

## President's Message

by Brenda Leyndyke

Dear Members,

Recently, I had the honor of judging the State Finals of Michigan History Day held at Bay City Central High School. Michigan History Day is an annual academic competition that allows students to participate at three levels: Youth, Junior, and Senior. Students are encouraged to express themselves through performances, documentaries, websites, research papers or exhibits. The students are judged at the school and district level before coming to the state competition. Michigan History Day is a program of the Historical Society of Michigan.

This was my first year as a judge and I have to say I was impressed by the quality of work the students presented. I was a judge for Junior Exhibits. There were 21 junior level exhibits, which I was in a group to interview seven students. I have to say that **History is Alive and Well in Michigan!**

I was a special awards judge for the junior level, as well. There are eight special awards given at the three levels. One of the special awards, sponsored by the Michigan Genealogical Council, was for "The Best Entry in Use of Family History". **Family History is Alive and Well in Michigan.**

The Family History winners were:

Youth Level-The Battle of Lake Erie:  
American Navy vs. British Royal  
Navy. An exhibit of a group at  
Angell Elementary, Berkley,  
Michigan

Junior Level-The Smryl Letters: A  
Soldiers Struggle to Survive- An  
exhibit from a group at Anderson  
Middle School, Berkley, Michigan

Senior Level-British in Bengal: The

British Effect on Bengal Culture. A  
documentary from a group at  
Bloomfield Hills High School,  
Bloomfield Township, Michigan.

As I drove home from judging I was wondering if Family History is Alive and Well in Calhoun County. We have a dedicated CCGS board, our meetings are well attended, and we offer quality monthly programs, but could we be doing more? I believe we could.

Two of our executive board positions will be term limited in 2017 and two more in 2018. We only have five positions and Vice President is open. CCGS will not remain viable if members don't step in to help. Now is the time to volunteer! It is easier to step in and be a part of a smooth running organization than to wait and have all positions with new members. Please do your part.

How can you help? Volunteer for one of the following committee positions: Nominating, Pioneer Certificates, Programs and Publicity or Records Preservation are currently open. This allows you to get comfortable with how CCGS operates. Other ways you could help are writing articles for the newsletter or newspaper and serving on any committee. I hope you will seriously consider what you have to offer your society. If you would like more information, ask any board member. At our last meeting we approved the Policy and Procedure Manual, which has job descriptions for each position. You are also invited to join us June 21<sup>st</sup> at our 7 p.m. board meeting. Come check us out! Your participation will keep **Calhoun County Family History Alive and Well** for years to come.



*Brenda Leyndyke, President*

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## Calhoun County Genealogical Society

The purposes of the Calhoun County Genealogical Society (CCGS) are:

- To gather and preserve information of genealogical value.
- To encourage the deposit of such information in suitable depositories.
- To aid genealogists in the study of family history through the exchange of knowledge.
- To publish and promote Calhoun County and other genealogical materials.



CCGS is a nonprofit organization recognized as tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law. Individuals, libraries or societies may join. Annual dues for the year, beginning September 1, are \$18 for members choosing to receive **Generations** through postal mail or \$15 for members electing to receive the newsletter via e-mail. Memberships are accepted year-round; dues received after May 1 will pay for the following year's membership. Members receive **Generations** newsletter six times per year. All are invited to submit articles to the **Generations** editor. Permission is granted to reprint articles unless otherwise noted. Please give appropriate credit to the source. Copies of pages from back issues of **Generations** are available for \$1.00 for the first page and \$.50 for each additional page. General meetings are held at 7 p.m. the fourth Tuesday of each month at the LDS Marshall Branch Church 16036 Old US -27, Marshall, *unless otherwise specified*. No meetings are held in July, August or December. Programs are free and open to the public.

