

MAY 2018

# Iowa Genealogical Society

On April 17, Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds signed an act relating to inspection and examination of certain public records under the custody of the State Archivist and County Registrar which goes into effect on July 1, 2018.

New section 22.16 opens all records in the custody of the State Archivist at 100 years old.

The bottom line is the State Archives of Iowa can now make more records available to researchers without having to first obtain permissions from State Agencies where the records originated before making them available.

Revised IA Code section 144.43, subsection 3 relates to vital records.

The revised law clearly lays out the responsibilities of the County Registrars and State Archivist as custodians of vital records at the county and state level respectively.

Reduces the term of state death record closure in the custody of the State Archivist from 75 to 50 years. As of 7/1, an additional 750,000 death records will be open to researchers for the first time!

For the first time the State Archives will be able to open State Fetal Death vital records in the custody of the State Archivist for public inspection, and we will be able to do so when they reach 50 years old.

Additionally, since Fetal Death records will now be open, the State Archives will work with its partners in the coming year to image State birth and death registers 1880- June 1904 and place on the web.



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## IOWA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

628 E Grand Ave  
Des Moines IA 50309-1924

Phone: (515) 276-0287

Email:  
[igs@iowagenealogy.org](mailto:igs@iowagenealogy.org)

Website:  
[www.iowagenealogy.org](http://www.iowagenealogy.org)

## LIBRARY HOURS

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

## IGS EXECUTIVE BOARD

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President

Kevin Spire

1st Vice President

Lori Meyer

2nd Vice President

Tasha Jackson

Secretary

Mo Wilkins

Treasurer

Ellen Landers

## IGS STAFF

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Administrative Assistant

Debi Iseminger Chase

Librarian

Debi Iseminger Chase

Assistant Librarian

Susan Claman

Assistant Librarian

Diane Green

Assistant Librarian

Karen Voss

Assistant Librarian

Curt & Tasha Jackson

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## IGS EDITORIAL STAFF

*Hawkeye Heritage*

Susan Claman

*IGS Newsletter*

Debi Iseminger Chase

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*By Kevin Spire, IGS President*

The Iowa Genealogical Society Exists for You!

Take a moment and think back to the time you first connected with the Iowa Genealogical Society. Maybe you were looking for some direction on how to get started? Maybe you were stuck with a brick wall problem? **Or was it that you were just curious and thought you'd stick your nose in the door?** Each one of us has our own story, and as new people come thru the door, they will have a story too.

Whatever your reason, the decision you made to become a member is positive proof that history and family are important values that you hold for yourself and your community. It also demonstrates your desire to keep history alive today and for future generations.

Have you taken time to consider the value your membership to IGS provides? Classes, conferences, guidance, a library filled with all kinds of resources (much of which you cannot find on the internet). Need I go on?! Remember the library also offers special access to Family Search records you cannot get from home.

We strive to keep our membership prices at a reasonable rate to allow you to attend our activities. But the organization cannot survive on membership dues alone. Board members work hard to find as many alternate sources of income as possible. But at times we are forced to ask for our members to contribute donations to help keep the organization afloat.

**There's one more way that you can get more out of your membership. While it might sound strange, I've learned that the want to get more, is to give.** Volunteer, serve on the board, provide funds, promote, teach, inspire others, advertise. So many ways you can give back. And you will be supporting IGS to keep history alive, keeping families connected and thereby strengthening our communities.

IGS exists for you. And IGS needs you to keep it alive. Alive with your time, energy and financial support. What do you want to see happen to IGS? The decision is up to you.

## How I Changed Iowa Law by Ricki King



A little over two years ago I was volunteering helping Sharon Avery, Historical Preservation Specialist at the State Historical Society of Iowa, flagging any death certificate marked still birth or if it did not indicate the baby was born alive. The flagged stillbirth certificates were not able to be open to the public with no end date listed. How I interpret the law is that these records are only open to direct family members. Of course the family must know of a birth, the date of birth and the name of the child. I and other volunteers were working to make more non-stillbirth records available. While flagging a certificate, I noticed that very day was the deceased 100th birthday. At that time is when I asked, “Why am I marking this certificate to not be open to the public?”

