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WHAT'S INSIDE?

From the Editor	1
Agnes Vera Fennessy	2
Combining Genealogy and History	12
Just What <i>is</i> a Violet Crown?	15
Griff	
Chapter IX: Exams	18
WPA Federal Writers' Project Case Study	24
Pioneer Families of Travis County, Texas	27
Index	28

On the Cover:

Dartmouth Avenue in Crestview in 2003

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The Austin Genealogical Society Quarterly is published once each quarter of the year in March, June, September, and December by the Austin Genealogical Society. Deadlines for submissions are the 3rd Saturday of the second month of the quarter. The AGS Editor reserves the right to edit all contributed materials for style, grammar, and length. Contributors are solely responsible for the accuracy and proper citation of consulted sources. In addition, contributors are responsible for adhering to all applicable copyright law in their works. AGS assumes no responsibility for the content of submitted material.

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The Genetic Genealogist

Blaine Bettinger, Ph.D., J.D.

brings DNA to your genealogy toolbox

May 11 - 12, 2018

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Blaine and the *Austin Genealogical Society* are presenting two Friday (May 11) afternoon workshops and a full Saturday (May 12) seminar at the Commons Learning Center in north Austin.

The workshops: Advanced third-party tools
 Visual phasing

The seminar: Using autosomal DNA to solve mysteries
 Using third-party tools to analyze autosomal DNA
 The danger of distant matches
 Begging for spit

You **must** reserve your space online at www.austintxgensoc.org, where you will also find more complete information.

FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings AGS Members,

As the sun shimmers across Lady Bird Lake and the days grow longer, I am once again reminded that our great city of Austin, Texas, is an enchanting place. From the sweet scent of wisteria in the air to the white blooms of the dogwood tree, one thing is for sure – Spring is in the air! Even the University of Texas at Austin Tower’s (UT Tower) resident peregrine falcon, “Tower Girl,”¹ has been spotted in courtship with male visitors.

As far back as I can remember, Austin has been described as a beautiful city and many groups have been established to protect its natural surroundings. In 1985, the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce established the *Keep Austin Beautiful* organization to “preserve Austin’s quality of life” so that it would continue to “be the cleanest, most beautiful community.”² We have the *Save Our Springs Alliance* (established in 1992) that “works to protect the Edwards Aquifer, its springs and contributing streams, and the natural and cultural heritage of the Hill Country region and its watersheds, with special emphasis on Barton Springs.”³

One of the earliest descriptions of Austin’s unique beauty is from the early 1890s when Austin became immortalized as the “City of the Violet Crown.”⁴ The phrase “violet crown” is said to describe the lavender hue cast upon the horizon above the rolling hills of west Austin at sunset. This atmospheric phenomenon is better known as the “Belt of Venus”⁵ and is truly breathtaking.

The name *Violet Crown* might be familiar to readers. It is the name of a shopping center located at North Lamar (formerly Dallas) Boulevard, and the name of a locally owned cinema featuring independent film located on 2nd Street in the heart of downtown. You can read more about Austin’s Violet Crown in the article, *Just What is a Violet Crown?* on page 15.

The next time you are out and about, I encourage you to look beyond the concrete and steel and take in the beauty that makes up our great city!

As always, we welcome feedback and suggestions on our quarterly publication. Let us know what you think and happy reading!



Angela Doetsch

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¹ <https://news.utexas.edu/2018/03/02/new-camera-offers-view-of-uts-resident-falcon>

² <https://keepaustinbeautiful.org/about/>

³ <https://www.sosalliance.org/about-s-o-s-alliance.html>

⁴ <http://www.austinlibrary.com/ahc/faq3.htm>

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belt_of_Venus

AGNES VERA FENNESSY

By AGS Member Lise K. Doss

Agnes, my grandmother, was the second child and first daughter born to John James Fennessy and his wife Mary Kinane Fennessy. She was born on 5 August 1898, in Jersey City, New Jersey,¹ just across the river from Manhattan. Her parents were first-generation Irish Americans and had their daughter baptized as Agnes, no middle name, at St. Bridget's Roman Catholic Church, where Mrs. Cullen and Margaret Oertal were her godparents. She already had a brother, Daniel Joseph Fennessy, born 5 February 1897, whose godparents were Ed. F. Nestor and Mary Sweeney.² Agnes got a little sister, Marian (sometimes spelled Marion), on 15 June 1904. Marian's godparents were Daniel Fennessy and Margaret Reddy.³ A brother, James, was born sometime between June 1905 and 1906.⁴ The youngest in the family was Virginia, born on 17 December 1907.⁵

This small photo was dated 1907 and shows Agnes, age nine, and Marian, age three.



Agnes and Marian 1907
Photo courtesy of Lise K. Doss

¹ "New Jersey, Births, 1670-1980," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:FCBG-4PT>; accessed 8 August 2017), Fennessy, 5 August 1898; citing Jersey City, Hudson, New Jersey, United States, Division of Archives and Record Management, New Jersey Department of State, Trenton.; FHL microfilm 494,241.

² Baptism record, St. Bridget's Roman Catholic Church, Jersey City, New Jersey, p. 41 (1897). FHL microfilm 1,403,267.

³ Baptism record, St. Bridget's Roman Catholic Church, Jersey City, New Jersey, p. 7 (1904), no. 157, FHL microfilm 1,403,267.

⁴ "United States Census, 1910," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MKYJ-G8B>; accessed 18 October 2017), James Fennessy in household of John Fennessy, Jersey City Ward 5, Hudson, New Jersey, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 121, sheet 13A, family 202, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1982), roll 890; FHL microfilm 1,374,903.

⁵ "United States Social Security Death Index," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:VMP2-CZL>; accessed 20 May 2014), Virginia Fennessy, November 1985; citing U.S. Social Security Administration, Death Master File, database (Alexandria, Virginia: National Technical Information Service, ongoing).

Agnes went to the parochial school at St. Bridget's and graduated from the eighth grade in June 1912.⁶

We have Agnes' confirmation photo dated 1911. Confirmation is the Catholic ceremony when a baptized child joins the church with adult responsibilities.

We also have a photo of Agnes' brother, Daniel Fennessy, that is dated 1910. It is possible this is also his confirmation photo since he is holding a rosary.

It was sometime between 1912 and 1915 that Agnes' little brother James died.



St. Bridget's on Montgomery St.

