



Houston West FGS



February 2021

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Presenting Virtually!

In her presentation, **"Researching Our Ancestors in Libraries, Archives and Repositories,"** Susan Kaufman will be sharing how to effectively find repositories and the information inside them to enhance your genealogy research. She will address creating a research plan and tips on how to find and ac-

cess resources.

Susan is the senior manager of the Clayton Library Center for Genealogy Research in Houston and has more than 30 years experience as a genealogy librarian.

See our website for a link to **register**. The business meeting begins at noon and the program starts at 1 pm on **February 11,**

2021.



Go here to register HWFGS website:
www.houstonwestfamgen.org

"Finding My Birth Parents" by Judy Durham©

My parents, after seven years of marriage, had lost multiple pregnancies before contemplating adoption. I grew up knowing that my older sister (fourteen months older than me) and I were both adopt-

ed; my parents told us when we were toddlers. I grew up loving them as Mom and Dad, and that is what I call them. However, occasionally throughout my life, I would ask about my adoption. Mom and Dad

always said they really didn't know much; just that in the late 1940s, they had gone through Catholic Charities and the St. Anne's Children's Home in

Cont. on page 4

"Where there is love there is life"

Mahatma Gandhi



The President's Note....

Greetings,

Dynamic, ever evolving, growing, member focused, transparent, inclusive, democratic, welcoming ...these are descriptors we want our society to be identified with. To live by these watchwords, we must each be ever mindful of our actions, how we ask questions, and how we word what we need and want. For example, it is important to say, "*Here is what I heard you say. Did I understand your message?*" If we want others to actively participate, it is important to listen, to let fellow members know what we heard, and to give credit where credit is due.

John F. Kennedy – "Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country." You may be wondering why I chose to share President Kennedy's quote from his inaugural speech 60 years ago. It is because I want to encourage you to ask how you can support our society. What are your talents and interests? If you ask that question and then respond by giving back to the society, we can indeed be an organization that continues to have members engaged and excited about the many benefits of being a member.

Did you participate in our monthly meeting on January 14th with Jeanie Smith? Jeanie 'knocked her topic, *Organizing and Preserving your Stuff*, out of the park'! Do go see her handouts on the website, houstonwestfamgen.org. Jeanie answered the call to contribute and she was fabulous. I am sorry if you missed her presentation. She left us with homework. I have been going around the house taking pictures of heirlooms.

What have you done to support this being the organization you want to be a part of? Many have answered this question by contributing in significant ways. Currently, there are about a dozen of our forty-three members who have stepped up in meaningful ways. If you aren't one of the dozen, please think about what you can do to support the Society before we end this programming year.

I invite you to join me in picking up the baton for change and to continue to lead our society forward! Here are some questions I want you to ask yourself:

- Have I sent a picture and story about an ancestor to Neal Scott for the website's home page?
- Have I written an article for the newsletter about how I got into genealogy?
- Do I have a passion that I can turn into a good program for next year?
- Have I been a secretary for an organization with skills that could translate to my being the secretary for the Society next year?
- Could my interest in marketing be a good fit for being the new publicity chairperson?
- Have I responded when asked for feedback?

President's Note cont'd from page 2.

As I have said before, this is a transition year for the society. The upcoming program year will undoubtedly be easier in many ways. For one, we will, at some point, get to meet in person. In addition, there will be a number of things in place to make it an even better organization. There will be revised bylaws that closely align with how we function. There will be tools we have never had for communicating ... a newsletter, a Facebook page, and a dynamic website. There will be a password protected Members' Page on the website that encompasses our new bylaws, membership list, surname list, position descriptions for the board and chairpersons, presentation handouts, and budgets.

Stay engaged and tuned in as we work to bring you more exciting adventures in finding your roots! Yes, I said as we work. So contact me or another board member about how you can help to make this one of the best genealogy organizations around!

Jenny Sharrer, President

Contact me at jennysharrer@sbcglobal.net



It's a great time to start researching your family. Our society is here to help you get started and to keep you informed about conferences and much more. Rootstech is coming up soon. Virtually. It's free. There is no travel involved. No travel expense. And there is so much to learn. From their website: "RootsTech is presented by FamilySearch International. It is the goal of FamilySearch to help everyone discover, gather and connect families past, present and future." What a great opportunity to kick your skills into high gear and feel inspired. Sign up at <https://www.rootstech.org>

“Finding My Birth Parents” *cont’d from pg 1.*

Washington, D.C. to get us, and that our birth parents had been very young.

Forward to 1970s; after having my first child, I began wondering if it was possible to find my birth mother, and if so, what it would be like. Of course, I had visions of a happy reunion. She would be as delighted to hear from me as I would be to find her. But Mom was not happy about my interest in my biological parents. I do not know if she felt threatened, or perhaps that I did not appreciate all she had done for me. My sister was not supportive of my curiosity. She made it clear she had no desire to find her birth family; was not really interested in re-hashing the circumstances of her adoption; not that there was much to re-hash. I was on my own.

