

THE JOURNAL OF THE TEXAS STATE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY INC.



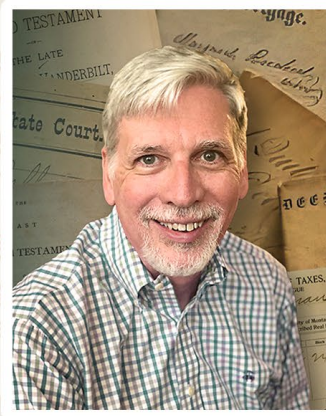
Stirpes



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Why Name our Journal Stirpes? Pronounced “STÛR’PEZ,” it perfectly describes the core understanding of our passion in researching ancestry and family history: The phrase “. . . to my heirs, per stirpes” means that the legal heirs share their inheritance based on their relationship to the deceased. (See full story in *Stirpes*, 2016, Volume 55, Number 3-4)

From the

Editors' Pen



DNA testing and analysis has revolutionized genealogical research, providing for many a shortcut to uncovering unknown ancestors and discovering new cousins. As with traditional document-based genealogical research, the more you know about using DNA to research your family history, the more likely you'll be able to find those elusive ancestors. This issue of *Stirpes* delves into genetic genealogy, with articles on DNA companies, research tools and tips, and examples of how DNA is being used to break down brick walls and better understand ancestors' lives.

Bernard Meisner provides a primer for autosomal DNA (atDNA) research, going over the basics from ethnicity estimates to identifying matches in "Getting Started in DNA – the First Steps." "Using MyHeritage's DNA Tools to Unlock Your Family History," by Daniel Horowitz and Daniella Levy, introduces readers to the many tools available at MyHeritage® for working with DNA to unravel family mysteries. Patti Huff Smith shares "8 Tips for the BEST Experience with Ancestry® ThruLines®" to help readers utilize this Ancestry tool to make family connections and discover common ancestors. DNA research can be challenging, and the number of matches can be overwhelming. In "Highlights from Diahann Southard's *Your DNA Guide – the Book*," Patti Huff Smith shares tips gleaned from this educational resource that can help readers conquer the confusion.

"Surnames to Locations: DNA

Projects Foster Collaboration," by Paula Perkins, discusses DNA projects available at FamilyTreeDNA® for those who have tested their Y-DNA, atDNA, and mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA). These projects are designed to help participants who may have similar ancestry or descend from the same person connect with each other. Bette Christopher-Peña shows how she used the Christopher Surname DNA Project and extensive research to differentiate Christopher lineages and identify her early American ancestor in "Breaking Through a Brick Wall: the Early American Christopher DNA Project."

Jim Thornhill discusses the combined use of DNA and traditional genealogy to achieve research goals in "DNA and Your Genealogy Toolbox." "Lost and Found: the Mystery of Jacob Gisler," by Marc J. LeClere, illustrates the technique of using autosomal DNA in conjunction with standard research to resolve the mysterious disappearance of Jacob Gisler in the 1880s.

"The TxSGS Early Texans DNA Project," by Melody Hooper Woods, shows how those with early Texas ancestors can leverage their DNA test results and genealogical research to explore DNA connections with other descendants of early Texans and perhaps uncover new information. The Early Texans DNA Project is just one of the priorities of TxSGS's DNA Committee. *Stirpes* salutes these committee members for their commitment to pursuing Debbie Parker Wayne's vision for using DNA to delve into the

history of Texas on individual, regional, and state-wide scales.

Resolving adoption mysteries is a well-known application of DNA research. In "One Person – Six Names: Following an Adoption Trail," Russell A. Rahn shows how one person discovered her mother's birth parents before DNA testing was available.

Stirpes invites you to explore summer genealogy events and more hosted by TxSGS's Partner Societies in the Partner Society Roundup. Societies in Texas and beyond depend on committed and passionate volunteers to serve on committees and in society management. One such leader is honored in "Johnnie Jo Sowell Dickenson: Celebrating Over 40 Years of Service with WCGS."

"Unlock Your Past" is the theme for this year's TxSGS Family History Conference, slated for November 4-5. Read about conference tracks, watch our website for updates, and plan now to attend! Do you have early Texas ancestors? Check out the latest Heritage Certificate recipients – someone may have proved your ancestor's early Texas connection.

Summer is the season for family gatherings, reunions, and opportunities to share family lore. Storytelling is the theme of our next issue, and we'd like to feature tales about your family. Do you have an intriguing legend, a resolved enigma, or a surprising discovery in your family research? Share your story with *Stirpes*! ★

–*Stirpes* Editors

New Members & More

**New Members since
February 2022**

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Mary Kay Snell
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Stephanie P. Sparkman
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Jennifer Hunt Bostick
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Manester Yvonne Bruno
Murry T. Bruno
Carol Diamond
Janis Minor Forté
Peter J. Gulden
Tom Henry
Lynda L. Henry
Roseann Hogan
Rebecca Lynn Hubert
Joel K. Levy
Judi F. Levy
Valencia Linton
Kelvin L. Meyers
Viviana L. Prieur
Bess Schulmeister
Bernd H. Strassner
Liz D. Strassner
Mary Frances Townsend

Individual and Household Members

Anita Beesley
Carrie Bohac
Emmy Bushman
Bette Christopher-Peña
Sue Suzette Clark
Kristin Dennis
Paul Edward Dietert
Lloydina Elliott
Rebecca C. Fleck

Ashley R. Gonzalez
Richard Andrew Gruetzner
Leslie N. Horan
Katherina J. Marsh
Stephen P. Marsh
Jane B. Martin
Erica L. Milano
Loyd D. Morris
Elissa M. Ramon

Richard Peña
Kris Richins
Brian L. Spence
Harry John Swanson
Christopher A. Taylor
Terry M. Turner
Linda Gilliam Vereen
GayNell Tinsley Wells
Suzy Zimmermann

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Volunteer Spotlight:

The TxSGS DNA Committee

Stirpes salutes members of the TxSGS DNA Committee who are committed to continuing Debbie Parker Wayne’s vision for the historical and genealogical insights that might be discovered from early Texan DNA through the TXStateGS DNA Project at FamilyTreeDNA and the Early Texans DNA Project.

Through this project, Debbie expected to help genealogists with early Texas ancestors break through brick walls. She also anticipated learning which segments of DNA are shared with other descendants of early settlers of Texas. DNA matches in the Early Texans Project may support claims of descent from a common ancestor and can provide clues as to where to locate documentary evidence, facilitating application for TxSGS Heritage Certificates.

