



NEWSLETTER

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- MEETING BITS AND BYTES
- WHAT'S ON THE MARCH SCHEDULE
- STEERING COMMITTEE NOTES
- FROM THE WISCONSIN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
- A QUOTE TO PONDER
- MEMBER SPOTLIGHT
- NAME CHANGES?
- UPCOMING PROGRAMS
- ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER
- MPAFUG KEY INFORMATION

APRIL 2021

Researching Your Revolutionary War Ancestor (Guest Speaker Brian Barrett)

*April 14, 2021
7:00 PM – New Berlin Ale House
16000 West Cleveland Avenue
New Berlin, WI 52151*

MEETING BITS AND BYTES

The March 10th meeting was held at the New Berlin Ale House almost one year exactly since the global Coronavirus pandemic had been declared. The 2020 meeting was actually held that very day with 72 members in attendance. This year's attendance was a bit less than half at 34. But, hey, we are slowly edging up as each month we see one or two more members come. Looking forward to the day when the world is back to normal! There were no new members or guests in March.

WHAT'S ON THE APRIL SCHEDULE

Has your family been in America from the very beginning? Did you have an ancestor who fought in the Revolutionary War? Do you need some tips on researching those ancestors? If so, you will surely want to come to the April meeting to hear and see our guest speaker, Brian Barrett.

Brian S. Barrett is a Revolutionary War historian with primary focus on the Berkshire County Militia. He is a member of the Berkshire Family History Association, Wisconsin Society of the American Revolution and Friends of the Saratoga Battlefield. His publications include non-fiction magazine articles, five self-published books and one print on-demand book being distributed at Amazon.com.

Here is the fun part – Brian will dress in a Revolutionary War uniform and will display items from that period. He will also have his books on display.

STEERING COMMITTEE NOTES

Your MPAFUG steering committee held a zoom meeting on March 17, 2021. The following 8 members attended:

John Canapa, Bob Heck, Randy Ray, Bruce Butterfield, Sam Colon, Louise Stack, Bob Tatalovich and Jane Orne. Bruce's wife and cat slipped in for pop-up visits and Sam's cat took a stroll across the top of his chair, but everyone was well-behaved.



Our meeting started off with a discussion of the general meeting held on March 10th. Sam reported that the opportunity table had made a profit, the first time in a few months.

The previous weeks' meeting had gone well, but we did critique the subsequent video of the presentations. For those of you who have viewed it you may have noticed that Randy Ray's presentation was cut off in the end, but also that you were not able to see the video he showed or anything other than his power point which left you wondering what you missed. Good news! Bob Heck's son Bill helped find a solution so in the future those who watch the presentation videos will be able to see the videos within the video so to speak. We do keep trying to improve.

John Canapa reported that they are still working on opening up the Family History Center, but cannot give a date at this time.



As always, we work on updating the schedule of upcoming events. The April schedule originally had 2 presentations on the program, however, we felt that the guest speaker may need the entire meeting so Randy Ray's presentation was moved to October. If there is extra time following the guest speaker, Randy will give some updates on death codes, which was part of his March presentation.

FROM THE WISCONSIN STATE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

"My name is Cathy Dailey – I'm the current vice president of the Wisconsin State Genealogical Society (WSGS). Each month I provide a quick tip or recommend a resource to help further your genealogical research. This month, let's talk about getting to know the Individuals that we've identified as our ancestors.

Just like we participate in activities for our enrichment, so did our ancestors. If you're stuck trying to fill in blanks, start thinking about what types of 'goings and doings' that your relatives might have enjoyed. What activities would have made them happy?

For instance, my Czech 2X great grandparents didn't speak English – so, besides gathering together with their families for holiday dinners, where did they go to be with others that shared their same language and customs? Were they members of a church or fraternal society? Did they play organized sports?

Your goal is to uncover any type of activity or organization that would have kept records. Using these organizational records can help you to confirm the 'whereabouts of your relatives at a specific place and time; they may also lead you to other records. Finally, identifying the organizations or activities that your ancestors were involved in helps you get to know your ancestors better.

Need help? Try browsing through the city directory associated with the specific location and timeframe of your ancestor. Not sure where to find a city directory? A Google search using the city name, city directory and before/after date command should

yield results (i.e., *Cleveland Ohio city directory before:1900*).

In my case, to learn more about my Czech relatives, I started with the index of 1898 Cleveland, Ohio City Directory (front of the book). I was specifically looking for societies, organizations and ethnic groups to which my relatives might have belonged. Within the 'Miscellaneous Directory' Section, I found category listings for:

- Benevolent Societies
- Bohemian Organizations
- Masonic
- Military, including local posts of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR)
- Societies
- Variety of Fraternal Organizations

Tip: If a society/organization lists multiple meeting locations, compare these addresses to where your ancestor lived – immigrants tended to stay within their 'neighborhood' when socializing. Additionally, fraternal orders often had auxiliaries or female 'sister organizations' – don't forget to search these as well.

