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WILMA SOWLE

WILMA SOWLE HELPS SENIORS WITH GENEALOGY

The Senior Drop-In Center sponsored a beginning class in Genealogy, with Wilma Sowle's expertise. Wilma regularly attends activities at the Senior Center and was the perfect person to
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introduce other Seniors to a new and interesting hobby.

Wilma has been researching for many years and very active with the Genealogists of the Clinton County Historical Society. Always interested in genealogy, Wilma helped with the creation of a genealogical archives in Clinton County, where she provided many records from her personal files.

As the records increased, the Archives outgrew one home after another until the DeWitt Township Offices offered free housing for the records and the Archives moved from St. Johns to DeWitt. There, Wilma served as a green thumb worker where she was able to help many with their research besides the many duties of maintaining records.

Wilma is a life-long resident of Clinton County. She is the youngest child from a family of ten children, born to George and Malinda (Wilcox) Cowles. Wilma & James J. Sowle were married in 1920. James died in 1976. Wilma has two children, Mrs. Frances Hiner Homer of DeWitt, and James J. Sowle of Cinnaminson, New Jersey, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Besides genealogy, Wilma has many talents to keep her from growing bored. Music and crafts keep her busy, as well as keeping up a good game of a cribbage. She has the energy of ten people, young or old, and she has a wonderful sense of humor.

LAND RECORDS FEATURED IN OCTOBER MEETING

Genealogists of Clinton County met on Monday, September 9, 1991 at the Capital Federal Savings & Loan Community Room for the September meeting. Those attending were, Bill Service, Pres.; Marilyse Brooks, Sec.; Janet Tiedt, Tres.; Janet Snyder, corresponding sec. Members present included Dorr & Jean Hudson, Wilma Sowle, Alberta Huhn, Myrna VanEpps, Jean Service & Arlene Smith.

Church presented an interesting program on land records. With humor and expertise, he included the history of land surveying and how explained how our founders, using the meridian & base lines to improve the ancient system of measuring land by meets & bounds. He explained how the land descriptions changed as the country grew and the system improved. He touched on the different land grants and how they were awarded, and the land developers and how they operated on the frontiers. Also, how the territories and states land boundaries were awarded and the conflicts settled over those boundaries, and how the separate controls of Federal, State and local, which includes City, Village, County & Township prevail.

He advised us to check the property descriptions on our tax form against the property description on our deed every time we receive our tax notice, and if any discrepancies appear, get the tax description corrected.

CUSHMAN FAMILY

The Cushmans were the first family in Gunnisonville Community and the first settlers in Bath Township.

The Cushman family history starts in Kent, England, when Robert Cushman was born 9 Feb. 1577. He was principal agent for the Pilgrims, and his son Thomas married Ruth Howland whose parents came on Mayflower to America in 1620. Fordney Cushman and his daughter are both members of the Mayflower Society.

Gilbert and Nancy Russell Cushman and most of their family left Kent township, Putman County, New York, in 1836 and came to Michigan. He recieved a land patent in 1839. Later Gilbert's sons, Morris, Russell and Ira took land adjoining the original farm. Ira and his family were the first settlers in Bath Township. Cushman's uncle Ira died soon after settling, and his wife,

Belinda, had to go to the County Court House in DeWitt to get guardianship of her two children. The law at that time considered them her dead husband's brother's children. Cushman verified this from probate records dated 1840.

The Cushman school was located on the north-east corner of Clark and Chandler roads. The Cushman Cemetery was near the south-east corner of Clark and Chandler roads. Gilbert Cushman is buried there, and his wife Nancy is buried in Gunnisonville Cemetery.

Fordney Cushman and his wife Wilma are the fourth generation living on the Cushman farm. Their daughter, Johanna Balzer, has a home on the farm, and her daughters, Kathryn and Shannon Balzer, are the sixth generation to live on the Cushman farm.



FORDNEY CUSHMAN

