



# WMGS Newsletter Winter 2016



## WMGS Website Named Best for Sixth Straight Year!!!

Online searchable databases at <http://data.wmgs.org> now contain over 2.8 MILLION records! For the Sixth consecutive year Family Tree Magazine has named this website as one of the best of the best for researching genealogy in a state.

The Letter of Congratulations notes:

"Your organization's website has been named to Family Tree Magazine's list of 75 Best State Websites for Genealogy in 2016! This list is free to view on our website at <http://www.familytreemagazine.com/article/75-best-state-genealogy-websites>, and it appears in the December 2016 Family Tree Magazine issue.

This list honors the best websites that specialize in genealogy research for each of the 50 US states. The 75 websites, available thanks to state archivists and librarians, historical and genealogical societies, volunteers and others, represent the go-to online destinations for tracing American ancestors, state by state. We hope the article will highlight valuable, often-overlooked resources for genealogical research, and inspire readers to keep searching beyond these 75 sites. Thank you for your work on behalf of genealogists across the USA."



## **Genealogy Lock-In for Beginners** **GRPL February 10th from 6-10 PM**

The Lock-Ins are free events hosted by the Grand Rapids Public Library and sponsored by the Western Michigan Genealogical Society. This one is **SPECIFICALLY** for those who are just beginning to research their ancestry. If you have attended previous Lock-Ins or are a more experienced genealogist your name will be placed on the waiting list in case all 50 openings are not filled by beginning researchers.

There will be one class available introducing attendees to the "Basics of Genealogy," and another presentation on a subject that is yet to be determined.

The Lock-In is held on the fourth floor of the Grand Rapids Public Library in the 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. 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. You may not bring food to share with others. 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 length of 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.

## **WMGS December 3rd Membership meeting 1:30 pm**

### **Traffic Violations, Criminal Complaints and Marriages: Records of a Justice of the Peace**

Justices of the Peace served as local magistrates empowered primarily to administer summary justice in minor cases, to commit for trial, and to administer oaths and perform marriages. Using the records of former Paris Township Justice of the Peace Earl H. Keyes, discover the role in which the justices played in local courts. See examples of records from the collection and learn how you can use them for researching your family's history.

Adam Oster is a librarian at the Kentwood (Richard L. Root) Branch of Kent District Library. His responsibilities include providing reference services, reader advisory outreach, as well as computer class design and instruction. Adam holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from Grand Valley State University with a minor in Political Science and a Secondary Education Certification. He also has a Master of Library Science degree from Indiana University. Adam's interests include genealogy and local history research.

### **December 3rd WMGS Mini Class How to Begin Doing Genealogy Noon to 1 pm**

New to Genealogy? Does it seem overwhelming? Not sure how to start? What to do next? This class will help you learn how to take the first steps to discover your own family's history.

**Location:** Lower Level Computer Lab

**Instructor:** Linda Guth



**Jim Jackson**

## **Saturday, January 7th Membership meeting 1:30 pm**

### **Maps, Gazetteers and Directories**

We all reach the end of the trail on some of our branches. As Churchill said, "Never, never, never give up!" By trying variant spellings, little used sources, and having just a little luck, you may break through that wall. How about really analyzing the sources you already have? There may be hidden clues there. Don't forget boundary changes through the years - are you really looking in the right place? And don't overlook finding aids and resources that are available for free on the internet.

Jim Jackson has been interested in Genealogy and Local History since the mid-70s, having served as President of the Detroit Society for Genealogical Research, Inc, and President of the Oakland County Genealogical Society. He has been the index editor of the DSGR Magazine since 1994 and the current President of the Calhoun County Genealogical Society and Commander of Camp 22 (Marshall, MI) Sons of Union Veterans. Jim has taught genealogical classes and presented talks to various local and national Societies.



**Adam Oster**

### **December WMGS Sales Table Discount**

The WMGS Sales Table will offer a 20% discount off your entire purchase if you are a member of WMGS

-OR-

a 10% discount off your entire purchase if you are NOT a member of WMGS.



Matthew Daley

## Saturday, February 4th Membership meeting

1:30 pm

### *In the Wake of Disaster: The Lake Erie Black Friday Storm of 1916*

On Friday, October 20, 1916 two freighters sailed onto Lake Erie and into one of the worst storms in Great Lakes history. Only one man, the captain of the James B. Colgate survived to tell the story of his vessel's loss. The crew of the Merida had no one, only lists of documents and policies remained to determine what happened to them once they came ashore. This presentation examines both the shipwrecks and then the efforts to locate and identify sailors and their families in the years before unions.

