



WMGS

Newsletter

Special Edition 2017



Note from our President:

In October of 1954 Western Michigan Genealogical Society (WMGS) began as a small group of individuals that were interested in learning more about their heritage and preserving the records that recorded that information. During those early days they met at the home of one of the 12-15 members. They worked on indexing projects and started donating books and equipment to the Grand Rapids Public Library Special Collections Department. Because of the momentum of that core group our membership has grown to over 430 members, but our focus and goals have remained the same.

We continue to have a working relationship with the Grand Rapids Public Library where we now hold our meetings. This relationship allows us to work on projects, donate to their collections, help with Genealogy Lock-Ins, and support their ability to have Ancestry and Fold 3 on their computer network. We also have been very fortunate to have members in our group that have helped us keep up with the technological advances that have happened so quickly in our lifetime. Because of their efforts and the work of our volunteers, for the 6th year in a row, we have been named in Family Tree Magazine's list of 75 Best State Websites for Genealogy for 2016. We invite you to check out the website at www.wmgs.org to get a glimpse of what we do and then check out the link to our databases and see what we have done.



After that look for our booth and that of Experience Grand Rapids at the NGS conference in Raleigh, North Carolina. We will have the announcement brochure that will tell you that we will be hosting the 2018 NGS Conference in Grand Rapids and Experience GR will have information about the opportunities you will have while here for the conference. We hope that you will check out our website and see what we have been doing and then reserve the dates of May 2-5 for the NGS Conference to be held here in our stomping grounds.

Looking forward to seeing you in May of 2018!
Mindy Koole
WMGS President

2018 NGS Family History Conference will be held at DeVos Place in Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2-5 May 2018.

NGS selected Grand Rapids for its significant historical importance as a city located between all the Great Lakes. In the 19th century, the Great Lakes were major, strategic waterways that helped Americans moving West and immigrants coming from overseas through Canada. Cheap land, mining, and the timber industry made the area attractive. Water power from rivers and rapids, joined with access to grain and lumber, encouraged industry, including breweries, furniture, and cereal.

Today, Grand Rapids is a popular vacation destination with miles of bike and walking trails and many locations for water sports. Come to Grand Rapids and experience the Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park, the Gerald Ford Presidential Museum, Grand Rapids Public Museum, and beautiful Lake Michigan. Spend time enjoying all that western Michigan has to offer plus take the opportunity to attend this premier conference and learn more about genealogy.

Details about the NGS 2018 Family History Conference will be available in the fall of 2017. The four-day conference will include more than 175 lectures and workshops. NGS is pleased to have the local support of the Western Michigan Genealogical Society, which was founded in 1954 and is the second oldest genealogical society in Michigan.



Got Ancestors 2017 Seminar

“The Legal Genealogist” Judy G. Russell

**Saturday October 14, 2017 at the
Salvation Army Kroc Center on South Division**

Topics:

- ⇒ Copyright Mythconceptions
- ⇒ When Worlds Collide: Resolving Conflicts in Genealogical Records
- ⇒ DNA and the Golden Rule: The Law and Ethics of Genetic Genealogy
- ⇒ No Vitals? No Problem! - Building a Family through Circumstantial Evidence. When there is no birth, marriage or death record, what's a genealogist to do? Learn how to use circumstantial evidence to build a family. A family for Isabella (tracing a woman married before the 1850 census).



Judy Russell is a genealogist with a law degree, and her purpose is to help people understand the often arcane and even impenetrable legal concepts and terminology that are so very important to those of us studying family history. Without understanding the context in which events took place and records were created, we miss so much of both the significance and the flavor of what happened.

Russell's personal background is eclectic. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism with a political science minor from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. and a law degree from Rutgers School of Law-Newark. She has worked as a newspaper reporter, trade association writer, legal investigator, defense attorney, federal prosecutor, law editor and, for more than 20 years before her retirement in 2014, she was an adjunct member of the faculty at Rutgers Law School.

She is a Colorado native with roots deep in the American south on her mother's side (from Virginia to Texas and just about everywhere in between!) and entirely in Germany on her father's side. She has spent the last decade learning her trade as a genealogist, and hold credentials as a Certified GenealogistSM and Certified Genealogical LecturerSM from the Board for Certification of Genealogists® where she currently serves as a member of the Board of Trustees. She is a member of the National Genealogical Society, the Association of Professional Genealogists, and, among others, the state genealogical societies of New Jersey, North Carolina, Virginia, Texas and Illinois.

She has attended the National Institute on Genealogical Research (NIGR) at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and completed Elizabeth Shown Mills' course in Advanced Methodology and Evidence Analysis and Thomas W. Jones' course in Writing and Publishing for Genealogists at the Institute of Genealogy & Historical Research (IGHR) at Samford University. She is privileged now to serve on the faculty at IGHR, at the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (SLIG), at the Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh (GRIP), and at Boston University's Center for Professional Education.

