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Contents

Features

- 6**
- Be a Brick Wall Buster!
by Jim Thornhill
- 9**
- Bless Your Family History Research by Delving into Church Records
by Nancy Gilbride Casey
- 13**
- Finding Individuals in Community Histories
by Hannah Kubacak
- 19**
- Researching Unindexed Records at FamilySearch
by Susan E. Ball
- 25**
- Finding and Using City Directories for Family History Research
by Sandra J. Crowley
- 46**
- Uncover Hidden Records with FamilySearch's Full-Text Search
by Susan E. Ball
- 50**
- Discovering Your Family in Federal Records:
The Gen-Fed Experience
by Samantha Barnes
- 51**
- Diamond Anniversary Commemorative Book
Yields Priceless Family Connections
by Russell A. Rahn
- 58**
- Exploring PERSI's Rich Resources for Family Historians
by Emily Coffman Richardson
- 62**
- An Outside the Box Resource: The Texas Surgical Society
by Russell A. Rahn
- 63**
- School's in Session!
by Russell A. Rahn
- 65**
- Life in the Public Eye: Locating Records
for Appointed and Elected Officials
by Paula Perkins
- 77**
- Biographies in Unusual Places
by Russell A. Rahn

TxSGS Focus

- Editorial Policy **2**
- From the Editors' Pen **3**
- New Members & More **4**
- Volunteer Spotlight **5**
- Book Review **32**
by William D. "Bill" Buckner
- TxSGS Family History Conference **33**
- TxSGS Conference
Speaker Biographies **35**
- TxSGS Conference
Bonus Recordings Speakers **39**
- TxSGS Conference Sponsors **43**
- TxSGS Partner Society Roundup **71**
- TxSGS Leadership **81**
- Policies of the Texas
State Genealogical Society **82**

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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.)

On the cover: This month's cover design includes some elements which were created with artificial intelligence (A.I.).

Be a **Brick Wall Buster!**

by Jim Thornhill

It's happened to you like it happens to the rest of us—you hit the proverbial brick wall in your genealogy research. You've gone to different record groups, you've looked for neighbors and relatives, you've searched your “go-to” family history websites, and yet you are still finding nothing.

It's easy to get discouraged and give up on a family line, or think you'll come back to it later, or be convinced that your ancestor was left here by a spaceship! However, every professional genealogist I have asked agrees, “Your ancestor left records behind, it's just a matter of finding them.” Let's look at some steps to find those elusive kin.

Review Your Research

First and foremost, review what you have already found. Whether it has been days, months, or years since you last worked on this person, you need to stop frantically looking for new records and refamiliarize yourself with what you have. Not only will this get everything fresh in your mind, but you may rediscover a vital piece of information you found years ago that you have forgotten. Putting all those pieces together could give you new insight that could be the key to your breakthrough.

Learn About Your Ancestor's World

Another thing that helps me is to realize that using my normal research techniques will not find the answer. This sounds obvious, but it's critical to recognize that looking in normal places, using the same techniques, and searching in the same way will not work. You must open yourself to new



ways of doing things: reading books, looking in unconventional places, or slowing down and daydreaming about what a day or week in your ancestor's life would have been like.

Studying the place and time your ancestor lived can give you clues as to what types of new records you want to seek. Were they living in the country or in the city? Were they living in a depression or recession? Was there a war going on in their lifetime? What was the predominate religion in their area? What was the political climate? Was there an epidemic or pandemic where they were living? Did they live in one place, or did they move around? Learning all these things about your ancestor's lives can help you identify new avenues of research.

Expand Your Search

Many of the answers we're seeking can be found in places we may not ordinarily access. Information about

a particular place and time might be found in one of the many county histories available in FamilySearch books. These histories and the U.S. census social statistics schedule can tell us what religions were predominant. There are Wikipedia articles on all the wars and most of the major battles that were fought in them, as well as all the recessions and epidemics in our nation's history. Looking at the U.S. census can tell us some of the places where our ancestors lived by identifying where their children were born.

Most search engines, i.e. Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc., have ways of tailoring their searches so that you can target the results. If your ancestor served in a war and you know what unit, enter the war and unit in the search box. Most units' histories are online, and some are very specific and have pictures. The National Park Service has one of the most comprehensive databases of Civil War units and their soldiers that I have seen. Most of these sites are not what we would consider family history websites, but they all can help you find more information about your family.

Cyndi's List

One great place to get started breaking down that brick wall is Cyndi's List at <https://www.cyndislist.com/>. The helpful feature of Cyndi's List is that the hundreds of thousands of websites linked on the site are

Bless Your Family History Research by Delving into Church Records

by Nancy Gilbride Casey

Most family history researchers turn first to civil records to begin the documentation of important events in an ancestor's life. These are frequently accessible, often digitized, and usually can be found on major websites such as Ancestry or FamilySearch.

Church records, on the other hand, are a sometimes-overlooked resource that can greatly enhance your genealogical research. They can help fill in the blanks in your ancestor's timeline and have other benefits as well.

Church records can:

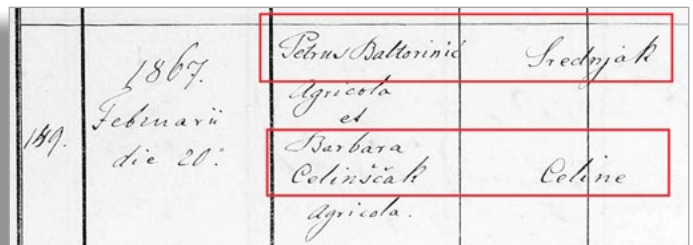
- substitute for vital records prior to civil records being kept;
- pinpoint your ancestor in a specific place and time;
- document your family tree further back in time, as religious records have been kept longer than civil records in most areas—centuries longer in some cases;
- expand your ancestor's family, as witnesses to religious events were often close family or friends;
- add context to your ancestor's life, shining a light on their beliefs, cultural practices, and more.

Church records can encompass a wide variety of documents depending on the denomination. In addition to sacramental records like baptisms and marriages, church records could include donor lists, membership rolls, meeting minutes, bulletins, burials, parish censuses, and more.

In researching my own Catholic ancestors, I have found baptismal records, marriage records, and burial records, as well as Catholic sacrament-specific records of first communion or confirmation. These records may include important facts that can serve as vital record substitutes:

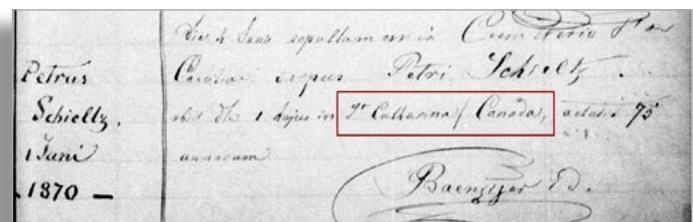
- A baptismal record might include the child's date of birth in addition to the baptismal date, which might not be the same. My great-grandmother Catherine Cassidy's baptism at St. Catherine of Alexandria's church in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada, lists her birth date as 12 April 1886 and her baptism on 18 April 1886.¹
- A marriage record may include the couple's parents' names, place of birth, or current residence. The Croatian marriage record of my great-great-grandparents Petrus Baltorinic and Barbara Celinščak notes their birthplaces and current residences were Srednjak and

Celine, respectively. Peter's parents, Petrus and Barbara Baltorinic, were named, while Barbara's parents were listed as Georgu and Hellena Celinščak.²



Baltorinic/Celinščak Marriage. The groom's and bride's names and birthplaces/residence towns are outlined in red in this Croatian marriage record.

- A burial record may include a specific date or place of death in addition to a burial date. The church burial record of my fourth-great-grandfather, Peter Schiltz, included his death location as "St. Catharines, Canada," a first indication that he did not die in Sheldon, Wyoming County, New York, where he lived. He died while visiting a daughter who had recently moved to St. Catharines.³



Peter Schiltz Burial Record. The assumption was that Peter Schiltz died in Sheldon, Wyoming County, New York, but his burial record indicated he died in St. Catharines, Canada (in red).

My husband has ancestors who were Congregationalist, Southern Baptist, and Primitive Baptist. Church records for his ancestors served as vital record substitutes, provided historical context, and located them in a specific locality and time.

Finding Individuals in **Community Histories**

by Hannah Kubacak

Community histories can be a treasure trove of information for family history researchers looking to add context and depth to their genealogical findings—and may even be the key to finding long-sought answers.

