

DCGS NEWS

D E N T O N C O U N T Y G E N E A L O G I C A L S O C I E T Y

JANUARY MEETING THURSDAY, JAN. 14, 2010



1896- Denton County Courthouse-

The Denton County Genealogical Society meets on the second Thursday during the months on September-November and January-May.
6:30 P.M.

Denton Public Library, Emily Fowler Central Library, 502 Oakland St., Denton, TX 76201
www.rootsweb.com/~txdcgs

Program:
“Portrayal of Cynthia Ann Parker”

Speaker:
Helen Garrison

Helen Garrison, our speaker for January, has been regaling her stories for over 18 years all over the state of Texas. She is a Texas historian and will soon be adding some American history stories to her programs. Helen is better known as Granny G and has entertained many

genealogical societies with her knowledge of history. The presentation we have asked her to do for our group depicts Cynthia Ann Parker. Miss Parker was taken at the age of nine by the Comanche Indians from Fort Parker in Southeast Texas. Helen will share with us a portrait of this pioneer woman’s unusual life.



NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

Beginning Genealogy

Interested in researching your family history, but not sure how to start? Let us show you how. Learn the basics of genealogical research, including gathering information, using genealogical forms, basic sources, and staying organized, as well as the resources available at the library. (2 hours) This program is free, but seating is limited. Please call 940.349.8749 to register for the class.

01/16/10 Emily Fowler Library 10:00 am

Finding your Family Online

There are a number of online genealogical resources to aid in locating people missing from your family tree. Learn what online resources are available through the library’s website to help with your search. We will focus on Ancestry Library Edition and Heritage Quest and introduce two new resources, Footnote.com and NewspaperArchives. (2

hours) This program is free, but seating is limited. Please call 940.349.8749 to register for the class.

02/27/10 Emily Fowler Central Library 10:00 am

Genealogy After-Hours

Genealogist, here’s your chance to do hours of uninterrupted research in the library. In addition to a guest speaker, we will have one-on-one research help and a light dinner. There is a \$10.00 registration fee for the evening. Checks should be made payable to the Denton County Genealogical Society. This event is co-sponsored by the Denton Public Library and the Denton County Genealogical Society. To register or for more information contact Laura Douglas at 940.349.8749 or laura.douglas@cityofdenton.com.
02/26/10 Emily Fowler Central Library 6:00 – 11:00 pm

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MINUTES—NOVEMBER 2009

President Linda Touraine opened the meeting. Minutes and treasurers report were approved as published. There were 16 persons including our speaker present.

In old business, a vote was taken to discontinue providing refreshments due to lack of interest. Snacks will be provided for the May meeting. Our President asked for ideas to draw more people to the meetings. Diane Abner asked about advertising in area libraries. Marilyn Simms suggested we elect a publicity person for the upcoming year. Vicki

Huerta asked about a brochure to handout at local festivals. No new business.

Linda Touraine brought duplicate copies of periodicals from the genealogy section of the library for members to take home.

Marilyn Simms introduced our speaker, Tresa Tatyrek. Ms Tatyrek presented and excellent program about "Jumping the Pond in Search of your Immigrant Ancestors". Ms Tatyrek also

presents programs in her home on Family Tree Maker. Time was allowed for questions and answers.

No meeting in December. Meeting was adjourned.

Merry Christmas

Respectfully submitted
Shirley Harris
Recording Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance Oct 31, 2009	\$ 2,576.63	Library Donations	
		April 1995 - May 06	\$2,876.52
		June 2006 - March 2009	560.00
Funds Deposited			
Dues	\$ 90.00	Birth Books Sold (61)	\$1,985.00
Donation	10.00	Printing Cost (200)	-2,049.13
Interest	<u>.28</u>	Postage	-118.69
Total Deposits	\$ 100.28	Sales Tax Paid	-104.78
		Advertising (1)	<u>-30.00</u>
Funds Disbursed		Profit	\$ -317.60
Speaker Fee	\$ 75.00		
FGS Dues	<u>35.00</u>	Death Books Sold (143)	\$3,329.72
Total Disbursed	\$ 110.00	Printing Cost (300)	-1,593.15
		Consignment Fees	-415.00
		Postage	-156.99
Balance Dec. 31, 2009	\$2,566.91	Sales Tax Paid	-77.19
		Advertising	<u>-237.45</u>
		Profit	\$ 849.94

2009-2010 Paid Members—34

Respectfully Submitted,
Holly Hervey, Treasurer

Pease Porridge Hot

by Patricia Law Hatcher, CG, FASG

Were you as stuffed as the turkey this Thanksgiving? I was. My choice of words reveals something of my background. When, as a transplanted Midwesterner, I had my first Thanksgiving dinner with my central-Texas in-laws, I was disappointed to discover that turkey was accompanied by mushy cornbread dressing prepared in a skillet on the stovetop. They were equally baffled to learn that I made stuffing, generously seasoned with sage, celery, and onion, and baked it in the turkey.

