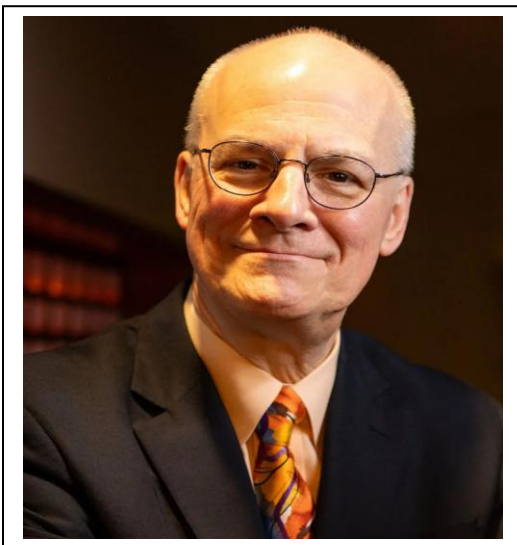


Save the Date!

**Curt Witcher, FIGS, FUGA
at the 2025 MGC Fall Family History Event
Co-Sponsored by the Archives of Michigan
and the Library of Michigan
Saturday, November 15, 2025
Presentations in-person! Attendees may also
choose to attend virtually.**



Curt Witcher is the Director of Special Collections at the Allen County Public Library, managing the widely acclaimed Genealogy Center as well as the Rolland Center for Lincoln Research. He is a former president of both the Federation of Genealogical Societies and the National Genealogical Society and the founding president of the Indiana Genealogical Society. Curt currently serves on the Indiana State Historical Records Advisory Board, the Indiana Historical Society's publications committee, and the executive committee of the Friends of the Lincoln Collection of Indiana's Board of Directors. He also serves on the Northeast Indiana Jewish Genealogy Society board of directors, as well as an advisor for the African American Genealogical Society of Fort Wayne. Curt is distinguished as a fellow of both the Indiana Genealogical Society and the Utah Genealogical Association.

Join Curt and MGC for these exciting topics.

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President's Message

October 2025

What beauty we're experiencing in the state right now – with oddly cooler temperatures, some tree colors emerging, sunshine, and wonderful storms to help everything look green and lush! I hope you are enjoying the sparkling waters of our beloved Great Lakes, exploring the area by rock hunting or bicycling, taking a cruise through the Pictured Rocks, enjoying a horse carriage ride on Mackinac Island, watching a football game at one of our wonderful universities or colleges, and savoring the food and festivals everywhere!

And our genealogy world didn't take the summer off! This issue is full of the plans made by our incredible societies across the state for their new program year. Be sure to check the listings, as many of them allow virtual participation so that you can continue your education. A BIG part of your education can be the 2025 MGC Fall Family History Conference in November – please see the information in this issue about presentations from Curt Witcher of the Allen County Public Library to prepare you for utilizing the incredible resources of ACPL for your family research. Registration information will be available soon! Again, this year, if you attend in person, you will be treated to Saturday lunch and continental breakfast, as well as an opportunity to win prizes. Stay tuned!!

Our fundraising campaign for the national Veteran Bounty Land Records digitization project at NARA is underway, and we kindly request your donation. Check out this issue for information on how societies can get involved and a donation form for your contribution – we need everyone's help with this nationwide effort. We want the State of Michigan, through MGC, to be a significant contributor to the effort. So encourage your society and its members and friends to get involved.

We're happy to share that the Delegate Council will have a special presentation from Stephen Little, NGS's AI Program Director, in January's Delegate meeting – AI Applications for Genealogical Societies. Discover how to leverage AI resources for the benefit of your society.

Our Quarterly Editor, Jay Taylor, will be leaving his temporary editor role on December 1st and we want to thank him for keeping us informed and updated with key information. We appreciate him stepping in this year. AND that means that **we are desperately seeking an Editor!!** AND **we need a Social Media volunteer** to continue sharing information about MGC events and links from across Michigan. Thanks to Judy Sheldon, who retired from her long role as Social Media volunteer in June, and we're desperate for someone to step up. For either of these positions, please contact me at judynmuhn@gmail.com or info@mimgc.org to volunteer your time! PLEASE???

