

Walworth County Genealogical Society Newsletter



Volume 22 Issue 1

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January - February 2013

Guest Speakers/Programs for 2013

January 1st, No Meeting - HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

February 5th, 1:30 PM: Show and Share

March 5th, 1:30 PM: Workshops: Beginning and Advanced Genealogy

April 2nd, 6:30 PM: Photo Reconstruction - speaker Pat Boyd

May 7th, 6:30 PM: Open night at the ARC - Whitewater University speaker Karen Weston

Don't forget to bring an item for Lakeland Animal Shelter!

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President Power

Mike Hay - WCGS President

Happy New Year! We have a new schedule for our monthly meetings, a new look for our library area, and I have assumed the duties as your new president.

The board met on January 10, and we have decided to change the format for this year's meetings and while we were at it we made a few changes in some of the committee assignments which have been taken over by other committees.

This year's meeting agenda has been changed so that the even numbered months, April, June, August, and October will have speaker presentations.

- February's meeting will feature Show and Share which has been held every year, so bring your memorabilia, artifacts, stories, etc. to present to the group.
- April we are planning a session on photo restoration.
- June we have scheduled a program on Irish history.
- August will be our Ice Cream Social with Chris Brookes portraying a historical character from the area.
- October will be the Family History Fair that we host this year. This will be held on a Saturday in early October, so please keep your October calendar open.
- December will be our Christmas party and potluck with, of course, Bingo.

The odd numbered months, March, May, July, September, and November will be workshop type activities.

- For example, the March meeting will be held in conjunction with the Daughters of Union Veterans, 1861-1865, and will have areas set up for beginning, advanced, and other research methods for genealogical research.
- For our May meeting we are planning to attend the Area Research Center at Whitewater hosted by Karen Weston.
- July will be our Cemetery Walk.
- September will be our annual meeting as well as our 25th anniversary and we are planning to hold this event at a local restaurant.
- November's meeting will be a presentation on DNA research.

Check your newsletter calendar or our web site for further details.

So as you can see, we have been rather busy and our push for this year will be to increase our membership while the society will be celebrating its 25th year. If you happen to be relating stories about your family to another individual, mention our group and invite them to attend one of our meetings and think about joining our group.

As always, we are open to any suggestions from our members, so feel free to bring up any new ideas you may have. My email is wcgspres@gmail.com or you can call me at (262) 279-6541.



Deb Ketchum, Librarian



Ketchum's Korner

NEW YEAR NEW LOOK

2013 marks the 25th anniversary of WCGS. Stop in and see the changes taking place within the library. The office area has already taken on a new look. It gives better usage to the computers and copier machine without interrupting someone else's research. It also opens the area for better air flow and help control the hot and cold fluctuations in the room.

As the year progresses changes will be made to our collections. Reorganizing, readable labels and condensing materials to make room for new additions. As these materials are worked with I will be creating an index to help better locate the various information available for the people and places being researched by our members and visitors.

In conjunction with the Programs planned at the monthly meetings the library will have monthly features. February and March will be getting started with genealogy research. It will feature the resources available at the library and other places outside the library that are available for research. It will give our visitors a chance to try the internet resources especially ones that are paid for such as Ancestry, Footnote, Archives and access to American Ancestors (formerly New England Historic Genealogical Society) and DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution). It will offer free forms to help simplify the information collected for research. It will offer criteria for joining organizations such as the Mayflower Society, Daughters and Sons of the American Revolution, Daughters and Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, and Wisconsin Pioneer and Century Certificates.

Let's make 2013 the year family history and genealogy become a part of your life. Come help preserve the legacy of your family.



