



# WMGS Newsletter Summer 2015



## June 13th WMGS Meeting Will Be Monumental!

### Civil War Memories in Bronze, White Bronze, and Stone

Family historians are able to find clues to past generations written in stone or metal. WMGS member, Bruce Butgereit will discuss some of these local permanent resources at the June membership meeting.

In 1864, even before the Civil War ended the people of Grand Rapids believed that the deeds and sacrifice of the soldiers serving deserved to be remembered by future generations. This program will take you on a tour of the many Civil War and Grand Army of the Republic memorials created in the Grand Rapids area from 1885 to 2014.

Many residents know of the Kent County Civil War Monument at the corner of Fulton and Division. When asked how many other such memorials exist in the Grand

Rapids area, some have guessed three or four. Do you know? You will after this program!

Bruce B. Butgereit serves as the Civil War Memorials Officer for both the local Gen. John A. Logan Camp No. 1 and the Department of Michigan, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. During his two terms as National Civil War Memorials Officer for the Sons of Union Veterans, Bruce created a handbook of instructions to provide guidance for all current and future memorial officers in fulfilling their obligations. He is recognized in Michigan and elsewhere for his knowledge regarding the Civil War and for his efforts to preserve and restore the public memories and monuments of the men and women of 1861-1865 and the Grand Army of the Republic.

### Coming to America Immigration Records Mini-Class

**Mini-Class: Saturday, June 13, 2015 Noon – 1:00 PM**

With so many immigrants entering the United States in the 1800's, Congress passed the first federal law regulating immigration in 1882. Nine years later, in 1891, the Superintendent of Immigration was established. Then in 1906, this became the new Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization.

Immigration records can fill in crucial details of your family's history. Passenger lists and records help to understand your ancestors' voyage from the other side of the "pond" to America. Instructor, Linda Guth, will discuss the challenges in finding passenger ship records.

**June 13th Membership Meeting  
and Mini-Class will be held in  
the Auditorium at the  
Grand Rapids Public Library  
Main Branch.  
Both are FREE to the Public!!!**



**Bruce Butgereit**

## Join the Global Family Reunion at the Grand Rapids Public Library

**June 6th 10:30 am - 4:40 pm**

The Federation of Genealogical Societies is facilitating the organization of Global Family Reunion branch parties at many of its member societies across the United States and around the world. WMGS is hosting one of these parties in the Vanderveen Room on the fourth floor of the Grand Rapids Main Library on June 6, 2015.

Brainchild of best-selling author and three-time TED talk speaker, A.J. Jacobs, the Global Family Reunion will host the event in New York. It will include talks, family history exhibits, the world's largest family photo, and other family reunion activities as well as live-streaming to branch parties located all over the world.

You can read more about the event at <http://globalfamilyreunion.com>

You can find out about AJ Jacobs here [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A.\\_J.\\_Jacobs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._J._Jacobs) and more about the year he spent in New York trying to live by biblical rules here <http://ajjacobs.com/books/the-year-of-living-biblically/> (he spoke about this at RootsTech 2015, including some pretty funny pictures of a bearded guy in cotton robes and sandals moving around New York City which you can view here <http://www.rootstech.org/video/4066621600001> )

WikiTree.com is also getting behind this effort with a "how are you related to AJ Jacobs" calculator on their site.

## WMGS Ft. Wayne Bus Trips

Over 40 genealogists traveled by bus from Grand Rapids to the Allen County Public Library in Ft. Wayne, Indiana on April 22nd. They stayed overnight and indulged in their love of genealogical research at the second largest family history repository in the United States.

For many years WMGS has sponsored one or two (depending upon demand) genealogical research trips to the second largest family history library in America. The Library continues to acquire new genealogical resources. For devoted researchers it is one repository that should not be missed. The bus trip includes round trip motor coach transportation, lodging, and library transfer.

The bus arrives at the Library about 10:30 a.m. Genealogists research until 9:00 p.m. when the bus leaves to take participants to the motel. At 8:30 a.m. the next day the bus returns eager researchers to the Library. At 6:00 p.m. the bus departs to return to Grand Rapids. We have dinner on the way home in Auburn, Indiana, where several restaurants are located close together.

