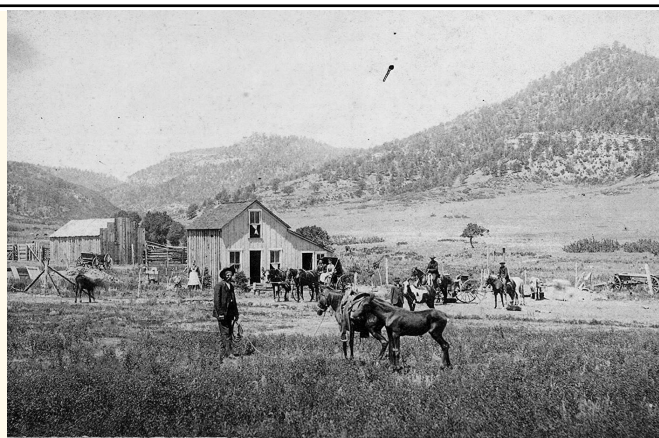


The WHAGS Journal



Volume 4, Issue 6

Just The Facts

March 2024



Editor's Note

Ron Ware

I have been visiting the Clayton Library, now known as the Houston Public Library's Family History Research Center at the Clayton Campus (let's just call it The Clayton Library) for some 40 years, back when all the holdings were in the old Clayton House. There, I have learned much about the lives of my ancestors, but after listening to Irene Walters' presentation at the February general meeting, I realized that I have only scratched the surface of that resource. Now, I'm looking forward even more to the Clayton visit with our society members in April.

On Saturday, March 16th, Kelvin Meyers, a fifth-generation Texan and professional forensic genealogist will present a timely topic, "Plowing Through Land Records to

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Major Milestone Reached!!

A Special Report on G2: Media Tracking Software for the Genealogist

by Rick Armes

The first significant G2 milestone was reached in February when the G2 software was downloaded and installed on a couple of WHAGS members' PCs. (Thank you Windy and Liz!!!) This is a huge first step on the path to making this media tracking software available to all interested WHAGS members starting this fall.

February Meeting Recap

There was no group G2 SIG meeting in February. Instead, Ricky worked individually with

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Don't Forget March Meeting Venue Change

The March 16th General Meeting will be held at the **Katherine Tyra Branch Library at 16719 Clay Road.**



President's Note

Gail Colby

Hopefully, we have seen the last cold grip of winter and can look forward to a wonderful spring. Spring brings renewal and greets us with colorful blooms and new growth. We feel invigorated (or not) to spruce things after the long, sometimes cold winter. This also extends to WHAGS.

The WHAGS Leadership Team (LT) has begun work on the 2024-2025 program and fiscal year. Of course, this includes the annual Board elections. The officers up for election in May are vice president, treasurer, and director, 2024-2027. Of the three, the incumbent treasurer has reached the term limitations defined in the WHAGS Bylaws. The Nominating Committee will reach out to

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President's Note

members, seeking individuals who may be interested in serving in one of these positions or other ways to help WHAGS.

Do you enjoy the programs and events that WHAGS offers? With the advent of our hybrid meetings, we offer a broad range of programs presented by experts in their field. These presenters are from around the country and beyond. The Program Team has done excellent work bringing these wonderful experts to our group. Would you like to help them or have active input on the programs and presenters selected? The Program Team would love to have you!

In late January, WHAGS had the privilege to attend the Richmond LDS Family History Fair. The team spoke to many wonderful people who stopped by our table. The comment heard most was, "I didn't know you existed!" We need to up our publicity game and do some outreach. Do you have a marketing or publicity background? We need your help!

As announced at the February general meeting, WHAGS has achieved a historically high membership. We have 81 individual members. This keeps our Membership Chair busy. WHAGS is in the process of automating some of these processes to streamline the work. Can you

help with data entry or document management?

Speaking of document management, WHAGS, in its various iterations, has amassed a lot of documents. Most are digital now. WHAGS has a Microsoft One Drive account, and we want to organize the documents on the SharePoint site. We would love to have help in uploading and organizing the documents!

Do you have an interesting story about your ancestors, research, or genealogy? The WHAGS Journal and website are great places to share!

WHAGS currently has four special interest groups (SIGs): DNA, Beginning Genealogy, WHAGS Writers, and G2. Participation in SIGs is open to all members. Pop in and check them out! Do you have a special interest that you would like to explore with other members, e.g., Irish genealogy, African American genealogy, or genealogy software program? You can start a SIG! You don't need to be an expert; it doesn't need to be formal. It is people exploring a shared interest.