AROUND THE COUNTY TIDBITS

by Shirley Sisk

Sugar Creek - Mr. Henry Reynolds has now bought the lumber for his new house which he will erect in the near future.-----Mr. J. Magill intends retiring from farming and will move into the "city" of Elkhorn where he owns a beautiful residence. Mr. Magill has resided in Sugar Creek for a great many years and will be greatly missed.-----There is a considerable amount of sickness reported in Sugar Creek, there has been several cases of black diphtheria. Also the scarlet fever is raging quite extensively. (Delavan Republican, March 27, 1889)

Millard - Mrs. Simeon Loomer was called to Hampton, Iowa, some two weeks since to help care for her mother, Mrs. Kingman, formerly a resident of this place, who was dangerously ill with pneumonia. Though still living at last report, they had very little or no hopes of her recovery. The family are indeed afflicted, Mr. Kingman being very feeble from the effects of a stroke of paralysis received some time ago.-----
-LATER--Since writing the above, word has been received here that Mrs. Kingman died Sunday morning at 10 o'clock. The remains, which will be brought to Millard for burial, are expected to reach here Tuesday morning, and the funeral service will be held at the Baptist church Tuesday afternoon.-----We are glad to learn that Ray Beach is improving. He lately spent three weeks in Chicago, taking treatment for that terrible disease, Sciatic rheumatism, from which he has been such a sufferer. (Delavan Republican, March 27, 1889)

Richmond - Mr. James McFarlane sails for Scotland April 24, to be gone several months.--

-----Clarence Knilans is just recovering from a severe attack of lagrippe.-----Mr. Thomas Cavaney was in Waukesha last week on business. (Delavan Enterprise, April 21, 1898)

Sharon - (from The Sharon Reporter, January 10, 1901) There were twenty-five burials in Oakwood cemetery during the year 1900. Below is a full list as furnished by the sexton, J. M. Phelps.

- Jan. 9 - Mrs. B. Patten
- Feb. 11 - Samuel Oleson
- Feb. 15 - Ole Simonson
- Feb. 26 - Luke Quackenbush
- Mar. 5 - A. Doolittle
- Mar. 11 - Mrs. Burgess
- April 3 - S. S. Blodgett
- April 11 - Mrs. J. Mereian
- April 12 - Mrs. J. A. Treat
- April 18 - Mrs. Morris Kizer
- Aporil 24 - Mrs. Nettie Meyers
- April 25 - Baby Bird
- May 18 - Willie Yates
- July 15 - Peter Milmine
- July 26 - Mrs. A. O. Conable
- Aug. 15 - Mrs. Burgett Banner
- Sept. 8 - Letta May Burns
- Sept. 14 - Thos. H. Dougall
- Oct. 6 - Betty Salisbury
- Oct. 7 - Lucien Waite
- Oct. 10 - Mrs. Harmon Vedder
- Oct. 27 - Geo. Stupfell
- Nov. 5 - Mrs. J. S. Burgett
- Nov. 6 - Mrs. Anna Schneider
- Dec. 20 - Mrs. Mary Sizer



Do You Know?

By Marilyn Traver

The Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, IN. has one of the largest genealogy collections in North America. It has surpassed one million items in its collection. In partnership with the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah, it also serves as a FamilySearch Center with access to 2.5 million microfilms covering over 100 countries.

This lovely library has completed a huge renovation project 5 years ago with open and moveable stacks, comfortable chairs, proper lighting and spacious areas making it “open” and “warm” and “usable”.

The librarians collectively have approximately 200 years genealogy research expertise and are on hand to help. They give tours, answer questions, help locate resources and offer research assistance, hold genealogy classes and workshops, and have events planned for each day of October in celebration of Family History Month. One of the popular services is their 30 minute one-on-one consultations, held monthly to help those in need of direction or struggling with a brick wall. For those who can't visit in person they are available by email or phone. For a small fee, researchers can request copies of articles, a quick search or research services. You also have digital access to Ancestry.com and Heritage Quest Online.com census records while there.

Although it focuses on North America it has very good resources on Western and Eastern Europe and the British Isles. Their online catalog can be accessed at www.genealogycenter.org. The Research guides are under the Pathfinders section.

Before making your trip, do a preliminary search online at their website and make note of what and where you want to look so as to save time. Check out the following: the orientation video, the brochure describing its collection, and finding links to visitor information and their blog for events, research tips and other news.

The Center has partnered with the Family History Books project (<https://books.familysearch.org>) and has a digital collection of over 40,000 genealogy and family history publications from the archives of several family history libraries.

