



# BAINBRIDGE ISLAND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

## Newsletter

### News from the Board

#### Board of Directors Vacancies - We Need Volunteers

We will have two, perhaps more, vacancies on the board of directors for the 2017 term (April 2017 - April 2018). Serving as a board member is a great way to contribute to BIGS and to get to know others who love this hobby. The duties vary among positions (none of them depends on being an experienced genealogist). We are still working out specifically which positions will be open, in part because existing board members might move around. The board meets monthly at a date and time that is set by the board.

Please consider learning more about the potential opportunities by talking with [Sylvia Nelson](#),

### Member's Corner

#### *The Death of Col. John Oliver Hoskins*

*by Andrea Kay Hoskins*

My grandmother once told me that the moon had let her down. She explained that she told my grandfather when he shipped out in October 1941 to help prepare the defenses of the Philippines for a possible war with Japan, she would send her love each night with the help of the moon - he would only need to look up at the moon and know her love was with him. And, she said, once he had gone, she began to ask the moon to protect him and watch over him for her. My grandfather would be declared missing in action after the Battle of Bataan. For the rest of the war, my grandmother would not know if he was dead or alive. Had he died in the fighting or endured the death march that followed? Eventually she would learn from a Filipino witness that he had been shot during the fighting but that his body had not been found. The memorial at Fort William McKinley to commemorate those that fought in the Philippines lists Colonel John Oliver Hoskins as missing. He was awarded the Purple Heart and the Legion of Merit medal.

My grandmother would never know the circumstances of my grandfather's death. She only knew the moon had let her down.

John died in January 1942 during the first American land battle of the Pacific war. Over 60 years later, a book titled "Tears in the Darkness: The Story of the Bataan Death March and Its Aftermath," by Michael and Elizabeth Norman, tells the story of how he died.

A family friend reading the book in 2009 recognized that

who is chairing our nominating committee. I am also happy to talk with anyone who wants to learn more about the board and its work Betty Wiese. The slate of candidates will be finalized in February so we can meet our bylaws requirement for the election, which will happen at our April monthly meeting - April 21, 2017.

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### Book Project

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#### Eight Genealogy-related Books Coming to Bainbridge Island Library Branch

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Last fall, Bainbridge Island Library manager Rebecca Judd offered to purchase some books if we would recommend titles to consider. We extend a huge thank-you to Pat Scott and Priscilla Greenlees for their work on this project. They determined what is already available at the Bainbridge branch and through the Kitsap Regional system and gathered suggestions from the board and mentors. We are happy to announce the books we recommended have been ordered and should be arriving soon. Library staff will decide

this story belonged to our family and contacted my sister to let her know what he had found. The following excerpt is from that book:

*On the west coast of Bataan, a separate Japanese force, some 5,000 men, had also been trying to push south. Here there was no beach, so the infantry had to take to the hills above the water. The hills were heavily forested, a hard and tangled hinterland with deep ravines, sudden drops, and breakneck gorges. A single serpentine road, the West Road, had been cut into the face of the hills. The road began at Morong, and on January 14, that's where the main Japanese push south started. Most of the fighting took place along the ridges, hogbacks, saddles, spurs, and ledges that looked down on the West Road, the only route to bring up supplies, weapons, and equipment. If the Japanese could fight their way down the West Road and through the heights above it to Bagac, roughly halfway down the peninsula, then pivot east and push across the East-West Road, they could turn the American Flank and attack the enemy*

*from the front and side simultaneously.*

*By January 17, the west coast force, the Kimura Detachment (named for the general who commanded it), had taken Morong and was starting to move south. Four days later at midmorning, part of the 3rd Battalion, 20th Infantry managed to slip undetected through the American line and set up a roadblock behind the enemy's front on the West Road. The Japanese officer in charge of the position, Lt. Minobu Kawaguchi, was just starting to reconnoiter his front when he heard the sound of vehicles approaching and quickly ordered his men to slip back into the woods and wait.*

*Coming around the bend now were two armored vehicles, half-tracks mounted with machine guns. The lieutenant let the half-tracks pass, too much firepower, but somewhat behind them was a plain black sedan with two men inside, two American soldiers, a driver and, in the front seat next to him, a much older man. The driver had his window down, and when the car came abreast of Kawaguchi and his men, they fired point-blank.*

whether they will be included with the many others that are on the circulation shelf or in the reference collection. Once they arrive, we will let everyone know the specific books, which include the following topics: DNA, the law, elements of analysis, and Irish and New England research.

