



# Twig Talk

Newsletter of the Muskegon County  
Genealogical Society



Since 1972

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## TWIG TALK

A publication of:

**Muskegon County Genealogical Society**

c/o Hackley Public Library

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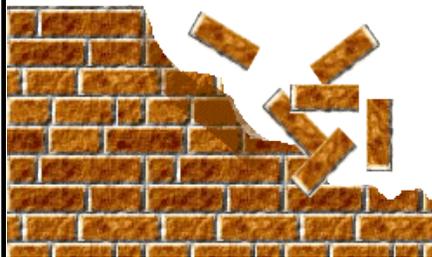
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## BRICK WALLS DISCUSSION!

Thursday, August 8th at 7:00 p.m.

Note: We will be at the VFW on Grand Haven Rd. (See back cover.)

### Breaking Through The Brickwalls



Bring in your brick wall questions so we can all put our heads together and try to answer them. Now is the time to think about a family history stump you have. We may just be able to help you. We will learn some great tips and tricks used in our sample brick wall story too.

## Special: Googling Your Genealogy

Thursday, August 8th following Brick Walls

We have a great video presentation and handouts for you!



Google Search

I'm Feeling Lucky

This is a 4 section presentation we have put together for this meeting. You will learn some fascinating Google information to help you with your ancestral journey.

Learn how to use many of the added and extra/plus features of Google for your genealogy. This will be followed by future presentations on using the internet to make your genealogical journey successful. Google is free and full of great features you can use.

### Historical Trivia MCGS

What year did the Mayflower DEPART for the new world? We know it happened in August, but what year? (Look for the answer somewhere in this newsletter.)



## MEMBERSHIP CHANGES COMING FOR 2014

As you may already know, many of our costs have gone up, especially over this past year. Our bank account has been continually showed that each month we pay out more than we take in. We recently conducted a survey (at our May meeting) to determine several topics, including how to raise more money. Many of you said you would not be opposed to the membership dues going up. The MCGS Board met recently and has decided to do this:

Dues for 2014 will be \$25 if paid by December 31, 2013 you will pay \$23.00. Starting Jan 1, 2014 dues will be \$25. We have made the decision to dropped the family rate. Now the dues will simply be \$23 per person. We have several couples in the society and we know this will affect you, but we need to raise money before we run out. We will be adding some very interesting Members Only perks to our webpage, including reinstating Family Tree Talk periodcal , discounts on web sites, free queries, and more.

## LOCAL HISTORY & GENEALOGY DEPT.

We need to use our library and show them how important it is for them to stay open. Please utilize the many resources they have.

Volunteers Needed For Local History & Genealogy Dept. This is a new opportunity for anyone interested. We would like to put a volunteer from our society in the Local History & Genealogy Dept. to assist customers with their search, using the machines, finding records and books, etc....

## MEMBERSHIP

**Anthony Hermans**, Poolesville, MD  
SURNAMERS: Hermans, Widdecke

**Diana Lebeau**, Kalamazoo, MI  
SURNAMERS: Banks, Bernier,  
Carpenter, Hyrns, Knapp, Krauss,  
LeBeau, Leroux, Penland, Perkins, Rollin/Rollins



## COOKBOOK LAST CALL

We are wrapping up the cookbook and still need more recipes and photos. The recipes can be for anything you like, new or old.

We also need more family photos. They do not need to be in the kitchen or anything. Maybe you have a photo of who's recipe your submitting for the book.

For every recipe and/or photo you submit you will be entered in a drawing to win the first copy of the cookbook.

## COUNTY CLERK RESEARCH

We are there on Wednesdays from 1:00-4:00 p.m. The Muskegon County Clerk is located in the Muskegon County Building at 990 Terrace. They are on the first floor. All entrants need to go through the metal detector to get into the County Building, so keep that in mind.



*We need help with data entry of the records at the clerk's office. This is an ongoing project but with your help we can see it finished and online soon. It is really very easy. Won't you please volunteer just a few hours of your time to help with this project?*



## PIONEER CERTIFICATES

We need someone who can check Pioneer applications. It is not a daily job. It is just an as applied for job. As we receive an application for a Pioneer Certificate, we need someone to verify the papers and help in the application process. If you have an eye for detail it will be easy for you. Jane Schapka has done this for years and has all of the steps laid out in easy-to-understand language. She can answer any questions you may have along the way. Our board is also available to help anyone interested. If you can help, please email us at [1972mcgs@gmail.com](mailto:1972mcgs@gmail.com) or get in touch with any board member.

