

DCGS News

“ADDING CONTEXT TO THE VETERAN’S STORY” IS FOCUS OF JANUARY MEETING



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Our November presenter **Jennifer Holik** returns to continue her series on researching veterans, with her presentation “**Exploring the Greatest Generation: Adding Context to the Veteran’s Story,**” on Thursday, January 9th, at the Denton County Genealogical Society’s monthly meeting.

Attendees will gather at the Emily Fowler Central Library meeting room, 502 Oakland St., Denton. Social time begins

at 6:30 p.m., with a brief business meeting followed by the presentation at 7:00 p.m. This meeting will be hybrid, with the presenter joining us remotely. Visitors are welcome.

Contextual records for veterans are everywhere, not just the National Archives! Once you have established which units your service member served in, it is time to explore unit-level records.

The program will include: The second part of the research strategy to piece together your veteran’s story; how to add to your timeline of service and expand the narrative; available histories, journals, photos, and maps for all the military branches; and valuable foundational records to put your service member into context and write a richer story everyone will want to read.

These records help you write the narrative to your stories, understand why your veteran was who they were after service, and possibly bring up more questions for you to consider.

For Ms. Holik’s complete biography, see the November 2024 issue of *DCGS News*.

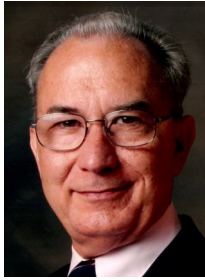


INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- President’s Message 2
- Meeting Minutes 3
- DCGS News Wins! 4
- Treasurer’s Report 5
- Library Field Trip..... 5
- New Podcast 5
- Spared and Shared..... 6
- TxSGS News 7
- MemberConnect..... 7
- November Recap 8
- Scholarship Ideas 8
- Library News 9

Photo: Jones Photographic Studios of America, Studio No. 1. Fireworks at the Denton County Courthouse Celebrating the End of World War I, 1918-; digital image, *The Portal to Texas History* (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/61903/3:1:6Q9M-CSK494-01111/122?i=2&cat=1>); © 2 May 2023); citing Denton Public Library.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Another year has passed and DCGS had some memorable moments throughout the year. The support and interest of society members is commendable and noteworthy. Thanks to all!

Several DCGS members were featured in the 2024 Texas State Genealogical Society Annual Meeting in November, and are worth noting:

Emily Richardson has been elected president of TxSGS for 2025. Her extraordinary leadership and contributions to TxSGS and to the genealogy community are recognized by the TxSGS members. Emily started Kinsearchers after retirement from a higher education career. She served as secretary of the Texas State Genealogical Society and served as a director-at-large of the executive committee in 2024. She has participated in multiple Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy courses, Institute of

Genealogical Studies courses, and Texas Institute of Genealogical Research courses. Congratulations, Emily!

Nancy Gilbride Casey was awarded First Place for Category III: Manuscripts for “No Descendants? No Problem! Where to Donate Your Genealogical Materials” (*Stirpes*, Dec. 2023); First Place for Category IV: Blogs (Individual) for *Leaves on the Tree* (<https://myleavesonthetree.blogspot.com>); and First Place for Category VI: Official Periodicals of Partner Societies for *DCGS News*, Denton County Genealogical Society—editor. Congratulations, Nancy! (See article, p. 4)

Laura Douglas received a Presidential Citation for her work on *Connections*, which led to the new *Stirpes* Study Group. Congratulations, Laura!

—Robert Lane, President
presidentdcdgs@gmail.com

2024-25 DCGS OFFICERS

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Find us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/DentonCountyGenealogicalSociety>

Society Website:

www.genealogydentontexas.org

NOVEMBER 2024 MEETING MINUTES

Denton County Genealogical Society, November 15, 2024 minutes

President Bob Lane called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance. Marian Carroll, membership chair, welcomed 24 members, including new member Melissa Sampson; 6 members were on Zoom in addition to our guest speaker Jennifer Holik.

Minutes of the October 10, 2024, meeting were published in the newsletter. There being no corrections or questions, the minutes were approved as published.

There were no questions about the Treasurer's Report as published in the newsletter and it was filed for audit.

