



DNA AND YOUR FAMILY TREE

"Researching Your Family Tree Using DNA" is the topic for the Madison County Historical Society's August Speaker Series program. The presenter, Debi Burgess, working through the DNA Detectives Facebook page, has assisted hundreds of families with finding their birth relatives. The program will be held at 2 p.m. on Sunday, August 7, in the lower level of Immanuel United Methodist Church at 800 N. Main St., Edwardsville, directly across the street from the MCHS Library.

DNA Detectives was founded and is administered by one of the country's foremost genetic genealogist, Cece Moore. It is a resource where persons with questions about their birth family can reach out for assistance. Some are individuals who took a DNA test to learn their ethnicity, only to find they are not related to the people they thought were their birth family. Others have been on a life-long search to connect with birth families.

Burgess is one of many "search angels" connected to the page. These are people who have developed a high level of expertise and agree to help families in their search. They are not permitted to accept payment for their work.

For the Speaker program, Burgess will discuss how you can use DNA to discover your ancestors, the websites to help in your search, and methods available. The information will be useful for beginners, as well as interesting for people with a curiosity about how DNA is being used in these searches.

She will also discuss some of the recent cold cases which have been solved using genetic genealogy techniques.

FAMILY REUNIONS RETURN

Connecting with extended family was one of the many things missed during the last two years. Family reunions, some that have been held for nearly a century, were cancelled, but not this year. Reunion committees around the county are eagerly planning the return of their family reunions.

This issue of the MCHS News will look at a half dozen Madison County families which have held reunions for many years, and how they plan their successful reunions. For those which hold reunions, it may provide new ideas. For those families which haven't held a reunion lately, it may bring inspiration.

THE PENELTON FAMILY

The Penelton family of Edwardsville began holding family reunions in 1979. It was a gathering of the "First Cousins," all grandchildren of Gabriel Reilly Penelton (1863-1941) and his wife, Birdie Virginia (Johnson) Penelton (1874-1948), who came to Madison County more than a century ago. They had eleven children.

The reunions are held every two years, on odd numbered years, on the fourth weekend in July. Although the family is now located in cities across the country, reunions are always held in

Edwardsville because

Edwardsville represents home. Like other families, the reunion was cancelled during COVID, but the family used group Zoom meetings to remain connected. They plan to meet in person in 2023 as scheduled.

A committee of six or seven people organizes the reunions which attract 150-200 participants, making it the largest of the reunions covered here. The duties of the committee, originally fulfilled by some of the First Cousins, have now passed to the next generation. As with many other families, the

Continued on Page 5



Gabriel Penelton and his wife, Birdie Johnson Penelton (Lynn Engbretson)

Save the Date!
MCHS Trivia Night
SATURDAY, AUGUST 27

Details on page 8

Hours

Wed - Fri, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Sunday 1-4 p.m.

Madison County History Museum

and Library
801 N. Main Street
Edwardsville, IL 62025

Contact us:

Library: 618-656-7569
Society: 618-656-1294
Email: info@madcohistory.org

LIBRARY AND MUSEUM NEWS

A new SIUE graduate intern, Abbigayle Schaefer, working under Curator Jenn VanBibber, is surveying the MCHS collections to identify artifacts and documents relevant to the theme of migration to Madison County. Her work will be part of the research needed to create a future exhibit on migration for the renovated museum.

Numerous additions have been made to the collections including a mysterious box, with connects to the railroad. No one could identify what it was until Archives Librarian Mary Rose researched the piece and identified it as a railway postal clerk's training case.



Railway Postal Clerk Training Case. (Mary Rose)

The Community Towers Project is nearly complete and will soon provide mini-historical exhibits at locations throughout the county.

Last year the Edwardsville Fire Department (EFD) donated several boxes of photographs, memorabilia and artifacts to MCHS. Nearly 800 photographs from the collection have been posted to Illinois Digital Archives (IDA) so they are available for anyone to view. IDA is an online repository for cultural institutions in the State of Illinois. This collection is called "Prepare, Prevent, Protect: 110 Years of the Edwardsville Fire Department," and it can be found here: <http://www.idaillinois.org/digital/collection/p16614coll85>

The EFD also assisted MCHS in early May. Woody and Kathy Daugherty were driving by when they noticed the flag at the museum was in poor condition. It had frayed and was caught at the top of the flag pole so that it couldn't be brought down. The Daughertys ap-

Volunteer Projects

Volunteers work on a variety of projects, most of which make the collections more easily accessible. We are grateful for their dedicated work! Some of the more recent projects:

Betty, Gary, LaVerne, Marty and Cherie continue to work on what probably seems like the never ending obituary collection. (Thank you for your patience!) LaVerne, Marty and Cherie are also archiving local newspaper articles.

