



THE BACKTRACKER



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FROM THE EDITOR

Sharon Hornback

I am glad to have this chance to reconnect with all of you through a new issue of the Backtracker. This pandemic, Covid-19 aka Coronavirus, has changed the world as we know it. We found our everyday activities were curtailed drastically at the beginning, with things opening up slowly as we progress through June. Many of you had your travel and research plans cancelled. Movie nights and dinners out with friends were not allowed to happen. However, we were always able to go to the grocery stores, hardware stores, and pharmacies. Our basic needs continued. But sadly, our library closed. Our meetings (general and committees), Special Interest Groups, and classes were all immediately cancelled. I missed seeing all of you in those venues.

The Backtracker Committee and the Executive Board of PSGS pondered long and hard about what we should do with this issue. The majority thought we should skip the issue completely. However, I made an editorial decision and decided to give you a very short issue. It may be different, but will be one thing that can be a constant during this time of unsettlement in our lives.

Elisabeth Demmon has helped with writing up what may be available as we work from home. I hope you have had a chance to take advantage of many of

these wonderful services. We are fortunate to live in a technological era where so much data is available to us on-line. Be sure to read her articles on pages 3 and 5.

You can be a part of writing history. What was life like for you “When the World Changed”? Ask yourself the following questions and add more of your own.

How has your daily life changed?

- What do you think when you watch the news?
- What precautions do you take to stay healthy?
- How do you keep in contact with family and friends?
- How has your daily life stayed the same?

These questions and your responses could be put into a journal for your descendants. Think how excited your great-grandchild will be to read your story in 50 years or more.

I can’t predict the future, but am thinking that our next Backtracker, October-December 2020, will look more like you are used to. I hope many of you have been writing your stories to include in upcoming issues. I look forward to seeing your stories in my email soon.

In the meantime, stay safe, stay healthy, and enjoy your summer.

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Presidential Ponderings

by Jean Yager

20/20 can be Hindsight (retrospection, reflection, observation, remembrance, recall, perception after the fact). 20/20 can be Vision (distance and size for visual sharpness). 20/20 can be a Television Newsmagazine OR 2020 can be a year to remember (interruption, Covid-19, elections, protesters, vandalism to our country) OR 2020 can be the year we just want to forget (overlook, disregard, ignore, erase). Which leads me to share with you the following: the Executive Board met on July 6th (our last meeting was Feb 17th). Needless to say, it was great seeing one another even if we had to sit 6 feet apart in Alta Drane’s backyard.

The first topic discussed was the PSGS officers for 2021. According to the By-Laws, the President (me) can only serve a two-year term and this was my second year. However, the By-Laws do not mention what to do when a year literally shuts down and the society cannot function due to circumstances out of their control. To rectify this and to solve the problem of finding a chairperson for the Nomination Committee (or a new President), the board voted unanimously to forget this year and roll over the existing officers into 2021 (so, you’re stuck with me for another year).

But wait.....there’s more! Since we are writing off 2020, the Board also voted unanimously to roll your 2020 dues over into 2021. In other words, if you paid your dues for 2020, you do not need to pay your dues for 2021.....do I hear a “YEAH!” (because you saved yourself \$15.00!).

The next bit of information I want to share with you has to do with KRL. You’re probably wondering when is the library going to reopen? Well, that is a very good question...one that I cannot answer, nor KRL. We are waiting for the okay from the Governor and our Mayor. So, what does it mean for our future classes, SIGs, chapters and general meetings? Well, I can answer that one....because of this uncertainty, the Board voted unanimously to cancel all classes and meetings until the end of year, in other words, forget 2020. What about our Christmas party, you ask....well, we are going to play that by ear. We still have the reservation to use the Eagles at the Fairgrounds on Dec 3rd.

