

Bond County Genealogical Society News

Volume 40, Issue 2

Summer July 2025

Official Newsletter of the Bond County Genealogical Society of Greenville, Illinois,
published jointly since 2014 with the Bond County Historical Society

Family Bibles Part of Bond County Museum Collection



What first-hand accounts captured in family bibles, journals, calendars or notes do you have from your ancestors? Bond County Historical Society currently serves as safe keeper for several large, leather-bound, Victorian-era family bibles donated over the years.

Why Search for Family Bibles?

Many families have traditionally recorded births, marriages, and deaths in a family bible, family record book, or book of remembrance. A bible was often given

This Casper Ulmer family Bible (LEFT) includes the surnames **Ulmer**, **Tischhauser**, **Cantrill** & **Blizzard**. This David W. Mitchell family Bible (RIGHT) includes the surnames **Mitchell** & **Walker**. BCM Archives.

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Special points of interest:

- Discover resources replacing RootsWeb Forums.
- If you're not related to Mike Hubbard, are you truly from Bond County? Watch his Family History presentation and page through his new book.
- Swear you'd absolutely never use AI for genealogy? Guess what—You're already using it!
- Even more evidence uncovered of Underground RR agents, stations, and conductors in Bond Co!
- Hire a researcher to find Wills and Probates at the LDS Family History Library.
- Women lost U.S. citizenship when marrying foreigners? It caused a real mess!

Bond County Genealogical Society

Officers

President - Cindy Tischhauser
Vice President - Kevin J. Kaegy
Treasurer - John S. Coleman
Recording Secretary - Jane Hopkins
Corresponding Secretary - Cindy Tischhauser
Historian - Kevin J. Kaegy
Editor - open
Director(s) - Mike Evans

Appointees

Library - Jane Hopkins
Program - Kevin J. Kaegy
Membership - Jane Hopkins
Publicity - open
Hospitality - Cindy Tischhauser
Cemetery - open
Research - Cindy Tischhauser & Rebecca Clausen
Newsletter Editor - Rebecca Clausen
Webmaster - Rebecca Clausen

Bond County Genealogical Society membership dues are \$10 per 2-person household for the current year. A lifetime membership for a 2-person household may be purchased for a one-time payment of \$175. Members are eligible to vote and to serve as BCGS officers and appointees.

If you would like to become a member please send your name, address, phone number, email address, and the surnames you are most interested in researching with appropriate check or money order to:

Bond County Genealogical Society,
P.O. Box 172, Greenville, IL
62246-0172

Membership forms also are available on our website. www.bondcogen.org

*"Let us, before
we die, gather
up our heritage,
and offer it to
our children."*

*— Will Durant,
The Story of
Civilization*

Bond County Historical Society

2024-2025 Officers

President - Cary Holman
Vice President - Blake Knox
Treasurer - John S. Coleman
Secretary - Jane Hopkins
Historian - Kevin J. Kaegy (non-voting)

Directors

Burgess Twp - Michelle Haller
Central Twp - Kevin J. Kaegy
Tamalco Twp - Cindy Tischhauser
Mills Twp - Gary Tischhauser
Pleasant Mound Twp - James Schutte
Old Ripley Twp - Kathy Brewer
Shoal Creek Twp - Tom Varner
LaGrange Twp - Eric Reelitz
Mulberry Grove Twp - Kim Myers

Bond County Historical Society membership dues are \$15 per family for the current year. Members are eligible to vote and to serve as BCHS officers, directors & appointees.

If you would like to become a member please send your name, address, phone number, email address, and a check or money order for \$15 to:

Bond County Historical Society,
P.O. Box 376, Greenville, IL 62246

Membership forms and a **secure online payment option** are also available on our website.

www.bondcountyhistorical.org



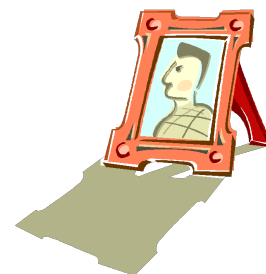


Monthly Society Meetings

It was decided in 2013 that the two societies would meet jointly for Program Meetings and this practice continues. Meetings are generally the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm. Please check Bond County Museum's Facebook Page, the *Greenville Advocate* newspaper, www.bondcogen.org or WGEL Radio (101.7 FM) for times and locations. Announcements will be made ahead of time whenever there is to be a business meeting for one or both of the two societies. Also, there will be no December meeting.

The Bond County Historical Society specializes in questions about the history of the county and communities. If you have questions about family history, burial sites, census records, birth records, or death records from Bond County, please contact the Bond County Genealogical Society instead.

All genealogy requests submitted via email to info@bondcogen.org will be researched and answered in order received as time permits. There is no flat fee for requests as we attempt to reply with electronic documents, but if your request requires printing, postage, or original document access and retrieval you may be responsible for those charges.



Invite a friend to an interesting and educational program meeting or special event!

2025 Special Events Calendar

Jul. 29 Cemetery Walk @ Mt. Gilead Cemetery, Central twp.

Sep. 14 Lunch Potluck & 200th Anniversary Program @ First Presbyterian Church, Greenville.

Oct. 2 Greenville Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours @ BCM.

Oct. 28 Annual Dinner Mtg, Elections, Speaker: Cyndee Schaffer on "The Journey of Mollie's War: WACs and WWII".

Nov. 29 Christmas Open House @ BCM.

Share your ancestor's tale in the Bond County Genealogical Society News!

Uncharted Territory: What's Your Story?

"Uncharted Territory" are the stories found deep in your family tree. What's Your Story? Was your ancestor a Bond County native or did he pass through, stay briefly and then move on? Where did she live? What kind of work did he do? What clues did your ancestors leave to mark their path in, around or across this county?

Have you considered sharing your ancestor's tale in the B.C.G.S. News? If you have a story you'd like to share, please contact the editor. Please find submission details and guidelines on Page 27.





Bond County Museum is located at 409 S. Fourth Street in Greenville, Illinois.

*January-December:
Open Saturday
10 a.m. to noon*

*June, July, August:
Open Saturday 10 a.m. to
noon and
Sunday 1 to 3 p.m.*

*Tours also available by
special appointment or
during announced events.
Call 618-690-0469.*

Bond County Museum News

*Support the
New Museum!
Donations are being
MATCHED!*



Financial Gifts Sought to Support Bond County Museum

Bond County Historical Society needs your help to raise funds to complete Phase 2 necessary renovations and ADA improvements to the historic U.S. DeMoulin Mansion. Bond County Museum opened to the public with regular weekend hours in May 2021. Please consider a donation to help us reach our goal! As BCHS is recognized as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, your contribution may be tax deductible. Donations of any size are encouraged; all contributions above \$50 will have their name on a special donor's plaque inside the museum unless marked anonymous. Download the donation form at www.bondcountyhistorical.org, the society's Facebook Page, or mail check to: Bond County Historical Society, attn. ADA Renovations, PO Box 376, Greenville, IL 62246.

Genealogical Society Library Shelf

The Genealogical Society Library collection is housed on the lower floor of the Greenville Public Library. There is a booklet in the room which lists all the holdings and a microfilm reader/printer for doing research in the *Greenville Advocate*, *Sun*, and other Bond County newspapers. The building has wireless internet access so you can do supplementary research while you are there. The room is kept locked, so the key must be requested at the Circulation Desk. The Greenville Public Library's hours are posted on their website: www.greenvillepubliclibrary.org ~ 414 W. Main Ave. Greenville, Illinois (IL) ~ Phone 618-664-3115 ~ Fax 618-664-9442

If you experience technical difficulties with our microfilm reader, please contact Jane Hopkins (jhopkins4616@sbcglobal.net 618-664-4616) or Kevin Kaegy (kevink@markuscabinet.com 618-971-9140).

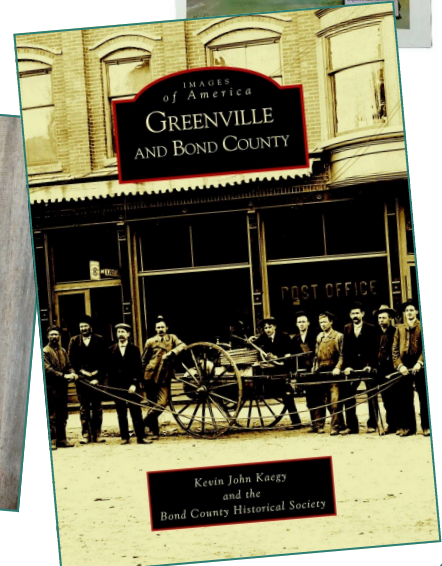


New Books, Poster, Prints, and Note Cards in Shop

Pick up one or all of these latest additions to our Gift Shop at Bond County Museum in Greenville, Saturdays 10a-noon year round, plus Sundays 1p-3p June, July & August. You can also contact us via our website to order (prices do not include shipping & handling).

www.bondcountyhistorical.org/store.html

- ◆ 18 Reprints from Carson Donnell's hand-carved Walnut Block Prints. Collected and restored by Robert Whiteside, and printed at 8.5" x 11" on parchment-style paper. \$25.00 per set.
- ◆ Carson Donnell Studio Poster, 11" x 17". \$5.00 each.
- ◆ Watercolor Paintings by Helen Smith Carlson showing the U.S. DeMoulin Mansion in four seasons. Sold in packets of 4 blank notecards with one of each design, including envelopes. \$10.00 per set.
- ◆ Images of America: Greenville and Bond County, by Kevin Kaegy and the Bond County Historical Society, 2003. \$22.00 each.
- ◆ Robert Whiteside's 2022 "Carson Donnell, Prairie Artist" softcover book. \$20.00 each.



