



# 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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## “The Art of Tombstone Rubbing” An Artful Approach to Preserving History

with Jane and Dr. Wallace Ewing



The brasses of medieval and renaissance England are remarkable historical records. They have preserved for us not only names and effigies of the aristocracy and the landed gentry, but those with lesser titles. On incised plates of brass, the nobility, ecclesiastics, knights and their ladies and children, wool merchants, tradesmen, and city burghers, for example, are commemorated. Their armor, costume, head-dress, vestments, coats of arms, heraldic shields, and other accessories displayed on monumental church brasses reveal the development of aspects of history, art, and social manners. The rubbings obtained from them, besides being a commentary on life, are works of art and are appreciated for aesthetic qualities in their own right. Jane Ewing earned her bachelor degree from Western Michigan University and master degree from Wright State University in Ohio. She has been published in *Letter Arts Review* and *Calligraphers Engagement Calendar*. Her work has been accepted by the Smithsonian Institution and other juried exhibitions throughout the United States. In 2012 two of Jane's pieces were accepted into the annual juried exhibition at the prestigious Newberry Library in Chicago, and this year another entry, *The Power of Words*, was accepted for their exhibition, Exploration 2013. She has served on the Executive Boards of numerous calligraphy guilds. She taught Western calligraphy to university students in China where she also received instruction in Chinese calligraphy. Jane has practiced calligraphy for 25 years, including studying under master calligraphers from Canada, Belgium, Ireland, and England. Dr. Wallace Ewing went to school in Grand Haven and Chicago. He attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison and received his bachelor's degree in 1962 and master's degree in 1964 from Michigan State University. He completed his doctoral studies in English at the University of Illinois in Champaign in 1971. He has taught at Michigan State University, Iowa State University and the University of Illinois. He was a Fulbright Lecturer in Tehran, Iran and worked for the Peace Corps in Sierra Leone, West Africa. He supervised English teachers in Puerto Rico public schools. Wally also was Dean of the College at Colby-Sawyer College in New London, New Hampshire. Place & time on back.



Dr. Wallace K. Ewing and spouse Jane Ewing

### Historical Trivia MCGS

On August 26, 1920 the 19th Amendment was formally adopted into the U.S. Constitution by proclamation of Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby. What did the 19th Amendment guarantee? Find the answer somewhere in this newsletter.



## MEMBERSHIP CHANGES COMING FOR 2014

Dues for 2014 will be \$25. Pay by December 31st of 2013, you will receive \$2 off. Coming Soon! we will be adding some very interesting Members Only perks to our webpage, including reinstating Family Tree Talk periodical, discounts on web sites, free queries, and more.

## MEMBERSHIP

Cherri Atwood, from Fruitport, MI  
**SURNAMES:** Fulmerhouser, Hill,  
Moss, Wehrle



## COOKBOOK LAST CALL

Our cookbook will be coming out for the Christmas holiday this year so this is your last call for recipes and 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 the recipes and/or photo you submit you will be entered in a drawing to win the first copy of the cookbook.

## HOSPITALITY HAPPENINGS

Our August meeting presented Brick Wall solving including those of Marcia Wiersma and Fran Harrington.

Kay Bosch showed us how to Google our genealogy.

Karen Frazier shared what she learned when she went to the State of Michigan Archives. She gave us interesting results on prison records and divorce records after researching her own family.

Lucky Fran Harrington won the door prize.

A treat of strawberries and ice cream along with Slater's bottled water was refreshing.

Phyllis Slater and Dawn Kelley shared their ancestor's eyeglass stories. Charles Brown and Kay Bosch won the book drawings.

Will there be gravestone photos for September?



## MUSKEGON CO. CIRCUIT COURT RECORDS

It seems like everyone wants divorce records lately. So here is the scoop at the Circuit Court on the 6th floor of the county building.

Index Book 1—1894 to 1924

Index Book 2—1924 to 1937

Index Book 3—1937 to 1949

All records from 1894 to 1949 are at the Library of Michigan Library in Lansing

In the index card catalog —1950 to 1979, these records are off onsite.

On computer—1980 to present onsite.

Circuit Court is opened from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. except holiday's



## VOLUNTEERS AT COUNTY CLERK

Need help, we are there on Wednesdays from 1:00-4:00 p.m. Muskegon County Clerk

is located 990 Terrace, first floor at the Muskegon County Building.

