

MUSKEGON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Founded 1972

Vol. 22 No. 8

August 2022

T W I G T A L K

Newsletter



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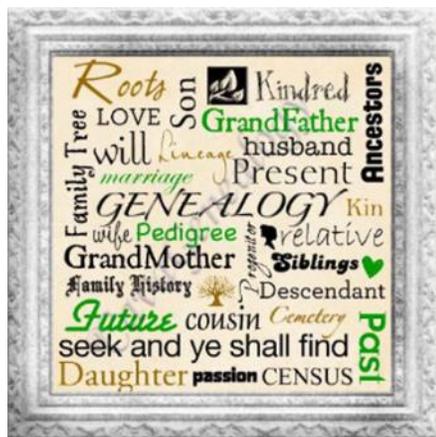
Celebrating 50 years in 2022

President's Message

By Dawn Westcomb Kelley

Membership meeting!

Do not forget to mark the date of our first membership meeting since March 2020, which will be held on Saturday, September 17, 2022 at 10:30 a.m. Specific meeting information is on page 2.



Membership meetings dates or places could change in 2023 and we will keep you posted when that happens.

Information that you might know or should know:

The Ravenna Independent News was founded on July 4, 1976. If you would like to know anything about the families from Ravenna or the family happenings in Ravenna, buy or go to Ravenna Library or Egelston Library to check it out or read them at library.

www.ravennaindependent.com

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Ravenna-Independent-197221003644200>

Newaygo County – Fremont, Michigan

The Terry Wantz Historical Research Center at 30 East Main Street, Fremont is a good resource if you have any ancestors that lived in Newaygo County. This is must historical research center to visit. The Center opened March 2012. **Email:** Director@TWHRC.comcastbiz.net - **Phone:** 231-335-2221

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/TerryWantzHistoricalResearchCenter>

Contact Email kate.twhrc@gmail.com

Marriage License Tid Bit

Muskegon County marriage licenses included the parent's names for the first time on September 29, 1887.

(continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Family Tree Magazine

Historic Map Works

www.historicmapworks.com

With more than 1.6 million searchable historic maps and images, this site lets you match historic maps with modern Google ones and search in the old property maps and directories. Subscribers can use a premium viewing tool, but there's plenty here for free.

US Geological Survey

www.usgs.gov

Where in the heck is your ancestors' old stomping grounds of "West Thumb"? The USGS' Geographic Names Information System <edits.nationalmaps.gov/apps/gaz-domestic/public/search/names> knows. You can also put places on the map with satellite, topographic and geologic maps.

Platitude or Inspirational Saying

Family tree research is one giant step backwards and one giant step forward—usually at the same time!

TIP - From GenealogyBank

Many genealogists neglect telling their own stories, while in the midst of telling the stories about others. Do not let that happen to your family. Your children may not thank you, but if you preserve the family genealogy your great, great, great, great, descendants will remember you as super-great!

Finally, that's all for this month. Stay safe, healthy and see you soon!

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Held every month except July and December.

We are one month closer to our first general membership meeting in over 2 years!



Please tell your genealogy friends about the new location, date, and time.

NEW Location: Hackley Public Library, Lower Level (Handicapped Accessible with ramp & elevator). Use the front door only.

NEW Day: 3rd Saturday of month, (subject to change due to HPL events)

