

September 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,

We hope everyone had a relaxing and enjoyable summer. As you look through this month's newsletter, you'll find lots of opportunities to get involved. Whether it's bringing a snack to a monthly meeting, or delivering flyers to your local library, we need your help to make this year a success. Here are a few areas where you can help and get involved:

1. October is Family history month. Help increase our membership by bringing a friend to our monthly meeting or genealogy workshop (Page 3)
2. Do you have a web site for your family history? If so, let us know and we'll showcase it on our website. (Page 4)
3. Can you deliver flyers to promote our society? (Page 4)
4. At our September meeting, we'll be looking for members to bring snacks and beverages to our monthly meetings. Look for the sign-up sheet at our next meeting.

We're looking forward to seeing everyone at our first meeting on Wednesday, September 7, 2011 at the Agawam Senior Center.

Calendar of Events.

Wednesday, September 7, 2011:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will hold their first meeting on Wednesday, September 7, 2011. The meeting will be from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts.

John O'Connor, former Archivist at the Genealogy Library located at the Springfield Museums, will speak to us on the research of our French Canadian ancestors. His discussion will include "dit" names, basics of reading French parish records, and a list of Anglicized French surnames. John is also known for his work on the project "Find A Grave" which can be viewed at www.findagrave.com

Wednesday, September 14, 2011:

"Using AmericanAncestors.org" Free lecture to learn more about this online resource; held 10:00AM - 11:00AM at 99-101 Newbury Street in Boston, MA. Description: NEHGS recently launched its new Website, **AmericanAncestors.org**. It is full of new features, tools, resources, and content that highlights NEHGS' growing national expertise in genealogy and family history. We now have more than 135 million searchable names covering New England, New York, and other areas of family research dating back to 1620.

Thursday, September 15, 2011

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.

Saturday, September 17, 2011

The Friends of the National Archives will present its eighth and final annual full-day Genealogy Conference, *Life in the Past Lane VIII*, at the Williams Inn, Williamstown, MA. Speakers include Michelle LeClair, Meldon Wolfgang III, Peter Sisario, Jean Nudd Elliott, Paul Bunnell, and Mary Flood. There is a \$75 registration fee which includes refreshments, lunch, and a round table question and answer session. More information is available at: www.narafriends-pittsfield.org

Thursday, September 22, 2011

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, October 5, 2011:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will hold their next meeting on Wednesday, October 5, 2011. The meeting will be from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts.

Ted Furey the President of the Keeley Society will speak to us on Patrick Charles Keeley's life, art, and architecture. Mr. Keeley was the most prolific church architect in America. The Society's aim is one of education, history, and preservation for the future.

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

Friday and Saturday, October 14-15, 2011:

The Polish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Northeast, Inc. will host a Polish Genealogy Conference at Central Connecticut State University, New Britain, CT. For more details, please visit their web site:

<http://www.pgscctne.org/Conference%202011/Documents%20list.html>

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 2011-2012 calendar for the WMGS:

October 5, 2011 - Ted Furey the President of the Keeley

November 2, 2011 - Rhonda McClure from the NEHGS

December 7, 2011 - "Pot Luck" dinner and holiday music while you dine

January 4, 2012 - Cliff McCarthy-Springfield Museums Genealogy Library

February 1, 2012 - Leslie Huber "Getting the Most out of Familysearch.org."

March 7, 2012 - Sarah Campbell - "Meet Your Civil War Ancestors"

April 4, 2012 - Speaker to be determined

May 2, 2012 - Election of officers; Speaker from Chicopee City Clerk's Office

June 6, 2012 - Last monthly meeting and "Pot Luck Dinner"

Membership

Just a reminder: WMGS annual membership dues should be paid by October 15th. Dues can be submitted at our next meeting on September 7th, or mailed to P.O. Box 418, West Springfield, MA 01090.

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.

Website Updates

Have you checked out the changes to our website? Over the summer, we worked to implement your suggestions.

Our Calendar of Events for 2011-2012 is now available on the “Updates” tab, and is in a printable format. It is also in a larger font size, making it easier to read.

Our “Surname List” is now on our website. If you have additional names to include, just send us an e-mail at WestMassGen@gmail.com. To see the “Surname List” or the “Calendar of Events,” click on the following link: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mawmgs/updates.html>

Our next upgrade will include:

1. Publishing a list of items located in our library
2. Exploring Facebook and Twitter, and establishing a link to each
3. Adding a page to showcase web site pages of our members

If you have a web site for your family tree, let us know and we’ll include it on our site. Send your web site address to WestMassGen@gmail.com

Marketing

We are looking to increase the number of members in our society. As part of our plan, we would like to increase our publicity by distributing 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 September meeting.

