

NEWSLETTER

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WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Midwest Computer Genealogists will meet in Bromwell Lounge at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, July 21 at Brookdale Foxwood Springs in Raymore, Missouri. Our speaker will be Chris Wimsatt from the Bates County Museum in Butler, Missouri. His topic will be "Worth A Thousand Words". A native of Adrian, Missouri, Chris has been doing family research for 20 years. He is a graduate of the University of Missouri.

He says, "My role at the museum is that of family researcher. I do genealogical and historical research concerning Bates County. I also act as the de facto curator. I have been doing genealogical research for the last 20 years. My presentation will be "Worth a Thousand Words: Forensic Genealogy Techniques to Uncover Clues in Your Family Photos". He will bring examples of the different types of images from the Bates County Museum Collection.

We are looking forward to this presentation. We have not had many presentations on photos, and our members always seem to have many questions about this topic. Put this date on your calendar, and join us on July 21. Everyone is welcome to attend.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Al Morse

As I sit here writing this article in the last few days of June, 2018, the temperature outside is nearing one hundred degrees, and our air conditioner is not working. I got to thinking of how we depend on air conditioning today.

I was born in 1942. Shortly after my birth, my

parents, Albert Frank and Mildred Catherine (Janssens) Morse, bought a two story house in Rich Hill, Bates County, Missouri. I grew up there with no air conditioning. We opened windows and used fans. I do not really remember being too uncomfortable. Summer was a part of my life. My brother and I spent time outside, often with neighboring kids. We played, but, of course, we also had chores to help with.

We had a garden until I was about twelve. So, we spent time in the garden, even digging potatoes. We had to help mow the yard. At first it was a reel mower that took both of us to push. We could do some mowing and Dad would finish. At that time, Dad worked at a welding shop, and he built a power mower. It was very heavy and very dangerous to use. There were no safety features at all, as we know them today. Dad kept reminding us to be careful. I could eventually use it by myself. But Dad finally bought a safer and lighter power lawn mower.

I helped Mom in the kitchen. Since I had no sisters, my brother and I helped in the kitchen. At first we helped with little things, like setting the table. We then did the dishes and eventually helped with the cooking. In fact, I became the official "Potato Masher". In the summer, when Mom was canning, it was very hot in the kitchen. At times, she would have two large canners going at the same time, canning green beans on the gas stove. The kitchen was on the north end of the house with a window on the west, a back door onto the back porch on the east, and a pantry on part of the north side, and it had a window facing north. Dad put a large window fan in that window, but he had the air blowing out to remove the heat from inside the kitchen, and it did help.

When Mom did the laundry in the summer, we did it on the back porch. There was an electric washing machine with a wringer that rotated around to various wash tubs. We had two big wash tubs on stands beside the washing machine. Hot water that was heated to boiling inside in a kettle was poured into the washing machine. Cold water was poured into the wash tubs, which became one of my brothers and my jobs. The white clothes were washed first. Mom used a stick to lift the clothes out of the washing machine and through the wringer into the first tub of rinse water. We then used our hands to work the soap out of the clothes and then pass them through the wringer to the second rinse tub. They were then passed through the wringer into the clothes basket to take out and hang for drying. In the winter, the laundry was done in the kitchen. When a laundermat opened, we started using it.

I do not remember sleeping outside during the summer, except one time out at my grandparents, Clark Frank and Alma Dona (Miller) Morse's farmhouse. Four or five of us, my brother and I, and some cousins, spent the night and slept on a bed outside. We were about four, five, or six years old.

My wife, Dorothy, says her family did sleep outside during the summer. They lived on a farm. She remembers spending time outside with the dogs and cats during the daytime. The house did have electricity, but no running water. They had well water, brought in with a bucket. There was a washstand as they came in from outside. On the washstand was a bucket with a dipper for a drink of water and a wash basin to wash your hands.

When Dorothy and I got married, we rented an apartment in Independence, Missouri. It did not have an air conditioner. When we bought our house in 1965, we had no air conditioning. We went until the 1970's before we bought a large window unit and put it in the front window. This was a small ranch house with less than one thousand square feet of floor space. In 1980, when it became very hot for a few weeks, we slept on the floor in the living room. When we added a room to the house in 1983, we had an air conditioner installed. What a

difference.

By the way, our current air conditioner has been repaired. But it is an old inefficient model. In this hot weather, it still does not do a very good job and runs continuously during the hot afternoons. We have a new air conditioner on order, and we can't wait for it to get installed.

