

Spotlight On California Genealogical Research Facilities

A series of articles about places to do research around the state

Torrance Library Genealogy Room

3301 Torrance Blvd.

(310) 618-5959

Hours: Mon-Thurs: 10 am to 9 pm; Friday: 10 am to 6 pm; Saturday: 10 am to 5 pm; Sunday: 1 pm to 5 pm.

Website: <http://www.ci.torrance.ca.us/Library/5465.htm>

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Go to Your Room!

by Stan Brown

Almost a year ago, I retired and started having more time for my interests. I began accompanying my wife when she volunteered once a month at the Torrance Library Genealogy Room. I had visited it before, but now got more acquainted with it. Two things stood out: First, the amazing wealth of material in one small room. Second, almost no one utilizes it!

For those who don't know, the Genealogy Room is maintained by our society [South Bay Cities Genealogical Society] and is on the lower floor of the library. A volunteer staffs the room from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday and 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month, but the room is open whenever the library is.

The books are not available for checkout, but may be perused in the room or taken to the nearby copy machine. There is a table to be used for research and, trust me, space is not a problem. There is even a working microfiche viewer to view one's own microfiche or the SBCGS collection.

An example of a valuable research resource is Hinshaw's *American Encyclopedia of Quaker Genealogy* (6 volumes, indexed). I highly recommend this source even for those who do not think they have Quaker ancestry. I was surprised to find Quakers on both sides. The records are fantastic — giving marriages, births, deaths, and relocations. Even the disciplinary records provide genealogical information. My father's most recent Quaker ancestor was "dismissed for marrying out of unity," i.e., marrying a non-

Quaker, with the husband's last name given.

Other tremendous resources include *Our French-Canadian Ancestors* (21 volumes); *English Origins of New England Families* (NEHGS, 2 editions, 3 volumes each); *Compendium of American Genealogy* (7 volumes) and the *DAR Patriot Index* (3 volumes), as well as such standards as *The Redbook* and *The Source*.

There are many more titles for different groups and localities (including foreign), plus how-to books, gazetteers, etc. Books for states and counties (or parishes) are grouped by state with the shelves labeled.

Okay, enough about books already. How many times have you been reading some write-up and come across a citation such as "Central Kentucky Quarterly, v. XXI (Mar-Apr 1982), p. 27," and really wished you could see the entire original article? A good first place to look is — you guessed it — the Genealogy Room! Almost half the shelf space is devoted to genealogical and historical society periodicals, both U.S. and foreign interest. Kentucky periodicals, for example, fill four shelves; Pennsylvania accounts for three.

When you have some free time and are letting things "percolate," I suggest going there and getting down a box of periodicals from a place your ancestors lived and just browsing. Even if you don't find your ancestors by name, these volumes have a wealth of "life and times" articles — a great way to get a better feel for your family history.

Finally, you can combine these resources with those of the Torrance library (the SBCGS staff strives to avoid duplication of main library titles). The main library has a fair number of very useful genealogical books, both as reference (main floor) and available for check-out (top floor).

So come by and visit the genealogy room of the Torrance library and get to know its resources. And sign the register!