

PEGASUS

Journal of the Dallas Genealogical Society



RESEARCH ISSUE - SUMMER 2014
VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1

Pegasus: Journal of the Dallas Genealogical Society

The Publications Committee chose the name *Pegasus* for our journal because the winged horse is regarded as the symbol of the Muses and of aspiring to great accomplishments, and more importantly, because a Pegasus has been an icon of the City of Dallas for decades.

First erected in 1934 on the roof of the Magnolia Petroleum Co. headquarters on Commerce Street, the winged horse sign, fabricated by Texlite Signs in Dallas, became one of Dallas's most enduring and recognizable landmarks. In 1959, it became the logo of Mobil Oil when it merged with Magnolia Petroleum. The city conferred landmark status to the sign in 1973. In 1976, it became the property of the City of Dallas.

In 1978, the Magnolia Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Developers bought the building in 1997 and converted it to the present-day Magnolia Hotel. In 1999, in anticipation of Dallas's Millennium Celebration, the original sign was taken down and put into storage when a new sign was commissioned. A completely new, fully-rotating sign was lit for the first time at midnight on 1 January 2000. This work was accessioned into the Public Art Collection in 2000.

Articles Solicited for *Pegasus: Journal of the Dallas Genealogical Society*

The DGS Publications Committee is actively seeking articles that showcase both genealogical research and writing and compilations that feature unpublished genealogical records. Articles may be submitted by members and non-members of DGS, both hobbyists and professionals. Articles may not have been previously published elsewhere.

There will be two categories of publication: research issues that feature articles (case studies, methodologies, family genealogies) and records issues that feature transcriptions, abstracts, or indexes of records not yet filmed, digitized, or published elsewhere (e.g., cemeteries, family bibles, civil, religious, business groups, etc.).

To encourage article submissions, DGS will compensate authors for their material upon publication. We are one of a handful of societies to reward authors in this manner.

Guidelines for submission and payment terms can be found at: <http://dallasgenealogy.org/prod/index.php/journal-articles>.

Send submissions or questions to: pegasus_editorial@dallasgenealogy.org.

On the Cover

Night view of the neon Pegasus on the roof of the Magnolia Hotel, 1401 Commerce St., Dallas, Texas. Used with permission of The Magnolia Hotel, Dallas.

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ISSUE 1

From the Editors...Goodbye and Hello

Goodbye—In the summer of 2011 I accepted the position of Director of Publications Content for the Dallas Genealogical Society (DGS), effective in October of that year. This position posed several challenges, including editorial control of the *DGS Newsletter*, as well as working with DGS Board members on eBlasts and website items.

The biggest challenge was launching a new journal for the Society that raised the bar so articles not only met the highest standards of genealogical writing, but also were exciting and interesting to read. As with all new endeavors, there were obstacles along the way, including finding an editor and inspiring researchers to submit material for publication whether or not they were DGS members, professionals, or hobbyists.

In 2012, to encourage submissions, the Publications Committee announced a revised DGS Writing Contest that requires research articles to be new material never published elsewhere, to follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* and *Evidence Explained*, and to encompass research beyond the City and County of Dallas to include much of North Texas. The winners of the contest would be eligible for publication in the Research Issues of the new journal.

Pegasus: Journal of the Dallas Genealogical Society premiered in mid-2013, with the DGS Publications Committee serving as group editors of the four winning contest entries. A Records Issue, containing transcriptions of genealogical records specific to the City and County of Dallas, was introduced in the fall of 2013, and another is planned for this coming winter.

This 2014 Research Issue includes the two winning entries of the 2013 DGS Writing Contest: “From Kentucky to Texas: The Story of One Pioneer Family,” and “A Double Murder in Mills County.” The other articles were entries in the 2012 DGS Writing Contest that were accepted for publication even though they were not prize winners.

Now that *Pegasus* is well on its way, I have resigned as Director of Publications Content to allow me to return to my own research and

write family histories for the major branches of my family tree. The new editor of *Pegasus*, Julie Cahill Tarr, takes the reins with this issue. I will let her tell you a little about herself and about the future of *Pegasus*.

Marianne Szabo, former Director of Publications Content

Hello—It is an honor to have been selected by the Publications Committee to serve as the editor of *Pegasus*. I have spent the last month or so working with the fantastic members of the Publications Committee to bring you a journal that is both educational and enjoyable. The articles in this issue are certainly worth the read, and I hope you find them as enlightening as I did.

Marianne has asked me to tell you a little bit about me, so here we go. Genealogy has been a passion of mine for several years and I have been a professional writer and editor for as long as I can remember. With this melding of passion and skills, I provide writing, editing, and design services to assist other genealogists in telling their family stories. Additionally, I dedicate much of my time to educating others through my writing, having written genealogy articles, guides, and courses, as well as maintaining a genealogy blog for six years. I am heavily involved with the Illinois State Genealogical Society and currently serve as their Quarterly Editor and Education Committee Chair.

But enough about me, we should talk about you. Yes, *you*, the researcher and the storyteller. Have you ever thought about taking those stories from your laborious research and publishing them? *Pegasus* offers you this opportunity. Not a “skilled” writer? No problem! Time and again, as the editor of another genealogy publication, I get submissions with the precursor “I am not a writer and this is my first article.” These are often the best articles I receive. Just because you have not written an article before, does not mean you do not have it in you to do so. Give it a try! What do you have to lose? Learn more about submitting your work to *Pegasus* at <http://dallasgenealogy.org/prod/index.php/journal-articles>. I look forward to your submissions and seeing your family stories come to life!

Julie Cahill Tarr, Pegasus Editor

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FROM KENTUCKY TO TEXAS: THE STORY OF ONE PIONEER FAMILY

2013 DGS Writing Contest First Place Winner

by Jo Archer Arnspiger

During the 10-year life of the Republic of Texas, hardy pioneers enticed by the offer of free land moved into the wilderness that is now northern Texas. Peters Colony was the first and largest colonization endeavor for the new Republic, encompassing the huge land survey conveyed to W. S. Peters for the purpose of bringing settlers into the widely unpopulated area.

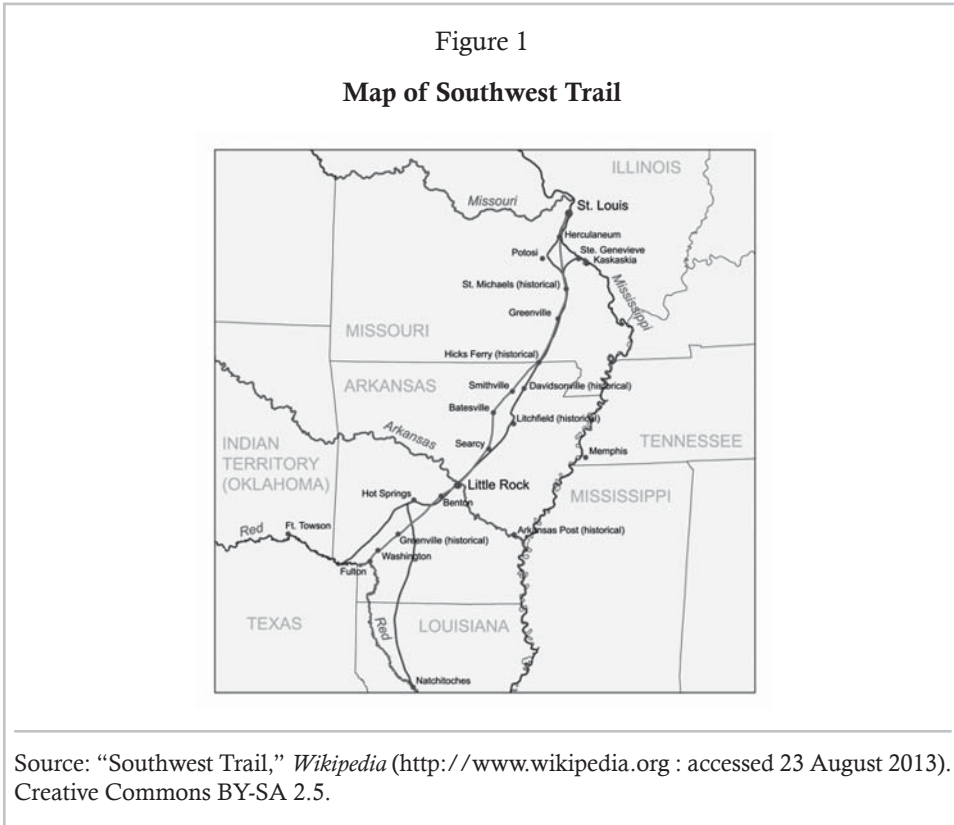
Land grants of 320 acres for single men, 17 years and older, and 640 acres for married men, were granted with the following provisions: building a home, occupying the land for a minimum of 3 years, and cultivating at least 15 acres of the land.¹ On 19 February 1856, Certificate No. 391 was issued to David Arnspiger and his wife Jane, for 640 acres in Grayson County in the southern portion of Peters Colony.²

David Arnspiger was born in Jessamine County, Kentucky, 5 June 1808, the son of Henry Arnspiger.³ Upon coming of age, he followed the historical path of young men, striking out on his own and travelling to Missouri in 1831.⁴ Coming from the blue grass region of Kentucky, it seems likely he pursued work with horses during his three-year residence in Missouri. Later years reveal a continuing occupation involving the raising of horses. The death of his father in 1834 prompted David to return to Jessamine County from 1835 to 1837.⁵ Following the settlement of his father's estate in 1837, David and three of his brothers removed to Illinois; two settled in Jersey County with David.⁶

David married Jane Stephens on 20 October 1839 in Jersey County, Illinois. Jane was the daughter of Wood Lampkin and young widow of Jasper Stephens.⁷ Based on the 1840 federal census for Jersey County, Illinois, Jane had no living children from her marriage to Jasper Stephens.⁸ James Harvey was the first child of David and Jane, born 19 May 1842, probably in Jersey County, just two years before the move to Texas.⁹

The 1837 Panic was the worst economic recession in the history of the young United States and lasted for seven years. Cotton prices fell and unemployment soared. Small farmers across the country faced economic disaster, many of them unable to pay their debts or keep their farms. The Bankruptcy Act of

1841 went into effect on 1 February 1842 and, for the first time, enabled any debtor to voluntarily petition for bankruptcy.¹⁰ David was among thousands of farmers who took advantage of the opportunity to wipe the slate clean and start again. He filed for bankruptcy on 20 May 1842 with the final discharge of his debts occurring on 8 October 1842 in the United States District Court in Springfield, Illinois.¹¹



“In 1845, David with his wife and young son came to Texas in an ox-drawn wagon, and settled near the small town of Mantua, Texas. Other than the few settlers in this small community, the area was very primitive, and neighbors few and far between.”¹² The trail to the Red River country of Texas was known as the Military Road, later the Southwest Trail (see Figure 1). Originating in St. Louis, Missouri, the trail headed southwest to the Hick’s Ferry (later known as Pitt’s Ferry), crossing the Current River into Arkansas, then southwest through Arkansas to Texarkana before heading west into north Texas.¹³ David likely travelled this road in his migration to Texas, whether with friends from his home in Jersey County or with strangers all heading to Texas to start again.

The distance of over 650 miles took 2 to 4 months to complete. The vagaries of weather, road conditions, wagon load, and family health could make the

trek longer or shorter. Oxen travelled an average 2 miles an hour, enabling the weary pioneers to progress only 10 to 15 miles a day.¹⁴

Everything David and his young family needed for the journey was in his wagon, as well as what he would need once he reached Texas. Foodstuffs would have consisted of flour, bacon, corn meal, dried beans, meat, fruit, sugar, salt, tea, and coffee. Cooking was done on an open fire using only such basic implements as a Dutch oven, kettle, and skillet. With only one small child in the family, possibly Jane and the young boy slept in the wagon, but David most certainly slept on the ground, either in a tent or simply utilizing quilts and blankets and sleeping under the stars.¹⁵

Upon reaching Texas, probably in the late fall, David would have faced the problem of housing for that first winter. As the definition of an “old Texan” was one who “passed his first winter in the bed of his wagon,” it is very likely David and Jane with young James Harvey did just that.¹⁶

The first years in this primitive land must have been difficult for both David and Jane. With few other settlers in the area to help and no teenaged sons, all the work of constructing a cabin and barn, containing any livestock, and preparing the land for the first crop of wheat or corn fell to David. The nearest supplier of farm equipment was in Jefferson, Texas, over 200 miles to the east. The preparation of the land to receive the seeds of corn, wheat, and oats, while not as difficult as some more forested land, was still a backbreaking task. David’s choice of acreage in southern Grayson County provided trees for building materials, grassland perfectly suitable for raising grain and livestock, and plentiful rainfall for a long growing season.¹⁷

As one of only a handful of women in the county, Jane faced challenges only a woman would truly understand. Her second son, William Jasper, born 1 January 1846, is said to be the first white child born in Collin County.¹⁸ It is probable only Jane’s husband assisted in the birth of this first Arnspiger born in Texas. Two years later, daughter Texana was born on 4 September 1848. Powers, a third son (and final child), was born on 12 September 1850. One can only imagine the daily life of Jane and the hardships she suffered. With four children under the age of 10 and isolation from neighbors, Jane had the responsibility of providing all things domestic for her children and husband. Jane’s enduring character sustained her for 94 years and is a shining example of the indomitable Texan and American spirit.

