

MUSKEGON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Founded 1972

Vol. 22 No. 5

May 2022

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 -

Your society board met for the first time in person since 2020. The board voted to add Gail Taggart, Jim Harkness, and Fran Harrington for 2022. Welcome to the new board members and thanks to those who have served in the past. Gail has been involved with representing the society as a delegate to the state wide society for several years. Jim Harkness has worked with veteran projects in the past and is helping Kathy DeCormier with the new county book. Fran's gift for research, writing and sharing her knowledge has been entertaining and inspiring this past year. She will be helping out with several special projects and backing up those at the county clerk's office.

We have received from Michigan Genealogical Council official recognition of our 50th year anniversary. It is now framed and posted on the wall at the Torrent House in the Local History & Genealogy Dept. Fifty years of supporting genealogical research, adding to the collections, supporting the local history department and working with the public, have made the society an important resource for many.

At the recent board meeting, it was voted to spend funds to bind three books of vital records that were completed and to cover the cost of more in the future. This supports the commitment one individual has taken on to add to the collections of vital records. The books provide access to the information for the public and relates directly to our mission statement. We certainly appreciate all the time and work involved with this project.

May is the time to check out family cemetery plots. Remember that each cemetery has different rules about everything from type of flowers, where to place them, where to park in the cemetery and what not to do. Please keep in mind that planters often have to be filled each year. Some cemeteries mark those that are not filled and after several years remove them. It is always good to check those rules posted and not be surprised. Cemeteries are a peaceful place, so take the time to enjoy and cherish memories as you plant new flowers or tidy up the area.

The board is looking at ways that we can reach everyone in a meaningful way with research tools, training, or information. Many societies have been using Zoom on a regular basis, for example the Genealogy Center at Allen County Library, Fort Wayne. They have been archiving earlier programs, so you can go back or see them again. They, like other genealogy groups have been providing information about the

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program before it is seen and many of the presenters use closed captions, which is wonderful. We have to look at doing things differently, more creatively, and learn how best we can serve our society's members and support our mission.

Days to Remember in May

May 8 – Mothers Day: have an awesome day.

May 21 – Armed Force Day: honors those serving.

May 30 – Memorial Day - Instituted following after World War I to honor all military personnel who died in U.S. wars.

We will see you soon in person or virtual. Stay safe and healthy!

Treasurer Report

From 2020 to April 7, 2022, our assets are \$13,254.23

HPL-Torrent House Our Local History & Genealogy Dept.

Dates they will be open & closed – Friday, May 27 opened from 10 to noon because of Hackley Day, and closed on Sat., May 28.

We are excited to help you get started on your one on one research. Contact the society at 1972mcgs@gmail.com or call the Local History & Genealogy Dept. at 231-722-8016. Tuesday thru Saturday 10:00a.m. - 12:00 and 1:00p.m – 4:00p.m. **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY!**

New Books Added

Muskegon County, Michigan Polk City Directory 2020

Muskegon County, Michigan Polk City Directory 2021

McGraft Church and Port City Church

McGraft Church and Port City Church have merged. This information came in the form of a phone call from Bob Dillard. The combined church has set up a "legacy room" of their history. Hours are 9 a.m. to Noon. This includes a book containing baptism, confirmation, weddings, and deaths. The church phone number is 231.759.0166

1950 Federal Census

Now that the 1950 U.S. Federal Census are here and ready for you to find you and your families. I found mine after going to 1950census.archives.gov Go to Begin to Research. I knew where my families lived, state, and city. Sometimes it did not work with the name, but worked by putting in the street address. If I did not know the street address, I went to the Muskegon City Directories to find the address.

TIP - From Ancestry

Voters register

Voters register are great records to use as census substitutes. They usually contain the name of a head of household and other adults.

Immigrants

Immigrants often traveled with other family members and neighbors from the same hometowns. When they arrived in their new home, they may have lived near these people too. Research passengers list, to see who traveled with your ancestor - look a few pages before and backward.

