

February 2014

*A monthly publication  
on behalf of the*



*Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society*

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## News

Greetings,

We hope you are all finding a way to stay warm this winter. On many days, the temperature flirts with zero. When the temperature gets into the 30s, it actually feels like a spring day. With so many cold days, it is a great time of year to continue to expand your family tree. Check out the following items in our newsletter, which can help you with your genealogy research:

- Upcoming Events (pages 2-4)
- Rootstech (Page 4)
- Fran Malone's Genealogy Hint on Message Boards (page 5)
- Dave Robison's article: But My Ancestor's Weren't Canadian (pages 6-9)
- Free Webinars (Page 9)

We're looking forward to seeing everyone at our next meeting on Wednesday, February 5, 2014 at the Agawam Senior Center.

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## WMGS Calendar of Events

### Wednesday, February 5, 2014:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will meet from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts.

Western Massachusetts author Kerry Hotaling will join us for a book signing on his new book “What They Endured, What They Wrought: Comparing Regimental Casualties at the Battle of Gettysburg.”

### Thursday, February 20, 2014:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will host a Genealogy Research Clinic. Individuals are encouraged to bring their research and questions. Clinics 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. Clinics are free for members. There is a \$10 fee per class for non-members.

### Thursday, February 27, 2014:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will host a Genealogy Research Clinic. Individuals are encouraged to bring their research and questions. Clinics 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. Clinics are free for members. There is a \$10 fee per class for non-members.

### Wednesday, March 5, 2014:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will meet from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts. Denise Martinez from the Chicopee City Clerk’s office will be our speaker.

## Save the Dates

Mark your calendars. Below you will find the 2013-2014 events for the WMGS:

**April 2, 2014** – Gravestone Girls

**May 7, 2014** – Election of officers; D Barry Sheldon “Breaking Down Brick Walls” (Tentative remote presentation)

**June 4, 2014** – Last monthly meeting and dinner

## Genealogy Research Clinics

Join Fran Malone, President of WMGS, and Dave Robison, Treasurer of WMGS and owner of [www.oldbones.co](http://www.oldbones.co) for “Genealogy Research Clinics.” Spend some time with genealogy researchers with years of experience using the internet to help get the answers you’re looking for. Time saving research strategies using Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, Google and SteveMorse.org among other sites.

Sessions will be held on the third and fourth Thursdays of the month in the computer room of the Agawam Senior Center. Mark your calendar for the following dates:

### 2014

January 16

January 23

February 20

February 27

March 20

March 27

April 17

April 24

May 15

May 22

June 19

Special note: If you are planning to attend a Genealogy Research Clinic, please be sure to add your name and phone number to our sign up list. If a clinic needs to be canceled, we will call you.

## Genealogy with Dave Robison

### **Two Part Genealogy Class for Beginners**

Monday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>

6:30 – 8:00

Chicopee Public Library

### **Open Lab and Genealogy Research Clinics**

Thursdays from 9:00 – 4:00

Chicopee Public Library

For more details, check out: <http://oldbonessearch.com/>

Or the Chicopee Public Library: <http://www.chicopeepubliclibrary.org/>

## Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts

Thursday, March 20, 2014, 6:30 PM

<http://www.pgsma.org/>

Mr. Joseph Manning, a former social worker, and historian will speak on **The Lewis Hine Project: Tracking down the lives of child laborers.** Manning will show some of these historic photographs, tell the stories of the immigrant child laborers in them, and talk about the exciting process of searching for descendants. Several of the stories at this presentation will be about Polish children.

**FREE.** Bring a friend.

Location: Polish Center of Discovery & Learning, 33 South Street, Chicopee, MA 01013 Phone: 413-592-0001 Website: <http://www.polishcenter.net/>

## Rootstech 2014

by Susan Levenson

Are you interested in attending a genealogy conference, but just can't get there? Then Rootstech might be for you. The fourth annual conference is hosted by FamilySearch and will be held February 6-8 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The conference is for people of all family history skills levels. Although it pairs family history with technology, there is something for everyone.

**Watch from home:** Some of the sessions will stream live starting at 8:30 on February 6<sup>th</sup>. (That's 10:30 a.m. EST.) You can watch the videos right from your computer. For more information, check out <https://rootstech.org/>

**Download the materials:** The RootsTech 2014 Syllabus Materials are available for a limited time, so click here to download your copies today:

<https://rootstech.org/about/syllabus-materials/>

**Review the sessions:** You'll also want to view a description of the sessions. Their session id numbers are also listed so you can locate the correct syllabus:

<https://rootstech.org/schedule-info/session-viewer/#id=RT>

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

## Genealogy Hint: Message Boards

by Fran Malone

How many of you reading this have used the message boards that are available? How many of you have had a connection or any shred of success with the boards? Remember this, they do work. There are two boards that I use and I check. You have genforum which can be accessed at <http://www.genforum.com/> and you will find that they have a surname board, state boards, and county boards. Should you use any of the boards make sure that you give all the facts that you know such as the person or persons name, dates (approximate is good), location (born in Quebec came to Chicopee, Mass.), and family members if known.

