



# WMGS Newsletter FALL 2020



## 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 (NO IN-PERSON MEETINGS YET)**

**Saturday, September 12, 2020, 1:30 p.m., Virtual presentation via Zoom Webinar**

**<https://zoom.us/j/97300550464?pwd=aG0xNytMTENXUVVxL0N3ZG9mSkJjdz09>**

**"Generating Resources: Indexing an Army of Women "**

**Presenter: Jo Ellyn Clarey, Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council**

Genealogists don't always look to mass movements to locate individuals, especially women--or consider taking the next step toward resource creation when they discover a forebear's name in a group listing. This program will call for the creation of indexes akin to the lists of Civil War soldiers, to assemble armies of women, making them forever easier to find. It will illustrate the riches to be yielded beginning with participant lists from early women's social movements on the local level. The records of early women's organizations were rarely considered worthy of archival collections or even attic space; so there are often no minutes or correspondence files. But we know that disciplined searches of newly digitized newspapers can result in columns of the names of women who were committee members of local literary societies and WCTU chapters, as well as those who embarked on political activities and wartime work. (This program will look beyond the WWI women's registration cards, so well known in Grand Rapids. But those 23,000 names represent only one wartime project.) Still, energetic searches of newspapers often stop short with the discovery of just one particular name--even when it is one among 14,000 others who published their names in support of women's suffrage in 1918 Grand Rapids. This program will discuss the benefits of placing ancestor names into their rich and intersecting contexts, and the need to structure a process for doing that.

By profession a literary scholar, Jo Ellyn Clarey has redirected her path into the world of local women's history in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where she has been tracking down the forgotten contributions of area women. For the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council, she continues advancing long-term projects highlighting the roles of local women in the Michigan suffrage movement; overseeing a complete elective history of the city's women; and organizing research on U.S. women's immense, but little known, work during WWI. She has also served on the boards of the Grand Rapids Historical Society, the Grand Rapids Historical Commission, and acted as liaison to the Michigan Women's Studies Association, whose statewide conference she has chaired. Clarey has presented at and organized programming for numerous institutions and academic conferences.



**Saturday, October 3, 2020, 1:30 p.m.**

**Virtual presentation—**

**“Researching Beyond the Usual Civil War  
Union Resources”**

**Presenter: Mark Hoffman**

This session moves beyond the basic information on the service of Union veterans of the Civil War. It includes many seldom-used sources – online, archival and printed -- which help provide context and detail to the Union Civil War experience. The presentation will include sources of information on ancestors, both men and women, soldier and civilian. It draws upon almost 40 years of experience researching Civil War-era soldiers and their families, both as a genealogist and as a Civil War historian.

**Biography**

Mark Hoffman currently serves as the Chief Administrative Officer for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Previously, Hoffman was deputy director of the Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries for eight years after holding leadership roles with the Michigan Bureau of State Lottery and the Michigan House of Representatives. A life-long student of the American Civil War, he is the author of *Among the Enemy: A Michigan Soldier's Civil War Journal* (2013) and *My Brave Mechanics: The First Michigan Engineers and Their Civil War* (2007) – both published by Wayne State University Press. Hoffman is a graduate of Michigan State University, with a degree in History.



**Remember to “like” and follow  
WMGS on Facebook**

**Find us at:**

**<https://www.facebook.com/wmgs.org/>**

**or search for “Western Michigan Genealogical  
Society” at Facebook and you will be directed to our  
new FB closed group**



**Got Ancestors 2020?!**  
**Saturday, October 10, 2020**

**“Your Genealogy Gem”**

**Speaker: Lisa Louise Cook**

What a year 2020 has been so far! Many events cancelled, many other events changed somehow.

This year's Got Ancestors?! 2020 Seminar is no different. We have switched it to a Virtual Seminar. Our speaker, Lisa Louise Cooke, will be at her home in Texas, and all the attendees will be at their homes where ever they live. Or maybe you'll be sitting in your car because you have lousy internet connectivity at your home.

In any case, we're please to bring Lisa Louise Cooke to you for a day of (virtual) presentations and learning.

Stay tuned for more details and registration when we have it ready to go – for now at least save the date if you didn't already.



