



MADISON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Winterset, Iowa

Contact us: madisoncountyiagenealogy@gmail.com

December 2025 Newsletter

MEETING: Our meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month (except January and February) in the Winterset Public Library meeting room, at 6:00 pm.

DUES: Payable before January 1 of each year. Annual is \$10 per person or \$15 per family. Life membership is \$115.

RESEARCH: \$10 per hour plus cost of copies and postage. Send inquires to our email address.

OFFICERS FOR 2026

PRESIDENT	Marcia Trevillyan
VICE PRESIDENT	Skip Greenwood
SECRETARY:	Colleen Haglan-Lynch
TREASURER:	Colleen Peterson
OBIT ENTRY	Pat Hochstetler Kathi Kuhl
DIRECTORS (year term ends)	Linda Smith (2025) Pat Hochstetler (2026) Donna Crow (2027)
IAGenWeb COORD:	Linda Smith
EMAIL:	madisoncountyiagenealogy@gmail.com
WEBSITE:	madisoncountyiagenealogy.com
MADISON COUNTY GENEALOGY INFO:	www.iagenweb.org/madison

Last Issue of Newsletter
See last page for
how to keep in touch.

Message from Our President

Greetings MCG society members and friends,

I'm sure you have heard that old saying; "Time sure flies the older you get." Well, isn't that the truth. (Not that I'm getting any older you understand!) Here we are at the end of year 2025.

In this newsletter you will find articles that highlight our Madison County Genealogical Society and all of its wonderful programs, projects and people.

We had another year of GREAT programs! There were the intriguing programs by Colleen Peterson about whispers of a distant relative who had ties to the Mob and Donna Crow finding among her family's papers a document regarding an indentured child. It was fascinating to hear all the research that each of them did to answer those genealogy questions of who, what, when, where and why. Also, Sandy Harper presented a program on the town of Barney. That was special to me as my Dad at age 9 or 10, and his family moved from Valley Junction to a farm just outside of Barney. Those were just a few of the interesting programs this year.

I always enjoy our Roundtable discussions at the end of our meetings. We had a lot of lively discussions at our December meeting which gave us some thoughts for programs for next year, so stay tuned.

This year we had a new project to provide a free 'Public Notice' sign to all Madison Co. cemetery caretakers that displayed the Iowa legal code as a deterrent to vandalism. Another new project which is ongoing, is researching to make sure that every veteran buried in Madison Co. has a flag grave marker. Read more about both inside.

Then there were those ongoing projects by dedicated members like Pat Hochstetler, Colleen Haglan-Lynch, and others who walk the cemeteries to document new burials and take photos of new/updated gravestones. They completed the monumental task of coming up with a navigation map of the crooked rows in St. Patrick's cemetery.

Next year will be the 250th celebration of the Independence of the USA. We are discussing a cemetery walk project for the public to note the occasion and highlight our genealogy work. A planning committee has been formed to present ideas at the March meeting. Also, we have heard from the public that an MCGS presence at the County Fair has been missed, so more discussions to come on that, too. *(Continued on next page)*

Inside, you will find an article that explains that this is our last MCGS newsletter. I want to give a big thank-you to Linda Smith for all her fantastic work and time putting together all of those wonderful articles.

If you haven't been to a meeting in a while, I hope you will join us in March. I think it will be the start of an exciting New Year! Reminder: We meet the second Tuesday of the Month at 6:00 PM. (except January & February – Burr!)

Marcia Trevillyan
President, Madison County Genealogical Society



Remembering Lorainne (Mitchell) Kile

May 2, 1932 — September 27, 2025

Lorainne was born in Webster Township, Madison County, Iowa to Clem and Vera (Hardisty) Mitchell and married Wayne Kile in 1953. Genealogy was her lifelong passion, and she was active in the Madison County Genealogy Society from its founding. She faithfully attended meetings to contribute ideas, encouragement, and her wonderful smile. Her thoughtfulness included suggesting that her memorial funds be directed to the Madison County Genealogical Society.

County-wide Care of Veteran Gravestones

To celebrate US veterans during the month of November, The Winterset Madisonian newspaper asked that MCGS provide a summary of our activities that honor veterans in Madison County cemeteries. This article was published in the November 26, 2025 edition.

During the month of November, thoughts turn toward US veterans. One way to remember and honor those who served is by caring for their gravestones throughout Madison County. Veteran graves account for 2000 to 2500 of the 32,000 burials within Madison County's 53 active cemeteries. The Madison County Genealogical Society (MCGS) plus other organizations and individuals work together to assure they are identified and cared for.

