

# THE GENIE BUG

NORTH CENTRAL IOWA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

P. O. BOX 237 MASON CITY, IOWA 50402-0237 [www.ncigs.org](http://www.ncigs.org)

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**\*May 12th 1:30 pm, Carol (Perkins) Tinkey, presents **Tree Stump Tombstones**** a unique form of cemetery markers popular from the 1880s – 1930s, actually are a form of folk art. Our program will include photos of interesting stumps from Minnesota to Texas in a variety of shapes and sizes. Hear how this style of tombstones became an integral part of the Woodsmen of the World Benevolent Society. E-mail for reservations [membership@ncigs.org](mailto:membership@ncigs.org), public is invited to attend the program.

**\*June 09th 1:30 pm, Our 40<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY – Accomplishments & Growth,** Join in the “Looking Back” while we reminisce with speakers sharing about our beginnings, research, special trips taken and our Genealogical Library growth. E-mail for reservations [membership@ncigs.org](mailto:membership@ncigs.org).



**\*July 14th at 1:30pm, Danuta Hutchins' presentation "The Butterfly Effect"** relates to her book of childhood memories of WWII in Warsaw Poland and the horrors of the 9/11 terrorist acts in America. Traumatic events from her childhood surfaced as she witnessed these terrorist acts. She presents images in Power Point and a discussion of the U.S.A. and President Herbert Hoover's role in feeding and clothing of Polish children after WWII. Her book "Torn Out Memories" is a testimony of war survivor and a source for socio-philosophic considerations of acts of mass violence versus kindness, caring and generosity. Meeting today held at the LDS Church, E-mail for reservations [membership@ncigs.org](mailto:membership@ncigs.org).

**\*Aug 11<sup>th</sup> 2012 at 1:30pm, “One Room School Houses”** their history & operation will be included, by Marie Thompson, NCIGS member, Mason City. **Why not make it a school reunion?** Anyone who attended a one-room school is encouraged to come and share their stories. E-mail for reservations [membership@ncigs.org](mailto:membership@ncigs.org).



We celebrated April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012  
Appreciation to Library Volunteers



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## President's letter to NCIGS Members

*" . . . in the summer of 1992 two groups, quite unaware of each other, met on the same day, and only hours apart in the same town, Clear Lake, Iowa. Each met to found a P.A.F. users group. Upon discovering each other, and enjoying a good humored laugh over the coincidence, instantly joined as one."*

This was the beginning of PAF-Ways. More on this on the history page @ncigs.org. You can get to the history page by clicking the "NEW NCIGS.org" in the navigation on the top of the main page, and finding the history link on the side of the next page. This will also give you a sneak preview of the new website, which we hope to unveil completely by August of this year.

This is the anniversary edition of The Genie Bug. It was 40 years ago our society was formed to meet a growing need in the genealogy field. It is also the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of PAF-Ways. It is a very unique celebration year at that.

The program committee once again has been able to put some great programs together for this year. To find out what's going on check out the front of the 'The Genie Bug' or by going to our website (both old and new).

A rebuild of our website, after consultation with our original webmaster, Loren Toomsen, was decided that the time had come to give our website a "fresh" look. It has been almost six years since the NCIGS website went online with little or no real changes to the website. You can see the changes in real time at ncigs.org and clicking on the "NEW ncigs.org" button.

Your President, Jay Lehmann [jay@ncigs.org](mailto:jay@ncigs.org)

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### 'Presidents of the past and present', help celebrate 40 years!

JoAnn Burgess	1972-1973	Loren Toomsen	1974
Rosemary Osier	1975	Merle Behne	1976
Margaret Constable	1977	William Kopps	1979-1980
Rita Goranson	1981	Leona Montag	1982-1983
JoAnn Burgess	1984-1985	Ruth Scott	1986
JoAnn Burgess	1987	Irma Harris	1988-1989
Marie Thompson	1990	Irma Harris	1991-1995
Ruth Boyenga	1996	Beth McBride	1997-1998
Jim Kuhlman	1999-2000	Irma Harris	2001-2003
Tom Sawyer	2004	Arnita Searle	2005-2006
Dorothy Paul	2007-2008	Jay Lehmann	2009-2012

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?? NCIGS needs to fill the RECORDING SECRETARY position. We are presently managing with a pro-tem person who wishes to be replaced. The Recording Secretary shall keep and read minutes of meetings. As a voting member of the Board, this person must be a prior member for at least one year to NCIGS.

