

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
OF THE
WELLS COUNTY GENEALOGY SOCIETY**

ARTICLE I NAME

The name of the organization shall be the Wells County Genealogy Society referred to hereafter as The Society or WCGS.

ARTICLE II OBJECTIVES

- 1) Collect, preserve, secure, document, organize, and record the ancestry of any and all Wells County and surrounding area families.
- 2) Study, maintain, and encourage development of genealogical materials entrusted to The Society.
- 3) Create and implement special projects deemed appropriate by majority vote of the active membership
- 4) Generate local interest in genealogy, assist, and instruct those unfamiliar with practices.

ARTICLE III STRUCTURE

WCGS is a not-for-profit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian organization operating under the aegis of the Wells County Historical Society. The members of the WCGS have the sole right to govern and control its activities through duly elected officers.

ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP

- 1) Membership is open to all interested parties with payment of annual dues. Timely payment of dues will place the member in good standing with The Society.
- 2) Memberships shall include all members in one family, residing at a single mailing address.
- 3) Members have the right to vote and hold office in The Society. Details of this are described in Article VII.
- 4) Charter members are members who were in good standing with Blackford-Wells Genealogy Society April 30, 1996.

ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP DUES

- 1) The Elected Board (defined in Article IX) establishes Society membership dues.
- 2) Dues are to be paid annually in January of each year; failure to pay by April will result in loss of good standing with The Society and removal from the membership roster.

ARTICLE VI MEETINGS

Regular meetings of The Society shall be held on the third (3rd) Saturday of January, March, May, July, September, and November. Meetings will take place at the designated Wells County site.

- 1) The President or Elected Board may call special meetings provided that at least five days' prior notice is given to all members of The Society specifying the location and principle business of the meeting.
- 2) The Annual Meeting will be the regular November meeting. Principal business will be the election of officers for the ensuing year.
- 3) A quorum is required to take action at Society meetings. Two officers and two members of The Society shall constitute a quorum and a majority of those present must show approval for an action to be taken by the Society.
- 4) The President or the Elected Board may close any meeting to visitors for Society business if necessary.

ARTICLE VII OFFICERS, TERMS, ELECTIONS

- 1) The Society officers will be President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. These officers will serve on the Elected Board.
- 2) The Society officers shall be elected during odd-numbered years at the Annual Meeting for a two-year term beginning January of the following year.
- 3) Officers may stand for three consecutive terms. Additional terms require approval of all voters present at the Annual Meeting.
- 4) In the event of a vacancy in the office of President, the Vice President shall succeed to the office. If the Vice President is unwilling or unable to assume the responsibilities of the presidency, the members shall elect a new President to fill the vacancy. In the event of a vacancy any other office, the Elected Board, by majority vote, shall appoint from the membership an officer to finish the term. Any appointments lasting longer than six (6) months shall be deemed to have served one term in determining eligibility for future elections.
- 5) Nomination and election of officers shall proceed as follows during the Annual Meeting:
 - a. The Nominating Committee shall submit a slate of candidates for each open office. Nominations may be made from the floor before the election provided the nominees consent. Floor nominations will be added to the committee's ballots before distribution to the membership for consideration.
 - b. Voting is open to members in good standing with The Society. Members must be present to elect officers.
 - c. The Nominating Committee will tally the votes, report the officers-elect to the President who then informs The Society, and declares the offices duly filled. Vote tallies shall remain secret.

ARTICLE VIII DUTIES OF OFFICERS

- 1) The duties of the President include but are not limited to:
 - a. Preside at all Society and Elected Board meetings.
 - b. Appoint all special committee chairpersons except for the Nominating Committee. Appoint a Society Historian, to serve as chair of the Archive Committee. Appoint a Society Editor to serve as chair of the Editorial Committee.
 - c. Serve as ex-officio member of all committees except the Audit and Nominating Committees. The past president shall serve as ex-officio of the Elected Board.
 - d. Serve as secondary signatory on Society draft accounts.
- 2) The duties of the Vice-President include but are not limited to:
 - a. Preside at all meetings in the absence of the President. Assume duties and responsibilities of the President if necessary.
 - b. Assume the office of President upon the resignation, removal from office or death of the elected President per procedures outlined in Article VII.4.
 - c. Assist the President and perform other duties as assigned by the Elected Board or by membership vote.
 - d. Serve as Society Parliamentarian and retain a copy of Robert's Rules of Order for reference.
 - e. Serve as Acting Society Program Director and schedule appropriate programs and or speakers for Society meetings in the absence of a Program Committee.
- 3) The duties of the Secretary include but are not limited to:
 - a. Record meeting proceedings and file reports from committee chairperson.
 - b. Provide meeting minutes to the President and Editor prior to the next meeting.
 - c. Keep on file the official copy of the Society By-laws and Standing Rules.
 - d. Conduct Society correspondence as directed by the President or Elected Board.

