

Walworth County Genealogical Society Newsletter

Volume 27 Issue 2

ISSN - 1008-5765

Mar-Apr 2018

Mission Statement-*The WCGS was organized for the purpose of bringing together family researchers who can network together and promote preservation of heirlooms and documents. Our goal is to help others find their ancestors, to educate them about genealogy, to copy cemeteries in the area and to stimulate interest in the county and genealogy.*

In the event a meeting is cancelled due to inclement weather, we will post a message on the website www.walworthcgs.com or call 262-723-9150.



Spring 2018 Meetings *(Changes from Jan Newsletter)*

April 3rd- 6:30pm -Delavan Community Center-
Delavan WI- "Writing Your Own Obituary" - Presented by Judy Rockwell, Judith Schultz-Tips and Techniques to consider

May 1st- 6:30pm-Delavan -We invite you to our annual "Bring a Friend" Meeting. The presentation will be "Getting Your House to Talk" -by Michael Rehberg

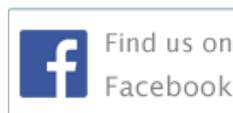
June 5 -6:00pm Elkhorn- Community Room at Matheson Library-DNA - by Michael Stumpff.

You can find additional info about future 2018 meeting agendas in Chris Brookes's comments.

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www.facebook.com/wcwgcs



A heartfelt welcome to new members Ronald and Julie Dorn from Burlington. We hope you enjoy spending time with us and are successful in your family search..



From the President's Desk



Chris Brookes & Martha Hay- WCGS Co-Presidents

Chris's Message:

Your Board of Directors met in March over banana cream and French silk pies. Ideas were popping – must have been the pie! We sketched out programs for the second half of the year, pending approvals and confirmations, so mark your calendars.

- August 7 – ice cream social and Genealogy Jeopardy by Karen Weston
- September 4 Annual Dinner – at 841 Brewhouse in Whitewater and (possibly a visit to the Whitewater Historical Museum)
- September TBA – Cemetery Walk in Whitewater
- October 2 – (pending) “They Can’t All Be Museums: Historic Preservation in Walworth County through Adaptive Use” program by Black Point Speaker’s Bureau
- November 6 – “Pre-Planning Your Funeral” by Andy Haase of Haase-Lockwood & Associates
- December 4 – traditional holiday party pot luck and Take Away Bingo

Lots of other ideas were proposed, and we’re still open to suggestions for the future. Our partnership with Matheson Memorial Library continues to grow as we have the opportunity to meet in the Community Room, which we will do again in June.

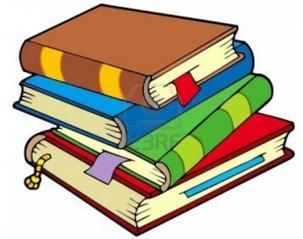
We hope to see you at the April 3 meeting “Writing Your Own Obituary” by Judy Rockwell and Judith Schulz in Delavan, and plan to Bring A Friend to the May 1 meeting featuring Michael Rehberg’s program about researching your house and property, “Getting Your House to Talk.”

Martha's co-comments:

Maybe Spring is in our future! I don't know about the rest of you, but this has been a hard winter for us. Between arthritis, the flu (and we DID get our Flu shots last September), and Mike's hip replacement we haven't had the energy to do much of anything. I'm starting to feel like the energy is coming back. 2018 is starting out well. We have gotten some new members already this year. Our bank account is finally at a level where we can bring in outside speakers for programs. We want to hear from you, the members, about programs you would like to see. We know that everybody has different aspects of genealogy that we want to learn more about, so it is important that you let the board know. Also, for those members who cannot attend meetings, drop us a line and let us know how things are going.



WCGS Library Page



LIBRARY REPORT

When you walk into the Mary Bray room you will notice a change. Selling our table and chairs gave us space for the Matheson Library's microfilm reader and file cabinet. Adding these pieces of equipment to our other resources has been a big improvement. Matheson has also moved their history books closer to the Mary Bray room.

At one time or another, researchers gravitate to the newspapers for family information, first and foremost being the obits. Both death notices and obituaries are found in the large cities newspapers; the smaller towns have obituaries which have only the notice of when the funeral is/was or, for a very active person, can give quite a detail of the deceased's life. These papers come out once a week, sometimes after the funeral. Obits aren't the only things one can find about their ancestors. Once I started listing what one could find, I was amazed myself at how valuable the newspapers are. They have newsworthy articles –good and bad. In the smaller towns the older newspapers have columns that the townships reporters give an itinerary of what is happening in their area. The papers have stories, politics, voting ballots, real estate records, court notices, articles of service men, weddings, births, and death notices, sports, school graduations with pictures, the list goes on and on. Don't forget to read the advertisements, just in case your ancestor owned a business. If there was a bad accident or fire listing any deaths sometimes there isn't an obituary. Once during my research I found the only notice of a death (in the 1800's) was the notice of real estate sale-there wasn't an obit. Also back in 1800's and early 1900's the newspapers were very graphic with their details even in accident reports.