THE GENIE BUG is published in Feb, May, Aug, & Nov. A Benefit for members of the Non-profit North Central Iowa Genealogical Society. PO Box 237, Mason City, IA 50402-0237 c.NCIGS 2012



## *A message from our Librarian*

### *Library Location*

Mason City Public Library, First floor - 225 2<sup>nd</sup> St. SE, Mason City Iowa

### *Library Hours*

The Mason City Public Library is open M/T/W/TH 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.; F/SAT 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. If you need help from one of our library volunteers, remember the library is staffed M/W/F 9 a.m.-12 p.m.; 1-4 p.m.

Organized in 1972 the society's purpose is to preserve genealogical and historical data, as well as assist individuals in compiling family genealogies or ancestral histories. The office of Librarian was created in the fall of 1973, with Edith Brown being elected to that position. In the beginning, the library consisted of library materials on loan from various members and was in "box form". As the society grew, the library materials became more permanent and the "box form" needed to find a home.

Finding that perfect home was no small feat. Our collection is certainly a well-traveled entity. For example, in its early years, the collection was housed in the homes of various society members, such as the Krueger home, the Brown home, the Goranson home and, finally, in the Constable home. Maintaining its wandering nature, the collection briefly nested at the IOOF Home as well as at the Senior Center. Even a closet at Garfield Elementary School was a temporary home. It was in 1979 that arrangements were made with the Mason City Public Library. They would house our collection for us in their Reference Room located on the 1st floor of the library.

But the traveling of the collection was not yet complete. By July of 1987 the collection was taking up too much space in the Reference Room. The collection traveled from the first floor to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the library. Everyone thought that was the last and permanent move, but no, with the 2008 renovation of the library building, once again cardboard boxes were located, filled, and emptied into a classroom at the Madison School. The collection stayed at Madison for about 18 months, until once again the boxes were filled and the collection moved into a beautiful new room, ironically, once again on the first floor of the Mason City Public Library. What a saga of movement, but somehow considering how often and how far our ancestor's moved, it seems appropriate. Perhaps now our 40 year wander is complete.

And let's talk about growth. From that humble cardboard box of donated and loaned materials, 40 years later the collection consists of over 5,000 items. As a non-profit entity, we have no specific means for acquiring funds, except through membership dues, member gifts of items or money and fund-raising. As a society we have been creative in our financial efforts.

By 1978 we had collected more than 87 books and periodicals as well as telephone books from various towns including some from Germany and the Netherlands. 1980 brought the first No-Bake Sale, which greatly increased our holdings. Books and four 1860 Federal Census microfilms were purchased with these funds. Our census microfilm program was also started in 1980, allowing members to purchase an Iowa Census with NCIGS matching that donation with a microfilm of the member's choice. Remember that was before on-line census indexing. At that time, we did it the hard way! In the spring of 1987, eleven new books were added to the collection because of the successful Everton Workshop which NCIGS sponsored.

Over the years we have been fortunate to benefit from several grants. For example, a Kinney-Lindstrom grant, extended to the Mason City Public Library, required NCIGS to raise matching funds. Two grants from the Farrer Endowment Foundation proved very helpful in enriching the collection and providing computer equipment.

Along with the February No-Bake Sale, we added other fundraising activities including our successful garage sales which raised a great deal of money each year. Because of these activities we have been able to keep our library growing year by year, step by step.

So how have we invested our money? What is in those 5,000+ items we have in our collection?

Our library is a fully cataloged collection enhanced with regional ephemera, directories, Iowa censuses and vital records microfilms, including the 1840 territorial census, localized obituary, cemetery, church and military records, genealogical materials from states along the migration trails leading to Iowa, books about the European origins of Iowans, how-to-do-it books, maps, periodicals, and passenger lists. Especially unique are the necrology, surname and genealogical files compiled by our members, past and present. Our most complete information covers a nine-county area of North Iowa.

