

Walworth County Genealogical Society Newsletter



Volume 23 Issue 5

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September - October 2014

Guest Speakers/Programs for 2014

Saturday, September 27th, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm - History Fair - hosted by Burlington Genealogical Society at Burlington High School

This marks the first time Burlington, Walworth, and Kenosha County Genealogical Societies will be combining for the History Fair

Tuesday, October 7th, 6:30 pm: Land Information: Using GIS (Geographic Information System) - Deb Ketchum will give a visual program on how to use the online GIS programs to research land information.

Tuesday, November 4th, 6:30 pm: "Taking Your Family Research from Chaos to Calm" Presented by Jean Hoffman from the Civil War Museum in Kenosha

Please consider a donation for either the local food pantry or Lakeland Animal Shelter

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From the President's Desk

Mike Hay - WCGS President

It's time for the History Fair again! This time it is in Burlington, and this year we are joined by the Kenosha County Genealogy Society as well as the Burlington Genealogy Society. We are looking forward to a good turnout as we are also being joined by the McHenry County Genealogical Society as well.

With the present nip in the air, we look forward to the fall season and our upcoming election. We will be preparing a slate of candidates for the upcoming vote which will be held at our December meeting.

The positions open will be President, Treasurer and 2 Board Members. At our September Board meeting, it was decided to allow a Co-President position in which two officers would share the duties formerly assigned to the President. Chris Brookes has announced her willingness to share the duties with me if the Society should decide to re-elect me. I believe that, together, we could accomplish great things, but this decision will be left up to the electorate.

We will be providing nomination slips at the October meeting. The nominating committee will then prepare the slate for the December election. They will present the slate at the November meeting, thus giving the members time to make their decision. The November slate will still allow any additional candidates. We want to have as many members as possible have their say as to the leadership of our group. Remember, this is Your Society and your participation makes it work!

I spoke last newsletter about the success of our Cemetery Walk at St. Peter's in East Troy, and the fact that we were approached by members of the Williams Bay Historical Society who are planning their own Cemetery Walk at East Delavan Union Cemetery later in October. The Lake Geneva Museum Volunteers are having a Cemetery Walk at Oak Hill Cemetery in Lake Geneva on October 11, 2014, where re-enactors will be doing all the presentations. Anyone who wishes to attend these functions will be welcome by the respective groups.

Our membership is growing by the rate of 1 member per month, and we are very excited about that. We all need to tell our families and friends about our society in order to continue to offer the benefits of our organization to others. The word is spreading that our library room is staffed every Tuesday and the third Saturday of the month and people are happy to have the ability to research their family's roots at our facility. More and more people have been stopping in regardless of having Wisconsin roots or not.



Deb Ketchum, Librarian



Ketchum's Korner

Walworth County's Best Kept Secret

Libraries use a classification called the Dewey decimal system for book placement. This classification is broken into 10 sections 000-099, 100-199, and so on up to 900-999. The 900-999 section is the History, Geography & Biography. The 920-940 is People, Names and Family Histories with 929 specifically Genealogy. The rest of the 900 section is 941-999 Countries and United States. Lineage books can be found in the 369 area.

Within the public libraries you will find these sections have as few as a couple books to several hundred. You will then most likely find the library does not have a specific person to assist with genealogy research as WCGS does.

I've had several people tell me how impressed they are that WCGS has their own library and volunteers that can help sort out and forward their research. I did some checking and found that WCGS is one of the few genealogy societies in the area (Wisconsin and Illinois) that have their own private library which is manned by knowledgeable people. Although the WCGS library is housed in a space at Matheson Memorial library it is solely ours. Our library also doesn't charge for you to come in to research.

Come visit our library on any Tuesday (10am-3pm) or the 3rd Saturday (10am-2pm). Let's see what WCGS can do to forward your family research.



The History & Herstory of Walworth County

By Chris Brookes

More Than Just Maps

The Combination Atlas of Walworth County, Wisconsin 1873, for example, contains population of principal cities and villages, lithographic views of schools, residences, hotels, businesses, and history.

