

# *Madison County Remembers...*

A Publication of the Madison County Genealogical Society

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P.O. Box 1031, Norfolk, Nebraska 68702-1031 Vol. 21. Issue Number 86 July-August 2000

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## **From the President,**

July is the time that we remember "the rocket's red glare and the bombs bursting in air" with our struggles for freedom and our faith as a guide. As genealogists, we study our family histories, their times and places. We strive to see through their eyes, to understand their choices. We do this so we can find the records and prove the connections to ourselves.

An ancestor of mine, Samuel HENERY, moved his wife and seven children from Maine to Ohio, early in the 1800s. What went through that man's mind, what dreams, what faith in his God, his future, his abilities? What does a man say to his wife of almost 20 years to move their children and all their household goods so far? They'd leave their farmstead, their neighbors, some family. They moved from an established area through the unknown to a place they hadn't seen yet. All they had was a promise that it might work out.

Are these my people? Do I have their genes, their blood? None of them were perfect. They had blind spots for other races, other ethnic groups, even other Christian denominations. Yet they strived to make a better life for their children. They worked to get ahead, to buy low and sell high. They worked to build a school and hire a teacher, to provide education and society for their children. They built churches and sent for ministers. They organized their county, with land offices and tax assessors. They wanted mayors and town councils, newspapers, and an organized militia when needed. They made their lives better.

Then their children went off to homesteads in Iowa or Nebraska. Some went west to the gold mines, or to cut timber in virgin forests. All these people had dreams. Some dreams were lost in mine accidents or by foul play in frontier camps. Parents lost dreams for their children who left and never returned.

Will I look back on my life and see faith? Will I see struggle, bad economic times, lost children? Will those who look at my life see hope or bitterness? Could someone see faith in a bigger plan, a plan in which I was just a part?

As we study each ancestor, we don't just gather names and dates. We try to look deeper, to see the individuals. They had strengths and weaknesses, sorrows and joys. We can pass on these stories. The stories have universal themes, overcoming weakness and seizing opportunities. We can teach the next generation, showing them how they are part of the bigger story, and how their story counts. This summer, take time to make your story something to be remembered. We make our stories count in how we live our lives. Our stories are connected to the past with our research. We are preserving our stories.

Make your story a good one.

John Kielty

## RECENT MEETING ACTIVITIES

We have had a variety of programs at our meetings lately. John Kielty headed a very interesting discussion on what we have learned researching our family histories. All members present shared ideas and suggestions for making our work easier. We can definitely learn from the experience of others. The members felt that while putting the information on computers is nice, we should also have everything backed up on paper. Computers can malfunction and it would be tragic to lose our hard-gained information. Using Family Group sheets, Pedigree Charts and other forms are important. They help us to know what information we have and what we need to find.

Another interesting program was given by our member Joyce Barlow. She is a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Colonial Dames and the Daughters of Founders and Patriots. The DAR was founded in 1890 and has one of the most complete genealogical libraries in the country. Their headquarters are in Washington, D.C., and anyone can use their facilities for research. Members have free access and non-members can use the facilities for \$5/day.

The DAR is involved in educating young people in the history of and respect for our Nation's flag, and they publish a citizenship manual for those studying for the exam that is part of the naturalization process.

The Colonial Dames have ancestors who were in the country by 1701. Land records are a primary source of information for researching this information. To be a member of the Daughters and Patriots, your ancestors have to have settled in this country between the years of 1607-1784.

Joyce explained the differences between each organization and described the procedures for joining each. Their records could be a valuable resource for research.

The July meeting will include the election of officers for the next year. Anyone interested in running for an office should attend the July 18, 2000 meeting or contact any member of the nominating committee (Karen Rogat, Nancy Zaruba, or Diana Ramaekers).

The program for the July meeting will be to bring an interesting document to share with the group.

Refreshments for the July meeting will be served by Marlyn and Betty Low.

The August meeting will be held in Madison at the Barnes Reserve Cemetery and the Madison County Museum. Meet at the First Baptist Church in Norfolk at 6 p.m. to carpool to Madison. Bring a sack lunch for yourself. Beverages will be provided by Marj Fuhrmann, JoNelle Linnaus and Richard Strenge.

