



# My Journey From Yesterday

Mid-Cities Genealogical Society

P.O. Box 407

Bedford, TX 76095

Visit our Website at: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~txmcgs>

August 2013

Volume 36 Issue 8

Jane Aronhalt, President

Mid-Cities Genealogical Society meets  
the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month at:

Eules Public Library  
Meeting Room, 201 N. Ector Eules, Texas  
6:30 p.m. – Social  
7:00 p.m. – General Meeting  
Visitors are welcome.

## 2013 MCGS GENERAL MEETINGS CALENDAR

**September 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Speaker:**

**Mic Barnette**

Program: Immigration to and the  
Settlement of North America Before the  
American Revolution

## MCGS YEARLY ELECTIONS

Voting and installation of Board Members will  
take place at the August 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. Nominees  
are:

President: Jane Aronhalt

Vice President: Bonnie Baker

Secretary: Bernard Meisner

Treasurer: H. P. O'Mary

**WE'RE ON FACEBOOK!**

**IT'S OFFICIAL:**

We're on Facebook! Please visit and LIKE  
our page. We want LOTS of Likes. And  
THANKS to long-time member and web-  
master Bernard Meisner for developing an  
awesome site:

[www.facebook.com/TXMCGS](http://www.facebook.com/TXMCGS)

# It's a Party !!!!!!!



**What:**

**35th Anniversary Party and Ice Cream Social**

**When:**

**August 1, 2013, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM**

**Where:**

**Eules Public Library**

**MID-CITIES  
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**

**OFFICERS:****President:** Jane Aronhalt

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Sandra Crowley

Please contact Carole Crawford,  
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your name or contact information.

## SERENDIPITY II

By Carole Crawford

*In the June newsletter, I published a story of a genealogist who happened upon critical family history quite by accident. What follows is my experience with "serendipity."*

I've written before, in this newsletter, about researching my paternal family, none of whom I knew, including my father. At age 17, mother informed me my dad had passed away several years previously. Thirty-three years later, I embarked in earnest on a search to know more about him.

I started with the Department of Vital Statistics, taking a few vacation days to drive to Austin. Waiting patiently in line, I finally reached the counter and made my request for his death certificate. I gave the harried, seemingly uninterested clerk the benefit of the doubt – perhaps she was having a bad day, or maybe her panty-hose were too tight – who knows! After reviewing their records (this was prior to the internet revolution), she announced there was no information meeting my criteria. I quickly realized I wasn't going to get anything out of this woman and would have to resort to my "desperate" card (which I'm not ashamed to do). Pleading with her, I explained I had taken off work and driven all that way, and SURELY there had to be something – anything! Clearly annoyed, she pawned my request off on one of the other clerks. He kindly agreed to take a second look, after his lunch break.

Within 30 minutes (well before his lunch hour was over), he returned, death certificate in hand. He explained that my father had died just six months prior- not in 1969 as mother had claimed. The clerk discovered the document amongst a pile of papers that had not yet been entered into their "system." I was stunned to learn that my father lived only 30 minutes away from our home, for all those years, when all along I believed he was dead.

I immediately drove back to Fort Worth and went straight to the last known address on the death certificate, which was Duncanville. A family estate, there were three homes situated around a circular drive. The sign atop the iron entrance gate read, "Timber Ridge." I stood there in awe, thinking of all I had missed. And also thinking that my mother had better have a darn good reason for this soap opera!

The moral to my story is: Never give up! Had it not been for the kindness of a clerk who was willing to go out of his way, on his lunch break, to help a perfect stranger, I would still know nothing about my dad, or that I had two step-siblings, or that my grandfather was a Texas Ranger! Life can be funny that way.

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**COUNTDOWN TO ANCESTRY DAY TEXAS**

-- 55 DAYS --

## ANCESTRY DAY

Confirmed presenters for Ancestry Day, September 21, 2013, include Crista Cowan, "The Barefoot Genealogist," Lisa Arnold, from Ancestry.com and Meg Hacker, Director of the National Archives Southwest Regional Office.

### Register now at:

[www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~txmcgs/](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~txmcgs/)

or

[www.facebook.com/TXMCGS](http://www.facebook.com/TXMCGS).

Tickets are going fast -- there may not be any available at the door -- so please register soon!

Volunteers are still needed for this important MCGS event.

Please sign up with Terri O'Neill!

### NEW MEMBER

We are pleased to announce the following  
New Member:

**CATHY CONSTANT**

Welcome!

### Summer Institute 2013

#### "Bits of Yesterday"

with Pamela Boyer Sayre and Richard Sayre

August 2-3, 2013

Learn how to take advantage of maps, land and other records. Identify ways to take a fresh approach or explore new avenues of research.

Register online at [www.dallasgenealogy.org](http://www.dallasgenealogy.org)



### MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

*Barbara  
Lancaster  
Tsirigotis*

Legally, I am Barbara Lancaster Tsirigotis, but for genealogical research purposes I am Barb Lancaster. I have encountered only one Tsirigotis researcher over the past 30 years; but, I've found my maiden name to be quickly recognizable by family historians in all parts of the United States.