Matthew L. Daley is an Associate Professor of History, at Grand Valley State University. He received his Ph.D., in History, from Bowling Green State University, in 2004.

His research and teaching focus on Michigan, the Great Lakes, and local, and urban history. He has been published in journals such as *Ras the International Journal of Maritime History, Technology and Culture, Minnesota History, and Michigan Historical Review.*

**All Membership Meetings are free, open to the public, and held at the Main Branch of the Grand Rapids Public Library, 111 Library Street.**

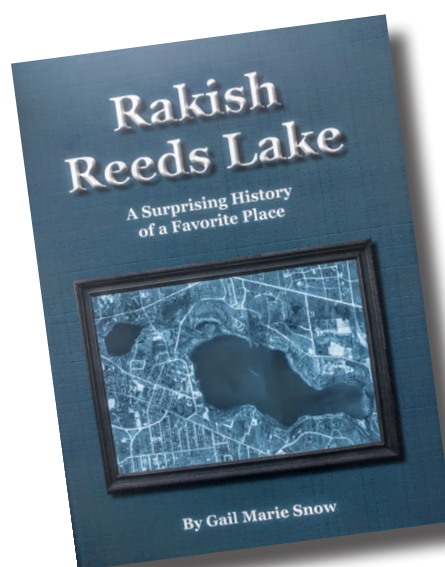
**Michigan is known for its WINTER WEATHER events. Local radio and TV stations, and the Library's website will alert the public to weather related closings.**

## WMGS TWO HOUR CLASS Tues., Dec 6 6:30 – 8:30 pm *Women's Fashion Throughout The Years*

Take a trip down fashion's memory lane and learn how women's fashion has changed throughout time.

Location: VanderVeen Room, 4th Floor, Grand Rapids Public Library.

Instructor: Linda Guth



## Great New Book by WMGS MEMBER Gail Marie Snow

When Gail Marie Snow wrote *Remarkable Ramona Park*, she only planned on publishing one book. However, she rapidly found that she had enough family and local history information to write a second: *Rakish Reeds Lake*.

The first book focused on the history of the Ramona Amusement Park. The new one covers the settlement and development of the land surrounding the lake, the people and families who lived there and the businesses in the area.

If you grew up in the greater Grand Rapids area or are researching ancestral roots, *Rakish Reeds Lake* is a wonderful resource.



# 10th Annual History Detectives: *Sleuthing for Local History*

**January 28, 2017,  
9:30 AM – 4:00 PM**

For the tenth year, the Grand Rapids Public Library will host the popular History Detectives seminar. It will be held on Saturday, January 28th in the Main Branch at 111 Library Street. WMGS sponsors one of the sessions. The following presentations are scheduled:

9:30 – 10:15 AM

**Present, But Not Counted: Dutch Immigrant Midwives in Grand Rapids**  
**Janet Sjaarda Sheeres**

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

Though stories of male physicians are adequately represented in medical histories, accounts of female midwives have been woefully neglected. And what histories of early American immigrants ever ask, "Who delivered the babies"? Adding to her body of work on invisible Dutch women, Janet Sjaarda Sheeres has uncovered ten midwives working in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Grand Rapids, and thirty more in other Dutch colonies. She will address why these women chose work delivering babies; who their clients were; what hardships they faced; and why they are not in our histories. Sheeres' findings also shed light on midwives serving other ethnic communities and why they have been sidelined in early historical records.

10:30 – 11:15 AM

**Selling Grand Rapids: Expositions in the Furniture City, 1878-1965**  
**Scott St. Louis**

*Sponsored by the Grand Rapids Historical Society*

Grand Rapids' late-nineteenth century business leaders were ambitious and optimistic: Striving for the greatest profit from available resources, they rationalized production workflows, integrating the latest technologies into their factories. They also took advantage of the railroad network connecting Grand Rapids to an emerging consumer economy, reaching new levels of prosperity through an industry on the verge of unprecedented growth: domestic furniture production. Local leaders established semi-annual furniture expositions and col-

laborated to make Grand Rapids' name synonymous with excellent household furniture on an international scale. With the help of a supportive community, leaders also resolved to prevent similar efforts in other cities from eclipsing their own. Their success transformed the physical and economic landscape of Grand Rapids.

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM

**Making Waves:  
Michigan's Boat Building Industry, 1865-2000**  
**Scott M. Peters**

*Sponsored by the Grand Rapids Historical Commission*

Michigan's late-nineteenth century emergence as the boat-building industry's hub drew together talented designers, builders, and engine makers to produce some of the fastest, most innovative boats ever created. Entrepreneurs like Christopher Columbus Smith, John L. Hacker, and Gar Wood established some of the nation's top brands and brought the prospect of boat ownership within reach for every American consumer. Michigan boat builders also left their mark on history—from developing the speedy runabouts favored by Prohibition-era rum-runners to creating the landing craft that carried Allied forces to Europe and the Pacific. Making Waves explores this intriguing story of people, processes, and products—of an industry that evolved in Michigan but would change boating across the world.

