

IONIA COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

MISSION STATEMENT

The Ionia County Genealogical Society is a non-profit volunteer group whose mission is to create awareness and preserve family histories within the Ionia County Area. The focus of this group will be to develop genealogical resources and to assist all those seeking local history.

Volume 4 - Number 2

April - June 1999

RIDE THE ORPHAN TRAIN OF 1854

by Pamela Swiler

The idea of the "New World" encouraged the poor of European countries to come to America to find hope, wealth and happiness. Many of those who gave up everything they had to come to America were exchanging a bad situation for a much worse one on the streets of New York. Because of the lack of jobs, many of these people lived on the streets, sleeping on old dirty mattresses with rats running through their hair while they slept. Many died, leaving their young children to wander the streets alone. Many others were forced to abandon their children in order to seek a better life.

Women whose husbands had died were especially vulnerable because there were even fewer jobs for women. They were often the ones who suffered the most in an effort not to be separated from their children. The land of opportunity had become over run with thousands of hungry, dirty children who were stealing money or food and seeking shelter, to survive in a seemingly uncaring society. Young girls were sweeping the streets for coins and the older girls were prostituting. Because of the way they wandered the streets they became known as "street Arabs". Boys survived by

joining gangs, others were selling newspapers. All were much older than their ages - many smoked and gambled, and even drank. Many children were abandoned at such early ages that they had no memory of their parents. Most had no idea what ever become of their parents. Some desperate parents, because of their own situations, abused and neglected their children, forcing the authorities to remove the children from their homes.

In 1853, a plan was developed to rescue the thousands of street children and send them to live with rural families all across America. This organization was called the Children's Aid Society. The society was a private charity run organization formed by Charles Loring Brace. The plan was to give food, lodging and clothing's to homeless children, as well as provide them with educational opportunities. The number of children who needed help soon outnumbered the resources that were available. A new plan had to be made. Hence came the Orphan Train.

See ORPHANS, page 3

Tip from Shirley Hodaes:
Men were USUALLY in ^{an} area at least eight years before buying land or receiving land through Warrant Deeds.

FEBRUARY SPEAKER:
MICHAEL HOOK
by Jim Moses

Michael Hook gave a very entertaining talk about Abraham Lincoln on 13 February. Mr. Hook has spent many years gathering information, photographs and memorabilia of Lincoln and his family, and presented us with a truly remarkable collection of what he has gathered. Along with his fact-filled talk, he showed us a number of slides depicting the life and times of Mr. Lincoln from childhood until that fateful day when he gave the ultimate for his country.

It was evident from the beginning that Mr. Hook has studied his subject well, as he gave many facts about the Lincoln family. Some of the highlights of his presentation were two documents bearing Mr. Lincoln's signature, a very rare, unpublished photo of Lincoln, and another photo with a lock of his hair beside it.

The talk was well-received and everyone enjoyed it.

GENEALOGY WITHOUT DOCUMENTATION IS MYTHOLOGY!

COMING EVENTS

♦ Eaton Co. Genealogical Society (Michigan) Seminar - May 1. If you have ancestors from New York, you will find this seminar invaluable.

<<http://userdata.acd.net/mmgs/ecgsssem99.html>>

♦ Ohio Genealogical Society Seminar April 22-25, 1999, Toledo Hilton and Dana Center, Toledo, OH.

<<http://www.ogs.org/conf99.htm>>

♦ Beginning Genealogy Class will be held Saturday, May 15 at 10:00-12:00 at the Depot. Merrie DeVoe will be teaching the class. Cost \$5, materials included. Please contact Pam Swiler to sign up.

DOG OWNERS IN ODESSA TWP IN 1887

Compiled by John Waite

John J. PEACOCK
H.A. JACKSON
Wm. H. PARKER
Jane LEONARD
Seymour BAGLEY
Andrew J. POST
Margaret M. DAILEY
Eliphalet BECKWITH
Alonzo DRAKE
Hiram BARKDULL
Thomas AINSWORTH - 2 dogs
Charles McROBERTS
James BELL, JR.
E.M. ELDRIDGE
Henry BECKHOLD
A.C. STEWART
Reuben HUMMEL
James JAMESON
Harvey MORROW
John HUMMEL
James MUSGROVE

M. L. FOGHT
John SMITH
Alonzo LAPO
Sarah A. LAPHAM
Abram KEIFER
Eugene PARMLEE
Albert RUSSELL
H.F. MINER
Frank JOHNSON
Wm. SHAFER
Ransom WADE
Delos VANHOUTEN
James WICKOFF
Edward THURMAN
Godfrey HUTCHINS
T.A. HIAR
J.W. GEORGE
Ezra SHAFFER
Peter TRUMPOWER
Wm. W. HOUGH
Christian RAFFLER
Peter SCHNABEL
Fredric ZANDERS
Wm. ROBINSON
James LEONARD
Myron CAMPBELL
Samuel B. ANWAY
W. H. BRUNDRIDGE
Willis MARTIN
James PATRICK
John W. DILLENBECK
Jeremiah HANSBARGER
Charles MYERS
Wm. SOMERS
George MAGISKI
S.O. HOSFORD
Israel CAVE
Simon TUSING
James WRIGHT
Thomas MORROW
Malachi BURNS
William R. LONGLEY
Phillip A. WACHS
Ezra STALTER
George CLARK
Henry SHIRE
A.E. ELLIOTT
Elizabeth VANSICKLEN - 1
female dog
Harvey MARVIN
Henry ROOT
Eugene R. HUNT
Daniel LEPARD
John NYE
Rudolph GATTNER