In 1873, “Walworth County, one of the oldest, wealthiest, healthiest, and consequently most intelligent counties in Wisconsin” was surveyed in 1835 and named for Chancellor Reuben H. Walworth of New York. At the time the state contained only two counties, Milwaukee and Racine which included Walworth. Three years later Walworth County was organized into five towns: Elkhorn, Delavan, Geneva, Spring Prairie, and Troy.

The first claims of Jesse Meacham and Adolphus Spoor in the fall of 1835, in the town of Troy, was settled by fisticuffs. The following year, before Major Meacham settled on his property, Christopher Payne, the first actual settler of Walworth County, cleared some trees, built the body of a log cabin near the outlet of Geneva Lake, and departed. Meanwhile, John Brink’s surveying party claimed the same land as Payne and a claims war ensued. The surveyors finally agreed to take \$2000 from Payne and his party of seven, sometimes known as The Company of Geneva, to quit the claim.

The Company of Geneva consisted of Robert Wells Warren, Greenleaf Warren, Andrew Ferguson, James Maxwell, Phillip Maxwell, Lewis Goodsell, and George Campbell. R. Wells Warren built the first saw mill. C.M. Goodsell built the first grist mill. Andrew Ferguson erected the first frame house in the County at Geneva.

Soon after this, many settlers “found their way” to the County. William, Henry and Samuel Phoenix along

with Luke Taylor and Allen Perkins, settled around Delavan Lake in the fall of 1836. John Powers put up a cabin in Linn. Mr. Davis came to Silver Lake in Sugar Creek. S.A. Dwinell, Nathaniel Bell, Dr. J.C. Mills, Charles Perrin and Roderick Merrit settled in Lafayette. Harry Kimball made a claim in Bloomfield; Allen Perkins in Hudson (now Lyons); Asa Blood, Austin McCracken, Mr. Roberts, Daniel Griffin and sons, Allen Harrington, Benjamin Jennings, and Gaylord Graves all came into East Troy; and Palmer Gardener became the first settler of Spring Prairie.

The history continues with information on the cities and towns of the County.

- Whitewater – specially noted for its schools and churches – was first settled by Samuel Prince.
- Geneva – a delightful and thriving village – first owned by Payne and The Company of Geneva.
- Delavan – a beautiful village on the Western Union Railroad – named for E.C. Delavan, a pioneer champion of the temperance movement, and settled by Henry and Samuel Phoenix.
- Elkhorn – geographical center of the County known for its healthfulness – first settled by LeGrand Rockwell, Hollis Latham, and Albert Ogden.
- Sharon – platted by the Chicago Northwestern Railroad – John Reeder was the first settler.
- Bloomfield Township – contains the richest land in the County – Harry Kimball claimed land in 1836.

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The History & Herstory of Walworth County

By Chris Brookes

(continued from page 52)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lyons Township – diversified by hills and bluffs – Allen Perkins was the first to arrive.• East Troy Township - the home of true picturesque beauty and enterprise – settled by Asa Blood and his family.• Spring Prairie Township – the citizens are among the most intelligent and generous in the State – Palmer Gardener broke the first land in the County here.• The well-known farming districts include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ LaFayette – named for the Marquis de LaFayette○ Troy – abundant water power and timber○ LaGrange – excels in good houses○ Linn – home of Senator John W. Boyd | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Walworth- settled by James VanSlyke○ Darien – first settled by John Bruce○ Sugar Creek – settled by John Davis and M. Charles○ Richmond – Morris F. Hawes brought his wife and six children in a large covered wagon from Michigan in 1837. |
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All this before the lithographs and maps even begin!

The *1873 Atlas* has been digitalized by the Wisconsin Historical Society, and the images can be found on the Lake Geneva Library website under Lake Geneva Images – copy and paste the url below to access the 1873 Walworth County Plat Map.
<http://www.lakegeneva.lib.wi.us/>

M & M Tips

I'm sure everyone has noticed the identification on every page of the newsletter. I had received an email from member Robert Reek from Prescott, Arizona who pointed out that if he printed only certain pages from the newsletter, he could not determine which issue the article had come from. I thought that was an excellent idea and now you see the identification on every page. I want to officially thank Mr. Reek for his suggestion to make the newsletter better.

