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CIVIL WAR STORIES

Marjorie Slavens

On the Fold3 website, Jenny Acshcraft announced that Fold3 is creating a new feature on the website, www.fold3.com. This site has a wide variety of military records and stories from all of the wars from the Revolutionary War to the present. Because of the newsletter, as well as my own research, I have memberships with Ancestry.com, Archives.com, and Fold3. All of these sites are available at our area libraries, and some libraries make some genealogy sites available online.

This month, President Al Morse presents the calendar of births, marriages, and deaths which he and Dorothy maintained each year in order to be able to remember and send cards to family members. My niece created a calendar each year while her children were growing up that featured them with pictures of their activities each of the months. This was a Christmas present that we appreciated receiving each year, and I still have all of them; they are historical picture albums. Priscilla Darling creates picture book biographies of members of her family, as well as books that feature pictures of trips she has taken with family members.

This month, Julia Morse has written a history of Halloween; it has a much longer history than “trick or treating”, and there is some excellent history for all of us.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Al Morse

This article is a rambling of birthdays, weddings, and deaths in my life and my wife, Dorothy Jean (Newcomb) Morse's, life. These include our parents, grandparents, and sons. This will be done on a

monthly basis to reflect our annual calendar. Some months were very busy, and some were sparse.

Beginning with January, Dorothy's grandparents, Ralph and Sarah (Gaston) Newcomb, were married on January 1. My mother, Mildred Catherine (Janssens) Morse, was 8 months pregnant with her first child when, on December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor was bombed. The thoughts and concerns had to be many for her because, in addition to expecting the birth of her first child, her brother and his family were living in Hawaii at that time. I was born on January 3. Of course, 77 years later, my dear wife, Dorothy, died on January 3. That birthday brought tears, yet joy, knowing that she was no longer suffering from all of the medical issues she had encountered during her lifetime. On January 17, my grandparents, Clark Frank and Alma Dona (Miller) Morse, were married. I remember their 50th wedding anniversary, when many people came to congratulate them. On January 18, my nephew, Kevin's, daughter, Stephanie, was born. On January 24, Dorothy's grandmother, Lillie Ethel (Burke) McDaniel, was born.

On February 10, Ralph Newcomb, Dorothy's grandfather, was born. On February 18, Dorothy's mother, Dorothy (McDaniel) Newcomb, was born.

On March 8, 1854, my mother's father, David Janssens, was born in Belgium. On March 15, Dorothy's grandmother, Sarah (Gaston) Newcomb, was born. My mother died on March 18, 1982. My grandfather, Clark Frank Morse died on March 23. My nephew's wife, Susan, was born on March 28. My youngest son, Steve, and his wife, Kelly, were married on March 31 in Las Vegas.

Herbert Edgar Newcomb, Dorothy's father, was born on April 16. Dorothy's birthday was April 21. This was the same day, but a different year, that my grandmother, Laura Jessie (Mooney) Janssens, was

born. She and David Janssens were married on April 23, 1889. She had just turned 18 and he was 35. They had 14 children, and my mother was child number 12. On April 22, our youngest grandson, Owen, was born. On May 23, 1939, Laura Janssens died.

On June 10, 1999, my mother-in-law, Dorothy Newcomb died. On Father's day, June 28, 1972, my father, Albert Frank Morse, died. The next Fathers Day, June 17, Dorothy's grandmother, Lillie Ethel McDaniel, died. The next year, a few days before Father's Day, Brian, our oldest son, at age 6, had major surgery. This, of course, caused many concerns. He did well, and on Father's Day, I had lunch with him in the hospital. We ordered steak and lobster. He liked steak so he had it and I had the lobster. On June 27, our nephew, Kevin, was born. On July 11, my father was born. He died less than a month before his 63 birthday.

On August 11, Dorothy's grandparents, James and Ethel McDaniel, were married. I remember going to there 50th wedding anniversary reception at their farm house. Dorothy was scolded by her grandmother because Dorothy and I were married exactly one week later on August 18, 1963. Her grandmother thought that we should have been married on the 11th . Our wedding was a week later because I graduated from college on August 17. My brother, Carl, was born on August 22. My grandfather, Clark Frank Morse, was born on August 26.