David appears to have been an industrious man and by 1846 his personal property consisted of 1 horse, 68 head of cattle, and miscellaneous hogs and tools valued at \$15, as well as his 640-acre land patent valued at \$320.¹⁹ In northern Grayson County, Preston Bend was developing as a major trade center

with a crossing over the Red River allowing cattle raised throughout Texas to continue to the northern markets.²⁰ Perhaps David utilized his close proximity to this crossing to sell his cattle during the first few years to supplement his income.

Records show from 1847 to 1850 he paid only the state poll tax. It was not until 1851, after he received title to his land, that he again paid property taxes.²¹ David's early affinity with horses was a lifelong pursuit as evidenced by the continued increase in the size of his horse herd during his lifetime.²² Grayson County tax records indicate David maintained possession of his original 640 acres and added to his horse and cattle herds year by year. The value of David's land had quadrupled by 1854, valued at \$2,160. His livestock herds increased to 9 horses and 15 cattle, and he had a wagon valued at \$51.²³ By 1860, David had 40 acres of land in cultivation with 526 acres remaining uncultivated, probably much of it utilized as grazing land for his livestock. His land was valued at \$5,680 and the livestock consisted of 17 horses, 6 milch cows, 10 working oxen, 20 other cattle, 8 sheep, and 8 swine. He also raised 396 bushels of wheat, 300 bushels of Indian corn, and 50 bushels of oats.²⁴

In his religious beliefs, David was an ardent Baptist, attending the Highland Baptist church some 10 or 12 miles south of his farm near the small community of Anna in Collin County. He rode one of his numerous horses each Sunday, likely accompanied by his wife and children travelling either by wagon or horseback. David had a close personal relationship with Thomas Benton McComb, preacher of the Highland Baptist Church. David's son, James Harvey, married Thomas's daughter, Mary Ann, in 1866. The wedding was an extended affair, serving as an opportunity for the community to gather together for dancing and socializing with delicious food and good friends.²⁵

David spent the remainder of his life in Texas on his original land, only giving portions to his oldest two sons in 1868, two years prior to his death. In the words of his daughter-in-law, Susan Jane Lancaster, wife of William Jasper, "being of German parentage, [he] could speak only very broken English. Many times he had difficulty making himself understood." David and Jane lived a solitary life away from family and in an isolated area of Grayson County. Was this by chance or by design? The answer is unknown, but it seems David had an early desire to leave what was, and try something new: first leaving Kentucky at the young age of 21, then again leaving family and friends in Illinois for Texas where no family followed. For a man and woman who lived such a solitary life, they left a multitude of descendants. Most Arnspigens living in Texas today are descended from this couple.

David died 9 June 1870 at his home three miles south of Van Alstyne. Jane lived another 24 years but never remarried. She died 2 March 1894.

This enduring couple lie side by side in the small rural Alexander Cemetery in Weston, Texas, just a mile or two from their homestead. Although David had a small family for the times, only 3 sons and 1 daughter, his descendents more than compensated by providing 25 grandchildren and at least 50 great-grandchildren.

Author Biography

Jo Archer Arnsperger is a professional genealogist and owner of Those Who Went Before. She is retired from a career as an Information Technology trainer in the education field. She is currently accepting research clients, and subcontracts with Bridge to Yesterday to create Ancestry Albums, merging her technology and graphic art skills with genealogical research. Jo began doing genealogical research in 1974. She has been editor of the Northern Arizona Genealogical Society's quarterly newsletter, *The Bulletin*, for three years. She also maintains the Jessamine County (Kentucky) Genealogical Society's website and attends national conferences and institutes. For more information on the Arnsperger family, contact Jo at jarnspiger@cableone.net.

ENDNOTES

1. Capt. B. B. Paddock, editor, *A Twentieth Century History and Biographical Record of North and West Texas*, (Chicago and New York: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1906), 78. Available via *Internet Archive* (<http://archive.org/details/twentiethcenturyv1padd>).

2. W. M. Arnsperger, *David Arnsperger 1808–1870*, (MS, Van Alstyne, Texas, 1976) 1–2; privately held by Gary A. Nees, Portland, Oregon. A copy was provided to the author in 1985. Also, "Land Grants," database, *Texas General Land Office* (<http://www.glo.texas.gov> : accessed 18 August 2013), entries for David Arnsperger, Grayson County, abstract no. 1526, file no. 001123 and David Arnsperger, Collin County, abstract no. 15, file no. 001123. Full payment for the land was made 19 April 1856; the land lay in both Collin and Grayson counties.

3. *Find A Grave* (<http://findagrave.com> : accessed 19 August 2013), entry for David Arnsperger, memorial no. 6424435. Also, Jessamine County, Kentucky, Will Records, E:57–59, Henry Arnsperger; "Kentucky Probate Records, 1727–1990," database and digital images, *FamilySearch* (<http://familysearch.org> : accessed 19 August 2013).

4. Jessamine County, Kentucky, Will Records, E:57–59; affidavit by Samuel Arnsperger, son of Henry Arnsperger, stating David Arnsperger, his brother, was due money from the estate. Also, *Tax Books of Kentucky Counties, Jessamine County*; Kentucky State Historical Society, roll no. 217. David Arnsperger appears for the first time in 1830, listed as 21 years old with no land.

5. *Tax Books of Kentucky Counties, Jessamine County*, 1835 and 1837 (the 1836 book is missing); David Arnsperger, over 21, no land.

6. 1840 U.S. census, Jersey County, Illinois, no township, p. 27, line 28, John Arnsperger (also, p. 29, line 2, Samuel Arnsperger and p. 29, line 27, David Arnsperger); digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 19 August 2013); citing National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) microfilm publication M704, roll 61.

7. "Illinois Statewide Marriage Index 1763–1900," database, *Illinois State Archives* (<http://cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/databases> : accessed 19 August 2013), entry for David Arnsperger to Jane Stephens (1839) and entry for Jasper Stevens and Jane Lamkin (1835). Also, *Biographical Souvenir of the State of Texas* (Chicago, Illinois: F. A. Battey & Co., 1889), 36; sketch of James Harvey Arnsperger, son of David Arnsperger. Also, Green County, Illinois,

Probate Index 1836–1848 v. 6, Jasper Stephens, referencing Book 3:34, 53 and Book C:160; “Illinois Probate Records, 1819–1970,” digital images, *FamilySearch* (<http://familysearch.org>).

8. 1840 U.S. census, Jersey County, Illinois, p. 29, line 27, David Arnsperger. Household shows 1 male age 30–39 and 1 female age 20–29.

9. Texas Department of Health, death certificate no. 21245 (1932), J. H. Arnsperger; Bureau of Vital Statistics, Austin; “Texas, Deaths 1890–1976,” database and digital images, *FamilySearch* (<http://familysearch.org> : accessed 19 August 2013). Also, *Biographical Souvenir of the State of Texas*, 36.

10. *eNotes* (<http://www.enotes.com/bankruptcy-act-1841-reference/bankruptcy-act-1841> : accessed 18 August 2013).

11. “David Arnsperger,” notice of bankruptcy petition, *Illinois Weekly State Journal (Springfield)*, 20 May 1842, p. 3, col. 7; digital images, *GenealogyBank* (<http://genealogybank.com> : accessed 17 August 2013) Newspaper Archives Collection. Also, “David Arnsperger,” notice to creditors, *Illinois Weekly State Journal (Springfield)*, 29 July 1842, p. 3, col. 3; digital images, *GenealogyBank* (<http://genealogybank.com> : accessed 17 August 2013) Newspaper Archives Collection. This same notice to creditors was printed each week, through the 30 September 1842 issue.

12. Arnsperger, *David Arnsperger 1808–1870*, 1–2.

13. “Southwest Trail,” *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture* (<http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net> : accessed 20 August 2013).

14. “Typical travel distance for wagon trains on fairly navigable land,” 4 June 2013, message board thread, *TrueWest*, community forum, (<http://truwest.ning.com/forum/topics/typical-travel-distance-for-wagon-trains-on-fairly-navigable-land>).

15. “The Pioneers,” *Lone Hand Western* (<http://www.lonehand.com/pioneers.htm> : accessed 20 August 2013).

16. Graham Landrum, *Grayson County: An Illustrated History of Grayson County, Texas* (Fort Worth, Texas: University Supply & Equipment Co., 1960), 79; digital images, *Portal to Texas History* (<http://texashistory.unt.edu> : accessed 18 August 2013).

17. Donna J. Kumler, “Grayson County,” *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hcg09> : accessed 20 August 2013).

18. Arnsperger, *David Arnsperger, 1808–1870*, 1–2. The Arnsperger land was situated in both Grayson and Collin counties. On 17 March 1846 Grayson County was created from Fannin County. On 3 April 1846 Collin County was created from Fannin County. It would seem the homestead David built was situated on the portion of his 640 acres that lay in the new Collin County.

19. Grayson County, Texas, 1846 Assessment Roll, unpaginated, David Arnsperger; “Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1846–1910,” database and digital images, *FamilySearch* (<http://familysearch.org> : accessed 19 August 2013).

20. Kumler, “Grayson County,” *Handbook of Texas Online*.

21. Grayson County, Texas, 1847 Assessment Roll, unpaginated, David Arnsperger. Also, assessments for David Arnsperger in the following years, 1848 (unpaginated), 1849 (p. 1, all B sheets batched first, followed by A sheets), and 1850 (p. 1).

22. Jessamine County, Kentucky, Will Records, E:57–59; David had left a horse with his father, which his father sold for \$60 while David was gone to Missouri.

23. Grayson County, Texas, 1854 Assessment Roll, unpaginated, D. Arnsperger, p. 2.

24. 1860 U.S. census, Grayson County, Texas, agriculture schedule, 7th sheet (header illegible on all pages), David Arnsperger, line 22; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 19 August 2013); citing NARA microfilm publication T1132, roll 4.

25. Arnsperger, *David Arnsperger, 1808–1870*, 1–2. Also, *Biographical Souvenir of Texas*, 36.

A DOUBLE MURDER IN MILLS COUNTY

2013 DGS Writing Contest Second Place Winner

by Charles L. Curtis

A contemporary genealogy message board has this entry: “I am trying to find out information on the murders of my grandfather Felton Waddell and his brother Ramsey Waddell. This is a subject that was never spoken of in our family and the grandchildren are wondering what caused this tragedy. Any information you could supply would be greatly appreciated.”¹ It is common for families to have secrets. The genealogist, however, can often uncover the truth with the use of historical documents. In this case, the cause of the Waddell murders was found in the archives of the Texas Criminal Court of Appeals and the yellowed crumbling pages of a newspaper morgue file.

“Get off of that woman or I will kill you!”² Seconds later, two shots from a Winchester rifle left one man dead and one man dying on a gravel road in Mills County, Texas.³ The shooter was Kenneth W. Witty. The victims were his neighbors, Ramsey and Felton Waddell. They had known each other all their lives.⁴ Ironically, this burst of violence came as peace followed the bloodiest war in world history. It was 25 September 1945 and bake sales had replaced war news in America’s newspapers.

