



Dane County Area Genealogical Society News

April 2 DCAGS Meeting Will Answer “What’s in Naturalization Records – and Where Do I Find Them?”

Many researchers expect that naturalization records will contain such information as exact date and place of birth, parents' names, date and port of arrival, etc. Dee Grimsrud, Reference Archivist at the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS), will clarify what the naturalization records contain (and don't), the steps toward citizenship circumstances, and how to locate the records you need, with an emphasis on Wisconsin records.

Dee Grimsrud has been a Reference Archivist at the WHS since 1996, having earned her

Master's degree in 1994 from UW's School of Library and Information Studies. Her main duties are to reply to inquiries about photographs people are looking for (mainly for publishing purposes) and about family history resources in the Archives.

She also staffs the Archives Reference Desk two afternoons a week (Tuesday & Friday) and on occasional Saturdays, plus provides one of the Society's genealogy workshops each Spring and Fall.

Dee's personal interest in genealogy began in 1970, with

her main focus being her Norwegian and English roots (plus a bit of Swedish, Canadian and early American on her husbands' lines.) Dee considers herself lucky to working at WHS, but she can't wait to retire and have some time to do her own research for a change!

We are meeting at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at 4505 Regent Street, Madison, WI. Please join us on Thursday, April 2 at 7:00 P.M.

March 31, 2009

Volume 3, Issue 7

Mark your
Calendars!
DCAGS
Genealogy Fair
Saturday,
October 10
Church of Jesus
Christ of Latter-
day Saints
4505 Regent,
Madison, WI

Oral History

Troy Reeves, head of the Oral History Program at the UW Archives, joined us for an entertaining evening of discussing the importance of oral history in genealogy.

Troy began with a funny story about explaining what oral history is. An individual was attending the 2nd oral history conference about 40 years ago. After the day's events he adjourned to the bar in the hotel and met another man who asked what he was doing at the hotel. The person said he was at an oral history conference. The other man smiled and said it was a good idea to preserve the history of dentistry.

As Troy explained, oral history has nothing to do with dentistry. There are four main purposes behind conducting oral histories: gather, preserve, access and educate. The Oral History Association defines oral history as "a method of gathering and preserving historical information through recorded interviews with participants in past events and ways of life."

Oral history provides a first hand account of events the person witnessed. The oral tradition is a cousin to oral history, but tells the stories passed down, generation by generation.

Troy said there are three parts of an oral history project: pre-interview, the interview and the post-interview.

Research is the key to a good interview. Troy said he has copied the 7 P's from the McCain campaign, "proper prior preparation prevents piss poor performance."

Research prior to the interview allows you to be familiar with the background of the person you are interviewing. Equally important it gives you knowledge of the time period or subject so that you will be able to ask intelligent questions, (hopefully) understand the

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Regular DCAGS meetings are generally the first Thursday of each month at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints located at 4505 Regent, Madison, WI beginning at 7 p.m.

DCAGS Update:

The DCAGS Governing Board meets the third Monday of each month. The next meeting is set for Monday, April 20 at 6:30 p.m. South Madison Library, 2222 Park St. We invite all members to attend. Please join us!

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detailed explanations, and help the narrator to dig deeper into his or her memory and elicit elusive details.

Troy recommends doing a pre-interview with the subject to go over the topics to be covered and perhaps have the person sign a release. The release allows the interview to be used later by you or other researchers. Troy said the release might help you avoid any legal problems from other family members who may have objections to the contents of the recording. Also, without a release, you are not the recording's legal owner and public can never use it. Since the use of the special information contained in oral history interviews is most important, the necessity of getting a legal release cannot be stressed too much. Troy has found that few people refuse to sign the release. You can discuss it in the pre-interview and make sure it is signed when the interview is complete. Troy said copies of a sample release might be obtained through his office.

Troy gave an example of conducting an interview in Boise, Idaho, where Troy worked prior to coming to Wisconsin. Troy was interviewing people who graduated from high school during the depression and WWII. While speaking with one of the graduates he learned of a sit-down strike. Troy's research had not uncovered this strike, so he looked further and found a story about it in the newspaper. The story centered around a co-ed ball (for girls only) and one boy who snuck in dressed up as a girl. He was caught and as punishment, he was stripped of his presidency of the Boy's Club. Some of the students started a sit-in until the punishment was eliminated. The sit-in succeeded. Troy was able to then ask other students if they remembered the sit-in, including the young man who had sneaked in to the dance, who turned out to be a Brigadier General and was much chagrined about the episode.

