

network, and library social spaces such as common study areas, cafés, etc. So question: Do the statistics at your institution bear this out? They do at mine.

Why is this a bad thing? It's not, necessarily. Provision and usage of our resources and services is what we are here for. But when that usage becomes, perhaps abruptly, perhaps through a sea change, significantly lopsided, at some point it does become a bad thing. When the monographic and special collections lie fallow, their value comes into question. We as librarians know their value, many of us still wander the stacks in wonder and awe, many of us take it all for granted. Others do not.

I suppose it is the same with any cultural institution. End your patronage of the local museum, and the treasures of beauty, sublimity, and genius housed there may eventually fall from the walls.

What is to be done?

Is it ironic that I think we should applaud those librarians among us who communicate with the under-30 crowd using their preferred technologies, in their native habitats? Increased library usage of MySpace, blogs, and Twitter does not necessarily herald the end of civilization; rather, it is the first step in communicating with our clientele on their own terms. These are perfectly good tools to use to lure them in to witness for themselves the rest of what we have to offer. These tools can and are being used to promote the Good, where "Good" stands for the full and rich range of services and resources we provide. And just as I, here at mature middle-age (although we all know 46 is the new 25), much prefer e-mail to the telephone, so too do the under-30 crowd prefer Facebook to anything else.

So be it. Let's meet them where they live and lead them from there back to the stacks. Maybe Virgil, the reference librarian, can guide a sophomore through the reference stacks, pointing out important works along the way, before delivering him upstairs in time for his 2:15 appointment with Bea in Special Collections?

And maybe that appointment was made through Google Calendar?

Twitter feed #865217: Tpmost flr library, lavender latex gloves, paging thru old Hieronymus Bosch reproductions. Drk & scary like Diablo 3. Incred. Who know?! BTW Bea looks angelic...

This message sent from T-Mobile Sidekick™ {ts '2009-10-07 14:37:23'}

(I think I just heard an English professor groan, all the way from Atlanta.)

I remember standing in the grocery checkout several years ago, enduring the young woman in front of me speaking loudly into her cell phone for all to hear:

"Yes. Yes. I painted them last night. I clipped them, then I painted them. Bright red."

All this technology and she's reporting on the current condition of her toenails? There are appropriate uses of technology and inappropriate uses of technology and surely one inappropriate use is to magnify inanity.

Precisely Bauerlein's point.

It would be so easy to label Bauerlein a grouchy fuddy-duddy and to dismiss his warnings as Henny-Penny overreactions. But then you realize how true to life his picture of the current situation is.

You realize this when your darling new fourteen-year-old stepdaughter picks up her cell phone and starts texting—at the dinner table.—Mark Czyzyk, *The Sheridan Libraries*, Johns Hopkins University.

Jack Simpson. *Basics of Genealogy Reference: A Librarian's Guide*. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2008. 176p. alk. paper, \$40 (ISBN 9781591585145). LC2008-010596.

Jack Simpson's new book succeeds in meeting the needs of two distinct audiences: those seeking a very basic starting strategy for genealogical research and those seeking to understand the basics of

genealogical librarianship. Experienced researchers and veteran librarians will also find nuggets of information to refresh their knowledge of this area of professional practice.

It is very obvious from the beginning that the author has been there and done that. Simpson is the Curator of Local and Family History at the Newbery Library in Chicago, co-creator of *ChicagoAncestors.org* and teaches an online genealogy course for the Reference and User Services Association of ALA. He draws on these experiences to produce a very useful book.

What experienced public services librarian cannot empathize with Simpson's scenario?

You have just opened the reference desk, and already you have:

- a new resident on the phone asking about recreational sports leagues
- a regular at the desk looking for the new Elmore Leonard novel
- a computer freezing up

Into this scene strides a patron with a pile of disorganized papers in his hand and a confused expression on his face. He begins to speak, tentatively at first but with increasing fervor as he warms to his subject:

Um ... Hi ... I'm trying to get started on my family history, and I was told you have good resources here at the public library. I guess I'm mostly English and Scottish but maybe also German. The German was my Mom's side I think, and then the Irish was her dad's side. But I'm interested in my great-grandfather on my Dad's side because my Grandpa never really talked about him. There's some mystery there. He had the same name as me. He was a mine manager in Pennsylvania but also in West Virginia, but that side of the fam-

ily is also supposed to be from Ohio, so I guess he moved around. He died when my Grandpa was young. Then, my Grandpa married my Grandma, who was also from Ohio, and her family had a general store....

