



# Dane County Area Genealogical Society News

## *The Power of Yes: A Case Study of Norwegian Immigration to Minnesota at June 2 Meeting*

May 31, 2011  
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The June 2 DCAGS meeting will be "The Power of Yes: A Case Study of Norwegian Immigration to Minnesota." Our speaker will be DCAGS member Joyce I. Nigbor.

Joyce is a member of DCAGS and has worked actively at the hobby of genealogy for over fifty years. During that time, she has written/compiled two books about her family; one on her Hasselman line, and one on her Asbach line.

Joyce comments that her area of expertise is German genealogy until she took on this project to find four Norwegian sisters who immigrated to Minnesota. Joyce has found a lot of material in the year since she undertook this project. She will take the audience through the process of the last year using documents, Ancestry.com, and the personal contact with a multitude of people including living descendants of these four women. She feels it's been a

wonderful experience helping a Norwegian friend of 33 years and his family realize their dream of knowing what happened to these women.

Joyce is currently co-chair of the University League Genealogy Group.

Please join us on Thursday, June 2 at 7 p.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 4505 Regent St.

## *Wisconsin in the Civil War*

Michael Edmonds, head of Digital Collections and Web Services at the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS), spoke at the May 5 DCAGS meeting about a new online collection, "Wisconsin in the Civil War."

The WHS launched the new digital collection to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War. The collection can be found at [www.wisconsinhistory.org/Civilwar](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Civilwar).

Michael began his talk with the general belief held by many that we can't know the truth about the Civil War because it was too horrific for us to grasp.

In addition over 77,000

books, 26,000 academic articles and 17,000 web sites are devoted to the Civil War. One could spend their entire life reading only about the Civil War and never read everything because there is just too information on the subject. This information overload also can make the truth hard to find about the Civil War.

Michael quoted from Walt Whitman, who served as a nurse in Washington D.C. during the war and saw firsthand the death, illness and destruction of the war: "Future years will never know the seething hell and the black infernal background, the countless minor scenes and interiors of the secession war;

and it is best they should not. The real war will never get in the books," Whitman wrote.

Whitman expressed what many thought – day-to-day life was so shocking that no one could believe it unless you lived through it.

This online collection attempts to prove this thought wrong. The website contains original documents from the war – thousands of soldiers' letters, diaries, 2,500 newspaper articles, books, maps and images.

All 16,000 pages have been carefully indexed by WHS staff and are also searchable by keywords. This is the first time many of 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.***

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### ***DCAGS Update:***

***The DCAGS Governing Board meets the third Tuesday of each month. The next meeting is set for Tuesday, June 21 at 6:30 p.m. at the new South Madison Library on 2222 Park St. We invite all members to attend. Please join us!***

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## *Wisconsin in the Civil War continued...*

documents have been made available to the public.

Michael said the heart of the collection is the letters from soldiers. Over 10,000 letters are now online – many with firsthand accounts from the war front. Many were printed in local newspapers. The letters feature soldiers' accounts of battles and camp life and their reflection on slavery, politics, and the horrors of war.

In addition, the collection features over 100 memoirs, 250 maps of battles, and 1,000 pictures or images. There are 200 introductory pages as well as 34 battle summaries, 44 biographies, 68 stories and 73 histories of regiments.

Over 90,000 soldiers fought from Wisconsin. There is a roster showing what happened to each soldier. A separate index leads to the letters, diaries, articles or other original documents mentioning more than 35,000 people. There are short biographies of important Wisconsin leaders describing their personal accomplishments and military careers.

The soldiers' stories featured on the website are excerpted from the letters and diaries. One can then view the original document.

Each regiment has its own history. One can immediately jump to the unit's roster, casualties, and official assignments. You can quickly view letters, diaries, memoirs and newspaper articles created by the regiment's soldiers.

Read a short history of every major Civil War battle and the part that Wisconsin troops played in it. There are links to a longer history of the battle, pictures, maps and original documents describing it. Discover eyewitness accounts of hundreds of less-famous engagements.

Michael said there are three specialized indexes. The first is a listing of 650 Wisconsin communities and what happened to the soldiers from that town. If you had ancestors living near a small town, you can look the town up and find out who served, in what regiment and follow the regiment to battles. Search by state, city or other location for historical documents describing the specific place during the Civil War.

