



# PIONEER RECORD

Newsletter for the Midland Genealogical Society

Volume 29 No. 3

[www.rootsweb.com/~mimgs/](http://www.rootsweb.com/~mimgs/)

February 2009

## In This Issue

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Families Faced The Furies of Fire.....    | 1  |
| The Presidents Letter.....                | 2  |
| Editorial Comments.....                   | 2  |
| Membership News.....                      | 2  |
| Books for Sale.....                       | 3  |
| Tips.....                                 | 3  |
| Web Sites of Interest.....                | 3  |
| Researching Funeral Home Records.....     | 6  |
| Additions to the Gene Room.....           | 6  |
| The Year was 1852.....                    | 7  |
| MGC Report.....                           | 8  |
| Coming Events .....                       | 8  |
| Michigan Cemetery Sourcebook.....         | 9  |
| Looking Back In Midland County.....       | 9  |
| MGS Officers and Society Information..... | 10 |

## Families Faced the Fury of Fire

By Gloria Kunding

According to local census records, a family that you are researching has lived in the same area for several decades then seems to disappear. What happened to them? Why did they leave? More important, where did they go?

Sometimes families moved for better opportunities elsewhere. However, some had no choice but to leave because a great fire had decimated the area. They were left jobless or homeless or both if they were the lucky ones. Families who lost all or most of their members were the unlucky.

Michigan experienced four devastating fires in its history. On October 8, 1871, a terrible fire burned across the southern part of the Lower Peninsula. Extremely high winds and dry conditions caused towering flames to devour Manistee, Holland, and badly damage several towns in the thumb. It claimed two hundred lives. Hundreds also died in the fires raging in Wisconsin and Chicago that occurred at the same time. Countless acres of forest were destroyed and millions of dollars in property damage occurred. Thousands were left homeless.

In Manistee, the fire was swept into the town by gale force winds. The townspeople fought it for several hours until the winds blew like a tornado and a deluge of fire swept over the town. Those fighting the fire ran toward their

homes, gathered their families, and ran for the river and lake along with the rest of the town's inhabitants. They escaped across the bridge which burned behind them.

The town's two sawmills and other buildings in that area were engulfed by a monstrous sea of fire. Homes, businesses, warehouses, and boats all burnt including the fire engine that was left by the fleeing men. Families were separated in their race to escape. In the end, no lives were lost even though only three buildings were all that remained of the town.

The Great Fire of September 5, 1881 decimated Michigan's Thumb. When fifty mph winds whipped flames from lumbering debris that had been burning for days before, the fire became a wall of flame that spread quickly over the countryside. It killed 282 people and countless livestock and wildlife. It burned a million acres of timber and farmland totaling \$250,000.00 in property damage.

There were many stories of people who died while trying to escape the flames by taking refuge in shallow wells, in their farm

(Continued on page 4)

### Midland Genealogical Society Programs for 2008 - 2009

Meetings are scheduled on the third Wednesday of the month unless otherwise noted..

Programs for the meetings are as follows.

#### February 18, 2009 meeting 7:00 Lounge

Funeral Home Records by David Smith of Smith/Miner Funeral Home

#### March 18, 2009 meeting 7:00 Auditorium

Researching at the Allen County Public Library by Curt B. Witcher. Co-sponsored program with the library.

#### April 15, 2009 meeting 7:00 Historical Society

Discussion regarding genealogy databases

#### May 20, 2009 meeting 6:00 Historical Society

Annual Meeting—Alice Sias—Civil War Ancestors

## The Presidents Letter

It is hard to believe but our genealogy season is over half complete. It is time to issue the first call to those who wish to contribute their time as an officer of the society. I find that one of the perks of being president is to call my home office the "Presidential Library". Soon a nominating committee will be appointed to solicit volunteers for any vacancies.

At the January meeting we watched the PBS video on the "Orphan Train". The story is of a large program to give orphans and poor children in large cities a better chance at life by being placed with new families in the Midwest and West. Most of the program was interviews of adults who experience a wide range of experiences. But all suffered from the loss of their family ties. This DVD was purchased by MGS and will be available for you to play at home.

As a volunteer I saw numerous examples of information that came

from church records. Some local records give European towns that were not found elsewhere. In my own family tree most of the older records are from religious sources. I think we can be more help to our members and anyone researching in Midland County by producing a guide to all the religious institutions in the county, past and present. Geographical locations could help link residences and nearby churches. History of affiliations, mergers, name changes, abandonment could be included. The extent of records and where records are now kept would be key information.

Do you think this could be a project for our Society?

Our meetings for April and May will be at the carriage house at the Midland County Historical Society.

*MGS President, Bob Mass*

## From The Editor...

The past year has been very sad for our society. We have had three deaths of our members. My mother passed away in February 2008. This was soon followed by Earl Ebach, our residing President. Last week, we lost another of our members, Ron Snyder who has been our treasurer for several years. He will be missed.

