

# IONIA COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Ionia County Genealogical Society is a non-profit volunteer group whose mission is to create awareness and preserve family histories within the Ionia County area. The focus of this group will be to develop genealogical resources and to assist all those seeking local history.

Volume 8 - Number 2

April - June 2003

### Greetings from your President!

This spring has been tough for Ionia County with ice storms, wind, snow - we are looking forward to warmer temps so we can get out in those cemeteries and back to work on all the projects our society has going!

We thank outgoing board members Marilyn **STEWART** (Trustee) and Gary **VEALE** (Recording Secretary) for jobs well done. What a pleasure working with you! We appreciate your taking the opportunity to serve on our board.

Next, we welcome our newest board members - Elaine **GARLOCK**, Recording Secretary, and Bernadine **CARR**, Trustee. Both reside in Lake Odessa and have been active members of the local Historical Society. We are thrilled to have them serve with us for the next two years.

Bernadine and I recently drove to Hubbardston, on the NE corner of Ionia Co., to deliver some of the 1881 History of Ionia and Montcalm Counties books to Pat **McCORMICK BAESE**, owner of the "Celtic Path". Located at 214 E. Main St., this store was once a dance hall, the township hall and an antique shop. Inside you will find Irish crafts and folklore, and Pat is happy to show you around and tell you the history of Hubbardston. Closed on Sun. & Mon., the store is open 10-5 Tues. & Wed., 10-5:30 Thurs. & Fri., and 10-2 on Sat.. Pat teaches Irish dancing, which you had the opportunity to see her students perform last year at Depot Day. (One

of those students is the daughter of member, Merrilee **MORRISON-COTTER**.) Pat is also a board member of the newly formed Hubbardston Area Historical Society. A copy of their newsletter is on file in our library, if you would like to learn more about this fast growing group. You may also link to their website through the Ionia County website! Check them out!

March is Women's History month, and there is a new magazine out with that focus! West Michigan Woman is a new endeavor by Jennifer **CHURCHILL**. A copy of the first edition, January 2003, is in our library and available for your perusal. Good work, Jennifer!

Thanks to all who are donating towards our building project, we are nearing the \$40,000 mark - only \$20,000 away from our goal! At this rate, we will be breaking ground soon! Please continue sending in your contributions, raffle ticket money, etc. We will have a concession stand at the Lake Odessa Fair this summer. In cooperation with the fair board and the Lake Odessa Area Historical Society, the proceeds will go towards the building project. We need lots of volunteers at the stand. If you can help out, please call me for more information as to dates and times.

The book project is almost ready to go to print and will be ready in time for Christmas. You still have time to order copies for yourself, your family, your library, anyone!

We need to create three new positions to help with our Society's workload. (1) A

Membership Chairperson: responsible for maintaining our membership list (already created), this person must have a computer and e-mail access. He/she would also create mailing labels as needed for our newsletter and other publications that go out. This person would also report to the board how our membership is doing (numbers).

(2) A Hospitality Chairperson: responsible for contacting those who sign up for refreshments and welcome team to remind them of their volunteer date, and also to pass the famous clipboards around at meetings to make sure we have someone to fill all the available positions. A simple job, but a VERY important one, you do not need a computer or e-mail for this position - just a phone.

(3) A Newsletter Committee: these people would take the copy to the printer (after getting it from our editor), pick it up (200+ newsletters 4 times a year), fold it, put labels on it (provided by the membership chairperson), sort it for bulk mailing, then take it to the post office. Get your whole family involved in this project - my husband and I have done it for the past 6 years. We are ready for a break. ☺

If you think you can handle any of these - call me!

Thanks in advance for pitching in!  
Pam **SWILER**, President  
Ionia County Genealogical Society

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- Steven John **ZIMMER**  
982 McLean Ave  
St. Paul, MN 55106  
(651) 771-2606  
E-mail: <swzimmer@msn.com>  
Researching: BARNARD,  
LEWIS, KELLEY, FAXON,  
ROBERTSON, HENDERSON,  
GEE, SWARTHOUT, SMUCK,  
ANDERSON, OSTRANDER.
- Concetta **FRANCO**  
Bldd Architects, Inc.  
833 West Jackson Blvd.  
Suite 100  
Chicago, IL 60607  
Phone not listed  
E-mail:  
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- Jack V. **WILLIAMS**  
7502 Clifftop Way  
Bakersfield, CA 93306  
(661) 871-7987
- Gary & Joyce **WICKERHAM**  
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Researching: **WICKERHAM,**  
**PEACOCK, DAVENPORT,**  
**MITCHELL**

Please note these new addresses/  
e-mail addresses for our members:

- Kitty **WITNEY**  
New address:  
2055 Tittabawassee  
Alger, MI 48610  
(989) 345-5177
- Mary & Jerry **MILAN**  
New e-mail address:  
<Rver78@aol.com>

### CORRECTIONS to the January issue:

- > to the Tax Assessment Lists  
for Easton Twp: the first book  
covers 1877 – 1880, not 1877  
– 1885, as stated.
- > Our apologies to Pat

**KENNY CURRIGAN** for mis-identifying her brother Bob Kenny as her husband John. The good news for John is his service story appeared *twice* (both the October and January issues!), but poor brother Bob didn't get his story in either issue. We will attempt to set the record straight now:



**ROBERT "BOB" KENNY**

Seaman 1<sup>st</sup> Class Robert J. Kenny enlisted in the Navy in 1945 and served during WWII on the S. S. *AUCILLA* Auxilliary Oiler 56, landing ship tanker at Guam in 1946. He was awarded the American Theatre Victory Medal. In 1947, he was stationed at Bremerton, WA, Naval base attached to Sub groups 1, 2, & 4 of the Pacific Fleet, de-commissioning ships. The son of Foster J. Kenny and Helen **LINDLEY/FOLTZ**, Bob married Dolores M. **PARKS** in July 1948 and worked in auto body shops and was a volunteer fireman in Belding, MI.

~ submitted by Pat Currihan  
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### NOTICES TO MEMBERS & FRIENDS

#### *New Belding e-list:*

"Hello,  
I would like invite you to join our brand new (2-22-03) Belding, MI, mailing list. This list will consist of members interested in discussing

and researching Belding MI, history and/or genealogy.

Please feel free to share your memories of Belding and discuss current topics related to Belding.

Any questions please email me. To join the mailing list, submit an email with only the word "subscribe" in the subject line to:

MI-IONIA-BELDING-L-  
request@rootsweb.com

or

MI-IONIA-BELDING-D-  
request@rootsweb.com (if you only want one message a day containing all the days' messages)

