

# NEWSLETTER

## McLean County Genealogical Society

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## THE 1950 U.S. FEDERAL CENSUS

**Presented by Tina Beard**  
**Tuesday, May 17, 2022, 6:30 p.m.**

**Join us on Zoom**



Tina Beard, owner of Tamarack Genealogy is a genealogy and local history librarian in the Chicago area. She holds an MLS with a specification in Archives Preservation. She lectures at local, state and national seminars and conferences. Tina has served on numerous boards and volunteers her time when available with several Chicago area historical and genealogical societies. She occasionally still finds time to work on her own genealogy.

**This program is free and open to the public.**

### Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88923613436?pwd=NFVMZlowYyt3bEtDcWtZcVINTVY1UT09>

Meeting ID: 889 2361 3436

Passcode: 511021

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Passcode: 511021

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kVKBa0tX>

## President's Message



I had lunch with a friend last week (April 2022) and we started talking about genealogy and history. One thing led to another, and we ended up talking about websites from New Haven, Connecticut. She has relatives that she was researching from that area and ran across information about one particular website, the Center Church on the Green-The Crypt. Turns out that the church was built on top of a small portion of the town's burial ground. The fourth meeting house or now known as the Center Church was built between 1812-1814. An enclosed chamber was built around the area below the Church and is an exceptional colonial burial ground that had been untouched for many years.

The Crypt is a rich source of information on the early days of New Haven and a resource for understanding what makes the city unique. Early settlers represent a cross-section of the original community. There are 137 identified remains buried in the Crypt and likely remains of over 1,000 that are unidentified. The identified stones are of New Haven founders and earliest citizens dating from 1687. There are some prominent citizens entombed in the Crypt. Besides the remains, both identified and unidentified in the Crypt, there are more than 5,000 unidentified remains of many of the settlers of the New Haven Colony who were buried on the Green.

Unfortunately, the headstones in the Crypt are deteriorating due to water seepage and the passage of time. Prior to Covid and the condition of the Crypt, the area is now closed until further notice. Donations are being requested to preserve the past for the future. Some stones have been repaired and the floor has been replaced with brick paving stones with no mortar in between, instead of a cement floor, so that water will drain.

The Center Church is a registered landmark and a congregation of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ.

<https://www.centerchurchonthegreen.org/history/crypt>

There is more information you will be able to access through this website at the top of the opening screen. History of the Church, weddings, pictures of the outside and inside of the Church, an overhead view of the Green, pictures inside the Crypt, other events that are held there, food pantries every week, and weekly Sunday services are some of the events that are listed.

If you have relatives from this area, you might want to investigate other websites or take a road trip to New Haven, Connecticut. You never know what you might find.

Happy researching!

**Pat Perkins, President**

## Looking Ahead . . .

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| May 17, 2022       | 6:30 pm Public Meeting. Join us on Zoom.<br>"1950 Census" by Tina Beaird, genealogy and local history librarian, author, lecturer and owner of Tamarack Genealogy.                                                                |
| July 19, 2022      | 6:30 pm Public Meeting. Join us on Zoom.<br>"Genealogy Treasures In Cemetery Records" by Suz Bates, local genealogist with a presentation specialty of step-by-step instruction in researching, archiving, and technology skills. |
| September 17, 2022 | 1:00 pm Public Meeting. Join us on Zoom for this prerecorded webinar.<br>"3 Cool Cases Solved: How to Identify Your Photos" by Lisa Louise Cooke, <i>Genealogy Gems</i> .                                                         |
| November 15, 2022  | 6:30 pm Public Annual Meeting & Installation of Officers and Directors<br>MCMH Courtroom                                                                                                                                          |
| December 2022      | MCGS Winter Break                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |



### Our Research Volunteers Are Happy to Assist You!

Many of you have [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) or [newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com) accounts which help you locate information about your McLean County ancestors. For those of you who don't have those accounts and for those of you who aren't able to come to McLean County to do research, our researchers are happy to assist you. Local resources could, and many times do, include materials not available on [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) or [newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com).

Email requests should go to: [mogs.research@gmail.com](mailto:mogs.research@gmail.com). Emailed requests should be followed with a \$10 check for the first two surnames and, if needed, a \$5 check for each additional surname. Please send your check, along with a copy of your request to MCGS, Attn: Corresponding Secretary, P. O. Box 488, Normal, IL 61761-0488.

Please submit a family group sheet, or at least as much information as you have about an individual or family, so that research isn't duplicated and that a foundation for research is provided.

## MCGS April 2022 Highlights

### **THE (UNDERGROUND) RAILROAD RUNS THROUGH HERE**

A very interesting and educational program was presented by Janice Lovelace, Ph.D. on Zoom, Tuesday, April 19, 2022. If you had the opportunity to hear this presentation, I'm sure you learned a lot about the Underground Railroad and how slavery impacted the people both enslaved and all those who helped them escape.

