



Your ancestors are waiting
for you to find them...

Iowa Genealogical Society

Iowa Genealogy.org • 628 E. Grand Ave
Des Moines, IA • 515-276-0287

Last month at the Members Only session, we talked about Genealogy Do-Overs and we all made resolutions for 2016. Some of them were major like “publish my book” and some were very specific, like “drive to Boone to see land deed records.” My resolutions were included among them and now that it’s the new year, I am committed. How did that happen?

I want to thank everyone who donated to help pay for the new heating unit. The last time I asked, we were almost there. We had fun with the “obituary” but it truly was a serious need. We’ll post pictures of the installation – any time a crane has to be parked in the lot, it’s a great photo op.

Another thing about the start of the year is that the work of the Nominating Committee begins. This year, in addition to the representatives from the even numbered regions, the positions of President, 2nd Vice President and Secretary will be elected. Under the bylaws, I cannot stand for re-election which is good – it’s important to have new people and ideas. Other current office holders will be contacted to see if they wish to have their names on the slate and the membership at large will be asked if any of them would like to volunteer. Please seriously consider serving.

In my family, we draw names among the adult children for Christmas and I drew one of my brothers-in-law. Among other things, I decided to do a little family history for him. You all probably know how that worked out. I am now in French –Canadian records from the 1600’s, learning all about “dit” names and using the *Dictionnaire Genealogique des Familles Canadiennes*. And I have yet to get to the Danish census and church records for another line! I already told him that this part of his present will be a little late – his birthday is in June, maybe I should shoot for that.

Stay warm and safe. Happy New Year.

Theresa Liewer
IGS President

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IOWA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

628 E Grand Ave
Des Moines IA 50309-1924

Phone: (515) 276-0287

Email:
igs@iowagenealogy.org

Website:
www.iowagenealogy.org

LIBRARY HOURS

Monday, Wednesday,
Friday & Saturday
10 a.m.— 4 p.m.

Tuesday & Thursday
10 a.m.— 9 p.m.

IGS EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Hawkeye Heritage

Susan Claman

IGS Newsletter

[Jennifer Ewing](#)

2016 IGS Spring Conference DNA: Unlocking the Code

IGS is pleased to announce that Bryant F McAllister is an Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Biology at The University of Iowa will lead the 2016 Spring Conference—DNA Unlocking the Code..

Dr. McAllister's research program primarily focuses on investigating principles governing the organization of genes within chromosomes. Aside from academic research, he actively uses the tools available in the direct-to-consumer genetic testing marketplace (e.g., 23andMe, AncestryDNA, and Family Tree DNA) to investigate the intersection between biological and historical inferences of family history - a pursuit commonly known as genetic genealogy.

The American Citizen/La Tribuna Italiana

The scanned images of the weekly Des Moines Italian-American newspaper, *The American Citizen/La Tribuna Italiana*, are now available on a computer at the IGS library. The issues run from 1923 to 1972 and are searchable by name and subject. The early issues are predominantly in Italian but by November, 1928 the articles are in English with a few Italian items scattered throughout the paper. At various times it called itself The Most Influential Italian Newspaper in the State of Iowa and also The Official American-Italian Newspaper of Iowa and Minnesota, although the news from Minnesota seems to be minimal.

We want to thank Sue DeFazio and Kathy Foggia of the Italian-American Cultural Center for making this wonderful resource available to us. If you have Italian ancestry in Iowa, this is something you want to check out.

German Interest Group Topics for 2016 February through June

February 1, 2016 @ 7 p.m. ABC's of German Research part 1. David Bartholmy and Diane Green will lead the discussion using Lois Edward's Beginner's Guide to German Genealogy.

March 7, 2016 @ 7 p.m. IGS is now a Family History Library, which means you can order films from Salt Lake City and have them sent to IGS. We will explain how this works and well as point out some behind the front page items of the IGS website and FamilySearch websites.

April 4, 2016 @ 7 p.m. Research in Mecklenburg—History and tips for research, led by David Bartholmy

May 2, 2016 @ 7 p.m. To be Announced

June 6, 2016 Research in Hanover—History and tips for research, led by Diane Green

For more information on the German Interest Group, contact Diane Green at dkg1300@aol.com.

