

#### 2024 NASS IDEAS Award Nomination

### **Arizona Genealogy Day**

Submitted by:

Adrian Fontes
Secretary of State
State of Arizona

Description of Program: Arizona Genealogy Day is a free, virtual, annual event presented in partnership with the Arizona Genealogical Advisory Board. The purpose of this event is to support the genealogical education needs of Arizonans and the general public and to highlight the genealogical records and resources available within our agency's collections and throughout the state. We have seen exciting growth in event attendance, collection usage, and other outreach opportunities since the event launched in 2021. We have presented locally and nationally to share our methods with other organizations who may wish to replicate Arizona Genealogy Day.

General subject area of nomination: State Heritage

Nomination Contact:

C. Murphy Hebert
Deputy Assistant Secretary of State
<a href="mailto:cmhebert@azsos.gov">cmhebert@azsos.gov</a>
602-364-3216

Project Lead:

Korina Tueller, MLIS State of Arizona Research Library Administrator ktueller@azlibrary.gov 602-926-3723

1700 W. Washington St., FL 7 Phoenix, AZ 85007-2808

www.azsos.gov

### History

In 2009, the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records returned to the Arizona Secretary of State's supervision, where it had begun 145 years prior under the Secretary of the Territory. Preserving our state's great history and providing access to public information is a critical function of the Secretary of State. The Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records provides Arizonans access to information about their government, our state's history, and records from the past. Collections include materials of high interest and importance to genealogical researchers including city directories, yearbooks, local histories, historic newspapers, livestock brand books, and state agency rosters and membership directories, and more in the State of Arizona Research Library, and vital records, court records, prison records, schools records, assessment rolls, livestock brand applications, territorial local census records and indices, and more in the Arizona State Archives.

In the last two decades, the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records has strengthened partnerships and pursued opportunities that have resulted in increased patron access to important genealogical materials from our collections. We are currently partnered with the University of Arizona Libraries in our fifth grant cycle of a National Digital Newspaper Program grant, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities in partnership with the Library of Congress. The Arizona Memory Project is our growing digital platform that provides online access to primary and secondary sources from our collections as well as from contributor collections from over 110 Arizona archives, museums, libraries, and other cultural institutions. We have also partnered with FamilySearch to digitize books and periodicals of genealogical interest from our Arizona Collection.

In addition to these efforts to increase access to resources and meet the needs of genealogical researchers, State Library staff began pivotal discussions in August 2020 with the <u>Arizona Genealogical Advisory Board</u> and other members of the genealogical community. As we brainstormed ideas for working together to advance genealogical education and to increase visibility of State Library and genealogical society resources, the idea of a jointly hosted speaker series sparked our interest and evolved quickly into the concept of a day-long virtual event. A committee was formed, planning began in earnest, and on March 20, 2021, the first Arizona Genealogy Day, a free, virtual, annual event launched. It was a success and subsequent events have been held in 2022, 2023, and 2024. Planning for Arizona Genealogy Day 2025 will begin later this year.

The purpose of this event was and is to support the genealogical education needs of Arizonans and the general public and to highlight the genealogical records and resources available within our agency's collections and throughout the state. Arizona Genealogy Day has helped us overcome historical challenges and achieve goals and objectives in these five areas:

1. Connect with the genealogy community

The Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records' Genealogy and Family History resources were downsized and relocated to their current location in 2015. This restructuring caused great concern to the genealogy community, and triggered a protest email campaign to the Secretary of State's office and to the Arizona Governor's office.<sup>3</sup> Collaborating with the genealogical community on a joint Arizona Genealogy Day event has provided a valuable opportunity to rebuild

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://azmemory.azlibrary.gov/nodes/view/181356

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://azsos.gov/about

 $<sup>^{3}\ \</sup>underline{\text{https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/phoenix/2015/07/29/arizona-genealogy-collection-state-library-move/30859015/29/arizona-genealogy-collection-state-library-move/state-library-move$ 

trust and increase communication. This event has highlighted our agency's commitment to work together with the genealogical community, and our desire to support genealogical education in Arizona and beyond.

### 2. Highlight local resources

There is no one organization or collection that can meet a genealogy researcher's every need. Relevant records and resources are found in a variety of repositories across each state, the country, and the world. One of our goals for Arizona Genealogy Day is to highlight the local resources found in Arizona and sometimes outside of Arizona. Amplifying libraries, archives, museums, genealogical societies, other state agencies, and more educates researchers on the many sources that may be relevant to them. We invite those organizations to submit a slide that will be shown between sessions on event day and emailed to registrants afterwards for reference.

