



News & Views Newsletter

www.tgstopeka.org

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

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What's Happening at TGS?

Over the past month, we have continued to work toward our long-term goals of dissolving the library collection and clearing our building to ready it for sale. At the same time, we continue to work to carry out our core mission in the areas of Educational Programming and Records Preservation and Access. At times, it feels like a juggling act, trying to keep all of the balls in the air. Here are a few updates:



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 receive to add to their genealogy collection. Those items have been transferred to them. We will continue this process, working in small batches. TSCPL will work on processing and accessioning the items as they are transferred.
- 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 received the returned lists of approximately 900 volumes that they would like to accept. We are currently discussing options for the logistics of transferring materials to them, and will soon begin pulling out those items and readying them for transfer.

Educational Programming: Cindy Cruz, our Education Chair, has done an excellent job in lining up presenters and interesting topics for our Monthly Programs. The past two months' programs, on *Digital Family History Albums* and *Schoolhouse Survivors of Shawnee County* have had strong attendance. Our three Special Interest Groups (Foundations of Family History, Brick Wall Problem-Solving, and DNA) continue to meet on a monthly schedule and offer a

variety of help and learning opportunities. If you have not been able to attend, many of these programs have been recorded, and are available for TGS members to view on-demand in the "Past Programs" section of our website.

Records Access and Preservation Projects:

- **Columbian Title Abstract books** are currently being digitized by a third-party vendor hired by FamilySearch. 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. The index that was compiled by TGS volunteers is waiting to be added to the TGS website.
- **Pedigree Charts Project** – These are charts that were submitted many years ago by TGS members. A team of TGS volunteers is currently working on indexing and digitizing the charts, and making good progress. When complete, the index (and hopefully the digitized images) will be added to the searchable databases on our website.
- **Other upcoming projects** – We have pulled out and reviewed our list of additional indexing and records preservation projects, and there are many! We are currently prioritizing, and looking at what needs to be done with each project to get them ready to hand off to volunteers. Complexity of the projects is varied; most of the work could be done remotely. If you think that you might be interested in volunteering for some of these upcoming projects, let us know and we will contact you as the projects become ready to work.

- *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!

- Margaret Ryan, Santa Fe, NM
- Maura Gathers, Topeka
- Randy Fisher, Wichita, KS
- Pamela Sensney, Benton City, WA

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!

Who Will Help Lead Us into the Future?

It is that time of year again. As defined in our by-laws, members of our Board of Directors serve staggered, two-year terms that begin in January and continue for 24 months. Half of the elected Director positions come open each year, and we hold a vote in September to fill those openings. We form a Nominating Committee in June to search for suitable candidates and develop a slate of individuals who have agreed to run for the open positions. This year, we are searching for candidates for the offices of **President, Recording Secretary, and Director at Large**.



To be eligible to serve on the Board of Directors, candidates must be TGS members in good standing and must have a strong commitment to our mission and values. Experience serving as a Board Member with other nonprofit organizations is helpful, but not required. As we continue to work our way through the current period of organizational transformation, big-picture vision and creative thinking are desirable characteristics.

If this description fits you, and you think that you would be willing to step up to help TGS build a strong future, please contact Cindy Cruz, who is serving as the head of our 2025 Nominating Committee (clcruz32153@aol.com) to let her know and to discuss your interests.

In addition to these Board positions, we have a lot of other leadership and volunteer positions that we need to fill. See the list at the end of this newsletter, and let us know if you have interest in helping in any of those capacities.

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.

- New program recordings added (in the Past Programs section):
 - May Monthly Program – Surviving Schoolhouses of Shawnee County
 - February Foundations of Family History SIG – Land Grants & Patents
 - April Foundations of Family History SIG – Social Security Records
 - March Brick Wall SIG – Full Text Search on FamilySearch
 - May Brick Wall SIG – Find a Grave
- 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://tgstopoka.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) – **Jun 10, 2025, 7pm (Central Time)**. Our May program will be **"Ask A Genealogist"**. Bring your genealogy questions, or just join us to see what questions are asked and maybe offer your answers or suggestions in response.
- **Brick Wall Problem-Solving SIG** – (3rd Tuesday morning, 9:30am. **June 17, 2025**. Onsite research at the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library. 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) – **Jun 20, 2025, 10:00am (Central Time)** – **The Power of atDNA, DNA Painter and GedMatch**

MORNING JOE & JAW – (1st Monday morning each month, 9:30am at Perkins Restaurant, Topeka) **Monday, June 2, 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!

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.)

June 26, 2025 - We're still working on making the arrangements. Check the events calendar on our website for details as they become available.



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.

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.



July 24, 2025 – “I’ve Been Working on the Railroad...Records”, presented by Kansas City researcher and TGS Vice President Danni Altman-Newell. Danni will present tips and strategies for researching railroad related records.



UPCOMING REGIONAL EVENTS

June 7, 2025 – Digging Deeper in Your Swedish Research: Online Workshop. 9am – 4pm.

Virtual Genealogy Workshop with ArkivDigital, hosted by Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Heritage Museum in Lindsborg, Kansas. For details or registration, see <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/online-swedish-genealogy-workshop-june-7-2025-registration-1297416039299> .



August 8-9, 2025. MoSGA (Missouri State Genealogical Association) Annual Conference, with Judy Russell as featured speaker. See the MoSGA website for details and registration information, <https://www.mosga.org/>.



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. *TGS will have a table at this event – stop by to say hello!*

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



(Yes, we are running this information again – we still need lots of help!)

Help Wanted!



Many hands make light work. We are an all-volunteer organization, and 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. Experienced genealogist. 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.

(NEW this month) Co-Webmaster: Assist with website updates and routine maintenance, including keeping the calendar and event listings up to date. The website is built in WordPress, with the events calendar, membership system, store, and several other features being run behind the website in a system named [MembershipWorks](#). Website updates will require working with both systems. Skills needed: Familiarity and experience with WordPress is strongly desired. Basic knowledge of html and php coding is helpful, but not required. Location: Mostly remote.

(NEW this month) Leadership Team positions (non-elected). We have several openings for Committee Chairs and other key volunteers:

- **Marketing, Public Relations and Outreach Chair**– lead & coordinate efforts to promote TGS and our activities
- **Finance Committee Chair**– Support Treasurer and Board with budget review, periodic review of financial reports and record keeping, fundraising suggestions, etc. Possibly serve as backup to Treasurer?
- **Research Coordinator** – Conduct research as requested by TGS clients. Write reports, organize and maintain records and tracking of research activities. Should have strong communication and genealogy research skills, and be familiar with local resources. Some of the work will need to be in person at local repositories.
- **Publications Manager** – Organize, maintain and update (as needed) digital master files for the numerous publications that TGS offers for sale. Fulfill orders for publication purchases as they are received (infrequently).
- **Records Preservation Projects Chair** – Oversee and coordinate indexing, digitization and other records preservation projects.

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.



"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."

- Elizabeth Andrew