Honoring Our Ancestors by Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak

Submitted by Diane Green

I had bought a used copy of Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak's *Honoring Our Ancestors* and have just finishing reading the true stories submitted to her for the book. This one really hit a nerve. — Diane

The Battle to Preserve the War Letters, by Andrew Carroll

After a fire swept through his own home in 1989 (thankfully no one was hurt,) Mr. Carroll realized that things like furniture and appliances can be replaced, but his letters were gone. He was not particularly interested in history, but had letters from friends and family that were irreplaceable. His focus on war letters began after talking with veterans who said they had thrown away their letters. They were very modest about their service and felt no one would be interested in what they had written. No one in his immediate family had served in the military, but he felt a keen sense of loss knowing that these letters were being destroyed. On a whim, he contacted "Dear Abby" and she agreed to put his information about encouraging vets or family to send a copy of their letters to the Legacy Project in her column on Veterans' Day, 1998. Within three days his post office was inundated with mail. Attached to many of the copies were messages from the sender, "Please remember him." Time and time again, the writers pleaded with Mr. Carroll to please remember.

From that modest beginning, the Legacy Project has received copies of over 50,000 letters and Mr. Carroll published a book based on them. Earnings from the book are donated to veterans groups.

<http://www.warletters.com/>

Everywhere an Intern. . . .

Hi, my name is Karen Voss and I am working here as an intern through the AARP Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). I grew up in Des Moines and did an exchange year after getting my B.A. from the University of Iowa. I ended up staying in Germany for 35 years.

This is my third assignment through SCSEP and definitely the most challenging. I thought I had paid a little attention in school, but now I am not so sure. What I have learned from the staff and members about Iowan and American history in the past month is awesome not to mention improving my computer skills on basic programs and the internet. There seems to be no end to the knowledge floating around this building.

I was able to attend the December meeting of the German interest group and would be happy to look at any German documents helping with language barriers you may have. I am looking forward to getting to know more of you in these coming weeks.

Death Certificate Errors

Submitted by Dale Gurwell

My maternal grandmother's death certificate had 2 major errors which my mom caught after it was issued, but mom never knew she could get it corrected. So I had to pay \$15 and provide proof so the State of Iowa would make the corrections. Then I had to pay another \$15 to get a copy of the corrected death certificate. At least I got it right for future generations.

It was the funeral director or the nursing home that made the mistakes. They should have talked to my mother who was a great genealogist before the age of computers. — Dale

Lucas State Office Bldg.
321 E. 12th St.
Des Moines, IA 520319-0075

Subject: Request to Amend Death Certificate

Introduction:

Recently, I discovered that my grandmother's death certificate from 1963 has two significant errors. It does not list her mother's maiden name and it erroneously lists her step-father as her father. The informant is "mortuary records". At the time, if they had asked my mother, then they could have obtained the correct information but now even my mother has died. Therefore I provide the following proof of the correct information.

Attachment Summary:

- A. This is the death certificate of my grandmother, Ida Alcorn. It appears no family member had any input for the information.
- B. This is my birth certificate. I am Dale Gurwell and my mother's maiden name is Clara Alcorn.
- C. This is my mother's birth certificate. Note that her mother's maiden name is Ida Christina Lenning. Thus Ida truly had a middle name of Christina. Ida's father was a Lenning, not Gunder Larson. Below I will show that Gunder Larson is actually her step-father.
- D. These are marriage records showing my grandmother, Ida. C. Lenning, married my grandfather, Hubert Roy Alcorn, in 1902. Note that she lists her mother as Ellen Knudon and father as Osmond Lenning.
- E. These are pages from the 1925 Iowa Census and Ida indicates that her parents are Ellen Knutson and father is O. Lenning.
- F. 1 & 2. This death record shows that Osmond Lenning, Ida's father, died in 1895 of typhoid fever in Ledyard, Kossuth County, when he was 32. This left his wife, Ellen, a widow with 4 boys and 1 girl, Ida, my grandmother. F3: See pictures of Osmond & Ellen and also Ellen with 5 children including Ida.
- G. 1 & 2. This is a marriage document from Hardin County. In 1910, Ellen Lenning marries her second husband, G. Larsen Vik, commonly known as Gunder Larsen. G2 show both Ellen's maiden name of Knudson and her first married name of Lenning. This made Gunder my grandmother's step-father.
- H. This is the death certificate for Ida's mother, Ellen. Note that this provides her father's name as Iver KNUDTSON. Thus, Ida's mother's maiden name was Ellen Knudtson also spelled as Knutson and Knudson.
- I. Obituary of Ellen which summarizes her whole life, birth, marriage to 2 husbands and and her children, including Ida.