Our president, Bob Mass, has appointed Dave Russell to complete the year as our treasurer. I'm sure that Dave will do a terrific job.

For our society to grow, we need to increase our membership. I would like to see each of you bring a friend along to one of

our meetings. Let them see what we are doing and help them get started in genealogy. I also am a merit badge counselor with the boy scouts for the genealogy merit badge. I encourage each of these boys to trace their families and continue their research even after the badge requirements are complete. If you have a suggestion that can help our membership, please send these to Linda Fisher, our membership chair.

*Walt Bennett*  
Editor

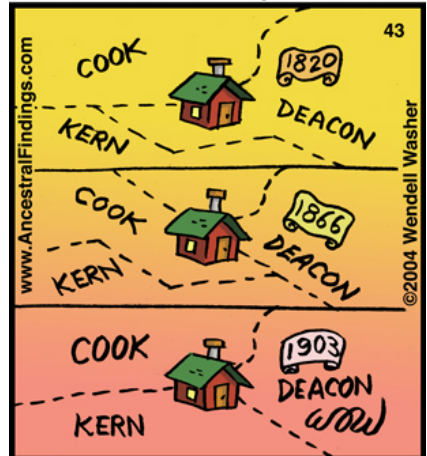
## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome new member Chadwick Phillips of Lansing, Michigan. Two members dropped their membership this year and four others were dropped for non-payment of dues. Our total membership is 134 including couples.

We had 22 members sign in at the November 19th meeting. I am sure we had more than that attending. Please sign the sign in sheet when you arrive.

Remember to support the NARA project with your monthly donations to the NARA jar. Thank You,  
*Linda Fisher, Membership Chair*

## GENE TOONS by Wendell Washer



Jerry Mander never moved,  
but the counties did.

## MEMBERSHIP DUES 2008-2009

The collection of MGS membership dues for 2008-2009 has been concluded. Two members have cancelled their membership and four have been dropped because of no response and no payment. Statements for the 2009-2020 dues will be sent out in early August 2009 and will be due by the first meeting in September 2009. Linda Fisher, Membership Chair, Midland Genealogical Society, 3772 N Meridian Road, Sanford, MI 48657. 989-687-9131. Dues for an individual are \$14.00; for a family they are \$17.50.

## Web Sites of Interest

Here are some of the 50 most popular genealogy websites for 2008.

Ancestry.com  
Rootsweb.com  
MyHeritage.com  
Genealogy.com  
FamilySearch.com  
MyFamily.com  
Findagrave.com  
Footnote.com  
OneGreatFamily.com  
WorldVitalRecords.com  
GenealogyToday.com  
AncestorHunt.com  
AccessGenealogy.com  
EllisIsland.com  
CyndisList.com  
Interment.net  
USGenNet.org  
Geni.com  
KindridKonnections.com  
FamilyTreeMaker.com  
SearchForAncestors.com  
DistantCousin.com  
CousinConnect.com  
Genebase.com  
TribalPages.com  
SurnameWeb.org  
FamilyTreeDNA.org  
JewishGen.org  
ObitCentral.com  
GenCircles.com  
<http://www.progenealogists.com/top50genealogy2008.htm>

## Simplify Finding Distances between Locations

Not long ago I spent quite a bit of time trying to figure out how far my ancestor lived from the cemetery that I believe he is buried in "as the crow flies." I could locate both locations on a map, but didn't know where roads might have been on the frontier. I have since found a free website for joggers and bikers very useful for getting distances. GMaps Pedometer allows you to get straight line distances (manual) between two or more points.

Distances on current roads are available taking into account curves and turns onto other roads (automatic). This will be useful to get an exact driving distance from a landmark to a cemetery or other location. The site is based on Google Maps and has that look and feel to it. Double click to set your start, turn, and end points. I like to zoom in quite a bit and then click and hold to move the map when my route starts to go off the edge. The cyclist route will not let you go down a one-way street the wrong way like the runner route would.

Gerald M. Graves

Van Meter, Iowa

## Tips

If you have ancestors whose surnames begin with "Mc" and "Mac," such as McKnitt and MacTavish, you may find them suspiciously absent in records even in places you are almost positive they should be appear. Sometimes the Mc or Mac may have been omitted by the person making the record or the record may have been misfiled under the second half of the name. Look in the records for both the full name and for the shortened version of the name. Of course this would also apply to O'Malley and other surname prefixes that could be separated. Learning to misspell and fracture your ancestors' surnames can sometimes help you find those missing links.