Simpson uses this ADD patron as a starting point to launch the book.

As he weaves the basic search strategy for successful genealogical research together, the author uses four case studies to illustrate his points. The research is described from a first-person point of view; and readers get the sense they are along on the hunt for the elusive ancestors. Additional information on the four families used as case studies is available in the Appendices.

Succinct chapters cover most of the basics of 21st-century genealogy research including getting organized and talking to family members. These are followed by introductions to searching census records and vital records, published sources and archival sources including immigration records. Additional chapters cover an overview of ethnic and international research as well as using the Internet, the resources of the Family History Centers and the National Archives, and related institutions. Screen shots and record snippets are used to illuminate the steps along the way.

Most serious genealogical researchers have a love-hate relationship with census takers and the records and penmanship they have left us. However, Simpson gives one renewed appreciation for the daunting challenge faced by these brave souls:

In 1900, census enumerators were directed to record nativity as follows:

In case the person speaks Polish, as Poland is not now a country, inquire whether the birthplace was what is now known as German Poland or Austrian Poland, and enter the answer accordingly as Poland (Ger), Poland (Aust.), or Poland (Russ.).

In 1930, more difficult directions were given:

Since it is essential that each foreign-born person be credited to the country in which his birthplace is now located, special attention must be given to the six countries which lost a part of their territory in the readjustments following the World War. These six countries are as follows: Austria, which lost territory to Czechoslovakia, Italy, Yugoslavia, Poland, and Rumania; Hungary, which lost territory to Austria, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia; Bulgaria, which lost territory to Greece and Yugoslavia; Germany, which lost territory to Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Danzig, Denmark, France, Lithuania, and Poland; Russia, which lost territory to Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Turkey....

It goes on, but you will have to read the book to see the rest. I can really sympathize with the census taker who tries to understand and follow these instructions but can barely understand the residents who have very thick ethnic accents.

Simpson then turns to two chapters primarily aimed at librarians but also of value to other genealogists. The first is called the Reference Interview but could have been called Research Philosophies and Strategies. The other chapter is called Professional Toolkit. It is a combination of professional growth opportunities for

genealogy librarians and annotated list of approximately two dozen titles that could form the core of a genealogical reference collection.

The single significant shortcoming of this book results from the author's decision not to include a discussion of DNA. His reasoning was that "As a librarian, I do not assist researchers with DNA projects because this kind of research occurs outside the library, but it is important for librarians to help researchers to learn the basics of DNA research." Therefore, the author included one book in his annotated bibliography but no further discussion of this important new genealogy tool. Excluding a basic discussion of DNA on this basis is dangerously close to suggesting that a basic text should exclude a detailed discussion of census data because it is collected outside the library.

All in all this is a well-written book by a very knowledgeable genealogy librarian. The pace of the book keeps the reader moving. The information is relevant and up-to-date—particularly the discussions of online resources. It, minus a discussion of DNA, is a very solid introduction to the basics of genealogy research and genealogy librarianship. In addition, it is an easy read. A couple of times my wife, who is neither a librarian nor a serious genealogist, picked up the book and read several pages before I was able to wrestle it back.—*Dave Dowell, Emeritus College, Cuesta College.*

J. Greg Matthews. *Literary Research and Irish Literature: Strategies and Sources.* Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2009. 213p. alk. paper, \$40 (ISBN 9780810863668). LC2008-029230.

As its title makes clear, the fifth volume in Scarecrow's "Literary Research: Strategies and Sources" series provides an overview of resources and methods for researching Irish authors and their works. The author is a cataloging librarian at Washington State University Libraries with some expertise in the subject (he holds a master's degree in English literature from the

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