



# WMGS

## Newsletter

### Summer 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, June 13, 2020, 1:30 p.m.**

**Virtual presentation—**

**“Genealogy: It’s Not Greek to Me!”**

**Presenter: Rozlyn Kelly**

The board of WMGS is pleased to tell you that we have a presentation available to you for our normally scheduled June 13<sup>th</sup> meeting date. This meeting will be a virtual meeting through ZOOM and hosted by the library. You can register at any time before the event at:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_AdiYvvArRqyR-fN9XqJ-2A](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AdiYvvArRqyR-fN9XqJ-2A)



Rozlyn Kelly will discuss how to conduct genealogical research starting with oral history and locating documentation to support, explain or further the oral history. She will present a case study of an interracial couple, a Canadian born free black who serves in the US Civil War and marries a German immigrant, and their pioneering travels in the late 1800s.

### Presenter Bio

Rozlyn Kelly is an attorney with over 20 years of genealogical research experience focused on African American ancestry in Michigan, Canada, Southern Illinois, Kentucky, and Washington, D.C. She is currently President of the Farmington Genealogical Society and serves on the executive board of the Michigan Genealogical Council as recording secretary.

### Note From Our President about Future Meetings

We do not know when we will be able to hold our meetings again at the library. Right now I know that it is not for the foreseeable future. July and August are the two months of the year that we generally do not meet. For the September meeting we may again be doing a virtual meeting but at this time I am not sure what format we will be using. We have options:) We will send out the information you need in a timely manner so that you will know what to expect. (The dates and times will be our normal meeting dates- no changes there.)

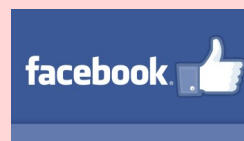
President Mindy Koole

### 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



## From the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council:

### *Celebrating the 2020 Suffrage Centennial! Portrait of a Suffragist*

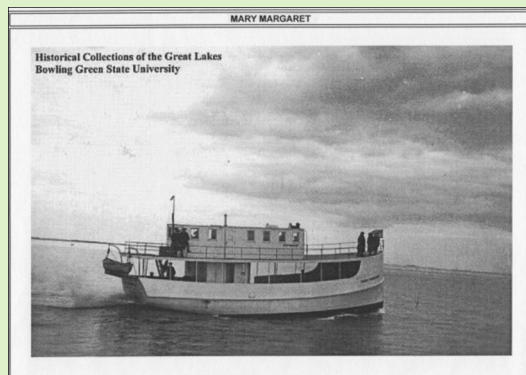
Here is a short course on why very early Grand Rapids attorney Elizabeth Eaglesfield (1853-1940) was inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame in 2013. She hung out her shingle in 1878 Grand Rapids and tried to make a living for twenty years. As long as the 1890s, she was a respected club woman and dedicated suffragist. Then, with the new century, Eaglesfield took herself and her career onto the Great Lakes, buying and skippering fruit boats--and fighting dramatic legal battles along the lakeshore. You should also know that Eaglesfield would probably not have been inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame had the judges known her full story! It includes being charged, along with the Kent County sheriff for flipping houses to have been sold at a sheriff's auction and, later, not always paying for her boat engines. Meet Elizabeth Eaglesfield!



**Interview** – six minutes with Cynthia Canty and Jo Ellyn Clarey, Michigan Radio's *Stateside*, November 18, 2013: <https://www.michiganradio.org/post/michigan-womens-hall-fame-has-some-new-inductees>

**Link** for further reading about the suffrage movement in Grand Rapids: <https://myemail.constantcontact.com/May-Flowers-for-Women-s-History-Wednesday.html?oid=1102964307953&aid=6aLZCh-AnOM>

The *Mary Margaret* was a small Diesel freighter that Eaglesfield and her son commissioned in 1923. Named for two of her granddaughters, it operated in the Lake Michigan fruit trade until they sold it in 1937 for duty as a passenger and freight service between Charlevoix and Beaver Island. In 2017 it was still ferrying passengers in Portland, Maine, as the *Chippewa*.



Eaglesfield liked to start organizations named after herself--in this case a literary club.



Her own tombstone includes a quote and, at its bottom, her two degrees from the University of Michigan.

# GENEALOGY TV PROGRAMS

## “Roots Less Traveled”

<https://www.nbc.com/roots-less-traveled>



### About the Show:

“Roots Less Traveled” is a live-action, half-hour television program designed to meet the educational and informational needs of children aged 13-16 and follows two family members, often from different generations, as they gain a newfound understanding and respect for each other on their quest to learn more about their family history. Each week a new pair will set out on an adventure to solve a mystery in their family tree.

