

# The WHAGS Journal



Volume 5, Issue 3—December 2024



## Editor's Note

Ron Ware

Welcome to the Christmas edition of the WHAGS Journal. This is the first publication since going to a bi-monthly schedule. Publishing every other month will allow more time to provide improved content and at the same time relieve the busy volunteers who contribute stories, provide editing, and publishing of this newsletter.

We began on a sad note with the passing of WHAGS member Fred Saunders just a day after our October general meeting. Please see the announcement and a link to his obituary on [page 7](#).

I hope you were able to see Annette Burke Lytle's November presentation "The Influence of" *(Continued on page 2)*

## Holiday Dinners Over the Years

by Liz Philip

Our holiday dinners had the same menu. Thanksgiving and Christmas were oven roasted turkey, mashed potatoes with gravy, jambalaya, candied sweet potatoes, peas with pearl onions, jellied cranberry sauce, black pitted olives, crescent rolls, fruit salad and lemon meringue pie.

Mom would cook the entire meal, except for the fruit salad, while Dad and my sister, brother and I would watch the Thanksgiving Day Parade on



## President's Report

Gail Colby

Our president is on a much deserved vacation and won't be reporting in this issue. Let's wish Gail an enjoyable and safe trip, wherever she goes.

television. Our kitchen was small, and the parade kept us out of Mom's way. Five people would not fit along with the turkey and the food being prepared. Mom would say later that it was a two-butt kitchen, meaning that only two people would fit. Yet it was a warm and comfortable place. There was a window over the sink looking into the back-

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November's speaker, Annette Burke Lyttle, C.G.

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**Editors Note**

Free and Cheap Land on Migration.” It was interesting and informative, with thirty-six percent of our membership in attendance. I for one learned a few new approaches to researching in land records. If you were not in attendance, a recording of Annette’s presentation is on the WHAGS website in the members only section.

This year’s holiday gathering on December 21<sup>st</sup> will be a lighthearted and fun filled way to end the calendar year. Tom Woltz, as he has done for several years, will host a “Show and Tell” event that always proves to be interesting and informative. Tom invites members to share

stories, family treasures, or artifacts, of their ancestors and their road to discovery. It’s always great to hear the accounts of our ancestors and how the member discovered their story. The storytellers are rewarded with members’ interest and with a thank-you gift from the Program Team.

Since we are in the holiday season, I wanted to run Liz Philip’s warmhearted account of her family’s traditional holiday dinners. Liz wrote the article for review in our last WHAGS Writers meeting, and I found it so heartwarming. She describes her mother’s food preparation in her small, warm kitchen. Working in a room large enough for only one cook, her mother would relegate the rest of the family to the living room to watch the Thanksgiving Day Parade. The story brings back memories of those old-time holidays at my house.

We continue with two ideas on the Journal’s “Tip Page.” For the first, regular contributor Linda Hudson provides tips on how and why our ancestors, beginning as early as 1565, came to America. Secondly, I offer my experience at The Harris County Archives, conveniently located in Northwest Houston. It lies in a nondescript setting off the old Hempstead Highway, a place that

most of us were probably unaware of its existence. But it proves to be a great resource for those of us with Harris County ancestors. I find these Tipline submissions helpful, so watch for more late minute tips.

I wish you all a happy and prosperous 2025.

**Tipline: They’re Coming to America**

by Linda Hudson

Persons of European heritage began coming to America in 1565. The oldest occupied settlement is St. Augustine in Florida. While it has been continuously inhabited since, records do not exist for those early times. The French had arrived first, but the Spanish were able to expel the French. In 1620, the Pilgrims arrived. They left England because even though the church was evolving, the changes were very different. Those early immigrants are noted in various texts. You can find identities on the web or the book, “The Original Lists of Persons of Quality, 1600-1700,” edited by John C. Hotten.

By the late 1600s, William Penn was bringing persons from the British Isles and later Germanic lands. If your ancestor,

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*Old Time Christmas*

yard. To the right of the sink was the stove and refrigerator. To the left of the sink was the counter and all the meal preparation was there.