### 3. Highlight our resources

We consistently strive to make the genealogical resources in our agency more visible. To achieve this goal during Arizona Genealogy Day, we reserve one of the sessions each year for a presentation that highlights the resources in the State of Arizona Research Library and/or the Arizona State Archives. In 2021, we focused on our digital collection platform, the Arizona Memory Project. In 2022, the focus was Genealogy Gems in Government Documents. In 2023, staff spoke about the range of Arizona Genealogy Resources found in the State Archives and the Research Library collections. And this year, our Newspaper librarian and our partner at University of Arizona Libraries talked about the work our teams have done to digitize historical newspapers as part of a National Digital Newspaper Program grant, a partnership between the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress.

- 4. Fulfill the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records strategic directions:
  - a. Preserving Arizona, Providing Access to empower all Arizonans now and in the future
  - b. Expanding our impact through grants, e-rate support, and partnerships
  - c. Making informed decisions to provide stewardship and service to Arizona
  - d. Growing leaders and innovators who embrace changes that lead to superior service

Arizona Genealogy Day efficiently and effectively satisfies all four of these strategic directions. Education and instruction on event day provides access to information that empowers all; our partnership with the Arizona Genealogical Advisory Board on the event expands our impact; the feedback we receive from event attendees informs our future events and helps us identify additional opportunities that better service our patrons in Arizona; and, lastly, the event allows staff members to lead on both a state and national level, discover and model innovative outreach practices, and positively enhance our attendee's experiences.

### 5. Build a tradition

There is no shortage of national, regional, and local genealogy events, both in person and virtual. Our goal was to create an annual event that would draw attention to the unique history, culture, and genealogical resources of Arizona, and we succeeded. Many of attendees sign up to receive future event details and return to join Arizona Genealogy Day year after year.

### **Significance**

There are multiple national and regional level conferences, but the collaboration between the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records with the Arizona Genealogical Advisory Board created a unique opportunity for our agency. State Library staff are able to use this event to highlight, demonstrate, instruct on, and encourage research using the rich genealogical resources found in our print and online collections.

The Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records is mandated in Arizona Revised Statutes 41-151.01 to "acquire and provide access to materials" related to multiple topics of study, including genealogy and Arizona history. Providing access means much more than opening our doors for researchers to visit us in person or online. It is imperative that we take strategic, proactive action to remove barriers for under-resourced communities that might not feel comfortable in our spaces or may not realize that we have something of value to them. We have chosen our topics with intention for Arizona Genealogy Day, and will continue to do so in order to invite and guide all those with an interest in genealogical research.

Many organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic strove to create virtual spaces that still provided space for strong connections with patrons and stakeholders. With this in our minds as well, our plans for Arizona Genealogy Day included innovative ways to encourage networking, communication, and crowd-sourced knowledge-sharing using the chat feature of our online hosting platform during event day. We strategically placed questions in downtime slides which ran between each session. Attendees would view questions and provide their answers in the chat. Attendees were highly engaged and share encouragement and useful resources in the chat, so much so that attendees requested we save the chat and distribute it post-event with the other deliverables we planned to send.

Our expenses for Arizona Genealogy Day are extremely modest, and our return on investment is high. We have used Institute of Museum and Library Services funding to pay speaker fees, which typically total \$1,000 or less for the day. Many other expenses (platform license, registration page, etc) are already in use for other Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records projects, so there is no added cost solely for Arizona Genealogy Day's benefit.

### Impact/Results

We evaluate the success of our event every year in both quantitative and qualitative ways. The response to our event has been overwhelmingly positive and we have seen exciting growth in event attendance, collection usage, and other outreach opportunities for our staff.

### Quantitative Data

Quantitative data can be pulled from our registration software and platform reports. We saw significant growth from Year 1 to Year 2, and respectable growth from Year 2 to Year 3. Our platform webinar license restricts us to 1000 logged-on participants, so we emphasized watch parties this year. As a result of that, plus some other possible reasons, our numbers this year were respectable but declined slightly from Year 3. We had 716 people register for the event this year, and approximately 416 attended the event live. Our attendance each session ranged from approximately 296-329 people.