In that same vane, I would like to ask the members to let me know what they might like to see in the newsletter. We welcome any suggestions, and if you have an article you would like to write for the newsletter, please do so and send it to wcsnewsletter@gmail.com. I'd love to hear from you.

Sue Morgan is currently working on a database of all the visitors to the library since 2009 and which family names they are searching for. We are planning to put this database on the web site with instructions to contact WCGS and we will put people in touch with each other.

We have created a membership page sorted by location with member names and email addresses. Any member who wants one can pick a copy up at the meetings, or if you cannot make meetings and want a copy, send me an email and I will send you a copy.



AROUND THE COUNTY TIDBITS

by Shirley Sisk

Darien – Mrs. Hattie Wright left Chicago Monday evening for Kansas city to visit her sister, Mrs. Bettie Marsh.-----Mrs. Dr. Johnson was called to Milton last Thursday by the severe illness of her daughter, Mrs. Lizzie Crumb.-----Vernie Wheeler had his thumb broken in his father's feed cutter last week.-----Mr. and Mrs. S. T. Johnson were called to Clinton Sunday by the severe illness of his father, who passed away Sunday evening after an illness of three days of la grippe.-----Mr. and Mrs. E. D. Odell gave a party to twenty-four lads and lasses last Wednesday evening in honor of their son Ray's fourteenth birthday. All kinds of games were entered into with spirit, and the evening sped swiftly away and when the clock told the hour of eleven they took their departure, leaving behind them many tokens of love and esteem. (The Delavan Republican, Wed., January 13, 1892)

Allen's Grove – Lagrippe is again on its rounds. On the list are Mr. Broomhead and Miss Fannie, Mr. and Mrs. Botzer, Mr. Joslyn and family, three of them were down at one time, Mrs. Joslyn narrowly escaping pneumonia. Others were dangerously ill, all improving, some very slowly.-----Miss Annie Wright is visiting her brother, and family in Chicago.-----Mr. Joseph Wilkins went to the Hub Tuesday to visit his daughter, Mrs. L. E. Allen.-----Wm. McAfee, Sr., died at his home Friday a.m., Jan. 8th. He had been ill some two months, but seemed to be better. He sat up all day Thursday, Friday morning arose much weaker and died suddenly, sitting in his chair. Funeral services were held at the M. E. church Sunday morning. Mr. McAfee was about 65 years of age, an industrious and hard working man. He had resided here many years. (The Delavan Republican, Wed., January 13, 1892)

Sharon – There are quite a number of cases of sickness about this village and vicinity, caused by la grippe, and it keeps our local doctors all busy administering remedies to keep its ravishes in

check.-----Friday night last the W. R. C. with their friends, assembled at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Pearson. The evening was spent pleasantly, and songs, recitations and music served to enliven the occasion.-----John T. Fish, Esq., of Chicago, solicitor of the C., M. & St. P. R. R., and formerly captain of Co. C, 13th Wisconsin infantry, was a Sharon visitor Tuesday after noon. He was heartily welcomed by the "boys" of the 13th, and old residents of this place, as, prior to, and at the time the war began, he was a resident of Sharon. (From the Reporter, but reprinted in the Delavan Republican, Wed., January 20, 1892)

Lyons – Geo. Bresee fell from a load of hay one day last week, striking his head on the frozen ground, but strange to say, was not hurt beyond a general shaking up.-----C. A. Fellows has been baling hay and shipping it to Whitewater, where he will soon move.-----

---Mr. and Mrs. G. T. Travis returned from Michigan last Monday, where they have been visiting for the past month.-----Peter Strassen commenced filling his ice house last Monday. The ice is nearly a foot thick and of good quality.-----Two large sleigh loads of young people met at Mr. Prash's last Thursday evening, and the time passed very pleasantly playing cinch and tiddledewinks. (The Delavan Republican, Wed., Jan. 20, 1892)

