



# Dane County Area Genealogical Society News

May 31, 2007  
Volume 1, Issue 9

## Gravestone Symbols: Identifying What They Mean at June 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting

Join Pat Skubis at the June 7<sup>th</sup> program on grave or tombstone symbols and their meanings. The program was inspired by a request from Shirley Levine. When Pat first started investigating this topic, she admitted that she knew little about tombstones other than they came in different sizes and shapes. She googled, "tombstone symbols" Wow!! Like one of our members stated after viewing the PBS special on this topic, "I now look at cemeteries in a totally different manner."

Searching for tombstones inspired Pat's interest in genealogy. Thirty-nine years ago her Aunt Florence said, "I think your great grandmother is buried in Red Wing, Minnesota." So on her

way back to Madison from Minneapolis, she stopped in Red Wing to look for her grave. The cemetery was situated on the bluffs that line the Upper Mississippi Valley. She did not find the tombstone, but was able to locate the Swedish Lutheran Church her father's family had attended and by contacting them verified the family's bible records.

Visiting graveyards over the years has provided many humorous and memorable experiences. She can still see her husband wandering through Resurrection Cemetery, calling out, "Grandma, Grandpa where are you?" as they searched among the look-alike tombstones.

Preparing for this presentation exposed her to the beauty and art that can be found in your local "old" graveyard. It also made me aware of the different military markings and the recently resolved controversy over the use of the Wiccan symbol. The different military symbols would be a program in itself.

It is a shame that most new cemeteries only allow flat boring stones. Hopefully the beautiful stones you will see in this presentation will last far in to the future.

Please join us at the June 7<sup>th</sup>, meeting at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints located at 4505 Regent, Madison, beginning at 7 p.m.

## Mark your calendars for July 12!

The DCAGS will be visiting the Dane County Historical Society at the Lussier Family Heritage Center at Lake Farm County Park on Thursday, July 12 from 5 to 8 p.m. (The meeting will be on the 12<sup>th</sup> to avoid a conflict with the July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday.

Members are encouraged to bring a picnic at 5:00 p.m. We can either eat inside or outside depending on the weather. (The room is air conditioned.)

Beginning at 6:30 p.m. Debbie Kmetz, the cataloguing coordinator of

the Dane County Historical Society, will show a sampling from the various collections – post office records, 4-H Club and Homemakers' Club records and student newspapers from Central High students in Madison.

Join us for an enjoyable and informative evening.

**Regular DCAGS meetings are the first Thursday of each month at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints located at 4505 Regent, Madison, Wisconsin beginning at 7 p.m.**

\*\*\*\*\*

### DCAGS Update:

*The DCAGS Governing Board meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month. The next meeting is on Monday, June 18 at 6:30 p.m. at the South Park Library, 2222 Park St. We invite all members to attend. Please join us!*

### Individual Highlights:

President's Message – 4

Fitchburg Cemetery Tour – 6

Max Kade and NAGC - 2

Upcoming Events– 5

80 million Records online – 7

Puzzle of the Month – 2

Remembering a Pioneer - 5

Ancestry.com free offer – 7

## *The Max Kade Institute and the Norwegian American Genealogy Center Reviewed*

Madison offers genealogists some unique resources. We heard from two unique places at DCAGS's May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

First, we heard about the Max Kade Institute from Kevin Kurdylo, Librarian & Archivist there. The Max Kade Institute (MKI) is part of the College of Letters and Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Kevin is part of an administrative staff which also includes a Director, Assistant Director, clerical staff and numerous graduate and undergraduate students as well as volunteer help.

The Institute is named after Dr. Max Kade (1882-1967). After emigrating from Schwäbisch Hall, Germany to New York City in 1905, he became successful and well known in the pharmaceutical industry. Dr. Kade established a foundation in New York to promote scientific and technical progress and to further the peaceful coexistence of nations. He was also

committed to advancing German-American relations. The initial grant to found Madison's Max Kade Institute was made by the President of the Max Kade Foundation of New York, the late Dr. Erich Markel, in 1983.

