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More Than a Café - The Frisco

The Story of George and Anna Georgopoulos

*A Tribute by Their Children - May 2022
Section 1 of 2*

Mitchell's longtime residents and Frisco Cafe owners George and Anna Georgopoulos, our parents, were originally from Stilia Doridos, Greece in the region of Roumeli which is Central Greece. In the early 1900's, Stilia was a small village in the mountains with about 40 homes and a cemetery at the outer edge of the village. By car, Stilia is four hours northwest of Athens. Born on February 10, 1903, Dad was the second youngest of ten siblings; Mom, born on November 15, 1911, was the middle of three siblings.

Village Life in Greece

There was no running water in the village. In the winter, water came into the village from the snow on the mountain, and in the summer the ice cold water was from underground springs. There was no road going into the village until the summer of 1965 when Dad, Mom, and Stella were there. It was such an important event that Dad threw a huge party for the entire village and included the road construction workers. The summer weather was usually between 70-80 degrees. However, the winter usually lasted two-three months and had snow with the temperature between 30-50 degrees. Stilia had no electricity until 1970. Even though mail was delivered, it took about three months to get to the village. There was no medical facility; the villagers had to rely on their own holistic medicines or travel to a larger town. The only mode of transportation was either by foot or by donkey. And when villagers went by foot, they most likely were carrying their only

pair of shoes so as not to ruin them. In the center of Stilia was the Plaka, which was the gathering place for festivities. Located on the Plaka was a small one-room school building measuring about 12'x15'. Very close to the school building on the Plaka was St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church which had no pews. Churches in Greece typically had a few high back wooden seats against the walls. Next to the Plaka was also a small "Taverna" where Greek coffee, beer, alcohol, and a few grocery items were sold. The Taverna had a couple of small tables and chairs usually outside; in those days, only men went there for a drink.

Mom and Dad's homes were about 100

feet apart. They had dirt floors, windows with no glass but covered with material, roofs built with mud and stone, and with the structure of the houses wood and mud bricks. Rain and snow seeped in through the roofs. None of the homes had toilets; instead only holes in the ground were used.

Dad's home had two small rooms about 7'x10' with a lower level being one large room used for storage and the animals. Dad's family were farmers. The entire family took care of chickens and spent the week herding goats and sleeping in small huts. They made feta cheese from the goats' milk.



Above, the sign says, "Welcome" with the village name, Stilia and the area name, Doridos. Below, schoolhouse in 1985 in Stilia. The area from the door to the left corner of the building is the one-room school. From the door to the right corner of the building is a separate office room.



George's house in Greece. Arthur's son, Nick and Arthur's grandson, Constantine on a visit in 2017.

Mom's home had two rooms; the larger room was about 10'x10' and had a small wood-burning fireplace for heat and for cooking. The other room was about 8'x10' and was the main sleeping area. There were no beds; handmade wool blankets were on the floor, and more blankets were used for warmth.

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Oil lamps were used for lights. For bathing, water was heated in the fireplace and then poured into a metal washtub. Mom's father was the mayor of Stilia, the town's only teacher, and also a farmer. Her family grew grapes, wheat, oregano, pomegranates, vegetables, and had walnut trees; walnut trees had a great value!

All these products sustained their families and gave them an income when people from nearby villages traveled to Stilia to purchase foods such as feta, grapes, grape leaves, oregano, goats, wheat, walnuts, and more.

Life was not easy and young ones were always at risk. One of Dad's brothers had severe pneumonia at age three and was taken to the hospital; a few days later he was kidnapped. Mom had an older sister and a younger brother who died at a very young age. Mom's dad was working in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to earn money to send home to his family. One night, he dreamed that his home fell! He later learned his son died!

In the early to nearly the mid 1900's, ninety-one men from Stilia came to America to better their lives for their families. Some came to America for several years, worked, sent money home to their families, and later returned home to Greece. Others worked and later sent for their families to come to America to live. Unfortunately by the time Dad financially was able to bring his family, his parents had already passed away. Also, the United States quota changed for bringing people from Greece to the United States.

Dad grew up being a goat herder and quit school at age nine before deciding to leave Stilia and travel to America for a better life. For a young man, there virtually was no future. At almost thirteen years old, Dad left for America to meet with his godfather in Boston and then to find his brother who had been working in America for a few years.

Dad left Stilia with his father to go to the port in Patras to sail for America without the knowledge of his mother knowing; she would not have let him leave. He had seven dollars which was the equivalent of one hundred seventy dollars and five cents in 2022. His father went to buy a loaf of bread for Dad's jour-

ney, but sadly the ship departed before his father returned. Dad never spoke to or saw his parents again as there were no phones in the village, and his parents had passed away before Dad's return to Stilia in 1938.

The ship fee at that time was fifty dollars to the United States which would be equivalent to one thousand two hundred seventy eight dollars and ninety one cents in 2022. Because Dad didn't have that much money to pay for a ticket for the Italian ship, the men had him work in the kitchen and on the ship to pay for his voyage. Dad was on the ship for about a year in the Mediterranean Sea traveling to Europe, Asia, and Africa. Arriving in Boston speaking broken English, Dad said he had his godfather's name on a piece of paper and would ask only women about information and for directions. He located his godfather who gave him some money. Dad later left for Duluth, Minnesota and worked for a short time as a water boy on the Milwaukee Railroad. Determined to find his brother, Dad immediately left Duluth for Mitchell, South Dakota when he learned his brother was working on the railroad with a couple of hundred other young Greek men.



Young George Georgopoulos.

A New Home in America

After finding his brother, Dad ultimately took a different route than his brother because he had experience working

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with chefs in the ship's kitchen this gave him different skills and interests. And at this time, Dad and his brother decided it would be best for his brother to return to Stilia to his family. Dad helped by paying for his ticket back home.

Dad rented a room in the home of Mrs. Burns who with her husband owned Robert Burns Lumber Company in Mitchell; she apparently rented rooms to some of the railroad men. One interesting fact was that she owned one of the first electric cars in Mitchell! Dad drove her car and did errands for her; he had such fun driving it.

Dad saved his money, purchased his first car, and headed to Sioux City, Iowa to see a friend from his village in Greece. While on the road, a policeman stopped him. "George, how long have you been driving?" Dad answered, "For only a few days." The policeman told him to return home, practice, and then drive back.

