



# TEXAS RESEARCH RAMBLERS GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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## LAST MEETING

Vice-President **Dean Duncan**, filling in for President Mary Elizabeth Dresser, opened the meeting on April 30 at Senior Circle. We had 52 members and 8 guests present at the meeting. Guests were **Nancy and Bud Schwart, Alice Luttbeg, Robert Lyon, Steven N. Morgan, Fred Brossart, Bill Vance, and Ruth Shaw.**



**Sue Foy**, Treasurer, and **Georgianne Bigam**, Secretary, are keeping our records straight. The Financial Report and Minutes were accepted and filed.

Kudos to **Ellen Horner** who recently received the DAR Texas Society American Heritage Award for Outstanding Women in Historic Preservation. Way to go, Ellen!

Following committee reports, Dean introduced our speaker, **Bruce Lockett**. TASA, the volunteer historical research group based in Vidor, Texas, has researched a number of historical steamboats in Texas and the coast of Louisiana. He concentrated on steamboats along the Trinity River, a.k.a., "River of Canoes" by the Indians.



**Bruce Lockett**,  
 Archaeological  
 Searcher and Director,  
 Texas Archaeological  
 Study Association or  
 TASA

Keel boats, which were flat boats with a house on top, were used to float logs along Texas waterways. Paddle wheelers appeared, but steamboats made their mark on river travel. Vendors brought their wares in the steamboats, which they sold to those people at the landings. When the water was high enough, a steamboat could get all the way to Dallas.

Two major dangers existed for steamboats: One danger came from Mother Nature, who provided snags, which punched holes into the boat, causing her to sink. A second danger came from Mankind's racing fever, which provided the captain's motivation to add fuel in the form of bacon slab and more wood to increase the speed of the steamboat. The problem was the boiler exploded when overheated. Because of the number of deaths, guidelines were put in place to control heat output after 1852.

The Battle of Sabine Pass of 1863 is not a battle the U.S. Navy talks about very much, because it is the only naval battle it lost. Major humiliation added to the picture is that the Pass was defended by only 47 Irishmen.

As a starting point in our own research, Mr. Lockett gave us a packet of information on Trinity River and Bay's shipwrecks, libraries, ship graveyards, Sabine River vessels with date and location of wreck, as well as list of steam boat captains.

The largest shipwreck found was the *Corazan De Hesus Santa Barbara*, which went down in 1766 at Hurricane Texas Point on the Sabine River. The find netted a valuable 183,000 silver pesos.

Some other shipwrecked boats are pictured below in Mr. Lockett's display.



An especially challenging search was for the *Josiah Bell*, a gunboat sunk during the Civil War. The *Josiah H. Bell* sank in 1865, but no reports of where it sank have been found in the War of the Rebellion reports or other places. However, in an 1893 Galveston newspaper interview W.A. Bowen, a long-time Trinity River sailor, told of the whereabouts that led TASA to search the Sabine River south of Orange. To determine the location, the researchers use aerial photographs, but the most convincing study was the magnetic anomaly study performed in 2002 for the Corps of Engineers for obstacles in the Sabine River.

Earlier in her career, the *Josiah H. Bell*, armed with a 64 pound rifled cannon that the crew called "Annie," went into her first battle, out of the Sabine Pass. She and the *Uncle Ben* confronted the Union blockade sail ships, *USS Morning Light* and *Velocity*. After a 30-mile chase at sea, the *Josiah Bell* fired its cannon at the *Morning Light*, destroying critical parts of its structure. Following more exchange of fire the *Morning Light* and the *Velocity* surrendered and became the prize of the Confederate steamboats. The *Josiah Bell* captured 450 men and officers and 20 large Union weapons from the *Morning Light* before they burned it.

The *Josiah Bell* was being outfitted for a blockade runner when Confederate authorities learned that Gen. Robert E. Lee had surrendered to the Army of Northern Virginia on April 12, 1865.

It is believed the the *Bell* was scuttled at the end of the war rather than fall into the hands of the Union. (from article by Melissa Tilley, "Civil War Secrets Revealed," *The Examiner*, June 30-July 6, 2005, pp.6A, 7A)



Locating and excavating a shipwreck is like opening a time capsule. The artifacts represent a slice of time in our history.

*La Belle* is the only large vessel on display at this time. More excavations are on TASA's list, with prospects for an exciting future for TASA.

If you find a shipwreck or artifact on public land, however, the artifacts belong to the state. So, you must contact the Texas Historical Commission, Department of Marine Archeology. Nothing should be removed from the site until proper permits are obtained through the Texas Historical Commission. TASA may locate a site, but obtains permits before searching a site. For further information, contact Bruce Lockett at P.O. Box 905, Vidor, Texas 77662, or phone at (409)-769-3069, or email at [TASASEARCH@aol.com](mailto:TASASEARCH@aol.com).

### **NEXT MEETING:**

Joycine Hanath, Bellville, Texas, will present a program on “Researching German Immigrants” at our next meeting on **May 28, 2008**. See you at Senior Circle, College Station.

