

## *History of the Washington County Genealogical Society*

The Washington County Genealogical Society (WCGS) was organized August 5, 1997, at the Nancy Carol Roberts Memorial Library. Around 60 people were present who elected officers and appointed a committee to draw up bylaws. By the end of 1997 membership had grown to 179 charter members whose names are listed on the society's website.

The first major project of the Genealogical Society was the re-publication of two popular books that had long been out of print:

- *The History of Brenham and Washington County* published in 1915 by Mrs. R. E. Pennington
- *The Cemeteries of Washington County* compiled and published by Nathan (Nath) and Judy Winfield of Chappell Hill.

Later publications included the following books:

- *Washington County Marriages dating back to 1836*.
- *Historical Homes of Washington County 1821-1860* by Betty Plummer. The book investigates life on the frontier with colonists searching for freedom and cheap land lured by Stephen F. Austin.
- *The Common School Districts of Washington County, Texas 1909- 1967*, originally published by the Brenham Louise Giddings Retired Teachers Association and republished by WCGS in both print and searchable CD.

The Toubin family provided a grant in 1997 to create the Sam and Rosa Toubin Genealogy Room at the Nancy Carol Roberts Memorial Library. Charles and Joy Blake, members of the society, were able to secure two Exxon grants and, along with some private contributions, microfilms of the census records for all Texas Counties from 1850 through 1900 were acquired.

Other library resources include 57 volumes of the World Family Tree on CD along with Social Security Records, Marriage Records, Immigration Records and Census Indexes. The Society used proceeds from the sale of books to continue to enhance the resources of the Genealogy Room at the Library.

In 2004, WCGS began our Cemetery Project which included documenting all the approximately 240 cemeteries in the county. We've added histories of the family cemeteries and have included additional information when available for individual burials. These are being entered on our website by cemetery name and on Findagrave by individual. Photographs have been taken of many of the tombstones and are being uploaded to Findagrave. We strive to transfer our Findagrave memorials to descendants. This is an ongoing project with many individuals contributing their time and efforts.

In 2010, we created our [www.bluebonnetgenealogy.org](http://www.bluebonnetgenealogy.org) website and have been adding cemeteries, obituaries, histories, etc. to share with others. We also assist individuals who are in need of help with their families, and especially use our expertise of county history to help establish where families settled and where their burial sites are located within the county.

In 2016, WCGS began a project to GPS the locations of all of the schools that have ever existed in the county. We are using *The Common School Districts of Washington County, Texas 1909-1967* as our original source. We are also using the deed records of the county, old newspaper articles, and memories of many interested individuals. This information will be placed on a map so that those locations will be saved for the future.

In May 2016, members of WCGS approved a revision to the Bylaws in order to bring our organization up to date with technology and changes in our plans and visions for the future.