

Jamie A. Patrick-Burns. History and Genealogy: A Study of the Relationship between Genealogical Research and Interest in History. A Master's Paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. April, 2015. 50 pages. Advisor: Helen Tibbo

Genealogists make up an important segment of libraries' and archives' user population. This study explores the connection between genealogical research and interest in history to better understand user interests and needs. A survey of three North Carolina genealogical societies was compared to the answers of graduate students at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. The results indicate that genealogists tended to be more interested in history in general than the students and revealed some common motivations for genealogical research between the two groups. Both groups enjoyed learning the context of ancestors' lives, exploring the continuity of family traits, and building a narrative. Distinct from the students, genealogists also tended to like community, the learning process, and problem-solving. These findings can help information professionals develop more effective resources for and provide better service to their genealogist patrons.

Headings:

Archives users

Genealogists

Genealogy

Family history (Genealogy)

Surveys

Library users

HISTORY AND GENEALOGY: A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH AND INTEREST IN HISTORY

by
Jamie A. Patrick-Burns

A Master's paper submitted to the faculty
of the School of Information and Library Science
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in
Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

April 2015

Approved by

Helen Tibbo

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Literature Review.....	5
Methodology	16
Results.....	21
SILS Students.....	21
Genealogists	25
Discussion	31
Summary	39
Bibliography	41
Appendix.....	45

Introduction

Genealogy has become an important pastime for many Americans; according to a 2005 poll conducted by Market Strategies, Inc., and MyFamily.com, Inc., seventy-three percent of Americans are interested in “discovering their family history.”¹ More than just an entertaining hobby or an antiquated interest in people and places long gone, genealogical research meets an affective need to know one’s place in the world, and to “find a few fixed points in a world of constant change.”² Knowing one’s family background gives the genealogist a sense of identity and self-worth, offering him or her a place in a wider narrative and contributing to psychological well-being.³

As an already large and ever-growing group, genealogists also compose a significant segment of archives’ patrons. While the proportion obviously varies from repository to repository based on the institution’s size and collecting focus, studies report that family historians compose from fifty to ninety percent of users in archives and

¹ Ancestry.com, “Americans’ Fascination with Family History Is Rapidly Growing,” *Press Releases*, June 9, 2005, <http://corporate.ancestry.com/press/press-releases/2005/06/americans-fascination-with-family-history-is-rapidly-growing/>.

² Patrick Cadell, “Building on the Past, Investing in the Future through Genealogy and Local History Services,” *IFLA Journal* 28 (2002): 177.

³ Judith Etherton, “The Role of Archives in the Perception of Self,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 27, no. 2 (2006): 227.

special collections.⁴ For example, Aprille McKay reported in the early 2000s that eighty-five percent of users at the National Archives were searching for genealogical information.⁵ In 2010, nearly a quarter of Archives.gov website visitors self-identified as a “genealogist or family historian.”⁶

Regardless of who their users are, understanding patrons’ needs and preferences is a vital step for archives and libraries when planning and evaluating the services that accomplish their institutional mission and serve their patrons. Beginning in the 1980s, archivists called for a more robust and systematic study of special collection users and their research projects and proposing they “begin to think of archives administration as client-centered, not materials centered.”⁷ In the past thirty years, libraries and archives have increasingly oriented their activities to a customer-centered focus.⁸ Access and use are a core value of the Society of American Archivists, seeking to “promote and provide the widest possible accessibility of materials;” thus it is necessary to understand patrons

⁴ Paul Darby and Paul Clough, “Investigating the Information-Seeking Behavior of Genealogists and Family Historians,” *Journal of Information Science* 39, no. 1 (2013): 74.

⁵ Aprille Cooke McKay, “Genealogists and Records: Preservation, Advocacy, and Politics,” *Archival Issues* 27, no. 1 (2002): 23.

⁶ The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, “About the Archives.gov 2010 Redesign,” *National Archives*, accessed January 19, 2015, <http://www.archives.gov/open/redesign/about.html>.

⁷ Elsie T. Freeman, “In the Eye of the Beholder: Archives Administration from the User’s Point of View,” *The American Archivist* 47, no. 2 (Spring 1984): 112.

⁸ See, for example, Margaret Hedstrom, “How Do Archivists Make Electronic Archives Usable and Accessible?,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 26 (1998): 6–22; Geoffrey Yeo, “Understanding Users and Use: A Market Segmentation Approach,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 26, no. 1 (April 2005): 25–53, doi:10.1080/00039810500047425.

and their needs.⁹ A better knowledge of genealogists' interests will help archives promote these values and provide quality service to users.

Given the importance of understanding user needs and interests for effective services, this study will explore the relationship between family historians' pursuit of genealogy and their interest in history more broadly. Increasingly, genealogical research has become a quest for personal heritage, which "combines the history of one's ancestors with the story of where they lived, worked and died, interlaced with the history of events in the local community."¹⁰ For archivists and instruction librarians in particular, assisting genealogists can simultaneously encourage them to learn about history. Doing genealogy is one of the best ways for the public to connect with history, realizing how profoundly our past impacts who we are in the present. It is also a prime opportunity for information professionals to provide quality services and to encourage wider use of their collections. This research paper explores the idea that the pursuit of amateur genealogical research, defined as researching one's ancestors online or at repositories, tends to spark interest in history in general as measured by spending leisure time learning about historical trends or topics. As family historians spend more time learning about their forbears, do they tend to also increasingly enjoy studying the world their ancestors inhabited?

⁹ SAA Council, "SAA Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics," *Society of American Archivists*, May 2011, <http://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics>.

¹⁰ Nick Barratt, "From Memory to Digital Record: Personal Heritage and Archive Use in the Twenty-First Century," *Records Management Journal* 19 (2009): 9-10.

Literature Review

While little has been written about the specific relationship between genealogical research and interest in history as a whole, important work has been done in user studies and in studies of operationalizing interest. The information and library science literature contains many relevant user studies of genealogists, while psychology and educational psychology have developed useful conceptualizations and measurements of interest. Additionally, interdisciplinary work on leisure and will provide relevant insights.

In the information and library science body of work, the terms “genealogy” and “family history research” are often used interchangeably, but some scholars indicate a difference in definitions. Paul Darby and Paul Clough claim that genealogy is “the systematic tracing of an individual’s ancestors and their key information,” while family history research “seeks to go further by unearthing supplementary information about ancestors’ home, educational, working, social and political lives.”¹¹ Combining these two components of family history, Nick Barratt describes a new genre of historical research called “personal heritage,” which combines the study of one’s ancestors’ history with

¹¹ Darby and Clough, “Investigating the Information-Seeking Behavior of Genealogists and Family Historians,” 73.

local and social history.¹² It is the second that is of interest to this study, as researchers transition from simply constructing family trees to exploring of historical context.

Although genealogists are reportedly many archives' largest user population, they have often been neglected in the information science literature. Early articles in the 1970s bemoaned the anecdotal antagonism between librarians and genealogists, as the latter were perceived to have low competence and little research experience, burdening staff with their needs.¹³ This negative attitude began to change when genealogists began to visit local repositories in increasing numbers, commonly attributed to the publication in 1976 of Alex Haley's book *Roots* and the subsequent television series.¹⁴ As more genealogists flocked to libraries, archives, and special collections, more studies emerged in order to understand the population's demographics. While these articles do not primarily address the interests or needs of genealogists, the data are foundational to understanding this set of patrons. Anecdotal evidence and sample populations indicate a majority of female genealogists, including a master's thesis project that found about seventy-two percent of survey respondents were female, but it is unclear if this finding can be generalized.¹⁵ It seems that family historians tend to be well-educated and middle-

¹² Barratt, "From Memory to Digital Record: Personal Heritage and Archive Use in the Twenty-First Century," 9-10.

¹³ Craig R. Amason, "Instruction for Genealogists in the Public Library," *The Reference Librarian* 9, no. 22 (November 1988): 284.

¹⁴ Ibid.; Russell E. Bidlack, "Genealogy Today," *Library Trends* 32, no. 1 (June 1983): 7; Hannah Little, "Identifying the Genealogical Self," *Archival Science* 11, no. 3-4 (November 2011): 241, doi:10.1007/s10502-011-9159-9; David G. Null, "Genealogy and Family History in the Academic Library," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 11, no. 1 (1985): 29.

