

24th Annual Genealogy Lock-In Agenda

Friday, October 17th, 2025

9:00 am – 9:50 am **From Names to Narratives: A Simple Guide to Writing**

Hannah Kubacak, Librarian from the Waco-McLennan County Library's Genealogy Center

Learn the art of biographical writing by weaving historical context, personal anecdotes, and family lore into your ancestors' stories. Review tips on maintaining accuracy while crafting a compelling narrative to preserve and share your family history. Join us and be inspired to transform your genealogy research into captivating biographical sketches cherished by future generations.

10:00 am – 10:50 am **Following a Civil Case Through Documents Filed in Court**

J. Mark Lowe, FUGA, Ky-Tn Research Associates Researcher

Learn the basics of the legal system. Understand the process of following a case through court including dockets, orders, depositions, etc. Find the key to solving a problem using these records.

11:00 am – 11:50 am **Jakten - Researching Your Scandinavian Ancestors**

Carl Smith, Manager of the Family History Research Center at the Clayton Library Campus

Do you have ancestors who emigrated from Denmark, Norway, or Sweden? These countries each did an amazing job of recording and preserving their church and government records from early-modern history until the present - many of which are accessible online. Review record sources and strategies for researchers ready to uncover their Scandinavian family roots.

11:50 am – 12:50 pm **Lunch on Your Own**

12:50 pm – 2:10 pm **The Stories of Our Lives: Beginning Your Family History**

Curt Witcher, Director of Special Collections at the Allen County Public Library

Discover (or review) straightforward steps to take when starting your family history. Easy steps for comfortably gathering as much information as possible will be shared along with how to organize that information to lead one to next steps and new discoveries.

2:25 pm – 3:15 pm **Research Road Trips: Productive for You, Fun for Family**

Jessica Horne Collins, President of the Clayton Library Friends

Uncover your family's past with a balance of research and family fun. Learn how to prepare yourself for research trips to libraries, courthouses, archives, and other repositories. Explore ways to take completed and in-progress research and craft a road trip that showcases your family history to loved ones of all ages.

3:30 pm – 4:20 pm **Resources for New Orleans Area Genealogical Research**

Stephen Stuart, President of the Genealogical Research Society of New Orleans

Family historians can access a wealth of libraries, archives, and other resources to learn more about their roots in Southeast Louisiana. This presentation provides an overview of those resources – both prominent and not so well known – and key features of their collections. Participants will also receive contact information to get started.

4:35 pm – 5:25 pm **Family Trees Get Smart: AI as Your Genealogy Assistant**

Sherri Taggart Ahmadzadeh, Chief Genealogist at Family Tree Tracer, LLC

Artificial Intelligence is transforming how we discover, analyze, and connect family history records. Join us to explore the emerging ways AI tools are revolutionizing genealogical research - from document analysis to pattern recognition to breakthrough research techniques. Whether you're a tech enthusiast or just getting started with digital research, this presentation will help you harness AI's potential in uncovering your family's story.

5:40 pm – 6:30 pm **All in the Family: Using Collateral Research to Build Your Family Tree**

Sandra Crowley, Director of Development for the Texas State Genealogical Society

Collateral research is a powerful genealogical method that extends beyond direct ancestors to investigate the broader family network. Explore strategies to find additional records, reconstruct family dynamics, and navigate challenges posed by missing direct ancestor documentation. This approach is useful when primary records are scarce, offering contextual clues, migration patterns, and unexpected biographic details. Learn to transform fragmented family history into a rich and comprehensive narrative.

