



November 7-9, 2025
**EAST TENNESSEE
HISTORY CENTER**
Knoxville, Tennessee

EAST TENNESSEE
ROOTS & RESOURCES
DISCOVER YOUR STORY



Presented by




**KNOX COUNTY
PUBLIC LIBRARY**



**Doug & Jane
McCarty**

EAST TENNESSEE ROOTS & RESOURCES

The inaugural genealogical gathering of the **East Tennessee History Center**, a facility of **Knox County Public Library** operated in programmatic partnership with the **East Tennessee Historical Society**



DAY ONE **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7**

4:00 PM **WALKING TOURS**

East Tennessee Roots & Resources opens with in-depth walking tours of the main departments that make up the East Tennessee History Center. *Participants may choose one of the following:*

A (THIRD FLOOR): Tour of the **Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection**—Eric Dawson, Manager, McClung Collection, Knox County Public Library

B (SECOND FLOOR): Tour of **Knox County Archives**—Eric S. Head, County Archivist, Knox County Public Library

C (FIRST FLOOR): Tour of the **Museum of East Tennessee History**—Adam H. Alfrey, Assistant Director of Historical Services, Knox County Public Library

5:00 PM **RECEPTION**

AUDITORIUM, FIRST FLOOR

Enjoy light refreshments as you mingle with genealogists, historians, and researchers who share your interest in the people and places of East Tennessee.

6:00 PM **WELCOME & KEYNOTE**

“Microfilm, Manuscripts, and Mayhem: Joys and Trials of a Genealogy Junkie” by Charles A. Sherrill

AUDITORIUM, FIRST FLOOR

All Roots & Resources events are free and open to the public.

However, Sessions I-III (marked with an *) require pre-registration.

Hear from **Dr. Warren Dockter**, President and CEO of the **East Tennessee Historical Society**, who will welcome participants to East Tennessee Roots & Resources and share exciting news about the future of **First Families of Tennessee** and **Civil War Families of Tennessee**, the Society’s long-running lineage certificate programs.

Then, enjoy a heartening keynote by **Charles A. Sherrill**, retired State Librarian and Archivist of Tennessee. Sherrill began genealogical research at the age of 13 and has had a 50-year love affair with family history research. He will relate stories and incidents from his long career, including visits to snake-infested cemeteries, stealing library books, getting lost in the National Archives, and much more. Intended both to educate and entertain, this humorous and insightful keynote will appeal to all.



DISCOVER **YOUR** STORY

DAY TWO SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8

9:00 AM-5:00 PM Calvin M. McClung
Historical Collection open for research
THIRD FLOOR

Take the lobby elevators to the third floor of the East Tennessee History Center and delve into the **Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection, Knox County Public Library**. Reference librarians will be on hand to orient you to the collection and help you access its varied and wide-ranging resources.

9:30 AM-3:30 PM Roots & Resources Hall open
BACK OF THE AUDITORIUM, FIRST FLOOR

Drop by the Roots & Resources Hall and chat with presenters, organizations, and vendors who may be able to help you on your journey to discover your family's story. The **East Tennessee Historical Society** will also offer a special sale on selected publications.

10:00 AM-4:00 PM Museum of East Tennessee
History open with free admission
FIRST FLOOR

Stroll through East Tennessee's past in the **Museum of East Tennessee History**, where free, hands-on activities will inspire young ones to become genealogists and start exploring their family's story.

10:00-11:00 AM SESSION I

A: Genealogical Trifecta—The Archives of Jefferson and Morgan Counties*

FRONT OF THE AUDITORIUM, FIRST FLOOR

This session will highlight the unique partnership between a local genealogical and historical society, museum, and county archives. Together, these organizations preserve, protect, and share the community's rich history and family stories—a genealogical trifecta. Using the **archives of Jefferson and Morgan counties** as examples, participants will discover how collaboration strengthens public access to genealogy and

historical resources, fosters civic pride, and ensures that future generations can connect with the people, places, and events that shaped the county's heritage.

Wayne Roberts is the director of the Jefferson County Archives and County Museum, located in one of the oldest Tennessee courthouses (mid-1840s) still in use. The Archives contains numerous resources available including records of Cocke, Hamblen, and Sevier counties, as early as 1792.

Jill Jones-Lazuka is an author, genealogist, and historian with decades of leadership in local and national lineage societies. She has published multiple family histories, co-authored *Civil War Stories of Morgan County*, and written extensively for books, magazines, and blogs. A recipient of the NSDAR Historic Preservation Medal, Jill also speaks statewide on cemeteries, dowsing, and historic preservation, combining research with hands-on community engagement.

B: New Lineage Certificates from the East Tennessee Historical Society*

MCCLUNG COMPUTER CLASSROOM, THIRD FLOOR

The **East Tennessee Historical Society** is presenting new lineage certificates covering more eras of Tennessee history. In addition to **First Families of Tennessee** (residency by 1796) and **Civil War Families of Tennessee** (presence in the state during the Civil War), the Society will now issue **War of 1812 Families** (military service and residency), **1870 Families of Tennessee** (residency in 1870), **World War I Families of Tennessee** (military service and residency 1914-1919), and **Century Families of Tennessee** (residency for 100 years). Learn how to apply to these new opportunities, which will allow you to honor your family's contributions to Tennessee history.

Ann K. Blomquist is an experienced genealogist, author of 13 books, editor of three genealogy magazines, presenter of genealogy classes and topics, and administrator for lineage certificates at the East Tennessee Historical Society.