Who do I contact if I am interested?

- Board – Liz Philip
- Marketing/Publicity – Gail Colby

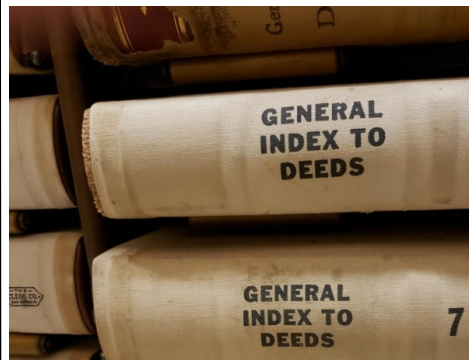
- Documentation management – Gail Colby
- Website – Neal Scott
- Other ideas – any LT member
- Programs–Pacquitta Laverents
- Membership – Liz Philip
- WHAGS Journal – Ron Ware
- SIGs – Pacquitta Laverents

Happy Spring! We look forward to hearing from you!

(Continued from page 1)

Editors Note

Find Your Ancestor." I say timely because Kelvin's along with Irene's presentation should give us focus for the upcoming bus trip to



Clayton. (Please note that the March general meeting will be held at the Katherine Tyra Branch Library at 16719 Clay Road, just a couple miles east of the Radack Community Center.)

This edition of the WHAGS Journal will contain lots of interesting stories, tips, and society updates. Next month, look for a

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Editors Note

new section called “Member Spotlight.” Contributors are Tom Woltz and Liz Philip who will provide ancestor stories they have written while participating in the WHAGS Writers group. Other contributors are Rick Armes, and me. The section titled “Helpful Libraries and Archives” will return after an absence of a couple of months. That page will contain some of the library and archive links provided by Irene Walters.

As usual, I hope this newsletter provides the reader with helpful content and support as you search for those elusive ancestors.

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G2 Report

members to get G2 installed.

Any members interested in downloading G2 to get early access to the software and assist with the beta-testing should get in touch with Ricky via email (rmames@swbell.net) before the March G2 SIG. It should be noted that members need to have the software installed by March 20th in order to beta-test the software this spring.

When not working directly with members, the development team put into place a “Release” folder where members can go on

their own to download the G2 software. Currently there are two G2 releases, each one labeled with a release date. It is anticipated that new releases will be made available on a weekly basis. Link to the G2 Release folder: [G2 RELEASES](#).

Software Development Highlights

The software development team (Ricky and Doug!) is making significant progress on two fronts:

First, G2 will contain a form allowing users to quickly input a batch of media files (think photographs), instead of entering one at a time. This form should be available to test in the next release, and

Secondly, G2 is being redesigned to provide a mechanism for importing media directly from Legacy. This feature may be available as early as this summer. (Note: People entered into Legacy’s software can already be imported into G2.)



Rick Armes, WHAGS member and developer of the G2 software

March SIG Agenda

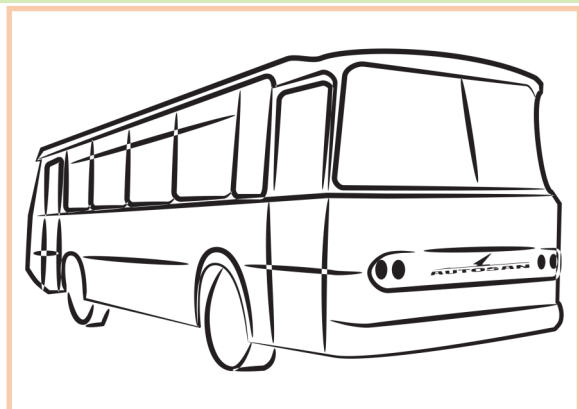
With the software downloaded onto SIG member’s PCS, the plan for March is to start teaching members how to navigate and test G2 using Legacy’s “sample” database. The plan is for Ricky to assemble a syllabus for March, April and May. The syllabus will outline topics to cover and suggest exercises for members to test. The “punch list” for documenting issues or future enhancements will also be discussed in March.

For any questions regarding the G2 installation process, or G2’s current and future capabilities, contact Ricky Armes by email or text.



