

# Bay Area Genealogical Society Newsletter

Volume 26 Issue 5  
MAY 2026



## BAGS General Meeting

May 29, 2026 at 7:00pm (Zoom)

Guest Speaker: Paula Stuart-Warren

*The Farmer in the Dell and in Many U.S. Records*

Live Virtual



One of Paula's favorite presentations is "*The Farmer in the Dell – and in Many U.S. Records.*" She tells about many resources related to finding the history of farm families and the farm itself, many more resources than most people realize! This session will demonstrate the extensive records and places for learning more about ancestral farmers, ranchers, families, and where they resided in the U.S and Canada. No matter the present status of the property, there are ways to learn more about the people, their business, and related activities. Today's online finding aids lead to more records that you will crave to research.

**Paula Stuart-Warren** is an internationally recognized genealogical educator, researcher, and consultant focusing on unusual resources, manuscripts, methodology, and analyzing records. She specializes in the Midwestern states, Native American research and enrollment issues, the WPA, and railroad records. She has spent extensive time at libraries, courthouses, libraries, state archives, historical societies, and U.S. National Archives locations. She is an instructor for the GRIP Genealogy Institute and has presented courses and sessions for Ancestry Academy, Institute of Genealogical and Historical Research, Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy, Texas Institute of Genealogical Research, and continues to present seminars and webinars across the U.S. and Canada. She was a member of the Board of Directors of the Federation of Genealogical Societies, of the Minnesota Genealogical Society, an officer of the Association of Professional Genealogists, and has been a Board-Certified Genealogist since 1988. She descends from eight ancestral countries into many regions of the U.S. Her website and blog are at <http://genealogybypaula.com> and is enthusiastic about sharing knowledge and continuing education.

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### *Special Points of Interest*

*Meet Your BAGS 2nd VP*

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## Bay Area Genealogical Society

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## Renewing Research Goals: Embracing New Tools and Opportunities



Many of you are familiar with the saying, “April showers bring May flowers.” As the seasons quickly transition from spring to summer and flowers begin to bloom, it is also an excellent time to renew your research goals and objectives. If you have previously encountered a brick wall in your research and decided to take a break, now may be the perfect moment to revisit those challenges.

With the help of **Full-Text Search**, you may uncover documents that have eluded you for years. Over the past few years, a significant number of documents have been scanned and indexed, making valuable information more accessible than ever before. This advancement offers a renewed opportunity to break through research barriers and discover new insights.

To support you in utilizing Full-Text Search, we are hosting an Education Spotlight, **6/13**, using [FamilySearch.org](http://FamilySearch.org). We encourage you to **bring your own data** and **electronic device** so that our team can assist you in researching your ancestors. Volunteers will be available and eager to help you learn how to use this powerful tool, which may prove to be the key to overcoming your brick wall. Additional details about the Education Spotlight can be found on page 4 of this newsletter.

See you there,  
*Teresa Rundell*

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## MEET YOUR BAGS 2ND VP – PROGRAMMING



**Rebecca “Becky” Wilson Jones** considers herself a Texan. Most of her residency has been in various corners of Texas—the Texas Panhandle, El Paso, and Houston areas—with a few years in neighboring New Mexico and Louisiana. Her background began in corporate, leisure & group travel planning, and then evolved into a career as a corporate event planner and exhibition project manager for a Houston-based global energy company. She served as Director of Professional Education for the Houston chapter of Meeting Professionals International for four years.

Becky has always been interested in family stories and historical events but really started documenting her family tree almost 20 years ago after her father's death. Since then, she has discovered a family connection to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of the United States, John N. Garner III, a Democratic politician and lawyer from Texas, known as “Cactus Jack.” Her challenge now is to research the family lore that her paternal grandfather’s given name, “Cole Younger,” was chosen because his grandparents provided food and rest to the notorious Cole Younger and Jesse James gangs as they passed through southwestern Missouri after the Civil War.

DNA tests have indicated that Becky’s ethnicity is primarily of British Isles origin, with 10% divided between Scandinavia and Germanic Europe. Her genealogical history reflects family arrival in the colonies, with migrations to the southeast and then westward.

