

THE JOURNAL OF THE TEXAS STATE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY INC.

# 13 stripes

## Military Research: *Beyond the Battlefield*





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

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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



The December 2024 issue of *Stirpes* takes readers on a journey “Beyond the Battlefield,” exploring the invaluable contributions military research can bring to family history. This theme resonates throughout the articles, highlighting the significance of military service and its legacy in genealogical exploration.

In “Unlocking Fold3: A Genealogist’s Guide to Military Records,” Jim Thornhill provides practical advice for navigating Fold3, the premier repository of online military records. “The DAR Website as a Research Resource” by Susan E. Ball explores this invaluable tool for genealogists with colonial American ancestors.

Nancy Gilbride Casey showcases two remarkable initiatives honoring Texas veterans in “Two Cemetery Projects Memorialize Thousands of Texas Veterans.” “Marking a Patriot Grave for America’s 250th Anniversary” by Janine Sandford also highlights the importance of cemeteries in military research. In this article, Janine reflects on her experience commemorating her Revolutionary War ancestors.

Nancy Wright Brennan addresses contributions of Huguenot ancestors during a pivotal era in “Huguenots in the American Revolutionary War.” In “Grandma’s V-Mail Letters: Forging Bonds During Wartime,” Nancy Gilbride

Casey shares poignant wartime correspondence between two friends. Bill Buckner reviews *Under the Double Eagle: Citizen Employees of the U.S. Army on the Texas Frontier, 1846-1899* by Thomas T. (Ty) Smith, revealing Ty’s meticulous exploration of citizen employees of the U.S. Army in Texas.

Correspondence between relatives seeking American Revolution connections is the impetus for Russell A. Rahn’s “Don’t Forget the Envelope,” and the family tree he creates based on the correspondence and an envelope’s notes.

Volunteers are a valuable asset for genealogy societies. TxSGS outgoing president Susan E. Ball honors the contribution of volunteers in “Recognizing Sharon Bowles: TxSGS Volunteer of the Year” and “Volunteer Spotlight,” which highlights those TxSGS volunteers who were awarded certificates of appreciation, presidential citations, and presidential commendations.

We especially want to draw your attention to the incoming TxSGS board of directors in “Introducing New Officers for the 2025-2026 Term.”

Additionally, this issue recaps the 2024 TxSGS Family History Conference, the 2024 Annual Business Meeting Highlights, the 2024 TxSGS Awards Ceremony

and awards listing, the *Stirpes* Study Group program for Partner Societies, and the inauguration of the “Genealogy Essentials” course. Looking ahead, we invite you to discover the opportunities available at TIGR 2025 to deepen your research skills.

Be sure to read the “Partner Society Roundup” for genealogical society news from TxSGS’s Partner Societies across Texas. You might find an event of interest in your area.

Finally, as we reflect on the 2024 holiday season, we wish all our readers a happy 2025 and share with you the hopeful, heartfelt, holiday desires of our readers in “Genealogy Wishes for the Holidays.” As we celebrate the legacy of service and sacrifice of the servicemen and women in our families, let us honor our ancestors by continuing to preserve their stories. To aid in that endeavor, our March issue focuses on storytelling. We have a terrific group of articles lined up—you won’t want to miss it! ★

—*Stirpes* Editors





# Two Cemetery Projects Memorialize Thousands of Texas Veterans

by Nancy Gilbride Casey

If you have Texas ancestors who served in the military and are buried in Texas, you might want to send a thank you card to Linda Jonas and Joe Spears. Their efforts may guarantee that your veteran is properly remembered—whether they fought in the Civil War, WWII, the Gulf War, or any other U.S. military conflict in the past several centuries.

I know Joe and Linda as fellow members of the [Denton County Genealogical Society](#), and it's there that I first began to hear talk of two amazing projects they have been working on to memorialize Texas veterans.

What I learned was astounding. Between them, Linda and Joe have successfully documented nearly 6,000 Texas veteran gravesites in the past two years in separate projects.

For them, recognizing veterans is personal. Joe joined the U.S. Army after three years in college, served in Vietnam, and received a Purple Heart.

Linda's father served in the Marine Corps, and she has ancestors who fought in the Civil War, the War of 1812, and the Revolutionary War. Finding ways to honor military veterans was a natural outgrowth of the pair's personal and family histories and their genealogical endeavors.

## Remember Them Forever

Joe began volunteering with the **Remember Them Forever** (RTF) Project, a [Texas Veterans](#)

[Hall of Fame](#) (TVHOF) program, after his wife, Donna, became an RTF coordinator for a local historic cemetery. With a goal to memorialize the several million veterans buried in Texas, Joe says the RTF project is a long-term one. "There are over 50,000 cemeteries in Texas, so during my lifetime it will be ongoing!"

It's a team effort. Joe outlines the process undertaken by a group of about eight volunteers: "I confirm the data of marked veterans and then search the cemetery for all men and some women of service age to identify those without government-provided military gravestones. Sponsored conflict-specific medallions with QR codes are placed on the veterans' graves. Each QR code links to that veterans' data in the database."

The results of this work are impressive. "As of today, there are over 10,600 veterans entered into the TVHOF database. These heroes are buried in over 50 cemeteries." Of his own efforts, Joe says, "I have proven over 2,400 veterans in 41 cemeteries, most without military gravestones, in 3,500 hours." For his work, Joe was inducted into the Texas Veterans Hall of Fame in November, receiving the organization's Patriot Award.

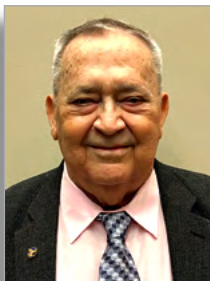


Figure 1: Joe Spears



Figure 2: Linda Jonas at WWI veteran Edgar Baker's Gainesville grave site. Baker's final resting place was misidentified as both Valley View and Muenster in records but was finally located in Fairview Cemetery, Gainesville, Cooke County, Texas.

## Memorial of Honor Project

For Linda, it all began in a cemetery—of course. "I was photographing cemeteries using the BillionGraves app, and a veteran said he wished that children in his school program could place flags on the graves of veterans. However, he didn't want them to have to walk through entire cemeteries trying to find the veterans. I said, 'Oh, I can fix that.' I began a year and a half ago by locating the graves of veterans who died in service so they could be honored on Memorial Day, 2024."

After flags were placed on all their graves, Linda decided to locate all veterans in Cooke County. "I discovered many veterans who have no grave markers at all, and I have begun to apply for military headstones," says Linda.

