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Minnesota Genealogist

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Minnesota Genealogist

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The Managing Editor invites readers to submit articles, including genealogy research articles, genealogical source guides, family history research experience stories, family history heritage travel stories, book reviews, and genealogy software and technology reviews. Research articles and family history research or travel stories should have some connection to Minnesota or the Upper Midwest. Preference is given to MGS members, but non-member submissions are welcome. Submit articles digitally in file formats readable in Microsoft Word. Complete guidelines for writers are available at www.mngs.org.

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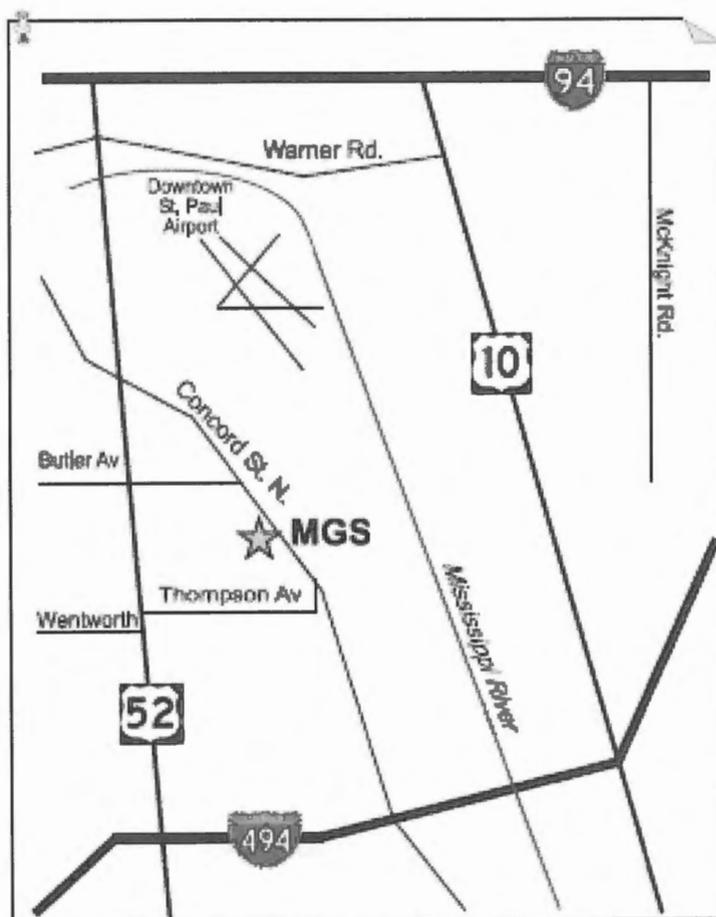
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From the Editor's Desk

Family History is a very personal endeavor. We come to our research with different motivations and different goals. Some of us just want the facts – who were they, where did they come from? When? Why? Others love the family lore, true or not. For some, medical history matters.

Whatever our motivations – if we actually do research, we inevitably find surprises. Most are benign, even charming. Some are disturbing. We know that we can't be held accountable for our ancestors' lives, but we worry about what those lives might foretell for us.

I've never encountered anything too shocking in my own family history. Just things like 18th Century marriages between cousins, and a distant Iowa ancestor who might have been a horse thief. But, I once had to tell a client about an ancestor who went to Stillwater State Prison for murder. There was no mistaking the fact: he did it.

In this issue's feature article, Janet Savelkoul Mitchell makes good use of prison records and newspaper accounts to take a sympathetic look at a grandfather who went to prison for a serious crime. Janet reminds us that our ancestors are not just ours; others share them, too. Some members of Janet's family were uncomfortable with what she found, but Janet decided that she could tell the story with respect. In her words, "Every family member has value." We are proud to publish her article, which won the 2010 MGS Michael Clark Family History Writing Award. Congratulations, Janet.

As always, we have tried to provide something of interest for all our readers. In her Beginning Genealogy column, Lois Mackin takes us through the first of five steps for effective genealogy research: write down and organize what you already know. It's good advice for both beginning and experienced genealogists.

Tom Rice is always on the lookout for technology to make his genealogy research more efficient. He tells us about a little-known program that helps researchers explore all those variant spellings of surnames. Minnesota's own Rick Crume is a widely known expert on internet genealogy. This issue, he makes suggestions for finding Minnesota local records online. Jen de Fiebre is one of those genealogy angels who generously shares her talents. She introduces us to RAOGK – Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness.

Perhaps there is a Catholic nun in your family history. Gayle Geber introduces us to records that may help you reconstruct a nun's life. And, returning to our opening crime theme, Sue Kratsch brings us "Newman for the Defense." Newman was a St. Paul attorney who defended such gangsters as Public Enemy No. 1, Alvin Karpis. Did you know that the Sainly City was a gangland haven in the 1920s and early 1930s? Turn to Sue's article and read all about it.

Finally, we are trying out a new feature called "What Next?" This will be a regular one-page piece from the MGS Education Committee illustrating how to follow clues in genealogical source documents. We have all kinds of documents in mind, but if you have a favorite for us to tackle, let us know.

J. H. Fonkert
Managing Editor

Every Family Member Has Value

by Janet Savelkoul Mitchell

A genealogical speaker once said “every family member has value,” even those who don’t seem to fit the “norm.” Was there a Crazy Uncle Louie on your mother’s side? Was there a scoundrel that your family spoke about in hushed whispers? Was there a crime committed by an ancestor?

Do you dare to include stories about these family members in your family history? If you answered with a resounding “Yes,” how do you accomplish that? Experts say you need to know your audience - and how they may accept the information you are documenting.

That led me to think about my great-grandfather, Martin, who was sentenced to Stillwater State Prison for five years in 1900.¹ He was 59 years old at the time of his arrest, a family man with a wife and seven children. The charge was rape of a 17-year old girl resulting in the birth of a female child.² The father of the victim waited until the child was born to accuse my great-grandfather. Why the wait? No reason seems to be given. The baby died two weeks after birth³ and two weeks before her biological father was incarcerated.

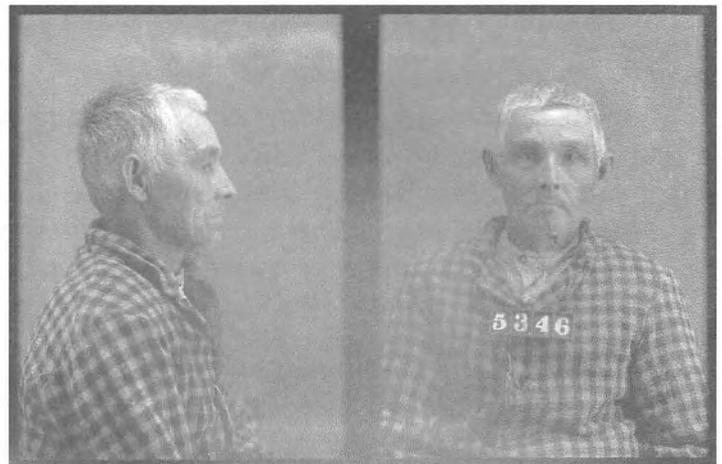
Martin immigrated to the U.S. from Bavaria, Germany, arriving on 16 May 1873 with his brother, George.⁴ His birthdate is variously reported as 1831, 1836, 1840 and 1842. He and four brothers all came to Minnesota within the span of three years for unknown reasons. Martin was a carpenter by trade, but became a farmer in Minnesota. He married in Minnesota in October 1873 and fathered nine children with his wife, two dying in infancy.

The newspaper accounts of his arrest and sentencing are short, but found room to editorialize that “it is hoped that [he] will be made to suffer for his misdeed” and “the sentence of the Court, though seemingly severe, is not more than what the culprit deserves.”

According to the first article, he pled not guilty, but the city justice sent the case to the grand jury, which set bail at \$500.⁵ Unable to raise bail, he remained in jail. Three weeks later the charge was reduced to indecent assault;⁶ he pled guilty and was “taken to his future home” by the sheriff and deputy.⁷ Corresponding newspaper articles from his former hometown added information about a prior arrest and jail escape seven years earlier.⁸

When I found these newspaper articles, my mother told me that her father had never mentioned his father’s imprisonment. None of her surviving siblings had any knowledge of this, either. Some of them were quite upset that I even discovered the information! I replied that every family has black sheep and I only learned the hard truth through serendipity. That didn’t seem to sway their opinion. Now I was made to feel like the black sheep.

Martin’s criminal past opened up new avenues of research that I had never pursued before. Accessing Stillwater State Prison records available by law at the Minnesota Historical Society brought new skills to my work as a genealogist. Although I found no printed photograph of Martin, I was glad to discover a glass plate negative of his inmate photo, complete with his prisoner number.⁹ It might seem crass that I wanted a photograph of my great-grandfather with his prisoner number, but it is the only photograph of Martin we can rightfully identify.



Martin’s guilty plea meant there was no trial or transcript of testimony. There was, however, a wealth of paperwork and correspondence associated with Martin while he was in Stillwater. These documents reveal an intimate view of three years of my great-grandfather’s existence.

On the *Admitting Report* of March 16, 1900, Martin said liquor was the main cause of his downfall, and that he could go to his own farm in the event of parole.¹⁰ The *District Court Indictment* papers listed the charge and witness names for the prosecution “sworn and examined before the Grand Jury.”¹¹ The *Inmates*

Registers Convict Record which showed the charge, prison term, dates of parole and discharge, and the fact that he "deposited 1 Stick Pin" when admitted to prison, gave me a peek into his first day.¹² It also made me wonder whether he got the stick pin back when he left. Does someone in the family still have that stick pin? Did Martin's stick pin have value to him?

The *Physical Condition Report* upon his admittance shows that he was unable to "talk English" and his hearing and eyes were poor, along with his overall general appearance. Notations on the bottom of the report show a fluctuation of only five pounds in weight from his entrance to his release. His physical condition was upgraded to good at the time of his release.¹³

Letters from former and current county attorneys showed that Martin had been arrested before, in 1895, for larceny of items he found in trunks of clothing abandoned in the woods – trunks that had been stolen several days previously from a train depot by others.¹⁴ For this crime he was only fined. He had thought he could take the abandoned items home to his family for their use. This confirmed the earlier newspaper report that he had been arrested before.

The average income of farmers, who comprised 41 percent of the workforce in the U.S. in 1900, was about \$120 to 200 per year.¹⁵ Martin was not only going to lose his freedom, but he was also to lose the family's only income. That must have been quite a blow not only to himself, but to his wife and seven children. During his incarceration, Martin also missed the wedding of one daughter.¹⁶

The 1900 U.S. Census enumerated on 15 June 1900 for the Minnesota State Prison, Stillwater, shows Martin, born in 1842 in Germany, at age 58, single, with the occupation of carpenter.¹⁷ At the family home, that same census shows no occupation for his wife and 20-year old single daughter, but does list my grandfather, then age 15, as a farm laborer, the only employed person in the household.¹⁸ The remaining children were either at school or at home. They were listed as renters. Evidently my grandfather was the wage earner for the entire family.

That census also counted 511 inmates at Stillwater, with two well-known names among them -- Cole and James Younger.¹⁹ The three Younger brothers had been in Stillwater Prison since their capture and conviction in 1876 for the Jesse James-Younger Brothers raid on the Northfield First National Bank. One brother, Bob Younger, died of tuberculosis in prison in 1889. The surviving brothers were paroled in 1901, but to think

that my great-grandfather may have met them in prison is fascinating.