Photo by Gina Vergel

Used with permission

https://ginavergel.com/files.wordpress.com/2014/06/20140531_195453.jpg

⁶ "St. Bridget's R.C. School Commencement," *Jersey Journal* (Jersey City, New Jersey), p. 9, col. 45; digital images, *GenealogyBank* (<http://www.genealogybank.com>: accessed 13 August 2017).

He was not listed with the family in the 1915 state census that showed them renting at 252 Mercer Street in Jersey City, New Jersey.⁷

In 1915, Agnes was 16 years old and was working as a clerk.

Sometime between 1915 and 1918, the family moved from the 252 Mercer Street apartment (where they had been since at least 1902)⁸ to another two-family dwelling in the same city that can still be seen today at 20 Delaware Avenue.⁹



Agnes Fennessy
Confirmation photo 1911
Photo courtesy of Lise K. Doss



Daniel Fennessy
Confirmation photo 1910
Photo courtesy of Lise K. Doss

⁷ "New Jersey State Census, 1915," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QV9Q-G9NH>; accessed 18 October 2017), Agnes Fennessy in household of John Fennessy, Jersey City, 5 ward, 6 district, Hudson, New Jersey, United States; citing sheet #21A, household 390, line #8, New Jersey State Library, Trenton; FHL microfilm 1,465,533. All the children were enumerated but James. Agnes told her grandchildren she had a brother that died in childhood.

⁸ "U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>; accessed 29 August 2017), entries for John Fennessy at 252 Mercer Street in Jersey City, New Jersey, in 1902, 1904, 1906, 1908-1909, 1915.

⁹ "U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>; accessed 29 August 2017), search for 20 Delaware Avenue in Jersey City, New Jersey, in 1918 shows the Fennessy family and the Martin family.

Agnes met her future husband, Leo Kirner, by 1917. There is a photo of them on the Coney Island Express dated 19 August 1917. Perhaps she met Leo in Manhattan. In 1917, she lived with nine other women in Blanche Haskell's boarding house at 434 W. 20th in the Chelsea neighborhood in New York City, New York. Agnes' brother Daniel joined the Army by Labor Day 1917. We have a photo of the two of them, with Daniel in uniform. The United States had entered World War I in April of that year.

Just a few weeks before Christmas, on 14 December 1917, Agnes' grandfather, Daniel Fennessy, died in Brooklyn.¹⁰ She probably attended the funeral with her Brooklyn cousins.

In March 1917, the local paper, *The Jersey Journal*, started running articles about "la grippe" or Spanish influenza, but through August they were all datelined in Europe. By September, the epidemic had appeared in Jersey City, New Jersey. It attacked the young more than the old, so schools and other public places were closed.¹¹ On 21 October 1918, Agnes' sister, Marian died of the epidemic at age fourteen.¹²

It must have been heartbreaking to lose three family members (two of them children) in just a few years.



Leo Kirner and Agnes on Coney Island Express
1917

Photo courtesy of Lise K. Doss

¹⁰ "New York, New York City Municipal Deaths, 1795-1949," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:2WN2-HNR>: accessed 21 August 2017), Daniel Fennessy, 14 December 1917; citing Death, Brooklyn, Kings, New York, United States, New York Municipal Archives, New York; FHL microfilm 1,324,316.

¹¹ "State Health Head Warns of Influenza Here", *Jersey Journal* (Jersey City, New Jersey), 21 October 1918, p. 1, col. 1; digital images, *GenealogyBank* (<https://www.genealogybank.com>: accessed 27 August 2017).

¹² Department of Health of the State of New Jersey, death certificate, 13026 (1918), Marion Fennessy; Bureau of Vital Statistics, Trenton, New Jersey.



**Agnes and brother Daniel
1917**

Photo courtesy of Lise K. Doss

Agnes was fortunate to have her grandmother, Bridget O'Rourke Kinane, living in Jersey City, New Jersey, during her lifetime.

We have a picture of her dressed up in a military uniform next to her grandmother. She's apparently mimicking some long-forgotten personality. The photograph was dated June 1919.

Agnes' beau Leo joined the Navy on 9 April 1918.¹³ Instead of going off to war in Europe, he was stationed just an hour away at the Naval Training Camp at Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx from 20 May 1918, to 13 March 1919.¹⁴

His family lived at 44 Woodlawn Avenue in Jersey City, New Jersey.¹⁵

He was going by the name Lee Francis now and probably got a three or four-day pass for Thanksgiving,¹⁶ the day when he and Agnes got married, 27 November 1919.¹⁷

¹³ "U.S., Headstone Applications for Military Veterans, 1925-1963," database with images, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 21 August 2017), image 291 of 4069, entry for Lee J. Kirner

¹⁴ War Service Certificate no. 287891, United States Navy, Lee Francis Kirner[sic], collection of the author.

¹⁵ "1910 United States Federal Census," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 18 October 2017), entry for Leo J. Kirner in household of Joseph J. Kirner, Jersey City, Ward 7, Hudson County, New Jersey, ED 0145, p. 5B, dwelling 74, family 122.

¹⁶ "Holidays and Observances," 1919, *Timeanddate.com* (<https://www.timeanddate.com/calendar>: accessed 29 August 2017).

¹⁷ Marriage Certificates, Indexes and Registers, 1878 – 1948; Control # SHEVS003, reel 368; "Marriage Certificates, 1919, HI-KL (groom);" New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, New Jersey, Lee F. Kirner-Agnes Fennessy.

Agnes lived with her family in 1920 at 20 Delaware Avenue, since her husband was in the military, and she worked as a clerk in a warehouse.¹⁸

On 23 February 1921, Agnes and Lee welcomed their first child, Mary Kirner.

Mary was baptized at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Lee's parish on 6 March 1921.¹⁹ As she grew older they started calling her Mary Lee. In those days, women did not work outside the home after they married, and certainly not after they had children, unless their husbands were incapable of supporting the family. In 1922, the family lived at 36 Roosevelt Avenue in Jersey City, New Jersey, and Lee had a cotton brokerage business.²⁰

They moved again in a couple of years to 15 Lexington Avenue in the same city.²¹



Agnes and grandmother Bridget O'Rourke Kinane June 1919

Photo courtesy of Lise K. Doss

¹⁸ "United States Census, 1920," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M4RT-Z57> : accessed 11 September 2017), Agnes Fennessy in household of John Fennessy, Jersey City Ward 8, Hudson, New Jersey, United States; citing ED 204, sheet 3A, line 31, family 54, NARA microfilm publication T625 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1992), roll 1046; FHL microfilm 1,821,046.