Charles HENION
Peter J. FELLOWS
Wm. RUSH
A. G. LIPSCOMB
George BECKER
George MUTCHLER
Andrew RHEAM
Charlie HOUGH
REECE and DETTERICK

Tax was \$1.00 per male dog and \$3.00 per female dog. 84 male and 1 female in Twp.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

♦ Rica R. VERUS
3637 E. Cloverdale Road
Hastings, MI 49058
Researching: ROWLEY, NORTH,
Ella HOWARD ROWLEY,
WHORLEY, MCCORD,
JACKSON, HAMILTON
♦ Sondra L. HIGBEE
2560 N. Williamston Rd.
Williamston, MI 48895-9529
higbees@pilot.msu.edu
Researching: BAILEY,
STODDARD
♦ Marjorie K. SHELTON
7250 E. Michigan Ave.
Saline, MI 48176-9516
Researching: COPENHAVER,
DOLE, WHITMAN, CULVER,
SHOEMAKER
♦ Judy THELEN
3621 Cambrey Dr.
Lansing, MI 48906
judycem@aol.com
Researching: THELEN and
PUNG
♦ Jan WHEELOCK
9620 Riverside Dr.
Greenville, MI 48838
wheelock@pathwaynet.com
Researching: WHEELOCK,
PECK, and SACKETT.
♦ Joe and Joan MCCORD
3960 Potters Road
Ionia, MI 48846



QUERIES

♦ Elizabeth **CONNELLEY** is researching **CASE, COTTON, ELLSWORTH and FISH**. Contact Elizabeth at 7935 Greylock Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45243.

♦ Ruth **MCCAMAN** would like information on the family of Harmonius and Eliza **SMITH** who came to Ronald Township about 1854. Some of their family remained in the county until their deaths, 1929-1934. The Moses **WILSON** family came about 1865. The **BUTLERS, LANES and GARDNERS** are also in her line. Please contact Ruth at 20313 - 60 Avenue, Ewart, MI 49631-9615.

♦ Barb is researching **BARLOW**. My grandmother was Nora Viola **BARLOW** married to Robert Percy **JENKS**. Her father was Myron H. **BARLOW**. Many of my Barlows were in the Belding area. If you can help contact Barb at <bdonathn@crosstel.net>

♦ Jim **McQUEEN** is looking for any pictures of the Civil War Company the 16th Michigan Infantry that was raised in Ionia

County. Any help would be appreciated. Reply to <Haljim3@aol.com>

♦ Norm **NICHOLS** is seeking information on the following people: Calvin **WILLSEY**, Sarah A. **WHITEHEAD**, Henry Brower **WILLSEY**, George A. and Mary **WILLSEY**. Contact Norm at 1423 Williamsburg, Flint, MI 48507.

♦ Kathy **CAMP** of Valdosta, GA is seeking information on James **ATKINSON'S** family, dau. Lina, son, William, wife, Caroline **WARD**. E-mail her at <camp@surfsouth.com>

♦ I have a photo of the 3rd Michigan Crusade Band and would like information on how they were formed, when, where, and for what purpose. According to the Archives of Michigan, they believe they were part of the Women's Christian Temperance Movement. Send any information to Pam **SWILER** at <pkswiler1@juno.com> or <pkswiler@voyager.net>

♦ Judith **MCKNIGHT** is looking for a death record for Daniel **HEATH**, b. OH ca 1822/25. She believes he lived in Ronald Twp. and died between 1902 and 1910. Send responses to Judith **McKNIGHT** at Rt. 3, Box 1099 B, Baldwin, MI 49304

♦ Fawn **DEPUY** is seeking information on the **BLACKMER** and **WHEELER** families. Contact Fawn at <fawn.depuy@scott.af.mil>

If you have information that may help someone, but you are not on the Internet, please send the information to Pamela K. Swiler, President, ICGS, 13051 Ainsworth Rd., Route 3, Lake Odessa, MI 48849

ORPHANS

Continued from Page 1

Mr. Brace developed a plan to raise money to put children on a train, heading west, with the intention of placing them in rural homes along the way. He was convinced that there were many available homes for these children and that they would find many benefits of living in rural America. He felt that the family farm was the best place for these children and that the farmers would welcome the homeless children and treat them as their own. Funds were raised and in 1854, the first train was sent west.

Researchers have estimated that over 400,000 children were placed on orphan trains and sent across America. Three times a month agents of the society would send groups of children ranging from six to one hundred and fifty, usually leaving on a Tuesday from New York, and

the trips usually lasted about three or four days. The children never left the train. Each child had a suitcase containing a change of clothes and a Bible. As they got closer to their destination, they would get cleaned up and change in to the clean clothes. Local newspapers would run notices that the train was coming and encourage people to come and look over the homeless children on a stage of a meeting hall. The children were encouraged to do everything they could to make a good impression. The tired, weary, travel-stained children were paraded in front of prospective families and poked and prodded before the final decisions were made.

The society would ask the community's leading citizens to form a committee to check the qualifications of the potential parents. Legal adoptions were not required and the children could leave if they were unhappy. The families were asked to feed, clothe and educate the children in the same manner they would their own. The children who did not get selected were put back on the train and taken to the next stop on the line. Many families were torn apart when the foster families only chose one of the children, leaving behind the siblings. Children were taken to many states, including Michigan, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Texas,

and Missouri. Over 100,000 children were believed to be left in Missouri alone.

