

# WCGS Newsletter

Washington County Genealogical Society

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

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## 2019-2020 Officers

### President:

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

## October Program on Camptown Cemetery

Charles Swenson, historian for the Camptown Cemetery, spoke about the progress that has been made since 2013 when the city called the attention of the derelict area to Eddie Harrison, who worked for the City of Brenham at that time. There had been complaints made to the city regarding health concerns of those who lived in the area. Eddie and members of Mount Rose Baptist Church, the nearest church to the cemetery, met the challenge head on and the result is the clean cemetery today. Mr. Swenson shared pictures of the cemetery prior to the cleaning as well as information about some people who were buried there.

## November Program

Did you know that throughout the history of Washington County, there are about 70 known community names? Some of those names may simply be an early name for a current town, such as Brenham first being called Hickory Grove. Some may have been towns for a brief period of time until something caused another location to be more important. Some had towns laid out and lots sold. Others were thriving towns but only the general area is known today. Jan Kelm will tell you about some of the lesser-known places in her presentation of "Ghost Towns of Washington County".

## New Members

We welcome our newest members:

Emery Heuermann  
David Herman  
Kate Hohlt  
Finny Clay

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

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



Do you have questions about local history or genealogy? Contact us at [wcfgs@bluebonnetgenealogy.org](mailto:wcfgs@bluebonnetgenealogy.org) (Contact information will be published with answers unless otherwise indicated)

## Working to Have an Active and Knowledgeable Membership

The WCGS is pleased with the interest and participation of its members. Yet we know there is always more to learn. Although the Executive Committee meeting is open to all members at any time, they will invite two members to each board meeting in order for the membership to better understand what is handled at these meetings. When you are asked, please respond positively. We want to grow in our purpose and goals.

## Washington County School Display

There are two new maps on display at the Brenham Heritage Museum's temporary location: The Depot at 313 East Alamo. One map shows over 100 known school locations in Washington County. The other shows 27 school locations, starting with the Hickory Grove Academy when Brenham was known as Hickory Grove.

Hours are Thursday-Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
The maps will be on display through mid-November.

## Calendar of Events

November 4	WCGS meeting	1pm	NCRM Library*
November 13	Executive Committee Meeting	1 pm	NCRM Library
	Meeting will include a training session for newly elected officers		
May 24-31, 2020	The Humble Area Genealogical Society (THAGS) Research Trip to Salt Lake City**		

\*Nancy Carol Roberts Memorial Library in Brenham, TX

\*\*For more information, please visit <http://www.humblegen.org>

## **WCGS Recognized by Camptown Cemetery Association**

At a reception held at the NCRM Library on October 10<sup>th</sup>, The Washington County Genealogy Society was recognized by the Camptown Cemetery Association for their donation of \$500. It is anticipated that this donation will be used toward a gate/fence that is required for the cemetery. Cheryl DaBera, Secretary/Treasurer of the organization presented a certificate to Geraldine Johnson, President of the WCGS. Other individual and groups were also recognized for their assistance in completing the project's first phase of researching history and cleaning the cemetery. The Association is developing a five year plan to continue in the maintenance and development of the historical cemetery.

WCGS members attending the event were Trish Cooke, Eddie Harrison, Tina Henderson, Lowell Herzog, Lu Hollander, Geraldine Johnson, Jackie Parker and Vanessa Smith.



## **Are You Able to Assist in Recording Washington County History?**

WCGS is aware of information, records, stories and facts relating to Washington County and its people that are in the possession of members and others in the community. The organization would like to take on the project of copying and organizing this information in some manner so that it available to the public by placing it in the library. Likewise, we must retain and make available the information we receive from our speakers.

If you have some historical facts and locations, family history, stories, genealogy, etc. that needs to be preserved before it is lost or needs to be placed in a location where it will be available to the next generations, please contact Geraldine Johnson. Do not feel that it must be in some order, typed, etc. Your material can just be facts or even one fact, etc. We will organize and preserve the material in an appropriate form and determine from there whether to bind, scan, etc. Think about it and contact Geraldine. Sometimes what seems like the most insignificant thing is an enlightenment to another.

