Chronicling Illinois provides digital access to collections of The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. More than 6000 individual manuscript collections, hundreds of newspapers, and tens of thousands of photographs can be found online. Currently Chronicling Illinois displays four collections: Manuscript Finding Aids, the Louise and Barry Taper Collection, the Civil War papers of Illinois Governor Richard Yates, and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library’s Audio-visual collection.

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is asking members of the public to help transcribe online 30,000 pages of documents written during the Civil War. To do this, simply go to the ChroniclingIllinois.org website, create an account, and begin transcribing items you choose. At the time of this writing, 13,636 documents are available for transcription with 48 transcriptions in progress, 709 transcriptions completed and 453 transcriptions read to be reviewed. This project is only 5% complete.

By transcribing these documents, the Lincoln Library staff hopes to create a searchable transcription of all the documents to make the records available to the public and to allow genealogists to find the information and specific materials more quickly.

Information for this article taken from the ChroniclingIllinois.org website, an AP article printed in The Peoria Journal Star, December 14, 2014.
ISGS Members:

The ISGS president, Jayne Cates, has given me the opportunity to introduce myself to ISGS members and anyone reading this newsletter.

My name is Becky Higgins. I am currently on the ISGS board as a 2015 Director, Cemeteries Chair, and Indexing Coordinator. My work with ISGS began in 2011 as the Honors and Awards Chair. Reading the many accomplishments of the dedicated nominees was awe inspiring to say the least. Taking stock of my own endeavors left me with only one answer to the offer to join the board as a Director – yes. Giving back to the community is the way of genealogists.

In addition to my time with ISGS, I’ve been on the board of my local Society – Elgin Genealogical Society (EGS) – since 1995 in one position or another. Until this year, that is, as I’m taking a sabbatical. Why EGS? It meets within fifteen miles of my home, it holds 23 meetings, one morning and one evening, each year in order to serve the most genealogists possible, it provides on-line databases free to all (elginroots.com), and its members are friendly and helpful to all.

I have no direct ancestors who sojourned in Illinois for more than five years; however, my husband’s side has Chicago and Hampshire natives. I have already published (for family only and some libraries) his Ruch family story and am currently working on writing the stories of my husband’s mother’s ancestors who hailed from Denmark, Sweden, and Cornwall, England. I’ve published my Leisure line and hope to write-up the rest of my lines who settled in Indiana.

Bottom line: I’ve been active in Illinois as a way to give back to the genealogical community which has provided me with wonderful research assistance from all over the US and the world. If the work I do helps someone then I’ve done my job of paying it forward. I encourage you to consider doing the same. One way to do so would be to help with the ISGS’s latest indexing project. This would be a great time to start because it’s something you can do from the comfort of your own home. For more information on the project contact me at bhiggins9@gmail.com.

Best of luck with your research and may any of your “brick walls” come tumbling down.

Becky Higgins
Montgomery County Genealogical & Historical Websites

In an effort to draw attention to local and regional genealogical societies and the research / services they provide...

After searching many of our local genealogical and historical society websites for information, I think I have found the cream of the crop in Montgomery County. First, The Historical Society of Montgomery County Illinois Digital Archive website, http://history.montgomeryco.com/. It caught my attention, and I keep coming back. Second, is the Montgomery County (IL) Genealogical Society website, http://www.mcgsil.com/. It is one that looks alive and interesting while reaching out to Montgomery County residents.

The Historical Society of Montgomery County Illinois -- The simplicity, yet thorough design, is the eye catcher. Current copyright 1913-2014, and the message board are indicators that the site is alive. On the home page one is struck with the black and white photographs, the 11 database links, the message board, the call for volunteers, and new member relationships to their ancestors in Montgomery County. Once you register for their site (it is free) you can access the databases. Upon registering I received a message (in the site’s My Messages) welcoming me and offering to help me navigate their half-million county records and 30,000 photos they hold in their Digital Archive. Archives include 867 biographies, Montgomery County History organized by Town, 3,644 Photos and 25 books. Their mission is to create a forum or venue for those who are interested in history, especially in the history of Montgomery County, Illinois.

The Montgomery County (IL) Genealogical Society - The site’s use of color and graphics breathes life. On their home page a picture of the Courthouse as it once looked, an ancestor chart, and announcement of their latest publication as well as the reminder that undocumented genealogy is mythology.

They include a state map with the placement of the county highlighted and a menu of six links to the pages within their site. They have a page featuring their latest publication and offering the opportunity for family histories to be included in a work-in-progress, a Book of Montgomery County History and Family Sketches. The intrigue here is the society’s outreach to high school students, businesses, churches, and organizations to participate. They have a page devoted to their Research Center. It gives their address and hours. Not only do they hold Montgomery County books, but, over 200 books available for other Illinois’ counties. They also have many societies’ Genealogy Quarterlies. The Membership page has PDF membership forms and dues schedule including family and lifetime memberships. The News and Events page contains information on upcoming meetings. The Database Link has 14 different sections including many index lists including over 103,900 names that have appeared in their Quarterly. They devote a page for the sale of their publications and a PDF form for ordering. And lastly the About Us page gives location and email address. It provides information about Meetings, the MCGS Research Center, Acquisitions, and Quarterly. Organized in 1978 by individuals interested in family history and preservation of family records and historical information for those families in Montgomery County.

