FAMILY HISTORY MONTH 2009

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BARB HUG

Celebrating the values of family and community are what genealogy is all about. In 2001, Utah’s Senator Orrin Hatch sponsored legislation designating October as Family History Month. As we celebrate this special time in Iowa, we are reminded that the Iowa Genealogical Society is active throughout the year, collecting, preserving, and interpreting the stories of Iowa’s people.

The Iowa Genealogical Society has come far since its charter members met in private homes and carried the original collection in an orange crate. Today, nearly 45 years later, the IGS Library is acknowledged as the premier family history resource center in Iowa. And while today’s economy continues to challenge our resourcefulness, commitment to our patrons, our educational programs, our publications and our mission remains unchanged.

In this issue, we’ll take a look back at the countless ways the IGS has served the historical and cultural needs of our community in the past year, and we’ll showcase our October schedule of special events designed to enrich the lives of family historians.

We hope you enjoy this special issue, and we hope you will join us in celebrating Iowa’s heritage.
SHATTERING SILENCE

Earlier this year, Theresa Liewer received a phone call from the State of Iowa Department of Administrative Services. Plans were being made to dedicate a sculpture entitled “Shattering Silence” on the state capitol grounds, commemorating the 170th anniversary of the first Iowa Supreme Court decision, In the Matter of RALPH (a colored man). They asked if she could locate descendents of the parties involved in the case: Ralph Montgomery, the Supreme Court Justices, the attorneys representing Ralph, and “warm-hearted Irishman” Alexander Butterworth, whose Dubuque district court petition for a writ of habeas corpus on behalf of Ralph triggered the landmark case.

The request sent Theresa and several other members of IGS on a research journey using all the resources genealogists draw on. The vault of the State Historical Library in Iowa City yielded a copy of the 1840 court proceedings, and a story began to unfold.

Ralph Montgomery was a Missouri slave who had heard that good money could be made in the Dubuque lead mines. He signed a contract with his owner allowing him to go to Iowa and earn enough money to buy his freedom for $500 plus interest. Unfortunately, after four years Ralph had not managed to accumulate any funds and his owner attempted to reclaim him.

The court ruled that Ralph was not a fugitive slave; he had become a resident of Iowa with his master’s permission. Slavery was prohibited in Iowa, so Ralph was free. He still owed his former master the $500, but a person cannot be enslaved for a debt in the United States.~ continued on page 5

THE CHRISTENING BOWL: MYSTERY SOLVED!

When the christening bowl pictured below arrived at the IGS Library, it had already been on an incredible journey. Found by a homeless man along the Des Moines River, it had been lost for so long, its existence had been forgotten. The pewter bowl, once silver-plated, is engraved with thirteen family names, and commemorates their baptisms. How it came to be lost and in the river remains a mystery, but thanks to Diane Densmore and other IGS volunteers, the bowl has been restored to its family and to its place in family tradition.

Diane spent hours researching census and cemetery records, newspaper archives and online databases. She traced the bowl to descendents of Edith and Harry Runyon, a grocery buyer who moved to Des Moines from Oskaloosa after 1900. The Runyon children—Emma, Leta and Iola Runyon, born between 1892 and 1899, are named on the bowl. ~ continued on page 3
OCTOBER PROGRAMS & EVENTS

OCTOBER 3

- IGS Open House ~ 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
  If you’ve never visited the IGS Library, or if you’ve been away for awhile, plan to explore its exceptional resources during our Open House. Containing thousands of volumes, 15,000 microforms, and Internet access, the IGS Library combines computer technology with traditional research for a truly rewarding experience. Nearly 1000 new volumes have been added to this remarkable collection in the past year; a valuable resource for genealogists and historians alike.

- Introduction to Genealogy ~ 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.  IGS Library
  Find out how easy it is to get started in this popular and fascinating pursuit and preserve your family’s unique heritage. After class, take advantage of our Open House to get acquainted with the IGS Library. FREE! Reservations suggested.

OCTOBER 9 - 10

- IGS Annual Conference: Mining For Your Ancestors
  West Des Moines Christian Church, 4501 Mills Civic Parkway
  See complete conference details on page 4. Registration on page 7.

OCTOBER 16 - 17

- Garage Sale Fundraiser ~ 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  IGS Library
  Open to the public.

