



MTGS Messenger
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Jim Long, Editor



September Meeting – Adding a Little Magic to your Genealogy Research

Our September meeting will take place on **Saturday, September 16 at 1:00pm** at the Tennessee State Library and Archives, and online via Zoom.



Our speaker is the ever-popular **Taneya Koonce, MSLS, MPH**, on **The Power of RootsMagic**.

Taneya will demonstrate how to use the RootsMagic software for organizing your genealogy research. Even if you already use a different program, come and participate. There's always something to learn from Taneya!

As always, our regular meetings are free and open to the public. Refreshments will be available, and be sure to check out our Freebie Table.

The Zoom link for the meeting is <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87851399108>

It's Seminar Time!



We look forward every year to our annual **November Seminar**, and this year, we are devoting the day to a topic that our members are always eager to learn more about – DNA.

Our speaker this year is **Dana Leeds**, Creator of the **Leeds Method** for organizing your DNA matches. Dana will

present these topics:

- The Leeds Method: Organizing Your DNA Matches
- One Man, Multiple Names: A DNA-Based Case Study
- AncestryDNA Tools: The Basics and Beyond
- The Shared cM Project & Cousin Terminology

For more details, please see our Seminar Brochure at <http://www.mtgs.org/MTGS%202023%20Seminar%20brochure.pdf>

This Seminar is in-person only, at the [Tennessee State Library and Archives](#). Registration is still just \$40 for MTGS members and \$45 for non-members. Registration includes a boxed lunch, snacks and beverages. TSLA will be open its regular hours that day.

Two Ways to Register:

- To register by postal mail, print the form in the Seminar Brochure and mail it with your check (payable to MTGS)
- To register by PayPal, use the form and button on our Seminar web page at <http://www.mtgs.org/seminar.html>

We hope that you will join us for our 35th Annual Seminar.

Speaking of Conferences...

I mentioned ConferenceKeeper.org in the January 2023 newsletter. I keep a shortcut to it handy, as it, aptly, describes itself as “the most complete Calendar and Collection of Genealogy Events on the Internet.”

There are so many options to attend conferences these days, both in-person and virtually. ConferenceKeeper is searchable by keyword, date or location, and even has built-in filters for specialties such as [DNA Events](#), including our own November Seminar.



Keep an Eye on the Neighbors

[MTGS' Facebook page](#) is a good place to find local research tips and to connect with other researchers. But keep in mind that we have some great neighbors doing the same thing, and that our ancestors may have been neighbors to ‘their’ ancestors. Here are a few of our neighbors that you should pay a call on:

- [Mid-West Tennessee Genealogical Society](#) (based in Jackson, TN)
- [Tennessee Genealogical Society](#) (based in Germantown, TN)
- [Kentucky Genealogical Society](#)
- The [TNGenWeb Project](#)
- [NorthEast Alabama Genealogical Society](#)
- [Alabama Genealogical Society](#)

Social media groups are a modern-day equivalent of the Queries section of your favorite old genealogy magazine – but no self-addressed, stamped envelope required!



Where There Isn't a Will, There's a Way

It's genealogical gold to find the will of an ancestor, naming all of the heirs in a neat and tidy way. But often I hope that there wasn't a will, because an *intestate* estate can sometimes yield more information. Heirs can be left out of a will for various reasons. But if the heirs are dividing up an *intestate* estate – either in a friendly or a not-so-friendly way – I find there's a better chance of getting a more-complete list of the heirs.

The [1831 Statute Laws of Tennessee](#) tell us that, in the absence of a will, land descended to all the sons equally, and in the absence of sons, to all the daughters equally. But by the 1840s, this law was amended so that sons and daughters inherited equally, and in the absence of children, siblings and half-siblings inherited equally, without regard to gender. So when the courts had to intervene to split up an estate, often a complete list of the heirs was included in the petition to the court.

The places that I find intestate estates in Tennessee being divided up include:

- [County Court Minutes](#), if the division is friendly among the heirs, and [Circuit Court Minutes](#) or, later, [Chancery Court Minutes](#) if the division is not-so-friendly; in all 3 courts, better information is usually found in the *loose records* of the case as opposed to the minute books – if you can find them
- [Settlements](#) books, into which the estate settlement and distribution to heirs was recorded; if not recorded in a bound volume, check the loose records of County Court for a so-called “probate packet” listing the distribution to the heirs
- [Guardian](#) records can be a good source of information about under-age heirs, as the County Court should have appointed a guardian to oversee the inheritance of any minor heirs until they came of age

To learn more about Tennessee laws relating to Descents and Intestate Estates, search [Google Books](#) for Statute Laws of the State of Tennessee, keeping in mind that the laws changed over time and you can find a dozen or so copies of the Tennessee statutes there.

One of the highlights of my genealogical month is a [local genealogy discussion group](#) in my town. It's great to meet face-to-face with others who share a passion - for my passion. There are 15 or so people who participate in it, but not everyone can come every month. We meet at our local library, which has a great genealogy room.

Ours is an open-format meeting, with everyone encouraged to share tips and successes. The favorite activity, however, seems to be when someone brings a [genealogy puzzle](#) needing to be solved. They present their data and what they're trying to figure out, and everyone enjoys offering suggestions, or firing up their laptop/tablet/phone to do live research to solve the puzzle.

At last month's meeting, the puzzle was a an actual object – a quilt with 100+ hand-sewn names on it, from the early 1920s. The owner was trying to understand the reason that the quilt was made. Many of the names were from her family, but many weren't. She had taken the time to transcribe the names on the quilt, and handed the list around for the group to inspect. I was astonished and delighted to see my great-great grandmother's name on it. We still haven't figured out the reason that the quilt was made, but it was a fun evening.

If you don't have something like this where you live, why not start a group and see who shows up?
