



My Journey from Yesterday

Mid-Cities Genealogical Society

P. O. Box 407

Bedford, TX 76095

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

38 Issue

December 2015

Volume 38 Issue 12

Bonnie Baker, President

Mid-Cities Genealogical Society meets the 1st

Thursday of each month at:

Mary Lib Saleh Library Meeting Room, 201 N. Ector

Eules, Texas

6:30 p.m. – Social

7:00 p.m. – General Meeting

Visitors are welcome

2015 MCGS General Meetings Calendar

Speakers:

-December 3, 2015

Christmas Social—Begins at 6:30 p.m.

-January 7, 2016

Mary Moore, MCGS Member
Topic: "How to Plan Family Reunions"

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But Mommy, all I said was "You're my first generation ancestor..."

Reminder: Christmas Social



CHRISTMAS SOCIAL: The December 3, 2015, meeting is our annual Christmas social. We will begin around 6:30 p.m. As far as food is concerned, it will be *pot luck*. MCGS will provide the meat dishes and everyone else is asked to bring a dish to share.

FOOD DONATION: Besides your dish for the social, if you care to do so, MCGS is asking you to bring a donation of nonperishable food goods for **6 Stones** organization. **6 Stones** is part of New Hope Center whose mission is to provide emergency assistance of food, clothing and other resources to families in need. On average, they serve around 300 individuals each week. **6 Stones** is building a coalition that provides solutions to meet the needs of the community. In all they do, they are: Christ-centered, Unified, Honorable, Respectful, Compassionate, and Service Oriented.

GIFTS: We will also exchange gifts as we have in the past. A gift should **NOT cost more than \$5.00**. It should be wrapped and the exchange will take place during the reading of, "*A Wright Family Christmas*."



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year



A January Preview-- MARY MOORE: "Have you thought of having a family

reunion, but aren't sure how to get started? Here are some questions you might want to ask yourself and others..."

"What type of reunion do you want to have? Will it be a small or large reunion? How do I contact everyone? Where will we have it? How many days will it be? How often should we have it?"

These are just a few of the many questions Mary Moore will try and help answer at our January meeting.



Dear MCGS Members a Suggestion: Do not put away your Christmas card list. You could use it to start "a who to invite list" to the family reunion. Also, during the holidays, ask various relatives for ideas and contact information.

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**Gleanings from the Texas State Genealogy Society's 2015
Family History Conference** by Bernard N. Meisner

When I gave a brief report at the November MCGS meeting about the Texas State Genealogy Society's Family History Conference that was held in Austin October 30-November 1, I was asked, "What did you learn?" I promised to write a summary for our Newsletter. Understand there were as many as five concurrent sessions at any given time, and I could only attend one talk at a time. That said, here are some things I learned.

The Genealogist's Searching Mantra (*Recite at the start of every search!*)

- Not every record you're seeking exists.
- Not every record that exists is on the Internet.
- Not every record on the Internet can be found on any particular site.
- Not every record on the Internet has been indexed.
- Not every record has been indexed as you think it should be.
- When you find the record you're seeking, REJOICE!

Always begin a search by familiarizing yourself with the records and the history of the locations you will be researching. Otherwise, the "needle" you're looking for may not even be in that particular "haystack!"

When preparing for a research trip, beginning genealogists tend to focus on researching particular surnames, while experienced genealogists tend to focus on the records available for a particular place of interest. Familiarize yourself with the hours, rules and policies of the archive you will visit. Since it likely will have more records than you will have time to research, prioritize, by setting S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely) goals.

Copy the title and index pages of any book or microfilm in which you find a record so you can reference your sources.

Evaluate every record you find, taking into consideration: When in the lifetime of your ancestor was the record created? Who created the record? Why was the record created?

Once you determine what you do know about a person, then you will see what you don't know and where the gaps are in that person's timeline. Then, make your plan of what you plan to research.

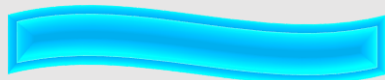
It can often be more productive to search for the oldest or youngest members of a family, or a member with a distinctive name, rather than your direct relative.

Post queries on sites such as GenForum.com and RootsWeb.Ancestry.com. Recognize it may be years until you get a response but, if you do, follow-up by posting the results of a successful search.

From <http://members.home.nl/sjouwke/genealogie/jokes.htm#indicators>

More Indicators That You've Become a Geneaholic:

- You've taken a tape recorder and/or notebook to a family reunion
- You've not only read the latest GEDCOM standard, but also you understand it
- The local genealogy society borrows books from you
- The only film you've seen in the last year was the 1880 census index
- More than half of your CD collection is made up of marriage records or pedigrees
- Your elusive ancestor has been spotted in more different places than Elvis!



Mason Jars Close the Deal

By MCGS member Barbara Tsirigotis



Ollie Bishop's home

In the 1930's it was almost unheard of for a woman to purchase a home on her own; but, Ollie Bishop did just that.

Married in 1923, Ollie and Albert Bishop lived in whatever rent houses they could find. In the early 1930's they were living in such a house in the England Grove area of Hunt County Texas when Mr. Gay, a representative of Sears Roebuck & Company (now Sears Mortgage), visited Ollie and asked if she and her husband would be interested in buying a two story house near them. Ollie and Al were familiar with the property and Ollie had always loved the house.

It seems the materials for the house were financed by Sears and the owner had built the house himself. He and his family had lived in the house for a few years and he was in the process of adding onto the house when he was shot and killed. The murder took place at the road turning onto his property and the only description of the killer was simply ... a black man. Due to economic reasons the family was forced to sell the house and the 52 acres of land after his death. Mr. Gay described the house as having two large rooms and a screened-in porch downstairs and one long attic room upstairs. He explained that the payment would be \$104.00 due the first of every year. Ollie asked that Mr. Gay come back the next day for lunch and talk with her husband Al about the house. Jokingly, she said, "If Al refuses to buy the house, then I'll buy it myself." Although Mr. Gay was laughing, he agreed to this arrangement. The property was located over a mile off the main roadway difficult to access in bad weather. There probably weren't too many people interested in the location or many that could afford a property of that size.

The following day Ollie served up a large noon meal of fried potatoes, red beans, cornbread, pork chops, and cake all prepared fresh that morning. Mr. Gay appeared on time and presented his sales pitch to Al, over lunch. He thoroughly enjoyed his meal and told Ollie so several times. Mr. Gay, being a city boy, asked where Ollie came by the unusually large drinking glasses she used for iced tea. Ollie told him they were quart fruit Mason jars she used for canning vegetables; but, she used them for iced tea as well because they held much more than a regular drinking glass. He was thrilled with the idea and wanted to know where he could buy Mason jars.

As Ollie had expected, Al declined Mr. Gay's offer to buy the land and house saying that he was not sure he could raise the \$104.00 each year to make the annual payment. He then excused himself and returned to work.

Ollie, who had been out of the room searching for fruit jars for Mr. Gay, asked him if Al had decided to buy the house. Mr. Gay said, no, Al had declined. Ollie desperately wanted the house and, at that moment, asked Mr. Gay if he would sell the house to her.

Mr. Gay had become quite fond of Ollie, her tenacity, determination, as well as her cooking; and, he really wanted to unload that property. So, he decided to sell to Ollie. Ollie had only a third grade education but was able to sign her name to the deed. She sent Mr. Gay on his way with a signed deed and four Mason jars.

