



NEWSLETTER

January 2018
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2017 – Year in Review

Summarized by Louise Stack

THE YEAR IN REVIEW: January – November 2017
JANUARY 2017: None of us were brave enough to venture out for this meeting as there was an ice storm – not fit for man or beast as the saying goes so the meeting was cancelled. None of us could really afford a broken bone at this point in life anyway.

FEBRUARY 2017 (The postponed January topics): Bob Heck started the meeting off with his presentation on Hoaxes and Scams to help keep us keep the crooks at bay. With a healthy dose of suspicion and wariness perhaps we will keep our heads clear and our pockets unpicked.

A scam Bob shared was one which involved a friend. This friend called Bob from Florida and asked his advice because his wife had received an official looking letter from a “lawyer” in Switzerland. Allegedly, the wife was in line to receive an unidentified inheritance but first she would have to prove that she was a valid heir by sending a certified copy of her birth certificate as well as a certified copy of her father’s death certificate. And this had to be done within 5 days or she would lose out. Bob’s advice was that it was a fake, that his friend should do nothing and throw the letter away. He later learned that the wife did send the documents and surprisingly received a 2nd letter stating that they had been received. Promising? But then the other shoe dropped and the lawyer advised that all, yes all, of Switzerland was on a two-week national vacation so he would contact them when he returned. Several months later the woman realized that she would not get anything but someone got a false identity.

So many scams, so little time. Here are some more of the highlights:

Bob mentioned the calls from “Microsoft” that lead you to believe there is a problem with your computer which they can fix over the phone for say \$150. You provide your credit card, including the security code, and control of your computer. You’re out the money, your computer isn’t “fixed” and you might even get a virus or malware.

YEAR IN REVIEW, 2017

10 January 2018

INTERNET, COMPUTER AND SYSTEM
SECURITY

By

Bill Heck & Associates

Next Meeting is January 10, 2018

Klemmer's Banquet Center

10401 West Oklahoma Avenue

Milwaukee, WI 53227

Then there is the one where you get a call or email saying you missed jury duty. To avoid being in trouble you are asked to give personal information and social security number.

Or your “bank” contacts you to say there is a security breach so asks for your account number and social security number to help clear up the issue. The FBI scam is in an email accusing you of downloading copyrighted material or some such and stating that your system will be locked unless you pay a fine within 72 hours. Threats of criminal proceedings and jail are also mentioned. The logo on the email looks authentic but think about it a minute, no law enforcement agency will send threats of prosecution via email. Do contact the FBI, but do not use the number listed in the email.

The beneficiary scam where you are offered a large amount of money to set up an account to help get funds out of a country following a death. You are required to first deposit a substantial amount in a joint account as a show of good faith, provide your bank account number and credit card number. Has anyone else gotten one of those messages from Nigeria?

Then there is one where you will get rich. In this scam, you are asked to send out messages and get money for each person you send to. Bob used MPAFUG as an example and showed how much he could get if he sent out the message to all 500 members, plus additional when a member sent it on.

Grandparents be alert for the grandparent’s scam where a caller claims to be your grandchild and is in jail so needs money. If you don’t recognize their voice, you mention their name. The caller, of course, uses this but says that he is sick or injured which accounts for the altered voice.

Genealogists can be particularly vulnerable and have been targets of scams since at least the 1700’s; usually land, wealth and inheritance related. We all want to have royal blood or Native American ancestry and social status such as in the DAR or SAR.

If you really want proof of your ancestry there is the heraldry scam where you could buy Family Crests and Coat of Arms, family name lists and history books. And let’s not forget that you too could become a Russian count as Bob was offered. This required a minimum bid of \$10,000 on e-Bay.

Now for hoaxes, they are a message warning you about impending doom or of a virus. They define the problem, what will happen (hard drive will be wiped out), evidence (my friend at Microsoft says), the authority (reported on CNN) and the action (send to everyone you know). First of all, do not send this on to your friends, but if you

are concerned verify it at F-Secure or Snopes or other reliable websites.

Bob’s tip: If it looks too good to be true, it probably isn’t!

The second half of the meeting was Bill Heck’s presentation on “Internet and Computer Security”. Bill brought along his associate Doug Rogahn and they began by showing us the new world of internet-connected machines, appliances and other gadgets that talk to each other, and sometimes us, through the internet. They called this the internet of things or IOT.

The first example they used was a pet cam where the owner could watch their pet, talk to it or open a treat machine. That was fun, but the real message was a warning that there is also the possibility of abuse by predators when using remote devices such as that. Bill and Doug had a number of slides of images they found on social media inside homes including children’s bedrooms and playrooms. There were images of stuff to be found in the homes – internet shopping for the burglar you might say. In one unnerving scenario, a family was listening to their child in her room via a monitor when they suddenly heard a man’s voice. The man was not in the room, but had taken control of the monitor remotely. Bill and Doug cautioned that it is the owner’s responsibility to check for updates in their devices, not just the computer. This could also apply to your home thermostat or security system.