Once you have confirmed a potential association, you'll need to do a subsequent search to identify where their records may be archived (and if they are still available). Once again, head over to Google.com to look for an organization's present day contact information or website.

In my Cleveland example, under the Bohemian Organization heading, there are listings for monthly meetings of C.S.P.S. A Google search of 'C.S.P.S. AND Czech' produced a Wikipedia article on the Czech-Slovak Protective Society. A follow-up search led to the organization's website – now known as CSA Fraternal Life with headquarters in Lombard, Illinois. This may or may not be a match for my 2X great grandfather, but it's another resource to pursue.

While you're browsing through a city directory, take a moment to look at the advertisements. A company would often list its owners/officers in the ad – you might get lucky and find a relative there.

And, that's another lead to help you add to the richness of your family."

The WSGS provided this genealogy tip. As your partner for genealogy, our educational offerings include monthly webinars, quarterly newsletters and informative conferences and workshops. To learn more or join, please visit: www.wsgs.org.

A QUOTE TO PONDER:

"Genealogists don't get Alzheimer's they just lose their census."

Unknown

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

The John Johnson Story

John is a cousin of another member, Linda Marcinowski, who was featured in the November 2020 newsletter. Here is a picture of the two collaborating on the family history.



John shared that when he was about 4 years old, he asked his father "Who are we?" His father's response was, "What do you mean?" That was the start of his interest in genealogy.

"I replied that I knew who he was, and Mother, my sisters, my Aunt Nora, but where did we come from? How did we get here? He told me that our name should be Jensen, but he didn't know how that

worked. His father, George, came over on a ship, but the family came before him, and he went to a tavern and the ship left without him, so he came later. He was sent to Appleton, WI, and one day as he was walking down the street, about 3 months after he got there, he bumped into his sister, Kristianne, and the whole family got back together. All of which was untrue. George did stay behind, but it was with his other two sisters that stayed in Norway, that we didn't know about until much later in life. The family had moved to Rudolf, WI, near Wisconsin Rapids, in that surrounding area. George was there for a while, but the Northwoods logging called him and he moved to the Minocqua-Woodruff area where he eventually met and married my grandmother. It was there that they had children, including my Dad, and the people I knew."

When John was in his 50's and working as a salesperson travelling the northern half of Wisconsin and the UP of Michigan, he decided he would look into his family. "I had time to investigate!"

At first John had no direction on what to do with the information he collected so he made up his own sheet on which he could record names and dates. One day he got a call from cousin Linda in Milwaukee asking him to look for the grave of a woman named Inga Larsen in Wisconsin Rapids. John knew there were 2 huge cemeteries there with one displaying many statues of Jesus and the other one not. Because they are Lutheran, John chose to investigate the "plain" cemetery first.

"I got out of my car, just looking over the thousands of graves, wondering how I was ever going to find Inga in all this mess. Suddenly a woman walked up to me and asked me if she could help me. Just like in a hardware store! So, I told her I was looking for Inga Larsen. She said, 'I just saw that grave a few days ago. Walk this way.' She took me to the grave! She was buried, well still is, alongside her mother Kristianne! I love this name, and I was so excited! I wrote down all the information for Linda to send it to her. Also, for Kristianne's husband Nels. But and this was the big turning point for me, here was also a Jens Andreason Skoor, father of Mrs. Nels Jensen. This was the Jensen name that my father was telling me about many years before!

Here lies my namesake! (Can anyone reading this now comprehend my excitement? I was so happy, excited, amazed, etc.) The lady told me that I should go to the courthouse and go to the County Clerk's Office to get some death records. I ran down there and spent about \$70.00. I was stoked! I forgot to thank that lady, so I went back to the cemetery to thank her, but they had no one there that did that. Someone was there to guide me."

John sent the information to his cousin Linda who had already done a lot of research, but all this helped her. "Since then, my cousin Linda and I have been doing this madness."

John has been a member of MPAFUG for about 13 years. "Linda gave me a 10-year membership, and I have been an appreciative member since." Because John lives in Rib Lake, WI he does not attend meetings, but says that he would surely be an active member and attend all the meetings if he lived in Milwaukee.

John is the secretary of the Taylor County Genealogical Society and a member of the Price County Genealogical Society as well. "Do I have a passion for this stuff? Oh Yea!"

John does research for his family and his wife's. "I am all in, I am doing both. My wife is not gung-ho about this stuff, but she will correct me if I don't get it right."

His wife is from Germany but all of her family are now deceased, however he did manage to get quite a bit of information and photos from her mother when she had visited them. "I am pleased."

As for working with another relative, John is ecstatic to have his cousin Linda Marcinowski. "My wonderful cousin, my mentor, my helper, my inspirational giver." He also has help on his mother's side.

John has gone on many road trips for his research. Besides all over Wisconsin, he has gone to Montana, California and the UP of Michigan. And he has had a few surprises along the way.

"The Montana people didn't know how they Jenson's, and us, Johnson's, are related even though

we have the same relatives. Father didn't know how that worked! The grave of Jens Andreason Skoor, my great grandfather, should have explained all that, but it still left a question. Jenson to Johnson."