Thank you,  
Kim **PENNOCK**  
<smyrnam@pathwaynet.com>  
~~~~~

**CREIGHTON/McCAUL Family Reunion** to be held Sunday, June 29, 2003, at Fallasburg Park, Lowell, MI, at 1 pm. Potluck dinner to celebrate 50th Wedding Anniversary of Rex and Virginia McCaul Creighton of Liverpool, NY. Hosted by their daughters, Louise Creighton, Laura **SCHROTH** and Lola **GLANTZ**. Friends are welcome to join us. For more information, contact Louise at <lcreighton87@hotmail.com>  
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### **GTAGS FALL SEMINAR**

The Grand Traverse Area Genealogy Society (GTAGS) will be hosting a one-day seminar featuring Henry Z. **JONES**, Jr. on Saturday, September 27, 2003 in Traverse City, MI. Hank will be making four interesting presentations. This is the only seminar that Hank will be attending in the midwest.

Hank is a Fellow, American Society of Genealogists, and an author of 7 books. He is descended from Abraham **BERGMAN**, a 1709 Palatine, who settled in Ireland. He is primarily noted for his *Palatine Families of New York 1710* that was published in 1985. This book

contains the origins of the 847 Palatine families who settled in New York State in 1709. He followed this book with 2 more books, *More Palatine Families* and *Even More Palatine Families*. Another interest of Hanks has been in Serendipity and Intuition and their effect on genealogy. This resulted in 2 books, *Psychic Roots: Serendipity & Intuition in Genealogy* and *More Psychic Roots: Further Adventures in Serendipity & Intuition*.

Hank was a featured player in many WALT DISNEY films of the 1960s and 1970s. He also had recurring roles on TV shows such as MY THREE SONS and the PATTY DUKE SHOW as well as several other popular TV shows. He has also made many TV commercials and is a long-time songwriter and member of ASCAP. He and his wife Bonnie live in the Scripps Ranch area of San Diego, CA. They have a daughter, Amanda, now in her early 20s.

The seminar will be held at the Presbyterian Church at 701 Westminster St. in Traverse City from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm. The price for persons who register early is \$30.00, including lunch. Write to GTAGS, PO BOX 2015, Traverse City, MI, 49685, or email Richard HAYES at <RAHayes@chartermi.net> for registration forms.

Space is available for any society that would like to sell its publications. We are asking for a \$10 fee for this opportunity. Contact Richard Hayes for a Vendor Registration Form.

*from the Ionia Sentinel, Thurs.,  
March 8, 1900:*

### Co. I Pensioners

Two members of Co. I, Thirty-fourth volunteers, who went with

the Ionia company to Cuba, have recently been granted pensions by the United States government. Walter SWANGER, who, it will be remembered was riddled with bullets, gets \$30 a month. He also drew \$328 back pension. Today Archie GATES, who has never recovered his health, was notified that he had been allowed \$12 a month and \$204 back pension.

*from the Portland Observer, Thurs.,  
May 25, 1916:*

## DEATH TAKES WAR VETERAN AT AGE OF 71

CHARLES H. GILDEN IS FIFTH  
GRAND ARMY COMRADE TO DIE  
SINCE YEAR BEGAN.

### HAD BEEN RESIDENT OF PORTLAND SINCE 1870

Was Native of England, But Came  
to America at Age of Four; Carried  
Civil War Scar to His Dying Day.

Portland's Grand Army Post laid another comrade away in the township cemetery this (Thursday) afternoon - the fifth to die since the beginning of the year. This time it was Charles H. GILDEN's turn to go the way of his forefathers. Mr. Gilden's death occurred Tuesday morning at 7:30 at his home on Lincoln street, after an illness of three months with paralysis of the lungs. Dr. T. C. BUSKIRK, who treated him, says the man was entirely free from disease, but simply worn out and beyond revitalization.

Mr. Gilden's life, and particularly his war record, make up an interesting obituary. He was a member of a family of nine children and was born in the village of Barton, near Yarmouth, England, January 27, 1845, accompanying his parents to the United States four years later. The voyage from

Liverpool to New York was made in one of the crude sailing vessels typical of that time and the trip consumed a period of eleven full weeks, not without incident. On the way across the boat collided with another ship and narrowly escaped being sent to the bottom. It also encountered a terrific storm when in mid-ocean and was violently tossed about for several days. Though but four years of age at the time, Mr. Gilden remembered the trip distinctly.

His parents settled in the village of Waterport, N.Y., upon reaching America and it was here, in later years, that Mr. Gilden apprenticed himself to a carriage-maker and learned the trade. Then, in 1861, the civil war broke out. Mr. Gilden was but 16 years of age at the time, but when President Lincoln sent out his first call for volunteers he was one of the first from his town to respond. He enlisted from Batavia, N. Y. July 24, 1862, he was enrolled as a corporal in Company C, Eighth Regiment of New York Heavy Artillery, and was sent to the front. He took part in a number of important engagements, including the battle of Cold Harbor, the Appomattox campaign, the siege of Petersburg, and the fight before the Spottsylvania Courthouse. August 25, 1864, he was shot through the face at Ream's Station, Va., on the Weldon railroad, and nearly died from his injuries. He carried the scar to his dying day. He was honorably discharged on account of disability from the Hanwood general hospital, near Washington, May 29, 1865.

Two of Mr. Gilden's brothers, Benjamin and Robert, died in the Union service. Benjamin was killed at Gettysburg by the bursting of a cannon ball. Robert died of natural causes during one of the southern campaigns.

During the time he was at the front Mr. Gilden's parents moved from New York to Michigan. They settled at East Paris, Kent

County, and it was here that Mr. Gilden came after being discharged from the military hospital at Washington. In 1870 he came to Portland and on July 17<sup>th</sup> of the following year was married to Miss Arvilla **FRANCIS**, of this place, who survives him. Four children were born to them, two of them, a boy and a girl, dying when young. The two who survive are Mrs. Chauncey **GUILFORD**, of Danby, and Charles F. Gilden, of Portland. There are also three sisters and one brother living. The sisters are Miss Mary A. Gilden, of East Paris, Mrs. Betsy **ECKLER**, of Waterport, N. Y., and Mrs. L. H. **VanAMBURG**, of Cascade township, Kent County. The only surviving brother is James D., of East Paris.

For 25 years after coming to Portland Mr. Gilden followed the carriagemaker's trade, at one time operating a shop in the building now occupied by **BAUER & LEHMAN**. This he was forced to give up 20 years ago on account of his health, being unable to further withstand the confinement. Since that time he had followed the carpenter's trade. It was not until two years ago that he gave up work entirely. He was a first class workman and a genuine good citizen. Politically he was a democrat and in state and national matters always voted his ticket. He was probably as well posted on current events as any man in Ionia county, was particularly conversant with the movements of the several armies engaged in the present European war.

James **PLUMB** and Grant D. **BLACKMAN**, fellow workmen, Herbert **SHAFFER** and Judson O. **HENDER**, neighbors of deceased, were pallbearers at the funeral, held this afternoon at 2:00 at the late residence. Members of the Grand Army

Post, dwindling in number as each year goes by, attended the last rites in a body. Rev. John H. **STEWART**, a long standing friend of the family, officiated. Burial took place on the family lot in Portland cemetery.

*from the L.O. Wave, April 8, 1904:*

#### **STAPLES**

Mary **KAVANAUGH** was born in Boston, Mass., June 14th, 1832. She was the oldest of a family of ten children only one whom, a brother, is now living. She moved with her parents to Ann Arbor, Mich. about 1838 and from there to Lit.chfield, Hillsdale Co. in 1849. She was married to Loren **STAPLES** Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>, 1850, from which union several children were born, all of whom with the aged husband and father survive her.

She was converted under Methodist preaching in 1855, joined the Methodist church soon after and, except for a short time during which she held her membership with the Presbyterlan church of West Sebewa, she remained a consistent and devoted member thereof to the time of her death.

She moved to Sebewa with her husband and family in 1875 where she lived until called to her reward, March 27th, 1904. Her quiet, unobtrusive and genuine Christian life greatly endeared her to her friends and neighbors and especially to her christian brothers and sisters. Would there were more like her.

#### **WACHTER**

George Wachter died last evening, at 5 o'clock, of pneumonia, at the age of 79. He has been in feeble health all winter but was only confined to the bed one and a half days. He has made his home for over two years with his daughter, Mrs. John **HABERSTUMPF**, 364 King Street,