Reports by Board Members

Social/Hospitality—Joan Anderson was unable to attend. Marian and others pitched in to help set up the refreshments and coffee. Eileen O'Neill and Bob and Linda Lane brought cookies.

Librarian—Laura Douglas said that Connections will start in January. A four-series workshop on writing about your family led by Emily Richardson, will also begin in January. The library has had a donation of twenty-eight boxes, mostly books. A donation of \$100 will be given by DCGS to the library in honor of Walta Evans.

Scholarship—Bob Lane announced there were no applications for the scholarship this year. He advised members to pay attention to various educational opportunities throughout this year

and to check October's newsletter for suggestions and ideas for next year's application.

There was no New Business.

Announcements

President Bob Lane announced that Joe Spears, a long-time DCGS member, would be honored Saturday night at UNT and inducted into the Texas Veterans' Hall of Fame. Joe has done great work on finding veterans' graves in the area that were unknown as veterans.

Stacie Briggs, VP/programs announced that the trip to the Dallas Library was postponed due to Walta's memorial. She also reminded members that Jan. 25, 2025, was Discovery Day at the Family History Center.

Stacie introduced the speaker for the evening, Jennifer Holik, who joined us on Zoom. Her topic was "Researching a Veteran." This was part one; the second part is scheduled for the January 9, 2025, meeting.

At the end of the presentation, President Bob Lane asked for questions for the speaker and thanked her for her informative talk. Bob then gave everyone a small round disc with "tuit" written on it because everyone working on genealogy needs to get "a round tuit." President Lane offered as the last word a quote from Benjamin Franklin: "If you would not be forgotten, as soon as you are dead and rotten, either write things worthy of reading, or do things worthy of writing."

President Lane asked for help storing chairs and tables for the library and adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.



*—Respectfully Submitted by
Eileen O'Neill, Secretary*

Image by rawpixel.com

DCGS NEWS EARNS 1ST PLACE IN TXSGS NEWSLETTER COMPETITION

By Nancy Gilbride Casey

For the second year in a row, *DCGS News* has captured first place in the Partner Society Newsletters category in the 2024 Texas State Genealogical Society's Writing Awards. The society submitted issues from 2023-24 for consideration. Winners were announced on Friday, November 15 following TxSGS's annual meeting. DCGS will receive a \$100 prize.

"Wow! What a quality newsletter you produce. It is packed with information, past and upcoming events, links to help further your search, and helpful articles," commented one judge.

Another noted, "There is a variety of information and subject matter. Including the list of new books in the library's genealogy department encourages members to visit and take advantage of their resources...I liked the special monthly subjects in which members can submit a short story about their ancestor(s)."

DCGS News would *not* be possible without the contributions of our members. In fact, more than half of the DCGS membership contributed in some way to the 2023-24 newsletter series by submitting to the Ancestor Question of the Month, writing meeting recaps or previews, providing photos, offering tips and resources for MemberConnect, and proofreading.

This award belongs to *YOU*: Bob Lane, Kathi Coatney, Kathy Lawrence, Beth Leggieri, Jim Leggieri, Laura Douglas, John Windsor, Donna

Spears, Arthur Medrano, Minna Marinko, Charles Robertson, Tara Anderson, Sandra Robertson, Cheryl Cypert, Mary Tate, Emily Coffman Richardson, Stacie Briggs, Monica Wenthold, Marian Carroll, Eileen O'Neill, Linda Jonas, Missy McCormick, Linda Lane, Sally Austin, Fran Shurtleff, Audrey Mabe, Stephen Booher, and the late Walta Evans.

Congratulations to all!



Screenshot from the virtual TxSGS 2024 Writing Awards ceremony.



to our newest DCGS member
Melissa Sampson.
We're glad to have you with us!

