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## MTGS Messenger



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**Jim Long, Editor**

The May 15 MTGS event will be an **in-person tour of the new Tennessee State Library and Archives building**, rather than our traditional meeting format. **Pre-registration for a tour is required**, and can be made at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/middle-tennessee-genealogical-society-may-15-meeting-tickets-147284703513>. Walk-ins cannot be guaranteed a tour slot, but there may be slots available due to no-shows.

Due to popularity, the Library and Archives graciously offered two tour times for our group that day. **Be sure that you know which tour time you are registered for (1:00pm or 2:30pm)**, so that you arrive at the correct time. Also note that the 1:00pm tour is full, so all new registrations will be for the 2:30pm tour, until that tour is also full. At the present time we have 78 pre-registered for a tour, with a capacity of 90.



Masks are required inside the Library and Archives building.

**Parking Instructions:** Parking is available in the underground garage below the Library and Archives, the entrance to which is on Junior Gilliam Way, a short street that runs along the south side of the building between Rep. John Lewis Way North (formerly 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. North) and 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. North. Press the call button at the garage entrance, and let Security know that you're with the MTGS group and they will open the gate for you. Park in any of the spaces marked Visitor. Enter the Library and Archives through the double doors mid-way along the east side of the garage, and take the elevator or stairs up to the Lobby level, where you will check in at the Security desk.

Tours will start in the Conference Center at the Library and Archives, on the ground floor near the lobby, where you can mingle with other attendees before or after your tour. Be advised that the new Library and Archives is a large building, and while elevators make moving

between floors easy, there will be a lot of walking on this tour – there’s a lot to see in this wonderful new facility!

If you plan to do research at the Library and Archives before or after your tour, you must reserve a research appointment directly with the Library and Archives, by emailing [ask@tsla.libanswers.com](mailto:ask@tsla.libanswers.com). The Library and Archives closes at 4:30pm.



It's **membership renewal time** for MTGS. 2021-2022 Memberships run from June 1, 2021 through May 31, 2022. If you have not yet renewed your membership, you can do so at Saturday's gathering at TSLA – still a great bargain at \$25.00 for the year, including 4 issues of our [Journal](#), online access to past Journals, and a discount on the November Seminar.



Family History Fanatics, based in Humble, TX, is hosting its 3<sup>rd</sup> annual *Research Your Way to Genealogy Answers* virtual conference on Saturday, June 5. Speakers and topics include:

- Research Over My Shoulder: A Practical Guide to Researching Your Ancestors (Devon Noel Lee)
- How To Effectively Research Newspapers For Your Ancestors (Lisa Lisson)
- How to Research German Ancestors from the US to their Hometown (Miles Meyer)
- Dissecting a Civil War Pension Record-Union & Confederate (Jill Morelli)

The sessions will be live but recorded, and available for 30 days to registered attendees. Early bird registration is \$19.99 until May 22<sup>nd</sup>. For full details, visit <https://www.familyhistoryfanatics.com/researchconference>



[TNGenWeb](#) is the home of a network of volunteers who maintain genealogical & historical content for each of Tennessee's 95 counties. I myself volunteer for this organization and serve as the County Coordinator for the Stewart and Montgomery County websites. TNGenWeb has been providing free genealogy content since 1996 through the hard work and generosity of many people.

TNGenWeb is looking for eager genealogists to serve on its Board of Directors and help the TNGenWeb network continue to grow. To learn more, click the link at the beginning of this article. To inquire about the Board of Directors, contact Jerry Butler at [jlb30504@gmail.com](mailto:jlb30504@gmail.com).



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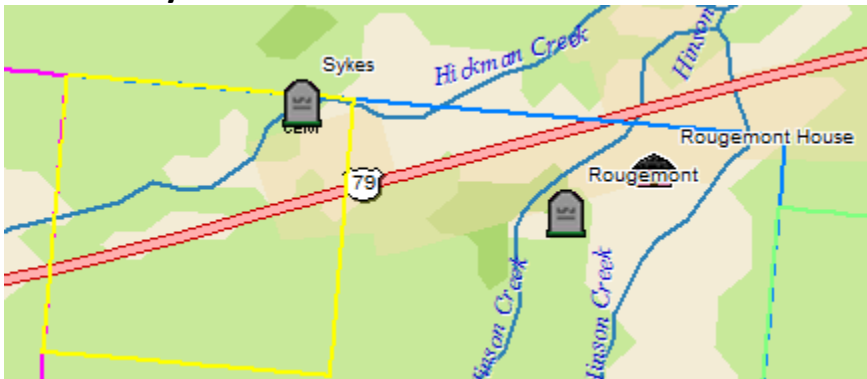
## The Dreaded Camera-Key Icon at FamilySearch

You've logged into FamilySearch and have found the exact microfilm reel that you need for your current genealogy brick wall. But you're presented with the camera-key icon and think that you've only forgotten to log in, only to realize that you are logged in, and that access to the microfilm reel is restricted – only viewable at a Family History Library or at an Affiliate Library.

Never fear! The [Tennessee State Library and Archives is an FHL Affiliate Library](#), so you can view that reel at the computers in the Library and Archives' awesome new Reading Room. So get your TSLA Researcher Card, drop into the enormous parking garage, glide up the elevators to the Reading Room, and break down those remote brick walls!