It was a few days before she told Al that she had bought the house. Naturally, he was furious. He searched for a way to get out of the sale, but to no avail. There were times her daughter Reba remembers, her mother would tell her in the morning, before Reba left for school, that she may be gone in the evening when Reba got home from school. And that it might be rather late before she got home. Reba later learned that her mother was picking and hoeing cotton for neighbors and saving the money she earned for the annual house payment. One year Al lost 4 mules within a month of each other. The cause was never determined; but, he was forced to borrow money from the bank to purchase more mules. Money was very short that year but somehow Al and Ollie managed to make the house payment. Over the years Al and Ollie, with the help of their daughter and son-in-law, added a large kitchen, 2 bedrooms, and bathroom to the house. The original water well (located inside the house -- on the porch) was their constant source for drinking water. Al and Ollie lived out there lives in the house that Ollie loved.

Blessed are the great-grandmothers, who hoarded newspaper clippings and old letters... For they tell the story of their times.

From: Eastman Online Newsletter, November 11, 2015

A Postal Treasure Trove

Press Release



Secrets of 17th-century postal archive finally to be revealed – includes 600 letters never opened
Issued on 5 November 2015

2,600 letters have been recovered in a postmaster's trunk, containing extensive historical and cultural evidence from 17th-century Europe, BBC History Magazine has revealed. 600 of them are still sealed shut, and will be read for the first time using the latest advances in x-ray technology.

The trunk contains 2,600 letters sent from France, Spain and the Spanish Netherlands between 1689 and 1706 but never delivered – including 600 letters never opened – because their recipients could not be found or would not pay outstanding postage costs. The trunk has been stored in The Hague's Museum voor Communicatie since 1926. An international team of experts from MIT, Yale University, and the Universities of Leiden, Groningen, and Oxford is exploring them to find out more in a ground-breaking project called *Signed, Sealed, & Undelivered*.

The researchers are employing a range of innovative techniques to explore these often complexly folded letters – and to read the unopened letters without breaking their seals. Using the latest advances in x-ray technology from the field of dentistry developed by the Apocalypto group including Dr. David Mills, at Queen Mary, the team will read the letters for the first time without damaging this unique archive. Dr Nadine Akkerman, from the University of Leiden, says: “*Because early modern ink contained iron, incredibly delicate scanning can detect it on the paper. By scanning each layer of paper in a letter packet, we should be able to piece the letters back like jigsaw puzzles and read them without breaking the seals.*”

Collected by the postmasters of the Dutch city of The Hague – Simon de Brienne and his wife Maria Germain – the letter-writers come from all levels of society, from aristocrats to wandering musicians, women as well as men, each with their own stories to tell. Beyond its written information, the trunk is a valuable physical resource, from the wax seals on its seal-skin-covered exterior to the ways the letters were folded.

Dr Daniel Starza Smith, from Lincoln College, University of Oxford notes: “*How a letter was folded can express personality and period just as handwriting can.*” Jana Dambrogio, conservator at MIT Libraries, adds: “*But the inventiveness and complexity here is like nothing we have ever seen. It allows us to study what we call ‘letterlocking’: the*

tradition of folding and securing a writing surface to function as its own envelope. This is an entirely new area of study, so the trunk offers us amazing research opportunities.”

Dr David van der Linden, from the University of Groningen, says: “*The collection contains unique letters sent between Huguenot family members, evincing the emotional strains of exile and separation. These Huguenot letters point to the emotional toll that displacement and migration could take in the early modern period – and still does today.*” “*So many of the concerns expressed in these letters are the same as today: parents worried about their children, wives angry at delinquent husbands,*” adds Dr Rebekah Ahrendt, from Yale.

The Briennes were at the heart of European communications networks, serving William of Orange both before and after The Glorious Revolution of 1688, which saw William and his wife Mary depose King James II following a successful Dutch invasion of England, Scotland, and Ireland which shocked the world and changed Europe forever.