# Marking a Patriot Grave in Celebration of the Upcoming America 250! Anniversary

by Janine Sanford

**M**y maternal grandmother, from Quakertown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, was born a Benner. When I saw two Benner names in the “new patriots” section of the *Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Newsletter*, I inquired about and was able to submit the documentation to link to John and Elizabeth Benner and John’s parents Ludwick and Catharine Benner.

John, Elizabeth, and Ludwick’s tombstones are found at the cemetery located next to the St. Peter’s Tohickon United Church of Christ on Old Bethlehem Pike in Perkasio, Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> Catherine Benner’s tombstone has not been located to date.

Personally, there was value in permanently marking these Pennsylvania Patriot ancestors’ graves, who are recognized for paying the Pennsylvania supply tax to support the Revolutionary War.

## History of the Pennsylvania Supply Tax

After the British landed in New York City, Congress realized that the Revolutionary War was going to be a prolonged fight. This dictated a move from bills of credit to a taxation system, and in 1779 Congress dictated this policy to the colonies. Pennsylvania passed tax laws in the model of Congress (taxing the inhabitants) and appointed county level authorities as the assessors, who then passed this duty down to townships. Thus, the Pennsylvania Archive reports are generated by townships, with my ancestors located in the Bucks County, Rockhill Township records.<sup>2</sup>

The tax of April 3, 1779, the Supply Tax, enacted by Congress and passed in the Pennsylvania Assembly, expanded the list of articles to be taxed. This new law allowed taxing of trades, personal property, land, mills, rents, horses, cattle, and anything that would sell for ready money.<sup>3</sup>

## Charting my Ancestors’ Payments

Ludwick Benner, my sixth-great-grandfather, was born in Germany in 1729. He came to Pennsylvania, and he and his wife Catherine farmed and raised seven children in Rockhill Township, Bucks County.<sup>4</sup> His oldest son and my fifth-great-grandfather, John (born in 1756), married Elizabeth; they farmed and raised six children.<sup>5</sup> Both Ludwick and John appear on Rockhill Township tax rolls and in the early records of the Tohickon Church.<sup>6</sup> The original church on this site was founded by German immigrant families in 1743.<sup>7</sup>

In 1779, Ludwick Benner and his wife paid the Pennsylvania supply tax on 100 acres, two horses, and four cattle.<sup>8</sup> Records show that they also paid the tax in 1781 and 1783 on their increasing property: 120 acres, three horses and four cattle.<sup>9</sup> In 1779,



John Benner, Ludwick’s son, and his wife paid the supply tax on two cattle.<sup>10</sup> Then in 1781, his tax reflected a property increase; John paid tax on one horse and two cattle.<sup>11</sup> These documented supply tax payments in support of the America Revolution show us their heart and support for America’s freedom.

## The Journey to Mark the Graves

The journey began by applying to the Historian General’s (HG) office National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR). This two-page application included information on the patriot and wives’ names, dates of birth and death, gravestone location, and proof of service.<sup>12</sup> It is not enough to solely provide a DAR ancestor number for this application. Source documents for service must accompany the application and gravestone photos are recommended. Additionally, a letter from the church/cemetery was required to show permission granted to mark the graves. This was the most difficult part of the journey, as the volunteer on the cemetery board did not respond in a timely fashion.

Once the paperwork was

# Unlocking Fold3: A Genealogist's Guide to Military Records

by Jim Thornhill

There is little doubt that Fold3 is the go-to source for military records. Covering five countries and containing almost 650 million records, it is an invaluable resource for anyone with ancestors that served in the military in those countries. While you could easily write a book on all the features of Fold3, let's hit some of the highlights.

## Preparing for a Successful Search

First, how do you know if your ancestors might be included in the records on Fold3? If your ancestor was born in one of the year ranges listed in table 1, they were of the proper age to serve in one of America's major conflicts. While it is possible they served in peacetime or in one of the minor conflicts, this list is a good starting place. Even if you doubt your ancestor served, search anyway. You never know what you might find!

**Table 1: Typical birth year range for servicemen in major U.S. wars.<sup>1</sup>**

U.S. War	Birth Year Range
Revolution	1715-1767
1812	1752-1799
Mexican	1788-1832
Civil	1801-1849
WWI	1858-1900
WWII	1881-1927
Korea	1890-1935
Vietnam	1905-1955

Check also for any letters or artifacts you might have or an inscription on a grave marker that indicate military service. Whether it's a military unit noted on a letter's return address or etched on your great grandfather's tombstone, knowing the unit your ancestor served in makes research much easier.

When searching for Civil War ancestors, don't assume that just because they lived in the South they fought for the Confederacy. The vote to secede from the Union by most southern counties was not unanimous, which resulted in Union military units in many Confederate States, especially along the Union-Confederate border.

It is also helpful to know what records are available for which conflict. If you are looking for service records for the world wars, you won't find much because of the

1973 fire at the National Personnel Records Center. However, if you go to the WWI conflict on Fold3 you will find many useful record sets such as "U.S., Morning Reports" or "U.S., Marine Corps Muster Rolls."

Another thing to keep in mind is that accessible records become more general after WWII. Veterans from the Korean, Vietnam, and Middle East conflicts are still living. To protect the privacy of those that served, many personal records may not be available.

Fold3 is a subscription website. It can be purchased alone or bundled with other Ancestry subscriptions. Fortunately for Texans, Fold3 has been added to TexShare's databases, which means you can access it for free from home from a library that participates in TexShare. To see if your library participates, go to <https://texshare.net/login.php?db=pqfold3&org=> and look for your local library in the pull-down menu labeled "Select Your Library." If your library is listed, a password is required to access Fold3 via TexShare. You can typically obtain the password by calling your library's reference desk. Alternatively, the next time you are at your local public library, stop at the reference desk and ask them how to access the TexShare system.

## Searching on Fold3

Fold3 search technology is not the same as on Ancestry or any other major genealogy websites. You may need to try different name spellings instead of relying on a the "fuzzy search" capabilities of a more advanced search engine. You might find that browsing can be more effective than searching (more on that later).

When you access Fold3 at <https://www.fold3.com>, you will see a banner in the middle of the page with several conflicts pictured below the banner (figure 1). Fold3 calls each of these conflicts a collection. The different record sets from each conflict are called publications. For example, if you pick the Revolutionary



# Introducing New Officers for the 2025-2026 Term

**T**xSGS was founded more than 60 years ago by a group of dedicated volunteers with a passion for family history research and a vision to share that passion with the genealogical community through education, preservation of records, and a commitment to serving both individual researchers and genealogical societies in Texas.

