

GALLATIN COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY MINUTES

Saturday, March 8, 2014 @ 11:00 a.m.

Business Meeting:

The March meeting of the Gallatin County Genealogical Society was held at the Bozeman Public Library in the large conference room with 18 members present. Bonnie Jackson thanked everyone for attending on such a beautiful day when most people were enjoying spring break. Jim Keefer made a motion to approve the February 8, 2014, GCGS minutes submitted earlier by Bonnie Jackson via email. Lynne Elder seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved as written. Karen Maika read the Treasurer's Report indicating there is \$491.40 in the checking account. Tricia Thompson reported that GCGS members have indexed 53,358 records thus far, but there are numerous opportunities for everyone to get involved in the process. Current indexing projects include voter registrations at the Pioneer Museum and vital statistics (births, adoptions, engagements, marriage licenses, marriages, anniversaries, deaths, and obituaries) from the Bozeman Daily Chronicle at the Bozeman Public Library. Terri Dood, a librarian at BPL, is currently indexing 1911 BDC microfilm and moving forward; whereas GCGS members are beginning with 1979 BDC microfilm and working backwards. Since there is a void in 1940-1980 records due to privacy concerns, we chose to index the later records because they will be invaluable to researchers who can't find those records elsewhere. Tricia calculated that it would take 17 1/2 years to index the BDC microfilm collection with the current number of volunteers working on the project. However, if we get more volunteers involved, the project will go more quickly.

Program: "How to Use the GCGS Website and Indexes for Genealogical Research in Gallatin County" - Jenn Vieth, GCGS Webmaster

The GCGS website is hosted by RootsWeb on Ancestry.com. There is a "join page" with a membership form for individuals to download and print so they can join the society. Most of our 44 members are local, but there is a member from Washington who joined during the fall conference in Bozeman. One advantage of membership is lower research costs, so someone from out-of-state who wants to request several items might save money by becoming a member.

Researchers utilizing our databases will find indexes of birth records; death records (obituaries, funeral home cards, death records); marriages; divorces, naturalizations; and voter registrations. Approximately 6-10 requests for additional information have been made to the website since it began operating. These requests were forwarded to Tricia Thompson for follow-up and required a simple response such as an obituary can be located on microfilm at the Bozeman Public Library to having a member locate a divorce document at the courthouse. We discussed that a FAQ page would help users navigate the website more readily. Jenn Vieth and Tricia Thompson will work on this page and get it posted to the website as soon as possible. A contact page is available for users to make suggestions to improve the website.

Local genealogical resources are posted on our website giving researchers additional options. These other websites generally reciprocate by posting our website on their pages. This cooperation helps the GCGS website gain broader usage (more hits), which helps move us to the top of the list so people can find us more easily. Jenn isn't sure how many hits our website has had since its inception, but she will follow up with that information at the next meeting if it is available.

Jenn showed us how to use Coursera.org, which is a website allowing free access to online classes. One class she has taken is: "Citizenship and U. S. Immigration," which covers the legal aspects of immigration. She said it opened her eyes to how difficult it was for our ancestors to immigrate to the U. S. Most classes on this website are free unless you want credit for the class.

Another topic covered was searching for documents on the web that are in another language such as digitized parish records. If you find a site that tells you what the column headings for parish records in that country are in English, you can then use Google Chrome or FamilySearch.org to help decipher the other items in the record more readily. If the translation is more difficult, a genealogy freelancer site is available online that will allow you to put your document translation request up for bid.

The meeting was adjourned at noon.

Next Meeting: Saturday, April 12, 2014 @ 11:00 a.m. - MSU Library/Special Collections (second floor) - Kim Scott, MSU Professor/Archivist, will present how to access the special collections at MSU. Parking on campus is always a problem, so you might want to consider using the pay parking lot south of the Strand Union Building and car-pooling.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Jackson
GCGS Secretary