written by Sandy Barnett, ISGS Society Liaison
The following is a review of a 30 minute YouTube video of Dottie Hopkins-Rehan, Senior Archival Conservator from the Illinois Secretary of State’s Office. The video can be found at the following YouTube address:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcb3JwPjDjA

…It was certainly worth the half hour it took to watch and listen to this video. I have no background beyond “don’t step on it” and “don’t tear it”. In other words, Not much! Dottie Hopkins-Rehan speaks clearly, slowly enough, and is always understanding of the fact that not all collections have ideal locations, or enough money to use the finest choices. She offered second and third choices…and talked about what the most important factors were so that one could guard them first and then make choices that were possible. The presenter did a good job of blending what “should” be done with the reality of what “could” be done at your site

I’d recommend this short film to you.

written by Kristy Gravlin
Welcome New ISGS Members

Desiree Booker, Chicago, IL
Charles & Rebecca Dobias, Carlyle, IL
Beth Phillips, Cottage Hills, IL
Toni Holmes, Elgin, IL
Judith Ann Craddock, Mt. Pleasant, TN
Clytee Kleager Gold, Holladay, UT
Linda Kimes, Bristol, WI
Vicki Evans, Morrow, GA
Dannell Altman-Newell, Shawnee, KS
George R Ward, Benton, IL
Virginia & Allan Willey, Williamsburg, VA
Lisa Ferrand Hunter, Victor, ID
Linda Bloomfield, Timonium, MD
Karen Relstab, Libertyville, IL
James D Craig, Mattoon, IL
Peggy Villani, Arnold, MO
Dyna Duncan, Edmond, OK
Cynthia Barnhart, Lake Kiowa, TX
Jackie Mantua, Woodbine, MD
The DAR Library, Washington, DC
James Bail, Stanfordville, NY
Diane Gonzalez, Chicago, IL
Barbara Gilliland, Kokoma, IN
Donna Bailey, Redmond, WA
Nancy Leitschuh, Machesney Park, IL
Roger Higgs, Apple River, IL
Gene Naujock, Toledo, OH
Elaine Fisher, Naperville, IL
Kim Boyce Hagerty, Chicago, IL
Sandra Simmons, Tustin, CA
Jim Durham, Tacoma, WA
Bev Hartsock, Clinton, IL
Philip Craig Weiser, Philadelphia, PA
Dennis Rone, Westerville, OH

Join or Renew Your Membership Online: It’s EASY!

You can renew your membership online at http://ilgensoc.org/cpage.php?pt=8, or mail your renewal to:
ISGS Membership Renewal, PO Box 10195, Springfield, IL 62791-0195

Individual/Associate/Subscription: $35, Joint (two people at same address): $40,

Address Changes

If you have a change of either mailing address or an email address or both, it is important to let the ISGS office know. We cannot be responsible for resending issues that could not be forwarded to a new address. Your email is how you will receive this newsletter and other "blast emails". Please keep your email current.

Contact ISGS

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 10195, Springfield, IL 62791-0195 Executive Office: IL State Archives Building, 2nd floor
Office Telephone: (217)-789-1968 Website: ilgensoc.org, Facebook: facebook.com/ILGenSoc, Twitter @ILGenSoc#ISGS
Office Hours: Mondays and Thursdays 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Advertise in Newsletter

ISGS online newsletter is published in January, March, May, July, September, November. Advertising is available by contacting the advertising chairperson at isgsadvertising@ilgensoc.org

Newsletter Articles

Please send articles for the newsletter to isgsnewsletter@ilgensoc.org. Pictures are welcome (not in a pdf please). Just include your caption with names, places, details.
With the generous help of its volunteers, ISGS is poised for continued success. The positions listed below present some interesting and exciting opportunities for you! Please consider helping ISGS achieve its mission to preserve and disseminate Illinois historical and genealogical materials, and to educate and aid those researching their ancestry.

INDEXING PROJECT

ISGS’s newest project indexing ledgers from the IL Dept. of Registration and Education 1877-1952. Volunteers need computer with CD drive, Microsoft Excel, and Internet. If you are not already in our database of indexers, please contact Becky.

Contact Becky Higgins, Indexing Coordinator at bhiggins9@gmail.com

ISGS Board Volunteers Needed

• Finance and Budget Chair: This committee monitors the financial condition of ISGS, makes recommendations to the ISGS Governing Board, and compiles the annual budget.

• Long Range Planning: This committee considers plans for the improvement of ISGS. The committee solicits suggestions from the members, reports to the ISGS Governing Board, and present projects for action.

• Advertising Chair: This committee chair solicits advertising for various ISGS publications and fall conference syllabus.

• ISGS Archivist: The Archivist coordinates activities to properly preserve and maintain the private records of the Society at the Illinois State Archives in Springfield, IL. These records do NOT involve the society’s public genealogical holdings at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

For more information or to VOLUNTEER, contact Susie Pope at isgs2ndvp@ilgensoc.org. Say yes if she emails or calls you!!
2nd Tuesday of every month, 8:00 PM CST featuring some of the nation’s best known speakers in the field of genealogy!