Through the years, countless other volunteers have followed in their footsteps. We are grateful for them and strive to follow their example by continuing to build on their legacy. TxSGS is managed by a team of individuals who play a variety of roles from officers, directors, and committee chairs to supporting roles on programs and events.

To ensure leadership sustainability and continuity,

TxSGS elects half of its board members each year. Each board member serves a two-year term. Below are the officers elected at the 2024 Annual Business Meeting for the 2025-2026 term who will serve from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2026.

To view a listing of the entire board, please see page 69 and the leadership page on the TxSGS website at <https://www.txsgs.org/about/leadership/>.

## Executive Committee



**President:  
Emily Coffman Richardson**

A professional genealogist and lecturer living in Denton, Texas, Emily began her genealogy research working with her mother in courthouses and cemeteries, finding records for her ancestors in Ohio and Pennsylvania. From 2014 to 2018, Emily lived and worked in Charlotte, North Carolina. During that time, she researched her husband's Richardson family in Nash County, North Carolina, and did pro-bono work and client work researching in both the archives in North Carolina and South Carolina. In 2019, she retired from higher education as a faculty member and administrator, moved to Texas, and opened up Kinsearchers, the original name of her mother's business as a genealogist.

Emily served as secretary of the Texas State Genealogical Society for four years and as a director-at-large of the executive committee in 2024. She oversees the production of the TxSGS podcast, *Lone Star Family Trails*. She is the programming chair for Robson Ranch Genealogy Club. She has taught genealogy courses for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) for the University of North Texas. She speaks to multiple local genealogy societies throughout the state of Texas on a variety of topics. Emily has participated in multiple SLIG (Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy), IGHR (Institute of Genealogical and Historical Research), GRIP Genealogy Institute, and TIGR (Texas Institute of Genealogical Research) week-long courses, as well as ProGen34.



**Director of Membership:  
Larry Pettit**

Larry's passion for genealogy began in the late 1980s after attending a "discover genealogy" seminar. Retired from American Airlines in 2018 after a 42-year career, he holds a BA in computer programming and a master's in airline management. Now, he devotes his time to tracing his East Texas roots. Although born and raised in Dallas County, Larry has earned a "Gone to Texas Pioneer" certificate from TxSGS, as well as "First Family" certificates from the Franklin County and Hopkins County genealogical societies.



**Director of Education:  
Michele Bailey**

Michele Belville Bailey is the president of the East Texas Genealogical Society, director of the FamilySearch Center in Athens, Texas, service missionary for North America FamilySearch Records – Texas, and the coordinator for Texas Connect 2023. Michele was the event coordinator of the very successful 22nd Annual Family History Fair in East Texas this year, as well as leader of the "Genealogy Gals" trips the past two years to Salt Lake City to visit the Family History Library. She has worked in the land title industry for 12 years and marketing for eight years. Michele has been doing genealogy for 30 years.

## 2024 TxSGS Awards Ceremony Highlighted Preservation

A vital aspect of genealogy preservation involves writing—crafting histories and documenting records for future generations. Other important materials include society and how-to publications. At the annual Awards Ceremony on Friday, November 15, TxSGS celebrated the efforts of those authors, editors, societies, compilers, indexers, transcribers, and webmasters who submitted their work for award consideration.

Their dedication and passion for preserving and sharing family histories and genealogy records were evident, and the awards served as a fitting tribute to their efforts.

Bill Buckner, awards chair, shared his thoughts on the evening: “What a night! Congratulations to all the winners. I am so proud of your accomplishments.” He continued, “I am amazed when I learn the background on how writing projects came to fruition. These tales are inspiring and serve to remind us all, individually and as an organization, of our responsibility to continue to record the stories of our ancestors for future generations.”

The TxSGS Awards Program presents awards in the categories of books, manuscripts, periodicals, websites, student projects, and blogs by individuals or Partner Societies. In all, 47 entries and 30 prizes in 13 categories highlighted the effort expended by authors, genealogists,

society volunteers, and others across the state of Texas and beyond in writing books and manuscripts and creating blogs and websites. TxSGS thanks the chairs of the various categories: Pat Gordon, Manuscripts; Karen Stein Daniel, Periodicals; Bill Buckner, Books; Pat Metcalfe, Student Projects; Jaycie M. Smith, Blogs; and Randy Whited, Websites. Thanks are also extended to the judges that each chair recruited.

To view a video of the 2024 Awards Ceremony, visit our website at <https://www.txsgs.org/2024-award-recipients/>. Submission requirements can be found at: <http://www.txsgs.org/programs/awards-grants/writing-awards/>. We encourage you to begin or continue your writing journey and consider entering in 2024. Judging criteria are subject to change, so please check the website prior to submitting your entry.





## Book Awards

Chair: *Bill Buckner*



### Grand Prize (\$400)

*Under the Double Eagle: Citizen Employees of the U.S. Army on the Texas Frontier, 1846-1899* (2024) by Thomas T. (Ty) Smith, Texas State Historical Association

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

#### 1st Place (\$200)

*Kenny-Colwell: History of an Early Texas Family* (2024) by Mary Jo Kenny

#### 2nd Place (\$100)

*Jonathan Knight: Pathfinder of American Roads* (2024) by Patrick F. Chase

#### 3rd Place (\$50)

*Lula Mae and the Baseball Player: Their Love, Their Lives, Their Losses* (2024) by Jeremy B. Myers

### Category I: Books by Non-Professional / References

#### 1st Place (\$200)

*Thoughts, Theories, and Impressions of... Groveland Pioneer Cemetery, located in Groveland, Livingston County, New York* (2024) by Karen Lindberg Rasmussen

#### 2nd Place (\$100)

*Halito, Gianna!* (2024) by Becky Villareal

#### 3rd Place (\$50)

*How Rhineland Stayed Alive: Tests and Tasks 1995-2020* (2024) by Jeremy B. Myers

### Category II: Books by Professional / References

#### 1st Place (\$200)

*Beneath Sacred Ground: The Mission San Antonio de Valero Burial Records Transcribed, Translated, and Annotated* (2024) by Art Martinez De Vara

### Category VII: Books Published by Partner Societies

#### 1st Place (\$200)

*Compiled Index to Various Books, etc. About Smith County, Texas* (2024) by compiler Jeanne Sellers and editor Scott Fitzgerald (East Texas Genealogical Society)

