



Bay Area Genealogical Society

Newsletter

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

Volume 14, Issue No. 2

October 2014

Friday, October 24, 2014: Kevin Burke presents "Who Was The Doughboy?"

Public Invited. Join us at 6:30pm for coffee and socializing.

We meet at the University Baptist Church in either the Chapel on the 1st floor or the Great Room on the 2nd floor depending on building renovations.
(16106 Middlebrook Drive, Clear Lake City - [online map](#))



Kevin Burke

Kevin Burke will discuss the life of a World War I soldier, the citizen soldier, their enlistment verses conscription. How much training did they receive? What uniforms, equipment, and weapons did they have? What was their daily routine and combat experience? How did they return and reintegrate into civilian life? Kevin Burke is a WWI historian and reenactor, and a Friendswood resident. If you have any family WWI memorabilia, bring it to share with the group.

Note the meeting date was changed from October 31 to October 24. A survey requesting input on future programming topics will be handed out at the meeting. Please complete and turn in the survey at the Registrar's table that evening.

BAGS members and guests are invited to the BAGS Annual Holiday Party at Hope Village Cafe in Friendswood on Saturday, November 15 from 11am to 1pm. The lunch is dutch. A special ham plate with vegetables will be offered as well as the regular menu ([view menu online](#)). Please RSVP with Kim Zrubek by Friday, November 7. Come enjoy the holiday spirit and a pleasant lunch with friends. This event benefits The Foundation for Hope Village (www.hope-village.com).

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October is Family History Month

Take a look at genealogy programs offered during this month listed on pages 7-8.

Pick up your copy of the first *BAGS Journal* at the October meeting.

Next Bus trip to Clayton Library is on Wednesday, November 5. Details on page 6.



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Message from the Hospitality Chair

Leslee Covington Fehlman



Leslee Fehlman

I have lived in the Clear Lake area for 17 years since moving from Austin. We were following the boat!!! I am a charter member of BAGS. My job is part of the welcoming committee. I stand behind the coffee/tea/water window and chat with whoever comes by. I also serve as the hostess for the annual "Show & Tell" dinners.

I started researching both Barry's and my families about 35 years ago when I found out we were going to be grandparents for the first time and I wanted something special to give so started family history. I knew nothing about research so started writing down everything I could find about any of the families. My mother's double cousin had done research on the Osborne/Wells line and I inherited her files. We lived in Del Rio so I had plenty of time to contact relatives. Even today a NY Osborne cousin is writing a book about the Osborne's and I sent him what I had. I do enjoy the BAGS group, the meetings, and going to Clayton Library. Here's to many more years to enjoy genealogy and life in general!!!

Welcome New Members!

Jane Sosnowy Arni from Santa Fe, TX

Deanna Lamoreux of Houston, TX

Jane Murtishaw Lindsey from Dickinson, TX

Barbara Ann and Michael Hart from League City, TX

Barbara is researching surnames Ford, Barfield, and Grantham. She is looking for assistance with linking William Ford to George Ford to Preserved Ford (War of 1812).

Robert Long Wegner, Sr. from Arlington, TX

Robert is the father of BAGS Registrar Bob Wegner, Jr.. He is interested in identifying the ancestors of his maternal grandfather William Elmer Long.

Please give a hearty welcome and introduce yourself to each of these people at the next meeting.

This newsletter is a monthly publication of the Bay Area Genealogical Society, a non-profit educational organization dedicated to the people of Harris and Galveston counties, Texas, who have an interest in genealogy.

Articles on genealogy are welcome. Inclusion is based on space available and is subject to editing. Please include permissions with copyrighted material submissions. Questions or comments on the BAGS Newsletter should be addressed to:

Editor, P.O. Box 891447, Houston, TX 77289-1447, or newsletter@TxBayAreaGen.org

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September Program Recap provided by Deborah Gammon

Gay provided an excellent power point presentation “Following Smoke Signals: Using Circumstantial Evidence to Focus Research.” She walked us through her research techniques and findings for William Cockburne Johnstone, father of Bill Johnstone who played Lamont Cranston in the radio program *The Shadow*. Gay was trying to verify Mr. Johnstone’s first marriage. It was a very interesting and entertaining case study and everyone was delighted with her presentation that used cluster genealogy techniques and *NewspaperArchive*. She introduced us to the website www.popplet.com that helps narrow down genealogical findings.