Being a young married mother, I really didn't know where to start a search, nor did we have the financial resources to hire a private detective. It wasn't as though someone's life depended upon me finding my birth mother. But, as a mother, I could not imagine having to give up my child and never hearing anything about her again. What pain she must have endured. So, I wanted to find her and let her know it had all turned out OK; that I was alive and healthy and happy.

Years later, I spoke with my father about my desire to locate my birth mother. As a businessman, he traveled extensively and on a trip to Washington, D.C., he visited St. Anne's Children's Home, the agency that had handled my adoption. He learned that the records were sealed by the court and could not be released without a court order. That was a disappointment but not completely unexpected.

In the meantime, I heard about the ALMA Society and their online adoption reunion registry. I registered what little information I had with them, and then life got in the way and I thought little more about it.

Years pass: I divorced, my daughter married and had children of her own, and both my parents had died. Time is slipping by. At 67 years old, I realize my birth mother would by now be in her 80s if she is even still alive. Without her, there would be no way to find my birth father, even though I had not given him much thought through the years. I realized that he may not even know I exist. So again, I started searching. My years as a manager in a local school district had taught me how to use a computer. I thought I might get lucky through several of the online adoption reunion registries, so I registered with them.

About that time, a friend told me about his genealogy hobby and the DNA test available from an online genealogy site called Ancestry.com. I opened an account and started building a family tree of my adoption family; remarkably interesting and fun, but it really did not have much to do with finding my biological family. I realized that I needed to take Ancestry's DNA test. I ordered their kit, spit in it, sent it in, and then I waited.

I did not know my ethnicity. On school forms, I had always written Irish and French, because that was the ethnicity of my adopted parents. But Dad thought I may have Slavic ancestry. Perhaps that was a place to start.

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The Ancestry DNA results came back. I was nervous. Dad was half right. The results showed that my ethnicity was predominantly Hungarian and Irish. Well, that was something, but it left me wondering which parent was Irish and which Hungarian. Then I received a notice through Ancestry that I had a match with a 1st or 2nd cousin. Wow, a start! I wrote him a note; didn't hear back.

I needed to know more about adoption privacy laws. My parents lived in Alexandria, Virginia when they adopted me, so I began a computer search there. I found the Virginia Department of Social Services Adoptee Application for Disclosure form online, downloaded it, and returned the completed and notarized form in late April 2016. Wow, within 2 weeks I received a notice that my request had been forwarded to the Fairfax Virginia County Department of Family Services. I also received a copy of the letter they sent to Fairfax County which instructed them to provide a response in the form of a report within 90 days.

The Post Adoption Social Worker who was assigned to my inquiry subsequently phoned me. She explained that, although she could not release any "identifying" information, she could send me what "non-identifying" information she had, if I sent her a formal request. I sent the request immediately. She couldn't send the information to me directly but had to send it to someone at Child Protective Services here in Houston. I was required to visit CPS and sign for receipt of the package. Of course, some of the information on the pages had been redacted, but it gave me some very good information. I learned that my birth mother was 17 years old, a Catholic of Irish descent, and one of five children. Her mother had died several years earlier of tuberculosis, her father had remarried, and she had a half-brother two years of age. My biological father, at the time of my birth, was 24 years old and a Protestant of Hungarian descent. He was a veteran of WWII, and upon his discharge, worked in a factory and was then attending school in California.

I checked back on Ancestry.com for that cousin who had come up as a DNA match. He still had not responded to my email, but he did have a short profile and a small family tree on the site. He was just 2 years older than me, and he was looking for information about family in Buffalo, New York. That gave me a place to start. This "cousin" had a limited family tree on Ancestry, but it did reveal the name of his father, that he had been born in Buffalo, the year of his birth, and that he had died in Bermuda. Additionally, it showed that the cousin and his sister were borne from his father's second marriage but did not name any children from the first marriage.

I started looking at the Federal and New York census records. I found the cousin's father by matching his name and date of birth, following him through the 1940 census. He was married and had four children, 2 sons and 2 daughters. The census also named his first wife. Then, I found a 1944 death record that showed his wife had died at age 34. Things were beginning to line up. Could this woman have been my birth mother's mother? I focused on the oldest daughter who was 8 years old at the time of the 1940 census. That would have made her 17 at the time of my birth. Had I found her?

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Knowing women are hard to find because of maiden and marriage names, I started with the sons on the 1940 census; unfortunately, both had already died. But by doing a Google search in the Buffalo area, I was lucky to find the obituary for the oldest son. It named all his siblings, including his sisters' married names and their husbands. I now had the oldest sister's married name, Patricia K., but sadly she was a widow. I checked Google for her husband Alex's obituary and found that he was 7 years her senior (making him 24 years old when I was born) and was a Navy veteran of both WWII and Korea. It also showed they had 2 daughters, Nancy and Cathy. I searched and found him in the 1930 and 1940 Federal censuses. His parents were Hungarian immigrants! Remember, my DNA results showed I was of Hungarian ethnicity. At this point, I think I've found both my mother, and is it possible my birth father, too. I wondered, had they later married after all.

