

Genealogy at the New Jersey State Library: A Cook's Tour

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Introduction

Slide 1: *Genealogy at the New Jersey State Library: A Cook's Tour*

My name is John Shaw, and I am your speaker for today. My topic is the New Jersey State Library where I work as a reference librarian. Those of you who attended last month's lunch and learn may be asking yourselves, "Didn't we just hear about the library?" You did, but the library you heard about is not the library I will be talking about today.

Slide 2: *New Jersey State Library (the Box View)*

This chart with the boxes represents the New Jersey State Library that was the topic of last month's talk given by Andrea Levandowski. In this case, "New Jersey State Library" names an organization, an organization that delivers various library services to state government, Thomas Edison State College, other libraries in New Jersey, and to the general public. The tag line provides a good statement of the organization's purpose: "Connecting people with information through libraries." Since an organization chart is often used to represent this library, I call it the library of boxes.

There is another New Jersey State Library, and it looks like this.

Slide 3: *The New Jersey State Library (the Books View)*

This is the library of books. In this library the word "organization" refers to classification schemes, cataloging, and bibliographic control, that is, the organization of the books. Note that I am using the word "books" here in a generic sense. When I say books, I am including other library resources such as journals, magazines, newspapers, reports, maps, and all their various microform and online equivalents.

Slide 4: *The Boxes; the Books*

Last month Andrea told you about the boxes. This month I am going to tell you about the books.

Being here at an academic institution, I thought an academic approach to my topic would be appropriate, so after due deliberation, I decided that I would begin with some mathematics. After all, what could be more academic than mathematics?

Slide 5: *Mathematical Function*

Here we have the general representation of a mathematical function. There are a number of different ways to define a function, but my favorite is the visual definition used in many introductory text books.

Slide 6: *Mathematical Function Defined*

In this definition a function is described as a box with an input slot and an output slot. When a number is placed in the box at the top, another number comes out at the bottom. The set of numbers you can put in the top is called the domain of the function, and the set of numbers that comes out the bottom is called the range of the function.

It occurred to me while thinking about what I would say today that this description of a mathematical function would work nicely as a model for a library. All you have to do is replace the numbers in the domain with questions and the numbers in the range with answers.

Slide 7: *Function Model of the Library*

Here is my function model of a library. Enter questions at the top and answers come out the bottom. In the box are all the information resources—books, journals, magazines, newspapers, reports, maps—that have been brought together for the purpose of supplying answers. The resources in the box determine what types of questions can be answered. Different libraries are designed to answer different types of questions. This is as true for the New Jersey State Library as it is for any other library. And that brings me to my subject for today, “Genealogy at the New Jersey State Library.”

Genealogy is, in fact, one of the domains of questions the state library is designed to answer. This domain includes questions about ancestry, kinship, and family history. The library is full of resources to help you answer questions like ones I might ask about one of my ancestors:

- When and where was he born?
- Who were his parents?
- When did he come to America?
- Who did he marry and when and where?
- Where did he live and what did he do for a living?

There are many other domains of questions that can be answered at the state library. To meet the broad range of interests of New Jersey State government organizations, the library acquires materials on many subjects such as education, business, health, government, law, agriculture, banking and finance, history, and the list goes on. But at the core of the library are the collections that focus on New Jersey.

Slide 8: *The World's Documentary Heritage*

I recently ran across a book called *Memory of the World: The Treasures that Record Our History* which describes library collections, archival holdings, and other collections of documents considered of great value to the world. The book makes the case that it is our documentary heritage that “safeguards our memories as a force shaping us as social beings in a common humanity.”

The phrase “safeguards our memories” got me to thinking about our collections here at the state library and how some of them act as a memory for the State of New Jersey. I believe that serving as the state’s “memory” is an important role that the library plays.

Slide 9: *Memory*

And it is this role as memory that attracts genealogists. As New Jersey’s memory, the library has collections rich in information about the history of New Jersey (its people, places, and institutions), and the state’s position within the wider world.

Slide 10: *The Library*

What I would like to do today is show you what is inside the function box that might help you when you have questions about ancestry, kinship, and family history.