RootsTech Salt Lake City

WHAGS’ Vice President Neal Scott is in Salt Lake City having attended RootsTech 2024, the world’s largest genealogy conference. Following the conference he joined up with The Humble Area Genealogical Society (THAGS) group to dive into some family history research at the FamilySearch Library.



You will need to sign up if you are interested in making the trip. Sign up is easy: Just click this link whags.org/bus and provide the information requested. Bus capacity is 40 so be sure to sign up early to claim a seat.

Clayton Library Bus Trip Set

By Rick Armes

As mentioned in February's meeting WHAGS has scheduled a free bus trip to the Family History Research Center at the Clayton Library on Wednesday, April 3rd. This is the perfect opportunity to put to use the knowledge you gained from the excellent presentation by Irene Walters in February.

For those of you not familiar with the Clayton Library:

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. (FamilySearch.Org)

For those of you who are unfamiliar with Clayton Library here are ten tips to assist you in getting the most out of this research trip:

1. Get a Houston library card (not a Harris County Library card) BEFORE getting on the bus. You will need a card in order to use the PCs at the library. Yes, you can get a card when you arrive at the Clayton, but why wait?
2. You can use your own PC at the library to access the same websites you can get to with the library's PCs, but again you will need a library card to do so.
3. Take a thumb-drive with lots of capacity to download your findings. You can use the thumb drive with the Clayton PCs. This is a faster, cheaper option than printing to the copier.
4. Learn how to use Window's "Snipping Tool" app. It's invaluable for capturing screen images, which can then be downloaded to the

thumb drive.

5. Important: Note that books at the library are organized by county within state. So know which counties you want to research before getting on the bus.
6. Know which websites are available using the Clayton PCs, and determine which ones you want to access in advance. Click on this link to see some of the websites you can access for free while at the library: <https://houstonlibrary.org/az/databases>
7. Use your camera to take pictures of the book covers, title pages and specific pages that have information about your family. Be sure to get the call number as well.
8. Do not re-shelve books after you are finished. Instead put them on one of the many carts provided.
9. Don't forget to bring chargers for your electronics.
10. Don't hesitate to ask library staff for assistance.
11. Lunch. Clayton has a snack room with vending machines, and a couple of tables. Bodegas Taco Shop (<https://bodegastacoshop.com>) is an option, as well as a café at the Asia Society (<https://asiasociety.org/texas>)



Corner

Winona Jewell Griffin (1910-1984)

By Liz Philip

Winona Jewell Griffin was born on 7 April, 1910 in Walla Walla, Washington. According to the 1910 U.S. Census, she had two brothers, 8-year-old Walter and 5-year-old Willard. She also had an older sister, Ellen who was 2. Her parents, Samuel and Carrie Bell Griffin, had a home on North Eight Street. Her father was a teamster with the Walla Walla Construction Company and her mother was a homemaker.

By the time Winona was 9 years old, according to the 1920 U.S. Census, they had moved to Cunningham, Washington. Her father was now a Section Foreman for the Northern Pacific Railroad and her mother was a boarding housekeeper. They lived at 15 Railway Rightway, which was next to the railroad tracks.

I don't know how she met Herman Mortamer, my grandfather. She was barely 17 and he was 18 years old when they were married on 9 April 1927 in Pendleton, Oregon. It was a very small wed-

ding. The guest book had only her family and her husband's family's names written down. The witnesses were her mother and Herman's mother, Anna Mortamer. The story relayed by my mother as that Winona's mother, Carrie Bell Griffin, thought the relationship was getting too close and made them get married.

Their only daughter, my mother, Jacqueline Mortamer, was born 9 months later on 18 January 1928 in Pendleton, Oregon. Winona and Herman lived with his mother, Anna Mortamer, on Calvin Street according to the city directory. Not long afterward, the little family was in Portland, Oregon. In the 1930 U.S Census, Winona was a waitress in a tea room and he was a truck driver. They rented a small apartment for \$20.00 a month.

Winona and Herman divorced in 1935. She married three more times until in 1957, she married Don Anderson. He was Grandpa Don to us.

Grandma Noni and Grandpa Don lived in Yakima, Washington. He also worked for the Northern Pacific railroad like her father, but as a brakeman. Brake-men had to engage the brakes on each car by turning a wheel. They also had to couple and uncouple the train's cars. I remember that he was tall, clearly a foot taller than Grandma. He had a

limp from a bad knee resulting from jumping between railroad cars.