(Ancestry Weekly Journal Nov 15, 2008)

The popular Post-It notes and other brands of self-adhesive "sticky notes" may be great for leaving a quick note for yourself or a friend, but they are definitely not for use in books and original historical documents. The paper used in the product is not acid-free, and the adhesive on them contains chemicals which can leave behind a residue that can damage and/or discolor anything to which it is applied. Don't use these products on any historical documents, photographs, books, or any other materials in libraries, archives, or on materials in your personal collection that you wish to preserve for posterity.

(Ancestry Weekly Journal Aug 3, 2008)



## B O O K S F O R S A L E

The following books, published by the Midland Genealogical Society, are available for sale at any meeting, at the Midland Genealogy Room, Grace A. Dow Public Library or by mail. Price of each book is \$20.00 plus \$3.00 for postage and handling.

Midland County Obituary Index (#1) – 1872-1927. The book consists of 16,000 abstractions covering 55 years from the Midland Times (1872-1875), The Midland Sun (1892-1924) and the Midland Republican (1881-1927). The soft bound 238 page book is 8 ½ by 11 inches.

Midland County Obituary Index (#2) – 1928-1950. The book consists of about 8,000 abstractions covering 22 years from the Midland Republican (1928 - 1937) and the Midland Daily News (1937 - 1950). The soft bound 238 page book is 8 ½ by 11 inches. Note: Both Obituary Books (#1 & #2) are available as a package of \$35.00.

Midland County Obituary Index (#3)-1951-1982 This book consists of 30,900 entries including about 4000 maiden names covering 22 years extracted from Midland Daily News. The 387 page, 8½ by 11, soft bound book consists of two volumes A through L and M through Z. The set costs \$40 plus \$5 postage and handling.

Midland Pioneers, edited by Ora Flaningham. This book is a compilation of the most interesting genealogical, historical and humorous reprints from newspapers published in the Pioneer Record. The book is 6 by 9 inches, soft bound, 259 pages. (Out of print, but orders being compiled at Genealogy desk.)

To ORDER A BOOK write: Midland Genealogical Society BOOK: Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 W. St. Andrews Dr., Midland, MI 48640.

(Continued from page 3)

fields, or by trying to out run it on the roads with horses and a wagon. One large group of survivors found escape in the brick court house building in Bad Axe. It was the only building in town that was left standing after the fire passed through.

This fire also burned into Saginaw County. In the east, the fire burned buildings and property in Bridgeport, Blumfield, Buena Vista, and Birch Run Townships. In the west, it burned in Kochville and Saginaw Townships. It also threatened an Indian settlement of 30-40 families.

On October 15, 1908, the small village of Metz in Presque Isle County was reduced to ashes in three hours time. The summer was a dry one that year. The fire started when very high winds fanned either a small fire that was burning days ago from land clearing or sparks from a locomotive.

This fire burned northwest towards Millersburg where the townspeople fought it and saved three saw mills with piles of timber near them. It burned northeast to Lake Huron where it died on the shores while people and wildlife in its path took refuge in the lake. Some didn't make it. It burned into parts of Alpena County.

Forty-three died in the fire at Metz. Thirteen of those were cremated after they and others climbed into a gondola car (a flat low-sided car) on a rescue train in Metz. The other train cars held household possessions. At Nowicki's Siding a mile away, piles of cedar posts on one side and train cars loaded with tanbark

on the other side of the tracks were ablaze. The train was headed for Posen six miles away and tried to run through the gauntlet of flames from the burning piles. The train derailed in the middle of the piles because the tracks were warped from the heat of the fire. Many saved their lives by climbing from the car and stumbling blindly into a nearby plowed field and burying their faces and hands in the dirt. The others in the gondola car didn't make it. Two of the train's

other Michigan counties contained small forest fires as well.

The July 12, 1911, front-page article of the *Alpena Argus Pioneer* described it well.

## AUSABLE AND OSCODA IN RUINS

Oscoda and AuSable are wiped off the map and may never be rebuilt. The fire started yester-



*Metz Fire Historical Marker*

crew also died. Although burned, the engineer followed the tracks to Posen.

Over two hundred thousand acres were blackened and \$200,000.00 in property was lost. There was \$60,000.00 of property lost in Metz alone. This year in October was the centennial commemoration of that terrible event. The local Catholic Church was packed with area residents, ancestors of those who survived, and of those who didn't.

Michigan's fourth and final great fire occurred on July 11, 1911 and destroyed the twin towns of Oscoda and AuSable. Even though it was called the Great AuSable-Oscoda Fire, most of the northeastern side of the Lower Peninsula was ablaze. Fires did damage in Alpena and in Otsego County. The south end of Millersburg in Presque Isle County and parts of Tower were burnt. Fire menaced Turner, Alger, and Boyne City. Ten

day afternoon near the depot, but this building and the turpentine mill, both over a mile from the twin cities, were saved.

