

December 2014

*A monthly publication
on behalf of the*



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society

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News

Greetings,

The holidays are quickly approaching. This can mean less time for genealogy research. It can also prove to be for a great time to reminisce with relatives and share stories about our ancestors. Be sure to check out the following items in our newsletter, which can help you with your family research:

- Upcoming genealogy events (Pages 2-5)
- November meeting with Dear Myrt now on-line (Page 3)
- WMGS December 2014 Meeting Details (Page 5)
- December Historical Society Spotlight: Pioneer Valley History Network (Page 5)
- Update on WMGS Google+ Community (Page 7)
- How to Find a Revolutionary War Patriot by Dick Eastman (Page 8-10)

We're looking forward to seeing everyone at our next meeting on Wednesday, December 3, 2014 for our Pot Luck Dinner at the Agawam Senior Center.

Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season.

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WMGS Calendar of Events

December 3, 2014 – Holiday Dinner: Join us for a pot luck dinner. Socialize with fellow genealogists while dining to holiday music.

After dinner, we will hold an open-mic session. Members are welcome to share their genealogy research stories, websites, tips and ideas. You are also invited to share your New Year's genealogy resolutions.

Save the Dates

Mark your calendars. Below you will find the 2014-2015 events for the WMGS:

January 7, 2015 – Field Trip: The Lyman and Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History

February 4, 2015 – Judy G. Russell “The Legal Genealogist”

March 4, 2015 – To be determined

April 1, 2015 – Lauren Forastiere will present, “The Funeral Home Industry as a Family History Resource.”

May 6, 2015 – Election of officers; Connie Reik, Archivist at Tufts University will present “Finding Your Civil War Ancestors.”

June 3, 2015 – Last monthly meeting and dinner.

For a printable version of our 2014-15 calendar and events, click here:

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mawmgs/updates.html>

E-Mail Updates

Do we have your e-mail address to keep you posted? Have you been receiving e-mail notices and announcements from us? If not, there's a good possibility that the address we have is either outdated or simply not recorded properly. PLEASE let us know your current e-mail address so that you won't miss any WMGS announcements. Contact us at WestMassGen@Gmail.com with your current e-mail address.

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

Genealogy Research Clinics

Join Fran Malone, President of WMGS, and Dave Robison, Vice President of WMGS and owner of 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. Learn time saving research strategies using Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, Google and SteveMorse.org among other sites.

Sessions are held on the third and fourth Thursdays of the month in the computer room of the Agawam Senior Center. Clinics are free for WMGS members. There is a \$10 fee per session for non-members.

Last meeting for 2014: December 18, 2014

2015 Dates

January 15	April 16
January 22	April 23
February 19	May 21
February 26	May 28
March 19	June 18
March 26	

WMGS November Meeting Now On-line

Did you miss our November meeting? Dear Myrt spoke to us remotely about "Three Months to Better Organization." To view the handouts from her presentation, just click on the following link:

<http://www.geneamusings.com/2014/11/dearmyrtles-3-months-to-better.html>

NERGC Conference

NAVIGATING THE PAST: SAILING INTO THE FUTURE

15 – 19 APRIL 2015

The Rhode Island Convention Center
Providence, RI

Register at www.nergc.org

Early Bird Deadline **28 February 2015**



The most important genealogical conference in the Northeast is the biennial “New England Regional Genealogical Conference.” Virtually all genealogical subjects will be covered in a 3 day event with a wide variety of speakers, workshops, “Ancestor’s Road Show”, banquets, luncheons and other events. For a detailed description of what has been planned, click here <http://www.nergc.org/> and then click the link **Download the Program**

Brochure. There is an “Early Bird” registration of \$120 which ends on February 28, 2015. After that date, registration is \$150. Also, the local hotels are offering special rates to conference attendees.

Keynote Speaker: Lisa Louise Cook – Genealogy Gems
Keynote Speaker: Judy G. Russell – The Legal Genealogist

- 60+ lectures
- Technology Day
- Librarians’ and Teachers’ Day
- Ancestors Roadshow
- Research in Providence
- Society Fair
- Exhibit Hall
- Special Interest Groups
- Query Column

Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NERGC.