Slide 11: *Library Entry*

Here we are inside the box. The desk far back in the middle of the picture is where you would go to get a library card or borrow a book. If you are looking for an ancestor, I recommend you go up one floor to level four.

Slide 12: *Information Desk, Public Access Computers*

Level four has a number of our special collections including the genealogy and local history collection. You will also find there public access computer terminals and the information desk where help is always available.

You are now surrounded by thousands of books. One of them may actually contain the answer to a question you have. All you have to do is find it. To help you decide what to do, I am going to take you on a Cook’s tour of the library, a tour especially designed for the genealogist.

Slide 13: *Genealogy at the New Jersey State Library: A Cook’s Tour*

The Cook’s Tour

When I got the idea to call this a “Cook’s tour,” I thought the phrase was like a “busman’s holiday.” The busman took the holiday, so I figured the cook gave the tour. In my version of a Cook’s tour, you would get a good look at the kitchen and at what’s cooking, a behind the scenes look, if you will. Unfortunately, my definition turns out to be a complete fantasy.

When I checked the dictionary, I found that the Cook in a “Cook’s tour” was Thomas Cook, a travel agent working in England in the 1800s, and that a Cook’s tour was “any rapid but extensive tour or excursion.”

Slide 14: Thomas Cook

Thomas Cook was known for his tours that covered many destinations in a relatively short period of time. This slide shows on the right a pamphlet describing his tours to France, Switzerland, and Italy in 1865.

Considering the brief time we have today, and the number of stops I want to make on my tour of the library, the dictionary definition turns out to be even more appropriate than my imaginary one. So let's get started.

For my Cook's tour today, we will go in search of information about a revolutionary war soldier, his wife, and a few of his descendants. Each stop will provide information about him and his family gathered from a particular library resource, and each resource will represent a type of resource especially useful for genealogical research.

If you have ever gone searching for information about your ancestors, you most likely have spent time at a microfilm reader looking through newspapers for obituaries, a reader something like this one.

Slide 15: *The New York Times*, Saturday, December 2, 1950

Here you see an issue of *The New York Times* dated December 2, 1950. In it is an obituary that caught my eye some time ago, and I am going to use it as the first stop on our tour.

Slide 16: *Miss Dorothy Lake Obituary*

The obituary is for Miss Dorothy Lake. It says that she died on Thursday in her home at Sarasota, Florida, where she had lived for the last eleven years, and that she was a member of "an old Staten Island family." What caught my eye when I first saw this obituary was the fact that it mentions two of Miss Lake's ancestors both of whom she could not possibly have known personally since they died long before she was born. That's something I had not seen before in an obituary.

The article says that "She was a great-great-granddaughter of Maj. William Bernard Gifford, a legal advisor on the staff of General Washington," and that "On the maternal side [she] was descended from George Read, [one of the signers] of the Declaration of Independence."

I am going to use Miss Lake's great-great-grandfather William Gifford as the focal point for our tour of the library, but before beginning to look for information about him, I can't resist taking a moment to talk about her other ancestor, George Read. He in fact signed both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution as a representative of Delaware, and he also signed something we have at the state library.

Slide 17: *Geo : Read*

The title page you see on the left of this slide is from one of our books. It's hard to see, but George Read's signature is in the upper left corner of the page. I enlarged his signature at the top and part of the title page on the right. Note the date: 1576. This book has been around for 439 years, first in England, later in George Read's library in New Castle, Delaware, and since at least 1846 here in Trenton. There are many books in our collections that tell us about history; there are a few books that have a history of their own, and this is one of them.

But I digress. Let's return to Miss Lake and her other ancestor William Bernard Gifford.

Since Miss Lake was, as noted in her obituary, a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, one can easily find a record of her lineage back to William Gifford who fought in the Revolutionary war.

Slide 18: *Ancestral Chart*

You can see the lineage here extending from Miss Lake back through four generations to William Bernard Gifford. One of the reasons people looking for their ancestors go to libraries is the hope of finding that someone else has already researched and documented facts about their family. In the case of William Gifford, members of the D.A.R. have done research, and this research is available to the public.

