



# NEWSLETTER

May 2019  
Volume 2019 Issue 5

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MAY 2019

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*Finding the Trail to Europe (Bob Heck)*

*Faces Behind Memorial Day: Tracing Military Deaths  
(Louise Stack)*

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*Next Meeting is May 8, 2019*

*7:00 PM -- Klemmer's Banquet Center*

*10401 West Oklahoma Avenue*

*Milwaukee, WI 53227*

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## MEETING BITS AND BYTES

April 8<sup>th</sup> we were able to bask in the sun and warmth of beautiful summerlike day but by the time our meeting day arrived on April 10<sup>th</sup> we were back to winter coats, gloves and hats. When Bob Heck got the 7:00PM meeting started at Klemmer's Banquet Center he welcomed us "brave ones" who had ventured out in the cold, snow and sleet to hear 7 fellow members tell their stories on Show and Tell night. There were 49 of us including a new member/guest, Dave from Oak Creek.

The opportunity table for the April meeting included a Windows 10 computer Sam Colon had put together and to which he had added some good programs like Roots Magic. The weather might have been icky but the bright side was that with fewer in attendance, the odds of winning were greatly increased.

Bob Heck will be a presenter again in May helping you find your roots back in Europe; where your ancestors came from and where to look for clues. Since Memorial Day is celebrated in May, Louise Stack will be giving a presentation on researching those who have been killed during wartime. She has 4 different stories she researched, 2 from World War II and 2 from Vietnam. Three of those are Louise's relatives.

## SHOW AND TELL

Summarized by Louise Stack

First up was **Carl Micech** with a story about his Slovak Family complete with some wonderful pictures of his ancestral village. Carl is a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation American but didn't know much about his family history although he did know that his

father's 2 older sisters had worked in Chicago as servants. Then in May 2006 he got a call from Bratislava and learned that he had a cousin there. That started the ball rolling and Carl contacted a travel agent who specialized in finding relatives. He also asked his wife to make a descendant's tree instead of an ancestry tree. Then in July 2007 he was off to Slovakia. He has made 4 trips so far but still has more to learn. Carl has been working on his family the last 12 years and has been able to see the house where his father was born in the village of Konska. He has met cousins and traced the family back to 1770.

**Bruce Pollock** was the second speaker to share his "Lessons Learned" story. Bruce has been doing genealogy for about 7 years and has been an MPAFUG member for the last 5 years. After hearing Bob Heck's presentation on doing a family newsletter (August 2018), Bruce decided to do that for his family. Currently, he is on his 3<sup>rd</sup> newsletter. He gave us some excellent tips on doing research and what he has run into. One surprise was that his father had been married once before Bruce's mother. He had difficulty researching that until he ran into a misspelling of his father's first name (Warlord instead of Woodard). Bruce says that he is addicted to genealogy now although his wife could care less.

The third speaker was **John Canapa** who taught us all about the "Marble from Carrara." If you heard John at last year's show and tell, you might remember he is related to the Wenta Monuments family in Milwaukee. His aunts lived above the headstone store which was a unique place for kids to visit. John did not know much about his father's family however, until he was in Salt Lake City and found an article about his great-grandfather. He learned that he had been killed in an elevator accident in 1892. John's paternal great-grandfather was a stone cutter and had been working with marble at the time of the accident. From that story he was able to make other connections to his family as stone cutters. John also learned about a relative who killed his wife with a chisel, was sent to Sing-Sing and later an insane asylum. Carrara, Italy is known for their marble and had a pit reserved for Michelangelo from which he made the statue of David. John has heard you can still get

Carrara marble for countertops. He also learned that the Latter Day Saints temple in Rome has a statue of Christ made from the marble in Michelangelo's pit.

John ended his talk by putting in a plug for the Family History Center – it is there for you to use.

**David K. Miller** followed John with "An Adoption Story." David's story began when he had his DNA tested through MyHeritage. When he got the results, he saw that he had a second cousin once removed (later determined to be a 3<sup>rd</sup> cousin) which was a surprise. He reached out to her and she answered back. She told him that she was adopted and the adoption records in MN are permanently sealed so she did not know much about her birth family. David did some research with the 1900 and 1940 census records where he was able to narrow down who the father could be. His new found cousin, Julie, did have some limited information about her mother's family so the mystery was finally solved but did not have a happy ending. Julie contacted her birth mother who sent a reply that there should be no further communication and she did not want her children to know about Julie. An interesting twist was that Julie's father was identified and records showed he married another woman 10 days after Julie was conceived. Julie plans to meet a new first cousin in Colorado.