Mom would set out everything she needed on this counter. The silver canisters holding flour and sugar were in the corner. Next, to the blue carton of Morton's salt, rested the small red and white can of McCormick's black pepper and the red box of Minute Rice. Near the cutting board Dad made for her out of Douglas fir, celery, onion, green peppers, and russet potatoes waited to be chopped.

The Butterball turkey, always twenty pounds, give or take, would be the first to be prepared. She removed the bird from the refrigerator and saved the giblets for the jambalaya. Then the bird went into the big, white roasting pan, with the legs tucked underneath, the red pop-up indicator ready to tell us when it was "done."

The giblets boiled on the stove to make stock for the jambalaya. Meanwhile, the celery, onions and green peppers were sauteing in butter and oil in the electric skillet. Mom added the giblets to the skillet after they

cooked. The jambalaya sat there simmering, filling the kitchen with its aroma mixed with that of the roasting turkey.

Next were the russet potatoes. Peeled and cut, boiled in the big silver pot, they would be mashed with lots of butter, salt, and milk.

Meanwhile, the Ocean Spray jellied cranberry sauce chilled in the refrigerator along with the Pillsbury crescent rolls and pitted black olives. The Green Giant peas with pearl onions, Dad's favorite, would be heated in a small pot.

Grandma Teen always made fruit salad for the holidays. She was a good cook and did not use measuring cups or written recipes. Made of apples, grapes, pineapple, strawberries, and bananas, chilled in a heavy dark green bowl. Grandpa would carry it for her from their mobile home to our house.

Grandma Teen and Grandpa lived in a single-wide mobile home on the same property. Dad was their only living child, his siblings dying young. In their elderly years they moved to Houston from New Orleans after Mom and Dad bought the house in the 1950's.

We did not have special din-

nerware for holiday meals, but every food had its own special serving dish. The jellied cranberry sauce was in an oblong glass dish, the sliced sauce fitting perfectly. The black pitted olives were in a light blue bowl. A dark green bowl held the fruit salad, leaving peas with onions in Corning Ware, and jambalaya in the largest Pyrex. The table was a colorful hodgepodge of dishes.

We gathered at the table in the early afternoon, and Mom would say grace. Dad carved the bird. We would pass our plates, and then we would eat. Most everyone favored white meat, so there was little left over. But the drumsticks were my brother's favorite.

Sometime toward the end of the meal, Dad would put the large black pitted olives on his fingers, one by one. He would wave his fingers at us and pass the light blue bowl around. We would do the same. Then we would eat the olives, one by one.

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### WHAGS Partners with MyHeritage

WHAGS has partnered with Legacy Family Tree Webinars to provide members of our society a brand new membership benefit. Here's the scoop:

Legacy Family Tree Webinars ([www.FamilyTreeWebinars.com](http://www.FamilyTreeWebinars.com)) hosts online genealogy webinars presented by nationally-known speakers on a variety of genealogy and technology topics. The live webinars are free, and their recordings are free to view for about a week after the live show. The Webinar Library has more than 2,300 classes and more than 9,000 pages of instructors' handouts. Access to the Webinar Library is typically available through an annual membership (\$49.95/year).

However, with this WHAGS offer, members and affiliates can receive a first-year 50% off discount for a webinar membership. This discount would make it \$24.98 (U.S.) for the first year, valid for new memberships only. Included in the membership are:

- Unlimited on-demand access to all webinars (currently 2,310 classes).
- New webinars every week.
- Access to chat logs and speakers' handouts (currently 9,030 pages)

- Bonus members-only webinars
- Automatic 5% off anything in the store (when logged in at checkout).
- Chance for a bonus subscribers-only door prize during each live webinar.

To take advantage of this offer, go to

#### [Family Tree Webinar Checkout](#)

and the special coupon code WHAGS50 will automatically be applied. Please do not share this link with others outside our organization and do not post in public areas. The special discount is valid through Saturday, 21 December 2024.

