

WARREN COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY *e-News* January 2025

This monthly newsletter is being distributed to Warren County Genealogical Society members and other interested parties. Feel free to share with others as you see fit. If you wish to be added or removed from our mailing list, contact us by phone 513-695-1144 or email at wcgsoh@gmail.com.

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WCGS RESOURCE LIBRARY HOURS

The Resource Library will be closed Monday, January 20, 2025, for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

The Resource Library will be closed Monday, February 17, 2025, for President’s Day.

2025 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Our programs are FREE and open to the public. All are welcome!

March Virtual Program “**Ohio Catholic Records Research**” presented by **Dana Palmer**
Wednesday, March 12, 2025, 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM EDT – Zoom Program

October Virtual Program “**Hoosier Family: Getting Started with Indiana Research**” presented by **Dana Palmer**
Wednesday, October 8, 2025, 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM EDT – Zoom Program

If you are on our email list, you will automatically receive a Zoom invitation to join us for our Virtual Chapter Meeting and Program. You can sign up for our email list at the bottom of any website page. <https://www.wcgsohio.org>

WCGS OFFICERS

The newly elected officers were installed at the Board Meeting held Thursday, January 9, 2025. Many thanks to the outgoing officers and welcome to the new officers of WCGS!

	2023 / 2024	2025 / 2026
President:	Linda Eckert	Jim Brokaw
Vice-President:	Delores Bovee	Diana Linkous
Treasurer:	Jo Roth	
Recording Secretary:		Laura Ingling
Corresponding Secretary:	Deborah Osburn	Deborah Osburn

Jo Roth will remain as Acting Treasurer until a qualified candidate can be found. If you have any interest in helping our Society in this capacity, please contact Jim Brokaw at president.wcgsoh@gmail.com. Previous experience in bookkeeping or accounting would be helpful and experience with nonprofits a plus. If you are interested and do not have this experience, please still contact us! We may be able to train the right candidate.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Submitted by Jim Brokaw, WCGS President and Research Chair

Happy New Year and welcome to the 44th (soon to be 45th) year of the Warren County Genealogical Society! I would like to begin by thanking every one of our volunteers for their commitment to our Society. These dedicated and hard-working individuals keep the Research Library open, answer phone calls, assist visitors, conduct research, and tend to the business of WCGS. We are truly fortunate to benefit from their time and expertise.

No nonprofit organization can exist without officers and committee chairs, and I want to thank those who held key positions in 2024: Linda Eckert, President; Delores Bovee, Vice President; Jo Roth, Treasurer and Webmaster; and Debbie Osburn, Corresponding Secretary, for their outstanding efforts and dedication to WCGS. This year we welcome Charter Member Diana Linkous as Vice-President, welcome back Debbie Osburn as Corresponding Secretary, and we thank Jo Roth for volunteering to remain on board as Acting Treasurer and Acting Webmaster until replacements can be found.

We cannot exist without our membership, either. We want to thank every one of our WCGS Members and Life Members for your continuing support, and if you still need to renew your membership for 2025, please do!

In upcoming issues of the *e-News* I will discuss various activities of our Society, our volunteers, and the genealogical community in general. There are so many wonderful things happening at WCGS and in the genealogical world!

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our Society and especially our **Support The Star!** fundraising drive. The *Western Star* newspaper is the single best resource for genealogical and historical research on the people of Warren County, and it is available to you online for free! Our initial \$150,000 digitization and publication project is nearly complete, but we are missing entire years of 19th century editions, and are actively searching for existing paper and microfilm repositories to help us to fill those gaps. The production process is laborious and very expensive; therefore, we will continue our fundraising efforts to make more editions of the *Western Star* available to you! We welcome your donations, and if you are willing to help us with our fundraising effort, please let me know.

WESTERN STAR ANALYTICS

Since the fall of 2018, our **Alleen Stephenson Digital Newspaper Project**, sponsored and maintained by the Warren County Genealogical Society, has provided free public access to digital images of the *Western Star* from 1807 through 2001 on the [Ohio Memory Project](https://ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/p16007coll84). With the addition of issues through 2001, there are now well over **157,000** pages online (we are still calculating the exact number). As of the end of 2024, **36,337** users have viewed **770,459** pages in **55,332** sessions. The fourth quarter of 2024 alone showed 4,036 users of which 3,131 were NEW users viewing over 65,000 pages!