Debbie shared her dream with *Stirpes*:

It will be exciting to get descendants and collateral relatives of famous Texans like Stephen F. Austin’s Old Three Hundred, Sam Houston, José Antonio Navarro, Elder John Parker, Quanah Parker, Thomas Jefferson Rusk, Juan Seguin, Lorenzo D. Zavala, and others into the database. It will be just as exciting to see what we learn from the descendants of those whose names may not be as well known.¹

In addition to general responsibilities, each committee member fills a critical role in achieving this vision:

- Paula Perkins and Mic Barnette manage the TXStateGS DNA Project at FamilyTreeDNA. Paula and Mic both have extensive experience in managing DNA Projects at FamilyTreeDNA. (See Paula’s article on page 19.) Mic is also leader of the Dallas Genealogical Society’s DNA Special Interest Group. In addition, Paula and Mic speak on DNA for various groups in Texas including TxSGS.
- Melody Hooper Wood administers the Early Texans Database (ETDNA), <https://www.txsgs.org/programs-dna-project-early-texans-database/>. Melody

was trained by Debbie in adding photos, documents, and other information to the database. She also ensures that sources and citations are formatted in a consistent manner and meet ETDNA guidelines. Prior to joining the committee, Melody submitted one of the most complete lineage forms to ETDNA and also shared photos, news articles, and records for her family. This led to an expanded way to showcase additional information in the ETDNA database. (See Melody’s article on page 36.)

- Jessica Horne Collins assists those who are using DNA to prove a parent-child connection in their application for a TxSGS Heritage Certificate. Jessica has experience in writing and reviewing DNA proof arguments, having written a proof argument for *Stirpes* and reviewed applications with DNA proof arguments for TxSGS Heritage Certificates.
- Randy Whited adds depth to the DNA expertise on the committee, helping where needed. He also reviews articles submitted to *Stirpes* that rely on DNA to prove family connections. Randy is leader of the Capitol City DNA SIG and speaks on DNA for the TxSGS conference and local genealogy societies.
- Sandra Crowley, TxSGS Director of Development, is presently the Acting DNA Committee Chair.

As genealogists, we have come to value the connections that DNA provide us with our ancestors as well as current extended family members. Thank you, DNA Committee members, for not only working with Debbie to make the Early Texans DNA Project a reality but also for building on the current foundation to take the Early Texans DNA Project to new heights. ★

1. Debbie Parker Wayne, “The TxSGS Early Texans DNA Database: Explore, Connect, and Join to Further Your Early Texan Research,” *Stirpes*, vol 60, no 1, page 27-29:29.

Getting Started in DNA – the First Steps

by Bernard N. Meisner

You submitted your sample to one of the genealogical testing companies and have received the notification that it has been processed, and your results are available. After logging onto the company’s website, you may be overwhelmed by all the information that is available. How should you proceed?

Manage Your Expectations

Genealogical DNA is not a magic bullet. Rather, it is a tool to be used in genealogical research. Don’t expect to submit your DNA and immediately be presented with your family tree extending back many generations. Genealogical DNA is not a precise tool. Your DNA, by itself, cannot confirm a family connection. It may suggest several possible relationships for someone whose DNA matches yours; you will have to determine which one is correct. Your DNA must be combined with historical records to confirm a connection.

Your Ethnicity Estimate

Many people start by looking at their ethnicity estimate. In fact, learning what their DNA indicates about their ethnicity may be the only motivation many have for taking a DNA test. Are you pleased, surprised, or shocked by your ethnicity estimate?

Figure 1 is a graphic depiction of my direct ancestors that I have been able to document through

years of research, color-coded by their place of birth. They are the people from whom I inherited my DNA. The most recent generations, including all my great-grandparents, were born in the United States, specifically my home state of Pennsylvania. Does that make me ethnically Pennsylvanian? No, there is a distinction between nationality and ethnicity, with the latter being the cultural and ancestral identity of a person.¹

All my mother’s more distant ancestors that I have been able to document were born in Ireland, while many of my father’s ancestors were born in what is now Germany. Based on the birthplaces of my great-great-grandparents, I am 62 percent Irish and 38 percent German. However, when I look at the ethnicity estimates from the various companies (figure 2), I see a wide range of values. What’s happening?

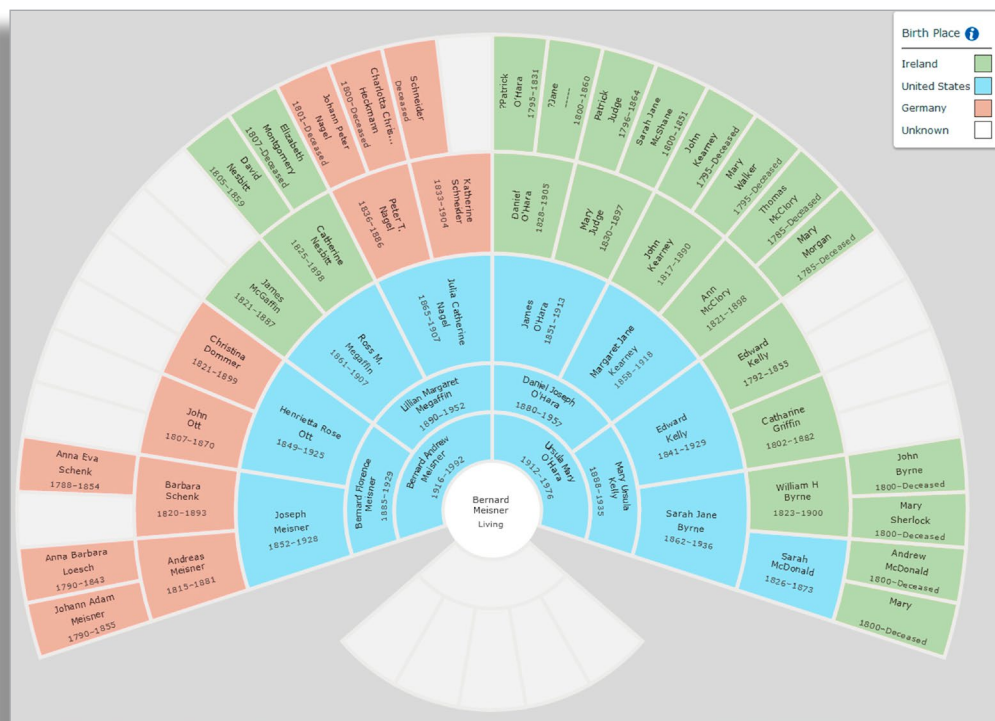


Figure 1: Six generation fan chart of the author’s direct ancestors, color coded by birthplace.

Using MyHeritage's DNA Tools to Unlock Your Family History

by Daniel Horowitz and Daniella Levy

The introduction of at-home DNA tests has revolutionized the world of genealogy, providing a new and exciting way to explore family connections and break through brick walls. However, a list of DNA matches, in and of itself, can only get you so far. The wealth of DNA tools offered by MyHeritage™ can open a whole new

world of possibilities, potentially saving you hours of research and helping you make connections you might never have seen otherwise.

This article will explore the various DNA tools available on the MyHeritage platform and show you how you can use them to get the most out of your DNA test results.

