



Genealogy and Local History for All: Services to Multicultural Communities

IFLA Satellite Conference
August 6-7, 2008

Library and Archives Canada
Ottawa, Canada

Hosted by: Section 36 – [Reference and Information Services](#)
Section 37 – [Genealogy and Local History](#)

Summary of Proceedings

The Reference and Information Services Section (RISS) with the Genealogy and Local History Section (GENLOC) held a very successful satellite meeting in Ottawa, Canada at the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) on August 6 and 7, 2008. The title of the event was **Genealogy and Local History for All: Services to Multicultural Communities**. Forty delegates attended the meetings near the beautiful Ottawa River and government buildings of Canada's capital. Thirteen speakers presented information on the diverse cultures of Canada. Members of the organizing committee were Antonio LeChasseur, Janet Tomkins, Penny Allen, Amanda Duffy, Franceen Gaudet, and Lina Gouger.

The Librarian and Archivist of Canada, Ian E. Wilson, welcomed the group on Wednesday morning. Mr. Wilson mentioned how genealogists were successful in lobbying parliament to grant access to the 1911 Canadian Census. He also said, "How a community sees itself changes over time. This is the value of local history over time. It is a valid reflection of the community."

Keynote

Discovery, Inspiration, Legacy: The Vocabulary and Practices of Family History.

Susan Tucker

Susan Tucker is the Curator of Books and Records at the Newcomb College Center for Research on Women, Tulane University, Louisiana (United States). Since 2003, she has explored aspects of the histories of women, genealogy, archives, memory, and the places in which these histories meet as parts of both record-keeping and material culture. She spoke of the many versions of the past that form the collective memory. Instead of just one “collective memory,” it really becomes collective memories (plural). As genealogists gather collective memories, they continue the process and add to the collection of memories.

Many people believe historical records move from an active state, a record in use, to an inactive state (or “dead” records), or records not in use. Historical records are as valuable as modern records. Many people only think of the importance of official government records—those that are “fixed and permanent.” They don’t think about the parallel provenance—the stories that supplement the official records. All of this activity creates layers of memories. One woman explained that she prefers the scrapbook album format because it accommodates both records and stories.

Mrs. Tucker explained the Theory of the Dynamics of Memory. The theory holds that:

- There is an active production and mediation of meanings of the past
- Collective memory is an ongoing process of negotiation
- Memories about the past illustrate the power of actors in the present
- Permanent and changing visions of the past are themselves part of one another.

Also, Susan Tucker spoke of paintings and stories called The Spirit of the Acadian Women by Mary Anne Pécot de Boisblanc. Most of the book is based on an 1804 event in Louisiana for which she painted a picture, the “Autumn Reunion of the Four Préjean Sisters on Bayou Têche.” The “family account” tells more than the published and official account. As Mary Anne worked others in using family records and public records, she confirmed what her grandmother had told her and learned much more as well.

Here are some highlights from the other presentations.

Canadian Genealogy Centre

Antonio LeChasseur and Roanne Mokhtar

- The “Who Do You Think You Are?” television program was a catalyst for bolstering their centre.

Canadian Genealogy Centre website

Sylvie Tremblay

- The site launched in 2003 before the merge of Library and Archives Canada.
- The LAC keeps a CLF style for the web pages (“Common Look and Feel”)
- That’s My Family (Voici Ma Famille) a partnership with societies in Québec Province.
- 90% of their content is under “What to Search” topic tab.

Chinese-Canadian Genealogy: Genealogy Outreach to Chinese-Canadians

Janet Tomkins

- The 2001 census of Canada showed more than 1 million individuals of Chinese origin.
- The early Chinese-Canadian community faced a level of social hostility and over discrimination that had a considerable impact on how the population was documented, creating obstacles for future generations and genealogists.
- The 1891 census of British Columbia often just says, “Chinaman” instead of giving a name. The 1932 Vancouver City Directory often just says, “Oriental.”
- The Vancouver Public Library launched a Chinese-Canadian Genealogy website in November 2005. They have profiles of 500 individuals all born before 1900.