NEW Time: 10:30am to 12:30pm. Doors open at 10:00am

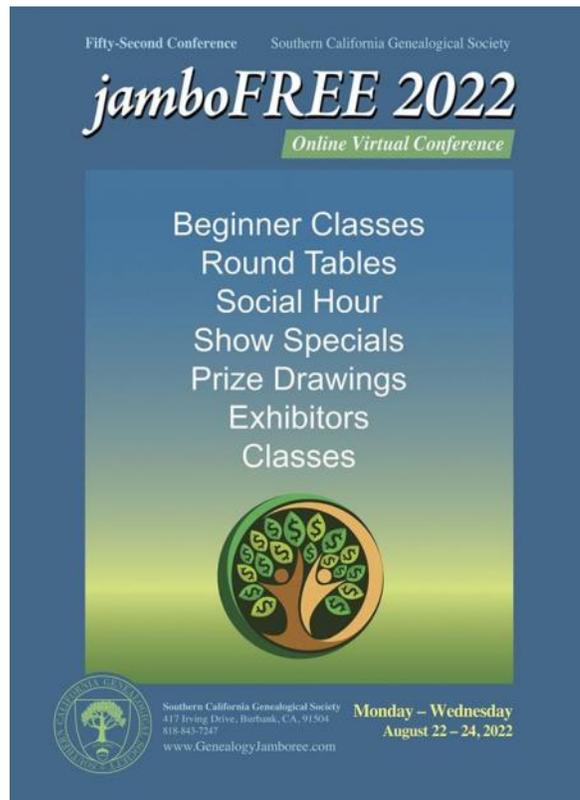
Dates Confirmed:

Saturday, September 17, 2022 – Restart, Reset, Go!

Saturday, October 22, 2022 – Family History Month
(3rd Saturday date moved due to HPL event)

Saturday, November 19, 2022 - Annual Meeting, Election of officers

Members, guests, and public are welcome. All meetings are FREE. Come and mingle with your Society friends and family!



JAMBO FREE VIRTUAL EDITION IS COMING LIVE: MONDAY AUGUST 22—WEDNESDAY AUGUST 24

The Southern California Genealogical Society is committed to providing genealogical education for *all*. Traditionally, during our Jamboree conferences, we offer classes that are free and open to the public.

We are offering **16+** classes during **JamboFree**. Here's the line-up:

- Ethnic and DNA Round Tables – Eleven topics, most with multiple rooms to keep the discussion groups small and personal, hosted by experts in SCGS' interest groups and guests.
- Advanced Beginner Class – Our very popular in-person class returns for 3-hours of learning and fun.
- What's New at FamilySearch by Michael Provard
- What's New at the FamilySearch Family History Library by Michael Provard
- It's Never Too Late to Start! DNA for Beginners by FamilyTreeDNA's Janine Cloud
- Social Hour on Tuesday from 4pm - 7pm PDT.
- *Bonus Lecture - Looking Forward to Looking Back: Where to Go Next* presented by Jean Wilcox Hibben
 - To access the JamboFree programs you will need to Register for FREE..
 - No SCGS account yet? Open one with your name, email, city and state.
 - Join any session while it's on. Not what you expected? Feel free to leave one session and join another.

There is a maximum of 100 attendees per session so please try and log in early to "save your seat". All events are LIVE and will not be recorded.

Explore the Schedule and Register: <https://genealogyjamboree.com/jamboree-schedule>

MEMBERSHIP REPORT



There are no new members to report for July 2022. We encourage all members to bring guests to our free monthly meetings. How about a grandchild who may be interested? A neighbor? Work friend?

Thanks to all members, new and old, for your continued support of our Society.
Karen Frazier
Membership Chair

THE PIRATE'S DAUGHTER

By Frances Harrington

(continuing with the final paragraph as it appeared in the July 2022 TTN)

Apparently, she could be quite the character. There were reports that said, after receiving her sentences, she was always polite and thanked the Judges. Once, after getting out of jail, she even sent flowers to the judge who sentenced her. Apparently, she wasn't as polite to all the officers, because one time, she went to jail for 90 days for verbally assaulting the Assistant Police Chief. Another time, she was in jail in Muskegon and transported to Grand Rapids to be a witness in a separate trial. Somehow, during the lunch break, (without the officer guarding her noticing) she managed to get drunk. She ended up spending that night in jail in Grand Rapids instead of being transported back to Muskegon. On one occasion, the judge told her, he wouldn't send her to jail *if* she left town. She made it as far as Grand Rapids, but decided to come back, and eventually, was arrested again. It would almost be comical, if it weren't so tragic, that this otherwise, kind and intelligent woman's life, was ruined because of her addiction.

