

# The Clarion

Bay County Genealogical Society of Michigan

Volume 55 Issue #4

October-December 2024

## LAZY DAYS OF FALL



## **Of All the Places....**

**A funny thing happened to me the other day. I was waiting for my daughter's volleyball game to start, when my father came up to me and said he needed to show me something. He had been passing the time (we were an hour early for the game) walking the hallways of the school when he came across something interesting. The school had hung up pictures from graduating classes dating back to the 30s, 40s, & 50s. After the third or fourth picture, he came across our last name "Downing". It was his father's brother, Richard.**

**Richard was one of 10 siblings, who all attended Owendale-Gagetown Schools. For years, I had had the Downing Family Tree on my to do list. I never had any free time to do much research on it. Now, I had an hour to roam the halls looking for the rest of the family!**

**Including Richard, I found 8 of them. Robert Downing passed away when he was 10 years old so he wasn't there for a picture. And Joan Marie Downing's possible graduation picture was not found on the walls. But I found the rest: Thomas, Genevieve, William, Paul, John, Gerald, and my father's father, James.**

**The one of the best things about finding these pictures is that I have never seen them before. The originals are probably somewhere out there with distant relatives whom I wouldn't know how to contact. I have more current photos (mostly from obituary notices) but these give a glimpse into what they looked like when they were just starting their lives. And it's a great feeling that in a family of 10, most of them managed to graduate. My next search will be for where they all went next.**

**The other best thing was that I was able to do the search with my father. His dad died in 1979, one year before he married my mother and adopted me. I don't remember much about him and even less about his side of the family. But it was nice, having this experience with him.**

**~Heather Downing Leser**



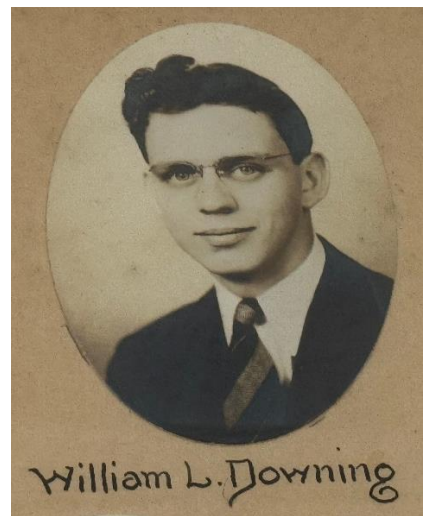
*Genevieve Downing*

**1922-1998**



*Jack Downing*

**1929-2015**



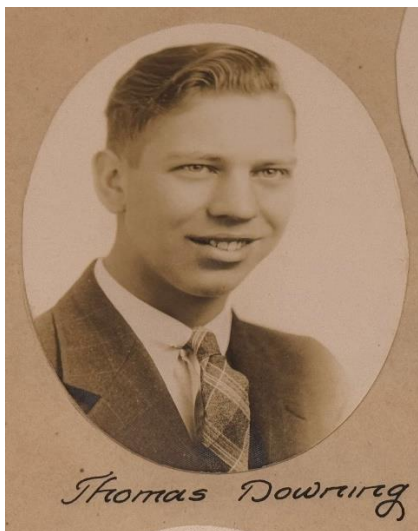
*William L. Downing*

**1925-1992**



*JAMES J. DOWNING*

**1923-1979**



*Thomas Downing*

**1920-1993**



*Richard A. Downing*

**1918-1980**



1928-1988

**Future Meeting Dates:**

**November 12<sup>th</sup> – Cynthia Grostick – Collateral Lines**

**December 11<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Party and Auction Night!**

**January 8<sup>th</sup> – Megan Heyl – “From the Crowd – Lot of Questions & Answers”**

**February 12<sup>th</sup> – TBA**

**Mach 12<sup>th</sup> – Derek Blount – Great Midwest Fires of 1871 & 1881**

**April 9<sup>th</sup> – TBA**

**May 14<sup>th</sup> – Jeff Mason – Breaking Down Brick Walls & Revising Dead Ends**

**June 11<sup>th</sup> – Pot Luck & Auction**

**Have You Ever Tried These Resources?**

**By Mary McManman**

Can't find a Bay County death record online? Try these indexes and transcriptions from the Bay County Clerk's copy of the death records, interpreted and transcribed by local members of the society.

**Bay County Deaths: Transcriptions for 1867-1891, 1892-1906, 1909-1920**

**Death Certificates for Bay County 1897-1929 (not a complete collection)**

**Every Name Death Records Index, 1867-1893**

**Bay County Death Indexes 1894-1906**

**Located in the Local History and Genealogy Room at Wirt Library GEN R 977.447 Death**

### **Digitized Pinconning Newspapers**

The Pinconning newspapers are now available to search digitally on CMU's Digital Michigan Newspapers Collection at <https://digmichnews.cmich.edu> or from a link on the Bay County Library System website under Digital Collections. Use the advanced search feature to limit your search to one of the following titles.

**Pinconning Press --- 1905 - Feb 1924**

**Pinconning Journal and Bay County News --- Apr 1925 - 1948**

**Pinconning Journal --- 1940 - 2022**



## **A Look Back at Our Last Meetings:**

### **September 11<sup>th</sup> – Derek Blount: Lumber Barons and the Shanties that Worked for Them**

Derek Blount gave us an overview of the importance of the lumber industry in Michigan the last half of the 1800's. Michigan had the White Pine that was in demand, the rivers to float the logs down and the lakes for shipping them to market. Money was made by the lumber barons and work was available in the lumber camps. Derek had some great photographs of the loggers and the camps they worked in.

### **October 9<sup>th</sup> - Jeff Mason: Death & Taxes, Two Things You Cannot Afford to Miss**

Jeff Mason spoke to us about using land and tax records as well as wills and estate records to help us establish family relationships. This is especially helpful during the pre-1850 time period when census and vital records are limited. He walked us through the probate process and spoke to us about different land records. He used case studies to show us how those records could be part of solving the "Who were their parents?" puzzles!

# Website-FaceBook-Plus

By Charles Kocher

## Facebook (Bay County Genealogical Society-Michigan)

As of November 8, 2024, there are 366 members in our Facebook group. Of those members, only twenty-two are members of the Society. The rest are people who probably live outside of Bay County and noticed the Facebook page and took a chance that a group member may be able to help with their research or just to check us out. To post a message on the site, you must be a member of the Society's Facebook group, which happens automatically if the criteria are met.

Whenever a researcher, from outside of the county, comes into the library, where I volunteer, I tell them of the Facebook page and how, if they post a query, there is a good chance somebody will have an answer.

"Back in the day' joining a county society could get you help by interacting with local members at the meetings, or by reading their newsletter, if they had one. With no internet, local societies would take it upon themselves to gather data and put it in a form that would be available to the public, in libraries, etc. With the advent of the internet, "long distance" requests-for-help through free services such as Facebook and other similar online sites, societies are having a hard time getting and keeping members. Therefore, societies are being forced to be more creative to meet the challenge of attracting new members. The Bay County Genealogical Society has gotten new members by being helpful at the library, by answering queries made on its Facebook page, and by putting notices on its Facebook page about classes given by Society members and what is happening at upcoming meetings.

Thus, the Bay County Genealogical Society is living up to its mission statement located in the "About" section, "We strive to promote and educate persons interested in genealogy with a focus on Bay County, Michigan.

