



# Dane County Area Genealogical Society News

## *Social Networking & Family Trees will be addressed at May 7 meeting*

You may be wondering what is "Social Networking" and whether those websites can be useful to genealogists. At the May 7 meeting Pat Skubis will be reviewing six sites currently engaged in providing social networking access for people engaged in genealogy.

Social Networking websites allow one to connect with family, swap stories and recipes, share family photos, or build collaborative family trees at these family networking portals. Each site offers some different features. One can make them public or keep them private.

The websites allow one to access your family tree records

from any computer with internet access. They are a great tool to use if doing research away from home. Some are totally free and some charge a nominal yearly fee.

Pat will be discussing the unique features of MyHeritage.com. This online service allows its members to create profiles and community sites online in order to communicate with family and friends, and to research their heritage with advanced face recognition and search tools.

With MyHeritage Research, genealogy research becomes easier, because for the first time, one can search multiple

databases simultaneously and it will take one to the exact page that the information is on.

The site also compares other family trees that have been submitted for what they call "Smart Matches" and notify you so that you can compare the data. If they have indeed found a match you can contact the submitter through their service. People around the world are using their service.

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

April 30, 2009

Volume 3, Issue 8

Mark your  
Calendars!

DCAGS  
Genealogy Fair

Saturday,  
October 10

Church of Jesus  
Christ of Latter-  
day Saints  
4505 Regent,  
Madison, WI

## *Naturalization Records*

Dee Grimsrud, Reference Archivist at the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS), gave DCAGS members an overview of naturalization records at the April 2 meeting. She clarified what naturalization records contain (and don't), the steps toward citizenship and how to locate the records you need, with an emphasis on Wisconsin records.

Naturalization records are the records immigrants used to become citizens of the U.S. From 1790 to 1906 immigrants could be naturalized by any court of record in the U.S. This means naturalization records

could be found in any municipal, circuit, county, equity, probate, common pleas, or chancery court, or even a State Supreme Court.

There was a two-step naturalization process. First, a Declaration of Intention could be filed at least two years after arriving in the U.S. The immigrant needed to keep his copy to file with his Petition for full citizenship after at least five more years.

The "second papers" (Petition) may have been filed in a different county or state from the "first papers"

(Declaration of Intention). Often the Declaration was filed where the immigrant first lived after arriving; then they may have moved west or northwest, where they filed their Petition (if they did at all).

Dee said to be careful: because citizenship wasn't mandatory, many immigrants who declared their intention to become a citizen never petitioned for final citizenship. Only the Declaration was required in order to be able to vote or to buy land from the federal government; there was

*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.**

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**DCAGS Update:**

*The DCAGS Governing Board meets the third Monday of each month. The next meeting is set for Monday, May 18 at 6:30 p.m. South Madison Library, 2222 Park St. We invite all members to attend. Please join us!*

### **Individual Highlights:**

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## Naturalization Records Continued....

no such requirement to purchase land from a private party.

The information in the records may vary from county to county and state to state, since there was no standardization of naturalization forms until Sept. 27, 1906. Dee said that Wisconsin records before 1906 often do not contain more than the name of the country the person is renouncing allegiance to. If you're lucky, the clerk used the longer form that included lines for the date and port of entry into the U.S.

Although age is sometimes stated, exact birthplace or birth date are almost never given. The names of a wife or minor children were not required in a pre-1906 naturalization record, although they automatically received citizenship at the same time as the husband/father. So these early WI naturalization records are not a good source for finding many hoped-for details, but they may contain good clues.

Dee said that the federal government did a study of the naturalization process in 1905, which found that over 5,000 different courts were handling naturalization records. It was also determined that there was a lot of fraud occurring, such as officials selling citizenship papers. Congress enacted legislation to clean up the naturalization process, which became effective 27 September 2006. It limited the number of courts hearing naturalization cases, standardized forms, set fees, and required that all records be indexed and copies sent to Washington D.C.

