



Colorado Genealogical Society

Newsletter

November 2025 Volume 50 Issue 9

Nancy Dierker, Editor

President's Message

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Dear Members,

The Colorado Genealogical Society (CGS) is more than an accumulation of members—it is a vital part of a national network of genealogical excellence. One of our most enduring contributions is *The Colorado Genealogist*, our quarterly journal that has been proudly published for nearly eighty years. This publication not only chronicles Colorado history and genealogy but also carries our legacy far beyond state lines. Today, it is found on the shelves of prestigious libraries and research institutions across the United States and Canada, where genealogists and historians access the rich content CGS has faithfully curated.

Two key programs help us maintain this broad visibility:

Journal Exchanges: Through mutual exchange agreements, CGS swaps printed copies of *The Colorado Genealogist* with partner societies and libraries at no cost. These publications are then delivered to the

Special Collections and Archives department at the Denver Public Library (DPL), where they are cataloged and made available to the public. As genealogy librarian Jaymie Middendorf notes:

"The exchange is a wonderful program, and the library has been able to add many titles that we wouldn't have ordinarily been able to obtain."

This program, now more than two decades strong, has resulted in hundreds of journals added to DPL's shelves.

Society Support Staff

Communications & Publications

Nancy Dierker, Editor, CGS Newsletter
Kelly Glenn, Social Media
Nancy Ratay, Editor, *The Colorado Genealogist*
Karin Conway, Assistant editor
Leslie Karnauskas, Proofreader
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Education

Carol Darrow, Beginning Genealogy & WriteNOW!
Bobbi King, Program Coordinator
Doug Short, Program Asst
Lucia Mears, Program Asst

Membership

Sandy Ronayne, Chair

Society Delegates and Liaisons

Pattie Apple, NGS & CCGS delegate
Sylvia Tracy-Doolos, DPL liaison

Technical Support

Carol Darrow, Zoom manager
Becky Clark, Video editing
Gary & Denise Williams, Mailing
Libby Dollar, Google Manager & Web Support
Joel Jones, Web Manager
Martha Van Driel, Web assistant
Marilyn Alvord, Web assistant

Institutional Subscriptions: Some organizations support CGS through paid subscriptions to *The Colorado Genealogist*. While the financial gain is modest, the impact is invaluable—our journal continues to be preserved in major research libraries and family history centers across the continent.

Of course, none of this would be possible without our dedicated team of volunteers—the editor, copy editors, proofreaders, mailing crew, and treasurer—who work behind the scenes to produce each issue. Their diligence and high standards uphold the quality and reputation of our publication. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to each of them for preserving our shared heritage and ensuring that Colorado's family stories remain accessible for generations to come.

Bobbi King

Help Wanted: Programs Chair

CGS is seeking a Programs Chair—a volunteer to help bring inspiring speakers and topics to our members. The Programs Chair coordinates our monthly programs (in-person, virtual, or hybrid) and collaborates with the board to plan engaging presentations and special events for genealogists at all levels. It's a creative, social role at the heart of what we offer members.

What you'll do:

- Contact and schedule speakers
- Introduce presenters at meetings
- Help brainstorm program themes
- Coordinate with the communications team for promotion

You'll have strong support from volunteers who manage Zoom hosting, publicity, and communications—you won't be doing it alone!

If you love genealogy, enjoy organizing ideas, and want to make a visible impact, this is the perfect role for you.

Interested? Contact Bobbi King at president@cogensoc.us.

Join Us for the November Lunch Bunch In Person!



Fall is the time of Oktoberfest! This month, we are gathering at the Lowry Beer Garden to celebrate our bounty of friends and family.

Where: [Lowry Beer Garden](#)

7577 E Academy Blvd, Denver, CO

When: Thursday, Nov. 20,, 2025 @ 11:30AM

RSVP: Please email

lunchbunch@cogensoc.us to reserve your spot.

We can't wait to see you there! If you aren't in a rush after lunch, the Wings Over the Rockies museum is right next door. It's a great place to learn more about aviation and the role Lowry played in training aviation specialists!

