

Generations

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Connecting Calhoun County, Michigan, family history researchers since 1988

President's Note: Getting Out of My Genealogical Rut

by Jim Jackson, President

Spending many years in our shared hobby of family history research, I believe many of us get in a rut. We have our favorite types of records and start with them when working on a new line, even if other records might be a better fit.

This was demonstrated on my last trip to Washington D. C. where I spent most of my time at the National Archives researching Civil War soldiers. I'm very familiar with their military envelope jackets of muster rolls, and pension files, including invalid, widow and others.

It was announced on our bus that I was knowledgeable in military research, so I spent most of the travel day talking with someone new to genealogical research while she "picked my brain" for her research at NARA. It was probably more enjoyable for me as we all like to share what we can with newbies (I hope all of you had a mentor during your initial learning curve in this hobby), and she probably developed a headache trying to file everything thrown at her.

Later in the week I saw her working on some records that I wasn't familiar with and thought she may have moved onto other research, but after asking her, she displayed some medical records from military hospitals. This collection including major military hospitals, as well as field hospitals and first-aid tents. It included amputations, but also stomach aches, corns, social diseases, etc. I'm guessing there were very few soldiers who did not need some type of medical treatment during their enlistment.

I asked her how she knew about them, and her response was enlightening. Where I would ask for the type of record that I thought would be the best source, she stated her

problem and what she was hoping to find to the archivist helping her. Perhaps the archivist asked questions, like "was he ever wounded?" but the point is, with my method (already familiar with the records), I never gave the archivist the opportunity to ask probing questions.

In the beginning, I definitely relied more on the librarians and archivists expertise. It's always best to ask the right questions so the staff who may be more familiar with the records can recommend the best source, or some obscure record that may be the best fit for your research. After using this approach I found the regimental books that included casualties, promotions, etc. I already knew some of this information but this book stated the reasons for promotions, such as death of previous members of that rank.

On this theme of stepping out of our comfort zone, I traveled with my wife to Lansing when she had a craft class on a Sunday. Of course neither the Library of Michigan nor the Archives of Michigan are open on Sunday, but the MSU Main Library is open on Sunday. I also never visited the Waldo Library on the WMU campus.

So recently I have visited both of these libraries and I've been able to research a few publications that weren't available elsewhere. Visiting a new library is always a bit daunting no matter how large or small, so this experience challenges us to practice lifelong learning. The smaller, local libraries may also have unique collections or card files that are invaluable. More importantly, these sources, as well as the knowledgeable staff are not available online.



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Calhoun County Genealogical Society

The purposes of the Calhoun County Genealogical Society (CCGS) are:

- To gather and preserve information of genealogical value.
- To encourage the deposit of such information in suitable depositories.
- To aid genealogists in the study of family history through the exchange of knowledge.
- To publish and promote Calhoun County and other genealogical materials.



CCGS is a nonprofit organization recognized as tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law. Individuals, libraries or societies may join. Annual dues for the year, beginning September 1, are \$18 for members choosing to receive **Generations** through postal mail or \$15 for members electing to receive the newsletter via e-mail. Memberships are accepted year-round; dues received after May 1 will pay for the following year's membership. Members receive **Generations** newsletter six times per year. All are invited to submit articles to the **Generations** editor. Permission is granted to reprint articles unless otherwise noted. Please give appropriate credit to the source. Copies of pages from back issues of **Generations** are available for \$1.00 for the first page and \$.50 for each additional page. General meetings are held at 7 p.m. the fourth Tuesday of each month at the LDS Marshall Branch Church 16036 Old US –27, Marshall, *unless otherwise specified*. No meetings are held in July, August or December. Programs are free and open to the public.

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Become a CCGS fan on Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/CalhounCountyGenealogicalSociety

CCGS e-mail list: Send a message to calhouncountygs-subscribe@yahoogroups.com with the word "subscribe" in the subject line.

Organizational Member of National Genealogical Society • Michigan Genealogical Council • Federation of Genealogical Societies

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Change in policy for requesting copies from Family History Library by Merrill White, Family Search

Please note the following change in the policy for patrons who are requesting copies from the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.

All requests for information copied from films, book pages, CDs, marriage, death or birth certificates, wills and/or deeds, etc. will be copied in digital format and emailed to patrons in a zipped PDF or JPG file format. There is no charge for this service if we are able to email to information to patrons.

If a patron does not have an email address, we can mail the information to the patron using the US Postal Service. However, as much as possible, we will rely on emailing all requests for information through the internet. If patrons do not own a computer or do not have an email address, they can request to have the information emailed to their local Family History Center, where they can print the information at the center.

Patrons should request copies by emailing their request to Photoduplication@familysearch.org. All requests MUST include the following information:

- Film or Fiche number
- Item number
- Name of Individual(s) referred to in the record
- Title of the record
- Name of parents, spouse, grantor, grantee, etc.
- Event type (Birth, Death or Marriage)
- Complete event date and place
- Event place (county, parish, township, etc.)
- Volume or page number
- Registration or Certificate Number

Any other information that will help us locate your record.

Go to http://goo.gl/EVMUQ for more information (and read comments for more details).

What's New At Willard Library for 2013

Information is on the move and your Willard Library is leading the way.

2012 was another watershed year in terms of developments at Willard Library of crucial interest to genealogists and historical researchers of every stripe.

*Three massive digitization projects have resulted in the movement to the internet of the Library's entire Battle Creek microfilm newspaper archive 1846-2012, making 600,000 pages of local history searchable for the first time ever.

Also now digitized is our complete collection of Battle Creek public high school yearbooks, every photo-packed page from 1894 to 2002.

*And a third treasure, our complete collection of Battle Creek city directories 1880-1960, is now also available on-line at our website www.willard.lib.mi.us.

*The Helen Warner Branch now has the latest university-quality microfilm readers with scanning and file-saving options in addition to basic printing. These are amazing and welcome replacements for the old microfilm readersprinters.

By George Livingston Local & Family History Librarian Willard Library

Query:

Kenneth Petersen has written to us requesting help with his family's history.

- 1. Albertis Harrison "Bert" Robbins 1857-1940
- 2. (Wife) Mary Margaret Robbins 1860-1951.

Both are buried in the West Pennfield Hicks Cemetery in Calhoun County. He is looking for information including any documents, death and funeral home information and burial and cemetery papers.

Annual Membership List and Surname Directory:

As reported in the last newsletter we be sending out the annual membership as a separate publication and will not include it in the newsletter for privacy issues.

Generations

Calhoun County Genealogical Society PO Box 879 Marshall, MI 49068-0879

Next Meeting is our annual lock-in at Willard Library

Calhoun County Genealogical Society Calendar of Events

CCGS monthly meetings are typically held the fourth Tuesday of each month except July, August and December, and are free and open to the public. Unless noted, meetings are held at 7 p.m. at LDS Marshall Branch Church at 16036 Old US-27 N, Marshall MI.

February 22nd FRIDAY Annual "Library Lock in" at the Helen Warner Branch, Willard Library. 36 Minges Creek Place, Battle Creek, MI Please contact the library to register.

March 26 - Marc Young

Jun 25, 2013 Sharon Carson, Director, Archives and Regional History at Western Michigan University will inform us

Have ideas for future programs? Please contact Vice President Alex VanZanten, whose contact information is on page 2.