Kat Housewright, a new volunteer, has started a Madison County LGBTQ+ history archive.

Emily Klingensmith who is a returning volunteer, is working on a digital collection of Bertha Love's photograph album.

Members of the Board are currently taking care of the lawn in addition to their other duties serving on numerous committees, not least of which is a grant writing committee. Board volunteers also serve as staff for the library on Sundays.

RECENT VOLUNTEERS THANK YOU!

Donna Bardon
LaVerne Bloemker
Betty Byrd
Lynn Engelman
Gary Forshaw
John Harvey
Kat Housewright
Emily Klingensmith
Cheri Kuhn
Marty Lane
Scott Oliva
Mindy Phillips
Steve Rensberry
Mike Reinhardt
Connie Royston
Mary Westerhold

*"Alone we can
do so little; together
we can do so much."*
— Helen Keller

proached the EFD who came by with their bucket truck and freed the flag. A new flag was acquired in time for Independence Day. The Daughertys also took the old flag so it could be properly disposed of in a ceremony at the American Legion in Wood River.

*A member of the EFD cuts the flag
away from the chains holding it to the
top of the pole. (Jenn VanBibber)*



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PUBLICATIONS

MCHS News

6 issues annually
Cindy Reinhardt, Editor
cindy.reinhardt@madcohistory.org

VOLUNTEERS

There are abundant and varied opportunities for volunteers at either the Museum or the Library. If interested, please call 618-656-7569.

MEMBERSHIPS

Several membership levels are available to those interested in supporting the work of preserving Madison County history through a MCHS membership. Memberships run on the calendar year, Jan 1-Dec 31. Applications are available on our website, or at the Library.

The Madison County Historical Society is a 501(c)3 charitable organization.

MCHS CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION - A PERFECT DAY

Thank You Sponsors!

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The MCHS Centennial Picnic at the Mudge Farm was a fitting celebration for the Society's 100th anniversary. The sold-out crowd enjoyed a picnic lunch of fried chicken and pulled pork while listening to music by the Lodge Brothers. The meal was followed by a program and house tours.

MCHS is very grateful to the Mudge family for their hospitality, especially Steve Mudge who related his personal history of the farm. The event committee with Candace Ladd, Carol Manning, Norma Asadorian and Cindy Reinhardt had things well in hand. And, last, but not least, event sponsors made it all possible. (Note: MCHS is a non-political 501(c)3 charitable organization. Numerous state office holders were invited to participate but only two responded!)

LIVING History DAYS

2022

FAMILY HISTORY WALK

Saturday, Sept. 24, 2022

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Self-guided tours of historic sites in Edwardsville with re-enactors at each location.

Pick up your free Family History Walk map at the MCHS Weir House, 715 N. Main, Edwardsville

VINTAGE BASEBALL

Belleville Stags vs. St. Louis Brown Stockings

Saturday, Oct. 15, 2022

12:30 to 4 p.m.

Winston Brown Recreation Complex
Edwardsville, IL

12:30 Batting practice for kids and adults
(MCHS donation required)

1:30 Original baseball game rules reviewed

2:00 Vintage baseball!

Food and beverages by MCHS



**SAVE
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DATES!**



**Living History
Days**
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Madison County Reunions (cont. from page 1)



The original Penelton family "First Cousins." Back (L-R): Tony Penelton, George Leslie Penelton, Clem Penelton, Nadine Bradshaw, Clarice Deloach, Rita Beamon, Lois Harrison, Eugene "Fat" Ward; Center: Dora Dean Greene, Gwendolyn Dean Washington; Front: Bill Penelton, Jimmie Ward, E. Bonnie Ward (Lynn Engbretson)

committee consists of the women of the family who also serve as unofficial family historians. They try to have multiple generations involved with the committee who met via Zoom during COVID. They also stay in touch via a private family Facebook page

The Penelton Reunion is very well organized and offers something for every age group to keep them connected and continue a family legacy. It is a three-day affair that begins with a "meet and greet" on Friday evening. In previous years, there was a fish fry at the home of Rita (Ward) Beamon that spilled over to the nearby home of Nadine (Penelton) Bradshaw. Rita and Nadine, two of the original First Cousins, both passed on in recent years, but their influence continues. With so many relatives coming from out of town, they now sometimes hold the Friday meet and greet at a hotel hospitality room.

