

Past Tracks



A Publication of the Southern Arizona Genealogy Society

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Contributors

Mike Day
Irene Little
Mary Martin
Becky McCreary
Bob Pitcher
Lucy Redding

Southern Arizona Genealogy Society meeting

Thursday, November 20

1:00 - 3:00

Recreation Center at La Posada

(directions on page 29)

Hybrid Meeting (In-person and Zoom)



MIKE DAY AND MARY MARTIN

November SAGS Meeting will feature Mike Day and Mary Martin talking about Brick Walls and Timelines. This picture shows them hiking and enjoying a New Mexico holiday together.

President's Message

Autumn Season in Full Swing!



November, with the Thanksgiving Holiday, is a month full of activity and family gatherings. My childhood memories involve traditional turkey dinners and comfort foods. My father always prepared the turkey and tried a different dressing each year. Some of his most successful dressing recipes used cornbread and giblets. He had one spectacular failure when he used too much sage and both the turkey and the dressing were overwhelmed with sage flavor and aroma. He reminisced about oyster dressing from his childhood, but he only tried that once. The inexpensive oysters from the Chesapeake Bay in the 1930's were no longer available in the 1960's.

My mother made pies... apple, pumpkin, cherry and mince meat. Being born in Canada, she didn't learn about pecan pie until I was a teenager. Like many people from Canada and New England, she liked a slice of cheddar cheese with her apple pie. I learned to like it, but it did seem strange when I first tried it.

Mary Martin and I will present the program for the November meeting. I will talk about My Brick Wall: the problem with identifying the parents of my 2nd Great Grandfather George S. Aldrich. I will describe various strategies I have used to try to break through the wall... so far without success. Mary will talk about her approach to timelines, an unglamorous but powerful tool for understanding family history. When you lay out a timeline, the sequence of events and the intervals between events suggest motivations for the big decisions and actions in our ancestors' lives.

Genealogy is about understanding communities and we will improve our skills and knowledge by approaching the challenges of family history together.

Mike Day

SAGS November Monthly Meeting

On November 20 there will be 2 topics featured at the meeting in person and on Zoom. The first will be a presentation by SAGS President Michael Day on the strategies he has used to attack **My Brick Wall**: Who are the parents of his 2nd Great Grandfather George S Aldrich who was born in Ontario County, New York in 1812 or 1813. All strategies so far have failed to yield a satisfactory answer to this question.

The second will be a presentation by SAGS Secretary Mary Martin on **Building Family Timelines** for genealogy. In the five family history books that Mary has written, timelines have been used constantly to help construct the narrative of her ancestors' lives, families, migrations and challenges. Mary learned the value of timelines as a lawyer in Minnesota.

After the break with cookies, there will be an in-person activity where attendees will pair off with a Brick Wall Buddy to discuss their own brick walls and determine what may be the best way to next attack this problem.

Please bring research notes, the family tree, person sheets, and other documents to outline the details to your Buddy who will view it with a fresh pair of eyes. Likewise the Buddy will do the same with his materials.

Please, remember to wear your name tag.

SAGS December Monthly Meeting

On December 18, there will be two topics presented by SAGS members. First, Ed Storey will share his experience using **English archives** and resources for researching his English family.

The second topic will be Pat Edwards showing how to use **Welsh and Irish tithe maps** to find ancestor information.

In the second half of the meeting, we will have a holiday party and everyone is encouraged to dress like one of their ancestors and briefly tell the ancestor's story.



**Reminder: THURSDAY, DEC. 18, 2025 is the popular
DRESS LIKE YOUR ANCESTOR PROGRAM.**

It's time to put your outfit together for this entertaining program and prepare to tell us about the relative you portray.



Bob Doss is his 5th great-grandfather, Revolutionary War Patriot James Weethe.



Mike Day as a Coal Miner Ancestor



Darillyn Doss

SAGS' annual Seminar will be held on Saturday, February 7, 2026 at the REC. Center.

And an Anniversary Party to celebrate the Society's 50th year will be held on Thursday, March 19, 2026.

Calling for Volunteers!

SAGS needs volunteers to serve as:

- Past Tracks Editor
- SAGS Board Vice President
- Director of Membership

Please refer to the website for description of responsibilities and contact a member of the SAGS board if you would like to help.



Education Opportunities



*Please inform the facilitators/instructors if you will attend their session. Some classes require a Zoom link.
The latest SIG information is always on the [SAGS website calendar](#).*

Let's Talk Genealogy (SIG)

First Weds of each month: Nov 5; Dec 3; Jan 7

9:30 - 11:30

In-person Meeting

Genealogy can be confusing. Sometimes, you just need to be with some friends to talk about a research problem. Maybe you want to share a breakthrough you have been working on for years. That's the purpose of "Let's Talk Genealogy"— friends talking about genealogy and family history. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month. Meeting location: La Posada Pavilion, Building #670, 2nd Floor, Synergy Room.

