

March 2012

*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](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com)

### News

Greetings,

There are only a few more weeks of winter left, and it's a great time to continue your genealogy research. We have some terrific events coming up, and there are a few articles in this month's newsletter with ideas for your research:

If you have Irish ancestors in your family tree, then you'll want to read our article on the Irish Cultural Center at Elms College. (See page 4.)

The 2012-2013 year will mark the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society. (See page 4 for more details.)

Fran Malone has a few Genealogy Websites and Hints for you. (See pages 6-8.)

#### **Mark your calendar for our upcoming meetings:**

<b>April 4, 2012</b>	Field Trip: Family History Center, Ludlow, MA (see page 5 for details)
<b>May 2, 2012</b>	Election of officers; Denise Martinez from Chicopee City Clerk's Office will speak
<b>June 6, 2012</b>	Last monthly meeting: open mic and "Pot Luck Dinner"

We're looking forward to seeing everyone at our next meeting on Wednesday, March 7, 2012.

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## Calendar of Events

### Wednesday, March 7, 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. The meeting is free and open to the public. Members are encouraged to bring a friend.

Sarah Campbell will be our speaker. Her topic, "Meet Your Civil War Ancestors" is a journey through the various records and sources that can be used to find information about Civil War-era ancestors. Using a case study of the family of Holyoke resident Richard Wall we will explore how facts found in government documents can add detail to a name or event and bring a story to life. Sara Campbell has been researching her family for over 20 years and has taught topics in genealogy at Greenfield and Holyoke Community Colleges. She is a Director of the Polish Genealogy Society of Massachusetts.

### Thursday, March 15, 2012 and March 22, 2012:

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, April 4, 2012:

The monthly meeting for the Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will be held from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the **Family History Center located at 584 West Street in Ludlow, Massachusetts. Please note the change in location for our meeting this month.** The meeting is free and open to the public. Members are encouraged to bring a friend.

Pat and Ralph Welliver will make a presentation and we will tour the facility. Afterwards, members can use the microfilm room. **Note:** If there is something in particular you want to research, please be sure to order the microfilm a month or two prior to our April meeting.

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

# National Archives

## Free Genealogy and History Lectures

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
Mon. Apr 2, 2012	9 A.M.	The 1940 Census is Released Today!
Tues. Apr 3, 2012	2 P.M.	Introduction to Genealogy
Wed. Apr 16, 2012	10 A.M.	History for Kids (Gr. 3-8 & chaperones): Patriots' Day
Thur. Apr 19, 2012	6 P.M.	Patriots' Day. Author William Fowler: American Crisis: George Washington and the Dangerous Two Years 1781-1783
Tues. May 1, 2012	2 P.M.	Genealogy Research: What's Online; What's Not Online
Thurs. May 17, 2012	6 P.M.	Navigating the US Census, 1790-1940

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. 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>

The National Archives is open to the public M, T, W, and F 7:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Thursdays 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m., and the first Saturday of each month 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

## Election of Officers

At our upcoming meeting on May 2, 2012 we will elect the 2012-2013 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 7th, or contact us via e-mail at [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com)

Any member of the WMGS is welcome to run for the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer.

## Irish Cultural Center at Elms College

By Susan Levenson

Do you have Irish Ancestors in your family tree? Then you might be interested in the Irish Cultural Center located at the Elms College in Chicopee, Massachusetts. In honor of St. Patrick's Day this month, we're highlighting this cultural center, which houses various genealogy materials. In addition, the center also promotes Irish culture and will host the following events:

On March 11, 2012, the Irish Cultural Center and the Sons of Erin will partner to host an Irish ceili. There will be music, dancing and light refreshments. The event is free, and will be held from 2-4 p.m. at the Sons of Erin on 22 William Street in Westfield, Massachusetts.

On Wednesday, April 11, 2012 at 7 p.m. in the Elms College Alumnae Library Theater, the Irish Cultural Center will offer a presentation on the one hundredth anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic. The ship was built in Belfast by Irishmen and designed by an Irishman.

For more details about the Irish Cultural Center, and the upcoming events, visit their website: [www.irish-cairde.org/content/list-events](http://www.irish-cairde.org/content/list-events)

## WMGS to Celebrate 40 Years

February 11, 2013 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the incorporation of the Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society. The 2012-2013 year will be a time to celebrate and showcase our organization. Do you have any suggestions? Would you like to get involved? We need your help. We are looking for:

- suggestions for dynamic speakers
- WMGS volunteers to speak to the community
- ideas on how to involve local high school or college students
- individuals to coordinate events
- additional ways to mark our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Bring your thoughts and ideas to our next meeting, or contact Susan Levenson or Fran Malone at [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com)

## Donation Received

Special thanks to Sue Peck from Illinois who recently donated multiple rolls of microfilm containing information relative to Western Massachusetts. Fran Malone, who is Sue Peck's cousin, compiled a listing of all of the items:

1. Index (soundex) of the 1900 Census for Massachusetts.
2. Index (soundex) of the 1920 Census for Massachusetts
3. Microfilm of the 1900 Hampden County Census that includes the following Springfield, Ludlow, Montgomery, Monson, Palmer, Russell, Southwick, Longmeadow, Holyoke, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, and Granville.
4. Microfilm of the 1910 Hampden County Census that includes Palmer, Westfield, Southwick, West Springfield, and Part of Springfield
5. Microfilm that has the Hesser Family and the Davis Family - The film shows dates back to the Mayflower.
6. Two CD's from ancestry that has the 1810 Census Index and the Mass. Vital Record from 1690-1890
7. Eleven CD's from Heritage Quest that have the Mass. Census for 1860, 1870, 1880, and 1920. Also included in this group is a CD for the 1870 Census showing the states of Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Ohio.

