



NEWSLETTER

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MAY 2021

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

May 12, 2021
7:00 PM – New Berlin Ale House
16000 West Cleveland Avenue
New Berlin, WI 52151

MEETING BITS AND BYTES

The April 14th meeting took us back in time to the Revolutionary War complete with a guest speaker in period costume.



Thirty-eight members came to hear Brian Barrett tell us how to research our Revolutionary War ancestors. He has done a tremendous amount of research on his own ancestors, but has used some of his knowledge to write several books on various battles which he also had available for sale. Lots of good places to start your own research were included in Brian's handout.



Since last month we have added a new member to MPAFUG, Cheryl Sarasin of South Milwaukee. Welcome Cheryl!

WHAT'S ON THE MAY SCHEDULE

Do any of your ancestors have a headstone that is all but impossible to read either due to age or tampering of some sort? Bob Heck did. His 4th great-grandfather, Benajah Burgess, died in 1830 and is buried in Walloomsac, NY. Bob photographed his headstone in 1990 and later found that twice after that it was damaged by attempts to

make it more legible. Randy Ray will tell us how we can read those worn headstones without doing damage. His presentation will be all photographs and he is promising that it will be a fun night.



Benajah Burgess's headstone 1990.



Benajah Burgess's headstone after chalk was used to highlight the engraving.



Benajah Burgess’s headstone after it was shellacked causing permanent damage.

Randy Ray will also have the 2nd presentation of the evening where he will give further information on previous presentations about cemeteries, Find-a-Grave, and Family Tree Maker. He will include updates on divorce records and death codes which were in previous presentations as well.

STEERING COMMITTEE NOTES

Your MPAFUG steering committee held a zoom meeting on April 21, 2021. Yes, we are still zooming after a year. We can wear jammies or sweats, enjoy an adult beverage and snuggle with a pet all while doing a meeting – not such a bad thing. The following 7 members attended:

- Bruce Butterfield, Bob Heck, Randy Ray
- Bob Tatalovich, Sam Colon, Jane Orne
- Louise Stack



Our first order of business is always a review of the previous week’s general meeting. Bob had received a little feedback about the guest speaker and his talk, the majority of which was very positive. A couple of us on the steering committee mentioned that we were able to learn a few things about the Revolutionary War so felt that it was a worthwhile presentation.

We then moved on to discuss how we are currently reaching our members. Prior to the pandemic MPAFUG meetings were in person with follow-up sound recordings. A few months into the pandemic we added video presentations as attendance was quite low. Now, Bob Heck suggested that we try a “GoToMeeting” program which would be along the lines of a zoom type meeting. All approved a one-year trial to see how it will work for our group.

Because there is an opportunity table at the in-person meetings that generates income from raffle sales, changing how the meetings are held will have an impact. The sales have been down anyway due to lower attendance so it was decided that we will offer what we currently have on hand over the next few in-person meetings. Sam Colon said that he would not purchase any further items at this time.

As always, we tweaked the schedule of Upcoming Programs.

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.

Did you know that April is *National Records & Information Management Month*? This national designation emphasizes the importance of good record keeping and organization – *a must for genealogists!* Not only does this month encourage us to “spring clean” our records, it reminds us to identify a safe place for storage.

While we’re talking records, let’s take a look at some of the Wisconsin County Resources available on the WSGS website:

Wisconsin County Research:

<https://wsgs.org/cpage.php?pt=12>

This webpage contains research links for each of Wisconsin’s 72 counties – the specific county link includes listings for cemeteries, libraries, local historical and/or genealogical organizations, and other resources. From the webpage, click on the selected county for more information.

Wisconsin County Register of Deeds Offices:

https://wsgs.org/upload/files/Register_of_Deed_Surveys_1.pdf

In 2016, WSGS conducted a survey of all Wisconsin County Register of Deeds Offices. The compiled county data for the 72 counties includes the following:

- 1) Contact information
- 2) County website URL
- 3) Office hours
- 4) Available records, including specific years on file

The Register of Deeds information is listed in alphabetical order by county. After opening the document, scroll down to the desired county resource page – it’s important to note that some cities are located in multiple counties. For instance, the city of Appleton is in Outagamie, Calumet, and

Winnebago Counties – which means you may need to check multiple county listings to the information you are seeking.

When planning a research trip, it is recommended that you always call ahead to confirm if in-person access to records is allowed.”

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.

*Please note that although WSGS does share their research tips and other information with MPAFUG, you would need to be a member of their organization to take full advantage of their resources.

A QUOTE TO PONDER:

“Money doesn’t grow on trees, but ancestors do.”
Unknown

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

The Carol Koty Story

“The movie “Roots” appeared as a mini-series on TV in 1977. It was based on the book of the same name by Alex Haley, which I have read. Seeing as I was expecting my first child at the time, I did not have the time to start researching my family tree, but the seed was planted.