[Editor note] Gay sent an update to her research shared that evening. Mr. Rattray, living in Scotland, has responded to Gay Carter’s initial inquiry and is continuing active email correspondence. Mr. Rattray believes he is the grandson of Edward Cockburn Johnstone, who is the brother to William Cockburne Johnstone, and is excited to have research of his genealogy rekindled.

Carpooling!

Deborah Gammon is organizing carpools for the following two October programs. Contact her if you are interested in attending.

- Free symposium featuring John Philip Colletta, Ph.D. on Saturday, October 18, from 9:30am to 4:30pm at George Memorial Library in Richmond, Texas. Program details are on page 8.
- Free lecture “American Family Histories: Lost, Forgotten, Found” presented by Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and genealogist Nick Kotz on October 30 from 10:30-noon at Clayton Library. Program details are on page 7.

Finding Your Roots with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

PBS has begun season two, airing the first episode on Tuesday, September 23 at 7:00pm CST. The program will continue through Tuesday, November 25. Review the schedule and watch past episodes online at www.pbs.org/wnet/finding-your-roots/schedule

RootsMagic Import TMG Data

The new version of RootsMagic (v6.3.3) includes a feature for direct import data from The Master Genealogist (TMG) software. This direct import not only imports basic genealogical information from TMG like names, events, notes, and media, but also imports witnesses (with roles), source templates, and sentence templates.

More information is available at

<http://rootsmagic.com/tmg>

Sons of the American Revolution

Bill Whatley, President of the Sons of the American Revolution Bernardo de Gálvez Chapter #1 in Galveston Texas, was visitor at our last meeting. He was recruiting new members and reported that their organization's registrar will help with research. Find more information on their chapter online at <http://bdgsar.org>.

Member News

Member Laura Epps moved to New Braunfels, TX

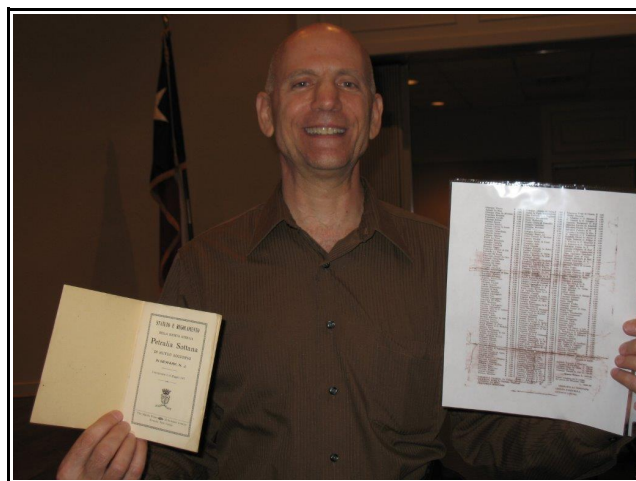
Nick Cimino is now our Education Committee Chair! Thank you Nick!

New member Barbara Hart has already agreed to help with name tag setup and greeting. Introduce yourself to her when arriving to the next meeting. Thank you Barbara!

Please send contributions of articles, pictures, anecdotes for publication in the *BAGS Journal* to Melodey Hauch, Journal Editor.

A Research Story from August 2014 Show & Tell BAGS Program by Neil Miserendino

My paternal Grandfather, Eugenio Miserendino, was one of three brothers who emigrated from a small town in central Sicily called Petralia Sottana. During the early years of the 1900s, the brothers settled permanently in Newark, New Jersey and were part of an Italian American area located in the “Iron Bound” section of Newark. [The name “Iron Bound” derived from that part of Newark being “bound” by railroad tracks.] Their migration was an example of the genealogical concept of “cluster genealogy” which can include extended family, friends, and neighbors either from one region or town, or emigrating to one geographical area (one city or one part of one city). The concept of “cluster genealogy” is well known by genealogists and has been presented to our Society by Emily Croom, a Nationally known genealogist, author and speaker.



