

October 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>

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News

Greetings,

Fall is officially here and it's a great time to continue your genealogy research.

- Check out the upcoming genealogy events. (Pages 2-3)
- Membership to WMGS for the 2012-2013 is off to a fantastic start. (Page 5)
- Can you help distribute flyers in the community? (Page 5)
- Read about our genealogy website for this month. (Page 7)
- Check out our Genealogy Hint. (Page 8)

We're looking forward to seeing everyone at our first meeting on Wednesday, October 3, 2012 at the Agawam Senior Center.

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Calendar of Events.

Wednesday, October 3, 2012:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will hold their first meeting on Wednesday, October 3, 2012. The meeting will be from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts.

Sara Campbell will speak to us on the topic of Overlooked Municipal Records. Her presentation will cover useful information that can be found in the reports of the boards or committees, as well as records kept by local towns.

October is Family History Month, so members are encouraged to bring a friend to our meeting.

Thursday, October 18, 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.

Thursday, October 25, 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, November 7, 2012:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will hold their next meeting on Wednesday, November 7, 2012. The meeting will be from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts.

Dave Robison from www.oldbones.co will speak to us on “Interviewing relatives, young and old.”

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:

December 5, 2012 - "Pot Luck" dinner and holiday music while you dine

January 2, 2013 – Field Trip to Springfield History Library and Archives

February 6, 2013 – 40th Anniversary of WMGS Incorporation

March 6, 2013 - Speaker to be determined

April 3, 2013 – Speaker to be determined

May 1, 2013 – Election of officers; Speaker to be determined

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:

2012

September 20

September 27

October 18

October 25

November 15

December 20

December 27

2013

January 17

January 24

February 21

February 28

March 21

March 28

April 18

April 25

May 16

May 23

June 20

Thursday, October 25, 2012, 6:30 PM

Fall Meeting of the Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts

Polish Center of Discovery & Learning, 33 South Street, Chicopee, MA

Overlooked Municipal Records

Our genealogy research begins with records of births, marriages and deaths, but finding out what our ancestors did between those dates helps us understand their lives. Recent immigrants may not have held public offices, but other useful information can be found in the reports of the boards or committees in the town where they lived. They may have worked building roads or sewers, or received assistance in hard times. Sara Campbell will present a talk on what kind of information may be gleaned from records kept by local towns. Sara has been researching her own family history for over 20 years, including the Szymanowicz and Zawacki families in Easthampton and Northampton. She recently began a working at the Department of Public Works in Greenfield and can often be found in the vault in Town Hall thumbing through the dusty records. For more information about this event and for directions, please see: <http://www.pgsm.org>

WMGS at the Library

October is Family History Month. Since the mission of our society is to promote the research and documentation of family ancestry and history, we will host several outreach programs in the community.

During the month of October, members of our society have volunteered to speak at local libraries in Western Massachusetts. Members will discuss how to organize genealogy files. Information on genealogy websites will also be provided to those attending. The following libraries have been scheduled:

Agawam – October 6, 2012

Wilbraham – November 19, 2012

Facebook

We are officially on Facebook! Check out our page for details on our society, upcoming events, and news. Be sure to “like” us, so that you will receive postings of new information. Click here to view our page:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Western-Massachusetts-Genealogical-Society/308787969219252?ref=hl>

Membership Update

September 2012 was a phenomenal month for membership. We collected dues from 32 individuals. Of these, 5 were brand new members, and 2 were people who were members in the past, but not last year. We also have members across the country. Although they cannot attend the monthly meetings, they enjoy being part of our society. Welcome back everyone! Thank you so much for your support. We are thrilled to have such a vibrant start to our year.

Marketing

Will you be out in the community this fall? Volunteers are needed to distribute flyers to local libraries, city clerk's offices and genealogy research facilities. The following places were covered in September:

Agawam Public Library
Agawam Town Hall
Hampden Senior Center
Westfield Public Library
Wilbraham Public Library

Traveling to a place not on the list? Pick up a package of flyers at our October meeting.