Russell has written for both the National Genealogical Society Quarterly (see Judy G. Russell, "Don't Stop There! Connecting Josias Baker to His Burke County, North Carolina, Parents," National Genealogical Society Quarterly, March 2011, 25-41) and the National Genealogical Society Magazine (see Judy G. Russell, "Autosomal DNA testing," National Genealogical Society Magazine, October-December 2011, 38-43, and "Fifty years of credentialing," National Genealogical Society Magazine, January-March 2014, 15-19). She lectures on a wide variety of genealogical topics, ranging from using court records in our family history to understanding DNA testing.

List of small town museums in Barry, Eaton, Ionia, Kent and Montcalm counties

***Plan a visit to these unique Tri-River Museums
housed in a variety of historic buildings***

- ♦ **Alton Historic Church Museum** – *in old church, north of Lowell*
- ♦ **Ada's Averill Historical Museum** – *house and barn*
- ♦ **Barry County Historical Society** – *visit Middleville Depot*
- ♦ **Belding Museum & "The Bel"** – *in Belrockton Silk Mill Dormitory*
- ♦ **Boston/Saranac Historical Society** – *a depot museum in Saranac*
- ♦ **Bowne Township** – *museum, carriage house, school – near Alto*
- ♦ **Byron Center Historical Society & Museum** – *in former Town Hall*
- ♦ **Cascade Historical Museum** – *in old township hall*
- ♦ **Cedar Springs Museum** – *in Morley Park, local artifacts and research*
- ♦ **Charlton Park Historical Village** – *museum and reconstructed village & recreation area near Hastings*
- ♦ **Clarksville/Campbell Historical Society** – *has no museum as yet*
- ♦ **Fallasburg Historical Village** – *near covered bridge, north of Lowell*
- ♦ **Fighting Falcon Military Museum** – *Restored CG 4-A glider, & military exhibits honoring veterans from Greenville*
- ♦ **Flat River Historical Museum** – *and Victorian Garden - in Greenville*
- ♦ **Freeport Historical Society** – *located in the old Masonic Temple*
- ♦ **Grattan Township Historical Society** – *in a restored 1853 structure west of Belding*
- ♦ **Ionia's Blanchard House and Museum** – *in a stately Victorian Mansion*
- ♦ **Ionia Free Fair Antique Village** – *is an exhibit only during Ionia Free Fair*
- ♦ **Ionia Co. Genealogical Society** – *History Room research in Lake Odessa*
- ♦ **Lake Odessa Historical Society Depot Museum** – *displays, archives*
- ♦ **Lowell Area Historical Museum** – *in old home with Victorian flair*
- ♦ **Lyons/Muir Historical Museum in Lyons** – *newly redone in old store*
- ♦ **Oakfield Museum** - *west of Greenville in old Gleaner Hall in Podunk*
- ♦ **Pine Forest Historical Museum** – *variety in an 1881 Edmore church*
- ♦ **Plainfield Charter Township—Hyser Rivers Museum** – *northside Grand Rapids*
- ♦ **Portland Area Historical Society** — *no museum but memorabilia is housed at the Portland Area Library*
- ♦ **Rockford Area Museum** - *exhibits early life in Rockford*
- ♦ **Welch Historical Museum** – *in former hardware store in Sunfield*



Local Highlights

Historical Societies and Museums close to Grand Rapids

Lowell Area Historical Museum

325 West Main Street. Lowell, MI 49331
Phone: 616.897.7688



The Museum is located in the historic Graham home, built in 1873. It features permanent galleries surrounding the founding and early history of the Lowell area, its industry and retailing and the Lowell Showboat. In addition a Victorian Dining Room, Parlor, Porch with Garden and a Special Exhibits Gallery which changes annually creates a wonderful experience for all visitors. Genealogical material available. The Victorian rooms can be rented for your special event, please call for more information. **The Museum is also open to the public throughout the year on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

website: www.lowellmuseum.org
email: history@lowellmuseum.org

Cascade Historical Society

2839 Thornapple River Dr.
(Mail: 2865 Thornhills SE) Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Phone: 616.949.1500

Cascade Township was founded in 1848 and the township hall was built in 1898. A history group was formed in 1974 and a history book published in 1987. Township Hall, now the Museum building, was added to the State Historical Registry in 1998.

Byron Center Historical Society & Museum

2506 Prescott St. S.W., Byron Center, MI 49315
Phone: 616.878.0888

The Byron Center Historical Society was founded in 1978 with a group of ladies interested in preserving and protecting our community history. In 1986, with the opening of a new Town Hall, the old town hall was offered to the society to house their museum. The museum is now home to a look back at our early farming community: general store, doctors' offices, one-room schoolhouse, Veterans display, and typical farm house. **The museum is open every Tuesday from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.; May- November (or by appointment).** We also offer a meeting place for small groups at a modest fee.