The microfilm machine is now connected to the Matheson library printer downstairs. We need to get a password for that, but you can use a flash drive for free. There is a good source of microfilms available, briefly listed: Elkhorn Independent 1885-2006, Elkhorn Liberal Dec. 1873-1876, Elkhorn Blade 1891-1905, Wis. Misc. Paper D-E, the Independent TMC 1986-1988, The Week Walworth Co. 1991-1999, Time Magazine 1965-1982, State Census 1850, 1860, 1870, 1875, 1885, 1895, 1905, 1910, 1920, 1937; US Census 1850, 1880, 1810; NY, a few counties in 1850; NY, 1850; Ohio, 1850 & 1910; KTY and WPA (Projects of Wal. Co.) 1935-36-37. Any questions ask the library staff and we will be happy to help.

To contact any of the members:

Diana Bird - 815-943-3690 - leave a message if no answer.
birddiana1@gmail.com
Judy Rockwell - jjrockwell@gmail.com
Marilyn Traver - msearchin@gmail.com

They will be delighted to hear from you!



The Seipps of Black Point Estate

His, Her, and Their Stories: The Seipps

Michael Rehberg, Lead Interpreter of Black Point Estate & Gardens, will be presenting our WCGS program at the May 1 meeting, so that led me to writing about the four generations of the Seipp family who built and owned Black Point from 1888 to 2005.

According to *The Black Point Legacy*, Conrad Seipp was born in Langen, Germany in 1825, the youngest of six children. Conrad began “learning his father’s trade of carpentry and working the family farm with his brothers... Conrad was called into military service at the age of 20 and served as a body-guard for the Grand Duchess of Hessen when the rebellion (1848 German Revolution) began.” In 1849, he left Germany for America, settling in Rochester, NY, and working as a carpenter. He married Maria Josepha Teutsch, moved for a short time to Lyons, Illinois, and finally settled in Chicago. The 1850 census of Chicago shows Conrad married to Mary and living in the 4th Ward.

His first job was driving a beer wagon. Then he managed a hotel for five years, and in 1854, using the profits from the sale of the hotel, he purchased a small plant known as the M. Best Brewery. Unfortunately the following year the brewery was destroyed by fire. Undaunted, Conrad found a new location on the south side of Chicago and rebuilt a bigger and better brick plant, founding the Conrad Seipp Brewing Company. Its location saved it from the Great Chicago Fire in 1871.

Conrad and Maria had five children, two did not survive infancy. Unfortunately, Maria died of pneumonia at age 39 in 1866. Conrad realized the

need to remarry. Within a year, he met and married 26 year old Catharina Orb. Together they



had six children, five surviving to adulthood.

When Conrad was only 47 years old, 1872, the Seipp Brewery was the leading brewery in the United States, and 1879 the brewery was the largest in Chicago producing 108,347 barrels a year. Due to his financial success, Conrad was able to build two different mansions in Chicago, one for his first wife Maria in 1864, and another on South Michigan Avenue with Catharina in 1887. The same year this house was being completed, Conrad commissioned the same architect, Adolph Cudell, to design a summer home on Geneva Lake. The Seipps, as well as many other Chicagoans, took refuge in Geneva after the Fire, many staying at the premier resort, Kaye’s Park. When 28 acres of land became available on the south shore near Kaye’s Park, Conrad wasted no time acquiring it.

The Black Point summer “cottage” was completed in 1888 for about \$20,000. It included 13 bedrooms and only one bathroom. It sat on nearly eight acres of beautiful grounds that included 620 feet of undisturbed Geneva Lake shoreline. During the building process he moved much of the family’s furniture from the previous Chicago home into Black Point. Sadly, Conrad Seipp died in January of 1890, so he only enjoyed two summers in his Queen Anne style mansion on the lake.

After the death of the matriarch Catharina in 1920, eldest daughter Emma (Schmidt) inherited the estate. Brother Conrad, and sisters Clara (Bartholomay), Elsa (Madlener), and Alma (Hay) continued to enjoy the estate, as well as following their own pursuits and achieving many accomplishments. Alma Seipp Hay was the first woman in the family to attend college. Family members excelled at music, sailing, and horticulture.

In generation three, Emma Seipp Schmidt’s daughter Alma Schmidt Peterson served as president of Hull House from 1945-1952. Generation four found Alma Peterson’s son William O. Peterson deeding his great-grandfather’s Black Point estate to the State of Wisconsin, and it is now opened as one of 12 historic sites managed by the Wisconsin Historical Society. It’s well worth a visit this summer!



