



MTGS Messenger
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Show Us What You've Got!

It's time for our annual show-and-tell meeting: "[Ancestors, Antiques, and Artifacts](#)." Everyone who has an interest in family history is welcome, whether a member or not.

The meeting will be held **Saturday, January 21, 2023 at 1:00pm Central Time**, both in-person at the Tennessee State Library and Archives, and online via Zoom.

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Attend in-person or virtually and see how some of our members became interested in genealogy. Share your own family history by sharing photos, artifacts, or heirlooms from your ancestors. We enjoy seeing photographs, clothing, jewelry, family history books or other books that talk about your family history.

This is an exciting get-together because we never know what items will be presented. Don't be shy! Bring something to share or attend to see what others are sharing.

The Freebie Table at the meeting will get a boost this month, as we just received a donation of a healthy number of genealogical journals to share with our attendees.

The Zoom link for this meeting is <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86074190603>



Conferences Aplenty in 2023

Many of our favorite genealogy conferences are back and better than ever this year. They can be great places to immerse yourself in top-quality lectures, interact with fellow genealogy enthusiasts at special events, and see the latest in genealogy products and publications.

Where are you traveling this year?

Conference / Link	Date / Location	Cost
RootsTech	March 2-4, 2023, Salt Lake City, UT, and virtual	\$ 98 in-person, free for virtual attendees
Institute for Genetic Genealogy Conference	March 11, 2023, San Diego, CA, and virtual	\$ 169 in-person, \$69 virtual
North Carolina Genealogical Society Virtual Conference	March 24-25, 2023, virtual only	To be announced
Tennessee Genealogical Society Spring Seminar with J. Mark Lowe and Dr. Deborah Abbott	March 25, 2023, virtual only	\$ 25 TNGS members, \$30 non-members
National Genealogical Society (NGS)	May 31 – June 3, 2023, Richmond, VA, and virtual	\$295/\$375 NGS member/non-member in-person, \$215/\$265 virtual

This is just a sampling of local or larger conferences. My favorite source for keeping track of genealogy conferences is [Conference Keeper](#).



MTGS November 2023 Seminar – Our Big 3-5

For our [35th Annual Genealogical Seminar](#), on **Saturday, November 18, 2023**, MTGS is planning a ‘day of DNA’ with **Dana Leeds**, author of [The Leeds Method](#).

Our Society members are always hungry for DNA-related content, and we intend to feed that hunger at this year’s Seminar. Save the date!



Hey, We Know Her!

One of my favorite genealogy-on-TV programs is [Finding Your Roots](#). Finding Your Roots is hosting a special National Virtual

Conversation Event **this Wednesday, January 18, at 7:00pm Central Time**, titled *Finding Your Roots: Documenting Family History in the Digital Age*.

One of the guest panelists is MTGS Member and past Board Member **Taneyia Koonce**, currently serving as an Executive Board Member for the [Afro-American Historical & Genealogical Society](#).

The event will include information about Season Nine of *Finding Your Roots*, and tips on how people can digitize files, responsibly share them for discovery by distant family members, and safeguard them for future generations.

Attendance at this virtual event is free. To register, visit [this Eventbrite link](#).



Looking for RootsMagic Kindred Spirits

One of our members is looking for someone with RootsMagic experience who can help him understand how best to use the product, and another member has a RootsMagic file but no way to read it (for free). If you have RootsMagic skills to offer, let me know and I'll put you in touch with these members.

If there are enough RootsMagic users out there, and at least one person willing to lead, it might be worth spinning up a RootsMagic special interest group.



When Those Shaky Green Leaves Turn Brown

I was recently contacted by a descendant of James Thomas Stavely of Washington County, GA, who died about 1925. She was trying to find his parents, and one of those **shaky green leaves** on Ancestry led her to a clue in Stewart County, TN, where I have research experience. The Ancestry hint purported to be a 1925 will of a **T. H.** Stavely – not quite a match to her ancestor's name. The descendant was sure, however, that it was her ancestor James T. Stavely since he had "disappeared" from Georgia about the same time, and asked me how to get a copy of the will.

I looked at the hint, and had to break the news to her that the reference was to a 1925 bond for Thomas H. Stavely, who had been elected as Stewart County Clerk (a county in which bonds and wills were recorded in the same book), so there was no will, much less for her James T. Stavely. That shaky green leaf in a "probate" collection was just a clerk's bond.

You would think that would be the end of the conversation, especially given that her Stavely line is firmly established by records in that part of Georgia back to 1810. But she was very new to research and very enticed by that shaky green leaf. Fortunately, I knew a long-time researcher of the Stavely line in Stewart County, and asked her to weigh in. She confirmed that the TN and GA families, though possibly connected back in North Carolina, had no close ties that could relieve the eagerness of the descendant to find her family.

A shaky green leaf does not take the place of genealogical proof!



Find My Savings

[FindMyPast](#), a great research destination for British research, is celebrating the release of the 1921 UK Census by offering a 21% savings on some of its subscriptions. The special offer ends tomorrow, so hurry if you've been thinking of trying out the site.



Congrats, Doc

If you didn't get that hoped-for DNA book in your Christmas stocking, consider this list of [FamilyTreeDNA's Top 17 Genetic Genealogy Books](#).

On that list is a great offering by one of our own Society members, Dr. David Dowell's [NextGen Genealogy: The DNA Connection](#).



Putting MTGS Seminar Tips to Practical Use

At the County Archives where I volunteer, we recently received an email that read: *"I was directed by the County Mayor's office to contact you pertaining to information about a gravesite located on a piece of land we are looking to purchase. Looking for any and all information you can provide about family rights and land owners rights in this situation. We are not looking to remove the site or cause any kind of issue for the family of the deceased - more so want to make sure that everything would be operated above par for all parties involved."*

Thanks to Graham Perry's great presentation at our November Seminar on [Tennessee Cemetery Laws](#), I knew exactly what resources to provide to the prospective landowner.

On a Lighter Note...

County Archives: A Final Resting Place for Records, not a Birthplace

At that same County Archives, I recently received a phone call from a gentleman who asked, "Is this the place to get a divorce?" Since we receive many requests for copies of divorce records, I replied with my canned answer – something along the lines of "Yes, but how long ago was the divorce? We have divorce records from 2000 and earlier, but the more-recent ones are still at the courthouse."

The gentleman kindly replied, "No, I want to file for divorce."

I steered him toward the local Chancery Court Clerk and Master's office.