Specifically, the society's treasure trove includes such specialized sources of information as the 1894 list of Cerro Gordo farmers; Civil War Veterans in Cerro Gordo County; completed listing of cemetery plots for Cerro Gordo County, an index of people who fought in the Revolutionary War, an 1883 list of pensioners in the United States, indexes to the passenger and immigration lists; a compendium of American genealogies; and a partial set of the Daughters of the American Revolution lineage. The most unique materials are compilations created by society members, such as collections announcing engagements, marriages, births, deaths and obituaries printed in the local newspapers.

Our library, manned by a dedicated group of volunteers, receives visitors from all over the United States. In addition our library collection is used to provide research services to people all over the world. The collection, created to provide North Iowans with a local historical research center, has certainly achieved its goal. As former society member Virginia Gibbs once said about genealogical research, "I think you learn to understand yourself better. I think it's a right everybody has: to know who they are and where they came from".

Sandra Turner, NCIGS Librarian

## >>>> NCIGS Library - BOOK REVIEW'S <<<<

**John J. Long's** book, **MY LONG FAMILY HISTORY**, was privately published by the author in West Haven, Florida in 2010. Presented in narrative format, the family genealogy is traced from the earliest ancestor, John Long, born in 1764 in Virginia, through some nine generations of descendants.

This valuable research tool is laid out in a format that is easy to use. It has a detailed index of surnames and includes an extensive bibliography. One of the author's sources was MEMORIES OF OLD CERRO GORDO authored by the Umbargers. The preface explains how each generation is numbered so the reader can distinguish which person is being discussed. Example: John Barrett<sup>3</sup> Long, Sr. (Richard<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>).

A great account of early Mason City history is presented in Chapter 6 (pages 69-246) including many interesting details of John Barrett<sup>3</sup> Long, Sr.'s arrival in 1853, which was just one year before his uncle, Alexander<sup>2</sup> Long, Sr. also settled in the county.

I recommend this book, which is inscribed to NCIGS - "his" fellow genealogists - because we love history. Thanks to JJ for this wonderful donation to the NCIGS Library. 'Book reviewed by Linda Faridi April 2012.'

**ROCKY HILL, A HISTORY OF CERRO GORDO COUNTY, IOWA** by **John R. Cunningham** was published by McNaughton & Gunn, Inc. of Saline, Michigan in 2010. This 208 page hard- cover book is the library's most recent published history of Cerro County. The book begins with the history and development of the county (pages 5-49) and then provides information about each of the incorporated and unincorporated towns and villages within the county (pages 50-186). The last section of the book includes several pages of indexing. Scattered throughout the book are a wonderful array of illustrations, including both contemporary and historical photographs, copies of plats, charts, maps, and other illustrations which aid in the interpretation of information as well as set the scene for the municipalities in Cerro Gordo County. Particularly interesting to genealogists will be the information and photos of the cemeteries of Cerro Gordo County. Our thanks to Ruth Umbarger for donating this book to the NCIGS library. 'Book reviewed by Sandra Turner April 2012.'

**If you are interested in purchasing a personal or gift copy, the books are available for sale from the authors.**

## 40 YEAR HISTORY OF THE NORTH CENTRAL IOWA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

*When a time-line is created it is always a difficult process of elimination, not everything can be included. So my apologies if something was left out that needs to appear in this time-line or for any errors. The source I used was the Secretary Notebooks. My intent with the time-line was to record not only the important achievements of the society, but also to convey something of the flavor and ambiance of the society and its members. I hope I have achieved this goal. Please notify me (Sandra Turner 641-380-0339 or turnersd@mchsi.com) of errors or omissions.*

*This time-line will be included in the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Notebook put together by LeNore Forbes, as well as in this edition of THE GENIE BUG, so accuracy is important. We look forward to your comments. If you would like to contribute information to the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Notebook, LeNore would love to hear from you! I hope this time-line will generate fond memories. Some of these photos were originally printed in the Globe Gazette and permission was granted to reprint them.*



**1971-1972** - In the winter of 1971-72, Phil Walker offered a genealogy class for individuals living in the north central area of Iowa. An attendee, **Jo Ann Burgess**, decided to look into establishing a local genealogical society. Since ten members were needed to start a chapter of the Iowa Genealogical Society, Jo Ann wrote to some area residents who belonged to the IGS. As a result, the North Central Iowa Genealogical Society was formed in the spring of 1972.

