

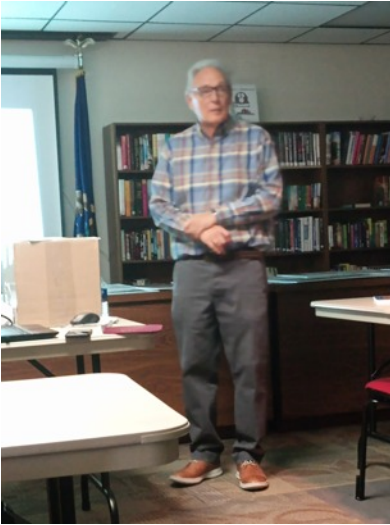


HURON SHORES GENOGRAM

Oscoda, Michigan

A DAY WITH BILL PARSONS SR.

By Dan stock



Bill Parspns Sr.

A small but enthusiastic group of Oscoda area residents with an interest in local history enjoyed the presentations given by Bill Parsons Sr. In the morning session, Bill discussed the WWI sacrifices made by the three local soldiers who died in WWI that the American Legion Post #274 is named for.

1. David Loud who related his army experiences in "Worthy Son" by David Vaughn
2. John Merkel, who died in 1918 and
3. Edward LaPlante

Interspersed with these stories were a number of side or back stories about the Merkel Farm, Harry Curley, Ivan O'Farrell in addition to the murder of Edward LaPlante's mother.

During the after lunch session, Bill talked about the Pack Family and the Pack House including the background history of the 1880s - 1890s lumber business in the Oscoda/AuSable area. During this period, the Pack family was among the wealthiest families in the country. Included were stories of Pack House after it was sold by the estate of Grace Pack, first to become the "Michgander" hotel and then to the Rosalik family to become "Pack House Restaurant" included ghost stories and antics transferred from the cruise ship "Western States" to the house as related with the ship's picture on the Facebook page link below.

In addition to the story in this issue about Greene Pack, additional information and many similar stories about the lumber business can be found at the [Oscoda/AuSable History Facebook page](#) under the files category. The site also has over 2,000 pictures of local interest on the Media page, many with side comments about the locations, times and the people pictured.

HSGS Genealogical Meetings and Events

January

18 HSGS Business Meeting at the Robert J. Parks Library, Oscoda and virtually, 5:30 pm

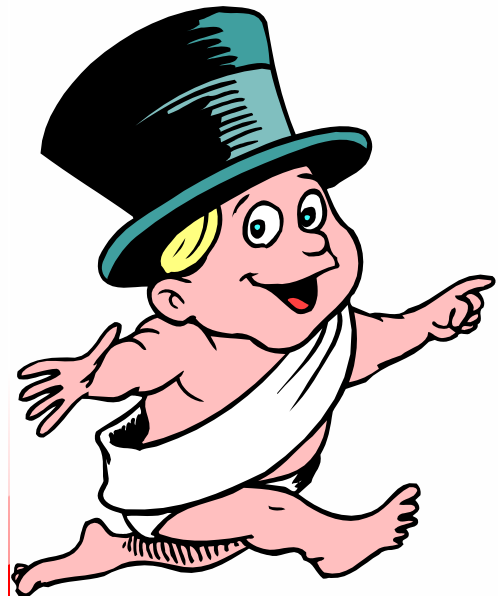
TBD Sessions on specific topics of family history interest presented By Society members or guests

April

18 HSGS Business Meeting, at a the Robert J. Parks Library, Oscoda and virtually, 5:30 pm

May

10-11 MGC Barbara J. Brown Family History Seminar in person and Virtual, Lansing MI



HAPPY NEW YEAR

5 Tips on Preparing to Hire a Professional Genealogist

By Gaynel Fayles

This is Part 2 of a three-part discussion of (1) whether you need to hire a research agent, (2) how to prepare for hiring one, and (3) what to keep in mind when you do.

If you know you've done your best and can't go further in your genealogy quest, it makes sense to ask for help, but there are several things to do before scouting for a research agent.