Judy Nimer Muhn

How to Make Member Society Contact Changes

The Michigan Genealogical Council updates our email list using the information provided on your Society's membership or renewal form. As this information can change between dues payments, please use the provided link to update your details as needed: <https://mimgc.org/society-contact-change-form/>

Save the Dates!

National Genealogical Society (NGS) Family History Conferences:

- Ft. Wayne, IN – May 27-30, 2026
- Madison, WI – May 20-22, 2027

MGC 2025 Fall Family History Event

- Lansing, MI - Saturday, November 15, at the Michigan Library and Historical Center. Featured speakers include Curt Witcher, FIGS, FUGA; Adam Oster and Matt Pacer from the Library of Michigan. Co-sponsored by the Archives of Michigan and the Library of Michigan.
- Topics include: Doing Effective Genealogical Research in Libraries; Mining The Mother Lode: Periodical Research; High Tech and High Touch of 21st Century Genealogy; and Michigan Souvenir Books – Visual Context to Our Family History Research.
- For additional information, presenter bios, and registration, visit <https://mimgc.org/event/2025-mgc-fall-family-history-event/>

Western Michigan Genealogical Society Special Event Featuring David Allen Lambert

- Hudsonville, MI – Saturday, October 18 at The Pinnacle Center. Topics include: Western Migration, 1783-1900; Basics of New England Research; Resources for Pennsylvania Genealogy; and Introducing American Ancestors. Go to <https://gotancestors.com/> for information.

Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan's 47th Annual Seminar

- Orchard Lake Village, MI – Saturday, October 18, at the Polish Institute of Culture & Research, The Pinnacle Center. Topics include: The People of Hamtramck: Reflections on Belonging, Agency, & Being Polish American; Researching Ancestral Locations in Prussian Genealogy Records; Finding Prussian Ancestors in Online Archives; and Pioneers in Polish American Education. Go to <https://pgsm.org/> for information and registration.

Kalamazoo Valley Genealogical Society Independent Research Trip to Washington, DC

When: September 21 through 27, 2025

Where: National Archives – DAR Library – Library of Congress

Accommodations: Go to the RESEARCH tab at the website www.mikvgs.org/

More Info: Reach out to info@mikvgs.org

Colorado Chapter, Palatines to America Fall Seminar

- Highlands Ranch, CO – November 15, 2025, at the Highlands Ranch Senior Center. The featured guest speaker will be Alex Tolkendorf, a genealogist and speaker specializing in German, Dutch, and Eastern European research. Information is at <https://www.copalum.us/>

Society News & Events

Please verify that any program listed is still scheduled to occur. All societies that have these programs have given their permission to list them here.

From the Genealogical Society of Monroe County:

October 4 – "Wreck on the Wabash" featuring Laurie Perkins

November 1 – "Oral History" by James K. Cameron

December 6 – "Finding Ancestors in the Grocery Store" by Rick Grassley

From Kalamazoo Valley Northville Genealogical Society:


September 21-27 – The 2025 Independent Washington, DC Research Trip

From Van Buren Regional Genealogical Society:

September 20 – "The History of the Fruit Belt Line," known as the Kalamazoo, Lake Shore & Chicago Railway, presented by Keith Howard, Digital Preservation Specialist for the Kalamazoo Public Library.

The History of the Fruit Belt Line presented by
Keith Howard, Digital Preservation Specialist for the Kalamazoo Public Library

Kalamazoo, Lake Shore & Chicago Railway
"The Fruit Belt Line"



"Trainmen had grand plans for the rail that once wound through Van Buren and Kalamazoo counties, but contract disputes and right-of-way issues "detailed" them and altered the history of this well remembered line."