Carried along by the wind, the wall of flame swept with lightning rapidity toward the lake and doomed cities. Nothing could stop it. The fire first swept into the slab piles, thence to the mills, houses, and business buildings. Not a business place was left standing. The D. & C. dock, the Loud mill, canning factory, everything went. The two Loud mills went up in smoke in the twinkling of an eye. The fire on the lake front could be seen across in Canada. During the evening, the wind changed and swept the flames toward AuSable. Nearly every building in AuSable is in ruins.

Hundreds of people are homeless and have nothing except what they had on when they

(Continued from page 4)

escaped. The fierce rush of the flames drove hundreds into Lake Huron.

The fierce wind which was blowing fanned the flames and the fire spread so rapidly that all the citizens could do was to make their escape with what few belongings they could snatch up in their rush.

A relief train hurried to the scene from East Tawas by the D. & M. and hundreds of homeless were taken to East Tawas and cared for.

It is impossible at this time to estimate the loss but it will mount into the millions. Practically everything in the two cities is burned.

The business of H. M. Loud Sons is wiped out. Every industry in the town is gone and the citizens are left without any means of a livelihood. The charitable citizens of the state will have to care for them until such time as they can look after themselves.

Many survivors crowded onto a steam ship sent to their rescue. After smothering an onboard fire, it sailed through the flames to Port Huron. A train carried others to Bay City. Many of the survivors decided to stay in Port Huron or Bay City. They had no home or job to return to since everything was destroyed.

Without the lumber mills, the town of Oscoda slowly made a comeback as a tourist area. It grew larger in the 1920s with the addition of the Wurtsmith Air Force Base. The dwindling of the population after the fire was believed to inhibit faster rebuilding and growth. AuSable, which was bigger than Oscoda in 1911 died completely. Its city status was dropped after the fire.

Forest fire control didn't exist until the Forestry Commission was created in 1903. Even though a law was passed to have fire wardens take care of the state forests, no money was allocated for it. After the Metz Fire in 1908, many large timber companies in the Upper Peninsula formed the Northern

Forest Protective Association and hired wardens to patrol their land and fight forest fires.

By 1914 timber companies in the Lower Peninsula had also organized to protect their land. In 1921 the State of Michigan finally appropriated the needed funds to form the Department of Conservation. People began to realize that burnt over swamps and forests didn't always make good farm land. They also realized that lives, property, and valuable timber and wildlife resources were lost in such fires which could not be replaced. The Department of Conservation along with several other departments were renamed the Department of Natural Resources in 1921.

Relief efforts throughout the state helped those who survived the great fires. The farmers of Metz still had their land and most decided to stay and rebuild their farms and town like other survivors of Michigan's great fires. A carpenter crew from the D & M Railroad assisted the Metz survivors by building temporary shanties for them. Farm families could be seen hoeing potatoes in their fields wearing party dresses and fancy coats compliments of people from Detroit's wealthy areas. Metz never grew as large as it was before the fire.

Most of the Thumb Fire survivors who owned farms stayed and rebuilt them and their towns too. Others who didn't own farms or want to rebuild moved their families elsewhere. Some came north to Presque Isle County. Many of those rescued from the 1911 Oscoda Fire

found jobs and stayed in Port Huron or Bay City. So when your search for a family living in Michigan (or elsewhere) suddenly leads to a dead end, take into consideration the history of fire in that area. If there was one, try to find out what happened to the survivors.

## Sources

"AuSable and Oscoda in Ruins." *Alpena Argus Pioneer*. July 12, 1911. p. 1.

Cutcheon, Byron M. "The Great Fire of 1871." *History of Manistee County Michigan*. Pub. 1882. <http://www.rootsweb.com/mimanist/ManHist14.html>.

Gilchrist, Tom. "The Great AuSable-Oscoda Fire." *The Bay City Times*. Sunday July 13, 1986. p.1B.

Micketti, Gerald. "The Day Metz Burned." *Michigan History*. Vol 65. Sept-Oct 1981. p. 12.

Taugher, Tim. "MI 'Great Thumb Fire,' Sept 1881." *GenDisasters*. <<http://www3.gendisasters.com>>.

Thornton, Neil. "The 1911 Oscoda Fire." "Rev of 'Log Marks.'" [http://www.sydaby.eget.net/swe/jp\\_oscoda.htm](http://www.sydaby.eget.net/swe/jp_oscoda.htm).

*Metz following the fire of 1908*



## Researching Funeral Home Records

By Walt Bennett

Funeral Home Records are often neglected but contain genealogical information unobtainable elsewhere. There are a couple of important reasons for this. It is the funeral directors job in many cases to initiate and file the death certificate. It is also the funeral directors job to gather the information for the obituary and have it published in the local newspapers. The funeral director may also need to work with the engraving company to have the stone or monument engraved. You might find pertinent information that never made it to either one of these source documents within the funeral home records.

Lets take a look at what you might find in these records and then look at how to locate funeral homes.