Officer Update

Special thanks to Jane Okscin who has returned as Secretary of our society. We look forward to working with you. ☺

Membership Dues

Just a reminder: WMGS annual membership dues should be paid by October 15th. Dues can be submitted at our next meeting. Can't make it to our next meeting? Use the coupon below to send us your payment.

We appreciate your continued support. We rely on our membership funds to provide quality speakers throughout the year.

Reasons to Join our Society

1. Meet people with similar interests of family history and genealogy
2. Attend monthly meetings to hear professional speakers
3. Receive assistance from our members on your family research
4. Attend our genealogy computer workshops held twice per month
5. Share our library of resources including books and cds

Did someone from WMGS help you with your research in the past? Even if you can't attend our meetings, please consider renewing your membership so that our society is available to assist with future research questions.

Thank you for your continued support.

Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society Membership Renewal 2012-2013

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

Genealogy Websites

By Fran Malone

Contributed by Donna Brown

At the September meeting we had Donna Brown, a representative from the Hampden County Registry of Deeds Office. She spoke to us on the topic of "Land Records" and what information you can obtain for your genealogy research. She informed us that they are trying to put the land records on microfilm for research but have a long way to go. At the moment they have images of records from 1951 and 1956 on microfilm. The 1956 images are also indexed.

Donna contributed the website www.archive.org for those interested in searching for information on railroads, bridges, maps, and histories of cities/towns to name a few topics.

We checked out the website, and were amazed to find the land records for the city of Chicopee along with maps and the history of Chicopee.

Follow these steps to access the site:

1. Go to: <http://www.archive.org/>
2. In the search box, type in "Hampden County," "Suffolk County," or "Berkshire County" and you will get a selection of records/topics for the county you choose.
3. You can also go directly to what you're looking for by typing the topic in the search block. I selected the following topics: Boston, Chicopee Manufacturing, Boston and Maine Railroad, Chicopee River Dam, and the Hoosac Tunnel to see what information could be obtained.

This website will help you with the records from where your ancestor may have lived or where he worked but it won't help with the actual land deed. To obtain that specific "land deed," you'll still need to contact the Hampden County Registry of Deeds Office, or the county in which your ancestor lived. The Hampden County Registrar's Office is located in the Hampden County Court House in Springfield. Some of the older records from Hampshire County are located in the Hampden County Registry of Deeds Office.

Genealogy Hint: Newspaper Obituaries

By Fran Malone

We all have our little hints that have helped us with our own research. Please contact us at WestMassGen@gmail.com and share your hints as well as your suggestions. Your hints or suggestions will then appear in this section to help others that might be having difficulty finding their ancestors.

This month's hint is on newspaper obituaries. Newspaper obituaries can provide the following valuable information to your family's history:

1. The place of birth, age, and the parents' names
2. If immigrated then how many years in country.
3. The city/town and length of time residing in community
4. The place of employment
5. The surviving members of the family by name and in most cases the order of birth. Order of birth would include siblings and spouses and his/her own children. Would also indicate if spouse was pre-deceased and when spouse died.
6. The date, day, and place of death.
7. The funeral home, date of burial, and the name of the cemetery.

Where can you find the old obituaries? First of all check with your local library to see if they have the old newspapers on microfilm. If your ancestor resided in the Springfield, Massachusetts area then your first step is to visit the Springfield Public Library. If you have a known date of death then find the paper that's on microfilm for that date and check the next two to three days after that date for the obituary. The Springfield Public Library also has the Boston newspapers if you are looking in that area.

If you're from another area of the country then google the public library from where you came from to see what they have under their collections. If you find that they have old newspapers on microfilm then look for the tab that says "Ask a Librarian." Make a request for lookup and provide as much information as you can. Most research librarians will attach the obituary in an email reply to you. I have had good success with this option and have obtained numerous obituaries from around Massachusetts and other states.

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 November 2012. Please forward your information by October 20, 2012 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