



Walworth County Genealogical Society



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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.

REMINDER— If you order items on Amazon please choose WCGS as the recipient of a small percentage of your purchase being donated to us by Amazon. No cost to you, it is a free donation to us, thank you.

Spring 2019 Meetings



May 7—6:30pm— Delavan Community Centre

It is our annual Bring a Friend meeting, so please invite anyone that you wish to the meeting, the meeting will include a presentation on the Digital Estate.

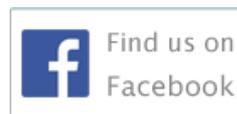
June 4th—6:30pm-Delavan Community Centre

The meeting will be discussing Wedding customs of our ancestors and displays of Wedding Finery of the past.

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www.facebook.com/wcwgcs



Welcome to our newest members:

Connie Johnson from AZ, Cathy Banks from IA, Gloria Ramirez from Elkhorn, and Christopher Neumann from OH. We welcome you all and hope your information searches ahead are successful, thank you for joining our WCGS family.

From the President's Desk



Karen Weston—2019 President WCGS

I've just returned from the Wisconsin State Genealogical Society's Spring Gene-a-Rama, so I want to talk about the importance of continuing education for genealogists. When we start researching our ancestors, we usually begin with the resources we have at home or can acquire easily. As we progress in our research, we run into questions that require deeper analysis and knowledge of more complicated resources. Learning those complex skills is the main purpose of continuing education via reading the genealogical literature, viewing webinars, and attending workshops and conferences.

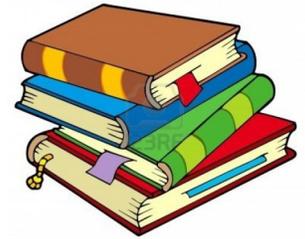
Access to the literature is relatively easy. You join a society that covers your location of interest and receive their publications. For example, my husband is from Virginia, so I joined the Virginia Genealogy Society and regularly scan their journal and newsletter for specialized Virginia research techniques and new sources of data. At a more theoretical level, the NEHGS and NGS journals offer models of successful research in difficult problems and excellent examples of how to properly evaluate and cite sources. I learned at Gene-a-Rama that though article access is not free, the index to PERSI (on Findmypast.com) is free and here in Wisconsin we have the Wisconsin Historical Society where many of the articles are available.

I am just learning about webinars myself. They provide a workshop at home; no need to travel and usually free. Members of WSGS have access to the Society's current and previous webinars through the Society webpage. There are many on You Tube. I can recommend the Genealogy Guys out of Tampa, Florida.

Conferences are not cheap and that is probably why many of us don't attend. However, conferences provide multiple tracks of instruction, dealers of genealogy books and supplies, various networking options, and, at many, a chance to talk to a professional about a brick wall problem. At Gene-a-Rama, the main speaker was Amy Johnson Crow, a professional genealogist from Ohio (AmyJohnsonCrow.com). Ms. Crow is known for her work on the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors Project and the NGS Research Guides. She gave very informative talks on the non-Federal population censuses, using social media for genealogical research, the non-population Federal censuses, and analysis verification. Other speakers dealt with church records, newspapers, the naturalization process and records, analyzing DND results, and using Google tools for research. These are all topics we need to deal with in our research and I strongly suggest attending conferences when you can. You might consider the German Interest Group's annual conference in Janesville this summer or the fall WSGS meeting in Manitowoc where the speaker will be Lois Mackin.

Conferences can fun and are always interesting! Karen

WCGS Library Page



Library Report: Society of Mayflower Descendants “Silver Books” at WCGS Library
On April 16, Dr. William Hopkins, Governor of Wisconsin Society of Mayflower Descendants, presented a 24-volume set of *Mayflower Families Through Five Generations* “Silver Books” to the Walworth County Genealogical Society Library.

