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.

**Order a BCGS polo shirt!**

*See page 5 for details.*

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**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

It is hard to believe it is already time for our summer newsletter! I hope this finds everyone well and prepared for the hot temperatures to come.

This is a busy time for our society, and we need volunteers to accomplish the activities described below. Please contact me if you are available to help.

- We recently formed a committee to coordinate a beginning genealogy seminar tentatively set for November 2, 2019, at Temple Public Library. We need help to plan and conduct the event.

- Temple Public Library has requested our assistance to organize the contents of three vertical file cabinets in their Genealogy Room. A few members volunteered to assess the project and develop a tentative plan and schedule to accomplish the work. I will provide more information about this important project at an upcoming meeting. Volunteers are needed to organize items in the cabinets.

- During a recent meeting, we discussed the need to review and potentially revise our bylaws created in 1991 with the founding of our society and revised in 1998. In the near future, we will formalize an approach to develop and propose the revisions. In the meantime, I ask that each member look over the existing document and provide comments, concerns, and suggestions for improvement. Click [here](#) to view a copy of the bylaws.

Please plan to join us for our meetings. Our programs this summer focus on various technologies useful for genealogists.

Wishing everyone a happy and safe Fourth of July and summer,

*Judy Tyler*

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**IN THIS ISSUE:**

- **FINDING WIDOWS, DISAPPEARING HUSBANDS, AND LOST RELATIVES** ([PAGE 2])
- **TEXAS HOUSE BILL 703** ([PAGE 5])
- **SURNAME RESEARCH** ([PAGE 6])
- **UPCOMING MEETING PROGRAMS** ([PAGE 7])
- **DID YOU KNOW** ([PAGE 7])
- **PHOTOS** ([PAGE 8])
- **BCGS MEMBERSHIP FORM** ([PAGE 9])
- **BCGS OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS** ([PAGE 10])
Great-grandma may be listed as a widow in the 1900 federal census...but she might not actually be a widow after all. Women in the past sometimes claimed widowhood to protect their family’s good name. A recent reader’s question prompted this post for sharing some tips to finding widows, disappearing husbands, and lost relatives.

Widow or Not?
Genealogy Gems reader, Mary, wrote us the following comment:

“My grandmother Kitty’s first husband was Robert Lee Jeffries. They married in 1887 and had 4 or 5 children. He died in the very early 1900’s. She later remarried my grandfather, John, and they had four children together. All this took place in Hardin County, Kentucky. I cannot find when, where, or how her first husband died, or where he is buried. Can you help me?”

I think we can give Mary some tips to help her find Robert. As you read along, consider how these same tips and techniques could help you in finding widows, disappearing husbands, and lost relatives.

Finding Death Records in the Early 1900s
A death record is typically a good way to determine where someone went. If you can locate a death record for your lost individual, they aren’t lost anymore! Finding death records for the time period that Mary is asking about isn’t usually too difficult, unless there has been a record loss for that county. By doing a quick check on FamilySearch wiki for Hardin County, Kentucky, I learned that many records between 1852 and 1911 are missing, including some of the death records. That may be why Mary wasn’t able to find one.

When a death record can’t be found, there are many alternatives that we can exhaust. Cemetery records, newspaper obituaries, and probate records are just a few suggestions. But before we move into alternative records, something caught my attention.

Misspelled Names
With a last name like “Jeffries,” there could be several ways to spell it. Jeffrys, Jefferies, Jeffres, and perhaps many more. What can you do when you have a name, first or last, that could be spelled so many different ways?

One suggestion is to search by each of the possible name spellings, but another tool is to use an asterisk or wildcard. The first part of the surname Jeffries is always the same: J e f f. Whether you are searching records at Ancestry, Findmypast, or MyHeritage, you can use an asterisk after the last “f” to indicate you are looking for any of the possible surname spellings.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)
I didn’t find any great matches using the criteria you see in the image above, but I took off the death date range and Kitty’s name and found Bob Lee JeffERies living in his parents home in 1880 in Hardin County, Kentucky. Take a close look at this image:
Do you see the mistake? If you look at the digital image of the census, it spells the surname as Jeffries, however the record is indexed as Jefferies. Not to mention that Robert Lee is recorded as Bob Lee. This combination of name differences will always cause a little hiccup in our search process. This is why it is so important to consider name spellings when searching for records.

Even though using an asterisk didn’t produce a death record, you can see how using a tip like this can help when searching for any records online.

Alternatives to Death Records
Like I mentioned before, Hardin county had some record losses. Just because their death records may have been lost or destroyed, doesn’t mean the probate records were.

