



# Guide to Genealogical Research in Shawnee County, Kansas

July 2020

## Introduction

This guide has been compiled in an attempt to assist individuals who are conducting genealogical or historical research related to Shawnee County, Kansas. It is hoped that this document will improve the researcher's chances of success in finding the answers that he/she seeks, and perhaps save some time and reduce frustration in tracking down the available source materials. This guide has been compiled by experienced volunteer researchers from the Topeka Genealogical Society, in consultation with staff and volunteers from other community repositories.

## General Indexes and Finding Aids

Compiled indexes and finding aids are often a good starting point when researching in a particular locality. They are useful in pointing out the types of source materials that may be available, and in quickly identifying the sources that may contain information about the subject of interest. In addition to numerous indexes of specific groups of records, two more comprehensive name indexes may be useful in identifying source materials related to a specific person.

In an attempt to make researching for Shawnee County ancestors or historic information easier and more efficient, the Topeka Genealogical Society has combined index information from numerous sources into a "master" **Shawnee County Surname Index**, which is available and searchable on the public portion of the TGS website (<https://tgstopeka.org/cpage.php?pt=8>). The index, which contains only a surname, given name, an event date, a brief description of the type of event represented by that date, and the name of the information source is intended to quickly guide the user to the resources and source materials that contain information about the person of interest. To access the record detail, the user must then consult the named source. (If

the source is an index or database, there may be additional steps required to get to the original source records.)

The Kansas Historical Society Kansas has compiled a similar name index for Kansas resources: <http://www.kshs.org/p/genealogy-combined-names-search/15899> .

## Census Records

Most, if not all, genealogists are very familiar with the decennial U.S. Census records and numerous ways to search and access those records. Some may not be aware, however, that the state of Kansas also conducted census surveys every ten years between 1865 and 1925, in the years that ended with 5. The **Kansas State Census** records are available on microfilm at the **Kansas Historical Society**, and are indexed and searchable on **Ancestry.com**.

Additionally, several pre-statehood territorial censuses were conducted in Kansas between 1855-1859. These are available on microfilm at the Kansas Historical Society, or on Ancestry.com. See <https://www.kshs.org/p/1855-1859-kansas-territory-censuses/10960> for more details.

## Vital Records (Births, Deaths, Marriages and Divorces)

Mandatory reporting to the state began **July 1, 1911** for births and deaths; **May 1, 1913** for marriages, and **July 1, 1951** for divorces. Records of events occurring on or after these dates may be requested from the Kansas Department of Health & Environment, Office of Vital Statistics, <http://www.kdheks.gov/vital/> . Access to vital records may be restricted:

The Kansas Legislature has determined that vital records filed with the Kansas Office of Vital Statistics are not open for public inspection. They are exempted from the Kansas Open Records Act [K.S.A. 45-221(a) and K.S.A. 65-2422d(c)]. The vital records are deemed to be confidential records which may contain sensitive information. Also, the information contained in a vital record is sufficient for establishing a false identity. Identity theft and fraudulent use of vital records has soared within the last decade. Therefore, we have no indexes available to the public. The requestor must meet eligibility requirements and must provide proof of identification.

*No statewide or countywide death indexes are publicly available. The Topeka Genealogical Society is not able to obtain birth and death records from the Kansas Office of Vital Statistics on behalf of our research clients.*

## Birth and Death Records prior to 1911

**Births** – The Topeka City Clerk maintained registers of Birth, Deaths and Infectious Diseases from 1885-1912. Images of the original registers are available on microfilm at the **Kansas Historical Society**, film #AR 1233-1235, or at the **TGS Library**. A surname-only index is available in printed form at either KHS or TGS.

The Shawnee County Clerk maintained records of Births & Deaths 1894-1911. An index listing is available at <http://www.snco.us/clerk/administrative.asp>. Microfilmed images of the register are available at the **Kansas Historical Society**, microfilm # AR 3893, item#3.

Neither of these sources captured all births and deaths that occurred, but they are the only existing records of early births and deaths, prior to the implementation of mandatory reporting.

**Deaths** – As mentioned above, the Topeka City Clerk maintained register of Birth, Deaths and Infectious Diseases from 1885-1912. Registers are available on microfilm at the **Kansas Historical Society**, film AR 1233-1235, or at the **Topeka Genealogical Society**. A surname-only index is available in printed form, at either the KHS or the TGS Library.

The Shawnee County Clerk maintained records of Births & Deaths 1894-1911. Index listing is available at <http://www.snco.us/clerk/administrative.asp>. Microfilmed images from the register are available at the **Kansas Historical Society** (film # AR 3893, item # 3)

Neither of these sources are complete, but are the only existing records of early births and deaths. In some cases, **obituaries, funeral home or cemetery records** may also be useful in providing documented evidence of a death and additional information (see funeral home and cemetery records sections of this document for more detail).