## Database with 26 Million Documents on Nazi Victims, Survivors is Now Available Online

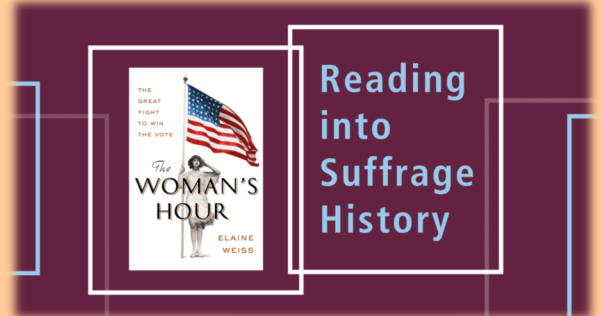
The Arolsen Archives, based in the German town of Bad Arolsen, announced that the recent addition to its database was completed with its partner, Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Memorial Center in Jerusalem. This database can be a valuable tool for finding lost Jewish relatives. Billed as the world's most comprehensive archive on the victims and survivors of Nazi persecution, the Arolsen Archives reached a "milestone" by publishing 26 million documents to its online database, including new information on forced laborers and deported Jews.

The new uploads included data on the deportations of Jews, Roma and Sinti from the former German Empire, Austria, Bohemia and Moravia. You can read more in an article in the Jewish News Syndicate at <https://www.jns.org/online-database-with-26-milliondocuments-on-nazi-victims-survivors-now-online/> while the Arolsen Archives may be found at <https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/en/search/>.



*Reprinted from Dick Eastman's online newsletter dated April 29, 2020 and printed in the Farmington Genealogical Society newsletter*

## Reading into Suffrage History -- Virtual Book Discussion Series, 7:00 p.m.—8:30 pm



Third Wednesdays—September, October, November

- ♦ September 16th: *The Woman's Hour* by Elaine Weiss [The author will attend!]
- ♦ October 21st: *Death in Ten Minutes* by Fern Riddell
- ♦ November 18th: *All Bound Up Together* by Martha S. Jones

Free & open to the public

(Meeting Registration)

[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZltcuisqj4qH9DsP\\_bPAYNM5uLzVNguDa3G](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZltcuisqj4qH9DsP_bPAYNM5uLzVNguDa3G)

In partnership with the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council, this three-part book discussion series will explore a variety of titles related to the history of the suffrage movement as the United States celebrates the centennial anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment. Join Grand Rapids Public Library staff and for a lively talk on each of these three books, co-hosted with members of the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council who will provide important context and resources as readers make deeper connections to the history of the events leading up to the 19th amendment.

This program is a collaboration with the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council in honor of the 100 year anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment, which occurred August 18, 1920.



## Family History Activities

<https://www.familysearch.org/discovery/>

### In-Home and online activities designed for the whole family.

There are a number of in-home and online activities that are perfect for families that are spending more time at home but still want to be involved with genealogy. The activities are also very kid-friendly. One unique activity is called “Compare—a—Face”. If you have a tree of pictures of your ancestors on the site you then upload a photo of your own face. The computer then matches your face to the faces of your ancestors and lets you know who you most closely resemble.

#### Remembering My Photos

Everybody has a unique life story. Photos help us remember the past but they don't tell us everything! Your photos need your voice to make the story complete.

- Consider drawing a picture of a story from your life if you don't have many photos.
- Find a photo that you can tell a story about: a fun memory, a sad day, an accomplishment, etc. Write down everything you remember about that day. Who else was there? What do they remember?
- Find more photos that tell the story of your life. If you had to choose one picture to represent each year of your life, which photos would you choose?
- Ask a parent or grandparent to show you photos of when they were younger and ask them what they remember.
- Upload a photo from your life as a Memory on FamilySearch, explaining the story behind the picture as an audio recording or a written story.



#### Family Trivia Game

Do you know your family members as well as you think you do? When you can show that you know your family members, it's a sign that you care about them. As a family, select a couple of the questions below.

Have everyone answer the questions for themselves then make guesses on how other family members would answer. Then take turns revealing each person's answers.



- My favorite thing to do for fun is...
- My favorite food is...
- My favorite song is...
- My favorite movie is...
- My best friends are...
- Something I'm really good at is...
- My biggest accomplishment is...

Have a cousin or friend answer these questions, and then see if you can guess his or her answers.

**2020 Michigan Genealogical Council**  
**Fall Family History Event**  
**Saturday, November 14, 2020**

The keynote speaker will be Sunny Morton. Sunny will give four lectures live, virtually. Additionally, there will be a session from the Archives of Michigan staff and the Library of Michigan staff.

Speaker, writer, blogger, and editor, Sunny Morton, speaks to genealogical communities throughout the world. Her work includes being a contributing editor at *Family Tree Magazine* and a National Genealogical Society award winning editor of *Ohio Genealogy News*. She is co-author of *How to Find Your Family History in U.S. Church Records*, author of *Story of My Life: A Workbook for Preserving Your Legacy*, and the quick reference guide, *Genealogy Giants: Comparing the 4 Major Websites*. Sunny is especially known for tracing U.S. ancestors expertise; comparing the industry's largest websites, and giving presentations on how to reconstruct tell meaningful stories.