Death certificates contain the deceased persons full name, date and place of birth, date and place of death, marital status at death, name of spouse, name of father, maiden name of mother, place of residence at death, occupation, military service, reason for death, and the name and location of the cemetery. You might also see the name and address of the "informant", the person who supplied the information to the funeral director. All states did not require death certificates until the early 1900's.

Obituary records contain the names of surviving relatives and sometimes pre-deceased ones as well. Obituaries also show the city and state where these relatives lived at the time. Other biographical information that make up the obituary are meant to reflect on the persons life and accomplishments.

This would include. Former residences, education, employment, church affiliation, military service, club and society membership, hobbies, personal accomplishments, honors, and any other events of importance. Other information would include dates and places of marriage and may also note previous marriages. This may also note the newspapers that the obituary was placed in.

Other information that you might find in these records are location of the grave and monument, photo of the person, notes about military service, officiating minister, pall bearers, music, etc. In some cases you might find descriptions of the individual such as height, weight, eye and hair color. The records may also have the insurance company name.

When working with the funeral home records, remember that this should only be used to provide information for further research. Always verify the information that is contained. The files may contain copies of the certificates (birth, death, marriage, military, etc.) but the rest of the information usually comes from the memory of the informant.

Please remember that Funeral Homes are private companies and are under no obligation to let you see these records. In some cases they may contain very "private" or sensitive information of which the families have entrusted it to the funeral directors. In some cases, the funeral director may need to check with family members before releasing any information.

The best method to getting the records is to write the funeral home director and ask for specific information about a specific individual. State the persons death date and include a stamped self-addressed envelope and offer to pay for copying expenses. You might get a photocopy of everything in the persons file.

When funeral homes go out of business, sometimes the records are transferred to another funeral director and other times, they end up in the attic or basement of the funeral directors home. They do not

need to keep these records and sometimes they are destroyed. In some instances, you can find these records transcribed, microfilmed and placed on the internet and found in the local library.

To locate a funeral home, visit your local mortuary and ask to see their copy of American Blue Book of Funeral Directors. Some libraries may also have a copy of this book. There may be other names for this book, but they list every funeral home in the United States and Canada and include addresses and phone numbers.

To determine what funeral homes existed at the time of the persons death, try locating a copy of the city business or telephone directories for the time period. These can usually be found at the local library or state library.

If you don't know what funeral home was used, there are usually several places to look for these. Older relatives may remember the funeral home. You can also check at the cemetery office, read the obituary, or a family member may have the funeral card in their collection. The death certificate may also have the funeral home name.



### New Additions to the Gene Room

Chiseled in Stone — All Cemeteries— Finding Your Past In Clare County, Michigan

## The Year Was 1852

The year was 1852 and it marked the beginning of the Second French Empire, with Napoleon Bonaparte's nephew, Louis-Napoleon (Napoleon III) ruling as Emperor. The Second Empire would last until, following the Franco- Prussian War, there was an uprising in Paris and the government of Napoleon III was overthrown.

One of the new empire's creations of 1852 was the infamous prison in French Guiana known as "Devil's Island." French Guiana was brutal territory and some of the previous attempts at settlement proved disastrous in the hostile environment. In 1852, Napoleon began deporting political prisoners to the newly formed penal colony and between 1852 and 1946 when the penal camp was closed, more than 56,000 prisoners were sent there. Prisoners were forced into hard labor in horrific conditions in timber camps, so brutal that many attempted dangerous escapes. Most of the penal camps were actually on the mainland, but other than a dangerous sea escape, the only escape routes through the mainland were fraught with peril. A popular route to Dutch Guiana meant crossing the piranha-infested Moroni River and then through a dense jungle through which there was one road. Devil's Island is perhaps best known now through the movie "Papillon," which was based on the book by Henri Charriere, who managed to escape the prison after several attempts.

In the United States, movement was

decidedly westward. According to "Oregon Trail Statistics," by William E. Hill, immigration hit an all-time high on the Oregon Trail with around 10,000 people making the overland trip.

With people still flocking to California in search of gold, every available means of transportation was employed and many chose to make the trip by sea, rather than face the long trek across the United States. But the voyage by sea had its perils as well. The sea voyage could mean a trip around Cape Horn, where ships were tossed in turbulent, windy waters, and iceberg inhabited waters, often being blown near Antarctica.

Skilled captains might be able to shorten the trip by traveling the Straits of Magellan, a sea passage around the tip of South America, but this too was considered a dangerous trip, because the narrowness of the passage at certain points made it difficult to navigate. The trip could take up to eight months and onboard conditions were horrid. Food spoiled quickly with the heat of the equator, and worms and rodents got into whatever supplies they had.