Following David was **Ed King** who shared his topic on "Researching My Family from Grosssheubach." He started off by saying that he was really surprised to get an email from Bob Heck that he was doing a presentation as he didn't remember agreeing to that. Anyway, he was well-prepared and made us all jealous with how "easy" his family research has been. Ed said he wanted his story to be one of encouragement and hope rather than a travelogue. Ed's story began in 1978 when he asked his father about his family because he had never met his grandparents. His father was the youngest of 9 and had a trunk full of pictures so they dove into that to see what they could find. An old German postcard gave them a hint of where the family might have come from so, get this, Ed sent a letter addressed only to the Catholic Church in the city of Grosssheubach, Germany. Unbelievably, the church secretary sent back his grandmother's birth record and his great-grandparent's marriage record. He

also had some great pictures of his grandparents. Of course, Ed then said “This genealogy stuff is easy.”

In 1986, as a member of the USAF 128<sup>th</sup> Refueling Group, Ed took a flight to Germany and had the opportunity to rent a car and, along with 2 buddies, took a drive to Grossheubach. The Germans were duly impressed with how much Ed’s buddies could drink but Ed was able to learn where his grandmother had lived, got a picture of his great-grandparents, met a relative who had a family pedigree chart and a Xerox machine. Thirty years later he sent another letter to Grossheubach and got even more including 2 more pedigree charts!

Our resident computer geek, **Sam Colon**, was next with new technology to use in your research. He commented that we all have grandparents but they can be elusive. Sam knew about his 2X great-grandparents but not back another generation. He uses Ancestry world edition so can get Puerto Rican Vital Records. There he discovered that their death records show the names of parents and grandparents, however the records have very small print. Sam recently invested in PhotoZoomPro 7 for his computer so was able to enlarge the print enough to read the information he wanted. This photo zoom enlarges photos up to 800% without losing detail, but the caveat is you have to have a good pic to begin with. Oh yes, Sam also reminded us that you should always listen to your wife.

**Bruce Butterfield** finished off the evening with 2 stories. The first was a happy one. Bruce’s mother-in-law died at the age of 99 and one thing the family found afterwards was a small case that had a stick pin with something on the top. A note said that it was a gold nugget from Australia. Some research later Bruce learned that his wife’s 2X great-grandfather had been part of the 1853 Australian gold rush. Because of that discovery he also was able to get a marriage certificate from the British National Archives.

The second story still involves a bit of mystery for Bruce. He has been searching for a great-grandfather but hasn’t found much about him yet. Bruce has been using census records and city directories to try to follow his great-grandfather but has run into a lot of conflicting information on census records such as immigration dates. He has

found an 1875 marriage record, but then found that the wife shows up as a widow in 1880 although grandpa shows up as divorced in 1881. And, he has had to use directories from different cities – Cincinnati, Columbus and Zanesville, OH as well as Pittsburgh. Seems there is always one in the family who is a challenge.

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Mary Jensen as told to Louise Stack

Mary became somewhat interested in genealogy around 1995 when her former mother-in-law sent her daughters a great deal of genealogy research that one of Mary’s husband’s cousins had been working on. It started Mary thinking. She had never questioned whether her grandparents had parents or siblings. Mary asked her mother what the names of her grandparents and her father’s grandparents were. She had always told Mary that when they moved to Menomonee Falls in 1953 that she was related to everyone in town so she had better behave. Of course, back then Mary didn’t really believe her. Mary wrote everything down on a few slips of paper and put it in a light blue folder along with the information from her former mother-in-law, and filed it in a “good safe place”. And promptly forgot where it was. Two moves, marriages and a number of deaths (including Mary’s mother) left her with nowhere to begin – no names and no one to ask.

Then one day in 2012, there was the folder. It had somehow followed Mary through 2 moves without getting really lost. By then computers were everywhere and genealogical information was readily available on the web. Mary started on Ancestry in October 2012 and was immediately able to get a good start because she had the names of her great-grandparents as well as her parents. And, she found that her mother was right, Mary was and is related to half of Menomonee Falls. That included many classmates with whom she went to grade school and high school. Mary joined the Milwaukee Genealogical Society and took the course they offered on genealogy research since she had very little knowledge on how to go about it.

Mary has been a MPAFUG for 4 years now since January 2015. In October 2014 she attended the “Our Family Heritage” seminar at the Milwaukee Family History Center. While there she met a 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin who recognized her and convinced Mary to come to the November meeting. She did and decided this would be good resource for her and joined for the coming year.

There are several families that Mary is researching. Even though the trees are interconnected, she has separate trees for each family. Since Mary already had all the information on her first husband’s family, she started one for his family going back, and also forward. She has another tree for her 2<sup>nd</sup> husband’s family. She also has a tree for one daughter’s husband’s family which goes back to his Mexican roots. Mary thinks she ought to get one started for her other daughter’s husband’s Russian family.

Mary has shared information with several relatives, a few who have also done research prior to her. She has a second cousin on her mother’s side and 2 on her father’s side with whom she collaborates and compares notes. Now that Mary’s dad’s last living brother has passed, she and her cousins are the only sources of family history.

