

# WOOD COUNTY ROOTS



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Chairman's Corner	1305
Genealogy Humor	1305
New Officers	1306
Dues Reminder	1306
New US WWI Military Records for Genealogy By Lacy Cooke	1306
Russ Horton Presenta- tion Flyer Fold 3 Links	1306
Circus Train Wreck 1910	1307 -
Looking Back in Time War Mothers on Ar- mistice Day	1308
George Peterson Follow up	1309
Membership Form	1309
Calendar of Events	1310
Society Information	1311

## CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

### *Greetings Everyone:*

Here we are at the beginning of a new year—in fact our 45<sup>th</sup> year as a Society! Hooray for us! There will be no formal celebration of this milestone event, but we can celebrate our Society in any number of small ways throughout the year.

First, I'm asking each veteran member to please offer help to any of the newer members or guests at our meetings. I have seen some members reaching out to help new members already, and that is what I like to see. Who knows, in offering suggestions to others as to where to pursue their research, you may discover some in-roads on your own research.

Next, I'd like everyone to suggest program topics to Wayne, our program chair; to write up articles for Tina, our newsletter editor, to include; and to volunteer in any other areas as requested by the officers, the committee chairs, etc.

Next, I'd like members to hang around for a while after the meeting to help others with their research. If a new member has a

question as to where to find some book in the library, please volunteer to take them upstairs to show them where to find what they need. As you work with them, you may find that you will get more familiar with the library also.

This doesn't have to involve hours of your time but a few minutes here and there.

Our meeting format will be changing slightly. I'll include a snippet of time, possibly toward the end of the meeting, to allow members to share their successes, to ask questions, or to share any tips they're come across that could make other member's research easier. We'll allow about ten minutes for this discussion.

I'm looking forward to leading you through the next year.

*Happy Hunting!*  
*Bev Peaslee, Chair*

**Learning your family  
history is the key to  
unlocking  
who you are.**

## NEW OFFICERS

Officers were voted in at the end of last year to take us on into the new year. Please help the officers out in any way that you can. Our society is only as strong as its members.

Chairman:

Bev Peaslee

Vice Chairman:

Wayne Peters

Secretary:

Sue Miller &  
Myra Sweet

Treasurer:

Tina Krummel

Trustee:

Flores Gumz

## Dues!

It's that time of year again—your annual dues are payable now. Our membership year runs from August 1 through July 31.

Check your newsletter label. The line above your name has the expiration date of your membership. There is a membership form on page 1309 of this newsletter. Please check with Tina, our treasurer, on the status of your membership.

## New U.S. WWI Military Records For Genealogy

By Lacey Cooke

May 3, 2019

*Topping the list of new and updated genealogy records this week are United States military records. Ancestry.com has a new collection of U.S. Navy Muster Rolls and an updated collection of historical postcards. Enjoy a special interview with military expert Michael Strauss on how he solved an old postcard mystery! Also new this week are WWI U.S. records at FamilySearch for Michigan and Utah, which you can access for free online.*

### Featured: U.S. Navy Muster Rolls

Ancestry.com has a new collection of [U.S. Navy Muster Rolls, 1949-1963](#). From the description.

“Arranged by two-year chronological subseries (1949-1950, 1951-1952, 1953-1954, 1955-1956, and 1957-1958), followed by single-year subseries (1959-1971). Each subseries is arranged by “activity number,” a unique number assigned to each ship, unit, and command within the Navy. Each activity’s muster rolls are arranged in chronological order by quarter, typically with enlisted personnel arranged by rate and thereunder alphabetically by surname.

“Beginning in the spring of 1956, officers precede enlisted personnel, with officers arranged either alphabetically by surname or hierarchically by rank. Personnel diaries, which

precede each quarter’s muster rolls, are arranged chronologically by date.”

### Historical Postcards

Ancestry.com also recently updated their collection of [U.S. Historical Postcards, 1893-1960](#). You might be wondering how historical postcards would be valuable to your genealogy research. The collection description sheds some light on what you can use this database for:

“This database contains over 115,000 historical postcards with photos of places in the United States. Each postcard caption has been indexed and may be searched by keyword or location. The database also includes the city, county, state, and postcard era (estimated year range) for most postcards.

This database is primarily useful for obtaining a photograph or picture of a specific place in time. If you do not already have pictures of the places your ancestors lived, historical postcards are a good alternative to personal photos.”

