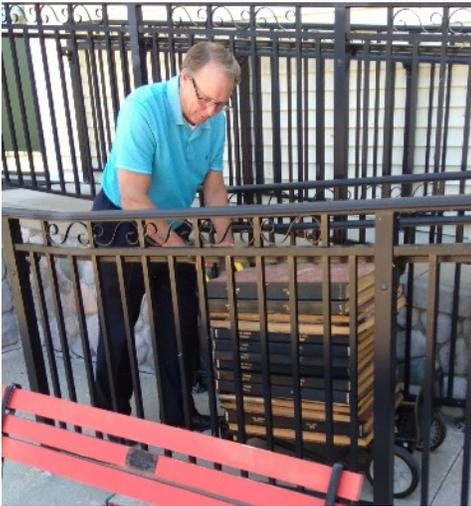




# HURON SHORES GENOGRAM

## Oscoda, Michigan

### HSGS UPDATE



Bruce Smith with the papers loaded on the cart.

#### THE GOOD NEWS

On receipt of grants from the NE Michigan Community Foundation and the Iosco/Arenac District Library and donations from members of HSGS and Friends in amounts needed to cover the costs, paper issues of the Tawas Herald for the years 1953 to 1981 have been shipped off for digitization. It will take about 4 months and then a little time for the Iosco Arenac District Library tech to get them on the web site. So

be patient a little while longer.

#### THE NOT SO GOOD NEWS

The Swedish Genealogy and the Native American programs scheduled for this year have been postponed until next year. The proposed cemetery walk planned for this fall is going to be in 2021.

#### THE REALLY BAD NEWS

Judy will be moving in early 2021 to SE Michigan. She will not be running for the office of President next year. We are in dire need of additional volunteers to help us with some of the many tasks she has been doing for us, including research, programming, coordination of indexing, review of indexes, acquisition of collection materials, data base management to name a few. Let us know if you will be able to help us out in time for her to orient and train you in an area that you may have an interest in.

#### MEANWHILE

You can make an appointment to meet with an HSGS member who will provide family research assistance at the library by sending an email to [huronshoresgs@yahoo.com](mailto:huronshoresgs@yahoo.com) or calling the library - 989-739-9581.

### HSGS Genealogical Meetings and Events

#### October

15 HSGS Business virtual Zoom meeting, 5:30 pm. Send an email to receive an invitation to attend.

#### November

14 MGC Virtual Fall event featuring Sonny Morton, <https://mimgc.org/>

#### January

21 HSGS Business Meeting, either virtual on Zoom or at a location TBD, 5:30 pm



## A TRIBUTE TO ALONZO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

From your recent newsletter, I was saddened to learn of the death of Alonzo Sherman. Several years ago, some members of my local historical society suggested that I conduct genealogical research on my ancestors. Initially, I did some routine research through the internet, but the project did not excite me at first. However, I was curious as to the place of birth of my grandmother Elsie, born in 1898 in, of all places, the small town of Tawas City; Michigan. After all, her German-born parents lived in Chicago, and her siblings were all born in Chicago. So, I decided to drive up to Tawas City in what turned out to be my first of many genealogical road trips.

Most important to the trip were my visits to HSGS at the Parks Library, where I met Alonzo Sherman. With his help, I found out that my great-great-grandfather Wilhelm Stark(e) moved to Tawas City from Germany in the mid-1880s with his four children, Martha, Rudolph, my great-grandmother Clara, and Helena. I am guessing that Clara, who lived in Chicago, was visiting her father and siblings in Tawas City when my grandmother Elsie was born.

With Alonzo's help and the resources of HSGS, I was able to fill in part of the story of my Stark family ancestors. This included:

HSGS's newspaper collection: In addition to an obituary for Wilhelm Stark, who died in 1903, one story in particular caught my attention. It

mentioned the attendance from Chicago of "Mesdames [Mrs.] Robt. Steinberg [i.e. great-grandmother Clara) and W. Brown [i.e. grandmother Elsie Braun, not Brown]" to the 1922 wedding of one of Rudolph Stark's daughters. I also found several other stories on the Starks.

