

WCGS Newsletter

Washington County Genealogical Society

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February 2019

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2019-2020 Officers

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Geraldine Johnson

Vice-President:

Mary Kubeczka

Secretary:

Vanessa Smith

Treasurer:

Lu Hollander

Membership Chair:

Charlene Voskamp

Communications Chair:

Trish Cooke

Finance Chair:

Eddie Harrison

Newsletter Editor:

George Zemanek

From Our February Meeting

The presenter at our February meeting was Michael Addicks, a native of Washington County and a 1978 Brenham High School graduate. After high school, Mr. Addicks apprenticed in the funeral business in Houston and then returned to Brenham to remain in this occupation for forty years. Currently, he teaches a genealogy class at the senior center in Brenham.

Michael's talk was entitled, "Tripping through History and Where It Has Taken Me." Although Mr. Addicks became aware of an interest in genealogy at an early age, his first genealogical trip as an adult, took him to Panna Maria, southwest of San Antonio. He learned about his Frisian ancestry from a woman there. She was able to give him a list of his ancestors back to the twelfth century. During a later trip to Poland he visited some of his ancestral villages with the Polish Genealogy Society. Being an organist, he was thrilled and privileged to be allowed to play several ancient pipe organs. He was amused to be told by some of the locals that he spoke a very old Polish dialect with a bit of a "Texas Twang."

On a trip to Germany, he also saw some of his ancestral houses. He was heartened to discover that a family crypt was virtually empty, having its last inhabitant buried there long ago, and being family, if the need arose, he was entitled to the spot! He learned that wooden shoes are also made in Germany and are worn for gardening. Mr. Addicks showed the audience some of his treasured souvenirs: a pair of wooden shoes and an authentically reproduced traditional red wool jacket worn by men in Poland.

New Members

We would like to welcome our newest members:

Gertrude Addicks
Gayle Engeling
Sheran McCants
Joyce Pankonien
Gus Pankonien
Ella Rau

If you know of someone with an interest in genealogy, tell them about us! They can join anytime.

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.](#)

The WCGS is a proud member of the Texas State Genealogical Society and the Washington County Chamber of Commerce

March Program

“Early Schools of Washington County”

Jan Kelm, past president of the WCGS, will take us on a journey from 1835 into the mid-1900s and the Common School Districts of Washington County. The Old 300 who settled here included many people who knew the value of education and opened the early boarding schools in Coles' Settlement, Washington, and Brenham. As other settlers arrived in the second half of the 1800s, schools were opened in the smaller rural communities. Maps showing known locations of schools will be included.



WCGS Calendar

Mar. 4 WCGS Meeting 1:00 PM Library Meeting Room*

*Nancy Carol Roberts Memorial Library in Brenham, Texas



From Sheryl Kearby, regarding early funeral homes (Lahrmann) in Washington County

No Lahrmann Funeral Home was found. Leon Simank Funeral Home has for several years been Brenham Memorial Chapel. There might have been a Hermann Funeral Home (Mr. Hermann was an undertaker).

From Janie Smith, regarding Elizabeth (“Bettie”) Price Smith Thacker (born 5/18/1844 in San Augustine Texas, died 9/28/1867 in Brenham, Texas) and infant child

Deed records found that William H Thacker owned a city lot in Brenham at the time of Elizabeth’s death. The assumption is that she is buried in a cemetery in Brenham. No listing for Elizabeth was found. In the fall of 1867, there was a major yellow fever epidemic. It is likely that she and the baby may have died from the fever. There are two large mass graves at the Masonic Cemetery where people were buried side by side because they were dying so quickly and it was impossible to bury them in normal graves.

From Steve Chicoine, regarding James G. Whann and wife who were teachers for the Freedmen Bureau in Brenham, 1866. Steve was seeking copies of any issues of the *Southern Banner* from the summer of 1866.

No issues of the *Southern Banner* were found. Genealogy microfilms are not available until 1876. We suggest checking with the Texas State Library or the University of Texas Library in Austin.

The WCGS regularly receives inquiries from individuals throughout the state. If you would like our assistance answering some of your genealogy questions, please contact us at wcgs@bluebonnetgenealogy.org

Upcoming Events

Texas Independence Day will be celebrated at Washington on the Brazos on March 2nd and 3rd. The event is free and will feature many historical exhibits.