1. *Make sure your research is organized.* Leaving a research agent without a starting line wastes their time and your money. You need to supply as much info as possible to help them solve your problem. Example: You want to know when and where your maternal grandfather John Doe died, what from and where he was buried. This means the researcher needs information and details sufficient to help them differentiate him with other John Does.
2. *Narrow down what it is you want to know.* Your agent needs a coherent question to answer. Example: I want to know these things: (1) When and where did John Doe, (father of Susie Doe born 3 Aug 1959 Kent Co MI) die? (2) Where was he buried? (3) What did he die of?
3. *Be honest with yourself about what do you NOT want to know? How much of the truth are you WILLING to accept?* Will it wreck your self-image to find you were never told grandpa was a bank robber who died in a hostage shoot-out that killed a bank teller? What if the family story that great-grandpa fought side-by-side with General Patton is rendered impossible? Do you want to know? And if you do, are you willing to take that info to your grave if you think that will upset your family? Are you willing to keep this out of your book you plan on publishing? An ethical agent would stop pursuing what you advise against. They would inform you they've reached undesirable info to discuss what route to take.
4. *Establish a bottom-line of how much you're willing to pay.* Unless the research agent you have in mind has several diplomas, is published, and/or of high acclaim, genealogy professionals tend to set their hourly and project fees by what their regional market will bear, depending on their own financial requirements and local competition. According to ZipRecruiter*, the state 2023 Michigan median hourly fee is \$56. Knowing this helps you compare equally qualified agents, especially if they live in different regions where necessary on-site research travel will increase costs.
5. *Make a list of potential hires.* Consider both non-professionals and professionals. First, ask your local and regional historical and genealogical societies for recommendations of well-qualified amateur researchers. Ask about or research whether they're certified, ask for references, get an example of work they've done for others, see if they follow standard guidelines. Now go online to find some professionals who, according to their certifications, are required to follow certain ethical and research guidelines. First check the Association of Professional Genealogists (apgen.org) for researchers who fit the specialty, region and time range of your question. If you have deep pockets, look at the Board of Certification Genealogists (bcgcertification.org) and the International Commission for the Accreditation of Professional Genealogists (icapgen.org).

Now read Part 3 of this series in our next issue to learn about things you should ask these researchers before deciding to hire one.

*Professional Genealogist Salary in Michigan (Hourly) ([ziprecruiter.com](https://www.ziprecruiter.com))

Greene Pack 1843 - 1895

By Bill Parsons, Facebook/Oscoda/Ausable History

Greene Pack was born in Petersboro, Madison County, New York in August 13, 1843 to George Pack Jr. and Maria Lathrop Pack. He was the 7th of 13 siblings. His father was a farmer and came to New York from New Brunswick, Canada in 1848. George Jr. eventually exchanged pine land in New York for land in Washington Township, Sanilac County, Michigan. He sold his farm in New York and bought 80 acres just outside of Lexington, Michigan. His large family traveled the Eire Canal to Buffalo, up Lake Erie and entered Lake Huron. He eventually extended his holdings and purchased 720 acres of timberland near the Black River at Carsonville, Michigan. This would be the start of profitable saw mill operations in Michigan's Thumb and eventually in Oscoda and Alpena. America was on a building boom, lumber was in demand and the George Pack Jr. dynasty was ready to meet the demand.

Greene Pack moved to Michigan's thumb area when he was six years old and forged his future while working in the family lumbering businesses. He married Margaret McKale in 1875 in Huron, Michigan. Their only child, Grace, was born in 1876 in Port Crescent, Michigan. Greene continued to work at the family business at Port Crescent and also for a time, was extremely engaged in building roads in Sanilac County. He eventually opened mills in Oscoda and Alpena with his brothers and others. His brother Albert partnered with George Fletcher and built a large mill in Alpena. Albert was elected to the state legislature and later became the mayor of Alpena. When the lumber played out Greene kept his residence in Oscoda, but built a new home in Detroit and spent time in New York City. He was a major investor in a new company called The Detroit Railroad Company, (streetcars).^{*} However, his life was cut short when he died while on business in New York City in 1895. He was 51 years old. On the day of his funeral, all of the businesses and saloons in AuSable and Oscoda closed from 1-3 pm in his honor.

