

Outstanding OGS Chapter Award

The Warren County Chapter of Ohio Genealogical Society has a very active society of local and out of state members. Our meetings are held in the Phillippi Meeting Room at the Otterbein-Lebanon Retirement Center on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 PM (except for January and February). During the summer months we offer weekly daytime genealogy workshop classes in lieu of our monthly evening meetings. We welcome all interested in genealogy. We have a resource center library located in the Warren County Administration building; at 406 Justice Dr., Lebanon, OH 45036; phone (513) 695-1144. Our library is staffed by volunteers, 9 AM to 4 PM Monday through Friday. We maintain the website www.co.warren.oh.us/genealogy/index.htm with many of our master indexes and also the Warren County Gen Web site at <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ohwarren/index.htm> Our officers and library volunteers answer patron's questions, research mail requests, or work on abstracting and indexing information for our master indexes, website and publications. Besides preserving records of Warren County, Ohio, one of the goals of our society is to help researchers quickly and efficiently find more about their ancestors. Researchers can use the many resources in our library, our website, our master indexes, read our quarterly *Heir Lines*, attend our monthly meetings or summer daytime workshops.

We work hard to contribute to genealogical records preservation. Our master indexes that are searchable by surname online, in our library, and in book format continue to expand. Our website currently has 572,827 name entries for records from these Warren County indexes. Our website received a major uplift this past year making navigation easier.

As a society we had two main focuses this year: to complete our book about researching in Warren County, Ohio and complete our virtual cemetery project. The research book is in the final stages and should be released soon. Although we did not complete our goal of finishing our virtual cemetery project, our society members and volunteers came very close. Only three cemeteries remain on our to-do list for this project. All others have been completed or are in various stages of completion. Of the three remaining, the Woodhill cemetery in Franklin has more than 20,000 interments and will take some time to complete. The other two cemeteries: Mt. Holly and Union Church are much smaller and we hope to have them completed in the spring.

We successfully sponsored our second cemetery restoration clinic in April of 2010 and had 55 attendees ranging from boy scouts to senior citizens. Many Warren County township employees that maintain cemeteries as well as cemetery workers were in attendance. We also had representatives from some of the surrounding counties and major cemeteries attend the clinic.

For our virtual cemetery project, volunteers have photographed and submitted more than 36,000 tombstone images with at least that many still to be loaded online. Our cemetery master index now contains 73,191 entries. The tombstone digital images can be found online at the Warren County USGenWeb site, which we also maintain. On our main website, some of the cemeteries have the name index hyperlinked to the virtual cemetery page to make finding the image easier. Our goal is to have this completed for all of our digital images in the next few years. When this massive project is complete we plan to republish our cemetery books with more complete and accurate listings.

In addition to our two major goals this year, we have worked on many other projects. Marriage records from 1803 to 1834 have been re-indexed to include license record reference details as well as correcting mistakes from the previous edition. A new Will and Estate book for boxes 351-400, 1888-

1893 has been completed. Death records from 1931-1935 have been abstracted and will soon be released. An every name index to the 1867 map of Warren County has been completed.

We have finished indexing the Oswald-Hoskins Funeral Home of Lebanon from 1867 to 1980 and Vale-Hoskins Funeral Home of Morrow. The index to these records will be available for purchase soon. This leaves only three known funeral homes in Warren County left to copy and index: Stine-Kilburn, Mueller-Parker and Shorten-Ryan. Webster Funeral home, (now located in Fairfield) once was located in Warren County. We hope to add copies of their records to our collection. By having multiple copies of these records, we insure that if some natural disaster or theft occurs, at least one copy of these records will survive.

The WCGS obituary project is an ongoing project and is one of our most requested research items. We now have 86,543 obituaries in our collection. The seventh edition of our obituary master index was completed in the spring. Copies of the actual obituaries can be found in binders on our shelves organized by year. Researchers can search for their surnames using our master index online at our website or by our published book edition and request copies of the specified obituaries. Our obituary master index has made these records much more accessible.

WCGS is a great asset to all those researching in Warren County, Ohio and to many county departments. We strive to provide assistance to our local members, the general public and other local libraries and repositories. We are happy to assist all who come into our library or who correspond through mail, phone or email. We frequently work with Archives and the Recorder's Office. Many local libraries have copies of our books. Societies and libraries nationwide purchase copies of our publications. Our research request box is always full. The money brought in from our research requests and publications are used to purchase new books, microfilms and equipment to further preserve Warren County records. Our quarterly, *Heir Lines*, is sent out to our members and 90 genealogical societies in Ohio, and major repositories nationwide. *Heir Lines* provides articles of interest on families, localities, happenings, family charts, queries, and membership pertaining to Warren County. We encourage our members to submit free queries to *Heir Lines*.

We help our members improve their research skills by attending our monthly society meetings and summer daytime workshops, by visiting our library or by using our website. Our website lists our monthly programs for the year as well as major conferences in the region. We encourage our members to attend these programs and conferences and send reminders via our e-newsletter, local newspapers, and email. A variety of monthly programs are scheduled based on members' interests. We recognized eight new inductees, six for First Families and two for Early Settlers of Warren County, Ohio, at our First Families and Early Settlers Banquet in 2010. During the summer months, we offer daytime genealogy workshop classes at our library instead of monthly meetings. The classes are free and open to the public. Participants are provided with a workshop booklet with corresponding class lessons. Classes are held weekly and include a variety of topics. This summer our classes were full with an average of 25 people attending each week. Often times these classes result in new memberships and volunteers for our society.

We strongly support OGS and its mission by having our officers and members represent us at the annual OGS Conference and Chapter Management Meeting. We invite each new OGS District trustee to attend our chapter meetings. We include a list of the OGS chapters and their addresses in *Heir Lines* every year or so. Periodically we have articles written up in the OGS publications and newsletters. We appeal to this committee to please consider Warren County as the Outstanding Chapter of 2010.