Storytellers: Writing Family Stories

Second Tues of each Fall/Winter months: Nov 11; Dec 9; Jan 13

10 - noon

In-person Meeting

The Storytellers class for SAGS members meets on the second Tuesday of the month October through May at Friends in Deed. This is a class for those who want to write to preserve their personal stories and those of ancestors. **This is not a drop-in SIG; you must register in advance to join the class.** For more information, please contact the instructor, Becky McCreary: rebeccamccreary764@gmail.com

Family Tree Maker SIG (Updated Schedule!)

Third Monday every other month: Nov 17; Jan 19

10:00am - 12:00 noon

Zoom meeting

Explore the features of FTM with a hands-on approach! An email with the Zoom meeting link will be sent out approximately 5 days prior to the meeting to those on the group email list. To have your name added to the group list, send an email to webmgr@azsags.org.

SIG Leader: Karen Feeney

Continued on next page

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Beginning Genealogy SIG

Fourth Thurs of each month: Jan 22 (No meetings in Nov, Dec due to holidays)

3:00 - 4:00

* Hybrid Meeting: Green Valley Genealogy Library, and Zoom.

This meeting is open to non-members & members. It is a great way to get started with researching your family tree. This group meets the 4th Thursday of the month. For more details, contact Jon Otto, Group Leader, at jonotto48@yahoo.com and check the SAGS Events Calendar for future meeting dates.

* In-Person Meeting location: Green Valley Genealogy Library, 665 S. Park Centre Ave., Green Valley.

DNA Special Interest Group

Fourth Friday of each month: Jan 23 (No meetings in Nov, Dec due to holidays)

9:30 - 11:30

In-person Meeting

LaPosada Recreation Center, 685 S. LaPosada Circle, Bldg. #37, Green Valley, AZ

This SIG will start with the basics through the experience of its leader, Mike Day. Mike is a former teacher and technologist who brings a decade of experience as a user of DNA testing services and a career of understanding technologies. If you have any questions or would like more information, contact Mike Day at michaelhday@me.com



News from the *Green Valley - Sahuarita Genealogy Library* at La Posada

Becky McCreary, Library publicity



As we enter the holiday season we are reminded to give thanks for our family, friends, neighbors, and others we meet along the way. As genealogists we are thankful to the ancestors who, through their struggles and hardships and perseverance, gave us life.

This November celebrates the 45th year of National American Indian Heritage Month to provide time for Native people in the United States to celebrate their culture, traditions, and music. In 1990 President George H.W. Bush signed the bill which in part said, "The President has authorized and requested to call upon Federal, State and local Governments, groups and organizations and the people of the United States to observe such month with appropriate programs, ceremonies and activities."

A visit to the Green Valley-Sahuarita Genealogy Library reminds us of how lucky we are to have the great resource for researching our ancestors! We are thankful for the well-organized shelves of 3,500 books, the helpful volunteer staff, and to La Posada for the space. At any one time, the Library has a number of books for sale; usually duplicate books. Stop by the Library and a staff member will direct you to the bookcase holding the variety of titles, most of which are priced \$2.00 to under \$10. You may also browse the catalog on your home computer. On the Southern Arizona Genealogy Society website (azsags.org), click on Library Catalog in the right-hand column. The first pages contain the Surplus titles. Currently there are 137. Following are three which look interesting:

500 Brickwall Solutions to Genealogy Problems Family Chronicle Magazine The book is rated 4.5 stars on Amazon. A reviewer said, "This book is loaded with great ideas to help you find those missing ancestors. It's worth having in your library." \$7.00.

History for Genealogists: Using Chronological Time Lines to Find and Understand Your Ancestors authored by Judy Jacobson. From an Amazon, rated 4.5 stars, review: "I use it often when I find someone new to add to my tree to see if something happened during their life that might lead to another bit of source of documentation." \$9.00

The Battle Road Charles H. Bradford.

It was formerly part of the main road Lexington, Lincoln and Concord, three of the main towns involved in the American Revolutionary War. \$10.00

November 17: The 6-part (consecutive nights) Ken Burns *The American Revolution* on PBS begins.

665 S. Park Centre Ave.
Green Valley, AZ. 85622
Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Saturday 9 a.m. - noon
520-648-4016



*For
your
Reading
Pleasure*

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My Grandmother

Irene Marenin Little

Franziska Hermine Rutcher Kraus, born 1875 in Saaz, Bohemia;
died 1961 in Willimantic, Connecticut.