His daughter Grace never married and lived in Detroit. After her mother's death in 1904, Grace kept the Oscoda home as a summer residence. Grace died



Greene Pack
1843 - 1895

in Detroit in 1939. The Oscoda Pack House was eventually sold from her estate and was first opened as a Hotel called "The Michigander." It evolved as a restaurant/bar and had several owners but is presently closed. It is located in Oscoda on US 23 and is a familiar landmark.

The Alcona Review, February 28, 1895

"A striking instance of the utter futility of human plans and ambitions is afforded by the untimely death of Greene Pack. Hardly past the period known as middle age, yet had he attained a degree of success in a financial way far exceeding the fondest expectations of the great majority of men. He was engaged even when the grim reaper came "as a thief in the night," in the consummation of plans for the accomplishments of still greater financial successes. He had at his command an ample fortune sufficient to surround him with all the comforts of a luxurious life. If the possession of wealth brings happiness his certainly would have been a happy lot. But death inopportunist steps in and robs him of the power to longer enjoy the sweets of life and robs his family of the comfort and pleasure of his society. He has crossed to that undiscovered country leaving wealth and family behind, his business plans unfinished. But yesterday vast enterprises hinged upon his determination. Today he lies cold in death's embrace; his friends shed tears of genuine sorrow, extolling his virtues and lamenting his death. Yet tomorrow, someone will take up the threads of work where he laid them down and will go on and compete them quite as well as he would have done himself. Sir Thomas Browne said; "Reckon not upon a long life; think every day the last and live always beyond thy account. And perhaps his injunction is worth heeding."

Greene Pack Dead - Tawas Herald, March 1, 1895

Word was received here Monday morning announcing the death of Greene Pack at New York City. Mr. Pack has been in poor health for several

Continued on page 5

HAVE YOU REVIEWED YOUR ONLINE FAMILY TREE LATELY?

By Dan Steck

I recently received an email from MyHeritage that indicated that they had found 185 discrepancies in my family tree on their site. My goodness, how could that be! On reviewing what they had found, I discovered the following:

Trivial

- Differences in punctuation for abbreviated names with and without a period after the abbreviation
- A failure to check the deceased box resulting in ancestors living to be over 100 years old.

Defensible

- Different spelling of surnames such as the double n for many of my German ancestors who dropped the second n when americanizing their name.
- Conflicting normally reliable secondary sources such as a baptism on I. G. I. occurring before the date of birth on Parish records.

True errors

- Improper entry of birth, death or marriage years through the transposition of digits, such as 1708 entered as 1780, yes I had some of these.
- A skipped generation when entering info from the paper version to the online version. In my defense, this is easy to do with a succession of Johanns in the family line.

Neither defensible nor resolvable

- Relatives imported from someone else's family tree, yes, I have done some of that, containing errors similar to those noted above.

Although the number of discrepancies is now well below 100, it will never reach zero. Family Search routinely points out situations where children are born to elderly or underage parents, etc. I have not noticed such indications about my Ancestry version or their Truelines, which means I have to add a review of my Ancestry tree over the winter.

Article of Some Local Interest from the Adrian Daily Telegram

Submitted by Judy Sheldon

Daily Telegram (published as Evening Telegram) - February 8, 1897, page 3, Adrian, Michigan

In his annual report, which will appear this week, State Bank Commissioner Ainger congratulates the 173 state banks of Michigan for the manner in which they have weathered the storm financially during the past year. During the year the following state banks went into voluntary liquidation: Farmer's State bank, Homer, \$15,000; Iosco County Savings bank, Oscoda, \$50,000. The depositors and stockholders of each of these banks were paid in full. Four state banks became insolvent during the year as follows: People's Savings bank, Lansing, \$150,000; Ingham County Savings bank, Lansing, \$101,000; Mescoto County Savings bank, Big Rapids, \$50,000; Whitehall State Savings bank, Whitehall, \$25,000. All were due to bad internal management.

