



# AGS Ezine

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Jane A. Wilkerson, Jeanne Rollberg, and Andria Yakoubian editors

Brandon Ryan, list manager

#### Coming Events

Click on link below for information on other events around the state,

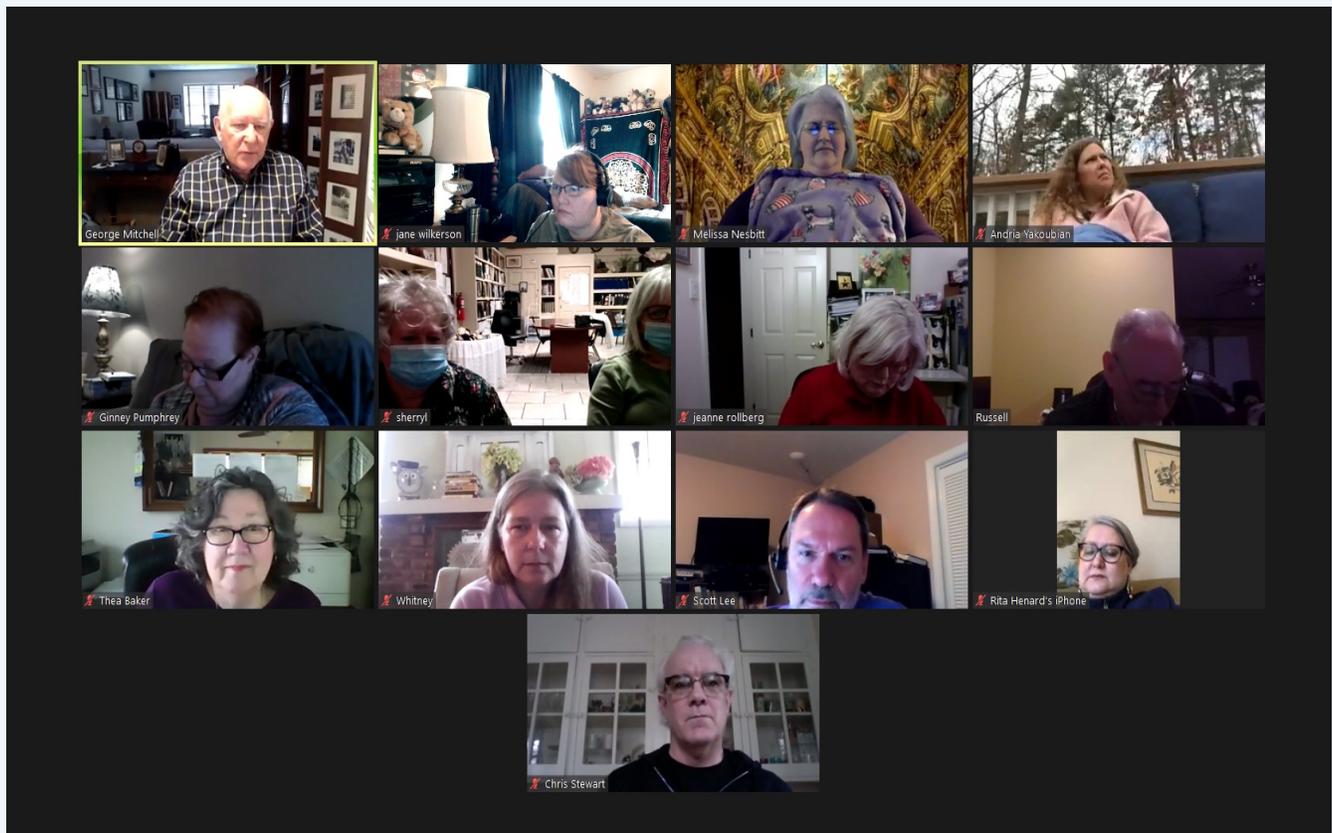
<https://heritageseekersar.weebly.com/around-arkansas.html>

## AGS January Board Meeting

President George Mitchell welcomed new board members Carla Coleman and Scott Lee to AGS during a January 23 meeting facilitated by Zoom.

The board discussed the AGS October seminar that will feature the highly popular Lisa Louise Cooke from Genealogy Gems in Texas, and began plans to update the AGS website.