¹⁵ Donald O. Case, "Collection of Family Health Histories: The Link Between Genealogy and Public Health," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 59, no. 14 (2008): 2314;

aged or older on average, as this demographic has the leisure time and resources to be able to research their ancestors.¹⁶

Moving from user characteristics to user needs, other scholars have sought to identify the motivations of genealogists and focus on users themselves rather than on collections or staff. Patrick Cadell ties the increase in amateur genealogical research to the rising mobility of recent generations, as people move further and more frequently than ever before, losing their rootedness in time and space. This lack of historic and family connection creates an “ever-increasing demand to meet what for many people has become a psychological need.”¹⁷ Many participants in another study said they pursued genealogy to “learn . . . about one’s roots and identity,” offering a present-oriented reason to the study of the past. Some self-identified as the custodian of the family’s history, serving the role of rooting the entire family in its past.¹⁸ Yakel also connects family history with a search for identity, an affective need underlying the factual questions that genealogists ask.¹⁹ Hannah Little explores the archives as part of the “articulation of the

Pamela J. Drake, “Findings from the Fullerton Genealogy Study” (Master’s Thesis, California State University, 2001), <http://psych.fullerton.edu/genealogy/>; Chrissie Anderson Peters, “Genealogy for Beginners; From Both Sides of the Reference Desk,” *Tennessee Libraries* 56, no. 1 (2006): 5.

¹⁶ Crystal Fulton, “Quid Pro Quo: Information Sharing in Leisure Activities,” *Library Trends* 57, no. 4 (Spring 2009): 758.

¹⁷ Cadell, “Building on the Past, Investing in the Future through Genealogy and Local History Services,” 117.

¹⁸ R. D. Lambert, “The Family Historian and Temporal Orientations Towards the Ancestral Past,” *Time & Society* 5, no. 2 (June 1, 1996): 121, 125, doi:10.1177/0961463X96005002001.

¹⁹ Elizabeth Yakel, “Seeking Information, Seeking Connections, Seeking Meaning: Genealogists and Family Historians,” *Information Research* 10, no. 1 (October 2004): 2.

self” that “connects the self to the other.” Little also discusses the “imaginative and performative aspects of archives within . . . genealogical storytelling,” touching on a further development in the concept of genealogy as identity formation: the construction of narrative.²⁰ Family historians look not just for lists of facts but for orienting information, historical context, and a narrative of events - a story in which they play a part.²¹ Genealogists must mingle “historical time,” the large and impersonal events in history, with “autobiographical time” of lived and remembered personal experiences.²² It is this intersection of autobiographical time with historical time that is the focus of the current study.

Studies of search strategies and preferred sources of genealogists are also relevant, but largely discuss sources for tracing family lines to the exclusion of relevant historical sources. Some articles suggest that libraries highlight handbooks, dictionaries of biography, and record collections that are valuable to genealogists, but the recommendations do not include any historical background resources.²³ Other articles offer case studies of genealogy workshops offered in particular institutions as examples for others to follow, although again, these workshops tend to focus on training for tracing

²⁰ Little, “Identifying the Genealogical Self,” 241.

²¹ Yakel, “Seeking Information, Seeking Connections, Seeking Meaning: Genealogists and Family Historians,” 2; Julia Skinner, “Does Greater Specialization Imply Greater Satisfaction? Amateur Genealogists and Resource Use at the State Historical Society of Iowa Libraries,” *Libri* 60 (March 2010): 28; Barratt, “From Memory to Digital Record: Personal Heritage and Archive Use in the Twenty-First Century,” 10.

²² Lambert, “The Family Historian and Temporal Orientations Towards the Ancestral Past,” 135.

²³ Amason, “Instruction for Genealogists in the Public Library,” 291.

family lines rather than conducting historical background research.²⁴ Some of the more recent articles do acknowledge genealogists' need for contextual information: Duff and Johnson's description of the three research stages includes a final stage of fleshing out historical context, after collecting names and gathering data about individuals.²⁵ Darby and Clough's study proposes an eight-step model of the family history research process which notes change over time in source use, as family historians dive further into the past and pursue more difficult research: genealogists' "information behavior is complex and changes over time as research experience is gained, researchers' personal circumstances change, research focus shifts, and research interests develop."²⁶

Finally, and most pertinent to the present study, a few scholars in particular have noted the importance of "orienting information" for family historians as they delve ever deeper into their family's past.²⁷ The more they learn and the farther back in time they go, the more background information they require to interpret sources and to understand their

²⁴ Paul Kaplan, "How Public Librarians Can Provide Basic Genealogy Instruction," *Illinois Libraries* 86, no. 4 (Spring 2007): 16–20; Noah Lenstra, "Digital Roots: Community Approaches to Local and Family History," *ILA Reporter*, June 2012, 10–13; John Webster, "Genealogy: An Information Need We Can't Meet?," *Library and Information Update* 4, no. 4 (2005): 42–43; Shauna Hicks, "Unlock the Past: Promoting History, Genealogy and Heritage in Australia and New Zealand," *Aplis* 25, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 61–66; John R. Lawton and Heather Block Lawton, "Public-Academic Library Collaboration: A Case Study of an Instructional House and Property History Research Program for the Public," *American Archivist* 72, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2009): 496–514.

²⁵ Wendy M. Duff and Catherine A. Johnson, "Where Is the List with All the Names? Information-Seeking Behavior of Genealogists," *American Archivist* 66 (Spring/Summer 2003): 84.

²⁶ Darby and Clough, "Investigating the Information-Seeking Behavior of Genealogists and Family Historians," 74.

²⁷ Barratt, "From Memory to Digital Record: Personal Heritage and Archive Use in the Twenty-First Century," 10; Skinner, "Does Greater Specialization Imply Greater Satisfaction? Amateur Genealogists and Resource Use at the State Historical Society of Iowa Libraries," 35; Yakel, "Seeking Information, Seeking Connections, Seeking Meaning: Genealogists and Family Historians," 10.

family members' contexts. Here the interrelated concepts of orienting information and exploratory search are relevant. Exploratory search involves browsing to learn, rather than searching for known items.²⁸ Related to exploratory search, orienting information is that used to understand the basics of a topic and to stay abreast of developments.²⁹

Questions that genealogists seek to answer transition from a search for factual information (what year did my great-grandparents get married?) to orienting information (what was life like for them growing up in Colorado in the 1890s?). In fact, both of these concepts fit into the larger information-seeking model of everyday life information seeking, or ELIS, which has also been applied to family history research practices.³⁰

Amateur genealogy is unrelated to the work purposes which dominate many other information-seeking models. Furthermore, the search for identity and belonging which motivates much genealogical research is related to mastery of life. Seekers are attempting to situate themselves in the world and understand their family context, past and present.³¹

It is this transition from fact-finding to the reconstruction of historical context that will provide the focus for the current research, exploring whether such work encourages genealogists to study history more broadly.

²⁸ Gary Marchionini, "Exploratory Search: From Finding to Understanding," *Communications of the ACM* 49, no. 4 (2006): 41–46.

²⁹ R. Savolainen, "Media Credibility and Cognitive Authority: The Case of Seeking Orienting Information," *Information Research* 12, no. 3 (2007): 21.

³⁰ R. Savolainen, "Everyday Life Information Seeking: Approaching Information Seeking in the Context of 'Way of Life,'" *Library and Information Science Research* 17, no. 3 (1995): 266.

³¹ Darby and Clough, "Investigating the Information-Seeking Behavior of Genealogists and Family Historians," 75; Yakel, "Seeking Information, Seeking Connections, Seeking Meaning: Genealogists and Family Historians," 9.

The library and information science literature about genealogists has come a long way from laments about librarians' least favorite patrons, to understanding their motivations, needs, and strategies. But more work can be done to better serve the largest constituency of archives and special collections. Drawing from other disciplines, we can form a more well-rounded understanding of how to measure genealogists' interests in order to better meet their needs. The disciplines of psychology and education have both produced important work on the concept of interest, operationalizing a subjective idea into something to measure and study. Suzanne Hidi and K. Ann Renninger define interest as "the psychological state of engaging or the predisposition to reengage with particular classes of objects, events, or ideas over time."³² Interest is "a source of intrinsic motivation for learning," making it vital for public awareness and education.³³ Interest is formed through a cognitive-emotional regulation system, in which positive cognitive (or rational) and emotional interactions with a particular object or idea lead to increased interest.³⁴ Similarly, others locate the emergence of interest when individuals evaluate an event or item's novelty, complexity, and comprehensibility.³⁵

³² Suzanne Hidi and K. Ann Renninger, "The Four-Phase Model of Interest Development," *Educational Psychologist* 41, no. 2 (June 2006): 111, doi:10.1207/s15326985ep4102_4.

³³ Paul J. Silvia, "Interest: The Curious Emotion," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 17, no. 1 (February 2008): 58.

