

# 6th annual Memorial Genealogy Weekend to take place Aug. 3, 4

THE HUNTSVILLE ITEM

Calling all genealogists, the sixth annual Frances Sprott Goforth Memorial Genealogy Weekend will be held Aug. 3 and 4 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 and the Huntsville Public Library.

The annual event is named in honor of Frances Sprott Goforth, who passed away at the age of 78 on May 7, 2011. She was born on Nov. 12, 1932, in Walker County 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 onsite registration at 9:30 a.m. both days, with programs from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Aug. 3, and from 10 a.m.

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to 4 p.m. on Aug. 4. The Daughters of the American Revolution 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."

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," Dickenson said. "There will also be WCGS members available to assist guests."

Gray was adopted out of Texas foster care at the age of 9. After celebrating her 18th birthday, Gray 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." Gray is the founder

of [TexasAdopteeRights.org](http://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 to 10 a.m., hosted by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

A silent auction, which 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.my-huntsvillelibrary.com](http://www.my-huntsvillelibrary.com).