Testing or Uploading Your DNA

MyHeritage offers its own DNA test, and if you haven't purchased a kit yet, it's an excellent choice. However, if you've already tested your DNA with another service, you don't need to test again with MyHeritage to benefit from its excellent DNA features; you can upload your raw DNA data to MyHeritage. Note that MyHeritage uses an autosomal-only test, so if you've tested with a service that analyzes additional chromosomes, make sure to download only the autosomal data to upload to MyHeritage. Detailed instructions for uploading your DNA data can be found at myheritage.com/dna/upload.

Sorting, Filtering, and Labeling Matches

Sifting through your DNA matches and identifying unknown relatives is the key to achieving important insights. MyHeritage provides a number of useful ways to approach your match list, helping you find and focus on the matches that are of greatest interest to you.

By default, your DNA matches

are listed according to overall shared DNA, with the closest matches at the top of the list and the most distant matches at the bottom. However, you can also choose to sort your list by number of shared segments, the length of the largest segment, full names

Genetic Groups, and labels.

The label feature allows you to create customized color-coded labels to apply to your matches according to your preferences. You can also “star” your favorite matches, making it easy to find the matches you keep coming back to, or add a note to a match to keep track of any important details you want to remember about this match.

Reviewing a DNA Match

On the DNA Match list, you'll be able to view some basic details about each match, such as their name, age group, and location, as seen in figure 1. You'll also be able to contact this person using MyHeritage's internal messaging system – or, if the kit is managed by a different family member, you'll be able to contact whoever manages the kit.

Next, you'll see an estimated relationship based on the amount of DNA you share with this person and the amount of shared DNA in percentages and centiMorgans as well as the number of shared segments and the length of the largest shared segment. The length of the largest shared segment is key to determining



of the matches, or how recently the match was added to the list.

Filters allow you to narrow your results according to a wide variety of criteria. There are currently five categories of filters with a number of options in each, including tree details, relationships, locations, ethnicities,

8 Tips for the BEST Experience with Ancestry ThruLines

by Patti Huff Smith

Are you wondering what the hype is about Ancestry® ThruLines®? If you have asked yourself this question, perhaps there has been an unfortunate disconnect. You have been missing out on one of the most exciting tools that Ancestry has created!

Note: While using ThruLines, it is good to have a research goal in mind. I will use the DNA data from my mother, Jacqueline Lou Crook, because my research goal is to find DNA cousins on my mom's paternal Crook line in hopes of finding additional information about the Crook family.

If you are a first-time Ancestry DNA user or wondering where to go after receiving your DNA results, let's talk about one of the ways to get more from your DNA data.

ThruLines is a tool created by Ancestry to assist you in making connections with your DNA matches to discover your common ancestors. Does this sound too good to be true? Not really! There are just a few steps to take for you to maximize your experience with ThruLines.

Before you can use ThruLines, you need to have taken an Ancestry DNA test. While waiting for your DNA results to come in, use that time to fill in your family tree as accurately as possible.

When you receive your DNA results, follow these simple steps:

1. Link your DNA to your name in your Ancestry family tree. On Your DNA Results Summary page, click the link under your name. *Linking your DNA must be done to utilize ThruLines.*
 - If your family tree is "private," you can make your DNA private and searchable for best results.
 - Once you've linked your DNA to your tree, it may take up to 48 hours to populate your matches in ThruLines. Then, you can proceed to ThruLines.
2. Go to your DNA Results summary, then click "Explore ThruLines," shown outlined in red in figure 2.
 - You should see the names and profile pictures for your parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, etc.

If you haven't uploaded a profile picture to these persons in your family tree, you'll see a silhouette or the profile picture from someone else's family tree.

3. Hover your mouse over the ancestor's name you would like to examine. You will see the number of DNA matches you have with that ancestor.

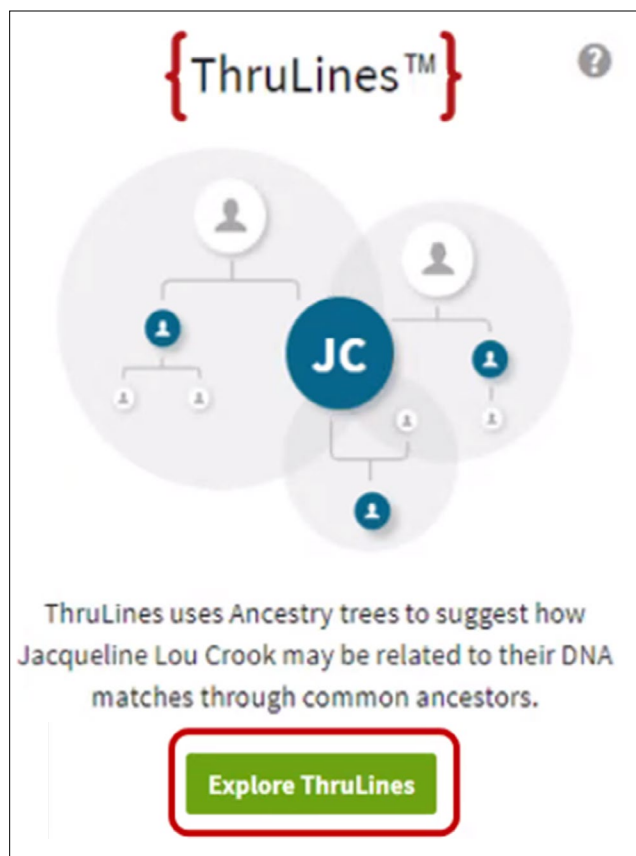


Figure 2: Using ThruLines can accelerate your genealogy research!

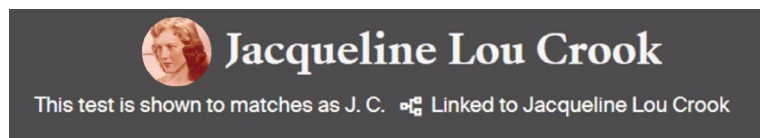


Figure 1: Remember to link your DNA to your family tree.

Surnames to Locations: DNA Projects Foster Collaboration

by Paula Perkins

Would you like to maximize the results from your DNA test? Collaborating with a group that shares similar characteristics can help you better understand your DNA results and gain new insights on your origins.

FamilyTreeDNA (FTDNA) fosters these collaborations through a variety of DNA Group Projects such as Surname, Geographical, Haplogroup, and mtDNA. In surname projects, members study the origins of a surname and how people with the surname are related using DNA and document-based research. Geographical projects are based on an area; for example, the TXStateGS Group Project is a geographical project. Participants compare their DNA with others from a specific area or community to look for common admixtures that may point to common ancestors or origins. Other projects include Haplogroup Projects that explore ancient ancestry as well as mtDNA Projects based on matrilineal descent. Thousands of projects exist, many with hundreds of members.

To join a project, you must test your DNA with FTDNA, manage a DNA test at FTDNA, or transfer your DNA results to FTDNA from another testing company. Having met one of these criteria, there is no additional charge to join any project, nor is there a limit to the number of projects you can join.¹

society, or other research area of interest has an existing project. Note that genealogical society projects may be listed with an abbreviation such as TXStateGS for the Texas State Genealogical Society or Collin CoGS for the Collin County Genealogical Society.