The landing page for the project is: <https://ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/p16007coll84>

YOUR FEEDBACK IS NEEDED BY JANUARY 16

The **Alleen Stephenson Digital Newspaper Project** is hosted by the Ohio History Connection. We are seeking feedback on ways to improve your experience when using this project on their website and searching the *Western Star*. Please send any comments, questions, or suggestions to Jim Brokaw at president.wcgsoh@gmail.com. This request has a very quick turnaround time as we have a meeting scheduled for later in January and would like to present them with input from YOU! Thank you in advance for helping us (and them) improve!

SUPPORT THE STAR! UPDATE

Thank you to everyone who donated in 2024 and helped us locate missing issues. Our fundraising campaign to [Support the Star!](#) was launched July 4, 2024, with a goal of raising \$20,000 by July 4, 2025. To date, we have raised \$11,205.09 with the help of our matching pledge, and are well on our way to reaching our goal!

Deborah Bennett
Adie and Donald R. Bohnenkamp, Jr.
Jim and Charlene Brokaw
Linda Stradling Campbell
Cindy Cary
Patricia Dubrow
Linda Eckert
Glenn Eschrich
Lebanon Elks Lodge #422
Lee Eltzroth

Little Miami History Connection
Greg and Mindy Hoffbauer
Merralee Retallick
Melody Roth
Tom and Jo Roth
Leniegh Schrinar
Todd and Becky Stephenson
Judith Morris Tooman
Iris Wilson

RESET FOR 2025

Submitted by Jo Roth

January is a great time to review the past year, get things organized, and prepare for the upcoming year. High on my list of priorities:

1. **SET A GOAL:** Establish exactly what I want to accomplish with my family history research this year. Working with a goal (or two or three) in mind helps keep me on track and improves my productivity.
2. **COMPUTER CLEAN UP:** Review computer files and clean up any that may need renamed or relocated. Purge those that are no longer relevant and can be safely deleted or move those that I might need in the future to an external device, such as a thumb drive or external hard drive. In general, do a quick once-over to refresh my memory of what I have and what I do not.
3. **PAPER AND BOOKS:** Do the same with my paper files, books, and binders. Ensure that all irreplaceable or valuable documents are in fire-resistant bag(s) and / or in the safety deposit box. Double-check that copies of them are saved digitally and that I can find them.
4. **KEEP IT SAFE:** Review antivirus and security software for computers and other devices. Ensure they are all updated and scanned, and run any disk defragment or cleanups needed.
5. **BACK IT UP:** Review backup service for computers and other devices. Check what is actually being backed up and ensure it can be restored if needed.
6. **PLAN IT:** Plan year in terms of conferences, seminars, classes, research trips, and webinars. Establish a budget for these and find ways to stay within it and still do everything I would like.
7. **SCHEDULE IT:** Schedule everything on my calendar. I use Google Calendar for my schedule and share it with those who need to know my plans. If it gets scheduled, it gets done. That includes free time, taking care of myself time, and time off!
8. **IF I GET HIT BY A BUS:** Review my plan for what happens if something should happen to me. I have a letter with instructions titled, "Open This if I Am Dead." While it is much more involved than that, it gives my next of kin a clear place to start.

We all are guilty of intending to do many of these things and never getting around to it. Make this the year to finally do them. Turn those intentions into actions! Take some time this January to press the reset button for yourself.

PHYSICAL VS. DIGITAL COPIES OF SOCIETY NEWSLETTERS

If you receive printed copies of newsletters from this or other organizations, please take a minute to consider whether you could make the switch to receiving a digital copy. We are happy to accommodate those who truly need a printed copy, but if you are able, opting to receive a digital version saves nonprofit organizations like WCGS a great deal of money, time, and materials. To give you an example, each printed copy of *e-News* costs approximately \$0.95 to print (black ink) and mail. Please let us know if you would like to make the switch. It is greatly appreciated!

BETTER RESULTS FROM YOUR FAMILYSEARCH FULL-TEXT SEARCH

Submitted by Jim Brokaw, WCGS President and Research Chair
president.wcgs@gmail.com

Since the April 2024 *e-News* article describing the FamilySearch Full Text experiment, they have added an incredible number of records to the project, including Civil and Probate Court records, vital records, genealogies, and countless more records invaluable to the research you can conduct in the comfort of your living room. Did you know conducting these same searches in a FamilySearch Affiliate Library will give you better results? Did you know the WCGS Resource Library is a FamilySearch Affiliate Library?

