



St. Louis Genealogical Society

Presents the

54th Annual Family History Conference

A Genealogical Journey Through Missouri History



Saturday, 18 April 2026

Maryland Heights Community Center

Syllabus

Featuring

John Dougan and Christina Miller

AND

Andrew Hahn, Ilene Murray, and Carol Whitton

Welcome to
St. Louis Genealogical Society's
54th Annual Family History Conference

**A Genealogical Journey
Through Missouri History**



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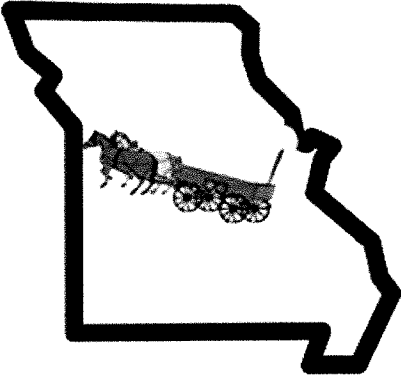
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A Genealogical Journey Through Missouri History

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A Genealogical Journey Through Missouri History

Schedule of Events

Time	Lectures	Room
9:45 a.m.–10:00 a.m.	Announcements	Millennium
10:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.	54A <i>Migrating West to Missouri: Whitton</i>	Millennium
11:00 a.m.–11:15 a.m.	Break and Browsing	
11:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m.	54B <i>Moving Through—Moving On: Dougan</i>	Millennium
12:15 p.m.–1:15 p.m.	Lunch and Browsing	
1:15 p.m.–2:15 p.m.	54C <i>Using County Court Record Books and Associated Records for Genealogy: Miller</i>	Millennium
	54D <i>Research Like a Pro!: Murray</i>	Infinity
2:15 p.m.–2:30 p.m.	Break and Browsing	
2:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.	54E <i>Mapping St. Louis: A History of the Gateway City in Rare Maps: Hahn</i> 54F <i>Introduction to the Missouri State Archives: Miller</i>	Millennium Infinity

**We encourage you to explore the book sales/Trading Post room during the lunch break.
This room will close at 2:30 p.m.**

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Speakers' Biographies

Featured Speakers: John Dougan and Christina Miller

John Dougan is the Missouri State Archivist and the Records Services Director for the Records and Archives Division of the Office of the Secretary of State. His leadership has led to the development of the award-winning Missouri State Archives and Missouri Digital Heritage websites, numerous innovations in the State Imaging Lab and State Records Center, growth of the onsite and online volunteer program, and ongoing work with a pilot electronic records archives. He is an advocate for free online access to genealogical records. He is currently a board member for the National Genealogical Society.



Christina Miller is the Reference Services Director at the Missouri State Archives, where she has assisted researchers for more than ten years. Christina holds a Masters of Archival Studies from the University of British Columbia School of Library, Archival and Information Studies and a Bachelor of Arts in history from Truman State University. She is a Certified Archivist.



Additional Lectures By . . .

Andrew Hahn

Andrew Hahn is a seventh generation St. Louisan who has been passionate about history and maps since he was a child. As a student at St. Louis University, he interned at the Cupples House, where he was bitten by the old house bug. Since 2003, he has worked as director of the Campbell House Museum, an 1851 townhouse in downtown St. Louis. He is the author of two books on local history and maps— *Mapping St. Louis* published in 2024 and *Mapping Missouri* to be published in the fall of 2026.

Speakers' Biographies

Ilene Murray

Ilene Murray has been a genealogy researcher for more than forty years. A retired English and computer teacher, she has been publications director for the St. Louis Genealogical Society since 2000. She co-leads the society's annual research trip to Salt Lake City and is a co-leader of the society's Jewish Special Interest Group. She lectures, teaches genealogy and computer classes, and writes and edits for genealogical publications. Ilene also serves on the society's technology and social media teams by working on the website, the society's Facebook pages, and the weekly blog, *StLGS News Flash*.



Carol Whitton

Carol Whitton is an author and lecturer on German research, U.S. migration, and other genealogical topics. She serves as projects director for StLGS, and she is the co-leader of the society's German Special Interest Group. Carol is a graduate of the Germanic Family History Research class at the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy, the National Institute for Genealogical Research, and the Virginia Institute for Genealogical Research.

Migrating West to Missouri

Carol Whitton

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Goal: Trace Missouri ancestor back to origin County in East or to a port city

I. Geography Determines Movement, as well as Transportation Availability

- A. Geography: New England to GA: three parts narrower in the north, wider south.
1. Tidewater—coastal plain: Rivers = roads.
 2. Piedmont—fall line of rivers to foot of mountains:
 - a. Farming soil is less rich, greater effort. Smaller farms or livestock, greater self-sufficiency, fewer slaves.
 - b. Rivers narrower and swifter; good for manufacturing and mills, easier to ford, but roads needed for transportation.
 3. Mountains—Appalachians to west bordered on east by mountain chains of various names with a VALLEY running in between.
- C. Transportation
1. Colonial roads east of mountains went north and south!
 2. After the 1730s, movement also E and W following rivers through mountain gaps. Obtain detailed State or County maps.
 2. Rivers: Ohio River first main route west. The Kentucky River flows into Ohio, as do the Cumberland River and Tennessee River.
 3. The National Road extended west from Ft. Pitt gradually after 1795.
 4. The Mississippi River became a main route after 1795 when Spain opened trade through New Orleans to the U.S.
 5. 1825 canals moved people and goods to Great Lakes & from there inland, especially after the 1829 locks built between Lakes Ontario and Erie.
- D. In the 1850s and 1860s railroads expanded, particularly in the north.
1. From the eastern ports, travel inland went by rail.
 2. Pre-Civil War travel from the port of New Orleans was still by river.
 3. During the Civil War New Orleans port was closed to passengers; Galveston replaced it in importance, increasing travel into and through Texas.
 4. Post-Civil War fewer passengers traveled north from New Orleans.

