



Colorado Genealogical Society

Newsletter

September 2025 Volume 50 Issue 7

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President's Message

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Dear Members,

As summer winds down, the CGS administrative team is gearing up for another exciting year. Looking back, we can be proud of a successful season of programming and events. Looking ahead, we're planning presentations that we hope will inspire your research and expand your genealogy skills.

This year, we're introducing a series of DNA-focused programs, offered both in-person and online. The details are still in development, but watch for announcements in upcoming newsletters and on our Facebook page.

Our tour of the Colorado State Archives filled quickly—a clear sign of member enthusiasm! While this tour is already at capacity, we look forward to offering more opportunities with research partners throughout the region.

We're also pleased to see the new Family Tree Maker Work Group, launched this summer by Doug Short, already attracting active participation. You can learn more about this member-led group on our website.

Not every update has been without challenge. When our long-time printer surprised us with a steep price increase for *The Colorado Genealogist*, Treasurer Patrick Purcell found a new, local printer in the Lakewood/Golden area. The result? Lower costs, high-quality printing, and a valued face-to-face partnership. We're excited to send out our first issue with this new vendor.

Thank you for your continued membership and support. We look forward to seeing you this fall as we begin the 2025-2026 program year—together building a stronger community of genealogists.

Bobbi King

Society Support Staff

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Marilyn Alvord, Web assistant

Bible Rescue: Preserving Family History, One Bible at a Time

Family Bibles are far more than religious texts—they are treasured historical artifacts. Many contain handwritten genealogical records, personal notes, and family stories that span generations. Yet all too often, these irreplaceable heirlooms are lost through estate sales, discarded during downsizing, or left forgotten in storage.

Bible Rescue, a nonprofit organization, is dedicated to recovering these Bibles, preserving the records inside, and reconnecting them with living descendants or ensuring they find a respectful new home. Each rescued Bible is carefully handled, with both the physical book and its unique historical information safeguarded for future generations.

If your society members come across a family Bible, Bible Rescue can often assist with shipping costs—especially via USPS Media Mail—and will share updates when the Bible has found its new home.

To learn more about this important work, or to search their growing online database of rescued Bibles, visit BibleRescue.org.

CGS WriteNOW! Returns September 14

Ready to turn your family history into written stories? WriteNOW! is back, starting Sunday, September 14, at 1:30 pm on Zoom. You can register now at cogensoc.us.

This supportive group meets monthly—usually on the second Sunday—with two exceptions in 2025: February 15 and May 17 (third Sundays). Last year's participants produced seven finished works—proof that inspiration and accountability really do get results!

Whether you've already started writing or are just thinking about it, you'll find encouragement, ideas, and practical tips to preserve your family's stories for future generations.

Come see if WriteNOW! is the writing group you've been looking for.

Join Us for the September Lunch Bunch In Person!

The kids are hitting the books, so let's hit the [School House Kitchen & Libations](#)! Join the CGS Lunch Bunch for good food, fun conversation, and maybe a little recess of our own in this 1882 schoolhouse turned bistro.

Where: [5660 Olde Wadsworth Blvd., Arvada, CO](#)

When: Thursday, September 25, 2025 @ 11:30AM

RSVP: Please email lunchbunch@cogensoc.us to reserve your spot.

We can't wait to see you there!

Celebrate Your Colorado Roots with the First Families Recognition Program

Since 1983, the First Families of Colorado Recognition Program has honored the stories of the people who shaped our state's history. In that time, we've recognized:

- 228 First Family applicants (before 1861)
- 350 Territorial applicants (1861-1876)
- 439 Centennial applicants (1876-1926)

Many early honorees trace their roots to Southern Colorado's historic Hispanic settlements. Our very first recognized family (F-1) was that of Jose Vicente Velasquez, who lived in what became Conejos County before February 28, 1861. More than 160 years later, his great-grandson was honored in 2024 as F-227—proof that these stories live on through generations.