OCTOBER 22

- Czech Archives: Getting Digital ~ 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.  IGS Library

OCTOBER 24

- Beginning Internet Genealogy ~ 10 a.m. - noon  IGS Library
  Explore the possibilities of researching your family's history on the Internet. Learn about search engines, genealogical websites and more with IGS president Barb Hug. Get the tools you need to conduct a successful online search and discover new information about your family. Space is limited and classes fill rapidly; preregistration is required for this FREE class.

OCTOBER 30 - 31

- Heritage Quilt Show ~ 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. daily  IGS Library
  Enjoy a unique display of vintage quilts crafted by the ancestors of IGS members. Each quilt includes a biographical sketch of its crafter. Admission: $5.

OCTOBER 31

- IGS Open House ~ 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Introduction to Genealogy ~ 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.  IGS Library
  Get started preserving your family's unique story today! FREE class, reservations suggested.

CHRISTENING BOWL ~ continued from page 2

The trail eventually led to descendent John V. Synhorst. His daughters, Susan (Synhorst) Texter and Julie (Synhorst) Linn, were delighted to recover their family heirloom. Mystery solved, the bowl is once again a part of this family’s heritage; a cherished connection between past and present.
HERITAGE QUILT & AMISH BASKETS RAFFLE

This beautiful handmade “Wedding Ring” quilt or these hand-woven Amish baskets can be yours! IGS is raffling off these exquisite heritage items as part of our Family History Month festivities.

Raffle tickets are $2 each or six for $10, and may be purchased at the IGS Library, or by contacting IGS:
515-276-0287
igs@iowagenealogy.org.

The drawing takes place on Saturday afternoon, October 31st, at 4 p.m., during our Quilt Show. You need not be present to win!

IGS ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2009

Our Annual Conference provides the perfect opportunity to network with other family history enthusiasts, learn from nationally known speakers, shop specialty vendors, and just have fun! Experienced researchers and beginners alike will enjoy this year’s offerings. Non-members welcome! See registration information on page 7, and visit our website, www.iowagenealogy.org for a complete listing of conference activities.

Nationally acclaimed genealogist, historian and author Timothy Pinnick will share valuable gems to help genealogists, amateur historians and scholars uncover new details of their ancestors’ lives. He has extensive lecture experience and has been a presenter at over a dozen national and regional genealogy conferences from coast to coast. Tim will speak on a variety of topics:

- **World War I Draft Card: Don’t Do Research Without It!**
- **Coal Dust in Your Veins: Tips, Strategies and Resources to Bring Your Coal Mining Ancestors to the Surface**
- **Locating and Using Oral History Collections**
- **Strikebreakers! The Recruitment and Employment of African Americans in the Coal Mining Industry 1870-1900**
- **Developing the Genealogy of a Community: A Case Study**

Mary Burtzloff, Archivist with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) - Central Plains Region, will present programs designed to shed light on the resources available through the National Archives, and provide tips on how to access these valuable records. Topics include:

- **U.S. Military Records**
- **Navigating the National Archive Website**

Explore the thoughts and character of our 16th president with Iowa author and historian Larry Hurto. His special program, *The Letters of Abraham Lincoln*, will offer a look at one of our most famous and beloved national figures.
Relive the spirit of the 1860’s with the Jasper Grays Civil War Singers. These Civil War enthusiasts from Newton will share period songs and artifacts from the “War Between the States.” Their vintage costumes enhance this journey into the past.

Spend an evening at the IGS Library! The society has added nearly 1000 new volumes to the library in the past year. This exceptional research collection will be available to registered conference attendees on Friday evening, October 9th, from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. A light meal will be provided. Please RSVP to take advantage of this special opportunity.

SHATTERING SILENCE  ~  continued from page 2

The project became a topic of discussion in the Irish Interest Group which Theresa moderates. JoAnne Walker took up the challenge and found a black miner by the name of Ralph Montgomery in the 1850 and 1860 Wisconsin census, across the river from Dubuque. Larry Slavens discovered an 1870 obituary for Ralph in the Dubuque paper which included an account of his early years. Tom McGarvey put together the story of David Rorer, the attorney who represented Ralph.

Theresa worked with local genealogy societies and public libraries in Kansas, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Florida and California as well as the archives of the Sisters of Charity in Dubuque and the State Historical Library in Des Moines.

No descendents of Ralph Montgomery were ever found. Descendents of the other parties were located all across the country – none still lived in Iowa. They have been invited to the dedication of the sculpture on Oct. 22 in recognition of their ancestors’ contribution to this milestone decision.