January 13 – Using Google Earth for Genealogy
Presenter: Lisa Louise Cooke
Registration: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2933074072977427457

February 3 – Basic Scandinavian Research*
Presenter: Diana Smith
Registration: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6829079176792483329
* This webinar is held one week earlier than our regular schedule to accommodate those attending the FGS 2015 and RootsTech conferences

Complete webinar descriptions are available on the ISGS website at http://ilgensoc.org/cpage.php?pt=234

ISGS Quarterly
The Illinois State Genealogical Society Quarterly is read by over 1000 members and is held in many libraries throughout IL and the US. The Quarterly is published four times a year. The editor accepts original, unpublished submissions for inclusion in upcoming issues. If you would like to contribute, please refer to the ISGS website for submission guidelines. All inquiries go to isgsquarterly@ilgensoc.org

If you are interested in advertising in the Quarterly or the newsletter, please contact the Advertising Committee at isgsadvertising@ilgensoc.org

Translations from German, Dutch, and French to English
Gordon Hartig
P.O. Box 2744
Evansville, IN 47728
Telephone: (812) 430-9117
Email: gordon@gartigtranslations.com
website: http://www.hartigtranslations.com
Specializing in Old German Script

The ISGS Quarterly is always looking for Bible records to print. Fill out the form on the ISGS website and mail to ISGS or Kristy Gravlin, 204 West North, Plano, IL 60545. Bible records for publication do NOT have to have an IL resident. Better to save them than to risk losing them.

FGS: Federation of Genealogical Societies Conference 2016
Planning for the 2016 FGS Conference in Springfield, Illinois is well underway. One of the first areas to be completed will be the Program tracks and sessions. Paul Milner, Program Committee Chair is asking for suggestions of Illinois related subjects. Email Susie & Janice at conferences@fgs.org with your ideas.
The Federal Census is an invaluable resource for your Family History research. The early census records included the names of the head of the household along with an enumeration of males and females in various age groups in the same household. Beginning in 1850, the census took on a new look and included names of everyone in the household, along with their ages. Each Census added a few more questions that help us add a bit more to our ancestors’ stories. For example, while the 1840 census did not include the names of every person in the household, it did enumerate the number of “Free Colored Persons”, “Slaves”, and “Pensioners for Revolutionary or military service” among other items. Even without the names of every person in the household, this can give you clues about who is in the household. The 1850 Census questions included a question about the value of “Real Estate Owned” while in 1860 the value of “Personal Estate” was included. The 1900 Census questions are some of my favorites because for the first time, women are asked to complete the questions “Mother of how many children” and “Number of these children living.” In addition, the household members are asked about their citizenship, including the year of immigration to the U.S. and whether they are naturalized. There are too many of these questions to list, so to see all of the questions asked for each Federal census, you can download and print free forms from http://www.ancestry.com/download/forms. The additional schedules compiled in several census years are also helpful--but that's another column! Happy Researching!

written by Mary Westerhold

The Surname Society
If you are interested in single surname studies, check them out!
http://surname-society.org
info@surname-society.org

Use your mouse to wave over any link, email, or website and you can click to get to that site from the newsletter. All links are live! Have Fun!!

Finding Women in the War of 1812 Pension Files
Check out this blog on Preserve the Pension website. It teaches the genealogist how to find the very valuable War of 1812 Widow’s Pension records.

Just click on the link above “A Soldier’s Wife at Fort Niagara” below to take you to the blog.

http://www.preservethepensions.org/blog/finding-women-war-1812-pension-files/?utm_source=FGS+Newsletter&utm_campaign=2bae225932-Novel&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1f1c05046e-2bae225932-38145573

Contribution Match to ISGS
If you’re thinking about making a donation to the Illinois State Genealogical Society, please also consider checking with your employer to see if matching funds are available for employee charitable contributions. Many corporations offer this incentive to encourage their employees to contribute to not-for-profit programs; more than half of all Fortune 500 companies will match employee donations. Your contribution can have twice the impact in supporting ISGS by tapping into this source of funding that's often overlooked.

The Illinois State Genealogical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization and contributions are tax-exempt to the extent of the relevant law.

Written by Margaret Truax
Announcing: 1st Carl Sandburg Institute of Genealogy
28 May-1 June 2015, Carl Sandburg College in Galesburg, Illinois
www.sandburggenealogy.com

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN! Facebook www.facebook.com/sandburggenealogy

Nationally known genealogical research experts presenting the following tracks:

*Refining Internet and Digital Skills for Genealogy-Cyndi Ingle of Cyndi’s List

*Advanced Methodology and Analysis-Michael John Neill of Genealogy Tip of the Day

*The Advancing Genealogist: Research Standards, Tools, and Records-Debbie Mieszala, CGSM

*Germanic Research Sources and Methods-Teresa McMillin, CGSM

Governing Board Meetings: Open to Members
2014-2015 ISGS Schedule for Executive Board and Governing Board meetings

21 February 2015 Executive Board 8:30 AM Governing Board 10:00 AM
Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois (weather permitting)

16 May 2015 Executive Board 8:30 AM Governing Board 10:00 AM
Site to be determined

15 August 2015 Executive Board 8:30 AM Governing Board 10:00 AM
Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois

24 October 2015 Annual Meeting at the ISGS Conference Hilton Chicago/Oak Lawn, 9333 South Cicero Avenue, Chicago

Everyone is welcome to attend any Governing Board meeting (10:00 AM). Please make the annual meeting a priority!