where the funeral service will be held at 2 o'clock tomorrow afternoon. He leaves a wife and seven children: Mrs. John Haberstumpf and Mrs. Wm. **JORDAN** of this city, Leonard Wachter and Mrs. Samuel **GARLINGER**, of Lake Odessa, and three sons, George, Henry and William, in the northern part of the state. - *Ionia Daily Standard, Wednesday.*

Mr. Wachter formerly lived on a farm south of the lake, and he is well known here. He has been in poor health for a number of years, and before he sold his farm a couple of years ago, his end was daily looked for, but he rallied, but has since been on the decline.

#### **LIFE HISTORY OF PIONEER IONIA DOCTOR**

Experiences of Dr. W.B. Lincoln as Recalled by His Daughter, Mrs. H.B. Barnes

*(article in Ionia Daily Sentinel, May 31, 1923, Thursday)*

The following excellent paper was read by Mrs. H.B. **BARNES**, a daughter of Dr. W. B. **LINCOLN**, one of the colony who founded Ionia, at the nintieth anniversary observance Sunday, May 27:

Our committee have requested me to give to you as nearly as I may, a brief sketch of some of the experiences of Dr. Lincoln's pioneer life. The colony, which first located in Ionia was composed of 63 members. The location was chosen by Samuel **DEXTER** in the fall of 1832, he coming to what was then considered the Far West. On his return to his home, he gave such a glowing description of the country and its great possibilities that others were enthused. In the spring of 1833, a colony was formed which left the Empire state

April 22, 1833, and landed in Ionia May 28 of the same year. They came by canal to Buffalo, crossing the lake by steamer, some of the party suffering severely from seasickness. At Detroit they purchased ox teams and other necessities, and started for the land of their dreams. In imagination I see a slowly moving procession wending its way through a trackless forest, a wilderness of hills, valleys, rivers, and marshes, sometimes on foot, at other times riding in their covered wagons drawn by slowly moving oxen.

To some of them the beauties of nature appealed strongly, and they sang out their joy and gladness in songs of praise and thanksgiving to the all-wise God, whose hand was leading them all the way. The first day out from Detroit they made seven miles. At Shiawassee, they hired a guide, an Indian trader, who piloted them through to Ionia. On their arrival they found a large company of Indians living on the land they had chosen. They had planted corn, melons, and squash, and did not wish to leave them. Through their interpreter they were able to make terms by paying them for their crops, and the Indians left peacefully. There were five wigwams built of bark, four of them were down on the flats by the river. They were very small, only about 10 feet square. Each had two bunks, one above the other. The fifth wigwam was located a few rods south and east of where the armory now stands, in the midst of a corn field, and was 12 or 14 feet square, with a doorway at each end. This wigwam was on land owned by Mr. Dexter, so was occupied by him.

Dr. Lincoln, one of the four pioneers who remained in Ionia, was the son of James and Lucy Lincoln, natives of Massachusetts. He was born in Perne Ves in the year 1807. His ancestors came from

Lincolnshire, England, and settled in Hingham, Mass., in 1635. The name William Benjamin was given to the eldest son from 1600 to the year Dr. William B. Lincoln was born. During the Revolutionary war the sword of General **BURGOINE** was surrendered to Major Benjamin Lincoln.

Dr. Lincoln was a studious boy and man, educating himself for his profession by teaching school at intervals between college courses, graduating in 1832 at Woodstock, Vt. His first practice was in Manchester, Vt. Dissatisfied with his location, he journeyed to Boston, Mass. Learning of the colony being formed in Herkimer County, he went thither, called on Mr. Dexter, and decided to accompany the colony as their physician, arriving in Ionia May 28, 1833. Casting in his lot with the little colony, he assisted them in every way possible. Teaching the first school, was first township clerk, justice of the peace, and school inspector. He married Anthony **ARNOLD**, daughter of Oliver Arnold, one of the original settlers, on July 5, 1835. For his bride he built the first frame house built in Ionia county, which was occupied in later years by Dr. **ALLEN**, and was removed later on to make room for the **GOODSPEED** building. Dr. and Mrs. Lincoln were the first white couple to be married in Ionia.

Faithfully he served all who called for his services, often walking many miles to visit patients, and many times riding his Indian pony 40 or 50 miles. His territory reached as far as Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids, where there was only a trading post. On one occasion he walked his horse over a deep ravine on a tree, which had fallen across it. For some years he was in the drug business, associated with Peter **HACKILT**, and afterwards with John B. **HUTCHINS**, father of Lee M. Hutchins and Miss Jessie

Hutchins, of Grand Rapids, also of Miss Ella Hutchins, highly respected and beloved teacher in our union school.

Dr. Lincoln was one of the six who organized the First Baptist church, serving it long and faithfully. He passed from this life June 12, 1882. His long residence made his name a household word in his own section. He will be remembered as a man loyal to his God, a true friend, a kind husband and father, a Christian gentleman, and earnest worker in all enterprises for the public good.

~ submitted by Pat Currihan

*The following item was transcribed from a photocopied, handwritten sheet of paper. It was submitted to your editors with no indication of its source or who provided it to us. If you recognize it, please let us know so that we may give attribution in a future newsletter.*

The First Baptist church of Sebewa was organized April 3, 1858, with eighteen members.

They were

Josiah **CLARK** and wife  
 Samuel **FREEHOUSE**  
 Carlos **PIERCE** and wife  
 Stephen **RIDER** and wife  
 Addison **RIDER** and wife  
 John **JACKSON** and wife  
 Cyril **CARPENTER** and wife  
 Elkanah **CARPENTER** and wife  
 Samuel **CARPENTER**  
 Mary **BETTS**  
 and Margaret **GRIFFIN**  
 The present pastor is Rev. David **BURGESS**.

A house of worship was completed (on Section 30) and dedicated Jan 10, 1872, cost of structure being one thousand four hundred and fifteen dollars. Membership now upwards of seventy. Church in a condition of encouraging prosperity. There is also a flourishing Sunday School of which J. **PORTER** is superintendent. The deacons are

J. H. **LAPO** and G. H. **YEAGER**. The Trustees John **HAMMOND**, Elkanah Carpenter and Reuben **LAPO**.



**ORREN W. DANIELS**

Orren Washington **DANIELS** was born 16 September 1838, in Albany, NY. He was the son of Andrus W. Daniels (b.1812 in Vermont - d. 1894) and Eunice **MERRYFIELD** (b 1812 in New York - d. 1891).

As a child he came with his parents first to Lowell, Kent County, MI, and then to Sebewa, Ionia County, MI, and remained in Sebewa. He enlisted in the Civil War 9 October 1862, Co. "E", 6<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry. He was wounded at the battle of the Wilderness 6 May 1864. On a furlough from the hospital, he came home and married Sarah **KINNEY** of Portland on 10 June 1864, then he returned to his unit. After the battle of Appomattox, his regiment (under General **CUSTER**) went out west to deal with the "Indian problem". He was discharged in Kansas on 24 November 1865, as First Sergeant.

Orren W. and Sarah (Kinney) Daniels had nine children. They settled on a section of land in Sebewa Twp., now known as 11857 South State Road (M-

66). Dallas Daniels is the current owner, keeping the land in the family for many years.

Sarah died 1 June 1909 in Sebewa. The eldest child, Cora, stayed and took care of her father, Orren W. He died 17 April 1921, in Sebewa. Cora married in 1926, and her brother Andrus bought the farm. Andrus's son, Oren W., married Beulah **AUSTIN**, and they lived on the farm forty years. They had four children:

-Larry A. served in the U.S. Army 1957-1959 and married Judy **GREEN**.

-Margene married Roger K. **SMILEY**, who served over 20 years with the U.S. Navy Seabees.

-Dallas O. married Jane **WELLMAN**.

-Gary D. served in the U.S. Navy Seabees 1966-1969 and married Sharon **WILDER**.

*-Submitted by Beulah (Austin) Daniels. Beulah is 87 years young. We thank her very much for sharing this photo and story.*

The term "belling" may not be a familiar one to the younger generatin, but if their grandparents were asked, a sheepish grin would most certainly fall across their faces.

Harold and Marilyn **COMPTON** shared their experiences of "belling" in Ionia County, which didn't really involve a bell. Harold and Marilyn were married 25 June 1949. Harold had been laid off from his construction job and was working at the Mulliken Elevator. They were living with Marilyn's parents, Earl and Ruth (**KASSNER SWILER**), at the time.

Ruth was aware of the upcoming event and was a little nervous about the timing as it was customary for Harold to take a bath each night in a tub on the back porch, and Ruth was sure that he would be caught at this most embarrassing moment.