Most people say it’s the law, they won’t change it, or there is no point in trying. I next asked, “have you tried to change it?” Invariably the answer would be no, but they won’t change it. I set out to learn what the law stated. Currently, you can access a death record if it is at least seventy-five years old at the state archivist or at a county registrar “... if that death was not a fetal death.” Those eight words close a fetal death (stillbirth) record with no timeframe of when it can be opened. I decided that day I was going to try and do something about it.

Once I read Iowa Code 144.43 I decided I wanted to remove the eight words and try to change the access from 75 years to 50 years on all death records. My thinking was it doesn’t hurt to try and if I have to compromise I can give up the years and leave it at 75 years. This way I could create a win-win for the state legislature and myself by agreeing to a compromise. If I was able to get both changes done it would be a win-win for genealogists and it would recognize those babies.

It turned out the representatives were onboard with both changes. No one understood why fetal deaths were closed and they were glad I was pointing out the law needed to be changed. The health department lobbyists were not so keen being concerned about identity thief. The law currently states:

“... in the custody of the state archivist and are at least seventy-five years old:

- (1) A record of birth.
- (2) A record of marriage.
- (3) A record of divorce, dissolution of marriage, or annulment of marriage.
- (4) A record of death if that death was not a fetal death.

It turns out some wording was needed to be changed or the law as currently written opens birth, marriage, divorce and death records at 50 years.

I explained to the lobbyist and state representatives that I wanted the information for genealogical purposes only. The lobbyists were worried about privacy and I explained that I was not

trying to open birth records. They too were ok but wanted it clarified in the law the change was only death records. Neither group had a problem with lowering it from 75 years to 50 years.

It did not cross my mind to try changing marriage and divorce records until I saw the written amendment just before the first vote in the House branch of the legislature.

When I started, my thought was that the problem would be getting the bill passed. In reality the problem was getting the bill to the legislature floor for a vote. I took my proposal about a year and half ago to Rep. Ruth Anne Gaines. Someone my family knew (not my representative) in the state legislature who worked with me getting the amendment written and trying to get it to a vote. Last summer after the legislative session ended I decided to talk to my representative Chris Hagenow, who happens to be the speaker of the house. He could not figure out why the bill did not go up for a vote the previous session in 2017 and promised it would go to a vote in the upcoming 2018 session.

What I call the stillbirth and state representatives call archives bill HF2277 did go to a vote in 2018. The amendment passed the House with a vote of Yea 95, No 0 on March 6, 2018 giving me a great birthday present. The Senate voted on April 3, 2018 and passed it with Yea 48, No 0. The amendment went back to the House for a final vote on April 10, 2018 and again passed this time with Yea 97, No 1. I was not notified when the bill was going to be signed and missed it on 17 April 2018. However, it does fill good to help change a law. If you want to watch the discussion before the legislature vote go to <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/chambers> and under live video feed "Bill Archives." I watched live feed and the most debate was the second time the House voted on 10 April 2018.

Because of my quest, genealogists, historians and others receive a bonus added to the law. I was not seeking this change but I'm very glad the change was made. The new section was added to the law section 22.16 opens all records held at the state archives automatically at 100 years if the record does not currently have an open date.

If you want to see how the bill will look once it is published Iowa Code please go to <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=%24selectedGa.generalAssemblyID&ba=hf2277>

Thank you, Iowa legislature for listening and revising section 144.43, subsection 3 relating to vital records and adding section 22.16.

The new law will take effect 1 July 2018 giving access to death or fetal death certificates of anyone who died in 1967 or earlier.

Sharon Avery, Historical Preservation Specialist, is looking for volunteers to help index birth records. She can be reached at 515-281-6863 or [sharon.avery@iowa.gov](mailto:sharon.avery@iowa.gov) .

Delpha Musgrave, Historical Preservation Specialist, is looking for volunteers to help open Polk County probate records. She can be reached at 515-281-5655 or [delpha.musgrave@iowa.gov](mailto:delpha.musgrave@iowa.gov) .