## YOU CAN HELP FROM HOME!



We need people who can Index records for us and do some other data entry work from home. You will need a computer with Microsoft Word and Excel, as well as a way to view .pdf files. Let us know if you can help.



## 10 MINUTE TOPIC

We will be giving you lots of handouts for your notebooks this month. Because of June's program, we didn't want to take extra time to go over the 10 minute topic on organization. We will be passing it out at the August meeting. You will also get a hefty handout pack about how to Google your genealogy, We are planning on more interesting topics for you in September and October as well. Remember, if you want a 10 Minute Topic but cannot be at our meetings just email us at [1972mcgs@gmail.com](mailto:1972mcgs@gmail.com)

We will send you a .pdf file. Keep all your topics in a notebook to make an easy reference handbook.

## HOME RESEARCH TIPS

**House and Building Histories**  
Whether you live in a Manhattan brownstone apartment or a castle in France, your home may be harboring a fascinating history. Learn how to uncover the history and genealogy of a house or other building with this step by step guide.

there are usually two types of information that people search for: 1) architectural facts, such as date of construction, name of architect or builder, construction materials, and physical changes over time; and 2) historical facts, such as information on the original owner and other residents through time, or interesting events associated with the building or area.

Begin your search by looking closely at the building for clues about its age. Look at the type of construction, the materials used in construction, the shape of the roofline, the placement of the windows, etc.

A thorough search of the property may also yield clues between walls, floorboards, and other forgotten areas.

A deed is a legal document used to transfer ownership of land and property. Examining all of the deeds concerning your home or other property is a big step toward learning more about its history.

Historical insurance records, most notably fire insurance claim forms, contain information about the nature of an insured building, its contents, value and, possibly, even floor plans.

## HOSPITALITY HAPPENINGS



Our June Meeting program by Civil War re-enactors, Bill & Glenna Jo Christian, educationally engaged our members and guests. Their power point presentation along with mid-19th century clothing demonstrations was truly captivating. We look forward to their

program next year! Door prize winner was lucky Marcia Wiersma. Our expert baker, Kathy Agard, brought a delicious variety of cookies.

Connie Fales dialed up her oven to 350 degrees and produced chocolate brownies. The Slater's quenched our thirst with bottled water. Thanks everyone!

A book drawing & two door prizes are on tap for August.

Where's the NOT so 20/20 visioned ancestor pics! Will these eyeglasses photos show up in August?!? It would be so great to see an actual old ancestor pair of glasses.

## LOCAL HISTORY & GENEALOGY DEPT. BOOKS

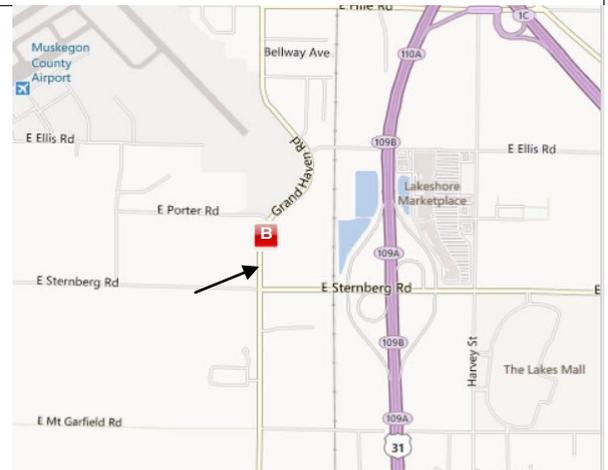


**Social Networking for Genealogists**,  
by Drew Smith

**Oceana County 1850-1950**, by David K. Petersen

## NEW MEETING LOCATION

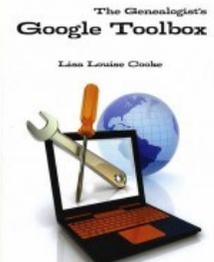
New meeting location:  
VFW #3195 at 5209 Grand Haven Rd., Norton Shores.