**Please send in your membership renewal dues by September. Dues for the year are \$10 for a single membership and \$15 for a couple.** September begins our new year and your membership in the Society is greatly appreciated.

**Murders and Frontier Justice:  
John A. Erskine vs. The Downeys**

By Charlton Ryan

In the early days of northeastern Nebraska, settlers came together for barn raisings, lent their time for harvesting sick neighbors' fields, and helped each other with the hard jobs. And, usually, the workers were satisfied, but one particular evening, men who had come together to form a work crew returned home appalled and disturbed.

It so happened that the one-room Duncan schoolhouse in Pierce County needed to be moved from Fred Markley's place over to the adjoining property of Nicholas Downey; consequently, men who had children in the school and a few community-minded neighbors got together on April 10th, 1886, to put the little building on skids and slide it over to the new site.

Since the schoolhouse sat in the area where Madison, Antelope, and Pierce Counties intersect, the volunteers came from all three counties and knew each other as neighbors. At times they read about each other in the local papers. For instance, in the May 12th issue of the *Burnett Blade* from the year before, they could have read:

Ed Downey's well is down to 72 feet, but no water. He says he'll dig on to China.  
Melvin Downey has a very sick child.

George Downey is breaking ground for Fred Markley.

Jacob Hoepfinger has out a large crop and is praying for fair weather.

John Bell has his brother working for him.

Miss Moore is successfully teaching the Duncan school with good attendance.

But the news about these folks and other settlers in the area began to take on a spiteful tone after John A. Erskine hit George Downey. What follows is an account of that event and its aftermath. The facts have been gleaned from courthouse records, censuses, cemeteries, and newspapers in Antelope, Madison, and Pierce Counties. A time line indicating the particular day events occurred runs along the left margin.

**April 1886**

- 10 The Duncan Schoolhouse on the Markley place was moved onto Nicholas Downey's property, but during the process, John A. Erskine struck George Downey with an axe.
- 11 George's father, Nicholas Downey, got a warrant issued against Erskine charging him with assault and intent to kill.
- 12 As a result, the Madison County sheriff arrested Erskine and took him to Burnett.
- 13 People crammed Burnett's Kierstead's Hall hoping to see the hearing for Erskine, as attorneys Ben White for his prosecution and Alex Athey for his defense squared off before Justice Memminger. They watched and listened as ten men present at the schoolhouse that night gave testimonies:

I. According to **Samuel Baker**, he went with George Downey on April 10th over to John Bell's home where Bell's girls, Stella and Emma, begged them to stay for supper as their father was over helping to move their schoolhouse. They went ahead and ate. John Bell arrived later, ate, and took a few swigs from Samuel's bottle.

Later, as Samuel and George rode away, they could hear men still at the schoolhouse, so they went over and found John Erskine, Jacob Hoepfinger, Ed Lea, Johnnie and William Duncan, Sheridan Whitcraft, and John Johnson working there by lantern light. George, 24, began scuffling with 44-year-old Jacob Hoepfinger, a married man with six children, then scuffled about with 46-year-old

Bill Duncan. Then a voice yelled that the levers (or pries, as the men called them) were ready to be manned, George and Samuel began to lift one, but their pry slipped and they fell across it. An altercation began over what had happened.

Erskine put his hand on George's shoulder and told him, "Now, go home." George retorted, "You don't know me." Erskine then shoved George, admonishing him to go away, and George again repeated, "You don't know me," as he raised his fists to fight. Erskine said he wasn't a fighting man, and George replied, "I ain't either." Then Erskine walked away a few steps, reached down, and picked up an axe, raised it, and threatened to strike George with it. George just stood there saying nothing. Erskine then struck Downey up side the head with the axe, and he fell instantly, bleeding profusely. Some of the men began taking him to Bell's house intending to get him to a doctor somehow.

Under cross examination, Samuel Baker recounted that he had not seen George demand the teetotaling Erskine take a drink from his bottle nor seen that George thrust the bottle under Erskine's nose demanding, "Damn you. If you won't drink, you've got to take a smell."

**II. John Bell** testified he had arrived back at the schoolhouse a little after George and Samuel did. Bell swore he didn't know if George and Samuel had been drinking or not, but that Samuel did offer him a drink from a half pint bottle he pulled from his pocket.