Identifying Veteran Burials

Members of MCGS have documented veteran burials for over 50 years. Documenting the gravestones in cemeteries began in the early 1970s as an activity nationally encouraged prior to the 1976 American Bicentennial. A local group visited each cemetery, walking row by row to create a list of all the gravestones there, with veterans noted. That shared interest led to the creation of the Madison County Genealogical Society in 1978.

Throughout the years, these cemetery "walks" have continued with each producing a new list of existing gravestones and known veterans. The complete set of documentation, covering 50 years, is organized by cemetery in 3-ring notebooks that are held in the Winterset Public Library's genealogy section.



Providing Gravestones

Over the last 10 years, MCGS has led a project to place gravestones at unmarked graves of pre-World War I veterans, which require no descendant participation. The Veterans Administration (VA) will provide a free gravestone with a completed application and approved documentation of the veteran's service. In addition, township trustees or the cemetery association must sign the application to confirm they approve where the stone will be placed.

MCGS found that those who care for cemeteries have welcomed this opportunity to honor veterans.

Several organization and individuals are involved with this project. The Madison County Historical Complex receives and stores the 350-lb gravestones until they can be placed. Various individuals take the time to set the gravestones in cemeteries throughout the county, including township trustees, Boy Scouts, father-and-son teams, neighbors, and MCGS members. The Winterset Cemetery sexton has placed five gravestones over unmarked veteran graves.

To date, 32 veteran gravestones have been provided by the VA and placed in 19 cemeteries. By conflict, the gravestones are: War of 1812 - 3, Civil War – 25, Spanish-American War - 2, and Mexican Border War - 2. You can see a photo of these gravestones at the Madison County IAGenWeb site: www.IAGenWeb.org/madison/military/american_civil_war/cwgp/CWG.html



Left: Ryan Marquart and son Zane set a gravestone for Archibald Parker, War of 1812 veteran, in Viney Cemetery.



Right: Colleen Peterson and Donna Crow at the grave of Francis Conn, also in Viney Cemetery.



The crew at Viney Cemetery (L-R): Garry Steffen, Luke Brown (Earlham Boy Scout leader), Ryan Marquardt, Donna and Steve Crow



Donna Crow closely supervises the work of the Viney volunteers. This year, Donna led needed work to clear brush and undergrowth so that the VA application could be approved.

Placing Veteran Markers

In the last year, MCGS members have been visiting cemeteries specifically to determine if veterans there are accurately marked with a VA-issued marker beside their gravestone. Each veteran's service record is verified with online and paper records. So far, 44 cemeteries have been completed with gratifying results. For instance, within the Earlham Cemetery, 182 veterans had been previously identified. After walking there and researching veteran records, 221 are

honored with markers. Within Bennett Cemetery, where there were no markers, three War of 1812 veterans are honored .

Each marker contains a place where a small US flag can be inserted, as is done by Madison County veterans' organizations and other volunteers during Memorial Day weekend. Some markers have been replaced with one specific to the conflict in which the veteran served. In the last year, approximately 150 markers have been placed, obtained at no charge from the American Legion or Madison County Veteran Affairs. The larger cemeteries remain to be investigated over the next two years.



Donna Wenzl and her daughter Abbey visited Hartman Cemetery in June to place a marker at the grave of Donna's maternal great-grandfather, Solomon Delong, a veteran of the War of 1812



MCGS Members in Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)

Five members of MCGS are also members of the Jean Marie Cardinell DAR Chapter in Des Moines. It is an active chapter with many worthwhile service projects and activities. If you have an interest in applying for DAR membership, we can help get you started. Likely your family genealogy work has you most of the way there. MCGS has the advantage of member Donna Rock Wenzl who is the Chair of various Jean Marie Cardinell chapter committees: Registration, Lineage Research, Community Service Award, and Historic Preservation, Donna is a tremendous help in getting your application papers completed... completely!



Pat Hochstetler (front), Colleen Peterson, and Linda Smith (back) attend a DAR meeting.



Colleen Haglan-Lynch also became a "daughter" in 2025.



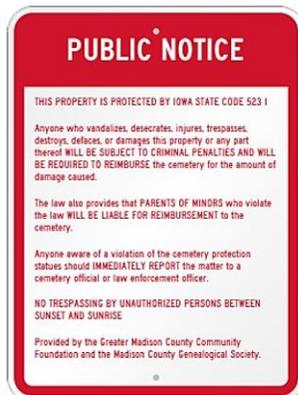
Donna Wenzl is a DAR chair for several chapter committees.

