



# WMGS Newsletter

## WINTER 2015



### **WMGS Databases Honored for 5 Consecutive Years!!!**

WMGS has once again been honored by Family Tree Magazine as one of the 75 best websites for finding American Ancestors. Datamaster, Roger Moffat, has worked diligently for 15 years to make sure genealogical records relevant to western Michigan is freely available to researchers. WMGS now has over 1,000,000 records in the Newspaper Database and passed 27,000,000 total records as of last October.

Many thanks to: Pat Rademaker who continues to index obituaries, weddings and engagements in current issues of the Grand Rapids Press; Lisa Christensen who indexes current death articles; the Tuesday Night Group; WMGS members who share their family trees; and, all of the volunteers who have indexed vital records, censuses, school records; books; or military information. We also thank past members who initiated the Obituary Project and worked so hard on it.



### **Bizarre Bazaar Raises over \$450 to Preserve War of 1812 Records**

The November 7th Membership Meeting featured a silent auction "Bizarre Bazaar." Money raised for the 1812 Preserve the Pensions project totaled \$468.72. The National Archives reports that these War of 1812 pension files are among the heaviest requested materials. With that level of use, these valuable records, available in no other format, are in danger of grave deterioration.

As these valuable historical documents are digitized, they will be made available to all at no cost, and the original pension files can be retired to much less active use. A donation of \$45 digitizes 100 pages. A matching amount given by Ancestry.com means that 200 pages will be preserved. Go to <http://www.preservethepensions.org/> for more information, or to make a tax deductible donation,



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

DIG meets at 7:00 PM on the 3rd Thursday of every month at the Grand Rapids Public Library. The group meets in the VanderVeen Center for the Book on the 4th floor. The group discusses the use of Y-DNA (male) and mtDNA (mitochondrial - female), and autosomal DNA (atDNA) tests and their relationship to family history research. Meetings are scheduled for December 17th, January 21st, and February 18th.

If you have questions or want more information, please contact Roger Moffat - [DataMaster@wmgs.org](mailto:DataMaster@wmgs.org)

# Upcoming WMGS Membership Meetings

All Membership Meetings are free to the public and are held from 1:30 to 4:00 PM in the Ryerson Auditorium at the Grand Rapids Public Library Main Branch, 111 Library Street. Mini-classes are also free and take place before the main meeting from Noon until 1:00 PM in the Adult Computer Training Center, lower level.

## December 5th Membership Meeting

**Topic: Thinking Outside The Box —  
Five Steps to help you bring down those brick walls.**

All genealogists have at least one ancestor who simply refuses to be found. Karen Krugman will show us several tactics for locating that elusive relative.

Karen Krugman has been researching since 1990, and professionally since 1998. She enjoys the challenge of Lineage Society research. Since 2002 she has been speaking to genealogy groups in the metro Detroit area as well as other areas of Michigan and Ohio. Her talks are given with a unique humorous spin.

Societies she has held positions in include: research chair for the Detroit Society for Genealogical research, past Registrar of the Michigan UDC chapter, past president of the



**Karen Krugman**

Ford Genealogy Club, a member of the Oakland County Genealogy Society and a six year volunteer at the Library of Michigan. She has written five books based on her family history research and was co-author of *The Ford Family Cemetery* book, which includes photos and other information on the cemetery where auto pioneer Henry Ford is buried. Currently Karen resides in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

## January 2nd Membership Meeting

**Topic: Discovering Genealogical Clues  
in 19th-Century Photographs**

A single photograph can unlock a family mystery. The details are in the photographic clues. Pictures document births, deaths, marriages, and more. Learn to use an image as genealogical proof by understanding the language of family photographs.

January's presentation will be a Webinar by Maureen Taylor. She is a frequent keynote speaker on photo identification, photograph preservation, and family history at historical and genealogical societies, museums, conferences, libraries, and other organizations across the U.S., London and Canada.

Maureen Taylor is the author of several books and hundreds of articles. She has made several television appearances.

Maureen was recently a spokesperson and photograph expert for MyHeritage.com, an internationally known family history website and also writes guidebooks, scholarly articles and online columns for such media as Smithsonian.com.



**Maureen Taylor**

**Saturday, December 5, 2015**  
**Mini-Class      Noon – 1:00 PM**  
**Family Group Sheets**

Just starting your genealogical journey? Wondering how to keep all of your family information straight? Confused about what is a Family Group Sheet is and how to use it?

