

# MUSKEGON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Founded 1972

Vol. 21 No. 1

January 2021

## T W I G T A L K

Newsletter



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### President's Message

By Dawn Westcomb Kelley -



As you can see, this issue of Twig Talk has a new look. It is hoped that this new look will display the information better and make it more in keeping with the way things show up on webpages. The goal is to keep it recognizable as the MCGS newsletter, keeping fonts, type sizes and other things the same, for example.

Maintaining communication with our members through this newsletter is extremely important since COVID-19 has caused the cancellation of so many of our in-person activities. There are articles in this newsletter to entertain and help you be informed.

We are looking for articles. If you have something that you would like to share, particularly about local history or your experiences as you do genealogy work, please send an email to this address—[twigtalk1972@gmail.com](mailto:twigtalk1972@gmail.com). It does not need to be a fully developed as a story, we can work with you on that.

As for 2020 I want to thank everyone who provided material for the 12 issues. We had many interesting and informative articles, including information about free online webinars, activities, and such in 2020.

Wishing all of you a better year for 2021. Stay safe & healthy.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

We depend on our membership dues for our society to survive for our future. Each year our Treasurer puts a budget together by September or October so we know how much we can spend for the following year. The board votes on the budget each year. Remember membership dues are from January 1 through December 31.

If you have a new address, home or cell phone number or email address that you have changed, please let us know. **NOTE** if you do not receive your monthly Twig Talk Newsletter we want to know.

## **GENEALOGY TIP**

Immigrants often traveled with other family members and neighbors from their hometowns. When they arrived in their new home, they may have lived near these people, too. So research passenger lists to see who traveled with your ancestor-look a few pages forward and back.

- By Ancestry

## **DISCOVER YOUR STORY AT ROOTSTECH CONNECT – ROOTSTECH.ORG**

ROOTSTECH – introducing Rootstech connect: a **FREE** online conference experience. For the first time ever, the world's largest family celebration event will be entirely and completely free. Get ready to celebrate shared connections with people from around the world. Connect with friends, your family, your family, your past, and your heritage and homelands-all from the comfort of your home and your browser. Feb 25 – 27 2021 - [RootsTech 2021 will be held as a virtual event February 25-27, 2021](#)

## **YOU HAVE A MAYFLOWER HERITAGE!**

By William Hansen



"The Courting of John and Priscilla." The artist is not given.

Back on November 15th of this year (2020), an email landed in my inbox, 400 years after my 9th great grandparents arrived. Talk about snail mail.

The following two articles are just two of many that can be found on the internet regarding this couple.

*Both John Alden and his wife to be, Priscilla Mullins, sailed from Plymouth, England to North America to escape religious persecution.*

*He was a cooper and crew member on the Mayflower and was only 22. After arriving in America, he signed the Mayflower Compact and decided to stay rather than returning to England. Alden performed extensive public service for the colony, serving in roles such as Treasurer and Assistant Governor.*

*In 1623 he married fellow passenger Priscilla Mullins, and the two raised 10 children together. Descendants of John and Priscilla Alden comprise one of the largest groups of Mayflower descendants living today.*

*When he died in Duxbury in 1687, Alden was the last surviving signer of the Mayflower Compact.*

**Priscilla Mullins** (c.1603 – c.1688), Mayflower passenger and noted member of Plymouth's "Pilgrim" colony in Massachusetts, and wife of fellow colonist **John Alden** (c.1599-1687), was most likely born in Dorking in Surrey, England. The second daughter and fourth child of William (c.1578 - 1621), Priscilla was a 17-year-old girl when she and her family boarded the Mayflower, arriving at Plymouth in December 1620. Her parents and her brother, Joseph, died during the first winter in Plymouth, leaving her the only remaining member of her family in the New World (although another brother and a sister remained in England).

