

AASLH

TECHNICAL LEAFLET BUNDLE

A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR STATE AND LOCAL HISTORY

Highlighting Cultures

BNDL019

Recent Events have once again highlighted the value of understanding the past of different cultural groups and how they interact and relate with each other. The leaflets in this bundle can help you explore and interpret the cultural diversity in your community.

TL108 – Ethnic Groups, Part I: Research for the Local Society (1978)

TL109 – Ethnic Groups, Part II: Activities for the Local Society (1978)

TL134 – Some Observations on Establishing Tribal Museums (1981)

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Technical LEAFLET

Ethnic Groups: Part One Research for the Local Society

By Dorothy Weyer Creigh
*Adams County Historical Society
Hastings, Nebraska*

Even as young children ask, "Who am I and where did I come from?," more and more adults are beginning to inquire into their ethnic backgrounds. Their questions are more likely to be, "Why did my family come to this country, and how did they live?"

For in North America, everybody's ancestors came from somewhere else. One of the most fascinating facets of this country is that not even the Indians originated here—thousands of generations ago their ancestors came from Asia—and all the other persons now living here have their roots in Europe or Africa or Asia.

Since the non-Indian settlement of this continent took place within a historically brief time—the first handful of white men landed in the sixteenth century, the first black men in the seventeenth century—and since the wholesale, large-scale rush of settlement from overseas took place in the nineteenth century, it is relatively easy to document migrations, trace ethnic patterns of settlement, and find out how people lived as new Americans.

In the mid-to-late-1800s, when immigrants by the hundreds of thousands poured into this country, speaking dozens of tongues, bringing hundreds of strange customs and traditions with them, they were encouraged to assimilate as fast as possible into the new culture. The New World was the melting pot, and the newcomers

worked frantically to become Americans rather than remain Germans or Czechs or Poles or Italians. Their children ripped off their babushkas and donned American clothing, learned English quickly, and were embarrassed at whatever Old Country customs lingered in the family circle.

But now, two or three or four generations later, Americans are becoming intrigued with



their heritage. Secure in their identity as Americans, they are trying to recreate the customs of their ancestors, learn folk songs and dances, revive culinary arts, and discover the heritage their immediate forefathers tried to disavow. This generation has discovered ethnic culture.

And local historical societies can find much pleasure, satisfaction, and support in stimulating ethnic studies, for ethnic history is community history. As Oscar Handlin wrote in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *The Uprooted*, "Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants were American history."

The process can involve not only the usual members of the historical society but also genealogists and members of special cultural groups and can have wide appeal to a broad spectrum of the public who might otherwise not be interested in local history.

Identify Local Ethnic Groups

In some communities, the ethnic background is obvious, for the original settlers came from one country, even one province, and most of the people living there now are descended from them. Some towns know without looking what their ethnic heritage is: Tarpon Springs, Florida, is obviously Greek, just as Stromsburg, Nebraska, is Swedish; Milwaukee, Wisconsin, predominantly German; Hibbing, Minnesota, Finnish; and Winnemucca, Nevada, Basque.

Most communities, however, are mixtures, and although there may be a large pocket of Germans, for instance, there may also be Poles, or French, or French-Canadians, or Moravians, in considerable numbers there. Likewise, a town that was originally Danish or Czechoslovakian may have changed its ethnic complexion through the years as the old-timers have died off or moved away and persons of other backgrounds have moved in.

How do you identify ethnic groups? In a few communities, the assimilation or Americanization has been so complete that it is difficult to discover the original backgrounds of most of the inhabitants. Some of the more obvious means for quick guess-type research are (a) to study the telephone book, which will give you an idea of whether the names reflect German, Spanish, Welsh, or Irish origins, and in what proportions, and (b) to talk to community leaders to get a feeling about the national backgrounds of the residents. Businessmen, ministers, Chamber of Commerce officials, school officials can help you if you do not have factual information to start with.

Census Tables

For a more accurate assessment, study the United States decennial census tables, available from public libraries, state historical societies, the National Archives, or the Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce. The United States Census has been taken every ten years since 1790, and although the questions and forms have changed over the years, the tables always reflect in some way the ethnic backgrounds represented in a community. They show how many foreign-born there were in your county or your incorporated town or village in a given decade and, of the foreign-born, their countries of origin. The Countries of Origin tables will give you a fascinating look at the ethnic mixture in your community.

The tables themselves are a quick study in world history, for in the 1880 census, for instance, there is a listing for the German Empire, but in the 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, and later censuses, there are separate entries for Germany and Austria. In some census years, 1880, for instance, Sweden and Norway were a single entry, but, after that, they were two separate listings. In the 1880 and 1900 censuses, Bohemia is listed individually; from 1920 onward, it is listed as Czechoslovakia; in other censuses, persons who came from the province of Bohemia were included in listings of Austria or Germany and were not identifiable. The entries for the British Isles are listed under England and Wales together in 1870, 1880, 1940, and 1950, but in the intervening years, they are given as separate entries, making it possible to differentiate between the English and the Welsh. Ireland is a single listing until 1930 when the listings were separated into Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State entries.

These tables are usually under the nomenclature of Countries of Origin and are listed by states and further broken down into countries and individual towns or villages within the counties.

Other tables in the census reports will tell you the numbers of blacks and of Orientals, although in most of the tables on race, the listings of Orientals may not be divided into separate categories, as Japanese and Chinese. (The category of Oriental reflects the immigration policy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when migration of Asiatics into the United States was discouraged, considered the Yellow Peril.) The census tables on race, usually listed under that nomenclature, also are divided by states and sub-divided into county and town entries. Some census reports on race divide Indians by tribal groups; some do not.



The National Archives in Washington, D.C., is one source for the United States decennial census tables.

Most of the decennial censuses will also include tables on the numbers of persons who, although native-born, have one or both parents who were foreign-born, although these listings do not name the country of origin of the parents.

Although the decennial census tables are an invaluable source of information about the countries of origin of the people in your community, do not try to compile statistical charts from them: adding up the figures to get a total number will give you a false figure. A long-lived person will be listed several times. For example, a female who came to the United States from Germany in 1902 as a three-year-old child and who lived to be 85 years of age, living all that time in your town, could be listed in the censuses of 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, and 1980 in the Countries of Origin charts, and, although adding the numbers together will make eight entries, she is still only one individual.

The tables will give you a picture of the ethnic, or national, backgrounds of the people who lived in your town at a given time, and presumably some of their descendants still do live there. The value of the tables is that they give you an idea of the proportions of Germans, Greeks, or English who have settled there.

In another way, the figures can be deceiving, for as all census-takers know, not all people are

counted during any given census-taking period. Illegal immigrants from Mexico, or from any other country, for that matter, do not want their identities known to governmental officials, and in some census years, some blacks have been known to avoid census-takers so that they have not been counted. But since it is only broad trends you are seeking, the patterns of ethnic backgrounds, you will learn what you can do with census figures, and, likewise, what you cannot do with them.

The federal decennial census is taken, as the name implies, every ten years, but the events which mold or shape a community seldom occur in such neat, tidy increments as to happen just before a new census-taking. For instance, the Dust Bowl years of the mid-1930s caused hundreds of thousands of residents of the Great Plains to move out, disrupting the settlement patterns of ethnic groups which had originally lived in Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, the Dakotas, Montana. Those changes occurred too late for the 1930 census and were long past by the time of the 1940 census. Another, even more dramatic example, is the relocation of millions of Americans during World War II, when members of the armed forces, war-workers, and Japanese prisoners-of-war were relocated almost overnight in areas remote from where they had previously lived; many of those persons remained in their new locations.



Young people demonstrate their native folk dances at the Czechoslovakian Festival held annually in Wilber, Nebraska.

For census material of the years between the federal decennial censuses, there are a number of local or community census tables, those taken by school districts and even some taken by church groups. These are not so detailed as the federal decennial ones, nor do they show countries of origin of the persons enumerated, but in the listing of names, they may provide some hints concerning the ethnic origins of persons living in your town at a given time. There are also other federal census reports for the in-between years, but they are not enumerations of people, nor do they have any information concerning countries of origin.

But you are interested in more than merely numbers of people for your ethnic studies. You want to know about why they came to this country, to your location, and how they lived. You must go elsewhere to find those answers.

Why Did They Come Here?

As soon as you have determined what ethnic groups settled in your community, and approximately at what period of time they came, you will want to know why they left their own country, why they came to this one, and why especially they came to your community. There are many sources of information.

First of all, try to discover why they left their own country. You know that a large number of Germans came to your town in the 1880s. That's only one hundred years ago. Perhaps some of the children or grandchildren know from family tradition handed down orally from father to son, and you can find out from inter-

viewing them. But you will need to know more. Study European history books; read about what was taking place in Germany at that time. It was the era of the Iron Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, who sought to unify the German states under one flag; forced conscription into military service of many years' duration sent many young men scuttling out of the country, with or without their families. Overpopulation meant that farmers could not find additional land for their sons. From time to time, general economic conditions caused families to look elsewhere. What were all the reasons that would send large numbers of people from Germany, or whatever was their native land, to America?

The Irish came to this country in waves; the flight after 1840 was caused by the potato famine. The Greeks came after Turkey had conquered large parts of their country. The Germans from Russia, who had been granted immunity from taxation, conscription, and assimilation in the 1760s, fled Russia after the 1860s when a new tsar rescinded those privileges.

Look up encyclopedia entries, study the history of the specific countries you are interested in for the period you want, and then read whatever you can find out about immigration patterns in this country. Were there military reasons for large numbers of people to leave a given country at a given time—wars, revolutions, military takeovers, forced conscription? Were there economic factors that sent desperate people away from home to find a new life—general depression, crop failures, poverty,

starvation? Were there religious reasons—programs against the Jews, discrimination against the Catholics in a Protestant part of the country, or vice-versa? At one point in Swedish history, for instance, state law prohibited any meetings not conducted by ministers of the established (Lutheran) church, and that law was responsible for some emigration from that country. Was the reason a simple socio-economic one of overpopulation, the desire to get to an area where the people could have land enough for themselves and for their children and their children's children?

Probably you will find that it was not necessarily one single reason but a combination of them that led individuals, families, and whole colonies of people to leave their homes, cross the ocean, and come to a strange new land. Superimposed on their reasons for leaving was the lure of the famed land of milk and honey, as the New World was considered—a land of freedom and economic promise. As you read, try to put yourself in the place of a German in the 1880s, or a Swiss in the 1840s, or a Swede in the 1870s, or a Lithuanian Jew in the 1890s, to figure out why the particular settlers in your community left their native country.

Why those individuals came to America is also the result of a combination of factors. From the time of its first settlement, the New World was a land of promise. After the Revolutionary War, it was a land of freedom, of liberty for the individual. After the various homestead acts, particularly the ones of 1862 and later, it was a land of fertile lands available at minimal cost. And after the Indians were relegated to live on in barren reservations, it was even a land relatively free from physical peril. Many of the later migrations came about because other family or village members had already reached the shores of the Promised Land and had sent back such glowing accounts that nobody could resist them.

Why they came to your particular community is information that may be fairly obvious. If it is not, however, you may need to do considerable research to ferret it out. Part of the reason for settling in your area might reflect the westward movement of the frontier; by the time your town in Ohio or Indiana, for instance, was settled, it may have been the westernmost land readily available. At a later time, towns in the Great Plains, west of the Missouri River and east of the Rockies, attracted immigrants because the Homestead Act and huge land grants to railroads made land available at low cost. Perhaps your town came about because one of the land-grant railroads had established vigorous immigration societies in Germany, Russia, England, Czechoslovakia, and other

northern European countries to do large-scale promotion of immigration, provide couriers to help whole colonies of immigrants to leave their native land, cross the ocean, and get aboard trains, and then provide temporary housing for them on the prairies until they could locate their homesteads.