**III. William H. Duncan**, told the courtroom that George had jumped on the end of that pry before it slipped, and that George had said, "Well, let her come," after being threatened with the axe. He recalled George was "under the influence of liquor" and that he had seen George put the bottle up in Erskine's face.

**IV. Johnnie Duncan** gave testimony which agreed with his father's.

**V. Dr. Eddy** said he had seen George last Saturday night for a "wound on left side of cranium about three and one half inches long by 3/4 inch wide."

**VI. Jacob Hoepfinger** related that George had struck him and given him the "blue eye," and added that George had a bad reputation for "fighting and getting drunk."

**VII. Sheridan Whitcraft** said he left the scene for fear a quarrel was about to break out because George and Samuel were drunk.

**VIII. Edward Lea** testified he saw George strike Hoepfinger in the face and also saw George thrust the bottle in Erskine's face. He said, too, that George had a revolver and tried to get it out of his pocket after being struck by the axe.

**IX. John Johnson**, swore he heard George and Samuel plotting to make Erskine drink or "lick him anyhow if he don't."

**X.** Finally, the accused, **John A. Erskine**, recounted that he was attempting to raise a pry when George pushed the bottle in his mouth, that George was set on fighting him, and that after telling George twice to stand back or he'd hit him, George attempted to get in a blow with his right hand. As for the axe blow, Erskine testified, "I just tapped him to keep him off."

- 16 Erskine's hearing proceeded into the night. Judge Memminger placed him under an \$800 bond to await District Court action. Ed Lea and N. L. Phillips made the bond for him.
- 23 George Downey has been "sinking several times," and Drs. Eddy, Jackson, and Alden from Pierce operated to remove pieces of bone from his brain, but George died a few hours after the operation.
- 25 Rev. Brown of Pierce County conducted George Downey's funeral at the home of

John Bell. Pall bearers were Will Harlow, Frank Burnham, Sam Baker, Thomas Bell, Fred Salts, and Charley Pratt. His burial was in Northside Cemetery.

- ?27 Friends and relatives of George Downey requested that Dr. Tanner of Battle Creek hold an inquest to determine what really killed George. Dr. Tanner impaneled a jury of G. A. Luikart, C. E. Burnham, Frank Henderson, J. H. Kierstead, Andrew Minkler, and Henry Carmody. They exhumed, examined, and reburied George's body. Afterwards, the *Burnett Blade* reported the panel's conclusion: "George Downey came to his death from the effect of a blow made by an axe or other blunt weapon in the hands of John Erskine, inflicted in the course of a quarrel."

#### June 1886

- 3 At midnight, a firebug entered the recently-moved Duncan schoolhouse and set it ablaze. The Duncans saw it just before it burned to the ground.
- 7 Miss Moore moved her students into a tent to continue their classes.
- ?21 George Downey's father appeared before Justice M. F. Brown of Warren in Madison County demanding a warrant for the murderer of his son. Constable Scott then arrested John A. Erskine, whose subsequent bond of \$1500 was furnished by G. W. Honeysett, M. L. Howard, and L. W. Miller.

#### July 1886

- ?13 J. A. Erskine arrived in Burnett showing people the white crystals he found in his well bucket. Upon examination, they appeared to be strychnine. People disagreed as to whether or not the Downeys were to blame or if Erskine was after sympathy. Feelings were becoming intense over the situation, and the *Burnett Blade* boldly stated, "...any person found engaged in any such business as poisoning wells or burning school houses will not be likely to die of old age."
- ?15 Erskine began digging a new well, enclosing it to prevent any tampering.
- 26 As Erskine and his hired man, Rightmire, drove a wagon up the side of a small ravine, two shots rang out from a rifle fired by a figure hidden in tall weeds. Erskine was hit twice, fell back into the wagon. Rightmire drove the horses hard toward Charley Pratt's house, blood dripping from the wagon box. The shooting took place near the field Erskine had rented in Pierce County--over near the Downey's place. Earlier that day, George Downey's brother, Melvin, had been seen attempting to buy a shotgun from D. W. Whitney. Unnamed persons say Mel had been drinking and that he left town only an hour or so before Erskine was shot.