These local chronicles, often compiled by historical societies or longtime residents, offer unique insights into the social, economic, and cultural landscapes that shaped our ancestors' lives. Published in many formats, these books often contain clues for vital record data within biographical sketches for individuals from that region. In addition to sketches, these books typically contain the general history of an area and profiles on historic organizations or businesses as well as maps or photographs.

Community histories vary widely in scope. Some may only address a single town or county while others may discuss an entire state or a multi-state region. Others highlight a profession or association. Regardless of the scope, these books can provide valuable clues for furthering research.

Types of Publications

There are two major publication styles for community histories. The first style encompasses publications that are compiled and published by an individual or group, usually a genealogical or historical society. In these volumes, the individual or committee plans the scope of the book, compiles the research, determines the format, and publishes the material. Generally, these books have a narrow focus that covers a



particular town or county.

These short-run books are typically published locally in limited numbers; many are now published in a print-on-demand format. University presses commonly publish this style of community history. An example is *History of Mission Valley Community: Now Part of New Braunfels, Texas*, by Alton J. Rahe. This book provides in-depth history and photos for families and organizations within this Comal County, Texas, community. In addition to the well-cited family history section, this book contains resources such as a list of students that attended Mission Valley schools from the 1860s until the 1940s, including the years the student was enrolled (providing a clue to their birth year), the names of parents, and

the name of their spouse.¹

The second style is based on a standardized format for community history books utilized by larger publishers. These publishers often partner with a local representative such as a group of individuals or community organizations to publish the history. The local partner is responsible for compiling the information, but the end product is very uniform. In some cases, the local partner collects family write-ups to include in the book. Otherwise, the publishers market directly to individuals in the book's focus region to collect these family history submissions.

In 1876, in celebration of the first centennial for the United States of America, Congress passed a resolution asking counties and towns to compile their histories, read them at local Fourth of July Celebrations, and file them with the Library of Congress.² This, in part, led to the community histories that became more widely produced in the late 19th and early 20th century. A popular format included a community history section followed by a section of biographical sketches and portraits. The inclusion of images of individuals led to these books being commonly referred to as “Mug Books.”

Goodspeed Publishing Company is one example of a “Mug Book” publisher. The company had offices based in Nashville, Tennessee, St. Louis, Missouri, and Chicago, Illinois, in the late 1800s. Company representatives visited communities

Researching Unindexed Records at FamilySearch

by Susan E. Ball



In the June issue of *Stirpes*, Emily Coffman Richardson showed how wills and probate records can provide unexpected results in her article, “Magic Wills.”¹ The insights Emily discovered about her family are truly astounding, making us want to locate all the wills and probate records that apply to our ancestors and their siblings. Maybe we’ll find a little magic to get us past our genealogy roadblocks.

Fortunately, many wills and probate records are abstracted or digitized and searchable online. Follow along below for step-by-step instructions for locating and searching these collections on FamilySearch.

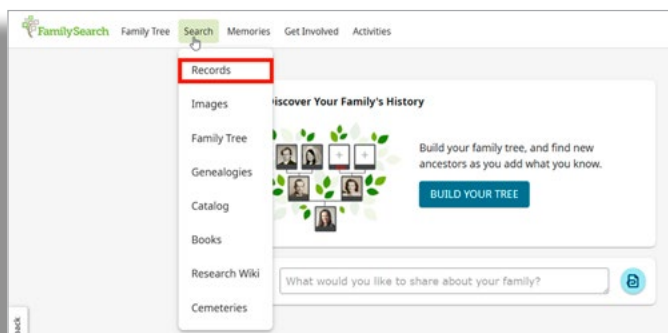
Keep in mind that not every county’s records have been digitized, so on-site research may be necessary. These records can be found by searching in person in a county clerk’s office or its equivalent, depending on the state.

FamilySearch Indexed Records

The following steps show how to locate FamilySearch’s wills and probate collections and access the records in those collections. Steps 1 through 4 deal with indexed records; steps 1 through 11 apply to unindexed records.

Step 1 – Go to the Records Search Interface

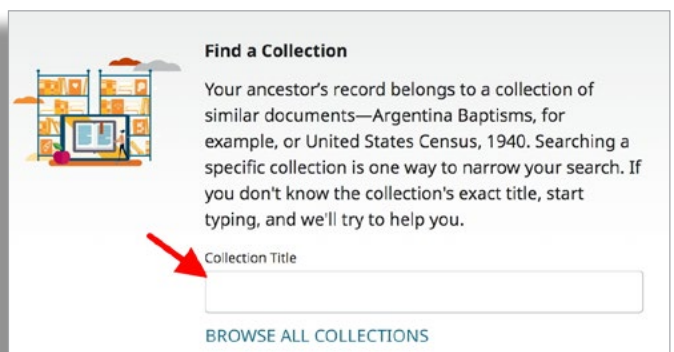
Select “Records” from the pull-down menu on the FamilySearch.org main page, as shown in step 1. This will take you to the records search interface where you can search historical records, find a collection, or search by place.



Step 1: Access the records search interface.

Step 2 – Search for Will or Probate Collections

Enter “will” in the “Collection Title” field under “Find a Collection” (step 2). You can narrow your search by adding a place such as a state. Repeat the search using “probate.”



Step 2: Find a collection.

Step 3 – Select the Desired Collection

All collections with your search term(s) in their title will appear in a scrollable list. If you use just the word “will” or “probate” as your search term, you’ll see several international collections as well as those for the U.S.

Just look through the list for collections that might apply to your search. Click on the collection’s name to select it, as seen in step 3.



Step 3: Select a collection.

Finding and Using City Directories for Family History Research

by Sandra J. Crowley

City directories are often overlooked by family historians, yet they are rich repositories of information, offering unparalleled glimpses into the lives of our ancestors. These publications flourished from the mid-19th to the late 20th centuries, providing a detailed snapshot of urban communities and their residents.

Unlike census records, which are typically generated every ten years, city directories were typically published on an annual basis. This publication schedule allows us to track changes in residences, occupations, and family structures year by year. The level of detail found in directories not only enhances genealogical research but also adds depth and context to family narratives, filling gaps left by other historical records.

Early Directories

Some of the earliest directories provide an interesting look at the origins of these residence and business listings. Many assume that telephones were a large reason for the development of directories, but the phone book gradually supplanted city directories. Early directories let communities know about individuals and merchants in the area that provided services, such as blacksmiths, lawyers, and more.

Here are a few of the earliest documented directories, according to *Bibliography of American Directories Through 1860* by Dorothy N. Spear:

1588: *The Companies of all the Craftes or Mysteries of London*, Treasury of the Receipt of the Exchequer

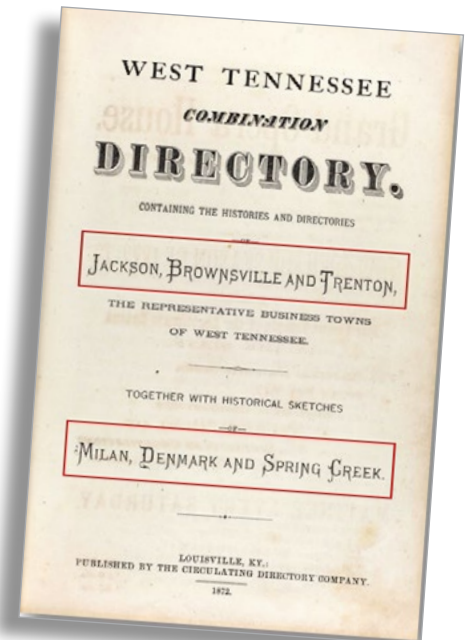
1677: *A Collection of Merchants* – the oldest surviving printed directory

1752: The first directory-type publication including inhabitants of an American city. This broadsheet was a one-sided single-sheet publication designed to be handed out in the street or pasted to a door or wall. It included a list of English families in Baltimore, Maryland, along with the following statement: *The Following List of Families and Other Persons Residing in the Town of Baltimore, Was Taken in the Year 1752, by a Lady of Respectability.* The lady's name was not disclosed.

1700s through Today

By the late 1700s to early 1800s, city directories were being printed in major cities by a variety of publishers. These books included names, street addresses, other adults in the household, occupations, and more.

