

PANNEBAKKER FAMILY NEWS



Pannebakker

NEWSLETTER OF THE PANNEBAKKER FAMILY ASSOCIATION

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Obituaries Contain Hidden Family Trees

Wouldn't it be nice if someone had already written out your family tree? Maybe they already have? In fact, most families have published family trees; it is just not recognized as such. That's because most people expect to see family trees in a certain format. When it is presented in a different format, people often do not recognize it.

Where do you find these hidden family trees? Try looking at an obituary. An obituary can provide a wealth of information about families, not just information about the deceased. Most obituaries can be divided into two parts. The first part talks about the deceased and the second part often talks about the family of the deceased.

Dead men tell no tales, but cemeteries and obituaries do. It is often only when someone dies that the living tell the real story of family relationships.

Obituaries really are an under-appreciated source of information for someone trying to construct their family tree. A surprising number of people researching their ancestors carefully study statements about the deceased and then give only a cursory glance to the names of family members listed in the obituary.

A listing of immediate next of kin in an obituary can provide an excellent base for creating a family tree. This is because obituaries often list parents, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, children and grandchildren. A typical obituary lists two or three generations of a family.

An incredible number of historic obituaries and cemetery records have gone online over the past five years. In addition to large websites like FindAGrave and BillionGraves, literally hundreds of local libraries and genealogy society websites from around the world have put obituary/cemetery records online for free. The Genealogy Search Engine conveniently searches all these websites. Even though the information in an obituary is not laid out like a family tree, it serves the same purpose. Obituaries have other advantages for someone looking to construct a family tree:

- Obituaries tend to be fairly accurate and complete as they are usually written by a close family member.
- Obituaries are one of the few documents where family secrets are laid to rest. Often family connections that are not revealed when a person is alive (such as the presence of a black sheep in the family) are laid bare in an obituary. How many times have you read an obituary and asked yourself a question like "I never knew he had a brother" or "I never realized that was her second marriage"? Probably fairly often.

It really pays to look at obituaries. Not only do they provide clues about the deceased, they also provide excellent leads about the family of the deceased. Stitching together the names found in even a couple of obituaries can create the foundation for a pretty good family tree. So, the next time you read an obituary, read about the living as well as the dead.

OBITUARIES

John I. Pennabaker, 86, of Juniata, died Friday evening at UPMC Altoona.

He was born in Roaring Spring, a son of the late Hayden and Katherine Isabelle (Shaner) Pennabaker. He was twice married, first to Hattie Arlene Byers on January 9, 1954, in Altoona. She preceded him in death on January 26, 2009, then to Debra A. Wasdin on June 4, 2010.

Surviving are his wife, three sons, John I. Pennabaker Jr., of Tyrone, Dennis C. Pennabaker of Houtzdale, Mark C. Pennabaker of Everett, one daughter, Mary E. Conrad of Dysart, 13 grandchildren, 7 great grandchildren, two brothers, Richard S. of Auburndale, Florida, William E. of State College, two sisters, Edith L. Cunningham and Sandra L. Pennabaker, both of Hubbard, Ohio. He was preceded in death one grandson, Jerrod Pennabaker, four sisters, Viola E. Hollabaugh, Katherine Hoover, Beatrice J. Polasko, Bonnie S. Ellmore and two brothers, Michael L. and Robert H. Pennabaker.

He was a 1976 graduate of Altoona High School and received his Masters Equivalency from Penn State. He had been a member of the former Fourth Lutheran Church.

In 1944, at age 16, John worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad as a fireman. In 1946 he joined the Army and went to Germany and fought for our country serving also in Korea in 1951 and Vietnam in 1966 and then retired in 1969 at the rank of CW3. Following that he was an instructor in the Small Engine Repair Program at the Altoona Vo-Tech School, retiring in 1989.

