



FISKE GENEALOGICAL FOUNDATION

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A Successful Year in Remote Learning



Summer is here and we are taking our usual Summer break in classroom learning. The Fiske Library Board wishes to offer their gratitude and thanks to Ken Peterson, David Brazier and the presenters who participated in the “grand experiment” of offering all our classes online. As noted in his article (p. 2) Ken Peterson came on board in September 2021 as Education Coordinator after the retirement of Karl Kumm.

It is a daunting task, finding and scheduling presenters for some thirty classes a year! In addition to scheduling presentations and dealing with the deadlines of the newsletter editor, Ken had to consult with David Brazier on the technical aspects of remote learning, and then coordinate with presenters on what would be required from them. The presenters were equally busy preparing their talks and any handouts. Material for the classes and instructions for joining had to be added in a timely fashion to the website. David was on hand to fix any technical “glitches” or assist individuals with joining issues.

Ken’s article displays the broad array of interesting, informative and helpful topics that were covered. Kudos to all for a job well done!

~ Marjorie Jodoin, Fiske Newsletter Editor

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Fiske Classes 2021-2022: A Retrospective

Wednesday morning classes at the Fiske Library were suspended in the Spring 2020 trimester, due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Library remained closed for eighteen months, during which time Karl Kumm, long-serving and beloved Education Coordinator, retired from the board. Finally, in the summer of 2021 – a somewhat optimistic time after many had been vaccinated – buildings were opened to the public again, and the Fiske Library re-opened by appointment only. David Brazier asked me if I would become Education Coordinator for a “reboot” of classes at Pioneer Hall in September 2021, and I agreed -- not really knowing what I was getting into.

Now, as the first day of Summer 2022 approaches, I look back on our year of 30 class offerings, and I’m so pleased at the wonderful array of genealogical knowledge that our speakers presented, and how we evolved through a changing year (think “Delta” and “Omicron.”) We started out during the Fall trimester direct from Pioneer Hall with a masked live audience, but also carrying the class on video conferencing software simultaneously. We found right away that most presenters preferred to give their classes remotely, and as time went on, we had fewer and fewer people joining us live at Pioneer Hall. The last classes in Fall 2021 were entirely virtual, and that became the format for the Winter and Spring trimesters. An especially good feature of the software we are using is that attendees do not have to receive invitations to join the class. They just click onto the meeting link on the Fiske Library home page, receiving the class notes at another link.

The presenters were uniformly informative. There were sixteen speakers who gave 29 classes (one had to be cancelled), and here is a tour of some of them:

Several presentations of thorough genealogy detective work were given by Jill Morelli (“Friedrich Eiler: Building an Identity from Scant Clues”) and Mary Kircher Roddy (“Flying Under the Radar – Discovering Charles Olin’s Alias”). Mary Roddy’s “A Nose for News – Sniffing Out Stories in Newspapers” has 24 tips that I’ll keep on hand when I look at old news articles.

Lisa S. Gorrell, with whom Jill Morelli and Mary Roddy founded the Applied Genealogy Institute, presented “Focused Research: Using Research Plans.”

Janet O’Connor Camarata reprised her class on transcribing old letters as well as giving an excellent talk on “Timelines and Chronologies” and “Capturing Stories: Using Artifacts and Photos as Writing Prompts,” The latter was paired with Lou Daly’s “Entering your Photos, Documents, Stories and Audio Memories into FamilySearch.”

Evelyn Roehl presented classes on “Germanic Immigration in the 1800s” and “Pledging Allegiance: The Paper Trail to Naturalization Records.”

Janice Lovelace gave us three presentations, including “African Americans in the Military,” and a class on the U.S. Census in combination with the release of the 1950 data.

Stephen W. Morrison gave us four very informative and entertaining classes on New England ancestors, Quakers, Irish / British Research, and U. S. Westward migration.

We heard the latest on DNA from Craig Gowens, Karin Borgerson, and Nancy Cordell.

And to crown the year – several wonderful presentations from Lisa A. Oberg: “Cemetery Symbols & Signs” and “Dancing with the Spanish Lady: The Influenza Pandemic of 1918.” The latter was such a fitting class for our times.

As far as I know, this program of thirty classes a year is pretty unique – and this year there was no requirement to contribute a set amount as in the past (\$35 for 10 classes, \$85 for the whole year, including library use). Stay tuned to see what Fall 2022 will bring – but donations are highly encouraged. And if you know of a particular speaker or topic you would like to see on our series, please email your suggestions to me, and I will pass it on to the Education Committee. Write me at ken.peterson@fiskelibrary.org.

Kenneth V. Peterson
Education Coordinator, Fiske Library

Surplus Books

Surplus Book sales have continued into 2022. Thank you so much for your support. We are still overstocked with surplus books, many of which contain specific data on individuals, families and locations. We also have general histories which can be very informative for understanding background, and a lot of research guides with useful information. Even if out-of-date, these guides can prove useful.

Our Surplus Books Half-Price Sale will continue during this limited reopening phase. Now is the time to consider purchasing some of the higher priced books which might benefit your research.