Neil with the Petralia Sottana workers' mutual aid association booklet and list of contributors.

Background: About the year 1906, my grandfather was able to purchase a house. The house has been owned by a Miserendino for over 100 years now and is still in our family. The house ownership was transferred many times. Upon the death of my grandfather the house was owned by my grandmother, Frances. When I was young and visited, she and my unmarried uncle Vincent (Vincenzo) lived in the first floor which consisted of two bedrooms, one bathroom and a living room. The basement and upstairs floor which also contained a bathroom and a kitchen was rented to various tenants over the years. Upon the death of my grandmother in 1967, the ownership of the house passed to my uncle Vincent who lived there until his death in 1986. Upon the death of my uncle Vincent, the house passed to a cousin (son of my aunt Frances who had the same first name as my grandmother and by that time was also deceased), then to my aunt Josephine, and then to my father, Morris (Mario). When my father owned the house, he rented it to my oldest brother Paul who had been working in the northern New Jersey/New York area. A little later, my brother Paul bought the house from my father.

Research: Growing up I and other members of my immediate family thought my grandparents came from Palermo, Sicily. We were told no family story of the actual city. We assumed Palermo as it was (and remains) the biggest city in Sicily. When I started my genealogical research, I talked to relatives. My brother Paul mentioned there were a few papers in the house which listed names of relatives. He sent copies of the pages. One page in English showed my Aunt Frances and my grandmother taking a trip to Italy via ship with the final destination of a town I never heard of “Petralia Sottana.” My father confirmed that was the original town of his parents.

Following other genealogical training presented by Trevia Wooster Beverley, I learned about ordering microfilmed civil registration records of foreign cities through the LDS Family History Centers. I ordered microfilm rolls of Italian birth records and used genealogy Italian aids to read the film contents.

I was able to confirm that my paternal ancestors came from Petralia Sottana and found the civil birth records for many other Italian ancestors who all were born in that small town.

While talking to my younger brother Marty about this discovery, he shared a rather surprising piece of news. Amazingly, he remembered that the name of the town matched a small booklet he received from our uncle Vincent when Marty visited in Newark, New Jersey about 20 years ago! My brother mailed me the booklet. I scanned it and then put it away for storage.

Discovery: For the 2014 BAGS Show & Tell, I brought that small booklet which is entitled “Statuto e regolamento della società operaia Petralia Sottana di mutuo soccorso.” **(continued on page 5)**

Neil Miserendino's Show & Tell Story (continued from page 4)

My rough translation of the booklet title is: “Statutes and regulations of the Petralia Sottana workers' mutual aid association.” I also found a list of members of that association in 1920. I have sometimes seen the members refer to themselves as “Petalisi” which I would think is a short way of saying “people from Petralia Sottana.” That 1920 list contains the names and amounts of money contributed by members of that association to help the World War I wounded and orphans. There are more than 200 names on the list of contributors. Included in that list were the names and contributions of my grandfather and two of his brothers. I think the members of that association were all men. If you double the number of contributors to account those men’s wives and possibly some children who were also born in Petralia Sottana (such as my first born aunt Frances), then over 400 people moved from a town (which now has a population of under three thousand) to Newark, New Jersey by 1920. We all know that many parts of Europe were poorer than the United States and that there were more opportunities in the United States. However, I have discovered around 1906 the sulphur mines closed which may have been another reason for that group of southern Italians to emigrate. With the loss of a major employer in that region, there was a strong incentive to leave for America.

Can any of the readers imagine one hundred years from now, the *Yearbook* from the Bay Area Genealogical Society being in the hands of one member’s descendant in another state who was also doing genealogical research? That is the equivalent of the booklet that I have from my ancestors.



Suggested Resources:

The Sleuth Book for Genealogists by Emily Croom (found in local libraries) discusses cluster research.

