

The WHAGS Journal



Volume 5, Issue 2— October 2024



Editor's Note Ron Ware

Golly! Wasn't the September general meeting great? Our speaker, Lynn Palermo, did an excellent job of walking us through the process of writing Ancestor Profiles. She follows up her presentation with a contribution to the WHAGS Journal with an article named "5 Reasons You Should Be Writing Your Family History." Two of our WHAGS Writers members are working on profiles and I bet the presentation, and article has given them the incentive to move forward with their writing. Maybe others will follow.

A big thanks goes to Neal Scott and Pacquitta Laverents, two WHAGS leaders who worked diligently to make September's virtu-

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👤 The following article by 👤
👤 Lynn Palermo serves as a 👤
👤 follow-up to her Septem- 👤
👤 ber presentation around 👤
👤 writing ancestor profiles. 👤
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5 Reasons You Should Be Writing Your Family History Stories

By Lynn Palermo

Family history is more than a collection of names and dates on a family tree. It's a tapestry of stories that bind generations together, offering glimpses into the lives, struggles, and triumphs of those who came before us. Whether you're a seasoned genealogist or just getting started on your journey of uncovering your ancestry, writing your family history is a priceless endeavor. Here are



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Presidents Address Gail Colby

President's Note – October 2024

The new program year is underway, and it will be Christmas before we know it. The Holiday Celebration at the December meeting is always a wonderful experience with great food and great camaraderie. I always enjoy the Members' Show and Tell. It is amazing to learn about others' research and the stories of their families. We would love to hear your stories, see your heirlooms, and learn about your research, please consider sharing. Contact Tom Woltz or Rick Arnes to get on the list of presenters.

If you read my note from

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5 Reasons

five compelling reasons why you should begin writing your family history stories today.

1. Preserving Your Family's Legacy for Future Generations

One of the most important reasons to write your family's history is to preserve your legacy. Time has a way of erasing memories, and oral traditions can easily fade with each passing generation. By writing down these stories, you provide a lasting record that your descendants can cherish. The stories you record today might be the only connection your great-grandchildren have to their roots. Whether it's your grandparents' journey to a new country, a relative's military service, or the everyday challenges your ancestors faced, these stories serve as a powerful way to keep your family's legacy alive.

2. Stories Make Facts Memorable

Facts alone can be easily forgotten, but when woven into a compelling story, they have the power to stick in people's minds. Stories engage our emotions and imagination, which helps us retain details long after we've heard them. Writing your family history in story form allows you to convey the facts—dates, names, and places—in a way that will resonate with readers. For example, rather than simply recording that an ancestor fought in World War II, you can narrate their experiences, chal-

lenges, and emotions. These stories transform dry data into memorable, living narratives that your family will remember and share for generations.

3. Understanding the Past to Make Sense of the Present

Writing family history stories helps bridge the gap between the past and the present. It allows you to understand the cultural, social, and economic forces that shaped your ancestors' lives and influenced the family you know today. When you delve into your ancestors' experiences, you see the connections between their choices and the opportunities you now enjoy. Their migration, education, or perseverance in the face of adversity may have directly contributed to the opportunities available to you. In exploring their past, you gain a deeper appreciation of your own life and the heritage that defines you.

4. Honoring the Resilience and Strength of Your Ancestors

Many family history stories depict challenges such as wars, displacement, hardships, and sacrifices. Writing these stories is a way to honor the resilience and strength of those who came before you. It shines a light on their struggles, highlighting the grit and determination that may otherwise go unnoticed in historical records. By writing these narratives, you're giving your ancestors a voice, recognizing their contributions, and ensuring that their strength and perseverance

are never forgotten.

5. Strengthening Family Bonds

Sharing your family's stories can be a powerful tool for bringing relatives closer together. When you write and share these stories, you open the door to conversations and connections that might otherwise remain unexplored. You may find that different family members have their own versions of the same story, which can lead to fascinating discussions and deeper bonds. Writing family history stories also provides an opportunity to pass down values, traditions, and lessons learned from previous generations. These narratives help create a sense of continuity and belonging, giving your family a shared identity across generations.

Writing your family history stories is a priceless gift you can offer both to yourself and to future generations. It preserves your legacy, helps you make sense of the present, honors your ancestors, strengthens family bonds, and provides a creative and purposeful project. Most importantly, stories are the best way to convey facts in a memorable way, ensuring that the details of your family's history are not lost but remembered and cherished for years to come. Don't let these stories fade into oblivion—start writing today and bring your family's past to life in ways that will resonate for generations.

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Editors Note

al meeting a success. It was obvious that was no easy feat, but despite technical difficulties they somehow pulled the virtual meeting together. Liz Philip, our membership chair tells me 22 folks were in attendance including those on Zoom. That represents 31% of our total members. Not bad but we would love to see more. I suspect that college football may play a role in lower attendance during Saturday meetings in the Fall.