Families of these Mayflower passengers that are covered in the Silver Books: John Alden, Isaac Allerton, John Billington, William Bradford, Peter Brown, William Brewster, James Chilton, Francis Cooke, Edward Doty, Francis Eaton, Edward Fuller, Samuel Fuller, Stephen Hopkins, John Howland, Degory Priest, Thomas Rogers, Henry Sampson, George Soule, Myles Standish, Richard Warren, William White, and Edward Winslow

Known as the "Silver Books" because of their silver covers, the *Mayflower Families Through Five Generations* series from the General Society of Mayflower Descendants meticulously documents the first five generations of descendants of Mayflower passengers who arrived in 1620. The aim of the project which started in 1959 is to bridge the research gap between Plymouth Colony's beginnings and Revolutionary times for researchers, to present documentation from primary sources, and to make the material available to the general public. Some of these primary sources include wills and typescripts of wills, bonds and typescripts of bonds, and land divisions. They include about 150,000 birth, marriage, death and deed records. Each book also includes a Bibliography and Every Name Index. The "Silver Books" and the associated Mayflower Families in Process "pink" pamphlets are the only officially sanctioned source for approved lineages.



This wonderful resource is now available for use by anyone visiting the WCGS library. If you are, or suspect you might be a Mayflower descendant, stop in on Tuesdays from 10 to 3 or the 3rd Saturday of each month and we will do our best to help.

To contact any of the members:

Diana Bird - 815-943-3690

birddiana1@gmail.com

Judy Rockwell - jjrockwell@gmail.com

Marilyn Traver - msearchin@gmail.com





Joseph Philbrick Webster

By Chris Brookes

While I was writing up information on the April 2 program, Why Do They Call It That?, I began thinking about other familiar names around the county. During the program we'll learn about Edward C. Delavan, Lewis F. Linn, Rueben J. Walworth, and more. Here's another name to ponder - Joseph P. Webster?

With the permission of the Walworth County Historical Society, I'm reprinting the article which appears on their website <http://www.walcohistory.org/>
Joseph P. Webster



Just 19 years after the original town of Elkhorn was officially formed, Joseph Philbrick Webster arrived in the settlement of Elkhorn in 1857. With him came his wife Joanna and their four children, Joseph, Mary, Louis, and Beethoven. They had traveled from their home in Madison, Indiana, to Elkhorn. Webster was born in 1819 in Manchester, NH and later traveled to Boston, Mass., in 1840, already pursuing a music career. He then traveled to New York and Madison, Indiana. While in Indiana he accompanied the famous Jenny Lind at the piano. Webster then traveled to Racine. It has been said while living in Racine Webster developed "Lake Michigan Throat". The condition, also known as bronchitis, forced Webster to move away from the lake and on to Elkhorn. It was this same condition which forced him to abandon his singing career and turn instead to writing music.

The year the Webster's moved to Elkhorn, 1857, Elkhorn boasted 220 dwellings with 1,500 residents. The onset of the Civil War several years later slowed the population boom enjoyed by the fair residents of Elkhorn but offered even more material from which Webster could draw from as he composed hundreds of war time songs during this period.

Within one year of settling in the bustling community Webster would compose the first of over 1,000 songs. Two of those songs would bring great fame to Webster and the town he now called home. "Lorena" was considered second in popularity, following only Stephen Foster "Swanee River." It is said "Lorena" was a favorite sung by Confederate and Union soldiers alike, during the Civil War.

Almost 100 years later the song would be featured in the 1939 Civil War epic, "Gone with the Wind." A complete 49 second playing of the song is part of the movies' musical score.

During the Civil War (1861-1865) Webster taught and composed a variety of war songs. He also served as a drill sergeant for the Elkhorn "Wide Awakes" soldiers who composed the home guard.
(continued on p. 5)

(Continued from page 4)

As the Civil War came slowly to an end, Webster returned to writing ballads. He also became proprietor of what was considered a "respectable saloon" which attracted young literary men of the town.