**Join Sunny and MGC for these exciting topics.**

***Must-Use U.S. Record Collections You Might Not Know About on Ancestry.com, FamilySearch, Findmypast and MyHeritage***

Become acquainted with powerhouse collections that are easy to ignore but tough to beat for the genealogical gems they reveal.

***Intro to U.S. Church Records: Why We Care Where Grandma Went to Church***

U.S. church records of many denominations can reveal ancestors' vital events, family relationships, overseas birthplaces, and other residences and religious lives.

***Lies, Errors and Bias—Oh, My! Consider Your Sources***

Learn to look critically at the sources that inform your research: the “what, who, when and why.” These criteria may indicate how much you can trust what individual sources say about your ancestors.

***“They Survived the Johnstown Flood?!” How to Reconstruct Your Ancestors’ Amazing Stories***

Come learn how to reconstruct fascinating experiences from your own family history by combining clues from your family’s knowledge, documents from genealogy websites, good historical research, and Googling to fill in the gaps.

***For more information about this conference and for  
registration help please see: [www.mimggc.org](http://www.mimggc.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](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)**



### **National Genealogical Society Membership**

Have you been thinking about beginning your search for your family history? Do you want to build your skills and expertise? The National Genealogical Society (frequently referred to as NGS) is here to help individuals learn about their family history. They are a non-profit organization headquartered in Falls Church, Virginia. For the past 115 years, they have been the leader in the field in teaching genealogical research skills and providing a pathway to scholarly work. Ready to get started? Take a look at their skill-building boxes on the homepage for advice and tips, or go to the learning center to enroll in an online course, check out books and publications, register for a research trip or come to an annual conference.

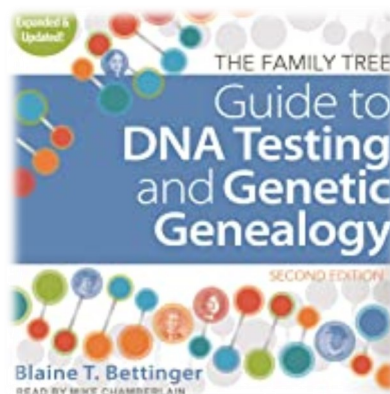
Join NGS and get all the benefits of membership today! Some of the benefits of membership are discounts on online genealogy conferences, free members-only resources, free access to archival resources, quarterly magazine, newsletters, and more.

<https://www.ngsgenealogy.org/family-history/>

## **DNA Resources**

With so many cancellations and virtual meetings due to Covid-19 restrictions, this is an ideal time to learn more about DNA and study at home. Blaine Bettinger is a leading expert on DNA and his book (originally published in 2016) was recently updated with the latest DNA developments.

Using this book you can discover the answers to your family history mysteries using the most cutting-edge tool available. This plain-English guide will teach you what DNA tests are available; the pros and cons of the major testing companies; and how to choose the right test to answer your specific genealogy questions.



After you take a DNA test, this guide will help you use your often-overwhelming results, with tips for understanding ethnicity estimates, navigating suggested cousin matches, and using third-party tools like GEDmatch to further analyze your data.

Whether you are new to DNA testing or you've tested at all three major companies, this guide will give you the tools you need to unpuzzle your DNA and discover what it can tell you about your family tree.

## **DNA Websites**

**<https://thegeneticgenealogist.com/>**

Blaine Bettinger's site, The Genetic Genealogist, examines the intersection of traditional genealogical techniques and modern genetic research. The blog also explores the latest news and developments in the related field of personal genomics.

**<https://dna-explained.com/category/geneticgenealogy/>**

Roberta Estes started this site and she formed a DNA company in 2005 and she has been doing genealogy since 1978. Roberta speaks and writes widely about DNA and genealogy, including the Native Heritage Project.

**<https://blog.eogn.com/category/dna/>**

Dick Eastman has been writing his newsletter for 24 years. His newsletter is sponsored by MyHeritage. Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter is considered to be the most popular online genealogy magazine in the world.

## 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.

**\*\*\*At this time the Writers Group is not having in-person meetings due to the threat of Covid 19. Many of our members are older or have compromised immune systems. Depending on the infection rate in Michigan that may change sometime this fall. We are also considering having Zoom meetings but nothing has been finalized. Check the WMGS website for updates or you can email Bobbi Schirado at rhjschirado@gmail.com.\*\*\***

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. We have a suggested topic for each meeting to help kick-start our writing, but if you are working on a family history, a story about how you discovered an ancestor, or an article for the 2020 Writing Contest you're welcome to get feedback on that instead. This year our topics are focused on more on our personal history and what we've experienced in order to preserve it for our children, relatives and local history.

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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