



# Genealogy Friends News

Genealogy Friends of  
Plano Libraries

Genealogy Friends News  
October 2013

P.O. Box 860477, Plano, TX, 75086-0477

[http:// www.genealogyfriends.org](http://www.genealogyfriends.org) <http://genfriends.blogspot.com/>

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## Schedule of Events

Mark your calendars now for the exciting Genealogy Friends events in 2013 & 2014. Meetings are held in the Program Room at the Haggard Library, 2501 Coit Rd., Plano, TX from 10:15 to 12:30 unless otherwise noted:

### Today's Topic:

**November 16, 2013**—"The What, When, Where and Why on Naturalization Records" by Meg Hacker from NARA Regional Branch in Ft. Worth.

### Future Topics

**December 21, 2013**—Show and Tell—share your family history finds with the group.

**January 18, 2014**—Richard Monroe will present "A Century of Texas Immigration"

**February 15, 2014**—To Be Announced

**The Legacy Users Group** meets the fourth Tuesday of each month, downstairs at Haggard Library from 1:30 to 3:30. There is an after meeting session if you need one on one help. Contact [ptxlegacyug@verizon.net](mailto:ptxlegacyug@verizon.net)

If you have an idea about a program or a speaker, email Charlie Law at [programs@genealogyfriends.org](mailto:programs@genealogyfriends.org).

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### Publications For Sale

The following are available from Genealogy Friends:

Public Land Survey Systems	\$5
Plano Star Courier Index 1904-1910	\$20
Plano Star Courier Index 1911-1917	\$20
Cemeteries of Collin County, TX	\$40
Collin County, TX Voter Registration Index 1867	\$20
Place Names of Collin County, TX	\$10
Railroads in Collin County, TX	\$10
Colonial Ills, Brews & Concoctions	\$10
Library 101: Using Dewey Decimal Sys	\$10

### Genfriends Membership

**It's time to renew your membership.**

Our membership year runs from October 1 to September 30. Individual memberships are \$30 a year and family memberships are \$50.

The money we raise is used to purchase materials for the Genealogy Section at Haggard Library.

Download the membership form on our website <http://genealogyfriends.org/news/> send it in with payment to

Genealogy Friends of Plano Libraries, Inc  
PO Box 860477  
Plano, TX 75086-0477

### New Monthly Feature

Announcing a new article series beginning with the December issue of Genealogy Friends' *Newsletter*, in which Brenda Kellow reports what she reads in the old issues of The Plano Star Courier Newspaper, beginning with the 1953 issue. Brenda, a native of Collin County, feels Plano histories in particular always ignore the 1950s through the 1980s. She hopes *Flashback—Tracing Our Collin County Roots* might fill that void. Brenda isn't re-writing history, just reporting what appeared in the newspaper.

She will mention some of the things going on such as births, deaths, marriages, visits of townspeople and their guests, people graduating from high school, people in piano recitals, even a few of the local store advertisements, a brief mention of politicians running for office, and some of the movies showing at the local Palace movie theatre referred to as 'the show.' She hopes it is a fun article acquainting the reader with the old settlers of Plano and giving a sense of the environment back then.

### Genealogy Friends Logo Shirts & Tote Bags

We have logo t-shirts, sweatshirts, Henley's and polo style shirts available.

The shirts have a 3" dark green logo printed on the left chest. All shirts are available in toddler through XXXL.

T-shirts \$15

Long Sleeved T Shirts \$18

Sweatshirts \$20 (white, neutral, ash, light blue, pink, yellow and sand)

Henley's \$20 (white, ash or natural)

Polo Shirts \$20 (white, ask or light blue)

Tote Bags \$17



## Ridgell McKinney

By Joy Gough

The last of Collin McKinney's great great grandchildren, Ridgell M. McKinney, died last month at the age of 99 1/2. He had lived a full life.

Ridgell was the youngest of the seven children of John B. and Annie Magers McKinney. He was born April 7, 1914 in the family home in the Wilmeth community. The Wilmeth community was named for another of Ridgell's great great grandfathers, J. B. Wilmeth. The community was located on the north side of McKinney in the vicinity of Wilmeth Road between Central Expressway and SH 5 (McDonald Street). He was named for a distant relative.

Ridgell attended the Wilmeth School, which was located in the northwest corner of the present-day McKinney golf course. He transferred to a McKinney school when the Wilmeth School closed in the mid 1920s.

Near the end of Ridgell's senior in high school, a boy in class cracked his knuckles during a test. The teacher blamed Ridgell. He did not do it but he could not tattle on a fellow student. He dropped out of school and, as a result, did not graduate from high school. The McKinney School District finally awarded him his high school diploma in 2008 when he was 94 years old.

The last legal hanging in Collin County took place in 1922 at the Old Collin County Prison in McKinney. Eight-year-old Ridgell had come to town with his father to the Woodman of the World building, which is located just off the southeast corner of the McKinney square. While his father was talking, Ridgell and a friend went to the roof of the building and watched the hanging. Later he and his friend sneaked by the funeral home and looked in the window at the corpse lying on a table. I wonder if his father ever knew that his young son had witnessed such a gruesome event! The state took over the task of hanging criminals in 1924.

