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Churches have Keys to Family History Research

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~ Resources, Records & Surprises

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~ Not Always What you Expect

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The public is invited to the free presentation entitled

“Church has Keys to Family History Research, Resources, Records & Surprises.” **It will be at 7 pm on Wednesday, August 15, 2012** at the meeting of the Burlington Genealogical Society.

The public is invited to hear real stories and practical tips that involve using church related resources for family history.

“When using church records, things are not always what you expect!” said guest speaker Judith Schulz, Church Historian of Racine’s First United Methodist Church. “There are keys to facts and stories beyond just *the obvious birth, baptism and marriage records*. In fact, there are clues, intrigue, glimpses of eras, and plenty of questions and answers woven into *the unusual records*, too”

The presentation will touch on eleven surprising types of records and resources, as well as normal church records that come to mind. Information can be found both inside and outside of churches, too.

“Opportunities with church resources are filled with surprises from frank comments and conflicts, to social movements and even the price of a ticket in 1900 to ride to the annual picnic. What were the social issues of the day or how many oysters were ordered for the fundraising supper? Was it your ancestor who

was in charge of that supper, and who gave the eulogy for an active member of the congregation? Who was behind in their pew rental payments? Who officially witnessed your great grandmother’s wedding; relatives, friends or the minister’s wife? Was there a previous marriage? Who was a Temperance advocate? Surprises lurk among church records that will enhance your family history,” Schulz commented.

Schulz will also share her experience analyzing church photographs, locating old news clippings, and investigating church publications and monthly minutes. “Several emergency meetings of the church trustees in the 1880’s and early 1900’s opened up a plethora of information on my own family that I never expected and have been elated to find,” she stated.

The presentation will include examples of who might help you, atypical resources, hunting tips and ways to put the puzzle pieces together. She will offer suggestions of what to do with records you might find and how to organize them for future use by others.

Schulz will also give a summary of ways to utilize church records and history for the benefit of the public and one’s own family history, through events she headed for the 175th Anniversary of the First Methodist Church, Racine. Those events and activities included the Ceremony of the Opening of the 1913 Church Cornerstone’s box, a Celebration of 175 Years of Weddings and Baptisms, Mystery Photographs, creating a Church Museum exhibit, filling a Time Capsule Box Ceremony, quick exhibits, writing weekly history tidbits, and making records accessible.

The meeting and program will be held at the Gateway Building, 496 McCanna Parkway, just past the Burlington High School. Parking is free, and the building is handicap accessible. Contact Bonnie for more information about the Society: 262-634-8815