It's a great time to spend with wonderful people who share our addiction to family history research. So -

**SAVE THE DATES -  
NEXT BUS TRIP WILL BE  
NOVEMBER 17TH AND 18TH**



## New Genealogist? Need Research Help? Have Questions?

Whether you're just beginning to investigate your family's past, or a more seasoned genealogist who needs a "new pair of eyes" to jump start your research, it's helpful to talk to other more experienced family historians. This is especially true during July and August when WMGS members take a vacation from monthly meetings.

Any beginning, intermediate or advanced researcher who wants help with a genealogical question is encouraged to come to the Local History Department at the Grand Rapids Public Library to confer with an experienced WMGS member on **any Tuesday evening or on the first three Thursday nights in June, July and August from 6 to 9 pm.**

## **DNA Interest Group (DIG)**

Meeting the third Thursday of the month:

June 18 — July 16 — August 20

7:00 - 9:00 pm

The newly formed Western Michigan Genealogical Society DNA Interest Group (DIG) will meet on the 3rd Thursday of the month in the Vander Veen Center for the Book (on the 4th floor of the Grand Rapids Public Library). The first meeting will be 18 June 2015 at 7p.m.. Then 16 July, 20 August, and 17 September.

In June Lisa Christensen will give a presentation showing the interaction of pedigree and descendant charts with Y-DNA (male) and mtDNA (mitochondrial - female), and an introduction to autosomal DNA (atDNA).

If you have questions or want more information, please contact Roger Moffat - DataMaster@wmgs.org

## **Finding Your Way Around the Cemetery**

Class will be held Tuesday, June 23rd

at Greenwood Cemetery

6:30 - 8:30 pm

This class is about enjoying cemeteries, finding particular graves, the pitfalls of headstone photography, dealing with difficult to read headstones, indexing a cemetery and the general tools a cemetery wanderer may need when visiting grave sites.

Please bring a clipboard-like device to hold papers and take notes. For details see the WMGS webpage. The class will be held on June 23, 2015, from 6:30 - 8:30.

Please join us at the cemetery. It is located off of Leonard Street NW. Take the first road to right in Greenwood Cemetery to the top of the hill. Kathy Cook and Bill Grinstead will be your instructors. If you have any questions please feel free to call 240-1579.

## **Join the WMGS Writers Group**

Meeting the third Tuesday of the month:

June 16 — July 21 — August 18

at the Dominican Center, 2025 Fulton St NE

1:30 - 4:30 pm

The Writers Group is designed to help and support the desire to write about our families with a kind eye and lots of humor. Everyone is welcome and all workshops are free.

Each meeting has a suggested topic, but writers are free to bring any work in progress to the meeting.

June 16: Which smell if you smell it today takes you straight back to your childhood? Why??

July 21: Describe how an historic event impacted you, your ancestors or both.

August 18 : When you walked into school, what and who did you see, what did you hear, and what did you smell? (What memories are triggered by your senses?)

The workshops are held at the Dominican Center on the corner of East Fulton and Lakeside Drive. Please call Sister Michael Ellen Carling at 616-514-3231 (home) or 616-514-3340 (office) if you are attending for the first time. You may park in the Dominican Center parking lot on Lakeside Drive. Use the lower entrance on the east side of the large portico. Go down the steps or down the cement ramp to enter the building. The receptionist will direct you to the room.

**WMGS Annual Seminar  
Got Ancestors?!**  
**With Who Do You  
Think You Are?**  
**Genealogist Josh Taylor  
COMING!**

**October 9th and 10TH**

# Places to Go - Things to Learn

## Two-Day Seminar at the Archives of Michigan July 10th and 11th

Each summer, the Michigan Genealogical Council (MGC) and the Archives of Michigan sponsor a seminar in Lansing, Michigan. This year's Abrams Foundation Family History Seminar, featuring Michael Lacopo, will be held on Friday and Saturday, July 10th and 11th. WMGS is a member of MGC and encourages everyone to take the opportunity to attend this great educational event. Registration is \$50 per person and includes a box lunch.