If you're not ready to subscribe, we still encourage you to register for their live webinars.

#### [Family Tree Webinars](#)



WHAGS has been able to keep membership dues very low so that everyone can afford to join in and be a part of our great program. As we've grown, our expenses have increased along with the membership.

Costs including website hosting, special equipment for hybrid Zoom meetings, PayPal fees to enable online membership payments, and by far our largest expense, our monthly presenters, have risen each year.

Because of our donors' generosity, we have been able to cover our expenses and still have a positive cash-flow. Without them we would have to raise dues.

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### Holiday "Show & Tell" Coming in December

#### *It's Your Chance To Show Off!*

The highlight of our annual December meeting, besides the good food and tasty treats, is the "Show & Tell" put on by our members, showing and telling about a special treasure, an interesting experience, or fascinating ancestor.

The WHAGS Program Committee is looking for six to eight members to share with us their story related to their genealogy research. Each story should last no more than ten minutes.

If you would like to share your story, please email Ricky Armes to get on the list!





## Committee and Special Interest Groups Reports

### WHAGS Writers

Our little circle of WHAGS Writers grew in November. New member Julia Carpenter joined our group, now we are six.

We often laugh, not at each other, but with each other over some of the stories we write. Still, it's a learning experience and I believe that our monthly writing sessions are helping all of us to improve.

We all enjoyed the heart-warming submission by Liz Philip, a story about memories of her mother cooking in their small, but warm kitchen during the holidays. Paul Clites in his family story talked about brothers Jonathan and James Cowherd. Both submissions held our interest, and we all had fun critiquing them.

Our next meeting is on December 19<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 PM. Check the WHAGs website for a Zoom link to the meeting.



### The Fall Bus Trip to the Clayton Library

By Rick Armes

The WHAGS fall bus trip to the Family History Research Center at the Clayton Library Campus came off without a hitch. Eleven members gathered at the Steve Radack Community Center (SRCC) around nine on Saturday morning. (Fortunately, this time we met the minimum headcount requirement of ten as required by Harris County Precinct 4.) The bus, provided free by Precinct 4, was already on sight when we arrived. We loaded up at 9:15 and were underway by 9:20.

The inbound bus trip took approximately 45 minutes which is the main reason we schedule the Clayton trips on Saturdays: A shorter transit time translates to more research time, and much less time spent in Houston traffic.

Clayton is recognized as a top tier family research center, so there are a great deal of resources in the library, as well as all the websites one can access for free. Another resource at the library is the staff. Irene Walters, Aimee Buhr and other staff members could not be more helpful. They are a resource that more members should take advantage of.

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Most members brought their own lunch as there is no longer a snack area. Chuck and Liz Philip always do it up right and have a picnic on the grounds. The rest of us make do with our PBJ sandwiches and some water!

With so many resources to draw upon the five hours went quickly. The Precinct 4 bus was back at the library at three, and soon we were on the way back to the SRCC.

### G2 SIG November Meeting Recap

Six G2 SIG members met as usual in November. The purpose of this meeting was to highlight the important design changes in the version of G2 that will be made available to all WHAGS members starting in January. Those changes include:

- Allow use of many of the primary media tracking capabilities of G2 without necessarily having a Legacy Family Tree database in place.
- Compartmentalization of many related functions so that users can specify what set they are interested in using.

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*Old Time Christmas*

This tradition continued with our children when we gathered at Mom and Dad's for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Over the years, the traditional menu has changed. The fruit salad would no longer be prepared. The jambalaya would also change. No longer were oysters hidden in the mix. The lemon meringue pie goes on to this day. I make it for my family, and it is my favorite.

One Christmas, my sister, brother, and I were slicing up the lemon meringue pie in the evening. We were standing around the end of the table, asking, "Who wants pie?" My husband said that he did, and just as the piece left the pie server on its way to the plate, he changed his mind and said, "No, I don't want one." Well, I pulled the plate away and plop, the pie goes on the table. Did you know that lemon meringue pie does not bounce? It just sat there and wiggled. We all had a great laugh. It is a fond memory that comes up every time lemon meringue pie is served. We smile and say "Remember when..."

