

WOOD COUNTY



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CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Hello Fellow Genealogists!

I was having a conversation with a friend a few weeks ago, and we talked about being alone in the world, after so many years of marriage. She spoke of how lonely she was and how she sat around the house drinking coffee with no one to talk to.

I thought about this subject that affects so many older people today. Their children are gone and don't need them, and now the spouse is also gone. **But**, there really is no need to just sit around when there are so many organizations that need volunteers. It has been said that **"Volunteers are the Life Blood of small communities."**

Volunteers are always needed—for delivering Meals on Wheels, taking patients for a walk at the local nursing home, visiting a vet and talking with him, reading to school children, helping monitor the playground at lunch time—and the list goes on.

Our Society is so fortunate in having a group of like-minded members who have given many hours of their time digging around in dusty attics, bug-ridden cemeteries, and musty basements collecting history in the form of town records, school histories and tombstone readings. Since the beginning in 1974, the group has always had a project or two in various stages of progress. Some of this work that was started so long ago, is now recorded on our web site for the benefit of other researchers.

We still have some unfinished projects and probably always will have, but I would like to thank all those who came before and set the barrier high so that we have to keep striving to keep up.

Happy Hunting!

Diantha Neinfeldt

BRAT FRY FUNDRAISERS

Please note we are planning the dates for this year's brat fry fundraisers. The first one will be Wednesday, May 13, at the Pioneer Bank located on the corner of 17th Avenue South and West

Grand Avenue. We are hoping to have another brat fry at Walmart on Friday, May 15. Be ready to volunteer to help in any way needed. More details upcoming at our regular meetings.

DID YOU KNOW?

Do you know what small community in Central Wisconsin had a college in the early 1900s? The college picked this small settlement because it "is practically the geographical center of Wisconsin surrounded by a network of railroads, it is convenient to larger cities and towns. Morally, the town is above the average. Here, located upon a farm of 500 acres in the most fertile section of the state, the school is especially founded to meet the need of our home missionaries' children and all worthy young people of limited means, giving the rare opportunity of earning an education." Believing that a college is not simply a place to make scholars, this school aims at making manly men and womanly women.

The school was the Northwest Collegiate Institute which was located in Sherry, Wisconsin! It opened its doors in 1906 and a student had to have \$125 for the year's education. Dormitories were available for students to live in. It put Sherry on the map!

COUNTY HISTORY GIVEN IN PAPER BY MRS. WARNER

The following is taken from the March 22, 1927, Issue of the Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune.

At a recent meeting of the Sunnyside Community Club, Mrs. W. H. Warner appeared on the program with a well-prepared paper dealing with early historical facts about Wood County, and especially the southern end, with special reference to the settlement of the rich dairy country around what is now known as Rudolph. Mrs. Warner was asked to furnish this office with a copy of her paper from that evening and it is reprinted herewith. Most of the data contained therein is taken from early diaries kept as keepsakes by old families near Rudolph. These diaries form the most authentic records available from those pioneer times and make very interesting reading for the present generation of people, who know more about seven bearing crankshaft motor cars with vanity cases for all, than was ever dreamed of in those days, long ago.

Wood County was named after Joseph Wood, father of Frank and George Wood of Wisconsin Rapids. He came to this section of the state in 1848.

First Dwelling

The first dwelling in Wood County was built in 1831 by Daniel Whitney. It was a log house built about 10 miles below what was called Whitney Rapids. This house was built on the east side of the river opposite the Nekoosa-Edwards paper mill. Mrs. Whitney was the first white woman to live in Wood County.

The first sawmill in the county was built at Whitney Rapids. Mr. Whitney hired A. B. Sampson, a millwright, to build the mill. The latter had come from Keipville, New York, in 1837. He rode a horse from there to Chicago. Horses were almost a novelty at that time. He was offered a trade of 15 lots in Chicago, in what is now the heart of Chicago's busiest business district. He considered his horse worth more so rode on to Green Bay. Here the animal was sold for \$125. At Green Bay he hired out to Daniel Whitney. The price of the horse would have bought 100 acres of virgin timberland in those days.

Whitney hired two Indians with a canoe to take Mr. Sampson to Whitney Rapids. They went down the Fox River as far as Portage, carried the canoe across the mile of land to the Wisconsin River, then up that river to a point opposite the present site of the city of Nekoosa.

