



WMGS Newsletter

Winter 2014-15



WMGS Program Schedule

These programs are held in the Grand Rapids Public Library in the Ryerson Auditorium, beginning at **1:30 pm** with WMGS business, followed by the speaker. Free admission — everyone is welcome! Parking is free at the Library on Saturdays. Remember to have your parking ticket validated in the Library's main lobby. Refreshments are served after the presentation. Books and supplies may be purchased from the Sales Table before and after the program.

6 December 2014, Saturday
DNA Testing for Genealogists
A Visual Introduction to the Basics
and Beyond

Speaker: Richard "Dick" Hill

Using photos and screen shots from various DNA accounts, Richard will explain and demonstrate the leading tests. You will see how these tests report genetic matches, relationships, family trees, geographic origins and ethnic ancestry.

Richard Hill's use of genetic genealogy tests in adoption search has been featured on the front pages of several newspapers. His first book, "Finding Family: My Search for Roots and the Secrets in My DNA," is an award-winning memoir recounting his personal experience as an adoptee searching for his biological family. He recently published his "Guide to DNA Testing," a Kindle Short Read on Amazon.com. This 99-cent eBook provides a concise, easy-to-understand overview of genetic genealogy.

3 January 2015, Saturday
Filling in the Blanks

Speaker: Lori L. Piercefield Fox

We ask Mom and Dad about their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. But are names, dates, places the entire legacy we want to leave? How and where can we find the information to expand this story? What was happening in the township, county, state, or world at those dates? Let's explore ways to answer these questions.

Lori L. Piercefield Fox, an ex-secondary business teacher, has been doing genealogy for over 30 years and is the member of several genealogical societies inside and outside of Michigan. Very active with Ionia County Genealogical Society since its formation in 1997, she is also a member of the Genealogical Speakers Guild and the Association of Professional Genealogists. She enjoys sharing her excitement and knowledge about genealogy.

7 February 2015, Saturday
Exploring familysearch.org

Look for more information on wmgs.org

WMGS Mini Classes

Free Mini Classes are held in the Grand Rapids Public Library from 12:00 to 1:00pm in the Adult Computer Center.

6 December, 2014 Saturday
Beyond the Death Record
Instructor: Linda Guth

Are you an ancestor collector? Are your family tree branches bare? Do you just collect names and dates? Or do you actually put "meat on your ancestor's bones"? Go beyond the vital records and learn who they were as people!

Check wmgs.org
for updated information about our
monthly meetings and mini classes.
See you at the library!

Allen County Public Library
Spring 2015 Bus Trip
22-23 April 2015, Wed-Thur

Make your plans and save the date for our next bus trip to the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne - a great place to do genealogical research. The trip includes roundtrip motor coach transportation, lodging, continental breakfast, and delivery to the library. More information will be available on our website in the near future.

~ December Sales Table Discount ~

The WMGS Sales Table is offering a December discount on your entire purchase at the December meeting!

Members: 20% discount
Nonmembers: 10%

Only available at December 6, 2014 meeting.

Also check out the bargains we have on several titles - the discount will be applied to those also!

Other Upcoming Genealogy Meetings

19 November, Wed. 7:30pm
Michigan Boys at Andersonville
 Speaker: John Urschel
 G.R. Civil War Round Table
 DeWitt Student Center
 Kuyper College
 3333 E. Beltline NE

Andersonville, the remotely located Confederate prison, was originally designed to house 10,000 prisoners. But the population swelled to over three times that and the men suffered from drastic sanitation, health, and mortality issues. John Urschel will share the stories of Michigan men who were locked within its walls. Check www.grcwr.com for details.

10 January 2015, Sat. 10:30am
Exploring Your English Roots
<http://dsgr.org>

Explorer's Conference Room,
 Detroit Public Library, 5201
 Woodward Ave., Detroit, Michigan
 Kathryn Lake Hogan, professional genealogist and author, will conduct a session for family historians who are beginning to explore their roots in England. Census records of England and Wales, birth, marriage and death registrations, and parish registers will be introduced and discussed.

11-14 February 2015, Wed-Sat
FGS 2015 Conference
 Salt Lake City, UT
<https://www.fgsconference.org/>

Registration is now open for the 2015 FGS Conference. FGS and RootsTech will share the expo hall, general sessions, activities, and more while each conference offers their own program of sessions. Join genealogists from across the United States for the largest family history event ever held in North America.