We can't thank our volunteers enough who take time out of their busy schedule to work on the indexing of the marriage records - Sherri DeMuro, Connie Fales, Fran Harrington, Jim Harkness, Dawn Kelley, Barb Martin, Cheri Miller. Welcome aboard Vivian (Viv) Nelund who has started indexing the death records. We need more volunteers to help finish these two projects.

We also want to thank Jane Gates, Barb Martin and Dawn Kelley for helping the researcher looking for a marriage or death records. Email at [1972mcgs@gmail.com](mailto:1972mcgs@gmail.com)

## GENEALOGY BOOKS



**Index to the Prerogative Wills of Ireland 1536**

**-1810**, by Sir Arthur Vicare

**The Settlers of the Beekman Patent Dutchess County, NY Volume 11**,

by Frank J. Doherty (Gift of Colonial Dames)

**Land Between the Lakes: The History of the Sylvan Beach Resort Company Crest of a Golden Wave**,

by the Writers

**Michigan Voices: Our State's History in the Words of the People Who Lived it**,

compiled and edited by Joe Grimm

**One-Room Country Schools of Newaygo County: History of Recollections v.2**

**Irish Church Records:** Their history, availability and use in family and local history research

**Great Architecture of Michigan**, text by John Gallagher and photographs by Balthazar Korab

**The Great Stone Face: The Magazine of the Damfinos;**

The International Buster Keaton Society 1996, Volume 1

**The Complete Films of Buster Keaton, by Jim Kline**

**Women of New France: Fort St. Joseph**

**Archaeological Project**

A woman's right to vote.

## TIDBITS AND NOTES

Kay recently attended the big genealogy conference in Fort Wayne, Indiana and brought back over 200 pages of new information and ideas to better our society. She even got to meet Cindy from Cindy's List fame! Lots of great ideas were shared there. You will be seeing much of the info in our upcoming issues of Twig Talk.

We will be going to Lansing to visit the Library of Michigan. Anyone interested in going, please email us or let us know at the meeting. We will go in September or October. We want to go on a Friday when we have access to not only the main library & the archives. So gather up your notes and let's go!

## ELLIS ISLAND FACTS

Ellis Island was an immigration center from 1892 to 1954. During much of that time, Ellis Island was the main port of entry for immigrants not just to America but for most of North America. Ellis Island processed an average of 5,000 people per day. A total of 12 million immigrants passed through the island over the years. As the table below shows, more immigrants passed through Ellis Island than all other North American ports of entry combined. When looking at Ellis Island immigration records, here are the things you need to know:

Port	Number of Immigrants
Ellis Island	706,113
Baltimore	69,541
Boston	64,358
Montreal & St. John's	33,048
Philadelphia	29,926
Honolulu	11,439
San Francisco	9,504
Key West Florida	5,129
New Orleans	4,685
New Bedford Mass.	4,435

Source: Ellis Island

For an immigrant coming from Europe, the most expensive part of the journey from their home in the old country to their final destination in North America would have been the cost of buying a ticket on a transatlantic steamer. As can be seen from the table above, New York City had by far the most number of ships visiting its port.

For many immigrants, New York City was the cheapest and most convenient port of entry to North America regardless of their final destination. Even immigrants to Canada could have chosen New York City as their port of entry (entry to Canada was not an issue at the time since as late as the 1930s many crossings at the border between Canada and the US were totally open and had no customs or border officials). Thus, anyone who had ancestors who arrived anywhere in North America in the forty-year period between roughly 1892 and 1932 should consider checking the Ellis Island immigration records.

Not all immigrants were successful in entering the United States. Official statistics suggest about 2% of immigrants were rejected and sent home. The most common reason for rejection was a concern by immigration officials that the person may become a ward of the state. This could be due to health issues (especially a fairly common eye disease called trachoma, which led to blindness), mental illness or lack of sufficient funds for immigrants to support themselves. They would have to talk up a series of staircases. Doctors were stationed in various locations to observe and mark anyone who could not talk the stairs competently. Immigrants were sorted based on their health condition, financial status and language. When looking at the records, don't assume all your ancestors passed through Ellis Island. Some may have been sent home.

Immigration officials also turned away communists, anarchists and bigamists. They did this by asking some rather ingenious questions: "Are you a communist?" "Are you an anarchist?" and "Are you a bigamist?" If a person answered 'yes' to any of the questions, they were rejected. If a person answered 'no' to any of the questions they were put aside for further questioning. The correct answer would have been "What is a communist?" "What is an anarchist?" "What is a bigamist?"

