



NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY®

6400 Arlington Blvd., Suite 810

Falls Church, VA 22042-2318

Phone 703-525-0050 or 800-473-0060

[www.ngsgenealogy.org](http://www.ngsgenealogy.org)

## **National Genealogical Society 2018 Family History Conference Fact Sheet**

### **The National Genealogical Society (NGS)**

- The National Genealogical Society is a non-profit organization founded in 1903. NGS is dedicated to genealogical education, exemplary standards of research, and the preservation of genealogical records. Based in Falls Church, Virginia, NGS is the premier U.S. genealogical society with a national focus that provides excellence in publications, educational offerings, research guidance, and networking opportunities for genealogists of all skill levels, from the beginner to the most advanced family historian.

### **The NGS Family History Conference Background**

- Since 1978, NGS has held an annual, educational family history national conference. The 2018 NGS Family History Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan, will be its fortieth conference.
- The conference rotates to different geographic regions and is usually held in May to allow maximum access to a geographically diverse membership. This four-day conference offers a balance of instruction in broad research themes that appeal to a wide audience and specialized topics and research techniques targeted to the locale or region of the conference.
- In recent years, NGS conferences have been held in Ft. Lauderdale, Raleigh, Las Vegas, Richmond, St. Charles, Salt Lake City, Charleston, and Cincinnati. Typically, more than 2,000 attended these conferences, which averaged more than eighty exhibitors and 175 lectures.
- NGS Family History conferences offer numerous presentations in every time slot. Most lectures last one hour including ten minutes of Q&A. Attendees may also hear speakers at daily meal events, so in four days an attendee may listen to more than twenty-five lectures given by some of the most skilled and well-known genealogists in the country.
- Attending an NGS Family History Conference gives genealogists—from those just starting to research their family tree to professional genealogists—the opportunity to learn from leaders in the field and also to meet them and network with fellow genealogists, family history researchers, local historians, writers, publishers, and developers and suppliers of genealogical materials.

## National Genealogical Society 2018 Family History Conference: Paths to Your Past

- The NGS Family History Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan, includes four full days of lectures and networking events that feature nationally known speakers. Learn more at the NGS conference website, [www.conference.ngsgenealogy.org](http://www.conference.ngsgenealogy.org).
- Conference Venue: DeVos Place Convention Center, 303 Monroe Avenue NW, Grand Rapids, MI, 49503
- When: Wednesday through Saturday, 2–5 May 2018
- Pre-Conference Events will take place on Tuesday, 1 May, including a Librarians' Day program; the Board for Certification of Genealogists® (BCG) Education Fund workshop, “Putting Skills to Work”; a Library of Michigan and Archives of Michigan Research Day; the Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park Tour; the Grand Rapids City Tour; the Civil War Tour; and the self-guided Beer City Ale Trail Tour.
- Registration (online or by mail): 1 December 2017 to 20 April 2018.
- Registration (onsite): Begins Tuesday 1 May at 12 noon.
- Local Host Society: Western Michigan Genealogical Society. See <http://wmgs.org> for more information.

### Conference Program

- The 2018 NGS Family History Conference Program has been developed for genealogists and family historians who have a common desire to learn how to find more information about their ancestors—no matter where they originated.
- Skill Levels: The conference program offers lectures for all levels of research experience.
- Lecture Tracks: This year NGS offers more than twenty lecture track themes including African American; BCG Skillbuilding; DNA; Immigration and Migration; Michigan; Military; Religion; Technology; and Tips and Techniques.
- Lecture Topics: The NGS 2018 Family History Conference features more than 175 lecture topics including DNA – Genetic Genealogy; ethnic research; Michigan, Ohio, and Northwest Territory; and migration to the Midwest.
- Speakers: More than ninety experienced lecturers are scheduled. Among the most highly recognized experts are Elizabeth Shown Mills, CG®, CGL<sup>SM</sup>, FASG, FUGA, FNGS, author of 500+ publications including *Evidence Explained* and *Professional Genealogy*, and Thomas W. Jones, PhD, CG, CGL, FASG, FUGA, FNGS, author, educator, researcher; teacher at Boston University, IGHR, and SLIG; editor of the

NGSQ since 2002; and author of *Mastering Genealogical Proof*; also author of *Mastering Genealogical Documentation*.

