In August 1935 the Library of Congress (LC) opened a reading room for American local history and genealogy on deck 47 in the Thomas Jefferson Building. The reading room was to provide improved service for those coming from all parts of the United States to consult LC's exceptionally large and important collections of genealogy and state and local history. Since that time the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room (LH&G), now a section of the General Reading Rooms Division, has had five physical homes, three administrative locations, and various hours of service to patrons.

Tradition of Service

Over the years many prominent genealogists, members of Congress and government officials have used the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room. For example, the National Institute on Genealogical Research, begun in 1950 at the National Archives, has sent many of its participants on orientation tours to LH&G, and Earl Gregg Swem compiled his monumental *Virginia Historical Index* at the Library of Congress in the early 1930s using the library's collections.
A unique and attractive display in the reading room was a gift from the government of Great Britain. Through the Commission of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom at the New York World's Fair, and for permanent display in the Library of Congress, the United States Government received the George Washington pedigree panel. Originally the panel was prepared for the New York World's Fair of 1939 and 1940 and hung in the British Pavilion. Slightly more than ten feet long and seven feet high, the panel records in gold and white lettering on a field of dark green the lineage of George Washington, not only from King John of England (1199-1216), who granted Magna Carta to his barons, but also from nine to twenty-five barons of Runnymede who became sureties for its execution. On the panel are ninety-two individual coats-of-arms, in colors, representing different allied families during the six centuries from King John to George Washington. The pedigree panel has been on display in the LH&G Reading Room since its receipt in 1941 (see fig. 1).

Current Services

The Library of Congress continues its tradition of service to genealogists. The current staff of the LH&G Reading Room provide reference services in genealogy, local history and related subject areas to users of the library's collections in person, by telephone or by correspondence. The room is located on the northeast side of the second floor of the Thomas Jefferson (LJ) Building. Hours of service are 8:30 A.M. to 9:30 P.M., Monday through Friday, 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. on Saturday and 1 to 5 P.M. on Sunday.

Most telephone and mail inquiries related to genealogical research are referred to the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room Section. LH&G staff do not conduct complicated or lengthy research in response to such inquiries, but they do check catalogs and indexes to the library's collections for specific items, suggest research methods or approaches, give information about the library's policies and genealogical collections, and provide referrals to other libraries and collections when appropriate. If specific information from a particular work is needed, the staff will examine the index to identify the family, individual or fact which is sought. As warranted, the staff will send a limited number of photocopies of relevant material to the requester free of charge. Otherwise, the request will be forwarded or referred to the Library of Congress Photoduplication Service, Washington, D.C., which provide photocopies for a fee.
Fig. 1. Genealogical chart in the Local History and Genealogy Room, Library of Congress showing "The Descent of George Washington from King John..." This display hung in the British Pavilion at the 1939 World's Fair in New York City and was acquired for LC by David C. Mearns as a gift through the British Embassy.
To acquaint readers with the Library of Congress's genealogical resources, the staff of the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room conduct group tours or orientations. Requests for such tours must be made well in advance so that a staff member can be assigned to provide the orientation or tour or can be available to answer questions if a formal tour is not necessary. If possible, the group's leader should conduct a preliminary session on the library's services and collections before the group arrives. Upon request, the library will furnish materials for use in such a session. It is particularly important for the group to know that the bookstacks are closed to the public and that no genealogy or local history books may be borrowed unless they are on microfilm and the library holds a master negative. Anyone who wishes to arrange a tour or who has any questions about the library's services to genealogists should call the head of the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room Section, Judith Austin, at 202/287-1403. Other staff members of the section and the areas in which they can provide specialized assistance are Samuel M. Andrusko (United States and foreign genealogy); Marvin W. Kranz (American history); Sandra M. Lawson (Afro-American genealogy and history); Ardie S. Myers (Afro-American literature); Rosemary Fry Plakas (eighteenth-century American history); Judith P. Reid (United States and British local history and British genealogy); Thomas E. Wilgus (heraldry and military history); and Virginia Steele Wood (United States genealogy and naval and maritime history).

