

HERITAGE HERALD

Research Library Edition

Fall 2011

DNA Fact or Fiction?



Can DNA really help you find your ancestors?

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WCCHS Bylaws Changes

Changing times have required changes in the WCCHS bylaws. Please review these changes as the new bylaws will be voted upon at our 2011 Annual Meeting on October 25, 2011.

Insert

Fall Events Insert

WCCHS has another fantastic fall planned. Don't miss our events! Simply remove the Fall Events insert and pin it up to stay one top of all dates and times.

Insert

Have Your REALLY Proven Your Ancestry?

All that is written is not necessarily fact. Ways to make sure your facts are in order:

Special thanks to RootsWeb for reprint permission.

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Stay Connected

Check online at wrihthistory.org to learn more about our projects and programs.



Genealogy Issue: What's YOUR Story? by Sally Stevens, reluctant genealogist

If you are the type of person to spend hundreds of hours researching your family tree, take vacations specifically to collect gravestone rubbings from across the country or ocean, get excited when you receive our postcard that your microfilm has arrived, and can navigate our online research tools like Ancestry.com or GenLine.com like a pro, I absolutely admire and respect you. But, ironically, have not been one of you. At least, it seems, until now.

Here at WCCHS, I serve as Business Manager and am the person who ensures the computers are in working order, the programs are up to date, microfilms are ordered, the heat is working, our website is running, and all our bills are being paid, just for a start. When giving a tour to young people I often refer to myself as the 'Museum Mother', and that I ensure things are working well, from toilet paper to taxes! Of the thousands of square feet here at WCCHS I feel absolutely comfortable in all areas but one. Our research library.

I do not delve into my background with the relish of those I see frequent our library, or am able to engage in the secret genealogical language spoken between those who really know how to research their family history. In fact, my world was rocked on my first day back in 2007. Betty Dircks, archivist and Wright County historian, asked me what my background was. I replied, "Irish", as my family had documented arrival in North America from Ireland in 1776. When she inquired the name of those who emigrated, I said, "Parker", to which she replied, "Oh, that's an English name. They probably just got on the ship in Ireland."

Ruined me, she did, but more importantly Betty has systematically taught me through the years about the

importance of having more than one source to back up your genealogical statements, and certainly where to look. I am constantly amazed at her skill and ability at family research.

My parents are, as I write this, traveling the country in a motorhome specifically purchased for research travels. My mom updates her Facebook page constantly with their historic finds and additions to our family tree and, I have to admit, it is starting to sound like an awful lot of fun. We have visitors here who pull up in their motorhomes, travel the country, even the world, specifically to come to the Wright County Historical Society and research their roots. When you walk into our library you'll see a wonderful work area, complete with online computer access and full time librarian assistance. People are truly enjoying themselves here, researching, sharing, and frequently "yahooing" after a particularly amazing find!

So why do I find our research library scary? Simply put, it's because I haven't taken the time to learn how to use it as a research patron. My goal for 2012 is to do just that, become much more familiar with our amazing library and all it offers, including organizing informational sessions for beginners like me which highlight our resources and strategies to research family histories.

And what will I do with all my newfound knowledge and skill? You guessed it--I need to prove that I'm Irish. Slainte!

If you are interested in a beginner's family research workshop, please contact Sally Stevens at 763-682-7323.

DNA Fact or Science Fiction?

Family Tree Magazine: December 2009

"DNA Myths Debunked" by Lauren Gamber (edited by WCHS)

