



THE
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and
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Press Release

Featured in *Family Tree Magazine's* "9 Libraries to Visit Before You Die" **Cincinnati's Public Library Ranks in Top Nine of U.S. Genealogy Libraries**

Above: Reference Librarian and map specialist Doug Magee assists customers with their search. Below: Reference Librarian Denis Daly holds up an 1884 map from the collection. ►

July 9, 2008: Cincinnati, OH: The July issue of *Family Tree Magazine* ranks the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County in the top nine genealogy libraries in the United States under the title, "9 Libraries to Visit Before You Die." This includes all libraries, not just public, so among the top nine rankings are the Library of Congress and the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. Cincinnati's public library is noted as one of only six libraries with complete census collections, one of the three top map libraries, and one of only three libraries that *Family Tree Magazine* has filmed to be in one of its upcoming virtual tours (which can be viewed in early August at www.familytreemagazine.com and then link to "YouTube").

"The Cincinnati library's Genealogy & Local History Department was a shoo-in for our list of destination libraries," said Diane Haddad, Managing Editor of *Family Tree Magazine*. "The collection's broadscope—with censuses, immigration records, nationwide city directories, maps and more—means just about every researcher will find helpful resources. And the recent merging of genealogical and local history materials in mostly open stacks, along with the expert reference staff and increased focus on collection-building, makes the department user-friendly even for new genealogists."

Library's Strength is the Scope of Its Collections & Resources - Cincinnati's public library is among 50 institutions being honored by the magazine with a special award called the Libby (short for "library") to designate some of the outstanding collections and resources available nationwide, based on a survey sent to librarians. The magazine quotes Patricia Van Skaik, Manager of the Library's Genealogy & Local History Department, who says "the department's biggest strength is its scope." The collection covers all 50 states and 23 foreign countries with a wide range of record types. These include microfilm of all available U.S. census records for 1790 through 1930, one of the nation's largest collections of African-American materials, many Civil War military records and histories, passenger lists and indexes for most ports, an impressive map collection, and city directories from 1,500 cities, some of which are being posted in the Virtual Library (www.virtuallibrary.cincinnati.org/).

"Collections such as these don't crop up overnight," explained Van Skaik. "Our family history collection is the oldest west of the Allegheny Mountains, dating back more than 150 years. By the 1980s, we had established a reputation as one of the few libraries in the country with the entire collection of federal census records that had been released. We have continued to grow and expand our resources and keep current with the latest technology. Our customers have access to a number of fee based genealogy databases at no charge. They can search Newsdex, index to local newspapers (a surname index to our family histories), and receive rss (really simple syndication) feeds when the library acquires new genealogy books."



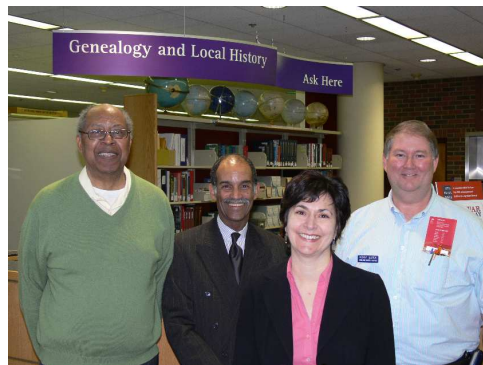
Top right: The Library's Genealogy & Local History Department hosts an annual Family History Fair.
 Bottom: A customer makes use of the Library's vast genealogy resources. ▼

Recent Enhancements, Expert Staff & Supportive Partners Ensure Ongoing Success

In the past year, the Library has created a digital library, where online content, such as city directories, can be easily searched and viewed. The Library has also created several Wikis, The Inland Riverboats Photographs Collection Wiki, and the Lincoln Letters Wiki, which were added to the digital library. The Main Library's recent reorganization, ML/21, has also enhanced research services by combining the genealogy, local history, African American, river history and rare materials into one service point.

"In addition to our resources, many of our customers come to the library for our genealogical expertise," noted Van Skaik. "The staff of the department holds a combined experience of 104 years in genealogy service with a number of specialties including African American, German and Irish research." The librarians are frequent speakers at state and national conferences and offer personal assistance and classes ranging from beginning to advanced genealogy.

The broad variety of quality programming hosted by the Library's Genealogy & Local History Department is another of its strengths. Programs range from department orientations, classes and workshops to customized tours and introductions for family reunions, genealogical societies and school groups to unique, one-of-a-kind series and events including an annual series celebrating Black History Month. In addition, a Family History Fair, showcasing local genealogical related agencies and organizations as well as programs and workshops, is held annually. The Library often brings in renowned genealogists and historians to speak at these events.



"It is also important to note that the Library owes much to its partnerships," concluded Van Skaik. The Hamilton County Genealogical Society and The Friends of the Public Library offer financial assistance for Library collections and programs. Recognizing the needs of future genealogists, the Veteran's History Project, in collaboration with the Library of Congress, is the only participant in the country to add genealogical content to the oral interviews. The memories are also added to Cincinnati public library's own online database.

▲ Pictured with Patricia Van Skaik, Genealogy & Local History Department Manager; are, from left to right: Dr. John Bryant, former Chairman of the Education Department at Wilmington College and head of the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative; Tony Burroughs, nationally renowned genealogy expert/author/research consultant; and Kenny Burck, noted genealogist and President of the Board of Directors for the Hamilton County Genealogical Society. Mr. Burroughs was this year's keynote speaker for the department's annual Black History Month series.

► The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County is an official partner in the Library of Congress's Veterans History Project. For the past two years the Public Library has recorded the memories of more than 250 local World War II veterans. Their first-hand accounts and photographs have created an historical record not available elsewhere. The Library will proudly add the recollections of Korean War veterans and those who served in other wars to its archives, while continuing to record the memories of World War II veterans. Log onto to the Library's Veteran's History Project database at www2.CincinnatiLibrary.org/vets/.



Highlights of the Public Library's Genealogy Collection & Resources

- Oldest family history collection west of the Allegheny Mountains
- Collection covers all 50 states and 23 foreign countries
- One of only six libraries with complete U.S. census records for 1790 through 1930
- City directories from 1,500 cities
- More than 1,700 compiled family (surname) histories
- Staff holds a combined experience of 104 years in genealogy service
- One of the nation's largest collections of African-American materials
- Over 250 interviews with local World War II veterans
- Over 50 programs offered each year
- Logbooks, account books, diaries and 46,000 steamboat photographs
- Local materials chronicling Cincinnati's history and culture, including newspaper articles, postcards and public, church and cemetery records
- Ranked in the top 3 map collections in the nation with over 110,000 maps
- City directories, rare and local materials available online in digital format, virtuallibrary.cincinnati.library.org/virtuallibrary/