



# Bay Area Genealogical Society Newsletter

## BAGS Potluck Luncheon

**Saturday, January 31, 2026 at 12:00pm**

*University Baptist Church*

16106 Middlebrook Drive, Houston, Texas 77059

**Kathleen Williams presents Full Text Search:  
Finding Hidden Records at FamilySearch.org**

**Be sure to mark your calendar** for our first 2025 in-person meeting on **January 31<sup>st</sup>** at University Baptist Church! This is our annual January potluck luncheon to welcome the New Year and celebrate with fellow members! All members are invited to bring an entrée, side dish or a dessert to share. Please bring serving utensils for your dishes. Food set up and social time begins at 11:30am.

**11:30am** Set up your food, grab your choice of beverage, find a comfy chair & socialize with great genealogy friends!

**12:00pm** Welcome BAGS members and guests, opening remarks, and lunch blessing with our BAGS President, Teresa Rundell.

**12:15pm** Members enjoy the delicious buffet!

**1:00pm** Presentation: Our guest speaker will be our own **Kathleen Williams**, speaking on the topic: **Full Text Search: Finding Hidden Records at FamilySearch.org**. Kathleen is the Education Chair for the Bay Area Genealogical Society, where she enjoys helping people uncover their family stories. Her own journey into genealogy started in December 1995, right after she graduated from college. Her father said something that stuck with her: "You'll never have more time than you do right now." He was right—and those words launched what became a lifelong passion.

*More details found on page 4*

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### *Special Points of Interest*

Social Media Links
BAGS Partnerships
Clayton Library Partner Links

# SUPPORT YOUR BAY AREA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY!

It's time to renew your membership with the TX Bay Area Genealogical Society (BAGS)! The new membership year starts January 1, 2025. You can renew your membership anytime before February 28, 2026, without any loss of membership privileges.

## Why should I renew my membership with BAGS now?

- ✓ BAGS is able to include **genealogy experts** from outside the Houston area to speak at our **virtual monthly general meetings**. This provides you with the benefit of national speakers and a wider range of genealogy topics. We also work with other regional genealogical societies to give you access to their resources and presentations.
- ✓ Our private **Facebook** group is engaging, and active with regular postings about webinars and expanded online resources (many of them free) to help you with your research.
- ✓ **Members Helping Members** sessions have expanded to include both virtual and in-person meetings. You can join in the group sessions or request an individual, one-on-one session. These sessions can help you with "how to" questions about using Ancestry.com, FamilySearch, Family Tree Maker software and other tools. These sessions can help you learn how to analyze the genealogical information you already have and show you how to research new sources.
- ✓ Informative **Education Spotlight** sessions are held at the Friendswood Library or via Zoom.
- ✓ Organized **meetups** at the Clayton Library Family History Research Center.
- ✓ **Special events** are planned for the upcoming year and include awesome guest speakers plus door prizes, drawings, and delicious food!
- ✓ Three **in-person General Meetings** (BBQ buffet or potluck) and a Holiday Luncheon.
- ✓ Free access to all past publications including **Quarterlies, Journals** and monthly **Newsletters**.
- ✓ A complementary listing in our **Membership Yearbook**.

## Renew your membership NOW – 2 options:



**ONLINE** – You can fill out a membership form online and make your payment via PayPal with a credit or debit card, or a PayPal account, if you have one. **To renew online, [click here](#)**. You will be directed to the "Membership Application Page" at the BAGS website. After filling out the form online, click the **Submit** button at the bottom. This will take you to PayPal where you will make your payment. You do not need to have a PayPal account to complete the transaction.

**Paper form and check** – If you would rather pay by sending a check through the regular mail, you can fill out a printed membership form. **[Access the form here](#)**. This will open a PDF file which you can print and fill out. Mail this to the address on the form along with your check made payable to "BAGS."

If you have questions on the registration process or if you want to verify your membership status, please contact our Registrar via email, [registrar@txbayareagen.org](mailto:registrar@txbayareagen.org).