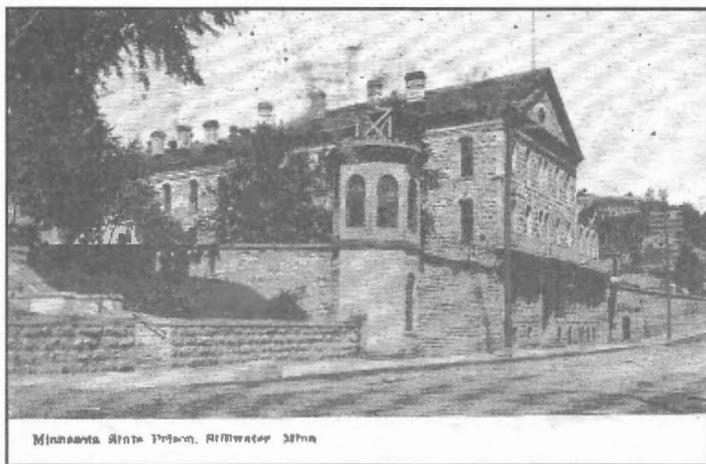
The county attorney who prosecuted the case in 1900 wrote in an April 1902 letter, "I know very little about the past life of Mr. ... , but at the time of the trial it appeared to me that he was quite an old man and that the sentence imposed was somewhat severe. As far as I am concerned [he] is entitled to have his application for parole considered and am aware of no reason why he might not enjoy parole privileges. As his future welfare will be considered, I wish to state that I have been informed that shortly before the commission of the crime he left his wife and children and was not living with them at the time."²⁰ In September 1902, the judge of the original case stated "he had better remain in custody. The community is safer with him in prison."²¹ Minnesota law at that time required convicts to serve at least half of their full terms before they could be paroled.²² Martin's eligibility came in September 1902, but the Parole Board tabled his case over its next three meetings, likely based on the judge's letter.²³ In November 1902 the judge restated, "I am still of the opinion that Martin...should serve out his term."²⁴ On December 10, Martin was told that he couldn't be paroled, but told that if his conduct were good in the meantime the case would be reconsidered on May 1.²⁵

Friends in his hometown had rallied around Martin and sent letters to the warden that he was "an upright and honest man" and worthy of parole.²⁶ Translations of letters written in German by his neighbors state "he wouldn't be there now had it not been on account of family trouble ... and others more to blame than he was."²⁷ His brother, George, wrote in October 1902 that "His past history before his downfall is good. He was always a good, honest, hard-working man. What put him where he is explained in the word family trouble. When a wife makes home a veritable hell for her husband, can you wonder that he runs astray? All of his neighbors can tell you the same story. He was arrested once before but there he was entirely innocent. I think he has been punished enough already."²⁸ These impassioned statements evidently did not make an impression on the parole board.

According to a history of the prison, all prisoners had to work while incarcerated.²⁹ The 1900 Census shows there were three twine manufacturing supervisors at the prison³⁰ and greenhouses to raise flowers for the warden's offices, dining halls and visitors' rooms. Minnesota was a leader in prison reform then. State law dictated that each inmate receive, upon discharge, one

good, serviceable suit of clothing and underclothing and \$25 drawn from the prison's current expense fund.³¹

Martin's *Punishment Records* showed three notations within the first 2 months -- his cupboard top and water jar were dirty, with only the last violation being marked against him.³² *Correspondence and Visitors Registers* show three letters received by Martin from his wife and one from his daughter within the first year of his incarceration. Martin sent only three letters, two to his wife and one to a friend in Jordan.³³ Compared with pages of documentation for other prisoners, Martin had little communication with his former world. I hope the letter from his daughter was sent by the one who was married three months earlier and described her wedding day.



Letters to the warden from the prison physician gave evidence of Martin's increasingly bad health. In February 1903, the warden told the physician that Martin "claimed he is in very bad health and that he is losing [sic] ground. If his health is suffering and there is any danger of its giving way, an earlier parole [than May] might be possible."³⁴ The following day, the physician wrote that Martin "is weak and debilitated, has an organic heart lesion, his pulse is weak and intermittent, and he complains much of rheumatic pains. He has been in the Hospital and in the cells down stairs for the greater part of the time during the first year and a half of his imprisonment. He was in the Hospital with a severe attack of dysentery in 1900. In 1901 he was again in the Hospital with orchitis [an inflammation of the testicles, caused by virus or bacteria]. He is now in better general condition than he was during the first two years of his service here. He is below par in mental condition. I do not think that his condition would be endangered by his remaining here until May 1903, but I think he would be benefitted by

being released as soon as possible."³⁵

Parole was finally authorized on May 7, 1903,³⁶ after three years of Martin's five-year sentence. Even though all correspondence in the files was from his brother, George, his parole officer was his other brother, Joseph, living in Shakopee.³⁷ Would Martin's wife not let him come back home? Evidently George could not take Martin in. George was an "incurable invalid" for the last 30 years of his life, according to his 1924 obituary.³⁸ He died one week after Martin.

Martin's *Parole Affidavit* said he was five feet, three and three-eighths inches tall and weighed 125 pounds, the same as when he was admitted.³⁹ His German script signature on his *Parole Agreement* shows a very unsteady hand.⁴⁰ How was such a slight, aged man able to withstand prison conditions in the twine-making factory? Even though the Minnesota State Prison was one of the more enlightened at the time, the rules for dress, meals, leisure time and especially a prohibition on speaking to others except on holidays made it seem like an inhospitable and bleak atmosphere to live in year after year.⁴¹

A letter from the warden, Henry Wolfer, to Martin's brother, George, dated May 28, 1903, is two sentences long: "Better come for your brother soon as possible. His health bad."⁴² Martin left the prison on June 2, 1903, for his brother's home.⁴³ Documents show that he was given his \$25 and an extra 65 cents of "Good Conduct Earnings," but with \$15 retained by the warden, Martin left prison with only \$10.65.⁴⁴

Five *Monthly Parole Reports* (June through October), submitted by Martin and countersigned by his brother, Joseph, show that Martin did not lead a very active life after his release.⁴⁵ Staying at home with family, doing only light work and some repairs and reading the local German newspaper seemed to be his everyday activities. The deterioration of his health in prison probably affected his remaining days.

On November 2, 1903, the most important final letter from the prison arrived: "Your term of sentence at this institution having this day expired according to law, we hereby send you notice that you are released from further custody of the officers of this Prison ... Enclosed your citizenship papers herewith."⁴⁶ The letter also offered the retained \$15, the "full balance due you from this institution," if Martin would sign the enclosed receipt and tell the prison where to send the money. This brought to mind that, while a prisoner, those beloved papers held by an immigrant proving U.S. citizenship were retained by the prison. I wonder

what he felt about surrendering those papers? Did he worry that he would never get them back? He even accidentally returned his naturalization papers to the prison with some paperwork, but they were kindly returned to him by the office clerk.⁴⁷

We know Martin was living alone in 1910, working as a carpenter.⁴⁸ In 1920 he and his wife were once again together, residing with their youngest son.⁴⁹ Martin died in 1924 at the stated age of 83 while living with a daughter and son-in-law⁵⁰ who had married while he was incarcerated. His wife died in 1948.⁵¹ His obituary stated that "thruout his long life [he] was cheerful, industrious, energetic, a good husband and father and an accommodating neighbor."⁵² Was this information I found of value? It certainly seems that way to me.

One of my hobbies is collecting old postcards to supplement my genealogical research. Postcards of Stillwater State Prison in the early 1900s are not too difficult to find.⁵³ The prison itself is an impressive set of stone buildings entered via a tall iron main gate with the demoralizing words "Who enters here, leaves hope behind" added to one postcard inscription. An extremely high stone wall with guard towers surrounds the area. One colored postcard of the

prison hospital shows a guard tower built into the front portion, overlooking a park with a few sick prisoners sitting in chairs around a gazebo.⁵⁴ Just having that postcard brings to life the place where my great-grandfather unfortunately spent many a day during his incarceration.

Martin had value among his friends and neighbors; that certainly comes through in the correspondence received and filed. Martin must have had value among his brothers, as they readily accepted responsibility for his parole, providing him a home and employment. Martin's children, likewise, may have respected their father enough to keep the story of his crimes from their spouses and children, as this story was not widely known. Or, as newspapers originally reported, Martin was "disowned" by his family, so the story was not to be repeated.⁵⁵ It is, however, part of his life. And life encompasses both the good and the not-so-good. To me, the story is a tragic yet inescapable part of my family history. I trust my audience to accept the information that I am giving them.

So do I give this family member value and include his tribulations when I write my family history? I believe I will.

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Beginning Genealogy

Step 1: Write Down and Organize What You Know

By Lois Mackin

In my column in the Spring 2010 issue of *Minnesota Genealogist*, I outlined five steps for beginning genealogy:

1. Write down and organize what you know,
2. Decide what you want to learn,
3. Locate a useful source,
4. Learn from the source, and
5. Use what you learned.

These five steps are the building blocks of the MGS Beginning Genealogy Course. In this issue, I will focus on Step 1: Write Down and Organize What You Know. This is a step that you will revisit many times during your genealogy journey! Performing it thoroughly, thoughtfully and systematically pays huge dividends.

As part of this first step, you will need to:

- Collect and assemble family documents, photos and memorabilia,
- Set up a system of binders, files and/or electronic files to store the records you have,
- Develop a system for preserving fragile or irreplaceable materials, and
- Create pedigree charts and family group sheets.

I suggest that you start by **collecting and assembling documents, photos and memorabilia about your family** in one place. Don't worry at this point about finding more information—just collect what you already have in your own home or can easily obtain from relatives. These materials, often referred to as "home sources," will be the foundation of your work. "Home sources" often contain information you won't easily find elsewhere, so look at them thoroughly and put them in order before you rush off to the library or the Internet!

Start with your own vital documents—birth and marriage certificates, baptismal or confirmation records, school records, military records, letters, diplomas, keepsakes. You may have records from your spouse, parents or other family members—collect those too. Carefully record information about documents or artifacts—"This family Bible came to me from my great-aunt Matilda Smith Emery. Aunt Matilda said it was brought to America by her grandmother Lucy Smith in the 1800s." Don't trust your memory—write everything down.

Setting up a system. As you collect materials, put them in labeled bins, file folders or binders. Many people like to divide up their folders or binders by family or surname. How many "containers" you create depends on how much material you have! If you don't have a lot, "Mom's side" and "Dad's side" may be good enough subdivisions. Some people like to start with a "container" labeled with each grandparent's surname. You can always subdivide the "containers" as the volume of your materials grows.

Your system can also be electronic, or a combination of electronic and paper-based. You can scan documents you find into your computer. If you do, set up a consistent system for naming the files - for example, *Jones_Elizabeth_1950_Birth.jpg* - and put them in appropriate electronic file folders. It's best to set up a folder—perhaps in your *Documents* folder - called *Genealogy* (or whatever you like) and put all your family history materials there. You could set up a separate folder for *Jones_Elizabeth* inside your *Genealogy* folder, or just a *Jones* folder where you put all the files related to the Jones family.

There are as many systems for storing materials as there are genealogists. Find one that works for you and lets you access your information quickly and efficiently, not a system that's right for someone else.

Preserve fragile or irreplaceable materials. Some of your "home sources" will be fragile or unique. Make copies of these irreplaceable items for your working files and store the originals separately—preferably in a fireproof container or safe deposit box. Never take original materials with you to a library or courthouse—take only the copies.

Look for reliable information about preserving your family history materials and artifacts at the Minnesota Historical Society's website <www.mnhs.org/preserve/conservation/index.html> and *Practical Archivist* <www.practicalarchivist.com>; Gaylord <www.gaylord.com>, and Hollinger Metal Edge <www.hollingermetalede.com> are good-quality providers of archival supplies.

Remember that not all genealogical sources are physical items or documents—some of the most valuable "home sources" are people who can tell you about your family. Tap these sources, starting with yourself. Jot down

or record on your computer your own recollections about your life, your parents' lives and your relatives. Interview parents, siblings and cousins and take notes. Always date your personal notes and interviews—in the future you will want to know when you acquired the information, as well as from whom you got it.

Creating pedigree charts and family group sheets. Pedigree charts and family group sheets are standard ways genealogists record and display information about individuals, relationships and families. Pedigree charts show lineage (parent-child relationships) for individuals. Family group sheets show family groups—parents and children.

Download blank forms from the Internet—look for free family group sheet forms at *Rootsweb.com*, *Ancestry.com*, and *FamilySearch.org*. *FamilySearch.org* also offers

free blank pedigree charts. Many genealogy database programs can generate blank forms or automatically fill in forms with your family history data.

Always record the sources of your information. Most genealogy database software makes it easy to do as you enter data. If you are filling in charts by hand, just include the source information for each fact in a footnote.

