



# BELL COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 5, Issue 3, Fall 2018

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Bell County Genealogical Society (BCGS) publishes this quarterly newsletter for the benefit of members and anyone interested in genealogy. The publication is intended to support the society's goal to promote genealogical research and preservation of records to perpetuate the memory of our ancestors and their contributions to the cultural heritage of our country.

BCGS, formed in 1991 under the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act, is a partner society of [Texas State Genealogical Society](#). Locally, the society supports Temple Public Library.

The society meets on the third Tuesday of each month, 6:30-8:00 p.m., in the McLane Room (third floor) at Temple Public Library, 100 West Adams Avenue, in Temple. Each meeting opens with an introduction of new members and visitors followed by a general session and a speaker or activity of genealogical or historical interest.

BCGS is for everyone, from the beginner to the advanced genealogist. Information about membership is available in this newsletter and at our website [www.txbcgs.org](http://www.txbcgs.org).

*Order a BCGS polo shirt!  
See [page 4](#) for details.*

In this issue of our newsletter, we look at the availability and use of Legislative Petitions as a source for information about our ancestors and the concerns and causes that had their attention. Also potentially useful to your research efforts is an article about Ellis Island passenger lists that are available online and searchable for free at [FamilySearch.org](http://FamilySearch.org).

During our meeting in September, Linda Judd resigned as chairman of the Research Committee. The society regretfully accepted her resignation. Judd will continue as our second vice-president for which we are grateful.

We are thankful that Mary Duke has volunteered to fill Judd's unexpired term as chairman of the Research Committee and that several members have volunteered to assist her. As chairman, Duke leads efforts to respond to requests from the public for the society's assistance with research of Bell County people, places, and events.

Our meeting programs in October and November will include online presentations by genealogy expert Lisa Louise Cooke. We will hold our annual Christmas party in December. The society voted to extend a special invitation to members of the Bell County Historical Commission to attend the party and looks forward to having them join us. Please look for email and at our website for details as they are available about this event.

*David Yeilding*

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## FIND YOUR ANCESTORS IN LEGISLATIVE PETITIONS

### Did Your Ancestor Petition the Government?

by Kimberly Powell

They may not have had internet, or websites such as Change.org, but our ancestors signed petitions just the same. The right to petition is one of America's most basic civil rights, guaranteed by the First Amendment which prohibits Congress from restricting the rights of citizens to petition the government for a redress of grievances. In the early years of our country, limits imposed by primitive modes of transportation and communication meant that petitions were one of the most effective ways for residents to communicate needs to their legislators.

Petitions are basically a form of written request from state citizens to their legislature or General Assembly, requesting that the Assembly use its power to take action on a specific matter. Public improvements such as roads and mills, divorce requests, manumission of slaves, taxation, name changes, military claims, division of counties, and incorporation of towns, churches and businesses are just some of the matters addressed in legislative petitions.

Petitions may include anywhere from a few to hundreds of signatures, making them a useful resource for genealogists dealing with multiple men of the same name in the same location. They may also help to identify an individual's neighbors, religion, marital status, financial status, or business concerns. A few states have either indexed or digitized images online, but for most you will need to search the catalog of the appropriate state archive to learn what's available and how to access the records. Visit <https://www.thoughtco.com/us-state-archives-online-1422754> for information and links to the 50 state archives.

*This article originally appeared in its entirety on March 3, 2017 and was updated on March 17, 2017 at [thoughtco.com/find-your-ancestors-in-legislative-petitions-4120433](https://www.thoughtco.com/find-your-ancestors-in-legislative-petitions-4120433).*



### AN 1852 LEGISLATIVE PETITION FROM BELL COUNTY

The petition shown below is a good example of the valuable genealogical and historical information that the documents might contain. This petition provides insight to conditions in Bell County and the names of many of those living in the area in 1852.

In January 1852, citizens of Bell County petitioned the Texas Legislature for continued protection by U. S. Army troops. The men who signed this document asserted that just more than two years prior to the petition, troops “were posted upon the Leon River and made barracks with such an appearance of permanency as gave promise to those of us that had lands in the vicinity that we might safely settle them. Under these impressions we have moved to and settled our lands and others have purchased land and exhausted [sic] our means to make homes where we might feel safe from the depredating savages that formerly infested this delightful region.

“...About the commencement of the present year by the order of Gen. Smith the troops that we had looked to for protection with so much confidence were put on the march for posts one hundred and fifty miles distant being beyond the usual range of the savages from whom we wish to be protected. Now in as much as the Leon has been and still is the principle thoroughfare and hunting ground.”

