



News & Views

Newsletter

www.tgstopeka.org

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

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From the President's Desk – Preserve, Protect and Pass it On

Are you the “designated genealogist” of your family? Are you the keeper of the only copy of important family photos, videos, and other recordings? Do you know you should preserve and make copies of these irreplaceable treasures? Does the job seem too daunting or expensive?



At our May 28 TGS meeting, Liz Frazier will describe the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library's impressive array of free technology tools and services that can be put to work for genealogy research, including digitizing photographs, video, and audio recordings, capturing oral histories, and recording in the library's second-floor studio. Her presentation is a timely reminder that preserving our family histories doesn't have to be expensive or complicated, and it leads naturally into an important conversation every genealogist should have with themselves. Are the irreplaceable physical materials in my possession truly safe?

Family photographs, letters, recordings, and other physical media are primary historical sources. They are firsthand documentation of the people, places, and stories that shaped who we are. Unlike public records or published histories, these items often exist as a single surviving copy. A lone photograph, a handwritten note, or a VHS tape of a relative's voice may be the only evidence of someone's life. Once lost to fading, mold, brittleness, or simple neglect, that evidence is gone permanently. Our goal should be to preserve the original carefully and create high-quality digital backups stored in multiple locations. Beyond research value, these materials forge a deeply personal connection across generations. Seeing an ancestor's face, reading their handwriting, or hearing their voice creates an emotional bridge that transcends what any family tree chart can offer. Preserving these items now is one of the most meaningful gifts you can pass down to your descendants.

Plan to attend our May program in person at the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, or register to attend online on Zoom (<https://tgstopeka.org/events/>).

--- **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!

- Jennifer Gribble – Salado, TX
- Nancy Simmons Roberson – Louisville, KY
- Jay King – Lignum, VA

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):
 - o April 2026 Monthly Program – **Topeka's Constitution Hall**, by Grant Glenn
 - o April 2026 Foundations of Family History Special Interest Group – **Getting the Most from Your Cemetery Visits**
- **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 most 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!

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

Have you seen the new exhibits and displays at the **Kansas History Museum** yet?

All TGS members are invited to attend a "Bring Your Own Brown Bag" lunch social gathering in the Kansas State History Museum commons area on Saturday, June 6, at 11:30 am, followed by a guided tour of the newly renovated museum exhibits by docent Terry Stahl at 12:30 pm. Admission to the museum tour is \$8 for seniors. Members and guests can attend either the lunch (Bring your own food and drink; No fee to



use the commons seating), the tour or both. We would especially like to invite new TGS members to join us and get acquainted at this event.

Memorial Day is Coming Soon – Make the Most of Your Cemetery Visits

Whether it's Memorial Day, or not, genealogists love cemeteries! It is fascinating to walk among the headstones and hunt for the final resting places of our ancestors. But, if you know what to look for there is a lot more to be learned from cemeteries. In the May session of our Foundations of Family History SIG, we talked about how to prepare for and what to look for to make the most of your cemetery visits. We started with how to figure out where a person was buried and how to locate smaller rural cemeteries, and then moved to what to take with you, tips for better photography, how to do tombstone rubbings and grave witching (yes, it really does work!).



If you missed our session but would like to view the recorded version, it has been uploaded to the Past Programs section of our website (<https://tgstopeka.org/past-programs/>). Log in with your member id and password and check it out!

Are You a Canadian Citizen? You Might Be!



If you have ancestors who lived in Canada, you are likely already a Canadian citizen, but maybe just not aware of it. Canada has recently relaxed its requirements for Citizenship by Descent. In the past, Citizenship by descent was only granted to children of a Canadian parent. Now, under the new rules, anyone who can prove direct lineal descent (no limit on the number of generations back) from a Canadian citizen is automatically considered to be a Canadian citizen and can apply for a Citizenship Certificate. Canada and

the United States both recognize Dual Citizenship, so there is no need to relinquish your U.S. citizenship to claim your Canadian one!