Step 1 is never really “finished”—you will revisit it each time you add to your knowledge or acquire new materials. If you are careful and systematic, Step 1 will provide a solid foundation for your genealogical endeavors. Having finished Step 1, you will be in good position to formulate a research question – my topic in the next issue.

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Researching Catholic Nuns in America in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries

By Gayle Geber

I hate to lose the memory of any family member, but I have found it difficult to find information on the lives of those who changed their names or didn't have descendants who left a paper trail. This is especially the case for Catholic nuns in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Happily, the nun's full identity and family history were not lost to her religious community, and typically its archivist is very willing to help. This article describes my experiences researching nuns in my family.

BARRIERS TO RESEARCHING NUNS

Basic genealogical research methods are the same for nuns as for other individuals, but the nature of nuns' lives in the past can present significant barriers to family research.

- Women often took the first steps in becoming nuns in novitiates far from home. (A novitiate is a place where women first explore their interest in becoming a nun.)
- Nuns may have been assigned to minister in many different locations over time.
- No single comprehensive list or index of nuns exists. Records are kept by the motherhouse of each religious community.
- Women took new names when they entered the convent.
- Some nuns were cloistered and had little family contact.
- Travel and contact with family members were restricted in some religious communities, particularly during the first years after the women entered the convent.
- Most nuns do not serve under the authority of the bishops, so dioceses are not necessarily good sources of information.
- Although it is a rare occurrence, some religious communities changed their names. For example, the names of one community and the dates they changed were: Sisters of the Holy Ghost (1892), Servants of the Holy Ghost (1896), Servants of the Holy Ghost and Mary Immaculate (1910), Sisters of the Holy Ghost and Mary Immaculate (1975), and now Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Mary Immaculate (1986).¹
- The spelling of a nun's name can vary widely in death certificates, censuses and indexes.



Sister Assumpta



Sister Magdala

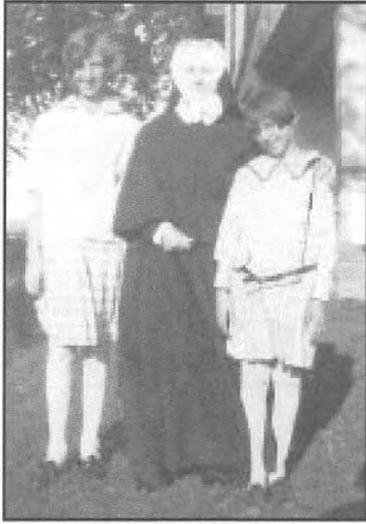
STRATEGIES FOR RESEARCHING NUNS

Sister Assumpta and Sister Magdala

Background. My father clearly remembers visiting his aunts in a convent in Dubuque, Iowa. I grew up seeing photos of them as children and then as young women after they professed their final religious vows as Sisters of St. Francis. Anna Even (1900–1991) became Sister Magdala, and her sister, Christina Even (1902–1946), became Sister Assumpta.

Research strategies. I learned about these women the old-fashioned way: talking with relatives. However, their information sometimes lacked detail, and some stories seemed bigger than life, so I wanted to check their accuracy. Because I knew the name and location of the motherhouse, I simply googled "Mount St. Francis, Dubuque" and contacted the community's archivist through the e-mail contact link on their Web site.

Results. I was quickly mailed a short, handwritten autobiography written by Sister Magdala describing events in her life she thought were important. I also received a biographical narrative, including information on her parents and childhood, when she professed her religious vows, her occupation, places where she ministered, a personal description (a "gentle, smiling nun"), and an extensive medical history. I was also sent a narrative with similar types of information about Sister Assumpta, including the college she attended. Because the motherhouse had provided the locations where these women died, I was able to obtain their death certificates. This information confirmed some stories I had been told and refuted others.



Sister Rufinia

Sister Rufinia

Background. Among the photographs left by my mother and aunt were two of a nun, one posed with my maternal grandmother and another posed with my mother and aunt when they were children. The nun's name was recorded on the back of one of the photos as "Sr. Rufina." None of my older relatives knew who she was.

Research strategies. Initially I had no idea how this nun fit into the family, if at all, but assumed she was a member of my grandmother's family. Since I knew my grandmother's, mother's and aunt's ages at the times the two photos were taken, I could approximate Sister Rufina's age in each.

Researching my mother's family indicated that only one woman became a nun (Cecilia Allmann, 1885–1971), but I was wrong in assuming she was on my grandmother's side of the family. Rather, she was on my grandfather's side. From this I learned the importance of the relationship between the subject of the photo and the person most likely to be behind the camera: my grandfather.

Once I identified all of Sister Rufina's siblings, I searched their obituaries for a mention of her. I frequently found her name listed as a survivor of the decedent and occasionally found mention of the city where she lived, but it wasn't until an obituary mentioned her religious community as "SCC" that I had my best clue for finding Sister Rufina.

I examined a list of Catholic religious communities and their abbreviations,² where I found two women's religious communities that use the abbreviation SCC, one of which was the Sisters of Christian Charity. (The

other SCC was in India.) I googled "Sisters of Christian Charity, Wilmette Illinois," because Wilmette was the last residence listed for Sister Rufina in her siblings' obituaries. This got me to the SCC Web site, which had a link to their archivist.

Results. Within a matter of days, I was e-mailed a letter that had been written about Sister Rufinia (the correct spelling of her religious name) shortly after her death. It described important events in Sister's life, including: early years with family in Waconia, Minnesota; her "loving service" in the convent; struggles with severe chronic illness; and the days leading up to her death surrounded by prayerful friends. The archivist also related more information about how a Waconia girl ended up in Pennsylvania, traveled back to Minnesota, and then settled in Illinois. The archivist also had a photo of Sister Rufinia.

It was only after I completed all this work that I found a history of Waconia's St. Joseph Catholic Church at the Carver County Historical Society. Here, in one short document, I found the names of all the women (including Cecilia Allmann) who were students at the parish school, taught by Sisters of Christian Charity, and later became nuns – along with their religious names.

Sister Aelreda

Background. After many years of researching my Allmann ancestors who arrived in Carver County, Minnesota, about 1857, I discovered that an immigrant daughter, Catharina Allmann, had married Peter Sarasen in 1862 in Shakopee, Scott County, Minnesota.

Research strategies. I searched the Scott County Historical Society's online surname list³ and found a reference to an obituary for "Sr. M. Alveda Sarasen." I then located the obituary which indicated that Sister Alveda was the eldest daughter of "Mr. and Mrs. Peter Sarasen," and that she had entered a Notre Dame convent in Milwaukee in 1885. Another newspaper article said that she had taught and died in Michigan City, Indiana.

Once again, I relied on googling, searching for "Notre Dame and Milwaukee," and arrived at the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Milwaukee site. I was reasonably certain this was the correct religious community since the obituary said that Sister Alveda had been a teacher. This Web site has a "Find a Sister" tab that allowed me to easily enter information I had on her. Although designed to find living sisters, it also worked well for finding a deceased nun.

Results. Within a few days, I received an e-mail from an archivist that contained a wealth of personal information about Sister "Aelreda" (the correct spelling of her name.) I learned that Sister Aelreda's parents were Peter Sarasen and Mary Weiser, not my ancestor Catharina Allmann Sarasen. This led me to investigate the Sarasen family more thoroughly. I discovered that a Catharina Allmann Sarasen and her daughter died in 1863. As it turns out, Sister Aelreda was the eldest daughter of Peter Sarasen and his second wife – not my ancestor, Catharina.

Sister Mary Gerard/Sister Frances Marie

Background. I began the search for my Carver County Fischer ancestors from Bavaria knowing virtually nothing about my great-great-grandfather, Georg Fischer, my great-grandfather, John Fischer, and John's siblings. My research goals included identifying the children of John Fischer's siblings. One of these siblings was Anna Fischer, who married John Berry about 1881. From census records I could identify four of their children, one of whom was Lizzie Berry (1882–1959.) At this time I had no knowledge that any of these children had become nuns.

Georg Fischer married three times, the third time to Anna Maria Schumm. In 1907 Anna Maria wrote her last will and testament in which she bequeathed \$50 to "Lizzie Berry of St. Antonio, Texas now a Sister in some convent." This was the first time I knew my great-grandfather had a niece who was a nun. Lizzie's second step-grandmother, Anna Maria Schumm, had given me a good start on finding Lizzie's religious community.

Research strategies. My search for Lizzie Berry started at the San Antonio Archdiocese website. (If you don't know the diocese or archdiocese for a city, google the city or state name with "Catholic diocese." Any archdiocese should also come up when you google "diocese.") The site's Archdiocesan Offices tab had a link to their Religious Office. I e-mailed its director with my request for information about Lizzie and received an immediate reply stating she would look into my request and also providing historical information about religious communities in that archdiocese.

In the meantime, I discovered *The Official Catholic Directory*,⁴ an annual publication listing communities of priests, sisters, and brothers for every parish and diocese in the United States – and some others around the world – for most years since 1817. In the 1907 volume, there were 30 listings for religious communities

of women in the San Antonio Archdiocese. Given Lizzie Berry's young age (25), I thought she might be early in her development as a nun, so I made my first priority those that had a motherhouse with a novitiate in San Antonio and were still ministering in that area (according to the most recent volume of *The Official Catholic Directory*.) Luckily, only two fit those criteria. An online search identified e-mail addresses for both communities, and I sent my request to both. Within two days, I heard back from both. The Congregation of Sisters of Divine Providence sent information about Lizzie Berry.

Results. I received a very detailed description of Lizzie Berry's – now Sister Mary Gerard's – life, including the names of her parents, when and where she was born, where she was missioned and, most importantly for my interests, the correct spelling of her mother's surname from her second marriage. Without the information about Sister Mary Gerard's life in the convent, it would have been very difficult to track her in public records, as she was assigned to six different parishes in three different states from 1900 to 1912. Sister Mary Gerard took a leave of absence from 1912 to 1925. When she returned to the convent in 1925, she made her second novitiate and received the name Sister Frances Marie. From 1925 to 1959, she was assigned to 15 different parishes in 14 cities in three different states before retiring in San Antonio. Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate Lizzie Berry in the 1920 U.S. census during her leave of absence.

Several months after I had obtained all this information, I was organizing some of my grandfather's papers. Although I must have looked in his wallet after his death in 1976, this was the first time I noticed a small slip of paper on which was noted "Sister Frances Marie" and a Texas address. Of course, without the information I had gathered. I would not have been able to link my grandfather's note to a relative.

OTHER TIPS ON FINDING NUNS

If you have a photo of a nun in her traditional garb, but don't know the name of her religious community, spend a pleasant afternoon looking through books containing photographs of nuns' traditional clothing. One example is *Guide to the Catholic Sisterhoods in the United States*.⁵ If you can identify the garb she is wearing, you will know the religious community, which is your first step in identifying a nun.

Reports of nuns' deaths are transmitted to vital statistics authorities, but there appears to be unclear

guidance on how to record or index their names. Using records available online at the Minnesota Historical Society Death Certificates Index⁶ as an example, if Gayle Marie Geber became a nun and took the name "Sister Mary Cecilia," her name could be recorded 11 different ways on her death certificate or indexed for online searching. (Imagine the permutations if she had become Sister Mary St. John of the Cross.) However, if you can find your nun in these records, you might also find the abbreviation for her religious community (e.g., "SCC" for Sister Rufinia), thus giving you another clue to finding additional information.

With persistence it is possible – although in my experience, not likely – to find nuns in census records. You might find them listed using their birth names or some version of their religious names. For example, I found Sister Magdala in the 1930 U.S. census as "Magdala Even" (using her religious name and surname), while I found Sister Assumpta listed as "Christina Even" (using her given name and surname.) Typically, surnames were not used for nuns in census records. However, when a nun is found in the census, the same wealth of information can be found for her as for other individuals. Nuns in a convent will be listed together, providing a glimpse at their living situations.

Census information about nuns can be rather amusing. For the nuns I researched, I found that the "relationship to the head of the family" was often given as "sister." I have seen nuns' occupations listed as "inmate," "roomer," "boarder," or "subordinate." I found one nun's name recorded clearly on the census form as "Bernardine", and her relationship to the head of the family was "mother superior." Ancestry.com indexed her relationship to the head of the family as "mother-in-law." All the other nuns in the convent were indexed with the surname "Bernardine."