Later, he decided to again head to Sioux City to visit his friend Tom Bovis who was a coffee distributor. He also met with the friend from his village who owned a cafe; Dad told him he wanted to open a cafe. The man told him to first go back to Mitchell to learn to cook. Dad did just that and a couple of months later, Dad returned to Sioux City, and his village friend returned with him to Mitchell to find a cafe. Dad found a Chef Apprentice position at the Frisco Lunch. Within a few months in 1917, Dad verbally was promised he could purchase the Frisco.

Dad soon returned to visit his Greek immigrant friends in Sioux City. This was where he learned to make the hot dogs which were also referred to as Chili Dogs/Coney Islands/Coney Dogs/ and Red Hots. Dad was the first cafe in South Dakota to have hot dogs with chili, and the chili had no beans. Originally, the hot dog sold for a nickel. A bowl of chili ordered was the same chili as for the hot dogs so, it too had no beans. One time when some tourists ordered a bowl of chili and learned there were no beans, they didn't want it and sent it back. And in 1919 at the age of 16, Dad purchased the Frisco Lunch and paid back his loan within a month.

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While in Sioux City, Dad became friends with a Greek man named Mike Props; he encouraged him to come to Mitchell to look at a bar that was for sale. In 1936, Props did move to Mitchell and brought his brother Chris and a Greek cousin Peter Economos from Chicago to be his partners in the Majestic Bar. Mike Props and Peter Economos were married to sisters who originally were from Sioux City. The partners also purchased the lot attached on the south side of the bar. Sadly, Chris Props lost his life during World War II when flying over New Guinea in 1942. For several years, the partners rented the building to a Greek man and his wife; they were Gus and Stella Papoutsis. Papoutsis opened the Oriental Cafe and brought in his three daughters and their Greek husbands to be partners with him. They were Fannie and George Karedis, Frieda and George Psiropoulos, and Nancie and George Chamales. They operated the Oriental Cafe until about 1955. Then the Props and Economos families took it over and renamed it the Town House Cafe. The three sisters of the Oriental Cafe and their families then moved to Huron, South Dakota and opened the Huron Cafe.

Another Greek man owned a cafe called the Legion Lunch across the street from the Frisco. The owner was a hardworking, kind man named John Rothones who after his retirement even had a granddaughter Barbara Zaugg Engravallo Garber, who worked at the Frisco.

Visit to Greece

When Dad had returned to his village of Stilia in 1938, he planned to stay for several months perhaps with the thought of finding a bride. During this time, several families approached Dad to marry their daughters; after all, Dad was an "American" and had money. One day, Dad was talking with Mom's former school teacher of their village, and the teacher told Dad that he should marry Anna Gaveras who was eight years younger than Dad. The teacher said Mom was a good, honest, hardworking, kind woman. At the time, Mom for a few years was living with her sister and her sister's family in Athens and had been working in a Silk Factory as a Weaver.

When Mom was young, she worked in

the fields. She and her sister used to walk barefoot in the mountains each carrying more than 50 pounds of wheat on their backs. In 1989, Arthur's son, George, Stella's son, Michael, Mom, and Stella went to Greece for a month. Stella drove Mom's walking distance; it took Stella about two hours driving on roads that were a bit rough. The sisters each owned only one pair of shoes; so, they put their shoes on just before entering the town to where they sold the wheat. For many villagers, owning one pair of shoes was typical even in the year 1965.



George and Anna's wedding day – June 19, 1938.

Dad listened to Mom's teacher and married Mom on June 19, 1938, in their village. Dad's visa was about to expire which would mean he would have to serve in the Greek Army if it did; so he left Stilia two months later. Dad also needed to return to South Dakota for the busy time of Corn Palace Week. Mom stayed until November so as to spend more time with her family. That later proved to be a good choice as Mom never again was able to see or speak with her parents since there were no phones in Stilia and for the fact that her parents had passed away by the very early 1950's. When Mom left for America in November, Mom was pregnant. She had an eleven day sail on the Italian ship Vulcania; fortunately, a wonderful woman befriended her and

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helped her. Mom arrived in New York City, New York on Thanksgiving Day in 1938. We always teased her that the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade was welcoming her entrance into America! After her arrival, Dad and Mom lived with Tom and Toni Ramos for a year.

Starting A Family and A Successful Business

Two months premature on February 4, 1939, Mom had twin boys with one being stillborn. The other twin was Arthur who weighed two pounds thirteen ounces and needed to remain in an incubator one month; every day Mom went to the hospital to feed Arthur. Mom was not told about the stillborn twin until several months later. Toni Ramos helped Mom in St. Joseph Hospital since Mom spoke no English, and later Tom and Toni Ramos became Godparents to Arthur. Stella Props made a booklet in the hospital for Mom which was helpful for her and later for when Dr. Delaney made house calls to check on Mom. In the booklet, she had handwritten Greek words and phrases on one half of the page; on the other half of the page were written the English translations that Mom could point to when speaking with the nurses and Dr. Delaney if she had no one with her who spoke Greek and English. After about a year, Dad and Mom bought our home at 1112 North Rowley where we remained. Within the next five years, three more children were born. In about 1952, Dad expanded our home in a couple of areas to become a three bedroom, one bath, 1,000 square foot home.

It was interesting to see the birth certificates of their four children born from 1939-1945; the two boys' names were recorded as Georgopolos, and the two girls' names were recorded as Georgopoulos. The Greek tradition was to name children after the couple's parents. Later, we were given English names either from our parents or teachers. So, Aristides/Arthur was named after Dad's father, and Kalomera/Kalley, born June 4, 1940, was named after Dad's mother. Arthur spoke no English when beginning kindergarten at Litchfield Elementary School, and Kalley spoke broken English.

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Neither had American names in kindergarten; so, the teacher gave them names that would be easier for the other children to pronounce. Ioannis/John, born on August 7, 1942, and Stavroula/Stella born on September 19, 1945, were named after Mom's parents. Later, Mom and all the children began working and eating many of their meals in the cafe while the children were still in grade school; they helped in the family business and also gave them much family time together.



Front L to R: Kalley, John, Arthur.
Back: Anna, holding Stella, and George.

From the time he started working, Dad always wrote letters to his family and inserted money! Even as children, we saw him doing that nearly every week. Even though he had little education, he wrote well and had beautiful penmanship. He would sit in the back booth writing and sending money to help his family and to later also help Mom's family. And, he regularly sent money to the village church in Greece to make improvements.

Dad also learned how to take care of his own records, taxes, and payments; he was never late on any payment and never had a credit card.