I called the social worker in Virginia and told her what I'd found. I even gave her the lady's address and phone number. Of course, she was still prohibited from confirming anything for me, but she said she would call the lady and get more information if she could. She called me back just a couple of days later. Although she still couldn't give me any "identifying" information, she pretty much confirmed that I was correct. After all, why would she have just called this woman simply on my hunch? Because she told me that the woman was ill and being cared for by her 2 daughters, I decided to write a letter to her daughters, Nancy and Cathy, at her address. The day that letter was received (mid-July), Nancy called me and delightedly confirmed that we were full sisters. Her mother and father were both my birth parents. I couldn't believe it, after all these years, in less than 3 months, I had found them!

Unfortunately, my birth mother, Patricia, was upset that I had found her. When confronted by her daughters about me, she told them that she had told her husband, Alex, shortly before they were married. However, neither Nancy nor Cathy really believe Alex ever knew about me. Pat had kept the secret from everyone in the family because it was "her secret and nobody's business." Although she confirmed to her daughters that she had given birth to me, she said she never saw me, nor had she named me. Well, that crushed my fantasy. (My adoption papers had my pre-adoption name on them, so someone at St. Anne's must have named me.)

Everyone who had known about her unplanned pregnancy (her grandmother, who she had been living with when she got pregnant, her father and her stepmother) had long since died. I think Patricia felt that nobody else would ever know. Her surviving sisters, Noreen and Judy, were quite upset with her that she had never shared her story with them. They do not believe she ever told Alex either.

I have struggled with the fact that my mother had gotten pregnant by a man she obviously loved (later to be married to him for 57 years), gave birth to me, gave me away, and possibly never thought about me in 67 years. No thoughts, no wondering, no regrets? I will never really know. I have had a good life, so I certainly can't be angry with her. Times were quite different back in the 1940s. I can't imagine what she must have had to deal with.

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I would so like to have talked with her but never had that opportunity. Sadly, she suddenly died about 4 months after I'd found her. Although Pat was reluctant to meet me, Nancy told me later that she seemed to be softening to the idea. Happily, my own daughter and I traveled to Buffalo and visited with my two "new" sisters and my "new" aunts a couple of years later and had a wonderful visit. We have maintained long-distance relationships ever since. After this pandemic is over, we hope to be able to visit each other again.

The Ancestry DNA "cousin" mentioned earlier turned out to be my step-uncle. He is the two-year-old stepbrother mentioned in my "non-identifying" adoption information. We have since communicated through Ancestry's messaging and confirmed our relationship.

Through Ancestry.com both my adopted and birth families keep expanding.



<https://www.facebook.com/FindMyBirthFamily/>

"Basics about Repositories" by Linda Hudson ©

A library, a repository and an archive walk into a bar.....

I bet that reminds you of the beginning of a favorite joke. But no joke here, there is a serious question. What is the difference between the three? According to Family Tree Magazine, "A library is intended for public access of materials. An archive preserves primary resource material with limited access to records. A repository is a library, archive or other place where records are stored." Archives are the most limited in public access. Libraries may have restrictions on collections. Repositories across the globe decide what collections they have are public and easily accessible.

In the U.S. there are many repositories. For genealogical purposes there are some which are considered the most important due to their vast and impressive collections. The following is a list compiled by FamilySearch published at this site: <https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/americas-top-ten-genealogical-repositories/>.

Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. which includes genealogies, local histories, newspapers and more. It has the largest collection of genealogy materials in the country.

National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C. containing government records including censuses, immigration documents, homesteads, and prison records. There are about a dozen regional centers across the country.

Family History Library located in Salt Lake City, Utah which includes microfilmed and digitized records of the government, church records, and others of genealogical value.

Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana with a vast array of historical periodicals, histories, directories, ethnic collections, and more. Their genealogy center is the second largest collection in the U.S. and the largest in a public library.

New York Public Library in New York City containing collections of American history, international genealogy, manuscripts, rare books, and art collections. It also contains specific artifacts to New York's history and role in immigration and early settlement.

New England Historic Genealogical Society of Boston, Massachusetts. This repository is considered the best overall collection for New England. It has vital records, journals, sermons, books, a 100 million name database, unpublished family genealogies, and other works, many of which are related to New England and its settlement.

Mid-Continent Public Library found in Independence, Missouri has many government records, family and local histories, including Records for Antebellum Southern Plantations and Civil War unit histories.

Dallas Public Central Library in Dallas, Texas contains vital records for some states, many war records from the Revolutionary War to World War II, and Black Biographical Dictionaries to name a few.

The Newberry Library in Chicago, Illinois also has a vast array of genealogies, local histories, and government records, mostly from the Mississippi Valley to the East Coast.

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Sutro Library in San Francisco, California contains an expansive collection including 10,000 genealogies, 40,000 state, county, or town histories, rare books and manuscripts, and items pertinent to the western states, especially California.

For additional noteworthy repositories see https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Archives_and_Libraries. Also, research for the best repository for the region or state you are interested in. Often you will find local collections unique to that area.