H. A. Sampson, the first white child born in the county, was born at Whitney Rapids, on March 1, 1842.

The first school in the county was established in Centralia by J. S. Hurlbut, a Methodist minister.

The first residential physician was a Dr. Whitney.

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Crossed on Ferry

In those days they crossed the river on a ferry at a

BEV'S BRICK WALL BREAKTHROUGH!

In 2012 one of my husband's cousins from Minnesota contacted me, saying he would like to replace Joe Gotz's tombstone at St. Mary's Cemetery in Auburndale, Wisconsin. He said his stone was illegible and I remembered it as being in pieces. I told him I could take care of that since I was closer to the cemetery. Joe Gotz is my husband's great-grandfather. His second wife was my husband's great-grandmother.

In 2013 I decided I better get going on that project. I'd happened to meet the owner of Marshfield Monument at a college function in July. He said he had a stone that had come in by mistake. It was gray granite and was not as highly polished as the stones are today. He thought it would be a nice new stone for Joe while still having a vintage look. I asked him to save me the pieces of the broken stone when they put the new stone up.

When I told my husband Bob this, he wondered out loud (and rather loud) why I would want the pieces. What was I going to do with them? I said I would store them with my great-great-grandfather Isreal Sweet's tombstone (which is in our son's machine shop).

On Tuesday, September 3, 2013, Marshfield Monument called and said they had set the stone in the cemetery. They also had the pieces of the old tombstone and were wondering when I would be there to pick them up. I said I would stop by that very day as we were headed to Marshfield anyway. On the way to Marshfield, Bob and I stopped by St. Mary's Cemetery to take a look at the new stone. It was awesome!

Once we got to the monument place, we were directed to the back parking lot as the pieces were still in the trailer behind their truck. In the trailer were multiple pieces of tombstone. One of the workers picked up Joe's stone and showed me that. It was in one piece, rather small, and the German script was hard to read. They then put the stone in the back of my van. The workers then started gathering up the other pieces to put in my van also. I asked what they were. They said they had been on Joe's plot with the other stone.

One of the pieces had his name on also. They showed me the piece. I pointed out the words above the name Joseph Gotz. They were German and said "Frau von" meaning "Wife of". So they immediately put the other pieces together to form the stone as it would have been.

Where the stone had broken, was the name "Anna". The stone reads "Anna, Frau von Joseph Gotz, Died 11 June 1886, Aged 31 Years." Written in German at the bottom of the stone was "Blessed Are Those Who Die in the Lord." Since the breaks went through the name Anna, it made it difficult to see the name. This was unbelievable! Here was the tombstone of Anna, Joe Gotz's first wife!

Here's a little background on Joe Gotz and his first wife, Anna. Joe Gotz, his wife Anna, and their two sons, Joseph and Carl, came to Auburndale from Eisenstein, now in the Czech Republic, in the year 1884. I looked at the end of the list to see if she might have died on board ship. Her name was not listed. I could not find her death in the church records or the Wood County, Wisconsin, death records either. So then I was thinking she might have died on the way from New York to Wisconsin.



My husband's aunt tells the story that Joe had hired Barbara Dillinger to care for his boys after his first wife Anna died. Most likely after pressure from perhaps her father, the local gossip, etc., he married Barbara on September 1, 1886, at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Auburndale, WI. Barbara was 18 years old and Joe Gotz was 35 at the time of their marriage.

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Their union was blessed with four more children. Then in 1892 the Marshfield Times newspaper stated that Joe Gotz, the village blacksmith, died, leaving a "wife and six children."

The church records show an empty place next

COUNTY HISTORY, CONT'D.

point near where the Herschleb Bakery now stands in Wisconsin Rapids. They used ropes to pull the ferry across. The ferry was run by Eusibe LaVigne, father of James LaVigne, present County Treasurer. Two boys in a playful mood stole the ropes one night and used them to string fish nets. The ferry was laid up nearly a week. The fun proved to be costly, as each of the boys paid \$20 and costs.

Three foot bridges have been built across the river at Wisconsin Rapids; a wooden bridge was built in 1866; the iron bridge in 1889, and the present concrete one in 1921.

