

DCGS News

TALK AIMS TO RECLAIM VETERAN HOLIDAYS



Once, veterans returning home were greeted with parades, respect, and gratitude—today, too often their sacrifices are overshadowed by fleeting pop culture icons. ***“Where Did We Go Wrong?”*** presented by **Gary Steele**, will challenge us to reflect on why society now sees heroes in capes rather than in combat boots. His talk will be featured at the Denton County Genealogical Society’s monthly meeting, Thursday, November 13. Attendees will gather at the Emily Fowler Central Library meeting room, 502 Oakland Street in Denton. Social time begins at 6:30 p.m., with a brief business meeting at 7 p.m., followed by the presentation. Visitors are welcome.

The presentation will highlight how the meaning of Memorial Day and Veterans Day has faded into just another long weekend for many. Gary will urge attendees to reclaim these holidays as sacred opportunities to honor real heroes — those who stood on the front lines in defense of freedom. Most importantly, he will offer practical ways to reverse this troubling trend and restore the respect and honor our veterans so rightly deserve.

Gary retired from the U.S. Air Force after 42 years. He served in Vietnam and several tours in the Pacific Theater and received over 40 decorations and awards for his service.

He earned a BS degree in occupational education and a MS degree in human relations and business. He taught high school and at the University of North Texas and the University of Texas at Dallas. He served on the board of directors for the Grand Chapter of Texas—Order of the Eastern Star and the Denton Animal Shelter Foundation. He is past president of the Denton Citizen Police Academy Alumni Association and Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter #920, as well as past president and board member of the Green Valley School Historical Society. In addition, he has two articles published in the *AT Ease!* Veterans Magazine and is working on a third.

Gary is president and founder of the Texas Veterans Hall of Fame. He has been married for 24 years, has a son, a daughter, and two grandsons.



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Photo: Jones Photographic Studios of America, Studio No. 1, Fireworks at the Denton County Courthouse Celebrating the End of World War I, 1918--; digital image. *The Portal to Texas History* (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/meta112494/m1/1/>; 2 May 2023); citing Denton Public Library.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Eileen O'Neill

November begins the holiday season. We tend to focus even more on family and friends as we prepare for Thanksgiving and Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and New Year's Day. Taking a bit of time from our holiday preparations for genealogy research is really only a continuation of our focus on family.

I want to be sure that everyone knows about the Texas State Genealogical Society 2025 virtual Family History Conference "Discovering Family Roots," to be held November 7-8, 2025. Registration is open through midnight November 6th. Recordings will be available through Feb. 6, 2026. If you don't register this year, keep the TxSGS conferences in mind for next year's application for the Diana Pearson White Continuing Genealogical Educational Scholarship.

Both Ancestry and FamilySearch have fun ways to interest younger family members in their roots. Ancestry has updated their DNA Origins. My sister and I compare our DNA mix, origins, and migration patterns to flesh out our mutual tree and pass on the information to our children. FamilySearch has a tab called Activities, which is interesting to explore for any age family member. Under "Record My Story," you can ask children/grandchildren to write/record their own stories. Ask them which famous persons they think they're related to, then pull up the "Famous Relatives" section. I guarantee they'll be surprised.

Our November meeting will be on Thursday, Nov. 13th, and then we don't meet again until January 8th. I look forward to seeing everyone on the 13th.

—Eileen O'Neill, President
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Visit DCGS online



Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/DentonCountyGenealogicalSociety>

Website

www.genealogydentontexas.org

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Submissions always welcome at
newsletterdcgs@gmail.com.

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Laura Douglas, Kathy Lawrence

DCGS News is proud to be the
2024-25 and 2023-24 1st place winner in the
Texas State Genealogical Society Writing
Awards, Partner Society Publications category.

OCTOBER 2025 MEETING MINUTES

Denton County Genealogical Society, Inc, Oct. 9, 2025 Minutes.

The meeting was called to order by President Eileen O'Neill at 7:00 p.m. There were 29 members in attendance, 3 members attended through Zoom, in addition to our speaker, and 2 visitors, for a total of 34.

