

THE JOURNAL OF THE TEXAS STATE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY INC.

Starstripes





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



Most genealogists are a microcosm of the American melting pot – a mix of many different ethnicities. With these rich ethnic roots also come research challenges. In addition to sharing personal research stories and case studies, this issue of *Stirpes* addresses some of the specific difficulties encountered when researching African American, Native American, Mexican, Swedish, Norwegian, and German ancestors.

In “Researching Ethnic Ancestry Enriches Family Trees,” Susan E. Ball shares the responses of TxSGS members to our Ethnic Roots survey. Participants in the survey surprised the editors with their unexpected discoveries, from unanticipated ethnicities and name changes to a deeper understanding of their family trees. Survey respondents also shared their expertise in “The Voice of Experience: Tips for Researching Ethnic Roots.” Included in these tips are tried-and-true suggestions for maximizing your research time independent of the ethnicity of your ancestor.

Exploring ethnic ancestry in the old country, and sometimes in the US, immerses genealogists in foreign languages and unfamiliar documents. In “Where are the Records? The *Familien Stammbuch* of Ludwig Matthias Friedrich Follert,” Russ Rahn discusses the *Familien Stammbuch*, a

book of family records, for one individual. Among German researchers, documents such as this are a gold mine for identifying family in a country where many records were destroyed by war. Russ discusses another interesting document German researchers might find in “The Heimat Scheins: A Certificate of Residency.”

An excellent overview of Native American research is provided by Nancy Calhoun in “Five Tribes Research: Tracing a Persistent Ancestral Rumor.” “Rachel – A Story of Emancipation” by Diane Richard discusses the effect of Colonial and early American emancipation laws on one slave and her family. In addition, Diane provides an excellent look at manumission law as well as 18th and 19th century legislation, both of which are important considerations in this complex case study.

In “Peaceful Rest Cemetery: An Enduring Monument to Spring Heights, Texas,” Margaret Smith shares with us her passion for the cemetery and for Spring Heights, an African American community in Harris County dating from the 1860s. Her description of the cemetery and its history provide an insightful snapshot of the community and the lives of those buried at Peaceful Rest.

Pamela J. H. Slutz describes her search for her Swedish great-great-grandparents

in “Tracing my Swedish Roots.” She also provides tips for other researchers on how to read Swedish records and decipher Swedish family names. “From Oslo to Austin” by Lisa Reed discusses the Norwegian settlements in Texas along with online research tips and a description of Norwegian naming patterns. “The Empresario Land Grant in San Patricio de Hibernia” by Mary Torres addresses Mexican land grants issued prior to the Republic of Texas. Bill Buckner continues the ethnic research theme of this issue with his review of *Památník Čechoslováků* by the Texas Czech Genealogical Society.

In addition to ethnic research, this issue of *Stirpes* includes the second part of Debbie Parker Wayne’s review of DNA Painter, a review of *The Family Tree Tool Kit* by Lisa Reed, and more.

The December issue addresses maps in genealogical research: tracing your ancestor’s migration patterns, reconstructing your ancestor’s community, and superimposing your ancestor’s world on today’s landscape. You can follow your ancestor’s footprints on paper even if you can’t visit the old home place. Please share how you are using maps to research your ancestors with *Stirpes*. The submission deadline is November 1.

~ *Stirpes* Editors ☆

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TxSGS Members and Society Delegates -
Join us for the

2019 TxSGS Annual Business Meeting

- Welcome
- Treasurer's Report
- 2019 Accomplishments
- 2020 Plans
- Election of Officers for 2020-2021 Term
- Other business as necessary



Saturday, October 12, 2019
11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Omni Houston Hotel Westside
Houston, Texas

Volunteer Spotlight: 2019 TIGR Team

Following its launch in 2017, the second bi-annual Texas Institute of Genealogical Research doubled in size while delivering a quality learning experience to all attendees.

This remarkable feat was achieved through the efforts of the TIGR Advisory Committee and the Texas Institute of Genealogical Research Committee, both led by Kelvin Meyers, TIGR Director.

The TIGR Advisory Board serves as the strategic planning arm of TIGR, charting TIGR's direction, evaluating course needs and content, developing long-range plans, and conducting post-conference analysis. Assisting Kelvin in defining the target audience for TIGR courses, the Advisory Board also considers the size of the group that courses can accommodate and identifies coordinators for each of the courses.

The TIGR Committee manages all aspects associated with producing TIGR such as dealing with logistics, managing registration, negotiating with the venue, marketing and publicizing TIGR, and dealing with the myriad details associated with hosting an event of this magnitude.

For all the effort and many hours expended by these valuable volunteers, TxSGS says *Thank You!*



TIGR Advisory Board

Kelvin Meyers, *Chair*
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Barbara Ware
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Texas Institute of Genealogical Research Committee

Kelvin Meyers, *TIGR Coordinator*
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Susan Moyer
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Sandra Crowley
Sue Kaufman

Where are the Records?