Billie Jo 'BJ' Pennabaker, the beloved daughter of William E. and Jane (Shaffer) Pennabaker, passed away with her parents at her side, and as always, on her terms on Good Friday, April 3, 2015, after a courageous four-year battle with Glioblastoma (brain cancer). She was 54.



She will be forever loved, missed, and cherished by her siblings, William, Billie Ann, Robert, Michael, Billie Lynn, Martin, and Thomas; Colleen Martin, her dedicated friend, relentless advocate, and tireless caregiver; lifelong best friend, Dora Heyman; her treasured godchildren, Matthew Pennabaker and Morgan Washburn; and all of her nieces, nephews, aunts and uncles.

She was preceded in death by an infant brother.

BJ served in the United States Air Force for four years as an air traffic controller. She traveled the country extensively in her capacity as vice president of Advanced Software.

BJ was known for her generosity and kindness both personally and professionally. She was always willing to lend a hand to anyone in need. She freely opened her heart, her life, and her home to those who needed it most. Upon receiving the news of her diagnosis and through her entire illness, her foremost concern was for her parents, whom she adored, and for the welfare of those she would leave behind.

BJ was a standout, lifelong athlete and continued to play soccer up to the last year of her illness. She was a 1978 State College High graduate, where she played basketball and softball and was later inducted into the hall of fame. She was a member of the McGuire Air Force Basketball team and selected to play point guard on the all-star All-Air Force team. She was a teammate in every sense of the word, encouraging and supporting every member of every team, regardless of their ability.

BJ always thought of others first. She effortlessly converted acquaintances into friends, friends into family, and families into communities. She was happiest when in the service of others.

Even in death, she wanted to help others. She generously donated her body to science to help further the understanding of this disease. She will be missed by everyone who knew her, and honored by those who emulate her kindness to others in her memory. 'Live Simply, Love Generously, Care Deeply, Speak Kindly, Leave the Rest to God.'

Americans think immigrants used to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. That's wrong.

If your ancestors came to the US in the late 1800s or early 1900s (or if you've talked to someone whose ancestors came then), you probably think of them this way: they came to the US with nothing but the clothes on their backs, worked hard in low-paying jobs, learned English, moved up the income ladder, and made sure their children could do just as well in life as anyone else's children.



But data from UCLA and Stanford researchers — with a big assist from Ancestry.com — shows the reality that many immigrants experienced might have been much more complicated, and much less in line with the American dream.

The researchers looked at the occupations immigrants held in 1900, versus the occupations natives had. (Natives were a lot more likely to be farmers, for example; immigrants were more likely to work as laborers, but also as managers.) They then compared the average incomes for each set of occupations. The result: as of 1900, immigrants were actually in higher-paying positions than natives in most states. In some states, immigrants were in occupations that paid as much as 20 percent

(or even, in New Mexico, 40 percent) more than the occupations natives held.

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This doesn't necessarily mean immigrants were getting paid more than natives. The researchers didn't know the income an individual immigrant (or native) made — the census didn't ask about income in 1900. That's why they looked at the average incomes for the *occupations* each group had. So it's possible that immigrants in a certain industry were discriminated against, and made less than the average income for someone in their position. On the other hand, it's also possible that as an immigrant stayed in the same job for years or decades, he started earning more — and the data doesn't capture that, either.

The *kinds* of work immigrants were doing in 1900 weren't necessarily less skilled than the work natives were doing at that time. That goes against the idea that immigrants of the late 1800s usually came to the US with nothing but a work ethic and worked their way up from there. Instead, what the data shows is that how well an immigrant did usually depended on where he came from — and his background in his home country — to begin with.

Immigrants from countries that were more developed in the late 1800s (like Great Britain or Belgium) went straight into jobs with a higher-than-average income: the average immigrant from a high-income country in 1900 was in a position that made \$800 more than the average for native-born workers. Immigrants from less-developed countries (say, Norway) went into low-paying jobs: the average immigrant from a low-income country in 1900 was in a job that paid \$1,700 *less* than the average for all natives.

