



# First Landing

the VBGS Newsletter

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## Consider Blogging to Share, Preserve, and Improve Your Family History Research

by Diana Quinn

I have been blogging about my family history since 2011 and seldom research family without thinking about how the research can be turned into a story for a blog post. For me, the benefits of blogging are tremendous.

### Why I Blog

Blogging is my creative outlet. I like to write and am primarily writing for family - those I know, those I hope to meet, and those who might appreciate my posts beyond my lifetime.

A blog can be more flexible than a website or writing a book. You can write about your new finds, ask questions, and point out the mistakes in your earlier research. Posts can be as short or as long as desired and published on your schedule.

Blogging allows me to share easily. I work hard researching my family and want other researchers to benefit from my knowledge. One of my personal goals is to add my ancestor

blog posts as stories to online family trees, thus allowing the stories to outlive me.

Blogging has improved my research skills. Writing stories to post on my blog helps me organize and analyze known details about an ancestor or event. As I write the stories, I almost always see missing information or mistakes. Finding these gaps or errors allows me to determine my next steps for research.

Family members, who find me on the web, share photos, family letters, and more. Some correct my mistakes, answer my questions, and share their research and ideas.

There are so many good reasons to pair blogging with family history research. As I will never "finish" my family history, I will continue blogging as long as I research.

(see Blogging on page 4)

## Getting Organized by Heather Wright

I recently started something I've been avoiding for a long, long time (years). Organizing my family photos.

### MY FILING SYSTEM

It's pretty easy and straightforward when I research because I have a system. Though I've recently started tagging everything to make searching possible, my overall system has been in place for years. (It's important to note, I'm a digital genealogist. I have hard copies of very little.)

File names most often include the person's name, birthyear (you have 20 people with the same name too, right?), and a brief description of what it is.

Example: Bisogni,Mercede\_1893-birth rec

Once the item is named, it gets filed in a surname folder (either documents or photos), always by their birth surname.

That's easy. I find something, download it, name it, file it. What isn't easy are the hundreds (thousands?) of family photos I've taken or gotten from family over the years. Especially those that have multiple people in them.

Those filenames are a mess or non-existent. Names like Scan0045 and Image546 abound.

(SEE ORGANIZED ON PAGE 5)



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## VBGS Leadership

### Board Members

- President: Wendy Bransom
- Vice President: Heather Wright
- Secretary: Sam Williams
- Treasurer: Craig Fenton
- Past President: Craig Fenton

### Members at Large:

- Debby Christian, Carmen Cross,  
David Hamilton, Diana Quinn

### Committee & Group Chairs

- Archivist: Peg Niedholdt
- Awards: Barbara Murry
- Banquet: **could be you!**
- Computer User Group: April Owens
- Digital Archivist: **could be you!**
- Education: Diana Quinn
- Librarian: Brian Baldwin
- Membership: Duane Harding
- Newsletter: Heather Wright
- Program: Bob Bruce
- Publicity: Barbara Murray
- Social: Debbie Christian
- Webmaster: Carmen Cross
- Scholarship: Jackie Alcorn
- Writers Group: Carol Johnson

## Newsletter Submissions

As a VBGS member, this is your newsletter and relies on you for content. Whether it’s short, long, a personal find, or information to share, send submissions to [newsletter@vbgsva.net](mailto:newsletter@vbgsva.net).



## Click here to find us online



Use the email links or contact the administrator, Bobbie Brenton, at [admin@vbgsva.net](mailto:admin@vbgsva.net)

For more information, visit [vbgsva.net/about--contact](http://vbgsva.net/about--contact)

## About VBGS

### Founding

The Virginia Beach Genealogical Society was founded in 1983. While some members are interested in local genealogy, like the city itself, most are not originally from the area. As a result, the group has far-reaching areas of interest.

### Objectives

1. To help individuals conduct genealogical research and compile their family histories.
2. To educate, including lectures, discussions, and workshops.
3. To create and foster an interest in genealogy.
4. To gather and preserve genealogical and historical data.

### Membership

The membership year is Sep-Aug,

\$25/individual

\$35/household of 2

For more information and to

become a member, visit

[vbgsva.net/membership](http://vbgsva.net/membership)

*current members: 112*

(includes 15 households)



The National Genealogical Society  
[ngsgenealogy.org](http://ngsgenealogy.org)

## VBGS is a proud member of

The Virginia Genealogical Society  
[vgs.org](http://vgs.org)



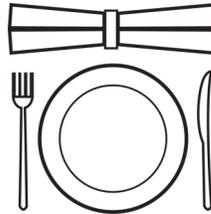
## President's Message



Fall is almost here! Make sure you pay your dues for the fiscal year September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023. You must pay them by August 31, 2022 to access the VBGS member-only area of website. The password will change on September first.

Our Officers and Committee Chairs are preparing for our meetings this fall. Watch the Meetings & Events page on our website for updates. The Computer User Group will begin meeting in person at the Central Library (potentially hybrid), while the How-to Class and the Writers Group will keep meeting via Zoom. The Members Meeting will be hybrid, in person at the Central Library and on Zoom. We will record meetings that we are allowed to in case you miss one. Those videos will be in the members-only area of the website, so make sure you pay your dues on time.

We still need a Committee Chair for the VBGS Annual Banquet. This is a leadership position where you delegate responsibilities to others assisting with the banquet. You would make sure every sub-committee is doing well, and maybe make recommendations. I will turn over to you what VBGS did in the last two banquets in 2020 and 2022. I will also be a mentor for you. This can be a lot of fun. You will have a lot of others who will want to help. If you are interested in filling this chair or helping with the banquet, email the nominations committee at [nominations@vbgsva.net](mailto:nominations@vbgsva.net).



We are always looking for helpers for everything we do. Check out our website, there might be something you can assist with, or maybe you have a fresh idea for something. Feel free to contact me at [president@vbgsva.net](mailto:president@vbgsva.net) with any questions or ideas!

One last point, covid is still with us, but you can still be with us in Zoom meetings. If you want to attend the meetings in the auditorium at the Central Library, you can be safe. It is a very large building where you can spread out easily.

I hope to see your smiling faces this Fall!