**MORE INFO ON BACK PAGE**

## GREAT BOOK

Lisa Louise Cooke is the owner of Genealogy Gems, a genealogy multi-media company. She is the producer and host of the popular online family history audio show The Genealogy Gems Podcast, as well as the monthly Family Tree Magazine Podcast. Her podcasts bring genealogy news,



research strategies, expert interviews and inspiration to family historians in 75 countries around the world.

When it comes to tracing your family tree online, you need the right tools to get the job done! In The Genealogist's Google Toolbox, renowned genealogy podcaster Lisa Louise Cooke helps you stuff your genealogy toolbox with FREE state-of-the-art Internet tools that are built to search, translate, message, and span the globe. You'll travel outside the genealogy community and straight to the folks who dominate the online world: Google.

- The Genealogist's Google Toolbox includes:
- Google Search: Put an end to fruitless searches forever
- Google Alerts: Your personal genealogy research assistant
- Gmail: Never loose another email
- iGoogle: Create a genealogy research dashboard
- Google Books: The world's history at your fingertips
- Google News Timeline: Get the scoop on your ancestors
- Google Translate: Explore the world of foreign language websites
- YouTube Videos: Your family history in action
- Google Earth: Rock your ancestor's world!

**BRICKWALL BUSTER IDEAS  
FROM  
ABOUT GENEALOGY.COM**

**Review What You Already Have**

Organizing your files and reviewing your facts may uncover just the clue you're looking for.

**Go Back to the Original Source**

You may have kept the names and dates from that old census record, but did you also keep track of other information such as years of marriage and country of parent's origin? Or, perhaps, you misread a name or misinterpreted a relationship? If you haven't already, be sure to go back to the original records, making complete copies and transcriptions and recording all clues - however unimportant they may seem right now.

**Broaden Your Search**

When you can't find a birth record for your ancestor that lists his/her parents, maybe you can locate one for a sibling. Or, when you've lost a family between census years, try looking for their neighbors. You may be able to identify a migration pattern, or a mis-indexed census entry that way. Often referred to as "cluster genealogy," this research process can often get you past tough brick walls.

**Question and Verify**

Published sources often contain transcription errors, while even original documents may contain misinformation, whether purposefully or accidentally given. Try to find at least three records to verify any facts that you already know and judge the quality of your data based on the weight of the evidence.

**Check Name Variations**

Your brick wall may just be something as simple as looking for the wrong name. Variations of last names can make research complicated, but be sure to check all spelling options. Soundex is a first step, but you can't count on it entirely - some name variations can actually result in different Soundex codes. Not only can the surnames be different, but the given name may be different as well. I've found records recorded under initials, middle names, nicknames, etc. Get creative with name spellings and variations and cover all the possibilities.

**Learn Your Boundaries**

Town, county, state and even country boundaries have changed over time as populations grew or political authority changed hands. Records were also not always registered in the locality where your ancestors lived. In Pennsylvania, for example, births and deaths can be registered in any county, and many of my Cambria county ancestor's records were actually located in neighboring Clearfield County because they lived closer to that county seat and found it a more convenient trip. So, bone up on your historical geography and you just may find a new route around your brick wall.

**Make a Timeline**

You might just need to see your ancestor's movement and events on paper. Include things like occupations, land types, and sickness in the timeline.

**Ask for Help**

Fresh eyes can often see beyond brick walls, so try bouncing your theories off other researchers. Post a query to a Web site or mailing list which focuses on the locality in which the family lived, check with members of the local historical or genealogical society, or just talk through it with someone else who loves family history research. Be sure to include what you already know, as well as what you'd like to know and which tactics you've already tried.

**Standard of Proof**

As outlined in the "BCG Genealogical Standards Manual", the Genealogical Proof Standard consists of these elements:

- A reasonably exhaustive search for all pertinent information.
- A complete and accurate citation to the source of each item used.
- Analysis of the collected information's quality as evidence.
- Resolution of any conflicting or contradictory evidence.

0791

**Sources, Information & Evidence**

When collecting and analyzing the evidence to "prove" your case, it is important to first understand how genealogists use sources, information and evidence.

**Original vs. Derivative Sources**

Referring to the provenance of the record, *original sources* are records that contribute written, oral, or visual information not derived - copied, abstracted, transcribed, or summarized - from another written or oral record. *Derivative sources* are, by their definition, records which have been derived - copied, abstracted, transcribed, or summarized - from previously existing sources. Original sources *usually* carry more weight than derivative sources.