# BAGS BUSINESS | INFORMATION

## Congratulations to the following Bay Area Genealogical Society Officers for 2026 – 27!

<b>President</b>	<i>Teresa Rundell</i>
<b>1st VP</b>	<i>Rebecca Briggs</i>
<b>2nd VP/Programs</b>	<i>Rebecca "Becky" Jones</i>
<b>Secretary</b>	<i>Louise Kidder</i>
<b>Registrar</b>	<i>George Porterfield</i>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<i>Todd Roberts</i>

At the November General Meeting, the above slate of officers recommended by the Nominating Committee, was approved by acclamation. These officers will be sworn in at the January 2026 general meeting for a period of two years. Other positions and committees will be appointed by the President subject to approval by the Board of Directors!

### BAGS CONTINUES TO NEED YOUR HELP!

The Bay Area Genealogy Society is partnering with the Kroger Community Impact Program. You can link your [Kroger Plus Card](#) to the Bay Area Genealogy Society of Texas. It costs you nothing extra, but impacts BAGS in a mighty way! A percentage of your total purchases at Kroger stores go directly to the BAGS without any additional cost to you. It's part of Kroger's commitment to giving back to the communities they serve through their Community Rewards program.

#### HOW TO ENROLL

- 1.Sign in to your [Kroger account](#) OR create a NEW account.
- 2.Search for Bay Area Genealogy Society [here](#),
- 3.Type HY346 in the search bar and then ←ENTER
- 4.Select the BAY AREA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY and click the blue [Enroll](#) button.

BAY AREA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY will also be displayed in your account's Kroger Community Rewards section. If you need to review or revisit your choice, you can always do so under your Account details. Have questions? Please contact Treasurer, Todd Roberts, at [treasurer@txbayarea.org](mailto:treasurer@txbayarea.org).

#### Additional points of BAGS contact:

Don't know the Members Page password? [registrar@txbayareagen.org](mailto:registrar@txbayareagen.org) — George Porterfield  
Have an article or idea to share? [newsletter@txbayareagen.org](mailto:newsletter@txbayareagen.org) — Cindy Austin  
Submit information for the Journal: [journal@txbayareagen.org](mailto:journal@txbayareagen.org) — Todd Roberts  
Ideas for BAGS advertising: [publicity@txbayareagen.org](mailto:publicity@txbayareagen.org) — Terri Myers  
Not receiving emails? [emailcoord@txbayareagen.org](mailto:emailcoord@txbayareagen.org) — TBA  
Research questions or provide research assistance: [education@txbayareagen.org](mailto:education@txbayareagen.org) — Kathleen Williams

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 are interested 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 about the BAGS Newsletter should be addressed to the Editor at [newsletter@txbayareagen.org](mailto:newsletter@txbayareagen.org). All rights reserved.

