



## **RAMBLERS' RAMBLINGS**

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**RAMBLERS' NEW VICE-PRESIDENT JERRY NELSON, PRES. SHELBY ROWAN  
AND FORMER VICE-PRESIDENTS CAROL AND RICH BOLVIE**



**Traveling with Henry Hanson on his.....**

### **GENEALOGY TRAILS**

In July of this summer there was a lot of noise in the media about President Trump's visit to Moscow and President Trump's one-on-one with Vladimir Putin, which reminded me of my first trip to Denmark to visit with my Petersen and Kristensen cousins.

Nancy and I arrived at the airport, claimed our bags and followed the signs pointing us to the train station. We took a 45-minute ride across two islands until we reached the mainland or Jutland at the town of Kolding. Across the street from the train station was our hotel where we would meet my cousins for a pre-arranged tour to my grandfather's home site and the church where he was christened in 1876, then meet a bunch more cousins for a traditional Danish meal of pork roast and potatoes.

Late that night my cousins took us back to the hotel in Kolding, where we spent the night and at noon caught the train back towards Copenhagen, getting off the train at Roskilde, the old Viking Capitol, where we met some friends and spent the night with them.

The following day, we took the train back to the heart of Copenhagen and a tour of the Queen's residents at Amalienborg. To our surprise in one of the Queen's buildings, a part of her compound, the Russian Faberge Egg Collection was on display, free. It was one of several events required of the Russians by Danish Queen Margrethe II if they wanted her to grant a wish of theirs.



**MARIE FEODOROVNA**

Trying to understand the importance of the event, I was told that Russian President Vladimir Putin wanted the body of Maria Feodorovna, the daughter of King Christian IX and the last Tsar's mother, returned to St. Petersburg. In an exercise branded as the righting of an historical injustice, Maria Feodorovna was reburied in St. Petersburg, Russia's former imperial capital, 87 years after she fled the country in fear of her life.

Her body is the last expected to be interred in the cathedral of St Petersburg's Peter and Paul Fortress barring a restoration of the Russian monarchy - something that seems highly unlikely. The Empress-Dowager's original funeral took place in 1928 in Denmark, where she died in exile and was buried 1,000 miles away from the remains of her husband, Tsar Alexander III, and her son, Tsar Nicholas II, in contravention of her final wishes.

Maria Feodorovna chose to live out her final years in Denmark because it was there that she was born as Princess Dagmar in 1847 before marrying into the Russian royal family, converting to the Russian Orthodox Church, and learning Russian.

President Vladimir Putin pushed for her remains to be posthumously repatriated in order to draw a line under one of the country's most tragic episodes, the murder of her son, Russia's last Tsar, Nicholas II, his wife and his young family.

Tsar Nicholas II stepped down in 1917 as revolution swept Russia and was executed by a Bolshevik firing squad with his family in the basement of a merchant's house in Yekaterinburg on 17 July 1918. Remains thought to be those of the Tsar, his wife and three of his five children were found in 1991 and laid to rest in St Petersburg in 1998.

For the Romanovs, a family dynasty that ruled Russia for three centuries, and of which Maria Feodorovna was part, the ceremony was an emotional point of closure that they hope will foster a renewed sense of respect for an institution whose reputation was destroyed by the Bolsheviks. For the

Kremlin it was the latest in a long line of reburials of tsarist-era figures that are part of Russia's quest to forge itself a new identity that draws on its entire past as opposed to selective highlights. Maria Fedorovna was laid to rest alongside her husband and her son in the Romanovs' family vault in 2006.



## WOMEN OF THE TEXAS REVOLUTION

BY SHELBY ROWAN

I just added a 'the End' slide to a presentation I was asked to put together titled "Women of the Texas Revolution." One important segment of those 'women' included the wives of our topic of discussion, the Signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence. So, let me share some stories and details about the families of those 60 men.