Millard – Mrs. D. D. Finch and Mrs. E. P. Ellsworth start Tuesday for Belmond, Iowa, to visit relatives. Miss Lillian King, of Adams, will preside over the household in their absence.-----Mr. and Mrs. I. L. Loomer, of Elkhorn, accompanied by Mrs. L's mother and Mrs. Galloway, of Menominee, drove over from Elkhorn Saturday.-----

Mrs. George Roe and daughter Genie and Mrs. Eugene Cary, of North Johnstown, spent Thursday with their sister Mrs. L. G. Loomer.-----Mrs. Crandal is suffering from an injured foot caused by stepping on a rusty nail.

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AROUND THE COUNTY TIDBITS

by Shirley Sisk

(continued from page 54)

-----Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Thomas now ride in a new surrey.-----Miss Myrtie Loomer has a new wheel. (The Delavan Enterprise, Thurs., July 21, 1898)

Walworth - From the last WCGS Newsletter, the newspaper and date were cut off for the item of "Mr. and Mrs. Frank Stupefell buried their seven year old boy who died Monday evening of scarlet fever." It was from The Enterprise, Delavan, August 23, 1900.

PROGRAM RECAP

Our August meeting was the ice cream social. We were pleased and surprised to see Peggy Gleich, who is living in the Willowfield Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, which is just across Hwy 50 from the Community Center. Jon Hay escorted her home when she was ready.



PROGRAM RECAP

The annual dinner held at Foley's was enjoyed by those who attended.



Ila is camera shy.



Discussing Irish salt bread.



Our waiter, who lives next door, went to call his cat to supper. We watched the cat run across the yard when he clapped his hands. Entertainment!



Deb Ketchum showed the new book for the Delavan Area Cemeteries.



Shepherd's Pie cooked and served in a cast iron kettle stayed hot for the entire meal. Just ask Pat Blackmer.



Nancy Lehman had a drawing for a copy of the Walworth, WI 175th Year Book. Jon Hay won. The books are available for \$10.00.

News from nearby Societies

Burlington Genealogical Society

The Burlington Genealogical Society is hosting the Family History Fair from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm on Saturday, September 27. The Fair will be held at the Burlington High School Gym, 400 McCanna Parkway, Burlington, WI.

The October 15 program will be "Organizing computer files, photos, and paper files", presented by Judy Rockwell. The meeting starts at 7:00 pm in room 100 at Gateway Technical College, 496 McCanna Parkway, Burlington.

The November 19 program is scheduled to be "Stories of military service, veterans, and local wartime activities at home" – Round-table sharing session, moderated by Dave Nelson. Time and place are the same as the October meeting.

BIGWILL

British Interest Group of Wisconsin and Illinois will have their next meeting on November 15; "Being Legal: citing sources and following copyright" with Ann Wells.

Citing your sources and following copyright laws are part of doing family research. Anything less makes for a work of fiction. Learn how to apply these two concepts in an easy manner.

Ann, a BIGWILL charter member, was born in England, raised in California, and has been resident of Illinois for more than 25 years. A researcher for the last 35 years, she is owner of Wells Genealogical Research.

Peggy Gleich sent me this poem and although I don't usually put these kind of things in the newsletter, I just loved it and wanted to share. There is no title and no author on the paper she sent me.

Just a line to say I'm living
And I'm not among the dead.
Though I'm getting more forgetful
And more mixed up in the head.

Sometimes I can't remember when
I stand at the foot of the stairs,
If I go up for something, or
If I just came down from there.

And before the frig I stand so often,
With my poor mind filled with doubt;
Have I just put some food away, or
Have I come to take some out?

And there are times when it is dark,
With my night cap on my head,
I don't know if I'm retiring
Or have just got out of bed.

So if it's past my time to write you,
There's no need in getting sore.
I may think I've written you already,
And I don't want to be a bore.

So remember I do love you,
And I wish that you were here.
But now it's nearly mail time,
And I must say "good-bye" dear.