## **Nomination Committee Report**

The 2019 nominating committee appointed by President Geraldine Johnson is Chair Joyce Pankonien, members and alternates Linda Jurecka, Nancy Maass, Gus Pankonien and Merlene Schumacher. They are presenting the following candidates for the elections at the November 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **President**

#### **Trish Cooke**

I grew up in Washington County. I have held several officer and committee positions while a member of various clubs and organizations. I have been working on family genealogy since the early 1980s. I lived out-of-state for 25 years before returning to Texas in 2013. I joined the Washington County Genealogical Society and served as its secretary for a year. Currently, I teach English as a Second Language to adults.

### **Vice President**

#### **Rebecca Lehmann Graeber**

Becky was raised in the Prairie Hill community in Washington County in a family with a strong German heritage. Her love for genealogy began while researching her maternal family history back to Wehdem, Germany. Through the assistance of others, initial contacts were made which have since resulted in several trips to Germany to visit both her and her husband's relatives. The Graebers live in Cypress, Texas. They have three grown sons and four grandchildren. Becky is a member of St. John Lutheran Church. She was active in the development of the current church constitution, served on the governing board, and coordinated the effort to obtain the historical marker acknowledging the church's 150th anniversary. She currently serves on the Altar Guild Board and is a member of the Senior Pastor Call Committee. She loves Washington County and its history. Becky enjoys spending as much time as possible on the "farm" near Independence. She has a special interest in preserving the historic cemeteries in the area.

### **Secretary**

#### **Tina B. Henderson, PhD**

Dr. Henderson is the founding consultant of Ash and Ash Consulting. For the past ten years, she has also been a part-time professor in the Department of Human Services with the University of Phoenix, instructing courses around management, leadership,

grant writing, and research and statistics. She earned her doctoral degree in Educational Psychology (now Human Development and Psychology) from the University of California, Los Angeles. During her tenure there, Dr. Henderson spent over 25 years in management and conducting behavioral research at the university, community, and in private settings.

During her doctoral program, she was an evaluator at the Center for the Study of Evaluation at UCLA. After completing her doctoral program, she was an assistant research psychologist in the Department of Psychiatry and Bio behavioral Sciences at UCLA, where her work consisted of conducting psychosocial intervention research. As the Project Director of a seven-year multi- site, multi-million dollar NIMH-funded randomized clinical trial intervention-based study on African American HIV-serodiscordant couples, she managed a 12 staff team. This project was an efficacy study to reduce sexual risk behaviors among these couples. In one of her more inspirational roles, she served as Project Manager at the private non-profit health organization, JWCH Institute. The organization was established in 1960 by concerned L.A. County physicians who made it their mission to provide affordable health services to support and augment patient care, education, and research. This HRSA funded project Dr. Henderson managed helped to link HIV-positive homeless women of color to HIV medical services, and to influence their behavior to maintain their health care. The primary clinic from where this project operated was in the heart of Skid Row Los Angeles, a very humbling experience.

As a consultant with Ash and Ash Consulting, she draws from her extensive experiences to help non- and for-profits strengthen their organizations by offering grant writing, staff trainings, program development, program evaluation, quality assurance audits, and strategic planning facilitation. Born and raised in Brenham, her adventures began in 1982 when she joined the

United States Marine Corps and was stationed at Camp Pendleton, CA. Dr. Henderson returned home two years ago to be closer to family and to continue her adventures with her Brenham friends and family.

Dr. Henderson has immersed herself into the Brenham community. She is the newly named Chairman for the Texas Ten Historical Explorers. She is also a member of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce Blue Blazers, Washington County Cattlewomen Association, Washington County Genealogical Society, Sigma Chi-Chi, and Brenham Activist Association.

## **Treasurer**

### **Sheran McCants**

Sheran McCants is a native Texan who has been a resident of Washington County for 7 years. She had lived in the greater Houston area for over 40 years. She worked with the Shuttle Space Program for 20 years. She became interested in family history about 1993 when her father began sharing his discoveries.

In 1999, she joined the Pasadena chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. She transferred the Conroe DRT chapter in 2005 and was chapter treasurer from 2009 to 2013.

She is a current member of the Texas State Genealogical Society and Clayton Library Friends. She is a current or previous member of several county genealogy societies which include Washington, Montgomery, Leon and Lamar Counties, Texas and Morrow County, Ohio.

Sheran is a member of the Hull Family Association since 2002. She was secretary from 2005 to 2009. Since 2008, she has been a member of the HFA Genealogy Committee, providing support for members.

She is a group administrator for the FTDNA Hull DNA Project (since the 2009 death of project founder).

As the daughter of an adoptee, she tested DNA with four companies and manages the DNA accounts for three siblings. She analyzes family DNA results and map chromosomes.