Dr. Lovelace told of legal issues impacting freedom, emancipation in the North, black codes and Fugitive Slave Act Laws from 1793 and 1850. The Underground Railroad was a loosely organized method of assisting people escaping enslavement in the South and heading north to free states and Canada. People were recruited to work first as indentured servants and then became lifelong slaves. Many families were split apart and were sold to other landowners.

Children born after 1788 were gradually emancipated after they became adults. According to the 1790 census, 94% of slaves lived below the Mason-Dixon Line. When slaves were able to escape, they faced opposition from places that did not wish for them to locate in "free" areas. Many wanted them to return to Africa. Black Laws were established to attempt to move them to the new frontier.

Black and white individuals worked in collaboration to assist fugitives by finding "stations" where they could stay before they could be safely moved further north. Some of the "stations" were attics, storerooms, barns, livery stables or a butchery (South African English) where dogs could not locate fugitives that were hiding due to blood smells that covered up the scent. Conductors were individuals that helped lead the fugitives to a "station" until they could safely be moved to another location. Many of these conductors were well known individuals, Quakers and abolitionists.

Information about the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 split the territory allowing the residents to choose to be a free or a slave state. Nebraska was free and Kansas became known as "Bleeding Kansas" because of the uproar and fighting that ensued.

Census records for Illinois showed an increase in Free Blacks listed from 450 to 7628 between 1820 and 1860.

Two special books were recommended: [The Underground Railroad: Authentic Narratives and First-Hand Account](#) by William Stil, and [His Promised Land: The Autobiography of John P. Parker, Former Slave and Conductor on the Underground Railroad](#) by John Parker.

There are a number of books about the Underground Railroad that you may be able to obtain through your local library.

## Memorial



**Donna Belle Smith**  
**Aug. 11, 1930 - April 12, 2022**

NORMAL - Donna Belle Smith age 91 Normal, IL, passed away at 9:50 AM on Tuesday, April 12, 2022, at Heritage Health Care, Normal, IL.

Her funeral service will be 11:00 AM, Friday, April 15, 2022, at Grace Church of the Nazarene 610 IAA Dr., Bloomington, IL. Rev. Mike Stipp will be officiating. Burial will be at Evergreen Memorial Cemetery, Bloomington, IL. Visitation will be 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Friday. at the church.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorials be made to Grace Church of the Nazarene 610 IAA Dr., Bloomington, IL, 61701.

Arrangements are being handled by Calvert & Metzler Memorial Home, Bloomington, IL.

Donna was born August 11, 1930, in McLeansboro, IL, the daughter of Carl Herbert and Bernetha Elizabeth Baker Wilson. She married William Howard Smith on June 18, 1947, in Eureka, IL. He passed away June 8, 2018.

Surviving are her three children: David (Kathie) Smith, Normal, IL, Keith Smith, Concord, CA, Elaine Weidman, Omaha, NE; four grandchildren: Aaron Smith, Olathe, KS, Starr Smith, Bloomington, IL, Lindsey Melchi, Ft. Wayne, IN, Stephanie Ihnen, Ft. Wayne, IN; seven great-grandchildren; brother, Jerry Wilson, Surprise, AZ; sister, Hilda Parsons, Eureka, IL; sister in-law, Shirley Wilson, Eureka, IL; and several nieces and nephews. Donna is preceded in death by her parents; a son, Kevin (Nancy) Smith; brother, Gilbert Wilson. Donna was a member Grace Church of the Nazarene, Bloomington, IL, and Genealogy Society of Bloomington, IL. Donna had worked at General Telephone Company for 15-years and Kohls Department Store for five years. Her hobbies included genealogy, gardening, crocheting, drawing, and painting.

Please view the obituary and share your condolences and memories online at [www.calvertmemorial.com](http://www.calvertmemorial.com).  
 Published by *The Pantagraph* on Apr. 14, 2022.

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MCGS NOTE: Donna was a Charter Member (1966) of the Bloomington-Normal Genealogical Society (now known as The McLean County Genealogical Society). She had been our last living Charter Member. She served as a member of the Gleanings Editor's Staff as Chairman of the Printing Department.

MCGS accepts memorial donations. They may be sent to: MCGS, PO Box 488, Normal, IL 61761-0488



## MCGS HAS A NEW WEBSITE!

Visit <https://www.tmcgs.org> for updated news and useful information!