“Trace your Italian Roots” by Melanie D. Holtz in *Family Tree Magazine* October/November 2014 issue

Message from the Registrar

Thank you to the one hundred and twenty (120) members that have renewed for the 2014-2015 Society year. As we enjoy the last meeting of the calendar year before the holidays I want to encourage those of you who have yet to renew your membership (48 members) for this year to send that renewal in now. The BAGS Board is pursuing a variety of exciting programming for the membership to begin in January and they would not like you to miss out. So I ask current renewed members if you know someone who has forgotten to renew to remind them to send that renewal form in. The renewal rates have not changed from last year—a single membership is \$20; a family membership is \$25; and there is a \$5 fee, if you want the *Journal* and *Yearbook* mailed to you.



I want to recognize those members to date who have renewed and supported the society with an additional contribution: 1) **Contributors** – Bonnie and David Conrad; Darleen Grandison; and, Keith and Laurel Stine; 2) **Benefactors** – Laura McKensie; Mary Olsen; and, Pauline Swerdlin; and, 3) **Patrons** – Wallace and Norma Davenport; Barbara Larsen; Jeanine Lawrence; Loren and Mary Martin; and Bob and Betty Wegner, Jr. The society is very grateful for your generous support.

For those members who need to still renew, please fill out a new membership application form. One is attached to the newsletter, which you can print and mail to the address at the top of the form or bring the form with you to the next meeting you attend. In addition, I will have forms available at the Registrar’s table when you enter the meeting room. I look forward to seeing you all at the October 24, 2014 meeting.

Best Regards,
Bob Wegner, BAGS Registrar

BAGS Event Calendar & Committee News

Monthly General Meetings

Generally, the last Friday of the month at 7:00pm. Come at 6:30pm to enjoy coffee and socializing. The public is invited to visit. These meetings are held at the University Baptist Church (UBC) located at 16106 Middlebrook Drive, Houston, TX 77059 (Clear Lake City).

Friday, October 24 at 7:00pm: (Date changed)
Kevin Burke presents *Who Was The Doughboy?*

Saturday, November 15 from 11:00am to 1:00pm: Annual Holiday Party

December: No general meeting

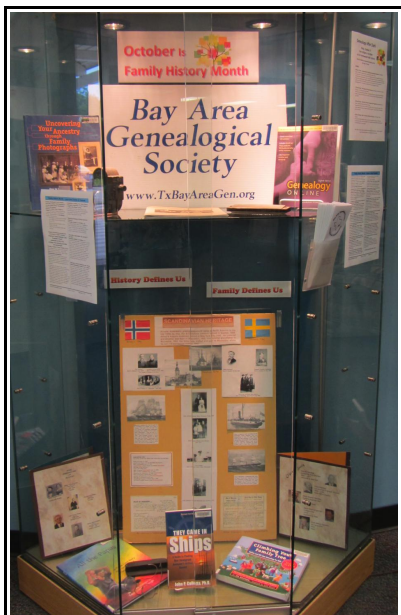
Board Meetings

Generally, the last Monday of the month at 6:30pm with exception of Memorial Day. All members are welcome to attend. These meetings are held at the University Baptist Church (UBC) on the second floor in room LC-210.

Monday, October 20 at 6:30pm (Date Changed)


Board meetings usually not held in November or December.

BAGS Display at the Friendswood Library during October. Thank you Polly Swerdlin for organizing the exhibit.



Research Trips at Clayton Library Mary Martin, County Coordinator

The bus leaves for Clayton on
Wednesday, November 5
Wednesday, January 7, 2015
Tuesday, March 10, 2015



Meet in front of the Clear Lake Community Association and Recreation Center at 16511 Diana Lane, Houston, TX 77062. The county bus departs at 9:15am and leaves the Clayton Library at 3:00pm to arrive back at the Rec Center parking lot before 4:00pm.

The current schedule is always available on the BAGS website www.TxBayAreaGen.org and printed in the newsletter. Sign-up sheets are also available at the general meetings.

If you have any questions or want to reserve seating, please call Mary Martin at 281-332-2435 or e-mail Mary at lmartin497@aol.com.

