



WMGS Newsletter WINTER 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, November 7, 2020, 1:30 p.m.

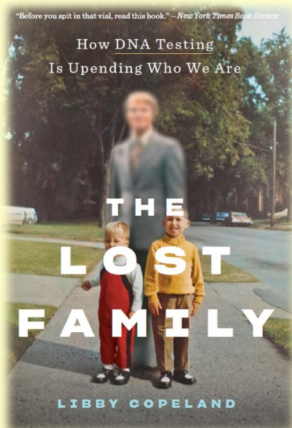
Virtual presentation via Zoom Webinar

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

Presenter: Libby Copeland

The Cultural Phenomenon of Home DNA Testing

The presentation will explore the extraordinary cultural phenomenon of home DNA testing, which is redefining family history. It will draw on



Libby Copeland's years of research for her new book *The Lost Family: How DNA Testing is Upending Who We Are* (Abrams, 2020), which *The Wall Street Journal* calls "a fascinating account of lives dramatically affected by genetic sleuthing." With more than 35 million people having been tested, a tipping point has been reached. Virtually all Americans are affected whether they have been tested or not, and millions have been impacted by significant revelations in their immediate families.



Libby Copeland is an award-winning journalist who has written for the *Washington Post*, *New York* magazine, the *New York Times*, the *Atlantic*, and many other publications. She specializes in the intersection of science and culture. Copeland was a reporter and editor at the *Post* for eleven years, has been a media fellow and guest lecturer, and has made numerous appearances on television and radio.

The Lost Family explores the rapidly evolving phenomenon of home DNA testing, its implications for how we think about family and ourselves, and its ramifications for American culture broadly. *The Wall Street Journal* says it's "a fascinating account of lives dramatically affected by genetic sleuthing." *The New York Times* writes, "Before You Spit in That Vial, Read This Book." *The Washington Post* says *The Lost Family* "reads like an Agatha Christie mystery" and "wrestles with some of the biggest questions in life: Who are we? What is family? Are we defined by nature, nurture or both?"

Opportunity!

We are looking for a new editor for *Michigana* our quarterly magazine. If you are interested please email our president, Mindy Koole, at president@wmgs.org or our current editor, Julie DeVisser at Michigana@wmgs.org

**Saturday, December 6, 2020, 1:30 p.m.
Virtual presentation via Zoom Webinar
(find link on website closer to meeting)**

Presenter: Don Bryant

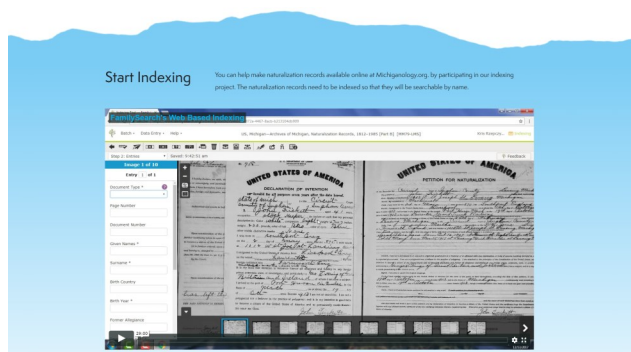
House Histories: Uncovering Family Stories in West Michigan:

What is more satisfying than finding surprises in your genealogy research?

Family historians already possess the basic research skills to discover and add local history and context to their family history narrative. A rewarding place to start is a house history. This presentation will demonstrate some real examples from past decades and hopefully inspire you to add local history to your research tool kit. African American, Polish, Dutch will be covered along with several well-known institutions. Some stories are tragic and others offer pure inspiration.

Don Bryant is a past-president of the Western Michigan Genealogical Society. Besides working on his family history, Don has presented at History Detectives in past years. Don will share important resources, strategies, and motivation for conducting effective house history searches.

Michigan Naturalization Records Indexing



Per the Michigan Genealogical Council website (www.mimgc.org)....