Activities

Pocahontas Dreamcatchers 4-H Club volunteered time to clean up Bond County Museum's yard, porches, and walkways April 17! Thank you!



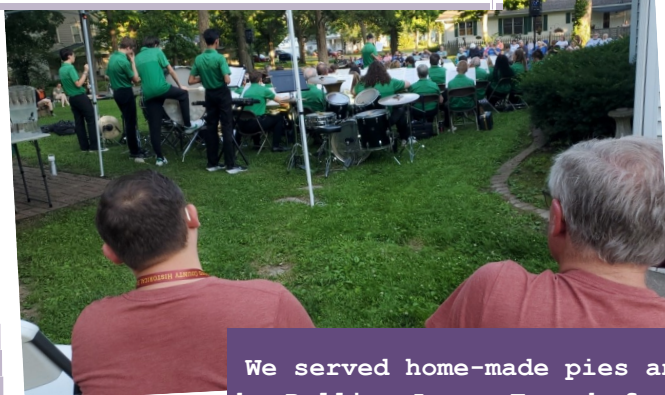
Greenville High School students volunteered at Bond County Museum on Comets Give Back Day, May 2.

Scrapbook

Selfie at the Wes Pourchot Fundraising Cookout July 18! It's a good time and some delish food!



Bond County Historical Society is proud to be a founding contributor to the B.C.C.U. #2 High School Rho Kappa National Social Studies Honor Society.



We served home-made pies and ice cream donated by Rolling Lawns Farm before the annual concert of the Greenville Municipal Band June 19.



Can't Miss Us Anymore!

A new sign has been erected marking the location and parking for the Bond County One-Room Schoolhouse. Find this time capsule of rural education prior to the late 1950s in Greenville at the corner of Beaumont Avenue and Wyatt Street. Thank you to Johnson Signs & Designs!



**Bond County's
One-Room School Museum**
601 E. Beaumont Ave.
Greenville, IL.



*Retired teachers provide tours
and in-costume presentations
only by appointment and
during special events.*

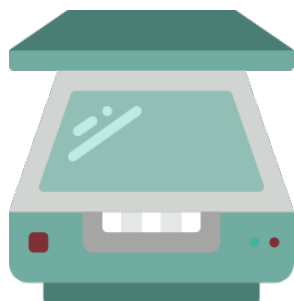
Groups welcome. Admission is free.

Donations encouraged.

*Please contact Bond County
Historical Society with details to
arrange special openings.*

618-690-0469

Back Issues of Quarterlies/Newsletters Available



The entire back catalog of Bond County Genealogical Society News Quarterlies, published 1982-2011 & B.C.G.S. e-Newsletters published 2014-2025 are currently available at no charge and with no password to members and the general public. Access the issues at <https://www.bondcogen.org/newsletter.html>. Volumes of the printed quarterly through 2010 are also available to research in bound book form in the BCGS Library located on the lower level of the Greenville Public Library.



Fold3 provides War of 1812 pension files for free!

This resource is still not 100% digitized, but new files are added regularly.

Fold3.com has added nearly 1200 new War of 1812 pension files in 2025. Pension files are an incredible resource for learning about your ancestor's war experience, discovering details about their family members, bounty land they may have received, and more! Most of these newly digitized pension files are for people with a surname beginning with "S" or "T" (however, there are a few others sprinkled in there). Check out the newly digitized files here:

<https://f3.social/6xyt>

Online Genealogical Resources

St. Clair County Heritage Compendium: The Public Domain Books Finding Aid (PDBFA)

Got family mysteries in nearby St. Clair County, Illinois? Unlock the stories hidden in 81 historical books with this powerful new tool, an AI-powered finding aid featuring nearly 190,000 entries. Search alphabetically by name, organization, or topic and discover rich research notes that include family connections, occupations, and locations. Built using artificial intelligence and machine learning, this resource reveals details that would once have required hours of page-by-page digging. Dive into your family history like never before and start exploring today!

<https://stclair-ilgs.org/biographies-histories/heritage-pdbfa/>

Spared & Shared: the Largest Repository of Privately Held American Civil War Era Letters and Diaries Transcribed and Published on the Web

William **Griffing** has dedicated himself to the transcription of letters—encompassing thousands of Civil War era correspondence and diaries that have remained unpublished until now, with most residing in private collections for decades. A significant portion of this work has been presented on various Spared & Shared Webpages or in independent, stand-alone websites.



If you possess any Civil War or Antebellum Letters that you are prepared to share, and wish for them to be transcribed, researched, and presented on Spared & Shared, "Griff" invites you to contact him. This service is offered at no cost, and he will consider any project that contributes to the public dissemination of these materials, enabling historians and family researchers to benefit from the publication.

Learn more or Donate: <https://billyyankjohnnyreb.wordpress.com/illinois/>

Free Digital Newspapers & Documents at Advantage Archives

The most recent update from Advantage Archives (formerly Advantage Preservation) totals 990 collections from 47 states (plus one Canadian province) and a total number of pages exceeding 120 million! Of those, 44 are non-newspaper collections (e.g., yearbooks, directories, local documents). Also, 85 of the collections are only accessible in the library.

Some of the collections are small, but others have over 50 different newspaper titles. Although Advantage Archives gets the credit for making these available, much

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Online Genealogical Resources, continued...

(Continued from page 8)

of the credit should go to the individual libraries, library systems, historical societies, and other institutions, who do the really hard work of obtaining the funds via grants and other funding sources to digitize these old newspapers and make them available online for their patrons.



Free to users, the Advantage Community History Archive of microfilm, newspapers, books, and documents is incredibly user-friendly with a wonderful search engine and clipping tool that saves the newspaper source and info. It has easier and better searching than even some of the huge paid online sites. It will highlight articles you have already viewed, which is enormously helpful when returning to a search of hundreds of articles on the same computer later so you don't lose your place.

Search Illinois now: <https://directory.historyarchives.online/sitedirectory?state=illinois>

What has Replaced Message Boards at Ancestry, RootsWeb, and GenForum?

Twenty years ago the message boards (forums) were amazing. It is possible to find some great research on several archived boards remaining, but unfortunately when Ancestry.com began purchasing industry sites, forums effectively died as active help sources. GenForum message boards and Family Tree Maker homepages remain available in a read-only format. The RootsWeb and other boards that Ancestry preserved lost much of their material, responses, links, and attachments. WorldConnect trees were removed from RootsWeb with an intention to migrate them to Ancestry. The conversations that used to happen between researchers on these boards were vital to progress on some really tough brick walls.

Some boards and email lists went to Google groups; some moved over to Groups.io: <https://groups.io/search?q=genealogy>. Some, like USGenWeb, found it difficult to retain volunteers for management or assistance. Quite a few of the original forum movers and shakers have even passed away and their web sites have been taken down due to lack of funds and privacy issues.

Fortunately, not all the work is "gone". Internet Archive maintains *The Way Back Machine*: website captures from the past. Some lead nowhere, but still have the information available and some still have links that work. It's a "go-to" resource for many: <https://archive.org/web/>

Some Facebook Groups are excellent. If your ancestors are from foreign countries where they spoke a language you don't know, there are usually people who can help you translate short documents, explain local resources, and point out churches. Try to join state and regional Facebook groups because residents know specific areas and can tell you where and how to find and retrieve documents.

The closest thing to the old message forums might be WikiTree's G2G (Genealogist-to-Genealogist) forum: <https://www.wikitree.com/g2g/about>.

Have you tried the RootsChat forums? No Ancestry.com affiliation, over 6 million posts, no subscriptions, and bursting with thousands of very knowledgeable people helping users solve more than a few brick walls and learn new techniques or resources. Dig down at <https://www.rootschat.com/>.



