



News & Views Newsletter

www.tgstopeka.org

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From the President's Desk – Why Volunteer with Us?

Volunteering with the Topeka Genealogical Society is one of the most rewarding ways to deepen your own research skills while strengthening the community around you. Whether you enjoy digging into family history, helping newcomers find their footing, or preserving local stories for future generations, sharing your time and talents enriches your own journey as much as it supports others. Every task—large or small—offers a chance to learn something new, sharpen your expertise, and stay inspired by the discoveries unfolding around you.



It's also a wonderful way to build meaningful connections. Genealogy volunteers form a network of curious, generous people who love history, problem-solving, and storytelling. Working together on projects, programs, or society initiatives creates friendships, mentorships, and collaborations that last well beyond a single meeting.

Volunteering is a way to give back while growing personally by learning new skills, meeting new people, and making a real difference. If you are new to TGS, there is no better way to reap the benefits of membership than by contributing to our organization. If you are a long-time member who once served as a TGS librarian, you may be interested in finding a new way to participate. Everyone's enthusiasm and experience can help keep our society vibrant, welcoming, and innovative.

TGS social events, projects and meetings are always filled with conversation, laughter, and learning. We have a place for every member to contribute according to their talents, skills and schedule. If you are curious about how you can help, please contact me at tgstopeka.president@gmail.com - and if you are asked to volunteer, say yes!

--- Cindy Cruz, President , tgstopeka.president@gmail.com

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!

- Mick Delfelder – Topeka, KS
- Carol Rudolph – Lawrence, 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!

Story Finders – Join Our New Writers' Group

Friday, April 17, 10-11:45 a.m., Anton Room, 2nd Floor
Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library

Our topic this month is:

Discover What You Forgot: Make a Map of a Place That Mattered

Draw a map and write a short (1-page) story. Or, you can write a story about any family memory, your ancestors, or any topic you choose. Bring your story to share with the group.



New TGS Member Event - Social and Museum Tour, June 6th



Have you seen the new exhibits and displays at the **Kansas Historical Society Museum** yet? TGS member Terry Stahl volunteers as a docent at the Museum and has generously offered to give TGS members a special guided tour on **Saturday, June 6th**. We're planning to gather for some social time and a brown bag lunch, followed by the museum tour. Join us for either, or both. Those who wish to participate in the museum tour will need to pay their own admission fee (\$10 for adults age 18-64, \$8 for Seniors 65+). Watch for upcoming details about the times for lunch and tours.

Visit the Topeka FamilySearch Center – New Hours!



If you live in or near Topeka, are you taking full advantage of the free genealogy resources available to you? Don't overlook the local FamilySearch Center. It's located at **2401 SW Kingsrow Rd**, in Topeka, and is free and open to the public. Their operating hours have recently changed. **The new hours are:** Sunday 1-4; Tuesday and Wednesday 9-noon and 6:30-8:30pm.

AMERICA America 250 – The Kansas Story



This year marks the 250th Birthday for the United States, but Kansas is not nearly so old. Ever wonder what might have been happening in current-day Kansas when our nation was being formed?

“Declaration 1776: The Big Bang of Modern Democracy,” hosted by Kansas Historical Society is now open. This traveling exhibition is from the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. The exhibition includes a section called “Kansas 1776,” which looks at what was happening on the land that would become the state of Kansas 250 years ago. Items from George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Aaron Burr, Theodosia Burr, and John Jay are on display. **The exhibition is located in the CHR Gallery across from the State Archives research room** and will be open through December 31, 2026. Hours are Tuesday-Friday 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday 9 a.m.-1 p.m. (closed state holidays)



Changes at TGS – We’re Cutting the (Phone) Cord!



As we continue to work our way through changes related to closing down our Library and operating without a building, our Board is continually on the lookout for ways to cut unnecessary costs. Every expense in our budget gets scrutinized.

Telephone service is one of those. A few months back, we changed to a VoIP service that reduced what we had been paying for our landline, but we had also been considering further cost savings by possibly switching to free service with Google Voice. As we explored and discussed this option, we began to question whether we really needed to have a dedicated phone number for TGS any longer. Nearly all of our contacts come through email, the contact form on the website or an occasional FaceBook message. We have been receiving only 3-4 phone calls per month, and many of those have been someone looking to sell us something. After discussion, the Board has decided that we will terminate our phone service in the near future, with the exact termination date to be determined based upon our current service agreements. We will be adding more prominent contact information to our website to ensure that customers and members will still be able to reach us easily.

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):
 - March 2026 Monthly Program – **Patriots Remembered – SAR Genealogy Resources**, by Brain Vazquez
 - March 2026 Brick Wall SIG – **Databases Available at the Topeka Family History Center**
- **Resources** – none added this month, but we're working on some cool ones!



There are now more than 50 recordings of past TGS programs and presentations available on our website! Access to some recorded 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 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.

