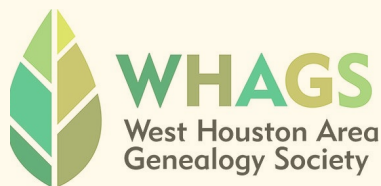


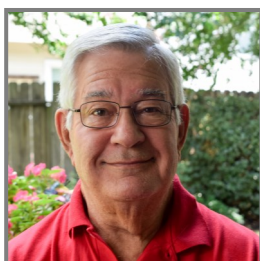
The WHAGS Journal



Volume 4, Issue 5

Just The Facts

February 2024



Editor's Note

Ron Ware

We are already into February and I just got my Christmas decorations taken down and stored. My how time flies. That can happen when you are enjoying great

Don't Miss Gail's report about WHAGS participation at the LDS Family History Fair hosted by the Richmond LDS Church. See story page 8.

presentations like the one by Marian Wood at the January general meeting. (See Marian's tips on page 9) Her presentation, titled "Researching Military Records and More on Fold3," caused me to head straight to my computer that evening.

This issue of the WHAGS Journal covers almost every spec-

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Census Takers Badges of 1900 and 1910

By Diane Rausch

A few months ago, a friend who has done genealogy and loves to shop for antiques surprised me with a gift of a 1900 badge that the census takers wore. I was thrilled with the gift and decided to try to find out more about the badges.

They only made this type of badge [see photograph] for the 1900 and 1910 census. They were made of pewter, giving it a shiny silverfish color. They measured 44 mm long and 30 mm wide. On the back of the badge, there is what is described as a "Texas Size" pin, in other words a large 1 mm thick pin. The pin was intended to be worn on thick material, like wool. In that time period the "Census Day" was April 15, which was exclusive for the census. It was later taken over as our due date for taxes.

The census takers require-

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President's Note

Gail Colby

Welcome to 2024! I hope you and your family had a wonderful holiday season and you found a wonderful genealogy gift under the tree.

We are heading into the nomination and election season for WHAGS. The Board is composed of seven elected offices: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and three Directors. The Directors serve for a term of three years and the four other offices

Want to know how WHAGS Works?

See Page 2

serve for a term of two years. An individual cannot serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office. This year, the three offices up for election are: Vice President, incumbent, Neal Scott; Treasurer, incumbent, Tom Matchett; and

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President's Note

Director, incumbent, Diane Rausch. Of these three, Tom M. is reaching the end of his two terms of service as Treasurer. Next year, 2024-2025, the current incumbents in the President and Secretary positions will be term-limited and cannot run for reelection. The WHAGS Bylaws detail the nominating and election processes and provide a summary of the duties of the offices. You can review the WHAGS' Bylaws at <https://www.whags.org/by-laws>. This is in the Members Only section of the website. Liz Philip is heading up the Nominating Committee and is the person to contact if you are interested in any of these positions. She is also looking for a few people to help with the committee.

You are probably wondering, "Why is this important to me?" WHAGS is a not-for-profit corporation, and that status has certain requirements that are met through our Bylaws. We can, and have, operated with vacant positions; this is not a good situation. Over the past four to five years, several genealogy societies have closed their doors. The Chaparral Genealogical Society in Tomball/Magnolia permanently closed its doors and dissolved the organization. The root cause was a lack of interest by the membership in helping manage the business. No one wanted to be president and without a president, the organization decided to shut it down. This could easily happen to WHAGS but there is a solution!

WHAGS has a historically

high number of members. This is exciting and indicates continuing growth. As noted above, there are seven board members. In addition to the Board, there are also two active members of the Leadership Team, Liz Philip and Mary Sandmann. The Leadership Team has a business tracking system with tasks and projects to improve WHAGS and provide the members with benefits such as events, programs, special interest groups, etc. that members indicated they were interested in. These nine people direct, coordinate, and implement the activities of WHAGS. They also have busy lives with lots of commitments. They also want to do their family's genealogy. They also want to travel. Consider a Board position, consider helping with a committee, be more proactive in your membership. The more people helping means less load on everyone.

The Nominating Committee will be reaching out to members over the next few months to see if they are interested in one of the Board positions up for election. If you are interested in a Board position, please reach out to Liz. If you are interested in a committee, contact Liz. The Library Committee will be contacting those of you who have expressed interest in helping with the library.

This is your genealogy society, let's not lose it.

Discover why and how WHAGS Works!