Grandma was short, had gray hair, and crocheted. I still have the crochet doll toilet paper cover that she made for me in my favor-



Winona Jewell Griffin, the maternal grandmother of WHAGS member Liz Philip

ite color, yellow. She wore beaded moccasins and had a dachshund dog named Duke.

I remember when we visited them over Christmas vacation in 1972. We flew to Yakima, Washington but the airport was closed. It was socked in by fog so we landed in Tacoma, Washington instead. I don't know who the airline employees were, but they drove us back over to the Yakima airport in their personal cars. Customer service was in force

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WHAGS Writers Corner

Continued

(Continued from page 5)
Winona Jewell Griffin

that day. During our trip we also went Christmas shopping. A beautiful red sweater was my gift from her that year. I kept it a long time, even after outgrowing it.

Grandma Noni bowled in a women's league so we went bowling while we were there. She threw a sixteen-pound bowl-

ing ball. All of 5 foot 2 inches and she could heave it down the lane. I don't know what her average was, but she thoroughly enjoyed bowling for years. Also, while we were there, she made biscuits. They were so good. What was her secret? She loved her small flower garden just off her front patio. She passed away there on September 17, 1984 at age 74, while resting on her lounge chair looking at her handiwork, the beautiful flowers.

around the time of her seventh birthday. It is interesting to note that Margaret was not listed on the 1880 U.S. Census, although the enumerator had visited that day. She was born in the afternoon, sometime after the census taker had left. We don't see her on a census until 1900, as the 1890 census burned in 1921 in a fire at the Commerce Building in Washington, D.C. Margaret, in her early years, was the last of the true pioneers and would travel by wagon train to New Mexico and ensure herself a place in the family experience.

Her parents were Alonzo Lyden Bell and Louisa Dearth (Vanderford.), both born in Ohio. In the Spring of 1878, the Bells sold their farm near beautifully wooded Allensville in Vinton County, Ohio, to make a new life on the Kansas prairie. Their land in Ohio lay in a valley, the hillsides not tillable, the good farms taken. The Bells had three sons for whom Alonzo and Louisa wanted a better life, and Kansas seemed to be the place. Land was plentiful and would give them a future. Alonzo and his two brothers, Marion and John Homer arrived in Rush County in early 1878. In June 1880, around the time of Margaret's birth, they filed with the Bureau of Land Management for a quarter section (160 acres).

(Continued on page 7)



Griffin Family Portrait – Standing – Robert, Willard, Margaret, Walter
Seated – Winona, Samuel, Carrie Bell, Ellen

In the January and February editions of the WHAGS Journal, I told the story of my Great-Great-Grandmother, Louisa Dearth. Over the next few months, we will follow the life of her daughter, my Great-Grandmother, Margaret Melissa Bell. The story begins in the next column.

The Margaret Bell Story

By Ron Ware

My great-grandmother, Margaret Melissa Bell was born on June 1, 1880, in Alexander, Rush County, Kansas. She would live on that treeless plain until 1887,

(Continued from page 6)

Margaret Bell Story

Alonzo's property was located two miles southeast of the town of Alexander.

Margaret was the youngest of four children, all of her siblings born in Vinton County, Ohio; Charles Homer (1868), Mary Frances (1870), and John William (1871). There was a fifth child, James Vanderford (1862) a son from Louisa's first marriage. Her first husband, Joel McGee Vanderford died of disease in St. Louis, Missouri while serving in the Union Army during the Civil War. Alonzo adopted the boy when he and Louisa married in 1867.

Alonzo and his brothers' dream about successfully farming in Kansas didn't work out. By the time Margaret was seven years old, they had experienced several crop failures through drought and locust onslaughts. They were left with no choice but to sell their farms and relocate. They looked toward New Mexico, a place known to the Bell brothers. They had heard of the mine operations around Raton, a town which had become a main hub for the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad. The mines in the surrounding hills contained high grade coal which the railroads needed to operate their huge steam engines.

To supplement their farm

income, the Bell brothers had spent several winters away from their families while working in those mines. Then early in 1887 they made the decision to move permanently to New Mexico. On a spring morning, several wagons lined up at Alonzo's place near Alexander, Kansas, and began the long trek overland to Raton. Seven-year-old Margaret must have been excited at the thought of the journey. It would be the first time she traveled out of the county.

The route would take them through the historic cattle town of Dodge City, Kansas, then south across the Oklahoma panhandle into New Mexico near



2Margaret Melissa Bell O'Connor at her home in Houston, Texas, about 1965.