I was born and reared in East Texas, near Commerce, and grew up surrounded by three generations of family members. I was exposed to the stories of my grandparents and their siblings every Saturday night as they gathered to play dominos around an old teacher's desk from the Bagley School. While I lay on the shelf beneath the desk, they told stories about my great grandparents coming to Texas in a covered wagon, moving from county to county; the heavy rains that caused the caisson bearing my great grandfathers coffin to get stuck in mud at the cemetery; great uncle John who killed his brother; and cousins Karl and Hugh Farr who played with the Sons of the Pioneers. These stories stayed with me throughout my life.

In 1985, as two friends and I were returning from a trip to Natchez, Mississippi, they decided to stop by the Dallas Library for "a few minutes" to quickly look up something about one of their ancestors. Not understanding what they were talking about, and anxious to get home, I moaned and complained; but, I was outnumbered. They seated me in front of a microfilm reader, inserted a film of the 1910 census of Fannin County Texas and told me to find my grandfather. I found the film to be interesting because I began to spot familiar surnames. THEN, there was my grandfather at the age of 9...and Uncle Jimmy his brother, and baby Lucille who died young, and *Great Day in the Morning!!* there were my great grandparents Adam and Martha Bishop! These were people from the stories I had heard as a child. I had visited their gravesite. But that little reel of film proved that they actually existed. I was totally enthralled by what I was learning on that one page about my great grandparents. I even learned where they and their parents were born! This was a whole new fascinating world for me. A fascination that quickly became a passion.

Since that time I've helped friends and extended family "look into" their family history. As a learning experience, I took on these challenges for a son-in-law who wanted to know if he had any Confederate soldiers in his family; for a family friend who had no idea where her late husband and his family originally came from; and, for a cousin who thought his older brother was illegitimate...he was.

(continued next page)

**Barbara Lancaster Tsirigotis (Continued)**

My grandmother died in 1987 and I inherited her collection of photos that numbered in the hundreds. A few years before, I had sat with her and my mother and identified as many of the pictures as we could. However, I forgot to ask about the two large charcoal portraits of a man and woman that hung in her bedroom as long as I could remember. I've kept those portraits since 1987 and only recently learned who they were. I found the same pictures on Ancestry attached to someone's family history. They are my great great grandparents from Arkansas.

I have combed through and published the old records of the Delta County Courthouse, until the County Judge asked me never to return. I published two books on my own families (Bishop & Lancaster) and a historical abstract of Hunt County land records.

I enjoy traveling and take along my laptop and cemetery kit whenever I leave home, because you never know when you might come across a library or cemetery. Cemeteries are one of my favorite places to research. I am occasionally asked to do presentations on Beginning Genealogy, Cemetery Research, or Analyzing Old Photos. I am a member of several genealogy societies and have written numerous articles for their newsletters and bulletins. My goal is to encourage people to learn more about their family history, our nation's history and how the two are entwined.

My world is a small one - gardening, painting, reading and genealogy – and I couldn't be happier in it.

### [FAMILY TREE DNA WILL KEEP REDUCED PRICES FOR FAMILY FINDER](#)

From Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter  
July 26, 2013

Family Tree DNA reduced its Family Finder price to \$99 one month ago. At the time, the company promised to make the price reduction permanent if a minimum volume of orders was received during the promotion. The number apparently was achieved, as Family Tree DNA has now announced that the \$99 price is permanent.

Family Finder will find relatives across all lines, both male & female. It uses autosomal DNA (inherited from both the mother and father, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, etc.) to provide you a breakdown of your ethnic percentages and connect you with relatives descended from any of your ancestral lines within approximately the last 5 generations. It finds matches for close genealogy relationships (within the past 5 generations) that cross gender lines and also your ethnic percentages.

More information may be found at <http://www.familytreedna.com/family-finder-compare.aspx>.

When you finally break through that brick wall you have been working on for weeks, it will be 4:37 am.

The next morning, your notes don't make sense. Just a few words with arrows between them & some impressive doodles



## Fort Worth Genealogical Society

Summer Seminar  
August 10, 2013:

### DNA in Genealogy

**Speaker:**

Jane Beck of Family Tree DNA

Trinity Terrace Towers  
1600 Texas Street  
Fort Worth Texas

To Register, Visit:

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~txfwgs/>

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

It's that time again! We've attached the Membership Renewal Form for your convenience.

## Family Tree University VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

September 13-15, 2013

Learn More at:  
[Familytreeuniversity.com/virtual-conference/virtual-conference-program](http://Familytreeuniversity.com/virtual-conference/virtual-conference-program)

# MCGS MEMBERSHIP FORM

## 2013 – 2014

(Membership from September 1, 2013 to August 31, 2014)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one: \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ New Member

Individual Membership: \$20.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Couple: \$25.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Surnames you are searching for: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about the MCGS? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Mail completed form with  
your check/money order to:

**Mid-Cities Genealogical Society**  
**P.O. Box 407**  
**Bedford, TX 76095-0407**



### OFFICIAL USE

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Check No. \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \_\_\_\_\_