Bill and his associates always manage to scare us with the latest in cyber security breach stories. One in particular they mentioned was that NSA (our National Security Agency) was “robbed” of information on cyber weapons that they create. You wouldn’t think that could happen to our secret squirrels. Also, ransom ware is still in the game and victims who had their systems locked up lost about a billion dollars in 2016. A couple of cautions here were to keep your protective programs updated and be cautious of where you visit on the internet. Doug also mentioned that if you have Quick Time on your computer, you should uninstall it as it is no longer supported by Apple. Bill and Doug advised that many well-known companies had been hacked in 2016 citing Airbnb, Netflix and Fox News as examples. You may have even been involved with one or more of those many companies.

Bill and Doug asked us to evaluate what we share with friends on the internet. Phone cameras are widely used these days so one example was a photo of super bowl tickets clearing showing the bar-code which could be copied/counterfeited. They also showed us several photos of vacant homes which can easily be found on social media sites.

The internet is not the only vulnerable spot in your home. Bill and Doug had brought along a gun safe with an

electronic lock to show us just how easily that could be circumvented and opened. Two children had found a similar safe in their home and were able to open it and gain access to the gun and, as kids will do, messed with that too. Doug showed just how easy it had been to open that safe. Hotel safes are easy to get into as well.

Bill's tip: Ask yourself if you really, really need that new gadget.

MARCH 2017: Kevin Abing, Archivist for the Milwaukee County Historical Society, was the guest speaker for the first half of this meeting. His topic was on the Genealogical and Historical Research Collections which are available at the historical society located in a former bank building on Old World 3rd St. The building itself is owned by Milwaukee County and is the official repository for county records.

If you have ancestors from the Milwaukee area, you do not want to miss out on research here. Kevin listed numerous collections that are available for you to peruse. There are naturalization records, city directories, county directories, obituaries and biographies, census records, jail registers, probate records, coroner's inquests and Milwaukee County infirmity patient records. In addition, there are incorporation records, a business index, assessment and tax records, church, photo and map collections and published histories.

Although there are all those collections, some are of limited time periods. Some like naturalizations, have more or less information, based on the time period. Prior to 1906 for instance, there is only an alphabetical card index, but after September 1906 there is much more information. The city directories are fairly complete, but are missing a few years in between periods. County directories are a little more sparse, but do list people who lived outside Milwaukee city limits but still within the county. There are obituaries and biographies, but mostly of prominent individuals. As for census records, territorial censuses for Milwaukee's early years, the 1905 state census and federal censuses 1850-1930 are available. There are jail registers for some periods starting in 1855 up until 1964, but they are not inclusive for every period and there is no name index. This is also the case for anyone who was buried at the "Potter's Field" on the Milwaukee County grounds. As for marriage records, there is an index of individuals who obtained their marriage license at city hall between 1897-1982, but the actual certificates would be at the county Register of Deeds. If you know the year of marriage, you might also be able to find a marriage application. Speaking of marriages, there are divorce records for 1837-1974, many after 1931 are off-site though.

Resources that you may not have tried before include school census records for 1863-1960 although the information might be spotty. The society's church collection has anniversary publications and histories, but also has some microfilm baptisms, burials, marriages and confirmations for some Milwaukee churches. Photo collections have organizational and business files along with those of individuals and city views. Kevin shared a number of photos from their collection which brought back memories for many of us.

Kevin's tip: Stop in and see for yourself what you can find at Milwaukee County Historical Society.

The second March presentation had Bob Heck staying on the topic of historical societies by taking us into what the ARC's (Area Research Centers) have to offer. He did start off his presentation with a brief history of The Wisconsin Historical Society and how it is organized. There are 4 divisions with The Division of Library-Archives being the most useful for genealogists. The Wisconsin Historical Society coordinates an Area Research Center Network with centers set up at 14 UW colleges throughout Wisconsin.

The ARC's have a wealth of information that you may not be able to find elsewhere. Bob had several examples of what he has been able to discover including a photo of a Civil War Recruitment poster he found at Parkside. Typically, you could find birth, marriage and death records, cemetery and census records, church records, naturalizations, citizenship, court and probate records and maps. In addition, you might also find land records, tax records, directories, family histories and farm records. Bob has found plat maps, probate records and court records relating to his ancestors.

Using tax records for example, Bob showed us what could be found at an ARC. He was able to find a widow who had married his great-great grandfather after she paid back taxes and he found an ancestor under a different spelling of the last name. You could find the specific property description of your ancestor's land which is useful in a number of circumstances, but it can help you determine when and where they were living. This could be especially helpful since there is no 1890 census to reference; you might at the least learn if your ancestor was still living during a given year. Taxes were generally paid at the end of every year.