Adrian Daily Telegram and Times - December 22, 1898, page 3

A Washington dispatch says Congressman Corlis has introduced a bill that has become time honored in congressional annals. It provides that the postmaster-general be directed to pay Nelson Green of Jackson Mich., \$1,659 for carrying the mails between Alcona and Black River, Mich., in the years 1879 to 1884. This bill has been pending in congress for 15 years and has been the subject of several reports, but in no case have both houses passed the measure in the same congress.

Greene Pack, continued from page 3

months past. His labors in connection with the organization of the new Detroit Street Railway system had been exceedingly arduous and told severely upon his previously enfeebled system. About six weeks ago he left Detroit for a prolonged visit to New York, where he hoped to secure immunity from active business worries. For several weeks afterward his condition was reported as materially improved, and his relatives and business associates hoped that he would speedily regain his old vigor. A week or more ago, however, he took a turn for the worse, after which he gradually sunk until the end came. His brother, Albert Pack of Detroit, and his wife were summoned by telegraph, and were with him when he died.

Greene Pack was born in Petersboro, Madison County, N. Y. Aug. 13, 1843. He removed with his parents to Lexington, Mich., but when 6 years of age, and had ever since been a resident of this state. He removed from Lexington to Port Crescent in 1870, becoming an active member of the lumber firm of Woods & Co. Six years later he went to Oscoda as vice-president and manager of the firm Pack, Woods and Company, among the most prominent and wealthy lumber dealers in Michigan. George W. Pack of Cleveland, an elder brother, was the leading financial spirit of this firm, and under Greene Pack's shrewd management wealth was rapidly accumulated. The latter continued to reside in Oscoda, of which place he was one of the most prominent citizens, until his removal to Detroit. He accumulated a large fortune and was renowned for superior business qualifications.

Mr. Pack was largely interested in Toronto street railway property, in addition to being one of the founders and heaviest stockholders in the new Detroit system. He also owned considerable other Detroit property, and intended making his home permanently in that city in the future. He was a pronounced republican, had frequently been mentioned as a desirable congressional candidate, and participated actively in the state and national councils of his party. He was a delegate to the republican national convention at Chicago in 1888.

Mr. Pack leaves a widow and one daughter, Miss Grace Pack. Two sisters, Misses Anna and

Josephine Pack, also reside in Detroit. Of his three brothers, Albert Pack resides in Detroit, George Willis Pack resides in Cleveland and Arthur in Duluth.

The remains will be brought to Detroit, the funeral taking place Wednesday at 2 o'clock from the Woodward Avenue of Albert Pack.

*Pack's venture into the streetcar business in Detroit is a complicated but interesting story. Greene Pack, along with his brother Albert and others formed an investment group called The Pack Everett Syndicate. They were heavily invested in street railways in several Canadian cities. The Detroit system at the time, was controlled by one company, Citizens, using horse drawn cars and the fares were high and climbing. Citizens had an exclusive franchise to provide service on their existing lines and could set the fares. Hazen S. Pingree, said to be one of Detroit's greatest mayors 1889-1897, was determined to see the system electrified and lower fares for the citizens of Detroit. He wanted new routes, better service and open competitive bidding for new routes. Citizens, thought they had the right to all new routes. However, the Detroit Common Council did not agree and Mayor Pingree convinced the Pack Syndicate to submit a winning bid on new franchise lines in competition to Citizens. The Pack Syndicate started construction on new routes in December 1894 and were operating by July 1895. It was purported that a handshake deal was made between Albert Pack and Mayor Pingree that the Pack Syndicate would not sell out to the competing line. Albert was an active republican and well versed in political negotiations as was Pingree. However, a year later, the Pack Syndicate sold out, for a profit that was estimated at 2-3 million dollars. During this period, Greene Pack died. One has to wonder if Albert lost interest because of the loss of his brother. Albert Pack passed at an early age a few years later. Pingree went on to become Governor of Michigan 1897-1901.