The Waddell and Witty families probably knew one another for three generations. Both families migrated to Texas shortly after the Lone Star Republic achieved statehood. Witty’s paternal grandfather, William Witty, was born in Georgia in 1854, but appears in Hill County, Texas, by the 1860 federal census.⁵ The Waddells were also from Georgia and their maternal grandfather, William Jameson Queen, had come to Texas by 1870.⁶

Not only did both families come to Texas, both families also settled near the tiny town of Star.⁷ They may have witnessed a good deal of violence in their early years there. After the Civil War, there was a power vacuum in Texas filled by gangs of vigilantes who dispensed justice with instant verdicts and hangings. Rival gangs then turned on each other and lawlessness prevailed in Mills and surrounding counties for much of the 1870s and 1880s.⁸

“While the vigilance mobs were at the height of their reign of terror in the present Mills County area...[it] is estimated that close to one hundred men were killed within these few years.”⁹ It was not until the Texas Rangers came in the 1890s that the vigilante violence ended.¹⁰

Although the Rangers brought the vigilantes under control, the local violence often metastasized into family feuds. “Feud troubles rose to a peak in

the seventies, slacked off in the eighties with the help of the Texas Rangers and should have become rare by 1890. Instead of continuing downward, however, the curve jumped upward again in the nineties and even since 1900 the old custom has been frequently revived.”¹¹ Author C. L. Sonnichsen concluded in *Ten Texas Feuds*: “You won’t find a better laboratory for the study of feuds than the State of Texas. From the days of settlement, Texans have had more compulsion to fight than most people, more pistols and rifles to fight with, more opportunities and excuses for slaughtering each other.”¹²

Perhaps this tradition of taking justice into your own hands—of settling disputes personally rather than through legal channels—contributed to the Witty-Waddell shootings. Something powerful poisoned a relationship that had been harmonious.

When Kenneth Witty moved onto the Mills County farm adjacent to the Waddells in 1942, it marked a homecoming. Kenneth Witty had been born in Mills County in 1905.¹³ Witty and Felton Waddell both attended the two-room schoolhouse in Star.¹⁴ As young men they rode the rails together to Arizona and partied together in Star’s only tavern.¹⁵

However, in the 1930 federal census we see that Witty, his wife, and three daughters had moved to Coleman County.¹⁶ The census lists his job as a “pumper” and the steady wages in the oil fields must have been more remunerative than the falling prices for crops in the depression.¹⁷

Witty worked in the oil fields for the next ten years and the 1940 federal census shows that he lived just across the Texas state line in Lovington, New Mexico. His family had grown to five children.¹⁸ When World War II started, crop prices rose and Witty returned to his home county and his earlier occupation as a farmer.¹⁹

When he moved onto his farm about five and one-half miles northeast of Goldthwaite, he seemed pleased to settle next to his old acquaintance, Felton Waddell.²⁰ Felton’s older brother, Ramsey, lived with Felton, Felton’s wife Gladys, and their three children.²¹ For two years, the neighbors worked in harmony. They helped each other with labor, shared garden harvests, loaned and borrowed tools, and ate at one another’s table.²²

The problem began when one of the Witty girls, 17-year-old Wyvone Witty, decided to leave Mills County in March 1945. She wanted to return to her friends in New Mexico and find work there.²³ The story of her departure sowed a seed of discord that grew into murder. Each stage of the dispute presented an opportunity to return to the earlier state of cooperation and friendship but, as if pulled by an invisible and evil intent, the story moved to its tragic end.

The Witty parents, Kenneth and Bertha, always claimed that their daughter's trip was made with their approval and support.²⁴ Gladys Waddell told a different tale. During her husband's trial, Bertha testified, "Mrs. Waddell told me that she had heard that my daughter had run off from home. I told her that there was not anything to it, and that she had her daddy's consent to go." Bertha Witty was sensitive to gossip and added, "I did not want talk like that going around the country."²⁵

Did Wyvone Witty run away from home or leave with her parents' approval? Gossip about her motive was the first crack in the neighbors' relationship. My daughter-in-law, Wyvone Witty's granddaughter, said the episode was a family secret that was rarely discussed.

Once planted, the hard feelings proved intractable, and petty acts of retribution led to harsh words that escalated into physical assaults. Each side called the other the aggressor. The battlefield for this quarrel was the neighborhood mailboxes.

Mailboxes on rural mail routes are grouped together for the convenience of the mail carrier. Typically four or five mailboxes are lined up on one stand. In this case, five neighbors shared a spot in front of the Waddell home for their mail delivery. A cove of trees on the Waddell property provided shade for the neighbors to share as they waited for the mail.²⁶

Bertha Witty often sat under these shade trees as she waited for her mail. After complaining to Gladys Waddell that her stories about the Witty daughter were untrue, Bertha began to find grass burrs under the trees where she usually sat.²⁷ Grass burrs have spiny, sharp spurs that stick to clothing and irritate skin.²⁸

Bertha recalled that on 31 July 1945 she was sitting in a chair under the shade trees when Gladys appeared and told her "your ass isn't good enough to sit in my chair." She made Bertha stand up and return the chair.²⁹ What happened next marked a turning point that escalated a war of words and petty insults into an assault.

Felton, Gladys's husband, sat on the front porch as the argument over the chair continued. He stepped off the porch and urged his wife to "get her, take to her." This encouraged Gladys to pick up a board and hit Bertha Waddell across the legs. Felton then grabbed Bertha, while Gladys hit her on the back and shoulders. The mail carrier's timely arrival stopped the attack.³⁰

After her beating, Bertha returned the next day to wait for the mail with a neighbor, Buddy Marler. The first thing they saw was a new fence that

surrounded the trees and blocked access of the shade from any neighbor waiting for the mail delivery. After their arrival, Felton Waddell came out of the house with a butcher knife in his hand.³¹ “He came off of that porch and he looked bad slinging his hands with that butcher knife,” Marler testified at the trial. “He was slinging the butcher knife like...a pirate slinging a cutlass.”³²

Shortly thereafter, Felton cut down the shade trees. Most neighbors saw only revenge and spite in this action and Gladys could not provide any other rationale. “The trees were on our property and they were our trees, and I guess he just wanted to cut them down.”³³

After the assault, Bertha talked to the Mills County Sheriff and the County Attorney. They noted the bruises left by the beating and advised her to see a private attorney.³⁴ One has to wonder why the Sheriff did not arrest Gladys and Felton for assault.

While these events occurred, Kenneth Witty was 365 miles away in West Texas. Each year he supervised more than 100 workers on a potato harvest in that part of the state. It was important work and income for the Wittys, but fear prompted Bertha Witty to telegraph her husband for help on Friday, 3 August. He began the long drive home that day and arrived at 3:30 in the morning. He consoled her but felt the worst was over and he returned to West Texas.³⁵

The Waddells’ vendetta against the Wittys did not restrict itself to the mailboxes. Someone placed human feces at the spot where the Waddell children waited for the school bus.³⁶ When Kenneth Witty returned from West Texas, Felton and his older brother Ramsey stalked him when he visited Goldthwaite.³⁷

When Kenneth Witty returned to Mills County on 31 August, he sought legal advice. He visited the Sheriff, who remembered that Bertha Witty had been in to see him and that she had shown him her bruises. The Sheriff recommended that Witty talk to an attorney. Witty saw an attorney named Gilliam, who told him he was too busy to take on more work. Gilliam recommended a peace bond, but Witty said, “If I put them under a peace bond they would beat me to death.”³⁸ He saw another attorney named Bowman who represented the Federal Land Bank. The Waddells were clients of the Land Bank so Bowman had a conflict of interest in the case. Witty next wired an attorney in West Texas, Lloyd Kennedy, who offered to help when he could travel to the area on 1 October.³⁹

Witty asked the post office to hold his mail in town to avoid the need for further confrontations at the mailboxes.⁴⁰ As a last resort he decided to put his

farm up for sale.⁴¹ We can imagine his frustration and fear at his situation. He was running out of options.

Witty looked for ways to avoid conflict. He approached Felton Waddell in town and tried to make peace, but “Felton was in a bad humor and he offered to whip me three or four different times while I was talking to him.”⁴²

“In the early part of that conversation,” Witty testified, “I asked him to let’s [*sic*] get our families and go the Sheriff’s office and try to get this matter settled, and then we could live out there all right. He said he had made up his mind not to get along, and not even to try to get along.”⁴³ Thirteen witnesses at Witty’s Burnet County trial later testified that the Waddell brothers had a reputation for “being quarrelsome and having an overbearing disposition.”⁴⁴

The feud boiled over into a second physical assault on 25 September 1945. Bertha Witty had some butter beans she wanted to mail to her sister. In hindsight, she would have been wiser to go to the post office in Goldthwaite. However, Bertha knew the mail carrier came down the road about noon, and she took a chance she could hand him the outgoing package without encountering the Waddells.⁴⁵

Her husband had been hunting that morning, but returned to his farm by noon. While Bertha went to the mailbox, Kenneth hunted rabbits in his nearby field to feed to his hunting dogs. Perhaps she felt safe since her husband was nearby and armed. Witty admitted that he took the gun “thinking that I would use it to keep the peace there should these men jump on my wife.”⁴⁶

His premonition proved true. Witty heard “a racket” and, upon finding a clear view through some heavy brush, saw “two men and a woman advancing upon my wife. I fired a warning shot and hollered, ‘Get off of that woman or I will kill you.’”⁴⁷

Felton yelled back, “We are going to whip her God-damned ass.”⁴⁸ As Felton grabbed Bertha, Witty shot him in the chest from 60 yards away. The bullet knocked Felton to the ground, but his brother Ramsey continued to wrestle with Bertha Witty. Although Ramsey had Bertha in a headlock, Ramsey’s head rose above Bertha’s and Witty took the shot. His bullet entered Ramsey’s temple, instantly killing him.⁴⁹ Felton died in the ambulance on the way into town.⁵⁰

Bruised and cut from the fight, Bertha returned home with her husband.⁵¹ Witty immediately drove into Goldthwaite where he turned himself in to the Sheriff.⁵² The jail registry (see Figure 1) shows only three prisoners in the Goldthwaite jail in the month of September 1945. One was charged as

“Drunk.” A second was held for a Sheriff in another county. Kenneth Witty was held on the night of 25 September for “Murder.”⁵³ He bonded out the next day on \$5,000 bonds for each murdered man.⁵⁴ The feud with the Waddells had ended, but a two-year legal battle had begun.

Figure 1

Register of Prisoners, Mills County Jail

REGISTER OF PRISONERS CONFINED IN THE COUNTY JAIL
OF MILLS COUNTY, TEXAS

Sept - 10 - Oct 8 NY 9

| No. | NAME | Date of Arrest Month Day Year | OFFENSE | Other | NAME OF OFFICER MAKING ARREST | HOW DISCHARGED | When Mo. Day Year | No. Days Confinement | No. of Months Per Day | TOTAL | REMARKS |
|-----|------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------|---------|
| | Doak | 9 14 45 | Drunk | 14 | W. Reynolds | Out fine | 9 19 45 | 2 | | 1 28 | |
| | K. Witty | 9 25 45 | Murder | 14 | W. Reynolds | Bonded out | 9 26 45 | 2 | | 1 40 | |
| | Wag so Boy | 9 27 45 | Beach by shore Littlegick pay | | | Released | Oct 28 | 1 | | 10 20 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | 4 80 | |

Mr. Walter Hoppert

Source: Register of Prisoners Confined in the County Jail of Mills County, Texas, 10 September to 8 October 1947, p. 9.

Kenneth Witty had shot two men dead. However, he shot them in defense of his wife. His guilt or innocence divided the town. It also divided the Mills County jury that heard his case in January 1946. The jury could not agree on a verdict and the judge declared a mistrial.⁵⁵

You can look at Kenneth Witty’s rabbit-hunting trip to the field that day through a Machiavellian lens. If you shoot a rabbit with a 30–30 Winchester, a rifle used for deer hunting, its big powerful bullet will not leave much rabbit meat for the dogs. And, Witty had a .22 rifle, a smaller more appropriate rabbit rifle, back at the house.⁵⁶ Was it also suspicious that Witty purchased the Winchester only a few days earlier?⁵⁷ Was it purchased with more than deer hunting in mind?

Witty admitted, in addition to rabbit hunting, that he took the rifle to the field to “keep the peace” if trouble raised its head.⁵⁸ One has to wonder if the rifle would have been a more effective deterrent if Witty had walked to the mailboxes by his wife’s side with the rifle in his hand. A darker interpretation suggests that Bertha Witty visited the mailbox as bait for a confrontation and Kenneth Witty ambushed the Waddell brothers when the inevitable fight began.

The trial was moved to adjacent San Saba County, but that was not far enough away to escape the notoriety and divided opinions that had led to the

mistrial in Mills County. San Saba eventually decided they could not seat an unbiased jury because the case had received so much discussion.⁵⁹

The trial was moved again in 1946. This time, a Burnet County jury heard the trial and found Kenneth Witty guilty. They sentenced him to 15 years in the penitentiary.⁶⁰ However, his legal story still had another chapter.