Wendy Bransom  
VBGS President



## CALENDAR

Monthly Meetings are open to all and now hybrid (if possible). Small group meetings are open to current VBGS members and may be in person, on Zoom, or hybrid. See the website for more info. [vbgsva.net/meetings--events](http://vbgsva.net/meetings--events)

### September

- 1 New membership year begins. Dues due.  
New website password begins.
- 6 How-to Class, 7pm on Zoom.  
topic: GEDmatch basics
- 8 Monthly Meeting, 5:30pm, hybrid  
speaker: Rebecca Suerdieck
- 19 Writers Group, on Zoom  
topic: TBD
- 20 Computer User Group, VB Central Library  
topic: Lisa Louise Cooke lesson,  
Early Virginia Genealogy

### October

- 1 VBGS Virtual Conference, Improving Your  
Research Skills, 9 am - 4:30 pm on Zoom
- 4 How-to Class, 7pm on Zoom.  
speaker: Sheree Budge, Reference Librarian for  
Local History and Genealogy, LOC  
topic: Library of Congress site
- 12 Monthly Meeting, 5:30pm, hybrid  
topic: show and tell  
NOTE: This is a Wednesday!
- 17 Writers Group, on Zoom  
topic: TBD
- 19 Computer User Group, VB Central Library  
topic: Lisa Louise Cooke lesson, Beginning and  
Restarting Genealogy Research

Get your PJs on, the

## VBGS Virtual Conference

is October 1st, see page 17 for more.



## Blogging by Diana Quinn (continued from pg.1)

### Start Your Blog

My blog, [Moments in Time - A Genealogy Blog](#), is a relatively small blog in the blogging world. I use Blogger (by Google) for my blog. It's free and easy to use and maintain. I use Grammarly to proof my posts and set up a Facebook page to share them. I keep a running list of ideas and frequently read other blogs for inspiration.

If you want to start your own blog, check out the suggestions at the links below.

Amy Johnson Crow will answer most questions in "How to Start a Genealogy Blog" <https://www.amyjohnsoncrow.com/how-to-start-a-genealogy-blog/>

Find many good suggestions and creative ideas in "Is a family history blog the best way to share your ancestral stories? Think outside the book" from The Creative Family Historian. <https://www.creativefamilyhistorian.com/design/family-history-blog/>

Make sure you read the six posts and Blogging Tips in Julie Goucher's Blog Writing Series. <https://anglersrest.net/category/blog-writing-series/>

I started my blog after hearing Thomas MacEntee talk about blogging at a conference. Read his "Blogging your family history" at Archives.com. <https://www.archives.com/experts/macentee-thomas/blogging-your-family-history.html>

## VBGS hosts Genealogy Classes at Harbor's Edge

The Publicity Committee was busy this summer! We are always looking for ways to let others know about the Virginia Beach Genealogical Society. On June 8th, Wendy Bransom and Barbara Murray were greeted warmly at Harbor's Edge Retirement Community in Norfolk, where Wendy presented a talk to approximately 16 residents. Her topic, *Researching Family History Without the Internet*. Everyone attending seemed very interested and asked a lot of questions. Afterward, Barbara gathered names of those who wanted to be added to our email list, handed out information about the society, and answered any questions.

On July 27th, Heather Wright and Barbara returned for another class. Heather presented, *Using Family Search for Genea-*

*logical Research*. And on August 31st, Heather and Barbara will be returning for the final presentation with *DNA Basics for Genealogy*.

The Publicity Committee is very pleased we were able to share knowledge of researching family history and enlightening others to the Virginia Beach Genealogical Society.

Barbara Murray  
Publicity Committee Chair



Wendy Bransom at left,  
Heather Wright at right.



# Organized (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

## FIXING MY MESS

I've been avoiding the task for years I think mostly because I was unsure how to handle items with multiple people in them – all of whom matter to me – and the sheer quantity.

After Google Photos was presented in a VBGS class, I thought that was my ticket. I loved that you could search for “house” and it would bring up anything that looked like a house.

I uploaded *sooo* many photos only to realize it wasn't for me. I didn't like the layout (it wasn't uniform) or the fact I couldn't simply see the filenames. So bye-bye Google Photos.

Once I started tagging items in the metadata, my path became clearer.

I chose to name the file based on the “main person” in the photo, or the oldest, whatever I'm feeling for that item. I may add some of the other people in the description part of the name, but I don't really have to because they are tagged in the metadata.

I named and tagged around 600 the weekend of July 9th – it felt so good! - and I now have filenames like:

Berti,Elda\_1924-photo-1932ish.jpg and  
Wilson,Bethel\_1931-pic 1959 c-LindaBethBillJimmy.tif

(I add *photo* or *pic* between the birth year and the photo date so it doesn't look like a lifespan. Even knowing it's my system, I would always see Berti,Elda\_1924-1932ish.jpg as she died at about age 6, not that it's a photo of her at about age 6. Also, I put the photo year before the *c* or month abbreviation so they would be listed (generally) in chronological order.)

## METADATA

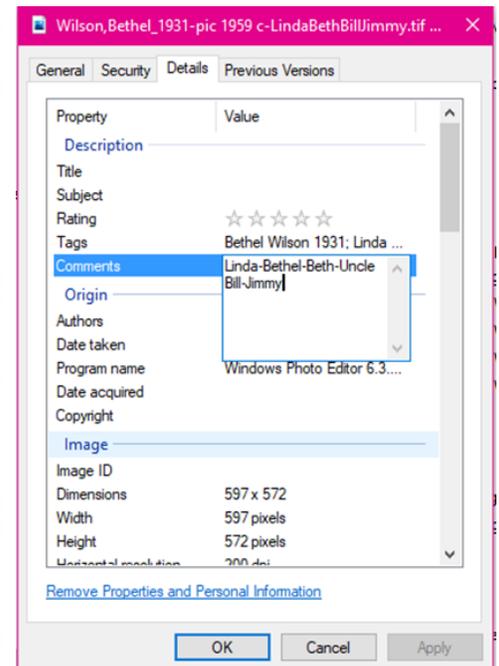
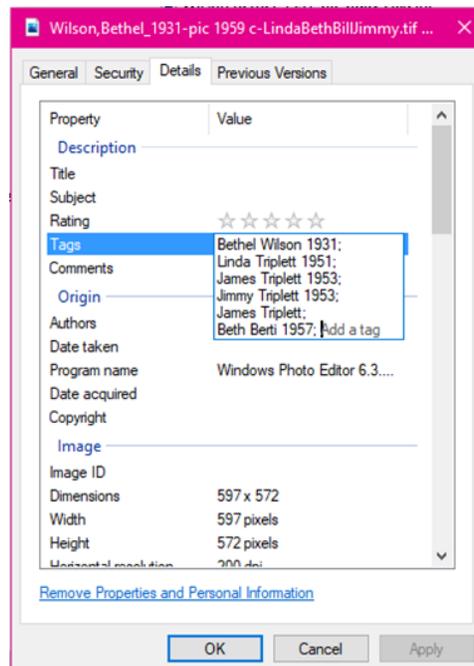
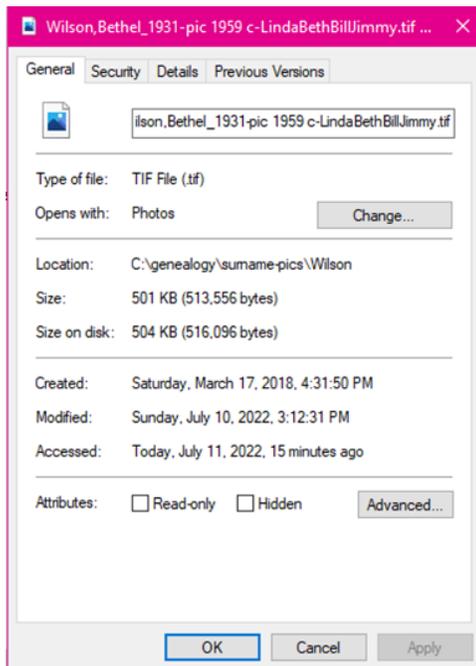
If you don't know, metadata is background information attached to a file. You can't add tags to pdf files, but you can to jpg and tif files. Once tags are added, that file will come up in a search. So, that photo with Bethel Wilson, Linda, Beth, Bill, and Jimmy has tags with their full names and birth years. No more relying on the filename alone.