As urban populations grew rapidly during the Industrial Revolution, the need for organized information about city residents and businesses increased. Publishers saw an opportunity to create comprehensive guides that would serve both commercial and social purposes. By the late 19th century, smaller cities and towns were

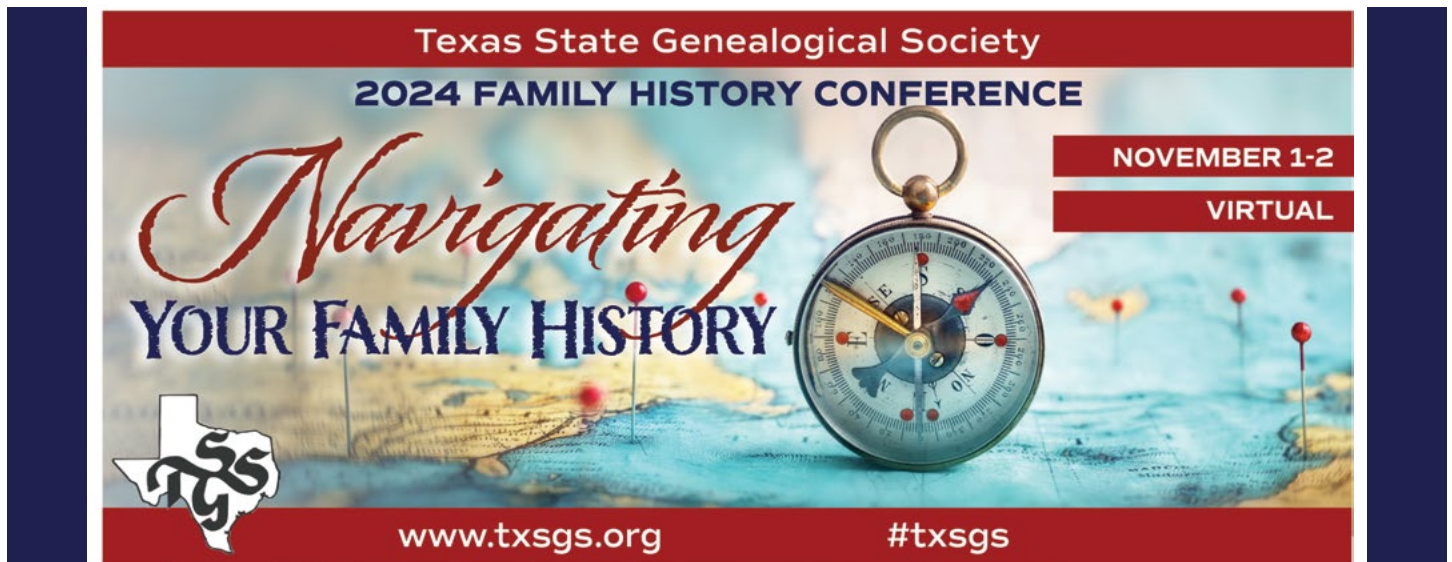


The city and surrounding communities included in the city directory were often printed on the cover.

producing their own directories, often including nearby rural communities. Be sure to check city directories in the regions you're researching for details on which cities, towns, and communities are included.

The golden age of city directories spanned the late 19th century through the mid-20th century. During this period, directories became essential references for urban dwellers, businesses, and municipal services. They were used for everything from locating individuals and businesses to planning mail routes and conducting market research.

The decline of traditional city



Navigating Your Family History 2024 TxSGS Family History Conference

Join us this fall for the 2024 TxSGS Family History Conference to explore resources and techniques for *Navigating Your Family History*. This virtual event will feature *TxSGS Live!* on Friday and Saturday, November 1-2, featuring ten well-known speakers with live Q&A.

That's not all! These lectures will be recorded, including the live question and answer sessions. More than 30 additional pre-recorded lectures will offer some of your favorite speakers and well-known presenters from across Texas and the U.S. Learn about these speakers on the following pages. You will be able to access these lectures online through midnight February 2, 2025.

Are you ready to take your genealogy research to the next level? The 2024 TxSGS Family History Conference, *Navigating Your Family History*, seeks to help you and hundreds of other attendees discover

tools and resources to answer your genealogy questions and guide you on your genealogical journey. In addition to live and recorded speakers, TxSGS will also offer select bonus sessions from some of our sponsors, exhibitors, and select genealogy vendors. Learn more about these bonus sessions on page 39.

Visit our website at www.txsgs.org for more information including speaker bios, FAQs, registration, and more. Register now for the 2024 TxSGS Family History Conference and join us virtually on November 1-2.

Uncover Hidden Records with FamilySearch's Full-Text Search

by Susan E. Ball

One of the most exciting recent developments in genealogy research is FamilySearch's Full-Text Search for unindexed records. There are millions of records that might include your ancestor's name, perhaps a maiden name, a parent, or a child, but they are difficult to access.

The records may be unindexed or perhaps they are in paragraph form such as a deed or will for which all the names embedded in the text haven't been extracted. FamilySearch is using artificial intelligence (AI) to transcribe and process these records so you can search the entire text for a mention of the name or other term. With full-text search, you can now locate people that don't typically appear in indexes such as neighbors, witnesses, co-signers, enslaved persons, enslavers, and the names represented by "*et. al.*"

Getting Started

Full-Text Search is part of FamilySearch's experimental labs. As it is experimental, FamilySearch doesn't guarantee that full-text search will always be available, it may have bugs, and it will have names and words that are not perfectly extracted. That's not surprising—even records indexed by humans have errors!

Access full-text search at <https://www.familysearch.org/en/labs/>. Alternatively, go to familysearch.org and scroll down to the bottom of the page where you'll see "Family Search Labs" (figure 1). Click "View Experiments."

On the FamilySearch Labs page, you'll see several experimental projects. In the box labeled "Expand your search with Full Text" (figure 2) click on "Go To Experiment."

You'll see the initial search box,

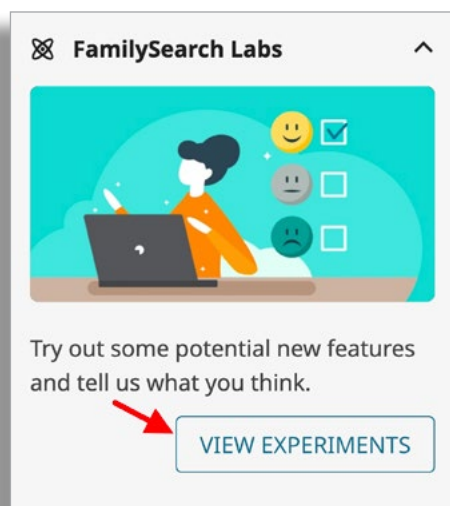


Figure 1

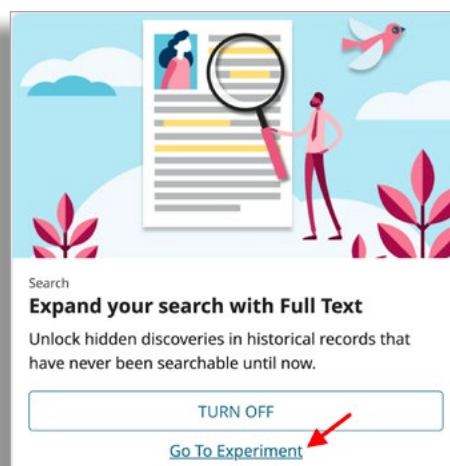


Figure 2

shown in figure 3. You can enter a name in either the keywords or the name boxes. Once you've become familiar with full-text search, you'll likely use both to find as many results as possible.

Simple Example

To test full-text search, I'll enter my early Texas ancestor, H. M. Black. His name was Henry, but he went by "H. M." in most documents I've found. Full-text search will find every document that includes H., M., and Black, over 120 million, unless I put the name in quotes. Searching for "H. M. Black," returned 2,379 results (figure 4), some for regions I'm not interested in, so I'll need to focus the search.

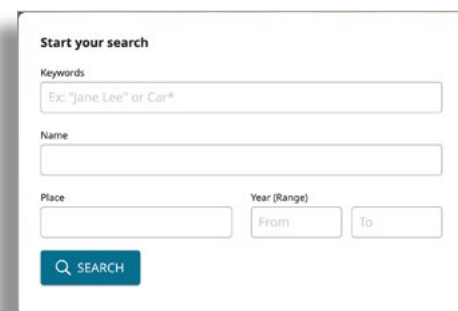


Figure 3



Figure 4

Diamond Anniversary Commemorative Book Yields Priceless Family Connections

by Russell A. Rahn

In 1875, a printer in New York City produced a small, 107-page volume commemorating the sixtieth wedding anniversary of John and Sarah Knox. This volume was printed for private circulation and thus must have been produced in small numbers.

Testimony on the very limited edition for this book comes from a footnote (page 11): “this volume is to circulate only within the limits of this honest family.” The book was published, two years after the 1873 anniversary celebration. If all the married couples in the family received a copy, perhaps the total press run of this small volume was about 100 copies.

