



**MTGS Messenger**  
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**Jim Long, Editor**



### **MTGS July 19 Outing to Fort Negley Park, Nashville**

Our July meeting is something we like to do every so often in the summer – have an outing to an historic location. On **Saturday, July 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm**, we will gather at **Fort Negley Visitors Center and Park**, [1100 Fort Negley Blvd., Nashville.](#)

Dr. Angela Sutton, Vanderbilt professor and creator of the [Fort Negley Descendants Project](#), will talk about the history of the site and about the Descendants Project. Following her remarks, we will take a tour of the park grounds and visitor center, guided by interpreter Gary Burke, whose great-great grandfather Pvt. Peter Bailey, Co. K, 17th Regiment, USCT, was stationed at Fort Negley.

The [Zoom link to the meeting is here](#) – **however**, it is uncertain at this time whether or not we will be able to broadcast the program. While Fort Negley has the *ability* for us to do so, your humble Editor (who is also your humble Zoom Coordinator) is having some health issues which might not allow him to travel to Nashville that day. Thanks for your understanding.



### **37<sup>th</sup> Annual November Seminar with Julie Merrill, AG**

Seminar season at MTGS is approaching! We are thrilled that our speaker will be national speaker **Julie Merrill, AG**, presenting these four great topics:

- Research Strategies for the Colonial Southern United States
- Intermediate Research Skill Building
- How do I use DNA to Breakdown Brick walls in my Family tree?
- Find all the Records! Alternative methods to documenting your family in a burned county

Julie is an Accredited Genealogist and is employed as a Research Manager at [Ancestry ProGenealogists](#)<sup>®</sup>. She has been the main researcher for episodes of *Who Do You Think You Are* and other high-profile media projects. Before working for Ancestry, she served a five-year service mission at [FamilySearch](#), serving in Historical Records, Research Assistance, and Early

General Authorities Research departments as well as a FamilySearch Library trainer for onboarding missionaries.

Registration for the November Seminar will open in late Summer, and will include a boxed lunch and snacks. As always, MTGS Members will receive a discount on the cost to attend.

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*Saturday, September 15<sup>th</sup> 1813. Conference opened. The list called. On motion our last minutes were the committee to whom was refered a settlement they had examined the acts and agreeably to the funds, yet they find fifty cents on hand not*

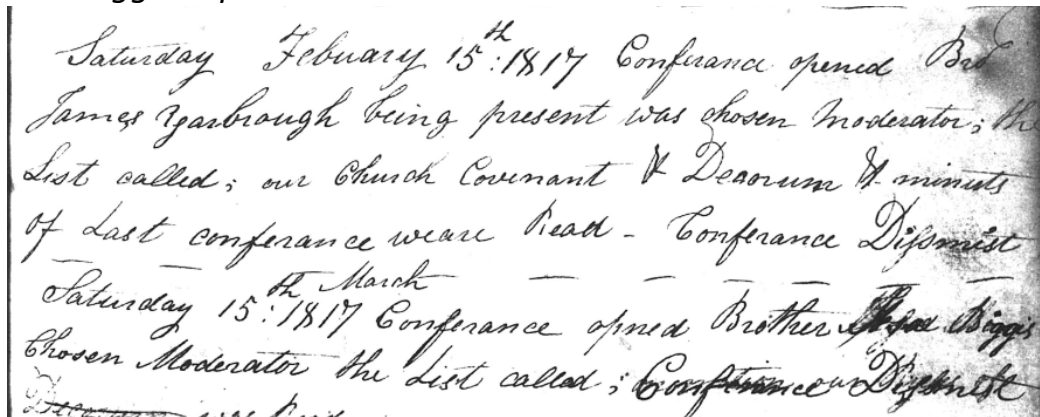
## Genealogy with Gemini

Our last issue of the MTGS *Journal* featured a great article by Scott Williams on using ChatGPT to transcribe historic documents. A few years ago on a visit to TSLA, I had copied the minutes of the Saline Creek Baptist Church in my beloved Stewart County, from [Microfilm at TSLA](#). I used the JPG images to create an index for research, but *transcribing* the hundreds of pages of minutes was just a pipe dream. But recently, I started doing just that – typing every page from scratch – and after a few pages rested my fingers, and remembered Scott’s article about using artificial intelligence (AI) for transcription.

I haven’t tried ChatGPT yet, but Scott’s article reminded me of a [recent announcement by Ancestry](#) that they were allowing users to upload documents for a transcription-by-AI technique like what Scott demonstrated. I logged onto Ancestry, only to learn that the feature was located in their upper-tier World Explorer Membership, which I don’t have.

