

Genealogy/ESL Library Board Report
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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). To make the collection easier to navigate, Technical Services and Genealogy have changed the spine labels to change the last line of the call number from author's last name to the county. In this way, collections that had been started by one author and continued by another can be found together under the county.

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. This past year, we have had requests for information from Holland and France as well as from Florida to Oregon.

In the Library's bookdrop, we had received letters that were from the 1960's from a son to his parents. We were able to find the mother's obituary in the McKinney papers and contacted the funeral home. They worked with us to find the son's name and we were able to send him the letters. He was very grateful to receive these. Unfortunately, we have no idea where they came from. We have also assisted patrons in finding their biological parent.

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 working with Technical Services, now have them available on the Library's OverDrive subscription as downloadable audiobooks.

Due to patron concerns, we are in the process of scanning our older city directories. Some of these directories are from the 1930's – 1950's. We have also scanned the "Preserve Historic McKinney" calendars from the Historical Commission and placed the pictures of the houses in a binder. By scanning and saving them, if damaged or lost, the pictures and information on McKinney's Historical Homes will be available. Pictures from the early 1900's that were donated to the Library were given to the Collin County Historical Society and Museum as they have the archival space to preserve these pictures.

We have received a grant from the University of North Texas to digitize 5 reels of 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.

The Library has purchased two microfilm machines and new tables for them. These machines now allow patrons to print and save to a flash drive. They greatly enhance the patron's ability to view the microfilm. The tables now allow the patron space to place their microfilm, writing materials, and extra leg room. Our previous tables did not have any of this and were not wheelchair friendly.

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, and the Genealogy Department 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. In the coming months, we are planning on presenting a program on the changes to the HeritageQuest database that is available through TexShare.

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 10 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.

Our students come from a varied background. Although most of our students are Spanish speakers from all over Latin America, we have students from India, Pakistan, Africa, Portugal, Japan, Korea, and many other countries. In order to remove one hardship for our students, we do not charge for these classes. We are impressed with the level of dedication our students show to stay with our program. We even had a large number of students show up when the weather was uncooperative.

The Collin County Adult Literacy Council has given the Library a small grant which was used to add materials to our Summer session, as well as adding posters, flash cards, and other items to enhance our students' experience. The Council also holds a Family Reading Day in April. We have had both a Volunteer and Student honored at this program. Five of our students with children have received books and a bookcase there. We have nominated families and award recipients for this year's Family Reading Day.

In response to patron requests, we have worked with the Children's Librarian to add Children's Spanish Language materials to the John and Judy Gay Library. As demand and space dictates, we will be adding to this collection.