MKI's mission is twofold: first, scholarly research and documentation; and second, outreach to a broader audience. Ongoing research involves faculty and students from many departments examining how German-speaking immigrants and their descendants have both shaped their North American environment and been shaped by it. Outreach efforts center on bringing a better understanding of issues of German-American immigration, history, culture, and language to a general public as well as to school children. It is not a genealogy research center, but has several resources valuable for genealogists.

MKI has been

collecting items on German immigration. The library of the MKI includes more than 2600 books, pamphlets, and periodicals in the German language published in America, and/or by German-American authors, ranging from cookbooks and religious works to family records, historical texts, and literature, as well as books, pamphlets, and articles essential to research in this field. Such materials are significant in helping understand the experiences, histories, and culture of one large group of immigrants to North America.

Kevin asked, "Why do we research our ancestors?" We do it to learn about where they came from and thus learn who we are. We also learn about German-American history and to celebrate the immigrant experience.

For genealogists MKI offers the following:

*Continued on page 3*

---

***Puzzle of the Month*** is a new feature. It is a great way to share what we know. A member may submit (on a 4 x 6 card) a basic puzzle and give it to a program committee member. At each meeting a new puzzle will be announced and any member can offer direction, an answer or you can bring the info to the next meeting. Each puzzle of the month will be printed in this newsletter as well as the answer/solution to last month's puzzle. Everybody learns!

### *Puzzle of the Month*

On the question from last month, relating to "What do I need to do to preserve my family history?"

Several people recommended saving family histories on CD's

or another back up system and placing copies in a safety deposit box.

This month's question is "If an ancestor was buried in a church cemetery, would

the interment necessarily be noted in the church records?"

If you have a suggestion or idea, bring it to the June 7th meeting

## MKI and NAGC cont.

- A collection of more than 325 family histories, diaries, and manuscripts of German-speaking immigrants and descendants;
- More than 30 current journals or newsletters on the subject of German-American studies or genealogy.

MKI does accept donations from individuals. Kevin told us of the contribution by DCAGS member Joyce Nigbor, who brought in letters written in German by her civil war ancestor.

Kevin also showed us publications that were used to recruit Germans to come to America, including a map of Wisconsin/Michigan from 1846. There was also a handbook of what Wisconsin offers to immigrants.

Genealogists can come to MKI to look over materials but individual help must be done by appointment only. Fees are charged for translations and individual genealogical assistance. Within the collection there are gazeteers, which allow genealogists to determine the present-day location of an immigrant's town or city of origin, for which relevant archive information can then be obtained. There are also detailed maps from German-speaking areas, including much of Pomerania, available for use by patrons.

Kevin spoke of a few interesting resources at MKI.

- Letters of the Frautschi Family, Swiss immigrants

who settled in Wisconsin, and Christian Frautschi's diaries, are available online, <http://csumc.wisc.edu/FLVA/FLVAhomed.html>.

- Wisconsin Mosaic, which looks at what Wisconsin and Germany were like in the same time frame.
- North American German Dialect Archive. A collection of several thousand hours of sound recordings of immigrant German dialects back to the 1940s.
- American Languages Our Nation's Many Voices Online, which currently features sound clips from Wisconsin German Dialects, Pennsylvania Dutch and Texas German

The MKI is housed in the "Keystone House," a historical stone-and-wood dwelling situated at the west edge of the campus, 901 University Bay Drive, Madison, WI 53705, (608) 262-7546, fax: (608) 265-4640. The hours of operation are from 9-4 p.m. Monday through Friday. MKI's website is <http://csumc.wisc.edu/mki/index.htm>.

