



# BETWEEN THE PAGES

*Huntsville Public Library Monthly Newsletter*

## THE ORPHAN TRAIN: A CHALLENGE FOR FAMILY HISTORIANS



*BY RICHARD LANE, REFERENCE*

The Walker County Genealogical Society and the Huntsville Public Library will host the Frances Sprott Goforth Memorial Genealogy Weekend on August 3rd and 4th, 2018. This year's event, "Orphan Trains, Adoption, and DNA" will provide insight and instruction to assist family historians challenged by the complexities of orphan train research. [See final paragraph for registration information.] Imagine, if you will, a child born in obscurity, raised in dire circumstances fraught with danger and deprivation. For many researchers, the genealogical record of lost and abandoned children may cause a stumbling block, the proverbial brick wall. The slums of New York and other east coast cities of the 1850s were breeding grounds for violence, poverty and misery. Immigrants from Europe arrived daily only to face cultural and ethnic barriers. Unemployment was high and wages low, when available. Housing could only be described as squalor with six, eight or more persons living in a single room. Sanitation was nonexistent. Death from tuberculosis and other contagious diseases took its toll on old and young alike. Alcoholism and opiate addiction were common. Fathers often abandoned families or met untimely death or disability. Maternal deaths left children motherless and abandoned to a life in the sweatshops or on the streets.

Opportunities were limited. Industrious boys might earn a few pennies a day selling newspapers or running errands. Some children found work in the mills and factories of the emerging industrial revolution. Work hours were long and conditions were deplorable. Gangs of children learned the survival skills necessary to survive on the streets. Older children taught the young the art of petty larceny and the sleight of hand needed to pick the pocket of the unwary.

Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* gave literary expression to the life endured by children of the period. The social safety nets of contemporary western societies had yet to be adopted by state and federal governments. Reform movements, as advocated by Dickens and others, called for desperate means to improve the life of desperate children. American philanthropist and social reformers, perhaps overwhelmed by tens of thousands of homeless children, hit upon a plan to transport the waifs by train westward to rural communities and the agrarian Midwest.

Farming methods of the period required large labor pools. The reformers reasoned that farm families in the interior of the country would willingly take in children, care for them and provide for their education. The migration of large numbers of children began in the late 1850s and continued until the 1920s. Many of the children were taken in by kind and generous families. Others were not as fortunate and suffered harsh treatment and captive-like conditions.

*(cont. on page 5)*

1219 13th Street  
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(936) 291-5472

Monday-Friday Saturday  
10am-7pm 12pm-4pm



[myhuntsvillelibrary.com](http://myhuntsvillelibrary.com)



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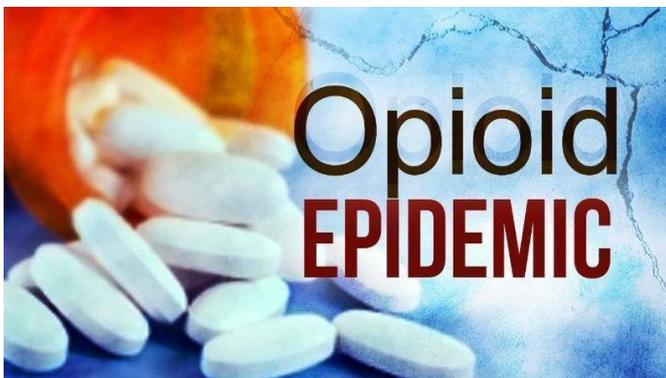


# OPIOID FORUM

BY MARY KOKOT, ADULT LIBRARY SERVICES

Opioid dependence and addiction has affected Walker County as it has the State of Texas and the nation. This issue will be addressed at a public information forum from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Thursday, August 24 at the Huntsville Public Library. A panel of medical and health professionals as well as law enforcement officials will speak about the history of the opioid epidemic, economic and sociological factors contributing to the increase in abuse, the role law enforcement plays, abuse prevention, and treatment opportunities. Opioid painkillers, now the most widely prescribed pain relievers, are highly abused and diverted for nonmedical use. Opioids are synthetic drugs that emulate opiates. Examples of synthetic opioids include fentanyl, methadone, oxycodone and hydrocodone. Opioids are dangerous because the difference between the amount needed to feel their effects and the amount needed to kill a person is small and unpredictable.

You may be wondering why opioids are so addictive. Opioids act by attaching to and activating opioid receptor proteins, which are found on nerve cells in the brain, spinal cord, gastrointestinal tract, and other organs in the body. When these drugs attach to their receptors, they inhibit the transmission of pain signals. Stimulating the opioid receptors or "reward centers" in the brain can also trigger other systems in the body, such as those responsible for regulating mood, breathing, and blood pressure. To learn more about the opioid epidemic and the strategies one can utilize to improve community health pertaining to this issue, please register for the Opioid Forum at [myhuntsvillelibrary.com](http://myhuntsvillelibrary.com) or call 936-291-5471. The public is invited to attend and light refreshments will be served.