Recently, I entered a series of Full Text search requests on my ancestors from home, and then repeated the same searches in the WCGS FamilySearch Affiliate Library with the following results:

“Ferdinand Brokaw”	Home: 22 results	WCGS: 38 results
“Christian Loar”	Home: 38 results	WCGS: 43 results
“Levi Dubois”	Home: 313 results	WCGS: 459 results
“Tobias Dubois”	Home: 284 results	WCGS: 325 results

The additional results included vital records, court and church records, genealogies, and genealogy cards. One of the best surprises was finding my great grandfather living, marrying, and divorcing, all in a very short time, in a state I never would have thought to check.

I noticed over the period of just two weeks of research for this article, the number of returns for a couple of my searches increased! If you check my work, you may find different results. The takeaway here is if it has been a while since you last tried FamilySearch Full Text search for your research, it might be time to try it again.

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/full-text>

Let me know if you discover the same thing when searching from home vs. using a FamilySearch Affiliate Library. Visit the WCGS Resource Library if you are local or happen to be in the area. We have volunteers ready to assist you with your family research!

RECLAIM THE RECORDS – 18 MILLION U.S. VETERAN RECORDS

Submitted by Jo Roth

This grabbed my attention! First-ever FREE public access to the Beneficiary Identification Records Locator Subsystem (BIRLS) database (<https://www.birls.org/>), which is the main index to the Veteran Administration’s records of veteran benefit files (and some non-veterans). To quote RTR:

“...the super-short version of the story is this: we figured out how to get access-by-FOIA to some amazing veteran records from the VA, from the late nineteenth century to the present day, really unusual records that aren’t available anywhere else, and now we want to help you get these files, too.”

“search for a name, push a button, and a few months later get a DVD full of scanned files in your mailbox from the VA, ALL FOR FREE”

The link below takes you to their newsletter with more information about how to request records:

<https://mailchi.mp/reclaimtherecords/the-birls-database-goes-online-with-eighteen-million-us-veteran-records-and-free-foia-by-fax-system>

GRIP 2025 GENEALOGY INSTITUTE – NEW LOCATION!

<https://grip.ngsgenealogy.org/>

Sunday, June 22, 2025 – Friday, June 27, 2025 – Virtual Courses
Sunday, July 13, 2025 – Friday, July 18, 2025 – In-Person Courses
University of Pittsburgh, 4200 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15260-0001

INSTITUTE OF GENEALOGY AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH (IGHR)

c/o Georgia Genealogical Society, Inc., P.O. Box 551247, Atlanta, Georgia 30355-2747
Telephone 678-439-7503 <https://ighr.gagensociety.org/>

IGHR 2025 Virtual Institute

Save the Dates! Sunday, July 27 – Friday, August 1, 2025 – Virtual

IGHR 2026 Virtual Institute

Save the Dates! Sunday, July 26 – Friday, July 31, 2026 – Virtual

45TH IAJGS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JEWISH GENEALOGY

<https://www.iajgs.org/conference/iajgs2025/>

Sunday, August 10, 2025 – Thursday, August 14, 2025
Grand Wayne Convention Center, 120 W Jefferson Blvd, Fort Wayne, IN 46802
The Grand Wayne Convention Center is connected to the Hilton Fort Wayne and located a block from the Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center.

GENEALOGY WEBINARS

Please visit the following sites for complete lists of webinars being presented.

[Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center](#)
[American Ancestors by New England Historic Genealogical Society](#)
[ConferenceKeeper](#)
[Florida State Genealogical Society](#)
[International Society for British Genealogy and Family History](#)
[Legacy Family Tree Webinars](#)

KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS

Support WCGS each time you check out by participating in the Kroger Community Rewards Program.

- Visit <https://www.kroger.com> and sign into your Kroger account.
- Click the icon above your name to access “My Account” and look for Community Rewards on that page.
- Select Community Rewards and search by Organization Name or Number and enroll in the program:
 - Organization Name – Warren Co Chpr of the Ohio Genealogical Soc
 - Organization Number – SU662

Then, every time you shop and use your Kroger Plus card, Kroger will make a small donation to WCGS!

WHAT TO WATCH

Looking for a good show to watch that involves genealogy? *The Breakthrough* (2025), a four-episode miniseries now showing on Netflix, is getting rave reviews from several well-known genealogists. The description from [imdb.com](https://www.imdb.com):

“When the double murder in Linköping, Sweden, back in 2004 was finally solved after 16 years, it was a genealogist who made the breakthrough. For the first time in Europe, a murder could be solved through genealogical research.”

