San Antonio Genealogical and Historical Society

NEWSLETTER | MARCH 2025





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Rob Lewis

Greetings! The February Membership meeting was well attended. We were treated to the introduction of speaker Lt. Col. **Frank Kebelman**, Ret., by Vice President **Peter Baron**. Frank has been a SAGHS member since 2022.

His topic, of great interest to our genealogy-focused family, was the finding and cleaning of veterans' graves and their markers. His focus is honoring our veterans—men and women who have given all to defend our freedom. His talk was of such



interest that he has been asked to prepare a class on how to clean markers. We'll look forward to that presentation. Within our own society family, there are several groups who have scouted, found, cleaned, and identified many graves and cemeteries here in Bexar County. Their published works are here in our library.

The business meeting followed Col. Kebelmn's presentation.

Barbara Holmes, Treasurer, updated our accounts and answered questions.

Larry Luckett, acting Publication Chairman, told us we are seeking new leadership for Our Heritage.

Jackie Meldrom, Memorials Chairman, reported that the February newsletter issue announced those departed.

Peggy Weyel, Publicity Chairman, explained how her newsletter goes out to the surrounding small towns, heralding both their and our educational offerings as well as American history episodes of interest.

Nancy Brennan, First Families Chairman, is working on submissions of two First Families.

Ann Hunt, Quilt Committee Chairman, announced that 318 tickets have been sold ... so far.

Also, the annual Fall Seminar Committee is forming; the date chosen is October 14th.

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And great news... because our computers have aged out, new computers will replace the current aging models; working with funds of $1,500 per quarter, our goal is to have all replaced before October.

David Ringer has agreed to serve as a Director-at-Large, unanimously approved by those present.

Please be mindful that the upcoming March Membership meeting will provide the opportunity to elect the Nominating Committee. This group will provide candidates for election to president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and 3 vice presidents. Please plan to attend.

Colonel Frank G. Rohrbough (ret.)

AN AMERICAN COMPATRIOT



By Peter Baron

Meet our feature speaker for the March 15 General Membership Meeting:

Retired Air Force Colonel **Frank G. Rohrbough**, whose career spanned 30 years as a health services administrator, will be our speaker. He served in small community military medical treatment facilities to large regional hospitals as well as in numerous staff positions at Major Air Command Surgeon's offices and twice in the Surgeon General's Office on the Air Staff (Hq. US Air Force in Washington, D.C.)

Colonel Rohrbough became a member of the Sons of the American Revolution based on his direct lineage to his Patriot grandfather John Rorabaugh who supported the cause of liberty during the American Revolution.

He served as the Chapter's Grave Marking Chairman for Revolutionary patriots buried in Virginia. In this role, he located and conducted the marking of 6 Patriot Grave Sites for the SAR in the northern Virginia area.

Since 2008, Compatriot Rohrbough has done extensive research on General Washington while he was the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. His research has been conducted at the Libraries of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution, the National Archives, the US Navy Research Library at the Navy



Yard in Washington DC, Valley Forge National Park in Pennsylvania and the Yorktown National Park in Yorktown Virginia. More specifically, his American Revolutionary Period Research has focused on Washington's spying operations during the Revolutionary War.

Compatriot Rohrbough and wife **Diane** are now Boerne residents. He has been an active member of the San Antonio Chapter, Texas Society Sons of the American Revolution since moving to Texas in 2004.

“REMEMBER THE ALAMO”

A Battle Cry Known to Almost Every Texan…





By Carol Thompson

The telling of the fight for Texas independence – the story of the Alamo is shared around the world. Our members are familiar with how those courageous women put their hearts and souls, funds into the rescue of this icon of Texas liberty. We will always be grateful for their steadfast love and decades long physical care of our beloved historical treasure here in the very heart of San Antonio. SAGHS is proud to have many Daughters of the Republic of Texas among our members.

There are now in place so many wonderful changes to enlarge, reestablish the historical footprint that only governmental action can manage to create. History tells us that there was once large locally hewn stone walls that surrounded this whole footprint, creating a barrier fortress. There were acequias bringing river water, a southern gate, lodgings for soldiers, and a church, all surrounded by a 9 to 12-foot-tall adobe wall, encasing approximately 3 acres, which provided some fort-like protection. Today, the Alamo Church and Long Barrack are the only two original buildings that remain from that 1836 battle. The rest, sadly, has been lost to history and the growth of the city.