On September 2, my brother's wife, Marjorie, was born. They were married on September 23. My youngest son, Steve, was born on September 29. He came home from the hospital on his older brothers 3rd birthday. That was October 4. Dorothy was very good about making sure each son had a special birthday.

Also in October, Dorothy's grandfather, James McDaniel, was born on the 8th. Our older grandson, Wyatt, was born on October 14. My mother was born on October 21. Dorothy's grandfather, Ralph Newcomb, was born October 22. My grandmother, Alma Dona Morse, was born on October 28. On November 4, Dorothy's grandmother, Sarah (Gaston) Newcomb, was born. My parents, Albert and Mildred (Janssens) Morse, were married on November 6, 1940.

On December 3, Dorothy's dad, Herb Newcomb, died. On December 10, Dorothy's grandfather, James McDaniel, died. They did not die in the same year, but they were one year apart. On December 16, my grandmother, Dona Morse, died. On December 23, my daughter-in-law, Kelly, was born. On December 24, Dorothy's parents, Herb and Dorothy (McDaniel) Newcomb, were married.

I never did know my maternal grandparents and Dorothy never knew her paternal grandfather, but we were reminded through the years by our parents. Over the years we would label our calendars with birthdays and weddings to send cards. Of course, names were removed over the years because of deaths, but also names were added because of births. Some months were not active but some had a lot to remember. That is what made me think of this article because August, September, and October were very busy months.

HALLOWEEN FOR OUR ANCESTORS WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?

Julia Morse

There are a lot of Midwesterners who love Halloween. Neighbors now compete with yard displays boasting coffins, skeletons, ghostly figures, dismembered bodies, monsterish creatures, giant spiders, cobwebs, and haunted-house motifs. Some put a cheerful spin on it with happy ghosts and smiling pumpkins amid the tombstones. At my Bible-believing church a couple of years ago, a sweet lady was giving out iced witch-hat cookies during the donut break between worship songs to Jesus.

As most children, I loved dressing up in costume and eating candy. However, I found the holiday emphasis on death and dark spirits confusingly out-of-place with the values and messages of my family and community. I accepted it as similar to make believe, dark fairy tales, but I wondered why we celebrated these things.

Regardless of your point of view, the question comes: How did our ancestors experience Halloween? How did they come to pass down this odd heritage to us? I decided to turn to old newspaper accounts to unravel

a bit about how Halloween played out in our Midwest U.S. ancestors' lives.

Halloween in the Midwest (1800s and 1900s)
U.S. Midwest newspapers of the early and mid 1800's suggest a very different type of Halloween from what we know today. There seems to have been little participation of adults with Halloween at this time. Rather, the young people were presumed to be at the root of one or two activities: (1) pranking or (2) playing with traditional superstitious divinations.

Young boys somehow got word that Halloween was a night that gave them license to unleash devilry in their local communities. The milder pranks involved misplacing wagons, livestock, and fences. Community-minded elders annually lamented costly destruction of property on this night.

This 1860 writer in Ebensburg, Pennsylvania describes the state of the holiday:

“Tonight is Halloween. From time immemorial this has been the occasion when all manner of quaint and fantastic tricks are played off—when an old grudge is wiped out or a joke paid off, with interest. The next morning, merchants generally find their store-boxes piled up in a conglomerate heap; professional men see their cards staring at them from over the doors of stables and other out-of-the-way places; and farmers occasionally discover their cows in the mow or their wagons on the roof of a barn. The sport is now and then varied by building fences across the roads and streets, and by pulling down out-buildings.

“Particularly, it was a hard old time on cabbages. Every youngster feels as if it devolves on him to “hook” and destroy every cabbage-head he can come across.”