Hubbard on Writing (and Publishing) Your Family History

After some time researching genealogy, you may have a family tree, notes, or records and wonder how to manage them. If you dream of sharing your family history but aren't sure where to start, you should have attended Bond County Genealogical Society and Bond County Historical Society's annual Soup and Chili Supper Thursday, February 27, 2025, at the St. Lawrence Catholic Church hall. Michael **Hubbard**, genealogist and member of both hosting societies, explained how he researched, wrote, and self-published his own family history. He also touched on his experiences helping others document their lineage to apply for membership in the Jamestowne Society and Sons of the American Revolution.



A program guest (right) assists genealogist and author Michael Hubbard in showing off his self-published book.

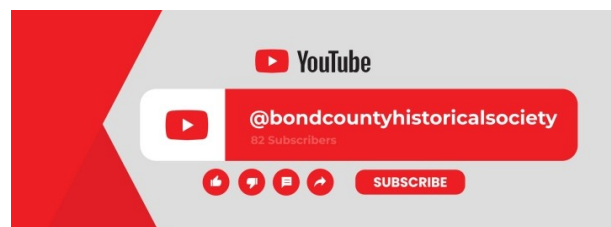
Michael Hubbard resides in St. Louis, Missouri, but he has deep roots in the Greenville area. In 2022, he published an extensive 500-page book titled "The Hubbard Family of Bond County, Illinois." This comprehensive work meticulously details the Hubbard family tree and its connections, tracing lineage back to the 1600s, alongside his mother's **Jernigan** family, which is traced back to the 1500s. The book boasts a table of contents, a name index, footnotes, and a bibliography. Each entry in the bibliography clearly indicates where Hubbard sourced the referenced records, documents, books, and articles, showcasing his dedication to accuracy and thoroughness.

Thank you, Mike, for your presentation on "Writing Your Family History." You've certainly been on quite a research and publishing journey for the past forty plus years. We appreciated your tips on family tree software, websites, forums, libraries, book printing, and the power of friendships made in the genealogy hobby world.

Mike's volume is not simply dry facts, oh, no! His narratives and timelines are conversational. His pages convey information, photos, and letters in a confident, friendly manner. His attitude is open to additional research, interpretation, and discoveries. Surnames highlighted in the table of contents are: **Hubbard, Chiles, Gillham, Saunders, Jones, Hepburn, Crichton, Babcock, Kiou, Linton, Morris, Jernigan, Adcock, Goff, Kelso, Taylor, Brady, McCray, Hoffmann, Silvers.**

You can watch a video of the presentation on our YouTube channel and official website:

www.bondcountyhistorical.org/videolegacies.html



Tips on Using Those City Directories

From Michael John Neill's blog genealogytipoftheday.com

It's easy to sometimes gravitate to or from certain sources based upon our life and research experience. For me city directories are one of those sources that I don't immediately think of to utilize in my research. Most of my families were very rural and usually owned just enough real property to warrant an estate settlement (even if the judge orders the farm to be sold to pay the mortgage).

But city directories can tell researchers several things, usually related to name, street address of residence, occupation and even employer, and proximity of neighbors. Urban researchers are usually well-served by researching all extant directories for their people of interest.

Get All Those Directory Abbreviations

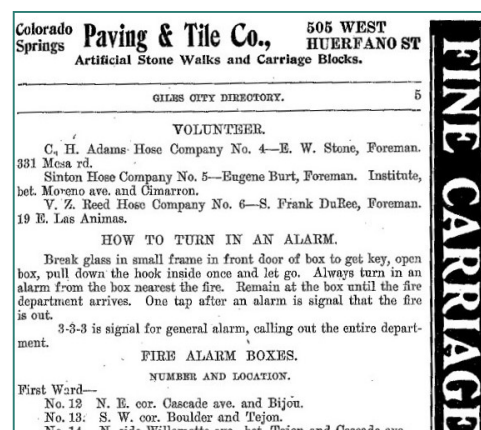
Some city directories contained two sets of abbreviations: a general set that applied to entries across the United States and a second set that applied to the specific geographic region the directory covered. The second set, if there is one, may appear right before the alphabetical list of names. The general set likely is on its own page. The specific abbreviations typically contain abbreviations for employers common in the area.

You may want to bookmark a reference page such as this one from Genealogy In Time Magazine: <http://www.genealogyintime.com/dictionaries/city-directory-abbreviations.html>

The Front Matter

When you find that relative in a city directory, after you've saved their information and made certain you understand any abbreviations in the entry, check out the front matter.

City directories often contain a variety of non-residential information in the front section of the book. Much of the information is geared towards helping individuals navigate city government, churches, libraries, and the like. But one never knows what will appear in the front section of a directory. This Colorado Springs directory from the very early 20th century contained a list of fire boxes. It also indicated all the various mail trains that ran to and from the city, when different courts were in session, and more.



Getting At Offline City Directories

Most city directories that are easily available online are usually ones whose original copyright has expired. Fold3 and Ancestry.com do have digital images of city directories as a part of their services, but Fold3's collection tends to concentrate on urban areas before the early 1920s and Ancestry.com's collection includes some post-1920 era directories, but the content is spotty and certain areas are more well-represented than others. Some specific city and regional directories have been put online by local genealogical societies, libraries, etc.

(Continued on page 12)

City Directories, continued...

Perkins & Herpel
MERCANTILE COLLEGE.

1002 KEE
Mississippi Valley Trust Company.
SAFE DEPOSIT BOXES
\$5.00 PER ANNUM.

SHORTHAND, BOOKKEEPING, TYPEWRITING
2d floor, Lincoln Trust Bldg.
Chestnut, Tels. { Bell Main 2640
Sw. cor. 7th st. { Kinloch A70

GOULD'S 1903 DIRECTORY. KEH

Merchants and Residents.
Real Estate Agents.
111, Main 622; Kinloch B1767.

Keesecker Margaret sten Torchon Lace Co r
3329 Lawton av
Keeshan Catherine dressmkr 2731A Gamble
Keeshan James helper r rear 1904 Franklin av
Keeshan John W clk r 3047 Cass av
Keeshan John W trav r 4213 Maryland av
Keeshan Mary wid Timothy r 2104 O'Fallon
Keeshan Minnie clk Munger's Laundry r 2732
Gamble
Keeshan Timothy bartdr r 1818A Bacon
Keeshan William J clk r 4214A Olive
Keetch John C r 1417 Marcus av
Keetch David lab bds 2901 Cass av

Keesecker, Margaret stenographer,
Torchon Lace Co r 3329 Lawton av.

From Ancestry.com. Gould's St Louis, Missouri, City Directory, for 1903 (for the year ending April 1st, 1904), Being a complete Index of the Residents of the Entire City.

(Continued from page 11)

Certain libraries, notably, the Allen County Public Library, have a significant collection of United States city directories, both in print and microfilm. Many of the microfilmed directories are available online on one or more websites.

Directory Overlooked Them?

Any directory can contain errors or omissions.

What I need to do is read the preface to see if there is some other technicality that might have caused great-grandfather to not be listed.... There may be a reason Charles is not listed. Or he may have been inadvertently left out. Directories sometimes do leave people out.

Note: Sometimes directories include a list of "late additions" at the very end of the directory. Always check to see if any directory you are using has such a section.

Multiple City Directories?

Make certain you note the publisher of each city directory you use, not just the year. In some time periods in some cities, multiple directories were published in one year by different publishers. And different directories may provide slightly different information.

Those Boring Borrowers

As FamilySearch makes it easier to find things in local court and probate records via their full-text searches, one of the things that can be discovered is to whom your ancestor lent money, from whom your ancestor borrowed money, and who signed on as security when your relative borrowed money. Many of these transactions are documented in court and probate records.

It can be tempting to ignore these items. But think about those individuals who had financial dealings with your ancestor:

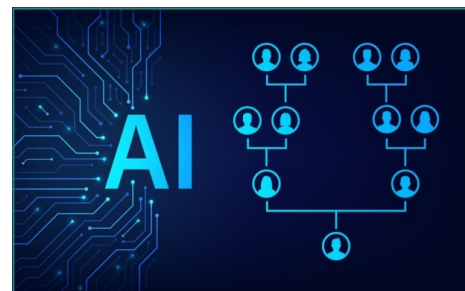
- ◆ Can you find them in census records and directories—how close did they live?
- ◆ What were their occupations?
- ◆ Are they related?

Your ancestor may have ignored their debts—that's sometimes how they end up being mentioned in court records. Don't you ignore their debts as well.

The 3 Ways to Avoid AI in Genealogy

From Jen Shaffer, “The Formidable Genealogist” on socials & theformidablegenealogist.com

For everyone swearing they would NEVER use Artificial Intelligence (AI) for genealogy, spoiler alert—you are already using it. BUT... Here’s how to do genealogy without the use of AI, since so many people are opposed to it.



