

February 2025  
Volume 25  
Issue 2



# Bay Area Genealogical Society Newsletter



## BAGS General Meeting

Friday, February 28th, 7:00pm (Zoom)

John Sellers presents – *Researching Your  
Ancestor's Plot of Dirt:*

*The Adventures of Courthouse Land Research*

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### *Special Points of Interest*

*Social Media Links*  
*BAGS Partnerships*  
*Clayton Library Partner Links*  
*FamilyTree Maker Classes*

**John Sellers** is a fifth generation native of Hopkins County, Texas. He has been doing genealogical research since 1985. His favorite area of research is in the courthouse. He has visited courthouses in several southern states and has conducted extensive research in both Texas and Louisiana. John will be discussing courthouse records research concerning land records, with a focus on how to use deed indexes to document proof of relationships. Affidavits of heirship and civil court records regarding land will also be addressed, along with an analysis of actual documents and their contents. Legal terminology and their meanings will be discussed as well as other documents in your land research.

John is an active member of the Hopkins County Genealogical Society, has served fifteen years on the executive board and is currently the HCCGS President. He has presented at the FGS National Conference, NGS Conference, and was an instructor for TIGR, IGHR, Samford University and University of Georgia. John has also been the featured speaker for more than 70 all day seminars located in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, New Mexico, and Oklahoma.

Registration for this meeting is located on the [BAGS website](#)

# MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2025

**It's time to renew your membership** with the TX Bay Area Genealogical Society (BAGS)! The new membership year started January 1, 2025. You can renew your membership anytime between November 1, 2024, and February 28, 2025, 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**.
- √ The **opportunity to serve the Society** by joining one of our committees.

## 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).



KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
RENEW YOUR  
BAGS  
MEMBERSHIP



# MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS GROUPS

## EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT PRESENTATIONS

February 25, 1:30pm, Friendswood Library – **Fold 3**

March 19, 10:30am, Friendswood Library – **HistoryGeo**

At an **Education Spotlight presentation**, topics are introduced with a brief presentation, followed by hands-on “how to,” and then attendees can practice what has been presented. Several hosting members will be on hand to help attendees and a handout will be provided. **Education Spotlight** meetings will be held at the **Friendswood Public Library**, 416 S Friendswood Dr., Friendswood, TX 77546.

## Online Research – Session #1 & #2

**#1 Mondays, 10:00am to 12:00pm**

with **Reneé Ball & George Porterfield**

**#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 MHM sessions via *Zoom*. Participants share their screens and demonstrate research finds. Details for connecting to a *Zoom* MHM link are available on the [Members Helping Members page](#).



## NEW Genealogy Writing Special Interest Group



The BAGS Writing Special Interest Group will be meeting **virtually, via Zoom**, 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. See page 5 for more details!

## 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 on BAGS [Members Helping Members page](#).

Our BAGS German Special Interest Group is **currently on hiatus**. For questions/information you may contact **George Porterfield**. Members are encouraged to utilize our other [Members Helping Members](#) events for further research help with German Ancestry.



## Still Need Help?

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

# WRITING SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (NEW)



The first gathering of the newly formed BAGS' *Genealogy Writing Special Interest Group* (SIG) met in person on Thursday, 16 January, at Friendswood Public Library. In addition to Rebecca "Becky" Jones, coordinator of the SIG, eight BAGS' members were in attendance, eager to tell a story of their ancestors.

After a short presentation to review hints for starting a project, each individual spent the remainder of the two-hour session writing on their project. Becky conducted one-on-one conversations with each attendee to better understand their expectations for participating in the group. By learning details on the status of each individual's current or future writing project, she plans to tailor future sessions with helpful hints and tips on genealogical writing that are more specifically designed to the group's needs.

Future sessions will be on the first (*virtual only*) and third Thursdays (*virtual or in-person option*) of each month from 10:30am for two hours. **All current Writing SIG members and those wanting to join must REGISTER to receive the access link to the virtual sessions.** Note: Contact *Rebecca "Becky" Jones* if attendance in-person is the option you prefer on the third Thursday of the month. She will provide location details.