Linda gave John a book on Norwegian customs and while reading it, he found the explanation he was looking for. When Jens had children, their last name would either be Jenson or Jensdatter. John learned that Jens is actually pronounced "Jahn" in Norwegian so there it was. So, when asked his name, Georgen Jahnson, became George Johnson. "He is the brother of Kristianne! If this is true, we will never know, but it makes sense, since we all have the same relatives."

"As an anecdote to all this, my wife's name is Elisabeth. Her father called her Lisie, and I thought he said Lilly! She likes her 'American name', so Lilly it is."

John's best find was the grave of Jens Andreason Skoor. "That changed the game for me." Surprisingly, he has not hit any brick walls, yet.

So far John's research has been in Norway, Germany and the United States. He has been able to go back two generations. His cousin Linda was able to visit Norway where she met with relatives and was in the house where George Johnson was born to Jens Andreason Skoor. Linda also found records that took the family back to the 1200's when they left Germany to go to Norway.

John's hope is that his children will take an interest in who and where they came from. He also said, "I dedicate all my knowledge to Linda, as she has been so much help, and such an inspiration."

What an amazing story John! Your cemetery story was truly exciting! Thanks for sharing.

If you would like to submit your story, please email Louise Stack at: kilostack@att.net for the member spotlight questions. Put Member Spotlight in the subject line.

There are 12 basic questions to answer about your genealogy story, but beyond that you are free to tell

your story any way you wish. All the stories are unique and interesting, but also give other members research hints and hope that they too will find their ancestors.

NAME CHANGES?

Louise Stack

As you read in John Johnson's story, he had an ancestor whose name morphed from Georgen (Jensen) Jahnson to George Johnson. My family also had a story about how great-grandpa's name changed from Franz Madsen to Frank Madson at Ellis Island. Well, my family arrived in Baltimore and the name change doesn't show up until a census. And oddly, there are 2 different spellings within that same family in the same census. How does that happen?

Are you a fan of the PBS TV series "Finding Your Roots?"

A few weeks ago, on one of the episodes I heard Henry Louis Gates Jr. say that if you thought your family's name had been changed at Ellis Island, that is a fallacy. According to Professor Gates, immigrant's names were recorded on ship passenger lists and those lists were turned over upon arrival to Ellis Island inspectors. That meant that your ancestor's name should have been accurate as they gave it at departure.

My friend Google led me to "AskSmithsonian" which had a great article on this very topic. Long story short, "name changes could happen, but they are not as likely as people have been led to believe." According to the article, "Ellis Island inspectors were not responsible for recording immigrants' names. Instead, any error likely happened overseas."

"It is not known how many immigrants arrived in the U.S. bearing a name that differed from the one given them at birth. It's also not clear how many may have changed their names on their own, at least before 1906.

The Naturalization Act of 1906 established the rule requiring documentation of any name changes, 'because of the well-known fact that immigrants did change their names, and tended to do so within the

first five years of arrival,' according to the U.S. immigration office."

The above excerpts are from the original article, "Did Ellis Island Officials Really Change the Names of Immigrants?" written by Alicia Ault and dated December 28, 2016. The article was written for the Smithsonian Magazine to coincide with the 125th anniversary of Ellis Island.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

May 12, 2021

Reading Worn Headstones (Randy Ray)
Follow-up for presentations on Cemeteries, Find-a-Grave and Family Tree Maker (Randy Ray)

June 9, 2021

Family Tree Magazine & Genealogy.com (Jo Kinzinger)
How to Zoom for Genealogy (Randy Ray)

July 14, 2021

Catholic Cemeteries, Milwaukee Archdiocese, and Billion Graves (Sam Colon)
Immigration and Departure Records Research (Randy Ray)

August 11, 2021

From Start to Finish (Cathy Dailey)
Understanding Street View in Google Maps and Smart Phone Maps (Randy Ray)

September 8, 2021

Member Object Show & Tell Night

October 13, 2021

On-line Vital Records of Birth, Marriage & Death (Bob Tatalovich)
Why Join the DAR, DAC, Mayflower Society or DAR? (Randy Ray)

November 10, 2021

Primary & Secondary Documentation and How to Source Them (Jane Orne)
Property Records in Genealogy (Cathy Dailey)

If you would like to make a presentation or have a suggestion for a meeting topic, please contact Bob Heck at: bobheckmpafug@gmail.com.

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MPAFUG KEY INFORMATION

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Steering committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month except in December. The meetings have historically been held at the Family History Center located at 9600 W. Grange Ave, Hales Corners, WI; however, due to the COVID-19 19 pandemic the meetings are currently being held via Zoom.

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 usually \$12 per calendar year for an individual or family. Dues are \$6 for the balance of a year if you join after June 30th. The year 2020 changed things for us all so in July the steering committee made a decision to give free membership to all current member for 2021. New members would still be asked to pay dues. Please send a check made payable to MPAFUG to:

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

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 else 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.