Reunion day, on Saturday, has something for people of all ages and is held at a large hall, usually the Knights of Columbus or the American Legion. It begins with ice breakers and then gets down to business.

Saturday used to be a big potluck meal. The women of the First Cousins generation would cook for days preparing a feast, but with many of them gone, and more people living at a distance where bringing food is impractical, they now cater the meal.

There are games and crafts for the children as well as games for the adults that change all the time to keep it fresh. One year they had a bounce house. Most years they have a photo booth. One year they played Family Feud, another year they held a talent show with Motown 60s as the focus.

Stories of their heritage are shared through either a program or a display of family history and photographs. A reunion souvenir is given to each attendee. In the past these have included cups, crocheted coasters with a "P" for Penelton, sunglasses, books, picture frames, tote bags, etc. One year, Lynn Engbretson made a shadow box to display all the reunion souvenirs.

They also design a dated green and white shirt for every reunion that people have the option to purchase. These are made available on-line so everyone interested can order their own in advance. Most people opt to buy the shirt. At one of the earlier reunions, the First Cousin families each had a different color shirt to represent their branch of the family.

They make a point of getting children involved in family history programs, for example, a play with the young people representing the First Cousins. A quilt is on display with handprints of many of the children.

The Peneltons always acknowledge milestones that have occurred since the previous reunion: births, deaths, weddings, graduations, promotions, and retirements. Like most reunions, they also recognize the oldest and youngest in attendance and the person who travelled the farthest to attend.

On the third day, Sunday, they gather for a catered picnic at Edwardsville Township Park followed by games of stick ball and volleyball before saying their goodbyes.

Activities vary each year to keep it fresh, but it is clear from the attendance and the efforts of this extended family, that they have a winning formula for a successful reunion.

THE LEITNER FAMILY

The Leitner Reunion began in 1961 as a reunion of the descendants of Joseph Martin Leitner (1861-1938) and his wife, Anna Maria Fencel Leitner (1864-1939), pictured at right. Joseph and Anna had ten children, but three preceded them in death. Their son William was accidentally shot in 1909 on New Year's Eve, and two children, Margaret and Joseph, died as infants.

As the children of Joseph and Anna, passed away, some branches of the family stopped coming to the reunion, but the descendants of their two youngest sons, Louis and Charles Leitner, continue to gather. Louis had seven children, and Charles had three.



The first few years the reunion moved around, from Quercus Grove, to Alhambra, to Edwardsville and other locations. The date moved as well. Today the reunion is always held on the third Sunday in September at Kendall Hill Park (Conoco Park) in Wood River Township. The park has an air-conditioned building, large enough for everyone to be inside, in case of rain.

The main course of their potluck lunch is always fried fish, caught, cleaned and prepared by Larry Leitner. Others bring the side dishes and delicious desserts.

In the early days, there were more adults in their 20s-40s so after the reunion there were often softball or volleyball games. The men also

Continued on Page 7



The Herman and Caroline Klueter family included (Back L-R): Emil, Fred, William, Henry, John and Mary; (Front) Kate, Caroline, Herman and Lydia.
(Eadie Schillinger)

THE KLUETER FAMILY

The first Klueter family reunion was held on June 7, 1942, at Quercus Grove School. It was originally a reunion of the descendants of German immigrants, Hermann Heinrich Klueter (1862-1939) and his wife, Wilhelmina Caroline (Heidemann) Klueter (1858-1940), who had eight children. As the extended family grew and older generations passed on, the family of their oldest son, John Henry Klueter (1886-1965), known as Henry, and his wife, Rosa Bernadene (Rohrkaste) Klueter (1892-1991), continued the tradition for their family. In the past the family attended two reunions, one for the Klueters, and another for the Rohrkaste family (1959-2017). The Rohrkaste reunion was discontinued before COVID.

The Klueter family lived and worked near the Quercus Grove School, making it an ideal location for their reunions. (They owned Klueter Concrete at the corner of Route 157 and Quercus Grove Road.) The old school was often used for reunions or other gatherings until 2007 when it was destroyed by fire. Since then, many of the Klueter reunions have been held at the Hamel Community Center.