¹⁹ "New Jersey, Births and Christening Index, 1660-1931," database, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 11 September 2017), entry for Mary Kirner, birth, 23 February 1921, christening 6 March 1921. Note: father named as Leo Kirner, child as Mary Kirner. Mary went by Mary Lee when I knew her.

²⁰ *R. L. Polk & Co.'s Jersey City Hoboken and Bayonne Directories 1922-1923*, (New York City: R.L. Polk & Co., 1922), 665; digital images, "U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995," New Jersey > Jersey City > 1922, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 18 September 2017), image 345 of 1055.

²¹ *Polk's Jersey City and Hoboken Directory 1925-1926*, (New York City: R.L. Polk & Co., 1925), 594; digital images, "U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995," New Jersey > Jersey City > 1925, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 30 September 2017), image 300 of 758.

Agnes lost her 76-year-old grandmother, Mary Mullaney Fennessy, to a stroke on 15 November 1924, which probably led to a subdued holiday season for the family.²²

Sometime in the late 1920s, they bought a house at 55 Center Avenue in the small suburban town of Chatham, New Jersey. They had a widowed boarder, Sarah Van Ness, living with them to help with the cost.²³

Agnes had trouble conceiving another child, and it was eight years before she was pregnant again. She lost a son, Leo Jr., in August 1929.²⁴ That was also the year her grandmother Bridget died.

Agnes lost her mother to stomach cancer on 9 November 1930;²⁵ she was only sixty-four. Despite the Depression, the 1930s were better

for her. On 15 March 1931, Agnes had a third child, James “Jim” Joseph Kirner.²⁶

On 16 May 1933, she won election to the Democratic party’s county committee, upsetting the incumbent by sixteen votes.²⁷

In the spring of 1935, she and her husband registered to take the postmaster examination for the vacancy at the Chatham post office.²⁸ Her daughter Mary was a teenager now and Agnes was an adviser to the Blue Triangle Club, a group for Chatham High School girls.²⁹

At the same time, she was an adviser to the Girl Reserve Club of Morris County.³⁰ Both groups were part of the YWCA. There were 50 girls in the Chatham Girl Reserves, about half of whom

²² City of New York, Borough of Queens, death certificate no. 4838 (1924), Mary Fennessy, Municipal Archives, New York City, New York.

²³ 1930 United States census, Morris County, New Jersey, population schedule, Chatham, Enumeration District 10, sheet 1B, dwelling 19, family 27, Kerner, Agnes B.; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:X4FQ-7XL>; accessed 30 September 2017), citing NARA microfilm T626, roll 1373.

²⁴ Archdiocese of Newark, *Catholic Cemeteries: A Ministry of the Archdiocese of Newark*, database, (<http://www.rcancem.org/find-a-loved-one-search/>; accessed 30 September 2017), search for Kirner in Holy Name Cemetery, entry for Leo Kirner Jr.

²⁵ (New Jersey) State Department of Health, death certificate no. 7934 (1930), Mary Fennessy, New Jersey State Bureau of Vital Statistics, Trenton. For her age, which was 61 on the death certificate, see her infant baptism at “New Jersey, Births and Christenings Index, 1660-1931,” database, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>; accessed 12 October 2017), 16 June 1866 (birth), 24 June 1866 (baptism), entry for Mary Canaan.

²⁶ State Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, birth certificate 78, Union County (1931), James Joseph Kirner; New Jersey State Bureau of Vital Statistics.

²⁷ “Primary Vote Cast in Chatham Last Night was Light,” *The Chatham Press* (Chatham, New Jersey), 20 May 1933, p. 1, col. 1; digital images, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>; accessed 11 October 2017).

²⁸ “Eight Candidates Registered for Postal Tests,” *The Chatham Press* (Chatham, New Jersey), 3 May 1935, p. 6, col. 4; digital images, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>; accessed 11 October 2017).

²⁹ “Legion Auxiliary Notes,” *The Chatham Press* (Chatham, New Jersey), 22 November 1935, p. 5, col. 3; digital images, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>; accessed 11 October 2017).

³⁰ “Along the Way,” *The Chatham Press* (Chatham, New Jersey), 22 November 1935, p. 3, col. 3; digital images, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>; accessed 11 October 2017).

were supervised by Agnes, and 200 girls in 15 clubs in Morris County.³¹

In September 1940, Agnes was notified that she was to serve jury duty in Chatham from November 25 to the end of the term; she was the only woman on the six-person jury.³² It must have been an extra busy holiday season for her that year. Agnes became a mother-in-law when her daughter Mary Lee married George Louis Miller in New Orleans, Louisiana, on 25 January 1943.³³ They probably married so far away due to World War II, which changed everyone's lives in new and unexpected ways. George was in the Navy and after the wedding, Mary Lee returned to Chatham and George returned to the South Pacific.³⁴

Agnes surely went to the funeral for her father, who still lived in Jersey City, New Jersey, with her brother Daniel, when he died of a stroke on

3 May 1944, at age 68.³⁵ She was a member of a women's group called the Rosary Society of St. Patrick's Church at that time.³⁶

She was still active in local politics, being one of the volunteers conducting the November election in Chatham's First District.³⁷ Perhaps she was a little too busy; the local paper reported her emergency appendectomy on 11 September 1946.³⁸

Meanwhile, her son James graduated from Chatham High School and then nearby Rutgers University. He enlisted in the United States Air Force, so when he married on 2 May 1953,³⁹ Agnes and Lee drove down to the Air Force base at Bainbridge, Georgia, for the wedding.⁴⁰ In those days, it was much more common to drive a long distance than to fly. Her son and new daughter-in-law were transferred to northern California, so she lived far away from the

³¹ "Along the Way," *The Chatham Press* (Chatham, New Jersey), 6 March 1936, p. 3, col. 1; digital images, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>: accessed 11 October 2017).

³² "Jurors Drawn for October Court Term," *The Chatham Press* (Chatham, New Jersey), 27 September 1940, p. 1, col. 2; digital images, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>: accessed 12 October 2017).

³³ "Louisiana, Parish Marriages, 1837-1957," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QKJZ-4XY7>: accessed 16 October 2017), George L Miller and Mary Lee Kirner, 25 January 1943; citing Orleans, Louisiana, United States, various parish courthouses, Louisiana; FHL microfilm 2,320,610

³⁴ "Along the Way," *The Chatham Press* (Chatham, New Jersey), 5 February 1943, p. 3, col. 1; digital images, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>: accessed 16 October 2017).

³⁵ (New Jersey) State Department of Health, death certificate no. missing (3 May 1944), John Fennessy, place of death Jersey City, Hudson County; New Jersey State Bureau of Vital Statistics, Trenton. Informant was Daniel Fennessy, whose given address was the same as his father's.