*Arkansas Family Historian* editor Russell Baker encouraged family researchers to continue to send in articles for possible publication and queries about their unsolved Arkansas family research issues.



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# Effective Use Of Ancestry.com

by Scott E. Lee

Here are some tips on how to most effectively use Ancestry.com's website to build your family tree. It has software that uses other people's trees to suggest how to extend your own tree. Possible matches in census records, death certificates, military records, and many others are provided as "hints" based on those found in other people's trees.

This is a huge time saver because most of the hints, in my experience, are correct. However, you must keep in mind that a few of these hints will be wrong. Remember that these hints are based on examining other people's trees, and some people are more careful than others.

The first hint they provide is frequently "Ancestry Member Trees," which allows you to compare a person in your tree to a matching person in someone else's tree. You can then pull information from the other tree into yours. I strongly recommend never doing this! You will pull other people's mistakes into your tree. Look at the hint, but never, never click the accept button.

Even though "Ancestry Member Trees" is usually the first hint, I recommend delaying that to be the last place you look. The reason is that it may bias you with incorrect information that can cloud your judgment when reviewing source records.

A note to those new to genealogy: A source record is a document, such as a census record, death certificate, or tombstone, used as evidence for dates, places, and other conclusions about the people in your tree and how they relate to each other. A good genealogist will document the source of every piece of information in the tree. That is every date, place, relationship, and all other information in your tree. Without these documented sources in your tree, other genealogists may disregard your tree as the work of an inexperienced novice.

My recommendation is to first look at all of the hints except "Ancestry Member Trees." Second, click the search button in the upper right corner to do your own search through the many source records. Finally, after exhausting all other avenues, compare what you found with other trees by clicking the "Ancestry Member Trees" hint.

If you see differences between your tree and someone else's tree, don't click the accept button. Instead, look at the source records in the other tree. If you have done your job right, you will frequently have more source records than the other tree. Sometimes the other tree may have few if any sources. That is a red flag that the other researcher is not an experienced genealogist, and you should have more faith in your own conclusions over theirs. If they do have sources in their tree, compare their sources with yours to decide which conclusion is correct.

Only add a source to your tree when you are confident that it matches the person. Just because the name matches doesn't mean it is the correct person. For example, if you are looking for the parents of someone and find a census record hint listing a child with the right name and age, that is not enough. This may be a mistake made by someone else. You must find more convincing evidence. Try looking for additional records before adding that census record. Perhaps there is a marriage record that lists the names of the parents, or an obituary may give the names of siblings. Sometimes it is useful to print several sources on paper and spread them out on your desk to help see the big picture. Highlight important parts with a highlighter. Ask yourself what evidence do I have that these are the right parents? Remember that a hint is just a hint. Never trust it just because Ancestry presents it as a hint.

When you add a source to your tree, Ancestry automatically fills in dates, places, and relatives so you don't need to type that information. Most of the time the transcription is correct and complete, but not always. Especially with blurry images and sloppy handwriting, there may be errors. Even with good handwriting and sharp images, there may be errors or omissions. Always look at the document image and verify that it is correct and complete. I frequently find that there is missing information, for example, a marriage license may list the parents, but they may be missing in the transcription.

One last recommendation is to normalize dates and places. A date may be transcribed as "10/15/32", or "Oct 15, 1932", or "15 October 1932". If you click in the date field and type a space, Ancestry will normalize it to "15 Oct 1932", which matches the standard format used by genealogists. Likewise, typing a space into the place field will normalize it. If it lists only a state, "USA" will be added. It will also add the county if missing.

A summary of my recommendations: Be skeptical of hints. Save "Ancestry Member Trees" hints for last and never click the accept button. Only add sources when you are confident of a match. Verify transcriptions with the document image. Normalize dates and places.

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## RootsTech Connect 2021: A Free Online February Conference

For the first time ever, the world's largest family celebration event, normally held at the Salt Palace in Salt Lake City, Utah, will be entirely virtual and completely free. Get ready to celebrate shared connections with people from around the world. Connect with friends, your family, your past, and your heritage and homelands—all from the comfort of your home.