Slide 19: *D.A.R. Lineage Books*

These are the D.A.R. Lineage Books in the library. They provide both lineage and biographical information. I found in one of these volumes some basic information about Gifford.

Slide 20: *Gifford: Brief Biography*

Here we have what I call some "what-where-when" information.

- Gifford was born in England, 1751, and died in Staten Island, 1814.
- During the American Revolution he served as a lieutenant in Captain Joseph Bloomfield's company and was later promoted to captain.
- He was wounded at the Battle of Monmouth and was taken prisoner at Elizabethtown in 1780.

This next slide provides a summary of what D.A.R. publications tell us about Gifford.

Slide 21: *Who—What—Where—When (1)*

Gifford first came to my attention when one of his descendants stopped at the reference desk in the library with a question. She knew Gifford's story as described here, but she had heard about a possible marriage that took place in New Jersey before his marriage to Annatie who was listed as

Gifford's wife in the lineage chart. Gifford's descendant asked me if I could find any evidence of a divorce.

The library does not have modern divorce records, but back in the 1700s divorces were granted by the legislature, and we do have in the library the laws of the state and the minutes of the assembly and the council. The early published laws are located in the vault.

Slide 22: *The Vault*

Here is where you would look for New Jersey's early printed laws.

Slide 23: *New Jersey Laws*

And here are a few volumes on the shelf in the vault, one of which contains Gifford's divorce.

Slide 24: *Gifford's Divorce*

"An Act to Dissolve the Marriage of William Gifford with Elizabeth his Wife"
"Passed at Mountholly, November 22, 1779."

Having found the divorce record, I wondered if I could find a record for the marriage.

Slide 25: *Genealogy and Local History*

For this information I headed back up to the Genealogy and Local History Collection on level four.

Slide 26: *NJ Marriage Records 1665 – 1800*

There I found this index to early New Jersey marriage records.

Slide 27: *Gifford's First Marriage*

There they are, William Gifford and Elizabeth Smith. They were both living in Burlington County at the time of their marriage, April 12, 1774. This record suggests that Gifford lived in the southern part of New Jersey, the section often called West Jersey, when he first arrived from England.

Military records can be a great source of information for genealogists. Gifford shows up in a number of books about soldiers who served during the American Revolutionary War. Here is one example.

Slide 28: . . . *Officers of the Continental Army*

Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army during the War of the Revolution.

Slide 29: *Captain William B. Gifford*

The entry on Gifford states that he served as a 2nd Lieutenant, a 1st Lieutenant, and a Captain; that he was taken prisoner at Elizabethtown and held by the British for ten months; and that upon release he did not return to service.

The D.A.R. record we looked at on our second stop today mentioned that Gifford served in Captain Joseph Bloomfield's company. As luck would have it, Joseph Bloomfield kept a journal during his time as captain, and it was published in 1982 by the New Jersey Historical Society.

Slide 30: *Looking for Joseph Bloomfield*

To find Bloomfield's journal, we need to move over to the Jerseyana Collection also on level 4.

Slide 31: *Joseph Bloomfield*

Here is the book, *Citizen Soldier: The Revolutionary War Journal of Joseph Bloomfield*. Gifford is mentioned in it over half a dozen times. Bloomfield describes the forming of his company in an entry dated February 1776.

Slide 32: *Gifford Joins the Military*

You can see at the bottom of the slide that Gifford began his military career as a second lieutenant under the command of Joseph Bloomfield. This entry also adds support to my speculation that Gifford spent his first years in New Jersey living in the West Jersey section of the colony. Here you see that he was living in Salem when he entered the service.

Note that I also placed a circle around the name of Lieutenant Colonel Francis Barber. Keep his name in mind. Both he and Joseph Bloomfield will appear later in Gifford's life.

Slide 33: *Who—What—Where—When (2)*

With five library resources—a lineage society record, a New Jersey law, a marriage record, a brief military record, and a personal journal—we have established some basic facts about Gifford. This slide summarizes what we now know.

