



My Journey From Yesterday

Mid-Cities Genealogical Society

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

March 2014

Volume 37 Issue 3

Jane Aronhalt, President

Mid-Cities Genealogical Society meets the 1st 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.

2014 MCGS GENERAL MEETINGS CALENDAR

April 3, 2014

Bernard Meisner:

“Applying Family Naming Conventions to your Genealogy Research”

May 1, 2014

Carl Oehmann:

World War II Records

June 5, 2014

Earl Armstrong:

Topic to be Announced

NOTICE:

The April and May meetings will convene in the Genealogy Room at the library. The March meeting possibly will meet in that location as well.



MARCH SPEAKER:

Kathleen Kent

TOPIC:

“The Outcasts”

Kathleen Kent is the author of three best-selling novels. Her first novel, *The Heretic's Daughter*, has been published in 15 countries and is a recipient of the David J. Langum Sr. award for American historical fiction. The book chronicles the life of Martha Carrier, the author's grandmother back 9 generations, during the Salem witch trials of 1692, and is based in part on family stories passed down through generations.

Her second novel, *The Traitor's Wife*, explores the life of Thomas Carrier, husband to Martha; a man who was a soldier during the English Civil War and who is rumored to be one of the executioners of King Charles I of England.

The author's latest novel, *The Outcasts*, is set in Reconstruction Era Texas and follows the paths of a young woman fleeing a life of prostitution and a newly-minted lawman on the hunt for a killer of men, women and children across the frontier.

A short story titled *Coincidences Can Kill You* was published in the crime anthology, *Dallas Noir*, on November 5th, 2013. She is currently working on a novel-length work based on this short story.

MCGS BOARD ACTIONS

The Board of Directors has voted unanimously to make the following contributions: Eules Library (\$1,000); War of 1812 Records (\$1,000 now and possibly more later – Ancestry will match our donation); and DNA Workshop (date and details to be announced – approximately \$1,500).

Deferred motions pending cost and/or details included a sound system (approximately \$1,500); and hosting a library summer reading program for 5th graders.

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MEMBER
SPOTLIGHT:
NANCY GARNETT

My Dad was in the US Air Force, so I lived in various areas of the United States. I was born in Ohio and stayed there about 4 years. I was the fourth child of six. We then moved to Maine for 5-1/2 years; Roswell, New Mexico for 1 year; then Ellsworth AFB outside of Rapid City, South Dakota for about 3 years where my father retired. The United States kept shutting down Strategic Air Command military bases so we kept moving.

After my father retired, we moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico. I attended high school there and college in Carlsbad, then Las Cruces, New Mexico. I received a BS in chemical engineering from New Mexico State in 1981. From there I went to work in Duncan, Oklahoma and later to Dallas for Halliburton Services where I learned all about hydraulic fracturing, currently referred to as "fracking." I was married for almost 12 years, but have been single since 1992. We didn't have any children. I have many nieces and nephews from my 5 siblings!

I started working at Texas Industries, Inc. (TXI) in 1990 and have been there for nearly 24 years. It is a construction materials company including 3 cement manufacturing plants; sand, gravel and stone mining and over 100 concrete plants. My position has been in the environmental department where I help ensure compliance with all environmental regulations. In the past I have worked in California, Colorado, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. The company has recently announced a merger with Martin Marietta Materials which has a large numbers of mining sites. Hopefully I will keep my job after the merger is complete.

My interest in genealogy started in the 1970s when I copied a genealogy that my grandmother had. Gramma, (Elma Park Austin Milton) is on my Mom's side and the Park family was from Iowa and South Dakota. This line goes back to Scotland in the 1860's with Park's and McDougal's.

My interest was renewed in the 1990s when my Mom was hospitalized and was incoherent for a time. My father had passed years earlier. I realized that I did not know anything about my father's ancestors beyond my grandfather, Emuel Elroy "Buck" Garnett, and not much more than that on my grandmother's (Ethel Marie Smith) family. Since we never visited my father's family, Mom was the only one who knew anyone on that side of the family. Fortunately, Mom recovered and started me on my journey through the family tree with some information about distant cousins in Arkansas, one of whom was very active in genealogy. That also helped me with Mom's side of the family too.

I joined MCGS about 3 years ago, but I had contact with the Irving contingent of our group prior to that because of living in Irving from about 1993 – 1995. I have some old newsletters from that time.