The CDs can be used on the computers at the Agawam Senior Center. Microfilm needs to be signed out, and can be viewed at the Agawam Public Library. Again, thank you, Sue, for your generous contribution. Our members certainly appreciate these materials, and will put them to good use.

## Has your e-mail address changed?

Please let us know if you have changed your e-mail address. We want to make sure that you continue to receive all of our updates, meeting reminders and electronic newsletters. Just send your name and new e-mail address to us at

[WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com)

# Genealogy Websites

By Fran Malone

Do you have a Civil War Ancestor in your family? This is a question that many of us ask ourselves when we begin our research. It's actually a question that pertains to any of our war veteran's and it's always rewarding when a war veteran is found. This month's speaker, Sara Campbell, will discuss the Civil War with her topic "Knowing your Civil War Ancestor".

Each state that fought in the Civil War has at least one website with historical information and there are numerous other websites that can be referred to. Many of our French ancestors that immigrated from Quebec fought for the State of Vermont and this includes my wife's Great-Great Grandfather Philip Bovat. The website [www.vermontcivilwar.org](http://www.vermontcivilwar.org) known as Vermont in the Civil War has the Units, battles, and the names of the men that fought. The website [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) which is a subscription website has the different civil war records on the individual soldiers. Another good site to look at is [www.civilwarhome.com/cwsites.htm](http://www.civilwarhome.com/cwsites.htm) This website is titled Civil War sites on the internet. Should you check this site out click on (1) Gettysburg Photographs, (2) Photo Galleries, (3) Day 2 Battlefield, (4) Wright Ave/20th Maine. The 20th Maine, the flank of the Union Army, fought at the battle of Little Round Top and was supported by the 5th Vermont Infantry which my wife's Great-Great Grandfather was in.

I recommend the following two Civil War movies that pertain to the 20th Maine. The first movie is "Gods and Generals" which takes in Fredericksburg among the several battles. The other movie is "Gettysburg" which happened 7 months after the battle of Fredericksburg and details the importance of 20th Maine at Gettysburg.

**Census Update:** The 1940 Census Report is fast approaching. Start thinking of who you want to find and think about the following two websites. On April 2nd at 9 a.m. the National Archives will release the 1940 Census and it can be viewed at: [www.1940census.archives.gov](http://www.1940census.archives.gov) I'm not sure if there will be a searchable index with this site though. As time gets closer then more details will be available. The website [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) will post the 1940 Census about mid-April and according to them there will be a searchable index. Ancestry will give free access to the 1940 Census for one year.

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:

## Check Your Real Sources for Information

By Fran Malone

As time goes by it gets easier to find information (records/documents/surnames) online and many of us can get caught up in the easy search but let us not forget where the real sources are. The real sources of information can be found at your local, county, state, and national level of governments but does that mean you'll find what you are looking for. Unfortunately the answer to that is no, so you then have to figure in the church/parish at the local level at least.

Two good examples for this are births in my family line. My Grandfather on my mother's side was born in North Adams, Mass. in 1879 but does not have a birth record with the State. The only record of his birth is his baptism with the church which gives his birthdate as well as his baptism date. The same goes for my Grandmother on my mother's side. She was born in Portland, Maine in 1886 and it was not recorded with the state. Her birth was recorded with her baptism at the church in Portland. Below is a list of resources that I've checked in Massachusetts as well as other states. An asterisk (\*) is next to the ones that I've used and had success with. Remember it's a guide/tool that will help with your search techniques.

### Town/Village/City Level

1. Parish or church records\*
2. City or municipal archives
3. Your Local library\*
4. The Local newspapers\*
5. A Local genealogical or historical society\*
6. City/town hall or record office\*
7. Your local cemeteries (especially if one has an office)\*
8. A Funeral Home (records might still be on file)\*

### The County Level

1. County courthouse (Register of Deeds)\*
2. County genealogical and/or historical society\*
3. County library\*
4. LDS Library\*

### The State Level

1. State Archives\*
2. State historical society
3. State genealogical society
4. University libraries (good for manuscript collections)
5. Regional libraries (local history collections)\*

### The National Level

1. National Archives (or Record Office, etc.)\*
2. National Library (used in Ireland)\*
3. National genealogical society
4. National lineage organizations (DAR for example)

What has worked for you in your research? We would like to hear from you with your hints, which could be posted here to help others. Contact us at [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com)

## Membership Update

We are so pleased with our membership drive for the 2011 - 2012 year. Most members have already renewed their memberships. We are happy to report that at last count, we have added 20 brand new members this year. Thank you to all of our members for making our society a success.

There's still time to join. You can turn in your dues at our next meeting on Wednesday, March 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:

**Ellen Leahy-Pile**

**William McMahon**

**Debra Windoloski**

## 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 April 2012. Please forward your information by March 20, 2012 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