

Madison County Remembers...

A Publication of the Madison County Genealogical Society

Volume 39

Issue 192

Published at Norfolk, Nebraska

March-April 2018

****The BOCHE Saga ****

The Boches were coastal fishing people along the north German coast, as related in 1908 newspaper articles regarding tragedies in the family. The name Boche appears in Polish coastal records as well, and could have Scandinavian origins, as Bosh or Bowker. Wilhelm Boche, one of the '1866' immigrants from Wisconsin and founders of Norfolk, was born Oct. 27, 1829, according to one family history, and Boche was listed as fisherman on 1860 Federal Census for Jefferson County, Wisconsin.

Farming was perhaps a seasonal fill-in when fishing was slow for the Boche fishermen. So Wilhelm would have been equally at home on water or on land. It's speculation, but if Wilhelm had fished near a great port like Hamburg he might well have wondered what lay on the other side of the ocean where the ships were heading, loaded with people. And in their fishing villages they would have heard people talk of going to the new land across the water, where they could buy land cheaply and begin a new life. In Prussia young men had slim prospects to inherit any land unless they were fortunate to marry into a family with land and daughters, and not enough sons. Not often did that happen. So the Boche brothers, Wilhelm and Friedrich, decided to emigrate to the new land known as Nord Amerika. The precise years and ships may vary but emigrate they did.

Wilhelm that spring of 1852 boarded the ship Elbe at Hamburg with a little apprehension, as this was his first ocean voyage away from the familiar fishing villages of his youth. Had he made the right decision to stake his future on that strange land? he gripped tightly what little money he had saved. Fishing he knew...no one owned the water...but now farming had an exciting allure for him when he thought of himself actually owning a piece of land. He knew and talked only German but he did wonder how people there talked, as some of his friends knew English.

The Elbe ship quarters were only the barest necessity, and the ocean crossing he thought was not that much different than fishing; while not alarmed at the storms as were some passengers, he was uneasy a few times as the ship rolled and plowed through the high waves. The Elbe arrived in Port of New York on July 31, 1852, and Wilhelm began his new adventure. The trails from New York to Wisconsin were well traveled by earlier immigrants heading west, including some river travel, with few stops for food and shelter. Some forest trees were similar and others new to him; as was some wildlife, unlike what ran freely back home. What a relief to finally be in the territory of Wisconsin where he set up a rough camp near water and good firewood. Hunting and fishing filled his days and he made friends, one being the Gilley family which had also emigrated from Germany. In 1854 he and Louise Gilley were married and they raised their family, surviving children being: William (F.W.) 1855-1908;

Herman E. 1858-1944; and Maria A. 1865-1947.

Friedrich, was a half-brother to Wilhelm, it turns out from one report (no additional data) that says he was born Nov. 29, 1824, in the small village of Gustebiese on the eastern edge of the Oder River (east of Berlin; now it is Poland). This village could have been the Boche homestead at that time, and the historic Oder River was more than just an interior border/watercourse to the Baltic. This village would have had fishing activities as well as some lowland farming.



Friedrich is said to have emigrated in 1855 on the ship Humboldt, and at some point he may also have made his way to Wisconsin, to acquire farmland. What contact there might have been between Wilhelm and Friedrich is not clear, nor is information on their mothers.

Friedrich married Louisa F. Lukas, born Feb. 12, 1821, in Prussia. Children listed for them are: Louise Anna 1852-1929 (born in Prussia); Friedrich Jr. 1857-1931 (nicknamed 'Nebraska giant'); Mary Anna 1860-1894; and Augusta Charlotte 1863-1925, all born in Wisconsin. Louisa passed away Feb. 11, 1898, and Friedrich (Fred) died Sep.3, 1897; burial for both is in St. Paul Lutheran Cemetery, Norfolk, NE.

Ancestry dates often vary as census and passenger lists are not 'documents' proving origins, but often show family preferences for descendants, in the absence of authentic church records. Name spelling and dates are frequently best 'guesstimates'.



