

San Antonio Genealogical and Historical Society

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

Larry Luckett Wins the Quilt!

SEASON'S Greetings

We're sending you, our readers, our best wishes for a joyous and healthy holiday season.

Your Newsletter Publication Family:

Barbara Holmes (editor emeritus), **Larry Luckett** (editors emeritus), **AnnMarie Esparza, Barbara Johns, Beverly Rakowitz, Dan & Nita Heinchon, Dr. David Katerndahl, Diane Scannell & Judy McKee, Don Sharon** (not pictured), **Elizabeth Prike, Gaspar & Mary-Catherine Gomez, Dr. Julia George & Jackie Meldrom, Dr. Jeffery Hankins, Kitty Massey, Dr. Lois Bready, Nancy McNamara, Norene Fiacco, Peggy Weyel, President Peter Baron, Rob Lewis** (webmaster) & **Frank Kebelman, and Scott Atkinson**, our make-it-all-happen graphic design artist **Amanda Pagan** and me, **Carol Thompson**.



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YA'LL COME! OUR...

SAN ANTONIO GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

IS HAVING A

BOOK SALE

ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2025, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

in our

DWYER CENTER'S CLASSROOM

(the corner of Blanco Road at 911 Melissa Drive)

These books have been donated to us, but...

(1) We already have copies of them, or

(2) They do not fit into our collection in some other way....sooo...

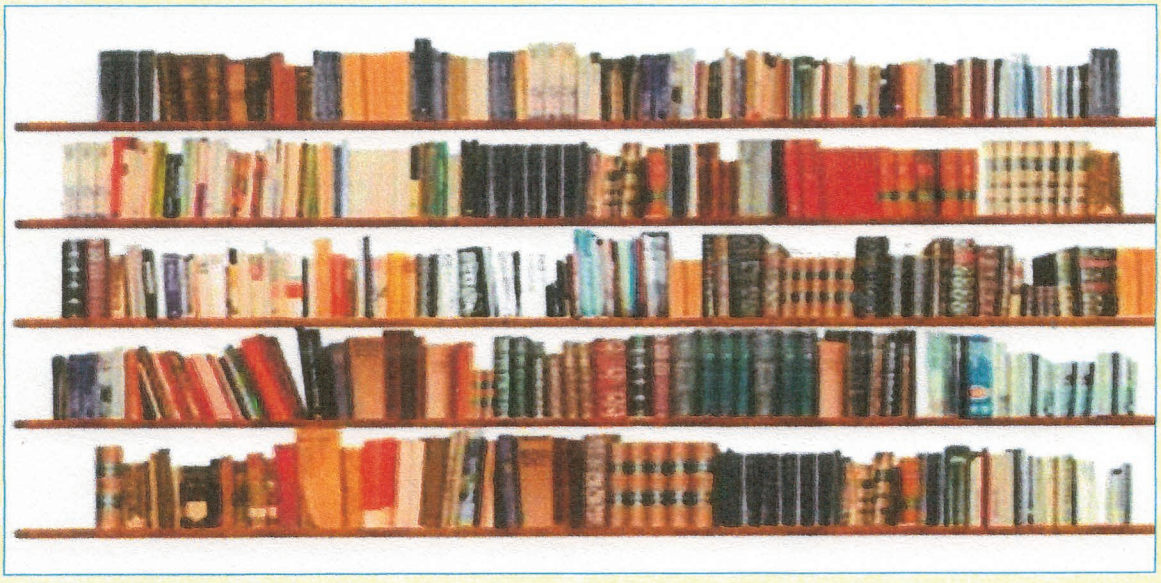
(3) Stop by and Check them out on Saturday, November 15,

for

they may be

Just THE Book

needed for your bookshelf or nightstand.





Dr. Judy Castleberry

A NATIVE STAR

By Carol Thompson

To those who attended September's Membership meeting, Dr. Castleberry's video presentation, the memories of those heroes of WWII and other conflicts, found many of us reaching for something to wipe away tears. Her visual presentation of what was given for our freedom impacted all assembled. She has been laboring many years to save these memories, all available and stored in perpetuity in the Library of Congress, to remind all – the cost of freedom.

What brought this learned lady to our library in 2010, was the research required to connect her with one of her 'patriots' - John Mays.

