



Bay Area Genealogical Society Newsletter

P. O. Box 891447
Houston, TX 77289-1447

Volume 4, Issue No. 4

December 2004

December Meeting: "Yuletide Memories" Annual Holiday Dinner Party

**Dec 19
5:30 pm
UBC**

Sunday, December 19th, is the BAGS Annual Holiday Dinner Party. The catered affair will begin at 5:30 and we hope it to be our best party ever.

This year, a society member will host each dinner table, in holiday fashion. The volunteer host/hostess will provide decorations and settings for their table, according to their interpretation of the "Yuletide Memories" theme. Each table should be unique, so stroll around and enjoy each and every one.

Ned Yelverton will provide entertainment on the grand piano and introducing Marcus Shoults on acoustic guitar. There will be no December speaker, just the sharing of "Yuletide Memories" from guests and members. We encourage you to bring an old gift, picture, or story from your "Christmas Past". Doug Wilson has a memory of "a special Christmas in the 1940's" that he will speak on, and we hope to hear more "warm fuzzies" from you.



In addition to our event at 5:30, University Baptist Church is hosting a separate but festive gathering at 7:30 on the same evening. It's free to the public and should be filled with choir music and good cheer. It might be something you consider for the rest of your evening.



Tickets are no longer available for purchase to this event, so if you will not be attending, our best wishes go out to every one of you for this season and the upcoming year.

We will see you next year. To those of you who will be attending, wear your holiday garb, and bring your holiday spirit and memories this Sunday, at UBC, 16106 Middlebrook, beginning at 5:30.

Inside BAGS —

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Tables shown are from a Tapestry Dinner event and they are just an example of what might be at the Holiday Party.



Message from the President

Ron Cox

The Christmas season is upon us. It is hoped that everyone is receiving it with joy and happiness. It's time for any of you "Bah Humbuggers" to step back, take a deep breath, and decide that this year, you too will revel with the rest. While we enjoy the pageantry, the music, the shopping, and visits from friends and family, let's not forget what it's all about. We know that it's become fashionable to emphasize the shopping and sometimes forget the spiritual reasons of this holiday and the child whose birth is celebrated.

It's also about the children. We want them all to be safe and happy. It's a magical world at Christmas time with so much to see and do. The lights, the cold weather (maybe), the gatherings, and festivals all add to the anticipation and joy of the season. Many of you, like myself, look back on many fond memories of Christmas and the season. Remember the first time you saw an aluminum Christmas tree or when you and your Dad first decorated the house with

outdoor lights? I remember my Dad always saying that maybe this year we might get lucky and have a white Christmas. As we remember our moments of Christmas, let's try to think about how Christmas might have been for those generations of folks who came before us. They always found ways to celebrate. It may have been stringing popcorn for the tree, or making ornaments from paper or soda water caps. Rag dolls and tin soldiers certainly were an order of the time. Later the Sears catalog became a magical world in itself. It was like a wish book directly from the North Pole.

So whether you prefer a Dickens's kind of Christmas, or one prepared by Tim Allen, it's all out there for us to enjoy. Speaking of Dickens, Tiny Tim said it very well - "God Bless Us Everyone".

Merry Christmas and may we all share in a great and peaceful New Year.

HOUSTON GENEALOGICAL FORUM January 8th, 2005

David L. Mishkin is the president of Just Black and White, established in Portland, Maine in 1983. JB&W is a custom photographic processing lab that specializes in copying and restoring historic and family photographs. It is one of the only labs in the U.S. that can provide enhancements from faded originals.

Mr. Mishkin will be speaking at our regular meeting starting at 10:00am and continuing until 12:00 noon, and the seminar will begin at 1:00pm and conclude at 3:00pm. Everyone is welcome, but space is limited so please pre-register. Non-members seminar price is \$30, but members may pay \$20 at the door. Please mail check to:

HGF January Mini-Seminar P.O. Box 271466 Houston, TX 77277-1466

2004-2005 Officer Roster

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5 Gen. charts - Tammy Frey

I am going to continue last month's theme of things that you can do during the busy holiday season to help your family history. I will use an example to show how you can fill in the details about some ancestor's life. Chances are that you have a family heirloom, so this year make a point of photographing these special items in your, or a relative's home. After you take the photograph, write a small history about the original owner and the item. The rest of this article is an example of what I am writing about. I will write about this picture I took of an old shaving mug. I want to encourage you to write about your family heirlooms. You can use your photographs and what you write to fill in the details of your ancestor's lives.

