

The WHAGS Journal



Volume 4, Issue 2

Just The Facts

October 2023



Editors Note

Ron Ware

It appears the brutal summer of 2023 has passed. Temperatures have returned to normal, and we are finally getting some much-needed rain. Now we can stop worrying about our landscaping and high electric bills and return to the joys of genealogical research.

Over the months of September and October, we have three Special Interest Group startups. The Beginners SIG hosted by Neal Scott, and Rick Armes' GENESSYS SIG which introduces a computer appli-

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WHAGS Writers

New SIG - Page 5

See Clayton Library bus trip announcement on page 10

Cristina Sturrock Foreman Mason

By Meg Philpot

When I started my genealogy quest, I started with my paternal grandmother, Christina Sturrock Foreman Mason whose history I knew through stories my father passed on to me.

She was born in Dundee, Scotland, in November of 1881, and went into foster care with her sister Elizabeth around 1887 living in the country with the Wallace family. Her childhood must not have been easy and the story goes that she found the grave of Mrs. Wallace and spat on it.

Not sure when she and her sister left foster care but did find them in a 1901 England Census working for different families as domestic servants in London.



The Author

In June of 1905

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President's Report

Gail Colby

The September presentation by Marion Wood, *Planning a Future for Your Family's Past*, was a great start to WHAGS' 2023-2024 program calendar. The rest of the year looks equally good. The Program Committee is doing a wonderful job getting speakers for topics WHAGS members are interested in learning more about. October looks to be another great month. I am looking forward to the bus trip to the Clayton Library and the monthly program, *Top Tips for Researching Your Scottish and English Ancestors*.

If you do not have an *Ancestry* subscription and have tested your DNA at *Ancestry*, you have

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President's Report

probably noticed that some of the beta testing features such as SideView (no longer called Sideview) and matches by parents are no longer accessible. *Ancestry* has moved these behind a pay-wall—a subscription-based system called AncestryDNA Plus™, <https://www.ancestry.com/offers/join?feature=matchesInheritance>. It costs \$29.99 every six months. If you have a data subscription to *Ancestry*, you automatically have access to these features; including all the kits you manage. *Ancestry* membership now also includes traits that were previously an additional cost. *Ancestry* dangles a carrot saying there is more to come with your membership.

There are rumors that *Ancestry* may start accepting DNA uploads. An additional rumor is that *Ancestry* will show you the amount of DNA you and a match share with shared matches, like *23andMe* and *MyHeritage*. It will be interesting to see what they release and when. With these upgrades, there are currently some issues with ThruLines®. In my ThruLines®, my ancestors are there, but I have lost matches that were there before. It is nice to see who you are related to and potentially through which ancestors. C'est la vie.

The WHAGS special interest groups (SIGs) and Members Helping Members are resources

that some of our members coordinate based on the interests expressed by members. Take advantage of the skills and knowledge that these members are happy to share. Genealogists learn from other genealogists; we cannot know everything. If you would like to share your knowledge and/or learn something new, I encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities. WHAGS' mission is to help you find your roots.

When You Can't Find the Gravesite

By Linda Hudson



What a blessing the *Find A Grave* website is. Who would have thought 20 or more years ago that we could find a gravesite online and get a photo of the headstone? Kudos to all those who have contributed to the site. However, we don't always have success via this program. It does have its limitations. Some cemeteries have not been surveyed. Most of the gravesites posted are based on grave mark-

ers. Spellings may be wrong or markers illegible, or non-existent. Then what?

About 2012, I happened to be in Clayton Library where I was researching their books for family records. I knew one of my 3rd Great-Grandmothers had lived in Sauk County, Wisconsin. I looked over the books they had for said county and much to my surprise they had county cemetery books. I would never have thought they'd have books like that for an obscure place in Wisconsin. My 2x Great-Grandmother was listed! And she was buried with her former husband's family, Goldmine. When I made the trek to Wisconsin, I paid my respects and it was exciting. That said, many counties have similar books. They are typically found in the local library or a small-town museum. Large colleges and other depositories may also have what you are looking for. There is a caveat. Most of these records are based on much earlier surveys of the cemeteries and entries are based on markers.

In 1996 my dad died. Mom knew he had a sister buried in a nearby country cemetery on private property. She went there and didn't find anything to suggest the little girl was buried there. She did find a marker for my dad's grandmother. She looked at what was in the library

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Gravesite

and that record book didn't yield her any results. She went to the landowner and asked if they had any more records of who was buried there. They gave her a paper which indicated where and who was buried in the cemetery.