Mary Eck, a dear friend, fellow member of the Tuesday Musical Club (and a San Antonio de Bexar DAR chapter member) knew about our resources and encouraged Judy to search material held here. And since that first happy visit, then into membership, Judy has found several other patriots and several more just waiting to be documented

Judy Milane Stewart is like so many of our august family, a northeast Texas girl. Her family came to Texas to farm, to Hunt and Hopkins Counties, and put down deep roots. There is in Hunt County a Stewart Cemetery, a marker to a great grandfather of Confederate Gray, buried there. Cumby, a town of 499 as she grew up, between Greenville and Sulphur Springs, she explained, was where she went to school through the eighth grade. She laughed, told me that it is now most likely a bedroom community out from Dallas.

That interesting middle name comes from efforts to acknowledge two wonderful grandmothers - a Mildred and a Jane; and further, Judy, not Judith because the attending birth nurse announced that this baby girl looked like a 'Judy!' And so it was.

After focusing on raising five children for several years, her mother returned to teaching in the neighboring community of Miller Grove, where Judy and three of her siblings went to school.

Valedictorian in her nine, yes NINE-member Miller Grove High School graduating class, she immediately, literally the next weekday, with a full first year's scholarship of $100 under her belt, enrolled at East Texas State University in Commerce, Texas which these days is under the umbrella of the Texas A & M system. She attained in 3 years, working straight through summers, her Bachelors' degree, with a major in Vocational Home Economics, and one year later, her Master's degree with a double major in Education and Home Economics. From freshman to Masters in 4 years!

Somewhere in all of this, a smart young man, also pursuing academic achievement, **Lowell Ernest Castleberry, Jr., Pete** to his friends, found her as they were working in the same campus audio-visual center. He was working to achieve his own scholastic goals, an MBA there at East Texas, using his VA education benefits.

Her first job was at Tarrant County Junior College. This began a steadily upward climbing career of being the 'go-to' trusted councilor, wearing

many hats supporting many facets of educational efforts. At the end of that year, she married Pete, and returned to East Texas so he could finish his MBA.



The couple moved to San Antonio in September of 1969 and Pete started his new job at the Federal Reserve Bank. It was in October of 1969 that she was employed by the Education Service Center, Region 20, her job to provide professional development for public school teachers on the use of instructional media.

Son **Jason Stewart Castleberry** came bursting into her career in 1973; then 2nd son **Michael Jarred Castleberry** followed in August of 1977.

In between these wondrous events, she began work on a doctorate at UT Austin, taught school at MacArthur High School here, but returned to the Service Center for a few years and then went to Cole Junior-Senior High School on Ft. Sam campus for a year as Secondary Director of Curriculum.

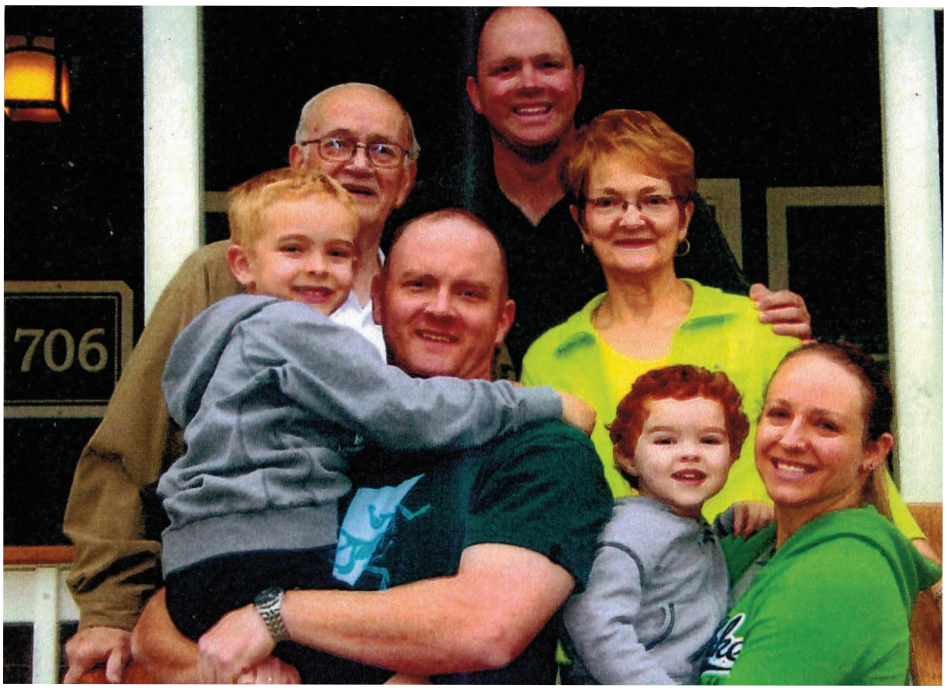
She was again lured back to the Service Center, this time as Executive Director, and was the first woman to hold the job at this level in the state. Among some of her achievements were a state-wide teleconferencing system, providing televised high school credit courses available nationwide, as well as beginning the process of converting textbooks to braille for visually impaired students. She retired from ESC-20 in 2003. However, the Texas Education Agency has called her back out of retirement for contract work, bringing her expertise to troubled school districts. She has just recently completed work at Harlandale ISD after 5 years of assisting their leadership.

