

THE JOURNAL OF THE TEXAS STATE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY INC.

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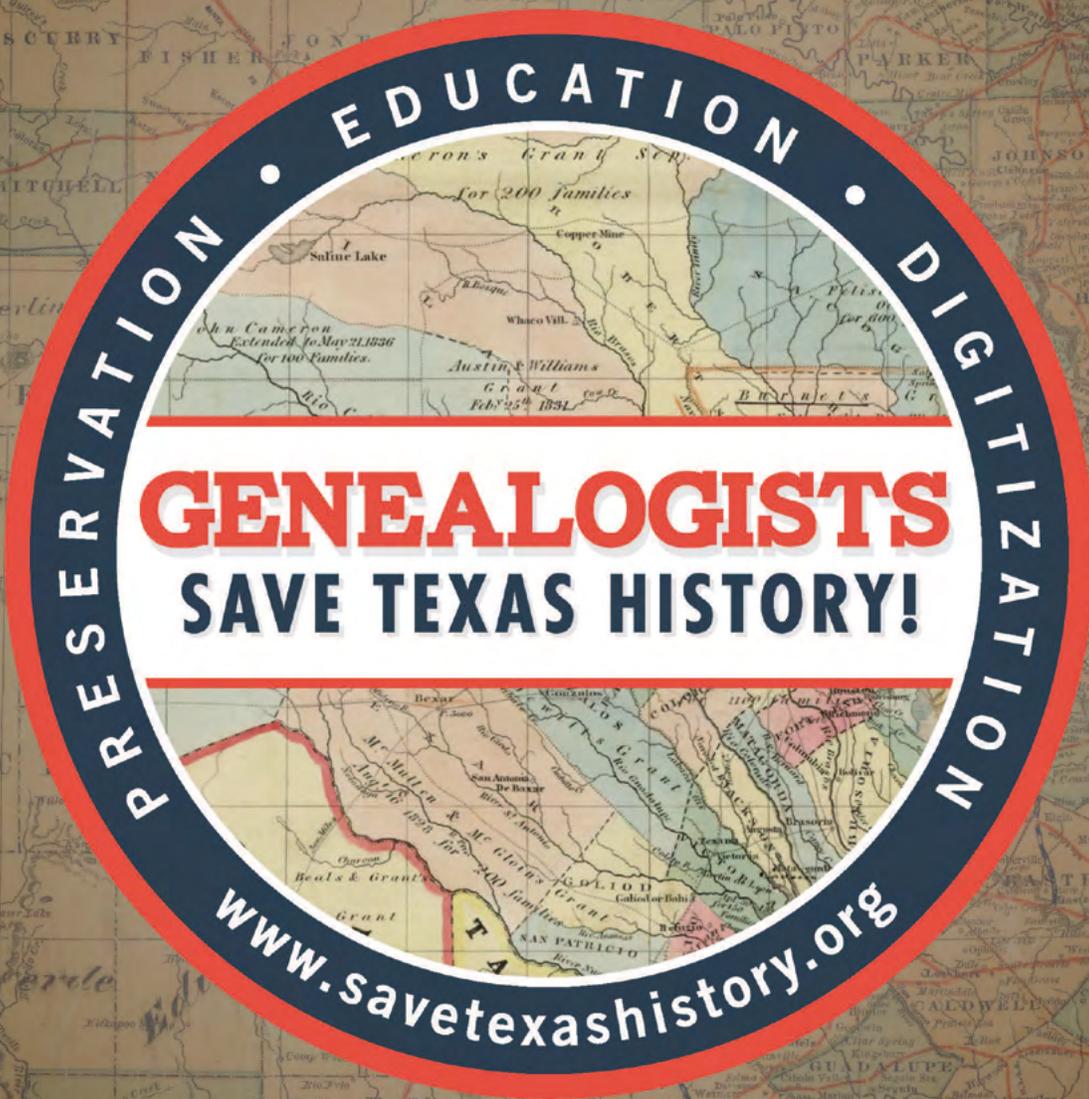
Land, Maps, & Deeds



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The Texas General Land Office
George P. Bush, Commissioner
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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



In this issue, we explore land as both place and proof—an enduring record that anchors families to time, geography, and history. From federal patents and county deeds to contested inheritances and forced removals, the articles that follow demonstrate how land records do far more than describe property: they reveal relationships, expose social and legal realities, and preserve stories that might otherwise be lost.

- “Go West, Young Man!” by Jim Thornhill presents a practical, step-by-step guide that introduces genealogists to federal land research using the Bureau of Land Management’s General Land Office Records, explaining how to locate patents, interpret Public Land Survey System descriptions, and identify an ancestor’s neighbors.
- “Online Access to Texas Land Records: Tools, Tips, and Comparisons” by Susan E. Ball guides genealogists through locating, accessing, and evaluating two commercial platforms that host online Texas county land records, demonstrating how deeds and related instruments can illuminate an ancestor’s economic life when other records fall short.
- “Thaddeus O’Malley and the 1873 Timber Culture Act” by Nancy Gilbride Casey introduces genealogists to the often-overlooked

Timber Culture Act of 1873 through the successful Nebraska land claim of immigrant settler Thaddeus O’Malley, demonstrating how federal land-entry files, naturalization records, and maps can be woven together to tell a richly contextualized land-based family story.