From rumors of a relative who sailed on the Titanic to stories of homesteaders forging a new path for future generations, our duo will discover the truth behind the tales that have been passed down in their family while our viewers learn the personal stories behind notable historical moments. Viewers will be taken on a literal journey to unique places around the globe, learning more about the culture and history of these significant locations and events that happened there.

## “The Genetic Detective”

### About the Show:

ABC News’ all-new series, “The Genetic Detective,” follows investigative genetic genealogist CeCe Moore as she uses her unique research skills to transform the face of crime solving. By working with police departments and crime scene DNA, Moore is able to trace the path of a violent criminal’s family tree to identify and help bring them to justice.



## “The Generations Project”



“The Generations Project” is a reality television series produced by and shown on BYU Television that helps those who have questions about their family history investigate their own identities by embarking on a journey to uncover the lives and stories of their ancestors. During this journey each participant attempts to retrace their ancestors footsteps often participating in immersion experiences, meeting experts, and even sometimes connecting with family they never knew they had. As each participant on the show sets out on their journey they discover new details about the lives of their ancestors, answer questions about identity, about time and place,

and even discover things about themselves. Overall this journey helps participants learn where they have been and make their own conclusions about where they are going.

This show can be found on [www.byutv.org](http://www.byutv.org)



# Metal Detecting Turns Up Civil War ID Tag

by: Jessica Riley (Newsletter Editor)

In my capacity as Newsletter Editor for the Western Michigan Genealogical Society my main job is to collect information and create newsletters for our membership. I am also employed by the Grand Rapids Historical Society and one of my tasks is to monitor and answer email for the Society. A few months ago, an email came in from John Owens from Falling Waters, West Virginia. He contacted us about a Civil War ID tag. He had recently gone metal detecting and found the Civil War ID tag of a gentleman that is buried in a cemetery in Grand Rapids. The name of the soldier on the tag is Serg E.C. Warner, Company C, 5th regiment Vermont Volunteers, Milton, Vermont. I have already shared this story in the March Newsletter of the Grand Rapids Historical Society and I thought it would be interesting for the WMGS membership as well.



**In John's own words:** "I think the preservation of history from further deterioration is a fascinating hobby. I live in an area that is rich in history. I started finding artifacts in the area with a metal detector in 1997. I live 15 minutes from the battle of Antietam, 45 minutes from Gettysburg and troops we're deployed and camped all through the area, before and after battles. What makes this find so interesting is that I have hunted this field for many years and found some civil war dropped bullets here and there. When I found this, I first thought it was a coin, then as I wiped some dirt off, I saw an eagle, and the hole punched through the top.

I did not see the soldier's name on it until I brought it home later that day. I like posting finds on Facebook and YouTube for people to see. The monetary value of an artifact does not motivate me, rather the historical value does. Every find tells a story. This find has the best story of any artifact I have found, as it puts this soldier in a conflict that shaped our country in this exact spot, and it would thrill me to present it, to a direct descendant."

## **ABOUT Edward C. Warner, CO C, 5th Vermont Infantry, CO F, 5th Vermont Infantry**

John also included a link in his email to a website called *Faded Footsteps* where the lives of veterans are documented to remember their service and to honor them. John found information about Edward Warner at this site. We learned that he was born in Vermont, his father was Thomas Warner and his mother was unknown. In the 1870 Federal Census, he is 31 years old and his birthplace is listed as Vermont. His wife was named Mary Warner and they had the following children: Nettie, Cora, and Mark. Edward was from Milton, Vermont. He enlisted on 8/19/1861 as a Sergeant. On 9/16/1861 he mustered into "C" Co. VT 5th Infantry. He re-enlisted on 12/15/1863. He was mustered out in June of 1865 at Munson's Hill, VA.

**(According to John)** "The 5th reg was in the area of Funkstown, Md a few days after Gettysburg. The Confederates retreated through this area, and they had a battle with Union troops called the Battle of Funkstown. This ID tag was found on the outskirts of the battle in a cut down cornfield. I believe this was dropped by Edward C. Warner sometime between July 10th and July 13th, 1863, most likely in some heavy rains. This is what held the Confederate troops from crossing the Potomac River at Williamsport, was the flooded Potomac. They entrenched for several days in different areas before crossing, as the river went down. Several small battles happened before they crossed. Funkstown was one of them."