## Marriage Records

The **Kansas Historical Society** has a microfilmed marriage index for Shawnee County, covering the time period 1865-1994 (microfilm # M298 – M302) and marriage licenses from 1856-1989 (microfilm # AR 5585 – AR 5621). The **Topeka Genealogical Society** has printed indexes to first three volumes of Shawnee County marriages (1856 – 1913), and original records of many early marriage license applications up to about 1920 (this collection is incomplete).

*In both indexes, the index will give the date of the marriage and the frame number of the marriage record. To locate the actual marriage record, use the date and frame number to locate the appropriate microfilm reel in the series AR 5585 – AR 5621, at the Kansas Historical Society.*

| SHAWNEE COUNTY MARRIAGE RECORDS<br>January 1856 through December 1994<br>"*" Designates Green |                             |                  |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------|
|   | Date                        | Reel Frame       |
| SPENCER, HABEL, ,   | *LUND, WM, E,               | 10/31/50 08 0196 |
| SPENCER, HADELINE, R,   | *ALHACK, ROBERT, B,         | 05/22/55 25 0230 |
| SPENCER, MAE, ,   | *BELLMAN, W, F,             | 09/16/01 07 0320 |
| SPENCER, HALINDA, ,   | *MULLER, GEORGE, HENRY,     | 04/07/75 01 2301 |
| SPENCER, MARGARET, A,   | *RICHARD, RAYMOND, DALE,    | 03/03/75 71 0413 |
| SPENCER, MARGARET, E,   | *SCHMIDT, NORMAN, E,        | 03/17/45 26 0275 |
| SPENCER, MARGARET, JEAN,  | *RICHARDSON, GARLAND, DALE, | 11/03/55 19 0073 |
| SPENCER, MARGERET, J,   | *NIXON, SEBASTIAN, E,       | 12/29/69 01 0814 |
| SPENCER, MARILY, H,   | *RHUBY, STEPHEN, B,         | 10/20/77 80 0228 |

Figure 1. Shawnee Co. Marriage Index on Microfilm (Reels MF 298- MF 302), Kansas Historical Society

From either of the indexes, note the date, reel and frame number for the marriage of interest. Go to the Microfilm cabinets at the Kansas Historical Society that contain film numbers AR5585 - AR5621 (1856-1989), and read the labels on the microfilm boxes to find the reel that includes the date range that you need. Load that microfilm on a reader and scroll through the film to find the volume (reel) and record number (frame number) from the index.

Inquires about marriage license applications should be directed to the Topeka Genealogical Society, at email address [research@tgstopeka.org](mailto:research@tgstopeka.org) .

## Divorces

Records of divorce proceedings in Shawnee County can be difficult to find. Divorce actions were, and still are, handled under the District Court and are recorded in courthouse books mixed in with other District Court proceedings. The courthouse retains only microfilmed images of earlier divorce proceedings, and the film is often faded and difficult to read. To our knowledge, there is no existing index of divorce cases in Shawnee County.

As an alternative, area **newspapers** reported regularly on divorce cases, and a search of newspapers may be helpful in at least verifying that a case was filed and providing approximate dates of the proceedings. In some cases, the newspaper articles provide colorful descriptions of the underlying complaints that led to divorce actions.

## Church records

In some cases, church records may provide an alternative source of documentation of births, marriages and deaths.

The Kansas Historical Society has microfilm of Baptismal, Confirmation, first Communion, death, and Marriage records, from **St. Joseph's German Catholic Church** in Topeka, spanning the time period from 1887 to 2002. For more information, see their website, <https://www.kshs.org/p/st-josephcatholic-church-records/13802> .

For records from other denominations or churches, check with the churches directly, or search for denominational archives and inquire there.

## Land Records

Records of **patents** (the first transfer of land from government to private ownership) are searchable online at the **Bureau of Land Management's GLO website**: <https://glorerecords.blm.gov/search/default.aspx>. Digital copies of the patent certificates are available there.

Images of **Land Entry Case Files** that were cancelled, relinquished or rejected between 1861 and 1932 are available for browsing online at **FamilySearch.org**. To locate them, search the FamilySearch catalog by location (Kansas, Shawnee) and scroll down to the "Land and Property" heading. These are not indexed, and will require browsing the images.

After the initial patent, subsequent transfers of real property in Shawnee County would be recorded and maintained by the **Shawnee County Registrar of Deeds**. Microfilmed copies of the indexes to deeds (1856-1901), and deed record books (1855-1927) are available at the Kansas Historical Society. Indexes to Shawnee County deeds are on the microfilm rolls AR 3888, AR 3889, AR 3890, AR 3891, AR 3892, AR 3893, and AR 4060. Deed records are on microfilm rolls AR 3704 – 3883, and AR 4059.

