

Volume 3, Issue 8

Just The Facts

In this issue, Emily Richards, the presenter at the March general meeting, follows up with more information around her subject, "No Genealogist is Excited about a Brick Wall."

See her article below

No Genealogist is Excited about a Brick Wall

By Emily Richards



I love puzzles, and for me genealogy is one big puzzle. How do I find the

right pieces (people) in the right locations with the right documents to tell their story correctly? The biggest difference between puzzles and genealogy is with puzzles you get the full picture on the top of the puzzle box. How I wish I had a full fan chart of my ancestors!

But what keeps me from having the full fan chart are my brick walls. My mother was a genealogist, with records dating (Continued on page 2)

May 2023

President's Note By Gail Colby

ay marks the end of WHAGS' program and fiscal year. It has been quite a year. We have more members than in WHAGS' known history. Our membership is active with a trip to the Clayton Library in March and a gravestone care and cleaning workshop in May, and the monthly, post-program lunch at Clay's. We would like to expand our special events and would love to hear your ideas. It is great to interact with fellow members at these events.

May is about thanking our volunteers. I would like to thank our WHAGS members; they volunteer their time to attend and participate in our programs, meetings, and events. Without them, we would not be WHAGS.

Our committees do the bulk of the work for our organization. Liz Philip led the Membership, (Continued on page 5)

Editor's Notes By Ron Ware

This issue of The WHAGS Journal brings us to the end of our fiscal year and the last newsletter until Fall. We'll pick up again with the September issue. I have enjoyed serving as the editor this year and look forward to publishing the 2023-24 issues.

I think you will agree that we have enjoyed the writings of our members as well as the professional genealogists who made presentations at our general meetings. The stories have grabbed our imagination. The autobiography of member Joe Carrington's grandfather gave us an inside view of life in rural Texas during the early part of the 20th century. His story will continue in the September issue.

Board member, Neal Scott

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(Continued from page 1) Brick Walls

back to 1943. She was great with her research logs. And remember she was doing this prior to the explosion of the Internet and before the luxury of pis and research. But she and my dad would often have conversations over dinner about what she knew, what she didn't know and who else could she be contacting to find the right information. She never once said "I have a brick wall." Instead, her attitude was about changing her mindset to enable her to find the answers. When I received her information. she had found at least five (5) generations of her relatives complete with proof and in some cases, she had 10 or 11 generations on the family chart.

The question becomes for you, how do you change your mindset to think about the opportunities instead of the wall? What processes should you be taking to be sure that you have explored everything you need to to find the right ancestor? One wonderful book I can recommend with great ideas is now in its third edition, "The Family Tree Problem Solver: Tried-and-True Tactics for Tracing Elusive Ancestors" by Marsha Hoffman Rising.

Here are just a few of the areas that she touches on:

• Researching Friends, Associates and Extended Family

members

- Utilizing Land Records
- Problem-solving with Court Records
- Replacing Burned Courthouse
 Records

But before she gets into these areas, it is critical that you analyze just how you have been doing genealogy.

- Do you focus on one or two good sources? It is important to realize that family trees are built using all resources and documents that are available to you. Not just the ones online, but also the ones at the courthouse.
- Do you make excuses for discrepancies in records – like that of place of birth? These must be researched and explained and that does take time. But the discrepancy might also be the key to your personal "brick wall."
- Do you skip generations to find a revolutionary war ancestor and then work to try to link with that person? Always move from the known to the unknown – move forward in your research one generation at a time.
- Do you write as you go? Or do you leave your research in piles of paper on your desk or in a folder for analysis later? Writing as you research is one way to catch mistakes, determine the next focus of your

research and to help you find the elusive ancestor.

Remember we are working on a puzzle, that has no picture! We must work methodically towards the solution, considering all the alternatives. Change your mindset and begin thinking what you next step should be and then take that step.

(Continued from page 1) Editors Notes

wrote about his summer research and family reunion in Tennessee and Kentucky in September. In October, Ricky Armes wrote the first of several informational pieces about a genealogy software add-on application that could prove to be just the thing for documenting our research. He calls the software, GENESSYS, and hopes to provide a working copy to WHAGS members sometime in 2023-24. Watch for more information in the Fall issues.

