



Olympia

Genealogical Society

Newsletter

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Eileen Dodge, Editor

The Olympia Genealogical Society (OGS) was founded in 1974 to promote the study, interest and research of family and local histories, and to encourage assistance, cooperation and guidance in those efforts to members, friends, and the community

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Upcoming Events

2022

Thursday, June 9th - Monthly General Membership Meeting via Zoom
July and August – No Monthly General Membership Meeting
Thursday, September 8th - Monthly General Membership Meeting via Zoom
Thursday, October 13th - Monthly General Membership Meeting via Zoom
Thursday, November 10th - Monthly General Membership Meeting via Zoom
Thursday, December 8th - Monthly General Membership Meeting via Zoom

President's Musings - Kathy Erlandson

I have been privileged to serve as president of Olympia Genealogical Society for three years this month. My predecessor, Nancy Cordell faced some enormous challenges as president, and handled them with great skill and success, and when I succeeded her, I figured the really hard stuff was behind us, and my term would be a breeze. Well, I was wrong. With the advent of Covid 19, our world was turned upside down, and everything our society was accustomed to doing had to be changed.

In spite of the challenges imposed by the pandemic, OGS has not only survived, but thrived. As president, I presided over many of the struggles we have faced, but I made it through only because I was surrounded by so many competent, experienced, hard-working people on our board of directors. So, in this, my last newsletter article as president, I want to thank those marvelous members, who have held us together through these difficult times and made OGS even stronger and more vibrant than ever before.

Nancy Cordell , as Immediate Past President, has given me so much support, encouragement, help and wise counsel! I'd have been lost without her. Greg Nordlund, VP, has planned our programs, and been a dependable back-up to me. Judy Artley, as treasurer, kept our books with integrity, planned our budgets, paid our bills; always ready to answer my questions about insurance, taxes, and expenses. Judi Hine and Jean Coons have both served as secretary during my terms. Without their accurate records of discussions and board actions, I could never have kept it all straight, and when I didn't keep it straight, it was only because I didn't look back at their invaluable notes.

Kerry McHugh-Upton and Bob Monn have worn so many hats for OGS that they could have kept the Mad Hatter in business. With Bob and Jerri McCoy, Kerry assisted in developing our website. She has managed our Facebook page, special interest groups and tech team. Bob has been membership chair, webmaster, and wearer of many hats on the tech team.

Rebel Romero managed our audio-visual equipment before the pandemic, and became our book coordinator, cataloging, boxing and storing our library of over 1700 books. Eileen Dodge, longtime editor of our newsletter, also managed our Drop In Genealogy Help. Oh my! If I keep going on like this, I'll fill the whole newsletter! The board members mentioned above have done a whole lot more than I have mentioned, and there are many more who have been invaluable to me and to OGS. I have yet to name them, and I will, but I hope they will forgive me for not listing all the wonderful work they have done and continue to do for our society. They are Diana Bargman, Joe Brookshier, Peggy Cooley, Karin Coppernoll, Jerri McCoy, Joyce Ogden, Ann Olson, Erin Quinn-Valcho, Kasey Schiewe, Mandy Stahre, and Gayle Strom.

I am so grateful for all of the above-mentioned board members. They have made my service a pleasure. And thank you, OGS Member, for your support and participation in this wonderful organization!

ZOOM Coordinator - Erin Quinn Valcho

I am delighted to be of service to OGS as your Zoom Coordinator. Thanks to Nancy Cordell for her great work in these stressful and changing times in filling this role! You can reach me at quinnthecurator@gmail.com for any of your Zoom needs.

If you are having problems logging into Zoom meetings, your first step should be to download updates for the Zoom App on a regular basis for all of your devices. You can find step-by-step instructions on their YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/E7zERcVLUBM>.

Happy Zooming!

Genealogy Books Review - Kerry McHugh-Upton

I am slowly working through the list of genealogy mystery and memoir books that is posted on our website. The next couple of books that I have most recently read were "Bitter Tide: An Ellis Island Mystery" by Ann Stamos and "Fair Warning" by Michael Connolly.

