

MUSKEGON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Founded 1972

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December 2021

T W I G T A L K

Newsletter



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[Celebrating 50 years in 2022](#)

President's Message

By Dawn Westcomb Kelley -



The meeting for Thursday, January 13, is questionable because of COVID. We will keep you posted.

I'm hoping that 2022 will be a better year for all of us to have genealogy meetings or gatherings. So please stay safe and healthy so we can see you soon.

2022 is the 50th year Anniversary for our society. From January thru December 2022. If each of you can think of why you enjoy researching your family history and if found something that you have researched that might help others, we would like to put your story in Twig Talk. Short or long story we would love to hear from YOU!

If you have not been organizing your records, genealogy, pictures and the stacks of papers that you keep looking at, you are falling behind. With my own personal, genealogy, I am still organizing everything; yes, it takes longer than you think, because something always pops up, but remember to go where you left off. Try to stay with one project and finish it. When we get any mail, the first thing we do is to look at it. If we do not need it, I shred or recycle the papers and envelopes.

Library Update

Following the New Year holidays, HPL will open on January 4, 2022 with new business hours, approved by the HPL Board and published as of yesterday:

| | <u>Main Library</u> | <u>Torrent House</u> |
|-----------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Monday | 9 AM - 7 PM | CLOSED |
| Tuesday | 9 AM - 7 PM | 10 AM - 5 PM |
| Wednesday | 9 AM - 5 PM | 10 AM - 5 PM |
| Thursday | 9 AM - 5 PM | 10 AM - 5 PM |
| Friday | 9 AM - 5 PM | 10 AM - 5 PM |
| Saturday | 9 AM - 5 PM | 10 AM - 5 PM |
| Sunday | CLOSED | CLOSED |

If there are any changes made to the above times between now and then, for instance due to Covid-19, we will notify you.

Also, 36 more books of the Muskegon Chronicle Newspaper Vitals, by Matt Burns, are now on the shelves at the Torrent House.

Do not forget to pay your Membership dues for 2022. An application is included with this issue of TTN.

MARKING TIME

GRAVESTONE WEATHERING, PART 2

By Cristine Bouwkamp

Superior Monument / Patten Monument Co.

In a previous column that appeared in the May 2021 issue of TTN, I wrote about the three categories of gravestone weathering: Physical, Biological, and Chemical.

Examples are:

- Physical—freeze and thaw conditions;
- Biological—lichen, mold, and moss growth;
- Chemical—acid rain, or cleaning agents.

The various types of materials used for markers are affected differently by each of these. Bronze, Zinc, Limestone, Slate, and Granite are all susceptible to some kind of weathering.

Last time I covered the biological aspect, and cleaning solutions to help preserve and not damage the marker which also touched on chemical reactions of cleaners.

Today, I want to explore Physical weathering.

To start, I'll remind the reader that rock is porous. All of the types of rock are porous to a varying degree and none are solid. Liquid and air pass through rock.

Rain will soak the rock, staying wet until enough air and sunshine dry it out. When it's cold the moisture will freeze and then expand. It will thaw out eventually and dry but the "freeze/thaw" condition has a negative effect on the stone eventually. Cracks or fractures can occur especially on soft or weak stones like limestone and slate. Sealant between markers and bases can be broken by this too. Cement foundations are also affected and will eventually crumble after repeated exposure.

So, what are the results? You've seen them many times! Cracks, broken stones, tablets falling over and laying on the ground beside the base. Tilting and sinking monuments occur when the ground and cement pads have been affected by rain and snow.

So what can we do? Well, not much. The snow and rain aren't going anywhere, but we have made improvements to help reduce the damage.

Using high quality monument grade granite is one good step. Proper joint sealants instead of caulk or cement is another. Cement mixes have improved and the use of a MonuGrid cell system instead of cement will help too.

Prevention is part of the solution but what can you do if you see damaged stones or stones that are

sliding off their bases? First -Don't touch them! It's dangerous. You can contact the cemetery department or sexton to notify them of the problem. Some are equipped to make repairs, some have regulations they follow, and some will contact a monument company or local preservationist for assistance. If there are living family members, they may need to be the one that hires out for the repair. Foundation repair or replacement is often done by the cemetery maintenance crew and is sometimes part of perpetual care. Each cemetery has regulations to follow so contacting them first is always the best idea.

Cemetery owners, families, enthusiasts, and monument companies all have the best interests of the monuments and cemetery grounds in mind. We all work together to ensure a beautiful, safe and respectful environment to visit, enjoy and honor loved ones.

Have you ever wondered what it would take to become a knowledgeable and trusted preservationist? It feels like a shame to see the beautiful old monuments crumbling and falling down doesn't it? It takes skill, knowledge and dedication to make proper and safe repairs. A little google research isn't enough. Our community needs more preservationists. If that is something that interests you, I'd love to talk more about it. Send me an email at cristine@supeiormonument.com and I'll point you in the right direction.

A NEW MONUMENT FOR THE BABIES OF OAKWOOD CEMETERY

Cristine Bouwkamp

Superior Monument/Patten Monument

Earlier this summer the City of Muskegon cemetery department contacted Superior Monument about a section of Oakwood Cemetery that had once been used as a "Babyland". The two lots, 4 and 5 of Block 27 range 25, were used from 1919 through 1954 for infant and still-born children. All burials were properly recorded and maps properly marked. However, the designated lots had never been marked with a memorial stone and as with many babyland sections in other cemeteries, individual markers were not allowed.



