

DCGS News

MARCH MEETING FOCUS: I HAVE A CIVIL WAR ANCESTOR...NOW WHAT?

Civil War soldiers often left a rich genealogical paper trail. Many of these records are tucked away at the National Archives in Washington D.C. **Brian Rhinehart** will give a virtual presentation, ***I Have a Civil War Ancestor...Now What?*** at the Denton County Genealogical Society's meeting, Thursday, March 9, 2023. Attendees will meet in the Emily Fowler Central Library's meeting room. Social time begins at 6:30 p.m., with the program beginning at 7 p.m.



Records from the Civil War may unlock some of the family stories that have been forgotten over time, as well as break down a brick wall or two! Brian will share which records are available for your ancestors at the National Archives, what records are online already, and how to access all of them.

Brian Rhinehart is a professional genealogist and speaker and is the owner of CivilWarRecords.com. He is a graduate of Boston University's certificate of genealogy research program, and his work has been featured in the PBS television show *Finding Your Roots*. A direct descendant of six Civil War soldiers, Brian specializes in research and record retrieval for Civil War and War of 1812 soldiers at the National Archives in Washington D.C. and has retrieved military files for hundreds of clients there.

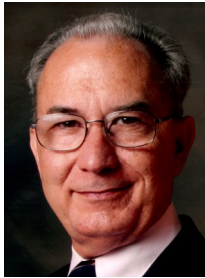


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Photo: Jones Photographic Studios of America, Studio No. 1, Denton, Texas. Fireworks at the Denton County Courthouse Celebrating the End of World War I, photograph, 1918-; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaphi12494/m1/1/?q=denon%20courthouse>; accessed June 1, 2022), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Denton Public Library.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



abilities.

Find Ancestry Academy from your Ancestry home page. In the right hand menu column, look for “Tools and resources.” The [link](#) to Ancestry Academy is found there.

The following is a sampling of instructional videos available on Ancestry Academy.

Researching Your Military Ancestors in the US

- *Six Steps To Find Your Civil War Veterans and Their Regiments*, six videos such as: Which Side Did Your Ancestors Fight For?, Collect Identifying Information To Help Find The Correct Records, and Learning About The Regiment.
- *Finding Your Military Veterans on Fold3*, twelve videos including: Fundamentals of Fold3 Browse, Searching Enlistment Records, and Exploring Draft Cards.

Ancestry's resources include a wonderful array of instructional articles about a wide variety of topics. I find Ancestry Academy to be particularly interesting and helpful. Even if you have reviewed Ancestry Academy in the past, it is worth taking a look again, since Ancestry continually adds new material to enhance our research

Getting The Most Out Of Ancestry

- *Navigating Wills and Probates on Ancestry*, ten videos such as: I'm Not a Lawyer—What Does It Mean?, Understanding Indexes, and The Record Page.
- *Learn About Your Ancestors Using the Latest From Ancestry*, eleven videos including: How Ancestry Helps You Tell the Story, Tidying Up Your Tree: Managing Facts, and A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words.

Researching A State

- *The Buckeye State: Researching Your Ohio Ancestors*, 14 videos such as: The Basics: Finding Ohio Collections on Ancestry, Migration Routes and Patterns, and Ohio's Land Surveys.

This is a very short list of examples of wonderful resources available within Ancestry Academy. Take the time to review the available list of videos. You may be surprised!

—Robert L. Lane, President,
presidentdcgs@gmail.com



DCGS members learned from Ari Wilkins how to discover “Mysterious Strangers” at the Feb. 9th meeting. See wrap-up on p. 5. (Photo: Laura Douglas)

FEBRUARY 2023 MEETING MINUTES

*Denton County Genealogical Society, Inc.,
February 9, 2023 Minutes*

President Bob Lane called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. at the Emily Fowler Central Library and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. He welcomed everyone and called on Membership Chair Monica Wenthold to introduce visitors Joan Anderson, Kathy Lawrence, Tedra Tatum, Richia Campbell, Janse Sanders, Brody Gough, Greg Bell, Linda Jonas, and John Linden. There were 21 members in person and six members on Zoom. Speaker Ari Wilkins was on Zoom for a total of 37 persons.

The Treasurer's Report was distributed in the *DCGS News*. There were no corrections or additions, and it was filed for audit. The Secretary's Minutes of January 12, 2023 were distributed in the *DCGS News*. There were no corrections or additions, and it was approved as distributed.

Reports by Board Members

Social/Hospitality—Eileen O'Neil thanked Carol Brantley for bringing snacks. Eileen O'Neil and John Windsor also brought snacks. Eileen said that volunteers have agreed to provide snacks for March, April and May meetings.