## 2026 BAGS OFFICERS

<b>President</b>	<i>Teresa Rundell</i> <u><a href="mailto:president@txbayareagen.org">president@txbayareagen.org</a></u>
<b>First Vice President</b>	<i>Rebecca Briggs</i> <u><a href="mailto:vicepresident@txbayareagen.org">vicepresident@txbayareagen.org</a></u>
<b>Second Vice President</b>	<i>Becky Jones</i> <u><a href="mailto:vicepresident2@txbayareagen.org">vicepresident2@txbayareagen.org</a></u>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<i>Todd Roberts</i> <u><a href="mailto:treasurer@txbayareagen.org">treasurer@txbayareagen.org</a></u>
<b>Registrar</b>	<i>George Porterfield</i> <u><a href="mailto:registrar@txbayareagen.org">registrar@txbayareagen.org</a></u>
<b>Secretary</b>	<i>Louise Kidder</i> <u><a href="mailto:secretary@txbayareagen.org">secretary@txbayareagen.org</a></u>
<b>Web Editors</b>	<i>Polly Swerdlin and George Porterfield</i> <u><a href="mailto:webeditor@txbayareagen.org">webeditor@txbayareagen.org</a></u>
<b>Yearbook Editor</b>	<i>Luanne Newman</i> <u><a href="mailto:yearbook@txbayareagen.org">yearbook@txbayareagen.org</a></u>
<b>Journal Editor</b>	<i>Todd Roberts</i> <u><a href="mailto:journal@txbayareagen.org">journal@txbayareagen.org</a></u>
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	<i>Cindy Austin</i> <u><a href="mailto:newsletter@txbayareagen.org">newsletter@txbayareagen.org</a></u>
<b>Newsletter Proofreader</b>	<i>Luanne Newman</i>
<b>Photographer</b>	<i>Bill Mayo</i>
<b>Email Distribution</b>	<i>TBA</i> <u><a href="mailto:emailcoord@txbayareagen.org">emailcoord@txbayareagen.org</a></u>
<b>Education Coordinator</b>	<i>Kathleen Williams</i> <u><a href="mailto:education@txbayareagen.org">education@txbayareagen.org</a></u>
<b>County Coordinator</b>	<i>Deborah Gammon</i> <u><a href="mailto:countycoord@txbayareagen.org">countycoord@txbayareagen.org</a></u>
<b>Social Media Administrator</b>	<i>Kathleen Williams</i> <u><a href="mailto:socialmedia@txbayareagen.org">socialmedia@txbayareagen.org</a></u>
<b>Publicity Coordinator</b>	<i>Terri Myers</i> <u><a href="mailto:publicity@txbayareagen.org">publicity@txbayareagen.org</a></u>

# RESEARCH ASSISTANCE GROUPS

## RESEARCH ASSISTANCE – MONDAYS

**Session #1 10:00am to 12:00pm**  
with [Reneé Ball & George Porterfield](#)

**Session #2 Mondays, 7:00pm to 8:00pm**  
with [Kim Zrubek & friends](#)

Need assistance with your family tree or a genealogical brick wall? BAGS members can participate in Research Assistance via Zoom. Participants can share their screens to demonstrate research finds. Details for connecting to a Zoom link are available on the [Research Assistance page](#).



## Genealogy Writing Special Interest Group (SIG)

The BAGS Writing Special Interest Group meets **virtually, via Zoom**, from **1:30 – 3:30pm** on the **1st** and **3rd** Thursdays of each month, – with an in-person option, on the **3rd Thursday**. Registration details are on the BAGS website or contact Becky Jones at [vicepresident2@txbayareagen.org](mailto:vicepresident2@txbayareagen.org) for more information and location directions.



## Family Tree Maker – by Appointment Only



If you would like help using /installing Family Tree Maker or need to ask questions about how the software works and interacts with other genealogical sources, you can now make appointments directly with our FTM guru, [Reneé Ball](#). Help with technical concerns, such as software upgrading and exporting files, is also available. Connection details are available on the [Research Assistance page](#).

## Need Extra Help?

Complete the [BAGS Help Desk Form](#) and email it to [Kathleen Williams, Education Chair](#). She'll respond to discuss your research needs!

*~ continued from page 1*

### ***Kathleen Williams: Full Text Search: Finding Hidden Records at FamilySearch.org***

What drives Kathleen is simple: she loves history and is fascinated by the role her ancestors have played in it! She is endlessly curious about the stories hidden in old records and family trees, and is always learning something new about the past.

At the January 31st presentation you might learn how to discover ancestors you never knew existed! FamilySearch's new AI-powered Full-Text Search lets you search the actual handwritten text inside over 1.4 billion historical documents – from wills and deeds to court records and beyond. Join us to learn how this game-changing tool can break through your brick walls and bring your family history to life.



# BAGS OPPORTUNITIES

## Research Assistance Group – In-person

Jan 10th 2:00-4:00pm

Need help finding Grandma Freeman in the census or reading Uncle Daniel's will? Maybe you just general help on a tough research problem? Bring your research and we can work on it together.

Join us for an in-person Research Assistance Group session on Saturday, January 10, 2026, at the [Freeman Public Library](#) from 2:00 to 4:00pm in the conference room on the second floor.

