



News & Views *Newsletter*

www.tgstopeka.org

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Warmest Wishes for the Holidays!



What's Happening at TGS?

Once again, it has been a busy month! Here are a few of the things we've been working on at TGS:

Library Closure – Our library closed as of the end of October. We're continuing to work out the details of plans for dissolution of the TGS Library collection and the logistics of how all of the

books and other materials will be packed, transported and delivered to their eventual homes. There are a million details that need to be considered and decided - we are making progress. We have signed an agreement with Family Search for digitization of the Columbian Title Abstract books and are working out the details for that process. Members, watch your email closely, as we will soon be sending out more details about our plans and a request for your vote of approval for us to move forward with re-distributing items from our library collection.

Building repairs - The furnace that serves the south half of our building has been repaired, and we have a comfortably warm work space again! Fortunately, the repair was fairly minor.

Programs and Education - Cindy Cruz has assembled a great lineup of all 10 Monthly Programs for 2025, and the details have been published to our website events listing. The Computer & Genealogy Special Interest Group is being discontinued for 2025 as the group facilitator retires from the role - we want to **Thank Rich McReynolds** for leading that very popular group for many years. The other three Special Interest Groups (Foundations of Family History, Brick Wall and DNA) will continue, with only minor changes.

2025 Conference – Mark your calendars and reserve **Saturday, April 26th** for our annual conference. We will be returning to a simpler, single-day format this year, with **Michael John Neill** as our featured speaker. We will also be moving the event to a new venue at **Washburn Tech's West Campus**. We just received an updated list of Michael's presentation topics – it is going to be really hard to select just four! Plan to attend – you won't want to miss it!

There's always more, but this should give you an idea of what we have been doing. We're all volunteers and none of us work full-time for TGS, so it sometimes seems as though things move very slowly. We're peddling as fast as we can, and we appreciate your patience and support.

- *Barb LaClair, President*

Welcome, New Members!



We want to extend a warm welcome to new members who have recently joined our organization. We hope that you will take full advantage of everything that we have to offer, and don't hesitate to let us know if we can assist you in your family history quest!

- November – Travis Taylor, Topeka
- December – Matthew Miller, Topeka
- December – Benjamin Lorenz, Silver Spring, MD

Welcome, and we look forward to getting to know you better!

New on Our Website : <https://tgstopeka.org>

We update and add content to our website on an ongoing basis. So that you don't miss anything, here's a short list highlighting changes and new additions in the past month or so.

- New program recordings added – December Foundations of Family History SIG program, **“Using Maps in Genealogical Research”**
- Resources – Getting Started Section, replaced pedigree chart with new
- New databases – none this month – several are in the works!



We hope that you are taking full advantage of all of the resources and information available on our website. Access to some content is restricted to members. To gain full access, we invite you to visit the membership page on our website, and become a member today!

Want to see more website content being added in a more timely fashion? Volunteer to help us in managing recorded content or working on getting datasets cleaned and ready for upload to the website!

TGS Out and About

Our new **Speakers Bureau** offerings are getting us noticed! Since we first announced our new Speakers Bureau, we have had several requests and have presented to a number of community groups, including the Ward-Meade Anniversary Celebration, Lexington Park Assisted Living, two chapters of the Topeka Garden Clubs, and an upcoming session with the Newton Public Library.



We have three prepared presentations that we are offering, and customized programs may be available by request:

- ***Get to Know Your Ancestors*** – A general presentation encouraging audience members to take interest in learning about their ancestors.
- ***Preserve Your Family History: 10 Easy Steps You Can Start Today*** – Simple steps that anyone can take to preserve their family history and memories, without having to become a genealogy researcher.
- ***Researching Your Family History: How to Get Started*** – Brief session outlining the research process and records that are commonly used as first steps in researching.

If you know of a group or organization that would be interested in one of our programs, have them fill out the request form on our website, at <https://tgstopeka.org/speakers-bureau/#!form/Speaker> .