It is important for librarians to understand that though LC is rich in collections of manuscripts, microfilms, newspapers, photographs, maps, and, of course, published material, it is not an archive or repository for unpublished or primary source county, state or church records. Keeping this in mind will help the reference librarian assist the reader who is interested in serious research in county records. He or she should be referred to a courthouse in the county of interest, the state archives, a library in the county, or a branch library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), all of which could have either the original county records or microform copies of them.

The Library of Congress relies heavily on copyright deposits and gifts for additions to its collections. Genealogical and local historical materials pose a serious problem because many are not copyrighted and the authors may not think to donate copies to LC or to any other library. Many authors who do copyright their works are not aware of the copyright requirements and neglect to send the required two copies to the Copyright Office. Librarians who know or meet authors of genealogies or local histories should encourage them to donate copies to various
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libraries around the country and inform them about copyright requirements. Copyright information kits will be sent upon request by the Library of Congress, Copyright Office, Washington, D.C. 20559, telephone 202/287-8700.

The Genealogy Research Process at LC

To do research in genealogy and local history at the Library of Congress, one should begin with the catalogs and reference tools available in LH&G and then use the main catalog, computer catalog, and other LC reading rooms.

LH&G Reference Collection

The reference collection of the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room consists of approximately 9000 volumes; the majority of the works are in the "C" and "F" classifications covering genealogy and local history, although smaller collections of pertinent materials in other classifications are included (in particular, history and bibliography). Standard multivolume genealogical works, published genealogical indexes, and some of the major genealogical and historical periodicals are also shelved in the room.

The vertical files in the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room contain miscellaneous materials relating to specific families; to the states, towns and cities of the United States; and to genealogical research in general. Included are drafts of letters written by LH&G reference librarians in response to queries, pamphlets and other donated materials, magazine and newspaper clippings, genealogical charts and newsletters, and brochures of genealogical interest relating to organizations, and societies and libraries throughout the United States.

Specialized Card Catalogs

There are seven specialized card catalogs in the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room for use by genealogists and local history researchers. The "Family Name Index" is arranged alphabetically by surname and then chronologically by date of publication within each surname. It indexes genealogies held by the Library of Congress and a few family names found in local histories. Entries are generally determined by the family names found on the title page (usually no more than three), although many cards for other family names have been added. It includes genealogies from all over the world and in many languages.
A complete transcript of the "Family Name Index," as of December 1971, was published by the Magna Carta Book Company, 5502 Magnolia Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21215. Entitled Genealogies in the Library of Congress: A Bibliography, it lists over 20,000 genealogies. A one-volume supplement, issued by the same publisher in 1977 lists about 3000 works added to the library's collections from January 1972 to July 1976.

The "Analyzed Surname Index" began as a detailed index to selected genealogies published until around 1910. It was later expanded to include the biographical sketches found in approximately 350 county histories. At present very few books are being analyzed and represented in this catalog. The "Analyzed Surname Index" was always selective rather than comprehensive and never attempted to cover every genealogy and/or county history. The last drawer of this index, "Local Histories Indexed," identifies the histories which are covered. It is broken down by state and then name of county or town and enables the reader to determine if the book needed was replaced by microfilm; if it is on reference in LH&G; or if the call number has changed. When one of the above changes occurs, the change is indicated on the cards in this one drawer rather than by changing several hundred entries in the index itself.

The "U.S. Biographical Index" is an alphabetical name index to various biographical collections for the states or regions of the United States. At least one book has been indexed for each state; the index contains a few entries for county histories as well. This catalog is very selective and no new entries are being added. The first drawer, "Books Indexed," identifies the histories which are indexed.

The "Coats-of-Arms Index" indexes illustrations of coats of arms found in books and periodicals in the collections of the library. It is arranged alphabetically by family name and covers British and American families primarily, although other nationalities are included. This file will eventually be weeded and partially replaced by the Heraldry Index of the St. Louis Public Library.