Fred Boche

The Territory of Nebraska appealed to many Wisconsin farmers as better farm land, to be bought at lower prices. So in 1866 the wagon trains of Wisconsin headed westerly, and Wilhelm and his family joined in. The boys and mother walked along while baby Maria rode in the wagon. Arriving in the new Norfolk settlement, in the beginning Wilhelm probably accepted whatever lot he drew as did all the pioneers, but that land along the Elkhorn River looked especially good to him. Herman Braasch's Numerical Index—his plat of the original town of Norfolk-- does not show any Boche town lots, as for other settlers.

Wilhelm would have naturally headed for the Elkhorn River lands and thus historically, his choice became the first Madison County Homestead Application No. 1280, filed May 14, 1867 on S ½ of SW ¼ of Sec. 1, and E ½ of SE ¼ of Sec. 2—all in T- 23 North, R- 1 west, 160 acres, Cert. No. 468. Quickly foreseeing the future of that river land for hunting, trapping and fishing for his family, he then acquired on Dec. 10, 1867 from Silas Turner, et al, his Military Bounty Assignment* for Mexican military service, covering an additional 160.72 acres in

Sec. 2-23-1.



Friedrich and Louisa Boche

At this point, Wilhelm's brother Friedrich who had traveled from Wisconsin to the Norfolk settlement, followed Wilhelm's example and also on Dec. 10, 1867 filed for 160.23 acres, under Patent Assignment* for Revolutionary War Service first assigned to Benjamin Shields, and by his widow, Susannah, to George Osburn, and finally to Friedrich Boche: S ½ of NW ¼; SW ¼ of NE ¼, and NW ¼ of SE ¼, all in Sec. 2-23-1.

So both north and south of the Elkhorn River was 480+ acres of Boche land for the families to enjoy for many years their long standing livelihood of hunting, trapping and fishing. This was better than they had hoped for. William/Wilhelm on his Homestead Application reserved land near the Elkhorn River for a private park, which later became well known to Norfolkers as Boche's Grove, and was described as one of Nebraska's garden spots. In fact, local people were so delighted with the scenic recreation spot three to four miles south of Norfolk, which Boche families generously allowed them free use of, that the city of Norfolk in 1935 purchased 52 acres of that land, and

the W. P. A. developed it into a new city park. As suggested by the Nebraska State Historical Society, the Norfolk Park Board agreed to preserve the River's most common Indian name, Ta Ha Zouka, who was the first chief of the Omaha Indian tribe, and who earlier had entered into a treaty with Spain. So this became our historic Ta Ha Zouka Park. (This Park land runs along the north side of the original Elkhorn River.)

For several decades the Boche families grew and developed good reputations for reliable fishing, hunting and trapping on their Elkhorn River lands, and the public increasingly took advantage of the friendly Boches, who frequently gave a helping hand in fishing and picnics in the scenic grove. But the Boche families' lives took dramatic and fateful turns in the ensuing years.

Quoting from the Norfolk Weekly Journal of 1908: "Mrs. William Boche, Sr. died as the result of having swallowed a fish bone. The Boche families have always been great fishers and trappers, and fish have been constantly on their tables for two score years. A fish bone lodged in Mrs. Boche's throat. She would not have a physician, but members of her family tried to relieve her. Infection is said to have set in, death resulting".—Louisa (Gilley) Boche died July 17, 1892, and is buried in the St. Paul Lutheran Cemetery, Norfolk, NE.

Recovering from this tragedy, Wilhelm remarried—to Mrs. Sylvia Brummond on Dec. 13, 1892.

Wilhelm continued his life of farming and fishing on the homestead, and died February 3, 1907, also buried beside his first wife in St. Paul Lutheran Cemetery. He was truly a self made man with no faith in banks, so kept his gold fortune buried on his own land, and took the hiding place to his grave.

It could be said that consolation for Wilhelm's death was that he did not have to suffer the additional tragedies of his own family.

His son, "F. W." William, drowned in the Elkhorn River February 19, 1908, as he attempted to walk south across the frozen river to the camp of his cousin, Fred Boche. But the ice was too thin to support his weight. It's ironic that he had safely lived beside that river for over forty years, crossing many times in many seasons, and that this tragic end came as he was preparing to sell his farm and move to a Knox County farm.

A search for the missing William was begun by his many friends and family. Julius Lehman in a boat heading (*easterly*) down the river, and Frank G. Moldenhauer, keeping pace on the bank, found his body washed onto a sandbar and lodged in shallow water, after a two day search.