#### August 1886

- 6 Erskine, having been shot in the back, is fortunate to be alive. One bullet came out the front of his chest, and the other, deflected by a bone, went completely through his right arm. He was able to sit up, however, and take a few steps. Mel Downey, on the other hand, continued to maintain his innocence, saying he could account for his whereabouts at the time of the shooting.
- 7 Melvin Downey appeared at the offices of the *Burnett Blade* complaining about reports being sent out about him. He was very upset and said he knew nothing other than what the public was saying about Erskine's having been shot.
- 27 It was reported that Mel's brother, Ed Downey, "outraged" the 11-year-old daughter of his neighbor, Henry Rose. Word got about that the Downeys will probably be arrested, and "Evidence is said to be forthcoming to fasten the shooting on the old man." Sheriffs Heath and Davis, along with Deputy Box, traveled under cover of darkness to the home of Frank Eberly, near the Downeys.
- 28 Before dawn, the officers of the law arrested the entire Downey family, Nicholas; his

wife, Matilda; their daughter, Emma; and their three remaining sons, William, Melvin, and Ed, taking them to Pierce under guard.

- 31 The prosecuting attorney issued subpoenas for: John A. Erskine, Henry Rose, Mrs. Wm. Downey, Washington Russell, D. W. Whitney, W. M. Brown and wife, Thomas and Frank Eberly, Ed Lea, Mrs. Fred Markley, C. A. Garvery and wife, Levi Leighman and wife, Elisha Collins, and Charles Pratt. The defense attorney issued subpoenas for: L. D. Loudermils, Jacob Bausman and wife, Fred Salts, A. V. Ruby, Allen Hobkins, James Shaw, Frank Lee, Charles Rottenberg and wife, Sam Melvin, Scott Provin, Thomas Bell, and William Mills.

A letter sent to the *Burnett Blade* about the trial reported that, "Henry Rose testified that [Nicholas] Downey had said to him he wanted to 'permit Erskine to live until after his trial and then shoot him.'" And that "Old Mrs. Downey is insane--trying the insanity dodge probably."

#### September 1886

- 2 Nicholas Downey was held in lieu of a \$2000 bond. The rest of the Downey family was bound over to keep the peace. Nicholas did not have the money to make his bond.
- 13 Matilda Downey said she hid herself in a draw and waited for Erskine to come back from his field so she could shoot him. At first, nobody believed her. Gradually, however, the authorities learned from her mutterings and from what Nicholas then admitted, that Matilda left home while Nicholas was gone with the wagon to pick up a barrel of water. When he returned, she was gone; but Nicholas had hurt himself getting the water barrel off the wagon, so he couldn't go hunt for her. But around 10 o'clock that evening, she came in the door of the house wearing her dead son's muddy coat and boots to announce, "I fixed him."
- 14 The Commissioners of Insanity pronounced Matilda Downey insane, saying she probably would live only another two or three months.
- 24 Ed Downey reported his mother was still in Pierce with the doctors, and that "At times she is very violent and the chances for recovery are considered few."

*Note: The author wishes to thank Nancy Zaruba who, while walking Northside Cemetery for the Madison County Genealogical Society, noticed George Downey's stone, looked for his obituary, and found he had met an untimely death.*

**George Downey Died 23 April 1886 Aged 24 years**  
**Remember friends as you pass by,**  
**As you are now So once was I;**  
**As I am now so you must be,**  
**Prepare for death, and follow me.**

Editors notes: The Northside Cemetery is today known as the Warren Cemetery. In other years it was also known as the Howard Cemetery and the Terry Cemetery. It is located 1.5 miles east of Tilden and then 1.8 miles north on the east side of the road.

We would like to thank Mickie (Charlton Ryan) for the effort she put in to get this story ready for publication. She took the 9 pages of newspaper articles and then went to the courthouses in 3 counties, looked through census microfilm, and more newspapers to get the details just right and then condensed it to this very readable article. Well done!