Merry Christmas!

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*G2 SIG*

ing. As they become more comfortable with the software they can "turn on" more functions, such as creating storyboards.

- Publish and Subscribe: The ability of forms to communicate with each other. Think of drag-and-drop.
- Ability to export the contents of any G2 table to Excel.

December's meeting will highlight more of the changes, and also discuss the January rollout. That meeting is sche-

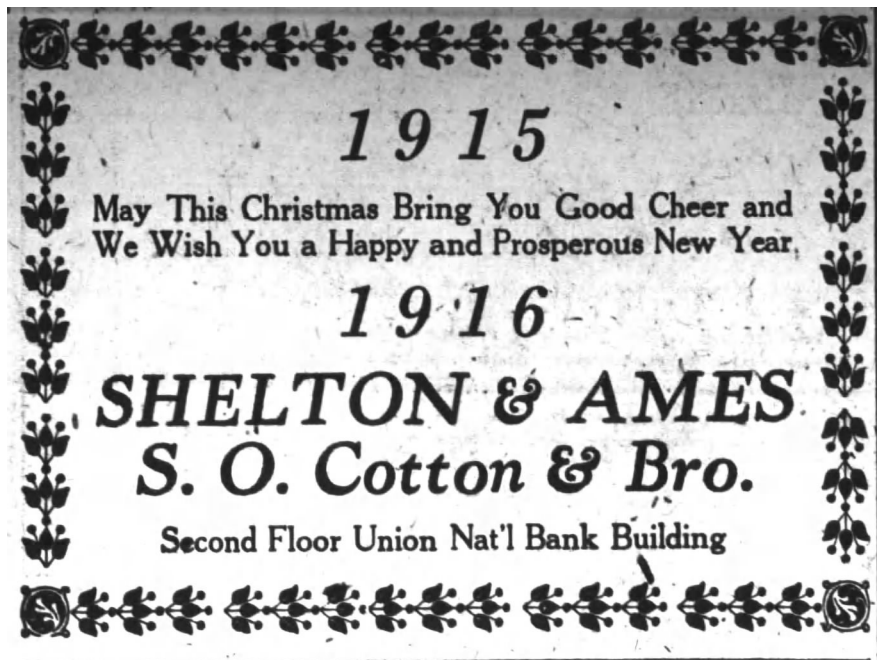
duled for 18 December at 10AM.

All meetings are held using Zoom.

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*Donations*

So, we want to express our gratitude to those who have contributed and made all we do possible. Click on the link below to see who's pitched in over-and-above, and perhaps you'll consider doing so as well. Donations are tax-deductible -as allowed by IRS regulations.

[WHAGS Donor Page](#)



Christmas Cheer which ran in The Houston Post on Saturday, December 25, 1915

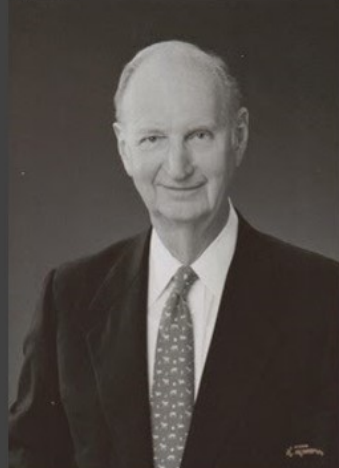




*In Memoriam*

Frederic M. Sanders

July 4, 1932 - October 20, 2024



We were very saddened to learn of the recent passing of WHAGS member Fred Saunders on October 20th, just a day after we'd seen him in attendance at the October meeting. Our sincere condolences go out to his family.

To visit his online obituary, [click here](#)

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*Coming to America*

came with William Penn, you are likely able to find information about them in Quaker records. Most Germanic persons began coming in the 1670s. The first permanent German settlement was in Philadelphia County. It was created when Francis Pastorius bought 15,000 acres from William Penn.