## Special Events

- The NGS Banquet, Friday, 4 May, 7:00 p.m. (cash bar 6:00–7:00 p.m.), features Ric Mixter, speaking about “Great Storms of the Great Lakes.” Mixter is a shipwreck researcher and historian, diver, photographer, explorer of more than 100 shipwrecks, and producer of more than thirty programs for PBS and the Outdoor channel.
- The NGS Luncheon, Saturday, 5 May, 12:15 p.m., features Mary M. Tedesco, a professional genealogist, speaker, and author; a co-host on the PBS television series *Genealogy Roadshow*; and the founder of ORIGINS ITALY.
- NGS Annual Meeting, Saturday, 5 May, 5:15 p.m., offers the occasion to hear the latest updates concerning publications, member benefits, genealogy courses, affiliate programs, video archives, and more from NGS President, Benjamin Spratling, JD.

## Luncheons

- Nine sponsoring organizations offer a selection of luncheons on Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday, each featuring a speaker on a topic relevant to the sponsoring society or organization. These sponsoring organizations are Association of Professional Genealogists (APG), Board for Certification of Genealogists (BCG), FamilySearch, Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS), Genealogical Speakers Guild (GSG) and International Society for British Genealogy and Family History (ISFHWE), Gen-Fed Alumni, NGS, the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society (NYG&B), and Western Michigan Genealogical Society (WMGS). On Friday, a ticketed barbecue luncheon buffet will be held inside the Exhibit Hall.

## Conference Tours, Tuesday, 1 May 2018

Sales closed 20 April 2018. Conference registration is not required to participate in these pre-conference events.

- Library of Michigan and Archives of Michigan Research Day, 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. \$25 per person

Located at the Michigan History Center in Lansing, Michigan, an hour’s bus ride away, both the library and archives offer family historians a wealth of research materials. Participants will attend a brief orientation program and then have approximately six hours for research. The Archives space is limited so each participant will have at least two hours for Archives research (more time if space is available). A box lunch will be provided.

- Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park Tour, 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. \$45 per person

Discover the beauty and splendor of thirty acres of botanical gardens and an internationally acclaimed sculpture park in Grand Rapids. Entrance to the gardens and a tram guided tour are included in the fee. Take a leisurely walk around the grounds, explore the largest tropical conservancy in Michigan, or view the current exhibits. Enjoy a coffee break or lunch on your own at the Garden Café. For more information, see [meijergardens.org](http://meijergardens.org). Will accommodate most individuals who can enter a bus with limited assistance; however, moderate walking over uneven terrain is required.

- Grand Rapids City Tour, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. \$35 per person

Explore downtown Grand Rapids and learn the history of the city through an architectural tour of the Heritage Hill District, which has one of Michigan's finest concentrations of homes built in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

- Civil War Tour, 1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. \$35 per person

Participants will view the most significant Civil War monuments in the City of Grand Rapids. The tour also will feature gravesites of three Civil War generals in the Fulton Street cemetery and the area's first Civil War cemetery at Oakhill. Attendees will learn about the Oakhill cemetery's ongoing genealogy-based project to identify the many "unknown" Civil War soldiers who rest there.

All coach tours will depart from the Lyon Street cul de sac located between DeVos Place and the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel. Please arrive fifteen minutes before departure. A tour with less than thirty-four registered participants will be canceled thirty days in advance of the conference, participants will be notified by e-mail, and the tour cost will be refunded.

- Beer City Ale Trail

Tuesday afternoon, pick up the free Beer City Trail map at the Hospitality Booth and enjoy a self-guided walking tour of several breweries in downtown Grand Rapids.

### **Exhibit Hall**

- More than seventy exhibitors and ten sponsors will offer genealogical goods and services for the duration of the conference at the Family History Expo in the Exhibit Hall.
- The Expo/Exhibit Hall is free to the public. No conference registration is required to enter, browse, or purchase.
- Exhibitors at the four-day conference event include Ancestry.com, FamilySearch, American Ancestors by NEHGS, Findmypast, MyHeritage, and the National Genealogical Society.

- The Expo/Exhibit Hall opens at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, 2 May, and closes at 5:30 p.m. that day. It will be open Thursday–Saturday from 9:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. except Saturday, when it will close at 3:00 p.m.

## **Media**

- For additional information, contact the National Genealogical Society, at [ngs@ngsgenealogy.org](mailto:ngs@ngsgenealogy.org) or call Jan Alpert, 2018 Conference Chair, at 804-304-5874.
- Also, you may visit the NGS website at [www.conference.ngsgenealogy.org](http://www.conference.ngsgenealogy.org).

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