Since there was a bus trip planned for Madison in June, Bob spent some time explaining what resources are available at The Wisconsin Historical Society Library there. It is the ARC for Dane, Sauk and Columbia Counties, but it also has the largest collection in the world dedicated exclusively to North American history. The library has newspapers on microfilm, books and publications, archives for special collections and visual materials. If you have never been to an ARC Center or

to the WI State Historical Society Library, you are missing a gold mine of information.

Bob's tip: If you are told records are not available because the courthouse burned down, ask if that means people didn't have to pay taxes then.

APRIL 2017: For the first half of this meeting Bob Heck led us off with a look at the "To America" series of books. This series of books is an index of passengers emigrating to the United States from Germany, Italy and Russia starting with Russia in 1834 with the majority of the records being between 1850-1900. Bob also mentioned Irish immigrant passenger lists for the famine years of 1846-1851 and border crossings from Canada 1895-1954. An often-overlooked resource is US Passport Applications for 1795-1925.

Bob demonstrated a Germans to America search looking for his great-great-grandfather Johann Heck. He had no luck at first with that name even though he found plenty of Johann Heck's, but none of them belonged to his line. As many of us know, there are often misspellings in records so Bob tried searching for Johann's son Peter and, after extensive research, found him listed under Hauk. He then looked for anyone else with that name and found the arrival date of 16 April 1853 and all 7 members of the family. He also found the name of the ship, port of departure and port of entry. From there he went on to check passenger lists. Bob also demonstrated a search under Italians to America and Russians to America and listed a multitude of websites you can use for your own ancestral research.

Especially interesting to those of you who may have ancestors who came to the US during the Irish famine years is a separate passenger index available free on Familysearch.org. And, the same applies to those whose ancestors came via Canada. The cost to Canada was less than the cost to enter New York or Boston. Their entry to the US would be recorded in St. Albans, VT (yes, really Vermont).

Lastly, Bob discussed researching US Passport Applications. Passports weren't necessarily required for US citizens, but it is worth a search. Your ancestor may have needed to return to the Old Country for family or other reasons. If they did apply for a US passport, you could find naturalization information along with when they first immigrated, other relatives or contacts and pertinent dates.

Bob's tip: Your ancestors left a huge paper trail – follow it!

The second half of the April meeting was "Demystifying DNA" presented by Pat Mundstock. Pat did explain a bit about DNA testing and analyses, but not enough to

scare everyone off. She began by explaining that DNA is essentially a 4-part code. Everything a computer does is based on instructions fed into it in the form of a code. There are different types of DNA: mitochondrial, Y-chromosomal, autosomal, and X-chromosomal. Autosomal DNA testing is the big thing these days because it can give you an estimate of the particular parts of the world your ancestors came from.

Our DNA is really a complex message spelled out in combinations and locations of very basic code words or nucleotides – Guanine, Cytosine, Thymine and Adenine. DNA testing looks at several chromosomes and other combinations of those 4 code words to determine just who you are. Remember that you get 50% of your DNA from each parent. The major companies that do testing are: Ancestry, 23 and Me, My Heritage and Family Tree DNA, but there are also others. To choose one Pat recommends that you read and understand the Terms and Conditions and the account options such as how the company will use your DNA information. She did caution that there might be surprises and not everyone wants to know the results. Pat recommends that you test with a site that matches your needs.

Pat mentioned that DNA analysis seems to be part science and part "art". There is often overlap in reports from different companies because baseline panels will be different due to variations in the client population. The various companies that do DNA testing determine which parts of the DNA to analyze. From that they develop a baseline panel with documented ancestry. The companies may not come up with the exact same results but the results would tend to be similar.

Pat's tip: Look for close cousins first in your DNA results and contact them.

MAY 2017: With a research bus trip to Madison scheduled for June, Winnie Mading gave this month's presentation on "Planning That Research Trip". She has given this type of presentation previously, but always has a few new tips to share and is also willing to share her mistakes so you (hopefully) won't make them too. Winnie does make her research trips look like an adventure worth taking, plans ahead and, in addition, plans to do some touristy things along the way. She has been doing genealogy since 2001 so has plenty of tips.

So, for starters Winnie recommends asking yourself what information you are looking for. See what you can access long distance such as local history websites and newspaper archives. If there is a relative where you are going, see if they can or will do some research for you. Another option would be a paid local researcher. Decide if you want to get more details on your ancestor's life, flesh them out so to speak, or meet the friends, neighbors and associates (FAN club she called it). Start with a plan and be flexible.

Possible resources for you are: libraries, both public and college, courthouses, local history centers, cemeteries, churches and museums. Once you have your research destination planned, check the days and hours the various resources are open. You will also want to know any costs for admission, copies, parking, etc. And don't forget rules – those can vary by place. She recommends contacting churches in advance so you know if they even have what you might be looking for. If so, leaving a cash donation is always a good idea. Remember too that some courthouses screen like they do at airports so leave those weapons at home. Document what you did and did not find.

