

WCGS NEWSLETTER

Washington County Genealogical Society of Texas

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What You Missed

The WCGS met at Blinn College Student Center at 7 PM on Monday, May 1, 2017. There were twenty-five in attendance with one visitor, Richard Thames, who joined WCGS as a new member at the conclusion of the meeting. Our speakers were Beth Rothermel and Vanessa Smith.

Mary Hargrove Haller



In jaunty feathered green hat and period clothing, Beth Rothermel portrayed, Mary Hargrove Haller, a founder of the town of Chappell Hill. Mrs. Haller named the community for her Grandfather, Robert W. Chappell, who was from Pickens County, Alabama. She also designed the plan for the city streets. Mary, who was an enthusiastic Methodist church member, was instrumental in initiating the launching of two colleges-- dual institutes; one for women and one for men. To encourage good moral

conduct from the students, she and other concerned citizens made sure that the two schools were decently separated by a respectable distance and that the church building itself stood in between the structures. Unfortunately, before she could contribute more to her community, Mary Hargrove Haller died in 1867 from Yellow Fever. Mrs. Haller was surely a forward-thinking woman who was ahead of her time.

Looking Forward

The next meeting will be September 11 at 7 P.M. in the Blinn Student Center. The program will be given by John Schmutz, author of *The Bloody Fifth: the 5th Texas Infantry, Hood's Texas Brigade*.

Summer Schedule

WCGS will take a summer break as they have in past years.

Look for occasional newsletters during the summer to keep you advised of news and plans.

New Members

If you know of someone with a genealogy interest, tell them about us. They can join at any time.

Memberships

Texas State Genealogical Society

Washington County Chamber of Commerce

Dues Reminder

Please give Lu Hollander your 2017 dues or mail them to 2211 South Day St. Suite 105 Brenham, TX 77833. The cost is \$12 for a single person or \$18 for a couple living at the same address. [Click here for the 2017 form.](#)

Martha "Passy" (Patsy) Guyton



In a pioneer's pink sunbonnet and long dress, Vanessa Smith portrayed Martha "Passy" (Patsy) Guyton, who was born in Old Union County, South Carolina in 1804. She immigrated to Pickens County, Alabama with her husband-cousin, Isaac Guyton and other family and friends from South Carolina. Interestingly, two of Isaac and Passy's neighbors in Alabama were Robert W. Chappell and William D. Hargrove-- Mary Hargrove Haller's

family. From the 1840s-1850s, the Guytons, including Passy's brother Joseph B. Guyton, began leaving Alabama for Texas and ultimately arrived in Washington County. They bought land in the Isaac Jackson and the S. R. Miller Leagues on the North side of New Year's Creek and with their small group of slaves began the arduous task of farming the land. The Guyton family named the now lost community of Turkey Creek and were supporters of the Turkey Spring Academy. They were active in the Brenham Baptist church where Isaac was a deacon. Some of their descendants became teachers, deputies for the city of Brenham, and farmers. Many are buried in Prairie Lea Cemetery, the Old Morgan Cemetery, and the Guyton-Roberts Cemetery (aka Roberts Cemetery #2) on Old Navasota Road. Others moved on to Limestone, Bexar, Harris, and other Texas Counties. Passy's niece, Julia A. Guyton, the daughter of Joseph B. Guyton, married John R. Pennington. They were the parents of Robert Elijah Pennington, the husband of Mae Amanda Pennington, the author of the 1915 book, *The History of Brenham and Washington County*.

Committee Reports

Camptown Cemetery - Eddie Harrison. They are currently waiting on a court date, and then the next thing is to restore the headstones. They cannot restore the stones

until they get a map done to show where to place them. They are coordinating with Auburn University. Research has been conducted on five individuals buried in the cemetery by Auburn students and biographies have been compiled. Crystal Harrell, one of the students who did the research, was given an award for her work by the university. Mr. Harrison then passed around a copy of the award certificate. Susan Lake requested copies of the biographies to put on our website. Mr. Harrison will look into permission for us to do that. Mr. Harrison requested that WCGS help come up with a slogan for the Camptown Cemetery — something that would emphasize that the cemetery is not just a place to bury and forget the contributions of the people who are now gone, but a place to remember and honor them.