Jackson County, Iowa Pioneer Reunions  
 Compiled by Jackson Co. Genealogical Society and Jackson Co. Historical Society  
 P.O. Box 1065, Maquoketa, IA

Registered Home-Comers  
 Maquoketa, Iowa Sept 3-6, 1906

Name and Current Residence	Born	Came to Iowa	Left Iowa
A. C. Pool, Rising City, Nebr.	Feb. 11, 1856, Ontario	1865	1873
J. R. Twiss, Meadow Grove, Nebr.	Aug. 5, 1839, New York	--	--
E. L. Twiss, Meadow Grove, Nebr.	Aug. 22, 1850, Ohio	1854	1883
Josephine Bowers Twiss, Meadow Grove, NE	1854 Maquoketa, IA	1854	1883
P. J. Whittemore, Omaha, Nebr.	Oct. 24, 1847, Iowa	1858	1896
Mrs. Useba Dunlop Twiss, Meadow Grove, NE	Sept. 17, 1835, IA	1858	1888
Minerva Twiss Eckman, Meadow Grove, NE	June 6, 1835, NY	1854	1884
Jay Walker French, Everett, Nebr.	March 1847, New York	1850	1870
S. L. Perin, Sargent, Nebr.	May 13, 1852, LA	1873	1875
Carrie Swigart-Lackey, Stanton, Nebr.	Mar. 12, 1877 Maquoketa, IA	1877	1906
E. D. Taylor, Davenport, Nebr.	May 11, 1871, Iowa	1871	1888
Mrs. A. J. Smith, Ord, Nebr.	Apr. 2, 1848, New York	1868	1876
Mrs. M. Goodenow, Ord, Nebr.	Apr. 23, 1851, New York	1867	1871
Nettie Buchanan Montgomery, St. Edward, NE	Jan, 18, 1847, PA	1855	1866
Mrs. Mary Jerman, Merriman, Nebr.	1857, Dubuque, IA	1857	1882
Mrs. Peter German, Merriman, Nebr.	1849, Maquoketa, IA	1849	1882
Maude Gordon Jenkins, Western, Nebr.	1881, Maquoketa, IA	1881	1905
Mrs. J. D. Courtney-Perrin, Omaha, Nebr.	1861, Davenport	1873	1878
Mrs. F. Kelley, Harrison, Nebr.	1839, New York	1853	1904
M. Bolton, Geneva, Nebr.	1854, Ohio	1856	1879
C. P. Rober, Beiden, Nebr.	1875, Maquoketa, IA	1875	1904
Ferd C. Fiske, Lincoln, Nebr.	1856, New York	1857	1883
Cornelia Prindle-Stevenson, Aurora, Nebr.	1839, Vermont	1854	1879
Lloyd Waugh, Lebanon, Nebr.	---	--	--
H. E. Waugh, Lebanon, Nebr.	1863, Maquoketa, IA	1863	1889
Melvin Goodenow, Nebraska	1844, New York	1845	1870
J. H. Demont, Petersburg, Nebr.	1857, Maquoketa, IA	1857	1876
Minnie Thomas, Omaha, Nebr.	1893, Maquoketa, IA	1893	1904
Mrs. Anna Hutchins, Omaha, Nebr.	---	--	--

transcribed June 13, 2000, by Nancy Zaruba at the Dubuque Public Library, Dubuque, Iowa

**There is a new television series out on PBS titled Ancestors.** This is not a repeat of the earlier series, but all new episodes. Beginning in June, 2000; Episode Titles and Broadcast Order: 201 Records at Risk, 202 Family Records, 203 Compiled Records, 204 Genealogy and Technology, 205 Vital Records, 206 Religious Records, 207 Cemetery Records, 208 Census Records, 209 Military Records, 210 Newspapers as Records, 211 Probate Records, 212 Immigration Records, 213 Writing a Family History.

The book to accompany this series is: ***In Search of Our Ancestors: 101 Inspiring Stories of Serendipity and Connection in Rediscovering Our Family History***, by Megan Smolenyak is published by Adams Media Corporation. (\$10.95 trade paperback; 256 pages; ISBN: 1-58062-317-4) and is available in book stores near you and online book stores.

