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Review of TSCPL Genealogy Archive Reference Sources

Sarah Tenfelde-Dubois

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Emporia State University

States. Within this list are resources that are available either online or in print, keeping with the libraries quest to provide service through all aspects of information dissemination.

Because TSCPL incorporates both print and electronic resources into its genealogy collection, these resources are available for all types of researchers to utilize. Professional genealogists to the novice researcher are welcome to access the resources the library provides and with reference services available at all times the information needs of every phase of researchers should be met.

Information needs of researchers, as TSCPL (2008) states, include access to “yearbooks, birth, marriage and death records, family histories, obituaries, census records, marriage and cemetery indexes, military records, property, tax, and probate records, plat and insurance maps, passenger lists, naturalization records, and Topeka city directories” (n.p.). These research items are available through the above mentioned resources and more that are too many to mention, both in print and electronic formats.

Source Evaluations:

The following are resources designed to help all levels of genealogical researchers. The nature of genealogy is rich in history so some of the sources are older, as far back as 1988. However, these sources are still important in the field and are well-used as a place to begin researching family histories. Several of these sources give general information to the basic, beginning researcher, but others go into detail regarding specific state and county information that is helpful for advanced genealogists. While genealogy resources involve many websites concerning the processes of genealogy researching, most of the factual information is still in print, making these source evaluations more about the information located in a library or genealogy center, rather than on the internet.

Government Source Review

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION:

National Archives (n.d.). Retrieved from www.archives.gov on Feb. 27, 2009.

PURPOSE:

This electronic source provides users to information concerning genealogical research. Records in the holdings include census records, military records, immigration records (ship passenger lists), naturalization records, and land records. While the actual records are not recorded and available for online use, they are the finding aids are available online, which include microfilm indexes, and instruction for searching these databases.

AUTHORITY:

The National Archives hold for the citizens of the United States a record for each American, including government archives such as the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, and the Declaration of Independence. The National Archives was created in the 1930s after concern for the preservation of records was expressed by President Franklin Roosevelt. The National Archives also sponsor educational courses and public seminars to help Americans learn how to use archived records, as well as assisting the public with research and reference services.

SCOPE:

The five different types of holdings the National Archives carry for genealogy research are broken down by subject and then each is displayed using a microfilm catalog. There are numerous links to other areas of the website detailing each subject and information on using these subjects.

FORMAT:

The format for this resource is an electronic format. There are different subject areas that have links taking the researcher to them. There are no illustrations or pictures.

ARRANGEMENT:

The National Archives analyzes the information taken from census records, military records, and others to introduce information to the general public about genealogy archives. The beginning page for the National Archives offers links to continue searching in the center column, with other information and self-help links offered on each side of the center.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

A special feature of this archival source is that it offers genealogy workshops and several links designed to help beginning genealogists start researching whatever family history they need. They also have a list of frequently asked questions and several search bars for individuals to use while researching.

USE:

The National Archives is a great resource for individuals who want to research their family history. Although these resources are only available for use through microfiche it is still a reputable place for accurate information. It is free for the patrons, and it combines five different resources for genealogy information, which can be a valuable resource when needing specific information.

CRITIQUE:

Users should realize that these archives will not provide facts through the website, but will direct them to the correct information by microfiche and a library loan between the National Archives and a library with a dedicated genealogy research center. Topeka and Shawnee County

Public Library is on the National Archives list of participating libraries, as are other libraries in Kansas. Also, it seemed these census archives only go to a certain date, right around the 1940s, so if you need to research a family member later than that, it would be hard to do using this resource.

Index and Abstract Source Review

INDEX AND ABSTRACT INFORMATION:

White, Virgil D. (1992). *Genealogical abstracts of revolutionary war pension files (Vols. 1-4)*.
Waynesboro, Tennessee: National Historical Publishing Company.

PURPOSE:

This source provides users to information concerning genealogical research. This four volume set of abstracts was obtained from the National Archives microfilm collection pertaining to the Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application files. The bound collection features the records of 898 rolls of microfilm from the National Archives.

AUTHORITY:

This collection of abstracts was put together by Virgil D. White, who used the National Archives as a reference for these bound volumes. Mr. White used microfilm Series M805 that contained most of the genealogical records located in the Application files mentioned above.