<sup>4</sup> https://www.azleg.gov/viewDocument/?docName=http://www.azleg.gov/ars/41/00151-01.htm

There are many different ways attendees can engage with us online: Visits to our website pages; visits to the Arizona Memory Project, visits to our LibGuides, especially our guide on Arizona Genealogy Resources; questions asked through our online reference form; and visits and/or subscriptions to our YouTube channel to watch previous or current recordings on our Genealogy playlist.

Although we can't always draw a direct correlation between our event and all of our online engagement data, we do see in some cases direct evidence of our added visibility and increased number of users as a result of Arizona Genealogy Day. Here are three examples:

### Example 1 – LibGuide usage

We have seen increased usage of our Arizona Genealogy Resources LibGuide, measured by number of views. We promote this resource heavily during Arizona Genealogy Day and during other genealogy outreach, so the combination of efforts has resulted in an increasing number of views each month, with a total of over 17,000 total lifetime page views at the end of February 2024.

### Example 2 – YouTube subscribers

Another example of our success relates to our State of Arizona Research Library YouTube channel. We created a special Genealogy playlist where viewers can see all publicly available Genealogy Day recordings. We encourage people to watch/rewatch the recordings, and subscribe to our YouTube channel to be notified when any new content is added. The number of subscribers to our YouTube channel spikes in correlation to our Genealogy Day events.

### Example 3 - Outreach invites

We have noticed an increase in outreach opportunities as a result of Arizona Genealogy Day. We've been invited to speak at libraries, genealogical societies, and retirement communities. We have also been invited to participate in local, special events. These groups typically ask for a repeat of a session we presented at Genealogy Day, such as Arizona Genealogy 101 or Genealogy Gems in Government Documents, or a customized presentation.

#### Qualitative and Other Data

We ask attendees to complete a survey after each event in order to obtain both quantitative, qualitative, and other data. Attendees have been positively impacted by this event, as evident in their freeform survey responses:

As an administrator/manager I often forget that it is research that got me into library science to begin with. This conference helped to remind me of that and to underline that libraries help people to find answers to their great questions—many of which revolve around family history. The presenters were interesting and I believe that what I learned will help me to help patrons better seek genealogical information.

Event was well organized, content was highly relevant and usable, presenters and moderators were knowledgeable and engaging!

I always learn a lot at these seminars which I can use in my family history research.

All presentations were very informative and helpful. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in learning how to become better genealogists.

Wow! This is my first time attending, and I am so pumped up to get back to my family genealogy again! Thank you for the multitude of great speakers and the wonderful information shared. I can't wait to attend next year!

Nice variety of topics. I listened to all of the sessions and came away with new tools and websites to use in my research.

The panelists were informative and demonstrated how to learn about a wide variety of people. We will use this in genealogy and teaching!

A good jolt to get out of my limited view of available resources and broaden where I can search for information.

Another survey question asks how far they virtually traveled by providing their city/state/country. This helps us know our reach, and gives added support for the importance of this being a virtual event. We use that information to build a heat map. We have been able to call this an international event for three years running since we have been joined by people outside of the US – as far away as Australia one year. This year, we had someone attending from the UK, as well as Canada and Mexico. Topics at Arizona Genealogy Day appeal to those inside and outside of Arizona.

Our survey also asks if attendees would like to receive emails about future events. This email opt-in list helps us easily to communicate information about our future Genealogy Day events with interested parties. We know from another survey question (about how attendees heard about Arizona Genealogy Day) that communication via this email opt-in list is a very effective tool for inviting attendees to return.

Arizona Genealogy Day is a model for positive partnerships between a state agency and a genealogical society. Staff have shared their findings with groups and organizations in order to help others replicate our success:

Arizona Library Association Professional Development webinar (May 12, 2022) – "Connecting with Community: Lessons from Arizona Genealogy Day" <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oa9f-6eZkVs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oa9f-6eZkVs</a>

NASS Webinar (November 14, 2023) – "We Are Family: How States Support Genealogy Research" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZcDZN4YV6w