Membership Renewals



It is that time of year again. For our members who had joined prior to our website transition this past summer, your memberships were on a calendar-year basis and will expire on December 31st unless renewed. With implementation of the new website in June, we transitioned to a rolling-12 months membership cycle. If you have joined as a new member since June of this year, your membership will expire 12 months from the date that you joined us.

Renewing your membership is simple. To renew online, just go to our website (<https://tgstopeka.org>) and sign in with your email and password. You should automatically see a message there about renewal and a link to renew if your membership is nearing its expiration date. If you are not sure, you can view your expiration date in your membership profile.

If you prefer to mail in your renewal with a check, there is a link to download and print the a membership form at the bottom of the membership page on the website (<https://tgstopeka.org/membership/>), or you can download a membership form by clicking the link below.

[Download Membership Form](#)

Exciting New Learning & Research Opportunities!

Contributed by Cindy Cruz, Education Committee Chair

FamilySearch Full Text Search

Family Search is expanding the record collections which can be searched with any keywords in the full text search "Labs Experiment" which was unveiled early in 2024. The list of searchable record types now includes handwritten deeds, wills & probate files, religious records, naturalization records, court minutes, military records, school records, migration records, periodicals, and even some medical records, depending on available content for the location you are searching. This function is positively game-changing! If you haven't looked for records with your ancestors' names here, you are likely missing some incredible finds which require very little effort on your part!



A simple tutorial for the full text search can be seen here:

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/help/helpcenter/article/find-the-new-full-text-search-for-historical-records>

Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library – Level 2 Tech Center

Take advantage of the free Level 2 Tech Center technology resources at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library. If you have cassette tapes, phonograph records or VCR tapes you would like to digitize, the library has equipment available for you to use. You must have a valid library card, and either complete an online video training and quiz, or attend an in-person class at the library, in order to be authorized to use the equipment. The computers are available for three-hour blocks of time on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations can be made on the library website or in the Tech Center. I took a Tuesday evening training and it was very simple to understand. Patrons will need to bring a flash drive or external hard drive with sufficient capacity to store the audio or video files they digitize. The training includes tips for choosing a storage device. A large scanner will soon be added to the library Level 2 Tech Center, too. It will scan oversized documents, film negatives, slides, and photographs.



For more information or to schedule a training go to: <https://tscpl.org/meeting-and-technology-spaces/level-2-tech-center>

Attention Volunteers! Are You Recording Your Work Time?

First, we want to say **Thank You** to all who are volunteering with us. Without you, we could not exist. We appreciate that you have chosen to share your time and talents with us. We want to be able to recognize and celebrate the contributions of our volunteers, but **we need your help**.

A graphic of a bookshelf with books and a small clock. Below it is a form titled 'TGS Volunteer Activity Record'. The form text reads: 'This form is to be used for recording time worked on any volunteer project for the Topeka Genealogical Society. All questions need to be answered before submitting the form. If you have any questions, contact Barb LaClair. (If you do not find your name in the dropdown list, please contact Barb at tstopeka.president@gmail.com to have it added) We Thank You for volunteering with us!'

We ask that **ALL** of our volunteers record the time that you spend working on projects or tasks for TGS. Having accurate records of the amount of time contributed by our volunteers is often helpful in demonstrating the level of support we receive as we apply for grants or other funding. We would also like to have the information for our own records, so that we can do a better job of recognizing and celebrating our volunteers. Although we have made previous requests and have had a tracking system in place in the past, we know that we have not captured nearly all of the time worked by our volunteers. Now, at the beginning of a new calendar year, is a great time to make a renewed effort to gather more complete information for the upcoming year.

Recording your time is quick and simple. We have an easy online form – just select your name, the date that you volunteered, the type of work that you did, and enter the number of hours you worked. Click on the “submit” button, and that’s it! Add a shortcut to our time recording system on the homepage or desktop screen of your computer, phone or other device so the link is always handy. If you get in the habit of recording your time each time you do something for TGS, it only takes a few seconds.

Here is the link to record your time: <https://tinyurl.com/tgsvol> . We thank you!