The second message board can be found on rootsweb <http://www.rootsweb.com/> and is set up like genform with surnames, country boards, state, boards, and county boards. Again be as specific as you can with your inquiry and don't give up your search.

The following is a classic example of how many years can elapse between postings. In 2002 I was contacted by a Rosemary E. Forster. She was born in October 1948 in Windsor, Ontario and from a few sources on her own she found out that her birth name was Jeannette Rose Desrosier. Shortly after her birth she was given up for adoption and she was looking for information on her mother (name unknown) and her missing birth family. Definitely not much to go on but I created a message for her on the boards with her adopted name, her birth and location of birth, and that she was looking for her missing family that she had heard was a good size. Fast forward to ten days ago January 2014 (12 yrs elapsed) and I was emailed by two members of that missing family asking me if I could help locate Rosemary E. Forster because she was the one that their Grandmother Elizabeth Desrosier gave up for adoption. In the past 10 days I've located three other messages posted by Rosemary in 2004 and 2005 and then again in 2007 still looking for her missing birth family. The message in 2007 now had her listed as Rose Horkey (presumably marriage name). I have reached out to her on the messages that I've found and as I write this I'm still hoping to hear from her.

This why I say never give up on the message boards and keep checking your older post if you have any. They do work, sometimes not as fast as we would like though. At this time I can only hope that she hasn't give up her search, time will tell.

## **But My Ancestors Weren't Canadian**

**by Dave Robison, Old Bones Genealogy of New England**

It seems obvious to most people, including myself, that if my ancestors were American, or at least lived most of their lives after immigrating in the USA, that researching them should involve nothing but American records. Makes sense doesn't it?

Well for me, at least, it made sense until recently when I listened to the weekly Legacy Webinar titled "Ten Reasons Why Your Ancestor Was in Canada" by genealogist Kathy Lake Hogan. It was the latest in a weekly series of free webinars sponsored by Legacy Family Tree. I strongly suggest that you visit <http://familytreewebinars.com/> and take a look at what they have to offer.

Here's a short list of some of the subjects already covered:

- 1) Irish Research 101: Learning the Research Process
- 2) How Computers and Gadgets are Changing Genealogy
- 3) Using Church Records to Identify Ancestors
- 4) Direct Your Research with City Directories

And the list goes on! There are literally hundreds of topics but I want to give you the high-lights from yesterday broadcast.

The first reason is **IMMIGRATION**. You may know where your ancestor came from and where they spent the rest of their lives after they arrived. But that certainly doesn't mean they came through Ellis Island. As a matter of fact, they may not have even landed in the US! For example, for a period of time in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British government subsidized passage to Canada to try to populate their territories rather than have everyone head to the United States. While I can't remember the exact in dollar amounts (or rather, how many pounds!) buying passage to Nova Scotia was substantially cheaper than buying passage to Boston or New York or any other seaport on the east coast. Of course, once they arrived in Canada, that didn't mean they had to stay! The lesson here is that if you're having difficulties finding an ancestor, especially an ancestor who settled in a border state such as Vermont or Minnesota. Try the Canadian census records for starters.

Next is **LAND**. From the time of the Revolutionary War when Loyalists left the

colonies, they qualified for land bounties in exchange for their military service. Again, in the War of 1812, anyone serving in the British forces also received land grants. Several efforts by the government during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were designed to encourage settlement of the western territories. Thus another series of available grants.

**MIGRATION** is another reason to look to Canada. Those who intended to stay in Canada and migrated there may have found far fewer opportunities than they expected for many reasons. So your great grandparents may have initially settled there but within a very short period of time, moved on to “warmer climates”.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there seems to be an inordinate number of US citizens married in the Canada. So **MARRIAGE** is another reason to look north in case you ancestors followed that pattern. Perhaps that’s why Niagara Falls became such a draw for newlywed couples to spend their honeymoons there! Just speculation on my part...

US Census records often list families with many or most children born in the US but an occasional Canadian **BIRTH** is not out of the ordinary. Especially if one or both parents were born there. Now we know that enumerators made a mistake of two, so even if no children were reported to have been born in Canada, it might still be worth a look if either parent was Canadian. And don’t just look in the Canadian Census records which are only released after 100 years. The vital records of Canada can be easily researched at [www.bac-lac.gc.ca](http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca) to begin your Canadian search. It doesn’t require a World Wide Ancestry subscription...it’s free!