The Emery photo collection: When grandmother Elsie died, my mother discovered an old photo album in the attic of Elsie's house. The album, probably owned by great-grandmother Clara, contained several late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century photographs. Unfortunately, no one could identify the people appearing in any of the photos. However, because a few of the photos were taken by A.G. Emery and records identified who ordered the photos, I was able to identify specific members of the Stark family as being in some of the photos,

Early records of Emanuel Lutheran Church: I found various references to the Stark family when reviewing these records, including the confirmation of great-grandmother Clara. In a couple of my visits to Tawas City, I attended services at Emanuel Lutheran. One of the older members of the church told me that Rudolph Stark had built the altar for the original church building.

In large Part because of the help I received from Alonzo and HSGS, I became a Genealogy enthusiast

Ron Roselli

### Blogs Judy Sheldon Follows

Judy Russell

<https://www.legalgenealogist.com/blog/>

Thomas MacIntee

<https://abundantgenealogy.com/>

Dick Eastman

<https://blog.eogn.com/>

Barking Up the Wrong Tree

<https://buwt.blogspot.com/>

## The Story of Frank and Martha Merkel Family and Farm

Submitted by Judy Sheldon

This simple mural on the wall at the back entrance of the Top Of Michigan Insurance Company in Oscoda seemed like a straight forward story about a dairy in Oscoda, but like so many of our research projects it has turned out to be much more complex. The mural is of the Merkel Farm



milk wagon in front of the J B Soucie Tourist Café. The mural, among other murals, was a grant project for local artists in 1985. There are so many stories and memories of this family that I can only skim the surface of what they meant to the people in the Oscoda area. I have to thank right up front William Parsons Sr, Margaret Torongo, Theresa Harmon, and the Oscoda Au Sable History Group on Face Book for their comments, memories and research.

Frank Merkel was born 30 March 1871 in Potajewo, Poland to John Merkel/Merkiel and Josepha Przybysz. Połajewo is a village in Czarńków-Trzcianka County, Greater Poland Voivodeship, in west-central Poland. He immigrated with his parents, grandparents and aunts and uncles, arriving in New York in 1873 and then moving to Gaylord in 1874. His uncle Michael Merkel is cited as the first Polish homesteader in the Gaylord area "The following year, 1874, saw the first Polish homestead established by Michael Merkel two miles east of Gaylord."

<http://www.otsego.org/ochs/Affiliated%20Projects/Polish%20Heritage/The%20Polish%20in%20Otsego%20County%20pdf-%20Laura%20Walker.pdf>

Sadly Frank's father passed away shortly after they came to live in Gaylord, perhaps in 1875. By 1878 Josepha had remarried to Anthony Smarzyanski in Bay City, MI. They are living in Dover, Otsego

County, MI in the 1880 census. Time passes and there is no word of Frank until he marries Martha Graffa, 26 January 1892, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Oscoda, MI. From this point on he is a resident of Oscoda. He and Martha (1876-1945) had 14 children

and only one died as a baby:

John (1892-1918), Lena (1893-1970) married Christopher Grabow, Stanley Michael (1895-1971), Victor Edward (1897-1965), Romie Benjamin (1901-1964), Angela T (1902-1981), Leo Anthony (1904-1982) married Melissa Nevin, Veronica (1906-1990) married Edward Klinski/Klinke, Theresa Mary (1908-1983) married George Kunkle, Helen Cecilia (1910-1988) married Harry Curley, Frances Blanche (1911-1964), David Paul (1913-1983) Marion Geneva Johnson, Gertrude Priscilla (1916-2004) married Charles F Laubrends and Dorothy (1919-1919) was stillborn and is buried in Bay City. The Merkels were solid members of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Oscoda and many family members are buried in the Sacred Heart Cemetery.

Frank settled on a farm shortly after arriving in Oscoda, purchasing it in 1907. This area of the Au Sable is pretty interesting in itself. Native Americans had farmed this area for years, as early as 1845. Various treaties changed the possession between Native Americans and the United States until it finally was the property of white farmers. The farm bordered the Au Sable River as it was before the Consumer Power dams were built. It consisted of 250 acres, from the Au Sable River up the Van Ettan Creek, including what is now Hull Island, and pastured cows almost to Foote site. The

Continued on page 4

The Story of Frank and Martha Merkel, continued from page 3

D&M Railroad cut through some of the fields. Picture from the river to almost Cedar Lake Road and from Hull Island to around F-41. Frank and several other land owners took Consumer Power to court, all the way to the Michigan Supreme Court, asking for restitution for damaged property because of the dams Consumers had built on the river. Frank was awarded eighteen thousand dollars in 1922, put it in the bank and then the Depression wiped it out. After this Consumer's bought the farm from Frank, who then remained and farmed it, later buying back some of it and this portion has remained in family hands ever since. Consumers didn't want any more legal hassles from flooding so they bought and sold property along the river retaining river rights.

