

Godfrey Memorial Library Presentation Topics: A Sampler (check back with us regularly, as topics may change; with lead time we may be able to add topics on demand)

Introduction to Genealogy

Carol Ansel, Director at the Godfrey Memorial Library in Middletown, will present the ABC's of beginning genealogy, with an emphasis on the 8 (or so) basic types of genealogical records—where you can find them and how best to use them. She will include plenty of personal anecdotes to help you learn from both her mistakes and her successes. Before she was bitten by the genealogy bug, Carol was a school librarian for many years, so she is no stranger to presentations, and she finds that adults are generally better behaved than seventh grade boys. If you don't know about the Godfrey Library, you will by the end of the presentation. Who knew we had such an amazing genealogical resource right here in Middletown, CT?

Introduction to Genealogy: *Ancestry* Library edition and *FamilySearch.org* Basics

Just starting out in genealogy? The first two programs most people start with are *Ancestry* (the library edition is available for free at most public libraries) and *FamilySearch.org* (provided for free by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints). Join Carol Ansel, director of the Godfrey Memorial Library, as she demonstrates the basics of searching these two databases. She'll teach you how to begin searching and warn you about possible pitfalls so you can develop good research techniques right from the get-go.

The Census: History and How to Analyze your Ancestors

Carol Ansel, Director at the Godfrey Memorial Library in Middletown, will discuss the history of the United States Census, how the questions changed to reflect what was happening in the nation at that time, and how you can use

it to learn about your ancestors. There are stories hidden in all those facts and figures-- you just have to know how to find them.

The 1950 Census

The 1950 U.S. Census was opened to the public on April 1, 2022, 72 years after the 17th decennial census was begun. In some ways, this census is much like previous censuses; however, it does have a number of unique features. Initially, until complete name indexes are created, access to the data may require knowing some tricks; enumeration districts will be key. Library Director Carol Ansel will cover what is and isn't included in this census, as well as how to successfully make your way around.

Search Tips and Tricks

Carol Ansel, Director at the Godfrey Memorial Library in Middletown, will share a number of hints to make your online genealogy searching easier and more effective. Some of these are general practice for experienced online searchers, but some are not nearly so obvious. In fact, Carol learned many of them from other genealogical researchers. The kind of tips that will make you think, "Gee, I wish I'd known that from the start!" Join Carol and up your searching game.

The Godfrey Memorial Library and its Resources

The Godfrey Memorial Library was founded in 1947 by Fremont Rider, retired Head Librarian at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut who had a keen interest in genealogy. He started out by donating his own personal collection of materials, which amounted to over 800 books. The collection expanded and grew from there, today comprising over 40,000 works.

In addition to genealogies and biographies, the library offers vital records, local town and county histories, city directories, military muster rolls, family Bible records, and unique collections like the Laput Cemetery Collection,

with its data and photos for gravestones in 1,040 Connecticut cemeteries (and counting).

We will introduce you to “The Scholar,” the online research element of the library, and show you how to search it effectively, with an emphasis on the collections which are unique to us.

Educational Opportunities in Genealogy

What are your educational options if you’re wanting to expand or improve your genealogical skill set? We will present and discuss a number of options, from online webinars, conferences, week-long courses, to Boston University’s semester-long certificate program, to becoming a CG (Certified Genealogist).

Tracing Immigrant Ancestors

When did your family’s original immigrant arrive in America? Godfrey Memorial Library Board Chair and Senior Researcher Al Fiacre will present information about finding records of these ancestors coming to different regions of America. The types of sources and where to find them will vary depending upon the time period in which your ancestor initially arrived. One set of records will help place your early colonial ancestors, another for eighteenth and early nineteenth century arrivals, and yet another for later nineteenth and twentieth century immigrants coming for work opportunities, when governmental requirements for record keeping begin to appear. NOTE: Depending upon the level of detail, this presentation can be between one and three, hour-long presentations.

Using Periodicals in Genealogical Research

Periodicals are an often overlooked source when conducting research. There’s no sense in reinventing the wheel when it comes to family history. Join Al Fiacre, Godfrey Memorial Board Chair and Senior Researcher to learn about the major scholarly journals that every genealogist should be

familiar with, and how to search them. Find out about indexes that can lead you to articles on your ancestor or family of interest and learn how to avoid some pitfalls associated with these searches. Learn about regional publications that may shed light on a particular area where your ancestors lived.

Finding and Using Newspapers for Your Genealogical Research

Historic newspapers can be an excellent source of information when researching your ancestors. In the earlier newspapers one may find simple records of birth, baptisms, and deaths, as well as marriage announcements. In the later 19th and 20th centuries it's possible to find longer obituary records. Carol Ansel, Director at Godfrey Memorial Library, will look at the larger newspaper database paid subscriptions, as well as a large group of free resources.

Cemetery Resources

While most people are familiar with Find-A-Grave, there are actually several other sites and sources that contain cemetery images and information, which Carol Ansel, Godfrey Memorial Library Director, will share with you. She will also share some of the imagery and symbolism that was common in early New England cemeteries.