- “The Garrisons and the Quakertown Community” by Missy McCormick, EdD, examines Missy’s own ancestors’ documented involvement in the forced removal of Denton’s Quakertown African American community, weaving family history with municipal records, maps, and civic actions.
- “The Legacy of Peter Allen” by Mic Barnette reconstructs the life and land legacy of Peter Allen, a free man of color who died at the battle of Goliad, using his complex land-grant files to identify heirs and resolve questions of identity and kinship.
- “Sold At the Court House Door” by Russell A. Rahn explores an often-overlooked category of land records—sheriff’s sales—using a 1932 Texas foreclosure to demonstrate how forced land sales can yield critical genealogical evidence and deepen understanding of an ancestor’s lived experience.

- Highlighting the TxSGS awards program, Bill Buckner reviews *Galveston County, Texas: A Narrative and Pictorial History* by the Galveston County Historical Commission, which offers a fresh and insightful look at Galveston’s past.

This issue celebrates volunteers, both local and state-wide. In “Volunteer Spotlight,” TxSGS president Emily Richardson honors the many hours Cindy Shipman contributed to her local society, Erath County Genealogical Society. Emily also highlights those TxSGS Volunteers awarded certificates of appreciation, presidential citations, and presidential commendations.

Additionally, this issue recaps the 2025 TxSGS Family History Conference, the 2025 Annual Business Meeting Highlights, the 2025 TxSGS Awards Ceremony and awards listing, and the “Genealogy Essentials” course. Looking ahead, we invite you to discover the opportunities available at TxSGS to deepen your research skills. ★

—*Stirpes* Editors

New Members & More

New Members since
October 2025

Heritage Circle

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Edna Gravenhorst
Jim Knauss
Audrey Nickodemus
Nancy Pardo

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Helen Petty
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Joseph Smaldone

Do you have Early Texas Ancestors?

Submit your DNA to the Early Texans DNA Project!



- Learn which parts of your DNA are linked to other early Texans.
- Facilitate your application for TxSGS's heritage certificate programs.
 - Confirm documentary trail by correlating DNA with related descendants.
 - Find cousins who may be able to expand your knowledge of your Early Texas ancestor!

Your DNA will contribute to an understanding of early Texas history by:

- Determining which admixtures are found in living Texans,
- Linking those admixtures to early settlements in Texas colonies, and
- Determining Y-DNA and mtDNA signatures for early Texas settlers.

Who is eligible?

Group 1: Descendants of Republic of Texas settlers and early Mexican and Spanish colonists – those who settled Texas before 19 February 1846.

Group 2: Descendants of early settlers of the state of Texas who arrived by 31 December 1900.

Interested? Learn more at <http://www.txsgs.org/programs/dna-project/>

Questions? Email dna@txsgs.org

All reasonable efforts will be made to maintain the privacy of project members while sharing non-identifying information that may help researchers link to Early Texas ancestors.

Volunteer Spotlight

In this edition of *Volunteer Spotlight*, the Texas State Genealogical Society (TxSGS) proudly celebrates the remarkable contributions of volunteers whose dedication, leadership, and passion for genealogy help strengthen our statewide community.

Through their tireless efforts, these honorees embody the spirit of service and the transformative power of volunteerism.

Certificates of Appreciation, Presidential Citations, and a Presidential Commendation were awarded to

outstanding individuals who have made meaningful and lasting contributions to the work of TxSGS and its partner societies. Their stories remind us that volunteers are essential to preserving the past and advancing the future of family history.

Volunteer of the Year

The Volunteer of the Year Award recognizes exceptional and transformational service at the local society level. Four distinguished candidates were nominated this year by their societies:

- **Paula Dickey-Wilson**, *Central Texas Genealogical Society*, has served in a variety of leadership roles including treasurer, chair of the budget committee, member of the long-term investment committee, and editor of the society’s newsletter. She has also chaired the committee for the Waco-McLennan County Library’s Genealogy Lock-In.
- **Kim Edge**, *Dallas Genealogical Society*, embodies the spirit of volunteerism that supports and enriches the genealogical community. She has served as director of membership since 2022 and was honored this year by DGS as their Volunteer of the Year.
- **Cindy Shipman**, *Erath County Genealogical Society*, volunteers as the sole archivist for the Stephenville Historic House Museum and assists with submitting historic newspapers to the Portal to Texas History. She profiles books, maps, and resources on social media and has served as ECGS secretary and program.
- **Joni Thiel**, *Navarro County Genealogical Society*, has volunteered since 2016 with the Liz Gillespie Genealogical Department at the Corsicana Public Library, contributing more than 50 service hours each month. She also served as editor of *Navarro Leaves & Branches*.

After careful review by the selection committee, **Cindy Shipman** was chosen as the 2025 Volunteer of the Year.