Hartford Public Library
12 Church St., Hartford, MI
Saturday, September 20th, 2025
11 am

A special presentation sponsored by the Van Buren Regional Genealogical Society
This event is free and open to the public, no reservation is needed.

October 18 – "History of Benton Harbor Ship Canal" with Chuck Jager, Director of the Morton House Museum

From the Grand Rapids Historical Society:

October 9 – "From the West Coast to West Michigan: Japanese Americans' Contributions to the Local War Efforts During WW2" with presenter Jennifer Tompkins

November 13 – "Rosie the Riveter," a symbol for all American women, is being presented by Deb Wake

From the Michigan Germanic Genealogical Society:

- November 10 - "German Census Records, 1816-1910: The Where, When and How of a Valuable Genealogical Resource" with Dr. Roger Minert

From the Western Michigan Genealogical Society:

September 26 – Join the Grand Rapids History Center for an after-hours Lock In program designed for genealogists.

October 4 – "Strange, Wicked, Spooky Michigan" featuring Amberrose Hammond

November 1 – "Grand Rapids Buildings" by Pam VanderPloeg

From the Muskegon Genealogical Society:

September 20 – "Preserving Patriots, The Daughters of the American Revolution and a Legacy of Lineage" featuring Sarah Gwyn Deming, State Director of Protocol, DAR of Michigan

October 18 – "Meet My Ancestor," a program in celebration of Family History Month, at the Hackley Public Library in Muskegon

January 17 – "What's the Deal with Evernote?" with speaker Karen (Page) Frazier

Frankenmuth Genealogical Society:

October 28 – "Digitizing My Family Tree: Formats, Software & Techniques" with speaker Adam Oster from the Library of Michigan

November 25 – "Various Types of Transportation in Saginaw County from 1850 to 1920" presented by Tom Trombley, Castle Museum

January 27 – "Michigan Online: Family History Tools for the Great Lakes State" by speaker Rachel Clark from the Michigan Archives

Michigan Pioneer Certificate Program

from Kim Smith

It really is a small world! Our committee received an application from Arizona. This person received a newsletter, as a member of a hereditary society in Michigan, that included an article highlighting the Michigan Pioneer Certificate program. Fast forward to a note from this very happy participant- they loved the pin and certificate and appreciated the opportunity to honor their pioneer!

Spread the word- how many other connections can be made?

Contact the committee if you have any questions at certificates@mimgc.org.

Major Upgrades: Library of Congress's Chronicling America

The Library of Congress recently made some very helpful updates to its Chronicling America website, making it easier to research its collection of 23+ million digitized newspaper pages of historical U.S. newspapers. The new upgrade is mobile-friendly, has better image viewing, and advanced search tools, making it much simpler to search and view. The site also now connects with other Library collections, making it easier to discover even more fascinating stories and historical context. The online Research Guide explains how to navigate the new site. <https://guides.loc.gov/chronicling-america/introduction>

Michigan Genealogical Council Proposed Process for Veteran Bounty Land Record (VBLR) Fundraising Campaign

Veteran Bounty Land Records Project with Jan Alpert A Preserve the Pensions Project (recorded session)

The Veterans Bounty Lands Project is the latest digitization project in partnership with the National Archives and Records Administration, in collaboration with the genealogical community. Just over \$1,000,000 of the \$2.5 million needed has been raised to date from FamilySearch, Daughters of the American Revolution, and other large contributors. The project will digitize over 360,000 bounty land files from the Revolutionary War through the Mexican War and commemorate the 250th anniversary of American Independence. Jan's presentation will explain how genealogical societies can participate in and join the 250th Celebration.