Winnie had oodles of suggestions of what to take with you on a research trip. Some such as laptops, smart phones and cameras would already be on your list, but she suggested taking a portable scanner as well as maps, office type supplies, tissue and allergy meds, change for making copies, flash drives and a cable with lock for your laptop. If you plan on visiting cemeteries she had some interesting suggestions including a snakebite kit (I'm not kidding).

Winnie's tip: Take time to have fun while on your journey.

Bob Tatalovich was next up and took us through research on "Naturalization Records in Wisconsin". Two research sources he discussed were the National Archives in Chicago and the Milwaukee County Historical Society. What you could hope to find in naturalizations would be date and place of birth, date and place of entry into the US, spouse's name, place of birth and date of marriage and information about children. The early naturalization forms had very little information but starting in September 1906 new, more detailed forms were mandated. Although unusual, you might even be able to locate records for a female relative which Bob was able to demonstrate.

Four types of forms available, although not all in every case, are: Naturalization Index Card, Declaration of Intent, Petition for Naturalization and Certificate of Arrival. It is important to know where your ancestor was naturalized as this will determine where the records are. Bob suggested that an excellent place to start with your research is with either Ancestry or Family Search. If your ancestor was naturalized there will be an index card for him or her. At the very least the index card can give you clues on where to find the papers. Usually, all related documents are gathered together with the Petition for Naturalization.

It is important to note that the final location of your ancestor's records is determined by which court handled their naturalization – County or Federal. Index cards can be confusing because the word circuit appears in both.

Bob suggests you start with Ancestry for Federal Court records, Family Search for County Court records and the Milwaukee County Historical Society for Milwaukee County records.

Bob believes that your search for these naturalization records is worth the hunt because whatever you do find could help you learn a part of your ancestor's story. Think of it as a scavenger hunt where you are picking up pieces from various sources.

Bob T's tip: Try the easiest way first.

JUNE 2017: You could say the June meeting was about fun old stuff. Louise Stack was first up with a presentation on "What's in the Attic?" This also included the garage and the basement. We've all collected stuff whether on our own or because we became the storage unit for the family. But, hidden in amongst all that stuff could be clues to your family history. Cleaning out the attic, garage or basement can be a daunting task but think of it as a treasure hunt where the reward will be discovering the family you didn't really know.

Louise suggested starting with a plan of attack and enlisting trustworthy help. Things you could find are: family memorabilia, funeral cards and documents, hidden treasures, junk, letters and notes, military items and pictures as well as a mystery or a surprise you weren't expecting. Some of the things that Louise has found placed her ancestors in certain time periods such as the 1920's, World War I or II, military dates and family celebrations. Family memorabilia she found showed a job/career for one ancestor, a hobby for another, personal items, a family heirloom and pieces of their heritage. Obits, funeral cards and documents gave lots of information not found elsewhere. Louise was able to learn about several relatives from the various funeral documents she found.

For sure there will be junk along with the treasures and don't expect to find the family fortune, but you could find another side to your relatives. In Louise's case, she found a grandmother's baby picture, a connection between 2 sides of the family, notes from aunts and uncles, and a love note from her grandpa to her grandma way before their marriage. The downside is that you will have to decide what is important to keep and what could be passed on.

Pictures talk to you in a way but can also perplex you. There are good pictures, bad pictures, and pictures that make you wonder why the family kept them. One picture, although good, created a mystery which Louise has yet to solve as it shows family in odd looking costumes/uniforms. And then there was the surprise, a note written in German which could be interpreted as either a joke or very mean-spirited. No matter what you come across, it could give you insight into your family.

Louise's tip: Look before you toss, you could find that missing piece to the family puzzle.

Bob Heck sort of stayed with the topic of fun stuff, but with old pictures. Bob's presentation was "Photo Magic Updated 2017". He showed what we can do using a simple scanner, computer and simple software programs to fix, restore and repair photographs. Bob claims that if you can color in a coloring book you can do this. Bob started by suggesting various scanner and software choices. His favorite is a Canon LiDE 220 which is powered by a USB cable so it is portable and can operate from a laptop computer. With the proper items Bob says you can scan from a cornfield or cemetery. Makes you want to try it, doesn't it? His favorite software choice is Corel's Paint Shop Pro version X2.

For demonstrations Bob took a couple of photos from Louise's previous presentation that had surface damage or were badly faded and showed how to improve them. He also used an 1888 photo found through his wife's Ancestry DNA and was able to demonstrate how to fix missing corners, and repair cracks and scratches. One of the techniques was cloning which Bob used to fill in the missing corners but then he went on to have some fun and made everyone a twin. He did specify that you will want to learn how clone as it is one of the most important tools to have. FYI, you can also clone a person out of a picture too. Scratch remover is another powerful tool and he showed how to fix a background using both techniques.