Moses J. Jones

Muskegon Pastor

By Melanie McLeod

My name is Melanie McLeod and I am a member of "Roll On Muskegon". We are a community biking group that started 7 years ago as inspired by Detroit's "Slow Roll". We meet every Monday at 6:30 pm at the Muskegon Farmers Market. We ride slowly through any neighborhoods we can get to within 60-90 minutes. Our rides usually have a theme...murals, parks, a historical building, a notable person. We stop along the ride to hear a "story" that goes with the theme. We do not ride quickly. We like to say, "If you are out of breath on this ride, it is because you are chatting too much". If you have a bike and want to join the fun, we would love for you to join us.

Recently, our story was about a notable figure from Muskegon's recent past. Have you ever driven on the section of road down by the old farmers market that is named the Moses J. Jones Parkway? Did you wonder, "Who was Moses J. Jones and what did he do?" You are not alone.

Moses J. Jones was born in 1898 in Montgomery County, Alabama. He was the grandson of slaves. When he grew up, he became a pastor. In 1936, he was invited to come to Muskegon to preside at the John Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church that had been started 13 years earlier. The first location of this church (the building is long gone) was on Webster Avenue...in the area where Seaway Drive ends and downtown starts. Reverend Jones served at the church for 36 years. Under his leadership, the church flourished. They were able to pay off debts and buy property. The church served the community, but by the 1950s the facility was inadequate.

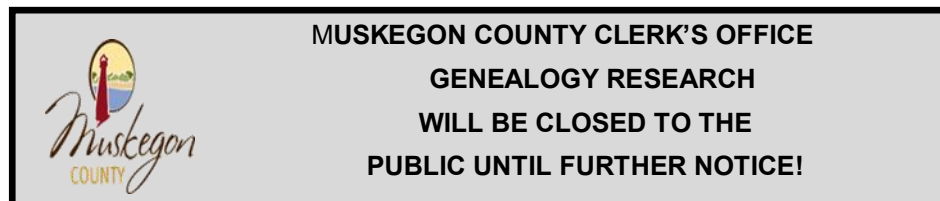
In 1969, the congregation moved to a beautiful church on the corner of Wood Street and Amity Avenue in the Jackson Hill Neighborhood. In addition to meeting the area's spiritual needs, they set up the basement as a refuge for the youth in the community. They had pool tables, table tennis, a music room and library. They also had places to play baseball and basketball.

Reverend Jones was best known for his "Good Will Dinners". The purpose of these dinners was to feed the hungry of Muskegon and ALSO foster interracial harmony.

Every day, Reverend Jones would go to local bakeries and grocery stores and get day old goods which he would use to feed those in need. He would also get "out of style" suits from clothing stores to give to individuals who could not afford clothing for interviews and such. He would sell the suits for a mere \$10 but if someone could not afford that...he would give them the suit.

People who knew him are on record as saying they do not think Reverend Jones was able to pay for these goods and services out of his own pocket as he had little money himself. But because he had such a stellar reputation, the businesses most likely donated most of the goods.

Reverend Moses J. Jones retired from the church in 1972. He died in 1989 at the age of 91. Shortly thereafter, the Muskegon city commissioners paid tribute to his memory by renaming the northern end of Seaway Drive "Moses J. Jones Parkway." It remains there to this day. If you were to stand on the location of that first church...you can see the highway which was named after this lovely man.



Mary E (Richards) Swayze

Muskegon's First Special Teacher

By Frances Harrington

If you've spent any time on Facebook (and I'll admit I spend too much), you've probably read posts about kids not being taught cursive writing anymore. I thought it was just one of those "fake news" posts I see all too often. After looking up the subject, I found that most US schools do not have cur

sive as a part of their curriculum. As of 2020, the website mycursive.com reported that only 21 states still required school children to learn cursive. Oh, and Michigan isn't one of them. So, if you don't know how to write cursive, how will you be able to read it? As genealogists, we know the importance of reading handwritten material since so many old documents are in cursive. Granted, some of the handwriting is hard to read, but others are beautiful. That beautiful writing skill brings me to the subject of this article, Mary E. Swayze.