Although the records books are filled with names and dates, little was said about the quality of the way the children were treated. Not every story had a happy ending. Many of the children floated from home to home. City boys didn't know how to manage on a farm. Some expected that their new families would be rich and were disillusioned when they found out different. Some just never adjusted to living with strangers and returned back to the streets of New York. Many landed in reform school in Michigan. Some were worked and treated as slaves, working 18-hour days and were never sent to school as promised. The society was supposed to visit each child once a year but they were terribly understaffed.

In 1883 there was an independent investigation which concluded that overall, the majority of children under the age of 14 were living satisfactory lives. The success rate of the older children though was not so good.

One success story was about a boy named John Brady. The society sent him to Indiana and a judge who described him as "the homeliest, toughest, most unpromising boy in the whole lot" adopted him. The judge welcomed the challenge to see what he could do with this boy.

He grew up to be governor of Alaska!

Other problems arose in the area of religion and language barriers. Many of these children were Catholics and spoke with heavy accents of countries such as Ireland, Germany, Netherlands, etc. The rural Americans were mostly everything but Catholic and viewed the accents of the children in a negative manner. They were considered "bad blood". Many times other children did not accept them because they were orphans, leaving them alone in a strange new home. Toni Weiler, an orphan train rider once wrote, "Nobody can understand the loneliness that an orphan feels...if you could just only have known your biological mother, if you just could have *seen her.*"

Ethel Lambert was a retired employee of the Children's Aid Society who had discovered a hidden closet behind some old filing cabinets that was full of scrapbooks, diaries and hundreds of letters from the children who were seeking homes and ended up traveling on the orphan trains. One letter said, "I am fourteen years old. Father died three years ago and Mother died a year ago. I became a singing girl. I went on board the boats and sung. I am tired of singing. I would like to live with somebody." (Source "The Orphan Trains" transcript). The things that child must have

endured just to survive. Ethel Lambert felt the stories of these children were a valuable account of their lives and she dreamed of keeping an archive so that they would not be forgotten.

On May 31st, 1929, the Children's Aid Society sent three boys to Sulfur Springs, Texas on what was the last of the orphan trains of America. Since that time, there have been many reunions held for these orphan train riders. Nebraska will be holding its 37th annual reunion in Aurora, Nebraska on May 2, 1999. Orphan train riders and their descendants are invited to attend. If you had an ancestor who was born in New York around the end of 1880 and was raised in another state under a different name, they might have been an Orphan Train rider. There is a society called the **Orphan Train Heritage Society of America** who is helping people learn about this little known part of history. For more information, contact the society at 614 East Emma, Suite 115, Springdale, AR 72764. You may also visit their web-site at http://pda.republic.net/or_train/index_new.htm

NEW ACQUISITION

◆ Our Library has acquired **MICHIGAN SOLDIERS IN THE CIVIL WAR** by Frederick D. Williams. Look over this

interesting book on your next visit to our library.



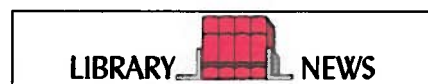
REMEMBER YOU DON'T NEED A PERSONAL COMPUTER TO ACCESS WEB-SITES. MOST PUBLIC LIBRARIES HAVE COMPUTERS FOR PUBLIC USE.

- ◆ Having difficulty reading old handwriting? Visit <http://www.firstct.com/fv/oldhand.html>
- ◆ From Cindy Bryant - this site has "found" bibles, pictures, documents from many Midwest states. Check out <http://users.erinet.com/31363/family.htm>
- ◆ Check out the home page of the Eaton County Historical Commission. The Commission was created by law in 1976 to advance public knowledge of the history of Eaton County. The address is: <http://www.co.eaton.mi.us/EC/HC/ECHC.HTM> From Shirley Hodges
- ◆ Also from Shirley Hodges is another site devoted to the care do's and don't of gravestones. Don't try to clean or make rubbings without checking this out. <http://members.aol.com/ctgravenet/dosdnts.htm>
- ◆ Trying to figure out a birth date before the 1750's?

Calendar years changed during that period. The site is <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/dates.txt> From Teresa Sweet

- ◆ The DAR Library Catalog is now online at <http://dar.library.net/index.htm>

>. This page contains some very helpful tips for using the catalog including how to search for place names, information on historical periods in American history, family names, authors and titles of books, the use of call words, and searching for a particular record type. From Ancestry Daily News, 5 February 1999.



- The Flat River Historical Library in Greenville, Michigan opened their Family History room March 1, 1999. The room will have volunteers to assist you. Call ahead for hours. Phone: (616) 754-6349.
- ◆ The Library of Michigan is offering various workshops for genealogists at all levels of expertise. The focus is on resources available at the Library of Michigan. Each class starts at 1:15 and cost \$5 for one class or \$20 for the entire program. The titles are as follows: Cemetery Records - April 30th; Internet Use of Ancestry.com - June 1 and June 4; Vital Records - Aug. 13; Genealogy and the Internet - Oct 15; Beyond 1920: Current Sources - December 3, 1999.

