

Sawdust City Roots

GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY OF EAU CLAIRE

VOLUME 42, NO. 3, 2024



Free Genealogy Websites to Expand Your Searches in 2024

[Digital Public Library of America](#)- search by subject! Maybe where your family located to first or the church they joined.

[Internet Archive](#)- the home of the Wayback Machine. Again, search by subject, like locations and organizations.

State Archives, Libraries and Historical Societies-Just type the state your ancestors first settled in or moved to. One of the best finds for me was the Wyoming State Archives. Not only did they send me the death certificates for the family I was interested in, but also the obituaries. No charge! In your browser search box or address box, just type the state name and the word archives (or library or Historical Society). To this group, I would also add State and Local Genealogy Societies. Many have records available to people who are not members. Check out the [Indiana Genealogical Society](#) as an example.

[Linkpendium](#)- like Google for genealogists. This site was developed by the couple who brought us RootsWeb. A listing of genealogy and family websites from the US and UK.

[The FamilySearch Research Wiki](#)- this is my favorite. If I am researching my Norwegian or German ancestors I open the word list for each language. I frequently have two or three tabs open featuring genealogical important words, medical words, and parish churches in the county.

Thanks to [Amy Johnson Crow](#) who first posted about this subject on June 25, 2020.

Anita Reid

Genealogical Research Society of Eau Claire (GRSEC)

This newsletter is published in September, November, January, March and May. Deadline for entries is the 25th of the month prior to publication. (e.g., entries for November's issue would be October 25.)

The GRSEC meets the second Saturday of each month, September through May, at 1 PM at the Chippewa Valley Museum, located in beautiful Carson park, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

The GRSEC does not meet during the summer months (June-Aug.). The membership year runs May 1st through April 30th. Membership is \$15.00 per year, beginning May 1st. Check your mailing label on the newsletter for your expiration date. It is on the right hand corner.

If you receive your newsletter electronically or wish to, please check with Tom Davey, our Treasurer/ Membership chair.

Visit us at: <https://grsec.org/>

Email us at:

<http://www.grsec@cvmuseum.com>

Membership forms can be found on the back page of each newsletter.

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Notes from the Chair



A New Year.

Happy New Year! There has already been a big change for me this year. I have started a new job as a Public Health nurse for Buffalo County. I have always wanted to work in public health. The office is in Alma, Wisconsin, on the Mississippi River.

It's more of a commute than my other jobs. But the roads are beautiful. It also gives me a chance to visit the land of my ancestors every day. My grandmothers were from Buffalo County, and I have deep roots there. After migrating from New York, my paternal grandmother's family lived on numerous farms in Mondovi. My maternal grandmother's family were Norwegian immigrants who farmed in Nelson and Yankees from western Pennsylvania.

One of the best perks of my new job is that the Buffalo County Historical Society is located on the same floor as the health department. I can pop in for half an hour to review the old newspapers. On my way home, I may stop by the Nelson cemetery on nice days.

One of my goals as president is to get younger people more involved in genealogy. We must make history accessible to people who work or go to school. Genealogy shouldn't be something that people wait until they are retired, and kids are out of the house to start. I'm lucky I

found this job where I feel I can sneak in some research between computer training and department meetings. I hope to help others my age and younger find ways to make family history part of their life. *Sara*



Photographs provided by Sara. From left to right: Nelson Cemetery, William H Myers family in Mondovi, Wisconsin, and Lyster Lutheran Church cemetery, the resting place for Sara's Norwegian ancestors in the town of Nelson.

Upcoming Events

Genealogical Research Society of Eau Claire

Meetings:

- 13 Jan 1 PM at the Chippewa Valley Museum. Short business meeting followed by a presentation.
- 10 Feb, 1 PM at the Chippewa Valley Museum. Short business meeting followed by a presentation.

Wisconsin Genealogical Society (WGS)

Webinars:

- 16 Jan at 7 PM, "Connecting Faces Through Time," Presented by Tina LaFreniere.
- 20 Feb at 7 PM, "Breathing New Life Into Your Boring Ancestors." Presented by Melissa Barker.
- For more information:

<https://wsgrs.org/Upcoming-Webinars>

Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS)

Online-only webinar Mexican and Chicano Genealogy Workshop

- 10 Feb from 9 AM to 3 PM. Registration deadline is Thursday, 8 Feb. 2024 at 12 NOON. A recording of the webinar will be available to registrants for 30 days following the event. Sessions include:
- Foundational Concepts & Reference Tools for Mexican Genealogy
- Working with Mexican Catholic Parish Registers
- Working with Mexican Civil Registrations
- Essential Immigration Records for Researching Your Mexican Ancestors
- More information?

<https://shop.wisconsinhistory.org/mexican-and-chicano-genealogy-webinar>

AmericanAncestors: Online

- 11 Jan, 3 to 4 PM ET. "Lithuanian Research: Back to the Old County." Presented by James Heffernan.
- 25 Jan, 3 to 4 PM ET. "Writing a Register-Style Sketch." Presented by Kyle Hurst

Click here for more information or to register:

<https://www.americanancestors.org/events>

BYU Library, Family History Webinars

All webinars begin at 5 PM MT (Mountain Time) and are free.