You should always scan in color even if the photo is black and white or grayscale. You can use your scanner to convert a negative to a positive or scan from an 8mm movie or digitized video. Bob did caution that you should not over scan and keep the resolution between 200-200 dots per inch. He also demonstrated how to resize photos, how to use Sharpen Brush to improve focus and how to use Brightness and Contrast to correct a dark photo. If you are experimenting, make sure to save a backup copy but remember that you can "undo" before saving your work.

Bob's tip: Most important is to have FUN!

JULY 2017: This month's presentations were related to technology. Bob Heck was the first presenter with "File Management" which he also referred to as back to basics. His presentation was meant to help us with moving, renaming and finding files and to help us avoid losing files on your computer. Simply put, think of your computer as a file cabinet. Think of the drawers in that file cabinet as drives which are physical storage devices and within the storage devices (drive) there are folders and subfolders.

When you write a paper, make a spreadsheet or draw a picture on your computer your work is saved in random access memory, but that does not mean it is permanently saved. If the power goes out and you have not saved your work, you will lose it and not be able to get it back. When you save it, it is copied to a secondary device such as a flash drive or hard drive. Once you have saved your work and made a file, it will need a name and is best kept short. There is a difference between "save" and "save as" which Bob explained, but recommends "save as" since "save" will overwrite a file with the same name. Bob showed his way of saving genealogy files; he changes a file name by adding the date and using "save as". You keep all your data separate and updated that way.

Remember that a drive is a storage device. There are different types of drives which are designated by a letter of the alphabet starting with A for floppy disk which is rarely used anymore. C is your hard drive and D is for DVD/CD although newer computers do not have this. E is for flash drive and F is for external hard drive. Believe it or not these designations go all the way to Z for other removable devices. You can rename, copy, move and delete on these storage devices. You know Bob, his demonstrations add humor as well as learning so he showed how he used photo magic to put a fish from one file on the end of his fishline in a pic from another file.

A little tidbit Bob shared was that if you delete from your C drive you can restore it by going to the recycle bin. You may want to remember that one.

Bob's tip: Be sure to back up your files often!

Sam Colon, our very own computer geek who can actually build computers, was the second speaker of the meeting with his presentation "Gizmos and Gadgets". His intent was to take the mystery out of all those technological things you have around your house. For this presentation he focused on The Cloud, flash drives, external devices and scanners although he had 5 pages of information in his handout which was well-written and easy to follow.

Sam's topic was similar to Bob's in that it involved information storage (remember the file cabinet). He started with The Cloud which he says links all of us on the worldwide web. Put another way, think of it as your PC connected to a mainframe. The advantage is that you can access your files from any device that's connected to the internet. You will want to do your homework when choosing a service so ask yourself what you need as far as storage. Some of the services Sam covered are: One-Drive, Dropbox, Google Drive and Box. But he also cautioned that you have an alternate back-up device as well.

Another storage option is the external hard drive which connects to your computer with a USB port. Flash drives also connect to your computer via a USB port, are designed for storage and transfer of files and are small and easy to transport. The disadvantages are that they can be affected by temperature extremes and humidity, can degrade over time and have a finite life. These devices vary in storage space and cost.

Sam also covered the use of scanners, calling them a genealogist's best friend. A scanner captures images from a variety of sources and makes sharing them with family a breeze. Save money on copying and postage by emailing your scanned photos and documents. Sam's personal favorite is the scanner mouse because of its dual capabilities. It is an efficient mouse and a portable scanner that connects to any PC or laptop.

Sam's tip: Have back-ups of back-ups.

AUGUST 2017: Both presentations this month were about genealogy software and both presenters were enthusiastic about their choices. Bob Tatalovich began with his choice of "Roots Magic" and said that it is a well-constructed program dating from the 1980's, does a lot and does it well. It is versatile, customize-able or can be used the way it is. And there is a FREE version which always appeals, but of course, probably will not do everything you want it to. The \$29.95 version would probably be the better option. Roots Magic is compatible with other software and is certified by Family Search so you will also have their support.

Bob had a number of examples of how to use Roots Magic. One he shared was a pedigree chart for his mother along with a family sheet for her parents and siblings. Under a tab for descendants he showed 3 generations under his maternal grandfather. It is always helpful to see an actual demonstration and Bob did make it look easy.