The *Familien Stammbuch* of Ludwig Matthias Friedrich Follert

by Russell A. Rahn

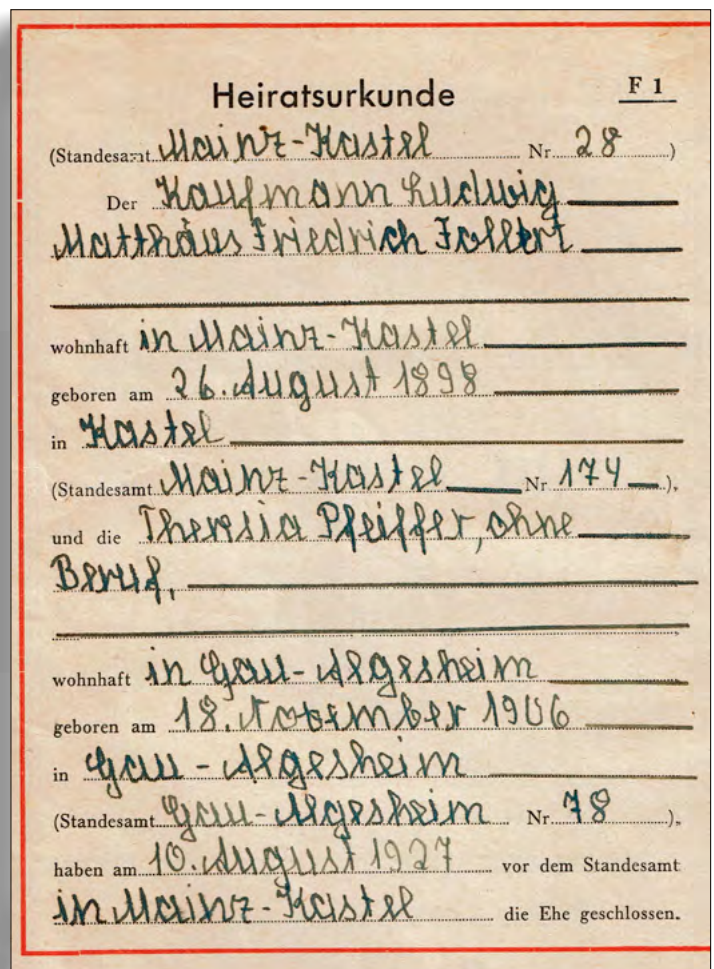
russandmarionrahn@gmail.com

Genealogical research into German families can uncover many records of interest to the genealogist. At some times, however, the key to success will not lie in the traditional state-held records as we find in the United States, but in records held by the churches in the region being researched. In addition, there are other sources of German records, but some of these may be very limited in scope and cover a very small number of generations.

One such source is the German *Familien Stammbuch*. This book of family records was used to serve various purposes during the years when it existed; during the World War II era, it was primarily used to document the Aryan ethnicity of the owner. This was important in the eyes of Nazi leaders. Today, it may be politically incorrect to require this type of record, but the record itself is often beneficial. While it documents only a single individual and his immediate ancestors or offspring, the record is quite reliable, because each entry needed to be stamped by a local records office or church authority to be considered acceptable.

With its close association with the Nazi movement, these records are not especially common. Following World War II, it seems quite likely that many good, upstanding German citizens would prefer to destroy any evidence of their Nazi association. Some survived, and some were still in use for a period following the War. This article deals with such a book, belonging to Ludwig Matthias Friedrich Follert. Ludwig had the good fortune (or misfortune) to be born in Mainz-Kastel, Hessen, Germany. A quick look at the entry for Mainz-Kastel on the Wikipedia website discloses that this community was one of the targets for allied bombing in the war.

That fact, in turn, brings us to another important point in German research. Bombing destroyed many of the records that may have existed. On more than one occasion,



*Marriage Document in Familien Stammbuch (Left side)
The registry office of Mainz-Kastel, Number 28
The Merchant Ludwig Matthias Friedrich Follert, resident of Mainz-Kastel, born the 6th of August, 1898, in Kastel;
The registry office of Mainz-Kastel, Number 174
and Miss Theresia Pfeiffer, without a profession, resident of Gau-Algesheim, born on 18th of November, 1906, in Gau-Algesheim.
The registry office of Gau-Algesheim, Number 98
were on the 10th of August, 1927, in the presence of the registry in Mainz-Kastel, joined forever together.
(Image used by permission of the author.)*

The Empresario Land Grant in San Patricio de Hibernia

by Mary Torres

One of the interesting things I discovered in tracing my family history is that my maternal line, the Molinas, formerly of Revilla (Old Guerrero, Mexico), had obtained empresario land grants in Bee and San Patricio counties in 1835 through the empresario contract of John McMullen and James McGloin with the Mexican State of Coahuila and Texas.

After Mexican independence in 1821, the Mexican government contracted with empresarios or land agents in an effort to aid the settlement of Texas. Each empresario agreed to settle a specific number of Catholic families on a defined land grant within six years. In return, the empresario received a land premium of just over 23,000 acres for every 100 families he settled. However, if the required number of families did not settle within six years, the contract was void. Under the state law, a married man could receive 177 acres of farming land and 4,428 acres of grazing land. An unmarried man could receive one-quarter of this amount. Unlike other grants, the settler had to improve the land and pay a nominal fee to the state.