TREASURER'S REPORT		
Reports for Months of October & November 2024		
Balance—October 1, 2024		\$3,300.05
Deposits October—Dues	\$220.00	
Total October Deposits		\$220.00
Disbursements		
10/10/24 Speaker's Fee	\$100.00	
Total October Disbursements		\$100.00
Balance October 31, 2024		\$3,420.05
Balance November 1, 2024		
Deposits November—Dues	\$100.00	
Total November Deposits		\$100.00
Disbursements		
11/12/24 Speaker's Fee	\$250.00	
11/14/24 Memorial: Walta Evans	\$100.00	
Total November Disbursements		\$350.00
Balance November 30, 2024		\$3,170.05
<i>—Respectfully Submitted, Linda Lane, Treasurer</i>		



NEW! *The Branching Out Genealogy Podcast* is your go-to guide for family history news, tips, tech, and "tea." Hosted by Elizabeth Swanay O'Neal, CG(R) and Tami Osmer Mize. Find it on Spotify, Podcast Addict, and other platforms.



**Field Trip to
Dallas Public Library's
Genealogy Collection
Saturday, February 8, 2025**

- ◆ Meet at the J. Erik Jonsson Central Library, 1515 Young Street, Dallas
- ◆ Free parking in the library's garage
- ◆ Program begins @ 10 a.m.—30-minute tour/orientation with library staff
- ◆ Free time to research on your own in the library's collections
- ◆ Enjoy your bag lunch in a meeting room and share your finds
- ◆ Depart on your own time
- ◆ *For more info or to join the trip, email newsletterdcgs@gmail.com.*

FIND YOUR CIVIL WAR ERA ANCESTORS IN “SPARED AND SHARED” LETTERS



Spared & Shared

By Beth Leggieri

“**Spared and Shared**” (<https://www.facebook.com/@Griff.CWLetters/>) is a Facebook portal to the largest archive of privately held American Civil War era letters and diaries you’ll find on the web. They have been transcribed and researched by William “Griff” Griffing, public historian. He advertises these postings and features some of the more interesting letters on the Facebook page.

For over 15 years, Griff, a prodigious researcher and compiler, has meticulously transcribed and posted thousands of Civil War era letters and diaries, treasures sourced from private researchers.

Find context and research direction from those who served in the same Civil War battles as your family—perhaps in the same units if you’re lucky! Letters of the time reveal family news: illnesses, deaths, social events, and more.

Why community of kinship (or FAN Club) research is essential: Archived in “Spared and Shared” is the letter of my distant cousin, Mary Ann Langhorne Leitch (1805-1857), to her widowed mother, which included numerous affirmations of my research hypotheses, including:

- ◆ the kerfuffle of her brother’s remarriage
- ◆ the surprising estate distribution conundrum of my third great-grandfather, John Spencer (1786-1845) which later played out over numerous court dates
- ◆ the ease with which the letter’s subjects traveled from one locale to another, documenting the community of kinship’s interaction with allied lines
- ◆ and the significance of New Canton’s Trinity Presbyterian Church to the community; another third great-grandfather, Edward Walton Sims (1800-1875), helped establish the church in 1838, and was serving as a ruling elder at the letter’s writing. The church continues to meet in 2024.

Read Mary Ann’s letter here on the “Spared and Shared 11” blog: <https://sparedshared11.wordpress.com/2018/06/15/1845-mary-ann-langhorne-leitch-to-ann-anderson-langhorne/>

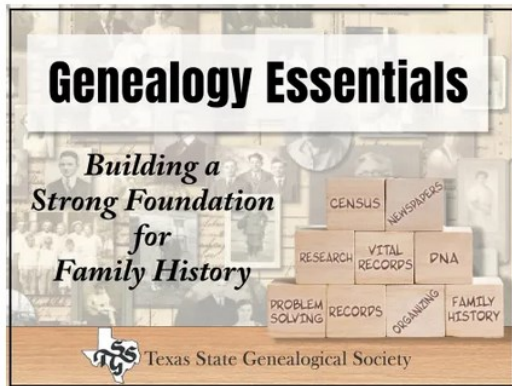
Read more about Griff and his process at these links:

- ◆ <https://www.historynet.com/rambling-this-man-rescues-civil-war-history-one-handed/>
- ◆ <http://john-banks.blogspot.com/2018/01/meet-man-whos-preserving-history-one.html>

Read the transcribed letters at *Billy Yank & Johnny Reb Letters* (a collection of 20+ blogs where the letters are archived): <https://billyyankjohnnyreb.wordpress.com/>

⇒ **Pro Tip from Beth**—It may be easier to simply google “Spared and Shared” and “Soldier’s name” or “Unit Number” etc. to get more directly to any letters for your ancestor. For example, “Spared and Shared” and “John Soldier” or “Spared and Shared” and “12th Maine Infantry.”