³⁴ Andreas Krapp, "Basic Needs and the Development of Interest and Intrinsic Motivational Orientations," *Learning and Instruction* 15, no. 5 (October 2005): 382, doi:10.1016/j.learninstruc.2005.07.007.

³⁵ Silvia, "Interest: The Curious Emotion," 54.

Furthermore, paralleling the emotional needs met by genealogical research mentioned above, the basic human needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness are motivations for interest development.³⁶ While certainly not the only factors influencing interest, these three needs can be seen to relate to genealogical research; in particular, feelings of relatedness are achieved when genealogists find how they are connected to their ancestors and to broader historical events. Furthermore, scholars have distinguished between individual interest and situation interest: individual interest is “a psychological state of interest in reference to a particular content domain or class of activities,” while situational interest “refers to interest that primarily emerges from and is supported by the environment,” and may or may not be long-lasting.³⁷ Expanding on these two forms of interest, others have generated a four-phase model of interest development: triggered situational interest, maintained situational interest, emerging individual interest, and well-developed individual interest.³⁸ This process can be useful for understanding the evolution of genealogists’ interest in history from something incidental to their research into a genuine personal interest, and for categorizing different levels of engagement among genealogists.

Relating the psychology of interest to history education, Yarema summarizes ten years of debates about the content of history classes in American schools. One suggestion

³⁶ Krapp, “Basic Needs and the Development of Interest and Intrinsic Motivational Orientations,” 382.

³⁷ Erika A. Patall, “Constructing Motivation through Choice, Interest, and Interestingness,” *Journal of Education Psychology* 105, no. 2 (2013): 523, doi:10.1037/a0030307.

³⁸ Hidi and Renninger, “The Four-Phase Model of Interest Development,” 113-116.

to make history “real, vital, and meaningful to...students” is to personalize history by encouraging students to talk with older relatives and learn about earlier generations.³⁹ Another educator notes that “genealogical study...reveals the influence of culture on our family. This gives history meaning. We cannot understand ourselves unless we understand the circumstances and forces which have molded us.”⁴⁰ Offering another approach to generating student interest which utilized the affective/emotional aspect identified earlier, Berry, et al. used emotional images to engage students in the history classroom.⁴¹ The affective, intellectual connection between interest in family history and local or national history extends to a wider population than just students; indeed, the education literature on student interest mirrors the information science literature on genealogists’ motivations.

Also drawing on psychological understandings of interest, the literature on leisure and hobbies sheds light on the practices of genealogists. The concept of individual interest is meaningful in that it explains a person’s interest in a given topic or domain and a set list of concomitant activities. However, some have challenged this understanding in favor of emphasizing the “organic nature of persistent engagement,” highlighting the wide range of factors that influence interest and the diverse levels of engagement of practitioners. A person’s persistent engagement in a practice is continually shaped by the

³⁹ Allan E. Yarema, “A Decade of Debate: Improving Content and Interest in History Education,” *The History Teacher* 35, no. 3 (May 2002): 390.

⁴⁰ Larry Aaron, “Using Genealogy to Teach History,” *OAH Magazine of History* 6, no. 3 (1992): 5.

⁴¹ Chad Berry, Lori A. Schmied, and Josef Chad Schrock, “The Role of Emotion in Teaching and Learning History: A Scholarship of Teaching Exploration,” *The History Teacher*, 2008, 438.

totality of that person's experiences: the interpersonal and community interactions, the individual's preferences, outside constraints and conditions.⁴² Another component to leisure activities is the serious leisure framework. Genealogy has been identified as one of these "serious leisure" pursuits, meaning the "systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity sufficiently substantial, interesting, and fulfilling for the participant to find a (leisure) career there acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience," as opposed to short-term and less-skilled casual or project-based leisure activities.⁴³ As a serious leisure activity, genealogy requires practitioners to develop a high level of information skill as they encounter a wide variety of sources and technologies over the course of their research, making them more likely to consult with or interact with information professionals.⁴⁴

From local historical societies to academic research libraries, repositories of all kinds receive genealogists searching for factual information about their ancestors, orienting information to understand the historical background, or both. These researchers bring a variety of interests developed over time in their serious leisure pursuits, and a range of motivations such as the need for self-understanding, connectedness, and a place in the historical narrative of their family. The information science literature pertaining to

⁴² Flávio S. Azevedo, "Lines of Practice: A Practice-Centered Theory of Interest Relationships," *Cognition and Instruction* 29, no. 2 (April 11, 2011): 151-152, doi:10.1080/07370008.2011.556834.

⁴³ Robert Stebbins, "Serious Leisure and Work," *Sociology Compass* 3, no. 5 (September 2009): 764, doi:10.1111/j.1751-9020.2009.00233.x; Fulton, "Quid Pro Quo: Information Sharing in Leisure Activities," 753-754.

⁴⁴ Robert A. Stebbins, "Leisure and Its Relationship to Library and Information Science: Bridging the Gap," *Library Trends* 57, no. 4 (2009): 625, doi:10.1353/lib.0.0064.

genealogists has evolved from focusing on collections and resources to centering on the users themselves. More recent work has sought to uncover how genealogists engage in information seeking behaviors and what genealogy means for them. Meanwhile, explanations of interest from psychology and education can help practitioners find a common definition and understand the different sources and stages of interest. Far from being a simple concept, interest can be generated by individual or situational factors, can be short- or long-lasting, and can meet deep affective needs. Finally, leisure studies help to illuminate the information-seeking practices of serious leisure pursuits and the individual, social, and communal factors that shape leisure activities. Informed by this interdisciplinary framework, this study will seek to further explore a particular subset of genealogists' interests and needs and build on the current body of literature.

Methodology

While past studies of genealogists have collected both quantitative and qualitative data, previous methods have been limited to surveys and interviews. Other related studies show a wider range of methods. For example, methodologies for studies of leisure activities include ethnography or field research,⁴⁵ interviews alone,⁴⁶ surveys alone,⁴⁷ and both surveys and interviews.⁴⁸ The relevant psychology studies about interest display an even greater variety; for example, Patall's study of interest and choice used an experiment in which interest was operationalized in a Likert scale, while Silvia discussed several studies that measured physiological changes to compare interest and other emotions.⁴⁹ Because this is an exploratory study of genealogists' interest in history and not designed to determine direct causation, following the methodologies of previous user

⁴⁵ Azevedo, "Lines of Practice," 147.

⁴⁶ Duff and Johnson, "Where Is the List with All the Names? Information-Seeking Behavior of Genealogists," 79; Etherton, "The Role of Archives in the Perception of Self," 228; Fulton, "Quid Pro Quo: Information Sharing in Leisure Activities," 753.

⁴⁷ Peggy Tuck Sinko and Scott N. Peters, "A Survey of Genealogists at The Newberry Library," *Library Trends*, Summer 1983, 97–109; Ronald Bishop, "In the Grand Scheme of Things: An Exploration of the Meaning of Genealogical Research," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 41, no. 3 (2008): 393–412.

⁴⁸ Case, "Collection of Family Health Histories: The Link Between Genealogy and Public Health," 2312; Darby and Clough, "Investigating the Information-Seeking Behavior of Genealogists and Family Historians," 73.

⁴⁹ Patall, "Constructing Motivation through Choice, Interest, and Interestingness," 522; Silvia, "Interest: The Curious Emotion," 57.

studies which gathered both qualitative and quantitative data using a survey was deemed most appropriate. While the survey had too small a sample size for statistical significance, the results could nonetheless enhance the existing body of literature and future studies, including discovery of a correlation between genealogy research and historical interest.

Before proceeding, a note on the use of terms in this study is in order. The precise meaning of a “genealogist” has been debated in the literature, as noted earlier. Often “genealogy” and “family history research” are used interchangeably and most scholars have not provided any specific definition for either; however, Darby and Clough distinguish between the two. Furthermore, there is also variety in how labels of “amateur” and “experienced” are applied. Some studies have made no distinction as to genealogists’ levels of experience, while some studied only amateurs or only professionals.⁵⁰ For this study, a “genealogist” is conceptualized as someone who gathers information about his or her family and its history, or another person’s family; professional and non-professional are not distinguished. Next, the idea of “interest” in history is defined as spending free time researching or exploring a historical topic or time period for personal pleasure. “History” is taken to refer to all past events, trends, or institutions, whether local, regional or national. This definition is in contrast to “family history” which is characterized by collecting names, dates, and facts directly related to

⁵⁰ Duff and Johnson, “Where Is the List with All the Names? Information-Seeking Behavior of Genealogists,” 83; Skinner, “Does Greater Specialization Imply Greater Satisfaction? Amateur Genealogists and Resource Use at the State Historical Society of Iowa Libraries,” 27.

one's forbears. The concept of interest in history was measured by asking respondents about preferred genres of books and films, preferred school subjects, and museums or historic sites visited, as well as open-ended questions about interest in history as related to genealogy. The questions were intended to measure behaviors indicative of underlying attitudes and provide indicators for interest in history. The survey was developed in consultation with Dr. Helen Tibbo to ensure clarity and validity. See the Appendix for the survey questions.

