

# DGS Newsletter



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### Announcement of Proposed Bylaw Changes

The DGS Board announces proposed bylaw changes primarily concerning the return to a September-August operating year. After several committee meetings and consultations with the Board, the Bylaws Committee, which was made up of Jean Larson (chair), Sandra Crowley, and Jan Howell, submitted these changes to the Board at its June 5, 2010 meeting and they were approved. Members of the Bylaws Committee are all present or past members of the DGS Board.

The DGS bylaws with indicated changes can be found on our website. Paper copies will be distributed at the September 11th General Meeting and the changes will be discussed then. Reading copies will also be available at the DGS desk on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of the library. Voting for the proposed changes will take place at the October 2<sup>nd</sup> General Meeting.

An explanation of the rationale behind these proposed changes can be found in the President's Column.

### New Books Reviewed Lloyd deWitt Bockstruck

Genealogical researchers working from the known to the unknown approach the records of an ancestral county by reading the wills of anyone with the same surname seeking proof of filiation and extension of a pedigree. Whether successful or not, the more seasoned researcher proceeds to an examination of the deed records. Parish registers and vestry books are examined if they have been fortunate enough to have survived. Such researchers are reluctant, however, to undertake a page by page reading of the court minutes of the county. That decision is indeed an unfortunate choice. The records are voluminous, the handwriting is wretched, and the volumes are lacking in indexes other than perhaps the names of defendants. Even in such instances, the indexes are inconsistent due to a change of clerks or the entering of the record by a deputy clerk.

John Anderson Brayton has made another significant contribution to colonial Virginia genealogy with *Transcription of Lower Norfolk County, Virginia Records Volume Two Record Book C 1651-1656*. At that period of time the county included that part of Virginia from the Atlantic seaboard on the south side of James River to Isle of Wight County on the ill-defined border with Carolina. County clerks had not yet begun the segregation into record groups so that one finds deeds, wills, orders, and court minutes interspersed. Paper had to be imported from England and was quite expensive. Accordingly, clerks resorted to all kinds of shorthand with which readers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are unfamiliar. The law had its own vocabulary so there are pitfalls facing the unwary. For example, incontinency might be interpreted as a urinary tract disorder. In law, however, it connotes the inability to exercise self-control in sexual matters. The crime was that of fornication or a couple living together prior to marriage in sin. *Lector*, read carefully.

This 555-page book may be ordered from John A. Brayton, 1900 Central Ave., Memphis, TN 38104 for \$30 post paid.

*A Who's Who of Your Ancestral Saints* by Alan J. Koman is a work setting forth the connections between 275 European Saints to two dozen personages of medieval Europe. It spans ten centuries from St. Gregory who died in 326 to St. Thomas, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Lancaster, who died in 1322. Included are such figures as Alfred the Great, Charlemagne, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and Margaret of Scotland. If you have qualified for membership in the Old World hereditary societies, this work provides a new approach to your ancestry. As we near the third millennium of the founding of Christianity, this work is indeed timely. It has already prompted the formation of a new lineage society, The National Society of Saints and Sinners. One might wonder what the basis was for the choice of the organization's name until one remembers that there are but two kinds of people in this world—saved sinners and lost sinners. The work may be ordered from Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 3600 Clipper Mill Rd., Suite 260, Baltimore, MD 21211-1953, by calling 1-800-286-6687, or on-line at [www.genealogical.com](http://www.genealogical.com) for \$34.95 plus \$5.50 handling.

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

*Janet Khashab, AG*

### Bylaws Changes and the Fruit Question

In 2004 changes to the DGS bylaws were put into effect that changed the beginning of our operating year, which had been in September, to coincide with that of the fiscal year which is January to December. Since then successive DGS Boards have had much discussion concerning the problems of the annual board turnover occurring in January. The current board decided to take action on this recurring headache and appointed a committee to propose changes to the bylaws so that this turnover would be returned to September. I will now try to explain our rationale behind this proposed change back but first a little side trip.

Before I joined the DGS Board three years ago, I had been an officer in another local society for four years. Also serving on this other board was a permanent member who acted as a financial advisor. Jerry was a fellow Longhorn, a retired CPA, a former director at one of the Federal Reserve branches, and a good friend to all who had the privilege to know him. Once there was a board discussion on changing the operating year of this society from September to May to coincide with the fiscal year of January to December. Jerry brought up his famous fruit question: "Are we talking oranges or apples here?"