The "Subject Catalog to the LH&G Reference Collection" provides subject access to those works which are on reference in the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room. This catalog brings together references to works of genealogical or local historical value in the "C" (genealogy) and "F" (local history) classes as well as others—for example, "Z" (bibliography) or "E" (U.S. history). This is a new catalog, and currently only 60 percent of the reference material is represented in it.

The "U.S. Local History Shelflist" is a card index arranged by the
classification numbers F 1-975 which represent the LC holdings for the states of the United States and their subdivisions (e.g., counties, cities, towns). A large white chart, "Guide to Materials in United States Local History," is located beside this card catalog. The chart lists the range of numbers assigned to each state and serves as a guide to using the catalog, which covers only those books classed in the U.S. local history classification (class F). Many books of a legal, religious or social nature, which may be of value to genealogists or local history researchers, are classed in other categories and are not found by using the "U.S. Local History Shelflist." The catalog was published in book form as United States Local Histories in the Library of Congress.

"Main Entry Catalog for Genealogy, Heraldry, and U.S. Local History" is arranged by the main entry (usually personal author) and covers those materials in the CS (genealogy), CR (heraldry) and F 1-975 (U.S. local history) subclasses. Because current titles are indexed in the library's databases, filing of cards in this catalog was discontinued in 1979.

LC's main catalog was frozen on 1 January 1981; no new cards have been added since that time. Researchers must use the automated catalogs to identify recently published and cataloged material. Although the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room staff have maintained the "Family Name Index" and the "U.S. Local History Shelflist," allowing reasonably current searches for genealogy or U.S. local history material, more comprehensive access to the collection is provided by the computerized catalog.

Computerized Catalogs at LC

The Library of Congress Information System (LOCIS) consists of two systems, SCORPIO and MUMS. SCORPIO (Subject-Content-Oriented-Retriever for Processing Information On-Line) has two files of possible use to genealogists: Library of Congress Computer Catalog (LCCC) and National Referral Center Masterfile (NRCM). LCCC is an automated version of the card catalog listing books by author, title and subject. This online catalog provides access to books written in English and cataloged by the library from 1968 to the present and to books written in various other languages from the mid-1970s. NRCM gives name or subject access to 13,000 organizations that offer services and information.

MUMS (Multiple Use MARC System) contains the same bibliographic information included in LCCC, and in addition, provides keyword searching in the book, map and serial files. There are plans for the two
systems (MUMS and SCORPIO) to be integrated allowing one sign-on and identical searching capabilities.

Eventually almost all of LC's genealogies and local histories will be searchable online. By 1984 Carrollton Press expects to complete converting the 5.2 million records in the shelflist into machine-readable form. In the fall of 1982, using the tapes prepared by Carrollton Press, LC introduced the REMARC (Retrospective Machine Readable Cataloging) database online, and retrospective computer searching became a reality. Two vendors market the Library of Congress databases commercially. REMARC and MARC records are available through Lockheed's DIALOG system, and SDC's LIBCON file includes both MARC records distributed by the Library of Congress and MET (main entry/title) records keyed by 3M from LC's depository card set.