Some have commented that the story is a bit slow to start, but the consensus is it is very well done and worth checking out.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to the following people and organizations who have made a monetary or materials donation to WCGS recently. Our Society and Resource Library Catalog continues to expand because of your generosity!

Deborah Bennett
Greg and Mindy Hoffbauer
Donna Lynch

Leniegh Schrinar
Todd and Becky Stephenson
Judy Tooman

WARREN COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

WCGS has more than 160 Warren County Genealogical publications available for purchase. These can be purchased from the [Shop and Support](#) page of our website or you can download an order form: <https://www.wcgsohio.org/downloadable-forms>.

Membership is \$25 for a regular membership (single or family) or \$250 for a Life Membership. Please visit the [Join or Renew](#) page on our website or you can download a Membership Application: <https://www.wcgsohio.org/downloadable-forms>.

Phone: 513-695-1144 Email: wcgsoh@gmail.com
WCGS NEW Website: <https://www.wcgsohio.org>
WCGS OLD Website (has broken links, but also GREAT databases): <http://www.wcgsoh.org>
WCGS Virtual Cemetery: <http://sites.rootsweb.com/~ohwarren/Cemetery/burial.htm>
Western Star Digitization Project: <https://www.ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/p16007coll84>
Warren County OHGenWeb Site: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ohwarren/>

RESOURCE LIBRARY HOURS: Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
The WCGS Resource Library is open to the public. We are a FamilySearch Affiliate Library.

At least it isn't 1977 or 1978...
<https://ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/p16007coll84/id/86480/rec/3>

★ The Western Star ★

171st Year — No. 47 Lebanon, Ohio — Wednesday, January 18, 1978 5 Sections 64 Pages 15 Cents

Same Week

Blizzard Repeat Of 1977

By JANET GOODE

On the anniversary of last winter's sledge-hammer blows of snow and cold, mother nature seems intent on giving Warren Courians an encore. In fact during the same week. It is not a particularly welcome anniversary present. The answer to those of us asking ourselves whether this winter could possibly be as bad as last winter has been, "Yes and no," so far.

As far as temperature is concerned, we are much better off. When it comes to snow, however, we are running ahead of last year, according to C.E. Stephenson, the official U.S. weather observer at Kings Mills.

Temperatures hovered in the mid-20s Tuesday with the official overnight low at Vandalia at 20 degrees Fahrenheit.

Last year at this time, Warren County was shivering under a record 46-hour siege of subzero cold with temperatures plummeting to minus 25 degrees. And the worst was yet to come.

The following week, Salem and Hartsville townships reported low temperatures of 27 and 28 degrees below zero, respectively, breaking an old record of minus 19 degrees, set in 1930.

By Jan. 12, 16 inches of snow had been dumped on the county and although not a great deal more fell, high winds whipped the groundcover into crippling drifts, tying up roads, isolating families and finally forcing activation of the National Guard to aid county emergency crews with snow removal and rescue work.

Snow remained on the ground until Feb. 22.

Snow Tops Last Year

Snowfall so far this year, however, already tops last year's precipitation.

As of 7 a.m. Tuesday, a total of 19 inches of snow had been recorded at the Kings Mills station, although Stephenson reported that only 12 inches of that remained on the ground Tuesday.

An additional three inches fell between 7 a.m. Tuesday and 7 a.m. Wednesday, when the U.S. weather observer made his official reading this morning.

Stephenson's rundown of snowfall so far is as follows:

Snow began falling Jan. 6 with an accumulation of two inches. Three inches fell each day on Jan. 8, 14 and 16. One inch fell each day the next three days, Jan. 14, 15, and 16, five inches on Jan. 17 and three inches on Jan. 18.

But the real trial may be yet to come.

Although a high in the upper 30s was predicted for Wednesday with diminishing winds, tonight's low is predicted at 10 to 15

Activity in downtown Lebanon ground to a standstill Tuesday as foot-high snow made travel by car almost impossible. This deserted scene was taken about 11 a.m. from Broadway, looking south. A few motorists braved conditions, but there was no need this day for the "No Parking, Doctors only" sign. Most merchants closed their doors at noon or shortly afterwards. "We had four customers all morning," one commented. City crews entered to plow and haul away the snow later.

Overtime Costs To Clear Snow Seen As "Staggering"