



# Keys To The Present

Newsletter of the Genealogical Society of Kendall County, Inc.

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Boerne, Texas

## First Fall Meeting September 8

Vice-president June Kiphart will be welcoming members back to the first GSKC meeting of the Fall, on Saturday, Sep 8, at the Boerne Public Library, in the absence of President Mary Alice Dell. The meeting starts at 10 a.m.

It will also be an opportunity for members to hear the president of our sister organization, the Boerne Area Historical Preservation Society, speak. Colonel Betty Edmonds will discuss the mission and projects of BAHPS. Not only do GSKC and the Historical Society share facilities, but we also share similar goals in preserving all aspects of Kendall County's past.

We have long partnered in sharing of information. Our Library Volunteers have added to and used the materials collected by BAHPS in helping visitors interested in local information. Their members, in turn have made use of the GSKC book and CD collection and First Family histories. Members of both groups support the Historic Court House Preservation project.

### GSKC Awarded Grant By City

GSKC was recently awarded \$1000 grant from Hotel-Motel Tax fund by the Boerne City Council. The grant is to be used in the promotion of the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Hill Country Family History Seminar in 2008 and for historical preservation expenses. Kate Skinner-Klee and Don Evans collected the facts and figures and made the presentation to the Tax Fund Committee who made the recommendations for awarding grants to the City Council.

The grant was made in recognition of the role that GSKC plays in bringing visitors to Boerne, not only to hear national genealogical speakers, but to do research in the GSKC family history collection at the Library and in preservation of historical documents.

Kate and Don, along with Terri James, also made a presentation

this summer to the Boerne Library Foundation to familiarize that group with GSKC's contribution to the library and the community.

### May Brunch Success

Everyone was all smiles at the May Brunch meeting of GSKC as shown by Don Evans, Terri James, Gwen Adrian and Tom Page pictured below.

The smiles were the result of the culinary skill of hostess June Kiphart, the beautiful setting of her home, and the opportunity to enjoy the company of fellow genealogists.

The silent auction netted \$189.00 for the GSKC treasury.

### Upcoming Events

**Sept 8**

GSKC Meeting  
Col. Betty Edmonds

**Nov 9-10**

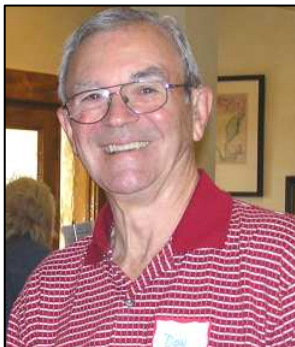
TX State Genealogy Conference  
Tyler, TX

**January 26, 2008**

4th Hill Country Seminar  
Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak

### Inside this issue:

<i>From the President</i>	2
<i>New Record Storage</i>	2
<i>TSGS Conference</i>	3
<i>New Books at Library</i>	3/4
<i>Seminar Speaker</i>	4
<i>Officer Profile</i>	4



## “Two Bits” from the President

### *Greetings from Fort Wayne, Indiana*

Or possibly I should say from the Allen County Public Library where Harry and I will be spending the next few days. The new library, with its user-friendly open stacks (you had to call for most books previously) showcases its wonderful collection. Even without its unsurpassed genealogical and historical journal collection, it surely competes for second place among our national genealogical libraries.

We have just completed four days of genealogical seminars (with a selection of eight different subjects for six hours each day). We

didn't miss a single session, so came away with our heads stuffed with information and new ideas. We heard many fine speakers, including some many of you are familiar with such as John Colletta, Dr. George Sweitzer, and Christine Rose, all who have spoken in local seminars. Topics ranged from military records to new Internet tools to railroad and orphan research techniques. The genealogy exhibits, equally diverse, were housed in a room nearly as large as a football field.

I was particularly pleased to discover the popularity of our January seminar speaker, Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak. They had to move her presentation at least twice, that I know of, from the standard sized room (which

easily held 150 people) to larger rooms.

She does a superb job of explaining the unfamiliar complex DNA subject. You will have an opportunity to meet her before the seminar as she will also speak at the pre-seminar dinner which will be held on Friday evening.

We won't be home in time for the September meeting, but look forward to seeing you all in October.

Mary Alice

## Charter Member Passes On

We lost another of the charter members of our Society this summer as Merva Thompson Pankratz, age 94, passed away on Sunday, July 1 in Comfort. Merva was an active member until the past few years. She and her husband, George, headed the annual fund raising committee, choosing the quilt to be raffled and selling tickets.

Merva was born Nov. 22, 1912 in Aberdeen, SD to John Morland and Aimee Chambard



her private business.

