



CITY OF WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
CITY CLERK DEPARTMENT

DAVID J. RUSHFORD
CITY CLERK

April 5, 2007

Mayor Konstantina B. Lukes and the
Members of the Worcester City Council
City Hall
Worcester, MA 01608

Dear Mme. Lukes and Councilors,

The City Clerk Department is fortunate to have student interns participate in the functions of the office from time to time. Our interns are both high school and college students, mostly Worcester residents.

Interns are generally assigned to work with the vital records collection. I ask them to assist our staff with current recordings and to be involved in report writing and analysis of older records.

Recently, Sharon Krefetz, PhD., Associate Professor of Government at Clark University provided our office with the services of an undergraduate student, Peter Kush of Worcester. Among the work assigned to Peter during the Spring 2007 semester is a survey of the records of Worcester marriages for the year 1950.

Peter's statistical report and comments are attached for your review. Although I have provided you with my thinking on these types of statistics in the past, it is interesting to gain the perspective of others who are allowed to access this historical data. I hope you will read Peter's comments about the composition of Worcester at the mid-point of the last century because the make-up of the 1950 data is in stark contrast to that of the present day.

Peter continues to work with the City Clerk staff this semester. By this communication I wish to thank Professor Krefetz and Peter Kush for their involvement at this office. I hope we are able to attract future student interns as the exposure to the operation of a city department and the business of public service.

Cordially,

David J. Rushford
City Clerk

enc.



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Dear Mr. Rushford

Please find attached:

- 1) A hand counted record of birth place of those seeking marriage certificates for the year of 1950.
- 2) A description of patterns and implications drawn from these patterns.

After completing my research of marriages intentions for the year 1950, I see two trends developing. The first is that a majority of those who filed for marriage in 1950 where born in Worcester. Of the 4,512 people who filed for marriage licenses, 2,648 people were from the City. Of the remaining 1,864 filing for licenses, 1,024 people were from Massachusetts but born outside the City's boundaries. In total, 3,672 people filing for a marriage license in Worcester where born in either Worcester or elsewhere in Massachusetts. This statistic indicates that people where not very mobile during the 1950's.

This thesis is further reinforced by looking at the out-of-state birthplace and the out-of-country birthplaces of people looking to get married in Worcester. To show that people where not very mobile during the 1950's one can look at the couples from the Northeast who are getting married in Worcester. In New England there were a total of 658 people applying to get married in Worcester, a number that includes 88 individuals from New York and 35 from Pennsylvania. All totaled, 75 percent of people seeking marriage in Worcester are from the Northeast. As one moves away from the New England and the Northeast the numbers decrease significantly.

The most probable reason for the concentration of marriage licenses in the immediate region is transportation. While automobiles were commonplace in the 1950's, the transportation network was still being developed and a national culture had not yet evolved to where people readily traveled and moved from one place to another. People also tended to stay closer to their birthplace, relying on a tight-knit intergenerational support network to care for one another and raise families. Travel to fulfill these functions was limited by time (rail), cost (airplane) and access (automobile.) The following is a state-by-state break-down of the place of birth of people applying for licenses in the City of Worcester.

State	Number
Alabama	3
Alaska	0
Arizona	0
Arkansas	2
California	3
Colorado	1
Connecticut	70
Delaware	0
Florida	5
Georgia	6
Hawaii	0
Idaho	1
Illinois	11
Indiana	2
Iowa	3
Kansas	2
Kentucky	1
Louisiana	1
Maine	80
Maryland	6
Massachusetts	1024
Worcester	2648
Michigan	15
Minnesota	3
Mississippi	2
Missouri	6
Montana	1
Nebraska	3
Nevada	0
New Hampshire	69
New Jersey	21
New Mexico	1
New York	88
North Carolina	3
Ohio	23
Oklahoma	0
Oregon	0
Pennsylvania	35
Rhode Island	53
South Carolina	4
South Dakota	1
Tennessee	2
Texas	3
Utah	1
Vermont	57
Virginia	8
Washington	0
West Virginia	4
Wisconsin	3
Wyoming	0
North Dakota	2
	4277

The second major trend that could be seen through this count is how few immigrants were getting married in Worcester. Only 235 immigrants sought marriage in Worcester in 1950. Of these immigrants, 79 came from Canada which ties into the earlier theory that there was limited mobility. Most of the immigrants born outside of North America were from Western Europe, mostly from Ireland, England, and Italy. A final point which should be made is how an immigrant from one country is likely to marry an immigrant from the same country. For example a Lithuanian immigrant would marry another Lithuanian immigrant. This is very important in a city like Worcester, where there is so much diversity. In the 1950s Worcester's cultural districts were still very much intact at the time.

Country	Number
Albania	13
Argentina	1
Armenia	2
Austria	1
BWI	2
Canada	73
China	1
England	18
Estonia	2
Finland	6
France	1
Germany	3
Hungary	1
Iran	1
Ireland	20
Italy	19
Jordan	1
Lithuania	19
Luxembourg	2
Mexico	1
Netherlands	1
Poland	12
Portugal	1
Russia	9
Scotland	4
Sweden	14
Syria	2
Turkey	5
	235

I feel that after seeing the place of origins of those people seeking to get married in Worcester, there are several points which should be noted.

- 1) Over 85 percent of those seeking marriage in Worcester were born in The Northeast
- 2) Most people seeking marriage in Worcester were from the Northeast due to lack of convenient and affordable transportation as well as to tighter intergenerational family models.
- 3) There are fewer immigrants filing for marriages than in past decades and contemporary years
- 4) Those immigrants who did get married often times married within their own culture and ethnicity.

Dutifully submitted
 Peter C. Kush
 Clark University