MYTH #1: Geneticists use hair & blood samples to trace a person's ancestry

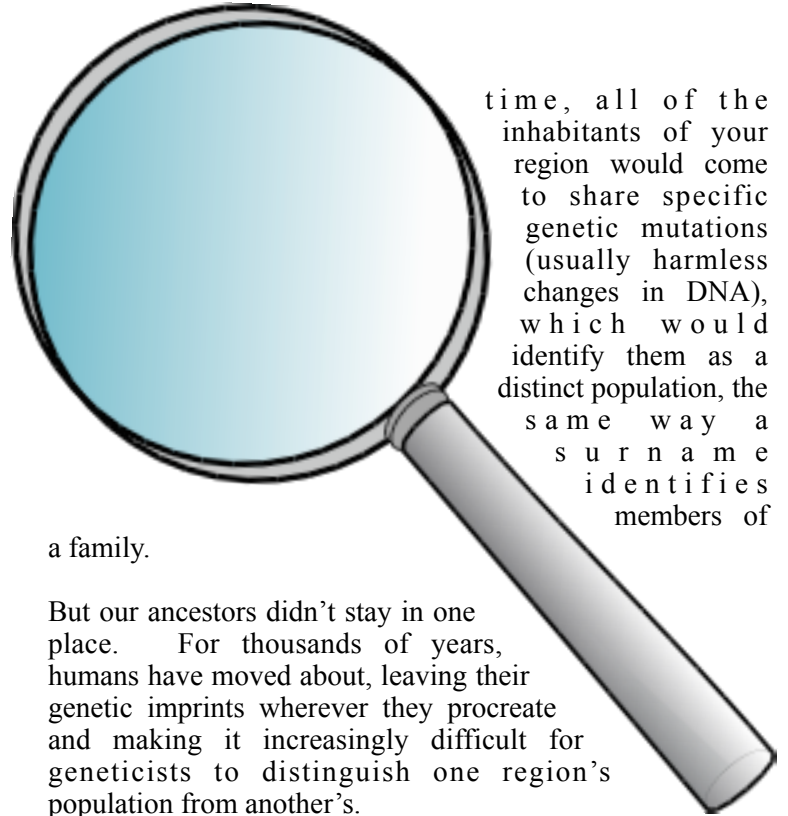
Although scientists do utilize hair and blood samples for paternity tests and forensic analysis, there's no need to draw blood or pluck hairs for a genetic genealogy test.

When you order a DNA test for yourself or someone else, you'll receive a cheek-swab kit or a mouthwash kit in the mail--complete with instructions, a consent form and a return envelope. For the cheek-swab kit, you'll use a sterile swab or toothbrush-like device to painlessly scrape the inside of your cheek for a few seconds. (The company may provide multiple swabs in order to obtain backup cheek-cell samples, just in case the first one doesn't yield clear results.) For the mouthwash kit, you'll swish the supplied rinse for a specified amount of time and spit it back into the container.

Then you'll just sign the consent form and mail it and your DNA sample back to the company. You should receive results in the mail or on a password-protected Web site within a few weeks.

MYTH #2: A DNA test can pinpoint precisely where your ancestors lived or which tribe they belonged to

If your ancestors and their offspring had stayed in one geographic region and never allowed outsiders to enter, it would be relatively easy to distinguish their DNA (and yours) from the DNA of people living in other regions. Over



time, all of the inhabitants of your region would come to share specific genetic mutations (usually harmless changes in DNA), which would identify them as a distinct population, the same way a surname identifies members of

a family.

But our ancestors didn't stay in one place. For thousands of years, humans have moved about, leaving their genetic imprints wherever they procreate and making it increasingly difficult for geneticists to distinguish one region's population from another's.

Want to learn more, including the other 3 myths? Visit our website at www.wrighthistory.org for the entire article (reprinted with permission). For more information don't hesitate to contact us at 763-682-7323.

Finding Living Relatives in a Cemetery? A True Story!



Rosemary Schultz, Erma Chevalier, Wayne Chevalier & Darlene Bearl

In 2010, Wayne Chevalier & Darlene Bearl went out for a drive, looking for a cemetery Wayne believed some relatives were buried in. When they arrived they found Charles Chevalier's gravestone, very well cared for, complete with a planter and a fresh plant that required tending. Darlene suggested that Wayne leave a note, which he did, tucked into a baggie and placed under the planter.

Within a week he received a call from Rosemary Schultz, the daughter of Charles Chevalier. Rosemary and her mother, Erma Chevalier (Charles' wife), arranged to meet the couple at the Wright County Historical Society and spent hours sharing family history and stories.

Occurrences such as this one happen all the time at WCHS. If you have a story you'd like to share regarding amazing coincidences during your own research, let us know!

***** A note to the reader of the proposed changes to the bylaws below: The Board of Directors has approved the revisions as shown. Upon approval of the membership at the annual meeting in October, all text that is underlined will be deleted. Text that is printed in red will be added to the bylaws.**

DRAFT....DRAFT....DRAFT....DRAFT....DRAFT.....DRAFT

WRIGHT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BYLAWS

Originally adopted October 1982
Amended October 18, 1984, October 17, 1985, October 19, 1989, October 20, 1992,
October 19, 1993, October 20, 1998, October 16, 2002, October 16, 2007

ARTICLE I NAME AND LOCATION

The name of the Society shall be Wright County Historical Society. The registered office shall be at 2001 Highway 25 North, Buffalo, MN 55313. **Mailing address is: P.O. Box 304 Buffalo, MN 55313.**

ARTICLE II PURPOSES OF SOCIETY

The general purposes of this Society shall be the location or discovery, collection and preservation of historical artifacts and archives and dissemination of knowledge about the history of Wright County and its relationship to the State of Minnesota.