There are a few blank spaces that need filling in. It would be nice if we could learn something about Gifford's marriage to Annatie and the family he had with her. I was able to find a transcription of a marriage announcement in this set of newspaper extracts.

Slide 34: *Newspaper Extracts*

These volumes provide extracts of articles about New Jersey from newspapers published from 1704 to 1782.

Slide 35: *Gifford's Second Marriage [Newspaper]*

And here is the article:

“Lately married at New-Utrecht, on Long-Island, William Bernard Gifford, Esq. Captain in the third New-Jersey regiment, in the Army of the United States of America to Miss Nancy Voorhies, a very amiable young lady, with a handsome fortune.”

When I read this, I wondered about the use of the name “Nancy.” I thought I should check another source for additional evidence as to the date and names. I found just the book needed on level 2 behind this fence.

Slide 36: *Behind the Fence*

This is an area where we keep many of our rare books and older genealogical resources that are not in the vault. If when searching the library catalog you come across a book kept in this area, the catalog record will alert you to the fact that you have to ask a staff member to retrieve it for you.

Slide 37: *New York Marriage Licenses*

Here is the book on the shelf: *Names of Persons for Whom Marriage Licenses Were Issued by the Secretary of the Province of New York Previous to 1784*. On page 153, we find Gifford and Miss Voorhies.

Slide 38: *Gifford's Second Marriage [Marriage License]*

The book indicates that a marriage license was issued to William Bernard Gifford and Ann Voorhies on April 1, 1780.

So we see that the Nancy in the newspaper was Annatie who also went by Ann. I looked up the name “Nancy” and learned a new word: “hypocorism.” It means “a name of endearment; a pet name.” The *Oxford English Dictionary* says that Nancy is a pet-form of the female forename Anne, and if you look up “pet-form,” you find “the hypocoristic form of a name.” Aren’t words great? Why say nickname, when you can say hypocorism?

So it makes sense for Annatie, Ann, and Nancy to all be the same person.

Slide 39: *Who—What—Were—When (3)*

With the exception of the divorce, Gifford’s life seems typical for the period in which he lived. He came to New Jersey as a teenager or young man. He married, joined the army when hostilities broke out, was wounded, and later taken prisoner by the British. After serving in the military, he married for a second time and began a family. All seems fairly ordinary until you note the three events between the red brackets. I will break these out on a timeline.

Slide 40: *Interesting Sequence of Events*

Somehow Gifford managed to meet, court, and marry Annatie Voorhies while he was being held prisoner by the British. And he managed to do this in two months. I find this a bit out of the ordinary and quite fascinating. The marriage takes place in British held territory, yet it is announced in a newspaper published in territory held by the Americans, and the newspaper makes no mention of the fact that Gifford was at the time a prisoner of war.

I thought it would be interesting to find out a little about Annatie, that “very amiable young lady, with a handsome fortune.” It just so happens that the library collection includes a family history of the Van Voorhees.

Slide 41: *Van Voorhees Family*

The full title of this book is *A Genealogy of the Van Voorhees Family in America*. In it Annatie and her family—parents, spouse, and children—get a mention.

Slide 42: *Annatie’s Family History*

As you can see, she was born May 11, 1761. That would make her 19 when she met and married Gifford. Their first child was named Mary. Mary married Daniel Lake of Staten Island. They are in the line that led eventually to Miss Dorothy Lake whose obituary started us on this tour.

If we turn back a few pages in the book, we see a transcription of Annatie’s father’s will.

Slide 43: *Annatie’s Father’s Will*

Her father’s name was Coert. This entry shows that he died in 1762 two years after his marriage to Sarah Van Brunt leaving Annatie as his only child. The will states:

“I give and bequeath all the residue or remainder of my whole estate so sold and made into money as aforesaid unto my said daughter Annatie.”

The estate was to be sold upon the death of his mother which probably occurred around the time that Annatie married Gifford, thus the “handsome fortune.”

When doing genealogical research, maps are often helpful. I found one that shows the western end of Long Island close to the time that Gifford married Annatie and settled down in the area.