Most of us have families who may have not had local acclaim, much less widespread notoriety. However, don't despair. Small town U.S.A. may help you fill in your tree. Local libraries and historical societies (repositories) often contain many of those family manuscripts and artifacts. If researching a family in a particular town, begin by doing a google search to see if there is a local library. Contact them and ask if they have genealogy resources of local history and families. You can also search for a state and local historical society and see what types of records and genealogy resources they contain. Some are better than others but do not overlook them. Local genealogy societies might also be able to give you some pointers about researching in the area. This may be your best path to discovery, particularly when researching areas that were left torn and tattered by the Civil War. Towns whose courthouses were burned to the ground.

I have had great success with local repositories. On a personal research trip to South Carolina, I paid a visit to the local Camden Archives and Museum. They had biographies, manuscripts, and family lineage records dating to the 1700s. The biographies were often published, limited edition books not going to be found in many, if any, other collections. Manuscripts and lineage records were family submitted paper copies with little or no availability at other sites. Here, in their family files, I found the answer to one of my female family lines. It was a HUGE find. The gentleman who assisted me in my search at the archives had written a book about the area, its people and history, and some of my ascendants were in it. He was extremely helpful. He also introduced me to a local storyteller/historian who shared some of the local histories, some of which were about my three times great grandfather. That, too, was a gold mine.

Making a road trip may not be in your plans, but your answers may only be a phone call away. Whether going in person or calling, be prepared. Make a phone call before you make the trip. Start with the basics: confirm days and hours they are open. Don't make assumptions. Tell them when you are coming, and your research interests and names. You might want to do this via email for clarifying purposes. Take your family group sheet(s). Prepare research questions. Have group sheets for as many branches as you have in that area. Why? Well, they may be related, and you just need to find that golden information nugget that ties them together. You might also want to have at hand the group sheet that you are certain of and the one that you have tinkered with that goes back further. Take a device to photocopy whether your phone or scanner.

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If you can't go, find out what kind of artifacts or records they have. Ask the archivist if they can assist you in your research at their convenience.

My greatest revelations for two separate trees were made at historical societies/museums. The one mentioned above and Sauk Prairie Historical Society in Wisconsin. They put me in contact with a local woman who showed me the Free Congregation Meeting Hall (aka Freethinkers and Free Society) that my great-great-grandparents help found and other places pertinent to my search. The society also found, in their boxes pictures of my great-great grandmother, her sister, and my great-great grandfather's sister. Calling ahead made this trip a great success. These repositories don't have all the flash and resources of the major centers, but they can exceed your expectations. They may not have what you are hoping for, but they may know someone at another archive, or a person in town, who may help. The more appreciation you show for their help, the more they will likely help you. Make their day. They may help you make yours.



Camden Archives & Museum in Camden, SC

<https://www.classicallycarolina.com/what-do/museums/camden-archives-museum>

Sauk Prairie Historical Society & Tripp Museum, WI

<https://www.saukprairiehistory.org/>

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“Why I do Genealogy—My Journey” by Neal Scott ©

It was the summer of 1969 and a 14-year-old version of myself was with my family in Houston visiting my Aunt Edith, my Mother's oldest sister. I always liked visiting my two Houston aunts. They were good folks, kid-friendly, who loved to take my brothers and me on outings to see things in Houston such as the construction of the Astrodome, the zoo, a view from the top of the Humble Oil building, bicycling through River Oaks, a shopping trip to the amazing Sharpstown Mall, and the best of all, stopping at a Baskin-Robbins for an ice cream cone! We had a B-R in Corpus Christi, where I grew up, but nothing else to compare to Houston. The highlight of this particular visit, in late July, was watching the live broadcast of man's first landing on the moon! I clearly recall sitting on the floor of my aunt's house watching Neil Armstrong (good name, he just spells it funny) take his historic first steps on the lunar surface. How cool to be watching this while in "Space City!"

At the time of this visit, there was another, far less dramatic, event that would have a much greater impact on my own life. And that was my browsing through a book my aunt had titled *The Beverley Family of Virginia*. She said it was a book of all the descendants of a family who helped found our country. "Great, more history," I likely thought to myself. Bored to be indoors, I looked through it and saw it had hundreds, even thousands of people listed born all through the history of the U.S. Checking the index, I went to the "S" section to see if there was a Scott listed. There I found... *Scott, Robert Edward*, my Dad's name! Flipping back to page whatever-it-was, there in print, inside a bound book, was my Dad. And my Mom. And my grandparents. And my aunts and cousins. How cool was that?!

The book was published in the early '50s just before my older brother's birth, so my siblings and I were not listed. Still, I was hooked. I guess I've always been a bit of a geek. I'd collected stamps, and coins, and Boy Scout patches, so why not ancestors?

Being the '60s, of course everything was done on paper. Communication was by letter (long distance cost way too much), no internet, no email. But I started to build a small family tree. My parents would pass along my interest to their family members when they corresponded, and I soon got the reputation in my family as "the genealogist." In time I began to get notes from family members listing the names and dates that they knew. These might be tucked into a birthday card, passed along during a visit, or included in a letter that was sent to my parents.

