

# DCGS NEWS

D E N T O N C O U N T Y G E N E A L O G I C A L S O C I E T Y

## APRIL ZOOM MEETING

### Program: "Using Historical Newspapers to Uncover Denton History"

Speaker: Laura Douglas



1896- Denton County Courthouse-

The Denton County Genealogical Society meets on the second Thursday during the months on September-November and January-May. 6:30 P.M. Denton Public Library, Emily Fowler Central Library, 502 Oakland St., Denton, TX 76201 [www.genealogydentontexas.org](http://www.genealogydentontexas.org)

Join us for the monthly Denton County Genealogy Society meeting Thursday, April 8, 2021. We will connect via Zoom at 6:30 p.m. for a social time to chat followed by a short business meeting. The program for the night is "Using Historical Newspapers to Uncover Denton History" presented by Laura Douglas, Denton Public Library. She will show us how to use the historical Denton County newspapers on the Portal to Texas History to research people and events in Denton's past, how the Portal can be used for their own research interests and how to locate other free digital newspaper repositories.

Laura Douglas, is the librarian in charge of the Special Collections with the Denton Public Library. Laura has a Bachelor of Science degree in History from Texas Woman's University and received her Master of Library Science degree from the University of North Texas in 2003. She has worked at Denton Public in various positions for 28 years including children's services, adult services, genealogy and local history. In addition to getting to help other people with their ancestry hunt Laura teaches genealogical research classes at the public library.

Visitors are welcome. If you are not a member of the DCGS and would like to attend, please register at <https://denton.bibliocommons.com/events/60247175ff763e2f0040db1b> by Wednesday, April 7, 7 p.m. to receive an invitation email for the Zoom event.

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## CYNDI'S LIST TURNS 25

Congratulations to genealogy resource site [Cyndi's List](http://Cyndi's List), which is now 25 years old! "After all these years people still don't often believe me when I say that I am the only person who works on the site. It's true, it's just me. This is my job, but it's also my life's work and my passion. I still enjoy what I do and still find it rewarding, particularly when I hear of success stories from all of you. I am happy to keep providing Cyndi's

List as a genealogical research tool for everyone to use."



## PRESIDENT'S ARTICLE

Hello, Everyone,

It is time to start planning your part in our May Round Robin and Annual Meeting. I hope you have made genealogical discoveries in the past year that you can share with us. YOU are the May program.

In March Thomas MacEntee again gave a very interesting program—this time on Getting Ready for the 1950 US Census. He has me working on where my parents lived when I was a little boy in that census. Several of you let me know how much you appreciate having the program recorded for on-line access after the meeting. Recording our in-person meetings for on-line access is something the DCGS Board will discuss and report back to you.

At our April meeting Laura Douglas will present an educational program about Using Historical Newspapers to Uncover Denton History. As the digital world grows, newspapers will play a bigger role in our research.

Stay well and stay safe. I look forward to seeing you on Zoom in April and maybe in person on May 13. DCGS dues for 2021-2022 will be due in May. I expect to have in-person meetings at Emily Fowler Library starting in September.

Joe Spears  
Email: [argyleiris@verizon.net](mailto:argyleiris@verizon.net)



## TREASURER'S REPORT

**Balance Mar. 1, 2021** **\$2,817.23**

**Deposits:**

Total Deposits: \$00.00

**Disbursements:**

High Definition \$100.00

[March Program]

Denton Public Library \$50.00

[Memorial – W. D. Mulkey]

Total disbursements: \$150.00

**Balance March 31, 2021** **\$2,667.23**

Library Donations

April 1995 – May 2006 \$2,876.52

June 2006 – June 2012 \$3,310.00

July 2012 – March 2021 \$2,925.53

Respectfully Submitted,  
Linda Touraine, Treasurer



## MARCH 2021 MINUTES

President Joe Spears called the Zoom meeting to order at 7:00 pm. He introduced himself and welcomed everyone. President Spears thanked Sandra Robertson for serving as Acting Secretary in Beth Leggieri's absence.

The motion to approve the February minutes as published in the newsletter was made by Bob Lane and seconded by Linda Touraine. The treasurer's report was filed for audit.

### Old Business

There was no old business.

### New Business

President Spears suggested consideration of a memorial for Wallace Dean Mulkey who contributed significant assistance to DCGS earlier efforts in production of a genealogy publication. Discussion ensued with Sandra Robertson making the motion that DCGS contribute a book to the Special Collections in Mulkey's memory, the cost of which will be in the range of \$25-50 and selected by Laura Douglas, Director of Special Collections. Audrey Mabe seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### Announcements

Our next meeting will be April 8, 2021 by Zoom; Laura Douglas will present "Using Historical Newspapers to Uncover Denton History."

Registration is now open for the National Genealogical Society Virtual Conference scheduled for May 17-21 ([nsgenealogy.org](http://nsgenealogy.org)).