If one member of a family was rejected, then it was up to the family to decide if they wanted to proceed into America or go back home. Usually, if the husband or the head of the household was rejected then the entire family would go home because the husband was generally the main breadwinner. If the mother or one of the daughters was rejected then often the family would often split up with the rejected person going home and the rest of the family staying in America. Sometimes, another family member would accompany the rejected person back home. Thus, the number of immigrants who went home was higher than the official 2% rejection rate would suggest.

You may come across an ancestor in the Ellis Island records who was accepted into the United States but then you cannot find any other record after that of the individual being in America. Consider the possibility they may have gone back home to the old country accompanying someone who was rejected. Often, families did not travel to America together. Be aware of this when looking for records. The more common pattern was for the husband (the main bread winner) to go to America a year or two before the rest of the family. The husband would get a job, get established and then earn enough money to pay for the passage of his wife and children. A variation of this might be an uncle, a brother or another relative (they were usually male) who arrived before the rest of the extended family. Therefore, when looking for immigration records on Ellis Island, always check for other relatives +/- 3 years from the date when you find a record for one of the family members.

A common misconception is that immigration officers changed or Anglicized immigrants' names. This did not happen. Many immigrants had their names changed, but it was not due to immigration officials. Instead, it was the responsibility of the officers aboard the ships that brought the immigrants to America to prepare the immigration documents. Many of these officers made mistakes in the immigration forms with the spelling of names and some of the ship officers were simply downright lazy. For example, consider an immigrant with the name like "Papadopoulos". The ship officers would sometimes write down an abbreviated name like "Papa" instead of spelling out the entire name. Be aware of this type of error when looking through Ellis Island records. It is more common than you might think.

Also be aware that often immigrants could not spell their own name. As a result, many errors (like the one noted above) passed through the system in addition to the usual problems of misspellings that occur in old documents. Remember, immigration officials at Ellis Island had to process an average of 5,000 people per day and for them it simply became a numbers game.

Of course, immigrants who arrived with proper documentation were much less likely to have spelling issues. In addition, even if the immigrant could not spell their own name, the name on the passport would be written by a government official from the old country who was much more likely to know how to spell it. Therefore, if possible, check to see if your ancestor travelled to Ellis Island with passports and other official documents. Knowing this fact will likely result in less spelling errors and this generally makes it easier to trace your ancestors.

Some immigrants who arrived in America also deliberately masked or hide their identity. New country, new life, new name. This was typically done to hide an immediate problem from the old country (such as a criminal past or an unfortunate family situation). Basically, the immigrant did not want to bring problems with them from the old country to the new country. In fact, the reason some immigrants decided to go to America was specifically to avoid serious problems at home, such as a potential jail term.

Sometimes immigrants masked their identity out of concern they may be rejected. In other words, they had a reason to lie. For example, indentured servitude was not allowed in the United States (and would be grounds for rejection) even though some companies in America tried to recruit people in Europe under these conditions. Basically, the company would pay for the passage to America in exchange for a couple of years of labor (this approach apparently was tried by some coal companies in Virginia according to Ellis Island officials). These immigrants were likely coached by the company that recruited them on how to lie to immigration officials. People also tried to recruit indentured servants from Europe using a similar approach. Immigration officials were on the lookout for this kind of activity and would reject immigrants based on indentured servitude. Sometimes, changing identities extended to not just changing names but also changing relationships within a family. For example a bigamist might claim to immigration officials that his second wife was actually his sister since both would likely have the same last name on official documents. Look out for this possibility, if you know your ancestor came to America from a region or religious group that supported polygamy. Many immigrants also deliberately changed their name to make it sound more American although this was normally done a couple of years after they had arrived in the country.

People often migrated to America in large groups from the same regions. For example, large groups of Croatians (sometimes almost whole villages) would come to America together. Groups of Italians or Swedes from the same region would also often travel together. This was true of many groups from many countries in Europe. Thus, if you are having trouble finding your ancestors in the Ellis Island records, consider focusing your search efforts on looking at records from ships that carried large numbers of immigrants from the same region as your ancestor. If you are not sure which ships to research, simply type in some common surnames from the region of your ancestors to find out which ships and which dates these immigrants arrived at Ellis Island. This can help considerably narrow your search for those problem cases. This idea can even be carried one step further. Suppose you cannot find the immigration record of one of your ancestors but you can locate the record of the person's spouse. Even though they may have been married in America, there is a strong chance that both of them came from the same region of Italy, Sweden, Germany, etc. Use this information to focus your search effort on ships that brought people from the region of your ancestors.

