



Dane County Area Genealogical Society News

Using Standard Histories to Find Elusive Relatives at June 3 Meeting

George Findlen will be speaking at the June 3 DCAGS meeting on "Using Standard Histories to Find Elusive Relatives."

What do the influences of a region's industrial, regional and local history tell us about our own family history? In this presentation George tells the story of Michael Findlen, who moved from the family home in Maine. Living Findlen elders knew only that he just left town. Period.

George was able to trace his movement using traditional genealogical documents – vital records and census records –

from Maine to British Columbia to Montana to Washington and finally to Alberta. However, state histories, industrial histories, and local histories all proved useful in helping George explain why he moved and pin down exactly when he moved. In one local history, George even found a photo. Without these histories, George only had a set of footprints, not a story.

George is a retired academic administrator who has served as a faculty member or administrator at nine colleges and universities in seven states over thirty years. In retirement, he has re-invented himself as a

genealogist. In addition to researching his family and those of clients, he writes articles for publication and gives talks to genealogy groups. On Tuesdays, he tries to stay out of trouble by volunteering at the Wisconsin Historical Society Library. There, he is part of the "Tuesdays with Lori" trio of volunteers in the Microforms Room and helps patrons.

Please join us on Thursday, June 3 at 7 p.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 4505 Regent St.

Beyond the Census and Vital Records – Government Information for Genealogical Research

Nancy Mulhern, Historical Collections Consultant/Documents Librarian at the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) led DCAGS members on a very interesting tour of government resources, other than census and vital records, that are available at WHS at the May 6 meeting.

Nancy began by saying there are three basic questions that people ask about federal, state and local records:

1. What is there?
2. How do I find it?
3. Is it online?

Nancy said that just about anything the government produces – handbooks, directories, phone books, studies, reports – is at the library.

Before the Internet, people had to come and ask her or another librarian what information was available.

Now that more and more of the information is online, people can do quite a bit of searching on their own.

In Wisconsin, WHS receives local government proceedings from various cities and counties in Wisconsin. WHS has Milwaukee City Council

proceedings from 1873 forward.

They also have proceedings from Madison, Appleton and La Crosse. Madison and Milwaukee are cataloged and in the online catalog. Most are available in print form until 1998, when things began going digital.

There are also some school district or planning department proceedings, and police department reports.

WHS also houses county information. They have directories of county officials. They also have numerous county board proceedings.

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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 Tuesday of each month. The next meeting is set for Tuesday, June 15 at 6:30 p.m. South Madison Library, 2222 Park St. We invite all members to attend. Please join us!

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Government Resources continued...

Back in the 1930s, the board of supervisors meeting would list the people who were receiving relief from the County. Nancy said the WHS library has holdings from 1910 forward. 19th century county board of supervisors proceedings are in the Archives.

One item that has proven useful is the Education Directory. It provided the names of teachers, their positions and the schools they taught at. Sometimes you can locate an ancestor who taught at a one-room schoolhouse in a rural county. Wisconsin was not unique in having a directory and other state directories are also available.

At the state level, all of the Wisconsin Blue Books are online. The Blue Book is the basic reference book for Wisconsin government and provides biographies of legislative, judicial and executive officials. They also contain statistical information. There are three indexes to the Blue Book that can be utilized.

Other state information available would be Wisconsin's legislative manuals, Senate and Assembly Journals, annual and biennial reports of state agencies. In Wisconsin there are 118 volumes of public documents in Wisconsin, 1852-1914. The reports are often rich in narrative and include maps, charts and photographs. Digital copies are available at <http://digioll.library.wisc.edu/WI/>.

The WHS has a large collection of non-Wisconsin U.S. state and territorial government publications. For the period before 1819, WHS holds paper or microform copy of virtually every government publication issued in the U.S. From 1819 to the early 1930s, WHS and other UW libraries holds a high percentage of the publishing output of the state and territories. By summer 2010, this entire collection will be searchable in the online catalog.

One example Nancy gave of an interesting resource is the Adjutant General reports from Colorado, which described the breakup of a mining strike in Ludlow.

Nancy described the project WHS has undertaken with Google™ Books.

Early on WHS signed an agreement for Google Books to copy books from the WHS Library collection. Not only are the books available on Google Books, but Wisconsin formed a consortium with other libraries to form Hathi Trust. All the materials Google Books copied are also available on Hathi trust.