There is a partnership between the Archives of Michigan, FamilySearch Indexing, Michigan Genealogical Council, and genealogists everywhere interested in their Michigan ancestors! For additional information on this project and tutorials on how to become an indexer for Family Search, visit <https://michiganology.org/naturalization/>.

Michiganology.org is the digital platform for the Archives of Michigan.

To visit this indexing project immediately, visit FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/indexing/projects#/list-view?query=Michigan>) and click on the "Start Indexing" button. You must be logged into your free FamilySearch account to participate in indexing these important records.

**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

facebook

RootsTech

Discover Your Story at RootsTech Connect

Join the world's largest family celebration for free to unlock your family's history and learn how to preserve the stories of your life.

25—27 February, 2021

To register: www.rootstech.org

Introducing RootsTech Connect: A Free Online Conference Experience: For the first time ever, the world's largest family celebration event will be entirely virtual and completely free. Get ready to celebrate shared connections with people from around the world. Connect with friends, your family, your past, and your heritage and homelands—all from the comfort of your home and in your browser.

Virtual Connections at Your Fingertips: RootsTech Connect is different than any other virtual event—no boring speakers or falling asleep at your computer screen. Rather, enjoy dozens of inspirational learning sessions, uplifting messages from celebrity keynote speakers, and hands-on activities to help you celebrate your heritage all year long.

At this online conference, there will be celebrity keynote speakers, classes from speakers around the world, a virtual marketplace, cultural activities, chances to connect with family from anywhere, and access to content year-round.

There's something for everyone at this conference, register for free today! Regardless of age or experience, this virtual conference has something for everyone interested in discovering family and preserving stories.



SAVE THE DATES

Please note the following dates for our future presentations. For the time being, our presentations will be via Zoom and more details will be available later.

January 2, 2021

February 6, 2021

March 6, 2021

April 3, 2021

May 1, 2021

June 12, 2021

Murphy's Law of Genealogy

Just before the entry you need, the records will end. After a blank page, they begin again two months after the date you needed.



Twisted Twigs on Gnarled Branches

2021 WMGS Writing Contest

~ Scandals in the Family ~

Within every family there is likely a story of scandal, whether having documented proof or not. As genealogists, we want to scour the archives, online databases, and newspapers to find the evidence of these (sometimes) tall tales. Tell us your stories of scandals in the family - no matter how big or little.

Write it up and enter the 2021 WMGS Writing Contest.

The Western Michigan Genealogical Society 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 2021 WMGS 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 for the WMGS Writing Contest

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.

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. Endnotes, documentation, photograph descriptions, and chart information will not be included in the word count.

Formats: Entry must be completed in Microsoft Word. ****IMPORTANT:** If you include your photographs, charts, or graphics within your document, please also send them **separately** as 300 dpi tiff or jpeg files.

Identification: Include the story title, your name, mailing address, phone number, and approximate word count in the body of the email. This information will only be used to identify and notify the winners. Other than the title, this information does not need to be included within your entry.

Deadline: Entries will be accepted between January 1 & March 31, 2021.

Email your submission to michigana@wmgs.org with

“WMGS Writing Contest 2021” written in the Subject Line.

Notification: Contest winners will be announced at a WMGS Membership Meeting before the end of 2021, on the WMGS Facebook Page, and in the next available issue of *Michigana*. Each entrant will also receive an email with the results of the WMGS Writing Contest at the time of the announcement. 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 & digital rights and are aware that submission will be edited by *Michigana* staff prior to printing; copyright is retained by the author. Entries may not have been previously published. All prizes may not be awarded.

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

For further information or any questions about the Writing

Contest, please contact the *Michigana* Editor at michigana@wmgs.org.

Want help or feedback?

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: wmgs.org

ONLINE GENEALOGY CLASSES

With many of us still at home due to the pandemic we are not able to go out and research. This time, while difficult, is also an opportunity to take advantage of different ways of learning and discovering more about genealogy. With the large number and varied nature of online genealogy classes, there really is something for everyone.