One of these "literary men" was Samuel Fillimore Bennett, who operated an Elkhorn drug-store while he studied medicine. According to museum records, one winter day in 1867, "Bennett looked up from the counter and saw Webster, violin and bow tucked under his arm, stride into the store. Recognizing that his friend was in a dark mood. Bennett asked what troubled him. Webster looked at Bennett, shrugged and said, "It is not important. It will be all right "in the sweet by and by."

Dr. Bennett wrote in later years in papers displayed at the museum, "It came to me like a flash that this might be an idea for a song and told him. The words came like a revelation. It was not I who wrote but something within me."

It is said Webster "began humming, drumming his fingers on the desk, composing music in his mind while he looked over Bennett's shoulder."

Webster is said to have taken the paper with the words written on it and without a word, lifted his bow to his violin.

"A lovely melody wove its way across the small store, into the hearts of the three men standing by," Dr. Bennett wrote. These men were the first to hear "In the Sweet By and By," which is still sung by people all over the world. The famous hymn has been published in sheet music, Sunday School books and in the hymnals of many denominations. It has also been translated into other languages.

Webster's home is now the home of Walworth County Historical Society.

Throughout the years the Society has reclaimed many of Webster's possessions which had been scattered after his death. The museum boasts thousands of Civil War era antiques and unique items.

Among the items now displayed in the museum are family portraits, tea set, his elaborate rosewood piano, his violin and his favorite sitting chair, a unique piece with high side wings.

It is said Webster liked his chair because it kept him warm during the brutal months of winter. Another prize possession is the scrap of paper upon which Webster wrote the lyrics to the song, "In the Sweet By and By."

Webster lived in their Elkhorn home until his death on January 18, 1875, at the age of 56. He is buried at the Hazel Ridge Cemetery in Elkhorn. A bronze plate attached to the large granite boulder marking his grave reads, "Joseph P. Webster. In the Sweet By and By We Shall Meet."

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AROUND THE COUNTY TIDBITS

by Shirley Sisk

Note: Punctuations and spellings are as listed in the newspaper.

Millard – Fred Harrison is building a new hog house, which all farmers need.-----There was a mistake in the report last week about Harry Weaver being married. We should have said he expected to be if he lived long enough, as he is drawing near marriageable age.-----Rev. E. Packer, pastor of the Millard Baptist church, attended the Baptist State Convention in Beloit last week and gave some good reports of the convention at the Sunday morning's services.-----Miss Amanda Monnis gave a peanut hunt to her primary class, last Saturday afternoon, from three until 5 o'clock at Mrs. Webb's; the peanuts were placed in a room, in every possible place. After the little ones had played several games on the lawn with their teacher they were invited in to search for the peanuts and after they found all they could, they were counted. Rilla Lamon had the most and she was presented with a nice box of stationery. Earl Thomas having the least, was given a little flute; they were treated to candy and grapes, which was pleasing to the little folks. (Delavan Republican, Thursday, October 13, 1898)

Delavan – Delavan's business men, who have been engaged in the mercantile business for many years are numerous. It is certainly an indication of our splendid advantages as a tradiEge, tailor; M. Gavett, clothier; K. N. Hollister, groceries and hardware; G. H. Briggs, druggist; H. R. Doane; druggist; James H. Camp, druggist; C. W. Irish, grocery; T. J. Smith ____?; John Allott, city meat market; Miss S. Sharp, Millinery; Mrs. E. Hollister, millinery; H. H. Williams, jeweler; Shulz, harness shop; Topping & Co., dry goods. (Delavan Republican, Wednesday, April 24, 1889) ng center that we can show so many who have remained and grown prosperous in our midst. Among the old established firms, that of W. M. & E.

Wells takes precedent, being the oldest established business in Walworth county. Among others who have been engaged in business for over ten years are W. W. Bradley, dry goods; J. H. Goodrich, general merchandise; Thos.