- 18 Jan, "Ten Serious Challenges to Genealogical Research." Presented by James Tanner
- <https://fh.lib.byu.edu/classes-and-webinars/online-webinars/>

Fountaindale Public Library, Online

Genealogy Events

- 24 Jan at 11 AM, via Zoom, "Regicide in the Family," presented by Sarah Dixwell Brown.
- 14 Feb, via YouTube, "Cool Tools on Genealogy Databases," presented by Suz Bates.

Fountaindale's Genealogy Club information

- Online meetings are held through Zoom, and registration is required. Zoom links and meeting handouts are emailed to registrants one day before the program.
- All of our Genealogy Club meetings are free and open to the public. You can register by phone at 630.685.4176 or online at fountaindale.org/events.
- All recordings will be available for streaming on YouTube one day after the meeting

Minnesota Genealogical Society

Online:

- 18 Jan, 8 PM to 9:30 PM, "German Dialects and What They Mean for the Researcher." Hosted online by the German Genealogy Society
Register here: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1502242281777270872>
- 27 Jan, 1 PM, "Virtual Field Trip: Denver Public Library." Hosted by the National Danish-American Genealogical Society
[Zoom link here](#)

Gene-A-Rama, Save the Dates!

12 & 13 April 2024

Oshkosh Waterfront Hotel & Convention Center
Oshkosh, Wisconsin

Featuring Renee Garrick, "The Grammar Queen"

Registration is not yet open. Check the [Wisconsin State Genealogical Society](#) for updates.

Free German Resources for 2024

These record links can be found on the [Germanology Unlocked](#) website. More resources can also be found on their [FaceBook](#) page.

- Master List of German Records Websites
 - PDF of German Church Record Vocabulary
 - Free Webinars
1. All You Need to Know About German Names

More News

2. Five Top Websites to Decipher the Old German Handwriting
3. Seven Things You Need to Know About German Church Records
4. Five Types of Genealogy Documents, And What You Can Find in Each
5. Five Must-Know Google Hacks for Deciphering Your Genealogy Documents

Reclaim the Records News

The following article is taken from their [FaceBook](#) page, dated 31 December 2023.

One of our board members has quietly been embroiled in a legal fight with the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, more specifically the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), to get all of their digital files released to the public for free, too. Every digital image, every piece of text metadata. Births, death certificates, all kinds of goodies...

Specifically, he asked the state archives for copies of anything that was scanned or indexed by Ancestry.com under the company's contracts with PHMC going back to 2008. According to the text of the contracts, the state was supposed to have been given back copies of everything Ancestry scanned, as well as the metadata files they created from indexing the images. Despite that, there are currently NO freely downloadable and freely reusable copies of those crucial Pennsylvania public records as digital data (whether images or text metadata) available anywhere without usage restrictions or terms and conditions. One company alone holds the digital files.

Well, we'd like to change that. Public records belong to the public, and when a federal, state, or local government archive signs a contract explicitly saying that the taxpayer-funded archive will receive any digital copies of any historical materials scanned and/or indexed by a third party vendor, well then those newly-made files then become public records, too.

At least, that's how we see it. And last year, although we didn't announce it at the time, the om-

budsman program at the Pennsylvania Office of Open Records saw it that way too, and ***ordered the state archive to turn over millions of those newly-digitized genealogical records (both the scanned images and text metadata) to the public within thirty days.

In an attempt to block the order to turn over the files, PHMC is now suing our board member, a genealogist, by name -- and Ancestry.com is now submitting briefs in support of the state's case. And they're not just writing up an amicus curiae giving their opinions: Ancestry.com has now petitioned the Commonwealth Court to become a party in the case, a co-plaintiff in a suit against a genealogist who already won his open records case under a state's Freedom of Information Law.

In open records parlance, this trick is called a "reverse FOIA"; if someone really doesn't want to turn over records even though they have been ordered to do so, a government agency or even a third party implicated in the files could try to sue the requestor, turning the Freedom of Information or open records law on its head, using it against the public instead of against the powerful. It's a rarely used and very gross tactic.

Pennsylvania's state FOI law is called the Right to Know Law (RTKL), not quite the same thing as federal FOIA, but it's the same principle. And here, Ancestry.com (which is majority-owned by the private equity behemoth Blackstone and minority-owned by the Singapore sovereign wealth fund GIC) is joining with the state archives, using the argument that these public records about Pennsylvanians, which are already online on their own paywalled for-profit website, are somehow actually "confidential proprietary information" [sic], and that a release of the data in bulk under the OOR's ruling in favor of the public would "cause substantial harm to the competitive position of [Ancestry]."

I'm sure we will be hearing more about this argument during 2024. I would not bet against Reclaim the Records.

Anita Reid

Interesting Digital Collections from the Wisconsin Historical Society

Found at <https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital>

Whether you are writing about your own family or looking for an image from the Civil War, check out the digital collections available to you from the WHS.