Some, especially lone men, came to fill specific jobs, as construction workers on the railroad, as cowboys on Texas ranches, as coal miners in Pennsylvania, as sponge divers in Florida. After they were established financially, they sent back for their families or, in some cases, advertised for mail order brides to come from their native villages. In most cases, as soon as a European community had some knowledge of a specific part of the New World, many others came from there to here, Fresians joining other Fresians who were already established in Kansas, Poles settling with other Polish immigrants.

In many cases, Europeans were attracted to land that was similar to that they left behind in the Old Country. Italians and Armenians settled in certain areas of California, because they knew how to till that kind of land; Swedes were attracted to Minnesota because it had a geological and climatic familiarity to them.

It's likely that some of the immigrants did not settle in your community when they first arrived in America but that they came there after having been in some other American community for a few years. The restlessness of Americans and their mobility are not new phenomena but have been part of the American style of living for four hundred years.

How can you find out why people settled in your community? Interview as many people as you can who might know why their forefathers came there; get their versions. If your town is young enough that much of the settlement has taken place within the last hundred years, talk to the Chamber of Commerce officials to see what local brochures the office has in its files; those printed blurbs might give you some clues. Study industries or businesses that may have attracted immigrants. Read all histories of your town and your region that might offer explanations. Talk to pastors of the oldest established churches; ask to see if minutes of their church board meetings provide any clues about whether members of the congregation encouraged friends and relatives from the Old Country to come to your town. Study your state history to see if your town reflected patterns of settlement in the state generally.

Then you will know why the people of your community left the Old Country, why they came to America, and presumably why they

came to your town to live. Your next task is to find out how they got there and what life was like for them after they arrived.

What was Life Like Here?

To reconstruct how the newcomers adapted to life in your community, you will want to learn all you can about their lives after they left the Old Country—their shipboard experiences, their trials as they came through Castle Garden or Ellis Island, the immigration centers in New York, or any other debarkation point, and their overland journeys to their destination, all of them occasions of great drama.

Make a search of your community to try to locate any diaries or journals an immigrant might have kept while crossing the Atlantic. You may have to find a translator, too! (Use a news story in your local newspaper or a request in the "action" column and a mention in the community chatter program of the local radio station to let as wide an audience as possible know that you are seeking material about immigration to your town from, say, the Ukraine, in such-and-such a period.) Check old newspaper files to see if there were any interviews of someone on his eightieth birthday anniversary, for instance, recalling in print any of his early-day experiences en route to America; occasionally obituaries, particularly of prominent persons, will include such information. Interview children or grandchildren of immigrants to find out if they remember any tales their ancestors may have passed along concerning their arrival in the Promised Land.

One Norwegian woman who immigrated to Minnesota at the age of eight said that she had a single coin to spend on her journey to America and that she was so attracted to a yellow fruit a vendor had that that was her purchase; it was a lemon, a sour, acid lemon, which puckered her mouth when she tried to eat it. By itself, the story is insignificant, but it is typical of the faith, the gullibility, the disappointments, of many of the immigrants to this country. This anecdote, added to dozens of other, similar ones, begins to paint a vivid picture of the adventures of the newcomers.

You can learn much general background material from reading already published books and magazine pieces. Although they will not necessarily be about specific individuals in your community, they will be about immigrants from the ethnic group you are studying and possibly about the same general geographic area as yours.

Settlers to the areas served by land-grant railroads, particularly those whose journeys

were supervised by the immigration societies of the railroads, made their overland trip from the coastal ports on zulu cars. These special railroad cars for immigrants were equipped with wooden slatted benches and berths which the passengers padded with their own bedding and with coal stoves which provided heat and a place for the passengers to cook their own meals while en route. Histories of specific railroads may have information about the immigrant houses, zulu cars, and other services provided the immigrants. For example, Richard S. Overton's *Burlington West*, and James Marshall's *Santa Fe's The Railroad That Built an Empire*.

The most interesting and the most significant part of your study will begin when you start research to learn how the immigrants lived after they arrived in your community. You will use all previously listed sources of information for this research, and, if there are still first or second generation immigrants in your community, you will use oral history techniques to interview as many representatives of ethnic groups as possible.

For your tape-recorded interviews, use procedures for general oral history outlined in Willa K. Baum's books, *Oral History for Local Historical Societies* and *Transcribing and Editing Oral History*, or in *A Primer for Local Historical Societies* by Dorothy Weyer Creigh, all published by the AASLH.

Some of the questions you will wish to ask are these: What was it like to be a member of an ethnic minority in the community in the old days? (Or in some cases, an ethnic majority—in which case the focus of the questions would be reversed.) Did you or your family speak the Old Country language? Exclusively? When did you or your family learn English? How? What was the principal means of your learning English—from playmates, school, business associates, neighbors? What were reactions to you as a newcomer in the schoolroom, from fellow students on the playground, out of sight of the teacher? What specific measures did you or your family take to begin acculturation or assimilation? Did the family forbid the use of the Old Country language and customs? Did they encourage the adoption of the new language and customs to hasten the process of becoming Americanized? Or did your family retain the native culture as long as possible so that they would not deny their heritage? Did you or your family read ethnic newspapers or magazines (*Den Posten*, *Der Volksfreund*, *La Prensa*, for instance), and if so, for how many generations?

Because of your ethnic background, were you or your family exposed to animosity,

discrimination, harassment during World War I or World War II? If so, what forms did they take? Under ordinary circumstances, did you feel that you were left out of community or school activities, and if so, how? Were your parents discriminated against in jobs, in job hunting? Were they fleeced economically because they were "different"? How?

What ethnic customs did your family retain? In weddings? Funerals? Baptisms? Feast days? National days? Was your clothing perceptibly different from the so-called Americans? What foods did you eat that others in the neighborhood did not? What games did you play, or what toys did you play with, that were foreign in origin?

On the other hand, did you feel that you were ever specially favored because you represented an immigrant or ethnic group?

These questions and other similar ones will lead to a host of additional ones, and, before long, you will have gained a tremendous volume of information.

In addition to learning about the domestic life of the ethnic groups and how it differed from that of the so-called Americans, you may encounter a situation wherein you will need to study particular trades or skills or vocational pursuits. For instance, many Welsh became coal-miners; many Basques became sheepherders; many Germans from Russia worked in the sugar beet fields. Why? When you learn about their countries of origin, the reasons for their coming to America, and how they lived after they came, you will begin to learn those answers. But in doing so, you will also gain considerable knowledge about specific kinds of work.

The success of Alex Haley in tracing his history back to Africa points out the importance of skilled interviewing, for it was clues that his grandmother gave him that provided the thread that led him to his roots. He also utilized materials from the National Archives and other sources. His purpose was different from yours, for he was tracing one individual, his own forefather, and you will be tracing groups, perhaps even colonies, to get a broad, overall picture of the kinds of persons who peopled your community. But even so, you will utilize many of the same historical procedures.

Suggestions for Further Reading

There are hundreds of books that tell of the varied experiences of immigrants to the United States. To gain insight into how the ethnic groups of your area lived, choose books reflecting the same sets of circumstances: the country of origin, the historical period, the geographic setting in this country.

Detailed reading lists are available from The Balch

Institute, 18 South Seventh St., Philadelphia, Pa., 19106. Single copies are free to institutions; from two to fifty copies are 25¢ each. The lists are prepared for readers of differing ages and interests, ranging from the junior high to the graduate school level.

The lists are as follows:

Carpatho-Ruthenians in North America
Chinese in North America
Czechs in North America
English in North America
Finnish in North America
French in North America
Germans in North America
Greeks in North America
Immigration & Ethnicity
Irish in North America
Italians in North America
Japanese in North America
Mexicans in North America
Norwegians in North America
Polish in North America
Portuguese in North America
Puerto Ricans in North America
Scottish in North America
Slovaks in North America
South Slavs in North America
Spanish in North America
Swedish in North America
Swiss in North America
Ukrainians in North America
Welsh in North America

More general bibliographies are the Bicentennial Reading Lists prepared by the American Library Association for the American Issues Forum in 1976. If your local library does not have copies, ask it to secure them from your state library commission. Two lists are available, one for adult readers, another for young adults. Books on ethnic cultures are listed in the "A Nation of Nations" section.

SPECIFIC ETHNIC GROUPS

American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 631 D St., Lincoln, Nebr.
Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, 4021 S. Archer Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60632.
Polish Museum of America, 984 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60622.
Swedish Pioneer Historical Society, 5125 N. Spaulding Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60625.
Norwegian-American Museum, 502 West Water St., Decorah, Iowa 52101.
American Swedish Institute, 2600 Park Ave., Minneapolis, Minn. 55407.
Norwegian-American Historical Association, Northfield, Minn. 55057.
Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y. 10028.
Department of Czechoslovakian Culture, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebr. 68588.
Dusable Museum of African American History, 740 E. 56th Pl., Chicago, Ill. 60637.
Museum of Afro-American History, Smith Ct., Boston, Mass. 02114.
Germans from Russia in Colorado Study Project, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colo. 80523.

RAILROADS

For information about the role of railroads in immigration, write the historical section of the railroads involved:

Burlington-Northern (includes the Burlington, the Northern Pacific, and Great Northern railroads), 176 E. Fifth St., St. Paul, Minn. 55101.

Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, 80 E. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill., 60604.

Union Pacific, (includes Kansas Pacific), 1416 Dodge St., Omaha, Nebr., 68102.

Missouri Pacific, Missouri Pacific Building, St. Louis, Mo., 63103.

Southern Pacific, One Market St., San Francisco, Calif., 94105.

For other listings, see *National Directory of Addresses and Telephone Numbers*, edited by Stanley R. Greenfield, Bantam Books.

Ethnic newspapers still in existence: names and addresses for ethnic newspapers published for Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, Croatian, Czechoslovakian, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, Flemish, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Jewish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Slovak, and Swedish readers are listed in *National Directory of Addresses and Telephone Numbers*, edited by Stanley R. Greenfield, Bantam Books.

The new, eleventh edition of the *AASLH Directory of Historical Societies and Agencies in the United States and Canada* has an index of ethnic or racial societies.

Dorothy Weyer Creigh has worked with the Adams County Historical Society in Hastings, Nebraska, for many years. She was the project director for a series of lecture-discussion programs on ethnic cultures which attracted large audiences and, as editor of the society's monthly publication, later utilized much of the information gained from the programs as source material for published stories. She holds a B.A. degree from Hastings College and was a Hitchcock Scholar at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism where she earned a master's degree. In addition to her work with the historical society, Creigh is a free-lance writer for magazines and newspapers. She is the author of numerous books, including the AASLH publications *A Primer for Local Historical Societies* and the Nebraska volume in the *States and the Nation* series of state histories and a two-volume history of Adams County which won the AASLH Award of Merit in 1973. She is also the author of Technical Leaflet 100, "Old Movies: A Source of Local History Programs."

This is a companion leaflet to technical leaflet 109, *Ethnic Groups: Part Two, Research for the Local Society*.



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TECHNICAL LEAFLET 108

Technical Leaflets are published by the American Association for State and Local History for the purpose of bringing useful information to persons working in the state and local history movement. The selection of subject matter is based upon varied inquiries received by the Association's home office. The leaflets, which are detachable from the magazine, are copyrighted © 1978 by

AASLH and should be catalogued as part of HISTORY NEWS.

American Association for State and Local History Technical Leaflet 108, HISTORY NEWS, Volume 33, Number 9, September, 1978. Ethnic Groups: Part One Research for the Local Society.

Reprints are available. For information on prices, write to the Association at 1400 Eighth Avenue, South, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.



Technical LEAFLET

Ethnic Groups: Part Two Activities for the Local Society

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What to do with the Information

Interesting though it is, just as information, what will you do with ethnic historical material after you have gathered it? You, of course, will want to share it with the community, and the ways in which you can disseminate it are many.

Museums

If your historical society has a museum or is planning one, you may wish to devote part of it to displays of one or more ethnic groups within your community. The interpretive exhibits will be based on the information you have gathered through your interviews, archival searching, and other historic techniques, and the objects you select for display will tell the story of immigrants graphically and succinctly.