Today a man's dress has become more casual than several decades ago. Dad was

a handsome "Dapper Dan"! Perhaps this came from growing up with little money, having very few clothes, and only one pair of shoes that were worn out in the fields while herding the goats. Dad was meticulous from head to toe in his dress, especially when going to a special event. He either wore a three piece or two piece suit with a pocket square, a white long sleeve starched shirt with cuff links, a necktie with either a tie tack or tie clip, and a men's Fedora hat.

His shoes were always polished, and his posture was strong and straight! Along with a welcoming smile, Dad's eyes reflected intelligence, kindness, and twin-



"Dapper Dan" – George Georgopoulos.



Keeping the Frisco name in the minds of the public.

kled with a sense of humor.

The Frisco Lunch was located at 120 North Main until a 1947 three month expansion and remodeling was finished; the address then changed to 118 North Main. Dad then decided to close on Tuesdays, and the cafe hours changed from 5:30 A.M. until midnight to 6:00 A.M. to 10:30 P.M.

Dad had Dakota Wesleyan students work in the Frisco; he fed and paid them wages, and the students taught him English, history, and government. Even during the Depression, Dad continued their regular wages. He was fortunate that the Frisco was doing well during the depression; many businesses were struggling.

In the Depression Era, many family meals were these hot dogs.

In the 1920's, Lawrence Welk and his band had just started and played in Loomis, South Dakota. They often ate at the Frisco, and they too shared nickel hot dogs. "Pretty Boy Floyd" had also been to the Frisco for nickel hot dogs. In the early 1950's, South Dakota Senator Francis Case often came in to eat and chatted with us.

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Dad met and became good friends with many Congressmen, people who worked with the various stands for the carnival during Corn Palace Week, the Hutterites, laborers, mayors, and governors; he always treated everyone equally. In the 1930's and 1940's, Dad barbecued dinners for Governors Leslie M. Jensen and then for Harlan J. Bushfield at the Amphitheater. In the 1940's and 1950's Dad would sometimes take us to the Hutterites' Colony where he supported them by buying their products. One item he bought was their homemade brooms for the Frisco and for home.

Later in the 1940's, the hot dog price was fifteen cents and stayed at that price until the mid-1960 when it was raised to twenty cents. Dad bought his hamburger for the chili from Mr. Stedman at Stedman's Grocery Store at 9th and Main Street; thankfully in those days, prices didn't increase drastically so as not to have to raise hot dog prices for a long time. Also, Dad was the last cafe in Mitchell to raise the price of a cup of coffee from five cents to ten cents in the mid 1960's.



Anna and George at the Frisco.

MARLA LARSON SANDE said her parents John and Evelyn Schroeder Larson became engaged after her dad returned from the Army; they celebrated by sharing a Frisco nickel hot dog. Marla's mom said when they were dating, they would go to the Frisco for "date night hot dogs!" They married on December 15, 1945.

Interestingly on Facebook, KENNETH JERALD WORTHING had these words about the Frisco and Dad!

"I can smell the food. I can hear the Carnegie Courier

sounds from the kitchen and his voice. He could also speak a lot with just his smile and eyes. Gosh, I miss 'the good old days'. I long to see downtown Mitchell be great again."

The menu was simple; it catered to the working man. In about the 1930's, Dad even had some menu items and prices written on the large front windows. The meals were homemade as well as most of the desserts such as pies, cakes, and puddings. And the "Shoestrings", now known as "French Fries", were all cut by hand, and the mashed potatoes were always from fresh potatoes, never a box!

RONALD F. FAST said, "My grandparents, especially grandma, liked to go out to eat at least a few times a month. Grandpa worked for Armour Creamery, which meant we were a family of modest means; so we ate well, but as they said, 'We didn't eat high off the hog.'"

One of their favorite places to go for supper was, for two reasons, actually three, the Frisco Cafe. Reason one, the food was excellent. Reason two, it fit our budget. The Town House Cafe, across and up the street from the Frisco, was owned by the Economos and Props families, and although their food was also good, it was too fancy for us. The third and real reason, Grandpa and Grandma liked the Frisco was that George and Anna Georgopoulos were friends and apparently had been for years. Whenever we were there George and Anna would come over to our wooden booth and visit.

The reason I liked the Frisco was because of the hot dogs covered with Mr. Georgopoulos' special sauce, topped with raw onions! After all these years, I am still looking for a sauce its equal. Stella, their daughter and my high school classmate, tells me that not even members of the family have been able to successfully duplicate it.

Talking with my mother years later, I

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found out that when she and my Uncle Kenny were in high school, the Frisco was one of the favorite places for teenagers of her generation to hang out. So the Frisco was a part of my family's history, and no doubt a part of the history of many other families as well which makes it a part of Mitchell's history."

GEORGE ECONOMOS from the Town House Cafe wrote on Facebook and later added, "Never ate less than 3 chili dogs!!! Nobody in California makes them as good. George would also insist to have one more dog, couldn't eat less! And, the mashed potatoes were great!!!"



Interior.

There was a breakfast menu from 6:00 A.M. until 11:00 A.M. and another menu from 11:00 A.M. until closing which was midnight and in later years 10:30 P.M.

The dinner menu included Daily Soup Specials, Bowl of Chili, Daily Dinner Specials, and other dinner meals. Included with the dinners were two slices of bread, butter, mashed potatoes and gravy or American fries, cole slaw made with sugar and vinegar, a vegetable, a homemade dessert such as tapioca pudding topped with chips of corn flakes, and two cups of coffee. Milk or pop was ten cents extra.

In the '50's and '60's, some of the Daily Specials were Boiled Spareribs and Sauerkraut, Meatloaf, Boiled Ham and Cabbage, Chicken, and other dinners. Every Saturday, Fred Woelfel and George Mauszycki would call the Frisco to reserve orders of Boiled Spareribs and Sauerkraut. There were also about ten other dinner choices with prices ranging from \$.70-\$1.85.

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Some dinners included Hamburger Steak, Perch, Halibut, the most expensive meals being two Pork Chops for \$1.25, the Rib Steak for \$1.50 and the T-Bone Steak for \$1.85. As for cigarettes and cigars, they sold for 25 cents a pack with "Camels" being the lead seller and five cents for a cigar, one name being "White Owl."



George ready to make "Red Hots." Cigar and cigarette cases can be seen to the left of the picture.

The atmosphere of the cafe often felt like a family gathering for customers, food suppliers, and employees. Fred Woelfel and his family were like family to us whether at the Frisco or at Greek gatherings at our house. Mr. Woelfel's mother was a wonderful woman with a good sense of humor. Dad often made her Greek Yogurt; she loved it and said laughing, "It grows hair on your chest!"