Following the March MGC presentation by Jan Alpert, Chair of the Records Preservation and Access Coalition (RPAC), to the Delegates of the Michigan Genealogical Council – saved and viewable at <https://mimgc.org/veteran-bounty-land-records/> - the process proposed to the Delegate Council from the Board's meeting in April is as follows:

1. Societies may either encourage their members to view the presentation by Jan Alpert (using the link above) or share the video as part of a membership meeting and discuss their Society's efforts to support this campaign.
2. As each Society determines how it will solicit its members, the Society's leadership may also consider finding a local organization, company, or historical group that might be a sponsoring or supporting member of the Society's efforts – inviting them to match the donations from the Society's membership.
3. Announcing the campaign and providing pledge/donation forms to members (perhaps as part of annual membership renewal efforts) to allow members to become part of this nationwide event. A sample form is available for use by the Society.
4. Societies would obtain pledges (via member-submitted forms) or donations (kept in a restricted fund in the Society's bank account) beginning immediately and extending through the fall of 2025. The member's pledges and donations would be used to tally any matching funds that businesses and organizations offer. This period – May through October – could also be used to provide media and local newspaper articles announcing the Society's plans and encouraging the public to join the campaign for the historic recognition of the 250th anniversary of American Independence.

5. At the end of October 2025, the Michigan Genealogical Council will request that societies report to the Board the amount raised to that point. The MGC Board will create a statewide tally of the monies raised and pledged to the national RPAC team, representing the amount the State of Michigan is offering to the nationwide campaign. The MGC Board has approved a match of up to \$10,000 for donations from our Societies. If your Society can obtain matching contributions from local sources, this can multiply your members' donations several times.
6. When the national committee announces its request for the funds to be forwarded to RPAC for the National Archives (expected in early 2026), the MGC will announce a deadline for the receipt of these monies from the societies and their donors (including the matching businesses and organizations), to be forwarded as the total donations from our state. The total contributions will be submitted to RPAC from MGC, representing our state.
7. Special commemorative certificates will be issued to every Society contributing to the campaign; they will be listed on the MGC website and newsletter. Societies may provide commemorative certificates to their donors at all levels or create a level of acknowledgment, perhaps in local papers or Society publications.
8. It is expected that the national RPAC team will provide a date by which all donations must be received, as it is planned to have an event announcing the final amount contributed to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) near the July 4th holiday in 2026.

For questions about this process, please contact the Michigan Genealogical Council through your Delegate or the Board of Directors. Thank you for your efforts to make a historical contribution to the retention of records important to our nation's founding.



Veteran Bounty Land Records Fundraising Campaign 2025-26
Gift/Pledge Form

I/We wish to make a pledge/gift of \$ _____.

___ Enclosed is a payment of \$ _____.

___ I will make my gift online. (To donate if your society accepts)

___ I/We intend to pay my/our pledged portion no later than December 31, 2025, as follows:

___ Bill me 1X on _____ (date).

___ Bill me \$ _____ on each of the following dates: _____.

___ This gift will be matched by my/our employer: _____ (name). (Note: Please contact your HR administrator for the correct paperwork)

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this pledge form to your society at the email address below. All gifts are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law. Please make checks payable to your society (add mailing address or email here)

For questions, contact:
Michigan Genealogical Council
President Judy Nimer Muhn
judynmuhn@gmail.com or
info@mimgc.org

Has Your Society Renewed Yet?

Our membership year is from July 1 to June 30. If your organization has not renewed for 2025-26, please ask your Board to renew today. We also invite you to complete all the information on our renewal form to keep our records up to date. Go to <https://tinyurl.com/5xe29849>

Genealogy Book Review

By Derek J. Blount, reviewer

Understanding and Using Baptismal Records by John T. Humphrey

After listening to a recent program by Judy Nimer Muhn on Church records, I pulled down this book from my bookshelf and did a little review of the topic. "Understanding and Using Baptismal Records" is an invaluable resource for genealogists and historians. It offers practical guidance on interpreting baptismal registers, which hold rich information about individuals and their religious communities. Baptismal records are central to many Christian traditions and often predate civil registrations and sometimes document births. They play a vital role in filling gaps in civil records. The focus is primarily on European and North American records from colonial times to the present.

