

# MUSKEGON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Founded 1972

Vol. 21 No. 8

August 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 -

Great news, member, Karen Frazier has volunteered to be at the Muskegon County Clerk's office on Wednesday afternoons from 1 to 4 p.m. Thank you Karen!

In other great news, an awesome member who wants to be anonymous, is willing to pay for hard cover binding of some additional books to bring us more up to date. They are the White Lake Beacon Newspaper Vital Statistics Indexes from 1983 to 2020 and Muskegon Newspapers Vital Statistics indexes from 1946 to 2020. [Matt Burns is still working on the Vital Statistics indexes from The Muskegon Chronicle in his spare time. He is a very special person to take time out do this large project.] The last time the Society had Peter Helder bind the newspaper index books was in 2014. At that time there were 33 books. He has no website, but you can look him up on Facebook - [Helder Bookbinding \(facebook.com\)](#). In addition, the Muskegon County 1900 Atlas & Map, which is in disrepair, is being worked on and our donor will cover that expense too.

We are hoping to be meeting in person soon, **tentatively** starting on September 9 at the VFW for our regular monthly MCGS meeting.

We are working on ideas for our 50th Anniversary celebration in 2022. We are still seeking ideas and input so please send in your ideas and suggestions to [1972mcgs@gmail.com](mailto:1972mcgs@gmail.com).

### GENEALOGY TIP

This tip is so important to all that researching their family history. Analyze. Do not just read, evaluate. Who provided the information for the record? Was the informant a participant in the event (e.g. ...)? Reference: [www.americanancestors.org/education/learning-resources/read/getting-started](http://www.americanancestors.org/education/learning-resources/read/getting-started)

### Local History & Genealogy Books

*Cross River Rivals: An Illustrated History of the White Lake Area v. 1 & 2*, by Daniel J. Yakes and Steven S. Demos

*Richard Robins Loyalist*, by John William Taylor

*The Long Point Settlers*, by R. Robert Mutrie

*The Family of Griffith Bowen*, Gentleman, Welsh Puritan Immigrant, Boston, MA 1638-9  
by Daniel Bowen

*Muskegon's True Colors Revealed: Using the Work of our Earliest Local Photographers, and Modern Technology, We Can Now See What They Saw*, compiled by William P. Hansen

*The Directory of Veteran Burials in Muskegon County, Michigan Cemeteries v. 1* Listed by Cemetery, compiled by William P. Hansen

*The Directory of Veteran Burials in Muskegon County, Michigan Cemeteries v. 2* Listed by Service, compiled by William P. Hansen

*The Descendants of John Bowen*, by Fanny Corey Bowen

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### **Michael John Neill Genealogy Tip**

Provided by Frances Harrington

(c)2021, Michael John Neill and originally appeared on [www.genealogytipoftheday.com](http://www.genealogytipoftheday.com). The specific date is shown above the title line and can be found by following the link provided [here](#), and then scrolling through the pages

**michaeljohnneill** 7:13 pm on July 12, 2021

Spelling Irregularities are a Genealogy Fact of Life

Variations in how your ancestor's name was spelled can be endlessly frustrating. However, it's worth remembering that a variation of how your ancestor's name appears in an index can arise from a variety of situations:

- Your ancestor did not know how to spell his name

- Your ancestor could not read

- Your ancestor did not speak clearly

- Your ancestor had an accent with which the writer of his name was unfamiliar

- The clerk didn't care

- The clerk had bad writing

- The transcriber could not read the name

- The transcriber did not care

- The transcriber made a typographical error

- The document has faded over time and is difficult to read

- Or something else

Keep in mind that one or more of these could explain why James Rampley ends up indexed as Jarvis Pample.

**michaeljohnneill** 8:53 pm on July 2, 2021

Name Just Changed?

Many name changes before the early 20th Century were not done by any sort of court order. The person could simply have chosen to use a different name. Sometimes these name changes presented later problems, particularly for individuals who later wanted to obtain a military pension. Probate and estate settlement records may also indicate a person's former names, as may divorce records if the individual later divorced. Naturalization records may also document name changes as may passport applications.

Editor's note: The MichaelJohnNeill Genealogy Tip provided by Frances Harrington that appeared on page 2 of the July issue of Twig Talk, did not carry the required copyright notice. Which should have been as above. It was an error by this editor.

