

January 2014

*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,

The holidays are behind us now, and it is a great time to continue building your family tree. Be sure to check out the following items in our newsletter, which can help you with your family research:

- Upcoming Events (pages 2-4)
- Dave Robison's article: Genealogy Resolutions for 2014 (pages 5-6)
- Janet Curley's article: The Importance of Place in Family Research (pages 6-7)

We're looking forward to seeing everyone at our next meeting on Wednesday, January 8, 2014 at the Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History.

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WMGS Calendar of Events

Wednesday, January 8, 2014:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will hold their next meeting from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History. Please be sure to arrive between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m.

About the archives: In addition to a large collection of French Canadian records, the library has indexes to the Ellis Island passenger records, the Loiselle Index, over 20,000 genealogy books, 6,000 microforms, 25,000 photos and 1.3 million archival documents, as well as diaries, deeds, account books, land transfer documents and photographs.

Location: The Springfield History Library & Archives is located in the Wood Museum of Springfield History (lower level)
21 EDWARDS STREET, SPRINGFIELD, MA 01103

Parking: Free parking is available in the lots on Edwards Street.

For a map of the Springfield Museum Buildings:

http://www.springfieldmuseums.org/the_museums/

Thursday, January 16, 2014:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will host a Genealogy Research Clinic. Individuals are encouraged to bring their research and questions. Clinics 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. Clinics are free for members. There is a \$10 fee per class for non-members.

Thursday, January 23, 2014:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will host a Genealogy Research Clinic. Individuals are encouraged to bring their research and questions. Clinics 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. Clinics are free for members. There is a \$10 fee per class for non-members.

Wednesday, February 5, 2014:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will meet from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts. Kerry Hotaling book signing "What They Endured, What They Wrought."

Save the Dates

Mark your calendars. Below you will find the 2013-2014 events for the WMGS:

February 5, 2014 – Kerry Hotaling book signing “What They Endured, What They Wrought”

March 5, 2014 – Denise Martinez from the Chicopee City Clerk’s office

April 2, 2014 – Gravestone Girls

May 7, 2014 – Election of officers; D Barry Sheldon “Breaking Down Brick Walls” (Tentative remote presentation)

June 4, 2014 – Last monthly meeting and dinner

Genealogy Research Clinics

Join Fran Malone, President of WMGS, and Dave Robison, Treasurer of WMGS and owner of www.oldbones.co for “Genealogy Research Clinics.” Spend some time with genealogy researchers with years of experience using the internet to help get the answers you’re looking for. Time saving research strategies using Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, Google and SteveMorse.org among other sites.

Sessions will be held on the third and fourth Thursdays of the month in the computer room of the Agawam Senior Center. Mark your calendar for the following dates:

2014

January 16

January 23

February 20

February 27

March 20

March 27

April 17

April 24

May 15

May 22

June 19

Special note: If you are planning to attend a Genealogy Research Clinic, please be sure to add your name and phone number to our sign up list. If a clinic needs to be canceled, we will call you.

Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts

Thursday, March 20, 2014, 6:30 PM

<http://www.pgsma.org/>

Mr. Joseph Manning, a former social worker, and historian will speak on **The Lewis Hine Project: Tracking down the lives of child laborers**. Manning will show some of these historic photographs, tell the stories of the immigrant child laborers in them, and talk about the exciting process of searching for descendants. Several of the stories at this presentation will be about Polish children.

FREE. Bring a friend.

Location: Polish Center of Discovery & Learning

33 South Street

Chicopee, MA 01013

413-592-0001

<http://www.polishcenter.net/>

PGSMA 25th Anniversary Conference

Saturday, June 21, 2014, 10 am - 4 pm

Details soon to follow.

Location: Polish Center of Discovery & Learning

33 South Street

Chicopee, MA 01013

413-592-0001

<http://www.polishcenter.net/>

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

Genealogy Research Resolutions for 2014

by Dave Robison, Old Bones Genealogy of New England

Everyone makes resolutions. They're not always dependent on surviving New Year's Eve! That's mostly because we all make genealogical resolutions year round. "I'm going to organize those census records" or "These birth certificates should be filed with the correct families"... The list goes on.