Tonight, the speaker presentation was first, followed by the business meeting. The speaker for this meeting was Thomas MacEntee and the topic was "AI and Genealogy: Trouble Ahead?" This presentation was enlightening and thought provoking. Several AI platforms were discussed, presenting advantages and disadvantages of each.

Business Meeting

Reports

Membership—Marian Carroll introduced visitors Dawn Terrizzi and Sherri Mulkey, and new member Marty Medrano.

Secretary—Bob Lane noted there were no objections to the minutes as published in the newsletter; they were approved.

Treasurer—Linda Lane prepared the financial report presented in the newsletter. The report will be filed for audit.

Social—Joan Anderson brought treats for the meeting.

Librarian—Laura Douglas reported the following are scheduled events/presentations in Emily Fowler Central Library:

- Oct 17: Genealogy Workshop: I Seek Dead People. Registration is required through the Emily Fowler Library website.
- Oct 24, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Connections: A Genealogy Discussion Group focusing on an article by Emily Richardson.

Scholarship Award for Genealogical Education—Linda Lane, Scholarship Committee chair, announced two recipients this year:

- Kathy Lawrence was awarded \$79 to attend the North Carolina Genealogical Society's Fall Conference (online).

- Nancy Gilbride Casey was awarded \$89 for online genealogy class on New York records.

New Business

Bob Lane announced the cost to continue Zoom access is \$170.46 for one year. This is a discounted rate for 501c(3) organizations. Offering meetings over Zoom allows DCGS members who are not able to drive to attend meetings. Bob requests that DCGS reimburse him for the paid membership renewal. Motion passed.

Announcements

- Beth Leggieri announced that the Roots Writer meetings will be held at the new conference room (first floor) in Emily Fowler Central Library, 11:00 a.m. to 12 p.m., beginning in November. This is a change from the previous meeting location at Zera Coffee. The library's meeting room will be available at 10:30 a.m. on meeting days (third Wednesday each month).
- The next DCGS meeting will be Thursday, November 13, 2025.
- We still need volunteers.
- Eileen O'Neill thanked Bob Lane for stepping in for her to run the September DCGS meeting while she and John were on safari in Africa.
- Bob Lane announced the recent passing of Patti Gillespie, genealogist and presenter at DCGS, Dallas Genealogical Society, etc. The society expresses its condolences on her death,
- President's last word: "If you don't recount your family history, it will be lost. Honor your own stories and tell them too. The tales may not seem very important, but they are what binds families and makes each of us who we are." —*Madeleine L'Engle, author*

Please help put chairs and tables back in place.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

—*Respectfully Submitted by Robert Lane, Secretary*

MACENTEE'S AI PRESENTATION ILLUMINATING

By Missy McCormick

Thomas MacEntee, of Genealogy Bargains, presented a virtual program entitled “AI and Genealogy: Trouble Ahead?” at the October 2025 DCGS meeting. He has been using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in genealogical research for seven years.

MacEntee outlined five AI platforms with limited free access to users. ChatGPT is the “most popular publicly accessible” AI platform. Claude offers the ability to remember past projects. Copilot is an “AI-powered intelligent assistant” that can generate “complex” responses. Perplexity is a new AI platform with a smaller database currently, but that provides “a curated list of sources when answering user queries.” He also demonstrated a photo enhancing feature available on the subscription site MyHeritage.

MacEntee noted that lower courts have determined that “AI generated content cannot be copyrighted since there is no human author.” For those using AI to generate content, he suggested a

Modern Language of America (MLA) formula for citing:

“[QUERY]” prompt. [NAME OF AI PLATFORM]. [DATE OR VERSION OF PLATFORM], [NAME OF AI COMPANY], [DATE OF QUERY], [PLATFORM URL].

MacEntee noted the many benefits of using AI for genealogical research: to analyze massive amounts of data quickly; to transcribe/translate documents; and to create complex timelines, among others.

He also noted some downsides to using AI, including concerns regarding the lack of transparency in source materials used for generating results; that results may be biased or false; that results could violate privacy; and that costs to subscribe to various AI platforms could be prohibitive.

MacEntee gave DCGS members and guests a good overview of the AI landscape as well as several important considerations for using this tool as a genealogical resource.