## MUSKEGON'S FIRST WOMAN CANDIDATE FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

By Frances Harrington

She was born Nellie Belle O'Connell on May 3, 1870 to Clara Cordelia Rogers and Maurice M. O'Connell in Montague, Michigan. She graduated from Montague High School at the age of 15. It was one of the new rural schools being started around the state at the time. Her first teaching assignment was at the Trading Post School on White River. While teaching at Mouth School, she even had some lumberjacks attend her classes. She taught school for some time until she returned to school herself at the Ypsilanti Normal College (which later became Eastern Michigan University) and graduated in 1893 with high honors. She taught at several places in Michigan including the Upper Peninsula. She taught at Wyandotte, Michigan and became the principal of the high school there. She was so highly regarded that they kept her on year after year with increases in pay. She also taught at one of the most successful schools in Muskegon. She returned to Montague and married John Chisholm on July 10, 1896. John had previously been the superintendent of schools in Schoolcraft County. Nellie and John had one son; John Alexander Chisholm born May 20, 1897.

Nellie was a life member of the New York Society of Self Culture, the White Lake Unity Club, the Montague Gymnasium Club, the Ladies of Modern Maccabees, the Relief Corps of the Eastern Star, and the State Teacher's Association.

In January of 1907, Nellie announced she was seeking the Republican nomination for County School Commission. She was the first woman candidate for public office in Muskegon County. As you can imagine, this didn't go over so well with some of her male counterparts. In an article on February 9, 1907 in the Muskegon Chronicle, it mentions that her candidacy "aroused the wrath of the Casnovia correspondent of the Ravenna Times, who *pitches into* Mrs. Nellie Chisholm in this manner". It goes on to say, "We see by the Muskegon papers that one Mrs. Nellie B. Chisholm of Montague is a candidate for county school commissioner on the republican ticket. Voters, cannot this woman's husband support her? What will she do with her children while visiting schools – take them along, eh? We understand Mrs. N. B. Chisholm's husband is a rural mail carrier and receiving good pay. We hope that our voters will look to the interest of our schools and re-elect Mr. John O Reed."

On February 12, 1907, the editor of the Muskegon Chronicle (William Manning) wrote an article regarding the attack on Nellie by the correspondent of the Ravenna Times. He wrote, "Now we have hundreds of examples of the first question all around us. We have scores of husbands who are able to support their wives and families, but they don't do it. The wife goes into the factory, takes in washings and enters into competition with her husband in different occupations. Now why does not the correspondent appeal to the voters of this county and try and compel these women to stay at home and rock the cradle and look after the children? I say to the voters if it is all right for these women to go out and try to keep the demand for their labor supplied it is just as fair to let them hold a political office and have good, clean employment. They should know the needs of the boys and girls much better than a man, who is more apt to have the salary in his mind. But even if her husband can support her, she no doubt has made provision for the welfare of her little ones. The correspondent, I judge from his talk, considers the gentle sex beneath man, and no doubt he looks at them in the light of slaves, and thinks that they should stay at home, year in and year out, and slave in house drudgery from 4 o'clock in the morning until 9 at night. He is of these people who do not want women to be as intelligent or have a bare chance with man." He goes on to say that she should be given an opportunity with the rest of the race.

Apparently, the majority of Republican voters thought Nellie should be given that opportunity also because she won the Republican nomination against 3 male opponents. She received 259 more votes than Richmond W. Brock, her nearest competitor. Her other 2 opponents were, John O. Reed and T.J.G. Bolt. After his loss, John O. Reed said he thought the requirements of the office and the



VOTE FOR  
**Nellie B. Chisholm,**  
for the nomination for  
County Commissioner of Schools,  
on the Republican Ticket,  
Primary Election, Feb. 26, 1907.

necessity of the occupant's traveling around the county in all kinds of weather made it "impracticable for a woman to fill the position". He also "expressed horror at the possibility that such a contingency would make it necessary for a man to stay at home and attend to the children and wash the dishes while his wife was out earning a salary inspecting schools".

Nellie went on to run against the Democratic candidate, James H. Cogshall. She won with a comfortable margin of about 450 votes.

John Chisholm died in 1910. In 1913, Nellie had planned to resign as commissioner. She was engaged to be married to George Hill, who was the Mayor of Antigo, Wisconsin. He died before they could be married so she withdrew her resignation. She never remarried.

Because of her teaching experience, love for her students and fellow teachers, Nellie was an excellent County School Commissioner. They even named the middle school in Montague



after her, the "Nellie B. Chisholm Middle School". She continued to get re-elected until 1935, when at the age of 65, she became the White Lake News Correspondent for the Chronicle for the next 23 years. She died on 16 August 1958 at the age of 88. She and her husband John are buried at Oak Grove Cemetery in Montague, along with her son and Nellie's parents.