Her nomination stated: *“I would challenge anyone to name a single individual in Erath County who, in the past two years, has volunteered more to preserve local history in support of her local genealogical society, our libraries, museums, and our community. Passion, dedication, and her positive impact make Cindy Shipman a leader.”*



Congratulations to Cindy on this well-deserved honor!

TxSGS encourages everyone to consider volunteering with a local genealogy society or with TxSGS. Whether one contributes a few hours a week or many hours a month, those efforts make a meaningful difference.

Go West, Young Man!

by Jim Thornhill

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) General Land Office (GLO) Records website is an essential resource for genealogical land research. Not to be confused with the Texas General Land Office, this federal database contains records of land granted directly by the United States government.

Note that the site only includes original land patents; it does not track subsequent private sales between individuals or non-government entities. If your ancestor was like many others who struck out across the continent in search of free or cheap land, then you need to look for them on this site.

The U.S. method for dispensing land was developed early in our history by Thomas Jefferson, who dreamed of having independent farmers from coast to coast. He developed a system to accomplish this that would expand as the country grew westward. Today we call it the Public Land Survey System (PLSS), shown on the map (image 1).

The original colonies, states created from the original colonies, Hawaii, and Texas (colored white in image 1) use metes and bounds to define the boundaries of land parcels. Because these twenty colonies and states retained control of the unclaimed land in their borders when they became part of the United States, they are known as state-land states.

The land in the remaining states started as the federally owned “public domain” which was surveyed, sectioned, and granted or sold under federal law, hence these states are the

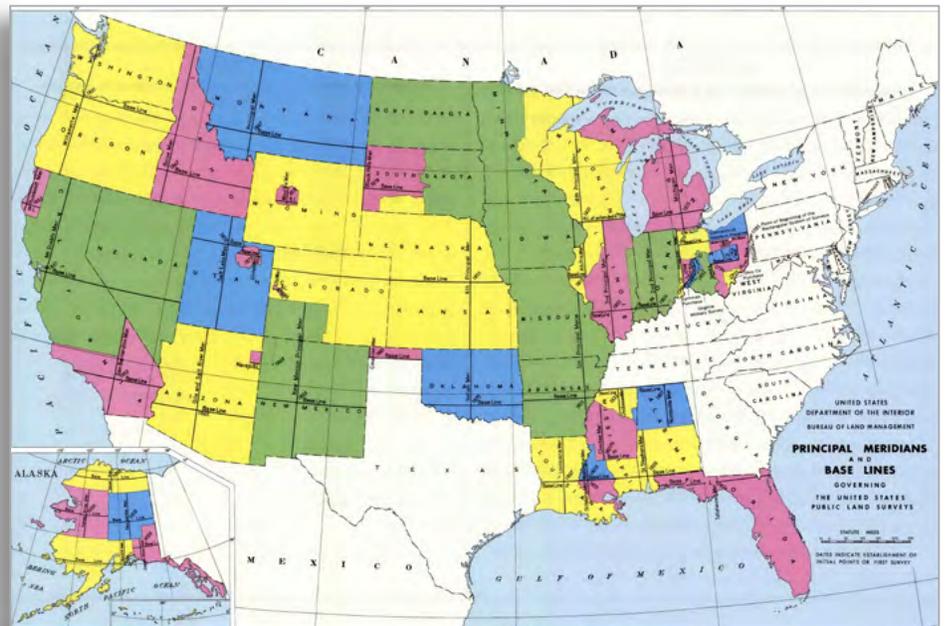


Image 1: A 1988 BLM map depicts the principal meridians and baselines used for surveying states (colored) in the Public Land Survey System.

federal-land states. The basic legal framework for land descriptions in the federal-land states is the PLSS grid of townships, ranges, and sections, rather than colonial-era metes-and-bounds descriptions.

Based on a grid consisting of meridians (north/south) and baselines (east/west), the federal-land states are divided into townships of 36 square miles each, which are named according to their relationship to the meridians and baselines. A description such as Township 2 North Range 3 West indicates the land’s specific

location within the Public Land Survey System: it is situated two tiers of townships north of the designated baseline and three ranges west of the governing principal meridian.

There are 36 one-mile square sections in a township. They are numbered starting at the upper left and wrapping like a snake through the township as seen in image 2 (*don’t ask me why, ask Thomas Jefferson!*). Each section of 640 acres is then divided into 40 acre tracts called aliquots, with 16 aliquots per section.

Sold At the Court House Door

by Russell A. Rahn



Researching an ancestor’s land ownership yields valuable insight into their life and family connections. Genealogists dig through deeds looking for the ancestor as grantee (the buyer) or grantor (the seller).

An important research avenue that should not be overlooked is the “sheriff’s sale,” where land is sold to recover unpaid property taxes, mortgages, liens, or writs of execution. In these land transactions, “sheriff” is noted as the grantor.

The county sheriff sells a property “at the courthouse door” as part of a public auction process mandated by court order, typically to satisfy unpaid debts or judgments. For example, a sheriff’s sale occurs during judicial foreclosures when a homeowner defaults on a mortgage, allowing the lender to recover funds through a court-authorized sale of the property.