Koos Havelaar, Curator of Postal History at the Museum voor Communicatie, says: “*Signed, Sealed, & Undelivered is a ground-breaking project which the Museum voor Communicatie is delighted to support. The historic postmasters’ collection of Simon de Brienne and Maria Germain will – for the very first time – reveal stories of everyday life from across seventeenth-century Europe. It shows how The Netherlands was at the heart of European communications systems, and offers an opportunity to study a unique cross-section of society. The trunk itself is one of the museum’s most spectacular treasures and we are delighted that we can at last reveal its fascinating contents. We look forward to putting on an exhibition and releasing a series of online resources in the near future.*”

For further information, please visit: www.brienne.org. The team is tweeting with the hashtag #signedsealedundelivered; or follow @letterlocking.

Notes to editors:

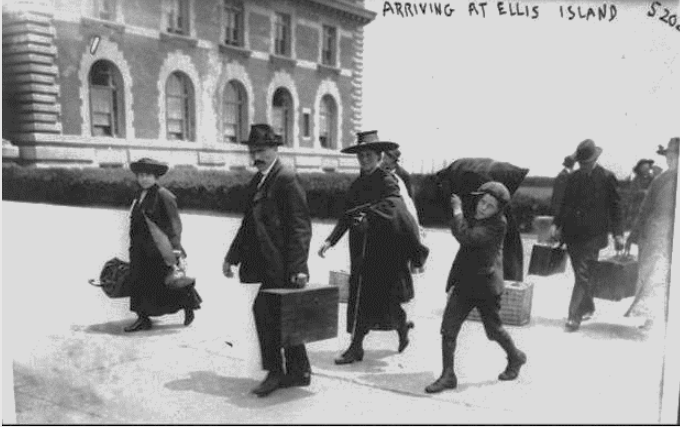
The research team comprises Dr Rebekah Ahrendt (Assistant Professor of Music, Yale University), Dr Nadine Akkerman (Lecturer in English, University of Leiden), Ms. Jana Dambrogio (Thomas F. Peterson (1957) Conservator, MIT Libraries), Dr David van der Linden (NWO Veni Fellow and Lecturer in History, University of Groningen), Dr Daniel Starza Smith (British Academy Post-Doctoral Fellow, Lincoln College, University of Oxford), and Mr Koos Havelaar (Director, Museum voor Communicatie, The Hague). They bring together a mixture of historical, archival, and linguistic approaches, and draw particularly on recent insights of conservation practice.

The project has received funding from MIT Libraries and the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), in order to begin conserving and cataloguing these letters. In the next stages of the project the opened letters will be transcribed, translated, and edited. Finally, the unopened letters will be scanned using x-ray tomography, an extremely sensitive technique from the field of dentistry, which has already been used successfully on some of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

©Signed, Sealed & Undelivered Team, 2015. Courtesy of the Museum voor Communicatie, The Hague

Dick Eastman referenced article below in his November 13, 2015, Newsletter. Following is the actual article.

Think your immigrant ancestors came here legally? Think again /



"Only 1 percent of people who showed up at Ellis Island were turned away," said Mae Ngai, author of *"Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America."*

"What that statement is ignorant of is that we didn't always have restrictions. It's a fairly recent phenomenon." The copied photograph is from the library at Ellis Island of immigrants arriving on Ellis Island in the early 1900s.



(Star-Ledger file photo)

By [Brian Donohue](#) | [NJ Advance Media for NJ.com](#) on November 12, 2015 at 6:12 PM, updated November 12, 2015 at 6:14 PM

There are many solid arguments for why the United States should not grant legal status to unauthorized immigrants, as opponents of immigration reform, have argued for years now.

But as the debate continues to rage, one particular mantra is heard from opponents of legalization, perhaps more consistently than any other:

"My ancestors came here legally."

So too, the argument holds, must today's immigrants. We're a nation of laws, we must be consistent, and we must not reward law breakers.

It's a mighty handy argument that worked wonders for opponents of the legalization bills that have died in Congress over the past two decades. It's logical, and draws a clear moral distinction between previous generations of law-abiding immigrants and today's border-jumpers. It heads off allegations of xenophobia, allowing the speaker to say it's not immigrants he or she is against, just illegality.

If everyone's grandparents said they immigrated legally, someone's grandparents were lying.