October looks to be just as interesting and informative. Scotland based Michelle Leonard will present a lecture on the “Top 10 DNA Do’s and Don’t’s.” Lots of folks, including me, need help understanding the use of DNA in their genealogy research. So, this should prove to be an inspirational presentation.

Be aware that there is a venue change for the October meeting. We will convene at the Katherine Tyra Library at 16719 Clay Road. We in leadership hope to see you all there on Saturday, October 19th. Don’t forget the lunch at Clay’s Restaurant at 17717 Clay Road immediately after the meeting. The weather continues to be warm, so I’m looking forward to attending October’s meeting and seeing all of you on the other side of a “Blue Norther.” You may have to be an older

native Texas to understand what that is.

A word about the frequency of this newsletter, The WHAGS Journal. A recent survey regarding readership indicates that a monthly publication is not necessary. I take that as good news, because there is such a lot of work in publishing a newsletter every month. So, beginning in December, we will go to a bi-monthly publication. That will make life a lot easier for me and for the folks that help by contributing articles and those who help with editing. See you in December with the Holiday edition of the WHAGS Journal.

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Presidents Note

last month, you know I was anxiously awaiting the delivery of a credenza to complete my office organization. The process was a two-month ordeal. I ordered a black credenza to match the rest of my office furniture on 24 June. In mid-July, I received a delivery notification for the next day. The delivery was canceled the next day with no explanation. After a call to the furniture store’s customer service department, I received a new delivery window of 2-3 weeks, which came and went with no communication from the company. After another call to customer service that elicited

more excuses, I finally talked to the customer service manager who told me she would manage my order and be my sole contact. About 2 weeks later, I received a text that my credenza had arrived and would be delivered the following day. Hooray! The promised delivery text and email did not arrive, so I contacted the customer service manager again who said I should receive something by 3 pm. I got that with a delivery window between 4:30 and 9:30 pm. The delivery truck arrived at about 7:45 pm and I showed the delivery lead where I wanted the credenza set up. They brought it to the front door, wrapped in plastic, and it was a white credenza. The white credenza went back on the truck, and I texted the customer service manager that evening. The next morning, I got a call from the original customer service representative asking me what I wanted to do. I went for a refund. So much for the customer service manager as my sole contact. I am looking for a black credenza again. Sigh.

What is your favorite thing about WHAGS? Mine is my fellow members. I appreciate the help I receive from you, and I enjoy helping others. I also value the members who coordinate and contribute to the programs, special interest groups, website, newsletter, hospitality, and

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Presidents note

events. We are an organization of volunteers, and these volunteers make WHAGS the wonderful genealogy society it is. Have you thought about what you can do for WHAGS? Every little bit helps.

Christmas PARTY

The WHAGS Holiday Gala featuring "Show & Tell" is coming. Mark your calendars for December 21st.

Calling all story tellers

Show & Tell

By Tom Woltz

Time is getting on into October, now the 13th. Pretty soon we will be preparing for Halloween, and then Thanksgiving, parties, pumpkins and all those fun things. After that, the WHAGS annual Holiday Gala. That means, if you are planning to present a new find, discovered new data, attended a fabulous family reunion where you may have learned a whole new line of family members. Whoa! We, your advocates of genealogical

pleasure, would also like to know about it.

I myself discovered some world -breaking facts while transcribing my grandmother's diary of a sixteen-month period in her life. I will reveal that find in my presentation at the December Gala meeting. What is your discovery? Was it a new cousin, artifacts you were given, or you discovered in your attic? We all at WHAGS would like to enjoy hearing about that find.

It's time to step up, personalize your relationship with the rest of us. One memory of our annual event, a few years ago, was that several new members, who had not attended even one meeting in the past, signed up to present. I loved it! That took some planning and foresight, but most of all, stepping out of their comfort zone. We all need to do that from time to time.

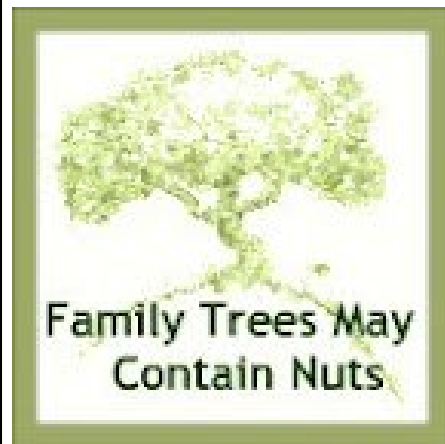
I found World War II letters sent to my grandfather during the war. They reveal what was on some soldiers' minds while defending our nation. Perhaps some of you have cubby holes within your house or apartment, attic, an old closet, or garage. With a little digging, you never know what you might find.