To pre-register for sessions, visit

KNOXCOUNTYLIBRARY.ORG/ETRR



11:15 AM-12:15 PM SESSION II

A: Between the Vernacular and the Records* FRONT OF THE AUDITORIUM, FIRST FLOOR

In this session, participants will discuss research techniques and obstacles in crafting **African American narratives** from often unavailable primary sources and how to utilize **oral histories** in the validation or contradiction of those sources.

Lisa N. Oakley serves as the Vice President and Curator of Education for the East Tennessee Historical Society. Her current research interests lie in the histories of Black East Tennesseans during Reconstruction.

William Isom II, a native of East Tennessee, has enjoyed a 25-plus year career in media, public history, and social justice work focused on the research and documentation of Black history in the Mountain South.

B: Finding Genealogical Treasures in Manuscript Collections* MCCLUNG COMPUTER CLASSROOM, THIRD FLOOR

Libraries across the country have rooms filled with personal diaries, heartfelt letters, detailed account books, revealing church minutes, and other records that shine a light into the lives of our ancestors. While more of these original documents are being converted to digital files every day, the vast majority of these records are not available online. But nearly every library has a catalog online, and the careful genealogist can use the catalog to find manuscript collections that will reveal new information about their ancestors. In this session, participants will discuss what treasures lie waiting for you in **manuscript collections**, how to track them down from home using the internet, and how to use what they find to enrich the story of their family.

Charles A. Sherrill has written and lectured extensively about Tennessee genealogical research for 40 years. He retired as State Librarian and Archivist of Tennessee in 2022. His publications include the *NGS Guide to Research in Tennessee*, two family genealogies, the two-volume *Tennessee Convicts*, and *The Reconstructed 1810 Tennessee Census*. Chuck has been the editor of *The Middle Tennessee Journal of History and Genealogy* since 2002.

1:45-2:45 PM SESSION III

A: Validity to Claims—Documenting Cherokee in the Southeast* FRONT OF THE AUDITORIUM, FIRST FLOOR

This session will explore the historical basis for the **continual presence of Cherokee people in the Southeast** and examine the complex reasons behind the **prevalence of Cherokee ancestry claims** among modern Americans. Participants will move beyond the common narrative of “hiding in the mountains” to uncover the documented circumstances that allowed a significant number of Cherokee people to remain in their ancestral lands following the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and the subsequent forced migration. By examining primary source documentation, we will establish the compelling history that forms the foundation for both valid and unsubstantiated claims of Cherokee heritage.

Anita Finger-Smith is a respected genealogical and historical researcher with over 20 years of experience, specializing in Southeastern Cherokee records from the pre-Removal era to the present. She is the principal genealogist for Cherokee Genealogy Services, a business licensed through the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Outside her research role, Anita is the co-owner of Bearmeat's Indian Den, an authentic Native American art gallery located in the Wolfetown Community of the Qualla Boundary.

B: How to Navigate the Tennessee Valley Authority's (Genealogical) Records* MCCLUNG COMPUTER CLASSROOM, THIRD FLOOR

Over her 30-plus years serving as historian for the **Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)**, Patricia Bernard Ezzell has fielded numerous calls asking for help locating family history information. This session will discuss the many records that TVA has generated that might help genealogists flesh out their family histories, including family **history survey forms** that were completed by TVA caseworkers when families were relocated due to a construction project, **cemetery relocation records**, and **TVA employment records**.

Patricia Bernard Ezzell served as the Tennessee Valley Authority's resident expert regarding the history of the agency and was the primary contact person for information pertaining to TVA's past. She is the author of several articles as well as two books on TVA history: *TVA Photography: Thirty Years of Life in the Tennessee Valley* and *TVA Photography, 1963-2008: Challenges and Changes in the Tennessee Valley*, both published by the University Press of Mississippi.

12:15-1:45 PM LUNCH

Enjoy lunch on your own in downtown Knoxville. Scan the QR code for a list of what's nearby.



DAY THREE **SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9**

1:00-5:00 PM Open research in Knox County Archives and the Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection

SECOND AND THIRD FLOORS

East Tennessee Roots & Resources concludes with an opportunity for an afternoon of research in **Knox County Archives** (second floor, open specially for Roots & Resources participants) and the **Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection** (third floor).

1:00-5:00 PM Museum of East Tennessee History open with free admission
FIRST FLOOR

ABOUT ETHC



At the **East Tennessee History Center**, **DISCOVER YOUR STORY** isn't just a tagline—it's an invitation. Whether your roots run deep in East Tennessee or you are exploring a newfound interest, the History Center offers a gateway to the people, places, and

events that shaped the region. With a family friendly museum, governmental archives, and a heralded special collections and genealogical library under one roof, the History Center is where personal past meets regional history.

The East Tennessee History Center is a facility of **Knox County Public Library** (www.knoxcountylibrary.org) and is operated in programmatic partnership with the **East Tennessee Historical Society** (www.eastTNhistory.org). It is located at 601 S. Gay Street in the heart of downtown Knoxville, Tennessee. For more information, please call 865-215-8899.

SESSION PRESENTERS



Charles A. Sherrill



Ann K. Blomquist



Wayne Roberts



Jill Jones-Lazuka



Lisa N. Oakley



William Isom II



Anita Finger-Smith



Patricia Bernard Ezzell



SPECIAL THANKS TO




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Thoughts? Suggestions?
SCAN THE QR CODE



EAST TENNESSEE ROOTS & RESOURCES

ANCESTRAL CHART

No. 1 on this chart is
the same person as No. _____
On Chart No. _____

BORN
PLACE
MARRIED
PLACE
DIED
PLACE

NAME OF SPOUSE

BORN
PLACE
MARRIED
PLACE
DIED
PLACE

BORN
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Chart No. _____

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