BAG\$ Report for August and September 2014

Loren Martin, Treasurer

Balance Brought Forward 7/31/2014	\$4,503.11
Income	\$595.00
Expenses	-\$670.66
Balance on hand 8/31/2014	\$4,427.45
CD Balance	\$3,696.61
Balance Brought Forward 8/31/2014	\$4,427.45
Income	\$1,067.60
Expenses	-\$633.90
Balance on hand 9/30/2014	\$4,861.15
CD Balance	\$3,696.61

Family History Month – Clayton Library Programs

The following free programs are offered to adults and teens in the Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research located at 5300 Caroline Street, Houston. All events require reservations except for the orientation. Call the library at 832-393-2600 to make a reservation (www2.houstonlibrary.org/clayton).

Cemetery Removal: Where did it go? How can I find it? Presented by Mel Hayes

Wednesday, October 22 from 1:00pm to 2:00pm

We will discuss strategies to find out where the grave was moved, and what you can do to document your findings.

Louisiana Death Records: Where to locate them presented by staff member Becky Grimes

Thursday, October 23 at 1:00pm

This presentation will discuss both the resources Clayton has on-site for Louisiana death records, as well as online avenues that are made available on this subject through the Houston Public Library's databases.

Authenticity in Genealogical Research presented by staff member Clinton Drake

Friday, October 24 from 2:00pm to 3:00pm

This presentation will explore several source formats and types and discuss the methodology behind determining a source to be reliable, or how to identify the most reliable source available for a specific query.

Old and the New Day: Research Strategies with Michael Leclerc, Mocavo's chief genealogist

Saturday, October 25 from 10:30am to 4:00pm

Please join us for a full day of presentations, ranging from Finding Your Family in Canada; Reading and Understanding Old Documents; Sources for New England Research, and a discussion of Mocavo.

Cemetery Symbolism presented by staff member Melissa Meadows

Friday, October 31 at 1:00pm

This talk discusses the ways in which ancestors marked their final resting places to indicate various accomplishments in life, through death. Topics will include iconography, recurrent themes, and symbols of organizations.

"American Family Histories: Lost, Forgotten, Found" presented by Nick Kotz, a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and genealogist.

Thursday, October 30 from 10:30am to noon

in the Carriage House at Clayton Library located at 5300 Caroline Street, Houston. This is a **free lecture** sponsored by the Clayton Library Friends (www.claytonlibraryfriends.org).

Would you like to carpool? Contact member Deborah Gammon. She is organizing transportation for BAGS.

Kotz's lecture argues that family histories are an essential element for people to understand and appreciate American History. Every genealogist has wondered about the importance and validity of a family story or lore that has been passed down for generations. His latest book, *The Harness Maker's Dream: Nathan Kallison and the Rise of South Texas* will be available for sale and signing at the end of the lecture. His book tells the epic story of how his Russian-Jewish grandfather, at age 17, escaped from the Czar's marauding Cossacks in 1890 to seek a better life in America. His journey took him from a Ukrainian shtetl to a Chicago ghetto, and then on to San Antonio in 1899 to open a one-room saddlery, which he grew into the largest farm and ranch supply business in the Southwest.

Family History Book Sale

October 1- 31st Clayton Library offers duplicate family history books for sale. These are donated copies of books that have never been part of our collection.

Martyn Farm Harvest Festival

November 8 & 9, 2014 from 10am to 4pm at the Armand Bayou Nature Center

This event celebrates farm life around the time period 1895 – 1910. Step back in time with old fashioned fun for the entire family! There will be children's games and crafts, woodcarving, blacksmithing, wagon rides, music and dancers, and a general store filled with homemade goodies and handmade gifts. More information is available at www.abnc.org

3rd Annual Genealogy Symposium
Featuring John Philip Colletta, Ph.D.
Saturday, October 18, from 9:30am to 4:30pm

(Registration opens at 9:00am)

in the Meeting Room at George Memorial Library
located at 1001 Golfview in Richmond, TX.



Would you like to carpool? Contact member Deborah Gammon.
She is organizing transportation for BAGS members.

Nationally known genealogist and lecturer John Philip Colletta, Ph.D., will share his knowledge, experience, and insight on a variety of topics designed to help family-history buffs explore different avenues of genealogical research.

