

Supporting family historians in the South Puget Sound since 1974

UPCOMING:

- **MEMBER MEETING:** Thursday, Sept 10th 7-8:30pm (Hybrid)
- **SIG MEETINGS** - throughout Sept
- **Newsletter articles due September 15th**
- **OGS Board Meeting Sept 15th, 6:30-8:00pm**

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Newsletter team: **Peggy Cooley, Carolyn Gibbons, and Mandy Stahre**
Contact us: newsletter@olygensoc.org

WEBSITE LINK:

olygensoc.org

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This newsletter is free to the community.



OLYMPIA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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SEPT 2026

Musings

Welcome back. OGS was busy this past year with outreach activities. As well as our annual representation at the Norway Day celebration last April, July found OGS again this year in Tenino at the very busy Oregon Trail Days where we

had well over 150 visitors to our table over 3 days. We were busy! Our next outreach event will be on Tuesday, **September 8, 3-7pm** for the [Lacey Community's America 250 and Lacey 60](#)

[celebration.](#)



September program

"School Censuses: What, When, and Where"

Discover one of genealogy's most overlooked resources—the school census. These records, often taken long before vital records existed, can fill critical gaps in family research, reveal the answers to family mysteries, confirm family migrations, and give a rare glimpse into daily family life and local history. Learn what they covered, when they were made, and where to find those that still exist. Bring your ancestors' early years to life—one classroom at a time.

Billie Stone Fogarty, a professional genealogist since 1979, has taught genealogical skills to audiences of all ages on all levels from local through national and international both in person and virtually. She is founder and co-creator with Matt McCormack of a learning retreat for professional genealogists called *Gen-Stock*. She also, along with Dr. David McDonald, created the *Genealogy Symposium*, an intensive, state library & archives-based genealogy methods program based on the theme "Thinking Genealogically". The inaugural *Genealogy Symposium* was hosted by

the Oklahoma State Archives and the Oklahoma Historical Society of which Billie has been a statewide-elected Board member since 2007. She is the founder and principal of the family history research firm, *HeritageTrackers*, based in Oklahoma City, OK.



Photo: Billie Stone Fogarty

DIG—Alive and Thriving

The **OGS DIG** (Drop In Genealogy) group was restarted at the [Tumwater Timberland Library](#) with our first session on June 29. Volunteers meet here on the **last Monday of each month, 1-3pm**, to assist people who are beginning their genealogy or working with them on their brick walls. In June, we had 8 volunteers and 13 clients; in July we had 9 volunteers and 12 clients. So two very successful turnouts, as I'm sure August 31 will also be. So

successful that the library has already approved us to be able to continue indefinitely. Hope to see some of you there sometime; the September session will be on Sept. 28, 1-3 pm. As of the August session, Cindy Stalnaker and Mike Harter will be heading up DIG. Many thanks to those OGS volunteers who made the Outreach events and DIG the successes, they are Kathy E., Kerry U., Cindy S., Greg N., Mike H., Carolyn G., Sue M., Anne T., Jerri M., Peggy C., Andy C., Jon

H., Cindy N., Jan. W., and Marilyn M. Anyone interested in more info. About or becoming a part of Outreach or DIG, please contact Diana Bargmann at [<barbourgenealogist@yahoo.com>](mailto:barbourgenealogist@yahoo.com) or (360) 338 – 3017.



Want to help with the newsletter?

The Newsletter team is looking for new members who want to help collect stories and put together the monthly publication. Time commitment is a few hours each month. The newsletter will also need

some ideas on the format moving forward as we currently use MS Publisher which is being discontinued this year. Additionally, Mandy Stahre is stepping away from helping with the newsletter and it truly

takes a team effort to put it together each month. If you are interested please send an email to newsletter@olygensoc.org

1. Do you know an OGS member who is ill or could use some cheer due to the loss of a loved one? Contact the Sunshine Team leader Kris Retlin at 973-273-4791 or kristin.retlin@gmail.org.
2. OGS Board Meeting minutes are available on the olygensoc.org website under Downloads > Board Meeting Minutes (Can only see if signed into your OGS account)

SiGs are going strong. Check out the groups that we have and join in!

SIG	Facilitator	Meeting Information	Location
Ancestry.com	Greg Nordlund	4th Saturday 11:00am-12:30pm	Google Meet
DNA	Nancy Cordell	2nd Wednesday 6:30-8:00pm	Google Meet
Family History Writing	Laura Carroll	*1st Monday 7:00-8:30pm	Google Meet
Family Tree Maker (FTM)	David Abernathy	1st Tuesday 6:00 - 8:00 pm	Zoom
FamilySearch.org	Carolyn Gibbons	On break	Google Meet
Genealogy Chat	Peggy Cooley	3rd Wednesday 1:00-3:00pm	In Person at Peggy's house

*Will meet September 14th due to the first Monday is a holiday

Membership News

New Members: A special welcome to new member, Kay Lynn Schultz, who joined during the summer! We look forward to meeting you.