Old Washington Cemetery Cleanup Workday. Jan Kelm. She read the names of all who helped and expressed the need for more men to come out and join us. She also suggested that if you would like to help but are physically unable, that perhaps a friend or relative could be found to substitute. To illustrate the effectiveness of the cleaning project, she presented a slide show of the April 29 work day. What a transformation! But there is still much more clearing to do. We probably won't have another work day until the fall and cooler weather arrives.

Cemetery Tour-Meeting May 9th at Yumm! at noon.

Schools. Roy Kelm. Another meeting scheduled for May 19.

New Business – Carol Muegge. The Washington County Read book will be *News of the World* by Paulette Jiles. Mrs. Muegge passed out informational bookmarks detailing the free reception, meet the author, and dramatic reading scheduled for October 19, 2017 at 5:30PM, Unity Theatre. The public is invited.

Genealogy Time - Susan Lake. The company that purchased Family Tree Maker from Ancestry is still in the testing mode and that she will keep us informed of any progress.

Jan Kelm- Offered some tips from Amy Johnson Crow on how to have a better library research visit:

1. Have a plan (otherwise you may accomplish nothing of value).
2. Make a backup plan (in case you find your first plan information quickly-then you will have an opportunity to accomplish more).
3. Check the catalog before you go and note call numbers (so you don't waste your onsite time doing prep work you could have done at home).
4. Check library hours of opening and closing (and holiday schedule).
5. Explore their website (for databases, indexes, and "how tos").
6. Ask for local advice (from staff and others who have frequented the library).

Announcements

1. Next meeting is Sept. 11, at 7PM at Blinn Student Center. This is the second Monday due to Labor Day. The program will be John Schmutz, author of *The Bloody Fifth: the 5th Texas Infantry, Hood's Texas Brigade*.
2. Reminder to pay your dues. There are still a few who have not done so.
3. Dr. Wilfred Dietrich shared with us that the First Methodist Church is applying for an historical marker for establishing of the first public school and the first college in the Brenham area.
4. Dr. Wilfred Dietrich expressed concern regarding the closure of the Brenham Historical Museum and desires to be advised of the renovation progress and eventual reopening. It was suggested by John Muegge that WCGS request an update for our first meeting in September.

Tidbit

Anne Wirtz. Anne related the story of researching her father's family: the frustration with inconsistent records and the bizarre tale of this third cousin connection to Marjorie "Marge" Nugent. Marge Nugent, who lived in Carthage, Texas was a crotchety 81 year old rich widow. She was befriended by Bernhardt "Bernie" Tiede II, an assistant undertaker, who had a troubled past. He alienated her friends and family and then convinced her to change her will and give him power of attorney over her funds. She was apparently a verbally abusive individual, although some sources disagree. He eventually shot her four times in the back, wrapped her in a sheet and stuck her in her freezer, while he enjoyed the fruits of her money. She was not missed until nearly a year later. A movie, "Bernie" was made of this true story with Shirley MacLaine and Jack Black playing the roles of Marge and Bernie. Bernie remains incarcerated in a Texas prison.

Cemetery Work Day

On April 29, ten people came out to help with our second cleanup day for Washington Cemetery. Some mowed and trimmed the areas where we had cleaned in March. Others began to clear more underbrush from the next area we had selected. We cleared the brush back to the fence on the opposite side of the entry. We will maintain all the cleared area through the hot summer months and will plan to have another cleanup when the weather is cooler. We wish to thank Leonard Ambriz, Steve Ambriz, Trish Cooke, Sameerah Dunkley, Claire Goines, Linda Jurecka, Jan Kelm, Roy Kelm, Vanessa Smith, and Jo Ann Wolf for the work that they all did that day! We all had a great feeling of pride and accomplishment. There is still a lot of work to do so be thinking about how you might be able to help us in the fall.