Digital images of Shawnee County Indexes to Deeds and Deed books are also available online at **FamilySearch.org** . *To view images of these records, search the FamilySearch catalog by location (Kansas, Shawnee), scroll to "Land and Property", and select the roll of film to be browsed in the viewer. Note: these records have not been indexed on FamilySearch and are not searchable by name.*

All original deed and real property records are maintained by the **Shawnee County Register of Deeds** office, located in Room 108 of the Shawnee County Courthouse (<https://www.snco.us/rd/>). They are open to the public from 8am – 4:30pm Monday-Friday. Copies are \$1.50 each. The Register of Deeds office has digitized all Shawnee County deed records and they are searchable and available for download through the Tapestry land records system (<https://tapestry.fidlar.com/Tapestry2/Search.aspx>). The Tapestry system charges \$6.95 / search, and \$1 per page to print.

In addition to the deed records maintained by the County Register of Deeds, the **Topeka Genealogical Society** library collection includes the original volumes of abstracts by the **Columbian Title Company** in Topeka. Most of the 800+ volumes have been indexed (indexing is

ongoing), and the index database is available for use in the TGS Library (2717 SE Indiana Ave). In addition to information about property ownership, the abstracts frequently include additional information about family relationships and locations. Abstracts frequently provide references to the volumes and page numbers where proceedings were recorded in County records.

## House, business and property histories

A searchable index to Topeka, KS building permits, 1880 to 1925 is available online at the **Kansas Historical Society**, <https://www.kshs.org/p/topeka-kansas-building-permits-index-1880-1925/13857>.

The **Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library** may also have historical property information in their vertical files in the Topeka Room.

## Tax Records

Original Shawnee County Tax Books from 1861 to 1870 are housed at the Topeka Genealogical Society Library. Microfilmed copies of real and personal property tax records, 1861-1968 are available at the Kansas Historical Society. Indexes to tax record books are not currently available.

## Naturalization Records

The **Topeka Genealogical Society Library** holds the original Shawnee County District Court books of Naturalization records from 1865 to 1929, and has created name indexes to the records. TGS Indexes are available in print or searchable database form.

The **Kansas Historical Society** has microfilm copies of these records:

| Description of Content    |                     | KHS Film #       |
|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Declarations of Intention | 1876-1888           | AR 3755          |
|                           | Volume E. 1903-1906 | AR 3702, Item #2 |
|                           | 1929-1932           | AR 6861          |
| Petitions and Records     | 1865-1902           | AR 3703, Item #1 |
|                           | Vol. 2, 1911-1918   | AR 3700, Item #3 |
|                           | 1911-1929           | AR 3701          |
|                           | 1911-1929           | AR 3702          |

The Shawnee County naturalization books have been digitized and images are also available on [FamilySearch.org](http://FamilySearch.org) :

| Description of Content                                     | FamilySearch Film # |
|--|---------------------|
| Petitions for naturalization 1906-1911.                    | 1533289             |
| Naturalization petitions and records: v.2 1911-1918        | (items 2-3)         |
| Naturalization petitions and records: v. 3-5, 1918- 1922   | 1533290             |
| Naturalization petitions and records: v. 6-7, 1922 – 1929. | 1533296             |
| Declarations of Intention, Bk. E, 1903 - 1906              |                     |
| Records of naturalization: Bks A, C, 1865-1876, 1887-1902  | 1533297             |
| Declarations of Intention: Bk. B, 1876-1888                | 1533755 (Item1)     |

*To view images of these records, search the FamilySearch catalog by location (Kansas, Shawnee), scroll to “Naturalization and Citizenship”, and select the roll of film to be browsed in the viewer.*

## Probate Records

**Probate Books:** The **Topeka Genealogical Society Library** holds original probate books from the Shawnee County Probate Court for 1855 through approximately 1918. Printed indexes to Shawnee County probate proceedings are available for the time period 1855-1994 in the **TGS Library**. Copies of TGS-published indexes covering the time period 1865-1908 are also digitized and available on [FamilySearch.org](http://FamilySearch.org).

The TGS indexes provide a date of the probate case, a brief description of the type of action and the probate case number. To go from this index to finding the records in the Probate volumes, one must begin with the date listed in the index, and then go to the Index Volumes of the Shawnee County Probate record books to locate the detailed index to the probate case. That index will refer to volumes and page numbers where actions related to the case have been recorded.

### How to Find Probate Records:

Check the indexes to learn what probate cases might be available for the person of interest.