I've finally found my solution; maybe this can help you too. Here's how to access the metadata on a windows computer (it may vary slightly on a Mac).

To add metadata, open the file Properties box (in Windows, right click on the file name or look in the Home tab).

In the Details tab, enter the names in the Tags window. Each entry is separated by a semicolon. You can see I've added both proper and nick names. I've added birth years because, again, 20 people.

In the comments window, I've added the order of the people, left to right. For documents, I still tag people as above and use the comment area to put the source info.



Welcome New Member: *Therese DeSanto*



My name is Therese DeSanto – My life has been very fortunate with many opportunities. I have two beautiful thirty-something daughters, two shelties, and three cats. I oil paint, was a Girl Scout Leader for 16 years, and loved living in Germany for five years. We were there when 9-11

happened. My professional nursing career spans over 40 years in the field of Emergency Medicine. I was an ED manager for about 12 years, but left that world right after COVID arrived, accepting another hospital management position with over 100 employees.

Moving forward, I consider myself a Genealogist. I am a member of the DAR and UDC, which I serve as President of the Princess Anne Chapter. I recently served for two years as the Virginia Historian of the Virginia UDC. I strongly believe that with today's culture, Education is key!

My journey into Genealogy began when I was 20 years old, when I asked my grandmother one simple question. With my grandmother's help these past 40 years, I have been able to build the story of my ancestors. She was my inspiration in all I do, and we continued to look for stories and pictures until her death two years ago, at the age of 104 years and 11 months. She was such a walking story. She was born in 1914, at a time when families sat at the kitchen table sharing family stories. I would take her to different organizations and historical libraries where they wanted her knowledge to identify pictures. She was so healthy until a month before her death, so imagine the stories and the knowledge she had. I am so thankful that I have various movies where she tells stories of the past.

I treasure the moments when we walked cemeteries, met with long-lost cousins, went to courthouses and yes, I am not afraid to knock on doors of our ancestor homes. I stood in front of the fireplace where my grandparents married in 1935. My mom, grandmother, and I have stayed in a Civil War Plantation where my great-grandmother and all her siblings were born. Oh, I should mention, that the Secret Services had surrounded my car one day about 2007, when I decided to get a photo of my grandmother sitting on the steps of her girlhood home, which just so happened to be the home of Governor Mark Warner. She took him on a tour of "his" home talking about the early stories of not having electricity, and he didn't know about the tunnel to the Potomac River from the cellar in the house that her mother bricked up about 1920.

I joined Ancestry in the late 1990s and have found a goldmine on the site. I have built a very thorough Ancestry tree with a goal of assuring its accuracy. I love networking and finding connections. I have connected with so many cousins and discovered so much through DNA

matches, with the most incredible being the discovery of a child no one knew of, born in 1929. DNA proved that my grandmother's oldest brother had a daughter no one knew about. She was adopted at birth; told she was adopted at age five and had been searching for her birth family since she was a teenager. We discovered her at the age of 86 years, and she was able to form a wonderful bond with her aunt – my grandmother – who was 101 when they met. I should mention that I have connected with "cousins" on Facebook and discovered so many great old photos.

There is so much more I could share. My next journey continues

with my mom and myself, always with my grandmother in mind, and wishing I could ask her one more question. Our next trip will be to Arlington Cemetery to tour the renovated Arlington House; and I am looking forward to attending my 5<sup>th</sup> RootsTech in Salt Lake City this coming March.



Therese with her mom and grandmother at Mt. Vernon, 3 May 2018.

## Genealogy Day at the Beach

On May 11th, the VBGS and Virginia Beach Public Library hosted a day of genealogy fun at the Central Library on Virginia Beach Blvd. At 3:30 that afternoon, the exhibitor rooms opened, and speaker sessions began.

The speaker presentations were held in the auditorium, with four half-hour mini-lessons leading up to the Monthly Meeting at 5:30.

During the short sessions, the VBPL shared about the Edgar T. Brown Local History Archive, VBGS member and professional archivist Tammy M. Woodward talked about preserving various items, author Allie Marie shared how she incorporates family history research into her books, and Edna Hendrix showed two videos about the history of Black Communities in Virginia Beach. At the Monthly Meeting, Pam Vestal showed us what we might find about ancestors in voting records.

All the while, fourteen exhibitors were across the hall. Offerings ranged from research supplies to different society information, services for hire, books for sale, and more.

With attendance estimates between 70 and 80 people, we hope this is just the inaugural Genealogy Day at the Beach event, and look forward next year being even better!



*Thank you*

**To the VBGS volunteers,  
speakers, and exhibitors!**

### Speakers:

Amanda Brooks (VBPL)  
Tammy M. Woodward  
Allie Marie  
Edna M. Hendrix  
Pam Vestal

**VBGS volunteers:** Bobbie Brenton, Wendy Bransom, Sharon Cruthers, Jo Given, Barbara Murry, Peg Niedholdt, Diana Quinn, John Ward, Heather Wright, Kim Pugh, Linn Baiker, Mary Ohnemus, Laurie Quint, Cindy Meier

**Exhibitors:** Jigsaw Genealogy ❖ Virginia Beach Central Library ❖ Virginia Beach Genealogical Society ❖ National Society United States Daughters 1812 ❖ Edna M. Hendrix ❖ Allie Marie ❖ Tammy M. Woodward ❖ Sam Williams, The Orthodox Genealogist ❖ Daughters of the American Revolution ❖ Sons of the American Revolution ❖ Ferry Plantation ❖ Dames of the Court of Honor ❖ Hugh S. Watson Jr. Genealogical Society of Tidewater ❖ Daughters of the Confederacy



See more photos here: <https://www.vbgsva.net/scrapbook.html>



The Newsletter Archive is being upgraded and needs your help!