<http://wheretexasbecametexas.org/events/texas-independence-day-celebration-4/>

The Texas German Society will hold their 2019 State Convention on March 9th at 13035 Hall Rd in Cat Spring. Registration postmarked by February 26 is \$15.00 and after that date is \$20.00.

<https://www.texasgermansociety.com/>

The Williamson County Genealogical Society Seminar will feature Judy Russell on March 16th. The seminar will be held at First United Methodist Church in Round Rock. Her topics will be "That First Trip to the Courthouse," "When Worlds Collide: Resolving Conflicts in Genealogical Records," "Reveler, Hogkillers and Disobedient Children," and "No Vitals? No Problem!"

<http://www.txsgs.org/event/wcgs-annual-seminar-with-judy-russell/>

Tomball German Heritage Festival will be held on March 29th through 31st.

<https://www.tomballgermanfest.org/>

WCGS Meeting Minutes

February 4, 2019

The Washington County Genealogical Society met on Monday, February 4, 2019, at the Nancy Carol Roberts Memorial Library. There were 19 members and 15 visitors present. The meeting was called to order and the pledges to the U.S. and Texas flags were led by President Geraldine Johnson.

Vice President, Mary Kubeczka introduced the afternoon's speaker, Michael Addicks. See page 1 of the newsletter.

Meeting:

The minutes of the January meeting were approved as sent.

Treasurer's Report: Lu Hollander reported that there are now 39 paid members. The Cemetery fund amount is currently \$3,925.00 and the total balance is at \$14,006.78. Dues for 2019 are now being collected: \$12.00 for an individual and \$18.00 for two at the same address.

Finance Committee Report: Joan Griggs and Charlene Voskamp met and reviewed the 2018 financial statements submitted by the treasurer and found that all amounts were correct as presented.

Executive Committee:

Vanessa Smith read the proposed list of 2019 WCGS Projects:

- a. Repair of the five stones in the Fisher Cemetery that were previously identified and obtain a current bid from Lowell Herzog. The bid remains at \$655.00.
- b. Contribute to the cost of a fence for Camptown Cemetery.
- c. With the Adopt a Cemetery Committee, research how to meet the Spencers' request for spending their money on the Old Gay Hill Cemetery.
- d. With the Adopt a Cemetery Committee, determine how to spend the funds of the now-defunct Washington Cemetery Association on the Washington Cemetery.
- e. Answer genealogical queries and Findagrave questions.
- f. Educate individuals on genealogical research by offering classes, seminars, programs, etc.
- g. Locate the coordinates of schools in Washington County as they continue to be discovered.
- h. Volunteer in the Nancy Carol Roberts Memorial Library Genealogy Room.
- i. Co-sponsor the NCRM Library's Genealogy Lock In webinar.

A motion was made and seconded to accept these projects for 2019.

Lu Hollander. Report on the proposed budget for 2019. She stated that we operate at a loss each year and that we spend more than our dues cover. Yearly expenses were explained which included the cost mailing some of the newsletters, membership in the Chamber of Commerce, and dues to the Texas State Genealogical Society. Proposed budget for the year is \$1,180.00. A motion was made and seconded to accept this amount for the budget. Approved.

Vanessa Smith. Report on Volunteers for the Library project. Vanessa met with library staff and we worked out a plan for which books would be indexed and the procedure for doing so. The completion of a volunteer information sheet is first required and then a library orientation will be scheduled. Next, the method of indexing will be explained to volunteers. As some of the books to be indexed may only exist in a single copy, a schedule will be necessary so that workers will be assured of access to the book when they arrive.

Susan Lake. (History of answering genealogical queries and Find a Grave questions by WCGS was presented by Susan Lake, as Jan Kelm was not in attendance). On average we get five to seven queries and the same amount of inquiries on our Find a Grave memorials per month. Some of this research can be time consuming but Jan and Susan have many photos of tombstones and many resources to answer questions about burials and past residents of Washington County. Vanessa has helped us with this occasionally. As an organization, we do not ask for money for our research, but we do indicate that we accept donations. We receive significant funds from this source-- as much as \$200 at a time. We believe this service is an important function and an outreach to the genealogical community.

President Johnson announced that there were signup sheets for our projects in the back of the room if anyone wished to add their name to them.

There was no new business.