~Marge Jodoin, Surplus Books Manager
surplus@fiskelibrary.org

Legacy Family Tree User Group

Legacy Family Tree User Group Zoom meetings are on the third Thursday of the month from September to June. The last meeting, until September, will be on Thursday, 16 June from **1-2 PM**.

Topics covered this year included use of Legacy for the upcoming release of the 1950 US Census, incorporating DNA information in Legacy, use of Short Cut Keys, adding parents that aren't married, single parents, and where there are multiple parents. We also went over use of copy and paste versus shared events. We welcome questions and topics.

If you are interested in attending, please send a message to editor@fiskelibrary.org with your email contact information. We will need your email address to send out the Zoom invitation.

~ Siri Nelson

German Settlement in Louisiana & Texas: A Case Study



Reehlmann siblings, ca. 1940

All I knew of my father's background was that he was from New Orleans, Louisiana. His somewhat unusual name--Reehlmann--and a New Orleans telephone directory at Seattle Public Library put me in touch with his sister. She told me that their patriarch had been a "strict German Lutheran" who arrived in New Orleans in the mid-19th century.

Using Rootsweb, Ancestry.com and FamilySearch I was able to trace vital records back to a William Balthasar Reehlmann and Maria Elizabeth Schwander. Per the 1910 Census he had arrived in New Orleans in 1845. I found a passenger list for that year showing a William & Eliza Rolman who had journeyed from Bremen. They settled in the 3rd District German quarter where he was a carpenter. He, his wife and a son also had a florist shop. Apparently, this was not unusual: *"Lush yard and patio planting were sources of pride for every German household. German immigrants were drawn to the nursery and florist business and were said to have introduced the concept of colorful flower gardens to New Orleans."* [Merrill]

They had at least a dozen surviving children, and while the first generation married within their Evangelical Lutheran community, descendants married into French, Roman Catholic families. My father was Catholic.

Early town and trade directories, census records and the *Times Picayune* newspaper provided a continuous history for the family up to Katrina. The *Times Picayune* [available on GenealogyBank.com] provided tremendous assistance particularly with funeral notices identifying family members. One Reehlmann moved on to Texas prior to the Civil War and I found several articles regarding his family. I even found photographs in news articles. A portrait of my great-grandfather, William, accompanied reports of his death in a horrific train collision in 1913. His son, Anthony, had his picture taken in uniform when he joined the Navy at the age of 18. He was interviewed after having sailed around the world as part of Teddy Roosevelt's Great White Fleet.

I was surprised at how much information I was able to glean because these were not "notables" of the town, just ordinary working folk.

As usual the spelling of the name was not consistent: Ruehlmann, Rolman, Rihlman, etc. But the name was sufficiently unique to isolate the family line. However, after much confusion over conflicting data, I realized there were two independent lines.

The patriarch of my line was William, but the head of the other line appeared to be a Daniel. Could they have been brothers? I found birth records in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Billigheim, Pfalz, Bayern for a Daniel and a William that seemed to fit. William's reported birthdate per his burial matched the baptism record. Circumstantially, the earliest marriages in New Orleans were with families who had originated within 3 km of Billigheim. But I had to admit that in New Orleans, there was no evidence of interaction between the two Reehlmann families.

Looking to place my family's experience into an historical context I did some research on German immigration to Louisiana.

In 1721 impoverished Germans from the Rhineland were recruited by John Law's Company of the Indies to work land he held. But having survived passage on disease-ridden ships, they were dumped at the colony with no means of support or instruction. Karl Friedrich D'Arensbourg, a company representative, took over stewardship of the group and secured decent land. The area came to be known as "Lac des Allemands" on the "German Coast." When the company folded in 1731, they became independent land owners. Without the produce supplied by their farms, the small outpost at New Orleans would probably have collapsed from famine. Over the 18th c. this group thrived, but Germans were not a significant portion of the population in New Orleans until the 19th c.

19th c. German immigration to Louisiana came in three waves. The first followed the Napoleonic Wars. From 1820-1850 many of the thousands arriving were redemptioners or indentured servants. A law passed in the U.S. in 1808 forbade any more imports of Negro slaves; but the demand for labor was still high. Dutch shippers brought in thousands of destitute Europeans instead. They were escaping famine and economic dislocation. On arrival the ship captains sold them to plantation owners, farmers, merchants and shopkeepers. By 1830 an estimated 7,000 Germans were dispersed throughout Louisiana, many of them redemptioners.

German farmers established dairy and truck farms upriver in Carrollton; land was plentiful and cheap labor was in demand. A resort industry established in the 1830s for wealthy New Orleanians required an immigrant workforce. The lumber industry also welcomed German laborers noted for their reliability.

A number of the 1830s arrivals sought sanctuary in Texas. Books and letters sent back home encouraged others to emigrate. [Texas Time Travel](#) offers an interactive map. There's also a [YouTube](#) channel with segments on German Texans.