It was reported in the Chronicle, that for twenty years, she had spent every Christmas in jail. The Grand Rapids Press wrote, "she was a woman with a checkered past that would fill pages," and, "she served 50 terms in the county (Muskegon) jail and entered the doors of the Detroit House of Corrections 20 times." Her sentences ranged anywhere from overnight in jail, to a year in prison. Most often, she did the time because she couldn't pay the fines. No matter how long she was without a drink (because of her incarceration) it wouldn't be long after she got out, that her addiction took hold of her again. As she got older, she would beg from people on the streets. The merchants started to complain, not because of her begging, but because of how angry and belligerent she became if people didn't give her anything. The last mention I find of her being arrested is in December of 1906, when, according to the Chronicle, she was found "sleeping the sleep of the unjust" at the lower end of Marshall Street, after being reported missing from the County Home. She was so intoxicated that the Police Chief had to "load" her into the wagon to take her to the jail. The next morning, the judge sentenced her to 30 days.



Lou's picture is from the Grand Rapids Press (1902) courtesy of the Grand Rapids Library.

All that I read about Lou makes me wonder what her early life was really like. What painful events caused her to turn to drinking to try to blot them out? Were any of the stories about her younger days even true, or were they just that - stories she told to hide the ugliness of a life she would rather

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forget? I guess we'll never know.

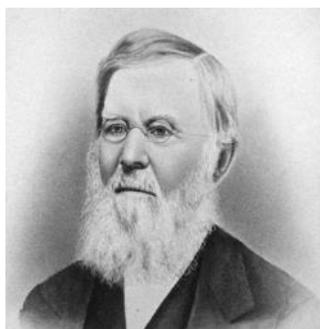
On January 9, 1908, Agnes Lou Whitcomb (AKA Spanish Lou), was walking down Terrace Street when she fell, hitting her head. When she didn't get up, the men nearby, assuming she was drunk again, called for the police instead of a doctor. She told the men, "Goodbye boys, my time has come" and before medical attention arrived, she was dead. She was completely sober at the time. Lou was anywhere from 76 to 83 years old – no one knows for sure. Her death record said, "dropped dead on street – heart trouble" but no post mortem was done. No one ever met her daughter or mentioned her by name, and she didn't show up for Lou's funeral, so it's doubtful she even existed.

I found articles that appeared after her death in papers all across the mid-west. Like I said earlier, each one had a little different story about the life of the pirate's daughter from Muskegon, "Spanish Lou".

Over two hundred people showed up for Lou's funeral. I'm curious as to how many of those people had even bothered to say hello to her when they saw her on the street. More likely than not, they only came to see the infamous "Spanish Lou", the character who was mentioned so many times over the years, in the Muskegon Chronicle. Her funeral was held at the Salvation Army Hall with Captain Vandeville conducting the service. During her eulogy, he shared how, several days before her death, Lou had become a Christian. She was buried at Oakwood Cemetery, in an unmarked grave that was probably donated by a friend - Georgia Steiner, proprietor of a number of boarding houses, with whom Lou had lived, on and off, over the years.

Sources: News articles from Genealogybank.com, Ancestry.com, Muskegon Cemetery Dept., Lou's picture is from the Grand Rapids Press (1902) courtesy of the Grand Rapids Library.

