

Effectively Tapping into Local, County, and State Historical/Genealogical Societies and Libraries

Request Companion Resources:

1. Copy of PowerPoint presentation
2. 80-plus pages with index and links

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Course Description: City, county, and state historical societies and libraries have a wealth of knowledge, artifacts, and resources ready to assist in finding your roots. Learn the ins and outs of working with historical societies and how they can extend your research success.

Introduction: Foundations for the Presentation and Paper

- What is the role and mission of the societies and libraries?
- What perceptions do genealogists have when they first contact historical societies?
- What resources do historical societies provide genealogists?
- What perceptions would historical societies like genealogists to have?
- How can genealogists give back to societies and libraries?

The Mission and Role of Historical Societies, Library Archives and Special Collections Historical Societies

The mission of historical societies is to nurture and promote awareness and appreciation of local, regional and state history and culture.

Additional Internet Resources:

Links to State Historical Societies in the United States

<http://www.stenseth.org/us/statehs.html>

The GenWeb Project

<http://www.usgenweb.org/>

Society Hill

<http://www.daddezio.com/society/>

Links to Native American Sources

<http://www.haskell.edu/archive/links.htm>

Genea Search

<http://geneasearch.com/states/statesgenealogy.htm>

Cyndi's List of societies and groups ethnic, lineage, national, and, etc.

<http://www.CyndisList.com/society.htm>

Cyndi's List of state resources
Look under your state of interest and select "societies and groups"
<http://www.CyndisList.com/usa.htm>

University and State Library Archives and Special Collections

The mission of library archives and special collections is to grow, organize, care for, and manage collections of records that are of local, regional, state and national interest - many of which date back to the early colonial period.

Additional Internet Resources:

America's Historical Documents
<http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/>

The American Antiquarian Society (AAS)
<http://www.americanantiquarian.org/>

State & Regional Library Associations
<http://my.execpc.com/~himmel/associations.html>

Digital History
<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/resources.html#societies>

Internet Public Library
<http://www.ipl.org/div/subject/browse/hum60.60.00/>

National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections
<http://www.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/>

National Archives
<http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/topics/genealogy.html>
<http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/topics/genealogy.html#morehints>

Online Books--Archives and Indexes
<http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/archives.html>

Repository of Primary Sources
<http://www.uidaho.edu/special-collections/Other.Repositories.html>

Virtual Link to WW Museums
<http://vlmp.museophile.com/>

Center for Research Libraries
<http://www.crl.edu/content.asp?l1=1>

Strategy for Searching Societies and Libraries

- Step 1. Consult Handbooks on Genealogical Research
- Step 2. Check Genealogy Surname Card Files
- Step 3. Search Family History Files and Published Biographies and Genealogies
- Step 4. Check Books on State and Local History
- Step 5. Search Journals and Periodicals
- Step 6. Search Original Source Material
- Step 7. Research Other Libraries
- Step 8. Make Your Research Available to Others

Resources Available at Societies, University and State Library Archives and Special Collections

1. **Archives and Manuscripts** – State government records, military records, personal papers, family Bible records, genealogical notes and charts, church and cemetery records, business records, maps, and other archival and manuscript material. Some finding aids are available online. Document images for 6,000 family Bible records are available online.
2. **Architectural Drawings and Plans** – Includes information on many state, local, and private structures and related material.
3. **Books, Journals**-Books, newspaper and periodical collections, federal, state, and local government publications, microfilm and microfiche, and selected maps.
4. **Business Records and Resources**– Includes historical business records and current business resources.
5. **Census Records** – Current statistical resources and historical records released for public use.
6. **County and City Records** –Includes court records, deeds, marriage records and vital statistics, wills, and other probate records.
7. **Election Records and Resources** – Includes published and archival records that document local, state, and national elections.
8. **Genealogical Research** – Resources for family history research.
9. **Government Records and Resources** – Current and historical resources and records; includes state records, state and federal publications.
10. **Land Records** – Includes county and city deeds, patents and grants.
11. **Maps** – Includes historical maps, USGS topographic quadrangles, and Sanborn Fire Insurance maps.
12. **Military Records and Resources** – Includes service, pension, and land bounty records for Virginia soldiers from the colonial period to the twentieth century.
13. **Newspapers and Periodicals** – Catalogs and indexes.
14. **Private Papers and Biographical Resources** – Contains genealogical and biographical sources including Bible records, cemetery records, church records, family papers, genealogical notes and charts, and organization records.
15. **Photographic Collections** – Images of history and culture.
16. **Tax Records** – Includes county and city titheable lists and state land and personal property tax books.
17. **Vital Statistics** – includes official state and locality registration of marriages, births, and deaths as well as family Bible and church records.

How to Locate Newspapers and Periodicals

Worldcat

<http://www.worldcat.org/>

PERSI

<http://www.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=3165>

<http://www.acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy/persi.html>

Organizing Your Research Priorities

1. What research can you do from home?
2. Review your records before you go on your trip.
3. What kind of records can't be found at home?
4. Questions to ask that can yield treasures.
5. Determine what resources are available in that area.
6. Determine what type of information you seek.
7. Make advance contact—establish a rapport.
8. Whenever possible, let people know you are coming and when.
9. Know the times of operation.
10. Be patient when requesting records.
11. How to plan to visit the library/archive.
12. Where is the best place to get information?
13. Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Conducting Research

1. Keep a travel journal during your trip.
2. Learn about local history.
3. Searching for your ancestors original places of residence.
4. Searching libraries and archives in the country.
5. Searching graveyards during your trip.
6. Photographing at the cemetery/graveyard.
7. Photographing in the libraries.
8. Photographing museums and archives.
9. Photographing microfilm.

Research Techniques for Societies, Libraries, Archives & Special Collections

1. **Trace footnotes and endnotes.** Footnote and endnote tracing is the use of footnotes or endnotes found in books or articles to identify other relevant material.
2. **Talk to scholars or other experts.** Talking to people who have already done work in the field of interest is another way of locating relevant primary sources.
3. **Talk to Librarians, Curators, and Archivists.** Most librarians, curators, and archivists are knowledgeable about the subject areas related to their collections.
4. **Google.** As more special collection repositories are placing descriptions, finding aids, databases, and digital reproductions of primary sources from their collections on the web, it is possible to do a certain amount of research using Google and other search engines.
5. **Tips for Searching Indexes and Databases.**

Document/Citing Your Sources

Citing sources, whether using primary or secondary materials, is fundamental to genealogical research and writing. Your citations provide readers and future researchers with a guide to the materials you have used as evidence, as well as a source for others to trace your footnotes for their own research.