One display could show the journey from the homeland by displaying clothing the people wore on their trip (women's long black skirts, men's short jackets with braid, or children's garments); trunks and other luggage; books, particularly Bibles, printed in the language of the Old Country; implements or household items that the immigrants brought with them for everyday use; cookbooks and perhaps plaster

replicas of particularly representative foods. All these items could be displayed against



Folk dancers at the Czech Festival in Wilber, Nebr.



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CANADA

The immigrant experience during the Atlantic crossing is portrayed in this photograph of an exhibit at the National Museum of Man in Ottawa, Canada.

photographic backgrounds, blown-up pictures of the homes they left behind in Europe, a picture of the Statue of Liberty or some other symbol of entrance to the United States, or maps or flags of the Old Country. The exhibit should be interpretive, not a hodgepodge collection of just-anything-from-the-Old Country gathered together and plunked down on a shelf. The items will suggest that some things were so dear or so useful to the immigrants that they brought them across the ocean to their new homes.

Another display could illustrate some ethnic traditions and customs, including wedding memorabilia, games and toys, and other items that suggest the beginning of assimilation of the ethnic groups into the American pattern. If the immigrants in your community were identified with one particular trade or industry, such as working in brickyards or cigar factories, include representative items from those businesses to suggest the connection between the newcomers and their work-a-day world. Again, this exhibit will be interpretive.

A third display, if you wish to have one, could suggest what has happened in later

generations to the ethnic groups—how some of them have achieved success in this profession, in that vocation. This particular display may be of great interest to the present generation, creating interest in your historical society and support for it.

Discussion Programs

Lecture-discussion programs on ethnic groups have wide appeal within a community for there is endless variety in the kinds of topics to talk about. Audiences can identify with the topics. No matter the size and financial condition of your historical society, it can develop discussion programs that will be of interest to large numbers of people.

If your community has diverse ethnic groups, you will want to have a series of programs so that you can concentrate on each of the major, identifiable groups in town. If your community is dominated by a single ethnic group, then your programs will probably be divided along topical lines, such as schools, churches, the role in the community.

The speakers should be articulate, knowledgeable persons who have prepared their

programs carefully and whose presentations provoke attention. After the prepared speech is finished, members of the audience may add their own comments and give additional information on the subject; usually a lively discussion ensues.

One local historical society that sponsored a series of weekly programs on ethnic groups assumed that the persons of German heritage would attend only the sessions about their cultural patterns, that the French-Canadians would be interested in only the programs that related to their heritage. But when Germans and French and others started to attend all the meetings, no matter which group was under discussion, the society learned that their townspeople had a lively curiosity and a genuine interest in how other people live, think, and react to various situations. Members of the audience added their own comments when they attended sessions relating to their own ethnic group, and they asked questions when they attended meetings of the other groups. The programs stimulated so much discussion that everybody became a participant.

The subjects may be definite, factual—for instance, how the Czechs in our area have celebrated Christmas and New Year's through the years or marriage customs among the Ukrainians. Or the programs can be philosophical discussions about ethnic attitudes—why a given group responds as it does to certain situations and how it is different from other ethnic groups, or a specific other one.

The possibilities of action and reaction to discussion programs about ethnic cultures are great. Historical societies that have selected their speakers with care and their topics with thoughtfulness have discovered that their programs on ethnic cultures have been among their most successful activities, attracting large audiences and focusing attention on the society.

Whenever possible, for the sake of the historical record if for no other reason, lectures and discussions at your programs should be tape-recorded so that in years to come, historians of that era can share the knowledge of today's historians.

If you have aspirations toward eventually having ethnic displays in a museum, you can use the occasion of your discussion programs to have townspeople bring their family mementoes for a sort of show-and-tell period. Most people appreciate having a chance to exhibit their treasures, particularly if they are family-related, and you can find out where exhibit material will be available in the event your society does get

to the stage of mounting an ethnic culture display in a museum.

Ethnic Festivals

When you combine a parade, a carnival and folk dancing, folk handicrafts and food booths, and lots of merriment, you can't miss. And that's what ethnic festivals are all about.

Most Old Country cultures have a tradition of festivals of some sort, whether the Oktoberfest of the Bavarians, the pre-Lenten spring celebration of some Latins, the Midsummer's Eve festival of the Swedes, the fall harvest rite of many civilizations, or the May Day activities of the Camelot era. Whatever the culture, people traditionally let off steam in some sort of organized rite.

In our own times, many communities have combined various ethnic traditions into a festival, with everybody in town involved in it—the Chamber of Commerce, Boy and Girl Scouts, schools, churches, business groups, civic clubs, and various other groups, including of course, the local historical society, which often is the coordinating agency for the whole activity.

If your community has one predominant ethnic group within it, then focus the festival on it—a Slovenian festival, a Czech festival, or a Danish one. The historical society, which has done all of the basic ethnic research, can supervise the historical accuracy of the program, help with booth displays of artifacts interpreting the lives of the early settlers of the town both before and after they arrived from the Old Country, and produce what other historical material is to accompany the festival. The historical society can also help the high school physical education teacher find appropriate folk dances, steer the costume committee to pictures that insure accuracy, and generally be in the center of all of the planning and implementation of the festival.

If your community has several ethnic groups of almost equal size, then the festival can focus on a different group each day. The first day of the festival could be set aside for the German celebration, the second for the Russian, and a third for the Irish, with each day's activities of folksongs, dances, foods, and crafts aimed at the ethnic group of the day.

Festivals can involve everybody in the community and, as a result, often serve to unify the town. They draw attention to the ethnic heritage that many people would otherwise overlook, and, although much of the activity of a festival is not directly related to history, the local historical society will want to be sure to be involved in it.



Displays of handicrafts representing the Old Country are part of the Czech Festival in Wilber, Nebr.



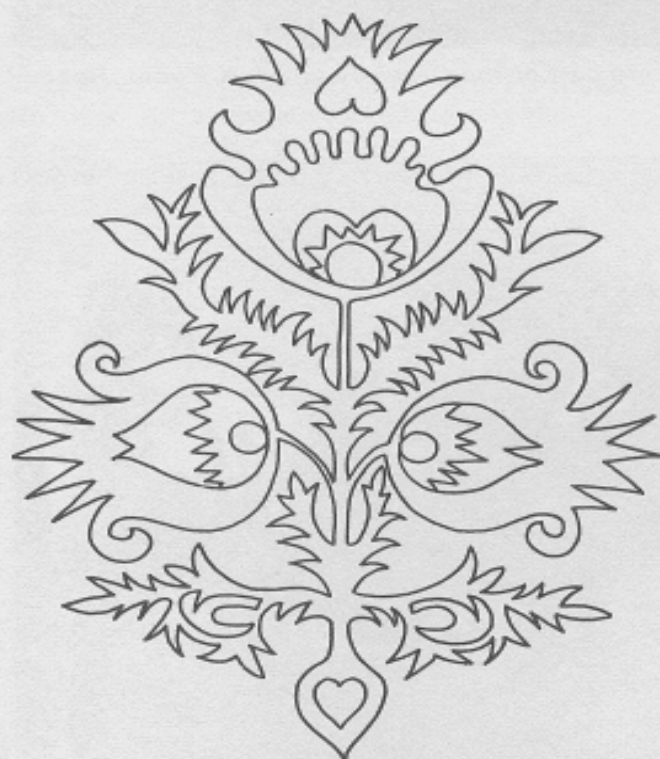
A group of young people dressed in costume demonstrate 19th-century corn planting techniques during Bishop Hill Jordbruk Dagen, a special event held at the Swedish utopian commune Bishop Hill in Illinois.

Publishing

If your society has a publishing program, producing a scholarly publication at regular intervals, it is obvious that you will publish the information you gather about ethnic groups in your periodical. Your society likely will have sufficient source material for a series of stories on each ethnic group involved.

Some small local historical societies that do not have sufficient funding for their own publishing programs rely on local or county newspapers to publish historical stories for them. A series on ethnic groups, utilizing the material gathered in accordance with procedures outlined in *Ethnic Groups: Part One*, would have widespread interest to readers of a weekly newspaper.

One group whose focus is on ethnic culture specifically, not simply local history, published and sold a coloring book for youngsters, in-



[56] Wycinanka

The Center for Polish Studies and Culture has published a children's coloring book with pictures and notes of Polish cultural history so that young people can learn of their heritage. This illustration is a paper cut-out, a popular folk decoration in Poland with different styles for different regions.

terspersing the drawings with information about that ethnic group. The idea could be adapted by other groups and brought to a local historical level.

Cookbooks

Even if you have no publishing program of any kind, and no intentions of having one, you may be interested in considering publishing a cookbook of ethnic recipes gathered by members and friends of your local historical society. Regional cookbooks always sell well, and those containing ethnic recipes particularly so.

Each recipe contained in the book should be carefully pre-tested before it is set in type to make sure that it is accurate. It should have the name of the person who contributed it to the cause and a sentence or more about the circumstances under which it was traditionally used. For instance, "This pastry was made by the grandmother to be presented to a new mother at the time of the birth of her first son." Or, "This recipe makes kolaches which are eaten only on Midsummer's Day," with a brief description of Midsummer's Day activities in that particular ethnic milieu.

In addition, the cookbook should contain opening chapters telling the story of the particular ethnic situation in the sponsoring community. If the cookbook is a combination of Bavarian, Moravian, Lebanese, and Portuguese recipes, reflecting the ethnic tone of the community, then the explanatory historical chapter should tell when the several ethnic groups arrived, why they did, and what has happened to them in the intervening years. These pages will contain the information you collected about ethnic groups in your community, following the procedures outlined in Technical Leaflet 108.

Speakers' Bureau

If your historical society has a speakers' bureau, have members prepare programs of varying lengths on varying subjects connected with ethnic studies. These can be booked for civic groups, book clubs, or any organization around town needing programs. They will stimulate interest in the community, its people, its past.

Some of the programs can be about games that the children brought with them from the Old Country, the toys they played with, the clothing they wore, the schedules they had in their day-to-day living. They were expected to do work in the field after they were old enough to handle a hoe or to work in a cottage industry

as soon as they could handle a needle. These child-oriented programs can, of course, be presented to school groups.

Other programs can be centered around business, telling how the newcomers helped in the field or factories or mines or whatever. Their labors helping the steel mills or the brickyards or the tobacco fields become significant in the total business of the area. These programs can be aimed at civic club presentations.

Programs telling about the cultural traditions generally can be worked out for presentation to book clubs or similar organizations. Speeches that are ready to be used more or less at a moment's notice are a great service to the community and can help the local historical society gain stature and authority while disseminating accurate information about the history of the area.

Those local historical groups that have no financial means for starting museums, historical libraries, or any other costly projects, can create a speakers' bureau and preserve history at no expenditures save those of time, energy, and devotion to the cause of local history.

Dorothy Weyer Creigh has worked with the Adams County Historical Society in Hastings, Nebraska, for many years. She was the project director for a series of lecture-discussion programs on ethnic cultures which attracted large audiences and, as editor of the society's monthly publication, later utilized much of the information gained from the programs as source material for published stories. She holds a B.A. degree from Hastings College and was a Hitchcock Scholar at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism where she earned a master's degree. In addition to her work with the historical society, Creigh is a free-lance writer for magazines and newspapers. She is the author of numerous books, including the AASLH publications *A Primer for Local Historical Societies* and the *Nebraska* volume in the *States and the Nation* series of state histories and a two-volume history of Adams County which won the AASLH Award of Merit in 1973. She is also the author of Technical Leaflet 100, "Old Movies: A Source of Local History Programs."

This is a companion leaflet to Technical Leaflet 108, *Ethnic Groups: Part One, Research for the Local Society*.