*Sweet of temper and blessed with great patience, she rose above her grief and spun wool and flax for the colony, taught the children and helped with the cooking. Priscilla Mullins and John Alden were married at Plymouth circa 1622, likely the third couple to be married in Plymouth Colony.*

*Priscilla is last recorded in the records in 1650, but oral tradition states that she died within a few years of her husband (who died in 1687). Although she was buried at the Miles Standish Burial Ground in Duxbury, Massachusetts and there is a marker at the Burial Ground in her honor, no one knows the exact location of her grave.*

**Time Line of Events: 1606** - The Virginia Company of Plymouth chartered by James I to establish settlements in North America. 1619 - The Pilgrims, seeking to escape religious persecution, are granted permission to settle in the new world. Sept. 1620 - The Mayflower leaves Plymouth, England, for the new world. The intended destination is Virginia. Nov.9, 1620 - After being blown off course, they arrive at what is now Cape Cod Harbor. Nov.11, 1620 - The Mayflower Compact is signed on the ship, establishing a provisional government. Dec. 1620 - The Mayflower moves to what is now Plymouth Harbor and they begin building Plymouth Colony. 1621 - During the first year about half of the settlers died. Help from Native Americans helped the rest to survive. Sept. 1621 - The surviving colonists celebrate their first harvest with the Native Americans. 1621-1640 - Many other settlers join the colonists, and new settlements are founded. 1638 was the peak year with more than 3,000 new arrivals.

My connection to John and Priscilla is through my mother, Mrs. Edwin Hansen. My mother, Rachel Woirol) Hansen's father was Paul Arnold Woirol 1888-1950, his mother was Carrie Estella Packard 1857-1930, her father was George Wheeler Packard 1831-1913, his father was Alanson Packard 1802-?, his father was Timothy Packard Jr. 1769-1853, his mother was Sarah Alden 1734-1795, her father was Samuel Alden 1705-1783, his father was Joseph, Alden Jr. 1667-1747, his father was Joseph Alden 1627-1697 and his parents were John and Priscilla Mullins Alden.

## **Jennie Donahue Dobson**

### **One of Muskegon's First Female Doctors**

By Frances Harrington

Jennie Donahue was born in Ottawa, Canada in 1840. She was one of seven children born to Mary and Michael Donahue of Irish decent. Jennie was educated at Catholic convents there before the family moved to Muskegon, Michigan around 1860.

By 1870, her father Michael was in business with John Riordan in a women's dry goods store called Donahue & Riordan, a partnership that lasted until 1877. During this time, Jennie and her younger sister Anna operated their own millinery business. Whether their business was in conjunction with Donahue & Riordan is not known. Anna married John Riordan in 1871.

Captain Henry Dobson was born in Canada in 1835. He was an early Muskegon settler and as an adult commanded a steamer on the Great Lakes. During the Civil War he was part of the 26<sup>th</sup> Michigan Volunteers and was well known for his military accomplishments. He was discharged in 1864 after being seriously injured by a bullet wound that lodged in his chest. Upon returning to Muskegon, he continued his work as a vessel captain. He married Jennie Donahue in 1870. Six years later Captain Dobson died as a result of an infection caused by his war injury.

Soon after the Captain's death, Jennie decided to follow her dream and went back to school to become a physician. She studied at the University of Michigan and the Women's Medical College in Chicago. After graduating, she became the house physician at the Women's & Children's Hospital and attended various college clinics in Chicago. Upon leaving Chicago, she studied for a short time in Europe.

In 1881, Jennie returned to Muskegon and started her practice here where she was a very successful doctor. During her career, she was a member of the 9<sup>th</sup> District Michigan State Women's Christian Temperance Association, a member of the Society of Microscopists, a member of Mus-





Jennie Donahue Dobson Residence and Office, Webster Ave

kegon Woman's Club, and on the Executive Committee of the Michigan State Medical Society where she served as Vice President.

In 1890, she built a beautiful home and office off the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> and Webster next to Dr. John Denslow's residence. She continued her practice there until 1896 when she died of pneumonia after a short two-week illness.