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)



# 18<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENEALOGY LOCK-IN

by Nancy Kelsey

The Genealogy Center of the Waco-McLennan County Library is spearheading the lock-in scheduled for October 19, 2018. This free event promises to be a great opportunity for beginners and experts to pursue their family history and learn more about genealogy in general. The event includes eight programs provided by the Genealogy Network of Texas, a state-wide initiative to connect libraries and provide educational and research opportunities. The programs will be streamed live to [forty libraries and societies](#), including the Waco Library, across Texas from 10:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. View the [agenda](#) for details about these program speakers and topics:

- **Judy G. Russell**, JD, CG, CGL, The Legal Genealogist - "Don't Forget the Ladies – A Genealogist's Guide to Women and the Law"
- **Kevin Klaus**, Information Specialist Texas General Land Office Archives and Records – "Discovering Your Ancestors Land Holdings in the Texas GLO"
- **Carl Smith**, Genealogy Librarian-Montgomery County Memorial Library System – "Genealogy Basics: Getting Started on Your Family Tree"
- **Ari Wilkins**, Library Associate at Dallas Public Library – "Organizing and Preserving Photograph Collections"
- **Kathy Huber**, Manager, Genealogy Center, Tulsa City County Library – "Locating Ancestors on the Dawes Roll"
- **Drew Smith**, Assistant Librarian, Academic Services, USF Tampa Library, co-host Genealogy Guys Podcast – "Using Autosomal DNA Testing to Solve Genealogy Brick Walls"
- **Shelby Rowan**, Family Historian, President of Texas Research Ramblers Genealogical Society in Bryan/College Station – "Breaking Brick Walls by Finding Living Cousins"
- **Patti Gillespie**, B.A., M.S., Owner, Family Lines & Stories – "Census Sense: Clues & Conundrums for Intermediate Researchers"

Doors at West Waco Library & Genealogy Center will open at 9:30 a.m. for registration. Attendees will receive a giveaway bag containing more than fifty items. Library computers will be available for use by the public. Library staff and volunteers will provide research assistance from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Genealogy Center. Hereditary groups will set up beginning at 3:00 p.m. Beginning at 4:15 p.m., the library will provide a series of additional in-house programs: "Digging Around Find A Grave," "Oral History and Video: Best Practices for Recording Your Best Oral Histories," "30 Genealogy Internet Sites in 50 Minutes," and "Genealogy Software: Navigating the Options." Door prize winners will be selected and announced at 7:30 p.m.

Everyone is encouraged to attend the lock-in on October 19 at West Waco Library & Genealogy Center, 5301 Bosque Blvd., Suite 275, Waco, TX 76710. Contact is Bill Buckner at 254-750-5945 or [billb@wacotx.gov](mailto:billb@wacotx.gov).



## BCGS POLO SHIRTS

Shirts are 50/50 cotton/polyester and available in a variety of colors and sizes with the BCGS logo embroidered just below the collar on the front. To order, email Kathy Taylor at [diamondt.kathy@yahoo.com](mailto:diamondt.kathy@yahoo.com) and put "BCGS Polo Shirt" in the subject.

**Colors:** The official color of the society's polo shirts is hunter green with the logo in white. However, shirts are available in other colors. Email Kathy for availability.

**Sizes and pricing:** Men/unisex SM-XL \$17; Women SM-XL \$18\*; Men 2XL & 3XL \$19; Women 2XL & 3XL \$20\*. Please email Kathy for availability and prices of larger sizes.



*\*Shirts for women run small, and Kathy suggests you order at least one size larger than you normally wear. Shirts for women are more fitted than the men/unisex sizes. If you like a roomier fit, Kathy suggests you order the unisex size.*

## ARRIVAL OF THE RAILROAD AND THE FOUNDING OF TEMPLE

In 1881, the Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe Railroad founded the town of Temple. According to tradition, the town received its name at the insistence of Captain R. B. Harris, the engineer in charge of construction, establishment, and planning for the railroad. Harris wanted the new town named in honor of Virginia-native Major Bernard Moore Temple, the chief engineer for the railroad. Arrival of the railroad and the founding of Temple followed a series of attempts to bring the railroad to Bell County.

The first serious attempt to establish a railroad through the county occurred in 1868, when a group of businessmen from Port Sullivan, Cameron, and Belton promoted a project to connect a railroad from Hearne on the Texas Central Railroad, through Port Sullivan in Milam County and on to Belton. Also in 1868, Bell County residents held a similar meeting in Belton and organized themselves into a railroad company. The men completed a survey for the railroad but problems associated with Reconstruction and the financial panic of the early 1870s prevented its construction. The men abandoned the project.