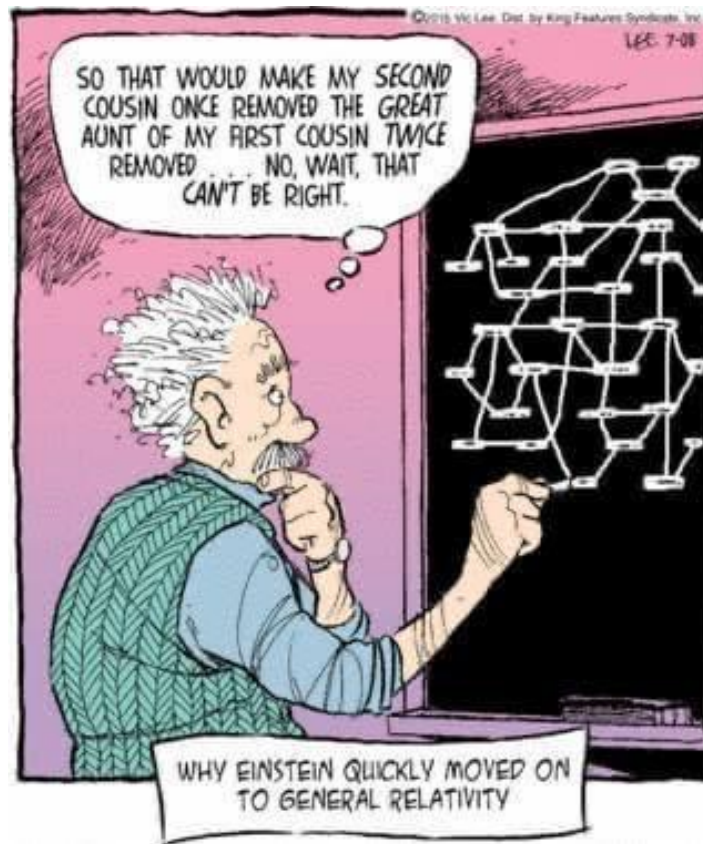
We also encourage the sharing of Bay County genealogy information resources and helping others with their Bay County based families and ancestors both past and current."

Therefore, Facebook may have problems with bad postings, there are a lot of good ways to make contact with like minded people.

### Website ([baymigansoc.com](http://baymigansoc.com))

Between June 22, 2024, the date of the last report, and November 8, 2024, the day of this writing, there have been 236 visitors from twenty-four U. S. states and the District of Columbia (212), Germany (12), Philippines (2), Canada (3), United Kingdom (1), Poland (2), Turkey (1), China (1), Belgium (1) and Switzerland (1)

From outside of Michigan and in the United States, the most visits came from Chicago, IL, Rio Rancho, NM, and Germantown, MD,



\*\*Twisted Twigs on a Gnarled Branch



\*\*Genealogy Squad

## Meeting Schedule

Meetings are held in the Community Room  
at Wirt Library

Time: 5:30-7:30 pm

September 11 <sup>th</sup>	March 12 <sup>th</sup>
October 9 <sup>th</sup>	April 9 <sup>th</sup>
November 12 <sup>th</sup> **	May 14 <sup>th</sup>
December 11 <sup>th</sup>	June 11 <sup>th</sup>
January 8 <sup>th</sup>	July No Meeting
February 12 <sup>th</sup>	August No Meeting

\*\*Tuesday Meeting

If Bay City Schools are canceled due to bad  
weather, our meetings are also cancelled.

## Library Hours

### Auburn & Pinconning

Sun-Mon	Closed
Tues-Thur	10am -8pm
Fri-Sat	9am - 5pm

### Sage

Mon-Tue	9am – 5pm
Wed-Thur	12pm – 8 pm
Fri	9am – 5pm
Sat-Sun	Closed

### Wirt

Mon-Thur	10am – 8pm
Fri-Sat	9am – 5pm
*Sun	1pm – 5pm
	*(Sep-May only)

## Contact Information

Please send all questions to one of the  
following:

Facebook: Bay County Genealogical Society MI

Website: baymigenesoc.com

Email: bcgs13@yahoo.com

Snail Mail: BCGS

P.O.Box 1366

Bay City, MI, 48706

## 2024-2025 BCGS Officers

President	Ruth Wilke
Vice President	Barb Connor
Secretary	Judy Berner
Treasurer	Mary McManman
Librarian	Heather Leser
Publishing	Heather Leser
Clarion Editor	Heather Leser

## Membership Dues

All membership renewals are due by the  
end of December. Yearly dues are \$20.00  
for a single person or \$25.00 per  
family/one household.

## The Wirt Genealogy Room

Our BCGS volunteers are available on  
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and  
Saturday from 1pm-4pm.

There is access to Ancestry.com,  
Heritage Quest, Fold3, and  
Familysearch.org