MCGS received Greater Madison County Community Foundation Grant

SAPIC (State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries) designed a sign that they encourage to be posted at cemeteries to deter vandalism. MCGS thought that was a great way to help protect Madison County's 53 cemeteries and to connect with those who care for them, which included towns, township trustees, and individual cemetery associations. Using a portion of the Ida Gross Memorial Fund as a start, we applied for the remaining funds from the Greater Madison County Community Foundation (GMCCF). When the 2025 grant was awarded, we had 60 12x18-inch signs produced, then members handed them out to those who care for cemeteries with a packet of useful MCGS and cemetery information.



MCHS members gladly receive GMCCF grant check
Front L-R: Linda Smith, Donna Crow, Maxine Bussanmus, Skip Greenwood, Ken Callison
Back L-R: Pat Hochstetler, Garry Steffen, Donna Wenzl, Colleen Peterson,
Jared McDonald (GMCCF representative), Marcia Trevillyan



SAPIC sign and shown posted on right column at Winterset Cemetery entrance

IAGenWeb.org/madison Website is Going Strong

Many individuals spend time to provide information and to update the Madison County website associated with the IAGenWeb project. Here are highlights of their work.

Veteran information continues to be contributed

Donna Wenzl provided an update to the list of nearly 800 Madison County WWI veteran soldiers and sailors from her volunteer work at the Gold Star Museum to be entered into the website. Colleen Peterson is verifying veterans with gravestones in each cemetery, so is contributing new or updated information to be entered, too. The Madison County Recorder's office provided us with a full list of public information from DD214 (discharge papers) filed here, comprising over 6000 records from which to glean information.

Obituary Work is Never Done

Pat Hochstetler and Kathi Kuhl alternate months of gathering new obituaries from various online sources. Beth Hunsberger processes the entered obits weekly, including adding a photo of the individual and gravestone link, to prepare them to post on the website. Their combined work resulted in posting over 475 new obituaries in 2025. In addition, Kent Transier completed a two-year project to standardize the headings on over 38,000 obituaries plus assure that they have a link to the Iowa Gravestone photo project in Madison County or Find a Grave, if buried elsewhere.

Passed Website Reviews

Twice each year, our website is reviewed by those who maintain other Iowa county sites. We passed both reviews with nice reviewer comments. In the spring review, we were told, *"A very impressive amount of information on many topics. I enjoyed my visit to Madison County. Keep up the good work!"* This fall, another reviewer stated, *"Wow! The amount and depth of information on the Madison County site is amazing! I'm so impressed with all the work that has been put into the site. And what is totally awesome is that new data is continually added. I'm certain Madison County visitors are extremely appreciative of the creation of material and the maintenance of the site."*

US GenWeb Project
Free Genealogy for 25+ Years

Madison County

Welcome to Madison County IAGenWeb

Madison County is located in the south central part of Iowa. It was established in 1846 and organized in 1849 from a territory within Mahaska County. Madison County has many covered bridges made famous in the book *The Bridges of Madison County* by Robert James Waller. It is also the birthplace of John Wayne and the home of the tree that produced the first "Delicious" apple.

SEARCH THIS SITE

Find!

powered by [FreeFind](#)

IAGenWeb Project

Iowa Gravestone Photo Project

Obits

MADISON COUNTY FAMILY TREE

[Search by \(sur\)Name Index](#)

SITE MENU

- [BIRTH RECORDS](#)
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- [BUSINESS DIRECTORIES](#)
- [CEMETERIES](#)
- [CENSUS RECORDS](#)
- [CHURCHES](#)
- [COUNTY HISTORY](#)
- [COUNTY RESOURCES](#)
- [DEATH RECORDS INDEX](#)

New Visitor Information: Welcome! You are on the path to discovering **ALL** available Madison County vital records directly related to genealogy - births, marriages, deaths and burials. The one exception, due to a concern for privacy, is that births and marriages only older than 100 years old are included, and are updated annually.

The SITE MENU to the left will lead you to an abundance of genealogical records. The most popular menu links are:

- BIRTH RECORDS (29,500+)
- CEMETERIES (31,400+ burials)
- MARRIAGE RECORDS (13,200+)
- OBITUARY INDEX (38,500+).