The “Clandestinity Question” in the Search for Identity Among Francophone Métis People: The Case of the Ladéroute-Perron-Marion Family Group

Marie-Louise Perron

- By definition, a “Métis” is a mix of white and native.
- If the ancestry is hidden (clandestine) then is it “underground” identity?
- The death of her father provided the key to the “skeletons in the closet.”

- Her relatives tied artifacts to family memory. Seeing the artifact released the memory and thus opened the stories.
- Clues for a hidden family past: a) the family doesn't talk like other neighbors, b) the oral literature, and c) taboo subjects in a family.

Drilling Down for DNA: DNA and Genealogy

Jeffrey Bockman

- DNA testing and the associated research projects are another good reason to find living, distant cousins.
- Persistence and stubbornness can be a virtue. Contact a variety of cousins since everyone in a family is not always as knowledgeable as others.
- There may already be a Y-DNA project underway for your surnames of interest.

From Raw Records to Digital Images: Making the Records of the World More Accessible at FamilySearch

Paul Smart

- FamilySearch is the brand name for the Genealogical Society of Utah.
- Online service providers, record custodians, and societies are teaming up with FamilySearch.
- Paul demonstrated digital images and Record Search.
- Paul explained the Research Wiki and the Family History Archives.
- He invited societies to participate and benefit from "sweat equity." If a society indexes records or contributes to the Wiki, they can be a FamilySearch member and get access to some databases for free.

Tour of the Gatineau Preservation Centre

- The Library and Archives Canada provided a tour on Wednesday evening of their preservation centre in Gatineau. The IFLA committees wish to thank the LAC for their generous support.
- The preservation function and storage building are across the Ottawa River in Gatineau, Quebec.
- We saw preservation efforts for books, maps, prints, video, and artifacts.
- We saw storage vaults for books and art work.
- We saw their digitization projects from microfilm.

Finding a Needle in the Haystack Called Eastern Europe

Dave Obee

- Begin with the same record sources and strategies as any other location.
- The church records, civil registration, and other government records may exist but are difficult to locate.
- Researchers in Eastern Europe need to deal with a variety of languages and alphabets.
- Researchers need to understand the history of their ancestral regions; those territorial shifts have had a huge impact on the availability of records today.

Exploring Dutch Records

John De Vries

- The naming parents in the Netherlands are very set and can provide clues to relationships.
- “Recent” genealogical records (after 1811) have a standard format.
- Think of the definition of household as, “they share the same mail box.”
- Many Dutch genealogical records are now available via the Internet.
- The twelve provinces in the Netherlands keep most of the genealogical records.

Recovering, Remembering and Reviving the Voiceless: Recording the Caribbean Presence in Canada

Jerome Teelucksingh

- Jerome has studied the Caribbean Immigration to Canada that started in the late 1960s.
- He published “Scarred and Exiled: Race and the Caribbean Immigrant in Toronto 1970-2004” in 2007.
- By studying ethnic groups, we avoid them becoming invisible immigrants.

Freedman Bank Records

William Forsyth

- Bill used the Indiana Jones account as a case study.
- Eight branches of the bank have no records. NARA microfilm series M816 has 29 of the 37 branches.
- Bill used U.S. census records and Alabama Death records as online sources to further research.
- Other research by family members developed a large family tree.

The Big and Little Things That Bug You About French-Canadian Genealogical Research: The Tremblay Experience

Sylvie Tremblay

- Sylvie provided a list of websites for Quebec families.
- Use the “marriage repertoires” as a research tool.
- For more information about the lives of ancestors, use the notarial records.

Librarians and Professional Genealogists

Louise St-Denis

- Louise discussed possible cooperative ventures between librarians and genealogists.
- Consider referrals and recommendations from the librarian to the patron.
- She shared ways a library can support a genealogical society.

Québec Regional History

Marc Vallières

- The project to print regional histories began in 1981.
- They started with the Gaspé region and have published 17 of 24 histories.
- Challenges they face include coverage, the title for the region, and the logical breaks in time periods.
- Each history costs between \$200,000 and \$500,000. Montreal's history will cost about \$2 million to produce.
- The Québec regional history will be in three volumes.

For more information about the conference programme, please go to www3.telus.net/public/cv910081/GenLoc/index.html

Additional information is also available from the GENLOC Secretary, Russell Lynch (lynchrs@familysearch.org)