

January 2011

*A monthly publication
on behalf of the*



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

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News

Happy New Year!

As we start a brand new year, here are a few genealogy activities and events to include on your 2011 calendar:

On **Thursday, January 20th**, Bruce Cortis, a member of the WMGS will continue hosting a genealogy computer class at the Agawam Senior Center. He plans to spend a portion of the night showing us the new format and reports for Family Treemaker 2011.

On **Friday, February 4th**, the second season of “Who Do You Think You Are?” will air on NBC at 8 p.m. During the season, we will see celebrities including *Gwyneth Paltrow, Tim McGraw, Rosie O'Donnell, Steve Buscemi, Kim Cattrall, Lionel Richie, Vanessa Williams and Ashley Judd* trace their family histories. For more details visit: <http://www.nbc.com/news/2010/12/16/who-do-you-think-you-are-nbc-announces-the-celebrities-tracing-their-family-trees-on-season-two/>

In 2011, our country marks the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. For the WMGS meeting on **March 2, 2011**, Steve Jendrysik of the Chicopee Historical Society will speak to us about the role that Chicopee played in the war.

So mark your calendars. We're off to an exciting start for 2011. We're looking forward to seeing everyone at our next meeting on Wednesday, January 5, 2011 at the Agawam Senior Center.

Calendar of Events

January 5, 2011:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will hold their next meeting on Wednesday, January 5, 2011. The meeting will be from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts.

A genealogy workshop is scheduled. Bring your research, share your ideas, and ask questions.

Thursday, January 20, 2011

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, January 27, 2011

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.

February 2, 2011:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will hold their next meeting on Wednesday, February 2, 2011. The meeting will be from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts.

Robert McGovern will speak to us

April 6-10, 2011

New England Regional Genealogical Conference

[Exploring New Paths to Your Roots](http://nergc.org/NERGC2011/index.html), 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. <http://nergc.org/NERGC2011/index.html>

Genealogy Hint

By Fran Malone

CITY DIRECTORIES

This month's hint is your city directories which probably one of the most overlooked resources by genealogist. Some directories depending on the location have been around since the 1700's.

The city directory is published every year around June and the information comes from the city census and other resources available to cities and towns.

Generally a city directory will contain an alphabetical list of its citizens, listing the names of the heads of households, their addresses, and occupational information. Sometimes the wife's name will be listed in parentheses or italics following the husband's. Often, dates of deaths of individuals listed in the previous year's directory are listed as well as the names of partners of firms, and when possible, the forwarding addresses or post offices of people who moved to another town. In addition to the alphabetical portion, a city directory may also contain a business directory, street directory, governmental directory, and listings of town officers, schools, societies, churches, post offices, and other miscellaneous matters of general and local interest.

Why use city directories?

City directories are primarily useful for locating people in a particular place and time. They can tell you generally where an ancestor lived and give an exact location for census years. They are also useful for linkage with sources other than censuses.

What is in a city directory?

There are usually several parts to a city directory. The section of most interest to the genealogist, of course, is the alphabetical listing of names, for it is there that you may find your ancestor. Whenever you use a directory, however, it is important to refer to the page showing abbreviations used in the alphabetical section of the directory, usually following the name in each entry. Some abbreviations are quite common, such as h for home or r, indicating residence. There may even be a subtle distinction between r for residents who are related to the homeowner and b for boarders who are not related. Some city directories list adult children who lived with their parents but were working or going to school.

Look for persons of the same surname residing at the same address. If analyzed and interpreted properly, these annual directories can tell you (by implication) which children belong to which household, when they married and started families of their own, and when they established themselves in business. In cases where specific occupation is given, you can search records pertinent to that occupation.

Once an ancestor has been found in a city directory, there are several ways the information can be used to gain access to, or link with, such sources as censuses, death and probate records, church records, naturalization records, and land records.

Where can you find the city directories?

Check with your local library for their local history resources. Every local library has at least their city/town directories available to view. In Springfield, Mass. the History Museum/Genealogy Library has city directories for all the communities in the local area.

In some cases the local city directories won't help you because your ancestor was from "Somewhere Else" USA. If that is the case then do a search for the public library in the city, town, or county that your ancestor came from. Once you find the library do a search for their local history/genealogy resources to see what is available. If city directories are available then look for the "ask the research librarian" and make a request for a search. This also works if the library has old newspapers on microfilm and you request an obituary look up. If you see the "ask the librarian" then the search will not cost you and you can come away with some valuable information. It will cost you a small fee (ex \$2.00) if the librarian finds something that they can scan and send to you.

Genealogy Websites

By Fran Malone

Happy New Year to all our readers and welcome back to a new year of research and preserving our family histories. The Spring of 2011 has Springfield, Mass. hosting a giant genealogy event that I'm sure will raise the interest of family history and the Western Mass. Genealogy Society will be part of it. The event is the New England Regional Genealogical Conference and it will be held April 6th to April 10th.

On Thursday April 7, 2011 the Western Mass. Genealogy Society will join twenty other genealogical, historical and family societies in the foyer in front of the

Sheraton Hotel Ballroom. The fair will be from 5 to 7 PM and give us a chance to meet and mix with conference attendees.

Each participating society will have representatives at tables on which they will display information about their society as well as any publications that they might be making available.

The primary portion of the conference is the exhibitors and the speakers. A few of the exhibitors that you might find interesting to your research are: The Connecticut State Library, National Archives from Pittsfield, Genealogy Society of Vermont, Godfrey Memorial Library, Polish Genealogy Society, and The Irish Ancestral Research Association (TIARA) of Boston. Check out the website at your leisure and save the dates of April 6 to April 10th for enhancing your genealogy research.

New England Regional Genealogical Conference
<http://nergc.org/NERGC2011/index.html>

Please contact us at westmassgen@gmail.com with your questions or suggestions. We want to hear from you and we look forward to hearing from you.

Membership Update

Just a reminder: Haven't paid your dues yet? Dues can be submitted at our next meeting on January 5th, or mailed to our PO Box listed on the Application for Membership.

Please be sure to submit an "Application for Membership" with your dues. This will ensure that we have all of your current information on file, especially those ever-changing e-mail addresses.

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

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 February 2011. Please forward your information by January 20, 2011 to Susan Leverson and Fran Malone at: WestMassGen@gmail.com

Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society 2010-2011 Executive Board Members

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