"Bitter Tide: An Ellis Island Mystery" by Ann Stamos takes place in the early 1900's with an Irish immigrant coming into the United States through Ellis Island, when she is detained for shooting her fiance. The plot thickens. This story is well researched on the inner workings of Ellis Island and the Irish immigrants of New York City. The only connection to genealogy that this story has is to give color to our immigrants' story during the early 1900's. For a fun read check it out!

"Fair Warning" by Michael Connolly is written in the modern times of online dating, stalking and DNA. The story doesn't delve into actual genealogy or genetic DNA research. The story goes into the darker side of DNA stalking for victim types.

If you are looking for a good genealogy mystery neither of these fit into a true genealogy mystery and how to connect the dots to solve the family mystery. If you want to check out the book list, log onto OlyGenSoc.org as a member, Click on Publications / Files > Downloadable Files > Genealogy Mysteries & Other for links to the pdf or excel list.

If you have any suggestions or books to contribute to the list let me know!
On to more genealogy mystery books! Good Reading!

Sunshine - Gayle Strom

As the Olympia Genealogical Society Sunshine person I like to bring a bit of "sunshine" when needed. I would like for you all to let me know, when you know, that someone is ill or needs a thoughtful note. You may contact me at gggnpoppa@comcast.net

Membership Lead - Bob Mon

Please welcome Corrina Reddinger of Roy who joined OGS within the past month.

In the May newsletter we provided a blurb about the OGS Surname Database. We were a bit disappointed that this apparently didn't result in any additions to this database. If you aren't familiar with it, please check out the information linked from the "article" near the bottom of the OGS home page.

As always, if you have any difficulty logging in to the OGS website, please contact us at a membership@OlyGenSoc.org.

Remember OGS When You Shop At Amazon

When shopping at Amazon, go to <http://smile.amazon.com>.

You must register at AmazonSmile and select the Olympia Genealogical Society as your charitable organization.

OGS will receive 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases. There is no cost to you.

From the Refreshment Table - Diana Bargmann

NOW BEING ACCEPTED: Short Stories about your Holiday Memories. They must be sent to the editor, edodge1946@acomcast.net by **November 25th** to be included in the December Newsletter. Share your memories about the best present you ever got, favorite holiday food, etc. Also, if you have favorite recipes for that time of year we'll accept those too. Questions? Call Diana Bargmann, 360-357-4251.

Please remember this is not a literary contest and there is no critiquing, no standard by which the stories are held accountable. They don't have to be a certain length, they don't have to be unusual, quirky or funny – they can be serious, sad or thoughtful too – like life itself. Just the story you might share with the rest of us at a meeting – something you uncovered during your research about an ancestor an experience you had while doing that research; and written in the same words you would use to tell it verbally, The same with the recipes – they don't have to be one that's been passed down through the generations or even holiday related, just one you think worth sharing, any type of food.

Thank you for your effort!

Washington State Digital Archives - Volunteers Needed

If you aren't familiar with Scribe, it's an online digital application that enables users to become "honorary archivists" by transcribing and indexing records that are historically important to Washington. By using Scribe, volunteers are able to add information to the images, making them searchable on the Washington State Archives Digital Archives.

Scribe users are volunteers from around the globe who have access to the ever-growing collection of digital images ready to be transcribed and indexed, from home, on their own time.

If you or someone you know would like to volunteer, please go to <https://scribe.digitalarchives.wa.gov/> to create an account. You can view a short tutorial there. Happy Scribing!

Special Interest Groups - Kerry McHugh-Upton

The Special Interest Groups (SIG) have been going strong this year so far. SIGs are a benefit of membership. Various OGS members have stepped up to lead the various groups. I've heard compliments from many in OGS how they are gaining practical knowledge and getting to know fellow members. Even experienced genealogists have walked away from a Zoom meeting learning something new! If you haven't participated in a SIG yet, feel free to check out the SIG link on the homepage of our website <https://olygensoc.org/>. Drop in to learn about different genealogy database software, DNA, Italian research, etc. Unfortunately we are not able to offer the FamilySearch.org SIG at this point in time. If there is someone interested in leading the FamilySearch.org SIG please let me know and we can get it started back up.