Halloween is the anniversary of the good old Scotch time when the elves and fairies and witches were supposed to stalk forth on the earth and hold a grand pow-wow. And the gay lads and lassies then met together. . . . Halloween then was a time for mirth and gaety; now it is a time when wild young gentlemen can ventilate their superabundant devilry with impunity.” [1]

Interestingly, damage concerns in the earlier 1800's

focused much on cabbage patches! Here are some descriptions from 1866 Ohio papers:

“Young America reminded our citizens on Wednesday night, the 31st ult., that it was Halloween by beating on doors, stealing cabbage and other devilry.” (“The Spirit of Democracy”, Woodsfield, Ohio, 6 Nov, 1866“)

“Even we can remember when Allhallow e'en was considered one of the most important and joyful evenings that only observance here will be by the boys, who will celebrate the occasion with much noise and confusion, and the destruction of any unfortunate cabbage heads which may be found exposed the frost upon that occasion.” (Lima, Ohio Democrat”, 31 Oct 1866).

Cabbage patch damage was different than random pranking or masquerading as roaming spirits of evil. It was the result of young people perpetuating a Halloween tradition once dear to peasantry of the British Isles. Young people headed into the cabbage patch to divine information about their future spouse they pulled up in the dark. This was part of a series of superstitious rituals documented by Robert Burns in 1785 in his long, lighthearted poem, "Hallowe'en".

Burns' poem records several other superstitious divinations that the unmarried could perform to learn about their future. There were tests of eating an apple at a mirror, winnowing in the wind, drying the sleeve of a garment, etc., all which predict aspects of one's future spouse. There were quite enough to keep a party of young people busy and merry long after a cabbage patch had been decimated.

An 1867 newspaper piece originating from The Pittsburg Post cites some “merry” games from English Halloween added to the divination practices, particularly “bobbing for apples,” as well as the beloved custom of nutcracking and roasting chestnuts to determine whether the course of their love will prove true. Other “good old fashioned Halloween festivities” played out in the United States: “Cider in the jug, nuts upon the hearth, and apples on the table.” He concludes, “therefore, “Let us not let this good old festival die out in our midst.”[2]

However, a writer, at the same time, from the Davenport, Iowa “Quad City Times” after describing

similar merry games and practices of the British Isles, laments a growing tension in the balance between the old-time parties and pranking: “Old time customs are disregarded, and fun of a wicked kind is substituted. The mischief done by youths on the strength of Hallowe’en is generally so wanton, that the police officers have to interfere.” [3]

By the latter 1800's, costly damage to property as a result of pranksters was an increasing problem. Cities with active policing sometimes claimed to have a better handle on the situation, but property owners in smaller towns and rural areas faced the Halloween night (or the morning of revelation) with dread.

An 1883 Marshalltown Iowa newspaper writer expressed the dread of the townspeople: “This is Hallowe’en. Take down your signs, chain down your gate, lock up your barn, tie a bull-dog to your front door, go to a prayer meeting, but keep an eye open for a pumpkin coming through the window.”[4]

A Windsor, Missouri editor wrote in 1896:

“No one objects to the boys indulging in a little harmless and injurious pastime, but when it comes to wrecking and destroying the property of their neighbors and friends to such an extent that the owner must “dig up” a good dollar or two to repair the damage, it is time to call a halt. A survey of Windsor on a morning succeeding Hallowe’en, would lead one not acquainted with the circumstances . . . to believe that a small sized cyclone had visited the town, twisting gates from their fastenings, wrenching fences from their moorings, dismembering wagons and vehicles of all descriptions, tearing up sidewalks, toppling over “small” houses and tearing up Jack and playing thunder generally”.[5] (We infer that the “small” houses likely refer to outhouses (privies.)

Formally announced home Halloween parties started to become a more common newspaper mention in the latter 1800's. In the early 1900's, Halloween parties were quite common, increasingly employed to channel the young people from destructive practices. Even churches were announcing Halloween parties.

Halloween practices in the United States took a

dramatic turn in the 1930's and 1940's with the emergence of "trick-or-treating." A few newspaper accounts in different parts of the U.S. and Canada describe enterprising youngsters calling at a home asking for a reward in exchange for not damaging their property, and how glad property owners were to bestow coins or treats in the exchange. While some historians today draw parallels between trick-or-treating and ancient pagan rituals, the 1930's newspapers tended to credit the young people with adopting the tactics of "gangster extortion" that was nonetheless welcomed as a happy solution to reduce Halloween destruction. [6], [7] It quickly caught on nation-wide.