When contacting religious communities to request information about a nun, I have found it helpful to share my reason for researching this person and to include as much identifying information as I have, e.g., the woman's birth name, date of birth, the city she lived in, and her parents' names. I have never been charged a fee for information, but I suggest sending a small donation to the community that sends you information in order to support their archives.

Researching Catholic nuns does not need to be an arduous, time-consuming process. By using available resources, you may be able to preserve these women's life histories in your family records.

Sources:

¹ *The Handbook of Texas Online.*

² *The Catholic Door Ministry.* accessed March, 2009. See also for a shorter listing of men's and women's religious communities, but one which includes the year the community was established.

³ *Scott County Historical Society surname index.*

⁴ *The Official Catholic Directory.* National Register Publishing. In earlier years, the title of the book was variants of "Catholic Directory." The Minnesota Historical Society library has many volumes: BX845.C42 and BX845.C4.

⁵ *Guide to the Catholic Sisterhoods in the United States.* T.P. McCarthy. 1955. Available at the Minnesota Historical Society Library: BX4220.U6 M3 1955.

⁶ *Minnesota Historical Society Death Certificates Index.*

Tom Newman for the Defense: St. Paul's Gangland Attorney

By Sue A. Kratsch

On 1 May 1936, FBI agents knocked at the door of an exclusive apartment building in New Orleans. J. Edgar Hoover had flown in to personally arrest one of the men who opened the door, Alvin "Creepy" Karpis. He was wanted in two of the most notorious crimes ever committed in St. Paul, Minnesota, the 1933 and 1934 kidnappings of William Hamm, Jr., president of Hamm's Brewing, and Edward Bremer, president of Commercial State Bank.

In the early 1900's St. Paul was a haven for criminals. Police Chief John O'Connor had a "layover agreement" with visiting gangsters. As long as payoffs were made and no major crimes committed, police not only looked the other way, but also failed to honor extradition requests from other states. If Prohibition agents or postal inspectors planned a raid, the gangsters were tipped off. According to Karpis, "If you were looking for a guy that you had not seen in a few months, you usually thought of two places: prison or St. Paul. If he wasn't locked up in one, he was probably hanging out in the other."¹

Ultimately, events conspired to bring down the "O'Connor system." An invigorated FBI captured or killed many crime figures while they were away from Minnesota. In 1932, a new, reforming chief began cleaning up St. Paul police corruption. But in 1931 a loose confederation of up to 30 criminals, the Barker-Karpis gang, arrived in St. Paul. It would be 1934 before authorities recognized that the ensuing crime wave was led by Fred, Doc, and "Ma" Barker, and Alvin Karpis.

While initially tolerated by St. Paul citizens, the gang's reckless killing of police officers and bystanders finally tipped public opinion against them. Apparently in retaliation for increased police pressure, the Barker-Karpis gang carried out the two kidnappings that led to their undoing. Although both victims were released after ransoms were paid, many leading St. Paul families felt they were no longer immune from harm. Attorney Tom Newman's future client, Alvin Karpis, was anointed by the press as "Public Enemy Number One."²

Tom Newman Arrives on the Scene

Tom Newman was part of a long-standing migration to Minnesota from the southern states. The health benefits of the Minnesota climate were touted especially to the South, where "malarious exhalations

from the undrained soil of ... the southern Mississippi Valley, yield an annual harvest of fevers," from which Minnesota was considered immune.³ And like many ethnic groups, the southerners tended to stick together.

The city of St. Paul attracted aspiring attorneys and physicians from the South. In 1892, John B. Metcalfe left Louisville, Kentucky, for St. Paul. Beginning as a railway clerk, he soon was employed at the law firm of Schmidt, Metcalfe, and Olson, although he apparently was not an attorney. By 1903 the firm's associates included Thomas J. Newman.⁴

Thomas Jefferson Newman was born on 30 November 1874, probably in Albany, Gentry County, Missouri, the fourth child of George W. and Louisa J. (Allen) Newman.⁵ George W. Newman was a physician, as were his son Stephen A. Newman and Stephen's son George William Newman, who practiced medicine in St. Paul in the 1930's.⁶ Tom Newman attended private schools and the University of Missouri. He then completed Harvard law school and was recorded there in the 1900 census, as well as at his parents' home in Mt. Vernon, Lawrence County, Missouri.⁷

Tom's older sister Hattie Grace Newman (known as Grace) was born in Bethany, Harrison County, Missouri, on 9 October 1869.⁸ In 1900, Hugh J. and Grace (Newman) McManus were in St. Paul boarding with John B. Metcalfe.⁹ Hugh left St. Paul for Hot Springs, Arkansas, in 1901. Hot Springs was thought to have curative waters, and Hugh may have been in poor health; he died within the next three years.¹⁰

Tom moved to St. Paul in 1902, also boarding with Metcalfe; by 1904 another boarder, Frank W. Saint, had joined them.¹¹ Grace married Frank on 20 September 1916 at St. Luke's Catholic Church on Summit Avenue in St. Paul.¹² The marriage lasted less than a month; Frank died in St. Paul on 17 October 1916, with an "automobile funeral" (a line of automobiles making up the funeral procession) from the St. Paul Cathedral.¹³

The Elusive Ella Beach

In each census in which Tom Newman appears, he is reported as "single."¹⁴ Yet he apparently was married-to Eleanor Weston Beach.

Ella Beach was born on 21 April 1875 in Fort Dodge, Iowa, to Bryant Durant and Frances Adeline (Pettingill)

Beach.¹⁵ She worked as a stenographer in St. Paul in 1896, boarding with the Harry Ringold family. One wonders if she were hiding her identity. Upon moving to Minneapolis in 1899 she gave her name as E. Weston Beach.¹⁶ Like Tom, she is recorded twice in the 1900 census, in Fort Dodge and in St. Paul with the Ringolds; she appears as Ellen W. Beach in the 1900 Minneapolis city directory.¹⁷ She has not been found in any census after 1900.

While family sources assert that Tom Newman married a woman named Beach, no record of the marriage has been found. It is unclear for how long they were married, or how long they lived together. They apparently married after 1900 and before 1916, when "Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Neumann" witnessed the marriage of Grace and Frank Saint.¹⁸ In his 1918 World War I draft registration, Tom states that his nearest relative is Mrs. "Eleanore" Newman ("wife" is penciled in.)¹⁹ Other evidence for the marriage appears in the 1928, 1929 and 1932 St. Paul city directories, which list "Newman, Thomas J. (Eleanor)."²⁰ In 1933, Mrs. Eleanor B. Newman occupied an apartment at 1604 Charles Avenue, her last known residence in St. Paul.²¹

Charles Stanley Ringold and James Harry Ringold were brothers and business partners, bringing their skills in shirt manufacturing from Cincinnati to their men's furnishings shop in St. Paul.²² In 1904 Stanley Ringold moved to Highwood, an early "railroad suburb" of St. Paul overlooking the Mississippi River and Pig's Eye Lake.²³ When Tom Newman registered for the draft he gave his business address, 1007 Commerce Building (across the street from the Ramsey County Courthouse). But Mrs. Newman lived on "Pond Street" in St. Paul. Pond Street (no longer extant) was one block long, connected Burlington and Glen Roads near Highwood, and apparently had no residents.²⁴ Perhaps an association with the Ringolds influenced this choice of address; it is not known if Eleanor actually lived there.



A Career in Gangland

Why did Tom Newman take up the defense of members of the underworld and how deeply was he himself involved? Contemporary observers thought that lawyers cooperated with criminals and that the availability of legal help was one of the attractions of St. Paul.²⁵ Tom and his sister lost heavily in the 1929 stock market crash, which affected all professionals but "especially lawyers."²⁶ The defense of gangland figures may have been a way to recoup the losses. What is known is that Tom partnered with attorney John Bowman in 1930 and launched a new phase of his career.²⁷

In 1931, Tom Newman helped provide an alibi for small-time criminal Reinhold Engel, accused of robbing a bank in Alden, Iowa. "In a hearing before Gov. Floyd B. Olson, several witnesses supported Engel's assertion he was in St. Paul the day of the \$4,500 bank robbery. Thomas Newman, attorney, testified Engel was in his office that day." Presumably Engel was an early client of the new firm.²⁸

The 1932 kidnapping of Haskell Bohn, son of a St. Paul refrigerator manufacturer, began a wave of high-profile "snatches." Verne Sankey and his wife Fern were indicted for the crime, but Verne eluded capture and "left his wife in the lurch." Then the Hamm kidnapping unfolded during Fern's trial, only blocks away. Police tried to tie the missing Verne to the Hamm and even the Lindbergh baby kidnappings. Newman was Fern's attorney, but unexpectedly withdrew from the case because "Mrs. Sankey had been unable to pay his fee."²⁹ Perhaps this was just as well; Ben Laska, the attorney who took the case, was soon convicted of knowingly accepting ransom money.³⁰

The Midwestern crime wave peaked in 1933 with the June kidnapping of Hamm, followed in July by that of Oklahoma oilman Charles F. Urschel. At least seven of the defendants in the Urschel case were from the Twin Cities, primarily involved in laundering ransom money.³¹ Newman's reputation grew as "the only

attorney to gain freedom for his clients" in this case.³²

With the January 1934 kidnapping of Edward Bremer, authorities were desperate for convictions. But another year would pass before the first of the gang members, including Doc Barker, were jailed in St. Paul. In the ensuing trial of 12 defendants, Newman represented Northwestern University medical student James J. Wilson. He was accused of aiding his uncle, underworld doctor J. P. Moran, in removing Karpis's fingerprints, and claimed that agent John L. Madala beat him to get a confession.³³ Despite Newman's plea to the jury to send "Jimmy back to his praying parents," Wilson was convicted in the Bremer kidnapping.³⁴

On 20 April 1934, the John Dillinger gang sought refuge at the Little Bohemia resort near Rhinelander, Wisconsin. With them was Jean, girlfriend of gangster Tommy Carroll and one of the Delaney sisters, a "trio of Dillinger gang 'molls'" from St. Paul.³⁵ Three days later, the FBI raided the resort. The gang escaped, but Jean Delaney was arrested and jailed in Madison. Jean's sister Helen, wife of gang member William "Pat" Reilly, accompanied Tom Newman to Madison to secure Jean's release.³⁶ After a remorseful reunion with Helen, Jean pled guilty and was freed on probation. Delores Delaney, the third sister, was the girlfriend of Alvin Karpis.

Karpis was Newman's most infamous client. After his capture in New Orleans, the FBI flew Karpis overnight to St. Paul and held him at the Ramsey County jail. Karpis was interrogated non-stop for five days. He could not "meet with his attorney without written permission from the prosecutors." When Newman did confer with Karpis, the FBI placed listening devices in the room; attorneys aware of this ploy would begin "thumping on a table" to disrupt the eavesdropping.³⁷

The trial of Karpis, held at the St. Paul Federal Courts Building (now Landmark Center), proved to be an anticlimax. Karpis initially pleaded not guilty. But as the case was called for trial, "Thomas J. Newman, attorney for Karpis, told the court his client, one of the actual kidnapers of Hamm, desired to plead guilty."³⁸ Two weeks later Karpis offered "through his attorney, Thomas Newman, to plead guilty to the Bremer conspiracy" if kidnapping charges were dropped; the court accepted the offer.³⁹ He served terms in Leavenworth and Alcatraz.

Newman seems to have been involved with criminals more than was warranted by the duties of a defense attorney. When underworld banker Harry "Dutch" Sawyer and his wife wanted to adopt a child, Newman

referred them to a Ramsey County child welfare agent who then investigated "more than Newman said she would." (The Minnesota Children's Bureau terminated the adoption.) Karpis is known to have cooperated with the Mafia; and Newman distributed olive oil and Italian delicacies to family members, courtesy of his clients.⁴⁰

On 21 June 1933, Tom was called before the Ramsey county attorney for questioning. Fred Barker (as "J. Stanley Smith") had some "small business dealings" with Newman, asking him to write letters to collect a debt. When, just before the Hamm kidnapping, Barker rented a house in St. Paul for a hideout, he used Tom Newman as a reference (a second reference was a doctor accused of tending to Dillinger's bullet wounds.) Newman had told the homeowner that Smith "seemed all right" and "judging from his appearance" would probably pay. When the county attorney asked to whom the collection letters were addressed, Newman could not answer; Barker had asked for all carbon copies of the letters, and Newman had complied. When asked how Barker happened to select Newman as his attorney, Newman replied, "I don't really know."⁴¹

Evidently Newman suffered no repercussions from this episode.