Librarian—Laura Douglas requests that DCGS purchase a book for the Library's collection entitled *Coleman County Stories and More: Every Memorial Has a Story by Carl Langford*. Sandra Robertson made a motion to purchase the book with a cost not to exceed \$45.00. Joe Spears seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Vice President

- Beth Leggieri hopes that the program summaries in the *DCGS News* are helpful to the members.
- The topic for the May round robin is military service by members' ancestors. Be thinking about information of the ancestor whose military service you will share at the May meeting.
- The topic of the March meeting is "I Have a Civil War Ancestor...Now What?"
- For members to add locations being researched, go the January, 2023 *DCGS News* and answer the Ancestor Q of the Month. The link is still active.

- It was with a heavy heart that Beth said that Eric Kaszinski passed away. He was a beloved member of DCGS for many years and will be missed.

Announcements—Bob Lane

- A motion to provide a \$100.00 memorial to Special Collections at Emily Fowler for Eric Kaszinski was made by Laura Douglas and seconded by John Windsor. Motion passed.
- A Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award by the POTUS for service to the community was awarded to Joe Spears, Donna Spears, Susan Schwartz, and former member Wanda Samek. Congratulations on your accomplishments!
- Bob Lane will soon convene an Executive Committee meeting to consider some procedural issues.
- Pending the outcome of the Executive Committee meeting, the following dues payment procedures will be in force:
 - Duties of Membership: Record changes to membership roster, receive dues payments and submit dues payments to the Treasurer.
 - Duties of Treasurer: Receive dues payments from Membership. Deposit such payments to the bank account.
- The next DCGS meeting is March 9, 2023.

Other Announcements

Kathy Strauss said there are opportunities to go on cruises that have genealogy as a special feature in addition to sightseeing.

Program

Kathy Strauss introduced Ari Wilkins who presented "Mysterious Relatives."

Following the program, John Windsor made the motion to adjourn which was seconded by Stephen Booher. The President adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m. with his last word from Winston Churchill.



—Respectfully submitted by
Sandra Robertson, Secretary

MEMBERS HONORED FOR LIFETIME SERVICE

Hearty congratulations to current DCGS members **Joe Spears, Donna Spears** and **Susan Schwartz** on each receiving a Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award signed by President Joe Biden for volunteering more than 4,000 hours to the various causes. They were nominated for the awards by the Texas Veterans Hall of Fame. (TVHOF).



Dr. Diana Mason, Chair, Remember Them Forever Project, and Jere Delano, Vice President, TVHOF, present Joe and Donna Spears their awards. Not pictured: Susan Schwartz. (Photo: Tom Williams)

Joe was recognized for his work with TVHOF's Remember Them Forever project, where he logged the military service of 740+ U.S.

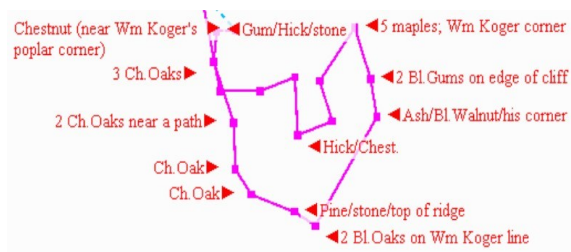
veterans not previously recognized in local cemeteries. He also creates or maintains a combined 14,000+ Find a Grave memorials, serves on the board of the Historic Lisbon Cemetery Association (Dallas), co-chaired their Known But Unmarked Project, and supports Wreaths Across America, as well as many other causes.

Donna was lauded for her active membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution, previously their recording secretary and chair of the lineage committee, where she successfully proved descent from a Patriot for 18 prospective members. As president of the Smith Family Cemetery Assn., she worked to preserve the site, and secured its Texas Historical Commission Historic Cemetery designation. Like Joe, she serves on the board of the Historic Lisbon Cemetery Association (Dallas), co-chaired their Known But Unmarked Project, and contributed 500+ hours to TVHOF initiatives, among other efforts.

Susan's lifetime service includes membership in the DAR, with service to their state genealogical preservation and lineage research efforts. She is also a member Colonial Dames XVII Century, supported the Remember Them Forever project, as well as Wreaths Across America. She also contributed 400+ hours to helping researchers navigate numerous genealogy databases.

MAPPING METES & BOUNDS AT SLIG

I just completed Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy's course on "Metes & Bounds." The intensive, five-day course focused on how to draw those irregular tracts of land in the State-Land states—those deeds with pesky descriptions like: "Beginning at a white oak, then north 25 west twenty-six poles to a hickory, then north eight west sixty poles to a stake...."