Membership Renewals: Thank you to those who have already renewed your membership. The membership year goes from September 1st 2026 through August 31st 2027.

Annual dues:

Individual \$30.00

Family \$35.00

Student \$15.00

Dues-paying members who log in to the OGS website (except those who joined after June 1

or who already have renewed) will see a notice in a red banner regarding the need to renew. To renew, please go to your Member Profile Page. Click on "Payments" in the left column of your Profile Page. Click the blue "Renewal" button below the red banner on the Payments page. This should take you to a **PayPal** page from where you can pay with either a PayPal account or pay with a credit or debit card (see the button toward the bottom of the page). If you wish to change your membership plan (e.g. from an individual membership to a family membership),

please contact us at membership@olygensoc.org before renewing. If you have any trouble logging in or have any questions about the membership renewal process, please contact me at the above email address. If you don't wish to pay on-line, you may mail a check to:

Olympia Genealogical Society

Attn: OGS Treasurer

PO Box 1313

Olympia, WA 98507-1313

We greatly value your membership and support of OGS and look forward to your membership renewal.

- **Helga Warner, Membership Chair**

Book Reviews by Keri Upton

Lie By Lie, "A Karen Copperfield Genealogy Mystery Novel" by



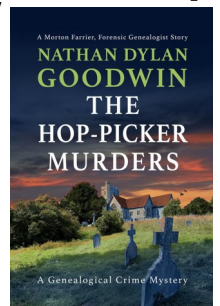
Sue George. The twists and turns untwining the lies as the mystery unfolds through the generations will keep you guessing until a DNA test confirms that

two friends are actually brother and sister, which they knew instinctively. As the truth starts to emerge, so do the reasons the truth was hidden all these years. In the present time, the threats started up again, affecting their business. As the truth reveals itself, I wanted to read the story all

over again knowing who all of the characters actually were. A very well written family mystery having you guessing how it all comes together. This is the second in a series of novels featuring Karen Copperfield, investigative genealogist.

"The Hop-Picker Murders, A Morton Farrier, Forensic Genealogist Story #11" by Nathan Dylan Goodwin. It's been a bit since I have read a Morton Farrier mystery. From the start it was like reading about an old friend. The basis of this mystery is a 1920 journal that Molly Moon discovers of her aunts. The journal con-

tains several cryptic entries involving the murders of four hop pickers, one of whom is her uncle. Morton is able to unravel the mystery behind these deaths. As typical of Nathan Dylan Goodwin he delves into a long forgotten trade, teaching the reader while leading us through research techniques to solve the mystery. An enjoyable read! I have both books to lend as well as it is available through your favorite book seller or available on Kindle.



Genealogy 101

Diving Deeper Into Newspapers

Last time I mentioned using newspapers to find marriages, deaths and births. If you have been doing genealogy for any length of time, you will want to fill out the pictures of your family – not just the bare dates. How boring that is! But if you could add that great-uncle Henry was a blue ribbon bull-rider or knew Jack London in Alaska during the gold rush, that would make him much more exciting. My grandmother was in a circus as a young woman. It was a family circus – more of a side-show – but she was in it. She was an Annie Oakley type shot, using her .22 to shoot cigarettes out of the mouths of men. She was a slack wire artist. She told Gypsy fortunes and read the cards. She was also a snake charmer – I have a picture of her at 18 with several boa constrictors around her. That is really exciting. My third great grandfather, Thomas Bates Watkins, was the first person in Scioto County, Ohio to wear blue jeans. Not sure what that means. These are the things that make our ancestors more real to us. The older newspa-

pers, especially the local ones, have little tidbits. I just typed in Dougherty and the time 1870-1900 in Howard County, Missouri and got over a thousand hits. There are 31 obituaries, 37 marriages and 2 births. But there are a lot more items. There are 902 labeled human interest. No telling what these are about. There are 573 labeled law and justice; saw one which I had known about earlier, just not this item: there were three columns about James Dennis shooting Jim Dougherty and Joe Will Dougherty and another item about Jim Dougherty being on trial for killing James Dennis (from the same incident). This was dated 1896. There are more stories about that incident. One item has listed some Dougherty children in third grade. That might not be so exciting as the murder above. And maybe not as interesting as the various notices of administrators being appointed nor that in Jan 1884 John H. Dougherty was allowed 30 cents for fees for appraising some land. Sometimes you have to plow

