Supporting family historians in the South Puget Sound since 1974

OLYMPIA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

VOL. 37, NO. 3 NOV 2026

UPCOMING:

- **MEMBER MEETING**: Thursday, Nov 12, 7–8:30 (ZOOM ONLY)
- **SIG MEETINGS** – throughout November
- **Newsletter articles due November 20**
- **OGS Board Meeting** Nov 17, 6:30–7:45 pm

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Newsletter team
Peggy Cooley
Elizabeth Grady

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WEBSITE:
olygensoc.org

FOLLOW US:

This newsletter is free to the community.

Member Spotlight: Elizabeth Grady

My name is Elizabeth Grady, and I have been a member roughly two years. I have been fumbling around with my family tree longer than that, with moderate success. I, like so many Americans, am a mutt. My maternal side came from Minnesota, and before that Sweden, North Ireland (by way of Quebec), and Switzerland. The Swedes farmed and sewed. My grandmother was a seamstress. Her sisters also sewed and sold corsets. My paternal side is dominated by early arrivals to the colonies from England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland and continued to move deeper into the southern colonies and then to Texas. From Texas to California and then obviously to Washington, for me.

In my employed days I worked for the Shelton School District. I taught special education reading and was proud of the gains that my students made in their reading and comprehension skills. When I retired, I was at lose ends and started to muck about with my family tree. The more I dug the more I wanted to really know who I came from. I really wanted to more about who my forebears were. I like learning the details of their lives, not just names. I, also like so many others, was told I was part Native American. So, I had a DNA test done and no Native American showed up, which shattered the stories I had been told. However, I did find out I have DNA from Africa which dates back to the early days of the nation. That was a fascinating detail linking me to early colonial history.

I like to sew and make quilts, read fiction and non-fiction, I like good simple food, and I love long car trips. As a kid, my favorite spot was in the very back of the station wagon (before seatbelts) and lay on top of the luggage and food box. I would eat raw oatmeal as we sped along the roads to Minnesota or Texas. I loved the deserts, fields of crops, miles of sunflowers, billboards of Jack-a-lopes advertising the "Wall Drug" store in South Dekota. For us kids, it meant we begged for a stop.

November Program: "Battle of Blue Licks"

Our November program is a comprehensive look at the Battle of Blue Licks, often referred to as the last battle of the Revolutionary War, presented by a survivor's 5th great-grandson, with selective inclusion of the FAN club, and ties to the Pacific Northwest.

From our speaker: Hi, My name is Michael Harter. I am an almost 80-year-old amateur genealogist who has spent my entire life living in Oregon Territory. That is kind of funny, because my father's family came to Washington before it was a state, and my mother's family came to Oregon before it was a state.



Michael Harter

(continued on page 2)

November Program: "Battle of Blue Licks" *(continued from p. 1)*

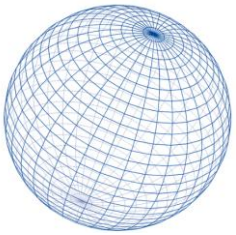
I was born and raised in Walla Walla, spent a year in Boise, and moved to Olympia area in 1968. I have an IT background, starting with computers in 1965.

I became interested in Genealogy about 10 years ago while trying to find out if I had any genetic markers for health issues, and took a 23andMe DNA test. That got me started down this Rabbit Hole, and I was rescued by my cousin,

I will be doing a presentation on The Battle of Blue Licks, which occurred in Kentucky in 1782. It is considered the last great Battle of our Revolutionary War. This is of great interest to me because I have ancestors who fought there, both survivors and casualties. I hope to make it interesting for you.