American Association for State and Local History

1400 Eighth Avenue, South
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

TECHNICAL LEAFLET 109

Technical Leaflets are published by the American Association for State and Local History for the purpose of bringing useful information to persons working in the state and local history movement. The selection of subject matter is based upon varied inquiries received by the Association's home office. The leaflets, which are detachable from the magazine, are

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American Association for State and Local History Technical Leaflet 109, HISTORY NEWS, Volume 33, Number 10, October, 1978. *Financing Your History Organization: Setting Goals*.

Reprints are available. For information on prices, write to the Association at 1400 Eighth Avenue, South, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.



American Association for State and Local History

Technical **LEAFLET**

Some Observations on Establishing Tribal Museums

By George P. Horse Capture

*Curator
Plains Indian Museum*

Museums preserve, document, protect, and exhibit the objects of a time and people to better explain those objects and the culture they represent. Tribal museums are a relatively new concept which developed out of a necessity of the times. Traditionally Indian groups had no need for museums because the culture was self-perpetuating. For untold centuries they lived with their material culture and preserved knowledge of it by the oral tradition. There was no need to save everyday items to remind people of the past because essential change was slow enough for people to adjust and live comfortably within it.

Within a very brief period, however, the Indian ways were disrupted critically. The land, the religion, the material culture almost disappeared from the earth. We now are engaged in the long struggle to regain some of our former glory and traditions. To do so successfully, we must adapt some of the white man's ways and methods, but do this in such a way that we revive and preserve our "Indianness."



Tepees are on display at the Plains Indian Museum of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center where George P. Horse Capture serves as curator.

Buffalo Bill Historical Center

One of these methods we should adopt is the establishment and maintenance of museums—viable tribal museums. My purpose here is to offer suggestions for tribes to follow in this endeavor. This leaflet addresses problems and concerns—organizational structure, museum building, training personnel, funding, and collections—that they must confront in establishing their museum.

The Basic Requirement

The first step in the establishment of a tribal museum is the development of the idea. Most Indian people seem to recognize the need for museums, but nothing happens until the idea is accepted on a broad local level. This essential development of the initial concept often is accomplished by the dedication of a single individual or small group who convinces other people of the importance and the feasibility of such an institution. Then, after a large enough or influential enough group is convinced, the tribal government must be persuaded.

Many tribal museums never make it beyond this stage because of lack of support. It is not that the people do not want a museum; rather, it is because they are too involved in the day-to-day struggle for survival. Basic existence must come first, so little time and energy remain for other important projects. If enough people believe in a museum, however, the actual planning will begin to involve and to excite others. And, with the planning comes the need for a governing body.

Organizational Structure

The key to the success or failure of a tribal museum may lie in the composition of the governing body. Three possible choices are an autonomous and separate board of directors, a board selected by the tribal council and, thus, semi-autonomous, and the tribal council as board of directors.

The first choice probably is not feasible as the tribe might be reluctant to support a project over which they have little influence and control. Competition for cultural "jurisdiction" might develop between the autonomous directors on the one hand and the tribe on the other.

The third option, the tribal council as the board, also may not be advisable since this type of structure might place the museum at the whims of tribal elections. The board from one tribal administration may place a high priority on cultural retention, while the next administration could be caught up in treaty-rights struggles and allocate all attention and funds to this problem.

The best choice would be the second position. With the initial direction of a key individual or small group, the tribal council can select as members of the museum board those reliable tribal people who are knowledgeable and interested in cultural matters. A board that includes prominent people from the Indian community at large, as well as a representative from the council, can work with the tribal administration while retaining some autonomy in regard to the council's fluctuations. This association with the tribal government also will satisfy requirements for non-profit status.

Members of the Board

The board should include representatives from all community groups—from traditional elders to contemporary youth—gaining as broad a representation as possible. This base of support provides the museum a better chance of survival because it then belongs to the entire community rather than to just an individual, a family, or an administration. Everyone should be given an opportunity to participate and assist in his or her own way.

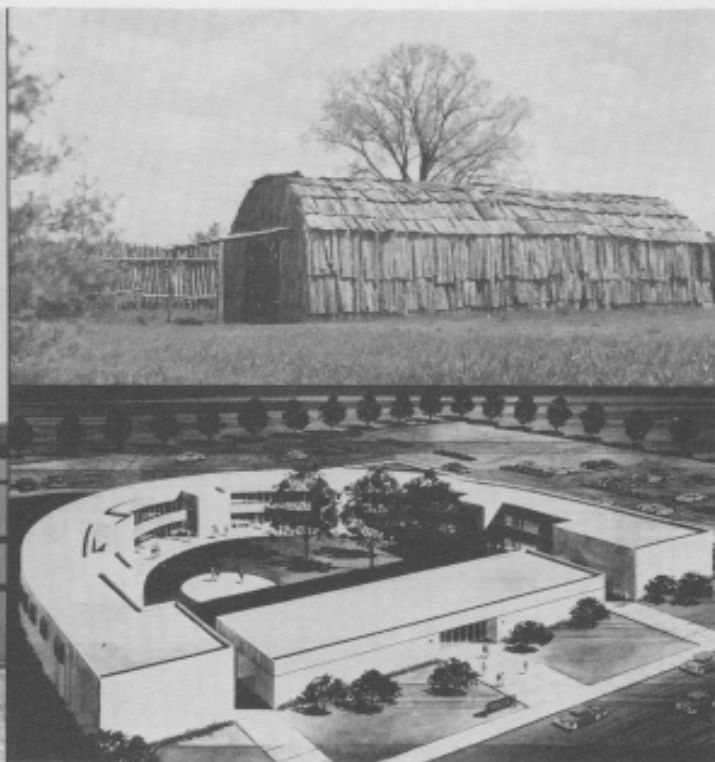
Those not belonging to the tribe also should be included in the organizational structure. Non-Indian participation, whether as members of the voting board or as members of a non-voting advisory board, can benefit the museum. Political figures, ranchers, and industrial executives, for example, can offer outside perspectives, contacts, and funding possibilities that are essential to survival and progress. Build as broad a base of support as is possible.

The Museum Building

Until a few years ago, in an effort to ease unemployment on the reservations, the Economic Development Agency funded the establishment of many tribal museums. After coming under attack for excessive spending, the agency curtailed this activity severely and no longer can be counted upon for funding, regardless of how badly help is needed. Raising money solely for a tribal museum is difficult, so those built today most likely must be a part of a larger complex.

Another approach is to use an existing building to house the tribal museum. Consider a local historical building such as an old agency office, a fort, a church, or a school. If the building is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, it can qualify for certain privileges, such as government protection and federal grant-in-aid and matching-grant monies. Another reason for choosing a local historical building is that many visitors will come just to see the site.

Native American Center for the Living Arts



Oneida Nation Museum

Indian Pueblo Cultural Center

Arapaho architect Dennis Sun Rhodes designed the Native American Center for the Living Arts in Niagara Falls, New York, to resemble a turtle, the Indian symbol for the earth. The center is scheduled to open in spring 1981. The bark long house at the Oneida Nation Museum in Wisconsin, above right, is typical of a pre-Revolutionary War Oneida structure. Below right, the artist's pre-opening conception of the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, owned and operated by Indian Pueblos of New Mexico.

Information about the National Register nominating process is available from state historic preservation offices.

Choosing a Name

Selecting the name for your museum is a good way to involve the people of the community. A naming contest is always fun and will create a lot of publicity for the project. As most tribal museums are historical in nature, the theme is predetermined. The name selected either should preserve and honor a tribal person or the tribe, or be descriptive enough not to exclude anyone. Indian names are interesting but are difficult to pronounce or to remember, so don't be too creative.

The Museum Director

An Indian museum director must be an exhibit designer, light technician, janitor, bottle washer, proposal writer, fund raiser, and more. Make the selection of the key individual with extreme care. Tribal and family jealousies must be set aside as you search for the best.

The director must be an Indian, ideally a member of your own tribe. If no qualified tribal member is available for the position, hire on a

temporary basis a qualified outsider to start the project while a tribal member is trained for the position. The director must be given the responsibility to run the museum and be unencumbered by exterior entanglements. He or she must be free to hire or fire museum employees, raise funds, establish contracts, and perform all of the other duties that the office requires. If the tribal council or the board of directors erodes the director's authority, the museum's organizational structure will weaken and ultimately fail.

Funding

Obtaining adequate financing is a never-ending battle and is made more difficult by the low economic base of the small population on a reservation. It is vital to receive tribal government support. This commitment at least will keep the doors open while you raise other funds. The tribal government must be willing not only to provide "seed money" to start the project, but also to step in with additional critical funds when necessary. After all, the museum belongs in part to them and serves to reflect their concerns. Major funding, though, must come from outside the tribe and be



Woodland Indian costumes on display at the Museum of the Woodland Indian in Brantford, Ontario.

obtained from federal and state governments and from the private sector.

States have cultural funding agencies that are associated with parent federal organizations. State committees for the humanities and state arts councils are mandated to fund programs and projects that promote either the understanding of the humanities or the arts. Both types of organizations fund museum and other related projects.

Several national programs assist tribal museums. The National Endowment for the Humanities funds programs related to libraries, museums, historical organizations, research, education, and public programs. The National Endowment for the Arts promotes and funds arts programs, and the Institute of Museum Services assists museums with operating expenses and funds some special projects. Obtain program announcements and other information from these organizations to determine how you can utilize their services for the benefit of your community and museum.

In the private sector, numerous private foundations have assisted Indian-related projects. Prominent among these are the Ford Foundation, Lilly Endowment, Field Foundation, Akbar Fund, Donner Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation. They fund projects such as theatre ensembles, bilingual and educational programs, and community development projects

on reservations. Although their prime emphases change periodically, they are proven funding sources.

The resource-rich tribes also can approach private industry. Lumber and mining companies that "work" Indian land may assist tribal museums with material and funds, if for no other reason than good public relations.

In addition, private individuals sometimes help tribal museums. Some concerned citizens, show business personalities, and politicians—approached with an explanation of the need for such a tribal museum—may be willing to help.

Don't limit fund raising only to assistance for exhibits, maintenance, and salaries. Think of the museum as a community cultural and educational institution that deals with many topics, both Indian and non-Indian. For example, the museum might sponsor a touring exhibit incorporating local art and artists and involving the entire community. Funds for such a project not only should pay for direct project expenses, but also should provide a percentage of the "overhead" costs, such as bookkeeping, electricity, and other day-to-day expenses. A portion of a director's salary frequently can be included if his or her participation is extended beyond regular duties. Funding obtained for such projects will have an impact on the overall budget and educate and involve people as well. All of this activity is sure to impress the tribal

government and improve your chances for obtaining additional or continuing funding from them.

Collections

Ironically, obtaining proper material to exhibit doesn't seem to be a frequent obstacle. Here are some sources for additions to your collections that you cannot afford to overlook.

■ *Reservation pieces.* Most Indian families somehow have retained a few good traditional pieces of Indian art—treasures that once belonged to their grandmothers and grandfathers. These items are very precious to their owners and they will not give them up easily. The owners are concerned for the safety of the items, however, and fear that someday they will be lost to fire or theft. When your museum is built and has the proper security and fire protection, call on these people and talk with them about their family treasures that need to be protected and shared with others. After a test period passes, some will give these pieces to your museum. With the items comes the responsibility to protect them.

■ *Adjacent sources.* Non-Indians have lived on or near Indian reservations for years. Their



TSA • LA • GI Museum



Plimoth Plantation

A private collection of Cherokee artifacts, above, donated to the TSA • LA • GI Museum in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Native American interpreters, below, build a dome-shaped reed house typical of the Wampanoag tribe as part of the Plimoth Plantation Wampanoag Indian Program.

ancestors dealt first hand with the Indian people from the 1800s and earlier. Over the years, some of them have amassed traditional Indian art collections that are worthy of inclusion in a tribal museum. Devote a section of your museum to the history of the reservation and the surrounding area. Here these artifacts can be used to represent in part the ranchers and farmers who played a role in the life of the reservation. Consequently, the present owners of the Indian materials may be inclined to donate them in their family's name.