One of Baseball's Odd Lives

by Peter Morris

For a man who played only one major league game, Walter S. Walker has a number of claims to distinction. Few have had as peripatetic and ultimately as sad a life, and no one has ever made his major league debut under more trying circumstances. Walter was born on March 13, 1860, in Berlin, Michigan (renamed Marne during World War I), the fifth of six children born to immigrants from the British Isles by way of Canada. The family seems to have been moving about quite a bit at the time; they appear in the nearby town of Wright on the 1860 census, and Walter was baptized at St. Patrick's Catholic church in Ada, Michigan. In 1863 the family moved to Ionia, where they finally settled. Walter's father, Archibald, a station conductor, died soon after and Wallie's mother, Mary, supported the family by managing a hotel in Ionia.

After finishing high school, Walter went to Sandwich, Ontario, in January, 1879, to study for the priesthood. This ambition was put aside at some point, but Walter did graduate with a bachelor's degree in belles Lettres. Upon his return to Ionia in 1882, Walter's play for the county baseball team began to draw favorable notices and soon earned him regular invitation to catch for other traveling teams. In the ensuing years Walter's life mirrored the transitory experience that was the baseballist's lot at this time. Along the way he passed up many chances at promising careers to play for teams that were almost invariably on the edge of bankruptcy. The jobs Walter got between baseball engagements included being a clerk in one of the state department offices in Lansing, acting as a traveling representative for a cigar company, and owning his own cigar manufactory in Ionia. But each was put aside when a new baseball opportunity beckoned. In April, 1883, Walter was elected as one of the seven



umpires of the newly formed Northwestern Base Ball Association. This too proved abortive, and soon Wallie was back in Ionia, working as the City Clerk. Although his baseball activities for the remainder of the season seem to have taken a back seat to these duties, he did play a few games for the Muskegon club alongside Welday Walker, the black man whose record is next to Walter's in the *Baseball Encyclopedia*. He also found time to play for Detroit's Cass Club, where his play earned him a contract with the Detroit Wolverines for the 1884 season.

Into the majors --Detroit already had a superlative catcher in Charlie Bennett (who by coincidence would go into the cigar business after the tragic end of the career), but the need for a capable backup was great. Walter came to Detroit a month early to get down to his playing weight of 162 pounds on his five-foot, ten-and-a-half-inch frame. In informal workouts with his new teammates, Walter impressed with his speed, hitting ability and especially his strong throwing arm. Teammate Ned Hanlong marveled that Walter could throw almost as hard with his left hand as with his right. Bennett arrived in camp anxious to learn if all he had heard about his new teammate and rival was true. At first, it seemed that it might be. After Walter's first exhibition appearance, played at Richmond, Virginia, on April 8, the *Detroit Free Press* raved, "Walker caught, and though he never saw [pitcher Dupee] Shaw previous to the first instant he caught him perfectly. Such a performance is wonderful...It will leave little doubt in the minds of the Detroit people that the club, for the first time in its history, has two efficient batteries." A

few days later, another headline announced "SHAW AND WALKER DO UP THE WASHINGTONS IN A WAY TO PLEASE DETROITERS." At this point, however, the toils of his position began to catch up with him. After his next game, on April 22 at Indianapolis, the *Free Press* observed that "Walker, whose hands are very sore, had three passed balls and came very near losing the game." A week later he played again at Trenton and made a bad throw.

Family tragedy--As the regular season approached, Walter was suddenly confronted with more serious matters than his sore hands. His younger brother, James, had gone on a trip to Bois Blanc Island in northern Michigan with several other Ionians to look after some land holdings. While there James was taken ill, and in a deranged state wandered away from the group. Notices of James' disappearance were published in the newspapers on May 1, the opening day of the season, with the additional observation that "it was feared he had perished" As the week wore on without finding him. Walter's eldest brother, Archie, was severely injured on a logging road north of Saginaw. Mary Walker, their mother, traveled to Flint, where Archie was recovering at the Flint Surgical Institute.

The National League schedule saw Detroit beginning with a twenty-six game road trip. They would lose the first eleven, most by lopsided margins, including a 25-1 thrashing. Walter Walker saw his first and only action for the Wolverines in an 8-4 loss on May 8, 1884, played in New York in a drizzling rain. Trying to catch Shaw's difficult curves, Walker was charged with two errors and seven passed balls. The account of the game, after waxing eloquent about the disheartening effect of poor fielding on a pitcher's morale, simply added "Walkers's play behind the bat was frightful." Walter did manage one in four at bats and scored a run while facing future Hall-of-Famer John Montgomery Ward. This would prove to be his one and only major league game. A few days later he was sent back to Detroit by a club anxious to economize. The Ionia papers charged that Walter was being made a scape-goat for the team's

ineptitude, and the Detroit papers defended the team. Walter told a reporter that he told manager Jack Chapman he was not healthy enough to play, and that Chapman had played him only to have grounds for suspending him. While this was being played out in the press, Archibald recovered enough to be out of danger and Mrs. Walker decided to return home, only to discover that the train taking her home was also transporting the dead body of her son James. His body had lain in an area so concealed that it had not been discovered until May 13. The authorities determined the death to be accidental, caused by exposure after a fall had knocked him out. Walter returned home on the 15th for the funeral and while there was released by the team.

The Wolverines' efforts to replace Wallie were met with an extraordinary lack of success. Their six replacements--Fred Wood, Chief Zimmer, Ben Guiney, David Beatle, Dickie Lowe and Ed Gastfield--combined for the abysmal total of eleven hits in 166 at bats for an .066 average, while making 69 errors and striking out 72 times. Wood and Gastfield stand as the two worst-hitting nonpitchers in major league history to have more than forty at bats. Another catcher, John McDonough, became ill on his arrival and died a month later of brain fever. If Walter had placed a "hoodoo" on his successors as Bennett's backup, it could hardly have been more effective.

The minors and politics--At the end of May, Walter joined the Minneapolis club of the Northwestern League, where he caught and played third base until the team disbanded near the end of the year. The following spring he signed on with St. Paul of the Western League but was released and caught on with Cleveland, which disbanded in May. In June, Walter was back in Ionia when he received another offer from the Detroit Wolverines and left to join the team. What came of this is not clear, but the team went on a winning streak and presumably decided it could do without him. Two weeks later, back in Ionia again, Walter decided to practice law and apprenticed himself to a local lawyer. Walter attacked his studies with characteristic energy and on February 20, 1886, was admitted to the state bar. A month later he and another new attorney, Fred C. Wallington, announced their plans to set up a practice in Mt. Pleasant. The

partnership was not to survive very long, however; business was slow at first and when Walter received an offer to play for the Oswego, NY, in the International League, he accepted it. Walter returned to Mt. Pleasant in the fall and Wallington elected to buy him out. In September Walker received the Democratic nomination for prosecuting attorney of Isabella county, and in early October the Republicans nominated as his opponent his erstwhile partner F.C. Wallington.

The election campaign was contested with a zeal augmented by personal animosity, as Wallington implied that Walker might neglect his duties if a baseball team were to beckon. Walter nonetheless defeated Wallington by the narrow margin of 1,714 votes to 1,570, bucking a trend which saw Republicans elected in 18 of the 21 contests in the county. The Isabella *Enterprise*, in a very unusual move for a Republican paper in those days of doggedly partisan reportage, noted that "the 'ball' racket [had not] hurt the next Prosecuting Attorney for Isabella county" and went on to moralize that lying always boomerangs and hurts the party that begins it.

Wallington's supposition about Walker's commitment to his new duties proved unfounded. During his two-year term, the *Enterprise* was full of commendatory notes about his comings and goings and official duties. In September, 1887, he handled the county's first murder trial, resulting in a hung jury, and the following year he got a manslaughter conviction in a second murder trial. One of his less serious duties involved traveling to Dushville in July, 1887, in pursuit of a man claiming to be Christ. A number of his trips took him back to Ionia, a fact which began to attract speculation about an ulterior motive, and, sure enough, on November 15, 1887, Walter Walker was married in Ionia to Jennie Kimball, an event which was heralded with warmth by the papers of both Ionia and Mt. Pleasant. In addition to his responsibilities as prosecuting attorney, Walter's private practice expended to include work as a notary public and a collection agent as well as successfully instituting a major class-action suit. He also umpired local games and served as field captain of the Mt. Pleasant team, catching whenever

his schedule permitted. All in all, these were two years of intense activity and personal fulfillment.

They came to an end in November of 1888, when Walter lost his bid for re-election as prosecuting attorney to the Republican candidate, Albert Coe. The defeat was the result of the county's predominately Republican makeup, rather than a reflection on the job he had done. All 15 races being contested went to the Republicans, with Walter losing by the closest margin of all, a mere 70 votes. At first Walter intended to stay in Mt. Pleasant and carried on his usual flurry of activities, entering into a new partnership with the Hon. E. D. Wheaton in an office in a new commercial block, and being secretary of the Isabella Country Bar Association, but in March, 1889, he decided to relocate to Detroit and practice law there. Soon he was playing ball for a local amateur baseball team, the Detroit Athletic Club, for which he played off and on for the next three years.

League president and disaster--In 1891, when it appeared that Detroit would be without professional baseball for the first time in a decade, a bold new venture was announced. The Northwestern League, dormant since 1884, was revived with Walter S. Walker as president, secretary and treasurer of the league in which he had formerly played and umpired. The eight-team league was to include teams in Detroit, Bay City, Grand Rapids, Port Huron, Fort Wayne, Terre Haute, Indianapolis and Evansville. Walter would seem to have been the perfect man for such a task. He brought to it his abundant energy, his experience in law and business, and a personal charm which was frequently commented upon. Just as importantly, he brought the experience of having played for numerous teams and leagues on the road to bankruptcy. Two of the new league's innovations were informed by this experience--a strict salary cap and Sunday baseball. Both ideas seems to be creative approaches to the challenge of making baseball profitable, but both backfired. The Detroit franchise, with Walker as secretary and treasurer, was the only team to adhere to the salary restrictions and as a result had a vastly inferior team. The first week alone brought losses by disheartening scores of 22-1, 19-4, 15-5, and 11-0 and must have reminded Walter of his days with the Wolverines. Just as crucial a setback

was the city's unreadiness for Sunday baseball. A campaign by many of Detroit's churches forced the team to play its home games outside of the city limits and, after drawing over 2,000 fans for the first-ever Sunday game in Detroit, the police broke up the second and final effort to play on the Sabbath.

Walter traveled around the league tirelessly in the season's early days, addressing a myriad of problems, but as so often was the case, the league was only as strong as its weakest link. Within two weeks of the season's opening, the Bay City team was reneging on its financial commitments and soon afterward disbanded. Shortly thereafter, Detroit followed suit and, while the league did make it through the season, it was not a financial success.

