



CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 811, Westminster, MA 01473-0811

THE SEARCHERS

MARCH 2020 MEANS

“Social Distancing”

“No Groups larger than 25”

“No March Meeting for us”

So

Our annual elections are being done

April 28, 2020!!!

Normally we elect our new slate of officers and directors in March but as the time has it we need to make it April this year. We are hoping to have some new faces on the board this year and encourage anyone who is interested to put their name in the election.

The proposed ballot will be presented at the meeting and **nominations from the floor will also be accepted for any position.**

President	Carol McNeil Bosworth
Vice Present	Susie Haenisch
Secretary	_____
Treasurer	Karon Parker
Director	Joan Bonner
Director	Bonnie Bohnet
Director	John Johnson
Director	Marcia White
Director	Janet Fortunato
Director	_____
Director	_____

Please think about becoming a member of the board and help shape the future of C.M.G.S

Time to renew memberships if you have not already. Reminders were sent out last month if you needed to renew for this year

IMPORTANT NOTICE

If Bonnie Sweetman was doing any research for you please contact me, I should have the information you would be looking for. Carol Bosworth at cambosworth@gmail.com

C.M.G.S. UPCOMING 2020 MEETINGS

April 28, 2020

Dennis Picard

"Gone a Whalin:

Western Mass Crews on Whalers"

May 26, 2020

Kathy Kaldis

"Researching Your Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Ancestors"

June 23, 2020

"Annual Dinner Meeting –

Irish Step Dancers "HIstory & Dance"

July 28, 2020

Sara Campbell

"Maps, Maps, Maps"

August 25, 2020

Dave Robison

"Much More than Ancestry.com & FamilySearch.org"

September 22, 2020

Kathy Kaldis

"Land Ho! Calling all Mayflower Descendants"

S. K. Pierce Victorian Mansion Tour

On Sunday, March 1st, my husband, my brother and his wife, my cousin, and a dear family friend joined a few other CMGS members and guests on a grand tour of the S. K. Pierce Victorian Mansion in South Gardner. The tour was led and enthusiastically narrated by the curator and lead restoration specialist, Ken Watson, and his lovely wife Memie (pronounced Mimi) who trailed around with us for extra support and additional story telling.

We ALL loved it! The home has been meticulously restored to its former glory, is furnished with a few original pieces along with others typical of the era, and each room was described by its history, its occupants, and how the restoration work was completed. The tour included all three floors, the cupola at the very top with a spectacular view of the surrounding neighborhood, and a careful walk through the basement where we could see the (now closed off) tunnel entrance to Mr. Pierce's underground access to his factory across the street. Newspaper articles framed and hung on the walls of one of the downstairs parlors described in detail the history and local prominence of the mansion. Family photographs and memorabilia shared with us left us with a more intimate knowledge of the home's occupants and how they lived . . . and died.



Many of you may have heard that this home is haunted. According to Ken and Memie (who is also a psychic medium), it is very true. Ken told us that there are a dozen spirits that still walk the halls. Some have even spoken to him as he's gone about his daily restoration work. After meeting a skeleton playing the piano in the parlor, we were introduced to a few "dolls" that reside in the home, some who have mysteriously moved or otherwise left their paranormal mark within the

home. Someone on our tour asked Ken if the spirits were happy with their efforts to save the building from (almost) being condemned. Both he and Memie gave a resounding YES to that query.

This tour was a result of Ken's presentation at our February membership meeting where he invited our members and guests to tour the mansion. Sign-up sheets quickly filled up and the four tours were offered the following weekend. You missed a great adventure if you didn't go. I'm very glad that I did!

For more information and some gorgeous photos of the outside of the mansion, check out <https://www.littlethings.com/haunted-victorian-mansion-gardner-massachusetts/1> and/or the mansion's FB page.

Susie Haenisch
VP & Program Chair

Fun History Corner

Challenge: Do you know what M&M's stands for?