Link to REGISTER -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/SBOwFQ7xQsqowkRFO1VgkQ>

For more information contact Becky Jones at:

[vicepresident2@txbayareagen.org](mailto:vicepresident2@txbayareagen.org)

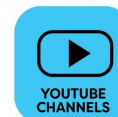
UPCOMING DATES **Feb. 6 & 20 - Mar 6 & 20 - Apr 3 & 17 - May 1 & 15 - Jun 5 & 19**

Come prepared to write! Bring your research notes, files, photos, or any items to guide your writing flow. This is a designated writing time only!



Genealogy CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ConferenceKeeper.org



# BAGS EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

## Education Spotlight Presentation



### Fold3

Tuesday, February 25th, 1:30-3:30pm  
Friendswood Public Library

Fold3 features premier collections of original military records. These records include the stories, photos, and personal documents of the men and women who served in the military. Many of the records come from the U.S. National archives, The National Archives of the U.K. and other international record.



Join BAGS members Kathleen Williams and Fred Roe as they help us learn to access Fold3, navigate through its various records, and the history behind it. Many local libraries provide free remote access to this excellent website – so remember to bring your laptop and your Friendswood Public Library card!

Take advantage of these weeks confined indoors by studying your family's history. Here's a genealogy task for February that will keep you cozy while moving your research forward.



### Focus on Marriage Records



With Valentine's Day in mind, make sure you've fully documented all the marriages in your family tree. Marriage certificates often contain information about both the bride and groom and previous generations: names of parents, ancestral birthplaces and (especially) maiden names.

Fortunately, laws for accessing recent marriage records are generally laxer than they are for birth and death records. Non-direct descendants might only have to wait 50 years from the date of a marriage to request records, whereas the restriction may be longer (75 or even 100 years) for birth and death certificates. Marriage records were also generally kept earlier than other vital events, helpful when you're researching in a place with relatively late vital-registration mandates.

Don't think only about marriage certificates and licenses, however. Weddings generated a variety of documents: marriage banns (published in newspapers or by the sponsoring church ahead of the ceremony) or bonds (paid by the groom or his family), for example. Take some time to learn about marriage customs in your ancestor's time, place and culture to see what may be available.

Also look for mementos kept at home, such as:

- Newspaper announcements
- Photo albums
- Wedding attire, especially dresses and bouquets
- Gifts that include the wedding date or name of bride and groom



You likely have an ancestor who married multiple times. Play around with your preferred genealogy software or online family tree to learn how to document blended families and second (or third, or fourth) marriages. ~ from *FamilyTree Magazine*, <https://familytreemagazine.com/projects/february-genealogy-activities/>



## 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)

### 2025 Meetings

February 24

March 24

April 21

May 26

June 23



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



Follow BAGS on Facebook!

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

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



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

# FEBRUARY RESEARCH | LIBRARY UPDATES



## Friendswood FamilySearch Center

In-Person MHM Research Session

**TUESDAYS: Feb 18th, Mar 18th, Apr 15th (NEW DAY and TIME)**

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

Now meeting the 3rd Tuesday of each month! This MHM session is open to all BAGS members for research. The Friendswood FamilySearch Center is located at *505 Deseret Dr*, in Friendswood. 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.*



## HPL Clayton Library for Genealogical Research (FSC) Events

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. You can even visit the [HPL YouTube](#) channel and [Clayton Friends](#) channel!

**When Worlds Collide: Resolving Conflicts in Genealogical Records – Feb 18, 10:30am – 12:00pm**

Alex Haley's book "Roots," propelled many African Americans to research their family history. As genealogists, we are laser-focused on finding our ancestors. But have you ever wondered what family traits you inherited from them? This session will focus on inherited family traits and why it's important to pass this information on to relatives. Debra Blacklock-Sloan is a fifth-generation Texan and native Houstonian. She is also a self-employed historical researcher and professional genealogist. Debra is the lead docent, education outreach and historical research director for the Freedmen's Town R.B.H. Yates Museum, Inc. In these positions, she has documented the rich history of Freedmen's Town for 20 years.

Use this link for [more information](#).

**CLF Book Sale and Scanning Saturdays – Feb 15, 10:30am – 4:30pm**, Call 832-393-2600 to reserve your spot to scan photos and documents. Bring a flash drive to save all your scans! (*repeating events*)

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*

**Begins  
Tuesday, February 11**

# Genealogy Software Classes

## Learn to use Family Tree Maker 2019 Software presented by Renee Ball

Whether you are a beginner or have been using the software a long time, there may be something for you in this 24-week course which will build on each session.