I next wondered if FamilySearch had a similar feature – but they don’t offer one. Somehow, I came across Google’s [Gemini product](#), which turned out to be free, easy to use, and quite good.

Below is a snippet of the Saline Creek Church Minutes. I uploaded the JPG to Gemini, and started having it do a lot of the typing for me. A few words and names it consistently struggled to recognize, so after several iterations my instruction to Gemini was “*Transcribe this document with high fidelity. Place square brackets around any words you cannot recognize. Replace the word Neff with Ross. Replace the word Terrell with Ferrill. Replace the word Ragan with Biggs. Replace the word Doorum with Decorum.*”



*Saturday February 15<sup>th</sup> 1817 Conference opened Bro James Garbrough being present was chosen Moderator; the List called; our Church Covenant & Decorum & minutes of last conference were read - Conference Dismissed*

*Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March 1817 Conference opened Brother [unclear] Biggs chosen Moderator the List called; Conference Dismissed*

Gemini came back with this transcription of this snippet:

Saturday February 15th 1817 Conference opened Bro James Yarbrough being present was chosen moderator. The List called; our Church Covenant & Decorum & minutes of last conference were Read. Conference Disposed of the Same.

Saturday 15 1817 Conference opened Brother John Biggs Chosen Moderator. The List called; Conference [adjourned] the Session was broke.

Pretty decent, right? This is going to save me a lot of keystrokes in transcription projects that I haven't even thought of yet.

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### Query: Col. Hugh Tinnin of Williamson County, TN (c. 1745 – 1794)

[Deborah Ann Boyers Maevers](#), family historian of the descendants of Col. Hugh Tinnin of Williamson County, is seeking to contact anyone who may have portraits/sketches/likenesses of Col. Tinnin, or documents that may mention him. Her email is hyperlinked at her name above.



### Get Yourself to Granville on July 26!

For the past couple of years, MTGS has enjoyed participating in the annual [Upper Cumberland Family History & Genealogy Festival](#), in historic Granville, Tennessee, "Tennessee's Mayberry Town." This year's festival is Saturday, July 26. MTGS will again be one of several dozen groups with a booth there, including county genealogy associations, historical societies, archives, museums and booksellers. There will be presentations as well on research techniques and on one of this year's spotlighted families, the Dudneys.

It's a fun town and a great concentration of genealogy and family history resources. Check it out, and stop by our booth to say hi, too!



### Online TVA Resources at the National Archives

I love using maps for genealogy research, and cemeteries of course (who doesn't?), and lately I've been spending time on the National Archives' website, exploring the 108,000+ online images relating to the [Tennessee Valley Authority's cemetery removal projects](#) necessitated by the impoundments of rivers. In the linked sub-series, you'll find maps, correspondence about individual grave removals, and field

books of cemetery inventories. Those with Middle Tennessee connections may focus on the Tennessee River and Cumberland River projects, but the series includes much more than those two rivers.

[Record Group 142](#) at the National Archives (Records of the Tennessee Valley Authority, 1918-2000), also contains over 100,000 photographs relating to TVAs projects. There's plenty on the website to keep you busy!

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## On a Lighter Note...

### My New Cousin!...Or Not

I recently received a lovely email from Donna, who had been referred to me by the Reference librarian in my local library's genealogy room. It went something like:

"Hi, Jim, I was told you've done extensive research on the Pollard family of Caldwell County, Kentucky and Montgomery County, Tennessee. My father, Jewell Pollard, was born in Caldwell County. The house my great-grandfather owned at Princeton was built by Wilson Pollard. We are trying to find the connection between Wilson Pollard and his parents, Reuben and Margaret of Montgomery County."

It was suddenly a small world. I am a descendant of Wilson *Lee* Pollard (1803-1889), who was born in Montgomery County to Reuben and Margaret Pollard, and who moved to Caldwell County. I quickly started tracing Cousin Donna's Pollard line in Caldwell County, to spot the new family connection.

But I soon realized that we are descended from unrelated Pollard families in the same county, both of whom had a member named Wilson Pollard. Her great-grandfather had a *brother* named *Robert* Wilson Pollard (1860-1935). Her patriarch, Lewis Pollard (c. 1810) came from North Carolina to Sumner Co., TN sometime between 1810-1830 before moving on to Caldwell County. My Reuben Pollard (1762-1843) came from central Virginia and was already in Montgomery County by 1793, with no son named Lewis born 20 years later in North Carolina, either.

I broke the news to ~~Cousin~~ Donna, but for some reason she has not answered my email...