Typically Dad sold about 250-300 nickel hot dogs a day to the railroad men and about 1,000 a day during Corn Palace Week. In 1928 in one 24 hour day during Corn Palace Week, Dad sold 12,000 nickel hot dogs. Business was so busy that only a certain number of customers were allowed to enter the Frisco at one time. After those customers entered, the door was locked; the customers then picked up their hot dogs and left through the back door. Incidentally, if 12,000 hot dogs were laid out end to end, they would cover a mile!

Somewhere along the way, Dad opened cafes in Peoria and Moline, Illinois and Ames, Iowa but sold them and just kept the Frisco Lunch. He also had a bar next to the Frisco, but that was sold in 1938.

The "Chili Dogs" had become the Frisco

Cafe trademark; even to this day, so many talk about them!



If there were a Corn Palace panel for the hot dog.

RICK GILLIS (Facebook)

Hands down, THE most satisfying meal, EVER! I still contend it deserves a Panel. I can still visualize, in my mind's eye, that glorious red neon sign, in the window of The Frisco Café, which proudly proclaimed, "Red Hots!" Entering the door was an exercise in experiencing comfort food in a comfortable place. The cafe was immaculate, with the predominant color being white, and constant was the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Georgopoulos. She, typically behind the counter and he, standing at the ready at the station at the window where those glorious "Red Hots" came to life!

Upon reflection, I don't think I ever sat in any of the booths as this experience was best at the counter, where that front row seat let you see the magic happening! My order was always the same, "3 on 1". I loved to watch the steamed buns come out and be placed on the stainless steel device held in Mr. Georgopoulos's hand, where they were lined up, then came the dogs out of the steaming pot, THEN that legendary chili, the mustard and the onions. NOTHING I've ever eaten has equaled that experience. In my mind, even today, The Frisco Café was/is THE best restaurant in the World, ever!

In our house, the best dinners were when someone made a "run" to the Frisco for a couple dozen Red Hots, to go tucked in the chipboard cartons that the buns came in. Those evenings for us were a veritable feast. Never equaled!

I've thought many times about why The Frisco Café and the Red Hots were so

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good and hold such a fond piece in my heart. I think it goes back to the PRIDE that Mr. and Mrs. Georgopoulos had in building their business from scratch, in a new country. They embraced some of the taste of their native Greece in their cooking, especially in the chili, and worked incredibly hard keeping the Café consistent. I'm also struck that they, literally, "raised a family" in the Frisco Café, as I believe every one of their children worked there at points.

I don't think it would not be overstating to say that this story embodies the American dream for Mr. and Mrs. Georgopoulos. With their dedication, talent and hard work, they built a business that has risen to literal "LEGENDARY" status in the minds and hearts of so many from Mitchell. We all were very fortunate to be there at a time when we could walk through the door of the café with the "Red Hots" red neon sign in the window!"

IRIS NELSON on Facebook said, "The gold standard of Coney Dogs. Have been in search for one as good my whole life... Haven't found one yet...."

GORDY WILLIAMSON also on Facebook said, "When I worked at the Town House Cafe bussing tables at age 12, I would pass on free hamburger after lunch and sneak over to the Frisco for a Coney LOL."

Mom loved Glazed Donuts and often ate them. One day, Elmer Heck who delivered Sunbeam Bread brought Mom a delicious Glazed Donut the size of a very large pie! She laughed and loved it and shared it! Another favorite was a caramel apple.



Anna enjoying a caramel apple

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Relationships

For many of the employees and several customers, our family became their primary family. Dad and Mom often had employees come to the house for holiday dinners. Many employees worked faithfully for over fifteen years, and a long time waitress Sophie Peterson worked at the Frisco for about twenty-five years. When the Frisco was extremely busy, it wasn't unusual for several of the regular customers to get up and clear off dishes from tables, wipe them clean, bring out trays of newly washed dishes and glasses, and help in other ways. They really were part of our family!

Dad and Mom were very kind, generous, humble people who truly loved people and who were truly loved. Mom had a gentle, warm look that when Stella's Augustana College Seminary friends for the first time met Mom, they felt comfortable and hugged her; they then spoke about some Greek words! In many ways, she was like a magnet attracting people!

Mom would rarely go anywhere without gifting to friends one of her many talents of Greek pastries, food, or crocheted items! She was so talented with her ability to recreate any crocheted piece. When she saw an interesting crocheted item at a friend's home, she perhaps would ask if she could take it home so as to crochet one like it. She was not comfortable reading the instructions of a pattern but could definitely figure out the design by counting stitches.

During the Christmas holiday, Dad and Mom treated all the regular customers to a meal. Dad especially wanted them to order either a steak or pork chops! And if Dad learned tourists were Greek, he'd make a feast for the family with no charge.

By watching them, we learned to always give Bazooka Bubble Gum and sometimes candy bars to all the young children in the cafe!

BENITA DOTSON OSCI, daughter of Policeman Sayles, said on Facebook, "Oh my, the best hot dog conies in the world. Mr. and Mrs. Georgopoulos would always greet you with a "Hi!" and smile. Mrs. would always slip my brother and me bubblegum while dad paid the bill. Haven't found a coney that good ever!"



George and Anna

MARION (MICK) HERSEY, formerly of Mitchell, added the following memory of the Frisco and our family.

"My family loved eating at Frisco Cafe. Many happy memories of the Hot plate dinners that we enjoyed. With a family of seven children with fifteen years between the oldest to the youngest, it was hard to find restaurants to eat at. The Georgopolis family treated us as family. We were the Hersey family. When my youngest brother John was born in 1962, your parents acted like we were family and passed out Hershey Candy bars to all the customers in the cafe. I was only 6 at the time and still remember it 60 years later. One of my favorite dishes your dad made was creamed peas and creamed corn, both with a creamy white sauce.

I became a cook/baker in the Navy for 23 years thanks to the memories of a great family cafe in Mitchell SD. The Frisco Cafe."

The busiest times for the Frisco were during the summer months, Corn Palace Week, pheasant hunting season, Saturdays when the farmers came to town, during high school athletic games, and when out of town band members were in the Mitchell parades.

When customers came in, they seated themselves and we immediately served them a glass of delicious ice cold water from the tap! It was interesting to see that the regular customers usually sat in their favorite spots when they came and typically ordered the same meal. Ironically, Dad became good friends with Andrew Ellwein as he delivered pop to the Frisco in his horse and wagon; years later he became good friends with Richard Ellwein who came in often, sat at the counter two stools away from where

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Dad cooked, immediately ordered three hot dogs, and chatted with Dad as he ate. Often several Mitchell policemen came in for coffee and donuts or hot dogs for which Dad would not let them pay. We got to know and respect the policemen; they were part of our family. It was always fun to talk with Elden Magstadt, William Sayles, Charles Stumm and Clarence Cunningham.