During the Depression in the 1930s Ridgell was the manager of the A & P Grocery Store, which was located at the southeast corner of the McKinney square. He had an IOU box in the store. People, who could not afford to pay for their groceries, would write an IOU and put it in the box. When the people had the money, they would pay off their IOUs. All of the IOUs were paid.

Ridgell had a date with the sister of Ralph Fults. Fults was a member of Clyde Barrow's gang and his parents lived in McKinney. When Ridgell picked her up for the date, he noticed that the girl was upset and that people were watching them from an upstairs window. The girl explained that the Barrow gang was hiding out in the house and she was afraid for the safety of her parents. He and his date went to dinner and then he took her home. Again he could tell that they were being watched from an upstairs window. She would not let him walk her to the door because they might make him stay.

Ridgell was married on November 9, 1939 to Peggy Douglas. He and his wife did not have any children. She died in 1967.

During World War II, Ridgell served in the European Theater with the 15th Air Force, completing 50 heavy bombardment missions as an aerial engineer and top turret gunner on B24 aircraft. He was already stationed in the north of Africa on D Day. On that day his squadron flew north to bomb some strategic points in France. He had many stories to tell of the war, including one where the planes had been sabotaged. As the first three planes took off, they exploded. His plane was number 4. They decided to abort the take off. There was another story where the landing gear would not go down and he was held by his ankles upside down under the plane while he cranked the landing gear down. He came back to the states to get training before being shipped to the Pacific Theater. The Japanese surrendered before he was finished his training.

After the War, Ridgell worked for the Ashburn Veterans Administration Hospital in McKinney, which was located north of US380 (University Drive) in McKinney near SH 5 (McDonald Street), where the Job Corps is today. The hospital was in use until 1965. He was in charge of the supply department.

Ridgell was a lover of Collin County and Texas history. He loved to talk about the history of the county and



## Ridgell McKinney

his family's contributions to that history. He collected memorabilia on the state and county. He had a letter that Collin McKinney wrote to his wife in 1835 while he was attending the Constitutional Convention for the Republic of Texas in which he said he would be killed by Santa Anna. He had a ticket to the first Cotton Bowl game. He had a picture of Collin McKinney's cabin being towed along SH 5 (McDonald Street) as it passed the Wilmeth home on its way to McKinney. The house was used as a Visitor Center for the celebration of Texas's Centennial in 1935. Ridgell's father was an early photographer, who set up a lab under the staircase in the house to develop his own photos on glass plates. Ridgell had a large collection of the glass plates and, thus, some of the earliest photos of the county, especially of the Wilmeth community.

In recent years the third grade classes in McKinney schools have been producing videos about the founding of the county and about Collin McKinney. Ridgell was always a judge of the videos.

In 2011 Ridgell visited the Texas historical marker for the early Collin County town of Mantua, which was founded by Collin McKinney and his sons.

In 2012 the Collin County Historical Commission honored him with a plaque commemorating his contributions to preserving and teaching Collin County history.

Ridgell McKinney was a Collin County historic icon, a great lover of life, the end of an era, as they say. He will be missed.

## CHEROKEE NATION HISTORIAN, EMMETT STARR, 1870-1930

By Brenda Kellow

The Foremost Cherokee Indian historian was Dr. Emmett Starr of Adair County, Oklahoma—formally Going Snake District, Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory. Starr was born December 12, 1870, 37 years before Oklahoma became a state. He was one of five children born to mixed-blood Cherokee parents Walter Adair and Ruth A. Thornton. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, there were many intermarriages between the British and French traders.

Starr attended Cherokee public school near where he grew up in Claremore, now Rogers County. He graduated from Cherokee Male Seminary at Tahlequah and from Barnes Medical College at St. Louis, Missouri in 1891. He practiced medicine for five years before he decided to study Cherokee history. Some of his books are *Cherokees West, 1794-1839* and his most notable work, *History of the Cherokee Indians and Their Legends and Folklore* published in 1922. This book is used to by the Cherokee Nation and it is considered a prized possession in any library. His goal in writing this book was to perpetuate the facts as much as possible on the Cherokees and present an accurate of biography of the Cherokee people.

In the Preface to his book, Starr says:

Without the assistance of the magnanimous, whole soul membership of the nation, the work would not have been possible and for that reason I wish to thank each and every member, for their hearty collaboration and express my regret that the work has not the merit with which many others might have invested it. Emmet Starr. Claremore, Oklahoma. December 12, 192 I.

Starr, who never married, died in St. Louis on January 30, 1930. He is buried at Claremore, Oklahoma. In 1997, Emmett Starr was inducted into the Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame.

This book is available in paperback from Amazon.com. It is also available on the Internet at [http://archive.org/stream/historyofcheroke00lstar/historyofcheroke00lstar\\_djvu.txt](http://archive.org/stream/historyofcheroke00lstar/historyofcheroke00lstar_djvu.txt).

