



WMGS Newsletter Summer 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, June 1, 2019—Membership Meeting

1:30 p.m.—3:00 p.m.

Open House on the 4th Floor

We are trying something a little different for our June meeting. Instead of meeting in the Ryerson Auditorium for a presentation, we are having genealogy open house at the library. Please come straight up to the 4th floor. We are giving you choices of mini-sessions in a slotted time frame. Decide which topic you have an interest in and attend the session. For the next time frame you have more choices or you can start working on something that you just learned about during the session you just attended.



Schedule 1:30 p.m.— 3:00 p.m. Membership/Information Table
1:30 p.m.— 3:00 p.m. Grand Haven Obit project in VanderVeen room

	<u>Choice #1</u>	<u>Choice #2</u>	<u>Choice #3</u>
1:30 p.m.— 1:45 p.m.	DNA	Library Databases	
1:50 p.m.— 2:05 p.m.	Tour of Stacks	Microfilm Machines	Vertical Files
2:10 p.m.— 2:25 p.m.	Archives Tour	Women's Cards	General List of Resources
2:30 p.m.— 2:45 p.m.	City Directories	Seeking Michigan	African-American Research
2:45 p.m.— 3:00 p.m.	Archives Tour	House Research	

Unclaimed Persons

every life is worth remembering

www.unclaimed-persons.org

What is Unclaimed Persons?

Alone in death and tucked away on dark shelves or cold gurneys in morgues across the country, thousands of deceased individuals whose names are known to coroners, medical examiners, and a handful of friends have no known family members to claim their remains. Homelessness, mental illness, long-term estrangement, deaths of all apparent next of kin, and other circumstances have severed familial connections. Ever-increasing caseloads and shrinking budgets make it nearly impossible for medical examiners, coroners, and investigators who cannot quickly identify family to find deceased individuals' relatives without help.

Unclaimed Persons is an online group of volunteer researchers who assist these professionals in their quest to find next of kin. They use online resources and genealogical sleuthing skills to help locate the families and fulfill their civic duty to notify these found relatives of the individual's passing.

Unclaimed Persons began as a concept in 2007 when rootstelevision.com aired a show following genealogist Megan Smolenyak as she tackled two cases for two coroners. A number of volunteers stepped forward to help, leading Megan to establish a closed-group **Unclaimed Persons** Facebook page in June 2008.

As medical examiners, coroners, and the genealogical community learned about **Unclaimed Persons'** work, requests for assistance and the number of volunteers continued to increase. Within three years, they had outgrown Facebook and moved to their current, more secure, user-friendly private forum. Today, **Unclaimed Persons** remains an all-volunteer online community of researchers dedicated to addressing the quiet unclaimed epidemic in morgues across our nation.

If you'd like to volunteer, learn more at <https://unclaimed-persons.org/volunteers/>.

SAVE THE DATE

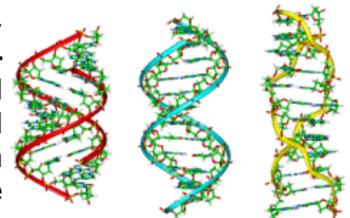
Western Michigan
Genealogical Society's
Bus Trip to Fort Wayne's
Allen County Public Library

Fall 2019 trip is Wednesday and
Thursday, November 12 - 13.



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

Grand Rapids Historical Society

Annual Baxter Award 2019 Recipient

George Bayard

The Baxter Award was created in 1980 by the Grand Rapids Historical Society to honor persons who have made significant contributions to the preservation and interpretation of Grand River Valley history. Named in honor of Albert Baxter, one of Grand Rapids' early historians who published, *History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan* in 1891.



George is the founding director of the Grand Rapids African American Museum and Archives. Their mission statement is to "Promote, preserve, display, collect and honor the lives, culture, history and accomplishments of African, African-American and connected peoples in the Greater Grand Rapids Michigan community". George has been active in our community for decades. GRAAMA is the culmination of his work, his passion, and desire to share knowledge. It is for these reasons, and more, that the Grand Rapids Historical Society will be honoring George Bayard with the 2019 Albert Baxter Award.