After kicking off with a tour of the Archives of Michigan, conference attendees will have the opportunity to pick from a variety of speakers and family history topics over the two-day event. Some examples of the learning opportunities available include:

- *A Digitization Tour* at the Archives of Michigan to learn how staff scan, index, and make digital collections available through Seeking Michigan.
- *Planning a Productive Summer/Genealogy Vacation* with presenter James N. Jackson, Professional researcher. Whether your destination is to a family reunion, research in distant states, or an expedition closer to home, these tips on organizing and preparing for a trip should create the best opportunity for success.
- *Using DNA to Break Down Brick Walls* will be presented by professional researcher, Bethany Waterbury. Learn how to use DNA test results as a powerful new tool to support or reject years of traditional paper record research. Attention will be paid to "misattributed parentage" errors in which an ancestor is paired with the incorrect birth couple due to research errors, adoption, name change, or infidelity.
- Jill Arnold, from the Archives of Michigan will talk about *Michigan Veterans of World War I*. This program will walk researchers through how to find a number of World War I records held at the Archives of Michigan. These resources are particularly significant given the lack of federal records due to a fire.
- *Chasing Your Elusive Ancestor On the Internet*: Karen Krugman, will provide hints and ideas for chasing your ancestors down on the Internet.
- *More Than the Census – Our Families Did Exist Between Those Ten-year Intervals*. Michael Lacopo, DVM, This lecture will the importance of to identifying our ancestors' whereabouts in as many local records as possible. A lot can happen in ten years! If you don't look harder, you won't find them.
- *Immigration Agents* During the time period from the 1840s – 1900, many states in the Union competed for immigrants and settlers. Ceil Wendt Jensen, Polonica Americana Research Institute, will relate how state agents, working with shipping lines, recruited future citizens both at U.S. ports and in villages and towns in Europe and the record sets they created.
- *Selected Detroit and Michigan Genealogical Resources at the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library*. Learn about the many resources available at the Burton Library from librarian Mark Bowden.
- *Researching Your Family History at the Archives of Michigan*. Kris Rzepczynski, Archivist, will provide an introduction to the Archives of Michigan, and explore the genealogical collections available, including original source records, published resources, and online tools at Seeking Michigan.
- *Breaking Brick Walls with Facebook's 4,400+ Genealogy Groups*. Katherine Willson, Researcher & lecturer, will discuss how Facebook can be used as a genealogy tool and will illustrate the process of creating an account, joining groups, managing notifications, and efficiently utilizing Facebook for their specific genealogical needs.
- *Deconstructing Your Family Tree: Re-evaluating the "Evidence."* Michael Lacopo, DVM will show how erroneous conclusions can sneak into our research untested. This lecture is pertinent especially today with so many Internet family trees that get cut and pasted into our own research
- *A Black Sheep Ancestor*. Jessica Trotter, Researcher and blogger, will illustrate a case study that features a mysterious and unreliable ancestor-including scandal, name changes, a wide range of record sources, and dumb luck.
- *The Buckeye State: Researching Your Ohio Ancestors*. This session, aimed at researchers whose ancestral trails extend to and from Ohio, will provide an overview of the rich and abundant genealogical resources available in print and online. Kris Rzepczynski is the presenter.

*Cemeteries and Ancestors*. Daniel Earl, Researcher, will talk about types of grave markers, how to use cemetery maps, where to find cemetery records online, and tips on cleaning grave markers and cemetery safely.

To register, (please register before July 8th so that all participants can be accommodated), learn about other learning opportunities, read the speakers' bios, or find out more about SeekingMichigan.org go to:

<http://seekingmichigan.org/events/2015-abrams-foundation-family-history-seminar>



## US Geological Survey Adds Excellent Online Map Viewer

The US Geological Survey has an online collection of more than 178,000 maps, dating back to 1880. They cover the entire country. Best of all, they're free to download. However, the digital images were not always of the highest quality and the search software for finding maps was confusing, at best. All that has now changed with the introduction of a new online map viewer.

Browsing and searching for maps is now much more intuitive. You can type or zoom in on a particular place, limit your search to maps of a particular scale or from a particular range of dates. You can download them in a variety of formats, from JPGs (fine for printing out a nice map to put on your wall), to KMZ files (to import into Google Earth), to GeoTIFFs (for the power users who wants to import maps into GIS software).

You can learn more about the National Map Viewer and Download Platform at <http://viewer.nationalmap.gov/viewer>.

Further details may be found in an article by Greg Miller in Wired at <http://www.wired.com/2015/05/amazing-collection-historical-maps-just-got-easier-see>. Posted on Dick Eastman's Newsletter, May 4, 2015.

## Newberry Library Orientation

Chicago is only three hours away from western Michigan and the Newberry Library holds a treasure trove of resources. The Genealogy and Local History staff there will introduce visitors to the Newberry and explain how to use its collections at an informal orientation. Aimed at researchers new to the library and/or new to genealogical research, this session will last approximately an hour, followed by a short tour of the library.

