

***The Updated Mission of the
Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council***

*The Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council is dedicated to
educating the community and celebrating the legacies of local women,
preserving knowledge of their past and inspiring visions for their future.*

**GREATER GRAND RAPIDS
WOMEN'S HISTORY
COUNCIL**

143 Bostwick NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616.234.3603
www.ggrwhc.org

Officers

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Vice President: Kyle Irwin
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Treasurer: Judy Lloyd

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Bibliography and Oral History
LEGACY
Membership
Newsletter
Nominations
Outreach
Publicity
Research and Recognition

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Twink Frey, Gordon Olson

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Merry Malfroid

Featured Biography

Mary Edmond

North Star of the 20th Century
By Barbara Robinson

Mary Edmond began teaching at the Grand Rapids Public Schools in the early 1960s. She soon became a prime mover and shaker in not only the African American community but in the wider education community. Her field was music education and that served as a springboard for her belief in better opportunities for black students. She always included black history in her teaching which led to the establishment of Black History Month.

In 1973 she was appointed Director of Multi-Cultural Education and Gender Equity. She began doing research on black history in the local area for curriculum development. This led her into further study of the Underground Railroad and in 1995 the Grand Rapids Historical Society presented her with the Albert Baxter History Award. She helped found Michigan Black History network and has been president since 1995.

Mary has written many papers, books and contributed an amazing amount of time and energy to her causes. She passes on a motto from her grandmother. "Nothing is promised to you tomorrow." Mary is always seeking to be sure her promises for tomorrow do work out.

President's Corner

Mary Seeger

The Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council welcomes all members and supporters as we reconvene after a summer hiatus.

A small working group of board members met over the summer to continue our strategic planning and to refine our operations.

We welcome you to the activities of this new year, and encourage you to take part in the projects and programs detailed elsewhere in this newsletter and on our website.

Mary A. Seeger

Women Pins

The holidays are coming. It's time to purchase our unique pins featuring women. These very colorful pins cost \$14.00 and the proceeds go to support events sponsored by the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council. To see the pins, contact Fran Pepper at 616.234.3908. They make great gifts!

Grand Rapids Historical Society
2003 – 2004 Season

The Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council is pleased to announce the Grand Rapids Historical Society's schedule for the 2003-2004 season. Please contact Ruth VanStee at 616.988.5402, ext. 5497 for more information or visit their website, www.grhistory.org.

Grand Rapids Historical Society lectures/programs are held the second Thursday of the month, except for the October program, which had to be moved to **Thursday, October 23**. All programs are co-sponsored by the Gerald R. Ford Museum and are held at the museum, 303 Pearl St NW, at 7:30 p.m. Each program is followed by a reception with light refreshments. Historical Society programs are free and open to the public, with the exception of the May meeting/banquet which is open to members and their guest. There is free parking at the museum.

October 23, 2003

Germania on the Grand: The German American Heyday in Grand Rapids

Wilhelm Seeger, Professor of German at Grand Valley State University

From 1870 to 1914 the German-American community grew and flourished. There were five churches and a synagogue with German congregations, about 21 German societies and associations, including labor unions, and many German-owned businesses.

November 13, 2003

Horse Cars, Cable Cars and Electric Cars: the Street Car Era in Grand Rapids

Carl Bajema, Professor of Biology at Grand Valley State University, has been studying the environmental history of Michigan for more than a decade. He also has been recording information concerning the history of Michigan's steam and electric railroads. Carl will take us for a 70-year ride on the horse cars, cable cars, electric street cars and interurban cars that traveled on the streets of Grand Rapids between 1865 and 1935.

February 12, 2004

Afro-Michiganders: Before the Civil War

Randall Jelks, Professor of History at Calvin College. History is recorded about African Americans in Michigan after the Civil War, but little is written about those who settled in Michigan prior to the 1860's. Dr. Jelks will discuss the migration, the labor, and the communities of early Afro-Michiganders.