The survey was composed of twenty-seven questions and designed to take five to ten minutes to complete. The first section asked questions about respondents' genealogical research habits, such as frequency and duration. The second portion asked the questions designed to gauge interest in history based on books, films, and historic institution visits, followed by statements about genealogical research and its relationship to historical context that respondents were asked to agree or disagree with. Finally, two open-ended questions and basic demographic questions closed the survey. No personally identifying information was solicited so that respondents would remain anonymous. Respondents were offered the chance to enter a drawing for a \$50.00 gift card as an incentive to take the survey, and told to email the author separately so that they would not be linked to a particular response set.

In order to establish a baseline of interest in history against which to compare genealogists' answers, the survey was administered online to a control population of master's students from the School of Information and Library Science (SILS) at UNC Chapel Hill, with the results forming a self-selecting sample. The survey was sent to the master's student email list on January 12, 2015. An additional question at the beginning

of the survey asked if the respondent was completing the Archives and Records Management Concentration so I could compare their answers with non-archives students in case there was a bias towards historical interest. The School of Information and Library Science currently has 193 masters students enrolled, and twenty-nine responded (about a 15% response rate). While the SILS population is not representative of the general US population in age, education, and other demographics, it provided a response set to compare with genealogists' answers. The average time for this group to complete the survey was eight minutes.

The same survey was sent to a convenience sample of three local genealogy societies, except the question about the archives concentration was replaced with the question, "Do you research genealogy as a hobby or a profession?" A link to the online survey was sent to the Durham-Orange County Genealogical Society (D-OGS) email list on December 16, 2014, the North Carolina Genealogical Society (NCGS) newsletter on January 5, 2015, and the Wake County Genealogical Society (WCGS) on January 28, 2015. Additionally, I attended a meeting of the Wake County Genealogical Society and offered a paper version of the same survey, with three results. These were then entered into the online survey system for ease of analysis. The NCGS has about one thousand members, including those outside the state of North Carolina; D-OGS, around one hundred and fifty; and WCGS, about one hundred. The survey achieved a 5.8% response rate (73 responses out of 1,250 recipients). Because the survey was sent to genealogy societies in North Carolina, it is not necessarily generalizable to all genealogists. Additionally, members of a genealogical society may have different characteristics and attributes than genealogists who are not members of any society. However, I hope the

results will still provide useful insights about their users with genealogical interests. This population spent significantly longer to complete the survey, with an average time of 41 minutes. Perhaps the time spent is indicative of the group's passion for the subject of the survey, compared with the majority of SILS students.

Once the data were gathered, the responses were aggregated in Qualtrics to analyze the responses to each question. In particular, the answers to questions indicating interest in history were compared between the control population and the genealogist population. The answers to the open-ended questions were iteratively coded to identify common themes and patterns, beginning with open coding and followed by axial coding to identify broader, more general concepts. I also ran the results through free textual analysis software to identify the most commonly used words for each set of answers.

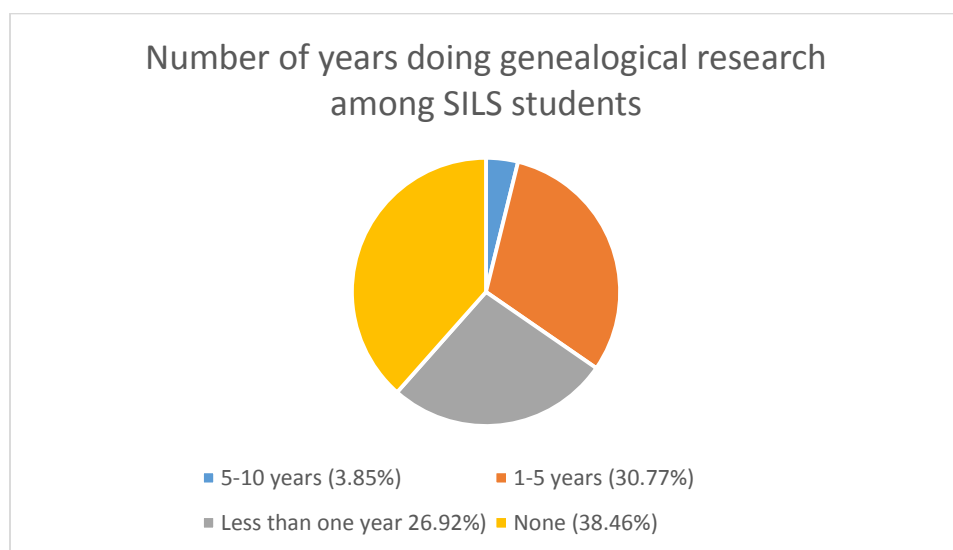
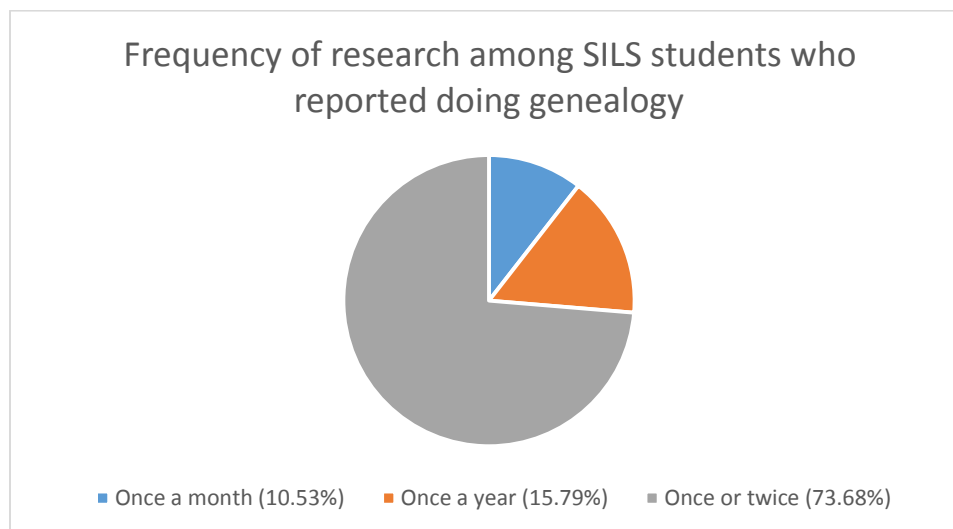
Results

SILS Students

From the SILS population, 68% indicated having searched for genealogical information at some point. Seventy-four percent indicated having searched once or twice, 16% once a year, and 11% once a month. Forty-three percent of respondents had searched for genealogical information for other people; this figure could be larger than the general population because as information specialists they are more likely to search out information for others in a personal or professional capacity. Unsurprisingly given the demographic makeup of the student population, the number of years doing genealogical research was low: 38% reported none, 27% less than one year, 31% 1-5 years, and 4% (one respondent) 6-10 years.

For the questions that indicated interest in history, I compared the answers of those students completing the Archives and Records Management concentration (32% of respondents) with those who were not; however, there were too few participants to discover a significant difference. When asked about preferred book genres and allowed to check all that applied, literary fiction/poetry was most highly ranked – chosen by 81% - an unsurprising result for a field that attracts many English majors. Historical fiction was the second-most commonly listed, at 73%. When asked to choose a single favorite genre, again literary fiction/poetry was most common at nearly a quarter (23%). When asked to check all preferred genres of film, historical films were most popular, selected by 88% of

respondents and closely followed by drama at 85%. However, when choosing a single favorite genre drama was most common. Eighty-one percent of respondents reported watching at least documentary in the past three months, with 73% having viewed one on a historical topic. Slightly over half (54%) reported visiting a history museum in the past three months, and 65% had visited a historic site.



The questions about attitudes towards genealogy included a set of statements with which respondents could strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. For the student population, because not all of them researched genealogy the answers may not

reflect actual practice. The results were roughly the same for the two populations surveyed except for the statement “researching genealogy sparks my interest in historical topics and makes me want to know more about history in general,” with which no genealogists disagreed while 27% of SILS students either disagreed or strongly disagreed. More students also disagreed with the statements “The most important thing is to construct a family tree and know names and dates,” and “I enjoy learning the history of my local area.”

