



# Dane County Area Genealogical Society News

## *Exciting New Developments at FamilySearch at October 7 Meeting*

*September 30, 2010  
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For over ten years, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has sponsored a free family history website, FamilySearch.org. The website has provided indexed records, family trees and helpful research guidance to genealogists the world over. Now, FamilySearch is expanding to provide even more resources. This presentation will bring the audience up-to-date on the latest developments and also provide a glimpse into the future of FamilySearch.

Our speaker is Maureen Brady, a former school librarian and computer educator has over twenty-five years experience doing family history research and who is now a professional genealogist. She has traced her own Scottish roots back to the

end of the 17th century and beyond, and has also pursued Chicago area, trans-Allegheny U.S., Irish and Swedish research. She is the co-director and trainer for the Crystal Lake (Illinois) Family History Center.

Maureen has made numerous presentations to Illinois and Wisconsin genealogical societies, conferences and workshops, as well as presenting at the 2002 National Genealogical Society Conference. Her topics include Chicago and Cook County research, Scottish research, Internet sources, and using a Family History Center. She is a life member of the Aberdeen and North East Scotland Family History Society, the Chicago Genealogical Society and the Ohio Genealogy Society. She is

also active in the British Interest Group of Wisconsin & Illinois, the Illinois St. Andrew Society's Scottish Genealogical Group, the National Genealogical Society, the Lake County (Illinois) Genealogical Society and the Clan Donnachaidh Society, for which she serves as one of the U.S. clan genealogists. Maureen is also a member of The Association of Professional Genealogists and the Genealogical Speakers Guild.

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

## *Genealogy on a Budget*

Lori Bessler of Library Archives at the Wisconsin Historical Society gave an excellent presentation on how to do genealogy on a budget. There were many useful ideas and tips for getting the most out of your time and money.

Lori said the key is to "organize." Do you have all the names, dates and places for each person in the family? Censuses, vital records, indexes are the most free, accessible and informative resources available. Be sure to take advantage of them.

Lori recommends using timelines to discover the holes in your research. Try a timeline for an individual, but then also for all members of the family.

Lori said one will get better answers if you form full questions that are backed up with research you've already done.

When ordering documents, Lori suggested that you send for as many records at one time to avoid more than one service fee.

The second key point is to keep high standards of research. Photocopy all records. Print the online catalog records for bibliographic information, which can be used to cite sources.

Primary records – created at the time of the event – are always more important than secondary sources – created at a later time – to researchers.

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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, October 19 at 6:30 p.m. at the new South Madison Library on 2222 Park St. We invite all members to attend. Please join us!***

## *Genealogy on a Budget Continued...*

At libraries, use the reference staff. They are free and often can provide valuable information. If you can't find what you are looking for for free, it may be worth the money to pay for the knowledge of archival or library staff.

While doing research online at libraries, email the documents to yourself so you can download them when you get home. This helps you avoid printing fees.

Lori went through a list of resources that are free. Public libraries carry the Ancestry Library Edition and HeritageQuest. FamilySearch.org is adding information all the time. Footnote is available at WHS and US Genweb has free volunteered-based collections.

Research institutions may have free digital collections. One can search by state or university and simply add phrases like "digital collection," or "library," "archives," "genealogical" or "historical." This allows you to search different states for information you are looking for.

Maps, photos, books and records all appear on sites like these. Test the sites to see if you can download collections/pages free. Photos maybe captured by right clicking on them.

You can also check for books online with Google books, ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) Family History Archives ([www.lib.byu.edu/fhc/](http://www.lib.byu.edu/fhc/)) or Hathi trust ([catalog.hathitrust.org/](http://catalog.hathitrust.org/)). Some books may no longer be under copyright and can be copied freely. You may be able to print the pages you want. If you can only view a partial text, get the book through Interlibrary Loan.

Lori said there is sometimes free data on paid sites. This allows one to check out the deals throughout the year.

Search engines can be used to

search for vital records or immigration records – [www.deathindexes.com](http://www.deathindexes.com). The Social Security Death Index is available of various sites and is now interactive on [www.footnote.com](http://www.footnote.com).

Lori said Footnote is adding 2 million images a month, including birth records and city directories.

If you are looking for researchers, they can be found at Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness, [www.raogk.com](http://www.raogk.com) and [www.usgenweb.com](http://www.usgenweb.com) as well as local historical or genealogical societies.

What isn't online? A lot! Lori said one can start with [www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org). It is an online catalog for hundreds of libraries, public and academic. It also includes archival collections. It lists who owns the material. You can call the library and ask them about availability and services.

If some book or record is not online, interlibrary loan could make them available to you cheaply.

There are also many collections at local historical or genealogical societies. They won't be loaned out, but you may be able to copy for low fees or donations.

So how does one avoid large fees? Once again the interlibrary loan. Simply ask that the records be sent to your local library. With FamilySearch, one can borrow from a Family History Center or affiliate library in your area. In Wisconsin, the Area Research Centers allow transfers between other ARC libraries.

Message boards allow one to find volunteer researchers who may copy items for you without

any major fees. One can also use Facebook and Footnote to find local researchers who may be able to help you. Also offer to trade research with others.

Also check at smaller libraries, they may have smaller fees than larger institutions.

Remember to bring a flash drive with you whenever you travel. It allows you to download documents onto it at the library and avoid large copying fees.

Lori said there are times when you will probably have to pay larger amounts – archival collections that aren't online and are too voluminous to copy by a volunteer, Register of Deeds and State Vital Record Offices (often have statutory or standard fees for copies), large urban areas, or there is no free researcher for that county.

Lori recommends keeping up with updates to websites and collections by signing up for email newsletters – Ancestry ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)) and Family Tree Magazine ([www.familytreemagazine.com](http://www.familytreemagazine.com)). Lori recommends using a free yahoo or gmail email account for this purpose.