I learned how to draw a plat's shape with graph paper and compass, how to draw it digitally with software, then how to overlay it on a map. That took two days. The rest of the week's study reminded me how something that sounds so easy can be so difficult. Turns out deed descriptions have errors (some have wrong directions, some are backwards or upside down, some are barely legible, etc.). Sound familiar?

Instructors were very generous with their feedback and time. The syllabus was very thorough, and all sessions were recorded. Using the DeedMapper program seemed quirky, but I have successfully located a great grandfather's land.

Click the links for more info on [DeedMapper](#) or [SLIG](#).

—Minna Marinko

“MYSTERIOUS STRANGER” WRAP UP

Mysterious relatives are the people we have never heard of who appear to be associated with our family. We may find them in the census with our family, in an old unidentified photo, mentioned in an old letter, or buried in a cemetery with our family.

Ari Wilkins—owner of the genealogical consulting company Black Genesis, as well as a library associate at the Dallas Public Library—provided tools for identifying these relatives in her presentation, “Mysterious Relatives,” at the February 9th DCGS meeting.

Ari encouraged everyone to use the cluster genealogy method—often referred to as the F.A.N. (friends, associates, and neighbors) club—by paying attention to the people surrounding the person of interest. She recommended that you should ask questions, develop a hypothesis, research, document, analyze the data, and develop and document conclusions.

Based on her experience, Ari advised us to periodically review and renew the research for new clues. Her own research spanned several decades, with new revelations appearing as additional sources of information became available.

Ari used people from her own family in multiple case studies to illustrate the use of the research tools. Her bibliography included useful sources to learn more about finding and identifying these mysterious relatives.

— Kathy Strauss

Ari Wilkins will coordinate the course “African Americans in the South,” at TxSGS’s virtual [Texas Institute of Genealogical Research](#) (TIGR), June 12-16. For info on all seven TIGR course offerings click [HERE](#).

MEMBERCONNECT

Shout out for our very own **Nancy Gilbride Casey**, recognized at the 2022 TXSGS Awards Ceremony. Nancy’s article, “Just Imagine: Creating our Ancestor’s Story with Senses and Context” (*Stirpes*, v. 61, no. 3, September 2022, pgs. 19-22), placed first in the Category III: Manuscript (Non-Professional) category. Yay for Nancy!

—Beth Leggieri

COMING EVENTS

3/21—**Facebook for Genealogy**, Pinellas Gen. Soc., 12 p.m. CST (V), [reg. req’d.](#)

3/25—**Researching Texas Pioneers**, Emily Fowler Library, 10 a.m. (IP)

3/29—**All Free for the Finding: Digging Up Family History for Free on the Internet**, Indiana State Lib., 9 a.m. CST (V), [reg. req’d.](#)

2022-23

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John Windsor

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Nancy Gilbride Casey

NGS Delegate

Robert L. Lane

TXSGS Representative

Emily Coffman

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE FEMALE ANCESTOR?



Jane Sanzone: Luther Izette Jewett, aka "Gram" Holt, lived to be 101 years old (1836-1937) and had 11 children. I'm fortunate enough to have a picture of her and also to find articles about her in several newspapers in the last few years of her life. She was described as having a sunny disposition and appears to have been an industrious worker, making butter, canning, and "making eats for social events." I discovered recently that she was a quilter and that several of her quilts were handed down to descendants. I'm on a mission to connect with other descendants who may have them and to get pictures!



Monica Wenthold's favorite is: My maternal grandmother, Irene Gallant. Her husband Prosper died of cancer when she was 51. She had 2 teenagers left to raise. She got a "man's" job at the town factory inspecting sticks for folding rulers. After they left the house, she worked at Singer, selling and demonstrating sewing machines. When she retired at 65 she became a VISTA volunteer for several years. She was an independent woman before woman's lib became a thing!

Melinda Culpon's favorite is: Naomi Parish Phillips - Grand Aunt - Positive can-do attitude in life which has been shared with thousands of people in the past half-century.

MORE FAVORITE FEMALE ANCESTORS...

Minna Gray Marinko: My favorite ancestor to date is Mahala Sweeney Gray (1820-1884). She lost her husband, her eldest son, her house, and all her possessions in the Civil War, yet somehow saved her three young children and survived. First, her Unionist husband Capt. Hiram Vardeman Gray barely escaped hanging by his Arkansas (Confederate) neighbors. Second, he recruited 100 men, but rather than fight near home, was ordered elsewhere. Six months later, half of the men sickened with measles and were hospitalized in Benton Barracks, Missouri. Mahala and the children traveled 250 miles to be with him, but he and their eldest son died a short time later. She buried them, went back home to Arkansas, only to lose everything else when those same neighbors burned her house down. Somehow she made it to Kentucky to live with other family. It took two years after that, but she did finally get a widow's pension (\$20/month). Good grief--I cannot imagine what grit it took. I admire her courage and fortitude.



