



NEWSLETTER

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APRIL 2020

**APRIL MEETING CANCELLED DUE TO
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

*Next Meeting date will be announced at a later time
7:00 PM – New Berlin Ale House
16000 West Cleveland Avenue
New Berlin, WI 52151*

MEETING BITS AND BYTES

It surely was a pleasure driving to our March meeting at the New Berlin Ale House in *daylight* for the first time in several months. Even though weather conditions were dry and showed the promise of spring, a global pandemic had been declared this day so the steering committee was especially surprised that 72 members came to the 7:00PM meeting. There were no new members or guests but there were a couple of old familiar faces.

Bob Heck opened the meeting with a greeting of “Nice to see all of you here!” His wife had asked him if he thought anyone was going to show up for the meeting and his reply had been that he hoped so. Of course, the coronavirus has made for uncertain times for group gatherings. If you keep up with the news you know that the majority of MPAFUG members are in the at-risk group as we are over 60 years old. At the meeting Bob advised that if the government issued an edict about group gatherings, MPAFUG would hold the April meeting with only the speakers and no guests. The recorded sound presentations would be sent to members in lieu of the meeting. That plan called for the presentations to be done at The Family History Center. However, shortly after that the FHC announced that they would be closed at least until April 14th. And subsequently the government did put the kabosh on group gatherings of more than 10 people and made a “Safer at Home” edict.

Sam Colon also made an announcement that there were already fake emails about the coronavirus. He advised that the emails were loaded with “garbage” to damage your computer so you should DELETE immediately.

With all the bad news a little humor was welcome. After the first presentation and break, raffle tickets for the opportunity table items are always pulled. You've heard before about our member Joyce who usually wins (because she buys lots of tickets!) She did win as usual but the laughs were attributed to another member who pulled the first ticket out of the bucket Sandy Colon was holding. The steering committee members are still scratching their heads as to how Sam Steffan was able to pull his own winning ticket number out of the bucket. What are the odds???

The next meeting date will depend on the progress of the coronavirus and how long quarantines are in place. In the meantime, maybe you can get to those genealogy research projects online that you have been wanting to do. Or, you can use what you have learned from the March meeting topics and start preserving those documents, photos and movies.

SCANNING BASICS FOR GENEALOGY

Summarized by Louise Stack

Sam Colon was the first presenter of the evening with his topic on scanners. As he always does, Sam had a very detailed handout with lots of directions, tips and examples.

As a genealogist, a scanner is a very valuable tool to use during your research. According to Sam you can give more life to your ancestor's stories than just their dates of birth, marriage and death. For instance, Sam's wife Sandy now has a copy of a full front-page article about her 3X great-grandfather which they were able to scan. You can also use the scanner to add vital records which tend to get brittle over time as well as photos and precious family stories.

Sam gave tips on what type of file format to use when scanning which included the PNG, JPEG and PDF. If you are curious about those and other abbreviations Sam used in his handout, here is a quick tutorial which might help you remember when to use what:

PNG = Portable Network Graphics
PDF = Portable Document Format

JPEG – Ha! The letters don't stand for anything but it is the format for compressing image files.

TIFF = Tagged Image File Format

OCR = Optical Character Recognition

Size and image matter when choosing to scan. Sam advised to never use JPEG for a document but only for digital photos. Use PDF for files such as your vital records and other documents. He also advises that, if possible, use OCR software technology which will allow you to edit documents later. Sam gave an example of file size with 2 images of the same marriage certificate. One was 21.6MB while the other was 6.67MB. For photos that you want to edit Sam said that you should scan them in first in a TIFF format. Those files are large but do allow for editing. Once you are done with editing you should convert to JPEG which is a smaller file storage (remember in the definition the photo is *compressed*.) Always scan photos, even old black and white, in color. You'll also get better detail if you scan digital photos on the highest color setting.

Sam had plenty of information on what types of scanners are available in his handout. Following are his top 5 picks.

#1 Canon CanoScan LiDE 400 Slim Scanner which he says is very portable and does not require an external power source.

#2 Flip-Pal Mobile Photo Scanner which is the size of a large paperback. You can scan a wall picture and it does an excellent job. You can also place it directly over a picture and scan directly onto a flash drive.

#3 Scanner Mouse which is suitable for text or photos. If you take it to a library, be sure to always ask the librarian for permission to use it there.