If you are curious and want to learn more, see <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-citizenship/proof-citizenship.html>.

New Tricks & Tools for Easier Newspaper Searches!



Digital newspapers are a tremendous resource for genealogy research. But, the only problem is that they are everywhere, scattered across websites and online database systems. And, the tools for newspaper research are constantly changing! Here are a couple of recent changes that will help with your newspaper searches:

Newspaper Finder (newspaperfinder.com) is a catalog to help you find all newspapers that have been digitized and placed online. Think of it as the newspaper version of WorldCat.org. It searches

across the databases of more than 30 major newspaper websites to help you locate the newspapers from the location and time period that you are interested in. Just use the search boxes to select the time period and location of interest, and the system will show you what newspapers are available, along with links to the websites where they appear!

Newspapers.com , improved clipping tool - [Newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com) has recently announced improvements to their clipping tool that allows you to clip multiple blocks on a page. Now, when your article continues to another column or includes a photo elsewhere on the page, you can save them all together as one clipped file!

Are You Researching Shawnee County Ancestors?

Opportunities abound! We are fortunate to have so many great resources and repositories available. Here's a summary:

- Download our **Guide to Shawnee County Research**, which summarizes available records and where to find them (https://tgstopeka.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Shawnee-Co-Research-Guide_2024-Update.pdf).
- Check out our online, **searchable databases**, which include more than 365,000 records. (<https://tgstopeka.org/search-our-databases/#!/search>)
- Check out our numerous **links to Shawnee County resources** found on other websites (https://tgstopeka.org/resources_links-to-sn-co-resources/)
- Visit the **Topeka Room and Baker Genealogy Center at the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library**, 1515 SW 10th. Hours are M-F: 9am to 9pm; Sat: 9am to 6pm; Sun: Noon to 9pm. (<https://tscpl.org/local-history-genealogy>)
- Visit the **Archives of the Kansas Historical Society**, 6425 SW 6th, or check out their online genealogy indexes (<https://www.kansashistory.gov/p/genealogy-indexes/18943>) Hours: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tuesday - Friday; 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Saturday
- Check the online resources at **Kansas Memory** (<https://www.kansasmemory.gov/>), hosted by the Kansas Historical Society
- Visit the **Topeka FamilySearch Center** at 2401 SW Kingsrow. Hours are Sunday 1-4; Tuesday and Wednesday 9-noon and 6:30-8:30pm.

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).
 - o **June 9** - Topic to be announced soon
- **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 **May 19, 2026** – Zoom Meeting. *Tracing the Maiden Name of a Female Ancestor*
 - o **June 16, 2026** - Research on-site at the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library
- **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)
 - o **June 2, 2026** – *Breaking thru Brick Walls Using Ancestry's ThruLines*
- **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 **June 19, 2026** – *Write a Story for an Ancestor You Remember*

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

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

Monday, July 6, 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.)

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 total sales. Following dinner, join us at TSCPL at 7:00pm for our monthly program. "TSCPL Technology Resources for Genealogy."



Download the Flyer: <https://tgstopoka.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>).

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.



June 25, 2026 – *“Finding Early Colonial Ancestors, 1600- 1700s”* by Phyllis Ericson

Who Were Your Ancestors in British Colonial America? TGS member, Phyllis Ericson, will explore our ancestors' lives in the British Colonies before the Revolutionary War. She will discuss how to find them in colonial records and share what we know about our early colonists in the 1700s.



UPCOMING REGIONAL EVENTS

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

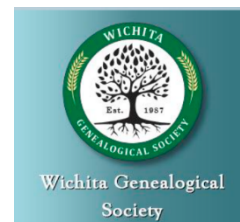
SAVE THE DATE! A free, full-day genealogy event, hosted by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Registration is now open.

For details and registration: <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/>

The brick walls are there for a reason. The brick walls are not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something. Because the brick walls are there to stop the people who don't want it badly enough. They're there to stop the other people."

----Randy Pausch, Carnegie Mellon University