From Germany we moved to Norway and the Norwegian American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library. Jerry Paulson, Director of Genealogical Research, provided us with background information on the Center and the resources in the Library. NAGC was organized in 1974 to stimulate interest in and promote the study of Norwegian-American Genealogy. Professor Gerhard

Naeseth, who was internationally renowned in the field of Norwegian genealogy, assembled the core of the collection. The mission of NAGC is to provide a unique facility in which to research, collect, preserve and interpret resources relating to Norwegian and Norwegian-American genealogy. NAGC provides trained staff to assist, interpret and educate patrons and correspondents. It also offers continuing education and outreach for genealogists and other interested parties worldwide through cooperative information exchanges, publications, tours, displays, seminars, resource lending programs and merchandise sales.

NAGC holds one of the world's largest collections of materials relating to Norwegian immigration and Norwegian family history. It includes:

- Norwegian parish records (dating from the 17th century to the 20th century) that provide information about baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials and emigrations
- Over 800 Norwegian local histories (known as *bygdebøker*)
- Over 3000 family histories
- Norwegian census records from 1801, 1865, 1875 and 1900
- Transcripts of more than 1,000 American cemetery records and a collection of 180,000 obituary files
- Some North American port records

*Continued on page 4*

## *MKI and NAGC cont.*

- American Lutheran Church records
- U.S. Norwegian-American Transcripts of U.S. Census Records and Passenger Lists.
- Card Indexes of U.S. Census Records
- Emigration Lists

Jerry said NAGC is looking for volunteers to help at the Center and Library.

NAGC is located at 415 W. Main St. in Madison, WI. All are welcome to browse the collection during regular business hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 10am - 5pm and Wednesday 10am - 8pm. Please call in advance for an appointment if research assistance is required: (608) 255-2224

The NAGC is a private, non-profit organization and

therefore charges research fees. Members may use the facility at no charge. In-depth research help for members is \$20 per hour. Non-members pay a daily \$10 use fee. In-depth research help for non-members is \$30 per hour.

Those who are unable to come to Madison may write requesting genealogical research by our professional researchers. The price of mail research for members is \$20 per hour plus \$.25 per copy. For non-members, mail research is \$30 per hour plus \$.25 per copy. You may request as many research hours as you wish. Pre-payment of \$50 from members and \$70 from non-members is required, which must accompany a mail research request.

Jerry handed out a

flyer with upcoming genealogy classes. Jerry Paulson will be teaching *Beginning Norwegian Genealogy* on September 17-18, 2007. The cost is \$112/member, \$132/non-member. There is also a *Personalized Advanced Genealogy* class that is offered by arrangement with Genealogy staff. It is a two-day intensive session for individuals who have begun their family projects. The cost is \$200/member, \$230/non-member.

For additional information visit their website at <http://www.nagcnl.org/index.html>.

Members had lots of interesting questions for the two speakers. Madison is very lucky to have such tremendous resources right here, so take advantage of them and see how they may be able to unlock your past.

## *President's Message*

I would like to thank Jerry Paulson and Kevin Kurdylo for the interesting information that they shared with us at our last meeting. Having these resources so close by is a real blessing for all of us living close to Madison.

Many of us will have visited the Cemetery with in the past few weeks to place flowers or flags on the graves of our loved ones and ancestors. As a Nation we have set aside the last weekend in May to honor those who have died in our nation's service. Over time this date has shifted, but the purpose of

the holiday has not changed. Several interesting articles about Memorial Day can be found at: <http://www.usmemorialday.org/backgrnd.html> and <http://www.usmemorialday.org/> or if you would like to listen to musical and video tributes to our veterans try either of these two links: <http://www.waterloony.com/Memorial%20Day%20Song.html> or Dr. Sam and The Managed Care Blues Band's' tribute to the veterans of WW II <http://www.managedmusic.com/Music/PlayBeforeYouGo.php>

Or think about making a contribution to the Veterans History Project. This project is collecting photos, oral and written accounts about veterans that served in WW I, WW II, the wars in Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf and the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. To learn more about making a contribution visit: [www.loc.gov/vets](http://www.loc.gov/vets)

Be sure to join us on June 7<sup>th</sup> for our virtual visit to view and learn about the meaning of symbols on the Tombstones.

