

March 2013

*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,

We are excited to announce plans for our upcoming **Open House**. WMGS member Bruce Cortis is working as the chairperson of the event, which will be held on **Saturday, April 6, 2013** at the Agawam Senior Center from 10 - 3. For more details on the event, please see page 4.

Below are some additional highlights in our newsletter this month:

- Upcoming Events (pages 2-4)
- Marketing Volunteers needed to distribute flyers (page 6)
- Election of Officers coming up in May (page 6)
- Fran Malone websites for Irish ancestry (page 7)

We're looking forward to seeing everyone at our next meeting on Wednesday, March 6, 2013. Dave Robison from www.oldbones.co will present "**Getting the most out of Ancestry.com**"

Calendar of Events

Wednesday, March 6, 2013:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will hold their next meeting on Wednesday, March 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.

Dave Robison from www.oldbones.co will present "**Getting the most out of Ancestry.com**"

Thursday, March 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, March 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.

Thursday, March 21, 2013, 6:30 PM

Spring Meeting of the Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts

"Locating Family Records in Poland"

Join us at the Family History Center in Ludlow to explore the resources available on site and on-line. Pat Welliver, a volunteer at the center and experienced researcher, will guide us through the holdings of the LDS. Joseph Kielec is a PGSM member who has had recent success with the Polish vital records, microfilmed by the LDS. He will illustrate the techniques he used to locate records of his family in the village of Padew in the county of Mielec, and to chart his family back to 1801. Bring the name of one of the villages that your ancestors emigrated from and we will show you how to see if there are church records for you to search for your family. FREE. Bring a friend! Location: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Family History Center , 584 West Street, Ludlow, MA 01056 Phone: 413-583-2224

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:

April 3, 2013 – Speaker to be determined

May 1, 2013 – Election of officers; Speaker Alan Doyle Horbal, an adjunct professor at Williams College and a 12 year volunteer at the former NARA Center in Pittsfield will speak with us about what's available on line and at the Pittsfield Athenaeum.

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

Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

40th Anniversary - Open House

Agawam Senior Center
954 Main St.
Agawam, Ma.

**Saturday, April 6th, 2013
10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.**

Come celebrate our organization's 40 years of genealogical family research and visit with our members who will have examples of research they have done.

Additionally, there will be presentations on genealogical research tips, examples of Web Sites available, genealogy programs for documenting your work and projects our members have undertaken.

Featured Presentations:

10:15 A.M. Bruce Cortis - "Michael J. Dowling – Blizzard Boy"
11:30 A.M. Dave Robison, Oldbones.co - "Tips & Techniques for Enhancing & Improving your Web Searches"
12:45 P.M. TBD – general Q. & A.
2:00 P.M. Roundtable Panel Discussion with WMGS Researchers

Free Admission - Open to Public

Genealogy Hint: Four Tips for Finding Your Immigrant Ancestors

by Fran Malone

Not finding your ancestor in genealogy records? The name you're searching for is probably the issue. Your ancestor may have changed his surname after immigration, or English speaking clerks may have translated it incorrectly. If you are looking for Sears then check Sayres, Sayers, or in Canada Cyr. In Poland the name Wietecha may have become Witeka for example. Here are some tips to help you with the name changes and translations.

- 1. Watch for regional customs.** In Germany around Ostfriesland you may find surnames taken from the father's given name. For example, Peter Hansen's offspring would have the last name Petersen, a combination of the first name Peter and "sen" from the last name Hansen. In Quebec you come across a lot of "dit" names, dit meaning of or from. The of or from could be an area the family lived in and often children in the same family would take one of the names as their surname. Example Laniel dit Desrosiers: Members from the same family would go by Laniel and some by Desrosiers, hence creating two surnames to search.
- 2. If an immigrant's name is different in US records than in those of his homeland, the change happened after he immigrated.** Ellis Island officials didn't write names, they merely checked the passenger list that was created at the port of departure. Your ancestor may have adopted an American-sounding name as a way to identify with his new home and avoid unwanted sentiments that might be cast on them.
- 3. Don't use census records alone to conclude an ancestor changed the spelling of his or her name.** Remember people didn't write their own names on censuses. They (or a family member, or even a neighbor) gave their names to the census enumerator, who wrote them down. One census enumerator may write Müller, another Mueller and another Miller. Even within the same document, such as a will, you might find a name spelled different ways. Note all name variations you find and don't limit your research to the most common spelling.

4. North Americans typically use middle names as first names. Looking for the name Thomas John Malone and can't find him. Make note that his middle name is listed as John. In Ireland and other European Countries people often went by their middle names and they carried that tradition to America. Try looking in the vital records for a John Thomas Malone born around the same time you expected Thomas John Malone to have been born.

We are always 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.

Marketing: Volunteers Needed

In order to promote our open house on April 6, we are planning to distribute flyers to local libraries, city clerk's offices and genealogy research facilities. If you would like to help, please pick up a package of flyers at our March meeting.

Election of Officers

At our upcoming meeting on May 1, 2013 we will elect the 2013-2014 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 6th, 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.

Genealogy Websites: Our Irish Heritage

by Fran Malone

"Beannachtal na Feile Padraig" translated to "Blessings of St. Patrick's Day Upon You." For those of you that prefer the simple greeting, "Happy St. Patrick's Day" to you. This month I'd like to share a few of my favorite Irish websites and hopefully they can be a help to you or someone that you know with Irish Heritage.

1. <http://titheapplotmentbooks.nationalarchives.ie/search/tab/index.jsp> - This website will assist you in searching you ancestor in Ireland around the 1828 time period. The Tithes were a tax on agricultural produce which was payable by the occupiers of agricultural land. The only family name listed was the family head or the one paying the Tithe. If you have a general idea of where your ancestor was then this will help narrow it down even more.
2. <http://askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/index.xml> - A good site for searching your ancestor during the 1848-1864 time period in Ireland. This site will help locate the next generation in Ireland from the Tithe Applotment Books. Again it only gives the name of the family head but if you have a good general idea of your ancestor line this site will help in placing him in the area of where you came from. You can also print copies of the Griffiths Valuation off.
3. <http://www.irishgenealogy.ie/> - This website was released in November 2010 and it has the births and marriages for Dublin, Carlow, Cork, and Kerry. This is a great site for finding your family if you have history in those counties.
4. <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/search/> - This link will bring you to the Ireland National Archives search blocks for the 1901 and 1911 Ireland Census. If you were able to find your ancestors in the Tithe Applotment Books and the Griffiths Valuation then this will be the next step in tracking your family members in Ireland.

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 March 2013. Please forward your information by March 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
Co-Secretary: Marilyn Powers
Treasurer: Susan Leverson