My maternal
Grandmother Franziska
Kraus had a much more
interesting life that I knew.
She was born on April 22,
1876 in Saaz (Zapetc)
Bohemia,
Austria (now Czech
Republic) from well-to-do
farmers (GrossBauer).
She told me that she was
the youngest of 8
children, but I can't find
any record of the
other 7 in the catholic
church archives. As a
child she was sickly
according to family lore. I
did find her birth
certificate in the church



Franziska Kraus 80 years old

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archives which gives the names of her parents, their occupations. and the names of her grandparents.

Before 1901, she eloped with Ludwig Gotthardt Kraus, born March 19, 1878 in Saaz, Bohemia. He was 2 years her junior and her family promptly disinherited her. They continued to live in Saaz. Ludwig first volunteered for and then worked for a bank. They had a child, Reinhold Ludwig Kraus - born March 10, 1901 in Saaz. On the church records he is listed as illegitimate, but the father's name is given as Ludwig Kraus. There is a later notation on Ludwig's birth certificate that he is now "legitimate". Does that mean they got married? I can't find a marriage certificate. Was she pregnant when they eloped? Good questions.

It became interesting when I found a notation on Ludwig's church birth record saying that he had committed suicide and died on Feb 2, 1902 in Munich. I had been told by my mother that Ludwig was on a business trip to Munich from his bank and that he died in Munich. That aroused my curiosity. Did he really commit suicide or was he murdered—a young 24 old male in a foreign city. Could the police decide it was easier to have a suicide than a murder to investigate? I tried to check newspapers from Munich, but could find no reference to Ludwig. It became much more exciting when I looked into newspapers from Bohemia! In February 2, 1902 he was reported as missing for a couple of days. What was happening to his wife and small child is not known. Notice, that Franziska is mentioned as his wife. Did they get married since the birth of their child? On February 9, 1902, the *Pilsner Tagblatt*- newspaper mentioned that yesterday the Savings bank assistant

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(Sparrkassenassistent) Ludwig Kraus was reported as being a fugitive. Ludwig also was the treasurer for 3 ethnic associations. In early February 1902, it was established that the fugitive Ludwig absconded with 700 Krone (about \$44 (~\$1600 in 2025)) from these 3 ethnic associations. That is not a very large amount of money. On February 10, 1902 the *Tepliz-Schoenauer Anzeiger* newspaper reported that Ludwig Kraus had worked in Saaz as a volunteer at the bank and then for a few weeks was employed as an assistant. Later newspapers mentioned that Ludwig fled to Munich and stayed in a hotel under an assumed name "Edmund Reichl". The police confirmed that Ludwig did shoot himself behind the right ear in his hotel room. He was identified by his handwriting, his wedding ring (so it appears that they did get married), another ring and a button on his coat. A couple of days earlier Ludwig pawned a watch in the nearby village of Ingolstadt. It looks like he ran out of money. He probably bought the gun that he used in his suicide with that money.

Ludwig may not have known that his wife Franziska was pregnant with my mother- Maria Franziska Kraus Marenin. She was born on September 24, 1902 in Saaz. That means that my mother was born about 7 ½ months after Ludwig's death. My mother obviously never knew her father.

My grandmother never remarried, but my mother told me that when she was about 10 years old, my grandmother could have remarried, but my mother Maria and her brother Reinhold were totally opposed to it. Children are very selfish and only know that they had a nice family with just the 3 of them. My mother later said that was the

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worst thing she and her brother could have done to my grandmother. She had to live on her own after the children left the nest.

My grandmother supported herself as a seamstress. She learned some French. At that time all the important people spoke French and she might have worked for rich people. She taught me 3 French words—"la vache" - the cow, "le boef" - the bull, and "ferme la porte" - close the door. How much more French she knew, I never found out. In August of 1925 my grandmother was listed as a dealer of textiles during a bankruptcy proceeding. She was getting compensation from a food distribution organization (*Wiener Zeitung*, Jahresuebersicht (annual report), 22 August 1925). I am not sure what that is all about—need to investigate it more and find more documentation for that. According to my mother, her brother Reinhold Ludwig Kraus died at the age of 30 in early 1930s from pneumonia

My grandmother was born as an Austrian citizen and on September 18, 1939 became a German citizen after Hitler and the Nazis took over Bohemia. According to Ludwig's death certificate, on 15 December 1933, she lived in Bodenbach, village of Podmokly, which is located on the right bank of the Elbe River in the Czech Republic, part of Děčín. Bodenbach is across the river from Tetschen. As far as I was told, my grandmother did not reconcile with her family until WWII. I remember my mother and my older brother Roman taking the train to a farm for getting milk, butter and eggs. I think they went to my grandparent's farm. I wish I had paid more attention to what little my mother told me about her relatives.

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At some point my grandmother started to live with us—my father, my mother and 3 children. I suspect it was after Reinhold, my mother's brother, died. She lived with us more or less for the rest of her life. There always seemed to be a small amount of tension between my grandmother and my father. Children are amazingly sensitive to tensions between adults.