Here is a plain green rubber mug. There is not much value to this mug. Well, I think differently because of what I can write about that mug. My



grandfather died during the great depression when my uncle was fourteen and my father was only ten years old. The hard times were only made harder by that family's loss of their "bread winner". As part of the adjustment, my

Uncle Vincent (Vincenzo Miserendino 1919-1986) started working at a barbershop. From that start in his early teens, he continued to work most of his adult life as a barber, even when he worked full time as a security officer.

Each summer our family would drive from Florida (where I grew up) to New Jersey to visit the relatives on both my mother's and father's side. On those trips we would go to my uncle's barbershop. We would visit our uncle and get our haircut.

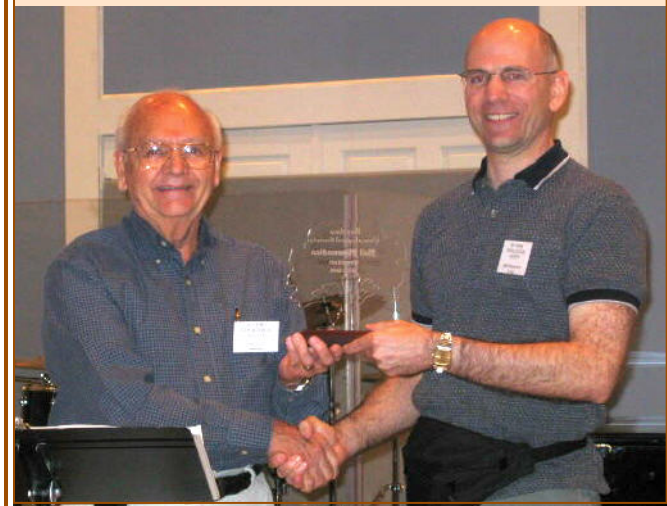
I do not remember the exact year, but it was in my teen years and after I started shaving I noticed some of the shaving mugs that my uncle used at work. My uncle gave me the

shaving mug that you see pictured here, along with a shaving brush, a straight razor and sharpening stone. He would purchase a special round bar of soap that would be placed in the bottom of the shaving mug and create the soap lather with the shaving brush.

During my teen years, I tried three methods of shaving. First, I used the safety razor, then an electric razor and after I received the shaving mug, shaving brush, and straight razor, I tried shaving with that. I did not use the special barber's soap, as my uncle told me that I could make the shaving lather with Ivory soap. Now I shave with a multi-blade disposable razor. My uncle has passed on, and the barbershop has been closed for many years. Among the few items I still have from my uncle is this green rubber shaving mug. What I wrote about my uncle has made this ordinary item worth something to me.

Do you have some family furniture such as a rocking chair or dining table, or maybe the family silver or china? Photograph those items and write a little about how you acquired the family heirlooms. This can be done even while you are busy during the Holidays. The camera will be out, all you have to add is a little writing to those pictures and you have a good beginning. Good Luck and Happy Holidays !!

Below: BAGS President Ron Cox (left) presents Neil Miserendino with a plaque for his service as president for the previous year.



Should Auld Acquaintance...

With one exception, I hadn't seen any of my high school classmates since I graduated from Bogota (New Jersey) High School in 1941. So when my buddy from those days asked me one more time to attend a reunion, I decided to go. Polly and I planned a road trip to do genealogy research en route. The reunion was great fun, even though we were few in number.

