



Connections

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McHenry County Illinois Genealogical Society Newsletter



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Contact Us: newsletter@mcigs.org

July 2018

MCIGS 2018 Conference



Hard to believe the MCIGS Summer Conference is already upon us. This year's speakers include Judy Russell, Curt B Wichter, David Rencher, and Lisa Aizo. This year the conference will be taking place at McHenry County College located in Crystal Lake. The doors will open at 8am for registration and the first session will begin at 9am. Tickets are available at the door although lunch will not be available for purchase on the day of the conference.

Whether you are just beginning in genealogy or a seasoned genealogist, there is something for everyone. This year all registrants will receive 5 FREE door prize tickets. We have many wonderful prizes which are listed on our website www.mcigs.org. You could win a DNA kit, subscription to a major genealogical database, a book of your choice, a year's membership in a genealogical society or any of the numerous other prizes we have to offer.

We have many past vendors and also have new vendors. These vendors know their subjects and may just offer you the tip you need to breakthrough a brick wall.

The MCIGS Conference HELP DESK is back by popular demand to work with experienced genealogists to help you over a hump in your research. This FREE service is available on a first come, first served basis.

You can sign up for a time slot the morning of the conference. Appointment times will be between conference sessions or at lunch. Come prepared with one question or problem that has been puzzling you and hopefully someone will be able to give you some direction.

NOTE - There is NO regular meeting in July, we are having the Conference instead.

August Meeting "Probate" Ann Wells



Thursday, August 9th @ 7pm
The Pointe Outreach Center
5650 Northwest Highway
Crystal Lake, IL

(Located just west of Target)

Alexander Lumber rests on historic foundation

By LINDA MILLER

The Tracer *

The Alexander Lumber Company has been supplying Illinois and Wisconsin residents with home renovation and building materials for more than 125 years. The company started all those years ago as a lumberyard in Aurora and now supplies much more than lumber: windows and doors, kitchens and baths, decorative trim and hardware, and decking and molding.

In 1922, the company opened a store at 909 N. Front St. in McHenry. In 1925, the Crystal Lake store at 110 Grant St. opened. The Grant Street location, according to April 19, 1956, edition of the McHenry *Plaindealer* was “low land on the former Carl Wallin property, two blocks north of Main Street on Highway 31...”

In 1983, having outgrown its Crystal Lake downtown location on Grant Street, Alexander Lumber moved to 210 Virginia Road. The Grant Street location now houses a commuter parking lot. Alexander Lumber again outgrew the area and moved in 2009 to its current location at 4001 Country Club Road in Woodstock. At that time the McHenry location merged with the new “Crystal Lake” store. Within the company it still is affectionately referred to as the Crystal Lake location.

Alexander Lumber Co. operates 20 retail yards – 17 in Illinois and three in Wisconsin; truss manufacturing plants in Cortland and Leroy, IL.; a countertop operation in Decatur and a showroom/sales office in Twin Lakes, WI. The story of Alexander Lumber Co. begins in Scotland with two families, the Stewarts and the Alexanders. In the 1800s, the Stewarts emigrated from Scotland to Nova Scotia, where John Stewart and his siblings were born. This story was common in Scotland at the time. According to *Education Scotland*, 59 percent of the United Kingdom settlers arriving in Nova Scotia during the first half of the 19th century were born in Scotland. Starting in 1853, their primary destination switched to the United States.

Blair Alexander, daughter to Walter Alexander (president of Alexander Lumber from 1969-2014), is fortunate to have a family history written by her grandfather, John Alexander. Following is an excerpt from that history:

Welcome to MCIGS

By Arlene Basten

Please help us welcome the newest members to MCIGS:

- Peggy Baer, Broomfield, CO
- Laura and John Dendor, McHenry, IL
- Janna Heuer, Ringwood, IL
- Vickie Speak, Trout Valley, IL

Claudia Conroy - Library Update

Did You Know?