- A. Mister & Missus
- B. Miniature Morsels
- C. Mars & Murrie
- D. Mickey & Mike's

Answer found within the newsletter

One Woman's Quest - Mine

When I started on this quest I had no idea who I would feature for this 52 week adventure. I have more than 52 ancestors, so "52 Ancestors in 52 Weeks" should be easy. Not so easy. For the first two weeks I chose my Canadian paternal grandparents, George L. Duval and Anna Mae Caron Duval because I knew them. The other 52 weeks would be about ancestors that I had not met

or never would meet, at least not in this world. So gathering information was a little more difficult. They are mostly all Acadian and Canadian. Now I will explain how I found this ancestor.

It all started when I was searching for information about my maternal grandfather, Joseph Mills, but I didn't know very much about him. My mother had told me that he had died from pneumonia when he was 37 years old and she was only 7 years old. Back in 1909 antibiotics had not yet been discovered. His death certificate read that he had been ill for about a month. He was a stone mason by trade so maybe while he was working in a quarry he caught a cold that developed into pneumonia. But I have also read that stone cutters could have developed pneumonia from inhaling the dust created from cutting the stone. I'll never know what caused his early death six months before the birth of his second son and last of his eight children.

I had been looking at census records for my great grandparents and had seen a name in the 1871 Acadian census for a Lassia Mills, in the 1881 Acadian census there was a Nastasie Mills and in the 1891 Acadian census there was a Tassie Mills. I didn't pay much attention to the birth dates because those were not always correct. In the past I have come across four different birth dates in four different censuses for the same person, so I then moved on to the baptismal records.

I found my grandfather's baptismal record and on the same page there was another Mills. Not too unusual since a lot of families lived in the same area, near brothers, sisters and other family members and had children about the same time. After I gathered my grandfather's information, I decided to look at the other Mills information. Her name was Anastasie Mills. I saw that the birth date was the same as my grandfather's. I continued reading and was surprised to learn that she had the same parents as my grandfather. My grandfather had a twin sister! My mother and aunts NEVER mentioned that little tidbit.

So Anastasie Mills who was born and baptised on 29 May 1870, the very same day as her twin brother, Joseph became one of my 52 ancestors. I don't know very much about her life or of her other siblings while they were growing up.

She married Celestin Jaillet in Bouctouche, New Brunswick, Canada on 1 October, 1894. They had 10 children and lived in Wellington, New Brunswick, Canada. She died on 1 March 1955 in St. Edward Village, Wellington, New Brunswick, Canada. She was buried along side her husband who died on 4 April, 1938

I am still amazed that my grandfather was a twin and NO ONE ever said a word about it. As far as I know (for I haven't found any yet), no following generation is a twin or has had twins. But I am still looking because the search never ends.

Submitted by Janet Duval Fortunato (#332) for National Women's History Month March

NYG&B UPDATE

As a rule, New York State is a difficult state in which to find original genealogical records. However, newspapers may hold the critical dates and information that you seek, if you are diligent in your research efforts and know where to look. The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society has included a most informative article in their last newsletter about New York State newspapers. Here is the intro to their findings.

Online Historical New York Newspapers

The array of historical New York newspapers online is very extensive, which is excellent news for the New York family history researcher, because [newspapers are crucial sources for genealogy](#).

This guide outlines all of the principle online newspaper collections, details exactly how many of their holdings relate to New York State, and indicates where you can find them online.

You will also find a list of online newspaper directories - these are invaluable to family history researchers and are essential to determining what publications covered the location, time period, and individuals you are researching.

Many of the resources listed in this guide are free and open to the public - others are available only to those who pay for a subscription. When a \$ symbol accompanies the title of a resource, that indicates it is a subscription-based service - all others are free.

If you're interested in a subscription service but do not have a subscription, you may want to check with your local library - some have subscriptions that can be accessed from computers in the branch.

Keep in mind that some historical newspapers exist on more than one website. For some major, long-run papers, the quality of the images and the search engine, as well as the extent of coverage, may vary from website to website - it's always a good idea to look for alternative copies if you're having trouble with a certain set of images.

While there are many New York historical newspaper titles that have been preserved, this guide is only to newspapers that are online. Visits to libraries, historical societies, and other repositories will give you access to many other titles. The newspaper directories at the beginning of this guide cover non-digital newspapers as well.