Oranges and apples are, of course, round fruit which are good for you. But each has distinctive characteristics such as color and taste that we value. Unfortunately, according to Jerry, the human tendency in organizations is to make too much fruit punch. In the case of DGS the resulting "fruit punch" of combining our operating year with our fiscal year has left a bad aftertaste.

The crux of the DGS Board dissatisfaction with the blending of the two calendars is that Board turnover occurs just after the usually frantic December holiday season. There is no gradual handover of positions and little training for new officers; the January turnover meeting has become a quick "hi, bye, and good luck" affair. To remedy this situation the Bylaws Committee, working with the Board, has proposed that DGS elections be moved to May but new officers would not take up their positions fully until September. In this way both sets of officers would work together during the summer to make sure that training takes place and there would be a smooth transition from one board to another. Both boards would be responsible for the running of the July Institute,

which would be a valuable hands-on experience for new officers.

The new officer who is under the most stress after a January turnover is the Treasurer, who must present the annual budget of the previous treasurer to the general membership, work with the Financial Review Committee for the audit of financial records of the previous administration and make sure all bank accounts, credit cards, etc. are reassigned to new officer signatures. All of this is to be accomplished within the first month of taking office with very little guidance. Although these duties will remain within the same time frame under the proposed bylaws, at least a new Treasurer will not confront them the first week in office.

I urge members to read the proposed bylaw changes for themselves on our website or at the DGS desk at the library and if you can, please try to attend our September general meeting for a discussion of these changes. Then you can make an informed vote at the October general meeting on the "fruit question."



## NEW ACQUISITIONS

All new books and materials cataloged into the Genealogy Section since the listing in the February newsletter are now included on the DGS website.

Go to [www.dallasgenealogy.org](http://www.dallasgenealogy.org) to view new publication titles. From the home page select "Resources." In the Resources box select "Dallas Public Library." Then in the Dallas Public Library box you will see "Recent Acquisitions."



## RSS - Really Simple Syndicator



Have you seen this little orange symbol? Created by Firefox and adopted by the Internet community, it lets you know that you can subscribe to Internet news feeds from the source where it appears. It may appear in other colors, too. A different RSS symbol with the letters RSS in an orange box appears on the Dallas Genealogy Society website where you register for DGS events. Both symbols mean the same things.

When I subscribed to DGS Event Feed, it put a link to the "2010 January Library Lock-in" on my iGoogle page through a Google Gadget. When I click on the link, I am transferred to the information on the registration page about that event. If you have a Google account, you can also read your RSS feed subscriptions through Google Reader. Google Reader will let you subscribe to a variety of news feeds, including genealogy feeds.

I'll admit I am a newbie on RSS, but I have just subscribed to RSS feeds from Dick Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter (free version), About.com Genealogy, North Carolina Genealogical Society, The Genealogy Podcast Guys, and Italian Genealogy.com in addition to DGS. Google Reader gathers all your news feeds, even non-genealogy ones, and displays the most recent for each subscription in a list from which you may select for reading.

The nice thing about RSS feeds on Google Reader is that they don't flood your e-mail. You just open Google Reader at your convenience to read the latest from organizations to which you have subscribed. I was happy to see a RSS for The Genealogy Podcast Guys because I subscribe to their podcasts. All the RSS feeds and podcasts mentioned here have no subscription costs. Of course, that does mean that there may be some advertising support. It was through a Family Roots Radio podcast that I first realized that genealogists were creating RSS feeds.

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), along with many other federal departments, has a RSS feed. Genealogy societies are beginning to use RSS feeds. For example North Carolina Genealogical Society, California Genealogical Society and Dallas Genealogical Society have some type of RSS feed. I learned through the North Carolina Genealogical Society RSS Feed that the NCGS Journal is available to members online for years 1995 to 2007 and that they are seeking volunteers to compile an index of loose estate papers held in the North Carolina State Archives. I am looking forward to this way of reading national and international genealogical news.

Source: RSS icon retrieved with permission from <http://www.feedicons.com/>

Barbara A. Ware



**DGS Newsletter is now Electronic**

The Dallas Genealogical Society Newsletter is now being delivered in both electronic and printed editions. The electronic newsletter is delivered to your email in PDF format. It is also posted on the DGS website. An email will alert members to the User Name and Password to view and/or download the newsletter.