<http://catalog.hathitrust.org/>.

There are numerous federal government records available – annual reports, Congressional hearings, department directories, rosters, serial sets monographs. Every federal agency has its own historian, so there is a large amount of information available.

Nancy provided several interesting examples of resources that might provide something of interest to a genealogist:

- Supervisor Inspector General of Steam Vessels Report, 1879-1901. It provides a list of people working on ships. It also provides information on when life saving services were utilized.
- U.S. Post Office guide. It lists all post offices in the U.S. from 1851 forward.
- Street Directory of Principal Cities in the U.S.
- Many directories and registers for departments. The State Department provides a directory of who has worked there – *America's Diplomats and Consuls 1776-1865*.
- Monographs: U.S. Center for Military History. This includes a series on the U.S. Army in WWII (over 100 volumes detailing aspects of the Army, campaign and battles), WWI, Viet Nam, Bosnia, Iraq 1991. They are working on the Korean War now.
- The Lawmen: Listing of U.S. Marshals and their deputies for 1789-1989.

Another valuable resource in the Congressional Record are the Annals of Congress, a record of all debates in Congress, 1789 to

date. This is a huge document. The records are indexed at the end of each Congressional session.

Digital images of the Congressional Record are available from the Library of Congress up to 1875.

<http://rs6.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/>

There is also a U.S. Congressional Serial Set. The series begins in 1817 and includes American state papers, House and Senate documents and expedition reports. LexisNexis® has digitized and indexed them. WHS is planning on getting a subscription very soon for the Library.

In 1910 when Senator Robert La Follette conducted hearings on the conditions of Indian in Wisconsin. The testimony of tribal members has been preserved and can be found at the WHS website: <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/>

Congress conducts and publishes hearings and investigations on a broad range of topics and events. An example of historical interest are the British and U.S. Congressional hearings on the sinking of the Titanic. These reports contain testimony from surviving passengers, crew and rescuers.

Nancy said if she is looking for anything about the government, she starts by looking first at Google Books. They are adding books, magazines and newspapers at a very fast clip. She mentioned that the editions of the 19th century *Milwaukee Journal* might now be found there. <http://books.google.com/>

The other place Nancy does a search is with WorldCat. It includes information on Hathi Trust and it is expanding more and more each day. <http://www.worldcat.org>.

Nancy said if you had any questions, to please contact her, nancy.mulhern@wisconsinhistory.org or asklibrary@wisconsinhistory.org.

So, think about checking out government records when doing your genealogical research.

Upcoming events

The German Interest Group- Wisconsin German Workshop

When: Saturday, July 10, 2010

Where: Hamilton Center, UW-Whitewater campus, Whitewater, Wisconsin (The Hamilton Center is handicapped accessible and air-conditioned. All parking lots are free on Saturday during the summer.)

Featured speaker: James Beidler, Lebanon, Pennsylvania. His topics will include: Contrasting German Migrations: 18th Century vs. 19th Century Waves, Success Story: Finding a European Village of Origin, What's a Palatine Anyway?, Blasting Open Genealogical Roadblocks: Secondary Uses for Primary Sources

Cost: Postmarked by July 1: \$35.00 - GIG member, \$40.00 - non-GIG member
Postmarked after July 1: \$40.00 - GIG member: \$45.00 - non-GIG member.
One-year membership at \$10.00 single/\$12.50 family (includes newsletter).
Make check payable to: German Interest Group-Wisconsin

Register: If you wish confirmation of your registration, send a S.A.S.E. to: GIG-WI Workshop, P.O. Box 2185, Janesville, WI 53547-2185

For more information or questions call 608-754-9130 or 608-752-0358 or http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~wigi/workshop_page1-general_info2010.html

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

Where: Knoxville, TN

When: August 18-21, 2010

Registration Fees: FGS Conference Early Registration Fees (postmarked or online NO LATER than 1 June 2010) Full Conference Registration (Wed. through Sat.): \$185; Single Day Registration: \$99

FGS Conference Registration Fees (postmarked or online after 1 June 2010) 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/>

Sign-Up Form for Fort Winnebago Surgeon's Quarters Tour on July 1, 2010

Name _____

I will attend the Surgeon's Quarters tour on July 1. (DCAGS will pay the admission fee for members) Number of people attending _____. (Guests may come. The cost is \$3 for the tour.)