*Pat Skubis*

---

To learn about other upcoming events, go to: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~wiilbig/upcomreg.htm>.

---



## Upcoming Events

### Expand Your German Research

When: Saturday, July 14, 2007

Where: Greenhill Center of the Arts, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Whitewater, WI

Featured Speaker: Larry O. Jensen of Salt Lake City, Utah

Sponsored by the German Interest Group-Wisconsin

Registrations postmarked by July 1<sup>st</sup> are guaranteed lunch and a syllabus. For more information and a registration form go to: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~wigig/ind ex.html>.

### 2007 FGS Conference "Meeting at the Crossroads of America"

When: August 15-18, 2007

Where: Fort Wayne, Indiana

For full information, including the complete program schedule and registration materials, go to: <http://www.fgsconference.org/>. Early registration deadline is June 1. WSGS is running a bus to the FGS conference; it will probably stop in Windsor to pick up passengers from the Madison area. See [www.wsgs.org](http://www.wsgs.org) for more details.

### The Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International 11th bi-annual Genealogical/Cultural Conference

When: October 18-20, 2007

Where: Alliant Energy Center Exhibition Hall in Madison

Go to:

<http://www.cgsi.org/whatsnew.asp?intEventID=398> to learn more.

### The Illinois State Genealogical Society 2007 Conference

When: October 20, 2007

Where: Elmhurst, Illinois

### The Wisconsin State Genealogical Society Fall 2007 Seminar

When: October 27, 2007

Where: Wausau, Wisconsin

Featured speaker: J. Mark Lowe

## Remembering a Pioneer – Jack Brisse

History is full of pioneers – those who come first and blaze the trail, opening up the way for others to follow. DCAGS lost a trailblazing pioneer when Jack Brisse died on May 8, 2007. While his obituary noted he was an "amateur genealogist," to those who knew him he was no "amateur." He was a dedicated motivator to improve the skills of genealogists and make our organization a worthwhile resource to many "amateur genealogists."

I have included a link to his wonderful obituary, which provides a detailed history of his life story. <http://www.madison.com/obits/listings.php?type=trans&date=05%2F10%2F2007>

I would like to emphasize his work with DCAGS. Recently Bob Luening, Joe Waddell and Shirley Levine worked on a nomination of Jack to receive the Ruth C. Bishop Family History Volunteer Hall of Honor. I have taken the liberty of reprinting much of the nomination below because it condenses the important work

Jack did to build our genealogy organization.

### Jack as a Pioneer and Leader

Jack Brisse's service to Computer Assisted Genealogists of Southern Wisconsin (forerunner to the present Dane County Area Genealogical Society–DCAGS) began even before its official organization date of September 1992. He was a leader among a small group who sought help from the Church of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City to form a PAF support group in Madison Wisconsin. These men and women formed a steering committee that not only launched the successful group, but functioned as its Board of Directors for its first two years. Jack, a constant guiding presence at every Board and membership meeting, was successively a president-elect and then president, and later Director-at-large with the Board.

During this early period of computer genealogical times, Jack developed many lectures and demonstrations that not

only emphasized computer use but tied solid genealogical practices and methods to the use of computer programs. All this time (over 12 years) he remained on the Board of Directors of the organization as it developed into a full blown viable organization. He founded and edited the *PAFways* newsletter and made it an excellent vehicle for teaching members about broad genealogical matters. As more computer genealogy programs became available this group morphed into the Computer Assisted Genealogists of Southern Wisconsin and later our present organization the Dane County Area Genealogical Society (DCAGS). Jack was a potent force in working with these early developments and growth. His strong early leadership and hard work was crucial in making this growth and development happen.

*Continued on page 6*

## *Brissee Remembrance continued*

Jack as a Continuing Dependable Motivator

Over the years Jack has remained a dependable motivator in seeing that the various organizations he worked with remained a reliable and viable source of genealogical information. He was instrumental in getting our group to join FGS. He always took a leadership and strong supporting role in all of the organizations of which he was a member. He learned many useful things that he brought back to the many other genealogical organizations to help and guide them with their work.