No doubt this failure, on top of the election disappointment, was a great blow, but it is still difficult to fathom or explain what came next. On August 3, 1892 Walter Walker was placed in the Eastern Michigan asylum for the insane in Pontiac after a complaint from his wife. Diagnosed as suffering from alcoholism and monomania, Walter would spend the rest of his life there, dying on February 28, 1922; his body was brought back to Ionia for burial. The Ionia paper ran a brief notice that "Wallie" had died at his "home" in Pontiac, but none of the other newspapers that had chronicled his peripatetic life saw fit to bear the tidings of its sad end.

Reprinted with permission of author

HOW CAN YOU HELP? HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS FROM BETH WILLS:

1) Send in obituaries you have collected over the years. They can be posted directed to the website at <<http://cgi.rootsweb.com/~genbbs/genbbs.cgi/USA/Mi/IoniaObits>>

2) Send in those family stories and biographies that you have either written yourself or found in various publications. Take a few minutes to type it up and send it to me, or better yet, post it to the website at

<<http://cgi.rootsweb.com/~genbbs/genbbs.cgi/USA/Mi/IoniaBios>>

3) Do you have copies of entries from a birth, marriage or death register. If you have copies of a whole page, take a few minutes and transcribe the whole page and send it to me.

4) Church documents - Do you have copies of "all the Smith's" baptized, married or buried from one of the local churches. You may have valuable information that does not pertain to your family, but it may be valuable to another researcher. It will be posted for all to see. "One person's trash is another person's treasure."

5) Cemeteries - Do you have information of people buried in any of the cemeteries that is not included in the information already on-line? Please send it in and little-by-little, we can update these files.

6) Newspaper articles. If you've copies whole pages take a few minutes to transcribe the articles on that page and send it to me for posting.

7) Census Records - Again, this is another situation where many of you have whole pages that can be transcribed. Spread sheets are a neat way to transcribe census data. If you need help contact me, I have templates done for most of the years in Excel format.

8) Did you grandmother keep a scrapbook or diary. See if you can find any of these old articles and get them transcribed.

9) Do you have a copy of a will that was probated in the county? Please transcribe it. I would love to build a page just for transcribed wills.

10) Have you collected names while looking for military information? Why not share these lists with the rest of us.

11) Do you own an old county plat map? We would like to see someone take one of those old maps and transcribe all the property owners to share with us.

12) Do you have any old copies (not under copy right) from early genealogical societies? If what you have was published after 1974 and there is a copy right, we might be able to get the publisher and/or author to release it so we can post it.

13) SHARE YOUR INFORMATION!!



BOOK REVIEWS

by Teresa Sweet

How to Trace Your Family Tree American - Genealogical Research Institute Staff

This book will give you information on how to start researching your family tree in early America until the present. It gives information on archives around the United States and different resources. It tells how the calendar changed in the 1700's. There is a complete chapter on census and how to find them, read them, and Soundex. It also explains PERSI. There is a chapter on the wars and how to obtain records on all the wars that were recorded in the United States. It will explain the different ways to show and learn authenticity of the family crest and where to send for information. This book has information on different societies such as the Daughters of the Revolution and has addresses for these societies. It is a must read for beginners.

Crossings - Celebrating 25 Years of Service in Preserving the History of the Lake Odessa Area--Lake Odessa Area Historical Society.

This book tells of the coming of the railroads in Ionia, Barry, and Eaton counties during the end of the 1800's and the beginning of the 1900's. It shows the different towns that were developed and then how people moved and worked to build towns because of the route of the railroad. Excellent resource on the settlements that no longer exist in the area, and why the settlers moved on. Settlements listed are Elmdale, Freeport, Sunfield, Lake Odessa, Clarksville, Coats Grove, Woodland, Woodbury, Sebewa, Rosina, Carlton Center, South Cass, Odessa

Center, Algodon, West Sebewa, Gerkey, Warnerville, Dellwood, Kelly, Bismark, Shaytown, Bonanza, and Cornell Corners.

Colonial Americans of Royal and Noble Descent

--Alleged, Proven and Disproved
by Patricia Ann Scherzinger

This book is a master index to colonial Americans of Royal descent whose pedigrees have been published in about one hundred English-language books and periodicals. This will help identify those Americans born during the colonial period (before 1776) who descend from an immigrant of royal ancestry, and to pick up all lines with surnames different from that of the royal immigrants. The entries are alphabetical by surname and then given name. They include a few bits of geographical and biographical data, which will help with identification. Each entry will tell who the person is descended from and gives reference to where the reader can find the information. Also tells whether the person has been proven as a royal ancestor or whether this person has still to be proven.

FIRST FAMILY NEWS

The 1998 index of names has been added to our web site on the Ionia County page. Stop in and see how we have grown!

LDS CHURCH

The LDS Church is going to begin a beta test of Family Search on the Internet for about a three week trial basis in March at:

<<http://www.familysearch.org>> They would like everyone to try it out and respond. After a short beta testing they will take it off the Internet in order to fix any problems.

THANK YOU: In reponse to a request for reseachers in Ionia County Jackie Badersnider of Belding and Pat Bravender of Grand Rapids have volunteered to assist us. Jackie has access to the Alvah N. Belding Library in Belding and Pat has access to the Grand Rapids Public Library.

This is a list of signatures found in the front of a composition book which includes the minutes of the organizational meetings for the Riker School Class Reunions which began in 1927. The title of the first page said LeValley M.E. Church 1927. There was no other indication of what this sign in list was for. This book was part of the items we received from Miss

Jessie Hinds estate. Mrs. Harriot Perrett was the secretary of the board that governed the class reunion. I do not know what the connection between this list of names and the Riker school is. Maybe you can help make it more clear? Some of the handwriting is hard to decipher, so I cannot guarantee complete accuracy.