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| NAME                         | CASE NO | DATE      | NATURE  |
|------------------------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| BLACKHEART, Warren W (minor) | 2333    | 25Oct1889 | Guard   |
| BLACKHEART, Gary M. dec      |         |           |         |
| MECHEM, James                |         |           | Guard   |
| BLAKELY, James               | 2759    | 22Jne1892 | Will    |
| BLAKELY, Henry               |         |           | Exec    |
| BLANCHARD, W I               | 2625½   | 12Nov1892 | Admn    |
| REED, Joseph                 |         |           | Trustee |
| BOAL, S H                    | 1817    | 28Feb1887 | Guard   |
| BOAL, C T                    |         |           | Guard   |
| BOATMAN, Elizabeth           | 2784    | 30Mch1893 | Admn    |
| HIGGINBOTHAM, C W            |         |           | Admn    |
| BOBZ, Augustus G             | 1785    | 23Nov1886 | Guard   |
| BOBZ, Rosalia                |         |           | Guard   |
| BOBZ, George A               | 1774    | 27Oct1886 | Admn    |
| BOBZ, Rosalie T              |         |           | Admn    |
| BOBZ, George E               | 1785    | 23Nov1886 | Guard   |
| BOBZ, Rosalia                |         |           | Guard   |

TGS Probate Index, printed books (above). From here, note the Case Number and Date for the case that you are interested in. Next, go to the Probate books, and find the index volume that covers the date of the case that you are looking for. The first few pages will have name indexed, grouped by the first letter of the surname (not in alphabetical order within the first letter groups). Look for the name of the person of interest. Note the page and file number (case number).

|   | Page | File No |                                     | Page | File No |
|---|------|---------|-------------------------------------|------|---------|
| Barnett, Ruth Flora, adoption               | 8    | 1691    | Beaubien, Lydia E. deceased         | 218  | 2238    |
| Burr, James D., estate                      | 10   | 1698    | Butterfield, W. H., deceased        | 227  | 2259    |
| Burrows, Helen, minor                       | 12   | 1705    | Bosley, Edward, minor               | 232  | 2277    |
| Bragunier, M. Maud et al., minors, 16-44-90 | 1201 |         | Blackheart, Gary M., deceased       | 236  | 2231    |
| Card, Lulu, adoption                        | 21   | 1719    | Barnett, Florence Lillian, adoption | 246  | 2302    |
| Cowen, David, estate                        | 25   | 1734    | Blackheart, Warren W., minor        | 260  | 2333    |
| Coll, Merrill, minor                        | 29   | 1746    | Bushnell, Eloise M., deceased       | 265  | 2343    |
| Coll, George A., deceased                   | 39   | 1774    | Cane, Emily, deceased               | 277  | 2371    |
| Coll, George E. et al. minors               | 42   | 1785    | Burns, Frank, minor                 | 285  | 2389    |
| Cutler, Mattie E., minor                    | 50   | 1802    | Bensley, Marian L. M., deceased     | 284  | 2375    |
| Care vs. Stark                              | 53   | 1808    | Barnett, Matilda J., insane         | 298  | 2415    |
| Coyne, Katie, deceased                      | 56   | 1815    | Bertrand, Benj. et al., minors      | 303  | 2425    |
| Coal, A. H., minor                          | 57   | 1817    | Bourbonnil, John et al. minors      | 313  | 2444    |
| Coal, Samuel, deceased                      | 56   | 1816    | Cravers, Rachel, Industrial School  | 323  | 2464    |

Next, in the same volume turn to the page number listed in the front index for the person of interest. You should find something like the example below, that shows a series of actions related to the probate case, and a volume and page number for each entry. Go back to the Probate books, and go to the Volume and Page number for the detailed records of each item.



**INDEX NO. 3.** 39

*Estate of George A. Boby Deceased*

| DATE                                   | <i>Rosalie T. Boby - Administratrix.</i>                   | Vol. | Page. |
|--|--|------|-------|
| Oct 27 1888                            | Affidavit of Death   | 28   | 323   |
| " "                                    | Order appointing Rosalie T. Boby <i>Ex. Testes</i>         | 28   | 323   |
| " "                                    | Bonds and L.illus  | 9    | 495   |
| Nov 23 "                               | Inventory copy   | 22   | 77    |
| " "                                    | approved   | 28   | 364   |
| May 6 1887                             | Sale bill filed  | 13   | 228   |
| " "                                    | approved   | 29   | 1     |
| Nov 18 "                               | First annual account filed & recorded                      | 26   | 396   |
| " "                                    | " " " approved   | 29   | 197   |
| " 14 1888                              | Second " " filed & recorded                                | 32   | 112   |
| " "                                    | " " " approved   | 29   | 637   |
| Nov 11 1889                            | Third " " filed & recorded                                 | 32   | 319   |
| " "                                    | Do " " approved  | 33   | 456   |
| Jan 7 1891                             | Final acct " filed & recorded                              | 36   | 15    |
| " "                                    | " account approved & taxes dis. & returned filing receipts | 34   | 340   |
| Feb 23 "                               | Receipts of heirs filed                                    | 34   | 377   |
| " "                                    | Order discharging Administratrix & releasing bondsmen      | 34   | 377   |
| <i>Estate Closed on Feb. 23. 1891.</i> |  |      |       |