Choice of Terms in the Catalog

There are two basic approaches to genealogical research in any genealogical or historical library: surname and place name. The catalogs in the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room reflect these traditional categories; however, the Library of Congress offers another approach through the use of its main and computerized catalog. Because LC collects materials in all branches of knowledge, the researcher can use a strategy which, for want of a better name, may simply be called the miscellaneous approach. To take this approach, it is necessary to define aspects of an individual's life about which books are written and search for these books under the appropriate subject heading in both the main catalog (located in the Main Reading Room) and the computerized catalog. A few examples of Library of Congress subject headings that illustrate this approach are Educators—Biography; Collisions at Sea; Methodists in Maryland; Navarino, Battle of, 1827; Delta Kappa Epsilon; Gunsmiths—Pennsylvania; and Yale University—Directories. Histories of particular religious groups on the national, state, or local level often contain information of value to genealogists; regimental and battle histories often supply important biographical information which helps personalize the information known for ancestors; alumni directories may contain information of value; and histories of various Masonic or other fraternal organizations may have interesting information about members. Almost none of this material is available through the card catalogs in the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room because it is not classed as genealogy or local history.
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It is also necessary to use the main and computerized catalogs when doing foreign genealogical research using a local history approach. Since the library uses the direct name approach for its subject headings, foreign local histories are scattered throughout the catalog under the names of the towns or cities (e.g., Berlin, Ger; Wiesbaden, Ger.; Hamburg, Ger.) and not under the name of the country. The headings used for countries (e.g., Germany—Genealogy) include only material about either the upper classes or very broad segments of the population and do not identify the published copies of local records in the LC collection. It is important, therefore, to be as specific as possible and search the name of the town, city or county from which the immigrant came.

Generally speaking, there are more genealogy and local history books for western Europe (especially Great Britain and Germany) than for eastern and southern Europe. Readers interested in the latter areas, even though they know the exact place of origin, may find little material at the library because few vital records in those areas have been copied and published. Consequently, patrons doing southern and eastern European research may not be too successful at the Library of Congress and may have to be referred to an LDS branch library or to institutions within the particular country of interest.

Rare Book and Special Collections Division

Many of LC's specialized reading rooms are rich in genealogical resources which cannot be identified by using the general catalogs. Adjacent to LH&G is the Rare Book and Special Collections Division (telephone 202/287-5434). In addition to the published genealogies and local U.S. histories that have been designated rare books, probably the best known genealogical resource is the Charles Edward Banks Manuscript Collection. Composed of fifty-four uncataloged volumes that resemble scrapbooks, this collection includes an assortment of handwritten and typed notes concerning early Pilgrim families in Massachusetts with abstracts of wills, baptismal and marriage records, and family charts. The index volume is divided into three parts: surnames, stray names and places. The Banks collection is also available on microfilm in the Microform Reading Room.

None of the Rare Book and Special Collections Division's holdings are available on interlibrary loan, and there is no photocopying equipment available for readers. Requests for copies can be accommodated through the LC Photoduplication Service, if the physical condition of the original permits. Lockers in the hallway just outside the reading room are available for the storage of coats, briefcases and oversized handbags. Pencils, not ink, must be used in this reading room.
Microform Reading Room

The Microform Reading Room (telephone 202/287-5471), located just below the LH&G Reading Room on the first floor of the Thomas Jefferson Building, is a facility much used by genealogists. In addition to published family histories and local U.S. histories that have been filmed for preservation, the reading room has other material in microform that warrants attention. The queries and answers appearing in the Boston Evening Transcript genealogy columns during the period 1896-1941 are available on microcard. The index of names is currently being published in The American Genealogical-Biographical Index.6

The British Manuscript Project provides a selection of materials covering the ninth through eighteenth centuries and includes manuscripts, archival records and rare printed material from major public and private collections in England and Wales. A printed guide, British Manuscripts Project, a Checklist...7 compiled by Lester K. Born, is available.

The Challen Typescripts are transcripts of parish registers, predominantly from London and vicinity. Additional parish registers are listed in the genealogical section of the Microform Reading Room card catalog under “Parish Registers.” Research Publication’s “City Directories of the United States” includes directories from selected cities, towns and some states, which were published through the nineteenth century, with a few through 1901. Currently filming is being done through 1910, with some cities being covered into the 1930s. The collection, comprehensive through 1860, is based on Dorothea N. Spear’s Bibliography of American Directories Through 1860.8 The Hollingsworth Genealogical Card File locates genealogical material concerning particular families in the southern states, particularly Georgia. A printed guide is available in LH&G.9 Irish genealogical material filmed at the National Library of Ireland spans medieval to modern times. This material includes family histories, pedigrees, and birth and death records. A typed guide is available. Frank W. Leach’s “A Genealogy of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence,”10 comprising twenty typescript volumes is available on microfilm. A typed index to the signer’s names, indicating the reel and volume number in which each appears, may be consulted at the reference desk in LH&G.

