



The Austin Genealogical Society Newsletter

April 2011

Advancing genealogy through wide-ranging research and education and supporting the preservation of the heritage of Austin, Travis County, and Texas.

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AGS Mini-Seminar #1

May 7th

NEW LOCATION

[See Page 5](#)

Monthly AGS Meeting

Tuesday, April 26, 2011

Program: "Connecting an Historic Site to the Larger Community: a beginning with the research "Enslaved Presence on Robertson Hill 1848—1865"

Presented by: Stephanie JARVIS

Highland Park Baptist Church
5206 Balcones Drive, Austin, Texas

6:30 p.m. — Refreshments & Networking

7:00 — 8:30 p.m. - Program

Invite a friend or neighbor to come with you!



Stephanie JARVIS, Director of the French Legation Museum, has a Bachelor of Journalism degree from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master of Arts degree in Public History from Texas State University-San Marcos. Before joining the staff of the French Legation Museum in August 2006, she worked as a Researcher/Interpreter at the Barrington Living History Farm at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site near Brenham, Texas. Although her current research centers mostly on materials relevant to the French Legation Museum, she is always eager to broaden her studies with as much Austin and Texas history as possible.

Robertson Hill is a 22-acre tract of land that includes the site of the French Legation Museum. Stephanie JARVIS' original project was to re-

"Connecting a historic site to the larger community ..."

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(Continued on page 2)

search the African American presence on Robertson Hill from 1848 to the present day and to explore the evolution of the larger neighborhood surrounding the site of the French Legation Museum. She soon realized she wanted to focus on the settlement of the area after the Civil War.

The original history included the 1840 establishment of the French Legation in the Texas Republic by Jean Pierre Alphonse Dubois, France's Chargé d'Affaires, followed by ownership by a few private owners, including the longest habitation of the site by Dr. Joseph Robertson and his family, and finally to the 1949 purchase of the site by the state of Texas with custodianship today held by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. While stories surrounding these original inhabitants were central to the French Legation's early history, they addressed nothing in regard to the larger community and how, or even if, those stories meshed.

The Legation's neighborhood includes a large and significant African-American community which had developed by the 1900s. How did the Legation's prior history compare with this development and more specifically, how did the land sales on Robertson Hill fit with the post-Emancipation purchases of this land by African Americans? This research would become a starting point for the museum's exploration of community and citywide history through the lens of this 22-acre tract and its neighborhood.

AGS Business

The Board of Directors met in regular session at 5:45 p.m. on Tuesday, March 22, 2011, prior to the general meeting. The following items were discussed and actions taken:

The President received a report from the committee appointed to review and discuss the "Paper-to-Paperless" option for moving our AGS Quarterly and Membership Directory publications to electronic format. The Report was adopted, and a letter and voting sheet were distributed to members attending the general meeting. The letter was also submitted via email and regular mail to other members of AGS not attending the meeting. The response has been very much in favor of moving to the electronic format and those publications will be available on the website going forward.

If you did not receive a ballot and want to receive your Quarterly and/or Membership Directory in a hard copy, please contact Kay BOYD at 836-7484.

Other matters discussed were as follows:

Earle McBRIDE has agreed to lead efforts to lock the church after our meetings and activities. He will attend a meeting called by the Highland Park Baptist

Church Board for all groups who currently use the church facilities for their meetings and activities.

The Mini-Seminar is set for May 7th. Cost to members is \$10 and \$15 for non-members. (See more about the mini-seminar and new location for it later in this newsletter.)

Pursuant to Article VII of the AGS Bylaws, the president appointed AGS Director Mary TODD to lead the Financial Review Committee. Karin BRANAMAN will assist and Mary will select one or two other people to complete the committee and assist with the task.

Randy WHITED will provide the TSGS webmaster with information regarding the AGS monthly meeting information in order to have that information readily available statewide.

The Board is looking for one or more volunteers to assist us with online publicity of our meetings and events. More information is found on page 3 of this Newsletter.