II. Historical Events Define Dates People Moved and Transportation Available.

1. 1720s VA Piedmont counties formed. State offered incentives: 10 years tax-free if settle counties beyond mountains; “dissenters” (non-Church of England) could bring their own ministers.
2. 1728 VA/NC line surveyed to mountains.
3. 1720s-1750s Quakers filled East PA. Scot-Irish and Germans arriving after that went into Valley, then south to VA, NC, SC.
4. 1748 Cumberland Gap discovered by Dr Thos. Walker.
5. 1749 VA/NC line extended to mountains.

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6. 1754 earliest settlers into Kentucky, a hunting ground previously free of native settlements, so it is easier to settle.
7. 1763–67 PA/MD Mason-Dixon line surveyed.
8. 1768 Ft. Stanwix treaty with Iroquois allowed settlement west to Ft. Pitt.
9. 1772 Richard Henderson opened Cumberland Gap to horseback traffic.
10. 1772 George Rogers Clark explored the Ohio River.
11. 1776 Kentucky County, VA formed where State is now.
14. 1780 post-Revolutionary War more settlers moved to Kentucky, Tennessee.
15. 1784–86 settled VA/PA territorial dispute; Mason-Dixon line extended to Ohio
16. 1792 Kentucky and 1796 Tennessee became States.
17. 1795 Spain opens port of New Orleans to use by U.S. western residents.
19. 1796 Cumberland Gap widened for wagon passage west into KY and TN.

III. Why Move?

A. Reasons to move west.

1. Eastern overcrowding
2. Farm soil exhaustion
3. Economic opportunity for self or children
4. Government Incentives
5. Be with family or because the only old age care—the children—are moving.

B. People also returned home, why?

1. Marketing crops in established towns.
2. Safety from Indian incursions, e.g: during French & Indian War 1754-63.
3. Individual moves, gets land, returns for family, and takes them west.
4. Especially for first child, return home for mama's help with childbirth.
5. Death requires return for inheritance, estate settlement, or siblings' provision.
6. Local disputes at new place led to return home until disputing party died or left new area, then likely to go west again.
7. Some old folks returned "home" to die.
8. Some found frontier too difficult or too isolated from family and friends.

IV. Maps Show Major Routes

A. Map books and Trail Sites:

1. Eldridge, Carrie, four atlases: *An Atlas of Appalachian Trails to the Ohio River* (Chesapeake, OH: C. Eldridge, 1998); *An Atlas of Southern Trails to the Mississippi River* (Chesapeake: C. Eldridge, 1999); *An Atlas of Northern Trails Westward from New England* (Chesapeake: C. Eldridge, 2000); *An Atlas of Trails West of the Mississippi River* (Chesapeake: C. Eldridge, 2001)
2. U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), National Map, with free map downloads <https://www.usgs.gov/search?keywords=national+map> has topography, hydrology, place names.
3. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), <https://www.blm.gov/>.

B. Major trails from the North

1. Hudson & Mohawk Rivers, NY; Genesee Road, MA to Mohawk R, Lake Erie.
2. After 1825 Erie canal, NY to Lake Erie.
3. 1829: St. Lawrence seaway into Canada, through to all the Great Lakes.

C. From Mid Atlantic

1. Forbes Road or Cumberland Road to Pittsburgh=National Road west.
2. Great Valley Road, PA/VA, to Cumberland Gap, to Wilderness Road into KY.
3. Tennessee or Cumberland Rivers to Ohio River.
4. Ohio River to KY. North of river only after battle of Fallen Timbers 1794.
5. 1795 Ohio River settlement opened to Ohio, Indiana, Illinois.

D. From South

1. Great Valley Road, PA/VA/NC/SC, into KY.
2. Unicoi Road, GA coast to Nashville, TN.
3. Nashville Rd. to Mississippi River.
4. Natchez Trace/Jackson's Road to Gulf Coast or to Mississippi River.

E. Into Midwest

1. 1763 end of French/Indian War, to avoid British rule, French leave Kaskaskia & Cahokia move across Mississippi to continued French/Spanish rule in Cape Girardeau, Ste. Genevieve, St. Louis, and St. Charles, MO, helping found latter two.
2. Settlers from Kentucky and Tennessee first go west on Ohio R to Missouri and Arkansas or north towards St. Louis.
3. Later settlers from Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois move west to Missouri too.

V. Techniques for Finding a Midwest Ancestor's Eastern Origin

A. **FOCUS ON END POINT STATE FIRST.** End point = State and County in which the ancestors last lived.

1. Review All documents for every clue!
2. Be Thorough! **Follow everyone:** children, siblings, all potential relatives, collaterals, and associates from death back to birth.
3. Merge everyone's events into one timeline focusing on the earliest years.
4. Seek earliest year everyone at end point; that record should mention the previous place.
5. Learn everyone's origin State and, if possible, County.
6. Compile end point "prospering" and "midlife" profiles for the ancestor.

B. Be resourceful; locate **every neglected source!**

1. Revolutionary War Pensions, including rejections. These contain affidavits.
2. Preemption Warrants, Treasury Warrants, Bounty Land Warrants.
3. Land records. An example: KY Secretary of State Land Office
<http://www.sos.ky.gov/land/>
4. British Mercantile Claims—*The Virginia Genealogist* v. 8–50 abstracts.
5. County Court Order Books and Chancery [Land] Cases up to 50 years later.
6. Legislative petitions—State Archives.
7. State-wide newspapers—*Virginia Gazette* begins 8/1736; *Kentucky Gazette* 1787. Found at State Newspaper collection site, eg: KY Library, newspapers
http://libraries.uky.edu/libpage.php?lweb_id=147&llib_id=14
8. Draper Collection—U. Wisconsin and microfilmed at various libraries.
9. Business records—Archives and Historical Societies.
10. Estates of relatives, merchants, or important local people—County records.