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EditorSharon Hornback
bt-editor@pusogensoc.org
 Associate EditorMary Ann Wright
 Copy Editor/Distribution Jean Yager
 Circulation Terry Mettling

Editorial Group: Larry Harden, Lew Noah, Peg Powell, Jeanie Schulze, “Woody” Wood

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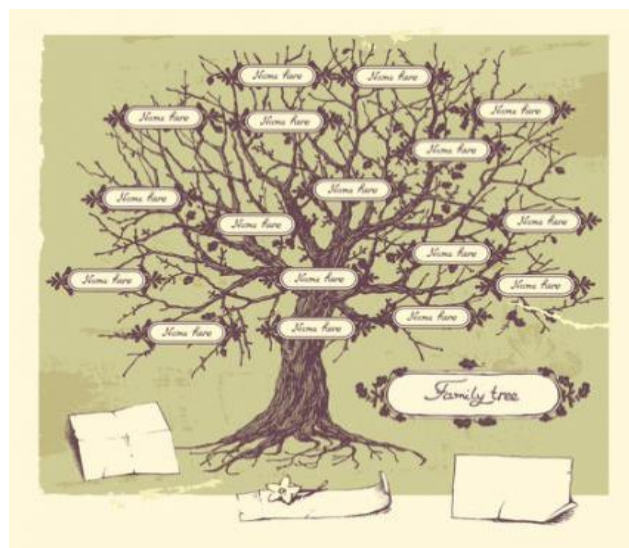
Pandemics, Family, and Genealogy

I hope this finds you and your family well as we all endure this global historic event known as the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been individual historic events throughout my lifetime I will never forget but I never imagined that in the 21st century that I would be living through such a fearful time caused by a disease similar to those that my ancestors once suffered. It is a time of reflection while trying to put this event into a historical perspective that relates to family and genealogy.

The last major global pandemic that COVID has been generally compared to is the 1918-1919 Influenza; to learn more, visit the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/1918-pandemic-h1n1.html>. Our ancestors suffered a virulent and contagious virus just as we are now with COVID. You may have a family story, a scrapbook, or a memoir that tells their story that will help you understand what they endured and how their stories might compare to your time during various quarantine levels in 2020.

My parents left no memoirs or family stories of this time in either their lives or the lives of their parents and grandparents. However, my husband's Aunt Margaret, who was 11 years old and living in Boulder, Colorado in 1918, did write a very brief story on the influenza. Her family, along with others in town, hosted soldiers from the nearby Army camp for Sunday dinners. One Sunday, a soldier they had fed the week before who had promised to return, did not show up; they later found out he had died from what she called the new disease – Spanish Influenza. Within a few weeks of his death, the schools were closed, there was no Sunday school, and the movie theatre had shut down. The town was in quarantine. Both Margaret and her father got sick but survived though many of her friends' fathers did not.

There has always been disease in our world. The book "History for Genealogists: Using Chronological Time Lines to Find and Understand Your Ancestors" by Judy Jacobson provides alarming lists of disease by year and location including individual cities, states, nations, and areas of the world. This may not be cheerful reading but it is an excellent source of material for those researching their family histories especially between the various Census years. By creating a timeline of major outbreaks of disease and combining this knowledge with a timeline for your family lines, you may be able to determine whether a disease, local or global, had an impact on your family, particularly if you know where they were living during an outbreak of disease.



You can also look for your American ancestors by checking the U.S. Federal Census Mortality Schedules, 1850-1885 available via remote access with your library card by going to the Heritage Quest link at the Kitsap Regional Website: <https://www.ancestryheritagequest.com/search/collections/8756/>

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Pandemics, Family, and Genealogy

(cont'd from page 3)

Ms. Jacobsen not only lists the diseases by year and place, she also mentions the economic effect that disease had on our ancestors. Just as COVID has resulted in a tremendous loss of jobs and income during these past months, disease whether local, national, or global had an economic impact on our ancestors which in turn caused migration to places where jobs or better prospects were available. This is something to think about if you having problems trying to find an elusive ancestor.

One the best resources to help you find out what your ancestors endured is newspaper articles.

