



TEXAS RESEARCH RAMBLERS GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Bryan-College Station, Texas

Volume XVII, No. 3 March 15, 2007

www.texasresearchramblers.org

OFFICERS for 2006-2007

President: Daniel Castillo
 Vice-President: Mary Elizabeth Dresser
 Secretary: Georgianne Bigam
 Treasurer: Sue Foy
 Corresponding Secretary: Helen Wolf

LAST MEETING

Dan Castillo called the Rambler meeting to order at the Annex Fellowship Hall on February 28, 2007. We welcomed visitors Carol Hasten and Harvey Oswald as well as new members Lillian Beasley, Rae Wiley, and Hazel Smith. Treasurer Sue Foy reported that as of February 28, 2007, the Ramblers had \$7,049.71 in the funds. Following committee reports, the business portion ended and the program began.

Speakers Kristine Roe, Deputy Tax Collector, and Gerald L. (Buddy) Winn, County Tax Assessor/Collector, both of Brazos County, presented useful information into what information at the courthouse was and was not available for the public. For genealogists, Kristy and Buddy explained three different areas of interest:

1. Poll Lists
2. Motor Vehicle Registration
3. Land and Tax Records

Poll lists in paper format from 1998-2006 and poll lists in electronic format from 2002-2006 are available. The speakers showed us examples of an official list of registered voters and an example of voter registration by gender and ethnicity. Voter registration information is available to the public, but the Social Security number and phone number are deleted from the copy given to the pub-

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Kristine Roe

The Motor Vehicle Registration information will be valuable information for those interested in antique cars.

Land and Tax Records are also available. The speakers gave us an example of a copy of a handwritten list from an 1879 Abstract book that included a person's name, acreage, and value for rendering of taxes. In addition, Mr. Winn passed around a book titled *Abstract Book: 1863-1866, Brazos County Tax Assessor-Collector*, transcribed by Ruth J. Hary and Janis J. Hunt. The listings included the owners' horses, cattle, slaves, oxen, poll, hogs, wagons, and even an ambulance. What a gem!

Mr. Winn pointed out that as the elected County Tax Assessor, he is liable for hot checks, which were prevalent in the 1980's.

Thank you, Kristine and Buddy, for enlightening us on what is available for genealogists at the Court House.



NEXT MEETING DATE AND PROGRAM

Our March 28, 2007, meeting will feature Aaron Hold, Southwest Division/Fort Worth, National Archives and Records Administration. Several people have sent Jim Boone questions they wish Mr. Holt to address.

Also we will vote on an amendment of the Research Rambler By-Laws. President Castillo sent this information to you on February 23, 2007, with explanations.

Article IV, Section 3, as amended, shall read:

- A. Officers of the Society will serve from September 1 through August 31.
- B. The President and Corresponding Secretary will serve a two year term, commencing with the 2007 election of officers.
- C. The Vice-President and Recording Secretary will serve a one year term for the period September 1, 2007, through August 31, 2008. The Vice-President will serve a two year term, commencing with the 2008 election of officers.
- D. The Treasurer will serve a three year term commencing with the 2007 election of officers.

FUTURE SEMINARS AND TRIPS

Every **3rd Wednesday** of the month: Computer Genealogy Users Group will meet at the Exit Teen Center, 1600 Rock Prairie Rd., at 9:30 a.m. Everyone is invited to eat at a local restaurant after the meeting.

Mark your calendar: March 21, 2007

Every **last Wednesday** of the month: Research Ramblers will meet at the Annex Fellowship Hall of the A&M United Methodist Church, 417 University Dr. in College Station at 9:30 a.m. Everyone is invited to eat at a local restaurant after the meeting. **Mark your calendar: March 28, 2007.**

Every **4th Monday, Roots Magic Users** will meet at the Bryan Public Library on the second floor from 9:30-11:00 a.m. **Mark your calendar: March 26, 2007**

For workshops around the state go to www.rootsweb.com/~txgenweb/

which will give you the full information on seminars/conferences around the state.

1. The Williamson County Genealogical Society on **March 17, 2007**, in Round Rock, Texas (<http://www.rootsweb.com/~txwcgs/index.htm>)
2. The Genealogical Society of Kendall County (Boerne) on **April 14, 2007**, in Boerne, Texas (<http://www.rootsweb.com/~txgskc/>).

Contact Mary Elizabeth Dresser if you wish to join the Ramblers on the following trips:

August 12-19, 2007: Ft. Wayne, Indiana, Allen County Library

October 14-21, 2007: Salt Lake City, Utah, Family History Library

FYI: Orientation for Genealogists

As a follow-up to Session I and II Orientation for Genealogists, Session III will be held on **March 20 or March 22, 2007**, at the Carnegie History Center, 2nd floor. Mentors from the Rambler group will be present to help with your research on both dates. You can come to the back door at 9:30 near Carnegie Alley, where you can park. If you have gone to the www.bcslibrary.org website before class in order to get a list of the call numbers and book titles at Carnegie, you will save yourself some time. Be sure and call Sue Foy (846-7392) or e-mail her at bsfoy2@suddenlink.net

Future plans are to go on field trips to Clayton Library in Houston and Montgomery County Library in Conroe.