For questions, please contact Kathleen Williams at [education@txbayareagen.org](mailto:education@txbayareagen.org)

## Genealogy Writing Special Interest Group Continues!

BAGS Writing Special Interest Group took a short break for the holidays, BUT THEY ARE BACK!! **This SIG resumes on Thursday, January 15th, 2026!** More information and details about this exciting group are on the BAGS website or you may contact Becky Jones at [vicepresident2@txbayareagen.org](mailto:vicepresident2@txbayareagen.org) with your questions and location directions.

*"Having a set time to get together and work on a focused goal has helped me to complete several ancestor timelines, which will help me complete my ancestor sketches." ~Amber*

A NEW LEARNING RESOURCE FOR  
BAGS MEMBERS WILL  
LAUNCH  
IN  
JANUARY  
2026!  
**STAY TUNED!**



## Board Meetings

All BAGS Board Meetings are virtual [via Zoom](#). Members are welcome to attend! If you would like to attend a meeting, request a link from [info@txbayareagen.org](mailto:info@txbayareagen.org)

## 2026 Meetings

*January 26th*

*February 23rd*

*March 23rd*

Board meetings are on Mondays at 6:30pm. Board meeting minutes are available on the Members Page.

*Follow BAGS on Facebook!*

[Facebook Group \(members\)](#)

[Facebook Page \(public page\)](#)



[txbayareagen.org/](http://txbayareagen.org/)

# JANUARY RESEARCH | LIBRARY UPDATES

## Friendswood FamilySearch Center

### In-Person Research Session

**TUESDAYS: Jan 20, Feb 17, Mar 17**

**10:00am to 12:00pm**

Now meeting the 3rd Tuesday of each month! This session is open to all BAGS members for research. The Friendswood FamilySearch Center is located at *505 Deseret Dr*, in Friendswood, TX. The center is also open to the public for research during the listed visitor hours:

**Tues, Thurs, & Fri**      **10:00am – 2:00pm**  
**Tuesday evenings**      **7:00pm – 9:00pm**

*The center has FREE access to the FamilySearch Center Portal page, with premium family history software.*



## League City FamilySearch Center

The League City FamilySearch Center is located at *4655 South Shore Blvd*, in League City and is open to the public for research:

**Tuesdays and Wednesdays**      **7:00pm – 9:00pm**  
**Saturdays**      **10:00am – 12:00pm**

### OTHER FAMILYSEARCH CENTERS

<b>Alvin FSC</b> , 2700 Lehi Ln, Alvin, TX, 77511	Wednesdays 10am – 12pm
<b>Baytown FSC</b> , 1010 Birdsong Dr, Baytown, TX, 77521	Wednesdays 10am – 12pm
<b>Kingwood FSC</b> , 4021 Deerbrook, Kingwood, TX, 77339	Wednesdays 7pm – 9pm
<b>Pasadena FSC</b> , 4202 Yellowstone Dr, Pasadena, TX, 77504	Wednesdays 7pm – 9pm
<b>Sugarland FSC</b> , 602 Eldridge Rd, Sugarland TX, 77478	Wednesdays 10am – 5pm

*These centers have FREE access to the FamilySearch Center Portal page, with premium family history software.*



## BUS TRIP WITH FRIENDS TO THE CLAYTON LIBRARY!

**Wednesday, Jan 7th 9:15am**

### THERE IS STILL ROOM ON THE BUS!

Mark your calendar for this BAGS reserved day at the Clayton Library. Interested in riding on the bus? Contact Terri Meyers at [publicity@txbayareagen.org](mailto:publicity@txbayareagen.org) to reserve your spot. Meet at the Freeman Library, 16616 Diana Ln, Houston, 1/7/26 at 9:15am to catch a ride on the bus!! Bring your own lunch!



## HPL Clayton Library for Genealogical Research FamilySearch Center

The FamilySearch Center at the Clayton Library Campus is open for research! Staff members are available to help you get started and to assist in locating books, microfilms, periodicals, and databases to further your research.