The easiest way to search for a project is through the browsing interface shown in figure 1 at <https://www.familytreedna.com/group-project-search?browse=true>. In figure 1, the browsing interface is shown

Exploring the DNA Projects

You can use the searchable database at <https://www.familytreedna.com/group-project-search> to determine if your surname, geographical region, genealogical

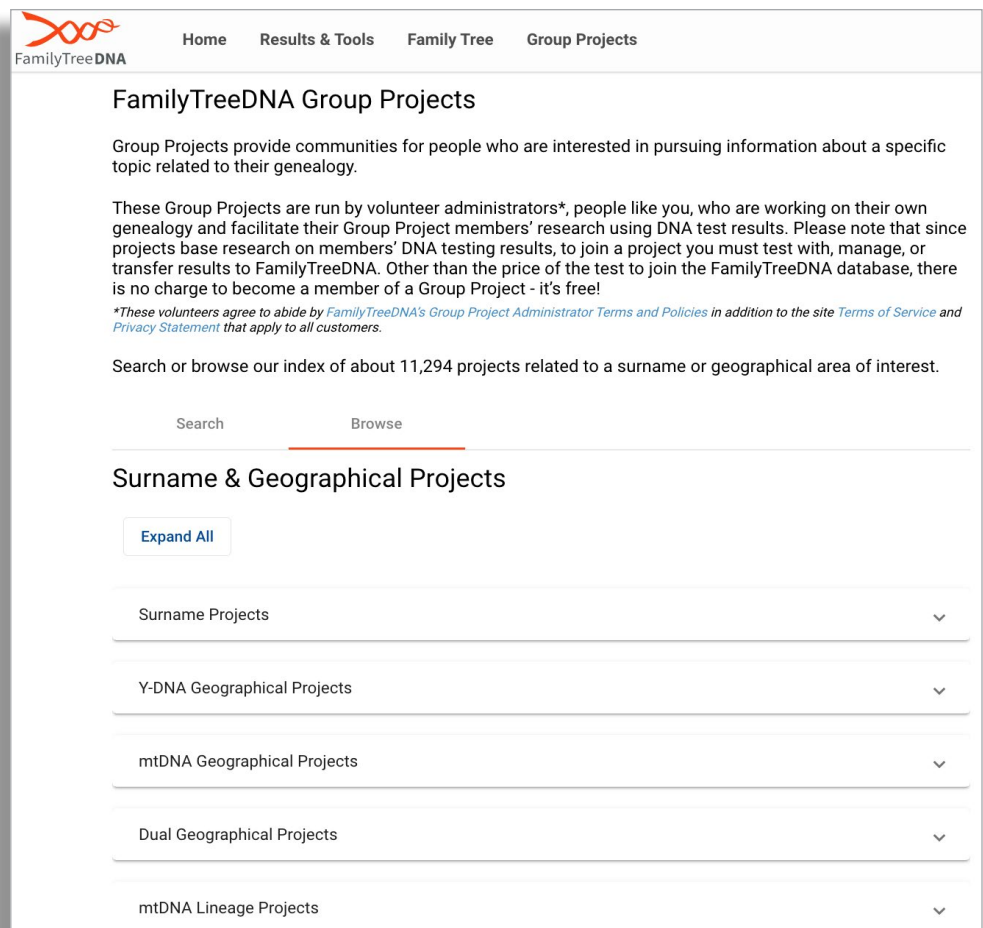


Figure 1: FamilyTreeDNA Project browsing interface.

2022 TxSGS Family History Conference

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UNLOCK

Your Past

November 4-5, 2022

2022 TxSGS Family History Conference

www.TxSGS.org #txsgs

Join us for the 2022 TxSGS Family History Conference to explore resources and techniques that can help you *Unlock Your Past!* While we wish we could be together in person, lingering challenges and encouragement from members and friends of TxSGS led us to go “virtual” in 2022. TxSGS will host *TxSGS Live!* online on Friday and Saturday, November 4-5, with ten speakers and featuring live Q&A.

That’s not all! These lectures will be recorded, including the live question and answer sessions. Thirty-two additional pre-recorded lectures will offer some of your favorite speakers and well-known presenters from across Texas and the U.S. Even though you won’t be able to see them in person, you will be able to access their lectures online for 90 days, from November 9, 2022, through February 6, 2023.

Are you ready to take your genealogy research to the next level? The 2022 TxSGS Family History Conference, *Unlock Your Past*, seeks to help you and hundreds of other attendees discover tools and

resources to answer your genealogy questions. In addition to these 42 live and recorded lectures, TxSGS will also offer bonus recordings on topics including technology solutions, storytelling, additional research tips, and more.

This year’s TxSGS Family History Conference promises opportunities for learning in a variety of areas, or tracks. Use the tracks to plan your conference experience. Go back and review TxSGS Family History Conference webinars as often as you like during the replay period.

TxSGS Live! Topics and Speakers

On Friday and Saturday, November 4-5, *TxSGS Live!* features ten presentations by some of the top speakers in genealogy on research techniques, records, DNA, and more. Each presentation will be followed by a live question and answer session. These presentations and the Q&A will be accessible by registrants through February 6, 2023.



Debbie A. Abbott, PhD

“Strategies and Techniques: Reconstructing an African American Family from Freedom to Slavery”

A case study will be used to help researchers learn the strategies and organizational skills needed to break genealogical brick walls. The importance of understanding the history of the area where you are researching and the need to carefully analyze various documents will be emphasized. The importance of using collateral and cluster genealogy in solving brick walls will be demonstrated. This presentation is designed to share the methodology used throughout the research process to reconstruct the ancestry and migration of an African American family in Ohio and Illinois with roots in Kentucky.

Bio: Deborah A. Abbott, PhD, is a professional genealogist specializing in genealogical methodology, manuscript collections, and African American family research. She holds both the BS and MEd degrees from Tuskegee University in Alabama and the PhD degree from Kent State University in Ohio. Dr. Abbott is coordinator of the African American Track at the Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research (IGHR) and the Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh (GRIP). In addition, she teaches at the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (SLIG) and the Texas Institute of Genealogical Research (TIGR). Dr. Abbott also presents lectures and workshops for national, state, and local genealogy conferences, colleges, businesses, and libraries across the country.



Debra Dudek

“Mixers and Shakers - Tracing Bartending, Saloon Keeping, and Tavern Keeping Ancestors”

Taverns and saloons have been a crucial American institution, and the men behind the bar were the social rock stars of their era. This program will lead you through the pre-prohibition records and resources which will help you add an extra shot of flavor into your research.

Bio: Debra M. Dudek is the Book Review Editor of the Illinois State Genealogical Society, Librarian of the Chicago Chapter NSDAR, board member of the Illinois State Historical Society, and the author of *World War I Research Guide: Tracing American Military and Non-Combatant Ancestors*.