Check it out. Go to:

<https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/subject-guide/online-historical-new-york-newspapers>

Submitted by : Susie Haenisch, CMGS VP & Program Chair

Using Military Records for Genealogy Research

Ancestry recently announced [the completion of a multi-year project](#) in collaboration with the National Archives to "digitize all 36 million of the nation's available WWII young men's draft cards."

Military records, like draft cards, can be confusing. However, they can also yield incredibly valuable insights into your ancestor's life and service. Use the resources below to learn more about how to use military records for genealogical research.

Follow these tips to make the most of your ancestor's draft records.

US military draft records are potentially untapped sources of information on male ancestors and sometimes their female family members. Even men who didn't serve in the military may have had to register under one of the conscription acts for the Civil War, World War I, or World War II.

Online resources make it easy for today's savvy researcher to find and use draft records as a springboard for family history discoveries. We'll give you an overview of registration records created between 1862 and 1945, identify where to find them, and explain how to expand on the information they provide. We'll also give your skills a boost with more resources to explore, a bit of practice interpreting these records, and a worksheet to chart your searches.

Clues in Draft Records

Local districts or boards conducted draft registrations to identify men eligible for service in times of war—specifically, the Civil War and World Wars. Many of the registration lists and cards these boards created survive, providing a deep well of data on several generations of American men. Those born as early as 1816 and as late as 1920 could've been eligible to be drafted for one or more of these three wars.

Questions the draft boards asked registrants varied from war to war, and even from one registration to the next. Typically, you'll find information about the registrant's name, residence, age, date and place of birth, race, US citizenship and occupation.

Depending on the registration, you also may discover details about your ancestor's previous or current military service, his marital status, the name and address of a relative or contact person, a physical description, and his signature.

These findings can move your research forward in many ways. Birth information can tell you about births that occurred long before a state began

keeping vital records. A woman named as a man's nearest relative might narrow your search for a marriage record. An immigrant's claim to be a US citizen could lead to naturalization papers.

Draft information is also useful in combination with other evidence. Residence and occupation details can distinguish your relative from others with the same name. If you're "missing" a person in census records, a draft registration can indicate where he lived. Descriptions of height, build, hair and eye color can help you visualize your ancestor.

Civil War

Prior to the Civil War, the federal and state governments relied on offering free public land to attract volunteer soldiers in wartime. These [bounty land incentives](#) were discontinued by 1855. The Civil War brought an unprecedented need for troops on both the Union and Confederate sides. Governors from Maine to Mississippi issued calls for volunteers beginning in 1861. As the war escalated, the need for men reached crucial heights.

Without the promise of free land to spur recruits (an incentive in previous wars), how could this demand be met?

Although the idea of a national draft faced considerable opposition in the North, it seemed the only viable solution. The Enrollment Act of 1863 required all men age 20 to 45 to register within their Congressional District, which often covered several counties.

The first Union registration took place July 1, 1863. Three smaller enrollments followed. For eligibility purposes, men were divided into classes. Those age 20 to 35 survive. You can find digital images of existing consolidated lists on subscription site [Ancestry.com](#) (which you can use free at libraries offering [Ancestry Library Edition](#)). For more-focused results, search within the site's [US Military Records collection](#). As a starting point, enter your ancestor's name and where you think he lived in 1863.

The original consolidated lists are in Record Group 110 (Records of the Provost Marshal General) at the [National Archives and Records Administration \(NARA\)](#) in Washington, DC. The registration books from which they were compiled, which sometimes contain years, plus

unmarried men age 36 to 45, were designated Class I. Nearly everyone else was Class II. In addition to name and residence, Northern draft registers typically show:

- age on the registration date
- whether white or colored
- occupation or trade
- whether married
- state or country of birth

If your ancestor registered, does that mean he served in the war? Not necessarily. Those in Class II were rarely made to serve. Each community and state was responsible for filling a quota of men. If they could raise that number with volunteers, no one needed to be drafted, so volunteers were heavily encouraged. Some states, like Massachusetts and Ohio, never had to call up draftees. Even if they were drafted, men could be exempted from service if they were:

- Physically or mentally impaired
- Only sons of dependent widows or infirm parents,
- Widowers or orphans supporting young children,
- Non-citizens who hadn't declared intent to naturalize
- Convicted felon
- Able to furnish a substitute
- Pay a \$300 fee

The South also instituted a draft. The Confederate Conscription Act of 1862 required all white males age 18 to 35 years to register. This was extended to ages 17 to 50 by early 1864. Ministers, teachers, civil officials, tradesmen, railroad workers and plantation owners were typically exempt. Initially, a man could hire a substitute and pay up to \$1,000 to avoid service, but that allowance was scrapped in late 1863 due to bitter opposition. Men already enlisted for one-year terms automatically saw their service extended to three years.

There are no consolidated lists of Confederate registrations. Each Southern state conducted its own drafts. Many times, troops raised by conscript were merged with existing units. Relatively few Confederate conscription registers survive today, and those that do can be difficult to find.

The best place to begin your search for any existing Southern conscription records is in the

state adjutant general's records. Some states compiled and published adjutant general records after the war. Georgia, for instance, published six volumes of *The Confederate Records of the State of Georgia*, which are available free on [Google Books](#).

If your ancestors lived in Tennessee, search the [Civil War Sourcebook](#), a digital collection of official records, diaries, letters and newspaper articles. South Carolina Archives offers information about its [Confederate Military Records](#) as well. [Learn more about Civil War records for individual states, North or South on FamilySearch.org](#).

World War I

The need for a national draft emerged again in 1917 when the United States entered the Great War. In response, Congress created the Selective Service System, consisting of local and state draft boards under the Office of the Provost Marshal. Three registrations took place in 1917 and 1918. In total, about 24 million men between the ages of 18 and 45, including noncitizens, were required to register. If your relative was born between September 1872 and September 1900, he was probably among them.

A draft board official asked questions of each man and recorded the answers on individual, two-sided cards. The questions varied by registration, but in general noted:

- Name and age
- Address
- Date and place of birth
- Citizenship status
- Occupation & employer
- Race and physical description

Some registrations also asked marital status, the name and address of the man's nearest relative, his father's birthplace, or information about dependants. Unless he was illiterate, the registrant signed his card to verify accuracy. Draft boards used the cards to determine which men to call up for service. They kept docket books listing the names and actions taken. Only a small percentage of those who registered were actually drafted.

Because they cover nearly **98 percent of the male population between 18 and 45 years old**, WWI draft cards represent a tremendous resource for genealogists. Even if your ancestor didn't have to

register, he or she might've had a brother who did. The cards can reveal unknown birth dates and places, the names of wives and/or parents, and clues to marriages and naturalization.

Digital images of WWI draft registration cards are online at [Ancestry.com](#), [Findmypast](#) and the free [FamilySearch.org](#). Each record consists of two images, the front and back of the card—be sure to view both.

The original registration cards are in Record Group 163 at the National Archives Southeast Region in Atlanta. Local docket books, classification lists, and miscellaneous papers relating to draft records may be found in state archives or National Archives regional locations.

World War II

When the Great War ended, so did military registration. There was no ongoing US draft in the 1920s and 1930s. Then escalating world conflict led to the first-ever peacetime registration in October 1940. Following the [bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941](#), thousands of men voluntarily enlisted in the service. But with war raging on multiple fronts, the need for soldiers, airmen, and sailors was far greater. Congress passed a new Selective Service Act requiring all males between ages 18 and 45 to register.

For the most part, WWII registrations of young men (born from February 1897 to July 1927) haven't been publicly released due to privacy concerns. But some restrictions are lifting. Full-color digital images of North Carolina draft registrations are now online in the WWII collection at [Fold3](#).

[Ancestry.com](#) has a collection of US WWII Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947, which includes cards from Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana and North Carolina. In time, cards from other states will likely become available.

The fourth registration, conducted April 27, 1942, required men born between April 28, 1877, and Feb. 16, 1897, to register. These men were 45 to 64 years old at the time. Nicknamed the "Old Man's Draft," this registration included many who'd already served—or at least registered—for World War I. Its intent was to gather information about older men's skills and occupations that could be utilized in manufacturing, transportation and other aspects of the war effort.