There is a ten step guide to discovering your Cherokee ancestry at

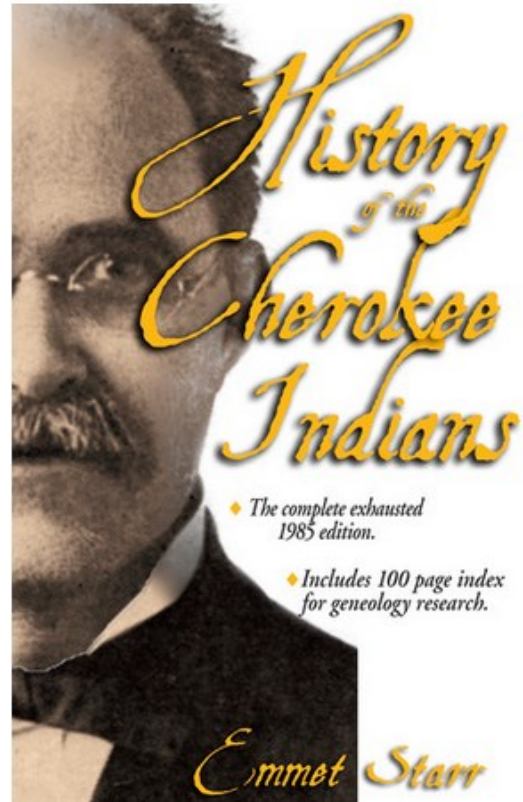
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The book, *History of the Cherokee Indians and Their Legends and Folklore*, on Cherokee history is in the Genealogy Library at W. O. Haggard Library. Of course you cannot check it out of the library, but you can hold it in your hands to study the early history of the early Cherokee Indians.

1. For a biography on Emmett Starr, read Bob L. Blackburn, "Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame Emmet Starr," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 75 (Summer 1997). "Death of Dr. Emmet Starr," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 8 (March 1930). Rennard Strickland, "Emmet Starr," in *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*, ed. Frederick E. Hoxie (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996).

## WHEN AND WHY PLANO'S STREET NAMES WERE CHANGED

By Brenda Kellow

Librarian Cheryl Smith was hunting for information on when and why Plano Street names were changed for someone in the Genealogy Center. I was one of the people she called to help enlighten her or give her an approximate date. After searching through old deeds of property my family owned I was able to find one original deed that listed the real estate on Mechanic Street. After searching through more deeds and insurance papers, I found the addresses written as being on 15<sup>th</sup> Street. The dates of the documents listing Mechanic and 15<sup>th</sup> were 1947 and 1948 respectively.

With this clue, Cheryl searched the Dallas Morning News for the answer. She found it on page 13 on February 8, 1948. It was not the exact date of the changeover, but it did explain the change was in the works.

### *Delivery of Mail Near for 532 Plano Homes*

*“Plano’s 532 homes will get mail delivery as soon as street markers are placed, mailboxes installed, and homes renumbered in compliance with postal regulations.*

*Postmaster W. C. Carlisle said residents of the Collin County town would be required to number their own houses and buy mailboxes. The street markers are being set by the town council.*

*He said an examination would be held to select Plano’s first house-to-house mailman.”*

*The Dallas Morning News, February 8, 1948, page 13.*

With the “when” answered, Cheryl searched to find why the streets were renamed. Here is what she found.

*“Your information you gave me about those deeds helped me narrow down the years when I went looking for this. I discovered a map drawn up by Mr. A. R. Schell Jr. with the new names of the streets. I found out through the research he was working on an engineer major at the time. He was asked to help create the map and rename the streets because his dad was mayor also at that time. So, about a hundred years after Plano first began receiving mail for the town we now had door to door mail. It’s part of my History of Plano talk.”*

Prior to mail delivery, residents picked up their mail at the Post Office in downtown “old” Plano on 15<sup>th</sup> Street. It was on the north side of the street near Avenue K. Mr. Carlisle was the first postmaster and Billy Wayne Creed and Claude Nelson were the first mail carriers. Billy Wayne Creed became our second postmaster. Thanks to Kenneth Christian for the information on the mail carriers.

It was during that time that residents got curb and gutters. I remember what a mess the street was in during that construction period. I also remember that we lost the lovely hedge in front of the house. It was too close to the property line I suppose, so it had to be removed.

All these changes must have made it easier for the milkman to deliver our fresh Borden’s milk. Mr. Morgan, owner of the icehouse, lived in Plano so the modern changes would not have helped him find our houses to deliver the block of ice. He used to come in the back porch, open a large door and slide the ice block through it into our icebox. Yes, it was an icebox before it became known as the refrigerator or fridge.

I have not heard Cheryl’s talk on Plano, but I would be interested in doing so. Hopefully she will give it again in a few months so that all of us from that period can attend. Thank you, Cheryl, for information on the when and why Plano’s streets were renamed.

*Brenda Kellow has a bachelor's degree in history. Before retiring to publish her family's histories in 2007, Brenda held certification as a Certified Genealogist and as a Certified Genealogical Instructor.*