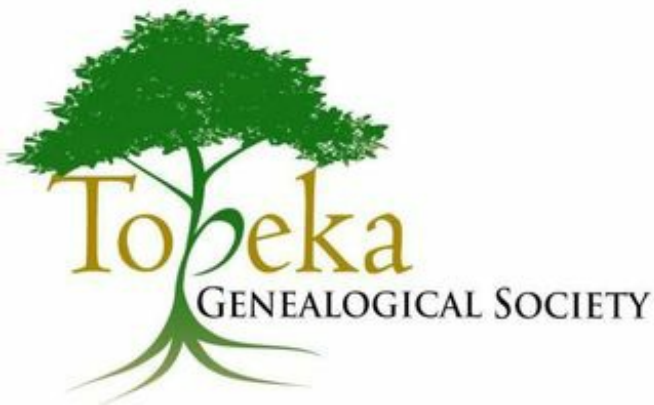




May 2024
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From Your President - Progress Comes in Small Steps

I know that to those who are not directly involved in making and implementing the decisions, it must seem as though we are doing a lot of talking about upcoming changes, but not making much progress in getting them accomplished.

There are lots of reasons why we move slowly – we're trying to think through the changes carefully and consider all of the possible implications, we have only a small number of volunteers working on the various projects, many of those volunteers are doing multiple jobs for TGS, and all of those volunteers have other things in their lives that keep them busy and limit the time that they have available to help at TGS. We're all volunteer, and we're all part time. We don't have any paid staff, and no-one works full-time for TGS.



That said, we are making steady progress, and I would like to give just a few brief updates.

Library Transition – The Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library is interested in receiving a substantial portion, but not all, of our library collection. We are working with them to help prioritize and identify the items that they would accept. Once we have a more definite idea of what they would accept, we will approach Midwest Genealogy Center about the remaining materials. They have previously told us that they would be happy to receive all or part of our collection. At this point, we are hoping to have more specific plans and timeline for transitions in place by this coming Fall.

New Website - It has been a long time coming, but we are getting close. We are currently putting the final details in place on the new website, and checking to make sure that all of the integrated features are working properly. This will be a completely new website, with a fresh new look and some exciting new features. We will have a new membership management system, a new events calendar/registration system, and online store as part of the site. One of the most exciting changes is the addition of a new searchable database system where we have numerous indexes and genealogical records! We currently have more than 330,000 records loaded to the system, and have more in the works. With time, we will also be able to link the records in the indexes to digitized images of the source records! Watch for more details coming soon as we launch the new site. General searches of the databases will be open to everyone, but access to record details and images will only be available to current members who log in to the website.

Conferences – We are not hosting a Conference in 2024, but will be back in 2025! Mark your calendars for April 26, 2025 when we will hold a one-day conference featuring Michael John Neill (<https://genealogytipoftheday.com/>) as our presenter! Members will be entitled to discounted registration prices.

Other Upcoming Changes – As we move toward closing down our library, we are considering how this change will impact our current volunteer roles, and where we would like to re-focus some of those efforts. We have a list of new record indexing and digitization projects, and are working to get each of those defined and set up to the point where we are ready to put some volunteers to work on them. Watch in upcoming months for announcements of new volunteer opportunities. Some will require on- site presence, but many of them will be work that can be done remotely. (Per our policy, all volunteers must be current members of TGS.)

We thank our members for their support through membership, and would like to extend an invitation to our non-member “friends” who receive our newsletter to sign up as members today so that you can become more involved with our work and take full advantage of our offerings. As we make the transition to the new website, we are also changing our membership cycle from a fixed calendar year (Jan-December) to a rolling 12-month period, so new memberships will continue for 12 months from the join date.

Barb LaClair

Become a TGS Member

The quickest and easiest way to renew or join is through our website at: www.tgstopeka.org.

As a renewing member you must be logged into your account otherwise you are joining as a new member. Click on “Membership-Join/Renew” then choose “Online Join” and follow the guidance. If you’ve forgotten your login and/or password please contact Nancy at: membership@tgstopeka.org.

If you prefer, you may print a membership form on our website by clicking on “Membership-Join/Renew”, scroll to the bottom of the page and choose Personal Membership Form and print.

Thank you for your continued membership and support of TGS!

Help us Finish the New Website

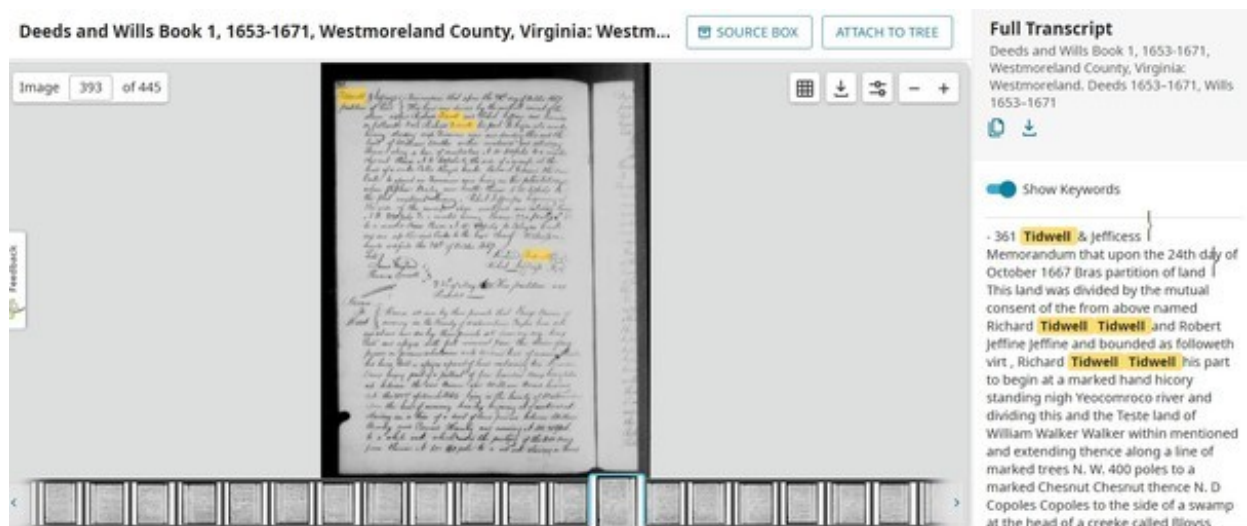
We Need a Few Testimonials As we put the finishing touches on our website, we need a little help from our friends. The home page of the new site has a space for a rotating display of a few brief testimonial statements, and we need some help in coming up with some great quotes to fill that space.

