



# WMGS

## Newsletter

### Spring 2019



### ***Upcoming Membership Meetings***

We meet at **1:30 p.m.** in the **Ryerson Auditorium of the Grand Rapids Public Library** on the first Saturday of the month, September through June. Should the first Saturday fall on a holiday weekend, another day will be scheduled. Unless a special program, each meeting has a one-hour lecture on a genealogy related subject by a knowledgeable speaker. Books and charts are sold at our meetings and a "Hospitality Hour" follows.

**All meetings are free and open to the public.**

**Saturday, April 6, 2019**  
**Membership meeting**  
**1:30 p.m.**

**The Abandoned Bride**

**Presenters: Deb Havens and Lynn Dole**

Twenty years after their Grandfather Del Havens died, sisters Lynne Dole and Dr. Deb Havens discovered a secret that stunned their entire family: a box of pictures and post cards from their grandfather's post-World War I service in Europe. Among them were sad messages from a mysterious woman named Dora Gallner, claiming to be his abandoned bride. All the postcards she had written to the sisters' Great Grandmother Grace, Del's mother, seemed to support Dora's claim. But if that were true, if he had left her behind, truly abandoned Dora, it was unforgivable-- the act of a man the family didn't recognize. The two sisters traveled to Germany, Austria and Switzerland to search for Dora Gallner... and uncovered her tragic story.

"The Abandoned Bride" documents the dramatic tale as the sisters traced the clues they found in Del's personal papers and photographs to conduct historically-based genealogical research.



**Saturday, May 4, 2019**  
**Membership meeting**  
**1:30 p.m.**

**Resources for Genealogical Research in Foreign Countries**

**Presenter: Katherine R. Willson**

Once you've discovered your immigrant ancestor's home country, how will you go about finding documents generated while s/he was still there, and how will you research his/her parents? We'll discuss available resources for beginning your research in foreign countries, including how to locate foreign language genealogy terms and online maps providing contextual information on shifting country borders.

Katherine R. Willson of Ann Arbor, MI is a highly acclaimed and professionally trained national public speaker. Her passion for genealogy combined with practical and creative strategies keeps her audience fully engaged and actively participating in these energetic, entertaining presentations.



### Mini Classes:

**WMGS offers mini classes before the Saturday monthly meetings in April and May**

**12:00 p.m.—1:00 p.m.**

**Location: Lower Level Adult Computer Lab, GRPL**

**Instructor: Linda Guth**

#### **April Mini-Class: Creating Your Family History Timeline**

Does your family tree timeline not contain much information? Want to make it more interesting? Learn how to merge historical events into your tree.

#### **May Mini-Class: Different Types of Censuses**

Did you know there's more than just the US Federal Census? Let's learn about US Federal census, other countries censuses, State censuses, Agricultural census, etc.

### A Special Online Benefit for Members of WMGS

We have a small, dedicated group of volunteers who will check personal resources, search records, compare notes and otherwise make extraordinary efforts to assist you in breaking down the Brick Walls in your family research. Most resources are for Michigan (& the Midwest), New York and New England, but we are not limiting your requests to those areas only.

Our guarantee: We'll use our combined resources and shared experience to at the very least lead you to a few new places to look. But our goal will be to find that missing piece of information to help you get back another generation or two! What have you got to lose?

- ◆ Be sure you are a current member in good standing. If you have any doubt, just email [wmgs@wmgs.org](mailto:wmgs@wmgs.org) and we'll verify your name against the membership list. (If you received a Michigana within the last few months that has this year's expiration date on the label then you're OK)
- ◆ Send an email to [webmaster@wmgs.org](mailto:webmaster@wmgs.org). The more information you provide, the better the chances of us making a new find for you. DATES & PLACES are IMPORTANT.
- ◆ Be patient. This service is free to WMGS members. Breaking Brick Walls is not necessarily an easy task.
- ◆ For now, we have a limit of one Brick Wall request per membership year.

NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
2019 FAMILY HISTORY CONFERENCE  
8-11 MAY 2019 | ST. CHARLES, MO

## Journey of Discovery



The upcoming NGS 2019 Family History Conference will be held in St. Charles, Missouri, and will offer the best and most expansive series of lectures to advance your research. St. Charles is easily accessible with a small-town feel and an abundance of history.

The NGS Family History Conference, 8–11 May 2019 is your opportunity to choose from more than 150 lectures presented by many nationally recognized speakers, explore an exhibit hall filled with more than 80 exhibitors, and network with more than 2,000 genealogists. Every NGS conference has a different theme with a new program top to bottom—so there is always more to learn and discover.