The sheriff conducts the sale at the courthouse door (or steps) on designated days, like the first Tuesday of the month, after public notices in newspapers and postings. Bidders compete publicly, and the proceeds first cover the judgment, costs, and liens, with any surplus potentially returned to the owner. Properties sell “as-is,” subject to existing liens, requiring buyers to research titles beforehand. After the auction, the property then transfers to the highest bidder, any necessary documentation to support this sale is filed, and the matter of the unpaid debt is ended.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, foreclosure rates skyrocketed throughout America and many homes and farms were

foreclosed on and sold in a sheriff’s sale.¹ Falling victim to this trend, a parcel of land owned by J. P. Sullivan was sold on 5 April 1932 “at the court house door” of Waco, McLennan County, Texas, under judicial order, as seen in image 1. This document implies that the borrower in default was not actually present, or maybe

not even nearby. A copy of these proceedings was to be mailed to him at his last known address.

My curiosity was aroused over this sale by the possibility that the foreclosure could have originated as the result of a family dispute. Cash loaned to a family member and not repaid might be at the bottom of

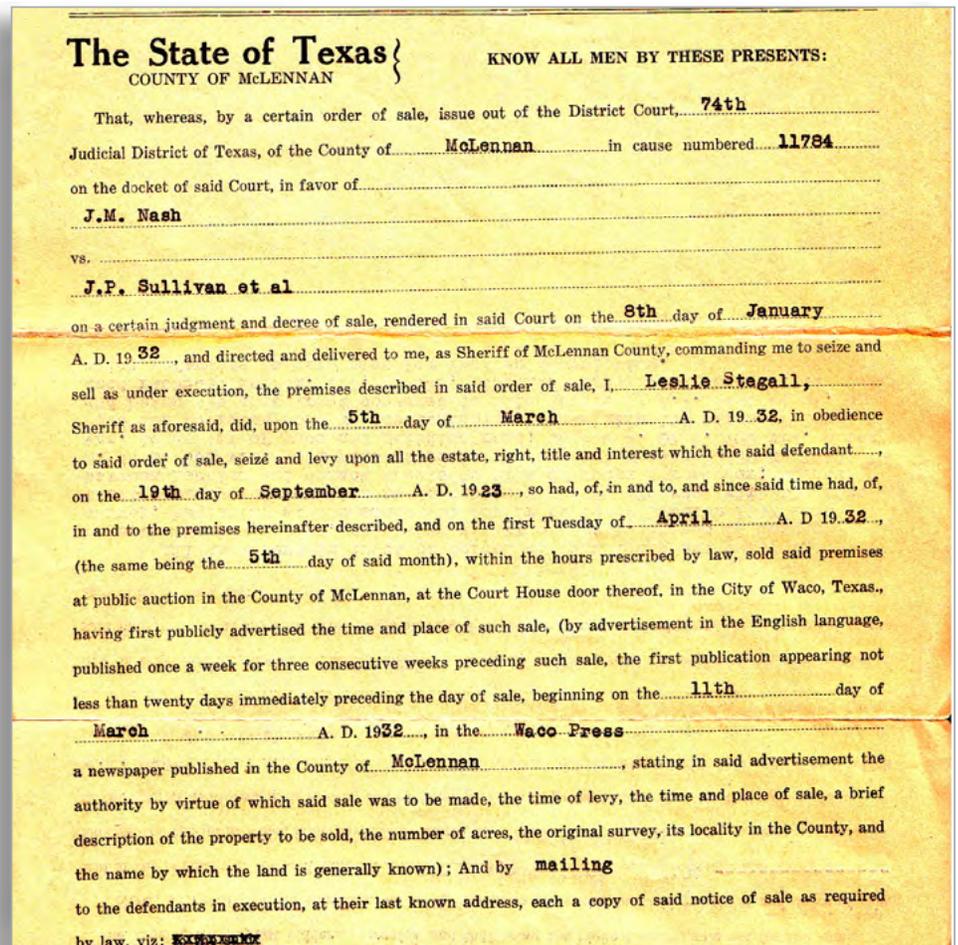


Image 1: Notice of the public auction of property owned by J. P. Sullivan, et al.

2025 TxSGS Awards Ceremony: Celebrating Excellence

At its annual Awards Ceremony on Friday, November 14, TxSGS recognized the authors, editors, societies, compilers, indexers, transcribers, bloggers, and webmasters who submitted their work for award consideration.

Their collective dedication to preserving and sharing family stories and genealogical resources enriches genealogy for this and future generations. Recognition serves as a meaningful tribute to their efforts and highlights excellence in genealogical writing and publication.

The TxSGS Awards Program presents honors in multiple categories, including books, manuscripts, periodicals, websites, blogs, and student projects submitted by individuals or Partner Societies.