Instructor Linda Guth will answer all of these questions for both beginners and more experienced family historians and explain how a well-documented family group record is the best tool you can use to get ideas about where to search for more information on a family.

**Saturday, January 2, 2016**  
**Mini-Class      Noon – 1:00 PM**  
**All About Charts and Your Family Tree**

There are many different charts available for genealogists to display a family tree. Check out the various choices to determine which one you like best. Instructor to be announced.

*Have a Joyous Holiday Season!*



## February 6th Membership Meeting

**Topic: Using the City of Grand Rapids Community Archives and Research Center for Genealogical Research.**

Tony Wright is the City Archives Officer for the City of Grand Rapids. For those who have ancestors who lived in this city, the Archives are a treasure trove of clues and original records.

Mr. Wright has nineteen years of public history experience working for the City of Kalamazoo, The Engineers Club of Dayton, the Montgomery County (Ohio) Records Center and Archives, and the Wright State University Special Collections and Archives. He has also served as an adjunct instructor of history at Kellogg Community College and Kalamazoo Valley Community College.



**Tony Wright**

**Saturday, February 6, 2016**  
**Mini-Class Noon – 1:00 PM**  
**Genealogy Correspondence**

We will be discussing form letters and letter writing tips for ensuring a response to your letters. Instructor: Linda Guth.

## Cancellation Policy

Living in Michigan we all know weather related cancellations are more common in the winter. If a WMGS meeting is canceled due to dangerous weather conditions, we try our best to let everyone know. We'll announce a cancellation using one or all of these methods:

- An eNews email to all current subscribers who have provided their email addresses.
- Notification posted on the WMGS Website at [www.wmgs.org](http://www.wmgs.org) and on the WMGS Facebook page.
- We'll also notify the venue - usually the Grand Rapids Public Library.
- These local TV stations: WZZM Channel 13 and WOOD-TV Channel 8

## All About Census Records

**Monday, December 14, 2015**

**6:30 PM – 8:30 PM (2-hour class)**

A census is a count and description of the population of a country, state, county, or city for a given date. Genealogists find these records to be invaluable in determining just where and ancestor lived. Many provide important clues about or connecting generations. Come and learn about the different census records and how they differ.

Linda Guth will be your instructor and the class will meet at the Adult Computer Training Center, lower level at the Grand Rapids Library Main branch.

## WMGS Writers Group

**Meets the third Tuesday every month from 1:30 to about 3:45 p.m. at the Dominican Center**

The Writers Group holds supportive meetings for everyone who wants to learn more about organizing and writing family history. We take time to informally discuss questions relevant to each person's work, provide helpful, non-judgmental feedback on current or on-going writing projects, discover new research techniques, and have fun making new friends.

Genealogy is more than "names and dates." An ancestor's story or a personal memory are even more fascinating and enlightening. But some genealogists don't know how to begin, while others just need a deadline to kick start their creative juices. The Writers Group can fulfill both of these needs.

### *Story a Month*

During 2016 we are concentrating on telling one ancestor's or relative's story, or relating a memory for a personal memoir at each meeting. "Writing Your Family's History," is a bit like saying you plan on writing several very long books - it's just too intimidating and daunting. But taking it one ancestor, event or topic at a time is a far more manageable goal.

### *Planning on Attending?*

Those who attend are encouraged to bring several copies of a Work-In-Progress (WIP), but it's certainly not a requirement and everyone is invited to participate in the discussion. Members include those who are just starting to write and others who have been working on their genealogy for some time. Everyone is welcome - newbies with fresh ideas, and seasoned vets whose pens have been in the trenches for some time.

If you plan to attend, please let Sister Michael Ellen Carling know you will be there. Call her at 616-514-3231 (home), or 616-514-3340 (office), or at her email address at [mecarling@grdominicans.org](mailto:mecarling@grdominicans.org). This gives her an estimate of the number of chairs to set up. She's also the person to call if you have any questions or need directions to the Dominican Center.

# **History Detectives 2016**

## ***Sleuthing for Local History***

**January 23rd - 9:30 am to 4:00 pm**  
**Grand Rapids Public Library Main Branch**

Anyone interested in local or family history looks forward to January and the History Detectives. Presentations are always varied, educational and surprising. Each session covers a specific topic in an in-depth and interesting way.

Speakers are sponsored by local history, library and genealogical organizations. WMGS is sponsoring *When "Everyone Knew Everyone": Forming a Latino Community in Mid-Century West Michigan*. Other sessions focus on 1950s Downtown Grand Rapids, Car Dealerships, Educational Methods in the late 1800s, and the history of beer making here and in the United States.