**In the video below:** A captivating story unfolds of old postcards from WWI that are snatched from oblivion by Michael Strauss, who is the *Genealogy Gems Podcast* Military Minutes man. Michael shares the story of how he found the historic postcards on eBay, and the research process he followed to identify their author. These are strategies that you can use in many areas of your family history research!

## New U.S. WWI Military Records For Genealogy Cont.

### FamilySearch

You can explore even more new WWI records for genealogy thanks to FamilySearch's newest additions to their free records.

[Michigan, Census of World War I Veterans](#)

[with Card Index, 1917-1919](#)

[Utah, World War I County Draft Board Registers, Name Index, 1917-1918](#)

[Utah, World War I Service Questionnaires, 1914-1918](#)

These records may help you find out more about your ancestors who served in the military during WWI. Depending on the collection and record, you might find:

- name of Veteran;
- serial number;
- address;
- place and date of birth;
- nationality;
- color;
- occupation before and after the war;
- marriage date;
- wife's name,
- birthplace and date;
- names of children and their birth dates;
- parents' names and addresses;

- first camp entered and date;
- rank, company, and regiment;
- transfers and promotions;
- battles engaged in; discharged date and reason, and additional information.

If you don't find the person you're looking for, FamilySearch has these helpful suggestions for next steps:

- Look for variant spellings of the names. You should also look for alias names, nick names and abbreviated names.
- Look for an index. Local genealogical and historical societies often have indexes to local records. Search the records of nearby localities (or military units, counties, parishes, etc.).

### More Military Records with Michael Strauss

Michael Strauss is our resident Military Minutes man for *The Genealogy Gems Podcast*. He first debuted on the show on episode #207, where he talked about draft registrations.

*Disclosure: This article contains affiliate links and Genealogy Gems will be compensated if you make a purchase after clicking on these links (at no additional cost to you). Thank you for supporting Genealogy Gems!*

**MILITARY GENEALOGY**  
FINDING THOSE WHO SERVED

Russell Horton is the presenter for this program. Russell is the Reference & Outreach Archivist for the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison. Military records can provide valuable information on the veteran, as well as on all members of the family.



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**Be sure to mark your calendar for our September 21st meeting when Russ Horton will be doing a present on Military Genealogy**

Many of you have received emails from Ancestry with this logo. This is another source for Military research. This was August 2019 email. Check it out

<https://www.fold3.com/>

Memorials: [https://www.fold3.com/wall/?utm\\_source=content&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=content-aug-2019](https://www.fold3.com/wall/?utm_source=content&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=content-aug-2019)



**The Day They Shot Elephants in Babcock  
Circus Train Wreck led to Unusual Animal Hunt  
From the Pittsville Record May 31, 1976**

Once upon a time the village of Babcock was a bustling railroad town. This southwestern Wood County community was also the hub of a fairly prosperous farm area.

And, once upon a time they hunted Elephants in Babcock.

Old-timers will tell you there is an elephant burying ground just south of the village to prove that the elephant hunt story is no fantasy.

The time was August 16, 1910. Before the sun rose that day Babcock was to be the scene of the worst train wreck in the history of the area.

The Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, Pacific Railway had made Babcock one of its main division points in the state. The railroad had a large round house here, having selected the village of Wisconsin Valley Division headquarters.

In the early morning hours of that fateful Tuesday, the Campbell Bros. Circus Train chugged into the Babcock station. The circus was making its way southwest from Wisconsin Rapids where it had made a one-day stop.

#### Train Was Late

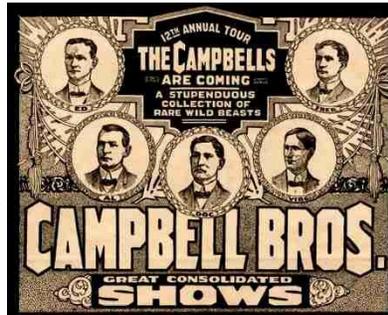
The Campbell Bros. train was to wait until a Milwaukee road passenger train coming north from New Lisbon had cleared the junction of two tracks just southwest of Babcock.

Once the passenger train had come through, the circus train had to proceed onto the track running to Tomah.

Shortly after 4a.m., word reached the Babcock station that the passenger train had been about 30 minutes behind schedule at New Lisbon.