Troy moved on to the interview and recommended using a directional microphone to get a clear recording. Place the microphone between you

and the person you are interviewing, pointed toward the interviewee. This should pick up both voices. Investing in good equipment is always a good idea. If you save digital files, use WAV files (not MP3) on gold phthalocyanine-coated CD-Rs. If you use cassette tapes, make sure they're 60 minute.

Troy provided two tips – don't interview more than one person at time, especially a married couple – and pick a quiet place to conduct the interview. Troy played a recording of someone he interviewed and the recorder had picked up some terrible background noises. Fans, air conditioning, cooking, and road construction all can interfere.

The most important quality for an interviewer is sensitive listening. It is not enough to listen—the person being interviewed must know that you are listening. A few perceptive questions, eye contact, shared laughter, smiling and nodding; all these responses let the narrator see how interesting his/her experiences are to you. The best way to be a good listener is to care about what the person is saying to you.

If you notice your mind wandering, then be assured the interviewee will also notice and will curb his or her stories. If, when you leave the interview, you feel a warm atmosphere, you are treated like an old friend, and you experience a mental fatigue from listening so hard, then you have been a good listener. A good listener helps make a quality interview.

Troy found that most answers to questions are 3-5 minutes in length. The most important question is usually a follow-up, which can be picked up with a change in body language or tone. Troy played an interview of a prominent woman in Idaho who talked about her first husband, and the follow-up question was "how did he die?" He drowned in the river and his body was not found for almost

two weeks and it sounded as if the death had happened two months ago, not the 50 years that had passed.

The last question is always, "is there anything else you'd like to say before turning off the recorder?"

After the interview, stay and chat. Also schedule a follow-up interview as soon after as possible. People are likely to forget something; so a follow-up interview is very important.

After an interview, make a simple index by minute of the recording. This is very helpful because it allows you to find the place you want when you later try to find one particular story. Also it is a good idea to label the discs or tapes as soon as they are created: person interviewed, interviewer, date and place interviewed.

Troy provided an outline of topics and memory triggers for personal or family histories and tips for interviewing on family folklore.

Troy recommends that if you make a recording for family history or personal interest, think about donating them to a collection – like the UW Archives, a local library, historical society or oral history project. Check with them about their criteria for acceptance; a legal release is usually necessary.

Troy said he or the staff at the UW-Madison Oral History Program will be happy to answer any questions or provide any help to those interested in starting an oral history project. Troy can be reached at treeves@library.wisc.edu.

Troy recommended that everyone check out the new website for the UW-Archives: archives.library.wisc.edu and check out genealogical resources/oral histories.

The power of oral history is listening to the stories. We thank Troy for sharing his knowledge and stories.

Upcoming events

The Wisconsin State Genealogical Society

2009 Gene-A-Rama Conference

When: 3-4 April 2009

Where: Middleton, WI

Featured speaker: Christine Rose, CGSM, CGLSM, FASG.

Other speakers will include James L. Hansen, FASG; David McDonald, CGSM, Nancy Emmert, CGSM; and George Findlen, CGSM.

Registration Information: WSGS website, www.wsgs.org

2009 Oral History Day

When: April 26-27, 2009

Where: UW—Eau Claire campus, Davies Center, Eau Claire, WI

Information:

<http://archives.library.wisc.edu/oral-history/OHday2009.html>

German Interest Group Annual Workshop

When: July 11, 2009

Where: Hamilton Center, the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

Featured speaker: Warren Bittner, Collection Manager for the Germanic, French and Oriental collections at the Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Cost: \$30 GIG member, \$35 non-GIG member by 6/27/2009 and \$35 for GIG member and \$40 for non-GIG member after that date.

Registration: For information go to: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~wigig/>

Spring Genealogy Classes at MATC/ACE

There is still time to register for genealogy classes offered at MATC/ACE. To enroll, call MATC ACE at 246-6440 or 1-800-628-6282, Ext. 6220. The cost is \$42.82 unless you are over age 62 and the cost is \$4. All classes are taught by Pat Skubis.

Internet: Genealogy Intro
<http://programs.matcmadison.edu/programs/enrichment/internet-genealogy-intro>

Class# 59803 begins Thursday 4/9 to 5/7 from 1:00 PM-4:00 PM at the Oregon Area Senior Center.

Internet: Genealogy Intermediate
<http://programs.matcmadison.edu/programs/enrichment/internet-genealogy-intrm>

Class# 59812 begins Wednesday 4/8 to 5/6 from 1:00 PM-4:00 PM at the West Madison Education Center.

Class# 59813 begins Tuesday 4/14 to 5/12 from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM at the Madison Senior Center.

Internet: Genealogy Advanced
<http://programs.matcmadison.edu/programs/enrichment/internet-genealogy-advanced>

Class# 59808 begins Tuesday 4/14 to 5/12 from 1:30 PM-4:30 PM at the Waunakee Senior Center

Class# 59816 begins Wednesday 4/15 to 5/13 from 6:00 PM-9:00 PM at the Fitchburg Senior Center

Proposed State Budget Increases Future Costs for Genealogists

The proposed Wisconsin state budget for the 2009-2011 biennium includes some provisions which, if enacted, will directly impact genealogical research. Under current law, the fee for a copy of a birth certificate, death certificate, marriage certificate, or divorce or annulment certificate is \$20, the fee for expedited issuance of a copy of one of these certificates is \$20, and the fee for an additional copy of the same birth certificate at the same time is \$3. Current law mandates that, effective July 1, 2010, these fees will be reduced to the following amounts: for a copy of a birth certificate, \$12; for a copy of a death certificate, marriage certificate, or divorce or annulment certificate, \$7; and for expedited issuance of a copy of a certificate, \$10 (additional copies of birth certificates are still to be \$3 each).

This proposed new budget repeals the scheduled fee reductions for certificates, increases the fee for a copy of a birth certificate to \$22, and increases the fee for an additional copy to \$5.

The Wisconsin Budget Bill can be viewed on the web at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/2009/data/A/B75hst.html>. It is a very large document, 5.35 MB, but can be searched as a PDF.

Contact your own state senator and assemblyperson, or contact the co-chairs of the Joint Finance Committee (the latter may be the most effective). You can email them, go to <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lfb/jfc.html>

If you don't know who your legislator is, you can find them and their contact information here: <http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/w3asp/waml/waml.aspx>. Otherwise go to the general page of the state legislature <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/> and you can find your legislator's contact information in the Senate and Assembly directories.

If you have knowledge of ways we could (legally, of course) get access – for that six hours a year – to reliable high-speed internet access at a reasonable cost, please get in touch with me. We are currently exploring several leads, but would welcome any new ideas. I can be reached at <rkittle@wisc.edu> or (608) 273-0211.

Rollie Littlewood

President's Message

Helping Our Speakers Help Us

The DCAGS Governing Board has identified two areas where we would like to obtain, or get access to, equipment which will make it easier for our speakers to present their ideas to us. In very brief terms, the areas are higher-speed internet access and a microphone system more compatible with our meeting format and location.

We are actively working on one of these right now -- higher speed reliable internet access. Although dial-up modem access is

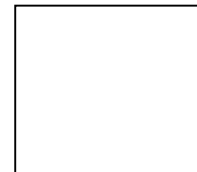
reliable, it is often too slow to enable a speaker to demonstrate new and exciting research tools available on the internet. Wi-Fi and broadband access are much faster than dial-up, but the cost of a regular subscription to either of these types of service is prohibitively expensive for use about six hours a year (assuming that half of our speakers would like internet access to help with their presentations). We have some leads which hint that we might be able to get fast internet access via a cell phone equipped with appropriate options.

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



**Dane County Area
Genealogical Society**

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

See you
April 2

We have a new web
address: www.dcags.org/

If you enter the address it
will take you to the group's
website on Rootsweb.

DCAGS officers for 2009:

President: Rollie Littlewood
rkittle@wisc.edu

Vice President: Don Cole

Secretary: Gerry Schlecht
13gerry@att.net

Treasurer: Walker Crawford
walker@viridis.ws

Past President, Pat Skubis
p318skubis@hughes.net

Standing Committee Chairs

Membership: William "Bill" Baures
bauresb@juno.com

Programs & Education: Vacant

Public Relations: Vacant

Historian: Sandy Zart
sandy_zart@yahoo.com

Web Master: Rollie Littlewood
rkittle@wisc.edu

Newsletter: Ruth Simpson
rsimpson@terracon.net

Remember to sign up for the
Gene-A-Rama Conference in
Middleton on April 3-4, 2009.

Registration Information: WSGS
website, www.wsgs.org