

Genealogy/ESL Library Board Report
April 2016

The Genealogy Collection continues to grow. Our patrons are pleased and surprised with the scope of the collection. Newcomers to our collection only expect to see items from Texas. They are grateful that we cover 29 states – from Rhode Island to New Mexico, with the concentration on the migration routes to Texas (Pennsylvania south and west). We have people come from out of state to use our collection. A couple from Kentucky stayed in McKinney for a week, just to continue their ancestral research here in the library.

Through the efforts of our volunteers and staff, we are able to have the obituary indexes from the McKinney newspapers available through the Library's website. This has increased our visibility throughout the country and around the world.

In the past twelve months, we have assisted over 100 individuals with close to 400 searches.

We have a set of oral histories that were donated to the Library from a local radio station in 1976 that was celebrating the bicentennial of the United States. These histories are of the early years of Collin County. They were originally given to us on cassette tapes. We have copied them to CD and they are now available through the Library's website on the Genealogy page as MP3 files. We have received great feedback on the MP3 format. Patrons can now listen to the oral histories while taking walks, long drives, even just doing housework!

We are working with the University of North Texas to digitize the McKinney Democrat-Gazette. These newspapers will be available on UNT's Portal to Texas History <http://texashistory.unt.edu/> This site is a free site available to all.

In the past year, we have had Genealogy Programs done by Guy Giersch, the City's Historical Preservation Officer on researching houses, Lynell Moss on FamilySearch.org, the Genealogy Department on the changes in Heritage Quest, and one on Genealogy Sources. This last one was followed up with patron assistance by the North Collin County Genealogical Society. Since that program, the Genealogical Society has been coming to the Library to assist those who are new to Genealogy or those who have hit a block on Saturday mornings once a month. They usually have between one and five people come in that day looking for assistance.

June 5th we will be conducting a program on beginning Genealogy. This will be followed up by the North Collin County Genealogical Society's meeting on June 9th. They will be assisting those who have attended our program. We are working on having a program this summer on navigating the Library of Congress website geared for Genealogists, but open to all. This fall, we hope to have someone from the University of North Texas come to speak about the Portal to Texas History website.

We are now using the LibraryAware online tool to promote upcoming Genealogy programs and new items each month. In the past, we have used a blog for this information, but some

subscribers were not receiving notification when the blog came out. We have 26 subscribers to our new Genealogy newsletter. This is almost double the number of subscribers that we had in the Genealogy blog.

The Library's English as a Second Language (ESL) program is flourishing. We have had our classes filled to capacity plus have had waiting lists. We have a group of 9 volunteers who teach these classes twice a week. Some have taught ESL before joining us; others just wanted to give back to the Community. We have three sessions of classes. The Fall and Spring sessions teach English, and the Summer session is a Conversational setting to get the students more comfortable in using the English they have learned. Due to the popularity of this program, we just advertise it in the library and through the City's media. We have recently been added to the National Literacy Directory. Due to space constrictions, we have moved our Level 4 classes to the John and Judy Gay Library for the Spring 2016 session.

For the past year, which includes the Summer and Fall 2015 sessions and Spring 2016 session, we have had 203 registered students. Of this number, 74% (150 students) have attended at least one class.

Our students come from a varied background. Although most of our students are Spanish speakers from all over Latin America, we have students from Asian, African, and European countries. This Spring session, we have seen more students from the areas around Russia.

In order to remove one hardship for our students, we do not charge for these classes. We have started allowing the students to check out the books we use for the program on their library cards. This has made it easier for them to study at home and has also opened up the possibility of using more of the library's services to those that would otherwise not do it. We are impressed with the level of dedication our students show to stay with our program.

The Collin County Adult Literacy Council has given the Library a \$1000.00 grant which was used to buy new white boards and other supplies to enhance our students' experience. The Council held their annual Family Reading Day in March. We have had both a Volunteer and Student honored at this program. Six of our students with children have received books and a bookcase through this program.

As the collections are rearranged to better serve our patrons, we have also done this in the Spanish collection. The juvenile non-fiction is now housed separate from the adult non-fiction and is seeing more use. In the future, we will be mimicking the Children's collection by changing some of our easy books to "Favorite Characters" and adjusting the call numbers to reflect the character as opposed to the author. The Spanish board books have been moved to their own cart, which gives us more room for the easy and easy reader books and makes it easier for parents to search for them.

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