Her interest in the Veterans History Project began when she attended a local training session on conducting interviews. With the support of the San Antonio de Bexar DAR Chapter, she continued that work for over 10 years, interviewing 67 amazing veterans.

At this point, she explained that she has had a great life. From a high school class of 9 students in a small north east Texas town to making a difference in the lives of many teachers and students, she is so grateful for people along the way who had faith that, “I could do more,” she said.

Widowed in 2017, she is proud of her sons: Jason, a Commander with Austin-Travis County Emergency Services; and Michael, Asset Protection Specialist working for Cargill Industries in Minnesota, and bride Kate, who have provided two grandsons, one of whom has just earned the rank of Eagle Scout!

As our chat was coming to a close, she laughed quietly, then shared what her first employer, who had called her into his office, told her in those first days on the job, “You’re good, Judy, but you can always be replaced – just remember that.” Motivation – east Texas style.



Jason, Pete, Judy, Myles, Mike, Henry, & Kate



FROM THE LIBRARY

By Bev Rakowitz

Hidden in plain sight/site – that's what is on display in the foyer of our library – those 128 volumes, massive details of our American Civil War.



These tomes have quite an unusual history, beginning with a bright idea of **Annie Hunt**. Her brother-in-law **Roy Allen Rutledge** grew up literally more of a big brother there in their small east Texas town. He married her sister **Connie**, a wonderful development!

Roy had a hobby, starting back in 1969, using a metal detector to "find" items. He is an inveterate history buff, having found by diligently searching many treasures as he and groups of like-minded hunters got permits from landowners to search their properties to find artifacts. Indeed, he has collections of bullets, nails, even coins, buckles, and all sorts of items left over the years that are sourced from those Civil War days. Now, all serious finds are turned over to various museums, but Roy has lots of show-and-tell items, collected over decades of searches up and down the East Coast, those battlefields. He says that some of the interesting 'finds' are from Louisiana!

Well, how to locate where those buried treasures are to be found, why, and material published about those battles, encounters, and campsites. He found the publisher, the US government, and, back in the day, for $10-11 each, he could purchase three of these historic recordings at a time…the series totaling 128 books. Using these vetted historic land guides, he and what developed over the years, his hunting buddy clubs, they could go directly to the very site where they were sure to find artifacts. This fun hobby developed into organized, highly developed hunt parties, wives included for spouse shopping excursions.

He laughed as he explained that he had even been the acknowledged hero, finding his son's Baylor roommate's lost class ring in mere minutes using his trusty metal detector.

These tomes record the exact battlefield and campsite locations, regimental identifications, details of many battle facets, a list of participants, and the records of that entire war.

So, having collected and used these details, historic descriptions of our historic battles to find collections of treasures, he began to wonder what use they could be put to. Knowing that his best 'sister' Ann Hunt, now in San Antonio, is keen on family genealogy, he asked her if they might be of some use to our library. And that was that.

For those who need a bona fide research source in tracing ancestors who fought in that horrible conflict, here is one of the best resources, right here in our library's foyer…the gift of **Roy and Connie Rutledge**, and **Annie Hunt**.



Our library is open thanks to volunteers who man that desk, open the building, and are available to assist those who search for answers - another benefit of membership.

Thank you, Annie, Roy, and Connie!



FROM THE HISTORIAN

By Norene Pfautz Fiacco

When I began (January 2025) all we found for scrapbooks was 1985-1999/2001. (My first contacts were **Jackie Meldrom** & **Barbara Holmes** who showed me around, introduced me to people, and helped me find what I had to work with.) These scrapbooks were done by previous ladies and in terrible shape due to age (yellowing pages, pictures beginning to fade, etc.) So we began there by "re-doing" them using all archival materials (papers, plastic sheets, etc.). We did not add, but kept the integrity of the original scrapbook keeper, including giving credit when a name was provided. This task literally took the whole village of SAGHS people contributing, but the bulk of the work was done by the Tuesday volunteers. These binders are now finished and stored in the Dwyer Center.