At one time reunions were held on the first Sunday in June, but now are held on any Sunday in June with the exception of the 2021 reunion which was postponed until the fall due to COVID.

Klueter reunions are potlucks with everyone bringing a dish. If seed money is needed for the hall or other expenses, they pass the hat.

Activities at their reunions include lots of cards, pinochle, euchre, or bunko. When the older generation (children of Henry and Rosa) were younger, there were also softball tournaments.

They don't usually have a program on family history, but they do go over changes to the family tree since the last reunion, i.e., births, deaths, and marriages.

They keep a directory of all the people on the family tree with contact information. Patricia Klaus, the family historian, maintains a family tree. Her sister, Eadie Schillinger keeps the reunion records.

THE MITCHELL FAMILY

The Mitchell family, with deep roots in both St. Clair and Madison Counties, has been holding reunions since 1924, making it one of the oldest family reunions in the county. It was held every few years until about 60 years ago when it became an annual event. The reunions have become national in scope with attendees from California, the D.C. area and elsewhere, but the majority remain local to Madison County or St. Louis.

The Mitchell family gatherings were originally the descendants of George Alonzo Mitchell, known as Alonzo, (1853-1944) and his wife, Mary Ann (Walker) Mitchell (1856-1946). After their 1875 marriage, the couple settled in Collinsville where their nine children were born. Over the years, many moved to Edwardsville.

As with other families, as the older generation passed away, the focus of the reunion narrowed in scope to primarily the de-

scendants of their daughter, Altheada Mitchell (1896-1931) and her husband Thomas Henry Mitchell (1892-1954). (Both Mitchells, but not related.)

Thomas and Altheada had six children.



Alonzo and Mary Ann (Walker) Mitchell
(Erica Holliday)

The matriarch of the family today is Anita (Mann) Banks, a great-granddaughter of Alonzo and Mary Ann Mitchell.

In the past, the Mitchell family reunion has been a one-day event, but this year, they are coming back from COVID with an expanded event in September. They have rented a farm near Dow, Illinois for a home base and have a three-day reunion planned. Friday will be a meet and greet with games and a menu of finger-foods. Saturday, besides great food, there will be more games, children's activities, volleyball, and even an option for horseback riding. On Sunday, they will attend church together, then enjoy a Sunday brunch before starting their journeys home.

The Tite Family

The Tite family reunion is held by the descendants of Edward Tite (1883-1958) and his wife Cynthia (Leavell) Tite (1884-1957), who had 14 children, 13 who survived to adulthood. The Tites had deep roots in Gallatin County, Illinois, but when they retired from farming in the early 1940s, they moved to Wood River where several of their children had settled. Although those children are all deceased, their grandchildren carry on the tradition of the Tite Family Reunion.

Their reunions have been held annually since 1951 on the second Sunday in June. This year was the 71st anniversary. When it began, the reunion was held at a local park, but later moved to a private home because there was a swimming pool that the children enjoyed.

Continued on Page 7

The Hanfelder Family

The descendants of William Charles "Bill" Hanfelder (1902-1969) and his wife, Josephine (Gascho) Hanfelder (1900-1989), have gathered for a reunion every year since 1958, until the COVID pandemic. They will resume this year. William and Josephine had 13 children.

Bill grew up on his family's horseradish farm. Many of his relatives continued to operate the horseradish farm in Nameoki Township for generations. Although he left the farm to become a South Roxana businessman, his family is very proud of its history in the horseradish business. Handfelder brand horseradish can still be purchased today.

The Handfelder reunion is usually held on a Sunday in August and begins with a big potluck meal. They meet at Kendall Hill Park (also known as Conoco Park), since someone from the family works at the refinery and can make reservations.

The potluck always has a delicious variety of foods. When Josephine was still alive, her specialty was chicken and dumplings, but others in the family also have their specialties which they bring every year. Of course, given their family history, Hanfelder horseradish dishes are also featured.