George is a former board member of the Western Michigan Genealogical Society and we congratulate him on this prestigious award and we appreciate all he has done for the Grand Rapids community.

Congratulations, George, on a job well done!

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 30 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.

Local History Organizations

Grand Rapids Historical Society: Since 1894, the Grand Rapids Historical Society has been collecting and preserving the heritage of the Grand River Valley, commonly known today as West Michigan. The society not only preserves and protects history, but also presents it to the community in the hopes of encouraging historical study to new generations. www.grhistory.org

Grand Rapids Historical Commission: It is the plan of the Grand Rapids Historical Commission to collect images from the personal collections of local families, local archives of public and private institutions and organizations, and other local sources that reflect and reveal family and community life and the ways in which Grand Rapids people worked, traveled, educated & enjoyed themselves from the mid 19th through the 20th century. www.historygrandrapids.org

Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council: The Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council is dedicated to educating the community and celebrating the legacies of local women, preserving knowledge of their past and inspiring visions for their future. www.ggrwhc.org

The Grand Rapids Civil War Roundtable: The Grand Rapids Civil War Round Table is a group dedicated to studying the Civil War, the people who fought it, and promoting a broader understanding of the conflict and how it has shaped American history. www.grcwrt.com

Upper Peninsula History Conference

The 70th annual Upper Peninsula History Conference will be held June 28-30, 2019, in Escanaba.

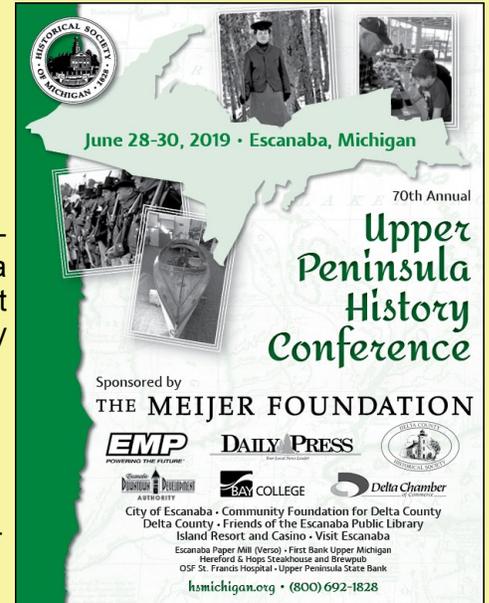
The annual Upper Peninsula History Conference pays particular attention to U.P. history topics and themes. This conference moves to a different location in the Upper Peninsula each year to also explore that area's heritage. In addition, the annual Upper Peninsula History Awards are presented at this conference.

The Upper Peninsula History Conference offer three Keynotes:

- Inventing the Outdoors: The Marble Arms Company with Dennis Pace, "Inventing the Outdoors" Special Exhibit From the Michigan Historical Museum
- Miners Died and Widows Cried: Remembering the Barnes-Hecker Mine Disaster with James Paquette, Marquette Regional History Center
- Secrets of the House of Ludington Hotel with Karen Lindquist, Delta County Historical Society and Kathleen Bennett, Gladstone Area Schools (Ret.)

<http://hsmichigan.org/conferences/upper-peninsula-history-conference/up-conference-registration/>

- ⇒ More than 12 breakout sessions that address local and statewide history
- ⇒ U.P. History Awards Banquet
- ⇒ Tours
- ⇒ Workshops
- ⇒ Exhibitors/vendors for attendees to visit
- ⇒ Three days of "meet and greets"



Saturday, June 22

Genealogy Day at Kalamazoo Public Library

9:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Come research at the Kalamazoo Public Library! Library staff and KVGS volunteers will help you with research. Photocopies will be free. Bring your laptop and flash drive if you want or use a library Chromebook and take your research home on a free flash drive from the library. Parking downtown is free on Saturdays so come enjoy researching.