A Walk Through the Frisco

A "Red Hots" Neon sign hung inside the front window near where the hot dogs were made. The Frisco had eleven white, high back, wooden booths each seating four to six people and also fourteen counter stools. At the front entrance, stood a brightly colored large jukebox and a large Penny Scale. Later, five of the booths had small individual jukeboxes, and six booths had small mirrors. At the front of the Frisco were large windows with a long window seat filled with plants including a small lemon tree that had a few 14 ounce lemons which appeared as a photo and article in the Mitchell Daily Republic newspaper. How proud they were of those lemons! Also, on the seat was a large basil plant, Mother-in-Law's Tongue plants, and more.



Made the Daily Republic with a story about the lemons grown in the front window of the Frisco.

People entered the back part of the cafe through a wooden swinging door with a small window. Half of the back section included a dishwashing area, a small storage room, and a tall ice box for blocks of ice. Arthur was so impressed how the man would deliver the ice.

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The Ice House was located at the NW corner of 11th Street and Lawler Street and owned by Joe and John Anderson. A man drove the ice truck to the back door of the Frisco. He had a thick pad on his shoulder probably to help prevent the block of ice from sliding off his shoulder and also perhaps for not getting his shirt wet and not being so cold on his shoulder.



Arthur and Stella.

He had a huge pair of tongs with hooks at the end of each tong with which to grip the block. Arthur called the tong the "Gripper!" He lifted a huge block of ice and flung it onto his shoulder. Later, he slid the ice block into the icebox.

The other half of the back of the cafe had a large gas stove with a two foot square grill to the side for cooking breakfast and counters for prepping large amounts of food. A very heavy stool held the huge pot in which the forty pounds of chili was prepared. It was much easier for Dad to be able to bend over a bit to stir the chili rather than to reach up to stir it! There was also a pass through to the main part of the cafe to pick up the breakfast orders.

The steam table held hot foods including the soup of the day, a vegetable, chili, and the specials of the day. Right in front of the steam table was a long wooden board where the cook prepared the order and then placed the order up on the flat wooden top surface covering the steam table.

To the immediate left was the two-sided hot dog steamer which held the hot



Back entry to the café through swinging wooden door.

dog buns, chili, and wieners. When ordered, the hot dog would be topped with mustard, chili, and if preferred with onions. Orders for the hot dogs sounded like the following: "Two with, one without" meaning two hot dogs with onions on one plate, and one hot dog without onions on another plate. "Five on three, two without" meant two hot dogs without onions on one plate, two hot dogs with onions on a second plate, and one hot dogs with onions on a third plate!

We kept cold drinks and other items in a long ice box. It was pure agony to reach down into the melted ice cold water to grab a bottle of pop! Most of the pop was from the Ellwein Coca-Cola Bottling Plant; the Ellwein name was on the bottles. It was great that the Ellwein pop had several flavors including grape, orange, and black cherry.

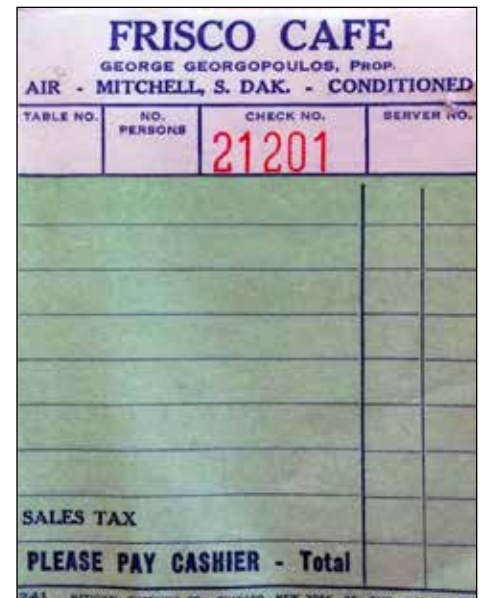


Kalley and Stella at their post to make hot dogs. The small crocks on the left held the onions.

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At the front of the Frisco, was another kitchen with a gas stove and also a two foot square grill where the public could see Dad cooking. It was amazing that one chef could cook on such a small space with so many orders at one time. Even when the Frisco was totally filled with customers, Dad never had someone cook on the grill in the back kitchen. It's curious why Dad didn't ask one of the children to cook in the back when it was so busy!

All orders were verbally given to the cook; the cook never read any orders no matter how busy. When orders were completed and ready to be picked up, Dad tapped the "infamous bell" once; if the order wasn't immediately taken, then the "bell" was tapped a few times!



Receipt ticket from the café.

People taking the orders of the customers did not write the order on the ticket until later; this even included if cream was wanted in the cup of coffee.

Mom couldn't spell in English. When it was time to give the customer the bill, she would go to the customer, repeat aloud what was ordered, write only the price of each item on the ticket, and then total the bill in front of the customer. When a customer paid, it was a family member or the waitress Sophie who worked the register.

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More than a Cafe ...

All of us children basically worked the register starting from about fourth or fifth grade, and change was always carefully counted back to the customer. We all did all the work from waiting on customers, tending the register, cutting hot dog and hamburger buns, peeling and cutting potatoes, cutting onions, making cole slaw, prepping foods, cooking, cleaning the cafe at night, and working in the back kitchen when necessary.

Gus Kaponin, a fellow Greek man, was the health inspector. He, of course, inspected cafes unannounced; Dad almost always had a 100% record after inspection. One time the potato bag was to be on a pallet, and another time the hot water was a couple of degrees lower than required. Every night while Dad thoroughly cleaned the front kitchen area, the others thoroughly washed every booth.

Stella started waiting on tables in the third grade and needed someone to pour the coffee into the cup because the coffee urn spigot was too high for her to reach. Very often Arthur and John and sometimes Stella cooked in the front kitchen, and we all made hot dogs. Kalley is the one who worked the 6:00 A.M. shifts on weekends and in the summer when there was no school. Arthur, John, and Stella preferred working after the breakfast shift! Year round, they often worked until the Frisco closed at 10:30 P.M.



Anna, Stella, George in front of the Frisco.