Soon there was quite a racket as a group came rolling in, riding in the back of Leo **SPITZLEY**'s pickup truck. They were banging on an old buzz saw blade and hollering at the top of their voices. The group consisted of Verlin **WILLIAMS**, Bernard **DUFFY**, Leo Spitzley, and Marjorie and Harold Swiler (brother of the bride). Soon word gathered around town that there would be a "belling".

The bride and groom were swept away in the back of the truck on what would turn out to be quite a ride. Leo provided them with some tires to sit on to ease their bumpy ride. The first stop was Main Street of Mulliken. The groom was then instructed to give his bride a ride the full length of the street in a wheelbarrow! She was given a doll to carry during her ride. From there, the couple was loaded up and taken to Portland where the ride was repeated for the waiting crowd.

Once back at the house, the scoundrels were given cigars and candy to ensure that they would not return. Marilyn and Harold were fortunate that other pranks were not pulled on them, such as short-sheeting their bed, putting salt on their sheets, or hanging bells from the open springs under their bed... all of which they knew had happened to others. It was most likely because Ruth Swiler was keeping a watchful eye on things!

Do you have an interesting "belling" story? If so, send it to us so we can share it! Thank you to Marilyn and Harold Compton for sharing this fun story!

*~ written by Pam Swiler*

**We would love to know who contributed the beautiful BOLSTER family history on the following page:**



George Wellington Bolster, 1864



Orlando Pascal Bolster, 1930



Jane Valentia (Bolster) Housler Lake, 1890



L. Z. (Bolster) Kent McCollum, 1890



Mary Aurelia (Bolster) Fox Listenfelt, 1890

**HARRIS GEORGE BOLSTER**, a farmer, born 18 Apr 1814, German, Chenango Co., New York, to Lot and Ruth Bolster. About 1830, his family moved to Wheelock, Erie Co., Pennsylvania. There, in 1840, he married **MARY CATHERINE MERTZ** (born 13 Oct 1819, Sparta, Livingston Co., New York; daughter of Jacob and Sophia Mertz). He and Mary stayed seven years, then relocated to Fairfield Twp., Crawford Co., Pennsylvania. In 1852, searching for affordable farmland, they moved by covered wagon to Sugar Grove, Kane Co., Illinois. By 1861, they were living in Greenville, Montcalm Co., Michigan; by 1862, in Manchester, Washtenaw Co. They moved, 1870, to property at the corner of Johnson and Seeley Roads, Orleans Twp., Ionia Co. Harris and Mary owned several properties near Johnson Road, including one on Wheeler Road near Chadwick. They were living there when Harris died, 30 Nov 1888. Mary died, 22 Dec 1891, at Manistee, Michigan. They are buried in Greene Cemetery, Belding and Johnson Roads, Orleans Twp.

Their children, particularly those linked to Ionia County:

**A. DeVALLENCE BOLSTER**, b. 24 Aug 1841, Wheelock, Erie Co., PA; d. 27 Aug 1848, Fairfield, Crawford Co., PA.

**VIOLA (BOLSTER) WHELAN THORNTON**, b. 14 Mar 1843, Wheelock, Erie Co., PA; d. 7 Dec 1917, Colfax, Wexford Co., MI.

**GEORGE WELLINGTON BOLSTER**, b. 2 Jul 1847, Wheelock, Erie Co., PA; d. 4 Mar 1926, Arieta, Crook Co., OR.

**THOMAS ELLIOTT BOLSTER**, b. Feb 1849, Fairfield, Crawford Co., PA. He m. 6 Mar 1869, Addie Lucinda Yates (b. 27 Sep 1848, Wheatfield, Calhoun Co.; d. 17 Jul 1902, Orleans). Only child, Harris M. Bolster, was b. in Belding, 18 Feb 1872; m. Armidie E. Berry, 1893; and d. at Chadwick, 13 Feb 1940.

Thomas ran a general store and post office in "Bolster," near Easton Cemetery. He sold the store to G. N. White, moved to Orleans, and opened a butcher shop. A week later, 17 Jul 1902, his wife was killed by a train on track near their property. Thomas remained in Orleans for awhile, then vanished. His horse and buggy were found near the butcher shop, but he was never seen again. Addie, their son and his family, are buried in Greene Cemetery.

**ORLANDO PASCAL BOLSTER**, b. 30 Aug 1850, Fairfield, Crawford Co., PA; d. 5 May 1949, Lansing, MI. A lumberjack and farmer, he owned properties in Ingham, Ionia, Kalamazoo and Wexford Cos. He m., 1870, Cornelia Eusebia Graham; then 12 May 1885, Josephine Bodenstein. Orlando and Josephine are buried at North Aurelius Cemetery, Aurelius Twp., Ingham Co.

**JANE VALENTIA (BOLSTER) HOUSLER LAKE**, b. 13 Mar 1852, Fairfield, Crawford Co., PA; d. 21 Jun 1926, Mesick, Wexford Co.

**L. Z. (BOLSTER) KENT McCOLLUM**, b. May 1855, Sugar Grove, Kane Co., IL; d. aft. 1910, Ann Arbor, MI. She was living with her parents in Orleans Twp. before her first marriage.

**MARY AURELIA (BOLSTER) FOX LISTENFELT**, b. 1856, IL; d. 1940, Colfax, Wexford Co.

**ALFARETTA S. (BOLSTER) HOUSLER**, b. 26 Aug 1858, IN; d. 1 Jun 1949, Garfield, Grand Traverse Co. Before she married John Jacob Housler, Jr., 28 Mar 1881, she was living with her parents in Orleans Twp.

**FRANKLIN L. BOLSTER**, b. 27 January 1861, Greenville, Montcalm Co.; d. 4 Dec 1952, at Greenville. He was a farmer with properties in both Smyrna, Ionia Co. and Stanton, Montcalm Co. Frank never married. He is buried in Greene Cemetery, Orleans Twp.



Viola J. (Bolster) Whelan Thornton, 1890



Thomas Elliott Bolster, 1895



Addie Lucinda (Yates) Bolster, 1895



Harris Martin Bolster, 1893



Arminda E. (Berry) Bolster, 1893



Franklin L. Bolster, 1870



Alfaretta S. (Bolster) Housler, 1870

## MAILBAG

Kathleen L. **WOODROW** writes:  
"Polly **REYNOLDS** was born ca 1800 in New York. She outlived husbands Galusha **HARRINGTON**, James or Joseph **McCANN**, Thomas **ADGATE**, possibly another, and died age 101, still able to do her own housework to the end. She was known as Aunt Polly and lived near Saranac, MI. Any information such as death date,

place and where buried will be most gratefully appreciated."  
Mrs. Kathleen L. Woodrow  
3100 SW 41st St.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73119-3230  
<WoodrowK3@cox.net >  
(405) 685-4829

Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me, I want people to know *why* I look this way. I've traveled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved.  
~ unknown

### ... One hundred years ago...

The average wage in the US was 22 cents an hour. The average US worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year.

Sugar cost four cents a pound, eggs fourteen cents a dozen, coffee cost fifteen cents a pound.

Most women only washed their hair once a month and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.

The population of Las Vegas was 30.

## RECENT HISTORY OF THE BABCOCK-WATTS BIBLE

Lansing, Michigan December, 2001

The following is an account of the recent history of a large and heavy, 11 x 17 inch Bible that was once beautifully covered in gold-tooled brown leather with gilded edges. Its title page reads:

The HOLY BIBLE, containing the OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS: Translated Out of the Original Tongues, and with the Former Translations Diligently Compared and Revised with Canne's Marginal Notes and References together with THE APOCRYPHA to which are added An Index and Tables of Scripture Weights, Measures and Coins. Stereotyped by James **CONNER**, New York. Hartford: Published by Silas **ANDRUS** and Son. 1849.

There is no title on the front cover and there is no spine cover, the binding after so many years now being completely exposed.

Inside, at the beginning of the Family Records section, there was found and preserved a newspaper cutout of the "Obituary of William Babcock," which stated that he was "One of the oldest and among the earliest settlers of Ionia county..." It indicated he was born in 1783 and died at the age of 89 suggesting the obituary was originally published in 1872. Under the title of the obituary, it reads: "From the Ionia, Michigan Sentinel," suggesting this cutout was actually a republication of an earlier report in the Sentinel. There was no name or date of this later paper shown in the cutout. In the Bible's Family Records section, Babcock is the dominant name listed and information on William is the first among them.

About 1965, the Bible had been deposited down the book chute at a public library in Lansing, MI, by those disposing of an estate in which it was then located. Because the library had determined it was not interested in the Bible, it was left with other books to be disposed of by the custodians who, in turn, were allowed to salvage for their own use any of interest to them. The head custodian, an African-American by the name of S.J. Watts, saved the Bible from destruction. Because Mr. Watts was very religious and active in his church, he felt an affinity to the battered Bible and brought it home to his wife, Mrs. Frankie Lee Watts. It became a significant and beloved icon in the Watts family. Because of the presence of the Babcock obituary, the predominance of Babcock names in the Family Records Section, and the stewardship of the Watts family in protecting and preserving this wonderful volume, this Bible is hereafter referred to as the Babcock- Watts Bible.

Mr. Watts was originally from Alabama and had worked in the coal mines there. In the 1940s, he moved his family to Lansing to work for General Motors. After about a year at GM, a change was necessitated by a deterioration in his health from the Black Lung Disease previously contracted in the mines exacerbated by the fumes and working conditions in the automobile plant. Supported by his excellent work history, integrity, and need to care for his wife and five children, Mr. Watts held several positions in the public and private sectors and eventually was recommended for the library job where he came in contact with this Bible.