Membership

Membership Chair Maud CAIN reported there were 85 members who checked in at the March meeting. There were also three visitors: Rick RODNEY from New York, Elizabeth B. OSBORNE and Carol MASON from Texas.

Since last month's report, we have added the following people to the AGS role:

Glen SELFE—Austin

Charles N. VAUGHN—Austin

Curt & Marla YARDE—Austin

Welcome to AGS, and we hope to meet you soon!



From the AGS President:

Can you help us?

Your AGS Board of Directors is very busy. All of us have assigned roles that keep us hopping. We hope we are serving you well, but sometimes we need help from the general membership.

We would very much like to find someone who is willing and able to do online publicity. Included in this would be posting to a number of online genealogy sites

REQUEST FOR SUBMISSIONS TO THE Q

Quarterly Editor Randy WHITED needs some additional content for the next issue of the AGS Quarterly. He is looking for stories, case studies, or especially family group sheets or pedigree charts. If you have family information that you can share, please send it to Randy at quarterly@austintxgensoc.org. Virtually anything submitted in the way of family information will be acceptable as we are trying to use more membership submissions than transcribed records.

Hospitality

Our appreciation goes out to Arlene ZIRKEL, Chris BOND, Shirley ROBERTS, and Shirley MEYER for providing the munchies at last month's meeting and also to Carroll PATTERSON and Edna YOUNGBLOOD for serving as greeters .

Greeters scheduled for the April meeting are Shirley MEYER and Lois McCULLOUGH. Those scheduled to bring refreshments for us are Sharon TIE-MAN, Maurine ATWOOD, Mary Jane ERMIS, and Connie PERDUE.

A special thanks also goes out to Shelia SARGENT for the great job she does taking care of the refreshment table each month. At the March meeting, Sharon TIE-MAN assisted Shelia and our thanks go to her also.

that accept announcements and news items of a genealogical nature. We would also like a truly active presence on Facebook and perhaps other social media. Any local sites that accept event postings would be good also. These are all just ideas. There is no limit to what could be done and there is room for much flexibility in this role. It is not meant to be overwhelming, but we could use a hand in this area. If you are interested, please contact Sharon FOLEY at sharonkfoley@gmail.com

COMING SOON!

The next issue of the FGS *FORUM* will include an article written by our own Randy WHITED discussing our recent decision to go paperless. Watch for it under the title of "Austin Genealogical Society Goes 'Green'."

AGS Calendar of Activities

Tuesday, April 26, 2011—AGS regular monthly meeting. *"Austin's Robertson Hill, Community Evolution"* presented by Stephanie JARVIS (See page 1)

Saturday, May 7, 2011—AGS Mini-Seminar #1 for 2011. See more details and location change information on page 5.

Tuesday, May 24, 2011— AGS regular monthly meeting. "The Home Front During the Civil War."

Saturday, June 18, 2011 — Breaking Brick Walls session at the Austin History Center

Other Educational Opportunities

Saturday, May 14th

**Austin Genealogy Special Interest Group
(AustinGenSIG)**

**Old Quarry Branch of the Austin Public Library
7051 Village Center Dr. (off Far West Blvd.)
1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

Free

Check the [website](#) for program information or contact John MAROSTICA for more information at John@marostica.org



**Angelina College Genealogy Conference
Lufkin, Texas.**

Family Myths and Realities

Special optional all-day workshops on

Thursday, July 14

Eight Speakers offering 24 sessions

July 15 & 16, 2011

Exhibitors & Vendors

See the wide range of speakers and topics at <http://www.angelina.edu/genealogy/genealogy.html>
Registrations are already being received; don't miss out. Early registration ensures syllabus packet will be ready for you upon arrival.