12:15 – 1:00 PM

**... Lunch – Reserve ahead of time!**  
**(See next page for Details)**

1:00 – 1:45 PM

**Where Have All the Flowers Gone? Rediscovering  
Emma Cole's 19th-Century Grand Rapids Flora**  
**Julie Stivers, Garrett E. Crow,  
and David P. Warners**

*Sponsored by the Grand Rapids Public Museum*

In 1901, Emma Cole published *Grand Rapids Flora*, a catalog of plants growing without cultivation in the vicinity of Kent County. Enormous changes have taken place since those days, yet her book remains the most complete account of plants specific to our area. Who was this high school teacher, world traveler and Kent Scientific Institute botanist? Where were her favorite spots for finding wildflowers? Do they still exist? Julie Stivers will speak about the life of Emma Cole. Professors Warners and Crow will describe their work with Calvin College students to rediscover Emma's haunts and assess their natural quality today. There are interesting surprises as we observe the changes over more than 100 years.

2:00 – 2:45 PM

**A Modern Vision Realized: The Mid-Century Park  
School Development Program  
Pam VanderPloeg**

*Sponsored by the Grand Rapids City Archives*

In 1951, a successful Grand Rapids Public Schools millage vote launched a twenty-year building program to solve the crisis of aging, overcrowded schools and the post-World War II baby boom. A collaboration between the schools, prominent West Michigan architects and the Grand Rapids Park Department, led by landscape architect Fred See, created beautiful modern schools set in expansive parks in old and new neighborhoods, and brought national recognition. The story of how that project unfolded, and of the fate of those schools today, will be told through original and contemporary photos and images.

3:00 – 3:45 PM

**Reflections on the Gi-gikinomaage-min  
(We are all Teachers) Project  
Belinda Bardwell**

*Sponsored by the  
Western Michigan Genealogical Society*

Launched in November 2014, the Gi-gikinomaage-min (We are all Teachers) project aims to document the urban Native American experience in Grand Rapids. The local Native American community grew dramatically in the last half of the 20th century as a result of a little-known federal program still impacting American Indian lives today. The Urban Relocation Program created one of the largest mass movements of Indians in American history. This talk invites you to learn more about the Gi-gikinomaage-min project, based in the Kutsche Office of Local History at Grand Valley State University.

\*\*\* **Lunch:** Boxed lunches are \$10 and must be ordered in advance. Choose a turkey, ham or vegetarian sandwich (or make any of these gluten-free). Also included in the lunches are a fruit cup, pasta salad, cookie, condiments and bottled water. Pop will be available for an additional \$1.00.

To reserve a lunch, call 616.988.5492 or email [rsvp@grpl.org](mailto:rsvp@grpl.org) by 5:00 PM on Monday, January 23. Cash payment is due at the event. Lunches will be prepared by Cherry Deli; afternoon cookies by Lomonaco Sicilian Cookies. The Kutsche Office of Local History at Grand Valley State University also sponsors History Detectives.

**Parking:** Limited parking is available in the Library parking lot and is free with a validated parking lot ticket.

**Limited Seating** - Space is limited and seating is offered first come, first served. There will be an overflow room available with a simulcast video presentation.

## WMGS WRITERS GROUP

**Meets the THIRD TUESDAY of the Month\*\***

**\*\* (Except December. We will meet the  
13th)**

**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 writing projects, discover new research techniques, and have great fun making new friends.

**\*\* The December 13th meeting** is our time to enjoy our mutual friendship. **Bring your favorite appetizer to share.**

**January and February meeting topics will be posted on the WMGS.ORG Website.**

### **PLANNING ON ATTENDING?**

Those coming to the WMGS Writers Group are encouraged to bring several copies of a Work-In-Progress (WIP), a story about the topic for that meeting, or both, but it's not a requirement and everyone is invited to participate in the discussion. 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, have any questions or need more specific directions please contact Sister Michael Ellen Carling at 616-514-3231.