Epilogue

In later years, Tom continued to practice law but spent less time in court. His sister made a home for him in the small apartment building she owned. She died in St. Paul on 4 April 1940 and was buried in Calvary Cemetery. After her death, Tom was cared for by a niece but descended into alcoholism. He died in St. Paul on 10 May 1958 and was buried in Roselawn Cemetery. At his death, he was the oldest practicing attorney in the city. Neither Grace nor Tom left descendants. Eleanor (Beach) Newman died in Houston, Texas, on 12 January 1962, and was cremated at Brookside Memorial Park in Houston.⁴²

Sources:

1. Paul Maccabee, *John Dillinger Slept Here; A Crooks' Tour of Crime and Corruption in St. Paul, 1920 - 1936* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society (hereafter MHS), 1995) pp. xi, 60, 262.
2. Maccabee, *John Dillinger Slept Here*, pp. 139, 193.
3. Carlton C. Qualey, "Some National Groups in Minnesota," *Minnesota History* (St. Paul: MHS) 31:1 (1950), p. 19.
4. Ramsey Co., Minn., death certificate 1922-023042, John B. Metcalfe (MHS). R. L. Polk's St. Paul Directory, 1904 pp. 1150 (Metcalfe), 1234 (Newman).
5. 1880 U.S. Census, Albany, Gentry Co., Mo., E.D. 274 p.16B, Thos. J. Newman age 5. Ramsey Co., Minn., death certificate 1958-028619, Thomas J. Newman (MHS).

6. St. Paul Directory, 1933 p. 852, Newman, Geo.
7. 1900 U.S. Census, Cambridge, Middlesex Co., Mass., E.D. 681 sheet 8, #33/35 Newman Thomas G. [sic]. Harvard Alumni Directory - A Catalogue of Former Students Now Living (Cambridge: Harvard Alumni Assn., 1919) p. 518 <<<http://distantcousin.com/yearbooks/maharvard/alum1919/>>> accessed 10 Dec 2009. (Newman's LL.B. degree was the equivalent of today's J.D.) 1900 U.S. Census, Mt. Vernon, Lawrence Co., Mo., Ward 4, E.D. 81 sheet 10, #224/226, George W. Newman MD; Thomas J. Newman, student. St. Paul Daily News, 21 June 1933, p. 7 "St. Paul Personalities" has education and pencil sketches.
8. Ramsey Co., Minn., death certificate 1940-24489, Mrs. Hattie Grace Saint, born Bethany, Wisconsin [sic] (MHS).
9. 1900 U.S. Census, Ramsey Co., Minn., St. Paul Ward 7, E.D. 121 sheet 7B, #116/153, John Metcalfe; Hugh J. McManus, wife Hattie G.
10. St. Paul Directory: 1902 p. 1056, McManus; 1905 p. 1114 McManus, Grace (wid Hugh J.)
11. St. Paul Directory: 1905 p. 1258 Newman Thomas J (Schmidt, Newman & Olson), p. 1171 Metcalfe, John B, p. 1479 Saint, Frank W, all r 99 Western ave N.
12. Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis microfilm, St. Luke's RC Church marriages 1890-1921, p. 170; witnesses: T. J. Newman, Domina T. J. Newman. Minnesota Genealogical Society, South St. Paul, Minn. (Hattie Grace Newman is said to have married three times; only this marriage has been documented.)
13. St. Paul Directory, 1917 p. 1406, Frank W. Saint death. St. Paul Pioneer Press 18 Oct 1916, p. 12, "at his home, 666 Hague avenue, Frank W. Saint." No death certificate found in MHS index.
14. 1910 U.S. Census, Ramsey Co., Minn., St. Paul Ward 7, E.D. 93 sheet 10A, #107/138, 479 Laurel ave, McManus, Hattie Grace, Wd; Newman, Thomas J. single; Saint, Frank W. roomer. 1920 Census, Newman not found; 1920 St. Paul City Directory, Newman, Thomas J. r 214 Baldwin ave. 1930 U.S. Census, Ramsey Co., Minn., St. Paul Ward 7, E.D. 62-84 sheet 5A, #48/101, 1200 Grand ave, Saint, Hattie G. widow; Newman, Thomas J. single. 1905 MN Census, St. Paul Ward 7 E.D. 28 sheet 32, Thomas J. "Neuman," which does not indicate marital status.
15. 1880 U. S. Census, Webster Co., Iowa, Ft. Dodge E.D. 227 page 29, #277/290, Beach, Bryant D.; and see Note 42. Illinois Statewide Marriage Index, Bryant D Beach #4394 Kane Co., <<www.ilsos.gov/Genealogy/MWeb/marrsrch.html>> accessed 17 Jan 2010.
16. St. Paul Directory: 1896 p. 288, Beach, Ella W.; 1897 p. 288, Beach, Ella W. stenogr NP Ry; 1899 p. 267, Beach, Ella W. moved to Mpls. Davison's Minneapolis Directory: 1899 p. 170, Beach, E. Weston, stenogr EG Walton; 1900 p. 181, Beach, Ellen W., stenogr EG Walton. The 1899 directory is the only source for middle name.
17. 1900 U.S. Census, Ramsey Co., Minn., St. Paul Ward 8, E.D.123 sheet 4A, #58/68 Ringold, Harry J.; sheet 4B, Beach, Elanore, stenographer . 1900 U.S. Census, Ft. Dodge, Webster Co., Iowa, Wahkonsa tp, E.D. 187 sheet 22A, Ella W. Beach, daughter, stenographer; but her family is at sheet 12A # 236/266.
18. Ramsey Co., Minn., Marriages, Bk 80 p. 427, SAM 433 roll 26, MHS. See also Note 12.
19. World War I Draft Registration Card, 12 Sep 1918, 22-3-16.C, #285, Thomas Jefferson Newman, <<Ancestry.com>> accessed 11 Jan 2010.
20. St. Paul Directory: 1928 p. 956; 1929 p. 964; 1932 p. 853.
21. St. Paul Directory: 1933 p. 852.
22. 1880 U.S. Census, Glendale, Hamilton Co. Ohio, E.D. 100 page 10B, #82/86 Ringold, John, born Holland; sons Harry, Stanley.
23. St. Paul Directory: 1902 p. 1347, Ringold Bros (J Harry and C Stanley) Shirt Mnfrs.
24. St. Paul Directory: 1904 p. 1402, Ringold, C Stanley r Highwood ave
25. St. Paul Directory: 1916, map location I19, Pond St; 1917, map, Ward 2 Pct. 10, Highwood. 1920 U.S. Census, St. Paul Ward 2, no one recorded on Pond St.
26. Maccabee, John Dillinger Slept Here, pp. 62, 218. St. Paul Daily News, 2 Feb 1934 p. 5 col. 1, Dakota Co. Attorney Harold Stassen on "unscrupulous defense attorneys."
27. Minneapolis Star Tribune, 27 Dec 2009 Sec. E:14, "Bad for business," review by Chuck Haga of *The Great Depression: a Diary*.
28. St. Paul Directory: 1930 p. 1058, Newman & Bowman
29. Muscatine (IA) Journal and News-Tribune, 10 Sep 1931, p. 10 col. 1.
30. St. Paul Daily News, 12 June 1933, p. 5 col. 2.
31. Timothy W. Bjorkman, Verne Sankey; *America's First Public Enemy* (Norman: U. of Oklahoma Press, 2007) pp. 87, 93, 212.
32. Maccabee, John Dillinger Slept Here, p. 184.
33. St. Paul Daily News, 8 May 1935 p. 2 col. 6. *The crusading News published partial trial transcripts.*
34. St. Paul Daily News, 2 May 1935, p. 3 col. 2, Newman cross-examines Madala; 8 May 1935, p. 1 col. 2.
35. Barker-Karpis Gang FBI Summary, File #7-576, p. 54. Paul Maccabee, St. Paul Gangster History Research Collection, MHS; St. Paul Daily News, 16 May 1935, p. 8 col. 2.
36. Rhinelander (WI) Daily News, 11 May 1934, p. 1 col. 2, "Provide Legal Aid for 'Moll'".
37. Maccabee, John Dillinger Slept Here, pp. 231-2, 237.
38. Maccabee, John Dillinger Slept Here, p. 269.
39. St. Paul Daily News, 14 Jul 1936, p. 1 col. 7.
40. Albert Lea (MN) Evening Tribune, 29 Jul 1936, p. 1 col. 4.
41. Maccabee, John Dillinger Slept Here, pp.141, 284, 263; and family sources.
42. St. Paul Daily News, 21 June 1933, p. 2 col. 3.
43. St. Paul Pioneer Press, 11 May 1958 Sec. 4:9 col. 1, T. J. Newman. *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Texas Deaths 1890-1976, Harris Co., #1962-03076; image 2235, Eleanor Beach Newman; in FamilySearch Record Search Pilot Site at <<pilot.familysearch.org>> accessed 17 Jan 2010.*

In memory and with gratitude to Lima Grace Johnson (1913-2010), Tom Newman's cousin, who preserved his story.

Software to Help with Surname Variations

By Tom Rice, CG

Surnames are at the heart of genealogy. However, they can be troublesome. Some of our ancestors did not feel bound by standardized spelling. Surnames were often spelled in different ways over many generations, sometimes even in the records created during a single generation. Our challenge is to figure out or imagine what these variants were.

As with many tasks of everyday life, there's a software program to help us. It is called Surname Suggestion List. It was created by Matt Combs and can be found at <<http://mattcombs.webs.com/sslmain.html>>.

Surname Suggestion List offers possible variants for a surname. The program groups the suggestions into categories: "Excellent," "Close" and "Longshot." With one mouse click, you can copy the lists onto your clipboard for pasting into other programs.

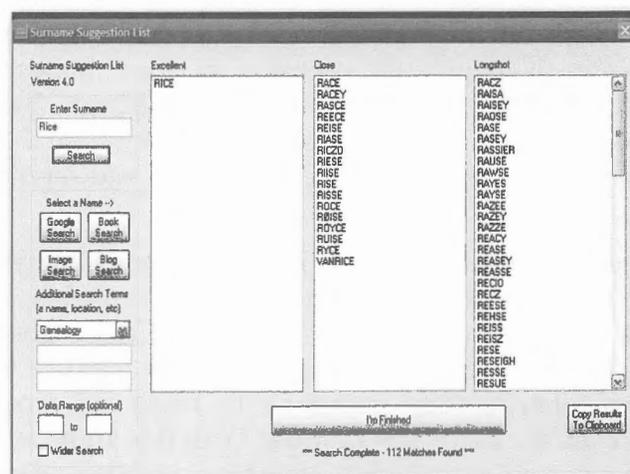
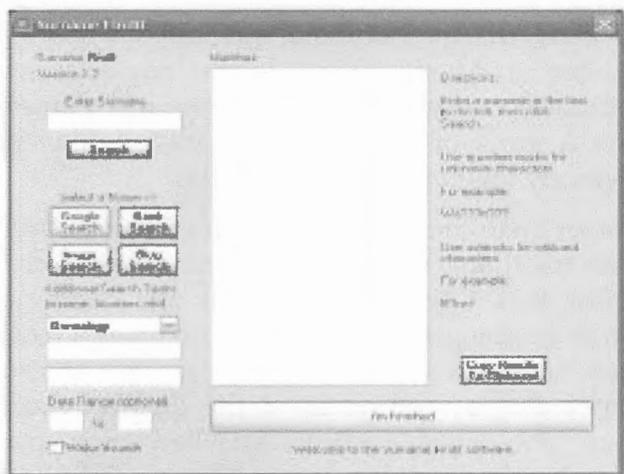
One of the program's key features is its ability to combine a selected surname variant with genealogically related terms and then automatically perform one of several types of web searches. From a drop-down list, you can choose searches of genealogy, birth, marriage, death, census or tax lists. You can further limit your search by adding up to two more terms. For example, you could pick "death" from the list and insert "Cook County" as the first additional search term and "Illinois" as the second. There are buttons for a Google search, a Google book search, a Google image search or a Google blog search. There is a check box for a wider search and a function to restrict the date range of a search.