Two open-ended questions allowed respondents to write free-text answers: “What do you like about genealogy?” and “Has your interest in history grown since you started genealogy? Please explain.” To analyze these answers, a text analyzer was used to determine the most frequently used words, excluding very short and common words such as “I” or “the.” The responses were then given codes based on content analysis of the answers, assigning labels for themes or contents in the answers. Each response could have multiple codes. For the SILS student responses to the first question, the word “family” was the most commonly used (7 times), followed by “like” (5), “knowing” (4), and “interesting,” “past,” “learning,” and “them” (3 each). The responses from SILS students to the question most commonly included enjoyment of learning the context or background of their family. Six answers included this theme. For example, one respondent noted that genealogy “provides interesting facts about family and background on ancestors” (SILS Student 5). Similar concepts are the impact of historical events on individuals and knowing what life was like for ancestors, mentioned by two respondents each. Three respondents mentioned enjoying stories and narrative: “Fleshing out names and dates with contextual information – building a narrative” (SILS Student 8), while a

related theme of continuity with the past was also included by three answers. Three respondents mentioned personal connections, either to famous people or historical events. Two explicitly indicated not liking genealogy. See Table 1 for a full list of codes assigned.

In responses to the second question, “Has your interest in history grown since you started genealogy?” “history” was most commonly used word at 7 counts, then “interest” or “interested” at 6. Twelve UNC SILS students answered the question; five said yes, five said no, and two indicated that they do not do genealogy. Some did not like history, found no connection, or thought genealogy was subordinate to history. Of those who answered yes, explanations of how their interest in history grew or changed included increased interest in particular ethnic groups, time periods, or places; a more personal connection to history; or more interest in what life was like for people of the past. See Table 2 for a full list of codes applied.

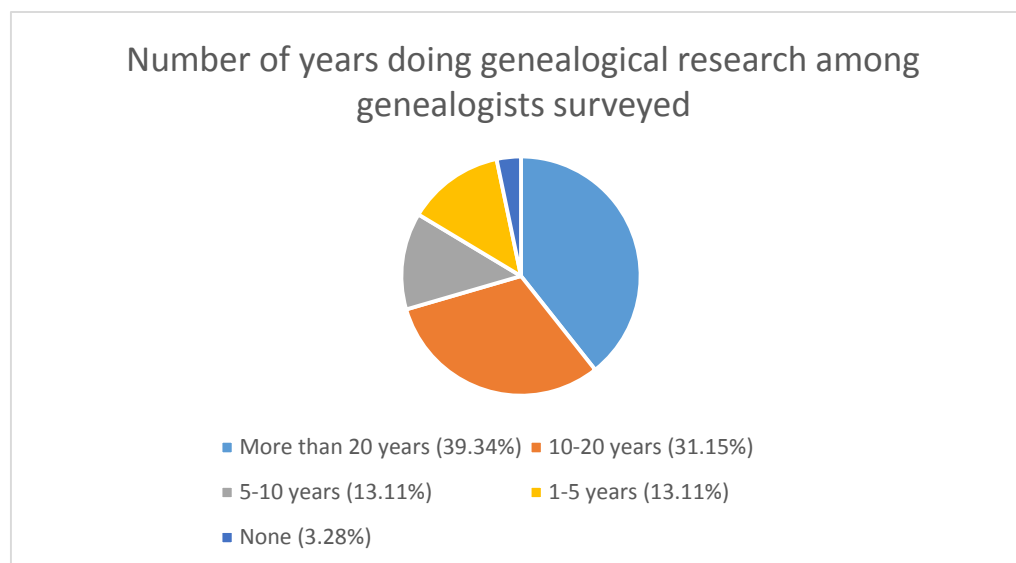
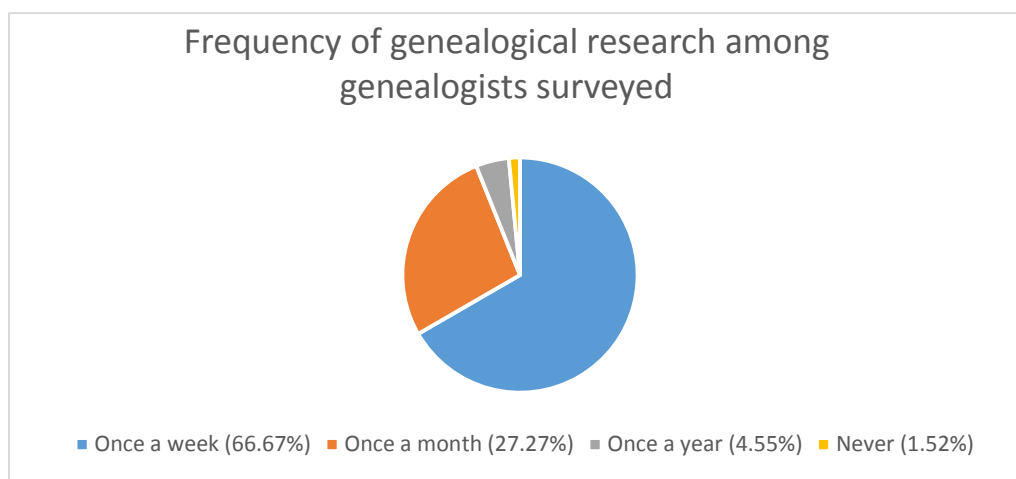
Table 1: Codes applied to SILS student responses to the question, “What do you like about genealogy?”	
Theme	Percentage of answers including the theme (rounded to nearest percent)
Historical context/background of family	40%
Narrative	20%
Continuity	20%
Impact of historical events on individuals	13%
What life was like	13%
Interesting facts	13%
Do not like it	13%
Understanding one’s roots	13%
Personal connection to famous people	13%
Identity	7%
Finding relatives	7%
Personal connection to history	7%

Table 2: Codes applied to SILS student responses to the question, “Has your interest in history grown since starting genealogy? Please explain.”	
Theme	Percentage of answers including the theme (rounded to nearest percent)
Do not do genealogy	17%
No connection between two interests	17%
History is more personal	17%
Knowing what life was like	17%
Changing focus/interests in history	17%
No change in interest	17%
New interest in particular ethnic history/heritage	8%
Understanding impact of ancestors’ lives	8%
Do not like history	8%

Genealogists

For the genealogist population, 95% indicated researching genealogy as a hobby and 5% as a profession. Sixty-six percent researched once a week, 38% once a month, 5% once a year, and one respondent checked “never.” Eighty-seven percent reported researching for others. Thirty-nine percent of respondents had been researching genealogy for over twenty years; 31%, ten to twenty; and 13% five to ten years or one to five years each. When asked to report all book genres they enjoyed, 72% included historical nonfiction, followed by historical fiction (65%), mysteries, (65%), and biographies/autobiographies (63%). When choosing a single favorite genre, historical non-fiction was first at 31%, followed by mystery at 24%. Historical films were most popular, included by 80% of respondents; however, drama was the single most commonly watched. Seventy-nine percent of respondents had viewed at least one documentary film in the past three months, and 89% of these included a historical topic.

Fifty-four percent had visited a history museum in the past three months, and 66% a historic site.



The genealogists were also asked the same the open-ended questions. In response to the first question, “What do you like about genealogy?” their answers used words like “family” (18), “ancestors” (12), “people,” “where,” and “context” (9 each), “learning,” “lives,” and “finding” (7). The responses included some of the same themes as those found among SILS students: enjoying learning about historical context and what life was like for ancestors (for example, Genealogist 47 wrote “finding information on how my

ancestors lived, their occupations and achievements, how they migrated”), as well as feeling a personal connection to ancestors, history, or famous people. A few mentioned the themes of continuity or narrative, for example, “finding information on . . . the personal talents that have been passed down through the years” (Genealogist 47). There was also a shared interest between the two groups in knowing “where I come from,” labeled as a concern for origins or roots. However two of the major concepts enjoyed by genealogists were absent from SILS respondents. First, many genealogists indicated their enjoyment of the research process and learning new information. For example, one genealogist liked “the search, the surprises, the knowledge learned” (Genealogist 29). While a couple of SILS students stated they enjoyed learning interesting facts, the genealogists’ responses indicate a deeper enjoyment of learning that comes with researching genealogy. A second point of departure is the number of genealogists who enjoy the problem-solving aspect of genealogy, like fitting together pieces of a puzzle: one genealogist called it “detective work” (Genealogist 25). None of the SILS students mentioned such an approach, while nine of the genealogists did. See Table 3 for a full list of codes applied.