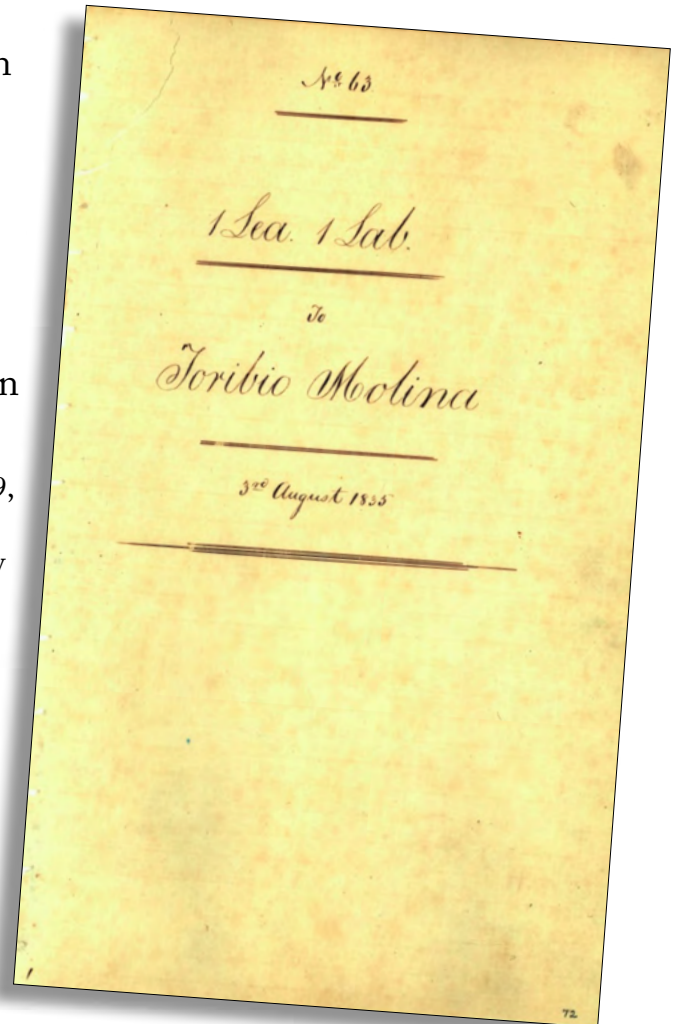
John McMullen and James McGloin founded the McMullen-McGloin colony in 1828 after an empresario contract originally granted to John G. Purnell and Benjamin D. Lovell was relinquished. The contract called for settling 200 families on 80 leagues of land on the left bank of the Nueces River above the coastal reserve.

In the summer of 1829, McMullen and McGloin went to New York to recruit colonists. They targeted recently arrived Irish immigrants who were not yet established, and by means of interviews and advertisements, they found several hundred willing colonists.

By 1832, Mexico had grown leery of the loyalty of the Anglo Americans and had begun to doubt the wisdom of the policy of colonization. Some of the empresario contracts had expired and others were expiring unfulfilled, thus the vacant land was back in the possession of Mexico. Mexico then passed a new law on 28 April 1832 offering special protection and aid to Mexicans who would agree to settle on vacant lands

I started doing genealogy research in 2000 and through information

provided by family members, US census records, the local FamilySearch Center, and Ancestry, I was able to trace one of the surnames on my maternal line, Molina, back to the mid-1700s in Revilla (Old Guerrero) Mexico. Upon conducting a surname search on Ancestry, I found that several people with the Molina surname had received land grants in San Patricio and Bee Counties in Texas. San Patricio County at the time



*Title Sheet of
Toribio Molina's Land Grant from Mexico.*

Tracing My Swedish Roots

by Pamela J. H. Slutz

I will never forget the day in August 1990 when my father and I discovered that my maternal grandmother, Elsie (Johnson) Vierling, was actually born Elsa Elexia and that she was born out of wedlock. We were researching my mother's Swedish ancestry at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. That discovery led to another amazing experience almost 20 years later.

My sister and I will never forget the day in May 2019 when we stood in the yard of what once was house #21, Morkagarden farm, Overby District, Friggeraker Parish, Skaraborgs County, where Grandma Elsie (nee Elsa Elexia) was born on 29 August 1890. We were guided to the farm by the meticulous records kept by the Lutheran Church of Sweden and a website designed by a Swede to assist foreigners—Americans—searching for their ancestors (www.emigrant.se).

With the assistance of kind docents from the local history museum in Falkoping, we downloaded a Swedish map application (Hitta.se) to our smartphone. Using this app (think Google Maps on steroids), we were able to pinpoint exactly where (on which farmsteads) our grandmother lived from her birth (1890) until her departure for the United States (1898).



