

Veteran's Day/Armistice Day

There are those among us "of a certain age," who remember when the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month was the day Americans set aside 11 minutes of silence to remember the armistice and the veterans of World War 1914. In the late 20th century, it became Veterans' Day.

Looking through the historical society material and some of my own, three veterans with Springfield connections from earlier wars, were found.

The first, George Mason Lovering was born in Springfield 10 January, 1832. He received the Medal of Honor in the Civil War. George entered the service in East Randolph, MA. He was a First Sgt., Company 1, 4th MA Infantry at Port Hudson, LA. His citation reads, " On 14th June 1863, during a momentary confusion in the ranks caused by other troops rushing upon the regiment, this soldier, with coolness and determination rendered efficient aide in preventing a panic among troops. The Medal of Honor was issued 19 Nov 1891. George Mason Lovering died in Holbrook, MA, 2 April 1919. There is a memorial plaque just behind the Unknown Soldier Monument in Old Pleasant View Cemetery. There are flags each side of the plaque.

The other two servicemen chosen had been corresponding with cousins back home. The first also serving in the Civil War was Dr. David Goodhue, Acting Assistant Surgeon on the "USS Maumee" at Hampton Roads, VA. Dr. Goodhue had studied medicine with Dr. E. K Webster of Boscawen and attended lectures at the University of Vermont and Dartmouth where he received his MD in 1863. While on the "USS Maumee", he received a letter from his cousin Maria Augusta Agar. Excerpts of her letter writing style of the period are interesting.

My Dear Cousin...I consider you very excusable for not writing me sooner. In these times of trial the Pen is always to be thrown aside for the sword, but I hope the time is not far distant when these deadly weapons which our soldiers now wield, will be beat into ploughshares and pruning hooks. Does it not indeed seem terrible, that our land from Maine to the Gulf is moistened and enriched by the blood of, well I call them mistaken men on both sides and hope and trust you do...

Please give me some particulars of the fights in which you have been engaged. How sad was the death of our cousin S.O. Stone. I wonder whether Uncle's folks ever recovered the body....Not many households now but have a vacant chair....I hope that you and brother Tom will render Gen. Sherman all the advice and assistance possible, and then I think this cruel war will soon be over. Please accept the love and good wishes of your affectionate Cousin. Maria Augusta Agar

There are some date discrepancies between the letter and the biography of Dr. Goodhue in

THE HISTORY OF SPRINGFIELD, by Charles McDaniel, but he served on several ships and was discharged 9 October 1865. On 19 February 1866, Dr. Goodhue began his successful medical practice in Springfield. His family lived in the house on the corner of Main Street and George Hill Road. His great granddaughter still resides there. He and Abbie had four children. Most of us would be familiar with Libbie Abbie Goodhue Cass for whom our Libbie A. Cass Library is named.

And now for the war President Wilson thought "...would end all wars," World War 1914. Col Arthur Heath was serving with the Lafayette Escadrilles in France where he would receive fourragere and medal of France. His service with the 103rd American Pursuit Squadron took him to France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

On 3 October, 1918 Arthur answered a letter from his cousin Elsie May Heath, who lived in Springfield on the family farm located on the Fourth NH Turnpike (4A). She, as well as other farm girls from the area, worked at the hotels in Georges Mills and other towns around Lake Sunapee during the tourist season.

My Dear Cousin, I will try to answer your letter this morning. I am more than pleased to hear from you as I am on the sick list. I have a chance to do a little writing. My hand got sore. I could not work...We have been having a lot of rain here lately, and it is getting cold. No, I don't suppose "Georges Mills" are the same old mills. These days...I don't imagine that "Mother's" pancakes have changed much...ooh-la,la...

*(Evidently Elsie had told him about a boyfriend and he sent some advice.)
...I am glad you are enjoying yourself...A fellow trying to entertain you, well whatever you do be careful when you go to get in that gig. Because it may hit the ground. "N'est-ce-pa?"
I reckon [sic] I will close for this time and get some water to wash with. Hope you are well and happy.
Love and best wishes from Arthur.*

Sadly, Elsie May, age 20 years, died 30 October 1918 in Springfield from influenza. She may never have read the letter that was written by cousin Arthur, on 3 October 1918. The armistice ending World War 1914 was signed the 11th of November 1918. Arthur came home from the war and married Elsie Philbrick. They had two sons, Sherman who died young and Arthur W. Heath, Jr. The family lived in Otterville for many years and Arthur was involved in several endeavors from landscaping to real estate. Arthur W. Heath, Sr. died early November, 1983.

References: Medal of Honor Citations, Civil War (A-Z) www.army.mil/cmh-pgmohl.htm,
Senate Medal of Honor Recipients 1863-1973. Letter to David P. Goodhue from Maria Augusta

Agar on file SHS. History of Springfield, Charles McDaniel, and Letter from Corp. Arthur Heath to Elsie Heath, October 9, 1918. Argus Champion Obituary, November 1983, of Arthur W. Heath.