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The Stillaguamish Star

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE STILLAGUAMISH VALLEY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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What Can You Do While Waiting For Your DNA Test Results?

Sue McNeil

Typically, it takes 3-8 weeks to get your DNA test results back. There are several things you can do while you wait to help time pass more quickly and to better prepare yourself:

- **Register your kit:** This step is mandatory. You should receive instructions for registering your kit with the testing company. This notifies them your sample is in the mail. An account will be created where you will be able to view your results when they are ready. If you are concerned about privacy, create a user-id that disguises your identity.
- **Build or upload your family tree:** On the test company's website, connecting your family tree to your DNA test results will give you more functionality. You can make your tree private or public. Regardless, living individuals will not be shown to other testers. A public tree makes it easier for your matches to determine how the two of you connect.
- **Opt into matching:** Choosing to opt in will allow you to see a list of other testers at this company matching your DNA, implying a common ancestor. If you do not opt in, you will not be able to see your matches and they will not be able to see you as a match to them. Seeing your matches and your shared matches (testers that match you and your match) is the most powerful tool DNA can provide. If you are only interested in learning your ethnicity results, you do not need to opt in.
- **Educate yourself:** There are many different options available to you. Below are just a few examples:
 - Facebook Groups – 'Genetic Genealogy Tips and Techniques'; 'DNA Detectives'
 - Blogs – 'Kitty Cooper's Blog' by Kitty Cooper; 'DNA-Explained' by Roberta Estes; 'The Genetic Genealogist' by Blaine Bettinger; also, each of the testing companies have their own blog.
 - Webinars – www.conferencekeeper.org (free and paid webinars); www.familytreewebinars.com (each webinar free for the first week)
 - International Society of Genetic Genealogy (ISOGG) – www.isogg.org (beginner to advanced)

There are plenty of activities to keep you busy and make the wait for your results more tolerable. Take advantage of this time to better prepare yourself, so you will get as much as possible out of your investment.



MY DNA JOURNEY: One of Acceptance, One of Joy and One of Pain

Michele Heiderer



To an outcome of acceptance: My long time goal was to find out the truth about my Sicilian grandfather, Nicolo Mattaliano, who was born in Palermo in 1885 and died in Manhattan (NY) in 1926. When I was growing up I tried to talk to my aunts and uncles and to his widow, my grandmother. Nobody would talk; although just before she died, my aunt Lucy told me that he murdered people for a living and painted cars on the side. He and my grandmother married in Boston in May 1920. Their wedding record lists his name as George Noon born 1886 in Chicago (obviously untrue). My father, Norman, was born in May 1921 in Lynn, Mass. and his brother, George was born in January 1923 in Boston. By the time of my uncle George's birth my grandparents had separated. After being involved in at least one (and probably more) legal tangles in Boston and using another identity, my grandfather skipped and with an unidentified girlfriend headed to Manhattan where he died of tuberculosis in October of 1926.

His death certificate is in the name of Frank Bonelli; there is no informant listed. My grandfather was buried in a pauper's grave in St. John Cemetery in Middle Village, NY without so much as a headstone.

Sicily has a rather unique law wherein a person's birth certificate becomes a road map of his life. Not only does it include the usual birth information, but if he dies as a child, that information is added as are marriages, any children with birth dates, he immigrates and when he died, death information is added.

After literally decades of genealogical research, I put together a time line of my grandfather's life, those of his siblings and parents. Still, my grandfather's life from 1903 to 1918 remained a mystery. He landed at Ellis Island as a stowaway in 1903 and deported back to Palermo as he lacked money, a trade, a sponsor, and an understanding of the English language. He married my grandmother two years later.

Back to the birth certificates from Sicily: My grandfather's birth certificate contains no additional information other than his birth, confirming that he came to America illegally. Same with his two younger brothers, Antonino born in 1887 and Gioacchino born in 1889. According to researchers I hired in Sicily, this is a strong indication that the two younger brother left the country as there are no records indicating that they stayed in Sicily or died there. I was told that in latter 1800s and early 1900s, young men in Sicily had few prospects for employment, if they not migrate to America, they usually head to France, South America or even Australia. Sometimes they moved to norther Italy but there, they were considered peasants and generally scorned. So what happened to my grandfather's two younger brothers?

Then came DNA testing. I took Ancestry.com's DNA test and afterwards the one at 23andme.com. Later I uploaded my DNA results to Familytree.com and MyHeritage.com. Even with my DNA results the four major DNA sites in this country, I have had no DNA matches on my Mattaliano line. Not one! So this pretty much confirms what I always suspected, that neither of my grandfather's two younger brothers settled in America, or if they did, they did not use their real names or leave any descendants. Of Nicolo's 7 older brothers and sisters, all of whom stayed in Palermo, only one descendant is alive today. Sadly she was not open to having any contact with me when. She also claimed to know nothing about our mutual ancestors and really didn't care about them. It isn't the outcome I had hoped for, but I have come to accept it for what it is.