## **WCGS Minutes, 7 October 2019**

WCGS met in Brenham at the NCRM Library. President Johnson called the meeting to order and led the pledges to the flags. 27 Members and 5 visitors were present. Linda Jurecka asked the five visitors to stand when their names were called and President Johnson welcomed new member, Jacquelyn P. Parker, who joined in September. President Johnson observed that October has been declared Polish Heritage Month. And Jan Kelm offered the information that there is an event in Chappell Hill to celebrate Polish heritage this month; see: the calendar of events at the end of these minutes.

VP Mary Kubeczka introduced our program speaker, Charles Swenson, who is a founding member of the Camptown Cemetery Association. Mr. Swenson related the long and complicated history of the cemetery, the continuing support of Mt. Rose Church, and the current efforts of the ongoing restoration. He then highlighted the lives of several persons who were buried there.

### **WCGS Business Meeting.**

The minutes of the September meeting were approved as published in our Newsletter without corrections. The Treasurer reported that the current balance after the receipt of dues and expenses for stamps and newsletters printed for mailing is \$13, 733.52 and stated that she is now accepting payment for 2020 dues-\$18.00 for two memberships at the same address and \$12.00 for one.

*Project Reports.* Jan Kelm gave a summary of the kinds of questions, and typical sources that she uses to answer queries to our website and for find-a-grave requesters. Using the GPS locations for Washington County early schools, Jan has been working on a map display at the restored Bus Station Depot and temporary home for the Brenham Heritage Museum. Joanne Wolf added that the display days have been extended until Thanksgiving. The Depot is open Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, from 10:00-4:00 PM. President Johnson noted we have made significant progress this year with all the help of volunteers who have taken Lydia Heins' clippings and scanned them for the obituaries link on our website. She asked if anyone wished to take more to scan. Vanessa Smith and Joan Griggs will be manning the WCGS table for the Genealogical Lock-In at the Library, Friday, October 18<sup>th</sup>. Since she and Joan may not be there all day, Vanessa is asking for members to come, learn and enjoy the webinar, drop in and take a turn sitting at the WCGS table. You can help by introducing yourself, passing out our new brochures, answering questions, and giving out our membership forms. This is a good public relations opportunity.

Unfinished Business. President Johnson announced that the Nominating Committee is having success assembling a slate of officers for 2020. The Chairman of the committee is Joyce Pankonien. Members and the alternates are Gus Pankonien, Linda Jurecka, Nancy Maass, and Merlene Schumacher.

New Business from the Executive Committee Meeting. A general discussion relating to the preservation of genealogical records, especially local ones, about families who lived in Washington County took place. A need was expressed for members who have research material to allow us to copy their papers and present them to the library for posterity. Perhaps all the WCGS Newsletters, both past and present, should be printed and donated to the library and bound and later indexed for names and subjects. All the wonderful information on past and present programs and research topics would then be available to everyone, instead of buried in the secretary's notebooks. It was agreed to request that our members consider donating family and local historical records. It was suggested that because the hard copy archived records of WCGS are quite bulky to store in individual homes, that a more suitable place should be found for them. Perhaps a climate-controlled storage space could be rented? President Johnson asked the members who were present at the regular meeting if anyone has such a space to share?. WCGS is also currently seeking members to strategically place our new information cards in high traffic public locations where visitors will see them. The executive committee will be inviting 2 members at large and prospective officers to the November and December board meetings. Members Lana Meir and Judy Matejowsky have been invited to our November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting at the library.

Announcements and Calendar. All candidates for office: please send in your resume for publication so that all may vote on the candidates.

- Oct 1-30 U.S. and Polish History Exhibit, Chappell Hill Historical Society Museum, Wed-Sat, 10:00-4:00PM; Sun, 1:-4:00PM
- Oct 10 Invitation to Camptown Cemetery Recognition Event, NCRM library, 5-6:30
- Oct 11-13 Family History Conference, Houston at Omni Westside
- Oct 18 Genealogy-all day Lock-In event, 10:00-8:30PM, NCRM Library
- Oct 26 Washington Co. School Display at the Bus Depot, Open Through Thanksgiving
- Nov 4 WCGS Meeting, 1PM NCRM Library-Ghost Towns of Washington Library, Jan Kelm
- Nov 13 Exec. Committee Meeting, 1PM, NCRM Library-New Officers and invited guests are encouraged to attend. Open to all members.