By 1700, greater changes were taking place in Europe. Various wars, increased taxes, people being forced to relocate and then in 1708, the worst winter ever happened. People of

some means and educated were the first to leave. Over 40,000 refugees left the Palatine region for Rotterdam and London hoping to find a way to a safer, better place. Conflicts will continue in Europe, off and on, from then until after World War II.

Having an idea of when your ancestors came, what their ethnicity was, and an approximate time can help you with your search for them in the States. You can do simple Google searches to get you started. Like where were Polish people likely to settle in the U.S. People typically stuck together

like clans. Knowing what their ethnicity was can help you identify regions of Europe they came from. My mother's ancestors ranged from Wurttemberg to Szczecin (Stettin), Poland. It's important to compare timeframes, maps, changing names of locations and dominant religions.

Numerous ships didn't make it to America. You may have to look at ship registers that left Europe and see if the ship made it here. Most "old" immigrants arrived in the 1800s. But as trouble in Southeastern Europe grew, many left there for America. There are many kinds of documents, not just ship passenger lists. There were Passage Contracts and Tickets; many can be found at [www.ggarchives.com](http://www.ggarchives.com), Google the name of a ship to see what happened to it, unless you know for certain where a ship made land and can find it disembarking. Fate may have intervened. The largest numbers of immigrants arrived in NYC between 1820 and 1957.

The history of the location is important. Context of a place, what populations lived there at the time, who controlled the territory – it all matters. Wherever you are researching in Europe, Google the best sites to use for genealogy in your location. I've

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**A Visit to the Harris County, Texas Archives**

By Ron Ware

Located in a nondescript area a block south of the old Hempstead Highway is the archives of Harris County, Texas. I have for some time been curious about the facility and what type of genealogical information it may hold. I have always liked the quiet environment of archives, so on a recent outing I stopped by for a visit.

Located at 11525 Todd Street, the facility houses documents from two county agencies, the archives of the Harris County Clerk, and the Harris County government files. We will probably be most interested in the clerk's archives. That department houses land deeds, plat maps, birth records, marriage licenses, road maps, and probate court records, most prior to 1961. In less than an hour, with the help of a obliging archivist, [Alex](#), I found deeds to my great grandparent's farm on Fairbanks North Houston Road, the place where six generations of my family lived. I also found the deed to a home my parents bought on Wellington Street after World War II. I have often wondered when they purchased the house and how much they

paid for it. Now I know.

Research visits are by appointment, although the place was vacant on my Friday afternoon visit, and the archivist was glad to assist me as a walk in. However, if you plan to visit, it would be best to make an appointment. The contact phone number is (713) 274-9680 or email them at [archives@hctx.net](mailto:archives@hctx.net).

Visit their website at [www.harriscountyarchives.com](http://www.harriscountyarchives.com).

For those who have ancestors that lived in Houston or the Harris County area, this is an excellent resource for the genealogist. Plan on making a visit.



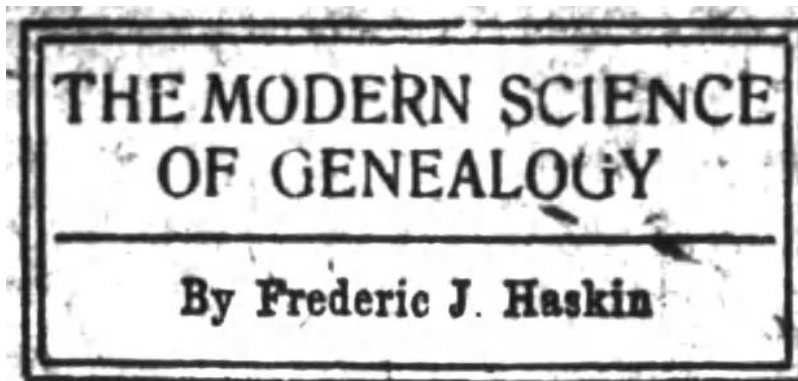
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*Coming to America*

previously mentioned "Matricula" for Catholic records and "Archion.de" for Lutheran records, you can google archives in Poland and get suggested sites, but you may have to click the link to display the records in English. Records are often by specific regions: Bohemia, Alsace-Lorraine, Bavaria, etc. Also, pay attention to the maps of Europe and the timeframe you are researching. It matters. And, the further back you go, birth records were not kept, only Christening, Marriage and Death. It's a lot, and you must dig and dig, but skill and luck are in your favor.