**Source:** from the website: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~rwwguide/notable/tv.htm> ✓

Excerpts from the  
**1889 Norfolk City Directory (Cont.)**

Carman, C. H., livery stable, res. 6th betw. Madison and Norfolk Aves. 1-h-w.  
Carman, Mrs. J. E., res. The same.  
Carlson, Chas., tailor, bds. At Morey House.  
Carlson, S. P., tailor, bds. At Morey House.  
Carberry, Miss Lida, domestic, at G. W. Wilson's.  
Chapman, Chas., res. Madison betw. 2d and 3d Aves, 3-h-e.  
Chapman, Mrs. N., res. The same.  
Chesney, J.H., merchant, Philip Ave. betw. 5th and 6th, 1-h-n.  
Chesney, Mrs. E., milliner, 217 Norfolk Ave.; res. The same as above.  
Chestnutwood, J., Madison Ave. betw. 4th and 3d, 2-h-s.  
Chestnutwood, Mrs. A. H., res. The same.  
Chestnutwood, Miss Dora, bds. As above.  
Chestnutwood, Miss Mamie, bds. As above.  
Chillson, Rev. M. D., clergyman, sw cor. 4th and Philip Ave.  
Chillson, Mrs. R. P., res. The same.  
Chillson, C. F., bds. As above.  
Childs, Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_, lives at I. Power's.  
Childs, \_\_\_\_\_, res. 4th betw. Park and Pasewalk Aves., 7-h-e.  
Chipman, Clay, drayman, res. Nw cor. 1st and Braasch Ave.  
Chipman, Mrs. P., res. The same.  
Chrisman, H. W., 327 Norfolk Ave.; res. 11th betw. Philip and Park Aves., 1-h-w.  
Chrisman, Mrs. L., res. The same.  
Clark, Moses, at rear of Geo. Coleman's.  
Clark, Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ res. The same.  
Clark, W. L., carpenter, ne cor. 5th and Philip Ave.  
Clark, Mrs. A.A., res. The same.  
Clark, G. W., bricklayer, Madison Ave. betw. 2d and 3d, 2-h-s.  
Clark, Mrs. A. M., res. The same.  
Clatlin, F. M., proprietor of the *Herald*, Odd Fellow's building; res. 3d, betw. Park and Pasewalk Aves., 2-h-w.  
Clatlin, Mrs. I. B., res. The same.  
Clatlin, R. T., bds. As above.  
Cobb, S.S., res. Nw cor. Koenigstein Ave. and 13th.  
Cobb, Mrs. A., res. The same.  
Cobb, Ezra, res. The same.  
Cobb, Mrs. Lucy., res. As above.  
Cole, H. J., dentist, Norfolk State Bank building; res. Se cor. Koenigstein Ave. and 9th.  
Cole, Mrs. M. H., res. The same.  
Coleman, Geo., butcher, res. Braasch Ave. betw. 1st and 2d.  
Coleman, Mrs. F., res. The same.  
Coleman, M. H., night clerk at Pacific House, bds. At the same.  
Colvert, Alexander, res. Se cor. 1st and Philip Ave.  
Colvert, Mrs. L., res. The same.  
Colvert, A. S., teamster, bds. As above.  
Colvert, Miss N. E., dressmaker, bds. As above.  
Collamer, James M., grocer, 408 Norfolk Ave.; rooms at J. S. Dart's.  
Collins, James, engineer, res. Nw cor. 3d and Pasewalk Ave.  
Collins, Mrs. J., res. The same.  
Collins, Miss Carrie, house-keeper at Pacific House.  
Coombs, Alfred, bds. At C. W. Morris'.  
Cooley, W. H., res. Norfolk Ave. betw. 15th and 16th.  
Cooley, Mrs. L. L., res. The same.  
Cooley, W. H., painter, res. se cor. 3d and Philip Ave.  
Cooley, Mrs. F., res. The same.  
Coyle, James, res. Madison Ave., betw. 2d and 3d, 3-h-n.



## **DAR -- Daughters of the American Revolution**

The Daughters of the American Revolution was founded on 11 Oct. 1890. It was incorporated in the District of Columbia in 1891 and was chartered in 1896 by a Act of Congress of the United States for historic, educational and patriotic purposes. Caroline Scott Harrison was the first President General.

The DAR building is made up of Memorial Continental Hall and Constitution Hall, connected by the Administration Hall. It has a genealogy library, period rooms, a museum, an American collection of documents, and a historical research library.

There is a DAR Library at the Grand Island, Nebraska Public Library. There is a smaller one located at Alliance, NE. Both are open to the public. The Nancy Gary Chapter of the DAR was organized 5 Mar. 1896 in Norfolk, NE.

To join, you must prove by births, marriages and deaths for each generation back to your Revolutionary War ancestor. You also must prove their service. You need to be 18 years old or older to join.

