
** Clarion **

BAY COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY VOLUME 12 NO.5 NOV.1990

MEETING

Our next meeting will be held at 6:30 pm Tuesday Dec. 4th at the South End Bay County Library on Lafayette. Our speaker will be Mr. Bill Worden. Mr. Worden who is the president of the Midland County Genealogical Society will provide us with information on researching at the Branch Library of the LDS Church and other resources available to us in Midland.

SOCIETY BUSINESS

With the first Tuesday in January being New Year's Day 1991 we will be meeting on the 8th in January, and since the library is booked for the 8th we will meet at the Salem United Methodist Church. It is located at the corner of 10th and Madison in Bay City. Activities for that meeting will be found later in this issue.

We want to remind you that the society dues for 1991 are now payable. Those dues are \$5.00 a person and \$7.00 for a family membership, and are to be sent to our treasurer at P.O. Box 27 in Essexville, MI 48732. Your present membership card has your expiration date, and may be referred to if you are in doubt as to whether you have paid your dues for 1991.

A number of significant issues were surfaced during the October meeting. Ruth Staudacher reported that a recent decision of the U. S. Supreme Court has in effect closed most all old archival information for use of the researcher who wishes to publish. Since there is now legislation pending in Congress to rectify this situation we are asked to contact our Congressmen and Senators, and urge them to support House Bill #4263 and Senate Bill #2370. A brief letter of support should suffice and positively impact upon this issue.

Many of our members remember when the society published a quarterly journal, "CHIPS AND CHIPS". Apparently others know of that publication of ours also, as we are getting requests for copies of them from the field. Since we have no knowledge of whether or not there are available copies of all the journals which were published it was determined to devote our meeting of 8 January 1991 to dealing with the question, "Can we and should we attempt to re-publish CHIPS AND CHIPS?" This will be a working session and all are urged to bring any copies which they have to that meeting in order that we can determine what we do have and how to best proceed.

You have noticed that these last two issues of the Clarion have been of greater volume than previous issues. We have received a number of favorable comments regarding the size increase in the publication, however there is one aspect of increase that may be considered in the negative i.e., it is more expensive to publish with added pages. That along with increased postage and other expenses forces us to consider a change in our dues. You may be interested in knowing that the dues are now \$2.00 more than they were when the society was first organized in 1968, a 40% increase in 22 years.

This issue will be a business item in June since our Constitution states that dues may be changed only at the June meeting. A decision would go into effect in January of 1992. We hope that you might share your feelings about the possibility of a dues increase with us. A card or letter sent to the society at our P.O. Box 27 in Essexville, MI 48732 will be helpful and appreciated.

A number of years ago members of our society did readings of most of the larger out-county cemeteries in Bay County. That information was typed and is found in a publication which is in our library. Each cemetery is separate and the names are listed alphabetically by cemetery. The readings were also published in CHIPS AND SHIPS. Realizing no such listing is ever up to date a group of ladies led by our librarian, Lottie Harrington, have been inserting new burials as they have been able. Last spring Mr. Kenneth Johnson of Mt. Clemens, MI, one of our newer members, volunteered to computerize the book for us. His progress to this end was reported at the meeting. We were told that he expects to have the project completed in early 1991. We appreciate that information and Mr. Johnson's efforts in behalf of the society.

A listing of surnames being researched was put in our last issue of the Clarion. There was but a partial list of our members and their surnames due to the fact some of you have yet to respond and some of those which were sent have been misplaced. We would appreciate your surnames if they have not as yet been published. Please limit your list to four names. We regret the loss of those one or two lists that are missing and extend our apology for that.

We want to announce again that if you have items of interest for the membership do not hesitate to send such information along to us for inclusion in a subsequent issue of the newsletter.

NOVEMBER MEETING

The program for the meeting in November consisted of reports from the MGC's Annual Seminar which was held in Southgate from the 11th to the 13th of October. Hilda Taylor talked on the contributions of Andrew Morris who spoke on Irish records, Ruth Staudacher reported on the remarks of Maralyn Wellauer who presented information about German research and Bob Luce told the group about Roman Godzak's speech about Catholic Church records. A program from the seminar which has a great deal of information related to the presentations was given to our society and will be placed in our library. Reports are found below about the Godzak presentation and one by John DuLong who talked about voyageurs .

ANNOUNCEMENTS

8 Dec. 1990- The Detroit Society for Gen. Research will present a video tour of the 65 Detroit churches conducted by Bill Henning of the Macomb Co. Community College.

12 Jan. 1991- The DSGR will present a problem solving help-session chaired by Betty Lou Morris, past-president of the DSGR. Both these sessions will start at 2:00 pm and be held at the Detroit Public Library. The room location will be posted in the Burton Historical Collection.