Mary E. Richards, was born in Bayham, Elgin County, Ontario, Canada in 1841. Her father, James Richards, was a farmer. His wife's name was Frances (Parker). They had 7 children. Mr. Richards had a high regard for teachers and ministers. He showed many of them the hospitality of his home over the years. Perhaps that is where Mary and her older brother George got the desire to become educators. Mr. Richards' children all went to school because he saw the importance of an education. For Mary to attend grammar school, she had to walk 2 ½ miles each day. By the time she was 15, she was teaching school, even though she was too young to receive a teaching certificate. She saved her earnings from her teaching job and when she was 18, she entered the Wesleyan Seminary at Springfield, Massachusetts. After her graduation, she returned to Canada and began teaching there. Throughout her educational years, she had a passion for penmanship. I'm not talking the normal cursive writing we were taught in grade school. I'm talking "penmanship". Penmanship is actually the art or skill of good handwriting. She spent her spare time studying it, and improving her own. She learned the Spencerian method of penmanship. Spencerian was used from 1850 to 1925 and considered the American standard at the time because it could be written quickly, lightly, and elegantly. It became an art form to her and she proved to be very "artistic".

In 1863, Mary married Salem Swayze and moved to the United States. They lived in Illinois and Iowa before coming to Muskegon in 1875, where Mr. Swayze worked as a contractor, carpenter, builder, and house mover for many years. A short time after their arrival, Mary approached to Board of Education offering her service as a teacher of penmanship. She showed them a sample of her penmanship and they were in awe of the beauty and readability of what she wrote. Even though they thought a special teacher for penmanship was a good idea, they chose not to do it at that time. Mary decided to start a private evening school to teach her beautiful penmanship skills. James C McLaughlin (later Congressman) and R Andrew Fleming (ex-Mayor of Muskegon) were only two of the many private students she taught. Soon, the Board decided to hire Mary on a trial basis for 2 months at \$40 per month. After the trial period she was hired on as Muskegon's first "Special Teacher". According to a Chronicle article, Trustee Nelson of the Board of Education said, "Mrs. Swayze's ambition and example set to the teachers by her enthusiasm, were worth \$500 to the public schools of Muskegon". He obviously meant \$500 per year, just slightly over the \$40 per month she made during her trial period. Her salary eventually increased to \$80 per month or \$960 per year. A very good salary in those days.

Mary was assigned as Special Teacher of Penmanship but did not have a set classroom to teach from. When she began, there were 23 school rooms (not all in the same building) and that later increased to 60 that she taught from. She traveled from school to school throughout the city. At first, she visited each school every other day and after a time, it ended up being once every 2 weeks.

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Later, Superintendent Bunker decided she should also teach Bookkeeping so she spent 9 weeks in Kalamazoo at the Parson's Business College to prepare for it. Her title was then changed to Special Teacher of Penmanship and Bookkeeping.



In 1889, Mary resigned for health reasons. In 1894, she started teaching again, this time, as a Special Teacher in Grand Haven. She taught for 6 years in the public schools and 1 day each week, for 1 year, she taught at Akeley Institute. She was held in such high regard that on Arbor Day, 1900, her Grand Haven pupils planted a Maple tree in her honor. After she left the Grand Haven public schools, she began teaching at the Morehouse Business College in Muskegon and continued to give private lessons at her home.

One of Mary's fondest memories was of a determined young maid servant who used to come to Mary's home, night after night, for private lessons in penmanship and bookkeeping. By 1909, this young woman was working in a metropolitan office earning \$250 per month. (The average yearly wage for men at that time was \$200-\$400 a year!)