Table 3: Codes applied to genealogist responses to the question, “What do you like about genealogy?”	
Theme	Percentage of answers including the theme (rounded to nearest percent)
Learning/research	23%
Context/background	23%
What life was like	23%
Problem/puzzle solving	21%
Personal connection to ancestors	19%
Understanding one’s roots	19%
Impact of historical events on individuals	12%
Community	9%
Continuity	9%

Finding relatives	7%
Interesting individuals	7%
Personal connection to history	5%
Identity	5%
Narrative	5%
Finding ancestors	2%
History of place	2%
Personal connection to famous people	2%

The second open-ended question asked if the respondents' interest in history had increased as since beginning genealogical research, and how. Genealogists' explanations included words like "history" or "historical" (33), "family," (17), "interest/ed" (16), "events" (9), "research" (8) and "ancestor/s" (11). While hardly surprising, this word frequency analysis shows the importance of family, knowledge or learning, and sustained

Table 4: Codes applied to genealogist responses to the question, "Has your interest in history grown since starting genealogy? Please explain."	
Theme	Percentage of answers including the theme (rounded to nearest percent)
Better understanding of context/background	26%
Impact of historical events on individuals	17%
Changing focus/interests in history	15%
Better understanding ancestors and their choices	13%
Personal connection to historical events	11%
Interest in history of particular places	9%
Desire to know more about interesting facts or individuals	6%
Interest in history came first	6%
Greater sense of identity	4%
Knowing what life was like	4%

interest in a genealogical endeavor. Thirty-three answered yes, eleven said no – five of which indicated they were interested in history already and their level of interest remained the same – and three did not answer yes or no. Like SILS students, a few genealogists indicated a different focus of their historical interests such as research on the

history of particular places related to their family tree, a personal connection to historical events, and what life was like. For the genealogist group more than the student group, some concepts carried over from the first question: many indicated increased interest in learning the historical context of their ancestors, or the impacts of historical events: “Understanding the impact of historical events turns a light on the family in a way no BMDD can do. Watching the effects of WWII on my family as the war progressed has made me more likely to read a book about London during the war, but that would have been unlikely had I not began to explore family genealogy” (Genealogist 15). Another idea absent from the SILS group but important for the genealogists was increased interest in history for better understanding and insights into their relatives and the choices they made. See Table 4 for a list of codes assigned. Tables 5, 6, and 7 offer comparisons of the two groups’ answers.

Table 5: Comparison of shared codes for the question, “What do you like about genealogy?”		
Theme	Genealogists	SILS Students
Family’s historical context/background	23%	40%
What life was like	23%	13%
Understanding one’s roots	19%	13%
Impact of historical events on individuals	12%	13%
Continuity	9%	20%
Finding relatives	7%	7%
Personal connection to history	5%	7%
Narrative	5%	20%
Identity	5%	7%
Personal connection to famous people	2%	13%

Table 6: Comparison of shared codes for the question, “Has your interest in history grown since starting genealogy? Please explain.”		
Theme	Genealogists	SILS students
Changing focus/interests in history	15%	17%
Personal connection to history	11%	17%
Already interested in history	6%	17%
Understanding what life was like	4%	17%

Table 7: Comparison of responses to the question, “Has your interest in history grown since starting genealogy?”					
Group	Yes	No (total)	No (interest remained the same)	Unclear response	N/A (do not do genealogy)
Genealogists	70%	23%	45% of “no” responses	6%	0%
SILS students	42%	42%	20% of “no” responses	0%	17%

Discussion

The survey results show a clear correlation between conducting genealogical research and some of the indicators of interest in history, such as preferred book and film genres. The genealogist survey results showed a preference for books and films on historical topics compared to the SILS student results, although the likelihood of having visited a museum or a historic site was remarkably similar. In accordance with the cognitive-emotional dimension of interest, positive results and feelings resulting from engaging genealogy reinforced and increased interest in continuing family history research. The open-ended answers of the genealogists also display some interesting trends when compared to the control population. Not only were some of the most common concepts found in both answer sets, but they were also discussed in earlier studies of genealogists' reasons for their research. A 1994 survey by Ronald Lambert found that the majority of respondents were motivated by "learning about one's roots and identity," and "getting to know ancestors as people," which are comparable to some of the codes applied in this study.⁵¹ First, both SILS students and genealogists often listed learning about the context and background of their families as something they enjoyed about genealogy and how their interest in history has increased. Ten genealogists liked

⁵¹ Lambert, "The Family Historian and Temporal Orientations Towards the Ancestral Past," 121.

learning about historical context as part of genealogy, as did six SILS students; for the question about increased interest in history, twelve genealogists included learning context as part of the reason for more interest. Genealogist 26 wrote that s/he liked “putting my family in the context of its time and place.” SILS student 20 enjoyed “learning about the historical context and events that led up to the way my family lives now.” Others expressed interest in knowing where they came from and understanding their heritage, which was classified as a search for roots. Eight genealogists and two SILS students liked knowing their family’s origins. “I love finding more on where my family came from,” wrote Genealogist 61; similarly SILS student 11 likes “learning about where my family comes from.” Such interests in filling out the historical background of families’ lives and exploring one’s heritage is similar to Lambert’s “learning about one’s roots.”

The closest categorization to Lambert’s “getting to know ancestors as people” from the survey results were answers indicating a personal connection to ancestors. While eight genealogists and no students indicated a personal connection to ancestors as something they liked about genealogy, more listed a desire to know what life was like for them, which can be interpreted as a personal connection. Ten genealogists and two SILS students liked knowing what life was like for their predecessors, and two from each group included it as part of their increased interest in history. For genealogist 44, genealogy “provides a snapshot of my ancestors during a period of time and helps to provide a connection.” SILS student 22 became more interested in history because “knowing more about individuals in my family paints a more detailed picture of what life was like in different time periods.”

Finally, while the theme of identity or self-perception is not apparent in the majority of responses, it is still an important topic that deserves consideration. Answering the question on increased interest in history, one genealogist wrote, “As I’ve researched the family, [history] has provided a backdrop for understanding myself, my parents, and all the people preceding us by establishing the time and geographic markers that tell me more about them” (Genealogist 15). Another noted that as an African American, researching genealogy has given a history to identify with when it was difficult to appreciate the exclusive mainstream history (Genealogist 66). One student respondent explained that genealogy “gives me a sense of my own identity by learning from whom (and where) I come from” (SILS student 13). As a final example, another genealogist wrote of enjoying genealogy because of “the sense of being part of something greater than myself” (Genealogist 59). While these people spoke explicitly of how genealogy contributed to their self-understanding, some of the other concepts also relate to self-perception, such as forming personal connections to ancestors or history, finding their “roots” or where their people came from, building communities, and weaving a narrative of which they are a part. These responses all reveal the affective and deeply personal needs for connection, identity, story, and meaning discussed earlier in the literature, and reveal that such needs are met not only by researching genealogy but also by the connection to history that comes with it.⁵²

⁵² Cadell, “Building on the Past, Investing in the Future through Genealogy and Local History Services,” 117; Lambert, “The Family Historian and Temporal Orientations Towards the Ancestral Past,” 121-125; Yakel, “Seeking Information, Seeking Connections, Seeking Meaning: Genealogists and Family Historians,” 2; Little, “Identifying the Genealogical Self,” 241.

Other overlapping ideas between the two surveys include building a narrative (related to identity), shifting focus of interest based on research threads, and understanding how historic events influenced individuals. As far as different results between the two surveys, it is difficult to establish causation rather than simply correlation, but perhaps the kinds of concepts and themes that differ between the two results are indicative of the time spent on genealogy. Of the SILS students who had researched genealogy in the past, most had been doing it for less than five years, while many from the genealogical societies had been researching for over twenty years. Some themes are common to all levels of genealogy, while some concepts were mentioned only by the genealogists; this may indicate some interests and insights that only emerge with time.

First, a few of the genealogists mentioned liking the community that comes with pursuing genealogy, either meeting new people in the course of research or deeper connections with family members as a result. One genealogist wrote, “I believe that having your genealogy and sharing it with your children and family members can give a family a solid foundation” (Genealogist 64). Yakel explored the concept of genealogists as “communities of records,” groups who find personal meaning in the records and form community with other genealogists and with family in the process.⁵³ Perhaps this sense of community only comes with time, as genealogists exhaust the easy sources of information and must rely more on the advice and aid of peers.

⁵³ Elizabeth Yakel and Deborah A. Torres, “Genealogists as a ‘Community of Records,’” *American Archivist* 70 (Spring/Summer 2007): 110.