### Indexing

Heather Wright has scanned and made all available back issues into searchable pdf files. An index of keywords needs to be made in order to easily search these and find any of interest.

### Missing issues

We are missing a number of issues and need your help. Do you have any of the missing issues listed below?

### Can you help?

Whether you have one missing issue or all of them, whether you index 1, 5, or 20 issues — it all helps! If you can help, contact Heather at [newsletter@vbgsva.net](mailto:newsletter@vbgsva.net).

### The Goal

#### Example of index to be built:

Keywords grouped by article	page	issue
Soviet Genealogy, Soviet Union, USSR, Russia	2	6-4 Dec 1989
cemetery, Melinda Lekei, John Newman, cemetery tra	3	6-4 Dec 1989
Ohio death records, Ohio Historical Society,	4	6-4 Dec 1989
Anson Hyde, genealogy, computer	5	6-4 Dec 1989
Christine Levet Gerbel, Jones Wrenn, Cisley Mabry, C	6	6-4 Dec 1989

#### What the searchable index looks like online:

Search Newsletter Archive		
Enter Keywords...		
keyword	page	issue
newsletter name	1	6-4 Dec 1989
meeting place, Central Library	1	6-4 Dec 1989
Everton Publishers	1	6-4 Dec 1989
NGS 10th Anniversary	1	6-4 Dec 1989
beginner class, William Isaacs, Bill Isaacs,	2	6-4 Dec 1989
German Ancestors, Baltimore, Maryland, Maryland Historical Society, Hall of Records, Annapolis	2	6-4 Dec 1989

#### As you enter keywords, the list narrows to the issues of interest to you!

Search Newsletter Archive		
ohio		
keyword	page	issue
Ohio death records, Ohio Historical Society,	4	6-4 Dec 1989

#### Missing Issues:

1984-1988: all issues

1989: Mar, Jun, Sep

1995: Nov

1998: May, Aug, Nov

1999: Feb

2014: Aug, Nov

2015: all issues

2016: Aug, Nov

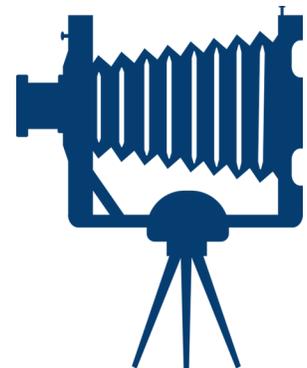
2017: all issues



We are cleaning out the clutter! Check out photos from VBG activities in the late 1990s to early 2000s here: <https://www.vbgsva.net/old-photos.html>.

These photos are now scanned and saved in our digital archive — which means if you or someone you know is in any of them and you can have the physical photo!

It's first come, first serve. If you see something you'd like, contact the webmaster at [webmaster@vbgsva.net](mailto:webmaster@vbgsva.net).



## Recipe Corner



*This recipe for  
Key Lime Pie  
has been shared by Debby Christian*



My mother's Key Lime Pie is a summertime favorite in my family, and the key lime juice makes the pie authentic. I found this in her recipe box that I inherited since I am "the cook" in the family. Mom was Slovak and Croatian, and grew up near Pittsburgh, so I know this is not a recipe that has been handed down through generations, but I will pass it along to my children.

### Ingredients

- 1 13 oz. can Sweetened Condensed Milk
- 4 Eggs, separate yolks from whites, keeping one egg white in another bowl
- 1/2 cup Key Lime Juice
- 1 9-inch Graham Cracker Pie Crust
- 6 Tbsp Sugar
- 1/2 tsp Cream of Tartar

### Directions

1. Prepare Graham Cracker Pie Crust according to package directions, bake and let cool.
2. Set the oven on 350 degrees.
3. Make the filling:  
Combine condensed milk, egg yolks and lime juice in a mixing bowl and beat for about 2 minutes on a medium speed. In a separate bowl, beat 1 egg white, on a high speed, until stiff. Fold the egg white into the mixture and turn the mixture into the (cooled) baked pie shell.
4. Make the meringue topping:  
In a separate mixing bowl, beat 3 egg whites on high speed and gradually add sugar and cream of tartar until the mixture "peaks".
5. Spread meringue over the filling.
6. Bake at 350 degrees for about 20 minutes or until meringue is golden brown.
7. Chill before serving. Makes 6 servings.



The above recipe will be included in the Social Committee's recipe book once there are enough submissions.

If you would like to contribute a family recipe, contact Debby Christian [social@vbgsva.net](mailto:social@vbgsva.net)



Have you thought about getting more involved in VBGS?

You don't have to know anything about the position coming in; just be willing to learn. Here's where help is needed:

### DIGITAL ARCHIVIST

Work with the Board and Committee Chairs to ensure all Society documents and photos are uploaded and organized on Google Drive.

### MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR

Keep the membership rolls up-to-date, coordinating with the Treasurer to ensure the list is current.

### YOU-TUBE EDITOR

Clip small videos from our growing library of recorded meetings to be the public face of VBGS on You-Tube.

### SOCIAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Debby Christian needs help with planning and making social activities happen.

### SOCIAL MEDIA AMBASSADOR

Regularly post on the VBGS Facebook and Twitter pages to share info and just let people know we are here.

### COMPUTER USER GROUP CO-CHAIR

Work with April Owens to plan and host the CUG. Share what you know and learn more along the way!



If you are interested in one of the positions, contact Barbara at [nominations@vbgsva.net](mailto:nominations@vbgsva.net)

## Help is here, VBGS Mentors

Did you know VBGS members can get help from fellow member mentors for free?

The current mentors are listed below. Check out the Mentors page in the member-only area of the website for more information and to contact a mentor.

If you would like to be added to the mentor list, or need to update your current listing, contact [webmaster@vbgsva.net](mailto:webmaster@vbgsva.net).