**1973** - Constitution and by-laws completed. A genealogical library was established with **Edith Brown** serving as the first Librarian. Marge Van Kluck served as the first editor of The GENIE BUG; first issue published in August.



**1974** - Society created and submitted to IGS information on the records held within the Cerro Gordo County Courthouse. Offered genealogy classes at John Adams School. Started the Surname Index.

**1977** - Cerro Gordo County listing of courthouse records was published in Hawkeye Heritage. Long-term work began on documenting county cemetery information. Established P.O. Box 237. Sponsored Everton workshop at Trinity Lutheran Church.

**1978** - Library moved from IOOF to Senior Citizens Center. Completed cemetery information for Cerro Gordo County.

**1979** - Genealogy Library moved to MCPL reference room. April meeting was style show featuring clothes from the past.

**1980** - Started the fundraiser NO BAKE SALE. Society funds purchased four reels of 1860 Federal Census microfilm. Started Census Microfilm Program: members purchased an Iowa census microfilm; NCIGS matched that donation with a reel of microfilm of the member's choice.

**1982** - 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary open house was held April 3, 1982. The two featured speakers were Margaret Foster, Librarian of the Iowa Genealogical Society, and Art Fischbeck, local historian. Workshops were held throughout the day. Displays of old photos and scrapbooks from surrounding counties were also featured, with Jim Latham of Latham Photography providing information on copying old photos. Booth in the McNider Museum Outdoor Event. Fundraiser at Willowbrook Flea Market. Compiled Clear Lake Marriages 1895-1920. Established the pioneer and military files (ancestor residing in Cerro Gordo County by 1880; persons whose ancestor served in military before 1900 based on enlistment from the county, residence in the county before 1900 or buried here). Created the index to the 1860 Census for Cerro Gordo County.

**1984** - \$2600 grant was awarded to the Mason City Public Library from the Kinney-Linstrom Foundation, Inc. The grant monies were to be used to purchase genealogical materials. The grant was awarded with the proviso that NCIGS raise matching funds. A variety of fundraising efforts were undertaken including a raffle for a quilt made by members. October 1984 was the kick off for the matching funds efforts. By December 1984 matching funds goal was not only met, but exceeded the \$2600.





**1985** - NCIGS members, led by President **Ruth Scott**, made a second quilt as a fundraiser. Raffle tickets were \$1 each or 6 tickets for \$5. In September 1985 NCIGS hosted the Iowa Genealogical Society's Region 6 Conference at Stillman Auditorium, Clear Lake, Iowa. Accepted the original Naturalizations of Cerro Gordo County, Iowa 1856-1943. A total of 31 books were included. Charles and Margaret Wellen completed indexing the Naturalization Records.

**1986** - Don Leake made the gavel presented to President Ruth Scott (February). May program was a member of the LDS church film team explaining their current project of filming Iowa county vital records.

**1987** - By July of 1987 the collection traveled from the first floor to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the library. Purchased a new microfilm reader.

**1988** - NCIGS sponsored the IGS District meeting for Region 6. July meeting program was bringing family heirlooms and telling about them. At December 1988 meeting Paul Polansky was made a life-time member of the society. Discussion was held about revenue sharing with IGS; society would receive 40% of the profit.



**1989** - NCIGS sponsored Everton's International Genealogical Society workshop. **Ruth Umbarger** elected Librarian.

**1990** - Society had a booth at the North Iowa Fair. Limit of four entries. Ribbons would be awarded. Members directed to bring old spectacles, pipes, family genealogy, old pictures, family tree charts, old wills and old letters, unique heirlooms, etc.