Suggestions that William might have been depressed and deliberately walked into the frozen river, were not accepted by his family and people who knew him well; bruises on his head where he struck the ice as he fell in refuted that unfounded speculation. The 1860 census lists William ("F. W."), born in Jefferson County, Wisconsin; family dates showing Nov. 30, 1855. He married Louise M. Grimm Nov. 14, 1880, and was survived by Louise and their four children: Paul J. 1881-1973; William A 1883-1963; Helene J. L. 1886-1960; and John Henry 1890-1985. Few funerals in Norfolk were attended by more people than this funeral for William Boche, well known and respected, held in the Christ Lutheran Church on South Fifth Street. The church was filled to overflowing; more than 40 horse drawn carriages in the processions. Rev. J. P. Mueller conducted the service, with burial in the Christ Lutheran Cemetery. Louise (Grimm) Boche, born Apr. 12, 1861 in Germany, passed away Feb. 27, 1955, and also is buried in Christ Lutheran Cemetery in the Boche Block 2, Lot 15.

William's death came on the eve of the Madison County murder trial of his brother, Herman Eustaph Boche, accused of killing Frank Jarmer on May 1, 1907, in front of the "247" resort east of town.

Much concern over legalities and Herman's mental and physical state created a long delay of his trial. County Attorney Jack Koenigstein and Judge N. D. Jackson of Neligh, formally opened the trial on Feb. 27, 1908 with selection of the jury, but it was postponed May 9th, by Herman's defense attorney, Senator William V. Allen, due to infirm condition of the defendant and undue publicity. On May 28th Dis. Court Judge Welch denied application for bail. In the Madison jail that summer Herman attempted suicide 3 or 4 times, and his attack on Sheriff Clements brought attempts to place Herman in the Norfolk State Hospital, for the safety of all. The Hospital declined to accept him.

Finally in August, Supreme Court Judge Barnes allowed Herman's release upon \$15,000 bail,

and at last he was back on his farm in September. It was said bail had been posted by brother William (deceased).

Herman E. was born Oct. 18, 1858 in Wisconsin, the second son of Wilhelm and Louise (Gilley) Boche. They raised their family in the Elkhorn River bayous--on some of the original homestead of his father...later they would have considered those the best years of their lives.

After the shooting May 1st (1907) Herman had spent a wild week hiding in his favorite wood river haunts where they could not find him...no one knew those woods and bayous like he did. A visit with his cousin Fred convinced Herman to give himself up during a truce by the sheriffs who, despite all manner of advertising and monetary rewards, had conducted a vigorous but unsuccessful search.

Herman first told his story freely with no intent to conceal anything, to J. B. Donovan, editor of the Madison Star Mail, after surrendering himself and handing over his revolver to Constable Conley who took him to Madison and to jail; the injunction from his defense lawyers, Senator W. V. Allen, and Burt Mapes, was to seal his lips and speak to no one.

Herman's story to Donovan of what happened, briefly, was that on his return from a live stock sale with \$800 in his purse he headed home, to be intercepted by Frank Jarmer who insisted that he have some drinks with him. He said Jarmer, who had been planning to borrow money from him for his liquor saloon license, kept pushing him to drink more until he was really drunk—he couldn't remember where he was or what time; that he carried a revolver because of the money. They ate at some restaurant (*east of the North Fork River*) and in his hazy recollection he was being pushed and pulled into a hack in the early morning hours, struggling as someone was digging into his pockets. Missing his money, he drew his revolver, while definitely under the influence of the liquor, and must have fired. Later, 'out cold' in some farmyard and not remembering the events of that early morning, he headed for his farm, where Sheriff Clements was already waiting for him. He dodged the bullets and dashed into his bayou haunts, living for the next week like a hunted animal, he later confessed.