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals is literally the court of last resort in Texas criminal cases. The Court of Criminal Appeals agreed to hear an appeal of the Witty trial in 1947. Witty's lawyers claimed that the Burnet County judge had failed to give the jury proper instructions. They argued that no other means were available to Witty to protect his wife and the jury should have been informed of this in the judge's instructions. Witty, they argued, had tried all other means to stop the attack on his wife. He yelled a warning. He fired a warning shot. He was too far away to physically stop the attack before great injury was done to his wife. Therefore, his use of deadly force was a legitimate case of self-defense. The court overturned the lower court verdict and Witty was a free man.⁶¹

A step-by-step escalation had driven events. Because of gossip, a friendship was lost. Because of pride, harsh words were exchanged. Because of anger, a feud began. The feud grew out of hand and two men died.

If the results seem out of proportion to the events that led up to them, it may be because the Wittys and Waddells lived in a society where traditions encouraged individual action, even when that action was violent. Tales of vigilantes and family feuds were most likely part of their upbringing. Malcolm Gladwell calls such societies "cultures of honor." Gladwell writes: "murder rates are higher there [in the South] than in the rest of the country. But crimes of property and stranger crimes—like muggings—are lower."⁶²

Sociologist John Shelton Reed says, "The homicides in which the South seems to specialize are those in which someone is being killed by someone he (or often she) knows, for reasons both killer and victim understand." Reed adds: "The statistics show that the Southerner who can avoid arguments and adultery is as safe as any other American, and probably safer. In the backcountry, violence wasn't for economic gain. It was personal. You fought over your honor."⁶³

The attack against his wife probably amplified Witty's sense of honor. The Southern culture of honor includes the notion that men should not insult ladies.⁶⁴ To modern ears this type of chivalry might sound out of place. However, the woman's role in 1945 was more subordinate than you might imagine. In 1945, women could vote but they could not serve on juries or

grand juries until 1 January 1955. A woman could not buy a car or house or stocks and bonds, make contracts, agree to promissory notes, sue if injured, or sign a bail bond without her husband's signature.⁶⁵ That may be why it was likely both Bertha and Kenneth saw an insult to her as his responsibility.

Although the years between now and these two murders are not great, the changes in society are significant. These differences make these murders hard for subsequent generations to understand. Hopefully this essay will help us come closer to understanding the people who suffered through this misfortune and the times in which they lived.

Author Biography

Charles (Chuck) L. Curtis is a native of St. Louis, Missouri. He earned Bachelor of Journalism and Master of Arts degrees from the University of Missouri. Chuck spent forty years in the advertising agency business, working for clients like Hallmark Cards, Pizza Hut, and Sprint. He is now retired and lives with Gloria, his wife of 48 years, in Dallas, Texas, near his son, daughter-in-law, and grandson. This story is about the great-grandfather of his daughter-in-law, Melody.

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JOHN HUNTER CLARIDGE (1854–1927)

by Karen Claridge Walker

John Hunter Claridge was born 16 November 1854 in Johnson County, Texas, near Rock Creek, the second son of Francis A. Claridge and Sarah Jane Hunter.¹ He was named for both of his grandfathers: John Claridge Jr. and John Hunter.²

The first few years of John's life were chaotic. His mother, Sarah Jane, died before 1860. His father married Martha W. Beaver in October 1860 in Johnson County.³ Soon thereafter, the family moved to Arkansas, where his half-brother George was born about 1862.⁴ They may have been en route to Illinois, where his father enlisted in the Union Army in 1864.⁵ After the war, their lives settled into a quieter pattern. John received an education, learning to read and write.⁶ His family remained in Illinois until about 1875.

By 1 January 1876, John was back in Johnson County, Texas, where he and his brother Rupert sold their community interest in Sarah Jane's portion of the F. A. Claridge survey for \$850.⁷ John married a very young Cynthia Ella Myers on 4 February 1877, in Cleburne.⁸ Cynthia was the daughter of a wealthy and powerful man, Samuel Houston Myers, and his second wife, Cynthia Ann Bales.⁹ Things seemed to be going well for John and Cynthia but were about to take a drastic turn.

Samuel Myers had three wives. His third and surviving wife, Mary Ann, was co-administrator of his will when he died in 1874. She was to give various amounts of land and money to each of his children at age 18; she would have use of the remainder during her lifetime unless she remarried.¹⁰ She did remarry in 1877 but did not follow the terms of the will. This created rancor among the family. On the evening of 21 February 1877, just weeks after John and Cynthia were married, Mary Ann was fatally shot in the head while she sat at dinner with her family. The shot had come through a window, and tracks led to a step-son-in-law named James Bowden. Bowden, who was imprisoned for life, implicated Sam Myers Jr., Cynthia's 18-year-old brother. Sam protested his innocence and had an alibi, but guilty or not, Sam Jr. was hanged for the murder on 19 March 1880.¹¹ Just a few weeks later on 27 April, John and Cynthia's son, Oliver Asbury, was born.¹² Their emotions must have been in turmoil—from horror through sorrow to joy.

After the horrific experiences in Johnson County, John and family moved south to San Antonio in 1882, where John had a job as salesman for Langdon, Greenly & Co. (wholesale railroad supplies) for about two years. Then he

worked for Morbie & Co. (general merchandise and Mexican goods) for one year. He also had a livestock business handling mules and horses.¹³ There was a spot of trouble on 13 April 1884 that revealed Cynthia's gumption:

They Got Away...

At Beanville yesterday two horse thieves attempted to rob the stables of Mr. John Claridge. Mr. Claridge was away at the time, but Mrs. Claridge, obtaining a pistol, shot at the men. One of them dropped, pretending he was shot, but on pursuit he arose and got off together with his companion.¹⁴

John gave up the livestock business and returned to Johnson County. Daughter Vera Myrtle was born there on 26 February 1887, another bittersweet occasion for John because his father died the same day in San Antonio.¹⁵ John's family returned to San Antonio, where Helen Pearl was born 31 January 1890, a purely joyful event.¹⁶

Their family was on the move for the next few years. After Helen's birth, the family moved to Hunt County, Texas, where John built a house for his brother and managed the Joe Devine Ranch.¹⁷ John went to Velasco, Brazoria County, in October 1891, where there was the promise of all the work he could do.¹⁸ Cynthia and their children followed him to Brazoria. Cynthia died of tuberculosis in January 1892, just a short time after their arrival in Velasco.¹⁹ John was left with three children to care for, just as his father had been when Sarah Jane died.

John returned to San Antonio to work as a carpenter and manage a ranch in Castroville.²⁰ He met Lucina Stow Riggs, a widow with children of her own, daughter of Abel Stow and Marietta McCafferty.²¹ John and Lucina married on 28 December 1893, at the Methodist Episcopal Church South.²² On 5 December 1894, their son, Rupert Rosswell Jr., was born and named for John's brother.²³

Trouble found John again in 1895. As reported in the *San Antonio Daily Light*, on Monday evening, 8 April, John was attacked by Ben Mohavier, Les Harris, and a few other men as he was walking home from work between 9:00 and 10:00 p.m. They threw rocks at him, and he ran away. They followed John, surrounded him before he got to his home, and threw more rocks, hitting him on the head and neck. One of the assailants grabbed John about the neck. John pulled out his pocket knife and cut the man. Mohavier and Harris were arrested. John turned himself in the next day. The attack had been inspired by a grudge. John had fired Mohavier from the Smith ranch in Castroville.²⁴

But wait! The very next day's paper contained a denial of John's statement. Joseph Mohavier, Ben's father, was quoted as saying:

John Hunter Claridge (1854-1927)

There isn't a word of truth in Claridge's statement. Claridge is always getting into trouble. Claridge was working on Smith's ranch in Medina County until about a year ago, when it was sold. My son was also employed on the ranch. I believe that Claridge killed a hog and cow belonging to my son, and that's what created the hard feelings, although my boy never said a word to him about it. My boy never molested him. Claridge married my niece, who was formerly Miss Stowe. We are all old settlers here and are well known.²⁵

There must have been hard feelings (mixed with alcohol, perhaps) for this group of men to attack John.

In June 1896, John attended a Populist Party convention and was elected as a delegate for Precinct No. 14 in the Congressional and Senatorial races.²⁶ The Populist Party was a third political party with more progressive or radical views, depending upon personal opinion. Labor and business reforms, assistance for farmers, and government support during deep economic depressions were part of the platform. John's progressive/radical political views would cause him some trouble later in life.

John's and Lucina's last child, Alma, was born in August 1897.²⁷ Alma was the ninth child in their blended family.

Trouble again. *The Daily Light* of 9 June 1899 reported that John Claridge was to appear in a criminal case in the 37th District Court on Monday the 12th. The plaintiff was the State of Texas.²⁸ John may have been called as a material witness in the assault to murder trial of Lon Neal, but the case was dismissed.²⁹

Tragically, on 11 February 1906, John's first-born son, Oliver, died of pneumonia in Pueblo, Colorado, age 25. His body was returned to San Antonio for burial.³⁰ For many years, John lived relatively quiet and worked as a carpenter and contractor in the San Antonio area. Then, in February 1915, trouble found John again, and this time it almost killed him:

Claridge May Die
Carpenter Assaulted Tuesday Night
In Critical Condition

J. H. Claridge, a carpenter, residing on Ferguson avenue, may die and Henry H. Hunt, contractor and builder, residing at 2408 Wyoming street, is suffering from several scalp wounds as a result of having been waylaid at 9:30 o'clock Tuesday night near the intersection of Nebraska street and Ferguson avenue. Two suspects are in the custody of the county officers and a third is being sought.

Concussion of the brain is feared in the case of Claridge. He was struck over the eye with an iron bar. He also sustained five or six deep gashes caused by blows from the iron rod in the hands of one of the assailants and a revolver in the hands of another. Though rendered unconscious by blows, Hunt is expected to recover.

Both victims, past 60 years of age, were en route home when the attack was made upon them.³¹

This attack eerily echoed the attack in 1895, but with much more serious injuries. Henry Hunt was John's employer. Both survived the assault, but their relationship would change.

John's son Rupert Rosswell Jr. was sent to serve in World War I in August 1918.³² While his son was serving in the war, John was being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for seditious activities. In November 1918, John was turned in to the FBI by Henry Hunt, his now former employer, for being a member of Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and writing a threatening letter to Hunt. The IWW was strongly pro-union with socialistic and anarchistic voices in its membership. It opposed the intervention of the United States in the war in Europe and was actively suppressed by the federal government. It was reported that John and others had been heard by Hunt "to curse the Government, and the President of the United States, and it is said that Claridge has been the most violent...." The letter to Hunt was assumed "not very incriminatory" by the investigator. John's home was searched and incriminating pamphlets and books were found. He was questioned about un-American, socialist, and anti-Catholic sentiments and gave a detailed history of himself as part of the investigation. He was not deemed an imminent threat to the country since no action was taken.³³ John was proficient at making enemies who set out to get him.

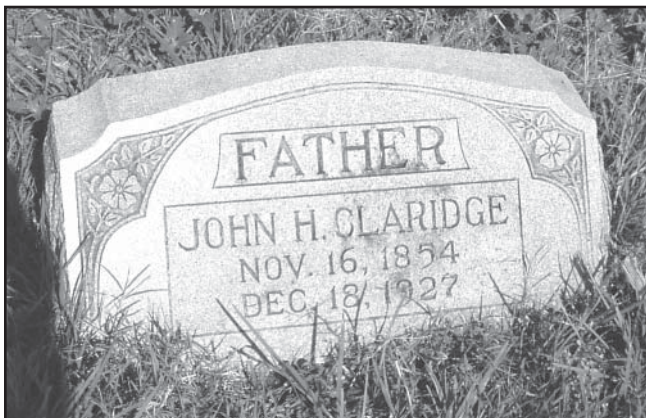
Ironically, at the time of the investigation, John was working as a guard at Camp Travis.³⁴ It appeared that the United States Army did not know the FBI was interested in John. He was working as a guard because he had been ill for about a year, but by 1920, he was recovered and working as a carpenter again.³⁵

John was a member of the Old Trail Drivers and the Pioneer Freighters associations in San Antonio. At a Freighters reunion picnic in June 1924, he:

...related an incident of 35 years ago, when he was chased into the brush by William H Krempkau and held there seven hours, when he came out and surrendered. Claridge was wanted on attachment proceedings as a material witness. And Krempkau was a deputy out of the sheriff's office, seeking to serve a subpoena on him.³⁶

John Hunter Claridge (1854-1927)

The incident was probably 25 years before, when John was called as witness in the murder trial. The story illustrated John's impulsive nature, his tendency to invite trouble, as well as his ability to laugh at himself.