As for the First World War, registrants' answers to several questions were recorded on two-sided cards:

- name and age
- date and place of birth
- residence address
- telephone number
- place of employment or business
- employer's name and address
- name and address of a contact person
- race and physical characteristics

The "Old Man's" registration cards for most states have been microfilmed and digitized. You'll find collections on Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org and Fold3.

Keep in mind that you should find two images for a single registrant. The cards for Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin were microfilmed in such a way that the front of one man's card appears with the reverse of the previous man's card, so take particular care to get the right match when working with the records of those states.

These collections aren't complete, however, as registration cards for some states were destroyed before being microfilmed. No Fourth Registration records survive for Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina or Tennessee. For New York, only those from the boroughs of New York City survive. Other states or parts of a state may be missing from a particular database. If you don't find the results you expect, read the notes that accompany the database to learn about its coverage.

The original cards for all six WWII draft registrations are at NARA's National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis. They're divided into two groups: one for the Old Man's Draft, and one for the other five drafts of younger men. You can request a copy of an individual's card using the [Selective Service Record Request form](#).

Using Draft Records

Once you've found a draft record, you'll want to get all the information you can from it. What does it tell you about your ancestor? Is this consistent with what you already know about him? There might've been many men with similar names in any given state. Analyzing the information is crucial to making sure you've found the right one.

Both WWI and WWII draft records list the name and address of the nearest relative or "person who

will always know your address." Who did your ancestor put down for this? Married men typically named their wives. Unmarried or widowed men might've named a parent, sibling, friend or employer. If you don't recognize the person your ancestor named, try to determine who he or she was. You could discover a relationship you didn't know about.

It's particularly interesting to compare the cards of those who registered as young men for World War I and again in the Old Man's Draft for World War II. These records give you snapshots of your ancestor at two points in time, about 25 years apart. Note the differences in address, employment, nearest relative or contact person and physical traits.

Finding a draft record naturally leads to the question of whether or not an individual actually served in the war he registered for. To determine this, you'll want to learn more about the records created for that particular war.

Enlistment records, service records, discharge papers, state adjutant generals' reports, and published unit histories are among the places you might look. Many of these resources are now available online. For an overview, see the United States Military Records wiki on [FamilySearch.org](#).

You might also find accounts of men who served in a county history book or local newspapers. During the Civil War, newspapers often published notices of enlistments and events. They sometimes published lists of those attending GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) events in later years, or noted an old soldier's service unit in his obituary. Also search for your potential Civil War ancestor in the 1890 veterans' census, soldiers' home records and pension files. Because they usually contain a good deal of documentation, pension records are particularly worth seeking out.

Cemetery records are another way to confirm service, as many veterans' gravestones bear military inscriptions or markers. Gravestone photographs and memorials on [Find A Grave](#) and [Billion Graves](#) often indicate military service. Some towns and counties have constructed veterans' memorials or published lists of those who served in various conflicts.

Tip: If a WWI registrant was African-American, the registrar was to tear off the lower left corner of his draft card.

Answer: [Fun History Corner](#)

The iconic M stamp printed on every single M&M simultaneously represents the last name of its creators, Forrest Mars Sr. and William Murrie. The former was an American who temporarily moved to England to start his own candy company and the latter was a Hershey's executive who supplied the necessary chocolate and sugar for the small candies. On Mars' return, he proposed the partnership with Murrie to secure the supplies he'd need in the face of rationing during WWII. They started manufacturing in 1940, originally exclusively for the United States Army, then brought them to the post-war market and the general public. I wonder how many of our surviving WWII veterans remember getting M&M candies during their service-related years?

Update from the NYG&B

As the nation and the world grapple with the profound impact of COVID-19, the NYG&B's top priority remains the health and safety of our community. Our physical offices will remain closed until at least March 31, 2020. However, our team is working remotely and is available by phone and email to continue supporting our members. The new [Online Records Platform](#) (currently in beta) is always open, providing access to numerous collections, including enhanced access to the complete archive of *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*.