The Merkel family lost their oldest son, John, in World War One, killed in action in France. It is said that Martha sat up in bed and declared that he had died and when his body was returned to Oscoda she made sure every inch of the coffin was nailed shut. John is one of the namesakes for the LaPlant, Loud Merkel American Legion Post 274 in Au Sable.

The history of being a good spot for farming held true for Frank and Martha. They had a healthy herd of Brown Swiss cows, beef cattle, chickens, vegetable gardens and all the things a farm needs to be self-

sufficient, including a milk pasteurizer and an ice house. To support his growing family, Frank and later Stanley, Victor and Romie loaded up their wagon (Frank was to the end a horse man) and supplied the town and the country side with fresh milk, vegetables and eggs every day but Sunday. They were a welcome site for many in the community. Their horse was known to know exactly where the stops were. The name of the farm was the Hill Dale Dairy Company. There are bottle caps for sale on E Bay.

Frank and Martha both died in 1945, Martha 22 November 1945 and Frank 12 December 1945.

This family means so much in so many ways to the people of Oscoda that I have decided to print their memories and comments of the family in their own words in our next issue of the Genogram.



The Merkel Homestead

**The MGC Virtual Fall Family History Event**

Saturday, November 14 - <https://mimgc.org/>

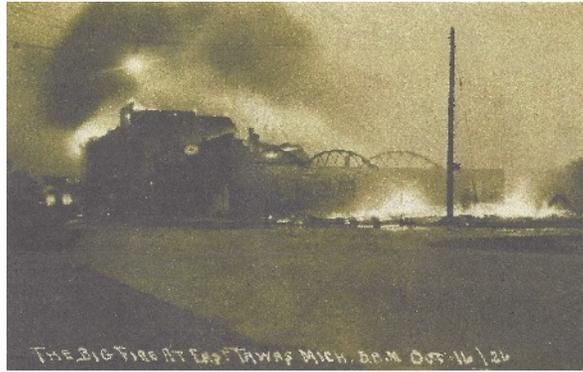


Our keynote speaker will be Sunny Morton. Sunny will give four lectures live, virtually. Additionally, there will be a session from the Archives of Michigan staff and the Library of Michigan staff.

Speaker, writer, blogger, and editor, Sunny Morton, speaks to genealogical communities throughout the world. Her work includes being a contributing editor at Family Tree Magazine and a National Genealogical Society award winning editor of Ohio Genealogy News. Sunny is especially known for tracing U.S. ancestors expertise; comparing the industry's largest websites, and giving presentations on how to reconstruct and tell meaningful stories from the past.

**East Tawas Fire; Total Loss; Little Insurance  
Tawas Herald, October 22, 1926**

A disastrous fire of unknown origin visited the business section of East Tawas last Saturday causing an estimated loss of \$125,000.00. Only a small amount of insurance was carried by the losers. The fire apparently originated in the restaurant owned by John Frank and recently purchased from Charles Chaney.



roof and wood work of the Haglund garage leaving bare walls standing; burned the upper story and destroyed or badly damaged the entire contents of lower story of the Opera House Block. This building was of brick veneer construction. It was occupied

The fire entirely destroyed the Gates block in which the restaurant and Miss Annabel St. Martin millinery shop was located; burned the contents,

by the Sempliner Mercantile company, H. W. Williams Electric company, Jas. E. Dillon's drug store, Mrs. Georgia Hanson's bazaar, Kunze and Applin's grocery and Mrs. Sarah Kelly's confectionery.

Twisted Twigs On Gnarled Branches Genealogy is with Danielle M. Henry and two others - <https://www.facebook.com/TwistedTwigsGenealogy/>

## Ancestral Mathematics

In order to be born, you needed:

- 2 parents
- 4 grandparents
- 8 great-grandparents
- 16 second great-grandparents
- 32 third great-grandparents
- 64 fourth great-grandparents
- 128 fifth great-grandparents
- 256 sixth great-grandparents
- 512 seventh great-grandparents
- 1,024 eighth great-grandparents
- 2,048 ninth great-grandparents

For you to be born today from 12 previous generations, you needed a total of 4,094 ancestors over the last 400 years.