In 1957 our family was contacted by the American Consulate about emigrating. My parents had applied for emigration status in 1945 both to America and to Australia. We had been contacted by the Australian Consulate for being eligible for emigration status. But by that time we had decided to emigrate to the US. Our family came under the Polish quota since my father's birthplace (Yavoriv) in Ukraine had become under Polish control between WWI and WWII. The Polish quota was highly over-scribed due to the atrocities committed by the Germans to the Poles. In 1956 US decided to discontinue the refugee program and our family had to decide if we wanted to emigrate to the US or stay in Germany. We decided to emigrate to the U.S. and arrived at Idlewild airport (now Kennedy) on 17 March 1957.

My father wanted to get as far away as possible from the Russians with good reason. He had fought for a free Ukraine in WWI and had been held as a prisoner of war by the Russians at least 3 times. Since the security at the camps was pretty lax, he had escaped each time. But he did not know if the Russians kept any list of their prisoners and wanted to make sure he would never again get under the control of the Russians. He was listed in the Austrian papers as missing in action several times during WWI.

My grandmother decided to stay in Germany. She had never been on a plane before and was not sure how she would adjust to life in the US. Besides that, she was not sure her German pension would follow her to the US (it did). But after a year living in Germany unhappily, she decided to join us in the US. She did not like it the nursing home-no friends, no family and not great service.

She was brave and got on a plane to Idlewild airport and arrived there in September 12, 1958. I had just gotten my driver's license and along with my mother we picked her up in New York. That was quite a scary drive for me-the first time on a freeway—the Merrit Parkway with its many sharp curves.

My grandmother then lived with us in a fairly small apartment in Willimantic, CT. I went off to college, Vassar College, and did not see much of her. She died on November 3, 1961 at the age of 86 in Willimantic, CT of old age and is buried in Saint Josef Cemetery in Willimantic. It is a long way from Saaz to Connecticut. I am sure she never imaged the kind of life she led when she eloped as a 20+ year old woman.



Oma Kraus 1956

Did my Great Grandfather James Day serve in the Civil War?

Michael Day

One of the mysteries in my Day family history regards my great grandfather James Louis Day. He was born in New London, Ohio in 1837, was married in Bryan, Ohio in 1863 and moved his young family to Iowa in 1865 and died there in 1894. He would have been 23 years old in 1860, prime age for military service. Did he serve? If so, when, where and how? If not, did he evade service, was he disabled or was he simply never called to serve?

In the 1850's and 1860's, he moved back and forth between Ohio, where his mother lived, and western Illinois, where his father and brother lived. The 1850 census finds him in New London, Ohio with his mother, brothers and sisters, several hired hands, but no father. His father, John M Day died in 1852 and was buried in Fulton, Illinois. James' mother, Amanda Moon Harmon Day remarried in 1856 to Thomas Coleman and moved to Bridgewater township, Williams County, Ohio, near where James' future wife, Marian Aldrich was living with her father. In the 1860 Census, James is in Fulton, Illinois with his brother. In 1863, again, he is in Bryan, Ohio.

Military service records, both in Ohio and Illinois are problematic because there are so many James Days in both states at the time. I found one James L. Day who served in an Ohio Cavalry unit, however, after the war he received a pension in Ohio and died in Ohio, so he is not my great grandfather.

Many young men volunteered to serve in locally organized military units, but after a couple of years of war, the supply of volunteers ran low. In 1863, the Union passed the **Enrollment Act** which was the first national draft in US history. (The confederacy had passed a similar act in 1862.) Under this act, the Army created an office of the Provost Marshall General to administer the law. Obtaining soldiers was regarded as a supply or logistics operation and not viewed as an obligation of local communities. This was a geographic bureaucracy that enrolled all men who were citizens or immigrants who had applied for citizenship between the ages of 20 and 45. When called to serve, a draftee could serve, arrange for another man to serve in his place (substitution) or pay a \$300 fee to avoid service (commutation). These latter two provisions were very unpopular and led to the saying "Rich man's war; poor man's fight."

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Draft records, organized by state and township, should have picked up my male ancestors between the ages of 20 and 45 in 1863 in both Ohio and in Illinois. These records are kept at the National Archives and are partially digitized for online searches. Not all congressional districts are digitized. However, I did find James' brother in the Illinois record, but a crucial district in Ohio where James may have lived is not searchable online. It is possible that James was enrolled but never called to serve. It is also possible that his movements made it difficult to enroll him. He does not seem to have been identified as someone who evaded service in the documents I have found.