While Colorado is often called a "Pass-Through State"—a place where gold- and silver-seekers paused before moving on—your ancestor didn't have to settle here permanently to qualify. Even a short stay that left a record is enough. For example, our most recent honoree, Brian Edward Smith (F-228), traced his heritage to James M. Coombs, who spent just five years in Colorado between 1859 and 1864.

Do you have a Colorado connection? Whether your ancestor built a homestead, mined for gold, or simply passed through on the way to new horizons, their story is part of our state's heritage.

Learn how to apply at the Colorado Council of Genealogical Societies website: [CoCouncil.org](https://cogcouncil.org). Your family's history could be the next to join this proud legacy.

Honoring Our Roots: Celebrating Grandparents and Ancestors in September

September offers not one but two special opportunities to reflect on the importance of family heritage:

- Grandparents' Day – celebrated on the first Sunday after Labor Day
- Ancestor Appreciation Day – recognized on September 27

Whether you're just beginning your family history journey or have been researching for years, these days are a perfect chance to share your discoveries, preserve memories, and spark curiosity in younger generations. Here are a few simple and meaningful ways to celebrate:

Ideas for Grandparents' Day

- Interview a grandparent or elder relative – Record their stories, favorite sayings, or family recipes.
- Create a memory book – Gather photos and handwritten memories to share with grandchildren.
- Plan a family tree day – Sit down with the kids and build a simple tree together, talking about each person's place in the family story.

Ideas for Ancestor Appreciation Day

- Visit an ancestral grave – Clean the headstone, leave flowers, or simply spend a moment in reflection.
- Share an ancestor spotlight – Post a short bio and photo on social media or with your genealogy group.
- Create an "ancestor altar" or memory shelf – Include photos, heirlooms, or objects that represent your heritage.

Do you have a tradition or creative way of honoring your family's legacy? We'd love to hear it! Send your stories or photos to newsletter@cogensoc.us, and we may feature them in an upcoming issue.

September Member Meeting and Genealogy Program

Saturday, September 20, 2025, 9:30-11:30

This month we will hold a meeting for our membership (that's you) with updates from the Society President and a financial report from the Treasurer. Following the member meeting at about 10:15, we will present our educational program.

Publishing Your Genealogy Book presented by Bobbi King, who has published several books using Lulu.com and Amazon. The discussion will cover the major print-on-demand publication sites that publish your family history manuscript.

Intro to Genetic Genealogy

FREE Program – Open to the Public - In-Person Only

When: Friday, September 19, 2025, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Where: Hoffman Library, [1298 Peoria Street, Aurora, CO 80011](#)

Facilitator & Presenter: Anna Phillips

RSVP to: secretary@cogensoc.us

Are you curious about DNA testing and what your matches really mean? Whether you're just starting out or want to better understand your results, this beginner-friendly session will help you take the next step in your genetic genealogy journey.

What you'll learn:

- The basics of DNA testing and how to choose a testing company
- How to interpret your DNA matches
- How to use the Leeds Method and clustering tools in Ancestry and GEDmatch
- Strategies for identifying unknown matches
- How DNA is used to solve adoption, misattributed parentage, and Doe cases

Anna Phillips is the founder of *Uncovered Roots* and has more than 20 years of experience in genealogical research. She holds a History degree from the University of Colorado Denver and completed the *Fundamentals of Genetic Genealogy* program at the University of Florida in 2023. Anna volunteers full time with United Data Connect, a Denver-based firm using Investigative Genetic Genealogy to assist in law enforcement cold cases. She has also helped countless individuals reconnect with biological family members as a dedicated Search Angel. Anna currently serves as Secretary of the Colorado Genealogical Society.

Join us for this informative afternoon—perfect for anyone who's ever asked, “*Who is this DNA match, and how do they fit into my tree?*”

Don't Miss Alexander Tolksdorf at This Year's Colorado Palatines Seminar!