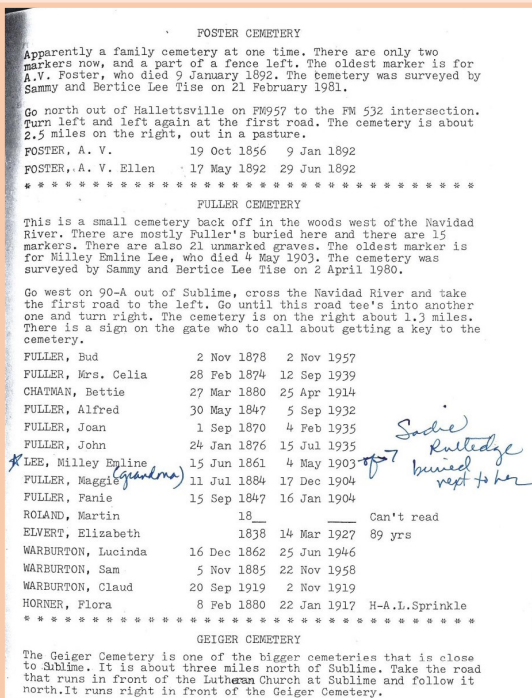
If you look at the first record, it tells you the location of the Fuller Cemetery and who is buried there. It indicates there are graves that are unmarked. My third Great-Grandmother Milley Lee is noted as being the oldest grave present. It doesn't indicate that my Daddy's sister is buried there. But we knew she was. Mom knew the landowners paid them a visit and asked if they had additional records. The

second page is what they gave her. Rows three through four contain some of my direct relations. Only three are mentioned in the published cemetery book. Mrs. Cardell was married to my third Great-Grandfather Lee. He died the first day at Bull Run and she quickly remarried. Mrs. Fannie Fuller was her daughter. Milley Lee was a Qualls who married Isaac Lee, Mrs. Cardell's son. Ed Rutledge's baby had no marker, so Mom had one placed, she was Sadie Rutledge. And then Milley Emline Lee's baby had no marker. This suggests she and her daughter died close together. Of these, Milley Lee and Fannie Fuller had markers and are in the county record books. Mrs. Cardell had an iron cross with crudely written let-

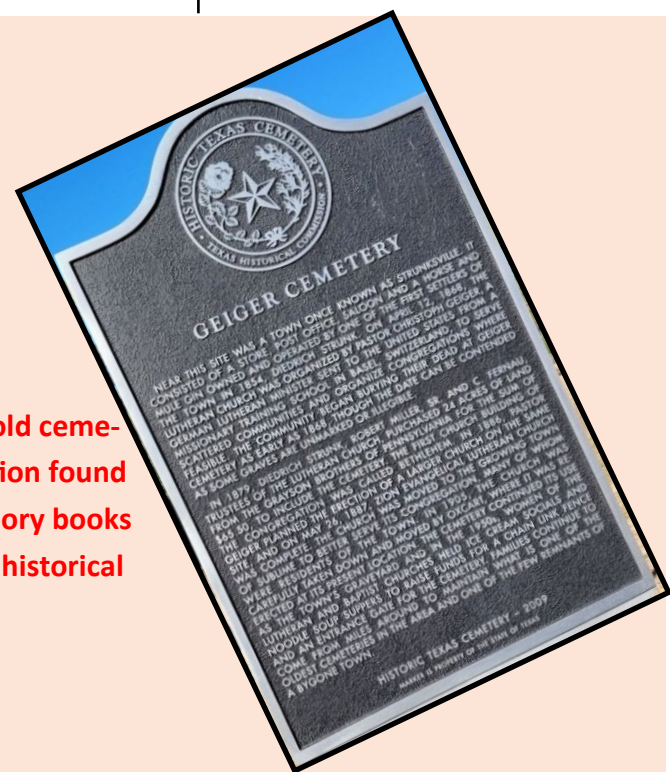
ters painted white. She is not in the county book.

Where there's a will, there's a way. I've been searching for my mother's great-great-grandfather, my third great-grandfather. She was told he was buried in the Bittner cemetery. There were Bittners in his family. I searched every cemetery using *Find A Grave* in the state with Bittner on the list. No luck. There is a Bittner Cemetery in Weimar with no indication my third great-grandfather is there. But my mom has been right about most things so far. My next step is to pay a visit to the Weimar Library or perhaps their historical society. I tried going to the cemetery, but the man I talked to said it wasn't his

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Examples of old cemetery information found in county history books and roadside historical markers.