In 1884, the Iowa Legislature passed an act to record the names, addresses and military units of all veterans living in the State of Iowa, regardless of in which war they fought or in what state they lived at the time. The act specified that the assessors should record all these men (there were few if any women) and compile the results for use by the state of Iowa and the local Grand Army of the Republic lodges. I have a digital copy of this document (*List of Ex-soldiers, Sailors and Marines Living in Iowa*, William L. Alexander, printed in Des Moines by George Roberts, State Printer, 1886) and James Louis Day is not recorded as a Civil War veteran in that document or its addendum.

In *Draft Evasion in the North during the Civil War*, Peter Levine, Journal of American History, Vol. 67 No. 4, March 1981, the author includes a summary chart from the Provost Marshall General's final report on the 4 rounds of draft in the north. A total of 776,829 names were drawn and of these 21% failed to report for examination within 10 days when a notice was dropped off at their last known address. Another 12% of the draftees were discharged because local quotas were met by volunteers, other draftees and substitutes. Only the remaining 67% were examined for service.

Of those examined for service, 20% of the 776,829 names drawn were physically disqualified, 20% were granted other exemptions, 11% paid commutation, 9% provided substitutes and only 6% served as draftees. That is, the yield of soldiers from four rounds of draft was 15% (draftees plus substitutes) of the names drawn... fewer than the number of draftees who failed to report. Since failure to report was a crime, law enforcement and the Army spent time and money locating and prosecuting these men.

Regression analysis of the data creates a profile of the most likely draft evaders: recent immigrants, Roman Catholics or urbanites. My great grandfather was none of those. I have also read that soldiers who volunteered for service did not trust draftees or their substitutes, since they were unlikely to be as committed to the fight as the volunteers.

Based on this research, what am I to think about my ancestor James Louis Day? He was a pioneer, raised on the edge of civilization and may have had a healthy disregard for government and politics. He may have volunteered and served for a short time without making a mark on the military records, but that contradicts the 1884 Iowa registration record and is unlikely.

He may have avoided enrollment, either deliberately or conveniently due to poor coverage of Army agents in western Illinois. He may have been enrolled but never called due to a sufficient local supply of volunteers. He may have failed to report due to being in the another county when given notice. He may have been examined but exempted due to physical or other issues. James died in 1894 of tuberculosis. If he contracted the disease in childhood, he may have failed his physical. It is unlikely he paid commutation or arranged a substitute unless a family member who just came of age went in his place. I surmise he did not serve, but I don't have sufficient documentation to be sure or to know why.



JAMES LOUIS DAY'S GRAVESTONE IN PLEASANT VALLEY CEMETERY NEAR OLIN, IOWA

The West Central School of Agriculture in Morris, Minnesota, 1910-1963:

A Boarding School for Children of Farm Families for More than 50 Years

By Mary K. Martin

I grew up thinking that boarding schools were mostly urban and mostly places where wealthy people sent their children. I have learned that Minnesota had at least two boarding schools designed to teach the high school aged children of farm families. These schools were the Northwest School of Agriculture in Crookston, Minnesota, which operated from 1905 to 1940, and the West Central School of Agriculture (WCSA) in Morris, Minnesota, which operated from 1910 to 1963. This article focuses on the WCSA, where more than 7,000 students received their high school education. The campus of WCSA has been an important part of my family history for nearly a century.

In 1887, a boarding school for indigenous children was built in Morris, Minnesota. When that school closed in 1909, the campus was acquired by the University of Minnesota and reopened the following year, in 1910, as the WCSA, a boarding school where both boys and girls from farming families could attend a technical high school that focused on teaching agricultural and home-making skills. The WCSA accepted its last new students in 1959; in 1960 the campus began accepting students as the University of Minnesota-Morris campus; The University of Minnesota-Morris (UMM) remains a vibrant public liberal arts college today.

My family connection to the WCSA/UMM campus began with the siblings of my mother-in-law Hazel Dehne (1916-2015). Since the school was founded, a total of twenty family members have had a connection to this school!

Hazel came from a farm family of sixteen children (fourteen of whom survived to adulthood) near Holloway, Minnesota, about 23 miles from Morris. Seven of Hazel's siblings (Arthur, Henry, Reuben, Alice, Hulda, Clarence, and Gilbert Dehne) attended this boarding school, as well as Hulda and Gilbert's spouses, James Flint and Pearl Maanum. Another of Hazel's sisters, Mildred Dehne, worked at WCSA as a housekeeper according to the 1940 census. Hazel's uncles John and Herbert Koehntopp, her cousin Malinda Roehl and Malinda's husband Syver Bergum, and Hazel's nephews Norman Dehne (Henry's son), and Gary Dehne (Gilbert's son) also attended this unusual boarding school. After the WCSA became UMM, Hazel's son (my husband), one of her grandsons (my son), his wife and I all received our degrees at this campus.

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Above: Collection of building photos at WCSA, about 1913. Spooner Hall and several others of these buildings were still in use when the author attended classes on this campus.

