



Jennifer Baker, Editor

# TENNESSEE GENEALOGICAL

*Society*

## Virtual Quarterly Membership Meeting of the Tennessee Genealogical Society



**Saturday, January 8, 2022**

**10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

***Via Go To Webinar Broadcast***

***Women in World War II  
by Mike Ellicott***

Please join us for the first Membership Meeting for the year open to members and nonmembers. We encourage everyone to attend this meeting in order to receive an overview of the Society's 2022 Goals, upcoming programs and events.

Most Americans know of the heroism of the nearly 16.0 million American men that fought in WWII. Not many know about the 350,000 American women who also put on the uniform, many of them serving overseas in the Mediterranean, in Europe and in the Pacific. In addition, over 6.0 million American women joined the Arsenal of Democracy workforce as Rosie the Riveter, Wendy the Welder, and a host of other jobs only open to men before the War. This presentation will highlight the contributions of a few of the many women in the Greatest Generation.

***Nonmember broadcast - \$5.00***

**Register at <https://tngs.org/event-4381101>**

# Welcome to the Newly Elected TNGS Board of Directors!

Effective January 1, 2022:

**President** - Carla Love Maitland  
**Vice President** - Cynthia Guffey  
**Secretary** - William Jerden  
**Treasurer** - Dena Ward  
**Business Manager** - Pat Garety  
**Director of Education** - John Ware  
**Office Manager** - Octavia Ashby  
**Director of Sales** - Jane Van Tour  
**Director of Public Relations** - Rhonda Campbell-Culver  
**Magazine Editor** - Tina Sansone  
**Director of Membership**—Kay Dawson  
**Director of Research** - Nancy Walczyk  
**Director of Certificates** - Sylvia Harris  
**Director-at-Large Position 1** - PZ Horton



## Meet Cynthia Guffey, Vice President–Elect

**Cynthia J. Guffey** is a native of Northern Virginia, who retired from NASA, Marshall Space Flight Center, and returned to Signal Mountain in 2019. She currently is employed with Logical Innovations, supporting Centennial Challenges at NASA.

She has been a member of NSDAR for 19 years, and served on the board for two chapters in Huntsville. She is a long-time genealogist, specializing in Pennsylvania, East Tennessee, Scottish, and Quaker research, and speaks at the Tennessee Genealogy Society and other genealogy conferences in Tennessee and Alabama. She is currently a member of the following societies:

- National Society Daughters of the American Revolution
- National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century, Prudhomme Fort Chapter – serves as Vice President
- National Society of the U.S. Daughters of the War of 1812, Chattanooga Chapter
- Tennessee Genealogical Society, East Tennessee Advisor
- Northumberland County Historical Society, Life Member
- Snyder County Pennsylvania Historical Society, Life Member
- Signal Mountain Genealogical Society
- Middle Tennessee Genealogical Society

Her goal as the upcoming Vice-President is to continue bringing excellent educational programs and speakers to the Tennessee Genealogical Society.

She is a graduate of UTC and the University of Alabama at Huntsville. Her hobbies include gardening, working on family genealogies, and walking her two Bichons, Gabe and Luca.



## Ask and Ye Shall Receive: Hidden Courthouse Records

It all began with a paragraph in the Lewisburg Journal from January 1933.<sup>1</sup>

*Case of Commonwealth vs. Lester Belles, charge of destruction of shrubbery. The defendant plead guilty . . . and to be given to the next term of court to pay the costs and fine.*

A very unusual crime. Destruction of shrubbery? It appeared to be a state of Pennsylvania case. No Pennsylvania county or location of the alleged crime was mentioned. Lester Belles was a great uncle, and this was a story I had never heard from my grandmother or father.

So I made calls to several Pennsylvania court houses at the local and district level to find where the case took place. Finally, I learned it was a Union County court case. So I called the courthouse and explained that I was out of state, and would love to have a copy of the case.

They responded, "There is a record of the case, but we don't have time to look it up." A typical response when court house employees don't have time or desire to help genealogists!

As a member of the Union County Historical Society, I asked one of their volunteers to go and look for information on the ca. 1933 "shrubby destruction" case. In about a week, I received an email showing one paragraph with very general information along with the court costs. No details on the exact date or location of the offense!

When in Pennsylvania for a research trip this fall, I stopped by the Union county courthouse, took the information from the docket book and asked if there was more details on the case. The manager of the Photocopy Office quickly said, "**That's all there is.**" She proceeded to take me back to the secure, inner room with shelves full of large, docket books, and opened the Criminal Docket book.

Again, I mentioned that the criminal docket book didn't give any details about the case -- where it occurred, how it happened, if others were involved. I asked, "Isn't there any other information or details? This doesn't even state what day it happened or where."

The manager then stated, "Well, I can pull the original case, and see if it has any other information." YES! Finally! I learned that there was an entire case file that no one had mentioned existed to me or to the Union County Historical Society volunteer.

She came back with the case file with five pages from the court case! I learned the "shrubby destruction" occurred on Market Street in Lewisburg and on Christmas Day in 1932. There were no details like whether it involved an automobile.

The lesson I learned from this research trip is when told, "**That's all there is**" to keep asking until the courthouse employees go and look for the original file. Docket books just have typed abstracts of a case, but are NOT the entire case file. Les Belles' misdemeanor was never discussed by the family, and the story quietly faded into history. The original case file likely never has seen the light of day since 1933.

Ask, seek, and ask again. The research results can be worth it!

<sup>1</sup>"January Court Sessions Being Held this Week," *Lewisburg (Pennsylvania) Journal*, 12 Jan. 1933, p. 1, col 6; digital image, *Newspapers.com*, (<http://www.newspapers.com>).

## Martha Jane Tibbs

1932—2021



**Martha Jane Pullen Tibbs**, age 89, passed away October 15, 2021. She was born February 12, 1932, in Memphis, Tennessee, the daughter of **John Thomas Pullen, Jr.** and **Martha Frances Gragg Pullen**. She was a sixth-generation Shelby Countian and a descendant of one of the original surveyors of Memphis, **John Ralston**. Her ancestor, **Colonel William Clement McDaniel**, served in the Revolutionary War and was at Yorktown for the British surrender. Her family's rich heritage in Tennessee, Virginia, and the Carolinas sparked a lifelong love of history and genealogy. She served on the Shelby County Historical Commission for many years and led work to mark and preserve numerous historical sites linked to the early days of Memphis. These efforts suited her sharp mind and talent for research. She also served as a Shelby County election judge, an officer in the Nineteenth Century Club, and was a benefactor of the Eastland Presbyterian Church near her childhood home. She expressed her artistic side through photography, painting, dancing, sewing, and cake decorating. She excelled at mathematics, which she taught in the 1950s at St. Mary's Episcopal School, Presbyterian Day School, and Lausanne Collegiate School. She had a sweet, kind, sunny, and endearing personality and was always eager to help anyone she thought was in need. As busy as she was, she always put family first. She was a devoted mother to her children, an adoring grandmother, and took loving care of her husband and her parents in the final years of their lives.

**Martha Jane** cherished the friends she made and history she learned through her genealogical work and became a member-and often an officer or leader of-countless historical and genealogical groups. These groups included: Zachariah Davies Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR); National Society Daughters of Founders and Patriots of America; National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century; National Society Southern Dames of America; Early Settlers of Shelby County; National Society Magna Charta Dames and Barons; Regents Council, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR); **Tennessee Genealogical Society**; The Colonial Dames of America; Memphis Scottish Society, Inc.; Sovereign Colonial Society Americans of Royal Descent; Tennessee State Dames of Court of Honor; West Tennessee Historical Society; The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America; Colonial Order of the Crown; Society of Descendants of Knights of the Most Noble Order of the Garter; Family of Bruce International, Inc.; Plantagenet Society; American Clan Donald Society; The American Clan Gregor Society; Tennessee Society of the Order of Founders and Patriots of America; National Society of Pilgrims; Chickasaw District Daughters of the American Revolution School; National Society Sons and Daughters of Antebellum Planters 1607-1861; Sons and Daughters of the Colonial and Antebellum Bench and Bar 1565-1861; National Society United States Daughters of 1812; Order of the Merovingian Dynasty; The National Guild of St. Margaret of Scotland; and Order of the Crown of Charlemagne.

**Martha Jane** is survived by her children, **Martha Katherine ("Jenny") Tibbs** (Thomas Merchant), a physician in Memphis and **Eugene Edward Tibbs, Jr.** (Stephanie Ortbals-Tibbs), an attorney in Washington, DC, and her grandchildren **Sophie Elaine Merchant**, **Charlotte Claire Merchant**, **Eugene Edward Tibbs, III**, **Eleanor Katherine Merchant**, **John Ralston Tibbs**, and **Robert Coleman Tibbs**.

She is preceded in death by her husband, **Dr. Eugene Edward Tibbs**, and her brother, **John Thomas Pullen, III**.

*Donations may be made in her name to the **Tennessee Genealogical Society** to honor her passions of history, research, and genealogy.*

Published by The Daily Memphian on Oct. 19, 2021.

## Jewish Genealogical Society of Nashville



**Arthur Kurzweil** will be the Jewish Genealogical Society of Nashville's guest speaker (via Zoom) on **February 20, 2022**, at 2 p.m. Central Time. He is a recipient of a lifetime achievement award from the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies.

**Mr. Kurzweil's** topic will be Jewish Genealogy as a Spiritual Pilgrimage. He will draw on his landmark book, *From Generation to Generation*, his Encyclopedia of Jewish Genealogy and will inform us of how, despite having lost so many relatives in the Holocaust, he is still been able to trace his family back to the 15th century.

Mr. Kurzweil will be happy to entertain questions about all of the above plus plans for new and revised editions of his reference books, if any, as well as any book or research topics he has in the works or on the back burner.

**Mr. Kurzweil's** presentation will be free to JGSN members. There is a \$5 charge for nonmembers.

For those who RSVP to [nashvillejgs@gmail.com](mailto:nashvillejgs@gmail.com), you will receive a link to the presentation.

## Jonesborough Genealogical Society



**Genealogy Help Night:** Thursday, January 13 at 6:00 p.m. at the Washington County-Jonesborough Library, 200 Sabin Drive, Jonesborough, TN.

**Genealogy Day:** Saturday, January 22 at 9:30 a.m. at the Jonesborough Visitors Center, 117 Boone Street, Jonesborough, TN. The Program will be on *TNGENWEB: A Genealogical Research Resource* by **Billie R. McNamara**, TNGENWEB Coordinator. This event is planned to be in-person, but will also have a Zoom link in cases of bad weather and/or increase in COVID cases.

TENNESSEE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
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## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS OF THE TNGS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

The **TNGS Partnership Program** was created to help fulfill the society's goal "to reach out and form associations with genealogical and historical societies and archives across the state."



**New Middle Tennessee Partner**

***Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives***