



WMGS Newsletter SPRING 2023



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, March 4, 1:30 p.m.

Presenter: Matthew Ellis

**Topic: Using the Archives for
Genealogical Research**

The City Archives and Research Center stores all the City's government records. The City Archives staff ensure that the documents, dating back to 1838, are preserved and accessible to citizens and employees to research. Much of the City Archive's records deal with property, so whether you are looking for a family home or want to know more about how ancestors utilized their property, the City Archives and Records Center can help. Genealogical researchers can also access many resources at the City Archives, such as cemetery records, tax records, mugshot and fingerprint cards, and many other documents.



Matthew A. Ellis is an archivist for the City of Grand Rapids and a researcher of history, data, and public policymaking. His focal area of interest is how information is accessed and used by decision-makers.

Other subject areas of interest are data privacy, misinformation, and open data. He has published articles on local history for the Grand Rapids Historical Society and co-hosts a local history podcast with the Grand Rapids Office of Communications.

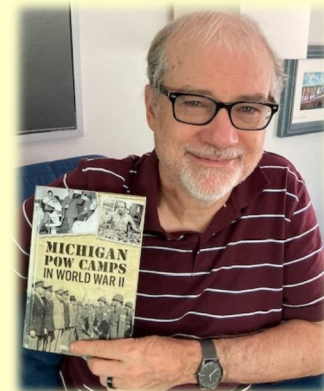
Saturday, April 1, 1:30 p.m.

Presenter: Gregory Sumner

Topic: Michigan WWII POW Camps

Dr. Sumner will speak about his most recent publication, *MICHIGAN WWII POW CAMPS* (History Press, 2018), which tells the largely-forgotten story of the 6,000 German and Italian prisoners who lived and worked in the state's orchards, sugar beet fields and forests of the U.P. between 1943 and 1946. The young men were treated well, they behaved themselves, with a few exceptions, and after being sent back home after the war many eventually came back to become U.S. citizens.

Gregory Sumner, JD, PhD, is Professor and Co-Chair of the Department of History at the University of Detroit Mercy. He is a graduate of Indiana University, Bloomington, and the University of Michigan Law School. His books include: *Unstuck In Time: A Journey Through Kurt Vonnegut's Life And Novels* (2011) and *Detroit In WWII* (2015)



Saturday, May 6, 1:30 p.m.

Presenter: Matt Pacer, Library of Michigan

Topic: Library of Congress Digital Collections for Michigan Researchers



The Library of Congress contains a treasure trove of family history information for Michigan researchers, including a vast array of online resources. Learn how to navigate these digital collections as well as other key research strategies to effectively use our nation's library while uncovering your family's story.

The presentation covers Michigan records that are online through the Library of Congress website. No one has to go physically to Washington D.C. in order to view the material. Matt will show how to navigate the Library of Congress website in order to find these collections and highlight collections that are useful for family history researchers.

Matt holds a MLIS from Wayne State University and an MA in History from Kansas State University. He has been working in libraries since college at Wright State University. Currently, he is a reference librarian at the Library of Michigan. He coordinates both the Michigan Collection and the Martha W. Griffiths Rare Book Room. Additionally, he is the donation coordinator for the Library of Michigan. When not presenting or appearing at a conference, you will probably find him at the reference desk or wandering about the library working on other tasks such as answering questions, moving shelves, and other duties as assigned.

Education Classes

Mini-Class

Saturday, May 6

12:00 p.m.—1:15 p.m.

10 Worse Genealogy Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Beginning genealogists and experienced researchers alike make these common genealogy mistakes. Learn what the mistakes are and how to avoid them.

Instructor: Linda Wells

Location: VanderVeen Room, 4th Floor GRPL

Two Hour Class

Wednesday, May 17

6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.