It works, too, because it rings true with Americans. The images burned into our brains of previous immigration waves come largely from newsreels and photos of immigrants disembarking at Ellis Island, one at a time, orderly, legally.

There's one problem with the argument. It's utter hogwash.

First of all, for hundreds of years, as immigrants poured in by the hundreds of thousands from the 1600s to the early 1900s, there were simply no federal immigration laws to break.

Unless you were a criminal or insane (or after 1882, Chinese), once you landed here, you were legal.

Crediting yesteryear's immigrants with following the laws is like calling someone a good driver because they never got caught speeding on the Autobahn.

"Only 1 percent of people who showed up at Ellis Island were turned away," said Mae Ngai, author of ["Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America."](#)

"What that statement is ignorant of is that we didn't always have restrictions. It's a fairly recent phenomenon."

Level the playing field hypothetically, and the argument becomes even more preposterous.

Imagine today's immigration laws, which make it impossible for most poor foreign farmers to immigrate legally — in effect in, say, 1849.

Somewhere in Ireland, a starving farmer turns to his family, their mouths green from eating grass in the midst of the potato famine.

"We could escape to America and have food to eat," the farmer says. "But I'd never do that without a visa. That would be a violation of U.S. immigration law."

Ridiculous, of course. That farmer would have done exactly what today's Mexicans, Chinese and Guatemalans are doing by the millions — get to the United States so they can feed their families, and worry about getting papers later.

Which brings us to the second reason the "my ancestors came legally" argument is absurd.

It's because lots of people's ancestors simply didn't.

Once Congress put immigration quotas in place to keep out less desirable Eastern and Southern Europeans in 1921, they began sneaking in by the thousands.

On June 17, 1923, the New York Times reported that W.H. Husband, commissioner general of immigration, had been trying for two years "to stem the flow of immigrants from central and southern Europe, Africa and Asia that has been leaking across the borders of Mexico and Canada and through the ports of the east and west coasts."

A story from the Sept. 16, 1927, New York Times describes government plans for stepped up Coast Guard patrols because thousands of Chinese, Japanese, Greeks, Russians and Italians were landing in Cuba and then hiring smugglers to take them to the United States, illegally.

Two years earlier, the immigration service reported that 1.4 million immigrants might be living illegally in the U.S., according to the immigration service's 1925 annual report.

"The figures presented are worthy of very serious thought, especially when it is considered that such a great percentage

of our population ... whose first act upon reaching was our shore to break our laws by entering in a clandestine manner," the report found.

The problem got so bad that the government was forced to legalize an estimated 200,000 illegal European immigrants by a process called pre-examination. These days, the process would be called amnesty.

Clearly, if everyone's grandparents said they immigrated legally, someone's grandparents were lying.

"When people cite their grandparents, they're basically operating with a very limited understanding of what immigration was back then," said Edward O'Donnell, author of "[1001 Things Everyone Should Know About Irish American History](#)."

"There's nothing people are more proud of than these huddled masses yearning to breathe free. It's based on a very skewed or no knowledge of history."

[Stanford University history professor Richard White](#) discovered that after he began researching a book on his family's immigrant past. White found his grandfather tried to emigrate from Ireland through Canada in 1936 because he could not get a visa under the quota laws.

"He tried to come through Detroit. It was hard to get caught at Detroit, but he managed to get caught," White said. Back in Canada, his grandfather called his brother, a Chicago police officer, who crossed the border and met him there. The two then walked to Detroit, his brother flashing his Chicago policeman's badge to U.S. customs officers who waved the pair through.

"I wouldn't be here, my brothers wouldn't be here if illegal aliens had been rounded up and dragged out," said White, a 1992 Pulitzer Prize finalist.

Few people say what White does in public. But since Ngai wrote her book in 2005, she has heard from some of them. They're not going on talk shows, blogging or writing letters to newspaper editors. But they're out there, even if they don't know it.

