



# My Journey From Yesterday

Mid-Cities Genealogical Society

P.O. Box 407

Bedford, TX 76095

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

December 2014

Volume 37 Issue 12

Bonnie Baker, President

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

**Mary Lib Saleh Library**  
Meeting Room, 201 N. Ector  
Euless, Texas  
6:30 p.m. – Social  
7:00 p.m. – General Meeting  
Visitors are welcome.

## 2015 MCGS GENERAL MEETINGS CALENDAR

**January 8, 2015**

**Mary Louise Garcia:**  
County Clerk, Tarrant County  
Topic: Keeper of the Records

**February 5, 2015**

**1L. Vaughn Oliver, KSJ:**  
The Sons of the Republic of Texas  
SAR Chapter President 2010-2012  
Topic: To be Announced

## CONGRATULATIONS!!

Our own Sammy Hynds Harrison has been named a Randolph Relief recipient by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. She is the granddaughter of Robert Henry Hynds, Company E, 39<sup>th</sup> Tennessee Mounted Infantry and is a member of the Abner Baker Chapter 1404, Tennessee Division.

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## MCGS CHRISTMAS DINNER



**Thursday, December 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**Dinner Served at 6:30 PM**

The main course will be provided by MCGS. Please bring your favorite covered dish, serving utensils, a wrapped gift (\$5.00) if you wish to participate in our "Christmas With the Wright Family" (we always have a good laugh with this game/gift exchange) and a non-perishable food donation for Six Stones Mission – [www.6stones.org](http://www.6stones.org). (Six Stones in particular is in need of spaghetti, spaghetti sauce, crackers, Hamburger Helper, cereal, canned meat and jellies.)

Volunteers are needed to assist with set-up, which will begin around 4:30. If you are able to arrive early and help, please contact Marilyn at [mm3651@verizon.net](mailto:mm3651@verizon.net) or (817) 379-4214.

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your name or contact information.



## A Visit to the Family History Library

By Bernard N.  
Meisner

In October the sun and moon came into alignment and I was able to combine participation in the annual meeting of the National Weather Association with a visit to the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. Due to the government shutdown last year I had been unable to include the NWA meeting in my "farewell tour" prior to my retirement.

The Family History Library contains one of the world's largest collections of interest to genealogists. For those not familiar with the Library it has five floors for public use; three above ground and two below. Each floor has a reference help desk, a library attendants' window, FamilySearch computers, a copy center and restrooms. Free wireless Internet access is available on all floors of the Library. First time visitors are encouraged to view a short video introduction to the Library that is shown throughout the day.

In addition to general family history and Canada books, the main floor has a computer lab, a classroom and a vending/lunch room with microwave ovens, tables and chairs. The second floor features U.S. and Canada microfilms, with U.S. books and maps on the third floor. The first basement has international books and microfilms, while the second basement has British Isle books and microfilms. There is an additional classroom on each basement level, and plans to add an additional computer lab on the second floor. The Library probably has more helpers than any other library you have visited. Some are experts in particular areas of genealogy, while other volunteers assist with the general operation of the Library.

This was my fourth visit to the Family History Library and, with so many books and microfilms available, I knew it was important to plan my visit to ensure the best use of my time. Before I left Texas I spent several days reviewing the Family History Library Catalog and Wiki pages on FamilySearch.org to identify those resources that are not otherwise available on the Web or at my local libraries. I decided to focus on books about Mifflin County, Pennsylvania -- where my O'Hara ancestors initially settled after their arrival from Ireland in 1848 -- and microfilms of the Pittsburgh birth registers from 1870-1905, where all my great grandparents lived. Those microfilms have not yet been digitized, although a partial index is available. Thus I walked into the Library armed with the identification numbers of the microfilms I wanted to review and the call numbers of the books I wanted to search.

The Library has a large number of well-maintained microfilm readers. In addition to a reader each carrel includes some desk space for writing, with a small storage area underneath. Coin operated lockers are nearby. You can work with up to five microfilms at a time and each patron is responsible for obtaining, refiling and keeping a record of the microfilms they use. As large as the Library is, they can't keep all the microfilm there. The catalog indicates which films are stored offsite; those you can request be made available at the Library on the day(s) you intend to visit.