Walworth – Mrs. W. E. McElwain is the regular Walworth correspondent for the ENTERPRISE. Call up telephone 104 when you have news of interest to the community.-Thos. Barnes, one of the pioneer residents of Walworth county and father of Fred Barnes, died Monday. Edith Hobart was teated to a party on her fifth birthday anniversary, Monday afternoon, about a dozen of her little friends gathering at her home. The little two year old child of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Robinson is very ill with pneumonia and a trained nurse is attending her.-Miss Lidabell Stupfel, who has been very ill with quinsy, is able to sit up. (Delavan Enterprise, Thursday, January 30, 1913)

Delavan – Personals - Mrs. W. E. Richardson, of Duluth, Minn., is visiting for a short time at the home of her father, Dr. F. L. von Suessmilch.--Geo. Bedell, who is now doing pattern work for the Beloit Iron Works, was calling on Delavan friends last Saturday afternoon. P. Crofoot, who has been employed by Ingham & Moore for some time, has moved his family from Delavan and will occupy Frank Stewart's cottage on Dodge street.- James J. Wheeler, of New York, is visiting his brother, A. E. Wheeler.-----E. W. Richards returned Saturday from Central Kansas. -----Frank Ege returned Saturday from Omaha.-----Shepley Sturtevant, of Chicago, arrived in Delavan Friday evening, remaining until Monday. Shep has a splendid position with Marshall, field & Co. (Delavan Republican, Wednesday, April 24, 1889)

March and April 2019 WCGS Meetings

The **March 5th** WCGS meeting was held at Elkhorn in the Matheson Library community Room. The presentation was given by David Desimone, the director of Black Point Estate in Lake Geneva. The program is titled **“The Great War: Anti-German Hysteria and Conflict at Home”**. Given Wisconsin’s large German-American population, anti-German hysteria had a significant impact on our state. In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the end of the war to end all wars, the program showed us the national, regional, local and personal responses to the outbreak of war in 1914 and subsequent US involvement in 1917. David noted the German population in WI was 600,000, or 1 in 3 citizens. Women working in the workforce to replace gone to war led into the 1920 Voting act for Women. Personal stories of the time involved a fear of being kidnapped into the German military for people who were still German citizens, or risk going to jail. The program was well attended by approximately 40 people. It was very informative and well received, thank you David.

The **April 2nd** meeting was held at the Delavan Community Center, given by Michael Rehberg and titled **“Why Do We Call It That?”** .

Michael Rehberg is Lead Interpreter at Black Point Estate & Gardens, the Wisconsin Historical Society's historic house museum in Lake Geneva. He gives presentations that bring history into the community. Rehberg is a year-round resident of Walworth County, with a home on the south shore of Lake Como. He earned his BA and MBA degrees from UW-Madison and earned a Certificate in Non-Profit Leadership from UW-Parkside. Rehberg was the project manager for developing Lake Geneva’s walking tours, in collaboration with the Geneva Lake Museum and Lake Geneva Historic Preservation Commission. He is active in local history, genealogy, and historic preservation groups.

From Duck Lake to Lake Como and Bigfoot Lake to Geneva Lake, this program explained how and why key places in our local area got their names. We Learned the answers to questions like: Who was Edward C. Delavan, Lewis F. Linn, Rueben J. Walworth? Where was the town called Hudson? What happened to West Troy? The presentation was very lively, informative, humorous at times and very entertaining, thank you Michael.



Member Stories

Cemetery Adventures!

One day when I first started researching, I decided to go to my gr-grandfathers cemetery and leave some flowers there. I took pictures and cleaned the stones the best I could. When I was ready to leave, I saluted him, telling him I didn't know if he knew who I was but that I was his gr-granddaughter and I would be back later. Then I walked back to my van and when I got halfway I felt a slight breeze across the back of my neck. I turned and looked around wondering where the breeze came from. I noticed at his grave site the little flag was fully waving. I looked at the trees and grass and NOT a leaf nor blade of grass was moving. It was the hottest day of the month, on July 4th, 2000. Was he acknowledging me? What caused the flag (he was a Civil War vet) to wave when there wasn't a breeze of any kind? You decide.