- 4) The duties of the Treasurer include but are not limited to:
- a. Serve as the legal custodian of all monies and other financial assets that come into the possession of WCGS. Keep accurate and complete records of the society's monetary funds depicting the current financial condition of the society, and the standing of each member. Serve as primary signatory with the President as secondary signatory on all draft accounts.
 - b. Deposit all funds of The Society in a federally insured depository institution designated by the Elected Board in an account in the name of The Society.
 - c. Provide a report of current financial status at membership meetings and as requested by the Elected Board.
 - d. Provide complete financial records to the Elected Board for an internal audit performed annually in January and when requested by the Elected Board.
 - e. Complete all business forms, pay bills for operating expenses authorized by the Elected Board.
 - f. Possess a key to The Society mailbox; pickup and distribute mail.
 - g. Serve as chair of the Membership Committee.

ARTICLE IX ELECTED BOARD

The elected officers shall serve as members with the immediate past President serving as an ex-officio Board member.

- 1) The Elected Board shall meet as required at the request of the President or a majority of the Board members.
- 2) The Elected Board shall have the authority to enter into contracts and legally binding agreements on behalf of The WCGS.
- 3) A quorum for a meeting of the Board shall be a majority (3) of the members of the Board and the vote of the majority when a quorum is present shall constitute effective action provided due notice of the meeting was given to all officers.
- 4) Appoint three members in good standing to serve on the Nominating Committee.
- 5) In the absence of The President, The Board is responsible for appointing all committee chair people as vacancies are created.
- 6) In the absence or inability to serve of any officer except the President the Board may delegate the powers and duties of that office to any other officer or member.

ARTICLE X COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEES shall be: Membership; Publicity; Program, Archive; Editorial.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES shall be: Nominating; Cemetery; Constitution/By-laws; Project Planning; and such others deemed necessary by the President or Elected Board.

- 1) Duties of all committees are outlined under the Standing Rules of The Society.
- 2) All committees and appointed positions shall be directly responsible to the Elected Board and shall gain Board approval before implementing any activities or programs.
- 3) Committee chair people shall be responsible for the committee budget, which should be presented to the Board for approval before the beginning of the fiscal year.
- 4) Committee chair people shall appoint the committee members.

ARTICLE XI OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

The Society will periodically issue a newsletter and a handbook to all members. The contents of each and the frequency of publication are described in the Standing Rule documenting Society Publications. All official publications are the responsibility of the Editorial Committee whose chairperson is The Society Editor.

ARTICLE XII FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of The Society shall be from the first day of January to the last day of December.

ARTICLE XIII PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall be the parliamentary guide for The Society in all matters of procedure not covered by these by-laws.

ARTICLE XIV NOT-FOR-PROFIT STATUS

The Society shall operate solely for educational purposes as provided in Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code and shall limit its activities as required of an exempt organization under this section of code.

ARTICLE XV DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution, the Elected Board shall be responsible for distribution of all assets. All documents, historical records, and publications held in the archives as property of The Society shall be presented to each of the following libraries in the specified order contingent on prior claims of ownership or inheritance: Wells County Public Library, Main Branch; Allen County Public Library, Reynolds Genealogy Collection. All funds remaining after just claims are satisfied will be presented to the Indiana Genealogical Society as a gift from this Society and its members.

ARTICLE XVI AMENDMENTS

These by-laws may be amended or repealed by majority vote at any regular meeting of The Society where a quorum is present. Changes shall be presented in writing to all members at least one month prior to presentation for action. Votes may be submitted by proxy through federal mail. The Elected Board will propose a course of action and failure to return the proxy will be assumed a vote in favor of The Board's recommendation.

