

T W I G T A L K

Newsletter



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President's Message

By Dawn Westcomb Kelley -



Here we are already into April and it is so nice without the snow. Just enjoy the weather while you can. I see some of the flowers have been popping up and the birds coming around. That is a good sign that spring is here.

I have been reviewing the websites of other societies as I look for ideas we can use to provide more service to our members. As a result, I have started to make a list of things that might spark interest and lead to some different types of meetings and get together occasions (at the appropriate time of course). Here's a list to give you the kind of things I am thinking about. Please let me know if any of these ideas strike a chord with you. And if you think this could lead to something worthwhile please let me know or make additional suggestions. It is intended that these small groups would be self initiated by the interested persons and directed by them. Small groups work out best if initiated and directed this way. Each group will determine their own convenient meeting times and places. The group could meet in homes, cafes, or other places.

1. Making the Most of Your Ancestry Membership - Users Group
2. Family Tree Maker software - Users Group
3. Cemetery Photography - Interest Group
4. Viewing Webinars Together - Interest Group
5. Exploring Local Cemeteries - Interest Group
6. Organizing Your Genealogy - Interest Group
7. Using Family Search at familysearch.com - Users Group
8. Using Find A Grave at findagrave.com - Users Group
9. Michigan Archives at michiganology.org - Users Group

We will get back together sooner or later. I hope we can meet in small groups for those who have had their vaccinations but we will probably still have to wear our masks for awhile. I will keep you informed. Be safe and stay healthy!

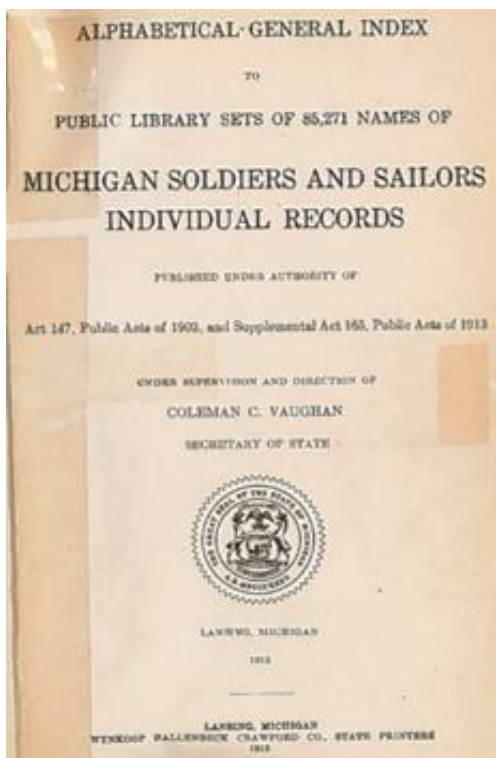
GENEALOGY TIP

How to Organize Your Papers and Genealogy

Think of doing small goals. Set aside one or three days a week to work on a small pile of your genealogy materials. Dedicate a small table or desk to the chore to use every week. This will be your home base. Now you will name each piece of paper using sticky notes, putting the sticky on the edge of the paper for each subject. I do this system all the time to get my paper in order. More information next month.

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE CIVIL WAR BROWN BOOKS?

By Dawn Kelley



The Torrent House has the index of all 46 Brown Books. These books are the record of service for Michigan Volunteers during the Civil War (arranged numerically by regiment). The information has been extracted from the original descriptive rolls held at the Archives of Michigan. The picture on the left shows the cover of the index.

The records are presented and organized alphabetically. It includes the serviceman's name, company, and regiment and the volume and page of the Record of Service Books (commonly called the Brown Books) where more information on them can be found.

Here are some samples from the Index: (Joseph Freelove was one of my great, great grandfathers).

Joseph Freelove was in the index twice under Company A., 12th Michigan Infantry Volume. 12 Page 59 and Company. A., 19th Michigan Infantry Volume 19 and Page 37.

With the index information above you can find the following:

Freelove, Joseph, Keeler. Enlisted in company A, Nineteenth Infantry, Aug 4, 1862 at Dowagiac for 3 years age 33. Mustered Sept 5, 1862. Discharged for disability at Cincinnati, Ohio, March 25, 1863.

Freelove, Joseph, Hamilton, Enlisted in company A, Twelfth, March 16th, 1865, Hamilton, 1 year, age 37. Mustered March 18, 1865. Mustered out Camden, Ark., Feb 15, 1866.