## CIRCUIT MAKER WORKSHOP

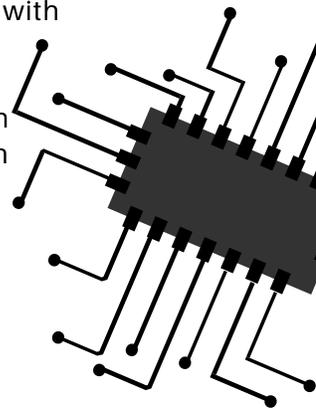
BY JALPA SHAH, IT COORDINATOR

It's kind of fun launching glow fans, investigating inline and parallel circuits and completing functional experiments. Apparently, the kids that participated in the Circuit Maker Workshop thought so too! Circuit Maker Workshop contains 42 projects. In each project, building blocks are used with snaps to build the different electrical and electronic circuits. Each block has a function: switch blocks, light blocks, battery blocks and different length wire blocks. These blocks are different colors and have numbers on them, so they can be easily identified. The blocks used are shown as color symbols with level numbers next to them, allowing the kids to easily snap them together with a circuit.

Each Tuesday this past July, twelve kids ages 8 through 12 enjoyed setting up their own gaming console with blocks using the circuit board in the kit.

Here's a recap of our experience with Circuit Maker:

- Day 1: made launching glow fans;
- Day 2: create light, sound & motion
- Day 3: cup & string communication
- Day 4: squishy circuit on Play-Doh



# August Events

Find this information online at [myhuntsvillelibrary.com](http://myhuntsvillelibrary.com).

School

**Back to School Bash**  
August 8, 10:30 PM  
*FREE School Supplies until we run out!*

**Teen Film Club (PIZZA&MOVIE)**  
*Ready Player One*  
August 9, 4:30 PM  
*13-17 years old only*



**First Friday Book Club**  
August 10, 1:00 PM  
*3rd-7th Graders*



**Family Movie Night showing**  
*Miracle Season*  
August 10, 5:30 PM  
*For all ages*



**Mother Goose Lapsit**  
Mondays, 10:30 AM  
*Ages 5 and under*



**Story Time**  
Tuesdays 5:30 PM,  
Wednesdays & Fridays, 10:45 AM  
*Ages 5 and under*  
*No program on August 1 and 3*



## CHILDREN'S Programming



## ADULT Programming



**Midday Matinee**  
*On the Town*  
August 10, 3:00 PM



**Internet Safety Class**  
Tuesdays, starting August 7, 10:30 AM  
*Registration Required*



**Frances Sprott Gorforth Memorial  
Genealogy Weekend**  
August 3rd & 4th  
*Registration Required*

**Play Texas 42**  
Mondays, 1:00 - 3:00 PM  
Registration Required  
Multiples of 4 needed to play!



**Stephen King Online Book Club**  
*"11/22/63"*  
Join the discussion online!



**Sittercise**  
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00 AM



**Book Club at the Huntsville Public  
Library**  
*Mischling*  
June 14, 10:30 AM



**Searching FamilySearch.org**  
Thursdays, 11 AM  
Registration Required



# WHY THE CASTLE?

BY RACHEL MCPHAIL, CHILDREN'S COORDINATOR

If you stopped by the library in late July, you may have seen a castle in the Community Room. Or, you might have seen a posse of teenagers dressed in medieval clothing. You may have wondered what on earth the library was up to! Over the summer, the library hosted a "Summer of Shakespeare Theater Boot Camp" for teenagers led by Ian McPhail (history teacher and husband who volunteers to help out with his wife's events). Five teenagers spent their summer memorizing Shakespeare and rehearsing Macbeth.

The idea for the theater program started with a question: What can the library do to encourage more teens to come to the library? Unsurprisingly, Huntsville ISD was a wonderful asset in answering that question. The library contacted Huntsville ISD teachers to get the word out that any teacher was invited to lead a program at the library over the summer, the idea being that perhaps they could finally teach that one lesson plan that may not work in a traditional classroom setting. Two teachers signed up to help.

Curtis Densmore volunteered to lead the Technology & Design course, a three day program in which children competed to build the strongest bridge out of spaghetti noodles, learned Scratch programming, and designed 3D printed objects. The library is so grateful for Densmore's willingness to volunteer.

Ian McPhail volunteered to direct the production of Macbeth over the summer. Five teenagers auditioned for the play. We shortened Macbeth down to one act and reduced 25 roles to 7 roles. Our goal was to maintain Shakespeare's themes while having the play still be manageable for 5 people.

The Huntsville Public Library is very grateful for the support we received over the summer. Without these teachers, the programs would not have happened. The library is planning to continue the theater program in the fall and invites any interested teenagers to audition.



*(cont. from pg 1.)* Birth and death records of the period leave a great deal to be desired. The vital statistics of the children were largely unrecorded. Their genealogical tracings have been lost to the chaos of their early childhood. Brothers and sisters frequently were separated with one family taking a sibling while unselected children were loaded back onto the train and transported farther west in search of a home. On-site registration for "Orphan Train, Adoption and DNA" will begin at 9:30 a.m. for both days at the Huntsville Public Library. Programs will be presented from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday, August 3 and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, August 4. A light supper will be provided on Friday. A silent auction of books and genealogical materials will be held during the weekend and will end at 4 p.m. Saturday. The event is free, but pre-registration is suggested. Call 936-291-5471 or sign up at [www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com](http://www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com).



The Huntsville Public Library is pleased to host the annual Back to School Bash at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, August 8 with sponsorship from Texas Children's Health Plan and other community organizations. Every year at the Back to School Bash, the library and other entities pass out free school supplies to children and teens. In past years, we have given away around 800 backpacks! Our favorite part of the event is knowing that we helped prepare a child for the upcoming school year. The Back to School Bash is such a rewarding experience and library staff look forward to it every year.

This year Texas Children's Health Plan will bring 500 backpacks and 200 cinch bags to give away. The event will be held until supplies run out. To receive supplies, the child or teen must be present.