#### *April Owens*

Converting media

#### *Craig Fenton*

DNA

#### *Debby Christian*

Planning a Genealogy Trip to Europe

#### *Diana Quinn*

Ancestry, Ancestry DNA, newspapers, DNA cluster research, general questions

#### *Diane Fenton*

extreme Eastern NC, coastal NY, RI

#### *Duane Harding*

Basic genealogy, Computer graphics, Google Earth, Google Maps, PC computer skills, Mail-merge, Maps, MS Office, Paleography, Pdf files, Scanning, The Cloud

#### *Heather Wright*

Legacy Family Tree, Family Search, Weebly DNA (23andMe, FTDNA, GEDmatch, DNA Painter)

#### *Kay Knight*

WikiTree, NY Wills and Land Records

#### *Renee Haynes*

Ancestry, DNA

#### *Wendy Bransom*

WikiTree

## The Education Committee Survey: You asked, We Listened

Members who responded to the Education Committee Survey had some excellent topic suggestions regarding How-to classes for the coming year.

A few requested topics were passed on to the Program Committee, as experts would better serve those topics at a monthly meeting. Look for other topics such as *Ancestry Beyond the Basics* and *Genealogical Education Resources* in a future newsletter.

Some members requested subjects that were topics of past presentations and are available to watch from the members-only area of the website. Check out these and others by logging in to the Members-Only pages.

Some of the available recordings:

- ◆ **Ancestors in the U.S. Military: Online and in Military Archives**  
presented by Dr. Margaret McMahan – 10 Nov 2021
- ◆ **Navigating WikiTree**  
presented by Kay Knight – 16 Mar 2021
- ◆ **Organizing and Staying on Track**  
presented by Heather Wright – 7 Sep 2021
- ◆ **Introduction to U.S. Land Records**  
presented by Sara Kidd – 1 Mar 2022



### Find the recordings:

Go to [vbgsva.net](http://vbgsva.net).

Click *Resources*, *Members Only*, and then *Recorded Meetings*.

(You will be prompted to log in if you haven't done so previously)



### Upcoming classes

How-to sessions planned for the coming year include:

- ◆ September 6, 2022 – A GEDmatch presentation by Heather Wright.
- ◆ October 4, 2022 – Sheree Budge, Reference Librarian for Local History and Genealogy at the Library of Congress, will demonstrate accessing Library of Congress digital sources and the online catalog.
- ◆ November 1, 2022 – Sara Kidd will present a land record presentation focusing on deeds.
- ◆ December 6, 2022 – Wendy Bransom will show us why we should use the databases found on the public DAR website.
- ◆ January 3, 2022 - Diana Quinn will demonstrate the use of early census records along with land and court records to find ancestors prior to the 1850 census.
- ◆ February 7, 2022 – The Education Committee will talk about searching newspaper sites and provide links to numerous paid and free newspaper sites.

In the spring, look forward to learning about free resources and more about GEDmatch and land records.

If you have questions or suggestions for the Education Committee, please contact Diana Quinn, Education Committee Chair at [dianaquinn@vbgsva.net](mailto:dianaquinn@vbgsva.net).

# Member Spotlight

This is Heather, your newsletter editor, here. I had the idea of profiling a member in the newsletter after attending an NGS delegate meeting in February. When I ended up taking over the newsletter editor position after the May issue, it was the first thing I thought about adding.

**Choosing who to profile:** Two members are chosen at random, using the membership list and a random number generator. They are then asked to write a little something about themselves.

**The little something:** When we write articles, it's always about our research process, an ancestor, a technique, etc. This is meant to be about us. Nothing big, just something from your life, like:

- What was/is your chosen career? (Yes, this certainly includes being a parent or any other non-paying work.) What drew you to it? What did/do you do? Did/do you like the work?
- A memorable get-together or trip. What was the occasion and who was there? Where did you go and why? Did you travel with family, friends, or solo? Did something go wrong, or was everything was perfect? Tell us about your adventure!
- A story from your childhood – any story. A favorite toy, a fight with a sibling, a best friend, a broken bone, a concert.

**Why:** It's the "ordinary life" kind of stuff that makes life interesting. One of my favorite finds is a collection of letters written to a 4th great-grandmother Ellinor Baird (and later to her husband as well). They start when she is 14, her father teaching her about the art of writing, including correcting her spelling and grammar. A few years later, while Ellinor is away at an aunt and uncle's, there are a few letters written to her from sisters. In one, her sister Catherine says another sister Sarah and a friend have locked her out of the room so she sits down to write. In another, little sister Harriet tells her they've been painting and hanging wallpaper. I love it! And that's not something found in any record.

**Getting started:** I asked a few people to participate but, for a number of reasons, no one is able to submit something this time, so you're getting me first. I hope you'll want to participate in the future! Feel free to send me something before I ask you, and I'll keep it on file to use at random.



## Career Goals of a Ten Year Old

Somewhere around eight years old, I had a short list of careers on my mind. High on the list, no pun intended, was an acrobat in the circus. Why, I don't know. I've never been a daredevil and wouldn't have made it up to the platform, let alone put on a show. Next, just as high on the list, was an archaeologist. I loved history and learning about how people lived in different times and places. I wanted to dig in the dirt to find the answers to questions I hadn't even thought about.

Thirdly, and not so high on the list, was being a teacher. Not in the "I want to help shape young minds" kinda way, but in the "I can yell at annoying children" kinda way. That lost its appeal quick.

Being a teacher went away, as well as

being an acrobat, but science always stuck with me. While some of my classmates dreaded it, I always loved science fair time and had fun with the experiments. I remember two during the 4th to 6th grade time frame. One was seeing under what conditions bread would grow mold/fungus quickest. My parents were sports. I had slices of bread in different cabinets, shelves, and all corners of the house. Another was seeing which brand of paper towels absorbed the most water.

(continued on page 13)



Heather Wright

## Career Goals of a Ten Year Old (continued from page 12)

A project in eighth grade was about erosion. I had cookie sheets with dirt with and without mulch or pebbles and varying types and densities of plants to see what would be best for erosion prevention. From that day on, my friend's dad would always ask me how the erosion was going, or what he should do. If I saw him today, he would ask.

I am fortunate to have made my science career dreams a reality and remember my childhood influences fondly. From Mr. Wizard and Steve Erwin, to Jack Hannah and even Star Trek, and for the support of my parents, teachers, and even my friend's dad in his weird way. They all had a little part to play in fostering my curiosity.

*This is me in 6th grade, in 1991, at Julius Rosenwald Elementary School in New Orleans, LA. I can't tell what place I won, but I think this is the moldy bread project. The middle panel is a calendar and there are plastic baggies on the right panel. And I was serious about the science fair. My panel isn't cardboard, oh no, this is plywood that I used over and over again!*



## It's DUES TIME!

The VBGS membership year runs September-August, so that means it's time to pay dues. If you don't know, here's where most of our dues go...