SCOPE:

This collection covers Series M805 but also additional data obtained from the Series M804, which contains microcopies of the entire file on each claimant who filed for pension or bounty land after the Revolutionary War. This collection is also cross-referenced with the Virginia Half Pay Claims.

FORMAT:

The format for this source is in print, with three volumes of alphabetical listing of names in abstract layout, and the fourth volume being an index that contains the 399,096 name index.

No color illustrations, with typeface. All four volumes total 5265 pages.

ARRANGEMENT:

This collection of abstracts includes an index comprising of each name listed, at the end of the three volume set, which takes up an entire volume by itself.

COST:

At <http://www.nationalhistoricalpublishingco.com> price was \$565.00 for the four volume set.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

A special feature of this archival source is that it offers a list of abbreviations on the first page of each volume. It also includes an introduction provided by Mr. White in each volume, including an explanation of the index volume. There is also a list of corrections from page 5220 to 5224 in the index. In addition, pages 5229 through 5265 have a reel by reel listing for both Series M804 and M805 with the first and last entry on each reel being shown.

USE:

This collection of Abstracts lists the names of each soldier who applied for pension and land warrants after serving in the Revolutionary War and in what state they applied for them. It also lists wives and widows of the soldiers, both under their maiden and married names when it could be determined. Anyone researching their family history can use this comprehensive list to determine if their family members were in the United States at this time, if they fought and lived through the war.

CRITIQUE:

Users should realize that this archive source has been obtained from the National Archives microfilm collection and if the need arises to see the hard copy, they are permanently stored in the National Archives building in Washington D.C.

Encyclopedia Source Review**ENCYCLOPEDIA INFORMATION:**

Kammen, C., & Prendergast, N. (2000). *Encyclopedia of local history*. Walnut Creek, CA.: AltaMira Press.

PURPOSE:

This source provides users to information concerning conducting genealogical research. This encyclopedia presents ideas to consider, sources to use and new trends to explore concerning the everyday practices of researchers, or as Kammen and Prendergast (2000) explain, “a compendium of useful information, interesting scholarship and other good stuff (p. xi).

AUTHORITY:

This encyclopedia was put together by Kammen and Prendergast using essays collected from authors and historians using their specialties or interests within their area of expertise. Starting on page 527, there is a list of contributor’s names in alphabetical order with a short biography of each author.

SCOPE:

This collection covers many different topics of interest from fields of history, sources for local history, ethical questions, historical truths, and copyright issues. Internet addresses are included to facilitate further use of local history websites.

FORMAT:

The format for this source is in print, with alphabetical listing of subjects in encyclopedic layout. No color illustrations, with typeface. Totals 539 pages.

ARRANGEMENT:

This encyclopedia includes an Appendices section which includes four different subjects: Ethnic Groups, Religious Groups, State Historical Organizations, and National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Facilities. There is no index.

COST:

At www.amazon.com the price was listed at \$79.95.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

This encyclopedia contains several special features: A Note about This Book, How to Use This Book, Acknowledgements, and About the Contributors.

USE:

This encyclopedia contains asterisks to indicate cross-referencing from the essay you are reading to another title of similar information. Also, some essays include a “See” to direct the reader to other essays that might be of interest to the researcher. This encyclopedia is helpful for anyone of any age and level of researcher to use.

CRITIQUE:

This is a great encyclopedia used for general information concerning many areas of genealogy research. It is especially interesting this resource is new enough to include website information, which is helpful since many people use the internet in their everyday lives.

Dictionary Source Review**DICTIONARY INFORMATION:**

Hanks, P., & Hodges, F. (1988). *A dictionary of surnames*. USA: Oxford University Press.

PURPOSE:

This source provides users a list of over 70,000 surnames which have the origin and meaning explained. A surname is defined as a hereditary name for members of a single family using the father to son line. The norm is patrilineal descent and centers on the English speaking names from the British Isles, although other countries are represented in this dictionary also.

AUTHORITY:

This dictionary was put together by Hanks and Hodges, using an extensive study of literature and correlating with local phonebooks to ensure that no reasonably common name was excluded. Specialists in other languages were consulted for particular areas such as Jewish names and Celtic languages.