According to a history of the WCSA in the UMM Digital Portal, (see <https://alumni.morris.umn.edu/wcsa-history>) the WCSA's mission was to educate west central Minnesota youth on contemporary agriculture and homemaking methods and to provide core academic instruction. Students accepted were at least 14 years of age and eighth-grade graduates. They enrolled in a three-year course of study that ran from early October after the fall harvest until late March before spring planting. Students continued projects at home during the summer, and visiting instructors monitored progress. Summer projects allowed students to share new agriculture practices with their parents.

Typical classes included animal husbandry, cooking, sewing, carpentry, as well as English, math, and music. Short courses were offered for students who could only attend for brief periods.

WCSA students also participated in activities outside of the classroom. These included:

- Literary societies that allowed opportunities to discuss literature and to share readings of favorite works.

- Debate and declamation competitions and class plays.

- Athletic teams included basketball for both boys and girls. The Morris public high school and the Northwest School of Agriculture were frequent opponents. The football team played its first game in 1910, losing to Morris High School by a score of 10-0.

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During Field Days, the community was invited to campus to learn about new agriculture techniques from the nearby University of Minnesota Experiment Station and WCSA faculty.

The *1911-1912 Bulletin* for the WCSA lists the following expenses to attend:

Incidental fee (yearly) \$5.00

Board, light, heat, and flat laundry (weekly) \$3.50

Laboratory fees for woodwork, blacksmithing, sewing, cooking or chemistry, per term \$1.00-\$3.00

Text-book rental per term \$1.00

Deposit (yearly) \$5.00

Hospital fee \$1.00

The *Bulletin* goes on to say:

“Textbooks may be purchased or rented as the student desires. The \$5.00 deposit is required as a protection against breakages, book losses, etc. Unless deductions are made, it will be returned in full at the end of the year. Each month's board is paid in advance. The buildings are lighted by electric lights and warmed by steam. No deduction in charge is made for any absence of less than five days. A fee of \$1.00 per term is collected from each resident student and is used as a hospital fund. This fund will be administered under direction of the hospital committee which shall consist of the matron, the preceptress and preceptor, and four others elected from the student body. A general statement of regulations so far as such regulations can be determined, will be posted at the beginning of the year. Students will buy their own stationery, drawing material, etc.”

From : <https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/wcsabulletin>



Above: The barn and orchard at WCSA about 1925. Saddle club members still used the barn to board their horses during the author's years at the campus in the 1970s.

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The WCSA provided many new experiences for these high school students: living on their own for the first time, eating in the dining hall, class schedules, and roommates they had never met before. For some students, running water and electricity were new amenities.

Like all aspects of life in Minnesota and across the nation, the Great Depression affected the WCSA. Enrollment fell from 388 students in 1929 to 187 in 1932 as students and their families struggled to find ways to pay tuition.

An optional four-year program was added to the curriculum in 1938. In 1940 a flight-training program, Civilian Pilot Training, was started. Ground and air instruction was offered at the new Morris airport. During World War II, it was renamed the War Training Service.

During World War II, the WCSA faced many difficulties. Students and administration adapted to rationing of food, tires, and gasoline. Students were no longer allowed to drive cars to school. WCSA stayed in touch with their service men and women by sending them the *West Central School News*.

The postwar years between the mid 1940s and the mid 1950s were stable for the WCSA. Enrollment grew to an all-time high of 455 in 1947.

But change was imminent. While the first WCSA students arrived by horse and wagon the high school students of the 1950s traveled by bus or car. By the late 1950s, telephone, radio, and television were standard means of communication, and the technology explosion was just beginning. By 1959 WCSA enrollment was falling, and the decision was made to close.

If you have any ties to central Minnesota, perhaps one of your ancestors was among the students at the WCSA. The UMM Digital Portal contains digitized copies of all the yearbooks from the WCSA; these yearbooks provided me with a lot of new information about the twenty members of the Dehne family who attended the WCSA and UMM. They are available at [Browse - UMN Morris Prairie Portal](#). The author even found photos of herself and her son in the UMM Archives!

AN UNUSUAL SOURCE: VIRGINIA COURT RECORDS IN PENNSYLVANIA

Bob Pitcher

Part I: The Dispute

Some time ago, I bought off the Green Valley–Sahuarita Genealogy Library’s sales shelves a book I’d had my eye on: *Virginia Court Records in Southwestern Pennsylvania*, by Boyd Crumrine, reprinted in 1997 for the Clearfield Co. by the Genealogical Publishing Co. of Baltimore. Mr. Crumrine compiled the records of the book’s title and added an introduction. And the book comes complete with – thank goodness! – an index. The records were discovered more than a hundred years ago hiding in the first three volumes, years 1902-05, of the *Annals of the Carnegie Museum*, from which Crumrine rescued them for genealogists.

