

February 2013

*A monthly publication
on behalf of the*



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

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

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News

Greetings,

It looks like we are headed for an early Spring, or at least the Groundhog thinks so. It's a great time to forge ahead with your genealogy research, before the nice weather arrives. Check out the following highlights in our newsletter this month:

- Dave Robison joins us for an encore presentation on February 6, 2013 (page 2)
- Upcoming Events (pages 2 and 3)
- Fran Malone shares his Genealogy Hint: Evaluating on-line resources (page 4)
- Susan Levenson explains how to order a copy of your ancestor's Social Security Application (page 5)

We're looking forward to seeing everyone at our next meeting on Wednesday, February 6, 2013.

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Calendar of Events.

Wednesday, February 6, 2013:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will hold their next meeting on Wednesday, February 6, 2013 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts. The meeting is free and open to the public. Members are encouraged to bring a friend.

Encore Presentation: Did you miss our November 2012 meeting? Most members did. So we're bringing back Dave Robison who will speak to us on "Interviewing relatives, young and old." Be sure to check out Dave's website at <http://www.oldbones.co/>

Thursday, February 21, 2013

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, February 28, 2013

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.

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

Save the Dates

Below you will find the 2012-2013 calendar for the WMGS:

March 6, 2013 - Speaker to be determined

April 3, 2013 – Speaker to be determined

May 1, 2013 – Election of officers; Speaker to be determined

June 5, 2013 – Last monthly meeting and dinner

Computer Workshops

Stumped with a research question? Bring your question to our hands-on computer workshop, by Bruce Cortis. During the workshop, you will have an opportunity to ask your question, and use the computer to look for a solution. 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. Mark your calendar:

2013

January 17

January 24

February 21

February 28

March 21

March 28

April 18

April 25

May 16

May 23

June 20

Genealogy Hint: Evaluating Online Sources

By Sharon deBartolo Carmack

Submitted by Fran Malone

This month's genealogy hint was written by Sharon de Bartolo Carmack and was published in the online version of Family Tree Magazine. Her article was short but asked some important questions when looking at a genealogy website:

Can you trust your favorite genealogy Web site? Put it to our test.

Does the site reference original documents?

What are its sources? A database compiled from original documents *may* be more reliable than one compiled from another database or a book. But even those compiled from original records can have transcription problems. It's best to check the original document yourself.

Does the site link to digital images of the original document? Can you view them?

When you look at the original document, do you agree with the transcriber's version? Or do you find a lot of transcription errors?

Who created the database or site? Was it a professional genealogist or another conscientious family historian? If so, the database may be quite reliable. Was it a library or archive that had some quality control over the data being entered? Or is it a commercial site that may have hired inexperienced personnel for data entry, or a volunteer site that may not have much quality control? (This isn't to say that all commercial and volunteer sites are unreliable—but it's a factor to consider.)

Have genealogy publications reviewed the site?

What did the reviewers note were the strengths and weaknesses of the information?

We are still looking for your input on a monthly genealogy hint or genealogy website so email us at westmassgen@gmail.com We want to hear from you.

Genealogy Website: **How to Order a Social Security Application**

By Susan Leverson

Have you been meaning to request a Social Security Application for one of your ancestors? It is now possible to obtain a photocopy of the Original Application for a Social Security Card (SS-5) through an on-line process. So put on your pajamas, and grab your credit card.

What can you expect to find on the Social Security Application?

Name

Address

Date of Birth

Place of Birth

Maiden name

Signature of your ancestor

This information may help you with your family research. It's also a nice piece to add to your family scrapbook. Click here to see a sample:

http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~landon/SSDI/joyce_ssn.jpg

How much does it cost?

The cost is \$27 if you provide the social security number for the individual. Without a social security number, the fee is \$29.

To read about the details of ordering the SS Application, click on this link:

https://secure.ssa.gov/apps9/eFOIA-FEWeb/internet/main.jsp?action=SSA711_Instruction

Are you ready to order? Here's the link:

<https://secure.ssa.gov/apps9/eFOIA-FEWeb/internet/main.jsp>

We hope this information is helpful. As always, we're interested in hearing success stories. Once you receive your information, let us know.

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 February 2013. Please forward your information by February 20, 2013 to Susan Leverson and Fran Malone at: WestMassGen@gmail.com

Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society 2012-2013 Executive Board Members

President: Fran Malone
Vice-President: Beckie Cross
Co-Secretary: Jane Okscin
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