PBS Genealogy Roadshow
Tuesday, 13 January 2015, 7:00 PM Central Time,
2nd season begins
http://www.pbs.org/program/genealogy-roadshow/
2015 Webinar Series
Online Educational Opportunities for the Genealogist!

Schedule

Using Google Earth for Genealogy
January 13, 2015 at 8pm (Central) with Lisa Louise Cooke

Basic Scandinavian Research
February 3, 2015 at 8pm (Central) with Diana Crisman Smith

Finding Your Femme Fatales: Exploring the Dark Side of Female Ancestors
March 10, 2015 at 8pm (Central) with Lisa Alzo

Using Evernote as Your Primary Tool for Capturing Notes and Ideas
April 14, 2015 at 8pm (Central) with Drew Smith

Need Direction? Try City Directories!
May 12, 2015 at 8pm (Central) with Jean Wilcox Hibben

Understanding Our Families, Understanding Ourselves
June 9, 2015 at 8pm (Central) with Ron Arons

Dissect Obituaries for New Clues
July 14, 2015 at 8pm (Central) with George G. Morgan

School Daze – Finding and Using School Records to Trace Our Ancestors
August 11, 2015 at 8pm (Central) with Peggy Clemens Launtenz

Using Tax Records for Genealogical Problem Solving
September 8, 2015 at 8pm (Central) with Michael Lacopo

Polish Genealogy – Four Steps to successful research
October 13, 2015 at 8pm (Central) with Steve Szabados

In-laws and Outlaws: The Bylaws of Talking About The Family Skeletons
November 10, 2015 at 8pm (Central) with Janet Hovorka

The US Federal Census: Good, Bad and Ugly for Genealogists
December 8, 2015 at 8pm (Central) with Gary Smith

FAQs

What is a webinar? A webinar is a live lecture/presentation that you can attend via a computer with an internet connection.

Is there a cost to attend an ISGS webinar? No, ISGS offers the live broadcast of its webinars to the public for free.

How do I sign up to attend a webinar? Visit the Webinars page at http://bit.ly/ISGSWebinars and click the “register” link for each session you want to attend. Fill out the short form to complete your registration.

How do I attend the webinar? After you sign up for a session, you will receive an email that provides instructions to join the live broadcast online at the scheduled date and time. A reminder email will be sent a few days prior to the scheduled webinar with the same instructions.

What if I cannot attend the live broadcast? We understand that the live broadcasts may not fit into your schedule. If you are an ISGS member you will have to access the recorded version of past webinars through the Members Section of the ISGS website, to watch at your convenience. Not a member? Join ISGS at http://bit.ly/joinisgs.

Learn More & Register

For a description of each webinar, or to register, visit http://bit.ly/ISGSWebinars.

Top Archived Recordings

Recordings of all past webinars are available to ISGS members through the Members Section of the ISGS website. Some of our top webinars from 2012, 2013, and 2014 include:

- Treasures and Hidden Secrets of the Illinois Regional Archives
  Luana Darby

- Going Nuclear: DNA Discoveries to Trace All Lines of Descent
  Debbie Parker Wayne

- 7 Habits of Highly Frugal Genealogists
  Thomas MacEntee

- Ready-Set-Plan! Developing a One-Step Research Plan
  J. Mark Lowe

- Timelines: Placing Your Heritage in Historical Perspective
  Laura Prescott

- Digging Through Documents Word by Word
  Debra Mieszala

- Going Digital: Organizing Your Research Files Electronically
  D. Joshua Taylor


Seventeenth Annual Conference on Illinois History
September 24–25, 2015, Springfield

Proposals for individual papers or panels on any aspect of Illinois’ history, culture, politics, geography, literature, and archaeology are requested for the Conference on Illinois History. The Conference welcomes submissions from professional and avocational historians, graduate students, and those engaged in the study of Illinois history at libraries, historic sites, museums, and historical societies.

Proposals for teacher workshops. Are you a teacher who has created an innovative, comprehensive, or timely curriculum on some aspect of Illinois’ history, culture, politics, geography, literature, or archaeology? Share your expertise with other teachers at the Conference on Illinois History. The conference is accredited by the ISBE for Professional Development Hours.

To submit your proposal for a paper, panel, or teacher workshop, send:
A summary of the topic
A one-page resume of participant(s)
Paper summaries should include a description of major primary and secondary sources used.

The deadline for proposals is March 11, 2015.

Send proposals to:
Conference on Illinois History
Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
1 Old State Capitol Plaza
Springfield, IL 62701
Phone 217/524-6045, Fax 217/785-7937; E-mail: shanta.thoele@illinois.gov
www.illinois.gov/ihpa/Involved/Pages/Conference.aspx

International Society of Family History Writers and Editors (ISFHWE)

The International Society of Family History Writers and Editors (ISFHWE) is reminding writers IN ALL MEDIA (magazines, newspapers, journals, websites, blogs) that the 2015 Excellence-in-Writing Competition is now open for entries through 15 June 2015.

The competition is open to both MEMBERS and NON-MEMBERS of ISFHWE; both published and non-published authors may enter (see category list below). Members of ISFHWE receive a discount on the entry fee (after logging in to the ISFHWE members’ corner; new members allow up to ten days to receive login information). The categories are columns, articles, genealogy newsletter, unpublished authors, unpublished material-published authors, poetry.