A shorter trip took passengers to Panama where they embarked on canoes to navigate the Chagres River. From there things were more difficult as the remainder of the passage to the Pacific meant a fifty-mile hike through the Panamanian jungle where some fell prey to cholera, malaria, and yellow fever. Those who survived this leg of the journey often arrived in Panama City to find a shortage of ships, which meant that they would have to wait, sometimes for weeks, to obtain passage on a northbound ship to California.

There was also an influx of immigrants into California from China at this time. The Chinese population of California was three (two men and a woman), but by 1852 an article in the "Daily Alta California" estimated the Chinese population to be at around 12,000. The Chinese weren't welcomed in a land where the gold fields weren't producing the riches expected and where the industrious Chinese were seen as a threat.

For more on the journey westward, there are many great websites, some with narratives by those who made the trek. Here are a few I found:

- \* Oregon Trail Diaries
- \* 1852 Oregon Trail Emigrants
- \* Gold Rush Chronology 1852-54
- \* Gold Rush Links
- \* Chinese in California
- \* California Gold Rush ("Sacramento Bee" website)

1852 also marked the publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous book, Uncle Tom's Cabin. The book was an anti-slavery statement which she later revealed was largely based on the memoirs of Rev. Josiah Henson. Originally produced in serial format, Uncle Tom's Cabin was a sensation and by 1857 had sold half a million copies in the United States--breaking book sales records for that time and stirring anti-slavery sentiment.

(From Ancestry Weekly Journal, Jan 6, 2008)

## Coming Events

March 14, 2009 "Habitants de Détroit 1701-1763". To be held at the Detroit Public Library and sponsored by the French Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan. Presented by Gail F.

Moreau-DesHarnais. For further information see [fchsm.habitant.org/Meetings.html](http://fchsm.habitant.org/Meetings.html)

March 21, 2009 "A Day with John Humphrey". The Genealogical Society of Monroe County, Michigan is sponsoring this event at the Monroe County Community College. Come hear John Humphrey speak about the www of German Genealogy, Researching Pennsylvania Ancestors. Using Church Records in Germany and the U.S. Download the flyer at: <http://mimgc.org/pdf/GSMC2009Flyer.pdf>

March 28, 2009 Kalamazoo Genealogical Society is hosting their 2009 Spring Conference at the Fetzer Center in Kalamazoo. Paula Stewart-Warren will be the guest speaker. Topics include NUCMC& its Cousins: Keys to Lost Ancestral Records, Tho' They Were Poor, They May Have Been Rich in Records, Organizing Your Genealogical Materials, and Finding Ancestral Places of Origin. Download the flyer at [www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mikvgs/2009\\_spring\\_conference\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mikvgs/2009_spring_conference_brochure.pdf).

April 2-5, 2009 "Finding Genealogical Gold in the Streams of History". The Ohio Genealogical Society is holding a seminar at the Sawmill Creek Resort in Huron, Ohio. There are a broad range of presentations for all skill levels with over 60 programs with many nationally known speakers. For further info send an email to [conference2009@ogs.org](mailto:conference2009@ogs.org).

April 4, 2009 "Learning more at the Library of Michigan". This is sponsored by and held at the Library of Michigan in Lansing. Read more at [www.michigan.gov/hal/](http://www.michigan.gov/hal/)

April 25, 2009 "Honoring Our Warriors: Military Genealogy". Sponsored by the Indiana Genealogical Society and is being held at the Marriot Center East in Indianapolis, Indiana. See [www.indgensoc.org/conference.html](http://www.indgensoc.org/conference.html).

May 13-16, 2009 "The Building of a Nation: From Roanoke to the West". The 2009 National Genealogical Society Family History Conference. To be held at the Raleigh Convention Center in Raleigh, North Carolina. For further info see [www.ngsgenealogy.org/Conferences/2009/ConferenceRegistration.htm](http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/Conferences/2009/ConferenceRegistration.htm)

May 29-31, 2009 "From the Printed Page to the Digital Age". The Ontario Genealogical Society is sponsoring this event to be held in Oakville, Ontario, Canada. See [www.ogs.on.ca/conference/index.html](http://www.ogs.on.ca/conference/index.html).

May 30, 2009 The Marion Public Library in partnership with Ivy Tech Community College, Kokomo-Howard County Public Library, Howard County Genealogical Society, Indiana Genealogy Society and many others will present a one day workshop. Megan Smolenyak will present 5 sessions on Using DNA in Genealogy Research at the Ivy Tech Community College campus in Marion, Indiana. The cost for the one day seminar is only \$65 if you register by April 1, and includes all sessions, lunch and evening banquet. For more information or to obtain a registration form visit our website at: [www.marion.lib.in.us/departments/indianahistory/dna/dna\\_workshop.htm](http://www.marion.lib.in.us/departments/indianahistory/dna/dna_workshop.htm), email [rstofer@marion.lib.in.us](mailto:rstofer@marion.lib.in.us) or call 765-668-2900 ext 153.