At some point, I bought blank pedigree charts and family group sheets, and tried to be more formal in organizing the growing data about my known relatives. Soon I had a 3-ring binder full of family group sheets and pedigree charts, tabbed by surnames; a folder or two of notes and letters from relatives; and a shoebox of photos, wedding invitations, newspaper clippings, etc.

My interest and the amount of time I could spend on my hobby came in spurts through college, career, and raising a family, but I never threw anything away.

With personal computers, Apple's Mac for me, the records would become more organized. I was an early adopter of Reunion for the Mac and still use it for

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my own records. With e-mail and the internet, the world grew much smaller, enabling discoveries I'd never dreamed of before. Correspondence with more distant relatives who had already done a lot of research helped me build my tree much larger. A challenge to my Dad to write down his memories resulted in his gathering a lifetime of photos and self-publishing an incredible book of his life!

Since retiring from the electrical supply business in 2017, I've made a number of genealogical travels to my "ancestral" lands of Mississippi (Copiah County) and Kentucky (Christian County) and numerous other places. I've met several distant cousins when my travels would take me near their homes. I've spent many hours in cemeteries, photographing, cleaning, and doing cleanup of family plots. Many ancestors were farmers, and they seemed to love to be buried out back in a pasture somewhere, so no perpetual care to keep things tidy. When driving, I always travel with a collection of soft brushes, water jugs, and D/2 biologic cleaner to clean up gravestones of ancestors (always following the guidelines of the CCUS!).



I've hiked a half-mile through an 8-ft high cornfield following the blue dot on my iPhone's Google Map to reach the grave of one Patriot ancestor; spent 2 days with a machete, hedge-trimmer, weed-eater, and chain saw to uncover the 12 graves in another family cemetery; and countless other efforts to honor my ancestors' final resting places.

Among the discoveries that I've found interesting... I'm related to Martha Washington, Senator Sam Ervin of Watergate fame, and the singing cowboy, Rex Allen. A cousin was one of Brigham Young's 55 wives. And I'm descended from John Knox, founder of the Presbyterian Church.

My four main lines are Scott, Allen, Ervin, and Gary. Others include Gillis, Paul, Jones, Bell, Lewis, Morris, Stackhouse, Tillman, Hollingsworth, Womack, Forgy, Hamner, Galbreath, Crewdson, Clark, Stubblefield, and many others. I'm not in the SAR but have considered it since I have found I'm descended from more than a dozen "Patriots."



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington_Crossing_the_Delaware_\(1851_painting\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington_Crossing_the_Delaware_(1851_painting))

“Our New Website—Hope You Like It” by Ron Ware ©

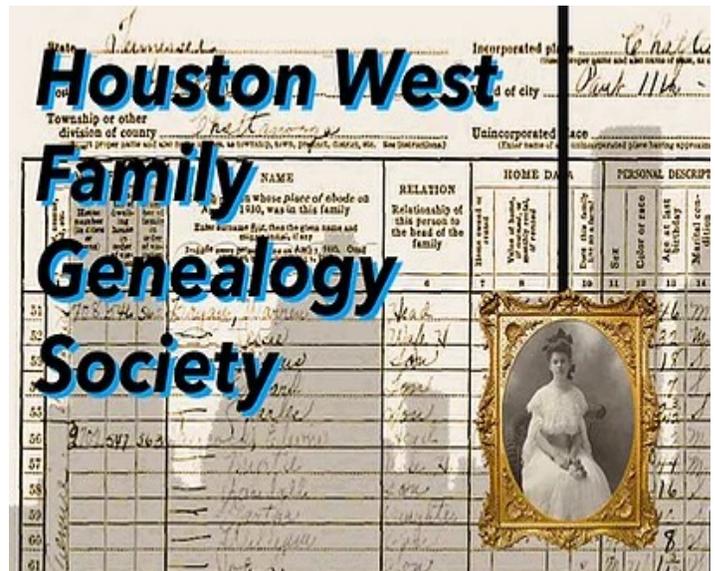
When Alan Leeds indicated he would appreciate a break from serving as the society’s webmaster, I volunteered for the job. Little did I know what I was getting into. As I began, I gained a deep appreciation of the hard work he had done over a long period of time. He deserved a break.

I began work on the site in August. It went relatively well, but I soon realized I was going to need help. Fortunately, I found that support in Jenny Sharrer, Gail Colby, and Neal Scott. Each of them agreed to serve on a newly formed website committee, and “boy” have they been a fun group to work with. Each of them has brought a different skillset to the team. I think the result is a well-organized and dynamic website.

Our initial goal was to publish a basic website, which we called Phase One. That phase would provide for a home page with five areas of content: ABOUT US, EVENTS, RESOURCES, VOLUNTEER and MEMBER. Every area except the Member section was fully populated and ready for publication by the end of November.