Finally, nearly a year later on March 3, 1908, the trial began in Madison, with full press court every day, a packed but peaceful courtroom, and an unbelievable list of witnesses. All of northeast Nebraska was fascinated by it, and page after page in the local, area and national newspapers gave every detail of the lengthy and emotional trial. Opinions for and against Herman varied among the many witnesses, but it was noted that no one spoke of his accommodating and hospitable character those earlier years—reasoning by some that friendly character references might bring up an old murder trial 18 years previously, from which Herman was acquitted as 'self defense'. Thankfully that never came up, although known to many people. His sister Maria (Henschke), and his own son, gave good accounts on the witness stand, with his wife Emma (Klipphahn), explaining that as a child Herman had suffered severely from a sickness, which seemed to have affected his mental acuity in later years. Under great stress, she was there every minute of every day—loving and loyal. Dr. Mackay, former superintendent at the Norfolk State Hospital, on the stand testified that he had treated Herman several times for 'instability of nerve structure', and dismissed as a joke earlier questions from Jarmer about getting 'knock out drops', ostensibly to use on someone who had money.

On the witness stand Herman handled himself well, was calm and answered all questions, even while acting out the death struggle for the jury to see, which he said was to get his money. He maintained throughout that Jarmer had asked him earlier for money to pay his liquor license due April 30, 1907, and that Herman had intended to loan him the money. His only defense was drunkenness and desire to protect his money, the reason he took his Sears Roebuck revolver with him.

The irony is that an error had been made by Julius Hulff the city clerk, as to the due date of the Jarmer liquor license renewal, and it was not due that April 30th...in fact, not due until May 6th. A seemingly trivial mistake—who would think lives might depend upon it, even be lost because of it! In other words, if not for that panicky action by Jarmer to secure the money or else, he thought, he would lose his license April 30th, this entire tragedy might never have happened...what a quirk of fate that so many lives were ruined so needlessly.

It came out that Jarmer was then already bankrupt, was quarrelsome and did not have the best reputation among those who knew him; also his bar associate, Lee Vroman, raised questions as to his own character and motives, as he stated repeatedly that neither he nor Jarmer had forced themselves upon Herman; ignoring comments that 'suddenly some people around are flush with money' for the first time.

Some questions could never be answered of course, and so it went on for days until both sides made closing arguments and instructions by Judge Welch were: they could return a verdict of second degree murder with sentence of ten years to life imprisonment, or a verdict of manslaughter with one to ten years in the penitentiary, or a verdict of acquittal; that pre-meditation had not been proven, and the jury was instructed not to bring in a verdict for first degree murder.

The jury of 12 men was locked into the jury room, as they had been every day before, taking breaks only for meals and exercise walks. After sixteen hours of deliberation the jury reached its decision at 2 o'clock on March 3, 1908, the verdict announced by H. F. Helme, foreman: "We find the defendant, Herman Boche, guilty of manslaughter." The jury was dismissed and Judge Welch was to pronounce sentence after customary appeals, etc. On the 17th of March, 1908, Herman Boche was sentenced to ten years in the penitentiary for killing Frank Jarmer on May 1, 1907.

Herman spent several years in the Nebraska State Penitentiary, but was paroled in November of 1911 by Governor Aldrich on the recommendation of John Yeiser, a member of the pardon board who had studied extensively the entire Boche case and found that there was reasonable doubt as to Boche's guilt—that the evidence on which he was convicted was that of disreputable characters; citing circumstances which had been excluded by the courts; Jarmer's previous malevolent and corrupt saloon operation, etc. The Governor said all of that should be considered as well as the ill fame of the witnesses against Boche, and so it was that parole was granted. No doubt Herman was eternally thankful to spend the rest of his life as quietly as possible with his family on his beloved river and bayous.

No account of any of Herman's money was ever given, so that remained a question.

The children of Herman and Emma (Klipphahn) Boche's large family are: Walter Rudolph 1886-1967; Emma Freda 1887-1967; Herman Carl 1889-1969; Emil Ernest 1892-1915; Emil Julius 1890-?; and Emma Otilie 1894-1969. Herman E. Boche died Apr. 17, 1944 and is buried in the Christ Lutheran Cemetery, Norfolk, NE, as is his wife Emma, who died June 7, 1913, Blk 4, Lot 39, #5.

The trial days had been long, often lasting to evening dinner hour, and witnesses included friends and acquaintances of the Boche families...some '1866' settlers: Lehman, Uecker, Wagner, Moldenhauer, Koehn, and Treythaler to name a few. An interesting note—the lawyers and judges regularly rode on the trains that ran back and forth from Madison to Norfolk in those days. Seems a short distance today for a train, but back then it was better than horse and buggy.