³⁶ "Closing Party for St. Patrick's Rosary Society," *The Chatham Press* (Chatham, New Jersey), 8 June 1945, p. 1, col. 2; digital images, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>: accessed 13 October 2017).

³⁷ "Elected Officials in Boro and Township," *The Chatham Press* (Chatham, New Jersey), 20 July 1945, p. 1, col. 4; digital images, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>: accessed 15 October 2017).

³⁸ Mrs. Edmund Clarke, "Along the Way," *The Chatham Press* (Chatham, New Jersey), 13 September 1946, p. 5, col. 3; digital images, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>: accessed 16 October 2017).

³⁹ Decatur County, Georgia, marriage certificate referencing Book M, p. 604 (1953), Kirner-Downs; private collection.

⁴⁰ "Along the Way," *The Chatham Press* (Chatham, New Jersey), 22 May 1953, p. 5, col. 3; digital images, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>: accessed 17 October 2017).

grandchildren that were later born. Nevertheless, they traveled to California to see their first grandchild in May 1955.⁴¹ Her son and his family also traveled back to New Jersey to visit, but sometime between 1953 and 1955 Lee and Agnes had moved from Chatham to Summit, the next town to the east.⁴²

The next big change in Agnes' life occurred on 31 January 1959. Her husband Lee went to the dentist's office and had a massive heart attack in the waiting room and died. Her daughter Mary had moved to Park Ridge at the northern border of New Jersey, and her son Jim was in California.^{43,44} Luckily, her daughter and her sister, Virginia, lived close enough to be of help.

The next year she took a cruise on the Ocean Monarch, stopping at Bermuda, probably her first trip out of the United States.⁴⁵ This might have been a lifelong dream; one of her long-held possessions was a souvenir of a Boston Cruise

in August 1935, on a ship called the Dollar Liner President Garfield.

After that, her life was very different. She lived with her daughter, Mary Lee Miller, a school librarian, and her daughter Missy, first in River Vale, then in Park Ridge, by the northern New Jersey/New York border. She used to send us a stuffed rabbit and a giant chocolate Easter egg every year. She visited us once when I was small, and we visited her only once after I was old enough to remember.

Agnes' brother, Dan, died in Point Pleasant, New Jersey, on 13 April 1968.⁴⁶ He had married late in life and did not have any children of his own.⁴⁷ Agnes' sister, Virginia, never married and also did not have any children. She had worked as a technician for the Jersey City Medical Center near the place where she had been born.⁴⁸

⁴¹ Mrs. Edmund Clarke, "Along the Way," *The Chatham Press* (Chatham, New Jersey), 6 May 1955, p. 3, col. 4; digital images, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>: accessed 17 October 2017).

⁴² Mrs. Edmund Clarke, "Along the Way," *The Chatham Press* (Chatham, New Jersey), 6 May 1955, p. 3, col. 4; digital images, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>: accessed 17 October 2017).

⁴³ "Lee Kirner," obituary, *New York Times*, 2 February 1959, p. 25. Col. 2; digital images, Times Machine (<https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1959/02/02/issue.html?action=click&contentCollection=Archives&module=ArticleEndCTA®ion=ArchiveBody&pgtype=article>: accessed 20 October 2017).

⁴⁴ "Lee Kirner," obituary, *The Chatham Press* (Chatham, New Jersey), 6 February 1959, p. 1, col. 4; digital images, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com>: accessed 20 October 2017).

⁴⁵ "New York State, Passenger and Crew Lists, 1917-1966," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 24 October 2017), entry for Agnes V. Kirner, 26 August 1960, Ocean Monarch, image 92 of 1161.

⁴⁶ "Daniel Fennessy", obituary, *Red Bank Register* (Red Bank, New Jersey), 15 April 1968, p. 4, col. 6, digital images, *Red Bank Register Newspaper Archives*, (<http://209.212.22.88/data/rbr/1960-1969/1968/1968.04.15.pdf>: accessed 5 November 2017).

⁴⁷ Per emails from Dan's stepson's wife dated 5, 7, 13 January 2004.

⁴⁸ "Virginia A. Fennessy," obituary, *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), 18 November 1985, transcription, *GenealogyBank* (<http://www.genealogybank.com>: accessed 6 November 2017).

I lost contact with my grandmother in the early 1970s. I had moved out of the country during the time when she moved, and in those days, it was not easy to find a person's new address. When my letter to her was returned by the post office, I assumed that she had passed away.

In reality, she lived on until 3 August 1991, the last surviving member of her immediate family.⁴⁹ That lost opportunity was my first research find, a shocking one that was the start of a twenty-year genealogy adventure.



20 Delaware Avenue, Jersey City, New Jersey

Image from Google Maps

(<https://www.google.com/maps>: accessed 29 August 2017), Street View August 2013.

⁴⁹ "Agnes Vera Kirner," obituary, *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), 5 August 1991, transcription, *GenealogyBank* (<http://www.genealogybank.com>: accessed 6 November 2017).

COMBINING GENEALOGY AND HISTORY

By AGS Member James E. Bridges

“Who do you think you are?” is a familiar question we often hear on TV and in ads for a well-known genealogy company. But who do we think they were? They were our ancestors and the further back in time we travel the less most of us know. If you are lucky and had a famous ancestor, then good for you – assuming their biographers were not overly prejudiced one way or the other. If there was prejudice, then you have another problem. And that problem is sorting out the truth.

Most of us have names and dates and locales and nothing more. Some have pictures that can tell a story. Others just have a few scribbled notes in a bible. And some have brick walls. There are a fortunate few who can sort through the history around an ancestor from long ago and come up with situations, opportunities, challenges, etc. I am one of those fortunate few.

My 7th great-grandfather was born in Dursley, Gloucestershire, England in 1628. We know a little bit about him because he immigrated to the colony of Virginia and became a colonel and brigadier general of the militia. However, that only gives us a few titles (colonel, general, admiral and planter), locations (Maryland and Isle of Wight, Virginia) and meetings (the House of Burgesses).

Reading the history of England during his lifetime tells an exciting story filled with revolution, royal beheadings, rebellion, and royal restoration. There are tales of sieges and battles, emergency monies, old weapons, cavalry, religious strife, spies, and conflicts with Native American tribes. Literature, modes of dress, military uniforms, class divisions, and new products such as tobacco also played a role in this history. There was international conflict over territory, trade and precious metals. Finally, there was also family conflict. All of these things tell us more about the man and the times that shaped him.