Here are several online resources that are comprehensive, free and definitely worth exploring: Kitsap Regional Library offers connections to news-

paper research via the Genealogy Link on their Website at <https://www.krl.org/research?subjects=10>
The Ancestor Hunt at <https://www.theancestorhunt.com/newspapers.html>;

(Note: this website also offers more free sites at <https://www.theancestorhunt.com/blog/the-5-best-free-sites-for-online-newspaper-research-for-genealogy>

Chronicling America from the Library of Congress at <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

Best wishes now and in the days ahead,
Elisabeth Demmon
KRL Liaison to the PSGS

Presidential Ponderings

by Jean Yager

(cont'd from page 2)

All I can say at this point is I will continue to keep you updated.

Another topic of discussion was our one-and-only fundraiser, the Antique Show. Traditionally, we have had it the last weekend of February. It is scheduled for Feb 27-28, 2021. Many hard-working volunteers put in a lot of hours to make this huge event a success (not to mention the expense involved from both PSGS and KCHS). Given the circumstances, the Board is concerned that February may be too soon to have the Show. Questions to ponder: Will the vendors be reluctant to come? Would we have to set it up where patrons have to mingle 6' apart? Would patrons come if we had such restrictions? With that said, the Board is looking into other options, such as moving it to a later date. But this in-

volves many components to consider. I will keep you posted as we go along but if you have any input, feel free to email me at pres@pusogensoc.org and I will share it with the Executive Board and Antique Show committee.

Last but by no means least, if you know of someone in need of cheer during this time (such as: thinking-of-you, get-well, and/or sympathy) contact Lisa at memberrep@pusogensoc.org and she will be happy to send a card on behalf of PSGS.

I will end this by saying, even though we are taking the actions above, we should, as Sharon suggests, write about the events of 2020 so they can be shared with your descendants.

Take Care and Stay Safe!

Genealogy Opportunities during a Pandemic

I am a self-confessed over-subscriber and life-long learner of topics and subjects particularly related to library, history, and genealogy subjects: examples are magazines, newsletters, databases, and blogs. My latest membership that I could not resist is for The Foundation for Medieval Genealogy (<https://fmg.ac>) based in the United Kingdom because it combines my love of medieval history and a hope that I might trace one of my lines to the Middle Ages. All these subscriptions help me to keep up to date with events, new records, databases, and other wonderful resources. “So what” you might ask?

This time of self-isolation and social distancing has resulted in restrictions on travel and access to repositories such as courthouses, archives, and libraries. As a result, many of these repositories have welcomed researchers by offering remote access to their databases not normally available except in person. An example close to home is Kitsap Regional Library’s Ancestry Library edition that has been available to researchers since the library has been closed. Go to <https://www.krl.org/research/> and click on the genealogy link on the library’s website. (Note: FamilySearch.org has not granted remote access to images usually available from affiliate libraries due to contractual obligations – check their website for a more detailed explanation.)

Some of the major genealogical societies such as the New England Historic Genealogical Society at <https://www.americanancestors.org/index.aspx> has a weekly newsletter that will keep you informed and updated on what is available online including expanded time to speak with their researchers: <https://www.americanancestors.org/coronavirus>. This is just one example of a society that is offering online resources to researchers.

For those of you who love to travel and attend conferences this is not possible at the moment. However

many of the societies have changed their physical conferences to a virtual event. Although these events are not free, you are saving money in travel and hotel costs. You can attend these online conferences and get the handouts with less impact on your budget than a physical conference would cost.

For example, check out the National Genealogical Society’s website at <https://www.ngsgenealogy.org>. Their annual conference occurred online on May 20th but you can still purchase the online lectures that would have been delivered at the physical conference and have access to free resources from their home page.

One of the best links for up-to-date information on available conferences and lectures is <https://conferencekeeper.org>. The list of events are by date of occurrence; click on the title of each item to ensure you have updated information especially for conferences as some societies are in the process of moving from a physical venue to an online event. You can subscribe at no cost to receive updates in your email for new additions as they appear on the calendar.

So next time you find yourself looking for access to a record, a source, a topic, a conference, or a repository, check out their website to see what is available for free via remote access. If you have always wanted to attend a conference but have not had the time or money, check online to see what is available. You can attend, learn, and research all in the comfort of your own home as you wait for the re-opening of the repositories and conferences that you know and enjoy.