Thompson. Shortly thereafter the family moved to Arlington, Minn. She graduated from Arlington High School as valedictorian of her class, attended Minnesota State Teachers College at Mankato and graduated summa cum laude. She spent 46 years as an accountant, the last 20 years in

She is survived by her husband, George M. Pankratz; son, John Max Pankratz and wife Valerie, son George Kurt Pankratz and wife Dana; daughter, Margaret Mary Kloss; five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren

She was a charter member of First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio, Brunhilde Lodge 7 of the Order of the Sons of Hermann, German-Texas Heritage Society, ChorGemeinschaft Texas, Beethoven Damenchor, Boerne Area Historical Preservation Society and Friends of the Boerne Public Library.

## Moved Into Storage

Unfortunately, we were unable to obtain donated space to house our stored collection of historical county records, books, and other GSKC items. These boxes, formerly housed in what was known as the Library Annex in the Phillips Center, are now in public storage.

Thanks to the anonymous donation of one our members, we have funds for several months of paid storage.

We anticipate receiving more historical county documents for storage. We will probably need to place some lesser used genealogy books from our Library collection in temporary storage until the new library is completed. These books would still be available for use of patrons, but there would be a delay in providing them.

We are still seeking free storage space in a climate controlled building so we do not have to deplete our operating funds. Contact Nancy McLarry at 830.537.4576 if you know of a possible donor.

## Recuperating

Edgar Schwarz, husband of member Cathy Schwarz, is recuperating from a recent illness at Town and Country Manor in Boerne. We wish him a speedy recovery.

Past President Edna Felps received her prosthesis this summer and is dancing a caper through Town and Country halls. Well, maybe not exactly doing the Texas Two-step, but she's certainly on her feet again and hopefully will be able to join us at meetings this fall.

### Texas State Society Conference

The 2007 Conference of the Texas State Genealogical Society will be held in Tyler November 9-10. Speakers at the two day meeting will be *The Genealogy Guys*, George C. Morgan and Drew Smith. Their subjects range from obituaries to getting organized to online research and a live podcast session. John Sellers will be the Friday night banquet speaker. Deadline for early registration is October 25.

For more information consult the TSGS website <http://www.rootsweb.com/~txsgs>.

### Appointed Nominating Chairman



Irene Page has been selected by President Mary Alice Dell to chair the Nominating Committee for 2008 officer candidates. Election will follow the presentation of the slate at the November meeting. Any one wishing to suggest a candidate should contact Irene.

### PERSI Users—Need an Article?

If you have searched PERSI on Heritage Quest and found an article on your ancestor you would like to have, if you will email the Dells by Wednesday, August 22, they will copy the article for you while they are researching at the Allen Public Library. Send the exact name and date of the publication, volume and issue. You can search by surname or by place in PERSI, so don't overlook articles that list indexes to wills, marriage records etc. Send email to [35madel@earthlink.net](mailto:35madel@earthlink.net).

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## New Books and Microfilm Added to Library Since May Newsletter

The following materials have been cataloged into the GSKC Library collection since May. Titles with asterisks have been donated and the donors name follows the title and author. We thank all of you who have made these contributions to our genealogical collection.

**Blount County, Tennessee Marriages, 1795-1865** by Will E. Parham

\***Adventurers of Purse and Person, Virginia 1607-1624/25, Vol III, Families R-Z.** by John Frederich Dorman, (Ed & Mary Lou Mergele)

\***Ancestors of Carl and Conrad Adam** compiled by Gerhard Adam (Regina Adam)

**Dating Old Photographs, 1840-1929**

**Denizations and Naturalizations in the British Colonies in America, 1607-1775,** by Lloyd deWitt Bockstruck

\***Encyclopedia of German-American Genealogical Research** by Clifford N. Smith & Anna Piszczan-czaja Smith (Jackie Dyess)

\***Even More Palatine Families; 18 Century Immigrants to the American Colonies and their German, Swiss and Austrian Origins, Vols. I, II, & III,** by Henry Z. Jones Jr & Lewis B. Rohrbach (Sharon Pratt)

**The Last Days of British Saint Augustine, 1784-1785** by Lawrence H. Feldman

**Washington County, Tennessee, Settlements of Estates 1790-1841** compiled by Rev. Silas Emmett Lucas, Jr

\***Marvelous Medina Folks** by Dot Ferguson Hatfield (Dot Hatfield)

\***Maryland Genealogies from the Maryland Historical Magazine, Vols. I & II,** (Sharon Pratt)

**More Dating Old Photographs, 1840-1929**

\***Nineteenth-Century Germans to America; A Consolidation of Six Pamphlets Identifying Emigrants from Gaden-Wuerttemberg, Hamburg, Bremen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Rheinland-Pfalz, and Schleswig-Holstein** by Clifford Neal Smith (Sharon Pratt)

**Organizing and Preserving Your Heirloom Documents** by Katherine Scott Sturdevant

**A Pictorial History of Bandera County** by M.J. Schumacher

\***Revolutionary Patriots of Frederick County, Maryland 1775-1783** by Henry C. Peden, Jr. (Sharon Pratt)

\***Settlers of Maryland 1731-1750** by Peter W Coldham (Sharon Pratt)

\***Settlers of Maryland 1751-1765** by Peter W. Coldham (Sharon Pratt).