Jack always emphasized high quality genealogical research and became known as a strong practitioner and advocate for solid documentation. Jack strongly supported ethical methods for producing genealogical materials. He developed and delivered many lectures on various genealogical computer programs such as Roots II, Family Treemaker and the Master Genealogist. His

many oral and written presentations were always clear, concise and competent.

Jack served as president of the Wisconsin Genealogical Society (1998-2004), was Local Arrangements Chairman of the 2002 NGS Annual conference in Milwaukee, member of the Board of Directors of NGS and served on numerous committees of the several genealogical organizations of which he was a member. For several years he has served as an Area Director for NGS. Jack organized and directed a committee to rewrite the Wisconsin Genealogy Society's Policies and Procedures. He also worked with several public policy issues relating to the use of crucial genealogical information (e.g. birth, death, marriage, census, etc records.) generated by public institutions.

One of Jack's many valuable contributions was serving as editor of the group's monthly newsletter, *Pafways* for 10

years. To describe him as editor begs a full description of his contribution for he literally wrote much of the content. The issues are collector items reflecting his vast knowledge and his droll sense of humor. As editor he launched such features as *Site to Behold*, to share with readers the addresses and descriptions of good genealogical Internet sources. During that decade, he wrote occasional "opinion" pieces in which he dealt with his favorite themes — ethical conduct in genealogy, and documentation, documentation AND documentation.

Jack's work formed the foundation on which DCAGS has been built. We salute his good work and his commitment to genealogy. We are honored to have known him and will greatly miss his enthusiasm, guidance, generosity and strong sense of right. God speed Jack, may you rest in peace.

*Ruth Simpson*

## *View Tombstones in Fitchburg*

The Fitchburg Historical Society is holding a picnic on Sunday, June 10<sup>th</sup> on the grounds of the Oak Hall Cemetery, located about one half mile west of the intersection of Fish Hatchery Road and CTH M.

The time of the meeting is set for 1 p.m. People can bring their own lunch or buy a box lunch in advance for \$6.00.\* A

program about the cemetery and the interesting pieces of information about it will be shared. An overview of the other cemeteries in Fitchburg will also be part of the program. In case of rain the program will be held at the Fitchburg Community Center, 5510 Lacy Road.

\*The box lunch will

consist of sandwich of your choice; roast beef or ham. Also included will be a fruit cup, chips, cookie and a soda. Orders must be placed on or preferably before June 4<sup>th</sup>. Please send payment along with sandwich preference to Muriel Stoneman, 2559 S. Syene Road, Fitchburg, WI 53711. Make check payable to FHS.

---

*Jack participated as presenting speaker, panelist or moderator for three dozen programs for our group.*

---

## *Ancestry.com offers free Military Records until June 6*

The genealogy Web site Ancestry.com is making millions of U.S. military records available online through June 6, the anniversary of D-Day in Europe. The free access allows people to search through indexed databases of draft cards, POW records and other information in search of family history.

Now, with databases containing more than 16 million names and thousands of government records available to search,

Ancestry has made researching your veteran ancestors easier than ever before. In the Military Records Collection, you can find enlistment dates, learn about famous battles, locate gravesites of war veterans, and discover the unique details of military service that will help you chronicle the stories of the lives of those who served in the United States military.

These records comprise the information that the government keeps

on any soldier (for example, enlistment/appointment, duty stations and assignments, training, qualifications, performance, awards and medals, disciplinary actions, insurance, emergency data, administrative remarks, separation, discharge, retirement, and other personnel actions).

So, check out the Ancestry database and see what you can learn about your ancestors that served in the military.

## *80 billion family files to go online*

The LDS Church plans to be history 'clearinghouse'. Below is a short quotation of Carrie A. Moore article in the Deseret Morning News. To read the full article, go to: <http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/1,1249,6602213,31,00.html>

In what officials say will be a quantum leap forward in providing family history information online, the LDS Church has announced a plan designed to eventually help provide access to as many as 80 billion family records on the Web, in addition to the tens of billions of records it is currently indexing out of its own Granite Vault microfilm archives.