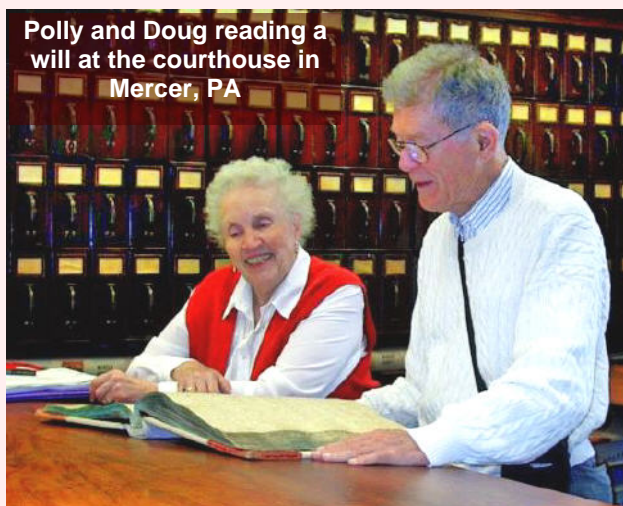
The reunion was held at Woodloch Pines Resort in Hawley, Pennsylvania. It had to be the best place for such a gathering that we have experienced. Food, entertainment, cheerful and helpful staff, no tipping, all this and computers with high-speed Internet access! It didn't hurt that there was a nip in the air and the most gorgeous display of fall foliage in my lifetime. I had printed off the 1930 U.S. Census pages that included as many Bogotanos as I knew would be there. The recipients were very appreciative, although it meant you had to be 74 or older to show up – we all qualified! It was as much of a blast as we octogenarians could stand.

Capital Capers

We both had to-do's for the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Fortunately, we had prepared enough targets for two full days of research. I had two people for which I wanted Civil War military and pension records. The first was Albert H. Stoothoff, the son of my gggfather William Stoothoff, whom I had previously found in William's military service record. It was he who was ordered by a company commander in the 139th New York Volunteers to accompany his father's body to Yorktown, VA, for burial. The second was William P. Smith, my gggfather. I had no assurance that William P. had served, but I was otherwise with few profitable avenues of research.

I had Albert's pension and service numbers from the indexes at Clayton Library. I had a list of William Smiths from New York and New Jersey to work on with about four likeliest candidates to start with.

We arrived early; the research unit opens at 8:45 A.M. After an airport-style security screening, we signed in and registered my digital camera and laptop computer. They prepared a photo I.D. as a temporary researcher. The top priority is to get the "Request for Military Records" form filled out for each person and for each type of record (military service, pension, or bounty land) and into the "pull" box, hopefully by 9:30 A.M. In 1-½ to 2 hours, the records will be delivered to the research area on the second floor. The Archives have many microfilm/microfiche indexes to the records, available on the first floor, in the event you run into a snag or are unprepared. There are also six patron computers with Internet access, including Ancestry Plus and Heritage Quest databases.



Polly and Doug reading a will at the courthouse in Mercer, PA

We left all our notebooks, jackets, pens and pencils in a locker and went upstairs. The staff showed us which records were unavailable, and gave each of us one record envelope of our choice. Our priority had to be to make copies of as many records as possible. There are only four copy machines in the second floor research room. You can read the details later, although it's tempting to read some of the affidavits and questionnaires.

Albert was easy to find but emotionally hard to take. His pension file revealed that all of his three children died in infancy or childhood, and that his wife Emma went insane. He was my only Civil War relative to rise above Private, to Sergeant in the 139th New York Volunteers, the same outfit as his father and his future brother-in-law, John Wesley Steinman.

William P. was harder to find but the second envelope was a jackpot. The pension index card gave "Jenny" as the widow's name, rather than Julia. Turns out my ggmother Julia Costello had died in 1891, and William P. remarried a Jenny Mooney. The amount of genealogically significant data from the records was enormous:

"Seems Like Old Times" is continued on Page 5 --

Events Calendar	All meetings are held at University Baptist Church (UBC)
Sunday, Dec. 19, 2004	5:30 pm Annual Holiday Party Note change in Date & Time
Monday, Jan. 24, 2005	4:30 pm BAGS Board Meeting; Room LC-210, UBC
Sunday, Jan. 30, 2005	5:00 pm BAGS General Meeting; Chapel, UBC Writing Your Family History – Beginning with the Box "From Overwhelming Junk into a Written History" by Kathryn Black Morrow

