



Lincoln-Lancaster County Genealogical Society

Preserving the past for future generations



NEBRASKA

Lincoln-Lancaster County Genealogical Society Celebrating 50 Years of Genealogy 1976–2026

For fifty years, the Lincoln-Lancaster County Genealogical Society has connected families, preserved local history, and supported researchers of all experience levels. From early meetings in local churches and libraries to a vibrant genealogy library and active online presence, our members have generously shared their time, talents, and stories. This overview highlights key moments, dedicated volunteers, and lasting projects that have shaped our Society from 2011 to our 50th anniversary in 2026, and we extend heartfelt thanks to all who have been part of the journey.

2011

- A Family History Fair was held October 2 at College View Adventist Church with 100 attendees and 28 exhibitors.
- A preservation and digitization plan identified key records (naturalization, marriage, Sittler newspaper index cards, and LLCGS publications); all have since been digitized, securely stored in cloud storage, and made searchable under “Search Database” on the Society website as of 2026.

2012

- A new LLCGS website debuted in January; the newsletter became electronic only.
- In anticipation of the 1940 census release, Lori Cox-Paul from the National Archives in Kansas City presented “Celebrating and Using the 1940 Census.”
- Lila Garner led a “Third Wednesday” monthly discussion group at Chatelaine from 2012 to 2016. The Time Travelers Writing Group, started by Ruth Briney in August, continues to meet on the Society’s 50th anniversary.
- Bob and Arlene Houser led “First Thursday” monthly genealogy discussions at St. Paul United Methodist Church from 2012 to 2017.
- LLCGS and Southeast Community College co-sponsored a workshop on October 13 with well-known Palatine Germans expert Hank Jones Jr.
- Early 2012 meetings were held at Walt Branch Library; by April, meetings returned to Union College.
- PayPal was implemented for Society use.
- On December 11, monthly meetings began at Eastridge Presbyterian Church, 1135 Eastridge Drive, Lincoln, with an ethnic fair attended by over 50 members and 29 guests; the last meeting there was in December 2014.

2013

- Scanning of Melvin Sittler's newspaper index cards (over 200,000 names) began, and digitized data was added to the website.
- A German Research Interest Group, led by Chris Effken, was formed and continues to meet in 2026.
- LLCGS and Southeast Community College hosted a fall conference on October 12 with speaker Lisa A. Alzo and 87 attendees.

2014

- Ninety-seven people registered for the April Irish Genealogy Conference with presenters from the Ulster Foundation.
- LLCGS joined Give to Lincoln Day; by 2025 that fundraiser brought in about \$4,800, with \$773.94 recorded in 2014.
- The fall conference featuring Dr. Colleen Fitzpatrick on forensic genealogy drew 119 attendees and launched LLCGS's interest in DNA research.
- The British Interest Group formed January 12 and continues to meet in 2026.
- Tom McFarland began monthly newsletter articles on books and DNA.

2015

- Monthly meetings moved to First Lutheran Church, 1551 South 70th Street, Lincoln, on January 15.
- The March 28 "Tools and Techniques" workshop at UNL East Campus (with about ten LLCGS presenters) was the first collaboration with OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute).
- The Family Tree Maker Interest Group began in April with 32 attendees and still meets in 2026.
- Over 2,000 books donated years earlier by the Nebraska State Historical Society were processed and added to the Union College Library collection.
- A field trip to the Lancaster County Poor Farm and Juvenile Detention Home took place September 27.
- The fall conference on October 3, featuring Lisa Louise Cooke at UNL East Campus in collaboration with OLLI, was part of a series of LLCGS/OLLI classes.

2016

- Jane and Steve Shanahan donated \$2,500 to Give to Lincoln Day in honor of Jane's grandmother and mother.
- Union College students began scanning Lancaster County marriage records in May.
- LLCGS celebrated its 40th anniversary on August 18 with a skit reenacting the Society's founding.
- The November 5 fall conference, "Smart Searching and Wise Preserving," at First Lutheran Church included the Society's first conference raffle fundraiser.
- A collection of pictorial atlases for Nebraska and Iowa counties was purchased and added to the library.

2017

- Members were heavily involved in the Nebraska Genealogical Society Conference with national speaker D. Joshua Taylor at the Cornhusker Marriott.
- On September 16, LLCGS hosted the fall conference “They Came West” at First Lutheran Church with speaker Julie Miller.

2018

- A new LLCGS logo appeared on the April newsletter and is still used on the 50th anniversary.
- Kathleen Brandt presented “Family History Resources” on August 18 at First Lutheran Church.
- Joel Green presented on Robber’s Cave at the February 13 monthly meeting.

2019

- Beginning in January, 45-minute help sessions were offered before monthly meetings, led by Society members and coordinated by Prudence Sadler.
- LLCGS received a 2019 Best of Lincoln Award in the community organization category.
- A July 13 conference at First Lutheran Church featured local professional genealogist and LLCGS member Gail Blankenau.
- The Czechoslovak Genealogical International Society held its October convention in Lincoln; LLCGS members presented and staffed a Society table.
- On November 20, Union College notified the Society that the library needed to move by March 20, 2020.
- A two-year project to digitize 78 Lancaster County marriage record books (over 52,000 images) was completed and placed on the LLCGS library website.