October Program: "Mapping Ireland's Records"

John Grenham's talk explored how visualizing the locations of households with particular surnames in Catholic records, Griffith's, census records, and records of births, marriages, and deaths can help with genealogy and local history, providing vivid examples of how local some names are and how impossibly widespread others can be. In addition, some of the focus will be on maps of the geographic areas used to collect the records. The talk covered some of the technical background behind creating the maps, but mostly focused on their use and how they shed light on surnames and families.
Speaker John Grenham was Project Manager for the Irish Genealogical Project from 1991 to 1995 and later developed and marketed his own genealogical software, "Grenham's Irish Recordfinder." In 2005, he was the first Genealogist-in-Residence at Dublin City Library. He was awarded a fellowship of the Irish Genealogical Research Society in 2007, the Genealogical Society of Ireland in 2010, and Accredited Genealogists Ireland (AGI) in 2021. He is the author of Tracing Your Irish Ancestors (5th ed., Dublin, Baltimore MD, 2019), the standard reference guide for Irish genealogy; The Atlantic Coast of Ireland (2014); Clans and Families of Ireland (1995); and An Illustrated History of Ireland (1997), among other works. He wrote the "Irish Roots" column in The Irish Times from 2009 to 2016, developed heritage databases with Dublin City Library and Archive and the National Archives of Ireland, and ran the Irish Ancestors website in conjunction with The Irish Times until 2016. In partnership with his son Eoin, he now runs the successor website at www.johngrenham.com. John was an external member of the National Library of Ireland Genealogy and Heraldry Committee from 2011 to 2021, has been a member of the full NLI board since 2021, and chairs the Genealogy and Heraldry Committee.



Ancestry DNA Update

Did you check out your new DNA regions? There are some exciting changes.

OGS News: NEW DOINGS AT THE ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY!!

This year the OGS Holiday Party will be held on Saturday, Dec. 5, 1-3 pm, at our usual location: Capital Vision Christian Church, 1775 Yew Ave. NE, Oly. It's wheelchair and walker accessible. We will be setting up tables, chairs, food, etc. starting at noon and REALLY NEED several people with strong arms and backs to help with this (also for afterwards).

The new part is that instead of our usual sharing of snacks, we will have a luncheon - a sandwich buffet with OGS providing the breads and fixings, tea and water, plates, napkins and eating utensils. We are asking for contributions from you, too:

A - L - salads, M - Z - desserts (please bring serving utensils for these; you might want to label them).

NOTE: Those of you who belong to DAR/SAR, I think your holiday events for those groups might be happening on this same Saturday. So, you can just not eat so much at one party and save some room for our goodies, or just come for dessert. We know it's really tough to have 2 parties on the same day, but you can figure it out!

Besides socializing, we are also looking for a few members to tell us stories of a genealogical (or not?) nature - your craziest genealogy research trip, most exciting or unusual discovery, etc. If you're willing to help us out this way, again let Diana or Kathy know.

Diana Bargmann (programs team) 360 338-3017
Kathy Erlandson (all-around team player) 360 280-4802

For Your Calendar

Our general membership meetings will be ONLY on Zoom in November, December, January and February.

We WILL have a December Program meeting on Dec. 10 via Zoom ONLY.

DIG will be at the Tumwater Library on the last Monday of each month. (Nov. 30, Dec. 28). We have been approved by Timberland Library through the end of the program year.

SIGs: see list on Page 4

OGS Seminar, 6 Feb 2027, via ZOOM only. Registration should be open by 5 Dec 2026. Members: $35; Non-members $45. Speaker Paul Milner: **Researching English Records**.

Roots Tech: 4-6 March 2027, in person in Salt Lake City, Utah. Most sessions will be online. Pre-registration now open.

National Genealogical Society, **2027 Family History Conference,** 19-22 May in Madison, WI. Both In-person and online attendance are available. See conference.ngsgenealogy.org/.

New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, **New York State Family History Conference**, now–Nov 16 (streaming on demand) See www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/nysfhc-2026-registration.

Member Contribution: CANALLING WAS A FAMILY AFFAIR – Joyce Ogden

Joyce Ogden's Great-great grandfather James Durgee settled in the Town of Amboy, New York in 1828 and had 8 known children. The oldest three left the family sometime in the late 1840's. Eldest son Asa married Mary Gay. Eldest daughter Mary Durgee married Mary (Gay) Durgee's brother Gilbert Gay. Gilbert and his brother Amos built an Erie canalboat and launched it in Verona.