**1991** - Booth at the fair. Necrology File moved to genealogy room. Enough money was available to purchase a second microfilm reader. WW II Records moved to genealogy library. A copy machine from MCPL was moved into Genealogy Room. Speaker at November meeting was Kathleen Flaherty, an orphan train child.

**1992** - Booth at the fair. 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration featured two speakers: Art Fischbeck and Delores Benning. Photo reproduction and document encapsulation day at Willowbrook Mall. Microfilm cabinet purchased. Computer interest survey conducted. PAF-Ways Genealogy Computer Interest Group, a computerized spinoff of the NCIGS, was formed in June 1992. PAF-Ways was created for our local members who wanted to learn more about using computers and the Internet for genealogical research and information storage. PAF-Ways takes its name from Personal Ancestral File, a software package created by the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints.

**1993** - NCIGS potluck picnic held at East Park. Society now has a 9 digit zip code. Booth at the fair included the computer user group. Purchased two filing cabinets. At July meeting spent some time in the library basement due to tornado warning. Project to assemble the WW II records completed, now in 29 volumes.

**1994** - Loren Toomsen and PAF-Ways members establish a website and begin the Web Obituary Project, one of the first such efforts in the United States. This project creates a permanent on-line archive of the obituaries for our region. Beth McBride became editor of THE GENIE BUG. Bill Bjerke became Treasurer. Indexing of obituaries begins. Photo reproduction and encapsulation booth at Willowbrook Mall.

**1995** - Booth at Willowbrook again. Continuing obituary indexing. Kinney-Linstrom approved another \$3900 grant.

**1996** - August meeting was in Ruth Boyenga's garden. A contest was held on the best decorated hat. Did not have booth at the fair.

**1997** - Muse-Norris grant, written by Jim Kuhlman, was for the purchase of a reader printer. Started "Five Minutes of Glory" at each monthly meeting. Newspaper pasting party was scheduled for January 1998. The clippings were from local area newspapers obtained when NIACC discarded them. Eight ladies from the society made a trip to Salt Lake; Rita Goranson donated a copier to the society.

**1997-2001** - Annual genealogical technology fair. Joint effort by NCIGS, Butler County Genealogy Society, Franklin County Genealogical Society, Wright County Genealogical Searchers, Howard-Winneshiek

Genealogy Society, Mason City Family History Center, PAF-Ways Genealogy Computer Interest Group, and the Iowa Genealogical Society.

**1998** - Dues increased to \$10 and research charges increased to \$10 per hour. NOW genealogy program offered at NIACC.

**1999** - Muse-Norris grant for \$1500 for copier received. Mayflower Society offered program at the December meeting.

**2000** - Indexing for the 1880 Federal Census of bordering counties was completed. Rita Goranson presented a program on Sod Houses in Iowa. A \$1,000 Farrer grant was received. The money was used to purchase the 1900 Every Name Soundex.

**2001** - Gerald Anderson presented a program on the trip he and his wife took to Norway. PAF-ways had a float in the Band Festival and the Clear Lake 4<sup>th</sup> of July parades.

**2002** - German Cultural Fest. Discussion was held about purchasing a computer. Completed more cemetery records. The 1930 census microfilm arrived in June. Members were reminded the 1930 census was filmed as the census was taken, so the entries would not be in numerical order. Dorothy Paul wrote a grant to Muse-Norris.

**2003** - September meeting was a trip to Des Moines to research in new IGS Library and the State Historical Society. Society voted to postpone work on probate records at the court house. Madonna Harms gave a talk on orphan trains. German Cultural Fest. Computer in place and ready for use.

**2004** - Over 100 people signed the register at the North Iowa Fair. Follow up was a letter and a copy of the latest BUG. A new reader was purchased.

**2005** - Sandra Turner became editor of THE GENIE BUG. In December 2005 the obituary clipping project was discontinued since so many obituaries are now online.

**2006** - In February 2006 Internet access wiring was completed for the Genealogy Room.

**2007** - In September, the Revenue Sharing Agreement was signed between IGS and NCIGS. Merger of PAF-Ways Genealogy Computer Interest Group with NCIGS implemented.