TXSGS OFFERS NEW “GENEALOGY ESSENTIALS” ONLINE COURSE BEGINNING JANUARY 17



The Texas State Genealogical Society (TxSGS) has introduced a NEW, fully-online course: “Genealogy Essentials: Building a Strong Foundation for Family History,” to run January 15-February 25, 2025.

The comprehensive, four-week, eight-session course, features terrific instructors, and will be delivered over Zoom. Participants can access the video-based lessons at their convenience, complete practical homework assignments, and engage in guided Zoom discussions with instructors each Saturday during the course. Each video covers a different topic—on getting started, various record sets, organizing, documenting and sharing your research,

and more. Course videos will be available through February 25, 2025. Can't make the live discussion? No problem—they'll be recorded and shared afterwards.

Instructors include some familiar names and faces: Barbara Coakley, **Laura Douglas**, Patti Gillespie, Paula Perkins, **Emily Richardson**, Deta Rogillio, and Jim Thornhill. Topics range from “Introduction to Genealogy Basic Knowledge” and “Using Census Records,” to “Newspaper Research” and “Organizing, Documenting, and Sharing Your Research,” to name a few.

The cost is just \$80 for non-TxSGS members, and \$70 for members. **Registration closes January 17th.** For more information and to register, visit the course website at: <https://www.txsgs.org/featured-events/txsgs-launches-genealogy-essentials/>



MEMBERCONNECT: NEWS, TIPS, & RESOURCES

Nancy Gilbride Casey shares, “I’ve recently purchased two new books which will be helpful to researching Pennsylvania ancestors.

Archives of Pennsylvania, by Denys Allen (PA Ancestors LLC, 2023), covers over 800 different archives located in the Keystone State. Learn how to search archive catalogs and finding aids; what records are stored in various archives; how to work with staff and volunteers; what to bring; and how to hire a researcher. View the archive listings divided into state, regional, county courthouse/archives, collegiate & special archives, local organizational, historical & genealogical archives, and religious archives.

Hot-off-the-presses ***The Pennsylvania Genealogical Almanac*** (Morgantown, Penns.: Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, 2024), is a treasure trove of information for researchers. Topics include organizations and institutions; printed resources; geography, migrations and land records; history, dates and published archives; all about counties, townships and towns; church records; vital records; institutions, incarcerations and executions; occupations (crops and coal), and special sections on Pennsylvania DNA group projects; resources for researching enslaved ancestors; and indentured servitude.”

“RESEARCH A VETERAN” RECAP

By Arthur Medrano

Jennifer Holik presented part one of her two-part on series about military veteran research for our November 2024 DCGS meeting. The presentation covered the basics of researching and documenting a veteran’s service history and a review of the common types of military documentation used in veteran research.

In the first part of her presentation, Jennifer covered the importance of the research process, and the approach used to research a veteran. She noted its similarity to performing genealogical research and the importance of ensuring the data collected is accurate and truthful, using multiple resources and—always—reviewing one’s work. She reviewed the types of resources available, such as online and offline newspapers, libraries, and museums. Cemeteries also provide a resource, but she cautioned that grave marker inscriptions may not always be 100% accurate. Always verify! Lastly, she noted the importance of creating a service timeline for your veteran, pulling together all the collected information

which can include input from family or others who knew the service member.

The second part of her presentation provided an overview of various military service record types, the information they provide and how they can vary from one military service to another. She described her own experiences working with enlistment and discharge documentation, as well as monthly personnel rosters, morning reports, Marine and Navy muster rolls, and the information that can be gleaned from these resources. In closing, she noted that the goal is to “write the story” of the veteran using the information the research has provided.

Jennifer is a well-spoken presenter and excellent researcher of discovering and uncovering military veteran service history. We look forward to part two of her series in January “Exploring the Greatest Generation: Adding Context to the Veteran's Story.”



More Educational Opportunities for the DCGS Scholarship

Consider these upcoming genealogical events or courses and apply for the Diana Pearson White Continuing Educational Scholarship. Next application round will kick off in May 2025, with applications due in September 2025.