#### 2nd Place (\$100)

*Our Heroes: Rio Grande Valley Veterans, Volume II* (2023) by Bertha "Bertie" Lucio Caballero and Ruben Jaime Caballero (Rio Grande Valley Hispanic Genealogical Society)

#### 3rd Place (\$50)

*Montgomery County, Texas: Historical Timeline*, volume 1-2, updated 2nd edition (2023) by Larry L. Foerster, J.D. (Montgomery County Historical Commission)

## Manuscript Awards

Chair: *Pat Gordon*

### Category III: Manuscripts (Non-Professional)

#### 1st Place (\$100)

"No Descendants? No Problem! Where to Donate Your Genealogical Materials" (published in *Stirpes*, v. 62, no. 4, December 2023, pgs. 61-63) by Nancy Gilbride Casey

#### 2nd Place (\$50)

"Hidden in Plain Sight and Demolished Right Before Our Eyes: Sommers Saloon (1871-2023); and Three Grandfathers: Francis, Carter, and O. W. Chulie Sommers" (published in *Our Heritage*, v. 65, nos. 1 & 2, Fall and Winter 2023-2024, pgs. 12-20) by Rita Rozelle Schimpff

#### 3rd Place (\$30)

"Bringing the Past to Life: Finding My Great-Grandfather Albert Joseph Pope" (published in *Our Heritage*, v. 65, nos. 1 & 2, Fall and Winter 2023-2024, pgs. 34-39) by Peggy Durack

## Blog Awards

Chair: *Jaycie M. Smith*

### Category IV: Blogs (Individual)

#### 1st Place (\$100)

*Leaves on the Tree*, by Nancy Gilbride Casey (<https://myleavesonthetree.blogspot.com>)

### Category IV: Blogs (Partner Societies)

#### 1st Place (\$100)

Dallas Genealogy Society (<https://dallasgenealogy.org/news/>). Edited by the *DGS Newsletter* staff: Michelle Dwyer Cohen, Jo Ann Graham, Susan Rainwater, Suzan Younger, Barbara Ware, and Patricia Hernandez

#### 2nd Place (\$50)

San Angelo Genealogical and Historical Society ([saghs-tx.org/blog.php?sid=4](https://saghs-tx.org/blog.php?sid=4)). Written by Jana Jenkins

## Periodical, Quarterly, and Journal Awards

Chair: *Karen Stein Daniel*

### Category VI: Official Periodicals of Partner Societies / Newsletters

#### 1st Place (\$100)

*DCGS News*, Denton County Genealogical Society, Nancy Gilbride Casey, editor

**2nd Place (\$75)**

*SAGHS Newsletter*, San Antonio Genealogical and Historical Society, Carol Thompson and Barbara Holmes, Editors

**3rd Place (\$50)**

*Los Portales Newsletter*, San Elizario Genealogy and Historical Society, Lillian Trujillo, editor

**Category VI: Official Periodicals of Partner Societies / Quarterlies**

**1st Place (\$100)**

*Heart of Texas Records* (Central Texas Genealogical Society), Mary Bullard, editor

**2nd Place (\$75)**

*Bosque County Genealogical Society Journal* (Bosque County Genealogical and Historical Society), LeAnne McCamey, editor

**3rd Place (\$50)**

*Hopkins County Heritage* (Hopkins County Genealogical Society), CarolAnn Dixon, editor

**Category VI: Official Periodicals of Partner Societies / Journals**

**1st Place (\$100)**

*The Genealogical Record* (Houston Genealogical Forum), Dr. Cynthia L. Chappell, editor

**2nd Place (\$75)**

*Our Heritage* (San Antonio Genealogical and Historical Society), Kathryn Messec Jones, editor

**3rd Place (\$50)**

*Keys to the Past* (The Genealogical Society of Kendall County), Kathryn Adam Hurst, editor

**Website Awards**

*Chair: Randy Whited*

**Category I: Website for a Partner Society**

**1st Place (\$100)**

San Angelo Genealogical and Historical Society (<https://saghs-tx.org/index.php>), Jana Jenkins, webmaster

**2nd Place (\$75)**

Central Texas Genealogical Society (<https://ctgs.org>), Dianne Howard, webmaster

**3rd Place (\$50)**

Mid-Cities Genealogical Society (<https://txmcgs.org>), Angie Shumway, webmaster

**Category II: Website for an Individual (Personal Genealogy)**

**1st Place (\$100)**

My Family History by Kathleen Murray ([www.rayson.us/KRMurray/](http://www.rayson.us/KRMurray/))

**2nd Place (\$75)**

My Family & Me by Tony Hanson ([www.rayson.us/achanson/](http://www.rayson.us/achanson/))

**Category III: Website for an Individual (General Genealogy)**

**1st Place (\$100)**

Hopkins County, part of the TXGenWeb, by Betsy Mills, Hopkins County coordinator (<https://www.txgenwebcounties.org/hopkins/>)



**Deadline for TxSGS Award Submissions  
September 15, 2025\***



The Texas State Genealogical Society recognizes individual and society excellence in the genealogical community with several awards. Winners are announced year at our Awards Ceremony.

Visit the TxSGS website for categories, guidelines, and additional details.

[www.txsgs.org/programs/awards-grants](http://www.txsgs.org/programs/awards-grants)

Submissions must be received by September 15, 2025.

\*Committee must receive submissions by the deadline to be considered.

# The DAR Website as a Research Resource

by Susan E. Ball

As we approach 2026 and the 250th anniversary of America's founding, genealogists are drawn to the fascinating task of uncovering connections to the Revolutionary War era. For those seeking to uncover personal ties to the Revolutionary War, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)'s digital databases provide a powerful gateway to rediscovering ancestors who fought, supported, or contributed to the cause of independence.

This exploration not only deepens our understanding of personal family history but also connects us to the broader story of America's foundation.

One of the challenges facing genealogists researching this era is identifying ancestors who lived prior to 1850. What do you do when census records have only the name for the head of household and tick marks for household members? To push the family tree further back, determined researchers turn to wills, land records, tax records, church records, family histories, and more.

## Exploring Revolutionary Roots through DAR Resources

Often overlooked are the documented lineages of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Lineages submitted to other societies such as the Sons of the American Revolution, the Colonial Dames XVII Century, and the Daughters of the War of 1812 are also good resources, but the DAR is exceptional because their lineages are searchable online and the documentation for many lines can be downloaded for a small fee.