Winners (1st, 2nd, 3rd) in each category will be awarded a cash prize and a certificate. Certificates may be awarded for Honorable Mentions. The awards will be announced in September 2015.

Entries must be submitted in PDF, Word, WordPerfect, or JPG format by e-mail in time to meet this deadline. Please note: Footnotes will not count toward word count. Send entries to: Competition@ISFHWE.org

Appropriate entry fee(s) - and membership dues to receive the discount - may be paid via PayPal on the ISFHWE website at ISFHWE.org

Full information on the competition is available on the ISFHWE website in the “2015 Excellence-in-Writing Competition - Information and Online Entry Form” link, which leads to:
http://www.isfhwe.org/competition.php

For questions, contact the Competition Coordinator at: competition@ISFHWE.org
The Advancing Genealogist Website and Blog

Debbie Mieszala, a Board certified genealogist who has been involved in genealogy and family history research for 30 years, has launched a new website and blog. Debbie chose “The Advancing Genealogist” due to her life long love of learning and her chosen profession. She believes “as we continue to learn, we continue to advance our skills and our knowledge, which can lead to greater success.” Her goals for the site are to share information, create a storehouse of resources, and promote quality continuing genealogical education. The site currently includes information on Lake County, Illinois; state of Illinois, and special topics like post-adoption research and law.

Debbie’s website can be found at http://advancinggenealogist.com

Sheldon Family Association 76th Annual Meeting and Reunion

The Sheldon Family Association will gather for the 76th Annual meeting and Reunion 30 July-2 August 2015 at LaQuinta in Sacramento, California. Host Betty Knopf will arrange lectures about Sheldon history and trips to Sheldon sites. Information from the 121,000 descendant database will be available.

The Sheldon history dates back to the 1600’s when Sheldon men John, Isaac, John, and Godfrey came to New England from southern England. The Sheldon Family Association is dedicated to the preservation of Sheldon history.

www.sheldonfamily.org

Jeanne A. Jeffries, President of Sheldon Family Association, arnjeff@myfairpoint.net, 603-756-2933

Irish Researchers: Online Records

The National Library of Ireland will be giving free online access to their archive of Catholic Church records, dating back to the 1700’s. According to a press release from Ireland Reaching Out recorded in the December 2014 St Louis Genealogical Society’s newsletter, “The records are considered the single most important source of information on Irish family history prior to the 1901 census. They cover 1,091 parishes throughout Ireland and consist primarily of baptismal and marriage records.”

Currently the Ireland National Library allows access to these records in their research rooms in Dublin; however, the library plans to have the records online by summer of 2015. For more information go to Ireland Reaching Out, www.irelandxo.com

Thanks to St. Louis Genealogical Society for this information taken from their December 2014 newsletter. www.stlgs.org
Delve Deeper into Essex History Than Ever Before with Thousands More Documents Online

The Essex Records Office (ERO) has uploaded an extra 22,500 wills to their online subscription service Essex Ancestors. The Essex Ancestors wills collection includes 70,000 documents which date from the 1400s to 1858. Councillor Roger Hirst, Cabinet Member for Libraries, Communities and Planning said “We have in Essex Ancestors an amazing resource dedicated to showcasing the rich and fascinating history of our county. The digital images of these historic documents — some of them over 500 years old — are now available so that people all around the world with connections to our county can research their family history and even learn where their family heirlooms originate from.”

Wills can tell us all sorts of things about the lives of people in the past. For example, in 1641, Elizabeth Fuller of Chigwell left her eldest son Henry her ‘longe carte’, ‘dunge carte’, ‘pondering crose’, ‘furnace’, and her ‘mault quarne’. We believe the cross would have been used for religious contemplation and the quarne for grinding grain. Her second son received ‘my best chest and my best brace [brass] pot’, to modern eyes this might seem the better bequest!

To celebrate the upload, the Essex Ancestors archivists will be choosing some of their favourite wills to share on their blog over the next few days and weeks.

You can access Essex Ancestors from home as a subscriber anywhere in the world, or for free in the Searchroom at the ERO in Chelmsford. You can also visit our Archive Access Points in Saffron Walden and Harlow. Essex Ancestors will shortly be provided at Waltham Forest Archives also. Opening hours vary, so please check before you visit.

The ERO looks after about 70,000 wills in total, dating from the 1400’s to 1858. Online now are all the wills dating to 1720, some 42,000 in total. The ERO will now continue to work on digitizing the remaining 28,000 wills, dating from 1720-1858, which will be uploaded in the near future.

http://seax.essexcc.gov.uk/

Essex County Council is on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, Tumblr.

Information taken from a Press Release
The National Genealogical Society’s (NGS) 2015 Conference, Crossroads of America, is coming to the St. Charles Convention Center 13-16 May 2015. St. Louise Genealogical Society (www.stlgs.org) is the local host.

Pre-conference events begin on Monday, 11 May 2015 with a tour of the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). On Tuesday, 12 May, research opportunities begin with all day events including Librarians Day, German Studies and tours to Daniel Boone’s home and the Lewis and Clark boathouse, among others.