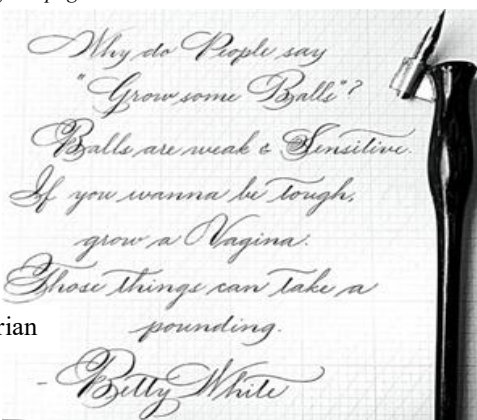
Throughout her teaching career, she held office in various teacher's associations, like the Business Educator's Association. She was the President of the Writing Department for the Federation of Writing and Drawing Teachers in 1897. In 1898, her Grand Haven public school pupils took 1st prize in the Commercial Teachers' Federation penmanship contest. She was also recognized in the Penman's Art Journal. Additionally, she was a member of Muskegon Woman's Club for many years focusing on the betterment of social and other conditions in the city.

In the book, "Romance of Muskegon" they stated that the handwriting of some of her students looks like Copperplate". Copperplate was an ornate calligraphy where upper- and lower-case letters have shading and is at a slightly different angle than Spencerian.

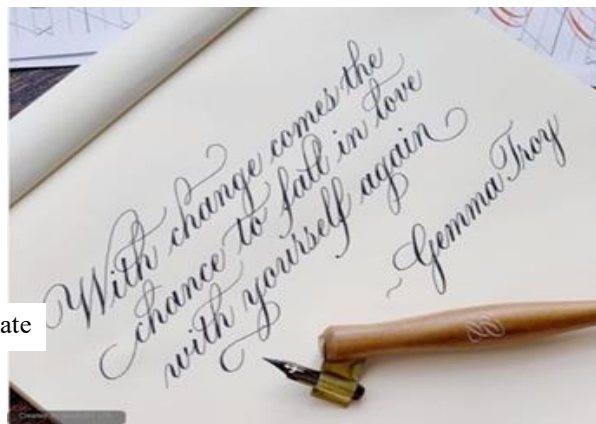
When Mary retired in 1909, she was the oldest woman teacher in the State of Michigan. Mary fought TB for 2 years before dying of the disease in 1911. She was survived by her husband Salem (who died in 1930), her son Glenn R. Swayze, and her daughter Ida Dell (Swayze) Williams.

Unfortunately, I was unable to find a sample of Mary's actual penmanship, but since she studied and taught the Spencerian method, I've included some samples below.

(Continued on page 6)



Spencerian



Copperplate

Sources: Lakeshore Museum Center (photo), Genealogy & Local History Dept. of Hackley Library, Genealogybank.com, Ancestry.com, Findagrave.com, Penman's Journal, Daily Inter Ocean (Chicago), 1882 Catalog of Muskegon Schools, Educators of Michigan 1900 (JH Beers & Co), Loutit Library (Grand Haven Tribune), Romance of Muskegon, Spencerian Penmanship Theory (P R Spencer), Caligraphyquill.com.



10 Things You Need to Know about Copyright and Genealogy

GENEALOGY BARGAINS

[HTTPS://GENEALOGYBARGAINS.COM](https://genealogybargains.com)