On 27 September 1847 Gilbert died in St. Johnsville. The records don't say whether he fell off the boat, was pushed off the boat, or otherwise drowned in the canal. The obituary says only, "boatman and stranger." The surrogate (judge) awarded the boat to Widow Mary, but Gilbert's brother contested on the grounds that he had helped build it. Many legal depositions testify to the characters of the two Gay brothers. The boat was apparently sold and re-named.

The Erie Canal basin in Verona in the 1850 census shows a whole page of canal people there. Mary (Durgee) Gay has re-married to Gilbert's brother Amos Gay and is living side-by-side with her brother (James Durgee's second son) Lewis Durgee and his wife. Eldest son Asa was apparently boating between towns and was missed by the census-taker.

By 1880 that second son Lewis had a teenaged boy, Lewis Jr., who was sent a-boating. On 16 November 1881, while driving the horses in the middle of the night near Crescent, he mis-stepped, fell into the canal and drowned.

You couldn't make all this up. I discovered it when I started "doing" genealogy and found the census records, court records, and newspaper notices in the intrepid Tom Tryniski's "Old Fulton Postcards" website.

When Joyce's mother Marion (Durgee) Turner wrote a family history book back in 1970 (before the Internet was invented), she had only family reminiscences to go on. Her grandfather was the YOUNGEST son of ancestor James, and when the three oldest siblings above left home he was just a child. So her family history book had no mention of them and their remarkable canal connection.

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, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm	Google Meet
DNA	Nancy Cordell	2nd Wednesday, 6:30 – 8:00 pm	Google Meet
Family History Writing	Laura Carroll	1st Monday, 7:00 – 8:30 pm	Google Meet
Family Tree Maker (FTM)	David Abernathy	1st Tuesday, 6:00 – 8:00 pm	Zoom
FamilySearch		On break	Google Meet
Genealogy Chat	Peggy Cooley	3rd Wednesday, 1:00 – 3:00 pm	Peggy's House


SAVE THE DATE
OLYMPIA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL SEMINAR
FEB 6, 2027
9AM – 3PM
Researching English Records
Our presenter, Paul Milner, a native of northern England, is a professional genealogist and internationally known lecturer with 30 years' experience, specializing in British Isles research.
PAUL MILNER
Full details:
https://olygensoc.org/seminar