A photo exchange program is for those who would like to share their photo collections of genealogy and historical materials. This is one way to safe guard your collection also. Contact the library at Genealogy@ACPL.Inf if you are interested.

The **Fred J. Reynolds Historical Genealogy Collection** is named after the head librarian who first organized the genealogy collection at the Allen County Public Library.

A person has access to millions of items in print, microtext, and also online through databases. The family history collection includes over 60,000 printed volumes of compiled genealogies.

The 1790-1930 census schedules, statewide alphabetical, and soundex indices, 1850-1880 mortality schedules are on microfilm along with other federal census records, state and territorial census records.

There are more than 55,000 printed volumes of R. L. Polk directories for cities throughout the United States, from 1961 to present. The Microtext records have 1785-1960 directories.

National Archives passenger lists and indices for 163 points of entry are on microfilm along with most printed immigration record sources. **Passenger and Immigration Lists Index** and **Germans to America, 1840-1879** are only a couple of many resource books available.

They also have an extensive military collection for every conflict from the Revolutionary War to the Philippine Insurrection along with most of the National Archives' microfilmed service and pension records.

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Microfiche records include Unit histories and soldiers' personal narratives from the Mexican-American War, Civil War, and Spanish-American War. The Confederate records from the state archives are on microfilm. There are WWI Draft registrations, casualty lists for the Korean War, Vietnam War, and Persian Gulf War along with unit histories for each conflict including the Iraq War.

Local history includes more than 265,000 printed volumes. **The American Genealogical-Biographical Index** and the **National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections** are some standard references, along with county and town histories, vital records, church and cemetery records, court, land probate, and naturalization records.

In microtext format are **The American Home Missionary Society Papers, 1816-184**, and the **American Missionary Association Manuscripts, 1839-1882**. These are only a couple resources. The Colonial newspapers from Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, major U.S. city newspapers from the 1800s and 1900s, and many other regional and national historical documents can be searched.

The U.S. Special Collections are in microtext format. The Native American resources include all Indian census schedules, 1885-1944 applications, and enrollment cards. Check out The Indian Pioneer History Collection and Index and American Indian periodicals.

Those researching their African American heritage can check the **African American Genealogy: A Bibliography and Guide to Sources**. Microtexts include series such as **Black Biographical Dictionaries 1790-1950**, **Records of Ante-Bellum Southern Plantations from the Revolution through the Civil War**, and **Records of Southern Plantations from Emancipation to the Great Migration**. Records from the Freedmen's Bureau, Freedmen's Savings & Trust Co., Freedmen's Aid Society, and Freedmen's Hospital are available along with the federal census slave schedules for 1850 and 1860.

The Canadian records include local histories, vital records indices, and parish registers. All Ontario Archives Land Record Indexes from the 1780s to 1914, Biographical Scrapbooks, Toronto 1911-1967

and Prince Edward Island Master Name Index from the 1700's – 1900s. Published censuses from 1666 to 1901 are available as well as passenger lists for Halifax from 1881-1919, and Quebec from 1865-1919.

There are more than 15,000 printed volumes for the British Isles. These include vital records, indices, early parish registers and the Victoria County History series.

Your German heritage can be researched with the help of guides, maps, emigration records and compiled genealogies. The Hamburg Direct Passenger Lists 1850-1900 with index shows the place of origin. German vital records can be found in the International Genealogical Index, and for a small fee, patrons who find microfilmed records in the Family History Library Catalog can request they be loaned to the Genealogy Center.

Access to 10 million sketches of more than five million individuals are available through the K.G. Saur's Biographical Archives.

To see everything they have available for research go to: www.genealogycenter.org.

(source: Family Chronicle/Jan/Feb 2013, Destination Fort Wayne)

If you change your email address, be sure to let us know. Just send an email to wcsnewsletter@gmail.com with your new email address. If your email box will not allow a large attachment and you need to receive your newsletter by mail, be sure we have your current address and you will receive a black and white copy.

Also, remember to check and clean your email box so you don't run out of space.

Are You Related To Me?

In this newsletter, the spotlight is on Sandy Stratmeyer.