ARTICLE XVII ENACTMENT

The by-laws, standing rules, and amendments herein shall become effective upon adoption by the membership.

STANDING RULES

The Standing Rules shall provide a description of the established procedure of the Society. Amendments can be proposed at any regular membership meeting where a quorum is present, immediate adoption shall occur with majority vote of acceptance. Prior notice is not required.

1. SOCIETY ORDER OF BUSINESS

- § Call to Order
- § Report of Minutes
- § Treasurer's Report
- § Report of Committees
- § Unfinished Business
- § New Business
- § Announcements
- § Adjournment

2. SOCIETY MAIL

A post office box shall be rented in the name of The Society for the collection of mail. The Treasurer shall hold keys.

3. STANDING COMMITTEE DUTIES INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO

A. ARCHIVE COMMITTEE

1. Committee chairperson shall serve as Society Historian.
2. Keep a memory book of all things of interest or newsworthy about The Society.
3. File and be responsible for all non-current documents belonging to The Society.
4. Perform other duties as requested by the Board.

B. EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

1. Committee chairperson shall serve as Society Editor for all official publications and distributions.
2. Create and distribute WCGS newsletter, Wells County Tracer, bi-monthly, described further in Standing Rule 5.

C. MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

1. Maintain the official membership roster.
2. Issue current WCGS Handbook copy to members. Provide the Editorial Committee with new member information.
3. Annually update and distribute the MEMBERSHIP HANDBOOK, described further in Standing Rule 5.

D. PROGRAM COMMITTEE

1. Responsible for providing a program for each regular meeting and introducing the speaker if one is present.
2. Present a tentative program schedule for the year to the Elected Board for approval at the March meeting. Programs shall be in keeping with the purpose of The Society.

E. PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

1. Create or approve all media press releases concerning WCGS activity.
2. Arrange publicity for Society activities.

4. SPECIAL COMMITTEE DUTIES INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO

A. CEMETERY COMMITTEE

This group is responsible for cataloging graves in Wells County cemeteries. This committee serves in cooperation with groups from other organizations with similar purposes.

B. NOMINATING COMMITTEE (3 MEMBER MINIMUM)

This committee is appointed by the Elected Board and shall be comprised of three members in good standing with The Society. The nominating committee is responsible for creating a slate of candidates for available offices and overseeing election of officers as described in The By-laws, Article VII, point number 4.

C. CONSTITUTION/BY-LAWS COMMITTEE

At the request of the President or Executive officers, evaluate and recommend revision to, if deemed necessary, the contents of the by-laws and standing rules.

D. PROJECT PLANNING COMMITTEE

This group is responsible for reviewing all WCGS projects and making appropriate recommendations to the Elected Board.

5. SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

A. NEWSLETTER THE WELLS COUNTY TRACER

1. The document should be published bi-monthly on the months prior to scheduled meetings for distribution to Society membership. The Elected Board may request additional issues.

2. The Editor shall edit and prepare material for printing and shall be responsible for assembling and mailing the publication. Members may contribute articles of general interest to The Society.

3. Queries [containing no more than thirty words, plus] including the inquirer's name and address will be published as space permits. Queries shall be published free of charge to members in good standing with WCGS. All other queries are subject to a fee.

4. Additional copies should be available. The Editor shall be responsible for keeping and distributing the surplus copies.

5. Back issues of the newsletter plus any applicable postage and handling will be subject to a current charge determined by the Editor.

6. Appropriate permission is required to print material that is under copyright.

B. MEMBERSHIP HANDBOOK

The Membership Committee, the Treasurer, and the Editor create this publication annually. If the Constitution/By-law Committee has made changes, their assistance can be requested. The Handbook shall contain pertinent information listed below:

1. List of officers and committee chair people
2. Meeting schedule and location(s)
3. Membership roster
 - a. Name
 - b. Address
 - c. Telephone number
 - d. Email address if available
 - e. Surname research list
4. By-laws
5. Standing Rules

C. Formal Society Publications can be in book or electronic format. The Editorial Committee must approve all contents prior to public release.

Adopted this 21st day of March, 1998, by the membership of the Blackford-Wells Genealogy Society.

First revision: Saturday 21 January 2017 by membership in attendance at the regular WCGS meeting with motion to publish on the websites.

Second revision: Saturday 18 November 2023 approved by membership during the Annual Meeting.