Historically, babyland sections of cemeteries were used by people who did not own family plots, or people who thought it was more comforting for babies to be laid to rest together. There are some instances of still born infants whose families could not afford a grave and the burial arrangements were made at no cost in the baby section. Even now, regardless of income, many cemeteries waive some or all of the fee's in baby sections. Muskegon currently has 3 cemeteries that have active babyland sections. St. Mary's, Restlawn and Sunrise Memorial Gardens each have different regulations and fees. Some funeral homes also waive fees for any still born child regardless of age. Death certificates are issued for any child over 24 weeks. Fetal burial certificates are issued for any child under 24 weeks. This was part of the Act that passed in 1924.

Oakwood Babyland has 140 infants buried in the two designated lots. The city and Superior Monument worked together to have a beautiful angel carved statue monument placed on the lot to honor the lives of those 140

children. Many of those children have death certificates and through the research done by Dawn and Fran of the Genealogical Society, Lyra Webb of the City Cemetery department and Samantha Chidester of Superior Monument, we have death, birth and burial dates for most of those children. Their names and information are available on a new memorial page that can be found by going to <https://monumark.com/monumarks/?tag=39834> or visiting the gravesite and scanning the QR code that has been activated by the City of Muskegon. Messages to the children can be left on the memorial page. It is hoped that Find-A-Grave links will be added so that uploaded death or birth certificates will be easily available to families looking for more information.

The City of Muskegon has done a great service to the families of Muskegon with this special acknowledgement of a beautiful memorial. We applaud them and are proud to be part of this sweet memorial project.

“For all the babies who were never rocked in the arms of their parents, or whose time of rocking was far too brief, may they be rocked forever in the arms of the angels.”

ONE HEADSTONE— THREE CHILDREN

By Frances Harrington

I was taking pictures in Oakwood Cemetery the other day to fulfill as many of the 300 requests for headstone pictures, as I could, off the Find A Grave website. Some of the requests dated back to 2013 so I decided to tackle it and get as many as I could before the weather got too bad. I already did the Evergreen Cemetery requests and the ones for Restlawn Cemetery, also. I left Oakwood for last because the Cemetery is so large (over 30,000 graves) and the task seem overwhelming.

While I was there, I noticed a headstone that had 3 children listed on it. I thought maybe they all died from diphtheria or something like that because I noticed they all died the same year and then I noticed they died the same day! I decided to do some research on them to find out what happened.

In the fall of 1887, the Howd family lived at 38 Park Street in Muskegon. Mrs. Howd had gone to a temperance meeting at 7:30 p.m. while Mr. Howd was home with the children. He put them to bed in their upstairs bedroom and left a lamp burning in their room. After they had fallen to sleep, he left the house to pick up his wife from the meeting around 9:30 p.m. and stayed for a little while. Shortly after he left, a neighbor, William Burns, noticed a fire in the upstairs of the house and set off the alarm. He then worked hard to get into the home. When he did, he headed for the upstairs to see if the children were there, but didn't get far because of the heat and smoke. Meanwhile, the other neighbors had started moving out what belongings they could from the downstairs of the home. It didn't take long for the fireman to put the blaze out once they got there. When the Fire Chief started checking the upper floor, he was overwhelmed by the site of the three children, still in their beds, covered with ash and debris, dead from the smoke and flames. The parents came home just as they were removing their children's bodies and of course, were besides themselves with grief. They had heard the alarm but had no idea it was for a fire at their own home.

At the inquest, the jury ruled that the lamp had probably exploded, setting the room on fire and suffocating the children, before they were burned. It turns out, the lamp had already been repaired once before. They didn't find the parents were to blame for the accident, although, some of the people from town voiced their opinions otherwise, because the children were home alone when this happened. It was also stated in the Chronicle that, “never in the history of Muskegon has a sadder affair of this kind occurred”. In fact, the incident was reported throughout the country.

These are the names and ages of the three young victims: Osborne was 5 years, Cora was almost 3 years, and Walter, the youngest, was almost a year old when this tragic accident happened. The next day, all the children in little Osborne's kindergarten class were allowed to leave school to attend the funeral. Every one of his class mates attended, each bringing a flower.

Francis A. and Lida (Cooley) Howd were married on 14 August 1880, in Montcalm County, Michigan. Mr. Howd had been a school teacher but with a wife and children, he probably needed to make more money than a teacher's salary, so he started working as a sawmaker for Barcus Brothers (manufacturer of circular saws) in Muskegon.

Not long after the fire, the couple left Muskegon. I wonder if it might have been because of people blaming them, and bad mouthing them, because of the fire. We all know how cruel and "holier than thou" people can be. In 1888, their son, Cloise, was born in Iowa. By 1900, they are living in Pacific County, Washington, where Francis is working in a saw mill. Besides Cloise, they have 5 more children: Hazel, Otis, Eugene, Alice, and Irma. They live out the rest of their lives in Pacific County. Lida (Cooley) Howd died in 1908 and Francis A. Howd died in 1926.



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

[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 information contained on 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 to 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 _____

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Rev. Oct 2021

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

MCGS MEETINGS

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



AT THIS TIME THERE ARE NO PLANS FOR A MEETING ON JANUARY 13, 2022

Genealogy Family History Workshops

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



Future workshops will be changing in 2022!

LOCAL HISTORY & GENEALOGY DEPARTMENT

Changes to the Local History & Genealogy Department. PLEASE call ahead of time at 231-722-8016.

See page one of this issue for the HPL and Torernt House business hours.

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
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- Newsletter Editor..... Tom Porritt
- 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 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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