

GALLATIN COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY MINUTES

Saturday, September 14, 2013 at 11:00 a.m.

- Introductions: Heather Bienvenue, the president, welcomed everyone to the Gallatin County Genealogical Society meeting in the small conference room at the Bozeman Public Library. She asked members to introduce themselves. Twenty-three individuals attended the meeting.
- Secretary's Report: Bonnie Jackson summarized the GCGS August 2013 Minutes that were distributed via email earlier in the week. She let the group know that Tricia Thompson had been formally nominated for the Anna Mae Hanson Award for dedicated service in the genealogical community, which will be awarded at the MSGS Conference. Michelle Westberg moved to accept the minutes. Dee Seitel seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved and will be posted on the GCGS website.
- Treasurer's Report: Norma Ardeson reported that the GCGS has \$416.40 in its checking account. The GCGS membership dues for the 2013-2014 year (September 1 to August 31) were collected during the meeting. It appears that 31 people will eventually be paid members.
- Project Manager's Report: Tricia Thompson reported the status of the society's indexing projects. The group has indexed over 37,000 records in a little over a year and placed the information on the GCGS website in the following databases:

Divorces: 9,996

Funeral Home Records: 3,221

Naturalization Petitions: 778

Obituaries: 5,467

Vital Records: 12,782

Voter Registrations: 5,338

Total: 37,582

Tricia reminded the group to continue to volunteer for indexing projects, since this is one of our main missions as a genealogical society. She told members that our indexing projects help researchers in the community and throughout the world find the records they are seeking. Currently, we are indexing early voter registration records at the Pioneer Museum: records rich with genealogical data of names, ages, and specific birth locations. If you have 30 minutes or more, even occasionally, go to the Pioneer Museum and ask the volunteer at the front desk to show you the ropes. You don't need a laptop of your own, because our template is on the Pioneer Museum laptops. You simply enter the data in five fields per name and you're done. Approximately 60 names can be completed in an hour. The Pioneer Museum volunteer will then email Tricia your work. All of our databases are indexes, which makes the recording of these records much easier to accomplish. After a researcher finds the person she is looking for in one of our indexes, she can contact the appropriate repository to get a copy of the complete record (e.g., obituaries are kept on microfilm at the Bozeman Public Library). You never know what interesting information you'll find in these early records. Norma Ardeson, who has deep roots in Gallatin County, found information about the street where her ancestor lived among the "cows" in the voter registrations.

- State Liaison's Report: Michelle Westberg reported that 85 people have currently signed up for the MSGS Conference that will be held in Bozeman, Montana on September 26-28, 2013. Eighteen of those registrants are from Bozeman. Bonnie Jackson asked about the number of people attending each luncheon and the banquet, since our chapter is responsible for the table decorations. Michelle said 85 people are attending each luncheon and 68 are attending the banquet; therefore, 10 table decorations are needed for each luncheon and 12 are needed for the banquet. She told members to drop off their tote bag donations to the Holiday Inn by 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 26, 2013, so they can be added to each tote bag that morning. Heather Bienvenue shared a copy of a book on Minnesota history that she is donating to the Book Frolic. You can donate new or used items of genealogical or historical interest, such as annuals, directories, county histories, genealogy books, tapes, videos, DVDs, and software, which will then be sold via a silent auction. The highest bidder for each item at the silent auction will get the opportunity to purchase the item at the end of the conference. The proceeds from the silent auction, which is a major fundraiser, will go to the MSGS to help fund future conferences. If you have any items you want to donate, they need to be dropped off by 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 26, 2013, at the Holiday Inn. Michelle also let the group know that members could work at the conference without registering for the conference. If you signed up to work an event(s) at the conference, please check the list carefully for date(s) and time(s) and show up a few minutes before the event to get instructions from the person in charge of that event. Registration sheets were given to members who hadn't signed up for the conference yet, but were still interested in attending.
- Jenn Veith has volunteered to send thank you notes to businesses that donated items for the 2013 MSGS Conference. Please let her know before the October 12, 2013 meeting what business(es) donated items to you, the person you contacted, their business address, what the items were, and how many items were donated. If she receives this information before the October meeting, she can compose thank you notes and have members sign them at the meeting, so they can be sent out in a timely manner. Jenn's email address is jmvieth@msn.com.
- Beginning Genealogy Class: Tricia Thompson announced that her *Beginning Genealogy* class at Bozeman High School will meet Thursday, September 26, 2013 through Thursday, November 14, 2013 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. (8 weeks). Registration begins at the Willson School on Monday, September 16, 2013 and costs \$49.00. Only 10 people can register for the class, so sign up early.
- Program: Ancestry.com – Tricia Thompson told the group that if you are not online with your family tree, you risk losing all of it, because your descendants will look at the box of old paper files, decide it's junk, and toss it out. She shared a story about family bible pages being lost to history because they had been ripped out of the bible to apply for military pensions. Luckily, Fold3 has been preserving those family bible pages in the pension files they have put online.

She advised everyone that once you decide to post your family tree on Ancestry.com, make sure to choose the public option so others can benefit from your research and share their

research with you. If her family tree had not been online with her McMillan family names, a McMillan family bible found by strangers would not have made its way to her. She showed the group how to set up a public vs. private tree, discussed the merits of each, and gave instructions on how to invite others to view a family tree with different levels of access.

A question was asked about merging two trees. She said that she has been experimenting with merging two trees, but this option isn't currently available on Ancestry.com. Therefore, trees have to be duplicated person by person. She cautioned the group not to make the same mistake that she did by creating a family tree for each branch of her family, since all of these trees will eventually come together. Putting the same information onto several trees is way too much work and makes accessing information more difficult. The ability to merge duplicate people (e.g., two brothers marrying two sisters) on a family tree and cleaning up sloppy trees was also discussed.

The differences between Ancestry.com and Family Tree software was also noted. One reason that Tricia likes having her trees on both (they can be synched) is that the Internet is not available everywhere and the printouts are essential to do her research. Family Tree also allows trees to be shared in different formats than Ancestry.com allows. Since there wasn't enough time to answer all of the questions members had about Ancestry.com, they asked for another Q&A session on Ancestry.com at a future date.

- Next Meeting - Sunset Hills Cemetery Tour: Tricia Thompson told the group that Derek Strahn, a Bozeman High School history teacher, has agreed to lead an hour-long Sunset Hills Cemetery tour on Saturday, October 12, 2013 @ 1:00 p.m., if weather permits. This is in lieu of our regular October monthly meeting at the Bozeman Public Library. Members should meet at the gates of Sunset Hills Cemetery for the tour.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Jackson
GCGS Secretary