SUCCESS STORIES



This month's success story is about the Orientation Sessions for Genealogists. Session I was held February 20, 2007, at the home of Sue Foy. Leaders included **Georgianne Bigam**, who presented information on how to enter information about yourself and your family on a pedigree chart and family group sheet as well as the date format (20 Feb 2007) ;

Gail Sewell, who covered the topic on finding information in family bibles, letters, journals, birth and death certificates;

Mary Elizabeth Dresser, who covered the protocol of writing letters to relatives, courthouses, and libraries; and **Sue Foy**, who presented information on helpful web sites, which offered keys to organizing your family history, including filing, sorting, and keeping up with the paper work.



Websites they used as a basis for presentations include the following:

www.familysearch.org Click on "Getting Started"

www.genealogy.com Click on "Learning Center" and the click on "Getting Started" and "Getting Organized."

www.dearmyrtle.com Click on "Lessons" and click on "Beginning Genealogy Lessons" and "Getting Organized."

Session II was at the Computer Lab at Bryan Library on March 6, 2007, where the teachers covered how to research the Clayton Library web site and the Bryan+College Station Libraries web site.



Another learning situation was taking place at the **Computer Users Group** meeting on **February 21st**. Here **Bob Cohen** is showing his audience how to use shortcut keys on the computer. As part of the audience, **Jane Maxwell** is picking up ideas to use when she gets home.

Everybody is a winner whether we are teaching or learning. Like the old saying goes, "Live and learn, and pass it on."

HISTORICAL MOMENT

When did electricity come to your home? Though most Texas cities and larger towns had enjoyed electrical power for decades, rural Texas was still largely without it in 1935, writes Staci Semrad in her article, "Rural Texas See the Light" in the August 2006 issue of *Texas Co-op Power* magazine, pp. 7-11.

City and country life stood in stark contrast.

Urban women washed clothes using washing machines while farm women bent over tubs and washboards.

A farmer milked and watered his cows by hand and hoped the milk wagon would pick up and deliver his unrefrigerated product before it spoiled.

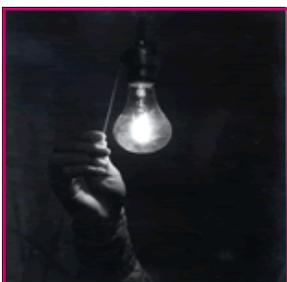
On the farm before 1935, lighting was like in the picture below.



<http://www.livinghistory.org>

One of the most important dates in rural America's history is May 21, 1936

On this date President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Rural Electrification Act that spurred the organization of rural electric cooperatives nationwide. These cooperatives were able to borrow funds from the newly formed Rural Electrification Administration (REA) which is known today as the Rural Utility Service (RUS). The funds borrowed enabled construction of electric distribution lines that brought electricity to rural Americans who wanted electricity just like their urban friends

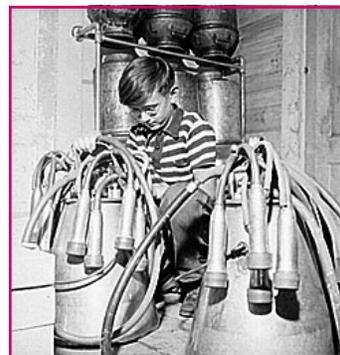


<http://images.google.com>

Henry Hanson's recollections of the REA was when his grandparents got electricity back in the 30's in the community of Ashwood in Matagorda County. He writes, "The wire was single strand insulated wire and was secured by a white insulator with a nail in the middle and grooves on both sides to clamp the electrical wire. It was 110 volt only...There was no bathroom in the house, each room had a single light in the ceiling, with only one on/off switch.

Only the living room and kitchen had electrical outlets in the wall."

Laverna Chicakel wrote of when electricity came to rural Minnesota where she lived on a dairy farm in the 1940's, when her dad bought his first milking machine. Another memory is of her father shaving with a mirror leaning up against an oil lamp.



When electric lines reached their farm in Vermont, Conrad Ormsbee's dad bought automatic milkers. FSA.

<http://images.google.com>

Gerald McCaskill remembers when he enlisted in the Navy in 1944 and he left home he did not have electricity. Later, when he was on leave and went home to Leon County, the Houston County Electric Co. had begun to furnish electricity to his family ranch.

He writes, “I remember at that time we had one drop light in every room. Up until that time we had no running water, etc. This was one of the greatest luxury for the people in the Trinity River bottom.



<http://images.google.com>

Mary Jo Lay vividly remembers “the day the lights came on.” She writes “It was just before the beginning of World War II. We lived on a farm about 20 miles south of Gainesville in Cooke County. We had a wind charger that provided battery power for one light in the living room and a radio. We were the only ones in the community that had wind power.