In 1876, leading businessmen of Bell County organized the Hearne, Belton & Northwestern Railroad Company. The project, like its predecessor of 1868, failed.

In an effort to enhance trade opportunities for merchants, leading residents of Galveston formed the Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe Railroad. In 1877, with only forty-five miles of track completed, the company continued construction toward Belton. When financial difficulties threatened completion of the railroad to Belton, Bell County Commissioners Court granted a ten-year county tax exemption with the condition that the company agree to complete the railroad to Belton within two years.

In February 1880, the Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe Railroad completed the railroad to a point near Cameron in Milam County. When it became apparent that the railroad would not reach Belton within the two-year limit, the court had no choice but to grant a two-year extension. During a meeting with a delegation from Belton to discuss the final phase of construction, Major B. M. Temple informed the committee that the "railroad interests of Belton have long suffered from some former surveys made through here, the same being faulty from the fact that more expedient routes exist." This was the first indication that the railroad was considering an alternate route through the county.

By June 1880, grading on the railroad advanced to within fifteen miles of Belton. Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe Directors John Sealy, J. W. Wallis, and Walter Gresham traveled to Belton and delivered the news that the railroad needed an additional \$75,000 and for the town to furnish the right of way and depot grounds. Having little choice, the residents of Belton agreed.

It was not long before rumors began to circulate that the railroad would circumvent the town of Belton. Two events confirmed these rumors. First, on August 13, 1880, the railroad purchased 187 acres on Knob Creek from Jonathan E. Moore. Second, the railroad located their depot outside the city limits and north of Belton. The final blow for Belton railroad promoters came a couple of months later. On October 1, the railroad amended its charter and requested building of the northern branch line to Fort Worth from its new terminus at Temple Junction on the land purchased from Moore. Therefore, the railroad from Galveston would not go to Belton but would instead go to Temple Junction and from there to Fort Worth.

Rail service to Temple completed in early February 1881. By April, the town consisted largely of freight trains, saloons, boarding houses constructed mainly of board sides and canvass backs, and business houses, all but three of which were temporary structures. On June 29, the Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe Railroad held a public sale of town lots, officially recognizing Temple as a town.

*From the book "Notes on Bell County, Texas, Volume 3, Temple,"  
by Nancy Graff Kelsey and Michael W. Kelsey.*



## BCGS MEMBER PARTICIPATES WITH RESEARCH TEAM

On September 17, 2018, BCGS First Vice-President (Programs) Nancy Kelsey attended a joint meeting of the Hill County Genealogical Society and the Hill County Historical Commission held at John W. Erwin Hill County Courthouse Annex in Hillsborough. During the meeting, Hill County historian Garland Lively presented a report on research that he and a team of researchers are conducting on the upper Brazos River area in Hill, Bosque, and McLennan counties. This is a significant body of research dealing with early settlement of the area.

Kelsey serves as a member of the research team and is also a member of Bell County Historical Commission. She shared with the team the Robertson Plantation Collection that includes the journals and correspondence of E. S. C. Robertson of Salado. The collection provided a wealth of information about the formation and early settlement of Hill County. This information led to enhancements/revisions to the documented history of the county and the addition of Julia Martin's name to the list of early women pioneers in the county. Martin was one of Robertson's overseers and assisted him with managing his land holdings in Hill County. A Hill County resolution recognized Michael and Nancy Kelsey and Cile Ambrose Cowan, a Robertson descendant and owner of his house and collection, for their contribution to efforts to accurately and completely document the county's history.



**C. F. of Tampa: "What is the correct pronunciation of GENEALOGY?"**  
**Answer: "Not 'jee-nee-OL-uh-jee.' Say 'JEN-ee-AL-oh-jee.'"**  
**From the *El Paso Times*, May 17, 1941.**



## DID YOU KNOW

American immigrants throughout US history have come from all around the world. With several ports of entry, tracking down where your ancestors are from and which port they came through can be quite the search. Take a look at which countries Ellis Island immigrants traveled from before they made America their new home.