## MAY, 2008 MICHIGAN GENEALOGICAL COUNCIL REPORT

*Faye Ebach, MGS Delegate*

The December MGC Meeting was cancelled due to weather conditions.

---

### New TV Show Announced

As many likely read in Dick Eastman's "Online Genealogy Newsletter" or saw in the NBC press releases, a new genealogy-based television program is debuting on NBC this spring. The first of six episodes of "Who Do You Think You Are?" is set to premiere on April 20, 2009 at 8:00 p.m. Lisa Kudrow, Sarah Jessica Parker and Susan Sarandon will explore their family histories in what NBC is calling a new "U.S. reality series." The former "Friends" star, Lisa Kudrow, is also the executive producer.

>From the NBC press release: "In conjunction with Kudrow's production company, Is or Isn't Entertainment, and the U.K.'s Wall to Wall productions, the new show is an adaptation of the hit, award-winning British television documentary series of the same name. A NBC spokesperson said 'Who Do You Think You Are?' is intended to 'lead celebrities on a journey of self-discovery as they unearth their family trees that reveal surprising, inspiring and even tragic stories that often are linked to crucial events in American history.'" The Fox network is also in the planning stages of a similar series.

Now before exclaiming that the last thing you want to do is hear about another celebrity's ancestry, please note it is a very significant event for genealogy-based programming to make it onto mainstream, American network television. I, for one, would like to see much more family and local history based programming along the lines of the U.K.'s "Who Do You Think You Are?" and PBS's two very successful "Ancestors" series, as well as their most recent hit with Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "African American Lives." We should all support the American version of "Who Do You Think You Are?" to ensure we see more of this type of programming. There are so many lessons that can be taught and learned through exploring genealogy. is the realization of how connected we all are."

By Curt B. Witcher, ACPL



## Looking back In Midland County

Taken from the *Midland Sun*

June 16, 1899 page 8

### Edenville

J. V. Reams has invested in a new safe.

John McGriff of Midland was in town Sunday.

Louis Himelhoch of Beaverton was in town on Monday.

Bert Arnold of Beaverton was in town on Thursday.

Andrew Bowman of Pinconning was in town the first of the week.

Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Robinson of Harrison are visiting Mr. Coolidges.

Mrs. Fred White and children of Sanford are visiting Albert Erway.

Geo. Hardy and Chas. Champlin took advantage of the excursion to Saginaw Sunday.

Ed. Ellsworth and wife and Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Ostrander of Midland were in town Sunday.

J. W. Jackson raised a 40 x 63 ft. barn Thursday p. m. There were about 85 men present and it went up in good shape.

Owing to a slight dispute in the council meeting Saturday night our mayor and several aldermen are nursing sore heads.

### Hope

Mr. Worthington is very sick.

Mrs. Watson Harris is very sick again.

Mrs. McIntosh, a sister of Robert Wilson, is visiting him at present.

Miss Lottie Hunter of Edenville was the guest of Laura Chambers Thursday last.

A number of the young people from here attended the dance at Averill last Friday night.

The Baptist society has a pastor, Mr. Bray, from Wisconsin and will now have services in their church.

Orvill Carey's new house is nearing completion, and he will soon be able to move in and begin housekeeping.

Miss Lydia McCrary is at Mt. Pleasant, with her sister Elva, who has been attending the normal there for the past year and gradu-

ated June 12.

Word has been received from Ira Isham from the northwest. He speaks highly of the country and is favorably impressed with it.

The many friends of Mrs. Lewis Havens are glad to see her looking so well after her operation at Ann Arbor. Mrs. Havens had a disease of the cheek bone caused from an ulcerated tooth.

### (One of the Candidates on the Ballot for the 1898 Election)

Taken from *The Midland Sun* Oct. 28, 1898 p.

#### For Surveyor

Sherman Olmstead, the Union-Silver nominee for county surveyor, was born in Lafayette, Onondaga county, N.Y., October 28, 1833, in a log house on a farm which joined the reservation of the Onondagas, one of the tribes of the six nations. Attended the district school, the surroundings and furniture of the school room being far different from those enjoyed today. At the age of 15, he moved with his parents to the "Hollow" as it was called, where the old stone academy built in 1824 stands, and he attended school there winters and worked on the farm and in a saw mill summers until 1852, when he began teaching district school and boarding round, which he continued for many years, finishing up in Midland in the winter of 1862-63. Married a farmer's daughter, Mary Gannett of Dewitt, Onondaga County, N.Y. in 1858 and came to Michigan in the spring of 1862. Lived in Flint until October of that year and then came to Midland, where he has since resided.