Thursday, July 21 through Saturday, July 23

**Dallas Genealogical Society –
Regional Technology Conference**

J. Erik Johnson Library Auditorium, Dallas, Texas

Presented by George G. MORGAN & Drew SMITH -
Web: www.dallasgenealogy.org

- ◆ Genealogical Research on the Internet (Morgan)
- ◆ Advanced Genealogical Research on the Internet (Morgan)
- ◆ Beyond Database Programs: Technology Tools to Help Manage Your Research (Smith)
- ◆ Using a Blog as Your Online Research Log (Smith)
- ◆ The Genealogy Guys Podcast LIVE! (Morgan & Smith)



AGS WEBSITE INFORMATION

The login and password for the Members' Only section of the [AGS website](#) have been changed. The new information is:

logon: ags2011

password: aU5t!n

The Austin Genealogical Society is proud to present
the first Mini-Seminar of 2011



Our speaker for this event is **Paula Stuart-Warren**, a nationally-known speaker and Certified Genealogist who specializes in Midwestern research, unique resources, major United States repositories, and Midwest and Plains Indians.

Saturday, May 7

8:30 a.m. to 12:40 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF LOCATION TO

Triumphant Love Lutheran Church

[9508 Great Hills Trail](#) (click for map link)

Austin, TX 78759-7290

(Due to circumstances beyond our control we have had to move the location of our mini-seminar. TLLC has a lovely fellowship hall. The church is conveniently located just off Hwys. 183 & 360, near the Arboretum.)

Doors will open at 8:30

8:30 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 9:10	Announcements & Introduction
9:10 – 10:10	Railroad Records and Railroad History: Methods for Tracking
10:25 – 11:25	Tho' They Were Poor, They May Have Been Rich in Records
11:40 – 12:40	A Baker's Dozen: Easy Ways to Begin Writing Your Family History

Registration at the door will be available, but we ask you to please pre-register if possible so we have a good idea of how many seats to arrange and how many refreshments to provide. The registration form is located on the AGS website at <http://www.austintxgensoc.org/activities/ppminiseminar.php> Register online and pay via PayPal or print the form and send your registration to:

Austin Genealogical Society, Attn: Mini-Seminar #1, PO Box 10010, Austin, TX 78766-1010

Cost is \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members.

SEE YOU THERE!

Getting to Know You!

For the next few months, this column will help you get to know the members of the Board of Directors.



MISSY HARRIS
AGS Board Member

Missy OWENS HARRIS and her husband, Steve, are lifelong Austin residents. At one time, five generations of Missy's OWENS, RATHER, and GREGORY families were living in Austin.

Missy's "daytime job" is at the Senate in the Publications and Printing Office. She has owned her own party, event and wedding business for over 25 years. A free-lance graphic artist, she continues to design invitations, coordinate weddings, enjoy Texas baseball and enjoy being with her two daughters, their husbands and the 4 grandchildren! The grandchildren thoroughly enjoy hearing about genealogy, often incorporating some of the family ancestors and their countries in school reports!

Great-grandmother Emilie Von ROHRDORF (RORDORF) GREGORY initiated Missy's interest in genealogy when she was a child, telling of *her* father Ernst Louis Von ROHRDORF, a doctor descended from "German royalty" who spoke six languages and who had come to America.

Missy loved hearing Emilie and her sister singing Christmas carols in German! While Missy never forgot hearing of Dr. Von ROHRDORF, she knew very little of him until the last few years.

Several years ago, in corresponding with Austin High School classmate, Kay Dunlap BOYD, Missy noticed that Kay was involved with AGS. Kay quickly inspired and helped with a new journey into locating the mystery man, Dr. ROHRDORF, his large family and other branches and lines.

Like so many of you, Missy thinks genealogy is a fascinating giant puzzle and is so appreciative of the help and the new friendships associated with AGS and its members.

Newest AGS Board member Earle McBRIDE is a native of Rock Island, IL, where his immigrant GGGrandfather McBRIDE died when a well he was digging caved in on him. A DNA match has identified an Irish cousin that he is scheduled to visit in May.



EARLE McBRIDE
AGS Board Member

His immigrant's daughter abandoned her Civil War veteran husband in Milwaukee and ran away with a black man. Her fate remains a brick wall.