After his death in 1989, Mrs. Watts continued to care for the Bible and in later years would keep it open to her favorite passage in the Book of John, on a marble-covered table in their living room. At the age of 83 and in ill health, Mrs. Watts - officially and affectionately known as Mother Watts by her Church - became interested in the history represented by the Bible, especially its Family Records. In 2001, she gave permission to a friend to explore the document's genealogical value. Through discussions with and information provided by genealogist JoAnne **HARVEY**, the Ionia County Historical Society was contacted.

~ written and submitted by Pat **BARNES-McCONNELL**



## FAMILY RECORD.

| James                                                                       | Births                                                                                                                    | Marriages                                                                                                                                                                                              | Deaths                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| George Babcock<br>Sophia <b>SHELDON</b><br>Silas <b>REED</b><br>Bethia Hurd | 1758 Mar 16 <sup>th</sup><br>1758 Dec 6 <sup>th</sup>                                                                     | Died in the 67 year of his age<br><br>1783 Nov 26 <sup>th</sup> to Bethia <b>HURD</b>                                                                                                                  | 1816 Mar 18 <sup>th</sup><br>1798 Dec.<br>1838 Nov. 12 <sup>th</sup><br>1847 Nov 20 <sup>th</sup>     |
| <i>Sons &amp; Daughters in Law</i>                                          |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                       |
| Philo <b>BATES</b><br>Margaret Babcock<br>Ruben W. <b>STEVENS</b>           |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 1838 Dec 20 <sup>th</sup><br>1854 Aug 16 <sup>th</sup>                                                |
| William Babcock<br>Julia Reed<br>Geo. Reed Babcock                          | 1783 Feb 11 <sup>th</sup> Partridgefield Mass.<br>1787 Apr. 16 <sup>th</sup><br>1806 Sept. 20 <sup>th</sup> Hopewell N.Y. | 1805 Sept. 15 <sup>th</sup> to<br>Julia Reed, Gorham N.Y.<br>1835 Mar 13 <sup>th</sup> to Mary B.<br><b>ROTTER</b>                                                                                     | 1845 Apr. 23 <sup>rd</sup><br>Buffalo N.Y.                                                            |
| Seymour Babcock<br>Julius Babcock                                           | 1807 Oct 1 <sup>st</sup> "<br>1809 Apr. 1 <sup>st</sup> "                                                                 | 1835 Apr 8 <sup>th</sup> to Margaret<br><b>MORROW</b> , Phelps N.Y.                                                                                                                                    | 1829 Dec 7 <sup>th</sup><br>1858 Aug. 19 <sup>th</sup>                                                |
| Fanny Babcock<br>Dolly Babcock                                              | 1810 June 10 <sup>th</sup> "<br>1812 Jan. 21 <sup>st</sup> "                                                              | 1830 Apr 15 <sup>th</sup> to Philo Bates,<br>Hopewell N.Y.<br>1836 Sept. 17 <sup>th</sup> to Philo Bates,<br>Hopewell N.Y.<br>1841 Feb 18 <sup>th</sup> to George C.<br><b>OVERHISER</b> , Ionia Mich. | 1836 June 19 <sup>th</sup> ,<br>Hopewell New York<br>1894 May 28 <sup>th</sup> ,<br>Greenville, Mich. |
| Julia Babcock                                                               | 1813 Aug. 16 <sup>th</sup> "                                                                                              | 1834 Oct 7 <sup>th</sup> to Ruben W.<br>Stevens, Hopewell N.Y.                                                                                                                                         | 1837 Nov 18 <sup>th</sup> ,<br>Ypsilanti, Mich.                                                       |
| William S. Babcock                                                          | 1815 Jun. 26 <sup>th</sup> "                                                                                              | 1842 Oct 24 <sup>th</sup> to Caroline S.<br><b>WHALEY</b> , Conn.                                                                                                                                      | 1859 Sept 16 <sup>th</sup>                                                                            |
| Bethia R. Babcock<br>Herman Babcock                                         | 1817 Jan. 14 <sup>th</sup> "<br>1818 June 29 <sup>th</sup> "                                                              | 1845 May 13 <sup>th</sup> to Adelia<br><b>BROMLEY</b> , Ionia Mich.                                                                                                                                    | 1836 May 27 <sup>th</sup><br>1901 Oct 24 at<br>Petoskey Mich.                                         |
| Joseph M. Babcock                                                           | 1820 Jan. 16 <sup>th</sup> "                                                                                              | 1845 Dec. 18 <sup>th</sup> to Harriet M.<br><b>CLARK</b> , Ionia Mich.                                                                                                                                 | 1885 June 9 <sup>th</sup> ,<br>Lowell Mich.                                                           |
| Samuel H. Babcock                                                           | 1821 Oct. 11 <sup>th</sup> "                                                                                              | 1848 Jan. 25 <sup>th</sup> to Emily<br><b>YEOMANS</b> , Ionia Mich.                                                                                                                                    | 1885 June 29 <sup>th</sup><br>Lowell Mich.                                                            |
| Silas R. Babcock<br>Lucy O. Babcock                                         | 1823 May 11 <sup>th</sup> "<br>1825 May 23 <sup>rd</sup> "                                                                | 1852 Jan 15 <sup>th</sup> to Edward O.<br>Clark, Ionia Mich.                                                                                                                                           | 182_ Aug 27 <sup>th</sup><br>1895 Apr 1 <sup>st</sup> , Dakota                                        |
| Marcus L. Babcock                                                           | 1827 Oct. 20 <sup>th</sup> "                                                                                              | 1855 Dec 31 <sup>st</sup> to Sarah <b>MEAD</b><br>Cassopolis Mich.                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                       |
| Elizabeth M. Babcock                                                        | 1829 Jan. 10 <sup>th</sup> "                                                                                              | 1850 Oct 29 <sup>th</sup> to Harvey<br><b>HARTER</b> , Ionia Mich.                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                       |

### *Grand Children*

|                       |                            |               |                                                 |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Geo. P. Bates         | 1832 Nov 4                 | Hopewell N.Y. | 1835 Feb 4                                      |
| William S. Bates      | 1834 Oct. 4                | "             |                                                 |
| Julia F. Stevens      | 1836 Jan. 29               | Phelps N.Y.   | to Charles <b>RENNIER</b> ,<br>Binghampton N.Y. |
| Frances B. Bates      | 1836 May 16 <sup>th</sup>  | Hopewell N.Y. | 1854 Oct. 15 <sup>th</sup>                      |
| Charles G. F. Babcock | 1836 July 11 <sup>th</sup> | Phelps N.Y.   |                                                 |
| Emily W. Babcock      | 1836 Aug 21 <sup>st</sup>  | Buffalo N.Y.  |                                                 |
| Philo T. Bates        | 1837 Sept 5 <sup>th</sup>  | Ionia Mich.   |                                                 |
| Mary J. Babcock       | 1838 Aug 27 <sup>th</sup>  | "             |                                                 |
| Elizabeth G. Babcock  | 1839 Feb. 5                | Buffalo N.Y.  | 1839 Aug. 21 <sup>st</sup>                      |

|                       |                            |                      |                                                           |                                             |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Heman P. Babcock      | 1840 Oct. 28 <sup>th</sup> | "                    |                                                           |                                             |
| Geo. Eugene Overhiser | 1842 Mar. 16 <sup>th</sup> | Ionia Mich.          |                                                           |                                             |
