

November 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>

E-Mail: WestMassGen@gmail.com

News

Greetings,

We hope everyone is safe after hurricane Sandy made landfall on October 29th. For the most part, Western Massachusetts was spared from the heavy rain and damaging winds that the rest of the eastern seaboard experienced.

As we get back to our daily routines, including our genealogy research, be sure to check out the following items in our newsletter:

- Upcoming genealogy events. (Pages 2-3)
- Membership to WMGS (Page 4)
- Genealogy website for this month. (Page 5)
- Check out our Genealogy Hint. (Page 7)

We're looking forward to seeing everyone at our next meeting on Wednesday, November 7, 2012 at the Agawam Senior Center.

© 2012 Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society. All rights reserved.

Calendar of Events.

Wednesday, November 7, 2012:

The Western Massachusetts Genealogy Society will hold their next meeting on Wednesday, November 7, 2012. The meeting will be from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, Massachusetts.

Dave Robison from www.oldbones.co will speak to us on “Interviewing relatives, young and old.”

Thursday, November 15, 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, December 5, 2012:

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

Join us for our Pot Luck” dinner and holiday music while you dine.

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:

January 2, 2013 – Field Trip to Springfield History Library and Archives

February 6, 2013 – 40th 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

Stumped with a research question? Bring your question to our hands-on computer workshop, by Bruce Cortis. During the workshop, you will have an opportunity to ask your question, and use the computer to look for a solution. 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. Mark your calendar:

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

Membership Dues

Just a reminder: We are still accepting dues for the WMGS annual membership. 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.

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

Genealogy Websites: Honoring Our Veterans

By Fran Malone

Sunday November 11th will be Veteran's Day. How many of you have Veterans in your family tree? Do you know how to get their Military Records? How about a medal earned or lost by your Veteran? Did your Veteran continue working with the Federal Government after his Military time? Hopefully the following information at the National Archives will help you in your discoveries.

I'm a Veteran of three wars so I find it very important to honor those before me and to keep their memories visible. The first time I worked with the National Archives was when I discovered that my wife's Great-Great Grandfather Philip Bovat fought in the Civil War and was wounded three times. His military records and pension were obtained at the National Archives in Washington DC because they hold all records prior to 1917 or more specifically World War I. The website for the National Archives is: <http://www.archives.gov>

Once I discovered that he received three wounds I started to look into when the Purple Heart was awarded and I discovered that in 1932 a bill was signed by the President that any Civil War Veteran wounded could be awarded the Purple Heart. The Veteran himself, if still alive, had to apply for it or a member of the family. Philip Bovat was already deceased in 1932 so I looked into the aspect if the medal was ever awarded and it wasn't. This was in 2007 so I applied on behalf of my wife and the National Archives in St. Louis took the information and went through Washington to get the Purple Heart Medal and have it sent to my wife.

Click on the following link and this will take you directly to the information on how to replace or obtain a medal for your veteran.

<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/replace-medals.html>

The National Archives in St. Louis not only handles the awarding of medals, it also handles the Military Records from 1917 to the present. However, a fire in 1981 destroyed a good portion of the World War I records so the chance of finding your World War I Veteran is close to zero. However, through them I learned a few places to look for those records. My wife's Grandfather John Calevro was a WWI Veteran out of Vermont. He received medical treatment at the Veteran's Hospital in Boston in the 1960's so they had parts of his records. Come to find out he was with the Vermont Militia which is today's National Guard. By going through the Vermont State Adjutant's Office I was able to find more of his records and

obtained the two medals that he had coming to him.

Click on the following link <http://www.archives.gov> and this will bring you to the National Archives home page. You'll see Veteran's Service Records as one of the tabs. Click this and it will bring you to the section that will explain how to request military service record, research using military records, and replace lost medals and awards. The Chart below shows you the older military service records that are held in Washington DC.

