



News & Views Newsletter

www.tgstopeka.org

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What's Happening at TGS?

Library - We're making progress, but still have a long way to go. Currently, we are in a holding phase as we wait to receive additional selection lists from Midwest Genealogy Center.

Four members of TGS recently attended the Wichita Genealogical Society's Annual Conference, with Peggy Clemens Lauritzen as the featured speaker. We enjoyed the day, learned lots, and got a chance to catch up with some of our Wichita friends.

As we make plans for our 2026 programs and activities, we would love to have some new ideas and volunteers to assist in this work. We're making plans for our lineup of Monthly Programs in 2026, and considering Conference options. We will have several new records preservation/ indexing projects ready to go very soon, but we need some project manager volunteers. Now is a great time to step up and help us plan for an exciting and productive year ahead.

As always, we thank our member readers for your support through membership. To our non-member friends, we appreciate your interest in our work and invite you to consider supporting us by becoming members. Joining our organization is simple – just see the “Membership” page on our website, at <https://tgstopeka.org/membership/>.

Barb LaClair, President



Peggy Clemens Lauritzen, featured speaker at the 2025 Wichita Genealogical Society Conference

October is Family History Month! How will you celebrate?

Consider celebrating by setting aside some time to work on family history projects. The National Genealogical Society suggests four possible activities, and provides free downloadable guides for each:

- Scan & label family photographs and documents
- Record & preserve family memories
- Write & share family stories
- Join the Family History community

Download the free guides at: <https://www.ngsgenealogy.org/family-history-month/>



Fall is a Good Time for Cemetery Visits!



Genealogists love cemeteries! Walking among the old headstones, whether collecting the vital information engraved on the grave markers, pondering the meaning of engraved symbols or just thinking about the life experiences of the deceased individuals who are buried there, we can learn a lot from cemetery visits.

As the weather cools and the tall grasses and weeds begin to die down, now is a great time to plan your cemetery visits.

A little advance planning and preparation can help you to get

the most from your cemetery excursions. To help with this, we are now sharing the handout from our popular Cemetery workshops. It is available for free download on our website, at

<https://tgstopeka.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/TGS-cemetery-workshop-handout-2022.pdf> .

Elephind is Back!

If you have spent much time researching digital newspaper collections, you might have been frustrated by how many different places you had to look to find the newspapers that were published for the time and location you were interested in. If you were persistent (and maybe lucky), you might have discovered [Elephind.com](https://www.elephind.com), a powerful specialized search engine that was designed to search across digital collections of historical newspapers from around the world, all in one place! Elephind was originally launched in 2012, but was taken offline in 2023 due to unsustainable operating costs. Now, a new and improved version of Elephind is online, and at least for now, it is free!



We encourage our readers to check it out, and consider subscribing if you find it useful so that this resource will continue to be available to genealogists everywhere!

More Newspaper News! *Chronicling America* has Been Updated



On August 4, 2025, the Library of Congress upgraded the ***Chronicling America Historic Newspapers website***. In the new system, the digitized newspapers

will become part of a larger Library of Congress digital collections framework that recently received major upgrades to accommodate future growth and expansion of the collection. New website features include new browse options (refine searches by ethnicity, location, subject, language, etc.), improved image viewing and manipulation, image sharing, improved Advanced Search form options, and more.

(<https://www.loc.gov/collections/chronicling-america/about-this-collection/>)

As part of the updates, the *United States Newspaper Directory 1690-Present* has also been migrated into a separate searchable collection. Users can access the new *Directory of U.S. Newspapers in American Libraries*, which is a searchable index of newspapers (in all formats) published in the United States since 1690. This directory can help users identify what titles exist for a specific place and time, how to access them, and when available, offer links to digitized content in Chronicling America. (<https://www.loc.gov/collections/directory-of-us-newspapers-in-american-libraries/about-this-collection/>)

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!

- Phyllis A. Ericson, CG – Topeka
- Kate Nadeau – Carbondale, 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!

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

Updates and new content are added to our website on an ongoing basis. So that you don't miss anything, here are highlights of changes and new additions in the past month.

- **New program recordings** added (in the Past Programs section):
 - *We're caught up, so none added since last month. More will be coming soon!*



- **Resources** – *TGS Cemetery Research Guide*, find the link to download it on the “Shawnee County Resources” page.

There are now more than 50 recordings of past TGS programs and presentations 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!

Help Wanted!