Dad always wore a long sleeved white starched shirt sometimes with rolled up sleeves, a couple of pens/pencils in his pocket, a necktie, a disposable white paper chef hat which read either "Culhane's" (milk), "Langenfeld's" (ice cream), or "Sunbeam" (bread). He also wore a long white bib apron that by the end of the night was totally spotless even after each night climbing a ladder to clean the entire stainless areas surrounding the oven and grill. Even though Dad had bad shoulder arthritis and bursitis and was told to not lift his arms, that wasn't going to happen! He continued working the same as always! Mom usually wore a uniform and apron when at the Frisco.

Throughout the years, there were three different men who cooked during the breakfast hours. Tom Ramos, who also was from Stilia, became partners with Dad and cooked during the breakfast hours. In about 1952, he left and started Tom's Cafe next door to the south of the Frisco.



George and John hard at work.

Sometimes when the cafe was not too busy, Dad would fold down an empty half pint carton of milk, set it on the floor, and stomp down on it with the heel of his shoe so as to create a loud POP sound! He loved doing crazy, fun things! During the Mitchell Diamond Jubilee Celebration in 1956, we watched two policemen come into the Frisco, handcuff Dad, and take him to the Court House. They ended by throwing a pie in his face! He licked his lips and said the banana cream pie was very delicious!

Out the cafe's back door was a personal parking area and a garden plot where Dad and Mom grew vegetables for use in the cafe. Also, about three quarters of

continued from page 8

the family home back yard were gardens of flowers, vegetables, a trellis of grapes used for making wine and Greek stuffed grape leaves, and fruit trees such as two apricots, plum, cherry, a peach tree that had 60 large peaches on just one branch that broke due to the weight, and several varieties of apples! Each of the children had a tree planted for them. The very large elm tree in the front of our home was for Kalley; Dad planted a seed the day she was born. The tree still stands in the front yard.

Dad and Mom grew rhubarb which often was made into wine as well as snap peas, tomatoes, string beans, zucchini, onions, and more. Many of the vegetables and fruit were used in the cafe and also given to neighbors and other friends. They also grew a variety of herbs such as basil, parsley, oregano, mint, and dill which were added to most Greek foods. In the summertime when Dad got home from the cafe at about midnight, he often would go to the back yard to water the garden.

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George presenting a 50-star flag to Mayor Martin Osterhaus.

My Dad's Country Store and Its History

By Florence Schumacher Scheetz

Hillside Country Store was established in 1896 by Mr. Dixon who built and operated it on the NE¼ of Section 19 Township 100 Range 62 (in Douglas County, Washington Township on the Dimock oil – 270th Street) just a quarter mile west of St. John Lutheran Church, currently at the intersection of 270th Street and 399th Avenue. Later, the store was sold to Al Pollock and Herman Blaseg who operated it for years. Then, in 1910, they sold it to August Schumacher (my father) and my Uncle William Koehn. Uncle Bill, as he was called, and my Aunt Martha went into partnership with Dad. At one time, my uncle, Walter Koehn, was in business with them, too.

The store was located 12 miles west of Dimock, South Dakota, at a location called Hillside. The store was 90' by 30'. We sold everything from 'soup to nuts' that early settlers wanted and needed. The main items were groceries, yard goods, underwear, hosiery, men's overalls, chambray shirts, shoes, overshoes, paint, hardware, bolts, wire, nails, horse collars, harnesses, fly nets, twine, notions, feed, seed, kerosene for lamps and



Interior of the store – a wide variety of goods for sale.

lanterns that were in everyday use, and many items too numerous to mention. The feed, seed, flour, and sugar came in cloth sacks that when they were empty were used for making dresses and shirts.

At the peak of prosperity, Hillside consisted of a store, post office, cream station, ice house, and later, a garage and blacksmith shop that was operated by Henry Prien. The very first blacksmith shop was across the intersection from the store and was operated by Gottlieb Titze who had learned the trade in Germany. With very primitive equipment,

he did his work in conjunction with his farming and often worked late at night by kerosene lantern, sharpening plow lays, shoeing horses, drawing hoops on wagon wheels, and other blacksmith work.

The Hillside Country Store was an old building facing south. In 1911, the year Elmer, my brother, was born, Dad had a new store built. The new store faced east. There was a hitching rail along the north side. I believe it was 1919 when Uncle Bill and Aunt Martha wanted out of the partnership and moved to Parkston, South Dakota. Dad became sole owner and operated the store until his retirement. Beata Haag came to work in the store in 1920 and stayed with us until the fall of 1937. Two other girls who were clerks in the store were Martha and Emilie Gerlach. Aunt Emilie married Mom's brother, Walter, in 1919. Two of the young men who worked for Dad were Mike Meyer and Elmer Gohns.

As my brothers, who were much older than I, grew up, they helped in the store and hauled the groceries from Mitchell, South Dakota, and hauled the eggs to Mitchell and cream to Dimock.

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More than a Cafe ...

Civic Minded

Dad was involved in many civic organizations such as Moose Lodge, Chamber of Commerce, and a men's Greek organization The Order of American Hellenic Education Progressive Association. The AHEPA's purpose is "To promote the ancient Hellenic ideals of education, philanthropy, civic responsibility, family and individual excellence through community service and volunteerism."

Dad loved Mitchell and was proud to be an American! In the 1960's, he presented to Mitchell's Mayor Martin Osterhaus an official 50-Star United States Flag for the city.

Dad and Mom supported three churches which were St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Mitchell, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Sioux City, Iowa, and the Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church in Sioux Falls. They also supported the church in their village of Stilia, Greece.

Arthur and Donna * Georgopoulos, Kalley and Mark Johnson, John * Georgopoulos, Stella and Fred Treiber thank you so much for loving the memories of Dad and Mom, the Frisco Cafe and for keeping alive the memory of the Frisco hot dogs! (The * indicates deceased.)

And, as Mom would say to everyone!

O THEOS MAZI OLOUS MAS! / GOD WITH ALL OF US

2022 - More to come! The end of the story is coming in the Fall Courier.

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Georgopoulos Family, L to R: Stella, Arthur, Kalley, John, with Anna behind George.

My Dad's Country Store ...

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The cream was taken by freight train to the Fairmont Creamery in Sioux City, Iowa.

Customers did not pick up their own groceries in grocery carts. Rather, the customers were on one side of the counter and gave the clerk their order as she or he wrote it on a sales slip and then filled the order. In those days, cream was made into butter. The cream, butter, eggs, and poultry were used in exchange for commodities at the store. Wooden tokens were given to the customers when they brought in their butter and cream. They were used in return to buy needed merchandise. I remember the customers who brought in butter, Mother would weigh it, then take it into the basement, and put it in a large crock. When the large crock was full, it was taken to Parkston, put on the train and shipped to Chicago. Our store made it convenient for the folks, since the nearest towns were Delmont and Parkston, South Dakota – each 17 miles away.