Perhaps if the Senate's legalization bill comes around again, their story could be a rallying cry for those in favor of amnesty.

Brian Donohue may be reached at bdonohue@njadvancemedia.com. Follow him on Twitter [@briandonohue](#). Find NJ.com on [Facebook](#).



Federation of Genealogical Societies Conference 2016

August 31 - September 3, 2016 Springfield, Illinois



From: Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter Fri, Nov 20, 2015

About the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS)

The Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) was founded in 1976 and represents the members of hundreds of genealogical societies. FGS links the genealogical community by helping genealogical societies strengthen and grow through resources available online, FGS Forum magazine (filled with articles pertaining to society management and genealogical news), and Society Strategy Series papers, covering topics about effectively operating a genealogical society. FGS also links the genealogical community through its annual conference — four days of excellent presentations, including one full day devoted to society management topics. To learn more visit <http://www.fgs.org>.

The [Federation of Genealogical Societies](#) (FGS) 2016 Conference, "**Time Travel: Centuries of Memories**," will be held August 31 – September 3, 2016 at the Prairie Capital Convention Center.

Wyndham Springfield City Centre: 700 E Adams St, Springfield, IL 62701 (217) 789-1530

The conference rate is \$129/night, available from August 27 to September 6, 2016. Reserve your room by August 6, 2016 to receive the discounted rate. Visit www.fgsconference.org to reserve your room online. **NOTE:** For the Wyndham, phone reservations will be taken ONLY after January 1, 2016, while online reservations can be made now

The President Abraham Lincoln Springfield

701 E Adams Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701 (217) 544-8800

The conference rate is \$129/night, available from August 30 to September 4, 2016. Reserve your room by August 3, 2016 to receive the discounted rate. Visit www.fgsconference.org to reserve your room online. **NOTE:** The President Abraham Lincoln Springfield has a connected walkway to the Prairie Capital Convention Center.

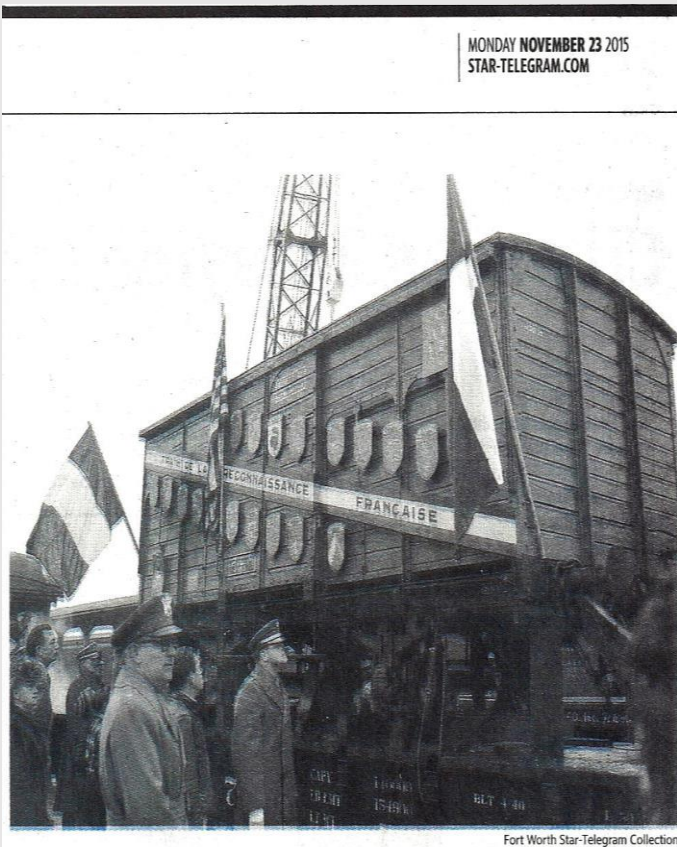
Book Your FGS 2016 Conference Hotel Room NOW! Rooms will be in high demand. Reserve yours now through the FGS conference website at www.fgsconference.org. Registration for the FGS 2016 Conference will open in late January 2016. For additional information about the FGS conference visit www.fgsconference.org

National Genealogical Society’s 2016 Family History Conference:

Registration for the **National Genealogical Society’s 2016 Family History Conference** will open on December 1st. The conference will be held at the **Greater Ft. Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center May 4-7, 2016**. The theme is *Exploring the Centuries: Footprints in Time*, and there will be up to 10 tracks per day and 150 lectures on a wide range of topics.

