

MIDWEST HISTORICAL & GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

ALERT

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Location

1203 N. Main
P.O. Box 1121
Wichita, KS 67201
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Library hours

Tuesday and Saturday
10 to 4 pm.
(library@mhgswichita.org)

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The Official 1st Valentine
Card Sent in the USA

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CELEBRATING THE HISTORY OF VALENTINES DAY!



Do you know who was credited for sending the first Valentines Day card in the USA?

In keeping with our country's 250 year anniversary, the *Alert* is focusd on how several of our holidays were celebrated in 1776. However, Valentine's Day in 1776 took the back seat due to the unfolding of the

Revolutionary War. Instead of printed cards, couples exchanged handwritten notes or self-written poems to their loved ones. In the years leading up to 1776, it was common for local newspapers to feature romantic, often acrostic, poetry. A common romantic superstition had young women pinning five bay leaves to their pillows – one on each corner and one in the middle – to dream about future relationships which would eventually lead to a spouse.

History documents that the first Valentine in the United States was actually written in 1779 by John Graves Simcoe, a British officer to Sarah Townsend of New York. He wrote her a poem about how difficult it must be to love an enemy soldier. It is displayed in the Raynham Hall Museum in Oyster Bay, New York.

The Raynham Hall was a home owned by the Townsend family that was confiscated by the British to use as their headquarters during the Revolutionary War. Robert Townsend was a spy for the George Washington Culper Ring of Spies. If only walls could talk, there's a lot of American history that was discussed in this homestead!

**HAPPY VALENTINES DAY TO YOU
&
YOUR LOVED ONES!**

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT FOR 2026

Are you looking for a place to volunteer where you can make a difference now and for future generations? The Midwest Historical and Genealogical Society has some openings for people who enjoy learning about history and genealogy. MHGS has openings on its board for a secretary and treasurer, an editor for the Alert, and a social media manager. MHGS is also recruiting for volunteers who are willing to work on Saturdays to help visitors who drop by to do research on their families. Julia, along with other volunteers, would be happy to train you to assist others in making family connections using our onsite resources.

The Alert editor is responsible for producing a monthly newsletter on current genealogy topics, historical antidotes, new books that have been donated or purchased, and updating the Special Interest Group Calendar. The social media manager will help with advertising our organization, our programs and resources available online as well as onsite. If you're interested in pursuing one of these positions, please contact Julia Langel or Ann Boll. Their email addresses are available under the Board of Directors section of this newsletter.

So come join the fun, research your own family history and help those who drop in and/or call in looking for a long lost relative needed to breakthrough a genealogical roadblock.

NEW BOOKS

| Call Number | Title | Series Info | Author | Date |
|-------------|--|-------------|--|------|
| R-669 029 | No End Save Victory: Perspectives on World War II | | Cowley, Robert | 2001 |
| R-669 030 | December 1941: 31 Days That Changed America and Saved the World | | Shirley, Craig | 2011 |
| R-669 031 | 'We Pulled Together...and Won!' Personal Memories of the World War II Years | | Mulvey, Deb | 1993 |
| R-669 076 | Absolute Victory: America's Greatest Generation and Their World War II Triumph | | Editors of TIME | 2005 |
| R-669 077 | Endkampf: Soldiers, Civilians, and the Death of the Third Reich | | Fritz, Stephen G. | 2004 |
| R-669 078 | The Longest Day: The Classic Epic of D-Day | | Ryan, Cornelius | 1959 |
| R-669 079 | War in the Pacific: Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay | | Nalty, Bernard | 1999 |
| R-669 080 | The War: An Intimate History 1941-1945 | | Ward, Geoffrey C. | 2007 |
| R-669 081 | Double Cross: The True Story of the D-Day Spies | | Macintyre, Ben | 2012 |
| R-669 082 | A Dawn Like Thunder: The True Story of Torpedo Squadron Eight | | Mrazek, Robert J. | 2008 |
| R-669 083 | Warfare and the Third Reich | | Chant, Christopher | 2000 |
| R-660 019 | A Preliminary List of U.S. Air Force Aces 1817-1953 | | USAF Historical Division, Research Studies Institute | 1962 |
| R-665 069 | Gettysburg: A Testing of Courage | | Trudeau, Noah Andre | 2002 |

| Call Number | Series Info | Author | Date |
|----------------------|---|---------------------------------|------|
| R-670 001 | The Ravens: The Men Who Flew In | Robbins, Christopher | 1987 |
| R-660 018 | Battle of Sea: 3,000 Years of Naval Warfare | Grant, R. G. | 2008 |
| R-665 070 | Some Reminiscences of Persons and Incidents of the Civil War | Ratchford, J.W. | 1971 |
| R-665 072 | The Life of Johnny Reb and The Life of Billy Yank | Wiley, Bell I. | 1994 |
| R-665 073 | Civil War Soldiers: Their Expectations and Their Experiences | Mitchell, Reid | 1988 |
| R-665 074 | Quantrill at Lawrence: The Untold Story | Peterson, Paul R. | 2011 |
| R-665 075 | Conquering the Valley: Stonewall Jackson at Port Republic | Krick, Robert K. | 1996 |
| R-665 076 | Deeds of Valor: How America's Civil War Heroes Won the Congressional Medal of Honor | Beyer, W.F. | 2000 |
| R-665 077 | Chronicles of the Civil War: An Illustrated History of the War Between the States | | 1999 |
| R-665 077 | Shiloh – In Hell Before Night | McDonough, James Lee | 1977 |
| R-665 078 | Not War But Murder: Cold Harbor 1864 | Furgurson, Ernest B. | 2000 |
| R-630 078 | Assembled for Use: Indigenous Compilation and the Archives of Early Native American Literatures | Wisecup, Kelly | 2021 |
| R-630 077 | The End of Indian Kansas: A Study of Cultural Revolution, 1854-1871 | Miner, Craig | 1978 |
| R-630 076 | The Quest for Citizenship: African American and Native American Education in Kansas, 1880-1935 | Warren, Kim Cary | 2010 |
| R-210 SG 048 1983 | Greater Wichita Cross Reference Directory | 1983 City Publishing Company | |

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2024-2025

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|---|---|
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Please visit our Facebook page for more information on local groups and our website.
(All meetings held at the MHGS library – 1203 N Main, Wichita, KS)

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| ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP | FAMILY TREE MAKER SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP |
| Second Tuesday @ 1:30 to 3 pm Led by Julia Langel Topic in February: Update on AI Translation | Third Saturday @ 2 pm (not every month) Led by Donna Londeen |
| PHOTO MYSTERIES | DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION |
| Third Tuesday @ 1:30 to 3 pm Led by Rex Riley | Fourth Tuesday @ 1:30 pm Led by Twila Ackley Brown |

Midwest Historical and Genealogical Society
 P.O. Box 1121
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Change Service Requested