Sources for Historic Maps

Maps can be crucial to the study of genealogy, on a number of levels. After a few generations, the Colonists began to spread out in search of new land, and there were distinct patterns as to which groups of people moved where. Knowing these patterns can make tracing your ancestors a much easier proposition. Mapping your ancestors' specific location with data from

censuses and city directories may uncover patterns you were previously unaware of. With the help of detailed property deeds, some consistent geographical features, historic maps, Zillow and Google Maps and/or Google Earth, as well as a little bit of luck, you may be able to pinpoint exactly where your ancestors lived.

Citing Your Sources – Why and How

Mention the word “citations” to a genealogist and you’ll probably receive a groan in response. No one loves crafting them, but it’s not as bad as you might think. Al Fiacre, Godfrey Memorial Library Board Chair, lost his fear of citations when writing his award-winning genealogy on the Jacob Smith family. This presentation includes plenty of examples of how to construct genealogical citations for different types of sources. Al will explain why citing your sources is so crucial and try to demystify the process.

The Burden of [Genealogical] Proof

Godfrey Memorial Library Board Chair and Senior Researcher Al Fiacre will present the professional standards for Genealogical Proof and discuss what is involved in doing professional quality genealogical research, something we all can aspire to. Are your sources original, derivative or authored? How about the informant for that source— primary, secondary, or undetermined? Is your evidence direct, indirect or negative? Have you studiously ignored conflicting information, or found and resolved it? Why does any of this matter? Al will present a couple of case studies to illustrate his points.

Using Real Estate Deeds

Real estate deeds can be a gold mine of information about our ancestors, yet researchers often forget to check them. While the search process can initially seem daunting, once you figure out which indexing system a particular town or county is using, it’s not so bad. Learn how to tell a grantor from a grantee. What are metes and bounds? Which parts of a deed are boilerplate phrases

that you can safely skim over? What can you learn about family relationships from deeds? Learn all this and more from Al Fiacre, Godfrey Library's Board Chair and Senior Researcher.

Military Pensions

Military pension records are not just for war historians. In proving eligibility for government pensions, veterans and/or their families had to prove the veteran's service as well as their relationships to their spouse and children. Thus, pension files can be full of records concerning family details. Find out where pension records are located and how you can search them, or perhaps hire someone to search them for you. Once you find them, what can you glean from them? Al Fiacre, Godfrey Library's Board Chair and Senior Researcher will have you searching pension files in no time.

Colonial German Immigration

In writing his award-winning genealogy of the Jacob Smith family, Al Fiacre became very familiar with the immigration patterns of Germans into the mid-Atlantic states during colonial days. Nowadays people talk about the "Pennsylvania Dutch," Dutch being a misunderstanding of the word "Deutch" or German. Al will share key resources that should be consulted by those who want to research their colonial German ancestors.

Lineage Societies: Who They Are, What They Do, How to Apply

DAR, SAR, GSMD, NSCDA*—to non-genealogists it might sound like alphabet soup; these are acronyms for a group of lineage societies. Maybe you've never heard of them, maybe you have an application in with one or more of them. Each society has different requirements and applications, but basically, to be a member one has to prove a direct family line to a qualifying ancestor. Assuming your application is approved, what does membership mean for you? What are the goals of the society? Al Fiacre, Chairman of the Godfrey Memorial Library Board and Senior Researcher,

has helped many folks prepare their applications to a number of lineage societies, and will describe several of these societies, as well as the application processes.

*Daughters of the American Revolution, Sons of the American Revolution, General Society of Mayflower Descendants, National Society of the Colonial Dames of America

Researching the Colonial Ancestors: Godfrey's "Top Ten" List of Resources

While it may not be an exact Ten, most researchers have their favorite "go to" resources for certain times and places. Al Fiacre, Chairman of the Godfrey Memorial Library Board, and Senior Researcher, will share with you the Godfrey's Must-Check resources for the earliest period of the American colonies. Depending upon your experience level, you may see many of your own favorites, but you may well discover some new titles to add to *your* "Top Ten."

Presenters

Al Fiacre is the Chairman of Godfrey's Board. Also a volunteer at the library and Senior Researcher, Al's family genealogy (*Ancestors, Descendants and Related Families of: Jacob Smith, Sr. (1773-1834) and his Wife Margaret Smith (1777-1850)*) won awards from both the National Genealogical Society and the Connecticut Society of Genealogists. He holds a certificate in Genealogical Research from Boston University.

Carol Ansel is the Director of the Godfrey Memorial Library. She has worked as both a public and school librarian; when she got bitten by the genealogical research bug she took the genealogical certificate program at

Boston University and soon thereafter landed a job at the Godfrey, a genealogy and local history library in Middletown, CT. The combination of running a library, helping others with their research, and writing genealogical reports is a dream job for her.

Cost

Our presentations cost \$150, which is the amount agreed upon by the Genealogical Speakers Guild. Currently we are presenting via Zoom. When COVID restrictions allow, we are willing to travel within an hour's drive of Middletown, CT.

A bit about the Godfrey Memorial Library

The Godfrey Memorial Library was founded in 1947 by Fremont Rider, Head Librarian emeritus of Wesleyan University and enthusiastic genealogist and historian. It began with Rider's personal collection of about 800 titles and has since grown to over 40,000 items. It is also the birthplace of the AGBI (*American Genealogical and Biographical Index*), a massive undertaking which runs to 216 volumes and six million entries and indexes a wide range of genealogical materials. The library welcomes day visitors and members and is known for its experienced and helpful staff. Visit its extensive website at www.godfrey.org.