Celebrate Your Roots

While November is commonly linked to Thanksgiving, it is also the month when America recognizes the commitment and sacrifices of our veterans.

History of Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving

Veterans Day: Honoring All Who Served

Veterans Day, observed each year on November 11, honors all men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces. The holiday traces its origins to the end of World War I, when the armistice between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918. Originally known as Armistice Day, it was established in 1919 by President Woodrow Wilson to commemorate peace and to honor the sacrifices of those who fought in the "war to end all wars."

In 1954, following World War II and the Korean War, Congress amended the observance to become Veterans Day, expanding its meaning to recognize all American veterans, living and deceased, who have served in times of war or peace. Unlike Memorial Day, which specifically honors those who died in service, Veterans Day pays tribute to all who have worn the uniform of the U.S. military.

Today, communities across the nation mark the day with ceremonies, parades, and moments of silence. It serves as a reminder of the dedication and sacrifice of our veterans, and an opportunity to express gratitude for their service in protecting our freedoms.

Special Program In honor of Veterans Day: Vietnam Veterans In Memory

This month, CGS is honored to host Marylee Hagen for a deeply meaningful presentation on the Vietnam Veterans In Memory Program, a powerful initiative sponsored by the Friends of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Unlike the names listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C., the In Memory Program recognizes those veterans who returned home from the war and later died—often due to illness or injury related to their service. This program gives families the opportunity to have their loved ones' sacrifice officially and permanently acknowledged.

Marylee, a Colorado genealogist with specialties in Norwegian and Irish research, brings both her expertise and personal connection to this topic. She honors her own brother through the program and encourages others to do the same for veterans in their own families.

Join us for this moving and informative session that blends genealogy, remembrance, and personal history. You'll come away with a deeper understanding of the program and practical steps to enroll your loved ones. The event will be the evening of Veteran's Day, Tuesday, Nov. 11 at 7:00pm. Register at the [CGS](#) website. The Zoom link will be provided by email.

Thanksgiving: A Time of Gratitude and Tradition

Thanksgiving, celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November, is one of the oldest and most cherished American holidays. Its roots trace back to 1621, when the Pilgrims at Plymouth Colony shared a harvest feast with the Wampanoag people, an event later remembered as the "First Thanksgiving." Though not an annual tradition at the time, days of thanksgiving were observed sporadically in the colonies.

In 1863, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a national day of Thanksgiving to be observed each November, calling on Americans to give thanks and seek healing as a nation. Congress formally established Thanksgiving as a federal holiday in 1941.

Today, Thanksgiving is marked by family gatherings, festive meals, and traditions such as parades and football games. At its heart, the holiday is a time to reflect on gratitude, community, and the blessings of the year.

Ancestry User Group Forming

Join us on Saturday afternoon, Nov 8 at 2:00pm for the organizational meeting of the [Ancestry.com](#) User Group. Register to attend on the [CGS website](#) on the Events page.

November Member Meeting and Genealogy Program

Saturday, November 15, 2025, 9:30-11:30

This month we will hold a meeting for our membership 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:

"From Sealed Records to Open Histories" presented by Judy Russell

This presentation focuses on using adoption laws to research family history, particularly using adoption records once considered "sealed."

Judy Russell is a genealogist with a law degree, who writes her blog as "The Legal Genealogist." Her presentations involve researching the intersections of law and genealogy.

Family Tree Maker User Group – Special Sessions Announced!

At our October meeting, group discussion revealed that several features of Family Tree Maker (FTM) software were not well understood. To help address this, CGS contacted FTM directly, and we're thrilled to announce that **Mark Olsen, Family Tree Maker Ambassador** to genealogical societies, will join us for two special presentations this fall and winter.

Friday, Nov. 21, 2025 at 7:00 PM	• Maps • Task List • Source Reports
Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2026 at 7:00 PM	• Charting Companion • Error Report • Duplicate Individuals

These sessions will offer an excellent opportunity to deepen your FTM knowledge and get personalized answers to your questions. We hope you'll join us for these informative and interactive discussions!