One account of the events states that the station agent told the circus train it could proceed, believing that it could clear the junction long before the late passenger train arrived from the south. However, another report said the engineer proceeded without clearance from railroad officials.

Unknown to anyone at Babcock, the passenger train was pouring on steam north of New Lisbon in an effort to make up for the time lost, and as it neared Babcock, it was only minutes behind schedule. Standard procedure called for the train to stop about 400 feet south of the point where the two tracks merged. But the train roared past the stopping point.



#### One Man Killed

Splintering wood and tangled metal were all that remained of the animal cars that were battered. Other cars in the circus train were badly damaged. The impact hurled the passenger train engine on its side and derailed all the coaches.

At least one person a Minnesota man named John McGee was killed outright, and a number of persons, all on the circus train, were injured.

Recalling the event, Leonard Brost of Nekoosa, who lived in the Babcock area at the time of the wreck, said that three men hurt in the crash died later in the Babcock Town Hall where they had been taken.

“I was on my way to work on a farm south of Babcock when I saw a big crowd of people around the tracks—the trains were just a terrible mess,” Brost said.

Six camels, three Shetland ponies and a few llamas were killed instantly. Animals were running through the countryside, including some elephants. Two elephants were hurt, so badly that they had to be disposed of immediately. The four that got away presented a problem.

“First of all, it was hard to find a gun big enough to handle those elephants,” Brost recalled.

#### Elephants in Yard

The first sighting of the animals was reported by a startled farmer who woke up to find two bull elephants calmly strolling through his back yard. The four giant beasts were later found frolicking in a slough on the Yellow River about a mile from the scene of the accident.

“Everything seemed alright when the circus people started leading them back, but a little dog began barking, and one of the 10-foot bull elephant went wild and trampled fences and trees,” Brost said.

Again accounts vary, but apparently at least two and possibly all four of these elephants were shot and later buried near the wreck.

The farmer who shot them is said to have remarked:

“Teddy Roosevelt had to go all the way to Africa to hunt elephants but here I can stay home in



“I heard that two men from the circus came running up to O’Leary, who was a big man, but he grabbed a piece of iron and scared them off,” Brost said. O’Leary’s failure to stop south of the junction point was listed as the main cause of the accident, and he was disciplined in some unrevealed manner by the railroad.

Babcock’s days as an important railroad career ended several years later, when the Milwaukee Road transferred its Valley Division headquarters to Wausau.

A large water tank now stands in what once was a picturesque park area built by the railroad. The abandoned roundhouse burned in a spectacular fire in 1934. Hotels and other businesses which thrived on railroad inspired prosperity have long ago passed into oblivion.

But few of those who lived in Babcock in the early years of the century will never forget the circus train wreck of 1910 and the day they shot elephants in Babcock.

Babcock and shoot mine.”

The engineer of the passenger train, Jil O’Leary and his fireman jumped only seconds before the crash and escaped injury. A newspaper account of the accident states that O’Leary “had taken to the woods” because he feared the angry circus workers would blame him for the crash.

**Stood His Ground**

Brost, however, relates that O’Leary stood his ground.

**Look back in time**



This tablet was unveiled by Mrs. Georgiana Buckley in the presence of several War Mothers on Armistice Day November 11, 1938.

11 members

Mrs. Jacob Bever, Mrs. Carl Anthonfer, Mrs. John Severance, Mrs. J.J. Looze, Past State President, Mrs. Georgiana A. Buckley and Mrs. Ann Namesnick.

Photo was taken by T.A. Taylor 1938, Wisconsin Rapids, Wood Co.

## George Peterson's Tombstone

Thanks to Linda, member Anna Greeno's sister, for letting me know what the symbol was on George Peterson's tombstone in Forest Hill Cemetery in Wisconsin Rapids. I wrote up an article for our June newsletter asking for help in identifying the symbol. Linda checked with a Facebook group, Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness. Someone there answered her inquiry. It turns out the symbol is the logo of the Knights of Labor (KOL); the S standing for Secrecy, the O for Obedience, and MA for Mutual Assistance.

The Knights of Labor was found in 1869 by a group of garment cutters in Philadelphia. Its aim was to organize all laborers regardless of qualifications, gender, or race. Its greatest success was in organizing men and women from various trades. Unlike craft unions, the Knights were advocating 8-hour workdays, improved hygiene and safety conditions in the workplace, and equal pay for men and women. In later years, the Knights found they could not compete with the American

Federation of Labor which was uniting the craft unions. The year 1902 saw the dissolution of the Knights of Labor.