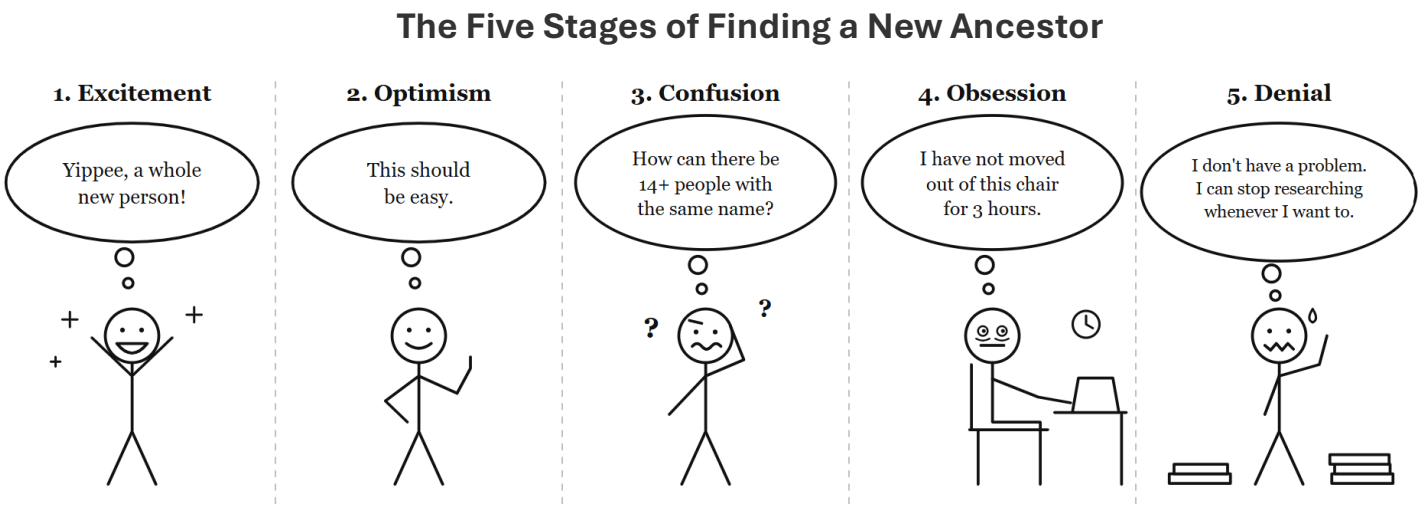
Book Reviews – Kerry Upton

The next series of books that I have been reading is by Wendy Percival.

Her first book, ***Blood Tied*** is the first in the Esme Quentin Mystery series. Esme was an investigator who helped with her husband Tim who was an investigative journalist. After his death she took up researching her family history as suggested by her friend Lucy to get her back up on her feet. When Esme received the call that her older sister was unconscious in the hospital after a brutal attack, she learned of a family secret. She needed to to determine what her sister was doing forty miles from her home when she was attacked. This mystery has layers of family connections, missing heirs and an estate that has been divided down to being worth nothing but for one key piece of property that was gifted to a loyal servant. This is an enjoyable read that is available from your favorite book seller as well as kindle.

The Indelible Stain is the second book in the Esme Quentin Mystery. Esme sets out to North Devon to help a childhood friend on sorting through historical documents for the region of Devon. On her first morning there, she was out on a walk along the beach before meeting up with her friend to start the project. She stumbles across the body of a woman who was fatally injured. Her final words were "I lied" and in her hand a sepia family photo. As the police dismiss Esme's hunches, Esme is retained by the woman's daughter to help to figure out what her mother was doing there and how this could happen to her. The story unfolds involving wealthy landowner, brutal penal history of the nineteenth century and a restored prisoner transport ship to Australia. Enjoy the read as Esme investigates how the characters are all tied together and who they really are. This book is available at your favorite bookseller as well as Kindle.

Death of a Cuckoo, an Esme Quentin Short Read In this novella Esme is called in to help Gina, a daughter of a recently deceased woman, make sense of a letter of condolence from a stranger, complete with a photo of her mother and this stranger with their infants. Gina tags along with Esme to research the connection of the woman and the infants in the photo to a home for unwed mothers and the cuckoo who is trying to keep them from finding out the truth. A quick enjoyable read can be found through your favorite bookseller and Kindle.



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Community News

EXPLORE THE DIGITAL ARCHIVES!

There are over 272 million digitized records preserved on the Digital archives, with new additions and projects in the works every day. A great place to casually browse or to begin your research.
Washington State Archives. Digital Archives

VISIT YOUR REGIONAL ARCHIVES!

Have a research inquiry? Find which branch serves the region of your research and plan a visit! View the dropdown "Archives Branches" to get started.
Washington State Archives - WA Secretary of State

Heritage Quest Research Library Fundraiser: HQRL is selling See's Candies until 12/04/2026. HQRL is a non-profit genealogical library in Puyallup, WA containing over 16,000 volumes. Books, forms, charts, software and supplies can be purchased at 2102 E. Main Ave., Suite #105, Puyallup. hqrl.com

Have you heard? The **National Archives and Records Administration** plan to close facilities in Chicago and San Francisco area in 2027 according to a leaked email on 23 June 2026. This would include moving temporary records out of Seattle's Sand Point archives. Tribal and local records will not be available to their communities.

