

Spotlight

Genealogical Conference Audiotapes: An Underutilized Educational Resource

Harold E. Hinds, Jr.

“A good genealogist is always learning.”

—*Connie Lenzen*

If you have not yet availed yourself of audiotapes of genealogical lectures given at national and regional conferences, you may have overlooked an important educational resource. If you’ve assumed that these lectures simply cover what is available elsewhere, in published articles, journals, and books, or on the Internet, you are mistaken. Yes, in some cases your assumption is true, although even then the lectures often present a different slant on the same material. But in many cases, the subjects covered are not readily available elsewhere; and/or the information and references included cannot be found in other media. If you do not own a tape recorder, the Genealogical Forum of Oregon has a couple of them at the library, and also will soon be obtaining another one that can be checked out, together with audiotapes (a limit of three for two weeks, and renewals are possible).



Audio Cassette photo by Philip Bosma CC BY-SA 3.0

The Forum has a collection of audiotapes of lectures presented at the National Genealogical Society (NGS) 1991 and 2001 conferences in Portland, Oregon. In addition, the Forum has recently received a collection of nearly 500 additional taped lectures given at NGS and at the Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) conferences; at the Allen County Public Library Millennium 2000 Conference; at the New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) Sesquicentennial 1995 Conference; and at numerous other regional and local conferences. These tapes will be listed in the Forum’s online catalogue; and also a complete listing of the collection will be found in an “Audio Tape Finding Aid” located in the Forum library on top of the black filing cabinet holding the tapes.

The collection includes a wide variety of topics presented by the leading experts on a particular subject. Here is a sample of the lectures that should whet your appetite to explore this rich resource: Dean Hunter on British subjects, Joy Reisinger on Quebec and Catholic records, Brenda Merriman on Ontario, Marie Varrelman Melchiori on National Archive records, Craig Roberts Scott on military sources, Annette Burgert on early German and Swiss resources, Melinda Kashuba on fraternal organiza-



tions and on mining records, Gary Mokotoff on Jewish genealogy, Mark Lowe on Kentucky, Patricia Law Hatcher on tax lists, Richard Sayre on federal land records, Eileen M. O'Duill and David Rencher on Irish genealogy, Lloyd Bockstruck on Dallas Public Library resources for genealogists, Helen F. M. Leary on North Carolina and on the law and genealogists, James W. Warren on researching Midwestern and Plains Indian ancestors, Steven Myers on the Old Northwest Territory, Henry Hoff on U.S. Colonial era records, Ann Lainhart on New England, Roger Joslyn and Gordon Remington on New York, James Hansen on newspapers, Diane Gagel on Ohio, John Humphrey on Pennsylvania, Thomas Jones on genealogical evidence and proofs, Charles Sherrill on Tennessee, Barbara Vines Little on Virginia, etc. etc.!

Obviously this collection covers a multitude of genealogical topics. But why bother with audiotapes, aside from the possibility that the information just might crack that brick wall? Unlike DVDs, audiotapes may easily be stopped and a section replayed so that you can listen even more carefully to that nugget, and you will be able, therefore, to take careful and precise notes. Conference syllabi will allow you to consult the four-page outline that originally accompanied the

presentation. The Forum has a collection of NGS and FGS syllabi, as well as the syllabi for the ACPL Millennium Conference and the 1995 NEHGS Sesquicentennial Conference. But what if the Forum does not have the relevant NGS or FGS syllabus? Xerox copies of lecture outlines for NGS and FGS conferences may be ordered for a small fee from the Monroe County Local History Room in Sparta, Wisconsin.

Unless you have been lucky or wealthy enough to be able to attend national and regional conferences, this is your most economical ticket to hear many of the leading genealogists impart their knowledge and wisdom. It's the next best thing to being there in person!

In short, heed Connie Lenzen's sage advice: "A good genealogist is always learning." And what could be more convenient than listening to a taped lecture at your leisure and being able to take careful notes on the content? It may be even better than being there in person!

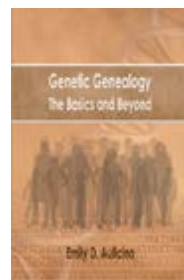
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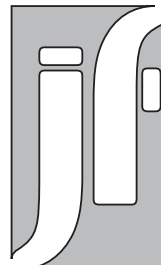
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