The Society is limited to purposes of charity and education as specified in the Internal Revenue Code requirements.

The primary functions of the Society shall be:

1. To locate and to collect any material which may help to establish **document** or to illustrate the history of Wright County or the State of Minnesota.
2. To disseminate historical information to interested persons, groups and institutions by any means it deems advisable.
3. To publish any unclassified material which may bear upon the history of Wright County or the State of Minnesota.
4. To provide for preservation of historical material and objects.
5. To accomplish these purposes through establishment of clearly defined collection conservation and interpretation policies.
6. To maintain a cooperative working relationship with local, state and national historic organizations.

ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

1. Any person or business firm may be enrolled as an active voting member upon payment of applicable dues. A business firm is entitled to one vote. Students under age 18 shall not be entitled to vote. An Individual/Family membership shall have one vote. **A family membership is considered a household consisting of up to two adults and children under the age of 18. Members under the age of 18 shall not be entitled to vote.**

2. The membership year shall be from January 1 through December 31. New memberships paid from July 1 through December 31 shall be valid for the balance of the calendar year plus the following year.
3. No person shall be qualified as a member or entitled to vote at annual meetings unless applicable dues have been paid in full by September 15 of the current enrollment year.

Annual membership dues shall be:

Individual/Family	\$15.00
Student	\$ 5.00
Business	\$25.00
<u>Benefactor</u>	<u>\$100 and up</u>

ARTICLE IV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. A thirteen-member Board of Directors shall manage the business of the Society and shall establish policy consistent with Article II of these Bylaws.
The Board shall have up to 13 members, but not fewer than 7 members. The Board shall delegate the routine management of Society business to the Business Manager who shall carry out daily and on-going operations, consistent with Article II of these Bylaws. The Board shall maintain supervisory status over all staff members.
2. The Board of Directors shall consist of **up to** two voting members from each commissioner's district and **up to** three additional voting members-at-large, who are not necessarily county residents. In the event that a candidate who is willing to serve as Director cannot be found in any district, one additional voting member-at-large shall be elected to fill the position for that district or it will be declared a vacancy.
3. Board members shall be elected by secret ballot at the Society's annual meeting for two-year terms and shall assume office on January 1 following their election.
4. One Director from each Commissioner's District and no more than two at-large Directors shall be elected each year. Additional at-large Directors may be elected in accordance with sub-paragraph (2.) of this article.
5. Officers shall be president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer, each elected for a two-year term . No officer may serve more than two consecutive two-year terms in any office without a 2/3 vote of the Board.
6. Officers of the Society shall be elected by the incoming Board of Directors from its membership at an organizational meeting in November.
7. The Commissioner appointed by the County Board may serve as an advisory member of the Board, with voice, but without vote.
8. The Board shall appoint a member of the Society from the corresponding commissioner's district to fill a vacancy in a Director's term, providing that a willing candidate is available from that district. If a candidate from that district is not available, the vacancy may be filled by appointment of an at-large Director.
9. The Board shall appoint a member from the Society-at-large to fill a vacancy in an unexpired term of an at-large Director.
10. The Society may remove a Director for just cause by a 2/3 vote of members present at a meeting for which the purpose of removal has been specified. **A director may be removed for unexcused absences at two consecutive board meetings.**

11. The Board of Directors shall meet at regular intervals and shall have a minimum of nine meetings a year.
12. Special meetings of the Board necessary to conduct the business of the Society may be called by the President or by a majority of the Directors. Notice shall be given to all Directors at least five days prior to such a meeting.
13. A simple majority of elected Board members shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business at any regular meeting of the Board of Directors.
14. Meetings of this Society shall be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*, except where they are inconsistent with the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws. The President, with approval of the Board, may appoint a Parliamentarian, who need not be a member of the Society.
15. The Board of Directors shall be empowered to employ a staff with duties to be determined by the Board in a written policy **policies** and written job description **descriptions**.
16. No employee of the Society shall be eligible for election or appointment to the Society's Board of Directors.
17. The Society's newsletter shall serve as the official publication for notice of all Society membership meetings and issues to be voted on. It shall be mailed to all members.