- speaker fees
- website & domain name
- P.O. Box
- Zoom subscription
- Publicity (business cards, banners, etc.)

Dues are still \$25 for individuals &  
\$35 for a household of two

Fill out the membership form and pay online at  
<https://www.vbgsva.net/membership.html>

(You can also mail it in, find the printable form and address through the same link)

And, here's the member only benefits...

- Small group meetings (Writers Group, Computer User Group, and How-to Classes)
- Members-only Facebook page
- Post queries in the newsletter at no charge
- Access to VBGS Mentors at no charge
- The growing library of recorded meetings, meeting handouts, and back issues of the newsletter.
- Member Lending Library
- Member surname list
- Social outings



**The password for the Members-Only area of the website will change on Sept. 1.** You will be given the new password once your dues have been paid. If you joined at the Genealogy Day at the Beach in May, or later, you're all set and will be sent the new password.

## Lost Scrapbook from 1928 by Bobbie Brenton



"Grandma, I found a scrapbook made in 1928 with a cover made from a Japanese Obi with lots of family pictures and beautiful hand painted pictures of places all over Japan. Do you think you can find the family so we can return it to them"?

That was a phone call from my granddaughter three weeks ago. We were both excited. My granddaughter Amanda and her wife Mia work every Saturday morning at the Portsmouth Library. Amanda is the President of the "Friends of the Library" and Mia is the Marketing Manager. Part of their job is to sort donated books and prepare them for sale. They came across this scrapbook and just had no other choice but to find the family. It was in perfect shape with parchment paper between each page. Inside the scrapbook was a poem and letter from the daughter who had made the scrapbook for her parents' 50th Anniversary. It listed each of her parents' full names and the dates marking their 50-year marriage. From the letter, the daughter was unable to be home for the celebration; instead, she made this exceptional scrapbook for them.

My first decision was to go on to my Ancestry account and see if there was a tree for either the father or the mother's family. I found the father's tree with five children listed, but on investigation, found that none of the five children had married or had heirs, including the daughter who made the scrapbook. Next, I looked at the mother's side of the family. The daughter had listed her mother's full maiden name. I found her mother listed in a tree with the owner's name and contact information.

I also found the daughter's 1922 passport renewal paperwork, which explained why she was in Japan and could not be home for her parents' Anniversary celebration. She was a career missionary and lived in Japan for many years. She had come to the states in 1922 traveling back to Japan, Ceylon, and Hong Kong on the USS Cleveland. (This was the same ship I had traveled on when I followed my husband's ship in 1961 from San Francisco to the Philippines. What a coincidence.)

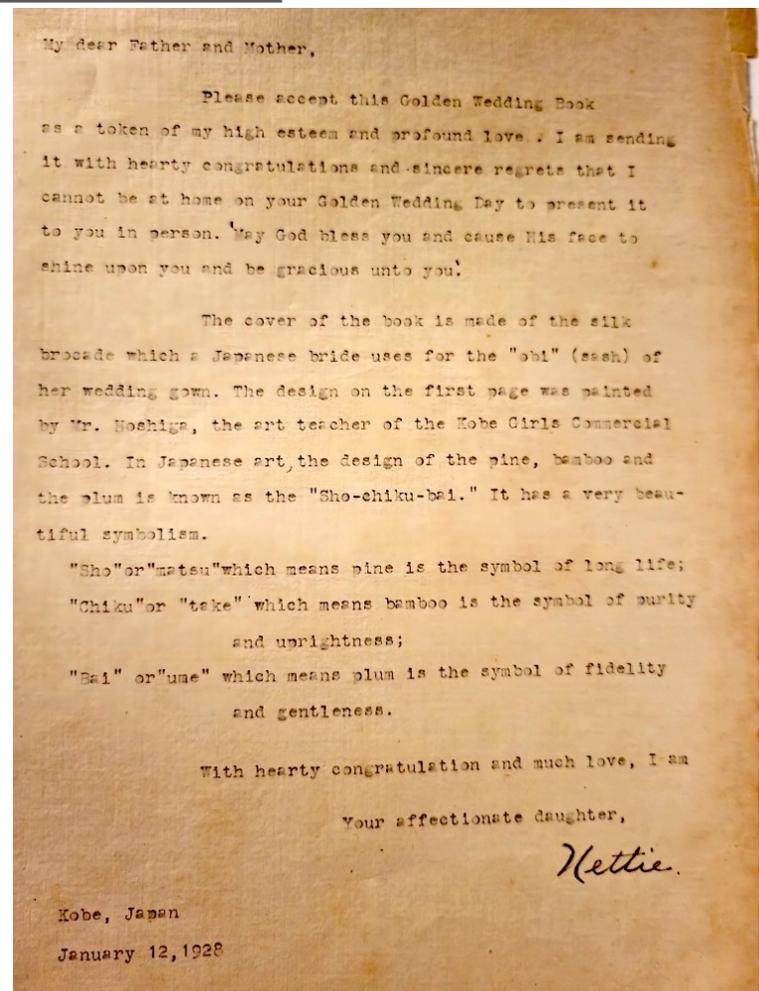
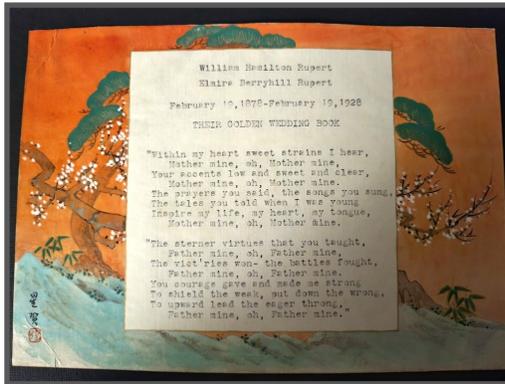
I sent an email to the tree's owner, telling her what we had

we had found, hoping this would be the correct family. Within an hour, I received an answer. Yes, this was the correct family, and the tree owner had been doing her family's genealogy since 1998! She was so excited to receive my email.

We boxed up the scrapbook for shipping, and my granddaughter wrote a letter as an enclosure explaining where and how the scrapbook was found. Before she mailed it, she took some pictures of the scrapbook and the daughter's letter to her parents.

All branches of this family have lived in the mid-west. It is still a mystery why this scrapbook was donated to the Portsmouth Library.

*The silk cover, hand-painted title page, and letter from daughter Nettie to her parents William and Elmira.*



# VBGS Ferry Plantation House Tour



The May 21 tour of the Ferry Plantation will not be the first and last tour of the historical house for VBGS. Ninety minutes wasn't enough time to learn about the former Ferry Boat Service, the 2nd

Princess Anne courthouse, the renovations for the Walke Manor, plus to see all the period artifacts that the Friends of the Ferry Plantation House, Inc. has accumulated.