"Seems Like Old Times" is continued from Page 4 --

- William P.'s enlistment date and place.
- His parents' names.
- His wounds and disabilities.
- His illiteracy.
- His age (He was free with making up different ages and places of birth.)
- The married names of my two great aunts.
- William P.'s two marriage dates and places.
- William P.'s death date and place.
- His physical description: 5ft 3in, 112lb, fair complexion, blue eyes. Described by one doctor as "scrawny".
- His residence on a number of dates.
- His occupation, farm laborer.
- Date and place of great grand mother's death.
- A number of residences for Jennie.

There may be more; I'm still digesting the data and entering it into PAF.

Polly found both Civil War military service records and pension records for eight of her ancestors. One of the questions Polly had was, "why did my ancestors change the way they spelled their surname?" Her 16 year-old great great grandfather George Washington Vertz was told that his name was on the company rolls as Verts and he had to sign his name that way. He had it changed back to Vertz for his pension. The more significant finds were marriage records, cause of death, and location for time lines.

George Washington and wife Margaret White Vertz had about 75 records, most of them in the pension folder. There were records for three of his brothers:

- John B.M. Vertz and his widow Amanda,

- Thomas C. Verts who collected a pension until his death in June of 1931, and
- Louis McC. Vertz and his military service.



Polly's great grandmother, Margaret Young McGinnis had three (Young) brothers who were in the Civil War:

- William Elder Young died at Vicksburg as a result of disease.
- Robert Milton Young and his widow Mary E, had 55 records.
- James Young and his wife Mary Sankey Young had an equal number of records.

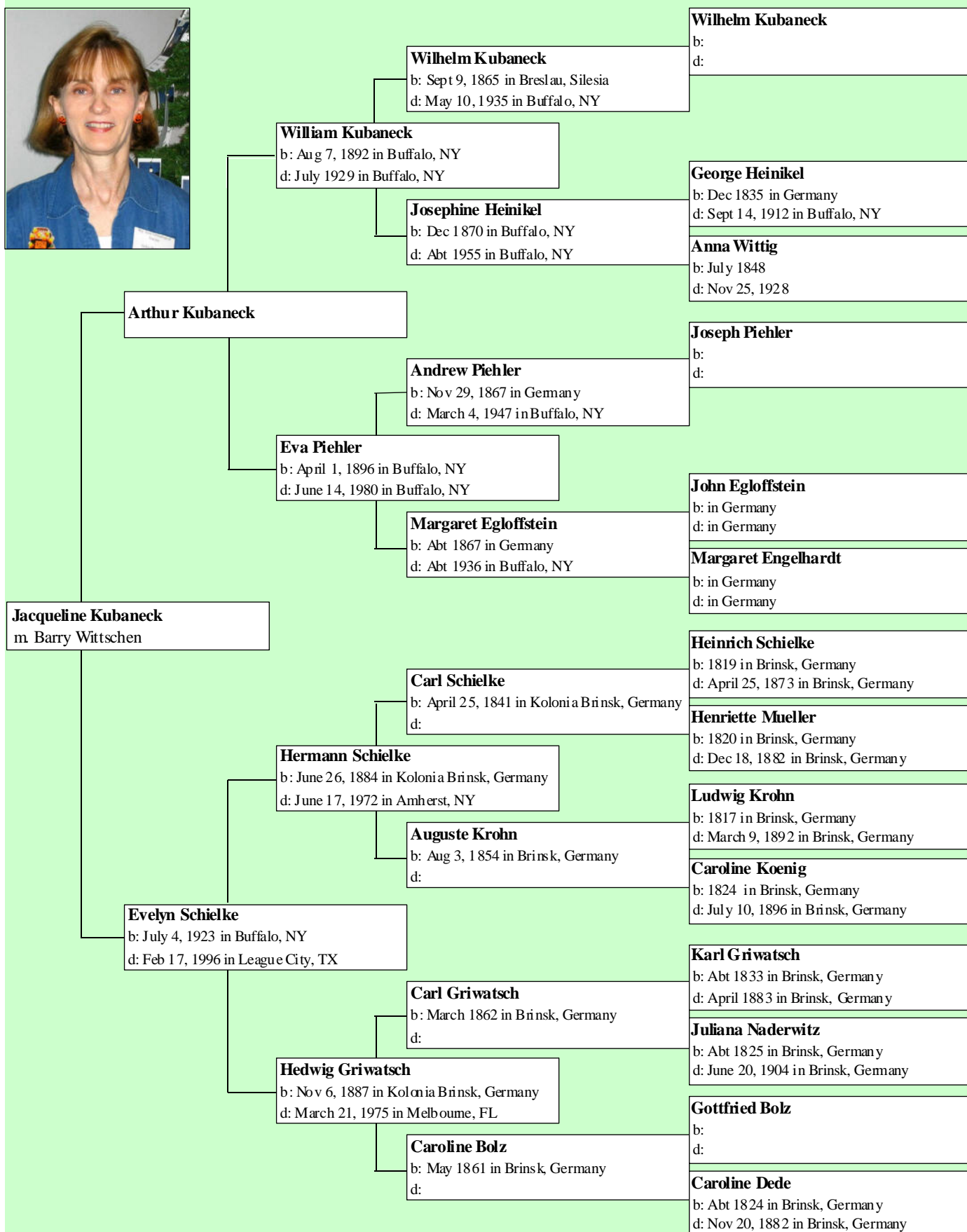
George McGinnis, Polly's great great uncle died in St Louis as a result of disease he contracted as he was escorting prisoners from Vicksburg to Missouri.