If you want to get more involved in our genealogy society, telling your story at the WHAGS Holiday Gala is a great start.

See you there!

Tom Woltz/MC

For more information, contact Tom Woltz at 832-754-2875 or email at crou1lsu@gmail.com



Clayton Library Bus Trip Saturday, October 26th

WHAGS' bus trips to the Clayton Library have proven to be a popular activity, and on our last trip we found that doing it on a Saturday helped more folks join us, and it meant traffic was much lighter which got us back home earlier.

Seating is always limited, so while the trip is free, registration is required. Sign up on the WHAGS Website.





One of our long time members, Linda Hudson, suggested that we begin a Tips page for the newsletter. Well, here it is. I hope these suggestions help you down your genealogy path.

The Power of WhatsApp in Genealogy

By Ron Ware

As a genealogist, I'm sure you have a box, stack or binder filled with photos of people you don't recognize. I am one of those researchers. I have many photos of my wife's ancestors. On several trips to visit my English family, I have been given photos taken as far back as the 1890's, many of whom are not identified. Well, welcome the power of WhatsApp, an iPhone app that can help you.

WhatsApp (Look for the free version) is a application that can be used for free long distance telephone calls, chat groups, and other uses. The chat group is important to this article. With it, one can set up a group of interested parties who can exchange information. In this case share information about a persons or persons in an old photograph. Of course, it is best if you include older folks in the group. For ex-

ample, I set up a chat group and named it "England Photo ID Group." We began with myself here in Huntsville, Texas and my niece in Church Stretton, England. As other family members learned of our group, they joined the hunt. Currently we have six people in the group who live in places ranging from Texas, London and the English Midlands.

Typically, I post two or three photos to the group each week. The responses have been incredibly interesting. To date we have identified a dozen of the twenty or so photos I have posted. It is fun. Sometimes we get off task by discussing the Texas and British weather, and current events such as weddings, but we soon return to talking about people in photographs. I have learned, however, that we need to take it slow and build in some extended breaks. People have busy lives on both sides of the Atlantic, so too much identifying old photographs can lead to burnout. So, take it slow with frequent breaks.

To get the free app, search the Apps Store for "WhatsApp". I hope this tip gives readers an insight in a new way down the genealogy path .

Upcoming Conferences

Texas Czech Genealogical Society Presents "A Salute to Our Veterans Past and Present"

The Texas Czech Genealogical Society is presenting "A Salute to Our Veterans Past and Present" on November 2, 2024 at the Caldwell Civic Center, 103 Highway 103 (Texas 21 West) in Caldwell, Texas. There will be talks from many of our military veterans, including those who experienced being a prisoner of war. Click on the link for more information.

<https://txczgs.org/>

Texas State Genealogical Society

2024 Annual Conference (Virtual)

The Texas State Genealogical Society will conduct a Family History Conference on November 1st and 2nd. The theme is exploring resources and techniques for "Navigating Your Family History."

This is a virtual conference which will offer many sessions through pre-recorded lectures.

Click on the hyperlink below for more information.

[TxSGS 2024 Conference Registration](#)



Tipline Continued

Tipline: Germanic Ancestry Research Tips part 2

by L. Hudson

This column focuses on the changing boundaries of Central Europe from approximately 1815 until 1900. You can follow along with the changing boundaries through the interactive links in the maps on the following page.

Observe the differences between the two maps. Many of the ancestors we seek immigrated between the time of the changing borders. Those from Central Europe who came earlier than 1815 typically have good records, and those who came later than WWI most likely can be found in US records. It's the "in-betweeners" that are tough to find. It can also be difficult to find family records in Europe. Just as we lost records in the United States due to the Civil War, Europe also, through two world wars and the Cold War, has had its fair share of record losses.

Let me first reference a book entitled "Historical Atlas of Central Europe," by Paul Robert Magocsi. I'm certain you will find

copies at various libraries. I suggest you check it out before making the purchase. Today it is \$87.00 on Amazon but other sources may have it for less. It has a great deal of history and maps for regions of Central Europe through the centuries. The history notes begin approximately the year 400 and go through Post-Communist Central Europe. Central Europe has gone through many conflicts and boundary changes. The book clearly demonstrates political, religious, and cultural changes over time which may help you understand the movement of your family. YouTube also has videos that demonstrate the ever-changing borders.

The records. FamilySearch allows you to research at an LDS center or affiliated library. They have some baptisms, marriages, and deaths among their records. However, you must have some idea of where to look. The [Germany Online Genealogy Records](#) has one of the most concise lists for Germanic areas. You can also find this information at, [Archion.de](#), a German language site, and [frenchgen.com](#) (free). Start with FamilySearch and you will find more information on accessing records. Search "country" archives on google to get you started.