Tacoma Family History Center News: Memory Lane Digitizing Equipment. It's free!
Equipment Available (covering almost every legacy media type):
Epson FF-6680W Fast Foto Scanner, Epson V600 Flat Bed Scanner, Kodak Scanza Film slide & Negative Digital Conversion Scanner, Diamond Video VCR movie Converter, Wolverine Regular 8 and Super 8 movie converter, Czur-Assure Pro Book Scanner, Xerox copier/scanner, Cassette & Reel to Reel Audio Converter
Tacoma Family Search Center, 1102 S. Pearl St., Tacoma. 253-564-1103. Sign up required.

Membership News from Helga Warner, Team Leader

New and Returned Members -- WELCOME!

Terri Cable, Eric Hatleberg, Jo-Anne Smith Huber, Melissa Kacher, Shauna Dorothy Kamenz, Molly Monks, Kimberly Nichols, Judith Ann Sorensen Pieper, Catherine Smith, Todd Wiley, Trina Young

Membership Renewal

Thank you to those who have already renewed their membership. If you need help with the renewal process, your login, resetting your password, or anything else, please send me an email. I'm very happy to help you!

membership@olygensoc.org

The Olympia Historical Society and Bigelow House Museum presents:

Remembering
Our Forgotten Dead:
an Appreciation of Historic Cemeteries



Sunday, Nov. 22, 2026, 2:00 pm-4:00 pm
Olympia Woman's Club

Erik Anderson's book, *Our Forgotten Dead*, was a passion project that took him all over Washington State, photographing obscure and historic cemeteries. He will share images and insights from his journeys.

Death Dancer's Jennie Banks will share her work helping people embrace their experiences of death and grief.

The Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation's Dr. Guy Tasa will share information about the Historic Cemetery Grant Program.

Franida Maudsley will speak about her work with the Daughters of the American Revolution to clean over 1,000 gravestones.

Rest assured, we will lighten the mood with some delicious refreshments.

All are welcome to join us at this free event.

inspire Olympia

DEATH DANCER

OLYMPIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY & Bigelow House Museum


SAVE THE DATE
Olympia Historical Society &
Bigelow House Museum
Historic
HOMES TOUR
Sunday, December 6
12:00 pm – 4:00 pm
South Capitol Neighborhood

OGS Elected Officers

President — Andy Carter
Vice-President — Terry Church
Secretary — Kris Retlin
Treasurer — Carol Jenner
Past President — Kathy Erlandson

OGS Volunteer Needs:

OGS Historian to commemorate our activities; one hour a month.

Drop-In Genealogy Co-Coordinator; at least 5 hours each month. Contact Michael Harter.

Our **FamilySearch SIG** has lost its leader. Anyone who would like to take charge, please contact info@olygensoc.org.

Team Leads

Librarian — Tracie Clawson
Membership — Helga Warner
Newsletter — Peggy Cooley
Historian — Vacant
Publicity — Gail Sanders
Research — Jerri McCoy
Seminar — Anne Thom
SIGs — Kerry McHugh Upton
Sunshine — Kris Retlin
Technology — Joe Brookshier
Outreach — Diana Bargmann
Drop-In Genealogy — Michael Harter

Community Partners

City of Lacey — Erin Quinn Valcho
Timberland Library — Agatha Burstein

OCTOBER OGS MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Minutes, October 8, 2026

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

Holiday Party: The event is Saturday, December 5,1-3PM at Capital Vision Church. It will be a sandwich buffet with members bringing salads or desserts. Come at 12 to help set up. More information in the Newsletter.

November General Meeting: A reminder that the meeting will be Zoom only.

Newsletter: Andy talked about the great amount of information that can be found in the Newsletter. Elizabeth Grady has joined the staff.

Team Reports:

SIGs: Meet monthly, please join in on one, information in the Newsletter

Membership: 11 new members since September.

Seminar: Paul Milner will speak on British genealogical topics on February 6, 2027. Registration will begin soon.

Speaker: John Grenham spoke on Mapping Ireland's Records.

There were 34 individuals who attended in person and via Zoom. The meeting ended at 8:41.

Kris Retlin, Secretary