Boston University offers two different programs, both online. More information can be found online at www.genealogyonline.bu.edu/. These classes cost money and there are pricing options. If you are considering taking your genealogy hobby to the next level, then these classes might be a good choice. Choose from two unique programs that combine the convenience of online learning with expert instruction to help you gain skills to set you apart in this growing field. Work with noted Boston University instructors, including Certified Genealogists and members of the American Society of Genealogists.

Both online programs offer:

- Flexible online format that lets you learn from any location
- Supportive learning environment
- Opportunities to meet peers and expand your professional network



Genealogical Principles Course

Length of course: 7 weeks

Next session begins: January 19, 2021

Ideal for enthusiasts seeking to hone their research skills, this course is also an excellent first step toward our certificate program.

- Define terms and understand best practices
- Use public records and optimize searches
- Follow the Genealogical Proof Standard

Certificate in Genealogical Research

Length of course: 15 weeks

Next session begins: January 19, 2021

Whether you are an experienced amateur, a budding professional, or an expert working toward BCG® certification, this rigorous program will help you take your genealogical work to the next level.

- Increase the professionalism of your research
- Get information and records faster
- Deliver more accurate findings

FREE ONLINE GENEALOGY CLASSES

⇒ **FamilySearch Learning Center:** www.familysearch.org/help/helpcenter/learning-center

FamilySearch is a free website and the learning center found at the above address offers a number of interesting and free tutorials from where to start to reading Dutch records to the research process and more

⇒ **YouTube:** www.youtube.com

There are tons of videos on YouTube, all free. Go to YouTube and type in "genealogy tutorials" or something similar and there will be hundreds of results.

⇒ **Genealogy.com:** www.genealogy.com

After going to the website, select, "Genealogy Classes" and you will be taken to a page with many different topics and each one has a lesson and assignments you can do on your own

⇒ **Ancestry Academy:** www.ancestryacademy.com

Although Ancestry does have a monthly fee, if you have a subscription, then you can access many different videos by professional genealogists on a variety of genealogy topics.

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**

**Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council
and the Grand Rapids Public Library**

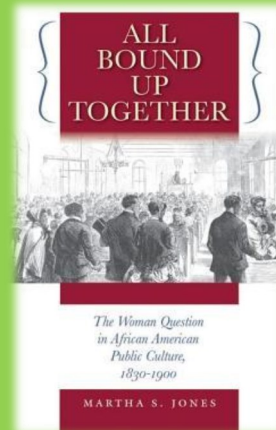
November 18, 2020

7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

All Bound Up Together by Martha S. Jones -- -- Virtual Book Discussion Series,

Free & open to the public. RSVP for this ZOOM event.

<https://www.ggrwhc.org/event/reading-into-suffrage-history-3/>



The Grand Rapids Public Library is open!

GRPL buildings are open to the public with limited hours and services including:

- Library account assistance
- Public computers and WiFi
- Reference questions
- Holds pickup
- Free printing, copying, and faxing (all locations)
- Material browsing in the stacks at library branches (excludes Main Library)

Patrons may begin placing material on hold for pick up at *any* GRPL location beginning October 12.

When visiting our buildings, you may notice

- Visitors are required to wear a mask that covers their mouth and nose when visiting GRPL. If you don't have a mask, we will provide one for you.
 - Patrons visits are limited to 30 minutes. A limited number of patrons will be allowed in the building. Please social distance during your visit.
 - Computers sessions are limited to 30 minutes. Staff are happy to help you browse and trouble-shoot any tech problems from a safe distance.
 - Children's play areas, meeting rooms, and study spaces are currently closed and much of our seating has been removed.
 - GRPL's Local History and Special Collections department will be available by appointment only.
 - There are installed plexiglass shields at each of the service desks and self-check kiosks.
 - All building locations and library materials will be sanitized regularly by trained library staff.
- Contactless holds pick-up service, GRPL To Go, will still be available at select library locations .



Questions? Contact the library at 616.544.5400 or email custserv@grpl.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.

*****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



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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