Ricki King  
Roots To Branches Genealogy  
Ricki@rootstobranchesgenealogy.com

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***The Iowa Genealogical Society Open House Saturday, May 19th.***

Our library at 628 E Grand Ave

**10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Stop in for a while, or stay the whole time!

Representatives will be present from each of our Interest groups (German, Irish, Norwegian, and DNA) and each of our User groups (Ancestry.com, RootsMagic, and Legacy) to answer questions about what their groups do at their monthly meetings and how you can join them.

We will have a family tree coloring activity for children  
tours of the library

staff and volunteers available to answer questions

and introductory classes that can help you start researching your family history.

Each introductory class will last for about 30 minutes, The introductory class schedule is as follows:

**10:30 a.m. – How to Start Looking For Your Ancestors**

**11:30 a.m. – Which Genealogy Software is Right For You?**

**12:30 p.m. – So You've Been Given a Big Box of Stuff...**

**1:30 p.m.– Intro to the Iowa Genweb**

**2:30 p.m. – Which Genealogy Software is Right For You?**

**3:30 p.m. – So You've Been Given a Big Box of Stuff...**

Come and meet some of our board members, network with some subject matter experts, and find out how we can help you in the search for your ancestors! This is our 53rd year in operation, and we'd love to talk to you about what makes our group unique. We might be the Iowa Genealogical Society, but we have resources from all over the U.S. and the world!



# **Jump into June IGS Slumber Party**

June 9th & 10th  
4 p.m. to 6 a.m.

\$20 per person  
Late night pizza provided  
Bring a snack to share

Iowa Genealogical Society Library  
628 E Grand Ave  
Des Moines IA

Learn from fellow researchers  
Use the Ancestry Library Edition  
Use the extra records you can access at IGS because we are an  
FamilySearch Affiliate Library



# 2018 Spring Conference



## IGS CALENDAR

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

### MAY 2018

#### Saturday, May 12

Beginning Genealogy

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

instructor.

Preregistration required. Cost: FREE

Getting to Know Computer Apps

Twitter for Genealogy

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Tasha Jackson, instructor

\$5 IGS members / \$15 non-members

### JUNE 2018

#### Saturday, June 9

Beginning Genealogy

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

Lori Meyer, instructor

Preregistration required. Cost: FREE

#### Saturday, June 16

Getting to Know Computer Apps

Intro to Online Books

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Theresa Liewer & Lori Meyer, instructors

\$5 IGS members / \$15 non-members

### THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING WHO DONATED DOOR PRIZE AND SILENT AUCTION ITEMS

African-American Museum

<https://blackiowa.org/>

Amana Society Heritage Museum

<http://amanaheritage.org/>

Museum of Danish America

<https://www.danishmuseum.org/>

Des Moines Visitors Bureau

<https://www.catchdesmoines.com>

Herbert Hoover Museum and Library

<http://www.hooverpresidentialfoundation.org/>

Living History Farms

<https://www.lhf.org/>

National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library

<http://www.ncsml.org/>

Pella Society Museum

<https://www.pellahistorical.org/>

Vesterheim – National Norwegian-American Museum

<https://vesterheim.org/>

Anonymous IGS Members

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



## 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:

Building 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

Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ CVV \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Iowa Genealogical Society,  
628 E Grand Ave, Des Moines IA 50309-1924



IOWA GENEALOGICAL  
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

May 2018

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](mailto:igs@iowagenealogy.org)

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

## IGS EVENTS



### 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.

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.

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.

DNA Interest Group meets the  
first Tuesday **of the month,**  
**at 1:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.**

### ROOTSMAGIC INTEREST GROUP

There will be no meeting in May due to the  
Memorial Day holiday.



### WOODLAND CEMETERY TOURS FOR 2018

Take a tour of Des Moines's oldest cemetery

Here are the Saturday tour dates and times:

May 5th from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

June 23rd from 9 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

July 21st from 9 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

August 25th from 9 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Please email Archie Cook for confirmation and directions/instructions at email address  
[archiecook@email.com](mailto:archiecook@email.com)

PRESERVING THE PAST & ENRICHING THE FUTURE