Over the last five years, WHAGS has evolved into a vibrant and successful organization. Our membership has grown, we provide our programs both in-person and virtually, our programming is responsive to members' interests, and we provide special interest groups based on members' input. Have you ever wondered why WHAGS has succeeded when other organizations have not? How does the WHAGS' Leadership Team run the organization and provide the programming, communication, and opportunities the members enjoy?

The Leadership Team (LT) invites you to attend and observe our monthly, virtual meetings to discover the behind-the-scenes operations that have made WHAGS the successful organization it is today. Be sure to watch the Leaflet for the Zoom LT meeting link each month. The LT meets at 10:00 am the Tuesday before the WHAGS monthly program meeting: February 13, March 12, April 16, and May 14.

Do you do Irish research?
Try this new tool:

<https://www.irelandxo.com/ireland-xo/news/registry-deeds-repository-wills-land-transactions>



Corner

Over the next few issues of the Journal, we will showcase the work of members in our writers group. We will begin with ancestral stories from two of our members, Liz Philip and myself, Ron Ware.

Liz writes about her Great Grandma Mort and her experiences living in Oregon during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Then I will share with you my profile of the life of my Great Great Grandmother, Louisa Dearth Bell. Born in Ohio in 1839, she emigrated to Rush County, Kansas and then by covered wagon to Colfax County, New Mexico.

Some of the articles will be short profiles, while the longer stories will be shared in several parts over the next months. Stories from other group members will follow.

Herman Franklin Mortamer (25 Feb 1909 – 26 Aug 1955)

By Liz Philip

Herman was born on the homestead near Echo, Umatilla County, Oregon on Feb. 25, 1909. They had 160 acres next to Henry Mortamer, his paternal grandfa-

ther's, claim. His paternal grandmother, Mary Bissett Mortamer, attended his birth, according to his delayed birth certificate. At the time of his birth, he had 5 siblings. Three half-sisters; Dellos, Vinnie and Pearl Hevel, one half-brother, Shirley Alta Hevel and an older brother George Parker Mortamer. His mother, Anna Kressin Hevel Mortamer, was a widow who's first husband, Elias Alto Hevel, was killed in a farming accident in 1901. She married George Willis Mortamer in 1903.

They lived and worked the land, and their land patent was granted on May 15, 1914. But tragedy was going to strike again. Herman's father George died in 1915, when Herman was 6 years old, of pneumonia.

It is unknown when the family moved into Pendleton, Umatilla County, Oregon. But five years later in the 1920 Census, Herman was 10 years old, attended school and lived at 617 Calvin St. His widowed mother Anna, his half-brother Shirley Alta, his older brother George and his little sister Marie all lived there too. His mother owned the home and was an employer in the general farm industry.

I don't know how he met my grandmother, Winona Griffin. She was a 17-year-old student in

Helix, Umatilla County, Oregon when they married on April 9, 1927. He was an 18-year-old laborer in Holdman, Umatilla County, Oregon. The towns were approximately 19 miles apart.

Their only daughter, my mother, Jacqueline Doris Mortamer, was born January 18, 1928 in Pendleton, Umatilla County, Oregon. He and Winona lived with his mother, Anna Mortamer, on Calvin Street according to the city directory. Not long afterward, the little family was in Portland, Multnomah County, Oregon. In the 1930 Census he was a truck driver and she was a waitress in a tea room. They rented a small apartment for \$20.00 a month.



Herman F. Mortamer, maternal grandfather of WHAGS member, Liz Philip

They wouldn't be married long, for in the 1940 Census, he is married to someone else. Herman worked as a truck driver for Consolidated Freightways in Billings, Yellowstone County, Montana.

He hauled freight and made \$1280.00 that year.

This marriage would not last either, for in 1941 he was with another wife, Barbara. He and Barbara would welcome two daughters, Georgeanna in 1941 and Judith in 1942.

He enlisted in the Navy Reserve in March, 1945 and served until honorably discharged in

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WHAGS Writers Corner

Continued

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Grandma Mort

February, 1946. He was a Seaman 2nd class according to his discharge papers and earned the World War II Victory Medal.

In the 1950 Census, he was 41 years old and separated from his wife Barbara. The divorce was final in August. He and his 2 younger daughters lived with his mother in Pendleton, Oregon. He was a taxi cab driver, instead of driving a truck.

He died on Aug 26, 1955 at St Anthony hospital in Pendleton, Umatilla County, Oregon, 46 years old.