The Tidbit was presented by Mr. Doss Pruitt. Mr. Pruitt related his difficulty and experiences in trying to identify his grandfather. There was an out of wedlock birth in the family and the baby was given to someone else to raise- the Doss Pruitt family. He is the third Doss Pruitt in his family, but he knows that the original Pruitt is not his biological grandfather. Though so far, Mr. Pruitt has not been successful in delving into that part of his past, he stated that it is more important to know where you are going than where you have been.

Announcements

- A. Newsletters will be published on the third Monday of each month. If you have an item that needs to go into the Newsletter, please get it to Trish Cooke by the Wednesday before publication.
- B. An Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 12th at the Nancy Carol Roberts Memorial Library. We will address how to acquire more members and foster more participation from our existing members.
- C. The Communication Committee will meet on Friday, February 15th, at 7:00PM at the Blinn Student Center, Room 1.
- D. Our next regular meeting will be on Monday, March 4th, at the library at 1:00PM, when Jan Kelm will present a program on the "Early Schools of Washington County." The Tidbit for that day will be by Kenneth Kettler and Mike Bronikowski on "Interesting Facts About Laying Out Gravesites."

Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by Vanessa Smith, Secretary

WCGS Executive Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2019

The executive committee met at the library. The meeting was called to order and the secretary began recording the minutes.

Treasurer, Lu Hollander, distributed an updated list of current dues paying members and said we also received a donation of \$100 from a woman named Kitten. The donation correspondence did not mention any specific research that was required. It was agreed to check with Jan Kelm to see if she has any record of this woman's request.

Membership Chairman, Charlene Voskamp, is working on a new system of distributing name tags at the meetings. Each member will pick up their own nametag as they enter. She has not investigated the printing of new name tags yet. She gave Vanessa the name tags for several library volunteers so that the tags could be worn during the volunteer work sessions.

Communications. Trish Cooke, said that she is putting three queries into the Newsletter. A discussion ensued about publishing two versions of the Newsletter—one for members and another more abbreviated one for non-members. This one would leave out the minutes. That was deemed too much trouble, but separating the minutes from the Newsletter and sending them out to members only was again discussed. To save postage, (we now will probably be mailing out seven newsletters instead of four), Vanessa will print those double-sided. It was discussed to perhaps raise dues to cover postage for those that require postal mailing. Nothing was decided about this.

Programs. Vice President, Mary Kubeczka, said that Jan Kelm will do the talk for the March meeting on The Early Schools of Washington County and will include several maps showing their locations. Mary said that she has all the talks scheduled now for the rest of the year, with the exception of October.

Projects. President Johnson.

1. Finance Committee. No one has spoken to Eddie Harrison regarding the fence cost for Camptown Cemetery. A discussion took place on whether he may or may not want the money before the deed process is finalized. No decision was made, pending further contact with Eddie.
2. Obituary scanning. Vanessa was asked if this project is still being done and reported the location of the holdings of various newspaper obituary collections and stated that the library has received a grant to send all of its *Banner Press* microfilm (1877 to the present), to University of North Texas for digitizing, ultimately to be added to the Portal to Texas History website. As the project has not started, it was decided to continue with our obituary scanning for now. This project was voted to be added to our project list.
3. Honorary Members, per Geraldine Johnson are being taken off the list of current members.
4. Other.

Suggestion made to talk to the library staff regarding help to set up chairs for our meetings.

Adopt a Cemetery Committee needs to meet to begin to research how to spend our donated money for the Spencers and the Old Washington Cemetery Association.

President Johnson was approached by a member who wants our society to continue to be active in the summer months. Perhaps instead of regular meetings, we could do field trips or get together for research or attend genealogical programs? More thoughts needed about this.

Discussion on what we can do to interest others in joining our society. Can we print up brochures or business cards to share with others? Attend the Chamber of Commerce events? Take more photos of our activities? Trish will investigate the Business Development Center to see if they can print up something for us like brochures or business cards. She doesn't know if they do non-profits. Perhaps we can leave the cards or brochures at places like bulletin boards at Kruse Village and other venues?

Next two meetings of the executive Committee set for April 9th and May 14th, both Tuesdays, at the Nancy Carol Roberts Memorial Library at 10:30. We will evaluate our progress with participation, and determine if we need to present our next slate of officers earlier to avoid the same issues as last year.

Meeting adjourned.

Vanessa Smith, Secretary, WCGS