What's included in the DAR documentation? The amount of information available depends on a variety of factors. Each DAR applicant is required to prove that a person in their lineage existed and belongs in a line that extends to a Patriot of the American Revolution. This proof usually contains some form of birth record or family acknowledgement such as a will or Bible record along with death records and marriage records. Documentation packets can range from just a few pages to dozens of pages. The DAR website has a webpage on their lineage resources with further explanation: <https://www.dar.org/library/collections/dar-lineage-resources>



A few caveats should be kept in mind. Prior to 1984, many applicants requested that their documentation be returned because photocopying was so expensive; no documentation was retained for these applications. Also, in the DAR's early years, some applications were accepted with no documentation at all. Since then, the DAR has become much more rigorous in their requirements for lineage proof and a number of these early undocumented lineages have been disallowed until adequate proof is provided.

"But I don't have any Revolutionary era ancestors!" you may claim. If you can't find your ancestors prior to 1850, a look through the DAR lineages might turn up a surprise. The roll of DAR Patriots of the American Revolution includes more than men of fighting age. Anyone, male or female, who provided aid to the revolutionary cause is also considered a patriot, and this extends the birth year of ancestors who might qualify for DAR membership to the early 1700s. Over a million DAR members have proved lineages to Patriots of the American Revolution. One of these DAR members might turn out to be a distant cousin who has submitted the documentation you need to scale a brick wall.

Look among your ancestors (male or female) for any that lived in the U.S. in the late 1700s or early 1800s. You can start your search in the DAR databases with any ancestor you find in the 1850 census who is over 50 years old and was born in the U.S. You should also look for the ancestor's collateral relatives, such as their brothers and sisters. One of their descendants may have become a DAR member, and their documentation is just waiting there for you to find.



# TxSGS Launches “Genealogy Essentials” Program



The Texas State Genealogical Society (TxSGS) is pleased to announce the launch of its new online education program, “Genealogy Essentials,” designed specifically for individuals interested in beginning family history research or expanding their research skills. “Genealogy Essentials” is dedicated to “Building a Strong Foundation for Family History.”

This first offering in this program is a comprehensive, eight-session course that will be released over four weeks starting January 13, 2025, with two sessions made available each week. Participants can access the video-based lessons at their convenience, complete practical homework assignments, and engage in guided Zoom discussions with expert instructors each Saturday. For those who are unable to attend live Zoom sessions, recordings will be provided.

“In designing ‘Genealogy Essentials,’ we aimed to create an accessible, flexible program that helps participants build a strong foundation in genealogy,” said Emily Richardson, incoming TxSGS president and course coordinator for this program “From understanding basic research concepts to evaluating sources and organizing family documents, this course empowers learners to discover their heritage with confidence.”

All participants will enjoy access to the course materials—including detailed handouts and Zoom session recordings—through February 25, 2025, allowing ample time for review and reinforcement. No prior experience is required; all you need is a computer with audio.

### What to Expect:

- **Accessible Learning:** Each week, beginning January 13, 2025, you’ll receive access to two new video lessons, each under one hour, that you can watch at your convenience.
- **Hands-On Homework:** Reinforce your learning with practical assignments crafted by experienced genealogists.
- **Live Instructor Support:** Join our weekly Saturday Zoom sessions to review course content, discuss homework, and ask questions. Can’t attend live?

No problem—the sessions are recorded and available for later viewing.

- **Extended Access:** Enjoy full access to all videos, handouts, and Zoom recordings through February 25, 2025, giving you plenty of time to revisit and master the material.

Whether you’re completely new to family history or need help organizing and verifying the records you have, “Genealogy Essentials” will set you on the path to discovering your roots with confidence. All you need is a computer with audio and a desire to learn.

### Ready to Begin?

For more information, please visit [Genealogy Essentials: What to Expect](#) or contact [genessentials@txsgs.org](mailto:genessentials@txsgs.org). [Registration is open](#), and seating is limited.

# Texas State Genealogical Society Launches *Stirpes* Study Group Program

**T**xSGS is excited to announce the launch of the *Stirpes* Study Group, a new Partner Society and subscribing library program designed to foster learning and discussion around articles published in *Stirpes, the Journal of Texas State Genealogical Society*.

The *Stirpes* Study Group program was offered in June 2023 as a pilot program by the Emily Fowler Central Library in Denton, Texas, to their patrons. This initial program was so successful that TxSGS sought the permission of the Emily Fowler Central Library to make it available to all of its Partner Societies and subscribing libraries.

Through the *Stirpes* Study Group, TxSGS provides participating organizations with a program to facilitate engaging discussions around *Stirpes* content. Each month, a study group session focuses on a designated article from a past issue of *Stirpes* along with a set of discussion questions and research resources developed by Laura Douglas, assistant manager, Emily Fowler Central Library.

Participating Partner Societies and subscribing libraries can use the materials provided by TxSGS or customize their own discussion questions and resources. The program is designed to be easily implemented by

societies and libraries of all sizes, providing an opportunity for both novice and experienced genealogists to deepen their research skills and understanding.

“The *Stirpes* Study Group is a wonderful way for our Partner Societies to leverage the rich content in *Stirpes* and foster collaborative learning among their members,” said Susan E. Ball, president of TxSGS. “We’re thrilled to make this program available and support our partners in bringing the pages of *Stirpes* to life.”

There is currently a library of more than 15 articles from which to choose. Study groups can take them in order or select randomly from the

list of topics based on their interest. Participating organizations can offer study groups to their members or patrons at a frequency of their choosing, for example, monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly. To participate in the *Stirpes* Study Group, Partner Societies must be members of TxSGS and subscribing libraries must be current subscribers to *Stirpes*.

To learn more about the *Stirpes* Study Group and how your Partner Society or library can get involved, visit our website at <https://www.txsgs.org/stirpes-study-group/> or contact TxSGS at [memberinfo@txsgs.org](mailto:memberinfo@txsgs.org). ★



## Stirpes Study Group

**ARTICLE**

**Walking with Your Ancestors**  
by Pat Gordon

**QUESTIONS**

**RESOURCES**

**Resources**

**QUESTIONS**

**RESOURCES**

# Discover the Next Level of Your Genealogical Research at **TIGR 2025 • June 16-20, 2025 • Virtual**



— TEXAS STATE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY —  
**TEXAS INSTITUTE**  
of GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH  
*To Enrich, Expand and Inspire.*

Genealogical institutes like the Texas Institute of Genealogical Research (TIGR) exist to provide intensive instruction and hands-on practice in specialized areas of research. Since its inception in 2017, TIGR has continually evolved to meet the diverse needs of genealogists.

What started as a single course has steadily expanded, offering genealogists the chance to dive deep into unique subjects and solve even their most complex research challenges.

