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**SCHC offers workshop into the past Terri Cowart Frazier
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Could you be related to the Queen of England? — or maybe your kin-folk set out across the Wild West in search of gold.

What ever your background, tracing ones lineages and histories has become increasingly popular, making genealogy the second most popular past-time for Americans.

And for those needing a little help getting started in their quest, a workshop is being offered at the Southern Cultural Heritage Center.

“I will take every participant back five generations,” said Michael Logue, instructor for the Legends and Legacies genealogy workshop.

This is Logue’s first time to lead a workshop at the SCHC, but he said he has taught genealogy classes at his church.

The workshop, he hopes, will serve as a jumping off point for participants to continue their search.

Pam Melsheimer, a participant in the workshop said she signed on for the workshop because she wanted to preserve her family heritage.

“I wanted to track back my family in order to have something to give to my son so he would know his relatives,” she said, and with the hopes that he will pass the history on to her grandchildren.

She said she already knew some of her ancestry, but with the new findings she has learned during the workshop she has been encouraged to get on the internet and search out more.

"Genealogy is very serious work," Logue said, because taking someone through their family lineage can totally change a person forever.

Learning where you come from gives a person "sense of place and belonging," he said, and it can also bring about bonding and healing.

He recalled an instance when a woman who didn't like her grandmother changed the way she viewed her, after discovering what had happened in her past.

Prior to the Legends and Legacies genealogy workshop, participants send Logue as much information as they know out about their family tree.

He said he then does preliminary research for the participants and throughout the six week workshop he reveals the information he has found.

"People are surprised," he said, "and suggest bringing Kleenex."

During the workshop, participants are also introduced to the tools used to research their descendants, which includes websites, documents and bricks and mortar opportunities.

"I'm using the tombstone records that the city has on their website," said Melsheimer.

She said her family has lived a long time in Vicksburg and can track her mother's side of the family back to the Klein family, who owned Cedar Grove.

Logue takes genealogy seriously, he said.

"We are the custodians of our history and if we don't preserve it, we are only one generation away from losing it."