Italy	2,502,310	Poland	153,444
Russia	1,893,542	Portugal	120,725
Hungary	859,557	France (including Corsica)	109,687
Austria	768,132	Denmark	99,414
Austria-Hungary	648,163	The Netherlands	78,602
Germany	633,148	Spain	72,636
England	551,969	Armenia	70,000
Ireland	520,904	Bulgaria	42,085
Sweden	348,036	Belgium	63,141
Greece	245,058	Wales	27,113
Norway	226,278	Yugoslavia	25,017
Ottoman Empire	212,825	Finland	7,833
Scotland	191,023	Switzerland	1,103
The West Indies	171,774		

*Extracted from the article "Ellis Island and Castle Garden Immigration Records" by Briana Taylor, July 26, 2018. The full article is available at [FamilySearch.org](http://FamilySearch.org).*



## COMPLETE ARCHIVE OF ELLIS ISLAND RECORDS—NOW ONLINE FOR FREE

Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty are famous landmarks in U.S. history. The Statue of Liberty, located on Liberty Island, is a symbol of freedom. Ellis Island opened the gates to millions as the home of the Ellis Island Immigration Station—and millions of passenger arrival records for U.S. immigrants came with it. Now, a complete collection of Ellis Island passenger lists is available online and searchable for free at FamilySearch.

These ship passenger records span more than half the nation's history, including millions of arrivals during the [“Great Wave” of immigration \(1880s–early 1920s\)](#). They also include a variety of transportation types, from the 380-ton cargo ship *Hector* that arrived from Liverpool on 8 January, 1820 to VARIG Airlines flight 850 from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, that arrived in New York on 2 July, 1957.

Ship passenger lists can teach you more than you might think about your traveling ancestors. Earlier records may include a full name, age, gender, occupation, nationality, intended destination (country), name of ship and date of arrival. Later records may also name traveling companions and relatives “back home” or in the United States. You may also learn a relative's marital status, physical description, last permanent residence, or birthplace. Any of these details can help you build your family tree and connect with your immigrant ancestors.

### Search Ellis Island Records for Free

A trio of new collections representing the complete archive of Ellis Island passenger records is now available on the free genealogy website [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org). Search these to discover your immigrant ancestors during 3 distinct time periods:

#### [New York Passenger Lists \(Castle Garden\) 1820–1891](#)

These passenger lists document over 13 million immigrants and international travelers who arrived in New York City beginning in 1820, when the federal government first required ship captains to submit lists of passengers to customs officials. Among these records are customs passenger lists for those who arrived at Castle Garden, the State of New York's official immigrant reception facility, during its years of operation (1855–1890). You can search the name index for your ancestors or browse the record images.

#### [New York Passenger Arrival Lists \(Ellis Island\) 1892–1924](#)

This is a searchable index of 25 million names of immigrants and international passengers who arrived at Ellis Island from 1892 to 1924. Once you find a name of interest, you can click through to view individual record images at FamilySearch. If you're interested in seeing a photo of the actual ship your ancestor travelled on, or learning more about Ellis Island as a historic port of entry into the US, check out the free [Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island website](#).

#### [New York, New York Passenger and Crew Lists 1925–1957](#)

Search nearly 29 million indexed names (and over 5 million record images) for these lists of post-Ellis Island-era international arrivals in New York Harbor and at New York airports.

Not sure when your immigrant ancestors arrived? Here's a tip: If they were alive between 1900 and 1930, look them up in the 1900, 1910, 1920 or 1930 U.S. censuses. There should be a column indicating their year of arrival. Still not sure? Search for their names in all three of the passenger list collections—it's free.

*This article was posted at [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) on August 13, 2018.*



## UPCOMING MEETING PROGRAMS

### **October 16 - Inspiring Ways to Captivate the Non-Genealogists in Your Life**

**(Lisa Louise Cooke presentation)**

Ms. Cooke discusses why it is important for genealogists to focus on what we want the intended audience to know to help them to understand and appreciate the family and their connections to each other.

### **November 20 - New and Must-Have Google Tips for Genealogy**

**(Lisa Louise Cooke presentation)**

Learn the powerful search tips and tricks that will immediately help you maximize the Google search box!

### **December 18 - Christmas Party**

Look for details as they are available at our website and by email.

*Suggestions for future programs are welcomed  
and should be sent by email to [bcgsprograms@gmail.com](mailto:bcgsprograms@gmail.com).*



## PHOTOS



BCGS members Nancy Kelsey, Gloria Harris, Judy Tyler, Terry Tyler, and Jalenn Ellis recently attended a Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting.



## SURNAME RESEARCH

Georgia Downey ([gid12000@yahoo.com](mailto:gid12000@yahoo.com)) - **Riley, Beene, Moore, Hill, Vannoy, Spencer, Breedlove, Graves, McEwen, Davison, Kuykendall, Embree, and Adair.**

Lonnie Moore ([lonnie@lonniemoore.com](mailto:lonnie@lonniemoore.com)) - **Moore, Horton, Knight, and Lancaster.**

James E. (Jim) Bridges ([bridgework@aol.com](mailto:bridgework@aol.com)) – **Wright** and **Kelsy/Kelsey/Kelcy**. My great grandfather E. A. or A. E. Wright was adopted by his stepfather Kelsey after the death of his own father and the remarriage of his mother. I am seeking info on that relationship and the burial place of Alexander Edwin Wright.