MCIGS has over \$45,000 worth of genealogy books housed in the Crystal Lake Public Library and the McHenry Public Library. The majority of these books are reference only and cannot be checked out. However, we realize that some of these books, especially the “how to” books, are much better used at home as they take time to work through. We are in the process of changing those books from reference to being able to be checked out. If you come across a book that should be allowed to circulate, please let us know and we will evaluate the book and change as the committee sees appropriate.

Our society has a yearly budget to purchase additional books. If you learn of an interesting or helpful genealogy book that is not in a local library, please let us know so we can determine if we should purchase it for our library collection. Our library committee is always looking for new finds. You can contact our library chairman at claudia.conroy@mcigs.org with your book purchase suggestions.

(Continued from left hand column)

“When John Stewart and his brother came of age, they got themselves to Chicago by ox train, and then walked to Wausau, Wis. There they got lumberjack work as it was then practiced – felling trees all winter, floating logs downriver in the spring, and running them through the river-powered sawmill all summer, then back up into the woods. The family lore is that the owner of the lumber operation where they worked had what was then a large bank loan. The banker went up to the woods to look over the operation, didn't like what he saw but did like the looks of the two raw-boned young Scotchmen he saw working there. He called them over and offered to turn the whole thing over to them if they took over the loan payments.” “It used to be that virtually every family member had at least some experience with the business – whether it be full-time or just summers,” Blair Alexander mused. “With the family now more spread-out geographically, fewer family members have enjoyed/endured that rite of passage.”

* This article (in its unedited version) originally appeared in the summer 2016 edition of the McHenry County Historical Society's *Tracer* quarterly magazine. This portion is being reprinted with MCHS's permission.

MCIGS Tagline Contest

By Claudia Conroy

Like most genealogical societies, our organization was named McHenry County Illinois Genealogical Society simply because we are based in McHenry County. Yes, our online databases are focused on McHenry County, but our meetings are not. The programs and conferences we offer are varied and cover topics of interest to anyone researching his or her family history. Contest ends at **4 PM on 7 July 2018**.

Goal: Identify a phrase to be included in MCIGS publicity which makes it clear that meeting topics are not focused only on McHenry County genealogy research.

Taglines can be submitted:

- at the June meeting **with the time submitted included**.
- at the July 7th conference **with the time submitted included**.
- by email to claudia.conroy@mcigs.org
- by mail to MCIGS Contest, PO Box 184, Crystal Lake, IL 60039-0184.

Elaine Obenchain Scholarship winner

- Emily McCusker

Huntley High School Senior Emily McCusker was awarded a \$1,000.00 scholarship on Wednesday May 23rd 2018. At the June 14th general meeting MCIGS recognized Emily and her mother and presented them with a certificate. As previously stated - Emily has been involved in the Children of the American Revolution and the Daughters of the American Revolution. She has assisted in fundraising events to help support Friends in Deed and acted as a re-enactor in the Midway Village Museum in Rockford, IL.

She is a member of the national honor society, color guard, choir, speech team and a crew leader at Huntley High School that helps incoming freshman with various activities. Emily plans to attend Lake Forest College in the fall and become a museum curator.



Upcoming Events

7 July 2018 MCIGS – MCIGS Summer Conference at McHenry County College, Crystal Lake, IL, 7pm. <http://www.mcigs.org>

9 Aug 2018 MCIGS – Probate Records at The Pointe, Crystal Lake, IL, 7pm. <http://www.mcigs.org>

11 Aug 2018 – NWSGS -- Finding Dead Ancestors is Easy; Finding Living Relatives Can Be a Challenge, Arlington Heights Memorial Library, 10 am. <http://www.nwsgenealogy.org>

13 Sep 2018 MCIGS – What's New At Family Search at The Pointe, Crystal Lake, IL, 7pm. <http://www.mcigs.org>

29 Sep 2018 – 25th Annual Conference 9-4 at the Fox Valley Genealogical Society of Naperville, IL. The speaker is Jill Morelli CG. <https://ilfvgs.org>