Box Lunch order, \$9.00 per person.

Sandwich preference:

- Turkey
 Ham

Type of drink? (Any Coke or Pepsi product or water) _____

We will try to order your preference, but cannot guarantee it right now.

I want to ride with someone

I can offer to drive and have room for _____ people. (number of people who can ride with you.)

Carpooling preference

- Eastside
 Westside

Please send your check to the Dane County Area Genealogical Society
P.O. Box 5652
Madison, WI 53705-0652

How should we contact you if the tour must be canceled at the last minute? (Chose one)

E-mail _____

or

Phone: _____

**Deadline for signing up is
Monday, June 28, 2010.**

President's Message

DCAGS to buy new microphone system

The DCAGS Governing Board has been considering for some time the purchase of a better system of microphones for use at our membership meetings. We have twice done a trial run with equipment we were considering. The first trial, done in late 2008, was not satisfactory. The second trial, done this past April, went much better. The headset microphone, meant to be used by the main speaker at each meeting, worked almost flawlessly. The handheld microphone worked rather well, although it is clear we have to learn better how to use it. Following the second trial run, we surveyed the membership regarding

their feelings about purchasing this system. The response to this survey, although not unanimous, was very much in favor of the society purchasing the better microphone system. The board very much appreciates the feedback we have received. At its May meeting the Governing Board authorized this purchase at a cost of about \$1900.

The society has enough money in its treasury to pay for this purchase and all other anticipated 2010 expenses, but the financial reserves at the end of the 2010 will be quite low. Several members have told us they would be willing to donate towards the microphone

purchase. The Governing Board would indeed be happy, on behalf of the society, to accept any donations toward this expense. Donations for this purpose could be given to Walker Crawford, the DCAGS treasurer, at any meeting or mailed to DCAGS at PO Box 5652, Madison WI 53705. The society is registered with the IRS as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization; as such any donations to it may be deductible on both state and federal income tax returns.

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



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

**See you at
the June 3
Meeting!**

DCAGS officers for 2010:

President: Rollie Littlewood
rkittle@wisc.edu

Vice President: Don Cole
846-3819

Secretary: Gerry Schlecht
13gerry@att.net

Treasurer: Walker Crawford
walker@viridis.ws

Past President, Pat Skubis
p3l8skubis@hughes.net

Standing Committee Chairs

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

Programs & Education: Vacant

Public Relations: Beverly Vaughn
beverlymvaughn@charter.net

Historian: Sandy Zart
sandy_zart@yahoo.com

Web Master: Rollie Littlewood
rkittle@wisc.edu

Newsletter: Ruth Simpson
rsimpson@terra.com.net

DCAGS Field Trip on July 1

Before the merger of the Dane County Genealogical Society and the Computer Assisted Genealogists of Southern Wisconsin, the Dane County group planned a meal or trip each May. In this spirit, the DCAGS Governing Board has planned a trip for the July 1 meeting.

DCAGS has scheduled a tour of the Fort Winnebago Surgeon's Quarters near Portage. (W8687 Highway 33 East, www.wsdar.com/surgeons) The DCAGS Board will pay the cost of the tour for attending DCAGS members.

We will bring box lunches, including drinks, for attendees. Attendees must pre-pay for their own box lunches. Please send in \$9.00 for the box lunch to DCAGS, or give it to Walker Crawford at the June 3 meeting. The deadline for signing up will be **Monday, June 28. There is a sign-up form on page 3 to fill out and send in.**

We gather outside to enjoy our lunches and socialize after the tour on the grounds of the Surgeon's Quarters. They have a few picnic tables, but we encourage members to bring a lawn chair to sit on.

For those participating in carpooling, we will leave Madison about 4:30 to arrive at 5:30 p.m. We will take the tour first, between 5:30 and 6:30 p.m. The tour takes about 45 minutes. People can eat after the tour.

We will leave from two different places: on the west side at the Latter-day Saints Church on Regent Street; on the east side at the Eastside Shopping Center, 2700-2900 East Washington Ave. Please contact Walker, walker@viridis.ws, if you need a ride or let him know if you would be willing to offer people a ride to Portage. It takes 45 to 60 minutes to drive from Madison to Portage.