ARTICLE V DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Society and the Board of Directors. The President shall have general responsibility for ongoing projects and activities of the Society; shall be an ex-officio member of all committees; and shall represent the Society to the public with the approval of the Board.
2. The Vice-President shall assume the office of President should the President be absent or unable to execute those duties.
3. The Secretary shall record and maintain a permanent file of the minutes of all meetings of the Society and of the Board of Directors. The Secretary shall work with the President and staff for publication of the Annual Report which may include reports by all officers and committee chairs, and a summary of the year's activities. A copy of the Annual Report shall be sent to all members and to the Director of Field Service Department, Minnesota Historical Society, by March 1. The Secretary shall work with staff to provide notices of all meetings, including the Board agenda. The Secretary shall be responsible for 'Sunshine' correspondence and other correspondence as designated by the Board.
4. The Treasurer shall work with the Business Manager to maintain up-to-date accounts. Two authorized signatures shall be required to sign checks. The Treasurer shall obtain a monthly financial statement and expense report from the Business Manager and present the Treasurer's Report to the Board at its monthly meeting. The Treasurer shall be the Chairman of the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee shall audit the books before February 15 of each year.

ARTICLE VI MEETINGS

1. The Society shall hold its annual meeting on the third **fourth** Tuesday of October in each year. The Board of Directors may change the date of the meeting provided two weeks written notice is given to all members.
2. The number of Society membership meetings will be determined by Board policy.

3. The Directors or President may call special meetings of the Society at any time. Upon written request submitted to the Board of Directors by twenty-five members of the Society, a special meeting may be called. If the Board refuses to call such a meeting, the request and reasons for denial shall be published in the first issue of the newsletter following the Board action.
4. Written notice of any special meeting shall be mailed to all members no less than fifteen days prior to the date of the meeting.
5. Five percent of the membership of the Society shall constitute a quorum for annual and special meetings.

**ARTICLE VII
ENDOWMENT FUND**

The Wright County Historical Society Endowment Fund shall be created by cash donations and may include designated memorial funds, stocks, bonds, and real or personal property. These funds are for endowment only. Interest may be used after the fund reaches the goal designated by the Board of Directors.

**ARTICLE VIII
DISPOSITION OF COLLECTIONS**

1. The Board of Directors shall make provision for the custody and care of material of historic value received by the Society.
2. If the Society fails in five consecutive years to have a quorum at its annual meeting, it shall be interpreted as the cessation of an effective working organization. All articles belonging to it shall be placed under the care of the Minnesota Historical Society until such time as a new Society can be organized or the County Board arranges for proper care of the collections.

**ARTICLE IX
AFFILIATION WITH THE STATE SOCIETY**

The Society shall be enrolled as an annual institutional member of the Minnesota Historical Society, paying the established dues. The Society shall, whenever feasible, send a delegate to represent it at the meetings of the State Society.

ARTICLE X

Proposed amendments to these Bylaws shall be presented in writing to the Board of Directors by the Bylaws Committee for approval. Upon approval by the Board, the proposed amendments shall be published in the September newsletter. A 2/3 vote of the members present at the annual meeting is required to adopt amendments to these Bylaws.

Have You Really Proven Your Ancestry?

by Mary Harrell-Sesniak (edited by WCCHS)

Researchers often feel they've proven ancestry because they located family in one or more online trees.

But tying into a database doesn't suffice as proof. For that, you need to verify an author's sources and references – whether they are from original or derivative documents – and whether they can be treated as primary or secondary sources.

Original vs. derivative Documents

The first term is easy, as original records must be original and not copies. Examples are birth, marriage, and death certificates created by attending physicians or officiates and and-written or original typed document / letter and first time photographs, which are not scans or reprints.

Derivatives imply that documents came from (e.g., were derived from) other sources. This applies to, but is not limited to abstracts, articles, scans, copies, transcriptions, family histories, card files and online databases.

Derivatives can establish viable evidence of ancestry, but only:

- If citations are accessible for examination
- If they are not too many steps removed from the original –Such as a fact referring to a reference which was not verified (e. g. a copy of a copy of a copy)

Rule of thumb: *Any document, database or citation which is one or more steps removed from the original, must be evaluated as to whether the intermediary author examined the original or a reliable reference referring to the original.*

This doesn't mean we should discount all online data. Just treat it as possible leads (not proof), and find source documents for verification. After all, most of us would not be able to pursue so much of our ancestry, without these valuable clues.