**DEATH** records might be found in Canada even though the burial may have been in the US.

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES** in Canada was certainly a draw to take a ride across the border. Economies of both countries certainly didn’t run parallel so when there was a shortage of good jobs state-side, there may very well have been some attractive opportunities up north. They may have been short term or simple fell below expectations prompting a return to the states.

Here’s an example of a set of circumstances that occurred in my own family. My maternal grandfather was born in Ontario, but “courted” my grandmother who lived in Massachusetts for about 7 years before she said “I do”! That’s not the

example I want to bring up here. It was his mother, my great grandmother who I couldn't find anywhere in or near where she lived in the 20's or 30's. When the 1930 census was released (yes I've been at this for a long time!) I found her in my grandfather's household. It just so happened that she **VISITING** in 1930 and must have stayed for a while! And there's the 8<sup>th</sup> reason to check in Canada. My great grandmother came to the States, but your American ancestor may have gone **VISITING** in Canada. Check it out!

Probably the worst reason to have spent some time in Canada was **POVERTY or PERSECUTION**. Citizens to the new United States may have felt they would be persecuted for staying loyal to the crown during the Revolutionary War. "Loyalists" could find refuge in Canada, even if it was just a short period of time. And no one should forget the flight of slaves prior to the Civil War. Underground railroads helped thousands to cross the borders to safety.

Interestingly, **WAR** is a really good reason to look north for your ancestors. Young unemployed men may have sought adventure (and a paycheck) by fighting for the British during World War I and World War II, both of which were being fought years before America's involvement. We didn't enter WW I until the sinking of the Lusitania. Pearl Harbor got us into WW II. The Civil War may have sent whole families to Canada during those years. If they left in 1861 or 1862 and returned prior to 1870, you'll find them in the 1860 and 1870 census but mysteriously absent during the war. That's where a few of the children of several families may have been born. Thus, no US birth records!

In addition to Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org, here are a few more websites to aid your Canadian research:

- 1) [www.bac-lac.gc.ca](http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca) (mentioned earlier)
- 2) [www.mesaieux.com](http://www.mesaieux.com) (Displayed in both French and English. A paid site where you buy "credits")
- 3) [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) (Yes, Google is an excellent resource for genealogy research---you need a few "tricks" to be effective---WMGS teaches them at our Genealogy Research Clinics, every 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday evening, 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center - \$10 per session/FREE to members)
- 4) [www.canadagenweb.org](http://www.canadagenweb.org)
- 5) [www.cyndislist.com/canada](http://www.cyndislist.com/canada) (A portal to thousands of web sites)

- 6) [www.automatedgenealogy.com/census](http://www.automatedgenealogy.com/census) (Index to every name in the 1901 Canadian census)
- 7) <http://tinyurl.com/nraxhs3> (Shortened web address to GenealogyInTime Magazine's article "Most Recent Genealogy Records for Canada")

A word about the weekly Legacy Webinar series every Wednesday with few exceptions. (February 5th, most of the staff will be attending the RootsTech convention and there will be no webinar.) The webinars are free to watch live and are made accessible for 7 days at no cost. A Legacy Family Tree subscription allows you to search the archives for any of the previously broadcast shows. Just before the broadcast, a link to download a syllabus is available that you can save or print to write notes on while you listen. They're done in a GoToMeeting environment so you can pose questions in a chat board during the broadcast. After the broadcast, you can download and save the chat. This is handy because almost every week, the moderator posts useful websites that you might want to save. The link, as stated above, is <http://familytreewebinars.com/> Good luck and I sincerely hope you're finding every ancestor you ever wanted to find!

Check out Dave Robison's blog at [www.oldbonesearch.com](http://www.oldbonesearch.com) where you will find articles with research tips, web sites and other genealogical news. Find the "follow" button and get an e-mail whenever a fresh post goes up on line.

## Free Webinars

If you're interested in learning about genealogy, the Illinois State Genealogical Society (ISGS) sponsors **FREE** webinars. These live lectures are offered once a month and you can access the presentations right from your computer.

Here's a link to the current brochure outlining subjects and dates:  
[http://ilgensoc.org/upload/menu/2014\\_Webinar\\_Brochure.pdf](http://ilgensoc.org/upload/menu/2014_Webinar_Brochure.pdf).

Special thanks to Dave Robison for sharing this information with us.

## 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 2014. Please forward your information by February 20, 2014 to Susan Leverson at: [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com)

### **Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society 2013-2014 Executive Board Members**

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