*Betty Wiese*  
President



[BIGS Website](#)



*The driver slumped forward, the sedan ran off the road into a culvert, and the older man stumbled out of the passenger side and tried to take cover behind a fallen tree.*

*Earlier in the day headquarters had sent word it wanted prisoners, so the lieutenant tried to coax the older soldier out of hiding. "Anata-wa Nippon-gun ni houi sareteiru," "You are surrounded by the Japanese Army," he shouted in Japanese. Then, in English, he yelled, "Hold up hands. Come out!"*

*The American gave no answer at first, then he unholstered a pistol and fired a few rounds in Kawaguchi's direction. The lieutenant was impressed. The older man's position was hopeless - surely he could see that - and yet he was fighting back.*

*Kawaguchi tried again. "Hold up hands. Come out!" But the old one answered with another volley of pistol fire. Headquarters, it seemed would have to find another prisoner.*

*Kawaguchi raised his rifle, took aim at the man's chest, and pulled the trigger. Later that day when the rest of the battalion arrived, the lieutenant and a communications officer*

*went through the American's pockets. His papers identified him as Colonel John Hoskins, commander of American artillery on the west coast.*

*Hoe-skins, Hoe-skins . . . Lieutenant Kawaguchi made an effort to memorize the name.*

*After the war, he thought, he might try to find the man's family and tell them how bravely he'd fought, how well he had died.*

*Then he ordered his men to dig a grave, and there beneath a luan tree by the side of the West Road, the hohei of the 20th Infantry buried John Hoskins, Colonel, United States Army.*

*After we all had a chance to read the passage and discuss what we had learned, my brother Keith decided to contact the authors and let them know we would be interested in any more information they might have. This is the reply he received from Michael Norman on Nov. 12, 2009:*

*Mr. Hoskins,  
Thank you for your note. Everything we know about your grandfather and his death is in the book. We held no detail back, including Lt. Kawaguchi's admiration for your grandfather. Believe me, it was very rare indeed for a*

*Japanese infantry unit to take the time to bury a keto -- their word for a disgusting white Westerner. So they showed your grandfather great honor and great respect. For a while I wondered why your grandfather returned fire instead of surrendering. All we can do, of course is wonder. He was an artillery commander, a colonel, which made him more of an administrator than a front-line fighting man. But he clearly had the instincts and heart of a fighting man. His car was surrounded by crack Japanese infantry; he likely knew well that as soon as he fired his .45 at them, they*

*were going to return fire, and at that range, close range, they would not miss. And that is why the Japanese admired him. He refused to surrender, and to them such an act was the ultimate mark of a warrior. 76,000 men surrendered on Bataan. John Hoskins was not one of them.*

It was remarkable and so unexpected to get not only the story of what happened to our grandfather, but to get the details of his death and "disappearance" from the Japanese soldier responsible.

***If you'd like to share your story in a future BIGS newsletter, please contact [Sue Hassenmiller](#).***

### **Thank You and Reminder**

A big "thank you" to all who have renewed their 2017 BIGS memberships. For those of you still to renew, dues should be submitted no later than Feb. 17. You can mail your dues -- \$35/single, \$50/family -- to P.O. Box 135, Rolling Bay, WA 98061 or give them to our treasurer, Sue Hassenmiller, when you see her at a meeting. If you'd like to give someone the gift of a membership, check out the [website](#) for an application form. Your contribution is appreciated as we look forward to a new year of fresh discoveries and profound ancestral insights.

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## Meetings

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*Until further notice, our monthly meetings will be held at the LDS Church, 8677 Madison Ave. NE, Bainbridge Island. Park on the northwest side of the building, and enter through the northwest corner door by the bike racks.*

**Friday, January 20, 10:00 AM to noon**

Kick off the New Year for 2017. Come to share ideas with, and learn from, other members for your genealogy in the new year.

**Friday, February 17, 10:00 AM to noon**

Mary K. Roddy, "A Decree of (Temporary) Divorce - My Life Without Ancestry.com"

**Friday, March 17, 1 10:00 AM to noon**

Janet O. Camarata, "Ask, Listen and Record."

For handouts from one of our guest speaker presentations, contact our historian, [Rebecca Pratt](#).

