

Genealogy Society going back to basics during seminar

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Johnnie Jo Dickenson calls herself an "old-school" genealogist. The best way to do research, she believes, is still the old-fashioned way.

"Get the will books, the land grant books, read the actual Census records and look at grave markings as they have been written," Dickenson said Thursday. "Everything on the internet has been placed there by somebody. Wills were done at the actual time of death, so they're more accurate."

This weekend, Dickenson and her friends with the Walker County Genealogical Society will be sharing that message and more during the Frances Sprott Goforth Memorial Genealogy Weekend, which kicks off today at 8:30 a.m.

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and runs most of the day Saturday at the Huntsville Public Library.

The official theme of this year's event is "Researching Texas," Dickenson says there will be an unofficial theme, too.

"We hope to encourage genealogists to get back to the basics," she said. "We tend to believe everything we read on the internet, but that's not always the best way. We're trying to go back to basics and go back to the original documents."

For a couple of days, an enthusiastic group of genealogists will welcome guests and visitors to the Huntsville Public Library for a fun and interesting event. With assistance from society members, genealogists can spend hours working on their own research proj-

ects. There are guest speakers, lots of time to talk and even some extra quiet time after the library closes to the general public to do more research.

"We enjoy the camaraderie. We enjoy seeing people who come in from out of town. It's a yearly activity that we all really enjoy," Dickenson said. "It's good PR for the library, the Genealogy Society and for Huntsville, too. People from out of town come here, so that's heads in beds, which is good for everybody."

This year, representatives from a number of area libraries will be here to talk about their collections and help spread the message about research methods. Among the libraries that will be represented are the Texas State Library & Archives, Clayton Library, Texas General Land Office, Sam Houston Regional Library & Research Center, Montgomery County Memorial Library,

Sam Houston Memorial Museum, Rosenberg Library and the Sam Houston State University Thomason Room/Archives.

More than 30 people are already signed up for this year's Genealogy Weekend.

"We always have drop-ins too, and that's certainly OK," Dickenson said.

Today's schedule runs from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. with a light supper being provided during the lock-in time after the library closes at 7. The weekend fun continues from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday.

A silent auction featuring genealogy and history books will be held during the weekend. Everyone is encouraged to check out the books and bid on anything that looks interesting. The auction will end at approximately 2 p.m. Saturday.

"The funds from the silent auction go back to the library and the Genealogical Society for the purchase of other books,"

Dickenson said.

The Forrest Masonic Lodge No. 19 is scheduled to present a \$3,500 check to the Walker County Genealogical Society on Friday at 5:30 p.m.

"That's a great donation and a great gift," Dickenson explained. "We are funded by some library funds, but the city has a tight budget so we don't get a lot. Our membership dues are minimal, so this kind of donation really is wonderful. It allows us to buy books, equipment and have our books bound."

The event is free. Registration is encouraged, but not required, according to Dickenson. Call (936) 291-5472 or sign up online at www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com.

For more information, contact Mary Kokot, the library's adult services coordinator, at (936) 291-5471.