~ continued on page 3

# BAGS OPPORTUNITIES

## 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

May 25th

June 22nd

July 27th

Aug 24th

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 \(public page\)](#)



## 10 Must Haves for Genealogy and Family History Success



Whether you're just "dabbling" in genealogy and researching your roots, or you've become a "hard core lifer" obsessed with the hunt, there are basic skills that family historians of all levels have in common. Is There a "Right Way" to Do Genealogy? Since we don't live in a "black and white" world where there are only two ways of doing something, there are basics that should be learned so we aren't just "playing around." Sites like Ancestry have "gamified" genealogy with shaking leaves and hints, but are you really building a legacy? Let's review the 10 Must Haves that will help you find success –and sanity – whether researching online or in-person. This Thomas MacEntee webinar is available to [Members Only](#) on the [Genealogy Learning Collection](#) page on the BAGS website!

~2nd VP: continued from page 2.



Becky and her husband, Travis, have been blessed with three adult children and nine grandchildren. When not attending their gymnastic meets and other events, she enjoys sharing her genealogical skills with family and friends as the owner of **Ancestral Research with Rebecca**. She has been a BAGS member for several years and has served on the BAGS Board and several committees.

## VOLUNTEER

FOR THE BAGS 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
PLANNING COMMITTEE!



CONTACT

REBECCA BRIGGS @

RRW77004@GMAIL.COM

OR (713) 401-7718

## SAVE THE DATE!

BAGS is making plans now to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the society on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026!

We need your input to make this gala event thoroughly enjoyable for all members, old and new alike!

If you'd like to help with the planning, contact [Rebecca Briggs](#) and she'll get you plugged in!



# RESEARCH ASSISTANCE GROUPS

## EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT

June 13th

10:00am – 12:00pm at the [Freeman Library](#)

This spotlight workshop will be introduced by a brief presentation, followed by a hands-on “how to” application of information. Handouts will also be available for download.

JUNE is a members requested, in-depth dive into MORE Full-Text Search at [FamilySearch.org](#) from 10:00am-12:00pm. Presentation details are under the **Members Only**> **Education Spotlight** section of the [BAGS website](#). A *Full-Text Search* article is available on [pages 5](#) of this newsletter.

## RESEARCH ASSISTANCE – MONDAYS

**Session #1 10:00am-12:00pm**

with [Reneé Ball](#) & [George Porterfield](#)

**Session #2 Mondays, 7:00- 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 *Zoom* links 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 Assistance



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!

# Full-Text Search at FamilySearch.org *by ChatGPT*

Full-text search at [FamilySearch](https://www.familysearch.org) has become one of the most powerful tools available to genealogists, transforming how historical records are discovered and analyzed. Unlike traditional indexed searches, which rely on pre-extracted names and fields, full-text search allows users to search every readable word within a digitized document. This capability opens up vast possibilities, particularly for records that have not been fully indexed or where key details were omitted during indexing.

At its core, full-text search uses advanced technologies such as optical character recognition (OCR) and, increasingly, artificial intelligence to convert scanned images of historical documents into searchable text. Once processed, users can enter **keywords—names, places, occupations, or even phrases**—and retrieve documents where those exact terms appear anywhere in the text. This is especially useful when researching individuals who may not appear in standard indexes, such as witnesses, neighbors, or extended family members mentioned within a record.

One of the greatest advantages of full-text search is its ability to uncover hidden connections. For example, a researcher might search for a surname and discover it not only in vital records but also in land deeds, probate files, court cases, or newspaper clippings. These mentions often provide context that indexed records alone cannot, such as relationships, property ownership, or social standing within a community. As a result, full-text search supports a more holistic approach to genealogy, encouraging users to explore beyond basic birth, marriage, and death records. ~ *article continued on page 6.*

**JOIN US!**  
**May's Meet 'n Munch**  
**May 31st, 4:00pm**  
**Red River BBQ & Grill**  
**1911 E Main St,**  
**League City, TX 77573**



~ **Full-Text Search** continued from page 5.