Slide 44: *Map Case*

Here is where the map is stored in the library.

Slide 45: [Map]

The map shows troop movements during an engagement between the British and the Americans on August 27, 1776. You can see parts of Manhattan, Long Island, Staten Island, and New Jersey. Gifford was held on Long Island when he was a prisoner in 1780, and he decided to live there after his release.

I circled the three towns of interest. As a prisoner Gifford was probably held at New Utrecht. That is the town where Annatie lived and where they got married. The Giffords' first child, Mary, was born in Gravesend, and by the end of the war, William and Annatie were living in Flatbush. Of course it's all Brooklyn today.

It is often the unexpected discovery that makes for the most interest. I selected Gifford as our subject for today's tour because he is full of surprises. His divorce was a bit unusual for the time period, and his marriage while a prisoner I found remarkable, but the most unexpected events are yet to come. In 1943 the historian Carl Van Doren published a book called *Mutiny in January*.

Slide 46: *Mutiny in January*

You can find it in our Jerseyana Collection. While doing research for this book, Van Doren uncovered some letters that had been written by Gifford around the time of his release in 1780. The letters were written to Lieutenant Colonel Oliver De Lancey.

Slide 47: *Lieutenant Colonel Oliver De Lancey*

In 1780 Oliver De Lancey was what we would call today head of British intelligence, at least in the New York area during the war. Van Doren reports in his book that William Gifford sent a letter to Oliver De Lancey twelve days before his release by the British.

Slide 48: *Letter Written While Prisoner*

In the letter he wrote that he would "send or bring in such intelligence as may be of service" and that he wished "for an opportunity to convince the Commander-in-Chief [of the British forces] and the world that he was a friend to King George and his government."

What should we make of this? Is Gifford volunteering to spy for the British? This is the first of seven Gifford letters to De Lancey that Van Doren mentions in his book.

Gifford's behavior certainly does seem suspect. After his release by the British, he returned to New Jersey to report for duty. Shortly after his return, Lieutenant Colonel Francis Barber, whose name we saw earlier in Bloomfield's journal, became suspicious of Gifford's behavior, and he shared his suspicions with General George Washington. Washington replied to Barber on January 21, 1781, with a letter about what he called "the affair of Capt Gifford." You can find a transcription of this letter in the library's General Collection on level one.

Slide 49: *Level One*

Does this picture look a bit dark? There was not much I could do about it. Level one is dark and sometimes a little spooky. Each range of shelving is on tracks allowing it to be moved backward and forward opening and closing aisles. Washington's writings can be found in one of these ranges.

Slide 50: *Writings of Washington*

Here are the books, and here is the letter I want you to see.

Slide 51: *Letter from Washington*

The letter opens with "Having considered the affair of Capt Gifford since I saw you," and closes with, "I would however advise that you take measures to have him [Gifford] closely watched, and if possible drawn into some snare that will unfold his practices. His resignation must be accepted without further delay."

This letter was written on the same day that Gifford arrived in British held New York City.

Slide 52: *The Letters to De Lancey*

This slide shows that Gifford's correspondence with De Lancey lasted less than six weeks. Note the red arrow. Following the last letter, Gifford moved to British held territory and settled down with his wife on Long Island.

Slide 53: *Gifford Arrives in New York City*

The news of his arrival appeared in the *New York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury*, a newspaper you will find at the library on microfilm.

Slide 54: *[Text of Article]*

On this slide I show my transcriptions of two passages from the newspaper article.

Note in the first line the word "se'nnight." That's a word I had never seen before. That makes two new words for this talk: "hypocorism" and "sennight." It turns out se'nnight is like fortnight. A fortnight is a period of fourteen days; a sennight is seven days.

Substituting seven for sennight, this is my version of the beginning of the article: "on Saturday, seven days previous to last Saturday, left the Jerseys, and on the following day came to this city, from Staten Island, in one of his majesty's barges, William Bernard Gifford, late Captain in the third rebel Jersey regiment." From this I calculate that Gifford left New Jersey on Saturday, January 20, 1781.