Be aware that not all immigrants who landed at New York City had to go through Ellis Island. Passengers in first class and second class were processed aboard their ships and then disembarked in downtown Manhattan. It was only passengers in steerage (third class) who had to go to Ellis Island. Immigrants who could afford first or second classes clearly were not destitute and were probably also not communists or anarchists, so they were viewed as lower risk. Prior to Ellis Island opening in 1892, immigrants were processed at Castle Garden Immigration Depot in Lower Manhattan. A total of 8 million immigrants passed through Castle Garden. Thus if you think your ancestor may have arrived before 1892, you also need to check the Castle Garden records. During World War II, Ellis Island was used to intern German, Italian and Japanese prisoners of war. Many sick or wounded US soldiers were also processed through the island on their way home (the island had a hospital and extensive medical facilities). The best place on the internet to find Ellis Island records is at [www.ellisland.org](http://www.ellisland.org) For Castle Garden records, visit [www.castlegarden.org](http://www.castlegarden.org). Some Ellis Island records can also be found using the free Genealogy Search Engine.

*Thank you to Genealogy In Time online magazine August 2013 for this valuable information.*

*We will vote on the changes in the bylaws and will be voted on in October.*

MUSKEGON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
BYLAWS CHANGE PROPOSED (bolded-in red)

ARTICLE II — PURPOSE

to gather people interested in genealogy and family history, with particular interest in Muskegon County, Michigan;

**Change to** gather people interested in genealogy and family history, with **emphasis on** Muskegon County, Michigan;

to promote genealogy research and public access to genealogical materials;

**Change to** promote **genealogical** research and public access to genealogical materials;

to teach members research methods, documentation standards, sources, and other skills;

**Change to** teach members research methods, documentation standards (take out—**sources**), and other skills;

to collect, compile, publish, and disseminate Muskegon County genealogical data;

**Change to** compile, publish (take out—, **and disseminate**) Muskegon County genealogical data;

to contribute genealogy materials and other aid to Hackley Public Library.

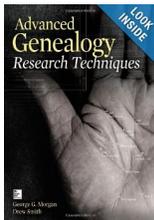
**Change to** contribute genealogy materials and other aid to Hackley Public Library-**Local History & Genealogy Department**.

## GREAT BOOKS!

### Advanced Genealogy Research

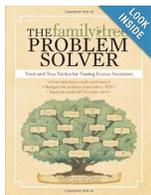
**Techniques** by George G. Morgan and Drew Smith

Advanced Genealogy Research Techniques uses up-to-date and highly organized methods and techniques to show you how to find the elusive details to round out your genealogy research. You'll get past the brick walls that have stumped you and see how to move beyond basic types of genealogy resources. The book covers a variety of software programs and specialized genealogy tools and shows you how to create an online genealogical research log to preserve data found and organize it in ways to help you understand what you've uncovered. Nearly every form of modern social networking is addressed as is using DNA records. This practical, in-depth guide provides the next level of detail for anyone who wants to expand beyond the beginner tactics and techniques.



### The Family Tree Problem Solver

by Marsha Hoffman Rising  
Has your family history research hit a brick wall? Marsha Hoffman Rising's best-selling book *The Family Tree Problem Solver* has the solutions to help you find the answers you seek.



Inside you'll find:

- Ideas on how to find vital records before civil registration
- Tips for finding "missing" ancestors on censuses
- Instructions for investigating collateral kin to further your pedigree
- A look at advanced court records and how they can help you find answers
- Work-arounds for lost or destroyed records
- Techniques for correctly identifying and researching ancestors with common names
- Methods for finding ancestors who lived before 1850
- Case studies that show how to apply the author's advice to real-life research roadblocks
- Strategies for analyzing your problem and creating a successful research plan

This revised edition also includes new information about online research techniques and a look at the role of DNA research. Plus you'll find a glossary of genealogy terms and more than a dozen templates for charts and logs to help you organize and record your research. Let *The Family Tree Problem Solver* help you find the answers you need today.