Rising Damp, a serious moisture erosion problem as some stone ages, ever present for that limestone foundation,



has led to deterioration of the structure causing pieces of stone walls to flake off and crumble, accelerating the damage of this beloved building. To date excavation units have been used to backfill, moisture/temperature monitors are in place which will enable



Artist rendering of the Alamo Visitor Center and Museum
Courtesy Image / Alamo Trust

preservationists to recommend remedies. Borescope inspections help pinpoint voids, small air and sand pockets, concerns with those stone walls inside the church. The cleaning of the Long Barrack walls has already been completed.

And more change is underway. The new Alamo Visitor Center and Museum is scheduled to open in 2027 with nearly 160,000 square feet of space, state-of-the-art cutting-edge immersive elements, including a 4D theatre and special event venues; also the cleaning and repair of the Cenotaph. This massive construction project was kicked off October 1, 2024, a testament to the collaboration, dedication and support given by the State of Texas, Bexar County, and many private donors. The Texas State Legislature appropriated $400 million for the Alamo plan. The Bexar County Commissioners Court has committed $25 million to the project, and there are many private donors.



The new museum will showcase over 5,000 artifacts, including more than 400 items form the renowned Phil Collins Texana Collection. These pieces, cannons fired during the battle, archaeological discoveries from the Alamo site itself, and personal belongings of Sam Houston, William Barrett, David Crockett and other heroes will be on display in new formats.

My thanks to **Kole Siefken**, general manager of The Emily Morgan Hotel for his thoughtful and kind permission to use all photos here, many of the facts. emilymorganhotel.com has much richer future construction information available to the public.

Also, thanks to **Kitty Massey** for adding information about that most valuable DRT Library which can be accessed at bexar.org/3740/DRT-Library.

March - a good month to remember, to honor those who gave all for our Texas freedom - a very good reason to Remember the Alamo.

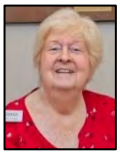


Aerial view of the updates projected to open in 2027 (*Alamo Trust, Inc.)*

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Lessons in Legacy: Sue Seiler's Genealogical Journey





By Carol Thompson

At some point in time, it all started in and around Charleston, Texas, vaguely northeast of what is now Dallas. It was a cotton farming area, literally out in the middle of nowhere.

Sue explained that Charleston was between Paris and Sulphur Springs; at one-time part of Lamar, then Hopkins counties, in a triangle that, to solve several kinds of civic and governmental problems, formed accurately enough - Delta County, one of the few Texas counties that isn't named for a Texas hero.

Running water, electricity supply wires, sewer lines, paved roads.... all lay in the future for those hard as rock citizens of this and many other north east Texas denizens those many years ago. And yes, she did indeed pick that cotton. In fact, her first foray out into the fields, at aged 5 earned her a real dime, darned fine pay for fully five pounds of the gnarly stickery white fluffy stuff. That dime bought lots of wonderful store-bought treasures. Sue Worden was the youngest of three Baptist girls, all college grads by scholarship and hard work, by the way.

Sue, from the earliest of times, has always been fascinated by her family's history. And the adventures of her ancestors are indeed thrilling.

Her ancestors came from all parts – the McGuyers from Tennessee, the Visers from Alabama, the Wordens from Wisconsin. (Peter Worden of English descent landed near Plymouth Rock, for instance.) Many of those tough Americans have earned her the right to honored membership in many lineage societies.



Annie Hunt and Sue Seiler

She graduated from Hardin-Simmons in Abilene. Her first 'real' job was with NEISD here in San Antonio, living with a roommate who needed a second for a double date. A big brassy Marine veteran drove up in a flashy new red Mercury....and it was mutual dislike from the first. Actually, she said, he promptly wrecked that new car, called Sue and her roommate to come get him.....and Lloyd Sterling Seiler Jr., a Lutheran, and Sue were married for 29 years and proudly

produced magnificent daughter Tracy and equally magnificent son Chad – who has now provided the 'they walk on water' grandchildren Gavin and Leila.