What are these records, what are Virginia records doing in Pennsylvania, and what’s my interest in them? They are of the 1775-6 sessions of the court of Virginia’s West Augusta District, and of the 1776-80 sessions of the courts of Ohio, Yohogania, and Monongalia Counties into which Virginia had divided West Augusta in 1776. Those *Virginia* counties then included most or all of the current Washington, Greene, Fayette, Westmoreland, and Allegheny Counties of *Pennsylvania*, territory Virginia then claimed, a claim that wasn’t finally resolved in Pennsylvania’s favor until after the Revolution. This situation came about as the result of a border dispute between the two colonies concerned; this Part I outlines that dispute, how it was settled, and why it was of real importance, not only to the parties directly concerned, but to the course of the opening of the American West to settlement.

Some of my ancestors – and my wife’s as well, it turns out – were in that corner of frontier America in those years, and appear in the records. Part II will tell what I know of what they were doing there, and what the records show of them.

Virginia’s Claim

Virginia was the first English colony on the continent. In the charter of the Virginia Company, the colony’s sponsor, King James I gave the Company all the territory in North America between Spanish Florida and French Canada. Although the southern, northern, and western borders of Virginia were vague, its charter essentially gave the colony all it could keep hold of – and there were initially no other English colonies. As other colonies were established, superseding royal charters gave away some of that land, but whatever subsequent charters didn’t cover was still Virginia’s, as far as English claims to territory were concerned.

The difficulty here arose because, while Pennsylvania’s royal charter carefully specified the western boundary of William Penn’s new colony, the charter did so in terms of Pennsylvania’s *eastern* boundary, and no one knew just where that was. Any land in that part of the world that was not included in what Penn had received from King Charles II was legitimately part of the

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territory that the Virginia Company had received from King James 75 years before. No one knew for sure where Pennsylvania ended in the west, and not only did Virginia believe it was entitled to the benefit of the doubt, but Virginians had been first on the ground there.

Already in the 1740s the very young George Washington was engaged by Lord Fairfax to survey the western parts of the enormous Fairfax Grant in Virginia between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers. So Washington knew the territory when Virginia's governor appointed him special envoy to take a militia detachment in 1753 into what's now northwest Pennsylvania and tell the French, who were moving into the area, to butt out. Washington met with the French, and they declined to leave; but Washington had conducted his mission well enough that he was deputed the next year to lead a larger force to drive the French from the Forks of the Ohio, where the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers join to form the Ohio. The skirmishing that ensued then began what has been called the first world war, known in Europe as the Seven Years War and over here as the French and Indian War. The conflict eventually saw the French lose to the British their holds on both eastern North America and India. Another of the opening stages in that war was Braddock's Expedition, whose participants were largely Virginians, and which came to grief there in what's now Pennsylvania. So Virginians had both a legal and an emotional claim to this territory.

The war ended in 1763, with the British in control of everything north of Florida from the Atlantic to the Mississippi River. But, valuing the fur trade with Indians in the new territory more highly than new white settlements there, George III decreed that everything west of the Appalachians was Indian land, closed to white settlers. The decree was only moderately effective, and the situation was soon even more complicated. A new Ohio Company, chartered by Virginia, now claimed 500,000 acres in what's now southwest Pennsylvania and northwest West Virginia, and was advertising for settlers on easy terms. Many came, and enjoyed Virginia titles to their new farms.

Pennsylvania's Claim

On Pennsylvania's side, during the French and Indian War a British army organized and led from the eastern part of the colony had captured the French outpost at the Forks and renamed it Fort Pitt. In coming west, that army of Pennsylvanians had established passable roads through the mountains, which Pennsylvanian settlers from the East were quick to use once the war was over. Those settlers enjoyed Pennsylvania titles to the land they'd bought. Virginia, partly to indicate its claim to the land, organized it, first as the western district of Augusta, which nominally stretched all the way to the Mississippi (if not all the way to the Pacific) and shortly into the

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three counties whose court records Crumrine's book contains. Pennsylvania did likewise, its first county there being Westmoreland.

From at least 1770, there were scuffles between the settlers from the two colonies, some of whom had overlapping land claims, differing cultural backgrounds, and different allegiances. The two colonies' governors issued dueling proclamations declaring their jurisdiction over the lands to the west of Laurel Hill, the backbone of the Alleghenies, but these served only to make the disputes livelier. For some years, both colonies' tax collectors were arrested and jailed by the other party. There was much shouting but little shooting.

The beginning of the Revolution brought renewed Indian raiding along this frontier, where, after all, British law said no white settlers were to be at all. The two colonies reached a tentative agreement for the duration, and provisionally extended westward the line Messrs. Mason and Dixon had begun between Maryland and Pennsylvania in the 1760s. No one knew how far west Pennsylvania might stretch, but at least this provided a temporary southern boundary to the colony. Both Pennsylvania and Virginia were inclined to believe that Fort Pitt, where the Ohio River begins, would be in Virginia when the boundaries were settled. It turned out not to be, of course, but this shows how hazy the geographical notions were in those days once one crossed the mountains.