The Louisa Dearth Story
By Ron Ware

[We continue the Louisa Dearth story from the January Journal. Her first husband, Joel has died]

When Joel left home for his second enlistment, he surely knew that Louisa was pregnant. He left anyway and most likely was with his army unit when, on December 2nd, she gave birth to twin boys, James McGee and John Vanderford. Unfortunately, John died within hours of birth. The twins would be the first of six children that Louisa would have with two husbands. It is unlikely that Joel ever saw his surviving son, having died in St Louis only three months after the boy's birth.

The war was a ghastly affair for young Louisa. She lost her husband, then her brother in battle around Nashville, Tennessee, and then finally the hell ended with the loss of her uncle, Noah Dearth, also killed in combat near Nashville late in the war. Louisa remained a widow until after the war ended. Then she met Alonzo Lyden Bell and the couple married on March 3, 1867.

Alonzo, also a veteran who served in the 81st Ohio Volunteer Infantry during the last months of the war, came home on July 13, 1865, after participating in the Grand Review of the Armies in Washington. Louisa and Alonzo probably knew each other before the war, both growing up in the Allensville area. At any rate, they married shortly after. The marriage produced four children: Charles Homer 1868, Mary Frances 1870, John William 1871 and Margaret Melissa in 1880.

The couple purchased a small farm from his parents in Vinton County where they lived until 1878. At about that time, he and his brothers got caught up in the "Go West" fever and it wasn't long before they began talking of selling their farms and moving to Kansas. Initially, Louisa was probably against the idea of leaving Ohio. She loved their beautiful farm; the picturesque hills and being close to family gave her comfort. But by the mid-1870's, she



Louisa Dearth Bell, Kansas circa 1880.

worried that there would be no future for her sons in Ohio. The state had become fully settled and

free or cheap land no longer existed. That prospect alone helped her to give up the Ohio dream and to build a future in the West.

The railroad helped them make the move. Encouraged by the lucrative government land grants, the railroads were laying tracks throughout the West. The government provided incentive for construction by granting the railroad companies land that extended for ten miles on each side of the track. The companies then raised construction capital by selling the land to settlers at a nice profit. They were even offering cheap fares for settlers to go out and look at Kansas. Taking advantage of that, Alonzo and his brothers visited the area, probably in late 1877. The next Spring, they returned and selected homesteads and moved their families to Rush County, Kansas, where Alonzo bought a farm one half mile Southeast of the railroad town of Alexander.

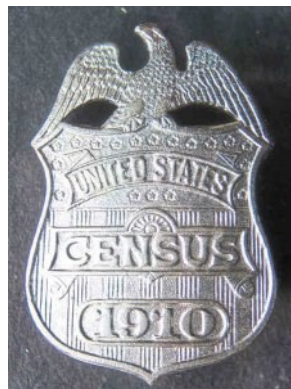
The family lived there for several years. At first, they did

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Census Badges

ments have changed with the times. Some years the enumerators



1910 Census Enumerators Badge

tor carried only a certificate.

Today they are required to have their census badge out in the open and show it prominently when they give their introductory remarks. In 1910 they were told to wear it on a vest under a coat and to be shown only when necessary and then only to show it quickly. After the census was finished, they were instructed to not let it leave their possession, but could keep it as a souvenir.



Crockery created to celebrate the 1790 census. It was made in England and sold in the United States

Today you can buy the 1900 or 1910 census badge on-line for

\$60-75. I just added the 1910 census badge to my small collection of items. I plan to display both in a case in my office.

There are memorabilia available online for other census years including a 1923 diary, 1850 census envelope, and one of my favorites, Three Stooges Action Figures from their movie “No Census, No Feelings” released in 1940 plus many more items.

The census memorabilia that



1900 Census Enumerators Badge

I really found interesting was a piece of crockery created to celebrate the 1790 census. It was made in England and sold in the US. An example of this can be found at the National Museum of American History in DC. The 1790 census totals are on the crockery for 18 locations. Besides the 13 colonies we now have the District of Maine, Vermont, Kentucky, South of Ohio and Northwest of Ohio. The

population totals show Virginia having the largest population of 747,610. Check out the other populations to see where your ancestors were living in 1790.

A Word of Warning

By Rick Armes

Ten days before Christmas, while visiting my local swimming pool, I lost my wallet, containing my house key, car fob, drivers license, medical insurance cards, credit cards and twenty dollars in cash to thieves. While I was swimming, they cut the lock on my locker and hurried off with all my stuff, initiating several days of anxiety and anger on my part.

