

CASS COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter September 2019

SEPTEMBER MEETING: Thursday, 26

The September meeting of Cass County Genealogical Society will be in the meeting room at Atlantic Public Library on Thursday, September 26 beginning at 1 pm.

Roll call will be: Name an ancestor who served in the military.

The program will be about federal records. Every time an ancestor interacted with the U. S. Government - military or civilian - paperwork was generated. A *Discovering Your Roots* DVD will discuss military records and homestead files. It will be interesting to hear members' experiences.

If time allows and there is interest, the many kinds of records found in county courthouses will be viewed and discussed...or that can be another meeting afternoon.

CASS COUNTY COUNTRY SCHOOLS

The standard location for country schools was one in every two-mile by two-mile district which included four sections. Everyone had a name which could tell a story.

Often names were very logical related to their location in townships such as Victoria Center, Lincoln Center, Washington and Noble Center. Others might be names for families such as Whitneyville, Bennett, Howard and Jensen.

Others seemed logical like Railroad and West Railroad. Yes they were located near railroads. Lone Tree, Maple Valley, Brookside, Five Mile Grove, Smith Lake and Brushy Point probably told you something about the site.

But where did these names come from: College Corners, Mayflower, Toad Leap and Hell's Half Acre?

Hell's Half Acre is located about a quarter mile south of I-80 in Pymosa Township. It is also

designated as Pymosa #2 and a few people called in A Little Bit of Heaven

This country school is one of several in Cass County which has been converted into a home. I know because I live there.

In 1966, Glenn Pagel bought the old schoolhouse which was located on a farm owned by the Tiedeman family. In those days when the school ceased to be, it returned to the land owner. The school had been empty for 13 years. It was 27 feet square with many broken windows and no outhouses or bathrooms.

Glenn made room for a kitchen, living room, one bedroom and one bathroom. He also added to the basement where a furnace was located. Glenn kept some of the school features such as the hardwood floor showing where desks had been connected. The original entrance concrete steps remained but covered with wood.

Glenn later added a second bedroom and bathroom and a space which would become a new kitchen. He covered the ceiling in the living room with wainscoting which had covered the schoolroom walls,

Some former students still live in the area such as Delbert Westphalen. Myrtle Nelson Rich (now deceased) taught school there 1943 to 1945. Some of her students included Lee Miller, David Nelson, Paul Laursen, Patty Nelson Wright, Vera Laursen, Laverne Misner, Marjorie Miller and Esther Laursen.

Patty Wright organized a school reunion in 1995. Previous students, parents of students and teachers attended. A few of them were Diane Cappel, whose mother was a teacher, Dave and Julie Nelson, Wayne and Myrtle Rich, Helen Petersen and Hazel Howard.

Bob Broderius came to the reunion from the Netherlands via Texas. Others came from Muscatine, Menlo, Villisca, Audubon, Council Bluffs, Newell, Storm Lake and Eagle Grove. One of the attendees said, "This is the thrill of a lifetime to stand on the ground where I used to play."

Iowa's one-room schools were landmarks of learning. Teachers who taught in them made Iowa a leader in learning. The first school was in Lee County in 1830.

Note from Mary

Here is a list of Cass County Country Schools-1902. This list is by township. Did you or one of your ancestors attend one of these county schools?

Brighton: Crow, Center, Walter

Pymosa: Hell's Half Acre, Smith Lake, Center, Lorah, Five Mile Grove and Maple Dale

Benton: Highland, Kitelinger, Benton Center, Miller or Darling, McDermott and Sunnyside-Theile

Grant: Barber, Koob, Osen or Reagon, East Railroad, Hazel Dell and West Railroad

Washington: Washington, Grant, Lincoln, Jefferson, Jackson, Webster, Union, Howard and Ellsworth

Grove: Brushy Point, Grove City, Oakdale-Coun Clb, Grove Community, Turkey Grove and College Corners

Franklin: Bell, Stony Point, Norway Center, Gold Hill, Toad Leap and German

Lincoln: Gissible, Maple Grove, Bontrager, Bailey, Lincoln Center, Woods, Jerusalem, White Cloud and Violet Hill

Cass: Liberty Corner, Haworth, Fairview and Reese

Bear Grove: Becker, Brookside, Plainview, Switzer, Lone Tree, Elm Park, Galion and Crawford

Union: Trego or Whittier, Victor or Victory, Pleasant Dell, White, Studley, Crossroads, Logue and Graham

Massena: Stern, Whitneyville, Denham, Masena Center, Maas or Huff, Greenwalt and Eastman

Pleasant: Bethel, Baughman, Mackrill, Center, Donahue, Hughes-Almonrole and Swede

Noble: Pringey, Lyman, Polk Corner, Bennett, Noble Center, Springdale, Sunnyside, Romig and Wax

Edna: McDiarmid, Mayflower, Custer, Pebble Hill, Edna Grove, Fairview, Grandview, Greendell and Maple Valley
Victoria: Guthrie, Krauth, Jensen, Mills, Victoria Center, Skellinger, Bell, DeVore and Wychof

We have a 3 ring binder here in the genealogy room with Newspaper articles about some of the country schools. Some articles are from 1958 papers when the schools were closing for the last time. Bob Anderson and Jennifer Hart interviewed some former country school teachers and students and those articles were printed in the Atlantic News Telegraph during the 1990's. They can be found in the newspaper archives on the Atlantic Library home page. Occasionally we will have a visitor who is looking for a picture of the country school they attended. If you or one of your family members attended a country school in Cass County and have a picture of the school and or the students we would appreciate a copy of it for our room.

We are still waiting to move into our new "room" here in the library. The library board only received one bid earlier so the board decided to resubmit the bid. Hopefully, we will be in our new space early in 2020. I understand we won't be able to use the library for research during the time of the remodel. At this time we don't know when that will start or when we will be able to do "business" again as usual. More information will be given when we know.

Some visitors to the genealogy room this last month were Vigil Peterson of Coon Rapids MN who is researching Petersons. Virgil is a long time member of CCGS. Other visitors were researching Kraus/Rudnick; Keasy/Whited and Knop/Johnson/Brown.