WMGS December Meeting

The Pot Luck Dinner Sign Up Sheet was passed around at our November meeting. You can bring a dish of whatever you want if you did not have the opportunity to sign the Pot Luck Sign Up Sheet.

Do you make a special dish for the holidays to celebrate your ethnicity? Perhaps homemade tomato sauce to go with an Italian dish? Maybe you're Polish and know how to make pierogi or golumpki? Whatever your background, feel free to bring your specialty to our Pot Luck Dinner in December.

After dinner, we will hold an open-mic session. Members are welcome to share their genealogy research stories, websites, tips and ideas.

Historical Society Spotlight: Pioneer Valley History Network by Katy Krause

We have a special group coming for the December meeting. Since it's a much more social evening, I was having trouble choosing just one historical society to invite. And I found an excellent answer: The Pioneer Valley History Network. If you've never heard of them, take a moment to read about them below and I think everyone will see why they are a great choice for this month.

The **Pioneer Valley History Network** is a resource for local history and genealogical organizations in western Massachusetts—and the public they serve. Large or small, old or new, these organizations care for the objects and stories of the region's past. Some are small, volunteer-run historical societies; others are large museum complexes. Some focus on collections, others provide resources and education. All are committed to keeping history alive and relevant for future generations. Our mission is "to promote and provide effective communication and collaboration among the historical societies, sites, and museums of the Pioneer Valley and to foster a public awareness of, and appreciation for, such repositories of history". We invite museums, historical and genealogical societies, libraries, and historic sites in the region, as well as all history-minded individuals, to join. That includes YOU! Membership is free for individuals and organizations in the Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire counties of western Massachusetts.

Genealogy with Dave Robison

Upcoming events by Dave Robison of Old Bones Genealogy of New England. More information is available at http://oldbones.co/?page_id=3679

December 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2014 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm: “**Advanced Genealogy Research**” is for those who have a few years of research under their belts and would like to be challenged to a higher level. Location is currently planned in Westfield. Sample of subjects covered include:

- Determining the value of sources, information and evidence
- Resolving conflicts
- “Crafting” a search
- If it’s not all on the internet (which is definitely is not!) then where do I go now?
- The 5 points of the Genealogical Proof Standard

And more! The course fee is \$75 per individual and \$135 per couple. Class size is limited to 10. For more details, contact Dave directly at dave@oldbones.info.

January 21, 2015 at 3:00 pm: A one hour presentation of the popular “**The ABC’s of Family Research.**” Attendees at Armbrook Village, 551 North Road, Westfield, MA will be introduced to the basics of genealogy research, how to find your “long lost cousins”, building a family tree from scratch, interesting and productive search strategies when using genealogy web sites. Also, since “it’s all not on the internet,” you’ll learn where you might go when the search sites just don’t have the answers!

April 15 – 19, 2015, Dave will be presenting “**Search Strategies You Haven’t Tried --- Search Sites You Never Thought Of**” at the biennial conference of the New England Regional Genealogical Consortium (NERGC) in Providence, RI. Dozens of speakers from around the United States will be presenting a broad variety of programs. “Early Bird Registration” is \$120 per person but ends 28 February 2015. Regular registration will be \$150 as of 1 March 2015.

Update on WMGS Google+ Community

by Dave Robison

I'd like to share a few words about our WMGS Google+ Community. It's a little like our Facebook page but different in a few important areas. First, there are members on the community from around the world. Researching Scottish ancestors? There is at least one member from Scotland. Holland? Yes, we have a member from Holland.

As with Facebook, you can share your genealogy thoughts, ask for assistance, offer suggestions to others, post tips...whatever! More importantly, in my humble opinion (IMHO??), the greatest benefit will be the ability to be invited to our Google+ virtual meetings (called Google+ Hangouts On Air) through the Community so that you can view them from your own computer at home or wherever you may be. That's where the link to view the meetings will be posted. Not all of our upcoming meetings will be "virtual" but I envision 3 or 4 per season.

Also, you DO NOT NEED A G-MAIL account, a fact that I was unaware of until a meeting I attended last Saturday. When I mentioned the reluctance of some people to have "another e-mail address," I was told that anyone can join Google+ with whatever e-mail address you ordinarily use.