6 Oct 2018 – NWSGS -- Newspaper Research: Beyond the Birdcage, Arlington Heights Senior Center, 10am. <http://www.nwsgenealogy.org>

11 Oct 2018 MCIGS – What's New On the Internet at The Pointe, Crystal Lake, IL, 7pm. <http://www.mcigs.org>

3 Nov 2018 – NWSGS -- DNA Doubleheader, Arlington Heights Senior Center, 10am. <http://www.nwsgenealogy.org>

8 Nov 2018 MCIGS – Ancestry.com Library Edition at The Pointe, Crystal Lake, IL, 7pm. <http://www.mcigs.org>

ONGOING - Free Webinars through the Illinois State Genealogy Society - All Webinars start at 8:00 PM CST register at: <http://www.ilgensoc.org>

Editor's Corner - Larry Wood

A True account - "In A Sperm Whale's Jaws's"

Here is another interesting story for you.

Captain Albert WOOD (16 Sep 1813-1884) was a whaling captain who was well known for surviving an attack by a sperm whale (see the account: "In a Sperm Whale's Jaws", voyage of the Ploughboy. <http://www.oakknoll.com/> \$20.00). See also the Nantucket Bed & Breakfast, Capt Albert Wood House - 1795, 29 India St Nantucket MA.

Albert Wood was First Mate on the ship "PLOUGHBOY" and during a Sunday 4 March 1849 whaling chase, the whale turned on the boat and attacked. Wood was 'bitten' by the whale but subsequently rescued by the other longboats.

According to the ship's log - " We got him to the ship as quick as we could, he could not move when we got him alongside, he was terribly mangled, a large piece was torn from his side, his head was very badly bruised, besides his back and legs. Am afraid he cannot live."

Wood's own words - "The next I knew he had swung his jaw between my legs & I found myself sitting astraddle of his jaw under water with his jaw closed holding me tight. While I was in that position he brought his fluke down across the stem of the boat killing the boatsteerer & at the same time let go of me so I swung clear of him & rose to the top of the water. He swung his jaw again & knocked me against the boat as she lay bottom up. When I found myself against the boat I caught hold of her and swung my chest in against the boat when he struck me several times with his jaw. I was laid up until August (in Tahiti - LAW) when I got so I could get about with a cane & then took charge of a 270 ton schooner & went to the Marquesas islands on a trading voyage & arrived back to San Francisco in Nov. or Dec."

One really Tough Sailor !!

Lineage: Larry WOOD and Capt. Albert WOOD are 5th cousins 5 times removed.

Volunteers Wanted - Kimberly McGuigan

MCIGS has a volunteer program in order to help members and non-members become a part of our events and projects and we need your help.

We could REALLY use a genealogy research center volunteer that people can contact to help with my family genealogy research. Other opportunities include:

- *2 people needed to hand out envelopes during Conference registration 7:30am to 8:30am (you will need to be registered for the conference)*
- *Indexing the Woodstock Sentinel newspaper*
- *Assisting with the MCIGS blog*
- *Digitizing the Quarterly back issues for uploading onto the members website*
- *Compiling the master surname index*
- *IT assistance during general meetings such as help with setup, video taping, computer assistance, and sound.*
- *Local history information*
- *Distributing handouts during general meetings*
- *Conference genealogy research help desk (you will need to be registered for the conference)*

Some of these activities do not require that you live locally. Please email me if you would like more information on any of these volunteer opportunities, For more information please contact Kim McGuigan, Volunteer Coordinator at Volunteer@MCIGS.org.

THANK YOU

Hint of the Month - Larry Wood



It is never a good time, but now might be perfect to decide WHO you want to leave your genealogy files to. You should choose a person and then mark them in your will, or just make a genealogy will for that person.