Of course, over the late 1800s and early 1900s, where immigrants came from changed a great deal: Italians and Eastern European Jews started coming in far greater numbers. Overall, immigrants who came in the 1890s were much more likely to be in unskilled occupations than those who came in the 1880s. And even within individual countries, the immigrants who came in the 1890s were likely to be in jobs that paid less than jobs their predecessors held.

But how much an immigrant made at one point in time doesn't really tell the whole story. That's where the Ancestry.com data comes in: the researchers were able to track immigrants over time as they aged, and even track the occupations their children and grandchildren went into.

But what they found was profoundly worrisome. Not only did less-educated immigrants from less-developed countries work in low-paying occupations when they got to the US, but their children *also* were likely to work in jobs that paid less than the average for natives.

The data suggests that there have always been two different types of immigrants: immigrants who came to the US with the skills to go into high-paying occupations, and immigrants who came from backgrounds that didn't give them those skills. And those distinctions don't appear to disappear among children born to immigrant parents (though they could disappear in future generations).

On one level, this is an extremely depressing finding. The US has been extremely good at integrating immigrants in some respects, like giving them the chance to learn English. But it appears it was never as good at economic assimilation as the myth of immigrants pulling themselves up by their bootstraps implies.

On the other hand, the data is just another sign that today's immigrants — who overwhelmingly are in lower-paying occupations — aren't less hardworking or less willing to assimilate than the immigrants of a hundred or more years ago. Many of them just haven't been given the tools to succeed.

Message From The President

Greetings All,

I wish to reiterate my thanks for sticking with us for another dues years. We are enjoying good response from our notification of dues expiration dates.

We have signed up 5 new members this year with another coming to us soon. This is a great boost for us and along that line, I would like to request you contact your family members and ask them to join us as well.

Here at home on Wisconsin's east coast we are having a hard time escaping the low water temperatures of Lake Michigan. We are having temperatures in the 50's and gardens are pretty slow growing. Most of the first cutting of hay has been completed and corn and soy beans are doing pretty well. Health wise, I am enjoying good health but wish I could share that with Carol. Her back is hurting big time. She has had two of the steroid injections. The first didn't do a lot of anything and the second ones effects lasted for about 6-7 weeks. She is back to trying to get another injection and of course hoping it is a bit longer lasting. I stay busy with the inside and outside chores but hey, that is what marriage is all about.

Been doing a bit of genealogy while waiting for summer. Nothing real outstanding but using FindAGrave to locate a lot of my mother's Helvey line. They sure are prolific bunch with settlements (after Virginia) in Missouri, Nebraska, Texas and believe it or not, Washington and other places. A few apparently got lost and actually lived in Wisconsin before wising up to snow and ice.

Nothing to report on a reunion. Wish I had something other than appealing to our membership to think about getting one started. Time is running out for some of us and I really would love to attend one more. The one in 1999 was a blast.

Don't forget the web site. Also don't be bashful about sending those neat stories that make a family a family. Don't forget to query us for that hard to find relative, we might just have a lead. Cheers to everyone. More next time.
Ron

Pannebakker Family Association Web Site

If you would like a user name and password, you must contact Bruce Pennypacker at, throwcoach@gmail.com and the necessary information will be sent to you.

Below is the URL for the web site:

<http://www.pannebakkerfamilyassociation.com>

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Pannebakker Family Association



The Pannebakker Family Association is an outgrowth of the family reunion held at Pennypacker Mills, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania on July 2-4, 1999. The reunion celebrated the 300th year wedding anniversary of Hendrick Pannebecker and Eve Umstat, in Germantown, Pennsylvania in the year 1699. In the words of the Steering Committee of the reunion, "We hope that the 1999 Pfannebecker-Umstat Reunion will lead to the growth of a family association, which will provide a forum for conversation, collection and preservation of information, and a sense of lasting community among the heirs of this rich cultural heritage."