McCormick - International Harvester Collection

My husband's family only farmed with "red" tractors. Fantastic images available.

Wisconsin in the Civil War

Diaries, regimental histories and letters!

Wisconsin Women's History

Wisconsin County Histories

Explore more than 80 standard county histories with detailed accounts of individual cities, townships and villages, as well as biographical sketches of prominent residents. Most volumes were published between 1850 and 1920. Every word on their 56,000 pages is searchable, so you can find specific descriptions of people, places, and events.

Wetherby Cranberry Library Digital Archives

Turning Points in Wisconsin History

Important historic events in Wisconsin through hundreds of eyewitness accounts, pictures, archaeological sites, rare books, museum objects, early engravings, handwritten manuscripts, essays, lesson plans and reference tools. From early native peoples, geography, Indian Mounds, Aztalan, and Iroquois Wars through response to 20th century change, Turning Points in Wisconsin History covers more than 12,000 years of Wisconsin History.

Wisconsin Magazine of History Archives

Contains more than 2,000 feature articles!

Menu Collection

The Wisconsin Historical Society's ephemera holdings include a wide range of menus (mid-1800s to the present day) from restaurants and hotels; schools; specialized organizations and societies; private homes; and menus for special occasions such as commemorative and farewell dinners; trade conferences; political events; and meals offered during transit, such as passenger ships and trains.

I admit to getting a little lost in this collection. I found a dinner menu from the Chicago and North Western Railway dated 16 October 1949. The a la Carte menu featured Tomato Stuffed with Sardines for .65, Fillet of Fresh Fish for .70, and Ox Tongue for .85! They also served something called Kaffee Hag. This brand of coffee was established in Germany by the renowned merchant Ludwig Roselius and was one of the first coffee brands to perfect the process of decaffeination. The coffee brand Sanka was spun off from Kaffee HAG in 1910. Thank you Wikipedia!

Central Wisconsin Digitization Project Online Collections

Central Wisconsin Digitization Project (CWDP) is a consortium of libraries, historical societies, genealogical societies and museums committed to preserving and disseminating the history of Marathon and Lincoln Counties through the digitization of original sources and artifacts and their subsequent publication on the internet.

The organizing theme of the CWDPs digital collection is "Community Life", construed broadly to include all aspects of community life, past and present, in these two counties. Under this broad theme, the collections are organized under the topics of education, industry, transportation, work, home, and family.

This was the collection I was researching as many in my husband's family line settled in Marathon and Lincoln counties. And then I went down the rabbit hole to see what else was available.

Anita Reid

Please remember that the position of Newsletter Editor will be available in May 2024. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Sara or Anita, our contact information is located on p. 2.

In Remembrance

Kathy Herfel has assembled a wonderful tribute of those GRSEC members who have passed away. This was shared at our picnic this summer. If you missed the picnic, I will be honoring a few people each month. Thanks Kathy!

Alice Larson Pingel

27 Dec 1934-8 Jan 2017

Buried: Rest Haven Cemetery



Before and after retirement (she worked at Presto, UW-EC and Medical X-Ray Consultants), Alice enjoyed traveling in the U.S. and many other countries. This photo was taken in October 2011 at the Chippewa Valley

Museum's Civil War exhibit. Alice was a GRSEC attendee that day.

Calvin Quayle

22 Jul 1927-13 Mar 2010

Buried: Forest Hill Cemetery



Calvin and his wife Virginia were long-time GRSEC members. What they may be remembered for the most is taking information off the old obituary paper index cards and creating a computer database. This is the current Obituary Index we report on today.

Kathleen "Kathy" (Anderson) Rau

2 Aug 1949-5 Oct 2015

Buried: Evangelical Lutheran Cemetery, Pigeon Falls



Kathy served her church family at Trinity Lutheran Church and was a valued GRSEC member. She assisted in many areas at her church including the hand bell choir (or "Ding Dongs" as she called them) and coordinated Mission trips.

Harry Senske

6 Apr 1923-21 Mar 2009

Buried: West Lawn Cemetery, Augusta



Harry was a distinguished WWII veteran. His interest in and knowledge of history may have been the reason he joined the GRSEC. Harry often called ahead to see what our program was going to be, making sure he wouldn't miss something interesting.

Kathleen Smith

29 Apr 1944-27 May 2022

Buried Rest Haven Cemetery



Kathleen participated whenever she could – whether it be helping with a Forest Hill cemetery project, going on bus research trips, or faithfully attending our Open Labs, Kathy was there.

GRSEC Newsletter
Chippewa Valley Museum
PO Box 1204
Eau Claire, WI 54702-1204

GRSEC Membership Application or Renewal of Membership

Name (Last, First, MI) Please print or type

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Phone, email, date

Area of Research and Surnames

Annual dues of \$15 per household/year are collected in May. Please make your check payable to GRSEC and return with completed form to GRSEC c/o Chippewa Valley Museum, PO Box 1204, Eau Claire, WI 54702-1204