Using FamilySearch.org, I used the browse option to search probate record books in Hardin county, Kentucky. I found a record dated 25 Apr 1893, in which Kitty wrote her own will. [1] She mentions Lucy (possibly Robert’s mother found in the 1880 census) and others by name. What is strange is there’s no mention of a husband. I wondered if perhaps husband Robert had died before 1893. Unfortunately, there was no Robert Jeffries (or any variation) in the previous record books and the record book that Kitty appeared in was the last one available online.

When no will can be found, that doesn’t mean there is not a probate record available. The next step would be to visit the Hardin County probate office or State Archives to see if there is an estate packet available for Robert.

An estate packet is typically filled with all sorts of genealogy goodies! Receipts, list of heirs, and affidavits may shed light on many a burning question for your targeted ancestor.

The Disappearing Husband
Sadly, not all husband’s leave their families due to their demise. In the past, it was sometimes easier and more appealing to call yourself a widow or widower when your spouse left you. Kitty wrote a will in 1893 and did not mention a husband. In 1900, she was living in her father’s house and her children were divided up among the relatives, including her in-laws. Could Robert have left Kitty and the children? There may only be one way to know for sure.

Kitty remarried. To do that, either Robert had to die or she would need to be divorced. Divorce records can sometimes be located on a county level or at a state archives. I gave Hardin County Clerk of Courts a call and found out that divorce records between the years of 1804 -1995 are held at the Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives. Their website provided details to ordering several types of records, including divorce records.

Looking in All the Wrong Places
Sometimes, we are so focused on one area that we can’t see past the end of our noses! Many of our ancestors lived on the borders of other counties. Hardin County, Kentucky is especially unique. It borders not only eight other Kentucky counties, but it also borders Harrison County, Indiana. It’s always a good idea to branch out to these nearby locations when you are having trouble locating records.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)
FINDING WIDOWS, DISAPPEARING HUSBANDS, AND LOST RELATIVES
(CONTINUED)

A Re-cap
When struggling to find a record for any targeted ancestor, try the following:

• Consider alternate name spellings and search for common nicknames.
• When there has been a possible record loss, search for alternative records that may hold the information you are looking for.
• Determine which counties/states your targeted location is bordering and search there for records as well.

This article was posted on April 20, 2019, at LisaLouiseCooke.com, the website of Lisa Louise Cooke, host of the Genealogy Gems Podcast.

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TEXAS HOUSE BILL 703 PROPOSING FURTHER LIMITATIONS FOR ACCESS TO BIRTH RECORDS DID NOT PASS

“During the recently concluded legislative session, genealogists across the state joined together to oppose a bill which would’ve significantly affected access to Texas birth records. Currently in Texas, a birth record is public information and available to the public 75 years after the date of birth. House Bill 703 (by Rep. Cody Harris of Hillsboro) proposed to close birth records for 125 years. I’m pleased to report that the bill did not pass.”

This information was included in an email from Teri Flack, Chair, Records, Preservation, and Access Committee (RPAC), Texas State Genealogical Society, dated June 17, 2019.

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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 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.
SURNAME RESEARCH

Georgia Downey (gjd12000@yahoo.com) - Riley, Beene, Moore, Hill, Vannoy, Spencer, Breedlove, Graves, McEwen, Davison, Kuykendall, Embree, and Adair.

Lonnie Moore (lonnie@lONTniemoore.com) - Moore, Horton, Knight, and Lancaster.

James E. (Jim) Bridges (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) - Smith, Robey, Mead, Price, Carothers, Watson, Henderson, Gillespie, Calloway, Webb, Cowan, and Blewett.

Brenda McGuire (bmcguire7679@gmail.com) - Goates, Bingham, Logsdon, and Pilcher.

Marilyn Fleisher (news@saladovillagevoice.com) - Fritsch, Richards, and Beadle.

Rich Trautman (trautmanrich@gmail.com) - Trautman, Stone, and Lovelady.

Ronald Neubert (singtoswing@gmail.com) - Neubert and Zoellner (both of German extraction).


Ginny Parsons (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/Tiburdy, Vick, and Ward.

Jennifer Schwenker (junder4@aol.com) - Teaff, Shipp, Jones, and Bawcom.

Terry Tyler (ttyler@hot rr.com) Blakely, Blickensderfer, Cardwell, Clearly, Cook, Cooksey, Crawford, Dillon, Franks, Frazer, Furr, Gamble, Johnson, Jones, O'Bryant, Oehler, Ricksecker, Rodgers, Russell, Smith, Tyler, Walderich, Winchester, Windsor, and Wofford.