In 1862 was elected supervisor of Midland township, which at that time embraced all of Roscommon and half of Gladwin counties, besides several unorganized townships of Midland county. Was again elected supervisor in 1868. From 1865 to 1871 had charge of the then extensive business of lumbering and milling of John Larkin. Built the first shingle mill in Midland city bringing the machinery up the river on a scow from Willow Island in the Saginaw river. Was elected highway commissioner for two 3 year terms; was deputy sheriff under Alfred Avery, John Ryan, M. W. Ryan and Chas. Oscar; county surveyor 10 years and deputy county surveyor 14 years. Has selected many millions of pine timber in the lower and upper peninsulas of this state and in the Georgian bay district, and at present is looking after the Parker lands in Midland and adjoining counties.

As before stated, the position of county surveyor should be held by a man that is in every way qualified for the position, as carelessness in establishing proper lines may

cause your children's children untold trouble. Who is better qualified for the position than the man who has spent many years among us, and who has no equal in his acquaintance with every piece of land in the county? The best is the cheapest at any price, but when you can get the best at the same price as the cheapest, surely that is what the county wants. Elect Sherman Olmstead and you will get the best in his line in the county.

### The Michigan Cemetery Source Book and Michigan Cemetery Atlas

by Cynthia Theusch

The "Michigan Cemetery Source Book" is an excellent key for locating cemeteries and transcriptions of tombstone information for all 83 counties of Michigan.

The book is divided into three sections. The first provides a listing, by county, of published and unpublished cemetery transcriptions available at the Library of Michigan. For each county, a numbered bibliography of these transcriptions, giving title and call number, is followed by an alphabetical listing of townships and an alphabetical listing of cemeteries in each township. Each cemetery listing indicates the year(s) the cemetery was read and the reference number(s) for the item(s) containing the transcription. Cemetery locations are given next, followed by a listing of cemeteries and locations that had no transcriptions or readings available at the Library of Michigan as of 1994.

The second section is a bibliographic listing, by title, of books, newsletters and manuscripts containing tombstone transcriptions that are available at the Library of Michigan. The third section is an alphabetical index of cemeteries.

The "Michigan Cemetery Atlas" is a great companion source for locating the cemeteries mentioned in the "Michigan Cemetery Source Book." More than 3,800 Michigan burial sites are listed and marked in red on detailed county road maps. A complete listing of cemeteries, by name and county, rounds out the volume. In addition, two errata pages to the "Michigan Cemetery Atlas" can be found at the end of the "Michigan Cemetery Source Book."

*Pioneer Record*

Midland Genealogical Society  
Grace A. Dow Memorial Library  
1710 W. St. Andrews Drive  
Midland, MI 48640



## MGS Officers

|                     |                             |          |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| President :         | Bob Mass                    | 835-8519 |
|                     | massro@gmail.com            |          |
| Secretary:          | Fran Longsdorf              | 832-2838 |
|                     | pstrlongsdorf@chartermi.net |          |
| Program Chair:      | Laressa Northrup            | 687-7268 |
|                     | cltaxson@tds.net            |          |
| Membership Chair:   | Linda Fisher                | 687-9131 |
|                     | fisherl@tm.net              |          |
| Treasurer:          | Dave Russell                | 631-0885 |
|                     | hdrussell4415@att.net       |          |
| MGC Delagates       | Faye Ebach                  | 835-7518 |
|                     | faeae@chartermi.net         |          |
|                     | Bev Keicher                 | 631-9455 |
|                     | bevjoank@netscape.net       |          |
| Historian :         | Kathy Bohl                  | 839-9016 |
|                     | kbohl30265@aol.com          |          |
| Hospitality Chairs: | Dona McArdle                | 835-7895 |
|                     | Nancy Humphreys             | 631-5123 |
| Web Master:         | Randy Keicher               |          |
|                     | r_keicher@yahoo.com         |          |
| PR Editor:          | Walt Bennett                | 631-5247 |
|                     | wgbennett@chartermi.net     |          |

Pioneer Record is published quarterly (Sep., Nov., Feb., & Apr.) by the Midland Genealogical Society. Queries are free to members and should be sent to: PIONEER RECORD, Midland Genealogical Society, Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 W. St. Andrews Dr., Midland, MI 48640. We welcome genealogical material which would be of interest to the general membership. Articles to be included in PR should be submitted to the above address by the 15th of August, October, January and March.

### Information about Midland Genealogical Society

The MGS meets on the 3rd Wednesday of Sept., Oct., Nov., Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr. & May at 7:00 PM in the lounge of the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 W. St. Andrews Dr., Midland, MI 48640. Visitors are always welcome. Watch the Midland Daily News or local Midland MCTV channel 5 for upcoming speakers, dates and times.

Membership dues are \$14.00 for single and \$17.50 for a couple and can be paid after July 1, but must be paid by Nov. 25, to continue receiving the Pioneer Record. Dues may be paid at any MGS meeting or may be sent to the Membership Chair, Midland Grace A. Dow Memorial Library, 1710 W. St. Andrews Dr., Midland, MI 48640.