**Register now for the Family History Conference:** <https://conference.ngsgenealogy.org/register/>

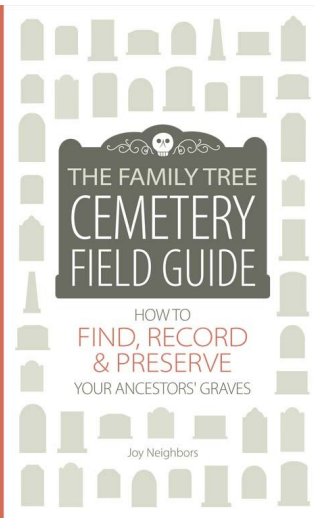
## The Family Tree Cemetery Field Guide

With the weather warming up, genealogists will get back outside and back to visiting cemeteries.

Uncover your ancestors with this guide for how to find a grave, understand tombstones and use death records and other cemetery data in your genealogy research. This book contains detailed step-by-steps for using FindAGrave and BillionsGraves, plus guides for understanding tombstone epitaphs and symbol meanings. Not all research can be done from home—sometimes you have to head into the field. Cemeteries are crucial for any genealogist's search, and this book will show you how to search for and analyze your ancestors' graves. Discover tools for locating tombstones, tips for traipsing through cemeteries, an at-a-glance guide to frequently used gravestone icons, and practical strategies for on-the-ground research.

You'll love *The Family Tree Cemetery Field Guide* if...

- You want to take your genealogy research on the road by visiting ancestors' burial sites
- You need an extra hand in understanding old-style handwriting and icons on tombstones
- You're a "tombstone tourist" who loves walking through cemeteries and wants to apply your findings to genealogy research



### Excerpt: Sample Tips

Here are some tips you'll find in *The Family Tree Cemetery Field Guide*:

- ♦ **Notice everything that appears on a tombstone.** Some markings on a headstone are obvious, but inscriptions that are subtle or vague can provide valuable insights about your ancestor's life. Be sure to note everything that appears on tombstones, and consider alternative ways of interpreting what you see on them.
- ♦ **Do your part to preserve tombstones.** The tombstone tourist's number-one rule is "Take only pictures, leave only footprints." Any form of tombstone rubbing will damage stones, so only take pictures (you can always use photo-editing software to enhance your photos later) and leave complicated preservation tasks (such as repairing headstones) to professionals.
- ♦ **Research before your trip.** Knowing the ancestors whose graves you want to visit (and where they're located in the cemetery) will help you have a much more efficient trip. Use the cemetery's website and resources like Find A Grave and BillionGraves to locate the cemetery office and the grave(s) you want to see ahead of time.

Please "like" and follow  
WMGS on Facebook

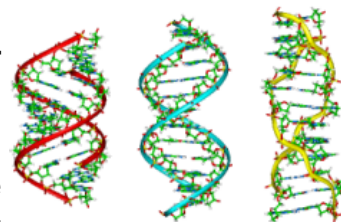
Find us at:

[https://www.facebook.com/  
wmgs.org/](https://www.facebook.com/wmgs.org/)



## DNA Interest Group (DIG)

Formed in 2015, the Western Michigan Genealogical Society's **DNA Interest Group** (DIG) meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month in the Grand Rapids Public Library's VanderVeen Center on the 4th floor. Meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. 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.



Questions, comments, or program suggestions are welcome. Please contact:

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



## The History of Baby Clothing—Clues to Date Photos of Children

The history of baby clothes in America is fascinating. Many reasons exist as to why not much is written about baby clothes the further back in history you go. One reason is that baby clothes were just a natural part of life and not something that was documented thoroughly. Another is that baby clothes were not colorful or eye-catching. Traditionally, baby clothes were white so they could be easily bleached.

In the 1600s, babies were “swaddled” and not in the current sense of the word. They were wrapped tightly in cloth so their legs and arms would stay straight. It was thought that if the baby’s limbs were bent, they could become physically deformed. The swaddling went from the head down their entire body to keep it still and straight.

Another fascinating seventeenth-century practice is the use of “stays” on babies. Once a baby left the swaddling period, he or she was put into a tiny corset, or stays, to keep straight and stiff. The era placed a great deal of emphasis on the positivity of an erect and straight posture. Parents dressed their children in long skirts, regardless of sex, to prevent crawling, which was considered barbaric and unnatural. The long skirts were significant indicators of age and not sex.

The 1700s brought new ideas about allowing physical freedom for babies. Firm swaddling went out of vogue and so did the infant stays. Parents still dressed their babies in little dresses, but they were now ankle length after about six months. As the centuries went by, baby clothes became more ornate and frilly. Social norms considered babies to be beautiful, no matter the sex, and no concerns existed about differentiating the gender at a glance. Boys and girls alike could have long ringlets and dresses. This makes identifying boys and girls in photographs more difficult. There were small nuances that separated the boys from the girls. Boys would have one style of dress while girls could possibly have a more ornate dress. Clothes were not distinct to gender until children reached a certain age. Boys would then be “breeched,” or allowed to wear breeches, sometime between four and seven years of age.