While teaching summer school one year, Sue and some of her teacher chums happened on to that now infamous Isom Road library's temporary home. At SAGHS she took classes in research where she met members **Bill Myers**, **Jim Garrett**, and **Pam Hays**, all of whom became good friends. Sue soon saw that through a bit of research she was to be invited into membership in chapters of the DAR, DRT, 1812, Daughters of the Confederacy, Descendants of the Mexican War Veterans groups, among others. She has proven ancestors who contributed to our American history in many eras. And, interestingly enough, just on a whim, she sent out letters to likely relatives, asking for information to help her fill in the blanks, details about her genealogy - and got back fabulous data on two ancestral lines!

During her career, she worked as the Executive Assistant to the owner of a chain of women's clothing stores in Texas and as secretary/bookkeeper in a plywood import business. All the while actively supporting her children as a PTA member and a supporter of the MacArthur band, a dedicated fundraiser and champion volunteer.

She retired from teaching in 2004. Sue has served as our Secretary, Membership Chairman, a Duty Librarian and now has proven invaluable to the Tuesday Volunteer group. Bev Rakowitz explains that Sue is now learning how to catalog, a tremendous help in moving income material onto our shelves.

And.... the best of all worlds.... she is excited that her grandson Gavin has shown extreme interest in her genealogy research. She is hopeful that he will carry on the work that she has begun...a goal that all of us would like to achieve.



Grandson Gavin, granddaughter Leila, and proud grandmother Sue Seiler, touring the SAGHS library

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR UPDATE



By AnnMarie Espinoza

Welcome, New Members!

- Jerry Crockett
- Vicki Ferguson
- Bob Kaska
- Alan Parrish
- Victoria Rich
- Dave Rowe
- Shannon Terrelle

TECHNOLOGY CORNER

Let There be Light from Your Smartphone

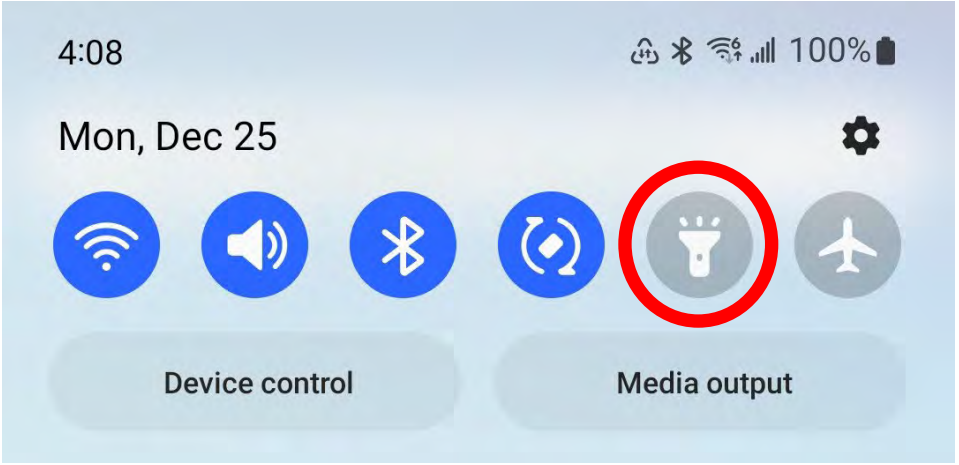


By Don Sharon

Libraries—sometimes—are not very bright areas. Lighting can be limited due to cramped shelves or old electrical work. So—sometimes—a little extra light helps.

With a smartphone (Android or iPhone), you have extra light at your fingertips, especially for people whose eyesight doesn't quite have the twinkle they used to have. You do not need to download a flashlight app. A flashlight is already part of your device.

From your home screen, swipe down from the top to see a row of icons. One looks like a flashlight. By default, it is gray. Touch it, and it turns bluish like the other icons in this screen shot. You also will see a light shining out at the back of your device. Touch it again and the light goes off.



For more information, refer to:

Android—How to turn the flashlight on or off on Android (androidauthority.com/how-to-turn-on-flashlight-android-800697/)

iPhone—Flashlight on iPhone - everything you need to know (appleinsider.com/articles/21/01/15/flashlight-on-iphone---everything-you-need-to-know)

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ENGLAND'S LAWS REGARDING OWNING AND HOLDING OF LAND

Part 2



By Jeffery R. Hankins, PhD

Less than 100 years after the Roman occupiers departed, England was invaded by an even more consequential group. In the mid-400's A.D., the king of Kent (Vortigern) invited warriors from northern Europe to help him defeat other British tribes in the south. Vortigern was to regret this move, as Saxon, Angle, and Jute settlers began to arrive from the continent in ever greater numbers.[1] By 600 A.D., England was almost entirely under the control of Anglo-Saxons, invaders who did not hesitate to kill Britons and take their lands.