More complete descriptions can be found below. For additional information go to [www.grpl.org](http://www.grpl.org).

**9:30 – 10:15 — Kindergarten and “Radical” Women in 1890s Grand Rapids** Presenter: **Scott Bultman**

*Sponsored by the Greater Grand Rapids Women’s History Council*

Kindergarten has a history? Revolutionary German methods for teaching young children were adopted in Grand Rapids when members of the Ladies Literary Club founded a Kindergarten Training School in 1894. The Froebel Foundation’s Scott Bultman will use his vast collection of photographs and documents to report on how LLC women lured the country’s best teacher here from Chicago and how the daughter of Grand Rapids’ first architect devoted her life to the movement. Kindergarten became both a “calling” and a career opportunity for local women from varied socio-economic levels and racial backgrounds. Built by dedicated women reformers and philanthropists nationwide, the movement spawned settlement houses and the YWCA, as well as temperance and suffrage initiatives. Grand Rapids’ fascinating story will illustrate the overall national history.

**10:30-11:15 — When “Everyone Knew Everyone”: Forming a Latino Community in Mid-Century West Michigan** Presenter: **Delia Fernandez**

*Sponsored by the Western Michigan Genealogical Society*

Latinos have a long and vibrant history in West Michigan. Local sources tell us that some of these migrants and immigrants date back to the 1920s, even though their numbers were small then. Evidence shows that, by the 1940s, they formed a very tight-knit community. Through consulting oral histories and reading a variety of primary source text documents against the grain, this presentation uncovers a rich history of Puerto Rican and Mexican community life in Grand Rapids. Come learn about how church

festivals, baseball leagues, dances, and other recreational activities helped to foster the strong relationships and unity among Latinos in the 1940s and 1950s.

**11:30 AM-12:15 PM — Retail Icons: Shopping Downtown in 1950s Grand Rapids** Presenter: **Michael Hauser**

*Sponsored by the Grand Rapids Historical Commission*

At its peak in the mid 1950s, downtown Grand Rapids boasted over one million square feet of retail space, making it Michigan’s second largest retail destination. This presentation will take a closer look at some of the home grown icons including Herpolsheimer’s, Steketee’s and Wurzburgs’, as well as other beloved downtown businesses. Generations made the trek to downtown Grand Rapids for back-to-school events, Easter shows, holiday windows and family luncheons. A number of Michigan based companies such as S.S. Kresge set trends in consumer culture. Guests will be treated to images, vintage ads, catalogs and signage from some of downtown’s best known emporiums.

**1:00 – 1:45 PM — Title: New-Car Smell: Nostalgia and the Story of Grand Rapids’ Car Dealerships** Presenter: **Thomas R. Wilson**

*Sponsored by the Grand Rapids Public Library*

Before today’s modern car dealerships on suburban streets, early Grand Rapids automobile dealers were located near downtown and in city neighborhoods. Unlike the sprawling car lots in the suburbs, Grand Rapids’ first dealers operated in more confined urban spaces. As the automobile business expanded, dealers moved into neighborhoods like Eastown and Cheshire Village. You’ll see examples of auto dealers of familiar cars like Plymouth, Pontiac and Chrysler, but also learn about outlets of forgotten cars such as Austin, Maxwell, Hupmobile and Studebaker. Take a look back at the growth of car sales during the heyday of automotive growth from its beginnings before the Model T, to the growth of the Big Three and the arrival of imports like Volkswagen and Toyota.

**2:00 – 2:45 PM Title: Modern Design Leader, the Story Behind Herman Miller** Presenter: **Amy Auscherman**

*Sponsored by the Grand Rapids Public Museum*

By the middle of the 20th century the name Herman Miller had become synonymous with “modern” furniture. Working with legendary designers George Nelson and Charles and Ray Eames, the company produced pieces which would become classics of industrial design. Since then, Herman Miller has collaborated with some of the most talented designers in the world, including Alexander Girard, Isamu Noguchi, Robert Propst, Bill Stumpf, Don Chadwick, Ayse Birsel, Studio 7.5, Yves Béhar, Doug Ball, and many others. Join Amy Auscherman, corporate archivist at Herman Miller, as she shares the events, people, and the design and management philosophies which have shaped the 108-year history of Herman Miller, Inc.