There is then the index of the 35,000 names of soldiers. One can look to see what happened to an ancestor.

They have also put together a day in Wisconsin Civil War History. Michael called this a "factoid." Each day has a different entry involving a Wisconsin person or regiment during the war.

Michael showed us how to do a search on the site. He used the example of William Moore of Black River Falls. He was a sheriff and blacksmith there and married with children. He wrote back to the local newspaper of his unit's action. Mr. Moore died in battle.

Michael also said you can search help topics online if you have any questions.

New documents will be added each week through 2011 including soldier diaries, contemporary maps, rare pamphlets, unpublished manuscripts and selected records of the Wisconsin Adjutant General's office, Michael said. When finished, the collection will have more than 20,000 pages.

Michael ended his talk with a

question, "Why should we care about the Civil War 150 years later?"

For some it is a fulfillment of the promise of 1776 – that "all men are created equal" and the authority to govern comes from the people.

Others saw the Civil War as an act of God punishing the U.S. for tolerating slavery.

Some things about the war still resonate with us today – sectionalism is one. If you look at a map of the U.S., voting patterns tend to be very regional – the South and Northeast tend to vote in blocks.

There is also a sense of revisionism. Many argued that the war was all about "state rights." Yet the only right they seemed to care about was the right to own slaves. Michael said that, "people are entitled to their own opinions – not their own facts."

Race remains a huge issue in the U.S. and one that pervades our entire culture.

Finally, there is persistence. One cannot go anywhere without running into some monument from the Civil War.

It truly was an American war – pitting family members against one another.

Michael said that he felt Whitman was wrong – with the original documents found in this collection, we can know the truth about someone's life – a Wisconsin soldier serving during the Civil War.

So, check out the collection and learn about the Wisconsin men who served in the U.S. Army to save the Union.

## *Call for Papers, Presentations and Workshops*

The Dane County Area Genealogical Society is sponsoring a Genealogy Fair on Saturday, October 8, 2011. The Fair will be held at the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints at 4505

Regent Street in Madison, WI. We are looking for presentations, workshops and papers to be presented at the Fair. We welcome all topics that relate to genealogy, directly or indirectly.

Examples would be methods of research, workshops on writing family histories and details of successful genealogy journeys.

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# Upcoming events

## Madison Family History Center Speaker

**June 15:** Barbara Scherz Banks will be giving a presentation entitled, "Researching Your Roots." She is the author of the book about her great-grandmother called, "19<sup>th</sup> Century Wisconsin Writer, Mary Ellen Beardsley Smith." The book honors Banks' ancestors in the Sun Prairie Area. The event begins at 7 p.m. at the Madison Stake Center, Old Sauk Road and Bear Claw Way. (One mile off the beltline.)

## The German Interest Group - Wisconsin Tracing Your German Family

**When:** 9 July 2011

**Where:** Hamilton Center (attached to the James R. Connor University Center) on the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater campus.

**Featured speaker:** Lois Hemmeter Edwards, author of *Beginner's Guide to Germanic Genealogy* and former editor of *Germanic Genealogy Journal*.

**Registration:**

[www.rootsweb.com/~wigig/index.html](http://www.rootsweb.com/~wigig/index.html).

For more information or questions call (608) 752-0358. You can send a SASE to German Interest Group - Wisconsin, PO BOX 2185, Janesville WI 53547 to request a registration brochure. Early (discounted) registration deadline is 30 June.

## The Wisconsin State Genealogical Society

Its 2011 Fall seminar is scheduled for 15 October 2011 at the Country Springs Hotel, Water Park & Conference Center, 2810 Golf Rd., Pewaukee, Wisconsin (near Waukesha). The featured speaker will be James L. Hansen, FASG, Genealogical Reference Librarian at the Wisconsin Historical Society.

## Federation of Genealogical Societies 2011 Conference, Pathways to the Heartland

**When:** September 7-10, 2011

**Where:** Springfield, Illinois

**Registration:**

<http://www.fgs.org/2011conference/>

### Overview of the FGS 2011 Conference

FGS and local host, Illinois State Genealogical Society, are proud to announce the FGS 2011 Conference "Pathways to the Heartland" will be held on September 7-10, in Springfield, Illinois. This year's conference offers an exciting opportunity for anyone interested in researching their family history. Over 165 educational sessions are designed to balance the needs of genealogists at all levels, exploring a wide variety of topics including Midwestern research, migration and immigration, military, strategies and techniques, technology, and writing. The early registration deadline is July 1, which offers a savings of \$50 for a full conference registration. Additional details can be found on the FGS website at <http://fgs.org/2011conference>.