Photo of Morkagarden farm, taken in May 2019

Sweden, Indexed Birth Records, 1860-1941
 Source: Ancestry.com; translated by Pamela Slutz

Birth Records for Friggeraker annex, Falkopings Parish, Skaraborgs Diocese, 1890

Date	Sex	Name	# Child	Civil Status	Parents (name, occupation)	Priest Attestation
						Mother's place of delivery, marital status, age
Line 16:						
Aug 29	F	Elsa Elexia	No. 1	Illegitimate	Father (blank)	
						Mother Karlsson, Elisabeth servant at Morkagarden unmarried age 27 P. Helandar

Utdrag ur 1890 års Födelsebok för Friggeraker annex församling i Falkopings Proster, Härad, Stift, Skaraborgs län / Medl.	De födande barnens	De levande födda barnens	Avlidna	Födelseort	Ålder	Notis
11 Juni 30	Albert Gottfrid Karlsson 1890			Friggeraker	29	J. A. Helander
12 Juli 16	Anna Maria			Friggeraker	37	P. Helander
13 Aug 16	Ruth Augustasdotter 1890			Friggeraker	38	
14 " 30	Albert 1890			Friggeraker	36	J. A. Helander
15 Sept 3	Selma Sofia 1890			Friggeraker	39	
16 Aug 27	Elsa Elexia 1890			Friggeraker	12	P. Helander
17 Nov 20	Gustaf Thure 1890			Friggeraker	36	J. A. Helander

Swedish Birth Record for Elsa Elexia (Karlson)

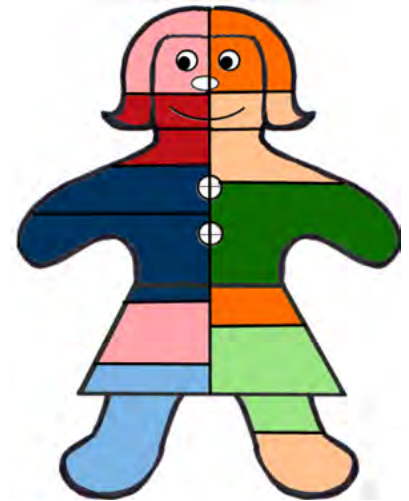
Armed with the parish records and the map app and acting on the hunch that, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, rural farming families did not move far from their birth places, we drove 45 minutes east of Falkoping to the parish of Utvangstorp. There, in the yard of the parish church, we

ID	Name	Birth	Death	Parents	Location	Notes
3314	Nils David	1866-10-24	1914-08-18	Morkagården, Byrsten	Friggeraker 1913-02-20	Kansas City, Jackson, MO
3336	Gideon Toftius	1868-03-29	1914-08-12	Morkagården, Byrsten	Friggeraker 1913-05-05	Minneapolis, Hennepin, MN Child # 2154
3330	Elsa Avelia	1868-08-29	1914-08-21	Morkagården, Overby	Friggeraker 1912-03-17	Rockville, Montgomery, MD
3332	Ester Christina	1891-04-22	1914-08-19	Morkagården, Overby	Friggeraker 1918-07-12	Kansas City, Jackson, MO Child # 3156
3337	Carl Gustaf	1892-04-20	1914-08-19	Morkagården, Overby	Friggeraker 1918-07-12	Kansas City, Jackson, MO Child # 3157
3338	Carl Gustaf	1893-11-21	1914-08-19	Morkagården, Overby	Friggeraker 1918-07-12	Kansas City, Jackson, MO Child # 3158
3339	Carl Gustaf	1894-06-20	1914-08-19	Morkagården, Overby	Friggeraker 1918-07-12	Kansas City, Jackson, MO Child # 3159

List of emigrants from Friggeraker parish, Falkoping, showing Elsa Avelia (Elsie) (line 3330)

DNA Painter—Part 2: What Are the Odds? Tool

by Debbie Parker Wayne, CG®, CGLSM



Introduction to DNA Painter

In the last issue we introduced the DNA Painter website created by Jonny Perl of London, England, which provides tools to help with autosomal DNA analysis.¹ The site also offers access to tools created by others, with permission of the creator, and sometimes modifies or automates the tool using rights granted through a Creative Commons license.² These additional tools include the Shared cM Project³ by Blaine T. Bettinger and What Are the Odds? (WATO)⁴ by Leah LaPerle Larkin. Access is free for the basic tools. Some useful features require a subscription.

There is an ongoing discussion in the genealogical community about whether genealogical databases should be available to law enforcement investigators and researchers working with law enforcement when no warrant or subpoena compels a company to allow access.

At this time, this is not an issue with DNA Painter. Data imported to an account is only available to the account holder unless explicitly shared with another person. Additionally, raw DNA data is not uploaded to DNA Painter; only the information about shared matches is needed and aliases can be used in place of real test-taker names when privacy is a consideration.

This article focuses on using the WATO tool offered by DNA Painter. The WATO tool can be used without creating an account on the DNA Painter website. Please refer to the article in the June 2019 issue of *Stirpes* for an introduction to using DNA Painter.

Accessing “What Are the Odds?” (WATO)

Access the website (<https://dnainter.com/>), click on “Tools” in the top navbar, then click on “What Are the Odds?” on the tools screen. The page displayed contains detailed instructions on how to use the WATO tool. Please read the instructions carefully and consider printing or saving a copy of the instructions for future reference. The tool description on the website includes “Instructions” and “Requirements:”

Instructions

This tool is designed to help you work out how one person, the “target,” [sic] is related to a family group of

people who have taken DNA tests. In particular, the tool is designed for when you have limited or no tree information about the target. The target may, for example, be an adoptee trying to work out how they fit into the family tree of a group of DNA matches. Or the target might be a new and unidentified DNA match who appears in your list.