#4 Pen Scanner which Sam says does an excellent job. It scans and also translates in 138 languages from either printed or handwritten documents. His exact comment was "Fantastic!" Sam specifically mentioned the Iris Pen Air 7 Wireless Pen Scanner that retails for \$89 which he felt was a reasonable price. Those who attended the meeting had a chance to win a pen scanner from the opportunity raffle.

#5 Multi-function machines such as your computer printer that includes a scanner.

Sam also mentioned that there are really good APPS for your Android or Apple phones as well.

A tip that Sam shared for your documentation is that you should use archival ink on the back of photos as it is acid free and won't bleed. Don't use magic marker!

Since we are pretty much homebound now anyway, it might be time to do some scanning and finishing your ancestor's stories. If you don't already have a scanner, there is always Amazon.

PRESERVING OLD MOVIES

Summarized by Louise Stack

Bob Heck started the 2nd half of the meeting by showing a family movie from 1940 starring his parents, grandmother and aunts. When they were going to film Bob remembered that his mother would tell he and his brothers not to move which they thought funny because in their mind a movie meant "action." He said that his parents took movies of all the kids' weddings but that his 2 brothers' wedding pictures were double exposed. (Not like nowadays when you can look at the screen and know if it is good or not right away.) Bob also shared a story of a bride on her honeymoon holding a movie camera out the window of their moving car – all of it a blur while her audio narrative is proclaiming how beautiful the view is. Oops!

Like Sam, Bob's handout has a lot of information and he began by introducing us to the various types of old movie format. Among those he listed are analog tape and digital tape. For those of us who didn't know the difference Bob provided a definition. Analog is something that is constantly changing; a picture then is made up of pulsing signals. Digital is simpler in that it is either a zero or a 1, on or off. Analog camcorders were huge and heavy while digital recorders are smaller. An example of formats Bob showed were 2 different images, one is of his father-in-law in WWII uniform as a turret gunner and the other of himself at an Air Force reunion. Nowadays we use digital chips in our phones to make a movie.

One reason that you will want to convert your movies is that the old formats will deteriorate over time. For example, VHS tapes stored under the TV will deteriorate because they use magnetic tape.

Doesn't everybody store them under the TV – who knew? If you do have older home movies, sometimes they were spliced. Bob strongly recommends that you put new splices where the old ones are before you start to transfer to a new format.

Old home movies on 8mm or Super 8mm need to be converted to digital video but it is quite costly to have it done commercially so Bob suggested doing it yourself like he did for 27,000 feet of his parent's movies. After you have converted your movies you can make still photos which Bob demonstrated with a picture of his family which also included his cousin Cheryl Heck and her father. Or, you could make flash drives to share photos with other family as Bob did for a family reunion. FYI Bob's favorite brand of flash drive is LEXAR.

In case you need to do some editing on your movies there are free programs available to help. Bob included one web address in his handout but also shared the following at the meeting:

www.techradar.com/us/news/software/application/best-free-video-editing-software-9-top-programs

Bob ended his presentation by showing a sample video of MovieMaker Pro which digitizes 8mm or Super8mm movies. He also showed a fun animated Christmas movie he made where his face along with those of other family members had been inserted. Just think what you could create.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Bob Heck has made requests for anyone interested in being the star of a member spotlight column to contact me. A few of you have responded so far but I am sure many more of you have a genealogy story to share. You just might inspire someone else in the group with your research story. Please use the email address at the end of this column to request the member spotlight questions.

For those that have already sent me your story I will be putting them in the newsletter in the order that I received them.

TWO SHORT AND SWEET STORIES

The Joyce Stutzriem Story

If you attend the MPAFUG meetings, you know who Joyce is, but even if you don't, her reputation as an opportunity table raffle winner has been mentioned a few times in our monthly newsletter.

Joyce has been doing genealogy about 25 years after having been influenced by her husband to get involved in it. She joined MPAFUG in 2002.

She does research on both her family and her husband's. Joyce does share her research with a cousin in Washington State. She does all of her research from home so has not gone on any road trips.

Unlike many of us Joyce has not really had any surprises or even best finds, but has admitted to hitting "very many brick walls." Joyce does research in Italy, Germany and the US and has gone as far back as 1750. She just likes to find whomever they might be related to.

Joyce's final comment was "nothing exciting but honest answers."