Afterwards, you are welcome to begin your research in the General Reading Room where a reference librarian will be available to provide suggestions and assistance.

These orientations are scheduled June 6th, July 11, and August 1st at 9:30 am. Reservations not required and there is no fee. For more information about the library and the orientations visit the website at <http://www.newberry.org/programs-genealogists>.

### MORE CLASSES???

Be sure to check [www.wmgs.org](http://www.wmgs.org) and [www.grpl.org](http://www.grpl.org) for more information on upcoming 2015 genealogy education classes.

## History of Grand Shire Farm

*Enjoy a Civil War style Lunch and Lecture on the Use of Herbs during the Civil War era.*

Saturday July 25, 2015 - 10:00

At the July Meeting of the Henry S. Jenks Chapter, National Society Daughters of the Union 1861-1865 \$15.00 payable two weeks prior to the meeting. Grand Shire Farm is located at 17325 White Creek Avenue between Sand Lake and Cedar Springs. For more information go to:

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mihsjdu/>

## 400,000 Images of Catholic Parish Registers Online

The National Library of Ireland is to digitize more than 400,000 images of Catholic parish register microfilms and publish them online for free. In what is being described as the most significant ever digitization project for Irish genealogy, the microfilms will be available online for free by the summer of 2015. Details may be found at

<http://www.irishcentral.com/>

Dating from the 1740s to the 1880s, they cover 1,091 parishes throughout the island of Ireland, and consist primarily of baptismal and marriage records.

## Cemetery Stroll at Oakhill Cemetery Thursday, June 25th

Northview Senior Neighbors is offering an educational opportunity for genealogists who missed last WMGS tour of Oakhill Cemetery guided by Tom Dillely. This stroll is full of amazing architecture and stories behind Grand Rapids' past power brokers.

It will take participants through the historic north side of Oakhill, a 75-acre park-like cemetery located at Hall Street and Eastern Ave SE in Grand Rapids. The cemetery is filled with grave markers, monuments and mausoleums that provide a tangible link to 175 years of history in the Grand Valley, and the people who built Grand Rapids' one-time reputation as the Furniture Capital of the World. The rigors of the walk are no more than moderately paced, and involves walking and standing, mostly on paved surfaces.

Depart center at 9:00 a.m. Cost: \$10  
<http://www.northviewseniors.org/newsletter.html>

## **DEATH RECORDS Covering 1921-1939 Available at Seeking Michigan.org**

Michigan researchers are now able to access even more death records - for free! In celebration of Seeking Michigan's 6th birthday, the Archives of Michigan released actual images of Michigan death certificates from 1921-1939.

These records, together with the index for 1940- 1952 are now fully searchable – and free – at Seeking Michigan: <http://seekingmichigan.org>. Additional certificate images will be released each year as privacy restrictions are lifted; for example, 1940 images will be released in January 2016, 1941 in January 2017, and so on. Together with the records from 1897-1920 that have been available at the site for years, this new collection of death records makes Seeking Michigan the one-stop destination for more than 2.6 million death records for Michigan genealogical and historical research.

In partnership with the Michigan Department of Community Health and FamilySearch, this collection of death records covers a critical period in Michigan's history. Researchers familiar with the earlier death records collection will find this new database very familiar. Users can search up to four different data fields at once, including last name, first name, county, city/village/township, birth year, age, death date, father's name, and mother's name.

As one would expect with a collection of this size, researchers may encounter inconsistencies and/or poorly indexed records. If you find omissions or errors please contact the Archives.

Users are also encouraged to contact the Archives of Michigan at [archives@michigan.gov](mailto:archives@michigan.gov) with questions, comments, or suggested index corrections. Some counties are still being added. This new database – together with the millions of other records and indexes already available at [SeekingMichigan.org](http://SeekingMichigan.org) demonstrates the Archives' commitment to and support of the entire family history community.

## **CIVIL WAR Diaries Donated to GRPL Archives**

Fifty-one leather-bound diaries written by the Grand Rapids businessman Robert Loomis are going to the Grand Rapids Public Library this year.

The diaries, written between 1855 and 1906, detail the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln's assassination and late 1800s Grand Rapids among other recollections penned by Loomis, a leather goods maker and founding deacon at Fountain Street Church. Loomis' diaries detail the war, assassination and much about mid- to late-1800s Grand Rapids.

Retired teacher Ron Stevens, 79, of Lowell, has owned the diaries for decades. Now, the general public will have a chance to see them as part of the library collections. "I think they belong here in Grand Rapids, and the library is my first choice," he said.