Gravestone for John H. Claridge, located in St. John New Lutheran Cemetery, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. Photo by Karen Claridge Walker, 17 July 2012.

Not long after the reunion picnic, John developed chronic bronchitis and was ill for the last three years of his life. He died on 18 December 1927 at the age of 73. He was buried in St. John's New Lutheran Cemetery in San Antonio, Texas, a very quiet ending to a lifetime filled with dramatic events.³⁷

Family Groups³⁸

John Hunter Claridge (1854–1927)

m. (1) Cynthia Ella Myers (1863–1892)³⁹

Oliver Asbury Claridge (1880–1906)⁴⁰

Vera Myrtle Claridge (1887–1973)⁴¹ m. Samuel Stowe (1887–1935)⁴²

Helen Pearl Claridge (1890–1982)⁴³ m. Gustav Herman Alex (1884–1973)⁴⁴

m. (2) Lucina Stow Riggs (1860–1935)⁴⁵

Rupert Rosswell Claridge Jr (1894–1944)⁴⁶ m. Evelyn Wisdom (1891–1989)⁴⁷

Alma Claridge (1897–1969)⁴⁸ m. Claude Fell (1895–1963)⁴⁹

Lucina Stow m. (1) Hugh Wood Riggs (1849–about 1890)⁵⁰

James Riggs (1879–1964) m. Kate Niernberg Logan (1876–1946)⁵¹

Alice Sarah Riggs (1885–1984)⁵² m. (1) John William Reed (1870–1911)⁵³

m. (2) Andrew Jensen (1871–1961)⁵⁴

Charles Riggs (1887–after 1910)⁵⁵

Serena Riggs (1889–1972) m. Timothy Titus Terry (1884–1962)⁵⁶

Author Biography

Karen Claridge Walker is a native of San Antonio, Texas; earned a Bachelor of Music Literature from the University of Texas at San Antonio; is a former Tulsa, Oklahoma, public school music teacher; worked two years in the Tulsa City/County Library Genealogy Center; and is a serious amateur genealogist. She has lived in San Antonio, Austin, Tulsa, and Honolulu; she now resides in Dallas with her husband of 42 years, Stephen D. Walker. Stephen is general manager of the Children's Aquarium at Fair Park. They have a son and daughter living in Tulsa, and are the proud grandparents of a beautiful baby girl. This historical biography is about Karen's paternal great-grandfather.

ENDNOTES

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8. Johnson County, Texas, marriage license, Claridge-Myers (1877); digital image posted via *Flickr* (<http://flickr.com> : accessed 22 August 2012) by Robert Puryear, owner of Vera Claridge Stowe's collection of papers and photographs.

9. Mary Ella Stowe Dugan, John Hunter Claridge Family Group Sheet (undocumented), prepared by Dugan, Shalimar, Florida, 4 September 1993. Photocopy of pages in the genealogy collection of Cleburne Public Library, 302 W. Henderson St., Cleburne, Texas 76033, phone

John Hunter Claridge (1854-1927)

817-645-0934. Mrs. Dugan was the daughter of Vera Claridge Stowe and granddaughter of John and Cynthia Claridge.

10. Johnson County, Texas, Deed Book 4D, 4:485–486, John H. Claridge/C.E. Claridge; Johnson County Clerk, Cleburne. Certified copies dated 24, July 2012. Cynthia inherited her property, probably after Mary Ann Myers's murder. The property was sold in this deed transaction on 23 April 1879.

11. Dan and Billie Anne Leach. *Johnson County, Texas: A Pictorial History* (Virginia Beach, Virginia: Donning Co., 1998), 95–97.

12. Dugan, John Hunter Claridge Family Group Sheet.

13. Case File 353192, John H. Claridge; Investigative Case Files of the Bureau of Investigation 1908–1922, Old German Files, 1909–1921.

14. “They Got Away,” *San Antonio (Texas) Light*, 14 April, 1884, p. 1, col. 5; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 9 July 2012). Beanville was a neighborhood on South Flores Street named for Judge Roy Bean.

15. Dugan, John Hunter Claridge Family Group Sheet.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Case File 353192, John H. Claridge; Investigative Case Files of the Bureau of Investigation 1908–1922, Old German Files, 1909–1921.

18. John H. Claridge (Velasco, Texas) to Cynthia Claridge, letter, 4 October 1891; digital image posted via *Flickr* (<http://flickr.com> : accessed 22 August 2012) by Robert Puryear, owner of Vera Claridge Stowe's collection of papers and photographs.

19. Dugan, John Hunter Claridge Family Group Sheet.

20. Case File 353192, John H. Claridge; Investigative Case Files of the Bureau of Investigation 1908–1922, Old German Files, 1909–1921.

21. Texas Department of Health, death certificate no. 31472 (1935), Lucina Riggs Claridge; Bureau of Vital Statistics, Austin.

22. Methodist Episcopal Church South (Bexar County, Texas), Marriage Book L, p. 599, Claridge-Riggs (1893). Photocopy of marriage license no. 12905 recorded in marriage book.

23. Texas Department of Health, delayed birth certificate no. 1983 (issued 1943), Rupert Rosswell Claridge Jr.; Bureau of Vital Statistics, Austin.

24. “Old Trouble Renewed,” *The Daily Light (San Antonio, Texas)*, 9 April 1895, col. 3; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 9 July 2012).

25. “Denies the Statement,” *The Daily Light (San Antonio, Texas)*, 10 April 1895, col. 2; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 9 July 2012). No follow-up articles have been found. The Bexar County Sheriff's Department does not have records available before about 1950, according to their archives department.

26. “The Pops In Session,” *The Sunday Light (San Antonio, Texas)*, 14 June 1896, p. 4, col. 1; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 12 April 2012).

27. Dugan, John Hunter Claridge Family Group Sheet.

28. “The Courts,” *The Daily Light (San Antonio, Texas)*, 9 June 1899, col. 1; digital image, *NewspaperArchive.com* (<http://newspaperarchive.com> : undated printout).

29. “The Courts.” *The Daily Light (San Antonio, Texas)*, 12 June 1899, col. 5. According to the Bexar County District Court Clerk's office, John was involved in a murder trial, but no further records were found. The newspaper article reports that the only murder case on the day in question was dismissed.

30. “Deaths” (O.I. Claridge obituary), *San Antonio (Texas) Gazette*, 10 February 1906, p. 7, col. 4; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com> : undated printout).

31. "Claridge May Die," *The San Antonio (Texas) Light*, 11 February 1915, p. 2, col. 3; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 14 August 2012). No follow-up articles have been found. The Bexar County Sheriff's Department does not have records available before about 1950, according to their archives department.

32. Military Record for Rupert R. Claridge, NA Form 13164 with cover letter dated 18 June 2007; NA-NPRC.

33. Case File 353192, John H. Claridge; Investigative Case Files of the Bureau of Investigation 1908–1922, Old German Files, 1909–1921.

34. Ibid.

35. 1920 U.S. census, Bexar County, Texas, pop. sch., San Antonio Ward 7, enumeration district (ED) 86, sheet 10A, p. 439, dwell. 191, fam. 253, John H. Claridge; NARA microfilm publication T625, roll 1779.

36. "Funeral Services Held Monday For John H. Claridge," *The San Antonio (Texas) Light*, 19 December 1927, col. 4; digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (<http://newspaperarchive.com> : undated printout). Also, "Old Freighters Hold Barbecue," *San Antonio (Texas) Express*, 29 September 1924, p. 18, col. 2; digital images *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com> : undated printout).

37. Texas Board of Health, death certificate no. 39097 (1927), John Hunter Claridge; Bureau of Vital Statistics, Austin. John died intestate and no probate records exist.

38. Handwritten notes dictated by Evelyn Wisdom Claridge to her daughter Bonnie Jeanne Claridge Turley about her life and memories, undated photocopy (but before 1989). Most of these relationships were included in Evelyn's notes. Evelyn was the wife of Rupert Rosswell Claridge Jr., daughter-in-law of John and Lucina Claridge.

39. 1880 U.S. census, Tarrant County, Texas, pop. sch., Precinct 7, ED 98, p. 225A (stamped), dwell. 271, fam. 276, C. E. Claridge; NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 1328. Also, Dugan, John Hunter Claridge Family Group Sheet.

40. Dugan, John Hunter Claridge Family Group Sheet. Also, Janey E. Joyce and Anthony Barbieri, *Cemeteries of Bexar County Texas*, 8 vols. (San Antonio, Texas: San Antonio Genealogical and Historical Society, 2011), 7:4.

41. "U.S. Social Security Death Index," database, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 27 May 2013), entry for Vera Stowe, 1973, SS no. XXX-XX-1950.

42. Dugan, John Hunter Claridge Family Group Sheet. Also, Bexar County, Texas, marriage license no. 28499 (1909), Stow-Claridge; digital images, *Bexar County Clerk* (<https://gov.propertyinfo.com/tx-bexar> : accessed 26 May 2013); citing Bexar County Marriage Book Y:56.

43. "U.S. Social Security Death Index," database, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 27 May 2013), entry for Helen Alex, 1982, SS no. XXX-XX-5226.

44. "U.S. Social Security Death Index," database, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 27 May 2013), entry for Gus Alex, 1973, SS no. XXX-XX-8701. Also, Bexar County, Texas, marriage license no. 32065 (1911), Alex-Claridge; digital images, *Bexar County Clerk* (<https://gov.propertyinfo.com/tx-bexar> : accessed 26 May 2013); citing Bexar County Marriage Book 2:136.

45. Texas death certificate no. 31472 (1935), Lucina Riggs Claridge.

46. Texas Department of Health, death certificate no. 6549 (1944), Rupert Rosswell Claridge; Bureau of Vital Statistics, Austin; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<http://familysearch.org> : accessed 17 April 2009).

47. San Antonio Metropolitan Health District, Texas, death certificate no. 1195 (1989), Evelyn Wisdom Claridge, Statistical Services Division, San Antonio.

John Hunter Claridge (1854-1927)

48. "U.S. Social Security Death Index," database, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 27 May 2013), entry for Alma Fell, 1969, SS no. XXX-XX-2585.

49. 1910 U.S. census, Bexar County, Texas, pop. sch., San Antonio Ward 3, ED 13, sheet 11A, p. 179 (stamped), dwell. 200, fam. 233, Claude Fell; NARA microfilm publication T624, roll 1531. Also, "Texas Death Index, 1903–2000," database, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 2 August 2012), entry for Claude Fell (1963). Also, Bexar County, Texas, marriage license no. 45184 (1917), Fell-Claridge; digital images, *Bexar County Clerk* (<https://gov.propertyinfo.com/tx-bexar> : accessed 26 May 2013); citing Bexar County Marriage Book 12:386.

50. Bexar County, Texas, marriage license no. 5159 (1876), Riggs-Stow; digital images, *Bexar County Clerk* (<https://gov.propertyinfo.com/tx-bexar> : accessed 26 May 2013), citing Bexar County Marriage Book F:263. Also, 1850 U.S. census, Montgomery County, Arkansas, pop. sch., Polk, p. 405A (stamped), dwell. 4, fam. 4, Hugh Wood Riggs; NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 28. Hugh's death date is estimated.

51. Joyce and Barbieri, *Cemeteries of Bexar County Texas*, 7:4.

52. *Ibid.*

53. Bexar County, Texas, marriage license no. 27140 (1908), Reed-Riggs; digital images, *Bexar County Clerk* (<https://gov.propertyinfo.com/tx-bexar> : accessed 26 May 2013), citing Bexar County Marriage Book W:581. Also, *Find A Grave*, (<http://findagrave.com> : accessed 27 May 2013), entry for John W. Reed, memorial no. 90103724.

54. *Find A Grave* (<http://findagrave.com> : accessed 22 July 2012), entry for Andrew Jensen, memorial no. 30469585. Also, Bexar County, Texas, marriage license no. 64690 (1922), Jensen-Reed; digital images, *Bexar County Clerk* (<https://gov.propertyinfo.com/tx-bexar> : accessed 26 May 2013), citing Bexar County Marriage Book 27:546.