To an outcome of joy: My extended family has a member who was adopted; the identity of his birth mother was always known. So I suggested that he take Ancestry.com's DNA test to see if we could identify his birth father, something that he had wanted to do for a long time. What we found was a whole lot more. His DNA results first revealed a half brother! When contacted, the brother could not have been more delighted to have been found. He did not know the identify of their mutual birth father. Using family trees attached to their other DNA matches, and after months of research, their birth father's identity was discovered. Once I had his name, I found that he had married briefly just before the birth to their daughter. They divorce not long after the girl's birth and then he passed away. I was soon able to find their half sister who agreed to take a DNA test. The results confirmed that she had two half brothers! I am happy to share that all three have become fast friends. I was soon able to find their father's sister, Mary, and after having been contact she was delighted to become their "Aunt Mary."

To the outcome of pain: I have a cousin who shared my passion for genealogy. He contacted me to say he was completing a DNA test. Sadly his DNA results revealed that he and I did not share any DNA. So the man he ad known as his father was no biologically related to him. I offered to help him identify his birth father using his DNA results, but my cousin's hear was broken. Experiencing so much pain, he quickly changed the password so I could no longer view his DNA results, removed himself, removed himself from my Facebook page, and cut all communication with me.

My DNA Journey is not over; I checked my DNA matches regularly, always hoping for a match on my Mattaliano line. Hoping I'll receive an email from my distraught cousin. In the meantime, my advice to anyone thinking about taking a DNA test is this: Be prepared for acceptance, joy and pain, keeping in mind that DNA does not lie or make a mistake. Be prepared for the unexpected.

A Well Traveled Trunk

Sue McNeil



For many years we have had an old leather trunk in our family room. My husband said it came from his parent's attic and he was guessing it from the McNeils, his father's family. Wrong!

I started researching his grandaunt, Melanie Rothschild, who had fled Germany in 1940. I discovered she sailed via Yokohama Transit on the mail ship Hie Maru from Kobe, Japan. We do not know how she got from Frankfurt to Kobe, but one of the common paths was to take the Trans-Siberian Railroad through Russia and then a boat to Japan.

I had seen the name Yokohama Transit previously but where? Then it struck me, and I ran into our family room. Sure enough, the old leather trunk full of old movies had 'Yokohama Transit' and the initials 'M R' stamped across the top. 'M R', Melanie Rothschild. This trunk was not from his father's side of the family after all. It was from this mother's family and had travelled from Nazi Germany to Kobe, Japan, to Seattle. If only this trunk could tell us a story. The bottom inside liner is torn out. Was it ripped from normal usage or did Melanie hide something of value that was torn out by inspectors in Germany or Japan or Washington? We will probably never know.

Take another look at those old items in your house that come from "some-where" in your family. You never know what kind of history they could tell us.



This metal savings bank was found in the second oldest house in Darrington last year and the newspaper article is from a 1920 Arlington Times Newspaper. The bank will be placed on display at the Society soon.

Coming Events-Zoom

The May 11 presentation is Ports of Call, where your ancestors landed. Cannot find your ancestors at Ellis Island? There were many different landing places around the world, so let Illinois librarians, MelissaPotoczek-Fiskin and Kate Mills. navigate you through the other Ports O'Call.

The June 8th presentation is Reverse Genealogy: Locating Living relatives. Step away from researching our deceased ancestors and attempt to locate living relatives who might be in possess of Great-Great-Grandma's family Bible, photos of Civil War ancestors or letters written from the home country by Katherine R. Willson of Dexter, Michigan.

Southern California Genealogical Jamboree is bring held in June. Go to <https://genealogyjamboree> to register.

Research Your Way to Genealogy Answers on June 15, 2021. To register go to <https://www.familyhistoryfanatics.comresearch> conference.

Genealogist-where you confuse the dead and irritate the living.

Important Information



The Society's annual meeting will be held next Tuesday, May 11 after the monthly presentation. The positions open are for president, vice president of the library and secretary. Be sure to participate in these elections.

Summer events are in tentative stages of planning which may include a picnic outdoors at the library perhaps in August. Please keep checking the website for the most current information on activities for our Society.

Your family stories are needed for the newsletters. You all have stories probably that you have found over the years. If you send your family story there is a member that will edit the article so you do not need to worry about a possible error. You can send the articles to shirleycase21@gmail.com. The next due date is Friday, June 11.

Continuing from page 5, the Well
Traveled Trunk by Sue McNeil



Send us your submissions!

If you have a story that our readers might enjoy, please send it to us!
Newsletter submissions for the July/**August** issue should be sent
to newsletter@stillygen.org by Friday, **June 11th**.



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