

MUSKEGON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Founded 1972

Vol. 21 No. 3

March 2021

T W I G T A L K

Newsletter



Celebrating 50 years in 2022

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President's Message

By Dawn Westcomb Kelley -



It looks like we are not going to meet anytime soon for our monthly board meetings or the Saturday workshops. All are cancelled until further notice. I will keep you informed about when we will be able to meet again in person.

Sunday, March 14th, Daylight Saving Time Starts

One of these days maybe they will make up their minds if we stay at Daylight Saving Time or stay at the way we are now, because on November 7, 2021 we will go back one hour.

NOW Is The Time To Make Plans For The 50th MCGS Anniversary in 2022!

Many of us would like to celebrate the MCGS 50 year anniversary with something that will be a significant news event. Our society had its first meeting in the late fall of 1972.

Primarily, what is needed right now is someone to come forward who has a passion and vision around the significance of this event to lead a planning committee that would include participation by some of our general membership. How should we celebrate 50 years for the Muskegon County Genealogical Society?



We have talked about the possibility of a celebration for more than a year, but with no concrete plans at this point. Some people see this time during a pandemic as making such a celebration impossible. To me that displays a lack of confidence and vision. I believe that failure to work on any kind of plan now means certain it will be an opportunity lost. Perhaps some "out of the box" thinking is needed. An example of this kind of thinking that might take place would be to plan for 2023 and call it the "51st year of our 50th" anniversary. Planning to do nothing is not acceptable. Please provide your thoughts and comments about this vision to me at: 1972mcgs@gmail.com.

GENEALOGY TIP - FAMILY QUOTE

I wish I had realized that family history is a perishable commodity. It disappears with time, as memories fade, and as loved ones pass on. I wish I had known that the most important aspect of family history is preserving a record of the present for the future. — *Guy Black*

AMAZING FACTS ABOUT ST. PATRICK'S DAY

St Patrick was born in 385 AD in a place believed to be Banna Venta Berniae, a town in Roman Britain (his exact place of birth is however uncertain). He died during the fifth century in the year 461 AD at Saul, Downpatrick, Ireland.



Patrick was born in England to Roman parents (Calpurnius and Conchessa). So he was English and not Irish. His given name was Maewyn Succat. Thus, technically we would be celebrating “Maewyn Day” instead of the “St Patrick’s Day” if his name was not changed. He wrote a book—Confessio—during his last years.

St Patrick’s Day has been observed by the Irish as a religious holiday for more than 1,000 years.

At the age of 16, St Patrick was kidnapped and taken to Ireland by a group of Irish raiders who attacked his family’s estate. He worked there for 6 years tending sheep and then escaped and became a priest.

Saint Patrick used Shamrock (a young sprig of clover) to teach the pagans about the Holy Trinity. The shamrock is now the official flower of Ireland. It is associated with St Patrick.

If you like to read more about St. Patrick go to [30 Amazing Facts About St. Patrick's Day - The Fact File](#)

The first St Patrick’s Day celebration in the United States was held in Boston in 1737.

Genealogy Resources for Irish History Month | Ancestral Findings

From Ancestralfinding.com

Do you have Irish genealogy? March is Irish-American Heritage Month (also commonly referred to as Irish History Month), which makes it the perfect time to do some extra digging into your Irish family tree. In 1991 the month was first celebrated and designated to be in March in order to coincide with Ireland’s biggest national holiday, St. Patrick’s Day. The celebratory month is set aside to honor the achievements and contributions of the Irish and their American descendants in the United States. Each year, the president and Congress officially declare Irish-American Heritage Month.



There is more information on Ancestralfinding.com and listen to the Podcast at; [Genealogy Resources for Irish History Month | Ancestral Findings](#)

REMEMBERING THE OCCIDENTAL HOTEL and CANDY SHOP



A highlight was the hotel's candy shop, which sold the best ice cream sundaes around, featuring this hot fudge and making the recipe sought after. The Old Occidental Hotel remained the town's hotspot until 1975 when the once ornate building was demolished to make way for the Muskegon Mall.