1. You can go to a courthouse or a church and view the physical paper record, because, guess what? Ancestry hints—they use AI. Indexing of records uses AI. Do you remember when the 1950 Census came out in 2022? That was indexed within a couple weeks by AI, where it previously would have taken several years and hundreds of volunteers to do it.
2. You can go into FamilySearch, into the catalog, and you can use the image-only records. You can only look at those scanned images and absolutely no names that are located in it. And you definitely can’t use Full-Text Search on FamilySearch, because that is AI. But you’ll want to do that quickly, because FamilySearch will eventually have all of those image-only records available through full-text search through AI.
3. With DNA, if you want to avoid AI with your DNA, you can download the raw DNA results and try to sort those out on your own, because guess what? AncestryDNA’s ThruLines—that is AI. Any type of manipulation for your DNA to read the results and understand them; that is AI.

So, try to change your thought process on AI in genealogy. It’s not going anywhere. It’s a tool. It is not always a good tool. It’s not always a bad tool. It is a tool. It will give you hints and ideas and help your research, but it is not always 100% correct. You still need your human eyes to judge it and figure out if it is helping you. And if you don’t want to use things like ChatGPT, CoPilot, Gemini, or DeepSeek, you don’t have to!

Now, here’s some helpful info from a RootsTech blog from 2024 that highlights how you can use AI and how you are already using it: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/ai-developments-genealogy>

Social Content, Hashtags Encourage Conversation

As part of an initiative started by Bond County Historical Society’s reconvened Brochure & Outreach Committee, our Facebook Page Admins have been publishing themed posts with hashtags on social media. On #MuseumMonday, we feature an #ArtifactOfTheWeek. We might choose a book, an invention, a souvenir, a tool, a work of art, a piece of furniture, a toy, or any other artifact in our society’s current collection. Then on #WayBackWednesday look for a photograph or image to trigger your nostalgia or present a mystery to solve. So what are you waiting for? “Follow” Bond County Museum on Facebook! Leave a kind comment or share!

BCM Hosts Researchers of Bethel Settlement's Presbyterian Underground RR Agents & Stations

Wednesday, April 23, 2025, Kevin **Kaegy**—local historian, author, and a director of Bond County Historical Society—met with out-of-town researchers at Bond County Museum in Greenville, Illinois. Both ladies were interested in the Reno-Bethel area Presbyterian church families involved in the Underground Railroad in Bond County. And they'd never met before or even heard of each other before!

Leah **Rogne** from Gheen, Minnesota (2 hours north of Duluth) researches the Seward family; she's retired from Minnesota State University, Mankato, MN. Laurie **Graney** from Platteville, Wisconsin researches the McCord, Dixon and Douglass families; she's an active member of Grant County [WI] Historical Society.

Your B.C.G.S. News editor was there to video record the discussions. Through letters, maps, and newspaper articles, it is possible to document and share facts and legends of those brave abolitionists who risked it all to help freedom seekers move north in the 1840s.

"Other than this T. O. **Jones** letter and this truly treasured piece of paperwork here written by Thomas **Wafer**," stated Kaegy. "This [newly unearthed Belleville newspaper piece] is the only known paper proof I've ever seen of the underground railway and how it worked in the state of Illinois." And especially in Bond county!

Those named in multiple sources as involved in the Underground Railroad Movement through Bond County are:

- ◆ Capt Samuel **Breath** near Marine, moved and sheltered runaways
- ◆ Charles **Lippincott** of Sparta, brought runaways
- ◆ James **Stephenson** near Springfield, sheltered runaways
- ◆ Anthony **Hill** of Reno, provided a wagon, shel-

tered runaways

- ◆ I. B. **Davis** of Reno, provided a horse
- ◆ James **Douglass**, sheltered runaway
- ◆ Nathaniel **Douglass** [of Reno?], moved runaways
- ◆ John Butler **Seward**, sheltered runaway? He certainly supported conductors
- ◆ Thomas **Wafer** of Elm Point, moved and sheltered runaways
- ◆ James **Wafer** of Elm Point, moved and sheltered runaways
- ◆ James **Rosebrough**, sheltered runaways
- ◆ J. B. **McCord**, sheltered runaways
- ◆ B. **McCord**, moved runaways (another source says David and Robert McCord were involved)
- ◆ T. O. **Jones** (cousin of fellow abolitionist Nathan Jones) temporary schoolteacher who knew of safe houses in area and moved runaways
- ◆ Dr. J. M. **Barber** of Reno, publicly friendly to abolitionists but raised a company of roughs to capture a runaway and send back south; his wife was tricked into providing medicine to a runaway under the guise the agent needed it

Visit our YouTube channel to watch the three part video recorded April 23. It features the Underground Railroad families of Reno-Bethel, indentured servitude in Greenville and Bond County, plus additional topics and stories such as the Rev. John Brown **White**, the **Shields** Murder, Rev. War Patriot Joseph **McAdams**, and Hillsboro's Hiram **Rountree**. <https://www.bondcounthistorical.org/videolegacies.html>

Sources helpful in preparing this video and article include:

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(Continued on page 15)

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- Wafer, Thomas. "Letter." 21 February 1896. Typescript. Wilbur H. Siebert Underground Railroad Collection, Ohio History Center Archives & Library. Ohio Memory. ohiohistory.org/digital/collection/siebert/id/10837.

SamPubCo has Bond County Wills Indexes and more

David Samuelson is the proprietor of SamPubCo, and it is a business venture. If you order something from the site, you will have to pay for it. Samuelson has access to the LDS Family History Library microfilms and digital images and provides digital copies of over 230,000 records for a fee.

There are links on the home page to Wills and Heirs, Surrogate's Records/Probate/Estate Files, Guardianships, Naturalizations, Letters of Administration, and Letters Testamentary. For each category, there are links to the states available, and on the state pages there are links to the counties available. Within a county, there are links to alphabetical lists of the records, along with the list of record volume numbers for the county.

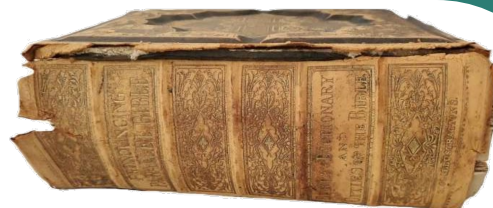
If you see a record that you want, you write down the type of record, the state, the county, plus the volume and page number of the record. You then fill out a text-based order form (either by hand or in a word processor) and submit it to SamPubCo (either by email or by snail mail - email is cheaper!). You pay with either a credit card, PayPal or an echeck online, or a personal check if by mail.

On the page with the Wills is a link for the list of volumes for Bond County (<http://www.sampubco.com/wills/il/ilbond01.htm>) which provides a list of the volume numbers and years. The other record types have similar listings of record volumes.

SamPubCo seems to have concentrated on New York, and on Wills. However, check all of the record types to determine if your ancestors of interest are available.

The alternatives for all researchers who want these records is to travel to the State/County of interest and access the records in a County office, go to a FamilySearch Center or a FamilySearch affiliate library and access the digitized images, go to the Family History Library in Salt Lake City and access the records on microfilm, order microfilms from the FHL at a local FamilySearch Center and read/copy them there, or to hire a local researcher to find and copy the records for you. SamPubCo gives you a fairly cost effective option if your ancestor is listed in his files.

Family Bibles, continued...



(Continued from page 1)

by relatives to a bride as a wedding gift, where she recorded information about her immediate family and close relatives. Relationships were seldom stated but were often implied. Names of parents, children, and their spouses, including maiden names, were frequently given along with dates of birth, marriage, and death. Sometimes the age of a person was given at the time of death. Many families kept bible records from the 1700s (and sometimes earlier) to more recent times, although few have survived. Family bibles that are no longer in the possession of the family may be at a historical or genealogical society. They are sometimes transcribed and published in genealogical periodicals or other databases.

Bible records can be used as a substitute in providing birth, marriage, and date information when vital record information was not recorded. The following is a resource hub for Bible records specific to Illinois [https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Illinois Bible Records](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Illinois_Bible_Records)

BibleRescue.org

Bible Rescue is a 501(c)3 non-profit based in Ogden, Utah, that rescues family bibles, records the family history information inside each bible, and reunites each family bible with living descendants, extended family, genealogy centers, and anyone who believes they can put the family bible to good use.

Since their founding, they have rescued over 1000 family bibles with thousands of entries referencing names, birthdates, weddings, relationships, marriages, passings, and burials.

You can access the family history information of each family bible right on their website www.biblerescue.org and you can also purchase the family bible. The funds raised from the purchase of family bibles allow them to purchase more family bibles and helps fulfill their non-profit mission.

Each family bible they rescue is sent to FamilySearch where they carefully scan each page of family history and make it available on their website, free of charge.