Burial Records

- ♦ **Online Resources**
- ♦ **Types of Records**
- ♦ **Where to Find Information**
- ♦ **Type of Cemeteries**
- ♦ **Types of Tombstones**

Instructor: Linda Wells

Location: VanderVeen Room, 4th Floor GRPL

**Have suggestions for a speaker?
Let us know! Send an e-mail
to our vice-president,
Marcia Shears at
u08554@hotmail.com**

**Please include the name of the
speaker and a contact email for
them. Thank you!**

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
Facebook private group**

facebook



Grand Rapids PUBLIC LIBRARY

Genealogy Lock-In

Friday, March 10, 6:00 p.m. – 10:00 pm
Main Library—111 Library Street NE
Grand Rapids History Center, 4th Floor

Come to the Grand Rapids History Center for an after-hours program designed for genealogists. Learn how to use library resources to explore your family history and take advantage of free copying and printing during the event. Volunteers from the Western Michigan Genealogical Society will be on hand to assist attendees.

This event is presented by the Grand Rapids History Center and the Western Michigan Genealogical Society

Registration Required - www.grpl.org/register

DNA Interest Group

The DNA Interest Group (known as "DIG") meets on the third Thursday of the month at the Main Branch of the Grand Rapids Public Library in the Vander Veen room on the 4th floor. Our next three meetings are as follows:

Thursday, March 16

"DNA Basics and Ancestry Matches"
by Jessica Riley (rescheduled from February)

Thursday, April 20

Thursday, May 18

In April and May, we are planning on reviewing GEDMatch and the Leeds Method. Watch for updates on the WMGS Facebook page

We meet at 6:30 p.m. with the first half and hour being a presentation, video, speaker, etc. and from 7:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m. we help each other with DNA questions. Check our Facebook group for updates.



Local History Podcast

Did you know that we have a local history podcast in Grand Rapids? If you are curious about the history of Grand Rapids, check this podcast out. The hosts share things they have learned about local people, (mostly) interesting things, and uncover small stories that, together, shaped our city. Feel free to send an email to the hosts at: grandrapidslocalhistorypodcast@gmail.com.



This podcast can be found on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Pod Bean, Stitcher and more.

Here is a link on Stitcher:

<https://www.stitcher.com/show/the-grandrapidslocalhistory-podcast>

WMGS Memories and Recollections

Our Board Historian, Janet Idema, is working on a project documenting memories and recollections of the Western Michigan Genealogical Society.

She is seeking solicitations from members to share their personal stories about WMGS. What do you remember as a favorite event, your volunteering activities, etc?

This is a great opportunity to share our own experiences during your membership years, hopefully to inspire other members to be even more active in the future. She needs more stories for this project. Please take a look back at your time with WMGS and send your story or short memory to Janet Idema at wmgs70@wmgs.org by **April 30, 2023**. Or if you prefer, contact Janet and she can visit you and record your memories.



Western Michigan Genealogical Society's

Bus Trip to Ft. Wayne

Allen County Public Library

Thursday–Friday --- April 27 – 28, 2023

\$170=Single, \$132=Double, \$120=Triple, \$114=Quad

Transportation by **Great Lakes Motor Coach** No smoking on coach or in motel

Day #1	7:00 a.m.	Leave Cascade Meijer . I-96 at 28 th Street, 5531 28 th Street S.E., Cascade MI, meet under the "K" aisle marker
April 27 th	7:30 a.m.	Leave Outreach Christian Church , Lake Odessa, I-96 exit #64, 7831 N Jordan Lake Road, Lake Odessa, MI, ¼ mile south of I-96
Thursday	8:30 a.m.	Leave Marshall Park & Ride , I-69 exit #36, 15720 Michigan Avenue E. Marshall, MI
	10:00 a.m.	Rest Area Stop
	11:00 a.m.	Arrive Allen County Public Library (260) 421-1200
	9:00 p.m.	Bus transfer to FairBridge Inn and Suites , 5707 Challenger Parkway, Fort Wayne, IN 46818 (260) 489-8888
Day #2	7:00 a.m.	Wakeup Call
	8:30 a.m.	Load luggage, Transportation to Library
April 28 th	6:00 p.m.	Depart Allen County Library
	6:45 p.m.	Stop at Auburn, IN (quick meal on your own at Culvers or Arby's)
Friday	9:00 p.m.	Drop off Marshall, Park & Ride
	9:30 p.m.	Drop off Lake Odessa church parking lot
	10:00 p.m.	Drop off Cascade Meijer

Trip includes: roundtrip motor coach transportation, lodging at **FairBridge Inn and Suites** and library transfer.