With the advent of washing machines in the mid-1800s and the expanded availability of store-bought fabrics, baby clothes began having a bit of hue to them. Initially, there were no colors assigned to either sex, but this changed in the mid-1800s. Originally, boys were assigned the color pink and girls the color blue.



Various writings, books, and newspaper articles show this opposite color assignment for babies, including this article from 1897: “On Friday, when she had read the papers and learned of the event at Princeton, Mrs. McKinley smiled, but her smile had a trace of discomfiture. The booties which she had sent to Mrs. Cleveland were blue, and as all the world which has had experience in such things well knows, blue booties are for girls and pink for boys.” – The Wilkes-Barre Telephone (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania), Saturday, November 6, 1897.

The mixed beliefs about the correct color for each gender continued well into the 1900s. In 1925, the Betty Bob’s Family paper doll book came out with a Baby Bobby in it, featuring some feminine looking clothing: The Times Magazine featured a chart on which ten popular department stores labeled the gender of clothes for which sex. Six stores listed pink for boys and only five stores showed pink for girls (one store even had pink for both sexes). You can view this article through the same access link as for the other articles.

Not until after World War II did the custom of assigning pink for girls and blue for boys become set. One thing to note is that even in today’s society, baby girls can wear blue or pink, but baby boys generally are not dressed in pink. Since the color assignments became set, it has become an insult to many mothers to call a child by the wrong gender. You will see most babies with some kind of indicator on them, such as a bow headband or a little blue blanket or toy, even if their clothes are not a female shade or male shade of color.



It is a relatively new phenomenon to have gender-assigned clothing instead of just age-assigned clothing. Take another look at your family photos and those vintage baby clothes. You might see something new from a different perspective.

*(From Lisa Louise Cooke’s Genealogy Gems at [www.GenealogyGems.com](http://www.GenealogyGems.com), home of the free Genealogy Gems Podcast” by: Allison DePrey Singleton)*

## Michigan History Museum

### Night at the Museum

**Date:** April 11, 2019

**Time:** 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

**Location:** Michigan History Museum, 702 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing, MI 48915

What does copper mining have to do with electricity? What role did simple machines play in Michigan's lumbering industry? What's so special about the design of the Mackinac Bridge?



Explore the scientific side of Michigan's most interesting stories through experiments and hands-on activities, as we partner with

the Michigan State University Science Festival.

Free admission and free parking.

## Michigan History Museum

### Say Yes! to Michigan Day

**Date:** May 11, 2019

**Time:** 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**Location:** Michigan History Museum, 702 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing, MI 48915

Celebrate the real stories of Michigan. Discover Michigan's past through live music, costumed interpreters, hands-on activities and Michigan trivia challenges. More information to come.

The Michigan History Museum—flagship of the Michigan History Museum System—is located in the east wing of the Michigan Library and Historical Center. Sunday admission and weekend parking are free.



**Do you know of something that our members need to know and/or would be interested in knowing? Send your information to:**

**[talkingtree@wmgs.org](mailto:talkingtree@wmgs.org)**

The editors of the WMGS newsletter and the WMGS quarterly, the publicity chairperson, the website and database managers, the WMGS president — and more — will receive the information. So you don't have to wonder who to contact, just send it to: **[talkingtree@wmgs.org](mailto:talkingtree@wmgs.org)**

## Volunteer Indexing Projects

Many genealogy and history based websites have online volunteer indexing opportunities. The website for Family Search has over 100 projects in 20 countries just waiting for volunteers to help transcribe and index millions of records.

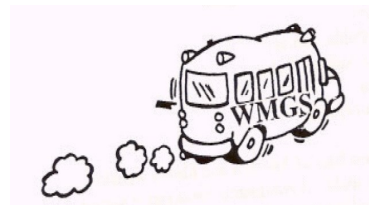
**<https://www.familysearch.org/indexing/projects>**

Another volunteer opportunity comes from the Citizen Archivist program. You can contribute to the National Archives Catalog by tagging, transcribing and adding comments to records, making them more accessible and searchable. Every contribution you make helps unlock history.

**<https://www.archives.gov/citizen-archivist>**

Find the graves of ancestors, create virtual memorials or add photos, virtual flowers and a note to a loved one's memorial. Search or browse cemeteries and grave records for everyday and famous people from around the world.

**<https://www.findagrave.com/contribute>**



## WMGS WRITERS GROUP

This 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.

### Upcoming Writing Topics:

**April : Describe one of your favorite memories with, or about, your significant other or best friend**

**May: Write about a cherished family heirloom; where did it come from; why have you (or has your family) kept it?**

### **PLANNING ON ATTENDING?**

Those who attend are encouraged to bring several copies of a Work-In- Progress (WIP), but it's 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) and her email address is 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 more specific directions.

## 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



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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.

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