

Genealogy Research in Kansas City

Lauri Jean Swett

Genealogy by Lauri Jean
genbyLJ@gmail.com



Kansas City is a thriving metropolitan area located in the American heartland with a colorful history, wonderful places to research, and a plethora of museums. From steamboats to wagon trails to jazz and sports, opportunities for historic and specialized research abound.

Geography

- Located in the middle of the United States on the Kansas-Missouri border at the junction of the Kansas (aka Kaw) and Missouri Rivers in both Kansas and Missouri
- Three Kansas Cities: KCMO, KCK, and NKC
- Kansas City area is comprised of six counties:
 - Wyandotte and Johnson in Kansas
 - Jackson, Cass, Clay, and Platte in Missouri

History

- Native American Tribes – Kansa, Missouri and Osage
- Trappers, traders and explorers – records of Spain & France
- Part of the Louisiana Purchase
- Lewis and Clark explored the area
- Trails Westward:
 - Santa Fe Trail opened in 1821
 - Oregon Trail in 1843
 - California Trail, gold rush in 1849
- Pre-Civil War immigrants from France, Germany, and Ireland
- Americans from the South including slaves
- Mormons from the East and Northeast
- An Area Rich in Conflict:
 - Mormon Wars
 - Border Wars
 - Civil War

- Post Civil War immigrants Germans from Russia, Greeks, Italians, Poles, Russians, Scandinavians, and Eastern European Jews
- More recent immigrants Chinese, Filipinos, Indians, Mexicans, Polynesians, and Vietnamese

Records

- Missouri & Kansas have different record access
- State Census Records
 - Kansas 1855-1925, every 10 years
 - Missouri 1840-1876, every 4 years, none survive for Kansas City
- Courts & Naturalization Records
 - District of Kansas
 - Western District of Missouri
 - Not restricted to state of residence
 - Jackson County has two county courts
- Newspapers – check both states
 - Kansas State Historical Society – free access from website
 - State Historical Society of Missouri – branch at UMKC
- FamilySearch Images & Film
 - Kansas - only eastern-most counties, includes KC area
 - Missouri - all counties

Repositories

- [National Archives at Kansas City](#)
 - [Alien Registration Files \(A-Files\)](#)
 - [Bankruptcy Records](#)
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs for Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota.
 - Federal Records from Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska
- [Midwest Genealogy Center](#)
 - Over 200,000 genealogy reference books
 - +20,000 additional books for Inter-Library Loan
 - 25,000 titles in its periodicals collection
 - [FamilySearch microfilm collection](#) – +40,000 films, +8,000 fiche
 - FamilySearch Affiliate
 - Their own [databases](#) for US railroad retirement board, Independence Examiner, and The Kansas City Star

- [Missouri Valley Special Collections](#) at the [Kansas City Public Library](#)
 - History of the Kansas City region
 - African-American collection
 - Border warfare
 - Native Americans
 - Migration and overland trails
- [Edward Jones Research Center](#) at the [National World War I Museum & Memorial](#)
 - US Army Unit Histories and Unit Rosters
 - State Rosters
 - Photograph collection
 - Artifacts and manuscripts collections
- [Merrill J. Mattes Research Library](#) at the [National Frontier Trails Museum](#)
 - Books, diaries and letters about the trails
 - American West
 - Lewis and Clark
 - Transcontinental railroad
- [Kansas City Research Center](#) of the [State Historical Society of Missouri](#)
 - Newspaper collection includes ethnic papers
 - Business and church records
 - Official state publications
 - Maps
 - Personal papers
- [Research Room](#) at the [Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum](#)
 - Official and personal files
 - Approximately 400 collections from relatives, friends, and associates

Other Kansas City Repositories

- [Kansas City, KS Public Library](#)
- [Johnson County Public Library](#)
- [Black Archives of Mid-America](#)
- [Kansas City Irish Center](#)
- [Midwest Center for Holocaust Education](#)
- [Linda Hall Library of Science, Engineering and Technology](#)

- [World Headquarters of the Community of Christ](#) *formerly Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*
- [Diocese of Kansas City in Kansas](#) (Kansas records)
- [Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph](#) (Missouri records)

A Short Drive

- West to Topeka, Kansas
 - [Kansas Historical Society](#) in Topeka
 - [Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library](#)
- East to Columbia, Missouri, then South to Jefferson City
 - [State Historical Society of Missouri in Columbia](#)
 - [Missouri State Archives](#) in Jefferson City

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genbyLJ@gmail.com
on Facebook as Lauri Jean

Places to Visit for Social Context and History Buffs:

These places will not be discussed during the presentation.

- [Alexander Majors House](#)
- [Amelia Earhart Birthplace Museum](#)
- [American Jazz Museum](#)
- [Arabia Steamboat Museum](#)
- Atchison Rail Museum
- [College Basketball Experience](#) and National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame
- [Fort Osage National Historic Landmark](#)
- [Historic Garment District Museum](#)
- [Jesse James Home Museum](#)
- [John Wornall House](#)
- [Johnson County Museum](#)
- [Money Museum](#)
- [Mormon Historic Sites](#)
- [National Museum of Toys and Miniatures](#)
- [Negro League Baseball Museum](#)
- Pony Express Museum inside the [Patee House Museum](#)
- [Royals Hall of Fame](#)
- [Shawnee Indian Museum](#)
- [Shoal Creek Living History Museum](#)