12 February 2015, Thurs. 7:00pm
The Exciting Early History of African American Women's Clubs in Grand Rapids

Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, 303 Pearl St NW
 presented by the
 Women's History Council

In 1907 five African American women's groups hosted the convention of the State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs in Grand Rapids. Delegates from all over Michigan were welcomed by the mayor and treated to trolley tours and receptions. Who were these enterprising women representing a tiny percentage of the city's population?

21 February, Sat 10:30am
Lies and Sins of Omission
<http://dsgr.org>

Explorer's Conference Room,
 Detroit Public Library, 5201
 Woodward Ave., Detroit, Michigan
 Liz Kelly Kerstens, Certified Genealogist, managing editor of NGS Magazine, and executive director at the Plymouth (Michigan) Historical Museum, will use case studies to illuminate ancestors' lies and sins of omission that become potholes along our research journey.

9-11 April 2015
 Ohio Genealogical Society
 Conference
<http://www.ogs.org/conference2015/index.php>

25 April 2015
 Indiana Genealogical Society
 Conference
<http://www.indgensoc.org/conference.php>

**I will not do genealogy.
 I will not do genealogy.
 I will not do genealogy.
 I will not do genealogy.
Who am I kidding??**

The Woman's Committee of World War I Card Collection in Process More Cards Currently Being Added ➡ You can help!

The Women's Committee of the Council on National Defense, Grand Rapids Unit Records had over 23,000 cards containing data about women who registered for home front service during World War I. The collection provides insight into the lives of women during the early 20th century. The cards provide biographical information such as name, age, address, as well as education levels, skills, and employment status. They provide valuable information for researchers of women's history and genealogy.

At the end of April in 1918 Woman's Committee volunteers in Grand Rapids and surrounding areas completed 20,000 registration cards that recorded important personal information and skills of women. Busy registrars at "The Hut" in Campau Square finally closed their books at 10 p.m. on the final

Saturday night after women had stood in long lines to have their information recorded. Today, cards from this 1918 national registration are almost non-existent, and the 23,000 cards in the GR History and Special Collections Department at the Grand Rapids Public Library appear to be very rare. Genealogists, academics, social historians, or those who are just curious to learn about the women of that era in Grand Rapids will find it enormously valuable.

A few volunteers are entering the rest of the information on these cards, but more help would be greatly appreciated. Work can be done whenever the library is open. Check with the staff on the fourth floor of the main library downtown. Training will be provided.

<http://grpl.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p16055coll5>

In case you missed the WMGS fall seminar **Got Ancestors**—in addition to Dick Eastman, Eliphalet Holbrook was a delightful guest from the past.



The October 2014 “Got Ancestors” was a great way to celebrate our 60th anniversary. Check out more pictures at <http://gotancestors.com>



Upcoming WMGS Education Classes

Grand Rapids Public Library, Adult Computer Training Center, lower level from 6:30 - 8:30pm

1 December 2014, Monday 6:30-8:30pm

Researching Catholic Records **Father Dennis Morrow**

Pastor of SS. Peter & Paul Church and Archivist of the Diocese of Grand Rapids, Father Morrow knows where many bones are buried! He is happy to help introduce researchers to the best procedures and etiquette to use to gain access to records which might be of use to them in seeking family information. On the table for presentation, discussion, and lots of entertaining questions will be: parish and institutional sacramental records, cemetery records, where to look, where not to bother looking, why the very item that I'm looking for can't be found, ethnic concerns.

Check wmgs.org and grpl.org for information on the 2015 genealogy education classes.

Common Corners <http://www.commoncorners.com/>

This website is developed to leverage our combined resources, enable a network of communication and assist in discovery of our Common interests in our Corner of the world - West Michigan. It includes information about the following counties: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo and Ottawa counties, with many links to library websites, township & city websites, historical societies, rootsweb links, and a community calendar. Maybe a piece of info you need is just a link or two away.

From the Fall 2014 issue of the Michigan Genealogical Council newsletter

<http://mimgc.org/newsletter/MGCv38n4.pdf>

FamilySearch will soon release a feature called “hinting.” With this tool, the site will automatically search for records that match people in your family tree. When you go to an ancestor’s page, the website will show you what it has found just for that person amongst the vast collections of records. FamilySearch does the searching, and finding, for you. Of course, as always, it is up to the user to confirm whether or not the individual found is really the correct one.