Judy Tyler (jkstyler@hot rr.com) Arendale, Arnold, Bennett, Bishop, Boyd, Carrol, Clark, Cooper, Courington, Daniel, Dobson, Eddins, Elston, Foxcraft, Franklin, Gautier, Glass, Harder, Henderson, Howard, Lindsey, Long, Mackey, Marsh, McNutt, Neel, Pitts, Robbins, Sellers, Sevier, Stubblefield, Trimmier, and Wilson.

Kathy Taylor (kathy.taylor56@yahoo.com) Casheer, Davee, McDaniel, Moore, Owens, Polk, Underwood, and Vinson. Husband’s line: Barron, Finney, Scott, and Taylor.

Submit your list of surnames and contact email address to txbcgs@gmail.com for inclusion in future newsletters.
UPCOMING MEETING PROGRAMS

July 16 – Your Guide to Cloud Backup
Back up your files is a mandatory move if you want to protect your family history. In this video, we will clear the clouds and answer your questions so that you can protect your data with confidence. You will get answers to questions like: What is cloud backup? Why should I use cloud backup? How does cloud backup work? Is cloud backup safe? What should I look for when selecting a cloud backup service? My personal cloud backup choice.

August 20 – Genealogists Guide to Dropbox
Dropbox is a free / subscription Cloud-based service that allows you to synchronize all types of files among all of your computing devices. It is ideal for files that you want easy access to from mobile devices because so many other apps are compatible with Dropbox. In this 30-minute video, we will learn more about what it is and how you can use it in conjunction with your genealogy research.

September 17 – Beginning Evernote
Evernote is a free tech tool that enables you to instantly capture and retrieve everything that is important to your research. Cloud storage of your notes allows you to access them from any computing device, no matter where you are. OCR adds another level of search-ability.

Suggestions for future programs are welcomed and should be sent by email to bcgsprograms@gmail.com.

DID YOU KNOW

Military records, such as those described below, can often provide valuable information on the veteran and members of the family. For more information, visit the National Archives website.

Compiled Service Records. Compiled service records consist of an envelope containing card abstracts taken from muster rolls, returns, pay vouchers, and other records. They will provide you with your ancestor's rank, unit, date mustered in and mustered out, basic biographical information, medical information, and military information.

Pension Applications and Pension Payment Records. The National Archives also has pension applications and records of pension payments for veterans, their widows, and other heirs. The pension records in the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C. are based on service in the armed forces of the United States between 1775 and 1916. Pension application files usually provide the most genealogical information. These files often contain supporting documents such as: narratives of events during service, marriage certificates, birth records, death certificates, pages from family Bibles, family letters, depositions of witnesses, affidavits, discharge papers and other supporting papers.

Bounty Land. Bounty land warrant application files relate to claims based on wartime service between 1775 and March 3, 1855. If your ancestor served in the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, early Indian Wars, or the Mexican War, a search of these records may be worthwhile. Bounty land records often contain documents similar to those in pension files, with lots of genealogical information. Many of the bounty land application files relating to Revolutionary War and War of 1812 service have been combined with the pension files.
On June 8, 2019, BCGS members Judy Tyler, Terry Tyler, Nancy Kelsey, Jalenn Ellis, Gloria Harris, and Ginny Parsons were among the large crowd gathered for the ceremony associated with designation of McLane Cemetery as a Historic Texas Cemetery. This designation is an important step to preserving the cemetery and ensuring its existence for generations to come.

Nancy Kelsey, as chairman of the Bell County Historical Commission, spoke to the group about the importance of the designation and thanked Deborah Shutz and McLean Cemetery Association for their efforts to gain the recognition.

(Photos courtesy of Gloria Harris)
BELLCOUNTYGENEALOGICALSOCIETY
MEMBERSHIPFORM

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):
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

(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 – Judy Tyler

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

Membership – Judy Tyler

Door Prizes – Richard Trautman

Refreshments – Jalenn Ellis

Research – Mary Duke

Facebook – James Bozeman

Website & Newsletter – Ginny Parsons

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

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Newsletter Publication

The BCGS newsletter is published quarterly by editor Ginny Parsons. Send comments, questions, and suggestions for content to txbcgs@gmail.com.

NOTE: Bell County Genealogical Society is not responsible for the content of any external websites to which we provide links. Be sure to read the privacy policy for the website before disclosing any personal information. These websites or services have separate data and privacy practices independent of us, and therefore we hold no responsibility or liability for their policies or actions.

Look for our Fall 2019 Newsletter in October!

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