Legacy Family Tree – Jerri McCoy – 3rd Saturday of the month; 1:00 pm

MyHeritage – Jan Minzel – 3rd Tuesday; 6:30 pm

Ancestry – Greg Nordlund – 4th Saturday; 11:00 am

DNA – Nancy Cordell – 2nd Tuesday; 6:30 pm

Family History Writers – Laura Carroll – 1st Monday; 6:00 pm

Family Tree Maker – David Abernathy – 4th Thursday 10:00 am

Genealogy Chat – Peggy Cooley – 3rd Wednesday – 1:00 pm

CHECK OUT THE ITALIAN SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG) SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5TH 11:00-1:00. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FEEL FREE TO REACH TO GREG ORDLUND OR LOG ON TO THE OLYGENSOCORG, CLICK ON SIGS – ITALIAN SIG FOR THE ZOOM LINK – THE SIG GROUP MEETS EVERY 3 MONTHS, SO DON'T WAIT!

Log onto OlyGenSoc.org website to access the Zoom link at time of the meeting. This is a benefit of membership!! Feel free to join in any session, ask questions, members welcome at any time!

Tech Team - Kerry McHugh-Upton

Updates From The Tech Team

Welcome back everyone from hopefully a summer of active research, in spite of the restrictions! During the summer break several of us on the Tech Team spent our time preparing for this coming year.

- Joe Brookshier spent some of his free time getting acquainted with our website as our newest member to the website team, under the direction of Bob Monn.

- Nancy Cordel worked with Erin Quinn Valcho in transitioning the coordination of the Zoom facilitator responsibilities, preparing for this year's meetings that will include the general membership meetings, the board meetings and the SIG meetings.

- Nancy Cordel, Bob Monn and myself attended a virtual meeting put on by the Washington State Genealogical societies President's group for discussion on how to facilitate a hybrid meeting. A hybrid meeting comprises of an in-person live meeting with some of attendees &/or the speaker attending virtually. There would be the ability for remote attendees to ask questions of the presenter much like an in-person meeting. We have also been watching some recordings provided by other groups on how to set up the meetings, what type of equipment would be needed and how to facilitate the meeting for an overall satisfactory presentation.

- Kathy Erlandson and I toured a facility in August with the focus of conducting our hybrid general membership meetings. Given all of this research this last summer in preparation for returning to in-person meetings we have decided, with the board's approval, to continue with all OGS meetings via Zoom until further notice. The timing just isn't right to start meeting in-person. The research that we have done isn't wasted though! There will come a time soon when we can start to meet in-person. One major caveat is that we would need to have an A/V person (preferably 2) who would be able to set up the onsite equipment to run the meetings for in-person & remotely with the help of our Zoom facilitator. With the team that we have currently, we won't be able to pull off a hybrid meeting. If you are interested in learning more about what it would take please drop me a line at Kerry.upton123@gmail.com or give me a call! We sure need you! Hybrid meetings won't take place without 1 or 2 people stepping up to help. In the meantime, we will continue all meetings via Zoom. The general membership meetings will be recorded and posted to our members' only section of our website, hint, you'll need to log onto the website first before you will find the recordings located at Community Events - *Recordings General Membership meetings via Zoom in real time will be open to the public, members and their guests. Recordings are only available for members.

Jewish Genealogical Society of Washington State (JGSWS)

To view the website use this Url: jgsws.org

Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter:

To read the most recent Online Newsletter go to: blog.eogncom

The Washington State Genealogical Society (WSGS):

To access their very informative web page: wasgs.org/

Washington State Archives

To access their monthly and back issues of their Newsletter:

www.sos.wa.gov/archives/newsletter-archive.aspx

Thomas MacEntee Genealogy Bargains

To access his website for genealogy bargains, genealogy do-over, and subscribe to his newsletter: genealogybargains.com/thomas-macentee

Elected Officers

President – Kathy Erlandson
Vice President – Greg Nordlund
Secretary – Jean Coons
Interim Treasurer – Karin Coopernoll