THE LIBERATION OF ROME: JUNE 5, 1944

Trevor

Ciao Rome! On June 5, 1944, the city of Rome was liberated. The people of Rome flooded the streets to welcome Allied troops with cheers, flowers, wine and kisses. Shops closed, and jubilant crowds celebrated. The liberation of Rome was not only important strategically, but culturally as well. In addition to the extensive network of airfields, rail lines, and roads, Rome was a treasure trove of culture, antiquities and artifacts.

Curious Yanks examined the many enemy tanks knocked out on the roads to Rome, Italy. Mark IV tanks were thrown into the battle of Rome to stem the relentless Allied ground offensive and serial pounding by the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces. They saw a wrecked Nazi duck, a big jeep that can ride water.

Liberation day was especially meaningful for 26 year old Hubbert Guthrie, an American soldier living in Memphis when he was drafted. Plans to liberate Rome started with a surprise amphibious attack on the city of Anzio, just 37 miles away. Guthrie boarded a boat bound for Anzio the morning of January 22, 1944. His flotilla was led by a minesweeping boat circling ahead. It hit a mine and exploded, resulting in casualties. As Guthrie's boat approached the floating wreckage, he spotted a tattered 48-star American flag floating in the water. He scooped it up, wrung it out and saved it. Though oil-stained and torn, he brought it home as a souvenir. "A lot of men died

under that flag, every man on that little ship,” he said. “Old Glory had a hard life, she did.”

Guthrie was one of 36,000 troops that descended on Anzio that first day. The goal was to outflank German troops, draw them away from the Gustav line, (a German defense line running across central Italy) and open up the way to Rome. They hoped for a quick defeat, but the battle of Anzio turned into a 4 month stalemate. The Allies didn’t have enough manpower to push forward and the Germans weren’t able to push the invaders back. After months of steady pressure, the Germans retreated. The battle of Anzio resulted in the loss of 7,000 Allied troops.

Guthrie was wounded at Anzio and spent 10 days in the hospital. “It seems like everything I went into was a slaughter. I don’t know how I missed being killed but I did.” Guthrie said. When the first American tanks finally rolled into Rome on June 5th, they found it largely undamaged. The liberation was seen as a huge military and cultural victory.

Hubbert Guthrie never returned to Europe after WWII. He was interviewed when he was 80 years-old by a Nashville newspaper, “The Tennessean”, “I never wanted to go back. I left everything over there that I wanted to – part of my soul,” Guthrie said. Along with many other WWII veterans, Hubbert Guthrie has since passed away.

You can learn more about the Liberation of Rome and the Battle of Anzio. Did you have an ancestor that participated? Search for their records now and share their story with us. (www.fold3.com, Fold3 Blog, 30 May, 2018) [Note: If you have family members who served in WWII, it is time to interview them, even if you only want to share their experiences with your extended family.]

RELIVING HISTORY

Marjorie Slavens

My friend, Jane Dodson, a long-time MCG member, used to say that she never liked history

until she became interested in genealogy. Other people have said the same thing to me. The major complaint seems to be that their high school teachers made them memorize dates and events, but they saw very little relationship to their own lives. History is much more than names and dates.

My high school History teacher was also obsessed with dates and events, but I learned more from the books I read than from her. She taught the parents of my friends. When she asked, as she had done for many years, what we remembered about December 7, no one knew. When she asked me, I told her I was not yet in school and did not remember Pearl Harbor. She never asked the question again in succeeding years.

I lived in a very small town, and there were only 62 students in my graduating class. During my junior year in high school, my Biology teacher wanted me to go to the regional high school competition for Biology. She was young, and the History and English teachers, who asked me later to compete for them, were offended that she had already asked me. I told my Biology teacher that I, having lost most of my sight by that time, could not take timed tests, but she assured me that they would provide plenty of time for me to read the material. Although I was prepared for the test, I could not take it. When I arrived, it was taking place in a very dark room, and no provision had been made for extra time. I hated to disappoint her, but neither she nor I had control over the test scheduling.

During my senior year, I received the medal for the best Chemistry student, but, of course, I could not do the experiments. I made the highest grades on written exams but had to tell my lab partner, who did not understand the material, what he needed to do for both of us in order to complete the lab experiments. When my Chemistry Faculty colleagues later tormented me because I took General Experimental Psychology and Astronomy to fulfill my college science requirements, I always reminded them that I received the medal as “best Chemistry student” in high school. The truth

is that the student who had the second highest test scores in high school Chemistry received a Navy scholarship to Purdue, where he earned a degree in Chemical Engineering, and he should have received that award.