Kalamazoo Public Library, 315 S Rose Street, Kalamazoo, MI

Friday, July 12 and Saturday, July 13

Abrams Foundation Family History Seminar

(hosted by the Archives of Michigan and the Michigan Genealogical Council)



Tina Beard is owner of Tamarack Genealogy and is also a genealogy librarian at the Plainfield Public Library in Plainfield, Illinois. She lectures extensively on topics including Scottish genealogy, military research and archival preservation. She is a member of the Genealogical Speakers Guild and the Association of Professional Genealogists as well as a board directors for the Illinois State Genealogical Society, the Illinois State Historical Records Advisory Board, and the Northern Illinois Historic League. Tina is also a commissioner for the Illinois WWI Centennial Commission. She has been published in the National Genealogical Society Magazine and TIARA: The Irish Ancestral Research Association Quarterly. Tina has provided research assistance for over fifteen years and has been researching her family's history, as time permits, for over twenty years.

For registration and other information:

<http://seekingmichigan.org/events/2019-abrams-foundation-family-history-seminar>

The seminar will be held at the Michigan Historical Center.
702 West Kalamazoo, Lansing, MI

The Archives of Michigan will be open for research from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday and 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday.

Friday, July 12

In conjunction with the 2019 Abrams Foundation Family History Seminar, the Abrams Seminar Lock-in will be on Friday, July 12 from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the Michigan Library and Historical Center.

The Archives of Michigan and Library of Michigan will both be open from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Pizza and refreshments, provided by the Archives of Michigan, will be available for registrants from 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. You can register for the Lock-In after registering for the Seminar.

Who Do You Think You Are? - Genealogy Docuseries Returns to TV



Emmy-winning docuseries *Who Do You Think You Are?* is returning to NBC after a few seasons on the TLC network. Thirteen episodes of the series from executive producers Lisa Kudrow and Dan Bucatinsky have been ordered. The series is produced by Ancestry and Shed Media.

Each episode highlights a different celebrity who goes on a search to trace their family tree with the help of professional genealogists and experts. Family mysteries and real-life stories are highlighted in the episodes.

The series traces the lineage of many different people with a wide variety of ethnicities and immigrant experiences. Previous episodes have traced genealogies to Italy, England, South Africa, Jamaica and Latvia, to name a few.

The schedule of episodes has not yet been released along with the celebrity list, but the show is expected to return sometime this summer on NBC.

FGS Conference

August 21—24, 2019

Hosted by the Federation of Genealogical Societies in cooperation with sponsoring local societies, corporate sponsors, and partner organizations, FGS 2019 offers a new full four-day format jam-packed with topics of interest to every genealogist. Whether you're a beginner just starting to explore your family history or an old hand at re-



FEDERATION OF GENEALOGICAL SOCIETIES

2019 Family History Conference | August 21 - 24

search, the wide variety of new and inclusive topics offers something for you. And true to its own roots as a federation composed of genealogical societies, FGS offers society management topics throughout all four days of the conference rather than a Wednesday-only focus as in years past.

Come early and stay late!

Explore the rich resources in Washington's many research repositories with records for everyone—whether you have colonial Mid-Atlantic roots or twentieth-century recent American immigrants. Plan some time at the National Archives, Library of Congress, DAR Library, and more, all an easy and affordable ride away on the DC Metro.

Bring the family and experience *our* capital city and its celebrated monuments and history. Spend the day learning about ancestors at the FGS conference, and then join living family for some fun with joint evening activities. You'll always remember your time in Washington, DC, together.

Learn from Experts. Visit Exhibitors. Meet Old and New Friends.

Learn from leading family history speakers and educators, including expert staff members of the National Archives, Library of Congress, DAR Library, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and others. Visit companies and organizations providing products and services that will benefit your research. Meet old friends and make new like-minded friends. Leave FGS 2019 with a renewed enthusiasm for family history and more knowledge to help solve those challenging research problems.

Registration information:

<https://fgs.org/annual-conference/>

Please “like” and follow
WMGS on Facebook

Find us at:

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



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

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

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:

June: *What did you want to be when you grew up? Why, and what actually happened?*

July: *50 years ago man landed on the moon. Where were you, what did you feel, and what do you remember? Or, what have your parents/grandparents said about that day?*

August: *Foods from your childhood that you no longer eat, or that may no longer be available.*

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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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

About WMGS

The Western Michigan Genealogical Society is a 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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