### **FUTURE SEMINARS AND TRIPS:**

Every **2nd Wednesday** of the month: Ramblers travel to Clayton Library in Houston. Contact **Bliss Wolfe** for details or sign-up sheet at the meetings. **June 11, 2008**, is the next trip.

Every **3rd Wednesday** of the month: Computer Genealogy Users Group will meet at The Exit, 1520 Rock Prairie Rd. in College Station, at 9:30 a.m. Everyone is invited to eat at a local restaurant after the meeting. **Mark your calendar: May 21, 2008.**

Every **last Wednesday** of the month: Ramblers will meet at the 2nd floor Senior Circle rooms of the College Station Professional II building, 1651 Rock Prairie Rd. in College Station at 9:30 a.m. **Mark your calendar: May 28, 2008.**

No **Roots Magic** meetings until September.

**July 17-19, 2008:** Angelina College 3-day conference. Find more information at <http://www.angelina.edu/genealogy.htm>. Copy the link and paste it into your web browser search location.

**September 3-6, 2008:** Federation of Genealogical Societies presents “Footprints of Family History” at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, Philadelphia. Go to [www.fgs.org](http://www.fgs.org) for more information. Copy the link and paste it into your web browser search location.

**FYI:** In 1866, 1/5 of the Mississippi state budget was spent on artificial limbs for Confederate Veterans. David A. Norris in the May 2008 issue of **Internet Genealogy**.

### **SUCCESS STORY**

The Mary Collie Cooper Lecture sponsored by Research Ramblers took place on April 12, 2008 at Senior Circle, 1651 Rock Prairie Rd., College Station, Texas.

**JOHN SELLERS**

entertained and informed his audience on 4 topics:

“The Court System, Criminal and Civil”

“The Court System Case Study”

“Women, That Gender You Can’t Do Without in Your Research”

“Revisiting History in Your Genealogical Studies.”



The audience appreciated the 3 packets of notes, which are valuable as tools as we prepare for our next court or library trip. Mr. Sellers went through each part thoroughly and provided some tips along the way:

1. **Probate** records may be tedious reading for some, so go straight to the settlement pages to find your information.
2. **Keep** a list of brick wall names on your computer, and take a copy of that list with you to a library or court outing. You never know when one of those names will appear in your research.
3. **Females** are hard to find, but sometimes they will be listed as a defendant in a court case.
4. **Docket books** give you a time period for search of an ancestor. Thus, another way to add “flesh” to your ancestor’s character.
5. **Know** the rules, because in some courthouses you may have to order the case file ahead.

And then

....it was time for lunch. It was a relaxing time to go over what we had learned.



6. **Packets** in courthouses are sometimes unavailable, but you can find them in other places. Published court records are now being printed in such magazines as *Southwest Reporter*. Also, you can find these records in scanned books on Google Books. Another source is *American Decennial Digest* for cases from 1600’s-1800’s. Just go to the index to find a surname. Finally, the Texas Supreme Court has packet information published.
7. **Take** advantage of tax records, because this record appears every year, unlike the census. These records are especially valuable in burned courthouses cases, because these records are sent to the state. You can even figure out the death date of a the male head of household, because the wife’s name will start appearing as paying the taxes, not the male head of household.
8. **If** you have 2 ancestors with the same name, pick a year to examine their tax records. Both ancestors will not be paying taxes on the same things. That’s how you can distinguish the two people. The example he used was Elizabeth Shown Mills’ search for White Potato Willie and Sweet Potato Sam.



9. **After** looking at a typed index, search for the original, because of possible discrepancies.

10. **Adding** substance to the character of your ancestor can be done by searching through the social columns of newspapers. You may find when he/she went to some place to visit a relative.
11. **Places** to search on the web:
  - a. Topozone to locate the homestead.
  - b. Texas Historical Commission to get clues about ancestor's home county.
12. **If** you don't have a diary of your ancestor, read the diaries of other people to gather information about the same time period. Word of wisdom: Don't get caught up in the census. Read historical information.

Thank you, **John Sellers** for giving us so many ideas. So many research avenues for us to wander through and what fun we will have in the walk!

If you have a question for John, write him at [sellersjl@verizon.net](mailto:sellersjl@verizon.net)



## HISTORICAL MOMENT

Imagine one of your ancestors coming into Ellis Island, New Orleans, or some other port of entry. Perhaps he came from Erndtbrueck, Germany, located between Frankfurt and Cologne, as did **Eugene Voelkel's** ancestors. The immigrants may have had trouble communicating with the immigration clerk. According to Mr. Voelkel, in the German language, the **W** sounds like the English **V**, for example, "You're Velcome." Then there is the German **V**, which sounds like the English **F**. In addition, if there are 2 vowels placed together, such as the **oe** of **Voelkel**, the first vowel is silent. So, "**Voelkel**" was originally pronounced "**Felkel**." During Eugene's lifetime, the spelling never changed, but people began pronouncing his name "**Vo(e)lkel**."