Historical Notes:

*The Military Bounty Assignment Wilhelm Boche rec'd for additional acreage in Sec. 2-23-1 from Silas Turner refers to a 'Van Vliet war with Mexico'. Stewart Leonard Van Vliet was a graduate of the famous class of 1840 Military Academy at West Point. He was a historic figure in the Civil War--- Union Brigadier General--- and saw service as well in several Indian wars. Born in Vermont Jan. 21, 1815, he died Mar. 28, 1901 and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery, as are his wife, and son and grandson both of whom served in the United States Army.

Complete history available: www.arlingtoncem.com. (N.Y. Times, Mar.29, 1901)

*Revolutionary War: "March 3, 1855 Congress approved granting 'Bounty Land' to certain officers and soldiers who have been engaged in Military Service of the United States", for which Warrants were issued to qualified former soldiers. The 'bounty assignments' were transferable same as for any other land transaction involving a deed or patent. (Apparently this could be applied to any military action the United States might undertake in the future... such as the Mexico action...no restrictions or limitations at that time).

Wilhelm C. and Friedrich Boche are included on the monument in memory of the pioneers who settled Norfolk, Nebraska in 1866, dedicated in 1976, at the Liberty Bell Park on Georgia Avenue at 6th Street, Norfolk, Nebraska.

(All things considered, a better defense of Herman should have been provided, but a 'mental institution' was apparently out of the question. And Herman's eventual parole was vindication of his self defense of his person and money.)

LIVE SNAKE IN THE CELLAR Creature From Central America Came to Norfolk With Bananas.

A Central American snake is running loose in the basement of the storehouse of Haley & Lang on Norfolk Avenue. It was found, presumably dead, in a bunch of bananas that came last week from British Honduras. It was only numbed by the cold, however, and once inside the storehouse came back to life and is now making its home in the cellar much to the confusion of the rats and mice. In unpacking a bundle of bananas the men came across the snake, which was about four feet long and had a beautiful yellow skin striped in a deep crimson with faint greenish spots along its back. They shook it out of the bundle and left it lying on the floor while they finished up their work. A little later, when they went back to get the snake, it was not to be found but in a few moments they saw half of its body just as it was slipping down the stairs into the basement.

Manager Fred Haley, who has seen several of those snakes before in fruit brought from Central America, and declares that they are house pets down there and are kept the same as a cat to drive out the mice and rats and bugs. As he has had some trouble from rats and mice recently he hopes that the snake can stand the cold weather yet to come and take up its permanent home in the cellar. The snake is absolutely harmless. There has been a noticeable shyness on the part of both mice and rats this week, and Mr. Haley believes that the snake is already getting in its work.

The Norfolk weekly news-journal. (Norfolk, Neb.) 1900-19??, February 02, 1906, Image 2 (Chronicling America)

WAGNER – OR WEGENER –What's In A Name? --The Family History

Wagner--- this well known surname in its earliest form stems from an old Germanic name "Waganari", and is occupational which means it can be interpreted as a horse drawn 'wagon maker'—or perhaps a wagon driver-- transporting goods and produce. Since first recorded in the 1200s of medieval Saxony, surnames indicating occupation or locale became accepted and hereditary during the Middle Ages, and Wagner with all its variations, is now one of the most common surnames in Germany. Thousands of "Wagners" of every status and spelling emigrated from every corner of Germany (and Europe) to America. Ship passenger lists attest to this American influx not only in our country's earliest years, but continuing into the 21st Century. Unfazed by the variety of spellings such as Waggoner or Wagonner, Wegener, and even Vagner or Vegener, they knew their ethnicity, and endured all manner of hardships in their meager existence, determined to establish their foothold and make the new land their own, to live their dream as free citizens at last.

With such a popular and prominent name it's no surprise that many famous people have the Wagner surname. This mobility by the thousands had a ripple effect, spreading the Wagner name far and wide, with variations, so that Wagner research is more like the proverbial "needle in a haystack" to determine documentation.

It's entirely possible, in fact likely, that in earlier centuries Wagners and Wegeners were related, as those names were interchangeably used, continuing today, and raising the horns of the dilemma in research—"which name"!