The Colorado Chapter of Palatines to America is pleased to announce that Alex Tolksdorf has accepted our invitation to be the speaker at our Fall seminar, 15 November 2025. Visit www.copalam.us for more details.

Accredited Genealogist Alexander Tolksdorf, AG®, brings his expertise in German, Dutch, and Eastern European research to four dynamic sessions you won't want to miss: *Maximizing Research Success in the Arolsen Archives*, *Eastern European Genealogy for Beginners*, *Tracing Your Dutch Roots*, and *How to Get Your Family Engaged in Your Research*. Whether you're

looking to expand your skills, explore new regions, or inspire your relatives, Alex's presentations offer practical strategies and fresh ideas for every level of researcher.

The seminar will be a hybrid event. A recording will be made available for 30 days to those who register. In-person attendees who register by 27 October 2025 will be eligible for lunch with Alex. There will be lots of door prizes for both in-person and virtual attendees.

Register electronically using PayPal: go to <https://www.copalam.us/> and click on the seminar registration link. Registration is \$50.

How September Epidemics Shaped Family History

by Kate Penney Howard

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September's return to school and crowded conditions historically triggered epidemic seasons that devastated families and communities. Understanding these health patterns helps genealogists locate death records, explain family dispersals, and interpret seemingly incomplete family structures.

Cholera, typhoid, diphtheria, and influenza often peaked in early fall as people returned from summer travels and children gathered in schools. These epidemics created clusters of deaths that appear in vital records, cemetery records, and newspaper obituaries. I was surprised to see in the newspaper that my own great-grandmother was part of a back-to-school typhoid outbreak as a young child.

Recognizing these patterns can help identify missing children or explain why certain family lines suddenly disappeared.

Medical History Research Tips:

- Search local newspapers for "epidemic," "contagion," or disease names plus dates (or try the disease names with your ancestral surnames)
- Check quarantine records maintained by health departments
- Look for school closure notices indicating disease outbreaks
- Examine cemetery records for clusters of deaths in short time periods

Before modern medicine, families often scattered during epidemics, sending children to relatives in "healthier" locations. This practice can explain why children appear in unexpected census locations or why family groups seem incomplete in certain records.

Death certificates from epidemic periods often contain more detailed information as authorities tried to track disease sources. Hospital records, when available, may include next-of-kin information not found elsewhere. Religious records often expanded during crisis periods as communities sought spiritual comfort.

Research Resources:

- State and local health department archives
 - Medical college historical collections
 - Newspaper digitization projects focusing on health crises
 - Cemetery association records and burial registers
-

AI Query of the Month

“Write a short story about my great-grandmother using what I know so far.”

Genealogists often gather facts—names, dates, places—but it can be hard to turn those details into a meaningful narrative. This prompt helps you transform research into a story, even if you only have a handful of facts. It’s a gentle, creative way to begin writing family history.

Try saying this to ChatGPT:

“I’m writing about my great-grandmother, (name). She was born in 1887 in Missouri, married in 1909, and later moved to Oklahoma and Colorado. She was known for her strong faith, hard work, and sense of humor. Can you write a short story or character sketch based on these facts?”

Bonus tip:

You don’t have to get it perfect the first time. You can say,

“Can you make it sound more like a journal entry?”

“Add more historical detail about farm life in Oklahoma in the 1910s.”

“Can you simplify this so it’s easy for kids to read?”

AI is a powerful storytelling assistant—no tech background required. Just talk to it like you would a helpful writing partner.

Tech on Tuesday

Tech on Tuesday focuses on the technology tools that can assist and support your genealogy journey. Held on the 4th Tuesday of the month, topics may include using AI, new features in genealogy software like Family Search, RootsMagic, or Ancestry, or introductions to other software that could help with organization or visualization of your family tree.

Check the [Events page on the CGS website](#) to see what the topic will be on Tuesday, September 23 at 7:00pm.

