

# WOOD COUNTY ROOTS



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## CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

### Greetings Everyone!

Well, another Gene-A-Rama has gone by. There were many interesting speeches, most of them centered around writing your family story. I found them all interesting and garnered quite a few tips on publishing. I especially liked the one featuring family treasurers. I believe the stories behind your family treasures are most important. The younger generation needs to know the stories so they can continue to cherish your most important treasures and the memories associated with them. I will be scanning some articles I have on this subject and will be sending them out to all of you in hopes they will help you teach the younger generation.

As we go into the summer months, please let me know any ideas you have for future programs. We are forming a Program Committee, and we will need your help in keeping it going. I hope to get some newbies on the committee to help us come up with new ideas for programs. We have had some good ones in the past and will hopefully continue to set up great ones in the future. Due to problems we had with the technology in May, we will be bringing that program back later this fall. That was entitled "Neighbors Past & Present: The Wisconsin German Experience" by Antje Petty, the Associate Director of the Max Kade Institute.

If you find some interesting articles on the history of Wood County, be sure to send them on to our newsletter editor, Tina, to see if she can use them in our newsletters. I know I find tons of interesting articles when I'm looking for something else and then I get distracted and go off on a tangent, forgetting what I started out researching.

A few years ago, I mentioned I was going to try some D/2 for cleaning gravestones at our little cemetery in Sherry. Well, this was the year! A teacher at Auburndale High School takes her Social Studies classes out to local cemeteries and they spend the class time cleaning old tombstones. I connected with her and last week Thursday a busload of students arrived in the morning and another in the afternoon to work on our cemetery. We started by scraping the lichen off with plastic scrapers and toothbrushes. They then sprayed the tombstones with D/2, waited 10 minutes, and started scrubbing. By the time the kids started rinsing the tombstones, the final effect was amazing! After the first one, they had a ball doing a "reveal" of the stone during the rinse! They were astounded at all the dirt, grime, and green junk that washed off the stones. It was a fun and productive time, and it left the cemetery spruced up for Memorial Day weekend.

Have a great summer!  
**Happy Hunting!**  
Bev Peaslee, Chair

## 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:

Christine Armstrong

Secretary:

Myra Sweet

Treasurer:

Tina Krummel

Trustee:

Mary Moss

## 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 1454 of this newsletter. Please check with Tina, our treasurer, on the status of your membership.

## Genealogy Without Sources is Mythology!

© Lorine McGinnis Schulze

How can you tell if the information posted by individuals on Internet genealogy sites is valid? Some sites have sources, others don't. How do you know what, and when, to believe what you read online??

A good rule of thumb is....

Don't trust anything you find on the 'net (or elsewhere) if it doesn't have sources.

Without sources you can't verify it, and you don't know whether the information came from a reliable source or whether it came from Great Aunt Martha who may have some of it right, but may have mixed up a lot too.

Maybe the info came from a book written by someone 100 years ago who didn't have access to sources we have now, or who just plain got it wrong.

Perhaps the information was transcribed for a webpage from a book source. That book source was transcribed from a microfilm record which was itself transcribed from the original. The chance of human error is greatly increased with each succeeding transcription.

Even if the information has

a source, you should double-check it personally, either from the original source or from an independent source.

**VERIFY, VERIFY, VERIFY!!!**

You also want to think about the source itself. Is the source a good one? After all, if Great Aunt Martha gives me information on the birth or baptism of my 3rd great-grandpa and I put it on the 'net, and source it as "Remembrances of Great Aunt Martha", that's not necessarily a reliable or accurate source. After all, Great Aunt Martha did have that fall from a horse when she was a child and she IS 97 years old.....

However if I source the birth or baptismal dates with full details on the church where I saw the original record, or the published transcript of those church records, that's much more reliable.

When in doubt, remember....

***"Genealogy without sources is mythology"***

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## 6 Tips for Writing Your Life Story

By Sharon DeBartolo Carmack

Continued From March 2024 Newsletter

### 3. Where Do You Start?

While it seems logical to begin your life story with the day you were born, that's exactly what makes the task seem overwhelming. Instead, try the flashback writing technique so common in novels: start in the middle of the story then use flashbacks to fill in the gaps. Open your story with one of the happiest, most memorable, unusual or exciting events in your life; it could be the day your first child was born, your first kiss, that big break on the job, or the day you got divorced.