through a lot of dull items to get some gold; pretend you are in the gold rush looking for that vein of gold to make you rich! I say to throw your net far and wide (just to mix my metaphors); don't keep to a tiny town or even county. Try the state. If you are lucky enough to have a surname like Eichelberger or Stonecypher, rather than Smith or Jones, you might be able to cast your net very wide, maybe across the US or in Europe. Newspapers.com has newspapers worldwide. I saw a notice in the 1870s in Utah where someone in England was asking for information on a man who had left England to settle in Utah. Remember that relatives in far distant places might like to know what their sons, daughters, brothers or other kin might be doing, so often the newspapers will have items about them – and almost always will have a notice when relatives visit. Try it, you'll like it! - **Carolyn Gibbons**

Carolyn also leads the Family Search SIG which is currently on break.

Member Spotlight: Michael Harter

My name is Michael Harter, and I am relatively new to OGS. I do not know many people yet, and I am terrible with names. Faces are better for me, and I always try to smile and wave. A bit of background on me. I have lived in Olympia area since 1968. I was married, raised two daughters and four grand daughters in this area. I worked for the State in IT, first as a Programmer (non-IBM, non-COBOL), then as an Analyst, and finally as a Manager. I worked for both Service Centers, DOL, and DSHS, the latter for 15 of my thirty years. After retirement and Y2K, I sold cars in Shelton, and worked for Fred Meyers in Photo Electronics. For recreation, I bowled. I have been a bowler since I was ten. I have a State Doubles Championship trophy, have a 300 ring, All Spare patch, Dutch 200 patch,

700 patch, 100 over, 150 over patches and have bowled in multiple national tournaments. I was a Thurston County All Star once., as was on the Board of Directors of Thurston County Bowling Council. I have been doing genealogy for about ten years. My cousin has been documenting my father's line since 1970, and I depend heavily on her help and support. In addition to OGS, I belong to Genealogical Forum of Oregon (gfo.org). They, like us, have many SIGs that are free to join and use Zoom to attend. I am active in their Virginia Roots and Vines SIG, the PNW Sig, Learn and Chat SIG, and Beginning DNA SIG. My Mother's line includes some ancestors who came across the Oregon Trail, some ancestors who fought in the Battle of Blue Licks, and some ancestors with close ties to Daniel Boone (his mother). I

have used DNA to get past two brick walls, one conclusively and one still under scrutiny (no paper documentation). During my working life, I was a trouble shooter, primarily chasing OS, Data Base and Communications problems. As I drifted into Management, I learned to become a Team Builder (because I seldom had the authority to Dictate to people). During the Oregon Trail Days in Tenino, I was asked if I thought OGS was a Service Organization, and I said I did not have enough experience to say. I know that GFO is. I know this because they receive money towards their Outreach and Service endeavors. I also know this because I have seen how they track their statistics to prove what they do, and how it does impact their intended community. This tracking ability has resulted in a National Award for them.

Beta Testing Opportunity

I'm Rufus Howe, and I've built an app called [Wit-nessLives](https://witnesslives.com) (witnesslives.com) that lets people enjoy their family tree in a new way — bringing ancestors into their lives through stories grounded in real facts, something families can actually share and talk about together. It

runs off your GEDCOM file and works on the web, iPad, and iPhone. We're also working on something we haven't seen elsewhere — a kind of "street view" for walking through your family tree — though that piece is still in progress. I'd be grateful if someone in Olympia Genea-

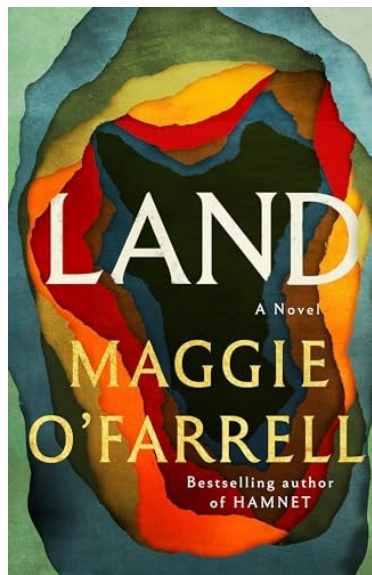
logical Society would be willing to try it for free. The feedback would mean a lot. If this isn't your area, I'd be grateful if you could pass it along to whoever handles new programs or outreach. Thank you for considering it.
- Rufus Howe