Metropolitan Toronto Central Library biographical scrapbooks cover the period 1911-1967. The collection comprises newspaper clippings containing information about Canadians and people of significance from the Toronto area. A printed guide, Biographical Scrapbooks, Metropolitan Central Library,11 is available in the Micro-
form Reading Room. New York City telephone directories, 1878-1959 for the boroughs of New York City, also include selected towns in the surrounding areas of New York and New Jersey. For Westchester, the period covered is 1906-1914; 1923-1955; for Rockland, the period is 1910-1954/55.

"Slave Narratives," the interviews with former slaves recorded between 1936 to 1938 by the Federal Writers Project, are of special interest to Afro-American genealogists. Copies of the original transcripts, which are in the Manuscript Division, are arranged by state on twelve reels of microfilm. This collection complements the large number of published collective and individual slave narratives which the Library has in its general collection.

The National Society, Daughters of Founders and Patriots of America collection of genealogical material is arranged by state and has a typescript guide. Gerald Paget's "Genealogies of European Families from Charlemagne to the Present Day (August 1957)" is a comprehensive compilation of typescript material covering 600 European families. It is followed by "An Official Genealogical and Heraldic Baronage of England." The Barbour Collection is an index of vital records transcribed from pre-1850 records of most Connecticut towns. A typescript index to the names and towns is available. The Microform Reading Room is equipped with microfilm, microfiche and ultratrace readers as well as reader-printers, all of which may be used by the public.

Manuscript Division

Across Independence Avenue, in the new James Madison Building, the Manuscript Division (telephone 202/287-5387) has papers of the Preston family of Virginia (1727-1896) deposited by Preston Davie. The collection has information on many Virginia families and is available on interlibrary loan. A typescript manuscript, "Index to Names of Persons and Places," including several hundred names, may be used only in the reading room. The microfilmed collection of Lyman C. Draper is also available on interlibrary loan. The historical and biographical material that Draper amassed is of particular value to historians and genealogists. The time period covered is 1735 to 1815; geographically, it covers the area east of the Mississippi, from New York State to Charleston, South Carolina. The collection is described in publications of the Wisconsin State Historical Society.12

For those doing research on the post-Revolutionary War claims of American loyalists, Great Britain's Audit Office (AO) records (numbers twelve and thirteen) of the Public Record Office are available for study.
AO twelve in particular consists of entry books and ledgers, testimonials of witnesses, decisions of the Commission, allowances, and so on. A typed name index is included on reel number one. None of the microfilm in this collection is available on interlibrary loan.

Among collections that are of particular interest to descendants of nineteenth-century emigrants from Germany are the sixty-six reels of microfilm listing passengers embarking for America from Hamburg during the period 1850-1873. These are in two series: “Listen Direkt” (direct lists) for passengers going directly from Hamburg to America; and “Listen Indirekt” (indirect lists) for those who embarked on vessels that made voyages to America via some intervening port. The “Listen Direkt,” 1850-1854, are arranged alphabetically by family name within each year. There is, however, no list for the first six months of 1853. Both “Listen Direkt” and “Listen Indirekt” are arranged chronologically by date of embarkation, with separate alphabetic indexes. Both lists and indexes are written entirely in nineteenth century German script and are, therefore, extremely difficult to read. Because of the time involved, the staff in the Manuscript Reading Room cannot offer assistance in translating or deciphering these entries. It would be necessary for someone interested in using these lists to either come to the library or hire a researcher to examine the material.