AGS members and others can enjoy "dozens of inspirational learning sessions, uplifting messages from celebrity keynote speakers, and hands-on activities to help you celebrate your heritage all year long."

The dates are February 25-27, and registration may be completed here: <https://www.rootstech.org/?lang=eng>

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## Meet the Board



Melissa Nesbitt was born in Arkadelphia and grew up in the East End Community in Saline County. She graduated from Sheridan High School and later from Ouachita Baptist University with a B.A. in History. After working for a short time in Little Rock, she moved to Texarkana where she worked for the Texarkana Museums System as curator of the Ace of Clubs House for almost 20 years. Since 2014 she has worked in the historic town of Washington at the Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives, a branch of the Arkansas State Archives. She is a member of several lineage societies with ancestors who served in the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Civil War with her roots in Arkansas going back to early statehood. Her maternal grandmother worked at the Jacksonville Ordnance Plant as a "Detonator Gal" during World War II, and her paternal grandfather worked for the CCC helping to construct Petit Jean and Mount Nebo State Parks. Besides her love of genealogy and history, Melissa is an active member of Fellowship Bible Church in Texarkana. She enjoys reading, Bible study, hiking, and being a "cat mom" to her three fur babies, Josephine, Angel, and Cookie, who aren't spoiled in the least.

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## The Heritage Seekers Promotes Genealogical Education

The Heritage Seekers promotes genealogical education. During the pandemic they have been holding meetings via zoom. They have had a variety of speakers and topics. Here is a tentative schedule of dates and topics. For more information visit [hertiageseekersar.com](http://hertiageseekersar.com)

### **February 22 @ 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm**

*The Orphan Trains by Tina Sansone of the Tennessee Genealogical Society*

"From 1850 to the 20th century, thousands of children were transferred from the overcrowded orphanages and homes in the large cities in the northeastern part of the United States, to live with families on farms throughout the middle West. Almost every state took in an orphan over the years. The name Orphan Train originates with the railroad trains that transported the children to their new homes. Learn more about these often overlooked kids. If you hit a brick wall, your ancestor just might be part of the Orphan Train kids."

### **March 8 @ 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm**

*Missing Relative Case Study Using DNA by Andria Yakoubian, Arkansas Genealogy Society*

Where'd They Go? Ever had a relative who vanished. Or maybe you have a relative who only appears when they are an adult. We will take a look at how to find a "missing" relative using the DNA trail that they left behind. Andria Yakoubian will walk through the paper trail and the DNA trail to find a missing relative.

**March 22 @ 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm**

*Local Search Angels Solve DNA Cases* by Tammy White and Angela Bernard, Local Search Angels

In this one-hour course, they will provide an overview of how they have solved cases using genetic genealogy. The speakers will discuss basic DNA platforms, resources and their process from beginning to end of select cases. They will share stories of reunification. Sharing the ups and downs of finding a long-lost family member. Then they will discuss resources and platforms used for searching for someone. Finally, they will demonstrate, using DNA, how to start a search from the beginning. They provide ongoing resources to help with searches and take questions.

**April 26 @ 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm**

*Women's Suffrage in Arkansas: People and Places* by Kathleen Pate, Arkansas Women's Suffrage Centennial Committee Chair 2018-2020

Kathleen Pate will present on the women's suffrage movement in Arkansas. She will highlight significant figures and locations connected to this important work. Kathleen will also share information about the National Collaborative for Women's History Sites (NCWHS) Votes for Women Trail project and special marker program sponsored by the Pomeroy Foundation.

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**Status of Richmond  
National Genealogical Society  
2021 Conference**

Note: Due to ongoing mandates in Virginia in regards to COVID-19 and concern for the well-being of attendees, exhibitors, volunteers, and staff, NGS is unable to host an in-person conference in Richmond, Virginia, in May 2021. It will be virtual only. <https://conference.ngsgenealogy.org>



## Newsletter Contributions

We are always looking for new information for the Ezine. If you have news or would like to contribute articles, please feel free to send them to [agscontributions@gmail.com](mailto:agscontributions@gmail.com) . Thanks!

### Administrative Stuff

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**AGS:** To learn more about [Arkansas Genealogical Society](http://www.agsgenealogy.org), visit our website at <http://www.agsgenealogy.org>

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