickey, is intended for novice to advanced family historians. Tours of the archives will be offered at 1:15 P.M. After the lecture, the public is invited to utilize the resources of the National Archives, and they will be assisted by the archives staff and volunteers.

The stories of our nation and our people are told in the documents maintained in the National Archives. The National Archives in Waltham is one of 14 regional facilities where the public has access to Federal archival records. It is a repository and center for research in genealogy and historical records from Federal agencies and courts in New England. Reference staff is available to assist visitors as they use the electronic databases, microfilm, and original records.

Free public workshops are offered each month. To register for the workshop "The A-Files and More" on December 6th at 2:00 pm, please call toll free 866-406-2379, local 781-663-0121, or email [boston.archives@nara.gov](mailto:boston.archives@nara.gov)

The National Archives is open to the public M, T, W, and F 7 A.M. - 4:30 P.M., Thursdays 7 A.M. - 9 P.M., and the first Saturday of each month 8 A.M. - 4:30 P.M. The NARA is located at 380 Trapelo Road, Waltham, MA.

## WMGS December Meeting

Calling all members: Do you have something you'd like to share with our group? On December 7<sup>th</sup>, we will host our annual holiday meeting. After our pot-luck dinner, we will have time for individual speakers to share tips, ideas, and projects.

We have enough time for 5-6 members to speak for 10-15 minutes. We just ask that members to sign up ahead of time so that we can coordinate the agenda. E-mail Susan Levenson at [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com) to let her know your topic and how much time you will need.

Speakers are asked to provide their own handouts, if necessary. However, after the meeting, we would be happy to send handouts electronically to our members, or post the information on our website.

Pot Luck Dinner: Do you make a special dish for the holidays to celebrate your ethnicity? Perhaps homemade tomato sauce to go with an Italian dish? Maybe you're Polish and know how to make pierogi or golumpki? Whatever your background, feel free to bring your specialty to our Pot Luck Dinner in December.

## Phone Numbers

Please be sure to provide us with your current phone number so that we can try to call you if a meeting needs to be canceled.

We are also collecting cell phone numbers of our members. This will enable us to contact members via text message or phone call if a meeting will be canceled. Just send a text message to [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com) and we'll update our records. If you're not into texting, just send us an e-mail with your cell phone number.

## Marketing

A special thank you to all members who distributed flyers and posters. If you know of additional locations, or places that need a refill, please pick up a poster or a package of flyers at our next meeting. Thanks again for spreading the word and getting our information out into the community.

## Genealogy Websites

By Fran Malone

### ANOTHER CENSUS SOURCE

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

I discovered this month's website in the Family Tree Magazine that I subscribe to. The website is in process of adding the U.S. Census Reports from 1790 to 1930 and shows a reference that 1940 will also be added when the time comes. This site was launched in July 2009 and according to the website the census addition will bring them into more-direct competition with industry leader [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com). [Archives.com](http://Archives.com) is a paid subscription website for only \$39.95, far less than Ancestry.

We want to hear from you. Contact us at [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com) with your hints or website suggestions and we will post them in this column.

## Genealogy Hint

By Fran Malone

Sorry, no hint this month. Instead I would like to take this spot and wish all our members a safe Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, or Happy Holiday season. As we gather with our families to enjoy our festivities, take time to remember your ancestors and if the opportunity rises, maybe even discuss Great Grandpa or Great Grandma. Maybe Grandpa or Grandma can even drop a genealogy hint about Great Grandpa and Great Grandma to the grandchildren as they reflect back on a Christmas from their past. The important thing is be safe regardless as to how you say it or how you celebrate it.

For me and my family in English it's "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year". In the Irish Gaelic language it's **Nollaig Shona agus Athbhliain faoi Mhaise Dhuit.**

# Books: Beyond Your Local Library

By Susan Levenson

Are you looking for a book, but don't want to purchase it? My recent genealogy research led me to a history book I wanted to read. It was an older book which contained some facts and stories about the time period I was researching. It wasn't a book I wanted to own, but I was interested in reading it, if I could get a copy. I went out to <http://www.worldcat.org/> which helps you find the nearest location of a book. The book I wanted was located at Western New England College. As a graduate of WNEC (now known as Western New England University), I have access to this library and can easily borrow materials. This one was easy.

While I was in the worldcat.org website, I noticed a second book by the same author. It focused on the round-trips that our ancestors made between America and Europe from 1880 – 1930. The nearest location for this book was Mount Holyoke College and Smith College. Both are college libraries with specific borrowing rules, and I didn't have access. So, I printed the information from worldcat.org, and took it to my local library. Not only did the reference librarian locate the book, but she also shared some helpful information that I want to pass along:

- Some college libraries charge a fee to borrow materials.
- It may take longer to receive the books, and renewals are not usually an option.
- There is a way to borrow books from public libraries throughout Massachusetts. This method is quicker and less expensive.

I knew that my library card allowed me to borrow materials from libraries within the CW/MARS catalog. This includes most public libraries in Western and Central Massachusetts. However, the "Virtual Catalog" contains books that are available within the state of Massachusetts. Here's how you can do this:

1. Go to <http://www.cwmars.org/>
2. From the "Library Catalogs" drop down box, select "MA Virtual Catalog"
3. Select "Western MA Virtual Catalog Login"
4. Enter your library card number, or the word "guest"
5. Click on the box for "Searching/Requesting"
6. Enter the information about the book (You can search the Virtual Catalog by title, author, subject or ISBN number)

Be sure to check out <http://www.worldcat.org/> . Good luck with your searches.

## Membership

Membership dues extended: Did you miss the October 15<sup>th</sup> deadline for the WMGS annual membership dues? You can turn in your dues at our next meeting on December 7th. Can't make it to our next meeting? Use the coupon below to send us your payment. We appreciate your continued support.

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### Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society Membership Renewal 2011-2012

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERSHIP TYPE:** (Membership fees are listed below. Please select one.)

*Annual dues period is from September 1 to August 31.*

**INDIVIDUAL, \$20** or  **INSTITUTION, \$25**

Please make check payable and mail to:

Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

P.O. Box 418

West Springfield, MA 01090

## New Members

Please welcome the following individuals who joined our society:

**Gilbert Roy**

## 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 workshops 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 January 2012. Please forward your information by December 20, 2011 to Susan Leverson and Fran Malone at: [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com)

### **Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society 2011-2012 Executive Board Members**

President: Fran Malone  
Vice-President: Beckie Cross  
Co-Secretary: Jane Okscin  
Co-Secretary: Marilyn Powers  
Treasurer: Susan Leverson