■ *Reservation collectors.* Even prior to the establishment of the reservations, many people collected good Indian pieces. Research the history of the area to determine who was there and when. These collectors include early explorers, railroad people, missionaries, soldiers, doctors, school teachers, and later, even gas station owners. Follow up on all leads. Locate and contact the present owners of the material and tell them of your effort. Many may want to help.

■ *Other museums.* Most large museums own Indian material that is "unlocalized," collected years ago with no accompanying information. The museum may know who collected it and when they received it, but not know when it was made, where it was collected, or even which tribe made it. Without this important documentation the articles are of little use either for research or for display purposes. Perhaps some large museums that keep massive amounts of this type of unlocalized material may be amenable to donating your tribe's material to your museum.

Some large institutions make loans of relevant material to tribal museums. Sometimes these loans are considered permanent and when possible should be converted to gifts. Others may be willing to make such gifts or loans, but you must know exactly what you are asking for and what you want, and you must follow through on your request in a professional manner. These large institutions may be wary of loaning some of our tribal pieces to us, apparently because they think we won't give them proper care. The off-reservation organizations must realize how tribal members feel about these traditional treasures. These Indian museum pieces are the physical essence of our cultural continuity, the "footprints" of our families and ancestors. They must understand that these cherished items are our direct link to our past heritage and confirm our present existence, as well as strengthen us for the future. To us they are not just another collection. They are the only collection. They are sacred. They must be assured that we will

and can protect and honor these few remaining touchstones, and that the materials will receive the best protection and honor while in our care. And we, in turn, must be prepared with adequate facilities and technological knowledge to provide that protection and care.

■ *Other sources.* Don't overlook the value of replicas of traditional art, models, photographs, and contemporary Indian artwork. Non-Indians have great difficulty viewing replicas such as bead work and quill work as museum pieces. We must work to boost the concept of proper Indian pieces as artwork.

Training for Key Personnel

Professional training of key personnel is a prime responsibility in the establishment of a tribal museum. This training extends to all phases of museum work and is necessary to insure professional standing, proper care of the materials, and, indeed, the long-term survival of the museum. Undergraduate academic disciplines that fill these needs vary and sometimes overlap.

The study of anthropology is necessary to understand the inner structure of a culture and how it relates to others. The ability to work with oral tradition is another valuable skill for tribal museum personnel. The study of art also is useful, and knowledge of history is vital to understanding your tribe and region.

Some colleges and universities offer courses in museology, but only a few of these are structured for the special needs of Indian museums. Two that do address Indian needs are the Institute of American Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and the University of Colorado in Boulder. The content of the courses varies but they are flexible and offer professional training. Museology is an ideal course of study for a satisfactory background in the various phases of museum work.

All tribal museum people should sign up for the American Indian Cultural Resources Training Program (AICRT). This program, a unit of the National Anthropological Archives of the Smithsonian Institution, is designed with the Indian in mind. The structure is flexible, the staff friendly and helpful, and the resources enormous. Prior to the early 1900s, many anthropologists and others associated with the Smithsonian Institution moved to Indian country to record dying facets of Indian life. Those affiliated with the Smithsonian's Bureau of Ethnology field research programs kept notes of these early expeditions, with photographs of Indian tribes and other ancillary materials, which now are kept at the National Anthropological Archives. Additional related

material has been added over the years and makes this collection a storehouse of information. Indians should take advantage of their opportunities to do research at the National Archives and the Library of Congress and to utilize the vast resources of the Smithsonian.

In addition, the Smithsonian Institution maintains a unit called the Native American Training Program. Although there are no Indians involved in the administration, it is capably coordinated and offers useful programs such as internships and regional workshops.

Another history-oriented program worth considering is the Newberry Library's Center for the History of the American Indian located in Chicago. Although this program is not designed primarily for the tribal historian, the center does have an impressive collection of relevant material and much can be learned there.

Potential key personnel should consider enrolling in internship programs at some of the larger museums across the country or doing work/study or volunteer work in the nearest museum. All such experiences bring useful information and knowledge that can be utilized later.

The Future for Tribal Museums

As tribes seek to tell their story and preserve their culture, the number of tribal museums increases across the country. Looking to the future and in an effort to assist this movement, over thirty tribal groups, meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, on May 6, 1980, organized and incorporated the North American Indian Museum Association.

Like other museums around the country, some tribal museums will succeed and others will fail. The importance of proper initial organization cannot be over emphasized. Build carefully and include as many individuals, groups, and perspectives as possible. The ultimate success of a tribal museum is tied to professional performance in carrying out its mandated responsibilities. We must recognize and preserve the traditional while at the same time contending with the changing social environment of the contemporary world. And these two perspectives must be integrated within the Indian community. When this is achieved, the museum will no longer be an "institution," but will merge into the continuing culture and become part of it. Such a new, total community can turn the tide of cultural erosion and save our "Indianness" for ourselves and for the world.

For More Information

Information Office
National Endowment for the Arts
Seventh Floor, West Wing
2401 E Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20506

Information Office
Department of Education
Institute of Museum Services
330 C Street, S.W., Room 4008
Washington, D.C. 20202

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Washington, D.C. 20560

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Cerrillos Road
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

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Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560

Rick Hill, Chairman
North American Indian Museum Association
Native American Center
for the Living Arts, Inc.
466 Third Street
Niagara Falls, New York 14301

For Further Reading

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Neal, Armita. *Exhibits for Small Museums, A Handbook*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1976. A helpful, detailed "how-to" book.

_____. *Help! For the Small Museum: Handbook of Exhibit Ideas and Methods*. Reprint. Boulder, Colorado: Pruitt Press,

1969. A good "nuts and bolts" book for small museums.

Schneider, P.H. *The Art of Asking: A Handbook for Successful Fund Raising*. New York: Walker and Company, 1978. Offers good background material on fund raising.

Tillotson, Robert G. *Museum Security*. Paris: International Council of Museums, 1977. Primarily for large institutions, but presents numerous aspects of security.

Two other publications of interest to those concerned with the establishment of tribal museums are *Native American Arts and Culture: A Resource Directory*, available from the Western States Art Foundation, Inc., 1517 Market Street, Denver, Colorado 80202, and *Grants Made to Native American Corporations and Related Organizations*, available from the Fort Belknap Education Department, Fort Belknap Community Council, Fort Belknap Agency, Harlem, Montana 59526.

George P. Horse Capture, a Gros Ventre Indian from the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in Montana, serves as curator of the Plains Indian Museum at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming. While earning a master's degree in history from Montana State University he served as research associate in ethnology; while earning a BA degree in anthropology from the University of California at Berkeley he received museum training and experience at the Lowie Museum. Currently Horse Capture is working toward the establishment of a tribal museum on his reservation.

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TECHNICAL LEAFLET 134

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American Association for State and Local History Technical Leaflet 134, HISTORY NEWS, Volume 36, Number 1, January, 1981. *Some Observations on Establishing Tribal Museums*.

Reprints are available. For information on prices, write to the Association at 1400 Eighth Avenue, South, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.



American Association for State and Local History

Technical LEAFLET

Black Genealogy: Basic Steps to Research

By Bill R. Linder

National Archives and Records Service

Blacks were on United States soil at least two-hundred-fifty years before the Revolution. In 1526 a slave revolt occurred in what is now South Carolina. A dozen years later a black headed the expedition leading to the discovery of Arizona and New Mexico. Blacks accompanied De Soto as he searched for the Mississippi River, and they were with the party that founded St. Augustine, Florida, in 1565. Blacks have been around for a long time, a longer time and in greater numbers than most people realize. One estimate is that well over two-million African slaves were imported during the 1600s.

Blacks in this country have a fascinating heritage. In recent years, that history has been researched extensively, documented highly, and portrayed dramatically in short stories, novels, textbooks, plays, and movies. In the past decade, there has been a surge of interest in black history, and an increase in the numbers of blacks who want to trace their individual family histories.

The family history quest by blacks is at the same time similar to and different from the



Beginning genealogists first should listen to the reminiscences of older relatives.

genealogical and family history research of white heritage. Much has been written in general on how to research one's ancestry. This leaflet offers helpful ideas for blacks in beginning a search, highlighting getting off to a good start and pointing out areas where the search will be unique. In addition, the beginner should read basic texts on genealogical research to gain a full view of how to thoroughly and methodically trace family history.

Oral Interviews

Interviews of relatives are an important part of any family history search. For most blacks, such interviews are even more urgent and relevant. Today the lifestyles and standards of living of many, if not most, black families are little different from the rest of society. But one and particularly two generations ago, the lifestyles and living standards were quite different. There has been much progress and change for all people during the last fifty years, but for blacks the progress and change has been more accentuated. This fact in itself causes family interviews to be more dynamic and valuable.

For the most part, black families in past generations kept fewer paper records making

concentration on the interview phase of the black family search even more meaningful. Photographs from the distant past are scant. Family bibles and scrapbooks exist, but they are not present as often as is hoped for. What does exist are the often excellent memories of the griot-like older black relatives. These interesting people have lived out experiences the current generations will never repeat and have heard the family stories from ancestors who lived an even stronger dose of life. They are ready for the opportunity to pass on literally reams of exciting, almost unbelievable data to younger generations.

Get Good Interviews

Use a tape recorder to capture the full sweep of their memories. Plan interviews before you make the visits to make the recordings. Think through beforehand a line of questioning that will bring out the information you want. In advance, get information about the personality of the person to be interviewed, such as lifestyle, habits, hobbies, interests, and occupation. This information will help you know what to expect from the interview and will guide you in planning and preparing a good set of questions.

It is better to make an appointment rather than to drop in unexpectedly. When making the date, give the person some broad ideas about what you want him or her to tell you. From then until the interview, the older relative's mind will be turning over memories of people, places, dates, and events from the past.

Design questions that will bring out feelings, thoughts about life, and attitudes ranging from work to politics, to recipes, to child rearing, to morality and religion. Trades, hobbies, goals, ambitions, and failures and successes are significant. Include physical descriptions: complexion, weight, height. Athletic? Skilled with tools? Resourceful? Independent? On welfare? Artistic talents? Piano? Guitar? Cooking talents and food preferences? Singer? Farmer? Laborer? Mechanic?

What were the houses like that the person lived in? Where were these homes located? Who owned them? What did the rooms look like inside? Woodstove? Kerosene lamps? How many slept in a room? Who lived together as a family? Who was the disciplinarian in the family—father, mother, grandmother? What were the roles of children? Of grandparents? What were the children's duties? And the all-important grand finale questions: What are the family stories about the slave days? Was your father a slave? Your grandfather? Your great-



Portraits such as this one by black photographer Arthur Macbeth are rare.

grandparents? Did your family name come from a white plantation owner? Listen carefully for names, dates, places, and other clues.

Alex Haley, author of the famous black saga *Roots*, was able to capitalize on certain sounds for African words that were passed down through his family, which later became clues to the location of his African origin. A caveat for beginning black researchers is to not start out with the idea in mind of accomplishing what Haley supposedly did. Some experienced genealogists in the world doubt the actuality of the Haley claims to proved African ties, though they are quick to admit the story is good and no doubt represents the kinds of events that probably were repeated often during the period of slave trade. Do plan to find much fascinating information, a significant amount of which will be derived from oral interviews of older relatives.

Home Sources

As with the oral interviews, it is both urgent and relevant for the black researcher to thoroughly comb and exhaust home sources. Everyone begins the search at home; blacks may have less to find at home and accordingly need to perform a more skillful and thorough search.

At home one can find information in family bibles, newspaper clippings, birth, death, and marriage certificates, diaries, letters, scrapbooks, and other memorabilia.

In genealogy, we start with ourselves, the known, and work toward the unknown. In starting with ourselves, we look through the records at home, at our parents' home, the homes of other close relatives, and in the cemeteries where family members are buried. This is something we logically know to do, and do not need to read this instruction in an article or book. Logic also suggests that we interview the old folks.