Primary vs. Secondary Sources

Primary sources are those created close to the time of an event, assuming the originator had the proper expertise and authority to create it. Some examples are:

- Birth, marriage, and death certificates
- Maps
- Artifacts, such as military badges
- Commemorative plaques
- Certain ephemera (e. g. playbills, advertisements)

Secondary sources are all those created after an event, including:

- Delayed birth registrations
- Abstracts, summaries, etc.
- Tombstones
- Obituaries

Some documents have both primary and secondary elements, depending upon the information. For example, a passenger manifest is a primary document in regards to the details of the

voyage, but a secondary source for birth dates, addresses, etc. The same issue relates to birth dates on tombstones or death certificates, which are always secondary. And depending upon when the monuments was erected (or replaced), a death date can be secondary.

Diaries, whereby events were recorded on a day by day basis, are considered primary, but an author's memory of the past is secondary.

A dilemma exists in regard to Bible records, whereby the author and date of the entry is uncertain. As a result, many lineage societies note whether a title page with publication date is available, and whether the handwriting and ink changes from item to item.

One might think that original documents are always primary sources – and that derivatives are always secondary. But in reality, it is possible for either type to be primary or secondary. For example:

- A hand-written letter discussing family births is an original document, but the source is secondary, since it occurred after the original events.
- A film created of an original document (such as those made by the Church of latter Day Saints) is a derivative treated as a primary source, since the copy is a reliable representation of the original.

Preponderance of Evidence vs. the Genealogical Proof Standard

The final step in proving ancestry lies in the Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS).

"RULE OF THUMB:
Any document, database or citation which is one or more steps removed from the original, must be evaluated as to whether the intermediary author examined the original or a reliable reference referring to the original."

Until recently, researchers cited evidence based upon the legal principle of *preponderance of the evidence* – meaning if definitive proof documents could not be located, and if all evidence pointed in the right direction, then a lineage or relationship was accepted as true.

However, there are numerous examples of why this might not be true. In my own ancestry, there were three William Harrells, recorded on early census records I Wythe Co., Virginia. A logical

assumption might be that they were kin, given that they shared names and lived in the same vicinity. But DNA studies imply that they share a more distant relationship, despite the preponderance of evidence.

Although certification is not a requirement for proving ancestry, you may wish to review the five elements of the GPS, established by the Board for Certification of Genealogies (BCG). They recommend that a strong genealogical proof should include:

- A reasonably exhaustive search.
- Complete and accurate source citations
- Analysis and correlation of the collected information
- Resolution of any conflicting evidence
- A soundly reasoned, coherently written conclusion.

As you search through records on Roots Web, and other sites, keep in mind that you can't be sure of the information until you have seen the evidence. Happy sleuthing!

Previously published in *RootsWeb Review*: 8 September 2010, Vol. 13, No. 9



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www.wrighthistory.org

The Wright County Historical Society (WCHS) is a public 501(c) non-profit organization whose purpose is the location, discovery, collection and preservation of historical artifacts and records and the dissemination of knowledge about the history of Wright County and its relationship to the State of Minnesota.

WRIGHT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

RESEARCH LIBRARY EDITION

UPCOMING EVENTS

**October 25, 6:15pm
WCHS Dessert Social**

Activity Room, Wright County Heritage Center

Doors open to the Heritage Center at 6:00pm. Advance tickets \$10/person, \$15/two people. Children 8 and under FREE! Tickets available through:

Mail	PO Box 304, Buffalo, MN 55313
Phone	763-682-7323
Email	wrighthistory@me.com
In Person	Wright County Heritage Center 2001 Hwy 25 N, Buffalo, MN

**October 25, 7:00pm
WCHS Annual Meeting**

Hands On History Gallery, Wright County Heritage Center

Free of charge; WCHS members and friends are encouraged to attend. A slideshow of the past year's accomplishments will be presented.

November 19, 9:00am-4:00pm

5th Annual Toy Tractor and Sports Car Show

Buffalo Community Middle School, lower gym (1300 Hwy 25 N, Buffalo, MN)

December 1-30, 2011

Festival of Trees

Hands On History Gallery, Wright County Heritage Center Tree Lighting
December 1 at 1:30pm; light refreshment served.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT Leander Wetter

VICE PRESIDENT John Norman

SECRETARY Claudia Menzel

TREASURER Dave Murray

BOARD MEMBERS Pam Campbell
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Herman Ernst
Leila McCarty
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COUNTY COMMISSIONER Pat Sawatzke

STAFF

ARCHIVIST Betty Dircks

CURATOR Erin Endress

BUSINESS MANAGER Sally Stevens

LIBRARY & RESEARCH STAFF Pat Cina
Kay Nordberg

EDITORS Sally Stevens
Betty Dircks
Erin Endress