Society Management Workshop

Join Us for a Day of Learning, Strategy, and Inspiration

Saturday, October 4, 2025 | 9:00 AM - 2:50 PM (MT)

Free Online Workshop - Registration Now Open!

The Colorado Council of Genealogical Societies invites society leaders, board members, active volunteers, and all society members to a free, interactive online workshop designed to help your genealogy society lead, grow, and thrive.

This year's program features an energizing keynote plus four focused sessions packed with practical strategies and fresh ideas. Whether you join for one topic or stay for the full day, you'll come away inspired, informed, and ready to take action.

9:00 - 10:00 AM | Keynote

Energize Your Message: Presenting with Power and Purpose presented by Ed Moehlenkamp, Leadership Development Consultant

Learn how to deliver clear, engaging presentations—online or in person—using strong structure, confident body language, and minimal slides.

10:10 - 11:10 AM | Session 1

Sustainability Strategies for Society Boards (Panel Discussion)

Discover practical ways to recruit and retain board members, prevent burnout, and build strong, lasting leadership.

11:20 AM - 12:20 PM | Session 2

Membership Growth and Retention (Panel Discussion)

Fresh ideas for attracting guests, welcoming new members, and keeping engagement high all year long.

12:30 - 1:30 PM | Session 3

Designing Flyers and Social Media with Canva presented by Barbara Lane

Create polished flyers, event promotions, and social media posts using Canva's free nonprofit tools—no design skills required.

1:40 - 2:40 PM | Session 4

Using AI to Supercharge Your Newsletter and Website presented by Nancy Dierker

See how tools like ChatGPT can help you brainstorm, write, and edit content for newsletters, announcements, and your society's website.

2:40 - 2:50 PM | Wrap-Up and Evaluations

Share your feedback, network informally, and get inspired for what's next.

[Register now.](#) After registering, you'll receive a single Zoom link—use it to attend one session or the whole day.

Family Tree Maker Workgroup – Share, Learn, Connect

Are you a Family Tree Maker (FTM) user—beginner or pro? The *CGS Family Tree Maker Workgroup* is a friendly, no-pressure gathering where members share questions, challenges, and tips for using this powerful software. There are no lectures or homework—just a collaborative space where fellow genealogists help each other get the most out of FTM.

We're also working with **Software MacKiev**, the program's developer, to become a registered FTM Users Group. This will open the door to exclusive benefits like product discounts and access to MacKiev staff for deeper dives into topics chosen by the group.

Join us on the **3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm** via Google Meet. Open to CGS members—register through the [Events page](#) at cogensoc.us.

Tracking Educational Records from September Past

by Kate Penney Howard

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As children return to school each fall, genealogists have a golden opportunity to explore their ancestors' educational journeys. School records represent one of genealogy's most underutilized treasure troves, often containing birth dates, parent names, addresses, and family migration patterns that appear nowhere else.

Before compulsory education laws, school attendance was inconsistent and often seasonal. Many rural children attended school primarily in winter months when farm work decreased. City children might start and stop school based on family economic needs. These patterns can help genealogists understand family circumstances and locate missing records.

Research Strategies:

- Contact school district offices for historical records (many keep records 75-100 years), but first, confirm what district holds your school's records.
- Check state archives for consolidated school records
- Look for enrollment records in local newspapers announcing new students
- Search for teachers' personal papers in historical society collections

School records can include maiden names of mothers, exact birth dates, previous schools attended (indicating moves), and siblings' names. Graduation programs, school newspapers, and yearbooks provide social context and may mention family events or circumstances.

Plus, if my grandchildren ever catch hold of my report cards, they will be in fits of laughter. “Katie talks too much.” And now, I’m a pastor and genealogical speaker. That tracks! What will your descendants find about you?