[Farmington Genealogical Society newsletter]

MeL Minute—Genealogy Training in HeritageQuest Tucked away in the MeL eResource HeritageQuest Online (a ProQuest product) is a Learning Center that researchers and library staff alike will find

informative and useful when undertaking genealogy research projects. Over 60 videos at 3 skill levels – Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced – walk researchers through topics such as the process of determining what records to use, how to understand the information that’s found, how to find missing links, and how to utilize special record sets – military, homestead, church records, even tombstones.

[Huron Shores Genealogical Society newsletter]

Paying it forward

FGS Presents Presidential Citation to Henry and Loekie Boersma for their contributions in cemetery preservation and historical research that benefits and is an inspiration the genealogical community.

WMGS Family History Writers' Workshops, third Tuesdays

16 Dec—20 Jan—17 Feb—17 Mar—21 Apr
1:30- 4:45pm

Dominican Center, 2025 Fulton St East

Have you checked out the Writers' Workshops? They are designed to help and support the desire to write about our families with a kind eye and lots of humor. Everyone is welcome!

16 December: Christmas gathering

20 January: Describe a typical family meal during your childhood: who, what, when and where?

17 February: If you could take one last trip - where would you go, what would you do, and who would you go with?

17 March: Are you an optimist or a pessimist? What makes you this way?

21 April: What are the most important books that you have read? How did they change your life?

The workshops are held at the Dominican Center on the corner of East Fulton and Lakeside Drive. Please call Sister Michael Ellen Carling at 616-514-3231 (home) or 616-514-3340 (office) if you are attending for the first time. You may park in the Dominican Center parking lot on Lakeside Drive. Use the lower entrance on the east side of the large portico. Go down the steps or down the cement ramp to enter the building. The receptionist will direct you to the room.

2015 WMGS Writing Contest Time to start writing!!

Your most "famous" or "infamous" ancestor

Check the next page for details. Submissions accepted from January 1 to March 30, 2015.

National Archives Virtual Genealogy Fair

<http://www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-fair>

Although the actual fair is over you can still watch the broadcast and look at the handouts in the comfort of your own home at your time schedule.

Scroll down to the link called "See the Lecture Schedule with Presentations and Handouts." This link lists the topics for each day and has links to the handouts. To view the lectures, click on the YouTube links further down the page.

History Detectives 17 January 2015, Saturday

9 am – 4 pm

Grand Rapids Public Library, Downtown

Grand Rapids Public Library's award-winning History Detectives Day is an All-Day Event. Boxed Lunches will be available to order in advance (\$8.00). Six presentations will be given on various local history topics throughout the day.

- *Why Grand Rapids Chose to Bulldoze Downtown in the Name of Urban Renewal*, by Garret Ellison.
- *The Architecture of Production: Grand Rapids' Furniture Factories*, by Matthew Daley.
- *Pharaohs on the Grand: The Egyptian Revival in Grand Rapids*, by Thomas R. Dilley.
- *Stories from Maple Grove: A History of the Kent County Poor Farm* by Adam Oster.
- *Fannie Boylon: The Legacy of Grand Rapids' First Female Home Designer*, by Marcie Beck.
- *Support Our Schools: Mid-Century Architecture and Rebuilding the Schools in Grand Rapids*, by Melisa Fox and Pamela VanderPloeg.

If you haven't attended History Detectives, here's what you should know. History Detectives features local historians who present their research projects and resources. Sponsors include the Grand Rapids Public Museum, Grand Rapids Historical Society, Grand Rapids Historical Commission, Western Michigan Genealogical Society, Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council, Grand Rapids Public Library, the Kutsche Office of Local History at Grand Valley State University, and the Grand Rapids Civil War Round Table.

Call **616.988.5492** or email: rsvp@grpl.org by 5:00pm on January 14 to reserve your lunch and include your sandwich choice - turkey, ham, or vegetarian. Attendees may choose to bring their own lunch as well. Pop will be available for an additional \$1.00. **See you on January 17!**

Only a genealogist regards a step backwards as progress.