Mrs. George **Thayer** - Orleans
Mrs. B.A. **Reeves** - Orleans
Mrs. Harry H. **Reynolds** - Portland
Mrs. R. W. **Dawdy** - Portland
Mrs. P.J. **Trierweiler** - Portland
Mrs. Charles P. **Munger** - Portland
Mrs. Wilment? L. **Moore**
Mrs. Nellie **Otis** - Saranac
Mrs. Anna **Braley** - Saranac
Mrs. Mae L. **Cobb** - Saranac
Mrs. Mae **Conner** - Saranac
Mrs. Bertha **Eddy** - Saranac
Mrs. Georgia **Reasoner** - Palo
Mrs. G. C. **Wellman** - Palo
Mrs. G. J. **Edington??**- Ionia
Mary **Normilica?** - Ionia
Mrs. Geo. E. **Green** - Ionia
Mrs. Mary E. **Folson?** - Lyons
Mrs. Geo. **Staley** - Lyons
Mrs. J. R. **Bricker** - Ionia
Mrs. E.S. **Danner** - Muir
Mrs. Earl **Benedict** - Muir
Mrs. E. ? **Danner** - Muir
Mrs. Mike **Kelley** - Muir
Mrs. Nettie **Sayers** -
Mrs. Marion **Runyer** - Lyons
Mrs. Elena **Searing**
Mrs. Margaret **Ranger** - Lyons
Mrs. Ellen **Vance** - Lyons
Kathryn **McQuillie?** - Lyons
Mrs. Edgar **Johnson** - Ionia
Mrs. Howard **Roush** - Ionia
Mrs. J. L. **Jordan** - Ionia
Mrs. R.W. **Setchfield** - Ionia
Mrs. Rille **Warner** - Orleans
Nora **Palmer** - Orleans

Rose M. **Wilkinson** - Orleans
Ollie **Lowrey** - Saranac
Elizabeth **Houserman** - Saranac
Jane E. **Robinson** - Saranac
Mrs. Glen **Tower** - Saranac Literary Club
Mrs. H. S. **Ellis** - Belding Literary Club
Mrs. Chas. **Hayward** - Saranac
Mrs. Dorothy **Austin** - Belding
Mrs. Dorothy **McHaughton** - Belding
Mrs. Laura **Lawless** - Orange
Mrs. Veryl **Tyler** - Orange Twp. Portland
Mrs. W. E. **Porter** - Portland
Mrs. J.W. **Morrissey** - Sunfield
Mrs. W. R. **Ward** - Belding
Mrs. Geo. S. **Kelly** - Orange
Vida M. **Jordan** - Orange
Mrs. Jessica **Wright** - Orange
Mrs. J. F. **Pinkham?** - Belding
Mrs. Earl **Monks** - Orange
Mrs. Ray **Gibbs** - Orange
Mrs. L. C. **Leuau??** - Portland
Mrs. H. T. **Emery** - Portland
Mrs. R. A. **Hawley** - Ionia
Mrs. J.M. **Irweg** - Lyons
Mrs. Flora **Gassdorf** - Lyons
Mrs. S.C. **Faxore** - Lyons
Mrs. ? F. **Upton** - Lyons
Mrs. E. **Davenport** - Ionia
Mrs. M.C. **Gates** - Saranac
Mrs. Ray **Smith** - Saranac
Mrs. Olive K. **McGannan** - Ionia
Mrs. Roy **Mosson** - Ionia
Mrs. J. **Mosson**
Mrs. Fred **Sandborn** - Ionia
Thelma **Sandborn** - Ionia
Mrs. Lewis James - Ionia

Mrs. Katherine Taylor - Saranac
Mrs. Myrtle Taylor - Saranac
Mrs. Lillian Denman - Saranac
Mrs. Myron Badder - Ionia
Mrs. Flora Hough - Lake Odessa
Ella Fellows - Lake Odessa
Gertrude Robinson - Lake Odessa
Marjorie Johnson - Lake Odessa
Mrs. Mary Hines - Lake Odessa
Mrs. Mertie E. Johnson - Lake Odessa
Mrs. Hattie Newman - Portland
Mrs. George W. Allen - Portland
Louise Warn??? - Portland
Erma Reeder - Ionia
Mrs. Perry Davenport - Ionia
Mrs. Ralph Moore - Ionia
Mrs. Joshua Burrows - Ionia
Mrs. Chas. A. Groff - Belding
Mrs. Ed. Ostram - Belding
Mrs. Louise Hall - Orleans
Mrs. Metta Mosher
Mrs. Ed. N. Lowry - Ionia
Mrs. Harvey E. Kidder - Ionia
Mrs. ? E. Sessions - Ionia
Mrs. L. W. Stewart - Ionia
Mrs. H. ? . Talcott - Saranac
Mrs. Nora Hartwell - Saranac
Mrs. Mella Mosher
Mrs. Wm. Hunt - Saranac
Mrs. Lorene Northrop - Saranac
Mrs. Grace Hidstrom? - Ionia
Margaret Jacobs - Ionia
Beulah Trowbridge
Neva Stone - Muir
Bess Stone - Muir
Mrs. C. J. Holt
Mrs. T. C. Jackson
Mrs. W. Loveless
Mrs. J.C. Flewing - Pewamo
Mrs. R. H. Darby - Lyons
Mrs. Orra Weeds - Ionia
Janie Tuttle - Ionia
Katherine Taylor - Ionia
Alma Nelson - Ionia
Mrs. G. Decker - Ada