This year's entries showcased the exceptional work being done by genealogists and volunteers across Texas and beyond.* TxSGS extends sincere thanks to the category chairs and judges who generously contributed their time and expertise: Belinda Brouette, Manuscripts; Karen Stein Daniel, Periodicals; Bill Buckner, Books; Becky Villareal, Student Projects; Jaycie M. Smith, Blogs; and Randy Whited, Websites.

To view a recording of the 2025 Awards Ceremony, visit our website

at <https://www.txsgs.org/2025-award-recipients/>.

We encourage you to include writing as part of your genealogical journey and consider submitting your work in 2026. Submission requirements for the 2026 competition are available at <https://www.txsgs.org/programs/awards-grants/writing-awards/>. Please review the judging criteria on the website prior to submitting, as guidelines are subject to change.

Book Awards

Chair: Bill Buckner

Grand Prize (\$400)

No Kings of Prussia: Six Immigrant Families Seek the American Dream in 19th Century Texas. Volume 1: Perspectives from Prussian & German Territories (2024) by Derek C. Block



Category I: Books by a Non-Professional / Family History

1st Place (\$200)

Fortitude: Preserving 400 Years of an American Family's Faith, Patriotism, Grit and Determination, 2nd edition (2025) by Dale R. Spaulding

2nd Place (\$100)

The Legacy of Robert Malone Tyus: Sussex County, Virginia, to Freestone County, Texas (2025) by Kelly L. Tyus

3rd Place (\$50)

The Life of Howson Hooe IV and His Descendants (2025) by David H. Surles

Category I: Books by a Non-Professional / References

1st Place (\$200)

Van, Texas, Oil History "The Quiet Boom" 1929 - 1939 as Told Through the Recorded Events of the Pure Oil Company, Its Employees and Families (2025) by Linda Lantrip Mays

2nd Place (\$100)

Building Saint Anne's Church: Behind the Walls (2024) by Jeremy B. Myers

Category VII: Books Published by Partner Societies

1st Place (\$200)

C. H. Waltersdorf's History of DeWitt County 1899 and Essays of Rudolph Kleberg 1847-1924 (2024) translated and edited by James Kearney (DeWitt County Historical Commission)

2nd Place (\$100)

Galveston County, Texas: A Narrative and Pictorial History (2024) (Galveston County Historical Commission)

3rd Place (\$50)

11 Days on the Colorado: The Pivotal Battle Unfought (2023) by James E. Brasher, author; Rick McCaslin, TSHA editor (Texas State Historical Association)

Online Access to Texas Land Records: Tools, Tips, and Comparisons

by Susan E. Ball

Land records are one of the cornerstones of genealogical research. When vital records aren't available or are ambiguous, a deed may prove a relationship between generations or siblings and tie an ancestor to a specific location and time where more records may be found.



Deeds, mortgages, plats, and related instruments can also trace migration and illuminate social and economic status.

Where can you find these important records? Increasingly, they are available online. Discovering whether your ancestor patented land is relatively easy, with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (see “Go West, Young Man!” on page 7) and Texas General Land Office records (see “The Legacy of Peter Allen” on page 37) online and searchable. Records for subsequent private land transactions are recorded at the county level. Depending on the county, land records may be available online at FamilySearch or through several companies which are expanding online access to these records as described in this article: CountyRecords.com, TexasFile.com, and iDocMarket.com. Try FamilySearch first, then experiment with these commercial sites.

Note that these sites don't replace original county offices; rather, they provide online access to some of the records created and maintained by county clerks, recorders, or registrars. The sites target professionals, such as lawyers, landmen, and real estate agents, whose work revolves around county records. The records they access are primarily associated with land and minerals. There are many other records in a courthouse not digitized by these companies that a genealogist finds helpful such as vital records, commissioners court minutes, civil and district court dockets, and more. For access to those records, you'll need to investigate FamilySearch or plan a trip to the courthouse.

You can register to access these portals for free, but a fee will be charged to download the documents. Heavy users may subscribe to download up to a specific number of records per month. Casual users can pay per document.

As genealogists may need only a handful of records at a time, the download fee isn't excessive, especially if you compare it to driving to a county courthouse and perhaps spending the night at a hotel to research your family's records in that location.

Getting Started

Before opening TexasFile.com or CountyRecords.com, determine **where** your ancestor lived and **when** they may have owned or transacted land. Land records are recorded at the county level, so accuracy here is important. If you don't know the exact place, you can try a site-wide search but restrict the search to a time range.

Genealogical tips:

- Track boundary changes. An ancestor may appear in records of a parent or successor county.
- Use census schedules, tax lists, probate records, and maps to narrow your date range.
- Remember that land transactions often occurred shortly before or after key life events such as marriage, migration, or death.

Familiarize yourself with basic deed language. The land seller is the grantor; the land buyer is the grantee. Records are called instruments. You'll see a plethora of instrument types with names such as lis pendens, mechanic's lien, or deed of trust. If you don't understand a term, look it up. You can also use AI (I recommend Gemini or Perplexity.ai for this type of task) to explain a term or provide a tutorial for the different types of records.