Church books provide the primary and best authentic records for birth, marriage and death in earliest centuries as without a church, few villages had the physical means or knowledge for recordkeeping, if royalty was not involved, or historic military campaigns. At best, village inns might have kept sketchy accounts of traveling patrons, and it was a rare case to make such a discovery, even later in the 14th and 15th centuries. The variations of handwriting and spelling were a tremendous challenge. The diversity of speech dialects as families moved around, made spelling variations inevitable as names were written just as heard, often barely related to the actual spelling. Name respelling by the original bearer after leaving the home country was common, just to simplify writing the surname; sometimes to hide identity. (In this case some early records show 'Ferdinand', later 'Frederick' for same data.)

The following passenger and church records are taken from on line records, and presumed to be our local Friedrich Johann Wagner who emigrated from Wisconsin to Nebraska in 1866, to begin the new settlement of Norfolk on the North Fork of the Elkhorn River.

The New York Passenger and Immigration Lists of 1820-1850 indicate that Johan F. Wagener and Elisabeth (Hoeckendorf) arrived in New York on September 27, 1844, on the barq Eliza Thornton sailing from Hamburg, Germany, with Abner Stone as Master. (Here is the spelling of Wagener ! rather than normal Wagner). Elisabeth was the sister of Pastor Johann M. Hoeckendorf who also traveled to Nebraska as Pastor of the newly established St. Paul Lutheran Church at Norfolk in 1866.

Family records indicate that Johann Frederick Wagner and Dorethe Elisabeth Hoeckendorf were married May 27, 1842 in Germany. Ewan's book on Old Lutherans lists 'freeholder' Friedrich Wagner (27), and wife Mrs. Elisabeth Hoeckendorf (27), with daughter Luise (1), as

emigrating in 1844 from Lietzegoricke, a small village northeasterly from Berlin. Actually the original was Alt-Lietzegoricke on the east side of the Oder River on the Poland side--Stare Lysogorki.

That area was probably their farm residence, and the church there may still have its original records, if not forwarded to a central church archive. On the west side of the Oder is the larger Neu-Lietzegoricke village built after the marshland drainage to allow for small farmsteads. The Google map of Neu Lietzegoricke shows it has a 'dorf' church, and on the same Lietzegoricke Strasse, a Wagner Supermarket, and coffee shop. So the Wagner name is well known.

Ewan lists the additional Hoeckendorfs included in 1844 as 'freeholder' Friedrich 42 yr; father Michael 80 yr; mother Sophie, nee Strecker 70 yr). (*Note: 'freeholder' without 'van' preceding the name indicates without nobility.*) Family records also indicate that Martin Ludwig Wagner, born June 30, 1787, in that same village, was Johann Friedrich's father, and that Sophie (Wagner) was his mother.

It was customary for each of the civil and court offices to be established in a different village, always raising the question...which office to research a specific record. These small villages on both sides of the Oder River are easterly from Berlin, and very likely many of those farmers knew each other and about Nord Amerika, as several of our pioneer settlers emigrated from areas on both sides of the Oder River...the Boche map includes all of these villages.

As to Friedrich Johann Wagner, from New York he and his family followed rivers and rutted trails west to lands they were told were available. In 1844 life in Wisconsin was still quite primitive but they managed with help of friends to create a new farm home for their family. The 1860 Census shows them living in Ixonia, Jefferson County, and they lived in Wisconsin for some years before moving on west to better and more affordable land. In 1865 Johan Wagner, Herman Braasch and John Gensmer had traveled to Nebraska and found the lush Elkhorn Valley and river country to be just what they were looking for, to begin a new settlement. Based on their report many families in the Ixonia area made preparations that winter to emigrate to Nebraska come spring.

The 1866 wagon trains left Ixonia that May with 42 families, all wagons loaded with only their most necessary household goods, food and implements. The women and children walked practically the entire distance, herding cows and sheep. Four oxen pulled each wagon; only a few men had horses. Much has been written of the southerly overland trek through hills and creeks of Iowa, which proceeded slowly but without any great danger or problems. Weekly stops were most welcome so the women could bake bread, do laundry and limited housekeeping. Often it was Sunday and church services under blue skies renewed their faith and determination.