### Other Aspects of the Conference

**Prairie Social** – The Illinois State Genealogical Society presents *An Old Fashioned Prairie Social* on Wednesday evening, September 7, in the concourse of the Springfield Hilton Hotel. Guests will enjoy period music, indulge in delicious desserts and popcorn, tour Illinois society displays, match wits in a genealogy quiz game, and win fantastic prizes. Tickets for the event are \$8 and can be purchased using the conference registration form. More information about this event can be found on the FGS Conference News Blog at <http://www.fgsconferenceblog.org/2011/05/old-fashioned-prairie-social.html>.

**Society Showcase** – On Thursday evening, September 8, the *Society Showcase* brings together FGS member societies and conference attendees in the exhibit hall for an evening of extended hours, door prizes, networking, and fun! Attendees can browse tables and exhibits of countless societies and vendors. New this year is the "Ideas Exchange Table" where society members can swap ideas with others societies, learn what benefits others offer, what publications they provide, how they select speakers, and more. This is an opportunity for societies to join forces and start joint ventures that could be mutually beneficial.

Consider, for instance, societies that fall along a migration path pooling their information. The potential is endless! More information about this event can be found on the FGS Conference News Blog at

<http://www.fgsconferenceblog.org/2011/05/fgs-2011-conference-genealogical.html>.

**Volunteers** – Perhaps DCAGS members would like to volunteer at the 2011 conference, assisting with registration, room monitoring, technology, and other areas.

Volunteering makes the conference an enjoyable experience for those attending, and allows participants to meet new people, network, and give something back to the genealogical community. Here's an incentive to volunteer: FGS offers a reimbursement for a portion of your registration fee if you register at the early rate for the entire conference and volunteer a minimum of eight hours. Volunteer slots need to be filled from Tuesday, September 6 to Saturday, September 10. All of the details, including the reimbursement schedule and a list of opportunities, are on the conference website at

[www.fgs.org/2011conference/activities/volunteer.php](http://www.fgs.org/2011conference/activities/volunteer.php).

## President's Message

### Tell Us What You've Been Doing

The 2 June meeting will showcase a type of talk I wish we could have more often--one of our members telling about personal experiences in genealogical research. I'm sure that quite a few of you have been dealing with unusual genealogical challenges; the society's membership would like to hear about how you dealt with your challenges. We're an easy group to speak to, and we can offer technical

help if needed. Please get in touch with me if you'd like to consider sharing.

### A July picnic?

For the past several years DCAGS has held a special event in July in place of its regular meeting in the LDS church chapel, where we combined a picnic with a presentation. The Governing Board has approved doing this again this year, but as of the

moment I am writing this particulars have not been firmed up. Stay tuned!

### Thanks!

I'm pleased to report that a request for help we put in the last newsletter has been answered. Joyce Peterson has volunteered to take over half of the newsletter mailing responsibilities.

*Rollie Littlewood*

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

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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

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**See you at the  
June 2  
Meeting!**

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**DCAGS Governing Board for 2011:**

President: Rollie Littlewood  
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Vice President: Don Cole  
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Past President, Pat Skubis  
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Programs & Education: Vacant

Public Relations: Vacant

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[rsimpson@terracon.net](mailto:rsimpson@terracon.net)

***Genealogy Fair continued....***

This invitation is to genealogy-related societies, organizations and individuals and others that have related interests. The objective of the Genealogy Fair is to provide information about genealogical resources and research possibilities in the Madison and surrounding area communities, as well as resources available via the Internet.

If you have an interest in participating please provide a brief description of your topic, what method of presentation you would require (presentation, workshop or display), how much time you would need to make your presentation and any other information you think pertinent to our consideration. We intend to include as many presentations as possible but will be limited by the length of the fair and size of the facilities.

Please make your submission via email to [walker@viridis.ws](mailto:walker@viridis.ws). Any questions can be sent to the same address or made by phone to Walker Crawford at 608-206-3182. We will notify you by July 8 if your presentation has been accepted. If you need notification at an earlier date, please let us know.

Walker Crawford, Co-Chair

Patricia Skubis, Co-Chair