



NEWSLETTER

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Research Land Records

Summarized by Louise Stack

The first speaker of the evening, Gary Haas, came to give us the dirt on Land Research. Seriously, according to Gary, a land record is anything that gives you information about a piece of dirt. Now why would you want that? Try to visualize where your ancestors lived, even walk that piece of property. You could learn who their neighbors were. Those neighbors could possibly or even probably have been other relatives. Or you could learn why your ancestors chose a piece of land. What type of property was it? Was it good or bad for growing certain crops? Was it reminiscent of their homeland? The more you know about the land, the more you will know about your ancestors. 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.

Gary's handout contained a plethora of websites, particularly Google sites, which will be valuable for your land research. To begin Gary suggested a search in probate records for your deceased ancestor. Probate documents contain a list of assets including land owned. They can also contain names of other people in the dead person's life. And probate records aren't just wills so don't overlook bonds and guardianships. Gary particularly enjoys it when he finds snarky comments in the documents. Now doesn't that sound intriguing. Perhaps you would find those hidden gems as well. Try a search under Ancestry.com Card Catalog keyword Wisconsin probate.

Another source is the Public Records of the Wisconsin Circuit Courts where you could possibly find other court cases involving your family and ancestors. Gary likes looking for traffic violations that his family may have incurred. (Okay, I have to confess doing that too, but FYI you might find more than you bargained for.)

The next place to look for land information is Plat Maps. You might agree with Gary that we usually find that "God awful" land description "SW1/4, NW1/4 etc." and don't always know what it means. He suggests that we try instead to learn how it works by using the Public Lands Descriptions website. Another site he recommended was the Milwaukee Public Library which shows all the

NOVEMBER 8, 2017

TERMINOLOGY & STUFF

Researching Wills and Probate Records

*By
Bob Heck*

Funeral Home Research

*By
Bob Heck*

Next Meeting is November 8, 2017

*Klemmer's Banquet Center
10401 West Oklahoma Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53227*

Wisconsin counties and tells you what years of maps are available online. They also have a collection of maps related to Milwaukee if that is where your research takes you. You may already be aware, especially if you have gone on the annual MPAFUG bus trip to Madison, that the Wisconsin Historical Society is also a good source for maps.

Between 1929 and 1947 the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture had a project to document the potential use of land in all parts of Wisconsin with the exception of Lincoln, Manitowoc, Milwaukee and Sheboygan. This is known as the WI Land Economic Inventory Maps but is commonly called the Bordner Survey. Besides documenting the type and quality of the land they documented other features. Gary cited an example in his hometown of Plain, WI where he found that the cemeteries and taverns were documented. He found that his ancestors lived on a dirt road and that when it was upgraded to gravel that was an improvement. Disregard the websites listed on the handout for the Bordner Survey and use the following instead: www.uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/EcoNatRes/WILandInv/.

If you are interested in Wisconsin's early days, a site to try is Original Field Notes and Plat Maps which covers 1833-1866 and 1858-2009. When first setting up the state of Wisconsin surveyors were sent out to actually sit on a parcel of land and look down the section lines. The entire state is covered and is very detailed. Gary showed an example where even 6" diameter trees and small streams were recorded. You might be able to find a specific property, but you do have to know what you are looking for.

Did you know there is a WI Aerial Photography Catalog? Even Gary was surprised by the number of aerial photos of Wisconsin in the catalog. The earliest photo is from 1937, but the payoff is that you could find where the actual photo is located. Another related site is the WI Historic Aerial Imagery Finder. Besides Wisconsin, Gary mentioned aerial photos of Europe in World War II. Many of those photos were taken prior to bombing and were used for intelligence purposes but you might find your family's ancestral village and see what it looked like before the devastation of war.

We may all have experienced this, but the Register of Deeds of each county handles their records differently. According to Gary, Sauk County is a genealogist's dream since that register of deeds has a passion for preserving records and making them available. Each land transaction is recorded in huge books and the current register of deeds, Brent Bailey, created PDF versions of these books and made them available online. Wouldn't it be nice if all the counties operated like that?

Sanborn maps are another option for research. These maps show a variety of factors for fire risk; wind

conditions, available water and fire departments. They also give information about the buildings such as the number of stories and type of building it is plus whether it is brick or wood.

Two websites that Gary suggested might be helpful in your family research were the United States Board on Geographic Names and the Annual Enumeration of Farm Statistics by Assessors, 1923-1972. You could also check the Department of Agriculture 1947 Record if you had ancestors on farms. An example Gary shared under the geographic names website was that you could use the data filter function and use "give me all cemeteries in a section." That might help you find a relative or two you've been missing. Under farm statistics you could learn the age of the farm house, number of rooms, electricity, telephone, running water as well as information about the acres of crops and number of animals, etc. According to Gary, if your ancestors lived on a farm, you need to look at those records.