I definitely felt a sense of peace at that moment. When I told my brother and his wife what happened, they laughed at me. I've learned that only other genealogists will understand and not laugh at unusual stuff happening when researching. This is only one of many times unusual things have happened when I was at the cemeteries. I look forward to going to a cemetery I've never been to and going to the area where I think they might be and asking the person I'm looking for to tell me where they are placed. Waiting a few moments, being silent and listening, I will walk right to the area where they at. Love it!

Marilyn Traver

Young Citizens League in South Dakota

The Young Citizens League, YCL, was a club with the goal of improving citizenship and character education in rural schools in South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Colorado, and Kansas from the 1920s until the 1970s. Each school had a chapter, and in 1941 there were 7,500 chapters in these states. The YCL motto was "Help Uncle Sam".

At Wilson School in Bear Butte Valley where I went to all 8 grades, we started the day with the Pledge of Allegiance and then the YCL Pledge: *I hereby pledge my active devotion to my country by a study of its ideals and by a constant interest in the general welfare of my state and nation. I shall strive to do something each day to improve the standard of my home, my school, and my community, and thereby endeavor to promote better citizenship.* Then we sang the YCL March.

At the beginning of each school year officers were elected, and we had weekly meetings following Roberts Rules of Order. Duties such as raising the flag, bringing in water from the pump, cleaning blackboards and erasers were rotated every week, so everyone had a chance at the fun and not so fun jobs. We also did fund raising for projects at the school. One year we had a box social and dance at the local hall for the whole community. With Mom's help I decorated a shoe box and filled it with sandwiches and cookies. Of course, my Dad bought my box! Each year there was a state theme for projects. When I was in 7th grade the theme was Conservation of Natural Resources and Wildlife. In 8th grade it was Pioneer Life in South Dakota 1858-1900. Students in each school would do scrapbooks, art work, essays and speeches on these subjects.

In the spring, YCL chapters in each county met in the county seat for a convention where officers and delegates to the state convention were chosen. In 1955 I was chosen as Meade County vice president and as a delegate to the 26th annual South Dakota state YCL Convention in Pierre, the state capitol. Pete Richardson was chosen as president and Dixie Crowser and one other girl were also officers and delegates. The four of us rode with Meade County Superintendent of Schools, Marion Middlebrook, and her husband to Pierre where we joined about 500 other South Dakota students. We stayed in a wonderful old hotel near the capitol building and attended sessions in the House Chambers. Badger Clark, South Dakota's poet laureate, was one of our speakers. At the banquet next to our names were small ceramic South Dakota birds. Mine was a pheasant that I still have! It was a great experience for a girl who had not been away from home before except with family. My youngest brother also attended the state convention in 1964.

Being a Student at a Country School—By Diana Bird

Growing up on a Racine Country dairy farm meant our school was just down our gravel road. I started in first grade (no kindergarten offered) and attended Pleasant Lawn School, (pointed out to me, not that long ago, that this name sounds like a cemetery!). I went to this one room school for first and second grades, then another room was added and the 2nd teacher came dividing the School 1st the 4th and 5th thru 8th. I attended here until March 1st of fifth grade then a move by our family to Illinois, (Farmers moved on March 1st). We walked, rode bikes, and in bad weather mom would take us.

The first 2 years of school was the one room with one teacher who taught every grade every subject. She was the one who cleaned, planned, disciplined, and doctored to the nearly 30 students. She was the only adult all day with all the responsibility to get the job done. A couple of years we had a woman who came once a week to teach music. I never knew her name, but the big boys always called her Mrs. Loopty Loo. I remember we had to dance, play rhythm band instruments, and sing songs.