At her first Thanksgiving dinner with her Irish in-laws, served on fine china by candlelight, my sister discovered that the vegetable on which she was ladling gravy was mashed turnips, not mashed potatoes. Over time I compromised by adding cornbread to my stuffing, but I never liked it. My sister did not find a use for turnips.

Our experiences demonstrate underlying traits that determined what early Americans ate. Each move, whether emigration from Europe to the United States or migration within, caused some alterations in food habits. The traits that determine food choices are taste preference, dislikes, preparation knowledge, available foodstuffs, physical environment, practicality, and adaptation.

Taste Preference

First of all, I should point out that "taste" doesn't exactly fit with our modern understanding of "tasty." Our ancestors had boring taste preferences. They didn't like variety, they weren't adventuresome, and they often didn't seem to care how food tasted. For most of them, food was a necessary part of daily life--without it one could not labor--and pleasure from taste was not an important goal. They often ate the same food at breakfast, dinner, and supper.

However, they certainly had likes and dislikes. As is so amply demonstrated in the Thanksgiving foods mentioned above, taste preference is primarily determined by what we grew up with.

Colonial Americans had a definite sweet tooth. This was more easily indulged because the regular

trade with the West Indies made sugar and molasses readily available. In colder colonies, maple trees provided syrup and sugar.

Dislikes

We might find surprising some of what colonial Americans disliked. They weren't fond of drinking water. In some areas, where the water was stagnant or tainted, this was good, but even in areas of clear springs, it was not enjoyed. Milk as a beverage was more common in areas such as New England and the middle colonies, where cows were kept in barns and fenced fields, than it was in the South, where livestock were more likely to roam free in the woods. Once fruit trees and orchards were established, cider became the most popular drink. A variety of alcoholic beverages were consumed--not always moderately, as both court records and church actions demonstrate.

Our early ancestors had much in common with small children--they didn't like vegetables, so they added them to stews or soups and cooked them until they were tasteless. It was not until the late eighteenth century that the idea of serving vegetables separately began to be accepted.

Our ancestors had an abundance of fish and seafood available to them, yet they did not consider this a blessing. Some of their reticence probably derived from correlating fish consumption and Catholicism, but some was a matter of taste. New England tour guides delight in telling of the indentured servants who complained of being made to eat lobster several times a week.

Preparations Knowledge

I can certainly attest to the fact that the cook relies most often on the cooking methods she learned "back home." This includes both utensils and preparation methods. Given the same set of ingredients, cooks in different regions, even different towns, would come up with highly varied dishes, but dishes that would be comfortably familiar to their families and neighbors.

Available Foodstuffs

The landscape that the earliest settlers found in America was very different from what they knew in England, yet they attempted to replicate familiar farming styles, which in turn shaped the foods available to them. Our ancestors tried to transplant both crops and livestock each time they relocated, with varying degrees of success. The change of environment from Europe meant that many did not survive.

Within the North American continent, we find migration most prevalent within what gardeners call "temperature zones" and sociologists call "life zones," because that determines the success of preserving agricultural habits, hence food options.

Physical Environment

Climate had an effect also, particularly in house construction. We think of New England as cold, but many of us are not aware that colonial immigrants found themselves in a period known as a mini-Ice Age, averaging several degrees colder than today. Large fireplaces were the center of a home. Much of the year was spent indoors, and the constant fire meant that foods requiring slow cooking and occasional brief attention were practical. In contrast, southern homes favored faster cooking methods and some outdoor cooking.

Practicality

Lifestyle was often a near-subsistence existence with fancy food preparation on the bottom of the priority list. This dictated food preparation with the convenience of the one-pot meal. Stew pots and Dutch ovens were ubiquitous.

Pease porridge hot, pease porridge cold

Pease porridge in the pot nine days old

Some like it hot, some like it cold

Some like it in the pot, nine days old

The familiar nursery rhyme refers to a dish that was prevalent throughout New England, boiled beans or peas. The exact nature of both the legume and the seasoning--if any--varied from place to place. Once the initial pot was made, it could sit cozily on or near the fire, with repeated additions of water if it became too thick from one day to the next. When a friend's grade-school-age daughter explained this to me, she concluded by making a face and exclaiming, "How gross!"

Adaptation

When their own food supplies were insufficient, colonists benefited from food obtained from the native Indians and from information about how to find or grow unfamiliar foods in the New World. That does not mean the colonists liked the new foods, but they did need them. Eventually, they developed ways of preparation of some that became a standard part of their diet.

Hogs were a convenient source of food, especially in areas in which they could be allowed to roam free, in forests away from fields. We find them more of a staple in early Southern diets. The fat content prompted the idea of fried foods--and the accompanying invention of the skillet--along with the popularity of smoking to preserve foods. How Do You Learn about Your Ancestors' Food?

