

WCGS NEWSLETTER

Washington County Genealogical Society of Texas

www.bluebonnetgenealogy.org

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Information

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2017-18 Officers

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What You Missed

WCGS met on Monday, December 3, 2018 at Blinn College Student Center at 7:00PM. There were 13 members and two visitors present.

The evening's speaker was Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz. He began his lecture by sharing that Polish immigrants have been in our country a very long time and in Texas since about 1836—the San Jacinto battle and monument are named after the Polish St. Jack. The first permanent Polish settlement in Texas was near San Antonio and was called Panna Maria. There was another important one at New Waverly, in Walker County, Texas. The later Washington County, Texas Polish immigrants began to arrive about the time of the Civil War. There were those who were of independent means and had money, but also those who were brought over as indentured servants, serving for three years and replacing the previous agricultural slave labor. For a time, former slaves and indentured Poles worked together and shared each other's languages and traditions.

Some of the customs and traditions the new immigrants brought with them included their Catholic religion, and their holiday celebrations. Singing Christmas carols is one of the most important; Polish people have over 800 Christmas carols that have been shared with the world.

A few of the usual celebrations observed around Christmas time are: St. Andrew's Day, St. Barbara's Day, St. Nicholas Day and St. Steven's Day.

Midnight mass is celebrated on Christmas Eve. The youngest family member is charged with finding the first star and then a meatless dinner will be served.

An empty place is set at the table for those who are not present but would be welcomed.

Note Change of Meeting Location for January

The next meeting will be on Monday, January 7 at the Nancy Carol Roberts Library at 1:00 P.M.

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 2019 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.](#)

January Program

Rosia Marie Telford Newsome was born and raised in Chappell Hill. The title of her presentation will be "Black Businesses of Chappell Hill in The Early 1900's".

Some hay is put on the table to represent the manger where our Savior was born.

Forgiveness for sins and offenses done to our family and friends during the previous year is asked.

Beginning on St. Steven's Day, December 26, Kolendy Polskie begins with caroling events at area homes; this is celebrated until February 2.

Professor Mazurkiewicz invited everyone to come and join another celebration of Kolendy Polskie this year on December 29, 2018, at 11AM, beginning at St. Stanislaus Church, caroling to nearby farms, and ending up back at the church about 8:30PM. To see pictures and descriptions of last year's Kolendy Polskie, go to www.austinpolsishsociety.org.

Business Meeting: The minutes were approved as submitted by email. The current balance is \$13,783.78.

Eddie Harrison-Reported that Camptown Cemetery project has received permission to begin putting the brick pavers in place and that we will continue to take donations for the pavers if you are interested in contributing. There was a discussion about the history of Wautrousville and Willow Grove neighborhoods of Brenham.

Jan Kelm- Since many of you indicated on the surveys that you were interested in changing our meeting time to daytime and not evening; we will be meeting next on January 7, at 1PM at the Nancy Carol Roberts Memorial Library in the large conference room to your right as you enter the front door.

Tidbit. Jan Kelm related the history of WCGS Cemetery Project, which began with the Winfield Cemetery book. Although this was an admirable undertaking, the Winfield book documented all white cemeteries and only those having tombstones in evidence. It was felt that more thoroughness was needed. The county was divided into three segments with WCGS members diligently collecting additional information. Many new sources were utilized, such as a 900 page document from the county clerk that listed death certificates issued in Washington County. We

decided that rather than publish this information, that we would add it to our website where it could be easily accessed and added to and amended as needed. "Adopt a Cemetery" became a new part of the project in 2014, but has proven not to be viable in its current form, as there has been little support. Additionally, many of the current WCGS members are aging and cannot physically maintain a cemetery any longer. It is hoped that we can continue the restoration of our cemeteries, but that WCGS may need to prioritize our renovation of projects and hire out the work from time to time, dependent on available funds and donations.

Eddie Harrison initiated a general discussion of the worthiness of the Walker and Harrington league cemeteries.

Of Interest To Members

The Texas Czech Genealogical Society (TCGS) invites you and the members and patrons of the Washington County Genealogical Society to attend the upcoming 26 January 2019 event. You do not have to be a member of the TCGS to attend. Click on the link below for a registration form and information.

[Texas Czech Genealogical Society – Exploring Resources for Discovering Our Roots](#)

Queries

4 December from Janie Smith

I am working on family history and would like to find out where a relative of mine is buried. She was the wife of my 2nd great uncle. Her information is as follows:

Elizabeth ("Bettie") Price Smith Thacker
Born May 18, 1844 in San Augustine, Texas
Died September 28, 1867 in Brenham, Texas

She was first married to Robert Alexander Smith in 1859 – he died in 1861. She then married William H. Thacker in 1862.

Ancestry.com shows she had an infant that was born and died in 1867. So she probably died in childbirth. I would like to know where the infant is buried also (and dates of birth and death and whether it was a boy or girl) if you have that information.

Response Pending

3 December from Sheryl Kearby

Do you have records for the Lahrman and Leon Simanek funeral home (if I am spelling it right) or any other early funeral homes in Washington County?

Response Pending

2 December from Mark Lomax

The husband of one of my great-aunts died in Brenham in 1938. His death certificate (copy attached) says he was buried in "Watrousville," without naming the cemetery. I know Watrousville was an African-American neighborhood of Brenham, but do you know what cemetery the certificate was referring to?

Jan Kelm Response: Watrousville was an area on the west side of Brenham many years ago. There are two AA cemeteries in that area and it could be either one. Willow Grove Cemetery or HIC which is short for Home Improvement Cemetery.