After nearly 5 years of closure that began with the Covid pandemic, the Topeka FamilySearch Research Center is re-opening and trying to establish regular operating hours once again. Renee Aldrich, director of the Center, has reached out to TGS to see if any of our members might be interested in volunteering in their Center. She currently has 4 shifts volunteering and hopes to add a 5th shift soon.



The Topeka FamilySearch Center is located in the LDS Church building at 2401 SW Kingsrow. Free access to a number of subscription genealogy websites are available at the Center.

Currently, their hours are:

Monday - 11:00-2:00

Tuesday - 6:30pm-8:30pm

Wednesday - 9:00-noon & 6:30pm-8:30pm

If you think that you might be interested in volunteering with them, please let Barb LaClair know, and we will get you connected with Renee. (Contact Barb at tgstopeka.president@gmail.com)

Help Wanted! - Newsletter Editor

We are looking for a volunteer to take responsibility for compiling and editing the monthly *News & Views* newsletter. This job would mostly involve collecting information from a few TGS leaders, and copying event information from the TGS website. Additional genealogy news articles may be included as new information becomes available. The newsletter is currently being created and edited in MSWord, so no special software familiarity is needed. Strong writing and grammar skills, and an eye for detail are important. Time commitment: 4-5 hours per month, dependent upon content availability and editor's comfort and skill level.



If you would be willing to help us by filling this role, please contact Barb LaClair, tgstopeka.president@gmail.com .

Identity Quest 2025 – November 15th!



The Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library is planning another free **IdentityQuest** event for 2025. This year's event will take place from **9:00am – 1:30pm on Saturday November 15th** at the Public Library, and the focus will be on **DNA-related topics**. Details and the event schedule are available at: <https://tscpl.org/genealogy/identity-quest#IDQ-schedule>.

TGS will be participating as an exhibitor, and Marty Flanagan will be leading one of the “round-table” sessions.

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 mostly 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 (Central Time), via Zoom). **November 11, 2025** – “*Using Periodicals in Genealogy Research*”
- **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)
 - o **October 21, 2025** – on-site research at the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library. Bring your own laptop computer, or plan to use a Library computer.
- **DNA and Genetic Genealogy SIG** – (3rd Friday morning, 10 am, via Zoom) – **November 21, 2025** - “*Sharing and Critiquing our Results from Previous Sessions.*”

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

Monday, November 3, 9:30 – 11am

Monday, December 1, 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!

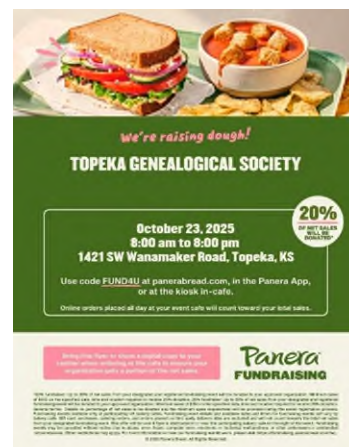
MONTHLY DINNER GATHERING/ FUNDRAISER

(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.)

October 23, 2025 - Join us for a little social time prior to our Monthly Program. We will meet at **Panera, 1421 SW Wanamaker**, at **5:30pm**.

If you are unable to join us for dinner, purchases made any time between 8am and 8pm at the restaurant or online will count toward our fundraiser if you show the flyer to the cashier, or use the code **FUND4U** when you check out with online orders. TGS will receive 20% of total sales credited to our group.

Following dinner, please plan to join us at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library at 7:00pm for our monthly program.



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. To obtain the Zoom link to watch online, see the event listing on our website (<https://tgstopeka.org>)

October 23, 2025 – “Curating Old Photos: Scan-Sort-Share,” presented by Jim Mathis. Jim owns a photo restoration and photography studio in Overland Park and is a member of the Johnson County Genealogical Society. He will talk about the history of photography, preserving images, and restoring damaged or faded images.



Reminder: No monthly programs in November or December.

UPCOMING REGIONAL EVENTS



October 28- November 1, 2025 – Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International Conference, in Overland Park, Kansas. See <https://cgsi.org/2025-conference/sessions> for details and registration.

The Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library is planning another **Identity Quest** event for 2025! This years' event will take place on **Saturday, November 15, 2025** from **9am – 1:30pm** at the **Public Library** and will focus on **DNA -related topics**. See <https://tscpl.org/genealogy/identity-quest#IDQ-schedule> for details.



RootsTech 2026 – March 5-7, 2026. Attend online (Free) or in-person. Registration is now open! See <https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/> for details.
