



### History Detectives are hard at work solving history mysteries

Here's a sample of some of the efforts currently under way by our team of History Detectives. Please let us know if you have information to add or if you'd like our team to help you investigate a history question related to Otsego County. Be sure to check out our History Matters exhibit at the museum by the north entrance.



#### ◆ Discover ◆ Learn ◆ Share

Jane Brink (shown to the left with her husband Charles) is credited for being the first white female to live in Otsego County. A long time "history mystery" was: When did she die? Her head stone in the Otsego Lake Township cemetery indicates the year was 1899 but she is listed in the 1900 Census. No death certificate could be found and the Herald Times archives begin at 1903 so these years aren't covered.

Maybe other newspapers printed her obituary. The Brinks moved here from Almont in Lapeer County and Jane had returned there at one time for health reasons. No on-line newspapers from Almont were found so the search turned to the Grayling newspaper. The Crawford County Avalanche is available on the internet. A quick search discovered Jane died on April 22, 1900 at Otsego Lake Village. The mystery is solved!

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1. Descendants of Stanislaus "Daniel" and Michalena (Kowaleski) Merkiel stopped by the museum during History Detective Edith Lennox's shift. The Merkiel's home was on the southeast corner of North Otsego and Mitchell in Gaylord. Dan Merkiel, his brother and his son worked in the Joseph Cole Grocery Store which catered to the Polish community. The relatives are searching for information pertaining to the Merkiel family and the grocery store. If anyone has information or pictures of the Cole Grocery Store, please send to [edithlennox964@gmail.com](mailto:edithlennox964@gmail.com)

2. History Detective Jim Czarkowski is researching the Otsego County Farm Bureau which is celebrating its centennial this year. Jim is looking for photos, documents, and other memorabilia that can be exhibited at the county fair next month. Please give Jim a call at 269-967-7939 if you have Farm Bureau items to share.

#### ◆ Discover ◆ Learn ◆ Share

History Detective Barb Switalski is researching the history of St. Mary Catholic Church and Cathedral. She discovered this photo of the St. Stanislaus Society dated 1912. Names of many of these men were written on the back of the photo.

Please contact Barb at [mts@freeway.net](mailto:mts@freeway.net) if you'd like a reprint of the picture or if you can help identify the rest of the people. A copy of the photo is on display at the museum as part of our History Matters exhibit.



#### ◆ Discover ◆ Learn ◆ Share

Sue Ciszewski shared the Michigan National Guard poster (shown to the left) of Company H, 125<sup>th</sup> Infantry. Her grandfather, Tony Pomarzynski, is among the more than 250 soldiers and officers that served from mid-1916 to October 1917. They mobilized at Camp Ferris in Grayling, went to Texas, and later journeyed to Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

Using the free access to Ancestry.com through the Otsego County Library, we discovered government documents for Company H that listed each person's home town. About 10 were from Otsego County.