The original pioneer settlers who arrived that July of 1866 on the banks of the North Fork River wasted no time in settling in. Lots were drawn and land measured out by means of a simple compass and cord, some on the riverbank with access to water and trees, other lots farther inland, 160 acres each. Families lived in their wagons while crude cabins, dugouts and some sod shanties were hastily constructed as winter was not far off.

Living was the simplest but adequate as the country had abundant wildlife--men hunted antelope, deer and prairie fowl; fishing was a daily chore for young boys. But grains and bread-stuffs were luxuries as the nearest mills were miles away—it was a 3-day trip to West Point for flour; hauling supplies from Columbus and even Sioux City took several days due to poor roads and rivers. Tree stump furniture was normal for many years.

Homesteads were staked out, the one appealing to Friedrich Wagner lay north of the Elkhorn River in Township 23N, Range 1 West: the E ½ NW ¼ and N ½ NE ¼ of Section One, 160.83 acres total, with Homestead Cert. #1366 Patent issued Nov. 20, 1874 at the Norfolk Land Office. Here they built their farm home and raised the family of eight surviving children; the baby Luise apparently not surviving the voyage and buried at sea according to family records (no ship record to that effect).

In addition to developing the family farmstead, Johan took an active interest in establishment of the new settlement. By December of 1867 steps were taken for the organization of Madison County, so named after the pioneers' former state capital (Wisconsin).

County Officers were then elected in 1868, and included Frederick Wagner, as Probate Judge, in which capacity Judge Frederick Wagner served from 1868 to approximately 1870. He had the pleasure of issuing the first Madison County Marriage License, May 1, 1868, to his own daughter, Frederike Emilie Wagner and her betrothed, Frederic Sporn of Cuming County, Nebraska. Pastor John M. Heckendorf performed the marriage ceremony on May 3, 1868, at the St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Norfolk.



Frederic Sporn was the young man who in 1865 had led Wagner, Braasch and Gensmer up the Elkhorn River valley to the North Fork. Johan Wagner helped organize and build the St. Paul's Lutheran Church, a community effort of all able-bodied men, and served as a Deacon of the Church and in other capacities for many years. The Wagner children made farming their primary occupation, some partnering with the parents on the home place and others developing their own farms. The Wagner name soon included other well known local families as children married, such as Sporn, Moldenhauer, Lenz, Fricke, Lehman, Nenow, Huebner and more Wagner as cousins married.

The Wagner name is growing by leaps and bounds; our Midwest contains many Wagners as part of the large group of Germans from Russia; with many original emigrants from Europe remaining where they settled in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Extensive and interesting relationships continue to develop over here and over there.

Judge Frederick Wagner lived a full and satisfying life, succumbing to illness only in his last days and passing peacefully at his farm home on the old Stanton Road, on January 2, 1894, age 77 years. Funeral services were conducted there by Rev. A. F. Siegler. His wife, Elizabeth (Heckendorf) Wagner, born December 27, 1816, passed on August 18, 1890. Both are buried in the St. Paul Lutheran Cemetery, Sec. B, Row 7, Lot 42. Friedrich Wagner is included on the monument in memory of the pioneers who settled Norfolk, Nebraska in 1866, dedicated in 1976, at the Liberty Bell Park on Georgia Avenue at 6th Street, Norfolk, Nebraska.

Madison County Genealogical Society
P. O. Box 1031, Norfolk, NE 68702—1031

2017—2018 Officers

Phyllis McCain, Bobette Ferguson, Bernice Walters

Our Society Website is at
www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nemcgs/

Our future meetings

April 21, 2018

May 19, 2018

June 16, 2018

July 21, 2018

August 18, 2018

Information and queries:

Nancy at mcgs@telebeep.com

Membership and newsletter:

Bernice at btwalters@cableone.net

Memberships are \$15 per year from September 1 through August 31. Join anytime (\$3 per issue pro-rate). Newsletters by email or snail mail.

Research Requests: \$10 and a family group sheet to: MCGS, PO Box 1031, Norfolk, NE 68702-1031

Website: www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nemcgs/

Meetings generally on the 3rd Saturday of each month with exceptions at 10 a.m. at 515 Queen City Blvd., Norfolk, NE., in the Elkhorn Valley Museum and Research Center, or at 703 E. Klug, Bernice Walters' home.