To receive your DGS newsletter electronically, you must have an email address in your DGS account and you should check "Newsletter" as a Membership Subscription Option.

If you do not have an email address in your DGS account, send your name and the email address you want DGS to use to [administrator@dallasgenealogy.org](mailto:administrator@dallasgenealogy.org) requesting that the information be added to your account.

**Genealogy on Vacation**

Genealogy probably should be regulated like tobacco or alcohol. It starts innocently; you make a few copies of your Aunt's papers, collect a few old pictures, then file them away to be almost, but not quite, forgotten. Every now and then you think about pursuing it but something else always seems more important or interesting. Then, one fateful day you take the plunge and actually read those letters and start to arrange the unfamiliar names and dates, and then you make your first discovery and feel that special rush and before you know it you are addicted, surfing the internet until after midnight every night and boring anybody who will listen (and many who won't) with arcane facts that nobody else understands or cares about.

Soon it begins to affect your job, your marriage and your relationships. Like any addiction, you begin to seek out others who share your affliction and try to interest them; in my case, it was my wife who fell under the spell. Eventually it even consumed our vacations. Back when we were normal we used to camp, lie on beaches, visit friends and relatives and eat at nice restaurants. Now we drive thousands of miles to visit small towns, home to nobody we know, lugging cameras, computers and documents and spend hours in basements of what seems like an endless tour of Carnegie endowed libraries, scrolling through miles of microfilms and paging through musty books. Then we drive around, trying to look inconspicuous while we stop to take pictures of houses where no relative has lived for generations, all the time hoping nobody shoots us or calls the police.

This year things were going to be different... we planned to escape the Texas heat and spend two weeks driving around Lake Michigan, relaxing and scouting possible locations for retirement (this was back when we still imagined that we might someday be able to afford to retire). We almost pulled it off too, but we finished the Michigan leg of the trip a little quicker than we anticipated and found ourselves in southern Wisconsin with a little extra time on our hands, so we decided to swing through Madison for a quick visit to the State Historical Society to see what they had to offer.

Libraries can be magical, wonderful places full of fascinating resources and helpful, knowledgeable people. Most towns have sections (some even have entire rooms) dedicated to local genealogy. I went to a town in Norway (Rakkestad), not even knowing that they had a library and ended up spending two fascinating days in the company of their full time genealogist. I was in the Rice Lake (Wisconsin) Public Library a few years ago looking for obituaries and the librarian who helped me had actually grown up next door to my grandmother. And so I entered the Wisconsin State Historical Society full of hope and optimism.

For those of you who have never visited a similar facility and who may therefore be unfamiliar with what it contains, let me paint a mental picture for you: it contains books (lots of them) and microfilms (lots of those too), located in many rooms on several floors of a large building. If you are a little rusty on your Dewey Decimal system, I'll tell you right now that there is no category for "Tony Hanson's family." If I had

attended Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry with Harry Potter I probably could have had the relevant films jumping out of the drawers from the dozens of metal file cabinets located in the microfilm room all by themselves. Unfortunately, I forgot to pack my magic wand.

So the problem certainly wasn't a lack of information, or any shortcoming on the part of the staff (they were great!); I simply arrived totally unprepared for the magnitude of what was available. But I am an experienced genealogist, so I did what I usually do in such situations, panic and turn into a grouchy, grunting lump. I'm not proud of it, but it is the way I am; just ask my wife. So while I frantically looked up microfilm references, she calmly picked up on an obscure reference about the cemetery where my great-great grandparents are buried and in what seemed like about 30 seconds unearthed a wealth of information about it, including the fact that it was located in Farmington, a small town about a 100 miles west of Madison.

Finding the films and the information I needed only took a couple of hours. We took a quick look at the map and realized that Farmington was more or less on our way back to Texas and decided that we could get there before it got too dark to see anything if we hurried, so we grabbed a quick sandwich and were soon back in the car and on our way.

Why my gg-grandparents ended up being buried where they are has been one of those "I really need to dig into that" mysteries that all genealogists know so well. Casper Frederick Amborn came to this country with his wife (Louisa Dora Hoerining) and sons (Antone and Gottreich) in 1847 and settled in the town of Bloomfield in Walworth County. I'm almost certain that they traveled with the Kimball family, which included 2 year old Martha who would marry Antone Amborn 20 years later and (eventually) become my great grandmother.