It is surprising that someone so young (George was only 24 years old) was a member but perhaps it was required by his work. I could find no further detail on his death. You'll remember his obituary said he was killed in an accident near Tomahawk. I'm assuming he probably worked in logging at that time.

Thanks to the newsletter, my questions have been answered! Do you have a problem you'd like to publish to see what might transpire? Write it up and email it to our newsletter editor, Tina Krummel. You may be in for a surprise!

Bev Peaslee



**MEMBERSHIP FORM**  
**DETACH AND MAIL WITH A CHECK FOR \$15 PAYABLE TO:**  
**HEART O' WISCONSIN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**  
**P.O. Box 1565**  
**WISCONSIN RAPIDS WI 54495-1565**

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**New members only:** You may have **one** free surname search if you reside outside of Wood County, WI (a \$10 value).

Surname you would like researched: \_\_\_\_\_

The membership list is published once per year in the December newsletter. We ask that you give permission for us to publish your address, telephone number, and e-mail address by responding to the following questions. **(Please clearly circle your answer; if no response is given, we will automatically publish):** I wish to have the following published in the December newsletter: my address? **Yes No**; my phone number? **Yes No**; my e-mail address? **Yes No**

Members may submit one free query per year, which will be published in the Society's newsletter in order to contact others researching the same ancestors. It should be 50 words or less, not counting the name and address of the submitter. Members and non-members may submit additional queries at the rate of 10 cents per word.

Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want a membership card mailed to you. Thanks.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Sept 21, 2019**      ***Finding Those Who Served: Military Genealogy***". Russ Horton from the Wisconsin Veterans Museum will talk about military records and the best methods to research you ancestors who served in the military.
- Oct 4 & 5, 2019**      **WSGS Fall Conference,**
- Oct 19, 2019**      ***" Our Ancestors & Their Churches"*** Presented by Amy Eichsteadt & Jim Schoenick. The meeting will be at the Charles & JoAnn Lester Library in Nekoosa
- Nov 16, 2019**      ***"Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?"*** Avoid those family arguments and hard feelings! Jackie Carattini from University of Wisconsin Extension will give a step-by-step guide to passing on our possessions and family treasures (such as you genealogical research!).
- Dec 21, 2019**      ***"Black Sheep, Heroes and Scoundrels!*** Almost every family has one of these. Let us know who yours is. These characters can be the most interesting of our ancestors. Will a Salem Witch make an appearance?
- Jan 18, 2019**      **No meeting.**

**Membership note:**      **Please note the change of date and time.**

**The third Saturday of the month from August through June (skipping January).**

**At 9:30 a.m. At McMillan Memorial Library**

**As a committee we have changed our meeting date and time temporarily to see if attendance would rise. We are in need of encouraging new members and activity from members who are in the Wisconsin Rapids Area.**

**We would like your input. You can email, or mail our President.**

**Email: [info@howgs.org](mailto:info@howgs.org)**

**U.S Mail : Heart O' Wisconsin Genealogical Society  
P.O. Box 1565  
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin 54495-1565**

**Look for us on Facebook.com**

**Heart O' Wisconsin Genealogical Society.**

**It is a now an open group so please check it out.**

## Heart O' Wisconsin Genealogical Society

Chairman	Bev Peaslee
Vice Chairman	Wayne Peters
Secretary	Sue Miller & Myra Sweet
Treasurer	Tina Krummel
Trustees	Betty Pearson
3 years	Flores Gumz
2 years	Mary Moss
1 year	

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Book Purchases	Flores Gumz
Hospitality	Joyce Keehn
Indexing	Mary Peters
Library Files	Arlene Keehn
New Members	Joyce Keehn
Newsletter	Tina Krummel
Sunshine	Sue Miller
Website	Di Neinfeldt
Tech Data Admin	Ben Chitek

Wood County Roots Editor:  
Tina Krummel  
2520 Ranger Rd  
Wisc Rapids, WI 54494  
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**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—August through June—on the Third Saturday of the month at 9:30 a.m. at the McMillan Memorial Library, 490 East Grand Avenue, Wisconsin Rapids, WI (right across the street from the Hotel Mead & Convention Center).

**Wood County Roots Editor:**

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**Visit us on the web at [www.howgs.org!!!](http://www.howgs.org!!!)**