2020

- Many activities, including the fall conference, were cancelled due to COVID-19; the last in-person meeting was March 19 at First Lutheran Church.
- In January, the Nebraska Library Commission, 1200 N Street, Lincoln, offered temporary library space; 535 boxes were moved March 16 in a rental truck, and shelving purchased from Union College went into storage.
- The first electronic election of officers was held in May, and, due to the pandemic, meetings and programs transitioned to online platforms implemented by Nancy Eckles.
- Membership fees were waived from September 1, 2020 through August 31, 2021.

2021

- On June 5, LLCGS and the Denton Community Historical Society co-sponsored a Memorial Spirit Walk at Yankee Hill Cemetery, while Sheila Spath continued her research and development of websites for Lancaster County cemeteries.
- Bylaws were amended August 29 to hold business meetings quarterly and to allow in-person, virtual, or hybrid meetings.

- The genealogy library remained at the Nebraska Library Commission by appointment while a permanent site was sought.

2022

- The April 1 release of the 1950 census was especially meaningful to members born after 1940 who could now see their own names.
- Best Choice UPC label fundraising, begun years earlier, continued with Connie Jean Hulinsky newly taking over the task, bringing in about \$100 a year for the library fund, including \$90 in 2025.
- On June 26, members voted to lease library space at 2900 O Street, Lincoln, enabled by a \$170,000 donation for a 10-year lease.
- The library moved from the Nebraska Library Commission into the new space in September, with shelving reassembled and boxes moved on September 14.
- A conference was held August 27 at Southeast Community College with virtual speaker Sunny Jane Morton.
- Ellen and Raymond DeVries received a Presidential Award in September.
- Time Travelers Writing Group assembled 36 holiday gift bags for elementary students, marking the seventh year of the project.
- An open house at the new library on December 3 drew over 150 guests.

2023

- Library volunteer training in January allowed the library to open four afternoons per week.
- The first quarterly meeting at the new library was held January 22; a 65-inch wall-mounted television was purchased to facilitate programs.
- The Standing Rules dated September 1 reflected dues increases: individual from \$15 to \$20, family from \$20 to \$25.
- In September, a scavenger hunt designed by Judi Cook helped volunteers learn the new library's resources.
- A *Lincoln Journal Star Neighborhood Extra* article profiled 97-year-old Time Travelers organizer Ruth Briney.

2024

- Humanities Nebraska funded the January program "Overland Trails: Children of the Trail," presented by Renae Hunt.
- LLCGS undertook digitization and preservation of the 1980 Neighborhood Oral History Project tapes and transcripts, supported by grants of \$2,500 from the Lincoln Community Foundation, \$1,000 from the NSHS Foundation, and a \$1,500 donation from Annette Wiechert, with Society members scanning and digitizing transcripts.
- Members were encouraged to add obituaries to Lancaster County cemetery records on Find a Grave.
- Genealogy Day was celebrated March 9.

- An overflow crowd attended Sue Schlichting's August 25 program "Your German Ancestor's Journey."

2025

- Hosted by LLCGS at the library, the Genealogy Day Fair on March 8 gathered more than 60 attendees and over 40 participating groups for collaboration and resource sharing.
- A farewell party for longtime member and past president Phyllis Ericson was held April 3; she moved to Kansas but continues offering online sessions on British and Nordic genealogy.
- Many members helped teach a six-week OLLI beginning genealogy class at UNL in March–April, led by Michael George and Marcia Stewart.
- LLCGS members presented collaboratively with Bennett Martin Library; among the programs were Becky Martin on house history (May 17) and Karen Keehr on the Neighborhood Oral History Project (August 30).
- The first Genealogy Coffee Chit-Chat met at Meadowlark Coffee Shop on October 14 with about 25 people attending.
- After many years of dedicated service, Al Harlow stepped down as IT manager at the end of August, and Susan Dunn, who had long served as newsletter editor, concluded her tenure in December.
- On October 18, members toured the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia on a visit arranged by LLCGS member Karen Keehr; AHSGR and LLCGS are collaborating to make the Neighborhood Oral History materials publicly available.

2026

- The library, interest groups, classes, and collaborations continue to serve the community as LLCGS celebrates 50 years.
- The genealogy library is currently open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 1–3 p.m. and also by appointment, with over 30 volunteers filling these shifts to provide assistance to researchers.

Presidents Through the Years

LLCGS has had 22 presidents in 50 years.

- Current or still-member past presidents (9): Eva Bachman, Phyllis Ericson, Michael George, Corinne Jacox, Joan Longacre, Renee Lubash, Tom McFarland, Bob McQuistan, Teresa Shane, Marcia Stewart.
- Deceased past presidents (8): Scott Argabright, Dick Young, Ruth Griswold, Van Henkle, Wes Lauterbach, Cynthia Monroe, Lester Rumbaugh, Hal Young.
- Living, non-member past presidents (5): Jon Curran, Bob Fitzsimmons, Beth Haring, Beverly Kappenman.

State Genealogist of the Year Honorees

LLCGS members have been recognized with the Nebraska State Genealogical Society Genealogist of the Year Award:

- 2013 – Judi Cook
- 2015 – Phyllis Ericson
- 2017 – Ruth Briney
- 2020 – Teresa Sullivan
- 2023 – Cindy Cochran

These honorees represent the Society's commitment to research, education, and community service in genealogy.