55. 1900 U.S. census, Medina County, Texas, pop. sch., Justice Precinct 5, ED 60, sheet 1A, p. 169 (stamped), dwell. 6, fam. 6, Charles Riggs; NARA microfilm publication T623, roll 1657. Charles's death was after 1910 based on the number of children born to Lucina and still living, recorded on the 1900 and 1910 federal Census records. Also, handwritten notes dictated by Evelyn Wisdom Claridge to her daughter Bonnie Jeanne Claridge Turley. Evelyn included Charlie in her notes. He was not recorded with his parents on the 1900 census and I would not have known of his existence without Evelyn's wonderful memory. No additional records for Charlie have been located.

56. Joyce and Barbieri, *Cemeteries of Bexar County Texas*, 7:4. Also, Bexar County, Texas, marriage license no. 35602 (1913), Terry-Riggs; digital images, *Bexar County Clerk* (<https://gov.propertyinfo.com/tx-bexar> : accessed 26 May 2013), citing Bexar County Marriage Book 5:62.

100 YEAR HISTORY OF 3700 MAPLEWOOD AVENUE IN HIGHLAND PARK, TEXAS

by Happi McQuirk

“I hope you can help me. I am trying to discover the exact date my house was finished and/or occupied in order to have a 100th anniversary celebration in conjunction with the Park Cities Historical and Preservation Society.” This plea from now 87-year-old Mary Lou Myers Wiggins started me on a five-year investigation to discover the history of her house at 3700 Maplewood Avenue (hereinafter referred to as 3700) in Highland Park, Texas.



3700 Maplewood Avenue, oil painting by Elaine F. Kinney, 1994. Used with permission of the artist.

The biggest obstacle was that all the records of Highland Park were washed away in the flood of 5 May 1995 except the tax records.¹ Using those meager tax records, on five-by-seven-inch index cards scanned and sent to us by the City of Highland Park, I uncovered the following chain of ownership:²

- 1914 – F. P. R. Co.
- 1916 – J. W. Halsell
- 1917 – S. G. Davis
- 1921 – C. W. Hobson
- 1935 – Mrs. C. W. Hobson c/o J. H. Shelton 3801 Maplewood
- 1940 – Dr. Felix L. Butte

100 Year History of 3700 Maplewood Avenue

- 1952 – Robt. Mims
- 1953 – Mrs. Doris Mims
- 1954 – C. A. Mason, Episcopalian Church, Manse (for Bishop Harte)
- 1962 – P. N. Wiggins, Jr.
- 1963 – William R. Wiggins

Using the clues found in the tax records, I investigated the following repositories, online databases, and other sources, in search of details on 3700 and the people who owned or occupied the home.

- Census records were consulted, particularly 1920, 1930, and 1940. Some earlier censuses were used to establish names, addresses, and occupations.
- The *Dallas Morning News* was searched, and I found a remarkable number of articles on the house and its residents over the years.
- Records and family trees were searched via *Ancestry.com*, *FamilySearch*, and other online databases.
- Living descendants were contacted to see if they had inherited any photos, plans, or other documents related to the house.
- Deeds at the Dallas County Clerk's office were examined to collect all the transfers.
- Utility records were explored to find out when the house was actually occupied. So far, this effort has not been successful due to length of time and changes of names and ownerships of the utilities involved.
- Histories and maps of Highland Park were consulted.
- City directories, found in bound copies at the Dallas Public Library as well as online, were explored.
- Books and files at the Dallas Public Library, including their permit section on the 7th Floor, were searched.
- The Dallas Historical Society Archives staff was consulted in order to retrieve any records about 3700, especially about building contractors who might have been involved in the construction of the house.
- The Public Works & Transportation Survey Section of the City of Dallas was explored to look for possible building plans or permits that might have escaped the flood.

Starting from the first owner of record and continuing on through the present owner, this article outlines my findings.

F. P. R. Co.

F.P.R. Co. was the Flippen-Prather Realty Company. Edgar L. Flippen and Hugh E. Prather, Sr., were the two sons-in-law of John S. Armstrong. They

began the development of a residential community with him and continued it after Armstrong's death in 1907. It was to be called Highland Park because of its "higher" elevation (compared with Dallas) and because they planned to reserve 20 percent of the developed land for parks. The area was also said to be ten degrees cooler because of that altitude.³

John's widow, Alice T. Armstrong, conveyed the 74.6 acres of land to Flippen-Prather Realty Company on 10 June 1912.⁴ This property was to be called the Third Section of Old Highland Park Neighborhood.

The lot that would become 3700 Maplewood Avenue was in this third section, also called the Country Club Section, and was developed with large lots most closely associated with the Dallas Country Club. The lots were advertised for sale by Hann & Kendall (H&K), who was the exclusive selling agent for F. P. R. H&K's ad said the "conveniences" for the Country Club Section were:⁵

- Permanent pavement
- Wide cement walks and curbs
- An abundance of cool, clear artesian water
- Natural gas
- Sewerage
- Each lot supplied with two large shade trees
- Deep, rich soil
- Beautiful terrace
- High altitude

The Highland Park tax records show F. P. R. as the owner of 3700 in 1914, so they must have registered the ownership of the individual lots at a different time than their 1912 offer, perhaps with the conveyance and deed mentioned above.⁶ An official at Highland Park said that they cannot account for this difference in the recorded dates. No taxes are recorded under the F. P. R. ownership.

To further confuse the research, Dallas County tax records say the house was built in 1914. This date appears to be incorrect since in 1916 it was taxed as land only. This 1916 date will be addressed in the next two sections.

J. W. Halsell

J. W. Halsell is listed in the tax records as the next owner of 3700 in 1916. Since his taxes were paid on the land only, I assumed he was the builder or an investor. He was a mystery because, at first, I could only find him listed as a dentist! A few newspaper accounts mentioned him as a builder in Highland Park. Was there only one J. W. Halsell? The 1920 federal census shows him as

a dentist and the 1930 federal census says he was an Oil Operator, Oil Leases. It seemed like a pretty big stretch to fit builder in there. This conflict in his possible occupation took months to resolve.

Nonetheless, I found articles in the *Dallas Morning News* that said he was a builder and, furthermore, building several houses on Maplewood Avenue. Though no articles actually showed 3700 Maplewood as one of the houses he was building, his obituary finally confirmed that he was indeed a dentist, builder, and oil operator.⁷ No other J. W. Halsell was found.

Tracing him back through earlier censuses, newspapers, the World War I Draft Registration, and online genealogies, revealed his full name to be John William Halsell.⁸ Once I had identified his descendants, I was able to find two living grandchildren:

1. His daughter Maurine Halsell married Henry E. Catto, Sr. and had a son, Henry E Catto, Jr. (the former U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain), who was living in San Antonio.⁹ He passed away on 18 December 2011, but Mary Lou was able to talk with him in 2009 and ascertained that he did not have any of his grandfather's records.¹⁰ He did, however, send her a copy of his autobiography, which revealed that he had married Jessica Oveta Hobby, daughter of former Texas Governor William P. Hobby and Oveta Culp. Searching that book did not reveal any clues to 3700.¹¹
2. J. W. Halsell's son Albert Jones Halsell had a daughter named Martha Ann.¹² In 2009, Mary Lou talked with her and she said she had some things of her grandfather's in the attic and would look at them "some time." That "some time" has not yet come.

A search of the Dallas County deeds showed Halsell's purchase of Lot 10 for \$2,750 from F. P. R on 27 December 1916.¹³ Five covenants were listed on the deed in considerable detail and are partially abstracted below:

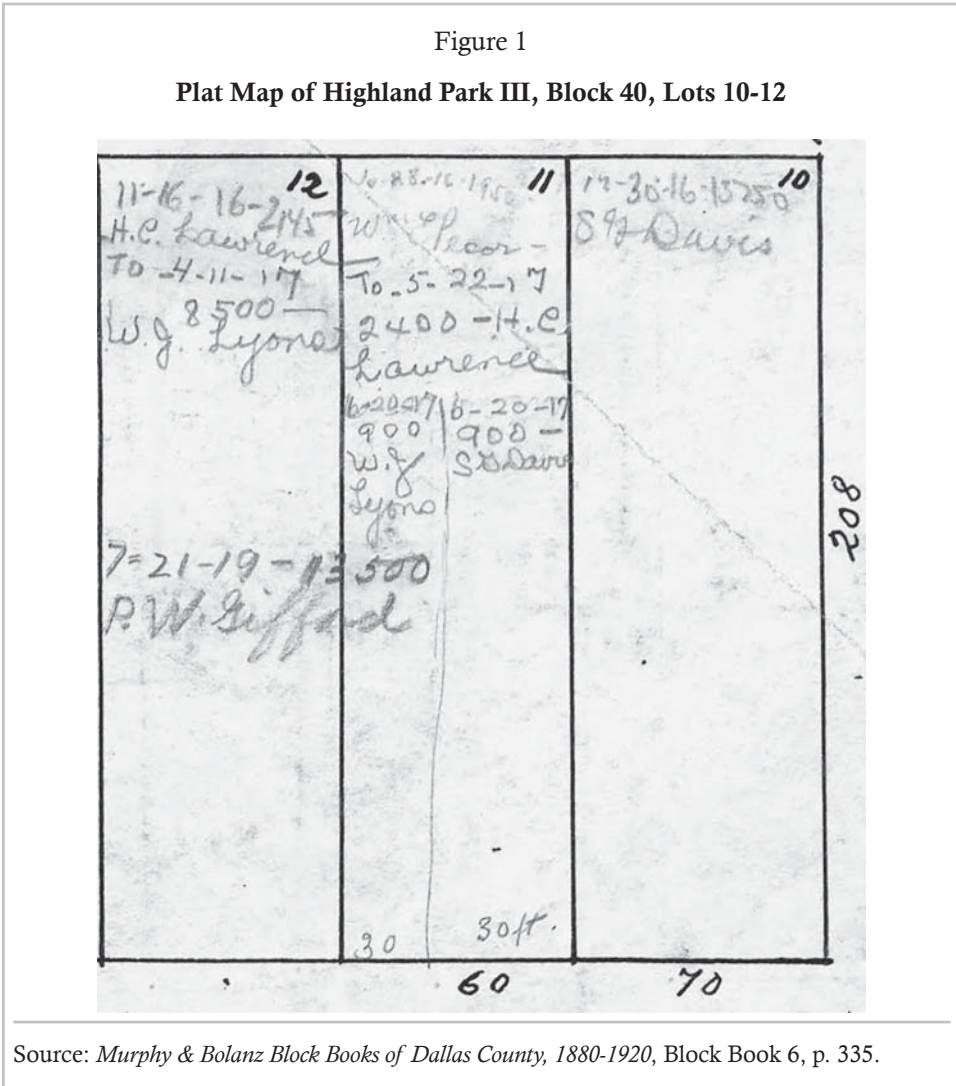
1. Only one residence on the lot.
2. Building should cost not less than \$3,000.
3. Sixty-foot setback required; house must face Maplewood, etc.
4. Any breach of the above conditions within 25 years will cause the premises to revert to F. P. R.
5. Conditions above will terminate after 25 years.

Stephen Girard (S. G.) Davis

The next owner seems to be the first occupant of the house. Stephen Girard (S. G.) Davis moved to Dallas in 1900 and started the S. G. Davis Hat Company, located on Jackson Street, just east of Central Expressway near downtown Dallas.¹⁴ By the time he moved into 3700, he was running the S. G. Davis Motor

Car Company, located on Commerce Street, selling Oldsmobiles.¹⁵ He was one of the founders of Southern Methodist University and active in civic affairs.¹⁶

Questions remained: When was the house finished and when was it occupied? We finally got a clue (which, at the time, we thought would be the only answer we would get) when we discovered the plat maps for Highland Park's Third Installment, where the following information is found: Lot 10, 208' x 70' and written in pencil, "12-30-16 S G Davis" (see Figure 1).¹⁷



I took that to mean he bought it on 30 December 1916, which date was eventually borne out when I examined the deeds at a much later time.¹⁸ Davis did buy the property from J.W. Halsell three days after Halsell bought the lot

from F. P. R., for \$13,750, a difference of \$11,000. While there is a great deal of information in the deed about how and when Davis would pay that sum, there is no mention whatsoever about the many covenants from the F. P. R. deed mentioned above. Improvements are mentioned twice.