| Ellen M. Babcock      | 1843 Nov 23 <sup>rd</sup>  | Phelps N.Y.          |                                                           |                                             |
| Frederick W. Babcock  | 1844 Jan. 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | Loganport Ind.       |                                                           |                                             |
| Julius L. Babcock     | 1846 June 16 <sup>th</sup> | Phelps N.Y.          |                                                           |                                             |
| Julia A. Babcock      | 1846 Nov 17 <sup>th</sup>  | Ionia Mich           |                                                           | 1848 Oct. 16 <sup>th</sup>                  |
| Edward S. Babcock     | 1847 Aug. 21 <sup>st</sup> | "                    |                                                           |                                             |
| Jeannie L. Babcock    | 1848 Jan 9 <sup>th</sup>   | Toledo Oh            |                                                           |                                             |
| Elizabeth M. Ovehiser | 1848 Feb. 19 <sup>th</sup> | Ionia Mich           |                                                           |                                             |
| James B. Babcock      | 1849 Dec. 30 <sup>th</sup> | "                    | Jan 28 <sup>th</sup> 1876 to Lucia<br><b>YOUNG</b>        |                                             |
| Julia M. Babcock      | 1850 Mar 9 <sup>th</sup>   | "                    |                                                           |                                             |
| William B. Harter     | 1851 Sept 29 <sup>th</sup> | "                    | to Helen ___ <b>BOICE</b>                                 |                                             |
| James H. Overhiser    | 1851 Nov. 19 <sup>th</sup> | Pawpaw               |                                                           |                                             |
| Frank H. Harter       | 1852 Nov 29 <sup>th</sup>  | Ionia Mich           | to Alice <b>HAMMOND</b>                                   | Jan 24 1883 [date of<br>marriage or death?] |
| George B. Clark       | 1853 Mar. 15 <sup>th</sup> | "                    |                                                           | 1855 July 25 <sup>th</sup>                  |
| Jennie M. Babcock     | 1853 Sept 24 <sup>th</sup> | "                    |                                                           | 1855 July 25 <sup>th</sup>                  |
| Julia E. Harter       | 1854 Feb 3 <sup>rd</sup>   | "                    |                                                           |                                             |
| William J. Clark      | 1854 Aug. 30 <sup>th</sup> | "                    |                                                           | 1861 May 2 <sup>th</sup>                    |
| Fannie ___ Harter     | 1855 Dec. 27 <sup>th</sup> | "                    |                                                           |                                             |
| Nellie E. Babcock     | 185_ Dec. 25 <sup>th</sup> | "                    |                                                           | 1857 Aug. 28 <sup>th</sup>                  |
| Mary J. Clark         | 185_ July 25 <sup>th</sup> | "                    | Jan 18 <sup>th</sup> 1883 to Louis<br><b>E. ROWLEY</b>    |                                             |
| Richard Babcock       | 1856 __ 2 <sup>nd</sup>    | "                    | Oct. 30 1883 to Mary<br>Elizabeth <b>GISH</b> , Petoskey  | Oct 7 1874                                  |
| Carrie Harter         | 1857 Jan. 19 <sup>th</sup> | "                    |                                                           |                                             |
| Frederick Harter      | 1857 __ 6 <sup>th</sup>    | "                    | Aug 7 <sup>th</sup> 1882 to Ida <b>UDELL</b><br>in Dakota |                                             |
| Harriet C. Babcock    | 1860 Apr. 14 <sup>th</sup> | "                    |                                                           |                                             |
| Lucy O. Harter        | 1861 Jan 31 <sup>st</sup>  | "                    |                                                           | June 15 186[9?]                             |
| George M. Babcock     | 1861 June 15 <sup>th</sup> | "                    |                                                           |                                             |
| Ruby Babcock          | 1856 Dec 31 <sup>st</sup>  | Lowell               | Frank <b>FOX</b> , Lowell Mich                            |                                             |
| Benjamin Harter       | 1864 Jan 20                |                      |                                                           |                                             |
| Edward M. Clark       | 1864 Feb 12                |                      | Mar 4 <sup>th</sup> 1891 to Lotta <b>GEORGE</b>           |                                             |
| Frances Ellen Babcock | 1883 Jan 31                | } Richard's children |                                                           |                                             |
| Marion Esther Babcock | 1895 May 10                | "                    |                                                           |                                             |
| Hattie A. Babcock     | 1876 Oct 18 <sup>th</sup>  | } James' children    |                                                           |                                             |
| Jessie [?] Babcock    | 1878 July 18               | "                    |                                                           |                                             |

### Obituary of Wm. Babcock.

~from the Ionia, Michigan  
Sentinel.

[clipping found in Bible]

One of the oldest, and among the earliest settlers of Ionia county, has gone to his long home. William **BABCOCK**, who died Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> at the residence of his son Henry, in this village, was born in Berkshire, Mass., in 1783, and was consequently in his 89<sup>th</sup>

year. His history, so nearly spanning a century, covers the whole period of our national existence, and carries us back to the very close of the Revolutionary war. From his very boyhood he was a part of that tide of energy and enterprise which rolls westward over this continent. In 1798 his father's family removed to the very heart of the Empire State, and William soon thereafter settled near Canandaigua, then an unbroken wilderness. Here amid the tolls and hardships of frontier life was developed that tireless

energy which characterized his after history.

In 1805 he was married to Julia **REED**, daughter of Silas Reed, of Gorham, Ontario county. As the fruits of this union, 15 children were born to them, of whom 8 yet survive. All of these are residents of Ionia, except the Hon. Geo. R. Babcock, of Buffalo, N.Y. In 1836, he removed with his family to Michigan, and selected with excellent judgment a tract of land about three miles from the present village of Ionia, as the

home of his future life, and the heritage of his children. Although he was revered and honored in all relations of life, yet his deepest interest and most earnest efforts were devoted to the promotion of the moral and spiritual welfare of society. When 17 years of age he made a public profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and joined the Presbyterian Church of Gorham, N.Y., where he was afterwards made an office bearer.

In 1812 he helped to organize the First Congregational Church of Ionia, and was elected one of its first Deacons. Of this church, (now the First Presbyterian,) he remained a member [until] his death.

As a Christian, his pathway was like the dawning light, shining more and more unto the perfect day. He was of a calm undemonstrative temperament, but his convictions were very profound, and his religious principles were very steadfast. To the last moment of his life, the doctrines of grace were more precious to him, and he died in the triumphant assurance of a blessed immortality beyond the grave.

He leaves behind him the record of a well-spent life, not engraved upon perishable marble, but upon the imperishable interests of humanity. His tireless energy has made the desert wave with golden harvests and reared homes of prosperity for future generations. A large and honored family of sons and daughters remain behind to cherish his memory and perpetuate his virtues. The churches he has helped to found and rear will last, we trust, to the very end of time, to bless the world with holy influences and guide future generations to glory.

Rarely is a life longer spared or made more widely useful to mankind. "Blessed are the dead who died in the Lord. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors and their words do follow them."