The library reached out to Stevens after he began giving presentations on the diaries — which Loomis' granddaughter left to the Stevens family in the 1940s — to local historical societies around the Ada, Lowell area.

"It's the perfect place for them," said Tim Gleisner, special collections director.

Loomis represented the city's second ward on the Kent County Board of Supervisors from 1877 to 1889 before becoming a state Senator. He was born in Maine in 1832 and relocated to Grand Rapids after working in Washington, D.C., during the war.

He was a leather-goods maker on Pennsylvania Avenue who made boots for Union Army soldiers. Loomis made daily entries during the war, documenting key moments in the conflict and aftermath. He considered Abe Lincoln a friend and pasted a scrap of wallpaper from Ford's Theatre into one of the books after the president was shot.

In Grand Rapids, Loomis spent a great deal of time at Fountain Street Baptist Church and "if you look out the windows, it's (the Library) right across the street," Stevens said. The old YMCA, now the Fitzgerald condos, also is right across the street, and "he was a developer of that."

The diaries join recent acquisitions like the St. Cecilia Music Center archives and the Women's City Club archives, which are also being transferred to the library this year.

## Protecting Tombstones for Future Genealogists

### CAUTION

Please **DO NOT** put these substances on a Grave-stone.

Chalk	Shaving Cream
Flour	Ink Markers
Cocoa	Baby Powder
Paints	Baking Soda
Soaps	Ammonia
Cleansers	Peroxide
Bleach	Detergents

“As harmless as these items may appear, they will all do long term damage to an old soft tombstone.”

Use only safe, effective methods like lights, aluminum foil, spraying water on the stone, or feeling the stone. Use mirrors to reflect light and shadows and photo editing programs to enhance the inscriptions.

“The more natural the better. Even snow or a little mud is better than a foreign substance.”

*From the Fairfield County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society.*

### LIKE WMGS ON FACEBOOK!

Ask questions, exchange information, learn about new resources and meet new friends who love family history.

## STRANGERS IN THE BOX

*Come, look with me inside this drawer,  
In this box I've often seen,  
At the pictures, black and white,  
Faces proud, still, serene.  
I wish I knew the people,  
These strangers in the box,  
Their names and all their memories  
Are lost among my socks.  
I wonder what their lives were like,  
How did they spend their days?  
What about their special times?  
I'll never know their ways.  
If only someone had taken time  
To tell who, what, where, or when,  
These faces of my heritage  
Would come to life again.  
Could this become the fate  
Of the pictures we take today?  
The faces and the memories  
Someday to be passed away?  
Make time to save your stories,  
Seize the opportunity when it knocks,  
Or someday you and yours could be  
The strangers in the box.*

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Cornish Association of Victoria newsletter August 2014

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NEW \_\_\_\_\_ RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_

\$20 in the US

\$25 Outside the USA

Make checks payable to: Western Michigan Genealogical Society or WMGS

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP+4: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your level of genealogy experience? (circle one):    Beginner                      Intermediate                      Advanced

Would you like someone to contact you about volunteer opportunities with WMGS?    Yes                      No

Do you use computer software to manage your genealogy?    No    Yes    Please list the software you use

\_\_\_\_\_

**Send checks and completed form to:  
WMGS Membership, Western Michigan Genealogical Society  
111 Library St NE  
Grand Rapids MI 49503-3268**



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## About WMGS

The Western Michigan Genealogical Society is dedicated to gaining knowledge, preserving records and teaching others about genealogy and family history.

**Membership:** An annual membership to WMGS is \$20 and begins on January 1st of each year. Membership benefits include: 10% discount on all items at the Sales Table, four issues of *Michigana* per year, free queries in *Michigana*, free online brick wall help and leadership opportunities. Your membership in the Western Michigan Genealogical Society will also include use of the private files of the Society and publication of your genealogy online at [trees.wmgs.org](http://trees.wmgs.org).

**Change of Address:** (Temporary or Permanent) If you will be permanently moving to a new address or going on an extended vacation, please notify WMGS before your address change occurs. Be sure to include the date your address will change or the dates when you will leave and plan to return. Email your address change information to the Society at [membership@wmgs.org](mailto:membership@wmgs.org) or write to: WMGS – Membership, Western Michigan Genealogical Society, 111 Library St NE, Grand Rapids MI 49503-3268.

### 2015-2016 WMGS Officers

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