His brother, James (aka Timothy), also served out of Kent County. I have other great, great grandfathers who served in the Civil War - Rueben Wilson, Newaygo County, and Andrew Tolford Durham, Ottawa County. I have each of their service records. Most records have more information about the soldiers.

You may obtain more information and links at the website listed below (including the Brown Books):

Department of Michigan - Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War - <https://suvcwmi.org>

Local History & Genealogy Department at the Torrent House Books

Index of Vital Statistics from the Muskegon Chronicle 1949 thru Dec 2019

- Compiled by Matthew Burns

The Family Tree Scandinavian Genealogy Guide: How to Trace Your Ancestors in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, by David A. Fryxell

The Book of McKee, by Raymond W. McKee

Lyman E. Patten And Genevieve (Davies) Murray Patten

Muskegon People
By Frances Harrington



Lyman E. Patten was born in 1837 in Cayuga County, New York. He was living in Rockford, Illinois as a single farmer when he mustered into the Union Army at Springfield, Illinois on 12 September 1862. He was part the 12th Illinois Calvary, Company A. During the Civil War, he fought in battles at Virginia, Maryland, and Gettysburg to name a few. He mustered out at the end of the war on 29 May 1866 in Houston, Texas.

After the Civil War, Lyman moved to Muskegon, Michigan where he worked in sawmills for Ryerson & Morris and C J Hamilton as a foreman and boom hand. In 1872, he married Genevieve (Davies) Murray, a prominent Muskegon widowed teacher and daughter of Joshua Davies, President of Davies Iron Works. Genevieve had 2 children from her previous marriage, Guy and Rowe Murray and two children with Lyman, Jesse Belle and Earl Patten. They made their home at 59 Hughart Street (now 8th Street) in Muskegon.

In 1890, the Hackley Public Library was being built and applications for employment were being taken. Several men applied for the position of library janitor and it was awarded to Lyman on 15 October 1890, six weeks before the opening. He was 53 years old when he started the job. In the summer, his workday started at 6:30 a.m. and in the winter he started at 5:30 a.m. so he would have extra time to shovel the walks. His workdays often didn't end until 9 p.m. because he was a very conscientious employee. He worked 7 days a week, 365 days a year except for the small vacation he took once a year. He earned approximately \$45 a month. During his employment at the library, he was appointed "special police", possibly to control disruptive children on library property. For several years around Memorial Day, as part of the Phil Kearney Post No. 7, GAR (Grand Army of the Republic), he went to various schools in Muskegon speaking about his experiences in the Civil War to help encourage patriotism among the young people here.

Lyman applied for his Civil War pension in 1892 but didn't receive it until 1897. It was for \$8 per month with back pay dating from his application date making it about \$480 (about \$13,320 in today's money). A nice little chunk of cash! Lyman and Genevieve were a well-respected couple in Muskegon. In 1903, forty-four of the couple's friends and family surprised them with a grand celebration for their Silver wedding anniversary.



Genevieve was born 13 November 1845 in Kenosha, Wisconsin. She moved to Muskegon with her parents in 1857. After her education in Muskegon, Genevieve graduated from college at Galesburg, Illinois. She returned to Muskegon and taught school in a country school house in Ravenna and later at Central School in the City. She married William Murray, a painter, in 1867 and they had 2 children. He died within 6 years of their marriage. She returned to teaching until she married Lyman Patten. Genevieve died on 12 November 1909, one day before her 64th birthday.

As Lyman got older, the janitorial work at the library (especially the shoveling) was getting to be too much for him. After working at the library for 20 years, he retired on 24 October 1910 at the age of 73 earning approximately \$60 week. When he retired, he donated to the library a 24-foot 6-star Confederate flag (a Civil War souvenir) that had been given to him by Chauncey Davis, Muskegon's first mayor. The current location of the flag

is unknown. After retiring, he moved to Kentucky to live with his daughter Jesse Belle (Mrs. Ralph Banks) hoping to improve his health. He died there less than a year later on 22 September 1911. His body was returned to Muskegon where he is buried next to his wife Genevieve at Evergreen Cemetery.