- ◇ “Details of Her Life: Discovering More About our Women Ancestors,” with Gena Philibert Ortega, 10/25/25, **Dallas Genealogical Society Fall Seminar** <https://dallasgenealogy.org/event/fall-seminar-4/>
- ◇ **TxSGS 2025 Family History Conference**, November 2025. Enjoy a full slate of nationally known speakers on a wide range of topics.

- ◇ **Applied Genealogy Institute—Learn by Doing** Join us for stress-free registration, small, virtual classes, useful homework assignments, and helpful teacher-student interactions. <https://appliedgen.institute/>
- ◇ **National Genealogical Society Genealogy Courses**—From entire courses like “Foundations in Family History,” to single-topic classes where you can learn valuable skills about understanding DNA, transcribing, extracting, and abstracting documents, reading old handwriting, and much more. <https://www.ngsgenealogy.org/genealogy-courses/>

WINTER LIBRARY EVENTS, NEW BOOKS

It's a full winter schedule at the Emily Fowler Central Library, with new courses, the return of Connections, and more. DCGS members and the public are invited to join in these events. Why not bring a friend and introduce them to genealogy happenings in our community?

Denton County Genealogical Society—Monthly meeting, 1/9. See page one for full information.

Writing Your Memories with Emily*

Friday, 1/17, 10:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Get started writing your family history in this two-part workshop with Emily Richardson. In session 1, we'll discuss writing goals, what to include in your story, and your desired final product. You'll develop a six-month plan and write a piece of memento writing as homework. In session 2, you'll share your plan and story, refine your goals, and look at sample finished products.

Connections: A Genealogy Discussion Group*

Friday, 1/24, 11 a.m.

Explore genealogical research in this fun discussion group. We'll read and discuss articles published in the TxSGS journal *Stirpes*. Once registered, you will receive the focus article and a list of questions to guide our conversation. This group is for anyone interested in learning more about genealogical research and the historical context of their family history.

January article: "Using FAN Clubs to Disprove a Family Legend," by Jean Wilcox Hibben, published in *Stirpes*, 6/2018, p. 24-28

***Registration Required:** [https://
denton.bibliocommons.com/v2/events](https://denton.bibliocommons.com/v2/events)



DCGS Memorial to Walta Evans Brings New Books to the Genealogy Collection

The Denton County Genealogical Society has made a \$100 donation to the Emily Fowler Central Library in honor of long-time DCGS member Walta Evans, who passed away on 28 October 2024.

Walta led a life defined by her love for teaching, family, and community. She had a passion for books and made sure that her grandchildren grew up with a love of stories. As an avid and knowledgeable genealogist, she loved to trace connections across generations, bringing families together with the stories she uncovered.

The library has purchased the following books for the Genealogy Collection with the donation, as Walta was particularly interested in English and French Canadian research. Each book will bear a bookplate honoring her.

- ◇ *Place-names in Devon and Cornwall* by Arthur Grigg
- ◇ *Dictionary of Americanized French-Canadian Names: Onomastics and Genealogy* by Dr. Marc Picard
- ◇ *French Genealogy: Finding the French Records* by Stephen Szabados
- ◇ *Companions of Champlain: Founding Families of Quebec, 1608-1635 with 2016 Addendum* by Denise R. Larson
- ◇ *French Language Lifelines for the Anglo Genealogist: Tips and Tools for Tracking Your French-Canadian Ancestors* by Sandra Goodwin

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

Founded in 1979, the ***Denton County Genealogical Society*** (DCGS) has been serving area genealogy researchers for 46 years, offering classes and events, collaboration, and support, in partnership with the Denton Public Library—a Family Search Affiliate Library.

DCGS is a proud member of the National Genealogical Society and the Texas State Genealogical Society.

The society meets on the second Thursday of the month (September-November, January-May), at the Emily Fowler Central Library, 502 Oakland Street, Denton. Social time begins at 6:30 p.m., program at 7 p.m. Programs may be in-person, virtual, or hybrid (both in-person & via Zoom). Visitors are welcome.

Membership dues are \$20 (individual) and \$30 (couples). To become a member, contact the membership chair at membershipdcgs@gmail.com.



Denton County Genealogical Society • 502 Oakland St., Denton, TX 76201

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