Earle's deceased wife, Donna, got involved with the genealogy of her HIXON family in the 1960s when she was active in AGS at that time. Fortunately for Earle, Donna acquired lots of first-hand documents from living members of his family long before he got interested in genealogy about 1988. He says Donna was his inspiration and genealogy counselor. After several months of research, he was so frustrated at the lack of information on the lives of grandparents and great-grandparents that he interrupted genealogical research to write his autobiography. Earle wanted his descendants to have at least one version of what he thought and did up until the year 2000. (Earle printed eight copies and says that only his sister has read all of it—and she disputes his version of several past events.)

Earle is a retired geology professor from UT-Austin, but is still doing research on reconstructing the geological history of ancient sandstone formations. Genealogical and geological research (as he does it) have similar goals – reconstructing past events when dealing with incomplete historical records.

In Memoriam

Our belated condolences go out to AGS member Trudi WATSON in the loss of her beloved husband Joe. Joe A. WATSON, born August 9, 1924, was a World War II Veteran who served in China/Burma/India under General Claire Chennault. He died in Austin, September 21, 2010.

After teaching careers in the public schools of Texas and California, he and Trudi spent busy retirement years in Austin, Texas. A member of the Neptune Society, his ashes will be placed in San Francisco Bay where he returned home from the war, sailing under the Golden Gate Bridge into the bay. A memorial mailing to his friends and loved ones from West Coast to Texas Coast to East Coast across our nation will follow in lieu of traditional services. Published in Austin American-Statesman on September 24, 2010.

Odds & Ends

AGS Member Jacquie WILSON is providing free consultations in Round Rock.

The [Round Rock Public Library](#) will offer patrons a chance for professional genealogy advice from Jacquie WILSON [several times a week](#) beginning March 31. Both experienced and novice family history researchers will welcome this opportunity: a chance to consult one-on-one (for free!) with an experienced genealogical consultant.

Jacquie has worked for the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library & Museum, the Office of the Federal Register, and the National Archives.

Learn how to locate the documents you need, interpret records, request information, or just get started. No advance registration is required. Arrivals will sign in and be assisted on a first-come, first-served basis. Mark your calendar to attend one of these sessions. In April, Jacquie will share her years of researching experience on the following days:

- **6 to 8 p.m. Wednesdays**
- **10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursdays**
- **10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, April 16**

Editor's Corner

There were a number of items we simply did not have room for in this issue of the AGS Newsletter. One of the main ones was about pending legislative action with regard to funding cuts for the Texas State Library and Archives and local libraries. TSLAC Director Peggy RUDD recently provided an update on the pending budget cuts to the Friends of Libraries and Archives. Her report was printed in the Friends' spring newsletter and can be accessed online at http://www.texaslibraryfriends.org/forecast/docs/forecast_spring2011.pdf. Regardless of what happens, there will be a number of changes at TSL next September when the new biennium begins.

We hope to see you at our first mini-seminar of the year scheduled for May 7th. This one will be held at Triumphant Love Lutheran Church. Pre-registering will really help us prepare for adequate seating and refreshments. Please help us out with that. We hope you will plan to join us in May.

Until next month, Happy Trackin',

Janis

2011 Board of Directors

Term ending 2011:	Term Ending 2012:
Kate ALLEN	Karin BRANAMAN
Maud CAIN	Earle McBRIDE
Teri FLACK	Sharon FOLEY
Dona KURTZ	Missy HARRIS
Mary TODD	Jane SCHWENDINGER
Randy WHITED	Janis TRAYLER

2011 Officers

President	Sharon FOLEY
1 st Vice President	Janis TRAYLER
2 nd Vice President	Jane SCHWENDINGER
Recording Secretary	Kate ALLEN
Treasurer	Teri FLACK

*We are here to serve the members of the Society.
If you have ideas, suggestions, or concerns,
please feel free to share those with us.*

Monthly Meetings on 4th Tuesdays
(except December)
Social time at 6:30; Program at 7:00
Highland Park Baptist Church
5206 Balcones Drive
Austin, Texas

Visitors Are Always Welcome!

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***Promoting genealogy through research,
education, and preservation.***