New York writer Hal Boyle, in 1942, explained his regrets on the new transformation of Halloween: “It was a fine thing a generation ago, and I suppose it still is in many places. We had our apple bobbing parties, then as now. But the real delirious pleasure was to be allowed to stay up a few hours late playing harmless pranks. We soaped a few storefronts. We made horrendous noises against neighbor windows with a notched spool—and ran in panic. . . There was no real vandalism. The soaped windows could be cleaned with a razor blade and a little elbow grease. But apparently event that small price became too much for some adults to pay for the thrill the youngsters got on their one night out. For now in many communities, they have formal pears and parties to keep the kids in check. Store owners get the children to draw pictures on the windows with washable paint and award prizes.”[8]

Early hosting of "haunted houses" in private homes began about the same time and is also said to have been spurred by the hope of further distracting Halloween pranking. It was later followed by community haunted houses (often for charity) and theme park attractions. Disney’s Haunted Mansion was first opened in Disneyland in 1961. Its developers initially wrestled over whether it should be scary or fun and settled on a compromise of both.[9]

The mid-1900’s was an era in which the popular culture separated the evil nature from the macabre, placing it in a fun and loving world. Casper was a friendly ghost of the 1930’s comic strip who later had

fun on early family television. Popular movies such as "Topper" (with Cary Grant), and "Harvey" (with James Stewart) all featured comical situations with ghosts. 1964 television brought not one, but two different loving and zany monsterish families--"The Addams Family," and "The Munsters"—weekly into the American family living room, along with the beloved witch, Samantha turned American housewife on the comedy "Bewitched. All three of these shows became successful in reruns targeted to after-school children throughout the 1970's.

However, television continued to make space for "scary" Halloween themes, and the late 1900's culminated in Halloween-themed mainstream horror movies that decidedly put the reality of evil back into Halloween and drove adult participation to a new level.

Early Halloween Origins

Halloween foundations, wrapped around the idea of roaming evil spirits, traditionally have been thought to have originated around the idea of Celtic Druids prior to Christianity's reach. The Celtic festival of summer's end, Samhain (pronounced Sah-ween), was marked the day in the year in which dead souls roamed on the earth. Sacrifices were made to pagan gods in large bonfires. Catholic popes applied measures to adapt the beloved pagan customs into the Roman Catholic the All-Saints Day and All Hallows Eve celebrations. Some Lutheran, Catholics, and German historians now dispute the pagan/Druidic origins of Halloween, stating that the Druidic practices of Samhain were separate and perhaps had even died out long before the fascination of death and evil spirits became associated with All-Saints Day in the early Christian church.

Regardless of the origins, we do know that, for our ancestors in the middle ages, whether Celtic or mid-European, death and the dark spiritual world were a part of their reality. Certainly, the Catholic teaching of the necessity to pray for dead souls stuck in a temporary purgatory tended to keep the image of unsettled, roaming spirits in mind. The Reformation taught from the Bible that ghosts purporting to be human souls were frauds (either demonic or earthly). However, ghost story culture remains persistent.

The witches, goblins, and other evil spirits in the old fairy tales remind us of the prevalence of spiritual evil passed down from folk stories from long ago and popularly shared with children over the centuries. After two centuries of the Enlightenment, the Brother's Grimm published their treasury of tales in 1811. Their counterparts in France, Russia, and Scandinavia all share elements of witchcraft, goblins, and other spiritual evil, though in some it is more "magical" than evil. The implication is that the magical elements of these tales were not meant to be believed as real. The prevalence of fairy tale culture largely explains why it was so acceptable for U.S. school children of the 1900s to dress up as witches and ghosts or draw pictures of dancing skeletons as fictional characters, "all in fun."

The Halloween of our Earlier Ancestors Comes to the Americas

Most historians claim very little observance of Halloween in the United states until after the 1840s influx of Irish immigrants at the time of the Irish potato famine.