**Remember that if you have a Kindle, Nook, or other reader on your computer you can download a digital copy of many books at a very low cost or even free of charge!**

## LATEST FREE ONLINE RECORDS

Find My Past UK just published service records of more than 50,000 officers and ratings who served in the Royal Naval Division from 1914-20. These records will give you details such as name, address, next of kin, service number, physical appearance, disciplinary record and even swimming ability!

The division was formed from men who served with the Royal Navy and its reserve forces. It fought on land alongside the regular army during World War One and suffered heavy casualties at Gallipoli and the Somme. It included recruits from the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, Royal Fleet Reserve, Royal Navy, Royal Marines, and Royal Army. Go to:

<http://www.findmypast.co.uk/content/news/rnd>

Scottish Post Office Directories posted over 700 digitized directories covering most of Scotland from 1773 to 1911.

With their alphabetical list of a location's inhabitants and information on their profession and address, the directories enable you easily to find out where people lived at a certain time and how they earned their living.

In each directory you can browse by place, year and resident's name, view page by page, view a PDF of the complete book, search the full PDF text, and download files for free. The oldest volumes digitized were published in the late 1700s, when the demand for information about the increasing number of traders, businesses and industries grew rapidly. Most of the directories were published annually. This makes them a valuable resource, especially for the years not covered by the census which, starting in 1841, was only carried out every 10 years.

<http://digital.nls.uk/directories/index.html>

The Troy New York Irish Genealogy Society has launched a new database of the State Street Burial Ground in the city of Albany. The city opened the burial ground in 1801 to alleviate the overcrowded churchyards and private family graveyards in the city. It was located at the eastern end of what is now Washington Park. This new database contains roughly 3,700 burial records indexed by last name.

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nytigs/StateStreetBurialGrounds/StateStreetBurialGroundsIntro.htm>

Yad va Shem, the Jewish Holocaust victims website continues to add more genealogy records. The website now records some 4 million names and biographical details. This is approximately 2/3 of the roughly six million Jews killed by the Nazis. The database can be searched by name and place of residence. Yad va Shem also accepts submissions of testimony and photographs.

<http://db.yadvashem.org/names/search.html?language=en>

## Upcoming Events Dates 2013

### Regular Meetings

Starts at 7:00 p.m.

2nd Thursday

**VFW Post 3195**

**5209 Grand Haven Road**

September 12

October 10

### Holiday Gathering

November 14

No meeting in Dec

### Board Meetings

Meet at 5:30 p.m.

2nd Thursday

**VFW Post 3195**

**5209 Grand Haven Road**

September 12

October 10

**NO MEETING in Dec**

### Genealogy Family History Workshops

Torrent House Local History &  
Genealogy Dept. 315 W. Webster  
2 sessions! Morning or Afternoon.

2nd Saturday of the month

10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. or

2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

You must pre-register online at  
[1972mcgs@gmail.com](mailto:1972mcgs@gmail.com) or call the  
Torrent House, Local History &  
Genealogy Dept. at 231-722-7276  
ext. 240

September 14

October 12

November 9

No workshop in Dec



**Our New  
Location!**

### **REMEMBER OUR NEW MEETING LOCATION**

We will be meeting at the Wilbur L. Boyer VFW Post #3195 at 5209 Grand Haven Road in Norton Shores. Directions: If your coming from North or South US 31 you take exit 109B West on to Sternberg Road to Grand Haven Rd. Turn right onto Grand Haven Rd. It is on the corner of Porter and Grand Haven Rd, on the left. You can bring your own soda or buy soda at the VFW. Our last meeting there went very well and we will be meeting there until further notice.

### Coming in September - your new official online publication of Family Tree Talk:

We offer Family Tree Talk periodical as a  
member only publication. Traditional mailing  
can be done for the cost of postage & handling

### Don't forget to bring in September

Your completed 4 Generation Chart.

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

Stories and photos for the History of  
Muskegon Volume II.

Donations are appreciated for our  
refreshment fund.

Any books or genealogical items to  
donate for prizes.



### PROGRAM REMINDERS FOR 2013/2014

**Sep 12**—"The Art of Tombstone Rubbing" An Artful Approach to  
Preserving History 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 11**—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

Members only and public Classes and Presentations on using  
computers for genealogy.

More with Bill and Glenna Jo Christian - Dating Photos Workshop.  
Member Car Pool Field Trips to Lansing, Grand Rapids, and Fort  
Wayne.

New Workshops.

More Perks for Members only. That gives our members benefits  
they can only get by renewing!

Coming in 2017 - Our 45th Anniversary