Essential Resources:

- State Department of Education archives
- University special collections (many hold local school district records)
- Teachers College archives and alumni records
- Local genealogical society school record projects

Don't overlook less obvious educational records: Sunday school rolls, vacation Bible school attendance, church newsletters and newspapers can be a treasure trove. These documents often survive when formal school records have been destroyed, and they frequently contain different information that can break through research barriers or confirm uncertain family connections.

<h3>See What You Might Have Missed</h3> <p>Members of CGS have access to Video Links of Programs and Classes. These recorded programs will be available, at least for a limited time (usually around 30 days), in the Members Only section of the CGS website.</p>	<h3>Don't Forget to Check Out the Library</h3> <p>If you are interested in genealogy and history events hosted by the Denver Public Library, go to the Denver Public Library Events Page</p>
<h3>Newsletter Submissions</h3> <p>Have something you'd like to share in the newsletter? Submissions must be received by the 20th of the month to be considered for the next issue. While publication isn't guaranteed, all submissions will receive a response from the newsletter team.</p> <p>Send submissions to:</p> <p>newsletter@cogensoc.us.</p>	<h3>Questions??</h3> <p>Do you have questions for or about the Colorado Genealogical Society? Did you know you can email us at cgscontact@cogensoc.us? That's right. We'll be happy to help you get the answers you need.</p> <p>If you have questions about any of the excellent archives around the state, you can save time by contacting them directly.</p>

Message from the Editor

The articles in this newsletter have been written by the people in the know. The articles may have been edited by ChatGPT 5.0 to add clarity and consistency. Our feature, AI Query of the Month, is written in conjunction with ChatGPT.

If you have any feedback on this newsletter, please send an email to newsletter@cogensoc.us.

90 Days of Genealogy with CGS - Mark Your Calendars

Here is the schedule of events for the next three months! To register for any of these events, go to www.cogensoc.us. To join the In Person Lunch Bunch, email lunchbunch@cogensoc.us.

September	October	November
8 - 4:00pm Monthly Board Meeting	11 - 10:00am Beginning Genealogy	8 - 10:00am Beginning Genealogy
13 - 10:00am Beginning Genealogy	12 - 1:30pm-3:30pm WriteNOW	9 - 1:30pm-3:30pm WriteNOW
14 - 1:30pm-3:30pm WriteNOW	13 - 4:00pm Monthly Board Meeting	10 - 4:00pm Monthly Board Meeting
17 - 7:00pm Family Tree Maker Users	15 - 7:00pm Family Tree Maker Users	13 - 11:30am Virtual Lunch Bunch
18 - 11:30am Virtual Lunch Bunch	16 - 11:30am Virtual Lunch Bunch	15 - 9:30am-11:30am CGS Monthly Meeting From Sealed Records to Open Histories by Judy Russell
19 - 1:00pm Intro to Genetic Genealogy by Anna Phillips in person	18 - 9:30am-11:30am CGS Monthly Meeting Saying Goodbye: Our Ancestor's Traditions of Death and Dying by Sylvia Tracy-Doolos	19 - 7:00pm Family Tree Maker Users
20 - 9:30am-11:30am CGS Monthly Meeting Publishing Genealogy by Bobbi King	18 - 2:00pm-4:00pm Finding Birth Parents Using DNA by Libby Dollar	20 - 11:30am In-Person Lunch Bunch
23 - 7:00pm-9:00pm Tech on Tuesdays via Zoom	23 - 11:30am In-Person Lunch Bunch	25 - No Tech on Tuesdays due to Thanksgiving
25 - 11:30am In-Person Lunch Bunch	28 - 7:00pm-9:00pm Tech on Tuesdays via Zoom	

Don't forget to register for events at

<http://www.cogensoc.us/>

Unless otherwise noted, all Colorado Genealogical Society meetings are free and open to the public. Please remember to [register in advance](#) for all Zoom activities, as attendance is limited to 100 connections. If you're unable to attend, kindly cancel by clicking the "cancel" link in your registration email.