

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 -

Though all meetings have been cancelled for 2021, things will be better in 2022 as we celebrate 50 years as a society. Thanks to everyone for all your support for our society.

Have a wonderful Happy Thanksgiving. Enjoy yourself with family and friends. Stay safe and healthy.



TIME CHANGE! Oh yes, it will be that time of year that you have to set your clocks back (1) hour on Sunday, November 8. The time change occurs at 2 a.m. but you don't need to stay up to do it.

BATTERIES! Many hazard alarms have 5 and 10 year batteries these days so it is a VERY good idea to be aware of what you have. Change hazard alarm batteries as needed at this time.

Veterans Day Hero's United Parade and Concert - Visit Muskegon

Thursday, November 11, 2021

How Exciting!



In honor of our Veterans, Military, and First Responders, for Veterans Day the United Way and Tyler Sales have partnered together to bring the Budweiser Clydesdales horses to Muskegon for a parade down Western Ave. starting at 4:00pm. The horses will be staged in front of Mercy Health Arena. There will also be a special concert from 6:00pm-9:00pm with Westside Soul Surfers. This is all FREE to the public. Please bring your family and friends to show your appreciation.

Digitized Newspapers

[Digitized Newspapers — White Lake Community Library \(wlclib.org\)](http://www.wlclib.org)

There is a searchable archive for the White Lake Beacon, Whitehall Forum, and Montague Observer. The collection includes papers from 1874-2010.

What's New

MICHIGAN HISTORY MUSEUM, ARCHIVES OF MICHIGAN CONTINUE LIMITED HOURS AND BY APPOINTMENT ACCESS

Until further notice, the Michigan History Museum and the Archives of Michigan in Lansing will continue to operate on a limited and/or by appointment schedule, detailed below.

Michigan History Museum

The Michigan History Museum is open to the public Fridays and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sundays, 1 to 5 p.m. The museum is open Monday-Thursday only for scheduled school field trips and group tours (10 person minimum). Visit the website for [information on scheduling a school or group visit](#)



Archives of Michigan

The Archives of Michigan is open by appointment Monday-Friday, 1 to 5 p.m. and, also by appointment, Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Appointments can be scheduled in advance via the [research appointment request online form](#).

Mask mandate for visitors

The State of Michigan has adopted a mask mandate for state office buildings. This includes the Michigan Library and Historical Center building, which is home to the Michigan History Museum and Archives of Michigan.

Per the policy, a face mask is defined as an N95/KN95/KN94 respirator or other multi-layered breathable fabric that completely covers the nose and mouth, fitting snugly against the sides of the face. [View the full face mask policy \[PDF\] for more information.](#)

THANKSGIVING DECLARED A NATIONAL HOLIDAY!

A thanks-giving holiday has been celebrated in this country almost since the founding. In fact, by the 1860s many states had official thanks-giving holidays, often celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November. In 1827, noted magazine editor and prolific writer Sarah Josepha Hale, known for the nursery rhyme “Mary Had a Little Lamb”, began a campaign to make Thanksgiving a national holiday. She became known as the “Mother of Thanksgiving.”



In the fall of 1863, during the height of the Civil War, Thanksgiving finally received the Presidential

Proclamation that made it an official national holiday. The proclamation by President Lincoln encouraged all Americans to ask God to “commend to his tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife” and to “heal the wounds of the nation.” President Lincoln understood the importance of the holiday during a time of “civil strife”.

Fred L. Reynolds

By Frances Harington

You’ve never heard of Fred L. Reynolds? No, he wasn’t a lumberman or one of Muskegon’s millionaires like Hackley or Pillsbury, he didn’t have a city block downtown named after him like Mason or Rodgers but he was well known in Muskegon for many years and brought joy, laughter, excitement, and tears to many Muskegon residents in the late 1870’s through the 1890’s. So, who was he?

During the Civil War, Fred worked a civilian job in the Quartermaster General’s Office. After the war he traveled with General George Custer on an expedition to Texas, where the two men became good friends. He left government service in 1866 and returned to Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he lived before the war. In 1867, he moved to Muskegon and became a clerk at H.D. Baker’s book store (a successful business that operated in Muskegon on Western Avenue for 45 years). In 1870, he partnered with Adolph Bolza and they opened their own book store. He later bought Mr. Bolza out. In the store he sold gold pens, stationery, novels, magazines, newspapers, tickets, schoolbooks, other items of amusement, and wall paper.