### Program

Laura Douglas introduced Thomas MacEntee, founder of the well-known genealogy blogging community "GeneaBloggers," who presented the program following the business meeting, "Getting Ready for the 1950 U.S. Census."

Audrey Mabe moved to adjourn at 7:16 pm and was seconded by Chris Strauss.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Leggieri, Secretary



## AMERICAN ANCESTORS NOW OFFERS FREE, ONLINE LIVE FAMILY HISTORY CHAT SERVICE WITH EXPERT GENEALOGISTS

Do you have a genealogy or local history question? American Ancestors/New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) is offering a free, online live chat service, hosted by experienced staff genealogists. The service is available to all, **Monday—Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET**. Nearly everyone who researches family history has a question about something, whether it's where to find a record, how to interpret an unfamiliar term, or locating the most authoritative sources for specific types of information. Our genealogists can help steer you in the right direction!

**WHO:** Founded in 1845, American Ancestors/NEHGS is America's oldest genealogical organization and a leading non-profit committed to advancing the study of family history. Find out more at [AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org)

**WHAT:** A free, online live chat service for family historians of all levels, hosted by experienced staff genealogists. During chat hours, several experts will be available to answer a wide variety of genealogical and historical questions.

**WHERE:** Visit [AmericanAncestors.org/chat](http://AmericanAncestors.org/chat) and

type your question in the window in the lower right corner.

### SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

- I recently heard that the Wales Family Association collection was donated to NEHGS. Are these papers available online?
- What is the 19th century definition of a homesteader?
- How or where would I be able to locate volume 4 of the Newport, RI Probate Records Index?
- What resources could I use to find more about local Massachusetts regiments from the Civil War?
- I discovered that my ancestor was christened 45-50 miles away from where he was born in Norway. Could you tell why my ancestors would have traveled so far?



## NO, FAMILY NAMES WERE NOT CHANGED AT ELLIS ISLAND

There is a family myth amongst tens of thousands of American families: "The family name was changed at Ellis Island." The stories claim the immigrant arrived at Ellis Island and was unable to communicate with the officials. A record was then created by someone who (undoubtedly did not speak the same language as the immigrant) assigned the immigrant a descriptive name.

### WRONG!

This fairy tale refuses to die. Let's look at a few simple facts:

1. Passenger lists were not created at Ellis Island. They were created abroad, beginning close to the immigrant's home, when the immigrant purchased his ticket. In 99% of the cases, the clerk filling out the forms and creating the passenger list in "the old country" knew how to speak, read, and write your ancestor's language. That clerk filled in the proper name. In the case of Eastern European or Oriental languages, those forms even included the correct non-Roman characters. To be sure, spelling variations were common as the immigrants usually were illiterate and often didn't know their own alphabets or how to spell their own names in any language. The clerks wrote what they heard, which may or may not be the same spelling used elsewhere. In fact, there might not be a "correct" spelling. However, what was recorded ALWAYS sounded correct, especially when pronounced in the immigrant's language.

It is unlikely that anyone at the local steamship office in "the old country" was unable to communicate with the immigrant or his/her family. Names were most likely recorded with a high degree of accuracy at that time.

2. The idea that the immigrant was unable to communicate with officials at Ellis Island is ludicrous. In fact, one third of all immigrant inspectors at Ellis Island in the early twentieth century were themselves foreign-born, and all immigrant inspectors spoke at least three languages. In addition, Ellis Island and other ports of entry also hired an army of interpreters, most of them as part-time employees. These interpreters always (repeat: ALWAYS) could speak, read, and write the languages of other immigrants. If a new immigrant arrived and no interpreter was available for his or her particular language, that immigrant was detained at Ellis Island until a qualified interpreter was located and brought in for the interview. Most immigrants were processed through Ellis Island within a day or two but there were cases where immigrants were detained for several days until an interpreter became available and proper documentation could be completed. Nobody passed through the process without being interviewed by someone in a suitable language.

3. The passenger lists were always prepared in "the old country" by steamship company officials. If any immigrant arrived at Ellis Island and provided a different name to officials from that provided on the passenger list, he or she was always denied entry. If a brief investigation could not clear up the mystery, the immigrant was shipped back to the old country on the steamship's return trip.

**NOTE:** Many immigrants were refused entry for a variety of reasons and were returned. Estimates seem to vary from 12% to 18% of all would-be immigrants were denied entry into the United States and instead were sent back to their originating

countries. The fates of most of these returnees has not been well documented.

4. Later immigrants had to verify their correct names every year. Starting in July of 1940, the Alien Registration Act required every alien resident in the United States to register at their local Post Office in January. As part of the registration process, the immigrant had to provide ALL names by which he or she had ever been known, including his or her full name as used in "the old country" as well as the name used currently. Yes, that was true even if the "previous name" was written in Russian, Arabic, Chinese, or other letters. Alien Registration requirements applied to all aliens over the age of fourteen, regardless of nationality and regardless of immigration status. Despite these facts, the Ellis Island name-change story (or Castle Garden, or Angel Island, or any other Port of Entry, or earlier versions of the same story) is as American as apple pie. However, there is little to no truth to these stories.