Best wishes now and in the days ahead,
Elisabeth Demmon
KRL Liaison to the PSGS

A Tribute to Marlys MARRS (abt 1930-2020)

On April 8, 2020, PSGS lost one of its founding members, Marlys MARRS. We would not be the society we are today, if not for her. Therefore, we wanted to take this chance to prepare a special tribute to an amazing lady.

A complete biography is in the October 2010 issue of the Backtracker. Please look on the members only page to read the entire biography. Following you will find a shortened version of it.

Marlys was born in Otter Tail County, Minnesota and grew up on her parents' farm. When disease hit the family's cattle, her family sold the farm and the Shipley family moved to Bremerton in the 1940s. Marlys took a job at the People's Store. A noisy muffler caused a police stop that led to a romance between Marlys and Bill MARRS, who married in 1958.

The "Genealogy Bug" bit Marlys when she was only 18. In the early 1970s, while Marlys was working at the Doctors Clinic, she showed her history book to Dr. Drew and discovered a fellow genealogy

enthusiast. Inspired by their mutual interest, Marlys and Dr. Drew decided to form a club, and together with 13 other like-minded individuals the Olympic Society was established. This was the forerunner of the Puget Sound Genealogy Society.

Marlys seemed to do it all. She taught classes, wrote authors and publishing companies soliciting donations of resource books, and helped members with their research. She and her husband Bill started the first library in their basement where members could do their research. Marlys took her turn at many official positions in PSGS. She organized the Society's first research trip to Salt Lake City which became an annual event (except for this year due to the pandemic).

Many members fondly remember Marlys. On following pages are some of the memories you shared. I am sure there are many more, as Marlys was such an important part of PSGS and a friend to all.



Marlys MARRS 2010

A Tribute to Marlys MARRS (cont'd from page 6)

Memories from Members

From Jean Balter

I am so sad! Way back in the eighties she taught one evening class about genealogy for the Olympic College Community Service. All of us in attendance begged her to do a Saturday series; and it happened. In her soft voice she encouraged us to “get busy and get started.” And in a more commanding soft voice, that I can still hear, “And I mean NOW!” A number of years later she taught a four week series at Fairview School off Central Valley in Bremerton. Her calmness, patience, incredible knowledge, enthusiasm, and her “no question was a dumb question” attitude encouraged me and everyone else that “yes” we could do this. At that time Computers and Genealogy Software were the “new kids on the block” and she wanted no part of it; she was sticking to pencil and paper. But she encouraged others to try computers and software. Just this past year she and I reconnected, and, by golly, she was still using only pencil and paper.

This past Fall I brought her to the Genealogy Library several times and what a joy to be with her. Oh, how she loved research. That smile and funny little laugh just “blessed-a my heart.” We had planned to go to Salt Lake this year, but both of us had health issues and chose not to go.

She will be so greatly missed.

From Elisabeth Demmon

So very sad and teary to hear this news. I absolutely loved Marlys...from the time I took her course back in the late 90s to her lovely presence at the GC...her smile, her kindness, her constant photo-

copying of the books...I loved helping her with Inter Library Loans...will miss her presence so very much.



Gail, Jackie, Estelle, Marlys, Madi, Linnie, Judy

From Deanna Dowell

Marlys was my genealogy mentor. I attended meetings in their basement. She taught me the basics.....the correct way to write a date, surname always capitalized, how to include your sources. I have gone on to support others by echoing her words.

She was wonderful!

From Jackie Horton.

I first met her in 1977 in her back room for a genealogical meeting. We seemed to immediately be friends. I, of course, was still working but I started going to meetings in Sept of 1978 and on the first meeting she asked me to be the librarian - for some reason she did not trust the one who was doing it. Then in 1980 Madi [Cataldo], Myself and Marlys went to SLC and my roommate was Madi but Marlys had a room next to us so she could open the door and be with us. She helped both Madi and I on this since this was not her first time there. She always called me to ask me to do things like picking up an

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Tribute to Marlys MARRS

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elderly person so she could attend the meetings and asked me to see about getting more books and films. So I started a fund and each person would put a dollar into a can with a request of what they wanted. When there was enough we would draw to see what film or book we would get. I also helped her in her classes and took them over when she could no longer do them. She hated the computer and I tried to help her with it but she just could not understand them very well. We also attended 3 and 4 seminars in the area, and I mean anywhere from Portland up to Canada. When Delana [Cox], Marlys and I drove back to the Midwest we were leaving a motel and she tripped and went face down and had abrasions on her face. I wanted to take her to the doctor but she would not go, said she was ok, but I always wondered if that did not bring on the stroke she had. Yes, we were very close and did many, many things together and I will always cherish these memories.