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

DIG will continue to meet at 7:00 PM on the 3rd Thursday of every month at the Grand Rapids Public Library. Check at the desk on the Fourth Floor for directions to the meeting room. 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. If you have questions or want more information, please contact:

Roger Moffat - [DataMaster@wmgs.org](mailto:DataMaster@wmgs.org)

# WMGS

## 2017 Writing Contest

### ~ A Sense of Place ~

**Location, Location, Location.** Our ancestors moved, settled and moved again. Place often determines occupation, educational opportunities, and even the materials used in building a home. For the 2017 WMGS Writing Contest, entries should focus on the Great Lakes Region (Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, New York, Ohio, Ontario, and Pennsylvania). Examples: You may choose to share the story of the family farm, home, or business and how its location changed (or didn't change) your family's history. Why did your ancestors come to a specific area? Why did they leave? Or, you may have a family story that took place in a park, by a lake, in court, at an event, in a church, etc. You may write about a family, an individual or yourself. Every story preserves history.

We would love to hear your story. Write it up and enter the 2017 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 2017 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 & March 30, 2017.

**Length:** Stories should be between 1,500 and 3,000 words in length. Please cite your sources by using end-notes, 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. \*\* **IMPORTANT:** Send photographs or graphics separately as 300 dpi tiff or jpeg files. Email your submission to [michigana@wmgs.org](mailto:michigana@wmgs.org) or [ruthgen@gmail.com](mailto:ruthgen@gmail.com) with "Michigana Contest 2017" 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:** Contest winners will be announced at the May 2017 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; 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 1 annual WMGS membership (total value - \$120); 2nd prize: \$75 and 1 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) or [ruthgen@gmail.com](mailto:ruthgen@gmail.com)

All entries due by March 30, 2017!

Email to: [michigana@wmgs.org](mailto:michigana@wmgs.org) or [ruthgen@gmail.com](mailto:ruthgen@gmail.com)

## **FREE Classes at the Grand Rapids Public Library**

**Classes Held at the Main Library – 111 Library St NE**

### **Getting Started with Lynda.com**

Saturday, January 7, 2017, 1:00 pm

Need advanced-level help with Excel? Want to learn how to use new Adobe software? Interested in travel photography? With Lynda.com and your library card, you can pick up a new hobby or begin training for a new career with the help of engaging online tutorials from industry experts. Tutorials cover a wide range of skills topics in the fields of business, technology, and the arts. This introductory class will walk you through the steps of signing up for this service and allow you time to explore all that Lynda.com has to offer.

### **Discovering the Internet**

Thursday, January 19, 2017, 11:00 am

Using the Internet can be an intimidating experience for many people. In this class, you will learn how the Internet works and basic definitions for the most common Internet terms. Discover tips and tricks on how to protect your information and identity while searching, shopping and surfing the web.

### **Exploring Social Media**

Thursday, January 26, 2017, 11:00 am

The Internet and social media have made it easier than ever to keep in touch with friends and family. Beginning with a brief introduction to email, this class will teach you how to communicate with others online and offer tips on how to be safe while doing so. You will learn the basics about Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Find out what you need to get started with Skype and Google Hangouts and other video calling services.

### **Managing Your Digital Footprint**

Tuesday, January 31, 2017, 7:00 pm

Have you ever forgotten a password? Do you wish you had a plan to manage your online information and protect your privacy? Managing your digital footprint may seem intimidating, but with a plan and the right tools, you can stay safe and get the most out of your experience online. This class offers methods and tools you can use right away to begin managing your online profiles, passwords and information.

**National Genealogical Conference Coming to Grand Rapids  
May 2 - 5, 2018 SAVE THESE Days!!!**

### **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





NON-PROFIT  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
GRAND RAPIDS, MI  
PERMIT No. 209

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

WMGS  
c/o Grand Rapids Public Library  
111 Library St NE  
Grand Rapids MI 49503-3268

---

## 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.

## WMGS Contact Information

**President** - Mindy Koole  
[president@wmgs.org](mailto:president@wmgs.org)  
Phone: (616) 719-3429

**VP** - Marcia Shears  
[U08554@hotmail.com](mailto:U08554@hotmail.com)

**Secretary** - Eileen Schmuker  
[divamom3849@gmail.com](mailto:divamom3849@gmail.com)

**Treasurer** - Mark Timmer  
[mark.timmer@centurytel.net](mailto:mark.timmer@centurytel.net)

**Past President** - Don Bryant  
[webmaster@wmgs.org](mailto:webmaster@wmgs.org)

**Michigana Editor**  
Ruth Waybrant  
[Michigana@wmgs.org](mailto:Michigana@wmgs.org)

**Newsletter Editor**  
Bobbi Schirado  
[rhjschirado@gmail.com](mailto:rhjschirado@gmail.com)

**Publicity Chairman**  
Denise Fedko  
[dhfed@yahoo.com](mailto:dhfed@yahoo.com)

**BEST WISHES  
FOR A JOYFUL  
AND HAPPY  
HOLIDAY SEASON**