Requirements

To use the tool you will need to have the following on hand:

- A set of DNA matches who are all descended from the same ancestor

(or couple) and from whom you suspect the target is also descended.

- The amount of DNA in centimorgans shared between the target person and each other person in the family group.
- Enough information about how members of the group are related to one another to build a basic family tree, including the common ancestor (or couple) from whom everyone in the family group is descended.
- Educated guesses (called “hypotheses”) for where the target person might fit into the family tree.

The words Certified Genealogist and designation CG are registered certification marks with the United States Patent and Trademark Office, and the designations Certified Genealogical Lecturer and CGL are service marks of BCG, used under license by certificants after periodic competency evaluations (and only during the current five-year period for which they are certified).

2019 TIGR Delivers a Week of In-Depth Learning in June

by Susan E. Ball

With week-long courses focused on specific research topics, attendees at the 2019 TIGR experienced an immersion in Advanced Southern Research and Texas Research Essentials. Course coordinators J. Mark Lowe and Kelvin Meyers selected session topics and speakers to craft a cohesive in-depth learning experience for attendees. Additional materials were made available to students, extending their classroom experience and providing hours of supplemental learning opportunities.

The hours of planning by the TIGR Advisory Board and the TIGR Committee resulted in an event that was well run; all of the survey respondents rated 2019 TIGR as excellent or very good.

Comments from attendees best illustrate their experiences:

*"I really enjoyed TIGR this week and I learned a lot ...
I can't wait to get back to my computer to research."*

*"This has been one of the absolutely best seminars
that I have ever been to."*

*"It was really hard to choose between these [courses]
as I wanted to attend BOTH of them, but I guess
that's the mark of a high-quality program.
It makes me want to attend TIGR 2021
if this is the caliber of [the] programs."*

*"Overall the seminar was excellent! I learned a lot and will
continue to attend as many as I can! Thanks!"*

"Thank you. Can't wait for 2021!"

*"TIGR has been a wonderful experience! I've learned so much
from these knowledgeable instructors."*

Plans are already beginning for 2021—
watch for updates from TxSGS!



Researching Ethnic Ancestry Enriches Family Trees

by Susan E. Ball



With the advent of DNA testing for genealogical purposes, many genealogists are discovering their ethnic roots are more varied than they first expected, with extra “ingredients” from America’s melting pot.

Through proprietary algorithms, DNA companies compare individual results with a sample population, estimating the likelihood that a person’s ancestors have DNA in common with those populations. The results, accompanied with commercials about those who have been surprised by their ethnic roots, have expanded our understanding of family roots and led us to embrace our diverse heritage.

Curious about the ethnicity of our readers, *Stirpes* asked survey respondents to share surprises they’d learned from their DNA tests. *Ora Jane Johnson* expected to see at least some Cherokee ancestry in her DNA. Instead, she discovered a lot of Irish DNA. *Mary Escobedo* was surprised by the high percentage of Native American ancestry in her family’s past.

Through Y-DNA, *Caren Cooper* learned that the surname for her paternal line was Hispanic rather than the expected English. The obvious conclusion—there was a non-paternal event¹ at some point in the 1800s. “One paternal ancestor was a conquistador from

Extremadura, Spain, and a founder of Santa Fe, New Mexico, circa 1600,” *Caren* marveled.

“Based on my family’s genealogy trail, I expected to find I was mostly English with some German,” wrote *Sam Stone*. He added, “However, my DNA showed a lot of what I expected to be English was actually Irish.” *Nancy Calhoun* discovered her Scots roots were dramatically different than expected. “I found that one line from Scotland is actually descended from a Roman,” she explained, adding, “He was probably part of the early invasion of Britain.”

Even though DNA testing has introduced a new look at our ancestry,

many interesting stories about our ethnic origins can be discovered through traditional genealogical research. “My great-grandfather emigrated from Heidelberg, Germany, to Illinois in 1881 at the age of 14,” *David B. Appleton* related. He continued, “What surprised me especially is that, based on passenger records, he seems to have made the trip alone.”

Through additional research, David discovered that by the time his great-grandfather was twelve, his father had died, his mother remarried, his stepfather died, and then his mother passed away. “His grandparents had already pre-deceased him, leaving him an orphan and entirely alone,” David explained. “The mystery then was,” he related, “why had my great-grandfather emigrated to America?”

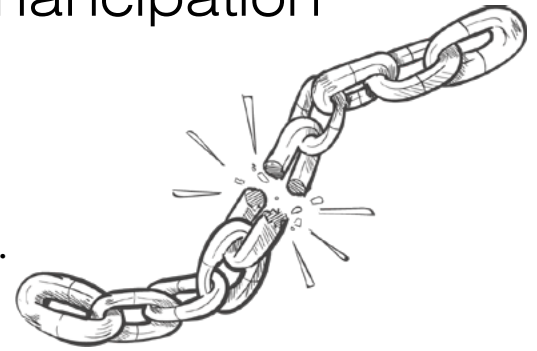
The final clue in this story came when David discovered an uncle, his great-grandfather’s mother’s brother, living outside of Chicago, Illinois. With that piece in place, the story of his migration from southern Germany to northern Illinois came into focus. “My grandfather told me that his immigrant maternal grandfather came from Denmark and jumped



1. A “nonpaternal event” or NPE refers to a case of false paternity where the biological father of a child is someone other than who it is presumed to be.