However, full-text search is not without its challenges. The accuracy of OCR can vary widely depending on the quality of the original document. Handwritten records, faded ink, unusual fonts, or damaged pages can lead to transcription errors, meaning that some words may not be correctly recognized. To compensate, researchers should use flexible search strategies, including variant spellings, partial words, and wildcard searches. For instance, searching for “John\*” might capture John, Jonathan, or Johnson, while trying multiple spelling variations of a surname can yield better results.

Another important consideration is that full-text search works best when combined with traditional research methods. While it can quickly surface relevant documents, it may also return a large number of irrelevant results. Narrowing searches by location, date range, or record type can significantly improve accuracy. Additionally, browsing image collections manually – especially when you know the approximate location and time period – remains an essential skill.

**FamilySearch** continues to expand its full-text capabilities, adding more digitized collections and improving search accuracy over time. Many of these records are freely accessible, making the platform an invaluable resource for both beginner and experienced genealogists. As the technology evolves, full-text search is likely to play an even greater role in uncovering previously hidden historical information.

In summary, full-text search represents a major advancement in genealogical research. By enabling users to search the entirety of a document’s text, it reveals connections and details that traditional indexing might miss. When used thoughtfully – alongside careful analysis and flexible search techniques – it can dramatically enhance the depth and breadth of family history research.

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## Let’s Hear From You – Monthly Members’ Questions!

In order to make your BAGS newsletter be a bit more hands-on and members interactive, the BAGS board would love to hear your responses!

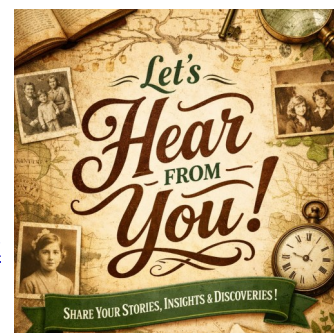
Based on **April’s** General Members Meeting presentation, [please use this link](#) to answer the brief questions.

Here’s the **March** presentation questions and answers!

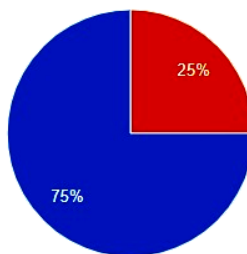
### *2. What Steps are you doing to accomplish your plan?*

Waiting for those "too HOT to go outside" days to finish digitizing and sorting, gathering photos from various relatives and documenting time/names/location, and collecting photos and organizing.

### *3. What is the oldest photo you have to digitize? 1870, 1893, 1914*



1. Did the March Presentation, "**From Clutter to Clean: Organize, Digitize and Store Photos**" by Allyson Maughan inspire you to make a plan for digitizing your photos?



● YES! - I'm making a plan!  
● Yes - but stuck on creating a plan.  
● Not at this time

# MAY RESEARCH | LIBRARY UPDATES

## Friendswood FamilySearch Center

### In-Person Research Session

**TUESDAYS: May 19, Jun 16, Jul 21, Aug 18**  
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:

**Wednesdays** 7:00pm – 9:00pm  
**Saturdays** 10:00am – 2:00pm (NEW)



### 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

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

## 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.

**Navigating the Darker Side of Genealogy** by Lori Samuelson, **MAY 15, 1:00–2:00p**, Uncovering family secrets can be unsettling. Genealogical research often reveals stories that challenge assumptions, reshape identities, and stir powerful emotions. Navigating the Darker Side of Genealogy explored how researchers can responsibly and ethically handle difficult discoveries while maintaining compassion for the living. [More info!](#)

**Write Out Loud** (In-Person), **MAY 20, 10:30a–12:00p** Our ancestors were as human as we are, which means they lived, laughed, loved, made mistakes, had triumphs, and had 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. [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*

# BAGS BUSINESS | INFORMATION

## 2025 BAGS Yearbook Is Ready!

You can get your copy of the 2025 edition of the BAGS Yearbook on the [BAGS website](#) under the **Members Only** section, scroll down to **Yearbook**, then click on **2025** to **download** your very own copy!