This article provides an overview and a basic guide to using CountyRecords.com and TexasFile.com. The records available on these platforms vary by county and date. Be sure to check all of them for your ancestor and the cost to access the documents before investing your time in

The Legacy of Peter Allen, Free Man of Color

by Mic Barnette

My interest in free people of color in early Texas history arises from the stark constitutional discrimination they faced, particularly the prohibition against their entering or settling in the Republic of Texas.¹

Similar restrictions existed throughout much of the American South, including Alabama.² These anti-emigration laws were reactions to widely feared slave uprisings—most notably the planned revolt of Denmark Vesey in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1822 and Nat Turner’s rebellion in Southampton County, Virginia, in August 1831.³

In the newly formed Republic of Texas, such anxieties quickly translated into legislation. On 1 January 1836, the General Council enacted laws barring free Black individuals from entering the country. Enforcement was severe. Any free person of color found in Texas could be sold into slavery, with the proceeds paid to the government. Ship captains who transported free Black passengers into Texas faced fines of up to \$5,000.⁴ These laws underscore the paradox at the heart of this study—Texas’s fight for liberty coincided with the institutional exclusion of free people of color.

Against this legal and social backdrop stands Peter Allen. My research established that Allen was a free man of color who never resided permanently in Texas yet died there—at Goliad—while fighting in the Texas Revolution. He served with Alabama volunteers in the struggle for Texas independence, an extraordinary circumstance given the laws restricting the movement of free Black men into both Texas and Alabama.⁵

At some point during my research, I encountered the suggestion that Peter Allen may have been the son of Richard Allen, the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and its first bishop in Philadelphia. Initially, I found this claim improbable. If true, why would a free man of color from Philadelphia—son of one of the most prominent African American religious leaders of the early nineteenth century—travel deep into the slaveholding South, much less enlist in a military expedition bound for Texas?

After reaching an impasse with conventional sources, I adopted a different research strategy. Land was a primary incentive for many volunteers who fought in the Texas Revolution, and Peter Allen was listed among those granted land for military service. Because he died during the war, the land grant would have passed to his heirs. Identifying those heirs, therefore, became the key to establishing Allen’s family connections.

I contacted the Texas General Land Office to inquire about the heirs named in Peter Allen’s land file. This research was conducted several years before the General Land Office made its land grant records widely accessible online. Today, such research could be conducted independently through the GLO’s digital collections, but at the time it required direct assistance from staff.

After a brief interval, a staff member contacted me by telephone and read portions of the correspondence contained in Allen’s land file. Several of the heirs named were immediately recognizable as children of Bishop Richard Allen. That evidence provided the confirmation I had sought.

Peter Allen was born a free person of color in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and, as the land records demonstrate, was the son of Richard Allen. At some point prior to 1836, he traveled to Alabama, where he enlisted in a company bound for Texas. He died at Goliad on Palm Sunday, 27 March 1836, during one of the most tragic episodes of the Texas Revolution.⁶

This article examines Peter Allen’s military service and traces the complex odyssey of the land legacy his heirs inherited as a consequence of his participation in Texas’s struggle for independence—an inheritance born of sacrifice, shaped by law, and deeply entwined with the broader history of race, citizenship, and memory in early Texas.

Peter Allen’s Military Service

During the early nineteenth century, the United States’ westward expansion—often justified through the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny—fueled sustained American interest in



2025 TxSGS Family History Conference Wrap-Up

Held virtually November 7–8, 2025, the 2025 TxSGS Family History Conference brought together family historians from across Texas, the United States, and beyond for two days of learning, discovery, and connection.

Presented by the Texas State Genealogical Society, the conference once again demonstrated how education can inspire researchers at every stage of their journey.

With more than 140 attendees participating, the conference combined live programming, on-demand learning, interactive community features, and a robust Virtual Expo Hall to create an engaging and accessible educational experience for family historians around the world.

From exploring new research strategies to rethinking familiar record sets and embracing emerging tools, attendees were invited to deepen their skills while connecting with a vibrant and supportive community of fellow researchers.

Learning That Continued Beyond the Live Event

The conference opened with *TxSGS Live!*, two days of live presentations featuring a mix of returning favorites and new voices.

Each live session concluded with real-time Q&A, giving attendees the opportunity to engage directly with speakers, ask questions, and explore topics in greater depth.

Beyond live programming, registrants had access to 38 on-demand sessions available through February 2, 2026. These sessions covered a broad range of topics, including research methodology, record analysis, writing and storytelling, women's history, and new tools such as artificial intelligence. Extended access allowed attendees to learn at their own pace, revisit complex material, and continue building skills long after the live sessions ended.

Among the most-watched presentations were *In Their Own Words: Women in the War of 1812* by Julia A. Anderson; *Speaking a Thousand Words: Using Photograph Collections in Your Genealogy Research* by Diane L. Richard; and *Break It Down, Build It Up: Solving Research Puzzles with a Plan* by J. Mark Lowe. These sessions encouraged participants to think

critically, creatively, and strategically about their research while offering practical takeaways they could apply immediately.