Most farmers brought their eggs to trade for groceries. Many also brought their sour cream which had to be tested. Some wives could spend part of the cream check. Others needed the cash for gas or other things. I learned to wait on customers and candle eggs.

I remember Rosina Scheetz coming in to buy candy and fabric. Later, I would see the fabric made into dresses for Rosina's granddaughters in church. I remember salesmen coming to the store with their swatches, and mother and I decided which ones would sell the best.

I also remember the Palmer candy that they bought from Sioux City. The company is still in business today. It would come in bulk, unwrapped, and they would sell a scoop for a nickel and put it into small brown paper bags. On Sunday mornings, the boys from Hillside church would walk over and ask us to open the store so they could buy candy. This had to be cash & carry—no credit, but Dad was always accommodating. It was always boys—no girls. Their choices were many—such as peppermint, candy corn, and lemon drops.

I also remember that during summer school, Margaret (Struck) Luebke would have to go home at 3:00 p.m. to herd cattle. The next day in school, Margaret would tell me that Grandma Scheetz had come by, and threw out candy for her, since she was herding cattle in the ditch.

Sugar, brown sugar, powdered sugar, cookies, candy, peanuts and walnuts had to be bagged in brown paper bags and weighed on the scale, which stood on the



Early picture of the Hillside Store.



A place to discuss the issues of the day

counter. A whole bunch of bananas was hung up with a pulley.

Cereal was up above the canned goods and had to be brought down with the "long arm", a long handle with a clamp on the end. At the lower end was the handle which opened and closed the "jaws". I often punctured a box of cereal without any complaint from the customer.

The store was open from 7:00 a.m. until 10:00 or 11:00 p.m. depending on the time of year and the weather. When Uncle Bill and Aunt Martha were still in business with Dad, they took turns keeping the store open on Sundays. In my lifetime, the store was not open on Sunday but Dad was always willing to open the store for people who needed to buy bread, cold meat, cheese, etc. for unexpected company.

The community had several baseball teams which played ball on Sunday afternoons. Our local team was called Hillside. Two others I remember were: Blumes

(they had two women who were at every game screaming at the top of their lungs), another team was called Metzgers. Cecilia's husband, Harry Metzger, was the umpire and Oscar Scheetz was the catcher. It was friendly completion as all were family.

After a Hillside ballgame, which was in Jendersee's pasture one-quarter mile south of the store, ball players and spectators wanted pop, beer, and candy from the store. We were always willing to accommodate them after the game. It was also a weekly gathering place for many of the early settlers for socializing and card games.

The store had an elevator at the west end of the store. An area of about seven-foot-square was cut out of the floor. The elevator was operated by ropes. One rope was pulled to take the elevator upstairs. Another rope was pulled to take you into the basement.

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Hansen Wheel and Wagon reception



Pictures clockwise from left: Crowd at the reception hosted by the Carnegie Resource Center on March 30, 2022, for the premier of the film WAGON MASTER – HANSEN’S HANDCRAFTED HISTORY held at the Luxury 5 Cinemas; Doug Hansen introducing Chuck and Linda Oster as representatives of the Carnegie Resource Center; Crowd at the reception for Hansen Wheel and Wagon; Doug Hansen enjoying snacks provided by the Chamber of Commerce.



Roger Musick donated his grandfather’s, C.A. Storla, note and coin collection to the Carnegie - our newest display. National Bank Notes were U.S. currency banknotes issued by the National banks chartered by the U.S. Government. They were usually backed by U.S. bonds the banks deposited with the U.S. Treasury. National Bank Notes were retired as a currency type by the government in the 1930’s. Included in the display at the Carnegie are bank notes from the First National Bank in Letcher, SD.

My Dad’s Country Store ... cont. from page 11

If the elevator was heavily loaded, the weight took it into the basement quite rapidly. One rope was used as a brake. Upstairs, there was a large round wheel that held the ropes. I’m not able to give a good description of how it operated, but it was all operated by hand with the use of ropes.

During the last years of the Hillside Store, August Schumacher operated the grocery business. The store was finally sold and moved to Parkston and remodeled into a home. The grocery business was then transferred into a garage building and operated by Leonard Schumacher and later sold to Chester Oliver. However, because of modern transportation and easier access to towns, the Olivers were forced out of business. Upon Dad’s retirement in 1946, he and Mother moved to Mitchell.

Today in 2015, at Hillside there is still a maintenance shed and shop and the house August Schumacher had built in 1924.

Noel Hamiel's 'South Dakota's Mathis Murders'



Noel Hamiel's presentation about the writing of his book, South Dakota's Mathis Murders, was a great success. The audience questions and comments at the end added to the program.



Noel Hamiel is signing his book for audience members on May 13, 2022, at the Carnegie Resource Center.



Renovation of
the last room!

<----- BEFORE

AFTER ----->

*Oh so much
better!*





Judy Thiesse (in back) and Marie Peterson along with other members of the Mitchell Garden Club planted perennials along the fence at Carnegie Resource Center. Last fall they prepared the soil and planted tulips. This spring they planted a variety of plants so that we will have blooming plants year around. Thanks to the Mitchell Garden Club for our new look.

Interesting upcoming opportunities

July 13-16,2022 51st GRHS International Convention "Keeping Our Hertiage Alive" –

Sponsored by the Germans from Russia Heritage Society – Check out registration and presentation topics at <https://www.grhs.org/pages/Conventions>

Sept. 1-5 SDGS Will be at the State Fair. Our Booth is entitled "Our Ancestors in the News"

Members and Societies are welcome to make contributions. MAGS is a contributing Society. If you have great stories – Let us know!!

Sept 4-Sept 11, 2022 RESEARCH TRIP TO SALT LAKE CITY - For more information, e-mail us at askus@rcgenealogy.com

September 30-Oct 1, 2022 Mining For Your Family History –Sponsored by Rapid City Society for Genealogical Research, Inc. – Check out the Seminar Information at <https://www.rcgenealogy.com/>

Carnegie is searching for ...

Mitchell City Directories

1941 1943
1944 1946
1947 1949
1950 1951
1952 1954
1956 1959
1962 1968

2009 thru 2013

All Years 2016-Current

If you have any of these items and wish to donate, call the Carnegie at 605-996-3209.