This five-day educational event, to be held virtually from June 16–20, 2025, will bring together top experts, focused curricula, and engaged classmates. Students can expect a supportive learning environment where meaningful discussions, interactive problem-solving, and real-life case

studies are the norm. Every TIGR session builds on the previous ones, ensuring that returning attendees and newcomers alike benefit from innovative topics, fresh perspectives, and the latest methodologies.

In 2025, TIGR will offer five dynamic courses that elevate genealogists' research skills and further their personal and professional pursuits, all delivered in the comfort of students' own homes.

## 2025 Course Offerings:



### Course 1 – **Research in the Lone Star State** Coordinator: Kelvin L. Meyers

This course is designed to introduce participants to the rich resources and techniques available for tracing family history in Texas. Whether you're a lifelong Texan or exploring family ties to the Lone Star State, this course will provide a solid foundation in Texas genealogical research. Participants will learn how to access key records, navigate unique Texas historical contexts, and connect with local repositories.



### Course 2 - **Building Communities Across the South** Coordinator: J. Mark Lowe, FUGA

Early families found their way into prime lands seeking opportunities and freedom. These citizens included merchants, blacksmiths, preachers, traders, craftsmen, speculators, hunters, and farmers. Early pioneers and settlers were a diverse group with family members across the country. How did their need for essential supplies inspire movement and continued migration? We will focus on the development of communities throughout the South prior to 1850 but will include some later records that will help shed light on the early settlements.



### Course 3 - **Legally Texas: Advanced Legal Research in the Lone Star State** Coordinator: Judy G. Russell, CG®, CGL®

This course will offer an in-depth look at the unique legal history of Texas and its impact on research in the Lone Star State. From the lingering effects of Spanish and Mexican civil law to the frontier rules of the Republic, to the clashes with settlers from the old eastern common law states, knowing how to research Texas law and its application to records is essential. Sessions will explore the laws impacting Texas's courts, land distributions, inheritance, family relations, and more, as well as the laws of slavery and Texas's role in the Confederacy. Students will get assistance in finding law-related records held by the major repositories including the Texas State Library and Archives and the Texas General Land Office.



# Grandma's V-Mail Letters: Forging Bonds During Wartime

by Nancy Gilbride Casey

When my grandmother Margaret Simonik Kozlina (1913-1988) passed away, a cedar chest full of her possessions passed to my mother, Ann Kozlina Gilbride (1937-2010). In turn, when she passed away, I was fortunate enough to inherit most of the items in the chest.

Amongst Grandma's things were three very small letters in military envelopes, marked "V-Mail," "Official Business," and "War Department." The letters themselves look as if they were a photograph or a print from a negative, as the surface of the letter is shiny. And they appear shrunken somehow; I can't imagine that anyone could write that small and expect the letters to be readable.

Grandma's letters were from her friend Katherine "Kay" Kurutz (1915-1992), who was an Army nurse stationed in England at the end of WWII. There are two V-mail letters, dated May and July 1945.<sup>1</sup>

May 8, 1945

Dear Margaret,

To-day is a great day for the British. We were expecting our boys to go a bit wild but I am proud of them. They really are sensible over the whole thing. Even though the war in Europe is over we still have the Japs to lick. I'm afraid our unit will get a trip there. I certainly hope not, but I wouldn't be too surprised to find myself in the Pacific. We all want to move to the U.S.—anywhere in the U.S.

We had a Thanksgiving mass at 11 a.m. to-day. The whole post is celebrating V.E. day. The British are doing most of the celebrating.

How's the baby getting along? Next thing you know the baby will be going to First Communion, too. How did Cleveland behave when V.E. Day was announced?

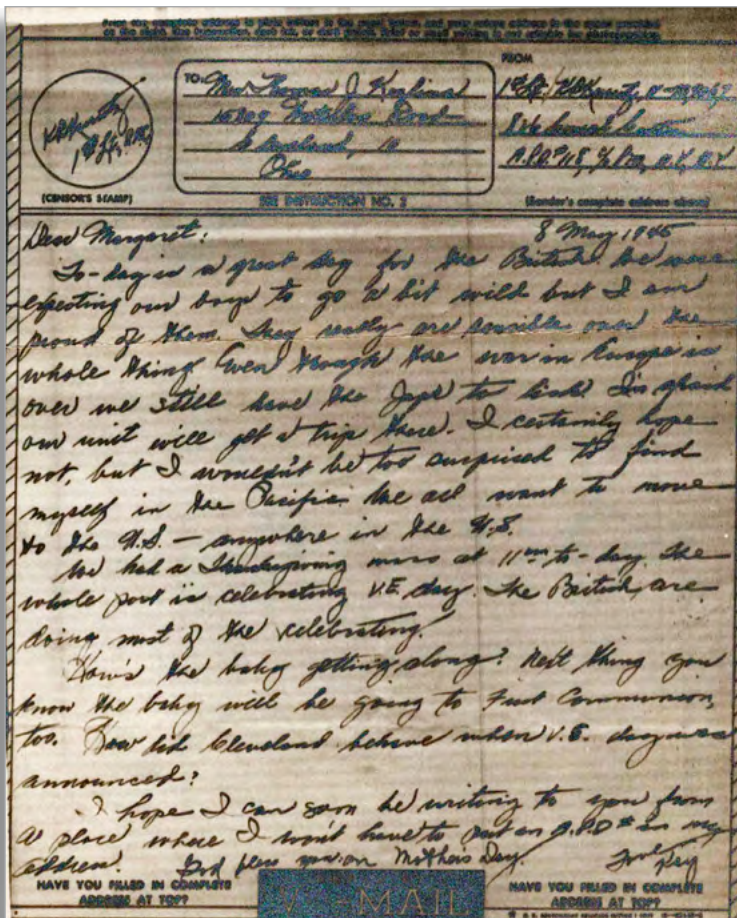
I hope I can soon be writing to you from a place where I won't have to post an A.P.O. # in my address. God Bless you on Mother's Day.

Love, Kay

This first letter was a candid glimpse into Kay's VE Day experiences in England. The "baby" is my aunt, Marian Kozlina Graff.