A Community That Learned Together

More than an educational event, the 2025 conference fostered a strong sense of community. Using the Whova platform, attendees connected through discussion boards, private messages, live polls, photo sharing, and informal meet-ups. Conversations ranged from research challenges and genealogy education to photo preservation, family stories, and shared “aha” moments.

Participants represented dozens of regions and genealogical organizations, reflecting the expanding reach of the conference and the accessibility of the virtual format. The Whova app played a key role in facilitating these connections, with active discussion topics, community polls, and themed meet-ups encouraging collaboration and peer learning throughout the event.

Thaddeus O'Malley and the 1873 Timber Culture Act

by Nancy Gilbride Casey

If your family included settlers of the Great Plains states, you probably have heard of the Homestead Act. You may even have a homesteader in your family. But have you heard of another public land-granting program called the Timber Culture Act?

“An Act to encourage the growth of timber on the Western Prairies,” better known as the Timber Culture Act, was passed in 1873. The program aimed to provide lumber to Great Plains pioneers for building and fuel and to act as a break to reduce the havoc caused by strong winds there. Tree planting was also thought to bring rainfall—a misinformed notion of the time.¹

The Act awarded up to 160 acres of public land after applicants cultivated 40 acres of trees on their claim. Unlike the Homestead Act requirements, applicants did not need to live on the parcel where they cultivated the trees.² Many homesteaders applied for a Timber Culture grant as a way to obtain an additional 160 acres of land. Any settler, including aliens, could apply for a claim; aliens were required to naturalize before making their final proof.³

Under the Timber Culture Act, the tree planting process took at least three years on each 5 acres, with additional 5-acre plots being added into the rotation each year.

- In the first year, 5 acres had to be broken.
- In the second year, the first 5 acres were cultivated, and an additional 5 acres were broken.
- In the third year, the first 5 acres



Image 1: Cottonwood stand.

were planted with trees, the second 5 acres were cultivated, and a third 5 acres were broken.⁴

Amendments to the Act in later years reduced the acreage and the number of trees to be planted.

- In 1874, the Act was amended to include the same age and citizenship requirements as the Homestead Act. Claimants would need to be over 21 or the head of a household and be a U.S. citizen or in the process of naturalizing.⁵
- In 1878, the Act was amended again to reduce the number of acres of land to be planted from 40 acres to 10. It also made exceptions for harsh climate conditions and grasshopper plagues.⁶

After planting, the applicant had to keep the trees alive. “This was no small task for land covered by virgin prairie grass, whose tough, interwoven roots

were a daunting opponent for plow, mule, and man.”⁷ After eight years, the claimant could offer his final proof, accompanied by the affidavits of two witnesses, and a fee to obtain the patent.⁸

The Timber Culture Act was short-lived; it was repealed on 3 March 1891 in response to accusations of fraud and abuse.

Exceptions were made for claims already under

way, with the period of cultivation to be computed from the date of entry. However, overall, only about 30 percent of all Timber Culture claims were ever completed.⁹

Thaddeus O'Malley's Grant

That many applicants abandoned their tree-planting endeavor makes Thaddeus O'Malley's proof of his Timber Culture claim all the more impressive.

O'Malley made his entry for 160 acres on 30 November 1883. The location was the SE 1/4 of section 22, township 30, range 12W, in Holt County, Nebraska. He paid the entry fee of \$14 and was issued a receipt. Creased, dog-eared, and worn, the receipt was included in his patent document file. I imagine him carrying this precious proof of his right to this

The Garrisons and the Quakertown Community

by Missy McCormick, EdD

It means a great deal, I think, to start off on a foundation which one has made for one's self.

Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery*, 1901.¹

Have you ever discovered stories about your ancestors that were unsettling? Honestly, I think most of us have. Here is a story about two of my ancestors, Flora Gregory Garrison (d. 1952) and Foster Vincent Garrison (d. 1933) and their involvement in the forced removal of a Black community in Denton, Texas.

Since moving to Denton in 1986, I have gathered documents and records concerning my ancestors, Foster and Flora Gregory Garrison, residents in Denton in the early/mid 1900s. Mrs. Garrison was my great grandfather's sister on my maternal line. I discovered early in my research that they led full lives in the Denton community and were prominent leaders who benefited from their social and financial status. It was not until recently that I discovered they were involved in one of Denton's most painful periods in history—the forced removal of the Quakertown African American community once situated within the city's borders in the 1920s. This discovery of my ancestor's role in the demise of Quakertown was uncomfortable to learn. I am compelled to acknowledge the story of my ancestor's involvement in the segregation of the Quakertown community. My hope is to memorialize the truth and to assist in the healing process.

Telling the Story

The following timeline outlines the start of and forced removal of Quakertown, my ancestors' intertwined story and involvement, and significant events that occurred during the same time.