- The motel does not have an elevator. Please indicate floor requirement.
- We need 35 bus riders by March 20 to make this trip a reality.
- A \$50 deposit guarantees your place on the bus if received by March 15th
- Balance to be paid by April 10, a \$10 late fee charged if paid after April 10.
- Cancellations will receive a refund with replacement only.
- Please make checks payable to **WMGS**.
- Please contact Sue Irvine with any questions. 616-889-0042 or sjirv@yahoo.com

Send registration and payment to **Sue Irvine, 4215 Northgate NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525**

Return Form With Deposit

\$170=Single \$132=Double (per person) \$120=Triple (per person) 114=Quad (per person)

Ft. Wayne Trip Thursday - Friday April 27-28, 2023 All rooms non-smoking

Is 1st floor a requirement? Yes ___ No ___ (help is provided for carrying luggage but no elevator)



NAME: _____ Phone # (____) _____ Cell # (____) _____

ADDRESS: _____ City, State, Zip _____

Pickup Point: Circle one: **Meijer 28th/I96** - **Lake Odessa** - **Marshall**

Roommates: _____

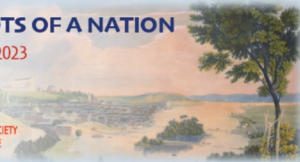
Confirmation and other trip information will be confirmed by email: _____



DEEP ROOTS OF A NATION

31 MAY–3 JUNE 2023
RICHMOND, VA

NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
FAMILY HISTORY CONFERENCE



**Join NGS at the Greater Richmond
Convention Center or Online at Home**

May 31—June 3

The National Genealogical Society 2023 Family History Conference gives genealogists and family historians of all levels the insights necessary to take their research and writing to new heights and make exciting new discoveries.

Learn the latest from the best speakers in the genealogy community. Discover what genealogy companies are bringing to market. Gain insights from genealogy societies and organizations throughout the United States. Attend your choice of more than 110 lectures and special luncheons. Have fun at the SLAM! Idea Showcase reception and Expo Hall opening. Celebrate Virginia's deep roots with a special Friday evening event sponsored by the Virginia Genealogical Society.

Designed for family history researchers at all levels — beginner, intermediate, and advanced — the conference lectures feature:

- records and repositories in Virginia and neighboring states
- resources and techniques for researching African American, Indigenous Peoples, Jewish, and other ethnic groups
- local and federal government records including military, tax, and land records
- the use of DNA to help determine relationships
- methods to analyze and evaluate evidence
- and much more.

**Keep checking this website for
updates and new information as it
becomes available.**

<https://conference.ngsgenealogy.org/>



INTERNATIONAL GERMAN Genealogy Partnership

Fort Wayne, Indiana, June 9—11

The International German Genealogy Partnership 2023 conference (#IGGC2023) is one of the few occasions you will hear from and connect with people focused on German genealogy. Attendees will enjoy a weekend of programs and activities highlighting the diversity of the German-speaking genealogy community.

This amazing conference will offer **more than 100 presentations** and **more than 25 Connection sessions** — the most presentations we have ever offered and the largest number of German genealogy presentations at a genealogical conference in the U.S.

The conference will be held **in-person**. But there is also a robust **virtual option**, with access to programming in real-time. And a USB drive is available for purchase, allowing all attendees to watch the **recorded presentations**.