Prior to the 1840s, newspapers in the British Isles make occasional mention of the old superstitious Halloween celebrations as cherished, nostalgic customs of the country folk. The practices were already being perceived as dying out.[10] Descriptions of "the old customs" seem similar to the descriptions of the superstitious rites performed in Robert Burns' "Halloween" of the same general time period:

Some merry, friendly, country-folks,
Together did convene,
To burn their nuts, and pile their shocks of wheat,
And have their Halloween.
Full of fun that night." [11]

An 1812 writer in The "Royal Cornwall Gazette", attests that the superstitious rites of Christmas and Halloween were done more in fun than in actual belief:

"The humbler ranks have been accused of superstition because the stocking is still thrown, the pd with nine peas hid over the door, and all the little ceremonies so admirably depicted by Burns in his Hallowe'en still practiced. These, however, are now generally looked

upon as a diversion, and few have faith in their efficacy; for in our days the poor have as good common sense as their superiors. These diversions come to them but once a year, and it is to be hoped they may long continue to practice them.”[12]

Our Puritan ancestors in New England were opposed to unbiblical, secular practices associated with both Halloween and the English Christmas traditions. Of course, we know from the sad story of the Salem Witchcraft Trials, that the Puritans were aware that witchcraft was a real thing mentioned in the Bible (abhorrent to God, Deuteronomy 18:10-12) and which they believed to still be practiced by some. This sometimes led to a sort of counter-superstition of beliefs in black cats and other signs of witches.

Likewise, the Dutch embraced the reformation and largely renounced both Pagan and Catholic traditions of Halloween in the 16th century, so some say that Halloween had no part in the early Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam and other parts of New York and Pennsylvania. However, an 1864 writer of Cleveland, Ohio attributed the Scottish practice of Cabbage divination to “the first Dutch Settlers of Pennsylvania and New York.” Washington Irving's story "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow", paints the picture of a Dutch village in New York in the late 1700's, following the American Revolution, that was rumored to be bewitched. A superstitious schoolteacher, Ichabod Crane, becomes frightened by ghostly stories told at a harvest party at a Dutch homestead, and a culminating prank embodying the ghost of the “headless horseman.” The story reminds us of a cultural traditions of harvest parties and ghost stories, apart from Halloween, which later easily merged into the Halloween culture.

Europeans today—even the North European Protestant areas—celebrate the originally Roman Catholic “St. Martin’s Day” on the 11th of November with traditions such as bonfires and the carrying of lanterns that may be the result of early co-mingling of the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon harvest festivals. Oddly, the St. Martin’s celebrations did not seem to gain a foothold among the German-American immigrant communities.

The British-European histories seem to mesh with the early newspaper accounts: Halloween for our U.S. ancestors was little more than a night of pranks and a few dying hand-me-down superstition games for young people, until the 1900’s, when a desire to redirect young people and a penchant for finding the good in fairy tales turned Halloween into a nation-wide party event for young and old.

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- [11] Robert Burns, “Halloween”, Modern English Translation, Translator unknown, “Myths for Kids, http://www.mythicjourneys.org/mythkids_oct06_burns/html
- [12] “Christmas-Keeping,” “The Royal Cornwall Gazette”, Falmouth Packet, and General Advertiser, Truro, Cornwall, England, 22 Dec 1821, p. 4.

INTRODUCING CIVIL WAR STORIES!

[For the online publication of this newsletter, this article has been modified to insure it respects copyright.]

Jenny Ashcraft of Fold3 discusses their new "Civil War Stories Project" which ultimately intends to integrate stories of battles, regiments, and individuals all in one place.

She discusses the phases of the project: "Starting today, you can head to our Civil War Stories page and learn details about some of the major Civil War battles, including what regiments fought in each battle.

"And then, starting with North Carolina Regiments, you will be able to see regiment timelines. When did they muster in? Where did they fight? Who were the officers? Eventually, we will add the ability to refine down to company. By the time this project is complete, you'll be able to map out your soldier's movements throughout the war.

"Finally, we'll add individual soldiers state by state beginning with North Carolina, followed by New York."

The project invites individuals to share family records, photographs, or journals that have been passed down. See the following link for more details: <https://www.ancestry.com/civil-war-stories/add-photo>.