This YouTube provides a video of time and the countries as they evolved.

[YouTube, a Timeline of Evolving Countries](#)



The Houston Post, Saturday, March 16, 1912

To a rapidly increasing number of people there is no more fascinating amusement for lecture time than the compilation of a family pedigree.





P.O. Box 842661  
Houston, Texas 77284-2661  
[www.WHAGS.org](http://www.WHAGS.org)

*Helping to Find Your Roots*

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

## WHAGS January Program

### *Bringing Family History Alive in Bite-Size Projects*

**Presenter: Marian Burk Wood**



Get fresh ideas for documenting family history stories in engaging, practical, bite-sized projects that can be shared with relatives and posted on genealogy websites for the sake of future generations. Learn why and how to narrow your focus to one ancestor or family, occasion, heirloom, photo, or place. Like a sprint rather than a marathon, each project takes a short time and gives you flexibility to be creative in spotlighting one aspect of family history to share with relatives now. This presentation includes examples of projects such as brief ancestor bios and booklets, heirloom background stories, ancestor coloring books, full-size and small photobooks, and audio/video-based family history.

**Marian Burk Wood** is the author of the popular genealogy book *Planning a Future for Your Family's Past*, an experienced genealogy speaker, and a long-time blogger about family history at <https://ClimbingMyFamilyTree.blogspot.com>. She holds a BA from the City University of New York and an MBA from Long Island University in New York. Born in the Bronx and now transplanted to New England, Marian has been researching her family tree for 25 years, with a special interest in preserving and perpetuating family history.

**Saturday, January 18, 2025**

*Meet & greet 10:00 am*

*Program begins at 10:30 am*

If you'd like to join the meeting virtually, visit our website at [www.whags.org](http://www.whags.org) for the registration link. Those attending in person will meet at the Steve Radack Community Center, 18650 Clay Road, Houston, TX 77084. Visitors are always welcome!

**To attend virtually go to**

[WWW.WHAGS.ORG](http://WWW.WHAGS.ORG)

**For a link to the event**



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Houston, Texas 77284-2661  
[www.WHAGS.org](http://www.WHAGS.org)

*Helping to Find Your Roots*

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## WHAGS February Program

### *Researching Your Irish Ancestors Online*

**Presenter: Debra M. Dudek**



Discover online tools and resources to unpuzzle your Irish heritage. This presentation will introduce you to a variety of online sites, new search strategies, and what steps to take to further your research objectives online and abroad.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn tips to help you search and browse for success!

**Debra M. Dudek** is Head of Adult and Teen Services at the Fountaindale Public Library District in Bolingbrook, IL. She holds a post-graduate certificate in Genealogical, Palaeographic & Heraldic Studies from the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland. Ms. Dudek is the Book Review Editor of the Illinois State Genealogical Society, a Chapter Librarian of the Chicago Chapter NSDAR, and the author of the *World War I Research Guide: Tracing American Military and Non-Combatant Ancestors – Includes a Guide to Canadian Military Research*.

**Saturday, February 15, 2025**

*Meet & greet at 10:00 am*

*Program begins at 10:30 am*

If you'd like to join the meeting virtually, visit our website at [www.whags.org](http://www.whags.org) for the Zoom registration link. Those attending in person will meet at the Steve Radack Community Center, 18650 Clay Road, Houston, TX 77084. Visitors are always welcome!

**To attend virtually go to**

[WWW.WHAGS.ORG](http://WWW.WHAGS.ORG)

**For a link to the event**