Mitchell High School

Warblers needed
All years prior to 1917

1918 1919
1920 1922
1923 1924
1925 1926
1944 1945
1986 1989
1991 1996
1997 1999
2001 2004

2006
All Years 2008-2013

All Years 2018-Current

Support CRC by using Amazon Smile

When doing your Amazon online shopping, think of supporting the Carnegie Resource Center by visiting: smile.amazon.com Type Carnegie Resource Center in the search box and select it. You only have to logon once through Amazon Smile and each time you shop after that, the site will show that you support CRC. A portion of the proceeds from all you buy on Amazon will go to the Carnegie Resource Center! How cool is that? This one simple way to give back to your community is so simple, so spread the word! Our ability to serve the community relies on generous donations from the public. Thank you!



HELP!!!

Many hands make light work!!!

Like to clean?

Have a skill/talent?

Like to help people?

Like to organize?

Like to research?

Like to decorate?

Like to write stories/articles?

Like to research/write grants?

The Carnegie Resource Center could really use your help! We have many projects being worked on right now. We would love some help with various things that need to be done at CRC. Anyone who has a skill or talent can be utilized. We will be working on more projects that organization and vision will be of use. Helping our guests that visit is always fun and interesting. Some of them just love to tour the building and see our Oscar Howe original works and prints. Some of our guests want to research family or a business in town. We would love to be able to have a list of people that would be willing to help us out. Since we are volunteers, you can set when you are able to help.

We would love for you to contribute an article for our Carnegie Courier, about a business or family. Anyone with experience in grant writing would be a huge plus for us. We currently decorate for the seasons, if you would like to participate, we would love to have you. This is not a complete list of what is needed, but hopefully you get the idea. Thank you for considering this.

As my grandmother always said, "Many hands make light work!"

Give us a call or email us - please type in the subject line "Would like to help."

605-996-3209 | info@carnegieresourcecenter.com

Daughtering Out definitions

From Andie Sindt

Q: I overheard a couple of people at the library talking about a family "daughtering out." Could someone explain what that means? -- Terry

A: One of the comments I hear the most often is how many different terms there seem to be in this hobby. One newcomer to genealogy jokingly said that she thought she needed a Genealogy-English dictionary to understand what some of the terms mean.

Of course, some of the terms are directly related to the types of records that we find ourselves looking in, such as land records and probate records. Terms like grantor and grantee or guardian and testator are legal terms that can be found in any law dictionary or in a good genealogical dictionary.

Sometimes you feel like you need a Genealogy-English dictionary to understand the terms bandied about in genealogy circles.

Definition One

When a line is said to "daughter out," it means that the last male descendant had only daughters. When this happens the surname is generally at an end as far as that line is concerned.

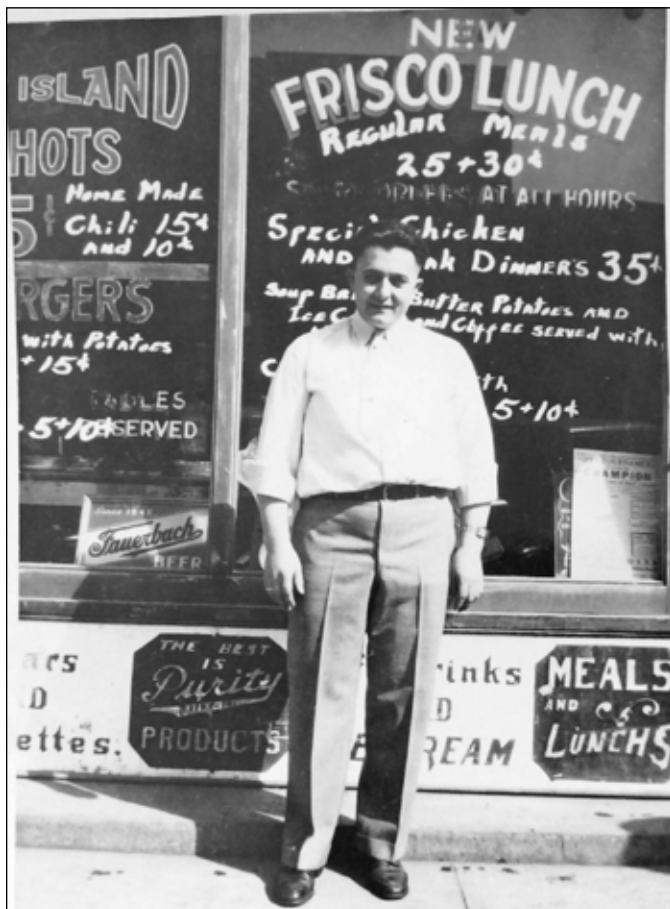
While in today's society when females marry they do not always take the surname of their husband, but this was generally not the case in past centuries. When a daughter married she took the surname of her husband. That meant that when a man had only daughters, there was no way for his surname to be carried on.

In some cases, I have seen where the male offspring of the daughters were given their mother's maiden surname as either a first or middle name to at least carry on a connection.

Definition Two

Another way that I have heard the term "daughter out" used is when an individual descends from a daughter in a line. It is usually at that point that the researcher ceases to research the descendants of a given individual, because they no longer carry on that surname in their own research.

Again, in researching the daughters' lineages, I have often found that they have carried on their maiden name in some way by using it in the name of one or more of their own children.



See George Georgopoulos's story inside!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jun 20 MAHS Business Meeting 7 p.m.
- Jun 27 MAGS Business Meeting 6 p.m.
- Jun 27 MAGS Program- Bring your "Brick Wall" 7p.m.
Helping others with their challenges
- July 5 Dr. Adrien Hannus & Prof Alan Outram – Ar-
cheology Updates 7 p.m.
- July 18 MAHS Business Meeting 7 p.m.
- July 25 MAGS Business Meeting 6 p.m.
- July 25 MAGS Program-Visiting Graceland Cemetery
Meet by the Maintenance Buildings
(if it rains we will meet at the Carnegie)
- Aug 15 MAHS Business Meeting 7 p.m.
- Aug 22 MAGS Business Meeting 6 p.m.
- Aug 22 MAGS Program-Making the Most of Ancestry.
com
- Sept 19 MAHS Business Meeting 7 p.m.
- Sept 26 MAGS Business Meeting 6 p.m.
- Sept 26 MAGS Program- Discovering Your Ancestors
in Canada

*Carnegie Resource
Center
119 West Third Avenue
Mitchell, S.D. 57301*