National Genealogical Society Focus session (coming May 2024) - "Branch Out: How to Partner Societies with State or Local Libraries"

https://conference.ngsgenealogy.org/focus/

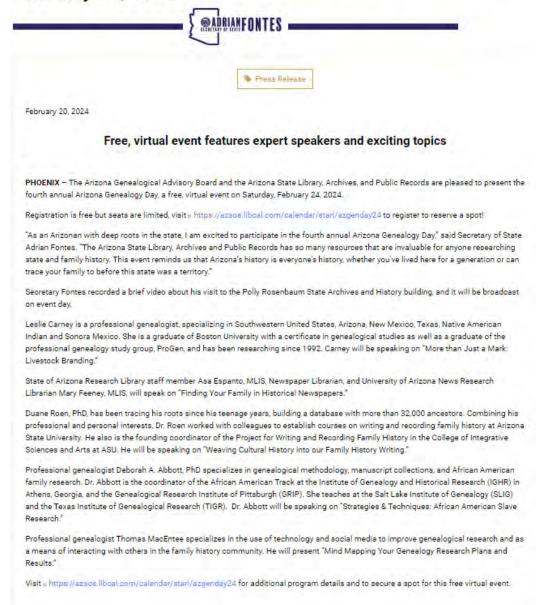
In summary, we are extremely proud of this successful partnership with the Arizona Genealogical Advisory Board and to host Arizona Genealogy Day the last four years. The benefits to our agency, our partner, and our attendees have been manifold. Arizona Genealogy Day is a highlight for genealogical researchers both inside and outside of Arizona, and has helped Arizona gain a reputation as a hotbed for genealogical research.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> https://kjzz.org/content/1872151/arizona-hotbed-family-history

### **Press Release Example**

# The Fourth Annual Arizona Genealogy Day is Saturday, February 24, 2024



### Welcome Videos and special recordings



https://youtu.be/KHFumjHJICE

Arizona Genealogy Day 2024 Welcome remarks from Arizona Genealogical Advisory Board president Betsy Gottsponer, State Librarian and Director of the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records Holly Henley, and Arizona Secretary of State Adrian Fontes



Secretary Fontes welcomes all to Arizona Genealogy Day (subtitles)

### https://youtu.be/sgOniuCy5Jg

Secretary Fontes' video welcoming people to Arizona Genealogy Day and highlighting the resources available at the State of Arizona Research Library and the Arizona State Archives.

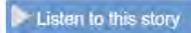
### Sample Media Coverage

# Arizona is a hotbed of family history

### By Mark Brodie

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Download mp3 (10.95 MB)

Lots of us try to find out about our family histories — who our ancestors were and what their lives were like. And Saturday, there's a virtual event aimed at people interested in just that.

Duane Roen will be taking part in the fourth-annual Arizona Genealogy Day, but he also runs separate workshops on family histories.

Roen is a former English professor and dean at Arizona State University. Since he retired in 2022, he says he's been doing a lot of work in this area. He joined The Show to talk about it,

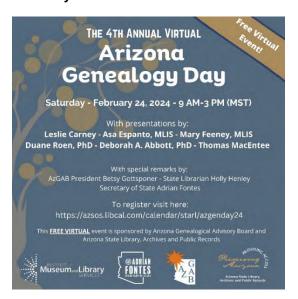
## Interview highlights

People seem really interested in their family histories. Do you feel people are more interested in this now than they have been in the past — or maybe there are just more tools to help us find out about it now?

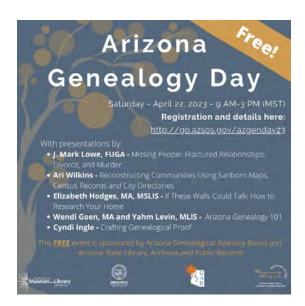
ROEN: I think there are a number of things. One, there are a lot more tools when I started doing this work. When I was a teenager, I had to go to the cemeteries. I had to go to the libraries, I had to go to the historical societies. I had to go to the courthouses. Now, almost everything that you need is online. So you never have to leave your house. The other thing that shows, like "Finding Your Roots" on PBS, has done a lot to generate interest in family history. And Arizona is a hotbed of family history for all sorts of reasons. And, you know, that's why we're having the Arizona Genealogy Day coming up on Feb. 24. ... And it's, it's going to be an exciting lineup of people that day and I hope a lot of people are able to tune in on Zoom.