When I taught Spanish, I gave my students grades on tests, for class participation, and for material they recorded for evaluation in the foreign language laboratory. Written test scores do not provide enough information about what students have learned. I learned from my high school experience.

I always planned to major in History in college. I wanted to teach in college, and I loved history. However, I only completed History minors for all three of my degrees. At that time, a long time ago, it became very obvious to me that, because I was a woman and blind by that time, I would not be able to compete in the predominantly male dominated profession as a college History teacher. Discrimination was open and active at that time.

I majored in Spanish Language and Literature, but history was always a part of my study in that field. I agree with Colombian Nobel Prize winner Gabriel García Marquez that “Those who do not learn from history are condemned to relive it” That is a difficult lesson we all should learn.

One of the aspects of genealogical research that I have always enjoyed is reading about the historical time and place in which my ancestors lived. My Mennonite Welty, Miller, Brumbach, and Cocghnower ancestors left Switzerland because of the religious discrimination in a predominantly Catholic area. They went to Germany but did not stay there long because they opposed military service. My mother joined the DAR based on the participation of ancestors in Pennsylvania because her German ancestor had contributed supplies and money to the Revolutionary cause. I could also have joined the DAR because my immigrant ancestor from Ireland, John Slaven, in southwestern Virginia also contributed supplies and funds to the Revolutionary forces, making his descendants eligible for the DAR. Of course, I had ancestors on

both sides who served in the Civil War in the Union and Confederate armies.

Through our research and my mother’s books, we have, in a sense, learned about and relived the history of our ancestors. One cannot do genealogical research without studying geography, history, religion, immigration, etc. and we have benefitted from learning more about all of these areas and are, at times, very glad we did not have to relive the religious prejudice of our Mennonite ancestors or the immigration experiences of most of our ancestors, almost all of whom were in this country by 1750.

In addition, I have benefitted through the years from my study of Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Italian, and maybe a little from German, although Spanish is the only other language I still speak. Through the language and history of these countries, I learned about their culture and traditions, which have always been very helpful in my reading and travel.

THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS ADOPTS THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, JULY 4, 1776

Trevor

As we celebrate America’s birthday, let’s take a look back through the original documents of the Continental Congress available on Fold3 to see how history unfolded!

In 1774, as the relationship between colonists and the British deteriorated, the First Continental Congress was established. Their Articles of Association was an attempt to respond to the British Intolerable Acts (a series of punitive laws meant to punish colonists for the Boston Tea Party), and to assert some level of independence. On September 5, 1774, the First Continental Congress convened in Carpenters Hall in Philadelphia with the intention of drafting a declaration of rights. Peyton Randolph was elected president.

The British did not respond warmly to their efforts and attempted to quell the rebellion. In the meantime, colonists were organizing and strengthening militias. Tensions came to a head when the British arrived at Concord, Massachusetts for a routine raid on colonial military supplies. Shots rang out and the American Revolutionary War began.

On May 10th, 1775, a Second Continental Congress was convened to determine how to respond to the British threat. In June, Congress authorized the printing of money to buy war supplies. There were no taxes, so colonies were asked to contribute men and supplies. Congress met throughout May to “take into consideration the state of America”. A committee was appointed to conduct relations with foreign governments. Congress had become a functioning government.

On June 14th, Congress created a Continental Army and put George Washington in command. Congress relocated to York, Pennsylvania because British troops occupied Philadelphia. In July, Congress drafted The Olive Branch Petition in one last attempt to avoid war. It was rejected.

By the time 1776 rolled around, the discussions in Congress had shifted to complete independence. In June of that year, a committee was formed to begin drafting a declaration. On July 2nd, 1776, the Declaration of Independence passed Congress and on July 4th, Congress approved it! (www.fold3.com, Fold3 Blog, 1 July, 2018)

AUGUST MEETING

At our August 19 meeting, Debora Downard will present “Jacob’s Diary”. She says, “For the August meeting, I will be sharing my great grandfather’s diary from his trip back to see family in Switzerland. The trip in 1858 took him from Fort Smith, AR to Walenstadt, Switzerland and back.