As with any writing, you need to grab readers' attention right from the start. Look at these reader-grabbing memoir openings:

I now want to claim Chokio. In elementary school, when my third-grade teacher asked as what nationality we were, we knew what she meant. Hands flew in the air as we acknowledged our heritage — part German, part Swedish, part Ojibway, part Irish. All of our ancestors had come from another country or another culture, and we claimed them as a way to define ourselves.

*Mary Logue, Halfway Home: A Granddaughter's Biography*

Whenever a telephone rings late at night or at an odd time of day, I still — even now that Frances has been dead for almost a decade — think someone is calling to say that my mother has taken her life. I grew up with stories of women who wanted to die. My mother's grandmother jumped from a window in Vienna at the end of the 19th century. My mother's mother repeatedly threatened to commit suicide in Prague. My mother locked herself inside the bathroom in New York, saying she had had enough, that she could not go on.

*Helen Epstein, Where She Came From: A Daughter's Search for Her Mother's Story*

Each author picked interesting or unusual aspects of her life to start the narrative and to plunge the reader into the story. These openings also give readers clues as to what the story will be about.

Both of these openings are examples from what I call "family-history memoir." Mary Logue's story discusses her search for her grandmother's story; Helen Epstein's is the search for her mother's, grandmother's and great-grandmother's life stories. The stories are thematic, covering their search for their ancestors, but do not directly deal with the authors themselves.

Through the course of their search and telling their ancestors' stories, however, they learn about themselves and indirectly reveal their self-discovery

### 4. Writing Your Parents' or Grandparents' Life Stories

Once you get the hang of life-story writing, you may want to immortalize your parents or grandparents on paper, too. Always begin with living relatives, assuming they're willing to be the focus of a narrative, because their stories will be lost after they are gone. Again, using guides on oral history interviewing to prod you on questions, get as much of the person's life on tape as you can. Or, if the person likes to write, show them this article and get them started writing their own story.

But writing about living people can be tricky. While you may think that story about your mother walking in on her parents making love is wonderful and adds color to the family history, she may not agree. She may have found the whole incident terribly embarrassing, and thought she was telling you about it in confidence.

Though I doubt your mom would sue you if you printed the story, you should certainly respect her wishes and not include anything she would not want you to include. Remember, you don't own a person's memories. This isn't journalism: Even though the person consented to an interview and told you deep, dark secrets, that doesn't mean you should print them. To keep peace, always let the person about whom you are writing read it first and get that person's permission to publish or circulate it among other family members.

When writing life stories about family members, also remember to put them into historical context. If Grandpa tells you about his experiences in World War II, include general information about the war and what other soldiers like your grandfather experienced. If Grandma grew a Victory Garden and redeemed ration coupons, research and write about what those were and why they were important. If your dad recalls the blackout shades on his bedroom window during the war, tell the reader why that was significant. Putting memories into context this way is what makes someone's life story valuable to an audience beyond family members.

You can get a sense of past times by looking at old magazines and newspapers; most large libraries have back issues on microfilm or in a special section. Categorize your life or your parents' and grandparents' into topics, then search for books with background on each topic. For example, my paternal grandmother was an emigrant from Italy in 1910. I've just categorized her: "an emigrant from Italy in 1910." I'll now look for books that will tell me what it was like to be an emigrant from Italy in the early twentieth century. She also came to this country through Ellis Island, so I'll look for books on immigrant processing there. To learn what the commu-

## 6 Tips for Writing Your Life Story

By Sharon DeBartolo Carmack

Continued From March

nity in America was like where she and her family settled, I can read local newspapers or town and county histories. When I write her story and blend this general information with her specific experience, it will broaden the narrative and make it more interesting to read.

### 5. Handling Sensitive Issues

Historical context will also help you write about sensitive issues. When I began interviewing my mother to write her life story, I knew there were aspects of her life she might be reluctant to talk about. Social histories, such as Brett Harvey's *The Fifties: A Women's Oral History*, which discusses the everyday lives of ordinary housewives in the 1950s, helped me frame my questions.