Colleen Robledo Greene, MLIS

“Taking a Deeper Dive into Mexican Civil Registration Records”

Mexico implemented federal civil registration in the 1860s. Learn how to more effectively use these genealogically-rich records to research your Mexican and Tejano ancestors.

Bio: Colleen Robledo Greene, MLIS, is an academic librarian and college educator. She is a nationally-recognized speaker specializing in methodology, Hispanic research, libraries, and technology.



Jean Wilcox Hibben, PhD, MA

“Genealogy Door Locked? The Key May Be in Searching/Browsing Techniques”

Searching and browsing websites can seem fruitless; this program will assist genealogists in ways to unlock the ancestral doors.

Bio: **Jean Wilcox Hibben, PhD, MA**, former Southern California college speech professor, is a national speaker and author. A member of the DAR, she is the President of the Corona, California, Genealogical Society and Past-President of the Southern California Chapter of APG. She has worked on background research for two genealogy television programs. Presently, Jean hosts podcasts with a couple of other genealogists under the moniker Genealogy Journeys® (<https://genjourneys.podbean.com>).



Kevin Klaus

“Pre-emption Grants: A Bonanza for Early Texas Settlers and Genealogists”

Did your ancestor migrate to Texas in search of land and a new beginning? Preemption grants, also known as homestead grants, allowed Texas settlers to claim land on the vacant public domain of Texas provided they met established criteria. Many times, the files associated with these types of grants are an overlooked treasure trove full of great genealogical information! You may find when a person settled upon the land, names of the original grantees, and possibly the name of their wife. Unique stories or history may be discovered in these files such as murders, Indian troubles, or even an old marriage certificate. Learn about these early grants, how to search for them, and how to interpret the information in the files to claim your ancestor’s place in Texas history.

Bio: **Kevin Klaus** has a background in anthropology, archaeology, and public history from the University of New Mexico and currently is working towards becoming a certified genealogist. For the last 17 years, he has served as one of the lead researchers in the Texas General Land Office Archives and Records Program Area. During his time at the Land Office, he has searched the early Court of Claims files, German Collection, and archival collection to learn more about the history of Texas and discover the amazing personal letters of early soldiers and pioneers who helped settle our great state. Over the last few years, he has focused his attention and research on the German Collection and the early German settlers that came to Texas under the Adelsverein in the 1840s. In the process, he has honed his research skills by tracing his own family line that came to America in the late 1800s.

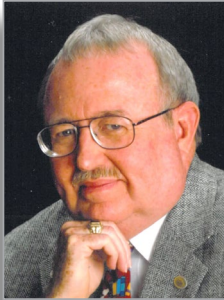


J. Mark Lowe, FUGA

“Missing People: Fractured Relationships, Divorce & Murder”

We often accept a person missing from a census enumeration without question. When should we look deeper, examine the clues, and ask more questions?

Bio: **J. Mark Lowe** describes himself as a lifelong genealogist. He is a full-time professional genealogist, author, and lecturer who specializes in original records and manuscripts throughout the South. He serves as the Course Coordinator for “Research in the South” at Institute of Genealogical and Historical Research (IGHR), Texas Institute of Genealogical Research (TIGR), and directs Southern courses for the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (SLIG). He has worked on numerous genealogical television series.



Bernard Meisner

“Beyond the Big Four - (Mostly) Free Resources for Genealogical Research”

The Genealogical Proof Standard calls for “a reasonable exhaustive search” for information regarding your family. After searching some or all the Big Four websites (FamilySearch, Ancestry, MyHeritage, and FindMyPast), what should you do? This presentation will demonstrate that there are numerous (mostly free) national, regional, state, and local resources that might provide the answers to your genealogical research questions.

Bio: Bernard Meisner, a popular speaker at Texas state and local societies, has been researching for over 30 years. He is a past president of the Mid-Cities Genealogical Society, a co-leader of the Dallas Genealogical Society’s German SIG, and is a member of the Texas State and the National Genealogical Societies.



Diane L. Richard, ME, MBA

“Death Records by a Different Name”

Explore almost 30 unusual places where you might find documentation of death. Looking beyond obituaries, cemetery records, probate records, death certificates, Bibles, and the records most often pursued, this presentation delves deeper. Following your ancestor’s death, many other records may have been created to document this event – ledgers, societies, poor records, funeral homes, and much more. Expanding your search might yield the details you’re missing.

Bio: A professional genealogist since 2004, Diane has authored over 500 genealogy articles. In 2019 she authored *Tracing Your Ancestors – African American Research: A Practical Guide*. She has delivered hundreds of talks about the availability of records documenting Southerners, pursuing formerly enslaved ancestors, and more. With two Texas-born children, she considers herself an honorary Texan.



Renate Yarborough Sanders

“We Were Supposed to be NEALS: Reuniting Family with DNA”

After 25 years of researching an enslaved ancestor of unknown parentage, DNA breaks the case and helps to put a splintered family back together. Participants will learn how the presenter was able to combine DNA matches with traditional research to find her ancestral family of origin.

Bio: Renate has been conducting genealogical research for 25 years and has provided client services since 2011. She specializes in teaching African-ancestored research methodology at every level. Renate has given virtual and in-person lectures for organizations around the country and served as genealogist for several community projects.



Lori Thornton

“Righting Your Wrongs through Writing”

Writing ancestral narratives offers an opportunity to review older research and correct errors made when less experienced. One genealogist demonstrates the process.

Bio: Lori Thornton, professional genealogist and librarian, specializes in Southern States research. She wrote the Mississippi volume in the NGS “Research in the States” series.

20+ Speakers, 42 Topics in Five Tracks, and Bonus Sessions!

In addition to the *TxSGS Live!* presentations, this year's conference offers access to another 32 pre-recorded lectures from some of your favorite speakers, plus well-known presenters from across Texas and the U.S. Bonus sessions will be accessible by all registrants. Topics cover a range of subjects in the following five categories:



DNA

Sessions will offer a variety of ways to analyze your DNA test results, regardless of whether you're just getting your first test results or are using the latest tools to analyze results you've had for a while. Whether you just want to discover ways to maximize your results or reunite a family through DNA, there will be a session for you.



Ethnic

Texas is a diverse state, and each ethnic group presents unique research challenges. Learn how to discover more information about your African American, Hispanic, and German ancestry. Reconstruct an African American family or delve into Freedmen's Bureau records; dive into Mexican and Colonial Spanish Catholic Parish registrations; or mine the nuggets in German newspapers. There is something for everyone.



Methodology

Discover new records and ways to analyze the records you've already found. Examine ways to use the information unearthed in records to identify and solve problems. Explore death records; research Texas homesteading; find the truth in an undocumented story; or research records from home. Methodology offers advice on all of this and more.