\***Settlers of Maryland 1766-1783** by Peter W. Coldham (Sharon Pratt)

The following books were compiled by Amelia C. Gilreath and donated by Sharon Pratt:

\***Shenandoah County, Virginia, Deed Books A, B, C, D, 1772-1784**

\***Shenandoah County, Virginia, Deed Books E, R, G & H, 1784-1792**

\***Shenandoah County, Virginia, Deed Books I, K, L, 1792-1799**

(continued on Page 4)

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**GSKC Website:**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~txgskc/>

### **GSKC Officer Profile**

Mary Alice Newsom Dell, president of GSKC, really was not born with a deed book or family group sheet in her hands. In fact, she did not discover the joys and frustrations of genealogical research until after retirement in 1992. Since that time, when she became hooked on following the trails of her ancestors, it has become a passion. After several years of benefiting from the labors of other genealogists, who have extracted records from dusty tomes in courthouses, and from those who had shared research techniques, she and her husband Harry decided it was time to give back. They became library volunteers helping others to find their ancestors, and began teaching their skills to those who were interested.



Mary Alice was born in Springfield, IL to George W. Newsom and Alice K. Willis, loving parents with roving feet. She attended schools in nine different communities in three states before graduating from high school in Marion, IL. She received her B.S. in journalism from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale IL. While there she met and married her husband, Harry Dell. Following his Air Force career during the Korean War, they moved to Dayton OH, where she was public relations director for Radio Station WING (in pre-TV days). She had previously worked for a neighborhood newspaper in Chicago and a Public Relations Agency in San Antonio. Shortly after their first daughter was born, they moved to

Southern California.

Until the last of their daughters left for college, Mary Alice had the opportunity to be a homemaker and community volunteer. She was a Camp Fire Leader for 20 years, a member of the National Council of Camp Fire. She served as president of two different county Camp Fire Boards, one in CA and the other in Cocoa, Florida. There, Harry was busy working at the Cape Canaveral Space Station on the nation's program to send a man to the moon, and Mary Alice, at the insistence of three daughters, started a Camp Fire council that grew to 500 girls.

Returning to CA, she re-entered the work field in 1978, and became a real estate broker and ultimately the broker-owner, along with Harry, of the 3<sup>rd</sup> REMAX real estate company in Southern California. This branched out to include a property management company.

In 1992, they sold their business and home in Huntington Beach and moved into their first "condo on wheels", a 34-foot 5<sup>th</sup> wheel trailer. That was the beginning of a love affair with "RV'ing" that remains today, as the Dells still travel 4 to 6 months a year.

They discovered that most of their ancestors had arrived in this country long before the American Revolution, giving an excuse to visit many communities east of the Rockies. Since their daughters remain in the west, they have an excellent excuse to go west frequently and stop off at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City.

In 1994 they moved to Boerne. Mary Alice is a founding member of the George W. Kendall Chapter NSDAR and past registrar.

### **Hill Country Seminar Speaker Selected**

Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak (yes that really is her name) has been selected as the speaker for the January 26th genealogical seminar. She is a nationally recognized authority on the use of DNA for genealogical purposes and has appeared on numerous TV shows and at genealogical conferences. She assists the US Army in identifying bodies through DNA. She is the author of several books including *Trace Your Roots with DNA*.

In addition to her discussion of DNA, she will be talking on two other subjects at the seminar and will speak at a informal dinner the evening before the Seminar.

(Books continued)

**\*Shenandoah County, Virginia, Deed Books M-N, 1799-1804**

**\*Shenandoah County, Virginia, Deed Books O, P & Q, 1804-1809**

**\*Shenandoah County, Virginia, Deed Books R, S, T, 1809-1813**

**\*Shenandoah County, Virginia, Deed Books U & V, 1813-1815**

**\*Shenandoah County, Virginia, Deed Books W & X, 1815-1817**

**\*Shenandoah County, Virginia, Deed Books Y & Z, 1817-1820**

**Sumner County, Tennessee Deed Abstracts 1793-1805** by Joyce Martin Murray.

**Texas County Sheriffs** by Sammy Tise

**\*Virginia Militia in the War of 1812 Vols. I & II** (Sharon Pratt)

The following Microfilms were donated by Elizabeth Jordan:

**\*1850 Census (Federal) Iowa: Louisa, Lucas, Madison, Mahaska, Marion, Marshall, Monroe, Muscatine Counties**

**\*1860 Census (Federal) Iowa: Lucas and Madison Counties**

**\*1860 Census (Federal) Iowa: Marion and Marshall Counties**

**\*1860 Census (Federal) Iowa: Plymouth, Pocahontas, Palo Alto, Mills, Mitchell, Monroe and Montgomery Counties**