AROUND THE COUNTY TIDBITS

by Shirley Sisk

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Darien – Lilly Gilbert, next youngest daughter of John Gilbert, broke her arm last week by a fall upon the sidewalk, while returning from school. Dr. Rood set the bones and pronounces her doing well up to date.-----Johnny Harwood’s team went through the city one day last week, with the fore wheels to the wagon, having ran from home; no serious damage done.-----Burial services of the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Asher Johnson, held at the house last Saturday; we did not learn the particulars.-----Dr. Rood went down to Chicago and returned Saturday; we lacked the usual amount of impudence to ask him what for.-----The funeral services of Miss Anna Serl, youngest daughter of Oliver Serl, was held at the house, Saturday, March 7th at 11 o’clock a.m., Rev. Dr. Collie officiating. a large concourse of friends and relatives followed the remains to their last resting place in the Fairfield cemetery.-----That horse of I. W. Babcock’s must believe in baptism by immersion. He upset his owner the other day into a pool of water whose reputation for cleanliness must have been questionable, from the appearance of the driver.-----Again we have to record the death of another old and familiar name—Mrs. A. W. Bailey, wife of Samuel Bailey, a long and well known resident merchant of this place. The deceased died at her place of residence Saturday, March 7th at 11 o’clock a.m., with congestion of the lungs. (The Delavan Enterprise, Delavan, Wis., Wed., March 11, 1885)

Delavan – Miss Bright, of Milwaukee, has

been visiting her sister, Mrs. Frank Phoenix, the past week.-----Mrs. Chas. R. Neitzsch and little boy, of Missouri Valley, Iowa, are visiting at S. Brainard’s.-----Mrs. D. E. Halteman left Tuesday for Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to visit her daughters and son.-----C. Wolf returned last week from a four weeks trip to Chicago and Cincinnati.-----Miss Nettie Carrier, of Beloit, visited her sisters here over Sunday.-----Mrs. E. Latimer has nearly recovered from her recent illness.-----Dr. Cora Turner is quite sick.-----Mrs. Frank Squires, of Elkhorn, visited her mother, Mrs. C. S. Babcock, one day last week. (The Republican, Delavan, Wis. Thurs., May 31, 1894)

North Walworth – Emma Van Schaick is home from the Normal to spend the vacation.-----A flock of white swans have been seen about the lake for the past week. So far they have kept out of the reach of the hunters.-----Ira Hoag and family, of Lockport, N. Y., arrived here last Saturday and took possession of the farm where Mr. Freer has lived for some time past.-----H. Seeley sold his fine carriage team last week. We did not learn the exact figures, but it exceeded \$300.-----The Box Social last Wednesday eve was a grand success in every way. Proceeds almost three dollars.-----We are sorry to say that Mrs. George Clark is in very poor health. (Delavan Republican, Delavan, Wis., Wed., April 9, 1890)





NEW FEATURE! Member Stories to Share



We are excited to announce a new feature for our Newsletter! We know you all have unique family stories, and we would like to hear about a story you think others would find interesting. It doesn't have to be about someone famous or notorious, whatever you want to contribute is welcome. Please keep it short so I can get at least two to three on a page. Here are the first two quick tidbits, one from Karen Weston, and one from me. Your submissions are welcome, remember to keep them short. I know you like to tell family stories, we all do, so lets share!

From Karen Weston- Her husband has a relative named A.E. Weston that is a descendant of Richard Bland of Virginia who was a member of the 1st Continental Congress in 1774. The first Congress met from September 5 to October 1774, at Carpenters Hall in Philadelphia, PA. (Can you imagine sitting alongside John Adams, Samuel Adams, John Jay, Patrick Henry, and George Washington discussing the possibility of a 'rebellion'?) AE Weston's GGrandmother from Nottoway County VA was a direct Bland descendant. She lived through the Civil War and was married successively to brothers Anderson and George Miller, bearing six children to each.

From Peggy Schutt—Relatives on my maternal GGrandmother Elizabeth Wheeler's side were early settlers of Manteno and Joliet Ill. In Mound Cemetery in Joliet last summer I found a set of historical markers that named some relatives named Higginbotham that I had not been aware of . I discovered Harlow Niles Higginbotham, my 1st cousin 4th removed. Harlow was a partner in Marshall Field & Co, and served as President of the Chicago Columbian Exposition. He was instrumental in establishing the Chicago Field Museum and served as the President for over 10 years in the early part of the 20th Century. He was a world traveler, knew Abraham Lincoln, and was present on the occasion of the first meeting between Lincoln and General Ulysses Grant in the White House on March 8, 1864.

He lived to be 80 years old, and died in 1919 as a victim of a pedestrian/horse drawn ambulance collision on the streets of New York City. There is a published memoir and autobiography with extracts from speeches and letters of his, I sure would like to be able to sit down with him and chat for a while!