Joseph Bridger was born into a religious family in southwest England. His grandfather, Lawrence Bridger, was Rector for many years at the Church of St. John the Evangelist in Slimbridge. His father, Samuel Bridger, was the auditor of the college at Gloucester Cathedral.

Both were graduates of Magdalen College at Oxford. They owned land and very nice homes which still exist. We do not have educational records for Joseph, but we can speculate that he must have had some formal education at Gloucester College where his father was an official. He certainly used skills later in life that could only have come from an educated person.

In his 14th year, the English Civil War began and he was soon drawn into battle and later records indicate he served King Charles I in the Royal Cavalry. The King moved from London to Oxford and that was where Oliver Cromwell and his Parliamentary forces laid siege. It was during this time that we believe Joseph became a captain of the cavalry for the King. We have no records to prove that, but we do have him embarking for the Virginia Colony as Captain Joseph Bridger.

His skills employed in the Virginia militia were in the capacity of a cavalry officer. Once King Charles I lost his battles and was beheaded, many of his commanders were also imprisoned or executed. Joseph Bridger took a ship to the new world and survived to serve another king.

Captain Joseph was married to Hester Pitt prior to leaving England and she accompanied him to Virginia. Her family was wealthier than the Bridgers.

The family story is that he arrived in the New World with a pocket full of gold and the blessings of the Governor of the Virginia Colony, William Berkeley. The Bridger family had been associated with the Berkeley family for several generations in England. His first experience in the New World was in Maryland but that went a bit sour with the change in domination by one religious sect rather than the official tolerance first used.

By 1676, he was a Brigadier and in charge of the Virginia militia in putting down the Bacon Rebellion for the King. Historians today call the Bacon Rebellion the early beginnings of the American Revolution. Many of the rebellious colonists were bivouacked at Bacon's Castle (the Allan Plantation) just a few miles from the Bridger Plantation at Whitemarsh in Isle of Wight County – previously called by the name of the native tribe whose village was in that area. Worrosquayake was just too much for Englishmen to say so Bridger had the name changed to the Isle of Wight.

Bridger's accomplishments are recorded in the early histories of the county and the colony. Many of these documents survive today thanks to the efforts of Virginians who hid records from British Armies, Union Armies and the ravages of time.

At one time, the records were taken from the county courthouse and buried in the graveyard at St. Luke's Church, the oldest Protestant

church in North America and the one where Joseph donated the funds to start construction. Even though Union troops stayed in the old church they did not find any of the records buried nearby. There are hundreds of pages to be added to this history, but I hope it serves as a small example of what one can learn when digging deeper than so and so begat so and so in the year of...

JUST WHAT IS A VIOLET CROWN?

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From “Just What is a Violet Crown?”, *Voices of the Violet Crown*, violetcrownvoices.com.
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The color of the hills and sky to the west at sunset has long been described as Austin’s “violet crown.” As it turns out, the phrase “violet crown” has historic ties to the Brentwood and Crestview neighborhoods of Central Austin, too. Its origins go back centuries earlier to Athens, Greece. (More about that below.)



Dartmouth Avenue in Crestview in 1956, looking west

In the late 1940s, Dr. Joseph Samuel Koenig and Charles McCullough, developers of Violet Crown Heights, from Payne to Ruth in Brentwood, promoted the subdivision as having “a beautiful view of the Violet Crown Hills.” The area had been farms and prairie, and new residents were only beginning to plant trees on the open land. (The photo, [left,] was taken on Dartmouth Avenue in Crestview, looking west, on the first day of school in 1956. In January 2015, Scott

Hopkins called to say the photo is of him and Janet Herron and that his parents built the house at 1516 Dartmouth. Janet grew up next door, at 1701 Dartmouth.)

By 1952, the nearby Violet Crown Shopping Center had been built at Brentwood and Lamar, and it included three businesses—a barber shop, beauty salon, and drug store—with “violet crown” as part of their names. The barber shop later was called Cockrell's Barber Shop, owned by Tom Cockrell. His shop closed December 22, 2017, after being in the center for almost 55 years. Since 2003, Brentwood and Crestview have become the home of the Violet Crown Festival, Violet Crown Community Works, Violet Crown Community Theater, and our Voices of the Violet Crown project. More recently, a number of other Austin-area “violet crown” businesses, organizations, and even a nature trail have been established.

William Cowper Brann (1855-1898), [right,] possibly was the first writer to use the phrase “violet crown” to describe Austin. Brann was an Illinois native and longtime Texas journalist. He first published his paper, *The Iconoclast*, in Austin in 1891, when William Sydney Porter (1862-1910) still worked as a drug clerk, admired Brann’s work, and only dreamed of becoming a famous writer. Later Porter would be known as O. Henry. Brann's article “The Garden of the Gods” appeared in Volume I of *The Iconoclast* and included this description:

... Austin’s violet crown bathed in the radiance of the morning or arched with twilight’s dome of fretted gold.



Self-Portrait of W.C. Brann

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Cowper_Brann#/media/File:WCBrann.jpg

According to the Austin History Center, the phrase also appears in an article published in the *Austin Daily Statesman* on Wednesday, August 8, 1894.

May 5, 1890, was a memorable day in Austin . . . on that day the citizens of the City of the Violet Crown voted to build a granite dam across the Colorado River.

Later in 1894, O. Henry also used it in the second chapter of his short story “Tictocq: The Great French Detective.”

The drawing-rooms of one of the most magnificent residences in Austin are a blaze of lights . . . The occasion is the entree into society of one of the fairest buds in the City of the Violet Crown . . . Austin society is acknowledged to be the wittiest, the most select and the highest bred to be found southwest of Kansas City.

Both Brann and O. Henry likely were inspired by other, much earlier, authors. The Greek poet Theognis, born 550 B.C., described the purple hue of the evening sky over Hymettus, a mountain near Athens, Greece, as a violet crown. Some have suggested that it was a reference to Ion, a king who was crowned in Athens; the word “ion” in Greek means violet. Over the years, other writers—from Aristophanes (400 B.C.) to Plutarch (100 A.D.) to Disraeli (1844) to Oscar Wilde (1878)—described Athens as the City of the Violet Crown.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Austin would share the designation. More than 100 years later the popularity of “violet crown” continues.