11. Anyone's diaries, letters, journals of the time—Archive or Historical Society.
 12. NUCMC manuscript collection, Library of Congress
<http://www.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/>
 13. PERSI journal collection at Allen County Public Library, Ft. Wayne, IN or on Find My Past (\$) <https://www.findmypast.com/>
- C. **On both sides of all trails**
1. Follow everyone's records, including religious leaders.
 2. Superimpose trail maps on a state map of the time with rivers and counties; try Animap software.
 3. Search records in every county along the route for everyone previously identified, especially those counties where people might intersect.
 4. Hypothesize an "origin point" ancestor profile, with knowledge so far. Update!
- D. **Compare** who is in both the end point and in each origin point.
1. Geographical place names may be same in both places.
 2. Compare people—census, tax lists, land, County court records.
 3. Try land plating in both end point and origins. Use Deed Mapper software <http://www.directlinesoftware.com/>.
- E. Especially look for documents with **original signatures**; the signature may be the only proof it's the same person!
- F. Frequently **review and question** every event, connection, and date.
1. Where DID I get that information?
 2. What is the quality of the source? Did I evaluate the information correctly?
 3. Are any other analyses possible?
 4. Have I overlooked any source that might be available?
 5. Avoid assumptions: Are you stubbornly defeating yourself? Always think: "I might be wrong!"

VI. SUMMARY

- A. For 17th and 18th centuries learn geography, history, as well as rivers and trails.
- B. Start with very, very thorough research in the end point State!
 1. Vacuum up every source!
 2. Follow death to birth: all children, siblings, collateral lines, and associates.
- C. Learn each person's origin State and County.
- D. Compile at least three profiles of the ancestor for different periods of life to be certain person is the same.
- E. Search all Counties on both sides of every known trail going back east.
- F. Seek everyone from end point in the origin State and County.
- G. Compare all people and place names from end point to origin point.
- H. Frequently review, question, re-analyze. You're likely to change your mind.
- I. Persevere! It may take time but it's possible!

Moving Through—Moving On: Missouri's Gateways to How They Got There and Where Did They Go? John Dougan, Missouri State Archivist

As the Gateway to the West and the Gateway from the East, Missouri's rivers, trails, roads, and railroads funneled our ancestors to, through, and from Missouri. Knowing specific details about these migration paths will aid your research and often give you clues to many of the unknown whats, wheres, whens, whys and hows in our research.

Rivers

Missouri generally, and St. Louis specifically, were historical epicenters of non-coastal water transportation in the United States. New Orleans and other coastal cities were vital to immigration and international mercantile exchange as were cities on the East Coast and Great Lakes, but St. Louis's location created an unparalleled confluence of emigration and commerce in the Middle West.

Prior to European contact, this was just as true for the native inhabitants. The largest city in what would become the United States was Cahokia, just across the Mississippi River in Illinois. The settlements on the Missouri side were suburbs. Many of Missouri's major river names flow from these native connections. "Mississippi" originates from the Ojibwe (Anishinaabe) moniker "Great River." "Missouri" comes from the Illinois term "Wooden Canoe People." The Osage Nation's preferred name, "Wazhazhe," means "Middle Waters," though the French term "Osage," dating from a time when they lived further east, means "Flat Water."

These and other native tribes, along with early settlers, used a variety of watercraft—canoes, pirogues, keelboats, flatboats and even log rafts to navigate the large rivers and smaller tributaries, but the Steamboat Era propelled St. Louis to the forefront of westward expansion.



Map derived from Jeremy Atack, "Historical Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database of Steamboat-Navigated Rivers During the Nineteenth Century in the United States." (August 2015)

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?layerId=0&layers=456874fa23d94ced872b67e9caf898b5>

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Missouri Rivers Navigable by Steamboat (earliest year) and distance:

Mississippi River—2186 total navigable miles

New Orleans to Cairo, Illinois (1811) 1312 miles

and on to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania by way of the Ohio River (1811) additional 604 miles

to St. Louis, Missouri (1817) 198 additional miles

to Keokuk, Iowa (1819) 183 additional miles

to Minneapolis, Minnesota (1823) 493 additional miles

Missouri River—2170 total navigable miles

from the Mississippi River to Franklin, Missouri (1819) 190 miles

to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas (1829) additional 218 miles

to Pierre, SD (1831) additional 705 miles

to Fort Union, Montana (1832) additional 548 miles

to Fort Benton, Montana (1860) additional 509 miles

Osage River from the Missouri River to Roscoe, Missouri (1837) 232 miles

Gasconade River from the Missouri River to Arlington, Missouri (1836) 106 miles

White River from the Mississippi River in Arkansas to Forsyth, Missouri (1833) 496 miles

St. Francis River from the Mississippi River in Arkansas to Wappapello, Missouri (1865) 137 miles

Current River via the Black and White Rivers in Arkansas to Donniphan, Missouri (1869) 49 additional miles

Cuivre River from the Mississippi River to Chain of Rocks, Missouri (1865) 22 miles

Ports/Steamboat Landings (innumerable)

Over time ports and landings would include hundreds of locations large and small as commerce waxed and waned and the courses of the river changed with annual flooding and constant attempts by the Corps of Engineers to “control” the rivers. St. Louis averaged over 3000 arrivals each year in the two decades before the Civil War, and even after the war the city continued to maintain over 2000 arrivals a

year. Prior to the proliferation of railroads, the 1840s and 1850s, and to a lesser degree during the decades beyond, immigrant/emigrant travel to any western state, utilized, at least in part, steamboats or ferries. New Orleans and Pittsburgh were the most common entry points for western steamboat immigrants but the destinations were limitless in the quickly expanding country.

The best analytical study of the steamboat trade may be Roald Tweet's, *History of Transportation on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers*, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Water Resources Support Center, Institute for Water Resources, 1983.

