



News & Views Newsletter

www.tgstopeka.org

2717 SE Indiana Ave. , Topeka, KS
(785) 233-5762

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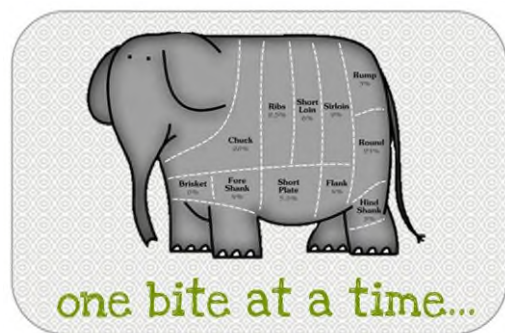
April 2025

What's Happening at TGS?

Over the past month, we have continued to make slow but steady progress toward our long-term goals and completion of active projects. Here are a few highlights:

Library Collection Dissolution:

Staff from the **Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library** have made two visits to our library and have begun pulling out items that they would like to accept to add to their genealogy collection. A Deed of Gift agreement has been signed, and the first batch of materials has been transferred to them. We will continue this process, working in small batches. TSCPL will begin work on processing and accessioning the items as they are transferred. TSCPL has developed a bookplate that will be placed in the front of all transferred items to note that the items were donated by TGS.



Lists of the Family History books, City Directories and School Yearbooks from our collection were sent to **Midwest Genealogy Center** for their review, and we have just recently gotten the lists back with their selections marked. We will soon be working on pulling out those items and defining the process for transferring them to MGC.

The **Columbian Title Abstract** books are currently being digitized by a vendor located in Texas. As the digitization is completed and images are reviewed for quality, they will be uploaded to the **FamilySearch** website (where they will be full-text searchable!). The original volumes will then be transferred to **Internet Archive**, and the digital images will also be published on the Internet Archive website.

A woman from Oklahoma who had previously purchased numerous books from our “Used Books” shelves heard that we were closing our library and contacted us to ask if she could come by to see what we had and perhaps purchase some books from us. After we checked the items she was interested in to determine whether Midwest Genealogy Center and the Topeka Library already had copies of them, she purchased several boxes of books, and left TGS with a very generous monetary donation.

2025 Conference, April 26th: Despite smaller attendance than in past years, we had a very nice conference. Our featured speaker, Michael John Neill presented four programs that were both informative and entertaining. We gave away lots of great door prizes, and enjoyed lots of time for networking with conference participants.

Other Activities: We are working gradually to clear our building of items that are no longer useful or needed. It is a slow and daunting process, but as the saying goes: “*How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time!*”

- *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!

- Karen Pickett, Topeka

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:
 - o April Monthly Program – Digital Family History Albums
 - o March Monthly Program – Roots in East Friesland, Lower Saxony, Germany
- Resources – none this month
- 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!

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) – **May 13, 2025, 7pm (Central Time)**. Our May program will be **“Social Security Records in Genealogy Research.”** Will also include time for Q&A. 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. **May 20, 2025**. Odd months are virtual, via Zoom. Even months in person at a local research facility)
- **DNA and Genetic Genealogy SIG** – (3rd Friday morning, 10 am, via Zoom) – **May 16, 2025, 10:00am (Central Time) – The Power of mtDNA**

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.)

- **May 22, 2025 – Qdoba, 1025 SW Wanamaker.** Join us in person at 5:30pm, or dine in or order for carryout between 4pm and 8pm. Use the coupon code QDOBAGIVES, and TGS will receive 25% of sales.



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.

May 22, 2025 - **"Schoolhouse Survivors of Shawnee County"**, by Robert Chitwood. Robert will provide his wonderful presentation of photos and history of the 103 rural schools that were used to educate children in our county.



June 26, 2025 - **"William Allen White"**, by Thomas Lewellen. Popular speaker Tom Lewellen will present a program about William Allen White, a famous Kansas newspaper editor, author, politician, and leader of the Progressive Movement.



MORNING JOE & JAW – (1st Monday morning each month, 9:30am at Perkins Restaurant, Topeka)
Monday, May 5, 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!

UPCOMING REGIONAL EVENTS

August 16, 2025 – **Manhattan & Riley County Genealogy & History Fair**, 10am – 3:30pm in Pottorf Hall in CICO Park, 1710 Avery Avenue, Manhattan, KS. Open to the public and free to attend. See <https://rileycgs.com/> for details.

August 23, 2025 – **Genealogy KC – "The Past Within Us."** Registration is now open. See <https://genealogykc.org/genealogy-kc-2025> for details and registration.



America250 – Share Your Stories



America will celebrate our 250-year Anniversary on July 4, 2026. America250, a nonpartisan initiative, is working to engage every American in commemorating the 250th anniversary of our country. This multi-year effort, from now through July 4, 2026, is an opportunity to pause and reflect on our nation's past, honor the contributions of all Americans, and look ahead toward the future we want to create for the next generation and beyond. They are inviting Americans to submit their stories and reflections on our country's past,

present and future. Materials that can be submitted include videos, images, audio recordings, and written stories. They will use these stories to tell the American story on social media, through videos and to create the most inclusive commemoration in our history. For more information on how to submit your stories, refer to the America250 website, at <https://america250.org/share-your-story/>.

Help Support Humanities Kansas!

Did you know that Genealogy and Family History are considered part of the discipline of Humanities? They are, and it makes sense that we would fit within the Humanities definition: the study of humans in the individual, cultural, societal and experiential sense. Humanities (and Family History) studies help us understand ourselves, others and the world.



In the past, TGS has frequently taken advantage of free programs offered through the Humanities Kansas Speakers' Bureau, and we have received occasional small grants from Humanities Kansas to support conferences or other programming that we offered.

Unfortunately, as part of the Federal Government changes that have happened recently, Humanities Kansas has been notified that their Fiscal Year 2025 federal operating grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities was terminated by DOGE. Fortunately, the Mellon Foundation has recently announced that it would provide Humanities Kansas with \$200,000 to help stabilize and plan for the future. An additional \$50,000 is possible if they can match it dollar for dollar. Humanities Kansas has issued a call to their supporters to help in raising the \$50,000 match. They have generously supported us, and now they need our support.

If you would like to make a donation (in any amount – every dollar helps!) to help Humanities Kansas raise the needed matching funds, go to: https://humanitieskansas-bloom.kindful.com/?campaign=1278127&blm_aid=46472.

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month!



Topeka Genealogical Society is an all-volunteer organization. Without the volunteers who support us, we could not exist. Volunteers help us in many ways - from serving on our Board, to planning and organizing our educational programs, indexing or abstracting information from records, or cleaning and maintaining our building and grounds. We always have plenty of jobs that need to be done, and places where we could use more help. Nothing would get done without our volunteers! We appreciate their help and support of our mission, and want to say "Thank You"!

Help Wanted!

Speaking of volunteers, we have a number of jobs for which we need help. Here are just a few of our current volunteer opportunities, along with short descriptions of the duties:



Newsletter Editor: Gather and compile content for the monthly News & Views newsletter. Create page layout and format the content (currently using Microsoft Word). Distribute link to the newsletter using MailChimp. Skills needed: Strong attention to detail and deadlines, and possesses strong grammar skills. Comfortable with page layout options, including insertion of images in Microsoft Word or other standard word processing software. Location: Remote. Will require coordination with key Board members to identify and gather content.

General Handyman (or woman): Perform general building maintenance functions, including changing bulbs in fluorescent light fixtures, minor repairs and upkeep, and light groundskeeping. For services that require contracting with professional help, coordinate scheduling and building access for contractors. Skills needed: Basic carpentry and handyman skills. Physical ability to lift 50 lbs, climb stepladders, climb stairs, bend and stoop, etc. (this job could be shared by multiple volunteers working as a team). Location: On-site at TGS.

Education Committee: Individuals who are willing to lead special interest groups, or prepare and teach classes on various topics related to Genealogy and Family History. Individuals who would like to participate in planning Annual Conferences for 2026 and beyond. Skills needed: Good communication and organizational skills. Experience as an educator is helpful, but not required. Location: flexible.

Volunteer Coordinator: Help us develop and implement a Volunteer Management system, including recruitment, development and maintenance of job descriptions, volunteer onboarding and volunteer recognition. Skills needed: Strong organizational, communication and people skills. Human Resources or Volunteer Management experience helpful. Location: Mostly remote. Some in-person time may be needed.

If you think that you might be interested in helping in any of these, or other roles, please let us know by emailing Barb LaClair at tgstopeka.president@gmail.com.

Highlights from our 2025 Annual Conference