March 11, 2004

Unsung Heroines of the Christian Reformed Community and Their Civic Contributions

Pujita Sieplinga

Ms. Sieplinga, granddaughter of author and activist Lillian Grissen, will pay tribute to her female elders from the Christian Reformed tradition. Largely overlooked and under acknowledged, these women have engaged the world by founding important social institutions and running for political office.

This program celebrates Women's History Month and is co-sponsored by the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council.

April 8, 2004

Carolyn Bartlett Crane on Peace and Patriotism: Women and War in the Progressive Era.

Linda Rynbrandt, Associate Professor of Sociology at Grand Valley State University

Ms. Rynbrandt will examine the struggle between peace and patriotism faced by women reformers in the Progressive Era through a comparison between the actions and attitudes of Jane Addams and Michigan reformer, Caroline Bartlett Crane.

May 13, 2004

Annual Meeting and Banquet

Grand Rapids Artists from 1850 – 1940

James Straub

Slides and stories about local artists including Mathias Alten, Lawrence C. Earle and Frederick Church. Open only to Historical Society members and their guests.

Has your membership expired?

If you have an asterisk (*) by your name on your address label, it has.

Your membership includes:

- GGRWHC Newsletter
- Photo Exhibit of 12 outstanding community women
- Documentation of Oral Histories by local women
- Educational Programs
- GGRWHC annual events
- Maintenance of historical archives of women in the Grand Rapids area.

Renewing your membership for 2003-2004 is as easy as completing the form below and mailing it with your check to Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council, (GGRWHC), 143 Bostwick NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Please Print

Name _____ E-mail address _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone (work) _____ (home) _____

Membership Level and Type: \$100 Sponsor \$50 Contributor/Institution \$25 Basic \$10 Student

Other: _____ New Member Returning Member

I am also interested in participating on the following committee(s): Bibliography/Oral Histories Outreach
 LEGACY 2006 Membership Newsletter Nominations Publicity Research/Recognition

Women's History in the Future (Calendar of Events)

OCTOBER, 2003

- 3-5 State History Conference in Port Huron
- 14 GGRWHC Board Meeting, Grand Rapids Public Library VanderVeen Center for the Book, 3rd floor, 4 pm.
 - *History in the Making* – Debra Muller Norton Mounds (See page 6 for a description.)
- 25 Michigan Oral History Association Conference
- 29 Women's Hall of Fame Dinner

NOVEMBER, 2003

- 7-8 Great Lakes History Conference (See pages 3 and 4 for information)
- 11 GGRWHC Board Meeting, St. Mark's Church, 4 pm
 - *History in the Making* – Mary Seeger "Eat My Words, Reading Women's Lives Through the Cookbooks They Wrote" (See page 6 for a description.)

DECEMBER, 2003

- 9 GGRWHC Board Meeting, Grand Rapids Public Library VanderVeen Center for the Book, 3rd floor, 4 pm.
 - Holiday Celebration

JANUARY, 2004

- 13 GGRWHC Board Meeting, Cabinet Room. Gerald R. Ford Museum *History in the Making* -- Historical Commission by Barbara McGregor Packer (See page 6 for a description.)

FEBRUARY, 2004

- 10 GGRWHC Board Meeting, location to be determined.

MARCH, 2004

Women's History Month

- 9 GGRWHC Board Meeting, location to be determined.
- 11 Women's History Month Program (See page 2.)

APRIL, 2004

- 13 GGRWHC Board Meeting, location to be determined.

MAY, 2004

Annual Membership Campaign

- 11 GGRWHC Board Meeting, location to be determined.
 - Annual Meeting

Michigan Women's Hall of Fame Dinner

In Celebration of Michigan Women, the twentieth annual awards dinner will be held on Wednesday, October 29, 2003, at the Sheraton Lansing Hotel.