The new Records

Access program was announced at the annual meeting of the National Genealogical Society (NGS) in Richmond, Va. The announcement details specifics of how the church is creating partnerships with various archives and other records depositories in a move to become the world's premier international "clearinghouse" for family history.

The first cooperative project under the new program will be to digitize and index U.S. Revolutionary War Pension records with the National Archives in Washington, meaning anyone with ancestors who served in that war will soon be able to access details about that family member online.

FamilySearch can also put indexing projects in progress on its Web site, where volunteers can help index public collections of records. The Revolutionary War records are a perfect example. They're doing the imaging, posting on our site and will recruit volunteers to help index." An online family history Web site called [Footnote.com](http://Footnote.com) will create electronic indexes of the records and host the actual images there for public access.

Some features are free and other parts require a subscription. \$7.95 is the monthly charge and \$59.95 is the yearly fee. Check it out and let them know what you think.

---

After Jan Davison received the last newsletter, she sent the following message:

*I got into the Cook Co. assessor's site and found the house I lived in from age 2 until I was married in 1948. My Dad had the house built and we moved in 1928. It looks pretty good and is still a good neighborhood! What a thrill to find it!!!!!!!!!*  
Jan D.

If any of you have a new website, please pass it along. It is always nice to discover something new!

The website once again is: <http://www.cookcountyassessor.com/filings/searchflat/search.asp>

Dane County Area Genealogical Society  
P.O. Box 5652  
Madison, WI 53705-0652



**Address Service Requested**

We're on the Web!

See us at: [www.dcags.org](http://www.dcags.org)



**Dane County Area  
Genealogical Society**

P.O. Box 5652  
Madison, WI 53705-0652

---

**See you  
June 7**

---

We have a new web  
address: [www.dcags.org](http://www.dcags.org).  
If you enter the address it  
will take you to the  
group's website on  
Rootsweb.

**DCAGS officers for 2007: Standing Committee Chairs**

**President**  
Pat Skubis  
[p318skubis@hughes.net](mailto:p318skubis@hughes.net)

**Vice President**  
Pat Stone  
[rjstone@chorus.net](mailto:rjstone@chorus.net)

**Secretary**  
Joyce I. Nigbor  
[billyjoycenigbor@aol.com](mailto:billyjoycenigbor@aol.com)

**Treasurer**  
Jim Benes  
[JimBenes@iname.com](mailto:JimBenes@iname.com)

**Past President**  
Shirley Levine  
[shirts26@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shirts26@sbcglobal.net)

**Membership**  
William "Bill" Baures  
[bauresb@juno.com](mailto:bauresb@juno.com)

**Programs & Education**  
Joan Nagle  
[JWNagle@merr.com](mailto:JWNagle@merr.com)  
Fay Schoenemann  
[schoenem@wisc.edu](mailto:schoenem@wisc.edu)

**Public Relations**

**Historian**  
"Walker" Walker-Crawford  
[walker@viridis.ws](mailto:walker@viridis.ws)

**Web Master**  
Rollie Littlewood  
[rklittle@wisc.edu](mailto:rklittle@wisc.edu)

**Newsletter**  
Ruth Simpson  
[rsimpson@terra.com.net](mailto:rsimpson@terra.com.net)

**Genealogy Fair Set for  
September 8**

DCAGS will be hosting a  
Genealogy Fair on  
September 8 at the Church  
of Jesus Christ of Latter Day  
Saints located at 4505  
Regent. We have vendors  
signing up and are working  
to confirm workshops and  
speakers. We are looking  
for volunteers to help at the  
Fair. We need people to  
help set up and take down  
tables, greeters and people to  
help with refreshments and  
registration. Sign up sheets  
will be circulated at  
upcoming meetings.  
Volunteer Now!