

Johnnie Jo Sowell Dickenson Genealogy Room



BRENDA POE | THE ITEM

The Huntsville Public Library is hosting its 32nd Annual Lineage Society Workshop, sponsored by the Walker County Genealogical Society, on Thursday, June 8.

LINEAGE SOCIETY WORKSHOP

Event to Focus on Heritage

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FOR THE ITEM

Ancestry is an important part of history. It helps individuals understand their heritage. Taking part in the preservation of this history helps ensure that factual accounts of the past survive to educate future generations. There are countless societies across the world that exist to aid in this kind of research, and they are always seeking new members that represent their respective places in our shared history.

These societies come together each year at Huntsville Public Library to help inspire people to trace their family's origins. From 2 to 4 p.m. on Thursday, June 8, the Library will host its 32nd Annual Lineage Society Workshop. The event is sponsored by the Walker County Genealogical Society (WCGS) and will be held in the Staggs Community Room.

Representatives from 10 different lineage societies will be on hand at the workshop to answer questions about their organiza-

tions and how to qualify to join them. The historical documents of proof required can be found with the assistance of the WCGS and the vast resources that are available in the Johnnie Jo Sowell Dickenson Genealogy Room at the library.

The genealogy room houses more than six thousand sources of historical records including books, newspapers, microfilm, and computer based information. The library offers access to

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Heritage Quest online, which is a database of images and census records from 1790 to 1840.

It also includes the Freedman's Bank Records, which is a reputable source of African American family history research. The library also subscribes to Ancestry Library Edition, American Ancestors, and Fold 3 Military History and Genealogical Archives.

The room is named after a seventh generation resident of Walker County, Johnnie Jo Sowell Dickinson, who was instrumental in gathering the archives. She has been a member of the WCGS for 40 years.

Dickenson joined the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) in 1972 when her cousin brought her an already completed application for the John McAdams Chapter in Madison County.

"I am so proud that I have ancestors who helped build this nation. When I saw their names on the application, I had never heard of them.

This was what first sparked my interest," said Dickenson. "These societies not only help people trace their family heritage but they also preserve our history by continuing to record our current situations. I believe that the true history of America is being neglected, especially in Texas."

Each organization that will be represented at the workshop has a unique history of its own, such as the Sons of the American Revolution, which was established in 1889.

Their brotherhood includes sixteen American presidents, General Douglas MacArthur, architect Frederick Law Olmsted and genealogist Henry Louis Gates Jr. The DAR was founded in 1890 and serves to celebrate the memory of those who achieved American Independence. They have almost 200k members who help foster education and patriotism.

On the state level, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas were the caretakers of the Alamo. They were dedicated to the founding families and soldiers of the Republic. They also operate a Texas histo-



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The Huntsville Public Library will host its 26th annual Lineage Society Workshop from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday, June 8. Registration is now open.

The Sons of the Republic of Texas was formed in 1893 by sons and grandsons of veterans of the Texas Revolution. They encourage research and publication of historical records in order to foster comprehensive knowledge of our state.

All members of the Sons, Daughters, and Children of the Republic of Texas are eligible to secure a certificate of membership with Texas First Families, who are

descendants of those who settled in Texas or served the Republic before February 19, 1846. This is the date that Texas officially became the 28th state in the Union.

Locally, the First Families of Walker County are the descendants of ancestors who resided in this area before Oct. 5, 1850.

Nearly 500 members represent the descendants of the 134 original settlers listed on the registry of the WCGS.

"The lineage work-

shop helps people to realize the requirements for membership in each organization with the help of the genealogical society, which assists directly with locating documents," said Dickenson.

Other organizations have international roots that link a further reaching piece of history, such as the Magna Charta Dames and Barons. Their society recognizes the descendants of those who compelled King John of England to bring an end to the exploita-

tion and unfair taxation of feudal landowners in June of 1215. They promote the principles of constitutional government and commemorate what some call the most celebrated event in English history.

The Colonial Dames of the 17th Century seeks to find the descendants of those living in the colonies prior to 1701. Their society reveres history and heraldry by maintaining one of the largest collections of Coats of Arms in the U.S. With more than 11k members, they also focus on supporting veterans who suffer from Agent Orange.

Whether you can trace your direct lineage to these groups, or you'd simply like to explore your immediate family tree, all the resources you need can be found at the public library.

The Huntsville Public Library is located at 1219 13th Street.

Open hours are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and Saturdays from noon to 4 p.m.

For more information about genealogy resources, visit <https://www.huntsvilletx.gov/232/ Genealogy> and <https://www.wcgstx.org/>.