## 2026 BAGS OFFICERS

### President

Teresa Rundell

[president@txbayareagen.org](mailto:president@txbayareagen.org)

### First Vice President

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### Treasurer

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### Statement of Activity as of April 1, 2026

Checking Account	\$4,969.76
Savings Account	\$2,187.43
CDs	\$10,237.18
PayPal	\$48.02
<b>Total Monetary Assets</b>	<b>\$17,442.39</b>

### IN MEMORIAM

Our condolences to the family and friends of Robert "Bob" Wegner Jr. Bob joined BAGS in 2010, becoming a Life Member in 2015 as well as accepting the position of BAGS Registrar.

A lifelong learner, Bob immersed himself in genealogy, tracing family histories with meticulous care.

## Welcome

to our **NEWEST**  
BAGS Members  
**David Brown**  
and **Ric Slater**

### 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) – Rebecca "Becky" Jones

Ideas for BAGS advertising: [publicity@txbayareagen.org](mailto:publicity@txbayareagen.org) – Terri Myers

Not receiving emails? [emailcoord@txbayareagen.org](mailto:emailcoord@txbayareagen.org) – Todd Roberts

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.



**APRIL 28 – MAY 16, 2026**  
**THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION EXPERIENCE**

HOSTED BY

**Sam Houston Chapter, NSDAR**

and

**Clear Lake City-County Freeman Library**

**16616 Diana Lane, Houston**

The Daughters of the American Revolution and the American Battlefield Trust have collaborated to provide an exciting exhibit that invites you to step into history and explore the people, places, and events that shaped our country. The display panels and interactive kiosks use storytelling and illustration to connect visitors with the people and places that shaped the birth of our nation.

***FREE EXHIBIT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC***  
**during regular library business hours**

Opening Night Reception  
Monday, April 27  
6 p.m.





# BAGS - Bay Area Genealogical Society

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



MAY 2026

## Calendar of Events 2026

### MAY

4	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	7:00p	Research Assistance #2
7	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom)
11	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	7:00p	Research Assistance #2
18	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	7:00p	Research Assistance #2
19	10:00a	Research Session @ Friendswood FamilySearch Center
21	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom and in-person)
25	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	6:30p	BAGS Board Meeting (Zoom)
29	7:00p	BAGS Members Meeting – <i>The Farmer in the Dell... and Many US Records</i> – Paula Stuart Warren
31	4:00p	Meet 'n Munch – <i>Red River BBQ</i>

### JUNE

1	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	7:00p	Research Assistance #2
4	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom)
8	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	7:00p	Research Assistance #2
13	10:00a	Education Spotlight @ Freeman Library
15	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	7:00p	Research Assistance #2
16	10:00a	Research Session @ Friendswood FamilySearch Center
18	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom and in-person)
22	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	6:30p	BAGS Board Meeting (Zoom)
26	7:00p	BAGS Members Meeting (Zoom) – TBA
28	4:00p	Meet 'n Munch – <i>Red River BBQ</i>
29	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	7:00p	Research Assistance #2

### JULY

2	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom)
6	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	7:00p	Research Assistance #2
13	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	7:00p	Research Assistance #2
16	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom and in-person)
20	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	7:00p	Research Assistance #2
21	10:00a	Research Session @ Friendswood FamilySearch Center
26	4:00p	Meet 'n Munch – <i>Red River BBQ</i>
27	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	6:30p	BAGS Board Meeting (Zoom)
31	7:00p	BAGS Members Meeting (Zoom) <i>Preserving the Greatest Generation: WWII Genealogy</i> – Courtney Carr

### AUGUST

3	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	7:00p	Research Assistance #2
6	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom)
10	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	7:00p	Research Assistance #2
17	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	7:00p	Research Assistance #2
18	10:00a	Research Session @ Friendswood FamilySearch Center
20	1:30p	Writing SIG (Zoom and in-person)
24	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	6:30p	BAGS Board Meeting (Zoom)
29	12:00p	BAGS Members Meeting & Potluck
30	4:00p	Meet 'n Munch – <i>Red River BBQ</i>
31	10:00a	Research Assistance #1
	7:00p	Research Assistance #2