The [complete meeting schedule](#) is on our website.

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# Special Interest Groups

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## **For BIGS Members Only**

*Upcoming SIG meetings in chronological order.*

*All meetings will be held at the LDS Church, unless otherwise noted.*

*Go to [our website](#) for the complete schedule.*

### **Southern States**, quarterly

Thursday, January 12, 1 to 3 PM, downstairs at Kitsap Regional Library,  
Bainbridge Island branch  
Leader: *Paula Schmidt*

### **Great Britain**

Friday, January 13, 10 AM to Noon  
Leader: *Brian Quick*

### **Evening Discussion Group (EDG)**, third Monday of the month

Monday, January 16, 7 to 9 p.m., Homestreet Bank on Hildebrand.  
**Topic: Active problem solving and updates on research progress**  
Leaders: *Mary Ferm and Sue Elfving*

### **Skill Building**, second Friday of the month

Friday, February 10, 10 AM to Noon,  
**Topic: Where Do I Begin? A review of Research Fundamentals**  
Leader: *Mary Ferm and Sylvia Nelson*

### **New England Mid-Atlantic**, quarterly

Next meeting in March (details TBA)  
Leader: *Mary Ferm*

### **All Things DNA**, every other month

Next meeting TBA  
Leader: *Sue Hassenmiller*

### **Irish**, monthly

Next meeting TBA  
Acting Leader: *Sue Hassenmiller*

## Program Notes

BIGS program chair Bagley Dawson is interested in hearing your suggestions for speakers in 2017 and beyond. They can be written on your comment slip and deposited in the comment box at the monthly meeting, or they can be given directly to Bagley, president Betty Wiese or any board member. All suggestions are welcome.

## Genealogy News

Here's a new website for Irish genealogy education:

<https://www.johngrenham.com/blog/2016/12/12/new-free-irish-genealogy-education-site/>

Also, Kimberly Powell's wonderful genealogy newsletter has ended. Her articles will remain online, at least for now.

<http://link.about.com/view/5436f4d3ba57e6ea0e8b4a9d51fmaach/536dc164>

## Local Events

### "Brick Wall Workshop"

Have you hit a brick wall? From 10 am to 1 pm on the second Thursday of every month, the National Archives on Sandpoint Way in Seattle hosts a free Brick Wall Workshop. Bring your lunch. For more information, go to <https://www.archives.gov/seattle/public/workshops.html>

### "O Canada! Children of a Common Mother"

Register now for the Skagit Valley Genealogical Society's spring seminar in celebration of Canada's 150th anniversary as a confederation. The event will be held April 21-23 in Burlington, Wash. For more information, go to [www.skagitvalleygenealogy.org](http://www.skagitvalleygenealogy.org)

### Genealogy: The Basics

Interested in chasing your own tale? Jefferson County Genealogical Society (JCGS) is offering "Genealogy: The Basics," an introduction to the concepts and tools used in family history research. This three-session class is designed for the beginner. Focus will

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## Local Events Cont...

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be on researching in the United States, but basic concepts are transferrable to researching anywhere in the world. A small class of 15 will be introduced to foundational resources, online websites, research techniques, and finding research done by others. Participants will also be introduced to the organization and maintenance of the data they obtain, both hard copy and computerized formats.

"Genealogy: The Basics" will be held from 1 to 3:30 p.m. on Feb. 13, 20, and 27 at the Jefferson County Historical Society Research Center at 13692 Airport Cutoff Road (Route 19). Registration is required and due before Feb. 1. Registration form is found on the JCGS website [www.wajcgs.org](http://www.wajcgs.org). Cost for the class is \$30 for JCGS members and \$55 for a non-member (includes a one-year JCGS membership). Questions? Contact Jesse at 360-437-8103.

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## Other BIGS Business

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### BIGS-net

BIGS-net, is an email discussion group, where BIGS members communicate with other members, e.g., post a question, identify a resource, carpool to a class, meet informally. We often post about free access to premium websites and discounted genealogy subscription deals there too. Join the network by clicking the BIGSNET menu on [our website](#) or [contact Sue Hassenmiller](#), the BIGS-net moderator, if you have questions.

*Feedback and ideas from our members are always welcome.  
BIGS is YOUR group so let us know what you'd like to see!*

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*Mae Gentry*

**Newsletter Editor**

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