Reception	5:00 pm
Dinner	6:00 pm
Program	7:00 pm
Cost per person	\$100.00
Reservation deadline	October 3.

Phone the Michigan Women's Studies Association at 517.484.1880 or email mail@michiganwomenshalloffame.org for further information.

**Greater Grand Rapids
Women's History Council
17520 Sherman Ave.
Casnovia, MI 49318**

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History in the Making

History in the Making will be short presentations about women in history or historical events in the West Michigan area. The first program was presented at the September, 2003 meeting. The public is invited to attend the board meetings to hear these presentations.

At the September meeting, Barbara Robinson gave a biography about Mary Edmond who had worked for the Grand Rapids Public Schools. Barbara shared the high points of Mary's life and her accomplishments. Board members were able to hear an excerpt of the original taped transcript. For more information about Mary Edmond, see the biography on page 1.

The October meeting will feature Debra Muller talking about the Norton Mounds, a National Historic Landmark and the Historic Survey and Assessment Project that she is administering for the Public Museum of Grand Rapids. The project is in the pre-planning stages and is the beginning of a long-range preservation and maintenance plan for the site. The Public Museum of Grand Rapids owns the property and has no set agenda for the future of the site beyond preservation and education. However, the development of the Millennium Park will bring the area into public focus along with many concerns and issues. The project will be dealing with the issues in a proactive and community-based format.

At the November meeting, Mary Seeger will discuss *EAT MY WORDS: Reading Women's Lives Through the Cookbooks They Wrote*. Among a number of new and newish publications on food and eating, Mary recommends this publication. Author Janet Theophano has studied cookbooks from the 17th century to the present day, and organizes her findings in seven fascinating chapters detailing cookbooks as communities, as collective memory and identity, as auto-biography, and as social and political commentary. Clearly cookbooks are much more than a collection of recipes for dishes to feed the body.

The January, 2004 meeting will feature a talk about the Historical Commission by Barbara McGregor Packer. Originally established in 1962 to write a history of Grand Rapids and develop a collection of local history material, the Grand Rapids Historical Commission has undergone several transformations in its 41 year history. A formal Commission of the City of Grand Rapids, the Historical Commission is now comprised of 13 members, appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Commission. From 1976 until his recent retirement, the work of the Commission was, in large part, made possible because of the efforts of City Historian Gordon Olson. Currently, the work of the Commission includes publication of books on the history of Grand Rapids and her people, work with a variety of ethnic groups and community organizations on collecting, presenting, and preserving their histories, and development of curriculum materials for use in area classrooms.

**2003 Great Lakes History Conference
Friday and Saturday, November 7-8, 2003**

The Twenty-Eighth Annual Great Lakes History Conference, sponsored by the History Department of Grand Valley State University, will be held Friday and Saturday, November 7 and 8, 2003, at GVSU's Eberhard Center in downtown Grand Rapids. The conference features thirty-six panels on historical topics, with over ninety presenters.

Conference Theme:

From Slavery to Freedom in the Atlantic World

Keynote Address by

Professor Ira Berlin, University of Maryland

Professor Berlin will speak about *American Slavery in History and Memory*. Ira Berlin is a pre-eminent historian of slavery and freedom in the Atlantic World and founder of the Freedmen and Southern Society Project. His *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in Mainland North America* (1999) received the prestigious Bancroft Prize among several other awards. Other publications include *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (2003), and *Slaves without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (1975). Professor Berlin is immediate past president of the Organization of American Historians. The keynote will be held as part of the luncheon on Saturday, November 8.