When Eugene was growing up, German was his first language that he learned at home. Then he went to school to learn English. He recalls that when WWII came along, his family was encouraged not to speak German. A similar situation probably occurred during WWI.

Perhaps some of you have had similar experiences or have seen name changes like Eugene. Other Ramblers have noted their family name changes too.

**Gail Sewell:** Yes, My **Lopers** had early on spelled it **Lowber**. Also **Kuder** was once spelled **Kudra**.

**Kate Skinner-Klee:** Here's one for you, Helen. My step-father's ancestor came over with Lafayette. His name was "**de laTouche**." It got changed to **Dilatush!**

**Melanie Welch:** I think the strangest one I've seen was in looking for the marriage of my Solomon Wells to **Cassa Isaacks**. We knew they were from KY, but she found this in Missouri.....

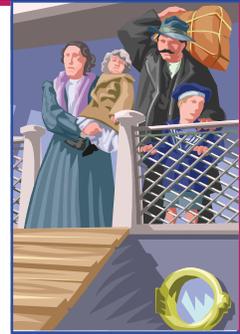
**"Solomon Weels to Lacasity Isaacks 23 April 1849, Franklin County, Missouri."**

So, she then researched in Missouri and found other family members there in Franklin Co....later a census that showed **Cassa** being born in IL so a trail from Ky to IL to MO and back to KY was established.

**Jane Horn:** My surname is **Bostick**. It has been shown in census records and many other wills land records and other documents as **Bostick, Bostic, Bostwick, Bastic and Bostie**. There are always stories about how it got changed, one was the North Carolina **Bostick's**. They formed a community and when the sign painter came to paint the sign for the post office, he left off the K. So this town and all the descendants from there became **Bostic's**.

My personal story is from our family records on my great grandfather, James Berry "Jim" **Bostick**. He married first and had 9 children. After she died he began courting a young lady from the next county. The newspaper articles about this courtship and finally marriage referred to him as Jim **Bostwick**. When they married, the other family members did not like her, so he packed up his family and moved to Texas from Alabama. He had another 9 children by his second wife who decided to just drop the k. So, the first 9 children were **Bostick's** and the second 9 were **Bostic's**. This made for a nightmare finding my family when I first started genealogy.

**Shelby Rowan:** My grandfather came from Sweden as **Sorböm** (om lot or whatever it's called over the o!) and decided no one would be able to pronounce or spell that so changed it himself to **Seurbom**. One brother did likewise, another kept the **Sorböm**. I had one cousin who had the **Seurbom** as a maiden name and she told me once that no one every spelled or pronounced her name the same way twice!! She always wished he'd left it at **Sorböm!!** When my last **Seurbom** uncle died a couple of years ago, we think that he was the last of the only **Seurboms** in the whole world.



**Helen Wolf:** Several of my ancestor's names were changed. **Steinmetz** was changed to **Stinemates**; **Melvill** was changed to **Melvin**; and **Keicher** was changed to **Kyker** or **Kiker**. The **Kyker/Kiker** family lived in Tennessee and were carpenters. According to the family story they shared tools and needed a way to distinguish the ownership of the tools so changed the spelling and labeled their tools with their individual name. My grandmother's maiden name was **Kyker**.

**Jane Maxwell:** My mother's maternal grandparents' name was **Jungberg**. On the 1900 census it was listed as **Youngburg**, which must have been how it sounded to the person taking the census--my paternal grandfather! The **Jungbergs** were **Johansons** when they came from Sweden, but I do not know how or why it was changed. My mother's paternal grandparents name was **Pederson** and they also came from Sweden. It is often spelled as **Peterson** in records. His brother decided to spell it **Pettersen** some time after he came to the United States. On the other side of the family, my paternal grandmother's maiden name was **Loughridge**, which I have found spelled **Longbridge**, and, most often, **Lockridge**.

**Debbie Wheeler:** Yes, in researching my husband's maternal line of **McNeill**, I have found the spellings **McNeil**, **MacNeil**, **MacNeill**, and **McNeal**, with **McNeal** being the earliest entry in the U.S. records. When searching I always use all variants and have been rewarded with finds on numerous occasions.

**WOW!** I'm impressed with everybody's research! You have done your homework. Wouldn't it be great if you found a connection to another Rambler?!

**THANK YOU TO ALL WHO SHARED YOUR RESEARCH.**

#### **THIS MONTH IN TEXAS HISTORY**

**May 5, 1862:** In the battle of Puebla, Mexican forces defeated the French. This event is celebrated annually in Mexico and Texas as "El Cinco de Mayo."

**May 25, 1863:** Amzi Bradshaw recruited his own company, which became Showalter's Texas Cavalry, that campaigned to rid Texas' Rio Grande Valley of Union troops during the Civil War.

**GENQUIP:**

**HOBBY:** Hard work you wouldn't do for a living.

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