Casper was followed in short order by brothers Henry (1850), Sebastian (1852), Anton and Daniel (1853) and John (the exact year is unknown, but he appears on the 1860 census in Bloomfield Township). With all of these connections, it was not obvious how or why he could live in Bloomfield for 24 years and end up dead and buried 200 miles away.

It turns out that Farmington was settled by German emigrants from Wernshausen, the same town in the Sachsen-Meiningen region of Germany where the Amborns and the Kimballs emigrated from. The trip from Germany usually included a stay in Bloomfield before the last leg of the trip was completed by ox or horse, so there were strong connections between the two towns. In fact, Sebastian Amborn left Bloomfield and was living in Farmington by the time of the 1870 census. Casper was still in Walworth County in June of 1870 (according to the census) but it appears that he moved to Farmington shortly thereafter. That is probably where his daughter Bertha met and married John Storandt (a Farmington native) in 1874, and that is where Casper died in 1875. Louisa survived him for another 25 years: she died on Christmas day in 1899.

The Methodist Episcopal Church where they are both buried was formed in 1865 (one of the founding members was John Pfaff, who lived on the farm next to Sebastian in 1870). The

church itself is no longer standing, and the cemetery eventually fell into neglect and was ignored and overgrown until 1966 when the graves of two Civil War soldiers buried there were re-discovered.

Kathleen read the history out loud to me as we drove. As I heard about the deterioration of the cemetery I decided that our chances of locating the 100 year old graves were slim to none, but I thought that we could at least get a few pictures and know that we had been in the vicinity.

The cemetery really is out in the middle of nowhere... for the last few miles the road was hilly and had many tight curves, and my desire to beat the encroaching darkness made Kathleen nervous and nauseous (a dangerous combination in a small car at the end of a two week vacation) so I had to curb my impatience. When we finally did reach it, we could see that most of the now fenced in cemetery was without tombstones or markers of any kind. I took a few "we were there" pictures from the road, put the camera back in the car and began to walk around to examine the few remaining markers...

... and to my absolute amazement and joy I discovered that the markers for Casper, his wife Louisa and their son David still exist! They are located at the back of the cemetery and are in remarkably good condition. Many excited trips back and forth to the car ensued (for the camera, then scrapers and brushes to clean the markers, then later for a flashlight to try to highlight some of the more obscure writing).

The stones are a little faded, but I am fairly certain that Casper's brother John H. Amborn and his wife Elizabeth are buried in the same plot. I did not find a stone for Sebastian but he surely must be buried there as well.

There are many things I love about genealogy: the joy of discovery that Kathleen and I have in common, the way it connects me with my family, and the way it seems to make history come alive. Standing there in the fading light with Kathleen at the foot of the graves of two people who unknowingly played such a vital role in my very existence was deeply moving and made me feel things that are as difficult to describe as they were thrilling to experience. I could almost imagine that my great-great grandparents were aware that I had found them and were pleased that I made the effort to stop by.

Kathleen and I are already looking forward to our next genealogical vacation.

If you would like a little more background about the Burr Oak cemeteries, I suggest you read these articles by the La Crosse Public Library (<http://www.lacrosselibrary.org>):

- La Crosse County Cemeteries: Burr Oak / Salzer Methodist Church Cemetery
- La Crosse County Cemeteries: Burr Oak Lutheran Cemetery

Tony Hanson

### Snippets from the Past

While leafing through some boxes of long-ago lectures and seminars, I found a packet of notes and handouts from the July 1994 gathering of the Genealogical Institute of Texas [a.k.a. GIT].

As background information, the GIT was founded in 1992 by DGS members Barbara Roberts Baylis, Madelyn Coen Crane, and Mary Reid Warner, who had decided researchers in our area would benefit from a local genealogical institute. The GIT was a rousing success in Dallas, and I attended all but one of its annual gatherings. Gene Burris held the record for not missing a single one! By 1996, the original co-founders needed respite from the significant organizational requirements and offered to turn the organization over to the Dallas Genealogical Society. DGS hosted and managed the first DGS Institute (then called "IGS") in 1996 and it continues as a rousing success to this day, although somewhat shortened from 5 days to 2 ½ days to adapt to the needs of potential attendees still in the work force.