Please note: attendance is reserved for CGS members, and advance registration is required through the CGS website.

Mingle, Jingle, and Genealogy - December 6, 2:00pm

On Saturday, Dec 6, CGS is having a holiday party, an opportunity to raise a glass in celebration of the year and a salute to our ancestors. See the flyer on the last page.

DNA Series

Finding Birth Parents Using DNA: A Historigen Case Study

Presented by Libby Dollar, CGS Member & Co-founder of Historigen

In October, CGS welcomed Libby Dollar for an insightful case study on how DNA can be used to trace the identity of biological parents. The case centered on DJ, a 53-year-old adoptee seeking to identify his birth mother and father after conventional searches had failed.

Case Overview

- DJ knew his biological mother's full name and a few details of his birth in 1971.
- He had already taken an AncestryDNA test and shared access to his results.
- Several promising DNA matches existed, but few had family trees, creating a challenge.

Key Research Steps

- Leeds Method Analysis: Libby organized 40 DNA matches into 8 clusters to identify shared ancestors.
- Tree-Building: Each cluster was expanded back two generations to locate common ancestral couples (MRCAs) and work back down to possible parents, including two brothers, one of whom was DJ's birth father.
- Public Record Investigation: Yearbooks, obituaries, marriage records, and online databases helped identify a potential match named Karen (b. 1957).
- Facebook Search: Social media confirmed Karen's identity and life details aligned with the findings.

Outcome

- DJ contacted Karen directly and confirmed she was his biological mother.
- DNA testing later validated Karen as the parent.
- The identity of DJ's biological father was also confirmed after Karen shared additional information.
- The unexpected DNA cluster disconnect was resolved when Karen revealed both of her parents had been adoptees.

Key Takeaways

- DNA testing combined with traditional research methods can solve even decades-old mysteries.
- Tools like the Leeds Method, Ancestry Pro Tools, public record databases, and even Facebook are powerful when used together.
- Clear communication with clients and thoughtful interpretation of clues are vital—especially when DNA doesn't align as expected.

If you are interested in learning how to use DNA to help you identify or confirm family relations, Anna Phillips will present **Introduction to Genetic Genealogy** in December at the Hoffman Heights Library in Aurora.

Libby will be back in January to present another case study.

AI Query of the Month

Since we have started the new DNA series, you might be looking for more information on how it can help you. DNA testing has transformed modern genealogy, but it can feel overwhelming to know where to start—or what to do with your results. This month, let's use AI to design a structured study plan for exploring DNA in genealogy, whether you're new to DNA research or looking to sharpen your skills.

Ask ChatGPT to develop a personalized study plan using the question:

“Create a 6-week study plan to help me learn how to use DNA in genealogy research, including testing types, interpreting results, building trees, and identifying unknown parents.”

Here's a sample outline ChatGPT might suggest:

Week 1: DNA Basics

- Types of DNA tests (autosomal, mtDNA, Y-DNA)
- Major testing companies (Ancestry, 23andMe, MyHeritage, FTDNA)

Week 2: Understanding Match Lists

- Centimorgans and relationship estimates
- Using shared matches and clusters

Week 3: Working with Genetic Networks

- How to apply the Leeds Method
- Identifying MRCAs (Most Recent Common Ancestors)

Week 4: Integrating DNA with Traditional Research

- Triangulation, tree building, and surnames
- Using public records to confirm DNA clues

Week 5: Solving Unknown Parentage

- Using DNA to identify birth parents and grandparents

- Ethical considerations and privacy concerns

Week 6: Advanced Tools and Next Steps

- Third-party tools (DNAPainter, Genetic Affairs)
- Joining DNA study groups and further learning

Bonus Tip: You can ask ChatGPT to customize this plan based on your experience or focus area (e.g., Scandinavian heritage, adoption cases, etc.).

Try it this month:

1. Open ChatGPT (or another AI tool) and enter:
2. ***“Walk me through how to analyze my DNA matches using the Leeds Method.”***
3. Then, let the exploration begin!