Clayton. And finally on to Raton. Margaret witnessed a sight in Dodge City the memory of which never left her. She told me the story several times of seeing a horse thief hanging by the neck from a tree on the outskirts of the town. Folks didn't tolerate horse thieves in those days.

Arriving in New Mexico, the Bells first settled in Blossburg, a coal mining camp near Raton which was owned by the railroad. The brothers worked the coal mine for a few months before homesteading a quarter section of land on a nearby high plateau called The Johnson Mesa. Laying ten miles east of Raton, The Mesa as it was commonly called, rose some two thousand feet from the valley floor. The top was a treeless plain of rolling hills and fertile soil. It was here that Margaret spent most of her childhood, finally leaving at the age of twenty.

While still living on The Mesa, Margaret experienced the first heartbreak of her life. Her older sister, Mary Frances Bell had in 1891 married a man named William Gregory. Mary Frances left The Mesa and traveled with her new husband to Trinidad, Colorado where he found work in the coal mines. Tragically, it was while living there that Mary Frances became ill and died on June 25, 1897. She left two young daughters, Mary and Amy Gregory. Oddly, Grandma O'Connor never spoke about the death of her older sister. More than fifty years had passed by the time of my birth, and perhaps time had dulled the memory.

Story to be continued next issue...

Our Committees and Special Interest Groups at Work

Membership

Liz Philip

Membership Team Update

As of February 17th, we have 69 paid memberships, of which 63 are individual memberships and 6 are family memberships. We have 6 Life Members too, for a grand total of 81 people. In fact, we had 2 members join at the Richmond LDS Fair in January. We met some very nice people, so we are planning to go back next year. Hope to see you soon at a program presentation or on Zoom!

Liz Philip, Membership

WHAGS Writers

Ron Ware

On February 27th, the WHAGS Writers group held our monthly meeting. We had five members present, including new member, Paul Clites, myself, Shirley Aiken, Liz Philip, and Tom Woltz. Paul and Liz presented an article for review by the group, with much discussion and recommendations for the improvement of their work. Not that they needed much as both stories are gripping.

We discussed the differences between a scene and summary (creative non-fiction) and pure non-fiction approach. Paul's work

reflected creative non-fiction while Liz's grandmothers profile is pretty much non-fiction. (See Liz Philips story "The Profile of Winona Jewell Griffin (1910-1984) in the March newsletter.)

This was the group's fourth meeting and the consensus is that our discussions have been helpful and the members feel that they have improved their writing. At the least, we are having fun with lively discussions.

G2 Update

Rick Armes

For those of you who are participating in the Genessys2 (G2) software beta testing, here are the most recent instructions from Rick Armes with steps necessary to get the latest copy of G2 installed and working on your PCs.

Download instructions:

- 1, Delete all G2 files previously downloaded onto your PC;
2. Create a new folder in your Documents folder, and name it "G2";
3. Using this link:

<https://1drv.ms/f/s/>

[AoKTKCiWe-GiPiNxtqtnbwQ00MDIWEQ?e=gymXLo](https://1drv.ms/f/s?e=gymXLo)

copy all the files that are in the folder "G2.23.02.2024" into the newly created G2 folder.

Text or call me when you are done, or if you have any problems with the download. Once I hear from you we will set up a zoom ASAP, and verify that you are good to go.

As always thanks for your patience.—Rick

Program Team Update

Pacquitta Laverents

The Program team is already scheduling dynamic speakers for the 2024-2025 program year. We're using topics suggested by members on recent monthly program evaluations.

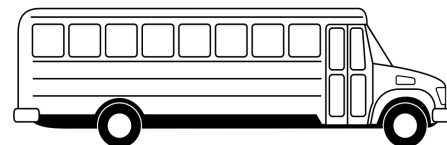
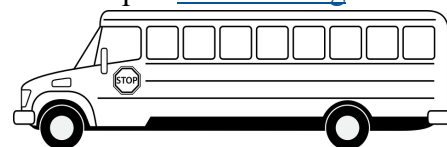
Also, be sure to keep an eye on upcoming Leaflets for more information about a day trip to be offered later this spring.

If you'd like to be part of the most fun group in WHAGS, consider joining the Program team!

We are Going to the Clayton Library

April 3rd

See more information and sign-up at WHAGS.org



Useful Libraries and Archives

WorldCat

WorldCat is a catalog that itemizes the collections of 17,900 libraries in 123 countries that participates in the Online Computer Library. It is a great resource for locating unique, trustworthy materials that you often can't find anywhere except in a library.