**2008** - Field trip to Des Moines planned. Discussions begin about the impact to genealogy library due to MCPL renovation.

**2009** - MCPL was officially closed on May 1, 2009; limited library services will be offered in Mason City Room during the renovation. Temporary quarters for the Archives and Genealogy Library will be in classrooms at Madison Elementary School. Monthly meetings will be held at LDS church during renovations.

**2010** - Genealogy Library returned to MCPL; now on 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Library no longer has copier or microfilm reader equipment; will use MCPL equipment. Board began process of reviewing By-Laws. Grant Committee established.

**2011** - By-law review completed and implemented. Lea Norlinger becomes Editor, THE GENIE BUG distribution goes on-line. Began RSVP system for monthly meetings. Farrer Endowment Foundation grant for \$5,000 was approved; \$2,000 for Research Committee computer equipment; \$3,000 for library collection.

**2012** - Sandra Turner & the Library Committee host an Appreciation Program honoring Past Library Volunteers. 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration - Accomplishments & Growth scheduled for June 09<sup>th</sup> meeting. A major design and rebuilding of NCIGS website undertaken by the Jay Lehmann in consultation with Loren Toomsen. Board approves THE GENIE BUG Newsletter increasing from 8 pages to the current 12 pages.

## Computer Survey for Classes

At a recent workshop of the North Central Iowa Genealogical Society, attendees expressed an interest in learning more about computers. In an effort to answer this need, the society is considering holding some classes on computer use in the fall. If you are one of those interested, we need to know a bit about you and what you already know. Skills

seem to vary widely; some people have never used a computer and do not own one. Others wanted hands-on practice/instruction on various genealogical websites. Others want information on genealogical software. Still others wanted advice on organizing/copying family photos into the computer/genealogy software. Following are a few questions that will help us zone in on what to include in the classes:

1. What kind of computer do you have? \_\_\_\_PC \_\_\_\_MAC \_\_\_\_Other
2. Are you just now considering what kind of computer to buy? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no
3. Do you know how to turn the computer on? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no
4. Do you want to use the computer to write? If so, do you want to write your family history? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_no Letters? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no
5. Do you want to know about doing your genealogy on the computer? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_no
6. Do you want to know about using the Internet? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_no
7. Do you want to know about copying/organizing family photos on the computer? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

Although some of these questions may seem silly, the answers will give us an understanding of your needs. If you are interested in computer workshops, please complete this survey, make a copy of it and either take it to the genealogy library or give it to Marie Thompson at the May meeting. If you want to talk to Marie prior to the May meeting she can be contacted @ 641-423-0487.

COMMENTS:

Your Name:

Phone:

E-mail:

\*Please be aware there is a \$5 fee for computer classes; they are considered individual Enrichment workshops.\*

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## A Path to the Future, PAF-WAYS journey - 1972-2012



About twenty years ago Genealogy in north central Iowa made a sharp departure from pencil, paper, hand written charts and shoe boxes. A number of NCIGS members redirected their energy into a new emerging technology. Computers!

The personal computer was in its infancy in the early 1990's. Suddenly synergy struck! A group of NCIGS members met at the home of Claire Giles in Clear Lake. On that very same day another group organized by Kermit Kittleson and Loren Toomsen also met in Clear Lake. Both groups had a common mission. When the two discovered each other they instantly merged.

With a slogan that "computers were invented to do genealogy" arrangements were made with N.I.A.C.C. to conduct a course where interested individuals could gather and share in "our common ignorance. In the early days we didn't learn how to do it, we learned how "not" to do it. It was the Wild West revisited! Because we were all using the Personal Ancestral File program, Kermit Kittleson suggested the name PAF-Ways. The name was voted on and adopted.

Initially we thought it would be cool, as a community project, to each take an issue of the Mason City Globe Gazette obituaries and hand type that them into a common database. The day of the "scanner" had yet to make its presence known. That fantabulous idea soon ran its course. Marie Thompson hung in the longest - but that was just too much work! The project nearly licked the red off of our candy!