For more information, read her full article here: <https://blog.fold3.com/introducing-civil-war-stories/>

DAVID WELTY IN THE CIVIL WAR (Part I)

Marjorie Slavens

David Welty (1833-1862) was the sixth child of John Welty (1800-1875) and Mary Magdalene (Polly) Miller, (1801-1844) and a brother of my great grandfather, Henry Welty (1837-1911). Both were farmers on their father's land in Rush Creek Township , Fairfield County, Ohio before the war. Two of their great great grandfathers, Peter Welty and Michael Miller, came from Germany with other Mennonites who traveled from Germany to Holland and then by British ships to Philadelphia

and then by land to Lancaster County , later York County, Pennsylvania in 1727.

The grandfather of David and Henry, John Welty, Jr. (1765-1827), his wife, Elizabeth, and their children first settled in Bullsken Township, Fayette County in western Pennsylvania after his father's death in 1794. He then settled in Fairfield County, Ohio around 1810 where David, Henry, and their 7 brothers and sisters were born.

David was a farmer and a teacher. He bought land in Howard Township, Tama County, Iowa July 28, 1856. He planned to move to Iowa following the war. David enlisted in Company D, 2nd Regiment of Ohio Volunteers in September, 1861. He was mustered in at Camp Goddard, Ohio. He was elected a corporal on June 6, 1863. He was in five battles, Winchester, Cedar Creek, Morris Island, Harrison's Landing, and Fort Wagner. His unit was consolidated with Company K at City Point, Virginia. He was wounded at Fort Wagner and taken on a hospital ship to New York, where he died July 29, 1863. He was buried in Cypress Hills National Cemetery, 625 Jamaica Avenue, Brooklyn, New York. So far as we know, my mother's brother, Edward Charles Welty, (1913-2012), as a result of my mother's research, was the only family member to visit David's grave .

Another brother, John (1835-1910), lived in Illinois at the time of the Civil War. He enlisted at Ottawa, LaSalle County, Illinois, and was mustered in the army at Camp Butler, Illinois on August 31, 1861. He served in the 26th Infantry, Company E and was discharged August 14, 1864 just before the Battle of Atlanta. He was a corporal in the army at the time of his discharge. Following the war, he lived near his oldest brother Solomon, (1826-1891) in Cerro Gordo, Piatt County, Illinois; he was a carpenter.

Henry Welty was a farmer on his father's land during most of the war. He served in the Civil War as a private in Company F, Regiment 159 of Ohio. He enlisted May 2, 1864 and was mustered out with his regiment on August 22, 1864. In 1866, he joined his brother, Abraham (1829-1873) in LaSalle County, Illinois, where he farmed and taught for a year before moving to Jasper County,

Missouri. There, he was a teacher, and he married one of his students, Catharine Mary Eppright, daughter of Jonathan Eppright and Edy Meadows, who came to Jasper County from Indiana in 1840. Catharine's brother, George Eppright, was the first white child born in Duval Township, Jasper County.

Henry and Catharine Welty lived on a farm with their eight children in northern Jasper County. Edward Alonzo, their sixth child, was my grandfather.

A cousin gave Mother some letters their grandfather received from his family in Ohio. He was never able to return to Fairfield County to visit them. Most of the money he used to purchase his farm was from the estates of his father, John Welty, his grandmother, Elizabeth Brumbaugh Miller, and part of the sale of the farm which his brother, David had purchased in Tama County, Iowa. Their farm was just south of Nashville, Barton County, where both and two of their daughters, a son-in-law and one grandchild are buried. Henry died in 1911 at the Federal Soldiers Home in Leavenworth, Kansas.

Mother received copies of three letters which David Welty wrote to Henry while he was serving in the war. David also wrote to their younger sister, Mary Magdalene Welty Thompson (1839-1893), who continued to live in Fairfield County, Ohio near their father's farm. She kept Henry's correspondence, and one of her descendants sent copies to Mother of David's letters to Henry during the war, in which he described his war experiences. Next month, we will look at David's letters, which present some aspects of his military experiences.

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