Most women did not become naturalized in their own right until the "Married Women's Act" in 1922 required them to do so. Instead, from 1790-1922, wives of naturalized men became citizens automatically. So a woman would have become a citizen without having to file any papers or to even appear on her husband's papers, either when she married (if the groom was already a citizen) or (if he was not yet naturalized when they married) later when the husband finalized his citizenship.

It's often assumed that minor children also became citizens when their father did. However, from 1824 to 1906, minor aliens who had lived in the U.S. for five years before their twenty-third birthday needed to file both their Declaration and Petitions at the same time to become citizens. Many people weren't aware of this requirement, and when Wisconsin implemented old age assistance in 1935, many who thought they were citizens found out they were not, and then filed.

Another exception to the filing of a Declaration of Intention was for military service. After July 1862, if a man served in either the regular or volunteer military forces, and was honorably discharged, the filing of the Declaration of Intention was waived and he was only required to have resided in the U.S. for one year (instead of five). But this does NOT mean that he automatically became a U.S. citizen upon honorable discharge; he still would have had to Petition for final citizenship and receive a Certificate of Citizenship. Some veterans may have misunderstood and thought that just having been a soldier made them a citizen, and may even have claimed so on a census.

Dee said there's an excellent description of naturalization laws in *The Source* (published by Ancestry), Chapter 13: Immigration: Finding Immigrant Origins. The text is also available online at Ancestry.com, but you have to be a subscriber to access it. It would be better, however, to consult a copy of the book, which has charts and illustrations that are not on Ancestry.com.

The naturalization records for all Wisconsin counties except Dane, Columbia, Sauk, Milwaukee and Menominee, are located at an Area Research Center. Those for Dane, Columbia and Sauk Counties are housed in Madison. Milwaukee County records are at the Milwaukee County Historical Society. Because Menominee

County was not incorporated until 1961, check for earlier records in Oconto and Shawano Counties.

For an online chart showing Wisconsin counties, the dates of their naturalization records, and where the records are located see [www.wisconsinhistory.org/genealogy/natlzn/natlist.asp](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/genealogy/natlzn/natlist.asp).

For more details about the naturalization records of a specific Wisconsin county, check the online catalog of the Wisconsin Historical Society Archives at <http://arc.library.wisc.edu>.

If the year you need is not included there, then contact the clerk of courts in the county where the filing occurred. If the county doesn't have the more recent records, they're probably at the Great Lakes Regional Archives in Chicago; see [www.archives.gov/great-lakes/](http://www.archives.gov/great-lakes/).

The federal government maintains a duplicate file of naturalizations that took place after 27 September 1906. Dee explained that the former INS has been renamed the "U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services" and now has a streamlined way to order copies of their historical records; see [www.uscis.gov/genealogy](http://www.uscis.gov/genealogy).

Dee also suggested checking out Footnote, which has a section of naturalization records for other states at [www.footnote.com](http://www.footnote.com).

For more information on WI naturalization records, as well as general naturalization processes and procedures, visit [www.wisconsinhistory.org/genealogy/natlzn/index.html](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/genealogy/natlzn/index.html) and the National Archives' site at <http://archives.gov/genealogy/naturalization/>.

Dee passed out a series of handouts at the meeting. If you would like to receive a copy of them, please contact her at [Dee.Grimmsrud@wisconsinhistory.org](mailto:Dee.Grimmsrud@wisconsinhistory.org).

We thank Dee for providing us with great information on finding the naturalization records of our immigrant ancestors.

## Upcoming events

### **Cemetery Art Workshop**

When: June 13, 2009; 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Where: Union Presbyterian Church, Green County

Featured speaker: Minda Powers Douglas, "Cemetery Art: Museums on the Lawn." She is the Epitaphs Magazine editor and publisher of *Tombstones Translated and Cemetery Walk*. The class will visit a cemetery and do gravestone rubbings.

Cost: \$30 for Green County Genealogical Society members, \$35 non-members.