Another prominent theme in the genealogists' answers was the joy of finding new information and learning new things. While a few of the SILS students mentioned learning interesting new facts ("I enjoy knowing the stories of my ancestors' lives. Some of them have had really interesting existences," SILS student 19), many genealogists expressed a deeper sense of satisfaction in their research endeavors. Perhaps this indicates the feeling of accomplishment from a deeper and longer investment in the search for genealogical information. Some noted an interest in learning more about particular places, such as Genealogist 12: "I enjoy doing research and making connections, following 'hints' to find more details, and learning about the areas and history of places where our ancestors lived." Others explicitly declared pleasure in the research process itself: "It's mostly original research – my ancestors may not have been researched . . . before" (Genealogist 20). Darby and Clough suggested an eight-step model of genealogists' family history research, with continuous learning as an inherent part of the research process.⁵⁴ Perhaps the longer genealogists engage in their research, the more aware they are of this ongoing learning process, particularly when encountering the more difficult stages of research.

Finally, a third point of departure between the genealogists' answers and the SILS student answers to the open ended question was the theme of puzzle or problem solving. Nine genealogists explicitly elaborated on this aspect when asked what they liked about genealogy. Genealogist 16 wrote, "I love putting the "puzzle" pieces together about my

⁵⁴ Darby and Clough, "Investigating the Information-Seeking Behavior of Genealogists and Family Historians," 77.

heritage.” Another listed “problem solving” (Genealogist 14). Such responses indicate that beyond the emotional fulfillment of knowing one’s heritage and finding oneself in history, genealogy brings the satisfaction of completing or at least making headway on a challenging puzzle. Such an inclination for detective work and problem solving is further supported by preferences for mystery fiction. When asked to check all book genres of interest, mystery/thriller tied in second place for most commonly selected. When choosing a single favorite type of book, 24% of genealogist respondents selected mystery/thriller, second only to historical non-fiction. These responses indicate a more cut-and-dried, quantifiable aspect of genealogy – such as tracking down an elusive place of birth to fill in on the family tree – that complements the more qualitative aspects like context and heritage that are difficult to operationalize and measure. And the prominence of both in the responses mean that both sides are essential pieces to family heritage research. This theme is also a fruitful area for future research.

The results of this study are useful for information professionals whose users include genealogists, which is most public librarians and archivists as well as those in academic institutions and especially state archives. Any kind of library or special collection that receives genealogy requests can benefit from a better understanding of its users’ interests and needs. Several studies discussed in the literature review have already identified the importance of historical context for moving out from names and dates to understanding ancestors’ lives, and for exploring personal heritage which interweaves individual and societal history. Background information helps with both knowing what kind of sources to look for at advanced stages of research, and enhances insight into and understanding of ancestors’ lives and decisions, as further confirmed by this study.

Context/background was among the most commonly mentioned themes in the open-ended questions, indicating the usefulness of resources that provide such data.

Information professionals can direct patrons to history books on the time period they are studying or direct them to historical collections or other primary sources, in addition to sources directly involved in family tree construction. This will directly contribute to increased collection use and patron awareness of the repository's holdings.

Librarians and archivists can tailor their workshops, brochures, online guides, and other user services to ensure that they include information about conducting historical research, which seems from the literature to be a lacuna in current practice. While many articles give examples of genealogy workshops to develop the skills used in this serious leisure pursuit as discussed in the literature review, a literature search did not uncover any workshops about historical context or background information for genealogists. There is a great opportunity for archivists and librarians to host workshops for genealogists that discuss local history or that highlight particularly rich historical collections, enriching their genealogical research. Of course, genealogists will benefit from these services and from information professionals who are more aware of their needs. Furthermore, many genealogists indicated shifting areas of historical interest based on their current line of research. Librarians and archivists must be prepared to keep up with the ever-changing needs and of these researchers.

One final note for information professionals is the number of SILS students who had engaged in genealogy research at least once – over half. Although few of them were currently involved, the responses indicate that even beyond the large numbers of self-identified genealogists who are members of genealogical societies, many others may

dabble from time to time and would continue further if given the opportunity. Some creative engagement with this marginally interested group could lead to increasing interest in genealogy and in history, and more interaction with the library or repository.

Summary

The impetus to create or continue a family genealogy comes in many forms, from curiosity to religious reasons to a perceived role as family historian. Less explored are the results of genealogical research, especially the connection between interest in one's family history and in wider historical events and trends. Survey results from members of three North Carolina genealogical societies and from graduate students at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill indicated a self-reported overall increase in interest in history resulting from genealogical research. For the majority of genealogists, the deeper they searched in their family's past, the more they became interested in the larger historical forces that shaped their family's lives. The genealogists also showed more interest in history in general than the graduate students, as measured by the kinds of books and films they enjoyed most.

Respondents were asked open-ended questions about what they liked about genealogy and if their interest in history increased as a result. Some themes found in the answers were common to both the genealogists and the SILS students who reported doing genealogy, such as learning the context of ancestors' lives and what life was like for them, finding identity in family continuity, and filling out a narrative. Other answers were found only in the genealogist response set, like enjoyment of the research process, building community through genealogy, and puzzle solving. Perhaps the shared answers are common motivations and sources of interest in all stages of research, while the latter

themes tend to develop after many years of the hobby. Further exploration of these answers is an area for future research.

A better understanding of genealogists' interests, motivations, and needs and their relationship to history can help information professionals provide better services. These conclusions can aid librarians and archivists in their design of user services such as brochures, workshops, and reference transactions that will assist patrons not only with their family trees, but with their historical endeavors as well. Because interest in history often precedes family history research and is modified or intensified by it, information professionals can recommend genealogical materials to patrons with an interest in history. The results of this research project contribute to the body of literature on genealogists and promote a better understanding of a significant segment of libraries' and archives' user populations.

Bibliography

- Aaron, Larry. "Using Genealogy to Teach History." *OAH Magazine of History* 6, no. 3 (1992): 5–7.
- Amason, Craig R. "Instruction for Genealogists in the Public Library." *The Reference Librarian* 9, no. 22 (November 1988): 283–95.
- Ancestry.com. "Americans' Fascination with Family History Is Rapidly Growing." *Press Releases*, June 9, 2005. <http://corporate.ancestry.com/press/press-releases/2005/06/americans-fascination-with-family-history-is-rapidly-growing/>.
- Azevedo, Flávio S. "Lines of Practice: A Practice-Centered Theory of Interest Relationships." *Cognition and Instruction* 29, no. 2 (April 11, 2011): 147–84. doi:10.1080/07370008.2011.556834.
- Barratt, Nick. "From Memory to Digital Record: Personal Heritage and Archive Use in the Twenty-First Century." *Records Management Journal* 19 (2009): 8–15.
- Berry, Chad, Lori A. Schmied, and Josef Chad Schrock. "The Role of Emotion in Teaching and Learning History: A Scholarship of Teaching Exploration." *The History Teacher*, 2008, 437–52.
- Bidlack, Russell E. "Genealogy Today." *Library Trends* 32, no. 1 (June 1983): 7–23.
- Bishop, Ronald. "In the Grand Scheme of Things: An Exploration of the Meaning of Genealogical Research." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 41, no. 3 (2008): 393–412.
- Cadell, Patrick. "Building on the Past, Investing in the Future through Genealogy and Local History Services." *IFLA Journal* 28, no. 4 (2002): 175–80. doi:10.1177/034003520202800403.
- Case, Donald O. "Collection of Family Health Histories: The Link Between Genealogy and Public Health." *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 59, no. 14 (2008): 2312–19.
- Darby, Paul, and Paul Clough. "Investigating the Information-Seeking Behavior of Genealogists and Family Historians." *Journal of Information Science* 39, no. 1 (2013): 73–8.