The program is free and open to the public. Seating is limited, however, and reservations are required. To register online at the library's website (www.fortbend.lib.tx.us), click on "Calendar," select "George Memorial Library," and find the program. Participants may also register by calling the library's Local History and Genealogy Department at **281-341-2608**.

The first lecture, "U.S. Passenger Arrival Records, 1820-1930s: Sources and Strategies for Challenging Cases," will begin at 9:30 am. Dr. Colletta will provide an overview of sources for finding arrival records of 19th- and 20th-century immigrants to America. He will also discuss a variety of alternative sources and methods for overcoming obstacles such as variant spellings of names, conflicting arrival dates, confusion of ship names, various ports of departure and arrival, and missing passenger manifests.

At 11:00 am, Dr. Colletta will present "U.S. Military Pension and Bounty Land Records, 1776-ca. 1916." Learn how military-pension and bounty-land files in the National Archives differ from military-service records. Dr. Colletta will discuss the basic information needed to start a search for an ancestor's file, and where to find that information. He will then outline a step-by-step procedure for locating, identifying, and retrieving a particular file, using resources such as websites, National Archives indexes, and other search tools.

The final lecture of the day, "Principles of Good Writing and Good Storytelling," will begin at 3:30 pm. This lecture will demonstrate how to take known information about an ancestor's life and combine it with details from the period to create an engaging true story that will hook a reader's interest. Specific examples will show how to incorporate archaic expressions and period quotations; utilize literary techniques to describe the setting, action, characters, and theme; and remain historically accurate by using qualifiers such as "probably," "perhaps," and "evidently."

Dr. Colletta has written a "murder-mystery-family-history" with details from his own family history -- *Only a Few Bones: A True Account of the Rolling Fork Tragedy and Its Aftermath* -- which recounts the story of his great-great-grandfather, Joe Ring, who moved his family from Buffalo, NY, to Rolling Fork, MS, after the Civil War. When Ring's country store burned to the ground with five unfortunate victims sleeping upstairs, the incident was investigated as mass murder, robbery and arson.

The genealogy symposium is presented with the generous support of the Friends of George Memorial Library. Proceeds from the Friends of the Library book sales and annual membership dues help to underwrite the costs of special programming and various cultural and educational events at the library.

Bay Area Genealogical Society

Registrar

P.O. Box 891447

Houston, TX 77289-1447

<http://www.TxBayAreaGen.org> ... registrar@TxBayAreaGen.org

Membership Application

Please bring to meeting or mail to above address with payment.

Membership: New _____ Renewal _____ Date _____

Full Name _____

Maiden Name _____ Preferred Name for Name Tag _____

Address _____

City _____ ZIP Code _____

E-mail _____ Phone # _____

If this is a family membership, list the other family members' full names:

Occupation or, if retired, previous occupation of primary member _____

Occupation or, if retired, previous occupation of other member(s) _____

May we print your address, e-mail address and phone number in the Society's yearbook? Yes ___ No ___

Research interests, surnames _____

I need help with _____

I can help with (e.g., German translation, NY research...) _____

The Society needs your participation. Check the committee(s) on which you are willing to serve:

<input type="checkbox"/> Auditing	<input type="checkbox"/> Historian	<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly
<input type="checkbox"/> County Coordinator	<input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality	<input type="checkbox"/> Photography	<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone
<input type="checkbox"/> E-Mail	<input type="checkbox"/> Member Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Programs	<input type="checkbox"/> Web Master
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> Publicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Yearbook
<input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raising	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____		

Payment – To calculate your payment, please choose one from each category:

Single membership \$20

Family membership \$25 \$ _____

Donation (**Contributor** - \$5-\$29, **Benefactor** - \$30-\$49, \$ _____

Patron - \$50-\$599, **Lifetime** membership - \$600 or higher)

Journal(s) included at no additional charge if picked up
by end of Society year

Journal(s) & Yearbook by mail ... \$5 \$ _____

[Journal(s) mailed all together at year end]

Make checks out to "BAGS" Cash ___ Check # _____ TOTAL \$

IF YOUR INFORMATION CHANGES DURING THE YEAR, PLEASE NOTIFY THE REGISTRAR.