Rachel – A Story of Emancipation

by Diane L. Richard



One would think that if someone “freed” a slave via their will, their dying declaration, it would happen. If you assume this, you might be quite mistaken.

We’ll explore the odyssey of Rachel who was seemingly freed by her owner’s will in 1782 and yet, it wasn’t until about 1800 that she and her children were freed and assumed a new surname.

Several North Carolina jurisdictions, entities, and parties were involved. Let’s trace the efforts to free Rachel as they played out and explore the world of law and manumission along the way. We won’t be able to cover all the minutiae involved, only enough of the story to make our point.

Rachel’s Journey to Freedom

I became intrigued by efforts to free Rachel and her children when I stumbled across a record in the February 1800 County Court Minutes of Orange County, North Carolina. These minutes gave me a first glimpse into Rachel’s situation and the freedom promised by William Freeman in his will, filed in 1782.

Recorded in the February 1800 Court of Pleas and Quarter Session

minutes for Orange County NC¹ is this mention of the manumission of Rachel, Billy, and Sukey Joel:

“... be free & liberated from all bondage & slavery ... licenses by the court to go at large as free persons with all the rights ... belonging to free persons of color and that they shall be known by the names of Rachel Joel, Billy Joel & Sukey Joel and that the Defendant Robert Freeman pay the full costs ...”

Manumission Defined

An online version of Merriam-Webster defines manumission as “the act or process of manumitting; especially: formal emancipation from slavery,” for which the root verb, manumit, is defined as “to release from slavery.”¹⁶

Essentially, emancipation is a broader term referring to a release from bondage and related constraints whereas manumission is specific to those released from slavery. Manumission will sometimes be found under emancipation records; I encourage you to explore records using both terms.

The Law

In his book, *The Free Negro in North Carolina, 1790-1860*, John Hope Franklin gives a nice overview of slave law in North Carolina up to and including the law of 1796 (see next paragraph) with the following details:¹⁷

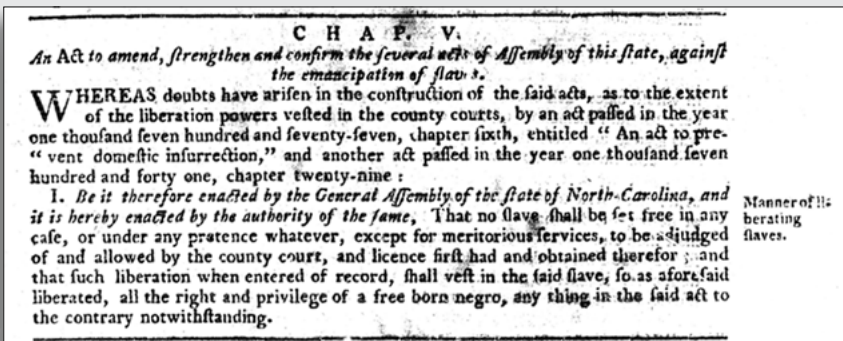
1715 – “prevented the master from setting free any Negroes that had been ‘Runaways for Refractory.’ Such freed negros had to depart the area within six months of achieving freedom.”

1723 – “made it compulsory for the newly freed Negro to abjure the State soon after manumission.”

1741 – “No Negro or Mulatto slaves shall be set free ... except for meritorious Services, to be adjudged and allowed by the County Court. The free Negro was still forced to leave within six months ...”

1777 – “this law was passed again, with slight revisions.”

As a result of petitions, such as the one regarding Rachel, the law in 1796 was revised for the purpose of clarification.¹⁸ In short, this act, which was titled “An Act to amend, strengthen and confirm the several acts of Assembly of this State, against the emancipation of slaves...” declared “That no slave shall be set free in any case, or under any pretence whatever, except for meritorious services, to be adjudged of and allowed by the county court...”



The 1796 NC law passed regarding the emancipation of slaves identifying meritorious service as a qualification.

Five Tribes Research: Tracing a Persistent Ancestral Rumor

by Nancy Calhoun

Many families have an oral tradition that their heritage includes Native American ancestry. There are hundreds of Native American tribes across the United States, and all have their own traditions, history, and membership requirements.