*Editor's notes: While preparing this article for publication in our newsletter, we contacted Pat Barnes-McConnell to inquire about Mother Watts' health. Pat replied, "Mother Watts was very happy to learn of the upcoming publication in your newsletter. I wonder if you could send me a copy so I might read it to her--some evenings she can even read a little herself. [of course, we will!] Mother Watts had me send those sheets to you so that that information could be used by folks who might find it useful. [She] is gravely ill and under hospice care. She is very weak but always rallies for a good conversation. She gave the Bible to her church, specifically to her Pastor, Rev. Dr. Michael C. MURPHY, St. Stephen's Community Church in Lansing. Today [March 24] is Mother Watts' birthday and she turned 85. She is a real dear lady. Regards, Pat"*

*The family pages were transcribed from photocopies of the originals. Every effort was made to be as accurate and faithful to the original as possible, and we apologize for any errors in the transcription.*

*~ Dottie PIECHOCKI*

### ... One hundred years ago...

The average life expectancy in the US was forty-seven years.

Only 14% of homes in the US had a bathtub. Only 8% of homes had a telephone.

There were only 8,000 cars in the US and only 144 miles of paved roads. The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.

## SPEAKER REVIEWS

by Jim MOSES

Lori FOX was the speaker at the January ICGS meeting. She gave another informative talk, this time on Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs). Lori told us that you can get PDAs for many purposes, such as for reading newspapers, books or the Bible. Maybe you could use yours for keeping your calendar straight, or storing your address book. You might want to listen to music, play games, use spreadsheets, OR work on your genealogy program. PDAs have many available attachments, depending on which type you buy. You can have e-mail, GPS, a digital recorder or a camera. Palm was the first company to come out with PDAs, and for less than \$200 you can get a PDA and a genealogy program that will really help with your research--you won't have to carry all of those notebooks with you to the library any more. Lori said that she uses her PDA for reference only. Some programs allow you to enter information with a stylus or an optional keyboard, but Lori mentioned the fact that if we are entering information on both the computer and the PDA you might lose something during data transfers.

There are several options that can be selected from, in order to get a PDA that fits your budget. You can get a monochrome or color screen, extra memory, a unit that runs on batteries or can be recharged, or any of several other options. You can buy a model compatible with a PC or a MAC.

Advantages for PDAs are that they are small while holding a lot of data, they are allowed in archives where other things might not be, and you can have programs installed that are helpful for your genealogy, such as a soundex calculator. There are disadvantages, though. The screen is very small and there is no keyboard unless you purchase one

specially. If you don't use a keyboard you need to use a stylus, with the PDA's own alphabet.

After Lori finished speaking several people were thinking of which model PDA they were going to purchase, and in what ways they would be using it!

---

The speaker for the February meeting was Sheriff Dwan **DENNIS** who spoke on the history of the Ionia County Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Dennis was hired into the department in 1972 and became sheriff in 1998. He mentioned that our county has had 39 sheriffs, beginning in 1837. Historically the sheriff was second in command to the King in England. The man in this position was called a Reeve, and would have been in charge of a Shire, keeping order there and collecting taxes. He was called a Shire Reeve, a term that later became sheriff.

In this country, the voters have control because they vote for the sheriff, so he must represent the people, since a new election is held every four years. Every county in every state (with the exception of Connecticut) has a sheriff. In some states it is only a ceremonial position, but in Ionia County, he has many duties, and uses "Anderson's Book of Sheriffs" to define his role in the community.

The first sheriff in Ionia County was named **CURTIS**. One of the more famous was William Moon **FRENCH**, noted for catching bootleggers going from Canada to Chicago.

Mr. Dennis had stories of several of the sheriffs, including a story of Herbert **ROSS**, who shot and killed a man who was breaking out of jail, aided by two others, who attacked the sheriff with socks filled with chain. The other two attackers were captured that same night.

There are now 65 county employees who answer to Sheriff Dennis, and they do everything from keeping the jail to road patrol.

A central part of the department is taking care of the 120 inmates housed in the jail. Another important part of Mr. Dennis' job is working in partnership with the mental health department, the schools, and other civic entities.

Sheriff Dennis said that he gets daily updates from Homeland Security, and all of his officers have been trained on what to look for while they are on patrol. The department also has a backup communications system in case there are problems with the main system. Ionia County is prepared in case there are problems. Officers have special weapons training and have taken advanced driving courses.

As a last bit of information, Mr. Dennis talked about the horse posse, which is used for the Fair, search and rescue, and other things. These people are all volunteers and have been trained in police work.

---

The "Sultana" was a side-wheeler riverboat that caught fire and sunk in the Mississippi River near Memphis in 1865. Normally, something that happened that far back would not attract too much attention, and most people at the March meeting of the ICGS had never heard of the ship until Sam **PARDEE**, who is a member of the Ingham County Genealogical Society, spoke to us about this tragedy from the Civil War.

The War was ending and a prisoner exchange was planned. Union prisoners were to be marched to Vicksburg, Mississippi and then put on boats for the up-river trip to either Ohio or Cairo, Illinois. Many of the prisoners were from the Kahaba prison, near Selma, Alabama. Mr. Pardee described the terrible conditions in the prison, which had over 5000 prisoners in only 15000 square feet of space. The prison only had 400 sleeping places, but even with this overcrowding, and a very polluted water supply, not enough food, and prone to flooding, it was

considered one of the 'better' Confederate prisons. When the Union soldiers were repatriated it was under four feet of water because of a flood. The men had to walk over 200 miles to Vicksburg to get on the ship, and many of them had no shoes.

Mr. Pardee also told us about Andersonville Prison, where the rest of the men who were to travel on the "Sultana" came from. Both of these prisons were terrible places where many people died -- the worst day in Andersonville was August 23, 1864, where 127 died.

Captain Cass **MASON**, a very good pilot, was in charge of the "Sultana", which, when it left port to go upstream, was overloaded with over 2500 people onboard a ship that had a capacity of 376. Since the government paid by the head to get the men home, it was decided to put too many passengers on the ship. There were a few lucky ones who, for whatever reason, didn't make it on time, so they were left behind.

Sam told a story of trouble on the river, ending with the explosion of one of the boilers in the middle of the night, which caused the "Sultana" to catch fire and sink, killing about 1500 of those on board. Among those who died were prisoners, crew, and some of the wives of the soldiers who had come south to ride home with their husbands. It was a very interesting story on a tragic event that seldom, if ever, is mentioned in the history books. We all went away with more knowledge of the horrors of war.

... one hundred years ago...

The five leading causes of death in the US were:

1. Pneumonia and influenza
2. Tuberculosis
3. Diarrhea
4. Heart disease
5. Stroke

## Highlight on First Families Member No. 14 Merrilee Morrison-Cotter



MERRILEE ALICE MORRISON was born the daughter of EARL LEWIS MORRISON, SR., and AGNESMAE ZANDER. She is married to

DAVID FRANCIS COTTER and resides in Ionia, Ionia County, Michigan, with their two children, David and Rachel.

Merrilee has a rich history in Ionia County which includes the families of ZANDER, DARLING, GRINNELL, SPARKS, SELDEN, and SLAGHT, just to name a few.

PHILLIP SLAGHT was one of the early settlers of Ionia County. He was born in Ontario, Canada, and died in Ronald Township, Ionia County, on September 12, 1882.

IRA AZARIAH SELDEN, born in 1799 in New York, died in Danby Township, Ionia County, in 1875. His wife, LOCELIA LORETTA SPARKS, died in 1872, also in Danby. She was born in Connecticut.

SAMUEL GRINNELL was born in 1791 and died in Orange Township, Ionia County, on February 6, 1869. His wife, HOPE HICKS, died in 1857.

Space does not allow for the wealth of information Merrilee has provided for us on these lines, but it is available to researchers in our library collection. If you are connected to any of these lines, be sure to contact us and we will be happy to assist you in any way we can.

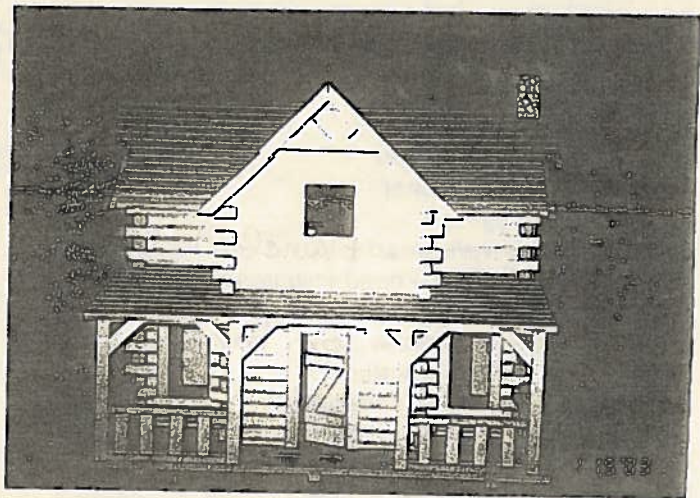