Currently we are "up-to-date" with all we have from 2002 - 2025; however, we are keeping the years 2000-2014 "open" in hopes of getting more artifacts. 2014- 2021 we consider "active" as we are adding newsletters to the years that do not have much else.

2021-2025 we call "active & current." Obviously we are not finished with 2025, but some things still occasionally come in for the last few years. (**Charles Brussells** is a tremendous help and extremely generous with his time. He is a valuable resource for this project, as well as a joy to work with.)

In addition, we have something else! In the "beginning to locate materials stage" at SAGHS, I ran across a few things from years before 1985. This is the area of greatest need (and the most difficult to find). I have begun a "prior to 1985 binder." We have only 5 or 6 items in the collection, but I am trying to spread the word through this Newsletter. "Hope Springs Eternal" is our motto.

I am sincerely grateful to **Bev Rakowitz** for providing the help from the Tuesday volunteers so that we are able to have accomplished all of the above.



FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

By AnnMarie Esparza

Welcome to our new SAGHS members!

Laijla Alvarez

Wayne Courreges

Torrey Hunter

David Pinegar

Frank Rohrbough

Nancy and Walt Scull

TECHNOLOGY CORNER

Find a Grave Now Has GPS Capability!



By Dan & Nita Heinchon

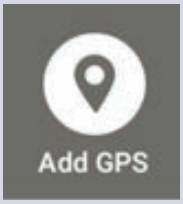
Find a Grave™

https://www.findagrave.com/

This website and its app (for both iOS and Android) have been loved by genealogists for years and are intuitive and easy to work with. Not only are they preserving pictures of tombstones that are becoming illegible or lost, but they have contributed the missing pieces to complete many a lineage application with its tombstone pictures of the ancestor's birth and/or death dates.

Recently the capability of adding GPS coordinates to a grave memorial was added to the app. This allows anyone to walk right up to a grave (if you have internet and have location services turned on) using the coordinates added by a previous user. This saves so much time wandering the whole cemetery in search of a grave. In addition, it's likely you will find other family members, you maybe didn't know about, buried nearby.

How to add GPS coordinates: They automatically upload when a headstone photo (containing GPS coordinates) is added either in the cemetery or later via Wi-Fi. Or, if a photo is already present in the memorial, tap the pin icon while standing at the grave. That is easy and fast.



Know that as you visit a cemetery, there may be photo requests from family members who are far away. You can easily take a photo with your phone, upload it to the memorial and the person requesting will be notified and so pleased. These "Open Photo Requests" can be found on the home page for all of the cemeteries in the area you are in and on each cemetery's home page.





TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

As we celebrate America's Semiquincentennial (250 years) and soon Texas' bicentennial (200 years), we also honor local and family history.

Join the Texas Historical Commission's for a Genealogy Research Series:

- Introduction to Genealogy: Researching Family History, French Legation - November 15th
- Preserving Family Photographs and Documents - January 24th
- Reading and Interpreting Genealogy Sources - February 21st
- Family History Day - March 21st

BONES & NOTES

Adding a Marker at the Foot of a Veteran's Grave



By Don Sharon

As we observe Veterans Day on 11 November and visit their cemeteries, we may see a marker at the foot of a veteran's grave. That marker lists the veteran's name, military service, and lifespan. Such a marker may have been placed there by family members or someone associated with that cemetery.

Some years ago, my maternal uncle and I placed such a bronze marker at the foot of my maternal grandfather's grave in Goliad County. The process to get the marker and to physically place it was not difficult. Requesting a marker is made through the Veterans Administration at www.va.gov/burials-memorials/memorial-items/headstones-markers-medallions/. Grave markers also are available through third-party vendors. They come in different materials.

Before requesting a marker, check with the owner(s) of the cemetery to see what requirements or regulations they have concerning any alteration to the grave. Sometimes you can add the plaque, as we did.

Here are some tips when adding a marker.