Kathleen Trautman ([kathleenst@mac.com](mailto:kathleenst@mac.com)) - **Smith, Robey, Mead, Price, Carothers, Watson, Henderson, Gillespie, Calloway, Webb, Cowan, and Blewett.**

Brenda McGuire ([bmcguire7679@gmail.com](mailto:bmcguire7679@gmail.com)) - **Goates, Bingham, Logsdon, and Pilcher.**

Marilyn Fleisher ([news@saladovillagevoice.com](mailto:news@saladovillagevoice.com)) - **Fritsch, Richards, and Beadle.**

Rich Trautman ([trautmanrich@gmail.com](mailto:trautmanrich@gmail.com)) - **Trautman, Stone, and Lovelady.**

Ronald Neubert ([singtoswing@gmail.com](mailto:singtoswing@gmail.com)) - **Neubert** and **Zoellner** (both of German extraction).

Nancy Kelsey ([mnkelsey@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mnkelsey@sbcglobal.net)) - **Allen, Barnes, Chaszczewski/Kaczewski/Kaszewski/Kaschewsky/Kashefsky, Combs, Dietrich, Duff, Fackler, Foster, Goodman, Graff/Graeff/Gref, Graham, Harper, Jung, Miller, Paul, Reed, Rice, Roney, Ruppenthal, Russell, Shyrock/Shryock, Tatum, and Tharp/Tharpe.**

Ginny Parsons ([ginnyguinn@yahoo.com](mailto:ginnyguinn@yahoo.com)) - **Barnes, Brown, Davis, Dearman, Dobson, Durden, Fry, Galyon, Guinn, Killian, O'Connor/O'Conner, O'Neal/O'Neil/O'Neill, Otis, Parks, Rhode, Ryan, Simpson, Tuberty/Tubridy/Tubirdy, Vick, and Ward.**

Jennifer Schwenker ([junder4@aol.com](mailto:junder4@aol.com)) - **Teaff, Shipp, Jones, and Bawcom.**

*Submit your list of surnames and contact email address to [info@txbcqs.org](mailto:info@txbcqs.org) for inclusion in future newsletters.*



Click [here](#) for details.

**BELL COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**  
**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT ENCLOSED (PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH): \$\_\_\_\_\_

FAMILY SURNAMES AND LOCALITIES OF INTEREST TO YOU (NEED NOT LIMIT TO BELL COUNTY OR TEXAS):

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(CONTINUE ON REVERSE IF MORE SPACE IS NEEDED)

**MEMBERSHIP:** Membership is open to all persons who have attained their twelfth birthday, are willing to abide by the by-laws, and are willing to support the society by service on committees. Members are encouraged to submit the surnames and localities they are researching.

**ANNUAL DUES:** \$12.00 per individual; \$15.00 per family. Dues cover the period 1 January through 31 December and are payable January 1 of each year.

**TO JOIN:** Please complete and mail this Membership Form with your check or money order payable to Bell County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 1493, Temple, TX 76503-1493. Alternatively, consider bringing your form with you to one of our meetings.

**NOTE:** Current members may use this Membership Form to update their personal information. Please note that it is important that the society has current contact information, particularly in the event a meeting is canceled.

## **BCGS OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

An elected Executive Board is the governing body of BCGS, and standing and special committees are appointed by the society's president.

### **OFFICERS**

President – David Yeilding

First Vice-President (Programs) – Nancy Kelsey and Kathy Taylor

Second Vice-President (Reporter) – Linda Judd

Secretary – Becky McEntire

Treasurer – Terry Tyler

Historian – Juanita Jones

### **COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Door Prizes – Richard Trautman

Facebook – James Bozeman

Refreshments – Jalenn Ellis

Research – Mary Duke

Website & Newsletter – Ginny Parsons



Visit us at our website [www.txbcgs.org](http://www.txbcgs.org)  
and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/groups/120501541316366/) (https://www.facebook.com/groups/120501541316366/)



### **NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION**

The BCGS newsletter is published quarterly by editor Ginny Parsons. Send comments, questions, and suggestions for content to [info@txbcgs.org](mailto:info@txbcgs.org).

***LOOK FOR OUR WINTER 2019 NEWSLETTER IN JANUARY!***