Trails (Roads)

As European settlement of Missouri developed, existing Native American trails evolved to accommodate migrants and their wagons. Fords (low water crossings) and ferries were replaced by bridges. Trading posts, stores, outfitters, livestock dealers, wagon makers, blacksmith shops, inns, taverns and forts sprang up to serve travelers. Trails that once directed wild game, now became paths to settlements and frontier claims. It is useful to note that the terms road, trail and trace are often used interchangeably today, but historically a trail would contain a single track for walking or riding where a road would have two tracks for wheeled vehicles and a trace would be a wider path created by large herds of animals like bison. As roads evolved many of their original names remained or were adapted.

Natchitoches Trace (later known as the Southwest Trail and the Old Military Road)—500+ mile prehistoric trail originally between modern St. Louis, Missouri and Natchitoches, Louisiana (with a 2500-mile extension to the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan, now Mexico City, Mexico). The route became a primary path for Arkansas and Texas settlement, with the Texas variant turning further west and crossing the Red River at Fulton, Arkansas.

Osage Trails—Many of Missouri's early roads predate even the arrival of the native nations resident in Missouri at European contact. The only recently arrived Osage tribe is associated with many early trails in Missouri south of the Missouri River, but all tribes used similar land transportation paths.

Three Notch Road was a 30-mile major road, constructed as early as 1717, used to transport lead from Mine La Motte to Ste. Geneviève on the Mississippi River. In frontier areas minor, primary, and major roads were often marked with one, two and three notches on adjacent trees.

El Camino Real/The King's Road/Kings Highway was authorized by the Spanish governor and initially built ca. 1779 as a road between St. Louis, Missouri and Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Extensions connected Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, New Madrid, Missouri, St. Charles, Missouri and Arkansas. Today the road tracks 1500 miles from New Orleans, Louisiana to Wyoming, Minnesota.

Although the 900-mile *Santa Fe Trail* was used extensively prior to its widening by William Bucknell in 1821, his improvements accommodated the large wheeled trade wagons that transformed it into a lucrative trade route to Santa Fe, New Mexico. It was superseded by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe

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Railroad in 1880. The earliest eastern terminus to the trail was Franklin, Missouri, but later developments of road, steamboat and railroad transportation moved the starting point to Independence, Missouri, Westport, Missouri and then Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas.

Opened after the development of a salt manufacturing facility in Howard County around 1804, later managed by the Boone family, the 150-mile *Boonslick Trail/Boone's Lick Road* became a highway for settlers after 1817, when improvements were made and nearby land opened to settlement. Between 1820 and 1830 this region of Missouri was the fastest growing area of the state and nation. Many later used the Boonslick Trail as the first leg of their western journey where connections in Franklin, Missouri and Arrow Rock, Missouri were made to other trails leading further west. Alternate routes were also developed south of the original trail to allow travel through Fulton, Missouri and Columbia, Missouri.

Many of today's major highways in Missouri were originally created by the legislature between 1808 and 1866. These *Early State Road Surveys* provide a wealth of information on the locations and landowners along the road <https://cdm16795.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16795coll51>. The collection is searchable by name, location and keyword. The records include scans of commissioners' reports, oaths, surveys, field notes, and relinquishments. The level of detail and distances covered by each road segment vary significantly from road to road.

Each road was created by an act of the General Assembly and then laid out by three commissioners, a surveyor and other assistants. The records were then filed with the Missouri Secretary of State and in local county clerk offices. The state copies of the surveys and supporting documents between 1808 and 1836 are believed to have been lost in the 1837 Capitol Fire in Jefferson City but the local copies are often available in the road records maintained by county clerks. This collection includes surviving records filed after the fire until government processes changed in 1866, making counties the primary records keepers for local roadways.

A good example of the diverse naming of these roads is the 250-300-mile-long *St. Louis to Springfield Road*, which actually continued to Fort Smith, Arkansas. It was also known as the St. Louis Road, the Springfield Road, the Great Osage Trace, and after telegraph wires were installed, the Old Wire Road (which separately connected to Bolivar, Missouri and Jefferson City, Missouri). This road was also part of both the Butterfield Stage Line and the Northern Route of the Cherokee Removal Trail of Tears, as well as the path of the mostly adjacent Frisco Railroad.

A majority of the participants of the *Cherokee Removal Trail of Tears* (1837–1839) traveled across Missouri. In addition to individual families, small groups and 8 voluntary detachments, 17 detachments were forced to travel various paths from their homes in the southeastern states (approximately 1200 miles). These included 13 detachments that used 3 routes across Missouri. The Northern Route that followed established state roads through Jackson, Missouri, Massey's Iron Works, and Springfield, Missouri was followed by 11 detachments. The Hildebrand Route followed less traveled Ozark roads south of the main route. Bengé's Route connected with the Natchitoches Trace, traveling into Arkansas

before heading west. Numerous detachments suffered significant numbers of deaths, primarily due to disease.

The less known 660-mile *Potawatomi Trail of Death* (1838) followed state roads in Northern Missouri. This removal of 859 Potawatomi tribal members stretched from Indiana to Kansas. Over 40 members died along the trail which crossed Missouri from Quincy, Illinois to Kansas City, Missouri.

Early paths of the *Texas Road/Shawnee Trail/Kansas Trail/Sedalia Trail* assisted with the settlement of Texas during the Spanish period. During the height of Texas cattle drives hundreds of thousands of cattle followed these trails north from the mid-1840s to 1867. The primary route extended 721 miles from Austin, Texas to Sedalia, Missouri. The terminus gradually moved further west to various railroad towns in Kansas. Previous connections were to Kansas City, Missouri, Westport, Missouri, Independence, Missouri, Sedalia Missouri, and early on as far east as St. Louis, Missouri and Hannibal, Missouri.