Opening day begins with J. Mark Lowe. The four days of the conference will be filled with dozens of interesting talks on a multitude of topics aimed at researchers of all skill levels. Participants can learn more about skill-building, migration, uncommon as well as more familiar records, researching in particular states, maps, ethnic research, immigration, use of technology, and more. Each day will offer small group workshops with hands on participation. Luncheons, evening activities, vendors along with the presentations make this a great event.

Registration is open. Go to http://conference.ngsgenealogy.org

written by Ilene Murray, Publications Director. Printed in St. Louis Genealogical Society’s December 2014 Newsletter
Illinois Homestead Records in National Archives

Blake Bell, the Historian for the National Park Service Site, Homestead National Monument of America wants to publicize that the Illinois Homestead Records located in the National Archives have been recently digitized. The documents were generated by homesteaders that claimed free land under the Homestead Act of 1862. The United States preserved these documents, but until now family historians and scholars had to travel to the National Archives to access them. Today, they are being added to the online databases ancestry.com and fold3.com. Mr. Bell says that his team is working with the University of Nebraska to develop a database that can be accessed by scholars.

Mr. Bell is available to speak about this. Contact him at blake_bell@nps.gov

2015 Ohio Genealogical Society Conference

The Ohio Genealogical Society is pleased to announce the program schedule and registration for its 54th Annual Conference: “Ohio: Your Genealogical Cornerstone”. The conference will be held 9-11 April 2015 at the Sheraton Columbus Hotel at Capitol Square in Columbus, Ohio with numerous pre-conference activities on April 8.

Keynote Speaker will be The Legal Genealogist, Judy G Russell, JD, CG, CGL.

Registration is open and the program brochure is available at http://www.ogs.org/conference2015/index.php.

Pre-conference activities on Wednesday, April 8, include tours and research opportunities at the Ohio History Center, tours of the Ohio Statehouse, and several workshops at the hotel. From Thursday through Saturday, family historians of all experience levels can select from over 90 presentations on a wide variety of topics to enhance their genealogical skills and understanding of their ancestors. The conference features 44 expert speakers from across the country. Tracks include:


- Friday: Skill Building, Technology Tools, German Ancestors, Methods for Success, Military Research, and African American & Southern Ancestors.

- Saturday: Getting Started, Records & Resources, DNA/Genetic Genealogy, Ohio Ancestors, Research Challenges, and Preserving Your Heritage.

A variety of social events, including luncheons and an informal evening gathering with live music, are offered for attendees to make and renew connections with others who share a passion for genealogy. New this year are express breakfast and grab-and-go lunch options. Businesses and societies will offer their products, books, software, expertise, and more in the exhibit hall.

Sign up to receive posts from the OGS Conference Blog, www.ogs.org/blog, for updates and details about conference activities.
Genealogy Do-Over

Are you ready to hit the restart button?

With each new year, many consider making changes in their lives such as losing weight, getting more exercise, etc. Even genealogists like to get in on the act and in 2015 there’s a special online educational program that can help you get rid of “bad research habits” and learn some new tricks.

The Genealogy Do-Over™ is the brainstorm of genealogy author and educator Thomas MacEntee and since its announcement in mid-December 2014, has attracted over 1,000 participants from around the world. And the best part? The entire 13-week program which starts on January 2, 2015, is FREE. Visit the Genealogy Do-Over at http://www.genealogydo-over.com to see the announcement and the latest news.

Genealogy Do-Over: A New Journey of Genealogical Discovery  Here is the short summary of Genealogy Do-Over as Thomas sees it:

I set aside everything* related to my genealogy research including notebooks, papers, and even digitized files and my genealogy database files and START OVER. I’m hitting the reset button. I’m allowing myself to have a do-over! (*certain items such as vital records ordered and paid for or research gathered on a long-distance trip will be retained).

Since genealogists started their research 10, 20 or 30 years ago (or more), much has changed in the areas of genealogy research methodology and education. Many now realize the need to collect facts and track them properly, including the use of source citations. Many understand the process of analyzing evidence and proving facts to reach a conclusion. In essence, as Thomas puts it: “I know a lot more about the ‘process’ of genealogical research and I want to put it to use.”

How Does the Genealogy Do-Over Work? The Genealogy Do-Over journey is constructed of 13 mileposts or journey markers spread out over 13 weeks. Participants can choose any pace they want, and even spread the topics out over the course of a year. Or some may decide to drop some of the less important tasks and add different topics. The goal is to do whatever it takes to ensure that a firm footing to finding ancestors.

A synopsis of the planned route – the Schedule of Topics – can be found at http://www.geneabloggers.com/genealogy-doover-schedule-topics/. As each week progresses, participants will continue researching and add more and more skills and areas of focus including citing sources, tracking searches, building a research toolbox, creating an educational plan, researching offline as well as online, and more.

continued on page 17
Genealogy “Do Over” continued...

By the end of the 13 weeks – or 13 journey markers – the group will have covered a firm foundation in genealogy and family history research. For individual participants, some focus areas may differ; participants have the freedom to add or remove content from their own Genealogy Do-Over plan. As Thomas says, “This program has to work for you and not something that you dread each week or that you find you are working against.”

What’s the Cost? What’s the Catch?