Altogether Bob had 7 strategies for you to utilize your Roots Magic program:

- 1 -- Use Roots Magic to collect data from the internet through web hints (the little yellow lightbulb)
- 2 -- Use Roots Magic to go back and forth from the public tree on Family Search as it allows you to download from and upload to the tree
- 3 -- Share data and sources with reports, CD's, flash or publishing on the internet
- 4 -- Not so much a strategy but a decision -- just do your research or learn more about Roots Magic through user groups, message boards, Facebook and the mailing list?
- 5 -- Consider what to do with the research you have collected to improve it
- 6 -- How to handle problem searches
- 7 -- Using your database tools

Bob started his presentation saying that he didn't think you would switch programs based solely on what he said, however, in the end he believed you would want to make the move to Roots Magic.

Bobs T's tip: Learn your software so you can do more with it.

Bruce Butterfield took the stage for the second half of the meeting with a presentation on his favorite genealogy software, "Legacy". He says it is a user-friendly program and does all the same things as Roots Magic. Like Roots Magic, Legacy has a FREE edition, but again you would probably want the Deluxe edition with more functions for about the same cost as Roots Magic. Specifically, Bruce mentioned that there are at least 14 features in the deluxe version that are not in the basic free version.

Remember Bob T mentioned in the previous presentation that you might want to learn more about the Roots Magic program? Well, Bruce also put an emphasis on learning Legacy to use it effectively. He stressed the importance of watching the beginner's video the first time you start Legacy, but also suggested watching it several times after that.

Legacy opens with a family screen that will always start with person# 1 unless you tell it not to. Bruce is a detail person so some that he likes in Legacy are:

- 1 -- You can see the number of spouses and their names
- 2 - You can see the number of parents and their names
- 3 - You can see the number of siblings; boy names are in blue and girl names are in pink
- 4 - Half children are displayed with a ½ symbol behind their name
- 5 - You can see whether there is additional information for a particular person

In addition, there is a place to put DNA information, and a box to check if the person was never married and had no children as they are treated a little differently. There are also boxes to record important record numbers and a box to exclude potential problems like a person living beyond 100 or born before the parents were married. You can also "Map My Family". There is no hint lightbulb as in Roots Magic, but there is a hint feature with an orange ball.

Bruce's tip: It's all in the details!

All that's left is for you to decide which of the two programs is right for you.

SEPTEMBER 2017: This meeting was a bit out of the ordinary. For starters, there was no real handout other than a bio page for the guest speaker. But the real difference was that there were props and costumed characters (okay, a couple were mannequins in caskets

and coffins). The topic for the entire evening was "The Victorian Undertaker" presented by Steve Person a retired funeral director and current docent at Black Point Estate and Gardens in Lake Geneva. Steve was in full costume as an 1800's undertaker and was quite the entertainer.

Steve started with a history lesson about death in the 1800's with some rather grim stories. He had quite a few examples of where we get certain superstitions, sayings or nursery rhymes, Jack & Jill for instance. "Death" is always looking for the next person which directly relates to most of the superstitions. Steve is also fond of epitaphs so he sprinkled in a few of those throughout his presentation as well. The result of the grim stories he told about the 1800's was a death had occurred.

Undertaker came into use as the term for the person "undertaking" the task of preparing a body for the funeral. Undertakers had a bit of competition in furniture makers who made the coffins or caskets. Coffins are six-sided while caskets are four-sided and are what most of us here are familiar with. The undertaker's wife usually had the job of lining the coffins.

The props Steve brought along included items used for the embalming procedure for which he gave a quasi-demonstration. Arterial embalming took the place of ice, which had previously been used, because it was longer lasting and was found to kill contagious diseases. Once the body was embalmed and dressed it was ready for the coffin/casket. Steve mentioned that a casket is a term for any container that holds something precious. Then it was time for the wake, funeral and burial. Several of the sayings we use today had their origins in that process. One practice was putting a bell in the casket in case the person was not really dead. You were "saved by the bell" if you awoke in the casket and rang it. Someone was hired to sit in the cemetery overnight to listen for the bell so hence the "graveyard shift". And if your casket was made of wicker you were a "basket case".

Steve's tip: Visit Black Point Estate, a Wisconsin Historic Site, in Lake Geneva.

OCTOBER 2017: Gary Haas was the speaker for the first half of this meeting with his presentation on how to "Research Land Records". According to Gary, a land record is anything that gives you information about a piece of dirt. Gary had a ton of information on how to research and what the resources are for you to use. If you have not considered this type of research before, you may want to give it a try, especially if your ancestors owned farms or other large tracts of land. Gary even had a drone's-eye view of his hometown and was able to buzz the whole farm where his ancestors lived to give you an idea of what you might find.

Finding where your relative lived is a key in finding other official records and can be a tool for breaking through brick walls in your research. By learning where your ancestors lived you could possibly find other relatives, discover why your family chose a piece of land, what type of property it was and what crops they had. The more you know about the land, the more you will know about your ancestors.

Gary started with probate records which contain a list of assets held by the deceased which includes land owned. They can also contain lists of other people in that person's life. A second source is the Public Records of the Wisconsin Circuit Courts where you might find other court cases involving family and ancestors.