Geographic Importance

All thirteen of the original American Colonies claimed land occupied by their neighbors or extensive lands to the west, or both. Delaware, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and what became Vermont were all at one time or another entirely claimed by neighboring colonies. But this Pennsylvania-Virginia dispute was unusually important for geographic reasons. That the great Seven Years War began here, over whether Britain or France should control the head of the Ohio River, is an indication of its critical nature for North America as a whole.

Until the French and Indian War, there were three great barriers to colonial expansion in the West. The first were the mountains back of the coastal plain – the Alleghenies to the north, the Appalachians farther south. There are just not many ways through the mountains, and they remained a difficulty for travelers until well into the railroad age. The second were hostile Indian tribes, which by the 1750s were essentially all the tribes that retained any coherence; they had by now all realized the danger posed by the advance of white settlement. Third were the French and their expanding colonial empire, based on fur trading with the tribes in the West. The French held Canada, and their explorers, missionaries, traders, forts, and recently towns – Vincennes, Kaskaskia, St. Louis, New Orleans, and Mobile – gave them a tentative hold on the entire Mississippi Valley as well. If the French could firm up this hold, the British would be cut off from influence in all parts of North America beyond the Atlantic coast, and even those

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holdings, the thirteen colonies, would come under serious pressure from the French and their Indian allies.

The key was the upper Ohio River. Whoever controlled the river – and that would be whoever controlled its source in western Pennsylvania – would control the settlement and commerce of the Ohio Valley and ultimately the Mississippi Valley as well. The European participants in the Seven Years War had many more issues on their minds at the time than just North America, and felt that some of them were more critical; but it's no wonder that the War began at the Forks of the Ohio.

The War over and the French if not the Indians disposed of, the area retained its importance. Soon English settlers found ways across the mountains, despite King George's decree. Daniel Boone's Wilderness Road, blazed in the years just before the Revolution, was the route in the South. There were at least two more roads in the north by this time, Braddock's Road up through western Virginia and the Maryland panhandle, and the way west from Philadelphia and Lancaster to the Forks of the Ohio. These routes all led to the Ohio River, the key to the Northwest Territories and the lower Mississippi.

Both the colonies that were parties to the boundary dispute recognized at least a part of what was at stake. Whichever of the two should win its claim to the land south and west of the Forks, the other would be cut off from easy access to the river and its expansion and commerce would suffer.

The interests of certain individual Virginians would also suffer, if their colony lost the dispute – George Washington the foremost, but by no means the only one. Washington bought western land throughout his life, and it's said he eventually held close to a million acres of it. Access to much of it depended on the Ohio River. Individual Pennsylvanians' interests were of a similar nature, if not on so large a scale.

Resolution

The dispute was essentially a loud stand-off through the early 1770s. When the Revolution came, and with it a significant increase in the danger of Indian raids stirred up by the British, the two colonies put the matter on hold. They had enough to think about in the East.

After the War, the two, now states, settled. The location of Pennsylvania's eastern boundary was agreed on, and the Mason-Dixon Line, whose progress had been stalled in the mountains, was pushed through in 1781 to the current Pennsylvania state line in the west, and then the next year north to Lake Erie. All the land to the west and south of those surveyed lines still belonged to Virginia. Pennsylvania allowed Virginians that had settled in what were now its land to keep their slaves – Pennsylvania wasn't at this time really a "free state" anyhow – and their land titles.

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This last probably meant in practice that in cases where both states had issued title to a tract, the actual possessor of the tract got to keep it. It is said that ill feelings and some active squabbling persisted in the area between the two bodies of settlers for some years more.

The resolution of the dispute might have had ramifications broader than could have been realized at the time, that is, before sectional differences among the states became critical. In 1787, Congress organized the Northwest Territories – which in a few decades were to become Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Congress decreed that these lands, both as territories, and eventually as states, would be free, that is, not slave states. There was little debate over this – it seemed not an issue.

But would that have been the case if, as had been anticipated, Virginia, a slave state, and not Pennsylvania, one of the first states to outlaw slavery, controlled the entirety of the Ohio Valley, from Pittsburg (or whatever Virginia might have named the place) on down? If Virginia and not Pennsylvania had easy access to the land that became the northern parts of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, would those states, eventual strongholds of the anti-slavery Republican party of Lincoln, have had more of a southern culture? We'll never know.

In the next Part, I'll trace how parts of my family got to this area of America, and how they – and a small branch of my wife's family as well – appear in the Virginia Court records.

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Map of La Posada Campus with Recreation Center at Western Edge. Entrance to Campus is off Continental on the East side.

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