In 1877, the Temperance Reform Association, was having great success in the city and at that time, decided to build a large building for their meetings, offices and library. It was located at Western and 2nd streets and took up that entire block. The building took 1-1/2 years to build and cost \$25,000 (\$509,998 in today’s money). The staircase leading to the 2nd floor auditorium was 14 feet wide to accommodate groups of people ascending and descending it at the same time. The auditorium was large enough to hold 1,000 people. It was beautifully decorated with a stage that measured 28 feet by 63 feet, with three dressing rooms on the sides. The walls had been frescoed (painted in water-color on wet plaster) with figures of Muses (goddesses of the various arts, such as music, dance, and poetry). It had fourteen changes of scenery and a beautiful drop curtain. It was first named the Temperance Reform Opera House but later called the Grand Opera Theatre. It was one of the finest in the State. It was meant to provide a wholesome alternative to the drunkenness and wild living that was prevalent at the time.

And who do you think was the Manager of the Opera House for over 20 years...Fred L. Reynolds, that’s who. At first, he was only able to get ordinary road companies here, but Fred soon developed a rapport with more noted theatrical producers and was able to bring in well-known performers. It was because of Fred that the people of Muskegon were being entertained in their own city by the best in American entertainment. After a time, the Temperance Association lost interest in the project and the Opera House was sold to a group of local lumbermen. With Fred as the manager, the Opera House was a success. The performances ranged from Shakespeare to Burlesque. Muskegon loved to be entertained, and Fred made sure they were. The most popular performances were the melodramas performed by touring companies consisting of well-known actors and actresses. Fred got to be good friends with many of them and gained a national reputation because of it. The most popular person to perform at the Opera House was Mme. Helen Mojeska, who always played to sellout crowds. In 1889, she held the House’s box office record at \$1,100 for a single performance. The most popular plays performed at the House were “Skipped by the Light of the Moon” and “Uncle Tom’s Cabin”.

The Opera House also had musical performances. Famous musicians, such as, the Great Gilmore and John Philip Sousa played there. The Opera House was also known to have lecturers come and speak. You might recognize this speaker's name - Susan B. Anthony. That's right, Susan B. Anthony spoke in Muskegon!

While the lumber mills were still up and running (and the cash was flowing), the Opera House did quite well under Fred's management; but when the lumber mills (and the income from them) diminished, so did the patronage. In 1911, the Opera House/Grand Opera Theatre, no longer in business, was sold to the Elks for \$25,000 - the amount it cost to build it in 1877.

In 1898, Fred and the Grand Theater Orchestra moved to the newly constructed theatre at Pere Marquette Park, known as Park Theatre. The Theater booked all kinds of vaudeville acts, especially those from the actor's colony. The actor's colony was a summer resort in Muskegon for many vaudeville performers. Unfortunately, Fred didn't get to enjoy much time at the Park Theatre because he died the next year.



He was known as "the genial Fred", meaning he was always friendly and cheerful. Besides being the manager of the Opera House for over 20 years and operating his book store for longer than that, Fred was also a ticket agent for the Crosby Transportation Co. and the Chicago & Grand Trunk Railroad, he was a partner in Reynolds & Leonard (a business that made bill posters), and served as Alderman for 2 years. He was a member of the B. P. O. E. (Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks) and the F. & A. M. (Free & Accepted Masons), and a charter member of the Knights of Pythias. At his funeral, the Elks acted as an escort and marched as a body at the head of the funeral procession. The service at the grave was conducted by the Elks according to the rituals of the Order.

Fred L. Reynolds was born in Rhode Island in 1842 to William and Rebecca (Lauyer/Lawyer) Reynolds. He married Caroline Gibson in Muskegon in 1870. They had four children: William, Grace, Rodney, and Fred Jr. Fred Sr. died of Bright's disease in December, 1899, at the age of 57. Fred and all his family members are buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Muskegon.

So, now you know a little about who Fred L. Reynolds was...a husband, father, friend, and hard-working businessman who raised his family, served his community, and kept the people of Muskegon entertained for over two decades.