The **Kansas Historical Society** has microfilmed copies of the probate books from 1860 to 1919, wills from 1920 to 1956 and probate case files from 1895 to 1942. (Film numbers AR 3653-AR 3697)

These probate volumes have also been digitized, and images are available on **FamilySearch.org**. To view images of these records, search the FamilySearch catalog by location (Kansas, Shawnee), scroll to "Probate Records", and select the roll of film to be browsed in the viewer. Note: these records have not been indexed on FamilySearch and are not searchable by name.

Images of some Shawnee County probate records are also indexed and searchable by name at **Ancestry.com** or **HeritageQuest**.

**Probate case files** are bundles or packets that typically include copies of all records related to the handling of a specific case, including public notices and miscellaneous receipts and loose papers. As such, they frequently include documentation that was not recorded in the official county probate books. The Kansas Historical Society has microfilmed copies of Shawnee County Probate case files 3021 to 16147, covering the time period of approximately 1896-1946 (film numbers MF 4018 – MF 4309, and MF 7252 – MF 7269. Case files between the numbers of 3021 and 3451 (time period 1895 – 1898) have been digitized and are available online at FamilySearch.org.

For more recent probate cases, it is necessary to go to the Shawnee County Courthouse, office of the Clerk of the District Court (see <https://www.snco.us/clerk/> for more information).

## Cemetery Records

The **Topeka Genealogical Society has interment records for all Shawnee County cemeteries.**

Many are in searchable databases, others are in the form of printed lists. Databases may include various additional information, such as last residence, cause of death, occupation, family relationships and lot owners. Cemetery database content is available for searching and viewing at the TGS library, or in the Shawnee County Resources section of the TGS website (must log in as a TGS member to access the full detail).

Additional Information is available for some Shawnee County Cemeteries, as follows:

**Auburn Cemetery** – The Topeka Genealogical Society has plat records.

**Mt. Auburn Cemetery** - ledgers and burial records are available online at Kansas Memory, <https://www.kshs.org/index.php?url=km/items/view/310084>.

**Topeka Cemetery** - Burial Records (1860-1948) are available on microfilm at the Kansas Historical Society (Film #AR 2532, Item#1). Register of Interments (1859 -1938) is also available at KHS, film # MF 6827-MF6828. The Topeka Cemetery has a searchable website (<https://topekacemetery.com/>) which shows names and grave locations of individuals who are buried there.

**Rochester Cemetery** - The Topeka Genealogical Society Library has a series of bound volumes that include cemetery plats, interment records, and many obituaries covering the time period 1901 - 1985. The Kansas Historical Society has Rochester Cemetery Association Records 1887-1976 on microfilm reel LM 740.

**Security Benefit Association Cemetery** – Cemetery plat, including owner names, is available online at Kansas Memory. <https://www.kansasmemory.org/item/221876>

**Rossville Cemetery and Czech Moravian Cemetery** – Rossville Community Library website has burial lists, additional local history information , <https://www.rossvillelibrary.org/rossville-history/genealogy-help-family-histories/>

## Funeral Home records

Funeral home records can provide a wealth of information about a deceased individual, and are especially valuable when a death certificate or other official record of death cannot be found. Obituaries, cemetery records and death certificates will frequently contain the name of the mortuary or funeral home that handled the burial arrangements.

A **list of Topeka Funeral Homes** was compiled by Jill Herzog in 2010 and was published in Volume 32, Issue 1 (pages 14-16) of the *Topeka Genealogical Society Quarterly*.

The **Kansas Historical Society** has microfilmed copies of the register and account books of the following Topeka area funeral homes:

- **LM Penwell Undertaking Company**, 1894-1947. Microfilm MS 1270-1281.
- **Sanders/Hack – McMichael Memorial Home Records**, 1930 – 1967. Microfilm MF 7233 – MF 7235.
- **Stonestreet/ Stonestreet & Hamilton Funeral Home , 1915 – 1928**. Microfilm MF658 & MF659.

Records of the **Bowser-Johnson funeral home** for the time period **1931-1967** are housed at the Kenneth Spencer Research Library on the Lawrence campus of the University of Kansas.

According to the Herzog article mentioned above, records of the **Conwell Funeral Home** were housed at the Parker Price Funeral Home, 245 NW Independence as of 2001.

## Obituaries

The **Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library** maintains an index of obituaries appearing in Topeka Newspapers from 1906 to the present. The index is being updated on an ongoing basis. The index is available online at <http://comres.tscpl.org/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=&profile=main&menu=search&submenu=subtab22#focus>.