But what next—after exhausting the home sources, cemeteries familiar to the immediate family, and the memories of the family griots? We enthusiastically move on to the libraries and depositories of records to look for more information and clues. The detective work is underway!

The Federal Census

For anyone pursuing American ancestry, white or black, the most important first step in venturing into research outside the home is to consult the federal census.

In 1864 George Washington Carver was born. In 1866 the Fourteenth Amendment was passed making American-born blacks citizens. In 1870 the first listing was made of all blacks by name

in a federal census. Thus you can search through the 1870 census for the household where George W. Carver should appear as a six-year-old child. There he should be listed and enumerated with other members of the family constituting the household in which he lived in 1870. Your ancestors also are listed in the 1870 census!

This same census kindled the flame of excitement in Alex Haley, ultimately leading to his creation of *Roots*. While in Washington, D.C., for a brief visit, Haley entered the National Archives building and inquired about the 1870 census. He learned how to look at a microfilm copy of that census. Within minutes he turned the handle on the microfilm reading machine and watched the pages of the 1870 census flow by on the screen. He relived in his imagination scenes of what Alamance County, North Carolina, was like some three or four generations ago. Soon names of persons appeared that he had heard the older relatives talk about. At that moment Haley experienced the beginning genealogist's "thrill of discovery." His quest for family roots was underway.

Like Haley, all beginning black researchers should consult the federal census records early in the search to find how the families of their ancestors were constituted in 1900, 1880, and 1870.

The 1900 census is the latest census available due to rights of privacy laws; the 1910 census will be opened for research on July 1, 1982. The 1890 census was destroyed by fire in 1921.

In 1850 and 1860, census slave schedules were made, but the schedules did not list slaves by name. They were tallied by age and sex. These slave schedules are useful, however, in circumstantially proving that a slave of a certain age and sex was the property of a particular owner in a census year.

The first federal census was made in 1790 to apportion representation to Congress. Free black heads of household always have been enumerated, beginning with the first census in 1790, and listed by name. Slaves, however, were listed by number in total figures only. You can learn that William Taylor had twelve slaves in 1790, but you cannot learn their names from the census.

In succeeding censuses, 1800 through 1840, the enumerations of slaves were refined further within age and sex categories. But, with the exception of free blacks, names of blacks were not recorded until 1870, after the slaves were freed.

The 1870, 1880, and 1900 censuses provide the names and ages of all persons in each

448 } 1870

1. Inhabitants in Morgan District, enumerated by me on the 21st day of July, 1870.

Georgia, enumerated by me on the 21st day of July, 1870.

Quinnville

The name of every person whose place of abode on the first day of June, 1870, was in this family.	Inhabitant			Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each person, male or female.	Value of Real Estate owned		Place of Birth, naming State or Territory of U. S.; or the Country, if of foreign birth.
	Age at last birthday, or under 1 year, give month in fraction, black, 5	Sex—Male (M), Female (F)	Color—White (W), Black (B), Mulatto (M), Indian (I), Chinese (C), Japanese (J)		Value of Real Estate	Value of Personal Estate	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Banks, Ophelia	20	F	B	Domestic Laborer			Georgia
Cobb, Floyd	20	M	B	Farm Laborer			"
Wilson, George W.	25	M	B	Farm Laborer			"
Antwette	20	F	B	Keeping House			"
John J.	11	M	B	At Home			"
Daniel, William	20	M	B	Farm Laborer			"
Nancy	40	F	B	Keeping House			"
Sallie	11	F	B	Labrington Farm			"
Phinnont, Anise	48	F	B	Keeping House			"
Sophia	18	F	B	Labrington Farm			"
James J.	5	M	B		500	700	Labrington
Wilson, William R.	25	M	B	Shower			Labrington
Lizzie	20	F	B	Keeping House			"
Jane	19	F	B	Spinning Mother			"
James J.	15	M	B	Attending School			"
William J.	11	M	B	"			"
Robert B.	9	M	B	"			"
John C.	7	M	B	"			"
Benjamin	1	M	B	"			"
Vandiver, Quincy	57	F	B	Keeping House	200	400	Labrington
Phinnont, Anise	16	F	B	Labrington Farm			"

Beginning black researchers should consult federal census records early in the search. The 1870 census was the first to list all blacks by name. Microfilm copies of the 1900, 1880, and 1870 census are widely available. The 1890 census was destroyed by fire. Due to rights of privacy laws, the 1900 census is the latest one open for research.

Register of Funerals in General.

<u>No.</u>	<u>Date.</u>	<u>Names.</u>	<u>Age.</u>	<u>Remarks.</u>
1.	May 20/74	Basil Sutcliffe	63 years	A member of the 15 th St. Ch.
2.	June 5/74	Robert H. Booker	40 years	A member of the Baptist Ch.
3.	June 14/74	Sarah Martin	45 years	A member of the Church
4.	July 20/74	James L. Matthews	7 years	A son of Samuel & Sophistic
5.	July 31/74	Sane Louise Matthews	15 years	A daughter of John T. & S. E. H.
6.	Aug: 15/74	Raphael Ambrose Sadgwar	13 months	The parents unknown to
7.	Sept: 7/74	Jessie Thomas	2 months	The Dr. Dr. Dr.
8.	Oct: 4/74	Benjamin S. Wallace	42 years	Unknown to me
9.	Oct: 29/74	Clara Brooks	31 years	Unknown to me
10.	Nov: 19/74	Walter S. Jones	28 years	Unknown to me

Most state records of birth and death began in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Church records like this register of funerals from the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., may help in the search.

household, their occupations, and other information. Census takers asked more questions in 1880 than 1870, and more in 1900 than 1880. You will be pleasantly surprised to learn how much information you can find in these censuses.

The availability of census records is unequalled. All of the extant census records held by the National Archives have been microfilmed and copies of the microfilm have been purchased widely. Many state and local historical and genealogical societies, large public libraries, and state and university libraries and archives have purchased microfilm copies of these census records. Because of this, the federal census is the most widely used record ever created by the government.

Find out from your local library or other local records institution what census holdings may be available to you right in your area. If the census records you need are not available locally, you can order microfilm copies on interlibrary loan through your local public library. The Federal Archives and Records Center, Archives Branch, P.O. Box 6886, Fort Worth, Texas 76115, is the census interlibrary loan distribution center for the National Archives and Records Service.

Full sets of all extant federal census records also are available for your use at the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C., and at

the eleven regional branches of the National Archives located in metropolitan areas throughout the country. A leaflet providing information about the regional archives branches, including addresses, hours, and phone numbers, is available from Correspondence Branch (NNCC), National Archives, Washington, D.C. 20408.

State Records of Birth and Death

The making of official records of birth and death is relatively recent, except for New England towns. In New England, such records were begun in most cases with the beginning of the town. But for the most part, for the rest of the country records of birth and death were started officially in the late 1800s and early 1900s, varying from state to state. Black researchers should order copies of these records; the information may not be available elsewhere. Birth and death certificates normally reveal names of parents, as well as data relative to the event being recorded.

The accuracy of the information on a certificate is as good as the reliability of the person who supplied the information. Usually a next of kin, such as a spouse or child, supplied the information entered on the certificate, in addition to what the attending physician or coroner entered.

The state office handling the centralized state registration of these "vital" records usually is called the State Department of Vital Statistics or the State Board of Health or similar office, and usually is located in the state capital.

The federal government has prepared information that helps one know where to write to obtain copies of these state records of birth and death. The booklet, *Where to Write for Birth and Death Records*, is available for \$1.25 from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

County Records

Following emancipation, blacks were recorded in the county records when they were involved in an event requiring such recording. For most of the United States over the years, the county has been the governmental unit where marriages, deeds, wills, and other records have been created and preserved.

Records of black marriages after 1865 are generally available and usually are recorded in the town or county records at the town or county courthouse. Official records of slave marriages only infrequently are available.

The succession of property from one owner to another is reflected in deeds and wills, records

that normally can be extremely helpful in proving family relationships.

A check of the county court minutes might reveal an entry about a family member. These records deal with a variety of situations, from employment on a county road to inquests involving homicide.

A search among the county records always should be made to see what, if anything, is available on the subject black family. Do not be discouraged when nothing is found; this often is the case for both black and white families who were not property holders or who did not attend properly to the recording of events at the courthouse.

County records are available in county courthouses, and in many cases microfilm copies also are available at the state archives in the state capital.

Church Records

Religion has played a dominant role in the lives of blacks in this country. Where church records have survived, they often can be of value in black genealogical research. First, search to find out the religion of the ancestor, then follow by a search to determine if records exist for the church to which he or she



Local church records of the early 1900s might include the names of persons baptized in this Alabama stream.



belonged. A personal visit to the church might be necessary to find out if any gravestones remain in the church's cemetery.

Many blacks were members of white churches and, for a number of years after the Civil War, blacks continued to attend the white churches and often were buried in assigned spaces in the white church cemeteries.

Military Service Records

Blacks have served in all our wars. For the earliest war recorded in federal records, the Revolutionary War, the National Archives has produced Special List 36, *List of Black Servicemen Compiled From the War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records* (Washington, D.C., 1974). This special list is available free from the Publications Sales Branch (NEPS), National Archives, Washington, D.C. 20408.

Search for records of a black ancestor's war service by mail. Write to the Correspondence Branch (NNCC), National Archives, Washington, D.C. 20408, and ask for a NATF Form 26, Order and Billing for Copies of Veterans Records. Fill out the form as completely as possible, noting that the record you seek is for a black serviceman, and send it in. Do not enclose money; the National Archives will bill you a nominal standard amount (\$3 as of this writing) if they are able to supply copies of the records you desire.



Religion played a central role in the lives of blacks in this country. The men above wait for services to begin at a church in Moncks, South Carolina. Children, below, attend a religious service.



Oral History Society



National Archives and Records Service



National Archives and Records Service

Blacks have served in the military since the Revolution and records of their service can aid the genealogist. The first group of black American aviators from Harlem, above left, prepare to leave for Abyssinia in 1933; below left, non-commissioned staff of the Ninth Cavalry in 1905, and right, black soldiers in the Union Army during the Civil War.

The information varies from scant to quite full. If your ancestor was granted a pension for his service, the pension application will provide substantial information about the man and often his family. On the other hand, information in what are known as "compiled military service records" usually is limited; normally there is no personal information about the soldier or his family.

The military and related records housed at the National Archives cover the early wars up to World War I; the records relating to World War I and subsequent wars are at the National Personnel Records Center (Military) in St. Louis. Requests of this facility are submitted on Standard Form 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records, and are directed to National Personnel Records Center (Military Personnel Records), 9700 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63132.

The Search Becomes Different

In essence, genealogical research for blacks back to about 1870 follows practically the same paths as for whites. Black researchers first exhaust home sources and interview older relatives. They visit cemeteries. They use the same county, state, and federal sources. For blacks, however, going back beyond the 1870 census and into the period prior to emancipation when events relating to most

blacks were not recorded officially, is generally a greater challenge.

The search is easier for some black families for the same reasons the search is easier for some whites. The greater availability of records and the enlarged possibility of success for some are caused by the extent of the family's wealth, property, position—for blacks, whether free or slave—and education. Black and white families having one or several of those characteristics were more likely to have been involved in recorded transactions, and the documents relating to those transactions may have survived.

Research into the ancestry of free or otherwise prominent or noted black families continues to follow generally the same research paths as white research, even before 1865. Blacks who discover this situation should continue to use the research instruction provided in general basic genealogical texts. The city directories of large cities like New York may be helpful in distinguishing between free black families and white families having similar surnames.