To get even a relatively accurate reflection of what our ancestors ate and how they prepared it, we may need to back into it. Probate inventories usually enumerate every pot, utensil, and accessory to be found in the house and outbuildings. They occasionally list major food stores. If the ancestral family you are investigating did not leave such an inventory, look for inventories of their closest neighbors and relatives, who are likely to possess similar household items.

Contemporary writing about recipes and food are usually available only for the upper class until relatively modern times. But there is one written source that can shed great insight--letters and journals written by travelers. Just as we do when on vacation, they often commented on the meals they were served. By the adjectives they used, we often get a good picture of regional differences--especially what they didn't like.

Patricia Law Hatcher, CG, FASG, is a technical writer, instructor, and professional genealogist. Her oft-migrating ancestors lived in all of the original colonies prior to 1800 and in seventeen other states, presenting her with highly varied research problems and forcing her to acquire techniques and tools that help solve tough problems. She is the author of *Producing a Quality Family History*.

ANCESTRY FAMILY HISTORY TIPS

Researching Wide

I have found success feeding my family tree with records from Ancestry.com on extended family members, as well as my direct ancestors. I not only get a better picture of my direct lines, but have also connected with numerous extended-family descendants. Together we've corrected family stories that were exaggerated, and straightened out relationships that were confused. With several people checking facts, the work goes quicker. It's also been helpful to research the neighbors of my ancestors. Very frequently I found a number of families in a given area taking the same migration path as they made their way from eighteenth century North Carolina to Arkansas, then on to Texas and Oklahoma. Deena M. Herod

Monitoring Message Boards

Although I had made several major discoveries by watching the message boards, it was something that I would forget to do for long stretches. I've found a great way to make sure I'm up-to-date at all times. I've customized my home page with Message Board Favorites near the top. While at an important family message board, I click the "Add to Favorites" button. Limit these favorites to 4 or 5, or they will take up too much of your home page. On your home page, click Customize, and the "Message Board Favorites" category will appear that you can add and arrange on your home page. Position it near the top, where you will notice it. The best part is the board with the newest message will automatically go to the head of your favorites list so you'll always be aware of activity on the board. Cheryl Parsons

Ireland, Casualties of World War I, 1914-1918

Don't dismiss the recently added database of [Ireland, Casualties of World War I, 1914-1918](#) because it looks as if this is just Irish born soldiers. It included all men who fought in Irish regiments, some of whom weren't Irish. In WWI soldiers didn't always have a choice of which regiment they fought in. They were put where there were vacancies. Prior to WWI soldiers often signed up with the regiment with the most persuasive recruiting sergeant or a glamorous reputation - not necessarily the one with links to their home county. Jacqui Kirk

Names Reversed

I was having a really hard time locating my great-great-grandfather, Dennis James in the 1870 census. One day as I was browsing through the pages looking for another family member it occurred to me that perhaps the names got transposed. I tried searching with his given name in the surname field and his surname in the given name field. He popped right up! Catherine James

Enumerated More Than Once

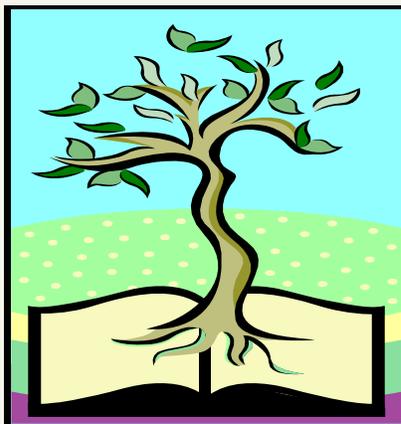
In my research of 19th century ancestors and relatives, I have found that individuals were sometimes enumerated twice in the federal censuses. For example, a young man may have been enumerated not only with his birth family but also in the household in which he was a farm laborer, apprentice, etc. I have also found one instance in which a young woman was likewise recorded twice. I was surprised to recently find an entire family - that of Benjamin Hubbard of Brookfield, New Hampshire, enumerated twice in 1860 - once on their own, and again in conjunction with his father and younger brother, with almost identical details. These duplications, and their contexts, can shed additional light on the individuals and their connections. Edward G. Hubbard

Revisit Websites Periodically

I have been searching for my great-grandparents marriage record for many years without success. I recently re-checked a website I had used before and to my amazement, there was their marriage record in a county I hadn't checked. I did not know they had lived there. Now I can write the county for the official marriage record. Hopefully from there, I will be able to determine what church they were married in and write the church for a copy of that record as well. So, look and search again at sites you have already searched. New records and databases are being added all the time. You might be surprised. Linda

2009-2010 OFFICERS

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**NEXT MEETING OF THE
 DENTON COUNTY
 GENEALOGICAL
 SOCIETY WILL BE ON
 FEBRUARY 11, 2010
 Emily Fowler Central
 Library
 502 Oakland St.
 Denton**

DENTON COUNTY
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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