The **Topeka Genealogical Society** cemetery databases also contain many references to published obituaries.

## Newspapers

The **Kansas Historical Society** maintains a comprehensive microfilm collection of all Kansas newspapers, including those published in Shawnee County. For a searchable listing, see <http://www.kshs.org/p/newspapers-in-kansas/11528>. Newspaper microfilms from the Kansas Historical Society are available through interlibrary loan.

Most major Kansas newspapers up through 1922 have been digitized and are available either on **Newspapers.com** or on the **Chronicling America** website (a project of the Library of Congress). Kansas residents may access these Kansas papers without a subscription by logging in to Newspapers.com through the Kansas Historical Society web portal (a Kansas drivers' license number will be needed).

The **Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library** also has an extensive microfilm collection of Topeka newspapers.

# Military Records

The Kansas Historical Society has compiled a **Kansas Military Index**, available online at <https://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-military-index/15797> :

### Kansas Military Index

**This index searches all of the databases listed below. It does NOT include all Kansas soldiers. You might also want to try our [Kansas Names Index](#).**

**Surname:**       **Given Name:**

**Use Soundex?**  [Soundex finds names that sound similar, although not spelled the same, as for example Turner, Terner, and Trimmer, or Watson and Whitson.]

**Include:**  19th century (Civil War & Spanish-American War)  
 The World Wars  
 Post-World War II Conflicts (Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan)

This index searches all of the databases listed below (click on hyperlinks for more detail about each item). It does NOT include all Kansas soldiers.

## Civil War:

- [Kansas Adjutant General's Report, 1861-1865](#)
- [Kansas Civil War Militia Index, 1861-1865](#)
- [Civil War Veterans in Kansas](#)
- [Kansas Members of the Grand Army of the Republic](#)
- [Necrology \(deaths\) of Members of the Grand Army of the Republic](#)
- [Sleeping Heroes: The Impact of Civil War Veterans on Kansas Communities](#)

## Spanish-American War:

- [Kansas Adjutant General's Report, 1898-1899](#)

## World War I

- [World War I Bounty Claims Index](#)
- [Kansas Soldiers of the Great War](#) - Some of this collection is [available online from Ancestry](#).

## World War II

- [World War II Selective Service Index](#)
- [World War II Army Casualties](#)
- [World War II Oral Histories](#)
- [Burials/Memorials at World War II Military Cemeteries Operated by the American Battle Monuments Commission](#)

### **Post-World War II Conflicts**

- [Korean War Casualties](#)
- [Vietnam War Casualties](#)
- [Kansas Casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan](#)

### **Guides Not Included in The Military Index:**

- [Military Records Guide](#)
- [Civil War Research](#)
- [Spanish-American War records](#)

### **Indian Wars**

- [Index to Kansas 19th Cavalry Enlistments, 1868–1869](#)

### **Other Military Records/Sources of Interest:**

**World War I Bounty Claims** - Copies of enlistment and discharge papers and other documents submitted by individuals applying for a state bonus paid to World War I veterans or their widows/orphans. <https://www.kshs.org/p/world-war-i-bounty-claims/15808>

**Affidavits of Alien Enemies and Alien Females, 1917-1918** - Kansans born in Germany or Austria-Hungary, & their wives, who were not naturalized at the time of World War I. At KHS on Microfilm AR1302-AR1311; also available online on Ancestry.com.

**WWI Honor Roll, Shawnee County** – available online at <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/41250-redirect>

**Fold3.com** is one of the strongest online collections of military source materials. Free remote access through the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library for library cardholders, or through the, or through Kansas State Library, kslib.info for researchers with a Kansas IP address.

## **City Directories**

Both the Topeka Genealogical Society and the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library collections include nearly complete sets of Topeka City Directories, from the 1880s through the present.

The Kansas Historical Society also has an extensive collection of telephone and city directories for Kansas, including Topeka and Shawnee County. Some have been digitized and are available

on Ancestry.com. For more information, see <https://kshs.org/p/kansas-telephone-and-city-directories/10983> .

## School Yearbooks, Directories

Both the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, and the Topeka Genealogical Society Library collections include yearbooks and alumni directories from local schools. The Kansas Historical Society also has school yearbooks for some of the junior high, high schools and Washburn University. To see what they have, search their card catalog under “Topeka--Schools—[name of school]”.

## Maps and Atlases

### Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps -

These maps of towns and cities show the footprints of buildings, and frequently provide some information about the type of building construction and sometimes the type of businesses.

**University of Kansas Digital Commons -**

<https://luna.ku.edu/luna/servlet/kuluna01kui~12~12>

Rossville – 1905, 1912, 1915

Topeka – 1883, 1885, 1889, 1896, 1913

The **Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library** has original printed maps for Topeka, 1913-50 and 1913-55.

Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for the entire U.S. are also available online at the **Library of Congress**, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps> .

### Shawnee County Maps & Plat Books

#### Topeka Genealogical Society Library has:

- Shawnee County platbooks – 1898
- 1921 Shawnee County Directory of Farmers

#### Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library has:

- Shawnee County platbooks - 1873, 1898, 1913, 1921

#### Kansas Historical Society has the following:

- **LM 496, no. 9** - Atlas of Shawnee County. New York: F.W. Beers, 1873. (Also available on Ancestry.com)

- **LM 496, no. 10** - Standard Atlas of Shawnee County, Kansas...Chicago: George A. Ogle & Co., 1898. (Also available on Ancestry.com)
- **LM 496, no. 11** - Plat Book, Directory, and Survey of Shawnee County, Kansas. Topeka: Kansas Farmer, 1913.
- **LM 496, no. 12** - Atlas and Plat Book of Shawnee County, Kansas... Topeka: Kansas Farmer & Mail & Breeze, ca. 1921.
- **Oversize/KL/978.1/-Sh1/C239** City of Topeka Plat Maps... Watertown, South Dakota: Carson Map Co., 1958.

**Available on Ancestry.com:**

- Shawnee County plat books – 1873, 1898, 1913

## School Records

Student records of county schools are difficult to find, if they exist at all. As smaller school districts closed, school board members sometimes retained the records, and stored them in an attic, barn or other privately-owned building. Researchers should contact the Register of Deeds in the county of interest, to see if they might have records. When school consolidation occurred in the 1960s, county superintendents' records were to be deposited with the Registrar of Deeds office when the superintendent's office was abolished. The Kansas Historical Society has some county school directories, but the collection is far from complete. Ask the archivist to check the shelf list by county to see what they do have.

## Institutional Records

**Topeka State Hospital** - The Topeka State Hospital, a state-funded institution for the care and treatment of the mentally ill in Topeka, Kansas, was in operation from 1872 to 1997. For some, the grounds of the hospital became their final resting place. With only a few exceptions, individuals were buried without markers. Patient case files from 1872 until the 1960s were filmed and placed in the State Archives at the Historical Society. The originals were destroyed. Only familial relations of deceased patients and living former patients can request information from these records. Kansas Statute 65-5603, paragraph 14, specifies the information that can be released for family history research, including: dates of birth and death, dates at hospital, and names and addresses of family members. *The medical information, including the DIAGNOSIS, is not open.* To obtain copies from these records, please fill out and submit a request to the KHS reference staff along with payment for their reference fee.

<https://www.kshs.org/p/topeka-state-hospital/11317>



## Orphanages and Orphan's Homes

**Kansas State Orphan's Home** (Soldier's Orphans Home), Atchison, KS – the Kansas Historical Society holds the records, and has a searchable index online at <https://www.kshs.org/p/state-orphans-home-records/19252> (see image below). Access may be restricted. Shawnee County probate books also contain numerous references to children being admitted to the state orphan's home.

### State Orphans' Home Records

Index to individual case records for children and youths placed at the Soldiers and Sailors Orphans Home at Atchison (later the State Orphans' Home, the Youth Center at Atchison and finally the Atchison Juvenile Correctional Facility), generally covering from 1887 to 1976.

**Fill in one or more of the following:**

**Surname:**       **Given Name:**

**Use Soundex?**  [Soundex finds names that sound similar, although not spelled the same, as for example Turner, Terner, and Trimmer, or Watson and Whitson.]

**County:**

**Date Range (years):**  to   
[Searches for children born or admitted within this range.]

**File number:**

Due to the sensitive nature of these records regarding children, entire case files are closed for at least 70 years after the file was created, by state law. For more information, see [Access Policy for State Orphans' Home Records](#).

**Topeka Orphan's Home** – Located at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Fillmore, 1904 – 1943. The Kansas Historical Society has the following records: Record of notable occurrences at the Orphans Home (typically such as a child being adopted, a child taken into the home or out of it, etc.), lists of children in the home during a given year, and minutes of the Topeka Orphans Home Association. *Access to records is restricted* – check with staff at KHS to learn what, if any, information might be available.

**St. Vincents Childrens' Home** (1945-1983) – Located on Stone, current campus of Most Pure Heart church. This facility was operated by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. If any records exist, they may be housed at the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas. Email inquiries should be directed to [archkck@archkck.org](mailto:archkck@archkck.org).

**Kansas Children's Service League** - Orphaned or abused children in the 19th century often ended up in orphanages or reform schools. Concerned Kansans felt these kids deserved better. They formed the Kansas Children's Home Society in 1893 with the state's governor as its first president. Across the state, the Society's representatives, mostly clergymen, began placing

needy kids with temporary "boarding mothers" while monitoring their care and working to find adoptive homes for them. In 1921, the headquarters moved into a large Victorian house in Topeka that served as a temporary "receiving home" for the children. They often needed medical treatment, eyeglasses, education, counseling and other services that were provided by the Society. The Kansas Children's Service League is still in business, and should be contacted through their website (<https://www.kcsl.org/>) to inquire about access to records there.