We’re looking for short (1-3 sentences) statements telling how membership in TGS has been helpful to you, or why you feel that family history is important, etc. For those that we select, the submitters of the published quotes will be identified only by initials (unless you tell us that you would like to have your full name shown).

If you have something that you would like to submit for consideration, please send it to Barb LaClair at tgstopeka.president@gmail.com. We thank you!



Amazing New FamilySearch Feature is Producing Results!



If you have not already tried it, you will want to check out this new search option offered by FamilySearch. The new system for full-text searches of unindexed records is still in an experimental/introductory phase, but is already producing impressive results for those of us who have tried it out. The system can search handwritten records by name and keyword and also provides a typed transcript of the results.

In the last meeting of our Foundations of Family History Special Interest Group, we did a live demo and took turns searching for names offered up by group participants. We were all impressed with the regularity with which the system produced records matching the individuals of interest. Right now, the system is searching only deed and probate records for the U.S., but still producing some strong results.

To check it out for yourself, go to [FamilySearch.org/labs](https://familysearch.org/labs), sign in with your FamilySearch ID and password, and then click on the box that says "Expand Your Search with Full Text."

Tech Help Wanted

We have a couple of places where we currently need volunteers who have some tech skills. Short descriptions are below. If you would be willing and able to help in either of the roles, please contact Barb LaClair at http://tgstopeka.president@gmail.com

Zoom Tech – We need someone who is comfortable in running Zoom meetings and setting up AV equipment to oversee the tech setup for our monthly programs which are held at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library. These meetings are hybrid format, with an in-person audience and a remote audience connected by Zoom. Meetings are on the 4th Thursday evening of each month (no meetings in November or December), starting at 7 pm. On-site presence is needed.



Video Manager - We have been recording presentations from many of our Monthly Programs and Special Interest Groups, and then making them available to members for on-demand viewing. We need someone who would take responsibility for obtaining or downloading the recordings (created in Zoom), do minor editing to clip out extraneous content at the beginning and end of the recording and occasionally additional editing when we have had a mid-presentation glitch, and then upload the edited videos to our online account with Vimeo. This work could be done remotely, on a flexible schedule.

Monthly Programs

“Researching Your Great War Ancestor” by Danni Altman-Newell

Thursday, May 23

7:00 pm

Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, or online with Zoom

Kansas City researcher, Danni Altman-Newell of Talking Box Genealogy, will offer tips and strategies for researching World War I ancestors.

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](#).



We usually have a get-together at a local restaurant before the Thursday program. We will send out an email to the newsletter group when plans are finalized for the place and time for May. This is a fundraiser for TGS and a portion of every purchase goes to our program. You must identify yourself as a TGS supporter in order for us to receive the funds.

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 tgstopoka.org and click on the Events and Education link on the left side of the page. Facilitated by Barb LaClair

May 14

7:00 - 8:30 pm

Topic: Preparing for a Research Trip



In genealogy research, there's always something new to learn! In this group, we will take a brief look at a different method or source material each month, and then leave time for questions, answers and discussion on any genealogy-related topic.

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

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

May 9

9:30 - 11:30 am

Topic: TBA

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

May 21

9:30 - 11:30 am

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

Topic: Members Helping Members

Attendees can ask questions and the group will brainstorm resources which might help answer research questions from members. (Submit your research questions to Cindy by Monday, May 20, or bring other questions to the meeting.)

[Download: Research Question Form](#)

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

May 27

6:00 to 7:30 pm

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

Discussion in this group will focus on how to understand and use your DNA matches. Participants will find this most helpful if they have done DNA testing and have received their results.

Upcoming Conferences Around the Country

April 26-27, 2024: Nebraska State Genealogical Society presents Blaine Bettinger and others. For more information: <https://nsgs.org/>. Registration: <https://nsgs.org/cpage.php?pt=136>

May 16-18, 2024: National Genealogical Society Family History Conference. For more information: conference.ngsgenealogy.org. Registration: <https://conference.ngsgenealogy.org/registration-and-information/>

June 21 and 22, 2024: Western Pennsylvania Genealogical Society presents their 50th Anniversary conference. For more information: <https://wpgs.org/50th-anniversary-conference/> Registration: <https://wpgs.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2024/03/50th-Registration-Information.pdf>

June 23-28, 2024: Virtual. 14-19 July 2024 at Pittsburgh. GRIP Genealogy Institute. For more information: grip.ngsgenealogy.org.

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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