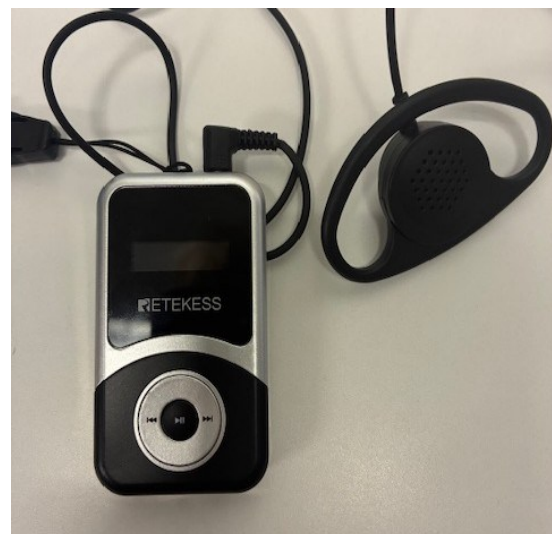
WHAT'S THAT YOU SAY?

Assisted Listening Devices Available

If you've ever found yourself struggling to hear a speaker while attending a DCGS meeting, fret no more! The Emily Fowler Central Library debuted new assisted listening devices at the October 9th meeting, which will be available for use at future meetings.

Originally designed to be used for individuals to wear during guided tours in places like museums, the Reteless T130s have also been employed as assisted listening devices for conferences, workshops, and meetings. The devices fit on the outside of the ear, making them easier to clean than a earbud-type device. They amplify sound directly from the speaker's podium or the computer set up for Zoom meetings.

Devices can be picked up from Laura Douglas or Dawn Terrizzi upon arrival to DCGS meetings.



The library's new listening devices. (Photo: Laura Douglas)

ANCESTOR QUESTION OF THE MONTH

This month we asked members to share a favorite fall or Thanksgiving memory. Members shared special meals and desserts, quilt inspiration, and even a wedding story! Read on...



(Photo: Beth Leggieri)

“Thanksgiving was my favorite holiday of the year long before I met my spouse,” writes **Beth Leggieri**. “An ‘expectant’ time of year—almost the end of the semester and an occasional nip in the air promised those surprisingly frigid Gulf Coast winters were on the way. To the annual frustration of my mother, every Thanksgiving meal revolved around the kickoff time between two of Texas’s land grant universities, UT and TAMU. It was tradition!”

In 1976, when I met my spouse and the universe shifted, we hit the wedding aisle within three months of meeting. At 10 a.m. on Thanksgiving morning, we walked together down the aisle of that small rock chapel in the Hill Country, sang ‘Great is Thy Faithfulness’ to celebrate our profound thanksgiving for the blessing of marriage, and marked the day surrounded by family and friends with a traditional Thanksgiving meal as our wedding feast. We continue to celebrate our anniversary twice, on November 25th and then again on Thanksgiving Day.”



(Photo: Missy McCormick)

Missy McCormick shares, “At Thanksgiving time, my family traditionally served a large meal of turkey, ham, dressing, carrots, Spinach Rockefeller casserole (I shared the recipe last year with the DCGS.), as well as pumpkin and pecan pie. I was always fascinated that my mother could get everything ready to eat at the same time! My parents had six children and always invited numerous friends to join us for our Thanksgiving meal. Card tables were pulled out of storage to make room for everyone to eat. As our family grew with the addition of grandchildren, the six siblings stepped in to help make dishes they would bring from their home. My siblings and I now have our own family traditions, but each of us still make the Spinach Rockefeller casserole in remembrance of our mother, Cissy Gregory Reilly.”

MORE THANKSGIVING & FALL MEMORIES...



(Photos: Nancy Casey)

Kathi Coatney writes, “One of my favorite Thanksgiving memories is from 1964, which inspired the quilt I call ‘Wild Turkey Morning.’

We were visiting my dad’s family in central Arkansas and it was the day after Thanksgiving. I was riding in an old pickup with my dad and a couple of his cousins. We were driving along a curvy, narrow dirt road lined with thick undergrowth. When we passed a huge pecan tree with a broken-off limb, we could see across a little creek to the meadow beyond. There was an old barn and the burnt ruins of a house. The

pickup bounced through a pothole, making a wonky, metallic sound. From the ruins of the house a wild turkey took flight.