The Lila Roberts Story

According to Lila she became interested in genealogy because of her own curiosity but also because her family took a trip to Janesville, Black River Falls and Green Bay when she was in the fourth grade. She has been doing genealogy for "decades" since then and has been a member of MPAFUG "probably most of this century."

Besides doing research for her own family Lila also does research for the West Allis Historical Society. (Now you know who to go see if your research brings you to West Allis.) She does do some "casual sharing" if she finds a good story now and then.

Lila has gone on *many* road trips mostly in Wisconsin and Iowa although she has gone on a couple in Michigan. One big trip she took was to Vermont, Connecticut and New York. She especially likes to watch travel programs on TV that

involved the time and place her people were somewhere. She also likes to watch the history of those places including their political history and current politics.

While doing her research Lila has found that each person has been a surprise at some point. She did not have a specific best find but said "on any given day a different thing is my best find."

When it came to the question of hitting any brick walls, Lila replied: "You mean there are other ways?" Good point Lila.

Lila does research in Scotland, Switzerland, Germany, England, Northern Ireland and Canada with "a side diversion in Mexico." Some of her lines she has been able to trace back to the 1400's but others she can't get past 1920. She is hoping to find the lessons these people learned that were passed down in her genes "because with so many orphans it sure was family lore."

Thanks ladies!

Note from the editor: All of you have a family story within you so please consider sharing. 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. Hope to hear from you!

Louise Stack

History Lessons

LET'S TALK PANDEMICS.....



Grave marker of a Black Death victim in Germany.

By the time you receive this newsletter you will probably be stir-crazy from being isolated in your home for weeks and from listening to continuous news coverage on what is happening with the coronavirus and what you should or should not do. Historically, there have been pandemics before and perhaps you have discovered during your research that you had ancestors who perished during one of them. For example, in the March member spotlight column Joan Romens told of losing a grandmother to the Spanish flu. Prior to that there was the Black Death. Today it is the Coronavirus.

The Black Death was also known by the names Black Plague, The Plague and Bubonic Plague. Depending on how far back you have been able to trace your ancestors you might find that some did perish during that pandemic which started in the 1330's in Asia. It was carried by fleas on rodents. Throughout the 1340's it made its way into various parts of Europe. According to history.com it was most likely passed on through "Mongol armies and traders, or it could have arrived by ship." It couldn't quite be called a global pandemic as the United States was yet to be discovered.

The Spanish Flu Pandemic might be more well-known in your family research since it only goes back 100 years to 1918. Again, according to history.com it "was first observed in Europe, the United States and parts of Asia before swiftly spreading around the world." The actual cause of this flu strain is unknown. Spain was hit hard by the disease so it became known as the Spanish flu but it touched the entire world.

That brings us to the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic about which there are still a lot of uncertainties. It will surely be a point of discussion for a very long time.

Upcoming Programs

May 13, 2020

A 24,000 Mile Journey for John Doe (Bob Heck)
DNA Completes the Story: Now That You Have the Test, What's Next? (Erika Zuehl)

June 10, 2020

Archiving on the Computer or In the Cloud (Sam Colon)
Organizing Documents & Photos (Bob Heck)

July 8, 2020

From Start to Finish: Working Your Way Through a Mysterious Family Member (Cathy Dailey)
Primary & Secondary Documentation and How to Source Them (Jane)

August 12, 2020

Tips and Tricks to Further Your Research (Cathy Dailey)
Newspaper Research (Bob Heck)

September 9, 2020

Show & Tell Night by MPAFUG Members:
Colorizing Photos on MyHeritage (Bob Heck)
My Civil War Connection (Louise Stack)
An Update on Slovakia – Finding My Uncle (Carl Micech)

An Update on “Genealogy is Easy” (Ed King)
Don’t Ignore Those Twigs (Carole Evans)
Making the Connection Back to Europe (Sam Colon)
Tagging in Group Photos (Bob Tatalovich)
A Pleasant Surprise on MyHeritage (Bruce Butterfield)

October 14, 2020

Live Find-A-Grave (Randy Ray)
The New Family Tree Maker (Randy Ray)

October 2020

Genealogy Workshop

November 11, 2020

To Be Determined

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.

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Steering committee meetings are held on the 3rd 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 30th. Send a check made payable to MPAFUG to:

Lynn Thrasher – MPAFUG Treasurer
PO Box 14222
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.