Authors note: My information for the Pack series came from numerous publications including: The Alcona Review, The History of Sanilac County, The History of Iosco County, The History of Alpena County, The History of the Huron Shore, The Tawas Herald, and Ancestry.Com for birth and death records. Also, the personal recollection of Mr. Robert Greene Pack.

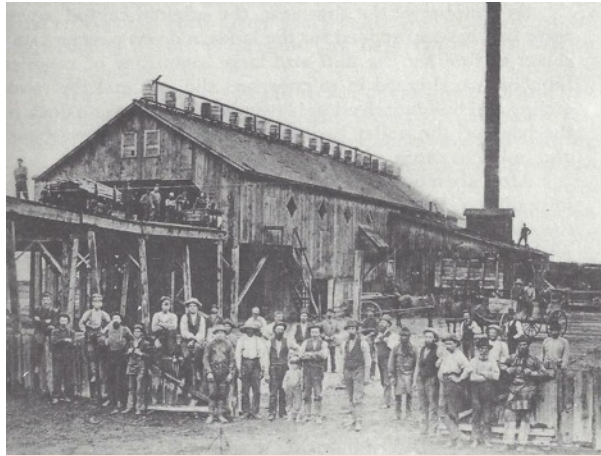
A LANDMARK Is Disappearing by the Removal of the W. S. & L. Co Mill. Tawas Herald, March 23, 1900

By the removal of what has of late years been known as the Winona Salt & Lumber Co. Mill, Tawas City and Tawas bay loses its oldest mill. This mill is the oldest landmark of Iosco county. It was built in 1854 by G. O. Whittemore & Co., of Pontiac, and was operated by the Whittemore until 1876, C. H. Whittemore being the properitor (sic) for several years. McBain & Whitney purchased it in 1878, and it was operated for a time by Wm. Nisbet and J. C. Adams. It was afterwards purchased by the the Winona Salt & Lumber Co. who conducted it until 1893, since which time it has been idle. The salt block in connection there with was built in 1880, and has produced as high as 20,000 barrels of salt in one season.

Since it has been closed down it has been in litigation most of the time and was recently sold at sheriff's sale to G. W. Mount and M. Murphy, who have sold what remained of the machinery to junk dealers, and who in company with James McCue are now preparing to maunfacture the lumber in the mills and dock into lath. A lath mill is now being placed in the old drill house and during the coming season the entire remains will be cut into lath.

Thus passes into history what was at one time the largest and best mill on Tawas bay and the pioneer of Iosco county. But few, if any, of those who were here when the mill was built are left to bid it farewell.

In this connection is also disappearing what is the most historical building of Iosco county. It is the little building standing directly in front of the mill, which is also now being torn down. This building has answered many purposes. It was the first store. In



The Whittemore Mill from "Now Your're Leggin"
by Neil Thornton

the upper rooms were held the first school, the first church service and Sunday School, the first court, and was also used as a dance hall. It was the first home of the HERALD, and afterwards used as a mill office. The last practical use to which it was put was as an ice house. The following reference to it appears in the history of the Huron shore:

"Down near the bay shore, half hidden by the tramway leading from the mill to the dock is the old Whittemore store. It is a story and half building, of pinched proportions, resembling somewhat in appearance a schoolhouse in a small New England district. This constituted the center of Tawas City a quarter (sic) of a century ago. It has stood serene and unharmed through fire and storms. The second story of this building, or more correctly the story next to the roof has served a multitude of purposes in its day. The early court sat here, whenever the judge could catch a sail boat coming this way, and when failed to come, the court would open and shut with all the solem and unctious precision and formality known to Iosco jurisprudence. It was here the people assembled for religious worship when the toiling missionary arrived on foot to break the bread of life to few dissiples (sic) who had gathered here. This was the primary school, the academy, the university of the pioneer, the village bail room, the amphitheater of intellectual contest when gladiators in political armor met "resolve," and so forth. It was a place such as the village will never have again, and if its dumb wall could speak, no man need write a book. It is now fulfilling an unpoetic mission as a mill office."