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## Calhoun County Genealogical Society

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**Become a CCGS fan on Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/CalhounCountyGenealogicalSociety>

Organizational Member of **National Genealogical Society** • **Michigan Genealogical Council** • **Federation of Genealogical Societies**

### **PART 3: Memoirs of Sheldon R. Curtiss (Great-grandfather of Art Adams)**

As Dictated to his Daughter, Evelyn Curtiss Lowrey, December 1, 1920

We reached our line where the gun boat was guarding between the North and South. We soon passed this line and came to one of our government transports. We were transferred to this in the early evening and it took all night to get the load off. Some of the men were too weak to walk the plank against the crowding of the stronger men. One boy, "Charlie," who was our drummer boy, gave it up the same time that I had gone back to the rebel boat to wait. He sat near us crying when the doctor came along and told him he would help him up.

Early in the morning we were ordered out on deck to remove all our clothing, together with the "gray backs" which might be crawling here and there. All this was thrown over into the Atlantic. We all bathed and had a fresh supply of clothing given us. It was quite a sight to see the sailors throwing out their long ropes with buckets, getting water for our baths. It surely seemed good to have some care for our welfare once again and to be treated like men.

We were four days on the Atlantic sailing toward Annapolis, Maryland, where our parole camp was located. Just before we landed the chaplain of the board came to us and said if we wanted to write home he had paper and writing material so we could do so, and he would mail our letters. I told him my letter was all ready to send and I gave it to him. This was the first letter that had reached my home for more than six months.

As our transport was being anchored we were notified by one of our Union soldiers that we were to have a furlough of thirty days. It took thirty days for our papers to be made out. As soon as we received our papers we started home and reached Ionia at daybreak one morning. No one knew the exact day we were coming, so we started in great haste for old Berlin. We went by the way of the Bellevue Road to call on the aged Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, whose son had befriended us and whom we had left at Savannah. How pleased the parents were to hear from son whom they had not heard from for three years. It was almost like hearing from the dead. Many were the questions asked which we were more than pleased to answer. Mrs. Taylor got us a very nice breakfast while we were visiting.

As soon as we could satisfy their anxiety we were on our way to Father Barnard's where my wife and the baby I had left were waiting for me, together with a new baby, Lillian Abby, named for her mother.

Lillian Abby was getting to be a big baby, over a year old the first time I saw her. The happy day of her birth had been denied me, and many were the anxious hours thinking of the mother and the new baby when I was so many miles away.

I got my furlough extended and did quite a little work on our farm while I was home. I made quite a little maple sugar. We had bought forty acres of land of my father and also another forty of Father Barnard. This farm I paid for during and before the war. I had built a log house on the same but had never had the privilege of living in it. While I was in the U. S. Service we rented it to a Methodist preacher.

It was a hard struggle to go back into the service again, but we reported at Washington in due time and were with our regiment again. We were on duty not far from General Lee when he surrendered at Appomattox. We were at City Point when the rebel army returned to take passage for their homes. I saw Lincoln at this time at City Point. I never heard such a din as there was at this place celebrating the great victory. Bells were ringing, the artillery from the gun boats firing, steam whistles blowing, and everything that would make a noise doing its utmost. It was impossible to carry on a conversation with one during the celebration.

My most important work after this, as I remember it, was the management of the discharge barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. I had to order the rations for different regiments as they came in. I also acted as cook for the men stationed there. A Sargent of one of those regiments happened to be a German and he called me "Gook" and his name hung by me for some time. After I came home a message came from him: "Love to the 'Gook.'" While there I wrote to the Secretary of War and asked why we were held when the orders from the War Department had been that "all prisoners of war were to be discharged immediately"? This letter brought our discharge papers with full pay from the government. We were soon homeward bound again! We had put in about one more year or more of service since the furlough. This time we came home by way of Chicago and Grand Rapids.

Abigail and I were soon established in our home on the farm. Is it any wonder that it seemed a dear place to us? In this home each of our other children were born. The frame house that stands there now I built about the year 1876. In this house each of our five daughters was married. No house ever vibrated more with the merry laughter of children than that house. It was a home of music, song, and entertainment. The old discordant organ was a treasure in those days, as was also the violin and guitar.

It was one of the homes of country teachers when they were boarded "round," the wayside inn for the preachers and friends at "quarterly meeting" time. I had a blacksmith shop and might have spent most of my time keeping the horses of the neighborhood well shod. Over this blacksmith shop was a large hall where public meetings were held now and then. The Salvation Army used to hold meetings there and march in and out through the orchard for their open-air meetings.

After the children all left the old home, next mother and I left too. In the year 1904 we moved to Saranac, Michigan. It meant a great deal for us to readjust ourselves in the new home, but we soon made it seem like home and spent thirteen sweet and wonderful and restful years together there.

*(This article is the final part in a series by Sheldon Curtiss, Civil War Veteran.)*

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Note from Evelyn Curtiss Lowrey:

"Memoirs was dictated by Father in the year he spent with us in Ann Arbor. Harvey was busy at the University, but Father and I attended many lectures and concerts. After hearing Dr. Stalker's lecture on "The Soul of Ann Rutledge" (Bernie Babcock's *The Soul of Ann Rutledge, Abraham Lincoln's Romance*, published in 1919) he went up to the lecturer and said, "Would you like to shake the hand that shook the hand of Abraham Lincoln?" We sent the "Memoirs" to the family in December, 1929, as a Christmas gift. (Each copy was hand-written)

## June 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting

German Research Tips is the topic our June meeting. Don Heider, who has researched in the United States and Germany, will be our presenter. Don will provide tips and resources helpful in German research. If you have German ancestors, this is one program you won't want to miss. Join us, Tuesday, June 28<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. All meetings are free and open to the public. CCGS meets at LDS Church, 16036 Old 27N, Marshall, Michigan. See you there!

## Summer Vacation

**Remember,** CCGS does not meet in the month of July and August. Our first meeting of the 2016-2017 year will be September 27<sup>th</sup>.

## Helen Warner Branch of Willard Library Lock In is Scheduled

Save Sunday, August 28<sup>th</sup> because the Helen Warner Branch of Willard Library is holding its annual lock-in from 1-5 p.m. The speaker will be Bethany Waterbury; her program will be "DNA Testing and Family History". Waterbury will explain the process and how it can help your research. Registration opens August 1<sup>st</sup> and is required by calling the library at 269 968-8166.

Time will be available to use the libraries resources for your personal research. Members of CCGS will be available to help those with their research questions. This is a great time to be in the locked, just for you, library to research.

CCGS Board Member, Darlene Stange, helps  
Lock-in researchers



## Appreciation for Board Members

April was volunteer appreciation month and at the April board meeting, the board received a "Thanks a Million" appreciation. Board President, Brenda Leyndyke, thanked the continued involvement of the board and the great work they do for CCGS.

If you see one of these board members, let them know you appreciate their work: Brenda Leyndyke, Darlene Stange, Stephanie Tobolski, Art Adams, Alex Van Zanten, Marcie Telfer, Janice Goodson, Chelsea Johnson, James N. Jackson.





## **CCGS Has a Policy and Procedure Manual**

A policy and procedure manual has been approved by the CCGS board and is now being used by the officers and committee chairs. The manual has been a work in progress since the fall of 2015. This manual has the important society documents all in one place for easy access. In addition to the manual, other paperwork pertinent to the society's business is stored on an external storage device and in a Dropbox account.

The policy and procedure manual has the CCGS mission statement, bylaws, articles of incorporation, job descriptions, and policy and procedures. Each officer and committee chair has a copy. The external storage device content includes the above and other paperwork needed for the society to operate. For example, it contains: ballot sample, agenda sample, budget, calendar of activities, charter member list, conflict of interest policy, newsletter format, award certificates, inventory, IRS forms, letterhead, logo, publicity contact lists, mailing label templates, brochure template, membership information, officer's history, pioneer certificate information, President's history, program history, records retention policy, speaker's contact list, and term limit history.

The hope is that the policy and procedure manual and external storage device documents makes for a smooth transition from year to year. It allows everything to be in one place and easy to access as needed. Thank you to the officers and committee chairpersons for their help in creating this manual.

A copy of the manual will be available for members to see at the monthly meetings

## **Abrams Seminar Registration is Open**

The 2016 Abrams Seminar will be held Friday, July 8<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, July 9<sup>th</sup> at the Michigan Historical Center, 702 W. Kalamazoo, Lansing, MI 48915. Registration for the seminar is open and available at [www.seekingmichigan.org](http://www.seekingmichigan.org)

Friday starts with behind the scenes tour of the Archives of Michigan, at 1:00 p.m. This is followed by two education programs of the attendants choosing. Topic choices include naturalization records, research methodology and brick walls, law resources in genealogy, using county and history books, ethics and etiquette in genealogy, and locating living relatives.

Saturday's agenda starts with key note speaker, Amy Johnson Crow, and her topic, "What Do You Mean There's No Record?! Using Vital Record Substitutes". Amy's talk starts at 9:30 a.m. at the Michigan Historical Center. Morning program choices, at 11:00 a.m. include Exploring Detroit at the Archives of Michigan or Little-Known and Rarely Used Google Resources and Search Tips or Cluster Research. Lunch is provided as part of your registration fee.

The Saturday afternoon program kicks off at 1:00 p.m. with Amy Johnson Crow presenting "Researching Your Civil War Ancestors Online". The day ends with session choices of Continuing Your Ancestral Search Offline, Research That Made Me LOL, or Skeletons in the Closet.

Speakers include Amy Johnson Crow, Kris Rzepczynski, Daniel Earl, Janice Selberg, Jessica Harden, Gail Hershenzon, Bethany Waterbury, Jill Arnold, Katherine Willson, Jessico Trotter, Jim Jackson and Matthew LaFlash. Check [www.seekingmichigan.org](http://www.seekingmichigan.org) for more information and to register.

## **2016 Calendar of Events**

**May 24**-CCGS President, Brenda Leyndyke, will present “Get Smart”. She will show attendees ways to improve your genealogical education by using free resources. These resources will help further your research.

**June 28**-Don Heider, a researcher with many years of experience in Germany and the United States, will provide tips and resources that are helpful in finding your German ancestors.

## **2016-2017 Program Proposals Being Sought**

It is that time of year again when we set our sights on planning for the 2016-2017 year. Program suggestions are being taken at each monthly meeting. If you have an idea you can put it on the list at the meeting or email [MichiganCalhounGene@yahoo.com](mailto:MichiganCalhounGene@yahoo.com) with your ideas.

If you are a speaker and would like to be considered for our monthly program, please let us know.

You can email your topics and speaker costs to the email address above. CCGS looks forward to hearing from you.

## **Grand Rapids, Michigan Chosen for the National Genealogical Society 2018 National Conference Site**

The 2018 National Genealogical Society Family History Conference will be held at DeVos Place in Grand Rapids, Michigan, May 2-5, 2018. Western Michigan Genealogical Society will be the host for the conference.

This is the first time that a National genealogy conference will be held in the State of Michigan. If you have never attended a National conference, this is the time to do so with it being in Grand Rapids. A national conference provides attendees with outstanding speakers and events, over 175 lectures and workshops led by nationally recognized speakers.

Details about the conference will be available in the fall of 2017, but I wanted to let readers know about this opportunity, so Save the Date. See you in Grand Rapids. For more information, in the future, go to the NGS website <http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/>

## **Join us for a June Pre-Meeting Dinner at Cornwell's Turkeyville**

You are invited to join CCGS on Tuesday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, at Cornwell's Turkeyville, 18935 15 ½ Mile Road, Marshall, MI 49068. We will still have our regular meeting at the LDS Church, but thought this would be a good way to end the year and have a little social time. Come between 5:00 and 6:15 p.m. and end our year in fun.

You will order your own dinner and join us at tables and get to know your society better. Tuesday night is Turkey Tuesday and Cornwell's offers four of its turkey sandwiches for \$2.49. No registration is needed. Just come, grab dinner and relax!

## **Generations**

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Calhoun County Genealogical Society  
PO Box 879  
Marshall, MI 49068-0879

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### **Calhoun County Genealogical Society** *Calendar of Events*

CCGS monthly meetings are typically held the fourth Tuesday of each month except July, August and December, and are free and open to the public. Unless noted, meetings are held at 7 p.m. at LDS Marshall Branch Church at 16036 Old US-27 N, Marshall MI

**May 24-Get Smart!**

**June 28-German Research Tips** with Don Heider

Have ideas for future programs? Please contact President Brenda Leyndyke, whose contact information is on page 2.