The men were very excited. Wild turkey in the area had been ‘hunted out’ in the 1930s. They hadn’t seen any turkey there since they were boys. The state had been restocking turkeys, trying to bring the wild turkey back. And it was working!”

(Note: See Kathi’s handiwork at the November DCGS meeting.)

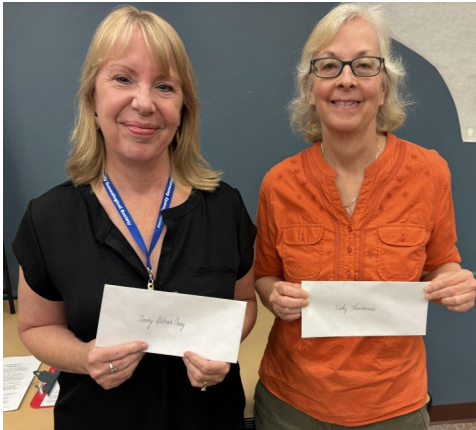


(Image: ChatGPT)

Sandra Robertson writes, “My parents always made a coconut cake for Thanksgiving. It was a two-layer beauty covered with freshly grated coconut and what my mother called boiled icing. It is sometime called 7-minute frosting and was popular in the early 20th century because it uses egg whites rather than butter, which was more expensive if store bought. During the rationing period of World War II, sugar rations had to be used for the 1-1/2 cups of sugar required.

They bought a fresh coconut, shaking it before buying to make sure it had plenty of milk inside. My father grated the coconut while the cake was baking. Mother used a fork to pierce the cake layers and fresh coconut milk was carefully spooned over the cake before icing. The freshly grated coconut was the crowning touch.”

Scholarships Awarded at October Meeting



(Photo: Beth Leggieri)

Nancy Gilbride Casey and Kathy Lawrence were awarded the first two scholarships from the Diana Pearson White Continuing Genealogical Education Scholarship Fund at the October 9th DCGS meeting.

Nancy will attend the online course “Tracing Immigrant Ancestors to New York, 1780s to 1924—The Records,” offered by the New York Genealogical & Biographical Society. She wishes to learn about immigration to New York state in order to further research her Irish, Belgian, and German ancestors who immigrated there in the mid-19th century.

Kathy will attend the North Carolina Genealogical Society’s 2025 Fall Conference, where she hopes to gain

new tools, learn research strategies, and learn about state record availability to enable her to better trace her North Carolina Lawrence ancestors in the 1700s.

The next scholarship application round will open in May 2026.



ROOTS WRITERS

New Location! Roots Writers will meet Wednesday, November 19, 11 a.m., in the downstairs meeting room at the **Emily Fowler Library**. The topic under discussion will be “Preserving our stories--blog or website?” Join us for a conversation about keeping our family stories from fading away.



TREASURER’S REPORT

Report for Month of September 2025

Balance—Sept. 1, 2025		\$3,600.05
Deposits Dues	\$605.00	
Total Deposits		\$605.00
Disbursements		
Speaker Fee	\$125.00	
Total Disbursements		\$125.00
Balance Sept. 30, 2025		\$4080.05

—Respectfully Submitted, Linda Lane, Treasurer



MEMBERCONNECT: NEWS, TIPS, & RESOURCES

Following Thomas McEntee's presentation on AI, **Emily Richardson** shares her artificial intelligence success story.

“Finding a German Script deed dated 1771 in a Berks County, Pennsylvania, land book was a surprise. Since old German script is something unfamiliar, I went to AI for help.

First, I used **Transkribus** with my ‘free’ account. The land deed from Berks County was uploaded to be used with the Transkribus ‘German Giant 1’ script. This script is dedicated to old German records. The results would still be in German but could be more easily read.

I copied the output to **Google Translate** with a request for a translation from German to English, resulting in a full translation of the document. Since Google Translate only accepts 1,000 characters at a time, it took time to cut and paste the words from the deed and get them translated.