Amazon Smile program

When purchasing from Amazon, a portion of your purchase can be designated for the charity of your choice. Check out the Amazon Smile program and please consider Western Michigan Genealogical Society. Thank you!

2015 WMGS Writing Contest

~ Who was your most “famous” or “infamous” ancestor? ~

Have you stumbled across one or two ancestors who just really intrigue you - because of who they were in the community, or because of something they did, or because they just happened to be in the right place at the right time of a well-known historical event? We would love to hear your story. Write it up and enter the 2015 writing contest!

WMGS has worked for 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 2015 Writing Contest will recognize unpublished excellent genealogical writing by awarding substantial prizes. Prize winning entries and those receiving an “Honorable Mention” will be published in *Michigana*. Like all submissions to *Michigana*, entries will be thoroughly edited before publication.

Additional information about submitting any article to *Michigana* can be found in the latest issue of *Michigana*, or at wmgs.org.

Rules:

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.

Deadline: Entries will be accepted between January 1 and March 30, 2015.

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. Neither documentation nor charts will be included in the word count.

Formats:

Entries by email are preferred, but those that are printed will also be accepted. When emailed, a PDF is preferred; iPages and Word documents will also be accepted. Photographs or digital copies should be in tiff or jpeg files at 300 dpi, sent as separate files.

Email your submission to ruthgen@gmail.com with “Michigana Contest 2015” written in the Subject Line.

If submissions are mailed, please double-space on one side of standard letter-size 8.5” x 11” paper. Put your name and a page number each sheet. Include copies of all photographs and supporting information. Mail to: WMGS, Grand Rapids Public Library, 111 Library St. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503-3268.

Identification: Be sure to include the story title, your name, your mailing address, phone number, and approximate word count. This information will be only used to identify and notify the winners.

Notification: The Judge’s decisions will be announced at the May 2015 Membership Meeting and in the next available issue of *Michigana*. 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. However copyright is retained by the author. Entries may not have been previously published. Judges’ comments will be provided upon request. All prizes may not be awarded.

The prizes: 1st prize: \$100 and 1 annual WMGS membership (total value - \$120); 2nd prize: \$75 and 1 annual WMGSS membership (total value - \$95); 3rd prize: \$50; 4th prize: \$25

NEED HELP?

The WMGS Writers Group meets the third Tuesday of the month and we’d love to help you make your story the best that it can be. For information about location, time, and directions go to www.wmgs.org. For further information or any questions about the Writing Contest, please contact the *Michigana* Editor at ruthgen@gmail.com.

~ All entries due by March 30, 2015!!! ~

Bring it on blank page
- I am ready to fill you
with amazing words!

Michigan archives Recent Acquisitions!

Over the summer, the Archives of Michigan acquired a substantial run of Detroit city directories in near-pristine condition covering the years 1837-1974. These directories are out on the shelf and ready for you to stop in and take a look. Other recent items of note include Detroit News (hard bound copies as well as their clippings file AND an index that references the clippings file), Detroit Times microfilms, Detroit Free Press clipping files, Vermont baptismal and marriage records, Allen County (IN) local histories, and Ashland County (OH) vital records indexes.

Preserve the Pensions! War of 1812

FGS, the National Archives, and the genealogical community are digitizing the War of 1812 pension files. Over *1.3 million images* have been preserved so far. The Pension Records from the War of 1812 are among the most requested documents at the National Archives. Completed images and associated indexing are posted incrementally. Genealogists, historians, teachers, patriotic societies, and history buffs all have access to the images that have been digitized right now. **AND** images will be offered for free at Fold3 indefinitely. <http://go.fold3.com/1812pensions>

To donate, click on the "Preserve the Pensions" link on the left side of the main page our website [wmgs.org](http://www.wmgs.org) or go to <http://www.preservethepensions.org>

~ Web links of Interest ~

Check out the **WMGS Blog** —<http://wmgs.org/blog>
"Like" us on **Facebook**
<https://www.facebook.com/wmgs.org>

USGenWeb Genealogical Events Projects

The USGenWeb is supporting this project as a service to any person, family, organization, society or group that wants to promote a genealogical event anywhere in the US or the entire world.