Summary

So Ida Alcorn's maiden name was Lenning. Her father was Osmond Lenning and her mother was Ellen Knudtson. Her middle name was Christina. . . (closing salutation)



Members Only Sessions are a round-table sharing format and are open only to members of IGS. There is no fee for these classes other than being a member of the Society. The classes are held on Monday evenings. Join us for an informative, fun evening.

Upcoming Members Only Sessions:

Mon. 2/8 6:30 p.m. Sick Trees-How to recognize and treat them with Linda Greethurst

Mon. 3/14 6:30 p.m. Finding Family in Institutional Records with Jennifer Ewing

Are you receiving this newsletter via snail mail? Receiving it by e-mail saves IGS printing and postage. Please contact igs@iowagenealogy.org if we can send the newsletter to you via e-mail. If you are not getting our Weekly E-Mail Updates, you can sign up on our home page: www.iowagenealogy.org.

Don't miss out on important communication from IGS.

If you are a member of IGS, FGS has partnered with Dell Computers to give Member Societies and their members discounts on products sold through the Dell website. You can also receive a discount on FindMyPast.



IGS SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

All groups meet at the IGS Library, 628 E Grand Ave, Des Moines:

German Interest Group meets on the **first Monday** of each month at 7 p.m.

African American Interest Group meets the **first Tuesday** of each month at 7 p.m.

Irish Interest Group meets on the **third Tuesday** of each month at 7 p.m.

Norwegian Interest Group meets on the **fourth Tuesday** of the month (except December) at 7 p.m.

British/Welsh and Scottish Interest Group meets the **second Thursday** of the month at 7 p.m.

Legacy User Group meets the **third Thursday** of the month, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

RootsMagic Interest Group meets the **fourth Saturday** of the month, from 10 a.m. to noon.

Ancestry.com Interest Group meets the **second Sunday** of the month, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Would you like to volunteer for IGS? We have several opportunities for you to work from home doing data entry. Contact Jennifer at execdir@iowagenealogy.org.

Did you know that IGS is now an LDS Affiliated Library? You can order microfilm rolls from familysearch.org and have them delivered to IGS to view! We are open six days a week with extended hours on Tuesday and Thursday. That means just one trip to IGS to research and view microfilm.

Public Lands to Private Hands *by Alice Hoyt Veen, CG*

"The land is the only thing in the world worth working for, worth fighting for, worth dying for, because it's the only thing that lasts".....Gerald O'Hara, *Gone with the Wind*, by Margaret Mitchell

Many of our ancestors were strongly motivated by the desire to own property, yet family historians often avoid land ownership research. Identifying and understanding the documents associated with your ancestor's real property is an essential step in understanding your family and can help solve genealogical puzzles. American land ownership begins with transfers from government to private individuals or groups. Learning the basics of government land distribution is not difficult; here are a few tips to get you started.

Why Land?

European lands were held by the privileged few for centuries. Laws of primogeniture (exclusive right of inheritance belonging to the eldest son) meant few family members could inherit land. One attraction for immigrants to America was the prospect of acquiring land and the ability to dispose of it as they saw fit—all male children, and eventually females, could inherit. The freedom to own and use land meant families could be self-sufficient. Land ownership signified independence and building wealth for future generations; for many, it defined the American Dream.

Because American lands were relatively inexpensive and easily acquired, many of our ancestors owned real estate. Ownership documents have been publicly recorded since the earliest colonial era and predate many other types of records. Ancestors not found elsewhere may be traced through land records—helping researchers place their families in time and location. Land records may contain genealogical information about spouses, children, other family members, and associates, helping establish relationships and identities.

