

The San Antonio Genealogical and Historical Society Library A Hill Country Treasure

by Barbara Froebel

Nestled on the north side of San Antonio, a 1926 two-story Spanish Colonial ranch house sits on a slight hill. Once overlooking miles of unsettled country, the grand old building presides like a red-headed queen over her many more modern subjects in a now very busy neighborhood.

The queenly structure has been home since 2004 to the San Antonio Genealogical and Historical Society (www.txsaghs.org) and library. The library houses a rich international collection of books, periodicals, maps, and other materials. Every state and several foreign countries are represented.

After speaking at the annual SAGHS seminar, Lloyd Bockstruck visited the library and was told “we don’t use the Dewey decimal

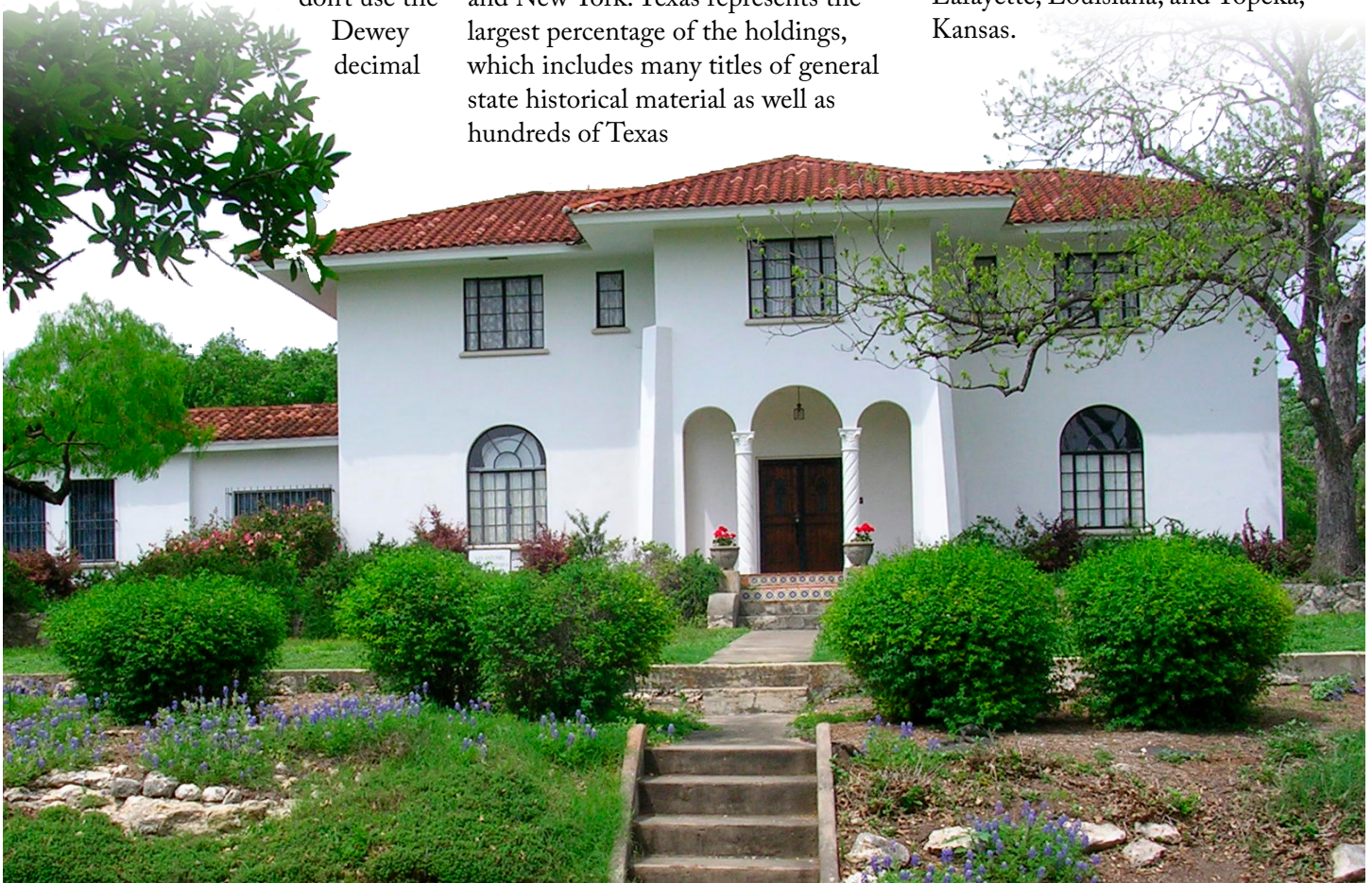
system.” Lloyd sighed deeply and said, “You must be sooo happy!” The bulk of the SAGHS Library collection is housed in what was once the living room of the historic home. Books are arranged alphabetically by state, county, and periodical.