Nancy Gilbride Casey: My favorite is Anna Sophia Tatar Simonik, a maternal great grandmother. She was my mother's favorite grandmother, and so I heard stories of her, and have some great photos. Anna was born in Forbasz, Stará Ľubovňa, Slovakia in 1883, in the Tatra Mountains in northern Slovakia close to the Polish border. Anna and her family were likely Goral (Tatra Highlanders). She married John Simonik in 1901 and emigrated to the United States, settling in Fayette Co., Pennsylvania, where John worked in mining. I would love to have met her and asked her about her life back in Slovakia. My photo shows Anna holding my mother Anna Margaret Kozlina in 1937.

EVEN MORE FAVORITE FEMALE ANCESTORS...

Kathi Kenneweg Coatney: Ellen Virginia Pretty is my favorite female ancestor because she is the most interesting! She survived the American Civil War as a child in Georgia, married twice, gave birth to nine children, all born at home, including twin girls, and buried both husbands and four of her children. All in all, an interesting life!



TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance January 22, 2023		\$3,010.49
Deposits		
Feb. 13, 2023 (Cash)	\$60.00	
Feb. 13, 2023 (Checks)	\$70.00	
Total Deposits		\$130.00
Disbursements		
Ari Wilkins Feb. 2023 Program	\$250.00	
Total Disbursements		\$250.00
Balance February 20, 2023		\$2890.49
—Respectfully Submitted, Marian Carroll, Treasurer		



Laura Douglas writes: I can't choose a favorite, but my mother's mother—Adeline Stella Chapman—fascinates me. She was born in Devonport, a town on the southwestern coast of England, in 1892 and died in 1956 in the village of Long Ashton. When her father retired from the British Navy he became a Hosteller, so my grandmother grew up living in various inns. The one they spent the longest time at was the Jubilee Inn in Flax Bourton, just down the road from Long Ashton, where my grandfather, Henry Poole lived. During her life Adeline was a dancer who performed on stage in London, she had two sons and two daughters. One of the biggest events that impacted her life was WWII. Long Ashton is a short distance away from Bristol and my mom told horrific stories about the Blitz.

NO GENEALOGIST LOVES A BRICK WALL!

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 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 pjs 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 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 doing to be sure that you have explored everything you need to find the right ancestor?

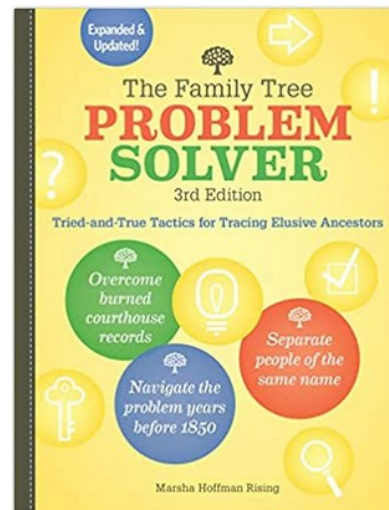
I can recommend one wonderful book with great ideas: ***The Family Tree Problem Solver: Tried-and-True Tactics for Tracing Elusive Ancestors*** by Marsha Hoffman Rising.

Here are just a few of the areas the author touches on:

- ◆ Researching Friends, Associates and Extended Family members
- ◆ Utilizing Land Records
- ◆ Problem-solving with Court Records
- ◆ Replacing Burned Courthouse Records

Before Hoffman Rising gets into these areas, she suggests analyzing 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—with no picture to help! We must work methodically towards the solution, considering all the alternatives. Change your mindset and begin thinking what your next step should be and then take that step.

—Emily Richardson

Borrow ***The Family Tree Problem Solver*** from the Emily Fowler Central Library.

ABOUT DCGS...

The Denton County Genealogical Society meets at the Emily Fowler Central Library, 502 Oakland Street, Denton, on the second Thursday of the month (September-November, January-May). Social time begins at 6:30 p.m., program at 7 p.m. Programs may be in-person, virtual or hybrid (both in-person & via Zoom).

DCGS is a proud member of the National Genealogical Society and the Texas State Genealogical Society, and actively supports the Denton Public Library—a Family Search Affiliate Library.



Ancestor Q of the Month

Equal time for the gents. Our question is “Who is your favorite male ancestor?”

Answers will be featured in the next *DCGS News*. **CLICK HERE** to complete the Ancestor Q of Month form, or email info to newsletterdcs@gmail.com.

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