The Britons and Anglo-Saxons shared ancestral roots in northern Europe and both used kinship ties as a basis for landholding. But Anglo-Saxons placed greater emphasis on military service to a king and one reward for that service was a grant of land.[2] So there developed a group of English nobles who served Anglo-Saxon kings militarily, as advisors, and by enforcing laws. Most governance in England occurred at the county (shire) level where the shire reeve (sheriff) collected rents and handled civil disputes. If a criminal case had to be decided, the Germanic custom of "compensation" (money) for injury helped to prevent vengeful family feuds.[3] Thus, the initial Anglo-Saxon conquest (500's A.D.) did not typically confiscate land as form of punishment.

One change that the Anglo-Saxons did bring was the first country-wide kingship in England. This meant in theory that the king controlled all land but in practice, Anglo-Saxon kings depended on local nobles and sheriffs to effect any laws. A good example of Anglo-Saxon kingship was when Alfred the Great organized England against Viking invaders in the late-800's A.D. During one of the interludes between Viking raids, Alfred divided his army into two parts so that one half could be battle ready while the other half could tend their crops. He also instructed locals to fortify their towns and build new "burghs" with reinforced walls and a "high street" to allow soldiers and supplies to move easily across the town.[4]



Alfred did manage to save his people from the Vikings in 900 A.D. but by 1016, England found itself under a Viking king. Cnut of Denmark at first purged many opponents but he later relied on the Anglo-Saxon style of kingship which kept local matters in the hands of nobles and sheriffs. Anglo-Saxon England became an occupied space, not unlike what the Romans had established 700 years earlier. King Cnut spent much of his time shoring up his Danish power base, which left Anglo-Saxon England lightly governed.[5] So by the 11th century A.D., England's laws regarding landownership had not changed very much from one thousand years earlier. But that was about to change.

The words "Norman Conquest" suggest urgency and finality but it took over five decades of political machinations to bring it about. In 1066 A.D., no fewer than three groups fought for the English crown and the Norman victory at the Battle of Hastings



was never a sure thing. But by 1086, the Normans had managed to dispossess almost all Anglo-Saxons from England's lands, installing Norman nobles and warriors in their place. They accomplished this partly through an innovative practice that devalued kinship ties, substituting a more formalized system of landholding based in contract.

When Cnut announced his kingship over England in 1015, any Anglo-Saxon heir to the throne had to flee the country. One of these was Edward, son of the king who had been dispossessed by Cnut, and in 1017 Edward crossed the English Channel to Normandy. The Normans and Anglo-Saxons had built a cautious friendship over several hundred years, both having experienced Viking attacks, and young Edward formed a close bond with the future Duke of Normandy, William. King Cnut died in 1035 A.D., followed by his son seven years later, and Edward could return to England as king.[6]

In 1042, Edward (aka "the Confessor") ruled an Anglo-Saxon country whose nobles had supported the previous Viking rulers. And so when Edward appointed several Normans to positions of power, some Anglo-Saxon nobles resisted the king, causing Edward to rely even more for support from Normandy. One of England's most powerful noblemen, Earl Godwine, challenged the king's authority in 1051, prompting Edward to declare that if he (Edward) were to die childless, William of Normandy would be the next king of England.[7] This decreased Earl Godwine's power and there was relative stability in England until Edward the Confessor died (childless) in January 1066. Then things moved quickly.

Earl Godwine had died in 1053 but his son Harold was at King Edward's deathbed. Harold Godwine claimed that the old king had designated him (Harold) as the next king, and he moved quickly to grab the throne of England. Godwin expected opposition from William of Normandy but instead the king of Norway, Harold Hardrada, raised his own claim to England's throne, based on the earlier kingship of Cnut.[8] Hardrada assembled a fleet of Viking ships and sailed for the northeast coast of England. Harold Godwine quickly mustered an Anglo-Saxon army and marched north, where after two bloody battles, Hardrada was killed, and the Viking force returned to Norway.