1. How did you get interested in genealogy?

My immediate family was all pretty close and we had frequent gatherings including a large family picnic every summer with extended families. Someone had put together a family tree and I found it very interesting. My father and mother were lifetime residents of Walworth County, so I had a great deal of personal knowledge of the area. When I lived in Waukesha, a friend of mine and I attended a beginners workshop on genealogy held by the Waukesha County Genealogical Society. After taking the class, it was convenient to join, and I became an active member for several years until divorcing and coming to Janesville.

2. Names, places and date of ancestors.

My mother, Olive L. (Mitchell) Larsen (26 Jul 1921-24 Mar 2012) was born at the family homestead farm near East Troy. Her father, Oliver C. Mitchell (19 Feb 1897-5 Jul 1976) was born there, as was Oliver's father, Benjamin F. Mitchell (2 Jun 1869-25 Jan 1945). The farm house is still occupied by my mother's sister. Many of my Mitchell ancestors are buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery in East Troy. The farm was bought by my 2nd great grandfather, Edward Mitchell (26 Mar 1836-12 Jan 1929) and his wife, Sarah (Burton) Mitchell.

3. Names and places:

4. Burial areas:

Roselawn Cemetery, Town Delavan; Spring Grove, Delavan; Hickory Grove, Spring Prairie; Oak Ridge, East Troy; and St. Peter's Catholic Cemetery, East Troy

5. Any Vets in your family line?

My 2nd great grandfather served in the Civil War. Several of my father's brothers served in World War II. One uncle was a prisoner of war, and my great grandmother was a prisoner of war in Norway during World War II.

6. Have you visited the old homestead? Does it still exist today?

As above, my aunt and uncle still live on the Mitchell Farm in East Troy. We had many family get-togethers there throughout the years. My father's family moved around a bit and never really owned land of their own. I had my father take me to places they lived and I took pictures of them before he died, which I am grateful I did.

7. Anything interesting happen while researching?

I had been looking for my maternal grandmother's parents as no one in the family had much information about them. My grandmother, Julia Mitchell, was placed in an orphanage when young. With what information I did have, I did a bunch of researching at many Milwaukee area resource centers and ended up finding her death and burial and was able to actually visit her grave site (a goose bump moment). While perusing a Milwaukee newspaper trying to find her obituary, just by accident, I found a front page article about her being found dead at age 46 by her husband, and the children being placed in an orphanage. Continued research found the father to have remarried a few years later, but the children never saw him again. My research about him has met a dead end of late.

8. Any surprises in your research?

Not much. The usual family skeletons, but mostly even those were known to me. In doing my research via Ancestry.com, a man from Canada was looking at an interesting story involving my Norwegian roots and he took it upon himself to help me find several of my grandparents historical records in Norway and he also sent me a great deal of Internet resources to look into. He is someone who does research as a hobby. I also was contacted by a very distant cousin in Norway and I hope to get more information from her. With the Internet, it is amazing how much information I have been able to find compared to when I first started back in the 1990's and did it all by going places and sitting for hours at a microfiche machine.

9. Please contact WCGS to network with me.

We continue our study of the first elected officials in Walworth County.

Submitted by Marilyn Traver

Lake Geneva's First Mayor 1886

Just as now-a-days, things change as time moves on and Lake Geneva was no different. Chartered in 1844 the village's first president was Charles M. Goodsell. As the village grew, new charters were given. The village was incorporated in 1879 and in 1882 the village changed its name to Lake Geneva to avoid confusion due to the fact that 50 miles south there was another town named Geneva in Kane County, Illinois and they were getting each others mail.

On March 31, 1886 the citizens accepted a city charter and **John Bell Simmons** became the **first MAYOR** of Lake Geneva. Along with him was the City clerk Charles Herbert Burdick, City Treasure Thomas Baker Bray, and Justice of the peace Warren Beckwith. In 1897 Lake Geneva became a statutory city of the fourth class.

John B. Simmons was an ambitious man and a very prominent citizen in Lake Geneva and Racine. He was born at McHenry County, Illinois, October 26, 1851 and later his father James Simmons moved his family from there to Lake Geneva, Walworth County, Wisconsin. John went to the Elkhorn public schools. After graduating from high school he worked in the attorney office of his fathers, in Lake Geneva. John was admitted to the bar of the Circuit Court at Elkhorn in 1873 after acquiring much practical experience of the profession reading the law and working in his father's office.