19-21 Sept. 1991-The MGC Annual Seminar will be held in Flint. This announcement is quite early, but since the Council is having the seminar so close to us we want you to have plenty of time to make your plans to attend. These are fine opportunities for each us to get a great deal of assistance as we search for our ancestors.

We have been advised that a Macomb Co. MI man, Wally Doebler has completed a book which describes the life styles of German farmers who settled in Macomb Co. in the 1850's. Mr. Doebler lives in Sterling Heights, and the book, " The Wallace Doebler Family of Macomb Co., Mi", was published by Gateway Press of Baltimore, MD. This book, which has many vignettes about the German settlers, has received favorable reviews.

We hope that you have received your copy of the Fall 1990 FGS Forum. You who have not may contact us at the society address, and we will take steps to see that you get future issues. We would suggest that you read the article on page 3 about the National Archives, and hope you contact your representatives in Congress as is suggested in that article.

OCTOBER MEETING

Our speaker was Mr. Mike Breza, curator of the Historical Museum of Bay County, a report of his talk follows:

The Bay Co. Historical Society operates this museum at the society headquarters in the former U.S. Armory located at 321 Washington next to the City Hall in Bay City. The phone number is 8935733, and their hours are 10 to 5 Monday thru Friday and 1 to 5 on Sunday. Their Research Library is open to the public from 1 to 5 on Tuesday and Thursday at this time. This is due to their recent move into the new site, the large volume of materials they have which needs to be organized and a small staff to do all that must be done.

They also have responsibility for the renovation and management of the Tromble House, the oldest frame house in Bay County. This building which was the home of Joseph and Mader Tromble, French Canadian brothers, who were among the earliest settlers has reportedly been a tavern and a store at various times. The society spearheaded a drive which resulted in its being floated across the Saginaw River to its present location opposite the Community Center on Kennedy Drive on the west bank of that river.

Included in the collection of the library are many items of interest to the researcher. The problem is that presently most of their materials are not indexed, and in many instances are still in boxes waiting attention. Although the public is welcome the staff is not able to well assist people due to the above mentioned situation.

The visitor is able to access with relative ease the following: Most of the Bay City and County Directories from ca 1866, all volumes of the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collection, four volumes of Bay County Histories which were published in 1883, 1892, 1905 and 1925, histories of other nearby counties as well as a number of topical histories, The Michigan Manuals, 1st. seven volumes of the Mayflower Descendants and a large number of public and private documents and histories.

Beside the above they have phone books, high school yearbooks, old newspapers, diaries, scrapbooks, club records Family Bibles, oral histories, family trees and photos plus a number of other documents not listed earlier.

During this transition period which will go on for some time persons interested in genealogy and/or history who would be able to donate time, money or both would certainly be most appreciated for their support.

A report on "TRACING YOUR VOYAGEUR ANCESTOR," by John Dulong, a specialist in Fr- Can. studies, presented at the Michigan Genealogical Seminar on 11 October 1990.

We were informed during Dulong's intro that his article on his specialty in the 1989 FCHSM Journal, "Habitant Heritage" was recommended to those with an interest in the French settlers in Canada. He opened with comments relating to the life of the voyageurs. They paddled canoes 18 hours a day, and travelled north to the Hudson Bay and as far south as the Gulf of Mexico. When a portage was necessary each man carried two 90 pound packs on his back. Their diets consisted of fatty food which provided them 4000 calories per meal. They were the first Europeans to arrive in many parts of the country including the Straits of Mackinaw, Grand Rapids and Monroe in Michigan, Urbana, Illinois and other places in what was then the frontier.

He read from notes written by an anonymous voyageur in 1825. He had paddled the canoes for 42 years, travelled widely, sang 50 songs daily, had 12 wives, many dogs, lived high and was at that time old and broke. He indicated that if he could relive his life he would change nothing. The life as a voyageur was a happy one, he was independent and free!

The men of the fur trade were classified as follows:
 Coureur des Bois- An illegal fur trader who lived with the Indians, a. k. a. mountain men. The 1681 Passport Law made it a crime to trap or trade without a license from the government.

Engage'- Those who had been legally engaged to work in the fur trade whether they were voyaguers or not. The position of a voyaguer in the canoe denoted his importance, and level of pay. These titles were noted on the engagements, i. e. contracts which were signed.

Les Mileux was a younger man and he paddled in the middle of the canoe with no responsibility, except to paddle. The Avant was the paddler in the bow and was in charge. The Gouvernail, the steersman, was in the rear of the canoe. The man in the bow of the lead craft of a brigade was the Guide, and was in command of all the canoes. He was the one with the most experience and was the highest paid of all. Others who were involved were the Comis, the clerk who could read and write and was responsible for all records, and the Bourgeois, usually a former clerk, and the boss.