Like many other trails, the 2170-mile *Oregon Trail* had been extensively used (by trappers and traders mostly) prior to 1843 when heavy use by settlers began. A majority of wagon trains destined for the Willamette Valley started in Independence, Missouri but others formed in Westport, Missouri, St. Joseph, Missouri and Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Latter-Day Saints migrants who traveled the 1300-mile *Mormon Trail* from their settlements near Nauvoo, Illinois to Utah, beginning in 1846, generally avoided Missouri by traveling across Iowa, but both earlier immigrants to Missouri and later immigrants to Utah used Missouri's trails, roads, and steamboats. The trail was extensively used until the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1868. The trail generally followed the Oregon Trail until turning south toward Utah in Wyoming.

The 1600-mile California Trail also followed the same basic path as the Oregon Trail before deviating south in Idaho. Its use by settlers dates to 1841, but a flood of overland travelers used it to travel to California after gold was discovered in 1849. Similar to other trails, numerous branches (cutoffs) developed over time to meet the needs of various destinations.

The Overland Mail Company, commonly referred to as the *Butterfield Overland Mail*, ran from both Memphis, Tennessee, and St. Louis, Missouri (by train to Tipton, Missouri) to Fort Smith, Arkansas, then to San Francisco, California (3292 miles) from 1858 to 1861. It was intended to be a reliable, "snow-free" mail and stagecoach route, but was too expensive to be sustainable.

The Pony Express, which only operated in 1860 and 1861, quickly transported mail 1966 miles from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento, California using multiple riders carrying the mail in saddlebags. The telegraph made the service obsolete.

Railroads (date begun), Original terminus city (date extended), End of the line—distance

[Missouri] Pacific Railroad (1851) St. Louis, Missouri

(1852) Cheltenham, Missouri—2 miles

(1853) Pacific (then Franklin), Missouri—36 additional miles

(1855) Washington, Missouri—18 miles additional miles

(1855) Jefferson City, Missouri—75 additional miles

(1858) Tipton, Missouri—28 additional miles

(1859) Syracuse, Missouri—7 additional miles

(1860) Otterville, Missouri—7 additional miles

(1861) Sedalia, Missouri—12 additional miles

(1864) Warrensburg, Missouri—30 additional miles

(1865) Kansas City, Missouri—70 additional miles

Pacific Railroad (Southwest Branch) [Frisco] (1851) St. Louis, Missouri

(1860) Rolla, Missouri—77 miles

(1870) Springfield, Missouri—163 additional miles

Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad (1851) Hannibal, Missouri and St. Joseph, Missouri

(1859) Construction from both ends meets in Chillicothe, Missouri—206 miles total

(1869) Cameron Branch connects Chicago to Texas with the completion of the Hannibal Bridge across the Missouri River in Kansas City, Missouri

Iron Mountain (1853) St. Louis, Missouri

(1858) Pilot Knob, Missouri—approximately 85 miles

(1873) Little Rock, Arkansas

(1874) Texarkana, Arkansas/Texas—489 total miles

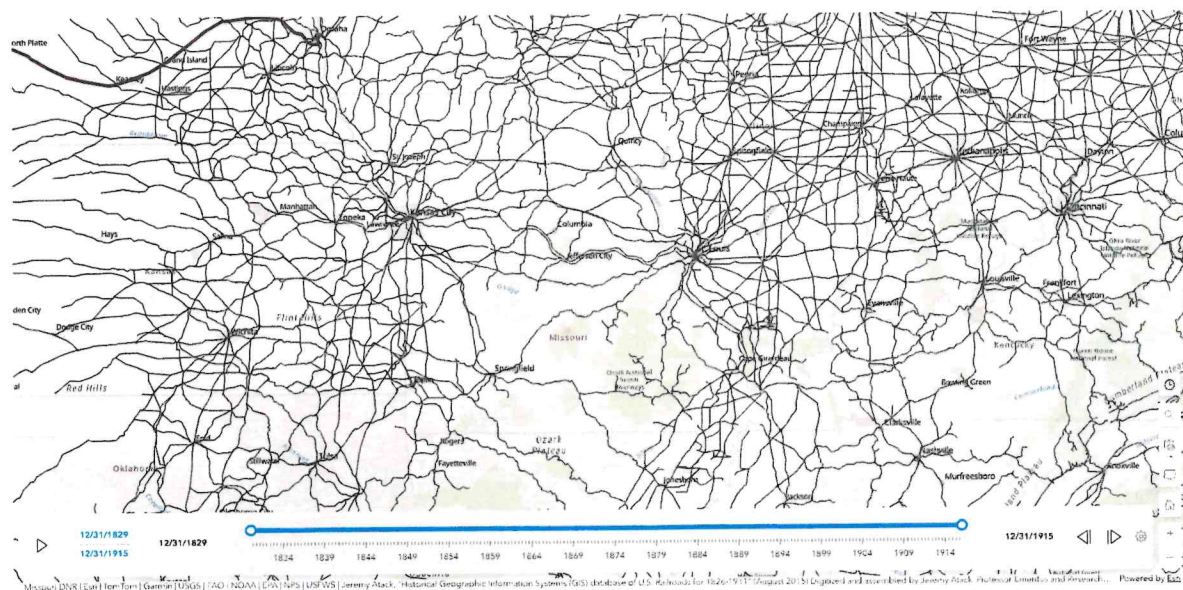
Union Pacific Eastern Division/Kansas Pacific Railroad (1863) Leavenworth, KS

(1869) connects with the Central Pacific to complete the first transcontinental railroad—1911 miles

(1870) connects Kansas City, Missouri to Denver, CO—639 miles

Missouri-Kansas-Texas “Katy” Railroad (1870)

(1886) Dallas, Texas—marks the end of the Texas Cattle Drives



Missouri Railroads Map derived from Jeremy Atack, "Historical Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database of U.S. Railroads 1826-1911 (August 2015)

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?layerId=0&layers=694a76f1ebe241088e3ed39fb494a8e2>

Missouri State Archives

600 West Main Street

P.O. Box 1747

Jefferson City, MO 65102

(573) 751 3280

archives@sos.mo.gov

<https://www.sos.mo.gov/archives>

NOTES:

Using County Court Record Books and Associated Records for Genealogy

Christina Miller, Missouri State Archives



What is the County Court?