Genealogy Hint

By Fran Malone

I would like to take this moment to welcome all our new members as well as all our returning members back from your summer vacations. I hope that everyone enjoyed their summer and were fortunate to find at least one of your elusive ancestors by name or picture. I can say that I was one of those fortunate ones and I came up with a picture of my Great Grandfather James Sugrue. James Sugrue was born 1832 in Castlegregory, County Kerry, Ireland and died in 1905 in Holyoke, Mass. The picture is estimated to have been taken in the late 1890's after he came from Ireland. The Sugrue Family is one of the family names on my father's side that I'm researching.

I obtained this picture from the 3rd Great Granddaughter of James Sugrue which makes her a "very" distant cousin. The picture was found on a shelf in her Grandfather's tool shed when it was being cleaned out earlier this year. Her Grandfather died back in 1980 so this picture was stashed away on that self for thirty one years without anyone's knowledge.

The hint: if it's a picture, make sure you identify the one in the picture, don't discard anything that seems important, and if it comes to discarding make sure you check it twice before discarding.

The early information on the 1940 Federal Census indicates that it will be released in Mid-April of 2012.

We want to hear from you so contact us at WestMassGen@gmail.com with your hints or suggestions and we will post them here under the Monthly Genealogy Hint or Hints.

Genealogy Websites

By Fran Malone

LDS Family Search Website: www.familysearch.org

The LDS Family Search site has been pointed out and discussed before under the following web address: www.familysearch.org/eng/default.asp You can still search the old site by going to the old web address or you can still connect to the old site by clicking on the new address. However on August 23rd the "Pilot Search" feature which contained many records was dropped from their menu and incorporated into their site. When the new webpage comes up you'll see "browse these areas" in the lower left corner. You "might" have to create an account to view some records and creating the account will only take a few minutes. In the upper right you'll see where it says sign in, click on that and then create an account. It will just ask you to create a user ID and a password. As I said you "might" have to create an account if you go look at a record and you can't access it.

If you click on "USA, Canada, and Mexico" under Browse these areas you will find many of the records and information that ancestry has and this site is "FREE". If there is a camera next to the record then you'll be able to view the actual record, save it, and print it. If you are from Massachusetts you'll find the Mass. Vital Records from 1841-1915 as well as the records in the small towns prior to 1841. Prior to this addition to the site you had to view them at your library or through the NEHGS website which is a paid subscription. This new updated version of the LDS Family Search site will not answer all your questions but it will help.

Free Courses: Family Search is a terrific source for learning about genealogy. They have free courses you can view right from your computer. The instructor appears in a video on the left side of your screen, and the slide presentation appears to the right. Some courses even include handouts you can download. To view the courses, follow these steps:

1. Go to the main site: www.familysearch.org
2. Select "Learn" from the choices at the top of the screen
3. Scroll down the page. Under the "Resource Courses" area, select "View the courses"
4. Select a "Place" or "Skill Level" or "Topic" to see the specific courses offered.

If you are interested in learning about a specific language or handwriting, select "Subject Language." In many cases, you can view samples of the alphabet, or learn specific words that will help you with your genealogy research.

Expanded Collections: Family Search continues to add new records to their database. In particular, they have expanded their European collection. Try this:

1. Enter the last name of the person you are searching for. In addition, in the "Place" box, enter the name of the country. For this case study, we used the country of Poland.
2. The "Historical Records" results will appear on the right side of your screen. On the left-hand side, select the category called "Collections."
3. Then under the "Collections" category, select "Birth, Marriage and Death." This will narrow your search to only the birth, marriage and death records.
4. Select "Birth, Marriage and Death." This will produce a box to the right side showing you which collections are available. For this case study, we selected "Poland, Roman Catholic Church Books, 1600-1950" to view the records in Poland.
5. Lastly, select one person to view. From here, you have the option to read information about the collection. You can also perform another search using only this collection.

You can also view a list of the collections. Just follow these steps:

1. Go to the main site: www.familysearch.org
2. Scroll down to the "Browse by Location" section and select a place. For this case study, we chose "Europe."
3. On the left hand side, you will be given additional choices. We chose "Norway" to view the specific collections.
4. The collection titles will appear on the right side. Just select a collection, and then you can perform your search within that collection.

We value your feedback to please contact us with websites that might have helped you. You can contact us at: WestMassGen@gmail.com

National Archives in Pittsfield Closing

The [National Archives at Pittsfield](#) is closing; the last day the facility will be open to the public is September 16, 2011. (Note: The facility will also be closed on September 6.)

The remaining National Archives branches within the Northeast Region are the [National Archives at Boston, located in Waltham, Massachusetts](#), and the [National Archives at New York City](#).

NARA-Pittsfield is in the process of transferring its microfilm room collection to the [Berkshire Athenaeum](#), Pittsfield's public library. The collection includes 71,000 rolls of film that contain census records, passenger logs, and other items of interest to those researching their family histories. After the material has been relocated and processed, the collection will be available to researchers via delivery to the Athenaeum's first floor, where state of the art digitizing microfilm readers/scanners are available.

New Members

Please welcome the following individuals who joined our society:

Thomas Adams

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 October 2011. Please forward your information by September 20, 2011 to Susan Leverson and Fran Malone at: 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