We started the new year with member, Bridget Demby's, account of the complications of researching the African American family. We learned how difficult African American research can be prior to 1870. Great article! Also in January, Liz Phillip shared the contents of her mom's old wooden recipe box. It was a fun article, and we learned some new ways to cook.

New member, Liv Taylor-Harris wrote feature articles in the

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2) Editors Notes

February and April issues with historical accounts of the Maxwell House Coffee softball team, followed by an account of the happenings of Vinegar Hill, a lively area of Houston that most of us had never heard about.

We will finish the year in this issue with an informative submission by one of the professional presenters at a WHAGS general meeting. Emily Richards followed her March presentation titled "No Genealogist is Excited about a Brick Wall." That article runs in this month's newsletter.

In addition to these quality narratives, all our committee chairs kept us informed about happenings in the various committees. Our president, Gail Colby kept us up to date on the state of our society through monthly front-page reports in The Journal. If you have read these accounts, then you will understand how busy our leaders have been, and how important it is for others to step up and help. The workload is always easier when it is shared with others. We need your help – be on the lookout for opportunities as they arise and don't be afraid to volunteer!

I know there are other contributors to The WHAGS Journal that I may have overlooked in this report. But the requirements of time and space seems to always leave out folks who deserve recognition the most. Forgive us for that.

I hope you have enjoyed The Journal over the past months. I have enjoyed serving as the Editor and look forward to seeing you again in September.

Our Committees at Work

Membership Team Update By Liz Phillip

As we come to the end of our program year, I want to give a special Thank You to Ricky Armes, Nancy Crane, Bridget Demby, Colleen Judd, Pacquitta Laverents, Diane Rausch, Cecilee Murphy, Dianne Martin, Herm Schertle, Sally Scott, Gloria Stewart, Gary Tober and Tom Woltz. The drinks and snacks shared for our monthly meetings were delicious!

I would also like to thank the volunteers that assisted with the members' table, Pacquitta Laverents, Meg Philpot and Diane Rausch. Your help with the Meet and Greet is greatly appreciated.

Don't forget, if you aren't attending a meeting in person, you can attend via Zoom.

Program Committee Update By Pacquitta Laverents

Looking Ahead to Next Year...

Your Program Committee is hard at work planning for upcoming monthly presentations. We rely heavily on the annual survey that was launched in February, and we're thankful that 25 members responded to let us know how they feel! Here are some of the top vote getters:

- Organizing all your information
- British Isles Ancestral Heritage
- Using Land Records to Maps to Enhance Family Research
- Making Your Research Available to Future Generations
- Exploring State Archives and Public Libraries
- Texas Ancestral Family Ties

Researching Your Immigrant Ancestors

- Discovering Family History through Military Records
- Solving Family Tree Mysteries Using DNA
- Creating Ancestor Profiles

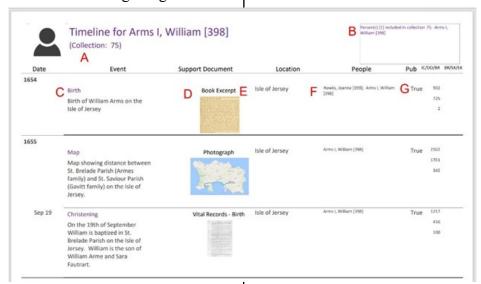
Be prepared to see events focusing on some of these topics when the new program calendar is released. As always, we'd love to hear about interesting speakers you might recommend to cover these subjects. Just send a note to program@whags.email with your ideas!



GENESSYS Now Does Timelines!!! By Ricky Armes

After watching Susan Ball's video at the WHAGS April monthly meeting I spent a few hours adding a "timeline" report to GENESSYS. Below is the first of twenty-six pages of a timeline I made for a sixth great-grandfather

- D. The supporting document type and an image of the support document, if available.
- E. The location where the event occurred, if available.
- F. List of the people referenced in the support document.



using GENESSYS.

