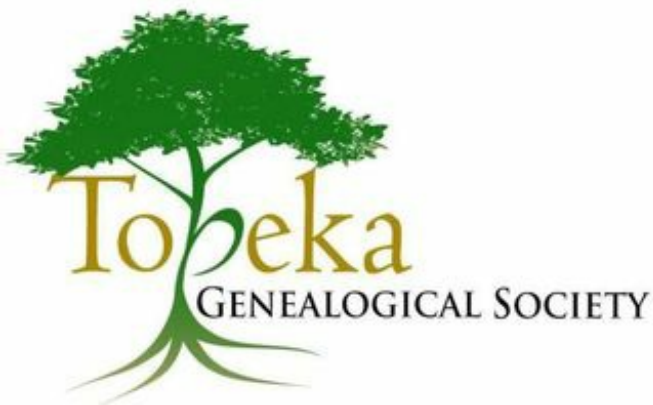




February 2024

Vol. 32 No. 2

From Your President

We're Not on Life Support: TGS is Alive and Well!

I recently had a conversation with one of our members who was wondering whether she should renew her membership. She had heard that we are planning to close our library and that we would not be hosting a Conference in 2024, and she wondered if TGS was even going to be around in 2024. It made me realize that there are probably others of our members and friends who are asking the same questions and that we need to do a better job of communicating what is happening at TGS.



First, I want to re-assure everyone that TGS is not closing, or even fading away. While it is true that we are making a lot of big changes and that some of the things that we have always done are either going away or changing in format, our leadership team is making those changes to try to ensure that we have a strong and vibrant future. Like a favorite old shirt that has been well-loved and comfortable but may eventually go out of style or become threadbare and faded, some of the activities and programs that have served us well in the past are just no longer working for us. It is increasingly clear that keeping on doing what we have always done will only result in continued declines in membership, until we reach the point where we are not able to continue operating. It is time to let go of some things.

Changes are necessary if we want to see TGS survive. We have to look at what we have been doing, assess how well each of our services or programs is working and what they are costing us to produce, and ask ourselves what new services or products we could offer that would help to attract and engage new members. That is exactly what our leadership team has been doing over the past several years.

Activities that are central to our mission and working well will be continued. Some that we think are of value but not working very well at present will be evaluated for possible adjustments and changes in format, content, etc. Others that have shown low utilization or little audience interest will be discontinued. We cannot afford to, and should not, continue to invest our scarce resources in programs that our audience has shown little interest in.

Phasing out or eliminating the program areas that are not working will allow us to re-deploy our limited volunteer and financial resources into other areas that we think will strengthen our organization and help us move forward. What's not working, and is up for change? Our Library, our paid classes and workshops, the TGS Quarterly, our Annual Conference. What can you look forward to in upcoming months? A continued lineup of great educational programs at our Monthly Programs and

Special Interest Group meetings, continued opportunities to participate in person or virtually with hybrid program formats, a renewed and expanding emphasis on indexing and digitization projects (many of which can be done remotely), and a stronger online presence with the launch of a totally new website.

We will continue to serve local members (who may or may not have Shawnee County ancestors) with programming that is applicable no matter where your family roots lie, and to serve our distant members by improving access to historical records from Shawnee County and northeast Kansas. We know that opportunities for networking and connection are an important aspect of membership with us, and we are exploring ideas for more opportunities there, too.

I firmly believe that the future of TGS is bright, and that there are exciting opportunities ahead of us. If you have been a member with us I hope that you will show your continued support of our efforts by renewing your membership. If you are among our many “friends” who receive our newsletter but are not a member, we invite you to join us as we begin a new membership year. Joining or renewing is easy and painless – visit the membership page of our website (<https://www.tgstopeka.org/cpage.php?pt=7>) for more information.

Members/volunteers are the backbone of our organization, and with an engaged membership we can work together to build a bright future for TGS!

- Barb LaClair

No Conference in 2024?

You may have heard the rumors. And sadly, they are true. We have made a decision that we will not be hosting an Annual Conference in 2024. The reasons are many. Since 2020, heroic efforts by the Conference Planning Team have produced some amazing Heartland Family History Conferences. The feedback from conference attendees has been very positive, but attendance has been low.

Producing these conferences has been very costly, and TGS has just barely broken even on some and lost money on others. We cannot afford to continue with that model. We have explored every available venue in Shawnee and neighboring counties in an effort to find a comfortable venue, at an affordable price, that offered us to space that we need to be able to include multiple breakout sessions, and exhibit area as well as plenary sessions.

We had agreed that we would scale back to a one-day event for 2024, featuring just one national presenter, but then ran into complications with finding a presenter who was available, and the chosen date being in conflict with another area meeting that involved many of our usual conference participants. After deliberation, the planning team felt that we were getting too late in the planning phase to be able to put together a high-quality event. They proposed that we not produce a conference in 2024, and get to work right away on planning for 2025. Our Board has agreed with their proposal.

So, no TGS conference in 2024, but we do plan to be back in 2025. In the meantime, we encourage you to support the other Genealogy Conferences that will be offered in our region (Johnson County, Wichita, Omaha, Genealogy KC, and the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library's Identity Quest). And remember, thanks to our collaboration with neighboring genealogy societies, current TGS members are eligible to register at discounted member rates for the Johnson County, Wichita and Omaha conferences.

