

Memorial Genealogy Weekend Information

Calling all genealogists! The 6th annual Frances Sprott Goforth Memorial Genealogy Weekend will be held August 3rd and 4th at the Huntsville Public Library. This year's focus will be "Orphan Trains, Adoption, and DNA," and is co-hosted by the Walker County Genealogical Society (WCGS) and the Huntsville Public Library.

The Genealogy Weekend is named in honor of Frances Sprott Goforth, who passed away at the age of 78 on May 7, 2011. She was born on November 12, 1932, in Walker County, Texas, to the late Frank Vernon and Nannie Wells Sprott. She was a professor at the University of South Florida, until her return to Walker County upon retirement and became an avid member of the WCGS and the Tall Pines Quilt Guild.

"Her family has made it possible for the Genealogy Weekend to happen through generous donations," WCGS President Johnnie Jo Dickenson said. "It is an honor to host such a wonderful research opportunity in her name."

The free "lock-in" event will begin with on-site registration at 9:30

a.m. both days, with programs from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday, August 3, and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, August 4. The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) will be providing coffee and light refreshments during registration as attendees get acquainted. A light supper will be provided on Friday.

Friday's lectures include "Orphan Trains" by Dawna Alsabrook. Connie Gray will present "The History of Adoption in Texas" and "How to Build Family Trees with DNA". WCGS President Johnnie Jo Dickenson will give guests a unique view of "Welcome to Huntsville Public Library - Our Collection". The evening will focus on individual research in the Dickenson Genealogy Room with society members available to assist.

"The evening will be an opportunity for guests to spend one-on-one time with Connie Gray, who specializes in adoption information. The sessions are by reservation only and need to be set through the Library," said Dickenson. "There will also be WCGS members available to

assist guests."

Gray was adopted out of Texas foster care at the age of nine. After celebrating her 18th birthday in 1976, Connie successfully petitioned a court for her original birth certificate and located her entire family within two years.

Other adoptees began asking for help with their searches and she soon became known as the "Texas Search Angel." She is the founder of TexasAdopteeRights.org.

Saturday's featured sessions include "On the Distaff Side: DNA Testing for Women" and "Climbing Trees and Jumping Over Brick Walls with DNA" with Janet Miller; and "Only Half My Genes: The Search for a Biological Father" by Dana Leeds. Registration will be from 9:30-10 a.m., hosted by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT).

A silent auction, open to the public, will be held during the special occasion and will end at 2 p.m. Saturday.

The event is free but requires registration by calling 936-291-5471 or signing up online at www.myHuntsvilleLibrary.com.