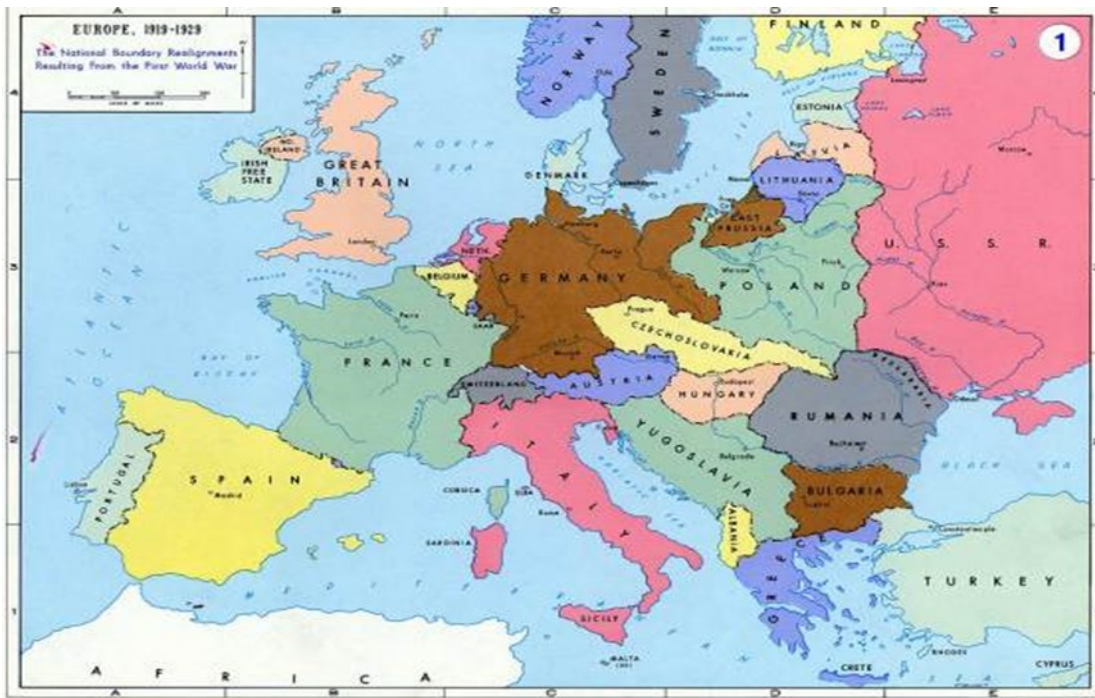
You should keep a record of the sites you have accessed. No sense in wasting time redoing what you've already done. As for cost, it varies. When I began this journey 20 years or so ago, I got in touch with the government office of Germany, and they had a family record. They did not do PayPal or credit cards back then. They sent me the record and I sent them \$40. CASH. I was dubious about the transaction, but I got what I wanted. Avail yourself of every opportunity to learn about the records and where they are kept in your location. Due to the many wars and border changes, etc., it can be complicated. Study the regional history and seek repositories that may also offer tips. Talk to employees of the LDS and Clayton Libraries. They are helpful in guiding you in your ancestry search. Also, begin with a history lesson or two. It may save you a lot of time.

I wish you much success.





[Click here for full scale map site](#)



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Helping to Find Your Roots

Monthly meetings are hybrid: in person at Steve Radack Community Center, 18650 Clay Road, and via Zoom

WHAGS October Program

(see location change noted below, for this month only)

The Top Ten DNA Dos and Don'ts!

Presenter: Michelle Leonard, M.A. PgCert



No matter where you are in your family tree research journey, you know that DNA testing can be a valuable tool leading to all sorts of discoveries. However, knowing exactly how to proceed and interpret the results can be confusing. Learn the best paths to take and some pitfalls to avoid in this fun countdown!

Michelle Leonard is a professional genealogist, researcher, speaker, writer, and historian. She specializes in the use of DNA testing for genealogical purposes solving adoption, unknown parentage, and all manner of ancestor mysteries. She uses DNA testing in conjunction with paper trail research to confirm and enhance family trees as well as break down brick walls.

Michelle holds an M.A. in English and Modern History from the University of St. Andrews and a PgCert in Genealogical, Palaeographic and Heraldic Studies from the University of Strathclyde. She is a member of several international professional genealogy associations and owner of **Genes & Genealogy**, a professional family history and genetic genealogy research service based in Scotland. Many of Michelle's publications, classes, and presentations are available through Family Tree Magazine (UK) and Legacy Family Tree Webinars.

Saturday, October 19, 2024

Meet & greet at 10:00 am

Program begins at 10:30 am

If you want to join in virtually, visit our website at www.whags.org for the Zoom meeting registration link. Those attending in person will meet **this month at the Katherine Tyra Branch Library, 16719 Clay Road, Houston, TX 77084**. Visitors are always welcome!