Surname Suggestion List is a shareware program. If you do not make the suggested donation of \$15, the number of surnames you can search diminishes over time. With no "donation," a user can make up to 15 searches during the first four days of use, but that gradually decreases to two searches per day after day 15.

The program has no built-in help, but the Surname Suggestion List website provides some guidance in its general introduction to the program. However, given the simplicity of this program, little help is needed.

The program's author offers a companion program called Surname Findit that lets you search for surname variants using wild cards. For example, you can type "O*g*rd" or "O??g?rd" where the * represents any number of letters and the ? represents a single missing letter. You cannot mix *s and ?s in the same search. As with Surname Suggestion Lists, the number of permitted searches diminishes with time unless you make the suggested \$15 donation.

These are very useful tools and well worth the \$15. Both have helped me find surname variations that I almost surely would not have thought of on my own. In searching for Rice, it found only one "Excellent" match for Rice and that was Rice. It found Race, Racey, Rasce, Reece, Reise, Riase, Riczo, Riese, Riise, Rise, Risse, Roce, Røise, Royce, Ruise, Ryce as "Close" matches. Among the "Longshot" matches were Raisa, Ricenberg, Riso, Rossier, Ruyes and Wrase, to name a few.



RANDOM ACTS OF GENALOGICAL KINDNESS (RAOGK)

By Jen de Fiebre

New genealogy websites and organizations seem to pop up almost every day. One that I find myself returning to time and again is Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness <www.RAOGK.org>. As both a RAOGK user and volunteer, I have come to value the assistance it can provide researchers.

RAOGK is an entirely volunteer organization that provides a national network of individuals (and many in international locations), who offer their knowledge and assistance. This can come in a variety of forms, but most often it is in providing copies of cemetery records or photos of grave markers.

Some volunteers are very specific in the type of "Acts of Kindness" that they are willing to undertake; others leave the door wide open for any type of request. Although the volunteers agree to donate their time, they may ask for reimbursement of expenses related to fulfilling the request (such as parking, copier fees, etc.).

USING RAOGK CAN SAVE TIME AND MONEY

Most of us have seen the dramatic increase in the cost of obtaining vital records from state and county vital records offices. Also, it is not always possible for us to travel to locations where the records are stored. A local researcher may know of alternative resources that can save money.

Take for example, the cost of obtaining a death certificate in Minnesota. If you contact the county vital records department, the staff will gladly send you a copy for upwards of \$16 per certificate. However, a photocopy of that same death certificate only costs 35 cents if requested in-person at the Minnesota Historical Society Library <www.MNHS.org>. Twin Cities-area RAOGK volunteers can save researchers money by obtaining the records at MHS and sending them out to you.

A local researcher also may know of indexes that you aren't aware of. Here in Minnesota, we have a relatively new marriage record index <www.MNCounty.com>. This free online resource can help you identify the specific date, county, names of the bride and groom and even the certificate number. With this knowledge in hand, you completely eliminate a possible county search fee. As a frequent researcher at the Minnesota Historical Society Library, I also have learned that

Ramsey and Hennepin Counties have provided many of their historical marriage records to MHS. The county will charge you \$9 for a copy of that record, but at the library it would only be 35 cents.

Several months ago, I contacted a volunteer in Montana for help finding records of a distant cousin. I provided the information I had and asked if it would be possible to obtain copies of obituaries and, depending on cost, the death certificate. A few days later, the volunteer reported that she had found my records, and asked for \$4 to cover her costs. A week later I received a packet containing the death certificate and four newspaper articles about my cousin's death. (He had died unexpectedly in a boarding house). The fact that this woman did not stop when she found the first article is just one small example of how generous volunteers can be. These records gave me another lead in locating the place name of my maternal grandmother's family home in Germany.

LEARN NEW THINGS

The majority of requests I receive as a volunteer ask for copies of an obituary. Many of the people who ask for my help are not aware of the free birth and death certificate index available on the MHS website. I have received follow-up e-mails from countless researchers who have used these indexes to find new records. Of course, this usually leads to a request for another record! If the requestor includes additional details, I can frequently offer suggestions about other resources that may be helpful. If I notice on the death certificate or obituary that the individual was buried at Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis, I let the requestor know about the cemetery website <www.LakewoodCemetery.com>. A search of the cemetery records might identify previously unknown family members.

Another tip to consider: don't be afraid to use RAOGK in less traditional ways. I was planning a research trip to New York City. Although I was very comfortable with researching at the Municipal Archives, I had not found newspaper articles mentioning my ancestors. I knew that several years of the *Brooklyn Eagle*, a major newspaper in Brooklyn, had been placed online by the Brooklyn Public Library <<http://eagle.brooklynpubliclibrary.org>>. Through that free website I had located several obituaries and marriage notices

about various ancestors. Unfortunately, the website only has copies of the newspaper up to 1902, even though my family lived in the area until the 1940s. I knew that if I could access later editions, I would likely find additional articles that would help my research. I had resigned myself to having to search the microfilm directly, but was not sure where to find the films.

A quick scan of RAOGK volunteers in the New York City area revealed one who was willing to search obituaries. I sent him a request asking if there was an alternate online resource that covered the time period I was searching in, or if he had suggestions about locating the microfilms. Imagine how excited I was when he responded with an address of a website that contained scanned images of the later years <www.FultonHistory.com>. Within three days, I found many additional articles about various members of my family. One was the wedding announcement for my great-grandparents, Henry Ignatius Hamm and Josephine Magdalen Huschle, the latter whom I had the joy of knowing as a child. The details provided in the article and the extensive list of guests gave me a glimpse into what must have been quite a grand event for this equally grand lady.

In another request, I asked a fellow volunteer in Indiana to check for one of my surnames in a transcription of

burials in Tennessee cemeteries at the local library. Within a few days he responded to say that the book I referenced did not appear to have the surname I was seeking, but that he had searched further and found another cemetery transcription for the area that did list my ancestors. He made copies of the pages and then scanned them for me. Once again, a shining example of that extra effort that paid off in ways I could not have hoped.

DO SOMETHING GOOD FOR SOMEONE ELSE

An organization like RAOGK and the amazing volunteers that help support it are one of the countless reasons I love genealogy. Like any other volunteer organization, it is only as strong as the individuals who donate to the group (whether in time or money). Consider volunteering for RAOGK. Maybe there is a local cemetery where you could photograph tombstones, or you know the ins and outs of a local county courthouse. I encourage everyone reading this article to check out its website and learn more about this wonderful group. Any way you cut it, volunteering is an easy way to give back to our genealogy community. Besides, it's good karma – and who couldn't use a bit more of that!

Guide to Hennepin and Ramsey County Marriage Films at MGS Library

By Jen de Fiebre

Hennepin County, Minnesota
 Marriage Records - 1850-1917
 Call Number MFilm MN R-1900

With translation to Family History Library film number

Roll #	Film Description	FHL Film #
1	Marriage license indexes v. 1-2, ca. 1853-1888	1380467
2	Marriage license indexes v. 3-4, ca. 1888-1895	1380468
3	Marriage license indexes v. 5-6, ca. 1895-1905	1380469
4	Marriage license indexes v. 7-8, ca. 1905-1913	1380470
5	Marriage license indexes v. 9-10, ca. 1913-1918	1380471
6	Marriage licenses books 4-1, 1853-1868	1380419
7	Marriage licenses books 8-5, 1868-1873	1380420
8	Marriage licenses books 12-9, 1873-1878	1380421
9	Marriage licenses books 16-13, 1878-1881	1380422
10	Marriage licenses books 20-17, 1881-1883	1380423
11	Marriage licenses books 24-21, 1883-1884	1380424
12	Marriage licenses books 28-25, 1884-1885	1380425
13	Marriage licenses books 32-29, 1885-1886	1380426

14	Marriage licenses books 36-33, 1886-1887	1380427
15	Marriage licenses books 40-37, 1887-1888	1380428
16	Marriage licenses books 44-41, 1888-1889	1380429
17	Marriage licenses books 48-45, 1889-1890	1380430
18	Marriage licenses books 52-49, 1890-1891	1380431
19	Marriage licenses books 56-53, 1891-1893	1380432
20	Marriage licenses books 60-57, 1892-1895	1380433
21	Marriage licenses books 64-61, 1893-1894	1380434
22	Marriage licenses books 68-65, 1894-1895	1380435
23	Marriage licenses books 72-69, 1895-1897	1380436
24	Marriage licenses books 76-73, 1897-1898	1380437
25	Marriage licenses books 80-77, 1898-1899	1380438
26	Marriage licenses books 84-81, 1899-1900	1380439
27	Marriage licenses books 88-85, 1900-1901	1380440
28	Marriage licenses books 92-89, 1901-1902	1380441
29	Marriage licenses books 96-93, 1902	1380442
30	Marriage licenses books 100-97, 1902-1903	1380443
31	Marriage licenses books 104-101, 1903-1904	1380444
32	Marriage licenses books 108-105, 1904-1905	1380445
33	Marriage licenses books 112-109, 1905-1906	1380446
34	Marriage licenses books 116-113, 1905-1906	1380447
35	Marriage licenses books 120-117, 1906-1907	1380448
36	Marriage licenses books 124-121, 1907	1380449
37	Marriage licenses books 128-125, 1907-1908	1380450
38	Marriage licenses books 132-129, 1908-1909	1380451
39	Marriage licenses books 136-133, 1908-1909	1380452
40	Marriage licenses books 140-137, 1909-1910	1380453
41	Marriage licenses books 144-141, 1910	1380454
42	Marriage licenses books 148-145, 1910-1911	1380455
43	Marriage licenses books 152-149, 1911	1380456
44	Marriage licenses books 156-153, 1911-1912	1380457
45	Marriage licenses books 160-157, 1912	1380458
46	Marriage licenses books 164-161, 1912-1913	1380459
47	Marriage licenses books 168-165, 1913	1380460
48	Marriage licenses books 172-169, 1913-1914	1380461
49	Marriage licenses books 176-173, 1914	1380462
50	Marriage licenses books 180-177, 1914-1915	1380463
51	Marriage licenses books 184-181, 1915	1380464
52	Marriage licenses books 188-185, 1915-1916	1380465
53	Marriage licenses books 192-189, 1915-1916	1380466
54	Marriage affidavits books 1-4, Dec. 14, 1871 - Nov. 26, 1879	1380394
55	Marriage affidavits books 5-8, Nov. 26, 1879 - Sept. 25, 1883	1380395
56	Marriage applications books 9-12, Sept. 25, 1883 - March 3, 1886	1380396
57	Marriage applications books 13-16, March 3, 1886 - May 9, 1888	1380397
58	Marriage applications books 17-20, May 9, 1888 - July 1, 1890	1380398
59	Marriage applications books 21-24, July 1, 1890 - June 18, 1892	1380399
60	Marriage applications books 25-28, June 18, 1892 - June 6, 1894	1380400
61	Marriage applications books 29-32, June 6, 1894 - Aug. 24, 1896	1380401

62	Marriage applications books 33-36, Aug. 24, 1896 - Dec. 3, 1898	1380402
63	Marriage applications books 37-40, Dec. 3, 1898 - Nov. 23, 1900	1380403
64	Marriage applications books 41-44, Nov. 23, 1900 - Sept. 23, 1902	1380404
65	Marriage applications books 45-48, Sept. 23, 1902 - May 17, 1904	1380405
66	Marriage applications books 49-52, May 17, 1904 - Oct. 16, 1905	1380406
67	Marriage applications books 53-56, Oct. 16, 1905 - Feb. 1, 1907	1380407
68	Marriage applications books 57-60, Feb. 2, 1907 - May 26, 1908	1380408
69	Marriage applications books 61-64, May 26, 1908 - July 28, 1909	1380409
70	Marriage applications books 65-68, July 29, 1909 - Sept. 12, 1910	1380410
71	Marriage applications books 69-72, Sept. 12, 1910 - Oct. 4, 1911	1380411
72	Marriage applications books 73-76, Oct. 4, 1911 - Oct. 25, 1912	1380412
73	Marriage applications books 77-80, Sept. 6, 1912 - Sept. 10, 1913	1380413
74	Marriage applications books 81-84, Sept. 10, 1913 - Aug. 5, 1914	1380414
75	Marriage applications books 85-88, Aug. 5, 1914 - June 22, 1915	1380415
76	Marriage applications books 89-92, June 22, 1915 - May 16, 1916	1380416
77	Marriage applications books 93-96, May 16, 1916 - Feb. 19, 1917	1380417

