



Historical Society
of Pennsylvania

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release
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New Series of Wednesday-Night Genealogy Workshops at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Philadelphia, PA (September 30, 2009) — Experts say that genealogy is the second most popular hobby in the United States after gardening, and it is believed that more than 80 million Americans are currently searching for information about their ancestors.

One of the nation's most complete and professional genealogy centers is located right here in Philadelphia. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania at 1300 Locust Street is the largest genealogy center in the Mid-Atlantic region and one of the largest in the country. The Historical Society has seen a recent uptick in visitors who are interested in genealogy.

This October, which is officially Family History Month, the Historical Society will launch a series of Wednesday-night genealogy workshops, to cater to both beginner and advanced family historians. The workshops will teach visitors how to get started with their research, find more information about a Civil War ancestor, and even how to protect their family documents.

The four workshops are:

- Getting Started in Genealogy – 6 p.m. Wednesday, October 28
and Noon Friday, October 30
- Genealogical Resources at HSP – 6 p.m. Wednesday, November 4
- Tracing Your Civil War Ancestry – 6 p.m. Wednesday, November 11
- Conserving Your Family Records – 6 p.m. Wednesday, November 18

The workshops are free for Historical Society members and \$15 for nonmembers. Attendance includes a one-day admission to HSP's research library. To register for the workshops, visit the Historical Society's Web site at www.hsp.org.

“The process of genealogical research is one that can easily move from a hobby to a (healthy) obsession,” said Lee Arnold, the society's senior director of the library and collections. “With Philadelphia hosting two major genealogical conventions in as many years, the society has seen a steady and significant increase in visitors and off-site queries.”

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“The Historical Society of Pennsylvania is a comprehensive research destination, having not only published, archival, and graphic genealogical material for Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey, but also sizable collections for New England, New York, Ohio, the Carolinas, Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee,” Arnold said. “HSP also offers genealogists free on-site access to family history databases.”

Interviews are available with genealogists on HSP staff. To arrange an interview, contact Lauri Cielo, director of programs and communications, at 215-732-6200 ext. 233.

The workshops are:

Getting Started in Genealogy

6 p.m. Wednesday October 28 and Noon Friday October 30

This beginner workshop will provide novice genealogists with the tools and knowledge they need to begin their family history search. Learn the proper way to conduct family interviews and review family records. Find out what resources are available and how best to use them, including public records, federal and local repositories, historical societies, ancestral DNA testing, and genealogical databases.

The workshop will be taught by Mr. Lee Arnold, a family historian and director of the library and collections at HSP. He received his masters in library and information science from the University of Wisconsin and his masters of liberal arts with a concentration in archives management from Temple University. Mr. Arnold is a member of the Academy of Certified Archivists and speaks regularly to groups on how to conduct research at the historical society. He has been researching his own family since 1980 and assisting genealogists at HSP since 1992.

Genealogical Resources at HSP

6 p.m. Wednesday November 4

HSP is the largest genealogy center in the Mid-Atlantic region, with records from every state east of the Mississippi River. Learn more about the expansive resources available at the historical society, including deeds, probate records, church records, ship passenger lists, and newspapers from 18th- and 19th-century Pennsylvania. This workshop is aimed at beginners, but there will also be useful tips for experienced researchers.

The workshop will be taught by Mr. David Haugaard, the director of research services at HSP. He received his masters in history from the University of Pennsylvania and is a member of the Academy of Certified Archivists. Mr. Haugaard previously worked at the Chester County Archives and the Biographical Dictionary of Pennsylvania Legislators.

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Tracing Your Civil War Ancestry

6 p.m. Wednesday November 11

Looking for information about a “reb” or “yank” in your family tree? This how-to workshop will give you the skills to successfully search for your Civil War ancestor. Learn how to make sense of muster rolls, service rolls, pension records, and other primary and secondary sources. Find out what Civil War genealogy Web sites are worth your time.

This workshop will be taught by Dr. Daniel Rolph, the military historian and head of reference services at HSP, as well as a senior lecturer at Montgomery County Community College. Dr. Rolph has a doctorate in folklore and folklife from the University of Pennsylvania and specializes in the Civil War and the American frontier. Originally from Kentucky, Dr. Rolph had three great-great-grandfathers who fought in the Civil War (two for the Union and one for the Confederacy), and he has been a Confederate reenactor in the 4th VA, Stonewall Brigade. He has written for *Genealogy Digest* and is the author of *My Brother's Keeper: Union & Confederate Soldiers' Acts of Mercy during the Civil War*. Dr. Rolph is working on his next book, *The War That Won't Go Away: The American Civil War & Family Folklore in the 21st Century*.

Conserving Your Family Records

6 p.m. Wednesday November 18

Held in HSP's conservation lab, this hands-on workshop will teach genealogists how to protect their family documents. Learn how to use proper archival materials, how to repair minor tears and stains, and how to handle old photographs. Each attendee will be given a conservation kit, including a micro spatula, bone folder, water brush, and mending paper samples. Participants are welcome to bring one personal item, which will be assessed by HSP's conservation director. There will be an additional \$20 materials fee for all attendees. Class size is limited to 12.

This workshop will be taught by Ms. Tara O'Brien, the director of conservation and preservation services at HSP. She received her masters of fine arts in book arts and printmaking from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. At HSP, O'Brien oversees the conservation lab and manages conservation interns. O'Brien is also an accomplished book artist whose work is widely exhibited and collected, and she serves on the adjunct faculty of the Moore College of Art and Design.

About the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Founded in 1824 in Philadelphia, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania collects and shares the stories of Pennsylvania. It is home to some 600,000 printed items and more than 21 million manuscript and graphic items. Its unparalleled collections encompass more than 300 years of America's history—from its 17th-century origins to the contributions of its most recent immigrants. The society's remarkable holdings together with its educational programming make it one of the nation's most important special collections libraries: a center of historical documentation and study, education, and engagement.

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