1. To repeat: Be sure you have permission from the owner(s) of the cemetery (that may be a funeral home, church, cemetery association, or family). Follow their requirements and regulations.
2. Be sure you are physically fit to dig a rectangular hole in the ground for placement of the marker.
3. You will need the following items: the plaque, cement mix and aggregate, a 5-gallon bucket for water, a wheelbarrow, a shovel, and a hoe or other implement for mixing the cement.
4. The plaque we installed was 2 feet long, 1 foot wide, and came with four anchor posts each about a foot long that go into each corner of the plaque. Dig the hole a little more than 2 feet long, a little more than 1 foot wide, and a little more than 1 foot deep. Thread the anchor posts through each corner hole. The plaque will rest upon a little more than 2 cubic feet of concrete.
5. Add water to the cement and mix. You may have to bring your own water. The cemetery we were at had an outdoor water faucet close to the grave. Shovel the wet cement slowly into the hole. Use the shovel to jab the wet cement so any air bubbles are released.

   (This was my first time mixing cement, which my uncle commented with a chagrin: "You can tell he's never mixed cement before.")
6. Get on your knees. Lower the plaque onto the top of the cement, making sure the plaque is level with the surrounding ground.

   (My uncle was on the right side of the grave while I was on the left side. Together we lowered the plaque to make sure it was going down level and aligned with the grave.

   (While I was doing this, I thought this was probably the last time the three of us—veteran, son, and grandson—would ever be together again.)
7. Wipe any excess cement from the plaque.
8. Let the plaque rest a bit and make any adjustments in its placement.
9. Wash any excess cement from the tools.

After we installed the plaque, we naturally took a moment to reflect on my grandfather's life and what he did for us. For me, he had a hand in teaching me how to fish. He had a hand in teaching me how to hunt. He had a hand in teaching me how to grow vegetables. He had a hand in teaching me how to behave when I needed a teaching.

Today, when I visit his grave and look at that plaque honoring him, I know that I, in turn, had a hand.



DAR table with Bill Myers



Good friends hugging



Blair Rudy



Diane Scannell & Judy McKee



Company of Military Historians - standing fellow



Seated attendee fellow

2025 SAGHS FALL SEMINAR

There were 22 groups represented at the Lineage Group forum!

We had 64 registrants, at least 12 were non-SAGHS members with at least 3 joining SAGHS

Dr. David Katerndahl says THANK YOU to those wonderful volunteers who made our Annual Seminar a magnificent success!

Photo Credit: **Judy Mckee & Diane Scannell**

We've done our best to label each photo – apologies for not getting everyone's name. We're grateful for every one of you who attended!



President Peter Baron and Attendee





Presentation of Legacy Groups



Video master, Rob Lewis, sitting at control center



Diane Scannell and Rita McSorley - Continental Society Daughters of Indian Wars



Smiling attendees





Attendees ready for the presentations



Karen Boyer & Mary Souter



Seminar Presenter, Terri E. Flack



Seminar sign-in table



Legacy buddies





Seated attendee and fellow



Anita and Ron Beasley looking over the program



The DRT table



President Peter Baron introducing the program



Ruth A. Edney of Colonial Dames of America & Peggy Jared of National Society of England Woman

