

March 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>

E-Mail: WestMassGen@gmail.com

News

Greetings,

With so much snow on the ground, it's hard to believe that Spring will arrive on March 21st. In the meantime, there are plenty of genealogy events and classes to attend. Take a look at the Calendar of Events on pages 2-3 for more details.

Just a reminder: Our February Newsletter is now available on our website. Copies are located at the top of our "Newsletter" tab.

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

If you missed an episode of "Who Do You Think You Are?" on NBC, it's possible to watch the full episode on-line. Click on the following link for more information: <http://www.nbc.com/who-do-you-think-you-are/>

We're looking forward to seeing everyone at our next meeting on Wednesday, March 2, 2011 at the Agawam Senior Center.

Calendar of Events

March 2, 2011:

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

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

Thursday, March 17, 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, March 24, 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.

April 6, 2011:

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

Jean Nudd from the National Archives in Pittsfield, Mass. will be our guest speaker this month.

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>

Genealogical Workshops at the National Archives at Pittsfield

<http://www.archives.gov/northeast/pittsfield/public/workshops.html>

- | | | |
|----------|------------|--|
| March 2 | 10:00 a.m. | Beginning Your Genealogy Research at the National Archives |
| March 9 | 10:00 a.m. | Using Federal Census Records |
| March 22 | 2:30 p.m. | Finding Your Immigrant Ancestors at the National Archives |
| March 8 | 10:00 a.m. | Examining the 1940 Census |
| March 16 | 1:00 p.m. | Genealogy on the Internet |
| March 24 | 10:00 a.m. | Researching Irish American Ancestors |
| March 29 | 10:00 a.m. | Researching French Ancestors – Part 1 |
| March 29 | 1:30 p.m. | Researching French Ancestors – Part 2 |

The workshops will be offered at the Regional Archives building, located at 10 Conte Drive in Pittsfield MA. The workshops are free and are approximately one hour in length. Call (413) 236-3600 to register.

Membership Update

Just a reminder: Haven't paid your dues yet? Dues can be submitted at our next meeting on March 2nd, 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

Genealogy Hint

By Fran Malone

This month's hint is something that has been heard more than once but it's worth repeating. When doing our searches it's easy to get caught up with just the surname and sources can easily be overlooked so remember check for sources, not just surnames. I found this hint on the www.genealogy.com website that I passed on to everyone in one of our previous newsletters.

Genealogy records and documents are easy to find online, but it is not uncommon for genealogists to overlook unknown resources in favor of sites they use on a regular basis. Even if you keep good notes and try to stay on top of new sites and databases, there are new resources coming online every day -- and not all of them are advertised. This is why your search for ancestors should always include a review of known resources and a search for new ones (i.e. explore the website for each of the suggestions on this list!).

It is important to note that the order and importance given to the resources in each of these lists will vary by country. Some countries, such as the United States, create and collect the bulk of their genealogical records at the county level. Others, such as Australia, maintain the most useful records at the state level. In France, important records are found at the departmental level. The goal here is to search for resources at all levels of government applicable to your country of interest - searching, for example, for records at the town/village/parish, as well as at the county/parish, state/department/district and even national level. A search may also start at one level (e.g. local church) and then end up at another level (e.g. diocese, because that is where the records of the local church are now stored). The goal is to research the availability of resources from each repository. These lists are not complete by any means, just examples of repositories/resources that you don't want to miss in your search.

At the Town/Village/City Level:

- Parish or church records
- City or municipal archives
- Local library
- Local newspaper(s) (check the newspaper website, as well as online [historical newspaper databases](#))
- Local genealogical or historical society
- City/town hall or record office
- Local cemeteries

At the County/Parish Level:

In many countries, the majority of useful genealogical records are maintained at the county or parish level. This could also be the district, department or some other political or geographical divisions.

County courthouse (check the Web site of each court division, i.e. Register of Deeds)

County genealogical and/or historical society

County library (county-level libraries often have larger genealogical collections than small town libraries)

At the State and/or Regional Level:

In some countries many records are collected and maintained at the state level. In other areas, town or county records may have been transferred to the state level for safekeeping.

State archives (often a great source for online digitized records/indexes)

State historical society

State genealogical society

University libraries (these may be in neighboring states) - especially good for manuscript collections

Regional libraries (or those with regional genealogy and local history collections)

At the National Level:

Records maintained at the national level vary greatly by country. In the U.S., for example, the census and many military records are found at the national level, while in France these are often found at the Department level. England has a nationwide index of civil vital records, while in Australia these are found at the state level.

National Archives (or Record Office, etc.)

National genealogical society

National lineage organizations (such as Daughters of the American Revolution in the U.S.)

For records that aren't online, one of the best ways to start your search for available records is to browse the [Family History Library Catalog](#) by place to see what has been microfilmed. Again, be search to search at the town/city level, the county/parish level, the state/district level, and the national level as various records

will be found at all levels. The FHLC does not include ALL available records by any means, but it is generally a good place to start.

We look forward to your feedback and suggestions so please email us at WestMassGen@gmail.com

Genealogy Websites

By Fran Malone

This month's genealogy website comes to us by the Department of Veteran's Affairs. As a Veteran I like to keep our Veteran's in our thoughts and to help those in genealogy find their lost Veteran. This is National Grave locator on someone's relative that was a Veteran. You won't find all of our Veterans on this site but it's worth the search.

THE NATIONWIDE GRAVE LOCATOR FOR VETERANS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NGL_v1

Search for burial locations of veterans and their family members in VA National Cemeteries, state veterans cemeteries, various other military and Department of Interior cemeteries, and for veterans buried in private cemeteries when the grave is marked with a government grave marker.

The Nationwide Gravesite Locator includes burial records from many sources. These sources provide varied data; some searches may contain less information than others. Information on veterans buried in private cemeteries was collected for the purpose of furnishing government grave markers, and we do not have information available for burials prior to 1997.

Erroneous information can be corrected, but we are unable to add to the information contained in the existing record. If your search returns incorrect information about a veteran or family member buried in a national cemetery, please contact the cemetery directly to discuss your findings. To report incorrect information about a veteran buried in a private cemetery, click on "Contact Us" at the top of this page. Names cannot be added to the listing if a government grave marker was not furnished for the grave, or if the existing government grave marker was furnished prior to 1997.

For more complete information concerning individual records, we suggest you contact the cemetery or local officials.

The [American Battle Monuments Commission](#) provides information on service members buried in overseas cemeteries. If you cannot locate the person you are searching for, please provide the following information on each individual:

- Full name, including any alternate spellings
- Date and place of birth
- Date and place of death
- State from which the individual entered active duty
- Military service branch

Most requests take approximately four weeks for a reply. Be sure to include your return mailing address, phone number or Internet e-mail address with your request and send it to:

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery Administration (41C1)
Burial Location Request
810 Vermont Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20420

Election of Officers

Volunteers Wanted: At our upcoming meeting on May 4, 2011 we will elect the 2011-2012 officers of the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society (WMGS). If you are interested in working as an officer, please see Fran Malone at our next meeting on March 2nd, or contact us via e-mail at WestMassGen@gmail.com Any member of the WMGS is welcome to run for the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer.

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 April 2011. Please forward your information by March 18, 2011 to Susan Leverson and Fran Malone at: WestMassGen@gmail.com

Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society 2010-2011 Executive Board Members

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