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Are you planning to work on that holiday gift list next week? While you're shopping for family and friends, give yourself the gift of genealogy education and research wrapped into one package. The FGS 2015 conference is coming up February 11-14 in Salt Lake City. A full four-day registration is \$159 for a limited time. Register today and tell your family they don't have to shop for you this year. Visit this site for details:

<https://www.fgsconference.org/registration>

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**2014 TSGS AWARDS**

1<sup>st</sup> Place, Category VI Official Periodicals of Partner Societies / Newsletters, *San Angelo Genealogical and Historical Society Newsletter*, \$100.

2<sup>nd</sup> Place, Category VI Official Periodicals of Partner Societies / Newsletters, *My Journey From Yesterday*, Mid-Cities Genealogical Society, \$50.

3<sup>rd</sup> Place, Category VI Official Periodicals of Partner Societies / Newsletters, *The Newsletter of Franklin County Genealogical Society*, \$30.

I spent most of my time with the birth register microfilms. Based on my preparation for the trip I knew the first three films in the series of 48 contained alphabetical indexes compiled when the original records were made. These gave the year, volume and page for each birth record. Using the Film Notes I had printed from the FamilySearch Catalog I could then identify the number of the microfilm containing each birth record. I was able to locate almost two dozen birth records of my Pittsburgh ancestors.

As I located each record on the microfilm I used one of the scanners in the copy center on that floor to save a digital image to my thumb drive. The scanners include software that allows the user to control the zoom level, orientation, brightness and contrast of each image, and you can easily review each image after you have saved it to your thumb drive. Digital copies of microfilm, microfiche and books are free; black&white and color paper copies can be made for a small fee using a copy card. The Library sells an integrated 2 Gbyte thumb drive, lanyard and nametag holder for \$6.00 or, you can use your own.

Using the birth records I confirmed that the first name of all but one of my grandfather Meisner's sisters was Mary. I also learned that my Kelly great grandparents apparently hadn't decided on names for my grandmother or my mother's Uncle Norman when they were born; and that my grandfather O'Hara's youngest brother was named after the doctor who assisted at his delivery, "Emmert Christopher Stuart." The birth record confirmed what his son, my mother's cousin Jim, had previously told me, that my great grandparents just wanted to call him Stuart (which is what the family always called him), but the Catholic priest objected because there is no Saint Stuart. Subsequently, he used the name Christopher Stuart on legal documents, perhaps because (as Cousin Jim told me this week) his brother Bert always teased him about the name Emmert!

The Library had not acquired any new Mifflin County books since my last visit. Most have been published by the local historical society in Pennsylvania, in particular by one Dan McClenahan, who has searched for all the genealogical gleanings in the local newspaper and in the naturalization and probate records at the courthouse over the years. However, since I had some new information about a couple of my ancestors since my last visit I did review the books and noted a few additional items for my family tree.

You never know who you might encounter at the Family History Library. As I entered the break room one day I ran into Bob, a fellow from Philadelphia I had met at the recent FGS conference in San Antonio. He was attending a workshop in the Library sponsored by the International Society for British Genealogy and Family History!

Now, about that alignment of the sun and moon...as luck would have it there was a partial solar eclipse visible from Salt Lake City on the Thursday afternoon of my visit, which I was able to enjoy with some of my former meteorological colleagues! The eclipse, renewing acquaintances with colleagues attending the conference, and some successful family history research made for a memorable week in Salt Lake City.

**SHARE YOUR FAVORITE GENEALOGICAL WEB LINKS**

Mid-Cities Genealogical Society's Webmaster, Bernard N. Meisner, notes the Society's Web site includes an area for members' favorite Web links:

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~txmcgs/FavoriteLinks.html>

The page currently includes links to local genealogical societies, local resources – such as NARA and the Fort Worth and Dallas libraries – and regional and national resources. Also included are links to blogs, podcasts and tutorials. Bernard has recently added some links related to genealogical applications of DNA. He invites members to share their favorite Web links for inclusion on the page. Simply email him at [txmcgs@att.net](mailto:txmcgs@att.net) with the URL of one or two of your favorite links, plus a brief indication of why you like that site.