The book explains the purpose and evolution of baptismal records, addressing challenges like deciphering handwriting and understanding denominational differences. It provides practical tips, including glossaries of Latin terms, and highlights regional and religious variations.

Many churches practice child and adult baptisms. The Religious Society of Friends rejects baptisms completely. When people came to this country in colonial days, a church from their homeland may not have existed in the colony yet. They may have adopted another similar church practice, combining their old-world tradition with the new. The new colonists may not have been staunch followers of their old church and found one to match their beliefs in the new land. They may also have founded new churches with their relaxed or reformed practices of the old church. Over time, some churches merge with others, while others split to form new forms of their church. As new immigrants came to America, they often brought their church with them, like the Germans and Dutch.

This book can help you locate and analyze records using archives, online databases, and other repositories. The book emphasizes key details to extract from entries while addressing language barriers and denominational differences.

Real-world examples and case studies demonstrate how to analyze records, link them to other documents, and uncover family stories.

The book offers clear instructions and addresses common challenges like lost or illegible records. It gives readers tools and strategies for effective research.

This book is an important resource for anyone exploring their family genealogy or history. It combines practical advice, historical insight, and examples to help readers navigate baptismal records.

Contact the Michigan Library and Historical Center

Archives of Michigan

Monday through Friday, 1 to 5 PM.

Saturday, 10 AM to 4 PM.

Reference Desk Hours by Email

archives@michigan.gov

or by Phone (517) 335-2576

Website: <https://michigan.gov/archivesofmichigan>

And <https://michiganology.org/>

Library of Michigan

Monday through Friday, 10 AM to 5 PM.

Saturday, 10 AM to 4 PM.

Phone (517) 335-1477

Email: librarian@michigan.gov

Website:

<https://michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan/>

Michigan History Museum

Monday through Saturday, 10 AM to 4 PM.

Sunday, 1 to 5 PM.

Field trips & group reservations are Monday to Thursday only

View the schedule of holidays for closures

Phone: (517) 335-2573

Website: <https://michigan.gov/mhc/museums>

Michigan Genealogical Council

Founded in 1972, the Michigan Genealogical Council (MGC) is an organization comprising delegates from each of its member societies. Its objectives are to locate, preserve, publish, and deposit in suitable repositories records of value to genealogists and to initiate activities that encourage and assist those involved in genealogical research. Meetings are held in the Forum of the Library of Michigan and Historical Center, 702 W. Kalamazoo St., Lansing, MI 48909, on the second Thursday in September, November, January, March, May, and July. Board meetings are held at the Archives of Michigan on the second Thursday of each month. Membership is open to any Michigan genealogical or family history society, amateur or professional, with a primary interest in genealogy. Dues are a flat rate based on general society membership at the close of their fiscal year. Checks should be made payable to the Michigan Genealogical Council and mailed to the MGC, P.O. Box 80953, Lansing, MI, 48908-0953, Website: <https://mimgc.org>.

The Newsletter is published quarterly by the Michigan Genealogical Council. Member society delegates and presidents are notified via email when a new issue becomes available online. Content for the Winter issue is due on December 1; the Spring issue is due on March 1; the Summer issue is due on June 1; and the Fall issue is due on September 1. Email newsletter items to MGC Editor: newsletter@mimgc.org. Or send it to P.O. Box 80953, Lansing, MI, 48908-0953. Permission to reprint a signed article should be obtained directly from the author. Unsigned material may be reprinted without permission, provided the newsletter is given credit. For more information, please visit our website at <https://mimgc.org/newsletter/>.

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Recording Secretary Delegate Meetings	Tim Salatin Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County	Nominations	Elected Directors
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Archives of Michigan Liaison	Kris Rzepczynski 702 W. Kalamazoo St, Lansing, MI 48915	Projects	Roger Moffat Western Michigan Genealogical Society
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