The conference hotel, the Hilton Fort Lauderdale Marina, is located across the street from the convention center. Rooms are also available at the Renaissance Fort Lauderdale Cruise Port Hotel and the Fort Lauderdale Embassy Suites (see <http://conference.ngsgenealogy.org/accommodations/>). All hotels are currently accepting reservations, so don’t wait!

Please visit the conference Web site <http://conference.ngsgenealogy.org/> for more information.



MONDAY NOVEMBER 23 2015
STAR-TELEGRAM.COM

TIME FRAMES

In 1947, newspaper columnist Drew Pearson spearheaded a national effort to assist the French people who were struggling to recover from World War II. His effort resulted in the American Friendship Train, a gift of more than 700 railroad cars of food and clothing.

Fort Worth contributed 19 of the 46 cars sent from Texas – 15 donated by the Amon Carter Foundation and four collected through the efforts of the Lions Club. To express their thanks, the French people sent the French Gratitude

Train, often called the *Merci Train*, to the United States in 1949. It comprised 49 wooden “40 and 8” boxcars filled with gifts ranging from a Louis XV carriage to children’s drawings.

The car destined for Texas was officially welcomed to the state in Fort Worth on Feb. 14, 1949. Lifted by crane to a trailer, the boxcar was on display in front of the Hotel Texas for the welcome ceremony, and was then moved to the Santa Fe station for public viewing on Feb. 15. The Texas car traveled on

to Austin where it was unsealed.

This photo shows the Texas *Merci Train* boxcar upon its arrival in Fort Worth. It now is at the Texas Military Forces Museum in Austin.

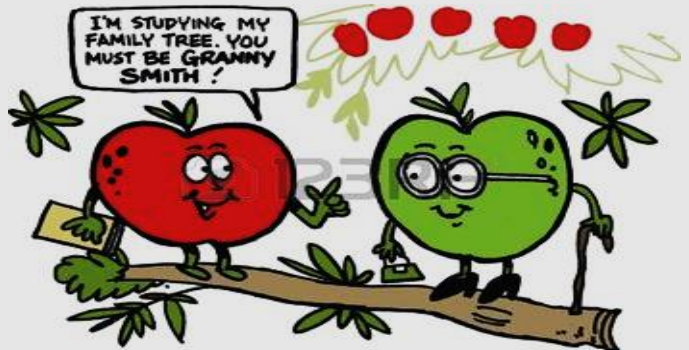
The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries offers a rich and diverse collection of materials on the history of Texas and the Southwest. Each week, readers of *Time Frames* get a glimpse of the past with an image from *Special Collections*. 817-272-3393; library.uta.edu/special-collections.

DID YOU KNOW?

From: <http://history.loftinn.com/Humor.htm>

There are some very unusual laws on the records of towns, cities and municipalities in North Carolina and the neighboring states. Even though it seems they were initiated and carry some form of punishment if broken.

- It is illegal for frogs to croak after 11pm.
- It is against the law in Dyersburg for a woman to call a man for a date.
- Every citizen must carry his gun to church.
- It is illegal to kick your wife out of bed in Lebanon.



MCGS MEMBERSHIP FORM

2015 – 2016

(Membership from September 1, 2015 to August 31, 2016)

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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

your check/money order to: **Mid-Cities Genealogical Society**

P.O. Box 407

Bedford, TX 76095-0407

www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~txmcgs/

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