There is no price. A journey that could very well revolutionize the way you’ve been doing genealogy research is priceless. When you join the Genealogy Do-Over (see below), you’ll receive weekly updates about the current topics, you’ll be part of an active and passionate collaborative group sharing genealogy tips and tricks, and more. Legacy Family Tree is hosting a FREE webinar entitled My Genealogy DO-Over - A Year of Learning from Research Mistakes:

http://legacy.familytreewebinars.com/?aid=461

presented by Thomas MacEntee on Wednesday, January 21, 2015.

Here’s How to Be a Part of the Genealogy Do-Over

Visit the following sites to get involved and set out on your own Genealogy Do-Over journey in 2015!

- Website: http://www.genealogydo-over.com
- Facebook Group: http://www.facebook.com/groups/genealogydoover/
- Email List (weekly updates): http://www.geneabloggers.com/gendo-over-emails

Schedule of Topics – Genealogy Do-Over

Week 1 – January 2-8, 2015
Clean house
Prepare to research
Review the Golden Rules

Week 1 – 2-8 January 2015
Setting Previous Research Aside
Preparing to Research
Establishing Base Practices and Guidelines

Week 2 – 9-15 January 2015
Setting Research Goals
Conducting Self Interview
Conducting Family Interviews

Week 3 – 16-22 January 2015
Tracking Research
Conducting Research

Week 4 – 23-29 January 2015
Managing Projects and Tasks
Tracking Searches

Week 5 – 30 January-5 February 2015
Building a Research Toolbox
Citing Sources

Week 6 – 6-12 February 2015
Evaluating Evidence
Reviewing Online Education Options

Week 7 – 13-19 February 2015
Reviewing Genealogy Database Software
Digitizing Photos and Documents

Week 8 – 20-26 February 2015
Conducting Collateral Research
Reviewing Offline Education Options

Week 9 – 27 February-5 March 2015
Conducting Cluster Research
Organizing Research Materials – Documents and Photos

Week 10 – 6-12 March 2015
Reviewing DNA Testing Options
Organizing Research Materials – Digital

Week 11 – 13-19 March 2015
Reviewing Social Media Options
Building a Research Network

Week 12 – 20-26 March 2015
Sharing Research
Reviewing Research Travel Options

Week 13 – 27 March-3 April 2015
Securing Research Data
Reviewing the Journey
Jane Haldeman, Past President responds to the gift the ISGS Board gave her at the November 2014 meeting, thanking her for her service to ISGS.

LuAnn Mayer was the winner of the ISGS Raffle at the Lake County Genealogical Conference. Pictured with Jane Haldeman, Past President ISGS, Saturday, 8 November 2014

ISGS Governing Board at Fall Conference

Governing Board who attended the conference: Back row, l to r: Becky Higgins, 2015 Director; Sara Taylor, 2014 Director; Angela Boyd, Membership Promotion Chair; Tony Burroughs, 2017 Director; Jane Haldeman, Past President; David Kent Coy, Parliamentarian; Michele Claypool, 1st VP; Mary Westerhold, 2016 Director; Darlene Hinkle, 2016 Director. Front row, l to r: Kristy Gravlin, 2015 Director; Jayne Cates, President; Sandra Parker, Prairie Pioneers Chair; Susie Scoville Pope, 2nd VP; Margaret Truax, Publications Chair.
Genealogy Events: for complete event information, go to ISGS website, events

8 January 2015: Fox Valley Genealogy Society, Naperville Municipal Center, 7:30 PM, “Overcoming Brick Walls”

10 January 2015: St. Louis Genealogical Society, St Louis County Library, 10:00 AM, Presenter: Bob Goode, Carol Kohnen, “StLGS Website Improvements”, www.stlgs.org

10 January 2015: Computer Assisted Genealogy Group Northern IL, 10:30, Presenters: Michelle & Alan Wilson, “DNA”, Schaumburg Township District Library


12 January 2015: St. Louis Genealogical Society, Schlafly Library, Presenter: Dennis Northcott, “If These Walls Could Talk: Researching the History of Your Home”, 7:00 PM, www.stlgs.org

14 January 2015: St. Louis Genealogical Society, St. Louis County Library, Presenter: Scott Holl, “What’s New in the German Collection at SLCL?”, www.stlgs.org


17 January 2015: 8:45 Family Tree Maker, Presenter: Ann Ellen Bar, Arlington Heights Senior Center


18 January 2015: Greene County Historical & Genealogy Society “Show and Tell”, Lee Baker Hodges Building, Carrollton, IL

21 January 2015: DuPage County Genealogy Society, in Wheaton, Presenter: Karen Bogdan, “Italian Genealogy”

27 January 2015: St. Louis Genealogical Society, 7:00 PM, Presenter: Vikki Fagyal, “Putting Meat on the Bones: Using Digitized Newspapers to Add Persona to Birth, Marriage, Death, 7:00 PM, www.stlgs.org

31 January 2015: CSAGSI General Meeting & free program, 1:30-3:30, Presenter: Jennifer Holik “Finishing the Story” writing stories of your soldiers, www.csagsi.org


7 Feb St. Louis Genealogical Society, Presenter: LaDonna Garner, “Mississippi Record Indexing Project Ideas”, 11:00 AM www.stlgs.org

12-14 February, 2015: Roots Tech/FGS Annual Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, roots.tech.org