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### Which Way is North?



I love trying to figure out exactly what piece of land an ancestor lived on. If you've researched land records in Tennessee and other state-land states, though, you know that platting deeds by **metes and bounds** is difficult at best, and downright intolerable when trying to place an older deed – described only by trees, rocks, stakes and the occasional neighbor – on a modern map. Researchers who've only ever worked in **ranges, townships and sections** don't know how easy they have it!

This week, I was attempting to plat some 1800s deeds to confirm the residence of someone I was researching. I looked up the relevant deeds, carefully wrote down the calls of each tract, and drew them to-scale on a modern topo map (I use DeLorme's Topo USA on my PC, because it came with my GPS. If you don't have Topo software but do have paper topo maps, try it by platting the deeds on clear polyester sheets, such as old transparency slides or archival polyester, and overlaying them on the topo map).

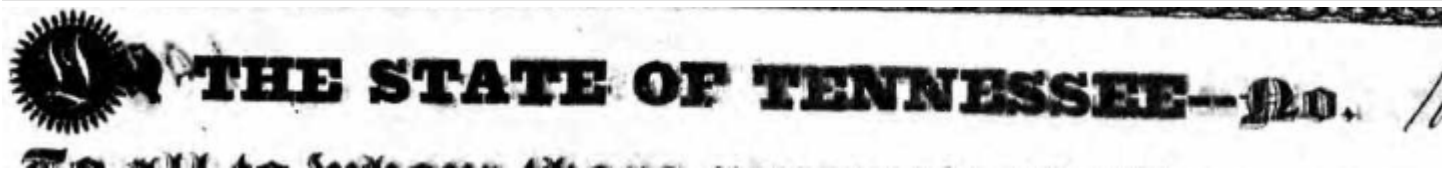
I started with a tract of land that included two known landmarks – a family cemetery and the family's still-standing 1800s house. I was lucky – or so I thought - that it was a square tract of

land, with simple north, south, east and west metes. I then drew in a couple of neighboring tracts that I was able to discover by reading the neighbor's deeds.

I was very happy with the initial results – except for one problem: the known family cemeteries were not within the tracts that each family owned. Where had I gone wrong?

**Magnetic North moves over time.** For our area, it is currently about 5 degrees east of where it was in the early 1800s. *Who knew?* Once I re-drew the tracts with everything 'tilted' 5 degrees to the east, then 3 family cemeteries were now within the tracts of land that the family owned.

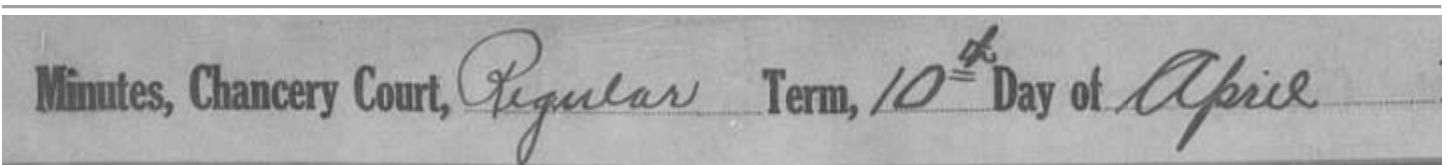
You may have observed this shift on Google Maps and not known what you were seeing. If you zoom into Google Maps far enough, it can show you fairly-current property boundaries. For older tracts, you may notice the boundaries are not oriented perfectly north-south, due to Magnetic North being in a different spot then versus now.



Speaking of deeds, have you come up empty searching for great-grandpappy's **land grant** in the county Deed Books? The Deed Books all survive, but the grant simply isn't listed?

Try looking in – of all places – the **State Land Grant books**. The printed indexes and microfilmed originals are located in the Reading Room at the Tennessee State Library and Archives. Tennessee residents can also access the microfilmed images online: if you don't know how, give me a shout and I'll give you the [secret link to the Tennessee Electronic Library](#).

In one of my counties of interest, **two-thirds** of the State land grants were never registered in the county deed books.



Are you using **Chancery Court** records to research your Tennessee connections? As a result of Tennessee's 1834 Constitution, Chancery Courts began hearing equity cases, while cases of law continued to be heard in Circuit Court. Chancery cases typically involved property that had to be equitably divided, such as in divorces or in the settlement of estates. If you thought

there was a divorce in your family and didn't find it in the Circuit Court records, have you checked the Chancery Court records?

Robert Dinkins left no will when he died in Tennessee in 1877. In 1874, a few years before he died, he sold some of his land to his grandson, Pinkney D. Bagwell, but the deed was never recorded at the courthouse.

In 1922, nearly 50 years later, Pinkney D. Bagwell died. He had lived on the land and had raised his family on it, but he never officially owned the land – as far as the courthouse was concerned.

Pinkney Bagwell's only child, his son Wiley J. Bagwell, had to "sue" all of Robert Dinkins' living adult heirs in 1923, in Chancery Court, in order to have the deed finally registered in his name, since the heirs owned the land in the absence of a deed.

The 1923 Chancery Court Minute Book entry for Bagwell's suit lists all 45 living adult heirs of Robert Dinkins in 1923. Imagine that you found your ancestor listed among those 45 heirs, and didn't yet know that you were descended from Robert Dinkins!

Get to know the Chancery Court records in your counties of research.