I know this story does not relate directly to genealogy, but I wanted to share this with our members, because it can happen to anybody, anywhere. Think about the times you leave belongings in library or archives lockers; you are vulnerable.

Here, in no particular order is what I learned from the experience:

- Don't carry all of your credit cards in your wallet.
- Don't sign the back of your credit cards. Instead write "see TDL."
- Ensure you have a photocopy of your TDL. Having the "DD" number at the bottom of

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Louisa Dearth Story

well. They settled there at a time of unusually high rainfall, and the crops flourished. But by the fifth year, the plains returned to a more normal aridness and crops begin to fail. By 1887, the Bells had to move or starve.

A coal mine had opened up near Raton, New Mexico, and after visiting the area, the Bell brothers decided to move their families there. All three families traveled across the prairie by wagon train from Alexander, Kansas to Raton, New Mexico, a journey of ten days across the prairie.

After arriving in New Mexico, Louisa and her family settled in the mining camp at Blossburg, some five miles Northwest of Raton, where Alonzo divided his time by working in the mine and cutting ties for the Santa Fe Railroad.

Alonzo and his brothers did well at Blossburg, but they were farmers at heart, and it wasn't long before they began looking for a place of their own. Flat top mesas ring the Raton area, land thought to be good for grazing cattle only, and then only in the summer months. However, the Bell brothers believed that if the soil could grow the lush grasses found on the mesas, then it could grow crops as well. So, by early 1887, Louisa found herself living

on the Johnson Mesa, the largest tabletop land in the area. It was there that the family would live for the next twelve years.

By 1900, Louisa and Alonzo were in their early sixties and life on the mesa had become increasingly hard. The summers were glorious, but the winters were harsh, temperatures often plummeting to well below zero. That Fall the couple sold the farm and moved to the Raton Valley where they purchased one hundred sixty acres just two miles east of town. It was there that Louisa's daughter, Margaret Melissa, would marry Tom O'Connor, a Raton Deputy Marshal. Both Louisa and Alonzo lived out their days on the Raton ranch; Louisa dying there on September 12, 1912 and Alonzo followed two years later, October 22, 1914. After the death of her parents, Margaret and Tom continued to work the ranch until 1915, when they moved into town.

Although no grave markers exist, most researchers believe that Alonzo and Louisa are buried in the Fairmont Cemetery in Raton.

RDW

Did you know?

The Texas Historical Commission has an ongoing project to des-



ignate cemeteries, or other sites, 50 years or older as historic to protect locations from being destroyed by builders and land pressures. The designee to start the process of making a cemetery or structure historic usually falls to a county historical commission. This group of interested people learn what they can about a cemetery and write a historical notation about the cemetery to be approved by the state commission.

Once approved the information is sent to the forge for marker creation. The cost is paid for by the local historical commission or family seeking approval from the state. The process requires quite a bit of research and documentation to ensure an application is approved. Once the designation is acquired another process begins to secure a state-approved historical marker. These markers are key to ensuring that the cemetery, or sites deemed archaeological in nature are protected and cannot be destroyed by builders or highways. In essence, it makes the cemetery or other site sacred in perpetuity. Texas has approximately 16,000 markers currently. They are not all cemeteries. Many are about the history of a place or person. To my knowledge, each state has some

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Thieves

the front of the license will allow you to request a replacement TDL online, otherwise off to the DMV.

- The valet key for the Mazda is in the key fob. So, whoever has the key fob has the key to gain access to the interior of the car. True, they cannot start it, but they can open it anytime unless I have the key cylinder replaced. (I have opted not to replace the cylinder due to the price involved.) The remaining concern is that the thief has my address, and since I park my car outside the garage, they can enter the car, and then open the garage door. My garage is detached however anything of value in the garage is now at risk of being stolen.
- With the key fob, however, my car could be stolen so I opted to have the remaining key fob reprogrammed. I made an appointment with my local Mazda dealer for the next morning to have the work done after getting a quote of \$425. After arriving at the dealer I was told that I had been misinformed and that \$650 was now required to provide a new key fob, reprogram the remaining key fob, and reprogram the security system so that the stolen key

fob would not work. I don't like being lied to so I left, found a one-man shop, "The Car Key Guy", who did it all, including a new key fob, for \$225. The important takeaway here is that key fobs can be replaced for a reasonable amount of money, and it need not be done by a dealer.