Registration: Due 6/1/2009. For information, contact [green\\_ancestors@hotmail.com](mailto:green_ancestors@hotmail.com)

### **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/>

### **Passages Through Time Federation of Genealogical Societies**

When: September 2-5, 2009

Where: Little Rock Convention Center, Little Rock, AR

Cost: \$175 pre-June 2, \$225 post-June 2; costs do not include meals

Registration: For information go to: <http://www.fgs.org>

### **Whose Father Was He?**

Recently Errol Morris ran a five-part series on a book by Mark H. Dunkelman, "Gettysburg's Unknown Soldier," in the *New York Times*. It is a fascinating account of a Civil War soldier who died on the battlefield with no identification, except he was clutching the picture of three small children.

The picture was distributed in the north and he was eventually identified as Amos Humiston and his widow and children identified.

Dunkelman's book explores not only who Humiston was, but his interesting life and the tragedy of what happened to his family. Dunkelman answers two important questions for genealogists, who is Humiston to us and what does he mean to us?

I have included two of the links to Morris' columns, the first and last. The other columns are linked to the final installment.

<http://morris.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/29/whose-father-was-he-part-one/>

<http://morris.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/04/02/whose-father-was-he-part-five/>

Dunkelman's book is available online at the Madison Public Library.

*Ruth Simpson*

## President's Message

Thank you to DCAGS members who helped at Gene-A-Rama

I'd like to thank a large number of DCAGS members who volunteered to help make the Wisconsin State Genealogical Society's annual Gene-A-Rama conference a success. In return for our society acting as the local host and many of our members helping with registration and other conference functions, WSGS made a sizable donation to a local genealogical repository selected by your board -- the Wisconsin Historical Society library archives. This donation may be more important for the support it shows that the genealogical community has for the library archives than for the actual dollar amount, but every dollar counts. Those who volunteered to help include Joanne Reis, Joan Nagle, Bob Stone, Sherry Lloyd, Don Cole, Ruth Simpson, Barb Abbott, Pat Konrad, Jill Hynum, Sandy Zart, Fay Schoenemann, Nancy Mullen,

Dorothy Klinefelter, Bill Baures, and Lucile McFee. As things worked out, several of those who volunteered were not actually able to help during the conference, but your offer to help was still appreciated very much. I am away from home as I write this, so I apologize if I have overlooked any volunteer or misspelled any name.

Put the DCAGS summer picnic on your calendar

The DCAGS governing board has voted to hold another picnic meeting this coming July. Many of you will remember the picnic meeting we had last July at the Fitchburg Community Center, complete with food prepared by several volunteers from the board and supplemented with desserts, etc., brought by several society members. After the picnic supper we were treated to a very enjoyable set of family history reminiscences written and read by former students of Ann Short. (Personally I'd rather forget the weather we encountered just

ahead of the picnic, but we had a good time despite any challenges from the weather and the resulting snarled traffic.)

Please make space on your calendar for a DCAGS picnic meeting on the evening of Thursday, July 9 (a week later than usual, in order to avoid conflicts with July 4th holiday events) at the Fitchburg Community Center, and watch this newsletter for more details.

Progress on having high-speed internet access at DCAGS meetings

Last month I wrote that the Governing Board is looking for ways to be able to provide high-speed internet access for speakers at our meetings. We will have our first trial run at the 7 May meeting. Come and see how well it works!

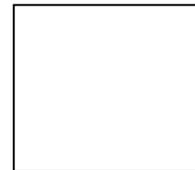
*Rollie Littlewood*

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)



**Dane County Area  
Genealogical Society**

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

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See you  
May 7

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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 2009:

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

Vice President: Don Cole

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

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

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

Standing Committee Chairs

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

Programs & Education: Vacant

Public Relations: Vacant

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

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

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

***Update on Proposed State Budget  
Increases Future Costs for  
Genealogists***

The Joint Committee on Finance, the state's budget committee, has approved the Governor's proposal that stops the repeal of the current fees for a copy of a birth certificate, death certificate, marriage certificate, or divorce or annulment certificate. The costs will remain \$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. The Committee did not approve the \$2 increase proposed for a birth certificate.

To keep up to date with the budget process, go to  
<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lfb/jfc.html>

Once the Joint Finance Committee completes its work, the bill will go to the Assembly and then the Senate for consideration.