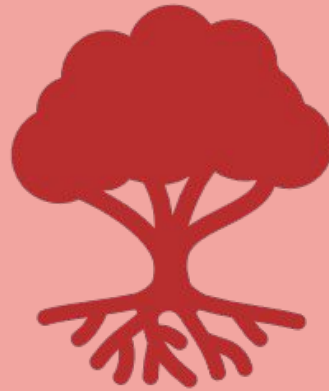


Building Critical Thinkers:

Genealogy as a
Marketing &
Instruction Tool



Georgia Library
Association Conference
October 2025

<https://tinyurl.com/GenealogyGLC2025>

Follow Along



[https://tinyurl.com/
Genealogy
GLC2025](https://tinyurl.com/GenealogyGLC2025)

Find these slides & all
handouts/ samples
(we also have URLs
on business cards)

Agenda

1

Introduction

Who, When, What

2

Context

Where & Why

3

Process

What We Did

4

Lessons

What We Learned

Introduction:

Who, When, What

What & When

- 2 Genealogy Programs
- Run in Spring 2024 from our library

Who: Your Presenters



Cordelia A. Riley

criley@atlantatech.edu



Atlanta Technical College

atlantatech.edu/library



Adelle Frank

adelle.frank@emory.edu



Pitts Theology Library, Emory

pitts.emory.edu

Audience Poll

Who is from a:

- Public library?
- Technical college?
- Other types of library?

Context:

Where & Why

Where: Atlanta Technical College

- Technical College
- Student body
- Students sometimes lack:
 - Updated technology
 - Available time (Non-traditional students/full-time jobs)
 - Technical skills
 - Exposure to research methods

Audience Poll

Who has researched
genealogy?

Why did we do this?

- **Staffing:** 2 had an interest in genealogy & 1 has history research expertise
- **Monthly Programming:** February = Black History Month + Valentine's Day
- **Outreach & Marketing:**
 - a great way to humanize librarians & to market library services/resources
 - a marginalized community that may find it hard to connect with their past
- **Bonuses:**
 - **Bridge the Digital Divide**
 - **Increase Literacy:** Reading comprehension/evaluation & Common Core Standards

The Digital Divide

Definition: The digital divide refers to *unequal access to* and *effective use of* digital technology, encompassing four interrelated dimensions:

- motivational
- material
- skills
- usage access

(Wikipedia, 2025)

- **Material & Usage Access:**
 - Use of free tools anyone can access
 - Cross-promotion of the public library and it's access points (Fulton, etc.)
 - Accessible tech across devices & operating systems
- **Motivate:**
 - Make research & us less intimidating (1-on-1)
 - Make it interesting: through self-discovery & personal relevance
- **Skills:**
 - Librarians learned to adapt to learning styles
 - We model various research skills

Our Tools

- **Ancestry Library Edition** (included in Galileo, as is MyHeritage)
- **Canva** (free account), use colors based on school or month's theme; use existing free templates and slightly alter
- **Google Forms** (free account)
- **Google Keep/Docs** (free account)
- **LibreOffice/Microsoft Word** (free/already paying for)
- **LibGuides** (already paying for): great place to centralize resources
- **Gramps** (<https://gramps-project.org>)
- **Ancestry/FamilySearch** (free account - maybe?)

Audience Poll

Do you know of any
free tools to bridge
the Digital Divide?

Why Common Core?

Our students have often been failed by their previous education, so we took inspiration from these 9th-10th grade English Language Arts standards for public education (next 2 slides show more detail for reference):

- Conduct short research projects to answer a question (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7).
- Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative sources (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.8).

Conduct short research projects to answer a question (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9–10.7).

- **Evidence:** Students should back up their findings with proof, showing where their information comes from.
- **Scope:** Focused research projects—short, targeted investigations, not giant dissertations.
- **Purpose:** To conduct research in order to answer a question or solve a problem.
- **Synthesis:** Students bring together information from multiple sources into one clear explanation or solution.
- **Evaluation:** Students need to think critically about the information they gather—does it actually help solve the problem or answer the question?

Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative sources (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9–10.8).

- **Evidence:** Students must use citations, footnotes, or bibliographies to show where their information comes from.
- **Scope:** Instead of a whole project, this is about the specific skills of finding and using information from many sources.
- **Purpose:** To gather relevant information, evaluate it, and use it properly in writing or speaking.
- **Synthesis:** Students collect and integrate evidence from different places (books, articles, websites, etc.) to support their ideas.
- **Evaluation:** Students check the credibility and reliability of sources (not just grabbing the first thing from Google).