And, people living here continue to see the violet crown at sunset, including one Brentwood neighbor who wrote this in December 2011:

I have lived in Austin most of 50 years and have always heard about the “Violet Crown.” Just as the sun went down yesterday, I was standing outside, and the sky went purple. I live on Koenig near Woodrow. I probably looked like an idiot staring up at the sky, but it was worth it. You could have knocked me over with one finger. I always thought it was a legend, or folklore, or whatever. It was incredibly beautiful, real, and I saw it. I would say lavender is the closest color to what I saw. I was so bowled over I forgot to take a picture. I ran inside for a camera a few minutes later, but it was gone. It was only visible for 2 or 3 minutes. Amazing.

Read more about the curious connection between “violet crown” and another Brentwood/Crestview icon—Domino the Pig—at [<http://www.violetcrownvoices.com/2011/hancock-creek-arroyo-seco-part-5>]

GRIFF

Chapter IX: Exams

By AGS Member Glenda Lassiter

Griff (Gordon Oscar Griffitts) was born in 1908 in Jermyn, Texas (founded 1902) in Jack County. When he was six and after his father's death in 1914, Griff's mother raised her four children with the help of her mother's Civil War Widow's Pension and by working in a dry goods store and farming. After graduating from Jermyn High School at age 15, Griff was given the unexpected opportunity to attend North Texas Normal College in Denton, Texas (now The University of North Texas), for two years. However, his expectation of finishing the two-year program to get his teaching certificate was smashed when he suffered an attack of appendicitis and, after emergency surgery, had to go home to convalesce.

In 1991, when Griff was 82 years old (the year before he died,) he recorded the story of his life on audio tapes. He left the tapes to his daughter, Glenda Lassiter, who promised to write his memoir from them.

Chapters 1-8 were previously printed in issues of the Austin Genealogical Society Quarterly beginning in December 2015.

Griff's story continues here.

The pecan tree outside of the window by Griff's bed was just coming into leaf in April when he returned to Jermyn after his appendectomy in Denton where he attended North Texas State Teachers College. He stared dismally at the tree's new life which seemed to taunt the loss of his own broken dreams. As the long days of his confinement passed, the flowers on the tree began to fade as the pecan fruit started developing.

Griff's father, Oscar Griffitts, had planted the tree from a pecan nut when they first moved to Jermyn in 1912. Griff had been four years old. Almost single-handedly, Oscar had built a house comprised of three enormous rooms and a kitchen with a wood stove and an oil stove. In 1912, Jermyn was a new town being built around the recently constructed railroad named The Gulf, Texas, and Western Railroad. The town was named after the owner of the railroad, Joseph Jermyn of Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Oscar had wanted to move to Jermyn from the community of Willow Point 30 miles to the east to start his own farm. The land had been donated for the new town by area ranchers, Oliver Loving and W. P. Stewart. The aroma of newly-cut lumber filled the air. Almost every building was still being constructed. Oscar leased 30 acres of land to farm, and nearby he found a two-acre strip of land that he considered ideal for their new home. One reason he wanted to build their house right there was that it was next to the brand-new Baptist church. The other reason was the new ten-grade school being built a block away where he planned to send his four children. To Oscar, his two hopes in this world lay in education and in the Baptist church.

Now, as Griff contemplated the large pecan tree with its leaves flickering in the sunlight, he recalled how he had received the news that he would be unable to finish his courses to get his Texas Teaching Certificate. The only way he could earn his certificate now was by going back to Denton and taking and passing all of his exams. Since 1921, teacher certification in Texas had been dependent solely on a student's college coursework. When Griff had to drop out, he was taking his last semester of English, science, algebra, American history, and pedagogy.

The morning after surgery, Griff had been filled with astonishment when he woke to see his

mother, who had never even been to Denton, standing by his bed. Orville Jones, Cora's boss at the dry goods store, had driven her to Denton as soon as the news about Griff's emergency appendectomy had reached Jermyn. "Pills," the attendant at the campus infirmary, had called the dry goods store because there was no telephone at the Griffitts' house.

The doctor who had performed the surgery returned to the infirmary the next morning. He greeted Griff with a broad smile while giving tiny Cora's shoulders such a big squeeze that he almost pulled her off her feet.

"I'm so glad you were able to get here," he said to Cora.

Looking at Griff, he continued, almost apologetically, "I had to give you the maximum dose of anesthetic for your age and weight to be sure you stayed asleep. That's why we couldn't wake you after surgery. But, since your vital signs were all okay last night, I knew you'd be all right."

He had taken one of each of their hands into his.

"Now you both need to listen to what I'm going to say next. Griff, you'll need to stay here in the infirmary for a week so I can keep an eye on you. Then you'll be able to travel home, but, when you get home, you'll need to rest for six weeks. No lifting or strenuous activity. Your surgery must have time to heal."

Griff interrupted him, "What about school?"

"I'll talk to the Dean of Men, and he can arrange for you to take your exams after classes are adjourned for the semester. Then you can get credit for your courses."

Griff had a sinking feeling. He couldn't imagine passing his exams after missing the last six weeks of school and not even having his books and notes.

Friends dropped by the infirmary all week to poke fun at him for being willing to do anything to get out of school work. Of course, they all knew better. Dutch had come by daily. He had to tell Griff that the books and notes he had dropped on the porch had vanished. All the boys speculated that some Good Samaritan had taken them to the Registrar's office, but Dutch was unable to track them down when he checked there.

The first day after the surgery, Pills had stuck his head in the door with a mischievous grin on his face. He said in a teasing, sing-song voice,

"Oh Gri-iff. There's someone here to seeeee you." Suddenly Desda was standing in the doorway, looking as lovely as he'd ever seen her.

"Hi," she smiled. "Are you going to be all right?"

"Sure," Griff answered. "I have to go home for a few weeks to rest from the surgery, but I'll come back when school's out and take my exams. Then I can go ahead and look for a job." He spoke with such false bravado that he almost believed it himself.

Desda said, "I'm going to go back to Cisco after graduation to apply for a job teaching in an elementary school there. Papa says there will be no problem getting a job." Her "Papa," had been a farmer, but after moving the family into town, had gotten into local politics, and now, as Justice of the Peace, knew just about everybody in Cisco, indeed everybody in Eastland County.

They promised to write while he was in Jermyn. He wished he could ask her to wait for him, but what could he promise her? He just knew he wouldn't be able to pass his exams. In his mind, all he would be was a seventeen-year-old fatherless kid from a poor family, who didn't finish college and was stuck on a failing farm in Jermyn. His sadness was overwhelming.

At the end of Griff's week at the infirmary, Orville Jones had fashioned a pallet of blankets in the back seat of his Model T so he could drive Griff home. The pallet was a small comfort to the ailing young man as Orville drove him over the bumpy dirt road into Jermyn.

As they departed Denton, Griff felt a keen sense of loss for all he was leaving behind. The idea of losing his beloved Desda was heart-wrenching. He was parting from his best friend Dutch and his other friends in Mr. Bishop's rooming house. He even thought of his garden, which was just beginning to show new tiny shoots pushing through the soil. He would miss his happy routine of going to classes and campus activities. He felt such helplessness thinking about the unbelievable loss of his books – books that he could not afford to replace, and which Dutch had been unable to locate. Overriding all of this, was his recollection of the joy he had felt about the promise of starting a new life with a teaching career: a promise shattered.

He knew his mother did not have enough money to keep him in school another term. Everything depended on his being able to pass those exams when he went back. He felt that missing the last six weeks and not even having his textbooks and class notes, doomed him to failure. Even praying about it did not lift this feeling. But

discouraged as he was, something inside told him he could not give up on himself.

The six weeks in Jermyn dragged by. His health improved and finally it was time for him to go back and take his exams. Orville Jones was going to drive Griff back to the campus saying he had business in Denton anyway.

A hot Texas sun was beating down on the little Tin Lizzie as it edged its way toward Denton.

Griff had received a letter from the Office of the Dean of Men telling him to report to the administration building on Tuesday, June 1, 1926, at 9 AM to take his exams. Griff climbed the steps of the building and approached the office with his heart in his throat. The secretary directed Griff into the dean's private office. The dean stood up from his desk and welcomed Griff, shaking his hand.

After introducing himself, the dean said, "I'm so glad that you are feeling better and could come today."

Griff felt gratified by the greeting, but his own words came tumbling out, unbidden, "Sir, I really appreciate your taking the time to give me my exams, but I have to tell you, I don't believe I can pass them because I have missed so much school. "Griff didn't mention the lost books because he felt that the loss had somehow been due to his own carelessness.

The dean responded, "I know how much you had to miss. I've talked to each of your teachers when they brought in copies of your exams. They all gave you a good report about having perfect attendance, doing well on your papers and quizzes, and always participating in class discussions and homework."

"Sir, I want you to know I have really enjoyed North Texas, and I feel I've learned a lot here. I can't come back for an additional semester because my mother can't afford it," Griff said.

"Yes, I understand that. So now just sit down at this conference table and do the best you can on your exams," the dean replied.

The exams were stacked on the conference table, and beside them were the textbooks for every course he'd been taking. Griff stared with surprise into the dean's eyes.

The dean continued, "I have a meeting in another building and will be gone most of the day. So just fill out the exams and leave them here on the table."

The dean smiled kindly and, again shaking Griff's hand, said, "Best of luck, son."

Griff stood for a minute wondering, "Doesn't he know that the textbooks are right here on the table?"

The dean left the office, closing the door. Griff sat looking from the exam papers to the stack of textbooks. He pondered, "He didn't tell me to use the textbooks, but he didn't tell for me not to use them."

The next week the Registrar's office mailed passing notices to Griff from all of his teachers.

A few weeks after that he received an envelope from the State Department of Education, awarding him an official State of Texas Teaching Certificate.

Later, when Dutch asked him how the exams had gone, Griff just said, "I didn't have any trouble passing those exams."

Griff had missed the interviews on campus when administrators came from nearby school districts hoping to hire teachers. So, he got a ride over to Jacksboro, and with that precious teaching certificate in his pocket, he got an appointment to see the principal at the high school and went to interview for a teaching job. He sat waiting in the Secretary's office until the secretary said, "Mr. Griffitts, the principal will see you now."

Mr. Osburne, the principal, invited him to sit down and asked Griff to tell him a little about himself. Griff was once again his energetic, cheerful, talkative self.

After they had chatted for a short while, Mr. Osburne said, "You seem like a very bright young man, and I'd love to have you teach here. But, tell me, how old are you?"

"Well, I'm seventeen, but I'll soon be eighteen."

"Son, we have students in this school who are older than you are. The District does not allow me to hire anyone that young. Come back in a few years. You'd have to be at least 20. But wait in my secretary's office and let me call a friend of mine who is hiring in sales. I think you'd make a good salesman."

While waiting, Griff almost laughed out loud at the strange turn of events. After all the desperation he had felt about the exams and getting that certificate he was so proud of, it didn't make a bit of difference. No one was going to hire a seventeen-year-old to teach.

(To be continued) ...

WPA FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT

Case Study: WPA Interviews Supply Information for Times and Places with Few Records

By AGS Member Lise K. Doss

How can we find ancestors who were poor, lived in rural areas, and moved from state-to-state, sometimes on the frontier before there were newspapers or census takers? Since they often lived in a sparsely settled area, there would be no city directories to turn to.

The 1890 census was for the most part destroyed. That left a twenty-year gap between 1880 and 1900, within which people were born, married, and died, sometimes all three within that time period.

If they also belonged to a religion that did not leave sacramental records or got to the frontier before the clergy, religious records will not be available either.

One helpful resource to help “fill this gap” can be found in interviews of citizens made by unemployed writers in the 1930s as part of the WPA Federal Writers’ Project. There are approximately 2,900 interviews available at:

www.loc.gov/collections/federal-writers-project.¹

Some universities have links on their websites to interviews with citizens in their state. In the case of Oklahoma, interviews with the earliest settlers of the Indian Territory are available under Digital Collections → Western History Collections → Indian Pioneer Collection at the University of Oklahoma Libraries website:

<https://digital.libraries.ou.edu>.²

¹ Library of Congress, Collection, “American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936 to 1940”, (<https://www.loc.gov/collections/federal-writers-project/>: accessed 4 October 2017).

² The University of Oklahoma, Western History Collections, database with images, (<https://digital.libraries.ou.edu/whc/pioneer/>: accessed 4 October 2017).

DAN STEPHENS

Dan Stephens was two years old in 1870 when he lived in Big Hickory, Hall County, Georgia;³ 12 when he lived in War Eagle Township, Madison County, Arkansas in 1880,⁴ and 30 when he lived in Marlow, Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory, at the turn of the century.⁵ But, where was he between 1880 and 1900?

Years later, when he was 68 years old, he met a man who was interviewing early settlers for the WPA Writers' Project. Dan told him that he "was born in Lumkin[sic] County, Georgia in 1869, moved to Indian Territory in 1885 with his parents,⁶ locating on the Big Washita River, just north of Alex, and close to the Lyal Switch on the Rock Island Railroad."⁷

His son, Clarence, was also interviewed a year later, reporting that his father was D. H. Stephens, his mother was Maggie Ross, and he was born on 23 August 1892. Clarence's mother died at age 22. His father helped build the Rock Island Railroad through Chickasha in 1892.⁸

Dan's marriage to Maggie Ross, Clarence's birth, and Maggie's death record are lost to written history since they lived on the frontier. These interviews are our only online clues to what happened in that twenty-year period.