I think the site is intuitive and easy to explore. Holding the cursor over one of the menu items will bring up a sub-menu with a list of pages packed full of information. For example, placing your cursor over the ABOUT US menu, and then clicking on OUR PURPOSE, takes you to a page that does just that; it describes the Houston West Family Genealogy Society’s purpose. All the other menu items follow the same format.

Phase One did not provide for a fully developed Member section. We want that area to be secure, accessed by



www.houstonwestfamgen.org

members only via a password system. To do that requires an upgrade to the Wix website builder currently used. With an upgrade to the platform, we can provide a dynamic membership directory, budget, treasurer reports, and other secure information. That would be Phase Two.

Even without the platform upgrade, there is opportunity for improvement of the current site. I think a great addition would be a “Member Highlight.” A blurb on the home page could link to an expanded information page - perhaps a photo, bio, and “Why I do Genealogy” posting.

Neal, Gail, Jenny, and I, are all open to suggestions. So, if you have something that you would like to see there, contact one of us.

You can access the site easily by simply typing in “houstonwestfamgen.org” in your browser header. I hope you enjoy your experience there.

“See What You Missed! ” By Linda Hudson ©

If you were unable to attend our December webinars, you missed some great information.

On December 5, 2020, Melissa Corn Finlay presented “Orphans, Infants, and Minors: Genealogy Nuggets, and Pitfalls in Guardianship Records.” So many of us have branches on our family tree that have experienced the loss of one or both parents and left minor children. If our families were lucky, someone was able to assist minors through the courts’ system and the courts adjudicated what was to happen to the parent’s estate and what would happen to the surviving minor(s).



http://www.helenahistory.org/st_josephs_orphans_home.htm

Melissa shared the legal definitions of terms related to guardianship records. Legally speaking, an orphan may have a living parent, but has inherited property from a deceased parent and because they are underage do not have the legal ability to manage their property. Guardians appointed by the courts were often male. They were expected to manage the orphan’s property, report regularly to the courts, and help transition the orphan at adulthood to the maintenance of his/her estate.

Guardianship records are in different courts depending on the location, but begin your search with county courts. Some jurisdictions maintained “orphan courts.” While many of these have been digitized, finding them online can be difficult. Search by county and state where your kinfolk lived. These records may be lumped in with general probate or county records of all kinds. You may have to get your sleuthing spectacles on and roll up your sleeves to find what you are looking for.

While the search may be arduous and time-consuming, the results may be research gold. Records containing information regarding “orphans” may include parental death date and place, information about the minor or person in need of a guardian, property, expenses and more.

On December 15, 2020, Sharon Gillins presented “Research Treasures in the Works Progress Administration (WPA).” These records involve those employed by the government during the Great Depression and years through World War II. During the Great Depression, many of our relatives sought work in a variety of programs begun by many branches of our government. Like the Civilian Conservation Corps, the WPA saw where there were needs in local communities and created jobs that would address those needs and provide work for persons during some difficult times.

The WPA employed people in everything from cultural projects involving the arts to writing materials (example travel guides) for local governments. Some even transcribed the narratives of former slaves and others. Importantly for his-

Cont'd

torians, one project included the collection and conservation of U.S. historical records. More likely though, your ancestor helped build roads, parks, and schools, or maybe they worked to improve flood control along the Tennessee River. No matter what job they filled, if they were a part of this massive relief program, there is a record of it. Bear in mind, their work may have been far from home. Many moved temporarily to have work.

The records that were saved and catalogued in communities by the WPA programs are vast and we can be very thankful for their efforts. But, of course, you want to learn more about your family. To do this, you can complete a "Request Pertaining to Works Progress Administration Personnel Records" and send it to the National Archives at St. Louis. The form is located at https://www.archives.gov/files/st-louis/archival-programs/civilian-personnel-archival/NA_form_14137.pdf. Once the archive receives your request, they will see if the person you are

seeking has employment records with the WPA in the National Archives. Then, the archive will contact you indicating if there is a record. If a record for your person exists, you will be asked to submit a request for release and pay a fee. If they receive both in a time-sensitive manner, they will fulfill the request. These records can contain details of the employee's project assignments, service dates and earnings, and other work-related information. These records exist for the time 1933-1944. Once you confirm the type of service your relative performed, you will be able to research their contributions to the U.S. and likely find out more about their life.

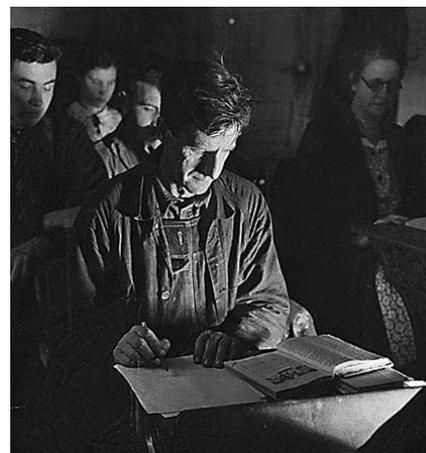


National Archives and Records Administration at St. Louis, MO.

www.archives.gov



WPA Sewing shop in NYC circa 1938. www.pbs.org



WPA Adult Education Program c. 1930s. www.britannica.com

Zoom with US!! Update.