To complete the full property as it stands today, the purchase of the East 30' of Lot 11 took place on 20 June 1917 (see Figure 1) so S. G. Davis had the entire combined property by that date as shown on the tax record.¹⁹

In speaking with an appraiser (Shane Allen) from the Dallas Central Appraisal District (DCAD) on 16 July 2013, pointing out these seemingly peculiar facts, he stated that, these days, a contractor often buys a piece of land towards the end of the year and does not start to build until after the beginning of the year to avoid paying taxes on the improvements (and, indeed, Halsell paid \$9 in tax on the land only in 1916). Among several other possibilities, he felt that this current practice would best fit and explain the dates as given and that it was likely Halsell sold a “package” to build the house for Davis for the full price.

Furthermore, the appraiser told me that, in the early days, appraisals were done by individuals and appraisal companies for the districts, not by the districts themselves. The DCAD was formed about 40 years ago to halt that practice. He said there is no way to find out which individual or firm did the original appraisal as the DCAD does not have any of these records (or even an index). Accordingly, I have abandoned that line of research.

Another fact of note from this time period is found in the McAlester book. To wit, Maplewood Avenue was the first street “in progressive Highland Park” to be paved under the 1919 Bond vote.²⁰

The 1920 federal census confirmed that S. G. Davis and his family were living at 3700.²¹ Many newspaper articles described their life and events in the house. The first, dated 16 October 1917, announced that Mrs. Davis was entertaining her mother and sister as guests.²²

At that point, we knew that the Davises had occupied the house sometime between 30 December 1916 and October 1917. Since S. G. Davis did appear at 3700 in the 1917 city directory, said to be published a year in arrears, a 1916 date seemed most likely.²³ However, if the DCAD appraiser is correct, the house must have been finished some time in 1917.

The 1920 census reveals that the household consisted of:²⁴

1. Steven G. Davis, age 45
2. Louise, his wife, age 24

3. Stanley, his son, age 15
4. Steven, Jr., his son, age 1-2/12
5. Addie Benjamin, Servant, female, age 27

One of the more interesting articles in the *Dallas Morning News*, “Texas Girl Who Played in ‘Go And Get It’ Is Visiting Here,” stated that Miss Willie Mae Carson, the “hello girl” was visiting the Davises at 3700 in 1920.²⁵ The article was accompanied by a large photo of Miss Carson behind the wheel of a car.

On 7 June 1922, the house was sold to C. W. Hobson.²⁶ By 1923, Davis moved to California to pursue other interests, became a bank manager for a while in Los Angeles, and then eventually returned to Dallas and the S.G. Davis Hat Company.²⁷

I have traced his descendants, through later censuses and marriage, divorce, and death records, and did find the former wife of one of S. G. Davis’ grandsons through her *Ancestry.com* tree. Unfortunately, she did not know of any pictures or records.

Charles Walter (C. W.) Hobson

C. W. Hobson was quite a prominent man in his day. From various *Dallas Morning News* articles, he had his fingers in a lot of pies: Chairman of the Board of Directors, Dallas Railway Company; President and General Manager, Southwest General Electric Company; President, Dallas Chamber of Commerce (got the Federal Reserve located in Dallas); Founder, City Club of Dallas; Delegate, Democratic National Convention, New York, 1924; Director, State Building & Loan Association; Vice President, Texas Electric Railway; Director, American Exchange National Bank; Owner of Valley Ranch in Glorieta, New Mexico; President, Love Field Corporation; Sponsor, Captain Erwin’s Pacific flight; Chairman of the Troop Committee, Texas Scottish Rite Boy Scout Troop; Director, Texas Security Mutual Life; Member of the Board, United Guaranty Board; Director, Realty Trust Company; Vice President, Texas Security Life Insurance Company; Chairman of the Board, Communities Gas Service Corporation; Director, Investments, First National Bank of Dallas (merged from American Exchange National Bank); and Vice President, Gulf States Security Life Insurance Company.²⁸

In 1921, the owner is listed in the tax records as C. W. Hobson (in front of which is overwritten “Mrs.” in blue pen).²⁹ There is a d^o [ditto] written next to C. W. Hobson. Below that is a d^o scratched out and underneath is written in blue pen: “c/o Mrs. J. H. Shelton [daughter Clara Elsie “Dollie” Hobson], 3801 Maplewood.”³⁰ My analysis of these notes is that at some point the

clerk stopped entering the tax figures on this record (possibly recording them elsewhere) as the rest of this column has the dates when subsequent owners bought the property.

Even though “Mrs.” was written in blue in front on the 1921 line of the tax records and “c/o Mrs. J. H. Shelton, 3801 Maplewood” was written on the 1923 line, I believe that the “Mrs.” was written in after Charles Hobson died (in the house) in 1935. I initially thought that Mrs. Hobson may have moved in with her daughter, Mrs. J. H. Shelton, who lived down the street, possibly leaving the house in the hands of her daughter, Mary Frances, and son-in-law, E. A. Wood, until she sold it in 1940.



Residence of C. W. Hobson, 1925. This photo is part of the Artwork of Dallas Collection at the Dallas Public Library (PA84-7-48-1) and is used with permission.

The 1930 federal census showed the following household living at 3700:³¹

1. Charles W. Hobson, age 62 (owned house valued at \$35,000)
2. Emma J., wife, age 62
3. Charles W., II, nephew, age 20, single
4. Edward A. Wood, son-in-law, age 44
5. Mary [Frances] H. Wood, daughter, age 34
6. Edward A. Wood, Jr., grandson, age 6
7. Josephine H. Wood, granddaughter, age 1-8/12
8. Viola Taylor, Servant, Negro, age 26
9. Robert O. Sl[-?]-er, Servant, Negro, age 34

Perhaps Mrs. Hobson did live with her daughter in the very early days after her husband died. The 1938 city directory for Dallas however, shows her as “Emily (Wid Chas W) r3722 Gillon av” and the 1940 federal census shows

her as Emma living at 3732 Gillon Avenue (which is also shown on the census as her residence in 1935) with her widowed daughter Sarah Leake and Sarah's son Sam Leake.³² Several grandchildren of Sam and Sarah Leake are believed to be still living and will be contacted for more information as soon as they can be located.

Mrs. Hobson's son-in-law and daughter, Edward and Mary Wood, are in the *Austin City Directory* in 1937.³³ Since that couple is shown living at 3700 through the 1934 *Dallas City Directory*, my original theory could have only been true for them on a temporary basis, if at all.³⁴

The Warranty Deed showing the sale of 3700 is dated 16 May 1940.³⁵ The 1940 federal census, which is dated 15 April, does not include the house at all, as the census starts with the house next door; 3700 is shown nowhere else in that District.³⁶ Although there is no note on the census about the house being vacant, I just have to assume it was not occupied due to the sale about to take place and was skipped.

Dr. Felix Lattimore Butte

On 16 May 1940, Dr. Felix L. Butte bought 3700 from the Hobson estate and started a festive and energetic stay in the house, with a surprise twist.³⁷ Dr. Butte was an orthopedic surgeon in private practice and, after serving in World War II, was Chief of that department at Baylor Hospital.³⁸

In the 1940 federal census, he resided at 3806 Stratford in Highland Park and his household consisted of:³⁹

1. Felix L Butte, age 38
2. Elizabeth Butte, wife, age 40
3. Rosa Elizabeth Butte, daughter, age 14
4. Sara Catherine Butte, daughter, age 10
5. Felix L Butte, son, age 8
6. Rosa Kirkpatrick, mother-in-law, age 63
7. Lizora Shipp, servant, age 25

I was able to find dozens of articles in the *Dallas Morning News* about parties, celebrations, and other activities that took place at 3700. There were teas, bridal showers, fundraising efforts, club meetings, sorority gatherings, fetes for visitors, luncheons, and various kinds of receptions. One of those teas brought the surprise.

A graduation tea party for 100 guests was given at 3700 in honor of Durelle Bishop, a June 1944 graduate of Highland Park High School, by Sarah

Catherine Butte. Listed among the members of the house party was none other than Miss Mary Lou Myers!⁴⁰ When I found this article, Mary Lou was amazed. She did not remember being in this house before she and her husband bought it in 1962. We both thought it was a great coincidence.

The next sale occurred 18 April 1952, to Robert and Doris Mims.⁴¹

Robert and Doris Crockett Mims

The next chapter seems to have been turbulent and was certainly short. Robert and Doris Mims bought 3700 in April 1952 and by 3 September 1953 it was transferred from Robert Mims to Doris Mims.⁴²

Robert Mims may have been an oil broker and golfer (we were not able to confirm this rumor). I was able to find two articles in the *Dallas Morning News* for February 1953 and 1955: one where a Robert Mims abandoned a well in Taylor County and another mentioning two dry holes in Jones County.⁴³ There is no way of knowing if this is the same Robert Mims.

Doris Mims also appeared in the paper on several occasions. If it is the same Doris, she started Adele Hunt's interior decorating department and, on 6 October 1953, she started a TV show on Channel 8, called "Fun With Coffee" at 10:15 a.m., Tuesdays.⁴⁴

On 24 May 1954, Doris sold 3700 to Bishop C. Avery Mason as a Manse for the Episcopal Church.⁴⁵

C. Avery Mason, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Dallas Occupied by Suffragan Bishop John Joseph Meakin Harte

From some time after the purchase on 24 May 1954 until 4 September 1962, Bishop John Joseph Meakin Harte, suffragan bishop of the Episcopal Diocese (St. Matthew's Cathedral in Dallas), lived in the "Manse" at 3700 Maplewood with his wife, Alice, and three children: Vicky, Joe Jr., and Judith.⁴⁶ He moved after the latter date to be the bishop of the Diocese of Arizona.⁴⁷

A few articles appeared in the *Dallas Morning News* about this family and their activities. In chronological order, they include:

1. A luncheon hosted by Mrs. Joseph Harte, new President of the Wellesley College Club of Dallas.⁴⁸
2. House of Bishops' Meeting tour of homes.⁴⁹
3. A tea for members of the Community of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁰
4. Coffee to make plans for Mardi Gras Charity Ball.⁵¹
5. A bridesmaids' luncheon honoring Miss Cecilia Dunlap.⁵²

This last event turned out to be particularly interesting. When the Park Cities Preservation and Historical Society sent Cele Johnsen to talk to Mary Lou about the house and its history, she turned out to be the very bride honored at the luncheon! She had been close friends with Bishop Harte's daughter, Vicky, and told us of the times she used to spend with Vicky at 3700.

Cele was also able to connect me with Vicky Harte (now Vicky Money), who told me many stories about the Harte sojourn in the house and provided me with quite a few photos and newspaper articles.

One interesting fact she revealed was that Bishop Harte used to hold office for his parishioners in what is now the library due to the convenience of the door to the outside, near the Oxford Street side of the house. According to Vicky, there was a chapel in the library near the door to the street. This room used to be a screened porch (also known as a sleeping porch) in the early days, which had been closed in and converted before Bishop Harte's residency.

Here are some personal recollections from Vicky Harte Money:

Mother chose the house herself. We moved from Erie [Pennsylvania] on June 12 so arrived in Dallas about the 15th. It was hot and the house was not finished. We had one or two window units so we could sleep.

The 3 of us really grew up in that house...for me, starting in Jr. High and leaving after my sophomore year in college. Judy and Joe started at Armstrong [Elementary]. Joe stayed in Dallas with our Aunt to finish at HPHS [Highland Park High School] and then went to SMU [Southern Methodist University]. Judy moved with Mom and Dad to Phoenix. The moving date was September 4.

Our parents were involved in many charitable and educational groups and entertained a lot. It was a great house for a busy family, close to schools, friends, HP [Highland Park] Library, and the Club.

A friend of Joe's lived across the street and, after school, a group of boys would come in the back door, raid the kitchen, and leave through the front. Judy and Joe played in the long side yard.

I had the big rooms over the kitchen and always had friends over to listen to music or translate our Latin homework.

Christmas was a very special time and they always had a huge Open House on Mom's birthday, December 27, for all the clergy in the Diocese and friends. I loved it because Mrs. Carroll catered and the kitchen was full of delicious treats; ham on biscuits was one of our favorites.

P. N. Wiggins, Jr.

On 29 October 1962, P. N. Wiggins, Jr. bought 3700 from Bishop Mason.⁵³ Mr. Wiggins was a well-known oil operator and the father of William Rowell Wiggins, who was to be the next owner/occupant of 3700.⁵⁴

Extensive remodeling and redecorating began, as shown on this partial list of renovations on the estimate provided by contractor Oscar G. Oelger.⁵⁵

- A central air-conditioning and heating system was installed.
- An elevator was installed (to aid his grandson).
- The awnings so prominent in the 1925 photo of the house (page 33) were removed and replaced by new shutters.
- The upstairs screened-in sleeping porch was enclosed.
- The windows in the living room and dining were replaced with complementary large sectioned windows.
- New plumbing and cabinets were updated for the laundry room and butler's pantry.
- The kitchen was remodeled and updated.
- Plumbing, fixtures, cabinets, and flooring for all bathrooms were updated.
- New wiring was installed throughout.
- Many improvements to closets and storage were made.
- The oak floors downstairs were refinished.
- Sheetrock was installed and painted throughout the inside of the house.