Knowing that my parents' divorce was a sensitive topic, for instance, it helped to have the background knowledge that many women who married in the 1950s were unhappy and that a quarter to a third of the marriages of the '50s ended in divorce. Now I was able to preface my question to her about divorce with, "I've been reading that many marriages of the 1950s ended in divorce...." When it came time to write her story, I interwove these general, typical experiences with her personal story: Rather than making her divorce seem unique, by placing it in historical context, it became part of the norm for that time in history.

When discussing premarital sex, to save us both from discomfort and potential embarrassment, I phrased the question in a non-personal way I asked, "Do you know what young women of your day did for birth control if they had sex before they married?" This way, she could answer without revealing directly whether or not she engaged in premarital sex.

Not all the answers on sensitive issues may be pleasant ones, and that's OK. Like life, the chronicle of your life story doesn't have to wind up happily ever after.

### 6. Getting Motivated and Finding Time

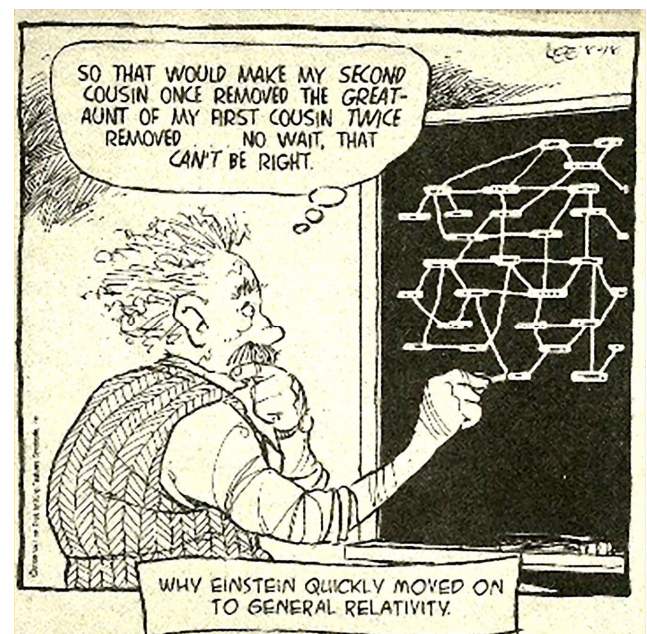
So do I practice what I preach? Have I written an autobiography or memoir? No, not yet. But I have faithfully kept a diary since I was nine. Though I plan one day to write personal and family-history memoirs, I figure if I never get around to it, at least my descendants will know me through my diaries.

We all make time for things that are important to us. Recording your life story, no matter which method you choose, is probably one of the most important things you can do — for yourself and for your descendants. Set aside a few hours each week (or more frequently) to devote to your life story.

If you need motivation and prodding, many community colleges and continuing education programs offer courses on life story writing, some as correspondence courses. (Writer's Digest School, for example, offers a home-study

workshop to help you research, organize and write your personal or family history with the step-by-step guidance of a published writer. For information, call 800-759-0963, or e-mail [wds@fwpubs.com](mailto:wds@fwpubs.com).) If you have trouble finding a class that's right for you, consider starting a life story writing group. Even if it's just you and another person getting together once a month to read and offer suggestions on each other's narrative, this can be a great motivator. However you choose to record your life, the important thing is that you do it. You owe it to yourself — and to those who come after you. Remember the golden rule of family history: Leave for your descendants what you wish your ancestors had left for you. They'll want to know your story and no one can tell your life story better than you.

A version of this article appeared in the January 2000 issue of *Family Tree Magazine*.



**A Few Facts For The Knockers  
Wood County Reporter Grand Rapids WI  
7-Feb-1907 Page 8**

The Census of Grand Rapids for 1880 showed a population of 2,173. For 1890 it was 3,137 and for 1900 it was 4,493.

In 1905 the population was 6,161 and for 1907 it is estimated at 7,000.

The bank deposits for 1880 were \$150,000, while for 1907 they are \$1,500,000.

In 1880 there were two railroads with four passenger trains daily; in 1907 there are four railroads with twenty-two passengers and many way-freights daily. In 1880 there was no Consolidated and Grand Rapids Paper Mill Company, Oberback, Kaudy or Wipperman Furniture factories, Roenius Foundry, McKinnon Wagon, Badger Box & Lumber, Grand Rapids Lumber Company, Grand Rapids Brick Company, Grand Rapids Milling Company, Concrete Block Company, Pickle Station, Potatoe Warehouses, Creameries, or Grand Rapids Brewing Company. Successful cultivated cranberry stock companies were unknown.