I have visited Walenstadt several times and connected with family still living there. Doesn’t hurt that they own a winery! My grandmother started my genealogy journey with her scrapbook

about the 6 Eberle sons. I will bring several photos.”

Deb is an experienced genealogy and family history researcher, and we are looking forward to this, her first MCG presentation.

LOOKING FOR FEMALE ANCESTORS

The following article is from the Ancestry Blog on Ancestry.com. Several articles on the Blog are concerned with programs that have been presented on “Who Do You Think You Are?” The programs themselves can also be accessed for viewing on this site. The problem presented here is concerned with the difficulty we all have finding our female ancestors. For example, My Slavens ancestor, Reuben, was presented in the first John Slaven Family book as the father of six sons. However, in the 1800 and 1810 Census records, we discovered that he also had four daughters. The names of family members are not listed in these records, but the gender and approximate ages are listed. We subsequently found the daughters and their families using tax, property, and marriage records.

MEGAN MULLALLY: COURAGEOUS WOMEN AND THEIR UNTOLD STORIES

Jessica Taylor

When Megan Mullally began her journey into the past, she discovered that many records for her family belonged to her male ancestors. She learned the sad truth that most legal documents in the 19th century related to men, with far fewer records belonging to women at the time. Megan realized, like many others researching their family tree, the frustrations of trying to document the lives of female ancestors. Many women, despite their bravery and fortitude, have their stories left untold. Fortunately, legal records about male ancestors can often have helpful details about their female relatives. When researching Elizabeth Mullally Venable (Megan Mullally’s 2x great-grandmother), many documents didn’t even

list her by name, yet they helped to piece together her intriguing story.

The story of Elizabeth came alive through records relating to her second husband, James Venable. In 1865, James applied for a presidential pardon for his service in the Confederate Army. The application focused on James but, on closer examination, we can learn details about Elizabeth. In 1865, Elizabeth lived at 409 N. Nineteenth Street in Philadelphia. She was forced, along with her husband and children, to flee the South during the war because of her husband's pro-Union loyalties. It was in these conditions that Elizabeth bore her first daughter, Mary Ellen, in Philadelphia. There had been a big question mark over why Elizabeth had a daughter in Pennsylvania while the rest of her children were born in Georgia, but the answer was found, thanks to her husband's application papers. It was no doubt traumatic for Elizabeth to have a child in an unfamiliar city, shortly after traveling 800 miles from her hometown. Fortunately, the family was able to return to Georgia the following year.

While James's application never mentioned Elizabeth by name, it gave a glimpse into her life during the tumultuous years of the Civil War, and why she lived so far away from home. Thanks to this record, Megan Mullally learned about the trials and fortitude of her 2x great-grandmother. Follow the tips below and find out how you too can uncover brave and extraordinary women in your family tree.

Tips from AncestryProGenealogists: When searching for female ancestors, don't forget to check the records of their male family members: While researching Elizabeth Venable, we located many deeds which referred to her land purchases. While this was quite unusual for the time period, land deed records are still frequently useful while tracing your female ancestors. Land deed records for men will often name their wife. While some women in the 19th century did own land, the majority of land transactions were between men. That doesn't mean that your female ancestor may

not have been mentioned in deeds for her husband. Probate records frequently refer to wives and daughters by name. They may also include details about who the daughters married or with whom they were living.

As in the example above, military records can be very helpful. Many soldiers and their widows applied for pensions from the government later in life. The applicants were often required to provide proof of service, or proof of marriage, or other important details, and so these files frequently contain a large amount of information.

When searching for newspaper articles regarding female relatives, remember that articles may refer to her by her maiden name, married name, or she may not be named at all. When searching for articles relating to Elizabeth, we searched for "Elizabeth Venable" "Mrs. James E. Venable" "Mrs. J. E. Venable," amongst others. In other cases, she was simply referred to as "wife," and so records were only located when searching under her husbands' names. As well as researching your female ancestor's spouses, make sure to research all her children, even those who are not your direct ancestors. Census records revealed that Elizabeth had eight children. While 7 children were born in Georgia, one daughter, Mary Ellen, was born in Pennsylvania, which was our first indicator that Elizabeth didn't spend all her adult life in Georgia. Mary Ellen's death record, dated December 1928, revealed that she was born in Philadelphia. This record, created over 25 years after Elizabeth's death, provided us with our first clue as to Elizabeth's movements during the Civil War. (www.ancestry.com, Ancestry Blog, 22 June, 2018)

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