After the meal there is a meeting where minutes from the previous year are reviewed, and officers/committees are established for the following year. The meeting closes with a white elephant sale that serves a dual purpose. It's a lot of fun, but also helps raise money for the following



William and Josephine (Gascho) Hanfelder and their 13 children. Back (L-R): Robert, Helen, Arthur, Kenneth, Alice and Charles; Center row: Rita, Doris, Phyllis (on her father's lap), William and Josephine, Margaret, Kathryn; Seated in front: Joseph and Gladys. Circa 1946.

year's expenses. After the sale, the games begin.

The reunion committee plans many games in advance, all with prizes, for the younger children. They also often have a blow-up water slide, or some other extra playthings to make the day special.

As with many families, when their reunions began in 1958, there were always baseball/softball games and everyone was allowed to play, even the little kids. The men played horse-shoes and some years there were volleyball

games. However, the generation that began the reunions is getting older and many of their children no longer attend, so there are fewer team sports played. This seems to be a common occurrence with family reunions.

The crowd is smaller now than it was in years past but still enjoyed by those who choose to attend.

Family history is usually displayed but there isn't a program. Cindy Hanfelder Parker keeps track of the family tree. The family also has a private Facebook group where they keep up with special occasions, birthdays, graduations, etc. As the family historian, Cindy also posts old photographs and stories. That page allows them to get to know one another better.

Most of the Hanfelder family lives locally so they also have a gathering at Christmas, but those meetings are smaller than the summer reunions which remain a long-standing family tradition for the Hanfelder family.

The Tite Family (cont. from page 6)

In recent years the potluck has been replaced with a restaurant meal because the reunion is held at a family-owned restaurant. This year it was at The Franchise in Wood River, owned by Marty Tite, a great-grandson of Edward and Cynthia Tite.

Activities at the reunion over the years have included bingo, washers, children's activities, softball tournaments, etc. To raise money to pay for the reunion, the family has produced three cookbooks (approximately every 10 years) that they have sold, as well as reunion shirts and hats. They also published directories of family members with names and addresses that are distributed at the reunion. Some years they hold an auction to raise seed money for the next year's reunion.

The Leitner Family (cont. from page 5)

played pinochle, but no one seems to know the game anymore.

Today, the young children play on the playground, a large group plays buncos with prizes provided by the committee, and another group pulls up chairs in a circle to visit for the afternoon. The buncos games are lively with 10 sets of dice circling at once and, when the prizes are all taken, then they begin stealing from their neighbors (or, in this case, their cousins) in good-natured fun.

Kathy Leitner Fox has kept the records for about 15 years. They always note the weather, the names of those in attendance, the reunion committee for the present year and the committee for the year to come. The aunts, who are grandchildren of Joseph and Anna, are now passing the reins to their children. Siblings Mike Leitner and Kathy Leitner Fox, great-grandchildren of Joseph and Anna Leitner, are in charge next year.

Most reunions these days last only a few hours, but everyone enjoys reconnecting. Most of the family lives in Edwardsville/Glen Carbon with others able to make it a day trip.

NEW FROM MCHS -

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**LEARN THE STORY BEHIND HISTORIC
SITES IN MADISON COUNTY**

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MADISON COUNTY
**Historical
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Save the Date: MCHS Trivia Night Saturday, August 27, 7 p.m.

Glen Carbon American Legion, 190 S. Main St., Glen Carbon, IL

Doors open at 6 p.m.; 8 players max per table; \$25/person; Mulligans available on site

CASH PRIZES: FIRST PLACE \$400; SECOND PLACE \$300

Silent Auction - 50/50 Raffle - Dead or Alive Game - Booze Basket Raffle - Pastry Auction
Attendance Prizes - Cash Bar for soda, water, beer & other alcohol (No outside drinks or alcohol
permitted); Bring your own snacks!

RESERVATIONS

For information, to reserve a table, sponsor a round, or make a donation call the MCHS Trivia
Night Committee at 618-451-2611 or send an email to hyaghchig@charter.net
Walk-in teams are welcome!

2022 MCHS SPEAKER SERIES



MADISON COUNTY
**Historical
Society**



Sunday, August 7 at 2 p.m.

Presenter: Debi Burgess

Researching Your Family Tree Using DNA

Immanuel United Methodist Church (lower level)
800 N. Main Street, Edwardsville, Illinois

MCHS CALENDAR

Summer History Camp Ages 9-11

July 18-21

Register at: bit.ly/madcohistorycamp

MCHS Speaker Series

August 7

(Information at left)

MCHS Trivia Night

August 27

Family History Walk

September 24

Vintage Baseball

October 15