The contents of this book included two main parts. The first section provided a general description of events that transpired before and during the celebration. It was clearly intended for the family because there were many references to things that only a participant in the event would have understood. On 8 October 1873, a church service featuring solo, choral, and organ music was held at the Presbyterian Church in Knoxville, New York.

Following the anniversary service, Rev. Charles E. Knox read a sketch he prepared on the military service of Captain John J. Knox Williams. The oldest grandson of John and Sarah Knox, John lost his life during the Civil War at the Battle of Chapin’s Farm.

The person who prepared the book thoughtfully included a listing

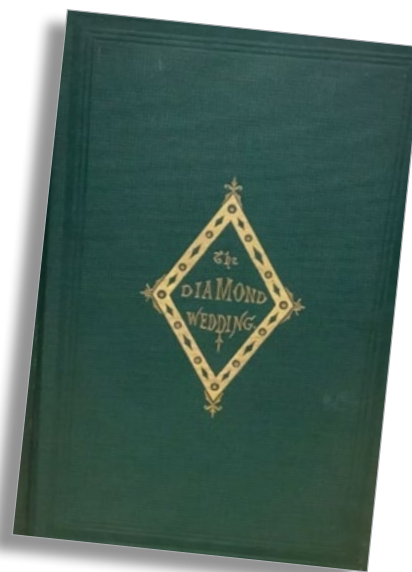


Figure 1: 60th anniversary booklet cover.

of family members who participated, which opened the door to creating a family tree for John and Sarah Knox and their children.

When beginning the work on the family tree, it was evident that the project was not a small one. However, if completed, it could be used as a checklist against the listing in the book to determine whether all of John and Sarah’s children were still living at the time the celebration was held and which of them were able to attend.

Helpfully, the family list of figure 2 is also a family tree of sorts. By carefully placing indentations

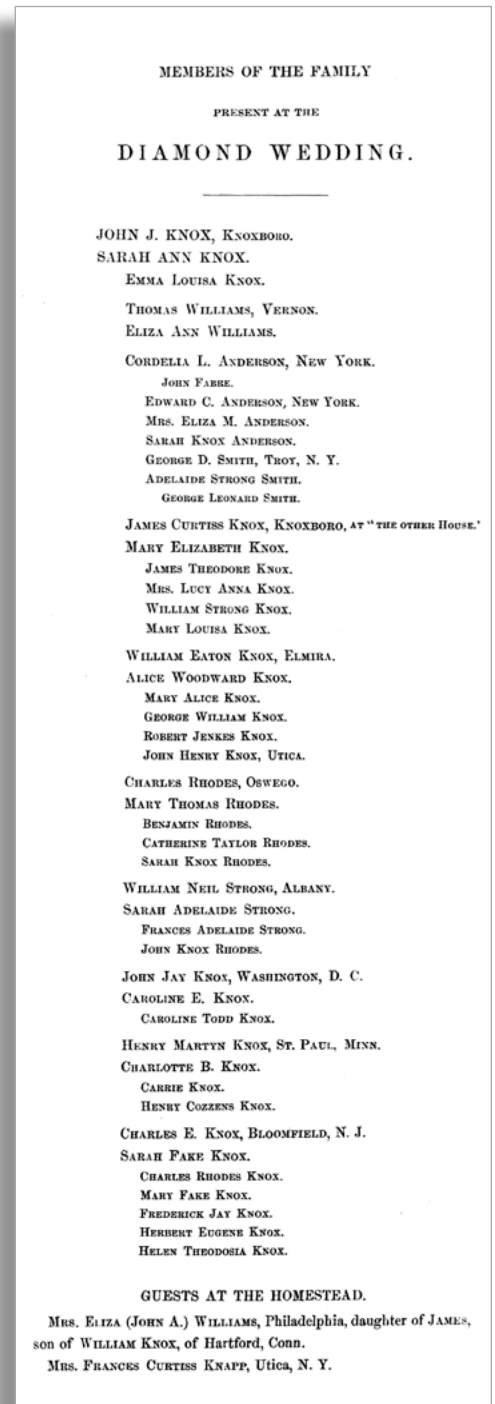


Figure 2: Knox family in attendance at the 60th anniversary celebration. Anniversary booklet pages 106 and 107 have been merged to create one list.

Exploring PERSI's Rich Resources for Family Historians

by Emily Coffman Richardson

What's a PERSI? PERSI, the Periodical Source Index, is a subject index for genealogy and local history periodicals produced by the staff of the Genealogy Center at the Allen County Public Library (ACPL) in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The indexed periodicals include history and genealogy magazines and journals from the 1800s to today.

Most of the indexed periodicals are from the U.S., but Canada, the U.K., and other countries are also represented. A small army is constantly working to keep the index up to date; recently ACPL announced an additional 20,000 entries, bringing the total to 3,144,958—an amazing number of articles dealing with our ancestors.

What's included in PERSI's index? PERSI isn't a typical index, with names from the articles' content. Rather, it's a listing of article titles in ACPL's periodical collection and a subject index of those articles. PERSI does not include every name in every article. It does provide an easy way to search millions of article titles for subjects and names of interest to you.

How can PERSI help? Consider that for well over a century, volunteers have been abstracting records, creating local histories, and writing about ancestors for publication in local society journals, quarterlies, and magazines. These articles might provide a missing name, information about where your ancestors lived and the time they lived there, or insight into significant events that affected them. You might discover an obscure record collection applicable to your family. All these articles can be identified through PERSI and mailed to you for a small fee.

Searching PERSI

Use this link, <https://www.genealogycenter.info/persi/>, to search PERSI from home. PERSI search options are displayed on the PERSI website (figure 1). Genealogists primarily search PERSI using the surnames and location options. The location

designations include the U.S., British Isles, Canada, and "Other Countries."

A location search isn't limited to just these broad categories. After selecting one of the location options, you'll see fields that allow you to select smaller regions such as state and county (figure 2).

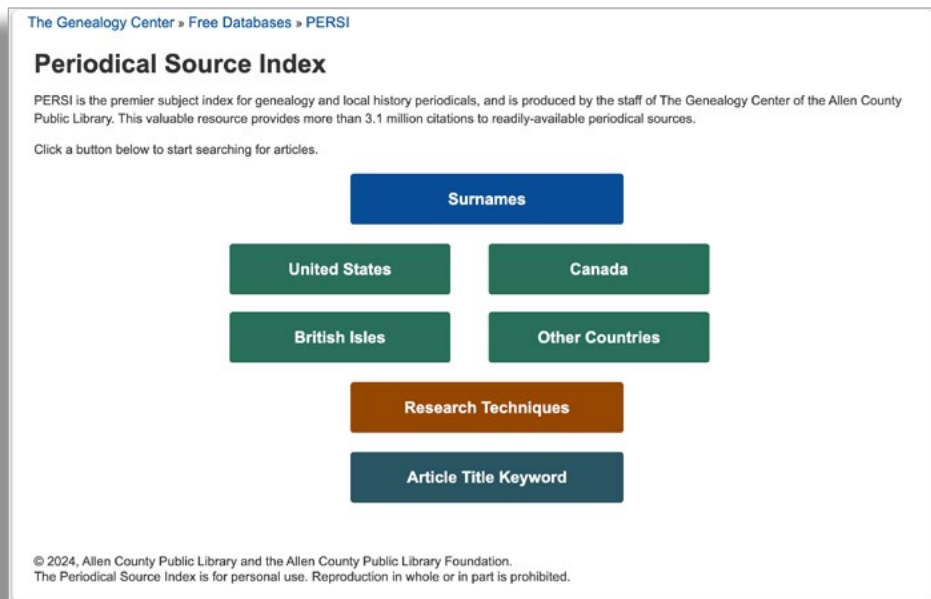


Figure 1

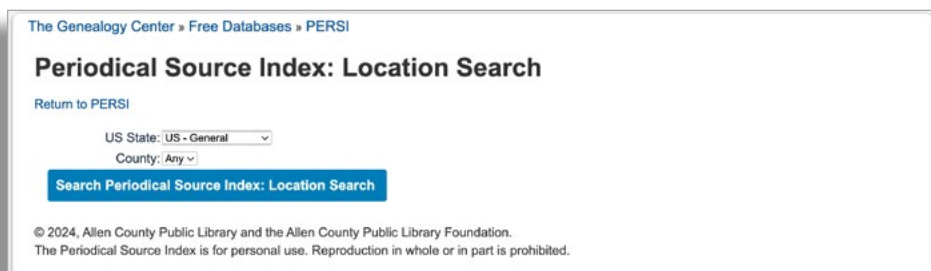


Figure 2

School's in Session!

by Russell A. Rahn

Census records are one of the major sources for discovering when and where our ancestors lived. When available, they can help us track families through time and assist in joining family members together. Unfortunately, there seems to have been at least some aversion to providing information and participating in the program on the part of some of our ancestors.