West Michigan Railroad Historical Society Depot

371 N. Union St. Sparta, MI 49345
Mail: WMRHS, PO Box 150461
Grand Rapids, MI 49515
Phone 616.784.7264

Founded in 1969 to preserve & promote Michigan railroad history, they meet in the 1886 Toledo, Saginaw & Muskegon depot the third Thursday of each month from April through November at 7:00 p.m. November is their banquet month and December through February they meet in members' homes. They have many photos, artifacts, records, a boxcar with train layout, a roadrailer and a caboose. Each year they host Sparta school children to teach them about trains. Open Thursday, Friday and Saturday during Sparta's Town and Country Days the third weekend in July or other times by appointment.



2018 WMGS Writing Contest

~ Family Tradition ~

Traditions often enrich and strengthen family bonds and create fond memories. Whether they are stories, activities, or beliefs handed down from generation to generation, it's important to preserve your family traditions for future generations. WMGS encourages you to write about one of your family's traditions. They may occur daily, weekly, monthly or yearly, and revolve around military, holidays, or other special occasions. Some may be humorous or unusual.

Traditions may or may not be genealogical facts, but often provide important research clues. You may choose to describe how a Family Tradition assisted in your research, how you determined when and how the tradition began, or whether the tradition is based on true information or was created to teach or convince.

We would love to hear your story. Write it up and enter the 2018 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 2018 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.

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 15, 2018.

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.

**** IMPORTANT:** Send photographs or graphics **separately** as 300 dpi tiff or jpeg files.

Email your submission to michigana@wmgs.org or ruthgen@gmail.com
with "Michigana Contest 2018" 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 2018 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

For further information or any questions about the Writing Contest, please contact the *Michigana* Editor at michigana@wmgs.org or ruthgen@gmail.com

All entries due by March 15, 2018!

Email to: michigana@wmgs.org or ruthgen@gmail.com

Common Corners

www.commoncorners.com

Whether it is a passion for genealogical research or interest in preserving local history & traditions, we share Common Corners and Common Borders. This website reflects our combined resources, enables a network of communication and assists in discovery of our Common interests in our Corner of the world—West Michigan.

The Western Michigan Genealogical Society wishes to make resources available to leverage the combined energy and passion within the historical and genealogical community of West Michigan. We focus on the eight county areas including Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo and Ottawa counties.

How to request to have your organization or township information added: send an email to webmaster@wmgs.org. Subject line should be Common Corners Inquiry. Our committee will review and advise how WMGS can help based on the specifics of your request.



Web Links

Our quarterly publication, *Michigana* specializes in original & unpublished material, concentrating on western Michigan. *Michigana* is available at many libraries. Past articles or complete issues of *Michigana* may be purchased online at **<http://data.wmgs.org>**

Our newsletter is published quarterly and can be found online at: **www.wmgs.org/news.htm**

Michigan Archives

The Archives of Michigan is responsible for preserving the records of Michigan government and other public institutions. In fulfilling this primary mission, it serves as the collective memory of Michigan state government. In addition, after review, the Archives of Michigan also accepts papers from private individuals and organizations.

With documents dating back to 1792, the Archives of Michigan houses much of Michigan's record heritage. More than 80 million state and local government records and private papers, 300,000 photographs and 500,000 maps, plus films and audio tapes are available for research.



702 W. Kalamazoo St.
Lansing, MI 48915
517-373-3559

www.michigan.gov/archivesofmi

Library of Michigan

www.michigan.gov/familyhistory

- Digital collections, including nearly 1 million Michigan death certificates (1897-1920) from the Library of Michigan's collection, state census records (1827 - 1894), Civil War service records, and much more.
- Research guides, including Getting Started guides, Immigration & Naturalization, Military Records, Vital Records, and Michigan county guides.
- Indexes to naturalizations for thirty plus Michigan counties.
- A Michigan County Clerks directory, complete with contact information and holdings overview.
- Visiting? See local history materials, including: city & county histories, newspaper clippings, vital records, cemetery transcripts, and plat maps. A librarian on staff would be happy to show you how to search the catalog for best results.

Family Tree Magazine Award

The WMGS' database website has been named to Family Tree Magazine's list of Best State Websites for Genealogy for 2016, published in the December 2016 issue and online.

The list honors the best websites that specialize in genealogy research for one of the 50 US states. The 75 websites represent the go-to online destinations for tracing American ancestors, state by state. We thank the hard working WMGS volunteers that contribute every year to achieve this..... The 6th year in a row!



We have passed 1,100,000 records in the Newspapers Database and more than 2.9 MILLION records online.



There are tons of different topics to search in the database such as: West MI Newspapers, Kent County School Censuses, West Michigan Church Records, World War One Veterans Census, Kent County Deaths, Kent County Marriages and much more.

data.wmgs.org

Membership Application

NEW _____ RENEWAL _____

\$20 in the US

\$25 outside the USA

Membership begins January 1 and ends December 31

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



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

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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

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 or write to: WMGS—Membership, c/o GRPL, Western Michigan Genealogical Society, 111 Library St. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503-3268.

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