

## BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF OUR PRESENTERS - 2018

### Margaret Braun:



**Maggie Braun**, a Texas native, grew up in Orlando Florida. She literally “fell” in love with genealogy research at the age of eight when she stumbled over a six-foot obelisk grave marker that had tumbled down and was buried at the bottom of a knoll. With that fateful fall, she discovered a family cemetery that had disappeared from living memory. Eventually, twenty individuals were found, and Little Maggie made the local paper!

Maggie graduated from Valdosta State University (Valdosta, Ga) with a BA in General Studies with an emphasis in History and Humanities. She went on to earn her Master’s of Art in Secondary Social Studies. She has taught Texas History for several years and teaches World History, US History and Art. She currently teaches high school at Summit International Preparatory in Arlington, Tx. Her current area of interest is post-Civil War Southern US History.

### Suzanne Fritz:



**Suzanne Fritz** is a Librarian with the Genealogy, History and Archives Unit of the Fort Worth Library. She relocated to Fort Worth, Texas from Naples, Florida where she worked as a Public Service Librarian and Genealogy Specialist. Suzanne received her B.A. from Mount Holyoke College and her M.S., L.I.S., from Simmons College, Boston. Suzanne is interested in a variety of topics including Italian-American immigration, German-American genealogy, and Native-American records. She’s realized that one of the benefits of moving to Texas has been discovering how much there is to enjoy in regard to Texas genealogy and history.

### **Kirk and Darlene Hathaway:**



**Kirk** was born in Idaho and has served in many positions in the LDS Church. Kirk and Darlene have been married 35 years in March. They were married in the Salt Lake temple in Salt Lake City, Utah, and have three children: all are adopted. The first two were adopted through LDS Family Services as newborn babies. The third was adopted at age five from an orphanage in Tula, Russia. The Hathaways have lived in Flower Mound, Texas, for 21 years. They were called to serve as Area Family History Advisors in November 2013. They serve 35 stakes in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Missouri. They love visiting the saints and sharing the joy of family history.

### **Jeanette Hurst:**



**Jeanette Hurst** holds a Master's degree in Medieval Studies from the University of Notre Dame and a PhD from Cornell University in Medieval history. She is a retired adjunct professor of history at the University of Dallas and UTD where she taught for over 20 years. She has been a family history consultant for at least that long. Recently she and her husband served a Family History mission spending 18 months helping the people of Micronesia research and record their family history. She loves working with primary sources from all time periods. For the past 18 years, she has been tracing her English ancestors who immigrated to the United States in the middle of the nineteenth century.

**Sabra Johnson:** (pictured with Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.)



**Sabra Johnson** joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1982. Since that time, she has been an avid researcher in African-American genealogy. The majority of her research has centered in Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, and Georgia. Her presentation covers some of the obstacles encountered when researching African-American genealogy. She says that she loves her. Always has and always will.

Her research experience is in records from African American records from Tennessee (Davidson, Maury and Wilson counties); Alabama (Lee) Georgia (Dodge) North Carolina, Texas. Sabra has been a family history consultant for 20+ years. Her natural curiosity has led her to unravel many of my families puzzling mysteries.

**Travis Morris:**



**Travis Morris** has been active in Family History since he was introduced to it by the Church almost fifty years ago. He has been instrumental in teaching Family History and in organizations to that aim. Several years ago, at RootsTech, he was encouraged to do Descendancy tracing. He started with an ancestor that he had previously found and have proven almost 10 thousand of his descendants and is still finding many more. He states, "This project may extend beyond my lifetime."

**Lynell Moss:**



**Lynell Moss** is a 6<sup>th</sup> generation Dallasite. She has been researching hers and other's families since 1968. She has been in a leadership position with the Plano Family History Center for 24 years and is the Director of the Great Family Search Conference

### **Bernard Meisner:**



**Bernard Meisner** is a genealogist and lecturer based in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. He began researching his family almost 30 years ago and enjoys sharing lessons learned from that experience, including his mistakes. Although he knew only one grandparent (his maternal grandfather) he has successfully identified all of his great-great grandparents and several triple- and quadruple-great grandparents. He is president and social media chair of the Mid-Cities Genealogical Society and is a member of the National Genealogical Society and the Texas State Genealogical Society.

Bernard recently retired from the National Weather Service Southern Region Headquarters where he was the Acting Chief of the Science & Technology Services Division. He is certified as a consulting meteorologist by the American Meteorological Society and holds a teaching certificate from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. He has taught at the Universities of Texas, Oklahoma and St. Thomas (Houston). Bernard earned a B.S. in physics/German from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, and an M.S. and Ph.D. in meteorology from the University of Hawaii. He has twice attended the Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh, completing courses in Irish and German research.

### **Kelli Merk:**



**Kelli Merk** began working on her genealogy when she attended a Continuing Education course on family history at Tarrant County College in the 1990's. Since then, she has become a life member of the Mid-Cities Genealogical Society in Euless, Texas and the Hacker's Creek Pioneer Descendants in Horner, West Virginia. She has taught classes on various topics such as Getting Started on the Internet using websites such as Heritage Quest, Cyndi's List, and Family Search among others. She lives in Arlington and assists in the Family History Center on Wednesday evenings.

**Lorna Rankin:**

**Lorna Rankin** is a 16-year member of Daughters of the American Revolution. She has assisted more than 100 women become members of DAR. She currently serves on the National America 250 Task Force where she works with chapters to train members in resolving application issues. She holds the office of Chapter Regent for Quanah Parker Chapter where she was appointed by the state regent as organizing chapter regent to form a new chapter in Mansfield. The chapter organized with 47 members and now has 65 members. Lorna will serve as Senior State President for Texas Society Children of the American Revolution for 2018-2020 term. She is also a state officer for Texas Society United States Daughters of 1812.

Her workshop will explore NSDAR Genealogical Research System and utilizing Family Search to secure source documents for DAR applications. She will discuss the requirements for membership in DAR, C.A.R. and Sons of the American Revolution. As a graduate of Genealogical Education Program Courses I, II and III, Lorna will explain strategies for discriminating source documents for lineages based on DAR guidelines and for documenting your family genealogies.

**Becky Savoie:**

**Becky Savoie** was born in the swamps of southeast Texas: right on the Gulf Coast and the Texas/Louisiana border. She is the sixth daughter of nine children. Growing up, the family didn't eat at the dining room table much: it was usually covered with genealogy papers. When her parent's evacuated for Hurricane Rita, they took both their vehicles. One contained their personal belongings. The other, a small truck, was filled to capacity with boxes of genealogy. That little truck sat in the Savories' garage for about two weeks until it could be driven home. Becky worked full-time at the Family History Center in Arlington for four years, and now substitutes there occasionally. She has worked many years on her own and her husband's genealogy; concentrating on New York and Nova Scotia.

**Jenny Sweeney:**



**Jenny McMillen Sweeney** is an Education Specialist at the National Archives at Fort Worth. She has been with the National Archives for over 10 years and enjoys providing education/outreach programs to teachers, students, and the general public. While at NARA she has co-authored the eBook *Baseball: The National Pastime in the National Archives* with her NARA Education colleagues. Prior to coming to NARA, Sweeney worked as the Education and Tour Programs Manager at the Legends of the Game Baseball Museum for the Texas Rangers. While in graduate school at the University of Texas at Arlington, Sweeney was fortunate to be an intern at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. Jenny Sweeney lives in Arlington, Texas with her husband Tom, daughter Julia, and two crazy dogs, Ace and Rosie.