Then there are plat maps and the WI Land Economic Inventory Maps (Bordner Survey) which will give the type and quality of land. There are Sanborn maps which were used to identify fire risk, but also give information about buildings on a property such as the number of stories, type and what it is made of.

You could also try searching farm statistics under the Department of Agriculture 1947 record. Gary listed a number of Google sites to try but cautioned that some, such as the Google Street View, will eat up your time because they are really a guided tour of places in the world.

Gary's tip: Look first to see if someone else has posted the same land research on the web.

Cathy Dailey was up next with her fast-paced yet stimulating presentation titled "Oh the treasures you will find... US Censuses and City Directories". Her first suggestion on this type of research was that you build on what you already know about your family and then work backwards. Cathy had a disclaimer about data on the US Federal Census records: it is only as good as the person who provided the information, recorded the information or transcribed the information. She then presented a great history of the Federal Census starting with its inception and gave a breakdown of what information was included by eras. The census can be a valuable resource for finding where your ancestor lived, who they lived with, and perhaps even where they came from.

Cathy had a considerable amount of information (lucky she talks fast) so here just a few points she mentioned that you may not have known. Until 1840 only the name of the head of the household was recorded. There was a slave schedule in 1850 and 1860. In 1870 parents were asked if they were foreign born. Starting in 1880 women were allowed to do the recording and the records became easier to read. Since the 1890 census was destroyed by fire, you might be able to supplement with state censuses which are done in the middle of the

decade, unless you are researching Ohio where there are no state census records. Beginning with the 1900 census more details began being added to the census records.

Cathy then went on to discuss city directories. Besides finding your family's name and address, you might also find if they are a boarder or have boarders, what their profession was with a possible employer and death listings for the previous year. As has been mentioned in other presentations, don't give up if you can't find a listing, try another spelling of the name. Cathy also suggested looking for social and fraternal organizations as your ancestor may have wanted to be with others of the same ethnicity. And check for city maps with ward numbers that can help when researching census records.

Cathy's tip: When searching those records, look left, right, up, down, back and forward.

NOVEMBER 2017: For the last meeting of 2017 Bob Heck was the presenter for both the first half and the second half of the meeting. That means that he gave 7 different presentations during the year. What would we do without him? Cathy Dailey did mention in her October presentation that everyone should consider giving a presentation because even though it is scary at first, it will make you a better genealogist. Both of this meeting's presentations were similar in that they were about finding information on your ancestor's life through death records. Bob's first presentation was on "Funeral Home Research" which he believes is a forgotten resource often overlooked by genealogists. Records vary from a simple 3X5 card on up to complete records with lots of information and possibly photos. You will need to know the date of death. Remember that before computers, that is how records were filed. At the very least the month and date will be helpful if you do not have the exact date. If you don't have that, a place to try is the Social Security Death Index. You will also have to know the full name of the deceased. The more details you can give, the better information you might be able to obtain.

Bob suggests trying your ancestor's church records if you don't know what funeral home might have been used. Another option might be newspaper obits, trying the funeral home nearest to where they lived or even the cemetery office or sexton. Bob also listed several websites for finding funeral homes. Some of the information you might garner from funeral home records are the names of other relatives and children, the date they immigrated, and their employment. A little caution here, if the wife died first, husbands often were not as accurate with dates and that any information given is usually from a grief stricken relative so there may be spelling errors as well.

Once you find the funeral home they may even have funeral cards in the records which would give you birth dates in addition to death dates, but also might include other information. Funeral records are rarely discarded so if the funeral home you want to research is no longer in business the records may have been transferred to another. Bob demonstrated the evolution of one funeral home through several name changes. Again, try looking for the funeral home closest to the one you are looking for which was closest to where the ancestor lived.

Bob always has lots of options for you to try in your research and had some great examples of what type of information you could find. For this topic, he showed burial requests, burial permits, transit permits and requests to open graves all of which held very useful information. He found causes of death for a child and accident details for a young woman for instance. And as we all have come to appreciate, Bob shares his intriguing family stories and research adventures which give us all hope that we too can find that missing family history.

Bob's tip: NEVER ask for information at a funeral home whilst there is a funeral in progress.

With his voice still holding out, Bob gave his next presentation on "Will and Probate Records". He started with statistics on who actually have drafted wills these days. The numbers were a little surprising as 51% of Americans age 55-64 DO NOT have wills. This was not the case in the 1800's when 90 percent of the population lived on farms and nearly all farmers had a will to keep the farm in the family. Nowadays only about 1% of the population lives on a farm.

A will can identify property and possessions, level of wealth and location of the property. Wills can also be used to get even as Bob showed with a number of fun examples. Significantly, you could find names of sons and daughters (with their married names) as well as other details. A will could give you proof of who you are descended from and your heritage. One of Bob's examples showed that a 4X great-grandfather owned property in Vermont, a previously unknown clue.