1. Facts Can't Be Copyrighted. Birth dates, death dates, locations of events, etc. are not covered by copyright. So, as a genealogist you can copy this type of information and use it freely in your research, reports, family trees etc.
2. How Are You Using a Copyrighted Work? If your research will remain unpublished, your worries are few. However, if you have a blog or you are publishing a family history book, you do need to understand what is and isn't allowed in terms of usage.
3. Assume everything is copyrighted. Prove the work is public domain, royalty free or covered by a special license; or a) can be used according to Fair Use provisions; or b) can be used through permission or licensing. Otherwise, don't use it!
4. What Does a Copyright Bestow to the Owner of a Work? When you own the copyright to a work, you can control how that work is used by yourself and others. This includes genealogy books, written family stories, even audio and video recordings.
5. Copyright Myths. Don't make these assumptions: "It's on the Internet so it must be free to use!" or "There's no copyright notice. Author loses and I win!" or "The book I'm using is out of print."
6. When in doubt, research or ask. Ask the owner of the work if and how the work can be used. Ignorance is not a valid excuse.
7. The Truth about Fair Use. For purposes of criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research, you can use portions of copyrighted works. Copyright is not meant to interfere with or impede scholarly research. Make sure your use meets the Fair Use standard.
8. How Long Does a Copyright Last? Due to the many changes to US copyright law, determining the length of copyright can be difficult. For guidance, use the Copyright Genie <https://librarycopyright.net/resources/genie/> to determine copyright issues.
9. Cite Your Sources! Not only do source citations serve you as a genealogist and help improve the research process, for Fair Use purposes you should make clear the name of the work, the author and all pertinent details in your citation.
10. When to Worry about Copyright. Don't let the fear of using materials in both your research and a published or unpublished report or book keep you from breaking down brick walls or serving your genealogy clients "Don't worry ... be educated!"

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- 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, May 7 1:00 PM - Eastern

Where There's a Will There's a Way... to Research your Family

by Daniel Horowitz

Daniel was asked to review the will of a distant relative to find the person's living relatives. As he examined each page & began building the family tree, new details began to emerge — and the MyHeritage algorithm began to work its magic. Smart Matches™ and Record Matches revealed additional records to prove Daniel's theories, and he was able to uncover new information and locate the descendants.

Dedicated to Genealogy since 1986, Daniel Horowitz has been working at MyHeritage since 2006 liaising with genealogy societies, bloggers, and media, as well as lecturing, and attending conferences around the world. He was the teacher and the study guide editor of the family history project "Searching for My Roots" in Venezuela for 15 years, and volunteers at the Israel Genealogy Research Association (IGRA)

Wednesday, May 18 9:00 PM - Eastern

The Art of Slow Genealogy

by Tara Shymanski, BA, PLCGS

Are you a genealogy tortoise or a hare? The hare rushes to find new documents but genealogy tortoises create more accurate and thorough family trees. This step-by-step method suggests ways to slow down, cite your sources, and read and analyze records. This process results in a more precise family history.

Tara Shymanski's lifelong passion for genealogy started when she heard family stories as a teenager. She has a BA in History and a Certificate in Canadian Records from the National Institute for Genealogical Studies. Tara is enthusiastic about educating herself and others on completing comprehensive and accurate family histories. She blogs to tell her family stories.

Saturday, June 4 1:00 PM – Eastern

On and Off the Train: Pullman Porters and Maids

by Janice Lovelace, PhD

The Pullman company was one of the leading employers of African Americans who worked on the railroad. The prime routes ran cross country ending in Los Angeles or San Francisco. How do we find records of our ancestors who were Pullman Porters or Maids?

Janice Lovelace, PhD (psychology), has 30+ years of experience in genealogical research, as well as completing academic work in the area (certificate program in genealogy at Boston University). She has presented nationally and regionally on women's and ethnic minority genealogy, research methodology and health issues.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

MCGS MEETINGS

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



2022 Meetings
Hoping to meet soon

RESEARCH HELP
With



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

Please call 231 722-8016
or email us at

1972mcgs@gmail.com

for your one-on-one
appointment!

LOCAL HISTORY & GENEALOGY
DEPARTMENT

Call 231-722-8016
Sunday and Monday — Closed
Tuesday through Saturday
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

More on their website
hackleylibrary.org/local-history-genealogy/research-sources-at-the-torrent-house



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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

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