The Anglo-Saxons did not have time to celebrate, because news arrived that William of Normandy had landed an army on England's southern coast. Amazingly, Godwine and his soldiers marched some 250 miles in about twelve days, to face the Norman army gathered west of Dover. The Battle of Hastings (October 14, 1066) was by no means an assured victory for the Normans. Though exhausted and battle-weary, the Anglo-Saxons linked their shields and repelled hours of Norman cavalry and infantry charges. But the line eventually broke when some Anglo-Saxons started to pursue the retreating Norman cavalry. Duke William ordered a counterattack, the weary Anglo-Saxon defenses started to crumble, and the Normans won the day.[9]



William "the Conqueror" knew there would be more Anglo-Saxon resistance and led his army on a slow march to London, destroyed everything in their path. The city surrendered and on Christmas Day 1066, William of Normandy was crowned King

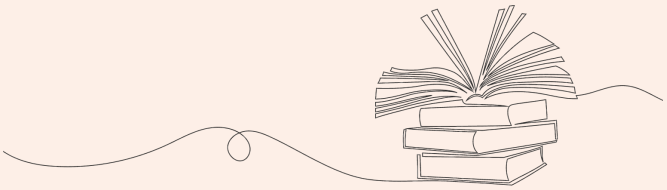
William I of England. But the Normans were conquerors and for years, the Anglo-Saxons continued to resist. Norman warriors started building tall stone towers to protect against rebellion, but the most effective weapon against the Anglo-Saxons was to confiscate their lands. This is exactly what William the Conqueror did in the years after Hastings; a wave of methodical dispossessions turned the Anglo-Saxons from landholders to the tenants of Norman lords.

[1] Hollister, Stacey, Stacey, *Making of England to 1399*, pp. 33-35.
[2] Walter Phelps Hall, Robert Greenhalgh Albion, Jennie Barnes Pope, *A History of England and the Empire-Commonwealth, 4th Ed*. (Waltham: Blaisdell Publishing Co., 1961), p. 24.
[3] Ibid., pp. 28-31.
[4] Hollister, Stacey, Stacey, *Making of England to 1399*, pp.74-76.
[5] Ibid., pp. 112-114.
[6] Ibid., pp. 113-115.
[7] David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact Upon England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), pp. 166-170.
[8] Hollister, Stacey, and Stacey, *Making of England to 1399,* pp. 117-118.
[9] Hall, Albion, and Pope*, A History of England and the Empire-Commonwealth*, pp. 40-42. Harold Godwine was killed by a Norman arrow fired randomly high into the air.



FROM THE LIBRARY

By Beverly Rakowitz



OUR TUESDAY VOLUNTEERS – a subject that I'm happy to explain, extoll, describe. These are the dedicated members, all volunteers of course, who do the WORK of this or any library. Our typical workday begins each Tuesday around 9:00 AM. The current priority structural or physical needs are explained, instructions given, and work commences without a stopping point until a much-needed break for lunch is called. At this point, these hard workers now have time to share life events: celebrate birthdays, pull out those grandkids' photos, share funny stories, or catch up on current events. And by the sound of laughter, it would be accurate to write that a good time is being had by all.

Between 9:30 and quitting time, here is what we accomplish:

- ✓ Stamp and place book labels on new books
- ✓ Check book/item donations against the catalog to make sure that we don't already have those items
- ✓ Make a copy of book title pages and add information, such as the donor acknowledgment
- ✓ Catalog a book or item to let researchers know what we have and where to find it
- ✓ Work on or adding lists of periodicals – the sole province of **Elizabeth Prike**
- ✓ Add our local cemeteries to those available via FindaGrave (our ongoing project)
- ✓ Access donations as they arrive

This is a short list, but you can see what we need to do to maintain our famed library. And as vital as all the former listed activities are, being flexible to handle challenges as they come is essential to keeping our library going. The library is the very heartbeat of our organization.

You are cordially invited to become a proud Tuesday Volunteer. We feature free training and free friendships all in an atmosphere of creating a stellar research facility for generations to come. And all on very comfortable chairs upholstered by very dedicated Volunteers led by **Jackie Meldrom** and her posse **Ellen Cotton**, **Sir Oliver Smith "Smitty," Lesa Forbus**, and **Deborah Knippa**.

No need to call…. just show up … we've got a job for you!

NEW BOOKS

For a full list of new books, view the catalog online or ask the duty librarian in person.

