

Rock County Genealogical Society

Rock County, Wisconsin Probate Index, 1839-1930s

Provided to Jump-Start Your Probate Research

Email Request for Research: [RCGS Webmaster](#) --- Return to [RCGS Home Page](#)

CLICK BELOW TO VIEW THE PROBATE INDEX

SURNAMES A-F

SURNAMES G-M

SURNAMES N-S

SURNAMES T-Z

WELCOME

Welcome to the 14,000 name Probate Index page of the Rock County Genealogy Society (RCGS). Here you can view key information abstracted from the original hard copies files of Rock County Probate Records for estates of people who died between 1839 and the early 1930s. Probate records are court files that detail the final accounting of a deceased person's **assets** (real estate, animals, equipment and personal belongings) and **debts** (outstanding loans, unsettled accounts and doctor, burial and legal bills). Probate records also describe the final distribution of the deceased person's estate to surviving family members.

ACCESS TO THE FULL ORIGINAL PROBATE FILES (NOT MICROFILM)

This **index** is a brief name & date catalog of the many documents in the **original hard copy probate files** held in the archives of the Rock County Historical Society (RCHS) in the Wilson King Stone House on the grounds of the Lincoln-Tallman Museum, 933 Mineral Point Ave., Janesville, WI. There are four ways to obtain copies of probate records from Rock County, Wisconsin:

- **Visit the RCGS Library:** The Stone House hours are Wednesday and Thursday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Friday from noon to 3 p.m. (closed major holidays). For on-site researchers, the fee for admission and research is \$10 (free for Genealogical or Historical Society members). RCGS volunteer researchers will help locate and copy probate records. Copy charges of \$1 per page (\$0.50 for Society members) apply. This is the best option, as it provides "no wait" access to probate records and allows you to carefully review and choose which documents to copy from probate files.
- **Call the RCGS Library:** Call during hours of operation (noted above) at either the Rock County Historical Society office at 608-756-4509 or the Rock County Genealogical Society library at 608-752-5891. They may be able to take your request or alternatively, instruct you how to more formally write a request for copies. A research fee of \$20 plus copy charges of \$1 per page (\$0.50 for Society members) applies.
- **Write the RCGS Library:** Using standard US Postal delivery, write us your specific request at Rock County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 936, Janesville, WI 53547-0936. Include your ancestor's probate index file number (or for a fee, we will look for your ancestor's probate record). A research fee of \$20 plus copy charges of \$1 per page (\$0.50 for Society members) applies.
- **Email the RCGS Library:** Write us at RCGS.WI@gmail.com, with your specific request. Include the probate index file number (or for a fee, we will look for your ancestor's probate record). A research fee of \$20 plus copy charges of \$1 per page (\$0.50 for Society members) applies.

Make sure to identify yourself as a RCGS member or RCHS member (or [join RCGS](#)) to receive faster service and reduced copy fees.

WHY IS THIS ONLINE INDEX A “LIMITED VERSION” OF THE PROBATE INDEX?

The RCGS is a nonprofit organization staffed entirely by volunteers. The Society’s only revenue comes from membership dues, publication sales and research fees. Consequently, we place “partial” or “limited” versions of many of our hard copy publications online to help researchers identify their ancestors. To preserve sales of the full version of Society publications that fund our ongoing archiving and indexing efforts, we do not post full indexes online. But we do make our archive holdings and skilled researchers available to you (see more about this below).

HOW TO OBTAIN THE FULL PROBATE INDEX

For many years, the Rock County probate records from 1839 were cloistered in long-term storage at the RCHS Archives. But recently these records been fully indexed by RCGS and made accessible to the public. The “Full Version” of the index lists the names of over 14,000 deceased Rock County residents and includes the death dates and the probate file number for each individual. For the first time a “card catalog” exists for this massive record collection. This remarkable index has now been published and a hard copy may be purchased from RCGS at its [Society Publications](#) web page. A non-circulating, reference copy is also available at the Society Library itself and in the Genealogy Room of the Janesville Hedberg Public Library.

USES OF PROBATE RECORDS

Probate records are remarkably productive research sources and it is rare that such records have been preserved, indexed and made accessible as they have been for Rock County. The state of Wisconsin was a crossroads for many families whose ancestors eventually traveled west and these probate records are a cache of previously untapped genealogical information. These are the kinds of facts you are likely to uncover in many probate records:

- A summary of property owned by the deceased, including both real estate with exact land descriptions and personal property from farm machinery and stock animals to jewelry and household goods listed in detail.
- A summary of debts owed, including physician's bills giving insights into the nature and cause of death, as well as grave lot purchases or perpetual care fees revealing the exact location of burial.
- A comprehensive listing of descendants, including the spouse, living children (including married names of daughters), names of deceased children with living children - and the location of residency of each of these potential inheritors of the estate. This is particularly useful as a launching pad for research on maternal family branches.

USE OF THIS INFORMATION:

All Rights Reserved. No part of this index table may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. COPYRIGHT © 2006, Rock County Genealogical Society. Use of data from this page is limited to the individual family researcher exclusively for the purpose of advancing her or his individual research.