In July 1994, I enrolled in the Advanced III GIT Class, taught by James W. Warren and Paula Stuart Warren. Members of the class generated a collection of "Genealogical Tips," a summary of which we all received at the end of the session. Some of these are out-dated by now – i.e. referring to Soundex-coding sheets, cheap "digs" at college dorms (\$15-20 a night) if you're researching near a college or university, newly-published books, etc .... Although I can't guarantee the accuracy of all, I find the selected list below still meaningful.

When you return from a research trip, analyze what you still need to look for. Make a list to include in the front of that family section. Then if you get to make a sudden trip, you'll be ready!

Becky Schwartz - The Colony, TX

Advice from Gordon Remington in an informal lecture in Salt Lake City, UT: in Feb 1994

*Don't open too many research doors without closing some.* I am applying this advice by writing some short pieces before my notes become too voluminous and unmanageable.

Jane Gardner Aprill - New Orleans, LA

Hang on to old photographs even though there are no names. You'd be surprised how many you will eventually identify and how many doors will open for you.

Ruby Keel Crook - Houston, TX

Take 6 or 7 post cards with you on a trip and take time to jot a thank you note to the person, person's Supervisor or institution about services or help rendered.

Becky Schwartz

Most of us have a word processor on our computers,

but many of us under-utilize it. Force yourself to learn how to use its capabilities. To learn about fonts, try copying a good-looking external document (maybe using the DGS Newsletter as an example!)... it's easier than you think. Then learn to index it!

Shirley R. Sloat - Dallas, TX

A suggestion that has been impressed on me several times in recent weeks is the necessity of a woman using her maiden name along with her married name. It leaves little doubt as to who you are, and often opens conversations.

Manya B. Rawl - Houston, TX

The first (1890) Territorial Census for the Oklahoma area before it became a state exists – it did not burn.

Lita Watson - Iowa Park, TX

My greatest success has come from using manuscript collections in various repositories. I've found tiny genealogical details, as well as overall important details in letters and other manuscripts.

Terri O'Neill - Bedford, TX

The Corps of Engineers has routinely made detailed pre-inundation maps and moved graves and stones – usually to an established cemetery. These are available at the District Public Affairs offices; contact an area office for details.

Phoebe S. Bond - Killeen, TX

Kaufman County, TX was created in 1848 from Henderson Co; the county seat is Kaufman. Rockwall was created from Kaufman County in 1873; the county seat is Rockwall. When searching Kaufman, one must also include Rockwall County. When searching Rockwall, one must include Kaufman, Collin, Dallas, and Hunt and Raines Counties.

Brenda Burns Kellow - Richardson, TX

Plan ahead. Initiate plans for the orderly disposal of your files, books, papers, records. This includes computer data for many of you. Your heirs may not attach any great significance to your work. Check repositories to see if they store collections as you would wish yours to be stored.

Linda Boyd Lawhon - Richardson, TX

[see postscript at end of article]

Law libraries have good records on Federal Indian Bureau payments to Indians.

Phoebe S. Bond

There have been some wills and deeds found, which were indexed by occupation rather than by name. Very few people in the Colonial days of America had three names; and often a person's occupation was used for identification, following a name, without a comma, and capitalized. For instance, John Williams Carpenter in 1785 was probably John

Williams, carpenter; And John Henry Taylor may have been John Henry, *taylor*."

Submitted by Paradise Gen. Soc., Paradise, CA to *My Family Tree*, published by the Odom Library.

Linda Boyd Lawhon

An old custom in old New England was if a woman was married for a second time, assuming she was a widow, she might be married in the nude! She would stand inside a closet with only her arm poking through, or standing behind a screen, or wearing a sheet over her bare body. This was her new husband's way of telling everyone that she came to him penniless, and that he would not assume any back debts of her previous marriage. These were called "Smock Weddings." ....from *The Family Tree*, published by the Odom Library, Moultrie, GA.

Linda Lawhon

When we volunteer our efforts in the field of genealogy, we aren't paying people *back* - we're paying *forward*! I like to think of it as "committing random acts of kindness."

Shirley R. Sloat

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**Postscript:** In 1994, Linda Boyd Lawhon couldn't know that she would die in 2003. During the compilation of this article, I received some very moving information from Jeri Steele who assisted Linda and her husband in carrying out Linda's wishes for the disposition of her genealogical material. Jeri has agreed to contribute a follow-up article that may provide some insight into how someone else might look at our own work.

