

The Genealogical Reference Interview – Orientation to Library Resources and Services

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Family history researchers are everywhere. If you are not one yourself, someone in your family “works on the family” or “has all that stuff.” In a library setting many, if not all of us, have encountered working on a family history research project. If not a family history project; maybe a local history project that involves people that genealogical / historical background is needed.

Managing a family history research questions is the same as managing any other reference question. Getting down to the actual need is the key to a successful interaction. In providing any reference service the dialog created along with listening and synthesizing of information is the key to you managing, controlling and providing materials within your wheelhouse of resources.

The reference interview occurs in all subject areas. As example: A customer asks for books on cats. You begin the dialogue to discover the customer wants material on tigers. If a little more probing would not have occurred, the customer might have ended up being shown material on house cats.

Family History researchers need the same guidance. Corraling stories being told by listening to geographic locations mentioned and time period mentioned is the key, no matter what the information need is: How to make a cake should discover through the reference interview what kind of cake. An exact information need discovered through a reference interview should allow you to provide a successful interaction – and an opportunity to provide a referral to someone, maybe the local genealogy society, another library, and through the internet. It doesn’t matter if it is a cake, or a family, listening and extracting is important.

As mentioned throughout this presentation, being in control, knowing where and how to get your customer started is the key to a successful reference interaction. As information professionals, providing highly effective customer service is not only a goal, but a responsibility.

Sources mentioned

Google searches: Listening to your customer is one of the most important things in providing family history reference. Being able to hear where someone is researching, when, or what their question is, should lead you to being able to create searches that will provide your customer with results. The ability to put a question in the search box in Google and presenting the results creates a successful interaction and further research for the customer.

Search also for “list of.....”

“genealogy blogs” “genealogy webinars” “genealogy podcasts”

Pedigree Charts

Search “free pedigree charts” on Google. Also check the images for links. You will also find charts through Ancestry Library Edition (ALE). Search “charts and forms” from ALE home page.

Heritage Quest

HQ is a great place for new researchers to start. There are “Research Aids” that have topic tips and tricks including getting started, census research and beyond the basics including African American research. The advantage to Heritage Quest is that researchers are directed to a specific resource type like census, revolutionary war, and the like. This helps researchers stay focused because the result list is limited to source type which can be less confusing to the new researcher.

FamilySearch

www.familysearch.org

- Set up a free account / available from home
- Wiki; catalog; search page
- search by global search or search specific area or specific record collection
- ~500,000 digitalized family history book sources
- Nearly 7 million digital images of source records
- Catalog search can also lead to digital images
- FamilySearch Webinars

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Family_History_Library_Classes_and_Webinars

Becoming an affiliate library is easy and gives you and your customers access to most restricted images unavailable when researching at home. Contact Cherie Bush at bushcd@familysearch.org to become an affiliate library.

Libraries

LibWeb online listing of libraries worldwide, over 8000 webpages from 146 countries from all types of libraries with links to them

www.lib-web.org

Larger Libraries that Offer International Collections

Allen County (IN) Public Library Genealogy Center

www.genealogycenter.org

Largest collection of family history research materials in a public library in the United States.

Houston (TX) Public Library Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research

www.houstonlibrary.org

www.houstonlibrary.org/clayton

Mid-Continent (MO) Public Library Midwest Genealogy Center

<https://www.mymcpl.org/locations/midwest-genealogy-center>

Directories of internet resources to genealogy sites (free and fee)

Cyndi's List www.cyndislist.com

A comprehensive, categorized & cross-referenced list of links (337,000+) that point you to genealogical research sites online by subject

Linkpendium <http://www.linkpendium.com/>

Linkpendium is a 10,000,000+ resource directory to everything on the Web about families worldwide and genealogically relevant information about U.S. states and counties

Additional websites mentioned

Internet Archive <https://archive.org/> is building a digital library of Internet sites and other cultural artifacts in digital

Hathi Trust

<https://www.hathitrust.org/> is building a digital library of internet set and other cultural artifacts in digital form

Digital Public Library of America

<https://dp.la/> works with a national network of partners to make millions of materials of libraries, archives, museums and other cultural institutions across the country available to all in a one stop discovery experience

Family History Daily – 50 free websites

<https://familyhistorydaily.com/genealogy-resources/50-free-genealogy-sites/>

Social Media Genealogy

<https://socialmediagenealogy.com/>

Here you will find two .pdfs that hotlink Facebook groups and YouTube videos for education. Additionally, Katherine has a very interesting blog

State Library Associations

Does your state library association have a Public Libraries Division? That division might have round tables or other interest groups that you can network with.

Genealib

A subscription mailing list for people serving family history researchers. Includes not only library staff, but also includes genealogy societies, historical and archival collections. Is a wonderful “beehive” of knowledge and information.

To subscribe or unsubscribe via the World Wide Web, visit

<https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fmailman.acomp.usf.edu%2Fmailman%2Flistinfo%2Fgenealib&data=02%7C01%7Csusan.kaufman%40houstontx.gov%7C65407fc7dd1d451363c808d85d72882b%7C57a85a10258b45b4a519c96c7721094c%7C1%7C1%7C637362093780417369&sdata=cduJeuxP55B0Mq6%2B0bbBhUJHtUUTISYDS5JfimnQ0Bs%3D&reserved=0>

or, via email, send a message with subject or body 'help' to

genealib-request@mailman.acomp.usf.edu

You can reach the person managing the list at

genealib-owner@mailman.acomp.usf.edu