- Drake, Pamela J. "Findings from the Fullerton Genealogy Study." Master's Thesis, California State University, 2001. <http://psych.fullerton.edu/genealogy/>.
- Duff, Wendy M., and Catherine A. Johnson. "Where Is the List with All the Names? Information-Seeking Behavior of Genealogists." *American Archivist* 66 (Spring/Summer 2003): 79–95.
- Etherton, Judith. "The Role of Archives in the Perception of Self." *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 27, no. 2 (2006): 227–46.
- Freeman, Elsie T. "In the Eye of the Beholder: Archives Administration from the User's Point of View." *The American Archivist* 47, no. 2 (Spring 1984): 111–23.
- Fulton, Crystal. "Quid Pro Quo: Information Sharing in Leisure Activities." *Library Trends* 57, no. 4 (Spring 2009): 753–68.
- Hedstrom, Margaret. "How Do Archivists Make Electronic Archives Usable and Accessible?" *Archives and Manuscripts* 26 (1998): 6–22.
- Hicks, Shauna. "Unlock the Past: Promoting History, Genealogy and Heritage in Australia and New Zealand." *Aplis* 25, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 61–66.
- Hidi, Suzanne, and K. Ann Renninger. "The Four-Phase Model of Interest Development." *Educational Psychologist* 41, no. 2 (June 2006): 111–27. doi:10.1207/s15326985ep4102_4.
- Kaplan, Paul. "How Public Librarians Can Provide Basic Genealogy Instruction." *Illinois Libraries* 86, no. 4 (Spring 2007): 16–20.
- Krapp, Andreas. "Basic Needs and the Development of Interest and Intrinsic Motivational Orientations." *Learning and Instruction* 15, no. 5 (October 2005): 381–95. doi:10.1016/j.learninstruc.2005.07.007.
- Lambert, R. D. "The Family Historian and Temporal Orientations Towards the Ancestral Past." *Time & Society* 5, no. 2 (June 1, 1996): 115–43. doi:10.1177/0961463X96005002001.
- Lawton, John R., and Heather Block Lawton. "Public-Academic Library Collaboration: A Case Study of an Instructional House and Property History Research Program for the Public." *American Archivist* 72, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2009): 496–514.
- Lenstra, Noah. "Digital Roots: Community Approaches to Local and Family History." *ILA Reporter*, June 2012, 10–13.
- Little, Hannah. "Identifying the Genealogical Self." *Archival Science* 11, no. 3–4 (November 2011): 241–52. doi:10.1007/s10502-011-9159-9.

- Marchionini, Gary. "Exploratory Search: From Finding to Understanding." *Communications of the ACM* 49, no. 4 (2006): 41–46.
- McKay, Aprille Cooke. "Genealogists and Records: Preservation, Advocacy, and Politics." *Archival Issues* 27, no. 1 (2002): 23–33.
- Null, David G. "Genealogy and Family History in the Academic Library." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 11, no. 1 (1985): 29–33.
- Patall, Erika A. "Constructing Motivation through Choice, Interest, and Interestingness." *Journal of Education Psychology* 105, no. 2 (2013): 522–34. doi:10.1037/a0030307.
- Peters, Chrissie Anderson. "Genealogy for Beginners; From Both Sides of the Reference Desk." *Tennessee Libraries* 56, no. 1 (2006): 1–9.
- SAA Council. "SAA Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics." *Society of American Archivists*, May 2011. <http://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics>.
- Savolainen, R. "Everyday Life Information Seeking: Approaching Information Seeking in the Context of 'Way of Life.'" *Library and Information Science Research* 17, no. 3 (1995): 259–94.
- . "Media Credibility and Cognitive Authority: The Case of Seeking Orienting Information." *Information Research* 12, no. 3 (2007): 21.
- Silvia, Paul J. "Interest: The Curious Emotion." *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 17, no. 1 (February 2008): 57–60.
- Sinko, Peggy Tuck, and Scott N. Peters. "A Survey of Genealogists at The Newberry Library." *Library Trends*, Summer 1983, 97–109.
- Skinner, Julia. "Does Greater Specialization Imply Greater Satisfaction? Amateur Genealogists and Resource Use at the State Historical Society of Iowa Libraries." *Libri* 60 (March 2010): 27–37.
- Stebbins, Robert. "Serious Leisure and Work." *Sociology Compass* 3, no. 5 (September 2009): 764–74. doi:10.1111/j.1751-9020.2009.00233.x.
- Stebbins, Robert A. "Leisure and Its Relationship to Library and: Information Science: Bridging the Gap." *Library Trends* 57, no. 4 (2009): 618–31. doi:10.1353/lib.0.0064.
- The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. "About the Archives.gov 2010 Redesign." *National Archives*. Accessed January 19, 2015. <http://www.archives.gov/open/redesign/about.html>.

- Webster, John. "Genealogy: An Information Need We Can't Meet?" *Library and Information Update* 4, no. 4 (2005): 42–43.
- Yakel, Elizabeth. "Seeking Information, Seeking Connections, Seeking Meaning: Genealogists and Family Historians." *Information Research* 10, no. 1 (October 2004): 1–11.
- Yakel, Elizabeth, and Deborah A. Torres. "Genealogists as a 'Community of Records.'" *American Archivist* 70 (Spring/Summer 2007): 93–113.
- Yarema, Allan E. "A Decade of Debate: Improving Content and Interest in History Education." *The History Teacher* 35, no. 3 (May 2002): 389–98.
- Yeo, Geoffrey. "Understanding Users and Use: A Market Segmentation Approach." *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 26, no. 1 (April 2005): 25–53.
doi:10.1080/00039810500047425.

Appendix: Survey Questions

1. Genealogist Survey: Do you research genealogy as a hobby or as a profession?
Hobby / Profession
SILS Student Survey: Are you completing the Archives and Records Management Concentration at SILS? Yes/No
2. Have you ever searched for genealogical information about your family? Yes / No
If so, about how frequently? Please circle the best answer.
Never Once or twice Once a year Once a month Once a week
3. Have you ever searched for genealogical information for others? Yes/No
If so, about how frequently? Please circle the best answer.
Never Once or twice Once a year Once a month Once a week
4. Number of years doing genealogical research:
None Less than one year 1-5 years 5-10 years 10-20 years more than 20 years
5. Amount of time spent per month on genealogy:
None Up to one hour 1-5 hours 5-10 hours 10-20 hours more than 20 hours
6. Please rank the following topics in order from 1-10 based on your interest, 1 being the topic you like the most and 10 the least.
 ____ Art
 ____ Music
 ____ Social studies/history
 ____ Psychology/sociology
 ____ Biology/Life sciences
 ____ English/literature
 ____ Chemistry
 ____ Physics
 ____ Foreign languages
 ____ Math
7. What genre of books do you like to read? Check all that apply.
 ____ Mystery/thriller fiction
 ____ Science fiction
 ____ Romance
 ____ Fantasy
 ____ Historical fiction
 ____ Literary fiction and poetry

- ☐ Autobiographies/biographies
 - ☐ Historical non-fiction
 - ☐ Other narrative non-fiction
 - ☐ Self-help
 - ☐ Religious books
 - ☐ Reference books
8. What is your favorite type of book? Please check one.
- ☐ Mystery/thriller fiction
 - ☐ Science fiction
 - ☐ Romance
 - ☐ Fantasy
 - ☐ Historical fiction
 - ☐ Literary fiction and poetry
 - ☐ Autobiographies/biographies
 - ☐ Historical non-fiction
 - ☐ Other narrative non-fiction
 - ☐ Self-help
 - ☐ Religious books
 - ☐ Reference books
9. What kind of films do you like? Check all that apply.
- ☐ Action
 - ☐ Adventure
 - ☐ Comedy
 - ☐ Drama
 - ☐ Historical
 - ☐ Horror/Thriller
 - ☐ Musical
 - ☐ Science Fiction
 - ☐ War
10. What is your favorite genre of movies? Please check one.
- ☐ Action
 - ☐ Adventure
 - ☐ Comedy
 - ☐ Drama
 - ☐ Historical
 - ☐ Horror/Thriller
 - ☐ Musical
 - ☐ Science Fiction
 - ☐ War
11. What genre of films do you watch most often? Please check one.
- ☐ Action
 - ☐ Adventure
 - ☐ Comedy

- ☐ Drama
☐ Historical
☐ Horror/Thriller
☐ Musical
☐ Science Fiction
☐ War
12. Have you watched any documentaries in the past three months? Yes / No
 If so, on what topic?
 History Science Contemporary issues
13. Have you visited a history museum in the past three months? Yes / No
14. Have you visited a historic site in the past three months? Yes / No
15. When conducting genealogy research, do you look for information about surrounding societal events/cultural context of ancestors?
 Yes No I don't research genealogy
16. My main interest in my heritage is pushing back lines of ancestry and knowing names in my family tree.
 Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
17. When I come across sources/kinds of documents that have required outside research to understand the item's use and purpose, I conduct the necessary research.
 Always Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never Does not apply
18. Researching genealogy sparks my interest in historical topics and makes me want to know more about history in general.
 Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
19. The most important thing is to construct a family tree and know names and dates.
 Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
20. I enjoy learning the history of my local area.
 Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree
21. What do you like about genealogy?
22. Did you have an interest in history before starting genealogy? Yes / No
23. Has your interest in history grown since you started genealogy? Please explain.
24. Please indicate your age as of today:
 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 66-75 76 or older

25. Please indicate your gender:

Male Female Decline to answer

26. Please indicate your race or ethnicity. Check all that apply:

☐ Latino/Hispanic
☐ Black/African American
☐ White
☐ American Indian
☐ Asian
☐ Other
☐ Decline to answer

27. Please indicate your highest level of education completed as of today:

High school or GED Associate's degree Bachelor's degree Master's degree
Doctorate