Don't Forget the BCGS Publication List & Book Shop

Just a reminder that Bond County Genealogical Society has put together many publications to assist you in your research. A complete list and an order form can be obtained at the society website's Book Shop www.bondcogen.org/for_sale.html. We've also updated shipping prices to reflect the current postal rates. \$5.00 for the first book, \$1.00 each additional. Contact us first for large orders! For more information or to make a purchase, email info@bondcogen.org or write us a snail mail letter.

Shelves upon shelves more that are no longer offered as "Print On Demand" are still available for browsing and photocopying in our Research Library! See page 4 for details.



That Time American Women Lost Their Citizenship Because They Married Foreigners

By Tanya Ballard Brown for NPR.org, March 17, 2017

In March of 1907, Congress passed the Expatriation Act, which decreed, among other things, that U.S. women who married non-citizens were no longer Americans. If their husband later became a naturalized citizen, they could go through the naturalization process to regain citizenship.

But none of these rules applied to American men when they chose a spouse.

"It's as though she walks under his umbrella. He puts his arm around her and poof! She's a citizen," says Linda **Kerber**, a professor who teaches gender and legal history at the University of Iowa. "She has had the good sense to come out from these monarchies and opt for an American. She's a sensible woman, we adore her."

"Whereas an American-born woman who marries a foreign man, oh my goodness, she is disloyal," Kerber said.

When *Mackenzie v. Hare*—a case challenging the expatriation act that involved a woman married to a British citizen—reached the Supreme Court in 1915, the justices upheld the law, arguing that the women chose to marry knowing this was a consequence so they weren't being forced to expatriate. Then World War I began and hundreds of women found themselves affected by the law.

"When we enter the war in 1917, American-born women who had married German men, like German immigrants who had not yet been naturalized... lost their citizenship, and they had to register as enemy aliens," Kerber says. Changing this law became an important part of the agenda for the women's suffrage movement, along with things like prenatal care and anti-child labor laws. "The key item on that list is what we would describe as the integrity of the citizenship of married women," says Kerber.

Once American women got the right to vote in 1920, they started lobbying lawmakers, pushing them to recognize that their citizenship should not be tethered to that of a husband. "There's a big scramble in those first two years for members of Congress to get on the good side of women and to get women to join their constituency," Kerber said. Eventually Rep. John **Cable**, of Ohio, introduced a bill to address the disparity. He may have been motivated by a nearing bid for re-election.

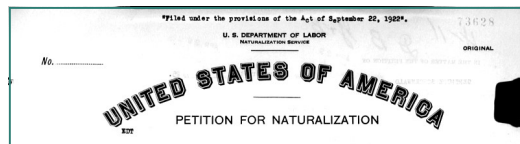
The Cable Act of 1922, also known as the Married Women's Independent Nationality Act, said women kept their citizenship if they married a man who could become a citizen even if he opted not to. "It sounds as though the Cable Act fixed it, if they married a man eligible for citizenship," Kerber says. However, "there's a lot of fine print."

These expatriated women had to petition the government to regain their citizenship, and their husband's status still played a role in theirs: if he wasn't eligible for citizenship, e.g. an Asian immigrant, she could be denied. And if she lived on foreign soil for two years, she could lose her citizenship.

But, as attitudes changed, laws evolved and by the 1960s women born in the U.S. no longer had to limit their marriage prospects to native-born men or naturalized citizens. In 2014, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution expressing regret for the past revocation of American women's citizenship under this law.

Types of U.S. Naturalization Records: A Summary for Genealogy Researchers

Source: genealogybranches.com/naturalization.html



Declarations of Intention (also called First Papers)

The record by which an applicant for US citizenship declared their intent to become a citizen and renounced their allegiance to a foreign government. Early records of this type (before Sept. 26, 1906) usually will have: name, country of birth or allegiance (but not town), date of the application and signature. Some (but very few) show the date and port of arrival in the US. After Sept. 26, 1906 much more detailed information is given including place of birth and port and date of arrival. A Declaration of Intention normally preceded proof of residence or a petition to become a citizen by two or more years. Exceptions: a person who entered the country while a minor, honorable military discharges, a person married to a citizen. Beginning with 1795 a person could declare their intent to become a citizen at any time after they arrived in the United States. A few people did this almost immediately upon arrival. The Declaration of Intention requirement ended in 1952 (although immigrants can still file a declaration if they want to—it is optional).

Naturalization Petitions

Following the Declaration of Intention and meeting the residency requirements an applicant then filed this petition for formal application for US citizenship. There was a 5 year residency requirement (in the US) to become naturalized (raised to 14 years in 1798, lowered back to 5 in 1802). Generally minor children (not born in the US) could derive citizenship from their father when their father naturalized. From 1855 to 1922 alien women became citizens automatically if they married an American citizen. Women could derive citizenship from their spouses until 1922 when the law was changed... After Sept. 22, 1922 an alien woman who married a US citizen could skip the Declaration of Intention and file for a Naturalization Petition. But if an alien woman married an alien man (after Sept. 22, 1922) she would have to start her Naturalization proceedings at the beginning with a Declaration of Intention.

Naturalization Depositions

These are statements made by witnesses in support of an applicant's petition.

Certificates of Arrival

On this form the immigrant listed the port name, date and ship of arrival. Copies of this form were sent to the port of entry and checked by a clerk, who located the immigrant's passenger list. If a corresponding record was found, the INS issued a certificate of arrival and sent it to the naturalization court. Certificates of arrival were first issued under the Basic Naturalization Act of 1906, which went into effect on Sept. 27, 1906. These certificates are generally included in a naturalization records file.

Records of Naturalization and Oaths of Allegiance

The document granting US citizenship to petitioners. Sometimes called the Certificate of Naturalization. You may not always find every type of record for your ancestor. Slightly different records were kept during different time periods. In some cases all of the records are combined together in a single petition and record file.

Notes on Naturalization in Illinois

In Illinois, naturalization could be performed in any court of record prior to the formation of the modern naturalization process. The courts of record included: circuit court, criminal court, justice of the peace court or a municipal court. Most of the justice of the peace court records were destroyed after the justice had completed his term.

WWII Muster Roll Acronyms and Abbreviations

There are U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps muster rolls available at Ancestry and Fold3 with a subscription, but they're only partial. There are also some hospital admissions and casualty lists online. The National Archives in St Louis, Missouri and Archives II in College Park, Maryland have personnel files for veterans, and if they were discharged more than 62 years ago, anyone can order a copy (your best bet is to go yourself for on-site retrieval or hire a reputable professional researcher). If you have not already obtained the OMPF (Official Military Personnel File), this is a must have document! "Reconstructions" and "Burn Files" may be available for your Army/Air Force veteran as well, even if you've been told all records were lost in the 1973 fire.

When you're looking through your veteran's muster rolls, there are plenty of codes for various things, including their rating, detaching command, station from which received, date reporting aboard, reason for travel or reprimand, illness, etc. And did you know that someone did not have to be on a ship to be listed on a Naval Muster Roll? There are rolls for stations—which are locations on land. This might have been a Naval Base in the U.S. or a location somewhere else in the world, perhaps an island in the Philippines.

Below is a Muster Roll of officers and enlisted men for April 1945 at Headquarters Battalion, 5th Marines Division, Fleet Marine Forces. Earl T. **Hopkins**, Military Police Company (677 MPCo)'s entry includes the Remarks that April 14th Private First Class Hopkins arrived via the vessel SS Sea Sturgeon and disembarked at Hilo, Hawaii, Territory of Hawaii.

(WRITE NOTHING ABOVE THIS LINE)			
MUSTER ROLL OF OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN OF THE U. S. MARINE CORPS			
HQ BN, 5TH MAR DIV, FMF, G/O FLEET POST OFFICE, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.			
FROM 1 April		TO 30 April, 1945, INCLUSIVE	
NO.	NAME AND RANK	ENLISTED	REMARKS
72	DOMCHUE, James T. Jr.	776: SigCo-See Footnote "W"	
73	DOHNEY, William J.	748: HqCo.	
Portion omitted			
132	HODGES, Joseph C.	876: SigCo-See Footnote "W"; 21-30, sk Cor Evacuation Hosp #1, Camp.	
133	HOKE, William K.	822: HqCo.	
134	HOKAN, William S.	929: SigCo.	
135	HOPKINS, Earl T.	677: MPCo-See Footnote "W"	
136	HULST, Howard A.	657: SigCo-See Footnote "W"	

FOOTNOTE "T"	14, arr and disemb at Hilo, Hawaii, T.H. via USS STORM KING (APA-171)
FOOTNOTE "U"	14, arr and disemb at Hilo, Hawaii, T.H. via SS SEA STURGEON
FOOTNOTE "V"	18, arr and disemb at Hilo, Hawaii, T.H. via USS ZEILIN (APA-105)
FOOTNOTE "W"	18, arr and disemb at Hilo, Hawaii, T.H. via USS GEORGE F. ELLIOTT (APA-105)

PFC Earl T. Hopkins highlighted in HQ BN 5TH MAR DIV FMF, 30 Apr 1945. From Ancestry.com. U.S. World War II Navy Muster Rolls, 1938-1949.