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Gravesite

property and he was told by the owner not to let anyone in the cemetery. I just wanted to know if there is a record; I suspected if he had a marker, it would be on *Find A Grave*. Since moving out to our ranch, I've also reacquainted with some folks very familiar with the people of the region, so I have several resources to further assist my search. My best advice is don't relent.

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Christina

she immigrated to Canada (age 23) with her sister Elizabeth. She arrived in Quebec and then caught a special train for Winnipeg. Don't know where she obtained the money for this trip but it's possible she was recruited by an emigration agency in London which promised passage and employment as Canada was looking for domestic servants. I can only imagine that her prospects in England and Scotland were not good, and she took this arduous journey to make a better life for herself.

In 1919 she immigrated to the United States along with my grandfather, who she had met in Canada, and their three children (my father being one of them) who had been born in Canada. They settled in Brooklyn and lived there for many years before

moving back to England but returned to the United States in 1940 just before the Blitz started in London.

My father told many stories of my grandmother, who called him Bobby, and the following are two that we all enjoyed, and he put down on paper in "Not Everyone Has A Scottish Grandmother" that he wrote.

On one occasion she boarded a crowded New York City bus after the demand for exact fare was introduced only to find she was 15 cents short of the 50 cents required. No, said the driver, he couldn't make change, she would have to get off. She rummaged in her big bag and came up with a 15-cent stamp. The driver, outraged, refused it. "You won't take an American stamp?" Mother demanded, equally outraged at this lack of patriotism. It took the driver about two more stops and a stream of advice from other passengers to realize he was beaten, and he waved her to the seat someone was offering. I wonder what he told his wife that night.

Then there was the morning she said, "Bobby, when you go into Grand Central, stop at the Traveler's Aid and give them a quarter."

"A quarter, what for?"

"Well, last night coming home, I found I was short a quarter for

my train ticket, so I went to the Traveler's Aid booth. At first they didn't want to give it to me, but I said, 'I'm a traveler and I need aid. I need a quarter.' After a while the man give me a quarter and I got my ticket."

The people at Traveler's Aid got round-eyed when I solemnly presented the quarter and, I suppose, passed it on to the bemused agent on duty the night before.

She was always having adventures. Some she created; others just seemed to happen to her. She used to advise me, "Don't be easy beat, Bobby." She never was.

**CHRISTINA STURROCK
FOREMAN MASON**

**November 10, 1881
February 5, 1963**



Our Committees and Special Interest Groups at Work

September Membership Team Update

We had a total of 35 people attend either in person or via Zoom for our first meeting of the year. For those that came in person, Diane and Cindy brought delicious cookies and mini-muffins. Afterward, a few of us went to lunch at Clay's and shared more conversation. Come and join us!

As of 9/15, we have 40 paid memberships, of which 37 are individual memberships and 3 are family memberships. We have 6 Life Members too, for a grand total of 49 people. If you are not sure if you have renewed, please email membership@whags.email. We will get back to you asap.

Liz Philip, Membership

New Family History Writing SIG Forming

If you are like me, you have filing cabinets and drawers full of documents gathered over years of research. I often think, what is going to happen to all my research after I'm gone. There is a great possibility that mine will end up in the Walker County landfill. No one in my family is interested in genealogy research and the gathering of documents.

However, they are interested in the stories of their ancestors, and that is the way to leave our legacy as family historians.

So how do we preserve our work? We write stories. Most of us do not think of ourselves as authors. But we do not have to be. The point is to get the information from our research down on paper in a story format. To help us do that, we are forming a

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G2

There has been a major rewrite of the first version of GENESSYS we saw in December. G2 is an improved version of that prototype

In the following interview, Rick Armes explains the changes and the result of his first G2 SIG meeting.

GENESSYS SIG UPDATE

Ron: Rick, you held your first GENESSYS SIG meeting recently. How did it go?

Rick: Great. Fantastic. Fifteen members tuned in for the 90-minute demo. I was very pleased by the turnout. I hope that October's turnout is just as large if not better once the word gets around as to the capabilities of "G2".

Ron: What was your takeaway from the meeting?

Rick: I believe everyone walked away from the Zoom meeting understanding that the "G2" software can track ALL their genealogy media, as well as offer tools to aid in their research. Everyone needs help tracking all the media they have amassed over the years, and I think G2 could be the tool for some of our WHAGS members.

Ron: I understand you now refer to GENESSYS as "G2". Why did the name change?