Whether this was due to a fear of excessive government supervision, loss of privacy, additional taxation, or some other reason, it is not unusual for someone to be missed in a particular census record even though we are certain that they lived at that location at that time. Somehow, they just managed “not to be at home” when the census taker came around and then “accidentally” overlooked sending in any forms which may have been left behind.

Fortunately, there are other ways to document the presence of an individual or a family in a community. One such method would be using school attendance records. Folks did not seem to mind having information recorded about them and their children through a school attendance record; thus, when available, they can be useful substitutes.

A *Register of Attendance for School District Number 5 in Orleans Township of Jefferson County, New York*, (1916) proved to be a valuable find. This book contained much information that could be considered of a confidential nature, which will not be included here. However, one page, the “Census Schedule,” is the one where the true genealogical gold can be found. It is illustrated and summarized in table 1.

CENSUS SCHEDULE						
Names of parents or other persons with whom the children live	NAMES AND DATES OF BIRTH OF CHILDREN BETWEEN 5 AND 18 (Follow the form given below) Census of August 30, 1916	Children between 5 and 18		Children between 8 and 16		Town in which they reside
		Male	Female	No. of each in the family	How many of those attended public school during entire school year	
(Example) J. Richards	James (Aug. 20, 1898), Charles (July 15, 1901), Mary (May 7, 1906)	2	1	2	3	Herkimer
F. Allen	Elton (Jun. 27, 1904), Ruth (Sept. 9, 1905) Pearl (Nov. 27, 1907)	1	2	3		Orleans
J. Wrape	Leslie (Aug. 9, 1902)	1		1		Orleans
O. Hotis	Herschel (Nov. 15, 1905), Harold (Aug. 27, 1909)	2		2		Orleans
J. Schulz	Margaretta (May 20, 1909)		1	1		Orleans
F. Vogt	Louise (Aug. 23, 1902), Viola (Aug. 1, 1904) Margaret (June 4, 1908), Albert (Apr. 2, 1911)	1	3	4		Orleans

Census Schedule from the Register of Attendance for School District Number 5 in Orleans Township of Jefferson County, New York, dated 30 August 1916.

While the classroom was obviously a small one, the information it offers could indeed be helpful to some researchers. One of the more interesting sidelights in the book has to do with teacher wages. For 180 days of service from September 25th through June 12th (circa 1916), the teacher, Miss Helen Fairman, received the grand sum of \$356.40. (This was after the

Table 1: Transcribed school census schedule of figure 1

Parent's name	Student	Student's Birthdate	Town of Residence
F. Allen	Elton	27 June 1904	Orleans
	Ruth	9 September 1905	Orleans
	Pearl	27 November 1907	Orleans
J. Wrape	Leslie	9 August 1902	Orleans
O. Hotis	Herschel	15 November 1905	Orleans
	Harold	27 August 1909	Orleans
J. Schulz	Margaretta	20 May 1909	Orleans
F. Vogt	Louise	23 August 1902	Orleans
	Viola	1 August 1904	Orleans
	Margaret	4 June 1908	Orleans
	Albert	2 April 1911	Orleans

2025 SEMINAR SERIES



Save the dates!

Honoring Your Shamrocks:

Irish and Scots-Irish Research

presented by the

Ulster Historical Foundation

and on March 16th

One-on-One Research Consultations

with

Fintan Mullan & Gillian Hunt

MARCH 15 & 16

Somos Familia:

*Tracing Your Mexican Ancestors
on Both Sides of the Border*

with **Colleen Robledo-Greene**

MLIS, FTxSGS

JULY 26

Details of Her Life:

*Discovering More about
our Women Ancestors*

with **Gena Philibert Ortega**

OCTOBER 25

Learn More & Register @ dallasgenealogy.org

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 (Open)

The [North Texas Genealogical Association](#) (NTGA) board met in July for a planning session, in which programs and activities for the next year were scheduled. Next year's plans include a visit from the Wichita County Archivist to show how genealogists can use that resource. October will feature genealogy tricks and treats. For the May 2025 meeting, members will be invited to share stories of American war veterans in their family tree. Other program ideas include a talk by a local landowner about local history, including an Indian encampment located on his property, and a possible field trip to an area history museum. NTGA members will be enlisted to fulfill requests for photos from local cemeteries.

NTGA meets in the hybrid format, both in person and via zoom.

District C

Emily Richardson,
District Representative

The [Collin County Genealogical Society](#) (CCGS) holds hybrid meetings the second Wednesday each month except July and August. Speaker Sara Cochran kicked off the fall on September 11 with "Irish Eyes Are Smiling: Finding Vital Records in the Land of Saints and Scholars." October 9 brought Jim Brewster to present "Tool Time with FamilyTreeDNA." Find society information and upcoming programs on the [CCGS Facebook page](#).

CCGS is excited to announce the Collin County Historical Commission is a sponsor of their most recent digitization project. The society was awarded a \$3,643 grant in June to digitize the McKinney historical city directories. This grant was funded in part by the Collin County Historical Commission. The Portal to Texas History will digitize the city directories and make them freely accessible on their website. The Portal to Texas

History recently completed digitizing the last set of the *McKinney Examiner* newspapers.

Prompted by great speakers and topics during the 2023-2024 year, *Heritage Ranch Genealogical Society* (HRGS) membership grew to pre-Covid levels by the end of May. After a summer break, HRGS resumed meetings in September. HRGS's September program was a member favorite, "Saints or Sinners." Members spoke about an ancestor that fits one of these categories; these ancestors make for interesting research.

During the summer, the [Robson Ranch Genealogy Club](#) (RRGC) met once each month and held help sessions. This summer included presentations on "City Directories" by Sandra Crowley and "WikiTree Basics" by David Randall. In addition, the club had a watch day that featured three videos from RootsTech 2024. In September, RRGc viewed a TxSGS webinar by Kim Richardson, "Relatively

Cheap Research and Education for the Frugal Genealogist.” In addition, Emily Richardson presented “Timelines to Analyze Your Research.” This fall, club members will focus on writing about a woman from their ancestry for RRG’s semi-annual journal. Tony Hanson will be visiting in October to discuss “Why Finding Atlantic Shipping Records is Challenging.”

District D

Larry Pettit,
District Representative

The [*Hopkins County Genealogical Society*](#) (HCGS) continues to offer its Fourth Wednesday Lunch & Learn sessions at no charge! Bring your sandwich, salad, or drive-thru meal and meet with HCGS from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the genealogy library, 611 N. Davis Street, Sulphur Springs, Texas. Each month, various volunteers present topics intended to advance members’ genealogical research skills. Preregistration is not required. See hcgstx.org/events/lunchlearn for more information.

HCGS will hold its annual Cemetery Walk at the Sulphur Springs City Cemetery on Sunday, November 10, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. As Veteran’s Day is November 11, HCGS volunteers will focus on bringing to life Hopkins County pioneer veterans or family members who have served our country. Taps will be played at the event to honor our veterans. The Cemetery Walk is \$10.00 per person; no preregistration is required.

District E (Open)

The [*San Angelo Genealogical and Historical Society*](#) (SAGHS) opened their 2024-2025 year in a virtual meeting with J. Mark Lowe, FUGA, presenting “A Day with Criminal Court Records.” The 2024-2025



Through *Stirpes*, our blog, Facebook, and more, TxSGS delivers Texas genealogy news to thousands of researchers, hobbyists, and professionals across the nation. Wouldn't you like to get your society news and events publicized among this large group of avid genealogists?

Speaker Series features top speakers on genealogical topics such as getting started in German genealogy, custom genealogy maps with Google, and an introduction to artificial intelligence for genealogists. Local history topics include Colonel John Moore’s 1840 Indian fight, old homes of San Angelo, and shearing sheep and Angora goats.

SAGHS has just passed a milestone—40 genealogy webinars are now available for viewing behind the SAGHS website’s member wall! The webinars are recordings of past SAGHS virtual and in-person programs on genealogy and West Texas history topics.

District F

Peter G. Jacobs,
District Representative

The [*Arlington Genealogical Society*](#) (AGS) continues to meet both in person and virtually at and from the city’s George Hawkes Downtown Library location. The October speaker is Kelly Crager, head of the Oral History Project at the Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University. The program, “Finding Native American

Indian Ancestors” was rescheduled to November. See the AGS website or follow www.arlingtongenealogytx.org for more late fall season meeting and program information.