The synergy soon led to a project of digitally preserving obituaries published in the *Mason City Globe Gazette*. The newspaper saved its obituaries weekly onto a floppy diskette. Toomsen swapped diskettes with the *Globe Gazette* each Friday. In sync with Kittleson, who wrote a coded translation routine, the two converted the *Globe's* machine language into a word processor file. Thus was born a daily updated digital archive of North Iowa obituaries.

PAF-Ways provided a focus group for interested NCIGS members to cut their teeth on computer genealogy. In our charter we designated that should PAF-Way ever disband all assets within the group be transferred to the NCIGS.

After just a few meetings it became obvious that our classroom approach at NIACC was not a working format. Loren Toomsen invited PAF-Ways to meet in his large living room in Clear Lake. An advantage was a 50 inch TV linked to his computer that provided a computer screen that all could share in a common group experience. By today's HD standards it was crude, but it worked.

Interesting innovations to computers happened at PAF-Ways meetings. The radically new idea of a "mouse" was introduced, demonstrations in the use of various new genealogy programs were made, many new high tech "toys" were introduced, and PAF-Ways was alive when the Internet first invaded North Iowa.

PAF-Ways membership continued to grow until finally a decision was made to hold two meetings back to back one on Saturday and one on Sunday. Loren's wife was worried there were so many people attending that their large living room floor might collapse. Acting on that concern PAF-Ways moved to the First Citizens National Bank "Heritage Room" in Mason City. Membership continued to grow to well over a hundred members and many visitors.

As success of PAF-Ways spread vendors would occasionally call upon PAF-Ways to present at our meetings. Once during such a visit a representative from Microsoft presented our program and then awarded two door prizes collectively valued at over \$1,000. The people behind Family Tree Maker flooded PAF-ways with many copies of their genealogy program - which for a while became door prizes. There was a time when membership in PAF-Ways didn't cost - it paid.

From the very beginning PAF-Ways volunteers added greatly to its core strength. Marie Thompson, Mason City was in it from day one and is still very active. Chuck Prickett, Jackson F. Wilcox, Alice Westfall and Gail Snow joined Marie as staples in presenting our monthly programs. Volunteer presentations from many members added diversity to our programs. Groping in the dark we learned from others experience. We were the first generation, with no prior cueing, to work out an understanding of the computer and the Internet. We discovered the power of a new extension to our creative nature. We were all pioneers in a "strange" new land.

PAF-Ways website was on-line within days of the Internet becoming available in North Iowa. Our first server was River City Internet of Mason City. River City not only hosted our PAF-Ways website, River City also provided technical programs at our meetings. The initial PAF-Ways website was coded by hand by Kittleson and Toomsen, several years before a viable commercial web authoring tool appeared on the scene.

The centerpiece of PAF-Ways website was our ongoing obituary project. Obituaries first appeared online in the early summer of 1993. Google did not yet exist. Yahoo was in its infancy. At that hour there were probably only a few thousand websites worldwide. Websites offering categorized clickable links sprung up everywhere assisting early navigation.

We began searching the net for other groups posting online - and found none. In December, six months after PAF-Ways began posting on-line obituaries we discovered the San Francisco Examiner began publishing obituaries. If PAF-Ways has one claim to fame it is we were the first group on Earth to provide a steady, continuous obituary archive stream on-line, one that continues to this day. Visitors to our website could navigate our pages and freely copy and paste obituaries, obituaries that now stretch back over many years.

Six individuals stand out from our membership for their solid contribution of time and talent with the website and the online obituary project. Gene Manning quarterbacked the Globe Gazette obituaries for a number of key years. Jay Lehmann managed the Clear Lake Mirror Reporter archives to perfection. Chuck Pricket fielded area newspapers as they came on-line. Gail Snow was strong on Internet research. Marie Thompson had her hand solidly on the rudder in virtually all aspects of the project and continues her contribution to this day. All NCIIGS members can give a sincere thank you for their dedication in making this a successful community project. And, people yet unborn in our future also give their thanks. However, Jim Rogers, of Garner, has established the gold standard of on-line obituary archiving. Jim Rogers has distinguished himself as our "archivist extraordinaire" managing a number of area newspapers, to perfection, since virtually the beginning. Jim's workmanship and contribution keeping the energy alive is deeply appreciated. Jim continues to archive and his work is on display to this very day.