When the opportunity to receive electric service from the REA came, my daddy and some other men went about the community trying to get people to sign up for electricity...When all the paper work was done and the electric lines were completed, we were told that when the time was right, men from the company would come and turn on our electricity.



A NEW STOVE — When electricity came to rural Noble County in the late 1930s it allowed the farm housewife to replace her icebox with a refrigerator, and the wood stove with a clean, efficient electric range.

One cloudy Sunday afternoon in about 1940 my family was sitting in the living room of our house when suddenly the light came on. What a surprise! My brother confessed that he had been playing with the switches outside the house and must have turned the power on. A couple of hours later the men came to turn the electricity on.

We had already bought a General Electric refrigerator and could hardly wait for the ice to make. Mother made ice cream in the ice trays for us

<http://images.google.com>

almost every day. The minimum monthly charge for electricity at that time was \$1.50 per month. My mother said that we never went over the minimum.

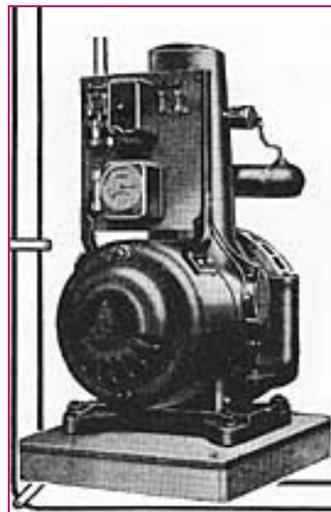
In 2003, I received a check for \$12.47 from ConServ Electric which is our member share of the profits of the company. I couldn't believe that we were still a part of the Rural Electric Cooperative.

Joel Watkins writes that the area he grew up in SE Arkansas got electricity around 1947 from the REA. Before then only 10% of the families living in rural areas had electricity. In 1939 the percentage had risen to 35%.

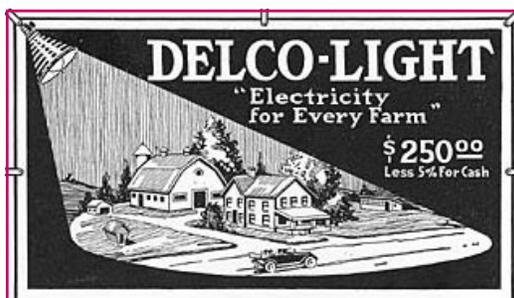
Jane Cohen remembers her family building a home in the country in Navarro County that would have electricity. There was this rectangular hole in the wall for the electricity switch. Jane got a candle to see in the wall. She doesn't remember if the candle got hot or if it got too close to her face, but the lighted candle fell in the hole inside the wall. She has wondered many years later if that wax candle is still in that wall.

Missie Collier writes, "When I was a child, we went to school in town (Waco) where my grandmother lived. Daddy built us a nice home on the farm, but there were no electric lines out there. Daddy had a Delco battery system built in the basement and our new home had lights. Every now and then the batteries had to be charged. We were quite a matter of interest in the area because we had electric lights. Much later rural electricity came to

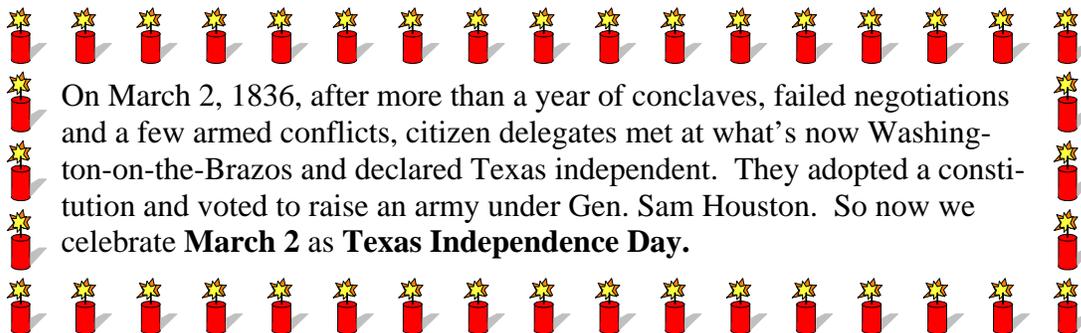
the area, but that was after the depression and the drought that impoverished the area."



<http://www.livinghistory.org>



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 On March 2, 1836, after more than a year of conclaves, failed negotiations and a few armed conflicts, citizen delegates met at what's now Washington-on-the-Brazos and declared Texas independent. They adopted a constitution and voted to raise an army under Gen. Sam Houston. So now we celebrate **March 2** as **Texas Independence Day**.

GENQUIP

Texas History Trivia: What Texas city has a Latin name? Corpus Christi

The Research Rambler Newsletter is published by the Texas Research Rambler Genealogical Society, P. O. Box 11195, College Station, Texas 77842-1195. Comments to Helen Kunz, [hkkunz at verizon.net](mailto:hkkunz@verizon.net)