In its 67th year, the [*Fort Worth Genealogical Society*](#) (FWGS) is committed to the history and genealogy of Fort Worth, as well as Tarrant and surrounding counties in North Texas. FWGS continues to bring monthly genealogy programs to members and visitors. After the sale of the central branch library downtown, the genealogy collection was moved en masse to the stand-alone Fort Worth History Center. Serving the community from the new location has provided the FWGS with new possibilities. The society has completely redone its website and now offers a Members Only section.

Situated halfway between Dallas and Fort Worth, the [*Mid-Cities Genealogical Society*](#) (MCGS) welcomes all who share an interest in family history in the Hurst, Bedford, and Euless communities. MCGS meets both in person and virtually. Daniel Horowitz, main spokesperson for MyHeritage, spoke to MCGS in September. The October and

November meeting programs will feature two presenters familiar to most Texas genealogists, Susan Kaufman and Bill Buckner. See the MCGS website for more information about meetings and programs or follow @mid-cities on Facebook.

In [TXGenWeb](#) news for District F, both Tarrant County and Somervell County [188 square miles, the second-smallest area among Texas counties] need GenWeb coordinators. Keep this link, txgenweb.org/county.htm, in your browser favorite list, and you are two clicks away from any of the Texas County GenWeb pages.

District G

Cheryl Freeman,
District Representative

The [Dallas Genealogical Society](#) (DGS) held a June fundraising workshop, “You Have Your Ancestry.com DNA Results: Now What?”, that attracted 78 in-person and virtual participants. To date in 2024, the society has donated \$18,225 to the Genealogy and History section of the Dallas Public Library: \$4,180 for a service contract on a i2S CopiBook Scanner available to library patrons; \$6,545 to provide patron access to NewspaperArchive.com and HistoryGEO.com; \$1,972 to purchase 64 books to be added to the library collection; and \$7,500 to fund a 5-year educational scholarship for genealogy and history section staff members.

District H

Bill Buckner,
District Representative

The [Bell County Genealogical Society](#) (BCGS) holds a day of activity on the fourth Saturday of each month. At 11:00 a.m., BCGS hosts “Genealogical Guidance” in the genealogy room of the Temple Public

Library to assist library patrons in tasks ranging from getting started in genealogy to destroying their brick walls. Monthly meetings follow at 2:00 p.m. in the Bell County AgriLife Extension Office in Belton. Recent programs include “Finding Relatives in Unknown Places,” “Institutional Records and Where to Find Them,” and “Breaking Down Your Brick Walls.” BCGS’s May meeting was cancelled after a tornado hit the Belton/Temple area.

The fall quarterly meeting of the [Bosque County Genealogical and Historical Society](#) (BCGHS) was held on Saturday, October 5, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the new BCGHS Family History Library, 9251 Hwy. 6 in Meridian. Erin Shields, executive director, Bosque Museum presented “Fall at the Bosque Museum.” On Saturday, September 14, BCGHS volunteers cleaned the headstone of Hendrick and Christine Dahl in Our Saviors Lutheran Cemetery, Norse.

The [Central Texas Genealogical Society](#) (CTGS) held its 2nd Annual Open House for the public on August 26. This fun, come-and-go event celebrated their members’ passion for genealogy and family heritage. Refreshments were served and informational tables were set up for volunteers to answer questions about special research interest groups such as German, Southeastern U.S., and DNA. CTGS continues to provide great programs at its monthly meetings including Patti Huff Williams in June speaking on “GEDmatch.com: Taking Your DNA Results to the Next Level!”; Gina Andrie in July presenting “Boston and The 250th Anniversary of this Destruction of Tea!”; and in September, Brian Bivona shed light on how to trace your Italian ancestors from immigration back to their Italian homelands. CTGS is a co-sponsor of

The 23rd Annual Genealogy Lock-In to be held on Friday, October 18, 2024. Registration is now open for this free event at <https://calendar.wacolibrary.org/event/11525947>

In May, the [Erath County Genealogical Society](#) (ECGS) hosted an enthusiastic group at a rural cemetery for a Cemetery Preservation Clinic led by Erath County Historical Commission’s Cindy Shipman. Volunteers cleaned markers and helped one another attempt grave dowsing. At the July meeting at the Dublin Public Library, Erath County Clerk Gwinda Jones demonstrated researching free online historical county records at <https://www.co.erath.tx.us/35/Online-Services>. An August round table featured Erath County native Mary Jo Kenny sharing the saga of the Colwell and Kenny families’ 1835 arrival in Texas and subsequent migration to Erath. Request the monthly newsletter at ecgs.dpl@gmail.com.

To make their evening programs more interesting to members and visitors, the [Pecan Valley Genealogical Society](#) (PVGS) is now starting their meetings with the program and ending with the business meeting. The June program featured a presentation by a local retired forensic police officer who had appeared on television shows such as *48 Hours*. The annual PVGS July picnic was held at Underwoods’ Cafeteria in Brownwood. In addition to meeting information, the [PVGS website](#) offers many research tools. Sadly, PVGS lost one of their founding members, Merle Stevens, on June 29, 2024.

The [Texas Czech Genealogical Society](#) (TCGS) has new headquarters: 203 South Main Street, Caldwell, Texas. TCGS gratefully acknowledges the SPJST (Slovanska Podporujici Jednota Statu Texas) for all they have done to

support TCGS and our Czech culture by hosting the society in the SPJST building in Temple.

The next TCGS event is slated November 2 at the Caldwell Civic Center where honor and remembrances will be given to veterans. The day's events include genealogical and informative presentations. TCGS President Patrick J. Janis was TCGS's 2024 honoree at the Texans of Czech Ancestry (TOCA) Appreciation Banquet and Awards Ceremony. Along with honorees from other TOCA organizations, he received recognition for his efforts to preserve and promote everything Czech. *Czech Churches*, the newest book from TCGS is now available. The book includes many photos and covers the history of churches both operational and defunct as well as accompanying cemeteries.

District I
Paula Perkins,
District Representative

The [Freestone County Historical Museum](#) is located on 302 E. Main in downtown Fairfield. Appointments are recommended for genealogical library research; phone 903-389-3738. Meetings are slated the first Tuesday of every quarter at the Teague Hotel. For more information, see <http://www.freestonecomuseum.com>.

Meetings of the [Hill County Genealogical Society](#) (HCGS) have moved to the Hill Regional Hospital Conference Room, 101 Circle Drive, Hillsboro, Texas. Members and visitors are encouraged to join them at 6:00 p.m. on the first Monday of each month, unless that date falls on a holiday. District Representative Paula Perkins attended the July meeting and shared a few words about the TxSGS fall conference.

The [Navarro County Genealogical](#)

[Society](#) (NCGS) continues to hold quarterly meetings with interesting programs. The July 23 meeting featured a free "Ancestry.com 101" workshop at the Corsicana Public Library. NCGS invites everyone to come to Corsicana and visit the Corsicana Public Library's genealogy department.

For over twenty-five years, [The TXGenWeb Project](#) has provided freely available genealogical information online. To continue this valuable volunteer-driven resource, TxGenWeb is seeking volunteers and invites you to Join The Team! Texas residency is not a requirement. For more information about volunteering, see <https://www.txgenweb.org/volunteer.htm>.

The [Van Zandt County Genealogical Society](#) (VZCGS) meets the fourth Saturday of each month, but check the VZCGS website and Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/VanZandtCountyGenealogy/>) for updates on time, date, and location.

District K (Open)


The [Genealogical Society of Kendall County](#) (GSKC) meets the third Saturday of the month except June, July, and August. Monthly meetings featuring special programs for members and visitors are in person and held at the Patrick Heath Public Library

community room in Boerne, Texas.

At the beginning of September, GSKC held their annual research trip to the FamilySearch Library in Salt Lake City. GSKC's First Families Celebration was held later in September. The First Families program documents early families in Kendall County; at the celebration, certificates were given to those who, in the past year, proved their descent from a founding family or settler. The proof documents for First Family certificates are available at the GSKC research center, The Family History Place, in Boerne, Texas.

In October, GSKC will participate with The Genealogy Network of Texas by holding Genealogy Marathon 2024. This event is sponsored by the Waco-McLennan County Library, Central Texas Genealogical Society, Texas State Genealogical Society, and the Genealogy Network of Texas. Also in October, GSKC will hold their annual "Gone But Not Forgotten" Boerne Cemetery tour.