Bob then took us into probate records which are the judicial determination of the validity of the will. Challenges to a will are heard in probate court with the probate process clearing up any issues and resolving any conflicts in the distribution of funds. If there is no will, a spouse would usually inherit property and belongings, but would still have to go to probate court. The same applies if the deceased had children. However, if the deceased was never married and had no children, the court decides who the relatives are and what they inherit.

No Bob Heck presentation would be complete without a surprising twist or what Bob would call a genealogical gold mine. Bob cited an example where his father-in-law inherited \$35, 1/125th of an estate, but got a report listing all of 125 people, their addresses and relationship to the deceased.

You can hope for such a discovery and start your search for probate records at FamilySearch.org, Ancestry or Google. He also suggested Milwaukee County Probate Records or the Wisconsin Historical Society ARC Centers.

Bob's tip: ALWAYS check the official state newspapers for published notices of wills/probates.

Upcoming Programs

January 10, 2018

Internet, Computer and System Security (Bill Heck & Associates)

February 14, 2018

House Research in Europe On-line (Bob Heck)
Google Mapping (ie. Ancestor Homes, Adding Cemeteries, Churches etc.) (Cathy Dailey)

March 14, 2018

Social Media for Genealogy Research (Cheryl Heck)
Memories in FamilySearch (Jane Orne)

April 11, 2018

PERSI Genealogy Research (Bruce Butterfield)
BYU for Genealogy Research Webinars on YouTube (Lynn Thrasher)

May 9, 2018

Colonial Wars & Colonial Records (Winnie Mading)
Preparation for Madison Trip (Jane Orne)

June 13, 2018

Stack of Research (Louise Stack)
Show & Tell (John Canapa & Others)

June 19, 2018 Bus Trip to Madison

July 11, 2018

US GenWeb for Research (Bob Tatalovich)
Books Research on the Internet

August 8, 2018

Create Your Own Cloud (Sam Colon)

September 12, 2018

Metes and Bounds Using Google Mapping (Cathy Dailey)
Land Record Research (Bob Heck)

October 10, 2018

TBA
TBA

November 14, 2018

TBA
TBA

Dues for 2018

Dues for 2018 are now being accepted.

About This Newsletter

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NO COPYRIGHTED ARTICLES may be submitted without express permission of the author and publisher. Articles should be submitted by the 1st Wednesday to be considered for inclusion in that same month. Credit will be given for your article.

Meeting Bits and Bytes

Again, back by popular demand for the January 10th meeting will be Bill Heck, Bob Heck's youngest son, as our guest speaker presenting "Internet, Computer and Systems Security." Bill and his associates are sure to have the latest updates in cyber security to share as they have done for the last few years. It is always an appropriate topic but especially since it seems that a different business or group is in the news as having been hacked. Perhaps it has even happened to you personally. The concept of being under "cyber-attack" is a scary enough thought, but not being protected could make it a reality. Even if you have heard Bill Heck and Associates in the past, there is always something new to learn.

Help with PAF

Call us if you need assistance in using PAF, or if you have question about MPAFUG
We're here to help!

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MPAFUG Key Information

The Steering Committee

Steering committee meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of every month except December. The meetings start at 7:00 pm at Bob Heck's house (4910 Steeple Drive, Greendale, WI). The Steering Committee is an informal group of members who get together to plan the general agendas for future meetings. All MPAFUG members are welcome to attend and participate in the meetings.

Our Web Page: <http://mpafug.org>

We invite you to visit our web page and even print a copy of this and the previous month's newsletter. We also have a surname section where you can see who is working on your family line. Members of MPAFUG have access to a members-only web page which contains past newsletters and handouts from our meetings.

Resources Available:

In addition to our monthly meetings and website, we offer 3 CD's that are available to members for purchase. CD's are \$5 each if picked up at a meeting, or an additional \$2.50 for shipping/handling. Contact Lynn Thrasher - MPAFUG Treasurer, PO Box 14222, West Allis, WI 53214-0222.

- ◆ MPAFUG Newsletters – December 1991 thru December 2013
- ◆ MPAFUG Handouts – 1999 thru 2013
- ◆ MPAFUG Utilities CD – contains 16 useful programs including PAF, Picasa, GenViewer, Open Office, Adobe Reader, PDA to Palm OS, FastStone, IRFAN Viewer/Plugins, FamilySearcher and more

Membership Information

Membership in MPAFUG is open to anyone interested in learning more about computer genealogy. Membership is \$12 per calendar year for an individual or family. Dues are \$6 for the balance of a year if you join after June 30th. To join, send a check made payable to "MPAFUG" to: Lynn Thrasher – MPAFUG Treasurer, PO Box 14222, West Allis, WI 53214-0222.

Questions about MPAFUG?

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