**2nd and 4th Tuesday each month  
10:30 am to 12:00 pm**

**Q&A sessions on the 3rd Thursday each month  
10:30 to 11:00am**

### Learn how to

- Start a new tree, import an old tree or download a tree you have been working on from Ancestry into Family Tree Maker.
- Add people and relationships, create timelines, add facts about ancestors.
- Use the maps to see where people migrated in your family, add citations and sources to documents, use publish features to create reports and charts of your family and much more.
- Use the Web Search feature to find information on your family and merge information into your tree.
- Use color coding and filters.
- Learn how to share, back up, and resolve errors in your tree.

You are encouraged to bring your laptop or mobile device to participate. Renee will share tips and tricks for beginners and advanced genealogists.



## Friendswood Library

416 S Friendswood Dr, Friendswood, TX 77546

281-482-7135 / [www.friendswood.lib.tx.us](http://www.friendswood.lib.tx.us)







# BAGS - Bay Area Genealogical Society

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



February 2025

## Calendar of Events - 2025

### FEBRUARY

- 3 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
7:00p Members Helping Members #2
- 6 10:30a Writing SIG – new (Zoom)
- 10 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
7:00p Members Helping Members #2
- 15 9:00a Clayton Library Day
- 17 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
7:00p Members Helping Members #2
- 18 10:00a MHM, Friendswood FSC (new day/time)
- 20 10:30a Writing SIG – new (Zoom and in-person)
- 23 4:00p Meet 'n Munch – **Red River BBQ**
- 24 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
6:30p BAGS Board Meeting (Zoom)
- 25 1:30p Education Spotlight, **Friendswood Library: Fold3**
- 28 7:00p BAGS Members Meeting (Zoom)  
*Researching Your Ancestor's Plot of Land: Adventures in Courthouse Records w/John Sellers*

### MARCH

- 3 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
7:00p Members Helping Members #2
- 6 10:30a Writing SIG (Zoom)
- 10 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
7:00p Members Helping Members #2
- 17 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
7:00p Members Helping Members #2
- 18 10:00a MHM, Friendswood FSC (new day/time)
- 19 10:30a Education Spotlight, **Friendswood Library: HistoryGeo**
- 20 10:30a Writing SIG (Zoom)
- 24 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
6:30p BAGS Board Meeting (Zoom)
- 28 7:00p BAGS Members Meeting (Zoom)  
*Invisible No More: Revealing the Lives of Our Female Ancestors w/ Stephanie O'Connell*
- 30 4:00p Meet 'n Munch – **La Brisa, League City**
- 31 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
7:00p Members Helping Members #2

### APRIL

- 3 10:30a Writing SIG – new (Zoom)
- 7 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
7:00p Members Helping Members #2
- 9 7:00p Education Spotlight: **Online Library Resources** (Zoom)

### APRIL (cont.)

- 14 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
7:00p Members Helping Members #2
- 15 10:00a MHM, Friendswood FSC (new day/time)
- 17 10:30a Writing SIG (Zoom)
- 21 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
6:30p BAGS Board Meeting (Zoom)
- 26 12:00p BAG Members Potluck @ **University Baptist Church: GenZ + Genealogy - Getting the Next Generations Interested in Genealogy with Carl Smith**
- 28 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
7:00p Members Helping Members #2

### MAY

- 1 10:30a Writing SIG (Zoom)
- 5 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
7:00p Members Helping Members #2
- 12 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
7:00p Members Helping Members #2
- 15 10:30a Writing SIG (Zoom and in-person)
- 19 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
7:00p Members Helping Members #2
- 20 10:00a MHM, Friendswood FSC
- 25 4:00p Meet 'n Munch – **Kings BierHaus**
- 26 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
6:30p BAGS Board Meeting (Zoom)
- 30 7:00p BAGS Members Meeting: **TBA**

### JUNE

- 2 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
7:00p Members Helping Members #2
- 5 10:30a Writing SIG (Zoom)
- 9 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
7:00p Members Helping Members #2
- 16 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
6:30p Members Helping Members #2
- 17 10:00a MHM, Friendswood FSC
- 19 10:30a Writing SIG (Zoom and in-person)
- 23 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
6:30p BAGS Board Meeting (Zoom)
- 27 7:00p BAGS Members Meeting: **TBA**
- 29 4:00p Meet 'n Munch – **Mia's Table**
- 30 10:00a Members Helping Members #1  
7:00p Members Helping Members #2