The school had the look of a typical classroom, with windows on one side, blackboards on the opposite wall, and in back were bulletin boards and the piano. In front was the teachers' desk, on the side a row of maybe 5 chairs that faced the front blackboard for lessons, and a set of pull down shade-like maps mounted over the blackboard. The desks were individual with lift-up tops, and every fall someone's dad would come in and adjust the height of the seat or desktop for the best fit. There was a small storage room with a refrigerator for the milk. The hall ways had a "bubbler", hooks for coats and a shelf above for lunch pails, gloves and hats. Wish I had my lunchbox now; it was a Roy Rogers and Dale Evans with a thermos bottle. We ate our lunch sitting at our desks or outside, and we sometimes swapped lunch items and save the wax paper from sandwiches to wax the slide by the swing set. Milk was delivered early every morning. In winter sometimes the milk, which was in glass bottles with a paper cap, was still frozen at lunchtime. I know it cost 3 cents, and one time one of the mean kids took my money, boy was my mom mad.

Every fall a photographer would come and take a group picture including the teacher for parents to buy. By 3rd grade, individual pictures were taken and a composite picture with everyone was made and we had small pictures to trade with our friends and send to relatives, I still have these pictures.

Country School cont.:



The usual subjects were taught: reading, arithmetic, science, social studies, geography, penmanship, and spelling. In first grade we spent most of the time coloring, cutting and pasting. The paste came in big tubs, mint flavored, most kids ate it...if you did a nice job or 100% right on a spelling test you'd get a small star stuck on your paper. So simple, but it made me do my best, doubt that would work in today's schools as an incentive. There was a mimeograph machine for making copies, the ink was a great smell. As we did our work at our desk, we also learned as we watched older kids do work on the board. We also had film strips to watch and moved at holidays. Splicing those film strips was an art and got us extended time out of class as we waited.

Lots of learning took place during recess also. We had 3 recesses a day, and everybody was out at the same time. Rarely did the teacher come out so this was a time of learning the "pecking" order. Bullying, teasing, know-it-alls, and name calling were typical, the usual characters at a school. There were a couple of swings, teeter-totters, a slide and a jungle gym. The school yard was about an acre and was grass with a gravel driveway. Kids played baseball, kickball, climbed trees, climbed along the top pole of the swingset and played games where choosing sides was a learning experience, you didn't want to be chosen last. We played redlight greenlight, statue, the dreaded red rover, duck duck goose and made snow angels. In winter someone's dad would plow the snow into huge piles and then it was king of the hill, snowball fights, and making snow forts. In rainy weather we stayed inside and danced the hokey pokey or played games on the blackboard. We were always allowed to go outside, wind chill had not been invented yet and neither really warm clothes, but we had boots that you put your shoe into and buckle up. Getting into those boots was too hard for young kids and the teacher must have spent hours unbuckling those frozen snow packed boots. As we waited in line for the teacher to help us, our hands were so cold we could not feel our fingers, they were useless for the next half hour! (To be continued in next WCGS newsletter!)

WALWORTH COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

PRESIDENT	Karen Weston	9601 N. Kyle Dr.	Whitewater, WI	wcgspres@gmail.com
VICE-PRESIDENT	Judy Rockwell	N6619 Grove Rd	Elkhorn, WI	wcgsvpres@gmail.com
SECRETARY	Marilyn Traver	473 E. Geneva St Lot 10	Elkhorn, WI	msearchin@gmail.com
TREASURER	Martha Hay	455 Fellows Road	Genoa City, WI	wcgstreasurerwi@gmail.com
DIRECTOR(S)	Diana Bird Karen Helwig Linda West Dolores Schutt		Harvard, IL Whitewater, WI Lake Geneva, WI Clinton, WI	
OTHERS:	Newsletter Editor: Peggy Schutt wcsnewsletter@gmail.com 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

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