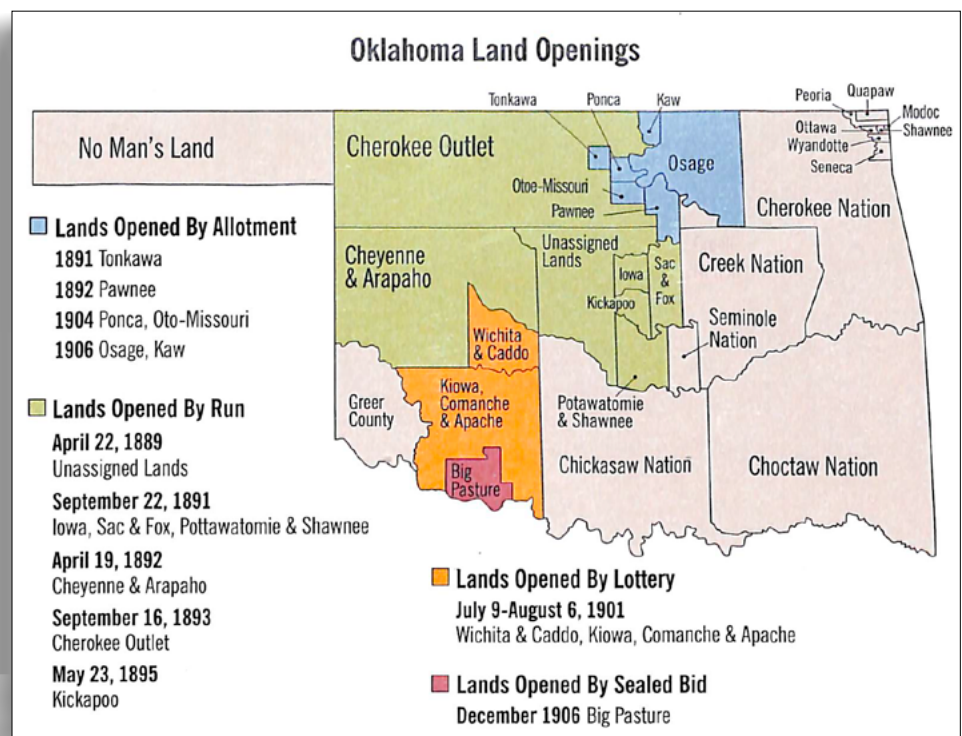
For many in Texas, that ancestral tradition often includes one of the tribes that now makes Oklahoma their home, especially the Five Tribes of Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole. These tribes experienced forced removal around 1830 and were relocated from their homelands in the southeastern United States. With the constant movement between Texas and Oklahoma, the population of Texas includes many who do and can claim membership in these tribes. Perhaps your ancestry includes a persistent rumor or two of a Native American connection.

Originally referred to as the Five Civilized Tribes, these southeastern tribes came in contact with settlers early, and they often intermarried and adopted the settlers' ways and religion. Some of these claims of Native American ancestry could date back to this time period, but may be very difficult to prove. Records are scarce and stigmas were attached to being Indian, thus leading some Native Americans to deny their heritage.

With removal looming in the future, some Native Americans left their native lands early and settled in Arkansas and Texas. Thousands of others endured the hardships of forced removal to Indian Territory, the area that is now eastern Oklahoma. However, with the deprivation and violence that the Civil War brought to



The Five Tribes Agency stands on Agency Hill in Muskogee overlooking the city and Honor Heights Park, home of the annual Azalea Festival. It is now a museum with displays of the history and culture of the tribes and features art displays. (Photo by author)



The area of the Five Tribes in eastern Oklahoma is shown on this map made available by the Oklahoma Historical Society. What is now the state of Oklahoma was opened at various times and by various methods, including allotments, the famous runs, lottery, sealed bid, and homesteading. Both Greer County and No Man's Land in the Oklahoma Panhandle were once part of Texas. (Oklahoma Historical Society Research Library)

From Oslo to Austin

by Lisa Reed

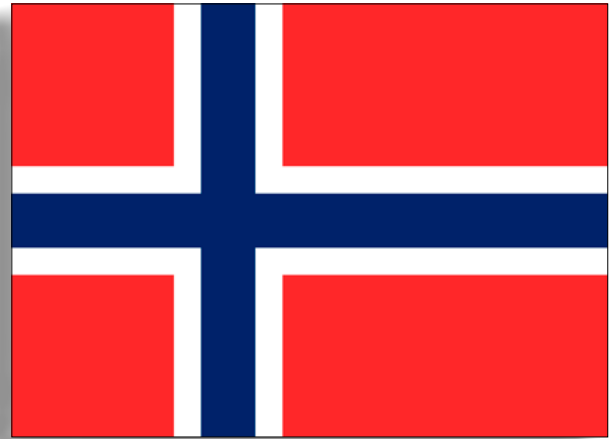
The story of Norwegians who came to Texas is the story of pathfinders. Cleng Peerson, the first of these pathfinders, came to the United States to discover where and how Norwegians could migrate. He eventually brought a group to America on “the Norwegian Mayflower,” and his final burying place is in Bosque County.

Norwegians in the mid-nineteenth century, such as Peerson, had several factors bringing them to our shores. Those factors included conflicting religions, a spirit of revolution in Europe, and little economic opportunity in Norway for those who were not landholders. Peerson was sponsored by Quakers and “Haugeians,” a similar group, who did not subscribe to the state Lutheran church. After planting settlements in New York and all across the midwest, Peerson came to the area that became Dallas.

One pathfinder influenced another. Johannes Nordboe is said to be the first Dallas-area settler; Johan Reinert Reierson brought Norwegian families to East Texas. “The lady with the pen,” Elise Tvede, had the unique position of influencing those back home by her writings to come to Texas.

Texas Settlements

The Norwegians spread from East Texas all the way to the Hill Country. Reierson, Tvede, and Tvede’s future husband, William Waerenskjold, developed settlements in “Normandy,” which became the current Brownsboro in Henderson County. The Norwegian Cemetery there is well-tended and shows some unique graves.