The 5th Division had just fought on Iwo Jima for five weeks where they sustained 2,482 killed in action, 19 missing in action, and 6,218 wounded in action. This was the highest casualty rate among the three Marine divisions involved in the invasion. Now they received an extended liberty in Hawaii, taking in the sights and USO shows, trying not to think about the recent battle or their looming next action—an invasion of mainland Japan (Rottman, Gordon. US Marine Corps Pacific Theater of Operations 1944-45. Osprey Publishing, 2004).

Marine Corps Individual Records Administration Manual (short title: IRAM) is one good reference for some of these codes. See Chapter 6: "Lists of Acronyms and Abbreviations," beginning on page 177 of the PDF. <https://www.marines.mil/Portals/1/Publications/MCO%20P1070.12K%20W%20CH%201.pdf>

Glossary of U.S. Naval Abbreviations, 5th ed, April 1949 is another.

<https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/NHC/NewPDFs/USN/USN%20Manuals%20and%20Reports/USN.Glossary.Abbreviations.pdf>

Probate Records Crucial—But Sometimes Overlooked—As Sources

Probate records are among the most valuable records available for American genealogy but can be challenging to access because originals are kept in courthouses across the country.

Probate records relate to a deceased person's estate, whether that estate is "testate" (through a will) or "intestate" (without a will). Whether the decedent left a large estate or just some personal property, there's a good chance that a probate file exists in a local court that oversaw distribution of property, the guardianship of a minor, or payment of debts.

Other: Page, Register of Deeds, Military, 100 and 101, Bureau of Vital, Chicago

Petition to Sell Personal Property at Private Sale.

STATE OF ILLINOIS, ss. In the Matter of the Estate of John M. Britton, Deceased.

To the Hon. C. J. Lindsey, Judge of the County Court of Bond County.

The undersigned, F. W. Fritz, your petitioner, by appointment of this Court, Administrator of the estate of J. M. Britton deceased, respectfully represent that he has heretofore duly returned to this Court the inventory and appraisement of the personal estate of said deceased; that the following items of the personal property, goods and chattels of said estate, to-wit:

One trunk and contents	valued at	\$2.50
One bedstead, springs and bedding	"	\$2.00
One silver watch & chain	"	\$4.00
Two books	"	"
One value and contents	"	\$0.25
Some old clothing	"	\$0.00
Total value		\$8.75

are of value insufficient to warrant the expense of a public sale and

that it is necessary for the proper administration of said estate that the same be sold, and that it will be to the best interest of said estate that they be sold at private sale. Your petitioner therefore respectfully pray for an order of this Court directing him to sell said personal property at private sale,

ABOVE: "Petition to Sell Personal Property at Private Sale," as the items are of value insufficient to warrant the expense of a public sale. BELOW: "Claim File" showing Thomas M. Brown is justly owed \$29.00 by the estate for a coffin, burial clothes, and shaving.

CLAIM FILE—Admission Print, Sec. 1-16

Estate of John Britton to Thomas M. Brown Dr.

1st Coffin	\$ 23 00
Clothes for Burial	5 00
Shaving	1 00
	\$29 00

STATE OF ILLINOIS, ss. In Bond County Court, in Probate, December—Term, A. D., 1890

Thomas M. Brown being duly sworn, on oath, says that the annexed account against the estate of John Britton deceased, amounting to the sum of Twenty Nine DOLLARS, is just, after allowing all just credits, and is now due and unpaid.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 29 day of November 1890

Samuel Miller Justice of the Peace

T. M. Brown

Attest public

The contents of a probate file can vary from case to case, but certain details are found in most probates, most importantly, the names and residences of beneficiaries and their relationship to the decedent. An inventory of the estate assets can reveal personal details about the deceased's occupation and lifestyle. There may also be references to debts, deeds, and other documents related to the settling of the estate.

Ancestry.com's collection, "Illinois, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1772-1999," includes images of probate records for approximately 83 percent of Illinois counties, including Bond. The records come from a collection of microfilm that took years to compile. They have been brought together from multiple courthouses over time to give you a single source to search. Some localities and time periods may not be included because they were not available to be acquired as part of this collection, or the records may have been lost or destroyed before the effort to collect them all began.

FamilySearch's collection, "Illinois, Probate Records, 1819-1988," contains 1.3 million images, but so far excludes Bond. But you can try their new Lab: Full-Text Search, an exciting new way to find information in over 100 million historical records that have not been indexed, using technology that reads the text on the images.

Joseph Walls of California, who was working on a research project for the family of John W. Britton and Addeline McKinney Britton, contacted Bond County Genealogical Society in January 2025. The Brittons both lived in Bond County, Illinois during the later years of their lives, died in Bond Co. in 1890 and 1888, and are buried in Robinson Cemetery. He was interested in obtaining a probate case file for John Britton. It didn't seem to be a part of Ancestry.com's collection, but Walls, found a probate court index published in an old BCGS News Quarterly. The entry was the administration of a probate for the estate of a John W Brittain in 1890 by F.W. Fritz.

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The image displays three pages from a probate record for the estate of John W. Brittain, deceased.

Page 1: RECAPITULATION
 This page summarizes the financial transactions of the estate. It shows a total amount received of \$158.30, a total amount paid out of \$118.25, and a balance due of \$39.55. The administrator, Fred W. Fritz, reports that the debts and claims against the estate have all been paid, leaving the above balance to be distributed to the heirs.

Page 2: FINAL REPORT OF ADMINISTRATOR OF ESTATE OF DECEASED
 This page provides a detailed account of the estate's assets and liabilities. It lists the date of death (Sept. 1, 1890) and the date of the report (Sept. 5, 1892). The administrator, Fred W. Fritz, reports that the estate's assets, including cash, real estate, and personal property, have been inventoried and valued. The report also lists the debts and claims against the estate, which have been paid or provided for.

Page 3: CONTRA
 This page is a contra account, showing the distribution of the estate's assets to the heirs. It lists the names of the heirs and the amounts they received. The total amount distributed is \$118.25, which matches the total amount paid out in the recapitulation.

ABOVE: From the Final Report of the account of Fred W. Fritz, Administrator, of the estate of John W. Brittain, Deceased. Filed Sep 5, 1892 and Recorded by Alfred Adams, County Clerk, Bond County. Approved by S. A. Phelps, County Judge, Sept 5, 1892. BELOW: "Sale Bill—Private Sale" of the articles in the estate of John W. Brittain reveals that two buyers, Robert Sloss and Charles Ward, purchased for cash on September 20, 1890, a trunk and its contents (\$6.00), Bedstead, springs, mattress (\$5.00), and a silver watch and gold plated vest chain (\$9.25).

As BCGS does not have copies of the actual probate files in its research library holdings, Walls contacted the Bond County Courthouse and provided the information he gleaned from BCGS's finding aid... and received a 37 page PDF in return. It WAS his John Britton after all!

In appreciation, Walls shared the complete probate file with BCGS as a donation for any future researchers to use. Thanks, Joseph Walls!

What are Some Limitations of Probate Records?

- ◆ Probate may not have occurred for some deceased (no property, delayed, silent transfer, etc);
- ◆ Not every child (or sometimes even widow) may be named in the document(s)
- ◆ Places of residence may not be mentioned;
- ◆ Maiden names are usually not given;
- ◆ Exact date of death is lacking;
- ◆ Because probate was usually done where the deceased resided, they may be hard to find if someone had recently moved or if property was in another county than death place;
- ◆ Indices are usually just by the testator's name;
- ◆ Beware of myths (all heirs must be left something in a will, for example).

This is a "Sale Bill—Private Sale" document from the probate record. It details the sale of personal property from the estate of John W. Brittain, deceased. The sale took place on September 20, 1890, at the residence of the administrator, Fred W. Fritz. The items sold include a trunk and its contents, a bedstead, springs, mattress, a silver watch, and a gold plated vest chain. The buyers are Robert Sloss and Charles Ward. The total amount received from the sale is \$19.25.

My Boyhood Years in Slovakia During World War II

By Ivan John Lach of Bloomington, IL, ivan1939lach@gmail.com

Born in 1939 in rural Yugoslavia, Ivan (Johnny) Lach recounts his family's immigration journey to the U.S., interrupted by war and bureaucratic hurdles. His memoir vividly captures early life in Slovak villages, wartime separation, and the challenges of starting over in America during uncertain times.

This is Part 2 of Lach's story, continued from B.C.G.S. News Vol 40, Issue 1, Winter 2025.