Process:

What We Did

Our Approach

- **"Boutique":** offered free, 1-on-1, personalized consultation
 - Tailored: individual learning styles & research skills (may switch librarians)
- **Title:** "Trace your Roots", inspired by Henry Louis Gates, and used "Family History" instead of "Genealogy" to be more understandable
- **Timing:**
 - **February** is Black History Month and Valentine's Day
 - **April** is between midterms and finals
- **Advertising:**
 - Library newsletter (Installments)
 - Flyers posted in library, student activities fair, student center
 - Email lists

Goal: Teach Critical Thinking

- Using historical primary sources is a great way to encourage critical thinking: the 5 Ws
 - (Who, What, When, Where, and Why)
- Exposure to other viewpoints
- Safe space in which to question
- Inspiring skepticism of documents (oral stories, AI, etc.)
- Encouraged to “show receipts”

How Do You
Prove Stuff?

Receipts



Audience Poll

How much genealogy research have you done?

- None
- Some
- A Lot

Research Challenges

- Students often had complex relationship structures (unofficial adoptions, etc.)
- Students, especially, may not know relationship details of family members.
- Family origin: don't always fit mainstream genealogy assumptions, but often had rich, multi-generational relationships to draw upon
- Emotional sensitivity: will possibly encounter enslavement, abuse, and other challenging situations
- Literacy issues: not only reading, but comprehension and evaluation skills are exercised

What Is Family?



Complex



Take 1: Feb. 14 & 21 Walk-Ins

- Attendance:
 - Was not a classroom exercise, so was voluntary and self-selecting
 - Mostly highly-motivated students who were already coming to the library to study, though faculty/staff expressed interest as well
- Timing: Often last 1 hour instead of 20 minutes
- Our Experience:
 - Practice our Reference Interview skills, getting to know them and what they needed
 - Taught students when to go broad and go narrow with topics and searches



TRACE YOUR ROOTS



Explore your family and community's history in a 20-minute research session with a librarian. Walk-ins welcome!

Wednesday, February 14 & 21, 2024

10am-12pm
2pm-4pm

Building G
Library



ATC LIBRARY



February 2024

InSTALLments

Library hours: Mon. - Thur. 8 AM - 5 PM; Fri. 8 AM - 2 PM  Phone: 404-255-4595

Trace Your Roots



When: Feb. 14 & 21
10 AM-12 PM &
2 PM-4 PM

Where: ATC Library

Explore your family and community's history in a 20-minute research session with a librarian. Walk-ins welcome!



Important Voting Dates:

Feb. 12: Deadline to register to vote in presidential primary

Feb. 19: Advance voting for presidential primary starts

Register at [MVP.sos.ga.gov](https://mvp.sos.ga.gov)

Take 1: Handouts

- Outline with basic research skills & tools
- Facts from the US Census
- US Census and Race
- Unaltered Family Charts
- Hopeful takeaway: Receipts & basic skills/tools

Genealogy = the study of family and community history.

What do YOU want to know? (The Question)

- More than blood, it's about relationships. *Who do YOU want to learn about?*
- Be prepared: you may learn difficult things on your journey.

Start with what you already know

1. *Work backwards* from the present (Child -> Parent, but also Death -> Birth)
2. Write what you know in Charts (see examples), and don't skip generations.
3. 4 Focuses: **Who** (Names), **Where** (Places), **When** (Times) and **Who Else** (Relationships)

Search off-line: asking & rummaging

- *Work broadly*: note relations other than the central few, sometimes groups are easier to trace.
- Ask loved ones for stories, especially notice those 4 focuses when mentioned.
- Gather photos, obituaries, etc. from your family.

Save as you go: don't lose what you found

- **Record** what you learn.
 - Use your phone's microphone to type with your voice into a Google Doc. **Google Docs** are automatically saved and you can use anywhere with internet.
 - Many libraries let you **scan** family papers in, so you have an image to save and share.
- **Save what you learn**. We suggest free cloud storage (like Google Drive or Proton Drive).
- **Save as you go**. It is hard to re-find information later, so give your files/folders names that are easy to find and to sort by. Is there information about this location/time/person that is not SHOWN on the image? Be sure to include that in the filename.
 - **Filename**: MaidenFamilyName-FirstName-Date-Place-RecordName.jpg
Example: *Parker-Rebecca-1940-04-01-UniontownPerryAL-Census.jpg*
 - **Foldernames**: FamilyHistory > ParkerRebecca > ExampleFile.jpg
- **Family Tree software**. Consider using software (like <https://gramps-project.org>) and backing up its family tree data to the cloud, as a GEDCOM file or in the native gramps XML format.