If there's a message from our experience, it is that the quality of preparation will make a difference. The National Archives has a very comprehensive web site, www.nara.gov. Spend enough time to decide what you want from them. You can order copies of the files, but I have little confidence that some staffer will know what is significant to you. Hotel reservations can be difficult and expensive, so plan to stay in the suburbs where you can get to the Archives by Metrorail. We have favorite hotels and restaurants, but part of the fun is exploring. There is an excellent article by Cindy Thompson on researching in the National Archives in the December 2004 issue of *Family Chronicle*.

The preceding is a portion of a longer article which will be in a future BAGS Quarterly issue in its entirety.

Additional photos to accompany this article can be found on page 8 of the Online Edition of this Newsletter.

Ancestors of Jacqueline Kubaneck (Wittschen)



Committee News

Message from Rose Mary Fritz, Registrar.

We are well into the 2004-2005 society year and many of you- but not all- have renewed your BAGS membership. Those of you who have not yet renewed are about to miss out on a wonderful bargain. Your membership is a gift to yourself which is like the Eveready™ bunny, it just keeps giving and giving. Each month there is an interesting and informative program, an opportunity to socialize with fellow genealogists, to exchange stories and experiences, and to enjoy a light supper prepared by someone else. The society offers trips to neighboring libraries where we can access a wonderful assortment of books, periodicals and primary records. The quarterly published by the society contains interesting original articles written by our own members. Also, in August there is a "show and tell" program where the members can show family mementos and tell about their interesting ancestors. All of this and membership is still only \$20 for a single member or \$25 for the whole family.

We don't want to lose you but you must act now. The membership roster is at this moment being purged of unpaid members. You will find the Application/Renewal form which all members, old and new, are asked to fill out, at www.TxBayAreaGen.org.

If you wish to renew your membership or join the society, send your check made out to "BAGS" and a filled out application form to Bay Area Genealogical Society, P. O. Box 891447, Houston, TX 77289-1447. Do it now!

Merry Christmas to All We hope to see you in the new year.

From Susie Ganch, BAGS Quarterly Editor...

The first issue of Volume 4 of the Quarterly is coming along nicely and will be ready to be handed out at the January meeting. I have received several "How I got to Texas" stories from members which I have found very interesting. I hope that by year's end (2005) we will know how all of our members got to Texas. Please don't miss having your story included in this series.