SCOPE:

This dictionary covers common surnames as well as rarer ones that are of European derivation. Each surname has additional information about the language or region in the name originated, and also the original meaning. It also lists any other variation, and what they might be in other languages.

FORMAT:

The format for this source is in print. No color illustrations, with typeface. It totals 826 pages.

ARRANGEMENT:

This dictionary includes an introduction followed by an abbreviation list. After this list, the names are printed alphabetically, followed by Index.

COST:

It is listed on www.amazon.com at \$34.95 used.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

This dictionary contains several special features: within the introduction there is a Typology of Surnames, which is a classification by type of origin, and an explanation on National and Cultural Groups. The index records every name listed among the derivatives, cognates, and equivalents.

USE:

This dictionary has all of the spellings that are known to be in use and those are listed in the dictionary part of this book. The index of names at the back of the book is advised to be consulted first, since variations of the name might occur at the beginning. This index provides variations of names for the patron.

CRITIQUE:

This is a great dictionary for genealogy researchers to use when searching for English originating names. However, it seems more volumes of this book are needed to allow for researchers to consult for other nationalities, like Germany. This is a great resource for English names, however, and there are a surprising number located within this book.

Biography Source Review**BIOGRAPHY INFORMATION:**

Gates, Jr., H. L. (2007). *Finding Oprah's roots, finding your own*. New York: Crown Publishers.

PURPOSE:

This source provides users an example on finding African American roots while describing the processes which a genealogist must go through to find the identity of the many individuals that make up the family tree.

AUTHORITY:

This biography was put together by Gates as a follow up to the 2007 PBS documentary, Oprah's Roots, in which he was the executive producer, as well as the on-camera host. Gates used a mix of sleuthing and modern genealogy resources to trace Oprah's roots back to the 19th century.

SCOPE:

This biography covers information concerning how to look for records, either in archives or the original documents that are now digitized and available through the internet. Gates aims to share the research methods of the genealogists that worked on this project and their many tricks he learned from them.

FORMAT:

The format for this source is in print with typeface, with black and white letters, pictures, and graphs located from the search, and from Oprah's private collection. It totals 191 pages.

ARRANGEMENT:

This biography contains an introduction by Gates, with the body of the book separated into six parts. There is an Appendix and Index located at the back of the book.

COST:

It is listed on www.amazon.com for a list price of \$19.95, and a used price of \$13.57.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

A special feature of this biography is the Appendix. It has resources that the professional genealogists used to build Oprah's family tree. Gates has listed the most general sources they used, followed by the sources for African American searching. He then lists important websites, and even more sources for the study of Africa and the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

USE:

This biography can be used by the most novice of genealogy researcher because of the list of sources in the Appendix. It is also a valuable tool for beginners because it gives an example of a search from start to finish, as well as an example of what the time and processes a search like this takes.

CRITIQUE:

Readers should gain valuable knowledge from this book as to what is involved in a search for their family tree. This book is not meant for direct researching, except for maybe using the appendix, but it does provide an account for the search process.

Ready Reference Source Review**READY REFERENCE INFORMATION:**

Fuller, W. (2006). *The handybook for genealogists: United States of America (11th ed.)*. Logan, UT: Everton Publisher.

PURPOSE:

This ready reference source provides users to information concerning U.S. counties. Since most vital records are kept on a county level, this is a critical resource for family history research. These records include land, tax, birth, marriage and death records, which this resource has included in it the contact information for offices by each state that maintain these records.

AUTHORITY:

This ready reference source has been a must have tool since 1947 and has over 1,000,000 copies in print. It has long been known as the “Bible” for genealogy. This is the 11th edition that was compiled by both genealogists and hobbyists.

SCOPE:

This ready reference source, in addition to county information by state, also covers a brief history of each state, has information on vital records at the state level, has a list of societies and repositories within each state, and an extensive bibliography of publications.

FORMAT:

The format for this source is in print with typeface. No color illustrations, but does have black and white state drawings, and color maps of state counties and maps of migration trails. It totals 940 pages, and is available on CD-Rom.

ARRANGEMENT:

This ready reference source has an Introduction, followed by state information shown alphabetically. It has a county index, state county maps and migration trails in the back of the book.