Search on-line: pulling receipts for proof

1. Take family stories with a grain of salt & pull receipts (**do research**) to prove or disprove them.
2. Start with **Ancestry Library** and find a specific family group in every **Census** that you can.

Update your story

Revise your charts/family tree software, and history notes whenever you find new information.

How Do You
Prove Stuff?

Receipts

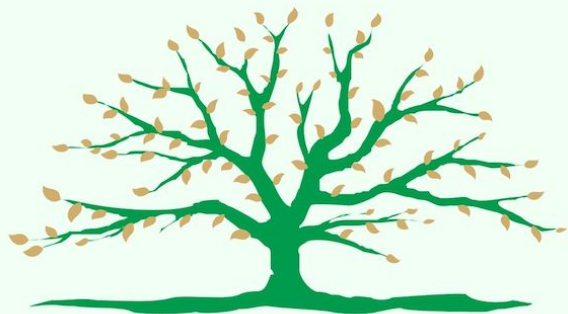


Take 2: April Appointments

- By appointment with, theoretically, preparation work
- Created LibGuide for basic info and appointment request with Google form and charts, available even if they did not visit us in person
- 1 student made and kept their appointment. Otherwise, worked better for staff/faculty (our secondary audience for marketing and urging them to send their students to our library)
- Faculty often had research skills already, so it was more introducing them to databases and historical context, plus upselling our services

Request an Appointment

tinyurl.com/atcfamilyhistory



TRACE YOUR ROOTS



This April, explore your family history in a short research session with a Librarian.



Make a Family History Appointment: Start Your Journey this month

Search this Guide

Search

During this month, book a session with a librarian. Begin the journey of exploring your family's and community's history through genealogy research.

Request an Appointment

Based on librarian availability this month, we will offer a limited number of consultations each week to help ATC community members (student, staff and faculty) begin their family history journey. Students are given priority access.

[Request an Appointment Now](#)

Finding Your Roots



Helpful Reminders

- **Genealogy** = the study of family and community history.
- Be prepared: you may learn **difficult things** on your journey.
- More than blood, it's about **RELATIONSHIPS**. So, who do **YOU** want to learn about?
- We recommend you get a free Google account so you can save what you learn along your research journey.

Form To Do Before Your Appointment

- Begin filling out this chart for **each person** you want to research (those born after 1949 are difficult to research due to data privacy laws).
- If you don't know much about the person, consider **asking family** to help fill out the form.
- **Don't worry if you can't fill in everything, just do what you can!**

☐ Chart - Individual Family History Identity

For **EACH PERSON** you want to learn about, write out the main genealogy information you need to research them.

Be sure to write down their sisters and brothers, too.

☐ Chart - Simple Family Tree (6-generations)

If the Individual Chart is too overwhelming, instead use this simple family tree chart from the Midwest Genealogy Center.

Take 2: Google Form

Welcome to Atlanta Technical College Library - Family History Appointment Request Form. Based on librarian availability this month, any student, staff, or faculty at Atlanta Technical College may request a one-on-one genealogy consultation. Students will be given priority.

Reminders:

- Begin filling out this [individual chart](#) for each family member you want to research (those born after 1949 are difficult to research due to data privacy laws). If the Individual Chart is too overwhelming, use this [simpler Family Tree Diagram](#) instead.
- We recommend you [get a free Google account](#) so you can save what you learn along your research journey.

FIELDS

- Email
- Name
- Phone number (Optional). Add your phone number if you want us to call (rather than email) to schedule your appointment.
- I am an ATC: student, staff member, faculty member
- How much family history research have you done before? None, Some, A Lot
- What days and times are generally best for you to meet with a librarian? The ATC Library is open Monday-Thursday, 8am-5pm and Friday, 8am-2pm.
- Who or What are you most interested in learning about during your appointment?
Examples: Filling in your tree; One person or one side of your family; Using a research tool.