The county court traditionally consisted of 3 elected justices that are responsible for the control and management of all property (real and personal) belonging to the county, including the power to purchase, receive as donation and sell said property. They also hold the ability to audit and settle demands against the county.

Originally, the County Clerk also served as the probate court, and thus could also appoint guardians, make settlements, and hear disputes between masters and apprentices.

The County Court was officially renamed the County Commission in 1985 ([1983 Laws, p. 307](#)).

What is the Role of the County Clerk?

Originally an appointed position, the County Clerk is responsible for recording the decrees, judgements, rules, orders, and proceedings of the County Court.

Beginning in 1946 ([1945 Laws p. 653](#)), the County Clerk was created as an elected office of each county, still with the duties to record the actions and proceedings of the County Court.

The official duties of the County Court and the County Clerk change regularly, affecting which records are recorded or filed in their records. Familiarity with the various laws and statutes of the state will be very helpful.

- *Revised Statutes of Missouri (RSMo)*-
<https://mdh.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16795coll26>
The Revised Statutes document the laws in effect at the time of printing, organized by field of law and subject.
- *Laws of Missouri* - <https://mdh.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/molaws>
Laws created by each session of the General Assembly.

What genealogical records can be found in the County Court/County Clerk Records?

*Reminder: Laws changed often so record types vary by time period

Records might be found in the loose papers of the County Clerk's Office or recorded in the County Court Record Book.

- Assessment Records
- Birth and Death Records (Pre-1910)
- Boards and Commissions Records
- County Court Records
 - Record of proceedings/minutes of the County Court/County Commission, showing date and place of meeting, names of officials present, actions taken on all county business. Arranged chronologically by date of meeting.
 - Can include indentures, payments related to support for the poor, petitions, road crews, appointments, etc.
- County Hospital Records (aka – sending people to Fulton State Hospital)
- Drainage District Records
- Estray Records
- Farm Name Registers/Marks and Brands
- Free Person of Color Records
- Forfeited Lists (lands forfeited for back taxes)
- Licenses (Merchant, Ferry, Dram shop, Physician, Nurse, Dentist, Embalmer, etc.)
- Loyalty Oaths
- Poor farm/Almshouse records
- Road Records
- School Enumeration Records
- State Censuses
- And MORE!

How to Find County Court Records

Records vary by county. Check County and Municipal Records on Microfilm PDFs:

<https://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/county/croll>

Some records may be digitized and online in County and Municipal Records Database:

<https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/archives/ArchivesMVC/countyrecords/>

Only *some* are indexed. (Not very many)

Contact the Archives

P.O. Box 1747
Jefferson City, MO 65102

(573) 751-3280
archives@sos.mo.gov



Research Like a Pro!

Ilene Kanfer Murray
StLGS Publications Director
publications@stlgs.org

Good Research Techniques

Whether you are just beginning on your family history research or you have been researching for years, it is important to practice good research techniques. Look for:

- ❖ Multiple sources for proof of your facts
- ❖ Original documents whenever you can find them
- ❖ Friends, associates, and neighbors; what Elizabeth Shown Mills calls the FAN club
- ❖ All possible variations of spelling

Always Analyze

- ❖ Documents and Photos
- ❖ Articles and Artifacts

You are looking for clues to take you to the next step in your research.

Ask Questions and Look for Discrepancies

- ❖ As you look at your findings
- ❖ As you enter data into your genealogy program
- ❖ As you discuss your stories with others
- ❖ As you gather more information

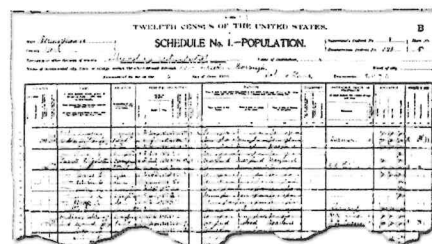
Begin (or resume) your research with the census.

Start with the present and work backwards for all family members. The more families you can piece together, one generation at a time, the better.

Use *FamilySearch* for free access or *Ancestry*, either at home or in the library. *Ancestry's* search engine is the most powerful.

Save either printed or digital images so you can analyze the sheets carefully. Look for clues on each census to move your research forward:

- ❖ Who were the neighbors?
- ❖ What occupations did people have?
- ❖ What military service did they engage in?
- ❖ What other families with familiar names are on the sheets before and after?
- ❖ What migration path did they follow?
- ❖ Are married children back home? Why?
- ❖ Are grandchildren, cousins, nieces, or nephews living with the family? Why?



Go Beyond the Index— Spelling DOES NOT COUNT!

- ❖ Many of our ancestors were barely literate, and if they weren't, the clerks with whom they dealt might have been.
- ❖ They were not concerned about spelling things "right."
- ❖ Names were spelled inconsistently everywhere, often in the same document.
- ❖ Complicating matters were "foreign" names that became Anglicized.
- ❖ Handwriting in documents adds to the problem and names are easily mis-indexed.

Good researchers:

- ❖ Accept any variations of names that make sense based on what they know.
- ❖ Are extremely flexible as they search.
- ❖ Say their names out loud and try to predict how they might have been pronounced by an immigrant and by those with whom he/she interacted.
- ❖ NEVER discount any fact based solely upon spelling!

What to Do Next?

1. Once you have used census records for your ancestors, branch out into vital records:
 - ❖ Try to obtain birth, marriage, and death records for everyone possible.
 - ❖ Look for records online, in libraries, archives, and courthouses.
2. Learn the history of your ancestors' **hometowns** and about the times in which they lived.
3. Read the **newspapers** that have been digitized and microfilmed.
4. **Connect with cousins** and others researching the same families/locations.
5. Take **classes** and attend **conferences/workshops**, to learn more on a particular subject.