Branching from this settlement, Norwegians claimed land in today’s Van Zandt and Kaufman counties. Four Mile, a community near Prairville, still has a Lutheran congregation that remembers its Norwegian roots.

West of the Brazos River, several communities in Bosque and Hamilton counties such as Norse, Clifton, Cranfills Gap, and Hamilton still reflect Norwegian heritage. This heritage is seen particularly in historic churches such as “the Rock Church,” St. Olaf’s, in Cranfills Gap.

When you are researching possible Norwegian ancestors in Texas, these five counties (Henderson, Van Zandt, Kaufman, Bosque, and Hamilton) offer the most promise if you do not know a particular homeplace.

Naming Patterns

In addition to knowing where to look, a basic understanding of historic naming patterns might help you mine through Texas, United States, and Norwegian records.

Historically, Norwegian surnames were patronymic, that is, they were based on the father’s first name. However, the gender of the child determined



Memorial at Our Savior Lutheran Cemetery in Bosque County honors Cleng Peerson, the first Norwegian pathfinder to come to America. The stone, carved in the Norwegian language shows his birthday as 17 May, or “syttende mai,” which is analogous to our Fourth of July. (Image courtesy of the author.)

Partner Society Roundup

Is your Partner Society missing? Perhaps our contact information is out of date. Please contact your District Representative and memberinfo@txsgs.org with current contact data. Partner Societies are encouraged to investigate the many benefits and resources available from TxSGS at

the Partner Society Resource page at <http://www.txsgs.org/partner-society-resources/>. Benefits include publicity support for society events, media downloads, preservation and access support, awards, digitization equipment loan grants, and much more.

District C – Open

The *Texoma Genealogy Group* meets from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, September through May, at Sherman Parks and Recreation, 1002 N. Music Street, in Sherman, Texas. Since meetings are open to anyone interested in genealogy, attendees range from beginners to researchers that have decades of experience. Membership is not required to attend meetings.

TGG seeks to provide a forum where genealogy lovers can find new friends, learn new tips and techniques, share their brick walls or successes, and get help with their research. To facilitate that, TGG provides speakers who cover a wide range of interesting genealogical topics that everyone can learn from and enjoy. TGG leaders Cindy Barnhart and Carol Beck are committed to helping make everyone a successful genealogist through learning effective ways to search and organize your family research.

Visit the TGG website, www.texomagenealogygroup.com, for more information about past and future meetings.

District D

Debra Usry,
District Representative

The *Red River County Genealogical Society* met on Monday, July 8, at the Red River County Chamber of Commerce Meeting room. The speaker was Debra Cornett Usry, District D, Texas State Genealogical Society representative. She spoke on “What does your Texas State Genealogical Society have to offer Partner Societies and Individual Genealogists?” She also shared a list of free websites that provide help with researching ancestors.

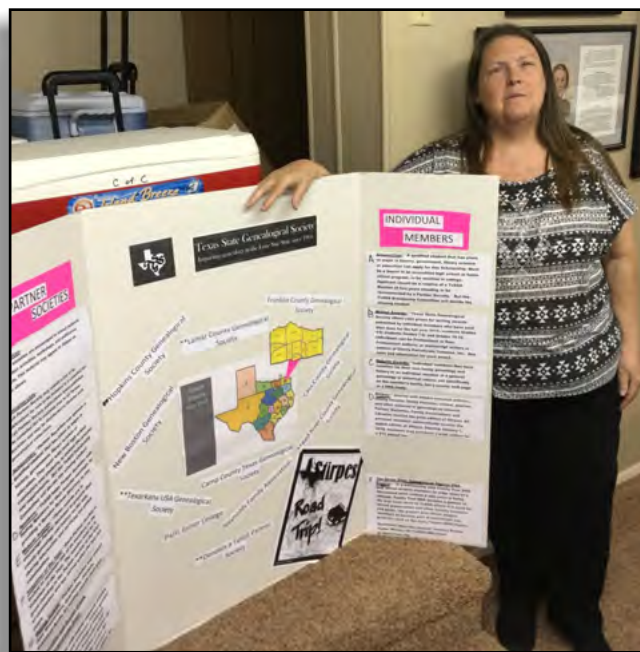
District E

Tim de la Vega,
District Representative

Based in Abilene, the *West Texas Genealogical Society* meets at the South Abilene Library located in the Mall of Abilene. Meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday at 6:30 pm. In April, Don Jackson presented techniques for making your DNA results pay off. President Terry Bull addressed sharing your family history with other researchers at the May meeting. June brought Esther Enos speaking on the 2020 Census; Amie Agee showed how to research like a pro and become a

more efficient researcher. July’s meeting featured Deanna Ramsey discussing the best way to scan your family documents and photos. This selection of speakers and topics illustrates WTGS’ commitment to meeting the educational needs of their members. Follow WTGS on Facebook to keep up with events, meetings, and activities.

The 2019 Fall promises to be busy for the *San Angelo Genealogical Society*. September 3 kicked off the SAGHS 2019-2020 year with Cory Robinson, Curator of History for Fort Concho, speaking on Fort Concho’s recently acquired Douglas McChristian collection



Debra Usry shared TxSGS member benefits for societies and individuals at a meeting of the Red River County Genealogical Society.

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