To view the full timeline report click on this link Timeline -Wm Arms I and then download it to better view the report. The following comments reference this report:

- A. The subject(s) of a GENESSYS timeline report are specified in a "collection" which is user-defined and can include one or more people. In this collection, number 75, only my great-grandfather was specified.
- B. Listing of all members of the collection.
- C. The event type (in bold) and event description.

- G. Publishing indicator" - "True" - The event will be included when producing the scrapbook; "False" - The event will be omitted.
- H. Inclusion of "historic" event (not shown).

If you are interested in generating a timeline for someone in your family tree, and you are using Legacy, Family Tree Maker or Ancestry just let me know sending me an email (rmarmes@swbell.net). I'll then get back to you and we can discuss the steps necessary to make this happen!

Ricky Armes,

GENESSYS SIG Coordinator

Spring 2023 Clayton Library Trip By Ricky Armes

On 28 March eleven WHAGS members made a trip to the Family Research Center at the Clayton Library located in the Houston Museum District. Here are some observations of mine and others from the trip.

Transportation was arranged through Harris County Precinct 4. Precinct 4 provided a 12 passenger bus which transported us free of charge from the Radack Community Center to the Clayton Library, and back. The bus was clean, air-conditioned, arrived on time, and departed Clayton as scheduled. Lastly, the bus reservation process was straightforward because Pam Beucler, the transportation manager at Precinct 4, was efficient and easy to work with.

A member of the Clayton Library staff met us on our arrival. I had arranged for the members to get a library tour before settling down to begin our research. This didn't happen, which is the only negative I heard from the attendees. As it turns out another group arrived at Clayton the same time as us and perhaps that's why the tour didn't occur. The staff was helpful but perhaps a bit distracted with having to work with two groups.

Here are comments from two members regarding the trip:

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(Continued from page 1) Presidents Report

Welcoming, Hospitality, and Engagement/Nominating committees and did a phenomenal job. Thanks to everyone who responded to Liz's calls/emails and welcomed members and visitors, and provided goodies for the inperson meetings. The Nominating Committee was comprised of Liz, Tom Matchett, and Tom Woltz. It is one of the most difficult jobs in WHAGS: recruiting members to step up and help run our organization. Liz and the "Toms" did a great job.

The Programming Committee, the heart of WHAGS, was coordinated by Pacquitta Laverents. She was ably assisted by Meg Philpot, Ricky Armes, Liz Philip, and Ron Ware. They provided and coordinated the wonderful speakers and presenters over the last nine months. The presentations have been very well done and provided good information. I look forward to next year's programs.

The Library Committee is led by the WHAGS Librarian, Linda. She and a small team have cataloged all the books and items in the library, including the donated material from the Chapparal Genealogical Society. This was no small feat. Linda has made the library accessible via a web app and you can now check out books to aid in your research. The library link and book checkout process are on the WHAGS website in the Members Only section.

Diane Rausch coordinated the Audit Committee ensuring our financial status and accounts were probably maintained. She also helps with welcoming and hospitality. Diane recently volunteered to fill the remaining term of one of the three director positions and will be an asset to the Leadership Team.

Ricky Armes coordinated the March trip for WHAGS members to the Clayton Library. As a presenter at the WHAGS Holiday Celebration in December, Ricky demonstrated his GENESSYS program and is currently working with some members in beta testing. As the sole candidate for the open Director's position, Ricky will be a valued Leadership Team member.

Ron Ware is the *Journal* editor and does a wonderful job of soliciting articles from members and putting together an informative and fun-to-read product. Ron also serves as a Director and has been active on the Leadership Team.

Neal Scott serves as the WHAGS Webmaster and recently stepped into the Vice President position. The WHAGS website provides up-to-date information for WHAGS and was used as a model by the Texas States Genealogical Society (TxSGS) at a recent TxSGS Leadership Forum meeting. He coordinates the Technology Team in the monthly program meetings to ensure seamless presentations. The recent gravestone workshop was coordinated by Neal to the delight of all the attendees. The Technology special interest group (SIG) is coordinated by Neal. This may morph into a Beginning Genealogy SIG in the near future, check the website for updates. Neal was key in streamlining our communications by setting up the Leaflet. He shares the distribution duties with Pacquitta.