First of all, seven never married (I believe I said six in my first column, sorry!) Collinsworth, Conrad, Hamilton, LeGrand, Mottley, Pennington, and Thomas. Moore and Roberts married but had no children that we know of. And I don't believe that Badgett or Kimble ever brought their families to Texas. That



EMILY DE ZAVALA

means that we are down to 49 Signer families in Texas. Don't bet any money on my math but my count for children for those 49 families is 281! The three Mrs. Latimer's account for 19 of them, the four Mrs. Parmer's 17, and Mrs. Taylor herself alone, for 13!! The only other double-digit families were Mrs. Gaines, Mrs. Maverick and Mrs. Stapp at ten each. Large families were much more often the rule then, than they are now, because as the children grew, they were needed to help with the household, farming and ranching chores.

Sadly, many, many children died in infancy or at a very young age. Just the number of children who died during the months of the "Runaway Scrape" was sad. Anna Taylor fled her home with four small children in tow and tragically, returned with not one of them.

Three of the families, Navarro, Ruiz and Zavala, were native Texas/Mexico families and all relatively affluent and prominent families to begin with so they might not have struggled for their daily existence as did many of the Anglo families. However, when they choose to take the Texan side of the war with Mexico their lives also changed. In general, for instance, when a more affluent Tejana joined the Runaway Scrape she often had the luxury of having wagons at her disposal to pack things in and take with her, BUT these families came back to the same destruction, burnt or looted homes, devastated crops, etc. that all the other families did. And many of the belongs that they had escaped with were lost or exchanged for food and lodging along the way. The Navarro and Ruiz families were related, Navarro the nephew of Ruiz. Both families had children who grew to be noted figures in early Texas history. The Zavalas lived near the Battle of San Jacinto and the second Mrs. Zavala, Emily West de Zavala, opened her home as the Battlefield Hospital for wounded Texan soldiers after that battle.

The signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence was on March 2, 1836. Before Texas became a State on December 29, 1845, 14 of the Signers' wives were widows, Childress from suicide, Coleman drowned, Samuel Fisher and Potter were shot, and ten other Signers had died of natural causes. The Robert Coleman family story was a particularly sad one. Two years after Robert drowned while bathing in the Brazos River (1837) his family was attacked by Indians. Mrs. Coleman and the oldest son were



MARY JANE BRISCOE

killed and the youngest son, Thomas was kidnapped by the Indians. Fortunately, the other four children escaped.

It occurred to me as I just finished the end of the Coleman family story that up to now I've written mostly about gloom and doom! There's so much more to the story of the Signers than gloom and doom!

Nancy Spencer came to Texas with her first husband William Spencer in 1824 and he was killed by Indians soon after they arrived and as a widow she received a sitio (league or 4428 acres). She later married Signer Thomas Barnett and had six children with him.

She successfully managed the 'Spencer League' the rest of her life.

Mary Jane Harris Briscoe was well educated, often referred to as the "Belle of Buffalo Bayou," and is particularly remembered for having organized the Daughters of the Texas Republic (DRT) in her home. She and Andrew had five children and managed his business affairs well after his death in 1849 until her death in 1903. Mary Ann Adams Maverick has a long biographical entry in the Texas Historical Association Handbook chronicling her contributions to society as a pioneer and diarist among other activities of her life. She was an active Episcopalian, a leader in the DRT, active in Civil War relief efforts, and recognized for her watercolor sketches of the Alamo. Her memoirs have given today's readers many insights into the life of the newly created State of Texas. She and Samuel had ten children. Just one more of the many courageous ladies of early Texas.

My ending for the "Women of the Texas Revolution" was 'so many stories, so little time' and that is appropriate here as well. There are so many stories related to the Signers. Next time I believe I'll tell you about the careers of those 60 men. Lawyers, doctors and Indian Chiefs - well not a Chief, just a member of the tribe. More next time! See you at the next Ramblers Meeting.