**3:00 – 3:45 PM — The Intoxicating History of River City Brewing Presenter: Pat Evans**

*Sponsored by the Grand Rapids Historical Society*

Beer in Grand Rapids is big. But how big is it really? Journalist Pat Evans explores the big history of beer in Grand Rapids and how it influences the multitude of brewers that call West Michigan home. Evans will also take a broader look at how the current world beer industry developed the way it has, from an eclectic mix of world beer styles to the homogeneous beers that dominated the United States for half a century. Those historical paths are important to understand why beer has gone through a renaissance in the past decade and put the United States at the forefront of the beer world for the first time ever. Within that context, Evans also will look at how Grand Rapids fits in to America's beer world.



## Searching the Web? Try Linkpendium

Using Linkpendium's search engines genealogists can search up to 2,648,502 pages of free genealogical data with a single query! Over 10,404,475 Web Links can be searched by surname or locality. AND, it's all free.

Biographies, family histories, photographs, local histories, and even some vital records are indexed. This all-volunteer website was created by Brian and Karen Leverich, who were also the founders of Rootsweb.

<http://www.linkpendium.com/> is an amazing resource that all researchers should explore.

## National Archives Ends Saturday Research Hours

Many vacationing genealogists visit various National Archive Field Libraries to research ancestral history. On November 1, 2015, the research rooms at the National Archives at Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Fort Worth, Kansas City, New York, Philadelphia, Riverside, San Bruno and Seattle ended the policy of having intermittent Saturday hours. However, all will continue to be open to the public Monday-Friday. The decision to cancel intermittent Saturday hours was made following the examination of usage trends. The result will be that all National Archives field locations are open on the same days. This will increase consistency and efficiency public services. No change is being made to research room schedules at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC or at the National Archives at College Park.

## Successful Allen County Library Bus Trip

The November 2015 WMGS Bus Trip to the Allen County Library in Ft. Wayne, Indiana was a success. Just ask Ruth Waybrant - she was delighted at the family history information she found.



**Spring Bus Trip  
Wednesday and Thursday -- April 13-14  
Save these Dates!**

## Midwest Genealogy Center 1.5 Million New Railroad Pension Records

A free index to over 1.5 million pension records from the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board is now online for the first time ever through the Genealogy Quick Look from the Midwest Genealogy Center (MGC) in Independence, Missouri. This is the first time an online database has been searchable by name or date. Everyone can access the Genealogy Quick Look by visiting the MGC website at [midwestgenealogycenter.org](http://midwestgenealogycenter.org) and clicking on the "Genealogy Quick Look" link.

The Genealogy Quick Look is a new online service from MGC that allows users to search the indexes of various genealogical resources. indexes include the large volume of pension records which are housed at National Archives and Record Administration's Atlanta offices, as well as some materials held by MGC. A complete list is available on the Genealogy Quick Look website.

While it does not provide direct access to the original pension records, Genealogy Quick Look can provide researchers with important information to locate a pension record held by NARA. It then directs users to the NARA website to make their requests.

In addition to the national railroad pension records which span the United States and range from 1936 through the early 2000s, Genealogy Quick Look provides an online name index to obituary, birth and marriage records from the various Kansas City newspapers and also a number of books. Outside of the railroad pension records, all of these materials are available in print, microfilm, or microfiche at MGC. Staff can provide digital copies of articles free of charge. For additional information about the Midwest Genealogy Center visit the website at [midwestgenealogycenter.org](http://midwestgenealogycenter.org).



# 2016 WMGS Writing Contest

## ~ Event in History & How It Affected Your Family ~

Pivotal historic events have caused major changes in our ancestors' lives. Choose one such event that changed the course of an individual's or family's path. Describe the event and its ramifications. For example: Wars, weather events, winning the lottery, an arranged marriage, a recession or depression, etc. are events that may cause either positive or negative changes.

**We would love to hear your story.**

**Write it up and enter the 2016 writing contest!**

WMGS has worked for over 60 years to educate researchers in evaluating and citing sources. Your story may inspire someone else to use new research techniques or discover a unique resource. The 2016 Writing Contest will recognize unpublished excellent genealogical writing by awarding substantial prizes. Prize winning entries will be published in *Michigana*. Like all submissions to *Michigana*, entries will be thoroughly edited before publication. Information about submitting any article to *Michigana* can also be found in the latest issue of *Michigana*, or at [wmgs.org](http://wmgs.org).

### Rules:

Eligibility: All family historians and genealogists, except the *Michigana* Editor and judges, are invited to submit their favorite story for the contest. There is no entry fee and membership in WMGS is not required.