Successful attempts were made to ensure the home was kept true to its original character. At the end of the construction, the house was sold to William Rowell and Mary Lou Myers Wiggins.

William Rowell and Mary Lou Myers Wiggins

On 21 March 1963, the house was sold by P. N. Wiggins, Jr. to his son and daughter-in-law, William R. and Mary Lou Wiggins.⁵⁶ Thus began the longest ownership in the history of 3700—over 50 years to date.

William Rowell “Bill” Wiggins spent a lifetime in the oil and gas business with his father and brother and was a former President of the Dallas Association of Petroleum Landsmen. Bill attended Bradfield Elementary, Texas Country Day School (now St. Mark's), the Kent School (Kent, Connecticut), and Stanford University. He graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a degree in Petroleum Engineering. He was a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon. He served in the United States Navy on board the USS *Pasadena* in the

Pacific during World War II. His ship was with the fleet in Tokyo Bay when Japan surrendered on 2 September 1945.⁵⁷ His main interests were hunting and (especially) fishing. He was passionate about both and willing to travel great distances to pursue them.

Mary Lou Myers Wiggins was born in Wichita Falls, Texas, and moved to Dallas when she was in third grade. She attended Armstrong and University Park elementary schools and graduated from Highland Park High School, after which she went to the University of Texas in Austin and graduated with a degree in Liberal Arts (Plan II). She is a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma. Much later in life, she achieved her Master's degree in Library Science from Texas Woman's University (TWU) in Denton, Texas.

Mary Lou has had many interests through her long life. She was President of the Dallas Junior League and participated in politics. She currently belongs to the Dallas Woman's Club, Daughters of the American Revolution, and Daughters of the Republic of Texas. One of her favorite activities is the Athena Foundation class, given semi-annually to study classic literature. She is an avid reader and enjoys watching movies.



Mary Lou Wiggins and her family, taken about 1966. Back row from left: Ellen, Will, Bill. Front row: Mary Lou, Martin, Anne. Photo in possession of Mary Lou Wiggins and used here with permission.

The Wiggins family included four children: William R., Jr., Anne, Martin, and Ellen. All but Martin graduated from Highland Park High School and went on to get their degrees in various colleges. Martin was severely afflicted with cerebral palsy and passed away in 2011.⁵⁸ Five grandchildren have also joined the family over the years: William E., William T., Lou, Mary Frances, and Austin.

Since 1963, the warm and inviting house at 3700 Maplewood Avenue has been the scene of many social and family events. From birthday parties and holiday events for the family to all types of formal and informal gatherings held on many occasions, 3700 is a storehouse of countless fond memories.

Epilogue

At 1:00 p.m, on 7 June 2014, the Park Cities Historic and Preservation Society (PCHPS) unveiled their Historic Landmark plaque that is now attached to the right side of the front door of 3700 Maplewood Avenue.⁵⁹ About 100 people were in attendance at the celebration, including PCHPS members, Bruce Harbour, Paul Willey, Cele Johnsen, and Taylor Armstrong, who commented to Mary Lou that since the Dallas Central Appraisal District said the house was built in 1914, he thought she could go with that date as the official 100th year. As part of the dedication, I presented a short history of the house and its owners through the years. All in all, it was a successful end to a long journey of discovery and, in the end, Mary Lou was thrilled to have the 100th birthday party for her beloved house.



Park Cities Historic and Preservation Society Historic Landmark plaque, 2014. Used with permission.

Further Research Possibilities

If we had needed to continue researching the correct date, our search could have included the following:

- Continue working with the Dallas Historical Society (DHS) in search of anything related to the construction of 3700, including records of the lumber companies where materials to build the house might be located. We have learned from a present-day contractor that Lingo Lumber kept records and we are trying to learn if DHS might have them. Another option is a lumber company named Cowser.
- Investigate a potential connection to the Holland Tunnel. One interesting detail about 3700 that Mary Lou has since remembered is that the bricks/concrete blocks came from the building of the Holland Tunnel. Since the Holland Tunnel was not started until 1920, if there is any connection, it would have to be with a company who later provided the materials to the Holland Tunnel or may concern the construction of the addition.⁶⁰ This possibility has not been verified and, at the moment, it is unknown how this could be determined.
- Continue the search for various utility records. We are working under the theory that the utilities would had to have been connected at some time near the completion of 3700. So far, we have not been successful along this front.
- Research the records of the Swiss Avenue, Preservation Dallas, Munger, and Oak Cliff organizations. This may be a long shot, but it may give us some clues.
- Continue working with the Park Cities Historical and Preservation Society (PCHPS) in investigating other possible obscure avenues to explore.
- Continue searching for and contacting surviving descendants of the previous owners of 3700.

Author Biography

Happi McQuirk has pursued genealogy for nearly 30 years, and has been a professional genealogist for 11 years, specializing in Heritage Albums, helping to bring her clients' family trees to life. She is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists (<http://apgen.org>). This is her first house history. She can be reached at happi@ancestrigraphy.com.

ENDNOTES

1. "Rain, Hail Batter N. Texas," *Dallas Morning News*, 6 May 1995, p. 1A. Digital images of all articles cited herein from *Dallas Morning News* were accessed via a NewsBank database available through the Dallas Public Library. [Editor's Note: This same newspaper collection also is available via *GenealogyBank*.] Also, City of Highland Park, Texas, tax records relating to Highland Park III, Lots 10 and 11, Block 40; provided by Mary Kuebler of the Highland Park

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Building Inspection Department, who confirmed that they were the only surviving documents from the flood.

2. City of Highland Park, Texas, tax records (note 1).
3. Virginia Savage McAlester, et al., *Great American Suburbs: The Homes of the Park Cities, Dallas* (New York and London: Abbeville Press Publishers, 2008), 59–86.
4. Dallas County, Texas, conveyance, vol. 1, p. 388, Alice T. Armstrong to Flippen-Prather Realty Company, 10 June 1912; shows plat on an unnumbered page before the conveyance. Also, Dallas County, Texas, Deed Book 545, p. 661–662, Alice T. Armstrong to Flippen-Prather Realty Company, 10 June 1912.
5. McAlester, et al., *Great American Suburbs*, 62.
6. The 74.6 acres (as stated in the paragraph containing Alice Armstrong) were all in a block owned by F.P.R. in 1912, but by 1914 they were listed as the individual owners of the 3700 lot. I have not found any deeds to show that division and assume that “separation” into lots may have occurred in documents swept away in the flood.
7. “Dr. J. W. Halsell, Dentist, Builder, Dies at Residence,” *Dallas Morning News*, 15 Jun 1934, p. 1.
8. “World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917–1918,” digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com>), John William Halsell, serial no. 382, order no. 1070, Draft Board no. 1, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas; citing *World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917–1918*, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) microfilm publication M1509, roll 1952598.
9. “Catto-Halsell Wedding Is Held,” *Dallas Morning News*, 19 October 1923, p. 6. Also, “Catto-Hobby,” *Dallas Morning News*, 16 February 1958, p. 7.
10. “Henry Edward Catto Jr.,” *Austin American-Statesman*, 21 December 2011.
11. Henry E. Catto, Jr., *Ambassadors at Sea: The High and Low Adventures of a Diplomat* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1998).
12. “Funeral Tuesday for Albert Halsell,” *Dallas Morning News*, 18 April 1944, p. 2. Also, “News of Women: Hawes-Halsell,” *Dallas Morning News*, 22 May 1955, p. 1.
13. Dallas County, Texas, Deed Book 695, p. 544–546, Flippen-Prather Rty Co. to J. W. Halsell, 27 December 1916.
14. Frank W. Johnson and Eugene C. Barker, ed., *A History of Texas and Texans*, 5 vols. (Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, 1914), 3:1103–1104. Available via *Google Books* (<http://books.google.com>).
15. *Dallas City Directory* (Dallas, Texas: John F. Worley Directory Co., 1917), 395; “US City Directories, 1821–1989,” digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com>).
16. “Retired Dallas Hatmaker Passes at 75,” *Dallas Morning News*, 12 September 1942, p. 3.
17. *Murphy & Bolanz Block Books of Dallas County, 1880–1920*, Block Book 6, p. 335.
18. Dallas County, Texas, Deed Book 695, p. 546–547, J W Halsell Rty Co. to S G Davis, 30 December 1916. This deed is for Lot 10, Block 40.
19. Dallas County, Texas, Deed Book 724, p. 348–349, H. C. Lowrance to S G Davis, 20 June 1917. This deed is for the East 30’ of Lot 11, Block 40.
20. McAlester, et al., *Great American Suburbs*, 89; citing original article “Highland Park Begins Street Paving Program,” *Dallas Morning News*, 9 July 1920, p. 9.
21. 1920 U.S. census, Dallas County, Texas, population schedule, Highland Park, enumeration district (ED) 4, sheet 2A, dwelling 32, family 32, Steven E. Davis; National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) microfilm publication T625, roll 1791.
22. “Personal,” *Dallas Morning News*, 16 October 1917, p. 11.

23. *Dallas City Directory* (1917), 395.
24. 1920 U.S. census, Dallas Co., Texas, pop. sch., sheet 2A, dwell. 32, fam. 32, Steven E. Davis.
25. "Texas Girl Who Played in 'Go And Get It' Is Visiting Here," *Dallas Morning News*, 23 October 1920, p. 4.
26. Dallas County, Texas, Deed Book 950, p. 430, S. G. Davis et ux (Louise Davis) to C. W. Hobson 7 June 1922.
27. "S.G. Davis-Connected with Bank in Los Angeles, Cal.," *Dallas Morning News*, 24 June 1924, p. 2.
28. "Dallas Bankers Are United in Campaign," *Dallas Morning News*, 25 December 1913, p. 7. Also, Johnson and Barker, *A History of Texas and Texans*, 3:1103–1104. Also, "C. W. Hobson, 68, Former Electrical Firm Head, Dies," *Dallas Morning News*, 23 January 1935, p. 1.
29. City of Highland Park, Texas, tax records (note 1).
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Founded in 1955, the Dallas Genealogical Society (DGS) is the oldest organization of its kind in Texas. Its objectives are:

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Dallas Genealogical Society meetings, which are free and open to the public, are held monthly (except for June-August). Each begins with a social hour and a business meeting, followed by presentations on genealogical and historical topics. Meetings are held in the plaza level Auditorium and East/West Rooms of the Central Library, 1515 Young Street, in downtown Dallas. Guarded parking is available in the garage beneath the library (enter on Wood Street, one block north of Young Street). See the Calendar tab on the DGS website for specific information on topics, time, and location.

Special Interest Groups

DGS has many special interest groups (SIGs) that meet at various dates, times, and locations throughout the Central Library. See the SIGs tab on the DGS website, the DGS eBlast, or the *DGS Newsletter* for details.

Society Publications

Published since 1976, the *DGS Newsletter* is sent directly to members via print and digital media periodically throughout the year. Non-members can view the newsletter on the DGS website after member distribution. Each issue contains information about major DGS events such as the Spring and Fall Lectures and the Summer Institute, upcoming SIG activities, research trips, and monthly general meeting topics. News about other regional and national society events of major interest is published when available.

Pegasus: Journal of the Dallas Genealogical Society continues the traditions of its predecessors, *The Dallas Journal*, published from 1995 through 2012, and *The Dallas Quarterly*, published from 1955 through 1994. Dallas Journals published from 1990 to 1994 are available as PDF files on the DGS website. Digital copies of the Dallas Journals from 1995 through 2010 are accessible from links on the DGS website under Resources/Journals, and at the University of North Texas's *Portal to Texas History* website (<http://texashistory.unt.edu/explore/collections/DLSJL/browse>).

Membership Benefits

DGS is a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation. Individuals, libraries, and societies may apply for membership. Membership is \$35 per year for an individual, \$40 for a household. Members receive discounted fees for the Spring and Fall Lectures and the Summer Institute, early electronic distribution of the *DGS Newsletter* and free copies of *Pegasus*, access to reduced-fee DNA testing by Family Tree DNA, and access to the DGS Surname Registry List. See the DGS website at address above for details.