Check with Bernice at
402-371-0543 or email at
btwalters@cableone.net

Results of the Ballot Taken during February and March 2018

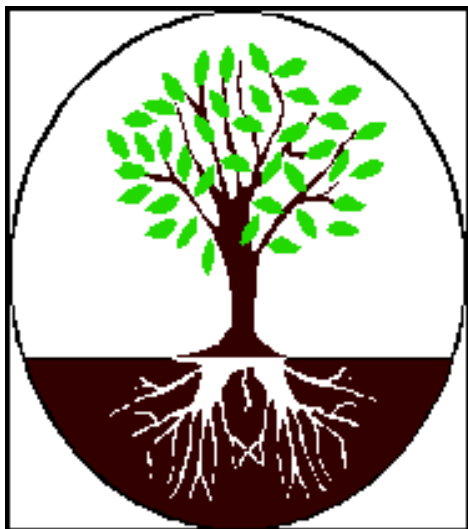
February 16, 2018 a letter was sent to all paid members regarding the termination of our newsletters and collection of dues with the August 31, 2018 fiscal year end. Questions were answered and the results are in. The ballot results are as shown below:

- 1) Newsletter— No one wishes to take over publishing the Society newsletter, therefore publication will end with the July/August 2018 issue which finishes the current fiscal year.
- 2) The Madison County Genealogical Society will continue, without newsletters or dues.
- 3) The Madison County Genealogical Society will maintain its present Website.
- 4) Queries will be researched by current researchers as at present, with same procedure.
- 5) The P. O. Box 1031 for MCGS will continue as long as needed.
- 6) No one wants the newsletters from other societies and they will be pitched in September Unless someone wants any of them. Please let Bernice know. If you want any of them.
- 7) There will no longer be regular dues charged after 8/31/2018. Dues may be reinstated sometime in the future if a specific need is identified or for a specific purpose.
- 8) Existing funds in the Society accounts will cover the costs to update the website and post all of our previous years of newsletters thereon. At such time as no future costs are anticipated to come due, the Madison County Genealogical Society local operating committee will consider making a donation of money remaining in the MCGS account to a local entity for genealogical or historical preservation purposes, to be determined by the Madison County Genealogical Society local operating committee. In any event, no MCGS funds will be distributed to any MCGS past or present member for personal use.

If you would like the newsletters from any of these societies that we exchange with please set us know and we can forward them to you. Boone-Nance Gen. Society (Albion/Belgrade), Eastern Nebraska Gen. Soc. (Fremont), Leila Stahl Buffet Gen. Soc. (West Point), Platte Valley Kinseekers (Columbus), Prairie Pioneer (Grand Island), Southeast Nebraska (Beatrice).

MADSON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

PO Box 1031, Norfolk, NE 68702-1031



TEMP RETURN SERVICE FIRST CLASS

Upcoming Events

April 27-28, 2018—Nebraska State Genealogical Society Annual Conference is at Rivers Edge in Columbus, NE. For more information:

<https://nsgs.org/eventListings.php?nm=19>

Attention: Call for submissions. If anyone has any pictures, photos, information or family stories about the Norfolk State Hospital, (Norfolk Insane Asylum) that they would like to share, Nancy has been gathering information for many years about the institution, staff, residents, cemeteries, answering queries, gathering clippings and researching details. This will become the final publication of the Madison County Genealogical Society. It will be quite a lot of detail though not a totally comprehensive volume which will include as much detail as I have been able to gather. There are NO complete burial records for the old cemetery and many patients had no obituaries or headstones no matter where they were buried. But, I do have a lot of interesting stories and clippings, census records, some photos and contributions from some people who had a family member there at some time. If you have any to share please contact Nancy Zaruba at ndzaruba@telebeep.com or 402-379-4654 or 304 N Cottonwood St., Norfolk, NE 68701

Index for this Issue:

Page 37-43: The Boche Saga; Page 43 — Live Snake in the Cellar ; Pages 44-46 : Wagner or Wegener What's in a Name? —The Family history ; Page 47: Society Contact Information; Page 47 : Results of the Ballot, Page 48: Upcoming Events, Index for this issue, Call for information on Norfolk Hospital for the Insane.