We also need queries and other interesting stories about your families or research tips which might help others in their quest for finding ancestors. Annette Bowen, one of the quarterly staff members, also came up with a good topic for stories in the quarterly. She suggested that we do

a series of stories on: "If I Could Share a Holiday with an Ancestor." We could pick an ancestor we would love to spend just one day with, who they were and why it would be interesting to spend a day with them. I think that could be a very interesting series, so get your thinking caps on and send in those stories.

You may email your information to me at sganch@verizon.net (please put "Quarterly" in the subject line so it goes to the correct folder). You may also bring it to the meetings or mail it to me at 2393 Golden Shores Lane, League City, TX 77573, or call me at 281-535-2598.

I look forward to reading your submissions.

Hospitality Committee

Lee Jared, Chair

Alice Braud Jones
Dick Warren
Dorsey Kastetter
Patsy McCall
Marie Krnavek

Thank you to all of these generous people who contributed to the dinner for November's meeting.

✓ Volunteer Opportunity !

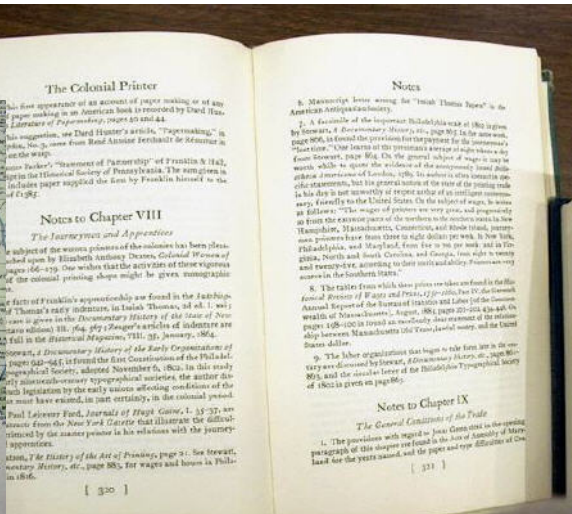
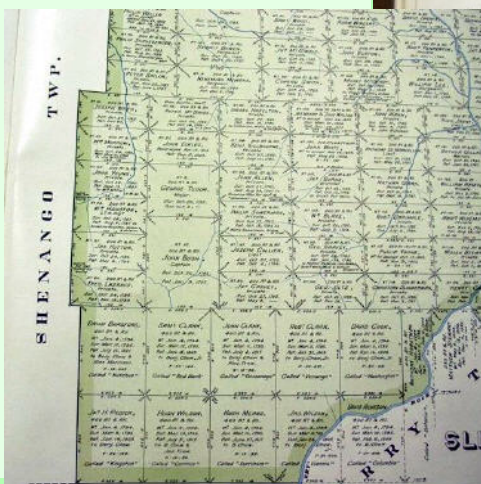
A person is needed to take over the composing work for this Newsletter. A computer is required along with willingness to expand your skills in layout and composition of a small publication. For more details on the task, send an email to Leo@TxBayAreaGen.org

Photos to accompany the "Seems Like Old Times" article that begins on page 4.

Right: Mercer Co PA atlas

Far Right: Colonial Printer Notes.

Below, Polly is "visiting" with the Dissenters at National Constitution Exhibit, and at right is Lake Teedyuskung at Woodloch, Hawley, PA.

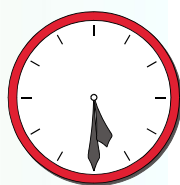


ONLINE
EXTRA

Next Meeting

Date: Dec. 19, 2004
Time: 5:30 PM
Place: University Baptist Church Chapel
16106 Middlebrook Drive, Houston, TX
(use Middlebrook entrance door to enter the Chapel)

Program: Annual Holiday Party



BAGS website:
www.TxBayAreaGen.org



This newsletter is a monthly publication of the Bay Area Genealogical Society. All officers are volunteers.

Articles on genealogy are most welcome. Inclusion is based on space available and material is subject to editing. If articles are copyrighted, then please include permissions with the submittals.

Mail to: BAGS Newsletter,
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claudiamg@ev1.net

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