Our local person to contact about any further information or to join is:  
Joyce E. Barlow, Box 134, Osmond, NE 68765-0134. Or call her at 402-748-3429.

## **The National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century**

Miss Mary Florence Taney, Founder. Organized July, 1915

### *Membership Eligibility*

Any American woman of good moral character, eighteen years of age or over, is eligible for membership, provided she has been invited by the Society and is the lineal descendant of an ancestor who lived and served prior to 1701 in one of the Original Colonies in the geographic area of the present United States of America.

Documentary proof of an ancestor's service prior to 1701 in one of the following is required:

1. Historic Founder of Jamestown and Historic Founder of any of the original colonies.
2. Member of the London, Plymouth [or] Virginia Companies who came to the colonies to live.
3. Colonial Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Deputy Governor, or Colonial Officer.
4. Member of the House of Burgesses.
5. Member or Delegate to the Council of the Assembly.
6. Deputy or Representative to the General Court.
7. Secretary, Magistrate, Selectman, Justice, Judge of a Court of Law or Equity.
8. Founder or Trustee of any College or School.
9. Minister of the Gospel or Commissary of the Bishops of London.
10. Member of the Council of Safety of 1689.
11. Signer of the Mayflower Compact.
12. Member of the House of Deputies.
13. All Professions, Trades and Crafts.
14. All Military and Naval services of the colonies.
15. Any who furnished funds or supplies.
16. Member of the Provincial Congress.
17. Original Landowner, Freeman or Planter.
18. Headright, Transportee.

**Source:** Copied as found in *Membership Eligibility* pamphlet from *The National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century*, 1300 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

## National Society Daughters of Founders and Patriots of America DFPA HISTORY AND PURPOSE

In 1898, three ladies formed a hereditary society in which membership would be small by reason of strict eligibility requirements, and therefore, more intimate. Miss Eugenia Washington, great grandniece of George Washington, Mrs. Henry V. Boynton and Mrs. William L. Mason founded the organization of Daughters of Founders and Patriots of America on June 7, 1898, and a week later the District of Columbia granted the charter. It is a date to remember - June 14, 1898.

The eligibility requirements make this society unique among all patriotic-hereditary societies. Eligibility requires an unbroken paternal line of either the applicant's father or mother, going back to a FOUNDER who arrived in one of the Colonies between May 13, 1607, and May 13, 1687, and further stipulates that in this unbroken line there be an intermediary PATRIOT ancestor who gave military or civil service in establishing American independence in the period of 1775 to 1784.

Collection, restoration, and preservation of public and private records, with emphasis on the earliest periods of American growth and limited to records of the Original Thirteen Colonies, has been an ongoing program of the National Society. Monetary contributions were given for the restoration and preservation of eighteen volumes of the General Court Proceedings of North Carolina; of the town records and deeds of Sutton, Vermont; the Moses Brown papers in Providence, Rhode Island; early records in several Virginia county court houses; the John Hanson account books in Maryland; and the original Ratification of the Constitution Document in Delaware. New York records preserved and restored include the lamination of the Baron von Steuben papers, preservation of Ulster County records from 1650, early will books of New York City, and wills, inventories of estates and administration papers from various places in the State.

Printed volumes of proved lineages of the Society's members, including references, are placed in libraries throughout the United States. An index of all Founders and Patriots listed in the first 23 volumes was published in 1976. A Supplement to include Volumes 35-37 was printed in 1985. Unpublished historical events and genealogical data from Bibles, family or community papers, and material from other local sources have been copied and filed at the Society's National Headquarters in Washington, D. C. Genealogical and reference books are added to the Headquarters' Library each year.

The DFPA Gazette was first issued in 1976 as an annual publication of the National Society to keep the members advised of the activities and accomplishments of both the National Society and the Chapters. A booklet of "Services and Prayers", appropriate for use by our Society at meetings and services, was published in 1979.

For over 90 years, since its founding in 1898, the National Society Daughters of Founders and Patriots of America has participated in the life and development of our country. Through small in membership, the Society has made a valuable contribution toward preserving the heritage of the past in order that the nation's future may be built on a solid foundation. Generations of our Society's members have dedicated, and are continuing to dedicate, hours of thought and work and gifts of money to teaching and perpetuating the ideals embodied in our priceless heritage.