Tech on Tuesday

Tech on Tuesday (ToTs) 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 tools that could help with organization, visualization or understanding of your family tree.

Due to Thanksgiving and Christmas, ToTs is on hiatus until January.

Help Preserve Colorado's Historic Cemetery Records

Informational Webinar: November 4 | 6-8 PM (MT)

Hosted by the Colorado Historic Cemetery Association (CHCA)

The Colorado Historic Cemetery Association (CHCA) is launching the Cemetery Records Preservation Project, a statewide effort to protect and make accessible the historic records of Colorado's small and independent cemeteries.

Project Goals

- Identify and safeguard at-risk cemetery records
- Preserve records in secure, public repositories
- Create a searchable database of cemetery record locations
- Partner with libraries, historical societies, and genealogy groups

Volunteer Opportunities

CHCA is seeking volunteers with experience in genealogy, local history, or archival work for:

Outreach & Standards Working Group

- Develop processes, templates, and data tools for statewide use
- Meets virtually; flexible scheduling

County-Based Volunteer Teams

- Work locally to locate and preserve cemetery records
- Engage with families and community organizations

Join our free informational webinar on November 4, 6:00-8:00 PM to explore how you can help—no obligation to participate.

Scan the QR code to register and receive updates.



Your involvement will support families, researchers, and communities for generations to come.



See What You Might Have Missed

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.

Don't Forget to Check Out the Library

If you are interested in genealogy and history events hosted by the Denver Public Library, go to [the Denver Public Library Events Page](#)

Newsletter Submissions

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.

Send submissions to:

newsletter@cogensoc.us.

Questions??

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.

If you have questions about any of the excellent archives around the state, you can save time by contacting them directly.

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.

November	December	January
8 - 10:00am Beginning Genealogy 8 - 2:00pm Ancestry User Group 9 - 1:30pm-3:30pm WriteNOW 10 - 7:00pm Monthly Board Meeting 11 - 7:00pm Special Veteran's Day Program 12 - 10:00am The Master Genealogist Users 13 - 11:30am Virtual Lunch Bunch 15 - 9:30am-11:30am CGS Monthly Meeting From Sealed Records to Open Histories by Judy Russell 20 - 11:30am In-Person Lunch Bunch 21 - 7:00pm Family Tree Maker Users  25 - No Tech on Tuesdays due to Thanksgiving	6 - 2:00pm Mingle, Jingle, & Genealogy Holiday Party 10 - 10:00am The Master Genealogist Users 13 - 10:00am Beginning Genealogy 13 - 3:00pm Intro to Genetic Genealogy by Anna Phillips in person 14 - 1:30pm-3:30pm WriteNOW 13 - 11:30am Virtual Lunch Bunch  Due to the heavy holiday schedule in December the following events will not be held: • CGS Monthly Meeting • Tech on Tuesdays • In-Person Lunch Bunch • Family Tree Maker Users	10 - 10:00am Beginning Genealogy 11 - 1:30pm-3:30pm WriteNOW 12 - 7:00pm Monthly Board Meeting 14 - 10:00am The Master Genealogist Users 15 - 11:30am Virtual Lunch Bunch 17 - 9:30am-11:30am CGS Monthly Meeting Heir to the Family Tree - Now What by Nancy Dierker 17 - 2:00pm Finding Birth Parents Using DNA by Libby Dollar 21 - 7:00pm Family Tree Maker Users 22 - 11:30am In-Person Lunch Bunch 27 - 7:00pm Tech on Tuesdays

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.

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.

Don't forget to register for events at

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



Mingle, Jingle, and Genealogy

The Colorado Genealogical Society is hosting a holiday party on Saturday, December 6, at 2:00pm.

We have reserved a room at the

Lowry Beer Garden

so dig out your Santa hat and join us for some cheer. This is a chance to hang out in person and visit with those you have been seeing virtually all year. Or, you might meet someone new who shares your passion for genealogy.

Put your jingle on and let's mingle!

[Lowry Beer Garden](#)

7577 E Academy Blvd, Denver, CO 80230

We hope to see you there.