Here I stand before the mail box
With a face so very red;
Instead of mailing you my letter,
I have opened it instead!

I'm desperately looking for more members to fill out the "Are You Related to Me?" form. If you need a form, email me at wgsnewsletter@gmail.com and I will be glad to send it to you.

This article was in the Ashtabula County Genealogical Society, Inc., Geneva, OH newsletter Volume XLI, #3. It is so pertinent.

FROM THE EDITOR

The Geneva Public Library houses the archive collection of Platt R. SPENCER, an American handwriting expert who lived in Geneva and ran an academy on North Myers Rd. called Jericho Log Seminary. He died in 1874. Spencer descendants still hold reunions in the area. Spencerian penmanship is characterized by clear, rounded letters slanting to the right and connected together in a flowing manner. You may still see examples of this style [or font] of handwriting on formal invitations and letters.

Remember elementary school when the teacher drew lines on the blackboard with an apparatus that held several pieces of chalk at one time? (It was also used to make music staves for learning the notes.) She then proceeded to instruct the students how to hold a pen and the formation of the letters, assisted by the ubiquitous black and white banners around the top of the room, which pictured the capital and lower case shape of each letter in the alphabet. (One friend who can recite the alphabet backwards told me her seat was near the x-y-z on the chart, so she thought that was the beginning of the alphabet.)

When students learned their alphabet and how to print it, they advanced to cursive writing (much faster than printing—all the letters of a word are joined eliminating the need to lift the pen off the paper after each letter.) Students were shown how to hold their writing implements while using their whole arm to make large circles and up-curving lines on blank newsprint paper. Soon, everyone was writing on special lined paper—it was an easy transition. Up until the invention of the printing press, all history, public records, communications, legal papers, etc. were all hand written in many languages.

Lately in the news are reports that schools just don't have time to teach writing anymore, what with preparing students for "the test" that has

been established as the criteria for a diploma. Someone assumes that computers, electricity and Internet are available 24/7 to everyone.

Shorthand, notehand, Morse code, binary code and other specific purpose "short cuts" serve a purpose but do not eliminate the universal method of putting words on paper. Have you noticed already how children are holding their pens and even crayons? Like a knife ready to stab the paper. What happened to developing "fine motor skills?"

Handwriting is important. Our recorded history is all hand-written. Genealogists take short courses on how to read various styles of old handwriting found in documents. Our census records have been transcribed in record time by volunteer genealogists who read cursive writing.

Sadly, the erasing of cursive writing relegates future generations to early elementary school printing. They will never be able to even read the United States Constitution in its original form. How will they know if future governments are abiding by it?

-Kristina (Tina) Carpenter

Shipping Cost Increase

Due to the constantly increasing costs of postage, we have had to increase our shipping cost for publications to \$5.50 per book. If more than 1 book is being ordered, contact WCGS for the actual cost of shipping.

St. Peter's Cemetery Book

The St. Peter's Cemetery Book should be available by the end of September or early October.

WALWORTH COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

| | | | | |
|----------------|--|---------------------|--|---------------------|
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| | Past-President: Deb Ketchum | | | |
| | Historian: Pat Blackmer | | | |
| | Librarian: Deb Ketchum | | | |

Regular meetings of the WCGS are the first Tuesday of each month at the
Delavan Community Centre, 826 E. Geneva St., Delavan, WI.

Library Hours: Matheson Memorial Library, 101 N. Wisconsin St., Elkhorn, WI- Every Tues. 10-3pm
other times by appt - call 262-215-0118

The membership year runs from Jan. 1st thru Dec. 31st. The newsletter is published bi-monthly.

****Dues are \$15 (\$50 Lifetime) for an individual, \$18.00 (\$100 Lifetime) for a family, \$25 contributing, \$7.50 student.
\$5.00 additional per year to receive the newsletter through the mail.

MEMBERS: Want email meeting minutes or not?? Contact Barb - jawadusti@yahoo.com

Visit the Walworth County website and uncover your roots! <http://www.walworthcgs.com>

E-Mail us at societynews@walworthcgs.com

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