## AN IDEA FOR A FUTURE "GENEALOGY TRAILS"

BY HENRY HANSON

What are your favorite TV shows? Mine are centered around history or good biographies of historical figures. Sometimes I get interested in political figures and their deceptive habits. My wife and daughter have reserved our TV on Tuesday nights for the *NCIS*, *Bull* and *NCIS New Orleans* shows.



Back in April 2014, a TV mini-series based on Alexander Roses' book *Washington's Spies*, a story of America's first spy ring, the "Culper Ring." The series originally aired on the AMC network for four seasons. I got interested in the series and when I missed an episode I would go to the internet to make sure I didn't miss anything. There was one woman in Washington's Culper's spy ring who was known only as agent #355n until more recent times. Her name was Anna Smith Strong, wife of Selah Strong and the mother of nine children.

Anna Strong passed information along onto other patriots in the spy ring by the number of handkerchiefs she put on her clothes line.

About the same time, I read the obit of Alma Belle Burket, a lady who passed away in Angleton, Texas, the mother of an old college friend. Alma Belle was married to Robert Monroe Burket, and her maiden name was Strong. My mind immediately started thinking about the possibility that Alma Belle was a descendant of the Strong family living on Setucket Sound, Long Island, New York, during the American Revolution. I may work on that connection for a future "Genealogy Trails with Henry."



## MAPS IN GENEALOGY, Part I

BY MARY ANN THOMPSON

Maps are an important research tool in genealogy. If you're a newcomer just starting to look into your family history, a good place to start is the United States Geological Survey (USGS):

<https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/mapsgenealogy.pdf>

This site offers a great deal of information on using maps in genealogy and lists resources available for further research.

George G. Morgan (productive writer of genealogy books and articles) wrote an article "Building Your Personal Map Collection" in which he listed the specific maps which should be your core reference collection:

- A contemporary world atlas
- A contemporary national atlas for the countries in which your ancestors lived
- Individual maps of states, provinces, territories, counties, provinces, etc. that are related to your family
- A gazetteer or place name dictionary for the country or area where you are conducting your research

There are many online sites about state maps that could be valuable resources for your research.

Geographers, historians, and urban planners all enjoy the Sanborn maps, which were produced from 1867 to 1977 by the Sanborn Company of Pelham, New York. Some examples of these sites which offer a

snapshot of the built environment of the area it covers (information about fire alarms, water mains, sidewalks, frontage, and a host of other details that could be used for insurance purposes):

1. **Texas Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (1877-1922)**  
<https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/texas.html> Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection
2. **North Carolina Maps: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps**  
<https://web.lib.unc.edu/nc-maps/> Maps from the 1880s to the 1950s, covering more than 150 cities and towns across the state. Includes original, printed maps of North Carolina published prior to 1923.
3. **New Hampshire Maps: Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps**  
<https://www.dartmouth.edu/~library/digital/collections/> [Check Maps) The maps date from the 1880s to the 1920s.
4. **Digital Sanborn Maps of Milwaukee 1894 and 1910**  
<http://uwm.edu/libraries/> [Browse the Digital Collections]
5. **Penn State University Maps Library**  
<https://libraries.psu.edu/about/collections/sanborn-fire-insurance-maps> A nearly complete collection of Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for the state of Pennsylvania.

The production of fire insurance plans of North American cities was dominated by two companies, the Sanborn Map Company of New York and the Charles E. Goad Company of London. Another was the Dakin Publishing Company of San Francisco. Dakin was in existence from about 1885 until the early 1960's, and also worked to create similar insurance maps in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The University of Hawaii has created a digital collection of 79 Dakin maps that document major cities in Hawaii, including Oahu and Honolulu. <https://digicoll.manoa.hawaii.edu/maps/index.php?c=1>