Why get a Google+ account? Again, it's like Facebook only different. There are thousands of communities that you may want to join beyond genealogy: hiking, quilting, history, Civil War, DIY, education, religion, government...You name it, there's a community! Some are public so that all you have to do is click "Join." Others are private which means you have to request membership. Our WMGS Community is private and each request to join has to be "moderated" so as to keep the membership within the boundaries of those who have an interest in genealogy and family research.

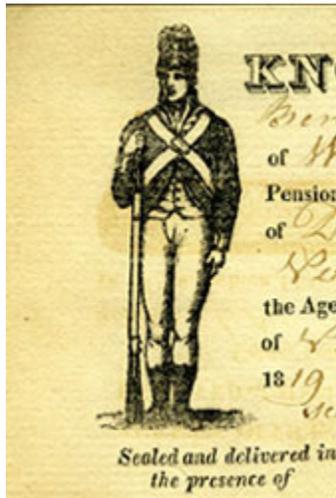
Here's a link to a simple process of joining Google+ after which you can "request" membership in the WMGS Community: <http://bit.ly/How-To-Join-Google-Plus>

If you'd like to see the Community, here's a link to that as well:
<https://plus.google.com/communities/109742774980945180341>

Any questions? Feel free to contact me at dave@oldbones.info.

How to Find a Revolutionary War Patriot

The following article is from *Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter* and is copyright 2014 by Richard W. Eastman. It is re-published here with the permission of the author. Information about the newsletter is available at www.eogn.com



After earlier skirmishes, the American Revolutionary War started with the battle between British troops and local Massachusetts militia at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts, on 19 April 1775. It ended eight years later with the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783. If you have been able to trace your ancestry in America back to those years, you have an excellent chance of finding at least one ancestor who had some type of service related to the Revolutionary War effort.

In fact, your ancestor may have been a Patriot or a Loyalist. We don't celebrate the efforts of Loyalists very much in the United States, but go north to Canada and you will find that Loyalists are well documented and honored as heroes. They are especially honored for their contribution to the development of Canada. Perhaps one Canadian in ten has a Loyalist ancestor, and many people with English blood who live elsewhere – in the United States, in commonwealth countries such as Australia and New Zealand, or in nearly any other country round the world – are also of Loyalist descent. Visit the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada web site at <http://www.uelac.org/> for more information.

If you have already documented your U.S. ancestry to 1760 or earlier, you already have an excellent chance of finding either a Patriot or a Loyalist in the family tree. Boys as young as 16 were allowed to serve, so any male ancestors born in 1760 or earlier are possible veterans. You can even find a few younger boys who served as drummers or assistants in the Revolutionary War and later were credited as veterans, even though they were not considered soldiers during the war itself.

Those who didn't serve directly in a military capacity may have helped in other ways, such as providing goods, supplies, or non-military service to the cause. Women also participated in the American Revolution, sometimes as spies, and a very few even fought in battles while disguised as male soldiers.

If your ancestor served as a Patriot and lived long enough after the war to apply for a

pension, you can probably find a pension application for him. Almost all federal pension applications have survived, even the applications of those who were later turned down. In most cases, the veterans had to prove they were true veterans and therefore eligible for pensions. The "proof" often consisted of testimonials from relatives, neighbors, or from other military veterans with whom they served. Such testimonials often provide a wealth of genealogy information, frequently mentioning parents, spouses, siblings, and children. Even the applications that were eventually rejected can be valuable to today's genealogists.

Before 1818, national pension laws concerning veterans of the Revolution specified disability or death of a serviceman as the basis for a pension award (with the exception of the Continental Congress resolution of May 15, 1778, granting half pay to officers for service alone). On March 18, 1818, the U. S. Congress granted pensions to Revolutionary War veterans for service from which no disabilities resulted. Officers and enlisted men in need of assistance were eligible under the terms of the 1818 act if they had served in a Continental military organization or in the U. S. naval service (including the Marines) for 9 months or until the end of the war. Pensions granted under this act were to continue for life.