...While the paperwork to get my mother's passage to the USA was in progress, Germany invaded Poland in September of 1939 and passage to the United States was not possible until World War II was over. At that time, things were very bleak for my family. My mother Johanna and I were stuck in Slovakia in the middle of the war and my father Stephan was in the USA with my two sisters and without a job....

World War II in Slovakia

Since Czechoslovakia was under German occupation, it was not in the battle zone of the war until 1944 and 1945, however, young men were drafted and grain and livestock were confiscated periodically and sent to the war zones. My mother's brother, Uncle Nikodem, was drafted into the German Army and sent to the battlefield in Italy. In addition, Nazi personnel were rounding up all the Jewish families and taking all their possessions. We had three Jewish families in our village of Ústie nad Oravou that owned the two stores and a tavern. All three families were taken into Nazi custody and hauled off to concentration camps. I saw several Nazi army stake trucks loaded with Jewish families passing through our village on the way to the concentration camps in Poland. One Jewish family consisting of a husband and wife and their three children that tried to run away were shot in the forest just north of our village. The bodies were left there for all to see as a warning to all Jews who had any thoughts of running away as well as anyone helping to hide Jews.

In 1944 and 1945, the German army was pushed out of Russia and Poland and into Slovakia. As a result, Slovakia was now in the battle zone. Our village was filled with more and more German army personnel and equipment as the battlefield got closer. German soldiers were



Jews climbing onto trucks, under the supervision of the Slovak militia, being deported from Slovakia, 1942. From the Yad Vashem Photo Archive

(Continued on page 23)

(Continued from page 22)

housed by all the households in the village rather than in tents. Our house was assigned four German soldiers who lived in one room of the house. Luckily, the soldiers that stayed with us did not cause us any problems. They turned out to be very nice young married men who were forced to leave their wives and young children back in Germany when they were drafted into the army. They could speak enough Slovak to communicate with us. They showed us pictures of their wives and children and were concerned about their prospects of making it back home because of the way the war was going. I remember that they would always bring chocolates for me and the other children.

The German army was well equipped with trucks, jeep-like vehicles, and motorcycles. Their big artillery cannons were all pulled by big trucks. The German officers wore black cavalry boots that came up to their knees and cavalry type pants. I saw a lot of German officers because a German command post was set up in our neighbor's house. This house was located on a high bluff that overlooked the river. I remember the soldiers shooting rifles and machine guns from this house at targets near the river. The sounds of rifles and guns shooting were very frightening. One day a prisoner escaped from the Germans. Before long there were German soldiers going through every house and barn looking for the prisoner. I never did find out if the prisoner escaped, was recaptured, or was shot.

The week before the battlefront came through our village we were instructed to take shelter in basements and cellars. We slept in the basement for several nights. I slept on the potatoes in the potato bin. Each night we could hear the artillery explosions getting closer. On Good Friday night [March 30] in 1945 our village was bombarded with artillery shells. The sound of the exploding bombs was deafening. The loudest noise came when the Germans blew up the bridge across the river when they left. I had pillows around my ears to keep out the loud noise from the explosions. The bombing lasted for several hours but finally ended before



Photo of the village from the Facebook Page "Ústie nad Oravou - obec zatopená vodami priehrady" (translation: A village flooded by the waters of the dam)

daybreak. The next morning the village was full of Russian soldiers with their artillery and supply wagons. In addition to a lot of foot soldiers, all the yards in the village were full of horses and wagons. The Russian army had no trucks, jeeps, or motorcycles. All of the supply wagons and artillery cannons were pulled by horses. This was a major contrast to the German army that had motorcycles, jeeps, and big trucks carrying their equipment. Although the Russian soldiers were all on foot with no tanks or other mechanical support they were winning the battles by sheer numbers. [For further reading: <https://ustie-nad-oravou.webnode.sk/historia-obce/>]

Although there were many big bomb craters on the bluff around our yard, our house was not damaged, however, two sections of the village were severely bombed and burned out. Bomb craters were all over the village and ammunition, such as, hand grenades, machine gun shells, and land mines, were everywhere.

The Russian army only stayed in the village a few days then moved on pushing the Germans further west.

(Continued on page 24)

My Boyhood Years in Slovakia, continued...

(Continued from page 23)

Later that week there was a major battle about 15 miles from our village that killed thousands of German soldiers. There is an entire hill there covered with crosses marking the graves of soldiers killed in this battle. I often thought of the four German soldiers that stayed in our house for several weeks and showed us pictures of their wives and children. I assume that all of them were killed before the war ended and may be buried in that large battlefield cemetery.

In the USA, my father finally got a job in a steel mill in Granite City and continued to farm on the weekends. Grandmother, Anna, tended to the farm and my two sisters during the week. After a few years, my father quit his factory job and became a fulltime farmer. Uncle Frank enlisted in the US Army in 1940 and fought in the Pacific during World War II. During the war there was no communication possible between my father, who was in the USA, and my mother, who was in Slovakia. We had no telephones in our village in Slovakia and the mail and telegraphs were not operating in the war zones. For several years my father did not know if we were dead or alive.

(Continued on page 25)

About The Author: Ivan John Lach

Ivan John Lach was born in the Croatia region of the former Yugoslavia on February 7, 1939. He and his mother lived in Slovakia during World War II with his grandmother. After coming to the United States in 1947, when he was eight years old, Ivan John grew up on the family farm northwest of Mulberry Grove. He attended Mulberry and Smithboro grade schools and graduated from Mulberry Grove High School in 1958. He then attended Southern University in Carbondale where he received a Bachelor's Degree in Education with a major in mathematics in 1962. After graduation he took a position as a beginning actuary at Country Life Insurance Company in Bloomington, IL. He joined the Illinois Army National Guard and completed basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, MO in February 1963 and advanced infantry training at Fort Ord, California in May.

In the summer of 1963, he resigned from his position with Country Life, bought a 125 acres farm east of Mulberry Grove and took a position teaching mathematics at Vandalia High School. He taught mathematics at Vandalia High School and farmed his farm for four years. In 1967, he took a position at Illinois State University teaching mathematics at Metcalf School. In 1970, he took a position as Director of Admissions and Research at Lake Land College in Mattoon. In 1973, he completed the PhD in Education at the University of Illinois and took a position as Director of Research and MIS at the Illinois Community College Board in Springfield. He was employed at the Illinois Community College Board for 25 years, the last 15 years as Vice President/Deputy Director. He retired in 1998 as Vice President Emeritus.

Ivan John Lach currently lives in Bloomington, Illinois close to his daughter's family and his grandchildren.



(Continued from page 24)

After the War

A few months after the battlefield passed through Slovakia, World War II in Europe was over. Finally, the Red Cross was able to get telegraphs through so that we could communicate with my father and let him know that we were still alive. Uncle Nikodem returned from Italy where he spent a few years as a prisoner of war in a US Army prison. During that first summer there was a lot of ammunition and land mines in the fields and pastures around the village. A few boys in the village lost their arms from playing with hand grenades. I remember one occasion that summer that was very dangerous. While herding cows in the hills with several boys from the neighborhood the boys found a string of 30 large machine gun shells. They decided to line them up pointing away from us and building a fire around them so we could see them shoot. We laid on the ground about 50 yards behind the back of the shells. As the fire got hot the shells started to explode but they were flying in every direction including over our heads. Needless to say, we were very frightened and laid low to the ground until we could hear no more explosions.

We were now getting letters and packages from our family in the USA, but it took a long time for my mother to get a passport from the US Immigration Service because diplomatic relations with Czechoslovakia took a while to get established after the war. As a result, my mother and I remained in Slovakia for a few more years. I spent that summers herding cows and doing a lot of swimming in both the Black Orava River and the White Orava River which flowed next to our village. I also attended school in Slovakia. This was a public school but we had to learn to pray and learn about the Roman Catholic faith as an integral part of the education process. There was no separation of church and state in Slovakia at that time. In school, I learned to read and write in Slovak, and learned basic arithmetic very well.



Photo of the "new school" in 1942 from the Facebook Page *"Ústie nad Oravou - obec zatopená vodami priehrady"* (translation: A village flooded by the waters of the dam)

Meanwhile, in the USA my Uncle Frank completed his service in the US Army and came home to farm with my father near Wilsonville, IL. By now my father's farming operation was profitable but he needed more land. In 1946, he purchased a 160 acre farm 3 miles northwest of Mulberry Grove, IL and rented the adjacent 80 acres. While the house, barn, and farm shed on this farm were very old and in need of major repairs, the land was very good. The family moved into the big old two-story farm house and began their farming operation in this new location. By now, my family was milking 12 cows, raised four steers for beef, 100 chickens for eggs, 100 chickens for meat, and 10 hogs for meat and for sale. They sold milk and eggs and had plenty of milk, eggs, and meat for their own use.