Documents of the fur trade which may be helpful to the researcher include engagements (contracts), conges (permits to travel), packing lists, account books and lead seals which may have a coat of arms or initials on them.

During the period of French dominance, ca 1600-1765, the fur trade was a rather loosely organized activity with no large dealers in control. A few companies like The Occidental were involved, but Montreal merchants usually signed the voyageurs to engagements for the season. Their destinations might take them anywhere north, south or west, but it was stated in the contract, i. e. Detroit, Michilimackinaw, OtaBois (Ottawa) which was anywhere up that river, Pays-d'on-haut which meant anywhere in the northwest or New Orleans. They started their trek up the Ottawa in the spring during the early years, and many did not return, at least for a few years, as they free-lanced.

After the defeat of the French there was a rather smooth transition to English control due to the interdependence of the French Habitants and the English companies. The start of the 19th Century saw the British assuming dominance of the industry with the English and Scotch taking over and the Habitants being relegated to a minor role and finally almost disappearing from the fur trade completely. A new culture of second class citizens was forming. Today we are seeing the results of that phenomena with the unrest in Quebec.

With the advent of this period large companies took complete control. This period saw great competition between the North West, Hudson's Bay, South West, X Y, and a few smaller companies, until the first two named merged and took over the trade. They also expanded their range of operation to such an extent that it was necessary to establish a break off point, because the voyageurs could not complete their trip in one year. The settlement at Great Portage became that point, but after the War of 1812 it was moved to Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Archives and libraries cited by Dulong include :

- Archives nationale du Quebec, Centre regionale du Quebec, 1945, rue Mullins, Montreal, Quebec H3K 1N9.
- Burton Hist. Collection, Detroit Public Library 5201 Woodward, Detroit, Mich. 48202
- Hudson's Bay Co. Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba 200 Vaughan St. Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 0P8
- Minnesota Historical Soc. 600 Cedar St. St. Paul, MN 55101
- National Archives of Canada, 395 Wellington St. Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0N3
- Old Fort William Resource Library, Vicker's Heights P.O. Thunder Bay Ontario P0T 2Z0
- State Hist. Soc. of Wisc., 816 State St. Madison, WI 53706

A report on "VALUE OF CATHOLIC CHURCH RECORDS IN GENEALOGY AND THE RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE USE OF SUCH RECORDS", by Mr. Roman Godzak, Archivist and Records Manager for the Archdiocese of Detroit at the Michigan Genealogical Council Seminar on 12 October 1990.

Mr. Godzak was awarded his certificate in Archival Administration in 1988 by Wayne State University in Detroit. His office is located at 1234 Washington Blvd. Detroit, MI 48226. This office which opened in 1980 is staffed by Mr. Godzak and a secretary with the primary focus relating to the heraldry of the church. Their oldest record is the 1704 Sacramental Registry of St. Anne's Church.

He informed us that each local church maintains its own records, but when one closes those records are then transferred to his office. Although their primary focus is not in the area of genealogy, and the limited staff in the office does not enable them to handle any type of extensive research in this area they are interested in providing assistance as they can. They decided in the summer of 1984 to microfilm all their Sacramental records, not for genealogical purposes, but as a "back-up" system. Mr. Godzak informed us that he got 100% cooperation from the local churches, and that 1 million pages were copied. Although these copies are not open for public inspection the church has allowed them to be copied for the Burton Historical Collection where they may be accessed. The baptismal, confirmation and marriage records go to 1900 and death records to 1984.

The modern Baptismal record is of great import as it is the Sacramental record of the person, and provides information as to the person's dates of birth, baptism, confirmation and marriage as well as the names of parents, Godparents, the priest, witnesses and church. This record is particular to the 20th Century. Prior to that time ledgers were used in many different ways. Some were written in Latin.

Their school records are kept in the Education Office, and requests are handled by Mary Donnelley at 313-237 5925. Cemetery records, for the most part, are at the cemetery. A list of their cemeteries can be obtained from him by sending a SASE to his office. When there is a parish cemetery that priest needs to be contacted. You can get the name of a parish if you have an address and a date by sending a SASE to his office.

Other Diocesan Archivist offices are at 300 W. Ottawa in Lansing, 718 W. Buffalo St. in Kalamazoo, 660 Burton St. S.E. in Grand Rapids, 2372 Badger St. in Marquette and P.O. Box 1020 in Baylond. Saginaw has none but their Diocesan Office is at 5800 Weiss in Saginaw.