So maybe it's time to make a real, honest to goodness, I'm-going-to-do-it-this-time, genealogical resolution. Great! Now where do we start? That's the hardest question to ask yourself most of the time. In other words, what are your priorities? It's a new year, so maybe it's a good time to decide the absolutely most important project that you've dreaded and, as a result, put off for weeks or maybe months. It could be a result of what I'd call "pin-ball research". You know how that works. You finally find the census record for your great uncle who lived in a small town in West Virginia. But before you get a chance to transcribe those precious tidbits of information, you happen to notice another family that sounds familiar. So off you go, checking out a family that has nothing to do with your great uncle. But it's really interesting! So you start tracking the "interesting" family---"I won't forget to get back to Uncle Whatever"---then you find a newspaper article from the depression era that has a very pitiful story that you can't take your eyes off. And then... "How'd I get here?" Here's a suggestion: Finish Uncle Whatever, but make notes on what it was that ALMOST distracted you so you can get back to that later.

It's a matter of discipline and focus. If you're like most folks, it's hard to be strictly disciplined with regard to scheduling a regular time to tend to your research. Life has a tendency to interfere! But we're not talking about punching a time clock here; we're just trying to put aside a block of time and when that time is over, it's over! There's another day with another block of time to deal with another priority.

If you're like me, you have a gazillion projects with twice as many sticky notes and pads of paper with "important" stuff. I know that I need to set aside some time to sort through it all, save what needs to be saved and toss anything that's just been hanging around too long, making that big pile on my desk look too daunting to tackle. I've done it before and it is past the time to do it again. I know that I always feel better and I ALWAYS find notes and folders and whatnot that I've been hunting for.

To sum it all up, resolve to clear the decks, organize, file, purge and prioritize. It's always easier to work when your head is clear and your goals are clearer. Tackle one project and one element of that project at a time. Track your progress with research notes describing where you've been so that you don't have to retrace your steps weeks down the road. You won't be fretting about whether you did this or that because you've written down the steps you've taken with each project.

More to come! This article will appear in my blog at www.oldbonesearch.com as well as more articles with research tips, web sites and other genealogical news.

Find the "follow" button and get an e-mail whenever a fresh post goes up on line.

Coming up: What can we do now that a new law has privatized the Social Security Death Index which has always been a valuable research tool?

The Importance of Place in Family Research

by Janet Curley, author of genealogyaddiction.com

As a volunteer at the Holyoke History Room and archives at the Holyoke Public Library, some of the most requested pieces of information I see are about street names and history of houses. This kind of research can add a lot of dimension to one's family history beyond names and dates on the family tree.

In my own family research in Holyoke, the archivist, Eileen Crosby, directed me to the Richards maps of Holyoke of 1911 at the Holyoke History Room to see exactly where my great grandfather had his home. This map has the names of homeowners and businesses printed right on the buildings which are drawn in detail. This helps locate the building despite the possibility of house number changes over the years. These house number changes happen with some regularity, so when we are trying to locate the ancestral home, it is wise to ask the local library about both street name and house number changes. In the case of my great grandfather, the house number did change and the old map was helpful in finding the correct building.

I have started to explore another branch of my family in Northampton where I have the pleasure of trying to determine if a street in Florence is actually named after my family who lived there for a few generations. Ryan Road in Florence was originally named West Street. My father had said many years ago that it had later been named after his mother's family, the Ryans. As I researched the family, I questioned this assertion as that family were mill workers and carpenters, hardly the land owning, community leader types. My research is not yet completed, but I have contacted the archivist, Elise Bernier-Feeley, in Northampton Forbes Library

to see what she can tell me about the street name changes. Elise wrote back a lovely history of this process. She noted that the street names changes in 1947 to assist both the post office and first responders to be better able to locate homes where there were duplicate street names in Northampton, Florence and Leeds. She looked at local maps and directories and identified my Ryans as land owners on West St. and were likely to be the Ryans for which the street is now named. The streets were often re-named for the people most associated with the area, despite their rank in the community. I have an appointment with Elise to consult the maps and she has directed me to go to the city planning department to see if there might be minutes from the meetings held in the community to name the streets.

In researching your own family, do not neglect their place of residence or work! It can grant you a bit of insight into their place in their community. Also, when researching this information, take care to understand the changes in house and street names that happen in the community. Reach out to the local library, historian, or city government for important information that will make your research more accurate.

A note about the author: Janet Curley is the author of a blog called “Genealogy Addiction. Click here to read more:

<http://genealogyaddiction.com>

Be sure to click enter your e-mail address, and click the “Follow” button, so that you’ll receive Janet’s newest posts.

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 2014. Please forward your information by January 20, 2014 to Susan Leverson at: WestMassGen@gmail.com

Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society 2013-2014 Executive Board Members

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