- I opted not to have a new valet key cut to go in the new key fob, for obvious reasons.
- Do maintain a list of your credit card numbers, and customer service phone numbers to easily cancel credit cards. FYI, I cancelled credit cards within two hours of losing them and by then the thief had rung up almost \$3,000 in charges at Walmart, BestBuy and Kroger.
- Maintain a list of which utilities and other monthly payments are tied to credit cards so you can quickly change them, and not risk the dreaded "pink slip".
- Make a list of all valuables left in the car such as USB cables, etc. I didn't discover they had been stolen until weeks after the theft.
- Make sure you use a pin code or facial recognition with

your phone, again, for obvious reasons.

- Know your Apple username and password so that you can restore your new iPhone from the cloud. If you lose this information, you will be unable to reset it. Instead you will have to wait for an email from Apple allowing you to reset. That email will arrive at some future date, not immediately, and not even the same day.
- Back up your phone regularly so you can restore the settings to your new phone if needed.
- Think twice about turning in your old phone when you upgrade. Because I had an old phone I was able to get a replacement SIM card from my provider and put it in my old iPhone5. Lifesaver. Note that some newer phones use an eSIM "card", and not a physical card. I needed a physical card for my old phone.
- Two step verification is often not possible without your phone. I don't know the work-around for this. I will look into having an email sent rather than a text message. Alternatively enter a second phone number, if possible.

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Our Committees and Special Interest Groups at Work

Membership

Liz Philip

As of January 15th, we have 62 paid memberships, of which 57 are individual memberships and 5 are family memberships. We have 6 Life Members too, for a grand total of 73 people. What have you been working on over the winter? Come and share with us! We would love to hear your story.

Liz Philip, Membership

WHAGS Writers

Ron Ware

The WHAGS Writers group members enjoyed our fourth meeting on January 10th. We began the meeting with a 14 minute video from Lynn Palermo's Storylines series. She does a good job with her short lessons around the art of writing. Lynn is the host of the Family History Writing Studio on the Internet, and as you may recall, she made a presentation at one of WHAGS general meetings.

We had six members in attendance: myself, Liz Philip, Tom Woltz, Dianne Martin, Shirley Aikin, and one new member.

Most of our meetings are via Zoom which is a great tool for meetings such as ours. I do miss

the in person socialization that Zoom does not quite achieve. But still, it saves a lot of time and gas.

Anyone interested in joining the group, please contact me at newsletter@WHAGS.email.

RDW

WHAGS at the Richmond LDS Family History Fair

On 27 January 2024, WHAGS participated in the Richmond LDS Family History Fair. Liz Philip, Pacquitta Laverents, Ricky Armes, and Gail Colby staffed an information table providing information about genealogy and WHAGS. We talked to about thirty people and had a great time. Liz even got to hold a six-week-old baby girl!



WHAGS member and director, Rick Armes directing traffic at the Richmond LDS Family History Fair

Interestingly, the comment we received the most was, "I didn't know you [WHAGS] exist-



WHAGS President, Gayle Colby enjoying the Richmond LDS Family History Fair on Saturday, January 27th.

ed." Several of those folks indicated they were interested in joining. If so, WHAGS will have reached a historically high number of members. We look forward to returning to the Rich-



Our own Liz Philip holding a baby while mom signs up. Whatever it takes! Right Liz?

mond LDS Family History Fair next year and participating in others.



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Thieves

- The day of the theft I had a locksmith come to the house and rekey the doors.
- Due to the high insurance deductible, I didn't file a claim for the locksmith fee, key fob related charges, iPhone, iPhone case, USB cables, etc.
- Keep a copy of all medical insurance cards.

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Editors Note

trum of our society. We will cover security while researching, ancestor profiles, WHAGS history, and much more. We start with the troublesome news from member Rick Armes about thieves in his favorite swimming hole. Who would think that your valuables would not be safe in your fitness center locker, but some guys with bolt cutters ruined Rick's day. The moral of his story is that we are all vulnerable, whether we are swimming or doing research in our favorite library or archive. Read Rick's story and advice on page 5.

Diane Rausch provides our feature article with an interesting story about badges worn by the 1900 and 1910 census enumerators. I didn't realize the enumerators were provided with such identification badges. Diane gives us some interesting insight.

Other articles of interest follow: WHAGS President, Gail Colby, shares her insights in the President's Note around the recent growth of our society, how that has happened, and invites more members to step up. Liz Philip, a member of WHAGS Writers entertains us with a profile of her grandfather, Herman Franklin Mortamer.