Branch of Service	Dates
Volunteers	Military service performed by persons serving during an emergency and whose service was considered to be in the Federal interest, 1775 - 1902
Regular Army	Enlisted personnel, 1789 - October 31, 1912 Officers, 1789 - June 30, 1917
Navy	Enlisted personnel, 1798 - 1885 Officers, 1798 - 1902
Marine Corps	Enlisted personnel, 1798 - 1904 Some officers, 1798 - 1895
Coast Guard	Persons who served in predecessor agencies to the U.S. Coast Guard: the Revenue Cutter Service (Revenue Marine), the Life-Saving Service, and the Lighthouse Service, 1791 - 1919
Confederate States	Persons who rendered military service for the Confederate States government in its armed forces, 1861 - 1865
Veterans Records	Claims files for pensions based on Federal military service, 1775 - 1916 and Bounty land warrant application files relating to claims based on wartime service, 1775 - 1855

The National Archives in St. Louis not only handles the Military Records from 1917 to the Present, they handle the records for the retired Government Employees. If your ancestor or family member worked for the Federal Government, then this is the Archives you need to go to. Some Veterans may be able to obtain copies of certain military records from their state, county, or municipality. Also Contact your State or County Veterans Agency. The last thing is finding where a Veteran Ancestor is buried. The following website http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NGL_v1 is the Veteran's grave locator. Not all veterans are listed but the site does get updated when a grave is found. If your veteran is not listed then try www.findagrave.com because a lot of veterans are buried in cemeteries that haven't been reported to the Veteran's administration.

Browse the pages and if you have any questions please email us at westmassgen@gmail.com There is a lot of material on the National Archives website that I haven't mention so I'd gladly try to answer something that wasn't mentioned here.

Genealogy Hint: Organizing Your Research

By Fran Malone

This month's hint is in light of the recent storm that hit the east coast and has shown us how quickly we can lose what is valued to us. However, as individuals and genealogist, we don't really need a storm like we had to remind us and that's why we constantly update our information. I organize at least once a week if I'm really busy but normally I update twice a month. During the winter months I look back on what I've accomplished and what I would like to do in the coming year. The winter gives me a good opportunity to reorganize my files and to do a complete update. Once you update, your information is available to grab quickly in the event of an emergency and you have to leave. I know my plan is to grab my research books and my computer along with what else is needed, but that might not happen, so here are a few of the things I've done. Hopefully these few hints will help in your planning.

1. Set up your research in three ring binders and organize your records by births, death, marriages, military, naturalizations, etc. These are your paper files and should be grabbed if you have time.
2. Obtain a flat scanner at a reasonable price. Start scanning your records onto your computer and creating files. For example I have files with all the birth records and I have also set up files for the marriage records, death records, all the military records, draft cards, Naturalizations, schools, places your ancestors lived, and several other files pertaining to family.
3. Your pictures - as you scan your records in take a look around at your pictures and make sure you scan these in also. You can create individual files for the pictures also. For example, I have folders created for my pictures, my wife's pictures, the grandson, and vacations. Bottom line is that you want to put your family history records and pictures on to your computer.

4. Your records are now filed in binders and on your computer. In case of emergency you can grab the books and the computer to preserve your history. This is the ideal plan but it may not happen. Now you need to put the information in one more place and that is on the USB thumb drive and you may need to have more than one. I have three USB drives, one for the pictures of the grandson, one for the family pictures (these contain old pictures as well as present), and one for all the genealogy folders that I've created. The USB drives are kept in a place that I can grab them quickly and put them in my pocket.
5. The USB drives become the life saver in the event of a disaster and that includes your computer crashing. Once you get your new computer then you just take your USB drives download your information on to your new computer.

Always be prepared and always back up your work. Many along the east coast lost a lot, but they can still carry on. Some of the things/valuables cannot be replaced. Grant you they weren't genealogists and then maybe some were. Regardless, there are things such as the pictures on your wall that can be saved by putting them on your computer and then saving those images to the USB drive. I hope that I gave you something to think about and something to do during those cold winter months.

We all have our little hints that have helped us with our own research. Please contact us at WestMassGen@gmail.com and share your hints as well as your suggestions. Your hints or suggestions will then appear in this section to help others that might be having difficulty finding their ancestors.

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 December 2012. Please forward your information by November 20, 2012 to Susan Leverson and Fran Malone at: WestMassGen@gmail.com

Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society 2012-2013 Executive Board Members

President: Fran Malone
Vice-President: Beckie Cross
Co-Secretary: Jane Okscin
Co-Secretary: Marilyn Powers
Treasurer: Susan Leverson