Are there interviews like these of your family members waiting to be found?

³ 1870 United States census, Hall County, Georgia, population schedule, Big Hickory District, New Bridge Post Office, p. 55 (penned), dwelling 460, family 405, Daniel H. Stephens in household headed by Aden W. Stephens; database and digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<https://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 15 October 2017); from National Archives microfilm publication M593, roll 155.

⁴ 1880 United States census, Madison County, Arkansas, population schedule, War Eagle Township, p. 20 (penned), Enumeration District 102, dwelling 140, family 143, Daniel H. Stephens in household headed by Aden W. Stephens; database and digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<https://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 16 October 2017); from National Archives microfilm publication T9.

⁵ 1900 United States census, Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory, Marlow, p. 10A (penned), Enumeration District 164, dwelling 158, family 160, Daniel H. Stephens; database and digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<https://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 16 October 2017); from National Archives microfilm publication T623.

⁶ Actually, Dan's mother died in Madison County, Arkansas, and there is no indication his father remarried, so he would have come to Indian Territory with his father. The interviewer probably assumed there were two parents. *Find A Grave*, database with images (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/50870273>: accessed 10 November 2017), memorial 50,870,273, Mary Ann Malinda Stephens (12 January 1825-21 November 1881), Huntsville Cemetery, Huntsville, Madison County, Arkansas; gravestone photograph by TS Lundberg (Sternburg).

⁷ *University of Oklahoma, University Libraries, Western History Collections: Indian Pioneer Collection*, database with images, (<http://digital.libraries.ou.edu/cdm/ref/collection/indianpp/id/6822>: accessed 16 October 2017), E. A. Cabler, "History of Cemetery" (Interview with Dan Stephens), 12 April 1937, interview no. 1072.

⁸ *University of Oklahoma, University Libraries, Western History Collections: Indian Pioneer Collection*, database with images, (<https://digital.libraries.ou.edu/cdm/ref/collection/indianpp/id/2444>: accessed 17 October 2017), Jasper H. Meade, "Interview with C. A. Stephens), 24 March 1938, interview no. 10286.

A FURTHER LOOK

From the Editor:

I am always excited to learn about new tools to further my own genealogical research. So, naturally, I was eager to delve into what the Federal Writers' Project had to offer. I began by searching the archive for mentions of my own family surnames. As much as I wanted to find a colorful narrative of my own family – I didn't (I still have my fingers crossed), but I did find some great pioneer stories about the places my ancestors lived. I am a firm believer that by reading stories written by those that lived in the same time and the same place, we get a good idea of what our own ancestor's lives must have been like. Plus, there is always a chance that these neighbors knew my people.

My ancestors came to Texas as pioneer settlers in the early 1840s, building their homes along the Pedernales River in Blanco County, Texas (just outside of what is now Fredericksburg). They later migrated to Williamson County, and eventually, Austin, Texas.

One of the stories in the collection that immediately stood out is a folklore narrative, *Mrs. Lucinda Permien Holze*.⁹

Mrs. Holze, a German immigrant, paints a picture of both Fredericksburg and Austin, Texas, from the 1870s:

“I was born in the year 1857 in Mechlenburg Germany. My father, Ludwig Permien, emigrated to America in the year 1871. He settled at the town of Fredericksburg Texas.

“The country was mostly a stock and ranch country, but in between the hills there was timber and so they raised their grain in these valleys.

“After I was grown I went to Austin and helped do housework for the white women.

“I can also remember the old court house in Austin. It was located down near the Colorado river, the course of the river ran thro' the city making a very picturesque picture with its large trees that bordered the banks of the river.

“When the river was on a rise we crossed on the ferry boats and when it was low it was easy to ford it as the bed of the river was rock. Sometimes in the spring it would get on a big rise and overflow the lowlands near the city, the people who lived in these places would have to move to higher ground. It was about the time I left Austin in 1879 that they built the new capitol...”

⁹ Cowan, Effie, and Mrs. Lucinda Permien Holze. *Mrs. Lucinda Permien Holze*. Texas, 1941. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/wpalh002248/>. (Accessed March 05, 2018.)

PIONEER FAMILIES OF TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

The Austin Genealogical Society will issue a pioneer certificate to those who can prove their ancestors lived in Travis County, Texas, prior to the close of 1880. To qualify for the certificate, you must be a direct descendant of people who lived here on or before 31 December 1880, proved with birth, death and marriage certificates; probate, census and military records; and obituaries and Bible records.

Applications for Pioneer Families of Travis County can be found at:

<http://www.austintxgensoc.org/pioneers/> or

from Kay Dunlap Boyd, P.O. Box 10010, Austin, Texas 78766-1010.

Each application is \$20, and the certificates make nice gifts. You don't have to be a Travis County resident or a member of Austin Genealogical Society, although membership in the Society is another fine bargain at \$20 a year.

Austin Genealogical Society
Travis County Texas
Pioneer Families Certificate

This is to Certify that

is a descendant of

who was living in Travis County, Texas

before the close of

Certificate No. _____	President _____
Date _____	Pioneer Families Chairman _____
	Registrar _____

INDEX

A

ALLAN 13

B

BERKELEY 13

BISHOP 21

BRANN 16

BRIDGER..... 13-14

BRIDGES 12

BURNESON..... 15

C

COCKRELL..... 15

CROMWELL..... 13

CULLEN 2

D

DOSS 2, 24

F

FENNESSY..... 2-3, 5, 8

G

GRIFFITTS 18-19, 22

H

HASKELL 5

HERRON 15

HOLZE..... 26

HOPKINS..... 15

J

JERMYN 18

JONES 19, 21

K

KINANE 2, 6

KIRNER 5, 7-8

KOENIG..... 15

L

LASSITER..... 18

LOVING..... 19

M

McCULLOUGH 15

MILLER 9-10

MULLANEY 8

N

NESS 8

NESTOR..... 2

O

O HENRY 16

O' ROURKE..... 6

OERTAL 2

OSBURNE..... 22-23

P

PERMIEN..... 26

PITT..... 13

PORTER..... 16

R

REDDY..... 2

ROSS 25

S

STEPHENS 25

STEWART 19

SWEENEY 2

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