Rick: "G2" is shorthand for GENESSYS Version 2. "G2" is a major rewrite from the version members saw during the December 2022 WHAGS meeting. A new name made sense. I've just recently found that it's way easier to say "G2" In a demo rather than "GENESSYS"!

Ron: I suppose the question then is "Why the rewrite?"

Rick: For three reasons:

Emphasize Document Tracing. When I joined WHAGS in 2022 I thought everyone would want to produce "an heirloom quality"

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G2

book such as the one I showed members at the December WHAGS meeting. I have now discovered since that December meeting that many members have no interest in creating a book at all! So I've rewritten GENESSYS to emphasize its document tracking capabilities, while downplaying the book creation aspect, for now.

Emphasize the “Document” over the “Person. The first form/screen WHAGS members saw in December highlighted my grandfather showing his parents, siblings, children, B/C/D/B dates, etc. It is entirely likely that their first impression might have been that GENESSYS was a family tree software package like Legacy or Roots Magic. GENESSYS is definitely **not** a family tree software package. Accordingly, the first form seen in G2 is a menu with “DOCUMENT” as the first menu item, and “PERSON” as the fourth.

Emphasize story telling. The most important reason for the rewrite was motivated by Lynn Palermo (one of our speakers last year) and Marian Burk Wood (our speaker in September): Stories are what interest people, and stories are driven by the information we collect over time. G2 provides a facility to link documents together to tell a story, or what I call a vignette. I'm hoping that

being able to easily craft vignettes, and highlighting them while using the software, will provide the “hook” to find that family member to carry on our work.

Ron: When is the next meeting?

Rick: Wednesday, 18 October at 10:00 by Zoom only.

Program Committee Update

Be sure to take advantage of the upcoming program events this month! We'll spend a day in downtown Houston at the Clayton Library on October 11th. Then on October 21st, international expert Michelle Leonard will be our presenter at the October monthly meeting to talk about “Researching Your Scottish and English Ancestors.”

The Program Committee is also looking into offering an out-of-town genealogy research trip opportunity in 2024. We'd like to know your thoughts about destinations and timing for possible group research trips you would be interested in joining. Feel free to reach out to any of the Program team members (Rick Armes, Meg Philpot, Liz Philip, Ron Ware, or Pacquitta Laverents) to discuss your ideas and share information.

Pacquitta Laverents, Program Committee

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WHAGS Writers

family history writers' group that we are calling “WHAGS Writers.”

We want to keep the group small, so participation will be on a first come basis. However, if we have a lot of interest, we could consider forming a second group.

Our first meeting will be in person on October 25th at 10:00 AM in room 131 at the Lone Star College Library, 18132 West Road, Cypress. This first meeting will be an organizational meeting. Subsequent meetings will be conducted via Zoom. More details will follow the October 25th meeting.

If you are interested in participating, contact Ron Ware at Newsletter@whags.email.



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Note from the Editor

cation to help us manage our research documents, will have launched by the time you read this. The third SIG, a writing group that I will facilitate kicks off on October 25th. You can find more information about these groups here in the Journal and on the WHAGS website.

Last month, we enjoyed a great presentation, *Planning a Future for Your Family's Past*, by Marian Burk Wood. Marian's enthusiasm displayed in her presentation made it obvious that she is passionate about genealogy. She held our attention throughout the hour and gave us good ideas about preparing our research for passing along to the next generation of genealogists.

I think October's speaker will prove to be just as interesting. For those of you with Scottish and English ancestors, Scottish genealogist, Michelle Leonard will offer guides to the most useful resources, including census records, parish registers, and more. Michelle has the right credentials for the task. She is a well-known author, speaker, and the official genetic genealogist of the Ancestry Hour. This should be a worthwhile event. See more information about her presentation on page 10 and on the WHAGS website.

We can thank the Program Planning Committee, led by

Pacquitta Laverents, for engaging these high-quality professional genealogy speakers. As a result, our Society has experienced steady growth over the past two years. Membership chair, Liz Philip, tells me that we now have 49 paid members, which doesn't reflect those who haven't yet renewed their membership. Please rejoin this great organization by going to the WHAGS website and renewing.

If you feel like a short road trip, consider driving up to Huntsville. The Huntsville Public Library and The Walker County Genealogical Society will be presenting a statewide Genealogy Program on October 20th. See more information in this newsletter.

See you all at the WHAGS general meeting on October 21st.