2 cups sugar
2/3 cup cocoa
6 tablespoons flour
1 teaspoons salt

2 cups milk
2 tablespoons butter
2 teaspoons vanilla



1. Mix the sugar, cocoa, flour, and salt in a heavy saucepan.
2. Turn the heat to medium and slowly pour in the milk, whisking as you go.
3. Whisk constantly until the milk comes to a boil at which point, it will thicken.
4. Remove from the heat and add in the butter and vanilla. Whisk until melted.
5. Serve warm or refrigerate to store.

WHO WAS LOUISA?

WOMEN PIONEERS OF CITY ANSWER CALL

MRS. LOUISE JOHNSON, 85, AND MRS. M. A. COLINS, 80, CROSS THE DARK RIVER

This is a colorful title of an obituary that appeared in the Muskegon Chronicle on 27 November 1917. I'd never heard the term "cross the dark river" until I saw this obituary. This article is about one of those women who "crossed the dark river", Louisa A. (Seifert) Neumeister-Johnson.— *by Frances Harrington*

Louisa A Seifert was born in Schleiz, Germany on 6 August 1832. She and her husband, Frederick H. Neumeister, came to Muskegon, Michigan in April of 1856. Frederick H. was born in Loberstien, Germany in June 1832. In a passport application made out by his son Frederick G., he said his father came to the United States in 1850. The 1900 Federal Census says that Louisa immigrated in 1852. Where they lived in the U.S. before appearing in Muskegon is unknown. In the 1860 Federal Census, Frederick and Louisa are living in Muskegon with his occupation listed as "brewer". He was the owner of "Neumeister Brewery", also known as the "City Brewery". It was located at Michigan Ave. and Lake St. off Western Ave. (the current location of Cole's Bakery). It wasn't a large brewery but it was a lucrative venture being the only brewery in the area for a few years. They also owned a saloon on Western Ave. where Louisa worked as the bartender.

Shortly after arriving in Muskegon in 1856, their son Gustav H. was born; in 1858, a daughter, Em-

ma K. followed; in 1861, a son, Frederick G.; in 1862, a daughter Louisa G.; and in 1866 their daughter Minnie was born. Minnie died 11 month later. The 1900 Census lists 6 children born, 4 children living. There is a family plot in Evergreen Cemetery where Frederick H., Louisa, and four of their children are buried. Gustav H. and his family are buried in Oakwood Cemetery. The 6th child is not buried there so it may have been born and died before they came to Muskegon.

Frederick H. must have known he was very ill because on 1 November 1873 he made out his Last Will & Testament. He died two months later of dropsy (a symptom of kidney failure or congestive heart failure) on 1 January 1874. The bulk of his assets went to his wife Louisa including the brewery and saloon. By the time his Will was probated that year, Louisa A. had married a man named Henderson Johnson, a successful lumber inspector. They changed the name of the brewery to the "Louisa A. Johnson Brewery". The brewery closed down the next year. It was sold to Otto Meeske, Gustav Meeske, and Gottlieb Ninneman in 1876. It was expanded with new equipment added and renamed the "Muskegon Brewing Company". It continued operating under that name until 1919. The saloon remained in operation with Louisa A. continuing as the bartender and proprietor for some time.

The 1879 City Directory lists Louisa as "Mrs. H. W. Johnson, dealer in choice wines, liquors, cigars, 15 ball pool tables, etc." at the corner of Western & 7th. Louisa's husband, Henderson Johnson, died suddenly in 1889 leaving his estate to Louisa. Louisa A., her daughter Emma K., and Mr. A. D. Berry bought the Leahy Dry Goods Store in 1892 where Emma K. and Mr. Berry had been employed for 12 years. Louisa A. became the President with Emma K. as the Treasurer and Mr. Berry as Manager. An article in the Chronicle about the sale calls Louisa A. "a thorough business woman, reliable in all her dealings with people in general". In 1903, she is listed one of the directors in the Hackley National Bank. Throughout the years we can find Louisa A. also buying and selling real estate. She died 26 March 1917 while living with her son Frederick G. on Houston Ave.