During the past 50 years, thousands of libraries around the world have entered their information about millions of books, magazines, etc.

<https://www.worldcat.org>

Houston Public Library — Clayton Library Campus

Clayton is one of the top ten genealogical libraries in the nation. It houses a national and international collection of family history research materials in print, microprint and online.

The Clayton library is located at 5300 Caroline Street in Houston.

<https://houstonlibrary.org/fhrc>

Texas State Library and Archives Commission

The library has been serving the people of Texas for more than a century. Their website states that they accomplish this mission through the following

four main areas:

- Archives and history
- Libraries and learning
- Access to public records
- Reading services.

<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/>

Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center

Located in Liberty, the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center is a component of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission's (TSLAC) Archives and Information Services Division (ARIS) and serves as the official regional historical resource depository for the 10 Southeast Texas counties of Chambers, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Newton, Orange, Polk, San Jacinto, and Tyler.

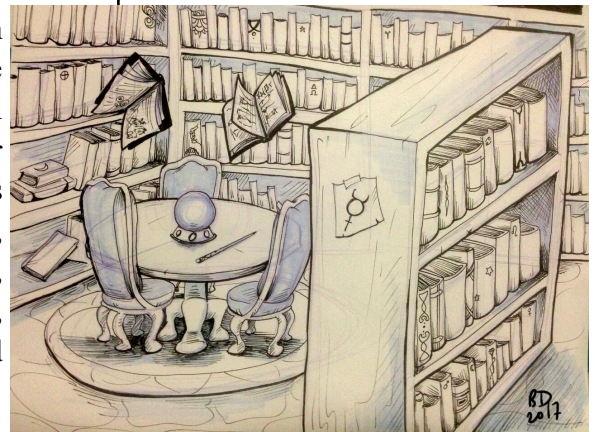
The Center's primary mission is to collect, preserve, and provide access to historically significant state and local government records and publications of the designated region and secondarily to serve as a library of Texana and genealogical resources.

Through its collections, historic buildings, and educational exhibits and initiatives, it also honors the distinguished public service of former governors, organizations, and citizens of the Atascocita District.

<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/shc>

Harris County Archives

Founded in November 2002, the Harris County Archives preserves, protects and provides access to the permanent and historical records created by the government of Harris County. Our collections include records from the Assessor and Collector of Taxes, Medical Examiner's Office (Institute of Forensic Science), Juvenile Probation, Social Services, Justices of the Peace, Commissioners, and County Judges to name only a few of the



over 70 offices whose records are in the archives. Adding depth to the understanding of the history of the county are private manuscript collections documenting Harris County and its people including the Heritage Society Map Collection, The Michael Driscoll Papers, J. E. (Mac) McCain Photograph Collection, and the A. E. Amerman Collection.

<https://www.harriscountyarchives.com/>

WHAGS March Program

(see location change noted below, for this month only)

Plowing Through Land Records to Find Your Ancestor

Presenter: Kelvin Meyers



Did you know Americans were so “land-minded” well into the 19th century that over three-quarters of all males who lived to maturity owned land? Because of that fact, land records exist from the beginning of the first permanent settlements in America – frequently one of the few identifying records from this early period. Ironically, more genealogical data may be obtained from land records

the older they are.

Join us for a lecture focused on using land records combined with other sources to identify your ancestors!

Kelvin Meyers, a fifth-generation Texan and professional forensic genealogist since 1996, is a frequent speaker to genealogical associations throughout the United States. He has worked extensively with attorneys in the oil and gas industry for over 20 years helping identify the rightful owners to mineral rights.

As a graduate of Texas Tech University with a history major, Kelvin is an avid research-historian. Previously employed in the Genealogy Department of the Dallas Public Library, he now has a solo practice as a forensic genealogist serving clients that include probate attorneys, financial trust departments, the US Immigration Service, and energy companies.

Kelvin has served as an officer for several genealogy organizations, earning multiple certifications and awards. He was most recently recognized as a 2023 Fellow of the Texas State Genealogical Society and currently serves as the chairman of the history and archives committee for First United Methodist Church in Dallas.

Saturday, March 16, 2024

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 **this month at the Katherine Tyra Branch Library, 16719 Clay Road, Houston, TX 77084**. Visitors are always welcome!