THE AU SABLE OPERA HOUSES

Continued from the September, 2023 Genogram
by Dan Stock

On August 21, 1879, The Women's Christian Temperance Union (W. T. C. U.) signed a ten year lease for Lot 5 of Block 1 of the Loud Gay Addition in Oscoda per the Register of Deeds Records (later identified as being in Au Sable on the 1903 Iosco County Plat map). The purpose being the erection of a Temperance Hall. One provision of the lease was that it could be terminated if alcohol or the makings of alcohol were ever on the property. This lot was located just south of Chevalier on the west side of River street.



W. C. T. U. Opera House in green
from the 1890 Sanborn Map

On December 16 and 17, a performance of "Esther, the Beautiful Queen" was given by over fifty of Au Sable and Oscoda's finer signers and muscians. This structure was identified as being the W. T. C. U. Opera House on the 1890 Sanborn map for Au Sable. However by 1901, Lot 5 of Block 1 is shown as being vacant on the Sanborn map although there is a structure identified as a hall on Lot 7 of Block 1, It is possible that this may have been a replacement Opera House.

"Wigwam" Opera House

It was reported in the Alcona County review of July 30, 1886, "Au Sable is to have an opera house" and again on September 20, 1889 that Au Sable was to have a new three story brick block which would be used as an opera house and also for lodge rooms. Oscoda not to be outdone, proposed to have a three story

brick hotel. The proposed location for the structure was not given nor was it named. It is not clear whether either building was ever constructed. In 1905, George C. Walker was identified as being the Manager of the Au Sable Wigwam Opera House in the Michigam Gazeteer.

Over the years, the Wigwam hosted a variety of events including a Charity Ball in 1894 which raised between \$300 and \$700 to be used in caring for the poor during the winter. The House hosted the first annual

ball of the E. F. Holmes Camp No. 109, S. of V. of AuSable, several plays as reported in the Herald, and several days of speeches and a ball during the Homecoming Week on the Sable.

One of the last reported activities reported as having taken place at the Wigwam was the March 28, 1911 presentation by John G. Wooley, a great temperance orator, under the auspices of the Anti-Saloon League.

It is very likely that, where ever it may have been, the Wigwam burned down in the 1911 fire as no mention is made of it in either the Herald or the Alcona County Review after that. It is also probable that it was not a "three story brick opera house.

Sources:

Numerous issues of the Tawas Herald (IADL Library web site) and the Alcona County Review (Alcona County Library) including the Alcona County review, October 22, 1880 and The Tawas Herald, January 5, 1894, The Tawas Herald, March 24, 1911
Alpena Weekly Argus, June 25, 1884 (Chronicaling America)
Oscoda Press "The Homecoming Week on the Sable"
"Memories of Au Sable and Oscoda" by Lucy Mead with historical notes and indexing by James Donaldson

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 - Lauri Finerty

Vice President - Amanda Alvarez Smith

Secretary - Linda Glomski

Treasurer - Daniel Stock

Database Manager - Judy Sheldon

Directors - Gaynol Fales and Stephanie Olson

Our Regular Meetings

Our regular business meetings are held quarterly at the Robert Parks Library, Oscoda and virtually at 5:30 PM on the third Thursday of the month.

Our next meetings are:

January 18, 2024

- In Person and Virtual meeting

April 18, 2024

HSGS staff can meet with clients by appointment. Please call the library (989.739.9581) or email to huronshoresgs@yahoo.com to arrange for an appointment with an experienced genealogical assistant.

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.

If you, as a new or renewing member, would be willing and able to hold an office, work on a committee, or help with indexing materials, HSGS would appreciate your help very much. You may indicate your area of expertise and/or interest on the following form. We will be happy to contact you about your interest in helping. Thank you!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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Make checks payable to: Huron Shores Genealogical Society

DATE: _____ PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

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

Do you use computer software to manage your genealogy? No

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