Zooming is Easy. It takes a few simple steps.

1. A Zoom account is **not** required to **join** a Zoom meeting.
2. When the society sends out an invite for a virtual meeting, **REGISTER** — it just takes your name and email. You must register in advance.
3. You will receive a link to the meeting via Zoom in your email. When it is time to meet, click on the link and then "Join Meeting or Webinar."
4. The link you receive is unique to you and your email. It is **NOT shareable**. Flag it so you can easily find it when preparing to join the meeting.
5. You will be able to see the meeting and hear it if your audio is on. You don't need to have your computer camera/video on. It is up to you to share your picture.



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A little more on repositories

A few more things to consider when planning your trip to a repository. Check to see if they have vertical or subject files. These would include family submitted records. It is here you might find the fami-

ly group sheet or copies of the family Bible with the answers you seek. Manuscript collections may also have been submitted, ask what they have.

When you are plan-

ning your visit, ask what you can bring in, fees for copying, parking, etc.

Be aware you may be searched, and you may have to put your personal belongings in a locker.

Don't reorder items in files. They are typically in a specific order to assist the archivist in helping visitors. Be sure to get your citation information and contact names. And, enjoy the trip!

Editor's Corner by Linda Hudson

Do you have something you've learned in your genealogy journey that you would like to share? It may be a great story, a researching skill or tidbit that we could all

benefit from, or special insight about a repository where you have researched. Email me and share the information. You can submit the information as a short or longer arti-

cle. You can opt to tell me the basics, and I can write it up for you. What's important is sharing your wealth of information. What you have to share may make all the difference to a

fellow member.



Happy Researching!
Linda

Houston West Family Genealogy Society

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www.houstonwestfamgen.org

2020-2021 Sept-May Calendar of Events

Everyone researching for ancestors...*Novice to Expert*...is invited to participate virtually until further notice!

2020	2021
<p>August</p> <p>6 1-3 PM Kick-off & Virtual Ice Cream Social</p> <p>13 1-3 PM HWFGS Board Meeting</p> <p>17 HWFGS Membership Applications sent</p> <p>September</p> <p>2-5 Federation of Genealogical Societies Conference The conference will be virtual—www.fgs.org</p> <p>10 12:30 PM Gail Colby - "DNA Results!? Now What?!"</p> <p>23 10 AM-12 Noon HWFGS Board Meeting</p> <p>October</p> <p>6 10 AM HWFGS Board Meeting</p> <p>8 12:30 PM Caroline Pointer – "10 Tech Tools to Help You Collaborate with Family for Your Research"</p> <p>29 12:30 PM Elizabeth O'Neal—"Using Digital Libraries: Search Strategies for Family Historians"</p> <p>November</p> <p>1 <i>Daylight Savings Time Ends - Fall Back!</i></p> <p>10 10 AM HWFGS Board Meeting</p> <p>12 12:30 PM "Maximizing Your Use of FamilySearch.org"</p> <p>13-15 TSGS 2020 Family History Conference - Irving, TX - www.txsgs.org (virtual)</p> <p>28 10 AM Members Helping Members</p> <p>December</p> <p>10 12:30 PM Holiday Party & Members' "Show & Tell"</p> <p>12 10 AM Members Helping Members</p>	<p>January</p> <p>7 4 PM Members Helping Members</p> <p>12 10 AM HWFGS Board Meeting</p> <p>14 12:30 PM Jeanie Smith - "Organizing and Preserving Your Stuff"</p> <p>16 10:00 AM DNA Special Interest Group (SIG)</p> <p>23 9:00 AM Members Helping Members</p> <p>February</p> <p>9 10 AM HWFGS Board Meeting</p> <p>11 12:30 Susan Kaufman - "Researching Our Ancestors in Libraries, Archives & Repositories"</p> <p>25-27 RootsTech Connect FREE info@rootstech.org (virtual)</p> <p>March</p> <p>9 10 AM HWFGS Board Meeting</p> <p>11 12:30 PM "Maximizing Your Use of Ancestry.com"</p> <p>14 <i>Daylight Savings - Spring Forward!</i></p> <p>April</p> <p>6 10 AM HWFGS Board Meeting</p> <p>8 12:30 PM Cari Taplin – "How Did You Find That? Knocking Down Brick Walls"</p> <p>May</p> <p>11 10 AM HWFGS Board Meeting</p> <p>13 12:30 PM "Two Approaches for Recording Your Finds: 1) Writing as You Go and 2) Family Book Creator" 2021-2022 Board Elections</p> <p>20-23 National Genealogical Society 2021 Family History Conference – Salt Lake City, UT https://www.ngsgenealogy.org/</p> <p>June, July & August - We are off for the summer</p>

Learning Opportunities

Please Join Us Online via Zoom for a Week-long Course in Your Choice of Weeks!