GSKC's annual all-day in-person seminar is slated February 2025 in Boerne with Drew Smith as the featured speaker. Additional information on these and other events can be found on the events tab on our website, www.gskctx.org. ★

<h2>Heroes of the Past</h2>	<i>Discover Your Heritage</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Texas and Southern Family History Research ◆ Family History Books ◆ Group Training and Individual Coaching ◆ Site Photography 	<p><i>Find out more at...</i></p> <p>www.heroesofthepast.com inquiry@heroesofthepast.com 469-516-1064</p> <p>Jim Thornhill Project Leader</p>
	
Heroes	of the Past

Biographies in Unusual Places

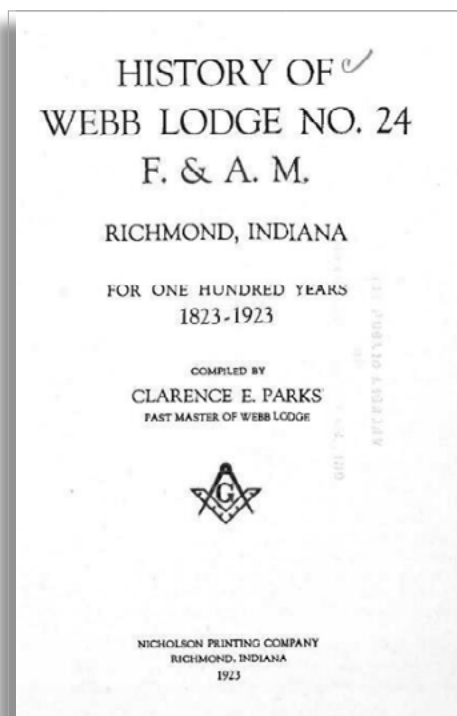
by Russell A. Rahn

Biographical sketches are a helpful source of family information, often containing vital records, names and relations of family members, achievements of the subject, and a brief overview of the subject's life. Genealogists are familiar with the biographical sketches found in community histories (see page 13). Where else can these sketches be found?

I recently added a small volume to my bookshelf, *History of Webb Lodge No. 24 F. & A. M. for One Hundred Years: 1823-1923* by Clarence E. Parks. This book details the history of the lodge, lists officers and the years they served, and provides a name of every man who had been a member of the lodge since 1823. The membership listing includes the year they were initiated or affiliated with the lodge and the year they died.

Past lodge masters were honored with biographical sketches. Since this title is not likely to be found in private libraries, I thought it could be useful to list the names and add some of the data for these masters. Those listed without death dates were still living at the time the book was published.

The men's birth years range from 1783 to 1884; vital information and context for their lives gleaned from the biographical sketches may be unavailable anywhere else. The biographies of men who had died prior to the book's publication were likely written by a family member. The sketches often note which family member held the subject's masonic apron; perhaps that person provided the biography. As always, details in a biographical sketch should be



confirmed through other sources.

The forward notes that in the early 1900s, the Grand Lodge of Indiana F. & A. M. instructed each lodge in its jurisdiction to prepare its history and forward the same to the Grand Lodge for preservation in its archives. Referenced in the forward as a booklet, this earlier publication isn't as extensive as the *History of Webb Lodge*. Of interest to genealogists is the indication that histories of lodges can be found

at the Grand Lodge of Indiana and perhaps at other grand lodges throughout the U.S.

Exploring biographical sketches in lesser-known publications like lodge histories can uncover valuable insights and connections that may not be found elsewhere. By seeking out these unique resources, genealogists can piece together more complete family stories, adding depth and richness to their research.

Editor's note: Since Russ penned this article, *History of Webb Lodge No. 24 F. & A. M. for One Hundred Years: 1823-1923* by Clarence E. Parks has been digitized and is now available online at FamilySearch at <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/299249/>. ★

About Russell A. Rahn: Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Russell moved to Texas in 1979 with his wife and four children. After a 40-year career teaching junior high school science, he retired and pursued his lifetime interest in genealogy along with traveling with his wife, spending time with their family, reading, and listening to classical music. Russell passed away 29 June 2021; *Stirpes* is honored to continue publishing his articles.

Index

- A**
 Abbott, Deborah A. 35, 42
 Allen, Elton 63, 64
 Allen, F. 63
 Allen, Frank B. 64
 Allen, Pearl 63, 64
 Allen, Ruth 63
 Allen, Ruth E. 64
 Anderson, Cordelia L. 51
 Anderson, Edward C. 51
 Anderson, Julia A. 35
 Anderson, Sarah Knox 51
 Andrews, Cody B. 4
 Andrie, Gina 73
 Ardell, Elizabeth D. 4
 Argersinger, Christina 4
 Auxer III, Guy H. 4
- B**
 Baker, Carl L. 78
 Ball, Susan 4, 81
 Ball, Susan E. 1, 2, 3, 19, 46
 Baltorinich, Barbara 9
 Baltorinich, Petrus 9
 Baltorinich, Peter 9
 Barnes, Samantha 1, 3, 50
 Barry, Susan F. 4
 Bebout, James Alexander 59
 Behn, Laurie Gray 4
 Bethea, James A. 62
 Bivona, Brian 73
 Black, Harriet Dewey 21
 Black, Henry M. 21, 22, 23
 Black, H. M. 46, 47
 Boren, Marla J. 4
 Bower, Catherine J. 4
 Brewster, Jim 71
 Bridwell, Ernal Wilson 32
 Brooks, Carol 4
 Brooks, Ray O. 17
 Buckner, William D. "Bill" 2, 3, 17, 32, 73, 81
 Bullard, Mary 4
 Burk, Lewis 78
 Byer, Mason T. 78
- C**
 Casey, Jesse 10
 Casey, Nancy Gilbride 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 11, 35
 Cassidy, Catherine 9
 Cassidy, John Patrick 11
 Cassidy, Mary Jane 11
 Celinšćak, Barbara 9
 Celinšćak, Georgu 9
 Celinšćak, Hellena 9
- Chessman, Henry C. 78
 Christmas, Henrietta Martinez 4, 35
 Clayton, William L. 44
 Coale, Walter P. 78
 Cochran, Geneva Shannon 4
 Cochran, Sara 71
 Cochran, Terry L. 4
 Cole, Warren Henry 62
 Collins, Samuel 4
 Collins, Spencer 4
 Conklin, Samuel 78
 Coughlin, Amy EM 4
 Courreges, Wayne Allen 4
 Cozzens, Charlotte Bass 54
 Crager, Kelly 72
 Crivil, Edward 78
 Crowley, Sandra J. 1, 2, 3, 5, 25, 71, 81
 Culpon, Melinda 4
 Curtis, Sarah Ann 54
 Cushman, Minerva 10
- D**
 Dahl, Christine 73
 Dahl, Hendrick 73
 Dalbey, Walter L. 78
 Daniel Stuart 62
 Davis, Robert F. 78
 Diamond, Carol 4
 Doolittle, Harold Medoris 62
 Douglas, Laura 81
 Doyle, Michele 39
 Dyer, Nicole 35, 45
- E**
 Edwin Joseph 62
 Elder, Diana 35, 42, 45
 Elliott, J. R. 65
 Ericson, Toni 4
 Evans, Lela 81
 Ewan, Ernest O. 78
- F**
 Fabre, John 51
 Fairman, Helen 63
 Fake, Sarah 54
 Felihkatubbe, Jason 36
 Fetta, Christian H. 78
 Finley, John 78
 Flack, Teri 81
 Fleming, Samuel 78
 Foreman, Clarence W. 78
 Foust, Harriet L. 23
 Foust, W. C. 23
 Fowler, R. E. 47
 Freeman, Cheryl 73, 81
 Froebel, Barbara J. 81
- G**
 Gaines, S. Burton 78
 Garner, LaDonna 36
 Gause, George A. 78
 Gebhardt, Sharron Lee 4
 George, TJ 81
 Gordon, Pat 5
 Greene, Colleen Robledo 36, 42
 Guilbeau, Roxie 4
 Gurtler, Debbie 36, 42
- H**
 Hall, William C. 67
 Hammack, Maria E. 4
 Handley, Lawrence A. 78
 Hannah, Samuel 78
 Hanson, Tony 5, 72, 75, 81, 82
 Harrington, Samuel H. 78
 Harris, George L. 66
 Hempleman, Aaron W. 78
 Hibben, Jean Wilcox 36
 Hill, James Abraham 62
 Hobart, Dean 4
 Hodge, LeRoy 78
 Hogan, Roseann 4
 Horowitz, Daniel 39, 72
 Hotis, Harold 63, 64
 Hotis, Herschel 63, 64
 Hotis, O. 63
 Hotis, Orra B. 64
 Hubert, Rebecca F. 4
 Hughes, J. M. (Dummy) 17
 Hughes, Mrs. Bennie (Tamplin) 17
 Hughes, Parilee Daniels 17
- J**
 Jacobs, Pete 72
 Jacobs, Peter G. 81
 Janis, Patrick J. 74
 Jenckes, Alice Woodward 54
 Johnson, Belinda B. 4
 Johnson, Lyndon 10
 Johnson, Reginald A. 4
 Johnston, Daniel W. 78
 Joiner, Columbus Marion 14
 Jones, Wanda L. 4
 Jupe, Sister Mary Elizabeth 16
- K**
 Kaufman, Susan 73, 81
 Keelor, Harry C. 78
 Keiller, William 62
 Kenny, Mary Jo 73
 Keszler, Rosalie G. 4
 Kiaune, Edward A. 4
- Kibby, John C. 78
 Klaus, Kevin 40
 Knapp, Frances Curtiss 51
 Knox, Algenia 54
 Knox, Alice Woodward 51
 Knox, Caroline E. 51
 Knox, Caroline Todd 51
 Knox, Carrie 51
 Knox, Charles E. 51
 Knox, Charles Eugene 52, 54
 Knox, Charles Rhodes 51
 Knox, Charlotte B. 51
 Knox, Cordelia L. 54
 Knox, Eliza Ann 54
 Knox, Emma Louise 51, 54
 Knox, Frederick Jay 51
 Knox, George William 51
 Knox, Helen Theodosia 51
 Knox, Henry Cozzens 51
 Knox, Henry Martyn 51, 54
 Knox, Herbert Eugene 51
 Knox, James Curtiss 51, 54
 Knox, James Theodore 51
 Knox, John 51
 Knox, John Henry 51
 Knox Jr., John J. 51, 52
 Knox, John Jay 51, 52, 54
 Knox, Lucy Anna 51
 Knox, Mary Alice 51
 Knox, Mary Elizabeth 51
 Knox, Mary Fake 51
 Knox, Mary Louisa 51
 Knox, Robert Jenkes 51
 Knox, Sarah 51
 Knox, Sarah Adelaide 52, 54
 Knox, Sarah Ann 51
 Knox, Sarah Fake 51
 Knox, William 51
 Knox, William Eaton 51, 54
 Knox, William Strong 51
 Kozlina, Margaret Simonik 10
 Kubacak, Hannah 1, 3, 13, 18
- L**
 LaFreniere, Tina 40
 Lambert, Elaine Gambill 4
 Land, Charles H. 78
 Lavene, Laura L. 4
 Lesley, Jack Renfro 4
 Longan, Karen L. 4
 Lowe, J. Mark 36, 42, 72
 Luckett, Larry W. 4
 Lynde, William W. 78
 Lyttle, Annette Burke 36

M

Machu, Nancy 4
 Magdalena, Sister M. 11
 Marlatt, Charles E. 78
 Marlatt, Samuel 78
 Maughan, Allyson 36
 McCracken, Peter 41
 McGuffin, Tina 81
 McKee, Thomas R. 4
 Meisner, Bernard 5, 37
 Mendenhall, James R. 78
 Meyers, Kelvin L. 37
 Miller, Gail Jackson 37
 Mills, Betsy 2, 81, 82
 Minke, Janet S. 4
 Mize, Tami Osmer 2
 Mondolf, Brother 11
 Moore, John 72
 Moore, Robert Milo 62
 Morris, Robert R. 78
 Moyer, Carl Alfred 62

N

Neff, Edward D. 78
 Neill, Michael 42
 Neill, Michael John 37
 Nobles, Charles N. 4
 Noelke, Wynnell 4
 North, John Paul 62

O

Ogborn, Albert G. 78

P

Paice, Gary P. 4
 Paice, Zena F. 4
 Parks, Clarence E. 3, 77, 78
 Pearce, Henry Davis 32
 Penn, William 67
 Perkins, James A. 65
 Perkins, Paula 1, 3, 5, 65, 69, 74, 81
 Persall, Judy Ardith 4
 Pete, Cassandra S. 4
 Peterson, Charles A. 78
 Pettit, Larry 72, 81
 Phillips, Robert W. 78
 Poe, James M. 78
 Pugh, William 78

R

Rahe, Alton J. 13
 Rahn, Barbara 52
 Rahn, Russell A. 1, 3, 51, 52, 62, 63, 64, 77
 Randall, David 71
 Ratliff, Joseph 78
 Raymond, Robert 41

Redfern, Andrew 37, 42
 Rees, Albert W. 78
 Reeves, Edwin Joseph 62
 Reynolds, Linda 81
 Rhodes, Benjamin 51
 Rhodes, Catherine Taylor 51
 Rhodes, Charles 51, 54
 Rhodes, John Knox 51
 Rhodes, Mary Thomas 51
 Rhodes, Sarah Knox 51
 Richard, Diane L. 37, 42
 Richardson, Emily 71, 72, 81
 Richardson, Emily Coffman 1, 3, 5, 19, 58, 61
 Richardson, Kim 71
 Roden, George Daniel 4
 Rogillio, Deta 81
 Roquemore, Haggard 17
 Roquemore, James Lary 17
 Roquemore, Mrs. J. L. (Sallie) 17
 Rouquemore, J. L. 17
 Rowe-Schurwanz, Katy 37, 42
 Rush, David 59
 Rush, Mary "Polly" Lewis 59
 Rush, Polly 59
 Ryan, David 38

S

Schepman, L. Homer 78
 Schiltz, Peter 9
 Schultz, Margareta 64
 Schulz, J. 63
 Schulz, Jacob 64
 Schulz, Margareta 63
 Sharp, Elizabeth 59
 Shaw, Robert Roeder 62
 Shipman, Cindy 73
 Simonik, Margaret 11
 Smith, Adelaide Strong 51
 Smith, Christine A. 4
 Smith, Drew 74
 Smith, George D. 51
 Smith, George Leonard 51
 Smith, James B. 78
 Smith, Stephanie Susan 4
 Smith, Thomas "Ty" 4
 Smith, William B. 78
 Solomon, Gay 41
 Sparkman, Robert S. 3, 62
 Spear, Dorothy N. 25
 Stanton, Stephen B. 78
 Starley, Jessica H. 4
 Steakley, Carol 4
 Stevens, A. Clark 78
 Stevens, Merle 73
 Strassner, Bernd H. 4
 Strassner, Liz D. 4

Straten, Herman 16, 17
 Strauss, Michael 42
 Strauss, Michael L. 38
 Strong, Frances Adelaide 51
 Strong, Sarah Adelaide 51
 Strong, William 52
 Strong, William Neil 51, 54
 Study, Justin N. 78
 Swierczewski, Edward 38

T

Taylor, Edwin Orlando 10
 Taylor, Rebecca S. 4
 Thoes, MeLinda 4
 Thomas, Earl E. 78
 Thomas, Mary 54
 Thompson, Susan K. 4
 Thornhill, Jim 1, 3, 5, 6, 8
 Todd, Caroline E. 54
 Torella, Roslyn 38
 Torres, Mary O. 81
 Townsend, Mary Frances 4
 Trevino, Leslie 4
 Tucker, Dorothy 39

V

Villareal, Becky 4
 Vogt, Albert 63, 64
 Vogt, F. 63
 Vogt, F. Andrew 64
 Vogt, Louise 63, 64
 Vogt, Margaret 63, 64
 Vogt, Viola 63, 64

W

Ward, O. Frank 78
 Whited, Randy 81
 Whitley, Mary Elizabeth 54
 Wier, Daniel Stuart 62
 Williams, Eliza 51
 Williams, George M. 68
 Williams, Jane Ellen 4
 Williams, John A. 51
 Williams, John J. Knox 51
 Williams, Monty L. 4
 Williams, Patti Huff 4, 73
 Williams, Patty Lynn 4
 Williams, Thomas 51, 54
 Wilson, Adeline 17
 Wineberg, William E. 78
 Witt, Dow 67
 Wolfe, Karl L. 78
 Woods, Melody Hooper 5

Woodworth, Linda 4
 Woodworth, Merlin 4
 Woolverton, Carrie 4
 Wrape, J. 63
 Wrape, John C. 64
 Wrape, Leslie 63, 64
 Wylie, John 81

Y

Yoders, Jacob 59

LOOK INSIDE

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