Origins of Old Sayings

from Karen Memory:

There is an old Hotel/Pub in Marble Arch, London, which used to have a gallows adjacent to it. Prisoners were taken to the gallows (after a fair trial of course) to be hanged. The horse-drawn dray, carting the prisoner, was accompanied by an armed guard, who would stop the dray outside the pub and ask the prisoner "ONE LAST DRINK?". If he said YES, it was referred to as ONE FOR THE ROAD. If he declined, that prisoner was ON THE WAGON.

So there you go

They used to use urine to tan animal skins, so families used to all pee in a pot and then once a day it was taken and sold to the tannery. If you had to do this to survive you were "piss poor", but worse than that were the really poor folk, who couldn't even afford to buy a pot, they "Didn't have a pot to piss in" and were the lowest of the low.

The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be.

Here are some facts about the 1500s: Most people got married in June, because they took their yearly bath in May and they still smelled pretty good by June. However, since they were starting to smell, brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water!"

Houses had thatched roofs, thick straw piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs."

There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom, where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence. The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying, "dirt poor." The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entrance. Hence: a thresh hold.

In those old days, they cooked in the kitchen with a big kettle that always hung over the fire. Every day they lit the fire and added things to the pot. They ate mostly vegetables and did not get much meat. They would eat the stew for dinner, leaving leftovers in the pot to get cold overnight, then start over the next day. Sometimes stew had food in it that had been there for quite a while. Hence the rhyme: "Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold, peas porridge in the pot, nine days old".

Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over they would hang up their bacon, to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could, "Bring home the bacon." They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around talking and "chew the fat".

Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning and death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or "The Upper Crust".

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of "Holding a Wake". England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people, so they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realized they had been burying people alive. So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, thread it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift) to listen for the bell; thus someone could be, "Saved by the Bell" or was considered a "Dead Ringer"

My Union Army Civil War Veteran Ancestor ROSELL S. MINER

A Story By
Gordon W. Struve

I travelled on a three-week family genealogy resource information gathering and ancestor burial ground visiting trip across northern Illinois State and Cedar Rapids, Iowa in September 2015. I realized after I returned home that I had missed crossing over into Wisconsin to the burial place of my American Civil War ancestor Rosell S. Miner. He is buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Sharon, Walworth County, Wisconsin.

I was pleased to find my five other Union Army Civil War veteran ancestor burial sites (that I visited at that time) all had headstones; either military markers or private stones with their military unit information indicated. I was dismayed to later learn that my veteran ancestor buried in Sharon, Wisconsin was not adorned with any marker whatsoever.

Rosell S. Miner was born on August 15, 1840 in Utica, Oneida County, New York. On September 13, 1861 he enlisted in Company C of the Wisconsin 13th Infantry Regiment; he mustered out on November 24, 1865 in San Antonio, Texas.

After the war he married Amanda O. Sutherland in Walworth County, Wisconsin on January 13, 1867. They lived in Walworth County until they appeared residing in Muskegon, Michigan in 1888.

Rosell was a charter member (December 1888) of John E. Gurley GAR Post #224 headquartered in Blanchardville, Lafayette County, Wisconsin. He was one of 12 charter members of this post.

In early summer time of 1910 Rosell and Amanda are found living with nephew Frank E. Stocking in Chicago, Illinois; Rosell was in poor health. He subsequently died there on July 23, 1910. He was buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Sharon, Wisconsin in a plot with Amanda's parents. There was no marker, but cemetery records had his burial location identified.

In August 2016 I travelled to Oakwood Cemetery and met with the cemetery sexton. She directed me to the site of Rosell's burial in the Stocking/Sutherland family plot. There was nothing to see except a flat grassy area. As she pointed to the head of Rosell's burial location, I placed a temporary grave marker and a GAR emblem. I then began the process of providing a military Veterans Administration-supplied grave stone.

I was directed to the office of a Veterans Administration service agent in nearby Elkhorn, Walworth County, Wisconsin who supplied me with the necessary documents for applying for a grave marker for Rosell. The new VA application form now requires that the grave stone be shipped to a grave monument/placement company. I drove to nearby Beloit, Wisconsin on the advice of the cemetery sexton to meet with a monument company owner there. They agreed to sign for the acceptance of the grave stone from the VA and place it at the cemetery upon receipt.



WALWORTH COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

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Library Committee: Diana Bird, Judy Rockwell, and Marilyn Traver				
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, phone 262-723-9150
other times by appt - call 262-279-6541

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

****Dues are \$15 (\$100 Lifetime) for an individual, \$18.00 (\$200 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 Marilyn Traver, msearchin@gmail.com

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

Email us at: societynews@walworthcgs.com

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WALWORTH COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY