



# Dane County Area Genealogical Society News

July 31, 2010  
Volume 4, Issue 11

## “Tip Toe Through the Tombstones” at August 5 Meeting

Cemetery research can reveal some of the most valuable records in genealogy research – not only the records of those in charge of the cemeteries, but the information from the stones themselves. Join us on Thursday, August 5, and Ann Wells of McHenry County, Illinois will lead us on a tour of cemeteries.

Ann was born in England, raised in California and now

lives in Illinois. She's been doing genealogical research for almost 35 years and has had her own genealogical research business for about 25 years. Ann is on the board of the Illinois State Genealogical Society, McHenry County (Illinois) Genealogical Society, Crystal Lake (Illinois) Historical Society, Friends of the Crystal Lake Library and the International Society for British Genealogy and Family History.

Cemetery records may contain a variety of data; hopefully some of them will help you in extending your research or answering questions that may help break down brick walls.

Please join us on Thursday, August 5, at 7 p.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 4505 Regent St.

## Fort Winnebago Surgeons' Quarters Tour



Fort Winnebago Surgeons' Quarters

July 1 was a picture perfect evening in Wisconsin -- 80 degrees, sunshine, and a light breeze. Twenty-six DCAGS members and guests made the trip to visit the Fort Winnebago Surgeons' Quarters near Portage. Everyone had a wonderful time.

The Surgeons' Quarters overlooks the site where Louis Joliet and Father Jacques Marquette left the Fox River at the east end of Wauona Trail in 1673. The Surgeons' Quarters is a property that is owned,

restored, and maintained by Wisconsin Society Daughters of the American Revolution. (WisDAR) It is a true example of the log type house built by French inhabitants of Wisconsin. We were told it is the third oldest log structure on its original foundation in Wisconsin.

Francois LeRoi, who operated a portaging business, originally built the log structure between 1819 and 1824. He sold it to the army in 1828 when Fort Winnebago was established.

For six years it was a settlers' store and then in 1834 remodeled as a home for medical officers and their families. That same year a hospital was built nearby. After the evacuation of the fort in 1853, the Surgeons' Quarters was sold and occupied for about eighty years by a succession of

families who altered it to suit their respective needs, including using the hospital as a barn.

Fort Winnebago was one of a chain of forts along the Fox-Wisconsin Waterway that was in use from 1828 to 1853. The fort was located across from current Highway 33. The Surgeons' Quarters, though not within the stockade area of Fort Winnebago, is its only remaining building.

Surgeon Lyman Foote arrived at Fort Winnebago in 1834. He was probably the first doctor to occupy the house; his predecessors had been quartered in the Fort itself. After Foote's five-year tenure, the Surgeons' Quarters became the home of Surgeon C. H. Laub, who remained until the last garrison left in 1845.

*continued on page 2*

**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 Tuesday of each month. There will be no board meeting in August. The next meeting is set for Tuesday, September 21 at 6:30 p.m. South Madison Library, 2222 Park St. We invite all members to attend. Please join us!*

## *Fort Winnebago Surgeons' Quarters Tour continued*

After the building was sold in 1853, the interior had been cut up into several smaller rooms in place of the original four; chimneys and fireplaces had been removed. It has been determined that new doors were added to the original cabin. There is also a storage area under what is designated as a bedroom. It was probably used as a store and it is likely that furs and other items were stored there awaiting shipping out after the spring thaw.

The house was in poor condition when the WisDAR bought the building in the 1930s. To restore the building, the group followed the War Department plans which had been used in the remodeling of 1834. The four original rooms were located and partitions restored. Fireplace locations were determined from the old foundations and footings were rebuilt. Pine logs, squared and hewn with axes, form the outer walls; the floor and ceiling joists are of hand-hewn tamarack poles. Much of the original flooring is still in place. The walls are plastered over hand-sawn and hand-tooled lath, a portion of which has been left exposed. The bricks used to restore the three fireplaces came from an old house in Portage made of bricks and stones that were once part of the fort foundations. All contributed to the authentic restoration of Surgeons' Quarters.

The home contains numerous items from the Fort Winnebago time period. Soldiers of the fort made several pieces of furniture in the building; including furniture that may have been built by Jefferson Davis who served at Fort Winnebago in the 1830s. Davis went on to head the War Department in the administration of President Zachary Taylor and then to become President of the Confederacy during the Civil War.

Among the pieces are the operating table, two desks and the wooden eagle from the fort gate. A prized possession is a sideboard that belonged to the family of Captain Gideon Low, the only officer of the fort who remained in Portage the rest of his life. A Sheraton-style piece of about 1800, it was probably brought with the Lows from Pennsylvania.

Surgical equipment of a by-gone day in the Surgeons' Room as well as the fort surgeon's operating table, furnishings of the Fort Winnebago period in the bedroom, sitting room, and kitchen have made Surgeons' Quarters a most remarkable attraction for visitors. There are several interesting clothing items, including a "Saratoga Wagon" type hat that was worn by Captain Low's wife. There are

also many examples of quilts and samplers from that time period. The kitchen contains numerous utensils from the 1800s.

Those touring the Surgeons' Quarters also visited the Garrison School, which is located on the grounds. The school was brought to the grounds in 1960. It had been used continuously as a school in the area from 1850-1960. It was restored and furnished as an eighth-grade country school with one teacher, desks of the past and textbooks representing its 110 years of use. The Benjamin Tallmadge Chapter DAR of Milwaukee brought the scene "to life" with mannequins dressed for the period of 1850-1860.

The WisDAR began giving tours of the Surgeons' Quarters in 1954. It is open daily May 15th thru October 15th from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

After the tour, everyone enjoyed an excellent box lunch provided by the Hitching Post in Portage. We were able to eat outside and enjoy the perfect July evening.

*Note: Much of the information for this article was taken from the Surgeons' Quarters website: [www.wsdar.com/surgeons/](http://www.wsdar.com/surgeons/)*

### ***Join us on Facebook!***

DCAGS has a Facebook Page. <http://www.facebook.com/dcags>

Facebook is a popular social networking site with over 500 million members worldwide.

Facebook is an additional tool for DCAGS to reach out to members and the public about our organization and genealogy. We hope to utilize it more to announce upcoming meetings and events.

If you are not a member it is easy to join, and best of all, it is free. So sign up today.

***The DCAGS Membership Directory will be available at the August 5 DCAGS Meeting. Walker Crawford will have them at the sign-in table when you register before the meeting.***

### ***New Membership Chair: Pat Konrad***

Bill Baures has left for a mission with the LDS Church and Pat Konrad has agreed to lead the DCAGS Membership Committee. We want to thank Bill for his leadership on the Membership Committee the past two years and welcome Pat to her new role.

# Upcoming events

## **Federation of Genealogical Societies 2010 Conference Rediscovering America's First Frontier**

**Where:** Knoxville, TN

**When:** August 18-21, 2010

**Registration Fees:** FGS Conference Registration Fees – Full Conference Registration (Wed. through Sat.): \$235  
Single Day Registration: \$125

Topics covered: Tennessee and Kentucky research, research in other Southern states, researching ethnic groups including African Americans, Native Americans, and the Scots-Irish, methodology, resources, technology, DNA, land platting, and much more.

Information: Information on the conference and secure online registration is available at:

<http://www.fgs.org/2010conference/index.php>. Be sure to check the conference blog for regular updates:

<http://www.fgsconferenceblog.org/>.

## **Wisconsin State Genealogical Society 2010 Fall Seminar**

### **Research: Something for Everyone!**

**Where:** Ramada Hotel, Stevens Point

**When:** October 9, 2010

**Registration Fees:** WSGS rate postmarked before Sept. 24: \$35.00  
postmarked after Sept. 24: \$45.00  
Regular Rate postmarked before Sept. 24: \$60.00; postmarked after Sept. 24: \$70.00

**Guest Speaker:** Lori B. Bessler, Reference Librarian and Outreach Coordinator at the Wisconsin Historical Society in Madison, WI.

**Lectures:** Everyone's a Beginner, How to Find Genealogical Collections, Google.com, Genealogy on a Budget.

**Info:** [wsgs@tds.com](mailto:wsgs@tds.com)

## **Genealogy Classes Oregon Community Education Classes**

### **Genealogy/Family History – Beginning**

Learn how to gather records, interview family, and record information. Find vital records; search the Wisconsin Historical Society and the FamilySearch. Learn about census records; city directories; land records; and how newspapers and obituaries can help you trace your family.

Call if you wish to drop in for some sessions. The Senior Center cosponsors this intergenerational program.

**Instructor:** Patricia Skubis

**Dates:** Tuesdays, Aug. 3 - 31

**Times:** 6:30 to 8:30 PM

**Fee:** \$44

**Location:** 219 Park Street (Sr. Center Lab)

Min/Max: 8/15

### **Genealogy/Family History – Intermediate**

Tools needed to locate ancestors overseas; resources to use to learn to read old script; a visit to the Family History Center in Madison and finding free international genealogy sites.

**Instructor:** Patricia Skubis

**Dates:** Tuesdays, Sept. 7 – Oct. 5

**Times:** 6:30 to 8:30

**Fee:** \$44

**Location:** 219 Park Street (Sr. Center Lab)

Min/Max: 8/15

### **Genealogy/Family History – Advanced**

Learn methods to find what's new in genealogy and explore new sites using new search engines. Track your family through local and church histories. Find

other distant relatives working on your family's genealogy by joining a social networking group.

**Instructor:** Patricia Skubis

**Dates:** Tuesdays, Oct. 12 – Nov. 9

**Time:** 6:30 to 8:30

**Fee:** \$44

**Location:** 219 Park Street (Sr. Center Lab)

Min/Max: 8/15

### **It's Easy To Register for Oregon Community Education Classes.**

**1. Online.** Visit us at <http://db.oregonsd.org/ce/>. Register online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and mail your payment. View availability of classes in just a few clicks! If you notice that a class is full when viewing it online, please register and put your name on the waiting list. If an opening occurs, you will be in line to get your name on the active roster. This also helps us know if there is enough demand for additional sessions and plan for future classes.

Please make out your check to "OSD Community Education" or cash is accepted.

### **2. Mail or Drop Off**

Please download a registration form on the Community Education page at [db.oregonsd.org/ce/](http://db.oregonsd.org/ce/)

Mail or drop off your completed form with payment at Community Education Oregon Schools, 123 East Grove Street, Oregon, WI 53575. Hours are Monday -- Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Please register early!

Please don't wait until the last minute to register! Registering early allows us to confirm the start of a class and plan for materials, facilities, etc. Unfortunately, programs may be cancelled if minimum enrollment is not met.

*Continued on page 4*

## **President's Message**

### **Special Events**

I admit to having some apprehension when the Governing Board decided to have the July DCAGS meeting be a field trip to the Fort Winnebago Surgeons' Quarters in Portage. My primary concern was the travel distance involved. But I believe that those of us who made the trip found it very enjoyable--well worth the trip. Ride sharing afforded an extra

opportunity for socializing for some of us.

DCAGS and one of its predecessor societies have a history of having one special event each year away from our customary meeting place. Sometimes it has been a picnic, sometimes a visit to a place in the area of special historic significance. I know that not all members are interested in

attending these special events, but I think many like the variety they add. I expect the society to continue this tradition. I invite you to present ideas for future special events, as well as for regular programs, to any member of the Governing Board. I can be reached at <rklittle@wisc.edu> or (608) 273-0211.

*Rollie Littlewood*

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)

Or [www.facebook.com/dcags](http://www.facebook.com/dcags)



## Dane County Area Genealogical Society

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

---

**See you at  
the August 5  
Meeting!**

---

### DCAGS Governing Board for 2010:

President: Rollie Littlewood  
[rklittle@wisc.edu](mailto:rklittle@wisc.edu)

Vice President: Don Cole  
846-3819

Secretary: Gerry Schlecht  
[13gerry@att.net](mailto:13gerry@att.net)

Treasurer: Walker Crawford  
[walker@viridis.ws](mailto:walker@viridis.ws)

Past President, Pat Skubis  
[p3l8skubis@hughes.net](mailto:p3l8skubis@hughes.net)

### Standing Committee Chairs

Membership: Pat Konrad  
[Patkonrad1@yahoo.com](mailto:Patkonrad1@yahoo.com)

Programs & Education: Vacant

Public Relations: Beverly Vaughn  
[beverlymvaughn@charter.net](mailto:beverlymvaughn@charter.net)

Historian: Sandy Zart  
[sandy\\_zart@yahoo.com](mailto:sandy_zart@yahoo.com)

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

Newsletter: Ruth Simpson  
[rsimpson@terracon.net](mailto:rsimpson@terracon.net)

### *Genealogy Classes continued...*

#### *Blackhawk Technical College -- Monroe Campus*

*Genealogy on the Internet—Beginning;*

Two classes

**Dates:** Thursdays, 9/16-10/21, 6 sessions,  
**Time:** 2:00-4:00PM, Room 302

or

**Dates:** Thursdays, 9/16-10/21, 6 sessions,  
**Time:** 6:00-8:00PM, Room 302

**Cost:** \$34.42. Senior rate: age 62 or older  
\$4.00.

Register on line at

<http://www.blackhawk.edu/lifelonglearning/index.html> or in person at the Monroe Campus, 210  
4th Avenue, Monroe, WI

#### *Madison Area Technical College*

*41664 Internet Genealogy Intro.*

**Dates:** Fridays, September 10 to October 15

**Time:** 9:00 to 11:30

**Fee:** \$56.38 (Ask about Senior Discount)

**Place:** Madison Senior Center 330 Mifflin St.  
Madison, WI

Register at the Enrollment Center (608) 246-  
6210