

Simpson, Jack. *Basics of Genealogy Reference: A Librarian's Guide*. Westport Connecticut: Libraries Unlimited, 2008. 169p. \$40.00 (ISBN: 9781591585145)

While this not the best genealogy reference guide I have ever read it does give some good tips and up-to-date online resources for genealogy. The best parts of the book are the case studies in the appendices. They take you step by step through what information was known at the beginning, what research could be done with that information, and the results found from that research.

The book suggests that the reader should research their own family to get a feel for how to help others (patrons) with research. I don't feel this is necessarily required as research in other fields is similar. The most important part of genealogy research is knowing where to look and this book does do an excellence job of giving numerous books, genealogical and historical societies, and online resources.

As a reference librarian or one who by default receives the questions from patrons, the book does give 4 starting points to beginning genealogical research; however I found the chapters to be almost overwhelming with information and long-winded explanations. I would stick with reading the 4 starting genealogical questions, the resources listed, and the appendices. If you do read the whole of the book you will find many tips on the idiosyncrasies of genealogical research and difference ways to get around these obstacles by searching differently or finding where to look. For example most people would look in newspapers to find an obituary, which is where they are printed. But if your ancestor is Polish and died in the early 1900s you should look in the newspapers for the Polish communities say in Chicago rather than The Chicago Sun-Times, which catered to the White Anglo-Saxon community.

On the whole this book does give a lot of good information, but the reader must read through a lot and pick and choose what is the necessary information. If you don't have a lot of time to read it can be skimmed well to achieve getting the kernels of knowledge required to help patrons begin their genealogical research.

Katie Zipperer  
Director  
Lincoln County Bookmobile