The town of Rudolph was established October 8, 1856, through a petition started by Francis Harkness. It was named after Fred Rudolph Hecox, the first white boy born in the town. He was born on what is now known as the Forman Farm. Anna Harkness Garrison was the first white girl born in the town. The records show that the first persons to file claims in Rudolph were John Draper, Paul Kingston, and H. K. Fay. They filed together in 1840 in Section 33. This is now known as the Welsh place.

Among the next persons to file was Francis Harkness. This was in 1854. He built the first house and made the first clearing in the Town of Rudolph. No one knew exactly where the lines were and Francis Harkness built his house near a spring about four rods southwest of Rezin's line. He cleared about five acres of land. About one acre of this is the little three-cornered piece of land on the Rezin place. Another acre is on the T. A. Anderson farm, and three acres on his own place, now the Warner farm. He was lucky enough to have built the house on his own land.

Road Followed River

The first road to Rudolph came out of Wisconsin Rapids along Third Avenue near the log piles, following the river past Redings and Staeges, turned north past the Welsh place, past Hamm's, through Lessig's farm, through the stone quarry, across Schmick's place, through the Brahmsteadt place, and came out on the cross road near the Brahmsteadt and Buschbom line, crossed the Joe Walloch forty,

and went into Sigel on the Walloch and Nash line. The road followed the high ridges. The second road branched off near the stone quarry crossed the McCarthy farm, and went north as far as the Clark & Scott mill. They had no bridge across the creek. The creek was forded. No bridge was built because the creek was used for floating logs each spring. The last log drive down Mosquito Creek was taken by Jim Rouhan in 1888.

The first school house in Rudolph was an old log building on the Harkness farm, near the northwest corner. This school house burned. School was held in an old house across the road on what is now the Nash place. The next school house in this school district was a frame building on the Forman place, then the Richard Rezin place. This school house was moved south on the corner of the Robert Hofschild farm in 1903. The old building was replaced by a brick building in 1916.

Mr. Hecox was the first teacher of which there are any records in this district. He taught in the frame building on the Rezin farm. He was paid \$40 per month. This was in 1876.

Among the oldest settlers in this community were Francis Harkness, Mr. Hecox, Dan Rezin, Dick Shay, Horton and Tom Whitman, Swain Lindahl, Ira Parkhurst, and Eusibe LaVigne.

And so the story goes. Stay tuned to the next issue for the remainder of Mrs. Warner's speech. She goes on to recite funny stories about Dick Shay. This is a nice concise story about Wood County, and especially about Rudolph. I hope those with Rudolph roots enjoy this article.

The Editor

WHO OWNS WHAT IN THE GENEALOGY WORLD?

The Milwaukee County Genealogical Society Reporter, Volume 46, No. 1, February 2015, reported on this article about how consolidation is affecting the on-line genealogy resources we all use. The article comes from an Australian user but the sections on Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.com are of great interest to us in the USA. The complete article can be found at <http://www.gouldgenealogy.com/2014/12/who-owns-what-in-the-genealogy-world>. Thanks to MCGS and Richard Eastman of Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter (<http://www.eogn.com>) for bringing this article to our attention.

Ancestry.com—founded 1983

Current list of the websites and products owned by Ancestry.com:

AncestryDNA – launched May 2012
 Ancestry app (formerly Ancestry Trees To Go app) – launched January 2010
 Ancestry.ca – launched in 2006
 Ancestry.co.uk – launched in 2002
 Ancestry.com – launched in 1996
 Ancestry.com.au – launched in 2006
 Ancestry.de – launched in 2006
 Ancestry.fr – launched in 2007
 Ancestry.it – launched in 2006
 Ancestry.se – launched in 2007
 AncestryEurope.lu – cannot find a date
 Ancestry Corporate – cannot find a date
 Archives.com – acquired August 2012
 FamilyTreeMaker.com – acquired 2006
 FindAGrave.com – acquired September 2013
 FindAGrave app – launched March 2014
 Fold3 (formerly Footnote.com) – acquired late 2010

Genline.com – acquired June 2010
 Newspapers.com – launched November 2012
 ProGenealogists – launched 1998
 ProQuest – partnership 2004
 RootsWeb – acquired June 2000
 Shoebox app (1000Memories renamed) – launched July 2013