Part of her obituary in the Muskegon Chronicle read, "Mrs. Dobson was a woman of strong character, energetic, persevering, helpful and kindly to all her professional and social relations, rewarded for these good qualities by the love of a wide circle of friends, the respect and esteem of the community

*in which she pursued so many helpful activities. She was a devout member of the Catholic Church, belonging to St. Mary's parish, a leading spirit in its labors and councils. Her influence and abilities were freely lent to the cause of temperance, of woman's advancement, and other movements which enlist the aid of the progressive workers in all lands and climes. In all these circles her pleasant voice and ready aid will be missed. Of her it can with entire truth be said that she was a model of many virtues, one of those intelligent, patient, persevering, self-reliant characters which compel respect, and leave an aching void in many hearts when at last called to the larger activities of the wider world beyond".*

Sources include: Ancestry.com, Genealogy Bank, Find A Grave, Newspapers.com, Michigan State Historical Society Historical Vol. 28, and Advantages & Surroundings of Muskegon, MI.

It looks like he is really studying his family tree. Does that look like you with the stack books and papers? Oh yes, a cell phone on top of the pile of books just in case he receives a phone call from a relative.



**Top 10 FREE Genealogy Websites**

Family Search [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)  
 Find a Grave [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)  
 World GenWeb Project [www.worldgenweb.org](http://www.worldgenweb.org)  
 US GenWeb Project [www.usgenweb.com](http://www.usgenweb.com)  
 National Archives [www.nationalarchives.gov](http://www.nationalarchives.gov)  
 Genealogy Today [www.genealogytoday.com](http://www.genealogytoday.com)  
 Google [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)  
 Access Genealogy [www.accessgenealogy.com](http://www.accessgenealogy.com)  
 Family Tree Searcher [www.familytreearcher.com](http://www.familytreearcher.com)  
 GeneaBios [www.geneabios.com](http://www.geneabios.com)

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**Research at the Muskegon County Clerk— Services Suspended Until Further Notice**



## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY WEBINAR SERIES

Join our twice-monthly webcasts with knowledgeable genealogists to help grow what you know. The **LIVE** broadcast is **FREE** and open to the public.

Register at [www.scgsgenealogy.com](http://www.scgsgenealogy.com)

- **You MUST Register to participate.**
- Click on the Webinar Title you want to attend listed below.
- Register with our partner website, *GoToWebinar.com*.
- Enter your name and email address and answer a few questions. You will receive confirmation of your registration by email.
- You will also receive reminders before the webinar. **The reminder email will have information on accessing the handout material.**

On the day of the session, click the link that you received in your invitation to *GoToWebinar.com* to join the online session.

### NEXT UP:

Saturday, January 9, 1:00 PM - Eastern

Writing about The Stars in Your Family with Ease

by Devon Noel Lee



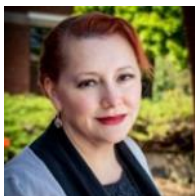
600 words or less? No problem. Discover a simplified method to write brief but inviting features about your ancestors. Honor them with words so others can know who the stars are on your family tree. Then submit your story for "The Stars in Your Family" book. Submissions must be in MS Word and emailed to [starsinyourfamily@scgsgenealogy.com](mailto:starsinyourfamily@scgsgenealogy.com) from February 1, 2021 through March 15, 2021. After the book is edited by SCGS member Kay Adkins, it will be available from Amazon.com by June.

Devon Noel Lee helps individuals strengthen their future by connecting to the past in meaningful and fun ways. She's the owner of Family History Fanatics, a genealogy education company that coordinates virtual learning events ([www.familyhistoryfanatics.com](http://www.familyhistoryfanatics.com)) and is a popular YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/c/FamilyHistoryFanatics](http://www.youtube.com/c/FamilyHistoryFanatics)). With a journalist's heart, Devon seeks out the story behind her living and deceased relatives.

Wednesday, January 20, 9:00 PM - Eastern

The Basics of Genetic Testing and Genealogy

by Shannon Combs-Bennett, MS



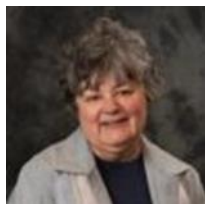
Genetic genealogy is a rapidly evolving tool for genealogists. That doesn't mean it is easy to understand. Learn the basics of the tests available to you, plus what you can and cannot discover in your DNA through this presentation. Trust me, you can understand the intricacies of DNA testing!