Ramsey County, Minnesota
Marriage Records - 1850-1917
Call Number MFilm MN R-1900
With translation to Family History Library film number

Roll #	Film Description	FHL Film #
1	MARRIAGE INDEXES no. 1 (p. 1-93) A - Con 1850-1882	1314520
2	MARRIAGE INDEXES no. 1 (p. 94-end) Co - Z 1850-1882 no. 2 1882-1888	1314521
3	MARRIAGE INDEXES no. 3 1888-1892 no. 4 (p. 1-457) A - Reh 1892-1901	1314522
4	MARRIAGE INDEXES no. 4 (p. 458-end) Rei - Z 1892-1901 no. 5 1901-1907 no. 6 (p. 1-161) A - Fl 1907-1911	1314523
5	MARRIAGE INDEXES no. 6 (entire) A - Z 1907-1911 no. 7 (p. 1-601) A - Y 1911-1915	1314524
6	MARRIAGE INDEXES no. 7(p. 610-end) Z & cont. letters 1911-1915 no. 8 1915-1917	1314525
7	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 1 - v. 2, v. A - v. B 1850-1855, 1858-1866 (v. B has ministers' certificates 1866-1885)	1314545
8	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. C - v. F (p. 1-325) 1865-1870	1314546
9	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. F (p. 324-end) - v. I (p. 1-225) 1870-1874	1314547
10	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. I(p.224-end), v. K - M (p. 1-179) 1874-1878	1314548
11	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. M (p. 178-end) - v. O (p. 1-473) 1878-1881	1314549
12	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. O (p. 472-end) - v. Q 1881-1882	1314550
13	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. R - v. T (p. 1-175) 1882-1884	1314551
14	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. T (p. 174-end) - v. V (p. 1-451) 1884-1885	1314552
15	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. V (p. 450-end) - v. X 1885-1886	1314553
16	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. Y - v. Z, v. 1 (p. 1-127) 1886-1887	1314554
17	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 1 (p. 126-end) - v. 3 (p. 1-295) 1887-1889	1314555
18	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 3 (p. 294-end) - v. 5 (p. 1-451) 1889	1314516
19	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 5 (p. 450-end) - v. 7 (p. 1-451) 1889-1890	1314517
20	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 7 (p.450-end) - v. 9 (p. 1-611) 1890-1891	1314518
21	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 9 (p. 610-end) - v. 11 1891-1892	1314519
1 *	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 12 - v. 13 1892-1893	1314520
22	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 14 - v. 15 (p. 1-489) 1893-1894	1313193
23	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 15(p. 490-end) - v. 17(p. 1-663) 1894-1895	1313194

* Records filmed out of sequence

24	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 17(p. 662-end) - v. 19(p. 1-621) 1895-1897	1313328
25	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 19(p. 622-end) - v. 21(p. 1-635) 1897-1898	1313329
26	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 21(p. 634-end) - v. 23(p. 1-687) 1898-1899	1313330
27	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 23 (p. 686-end) - v. 25 1899-1900	1313331
28	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 26 - v. 28 (index A-L) 1900-1902	1313332
29	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 28 (Index K-Z, p. 1-end) - v. 29 1901-1902	1313333
30	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 30 - v. 31 1902-1903	1313334
31	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 32 - v. 33 1903-1904	1313335
32	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 34 1904	1313336
33	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 35 - v. 36 (p. 1-427) 1904-1905	1313337
34	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 36(p. 426-end) - v. 38(p. 1-385) 1905	1313338
35	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 38(p. 384-end) - v. 40(p. 1-343) 1905-1906	1313339
36	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 40(p. 342-end) - v. 42(p. 1-421) 1906-1907	1313340
37	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 42(p. 420-end) - v. 44(p. 1-369) 1907	1313341
38	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 44(p. 368-end) - v. 46(p. 1-353) 1907-1908	1313342
39	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 46(p. 352-end) - v. 48(p. 1-321) 1908-1909	1313343
40	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 48(p. 320-end) - v. 50(p. 1-269) 1909	1313344
41	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 50(p. 268-end) - v. 52(p. 1-251) 1909-1910	1313345
42	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 52(p. 252-end) - v. 54(p. 1-235) 1910	1313346
43	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 54(p. 238-end) - v. 55(p. 1-557) 1910-1911	1313415
44	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 55 (p. 558-end) - v. 57 1911	1313416
45	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 58 - v. 59 1911-1912	1313417
46	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 60 - v. 61 1912	1313418
47	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 62 - v. 63 1912-1913	1313419
48	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 64 - v. 65 (p. 1-579) 1913	1313420
49	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 65(p. 580-end) - v. 67(p. 1-559) 1913-1914	1313421
50	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 67(p. 558-end) - v. 69(p. 1-601) 1914	1313422
51	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 69(p. 600-end) - v. 71(p. 1-243) 1914	1313423
52	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 71(p. 242-end) - v. 73(p. 1-195) 1914-1915	1314542
53	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 73 (p. 194-end) - v. 75 (p. 1-289) 1915	1314543
54	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 75(p. 288-end) - v. 77(p. 1-401) 1915-1916	1314544
7 *	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 77 (p. 400-end) 1916	1314545
55	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 1 - v. 2, v. A - v. H 1850-1873 (v. B has minister's certificates 1866-1885)	1379170
56	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. I, v. K - v. P 1873-1882	1379171
57	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. Q - v. W (p. 1-313) 1882-1886	1379172
58	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. W(index, p.312-end)-v. Z, v. 1-3 1886-1889	1379173
59	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 4 - v. 10 1889-1892	1379174
60	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 11 - v. 16 1892-1895	1379175
61	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 17 - v. 22 1895-1899	1379176
62	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 23 - v. 28 1899-1902	1379177
63	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 29 - v. 34 1902-1904	1379240
64	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 35 - v. 40 1904-1906	1379241
65	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 41 - v. 46 1906-1908	1379242
66	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 47 - v. 52 (p. 1-385) 1908-1910	1379243
67	MARRIAGE RECORDS v.52 (index, p.384-end)-v.58 (p.1-441) 1910-1911	1379244
68	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 58 (index, p. 440-end) - v. 64 1911-1913	1379245
69	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 65 - v. 70 1913-1914	1379246
70	MARRIAGE RECORDS v. 71 - v. 77 1914-1916	1379247

Minnesota County and Local Records Online

By Rick Crume

Most genealogists take advantage of online federal records such as censuses, military pension files and passenger lists. But, they should also make use of the growing number of county and local records that are now available online. Here's an overview of some of the best Web sites for county and local records, with a focus on Minnesota resources.

County Historical and Genealogical Society Web Sites

Genealogical and historical societies are some of the best resources for local records, such as cemetery transcriptions, marriage indexes and obituary collections. Many societies are putting this information online. Usually it's open to anyone, but sometimes access is restricted to members. If only the indexes are online, you may need to order copies of the actual obituaries or record books, or pay a local researcher to get complete details.

Here are a few examples of what you can find on society Web sites:

- The Pennington County Historical Society <www.pvillage.org> offers a free search covering hundreds of thousands of names in photographs, cemetery records, obituary listings, city directories and landowner lists.
- The Washington County Name Index from the Washington County Historical Society <www.wchsmn.org> lists more than 110,000 names from 140 sources, such as Stillwater deaths from 1919 to 1921 and 1930 to 1932 and the Washington County Coroner's Record from 1923 to 1932.
- The Red River Valley Genealogical Society <www.redrivergenealogy.com> has funeral home indexes <www.redrivergenealogy.com/htmls/indexes.htm>.
- You can get more details for \$2 per page.

Several directories will point you to society Web sites for the counties where your ancestors lived.

- The Minnesota Genealogical Society has a directory of Minnesota Historical and Genealogical Societies by county <mngs.org/society4.shtml>.

- Minnesota Historical Society has a directory of Minnesota Historical Organizations <www.mnhs.org/localhistory/mho/chscllo.html>. For a national directory, see the D'Addezio Directory of Historical and Genealogical Societies <www.daddezio.com/society/hill/index.html>.
- Census Finder <www.censusfinder.com/genealogy-society-directory.htm> lists societies in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. The state and county pages on USGenWeb <www.usgenweb.org> also have information on many genealogical and historical societies.

Genealogy Networks

Two similar sites, The USGenWeb Project <www.usgenweb.org> and the American History and Genealogy Project (USGenNet) <www.ahgp.org>, both run by volunteers, are useful jumping off points for genealogical research in every U.S. state. Each site has state pages which, in turn, are linked to county pages where you might find information on local courthouses and societies, links to online records and even transcribed records and indexes. For example, The USGenWeb Project for Norman County, Minnesota, has marriage and death indexes and census transcriptions.

Keep an eye on the new FamilySearch Wiki <wiki.familysearch.org>, a collaborative site with genealogical resources for countries, states and counties.

Ancestry.com's County Databases

Ancestry.com (\$19.95 a month or \$155.40 a year for the U.S. collection) recently made it easier to locate the service's databases dealing with specific counties. Follow these steps to find county databases: (1) select "Search All Records" from the Search tab (2) scroll down to the "Explore by Location" section and select a place, such as Minnesota, from the map or list of states, and, (3) on the right side of the page, select a county under "Narrow by county."

For example, if you select Rice, you'll get links to nine databases, including Rice County, Minnesota Births, 1870-74 and Rice County, Minnesota Directories, 1888-1953.

County Government Web Sites

Some Minnesota county government offices have published indexes or records online. For example, the Clay County Recorder <www.co.clay.mn.us> has online indexes to marriages from 1872 to 1939 and deaths from 1872 to 1980.

Be sure to check the Minnesota Genealogical Society's links to Minnesota county resources <www.mnngs.org/resources.shtml>. It includes links to county government Web sites, county registrar/recorder's addresses, online records and references to records published in the *Minnesota Genealogist*.

Internet Directories and Search Engines

Internet directories and search engines are great tools for locating online genealogy resources at the county level. Cyndi's List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet <www.cyndislist.com> now has sites arranged by county. For example, links for Becker County,

Minnesota cover cemeteries, census, land records, maps, societies, vital records and other topics.

Another huge directory, Linkpendium <www.linkpendium.com>, has links to numerous online genealogy resources at the county level. For example, the 399 links for Le Sueur County, Minnesota cover cemeteries, history, maps, newspapers and more.

A simple Google search <www.google.com> might reveal even more county resources. For instance, a search on "Kanabec County Minnesota genealogy" turns up dozens of useful sites, such as record guides and gravestone transcriptions.

While a small percentage of all local and county records are online, it's well worthwhile to check these resources for the localities and counties where your ancestors lived. You just might discover records that would have taken you much more time and money to retrieve offline.

About our Authors

Rick Crume of Glyndon, Minnesota, is a contributing editor for *Family Tree Magazine*, and has written for several other genealogy magazines including *Family Chronicle* and the *NGS News Magazine*. Specializing in online research, genealogy software and British genealogy, he is the author of *Plugging into Your Past: How to Find Real Family History Records Online*.

Jen de Fiebre enjoys sharing research discoveries with her paternal grandfather who began tracing his family in the 1970's. Her passion is fueled by the amazing friends she has gained through genealogy. She is Second Vice President of MGS, a member of the Germanic Genealogy Society, and volunteers for Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness <www.RAOGK.org> and Find A Grave <www.FindAGrave.com>.

Gayle Geber, against all advice, started simultaneously researching 16 lines of her family five years ago, and has lived to write about it. Along the way she has learned more about Western Pennsylvania bituminous coal mining in the 1850s than she ever dreamed of learning. She enjoys researching her ancestors in Bavaria, Hanover, Alsace, and Luxembourg.

