

# WCGS NEWSLETTER

Washington County Genealogical Society of Texas

[www.bluebonnetgenealogy.org](http://www.bluebonnetgenealogy.org)

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## Information

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## 2017-18 Officers

President:  
Jan Kelm

Vice-President:  
Geraldine Johnson

Secretary:  
Vanessa Smith

Treasurer:  
Lu Hollander

Newsletter Editor:  
Susan Lake  
genealogy@susanlake.net

## What You Missed

WCGS met at Blinn College Student Center. There were fifteen members present and three visitors. The minutes were approved as sent by email.

Committees. Geraldine Johnson reported on the progress of the Family History Fair and the upcoming "Genealogy Lock-In" at the Nancy Carol Roberts Library. We still need a few volunteers to man our table for the Lock-in; let Ms. Johnson know if you can help. If you participate in the event, please pick up your name tag at our table and wear it to help advertise our society to the other attendees. Thank you to Nancy Maas for lending a table decoration for the event.

Library Liaison. Geraldine Johnson talked about the Family History Fair and the judging that will occur on October 13th, 2018.

Old Business. The nominating committee members names were not available at meeting time and President Jan Kelm will get them to the membership next week.

Treasurer's Report. Lu Hollander commented that several new members have joined since the last meeting and the new treasury balance is now \$13, 637.78.

Old Business. Questions were asked about the surveys and the changing of meeting dates and times. The surveys are still being collected and based on the information presented, the new officers will make some decisions concerning meeting days and time.

Tidbit. Although not from Washington County, Vanessa Smith related that her research has revealed some unexpected connections to the local Faske and Rothermel families, by marriage, and to the Thaler family of Burton, by blood.

Program. Vice President Johnson introduced the evening's speaker, Lowell Herzog. Mr. Herzog is a cemetery headstone and monument conservator. He earned degrees in both History and English from Texas A&M University, and taught in public schools for over twenty years. In 1995, he and a senior student helped search for, excavate, and

## Note Change of Meeting Location for November

The next meeting will be on Monday, November 5 at the Nancy Carol Roberts Library at 7:00 P.M. The program will be on the Genealogy Room and items available for research at the library.

## Is This on Your Calendar?

October 19, the Nancy Carol Roberts Memorial Library in conjunction with the WCGS will host a free Genealogy Lock-In. It is an "all day" event which allows you to choose which presentations you would like to attend (and you won't be "locked in"). There is no cost, and this is a great opportunity to begin the family history research process or to learn more.

[Link to the Program of Events](#)

## 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 201 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 2019 form.](#)

conserve items from General George A. Custer's campsite near Liendo Plantation in Hempstead. Currently, he pursues stone conservation full-time and is studying the various methods of conservation used for cemetery and outdoor ironwork. Trained by nationally recognized gravestone and monument conservator Jon Appell, he is a member of the Association for Gravestone Studies (AGS) and the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIS).

Mr. Herzog's program was entitled, "Gravestone Conservation and Genealogy: The Connections (and Strange Stories) That Can Be Made Between Gravestones, Printed Materials, Web Resources and Descendants."

Mr. Herzog related the interesting tales of several individuals and their families resulting from his research for several gravestone restorations. Some resources that he used included:

Obituaries on microfilm (such as the Brenham Banner--Blinn College and the Nancy Carol Library has these). Their placement in the paper and the amount of detail revealed in obituaries will vary over time.

[www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org) (fee based site--includes 2000 academic journal articles and old newspapers).

3. [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com), for photographs and biographical information (many errors and misinformation--beware!

4. [www.spokeo.com](http://www.spokeo.com) (a fee based-people finder with addresses and phone numbers that can be used to contact living descendants).

5. [www.edoctechinc.com](http://www.edoctechinc.com) (free searches and free non-certified printing of documents for nine Texas counties--such as marriage and land records--Washington County is included. Our county has a link on its website).

## Of Interest to Members

The Independence Historical Association has started a project to restore and preserve about 85 tombstones that are in need of repair. Lowell Herzog will be doing the restoration. The association would like to have short biographies of each of the individuals whose stones are being restored and have asked if we could help with the research. Please let Jan Kelm know at [jankelm61@gmail.com](mailto:jankelm61@gmail.com) if you are willing to help with this research.

## Query

### September 29

My name is Ray Stanley a librarian in Sacramento California. A patron came in to my library looking for

information about an ancestor who lived and owned land in Washington County, Texas. His relative's name is Robert Spencer (a former slave) and he acquired or was given a large amount of land sometime between 1871-1880.

If you could direct us where to start our search for land records or newspaper articles or other ideas we would appreciate it. We would love to know when and how he acquired the land, what were its boundaries, and anything else you may find about him.

Jan Kelm Response: One of the best places to find newspaper articles is The Portal to Texas at <https://texashistory.unt.edu> I entered "Robert Spencer" in Search, then clicked on Counties and then Washington County. I think there were 11 that came up. You can put them in chronological order on the right. Then it will show on the left how many instances in each paper you click on. Click on that number. I think all of these listings had one item.

I found that In 1895 he was a stockholder in the Colored State Fair in Navasota. There were several deed listings, not the actual deed. He sang a solo in the Mercy Seat Church in Graball. There was some type of suit against him that was mentioned in a couple of papers.

On edoctecinc.com, there is one listing in the Deed Records of Washington County. It is an affidavit of heirship. That website has a lot of the county clerk's records. But it starts with the first records of the county in the 1830s to the mid 1870s. Then there is a break until the late 1940s to the current date. I did not see anything about Robert Spencer in those except for that affidavit of heirship. Please look for yourself. One thing to note is that once you put your criteria in, click on Search. Don't simply hit Enter on your keyboard. Nothing will happen if you do that.

Any other deeds will have to be looked for personally in the county clerk's office. I can possibly take a look to see if there is anything but it will be on a volunteer basis and I will have to do it when I have some time. I am quite familiar with the locations of leagues in the county so can help to determine the approximate location.

I do have another person from California with whom I have been communicating about the Spencer Family and also the Coleman Family. I'm wondering if it is the same person. His name is Capri Williams. I would be surprised if it was him because he has done a lot of research already. If it is someone else, maybe we can get these two people together. Please let me know if you have other questions or if you'd like for me to check further at the courthouse.

## Need Help

Hello, I am corresponding with you regarding my frequent visits to the area that has Gaskamp family links, Stemwede area of Germany. I live in Pensacola, Florida, and have traveled many times to Europe. At the request of my mother, I reached out to Wilhelm Niermann, a fantastic genealogist. Many times, I have visited the area that the Gaskamp family currently lives, and where auswanderers departed to emigrate to US. My mother has done genealogical research on her family; her great-grandfather is a Gaskamp. He left Stemwede and settled in St. Louis. My mother attended a Gaskamp family reunion in Brenham, 1998. She discovered that that branch of her family were descended here grandfather's brothers.

I will visit Herr Wilhelm Niermann in a few months, as I have established a friendship with this very knowledgeable man. My intent is to notify individuals who may have interest in any photos, or information that I may gather on my visit. I was fortunate, on a past visit, the church minister admitted me to St. Mary's church which allowed me to take photos of this historical place.

Again, I am reaching out with the consideration that I may provide something that may help individuals in the genealogical field.

Dave Greenwood email address: [davegreewood@gmail.com](mailto:davegreewood@gmail.com)