Shannon Combs-Bennett is an award-winning author and lecturer based in Northern Virginia. She loves sharing her knowledge with other researchers on a variety of subjects from methodology to genetics. She has a blog at <http://tntfamilyhistory.blogspot.com>.

Saturday, February 6, 1:00 PM - Eastern

Unscrambling the New Orleans Passenger Lists

by Beth A. Stahr, MLS CG®



The port of New Orleans was the second largest U.S. port of immigration in the early nineteenth century. This lecture explains the origin and derivation of overlapping indexes and passenger lists for the port. It provides a chronological approach with examples to using the microfilmed and online resources to find immigrants.

Beth A. Stahr, MLS, CG® is a recently retired academic librarian and instructor with over forty years of genealogical research experience. She has lived and worked in the Midwest, Louisiana and now Tennessee. She has been certified by the Board for Certification of Genealogists since 1990, is an alumnus of NIGR, IGHR and Excelsior College's Genetic Genealogy class, has lectured for local, state and national genealogical societies, and published in academic and genealogical journals.

**IMPORTANT MESSAGE**

**MCGS MEETINGS**

2nd Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

**VFW Post 319  
5209 Grand Haven Rd.  
Norton Shores, MI**



**Meetings cancelled**

**January thru March**

**At least for now.**

**Genealogy Family**

**History Workshops**

Torrent House Local History & Genealogy Department  
315 W. Webster Ave.

**All workshops are cancelled until further notice.**



**LOCAL HISTORY & GENEALOGY DEPT.**

Changes to the Local History & Genealogy Department. PLEASE call ahead of time at 231-722-8016 Tuesday thru Friday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. To make sure they are open or check out the Hackley Public Library website for new updates on opening and closing at <https://hackleylibrary.org/> Click the Local History & Genealogy button on top of the page and check out the Research Resources .



**2021 OFFICERS & COMMITTEES**

- President:** Dawn Westcomb Kelley
- Past President:** Jane Appleton Schapka
- Vice President:** Ingrid Porritt
- Secretary:** Tom Shepherd
- Treasurer:** Nancy Clark Spoon

**Committees**

- Facebook..... Norman Dagen
- Historian ..... Board Members
- History Book Project ..... Kathy DeCormier
- Hospitality..... Jane Weber
- .....Maria Chemelarova
- ..... John & Phyllis Slater
- Library ..... Barb Martin
- Membership..... Paula Halloran
- ..... Chris Nowak
- Newsletter Editor ..... Tom Porritt
- Pioneer Program. .... Barb Martin
- Programs & Publicity .... Ingrid Porritt
- ..... Tom Shepherd
- ..... Bill Hansen
- ..... Gale Taggart
- Special Projects ..... Dawn Kelley
- Website ..... Board Members
- County Clerk Office ... Members
- Michigan Genealogical Council.
- .....Gail Taggart, Delegate

**HISTORY BOOK VOL. 2**

We care what happens to our members, their families, and everyone around us. Our History Book, Volume 2 will be extend until further notice. It is very important to start working on your stories now. Do not wait.

If you have any questions or need help, contact us at our [1972mcgs@gmail.com](mailto:1972mcgs@gmail.com) or send your information to Kathy DeCormier at [middlaker@frontier.com](mailto:middlaker@frontier.com) In the subject area put "History Book Volume 2".

***TWIG TALK***

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[1972mcgs@gmail.com](mailto:1972mcgs@gmail.com)



MUSKEGON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION for 2021

*\* Our membership begins January 1 through December 31 \**

- New Membership     Renewal Membership
- \$25.00 Single in the USA     \$30.00 Single USD\$ outside the USA
- \*Membership cards are available on request. Send a small SASE with your membership payment.*
- We are a non-profit organization 501 (c) (3)  
If you wish to make a donation, please fill in the amount    \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

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\*NAME \_\_\_\_\_

\*ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\*CITY \_\_\_\_\_ \*STATE \_\_\_\_\_ \*ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check or money orders payable to MCGS

**MAIL TO:  
MCGS**

**Attn: MEMBERSHIP**  
C/O HPL - Torrent House  
315 W. Webster Ave.  
Muskegon, MI 49440-1208

**MCGS USE ONLY**

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