(Some of the upcoming programs are still in the planning stage - check the events calendar on our website for more details as they become available)

- **Foundations of Family History SIG** (2nd Tuesday evening, 7pm (Central Time), via Zoom).
 - **April 14** – Probate Records – More than Just a Will
 - **May 12** – Making the Most of Your Cemetery Visits
- **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)
 - **April 21, 2026** - Research on-site at the Topeka FamilySearch Center
- **DNA/ Genetic Genealogy SIG** – Paula Smith is taking over as group leader, and the focus will be shifting slightly to more intro-level topics. (1st Tuesday, 10:30-11:30am, via Zoom)
 - **May 5, 2026** – Breaking thru Brick Walls Using Ancestry's ThruLines

- **New for 2026! TGS “Story Finders” Writing Group** - (3rd Friday, 10:00am – noon, in person at the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, Anton Room on the 2nd Floor)
 - o **April 17, 2026** – Discover What You Forgot: Make a Map of a Place that Mattered
 - o **May 15, 2026** – Discover What You Forgot: Find a Story Within a Timeline

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

Monday, May 4, 9:30-11:00am

Monday, June 1, 2026, 9:30-11:00am

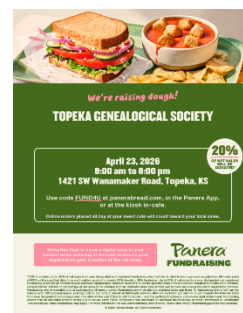
This is an informal opportunity for socializing and networking with other members. Meet us at **Perkins Restaurant, 1720 SW Wanamaker**, for some lively conversation while you enjoy a morning coffee, pastry, or breakfast. No need to register – just drop by to say hello!



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.)

April 23, 2026, 5:00pm - Our April 2026 dining out/fundraiser will be at **Panera, 1421 SW Wanamaker Rd.** TGS will receive 20% of total sales to our group. Order online, for takeout or in-person dining any time between 8:00am and 8:00pm. For those who would like to join us in person, we will plan to gather at 5:00pm. Following dinner, please join us at 7:00 pm at the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library for our monthly program presentation, "Topeka's Constitution Hall."



Download the Flyer: <https://tgstopeka.org/events/#!/event/2026/4/23/monthly-dining-out-fundraiser>

May 28, 2026, 5:00pm - Join us at 5:00pm for our monthly fundraiser at **Red Robin, 6230 SW 6th Street**, for some good food and lively conversation. If you cannot join us then, you have the option of dining anytime between 11:00am-10:00pm, or ordering online or in person for carryout. Mention this fundraiser or show them the attached flyer at the checkout register for TGS to receive 20% of sales benefit. Following dinner, join us at TSCPL at 7:00pm for our monthly program. "TSCPL Technology Resources for Genealogy."

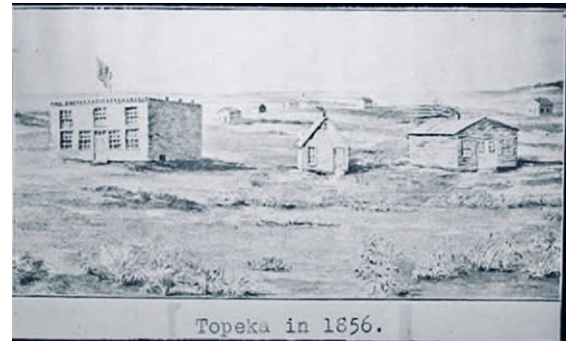


Download the Flyer: <https://tgstopeka.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Red-Robin-fundraiser-May2026-flyer.pdf>

MONTHLY PROGRAMS – 4th Thursday of the month, 7:00pm 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>).

April 23, 2026 – “Topeka’s Constitution Hall”

Kansas was first envisioned as a free state in the fall of 1855 when the Topeka Constitutional Convention met in Constitution Hall. Renovation of the historic building was recently completed, and it now serves as a reminder of important role Kansas played in the antislavery movement leading to the Civil War. Join us to learn more about the fascinating history of this Topeka treasure.



May 28, 2026 – “TSCPL Technology Resources for Genealogy” by Liz Frazier

Public Services Specialist, Liz Frazier, will talk about the many types of free technology tools and services in the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library which can be used for genealogy. She will cover digitizing photographs, video, and audio recordings, recording oral histories, recording in the second-floor studio, and other services available to the public.



UPCOMING REGIONAL EVENTS

Saturday, April 18 - Midwest Genealogy Center's Spring Seminar: Branches and Bytes, with Steve Little & Mark Thompson

AI tools are transforming genealogy, but where do you start?

Join Mark Thompson and Steve Little, co-hosts of the *Family History AI Show* podcast, for an engaging seminar that cuts through the confusion and shows you how to use AI tools to become a better researcher and storyteller.

Registration fee: \$40

For details or registration link: <https://www.mymcpl.org/genealogy/programs/spring-seminar> .



Friday-Saturday, August 7-8, 2026 - MOSGA (Missouri State Genealogical Association) Annual Conference, Jefferson City, Missouri

SAVE THE DATE! For more details as they become available, check the MOSGA website: <https://mosga.org/eventListings.php?nm=67>



Saturday, August 15, 2026 – Genealogy KC

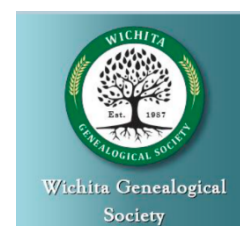
SAVE THE DATE! A free, full-day genealogy event, hosted by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Registration is set to open March 1st.

For details and registration info as they become available: <https://genealogykc.org/genealogy-kc-2026-1>



Saturday, October 10, 2026 – Wichita Genealogical Society Annual Conference

SAVE THE DATE! For more details as they become available, check the WGS website: <https://wichitagensoc.org/>



UPCOMING NATIONAL EVENTS

May 27-30, 2026 - NGS (National Genealogical Society) 2026 Family History Conference, in Fort Wayne, Indiana

The National Genealogical Society's annual conference—a pinnacle of the genealogical calendar—will take place May 27-30, 2026 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, home to the renowned Genealogy Center at the Allen County Public Library.

In recognition of the Semiquincentennial Anniversary of the signing of United States Declaration of Independence on 4 July 1776, our theme is **America at 250**. The conference will shine a light on the stories, communities, and research strategies that help us understand the nation's past. It also will focus on how genealogists can preserve our family histories for the future.

There are options to attend in person, or virtually. For details and registration information: <https://conference.ngsgenealogy.org/>