Just over a hundred years ago, however, the vast majority of blacks in this country were not free; they were slaves. The black senior citizens living today are the grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and second-great-grandchildren of people born into slavery. These living

SCHEDULE 2.—Slave Inhabitants in *Old River Township* in the County of *Chicot*
Arkansas, enumerated by me, on the *20th* day of *September* 1850, *J. B. Threlkeld*

NAMES OF SLAVE OWNERS.	Number of Slaves.	DESCRIPTION.			Fugitive from this State.	Whether manumitted.	Deaf & dumb, idiot, lame, or blind.				NAMES OF SLAVE OWNERS.	Number of Slaves.	DESCRIPTION.		
		Age.	Sex.	Color.									Age.	Sex.	Color.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8				1	2	3	4	5
<i>Byers & Chapman</i>	1	30	f	B							<i>John Sumner</i>	1	5	m	B
	1	5	m	-							"	1	2	-	-
	1	24	-	-							"	1	20	-	-
	1	24	f	-							<i>Wm. W. Rice</i>	1	75	f	B
"	1	2	m	m							"	1	40	-	-
"	1	55	-	B							"	1	30	-	-
"	1	27	-	m							"	1	40	-	-
"	1	6	-	B							"	1	40	m	-

relatives may have information that will take the research back to a particular state or county, clueing the researcher in on a particular place to begin further research. They may be able to help pinpoint the names of the last slave owners prior to emancipation. Again, attention is focused on the importance of conducting probing interviews of older relatives. This information, names and places, can be vital to the continuance of the research into the past.

White Family Records as Resources

Once blacks have worked back through the federal census of 1870, have gathered in all the clues from relatives and home sources, and have found whatever might be available in county courthouses and war records in federal custody, they then must embark on a search relating to white families! To do this, the slaveowners need to be identified. Research then can be undertaken among any existing records relating to that owner. Research in the deeds, bills of sale, and the will and probate records of the owner may reveal information relating to the slave. Migration patterns of white families often reflect the migrations of the slaves. Black families often moved to the same areas their former white owners did, even after emancipation.

It is important to understand early and accept that any extended search for black genealogy more often than not inevitably consists of a study of records relating to whites. This points out the real need for persons who undertake black research to become skilled at generally

TO BE SOLD on board the
 Ship *Bance-Yland*, on Tuesday the 6th
 of May next, at *Abley-Ferry*, a choice
 cargo of about 250 fine healthy



NEGROES,

just arrived from the
 Windward & Rice Coast.

—The utmost care has
 already been taken, and
 shall be continued, to keep them free from
 the least danger of being infected with the
 SMALL-POX, no boat having been on
 board, and all other communication with
 people from *Charles-Town* prevented.

Austin, Laurens, & Appleby.

N. B. Full one-half of the above Negroes have had the
 SMALL-POX in their own Country.

The black genealogist may have to turn to the
 records of white families to learn about slave
 ancestors.

accepted and practiced genealogical research
 methods and to become thoroughly familiar
 with generally used genealogical sources.

The study of any existing genealogical records
 relating to the white owner family must be in
 depth. A thorough search of diaries, family
 bibles, letters, plantation records, and any other
 existing records of the owner families is

required. These items often contain (but not always, so be prepared for frequent disappointments) entries relating to the slaves the family possessed. Some of the slaves were loved and regarded as a part of the family, thus the mentioning of them in the family's records.

One early nineteenth-century diary of a Southern plantation owner contains detailed entries relating to his slaves. He told of their illnesses, with what medicines they were treated, and how they progressed. He recorded the births, deaths, and marriages of his slaves and frequently mentioned their relationships to one another. He even wrote that he learned about some of his own genealogy from an old house slave who had been with the family for years and had known his great-grandfather. The old slave told the plantation owner where various of the owner's relatives were buried in another part of the state.

A noted white genealogist reports that he obtained valuable clues about the early generations of his family from an older black resident of a nearby community who had long been acquainted with his family. The genealogist also notes that older whites often can provide much information about early black families.

The name clues to black origins often come from unexpected sources. I once ordered lunch at a fast-foods restaurant in Washington, D.C. The name tag worn by the serving employee, a young black woman, read "D. Bouknight." Having known a white person of that name from South Carolina, and knowing this was a family of German origin that arrived in South Carolina in the 1700s, I asked if the young lady was from that state. She said she was born in the District of Columbia, but that her grandparents were from South Carolina!

Manumissions

Some depositories hold records of manumission, that is, documents granting freedom. The Pennsylvania Historical Society is one example; that depository has records of thousands of manumissions that were granted before the Civil War.

During the course of research on my white Hasfort family ancestors, I found in the South Carolina archives a torn 1747 manumission whereby Joseph Hasfort recognized ten years of service, accepted one-hundred pounds from his mulatto man Abraham, and granted him freedom "from the yoke of slavery for ever." The church records kept in German of the Orangeburg, South Carolina, Church of the Redeemer record the marriage of "Abraham Hasfort." Interestingly, there is in the South

Carolina records of manumission a record for Elizabeth Hasfort who was a "half-breed Indian woman," and her marriage also is recorded in the records of the Orangeburg Church. Indians as well as blacks made their way into the early church records.

The above illustrates how both blacks and whites doing research are faced with separating out of the records the names of those with whom they had a relationship. Although it is true that slaves often used the names of former owners as their own family names once they became free, a caveat is to not accept that fact as a rule. Many slaves, upon gaining freedom, took popular names from American history, such as Washington and Jefferson.

At the National Archives in Washington, D.C., the records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands include some valuable items—marriage certificates of freed slaves and registers and other records containing information about slave families. The bureau helped former slaves make the transition from chattel to citizen. The period of the bureau's greatest activity extended from June 1865 to December 1868. These activities included aiding in regularizing slave marriages, assisting with labor contracts, issuing rations and clothing to destitute freedmen and refugees, leasing land, operating hospitals and freedmen's camps, and providing transportation to refugees and freedmen returning to their homes or relocating them in other parts of the country. As the bureau developed, it became involved in helping black soldiers and sailors file and collect claims for bounties, pay arrears, and pensions. Since these records pertain to such a short period following the Civil War, they cannot be considered a major source. They can be helpful, however, to many black researchers whose ancestors had dealings with the Freedmen's Bureau after the war.

Black History Collections

In recent years the interest in black history has led to the development of important collections of black history materials, and these items include names, dates, places, and relationships regarding blacks. Black researchers should investigate these collections.

Organizing the Information

Why gather the information about your family? You want to learn your family's story and you want to make it known to others. You want to preserve it once you have discovered it and you want to pass it on to posterity.

Start out organized and you will be better able to produce a final product, something you

will be proud to pass along to family and friends and to records depositories. Set up a sound record-keeping system at the outset, using organized files.

Record your sources, always making good source references in your notes. These can be used later in preparing a research paper communicating your findings. Use the source reference notes as footnotes so that the reader can know always the source of every fact you cite. When you draw a conclusion based on the interpretation of facts cited, be sure the reader knows why you reached the conclusion—amplify and expand your notes with explanations of your research path.

When your family story is written, type it up into a formal paper. Offer it to your local library or historical society. Consider offering a copy to any depositories specializing in black history collections that you discover during the course of your research. Make copies for your relatives; they will bless you!

Your Ancestor Becomes a Star

Take one more exciting step. Feature your ancestor in a home-made production by creating a slide/tape program about him or her. You can make slides from old photographs. To this collection of slides, add shots taken of places,

people, and things connected with the life of the featured person. Record an interview with the person to accompany the slides. Play the tape as the slides are shown. This is a great agenda item for family reunions and Christmas and Thanksgiving family gatherings. The result? A very moving, touching, heart-warming family story—one that comes to life as you see it on the screen and as you listen to the voice(s) of the person(s) who experienced the story. For an even more penetrating presentation, dub in appropriate background music, as the movie people do.

Continue to Participate

The fascinating, developing, and enlarging field of family history and genealogy has been reported as America's number one indoor hobby. As you join the ranks of family searchers, you can further expand your knowledge of records and research techniques by participating with local organized groups. Genealogical societies are proliferating at an accelerated rate. There are hundreds of genealogical societies today, in both cities and counties. These usually are augmented by a state genealogical society that provides a medium for exchange of ideas, educational programs, newsletters, and fellowship among



Prominent ancestors such as these congressmen of the Forty-first and Forty-second U.S. Congress make the search for individual family histories an easier one.

those engaged in common pursuits. The names and addresses of societies usually are known to local libraries.

The National Genealogical Society based in Washington, D.C., is growing rapidly and invites membership and active participation. Recently organized is the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society; the first issue of its quarterly journal was published in the summer of 1980.

Yes, do it! Trace your black family history. Blacks have an exciting, rich heritage. Your family needs to be documented and its history preserved. Find out about it. Organize the material. Write it up and appropriately distribute it. You will enrich your life and the lives of others, and you will have a grand time doing it.

For Further Reading

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National Genealogical Societies

Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society
Box 13086, T Street Station
Washington, D.C. 20009

National Genealogical Society
1921 Sunderland Place N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Bill R. Linder, director of the Central Reference Division of the National Archives and Records Service, is responsible for reference services provided to government officials, historians, genealogists, and other researchers. Beginning in 1972, for five years he directed the National Institute on Genealogical Research. Linder lectures widely and has directed six genealogical education programs in Britain for American genealogists. A council member of the National Genealogical Society, Linder also is chair of the board of trustees for the International Society for British Genealogy and Family History. He is author of *How to Trace Your Family Tree* (New York: Everest House, 1978) and has published books, papers, and articles on his own family lines and promoted the formation of a number of family organizations.

American Association for State and Local History

1400 Eighth Avenue, South
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

TECHNICAL LEAFLET 135

Technical Leaflets are published by the American Association for State and Local History for the purpose of bringing useful information to persons working in the state and local history movement. The selection of subject matter is based upon varied inquiries received by the Association's home office. The Association disclaims responsibility for statements of fact or opinion expressed in signed

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American Association for State and Local History Technical Leaflet 135, HISTORY NEWS, Volume 36, Number 2, February, 1981. *Black Genealogy: Basic Steps to Research*.

Reprints are available. For information on prices, write to the Association at 1400 Eighth Avenue, South, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.