Watch for Part 3 in the B.C.G.S. News Vol 41, Issue 1, Winter 2026.

Genealogy Tips Of The Day

These tips appeared in Michael John Neill's blog www.genealogytipoftheday.com January—June 2025.

A Dead End List

Do you keep a list of those dead-end ancestors—the ones that seem to disappear and for whom you can't find any end of life information? Create a table or spreadsheet of their names, basic details on them, and the last date you took a look for them. The table doesn't need to include all your information on them. That you can easily find in your database. The list can serve as a handy reference and a way to make certain you're working on all disappearing people and not just the same ones over and over again.

Double Connection Chart

This is one of those charts that I find helpful when reviewing my DNA test results. It's a chart of marriages where one person is an ancestral sibling (no further back than great-great-grandparents) and their spouse is also a relative. Double connections can frustrate DNA results. I can remember most of the aunts or uncles who married a relative, but the relationship of the spouse occasionally eludes me and this chart saves me the time of looking it up repeatedly. The chart is not detailed, but there's enough information in it for me and that's what matters. I also realized in seeing it while writing this post that I forgot to list my great-grandmother Ufkes' sister who married a relative of my great-grandmother Habben. Reviewing things that have been created for some time is a good piece of advice as well.

The Town is Not In the County

Varying civil jurisdictional levels can confuse the genealogist. One thing to remember is that a state or province may have different civil jurisdictions with the same name. In Illinois, the town Henderson is not in the county of Henderson. There are numerous other examples, particularly when smaller civil units, such as townships are considered. Always consider the possibility that someone may be confusing the town with the township or county of the same name.

Bond, Illinois, is not in Bond County, Illinois, but in Lawrence County. Clinton, Illinois, is not in Clinton County, Illinois, but in DeWitt County. Montgomery, Illinois is not in Montgomery County, Illinois, but in Kane and Kendall counties. Shelby, Illinois is not in Shelby County, Illinois, but in Edwards County. Fayette township is not in Fayette County, Illinois, but there are Fayette townships in Greene and Livingston counties, Illinois, Vigo County, Indiana, Decatur and Linn counties in Iowa, and so on.

The list of examples is a very long one.

A Floating Branch

Say you have a DNA match that you cannot figure out your connection with. You determine some of this match's ancestry and some of their relatives. You just can't see where it connects to you, but you put these people in your database. They are all connected to each other, but the genealogical connection to you (evidenced by DNA) has not yet been determined. That match and their relatives are called by some a "floating branch." Basically it's relatives in your database whose connection to you has not been yet determined even though they share DNA with you.

Know your relationships: An ancestor is a person from whom you are descended. A descendant is a person who is descended from an ancestor. A relative is someone with whom you share a common ancestor but who is not in your direct line.

Genealogy Marketplace on Facebook

The Facebook Group "Genealogy Marketplace" is to "Buy or Sell Genealogy related resources, materials & Genealogy Research Services." The administrators, based in Kansas City, Missouri, founded this community and marketplace in 2015 to benefit all those who research genealogy and family history.

Users are asked to list their items for sale individually and with a price so that potential customers can find and purchase those products or services. This group can also be used to trade materials.

If you're looking to buy a particular book, you are encouraged to post what you're looking for: the City, County and State, the Title of the Book, Author Name and Year Published if known. Maybe someone has it or knows where to find it!

Check it out today! <https://www.facebook.com/groups/genealogymarketplace/>



Submissions and Genealogical Queries

The B.C.G.S. News is published 2 times a year—January & July. The Bond County Genealogical & Historical Societies invite members to submit articles on Bond County families or histories, research techniques, announcements & queries. Typed submissions are preferred. Please E-Mail to the newsletter committee at bcgs_editor@sbcglobal.net or send to: Bond County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 172, Greenville, IL 62246.

All submissions are subject to editing and/or serialization over multiple issues. Your articles and photos shall remain your property. DO NOT send copyrighted material unless you hold the copyright or you supply proof of permission to print with your submission.

Genealogical queries with connections to Bond County and its communities in Southern Illinois are published free of charge to members (and non-members!) in our Newsletter (though members have priority on query space). Anyone is invited to submit the names and brief identifying information of ancestors they are researching, so that those researching the same persons can exchange information with them.

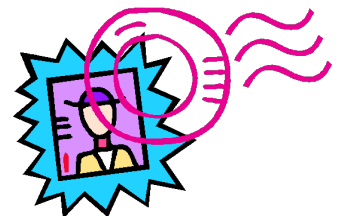
To make your query more effective, include dates, places and full names whenever possible. The query may also be published on our Website. You may E-Mail your queries to the newsletter committee at bcgs_editor@sbcglobal.net or send Snail Mail to: Bond County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 172, Greenville, IL 62246.

SAMPLE QUERY: *Researching Rev James Ball Woolard, b 16 Dec 1804 Buford Co NC, mov to Mulberry Grove Bond Co IL abt 1831, m Mary McCurley. dpl Greenville Bond Co IL 4 May 1887. --Submitter's name, address, and email address*

General questions for Bond County Genealogical Society and requests for Research & Library help should be emailed to info@bondcogen.org

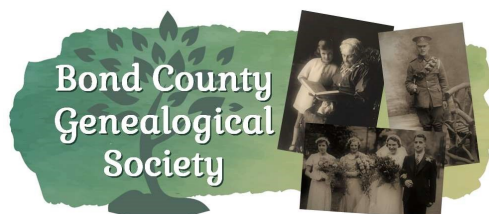
Good queries are:

*Clear—
Specific—
Simple—
Concise*



Official Newsletter of the Bond County Genealogical Society of Greenville, Illinois,
published jointly since 2014 with the Bond County Historical Society

Bond County Genealogical Society
P.O. Box 172
Greenville, IL 62246-0172
info@bondcogen.org
www.bondcogen.org
www.bondcountyhistorical.org



Renew Your Dues for 2026!

Bond County Genealogical Society membership dues are \$10 per 2-person household for the current year. A lifetime membership for a 2-person household may be purchased for a one-time payment of \$175. Members are eligible to vote and to serve as BCGS officers and appointees.

SPECIAL OFFER! Join both societies (Genealogical and Historical) for only \$20.00 - a \$5.00 savings! Find membership information on Page 2 of this issue and on both societies' websites (see URLS at left).



Historical Society Taps Sanders to Present at Vietnam Assembly

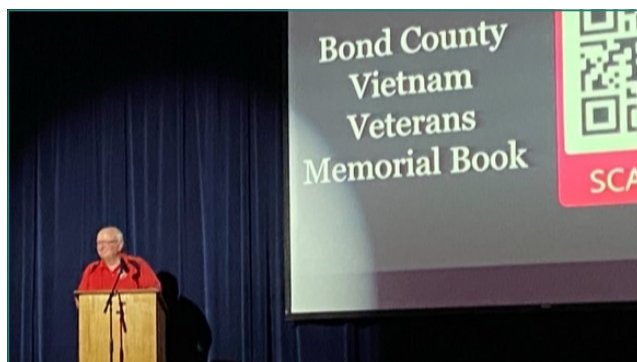
April 2025 marked the 50th anniversary of when the government of Saigon surrendered to North Vietnamese forces, ending the decades-long Vietnam War. Each year we remember and respect the nine million men and women who served in the military during that conflict; and honor the 58,279 killed in action.

Eight local vets paid the ultimate sacrifice: Thomas H. **Maynard**, PFC, USA; Michael J. **Scott**, Spc4, USA; Ronald E. **Shipley**, SSgt, USA; Arthur R. **Bolinger**, Capt, USAF; William K. **Elliot**, PFC, USA; Roy L. **Baldwin**, Cpl, USMC; Gary G. **Zeller**, Cpl, USA; and James L. **Scroggins**, Spc5, USA.

Greenville High School students in the GHS History Club held their Vietnam Veterans Recognition Assembly Wednesday, April 30, 2025.

Veterans and students spoke and a documentary, made by GHS students and featuring inspiring interviews with local Vietnam veterans, was screened. Student-made posters were also on display. Attendees could scan QR codes with their phones to read the Vietnam Veteran Memorial Book with biographies written by GHS Students.

Thank you, kids, for all the time and work you put



Roger **Sanders** of Greenville—a Marine Corps veteran, agricultural marketer, & journalist—spoke brilliantly on “Bond County in the Vietnam War.” Sanders, 76, passed away suddenly June 16th. Memorials can be made to Land of Lincoln Honor Flight. Semper Fi! Ooh-rah!
Photo courtesy a GHS student parent and Ryan D’Arcy.

into researching and compiling all the information for the evening and your upcoming book!

“[I’m pleased you could make it.] My students worked hard all year (and in previous years) for this event. I hope it was a meaningful tribute to those who made sacrifices during the Vietnam War.” – Ryan D’Arcy, faculty sponsor