SAMUEL B PECK
Fruit Grower
By Frances Harrington



Samuel Brooks Peck came to Muskegon in 1859 with his wife, Dency C. (Turner) and their youngest daughter, Millicent "Millie" Peck, from Gorham, New York. Samuel was born in Cheshire, Connecticut, in 1805, to Henry and Elizabeth (Brooks) Peck. When he was 18 years old, he started teaching school. In 1833, he married Dency C. Turner, daughter of Joseph and Deborah (Cook) Turner, in Rensselaerville, New York. The couple had three daughters, Ambrosia (born in 1834), Millie (born in 1835), and Cornelia (born in 1845 and died in 1852). Although he always had an interest in farming, after his marriage, Samuel decided owning his own store would provide a better future for his family. The family lived in a few different towns in New York, where Samuel operated general stores, before they settled in Gorham. While living in Gorham, his oldest daughter Ambrosia, married a widower with two small children named, Samuel R. Sanford. After her marriage in 1858, Ambrosia moved to Muskegon with her new family. She would write letters home to her parents about this little village called Muskegon. Desiring to be closer to his daughter, and considering the opportunities of this growing village, Samuel Peck sold his store in Gorham, and moved to Muskegon.

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Samuel opened a large general store located on Western Ave., between Pine St. and Terrace Ave. He sent for his brother John, who moved his family to Muskegon, to help with the store. Later, his friend, Joseph Murphy, came to Muskegon and partnered with him. They continued operating the store until it burned down in 1874. That was the year he retired from being a merchant.

While operating the store, Samuel and his brother, John, purchased a large track of land named Samuel B. Peck's Addition to the Village of Muskegon and another called, Samuel B. Peck's 2nd Addition to the Village of Muskegon. John had about 10 acres and Samuel had at least 30. Samuel's property took up most of the land from what is now, Peck St. to Hoyt St., and Irwin Ave. to Laketon Ave. and was known as Peck's Farm. His son-in-law, Samuel R. Sanford had also bought and platted a large area of land to the North of Mr. Peck's property. The men decided to try their hand at growing fruit. Samuel Peck was the one who suggested that his son-in-law, Samuel Sanford, name many of the streets in his "Sandford's Addition to the Village of Muskegon" after varieties of grapes (Concord, Myrtle, Hartford, Delaware, etc). Mr. Peck planted about 100 fruit trees (plums, peaches, cherries, etc.) and a large vineyard of grapes along with smaller fruits like strawberries. After some trial and error, Mr. Peck and Mr. Sanford were the first in the area to grow fruit on a large scale. They were instrumental in encouraging and giving advice to others so they could do the same. An article in the Chronicle from 1871 stated that both Mr. Sanford and Mr. Peck, each, grew at least 1,000 bushels of peaches, and by this time, they were not the only peach growers in the county. At least 9 other growers were mentioned who had at least 1000 or more bushels of peaches that they had grown.

After his retirement from the mercantile business, Samuel was able to devote his time to his "fruit farm". Samuel Peck found that grapes grew more successfully than the fruit trees so he started paying extra attention to them and became quite the expert on grapes. He was known to experiment with over 100 different varieties of grapes. He was one of the founding members, and at one time, President, of the Muskegon County Horticultural Society. He was also a much sought-after writer on fruit growing for a number of papers and magazines. In 1881, at a meeting of the American Pomological Society in Boston, Massachusetts, (the group consisted of representatives from all the northern states plus parts of Canada), Samuel exhibited ten varieties of his grapes that were said to be the best specimens of their kind at the exhibition. His farm was so beautiful that people would often take their Sunday afternoon carriage rides to look over his orchards and vineyards.

In 1879, Mr. Peck suffered injuries from a fall at a friend's house. After that fall, his health slowly started to deteriorate. He would work on his farm and give lectures until he no longer had the strength. He continued to write articles for horticultural journals and societies until he was unable to hold a pen, and after that, he would dictate them to others. He dictated his last article on the Niagara Grape, as requested by the editor of the Rural New Yorker, and died later that week on July 21, 1883. He and Dency had just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary three months earlier.



Millie

Samuel had not only been a merchant and fruit grower, but very active in civic affairs. He had served as the President of the Village of Muskegon twice, and Township Supervisor during the Civil War period from 1864-1868. He also donated money to help bring the Railroad to Muskegon.

After his death, his family offered to sell his beautiful property to the City to be used as a park. The city officials refused the offer, which was lucky for his family. The platted land quickly sold for much more than what they had asked of the city and new homes sprang up within no time. Part of that land was the property where Hackley Hospital was later built.