**Deadline: Entries will be accepted between January 1 and March 30, 2016.**

Length: Stories should be between 1,500 and 3,000 words in length.

Please cite your sources by using endnotes, and attach copies of documentation when appropriate. Family group sheets and pedigree charts should be included if pertinent. Neither documentation nor charts will be included in the word count.

### Formats:

Email your entry in iPages, Microsoft Word, or as a PDF. Photographs or graphics should be sent separately as 300 dpi tiff or jpeg files. Email your submission to [michigana@wmgs.org](mailto:michigana@wmgs.org) with "Michigana Contest 2016" written in the Subject Line.

Identification: Include the story title, your name, your mailing address, phone number, and approximate word count. This information will only be used to identify and notify the winners.

Notification: The Judge's decisions will be announced at the May 2016 Membership Meeting and in the next available issue of *Michigana*. Winners do not have to be present to win. Prize winning articles will be published in future issues of *Michigana*. By submitting articles, authors are giving WMGS one time print and digital rights. However, copyright is retained by the author. Entries may not have been previously published. All prizes may not be awarded.

The prizes: 1st prize: \$100 and one annual WMGS membership (total value - \$120); 2nd prize: \$75 and one annual WMGS membership (total value - \$95); 3rd prize: \$50; 4th prize: \$25.

### Need help?

The WMGS Writers Group meets the third Tuesday of the month and we would love to help you make your story the best that it can be. For information about location, time, and directions go to: [www.wmgs.org](http://www.wmgs.org)

For further information or any questions about the Writing Contest, please contact the *Michigana* Editor at [michigana@wmgs.org](mailto:michigana@wmgs.org)



**All entries due by March 30, 2016!**

## Next Grand Rapids Public Library Genealogy Lock-in January 29th from 6-10 PM

The Lock-In is a free event hosted by the Grand Rapids Public Library and sponsored by the Western Michigan Genealogical Society for both new and more experienced family historians. The Lock-in is held on the fourth floor Local and Family History Department. It provides an opportunity to use the extensive resources available in the stacks, share knowledge with other genealogists and learn about new techniques and resources. Learn how to use the microfilm reader/scanner/printer, save images, and take advantage of free copying and printing during the event. Use the time to search databases—we will have plenty of computers available or bring your own laptop and use the library's WiFi network. Bring your genealogy questions or Ancestry and Heritage Quest problems—volunteers will be on hand to assist. Network with other genealogists—you never know what you might find!

**Registration is required:** [www.grpl.org/register](http://www.grpl.org/register) or call 988-5400.

### Lock-in Guidelines

**Registration:** You may ONLY register for yourself and one other person. There is a maximum of fifty people due to space limitations. If all spaces are filled there will be a waiting list. If you are registered and find you will be unable to attend, please notify the library as soon as possible so another genealogist can take your place.

**Food:** The Library and WMGS will provide snacks for hungry researchers. If you wish, you may also bring additional food and drinks. ALL edibles MUST be eaten in the VanderVeen Room. No food or liquids are allowed in the stacks or by computers.

**Copying:** Please copy no more than TEN pages at one time. This will reduce the time each person has to wait for their copies to be available. To avoid confusion, it is helpful if you collect your copies as soon as they have been printed.

## Exploring Michigan: Back Roads and Small Towns

*GRPL December 15 - 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm*

Expressways have made it too easy to adopt a 'destination oriented' travel philosophy. We often miss enjoyable and scenic back roads and interesting small towns. Ride Michigan, a book for travelers, is about abandoning speed and straight-line efficiency for the chance to smell the flowers (or freshly cut fields of hay) along roads where it is ok to slow down and notice the world around us. The most interesting and beautiful places in Michigan are found on the 'back roads.' Bill Murphy's book and presentation stress making the journey the primary reason for travel, not the destination. Ride Michigan provides a ready-made guide to make trips on these scenic byways easy, informative and enjoyable. A book signing will follow the presentation.

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

**\$20 in the US**

**\$25 Outside the USA**

**Membership begins January 1st and ends December 31st.**

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

Would you like to donate to WMGS? Yes No If yes, Amount \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to WMGS. Send checks and completed form to:**

WMGS Membership, Western Michigan Genealogical Society  
c/o Grand Rapids Public Library  
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. c/o GRPL, Western Michigan Genealogical Society, 111 Library St NE, Grand Rapids MI 49503-3268.

### 2015-2016 WMGS Officers

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**Immediate Past President** - Don Bryant  
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