GOVERNMENT GRANTS

The first time a colony, state or the federal government transfers ownership of public lands to private parties is termed an original entry or land grant.

Colonial Land Grants

The original thirteen British colonies distributed land through colonial land grants. Although some colonists purchased land from Native Americans, the British Crown asserted ownership over all colonial lands. Title might be transferred by royal charter to a proprietor, a crown-appointed governor, or a company or corporation. These entities then made grants to individuals. Grants extended frontiers, rewarded military or political service, and encouraged population growth.

New England towns were established by grants to a proprietary group which then distributed land to individuals. Other colonial land grants were cash transactions from land companies and speculators. The headright system rewarded individuals for settling and for bringing other new settlers to the colony.

French & Spanish governments also made land grants in areas later acquired by United States. Records may be found in European archives; most owners were required to reestablish their claims with the United States.

Colonial lands were usually surveyed using the "metes & bounds" system, a process that incorporated natural physical landmarks, such as trees, rocks, and streams, as part of the property description. This created irregularly shaped tracts.

Public Lands to Private Hands by Alice Hoyt Veen, CG (cont.)

State Land Grants

Twenty states are considered state-land or non-public-land states. These include the original thirteen colonies plus Vermont, Maine, Kentucky, Tennessee, Texas, Hawaii, and West Virginia. Many state grants were bounty lands, rewarded to military veterans. The distribution process was much like the colonial system and used “metes & bounds” to measure and define tracts.

Federal Land Grants

After the establishment of the United States government, lands in new territories and states were considered in the public domain and distributed by the federal government. Acts of Congress established policies for transferring public lands to private parties.

District land offices under the direction of the Treasury Department’s General Land Office (GLO), supervised the distribution process. In 1946 the Department of the Interior organized the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Federal lands were platted using a “rectangular survey” system. This method divided large areas into townships, ranges, and sections, arranged as a rectangular grid oriented to baseline meridians. Individual tracts were measured and described by the same process.

A variety of criteria determined qualifications for individuals to obtain public lands. We’ll explore federal distribution methods and the process for receiving land grants in the next IGS newsletter.

SUMMARY

America’s colonial, state, and federal land grants truly created a “land of opportunity” for our ancestors. Knowing the “how” and “why” of the government distribution system enhances understanding of our ancestor’s movements, motivations and life experiences. From public lands to private hands: often the first step in fulfilling the American Dream.

NOTE: Learn more about land records research! “Basics of Land Records Research: On Solid Ground,” will be offered at the IGS Library on Saturday, 16 January 2016, at 10:30 a.m. Preregistration is required; contact 515-276-0287; igs@iowagenealogy.org.

Alice Hoyt Veen, Certified Genealogist (SM, is the founder of Prairie Roots Research, providing professional genealogical and historical research services to clients who seek superior research solutions. She specializes in solving genealogical “brick walls.”

Have you recently visited a local repository or library? We would love to have your thoughts. Please submit a short description of your visit and things that we would need to know before traveling to the spot, to Jennifer, execdir@iowagenealogy.org.

PLEASE GIVE US YOUR CURRENT E-MAIL

IGS has many member e-mails that are no longer active. Having your e-mail allows us to notify you quickly about special events or other happenings at IGS. It also ensures you get the e-news and newsletter as well as notification about the Hawkeye Heritage. Please send an e-mail to IGS at igs@iowagenealogy.org to give us your current e-mail. Be sure and give us your name too so we know whose e-mail it is.

If you don’t have e-mail or just want a paper copy that’s fine, you can still get it that way. But receiving it electronically helps us save our valuable resources—money, paper, ink and volunteer hours!

IGS CLASS SCHEDULE

All programs & activities take place at the IGS Library, 628 E Grand Ave, Des Moines, IA, unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday, January 27, 2016

Lunch & Learn-Using Newspapers for Genealogy

Noon to 1 p.m.

Instructor - Linda Greethurst

\$5 IGS members / \$10 non-members

Saturday, February 6, 2016

Case Studies: Breaking through Brickwalls

1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Instructor - Theresa Liewer

\$5 IGS members / \$10 non-members

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

Online Tutorials—Lunch & Learn

Noon to 1 p.m.