Louisa A. was definitely ahead of her time. She was not only a German immigrant and one of Muskegon's early pioneers, she was a mother and a successful business woman at a time when women didn't even have the right to vote. Gustav H., her eldest, was at one time the sheriff of Muskegon, an Alderman, Assessor, lumber inspector and later, partner in Neumeister & Shultz Shoe Store. Emma K. never married and eventually became the proprietor of the Leahy Dry Goods Store/Leahy Co. Frederick G. became a druggist and owned the very successful Neumeister Drug Store for 34 years on Western Ave. The youngest, Louisa G. was a bookkeeper for Western Union Telephone Co. and in 1885 married Henry C. Rood, a real estate dealer and farmer.

(Sources: Muskegon Chronicle, findagrave.com, Muskegon City Directories, Hackley Public Library, genealogybank.com, Ancestry.com, The History of Muskegon Brewing Company by Dave Meeske)

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

- **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, March 6 1:00 PM - Eastern
Alcoholics and Teetotalers: Finding Yours in America's Temperance
by Michael Brophy, MBA



The Temperance Movement was a social movement in the United States to reduce the consumption of alcohol in the United States in the 19th and early 20th Century. The movement has a large effect on California from social lives to politics.

Michael Brophy offers services and lectures through Brophy Professional Genealogy, www.brophygen.com. He specializes in Irish Americans and Massachusetts records. Reviewers have found his lectures to be insightful, informative, humorous and rich in detail. Alcoholics and Teetotalers: Finding Yours in America's Temperance

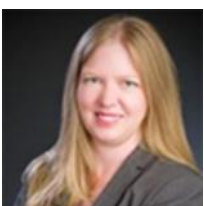
Wednesday, March 17 9:00 PM - Eastern
Find African American, French, Jewish & Spanish Revolutionary War Patriots
by Ellen Kowitt



Have you considered applying for membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution lineage society but didn't think your ancestors qualify? Learn about DAR's current efforts to encourage new applications from a variety of heritage groups including women descending from African American, French, Jewish, Spanish, and other patriot ancestors.

Ellen Shindelman Kowitt is Director of JewishGen's U.S. Research Division and National Vice Chair of the DAR Lineage Committee Jewish Task Force. She is past president of JGS Colorado and JGS Greater Washington DC, has served on the IAJGS board of directors, and been recipient of IAJGS Program and Stern Awards. Ellen publishes articles in Avotaynu: The International Journal on Jewish Genealogy and Family Tree Magazine. Ellen is a member of the CO APG. More information at www.EllenKowitt.com. Find African American, French, Jewish & Spanish Revolutionary War Patriots

Saturday, April 3 1:00 PM - Eastern
Suddenly Scotland: An Introduction to Scottish Research
by Sara Cochran



In this general overview of Scottish research, learn about the history of Scotland and what resources are available for finding the story of your family

Sara Cochran has been conducting genealogical research for over 25 years, and her research has taken her into nearly every state in the USA as well as Ireland, Italy, Austria, and Britain. She holds a Boston University Genealogical Research Certificate as well as a Bachelor's Degree in Library Science. Her website, www.theskeletonwhisperer.com, and blog, <https://www.facebook.com/theskeletonwhisperer/>, provide articles and assistance in research. She especially enjoys breaking down brick walls for her clients, discovering the stories of black sheep ancestors, and helping individuals preserve their photographic legacy.

MCGS MEETINGS

2nd Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

VFW Post 319

5209 Grand Haven Rd.

Norton Shores, MI



Meetings cancelled

Until further notice

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
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- Library Barb Martin
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..... Chris Nowak
- Newsletter Editor..... Tom Porritt
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- 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 or send your information to Kathy DeCormier at middlaker@frontier.com

In the subject area put "History Book Volume 2".

TWIG TALK

A monthly publication of:
Muskegon County Genealogical Society

c/o Hackley Public Library
Torrent House

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