Records & Repositories

From politics to family manuscripts; from religion to the post office; from unusual places of birth to manuscripts – records and repositories can provide the key that will help you *Unlock Your Past!*



Skill Building

Expand your abilities beyond the basics! Learn how to analyze facts and multiple record sets to uncover hidden stories, conduct effective research, develop advanced search strategies, find free digital content, and more. Learn effective browsing techniques to break down brick walls. Combine brick-wall busting with effective methods for sharing your stories to help you “Right Your Wrongs” and preserve your family history.

See the TxSGS website at www.txsgs.org for more information, including topic descriptions, speaker bios, and more.

Registration for the 2022 TxSGS Family History Conference will open in July 2022.

Breaking Through a Brick Wall: the Early American Christopher DNA Project

by Bette Christopher-Peña

Like many with Southern ancestors, I have a “brick wall” in my Christopher ancestry. Following the usual paper trail through census enumerations, military research, vital records, and more, I found George Ambus Christopher, my paternal second-great-grandfather, in 1850 in Abbeville County, South Carolina, working as an overseer.¹ Reportedly born about 1812, he was married to Jane A.; five children were in the household.



The logical place to look for George’s family members and parents would be in South Carolina in Abbeville County and the surrounding area. The 1850 U.S. Federal Census enumerated a total of nine Christopher households in Abbeville, Greenville, and Spartanburg counties; four of them were headed by women. Three additional households contained a person with the Christopher surname.² No clear connection with George could be made to any of these families.

With no luck pursuing documentation that would provide even a clue to the parentage of George Christopher, I turned to Y-DNA research, which tests the male Y chromosome. Males inherit their Y chromosome from their fathers, providing a research tool for determining a male surname lineage. The research plan I used illustrates how Y-DNA testing was implemented to work the “brick wall” of the George Ambus Christopher line. This approach can provide readers struggling with “brick wall” lines a potential path of research for discovering missing ancestors.

Research Plan

The initial foray into DNA research on the Christopher surname involved testing my nephew’s Y-DNA at FamilyTreeDNA (FTDNA). When his results returned, I learned that his Y-DNA haplotype is R-M269, which is very common. However, the first marker, DYS393, is 10 (referenced as DYS393=10), which is extremely rare. When my nephew’s Y-DNA was tested, there were only a few members at FTDNA with this mutation. Even today there are only 19 men with this mutation who have tested their Y chromosome at FTDNA. Throughout this article, this haplotype and marker combination will be referenced as R-M269 DYS393=10.

When I first received my nephew’s DNA results, I thought an error had been made. I then tested two other known descendants of George, with the same results. A rare mutation such as this helps differentiate other Christopher descendants from those that belong to the George Ambus Christopher line. Even better, this marker was tested with FTDNA’s original 12 marker DNA test, the least expensive Y-DNA test available at the time. Based on the relatively uncommon

Christopher surname and the extremely rare DNA marker, I developed a plan for determining not only the ancestral lineage of George but also how the Christophers who lived during the American Revolution were related, if at all. I was focused on early American Christophers as I was looking for the father of George Ambus Christopher among men born between 1770 and 1790, and a grandfather born between approximately 1740 and 1770.

Early American Christopher DNA Research Plan

1. Start with the 1790 census and follow each Christopher line found in that census forward to the present day.
2. Identify living male descendants of each of those lines using online family trees.
3. Request Y-DNA testing from enough of the living male Christopher descendants to differentiate their lineage from the lineages of other early American Christophers.
4. Group the living male descendants according to haplotype and, as needed, differentiating Y-DNA markers.

DNA and Your Genealogy Toolbox

by Jim Thornhill

We all have skills and techniques that we use in discovering our family's history. Such tools help us use cousins and in-laws to discover a missing ancestor's identity, wield internet search engines to seek out those remote sources, or mine the inner caverns of FamilySearch's catalog for hard-to-find records. Another such tool can be our DNA results. While DNA results can be an invaluable resource, and sometimes the only one we have, in several ways DNA results are different.

One way DNA results differ from other information we have is its dependability. When we find a source, whether it is a deed, a death certificate, or a probate document, we should always consider its accuracy. Any document prepared by human hands is subject to error. This is also the case with documents such as a census where the enumerators may have unknowingly recorded false information. For example, a 14-year-old wife may have reported to the census enumerator that she was 16 because she did not want to be caught in an underage marriage. DNA results are free from most, if not all, of these hazards.

DNA testing has been a part of our lives for over 40 years.¹ It started as a new and more reliable way for the courts to determine parentage and then entered the realm of law enforcement in 1986 when it was used to solve a murder case in England.² While the first DNA test marketed to genealogists was offered in 2000, the industry did not really take off until about 2015.³ Since the results of early DNA testing

impacted people's lives, in some cases determining life or death, exacting standards were put in place and the industry eventually fell under strict federal and state regulations to ensure that results were accurate.⁴ Because of that and advances in technology, DNA testing today is considered to be about 99.9 percent accurate.⁵

Another way DNA results differ from many traditional records is that they will never give us direct answers. Our DNA test only gives us one direct result, the structure of our DNA at predetermined

locations.⁶ Results must be analyzed and compared with other people's results to yield any solutions. Much of the evaluation and comparison is performed for us by testing companies. Additional analysis is possible through testing company tools such as Ancestry's ThruLines⁷ or MyHeritage's Labeled DNA Matches.⁸ Sometimes understanding our DNA matches and identifying elusive ancestors takes more in-depth research, using such websites as GEDMatch or tools such as DNA Painter or the Leeds Method.⁹

DNA testing differs from traditional research in another way in that we are carrying the evidence with us. Each cell in



Lost and Found: the Mystery of Jacob Gisler

by Marc J. LeClere

Jacob Gisler is my wife’s (Felicia Baker LeClere) great-great-grandfather. Despite having died more than 100 years ago, the first 51 years of his life are well documented through a combination of ship manifests, census enumerations, muster rolls, vital records, court documents, personal correspondence, and oral histories. After the 1880 U.S. Census, Jacob Gisler’s paper trail disappeared. He and his name vanished, and there is no mention of him in any historical records.

He remained a mystery among the extended Gisler family for many years – until now. Jacob Gisler disappeared, but his DNA was inherited by previously unknown descendants. This article documents Jacob Gisler’s early life in Jackson County, Texas, and explains how autosomal DNA testing and relatively simple DNA tools solved the mystery of his disappearance.

