Meeting Notes on Genealogy and Local History: March 21, 2019

The Reference and Instruction Roundtable met to learn about genealogy and local history on Thursday, March 21, at the Connecticut Library Service Center in Middletown.

We were fortunate to have the following presenters:

- Jerry Seagrave, CT State Library
- Eric Hansen, CT State Library
- Nora Galvin, CG
- Carol Ansel, Godfrey Memorial Library
- Agatha Monahan, West Hartford Public Library
- Amy Schumann, C.H. Booth Library (Newtown)
- Sally Ijams, Darien Library

Remarks from CLC

RUSA Guidelines for Developing a Core Genealogy Collection & Guidelines for Establishing Local History Collections

Christie Mitchell briefly reviewed the RUSA guidelines on developing a genealogy collection and for establishing a local history collection. The full-text versions of both guidelines are attached to this blog post.

Presentations

Jerry Seagrave, CT State Library

- CT State Library Resources

Jerry provided an overview of the collections housed at the CT State Library in the History and Genealogy Unit. You can find a comprehensive list of their holdings here: https://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/hg/home

To see items in person, it is recommended that you call ahead so items can be pulled for you.

Note: Some materials (both at the library and online) are available with a CT State Library Card. Click here for information on how residents can get one: https://ctstatelibrary.org/about/library-card/

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Eric Hansen, CT State Library

- ResearchIT CT

Eric spoke briefly about the digital resources in genealogy and local history that are available through ResearchIT CT. For a list of all resources in genealogy: https://researchitct.org/genealogy/

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Nora Galvin, CG, Editor of the quarterly journal of the CT Ancestry Society

- Genealogy and DNA

Nora gave a wide-ranging and fascinating talk about DNA and genetic genealogy. Please see her handout for some basics, as well as some resources she recommends.

Nora also told us about the Ancestors Road Show program by the Connecticut Professional Genealogical Council (CPGC). In an Ancestors Road Show, several CPGC members provide individualized consultations to attendees and offer suggestions on dealing with research problems. Host institutions pay $250, which is used by the charitable arm of the CPGC to support Connecticut libraries. More information is available here: https://www.ctprofgen.org/road-show/

Lastly, Nora highly recommended the convention of the New England Regional Genealogical Consortium (NERGC), which happens every other year. This year, it takes place April 3-6. You can get more information here: https://www.nergc.org/2019-conference/. They also have a Librarians Day on Wednesday, April 2: http://www.nergc.org/librarians-and-teachers-day/.

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African-American Genealogy Bibliography

A librarian from the New York Public Library provided us with a bibliography for African-American genealogy. Please see the attachments for this comprehensive resource.

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Ethnic Heritage Center, New Haven, CT

The Ethnic Heritage Center in New Haven, housed at Southern Connecticut State University, is a museum, archives, and research center for a consortium of five New Haven-based ethnic historical societies: Greater New Haven African American Historical
Society, Connecticut Irish American Historical Society, Italian American Historical Society of Connecticut, Jewish Historical Society of Greater New Haven, and Connecticut Ukrainian American Historical Society. We were not able to get a hold of anyone from the Center, but we wanted to make note of it because of the potential usefulness to patrons researching genealogy and local history for these ethnic groups.

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Brief Presentations

We were lucky to have brief presentations from four librarians about collections and projects at their libraries.

- Carol Ansel, Godfrey Memorial Library

Carol gave us an overview of the collections at the Godfrey Memorial Library, a genealogy, history, and biography library. Carol also provided a tour of the library after the meeting. The library is open to members only, but researchers can buy day passes. They also offer many programs, which non-members can attend for a fee.

- Agatha Monahan, West Hartford Public Library

Agatha gave us an overview of the many activities and holding of the West Hartford Public Library’s local history collection.

- Amy Schumann, C.H. Booth Library (Newtown)

Amy gave us an overview of the genealogy and local history collection. She also talked about the history of the collection and the reading room at the library.

- Sally Ijams, Darien Library

Sally told us about a project she and a colleague implemented to create an index of Darien obituaries using volunteers.