There were no Lincoln High School, Count Normal, T.R. Scott Public Library and macadam streets, cooperation Telephone and Electric Companies, waterworks, sewers, and fine houses were un-

known.

In 1880 there were three churches now there are eleven.

In 1893 there was not a family on the present site of Nekoosa with her 1.500 people to pay tribute to Grand Rapids. Before the close of 1907 there will be 700 to 1,000 people in Port Edwards to help us. In 1880 land on the east side sold at five dollars per acre where it is now selling at \$100. Lands on the west side sold in 1880 at five dollars per acre. It now sells for \$100 and up.

I am from Wood county! Show me a tow of 7,000 people in Wisconsin with better present or future prospects than Grand Rapids?

We feel that we have a sure thing! Better by far than ail copper, or gold stocks. Allow us to show you business and residence lot and acerage property.

Geo. N. Wood.  
Wood Block,  
'Phone 91.

(Please Note the spellings are as in the article.)



# The Wood Co. Reporter 16-Jan-1896 Grand Rapids WI

## SPOTTED HODAG, (Bovine Spiritualis).

Photographed from life by T. A. Taylor.



If you desire the complete history of this denizen of the pine forest of Northern Wisconsin, call on

**Centralia Lumber Co.**  
 CENTRALIA, WISCONSIN,  
 and get their prices on  
**LUMBER, LATH, SHINGLES,  
 DOORS, WINDOWS, LIME  
 AND BUILDING PAPER.**

Send in your bills for estimate. A description of the Hodag accompanies each estimate.

**THE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN SPOTTED HODAG.**—The origin of this wonderful animal is mostly wrapped up in mystery. The best informed scientists have traced it back to the Reptilian age. This would place it among the oldest known living species. It is easy to trace the effect of the Mammalian age and the succeeding age of man on the form and character of this animal. It has lost nearly all the distinguishing features of the reptile. Its scaly, flexible tail with a sharp, hooked point, the row of spikes on its back, and the short, crooked legs are the principal reptilian parts remaining. But it is, no doubt, at present classed with the Mammals by the best and most learned authorities on the subject. Its body and horns resemble most closely those of the ox in form, but its horns are much sharper and stronger than those of the ox, and are articulated when they leave the head, and can, at the will of the animal be pointed in any direction and thus form a most dangerous weapon offensive or defensive.

### MEMBERSHIP FORM

**DETACH AND MAIL WITH A CHECK FOR \$20 (FOR ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER)  
 \$28 (FOR MAILED NEWSLETTER)**

**PAYABLE TO:**

**HEART O' WISCONSIN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
 P.O. Box 1565 WISCONSIN RAPIDS, WI 54495-1565**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ 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**; If you wish a printed copy your dues will be \$28 to cover the cost of the printing of the newsletter.

**To receive the quarterly newsletter we need your E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

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.

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- June 15th, 2024 **Cancelled** Cemetery Walk Babcock Cemeteries, Town of Remington, Mount Cemetery and St Joachim's
- July No Meeting
- Aug. 17th, 2024 Welcome Back
- Sept. 21st, 2024 TBA
- Oct. 19th, 2024 TBA

*Watch for emails about the meeting*



**Starting August of 2024, the newsletter will have some changes. We will be raising our dues from \$15 to \$20, with a digital Newsletter. If you wish a mailed copy of the newsletter it would be an additional \$8.00 per year. We will need to have your email address so we can send the newsletter directly to you.**

**The third Saturday of the month from August through June (skipping January).  
At 9:30 a.m. At McMillan Memorial Library**

**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	Christine Armstrong
Secretary	Myra Sweet
Treasurer	Tina Krummel
Trustees	3 years Mary Moss
	2 years Betty Pearson
	1 year Kathy Bruner

## 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:

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**HEART O' WISCONSIN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**

**PURPOSE OF SOCIETY:** To assist members and others in genealogical re-search and to preserve local records.

**DUES:** **DUES:** \$20 per household—one digital 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.** *If you wish a Mailed copy of the Newsletter it would be \$8 more per year.*

**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!!!)**