Pacquitta Laverents, in addition to coordinating the Programming Committee, works with Neal on the *Leaflet* to ensure we communicate professionally and with a single voice. She serves as the WHAGS Secretary and keeps the Leadership Team on task with the Business Tracker. Pacquitta is part of the Technology Team that ensures our programs are available to our virtual attendees and the folks in the room at Radack. She also works with Ron on the *Journal* to send you a professional product.

Tom Matchett is the WHAGS Treasurer, the money man. He ensures we report to the federal and state governments as required by our tax-exempt, charity status. Tom pays our bills, balances the books, and encourages the Leadership Team to provide realistic budget estimates. We need people like Tom to keep us on track.

Tom Woltz has been with WHAGS for a long time and served in many roles. He coordinated the Holiday Celebration in December which was very successful.

I know there are people I missed in this list of heartfelt thanks, and I apologize. Thanks to all of the WHAGS volunteers! It takes all of the WHAGS members and volunteers to make this organization as successful as it is. Please think about how you can contribute, no effort is too small.

Have a wonderful summer! See you in September!



Clayton Library (Continued from page 4)

> A trip to the Clayton Library, a part of the Houston Public Library system, is a must for anyone researching genealogy. The library provides a multitude of resources for the beginner or the experienced. Visitors to the library have access to extensive book, periodical and digital collections, along with microprints.

> Some of the most popular resources are the numerous databases available to researchers. The library has access to over 300 databases, 25 of which are earmarked for genealogical research. All of the 300+ databases can be accessed while at the Clayton. Some of the databases can even be accessed outside the library after logging in to the library system.

(April Hampton)

My first-ever visit to the Clayton Library was eyeopening. Having access to materials that are not available online is a boost for anyone's family history research. The convenience of riding downtown and getting better acquainted with fellow genealogy "nerds" is also a plus. I'm looking forward to the next trip! (Pacquitta Laverents)

Due to recent remodeling, there is no longer a break room at Clayton so members who brought sandwiches ate in the foyer or on the grounds of the library. Others ate at restaurants nearby or did a takeout. (Thank you Tom Woltz for buying those two tacos for me!)

After five hours of research the group departed Clayton at 3PM.

The next bus trip to Clayton Library will be scheduled for this fall.

Tombstone Cleaning Workshop By Ron Ware

Well, if you attended Neal Scott's workshop on Saturday, April 22nd, you now have the tools and expertise to safely clean that stone, possibly returning it to its original beauty.

The workshop had 16 members and guests in attendance. The first half of the workshop was a how-to classroom presentation at the Steve Radack Community Center. Neal explained types of marker materials, causes of discoloration, what NEVER to use on a marker, safety tips, and gave us the steps to clean a marker once it's been assessed to be in condition to be cleaned.

May Program

Saturday, May 20, 2023

Planning a Successful Research Trip By Our Own

Jenny Sharrer

"Do No Harm" is the over-riding mantra in proper caring for a monument.

Then we moved to the Addicks-Bear Creek Cemetery (aka Bear Creek Methodist Cemetery)



The lecture phase at Radack Community Center

which is located on Highway 6 at Patterson Road, for a hands-on experience cleaning several markers there.

Neal introduced us to several methods of safely cleaning a stone, all of which involved the use of an amazing product, *D/2 Biological Solution*, which is distributed in Texas by a company named Cemetery Preservation Supply, based in Crockett, Texas. All the products and tools for the

(Continued on page 7)



Tombstone Cleaning (Continued from page 6)

field work at the cemetery, as well as door prizes, were provided by Rusty Brenner of that company.

We learned that the easiest method for stone cleaning is to simply apply a coating of D/2 and walk away, some gentle scrubbing with soft nylon brushes will help as well. D/2's residual effects along with Mother nature and rain will continue to clean the stone over the coming weeks and months. Come back in a few weeks and the dirtiest stone will be vastly improved. Sometimes a second application of D/2 is needed, but often even the dirtiest of stones can be restored to look nearly new.

I think I can speak for all the attendees, that the lecture and the field work was conducted in a high-quality presentation by Neal. Join me in thanking him for his dedication to the preservation of tombstones and his willingness to teach others.