(Sources: Sketch of Opera House from Muskegon and It's Resources (Muskegon Board of Trade); Findagrave.com; Ancestry.com; Street Names of Greater Muskegon (Mark Okkonen); Genealogybank.com; photo of Fred L. Reynolds from the Local History & Genealogy Dept. of Hackley Library photo collection,; Muskegon Chronicle; The Many Lives of Muskegon (Yates & Hornstein).

GENEALOGY TRIVIA

Where do surnames come from? Surnames came into being around 1200 AD in Europe. Of course it was a very long process and may have started hundreds of years earlier and went on for centuries afterward. There are four general groups: occupations, place names, appearance, or patronymic. Here are a few examples:

Occupations such as "Weaver" or "Baker". Place Names (also geographic features) such as "Hill" or "Riverton". Appearance such as "Short" or "Gray". Patronymic such as "Robertson" meaning "Son of Robert" or "McAndrew" meaning "Son of Andrew".

Southern California Genealogical Society Webinar Series

Webinar 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
- You MUST Register to participate.
- Click on the Webinar Title you want to attend.
- 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, November 6

1:00 PM - Eastern

It Takes a Village to Unearth the “Real” History

by Billie R. McNamara

Researchers spend substantial time on solo efforts or sharing with small cohorts. Participating in larger, crowd sourcing activities enhances skills exponentially. Each contributor brings resources to a resulting knowledge base. Define, describe the value of, and acquire tools for locating and assessing crowd-sourcing opportunities. Develop techniques for honing personal skills from crowd-sourced knowledge.

Billie R. McNamara is an international award winning family historian, author, editor, and educator with more than 35 years of experience. She is the founder of TNGenWeb Project and currently participates in TNGenWeb, PAGenWeb, FamilySearch, and other on-line genealogical and historical initiatives in the U. S. and U.K. She consults with individuals and organizations on family/local history research, problem solving, especially tech implementation, marketing.

Wednesday, November 17

9:00 PM - Eastern

Western Overland Trails – Following the Seven Ts

by Steven W. Morrison, MPA

An overview of the seven major western overland trails, Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, Santa Fe Trail and more. Learn about seven tracking techniques to help locate your ancestor and trace their route West.

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.”

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 below individual titles doesn't work, copy and paste the link below.

[The Genealogy Center - YouTube](#)

Learning to Use the Genealogy Center Catalog

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

A Lonely Voyage: Late 19th Century Irish Immigrant Women in the United States

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oza5lifDlmc>

Victory Henry's Headstone

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nw53oHpcfgA>

Expanding Your Family History Journey

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0OBLPLOWwY>

Introduction to Irish Internet Sites

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfdToil8uuc>

Are There Black Sheep in Your Family?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5qBqiRqUR4>

2021 McMurtry Lectures: Influences That Shaped Abraham Lincoln

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9waX_V-he0

Lincoln At The Library: Mary Lincoln and Poetry

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=912HzPdXuzg>



**INTERESTED
IN YOUR
FAMILY
HISTORY?**

Muskegon County Clerk's Office is open to the public for family history research of Muskegon County Marriage and Death Certificates:

- Monday through Thursday: 8:30am to 4:00pm
- Friday: 8:30am thru 2:00pm

Need assistance?

Muskegon County Genealogical Society is on site to help/ answer questions every Wednesday from 1:00pm thru 4:00pm.

MUSKEGON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

** 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
- \$50.00 Double in the USA
- We are a non-profit organization 501 (c) (3)
If you wish to make a donation, please fill in the amount \$ _____

*PHONE (____) _____

*E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

*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

Date Received _____
Check # _____ Amount Paid _____
Paid Cash _____
Money Order _____
PayPal _____

Rev. Oct 2021

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

MCGS MEETINGS

2nd Thursday at 6:30 p.m.
FWV Post 3195
5209 Grand Haven Rd.
Norton Shores, MI



**ALL MEETINGS
CANCELLED
FOR 2021**

**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

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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 to put your family history in Vol. 2

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:
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Torrent House
315 W. Webster Avenue
Muskegon, MI 49440-1208

genealogymuskegon.org

1972mcgs@gmail.com