Think for a moment – How many struggles? How many battles? How many difficulties? How much sadness? How much happiness? How many love stories? How many expressions of hope for the future? – did your ancestors have to undergo for you to exist in this present moment...

## Elijah Moses Peters, 1894-1918, Native American

By Judy Sheldon

Our interest in Elijah started with a request from Fred Glass, the Au Sable Oscoda Historical Museum, who had received a request from a history teacher, Anthony, in Morbihan (Brittany), France for information on Elijah. Anthony is working on a project involving the American soldiers of World War One who died in this area of France during the war. Fred sent this request on to us. Even COVID19 couldn't stop us from our research! Elijah was born 24 August 1894 in Mt. Pleasant, MI. He lived most of his life in the Indian Settlement in Mikado, MI. He was short, stout, dark complexion and black hair according to his WWI draft registration card. At the time he registered he was working for the Eastern Michigan Power Company in Glennie, MI. Elijah was known throughout Alcona County as a baseball pitcher and all-around athlete. Little else seems to be known about him, as he doesn't appear often in the Alcona Review, other than he sold his Buick to J G Kramer in October of 1916.

Then the war began. He registered 5 June 1917. The local draft board got after him on 20 June 1917 for not returning his questionnaire. 27 June 1917 he left for Camp Custer. Except for lists of Mikado soldiers listed in the newspaper in July and August there is nothing about him until he ships out. July 1918 Elijah is on the passenger list of the Mauretania, with his Uncle Amos Pamame as his contact. In August 1918 he is on ship Caesarea as an incoming soldier.

Elijah served with the 160<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Brigade, 330<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment, 85<sup>th</sup> Division.



By 18 October 1918 he was reported dead from disease in the training camp. On his burial card William Pamame was listed as his friend in Mikado, MI.

According to the Alcona Review, 9 September 1920, his body was returned to Mikado for burial. He was buried with military honors in the Chippewa Cemetery of the Indian Settlement.

We don't know who his parents are, but a possible father is Elijah Peters who died on the railroad tracks of the D&M Railroad in Arenac County, 1907. He had an uncle, Amos Pamame and in an Alcona Review article it said he was survived by his aunt and a cousin. We are guessing his parents were dead and the uncle and aunt were raising him.

### Sources:

Alcona County Review: 19 October 1916, 14 June 1917, 20 June 1917, 5 July 1917, 9 August 1917, 18 October 1918, 24 October 1918, 5 December 1918, 12 December 1918, 9 September 1920

<https://fr.findagrave.com/memorial/79277832/elijah-moses-peters>

<http://www.ioscovets.org/vets-p.htm>

Also search for "Peters" in the following book on Googlebooks which has his picture and name on pages 57 and 79:

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/Soldiers\\_of\\_the\\_Great\\_War/VSq-AQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Soldiers+of+the+Great+War,+Casualties++Michigan++Vol+2&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Soldiers_of_the_Great_War/VSq-AQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Soldiers+of+the+Great+War,+Casualties++Michigan++Vol+2&printsec=frontcover)

Alpena News, 5 December 1907

## The Van Ettan Lake Lodge

The formal opening of prominent lumber businessman F. G. Cowley's, new hotel at Van Ettan Lake, the Van Ettan Lodge, took place on Decoration Day, 1916. Some of the over 100 guests present for the occasion were members of the Palestine Lodge, F. & A. M., Detroit, who arrived on the D. & C. steamer. In addition to offering accommodations for tourists, the original Lodge hosted twice weekly dance parties at their pavilion until it was completely destroyed by fire in May 1924. The creation of the Lodge may also be the origin of the alternate spelling of the name of the lake.

A new and larger Lodge was built and reopened again on Decoration Day in 1925. Van Ettan Lake Lodge became the largest and most popular Resort Hotel in Eastern Michigan. It was completely surrounded by primitive forest of pines and balsams. In addition to the new 60 room hotel a great many of which had private, and connecting baths; every room with running hot and cold water and numerous corridor baths for guests desiring such accommodations, were thirty cottages for families and parties who desired privacy. Each cottage had three sleeping rooms, a large living room with fireplace and complete bathroom. All meals are served in the Hotel dining room, which seated 250, and the occupants of the cottages receive full hotel service in their cottages. Amusements included Orchestra Dancing, Roller Skating, Golf on a nearby course near the Au Sable River owned by the Resort, Tennis, Horse Shoe Courts, Riding Horses, Fishing, Boating and Swimming. The bathing beach, right in front of the Lodge, had a clear white sand bottom and a gradual slope, and was perfectly safe for either adults or children.

