

September 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,

We hope everyone had a relaxing and enjoyable summer. It's hard to believe fall will be here soon. Looking ahead, we have an exciting year coming up, as our society marks its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

- Check out our 2012-2013 Calendar of Events. (Page 3)
- Mark your calendars for our computer workshops. (Page 3)
- Take a peek at our new Facebook page. (Page 4)
- It's Membership Time: Renew your membership at our September meeting or via mail. (Page 5)
- Survey Results are in: Check out what others are saying about our society. (Page 6)

We're looking forward to seeing everyone at our first meeting on Wednesday, September 5, 2011 at the Agawam Senior Center.

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## Calendar of Events.

### **Wednesday, September 5, 2012:**

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will hold their first meeting on Wednesday, September 5, 2012. The meeting will be from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts.

A representative from the Hampden County Registry of Deeds Office will speak to us about land records.

### **Thursday, September 20, 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, September 27, 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, October 3, 2012:**

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will hold their next meeting on Wednesday, October 5, 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.

***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:

**October 3, 2012** – Sara Campbell will present “Overlooked Municipal Records”

**November 7, 2012** – Dave Robison from [www.Oldbones.co](http://www.Oldbones.co)

**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** – 40<sup>th</sup> 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

We are excited that Bruce Cortis will continue our “Computer Workshops” once again this year. Workshops are held on the third and fourth Thursdays of the month. Mark your calendar for the following dates:

### 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.pgsma.org>

## **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>

## **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. If you're interested in making a presentation at your local library, please see Susan Levenson at the September meeting, or contact her at

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

## Membership

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.

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### **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

## Survey Results Are In

Thank you, thank you, thank you. We truly appreciate your feedback, and rely on your information to make improvements.

Our survey was released in the June 2012 newsletter, and we received a handful of responses at our June meeting. At the end of August, we put together the same survey and released it electronically. Within three days we had more than 20 responses.

Here are some of the results:

- The majority of the people who responded read the monthly newsletter.
- The top three recommended topics for our monthly meetings are: Websites, Genealogy, and Library Resources.
- We heard from members across the country. Although they cannot attend our monthly meetings, they enjoy reading our newsletter and staying in touch. It was great to hear from these members.
- We also heard from former members who are very impressed with the progress we have made, and they plan to become members again this fall. This is terrific news! Thank you and welcome back. We're so glad you can join us. ☺
- Everyone who responded to the survey is planning to become a member for 2012-2013. This is fantastic news!

## 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. If you would like to help, please pick up a package of flyers at our September meeting.

# Genealogy Hint: Land Deeds

By Fran Malone

This month's genealogy hint pertains to deeds and what we can learn about our ancestors from them. I came across the following article "Doing the Deeds" in the September issue of Family Tree Magazine and it was written by Chris Staats. The article just happens to go along with our Guest Speaker for September, a representative from the Hampden County Registrar of Deeds who will speak to the group about Land Deeds. You can check the Family Tree Magazine at the following website: <http://www.familytreemagazine.com/>

Mr. Staats states in his article that when you dive into deed books, you might find a number of different types of transactions involving your relatives. Your relative's name might be on a deed because he purchased land or sold the land. That purchase or selling of the property could be a result of back taxes or debts. There is also the possibility that he inherited the property which in turn will give you the next generation back.

The deed, depending on the information written, will give you answers to 10 common genealogical questions. Among those questions are the description of the property, where the property is, was your ancestor he/she married, when did he/she die, why the property is being sold, and who the neighbors are.

You can get your ancestors deeds in a number of ways. The easiest is to go to a County Courthouse, Archive or Library that holds the original books or have microfilmed copies of them. Remember though that the County where the property currently is may not have been the County where the deed was obtained.

We all have our little hints that have helped us with our own research. Please contact us at [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com) and share your hints as well as your suggestions. Your hints or suggestions will then appear in our newsletter to help others.

# Genealogy Websites

By Fran Malone

## Ancestry and Familysearch

When our last newsletter was posted in June the various websites offering the U.S. Census Reports were still busy trying to get the 1940 Census online for us to view. The websites ancestry <http://www.ancestry.com/> and familysearch <http://www.familysearch.org/> have completed the indexing process and these websites can now be viewed. Both of these websites have been discussed before and as you know Familysearch is a free search site. You just have to create a user id and password to view the documents on familysearch. Ancestry is the subscription website but for a year they are offering the 1940 Census for free. I found the 1940 Census to be slightly less informative than the ones prior but it still gives you a new chapter in the lives of our ancestors. For some of you, the 1940 Census might even give you a glance at yourself.

## Officer Update

Special thanks to Robert Riopel who volunteered at our June meeting to work as our Secretary. Members voted, and Bob is officially our new Secretary. Welcome aboard Bob.

We also appreciate the work of Jane Okscin, our outgoing Secretary. Jane served as an officer for the past year, and graciously agreed to stay on until another Secretary was elected. Thank you Jane. ☺

## 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 2012. Please forward your information by September 20, 2012 to Susan Leverson and Fran Malone at: [WestMassGen@gmail.com](mailto:WestMassGen@gmail.com)

### **Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society 2012-2013 Executive Board Members**

President: Fran Malone  
Vice-President: Beckie Cross  
Co-Secretary: Robert Riopel  
Co-Secretary: Marilyn Powers  
Treasurer: Susan Leverson