American Association for State and Local History

Technical LEAFLET

Jewish Genealogy: An Annotated Bibliography

By Malcolm H. Stern

Genealogist

American Jewish Archives

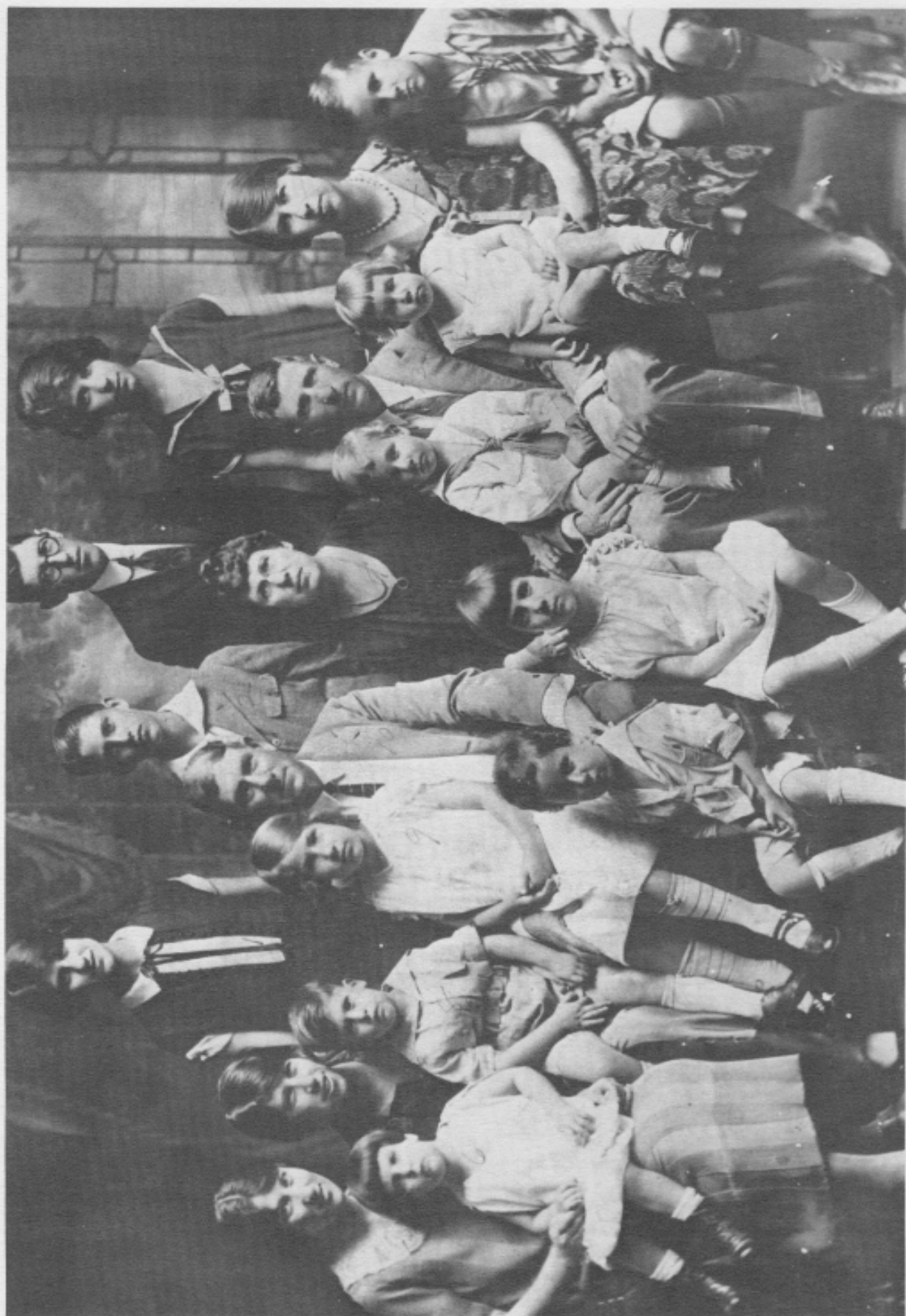
The search for documentation of ancestry begins at home. Interviews with older relatives and visits to cemeteries where ancestors are buried provide initial clues for further research. With such clues—names, dates, occupations, locations, births and deaths, times of war, days of poverty or wealth—the researcher then can move to a study of federal censuses, military records, state records of birth and death, county records of wills, property sales, and court proceedings, and religious documents and records. Ship's passenger lists beginning in 1820, on microfilm at the National Archives and Records Service, and citizenship records, standardized by the federal government in 1906 and on file at the Immigration and Naturalization Service, also are of value to those whose ancestors immigrated to America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Because of the unique heritage of the Jew, additional sources of information are available for their genealogical research. This leaflet offers an annotated bibliography of publications relating specifically to the ancestry of the American Jew.—*The Editors.*

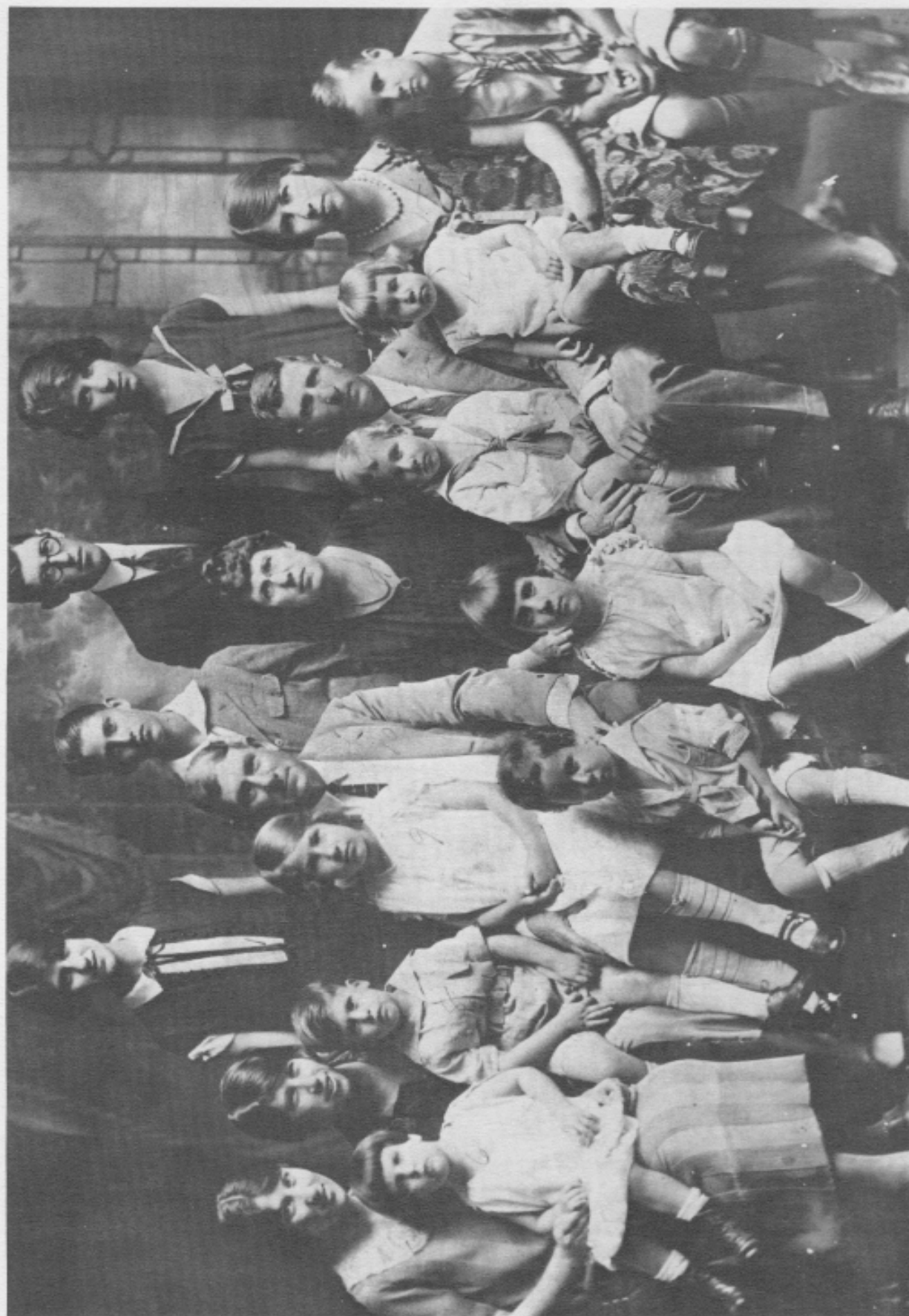


The seven-branch menorah symbolizes Judaism throughout the world.

Jewish Federation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee



This 1921 photograph depicts three generations of a Jewish family whose patriarch immigrated to Tennessee from Germany in the nineteenth century. The family name, Lowenheim, means "home of the lions." The family donated to the Tennessee State Museum two terra cotta lions that once stood on the grounds of the Nashville home where these children grew up. The home has been razed, leaving a vacant lot.



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Toledot: The Journal of Jewish Genealogy, 1977-. Edited by Arthur Kurzweil and Steven W. Siegel. Contains articles on methodology, vital records, queries, book reviews, and much information not obtainable elsewhere. Address: 155 East Ninety-third Street, #3-C, New York, New York 10028.

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Stern, Malcolm H. *First American Jewish Families: 600 Genealogies, 1654-1977*. Cincinnati, Ohio: American Jewish Archives; and Waltham, Mass.: American Jewish Historical Society, ca. 1978, 419 pp. A revision of the author's *Americans of Jewish Descent*. Contains genealogical tables for every Jewish family known to have been established in the United States before 1840 traced to the latest generation. 40,000 name index.

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The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day. 12 vols. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, Co., 1901-06. Contains numerous genealogical tables.

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Part II: "Abstracts of the Ketubot or Marriage-Contracts of the Congregation from earliest times until 1837." Oxford: Oxford University Press by Charles Batey, 1949, vii + 59 pp., index. The 1,842 marriage listings give names of groom and bride, most with father's name, all with Spanish-Portuguese orthography (anglicized in the index). Dates given according to the Hebrew calendar. Part III: "Abstracts of the Ketubot or Marriage-Contracts and of the Civil Marriage Registers of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews Congregation for the Period 1837-1901." London: Spanish and Portuguese Jews Congregation and Jewish Historical Society of England, 1973, vii + 275 pp. Lists 1,234 marriages with English date, couples' names, age, marital status, rank or profession, residence, father's name and rank or profession, place of wedding, names of witnesses, and synagogue registrar.

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Emmanuel, Isaac S. *Precious Stones of the Jews of Curaçao: Curaçao Jewry, 1656-1957*. New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1957. 584 pp., index. Contains 225 epitaphs with biographical and genealogical details plus complete catalog with dates of death of all those buried in Curaçao's oldest Jewish cemetery.

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Symbols of Judaism: the nine-branch Hanukkah menorah, the scroll read for the festival of Purim, a Kiddush cup, and a spice box. The spice box is used in the Havdalah service on Saturday evenings at sundown which celebrates the end of the Sabbath and the beginning of the secular week.

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Island; Philipse Manor (Yonkers), New York; South Haven, Long Island; Spottswood, New Jersey; Jamaica, Long Island; and Bedford, New York.

Corré, Alan D. "The Record Book of the Reverend Jacob Raphael Cohen," with biographical annotations by Malcolm H. Stern. *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 59 (1969): 23-83. Includes memorial prayers, circumcisions, marriages, and deaths in London, Quebec Province, New York, and eastern Pennsylvania, with identifying footnotes.

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Research Archives and Libraries

American Jewish Archives, 3101 Clifton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220. Specializes in documents which illuminate the history of the Jews in the Western Hemisphere. Holdings include many genealogies, vital records, newspaper indices. Pre-1971, four-volume manuscript catalog published by G.K. Hall and Company in 1971.

American Jewish Historical Society, 2 Thornton Road, Waltham, Massachusetts 02154. Specializes in all areas of American Jewish history, including organizational and institutional records, and early American family documents. Union Catalog.

Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150. The Mormons have on microfilm Jewish records from many European countries, notably present-day Poland, Germany, and Hungary. Catalog listings by town of these microfilm numbers appear in *Toledot: The Journal of Jewish Genealogy*, Winter 1977-78, Spring 1978, and Summer 1978. Mormon microfilms may be obtained on interlibrary loan at local Mormon libraries throughout America.

Leo Baeck Institute, 129 East Seventy-third Street, New York, New York 10021. Repository of records of Jews in all German-speaking lands. Many manuscripts of communal records, published communal histories. Union Catalog.

Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 3080 Broadway, New York, New York 10027. Archival material of Jewish communities, communal organizations, and family histories from all parts of the Jewish world.

Yivo Institute for Jewish Research, 1048 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10028. Major repository of material relating to East European Jewry, including many communal histories and records. Some manuscripts in Union Catalog.

Malcolm H. Stern, a retired rabbi, received a BA at the University of Pennsylvania, was ordained with a master of Hebrew letters at Hebrew Union, and earned a doctor of Hebrew letters in American Jewish history. From his doctoral thesis, he published *Americans of Jewish Descent*, which was revised and enlarged for the Bicentennial under the title *First American Jewish Families: 600 Genealogies, 1654-1977*. Stern serves as genealogical representative on the advisory council of the National Archives and Records Service, is a fellow and immediate past president of the American Society of Genealogists, and is a fellow of the National Genealogical Society. Since 1950 he has served as genealogist for the American Jewish Archives.



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TECHNICAL LEAFLET 138

Technical Leaflets are published by the American Association for State and Local History for the purpose of bringing useful information to persons working in the state and local history movement. The selection of subject matter is based upon varied inquiries received by the Association's home office. The Association disclaims responsibility for statements of fact or opinion expressed in signed

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American Association for State and Local History Technical Leaflet 138, HISTORY NEWS, Volume 36, Number 5, May, 1981. *Jewish Genealogy: An Annotated Bibliography*.

Reprints are available. For information on prices, write to the Association at 1400 Eighth Avenue, South, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.