Appointed Teams

Book Coordinator – Rebel Romero
Historian – Kasey Schiewe
Information Technology – Kerry McHugh-Upton
Membership – Bob Monn
Newsletter – Eileen Dodge
Publicity – Mandy Stahre
Refreshments – Diana Bargmann
Research – Jerri McCoy
Spring Seminar – Nancy Cordell
Sunshine – Gayle Strom
Special Interest Groups – Kerry McHugh-Upton
Webmaster – Bob Monn
Zoom – Erin Quinn-Valcho

Community Partners

City of Lacey: Erin Quinn Valcho
Timberland Library: Agatha Burstei

Member Story Contribution

**Fort Benton Family Histories
by Susan (Stannard) McDonald**

Is it possible that a river runs through my veins? As I pieced together my ancestors' histories from both my mother's maternal and paternal sides a connected story began to crystalize. On the banks of the mighty Missouri River dating back 30-40 years after Lewis and Clark pulled ashore near present day Fort Benton all of my mother's male ancestors too used the same route. Their travels on the waterway began in St. Louis ending at Fort Benton, Montana. The future brides of these adventurous men were already there on the vast plains of Montana, members of the fierce Blackfeet nation. The young men came from nations far away heeding a calling for new opportunity and adventure. Even though the territorial land was vast, scarcely populated and ungoverned, the story I'm about to share focuses on an unusual coalescing of four men who all took Blackfeet women as their brides and dared to civilize the Missouri shores in Montana all within one future town, Fort Benton, Montana.

The mighty Missouri River drains east from the mountains of Glacier Park flowing east to North Dakota and bending south to St. Louis and eventually dumping into the Mississippi River. The river provided a waterway West instead of the arduous travels via the Santa Fe or Oregon Trails. The West held luring possibilities for young adventurers seeking their fortune. Long before Fort Benton was established, early fur trappers from Quebec and Montreal working for the Hudson Bay Company and NW Fur Company migrated past the not yet delineated 49th parallel to a land rich with furs and pelts in the 1830- 1850's. Soon crude forts were built for security and trading. The beginning of commerce between the traders and Indians resulted initially into a commerce of welcome exchange. At a crude fort called Fort Lewis, two Belgium Jesuit priests speaking only French arrived in 1846 charged with the goal of Christianizing the indigenous people. Marriages and baptisms took place between the predominately French trappers and Blackfeet women and their young children. This newly established settlement continued to grow and prosper over the next 25 years into what is now called Fort Benton, Montana, the birthplace of the future state of Montana. And so begins my mother's lineage in Fort Benton.

(Chart And Story Continued Next Page)

| Fort-Benton, MT | 1830 | 1855 | 1857 | 1866 |
|---|--|--|---------|---|
| Augustus Hamel Furtrader | Arrival Daughter: Cecilia Granddaughter: Clara | | | |
| Jacob Schmidt Businessman | | Arrival Son: Carl, marries Hunsberger's daughter, Clara | | |
| George Steel Businessman Indian Agent | | | Arrival | |
| John Hunsberger Businessman | | | | Arrival Marries Hamel's daughter, Cecilia |

#1 Augustus Hamel (my mother's maternal side, my third great grandfather) born around 1800, came west from Quebec trapping with the NW Fur Company and eventually the American Fur Company. When he arrived near the Missouri drainages in about 1825-1830, he met Pine Tree Woman and started a family. In 1846 the Jesuit priests performed a Christian marriage and baptized their children. He became integral to the process of Christian conversion because he spoke French and the Blackfeet language. Father Point published a book about his travels and in it he writes of Augustus Hamel being his interpreter and paints a likeness of my grandfather. Included in the book is a map of the Missouri River with a mark designating where my grandfather's "maison" was. Augustus's trading posts are included in a diorama in the Montana State Library display He was also cited by Governor Stevens as a knowledgeable consultant for the route of the future Mullan Road. And again, he assisted Governor Stevens as an interpreter for the famous Lame Bull Treaty of 1855 between the white man and the Blackfeet because he could speak English and the Blackfeet language. He traveled the Missouri River back and forth for his fur trading to Fort Union and St. Louis. His offspring continued the establishment of Fort Benton.

