



News & Views

Newsletter

www.tgstopeka.org

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

Volume 33 No. 6

June 2025

What's Happening at TGS?

Over the past month, we have continued to work toward 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:

- 1) Promoting and supporting interests in Family History,
- 2) Providing educational programming related to genealogy and family history, and
- 3) Preservation of and improving access to records of genealogical and historical significance.

This month, I want to take the opportunity to clarify what we are doing, and why we are making the changes that we are making. From feedback that we get from time to time, I think there are some misunderstandings and misperceptions out there.

Let me be clear, **We Are Not Closing, or Going Away!**

We **ARE** making some big changes to our services and activities, but we are planning to continue on as a strong and relevant organization for years to come. As part of our responsibilities, our leadership team periodically evaluates our services and activities. We look at indicators such as alignment with our mission, attendance or utilization of the service, cost of providing the service or activity, and our return on the investment. Since TGS first began in 1965, there have been many changes in the genealogy world and we must adapt to those changes if we want to survive. Many of the things that we used to do successfully are no longer working or serving our members. Thus, after a long deliberation period and much discussion, we are closing our library and looking to divest ourselves of our building. The library was receiving only minimal use and consuming more than half of our volunteer hours. The building is simply too expensive to maintain and operate, and is not in an ideal location. We have

discontinued publication of our Quarterly as a result of ongoing challenges in finding or obtaining relevant material for publication.

So, what does all of this mean for the future of TGS? It simply means that we are adapting, shifting our priorities a bit, and attempting to stay relevant. We will operate much more like most local genealogical societies – without an independent library, and without a permanent building or office location. We will continue to focus on our mission, and re-deploy our resources toward our records preservation projects, educational efforts, and community outreach to promote interest in family history. We will continue to offer virtual programs and access to our resources, so that anyone can participate from pretty much anywhere in the world. We will continue to develop and improve our website and social media presence. We also realize that human contact and connection is an important part of what we offer, and will continue to look for ways to offer face-to-face gatherings and activities from time to time. Other genealogical societies operate very successfully in this model, and we can do it, too. We firmly believe that these changes are in the best long-term interest of our organization. Although changes of this magnitude are sometimes difficult to absorb, we hope that you will stick with us and see how this all turns out.

To our members, we thank you for your support through your membership. If you are a non-member reader, we invite you to consider joining us. Becoming a member is easy – see the Membership page on our website.

- *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!

- Tom Lynn, Topeka, KS

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!

Kansas State Archives- New Hours

The State Archives Research Room has extended its hours. The research room will now be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p. m. Tuesday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Saturday. Come explore the range of materials available for research - letters, photos, maps, government records, newspapers, ledgers, reel-to-reel film, cassette tapes, Edison cylinders, and many formats of electronic records. Patrons can research Kansas history, genealogy, property history and much more!



Plan Ahead! Turn You Family History into Great Gifts!



It's only June, but now is a great time to start thinking about ways to share your Family History with Christmas gifts for Family Members.

There are lots and lots of options for great personalized or handmade gifts, but most will require some lead time to get the information or materials together and organized, and then turn it into some amazing gift items. So, it's really not too early to start working on ideas!

The possibilities are almost endless, ranging from comprehensive family history books or digital family history albums, to simpler options like Christmas ornaments that feature photos of family members. Quilts or fabric crafts that incorporate shirts or aprons worn by beloved elders can become treasured heirlooms. A cookbook filled with favorite family recipes is another great way to preserve family memories.

So, put your creative thinking caps on and see what ideas you can come up with! To help you get started, we are sharing [slides](#) and [handouts](#) from one of our Monthly Programs in 2021. We would love to see what you come up with!

FamilySearch: Expanded Access to Full-Text Search!

While FamilySearch has billions of digitized historical records available to browse, only a small portion of them are indexed and searchable. Because of artificial intelligence and handwriting recognition technology, records are becoming searchable significantly faster. By searching AI-created transcripts of records, full-text search allows you to find results from unindexed record collections in seconds.

Using keywords, names, places, and dates, you can search over 1 billion genealogically significant records in a full-text search that might have been available only as images before. Although searching full transcripts is not exactly the same as searching indexed records, full-text search allows users to find results from any part of the text in a record. This capability is helping thousands of people find relatives in documents they hadn't considered before and discover new evidence in previously unsearchable records. This new search option has really been a game-changer for many of us.

Until recently, the full-text search feature had only been available in an experimental mode, located at [Familysearch.org/labs](https://familysearch.org/labs). Now, full-text search is being integrated with the all-collections search on the front page of the FamilySearch website.

To learn more about how to use full-text search with the all-collections search option, refer to this detailed article from FamilySearch: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/full-text-search-experimental-ai>.

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): none this month, but there are more than 50 to choose from!
- Resources – none this month
- New databases – none this month – several are in the works!



No changes this month, but 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) – **July 8, 2025, 7pm (Central Time)**. Our July program will be about **American Ancestors databases**. **August 12, 2025 (Central Time)**. Program will be about **Using Military Records in Genealogy Research**.
- **Brick Wall Problem-Solving SIG** – (3rd Tuesday morning, 9:30am. **July 15, 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) – There are **some changes to the usual schedule over the next few months:**
 - o **Jun 20, 2025, 10:00am (Central Time)** – The Power of atDNA, DNA Painter and GedMatch
 - o **July 25, 2025, 10:00am – 2:00pm** – **In-person DNA workshop** to assist with questions about topics that have been covered in recent months. At Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library. No regular SIG meeting in July.
 - o **August 22, 10:00 – noon, on Zoom. NOTE DATE CHANGE**

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

Monday, July 7, 9:30-11am

Monday, August 4, 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 - Join us for a little social time prior to our June Monthly Program. We will meet at Culver's, 1035 SW Wanamaker, at 5:30pm.

This month's dining-out is not a fundraiser - just a little time to visit and enjoy one another's company.



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.



August 28, 2025 – “Quilting and Genealogy: Stitching Together the Fabric of Our Lives,” presented by John Manning. John is a member of the Johnson County Genealogical Society and the Topeka Genealogy Society. His presentation will focus on how quilts can reveal family history through their designs (e.g. commemoration/ military service quilts, celebration quilts, death/cemetery quilts, signature quilts, etc.), and include case studies to show how to use that data for genealogical research.



UPCOMING REGIONAL EVENTS

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.



October 11, 2025 – Wichita Genealogical Society Annual Conference, with Peggy Clemens Lauritzen as the Featured Speaker. See <https://wichitagensoc.org/2025-Details-&-Schedule> for details and registration. (TGS members are eligible to register at discounted member rate!)