I began my search in 1983 when my girls were in 1st and 2nd grade. I was hooked immediately and as soon as the girls got on the school bus, I headed for the Milwaukee Co. courthouse and library until 3 p.m. when I headed home before the girls got off the bus at 4 p.m. Back then I had to make phone calls and send postcards or letters to Michigan, Illinois and Indiana looking for information about my family.”

Carol is not sure how long she has been a member of MPAFUG but does remember taking a half day

off of work to attend a meeting held at the Butler library where Bob Heck was the speaker. Her main reason for attending the meeting was because she had questions about her genealogy research.

Besides researching her family Carol has also been working on her husband's family since they lived in the Milwaukee area for many years. Carol's family came mainly from Michigan, Illinois and Indiana and she has shared her research over the years with other family members.

"My brother is interested in what I find, but not interested enough to get involved in genealogy research."

Carol has gone on a few research trips which have included Illinois and Indiana as well as two trips to Michigan's Upper Peninsula where her parents were born and raised. Like many of us, she has found surprises along the way.

"In the beginning I was surprised to find so many babies born 6 or 7 months after a wedding... even a few babies born 2, 3 and 4 months after a wedding. I was also surprised at the number of divorces that took place in the 1800's and 1900's. I guess people haven't changed all that much."

"My best find that still gives me 'chills' when I talk about it is finding when my husband's paternal grandmother died. Seeing as his parent's divorced when he was about 8 years old, his paternal side of the family was never talked about. That's what made that side of his family interesting to me. I had to find out about them.

After 30 years, I finally found her....by accident. I was visiting a few cemeteries in Milwaukee one day and decided to include Holy Cross where his paternal aunt's first husband was buried. That first husband died in 1961. Next to him is his mother-in-law....my husband's paternal grandmother who died in 1968. She had died under the surname of her third husband. I had no idea she had been married three times. There I stood saying out loud to myself, 'Here she is. This is his grandmother.' I was looking around for someone to share my joy, but there was no one else around. Since then, I research EVERYONE in the family!!!"

As for brick walls, Carol's husband's paternal grandmother was her 30-year wall which she finally hurtled over. But, another brick wall for her is finding the birthplace of her maternal great-grandfather in Germany.

"I have his naturalization papers, written in beautiful handwriting that lists the name of the town... but there is no such place. I have asked many genealogy conference speakers over the years about this problem and a couple of them actually did some research for me, but found nothing."

Until very recently Carol had no information about her maternal grandfather's parents, siblings and so on. She only knew that he was born in Grand Rapids, MI. A DNA match led her to that side of the family which in turn opened the door to his entire family all the way back to 1175 in England.

For Carol this turned out to be the most exciting family of all. She has found a Mayflower descendant and learned about ancestors in the "Doan Gang" during and after the Revolutionary War. (The Doan's were British loyalists or spies.) They helped the Red Coats by passing a message to Col. Rahl about Washington crossing the Delaware, but the Colonel never read it. Carol also learned that she is connected to the "Culligan Man" because the brother-in-law of her maternal grandmother's sister invented the water softener.

Carol has been doing research in Germany for both her and her husband's ancestors. She also has been doing research in England and Canada for her side as well as Denmark and Romania/Hungary for her husband's side. She has gotten as far back as 1545 in Wurttemberg, Germany on her paternal side and 1175 in England on her maternal side.

"I was hoping to find that my ancestors were decent people who led productive lives and loved their families, their community and their heritage. So far, this has been the case. There have been a few 'rotten apples,' but not many. Besides, we need those 'rotten apples' to keep the stories exciting."

Great story Carol! Lucky for America that Col. Rahl didn't read that message. 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.

MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day is a national holiday set aside to honor and mourn military personnel who died while serving their country. This year Memorial Day will be on May 31st.

The holiday began in the years following the Civil War and was originally called Decoration Day. It was made an official federal holiday in 1971. Unofficially, it is the start of summer.

If you have an ancestor who was killed in action or died while in military service and you want to honor them, make sure that there is a flag on their grave this year. Many groups such as scouts or veterans' organizations place flags on the graves of those who have an official government marker or headstone; however not all families chose to apply for the government marker. Also, because of the pandemic, some cemeteries may not have a group to place the flags so make it your duty to honor your ancestor(s). It will make you think about their sacrifice and how it affected your family.

If you want more information about the history of Memorial Day, try the History Channel website: www.history.com/topics/holidays/memorial-day-history.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

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
Sam Colon: Civil War Field Promotion
Bob Heck: Civil War Discharge Papers
Carl Micech: Note from Grandfather
Carol Poutain: Stuff Found in an Obituary
David Komassa: Polish Lancers Book
Karen Pauli: Her Mother's Doll
Ken Artlip: Buried State Pauper
Randy Ray: Tin Type Photos
Wayne Ray: Note from His Father

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.

About This Newsletter

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Members interested in submitting articles may e-mail them to bobheckmpafug@gmail.com. The MPAFUG Publisher will determine if an article will be used in this newsletter. Articles will be used as space permits.

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.

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 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 members 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.