Shirley Remnant Sloat



### "Sweet Mother Texas" by William Barr

"Mother of heroes, we come your children true,  
Proclaiming our allegiance, our faith, our love for you."

My theory is that most folks under Lone Star skies encounter these words from the state song only in Peter Bogdanovich's "The Last Picture Show." Unless they are of a certain vintage, contemporary Texans have a better chance of knowing the tune to the Agincourt Hymn than to "Texas, Our Texas."

That said, it is a pleasure to recommend a biography-cum-genealogy of Martin Varner, a book authored by one of his descendants who does his folks proud and the rest of us a favor in assembling the facts about a family numbering among Austin's "Old Three Hundred."

Author Don Raney, an engineer by profession, developed an interest in family history more than forty years ago leading up to his book and a post-retirement career in teaching genealogy classes for Richland College in Dallas. That his book had its origin in little family information, a disinterested many among his kinsman, and a charismatic, garrulous older relative with a rage to tell of his people makes the reading of Raney's research all the more interesting.

The author marshalls an extensive array of detailed maps and primary and secondary sources in detailing Martin Varner's story. When it comes to Varner's mortal wounding by Simon Gonzales, who as well murdered Stephen Austin Varner in the same incident, it's to Raney's credit that he includes multiple, somewhat contradictory versions of the tragedy.

Varner's German forebears came to colonial Pennsylvania. In the wake of Lord Dunmore's War, the Varner men placed their families in safety but returned of necessity to frontier farms in a war zone. Indian woes would pursue the family in their subsequent pioneering efforts in Ohio and Texas.

As a man in his late twenties, Martin Varner left the family farm in Warren County, Ohio for points south during the War of 1812. Flatboats carried him and some friends to the Arkansas and Missouri Territories, where they hunted buffalo and trapped beaver. This led to Varner joining the Jones Brothers' abortive settlement along both sides of the Red River and his carving out a farm in present-day Choctaw County, Oklahoma.

By the time Varner married Elizabeth ("Betsey") Inghis, another pioneer in the Wild West of their day, the Adam-Onis Treaty clarified the international border between Spanish Texas and the United States. When Federal troops from Fort Jessup subsequently burned the cabins and fields of the 200 settlers west of the Kiamichi River in the interest of re-settling the Choctaws, Varner and his neighbors attempted to ambush the soldiers in retaliation.

At this juncture, the Varners, after crossing the Red River, regathered in Jonesboro. They elected to follow Henry Jones into Stephen F. Austin's Colony in 1821, "the seed colony of Texas". The opportunity to acquire cheap cotton lands was too great to pass up, and Varner was clearing land and farming present-day Washington County by 1822.

By 1825, Martin Varner established a farm lower down the Brazos which in the twentieth century became the Varner-Hogg Plantation State Historic Site. From here he distilled the first spirituous liquor in Texas in 1829, a product from his cane fields. It was during this time of extending his wealth and raising a growing family that Varner participated in the Battle of Velasco in 1832.

Varner sold the property in 1834 to the Patton brothers after much improving it. The site of Varner's log home appears to lie underneath the plantation house built by the brothers, a home alike restored and improved by the late Ima Hogg of Houston, aka "Miss Ima."

An intriguing report from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department hints at Martin Varner choosing to build on the creek which bears his name with an eye towards attracting trade and developing a town in Brazoria County. Given his

ill-fated patronage of the carpenter Simon Gonzalez, which dates from this period, the possibility exists that the Varners' return to East Texas, with Gonzales in tow, was in part motivated by exposure to the profits to be made from trading posts and settlement development.

Clearly, the development of towns to facilitate agricultural expansion and stock raising was a goal of Varner's nearest neighbor on the Brazos, Josiah Bell, and of Stephen F. Austin himself, the recipient of that first bottle from Varner's farm.

Guarding the baggage of General Houston's army at Harrisburg, Varner, a man over fifty, played a role in the Texian victory at San Jacinto. Having first secured the safety of his family by seeing them east of the Trinity, he hastened in 1836 to join the war against Mexico securing the independence of the Lone Star republic. Around the time, the Varners and some of their relations had moved to the Sulphur River, near Fort Lyday in present-day Lamar County.

Indian trouble had earlier seen the removal of the Varners to the area around San Felipe (present-day Waller County) from their original settlement near what is now Independence. As a result of pressure from other tribes, they fled the area around Fort Lyday in 1841 to what is now Wood County, the Indian troubles there having been removed with the Texian victory over the woodland tribes at the Battle of the Neches in 1839. Another factor in heading south and east lay in a dispute with the Lydays involving land claims in the area about twelve miles south of present-day Quitman.

Whether Martin Varner and his only son met their deaths as a result of Gonzales resenting the garnishment of his tools for debt, or this factor was exacerbated by the latter encouraging Varner slaves to run away to Mexico, it is beyond dispute that the Mexican carpenter also perished in the altercation of 1844. Joe, a slave of Martin Varner, assisted the fatally wounded patriarch in dispatching Gonzales with a knife after the carpenter had shot and killed the teenaged Stephen Austin Varner.

Most of Raney's book consists of genealogy, located in the second section of pages. I think the book is worth reading by non-family members who appreciate not only Texas history, but the skillful telling of a family history which effectively draws on local and state history to make possible our understanding of lesser-known heroes.

Martin Varner was a hero of early Texas, and this literary work in heritage preservation neither understates nor overstates the case for such a claim.

William Barr of Katy, Texas holds the MA degree from the University of Texas and the MDiv degree from Yale University. He is an instructor of American History at San Jacinto College and writes for a Tennessee daily newspaper, the Paris Post-Intelligencer. Don Raney, "Martin Varner: Texas Pioneer; His Life Story

**and His Descendants"**

(The Book Warren, San Diego, California, 2009), 430 pages.

Martin Varner book review published in STIRPES, Vol.49, No. 4, Page 33, Dec. 2009. The author, William Barr, Katy, TX, has granted permission to reprint this review.



**NET LINK**

Net Link is a new column of the DGS Newsletter featuring a few helpful Internet resource links. These links are general enough to be useful by a number of individuals, but are not family name specific. Members are encouraged to submit their newly found Internet resources.

**Britain Isles - www.rootschat.com** is a messaging forum for Ireland and British Isles related research. The forums are divided by location (England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and other countries) and by research interests. Free.

**Hampshire (UK) Genealogical Society - http://www.hgs-online.org.uk/** is the site for this U.K. society. Especially interesting is the abbreviation and terms list that provides abbreviations and terms specific to England, such as BDM, GRO. For example, MI is not Michigan in the UK, but Monumental Inscriptions. Free.



**Do You Know Who We Are?**



DGS received this photo from a woman in Tennessee who found it among her grandmother's papers. Written on the back of the photo is:

Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Terry  
Dalas (sic) Texas -  
To be returned to that family when I  
am gone.

Florence R. Baker

In the lower right corner of the photo is the photographer's stamp - Malone, Nashville, Tenn.

Mrs. Baker's granddaughter sent the photo to the Dallas Genealogical Society in the hopes that we could help her to honor her grandmother's wish that the photo be reunited with the Terry family. Does anyone recognize the handsome couple in this photo or know of the TERRY family? Can anyone estimate the date of the photo by their clothes?

The Society intends to donate the photo to the Texas/Dallas History and Archives Division of the Dallas Public Library and hopes to be able to add a little background/history to accompany it.

Carolyn Davis, DGS Secretary  
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1-866-YOU2DGS (866-968-2347)

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### **DGS Calendar of Events 2010**

**Tuesday, August 17, 2010, 10:00 a.m. – Jewish Genealogy SIG**

**Saturday, September 11, 2010 – General Meeting: Social hour begins 10:30 a.m.; General Meeting begins 11:00 a.m.**

**Janet Khashab, Sandra Crowley & Tony Hanson – Topic: “FGS Conference Highlights”  
First Floor Auditorium**

**Saturday, September 18, 2010, 3:00 p.m. - AASIG**

**Saturday, October 2, 2010 – General Meeting: Social hour begins 10:30 a.m.; General Meeting begins 11:00 a.m.  
Lloyd Bockstruck – Special Guest Speaker (Topic: TBD)**

**First Floor Auditorium**

**All group meetings will be at the J. Erik Jonsson Central Library  
1515 Young Street, Dallas, TX 75202**

**If you need to contact DGS, you can email the particular board member with whom you wish to communicate or you may send an email to [info@dallasgenealogy.org](mailto:info@dallasgenealogy.org) or you may leave a voice mail at 1-866-YOU2DGS (1-866-968-2347)**