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The Peck's daughter, Millie Peck, became a teacher and was one of the first to teach at the old Union School. After eight years, she went into private teaching. Millie never married. She died July 28, 1922.

Samuel and Dency, along with their daughter Millie, are buried in Evergreen Cemetery and share a headstone and family plot with Samuel's married daughter Ambrosia and her husband Samuel R. Sanford.

Sources: Hackley Public Library Local History & Genealogy Dept., Ancestry.com, Genealogybank.com (Muskegon Chronicle), Findagrave.com, Lakeshore Museum Center, Portraits & Biographical Records of Muskegon & Ottawa Counties (Biographical Publishing Co 1893), American Biographical History of Eminent & Self-Made Men - Michigan Volume (Western Biographical Publishing Co), Know Muskegon, November 1947 (Charles Yates), History of the Settlement of Muskegon (Henry H. Holt), History of Muskegon Co. With Illustrations & Biographical Sketches of Some of It's Prominent Men & Pioneers 1882 (H. R. Page & Co), Muskegon & It's Resources (Muskegon Board of Trade), Muskegon County Register of Deeds Office

FREE Genealogy Cheat Sheets - used with permission



10 Tips for Successful US Census Research

GENEALOGY BARGAINS

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

Starting in 1790 and enumerated every 10 years, each US Census had its own specific questions as well as enumerator instructions. Besides Population Schedules other census resources include Enumeration District Maps, Non-population Schedules (Agriculture, Business, etc.), Mortality Schedules and special schedules such as the 1890 Veterans Census.



- Mistakes Happen!** Enumerators recorded responses to questions which could include incorrect data. Misheard information, a foreign accent, or even bad handwriting could impact data. Another frequent error: Some enumerators disregarded the Census Day and used the actual date of the visit.
- When was the Census Day?** The "Census Day" for the 1790 census was the first Monday in August (to catch farmers in their fields). But each census had its own Census Day set by Congress. Starting with the 1930 census, the Census Day is April 1.
- Note the Census Order:** House numbers and street names were not included in early censuses. Don't assume that the census was taken in house number order. Look for the Family Number used. A close examination of house and family numbers show the actual walking route of the enumerator.
- Census Bureau Marks:** Once a form was submitted, certain fields were "coded" for statistical purposes. If you see marks and numbers in different handwriting or a different color, don't panic! They were added later by the Census Bureau.
- Who Was the Informant?:** The 1940 Census asked enumerators to place an X or an X in a circle next to the name of the informant.
- How Long did the Census Take?** The first census in 1790 took 18 months to complete. Your ancestor was not always enumerated exactly on the Census Day. It could take days, weeks or even months to complete. Some enumerators would mark in the margins the day they visited a household.
- Derivative Document:** Don't assume that the enumerator actually took the population schedule form with them during interviews. They may have used a copy of the form or used their own notes and then went home and completed the form.
- Look for Multiple Passes or Backtracking:** Review the entire enumeration district when looking at schedules. In 1940, enumerators were told to survey hotels, boarding houses and even campsites separately and list them on a specific page number.
- Enumerator Marks and Comments:** Some enumerators made comments in the margins of the forms. Some are notes and reminders such as ("day one ended here" with a line number) and others border on being gossipy ("house not clean").
- Internet Archive:** There are over 24,000 sets of microfilm images available, provided by the Allen County Public Library and the US Census Bureau. These could be clearer than what you might find at Ancestry or Family Search.

Check out the [US Census Resource List](#) on the back page!

10 Tips for Successful US Census Research

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IMPORTANT MESSAGE

MCGS MEETINGS

NEW PLACE

Hackley Public Library
316 W. Webster Ave.
Muskegon, MI 49440



Saturdays at 10:30am

September 17

October 22

November 19



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

Call for your individual appointment!

231 722-8016

or email us at

1972mcgs@gmail.com

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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