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Local genealogy enthusiast talks about her passion ahead of Family History Month series at library

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Posted: Monday, June 29, 2015 12:00 am

Family History Month series

The series at Hardesty Regional Library's Frossard Auditorium will include the following programs:

- "Beginning Genealogy Workshop"; July 11; 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
- "Ancestry Tricks and Tips," July 11; 2-3 p.m.
- "The Immigration Process and the Records It Created," July 11; 3:15-4:30 p.m.
- "HistoryGeo.com: Unlocking the Past With Original and 19th Century Land Owner Maps," July 18; 10 a.m.-noon.
- "The Century Chest," July 18, 1:30-2:30 p.m.
- "Gateway to Oklahoma History"; July 18; 3-4 p.m.

MARK LOWE WORKSHOPS

- "Where, When and Why: The Story of Migration," July 25; 9:30-10:30 a.m.
- "How to Follow the 'Right' Family While They Move Across the South," July 25; 10:45-11:45 a.m.
- "How Do I Use DNA Testing?" July 25; 1:30-2:30 p.m.
- "Taxes Rule the World: Property, Poll, Ad Valorem, Permission," July 25; 2:45-3:45 p.m.

By NOUR HABIB World Staff Writer | 0 comments

It was a collection of 300 vintage glass shoes that got Margaret "Tippy" Hawkins interested in genealogy.

It was in the early 1980s, and Hawkins had just acquired a box full of her deceased grandmother's collection — which she had washed as a young girl whenever she visited her grandmother. But in the box was another treasure: reams of documents, letters and old diaries from her ancestors, dating back to 1776.

"I'm from a Quaker family that's fairly well known, from Nantucket, Massachusetts," Hawkins said. "And Quakers keep records. They write letters, they write everything down."

As Hawkins read the stories in these letters by ancestors who moved to Montana before statehood, near a ranch owned by Theodore Roosevelt, she became addicted. Hawkins began tracing her family history — her father's side proved a little more difficult because he didn't have as much information about his family — and last summer, she and her brother compiled everything into a book.

Hawkins said she's traced her family to



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- "A Death in the Family," July 26; 1:30-4 p.m.

England and Wales, as far back as the 1400s.

She is one of the many genealogy enthusiasts who will be making use of the Tulsa City-County Library Genealogy Center's 15th annual Family History Month series in July.

The series offers programs about the library's resources, as well as various research methods.

On July 25-26, renowned national speaker and certified genealogist Mark Lowe will offer several workshops that feature tips and resources to help genealogists solve research challenges.

Although Hawkins has been a genealogy enthusiast for more than 30 years, she said she still finds the library's series informative.

Before the Internet and websites like ancestry.com made research a little easier, Hawkins did a lot of her research while traveling. Her husband cycled across the U.S. one time, and Hawkins followed him, stopping in cemeteries and courthouses in counties where she knew she had relatives, looking for documents.

Now that she's finished with her own family's history, she works on the genealogies of friends. She has a workstation in her home where she sits with her books and laptop and a piece of scratch paper where she links family lines. Once she's done, she gives her friends a binder with her findings.

In one instance, she linked a friend to a Supreme Court justice.

"I do it as a hobby," she said. "I want to keep my brain active."

Plus, she simply enjoys history, she said. And she encourages friends to write down any stories they know about the relatives she finds and include it in the binder.

Hawkins said genealogy becomes addictive because once you find one generation, you want to find the next.

Her advice to those starting to work on their genealogies is to start with themselves, use ancestry.com and "get as much information from any living relative that you've got," she said.

The library's Genealogy Center is at the Hardesty Regional branch, 8316 E. 93rd St., and library officials say it has one of the largest genealogical collections in Oklahoma. It can also borrow resources from the Family History Center in Utah, the largest collection in the world.

The series will include a "Beginning Genealogy" workshop from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. July 11. All programs will be held at Hardesty Regional Library.

For more information about the series, including a full list of programs, visit guides.tulsalibrary.org/genealogy or call 918-549-7691.

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