The Manuscript Division also has a large collection, “Alaskan Russian Church Records, 1772-1936” (formerly called “Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in Alaska Records”), which includes clergy dossiers, parish records, and vital statistics. An extensive finding aid and indexes to the vital statistics are available in the reading room. The collection is currently being microfilmed and will be available on interlibrary loan.

In addition to the above mentioned sources, almost all collections of personal papers in the division contain some family data in the form of correspondence, diaries and journals. It is recommended that researchers ascertain what collections are available and what they include by first checking The National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections, Manuscripts on Microfilm: A Checklist of the Holdings in the Manuscript Division, and Manuscript Sources in the Library of Congress for Research on the American Revolution.

All persons using the Manuscript Division’s Reading Room are required to furnish appropriate identification—preferably bearing the applicant’s photograph—and to complete a reader registration card. No briefcases, notebooks, notepaper, folders, or oversized handbags may be taken into the reading room; all coats must be left in the check room.
located just inside the main entrance to the building. Both lined paper and unlined 5 by 8 inch note cards are furnished, without charge, at the desk; ink may not be used. All readers are required to adhere to the library’s rules for the use of rare materials, and all personal property brought into the reading room is subject to inspection. Microfilm readers, a reader-printer and coin-operated photocopiers are available.

Newspaper and Current Periodical Reading Room

The Newspaper and Current Periodical Reading Room (telephone 202/287-5690), also located in the James Madison Building, has a large collection of U.S. newspapers on microfilm and in hard copy. Most of the paper copies are in storage, and a one-day advance request is necessary in order to have them delivered to the reading room. In addition to such well-known titles as the *New York Times Index*, the reading room’s reference collection has a number of indexes to newspapers including marriage and death notices and other data of genealogical interest abstracted from a wide variety of local newspapers. For example, there are bound, typescript carbon copies of an index to Savannah, Georgia newspapers, 1763-1830. However, LC does not have a complete run of these Savannah papers.

“Early American Newspapers, 1704-1820,” filmed by the Readex Microprint Corporation in cooperation with the American Antiquarian Society, is available in the microprint edition and is based on *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690-1820*. There is no comprehensive index to these early newspapers.

All unbound serials are in the stack area of the Newspaper and Current Periodical Reading Room and must be called for in that room. Once bound and cataloged, the serials are shelved by their LC classification number and must be requested in a general reading room. The Newspaper and Current Periodical Reading Room is equipped with microfilm and microfiche readers as well as reader-printers and photocopier equipment.

Geography and Map Division

The Geography and Map Division (telephone 202/287-6277), also located in the James Madison Building, has material which can help researchers with problems of geographic location. Cities and towns, particularly in eastern Europe, have undergone numerous changes of name as well as political affiliation, and gazetteers and atlases can be useful in identifying these changes and in helping locate the places of origin of families who immigrated to America in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries.
For those interested in locations in the United States, the collection of county atlases, dating from 1825, is useful for showing land ownership; in addition, the Geography and Map Division has about 1500 county land ownership maps dating from the early nineteenth century. The division also has ward maps, which can be essential in obtaining the ward numbers needed in order to derive data from census schedules in the major cities.

The U.S. Geological Survey Topographical Quadrangles, first issued in the 1880s, are helpful in locating cemeteries as well as boundary lines described on plats and deeds. The Sanborn collection of fire insurance maps, dating from 1867 to the present, is also of interest to researchers. Although they do not show ownership of dwellings, the maps do indicate the size, shape and construction of dwellings because they were designed to assist fire insurance agents. This entire collection, numbering some 700,000 individual sheets, is described by state, city and town in Fire Insurance Maps in the Library of Congress.

Limited photocopy service is available in the Geography and Map Reading Room. Other requests for photocopies are handled by mail order through the LC Photoduplication Service. Copyright restrictions are enforced.

Conclusion

The Library of Congress has large and diverse holdings available for use by the genealogist or local historian and a staff that is committed to helping provide access to these materials. Researchers should not hesitate to seek assistance from LC by mail, telephone or in person.

References

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