Upcoming TGS Events and Programs



There is always something happening at TGS. Check the events calendar on our website

(<https://tgstopeka.org/events/#!event-list>) frequently to get more details on what's coming up and how you can participate!

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs):

These informal groups meet virtually (on Zoom) on a monthly basis for information sharing and learning around a topic or area of shared interest. Participation is free, and open to the public. Refer to the events listings on our website for information about how to register and participate in each group.

- **Foundations of Family History SIG** (2nd Tuesday evening, 7pm, via Zoom) – **January 14, 2025, 7pm (Central Time)**
- **Computer & Genealogy Software SIG** – **NO MEETINGS. This group is being discontinued for 2025**
- **Brick Wall Problem-Solving SIG** – (3rd Tuesday morning, 9:30am. Odd months are virtual, via Zoom. Even months in person at a local research facility) – **January 27, 2025, 9:30am (Central Time)**
- **DNA and Genetic Genealogy SIG** – (3rd Friday morning, 10 am, via Zoom) - **January 17, 2025, 10:00am (Central Time)**

MONTHLY DINNER GATHERING/ FUNDRAISER

(We gather informally at a designated local restaurant prior to the monthly program for an opportunity to socialize. A percentage of total sales at the restaurant will be donated to TGS.)

- **January 23, 2025 – Panera, 1421 SW Wanamaker.** Join us in person at 5:30pm. Any purchases made between 8am and 8pm will count toward our total if you use the fundraising code or flyer to identify your purchase as part of our group. TGS receives 20% of sales from our group.

MONTHLY PROGRAMS – 4th Thursday of the month, 7pm at the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library. Attend in person, or watch online via Zoom. Participation is free, and open to the public.

- **January 23, 2025 – “Military Records Decoded”**, presented by Sergeant Major Jeremy Byers. Have you ever looked at military records, and struggled to understand what all of the abbreviations and terms meant? Help is on the way! Sergeant Major Jeremy Byers from the Kansas National Guard will guide audience members through common notations on military records, and explain their meaning.



- **February 27, 2025** – “*Shawnee County Poor Farm*,” presented by Devin Cooper. Devin Cooper, Recreation Leader at the Shawnee North Community Center, will present a program on the history of the Shawnee County Poor Farm. She became interested in the history of the community center building, which formerly served as a county poor farm for many years. Devon has researched the facility, two nearby cemeteries, and several people who once resided there.



- **March 27, 2025** – “*Roots in East Friesland, Lower Saxony, Germany*,” presented by Kevin L. Groenhagen. Kevin is the editor of the *Kaw Valley Senior Monthly*. He will share his family history research in Illinois and Germany, his trip to his ancestral village in East Friesland, and how he connected with living relatives here and abroad.



MORNING JOE & JAW – (1st Monday morning each month, 9:30am at Perkins Restaurant, Topeka)
Monday, January 6th, 9:30-11am.



This is an informal opportunity for socializing and networking with other members. Meet us at Perkins Restaurant, 1720 SW Wanamaker, for some lively conversation while you enjoy a morning coffee, pastry, or breakfast. No need to register – just drop by to say hello!

2025 ANNUAL TGS CONFERENCE – April 26, 2025 – SAVE THE DATE!

We're returning to a simpler format in 2025. Conference will be one day, with four presentations by our featured speaker **Michael John Neill**. We have a new venue this year; we will be holding our event at **Washburn Tech's conference center**. Our planning committee will be getting together in January to select the topics for the four presentations, and to work out all of the other details. We anticipate opening registration early in February. Watch the events calendar on our website for more details as they become available.



UPCOMING REGIONAL EVENTS

Midwest Genealogy Center Seminar – March 29, 2025.

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

“**From Ship to Shore: Uncovering Immigrant Origins**”, led by renowned genealogist **Rich Venezia**.



Event Highlights:

- **Key Topics:** Discovering immigrant origins, navigating ship manifests, and understanding alien registration records.
- **Interactive Session:** Attendees will also have the opportunity to participate in an **Immigration Records Roadshow**, where they can present their personal research challenges for expert advice.