#2 Jacob Schmidt (my mother's maternal side, my second great grandfather) born near Heidelberg, Germany was trained as a tailor of clothing. At 15 he crossed the Atlantic for America, made his way to St. Louis and up the Missouri River to Fort Benton, the furthest navigable point. A family letter states that he traveled to Fort Benton as a cook's assistant on the same boat as Governor Stevens in 1855 (the same year as Hamel interpreted for Stevens' Lame Bull Treaty). His talent as a tailor gained him a job with the American Fur Company at Fort Benton sewing clothes for the Indians. Two years later he married Margaret Miller, daughter of Comes by Mistake, and together they raised a family of nine children. He moved to Helena during their gold rush in the 1860's and started a small grocery and a bakery. Now with a new business sense, he returned to Fort Benton to take advantage of its prosperity as a boom town and built the Overland Hotel and restaurant on Front Street for adventure seekers beginning to pour into the wild West. Many affectionate stories were written in area newspapers about "Uncle Jake".

(Story Continued Next Page)

His German accent and hard-working ethic made him one of the cornerstone citizens of Fort Benton who remembers him fondly. He helped to build the first school in Fort Benton and was a school trustee for six years.

#3 George Steell (my mother's paternal side: my third great grandfather) was the son of an immigrated Scots man, born in Quebec, Canada. At a young age he became orphaned and migrated to Boston where he learned the trade of clerking and befriended another young man named Carroll. Together they sought out the adventure in the West via St. Louis, up the Missouri River and arrived in the infancy of a new community, Fort Benton in 1857 two years after Jacob Schmidt arrived. He too worked for the American Fur Company and most likely knew of Jacob Schmidt. He and his friend, Carroll, worked at the trading post as clerks posting inventory provisions going in and out for traders, trappers and Indians. He remained there until 1864. He too married a Blackfeet woman, Red Woman, who was the daughter of Chief Lame Bull, the leader of the famous Lame Bull Treaty. He saw the need for movement of provisions to distant Montana territory destinations. He and Carroll built the first mercantile in Montana which freighted provisions by oxen train to the new gold claims in Helena and Virginia City. This venture proved very profitable and within years he expanded to move freight from Utah to Helena. He became a very wealthy pioneer businessman by 1870 and was a major participant in laying out plans for this new town, Fort Benton. In 1884 he was a member of the Montana Constitutional Convention writing a constitution for Montana statehood. He was appointed in 1890 by President Benjamin Harrison to be the Indian Agent at the Blackfeet Agency on the new reservation and gained the new title of Major George Steell. He assisted in stemming alcohol crossing into the reservation, instructed ranching skills with new herds of cattle being distributed and oversaw distributions of annuities. Unfortunately, he also promised a guaranteed long term government annuity if the Blackfeet would "cede" a strip of their reservation to the government. That land became Glacier National Park. He eventually became a target for mismanagement by tribal members and resigned in 1897. He rose to high notoriety and profitability, but also succumbed to financial over expenditure. Somehow he always landed on his feet with a reputation that proceeded him.

#4 John Hunsberger (my mother's maternal side, my second great grandfather), was from Pennsylvania and had just returned from fighting in the Civil War. Exciting news of adventure and prosperity caused him to travel to Fort Benton via St. Louis and up the Missouri River on the new steam powered paddleboats in 1866. He too worked for Fort Benton's largest employer, the American Fur Company, and he too took an Indian bride, Cecilia Hamel, daughter of Augustus Hamel. The fur trade enticed men to develop a "business" plan to expand the fur trade of their own. The idea was to trade with the Blackfeet north of the Missouri River up into Canada.