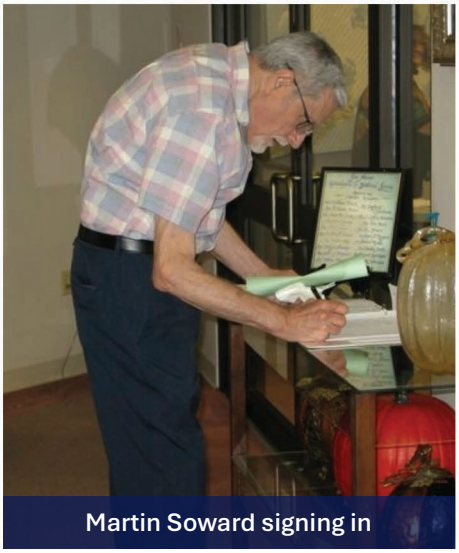




Sign-in table -Karen Boyers, Cyndi Lemanski, Kathy Totten



Presenter Teri E. Flack, M.A., M.B.A. - Seeing the Patterns



Martin Soward signing in



Nancy Brennan



Canary Islands Decendants Assoc.,Los Bexarenos Genealogical Historical Society

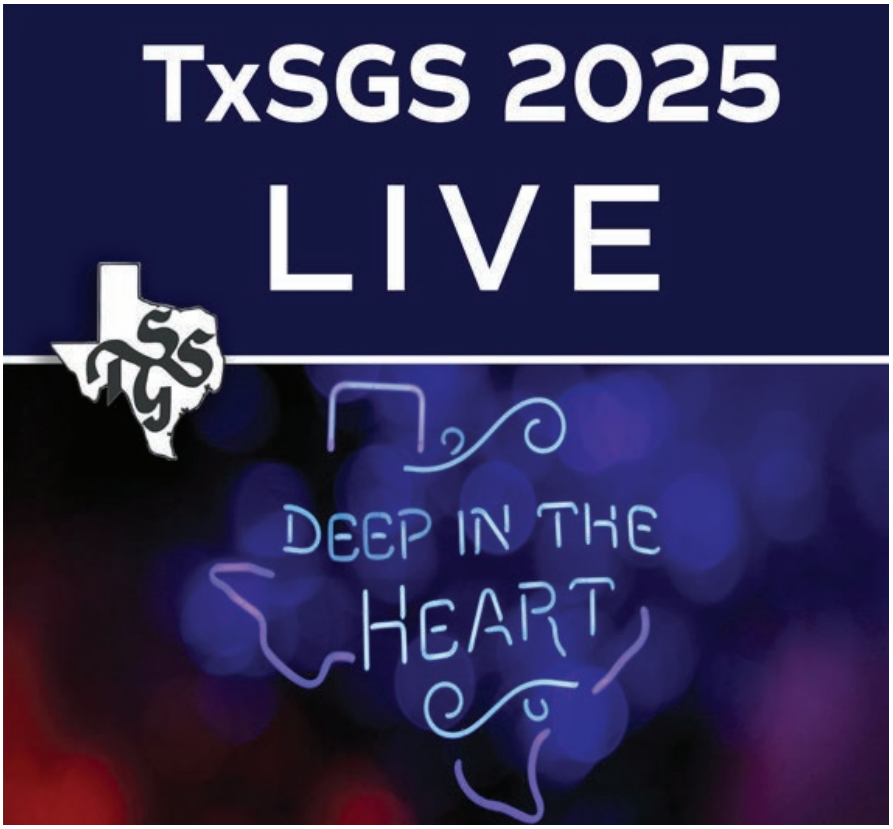


Call for Submissions, *Our Heritage*

Our Heritage, the SAGHS flagship journal is now seeking articles from members and non-members for the 2026 issues. Editor **Dr. Jeffery Hankins** is looking for articles about "farming ancestors" or "farming families" or "farming stories." The submitted articles can be set in Texas or in other areas but should be connected to its author.

Submitted articles can be of any length and should be in a Word document format. We ask authors to provide citations supporting sources used to create the article; however, our editorial staff is very happy to assist an author in doing this. We encourage stories on a wide variety of subjects, and historical topics are invited as well as family histories. Photographs or images are also encouraged and should be attached separately from the article.

Please submit your article attached to an email to Publications@txsaghs.org or Jeffery R. Hankins at jrhankins52@live.com. Our Heritage is an award-winning publication, recognized by the Texas State Genealogical Society. Journals will be available nationwide via PERSI, as well!



Join us November 7-8 to hear the ***TxSGS Live!*** featured speakers present a wide range of genealogical topics, each followed by a live Q&A session with each speaker during this two-day program. Following ***TxSGS Live!***, enjoy these and more than 20 additional pre-recorded topics through February 6, 2026.*

Want to learn more about the topics these speakers will highlight? Check out the Lone Star Family Trails podcast HERE.

Learn more about the ***TxSGS Live!*** topics and speakers.

**The number of topics available for replay depends on the package purchased.*

SAGHS is a proud member of:

Partner Society
Texas State Genealogical Society

National Genealogical Society
FOUNDED 1903

CONTACT US

SAGHS:
911 Melissa Drive, SA, TX 78213
210-342-5242
txsaghs.org

President:
Peter Baron
president@txsaghs.org

Vice President:
David Katerndahl
vicepres@txsaghs.org

Treasurer:
Cynthia Lemanski
treasurer@txsaghs.org

Education:
Lois Bready
education@txsaghs.org

Membership:
AnnMarie Esparza
membership@txsaghs.org

Webmaster:
Rob Lewis
webmaster@txsaghs.org

Our Heritage Editor:
Jeffery Hankins

Newsletter:
Carol Thompson, Editor
Amanda Pagan, Graphic Designer
newsletter@txsaghs.org

Library Hours:
Sunday: 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Monday: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Wednesday: 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Library Closures:
New Year's Eve & Day, Easter, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Founders Day, Father's Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, October (Seminar), Thanksgiving Eve & Day, Christmas Eve & Day