Instructor –Jennifer Ewing

\$5 IGS members / \$10 non-members

Saturday, February 20, 2016

Land Research: Metes & Bounds, Over Hill, Over Dale

10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Instructor: Alice Hoyt Veen, CG

\$5 IGS members / \$10 non-members

Saturday, February 20, 2016

Prairie Patchwork: Iowa's Ethnic Heritage

1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Instructor: Alice Hoyt Veen, CG

\$5 IGS members / \$10 non-members

Saturday, February 27, 2016

Beginning Genealogy

10:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Instructor - Donna Anderson

FREE

Wednesday, March 9, 2016

Easter Bonnets & Other Fashion Clues—Lunch & Learn

Noon to 1 p.m.

Instructor –Theresa Liewer

\$5 IGS members / \$10 non-members

Saturday, March 12, 2016

Beginning Genealogy

10:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Instructor - Donna Anderson

FREE

How They Got Here: Ports & Passenger Lists

1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Instructor - Jennifer Ewing

\$5 IGS members / \$10 non-members

Saturday March 19, 2016

Land Research: Rectangular Survey System--Fair & Square

10:30 pm - 12:30 pm

Instructor - Alice Hoyt Veen, CG

\$5 IGS members / \$10 non-members

Iowans Go to War

1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Instructor - Alice Hoyt Veen, CG

\$5 IGS members / \$10 non-members

***All Classes are subject to change

For more information about IGS programs and activities, or to register for classes, contact IGS: 515-276-0287; igs@iowagenealogy.org, or visit the IGS website: www.iowagenealogy.org.

DNA UNLOCKING THE CODE

With Dr. Bryant F McAllister

IGS 2016 Spring Conference—Saturday, April 9, 2016

Conference Schedule

8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. - Registration

9:00 a.m. - Announcements

9:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. - **Introduction to Genetics for Genealogy**

Break

10:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. - **Autosomal Matching to Support Family Relationships**

11:45 to 12:45 p.m. - Lunch

12:45 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. - Break Out Sessions

Advanced uses of Genome-wide SNP tests

or

Small Group Tutorials

Break

2:15p.m. to 3:30 p.m. - **Other Uses of DNA**

Seating is Limited

SPRING CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

(Conference fee includes lunch)

Early Registration (Before March 28)

_____ IGS Member x \$55 = _____

_____ Non-member x \$65 = _____

Late Registration (after March 28)

_____ IGS Member x \$65 = _____

_____ Non-member x \$75 = _____

_____ I prefer a vegetarian lunch

IGS MEMBERSHIP

I want to join IGS, which entitles me to the above member registration rate:

Individual \$35 = _____ Family \$45= _____

Check enclosed.

Please charge my credit card in the amount of \$_____

(we add \$2.50 for credit card handling fee)

Visa MasterCard Discover

Account Number _____

Expiration date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

E-mail _____

Phone _____

Iowa Genealogical Society
Membership Application

Membership Benefits:

- Free access to IGS research library
- Bimonthly Newsletter
- Admission discounts to all IGS classes & events
- Discounted hourly research rate

- Individual: \$35 Family: \$45
 New membership Renewal

I would like to make a tax-deductible gift of \$_____.

My company has a matching gift program. Company name:

My gift is in Memory/Honor (circle one) of

My gift may be best utilized for:

- Mortgage Fund \$_____
- General Fund \$_____

Name(s): _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Day phone: _____

Email: _____

- 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 E Grand Ave
Des Moines IA 50309-1924



**IOWA GENEALOGICAL
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**

January 2016

The Iowa Genealogical Society Newsletter is a publication of the Iowa Genealogical Society. Members receive the newsletter as part of their membership.

Individual members, member chapters, regional representatives and the public are invited to submit articles, reviews, chapter news and program information for publication.

Contact IGS for more information or to submit your article:

Iowa Genealogical Society
628 E Grand Ave
Des Moines IA 50309-1924
515-276-0287

igs@iowagenealogy.org

**NOTE: Please check
the mailing label for
your membership
expiration date.**