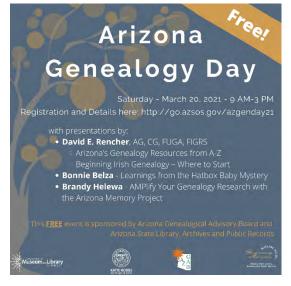
https://kjzz.org/content/1872151/arizona-hotbed-family-history

### **Event Flyers**









### **Select Agency Social Media**









State of Arizona Research Library

There are just two weeks left until the 4th Annual

Genealogy Day! This free, virtual event is on Saturday,

February 10 . @

February 24, 2024 😭



State of Arizona Research Library

February 24, 2024 📅

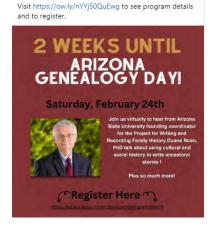
There are just three weeks left until the 4th Annual

Genealogy Day! This free, virtual event is on Saturday,



State of Arizona Research Library

We are on the final stretch! There is just ONE WEEK







State of Arizona Research Library

There are just four weeks left until the 4th Annual

Genealogy Day! This free, virtual event is on Saturday,

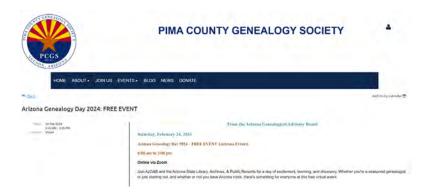
January 27 . @

February 24, 2024 😭

### Website announcements and social media from genealogical societies, libraries, and speakers



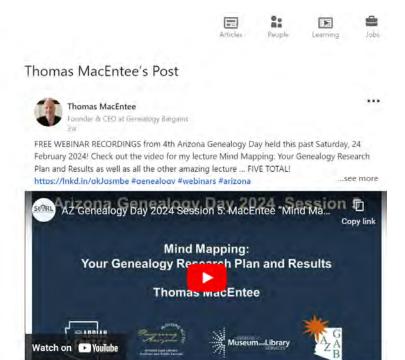
https://azwvgs.org/2024-02-24-arizona-genealogy-day/



https://www.azpcgs.org/event-5493214



https://www.azgab.org/



AZ Genealogy Day 2024 Session 5: MacEntee "Mind Mapping: Your Genealogy Research

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/thomasmacentee\_az-genealogy-day-2024-session-5-macentee-activity-

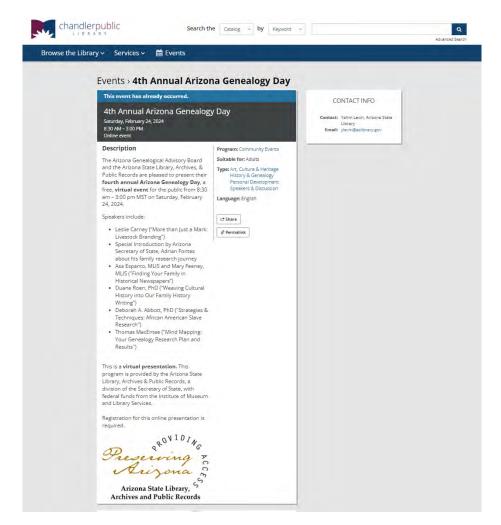
7167943478381887490-wbsA

Plan and Results"

Linked



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7Tw4wmeIEA



https://chandler.bibliocommons.com/events/6578fb02d20c652a4a049cb8

### Local and other resources who contributed a slide to our downtime slideshow

West Valley Genealogical Society

Arizona Historical Society Library and Archives

Southern Arizona Genealogy Society

Family History Society of Arizona

Mohave Museum of History and Arts

Hertiage Branch Library (Yuma)

McLelland Library

Prescott Public Library

Chino Valley Public Library

Pima County Library

Apache Junction Public Library

Sharlot Hall Museum Research Center

Black Family Genealogy and History Society

The Arizona Room (Phoenix Public Library)

**Desert Foothills Library** 

Sedona Public Library

Cyndi's List

Family Search

Allen County Public Library

New Mexico State Library

Mesa Temple Visitor's Center and Family Search

### 2024 Registration Page





# Arizona Genealogy Day 2024 🗎 🛱 🖪 🗷

The Arizona Genealogical Advisory Board and the Arizona State Library, Archives, and Public Records present a free, virtual event:

### 4th Annual

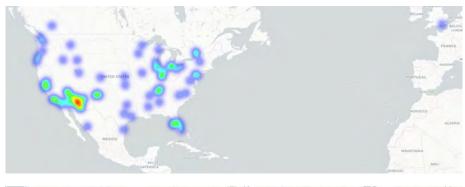
Arizona Genealogy Day Saturday, February 24, 2024