Mrs. Rier - Ionia
Mrs. Graham - Ionia
Mrs. Leon Miner - Owosso
Mrs. Eugene Bugbee - Ionia
Mrs. Evelyn Jepson - Saranac
Eleanor Musch - Muir
Aura Tooker - Muir
Beatrice E. Smith - Muir
Marim Keiffer - Muir
Mrs. Geo. E. Nichols - Danby
Mrs. S. Lau???? - Danby
Mrs. Claude Faude - Ionia
Mrs. Ella Holme - Ionia
Mrs. Charles Burrows
Mrs. Mary Smith
Sadie Haynes
Mary Minier
Mrs. Ray Noorington - Ionia R#2
Mrs. Fred Scheurer Jr. - Ionia R#2
Clara Vansickle - W.L.C. Ionia
Bernice E. Powell - W.L.C. Ionia
Mrs. L.W. Guffing - Muir
Mrs. Levi Greenwood - Muir
Mrs. Geo. L. Shaw - Muir
Mrs. A. W. Cushman - Grand Rapids
Mrs. F. A. Paige - Saranac
Mrs. M. Billinger - Saranac
Mrs. J. P. Billinger - Saranac
Mrs. Edna Glazier - Orleans
Mrs. Elta Pierce - Orleans
Mrs. Ella Richards
Mrs. Myrtie Lowrey - Saranac
Mrs. Irene Palmer - Orleans
Mrs. Hazel Spaulding - Orleans
Mrs. Avloris (?) Burrdick - Ionia
Mrs. Nelson Tuttle
Mrs. S. Brown
Mrs. Goldie Bennett - Ionia
Mrs. Earl Swiler - Danby
Carrie R. Monroe - Portland and Danby
Verna Saxton Swiler - Danby
Mrs. Frank Perrett - Orange
Mrs. J. Fred Fischer Jr. - Ionia
Mrs. H.O. Oakland - Ionia

1999 Calendar of Events - Ionia County Genealogical Society

April

- 6 7:30 p.m. First Families of Ionia County Meeting at Swilers
- 10 1:00 p.m. ICGS Regular Membership Meeting - Speaker John Waite "Tax Assessment Records".
- 24 10:00-2:00 Depot Museum open to public for researchers
- 29 7:00 p.m. ICGS Board Meeting at Swilers.

May

- 4 7:30 p.m. First Families of Ionia County Society Meeting at Swilers
- 8 1:00 p.m. ICGS Regular Membership Meeting - Speaker, Merrie DeVoe "Bounty Land Warrants".
- 15 10:00-12:00 Beginning Genealogy Class by Merrie DeVoe. Cost \$5.00 includes materials. Pre-pay and Sign up in advance.
- 27 7:00 p.m. ICGS Board Meeting at Swilers
- 29 10:00-2:00 Depot Museum open to public for researchers.

June

- 1 7:30 p.m. First Families of Ionia County Society Meeting at Swilers
- 12 1:00 p.m. ICGS Regular Membership Meeting - Speaker to be announced.
- 24 7:00 p.m. ICGS Board Meeting at Swilers.
- 26 10:00-2:00 Depot Museum open to public for researchers

July

- 3 25th Anniversary of Art in the Park in Lake Odessa
 - 5 7:30 p.m. First Families of Ionia County Society Meeting at Swilers
 - 24 1:00 p.m. Regular Membership Meeting - Speaker to be announced.
 - 29 7:00 p.m. ICGS Board Meeting at Swilers
 - 31 Depot Day - ICGS Civil War Reenactment
-

EATON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY Presents Its Annual Workshop on Saturday, May 1, 1999. Keynote Speaker is Roger D. Joslyn. Topics: Born in New York, but *where* in New York?

New York Probate Records

19th Century Passenger Arrival Lists and National Records

A Sibling is a Small, Crawling, Animal - help among the collaterals

Holiday Inn South, 6820 S. Cedar St., Lansing, MI. Cost of workshop \$30.00 includes lunch. After April 15th total cost is \$40.00. Mail your check made payable to Eaton County Genealogical Society to: Susan Polhamus, Registration Chairperson, 4801 Ellendale Drive, Lansing, MI 48911.

There will be vendors and a Library of Michigan Tour and Research Day and a Eaton County Genealogical Society Tour and Research at the Courthouse in Charlotte. You must pre-register for tours. Call (517)543-8792 or E-Mail <ecgsoc@juno.com>

Those interested in becoming a member of the I.C.G.S. complete the form below and send it with \$15.00 annual membership fee made payable to the Ionia County Genealogical Society. Mail it to: ICGS c/o Pam Swiler at 13051 Ainsworth Road, Route 3, Lake Odessa, MI 48849.
.....

Membership Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Zip Code: _____ Home Telephone: _____

E-mail address: _____

List five Ionia County Surnames you are researching: _____

Note: All information may be published in upcoming newsletters or placed on our internet web site unless you indicate in writing otherwise.

IONIA COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
c/o Pamela K. Swiler
13051 Ainsworth Road
Route 3
Lake Odessa, MI 48849
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

TO:

**Have You Sent Us
Your Family
Sketch????**