Then I copied the Google translation into a Word document, which was uploaded to **Claude.ai**. My prompt asked for an abstract of the document. Here are Claude’s results:

Property Description:

- 460 English acres in Oley, Berks County, Pennsylvania
- Originally purchased in 1734 by Johanns Jotter, one of Pennsylvania's proprietors

Inheritance Chain:

- Johanns Jotter died and bequeathed the land in his will:
 - ⇒ Northeast half to his son Johannes Jotter (from first marriage)
 - ⇒ Southwest half to his son Daniel Jotter (from second marriage)
 - ⇒ Daniel Jotter died intestate around 1747 without legitimate heirs
- Since Johannes (the half-brother) couldn't inherit under English law, the land reverted to Johannes Jotter of Mußbach, Germany (eldest son of Nicolaus Jotter, Daniel's father)

Transaction:

- Johannes Jotter of Mußbach sold his inherited rights to the southwest half (Daniel's portion) to Johannes Jotter of Oley
- Sale price: 1,000 Reichs-gulden (though 4,000 is also mentioned)
- Property includes all buildings, fields, gardens, orchards, meadows, water rights, and accessories

Legal Process:

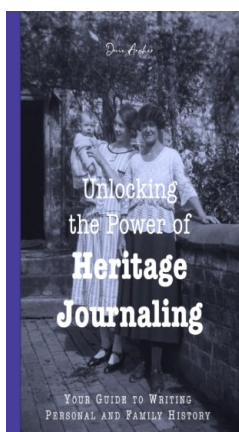
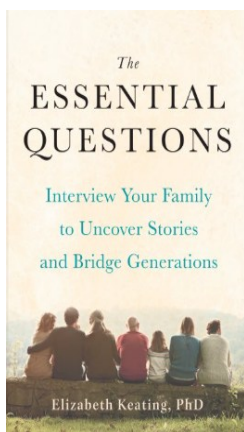
- Deed executed January 30, 1771 in Mußbach, Germany
- Witnessed and officially recorded by German court authorities
- Later recorded in Berks County, Pennsylvania on December 7, 1771
- Jacob Joder affirmed the authenticity of signatures and witnesses before Pennsylvania court

This represents a transatlantic property transfer resolving inheritance issues between German and Pennsylvania branches of the Jotter family.

This entire process took about 20 minutes from start (the German deed) to the finish (an abstract of the document). Using these AI tools saved me time and with additional prompts, I was able to fully understand a complex land deed that was written in German.”

LIBRARY NEWS YOU CAN USE

Family Interviews & Heritage Journaling: Two New Books Explore Collecting & Reflecting on Family History



October was Family History Month with its special emphasis on documenting our ancestors. The month brought a fresh reminder that there is no time like the present to begin collecting our family stories for the benefit of our descendants, fellow researchers, and even historians or sociologists who might want a peek into our ancestors' times.

Two recently published books on collecting and preserving family stories are now available at the Denton Public Library: ***The Essential Questions: Interview Your Family to Uncover Stories and Bridge Generations*** by Elizabeth Lillian Keating (New York: TarcherPerigee, 2022) and ***Unlocking the Power of Heritage Journaling*** by Dovie Archer (Coppell, TX: Dovie Archer Press, 2024)."

Continue reading this article on the Denton Public Library's Genealogy and Local History blog at:

<https://tinyurl.com/3e9476a6>



Beth Leggieri is surrounded by county history books, which were available at the September **"Connections"** discussion group at the Emily Fowler Central Library. Attendees discussed the *Stirpes* article, "Finding Individuals in Community Histories," by Hannah Kubacak. "Connections" will resume in January 2026.

(Photo: Laura Douglas)

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

Founded in 1979, the ***Denton County Genealogical Society*** (DCGS) has been serving area genealogy researchers for 46 years, offering classes and events, collaboration, and support, in partnership with the Denton Public Library—a Family Search Affiliate Library.

DCGS is a proud member of the National Genealogical Society and the Texas State Genealogical Society.

The society meets on the second Thursday of the month (September-November, January-May), at the Emily Fowler Central Library, 502 Oakland Street, Denton. 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). Visitors are welcome.

Membership dues are \$25 (individual) and \$35 (couples). To become a member, contact the membership chair at membershipdcgs@gmail.com.



Denton County Genealogical Society • 502 Oakland St., Denton, TX 76201

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