To get off to a quick start, we suggest:

- Use the yellow SEARCH THIS SITE box in the upper right to find references to a name, surname, place, etc. located *anywhere* across this website.
- Click on the MADISON COUNTY FAMILY TREE icon in the upper left where 102,500+ individuals are grouped in 33,750+ Madison County families. Then verify what you see there with additional research.

2026 Community Foundation Cemetery Fund Opens Soon

April 1, 2026 is the date this year’s Cemetery Restoration Fund grant cycle will begin. Established in 2023 by the Greater Madison County Community Foundation, the Cemetery Fund leverages tax-deductible contributions to preserve, protect, and restore cemeteries throughout Madison County.

The Community Foundation invites township trustees, cemetery boards, and municipalities to apply for matching funds for specific restoration projects. Eligible projects include:

- Repair and Cleaning of Headstones and Monuments – Fund will cover up to 75% of the cost.
- Boundary Fencing Repair/Replacement and Non-Decorative Gates – Fund will cover up to 50% of cost.
- Vegetation Clean-Up (including tree removal threatening stones or fencing, seeding, or site reclamation) – Fund will cover up to 50% of the cost.

Since 2024, the fund supported the repair and/or resetting of 51 headstones in three cemeteries and funded the installation of a new boundary fence to prevent livestock access in another cemetery.

The 2026 grant cycle opens with \$9,000 available for projects. Individual and business donors interested in supporting this effort can still make tax-deductible contributions to the Cemetery Fund.

Interested applicants can find detailed grant information, eligibility criteria, and the online application at <https://www.madisoncountyfoundation.org/cemetery-restoration-fund/>. Applications will be accepted until Oct. 31 and will be reviewed based on fund availability. For more information, contact Ryan Marquardt at 515-462-1891 or email director@madisoncountydevelopment.com.

2025 MCGS Meeting Programs

Each year we plan our year at the March meeting and then review our work (with snacks!) in the December meeting. But in the other months, we are determined to provide interesting programs in our meetings, many presented by our membership. All are free and open to the public. If you have ideas for a program that you would like to hear, or possibly present, please contact us.

- May – Road to Perdition: Chicago Gangster Wife’s Murder, Colleen Peterson
- June – The Final Salute – interring unclaimed remains , Denis Allen and Cris Nagla
- July – Powerful Features of IAGenWeb.org/madison, Linda Smith
- August – The Morgans and Armstrongs of St. Charles, Colleen Peterson
- September – History of Barney, Sandi Harper
- October – Accessing Online Madison County Land Records, Linda Smith
- November – Indentured Case Study, Donna Crow

Topics being considered for 2026 include how-to programs for various online resources, history of Bevington and residents, descendant organizations such as the Mayflower Society, and more.

Mark your calendar for next year’s meetings.

January – no meeting	May 5	September 1
February – no meeting	June 2	October 6
March 3	July 7	November 3
April 7	August 4	December 1



Winterset Public Library Rearranges Genealogy Section

In the months ahead, the Winterset Library will be building two much-needed small meeting rooms in the southeast portion of the existing building. The genealogy collection currently there will be moved and the contents evaluated by use. All our Madison County and Iowa items – notebook after notebook – will be making the move. Watch for the new location.

Celebrating America250 in 2026

Iowa was established as a state on December 28, 1846 - 70 years after the Declaration of Independence. Iowa has 41 Revolutionary War veteran burials, but none in Madison County. We have identified 36 War of 1812 veterans who may have had a father or grandfather who fought in the Revolutionary War. A committee has been established that will research these soldiers over the winter and look for ways to provide this information to the public in 2026.

Saying Goodbye - Last MCGS Newsletter

It's been my pleasure to help edit the newsletter, starting in 2013, working with JoAnne Walker, who had done it for years. There came a time for her to retire a few years ago and now it is my time. Newsletters from the past 11 years, totaling 42, are available on the MCGS website: madisoncountyiagenealogy.com/past-newsletters/

We will continue to highlight the activities of the Madison County Genealogical Society, but on two online platforms:

1. Watch our website: madisoncountyiagenealogy.com/
2. Follow Facebook page: [MADISON COUNTY IA FAMILY HISTORY](https://www.facebook.com/MADISON-COUNTY-IA-FAMILY-HISTORY)

If you have information to share with those interested in Madison County genealogy, feel free to post to Facebook or contact us at our MCGS email: madisoncountyiagenealogy@gmail.com so we can spread the information.

Thank you! Linda Griffith Smith

Leaving You With a Smile

Many thanks to Twisted Twigs for allowing us to borrow these from their Facebook page.