14 February 2015: StLGS, 10:00 AM “Preparing for Heritage Travel”, www.stlgs.org

14 February, McHenry County Genealogy Society, Crystal Lake, Presenter: Kristen McCallum, “Getting the Most out of Fold3”, www.mcigs.org


21 February 2015: ISGS Governing Board Meeting, 10:00 AM, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, IL

22 February 2015: Decatur Genealogical Society Meeting, DGS Library, 1:00, Decaturgenenso@att.net


14 March 2015: DuPage County Genealogy Society Annual Conference, 1120 E Diehl Road in Naperville, dcgs.org

15 March 2015: Greene County Historical & Genealogy Society, Presenter: JoAnn Hyland & Angie Custer, “St. Louis World’s Fair”

1-3 May 2015: Lincoln Funeral Re-Enactment, lincolnfuneraltrain.org 150th Anniversary Commemoration

13-16 May 2015: NGS Conference, St. Charles, MO, ngsgenealogy.org

28 May-1 June 2015: Carl Sandburg Institute of Genealogy, www.sandburggenealogy.com

15 June 2015: Deadline for International Society of Family History Writers and Editors: ISGHWE.org


First Congregational Church of Toulon, IL Celebrates 100 years and a Book is Born

Floyd Ham of Toulon, IL (with help from friends) compiled a book retelling the history of the First Congregational Church of Toulon, Illinois 1846-2014 using the weekly church bulletin inserts he created to celebrate the church’s 100th anniversary. This book is a gold mine of genealogical family references and reminds the genealogist that churches are a key place to gain information about individuals. This history book includes the history of the First Congregational Church, much about early Stark County history, the anti-slavery sentiment, the Abolitionist party candidates, and the underground railroad activities, and much, much more. Floyd’s 330 page book can be purchased by contacting Floyd at P. O. Box 425, 427 South Whittaker, Toulon, Illinois 61483, 309-286-6081, feham@mchsi.com. The book is $20 plus $6 shipping.

Floyd Ham presenting at Stark County Genealogical Society Meeting, First Congregational Church, Toulon, IL, March 2014

Floyd writes on page 4 that the idea for this book “developed after discovering a short pamphlet in the Church files entitled “Outline of the History and Achievements of the Congregational and Christian Churches” by Rev. HL Michael, Pastor of the Sycamore IL Federated Church , 1940.” Floyd used many documents in his research including Church meeting minutes, an 1869 church manual, previously written church histories (1879, 1896, 1921, 1936, 1946, and 1966), the Journals of Rev Samuel Guild Wright at Knox College’s archives, newspaper clippings, photos, obituary transcriptions, biographies, and books from local family members and genealogists.

Floyd begins the book with a short historical summary: “The Toulon Congregational Church was organized by Rev. Lucius Parker and Rev Samuel Guild Wright on November 29, 1846” (p 16). “Efforts to build our first “meeting house” began in 1849 and on December 13, 1851 the first services were held” (p 3). “On December 7, 2013 we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the setting of the Cornerstone for our current building which we dedicated for service to the Lord on Thursday Night October 15, 1914” (p3). “It is believed that the Toulon Congregational Church is the oldest Illinois Church in continuous operation from the same site originally based on Congregational Polity and organized within the State of Illinois” (p 16).

This book is a great example of a product of genealogical research, involving a team of researchers and a man with a passion. Congratulations on this amazing milestone Floyd!

written by Kim M. Hanks
The Illinois State Genealogical Foundation was established in 2012 as a wholly non-profit tax-exempt corporation, organized and chartered under the laws of the State of Illinois, with charitable and educational purposes.

All donations to the Foundation are tax deductible per Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The purpose of the foundation is to

• Assist in developing and increasing educational opportunities for the genealogical and historical community of Illinois

• Provide service for students and organizations whose primary interest involves the study and education of genealogical and historical events in Illinois

• Encourage gifts of money, property, historical papers and documents, and other material having educational, artistic, scientific and/or historical value and by such other proper means as may be determined. The Foundation will receive, hold, and administer such gifts with the primary intent of serving the genealogical and historical community in Illinois.

The Illinois State Genealogical Foundation is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of nine members.

Shirley Aleguas, Waverly, IL  
Steve Black, President, Phoenix, AZ
David Kent Coy, Decatur, IL  
Michele Claypool, Champaign, IL
Mary Lou Delahunt, Galesburg, IL  
Gary K Hargis, North Aurora, IL
Jean Jung, Waterloo, IL  
Carole McCarty, St. Charles, IL
George F. Perkins, Normal, IL

An annual meeting of the Foundation is held each year according to the by-laws.

The Foundation is an opportunity for individuals, businesses, and other organizations to contribute to genealogical and historical research and educational opportunities relating to people and events associated with Illinois. Projects will be selected for funding based on specific criteria to be developed by the Board with the intent of making information available to researchers and genealogists. The initial strategy is to build the assets in the Foundation and then begin providing funding/grants for various genealogical research projects in the state.

For further information about the Foundation, contact any of the Foundation Directors or Steve Black, President at 623-466-3545 or steve.black531@gmail.com.

ISG Foundation address: 906 Switchgrass Lane, Champaign, IL 61822
Illinois State Genealogical Society
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