Tom Woltz's story of his Aunt Blanche which began in the January issue will continue in March. Look for it..

Useful Fold3 Links

Hopefully everyone had a chance to listen to Marian Wood's presentation on "Researching Military Records and More on Fold3." For those of you unable to attend or who would like a Fold3 refresher on her presentation here are three links that you will find useful:

Click on the link below to view Marian Wood's handout and video in the members section of the WHAGS web site. The material will be available until the end of February.

<https://www.whags.org/meeting-handouts>

YouTube video giving step by step instructions for accessing Fold3 through the Houston Public Library website for FREE and from home:

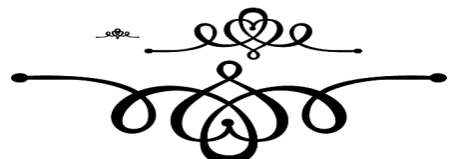
<https://youtu.be/nH5pAhGuNkM>

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The Historical Commission

similar commission. They may be referred to as the Commission for Historic Preservation for example. You may choose to get involved in a county group that will help preserve your family burial grounds, business sites or homesteads, etc. Where to start? PreservationTexas.org will get you started with basic knowledge about the purpose. This page has a link to the Texas Historical Commission. Then check the county of interest for a local commission or society, or museum. Someone will be able to direct you to the organization in your county. Many counties also have museums that can be a great resource. As of 1966, each county in Texas had a historical commission. As our population grows and roads and buildings spring up, without a marker, historical lands can't be protected.

This is a link to another marker <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=227850> I grew up being told that Mr. Ponton had his feet skinned by the Native Americans and was able to escape barefoot from his captors. I guess that couldn't be confirmed. But, I believe it.



Clayton Library Bus Trip Set

Due to popular demand WHAGS is going back to the Clayton Library on Wednesday, 3 April 2024. A bus has been reserved with Harris County, and online sign-up is now open. Bus capacity is just 40, so be sure to sign up early to reserve a seat for this free trip. The bus will depart Radack Community Center at 9:30 AM, and leave the library at 3:00. Look for more details and tips for getting the most out of the trip in the March WHAGS Newsletter.

This will be a great opportunity to further your family research at Houston's own world-class genealogical library, have fun with other WHAGS members, and save the cost of gas by not driving yourself.

FamilySearch.org says of Clayton:

The Clayton branch of the Houston Public Library has one of America's best genealogical collections. With an emphasis on the Gulf Coast region, the library also has an international collection and material for all fifty U.S. states. Collections include Texas and Houston-area death records including funeral home records, censuses, passenger arrival lists, manuscripts, international resources for Europe, Canada, and Mexico, military records, family histories, genealogical periodicals, maps, and family history vertical files.

You will need to sign up if you want to make this trip. Just click on the link below and provide all the information requested, including emergency contact and phone numbers.

whags.org/clayton



We're going to the Clayton Library



Director Rick Armes points the way to the bus. Sign on with the above link.



P.O. Box 842661
Houston, Texas 77284-2661
www.WHAGS.org

Helping to Find Your Roots

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

WHAGS February Program

Power Tools: Adding Library Collections to Your Arsenal

Presenter: Irene Walters



Feeling overwhelmed by having so many genealogy research services to choose from? Confused about which tools are the most cost-effective? Fortunately for family historians, public libraries have been collecting information for over a century and know how to organize it quite well. Even better news, it's free to the community!

This presentation will provide an overview of the databases, catalogs, collections, and services offered by libraries specializing in genealogy research throughout the country. Come and learn where to start and find out what's available to help you write your ancestors' stories.

Irene Walters is one of the "Yankee Librarians" for the **Houston Public Library's Family History Research Center at the Clayton Library Campus**. She is originally from New York and has her Master of Library Science degree from the State University of New York Buffalo. Irene arrived in Houston almost 30 years ago and is a frequent speaker at genealogy societies throughout Texas. She is currently the Clayton Library cataloger and coordinates Clayton's involvement in the digitization project with the LDS Library in Salt Lake City.

Saturday, February 17, 2024

Meet & greet 10:00 am

Program begins at 10:30 am

If you want to join in virtually, visit our website for the link to register for the Zoom presentation: www.whags.org. Those joining us in person will meet at the Steve Radack Community Center, 18650 Clay Road. Visitors are welcome!