## What was V-Mail?

V-Mail—or "Victory Mail"—was a wartime invention that enabled massive quantities of mail to be quickly and efficiently delivered both to and from troops overseas. In 1945 alone, 2.5 billion pieces of Army mail and 8 billion pieces of Navy mail were processed by their respective post offices.<sup>2</sup> V-Mail was an innovative system which drastically reduced the



*AV-Mail letter sent by Kay Kurutz from England in May 1945.*

# Huguenots and their Descendants in the American Revolutionary War

by Nancy Wright Brennan, Genealogist General, The National Huguenot Society  
edited by Larry Lockett

**H**uguenots (French Protestants) migrated to Colonial North America in the 17th and 18th centuries and established settlements in New York, Virginia, and South Carolina, as well as New England, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup>

After fleeing France due to religious persecution, their journey may have taken a circuitous route through England, Holland, Germany, and elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Along the way, the spelling and pronunciation of their names might have changed or adapted to the country in which they resided. Many colonists clung to their French traditions and language, but through the generations, assimilation in the new land and intermarriage caused disappearance of the original identity.<sup>3</sup>

As America began its campaign against British rule, Huguenot descendants had been in the colonies for many generations. The fight for independence became part of their family heritage. Some of the links to Revolutionary War patriots were obvious because of their French names. For others, it was not a clear path from Huguenot ancestor to patriot.

The National Huguenot Society was organized to perpetuate the memory, the spirit, and the deeds of men and women in France who were persecuted due to their Protestant religious beliefs and immigrated to North America.<sup>4</sup> A project to identify the Huguenot-Patriot connections began in 2017 and will continue. By October 2024, the project had identified 187 Huguenot immigrants or their Huguenot ancestors who had rendered military or civil service and support to the revolutionary cause. Each entry has been verified

with the National Huguenot Society's *Register of Qualified Huguenot Ancestors 2012* plus updates of 2016 and 2020.<sup>5</sup>

The Huguenot names were confirmed with the Daughters of the American Revolution, Genealogical Research

## Huguenot Descendants in the Revolutionary War and their Ancestors

### ***Patriots Descended from Huguenot Ancestors***

### ***DAR Ancestor number***

- William **Ammonet**, Patriot Service VA A002311  
Son of Andre/Andrew Ammonet  
Grandson of Jacob Ammonet
- Charles **Ammonet, Jr.**, Private VA A002309  
Son of Charles Ammonet  
Grandson of Andre/Andrew Ammonet  
Great-Grandson of Jacob Ammonet
- Andrew **Picon/Pickens/Pickins** Brig. Gen. SC A090968  
A Huguenot General and Congressman 1739-1817<sup>6</sup>  
Son of Andrew Picon/Pickens/Pickins  
Grandson of William Picon/Pickens/Pickins  
Great-grandson of Robert (aka André) Picon/Pickens/Pickins<sup>7</sup>

### ***Several Huguenot immigrants were themselves revolutionary patriots:***

- Andrew **Louis/Lewis**, Brig. Gen. Patriotic service VA A069714  
Born 1720 Ulster, Ireland; died 1781 Virginia<sup>8</sup>
- Anthony **Gabeau**, Patriot Service, Sergeant, SC A042822  
Born 1756 Aquitaine, France; died 1829 Charlestown, South Carolina<sup>9</sup>
- John **Girault**, Civil Service, Capt. VA A045370  
Born 1755 London, England; died 1813 New Orleans, Louisiana<sup>10</sup>
- And many other immigrants

### ***Example of Huguenot lineage through the female line resulting in a new Huguenot surname:***

- James **Jenkins**, Private SC A062067  
Born 1764 South Carolina; died 1847 South Carolina  
Son of Elizabeth DuPre Britton (Goddard) Jenkins  
Grandson of Joseph Britton and Sarah DuPre  
Great-grandson of Josias DuPre, Jr.  
Second great-grandson of Josias DuPre, Sr.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Example of proving many generations to reach the Huguenot ancestor***

- Paul **Revere**, Civil Service, Patriotic service Lt. Col. MA A095546  
Born 1734 Boston; died 1818 Boston; silversmith and "Night Rider"  
Father of 16 children by two wives.  
Son of Apollos/Paul Rivoire/Revere  
Grandson of Isaac Rivoire/Revere  
Great-grandson of Jean de Rivoire/Revere<sup>12</sup>
- Paul **Revere, Jr.**, 2Lt., Capt. A095548  
Born 1760 Boston; died 1813 Boston  
Son of Paul Revere, Sr.



# Don't Forget the Envelope

by Russell A. Rahn

Jessie Ford was born in Iowa in 1875. During her lifetime she developed an interest in learning the history of her family and the lineage connected with it. It is important to remember that “in her day,” the vast databases on internet websites were not even science fiction.

Telephones were just starting to be used in some areas of the nation, and transportation was by steam-powered trains, horse and buggy, horseback, or just plain walking.

Jessie did what many other Americans of that time did to gather information—she wrote letters to her family asking for information. It is one of the replies that she received which was the starting point for this investigation of her family. The reply (figure 1) came from someone who referred to Jessie as “Dear Niece.” This would be the first clue—Jessie was the daughter of one of the letter writer’s siblings. The letter also contained a few names of persons with the surname “Bradley.” The letter writer suggested the family originated in Virginia and migrated to Kentucky.

Of much greater importance to completing this study, however, was the envelope which accompanied the letter. Some kind person had made notes on the back side of the envelope (figure 2) dealing with specific family members. These notes enabled me to locate with a good level of confidence the particular Bradley family central to

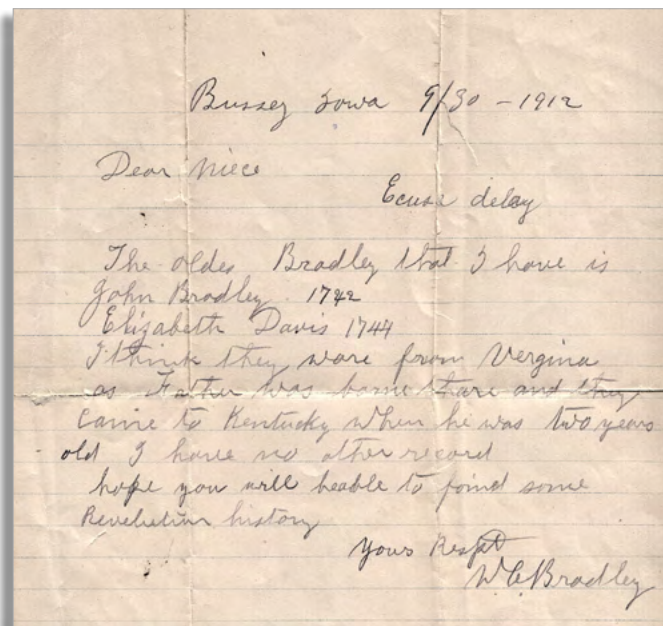


Figure 1: Letter from W. C. Bradley to his niece dated 30 September 1912.

this investigation. Transcriptions of the letter and envelope are shown below.