<http://genevents.genwebsite.org/index.html>

Ten steps for Writing and Publishing Your Family History Webinar

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUpoVyZZrXs>

Here's What Happens to Your Data After You Die

<http://tinyurl.com/n9dxnnv>
or https://www.yahoo.com/tech/heres-what-happens-to-your-data-after-you-die-101447039569.html?_content=bufferad364&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer

WMGS 2015 Saturday meetings Add to your 2015 Calendar

3 January	July - no meeting
7 February	August - no meeting
7 March	12 September
4 April	3 October
2 May	14 November
13 June	5 December

Pioneer Certificates

The Pioneer Certificates have been indexed and will be available soon in the WMGS Online Searchable Databases! <http://data.wmgs.org>

Do YOU have a West Michigan Pioneer among your ancestors? For more information about the Pioneer Certificates, check our website:

www.wmgs.org/pioneer.htm



Monroe County, Michigan Master Cemetery Index now available gsmcmi.org

The Genealogical Society of Monroe County, Michigan has created a master cemetery index containing *EVERY CEMETERY* in the county— over 68,000 burials- and have copied and indexed the births and marriages from the Monroe Evening News covering 6 years (1939-1944) with more being copied every week.

Available on their website (gsmcmi.org), the cemetery index can be searched by last name and will give you the first name, page number, cemetery name, and township where all individuals with that last name are buried.

~WMGS Newly Elected Officers for 2015~

Mindy Koole, President
Marcia Shears, Vice President
Mark Timmer, Treasurer
Eileen Schmuker, Recording Secretary

AND we now have a Social Media Coordinator:

Denise Fedko

Welcome and congratulations
to these volunteers and
our thanks for being willing to serve!

Recent Awards

The **Ken Gackler Award of Merit**, WMGS's highest award, recognizes exceptional contributions of a WMGS member who significantly aided research or increased interest in genealogy over a period of years. This year the Ken Gackler Award was presented to **Don Bryant** for his outstanding service to WMGS and the genealogical community.

The **FGS Presidential Award** was presented by Kris Rzepczynski from the *Archives of Michigan* to **Henry and Loekie Boersma**, for their genealogical work on Talmadge Township, at the November 2014 WMGS meeting.

There is a fine line between a packrat
and a serious family historian.

If you, as a new or renewing member, would be willing and able to hold an office or work on a committee or project, WMGS would appreciate your help very much. You may indicate your area of expertise and/or interest on this membership form. We will be happy to contact you about your desire to help. Thank you!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

\$20 in the USA

NEW _____

RENEWAL _____

US\$25 Outside the USA

Make checks payable to: Western Michigan Genealogical Society or WMGS

DATE: _____ PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

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

Do you use computer software to manage your genealogy? No Yes _____
Please list the software you use

Send checks and completed form to:
WMGS Membership, Western Michigan Genealogical Society
111 Library St NE, Grand Rapids MI 49503-3268

January 2015 GRPL "Lock-in" check www.grpl.org/events for the date Grand Rapids Public Library ➔ **Registration is required**

Come to the Local History and Special Collections department for a free after-hours program just for genealogists!

- Learn how to use the microfilm reader/scanner/printer, save images
- Take advantage of free copying and printing during the event
- Search databases – we have a limited number of computers available or bring your own laptop and use the Library's WiFi network.
- Bring your genealogy questions or Ancestry and Heritage Quest problems – volunteers will be on hand to assist.
- Network with other genealogists – you never know what you might find!

To register: check <http://www.grpl.org>

Did you know??

The WMGS Newspapers online database has over a million records. We also have 244,966 records in 1,044 manuscript files as well as 194,660 records in the Michigana database, AND the Pioneer Certificate database will also soon be available online.

These databases can be found on the WMGS website: <http://data.wmgs.org>



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

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
Western Michigan Genealogical Society
111 Library St NE, Grand Rapids MI 49503-3268

2014 WMGS Officers

President Don Bryant
email: president@wmgs.org

Recording Secretary Janet Jensen
email: JanetJ6990@aol.com
Phone: (616) 874-8035

Vice President Marcia Shears
email: U08554@hotmail.com

Immediate Past President Mindy Koole
email: koole2@comcast.net
Phone: (616) 691-7986

Treasurer Marlene Fabbro
email: mfabbro@sbcglobal.net
Phone: (616) 530-8232

**Thanks to Don, Marcia, Marlene, & Janet
for your years of service to WMGS!**