The largest collections, other than Texas, are Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New York. Texas represents the largest percentage of the holdings, which includes many titles of general state historical material as well as hundreds of Texas

county books such as histories and vital records. The Texas collection is housed in the library’s west wing, which also has thousands of family histories and lineages. The library has numerous Colonial America books plus Revolutionary, Civil war, and other military history. The entire catalog may be searched online at <https://txsaghs.org/libraryRecords.php>.

Library map cases house over 600 historical maps dating from the colonial period to the 19th century.

The library has city directories for 48 Texas cities and towns for various years as well as a few cities outside of Texas such as Hobbs, New Mexico, Lafayette, Louisiana, and Topeka, Kansas.





There are 38 San Antonio city directories covering the years 1931-1989 plus phone directories for 1933, 1948, and 1957.

The library has a huge collection of periodicals from 45 states and hundreds of counties. Periodicals representing more than 60 Texas counties are on the shelves. The library has many periodicals that are out of print.

Computers and high-speed wireless internet access are available; visitors are welcome to bring their laptops. Website subscriptions to databases include Ancestry.com, Fold3, GenealogyBank.com, New England Historic Genealogical Society (American Ancestors), Ohio Genealogical Society, and New York Genealogical and Biographical Society. SAGHS has obituary and cemetery records for the Bexar County area. The society's vertical files have been digitized and are available on library computers.

The library has numerous award-winning SAGHS publications that are also listed on the SAGHS web site.

Open to the public four days a week—including weekends—the library has free parking and lovely facilities and grounds. Society librarians are on duty to assist whether

you are a beginning genealogist or more experienced researcher. The Society invites you to come in and explore their extensive collections or attend one of the many interesting classes offered in the library.

The library welcomes non-

member researchers, but requests visitors support the library with a minimum donation of \$5 per person, per visit. Parking and entrance to the library are in the rear of the building.

When I first began to haunt this San Antonio treasure in the hills, it was considered the best privately-owned repository in South Texas. I have to say it has only gotten better. I have made many happy discoveries here and even found a cousin on my Oxley line. I'm from Idaho and could swear I had no Texas ancestors—but lo and behold, a great-grand-uncle settled in Montague County after the Civil War. That and other happy surprises have kept me coming back for several years. Even if you don't find a Texan, there are still the rest of the states and several foreign countries to explore within these walls. What will you discover? ★



San Antonio Research Opportunities

In addition to the 2018 TxSGS Annual Family History Conference's extensive program that includes sessions on records, methodology, DNA, and more, you can take advantage of some of the research facilities in San Antonio. Here are three of the best:

- Located on the 6th floor of the **San Antonio Central Library**, the **Texana/ Genealogy Department** includes 65,000 microfilms, 77,000 books, 150 drawers of archival files, 75 map drawers, and 300 cubic feet of archival collections. Visit this research facility at 600 Soledad St. in downtown San Antonio.

- The **Family History Place, library of the Genealogical Society of Kendall County** (<https://gskctx.org/>), holds a collection of approximately 3800 books, 69 journal titles, microfilm and manuscripts, maps, and some records salvaged from the county courthouse weeding process. Teacher reports to county school district and poll tax records are among these county records. The "First Families Collection" of Kendall County is a unique collection of the books compiled by family members when they apply for certification to GSKC's First Families. These books include documents, biographies, photos and stories of the family. Located at 114 E. Blanco Street in Boerne, the library is free to all visitors. Hours are Monday, 1 to 4 p.m.; Tuesday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Thursday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. To search the catalog, see <https://opac.libraryworld.com/opac/home.php>.

- The **San Antonio Genealogical & Historical Society Library** (featured in this article), located at 911 Melissa Dr. in north-central San Antonio, houses a vast collection of books, periodicals, maps, vertical files, microfilm, and family history volumes for San Antonio, Bexar County, and all 50 states. Hours are Monday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m. Consult the library catalog at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~txsaghs2/> for available resources.