The ultimate example of genealogical networking came last April when a group of IGS members went to Salt Lake City to research. Tom McGarvey and Theresa were among the group. One afternoon as they happened to be sitting next to each other at the computers, a FHL volunteer working next to Tom commented on his Iowa name badge. She had an Iowa ancestor – in fact, her ancestor was responsible for Iowa being called the “Hawkeye State.” Tom and Theresa looked at her and said “David Rorer?” for Ralph’s attorney was also the man who came up with the Iowa nickname. It was hard to decide who was most amazed at the results of a chance conversation, and the Salt Lake City resident received her invitation to the dedication ceremony.
Annual Appeal 2009

Membership Opportunities

2009 has been an economically challenging year. Families and businesses have faced difficult choices. The Iowa Genealogical Society is no exception. Even so, we look back at 2009 as a year of accomplishments:

- Nearly 1000 new volumes added to our research collection.
- Expanded outreach to the community through monthly educational opportunities at our library. Classes have been well-attended, and demand is growing.
- Continued contribution to the preservation of Iowa’s cultural heritage through projects that included researching the Christening Bowl and the Shattering Silence monument.
- Hosted nationally-known speakers presenting on a variety of relevant genealogical and historical topics.
- Maintained library hours and services despite financial constraints.

The Iowa Genealogical Society is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the stories of Iowa’s people. Entirely funded by donations, our library, educational programs and research services are enjoyed by hundreds of patrons each year.

The IGS Library is a significant family history resource and continues to build on its tradition of excellence in serving genealogists, historians, and other interested hobbyists and scholars.

We invite you to support the work of the IGS by participating in our Annual Appeal. Whether you are currently a member, joining for the first time, or you’ve been away for awhile, your support is deeply appreciated.

Please consider the accompanying membership opportunities; and remember, donations of any amount are very welcome. Check our website, www.iowagenealogy.org, to learn more about our endowment program and corporate sponsorships.

With your investment, our vision to “Preserve the Past and Enrich the Future” will be strengthened.

Thank you.

Take the German Challenge!

Members of the German Interest Group have pooled their resources and pledged $1,500 in a challenge to other members of IGS. These genealogists have demonstrated their generosity many times over the past few years and they encourage others to join in and match their funds. Just check the box for “German Challenge” on your donation form.
ANNUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION
October 9 & 10, 2009
West Des Moines Christian Church
4501 George Civic Mills Parkway, West Des Moines, Iowa

Friday, October 9
8:00 a.m.—Registration
8:30 a.m.—Welcome
8:45 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Speakers, vendors, socialize
5:00 p.m.—7:30 p.m. Research at IGS Library
(please preregister for library evening)

Saturday, October 10
8:00 a.m. — Arrivals
8:30 a.m. —Welcome
8:45 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.: Speakers, vendors, socialize

Members*
Full 2-day conference $85 ____
1-day conference $55 ____

Non-members*
Full 2-day conference $120 ____
1-day conference $ 75 ____

Registration Fee enclosed: $__________ Will you be at the IGS Library Friday evening? Yes ____ No ____

Name: _____________________________________ IGS Member: Yes ____ No ____
Mailing address: _______________________________________________________________________
Phone: _______________________ Email address: ____________________________________________

*Cost includes syllabus, two lunches, midmorning snack, and a light meal on Friday evening at the IGS Library. Full refund if cancelled before September 25, 2009.
Please tell us of any special needs you might have: ________________________________________________

Mail to: IGS Annual Conference, 628 East Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50309-1924

ANNUAL APPEAL 2009

YES! I would like to make a tax–deductible gift of $____________ to the 2009 Annual Appeal.

Name(s):__________________________________________ □ New membership □ Renewal
Mailing Address:_____________________________________
City, State, Zip: _______________________________________
Day phone:_____________ Email:______________________

□ My company has a matching gift program. Company name: ________________________________
□ My gift is in Memory/Honor (circle one) of ______________________________________________
□ I accept the German Challenge! $______________

My gift may be best utilized for:
□ Building Fund $____________ □ General Fund $____________ □ Endowment Fund $___________
□ Check enclosed.
□ Please charge my credit card in the amount of $____________ (+ $2.50 credit card handling fee)
□ Visa □ MasterCard □ Discover
Account No._________________________________________ Expiration Date: ________________
Signature:__________________________________________

Mail to: Iowa Genealogical Society, 628 East Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50309-1924
Located in the East Village section of the downtown area, two blocks west of the State Capitol Building and directly across the street from the Iowa State Historical Building.

PRESERVING THE PAST & ENRICHING THE FUTURE SINCE 1965