COST:

This 11th edition appears to be out of print, however the 10th edition is priced at \$131.95 for a new book or as low as \$27.64 for a used copy.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

A special feature of this ready reference source is that this book is an atlas, history book, address book, and record collection rolled into one. It includes maps, migration trails, and map coordinates to track changes in county boundaries over the years.

USE:

This ready reference source is one of the most used book in the TSCPL's genealogy collection because it encompasses new information with each edition. There are updated mailing addresses, internet addresses, and telephone numbers for each state and has a new listing of additional resources for researchers.

CRITIQUE:

This was an interesting book to look through, because it really does encompass everything that is needed for a researcher, including critical sources for locating your family.

Bibliography Source Review**BIBLIOGRAPHY INFORMATION:**

Filby, P. W. (1985). *A bibliography of American county histories*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co. Inc.

PURPOSE:

This source provides a comprehensive list of bibliographies of the histories of 5000 counties in the United States. It encompasses each state in alphabetical listing, providing a list of three to four sources that are considered to be of value historically.

AUTHORITY:

This bibliography was compiled by Filby, who is a former director of the Maryland Historical Society. He also consulted the county history holdings of the Library of Congress and the New York Public Library.

SCOPE:

This bibliography covers information concerning histories of each county with any significance, including a title, author, as well as place and date of publication. Filby also includes details of editions reprints and indexes where applicable.

FORMAT:

The format for this source is in print with typeface. It is hard bound and totals 449 pages.

ARRANGEMENT:

States are in alphabetical order, and the same is for the counties within each state. Bibliographies among the counties are listed by publication date. Resources focusing on multiple counties are cross-referenced with the page number listed.

COST:

It is listed on www.amazon.com for \$12.05 for a used copy.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

A special feature of this bibliography is the fact that Filby includes details of reprints, other editions and indexes. Since bibliographies are mostly out of date for genealogy in specific counties, his attempt to provide current information is appreciated.

USE:

This bibliography can be used by all researchers from professional historians, to the general genealogy novice because of the ease to find other resources for specific counties.

CRITIQUE:

Users of this book should remember that it is now close to being 25 years old now. It is interesting to note, however, that Filby says that “Comparatively few county histories are published these days, so this present compilation should remain the standard work for years to

come” (inside flap). If this is true, it can be used as a starting point for researchers to explore within the area of county histories.

Geography Source Review

GEOGRAPHY INFORMATION:

Shortridge, J. R. (1995). *Peopling the plains: Who settled where in frontier Kansas*. University Press of Kansas.

PURPOSE:

This atlas, with written text, serves to document and map the political and social geography of Kansas concerning the effects of migration and cultural aspects of the people who settled in this state.

AUTHORITY:

This atlas was created by Shortridge, while he was a professor of geography at the University of Kansas. He was on sabbatical in 1985 and 1994 and used a grant from the General Research Fund to create the statistics for this book.

SCOPE:

This atlas covers information about settlement patterns in Kansas that were influenced by many factors relating to life on the frontier. From weather conditions to land practices, including the expansion of the railroad, Shortridge provides insight into the settling of Kansas by people of different cultures, and how those cultures influenced some customs we have in place today.

FORMAT:

The format for this source is print with typeface, including black and white maps, graphs and tables. It totals 254 pages.

ARRANGEMENT:

This atlas contains an explanation of the graphs, maps and tables, each numbered individually. It includes six chapters on the people groups populating Kansas, and ends with a Notes section, a bibliography and index.

COST:

It is listed on www.amazon.com at \$29.95 for a new copy.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

A special feature of this atlas is the Notes section. There are an incredible amount of resources listed here that can be followed by genealogy researchers and each one has a note by Shortridge that give the reasoning of the resource a little bit more clarity as to why it was chosen.

USE:

This atlas is useful for researchers gathering information specifically about Kansas. It is an important resource because it focuses on the social, political, religious, and agricultural aspects of who settled in Kansas and how they shaped the state as we know it today.

CRITIQUE:

Readers should realize this book is meant for a more general research method. They will not find specific names of who settled where, but it would be useful for understanding of why their particular ancestor that has already been researched settled in Kansas and what that means for the researcher, as far as to what their heritage means.

References

Baker Center Dedication (March 6, 2009). Retrieved on April 23,

2009, from http://www.tscpl.org/guides/comments/baker_center_dedication/ .