Gary is obviously an enthusiastic fan of Google sites and admitted that he could spend a lifetime on Google Earth which has incredible information about land. He also says that Google Street view will "eat up your time" because it is really a guided tour of places in the world and allows you to "walk" many streets.

For those of us that attended the meeting, we were able to see a drone's eye view of Gary's hometown. He was able to buzz the whole farm where his ancestors lived. He showed the cemetery where family are buried and the chapel near there. The drone captured the downtown and buzzed in pretty close upon the church, which he said was without prior permission, but fun to see. Another point of interest he mentioned was using I-phone technology where you may be able to look at a building and say "give me old photo" to see what it used to look like.

Well now you know you don't even have to get your hands dirty to get down to earth and do land research.

Gary's tips: Let somebody else do the research; look first to see if someone else has posted the same land research on the web. "When in doubt, click it" like he did when he found he could get to the Haas page by clicking the name in an index.

Oh the Treasures You Will Find – US Federal Censuses and City Directories

Bob Heck introduced the second speaker of the evening, Cathy Dailey, and commented that he guaranteed that she would give us information that we had never even thought of. If you have heard one of Cathy's presentations previously, then you know she brings a different kind of energy to the stage. In fact, she warned us that she talks fast because she is from Cleveland and everyone there talks fast so we had to try to keep up. That sure had your reporter worried.

Cathy began by telling the audience to consider giving a future presentation because it will make you a better genealogist. She encouraged us to talk to Bob Heck about it and said that it isn't as scary as you might think, "well maybe a little at first."

This presentation focused on finding ancestors by using censuses and city directories so Cathy's first suggestion was that you build on what you already know about your family and then work backwards. Cathy introduced us to her great-grandparents with a photo of their gravestone which gave names and dates, a starting point. She also shared an impressive photo of those Czech great-grandparents, the Zaruba's, around a dining table with a centerpiece containing an American flag which she felt symbolized their embracing their new life here.

Before delving into the US Federal Census, Cathy provided a "data disclaimer." Remember, your data is only as good as the person who provided the information, recorded the information or transcribed the information.

Cathy went on to present a great history of the US Federal Census starting with its inception and also gave a breakdown of what information was included by eras. Everyone knows it is done every 10 years but maybe not that it remains confidential for 72 years. The first census was in 1790 and was established to count the number of people living in their "usual" residence. The actual days set forth to take the census has changed over the years with the current practice being April 1. The data collected has changed somewhat over the years as well. The census can be a valuable resource for finding where your ancestor lived, who they lived with, and perhaps even where they came from. One of the tidbits Cathy garnered during her research was that a cousin of her grandmother's, who she was especially close to, lived in the same house in the 1900 census.

Following are a few of the highlights from the information she provided. Up until about 1840 only the name of the head of the household was recorded with the others

listed within age groups. A slave schedule was recorded in 1850 with the second and last one being in 1860. In 1870 parents were asked if they were foreign born. During the period between 1850-1880 mortality schedules were included. In 1880 women were allowed to do the recording and, no surprise to some of us, the censuses were easier to read with women's handwriting. That was it for the 1800's as the 1890 census was lost to fire in 1921.

The 1900 census had expanded personal descriptions including the number of years a person was married, particularly important if they were married more than once. Occupation was now included and Cathy learned that an ancestor was a railroad tracing clerk who traced where shipments were going. The 1910 census expanded the information a bit more and asked for the native language spoken at home, which could give a better clue of where your ancestors might be from. Cathy had learned that sometimes Czech families were listed as Austrian or Bohemian for instance. This census also had a box for whether or not a person was a Union or Confederate veteran. In 1920 questions about citizenship were added. The 1930 census asked if you owned a radio, if you actually worked "yesterday", attended school or college any time after September 1, 1929 and what language was spoken in the home by anyone foreign born before coming to the US. The 1940 census is even more detailed and has supplemental questions that Cathy says you need to also look at by scrolling down further on the document. Of genealogical interest on this census is that it lists who gave the information for the record – maybe grandma, the child left at home or someone else?

We've all pretty much learned the hard way that the 1890 census records were destroyed or damaged. Now doesn't it seem like that is where all your important family information was? A state census can complement the federal census and is especially helpful in the case of the missing 1890 census. Federal censuses are done at the beginning of the decade, but state censuses are done in the middle. We are lucky here in Wisconsin as there are records starting in 1836 through 1905 so you might find what you are missing in the 1895 state census. Cathy discovered that there are none for her to explore in Ohio as no state censuses are known to exist there.

Another helpful source for finding those elusive ancestors is City Directories, a precursor to telephone books. New York had the first known directory, handwritten, starting in 1665. Baltimore produced a printed directory for Baltimore in 1752 with the information supplied by a "Lady of Respectability" done in manuscript style. Philadelphia followed with their printed directory in 1785.