Ancestry.com

Ancestry is a wonderful resource IF you:

1. Concentrate on actual records and not interpretations
2. Verify anything and everything you find on submitted family trees.
3. Cite all your sources properly. Someone else's unsourced tree is NOT a source!

Use the member-submitted family trees ONLY to get clues about things you are missing. NEVER add anything to your own files without proving it first. Look at anything you find with a critical eye.

Remember Proper Source Citation for Online Research

- A **source** is where you find information.
- A **citation** is the specific details about where in the source you found your information.
- Without these valuable elements, your genealogy is incomplete.
- Others (and you) need to be able to verify your facts.
- Your source citations should include enough information for you or someone else to find the same information.

Use any of Elizabeth Shown Mills's guidebooks or the free citation templates at the StLGS website <https://stlgs.org/>. Go to *Resources/On This Site/Citations* for help with most kinds of source citations.

The screenshot shows the St. Louis Genealogical Society (StLGS) website. The header includes the StLGS logo, the text "St. Louis Genealogical Society" with "founded 1968" below it, and navigation links: "Join Now", "FAQ", "Contact Us", "My Account", and "My Cart". A secondary navigation bar contains "Home", "About Us", "Events", "Resources" (circled in blue), "Research", "Education", "Online Store", and "Search". Below the navigation bar, the breadcrumb trail reads "Resources / On This Site / Citations— Proper Methods to Create". The main heading is "Citations—A Guide to Creating Proper Source Citations" with a "Print" link. The sub-heading is "How to Cite St. Louis and Missouri Sources". The text explains the importance of documenting sources and provides a model for citations. It also mentions guidebooks by Elizabeth Shown Mills: *Evidence Explained*, *Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*, and *Evidence! Citation & Analysis for the Family Historian*.

Family Stories

Every family has stories handed down from one generation to the next. Often the stories contain some truth but not necessarily the whole truth. Be thorough in your research; do not accept the stories without proving them.

Try not to perpetuate myths. Good researchers check out every detail!

Sources

FamilySearch Research Wiki. For information on thousands of locations and topics.
https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Main_Page.

Mills, Elizabeth Shown. *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*. 4th edition. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2024.

Mills, Elizabeth Shown. *Your Stripped Bare Guide to Citing and Using History Sources*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2025.

National Genealogical Society. Online classes and workshops. ngsgenealogy.org

Mapping St. Louis: A History of the Gateway City in Rare Maps Andrew Hahn

There is no handout for this presentation. Please use this page and the next for your notes.

NOTES:

Missouri State Archives...Where History Begins

Christina Miller, Missouri State Archives



The Missouri State Archives is the official repository for state records of permanent and historical value. Its mission is to foster an appreciation of Missouri history and illuminate contemporary public issues by preserving and making available the state's permanent records to its citizens and their government.

Currently, the Archives holds more than 336 million pages of paper; 850,000+ photographs; 9,000 maps; 73,000+ reels of county records on microfilm, 950+ cubic feet of published state documents and 1,000 audio/video items.

State Government Records

- Records of Statewide Elected Officials (Office of the Governor, etc.)
- Records of the General Assembly
 - Session Laws
 - Committee Records
- Records of State Agencies
 - Department of Health and Senior Services (Death Certificates)
 - Department of Public Safety (military records)
 - Military service cards available in the Soldiers Database (War of 1812-World War I)
 - World War I Bonus Claims
 - World War II Reports of Separation
 - National Guard Enlistment Contracts (1900-1945)
 - Department of Corrections
 - State Penitentiary Records
 - Department of Agriculture (Missouri State Fair, etc.)
 - Etc.
- Records of the State Courts (Supreme and Appellate)
- Photograph Collections
 - Numerous statewide photo collections – Commerce and Industrial Development, Tourism, MoDOT

County Records on microfilm

- MSA holds 73,000+ reels of film (deeds, marriages, circuit and probate court materials, etc.)
- A roll-by-roll listing of this film is available online:
www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/county/croll.asp
- County microfilm is constantly being added.

Online Databases

<https://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/resources>

Death Certificates, 1910-1975 - <https://s1.sos.mo.gov/Records/Archives/ArchivesMvc/>

- Index with images. New year added each spring.

Birth & Death Records, pre-1910 - <https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/archives/ArchivesMVC/birthdeath/>

- Abstract of the birth, stillbirth, and death records recorded before 1909 and that are available on microfilm at the Missouri State Archives. Birth and Death records were not required prior to 1910, and most counties only had the *option* to record them from 1883-1893.

Census Records and Tax Lists - <https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/archives/ArchivesMVC/census/>

- This index contains some territorial, state and special censuses, plus the federal mortality schedules and browseable images of the federal agricultural and manufacturing and industrial schedules.

Civil War Provost Marshal Index - <https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/archives/ArchivesMVC/provost/>

- The collection details how the provost marshal affected the lives of citizens who came into contact with the Union Army. The provost marshal records offer a unique look at a state divided and the war society that resulted. In addition to a resource for military research, the provost marshal papers provide information about the role of women during the war, its effect on slavery, and the difficulties experienced by war refugees.
- Digital copies of some reels available here: www.sos.mo.gov/archives/provost/provostPDF

Coroner's Inquest – <https://s1.sos.mo.gov/Records/Archives/ArchivesMVC/Coroners/>

- In Missouri, the coroner is a county official, usually elected, who investigates and creates records for deaths that occur under accidental, questionable, unusual, or suspicious circumstances.
- Index for the records for 12 counties

County and Municipal Records Database -

<https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/archives/ArchivesMVC/countyrecords/>

- Provides PDF images of county and municipal records that have been digitized. These records are not searchable by name or subject, but can be browsed by county, office, record type, and date.