Look for presentations from speakers in Switzerland, Austria, Ireland, Australia, Brazil, Serbia, and Germany. They do not usually present in the U.S. But you can hear from them at the IGGP conference! And, of course, U.S. experts in the field of German genealogy will speak as well.

Here are a few examples of those who will be **in-person** at the conference:

- **Dr. Thomas Aigner** from Austria, the man behind the website Matricula
- **Viktor Pordzik**, archivist at the Bremen State Archives and vice-chair of Die MAUS, the Bremen genealogical society
- **Andrea Bentschneider**, professional genealogist from Hamburg, with presentations on Mecklenburg and how to research in German archives
- **Dr. Michael Lacopo** with a brand new presentation about WWII SS records
- **Antje Petty** of the Max Kade Institute on hidden resources in German language newspapers
- **Katie Schober** will lead "Learn to Read Vital Records: A Workshop Experience" — a first for the IGGP conference

For more information or to register:

<https://iggp.org/cpage.php?pt=179>

2023 WMGS Writing Contest

~ *My Favorite Ancestor* ~

Some genealogists have tiny trees; others have thousands of relatives. No matter the size of your tree, at least one of those ancestors is likely to be your favorite. Maybe it's a relative who was an adventurous soul! It could be the very first immigrant in your family. Maybe it was a good cook, a business person, a pioneer, a war hero, an artist or a musician. It could be someone you knew or from centuries past. For the 2023 Writing Contest, climb your family trees and pick an ancestor, grandparent or earlier, who you like well enough to call your favorite ancestor.

How to Enter the 2023 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. In order to encourage quality in research, please cite your sources by using endnotes. Attach copies of documentation, family group sheets, and pedigree charts when appropriate. Endnotes, documentation, photograph captions, and chart information will not be included in the word count.

Formats: Please submit stories as a Microsoft Word attachment. ****IMPORTANT:** Please send digitized photographs, charts, maps or graphics as separate files as 300 dpi tif or jpeg files.**

Identification: Include the story title, your name, mailing address, phone number and email address in the header of the first page and in the body of the email. This information will only be used to identify and notify the winners.

Entries will be accepted between January 1 through March 31, 2023. Email your submission to michigana@wmgs.org with "WMGS Writing Contest 2023" written in the Subject Line

Notification: Contest winners will be announced before the end of 2023, on the WMGS Facebook Page, in *Michigana* and at a WMGS membership meeting. 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 and 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.

Looking for help, feedback, encouragement? The WMGS Writers Group is great for positive camaraderie along the writing journey. Check the WMGS website at www.wmgs.org for the latest info on whether the group is meeting online or in person.

WMGS WRITERS GROUP

We meet on the third Tuesday of the month, in person and on Zoom. In person, the location is Trinity United Methodist Church, 1100 Lake Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, 49506, one block west of Fuller. Park in the first lot on Lake Drive and come in the door on that side of the church.

We meet in the Fireside Room, immediately left as you come in the door. Contact Jill Pearson Reider at JillReider1@gmail.com or 307-699-0812 if you have any questions.

Next meeting topics:

March 21 - "My Favorite Ancestor" - the same as the writing contest. Bring in your contest submission or your work in progress for help or comments

April 18 - Any ancestor born or married or died in April

May 16 - How has this pandemic or one in the past effected you or your ancestors? How did their lives or yours change?

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

Option of receiving the WMGS newsletter by regular mail _____ or via email: _____

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

**NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE
PAID
GRAND RAPIDS, MI
PERMIT No. 209**

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.

WMGS Contact Information

President—Mindy Koole
president@wmgs.org

VP—Marcia Shears
u08554@hotmail.com

Secretary—Lisa Christensen
lisachristensen49301@gmail.com

Treasurer—Mark Timmer
mark.timmer@centurytel.net

Michigana Editor
michigana@wmgs.org

Newsletter Editor—Jessica Riley
jessica629@hotmail.com

Publicity Chair—Jessica Riley
jessica629@hotmail.com

Past President—Don Bryant
webmaster@wmgs.org