THANK YOU, MERRILEE, for your contribution to our First Families of Ionia County Society collection.

For more information on how you can become a member of the First Families of Ionia County, please contact Jim Moses at (517) 647-7310.

On July 12, 2003, some lucky child will have a beautiful log cabin doll house! This could be your child or grandchild. The log cabin doll house is 1<sup>st</sup> prize in a raffle being conducted by your Ionia Co. Genealogical Society. 2<sup>nd</sup> prize is a copy of the 1881 Ionia Co. History book. 3<sup>rd</sup> prize is a \$25.00 gift certificate to the Corner Landing Restaurant.

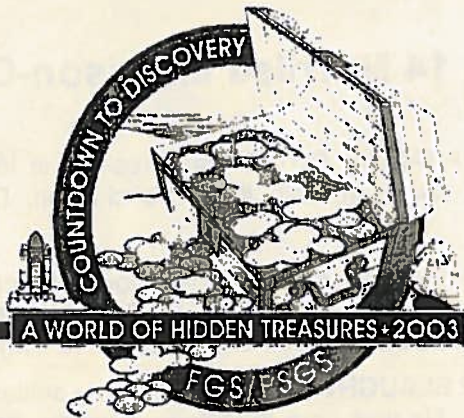
The raffle is being conducted to benefit the proposed Freight House which is to be built by the Lake Odessa Historical Society behind the Depot Museum. The Freight House, besides providing more space for museum displays, will house a library for the Ionia Co. Gen. Society and much-needed meeting space. All monies will go to this project.

Tickets are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00 and are available from any ICGS member or call 517-647-4245, 616-693-2730, or 616-527-3369. Drawing will be held Sat., July 12, from 1 - 2 p.m. at the Lake



Manor Apt. Community Room, 1057 Emerson, Lake Odessa. You do not have to be present to win. Thank you for your support of the Freight House project.

## FGS/FSGS 2003 Orlando Conference



### Find Your Genealogical Treasure

at the  
Federation of Genealogical Societies  
and  
Florida State Genealogical Society  
2003 Conference

3 – 6 September 2003

Renaissance Orlando Resort at SeaWorld  
Orlando, Florida

**For Information:** Contact FGS at [fgs-office@fgs.org](mailto:fgs-office@fgs.org) or  
call 888-FGS-1500. Visit our web site at [www.fgs.org](http://www.fgs.org).

Subscribe to the Conference ezine at  
<http://www.fgs.org/2003conf/conf-ezine.htm>

The 2003 FGS Conference "Countdown to Discovery: A World of Hidden Treasures" is getting ready to blast off on 3 – 6 September 2003 in Orlando, Florida.

Hosted by the Florida State Genealogical Society, this conference will be held at the famous Renaissance Orlando Resort at Sea World. Over 175 lectures will be featured on such entertaining and educational topics as *Charting a Course to the Old World* (British Isles & Europe), *Exploration in the New World* (United States & Canada), *Riches in the First Colony* (Focus on Florida), *Diverse Voyagers* (Ethnic & Religious Research), *Tools for Successful Navigation* (Skills & Strategies), *A Wealth of Hidden Treasures* (Records Research), and *Just Over the Horizon* (Technology & the Internet)! Tuesday, September 2, features an all-day workshop for Librarians Serving Genealogists, and Wednesday, September 3, will include the FGS Society Management Conference and the APG Professional Management Conference. Many exhibitors will also be on hand to offer their exciting products and services!

Conference attendees will enjoy the comfort and convenience of combining their conference classes, dining experience, and lodgings all within the luxurious Renaissance Hotel. Extra large sleeping rooms will accommodate up to four people at the same low price, complete with data ports and many other special accessories in every room.

## VOLUNTEER REMINDERS!

~ please check for your name and THANK YOU for  
volunteering!

### Library staffing

April 12 - Mary Read  
April 26 - Janis Kenyon  
May 10 - Mary Milan  
May 31<sup>st</sup> - Bonnie Jackson  
June 14<sup>th</sup> - Sue Carpenter  
June 28<sup>th</sup> - Mary Read  
July 12<sup>th</sup> - ~~need volunteer!~~ Elaine Garlock  
July 26<sup>th</sup> - Depot Day - need volunteers all day!  
(10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)  
August 9<sup>th</sup> - Elaine Garlock Lori Fox  
August 30<sup>th</sup> - Need Volunteer!  
September 13<sup>th</sup> - Need Volunteer!  
October 11<sup>th</sup> - Need Volunteer!  
October 25<sup>th</sup> - Need Volunteer!  
November 8<sup>th</sup> - Need Volunteer!  
November 29<sup>th</sup> - Bonnie Jackson  
December 27<sup>th</sup> - Pam Swiler

### Refreshments

March 8<sup>th</sup> - Larry & Marilyn Cahoon  
April 12<sup>th</sup> - Sue Carpenter & Donna Rogers  
May 10<sup>th</sup> - Louise Cook & **need one more volunteer!**  
June 14<sup>th</sup> - **Need volunteers! (2)**  
July 12<sup>th</sup> - Jean Edgerly & **need one more volunteer!**  
August 9<sup>th</sup> - **Need volunteers! (2)**  
September 13<sup>th</sup> - **Need volunteers! (2)**  
October 11<sup>th</sup> - Janis Kenyon & Susan Castro  
November 8<sup>th</sup> - Ann Fahey & Velma Mutch

### Greeters

March 8<sup>th</sup> - Larry & Marilyn Cahoon  
April 12<sup>th</sup> - Lori Fox & Janis Kenyon  
May 10<sup>th</sup> Vicki Dukes & Genny Read  
June 14<sup>th</sup> - **Need volunteers! (2)**  
July 12<sup>th</sup> - Jim Moses & **need one more volunteer!**  
August 9<sup>th</sup> - Elaine Garlock & **need one more volunteer!**  
September 13<sup>th</sup> - **Need volunteers! (2)** Jim Moses  
October 11<sup>th</sup> - **Need volunteers! (2)** John - Ann Fahey  
November 8<sup>th</sup> - **Need volunteers! (2)** Marilyn Kansara

## 2003 Calendar of Events - Ionia County Genealogical Society

### April 2003

- 1            7:30 p.m.    First Families of Ionia County Society Committee Meeting at Jim Moses's
- 12           1:00 p.m.    John Waite: "Skeletons in Your Closet"
- 24           7:00 p.m.    Board of Directors Meeting at Swilers'
- 26           10:00 - 2:00 Depot Museum open to public for research  
*Women's Festival in Ionia*

### May 2003

- 6            7:30 p.m.    First Families of Ionia County Society Committee Meeting at Jim Moses's
- 10           1:00 p.m.    *ROLAND WINTER: "The History of the Ionia County Grange"*
- 22           7:00 p.m.    Board of Directors Meeting at Swilers'
- 31           10:00 - 2:00 Depot Museum open to public for research

### June 2003

- 3            7:30 p.m.    First Families of Ionia County Society Committee Meeting at Jim Moses's
- 14           1:00 p.m.    Clyde Chamberlain: "Solitude in Stone"
- 26           7:00 p.m.    Board of Directors Meeting at Swilers'
- 28           10:00 - 2:00 Depot Museum open to public for research

### July 2003

- 1            7:30 p.m.    First Families of Ionia County Society Committee Meeting at Jim Moses's
- 12           1:00 p.m.    Shirley Hodges: "Genealogy and Genetics"
- 24           7:00 p.m.    Board of Directors Meeting at Swilers'
- 26           10:00 - 5:00 Depot Day - Museum open to public for research

### August 2003

- 5            7:30 p.m.    First Families of Ionia County Society Committee Meeting at Jim Moses's
- 9            1:00 p.m.    Jerry Morton: "The Sound of Words"
- 28           7:00 p.m.    Board of Directors Meeting at Swilers'
- 30           10:00 - 2:00 Depot Museum open to public for research

### September 2003

- 2            7:30 p.m.    First Families of Ionia County Society Committee Meeting at Jim Moses's
- 13           1:00 p.m.    Pam Swiler: "More *Family Tree Maker*" Tips
- 25           7:00 p.m.    Board of Directors Meeting at Swilers'
- 27           10:00 - 2:00 Depot Museum open to public for research

### October 2003

- 7            7:30 p.m.    First Families of Ionia County Society Committee Meeting at Jim Moses's
- 11           1:00 p.m.    Marilyn Cahoon: "Boston-Saranac History"
- 23           7:00 p.m.    Board of Directors Meeting at Swilers'
- 25           10:00 - 2:00 Depot Museum open to public for research

### November 2003

- 4            7:30 p.m.    First Families of Ionia County Society Committee Meeting at Jim Moses's
- 8            1:00 p.m.    Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens: "GeneWeaver"
- 20           7:00 p.m.    Board of Directors Meeting at Swilers'
- 29           10:00 - 2:00 Depot Museum open to public for research

### December 2003

-- NO MEETINGS --

- 29           10:00 - 2:00 Depot Museum open to public for research

\*\* All regular membership meetings are held on the second (2nd) Saturday of each month, except December, at 1:00 p.m., in the Community Room of Lake Manor on Emerson Street, Lake Odessa, just west of the Depot Museum. The public is welcome and refreshments will be served. In addition, the Depot library will also be open following each monthly meeting until 5:00 p.m.

ICGS Newsletter:

Editor: Pamela Swiler

Asst Editor: Dottie Piechocki

NEED TO REACH US? ICGS, 13051 Ainsworth Rd., Lake Odessa, MI 48849, PH: (616) 374-3141

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**13051 Ainsworth Road Rt3**  
**Lake Odessa, MI 48849**

## Finding Your Ionia County Ancestors On The Web

1. Ionia County, Michigan GenWeb site  
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~miionia/>
2. Ionia County Genealogical Society Home Page  
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~miionia/icgshome.htm>
3. First Families of Ionia County application forms  
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~miionia/firfamapp.htm>
4. Calendar of Upcoming Events for ICGS – link through #2 above
5. E-mail: [pkswiler@voyager.net](mailto:pkswiler@voyager.net) (Please do not send junk mail to this address)
6. Obituaries (1,915 of them so far) thanks to the volunteers who take time to transcribe them for you! Maybe you can help!?!  
<http://www.usgennet.org/usa/mi/county/ionia/webbbs/obits/index.cgi>