From Jane McAuliffe

She was a great researcher and a very fine and gentle person, always friendly. My introduction to PSGS was early 1990, soon after our move to Silverdale, when Margaret Wagoner, having learned of my interest in genealogy, took me to a PSGS meeting in the basement library of Marlys' home on Pine Street. Thirty years and just think of the changes in research techniques, the number of members in PSGS, and how the library has grown. May Marlys rest in peace.

From Gwen Detweiler

Sorry to hear this news. I worked a few Friday mornings with Marlys.

From Vickie Bushnell

So sad. Now she has become an ancestor. Such memories of meeting in her basement, everybody grabbing their stuff and running because Bev Greene discovered it had been snowing while we were down there. And throwing garage sales to buy books- my husband asking what happened to our dish drainer and I had to tell him I got overzealous and gave it to Marlys for the garage sale.



Jill Jean, KRL Exec Director, Marlys, & Commissioner Josh Brown at the Genealogy Center Opening in KRL

From Bonnie McKernan

I went to a few meetings in her basement. Seems like forever ago now. She will leave a hole in our community. Missed by many.

From Lorraine Maves

Well before I thought about researching where our families came from or knew anything about the PSGS, I knew of Marlys MARRS being the go-to person to ask about genealogy. She left an indelible mark and will be remembered. (cont'd on page 9)

Tribute to Marlys MARRS

(cont'd from page 8)

From IdaMae Swedberg

She was a love. I first met her when she had the meetings at her house. I was so ignorant of how to go about researching at that time. I only went to several meetings there but what I did learn, served to give me a base of researching. She will be missed.

From Jean Yager

Marlys was one of the founding members of what was first called Olympic Genealogical Society (1973). Soon after, the name was changed to Puget Sound Genealogical Society. Marlys and her husband started the genealogy library in the basement of their home. She also organized the first trip to the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. Marlys was one classy lady, always had a smile on her face.

From Bobbi Klippert

I didn't know her well, but noticed her smiling face at meetings and in Salt Lake City.

From Sharon Hornback

I will always remember Marlys sitting with paper and pencil taking copious notes from many books. She did not use the computer. The other memory of her is her ready smile for anyone around and her great laugh.

From Mary Ann Wright

Oh, how I miss her! Thoughts of her always make me smile. She just loved the Genealogy Center. She often told me that being in the library had been a dream of hers for a very long time. She was so excited when the Center opened January 2012 and the PSGS collection was accessible to all. Rest easy, Marlys.



Marlys MARRS and Friend



Marlys MARRS and Dr. Bill Richardson



Judy Joaquin, Madi Cataldo, Marlys MARRS and Delana Cox

Volunteers needed for the Genealogy Center

We need members to step forward and volunteer to work in the Genealogy Center. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about our collection. Most days are fairly quiet so you would be able to do your own research. Training is provided. You do not need to be an "expert" at genealogy. KRL provides us this space, cataloging all materials in the Center, and the meeting room for our classes and programs. In return, we provide volunteers in the GC. Send an email to Sharon Hornback at gcvol@pusogensoc.org. When the library reopens, a training date will be set and interested members will be contacted.

GC Volunteer Contest

The current contest will be extended. The end date will be announced at the next PSGS General Meeting. Volunteers in the Genealogy Center earn chances for a drawing to win the book, The Organized Family Historian by Ann Carter Fleming, GCG, CGL. Please note that this book is also available in the general non-fiction area of the Sylvan Way Library for check out.



1301 Sylvan Way

Bremerton, WA 98310

(360) 475-9172 • www.pusogensoc.org