Jacob Gisler – The Black Sheep

Jacob Gisler was born in Flaach, Canton Zürich, Switzerland, on 13 September 1839.¹ Flaach is in northwest Switzerland, very close to the German border, and German is the official language of Canton Zürich. He emigrated to the United States at age fifteen from Le Harve, France, aboard the ship *Gosport* and arrived in New Orleans, Louisiana, on 15 January 1855.² From New Orleans, he went to Indianola, Texas, and then moved on to Jackson County, Texas, with his father, Abraham, Sr., and three of his four brothers: Abraham, Jr., Ferdinand, and Johannes. His younger brother, Gottlieb, emigrated at a later date. Like most Swiss-Texans, the Gislers likely emigrated for economic opportunity, as Switzerland (unlike other European countries of the time) was devoid of political and economic turmoil, poverty, and religious persecution.³

According to the 1860 U.S. Census, Jacob worked as a laborer on Francis Gilmore “F. G.” Keller’s ranch in Jackson County, Texas.⁴ When enumerated in the 1870 U.S. Census, Jacob was living in Jackson County with his presumed wife, Martha; he was recorded on this census as a farmer, not a laborer.⁵

The relationship between Jacob and the Kellers evolved over the decade between 1860 and 1870. F. G. Keller arrived in Texas around 1825 and settled in Stephen F. Austin’s colony in 1829.⁶ While not considered part of the “Old Three Hundred,” he was nonetheless one of the earliest settlers to arrive in Texas and, as such, he received a league of land (about 4,428 acres) in 1831.⁷

Some years later, he transferred approximately 540 acres to his son Alexander P. “A. P.” Keller.⁸ A. P. Keller married Martha Ann Whitely on 19 January 1857 in Jackson County.⁹ The 1860 U.S. Census found A. P. Keller living in Jackson County with his wife, Martha Anne, and two children: two-year-old James Francis Keller and three-month-old Mary E. Keller.¹⁰ The Keller family had one more daughter, Martha F. Keller, born in 1862.¹¹ A. P. Keller died on 15 January 1863, a presumed casualty of the Civil War.¹²



The TxSGS Early Texans DNA Project

by Melody Hooper Woods

Do you have ancestors who lived in Texas by 31 December 1900? Do you want to collaborate with TxSGS and fellow descendants of early Texans to learn more about those ancestors? Do you want to contribute to a genealogical database dedicated to early Texas history? If so, then you will want to join the TxSGS Early Texans DNA Project.

What is the TxSGS Early Texans DNA Project?

In 2015, Debbie Parker Wayne conceived the geographically-oriented TxSGS Early Texans DNA Project to:

- Study the DNA of people who descend from early Texas settlers to determine their biogeographical admixtures;
- Link those admixtures found in descendants to early settlements and colonies;
- Learn which segments of DNA are shared between descendants of early Texas settlers and support claims of descent from common ancestors; and
- Facilitate applications for TxSGS Heritage Certificates by identifying Texas ancestors.¹

There are two parts to the project: the TXStateGS Group Project hosted with FamilyTreeDNA at <https://www.familytreedna.com/groups/tx-state-gs> and the Early Texans DNA Project Database at http://txsgs.org/TXSGS_DNA/.² The TXStateGS Project website charts project members' Y-DNA and mtDNA test data, as well as atDNA connections between members. The website also includes the project's goals, statistics, and news updates. For more information about the TXStateGS Group Project, please see the article "Surnames to Locations: DNA Projects Foster Collaboration" on page 29.

The Early Texans DNA Project Database is comprised of project members' anonymized DNA data and family trees, as well as Texas history and genealogical resources.

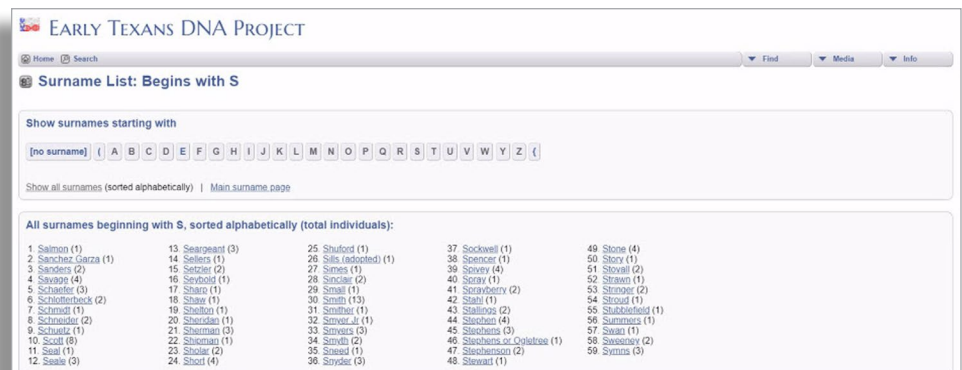


Figure 1: Results returned when searching for surnames that begin with the letter "S," Early Texans DNA Project Database.

The Early Texans DNA Project Database

The Early Texans DNA Project Database is free for everyone to explore. As of April 2022, it includes 1,562 individuals, 716 family trees, and 536 unique surnames as well as 2,111 sources.³ The basic search interface is available at http://txsgs.org/TXSGS_DNA/. Following are some examples of the categories located on the database's main page.

Surnames

The "Surnames" category, found beneath "Search" as seen in figure 1, enables you to browse all surnames sorted alphabetically. There is a number next to each surname indicating the number of individuals in the database with that surname. Search the database by surname, and you may discover that a project member has already submitted a lineage, a photo, or a story for one of your early Texas ancestors.

Sources

There are 2,111 sources displayed in alphabetical order within the "Sources" category. These sources include census, land, military, prison, voter, church, bible, immigration, birth, death, and marriage records, plus many more such as indexes,

One Person – Six Names: Following an Adoption Trail

by Russell A. Rahn

The process of adoption will often result in a name change for the child being adopted, usually from the name that the child was given at birth by the natural parents to the one chosen by the adoptive parents. There can also be other reasons, quite legitimate, for one or more additional names to be used for this person. Obviously, this can cause challenges for anyone attempting to assemble a family tree or a record of events for the adoptee.

One method for keeping track of the various identities of the adoptee is to construct two family trees, one that shows the adoptee's line of descent from the natural parents and another from the adoptive parents.

I was introduced to the issues of dealing with multiple identities for the same person when I acquired a rather large collection of paperwork involving an adopted person, Ann Durisch Curnow. The entire collection was housed in two three-ring binders, each about three inches thick. For the most part, these binders reflected Ann's efforts to secure copies of documents related to her own life and learn the history of her natural parents. While her efforts were not totally successful, I was able to put together family trees to show both her biological and adoptive lineages.

Considering potential names that Ann could have claimed for herself, I came up with six possibilities from the binders, all referring to the same person:

1. Alberta Helen Culp – her given name at birth and her natural father's surname.
2. Alberta Helen Burke – the given

name at birth and her mother's maiden name. It was used once by Ann Curnow on a family tree of her own making.

3. Alberta Helen Carter – the name originally given by her natural birth mother.
4. Annabel Lee Durisch – the name given by the adoptive parents.
5. Annabel Lee Curnow – her name after her marriage.
6. Ann Lee Curnow – her name after she officially changed it from the previous one.

An examination of the binders revealed several hundred items, mostly correspondence to or from an agency or an individual who could possibly help Ann in her quest to discover her birth family. Almost everything was copied at least once – in some cases, three to four times. I removed all the duplicates, saving only the original whenever possible, and arranged everything in chronological order. The documentation collected by Ann started in 1976 and continued to 1990. It was clear that there were items

missing and gaps throughout.