The next wave of immigrants were fleeing civil war in Germany. They were of the professional classes and settled in New Orleans contributing greatly to the city's development. By 1850 25,000 had made Louisiana their home, although many of the tens of thousands arriving moved on to other states. In 1848 revolutionary radicals escaping prosecution in Germany were a major segment of the new arrivals. Prior to the Civil War the largest German colony in America below the Mason-Dixon line was in New Orleans. They totaled more than all the other foreign speaking groups in the city combined. As the population swelled, the city passed a head tax payable by the ship captains who were bringing in the immigrants. This led many to drop off their "cargo" outside of the city—which also meant no passenger lists.

The final and largest wave 1864-1898 was composed of industrial workers. Almost 3 million German immigrants entered the U.S. through all available ports. The transcontinental railroad and Erie Canal allowed safer passage to the American interior. Few settled in New Orleans aside from communities in Fabacher and Robert's Cove. About 40,000 settled in Texas.

German immigrants seeking religious freedom were another major portion of the total picture.

The Dutch [Deutsch] Highlands of Baton Rouge were settled by Germans from Maryland escaping Catholic persecution in 1769.

In 1838 five shiploads of German Lutherans left Bremen for New Orleans; one was lost at sea. Their destination was St. Louis, but they settled in Perry County, Missouri. By 1847 they had established the “Evangelical Lutheran Church of Missouri, Ohio, and other States,” also known as the Missouri Synod. There were no Southern representatives at first, but St. John’s in New Orleans joined in 1852, Zion in 1854 and St. Paul’s in 1874. Rootsweb provides a “[Chronological List of German churches in New Orleans](#),” a useful guide to available records.

The prejudices of WWI & WWII forced German culture underground and most of the societies and other entities disbanded. But records were preserved, and German culture has re-emerged at [Deutsches Haus](#), a volunteer, non-profit organization formed between the wars by the German Society and others. They continue to offer social, cultural and educational events, but have also been responsible for collecting the German language newspapers and records of organizations which were disbanded. The archives are now part of the [Historic New Orleans Collection](#) at the Williams Research Center in New Orleans.

Resources:

1. Many interesting articles are available by just “googling” a topic.
2. Most of my summary came from publications by Ellen C. Merrill, *The Germans of New Orleans* <<https://64parishes.org/germans-new-orleans>> and *The Germans of Louisiana*. [available on Google Books].
3. Monteleone, Diana C. *German-Americans* <<https://cls.louisiana.edu/programming-special-projects/louisiana-101/peoples-places/german-americans>>
4. From Fiske Library you can access *The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* via JSTOR. A number of good articles from this source can be found in the Fiske Catalog with links.
5. A Fiske library computer has access to GenealogyBank.com, and with our new affiliate status you have greater access to FamilySearch resources.

~ Marjorie Jodoin



FISKE LIBRARY HOURS

Monday	By appointment. Call Michelle 253 205-7597
Wednesday	By appointment. Call Mary 206 784-8403
Thursday	By appointment. Call David 206 687-5249
Friday	Reserved for research groups from outside the greater Seattle Area. Contact David to make reservations. 206 687-5249
Saturday	By appointment. Call Larry 206 720-4719

FISKE GENEALOGICAL FOUNDATION INFORMATION

The Fiske Genealogical Foundation is a non-profit organization providing genealogical training and resource materials. Current Board Members are:

FISKE GENEALOGICAL FOUNDATION FEES

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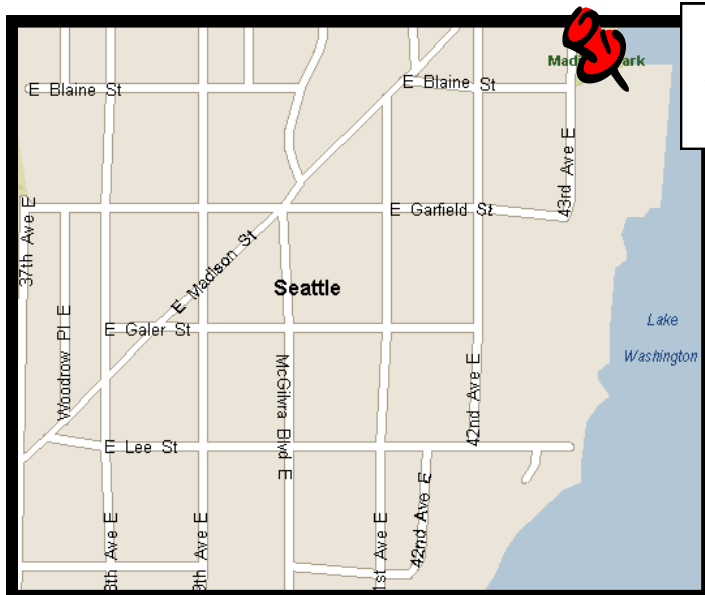
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Return Service Requested

HOW TO FIND US!



**Fiske Library is located
on the lower level of the
Washington Pioneer Hall.**

- Drive east on E Madison Street to the third crosswalk after reduced speed zone of 25mph. The crosswalk has a yellow blinking light. A one-way street sign is on your right.
- Turn right and follow E Blaine Street to the end of the street.
- The Washington Pioneer Hall faces onto 43rd Ave. E. The Fiske Genealogical Library is located on the lower level of the building.