Soldiers in the Family

By Bridget Demby

When I decided to do some research on my husband's family imagine my surprise to discover not one but four Buffalo Soldiers in his tree: Littleton Demby born 1825, Anderson Demby born

1832, William Demby born 1838, and John "Popp" Demby born 1843. These four brothers were born into slavery and fought for their freedom alongside other brave men. Three of the brothers enlisted in the 5th United States Colored Heavy Artillery Unit and the fourth, John, enlisted in Company K, 49th US Colored Infantry Troop.

Anderson, 25 years old, and his brother William, 21 years old, enlisted July 27th, 1863, in Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi. The Military Service Record for both men indicate this was the 9th Louisiana Infantry of African Descent for a 3-year term. I imagine these brothers heard about General Grant's victory at Vicksburg on July 4th, 1863, and I am sure this helped them in their decision to help fight for their freedom. In September of 1863 the unit was changed to 1st Regiment Mississippi Heavy Artillery African Descent probably just in time for the unit to participate in the September 12th, 1863, battle in Rodney, Jefferson County, Mississippi.

Reverend Baker invited 24 Union Soldiers to attend a church service being held at Presbyterian Church the next day. During the service, Confederate Soldiers that were in attendance that day stood up and announced the building was surrounded and requested

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Soldiers

the Union Soldiers surrender. Shots were fired into the church and the USS Rattler fired a cannon at the church. Unfortunately, 17 Union Soldiers were captured that day.

After this battle the Regiment returned to Vicksburg for Garrison duty and on December 2nd, 1863, William Demby died after serving only 6 months. One month later Littleton Demby, 39 years old, enlisted on January 17th, 1864, at Vicksburg for a 3-year term. On February 3rd, 1864, they fought a battle at Liverpool Heights along the Yazoo River and again on February 7th they were involved in a skirmish at Satartia.

In March 1864, the unit designation changed again and became the 4th United States Colored Troop Heavy Artillery Unit. However, a month later the name changed yet again to the 5th United States Heavy Artillery, its final designation. Under this designation beginning March 5th, 1864, they saw more action in Yazoo County. In May of 1864, more battles were fought at

Benton on May 7th through 9th, Luce's Plantation on May 13th, and Vaughn Station on May 15th, 1864.

In September 1864, once again the Soldiers left Vicksburg under the command of Major General Napoleon Dana march-

ing toward Rodney and Fayette to destroy a concentration of Confederate Troops. Upon completion of this campaign, the troops returned to Vicksburg. However, this was short-lived as the troops were once again sent to Yazoo County returning to Vicksburg on December 4th, 1864. The 5th USCT Heavy Artillery Unit remained in Vicksburg and was mustered out of service on May 20th, 1866.

Discovering John's military career was not as straightforward as his brothers'. Initially, I didn't recognize him as a soldier because he enlisted under an alias, "John Popp." When Anderson Demby filled out the Freeman Bank Application, he stated his parents' name and listed all his brothers and sisters including an alias they used.

Thus, identifying John as John Popp.

John (Popp) Demby was 19 years old, 5'5" brown complexion with black eyes and hair when he enlisted on August 13, 1863, at the Natchez City Hall for a 3-year term. He was assigned to Company K, 49th US Colored Infantry Troop.

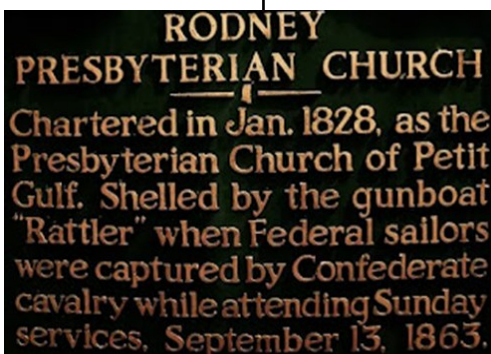
This Unit was originally organized as the 11th Louisiana Infantry Regiment of African De-

scent, May 5 thru August 22, 1863, in Milliken Bend, Louisiana. During this time, the Brigade did participate in a major battle on June 7, 1863. Under Major General John G. Walker, the Texas Division of the Confederate army attacked the Union garrison at Milliken's Bend. The garrison under the command of Colonel Hermann Lieb engaged in hand-to-hand combat causing the Confederates to retreat to Walnut Bend. This unit continued to be posted to Milliken Bend until January 1864.

Then, three months later, the unit became the 1st Colored Brigade attached to the Vicksburg district in Mississippi for garrison duty. It remained in Vicksburg until March 1866 when the unit was mustered out. John mustered out March 22, 1866, at

which time he was owed \$46.25 in pay, and he was a Private in company K 49th Regiment U S Colored infantry.