Sue Kratsch is a retired computer professional who spends what used to be her working hours on family history. She is past president of the Yankee Genealogical Society and past secretary of the MGS board. She lives and researches in St. Paul.

Lois Abromitis Mackin researches Polish, Lithuanian, Cornish, German, Irish, and Scots ancestors in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut. She holds a doctorate in history from Brown University, chairs the MGS Education Committee, and serves on the MGS Board of Directors. She lives in Plymouth, Minnesota.

Janet Savelkous Mitchell, a Minnesotan of German, Dutch, and Pommern ethnicity, has researched her ancestors for more than 40 years. In 2007, she and her husband started Family Tree Finders, a genealogical research company which specializes in German Kurrent/Sutterlin script translations and makes and sells genealogy-themed cards and other items.

Tom Rice, CG, is a professional genealogical researcher, author, and lecturer. He is managing editor of the Irish Genealogical Society International's journal, *The Septs*, and a former Director of the Minnesota Genealogical Society.

MGS Branches, Special Interest Groups, and Affiliates

MGS is your gateway to all your ethnic roots. The following MGS Branches and Affiliates make research materials available to MGS, Branch and Affiliate members at the MGS Library and Research Center. Unless otherwise noted, address correspondence to each group at 1185 Concord St. N., South St. Paul, MN 55075.

MGS BRANCHES

Canadian Genealogical and Heritage Society of Minnesota

<www.rootsweb.com/~mncghs>

Danish-American Genealogical Society

<www.danishgenealogy.org>

Germanic Genealogy Society

<www.rootsweb.com/~mnggs/GGS.html>

Irish Genealogical Society International

<www.irishgenealogical.org>

Norwegian-American Genealogical Association

<www.norwegianamerican.org>

Polish Genealogical Society of Minnesota

<www.rootsweb.com/~mnpolgs/pgs-mn>

Pommern Regional Group of Minnesota

<www.rootsweb.com/~mnprgm/PRG>

LIBRARY AFFILIATES

Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International

<www.cgs.org>

Ostfriesen Genealogical Society of America

<www.ogsa.us>

MGS MEMBER INTEREST GROUPS

(informal groups for MGS Members)

MGS Writing Group

Contact: Kathy Lund (mlund8307@yahoo.com)

Research Study Group

Contact: Jay Fonkert (jfonkert@aol.com) or Tom Rice (tomkrice@comcast.net)

Beginning Genealogy Group

Contact: Lois Mackin (loismackin@aol.com)

Scottish Genealogy Group

Contact: Bergetta Monroe (bergetta1@q.com)

Low Countries Group

(Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands)

Contact: Jay Fonkert (jfonkert@aol.com)

England and Wales Group

Contact: Jay Fonkert (jfonkert@aol.com)

African-American Genealogy Group

Contact: Bergetta Monroe (bergetta1@q.com)

What's Next?

By MGS Education Committee

Most genealogical sources carry several pieces of information. Use all the information and follow the clues to other sources to flesh out your ancestors' life situation.

MINNESOTA STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH Division of Birth and Death Records and Vital Statistics CERTIFICATE OF DEATH		24735 Registered No.
1 PLACE OF DEATH: STATE OF MINNESOTA County <u>RAMSEY</u> Township _____ Village _____ City <u>ST. PAUL</u> No. <u>776 - SEMINARY AVE</u> St. (If hospital or institution, give its name, ward or St. and No.) Length of stay: In hospital or institution _____ days In this community _____ days		2 USUAL RESIDENCE OF DECEASED: (If an institution, also give its name and address prior to admission) State <u>MINN</u> County <u>RAMSEY</u> Township _____ Village _____ City <u>ST. PAUL</u> No. <u>776 - SEMINARY AVE</u> St. Is residence within limits of city or incorporated village? <u>YES</u>
2 FULL NAME <u>Thomas - B. Reeve</u>	MEDICAL CERTIFICATION	
3 4 (a) SOCIAL SECURITY NO. <u>474-29-7815</u> No 5 SEX <u>Male</u> COLOR OF HAIR <u>White</u> (Specify Mental, Physical or Chronological (Within 24 hours)) 6 7 (a) MARRIED <u>MARRIED</u> 8 (b) AGE at death <u>53</u> Years	9 10 11 DATE OF DEATH <u>May - 19 - 1944</u> 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 29 I HEREBY CERTIFY: That I am a duly licensed physician, and that I have seen the body of the deceased, and that the date and cause of death stated above are correct. Immediate cause of death <u>Heart failure</u> Duration _____ 30 Cause <u>Heart failure, Coronary disease</u> 31 Other conditions (Include processes within 2 months of death) 32 Major diseases or conditions 33 Of course	
17 USUAL OCCUPATION <u>Railroad helper</u>	34 If death was due to external cause, fill in the following: (a) Accident, suicide, or homicide (specify) (b) Date of occurrence (c) Where did injury occur? (City or town) (County) (State) (d) Did injury occur in or above home, on farm, in industrial plant, in public place? (Specify type of plant) While at work? (e) Means of injury	
18 INDUSTRY OR BUSINESS <u>Railroad</u>	35 Signature of Informant <u>Olmon V. Olson</u> M. D. Address <u>513 N. Dale St.</u> From Name <u>Olmon V. Olson</u> M. D. Address <u>513 N. Dale St.</u> Date <u>May 2 - 1944</u>	
19 RESIDENCE (City or Town) (State or Country) <u>IRELAND</u>	36 Signature of Registrar <u>C. P. Russell</u> M. D. Address <u>904 W. 12 St.</u> Date <u>May 2 - 1944</u>	
20 NAME <u>Don't know</u>	37 Signature of Informant <u>Olmon V. Olson</u> M. D. Address <u>513 N. Dale St.</u> From Name <u>Olmon V. Olson</u> M. D. Address <u>513 N. Dale St.</u> Date <u>May 2 - 1944</u>	
21 RESIDENCE (City or Town) (State or Country) <u>IRELAND</u>	38 Signature of Registrar <u>C. P. Russell</u> M. D. Address <u>904 W. 12 St.</u> Date <u>May 2 - 1944</u>	
22 MAIDEN NAME <u>Julia Whalen</u>	39 Signature of Informant <u>Olmon V. Olson</u> M. D. Address <u>513 N. Dale St.</u> From Name <u>Olmon V. Olson</u> M. D. Address <u>513 N. Dale St.</u> Date <u>May 2 - 1944</u>	
23 RESIDENCE (City or Town) (State or Country) <u>IRELAND</u>	40 Signature of Registrar <u>C. P. Russell</u> M. D. Address <u>904 W. 12 St.</u> Date <u>May 2 - 1944</u>	
24 THE ABOVE IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE Informant's name <u>Olmon V. Olson</u> Address <u>513 N. Dale St.</u>	41 Signature of Registrar <u>C. P. Russell</u> M. D. Address <u>904 W. 12 St.</u> Date <u>May 2 - 1944</u>	
25 Burial at <u>CALVARY</u> (Specify No. of lot) 26 Signature of Minister or Undertaker <u>Olmon V. Olson</u> M. D. Address <u>513 N. Dale St.</u>	42 Signature of Registrar <u>C. P. Russell</u> M. D. Address <u>904 W. 12 St.</u> Date <u>May 2 - 1944</u>	
27 From Name <u>Olmon V. Olson</u> M. D. Address <u>513 N. Dale St.</u>	43 Signature of Registrar <u>C. P. Russell</u> M. D. Address <u>904 W. 12 St.</u> Date <u>May 2 - 1944</u>	

Follow the clues:

1. Residential address – match with households in censuses and city directories.
2. Social Security Number – order Thomas Reeve’s social security application.
3. Spouse’s name – match with information from censuses and directories, then look for marriage record to find her maiden name.
4. Occupation – match in censuses and directories; find out where Thomas worked.
5. Industry or business – find out which railroad he worked for and try to get pension file from the Railroad Retirement Board.
6. Mother’s maiden name – more often, the informant knows the father’s name, but not the mother’s name; look for the Whalen family.
7. Burial – visit the cemetery and obtain the interment record from the cemetery office.
8. Funeral Director – find out if funeral home records still exist.
9. Date of Death and length of illness – learn not only when Thomas died, but how long he was ill.
10. Cause of death – compare with other family members to learn about family health history.

MGS Horizons - Upcoming Events

Watch for your MGS Minnesota Families newsletter around the first of each month for complete event details or check the MGS Calendar at <www.mnsgs.org>.

- January 15* MGS Intermediate Genealogy @ Minnesota History Center
Documenting Births, Marriages and Deaths I: Government Records
Documenting Births, Marriages and Deaths II: Church and Cemetery Records
- February* *Who Do You Think You Are?* Viewing Party (date to be announced)
- February 19* Members' Morning
Writing, Beginning Genealogy and Research Study Groups
- February 19* MGS Intermediate Genealogy @ Minnesota History Center
Finding Clues to Immigrant Origins: Tracing Your Family Back to Europe
Getting from There to Here: Following Your Ancestor's Migration Trails
- March 19* MGS Intermediate Genealogy @ Minnesota History Center
Capturing and Bringing Life to Your U.S. Farm Ancestor
Sources for Reconstructing a Sourdough Miner's Life: Three Case Studies
- March-May* The New Family Search (dates to be announced)
3-part class on how to get the most of the new Family History Library Website
- April 23* MGS Intermediate Genealogy @ Minnesota History Center
Military Records I and II
- April 30* British Isles Day genealogy conference
Featuring David Rencher
West Hennepin Technical College
- May 7* MGS Members's Morning
Writing, Beginning Genealogy and Research Study Groups
- May 21* MGS Intermediate Genealogy @ Minnesota History Center
Pathways for Genealogy Research: Learning from Case Studies
- June 25* MGS Summer Genealogy Conference
Winona, Minnesota



Minnesota Genealogical Society
1185 Concord St. N., Ste. 218
South Saint Paul MN 55075

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Minnesota Genealogical Society

A member of the National Genealogical Society and the Federation of Genealogical Societies

Organized in 1969, the Minnesota Genealogical Society is a nonprofit organization that promotes interest in genealogy and family history, provides genealogical education, and collects genealogical, historical and biographical materials relating to Minnesota families.

Membership: MGS membership is open to anyone interested in genealogy or family history. Members receive free admission to the MGS Library and Research Center, a digital edition of the MGS newsletter *Minnesota Families*, the MGS journal *Minnesota Genealogist*, and discounts for classes and conferences. The Society offers several free learning groups throughout the year. Annual dues are \$35 for individuals and \$45 for families.

Branches and Interest Groups. MGS supports several ethnic and nationality branch organizations and interest groups, including Canadian, German, Polish, Pommern, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Scottish, English-Welch, Low Countries, and Yankee, (New England), as well as a Family History Writing Group and a Research Study Group. In addition, the Irish Genealogical Society International, the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International and the Ostfriesen Genealogical Society of America maintain their library collections in the MGS Library and Research Center.

Research Policy. Volunteer members of the MGS Research Committee conduct limited research using collections in the MGS Library and Research Center (including Minnesota city directories, Hennepin and Ramsey County marriage records, some Twin Cities area Catholic church records and online genealogy databases). A research fee of \$20 per hour supports operation of the MGS Library and Research Center. Make requests to MGS Research Committee, 1185 Concord St. N., South St. Paul, MN 55075, or research@mngs.org. The Research Committee provide you a list of independent professional researchers, but does not endorse or be responsible for their services.

Book Reviews. Authors and publishers are invited to submit books for reviews by MGS volunteers. Send books to: Managing Editor, *Minnesota Genealogist*, 1185 Concord St. N., South St. Paul, MN 55075. Please include price and ordering information. All books received will be added to the MGS Library and Research Center reference collection.

Donations. MGS is grateful for donations that support the Society's library and educational programs. The Minnesota Genealogical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization under rules of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and is a registered Minnesota nonprofit corporation.

MGS Office and Library: Suite 218, 1185 Concord St. N., South St. Paul, MN 55075. Exit to Concord St. from either southbound U.S. 52 or from east- or west-bound I-494.

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