- **1875:** A settlement called "Freedom Town" was established in Denton after 27 families left the White Rock area of Dallas County. They ultimately settled north of the square in Quakertown (also affectionately called "Quaker" by the Black community).²
- **19 October 1876:** The Quakertown residents applied to Denton County for a free public school.³
- **20 August 1878:** Denton County Judge C. C. Scruggs signed an order to establish "colored school #17" in Quakertown.⁴ Students enrolled, and the school grew as more African American families moved to Quakertown.⁵
- **8 July 1887:** Foster Vincent Garrison and Flora Gregory were married in Karnes County, Texas.⁶
- **1900:** Quakertown continued to grow as a thriving and self-supporting community within Denton. They espoused Booker T. Washington's philosophy of "self-help" and "peaceful" coexistence with the white community.⁷ The township had a general store, a doctor, a cafe, a grocery store, a funeral home, a school, a day care, churches, lodges, restaurants, and more. Some residents earned a living working for wealthy white residents and the local universities as cooks, bakers, gardeners, stable workers, and more. Quakertown was a "town within a town."⁸
- **1901:** The Girls Industrial College was founded by an act created by the 27th Texas Legislature and opened in Denton about two years later.⁹
- **1913:** Quakertown's school burned in the night before the first day of classes—the cause of fire was described as a "mystery" by the *Denton Record-Chronicle*.¹⁰ Classes met briefly at the St. James AME Church and the second story of the Crawford Grocery. The school was ultimately rebuilt outside of Quakertown.¹¹
- **1918:** The Garrisons arrived in Denton. Foster Vincent Garrison became a faculty member at the North Texas State Normal College in September of 1918.¹² His faculty photo is shown in image 1.¹³

Partner Society Roundup

Read these reports from around Texas to identify events and societies in your area.

TxSGS recommends that persons interested in society events check the society's website and Facebook page to see whether the event will be held in person, virtually, or both. Names of societies with webpages or Facebook pages are hyperlinked to those pages; otherwise, just search for the society on the TxSGS society webpage at txsgs.org/partner-societies/.

To find your society's district, check the Partner Society map on the TxSGS website at txsgs.org/about/district-map/. Click on your region to see your district

representative's name and contact information plus a list of genealogical resources in that district.

Is your Partner Society missing? Perhaps our contact information is out of date or your society's membership has lapsed. Please contact your district representative and memberinfo@txsgs.org to update your society's contact data and confirm your society's membership status.

Partner Societies are encouraged to investigate the many benefits and resources available from TxSGS at the Partner Society Resource page (txsgs.org/partner-society-resources/). Benefits include webinars to use for society programs, publicity support for society events, media downloads, preservation and access support, awards, and much more.

District B

Nancy Gilbride Casey,
District Representative

The [*North Texas Genealogical Association*](#) (NTGA) continues to serve a ten-county region of North Central Texas—Archer, Baylor, Clay, Hardeman, Jack, Montague, Wichita, Wilbarger, and Young counties—while offering programs of interest to researchers at all levels. Regular meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. (except July) at St. Mark's Methodist Church in Wichita Falls, with a hybrid option available.

The society enjoyed a busy fall with engaging speakers and a biannual webinar. Members participated in the annual “lock-in” day of webinars sponsored by the Waco–McLennan County Library and the Central Texas Genealogical Society on October 17 at the Wichita Falls Public Library. On October 25, NTGA welcomed Sarah Cochran, the “Skeleton Whisperer,” who presented virtual classes on “Locating Records in Archives from Your Couch” and “Preparing for Third-Party DNA Tools.”

At the November 6 meeting,

NTGA honored members who are military veterans, representing conflicts from the War of 1812 through the World Wars, with a special photo presentation. Members also enjoyed “Genealogy Tips and Tricks with Connie Knox,” tracking their own use of research tips for prizes. The December program, “Famous Names in Your Family Tree,” explored ancestors named after notable individuals.

Learn more about the society on their website, <https://www.northtexasgenealogy.org/>, and Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1078569545574426>.

District C

Emily C. Richardson,
District Representative

The [*Denison, Grayson County, TX Genealogical Society*](#) presented several engaging programs this fall. At the September meeting, guest speaker Robin Cole-Jett, known as the Red River Historian, spoke on steamboats on the Red River. In October, Denison historian Brian Hander presented “Denison's Main Street Serpentine,” illustrated with historical photographs highlighting long-gone local businesses.

On October 11, members participated in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Birthday Bash, presenting the Eisenhower family tree to the public and encouraging visitors to explore genealogy and attend society meetings. (Eisenhower was born in Denison, Texas.) The society took a break in November and gathered for a Christmas dinner in December at Rustico Mexican Restaurant.

The [*Denton County Genealogy Society*](#) (DCGS) meets on the second Thursday of each month, September through May, at the Emily Fowler Library. Meetings begin with refreshments and social time at 6:30 p.m. followed by a brief business meeting at 7:00 p.m. then the evening's program.

September featured Paula Perkins presenting “TxGenWeb to USGenWeb Project®: Free Genealogy Resources at Your Fingertips!” In October, Thomas MacEntee presented “AI and Genealogy: Trouble Ahead?” During that meeting, two members were awarded scholarships from the Diana Pearson White Continuing Genealogy Education Scholarship. November's program featured Gary Steele, founder

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