A GENEALOGIC CHALLENGE

By Ingrid Porritt

This past summer I received a new challenge. An individual who started researching his family several years ago, noticed that many of his family members interred in the Lake Forest Cemetery, Grand Haven, were not recorded on the [Findagrave.com](https://www.findagrave.com) site. I met him at one of our monthly meetings and at the Torrent House when he was doing research. He asked if I would help load records. I agreed. Since I knew of another person who was familiar with Dutch ancestry and was much better at using Find A Grave, we enlisted her help.

Most of his early ancestors were from the Netherlands. The Grand Haven, Loutit Library has several databases that were created by the local genealogical society using the city burial records for the cemeteries. It also includes some obituaries, marriages, and death records.

Performing this kind of work is always a challenge as names can be spelled different ways, first names, last names, maiden names, and second marriages. Any such records need to be verified with several different sources. In this way we could start to add information, but understood there was room for error.

Find A Grave is an easy site to update, change, merge or delete information. Some of the group worked from the library database adding and correcting. Others were taking photos in the cemetery, while some added additional, more current information. As we were doing this, communicating by email, others who had added records previously started to help out by adding obituaries and edits to complete families. Eventually our group expanded to 8 people.

One local person, who was adding many obituaries, asked if we could do another cemetery in the area. Several of our group have gone on to help with that project. It was fun to see what we could do, what more could be learned by sharing new things, and learning how Find A Grave works. Having others look over what we have added, and helping correct or complete a record is a comfort. It was more than just letters and numbers. We were putting out information that could help in their re-

search and yet could be updated if needed.

When we had questions, one person took the initiative to make an appointment with the library and actually photograph the cemetery record which noted the plot information and all those who were buried there. After it was posted on the Find A Grave memorial, they went back to the cemetery to see if there was a marker to photograph or look for an obituary or sought documentation for additional family.

We learned from each other as we worked together. I was reminded that we need to encourage others, younger and older in their search for family history. When I was approached first with this vision for help, I was not sure what I could do. But after considering, the answer became obvious - why not? Yes, mistakes and spelling errors have been made, duplicates and all those common mistakes happened as when you enter information from one source. Still, it was the ability to put the records out there, so later when the limitations of winter came, it could be reviewed. Knowing that others would be looking over the database and helping, was a great comfort. No one person had to know everything.

We all can learn about any computer program, even if it is uncomfortable for us to use. Others can share their knowledge and experience. Those Dutch names were dancing through my mind at night as I lay sleeping—van, van der, vander, Jantje, Trintje, Kate, where do they fit in the alphabet and even the names on the markers are not necessarily consistent with public records.

Lastly, it was fun to work with a group on a specific goal to see what we could do. It was daily, even hourly communications zipping back and forth, fixing, adding, finding a marker, getting the right plot, and adding a photo. We were trying to get as much done as we could before the snow would limit the photographers.

The leaflet from the Torrent House, “What is the Genealogy of Your House”, has sparked my own interest to research the house where we currently live. The mother's maiden name of the person who built our house is the same as my husband's grandmother, Holcomb. The research that I had previously done on the Holcomb family was all straight paternal and took me back to Connecticut. Now I have another lead to follow, the women and where their families came from and are we related? If only Julia Holcomb had left us some notes!

Research information like what Fran Harrington and others have done and shared in our society can inspire us to do our own history. We all have wonder filled and funny family stories to commit to paper. It would be great to have different people share every month by writing up a small story about what you have learned or where your search has led you recently. Our editor is always helpful in cleaning up our grammar. Do not let it hold you back from sharing your story.

The year 2020 will be remembered for many reasons. The society had almost all the programs planned for the whole year. Now the challenge is to see what we can do to support everyone in doing their family research. We have been forced to ask ourselves what can we do, how can we do things better, and what can we do as a genealogical society to help our members and others. Small focus groups may be an opportunity, or like the experience that happened this past year to me, reach out to others who have the same interest and see what you can accomplish. Make 2021 a year for new experiences in a positive direction.

Right now we may feel limited in what we can do. It is time to think differently about what we CAN do. We need to find a way to make things happen that will be beneficial for everyone. Every contribution is worthwhile.

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
- History Book Project..... Kathy DeCormier
- 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 or send your information to Kathy DeCormier at middlaker@frontier.com In the subject area put "History Book Volume 2".

TWIG TALK

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Torrent House

315 W. Webster Avenue
Muskegon, MI 49440-1208

www.genealogymuskegon.org

1972mcgs@gmail.com