Public Lecture

Charles Johnson, African-American Novelist

Charles Johnson's presentation topic will be *African-American Memory-Making and the Attempt to Tell History through Fiction*. A distinguished novelist, critic, and screenwriter, Charles Johnson is noted for his use of historical materials in his creative work. *Middle Passage* (1990), a vivid re-creation of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, received the National Book Award. More recently, the life of Martin Luther King, Jr., served as the basis for *Dreamer: A Novel* (1998). Other books include *Faith and the Good Thing* (1974); *Oxherding Tale* (1982); *Africans in America: America's Journey through Slavery* (1998) (for which Professor Johnson authored stories to accompany the historical text); *Soulcatcher and Other Stories* (2001); and *Turning the Wheel: Essays on Buddhism and Writing* (2003). The public lecture will take place on the evening of Friday, November 7, 2003, at the Loosemore Auditorium of GVSU's DeVos Campus in downtown Grand Rapids.

Friday Panels

(Session times subject to change.)

Session I, 1:30-2:45 pm

- Gendered Genre Fiction and the History of American Slavery
- Resisting Slavery in the Late Colonial Caribbean
- Legacies of Slavery in Africa: The Nigerian Perspective
- Empire and Identity for British West Indian Immigrants
- Debating War: Intellectuals, Ideology and the Vietnam War
- Abolitionism and the Underground Railroad in the Great Lakes Region

Session II, 3:00-4:30 pm

- The Popularization of Ethnic Foods and Loss of Identity
- Fugitive Slaves and Free Blacks in Canada
- Eighteenth Century America
- Portraits and Portrayals of the African-American Slave
- Subaltern Peoples and Identity Formation
- Manumission and Freedom in the Chesapeake

Saturday Panels

(Those in bold are local panels)

(Session times subject to change.)

Session III, 8:30-10:00 am

- **It's a Long Way from Borculo to Buna: West Michigan Veterans Recall Red Arrow Division Campaigns in New Guinea and the Philippines**
- Comparative Views of Slavery in the US and Russia
- Re-Conceptualizing Community Resistance: The Young's Prairie/Ramptown Settlement
- Slave Resistance in the British Atlantic
- Creating Public Memory and Selling the Past in Modern America
- **Michigan Ports and the Great Lakes**

Session IV, 10:15-11:45 am

- **Syrian-Lebanese Community of Grand Rapids, 1890-1940**
- The Underground Railroad: New Trends and New Partners
- Politics of Antislavery in Victorian England
- Catholics and the Early American Republic
- Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade in West Africa

Saturday Panels *(continued)*

Session V, 1:45-3:15 pm

- **Revisiting Racial Segregation in the Mid-1960s: Grand Rapids Public Schools**
- Liberalism and Social Welfare in Michigan
- African American Women and Slavery in Fiction and History
- Politics, Manhood, and Religion in the Civil War Era
- Black Responses to Slavery and Freedom in the 19th Century US and British Caribbean
- **The Felt Restoration Project: From Paper Project to People Project**

Session VI, 3:30-5:00 pm

- **Idlewild: The History of a Black Resort Community in Michigan**
- Darwinism and Difference in Progressive Era America
- Fragility of Ethnic Identity in 19th and 20th Century Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Post-Bellum Legacy of American Colonization of Africa
- The Moral Problem of Slavery in Antebellum Society, Culture, and Politics
- Quakerism and Social Reform in Colonial and Early National America

Registration fees

GVSU Students, Faculty and Staff	no charge
Members of the Grand Rapids Historical Society and the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council	\$15.00
General Public	\$20.00

For more information contact Ms. Shelby Hughes, Department of History, Grand Valley State University, One Campus Drive, Allendale, MI, 49401, 616.331.3298. The website for the conference is <http://www.gvsu.edu/history/glhc.html>.

Please register me for the 2003 Great Lakes History Conference.

Please Print

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone (work) _____ (home) _____

Email address _____

I am a GVSU faculty or staff member or student _____ No charge

I am a member of the Grand Rapids Historical Society _____ Fee \$15.00

I am a member of the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council _____ Fee \$15.00

I am a member of the community _____ Fee \$20.00

Total Enclosed _____

Please send me information on the Grand Rapids Historical Society _____

Please send me information on the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council _____