Book Review by Elizabeth Grady

Land by Maggie O'Farrell

The Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (folklife.si.edu/magazine) states in an article about Irish storytelling that it stretches back to the 'seanchaithe' and it is a "master in the art of remembrance". They [began as] "custodians of local genealogy and stored the meaning of placenames and skilled tellers of folklore, ancient myths, legends, and wonder tales". One Irish storyteller, Liz Weir, says that folklore is precious, and that the belief in magic and Faires runs deep. One should keep this in mind while reading Land. In the book we are first acquainted with Tomas through the eyes of his son and that his father was a man of few words. How does storytelling collide with such a taciturn nature? How does one preserve family stories when wrapped in pain and a need to forget? I kept thinking about that as I read Land. There was so much to forget and how those things were not really forgotten and well up in different ways. Tomas has survived the Great Hunger and the workhouse and is eager to prove himself. Tomas is a map maker who has tasked himself

to write down the forgotten names and places of the land he is mapping. He struggles to find the right balance between satisfying the British for the maps he draws and the history of the area he is mapping. He is at a crossroad between silence and storytell-



ing. In one passage, Tomas, the father, when reprimanded by his wife "had fallen silent, the words chocked to a halt. He does not like to go down the vertiginous path, into those particular words." He records history through his notebooks, not through stories passed down to his children. But it is the nature of storytelling that someone is going to talk. If it is not the characters in the book, then

the author will. So, we have an additional character, one without a name or shape, but one who leads us through the story. That storyteller is hungry to tell the tale. The Great Hunger is over; some have survived like Tomas and his to-be wife, Phina. The lives of their children are presented to us in such a way to make me want to protect them from all of the elements. The four children are all very different and they do not understand their father. I thought about the work of genealogists as I read this book. How to find the lives that survived and those who did not and how to unwrap the mysteries that envelop families and communities. In one passage regarding the oldest child, I actually blurted out loud, "well, that would make for a genealogist nightmare". I could write more but I would give away too much. This book both frustrated me and wrapped me in the story. I was both wanting to stop reading and I couldn't put the book down. Stories allow us to remember. Sometimes someone else must do the remembering for us

OGS Elected Officers

President — Andy Carter

Vice President — Terry Church

Secretary — Kris Retlin

Treasurer — Carol Jenner

Past President—Kathy Erlandson

Team Leads

Librarian — Traci Ragen Clawson

Membership — Helga Warner

Newsletter — Peggy Cooley

OGS Historian —

Publicity — Gail Sanders

Research — Jerri McCoy

Spring Seminar — Anne Thom

SIGs—Kerry McHugh-Upton

Sunshine—Kris Retlin

Technology—Joe Brookshier

Outreach—Diana Bargmann

Community Partners

City of Lacey — Erin Quinn Valcho

Timberland Library — Agatha Burstein

June Program: Speaker Crystal Hicks discussed government publications that can play a key role in solving difficult research problems. She discussed the Washington State Library's extensive collections of state and territorial publications and discussed how many of them are available online even when the building is closed. WSL's research librarians remain available by email and phone to help researchers navigate these resources and break through persistent brick walls. The presentation introduced researchers to often-underused sources, including agency reports, school records, directories, infrastructure surveys, legislative materials, and employment rosters. Participants saw how these records can shed light on the lives of Pacific Northwest ancestors.

JUNE OGS MEMBERSHIP MEETING

June 11, 2026

President Andy Carter called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

Election of Officers: Andy Carter presented the slate of nominated officers: Andy Carter-President, Terry Church-Vice President, Kris Retlin-Secretary, Carol Jenner-Treasurer. Nominations from the floor were solicited. There were none. Andy Carter moved that the slate be elected as presented, Kerry Upton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Speaker: Cindy Stalnaker introduced Crystal Hicks from the Washington State Library who spoke on "Bureaucracy to the Rescue: Unlocking Family Mysteries with State Records".

At 8:06 President resumed the General Meeting.

Team Reports:

Outreach: Diana Bargmann announced upcoming events: Oregon Trail Days in Tenino, July 24, 25, and 26. And the America250 Celebration in Lacey, September 8. Let Diana know if you would like to participate in either event. DIG at the Tumwater Library begins on June 29 from 1-3 and continues thereafter on the last Monday of the month. OGS needs to demonstrate that this is a well-used activity to continue, so please stop by. Five to seven OGS members are needed to man this activity, please let Diana know if you would like to help with the event. The Schmidt House reported that 272 members of the general public attended their America250 event that OGS supported with a table of information. 80 students and their chaperones also attended outside of the building.

SIGs: Kerry Upton suggested that members check out the activities listed in the newsletter. Ideas for new groups are always welcome.

Website: Recording and handout links for this evening's event will be on the website. The site also had information on the Lacey Museum Open House.

Membership: Two new members this month.

There were 28 members in attendance online and in person. The meeting adjourned at 8:10.

Respectfully submitted Kris Retlin