From this effort, I was able to learn that the real "payoff" came late in the enterprise. On 6 October 1980, Ann Curnow visited the Los Angeles County Court House. There, she was able to see the relinquishment document in which her mother surrendered her rights to her child and gave her up for adoption. Initially, Ann was not allowed to have a copy of the document, but was permitted to copy it by hand. She also hand copied the

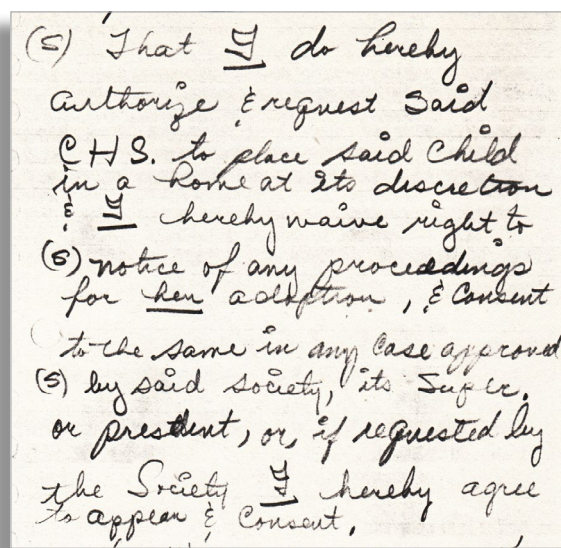


Figure 1: The hand-copied transcription of the Relinquishment Document for Alberta Helen Carter, written under stress and in haste by Ann Curnow at the Los Angeles County Court House.

Johnnie Jo Sowell Dickenson: Celebrating Over 40 Years of Service with WCGS

After over 40 years as president of the Walker County Genealogical Society (WCGS) in Huntsville, Texas, Johnnie Jo Sowell Dickenson stepped down on May 21, 2022.

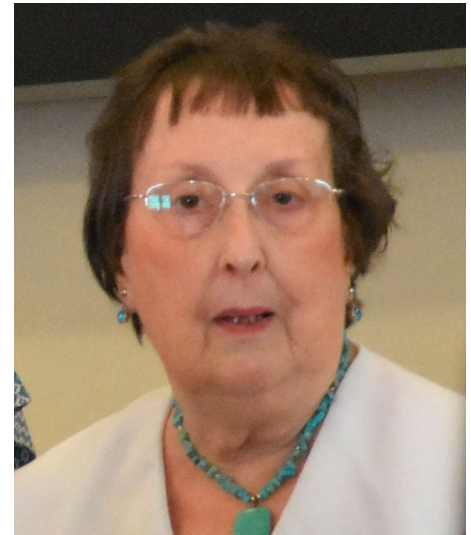
Members honored Dickenson for the numerous contributions she has made over the years to the society and presented her with flowers. A flag at the Texas capitol was flown in her honor for the day.

A member of WCGS since the early 1970s, Johnnie Jo has guided it through a multitude of ups and downs. Over the past two exceptionally challenging years, she has kept the society viable and alive during the 2021 pandemic.

Johnnie Jo has been a professional genealogist for over 40 years, taught

extended genealogical courses at Sam Houston State University, conducted numerous genealogical seminars, wrote a column about genealogy for the Huntsville newspaper for two years, and authored several books and articles on genealogical research. Previously honored by the Huntsville City Council for her dedication, a 21,000 square foot genealogy section at the local library was named for her in 2004.

She is a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Magna Carta Dames, Colonial Dames of the



CXVII Century, and Daughters of the American Colonists. Johnnie Jo plans to spend more time with her husband of 60 years, J. D., and enjoy some richly-deserved leisure time. An icon in WCGS and East Texas genealogy, Johnnie Jo's leadership will be missed. ★

Partner Society Leaders

Join us!

Topics include:

- Society management
- Volunteer recruitment
- Society publications
- Membership retention and growth
- And more!

*Visit our website for details and updates: <https://www.txsgs.org/society-forums/>

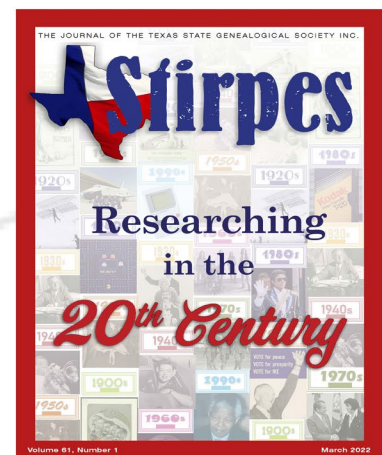


Upcoming dates for 2022 Forums*

- July 30
- September 24



Make this the year you tell your family's story! Whether you're sharing information about ancestors you've recently discovered or tips other genealogists can use to help them in their research, TxSGS wants to know more!



Themes for 2022:

Q3 - Storytelling: Content and Context (Jul 15, 2022 deadline)

Q4 - Skill Building (Oct 15, 2022 deadline)

Themes for 2023:

Q1 - Ethnic Roots (Jan 15, 2023 deadline)

Q2 - Neighborhood Watch (FAN Club and more) (Apr 15, 2023 deadline)

Submit your story to *Stirpes: The Journal of the Texas State Genealogical Society*.

Submissions are welcome at any time to stirpes@txsgs.org.
For complete guidelines and to learn more about the upcoming themes,
visit <http://www.txsgs.org/publications/stirpes/submission-guidelines/>

Genealogy Network of Texas

a free State-wide event

Join us on the third Friday of October as we celebrate Family History Month!

On Friday, October 21, 2022, libraries and societies across Texas and beyond join together as “The Genealogy Network of Texas” to bring a day of genealogy programs, research, and activities. Each participating organization hosts their own unique event, anchored by a set of eight programs.

The day’s activities vary depending on the hosting library or society.

SAVE the DATE!

21 OCTOBER 2022

Well-known speakers share their insights with the event’s participants.

Plan now to hear

Hannah Kubacak

Joseph B. Everett

Bill Buckner

Amy Johnson Crow

Tony Hanson

Sara Allen

Doug Waggoner

LeAnne McCamey

and

Curt B. Witcher

speak on their areas of expertise.



Coming soon!

A list of participating libraries and societies will be posted at the wacolibrary.org website soon.

Included will be contact information, registration details, and event hours.

Posted as well will be any additional activities each participating library or society plans to host.

Look for a location near you.



This event is spearheaded by the Genealogy Center of the Waco-McLennan County Library.

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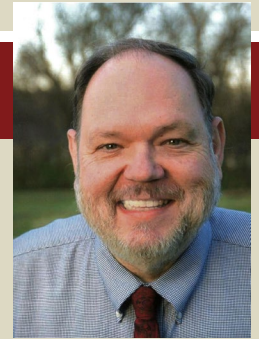
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