In addition, from March 17 through April 3, 2020 the NYG&B will be offering **free webinars**—nearly each day—for our community. We are grateful for the many speakers who will join us for the series, anchored by the NYG&B team. For the complete schedule of events and instructions for registering, [click here](#). I look forward to having you join us for one (or all) of these virtual events

Sincerely Josh Taylor

AN EXPENSIVE PASSION

Genealogy can be very expensive. I don't have to convince any of you about that statement. So, in keeping with my frugal New England roots, I actively seek out websites that will give me as much "bang" for my money as possible . . . but I much prefer free!

I have been a long-time follower of **[bespokegenealogy.com](#)**. My recommendation to you in this newsletter is, if you haven't already done so, treat yourself to a gold mine of a research site and check it out. There is so much FREE information offered that it boggles the mind. Log on to explore the many offerings under FREE GENEALOGY, such as the following:

- 120 Free Genealogy Websites
- How to Use Google Photos to Organize Old Images
- Where to Find Free Online Historical Newspapers
- Discover Free Hidden FamilySearch Records
- Where to Find Free Online Genealogy Courses
- Free Tools to Help with Transcribing Documents
- 10 Great Free London Genealogy Websites
- . . . and many more free sites about Irish, Scottish and British records

Using our research time wisely can save all of us so much money, and using free resources gets us there that much faster with no cost. Go have fun and explore! I promise you, it will be well worth your time.

Susie Haenisch
CMGS VP & Program Chair

Research Plans – The Critical First Step

Over 40 years ago, when I first started my journey to research my ancestors' lives, I began by gathering as much information as possible from living family members. That was a good thing. I followed that by filling out paper forms with the newly found data, which was also a good thing. Then I jumped onto the Internet, specifically with familysearch.com and Ancestry.com. I stated an online family tree, another good thing. I watched and waited for those hints on both sites. Everything seem to fall into place and I thought I was doing a good thing. That, in essence, was my research plan!

Years passed. I was taking online courses and in-person courses to expand my knowledge of the research process. This was also a very good thing. And I was spending hours and hours on the computer, but not always being as successful in my search processes as I had hoped. Soon it became very apparent that I was spending a lot of time retracing some search paths, going over information that I had already determined to be correct, and wasting time flitting from hint to hint without following through on a specific goal. I was, in fact, chasing those tempting and seductive BSOs.

For the uninformed, a BSO is a bright, shiny object. A new hint. A new clue. A path that can easily lead one down the proverbial rabbit hole. It is a distraction under the best of circumstances . . . an incredible waste of time under the worst. And I found myself in this situation time and time again. But I thought I was doing everything right. How could I have gone so wrong?

Easy answer. I didn't have a specific research plan. I had a general one. I started from what I knew, moved onto relatives and friends who could fill in the blanks, put it all down on paper, then added it to my family tree. That process was repeated. That was all good. But I had not learned about the importance of a specific research plan, setting specific goals, and developing hypotheses. And most assuredly, I didn't know where to begin. Fortunately, I discovered a long time ago that it's so easy to do. Taking that simple step can make a huge positive difference in your next research session. It is the most important step that will give you successful results. In short, following a

specific research plan and formulating a hypothesis will help you stay focused and on the trail of what you originally started researching, and you won't get lost chasing those BSOs. For more helpful articles on the subject, just Google genealogy research plans or go to:

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Research_Plan_Example_\(National_Institute\)](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Research_Plan_Example_(National_Institute))

Have I gotten your attention? I certainly hope so. I would love to hear from any of you about your experiences with setting up specific goals, developing research plans, and/or creating hypotheses for your genealogical research. What value did you come away with? Did you see an increase in your research productivity? Was developing hypotheses difficult to do? Etc.

There is a lot of information out there so you can become well informed. There are simple steps that take you through the creation process and there are even templates available to help you get started. You owe it to yourself to learn about this process. It's not a difficult step to master and your research will move ahead more clearly and effectively. I promise you!

Please feel free to share your experiences with all of us at our monthly meetings or by submitting your thoughts to this newsletter. We would all like to hear of your research journey because that's how we learn from one another. Happy researching!

Susie Haenisch

REMEMBER

April is our annual election



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