Take 2: Charts

- Mainstream family charts (see Resources) were slightly altered but still didn't reflect many family's realities
- Family charts are often overwhelming and hard to use

INDIVIDUAL WORK SHEET

NAME IN FULL: _____ Nickname (AKA): _____

BIRTH: Date: _____ Christening Date: _____
City, County, State: _____ City, County, State: _____

PARENTS: Father: _____ Mother: _____

DEATH: Date: _____ Probate: _____
City, County, State: _____ Obituary: _____

BURIAL: Date: _____ Funeral Home: _____
City, County, State: _____ Cemetery: _____

1st MARRIAGE: Date: _____ Announcement: _____
City, County, State: _____ Place: _____

Spouse: _____ Nickname(AKA): _____
Father: _____ Mother: _____

2nd MARRIAGE: Date: _____ Announcement: _____
City, County, State: _____ Place: _____

Spouse: _____ Nickname (AKA): _____
Father: _____ Mother: _____

Immigration/Naturalization: _____

Schooling: _____

Religion: _____


Occupations: _____

Military Service: _____

Census Records:
Year State County City Street

SIX GENERATION CHART

Compiled by _____
Date _____

 **MIDWEST GENEALOGY CENTER**

2 Father
B
W
D
W
M
W

4 Grandfather
B
W
D
W
M
W

5 Grandmother
B
W
D
W

6 Grandfather
B
W
D
W
M
W

7 Grandmother
B
W
D
W

8 _____
B
W
D
W

9 _____
B
W
D
W

10 _____
B
W
D
W

11 _____
B
W
D
W

12 _____
B
W
D
W

13 _____
B
W
D
W

14 _____
B
W
D
W

15 _____
B
W
D
W

Key
B - When Born
W - Where Born
D - When Died
W - Where Died
M - When Married
W - Where Married

What Is Family?



Complex



Lessons:

What We Learned

Preparation & Approach

- **Staffing:**
 - Full staffing to accommodate student schedules
 - Overcome the “Shhh” stereotype: Friendly & helpful demeanors
- **Timing:**
 - Drop-in worked better for students than pre-scheduled appointments
- **Space:**
 - Place to talk on phone to get family information
 - Don't push if they're not comfortable sharing
- **Format:**
 - For class setting, model Auburn Avenue's Teen Genealogy Camp approach (focus on one historical figure instead of own family)

What Is Family?



Complex



- Groups of people (FAN—Friends, Associates, Neighbors) was even more important with our community
- Privacy concerns must be addressed upfront
- Expect wonders and tragedy
- Be prepared for missing information
- Don't assume you know the relationship

Sensitivity

Resources/Materials

- Teamwork
 - Leverage artistic & editorial talents of other staff for publications
- Materials
 - **Database Handouts**: need Handouts for using Galileo and AncestryLE
 - **Libguide**: consider adding self-service handouts
 - **Custom Charts**: we need more flexible and easier-to-understand charts

Marketing

- **Fill gap** in our campus presence: highlight our library services/resources/people to campus community.
- **Theme:** A friendly location where staff are helpful and that has lots of free and useful resources
- **Our Patrons:**
 - Got to know our patrons more deeply so we could focus on
 - Marketing specific resources/services
 - Tailoring instruction to their learning styles

Upselling

- Our Databases
 - PrepStep
 - Merck Manual & Gale Anatomy
- Our Librarians
 - Friendly & helpful
 - Not intimidating
- Our Space
 - Study rooms
 - Free scanners

Broader Impact

- Updated our Library Orientation to emphasize source evaluation:
 - be skeptical/critical
 - show receipts
 - use TRAAP method
- Economical: know & leverage teammates' skills
- Faculty connections: improved relationships and increased library use in the curriculum
- Future:
 - might be an avenue to get funding
 - need more thought about privacy concerns & AI

References

- "RUSA Guidelines for Instruction in Genealogical Librarianship", American Library Association, August 9, 2023. <https://www.ala.org/rusa/rusa-guidelines-instruction-genealogical-librarianship> (Accessed August 20, 2025)
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- National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers (2010). Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. Publisher: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, Washington D.C. https://corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/ELA_Standards1.pdf (accessed August 20, 2025).
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How Do You
Prove Stuff?

Receipts



Q & A



[https://tinyurl.com/](https://tinyurl.com/GenealogyGLC2025)
Genealogy
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