Former sites and products:

1000Memories – acquired late 2012, relaunched as Shoebox (see above)
 Ancestry24 – acquired October 2013

Ancestry Magazine – discontinued 2010
 Ancestry Publishing – discontinued 2010
 Archive CD Books England – acquired 2008
 Genealogy.com – acquired 2003, discontinued September 2014
 The Generations Network – changed name to Ancestry.com in 2009
 LongLostPeople.com – launched 2008, no longer online
 Mundia.com – discontinued 2014
 MyCanvas.com – discontinued September 2014
 MyFamily.com – discontinued September 2014
 Y-DNA and mDNA tests on AncestryDNA – discontinued September 2014

FAMILYSEARCH – founded 1894

FamilySearch is owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and it is the largest non-commercial genealogy organization in the world, and it is totally free.

FamilySearch can trace its own roots back to 1894 when it was founded as the Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU) and their members have been actively gathering, preserving, and sharing genealogical records worldwide for over 120 years.

Renamed to FamilySearch, the organization launched their first website in 1999, which has now grown to include over a billion records from hundreds of countries around the world.

While FamilySearch themselves haven't bought out other companies (well not that I know of), being the world's biggest genealogy website, I felt they deserve a mention here.

Also in the past few years they have partnered with other genealogy organizations to make even more records available.

Thanks to member Flores Gumz for bringing this to our attention. It is amazing to see just how much is owned by Ancestry.com. Who knew?

Genealogy Humor!

- My family coat of arms ties in the back—is that normal?
- Genealogists are time unravelers!
- How can one ancestor cause so much TROUBLE?
- I should have asked them BEFORE they died!



IN MEMORIAM—JACK LUKES

It is with sadness that we report the death of another of our long-time members. Jack Lukes, 84, died on January 16. Jack was born July 16, 1930, in New Lisbon, WI, to John and Catherine (Plunkett) Lukes. Jack was employed by Consolidated Papers Inc. for 42 years, retiring in 1992.

Jack was the founder, the charter president, and a lifetime member of the Wisconsin Rapids Aqua Skiers, as well as the first chairman of the Wisconsin Water Ski Federation. He was inducted into the Wisconsin Water Ski Federation Hall of Fame which is located at the Tommy Bartlett Water Ski Show in Wisconsin Dells. In 2010 he received the Award of Distinction presented

by the USA Water Ski Association. His photograph is on display in the USA Water Ski Hall of Fame and Museum in Polk City, Florida.

In addition to his love of water skiing, Jack was a member of the Wood County Amateur Radio Club. He served as Emergency Coordinator of the Wood County Amateur Radio Emergency Service for 28 years. Jack also loved to ride his motorcycle (and received some cases of road rash along the way!).

Jack is survived by his son Macen, his brother Bill (wife Jan), a nephew, a niece, and numerous grandnieces and grandnephews.

After his retirement from the paper mill, Jack joined our Society. He was

always willing to help someone out. He worked on the lengthy project of updating the cemetery records. He helped haul the bound newspaper volumes to their current resting place in a Society member's basement.

Jack received Century Certificates from our Society for his ancestors, Vine Wales and his wife Amanda Bailey. They arrived in Wood County in 1859. Amanda Bailey Wales later married George Lyons. She was the mother of eleven children.

Jack's quiet smile and his readiness to help will be missed by all of us—his genealogy friends! **R.I.P. Jack!**

BEV'S BRICK WALL BREAKTHROUGH, CONT'D.

to Joe Gotz. Somehow the notation of his first wife's death had gotten lost. The church marriage record for Joe and Barbara stated that Joe's first wife was deceased. I will now try to verify her death by checking the Wood County records again, the church records, and various newspaper sources. Meanwhile, Marshfield Monument cleaned Anna's stone. It is now even brighter and easier to read. They repaired it by epoxying the pieces together, putting a metal frame on two sides, and setting them in cement to give the stone support. We lost the German verse at the bottom of the stone but that was a small price to pay for more stability for the stone.