Since both sides of Mary’s family came to America and settled in Southeastern Wisconsin, Mary’s research trips have taken her to the Hartford Public Library, Washington County Historical Society and the Wisconsin Historical Society Library in Madison along with several local cemeteries.

A big surprise came when Mary found out that one pair of great-great-grandparents were first cousins. When she told family members, they laughed and said “That explains a lot.”

Mary’s best find came at a meeting with people who were researching the history of St. Anthony’s and Fussville, WI. The leader of the group had a series of letters from Johann Fuss to his vicar in Germany which filled in some missing pieces on her Fuss side for Mary – she was ecstatic!

The brick wall Mary hit was the whereabouts of her grandfather after a certain point. She knew when

her grandmother died, that a son had been killed in WWII, that Mary’s family had lived upstairs until she was 5 and that he had later remarried. She was stuck for 2 years until she stumbled upon marriage banns for him while doing newspaper research on another relative. Mary was then able to fill in some blanks.

Most of Mary’s research has been on Germany since that is where both sides of her family are from. She has also done a little research in Canadian border crossings as well as Mexico for her son-in-law. The farthest back she has been able to go is 1746 in Klusserath, Germany on her father’s side. It seems her father’s side were farmers and vintners and her mother’s side were farmers and brewers. Tough choice, but Mary has all the bases covered for a party.

What Mary hopes to find is a way to get her brothers, sisters, daughters and grandchildren enthused about their family history.

Wow! Thanks for sharing Mary.

**Note from the editor:** Our hope is that many, if not all of you, will volunteer to be included in the Member Spotlight. There are 12 questions to answer that will be the same for everyone. You can give as much or as little of an answer as you want. If you are interested, please see me at a meeting or email me with Member Spotlight in the subject line at:

[kilostack@att.net](mailto:kilostack@att.net). Hope to hear from you!

Louise Stack

## History Lessons

### MEMORIAL DAY

It is considered a holiday, celebrated the last Monday of May, but is really a day of remembrance honoring those who died while serving in the U.S. Military.

The roots go back to the end of the Civil War in the southern states. Following the war, women began

decorating the graves of their Confederate dead but also did so for any Union soldiers buried nearby. Originally, it was known as Decoration Day because the graves were decorated with flowers. In 1868, it became official with the date of observance set as May 30<sup>th</sup> by proclamation of General John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic. May 30<sup>th</sup> was chosen because it was not the anniversary of any particular battle although southern states sometimes chose different dates. On that first Decoration Day General James Garfield, later our 20<sup>th</sup> president, gave a speech at \*Arlington Cemetery. Waterloo, NY is credited with being the birthplace of Memorial Day.

World War I changed things; the day went from honoring just Civil War dead to including any military personnel who died while serving in any war. Over time the day had also become known as Memorial Day rather than Decoration Day.

Memorial Day became an official federal holiday in 1971 and fell under the Uniform Monday Holiday Act which put the observance on the last Monday in May. This was to allow a 3-day weekend for federal employees.

In December 2000 the National Moment of Remembrance Act was passed which calls for 1 minute of “national unity” at 3:00PM local time on Memorial Day.

The current tradition is to place flags on the graves of military war dead.

\*Arlington Cemetery – the grounds of this cemetery were originally Robert E. Lee’s estate which was confiscated from the Confederate General during the Civil War.

## Upcoming Programs

### June 12, 2019

Resources at the Family History Center (John Canapa)  
American Geographical Society Library (Jovanka Ristic)

### July 10, 2019

World War I Genealogy Research (Debra Dudek) Full evening presentation.

### August 14, 2019

Relative Finder/BYU Labs (Bob Heck)  
Genealogy Mapping (Cathy Dailey)

### September 11, 2019

Dating Old Photographs (Bob Heck)  
In the works with a possible topic being Secrets Hidden in Old Photographs.

### October 9, 2019

Researching an Old Cemetery (Gary Haas)  
In the works -- perhaps another Halloween-related topic

### October 19, 2019

All day workshop at the Family History Center.

### November 13, 2019

City Directories (Bruce Butterfield)  
In the works with possible topics being Civil War Research or Live Interviews

### No Meeting in December

**If you would like to make a presentation or have a suggestion for a topic for a meeting, please contact Bob Heck.**

## About This Newsletter

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## MPAFUG KEY INFORMATION

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Steering committee meetings are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month except December. The meetings start at 7:00PM and are held at the Family History Center located at 9600 W. Grange Ave., Hales Corners, 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.

### 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 30<sup>th</sup>. Send a check made payable to MPAFUG to:

Lynn Thrasher – MPAFUG Treasurer  
PO Box 14222  
West Allis, WI 53214-0222

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