What can you hope to find in a city directory besides your family listed by name and address? How about

whether or not they are a boarder or have boarders, their profession and possibly employer, and death listings for the previous year. If you can't find a listing in the directory, don't stop, try another spelling. Look in the business directory and advertisements. Look for city maps with ward numbers that can be a great clue when searching a census. Look for historical information as well as other established businesses, churches and organizations. One such option Cathy pointed out was social and fraternal organizations as your relatives may have wanted to be with others of their ethnicity. Cathy shared an excellent example with an 1892 Cleveland City Directory that listed a number of Bohemian organizations. And who knew there were actually directory thieves? The directory cost \$5.00 and came with a strongly worded caution from the publisher about borrowers and thieves. A humorous statement from a 1888-1889 Cleveland City Directory was that "To find a name you must know how to spell it." In that very same directory Cathy showed there were at least 4 possible spellings for her Hejl family with "see also" references to the other spellings.

Cathy re-introduced us to her great-grandparents by showing how she tracked their life through census records and city directories. Lastly, she showed us how to "Map It" using Google maps. She mapped several residences for her ancestors prior to and after 1906 as well as where churches and cemeteries were located. However, you would need google maps to plug in your family residences.

Like Gary Haas, Cathy had a number of websites in her handout that will help you locate census records and city directories. She also recommends checking with local libraries, museums, historical societies and genealogy groups.

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

Upcoming Programs

December, 2017 – No Meeting

Do NOT forget, there is **NO** meeting in December

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 (Bob Heck)

August 8, 2018

Create Your Own Cloud (Sam Colon)
TBA

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

Soon enough we'll be going into daylight savings time but it was already noticeable when parking at Klemmer's Banquet Hall for our October meeting that it is getting dark earlier. Bob Heck opened the 7:00PM meeting commenting that it had been summer up until two days before the meeting. There were 101 at this meeting with 2 attending for the first time although they were already members.

Bob pointed out that MPAFUG now has some new equipment which was purchased solely with proceeds from the monthly Opportunity Table raffle. We have a new computer, projector and hot spot. As with anything new there is always a little breaking in period so Bob warned that the new computer and projector weren't playing nice and didn't always communicate with each other. Wireless is great though and the meeting went on with very few glitches and fewer electrical cords. Bob also specifically mentioned a couple of items that were available on this month's opportunity table. Again, there was an Ancestry DNA kit. There was also a picture keeper, similar to a flashdrive, that will search and find all pictures on your computer and put them onto the device. How handy is that!

Bob reminded everyone that it is time to start renewing your membership dues. Something new is that *only* dues for 2018 will be accepted as processing for a

longer period makes it more difficult for the treasurer. The good news is that the dues remains at \$12.00 for the coming year.

The ever-popular Q & A section began with Bob asking for Steve Person's comment about what to do with the Ancestry DNA kit that was on last month's opportunity table. This question was answered right away with the answer being that everyone at that meeting should spit into the tube. (Still funny, even this time around and of course, another chance to give it a try.)

Now you may already know this, but Bob does like to get tricky on us once in a while. This time he threw in a couple zingers. Question 2 asked what percentage of babies never saw their first birthday in the 1800's. According to the newsletter 1 in 5 babies never reach their first birthday, however, Bob was asking for the percentage. That answer was 20%. So, for question three, members were briefly puzzled as to whether they should answer with numbers or percentages. The question asked how many children died before age 5 with the answer being 5 out of 10 or 50%, the latter being the way it was recorded in the newsletter.

For question 4 Bob referred to the second verse of "Jack and Jill" where Jack goes home after falling down and covers his head. What did he cover his head with? The two-part answer was vinegar and brown paper but Bob also wanted to know what that was called. One member was heard to say "disgusting" but the answer Bob really was looking for was that it was a form of bandage.

So, after the previous two-part answer Bob upped the ante and gave the next question a three-part answer – told you he had some zingers. How can you determine your current dues status without asking anyone? Log onto the MPAFUG Member Only web page (1), enter your email address (2) and then your password (3). You will find your status below your name. Of course, you do need to know your password. Can't remember it? You all know it by heart – it's your last name.

Back to math class for the last question. What's the difference between a coffin and a casket? 6 sides (coffin) minus 4 sides (casket) = 2 sides, which was the answer Bob was looking for. Overheard in the audience: "Too hard!" and "You said there was no math." True perhaps, but we have to keep up a stiff competition for those valuable prizes. And don't forget the entertainment value of these questions.

Help with PAF

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

NAME	PHONE	E-MAIL Address
Bruce Butterfield	414-462-6097	Babtrfld-mke@wi.rr.com
Sam Colon	414-327-2133	genrschr@gmail.com
Bob Heck	414-421-7143	bheck@voyager.net
Bob Tatalovich	414-897-8280	bobt3725@gmail.com
Jane Orne	262-938-9371	orne@Rworld.net
Guy Porth	414-510-0563	guyporth9@yahoo.com
Earl Capps	414-327-4327	elcapps@yahoo.com

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?

MPAFUG c/o Bob Heck
4910 Steeple Drive, Greendale WI 53129
Phone: 414-421-7143
E-mail: bheck@voyager.net