Each of the brothers returned home, got married, and became fathers. Also, if you travel to Vicksburg along Hwy 61 north you will pass a street bearing there named "Demby Street" letting you know these brothers were there.



Resource Gems Of Texas

State-Wide Genealogy Program 2023

Friday, October 20, 2023

The Huntsville Public Library, in cooperation with the Walker County Genealogical Society, will host the state-wide 2023 Genealogy Network of Texas event in celebration of Family History Month. The presentations take place from 10:30 a.m. to 3:50 p.m. on Friday, October 20 at the Huntsville Public Library. Join us in the Staggs Community Room for this unique genealogical event. This is the fourth year Huntsville Public Library will be participating in this event so please come and help make it a huge success! The event is FREE, and registration is encouraged but not required. The programs are provided by the Genealogy Network of Texas (GNT), a state-wide initiative to connect libraries/genealogical societies and provide educational and research opportunities that is spearheaded by the Genealogy Center of the Waco-McLennan County Library. Co-sponsors include the Central Texas Genealogical Society and the Texas State Genealogical Society.

Huntsville Public Library
1219 13th Street

Texas Archival Resources Online

TARO (Texas Archival Resources Online) makes descriptions of the rich archival, manuscript, and museum collections in repositories across the state available to the public. The site consists of the collection descriptions or "finding aids" that archives, libraries, and museums create to assist users in locating information in their collections. Consider these an extended table of contents which describe unique materials only available at the individual repositories.

<https://txarchives.org/home>

Texas Digital Archive

The Texas Digital Archive (TDA) manages, preserves, and facilitates access to the electronic records collections of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, including those transferred by state agencies or digitized by the State Archives. All records visible in this portal are unrestricted and available for public use.

Some collections in the Texas Digital Archive may contain language, imagery, attitudes, and/or perspectives from the past that may be offensive today. The Texas State Library and Archives Commission does not endorse the language, imagery, attitudes, and/or

perspectives presented in the content but provides it as a historical document.

<https://tsl.access.preservica.com/>

The Portal to Texas History

The Portal to Texas History is a gateway to rare, historical, and primary source materials from or about Texas. Created and maintained by the University of North Texas Libraries, the Portal leverages the power of hundreds of [content partners](#) across the state to provide a vibrant, growing collection of resources.

<https://texashistory.unt.edu/>

The Texas Collection & University Archives

Baylor University

The Baylor Libraries originated on the Baylor campus in Independence in 1845 and have evolved with the university's move to Waco in 1886, the construction of Carroll Library in 1903, the opening of Armstrong Browning Library & Museum in 1951, the building of Moody Memorial Library in 1968, the addition of the W. R. Poage Legislative Library in 1979, the Jesse H. Jones Library expansion in 1992, the emergence of Library and Academic Technology Services in 2001, the onboarding of the Keston Center for Religion, Politics, and Society in 2007, and the welcoming of the Institute for Oral History in 2016



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Helping to Find Your Roots

Monthly meetings are hybrid: in person at Steve Radack Community Center, 18650 Clay Road, and via Zoom

WHAGS October Program

Top Tips for Researching Your Scottish and English Ancestors

Presenter: Michelle Leonard



This presentation will provide a guide to the most useful resources for Scottish and English family history research - from civil registration and census records to parish registers, maps, newspapers, and more.

Michelle will explain how to get the most out of each resource and include lots of valuable hints, tips, and practical examples to help you explore the lives and times of your Scottish and English ancestors. Don't miss your chance to learn from this globally known speaker!

Michelle Leonard is a Scottish professional genealogist, DNA detective, author, speaker, historian, and the official genetic genealogist of #AncestryHour. She runs her own genealogy and DNA consultancy business, **Genes & Genealogy**, specializing in solving unknown parentage and all manner of unknown ancestor mysteries. She also undertakes conventional family history research, living relative tracing, media consultation, lecturing, coaching, podcasts, webinars, speaking engagements, creating DNA courses and articles, blogging, and book writing commissions. Additionally, Michelle is known for her work on the WW1 Fromelles Genealogy Project and is a co-author of *Tracing Your Ancestors Using DNA: A Guide for Family Historians*.

Saturday, October 21, 2023

Meet & greet 10:00 am

Program begins at 10:30 am

If you'd like to join in virtually, visit our website at www.whags.org for the meeting registration link. Those attending in person will meet at the Steve Radack Community Center, 18650 Clay Road, Houston, TX 77084. Visitors are always welcome!