RDW



The following article is the 5th installment of the story of member Joe Carrington's grandfather, Joesph Carrington, Sr. The story picks up with Joe's grandfather and his family riding out the 1915 Galveston hurricane. He describes the storm as not being as severe as the devastating 1900 storm, but 1915 was pretty bad!

We will publish the remaining editions of Mr. Carrington's autobiography in the Fall.



A Texas Story Episode 5 By Joe Carrington Sr.

thel was several

months pregnant with Joe Jr. so we were happy to be some place considered more safe. Storm came in from gulf and washed into the bay and we could see people being washed down the current. I tried to lean out of the 2nd story windows to pick them up but could not do so. It was gruesome to hear their cries for help and being crushed as they hit objects such as telephone poles, etc. and there was nothing we could do. We were able to go back home after a day or so and found everything in good shape. Probably would have been as safe there.

Both Joe Jr. and Luella were born in Galveston (Joe Jr. on July 20, 1916 and Luella on 2-18-18). After Joe was born, the available milk was not sanitary and we wanted the best - so we moved out on 25th street, got a cow that

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A Texas Story (Continued from page 7)

was a fairly high producer and some Cornish chickens - rooster and hens. These fighting chickens that lay dark eggs and produce dark meat (my favorite) soon became bosses of the neighborhood.

Had an opportunity for a good job with the short line Sugarland Railroad where I could have "more action". It primarily served the Sugarland plant which shipped some 20 carloads of sugar a day from plant to Galveston to be hauled all over the country by other carriers.

I had become very friendly with Mr. Eldridge and he had me to go to Chicago to bring back to him a private parlor rail car he had purchased (to first be used for his honeymoon as he was getting married again). It was very special, very plush and very fancy in every respect. Had a full time porter, even when car not being used, as it had to be ready at a moment's notice.

With the experience gained thru claim jobs, decided to go into business for myself. Moved to Houston and started the San Jacinto Shippers Service Bureau. Proposed to handle over charge claims on the basis of 50% of the recovery no recovery no charge. Discrepancies very common due to complicated tariffs.

To become more efficient in handling these, I attended a night law school - Campbells and Overstreet Law Court Room. This was highly interesting and much learned that helped me throughout the rest of my life.

WHAGS Library Is Now Accessible Online

WHAGS Librarian, Linda Whitby, with help from several volunteers, has been hard at work for months to organize and catalog our library (now with over 500 physical books!), and make them available through an online catalog and check-out process.

Read all about it in the WHAGS website.

My real interest was in public relations and when there was an opening as Secretary-Manager of the Cuero Chamber of Commerce, I took on that job. While this was a small town, it represented a large and prosperous rural community.

My two closest associates the President of the organization, Victor Grundy, and Metz Heald, the Country Agricultural Agent were of tremendous value. We became such friends that when our youngest son was born, we named him for the two - Victor Metz Carrington.

Vic, Metz and I made many trips throughout Central and other points to "sell" our community and one of our prime projects was the revitalization and expansion of our "Turkey Trot" - an annual parade of turkeys. It is of interest that not only is this Turkey Trot continued to this day, but is one of the outstanding of such type agricultural projects in the country. Cuero is famous for it's turkeys - being one of the leading turkey raising areas in the country. Pecans were another prime crop of the area as they grew in profusion along the Guadalupe River. These were unusual native pecans as while they were small and round, the shell was so thin that they would often break when falling off the trees. And, they were extremely rich in fat content.

I made a trip to the East (Washington, Philadelphia and New York) to encourage more sales of turkeys, pecans and other items raised in the area. I stopped off in Washington and was presumptuous enough to call on President Calvin Coolidge to invite him to our Turkey Trot.

His secretary gave me 5 minutes and when I went into his office, I realized how appropriate the name "Silent Cal" was for him as he said nothing and I had to carry on the entire conversation. I gave him one of our special invitations and, as I was leaving, he bowed and carried on his total end of the conversation: "It's a pleasure, I assure you". This could be construed any way.

On this trip I found that the values we now place on pecans were not so important in those days as was told our thin skinned pecans broke too easily and the high fat content caused them to spoil quicker. Did what I considered a good selling job.