**Transcription of the letter:**

Bussey, Iowa, 9/30-1912  
 Dear Niece  
 Excuse delay.  
 The oldest Bradley that I have is John Bradley, 1742  
 Elizabeth Davis, 1744  
 I think they were from Virginia as Father was born there and they came to Kentucky when he was two years old. I have no other record.  
 Hope you will be able to find some Revolution history.  
 Yours Respt,  
 W. C. Bradley

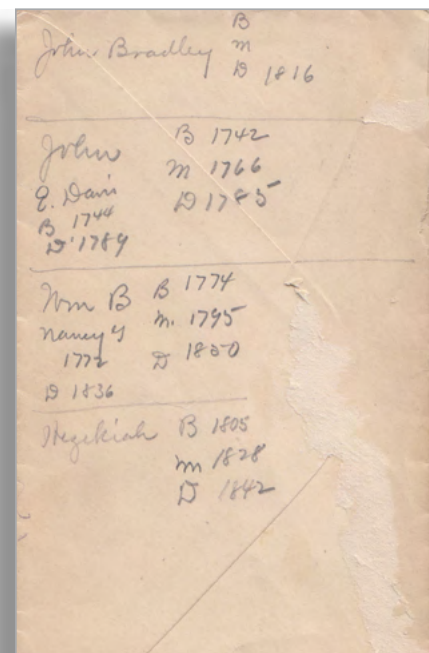


Figure 2: The back of the envelope mailed to Jessie Ford by W. C. Bradley.

**Notations on the backside of the envelope:**

John Bradley	B	
	M	
	D	1816
<hr/>		
John	B	1742
	M	1766
	D	1785
E. Davis	B	1744
	D	1789
<hr/>		
Wm. B	B	1744
	M	1795
	D	1850
Nancy G		1772
	D	1836
<hr/>		
Hezekiah	B	1805
	M	1828
	D	1842





## Genealogical Society of Kendall County



### GUEST SPEAKER: DREW SMITH



Drew Smith is an associate librarian emeritus at the University of South Florida Libraries in Tampa, specializing in genealogical research. He is the co-host of The Genealogy Guys Podcast and the host of the Genealogy Connection podcast.

Drew is a founder and administrator of The Genealogy Squad Facebook Group, with nearly 46,000 active members. He writes a regular productivity column for the Association of Professional Genealogists Quarterly.

Drew co-authored the book *Advanced Genealogy Research Techniques* and is the author of the book *Organize Your Genealogy: Strategies and Solutions for Every Researcher*. His latest book, *Generation by Generation: A Modern Approach to the Basics of Genealogy*, was published in 2023 by Genealogical Publishing Co.

Drew is the 2024 recipient of the Lloyd DeWitt Bockstruck Distinguished Service Award, presented annually by the Dallas Genealogical Society to an individual for outstanding contributions to the genealogical community on a national level.

#### His 4 Session topics will be:

- Your Ancestor's FAN Club: Using Cluster Research to Get Past Brick Walls
- Front Page News (and Beyond): Finding Archived Newspapers
- Organizing Your Genealogy Research Process
- Not in the Census? Try Again!

## 21st Annual Hill Country Family History Seminar

Saturday  
February 15th, 2025  
9:00am-4:00pm  
Doors Open at 8:15

St John Lutheran  
Church  
315 Rosewood Ave,  
Boerne, TX 78006

GSKC Member: \$55  
Non-Member: \$60  
After Feb 9<sup>th</sup>: \$65

Morning & Afternoon  
Snacks Provided.  
\$ Lunch Available \$  
Raffle & Door Prizes!!

GSKC  
114 E BLANCO  
BOERNE TX 78006  
(830) 331-8730  
[info@gskctx.org](mailto:info@gskctx.org)  
See us on Facebook!

Scan QR Code



# 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/](https://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/](https://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](mailto: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/](https://txsgs.org/partner-society-resources/)). Benefits include webinars to use for society programs, publicity support for society events, media downloads, preservation and access support, awards, and much more.

## District B

**Nancy Gilbride Casey,**  
District Representative

The [North Texas Genealogical Association](#) (NTGA) met in October for a program about Find a Grave. On Saturday, October 20, members took a field trip to Lakeview Cemetery in Wichita Falls to fulfill Find a Grave photo requests. They found, photographed, and posted some to Find a Grave. Using the city’s burial list, they also discovered that a number of listed burials had no grave markers. In addition, they found a couple of grave markers which were not listed in the city’s records and notified the Department of Parks and Recreation, which manages the cemetery. It was a learning experience, and NTGA plans to do more such trips in the future.

For their November program, “Family Tales: True or False?”, NTGA invited members to share stories they had heard about their family, whether they learned the stories were true or false, how they discovered the truth, and if they shared their findings with

family members. Some stories seem to appear in many families. Upcoming spring programs include talks by a member of the Wichita County Historical Association and the Wichita County Archives team (located in the Museum of North Texas History).

## District F

**Peter G. Jacobs,**  
District Representative

The [Mid-Cities Genealogical Society](#) (MCGS), located halfway between Dallas and Fort Worth, meets in person on the third Monday of each month at the Bedford Public Library (2424 Forest Ridge Dr., Bedford), and all visitors are welcome. The November meeting featured Bill Buckner with a program titled, “Who’s Your Mother’s Mother: Tips for Finding Maiden Names.” During November, MCGS was a gold sponsor at the two-day virtual 2024 TxSGS Family History Conference. They will kick off 2025 with a virtual presentation on “Using Collateral Research to Build Your Family” by Sandra Crowley, TxSGS

director of development. Visit the MCGS website for more information about meetings and programs or follow @mid-cities on Facebook.

The [Fort Worth Genealogical Society](#) (FWGS) continues to offer monthly genealogy programs to members and visitors both in person and virtually. For FWGS, 2024 has been a full year with interesting and engaging speakers, two of whom are being featured in upcoming documentaries highlighting their unique stories. FWGS concluded the year with a society field trip to the Fort Worth Independent School District Archives at their new administrative building. Society elections were held in October, and Carlene Johnson will serve as the next society president. *Stirpes* readers, FWGS invites you to visit the Fort Worth History Center and attend a meeting with the society. Visit <https://txfwgs.org> for all details.

The [Arlington Genealogical Society](#) (AGS) continues to meet both in person and virtually at the George W. Hawkes Downtown Library. The

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