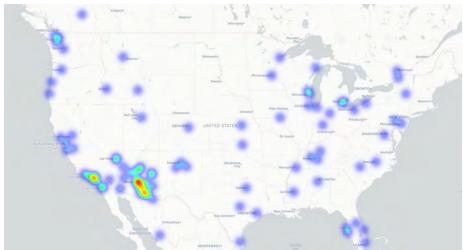
#### **Important Details**

- Registration is FREE!
- Registration is limited to 1000 participants.
- The presentations will be on Zoom.
- To view select past recordings from this and other genealogy events from the State of Arizona Research Library, click <u>here</u>.
- Please note that this event will be recorded and recordings made available to registrants for a specified amount of time. More information and links will be shared a couple of days after the event.
- · You do not need to be an Arizona resident to attend. Everyone is welcome!
- If you have any questions, please contact us at https://azsos.lihanswers.com/form

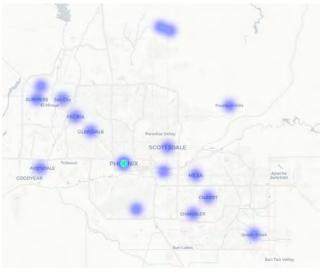
https://azsos.libcal.com/calendar/starl/azgenday24

# 2024 Heat Map of attendees who completed survey









### **Registration and Attendee Data**

|               | 2021 | 2022                | 2023            | 2024*                     |
|---------------|------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Registrations | 473  | <b>707</b> (+49.5%) | 815<br>(+15.3%) | 716 (=673+43)<br>(-12.1%) |
| Attendees     | 261  | 417 (+57.4%)        | 456<br>(+9.4%)  | 416 (=373+43)<br>(-8.8%)  |

|                             | 2021 | 2022            | 2023            | 2024*                           |
|-----------------------------|------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Session 1                   | 213  | 302<br>(+41.8%) | 352<br>(+16.6%) | 311 (=268+43)<br>(-11.7%)       |
| Session 2                   | 216  | 279<br>(+29.2%) | 357<br>(+28%)   | 329 <i>(=286+43)</i><br>(-7.8%) |
| Lunchtime/Session 3 in 2023 | 205  | 270<br>(+31.7%) | 348<br>(+28.9%) | 324 (=281+43)<br>(-6.9%)        |
| Session 3/Session 4 in 2023 | 222  | 305<br>(+37.4%) | 322<br>(+5.6%)  | 296 (=253+43)<br>(-8.1%)        |
| Session 4/Session 5 in 2023 | 204  | 327<br>(+60.3%) | 321<br>(-1.8%)  | 307 (=264+43)<br>(-4.4%)        |

### Presentations to other organizations about Arizona Genealogy Day



Arizona Library Association Professional Development webinar (May 12, 2022) "Connecting with Community: Lessons from Arizona Genealogy Day" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oa9f-6eZkVs



NASS Webinar (November 14, 2023)

"We Are Family: How States Support Genealogy Research"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZcDZN4YV6w

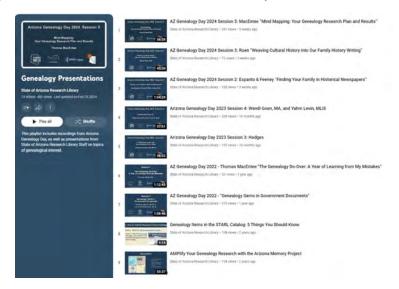


#### Breakouts 4:30-5:30 p.m. (ET)

 "Branch Out: How to Partner Societies with State or Local Libraries," by Korina Tueller, MLIS, and Linda Coldwell McCleary, MLS—Learn the ins and outs of the Arizona State Library, Archives, and Public Records and Arizona Genealogical Advisory Board partnership for Genealogy Day and how to launch a successful event.

National Genealogical Society Focus session (coming May 2024)
"Branch Out: How to Partner Societies with State or Local Libraries"
https://conference.ngsgenealogy.org/focus/

### Online Genealogy Resources from the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records



Genealogy Playlist, State of Arizona Research Library YouTube channel

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXW8MyF43pvorePqyy0HKpd7pd9LZ6rXI



Arizona Genealogy Resources LibGuide

https://azsos.libguides.com/azgenealogy