### Orientation to the Family History Research Center at the Clayton Library – Jan 24th, 10:00-11:30am,

Curious about your family history? We offer a genealogy workshop where you can learn how to uncover your ancestors' stories. Begin with a short video introduction, followed by a guided tour of our extensive genealogy collection. Afterward, stay for one-on-one assistance from our expert staff as you dive into your own research and start piecing together your family tree.

Why you should attend – 1. Learn the basics: Get an introduction to genealogy research and available resources. 2. Expert guidance: Receive personalized help from experienced staff. Uncover your family history: Start exploring your ancestry with the tools and support you need. [More Info](#)



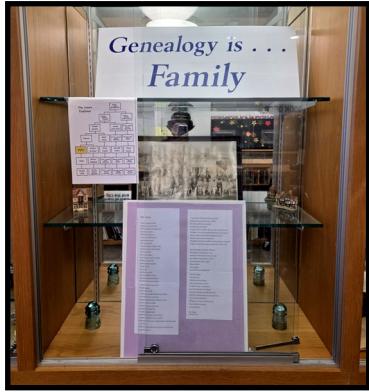
**"Write Out Loud" with the Family History Research Center, Jan 14th, 2:00pm – 4:00pm,** Our ancestors were as human as we are, which means they lived, laughed, loved, made mistakes, had triumphs, and tragedies. Join us at Clayton Library once a month for our new Special Interest Group "Write Out Loud," where we meet to work together to write out the stories that make our genealogies more than just a compilation of names, dates, and places. Each month will have a new "theme" to write about, so even though we'd like to build a "core" group of writers missing a meeting will not derail your progress. Use of a laptop or computer is helpful, but not necessary for group participation. [More Info](#)

Clayton Library Friends Partner Societies | The Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society | Texas Bay Area Genealogical Society |  
The Baytown Historical Preservation Association | Galveston County Genealogical Society | The German-Texan Heritage Society |  
The Greater Houston Jewish Genealogical Society | Hispanic Genealogical Society of Houston | The Houston Genealogical Forum |  
Houston History Alliance | The Humble Area Genealogical Society | League City Historical Society | The Matagorda County Genealogical Society |  
Texas Research Ramblers Genealogical Society | West Houston Area Genealogical Society



*Family History Research Center @ the Clayton Library, 5300 Caroline Street, Houston, Texas 77004*

# DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS



# Genealogy and AI

PRESENTED BY BAY AREA GENEALOGY SOCIETY OF TEXAS



## BAGS Membership Appreciation Seminar with Nicole Dyer

**Saturday, January 24, 2026, 1:00pm to 5:30pm**

Hybrid: In-person Friendswood Library or Online - Zoom Presentation

**In-person registration**

[REGISTER HERE](#)

**Zoom registration**

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Mark your calendar and save the date for our next **MEMBERS' ONLY SEMINAR!** Beginning at 1:00pm, the Texas Bay Area Genealogical Society will host a 3-session online and in-person seminar entitled *Genealogy and AI* with Nicole Dyer.

**Nicole Dyer** is a professional genealogist who specializes in Southern United States research and genetic genealogy. She is the creator of [FamilyLocket.com](https://FamilyLocket.com) and **Research Like a Pro** Genealogy Podcast. She co-authored *Research Like a Pro: A Genealogist's Guide* and *Research Like a Pro with DNA* with Diane Elders and is an instructor for the study groups of the same name. Nicole lectures at national and local conferences and institutes throughout the US. She holds a bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University in History Teaching. At Family Locket Genealogists, Nicole is a project manager, editor, and researcher. She is also a member of the Pima County Genealogy Society.