*Note: Residents of institutions such as the county Poor Farm, orphans' homes and the state hospital were enumerated in the decennial census, and on the 1880 Defective, Dependent and Delinquent Schedules. Be sure to check there, also.*

### **Shawnee County Poor Farm**

The Shawnee County Poor Farm was located north of Topeka, on NE 43<sup>rd</sup>. The site is the current location of the Shawnee North Community Center. No records from the Shawnee County Poor farm are known to exist. Happenings at the Poor Farm were occasionally mentioned in local newspapers – a bibliography of articles about poor farms in Kansas (including the Shawnee County farm) is available on the Kansas Historical Society website at <https://www.ksks.org/p/poor-farms-in-kansas-1855-1974-a-bibliography/13587> .

*Note: Residents of institutions such as the county Poor Farm, orphans' homes and the state hospital were enumerated in the decennial census, and on the 1880 Defective, Dependent and Delinquent Schedules. Be sure to check there, also.*

### **Jail and Prison Registers**

The Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library has the original register book of the **Shawnee County Jail** log, covering the time period 1890-97. It is available for in-library use only in the Topeka Room, call number TR 978.163 SHA.

A name index for **Leavenworth Penitentiary** case files from 1895-1936 is available on Ancestry.com. The original case file records are located at the National Archives at Kansas City.

## **Histories and Biographical Sketches**

King, J. L. (2010). *History of Shawnee county, Kansas, and Representative Citizens*. Place of publication not identified: Nabu Press. Copies are available at the Topeka Genealogical Society Library, Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, Kansas Historical Society, or online at

[https://openlibrary.org/books/OL14013262M/History\\_of\\_Shawnee\\_County\\_Kansas\\_and\\_representative\\_citizens](https://openlibrary.org/books/OL14013262M/History_of_Shawnee_County_Kansas_and_representative_citizens)

Giles, F. W. (2009). *Historical sketch of Shawnee County, Kansas: Prepared for the occasion of the centennial celebration, July 4, 1876*. Whitefish, MT?: Kessinger Pub. Available at the Topeka Genealogical Society Library, Kansas Historical Society, or online at [https://archive.org/details/historisketch01gile/page/n5/mode/2up/search/topeka?q=top\\_eka](https://archive.org/details/historisketch01gile/page/n5/mode/2up/search/topeka?q=top_eka)

CONE, W. I. L. L. I. A. M. W. (2016). *WILLIAM W. CONE'S HISTORICAL SKETCH OF SHAWNEE COUNTY, KANSAS: Including an account of the ... important events in the early settlement of each t*. Place of publication not identified: FORGOTTEN Books. Available at the Topeka Genealogical Society Library, Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, Kansas Historical Society, or online at [https://openlibrary.org/works/OL163387W/William\\_W.\\_Cone's\\_historical\\_sketch\\_of\\_Shawnee\\_County\\_Kansas](https://openlibrary.org/works/OL163387W/William_W._Cone's_historical_sketch_of_Shawnee_County_Kansas)

**Shawnee County Historical Society Bulletins** – Available at the Topeka Genealogical Society Library, Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, or the Kansas Historical Society.

## Other Resources

See the “Links to Shawnee County Resources” page on the Topeka Genealogical Society website for links to various other digitized resources. <https://tgstopeka.org/links.php?sid=3>

## Local Research Repositories

**Topeka Genealogical Society Library**, 2717 SE Indiana Ave. Open 1-4pm Mon, Wed, Thurs; Sat. 10am-3pm. Phone (785) 233-5762. Website: [www.tgstopeka.org](http://www.tgstopeka.org). Searchable library catalog on website, <https://tgstopeka.org/libraryRecords.php>.

**Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library**, 1515 SW 10<sup>th</sup>. Hours: Mon-Fri 9am-9pm, Sat 9am-6pm, Sun 12pm-9pm. Phone (785) 580-4400. Local History and Genealogy collection on 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor. Website: [www.tscpl.org](http://www.tscpl.org)

**Kansas Historical Society, State Archives and Library**, 6425 SW 6<sup>th</sup>. Hours: March-October - Tue-Sat 9am-4:30pm; November-February – Wed-Sat 9am-4:30pm. Phone (785) 272-8681, ext 117. Website: [www.kshs.org](http://www.kshs.org) .

**The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Family History Center**, 2401 SW Kingsrow Road. Hours: Tue 6:00-8:30pm, Wed 9am – 4pm, Th 6-8:30pm. Phone (785) 271-6818.