20–25 June 2021

Practical Genetic Genealogy

Blaine Bettinger, Ph.D., J.D.

Law School for Genealogists

Judy G. Russell, J.D., CG, CGL and Rick Sayre, CG, CGL, FUGA

Beyond Fundamentals: Hands-on Forensic Genealogy

Catherine Desmarais, CG

Digging Deeper: Records, Tools, and Skills

Paula Stuart-Warren, CG, FMGS, FUGA

Research in the Great Lakes Region

Cari Taplin, CG

Answering the Call of Uncle Sam: Research in

Military Records

Sandra Rumble and Jonathan Deiss

Beyond the Golden Door: Immigrants to the U.S.A. after 1890

Rich Venezia

Tools and Strategies for Tackling

Tough Research Problems

Kimberly Powell

11–16 July 2021

Advanced DNA Evidence

Blaine Bettinger, Ph.D., J.D.

Mastering the Art of Genealogical Documentation

Thomas W. Jones, Ph.D., CG, FASG

Reading, Transcribing, & Abstracting Old Documents

Carla Cegielski

Walking in Penn's Woods: Pennsylvania Research

Amy E. K. Arner

Essential Tools and Strategies for African American Research

Deborah A. Abbott, Ph.D.

Get Your Hands Dirty! A Workshop in Land and Property Records

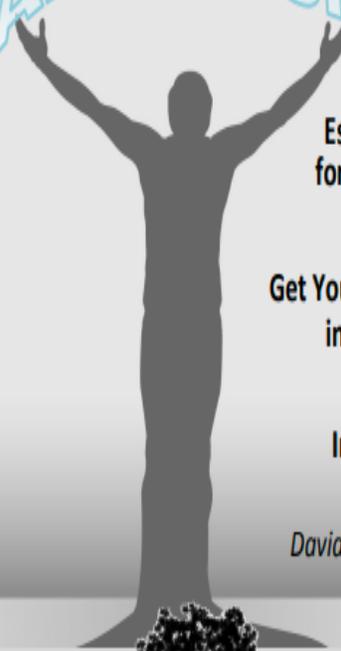
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Ireland and Northern Ireland Genealogical Research

David Rencher, AG, CG, FUGA, FIGRS

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Learning Opportunities!



Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research

Sunday, 25 July – Friday, 30 July 2021

IGHR 2021 *Choose one of thirteen courses*

Course One

Methods & Sources

coordinator Rebecca Whitman Koford, CG, CGL

Course Two

Intermediate Genealogy & Historical Studies

coordinator Debra A. Hoffman, PLCGS

Course Three

Advanced Methodology & Evidence Analysis

coordinator Judy G. Russell, JD, CG, CGL

Course Four

Writing & Publishing for Genealogists

coordinator Thomas W. Jones, PhD, CG, FASG, FUGA, FNGS

Course Five

Genetics for Genealogists: Beginning DNA

coordinator Patti Lee Hobbs, CG

Course Six

Military Records I

coordinator Michael L. Strauss, AG

Course Seven

Irish Genealogical Research

coordinator David E. Rencher, AG, CG, FIGRS, FUGA

Course Eight

Understanding Land Records

coordinator Angela Packer McGhie, CG

Course Nine

Research in the South: Trans-Mississippi South

coordinator J. Mark Lowe, CG, FUGA

Course Ten

Genealogy as a Profession

coordinator Elissa Scalise Powell, CG, CGL

Course Eleven

Virginia: Her Records and Her Laws

coordinator Victor S. Dunn, CG

Course Twelve

DNA as Genealogical Evidence (Advanced)

coordinator Karen Stanbary, MA, LCSW, CG

Course Thirteen

Fundamentals of Hispanic Genealogical Research

coordinator Lynn C. Turner, AG

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Good to Know! Beginner Tips!

Are you searching for African-Americans? If they were slaves, or are descended from slaves, consider the following:

- Look in Civil War records. Many fought for the Union in the Civil War and there should be records of service and perhaps pensions.
- Look at 1870 census records near the former slave owner. Freed persons typically stayed in the area using the last name of their former owner who was most likely a landowner. Pay attention to age, birthplace, and race. You might find information you can verify through other records.
- Emancipation records are located in county records. Check Freedmen's Bureau Records also, available on Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org

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MORE TO KNOW

For other events

[Update on GRIP](#)

Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh! The registration for their summer week-long **VIRTUAL** courses begins FEBRUARY 17. Pick **a topic** you want to learn at an in-depth level—that is the focus for the week. The tuition is \$475.00, but you don't have the travel expense and that makes this opportunity a real bargain! Courses do fill up, plan ahead. Course topics are found on page 17. Go to <https://www.gripitt.org/> for all the details.

[Institute of Genealogy & Historical Research](#)

Another opportunity to learn **virtually** with a focus on a "strand" of information similar to GRIP. This is an annual institute in Georgia. Registration begins MARCH 6. Tuition for a course is \$545.00.

Dates: **25 to 30 July 2021**

Course topics are found on page 18.

Go to: <https://ighr.gagensociety.org/> for all the details.