Congress passed another service-pension act on May 15, 1823, which granted full pay for life to surviving officers and enlisted men of the Revolutionary War who were eligible for benefits under the terms of the Continental Congress resolution of May 15, 1778, as amended.

The last and most liberal of the service-pension acts benefiting Revolutionary War veterans was passed on June 7, 1832, and extended the provisions of the law of May 15, 1828 to even more veterans. The act provided that every officer or enlisted man who had served at least 2 years in the Continental Line or State troops, volunteers or militia, was eligible for a pension of full pay for life. Naval and marine officers and enlisted men were also included. Veterans who had served less than 2 years, but not less than 6 months, were eligible for pensions of less than full pay. While thousands applied for pensions under the earlier acts of Congress, this final act of 1832 was the one that saw the most applications.

In 1832, all of the living veterans would have been at least 72 years old. Many had already died, either from war injuries or from unrelated causes. In many cases, widows of veterans applied for benefits based on a husband's service. In most cases, widows' applications provided even more family information than did the applications received from actual veterans.

On July 29, 1848, Congress provided life pensions for widows of veterans who were married before January 2, 1800. All restrictions pertaining to the date of marriage were removed by acts of February 3, 1853, and February 28, 1855. On March 9, 1878, widows of Revolutionary War soldiers who had served for as few as 14 days, or were in any engagement, were declared eligible for life pensions. This was still an issue in 1878 because many older veterans had married younger women, resulting in a large number of widows obtaining benefits 108 years or more after the birth of their husbands.

Follow the Money - Tracking Revolutionary War Army Pension Payments by Claire Prechtel-Klusens is a great tutorial on researching Revolutionary War pension applications. The tutorial may be found at

<http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2008/winter/follow-money.html>.

Revolutionary War pension applications may be found in their entirety on Fold3.com at

<http://www.fold3.com> along with many Revolutionary War service records, final payment vouchers for several states, many Revolutionary War rolls, and more.

RootsWeb at <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com> is another good place for identifying Patriot ancestors, although the site is not easily searched. The information there is submitted by other RootsWeb users so accuracy is not guaranteed. In fact, the site is plagued with many errors but you will find it easier to start with other people's research and then gather the required documentation yourself from other sources that is needed to validate the research than to try to research something entirely from scratch. As always with any genealogy claims, you need to independently verify each piece of information you obtain on RootsWeb.

Census Records for 1790 and the early 1800s also can be very helpful in identifying Revolutionary War ancestors. The census records may be found on MyHeritage.com, Ancestry.com. FamilySearch.org also has many census records available online although not all of them.

If you are unsuccessful at proving connections via the above online resources, you will need to resort to printed books and microfilm images as many of the needed records are not yet online.

If you have identified an ancestor born between 1710 and 1765 who was living in 1775-1776, check the online DAR Patriot Index to see if your ancestor is listed. If the answer is yes, someone else has submitted an approved DAR application for your ancestor; you will want to see more details in that application. If the answer is no, your ancestor could still be a Revolutionary War patriot; however, no one has submitted an approved DAR application for him/her.

A DAR Patriot INDEX (not the full records) is available at http://services.dar.org/public/dar_research/search/?Tab_ID=1.

Other books to be searched include numerous compilations or source records from various states, land grants made years later as a result of Revolutionary War service, and even books about various generals and admirals that may mention some of the men who served under them.

You can find many such books in your local library and at [Google Books](#). For example, I looked in [Google Books](#) and found a biography of Revolutionary War Captain John Paul Jones that mentioned one of my ancestors, a Marine who served on board the Ranger under the command of Jones. You never know what you will find until you look!

As with any genealogy effort, a bit of perseverance may provide records you never knew about – and very possibly contribute facts about your ancestors that you never knew.

Do you have comments, questions, or corrections to this article? If so, please post your words at the end of [this article](#) in the Standard Edition newsletter's web site where everyone can benefit from your words. You might also want to read comments posted by others there.

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 research clinics 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. Applications for Membership can be found on our website at www.WestMassGen.com

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 January 2015. Please forward your information by December 20, 2014 to Susan Leverson at: WestMassGen@gmail.com

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