It was also a favorite place for the officers and enlisted men from nearby Camp Skeel to go for entertainment and raise a little whoopee. Important boxing matches were held on the grounds, with some fighters from the base going on to national recognition. The colored help lived in cottages behind the lodge.

Frank Crowley died in 1928 and his wife continued to run the resort until it was sold, first to the Fort Shelby Hotel Co. of Detroit in 1931, then to a group of Pigeon business men in 1936 and finally to people from downstate by the name of Gilardino. The Lodge operated through the prohibition era and the liquor was rumored



The Original Van Ettan Lodge

to flow freely the entire time along with dancing and frolicking. Muted sounds of tinkling silverware and orchestra music could often be heard across the lake in the evenings.

The Lodge finally closed its doors in the early 1940s and is reported to have burned down in 1942 although this event was not found in either the Tawas Herald or the Alcona County Review.

### FRANK G. COWLEY DIES SUDDENLY IN DETROIT Was Prominent in Business and Civic Life of Oscoda

Frank C. Cowley, proprietor of Van Ettan Lake Lodge, Oscoda, died Monday in Detroit of heart disease. The body was brought to Oscoda where funeral services were held Wednesday in the church of the Sacred Heart, Rev. Fr. Delehanty officiating. Burial was made in the family vault at St. Anne's cemetery, Harrisville.

Mr. Cowley was born in Harrisville 55 years ago. In



his younger days he taught school in Alcona county and later was employed for a time in the Comstock bank at Alpena. He became interested in lumbering and located at Oscoda where he operated successfully for many years. In 1916 he built the Van Ettan lodge, the famous resort hotel located on Lake Van Ettan and devoted much of his time that enterprise, He conducted a retail lumber business in Oscoda, was once mayor of the town and was active in the civic affairs.

Mr. Cowley is survived by his widow and two sisters, the latter being Mrs. Marie Cowley and Mrs. Lillian C. Monroe, both of Detroit.

Alcona County Review, October 18, 1928

**Huron Shores Genealogical Society**  
**6010 Skeel Ave**  
**Oscoda, MI 48750**

As a society we have set as goals:

- To preserve and perpetuate the records of our ancestors.
- To encourage the study of family histories and genealogies.
- To aid individuals in the compilation of their genealogies.
- To cooperate with other societies and share information.

- President - Judy Sheldon
- Vice President - Lauri Finerty
- Secretary - Dale Harwood
- Treasurer - Daniel Stock
- Database Manager - Judy Sheldon

**Our Regular Meetings**

Our regular business meetings are held quarterly at 5:30 PM on the third Thursday of the month.

Our next meetings are:

- October 15, 2019 - Parks Library
- January 21, 2020 - location TBD

HSGS staff can meet with clients by appointment during the following hours:

- Wednesday & Thursday 11:00 to 2:00
- Saturday 11:00 to 2:00

Please call ahead for an appointment (989.739.9581) or by email to [huronshoresgs@yahoo.com](mailto:huronshoresgs@yahoo.com) if you would like to have the help of an experienced genealogical assistant then or at other times.

Please visit our web site at: <http://www.huronshoresgs.org>  
 And our Facebook page at: <http://www.facebook.com/HuronShoresGS>  
 to learn more about us and to link to our many indexes and our archived newsletters.  
 Editor's note - To access the Internet links in this issue, clicking on the link should work. If not copy and paste them to your browser.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION                      NEW \_\_\_\_\_                      RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_

\$10 per year    \$15 per year with mailed newsletter

Make checks payable to: Huron Shores Genealogical Society or pay via our web page using Pay Pal

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_      PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_      E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_      STATE: \_\_\_\_\_      ZIP+4: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your level of genealogical experience? (circle one):    Beginner    Intermediate    Advanced

Do you use computer software to manage your genealogy?    Yes \_\_\_    No \_\_\_

If yes, list the software you use: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you, as a new or renewing member, be willing and able to hold an office, work on a committee, or help with indexing materials? Yes \_\_\_\_\_    If yes, we will contact you about your interest in helping.

HSGS would appreciate your help very much. Thank you!

Send this completed form and your check if appropriate to:

Huron Shores Genealogical Society  
 % Robert J. Parks Library  
 6010 Skeel Ave, Oscoda, MI 48750-1577