On Sep. 11, 2014, Marshfield Monument called me and said they had set Anna's stone next to Joe's in the cemetery. Joe's first wife Anna has now come to rest beside Joe! How awesome! This broke down one of my brick walls in researching the Gotz family and also answered everyone's question of what happened to Anna Gotz! Thank you, Marshfield Monument!



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

10 Mar 2015 **Heart O' Wisconsin Genealogical Society meeting, 6:30 p.m., McMillan Memorial Library, Wisconsin Rapids, WI.** The program will be "Roundtable Discussions" with members bringing in some of their collections that helped them find their ancestors. Program at 6:30 p.m. followed by the meeting.

27-28 Mar 2015 **Wisconsin State Genealogical Society, Gene-A-Rama, held at the Sheraton Madison at 706 John Nolen Drive, Madison, WI.** Cindy Ingle from Cyndi's List will be the main speaker, along with other speakers covering topics: A Guided Tour of Cyndi's List; Where to Find Genealogical Collections Anywhere; Maintaining an Organized Computer; German Language Resources for Genealogists in America; and Digging for Doughboys; to name a few! Check the www.wsgs.org web site for more details and to register .

14 Apr 2015 **Heart O' Wisconsin Genealogical Society meeting, 6:30 p.m., McMillan Memorial Library, Wisconsin Rapids, WI.** Member Tina Krummel will be hosting a session helping members with computer problems. Meeting will follow the program.

02 May 2015 **Wausau Family History Center Conference.** Registration is at 8:30 a.m. This conference is free but you are asked to pre-register so enough packets are made available. Many topics will be covered including Researching Military Records, Using Homestead Records, Family History for Beginners, Ancestry.com for Beginners, Czech Research, Unlocking Secrets with Old Photos, Using Timelines to Enhance Research, Pomeranian Research, etc. There will also be some Open Discussion and Question & Answer time. E-mail familyhistory.wi@gmail.com to register, listing your name and your choice of sessions.

12 May 2015 **Heart O' Wisconsin Genealogical Society meeting, 6:30 p.m., McMillan Memorial Library, Wisconsin Rapids, WI.** Program to be announced.

13-16 May 2015 **National Genealogical Society 2015 Family History Conference, St. Charles, Missouri.** "Crossroads of America" is the theme of this year's conference. Registration is now open. Get all the details and the registration form at www.ngsgenealogy.org.

16 Jun 2015 **Heart O' Wisconsin Genealogical Society Annual Cemetery Walk.** June is traditionally our annual "cemetery walk." Sue Alft will join us with maps and charts of St. John's Lutheran Church Cemetery in Kellner, WI. More details will follow as they become available.

16-17 Oct 2015 **Fall Seminar 2015, Wisconsin State Genealogical Society.** This event will be held at the Hotel Marshfield in Marshfield, WI. The main event will be Saturday with a smaller, hands-on workshop session held on Friday. Details will be announced as they become available, or go to www.wsgs.org.

If you're a member of WSGS, don't forget their very informative webinars which you, as a member, can access on their website at www.wsgs.org.

Heart O' Wisconsin Genealogical Society

Chairman	Di Neinfeldt
Vice Chairman	Tina Krummel
Secretary	Doreen Dimick
Treasurer	Bev Polansky
Trustees	Eugene Meier
3 years	Ben Chitek
2 years	Flores Gumz
1 year	
COMMITTEE CHAIRS:	
Book Purchases	Flores Gumz
By-Laws	Pat Fischer
Genealogy Class	(Vacant)
Historian	Bev Peaslee
Hospitality	Joyce Keehn
Indexing	Mary Peters & Bev Peaslee
Library Files	Arlene Keehn
New Members	Doris King
Newsletter	Bev Peaslee
Pedigree Charts	Myra Sweet
Research	Mary Moss
Sunshine	Sue Miller
Website	Di Neinfeldt

Wood County Roots Editor:

HEART O' WISCONSIN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

PURPOSE OF SOCIETY: To assist members and others in genealogical research and to preserve local records.

DUES: \$15 per household—one newsletter per address. Please list names of all persons joining. Due at or before 31 July. Membership year runs from 01 August through 31 July.

MEETINGS: Held monthly—September through June—on the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the McMillan Memorial Library, 490 East Grand Avenue, Wisconsin Rapids, WI (right across the street from the Hotel Mead & Convention Center).

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