### Trivia Question?.....

**HOW DID DIME BOX, TEXAS (OUR NEIGHBOR) RECEIVE ITS NAME?**



## UPCOMING RAMBLER PROGRAMS

BY RICH & CAROL BOIVIE



Sept. 26 2018 - "How to Use the Periodical Source Index -PERSI"-Susan Kaufman

Oct. 31 2018 - "Using DNA Testing for Genealogical Research" - Jane Magill

Nov. 28 2018 - "How Thanksgiving Got Started at Plymouth Colony" - Henry Hanson

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## GENEALOGY COMPUTER USERS GROUP

BY JERRY MARKOWICH



Sept. 18 2018 -- "How to Write Your Obit" - Henry Hanson

Oct. 17 2018 - "All Genealogical Answers Are NOT Online" - Jerry Markowich

Dec. 19 2018 - "German Research" - Jerry Markowich

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## FAMILY HISTORY WRITERS GROUP



Oct. 10 2018 - "The Genealogy of the Family Farm" - Paul Harris & Henry Hanson



## HOW AMERICANS TALK DIFFERENTLY

Submitted by Jerry Markowich

What do you call that thing that you drank water from in school? "Water fountain," "drinking fountain" or you can ignore the East Coast/West Coast split and notice that Wisconsin and Rhode Island call a water fountain a "bubler."



The Northeast (and south Florida) puts on *sneakers*; everyone else finds a pair of *tennis shoes*. Some put on *gym shoes*.

The West Coast is really into their *freeways*. Others enjoy *highways*; some go on the *interstate*.

Does America realize that New York really is "The City"? Or is it just the folks who live in NYC?

Massachusetts, Long Island and Jersey are the only places that see a difference between *Merry*, *Mary* and *marry*. *Mary* and *Merry* are the same, but *marry* is different.

The pronunciation of "caramel" starts disregarding vowels once you go west of the Ohio River. It becomes *car' mil* (2 syllables).

Residents of the far north have an oddly Canadian way of pronouncing "been."

For whatever reason, it's a "boo-wie" knife in Texas and D.C. Enthusiastic Marylanders have alerted us there is indeed a town named "Bowie, MD" that is pronounced "Boo-wie." That solves that. From a Texan: "It's pronounced 'Boo-wie' because it's named after Jim Bowie (pronounced Boo-wie), who played a major role in the Texas Revolution. That explains why we're the only ones who pronounce it correctly."

The South is the only place where you'll try to call your "law-yer" instead of your "loyer."

Okay, this one is crazy. Everyone pronounces "Pecan Pie" differently. Is it "pee-KAHN," "pick'AHN" or "pee-CAN"?

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Everyone knows that the Midwest calls it "pop;" the Northeast and West Coast call it "soda" while the South is really into brand loyalty. "I'll have a Pepsi, or a DDP (Diet Dr. Pepper) or a Coke."

Tiny lobsters are tearing this country apart. "Crawfish", "crayfish", "crawdada", "critter".

So are traffic circles. Er...."roundabouts" or "rotary"?

The Northeast corridor puts "sear-up" on their pancakes. How about "sir-up," "sear-up" or "sih-rup"?





**Answer to Trivia Question:** **Dime Box, Texas** is located on Farm Road 141, only about 45 miles from College Station/Bryan, in eastern Lee County. Between 1869 and 1877 an early Texas settler named Joseph S. Brown built a sawmill near what is now State Highway 21, three miles northwest of today's Dime Box. A small community grew around the mill and was called Brown's Mill.

In 1877 a government post office opened and early day settlers near Brown's Mill dropped their outgoing mail plus a dime into a small box inside Joseph Brown's office for a weekly mail delivery to nearby Giddings, Texas. However, this "post office" closed in 1883. When it reopened in 1884, the town's name, due to confusion with Brownsville, was changed from Brown's Mill to Dime Box.



But in 1913, the Southern Pacific Railroad built a rail line that bypassed the original Dime Box, which then changed its name to Old Dime Box and the new railroad site became Dime Box. So now there's a Dime Box and only three miles away is Old Dime Box, Texas.



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