Check out blogs for free access to various sites – [www.genealogyblog.com](http://www.genealogyblog.com), <http://blog.eogn.com> (Dick Eastman's blog, updated daily), [www.ehow.com](http://www.ehow.com) (quick steps to research) and <http://genealogy.about.com>.

All these items will help make your genealogy more rewarding without costing you an arm and leg to do it.

We thank Lori for her valuable information on helping us do genealogy on a budget.

## *Elections in November*

Not only do we have some important elections coming up on November 2, DCAGS will be having its annual meeting and election on Thursday, November 4.

Pat Skubis, Jim Benes and Ruth

Simpson form the Nominating Committee this year. Right now Rollie Littlewood has agreed to serve another term as President. This would be a two-year term. The other position that is open is the office of Secretary – Gerry Schlecht will be stepping down after

serving in this position since Dec. 2007.

If you are interested in serving as Secretary, please contact a member of the Nominating committee.

# Upcoming events

## 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)

## The German Interest Group

**Where:** St. Mark Lutheran Church, 2921 Mt. Zion Ave., Janesville

**When:** Monday, October 4 at 7:00 p.m.

**Speaker:** GIG member Linda Meyer will give a presentation on the city of Berlin, Germany, and on cities and villages in an area of northern Germany and northern Poland that was known for almost 800 years as Pomerania (Pommern in German), including Kamien (Cammin), Triebiatow (Treptow), Swiecie Kolobrzeskie (Schwedt), Zarben (Sarbia) and Korzystno (Alt Werder). Meyer's presentation, a conclusion of her June lecture, will include photographs and historical information. Meyer is a retired environmental lawyer, a volunteer for HospiceCare patients and the Madison Overture Center, and does family genealogical research.

**Registration:** There is no charge to attend the meeting, and visitors are always welcome.

**Info:** contact Rick Leyes at (608) 754-5538.

## Genealogy Classes Oregon Community Education Classes

### Genealogy/Family History – Advanced

This class will include Google and other search engines, resources at the Library of Congress, unusual background resources, black sheep in the family, and using social networking to connect with distant family and enlarge your family tree. Beginning and Intermediate classes will be offered in the spring!

**Instructor:** Patricia Skubis

**Dates:** Tuesdays, Oct. 5 – Nov. 2

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

**Fee:** \$44

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

Min/Max. 8/15

Fall registration is now open at <http://db.oregonsd.org/ce/> or if you have questions or comments please contact us at the District Office at 835-4097 or email [srl@oregonsd.net](mailto:srl@oregonsd.net).

## President's Message

### Who Wants to Index?

Probably every DCAGS member who uses the Internet has used the FamilySearch website, either for research guidance or to obtain genealogical data. FamilySearch is in the midst of a very ambitious project to expand the amount of genealogical data available on its website and to create indexes (or better indexes) to make it easier to access the data you need. We are going to learn about some of these efforts at our October meeting.

All the data sets currently being indexed for FamilySearch will include the images as well as the indexes, and will be available at no charge to anyone in the genealogical community. The images are being put online by FamilySearch staff, but the indexes to the data on these images are being created by a large "army" of volunteer indexers. Two examples of recent FamilySearch indexing projects are the Wisconsin 1910 federal census and the Wisconsin portion of the World War II Fourth Draft

Registration Cards ("Old Man's Registration," April 1942, men between the ages of 45 and 64). My understanding is that the input has been completed for these two projects, but the verification is still in progress. I want to encourage each member to look into helping with this indexing; you do NOT need to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to participate. I will admit that I have not yet signed up to help out, but I am quite enthusiastic about the project. All work is done on your own computer; you download the images to be indexed and transfer information from specified fields of the (usually) handwritten form to an input form by typing in what you read. Someone else will be doing the exact same thing with the same images. Then the two sets of results are compared--if they match, great!; if they don't match, then a process is initiated to resolve the differences. I can't tell you right now how the indexing being done by FamilySearch will compare with the indexing being done by

[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) (most of which are accessible only by paid subscription), but I understand that in the case of censuses, the FamilySearch indexes will include more types of data than the Ancestry.com indexes. I expect that many of the FamilySearch indexes will be of data not indexed at all elsewhere.

You get to choose which data set you will work on from a group of currently-open projects. I don't know what the next "Wisconsin project" will be, but you won't be restricted to working on Wisconsin data. You can learn a bit more at <https://indexing.fsbeta.familysearch.org/> and at <http://tinyurl.com/2g8ustd>. If you have questions about FamilySearch indexing opportunities, you should be able to get some answers at our 7 October meeting.

*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

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**See you at  
the October 7  
Meeting!**

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**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  
[beverlylmvaughn@charter.net](mailto:beverlylmvaughn@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)

***Temporary Suspension of On-Site  
Vital Records Research at State Vital  
Records Office***

The State Vital Records Office announced that it will not schedule appointments for on-site researchers between Oct. 1, 2010 and Jan. 2011. They hope to resume appointments in January.

The search room staff person became vacant recently due to a retirement and other staff is intensely involved in a large project to modernize and protect the Wisconsin vital records systems.

The office anticipates that there may be other temporary suspensions of service in the future when vital records staff and contractors are converting paper and filmed records into the new electronic system.

To find information on how to apply for a copy of a vital record online go to [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/vitalrecords](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/vitalrecords).

***Forum on the DCAGS Website***

The latest issue of *Forum* is on the DCAGS website:

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~widcags/forumsforum/forum10fall.pdf>. All 2008 and 2009 issues are available. Use "08" instead of "09" and "spring," "summer," "fall" or "winter" -- as appropriate.