Thirteen members attended the tour on the hot spring day but the AC was working just fine. Gerry, our knowledgeable and humorous tour guide, has been volunteering at the site since the decision to save the house was made in 1996. Gerry led us through the renovated house in the kitchen, parlor, dining room, bedrooms, nursery, attic, etc. and ... what was once the courtroom where Grace Sherwood was on trial for witchcraft. She helped us envision the judge, jury, lawyers, witnesses, and defendant all crammed in the tiny space. Thomas Jefferson played the piano that is in the parlor, a room also used for the "Wake", after the death of a family member. The Ferry Plantation House supposedly is the most haunted house in Virginia Beach, with 14 spirits including: the enslaved caretaker Henry, a five-year-old little girl Bessie, and sisters Cora and Stella, to name a few.

Outside is a magnificent magnolia tree planted by a woman in memory of her husband who died during the civil war. The "Hanging Tree", the site of public hangings, is still alive even though the trunk is hollowed out and the surrounding neighborhood is believed to be built over a Native American graveyard.

Our tour ended in the Gift Shop, which helps raise funds for the nonprofit organization. I purchased a decorative glass Witch Ball that attracts the evil spirit to the sphere and traps the spirit in the web of colored strands of glass inside the ball. It's pretty and is now hanging in my livingroom window.

The Social Committee will keep you informed of another visit to the Ferry Plantation House and other outings during this coming year.

Debby Christian  
VBGS Social  
Committee Chair



## BEFORE IT WAS *First Landing*

We know the VBGS newsletter as *First Landing*, but did you know it didn't start out that way?

In 1989 it was just *NEWSLETTER*. In December of that year, a contest was launched for members to submit name suggestions, and the winner would get \$25.

Guess what? It didn't happen at this time. In the March 1990 *NEWSLETTER*, this appeared:

*The Board reviewed the entries carefully and after much discussion, decided not to select a new name for the newsletter at this time. The suggested names were good, but the Board felt that none of them perfectly described the unique nature of our society and its publication. Please continue to think about it, and perhaps we will promote another contest later.*

So, when did the name change happen? Stay tuned!

A Moment in  
VBGS History

1989



## What I Did on My Summer Vacation

by Laurie Quint

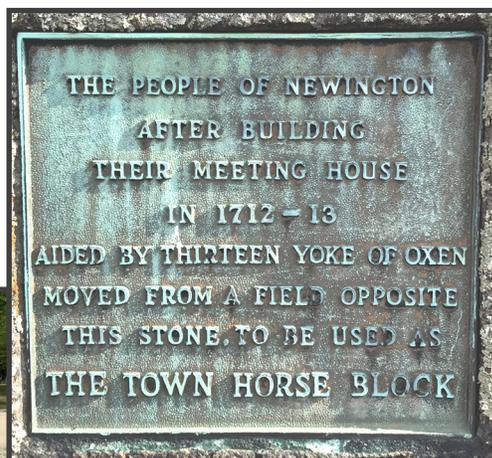
I guess I should start by introducing myself. My name is Laurie Quint and I joined VBGS last November. I have been a teacher for almost 40 years, and I've been enjoying genealogy for about 30 years.

I grew up in Maine and am fortunate that most of my ancestors stayed in Maine and New Hampshire. During my recent trip to Maine, I was able to do quite a bit of research in both states. This time I concentrated on the Quint line even though the "Bright Shiny Objects" of other lines were very tempting. The resources I took advantage of included the Register of Deeds, two public libraries with large research rooms, cemeteries, and a Historical Society where I was able to speak with a very delightful member who had attended school with my father.

It was a thrill to find deeds back to the early 1700s in which my ancestors bought and sold various tracts of land. The descriptions of the land boundaries provided names of neighbors, leading to clues about the connections between several affiliated families. The most exciting find was a clue to the name of my 8<sup>th</sup> great-grandfather leading back to the mid-1600s in Portsmouth, NH. Down the rabbit hole I will go to find the proof to back this up!



*The Newington town horse block.*



*Gravestones of William Goodwin Quint, Stephen Quint, and Stephen's wife Nancy.*

Before heading back to Virginia, I made a final stop in Newington, NH. It was here that I visited the Town Church, built in 1712-1713 on land belonging to my 7<sup>th</sup> great-grandfather. It is still operating, and during a previous visit, I had the opportunity to attend a service. I wandered the cemetery on a beautiful summer morning to pay respects to my many ancestors.

Visiting the resting places of numerous ancestors was almost as meaningful to me as the time I spent with my siblings and their families. I walked the same paths they walked and viewed many of the beautiful locations where they had lived. Saying their names, even without seeing a tombstone for them, keeps them connected to the present for the future generations. I hope someone will do the same for me many generations from now.



*The town church in Newington, NH*

## VBGS VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

VBGS is hosting a one-day virtual conference with some big names in the genealogy world!



October 1, 2022  
9am–4pm on Zoom

# IMPROVING YOUR RESEARCH SKILLS

Join us for the following LIVE presentations:

### *No Tree, No Problem* by Diahhan Southard

What to do when that good DNA match that might help break down a brick wall doesn't have a tree posted. Learn some best practices identifying your best DNA matches and skills to help track down the family tree.

### *The Double Edged Sword* by Sam Williams

Discover the 5 most common difficult discoveries a genealogist might make, learn how and why to proceed with caution, and get healing tools you can use as you grapple with the other side of genealogy.

### *Finding That Elusive Southern Speaker* by Diana Elder

Research in the United States South presents many difficulties: burned counties, poor record-keeping, frequent migration, and more. Explore ways to overcome these obstacles and discover your southern roots.

### *Using Indirect and Negative Evidence to Prove Unrecorded Events* by Tom Jones

Hidden or absent information can help reconstruct events, identities, and relationships that no record specifies. The qualities and uses of both will be discussed as well as examples of applying those to solving genealogical problems.



**DIAHAN  
 SOUTHARD**



**SAMUEL  
 WILLIAMS**



**DIANA  
 ELDER**



**TOM  
 JONES**

**Seats are limited, buy yours early!**

**VBGS members: \$25, non-members: \$30**

**Join and get the member price.**

**Recordings will be available for 30 days!**

**For more information  
and to purchase tickets,  
go to [vbgsva.net](http://vbgsva.net)**



## Annual Business Meeting

On June 9th, VBGS held its Annual Business Meeting prior to the monthly presentation.

The following reports were given from some of the leadership for the 2021-2022 membership year.

### President: Wendy Bransom

As President, I have hosted monthly board meetings to ensure all events went off smoothly for VBGS. With the help of the board, committee chairs, and group leaders, I have coordinated the workings of VBGS for this past fiscal year. We have 112 members — 31 more since last summer. We also have two honorary members: Kelly McMahon and Amanda Brooks.

Genealogy Day at the Beach was held May 11, 2022; the first of its type for VBGS. We worked with the Virginia Beach Central Library since Fall 2021 to plan the event. Suzanne Malush, Information Services Librarian, and Amanda Brooks, Special Collections Librarian, worked hard to ensure we succeeded. We had four speakers (plus our monthly meeting presentation) and eighteen exhibitors who were allowed to sell items. VBGS had two booths, one to share who we are and another to sell books and magazines we had gotten this past year. I made a VBGS trifold, with the help of my husband William, displayed info about the society. Thanks to Peg Niedholdt for the inventory of all those items and bringing them to the event. We made over \$200 in donations. Amanda Brooks from the Virginia Beach Central Library and I have agreed to have this event in 2023 on a Saturday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

### Vice-President: Heather Wright

As Vice President I have participated in board meetings, lead meetings when the president was absent, and attended NGS delegate meetings as our delegate. At these meetings, delegates are able to share their society's struggles, successes, and strategies on a variety of topics. The hope we are able to incorporate lessons learned into making our own society even better. In addition to the quarterly meetings, there is now an online forum for the NGS delegates to communicate through.

### Secretary: Sam Williams

Sam has recorded the minutes for the VBGS Board and Monthly meetings. He quickly uploads the records to the shared cloud storage, allowing access to those that need it.

### Treasurer: Rachel Greenberg

Rachel shared the bank account balance. The society is in good shape to meet its financial obligations and anything that may be needed.

### G-suite Administrator: Heather Wright

As G suite Administrator, I set up and manage our society and user accounts. If you aren't familiar with it, G suite (now *Google Workspace*) is just like a regular google account but also has the ability to connect together as a team. All of the @vbgsva.net accounts you see function just like a google account anyone can open. What makes them different is as a group, each has more storage space and can access shared society items like the contact list and cloud storage for documents and photos. Eventually, we'll get all the old minutes, newsletters, and anything else being stored by members up on Drive, Google's cloud storage. No more passing boxes of papers from one person to another as roles change.

As administrator, I create the accounts and train VBGS leadership how to access and use the features we use. I'm also working on getting this training up on the website for easy access; I'm hoping to complete this over the summer.

### Program Chair: Bob Bruce

Bob shared about the speakers we've had over the past year. As always, it's been an interesting year. One speaker had a family emergency the day of the meeting. Members stepped up and an impromptu show-and-tell evening occurred. It was wonderful!

### Writers Group: Carol Johnson

The Writers Group has began the year on a variety of topics but in 2022, began focusing on small pieces, such as A Travel Story and A Love Story. There were also mini-lessons drawn from the VBGS newsletters.

## Annual Business Meeting (continued from page 19)

### Nomination Committee Chair: Barbara Murray

With help of committee members Carmen Cross and Diana Quinn, we found nominees for: Treasurer, two Members-at-Large, the Newsletter Editor, and an assistant for the Writers Group.

### Publicity Committee Chair: Barbara Murray

The Publicity Committee has been busy! We have designed a new logo and other catchy items for the society and purchased new rack and business cards. Our website has been redesigned and launched. We also created flyers for the Genealogy Day at the Beach, and Monthly Meetings, and assisted with Zoom meetings. We will present lectures at Harbor's Edge Retirement Community in Norfolk this summer. I am looking forward to another year of achievements with Wendy Bransom, Heather Wright, Carmen Cross, Rachel Greenberg, and David Hamilton.

### Computer User Group: April Owens

The Computer User Group meets once a month from September to June. This past year, we did a five-part series on File Explorer, how to convert your family history slides, and how to use a scanner and an All-in-One printer. We are ending the year with a Family Tree Maker presentation on June 21, 2022. We currently are looking for a new co-chair for the group, we will plan and host the Computer User Group meetings on Zoom and at times, in person.

### Education Committee Chair: Heather Wright

As the Education Committee Chair, I've been working with committee members Diana Quinn, Sara Kidd, and Wendy Bransom to plan and host the How-to classes. These are always held on Zoom, the first Tuesday of the month, unless there is a conflict. The topics we've covered this past year include: using websites such as Chronicling America and Family Search, researching specific peoples like the Quakers and the Irish, digging into your Y-DNA results, starting to look into Land records, the newly released 1950 Census, and organizing your research, from staying on track to most recently, using OneNote and Airtable.

I've recently taken over the role of Newsletter editor and given up the position of Committee Chair to Diana Quinn. We want to cover topics of interest to VBGS members and welcome feedback. If you returned the 2-question survey Diana sent a few weeks ago, thank you! If not, or if you want to let us know what you would like to see or even lead a class, send an email to [education@vbgsva.net](mailto:education@vbgsva.net).

### Social Committee Chair: Debby Christian

Interesting facts we learned on VBGS Social Events this year:

Adam Thoroughgood never lived in the house, hence the change from *Adam Thoroughgood House* to *Thoroughgood House*. The house is home to two spirits, a lady from colonial times and a man who plays the fiddle.

Elmwood Cemetery in Norfolk has skulls and bones etched on many tombstones as a symbol of *Memento mori* (mə-MEN-toh MOR-ee, Latin for "remember that you die"). A reminder to believers to embrace each day as a building stone to the afterlife.

Troy Valos took us into the Slover Library's Vault, which houses original Norfolk City Council Minutes dating back to 1736, the "Newspaper Morgue" which is the remaining photo collection of the Virginian-Pilot plus much more.

William and Florence Sloan inherited a knitting factory in South Norfolk and earned their wealth by supplying the long johns for the British Army during the Great War. They built the Hermitage House as a summer home but eventually moved in as their primary residence and became instrumental in founding the Norfolk Museum of Arts and Sciences (now the Chrysler Museum). The Hermitage is home to over 5000 pieces of art and is surrounded by beautiful gardens.

Grace Sherwood, the Witch of Pungo, was a farmer's widow who worked as a midwife to support her three children. She was tried as a witch at Ferry Plantation, survived the ducking in the Lynnhaven River (hence Witchduck Road) and sentenced to live in a room for seven years, but went on to quietly live out her 80-odd years in Pungo, helping to care for neighbors' children. The Ferry Plantation's foundation and staff is made of all volunteers who saved the house from being torn down to expand the neighborhood.