Land Records – <https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/archives/ArchivesMVC/land/>

- The database contains over 280,000 entries from French and Spanish land concessions, federal land sales and state issued patents. The records may include names of purchasers, claimants and assignees, county, date of purchase, and legal land description (township, section, range and number of acres sold).

Missouri Judicial Records – <https://s1.sos.mo.gov/Records/Archives/ArchivesMVC/JudicialRecords/>

- Index to some county court records (circuit and probate) available on microfilm at the Missouri State Archives. A few of the indexes include images.

Missouri State Penitentiary – <https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/archives/ArchivesMVC/msp/>

- The database indexes the Register of Inmates Received 1836–1931 and the Register of Military Prisoners, 1864–1875. The register of inmates received includes information about the prisoners, their crimes and sentences, as well as when they entered and were released. The database currently includes some images of registers and mugshots.

Missouri Supreme Court Historical Records –

<https://s1.sos.mo.gov/Records/Archives/ArchivesMVC/supremecourt/>

- The database provides an index and abstract of the criminal and civil court cases that were appealed to the territorial Superior Court and state Supreme Court of Missouri up to 1878, and a partial listing of cases to 1889. Images are included for all cases 1820-1868.

Naturalization Records – <https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/archives/ArchivesMVC/naturalization/>

- Index to pre-1906 naturalization records for 23 counties.

Soldiers Records: War of 1812 – World War I -

<https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/archives/ArchivesMVC/soldiers/>

- Index (with images for most wars) of the individual service cards for more than 576,000 Missourians who served in the military from the War of 1812 through World War I.

Researching at the Archives

600 West Main Street
P.O. Box 1747
Jefferson City, MO 65102
(573) 751-3280
archives@sos.mo.gov

Hours

Monday – Friday 8 am - 5 pm
Third Thursday 8 am – 7 pm
See website for Saturday Hours

Cameras and laptops are allowed in the Reference Room.

Research Requests

- Each request should include your full name, e-mail address, phone number, and regular postal mail address.
- Submit **only one** request and **allow us to complete your research** before submitting another. Each genealogical request should contain the following information:
 - Provide the full **name of the individual** whose record is requested, if known. In the case of a marriage record, give both names if possible.
 - Provide one **county**, as all local records are arranged by county (name of town or legal land description may also be given).
 - Specify the exact **type of record**. We cannot search “for any record available.”
 - Provide exact **date** if known. For all deed records you must limit the search to a five-year period. For all other requests please indicate as narrow a period as possible, up to a ten-year date range.
- Each historical research question or request for Missouri information should be clearly written with a specific question.
- Please provide a record citation if you have one (i.e. microfilm reel number, box and folder number, case #, etc.)
- E-mail is retrieved daily. All e-mail requests are combined with regular postal mail requests and routed to the appropriate staff researcher. It may take up to eight weeks to receive a reply. E-mail requests are not given priority or answered before regular postal mail requests.
- Once the request has been researched, a response will be e-mailed back to you with information regarding copy fees.



St. Louis Genealogical Society

2026 Summer/Fall General Meetings & Special Events

Join us in celebrating America's 250th birthday and the special role Missouri has played in our country's history!

StLGS monthly meetings are hybrid, held at the Clark Family branch of the St. Louis County Library AND livestreamed via Zoom. You can attend in-person OR virtually; however, registration is required for all livestreamed meetings.

Additional special events may be announced during the year! Watch our website for updates!

Sat., 13 June **10:00 a.m.** ***Researching Railroad and River Transportation in the Later 19th and 20th Centuries*** **Nick Fry**

Did you have an ancestor who worked on a railroad or riverboat after the Civil War? Learn what resources are available to help you find people who worked on the railroads and the inland waterways from 1865 to the end of the 20th century.

Sat., 11 July **10:00 a.m.** ***Beyond the Document: Extracting Evidence from Context*** **Jake Eubanks**

Experienced genealogists learn to understand documents by exploring historical context: seeking out ancillary documents, scrutinizing record citations, and thoroughly analyzing documents to understand their context. Learn how you can do this too!

Sat., 8 August **10:00 a.m.** ***A Visit to the 1904 World's Fair*** **Jason Stratman**

Meet us in St. Louis. Meet us at the Fair!" Learn some of the fascinating stories of the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis through visitors' eyes, courtesy of items from the Missouri Historical Society collections.

Sat., 12 September **10:00 a.m.** ***Using St. Louis Court Records for Genealogical and Historical Research*** **Bill Glankler**

Come learn about the Missouri State Archives branch in St. Louis, how the court system worked in the 19th century, and what the local archives holds in its collection. View many examples of its holdings and find out how to access the records.

Sun., 11 Oct. to Sun., 18 Oct. **Annual Research Trip to Salt Lake City**
One week of research at the FamilySearch Library, the world's largest genealogy library!
Watch for more information. Pre-registration required.

Sat., 10 October **10:00 a.m.** ***The Kate Moody Collection: St. Louis City & County*** **John Egel**

Katherine "Kate" Twining Moody lived in Webster Groves and was a librarian for the St. Louis Public Library from 1895 until 1945. She amassed a large collection of photos, newspaper articles, booklets, oral histories, and other documents which has been donated to the Webster Groves Historical Society. They have teamed with the Webster Groves Public Library and Missouri Digital Heritage to make this eclectic resource fully searchable and accessible to the public. You will be intrigued by how much is now available to researchers in this newly-released treasure trove of local history.

Sat., 14 November **10:00 a.m.** ***Using the Emerson History & Genealogy Center's Print Collection*** **Robin McDonough**

Discover the center's collection of more than 100,000 books for family history research, including some of its unique resources. Learn how to search the catalog, initiate a lookup request, operate the movable shelves, and more. Anyone who is interested in a tour of the collection is welcome to join a group upstairs after the meeting.

No meeting in December. Enjoy the holidays as we prepare for 2027!



Use your smartphone's camera or scanning app on the QR code to the left to go directly to the StLGS home page.



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St. Louis Genealogical Society

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