**Primary vs. Secondary Information**

Referring to the **quality** of the information contained within a particular record, primary information comes from records created at or near the time of an event with information contributed by a person who had reasonably close knowledge of the event. *Secondary information*, by contrast, is information found in records created a significant amount of time after an event occurred or contributed by a person who was not present at the event. Primary information *usually* carries more weight than secondary information.

**Direct vs. Indirect Evidence**

Evidence only comes into play when we ask a question and then consider whether the information found in a particular record answers that question. *Direct evidence* is information that directly answers your question without a need for other evidence to explain or interpret it. *Indirect evidence*, on the other hand, is circumstantial information that requires additional evidence or thought to convert it into a reliable conclusion. Direct evidence *usually* carries more weight than indirect evidence.

## PHOTOGRAPHING IN CEMETERIES

These classes of sources, information and evidence are rarely as clear-cut as they sound since information found in one particular source can be either primary or secondary. For example, a death certificate is an original source containing primary information directly relating to the death, but may also provide secondary information regarding items such as the deceased's date of birth, parent's names, and even children's names. If the information is secondary, it will have to be further assessed based on who provided that information (if known), whether or not the informant was present at the events in question, and how closely that information correlates with other sources.

### Are the Ancestors Hanging From Your Family Tree Really Your Own?

*A reasonably exhaustive search for all pertinent information*

The keyword here is "reasonably." Does this mean that you have to locate and interpret every record or source available for your ancestor? Not necessarily. What it does assume, however, is that you have examined a wide range of high quality sources which relate to your specific genealogical question (identity, event, relationship, etc.). This helps to minimize the probability that undiscovered evidence will overturn a too-hasty conclusion down the road.

*A complete and accurate citation to the source of each item used*

If you don't know where a piece of evidence came from, how can you evaluate it? For this reason it is very important to document all sources as you find them. Keeping track of sources also provides the side benefit that fellow researchers can easily locate the same sources in order to verify your information and conclusions for themselves. It is very important in this step to record *all* sources that you have examined, whether or not they provided any new facts for your family tree. These facts which seem useless now, may provide new connections down the road when combined with other sources. See *Citing Your Sources* for more details on how to best document the many different types of sources used by genealogists.

*Analysis of the collected information's quality as evidence*

This is probably the most difficult step for most people to grasp. In order to evaluate the quality of your evidence, it is first important to determine how likely the information is to be accurate. Is the source original or derivative? Is the information contained in that source primary or secondary? Is your evidence direct or indirect? It is not always cut and dried. While primary information provided by an original source may seem the most conclusive, the individuals who created that record may have erred in their statements or recording, lied about certain details, or omitted pertinent information. On the other hand, a derivative work which expands on the original through further, careful research of alternative sources to fill in holes and inconsistencies, may be more dependable than the original itself. The goal here is to apply sound interpretation of the data contributed by each source based on its own merits.

Summer is the perfect time to photograph and document cemeteries. The weather is great! We need your help with it. We have a pinpoint listing of cemeteries that have already been done or are in the process of being documented. Please email or call Dawn or Kay to find out what needs to be done. This is kind of a big project but one that we need to do.

A *digital camera* in the hand is faster than a pen in the hand—much faster. With a digital camera, you can record information at more than three times the rate than if you were using a pen and notebook. The information you enter into your database is information that you're reading directly from the pictures you took at the cemetery. Having this ability translates into fewer database errors, as you are not transcribing from someone else's handwriting—or worse, in my case, my own handwriting. The process of transforming marker information into database information is simple. To begin, you need the following tools:

Almost any kind of digital camera will work for cemetery reading, but if you don't yet own one, here are some things to consider before you buy: The bigger the screen size better.

*Memory card capacity*—As with screen size, bigger is better. Now days, even the smallest capacity memory card (2 or 4GIG) will hold all the marker pictures you will take during one trip to the cemetery. *Resolution setting*—for taking pictures of cemetery markers, a resolution setting somewhere around 1 to 3 meg is will suffice for what you need to do. *Power source*—Carry a backup battery at all times. Want to save money? Don't buy your backup battery from the camera maker. Go on the internet and order a generic one. *Pocket notebook and pen*—For documenting what section and row(s) you are photographing.