**Continued on page 5**



## Continued from page 4

Also noteworthy, he was promoted to 1st Sergeant on 9/1/1864 and then to 1st Lieutenant on 11/10/1864

I did a little further research on Ancestry.com and found out some more about Warner. I saw a copy of his death certificate and his mother's name is listed as Anna O'Hara of Ireland and his father is listed as being from Vermont. Earlier records stated his mother as unknown. It is interesting that in a person's life their vital records can contain conflicting information. In 1898, it looks like he is in a Home for Disabled Soldiers in Milwaukee, WI. According to a record I read regarding his military history and his time in the home in Milwaukee, it stated that he had been living in Big Rapids in 1892 and was a widower. The next bit of information that we have about him is his death date. He died shortly before his 90th birthday in August of 1927 in a Michigan Soldiers Home Hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is buried in the Grand Rapids Veterans Home Cemetery.

I don't think that he had family in Grand Rapids but I can't state this for sure. As John mentioned previously, it would be great to be able to get this ID tag to a descendant. Please email the Western Michigan Genealogical Society at [newsletter@wmgs.com](mailto:newsletter@wmgs.com) if any of our readers know anything about this Civil War soldier who died in our city.



## Share your story with the Grand Rapids Public Library



The Grand Rapids Public Library is asking West Michigan residents to share their personal COVID-19 stories. These stories will be preserved in the library's archival collections to be used by future researchers to understand the local impact of the pandemic. Stories can be submitted at [www.grpl.org/covid-19-stories/](http://www.grpl.org/covid-19-stories/)

The COVID-19 pandemic is something that most people have not experienced in their lifetime. While there are many news reports, the library would like to capture personal stories about what is happening in our community to help create a shared memory of this time. Submitted stories will become a part of the Grand Rapids Public Library's permanent archival collections and will give scholars, historians and medical researchers a record to study in the future.

Anyone is welcome to participate by simply filling out the form on the website. Most of the questions are optional, and people can answer what they are comfortable with. Participants can also share images, audio or video. "We usually think of our history as something in the past, but right now it's clear that we're living through a historic moment," remarked Julie Tabberer, GRHSC manager. "Sharing our own stories can help us process some of the rapidly changing emotions we're feeling. Hearing about other people's experiences is powerful. I hope it builds empathy in our community and encourages us to provide real, tangible support to our neighbors."

*To learn more about the project, visit [www.grpl.org/covid-19-stories](http://www.grpl.org/covid-19-stories) or contact the library at [stories@grpl.org](mailto:stories@grpl.org) or 616-988-5492.*



## The Midland County History Museums Need Your Help to Save Their Buildings and Collections



The following letter was sent out to members of the Historical Society of Michigan and to friends of history. The flooding in Midland caused damage to historical organizations.

Dear HSM Members and Friends,

Following nearly five inches of rain in a 48-hour period, two dams on the Tittabawassee River failed on May 19, 2020, resulting in catastrophic flooding in Midland County that devastated large areas in Midland, Sanford, and other areas. **This included devastating flooding in two of our member historical organizations in the area: the Midland County Historical Society museums and the Sanford Centennial Museum complex.** Both of these entities have been longtime member organizations of the Historical Society of Michigan and are in dire need.

**We are raising funds** for the Midland County Historical Society and the Sanford Centennial Museum that may have been significantly affected **to provide relief for the devastated portions of their historical collections and property.**

**The Sanford museum is a volunteer-run organization and is in desperate need of help and donations** to save their collections and research facilities. Nearly a dozen of the buildings that make up the Sanford Centennial Museum complex were deeply affected and suffered major damage. The museum is very near the dam which failed in that community.



**The Midland County Historical Society also suffered greatly in this disaster.** "The Doan History Center, where most of the Midland County Historical Society archives are stored, took in an estimated 24 inches of water throughout the facility," noted Jake Huss, the society's historical programs and exhibitions manager.

**Please consider helping these entities today.** Donations received through a GoFundMe campaign will go directly toward the preservation and restoration of damaged property and salvageable artifacts and collections, such as the materials pictured here. The Historical Society of Michigan will withdraw the funds from the campaign and convey them to the Midland County historical organizations that have been most affected by this flood.



Thank you for your support.

Larry J. Wagenaar  
Executive Director and CEO  
Historical Society of Michigan

**To donate via GoFundMe go to:  
[www.gofundme.com](http://www.gofundme.com) and search for  
"Midland County History Museums  
Flood Relief"**

## 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.

### **WMGS WRITERS GROUP IS NOT MEETING OVER THE SUMMER MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW ABOUT FALL PLANS**

#### **PLANNING ON ATTENDING?**

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](mailto: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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