As computer programs became more intuitive and people could easily share among themselves the need for our twelve-year "boot camp" concluded. PAF-Ways closed its doors just a few years ago. True to its mission all properties were liquidated, bills paid and our funds transferred to the NCIIGS treasury.

In the years following, member Jay Lehmann, Clear Lake, has distinguished his technical skills and has become an important driving force behind the NCIIGS website and has served as our NCIIGS president for the past four years. Jay has carried forward the synergy of PAF-Ways and his contribution is greatly appreciated by all.

Our project is always looking for volunteers. Be careful! Archiving can "get into your blood." It is a wonderful way to leave your personal mark on the sands of time. If you would like to become a part of the NCIIGS on-line obituary project contact either Marie Thompson or Jay Lehmann. Leave a valuable gift to your future. Visit our NCIIGS website at: <http://ncigs.org/new>

Loren Toomsen, April 2012

## 2012 Membership Application

Annual Membership: monthly programs, FEB, MAY, AUG, NOV newsletters, and free query.

Renewal Membership dues are \$12.00 for a calendar year (January - December)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ PO Box \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Today's date \_\_\_\_\_

You're email \_\_\_\_\_  Receive electronically or PAPER copy Enclosed  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_\_\_ Check \_\_\_\_\_

Note: To receive your membership card in the mail, you need to furnish a stamped self-addressed envelope or include postage.

Mail to North Iowa Genealogical Society, PO Box 237, Mason City, IA 50402-0237



**Welcome to our newest Members !**



**We look forward to visiting with you at one of our next programs!**

Ron W Gerdes, Judith Poolman, Mary R Clark, Linda Riggan, Mary K Jennings,  
Ed & Gloria Lenius, Fran Fessler, Catherine Weitzel, Charlotte Marvin, Marian Lenz.

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**^ Recent Queries:** Can you help our friends get past these brick walls? \*Researching parents of Solomon Scott (died Dec 1851 in Ashe County, North Carolina) & parents of Daniel Brenneman, Jr. (died 1917 in Webster County, IA)

**^ Special search Query** HELP WANTED! ??? In 2007 a photo of a Norwegian girl, Olga Tommeraasen, was donated to NCIGS. The photo of Olga was taken at a studio in Kensett, Iowa, probably in the early 1900s. Olga was likely in her teens at the time the photo was taken. Since NCIGS does not retain photos, Ruth Umbarger indicated our procedure would have been to offer the photo to society members. Would the person who has the photo connect with Tammy Hertzal at 641-355-3544 or [thertzal@reconnect.com](mailto:thertzal@reconnect.com). The family would like to obtain a copy of the photo for their files. What a lucky connection this might be for one of our members, because the family will be happy to share their research information with them. Thanks for your attention to this request.

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This GENIE BUG represents an attempt toward enlarging our newsletter from 8 to 12 pages. The 'BUG' is designed to keep members well informed of the activities and opportunities of the NCIGS, to offer a place for publications of queries of members and provide information on their genealogical searches as well as insuring preservation of our

heritage. In order to accomplish these purposes, we need your cooperation of time and good talents. Please help us by sending a family query and joining us in helping others. Write or email to the Editor [lea@ncigs.org](mailto:lea@ncigs.org). Send 'Query' to Editor, The Genie Bug, NCIGS, PO Box 237, Mason City, IA 50401.

*Theory of relativity: If you go back far enough, we're all related!*

NORTH CENTRAL IOWA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
PO BOX 237  
MASON CITY, IA 50402-0237  
WWW.NICGS.ORG



**PAST Family PHOTO ~ Can YOU help us?**  
**May 1915 Confirmation Class in Britt, Iowa – Contact us if you know any**

of these people? We know Oscar Olson is second from the right.