Coming Soon to a Website Near You! – A Sneak Preview

It has been a long time coming, but after more than two years of exploration and trial-and-error evaluations, we have identified a website solution that we believe fits our needs and skill level, and we are really excited to be working toward implementation in the late Spring of 2024.

This will be a totally new website, replacing our current one. In addition to a fresh new look and more inviting tone, we are finally going to be able to add an amazing new feature that we have wanted for quite some time.

Some of you might be aware that TGS has created many indexes and finding aids, primarily for historical and genealogical resources pertaining to Shawnee County. We have thousands and thousands of names in these indexes, and they can be extremely helpful in pointing a researcher directly to records that mention the individual they are researching.

Up until now, most of these indexes and finding aids have been searchable on the computers in our library, but only limited information has been available online. That is about to change!

With the implementation of our new website, we will be able to upload all of these indexes to our website and make them easily searchable. With a single search, a user will be able to learn where their person of interest is mentioned among a long list of local source materials. Some record matches will point the user to where the original source material can be viewed; others may actually include a direct link to the digitized record!

We are very excited about this new feature, and hope that you will be, also. To see a list of the indices and records that are currently targeted to be included in this database system, click the link.

<https://amethyst-missy-66.tiiny.site>.

Updates and additions to this database will be ongoing as we complete additional indexing and digitization projects.

Monthly Programs

“James Naismith; He Did More Than Invent Basketball” by Thomas Luellen

Thursday, February 28

7:00 pm

Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, or online with Zoom



Thomas Luellen will present a program about the many facets of James Naismith’s fascinating life story. He was notable for more than the invention of the game of basketball and his coaching career at the University of Kansas.

Monthly programs are free and open to the public. No registration is needed to attend in person. To get a link to attend virtually with Zoom, [click here](#).

Join us at Jason's Deli before the program for supper and conversation! More information to come!

Special Interest Groups

Foundations of Family History SIG | 2nd

Tuesday of each month | Virtually by Zoom.

To sign up for this class, [click here](#) or go to the TGS website at tgstopeka.org and click on the Events and Education link on the left side of the page.

February 13
7:00 - 8:30 pm
Topic: Getting the Most from the FamilySearch.org Website

Computer Genealogy & Software SIG | 2nd Thursday of each month |
Virtually by Zoom.

Contact Rich at: rlm4017@gmail.com to sign up.

February 8

9:30 - 11:30 am

Topic: RootsTech Past Presentations Still Online



Brick Wall SIG | 3rd Tuesday of each month | **In-Person**-even months | Zoom-odd months

February 20

9:30 - 11:30 am

Contact Cindy at: clcruz32153@aol.com to sign up.

Topic: Hands on research at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, 1515 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kansas 66604. We will meet at the library on the 2nd floor.

Participants can use personal or library computers to access the free Library World Edition of Ancestry.com, American Ancestors, and Family Search collections which require access from a Family Search Affiliate Library. Cindy will also be happy to help participants use several other databases which are available at the library and at home by entering your library card and pin number. These include African-American History & Genealogy, Data Axle, Fold 3, Genealogy Connect, Heritage Hub, HeritageQuest, Newspapers.com, and Social Justice Suite. In addition, participants can browse the reference books in the Baker Genealogy Center. (Bring your research questions and your laptop or a flash drive to save your documents!)

[Download: Research Question Form](#)

https://tgstopeka.org/upload/events/files/1704736860_BRICKWALLSIG2024researchquestionform.docx

DNA SIG | 4th Monday of each month | Virtually by Zoom.

February 26, 2024

6:00 to 7:30 pm

Contact Marty at marty.flanagan3@gmail.com to sign up.

Free Genealogy Classes from Wisconsin

The public library in Appleton, Wisconsin hosts a virtual genealogy class every month for free. To view their list of topics for 2024 and register, click the link. <http://tinyurl.com/p3hwtbdf>

Roots Tech 2024



February 29 to March 4, 2024

Registration is open for the largest genealogy conference in the world.

Attend in person in Salt Lake City, Utah, for a nominal fee or online worldwide for free.

For more information, click the link. <https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/>

Spring Seminar 2024: A Day with the Genetic Genealogist**

March 16th, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Presented by the Midwest Genealogy Center,
3440 S. Lee's Summit Road,

Independence, MO 64055, (816)252-7228

Join us on March 16th for A Day with the Genetic Genealogist. Blaine Bettinger, The Genetic Genealogist and author, will provide four presentations that link the use of DNA to genealogy research. Join us as you learn how to use DNA to explore your ancestry! Tickets are \$50, and lunch will be provided.

This is an in person-only event.

Refunds will only be granted through February 16, 2024. To register, go to:

<https://www.mymcpl.org/genealogy/events/spring-seminar>

**REGISTRATION ENDS MARCH 4, 2024, 11:59 pm

Mr. Bettinger's website is: <https://thegeneticgenealogist.com/>

Topeka Genealogical Society Library

2717 SE Indiana Ave.

Topeka, Kansas

tgstopeka.org

(785) 233-5762

Email: tgstopeka.president@gmail.com

LIBRARY HOURS

1-4 pm Monday, Wednesday, Thursday

Noon - 3 pm Saturday

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