John was Lake Geneva's town Clerk from 1874-85 and the Mayor in 1886. He continued working with his father until 1896 when John Simmons and Franklin J Tyerrel of Lake Geneva formed a partnership.

Mr. Simmons relocated at Racine upon the dissolution of this partnership in 1898. John was regarded one of the leaders of the bar in Racine, where he formed a partnership with H.A. Cooper and Peter B. Nelson, under the firm name of Cooper, Simmons &

Nelson. Later, after the retirement of Cooper and Nelson, the firm changed the name to Simmons & Walker with Mr. M. E. Walker being partner and they both enjoyed a large share of the business in the local courts and office practice at Racine. John served as the Commercial & Savings Bank attorney at Racine and had been involved in local affairs and always lend his influence to any civic improvement and movements of philanthropic or benevolent nature.

He married Miss Sarah B. Sturges in 1876, the daughter of George W. Sturges, one of the highly respected citizens of Lake Geneva. Mr. And Mrs. Simmons were the parents of 2 children, John E., a naval architect in Chicago, and Katherine S., the wife of Ralph W. Bailey, of Waupaca, Wisconsin.

"John B. Simmons has not only been one of the most successful lawyers, but has done important work as a contributor to legal literature. His name appears on the title page of a work entitled "Simmons' Wisconsin Digest" a large work of 3 volumes, which is to be found in almost every law office in the state. This work in its general plan followed the lines of a previous work executed by his father who was long known to the profession as the author of the first Wisconsin Digest of practical value. He exercised all the care and judgment of this legal mind in the course of its preparation of the volumes and they are now regarded as probably the most indispensable standard reference book on state decisions to be found in Wisconsin. The publishers of the digest are Callaghan & Company of Chicago."

(source: *Wisconsin, Its Story and Biography 1848-1913, Volume 5, By Ellis Baker Usher Pg 1168 and History of Walworth County, Wisconsin 1912*)

Our new board

At our December meeting, elections were held for president and treasurer. Interim vice-president, Mike Hay, became our new president. Deb Ketchum, past president, is our new treasurer. Pat Blackmer is the interim vice-president.



Our new board, left to right: Back row: Kay Sargent, secretary; Pat Blackmer, interim vice-president; Karen Weston, director; Mike Hay, president; Ila McErlean, director. Front row: Mary Jordan, director; Deb Ketchum, treasurer; Martha Hay, director.

Membership dues were due on December 31, 2012.

If you haven't yet paid, send a check to WCGS, P.O. Box 159, Delavan, WI 53115-0159 or you can pay online at:

<http://www.walworthcgs.com/membershipform-new.html>

If you aren't sure whether you have paid or not, contact Deb Ketchum at debgenvol@gmail.com or Ila McErlean at ila2mac@yahoo.com.

PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE BY WCGS

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Walworth Co. Probate Record Index - 1848-1930 | \$35.00 |
| CD in pdf and searchable | \$25.00 plus \$1.00 s/h |
| 1857 Walworth Co. Atlas - township maps and index | \$16.00 |
| 1873 Walworth Co. Atlas - maps & Index (soft cover reprint) | \$20.00 |
| Walworth Co. - Directory of Prairie Farmers & Breeders (soft cover reprint) | \$30.00 |
| 1882 Walworth County Index to History Book | \$30.00 |
| 1912 Walworth County Index to History Book | \$29.00 |
| Area Research Center UW-Whitewater Resource Guide | \$12.00 |
| Declaration & Naturalization Papers Vol I \$18.00 Vol 2 & 3 (combined) | \$15.00 |
| Walworth County Pre-1907 Death Index | \$22.00 |
| BLOOMFIELD - Hillside Cemetery- Genoa City | \$23.00 |
| DARIEN - Darien Cemetery | \$22.00 |
| DELAVAN - Delavan Area Cemeteries (Spring Grove, Old Settlers, St. Andrews, Arboretum and some church burials) | \$ 3.50 |
| East Delavan Union Cemetery | \$25.00 |
| History of Delavan School 1982 - index only | \$18.00 |
| EAST TROY - Oak Ridge Cemetery | \$18.00 |
| GENEVA - Lake Geneva Area Obituaries (updated through June 30, 2010) | \$25.00 |
| Pioneer Cemetery | \$15.00 |
| Union Cemetery- plus some Geneva/Lyons Townships | \$20.00 |
| LAFAYETTE - White Oak Cemetery | \$ 7.50 |
| Hartwell-Westville-Sugar Creek Lutheran Cemeteries (DVD tombstone pics included) | \$12.00 |
| LAGRANGE -LaGrange Pioneers (reprint of 3600 names, full index) | \$27.00 |
| LaGrange Township Cemeteries | \$10.00 |
| LYONS - Hudson/Lyons (Old Quaker) / Wija Farm Cemeteries (DVD tombstone pics included) | \$12.00 |
| St. Joseph & St. Killian Catholic Cemeteries (DVD tombstone pics included) | \$12.00 |
| RICHMOND - Richmond & East Richmond Cemeteries | \$10.00 |
| SHARON - Oakwood | \$15.00 |
| SPRING PRAIRIE - Hickory Grove | \$25.00 |
| German Settlement / Mount Hope / Diener Cemeteries (DVD tombstone pics included) | \$12.00 |
| SUGAR CREEK - Millard Cemetery | \$15.00 |
| Hazel Ridge Cemetery | \$20.00 |
| Mount Pleasant Cemetery (DVD tombstone pics included) | \$15.00 |
| Mount Olivet Catholic Cemetery (DVD tombstone pics included) | \$15.00 |
| TROY - Little Prairie | \$15.00 |
| WALWORTH - Walworth Center (Walworth Village listings) | \$20.00 |
| Brick Church Revised 2007 | \$20.00 |
| Cobblestone, WI/Bigfoot, IL (two different cemeteries in one book) | \$18.00 |
| WHITEWATER - St. Patrick's Calvary | \$15.00 |
| Hillside Cemetery | \$25.00 |
| Unknown Burials | \$18.00 |
| Index to the Annals of Whitewater | \$12.00 |

AA

Shipping and handling as follows: \$4.00 for the 1st book and \$2.00 for each additional
 To order these publications, circle the selection(s), make check payable to WCGS and mail to:
 WCGS, PO Box 159, Delavan, WI 53115.

Membership (Jan 1st- Dec 31st) is \$12 individual, \$15.00 family, \$7.00 student

NAME _____ email _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ SURNAMES _____

I do ___ or do not___ give my permission to have my information printed in any WCGS media.

WALWORTH COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

| | | | | |
|--|---|----------------------|---|---|
| PRESIDENT | Michael Hay | 455 Fellows Road | Genoa City, WI | societynews@walworthcgs.com wcgspres@gmail.com |
| VICE-PRESIDENT | Pat Blackmer | 2148 Horseshoe Lane | Delavan, WI | wcgsvpres@gmail.com |
| SECRETARY | Kay Sargent | W7489 Pleasant St. | Delavan, WI | wcgs04@yahoo.com |
| TREASURER | Deb Ketchum | 605 W. Walworth #201 | Elkhorn, WI | debgenvol@gmail.com |
| DIRECTOR(S) | Mary Jordan Karen Weston Ila McErlean Martha Hay | | Walworth, WI Whitewater, WI East Troy, WI Genoa City, WI | |
| OTHERS: Newsletter Editor: Martha Hay wcgsnewsletter@gmail.com | | | | |
| Past-President: Deb Ketchum | | | | |
| Historian: Pat Blackmer | | | | |

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 or 262-728-6182

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

****Dues are \$12 for an individual, \$15.00 for a family, \$25 contributing, \$7 student.

MEMBERS: Want email meeting minutes or not?? Contact Kay - wcgs04@yahoo.com

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

E-Mail us at societynews@walworthcgs.com

WALWORTH COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 159
DELAVAN, WI 53115-0159