## DEALING WITH SHIFTING COUNTY BOUNDARIES

By Katy Barnes, Legacy Tree Genealogists

As anyone who has ever delved very deep into American research knows, the shifting boundaries of counties and even states can complicate research. You want to get right to the source, to know where to look for records of your ancestor, since many key American record types are often kept at the county level – civil vitals, probate, and deeds, to name a few. But what happens when it's not your family member that did the moving, but the county line? This was extremely common in the earlier days of the United States as it experienced rapid growth and constant reorganization.

The state of New York is a prime example. By 1785, less than ten years after Independence, almost all of New York was in Montgomery County. By the turn of the century only fifteen years later, it had split into over ten new counties and would only continue to fracture further over the next century. A man could have been living in Montgomery County in 1785, Chenango County in 1800, and Madison County in 1815 – and all without having moved ten feet over that thirty-year span.

Another example from my own tree: My great-grandmother who just died this year at the age of 107 was born in 1906 in what is today the city of Erick in Beckham County, Oklahoma. The problem? The day she was born, neither the county nor state existed. It was then known as Indian Territory and didn't become a state until the next year, when Beckham County was also created. It has taken some explaining to clarify why I can say she was born in Erick, Greer County, Indian Territory, and my family can say Erick, Beckham, Oklahoma, and we can both be technically talking about the exact same place!

How could you possibly keep all of this straight? One great (and free!) tool to help with the shifting lines is available online through the famous Newberry Library of Chicago. Called the **Atlas of Historical County Boundaries**, this super-visual site allows you to choose a state, then choose a year and it will generate a map of what the boundaries looked like that exact year. You can even overlay the modern county boundaries and names, check out the bibliography that led to its creation, or view chronologies for each individual county.

Although admittedly it is not the most immediately user-friendly tool out there, a little experimentation will bring you up to speed in no time.

## OUTLAWS AND IMBECILES RUNNING STATE GOVERNMENT

Columbia Editor Decries Parson Brownlow's Administration

The following editorial appeared in the *Columbia Herald* on May 12, 1866, while Reconstruction ruled the South

### THE SITUATION

Tennessee is today the most unfortunate State on the continent – cursed as never was a State, by a band of political outlaws, who accidentally occupy official positions; her people impoverished by four years{of}war, her limbs shackled and bound by infamous enactments, called laws, - she is certainly deserving of the pity of all the world.

We venture the assertion that, since the first attempt at representative government, history contains no record of just how such a body acting in a legislative capacity, as is now assembled at Nashville. As representatives, they cannot truthfully claim five thousand constituents in the State. In point of information, integrity and respectability, they represent about the same number, and generally the same persons, as do the inmates of the State Penitentiary and Insane Asylum.

It can be established before any honest jury of twelve disinterested and impartial men, that three-fourths of that body have already been guilty of willful perjury. While this is so, it excites no remark, simply because it astonishes no one acquainted with the private character of the individual members.

It is not, therefore, a matter of surprise that such a body, imbecile, incompetent, and bent on plundering the coffers of the State, should seek to perpetuate their hold upon the public offices. Their chief sin is plunder, and to gain this they have hesitated at nothing, and will be deterred by none of the considerations that usually operate to control, or govern, the actions of honorable men. To these they are as deaf as is the highway robber to the pleadings of his helpless victims.

It need surprise no one, therefore, if they should attempt to organize an armed band in every county, by which to govern and control the elections, and collect their plunder. Such a step has been, and may yet be, in contemplation.

Then, too, they would like to muzzle the press. They are enraged that their misdeeds should be chronicled, and grow furious when fitting and appropriate terms are applied to them and their conduct. In this they are unreasonable. They can play the tyrant and sport at will with the rights of men, because their position gives them the power so to do; but there is no power on earth can save them from the scorn and contempt of honest men, either as a body or as individuals, and the time is far removed when they can either intimidate or control a free press to overlook or countenance their crimes.

The convict who has served his time in the Penitentiary rarely returns to the community from whence he was sent; not less respected will be the position of the radicals of the present Legislature, when their terms expire.

(Contributed by Jane Aronhalt)

**MCGS MEMBERSHIP FORM****2014 – 2015**

(Membership from September 1, 2014 to August 31, 2015)

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

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

Surnames you are researching: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

Mail completed form with  
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