Sources: Genealogybank.com, Ancestry.com, Findagrave.com, and the White Lake Beacon. Pictures from shoreline-media.net



Looking for genealogy videos of interest?

Check out the Allen County, Indiana Library Webinars in the [The Genealogy Center](#). This is a library of 80+ YouTube presentations of webinars hosted by the Allen County Library. If the link above doesn't work, copy and paste the link below. These are videos of past webinars

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8AE558B5D8661B31>

**The Genealogy Center** continues its offerings of live virtual programs throughout the month of August with Tuesday 2:30 p.m. EDT and Thursday 6:30 p.m. EDT offerings every week.

August 3, 2021, 2:30 p.m. "New York State Censuses: You Won't Believe What's Hiding In There!" with Jeanette Sheliga: <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/5421040>

August 5, 2021, 6:30 p.m. "Testing Your Relatives' DNA: What You Can Learn" with Sara Allen: <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/5421917>

August 10, 2021, 2:30 p.m. "Tracing Your New York Ancestors with the NYG&B" with Josh Taylor: <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/5414470>

August 12, 2021, 6:30 p.m. "Scanning and Beyond" with Kay Spears: <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/5421918>

August 17, 2021, 2:30 p.m. "Lifting the Curtain on East European Family History Research" with Joe Everett: <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/5414471>

*The Genealogy Center Continued*

August 19, 2021, 6:30 p.m. "I Seek Dead People: Using America's GenealogyBank to Find Obituaries and More!" with Allison DePrey Singleton: <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/5414481>

August 24, 2021, 2:30 p.m. "Victor Henry's Headstone" with April Earle: <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/5421039>

August 26, 2021, 6:30 p.m. "Beginning Your Family History Journey" with Elizabeth Hodges: <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/5421018>

August 31, 2021, 2:30 p.m. "Genealogy Resources at The Los Angeles Public Library" with Julie Huffman: <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/5421014>

Please register in advance for each program by clicking on the link at the end of the description.

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The Following Information Provided by Gail Taggart

**Southern California Genealogical Society Webinar Series** - Join our 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.
- Register with our partner website, [GoToWebinar.com](http://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](http://GoToWebinar.com) to join the online session.

NEXT UP:

Saturday, August 7

1:00 PM - Eastern

Jurisdictions Explained: Finding New Avenues of Research for Your Family

by Diana Elder, AG®



Exploring each level of record-keeping for a locality can reveal additional records for a research subject. Learn about specific records kept on the town, city, county, state, regional, and federal levels and strategies to locate them. Discover how to create a personal locality guide for your research that will include each appropriate jurisdiction and links to the records and repositories.

Diana Elder AG® is a professional genealogist accredited in the Gulf South region of the United States. Diana is the author of the bestselling book, "Research Like a Pro: A Genealogist's Guide" and creator of the "Research Like a Pro" course. Diana and her daughter, Nicole Dyer, are the hosts of the Research Like a Pro Genealogy Podcast and share research tips on their website, FamilyLocket.com.

Wednesday, August 18

9:00 PM - Eastern

Profile of a Quaker – Finding a Friend in Colonial America

by Steven W. Morrison, MPA



The profile of a Quaker (Religious Society of Friends) can be as distinctive as a fingerprint. By the 1750s, Quakers were the 3rd largest religion in colonial America and kept excellent records. Learn key profiling techniques so you can spot the Quaker in your family tree.

Steven W. Morrison, MPA, is past-president of the Puget Sound APG Chapter, adjunct faculty at The Evergreen State College graduate program for seven years, and coordinator and instructor of a course on Quakers at 2018 SLIG & 2020 GRIP. In 2016, he received the American Society of Genealogists (ASG) scholar award for his paper "Quaker John Starr of Antrim and Cavan, Ireland and his five sons who sailed to Pennsylvania."

**IMPORTANT MESSAGE**

**MCGS MEETINGS**

2nd Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

**VFW Post 319**

**5209 Grand Haven Rd.**

**Norton Shores, MI**



**TENTATIVELY**

**First time in person meeting  
for 2021 on  
Thursday, September 9**

**Genealogy Family**

**History Workshops**

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

No news yet

**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.

Check 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**

**Facebook ..... Norman Dagen**  
**Michigan Genealogical Council**  
**Gail Taggart, Delegate**  
**Newsletter Editor...Tom Porritt**

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Pioneer Program..... Barb Martin  
Programs & Publicity ..Ingrid Porritt  
Tom Shepherd  
Gail Taggart



**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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c/o Hackley Public Library  
Torrent House

315 W. Webster Avenue  
Muskegon, MI 49440-1208

[genealogymuskegon.org](http://genealogymuskegon.org)

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