Anyone who flew through Albuquerque and went to the Kachina Room at the old Albuquerque airport may have met Gramma because she was a waitress there for more than 30 years. She was a relative that I admired. She worked hard and she stood up for herself. Albuquerque, the city where she lived, wanted to put a bicycle lane in front of

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her house, which would have prohibited family from parking on the street. The city had already taken the front half of her property when they widened Rio Grande Blvd. years earlier, so "Gramma" fought city hall and got the bicycle lane stopped just before her property. At that time I didn't believe anyone could fight city hall so it was a learning experience!

Joseph Brown Smith was my Gramma's grandfather. He was born in Illinois. His father was named James Smith and his mother was Artemesia 'Artie' Edwards. James Smith is the furthest back I can go in that line. Artie's line is much easier to track. Joseph and his second wife, Sarah Jane Lee, moved to Iowa and started a very large family. If I could talk to one ancestor in my line, it would be Joseph. His diary indicates that he was well read and thought a lot about what was happening in the world. He lived to 89 years old and died in 1922. The other ancestor I'd like to talk to is John Garnett who came to Virginia in the 1600's and find out where he came from...please!!

I wish I could spend a lot of time doing the genealogy research. It is tough to start and stop, and then get started again. So, when retirement arrives, hopefully I can travel to Kentucky and Virginia where the Garnett's lived and to Nebraska where the Austin's lived, Iowa where the Smith's lived and many other places to track down Menser's, Middleton's and more!

Forgotten Burials in US Cemeteries

[Leah Binkovitz](#) for the Washington Post

[Guardian Weekly](#), Tuesday 14 January 2014 09.02 EST



Bob Perry demonstrates ground-penetrating radar at the Historic Congressional Cemetery in Washington Leah Binkovitz

In cemeteries across the US, Bob Perry stalks the grounds looking for unmarked graves, forgotten burials and lost lives. He has his own logo: a skull and crossbones with the words "Bone Finder" above and "Tracking the Dead" below. Equipped with what is essentially a heavy-duty baby stroller hooked to ground-penetrating radar, Perry helps graveyard officials make sense of incomplete records and find forgotten graves.

For the past several months, Perry has painstakingly paced the grounds of Washington's [Historic Congressional Cemetery](#), tucked in a far corner of the city near the Anacostia River. More than halfway done with the search, the grave whisperer has already found an estimated 2,750 unmarked burials. Congressional was founded in 1807 and served as an

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Doron Ofir Casting, Robert Mazza Casting and Powderhouse Productions are searching nationwide for people with the most compelling stories who want to have their double-helix hunches answered for an all-new television series on a major cable network.

NOW CASTING

DNA

AN ALL-NEW TELEVISION SERIES
ON A MAJOR CABLE NETWORK

Do you need help unlocking the biggest mystery in your life? Put your most life-changing question to the ultimate test - DNA test!

New Television Program is Seeking Blood Relationship Puzzles to Solve by the Use of DNA

Do you have a genealogy mystery you are trying to solve? For instance, do you think your Dad might not be your real father? Do you think the mystery might be solved by the use of DNA? If so, a television casting company would like to speak with you!

The following is an excerpt from the DNA Casting web site at:

<http://www.dnacasting.com>

- Do you have suspicions about your blood relation to a family member?
- Have you ever thought that maybe you were switched at birth?
- Did you ever think you look more like your father's best friend than your own father?
- Are you suspicious that you might not be related to any of your relatives?
- Would you ever get a DNA test to prove your theory?

If you want to know who your parents are or who you are, then this is the perfect opportunity for you.

If you're ready to make your last stand, and are at least 18 years old, we want to hear your story! If selected, your search for answers may finally come to an end with a trip to New York or a visit by our genetic team where you will participate in the DNA test and be compensated for your time in doing so.

Learn more at <http://www.dnacasting.com> and you can even fill out a questionnaire on the same site to be submitted to the show's producers. You can also contact Jonathan Whipple at whipplecasting@gmail.com for more information.

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eternal home for some of America's first congressmen, but its recent history has been one of rebirth after a period of neglect. Perry's work will allow the historic graveyard to enter the modern era and reconcile its records, which Perry ranks among the best he's encountered, with reality.

Congressional is one of 12 cemeteries in Washington still accepting new residents alongside people such as civil war photographer [Mathew Brady](#). But choosing a site for a new burial isn't always a sure bet. Over time, headstones go missing and records disappear. The cemetery hasn't had a comprehensive map made of its holdings since 1935. Using carefully calibrated radar, Perry is able to find open space for the cemetery as well as provide a more detailed picture of the bodies buried there.

The cemetery's now-pastoral grounds were filled with trash and spent syringes in the late 20th century. In the 1990s, a band of dog walkers raised money to begin a needed clean-up. They envisioned a place open to the public, recalling the Victorian tradition of garden cemeteries, which were often the only open green spaces available to city dwellers. Not everyone embraced the idea of a graveyard full of puppies and joggers, but the group became responsible co-stewards of the site.

Every year, the cemetery throws a birthday party for one of its most famous residents, John Philip Sousa, complete with the [United States Marine Band](#). When goats were called in to help manage (ie, eat) an invasion of poison ivy in August, the quirky cemetery drew eyes from across the country.

Margaret Puglisi, vice-president of the Association for the Preservation of the Historic Congressional Cemetery, which manages the site, launched the DC Metro chapter of the Association for Gravestone Studies at the cemetery's chapel in early November.

Perry, 66, a Bostonian who now lives in New Hampshire, at first declined an offer to make a subterranean survey of Congressional. It is much bigger than the hundreds of cemeteries and church plots he has surveyed, many up and down the east coast. But the staff was persistent, and Perry relented.

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Now, he says, Congressional is his favorite cemetery. He has to remind himself to focus while he walks the radar up and down the rows because he often gets distracted reading the headstones.

Perry talks with a strong Boston accent and has a soft spot in his heart for fellow veterans. He likes the solitary nature of the work he does, the quiet as he walks the grassy streets of a silent city. He's gruff but patient with passersby who stop to ask him about his work. On the job, he wears faded blue jeans, belted, with a tucked-in Oxford shirt.

Perry starts every job the same way. He finds a group of graves that have a well-documented provenance. Then he rolls his radar over the plots, slowly, step by step, back and forth. A screen between the cart's handlebars provides a picture of gray squiggles that indicate any sort of anomaly in the ground. Most burials appear as little arches, but other items can show up, too: buried pipes, tree roots and the like. He divides the cemetery into sections and ropes off each one to guide his path. Anywhere he finds an anomaly, he sticks a small red flag in the ground. He has a six-step process for verifying if a grey blip on his screen is a "high-probability burial," as he calls it, or just an errant pipe. When he finds a bunch of blips evenly spaced, side by side, he can be pretty sure those are burials.

After serving in the navy during the Vietnam war and working at various jobs after leaving the military, Perry was asked by a friend who managed a cemetery to help map it. Perry agreed and found that he enjoyed the work. He knew he had found his calling on his first real assignment outside of Boston. It was the opening game of the Red Sox baseball season and, in a patriotic display, jets flew over the city. "Here I am working in a cemetery, it's nice and quiet," Perry remembered. Suddenly, the jets flew by right as Perry was charting a section of veterans graves. "It kind of overwhelmed me completely," he said. "It brought a tear to my eye thinking about it, and it's when I felt I finally found the business I should be in."

Ground-penetrating radar was first put to use in the Vietnam war. Perry remembers seeing it even though he didn't realize what it was at the time. Perry worked on river patrol boats, sometimes carrying elite forces up and down the waterways. One day, after dropping a crew off, he stopped at an outpost to get something to eat. "I happened to see these guys on the ground pulling this piece of equipment around, and it never dawned on me what it was." Years later, he realized that they were searching for enemy cells using the same technology he now uses.

Perry comes to Congressional from his home in New Hampshire for a week every month. He can cover an acre (0.4 hectares) in roughly two days, but his pace slows in the swampy summer heat. Of the 16 sections he has surveyed so far, he says he's averaging between 200 and 250 unmarked graves. He's also found pipes that the cemetery didn't know were there. Working in Washington presents some unique challenges. Everything from sirens to radio signals can upset readings. From November to April, Perry takes a break from projects in colder areas, preferring the warmer climates of the Virgin Islands or Hawaii. But he'll be back in the spring to finish the job at Congressional. When he's done, his work will be digitized so users can search the cemetery with a smartphone app. He suspects that most of the unmarked graves he has found will be accounted for in the cemetery's records. But some could be completely new discoveries.

This article appeared in the [Guardian Weekly](#), which incorporates material from the [Washington Post](#).

(contributed by Barb Lancaster)

"We all grow up with the weight of history on us. Our ancestors dwell in the attics of our brains as they do in the spiraling chains of knowledge hidden in every cell of our bodies."
 – Shirley Abbott

MCGS MEMBERSHIP FORM

2012 – 2013

(Membership from September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2013)

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Please check one: _____ Renewal _____ New Member

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