### EVERYONE CAN VIEW:

- Future program announcements, emergency or weather-related closures
- McLean County cemeteries
- Research aids
- Items of genealogical interest
- *Gleanings* searchable indexes

### MEMBERS CAN ACCESS ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

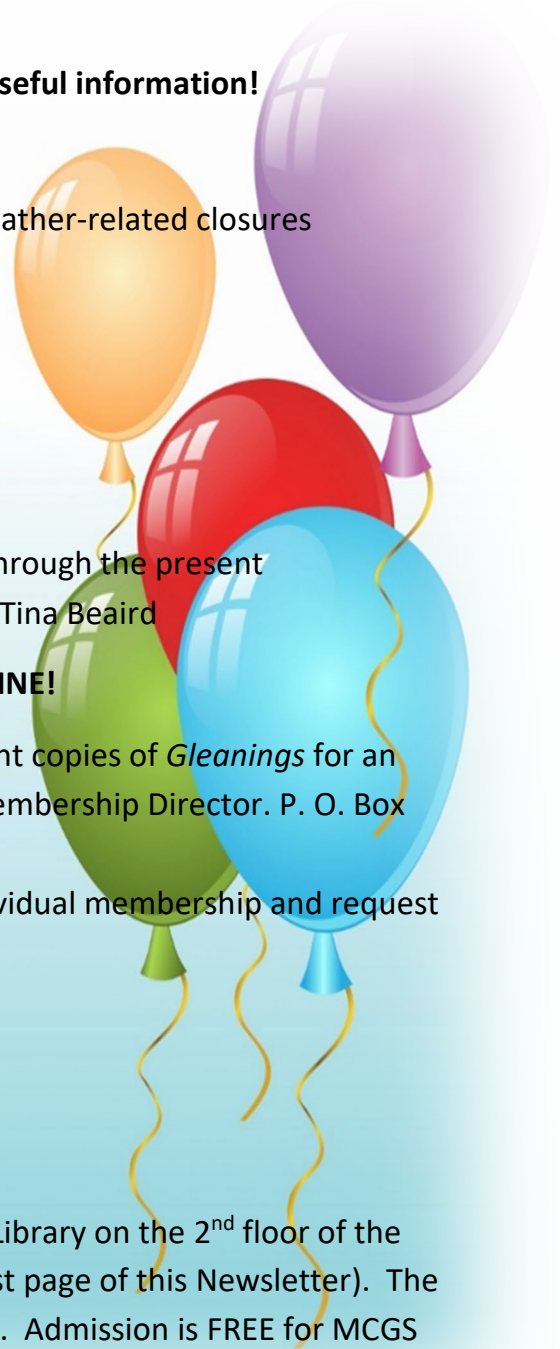
- Gleanings PDFs: All 176 issues of *Gleanings* 1967 through the present
- "Illinois Digital Resources" a webinar presented by Tina Beard

### YOU CAN JOIN OR RENEW MCGS MEMBERSHIPS ONLINE!

- Current members can request mailing of future print copies of *Gleanings* for an additional \$15 to the following address: MCGS, Membership Director. P. O. Box 488, Normal, IL 61761-0488.
- Libraries and institutions should sign up for an individual membership and request printed publications.

### REMINDER:

The MCGS holdings are located in the Stevenson-Ives Library on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the McLean County Museum of History (address on the last page of this Newsletter). The building is handicapped accessible and has an elevator. Admission is FREE for MCGS members. The library has extended hours on Tuesdays until 8:00 pm.





## IF ONLY THEY COULD FIND IT!

*Did you know that MCGS' Gleanings is distributed throughout the United States and Canada and is available to anyone at many genealogical societies and public libraries? Please consider contributing any of the following for possible publication. MCGS is always interested in reviewing publishable material.*

*Information you hold in your personal collections could be a treasure trove for other genealogists, and maybe help you make connections, **if only they could find it!***

- Have you created a database for information referring to McLean County, a surrounding county, Illinois, or even other areas of the U.S.?
- Have you walked a cemetery and recorded all of a specific name such as Armstrong, Miller, Wilson, etc. and created a database of this information? Did you take pictures of the monuments? Do you or someone in your family have the sexton's records?
- Was one of your family members the first to own property in Illinois?
- Can you share information about a family-owned business in McLean County?
- Do you have an ancestor's Bible? An image of the original pages with recorded information would be great along with a transcription.
- Family oral history can provide many clues. Do you have an interesting story to tell?

These are just a few examples of what could be submitted. Questions about whether a specific article would be suitable can be sent to one of the email addresses shown below. Any number of submissions will be appreciated.

Word or Excel format is preferred, between 1/2 to 4 pages in length. Send submissions or questions to [mcgs.journal@gmail.com](mailto:mcgs.journal@gmail.com) or [mcgs.directors@gmail.com](mailto:mcgs.directors@gmail.com) with attachments or mail to:

MCGS, Attention: Journal Editor, PO Box 488, Normal, IL 61761-0488



**McLean County Museum of History**

Photos by  
William P. LaBounty



***On the Courthouse Square, Bloomington, Illinois***

Contact: P.O. Box 488, Normal, IL 61761-0488

Library: 309-827-0428, ext. 28  
<mailto:mchg.directors@gmail.com>

Visit: McLean County Museum of History  
Stevenson-Ives Library  
200 North Main Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Downtown Bloomington

Online: <https://www.tmcgs.org>

Library/Archives: Appointments recommended.

Museum: Open to the public.  
Handicapped accessible. For details visit:  
<https://www.mchistory.org/visit/>  
FREE admission for MCGS members.

During their shifts, volunteers in the Stevenson-Ives Library are available to help visitors with their research.