Those were 4 good years spent in Cuero - 1925-1928. Our family increased by two as our two youngest sons, Edward and Victor Metz, were born there. I made some tremendous friends and contacts - not only locally but throughout the state and country. (Continued on page 9)

A Texas Story (Continued from page 8)

Joined the Rotary Club there, joined the South Texas Chamber of Commerce Executives Association and several others.

Henry Burt, friend of mine who was a member of the Cuero Chamber of Commerce and a bus operator, felt the bus industry was the business of the future. He felt it would be a good move for me to work with it.

So, in 1928, I became Secretary-Manager of the Texas Bus Owners Association (TBOA) with office in Austin. In reality, this was almost taking a chance as the industry was in a rather chaotic condition in getting started. There were many problems - such as high conditions where even paved arterial highways were primarily "crown top", narrow and crooked as well as not being too well maintained. Less traveled highways were not that good and really presented problems. Tires were poor. Gas stations and garages few and far apart.

Busses "per se" had not yet been "invented" and those wanting larger that the big 7 passenger cars then available (2 jump seats between front and back) cut these larger cars in two, added extra regular seats and then welded them back together. All in all, operators had to be rugged individualists, hearty souls and real pioneers.

I had to be out of town a great deal and limited resources made it sometimes necessary for me to cut such corners as sleeping in my car. This often meant neglecting my family but I knew our four children - 3 boys and 1 girl were under the close supervision of a very devoted Mother. In 1934, however, the greatest tragedy of my life up to that time occurred - my daughter, Luella, developed a serious kidney problem and died at the age of 16. I had never been hit so hard as losing this lovely little daughter who showed such great promise.

I was elected to two terms in the Texas Legislature - the 47th in 1941 and the 48th in 1943. This was quite an experience for a country boy. I made a tremendous amount of valuable friends and, probably some became enemies - such as some attorneys who were presenting a very complicated legal-wise bill to which I protested. I felt that if we removed half the laws on our books, rewrote the balance in such simple language that anyone could understand and then enforce them - we would be much better off. This experience in the Legislature enabled me to help motor carriers thru being able to present their case as well as to bring my experience with community matters to incorporate into bills.

My friends encouraged me to run for the Senate, which I did but had an unfortunate experience with a competitor who sometimes rather "confused" the issues. The war was then on and one example was increasing innuendos concerning my participation in actual service such as "why doesn't someone ask Joe why he's not in service in the army..etc" this at the last minute and not mentioning my age (with 3 sons in service) and not mentioning the fact known to them that my arm was principally metal. But, these facts not known to many voters and no chance for a rebuttal at last minute. It's not

WHAGS.org

Don't forget to visit our website often. It is full of information for the enjoyment and use of our members. Check there for upcoming events. Don't miss the members only page where you will find a membership roster, and much more.

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sour grapes, but am glad I did lose that election thru even tactics like that as feel I have been better able to serve more by not being retained in a political atmosphere.





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

Planning a Successful Research Trip

Presenter Jenny Apple Sharrer



In this presentation, Jenny will be sharing options for planning a research trip and the details of a trip she wants to take to Morgan County, Tennessee where she hopes to uncover what happened to her gg-grandfather. Why Morgan County, Tennessee? That is the last known location for Elisha Apple, Sarah's husband.

Jenny will include numerous options for ensuring a successful research trip. Join us for what will be an interesting and useful topic for those of you who are considering a trip to dig for additional roots of your ancestors!

Jenny Sharrer is a relatively new arrival to the world of genealogy research. Some ten years ago she offered to research the birth and death of her gg-grandmother for the purpose of erecting a monument for her paternal gg-grandmother, Sarah Apple. The monument got erected with no mention of a husband.

Jenny joined WHAGS in 2016 when it was called the Bear Creek Genealogical Society. She became an active officer shortly after that, serving first as Director and then as President of the society for the 2020-2021 program year. Her professional leadership and innovative ideas were instrumental in shaping what we know as WHAGS today.

Saturday, May 20, 2023

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 new Steve Radack Community Center, 18650 Clay Road. Visitors are welcome!