

Our Steil Great Grandparents Now Have a Grave Marker.

I have been researching the ancestry of my parents for the past three years. To launch my genealogy hobby, I joined ancestry.com on May 8, 2010.

My research took me in four different directions. My father, Murray F. Coleman, had paternal ancestors from Ireland and maternal ancestors from Scotland. The paternal ancestors of my mother, Kathleen Steil, came from Germany, while her maternal ancestors had roots in Poland.

My maternal grandfather was Frank W. Steil. He was born in Detroit. His father, George Peter Steil, was born in Germany and immigrated to Detroit in 1880, paving the way for his parents, John Peter Steil and Anna Ruhl Steil, to follow in 1884. Several of George's siblings came to America with John and Anna.

John Peter Steil and Anna Ruhl married in Neuerburg, Germany in 1858. They had eight children. George, born in 1859, was the oldest, and Mary Anna, born in 1873, was the youngest. Valentin was a middle child.

Three of the Steil children started families of their own, thus creating new generations of descendants of John Peter Steil and Anna Ruhl. George had eight children, including my Grandpa Frank and my Uncle Bill, Aunt Marie, and Aunt Anna. I never met Uncle George, the oldest, who died in 1940. Valentin had four children. Mary Anna married William Stephan, thus creating the Stephan branch of the Steil family.

John and Anna died only a few years after they arrived in Detroit. Anna died first, in 1889 at the age of 54. John died in 1991, at the age of 63.

My search for their grave sites was tedious and frustrating. It was only after reviewing John's death certificate that I discovered that he was buried at

what was then called "German Lutheran" cemetery. Today it is called Trinity Cemetery, which is located on the East Side of Detroit, close to where the Steil family lived in the 1880s.

Cemetery records confirmed that John Peter Steil is buried in Trinity Cemetery, on the same plot as his son Valentin. After several visits to the cemetery over the course of many months, I finally found a headstone for Valentin.

No grave marker could be found for John or Anna, so I started a campaign to raise funds to create one for them. Our 2x great grandparents – who orchestrated the transition of the Steils from Germany to America – deserved a visible commemoration of their life and death.

Several of their descendants contributed money to this project, including descendants of Anna Steil Ladensack, George Steil, William Steil, Frank Steil, and

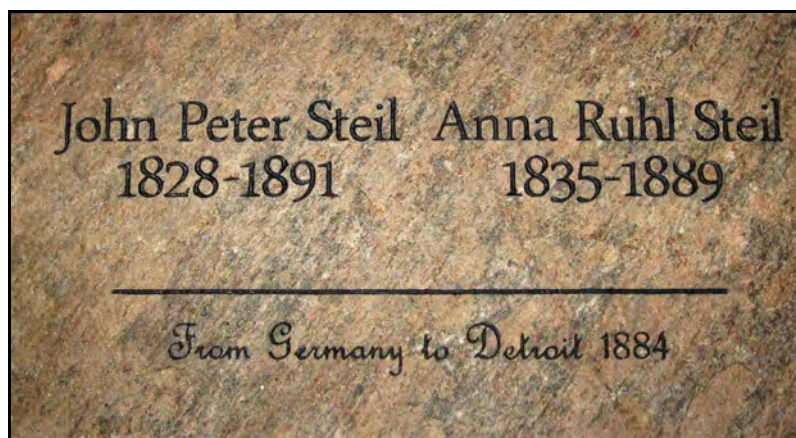
Marie Steil Walker. A descendant of Mary Anna Steil Stephan also made a donation.

My brother Mike Coleman suggested that my sister Diane would be the perfect person to select the stone and have it carved and engraved. She and her husband Ray Rogers, who owns a company dealing with stone, made my vision become a reality.

The grave marker is beautiful. Ray and Diane hope to have it installed in the next few weeks.

What a wonderful collaborative effort this has been. Many thanks to everyone who participated.

Thomas F. Coleman
May 5, 2013



For a larger image of the grave marker, go to:
www.steifamilyhistory.info/whats-new.htm