CALL #	TITLE	AUTHOR	DONOR	
AL 00000 (9)	Alabama Atlas of Historical County Boundaries	Long, John H. Editor	Wendy de la Cruz	ALABAMA
AL faye (Oversized)	150 Yesteryears	Fayette County Historical Society	Wendy de la Cruz	
AR 00004 (24)	Law West of Fort Smith: A History of Frontier Justice in the Indian Territory, 1834-1896	Shirley, Glenn	Wendy de la Cruz	AR
FL 00000 (5)	Florida Atlas of Historical County Boundaries	Long, John H., Editor	Wendy de la Cruz	FL
GA 00008 (20)	Index to Marriage License, Carroll County, GA, 1827 - 1980, Vol. I, Groom Index	Fagg, Jenny Martin	Wendy de la Cruz	GEORGIA
GA 00008 (20a)	Index to Marriage License, Carroll County, GA, 1827-1980, Vol. II, Bride Index	Fagg, Jenny Martin	Wendy de la Cruz	
IN 00000 (21)	Indiana Atlas of Historical County Boundaries	Long, John H, Peggy Tuck Sinko	Wendy de la Cruz	IN
IN oran4 (1)	Orange County Heritage	Dillard, Arthur L.	Wendy de la Cruz	
MO 00008 (11)	Enumeration of the County of St. Charles, Missouri Territory for the Years 1817 & 1819	Goe, Melvin B., Sr.	Wendy de la Cruz	MO
NC 00007 (19)	Catalogue, North Carolina Federal Court Records, National Archives	Bennett, William D.	Wendy de la Cruz	NORTH CAROLINA
NC 00000 (28)	North Carolina Genealogical Directory: A Listing of Tar Heel Societies and Selected Books for Sale	Spencer, Romulus Sanderson, Jr	Wendy de la Cruz	
NC 00000 (29)	North Carolina Historical Almanack, The	Wilborn, Elizabeth W.	Wendy de la Cruz	
NC 00007 (19)	Catalogue, North Carolina Federal Court Records, National Archives	Bennett, William D.	Wendy de la Cruz	
NJ monm4	Early Dutch Settlers of Monmouth County, New Jersey	Beekman, George C.	Wendy de la Cruz	NJ
NY newy0	New York City Court Records, 1684-1760 Genealogical Data	Scott, Kenneth, comp.	Wendy de la Cruz	NY
PA 00000 (31)	Pennsylvania Atlas of Historical County Boundaries	Long, John H., Editor	Wendy de la Cruz	PA

OUR LIBRARIANS

During library hours, a volunteer **Duty Librarian** is available to assist patrons. Check the schedule below to find a librarian based on their research strengths and availability. Patrons may also contact the library at **210-342-5242** to arrange assistance during a scheduled librarian's shift.

DUTY LIBRARIAN	RESEARCH STRENGTHS
Martin Soward *1st Monday*	Texas Research
Smitty Smith *1st & 3rd Wed. 2-7*	Beginning research
Kitty Massey *1st & 3rd Saturday*	Settlement of MD to KY; Settlement of VA to KY, PA
Karen Boyers *2nd Sunday*	Ancestry, lineage groups, FamilySearch, research
Julia George *2nd Monday*	Beginning & intermediate research, WV, VA, OH, PA, SC, KY
Beverly Rakowitz *2nd Wed. 10-2*	FindaGrave, Billiongraves, Persi, online catalog
Scott Atkinson *2nd Wed. 2-7*	Genealogy programs, Family Tree Maker, WikiTree.com
Elizabeth Prike *2nd Saturday*	French translation
Nancy Brennan *3rd Sunday*	Huguenots, DAR, lineage societies, New England
Nancy McNamara *3rd Monday*	Five-generation chart, beginning research
Susan Stieler *3rd Wed. 10-2*	Beginning research
Merri Murphy *4th Sunday*	Beginning and intermediate research
Daniel Snell *4th Monday*	Map/land record sources & research methods, TX landowning ancestors
Peggy Weyel *4th & 5th Wednesday*	Ancestry, Migration from Great Britian, NC, MS, TX; PA to SC's Piedmont to TX; Civil War (16 MS & 2nd TX Mounted Rifles)
Barbara Johns *4th Saturday Floater*	Beginning & intermediate research, Quaker migration, online catalog, FindaGrave

SAGHS is a proud member of:

NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Texas State Genealogical Society

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Library Hours:
Sunday: 1 pm – 5 pm
Monday: 10am–4pm
Wednesday: 10am–7pm
Saturday: 10 am – 4 pm

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