May 24-31 THAGS Research trip to Salt Lake City

## **WCGS Executive Board Meeting**

**Tuesday, October 1, 2019**

The board met at the NCRML at 10:30. President Johnson, VP Kubezcka, Treasurer Lu Hollander, Secretary Vanessa Smith, and Membership Chair, Charlene Voskamp were present.

The board gave President Johnson the go ahead to request contributions of genealogical histories, recollections, memoirs and the like from our members to be submitted to the library's collection or to be published on our website.

Ms. Johnson displayed the newly completed WCGS brochure and places to leave them and who would distribute them was discussed. Ms. Smith took some for the library's October Lock-In webinar event.

Ms. Voskamp submitted the proposed updated membership form and it was approved for the website.

It was decided that new members joining in the last quarter of the year would be given credit for the whole of the following calendar year.

It was suggested and agreed upon to invite candidates for board positions and one or two of our regular members to each executive meeting so that attendees can be aware of how our business is conducted. It is hoped that this may help to familiarize members with the responsibilities of each office and that this may encourage the acquisition of future office holders for the organization.

Ms. Smith reported on the library Indexing project. She and Nancy Maass are almost finished with the seventh book. (Common Schools of Washington County, 1907-1967). She requested that the six titles completed, be advertised in the October Newsletter and on our website. The six titles are:

Brenham, Texas, 1844-1958, by Robert A. Hasskarl, 1958

The Blazing Story of Washington County, by Wilfred O. Dietrich, 1973

The Negro Blue Book of Washington County, Texas, by J. A. Yancy, M.A.

Remembering Brenham, A Collection of Stories As Told by Dr. "Boy" Hasskarl, 2005

A Pictorial History of Washington County, Texas, The Banner-Press, 1993

In Their Honor-Veterans of the Washington County Area, The Banner-Press, 2008

One of the next projects will be the printing and indexing of the New Year's Creek Baptist Church proceedings and records, which begin in 1846.

Ms. Smith commented on several items on our website that may need to be deleted or revised:

Adopt-A-Cemetery has a link from our homepage, even though the committee has essentially disbanded. But there is a great deal of excellent information there about how to go about taking care of a cemetery, etc. Maybe that link should be reworked or retitled? Maybe ask Jan about this?

A couple of links (she only looked at three) on obits on our webpage went nowhere: two for Isaiah Guyton. She didn't remember the other but left a message in the comments area on the webpage. She suggested that we ask someone to check all links to see that they are still working.

The 2018 History Fair link is outdated and should be deleted.

She asked if it was possible, after the Schools of Washington County big map display closes at the Depot, could we mount that map on our website? (Susan Lake said we just need to take a photo of the map. We may need permission from the museum to do this).

Ms. Smith reported that she and Jan got together back in March to try to answer some of the Find-a-Grave tombstone photo requests. The process is complicated; using Quinn Kroll's database and Jan's database, and the Winfield cemetery book. We were able to complete some requests that day with those resources, but currently 67 remain to be done. Since March, Ms. Smith has researched a dozen or so for Salem Lutheran and three for St. Mary's Catholic Cemeteries. Jan and she plan to go to Prairie Lea soon to photograph tombstones for some burials that have occurred after the previous photo project ended and to check on some that may not be marked.

President Johnson announced that in October she will again name those who are serving on the nominating committee and that the biographies of prospective 2020 officers will be shared before the voting takes place at our November regular meeting.

It was decided that it would be beneficial for all to publish the contact information of those who post genealogical queries to WCGS. A statement will be added to our

website and Newsletter stating that “Your contact information will be published with your query unless you request that it not be made public.”

It was decided to suggest to the 2020 officers that a committee be formed for the purpose of reviewing/updating/reworking/revising our bylaws.

Due to the success and popularity of our Independence and courthouse tours, it was proposed and agreed to that a small group cemetery walk-about should be attempted before the end of the year. The Jewish Cemetery in Brenham, and Mr. Tobin’s name was offered as a possible contact to provide some historical perspectives and details.

It was decided to table the question of how to publish a current WCGS membership list at this time.

A suggestion by Treasurer, Lu Hollander that WCGS rent a small storage space to archive the past treasurer’s records. Ms. Smith also requested that the Secretaries’ notebooks be included as well.

Next Board Meeting will be at the NCRML on Wednesday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00

Meeting adjourned. Vanessa Smith, Secretary, WCGS