(Story Continued Next Page)

A Whoop Up Trail was established that allowed Fort Benton men to take provisions up to the Indians in exchange for furs and bison skins. Unfortunately, the provisions for trade included alcohol, which established a very ugly and dangerous era. So dangerous that Canada needed a policing system to end it. This was the beginning of the NW Canadian Mounted Police. These Mounties from eastern Canada could only get up to Fort McLeod, Alberta by steamboats from St. Louis to Fort Benton and then travel 50 plus miles overland into Canada. I am not sure in what capacity John was involved with the Whoop Up Trail, but he and three other men were on the Trail when a deadly blizzard blew in and he saved his life by burning US currency as a firestarter. This resulted in his frozen legs being amputated. As a disabled man he became the first proprietor of the Grand Union Hotel. The Grand Union Hotel was built in 1882, 36 years after Fort Benton was founded. It was built at the height of Fort Benton's prosperity and the steamboat era on the Upper Missouri River. It was touted as the grandest hotel west of the Mississippi bragging of unbridled elegance. Cecilia, his wife, had a small pistol she carried when transferring money across the street to the bank. He also was elected county treasurer for six consecutive terms and was the school superintendent. Ironically, he 1888, two major changes happened to Fort Benton. Firstly, the trains now transported people to Montana and the frenzied steamboat travels dried up. secondly, the Sweetgrass Hills Treaty of 1888 introduced the allotment system of private land ownership to members of the Blackfeet tribe. John and Cecilia were the first of my family to move to Browning, the agency headquarters. No longer was Fort Benton the center for my family. My family received lands granted to them by the federal government and everyone since has resided in Browning. John and Cecilia's daughter, Clara, married John Schmidt's son, Carl.

The arrivals of all four men to Fort Benton via the Missouri River between 1846 and 1866 most assuredly created relationships with one another. They all married Blackfeet women and their children married the next generation's daughters. It's an unusual story of interconnectedness rich with stories of each of them pioneering the great state of Montana. I have a sense of pride and thankfulness for their contributions. I have been most fortunate with my research finding information from Gonzaga's library to rare books. I have been to Fort Benton once to do in depth research and am going back this July to do more research. I'll be staying at the Grand Union Hotel and walking in my ancestors' footsteps. Dennis and I will also be doing a four-day Missouri River guided canoe trip. I can't wait!!

(Photos Continued Next Page)



Early-Fort-Benton-and-Landing-around-1846—painting-by-John-Ford-Clymer, .1967



Carroll-Steel-Storage-in-Fort-Benton



The-Grand-Union-Hotel—opened-in-1882--Postcard

**OGS General Meeting Minutes (via Zoom)
May 12, 2022 (approximately 32 people attended)**

President – Kathy Erlandson called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

President Report – President Kathy asked for a third volunteer to work on the newsletter, which will be a team effort. Carolyn Gibbons volunteered to help with the newsletter. Kathy also, asked for another volunteer for the program committee. Let Kathy know if willing.

Secretary - The April 2022 general meeting minutes, submitted by Jean Coons , were approved as published.

Treasurer – Karin Coppernoll gave the Treasurer’s Report for the month of April

Team Reports

Membership – Bob Monn reported that OGS has gained one new member since April 30.

Genealogy Gab Fest – Peggy Cooley reminded us that the gab fest meets next Wednesday, May 18, from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Seminar – Nancy Cordell reported that the Seminar team will have a debriefing this coming Monday night. All seemed to find the Seminar with Diahann Southard helpful and successful. Judy Russell will be the speaker for the 2023 OGS Seminar. Next fall the seminar team will decide whether to hold the event virtually or in person. If an in person seminar is chosen, the event will need a coordinator.

Program – Greg Nordlund introduced our own Jerri McCoy as the evening’s speaker. In addition to being a long- time member of OGS, Jerri is involved in state and lineage societies and has held many offices. She has written three books on her family history. The title of Jerri’s presentation was “You Joined What?! What you need to know about lineage societies.” Jerri listed many lineage societies , both the well known and the unusual. She followed that with examples of applying for membership.

Member Sharing Break Out Sessions – Members participated in 15 minute break out session small groups, which discussed discoveries found in the recently released 1950 US census.

**President Kathy Erlandson adjourned the meeting at 8: 30 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,**

Jean Coons, Secretary