### Seminar Schedule

12:45p – 1:00p

1:00p – 2:15p

**Set Up** – Check your connection and print handouts BEFORE 1:00pm.

**Session 1 – AI Fundamentals and Responsibilities: A Practical Overview:**

*Learn how to select and effectively use leading AI tools including ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and Perplexity based on genealogical needs.*

2:15p – 2:30p

2:30p – 3:45p

**Break**

**Session 2 – Objectives, Analysis, and Research Planning with AI:**

*Discover how Artificial Intelligence streamlines genealogy research, from defining objectives to analysis and planning.*

3:45p – 4:00p

4:00p – 5:15p

**Break**

**Session 3 – Transcription with LLMs:**

*This hands-on class teaches genealogists how to use Large Language Models as transcription tools for historical documents.*

5:15p – 5:30p

**Q and A – Session Wrap-up with time for questions**

BAGS Members attend FREE in-person at the Friendswood Public Library or virtually on **Zoom**. Whether you plan to attend online or in person, please register for the meeting to receive instructions for attending and handouts

Not A BAGS member? **Join BAGS TODAY!** BAGS Membership is only \$25! You can become a member at the BAGS website <https://www.txbayareagen.org>.

In-Person registration ends 1/22/26. Please check the BAGS website for more information and a link to print the handouts!





# BAGS - Bay Area Genealogical Society

For the latest news and event updates,  
visit our website at [txbayareagen.org](http://txbayareagen.org)



January 2026

## Calendar of Events 2026

### JANUARY

5	10:00a 7:00p	Research Assistance #1 Research Assistance #2
10	2:00p	Research Session @ Freeman Library
12	10:00a 7:00p	Research Assistance #1 Research Assistance #2
15	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom and in-person)
19	10:00a 6:30p	Research Assistance #1 Research Assistance #2
20	10:00a	Research Session @ Friendswood FamilySearch Center
24	1:00p	BAGS Membership Appreciation Seminar – <i>Genealogy and AI</i> with Nicole Dyer (Zoom)
26	10:00a 6:30p	Research Assistance #1 BAGS Board Meeting (Zoom)
31	12:00p	BAGS Members Meeting Potluck, Kathleen Williams: <i>Full Text Search: Finding Hidden Records at FamilySearch.org</i>

### FEBRUARY

2	10:00a 7:00p	Research Assistance #1 Research Assistance #2
4	9:00a	Funeral Museum Trip
5	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom)
9	10:00a 7:00p	Research Assistance #1 Research Assistance #2
16	10:00a 7:00p	Research Assistance #1 Research Assistance #2
17	10:00a	Research Session @ Friendswood FamilySearch Center
19	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom and in-person)
23	10:00a 6:30p	Research Assistance #1 BAGS Board Meeting (Zoom)
27	7:00p	BAGS Members Meeting (Zoom) Cherokee Genealogy 101 – Aimee Rose Haynes

### MARCH

2	10:00a 7:00p	Research Assistance #1 Research Assistance #2
5	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom)
9	10:00a 7:00p	Research Assistance #1 Research Assistance #2
16	10:00a 7:00p	Research Assistance #1 Research Assistance #2
17	10:00a	Research Session @ Friendswood FamilySearch Center
19	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom and in-person)
23	10:00a 6:30p	Research Assistance #1 BAGS Board Meeting (Zoom)
27	7:00p	BAGS Members Meeting (Zoom) <i>From Clutter to Clean – Organize Digitize And Store Photos</i> – Allyson Maughan
29	4:00p	Meet 'n Munch - TBA

### APRIL

2	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom)
6	10:00a 7:00p	Research Assistance #1 Research Assistance #2
13	10:00a 7:00p	Research Assistance #1 Research Assistance #2
16	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom and in-person)
20	10:00a 6:30p	Research Assistance #1 BAGS Board Meeting (Zoom)
21	10:00a	Research Session @ Friendswood FamilySearch Center
25	12:00p	BAGS Members Meeting & Potluck
27	10:00a 7:00p	Research Assistance #1 Research Assistance #2

Coming February 4, 2026

Get on the bus with BAGS as we tour The National Museum of Funeral History!  
\$10 Admission and plan on Dutch-treat lunch at Cracker Barrel after the tour!  
Reserve your spot now with Terri Meyers at [publicity@txbayareagen.org](mailto:publicity@txbayareagen.org)