*Computer Photo program*— Like Picasa3. It's a free download with attractive and functional screens and is one of the best programs for cemetery transcription. If you already have a photo program on your computer and are comfortable with it, then by all means, put it to use.

*Whisk broom*— Some cemeteries will work you more than others. Some markers that lay flat on the ground may need grass clippings or leaves cleared from them before you can take the picture. A whisk broom is quicker than a hand or foot for doing this. *Drinking water*— Fill a couple of 1 liter bottles about three-fourths full of water (a gallon milk jug works too), and stick them in the freezer the night before you go. The ice will melt slowly enough that you'll have cold drinking water for several hours the next day.

*Bug Repellant and Sun Screen*—Sometimes bugs will feast on you. Bug repellant will keep most of them at bay. As for the sun screen, play it safe and use it every time you read a cemetery *Proper attire*—Comfy clothes, wide brim hat on sunny days, sneakers, jeans with extra pockets to carry your camera and whisk broom, and you're all set.



## Upcoming Events Dates 2013

### **Board Meetings**

Meet at 5:30 p.m.  
2nd Thursday

**VFW 3195**  
**5209 Grand Haven Road.**  
**Norton Shores**

August 8  
September 12  
October 10

**No meeting in Dec**

### **Regular Meetings**

Starts at 7:00 p.m.  
2nd Thursday

**VFW 3195**  
**5209 Grand Haven Road.**  
**Norton Shores**

August 8  
September 12  
October 10

**"Holiday Gathering"**  
November 14

**No meeting in Dec**

### **Genealogy Family History Workshops**

Torrent House Local History &  
Genealogy Dept. 315 W. Webster  
10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. or  
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
2nd Saturday of the month

September 14  
October 12  
November 9

**No workshops**  
in Jun, Jul, Aug or Dec

### **NEW MEETING LOCATION HAS BEEN CHOSEN**

We will be meeting at the Wilbur L. Boyer VFW Post #3195 at 5209 Grand Haven Road in Norton Shores. Directions: Going South on US 31, take the first Sternberg Road exit that leads away from the mall 109 B. Turn right onto Grand Haven Rd. It is on the corner of Grand Haven Rd. and Porter Rd on the left. The cost to the society is \$50 a month. We will be meeting there until further notice. Park in back of the building.

### **JOURNEY THROUGH GENERATIONS - A CONFERENCE FOR THE NATION'S GENEALOGISTS**

**Federation of Genealogical Societies Conference Fort Wayne, Indiana August 21-24, 2013**

Check out the brochure and let us know. If you have any questions at all go to [www.fgs.org](http://www.fgs.org) for details.

### **Coming in your official online publication of Family Tree Talk:**

*(do we have your email?)*

Local Ships.  
Old advertising.  
Local history.  
Local Family Histories.  
And Surnames!

### **Don't forget to bring to the next meeting:**

Your Brick Wall Questions

Your completed 4 Generation Chart

Any recipes or photos to include in the cookbook.

Money for your copy of the History of Muskegon -Volume I.

Stories and photos for the History of Muskegon Volume II.

### **PROGRAM REMINDERS FOR 2013**

**Aug 8**—Brick Wall Busters Solutions to Real Life Stumpers-Will your Brick Wall be solved by our specialists? Turn in your Brick Wall details by June 30. First come First serve on these, and we are limited in what we can take in. Please consider this and get your requests in a.s.a.p.

**Sep 12**—Tombstone Rubbings Wally & Jane Ewing - A very interesting showing of how Wally and Jane went about rubbings overseas on ancient tombstones. They will show the tools used, how to use them, and where to get them. It is not just chalk and paper folks!

**Oct 10**—Cemetery Tour with Dani LeFleur - How timely is this! You will love the interesting history presented in her very well prepared program.

**Nov 14** —Holiday Gathering/Annual Meeting/Elections - Last chance before the holidays to buy our cookbook.

### **COMING IN 2014**

Classes and Presentations on using computers for genealogy.  
More with Bill and Glenna Jo Christian - Dating Photos Workshop.  
Cemetery Tour with interesting facts.  
Car Pool Field Trips to Lansing, Grand Rapids, and Fort Wayne.  
New Workshops.