### When Did the Names Change?

After processing through Ellis Island and settling within the United States, many immigrants DID change their names. In numerous cases, the names were changed for them by public officials, schoolteachers, shopkeepers, and neighbors. Anyone from Eastern Europe, with a name LONG on consonants and short on vowels, learned that his name often got in the way of a job interview or became the subject of ridicule at his child's school. Any change that might smooth their way to the American dream was seen as a step in the right direction. In most cases, these later name changes were made without court papers or any other official recognition.

In any case, the records at Ellis Island and other ports of entry always contained the original names, although with frequent spelling variations.



*Immigrant being interviewed at Ellis Island by an Immigration Official and an Interpreter  
(Photo courtesy of the Ellis Island Archives)*

(Source: Eastman Online Genealogy Newsletter)



## NEW DENTON COUNTY HISTORY BOOK – SHARE YOUR HISTORIC 1940s-1960s PHOTOS!

The *Record-Chronicle* is pleased to announce an all-new hardcover coffee-table book publishing November 2021, “Denton Memories II: The 1940s, 1950s and 1960s.” The new book will be filled with historic photos from Denton County sourced from the public as well as local historical organizations including Aubrey Historical Society, City of Lewisville, Denton County Office of History & Culture, Denton Public Library (Emily Fowler Central Branch), Krum Heritage Museum, Sanger Area Historical Society and Texas Woman’s University.

This project will cover a variety of topics to show the full scope of mid- 20th century life in Denton County. Images of family members and events, street scenes and transportation, industry, commerce, agriculture, public service, class photos, and community celebrations are all of great interest.

We invite you to participate in this pictorial history and to provide your never-before-seen images of our community — scan your photos and submit them online!

Here’s how:

1. Pick out photos meeting our guidelines below
  2. Scan your photos
  3. Upload photos at [Denton2.PictorialBook.com](http://Denton2.PictorialBook.com)
- For help with scanning or submitting, call 360-723-5800 or send an email to [photos@pediment.com](mailto:photos@pediment.com).

### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- Photos taken in Denton County
- Photos taken between 1940-1969.
- General interest photos such as listed above

For more info, visit our website at:  
**[Denton2.PictorialBook.com](http://Denton2.PictorialBook.com)**

## THE VIKING WARRIOR WHO TURNED OUT TO BE A WOMAN

Most of us have always pictured Viking warriors as being blonde, blue-eyed males. However, it appears there were exceptions. Historians have known for some time that Viking warriors included some women. Now the historians have discovered that at least one woman was a Viking warrior and a leader.

One particular Viking grave was unearthed more than 100 years ago. It obviously was the grave of a chieftain or some similar high-ranking warrior. For more than 100 years, the high-ranking Viking warrior was assumed to be male. Dr Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson has been studying the grave found in the 19th Century.

While the grave and its contents had been known for more than a century, apparently nobody thought to determine the sex of the skeleton. After all, Viking warriors were always males, right?

**Wrong.**

Thanks to the new technology called DNA, determining the sex of a skeleton is now rather easy. However, nobody thought to test this particular skeleton until recently.

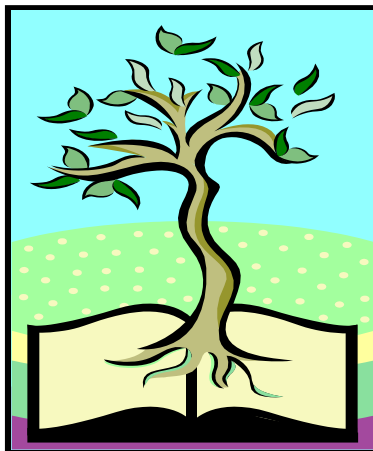
Dr Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson's team carried out a DNA test on the bones, revealing that they belonged to a biological woman. The discovery shook the academic world. The artifacts buried with the warrior indicated it was the grave of a high level warrior.

As stated in the article, "If this omen actually was the warrior that she was buried as, she probably would have done some not so nice things, so she wouldn't have been a very good role model. She was a fierce person."

You can read more and watch a video of this story in the BBC World Service web site at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/reel/video/p099hyk0/the-viking-warrior-who-turned-out-to-be-a-woman>.

### 2020-2022 OFFICERS

- President—Joe Spears**
- Vice-President—Stacie Briggs**
- Secretary—Beth Leggieri**
- Treasurer—Linda Touraine**
- Librarian—Laura Douglas**
- Webmaster—Chris Strauss**
- Membership— Donna Spears**
- Newsletter Editor—Kathy Strauss**



**NEXT MEETING OF THE  
DENTON COUNTY  
GENEALOGICAL  
SOCIETY WILL BE ON  
MAY 13, 2021**

DENTON COUNTY  
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

502 Oakland Street  
Denton, TX 76201