**Source:** Copied selected parts from the History and Purpose pamphlet of the National Society Daughters of Founders and Patriots of America. Washington, D.C. Rev. 10/88

## **Starting from Scratch Using Alternate Data Sources**

-- Karen Tippets

Vital records didn't become mandatory in most of the U.S. until the 20th century, making the discovery of a birth certificate impossible in many parts of the country for the earlier years. Thus, it is important for a beginner to recognize alternative sources for some of the data that we need to identify our ancestors with birth, marriage or death dates.

If you have Pennsylvania German ancestry, there is an important resource that should not be overlooked. It is an illuminated document called a *fraktur*, taking its name from the German style of lettering commonly used in making it. Most commonly commemorating a birth or baptism, there are a few for marriages. They usually have scriptures, pictures, and/or designs decorating them. Most commonly, they are written in German, as one might expect, given the ethnic origin of this art form. Not all families had them made, as an artist/calligrapher had to be hired, but they are worth checking for.

Because of the pictures and antique value, these documents can sometimes be found in antique shops at high prices, although Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster has a good collection. There are also some collectors that have amassed a good number of these, some of which have been transcribed so that the data isn't lost to descendants.

I heard about the value of these documents and the frequency with which they occurred a few years ago. There are a few books out with transcriptions and translation, but they have not been available on interlibrary loan. The frustrating thing is that the libraries offered to [copy] the information if any of my family appeared in the books, but the

list of names that I needed to have checked was lengthy.

The good news: in December, The W. Dale Clark Library obtained the available books on *fraktur* so that researchers in our area can use them and learn about this relatively unknown source. The bad news for people out of the area: these copies won't be available on interlibrary loan either, although G.O.G.S. will research them for you or you're welcome to come visit. The books are indexed.

Typical information found on these *fraktur*: child's name, parent's names (with mother's maiden name), birth place, birth date, sponsors if it is a baptism name. If you have German ancestry that may have passed through Pennsylvania in the 1800's or earlier, you will want to check for documents of this type. Some may look upon them merely as interesting antiques. For those looking for family however, *frakturs* can be a real treasure.

**Source:** We have copied the previous article from The Lincoln-Lancaster County Genealogical Society Newsletter [Lincoln, NE.] Volume 24, No. 5, May 2000. It originally appeared in a January issue of Westward Into Nebraska [Greater Omaha Gen. Soc.].

### **Iowa Old Age Assistance**

The Iowa Genealogical Society Library (6000 Douglas, Des Moines, IA) has acquired the old Age Assistance records for 56 counties in IA. Compiled during the 1930's these records list the names of Iowans 21 - 65 years of age subject to tax to help care for the elderly. For each person listed, the names of the parents, including the mother's maiden name is given.

**Source:** *Out On a Limb*, Dodge/Jefferson Counties Genealogical Society, Watertown, Wisconsin, Vol.15, No. 2, May 2000 via *The Iowa Gen. Soc. Newsletter* Dec. 1992

The Madison County Genealogical Society was established in June 1973.

**Meetings:** The Madison County Genealogical Society meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month (except in December) at 7:00 p.m. at the First Baptist Church, 404 W. Benjamin Ave., Norfolk, NE.

**Officers for 1999-2000:** President: John Kielty; Vice-president: Richard Strenge; Secretary: Sue Askew; Treasurer: Don and Dorothy Monson

**Madison County Remembers...** is published Jan., Mar., May, Jul., Sept., and Nov. Submissions are welcome. Newsletter Committee: Karen Rogat, Charlton Ryan, Sue Askew, Tommie Tracy, Bernice Dewey, Richard Strenge, Nancy Zaruba, David Zaruba, and Jeanne Rix.

**MCGS Library** is located at the home of Harold & Betty Lyon, 604 So. 14th St., Norfolk, NE Phone: (402) 371-2589. Please call in advance.

**Dues** are due in September of each year. Dues are \$10.00 for individual or \$15.00 per couple per year.

**Mailing address** for the Madison County Genealogical Society is P.O. Box 1031, Norfolk, NE 68702-1031. Newsletter submissions and all correspondence should be submitted to this address.

**Web page address** is <http://www.rootsweb.com/~nemcgs>

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