



News & Views *Newsletter*

www.tgstopeka.org

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Volume 33 No. 2

February 2025

What's Happening at TGS?

Mother Nature and her fits of Winter Weather have slowed us down a bit, but we are continuing to work when we can and make progress toward our goals and completion of active projects. Here are a few highlights from the past month:

Library Closure & Dissolution: The Columbian Title Abstract Books (all 813 volumes of them) have been packed up and shipped off to FamilySearch's vendor in Texas where they will be digitized, and the images uploaded to the FamilySearch website as the digitization is completed. Packing the books and preparing them for shipping was a monumental task, and we are thankful that FamilySearch contracted with a local moving company to pack, load and transport the books (see photos below).



Amy Bowen (daughter of Paul & Marcy Bowen) will be coming within the next few days to pick up the bundles of old newspapers that we have stored in our back room (Annex 7), and the shelving that they are on. Once that has been done, we will have Annex 7 cleared out and be

able to use that space as a place for organizing and packing books to be transported to other facilities.

Thank you to those members who reviewed our proposed plan for determining the disposition of items from our library collection, and submitted your votes and comments. The vote was overwhelmingly positive in support of the plan, and we appreciate your comments and feedback.

Staff from the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library are continuing to work on identifying the items that they would like to receive. They will be visiting our library in person within the upcoming weeks to be able to actually look at some of the items as they make their decisions. We anticipate soon being able to begin the process of pulling out the items of interest and setting them aside to prepare them for transfer.

2025 Educational Programs and Events: As you can see from the list of upcoming events included in this newsletter, we have lots going on and some great programs coming up. We are looking forward to our **Annual Conference on April 26th** with **featured speaker Michael John Neill**. We have a new conference venue this year, and we think that it will meet our needs nicely at a much more affordable price. With the new venue, we have been able to bring conference registration prices back down, something that we think all of you will appreciate. Please remember to say “Thanks” to Cindy Cruz for leading our Education Team, and to others who help to lead or organize various aspects of our programs and activities!

Special Interest Groups - As a reminder, we have made some changes to the process by which you register to obtain the Zoom links. We think that this process will be simpler for everyone. If you would like to participate in a meeting of either of these groups, find the event listing in the events calendar on our website, and click on the “*Register Now*” button at the bottom of the event description. You should automatically receive a confirmation email which will contain the Zoom link information. We have had some questions regarding this process. Each SIG is set up as a recurring meeting in Zoom, and the Zoom link for that SIG should remain the same for meetings throughout the year.

We are making some huge changes, and trying hard to also keep our usual programs and activities going at the same time. Sometimes, it feels a bit like a juggling act to keep it all moving, but we are making steady progress.

To our members, we thank you for your support and involvement through your membership. To our non-member readers out there, we invite you to become members! Joining is easy – just see the Membership section of our website (tgstopeka.org) for more detail.

- *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!

- No new members since the last newsletter

Help us continue to grow our membership by telling your friends about us, and inviting them to check us out. Word of Mouth is the best advertising!

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:
 - January Monthly Program – Military Records Decoded
 - DNA SIG –
 - January 2025 – DNA Basics
 - February 2025 – Using DNA to Break Down Brick Walls
- Resources – none this month
- New databases – none this month – several are in the works!
- Events calendar – 2025 Conference details and registration information, see in Events listing, and also on separate Conference page



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 last Fall, 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 a virtual session for patrons of 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> .

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 (mostly 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) – **March 11, 2025, 7pm (Central Time)**. Our March program will be **“Ask A Genealogist”** Q&A with all attendees participating. Bring your genealogy questions, or just join us to see what questions are asked and maybe offer your answers or suggestions in response.

- **Computer & Genealogy Software SIG** – **NO MEETINGS. This group has been discontinued.**
- **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) – **March 18, 2025, 9:30am (Central Time)**
- **DNA and Genetic Genealogy SIG** – (3rd Friday morning, 10 am, via Zoom) – **March 21, 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.)

- **February 27, 2025** – Red Robin, 6230 SW 6th. Join us in person at 5:00pm, or order for dine in or carry out any time between 11:00am and 10:00pm. Mention our fundraiser or show the flyer when you place your order, and TGS will receive 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.

- **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.



- April 24, 2025 - **“Making a Digital Family History Album,”** by Gail McGowan. Gail is a Special Interest Group facilitator for the Johnson County Genealogical Society where she leads their Digital Scrapbooking group. She will share some suggestions and tips for how to create your own digital family history scrapbook.



MORNING JOE & JAW – (1st Monday morning each month, 9:30am at Perkins Restaurant, Topeka)
Monday, March 3rd, 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 – REGISTER NOW!

“Finding Your Keys to Success”

We’re returning to a simpler (and less expensive) format in 2025. The 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**. Michael will be presenting four lectures:

- *Where Could It Be Written?*
- *What it Does Not Say*
- *Organization of Information: Seeing the Patterns*
- *Is Your Process the Problem?*

No matter what your level of experience with genealogy research, we’re confident that you will learn new tips for better research and leave at the end of the day inspired with lots of new ideas to try out. To see more details, or to register, see: <https://tgstopeka.org/annual-conference/>

Register before **April 12** to receive the early registration discount!



UPCOMING REGIONAL EVENTS



Johnson County Genealogical Society Annual Seminar - March 22, 2025

Our colleagues at the Johnson County Genealogical Society are planning another great Seminar, and we encourage our members and friends to support them by attending. (Reminder: due to our reciprocal agreement, TGS members may register at the discounted member rate!)

Cheri Hudson Passey is a professional genealogist, instructor, writer, speaker, and owner of Carolina Girl Genealogy, LLC. She hosts the YouTube genealogy chat show GenFriends and is

a genealogical researcher subcontracted by Eagle Investigative Services, Inc., for the US Army Past Conflict Repatriations Branch. She is involved in many genealogy societies and organizations and is on the National Genealogical Society board. Cheri has written the blog "Carolina Girl Genealogy," sharing genealogy tips, methodologies, and family stories for over ten years.

For more details on the event, or to register: <https://www.icgsk.org/cpage.php?pt=251>

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.

Roots Tech 2025 is Coming Soon! March 6-8, 2025



RootsTech2025 is almost here! Attend what is probably the world's largest genealogy conference, either virtually (free!) or in person. The schedule of events is now available for your review, and to create your own customized schedule of the sessions that you want to hear. To see more details or to register:

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/schedule?cid=EM-00044530&lid=j2qq1eta6y18&day=2025-03-06>