The author of the article added that Gifford “wisely embraced the first opportunity of laying down his commission” and returning to the allegiance of his rightful and lawful sovereign.

When reading this it is worth remembering that this newspaper published the British view of the news and often carried propaganda at least from an American perspective. What Gifford may have actually said at the time, we do not know.

Slide 55: *Family Stories, Family Secrets*

When doing genealogy you will soon run into what I call “family stories” and “family secrets.” Most families have stories they like to tell about the ancestors they find most interesting, and these stories sometimes get embellished as they are retold. Families also often have secrets that are rarely mentioned and sometimes completely forgotten by family members. Let’s take a look at a few family stories and family secrets in the Gifford family.

- Did Gifford reach the rank of Major? Miss Lake’s obituary referred to him as Major, and some sources written in the late 19th and early 20th centuries also give him the rank. What we know for sure is that he was a captain when he left the military in 1781. Perhaps it was an honorary title bestowed on him in later life.
- Did he serve on Washington’s staff as his family was fond of claiming? I have grave doubts about this. There is no evidence I can find, and given the mentions he gets in Washington’s correspondence, I doubt that he did.
- Who knew about his first marriage? His marriage to Elizabeth seems to have been forgotten at some point. Most writings about the family refer to Annatie as his first wife.
- Was William Gifford a spy for the British? Carl Van Doren certainly presents him as one in his book, and for a few weeks Gifford did participate in some questionable correspondence. To give him his due, this was during a time he was trying to return to his wife who was by then pregnant. His future was clearly with her and she was unfortunately, linked to family and property located in British held territory.

If he was a spy, it was for a very short time, and the letters do not show him revealing particularly damaging information. The fact is that when the war was over, no one seemed to suspect him in any way.

Slide 56: *Gifford Counted Among the Leading Citizens of Long Island, 1787*

In 1787 Gifford was considered one of the leading citizens of Flatbush. This history of Flatbush mentions him as a contributor to a fund for the building of a school in the town.

Slide 57: *Subscription for an Academy*

As you can see here, he contributed 20 pounds.

Slide 58: *What the Subscription Built*

This is a picture of the school that was built. It was given the name Erasmus Hall Academy.

Slide 59: *Erasmus Hall*

And here it is today. Newer buildings have been built all around it, but the original 1787 structure still stands. Now called the Erasmus Hall Educational Campus, it is the home of five separate high schools.

Slide 60: *Well-to-Do, 1790*

In 1790 the first U.S. census was conducted. Gifford is recorded in it living in Flatbush Town and owning ten slaves. It seems he was doing well.

His activities after his release by the British which look suspicious to us today apparently had no impact on his life following the Revolutionary War. In fact his captain during the first year of the war, Joseph Bloomfield, stood as a witness at the baptism of one of his children in 1793. Eight years later Bloomfield became Governor of New Jersey and served for 10 years. Gifford's wealth and his reputation as a patriot continued to grow until his death in 1814. The letters to De Lancey, the newspaper article published on his arrival in British held New York City, even his first marriage were all long forgotten by this time. He was to be remembered as a Revolutionary War hero, wounded at the Battle of Monmouth and later held prisoner by the British.

Ninety-eight years after his death The Daughters of the American Revolution honored him by installing a tablet on the front of the church where he was buried. A copy of the tablet appears in a report of the D.A.R. we have at the library, and this report is our last stop on today's tour.

Slide 61: *Report of the Daughters of the American Revolution, 1911 – 1912*

The tablet states in part: "To the memory of Major William Gifford" who "served in the Third Regiment" and "was an aide de camp under General Washington." "His grave is under the sidewalk in front of this church."

That's Gifford's story, a story told to give you some insight into the state library and its relationship to genealogy. And to my great surprise, as I try to describe this relationship, I find that I have come full circle and arrived back at mathematics, though this time it's geometry that comes to mind, or perhaps I should say, a geometric figure.

Slide 62: *Genealogy is about—*

I find that an equilateral triangle helps when trying to visualize the relationship between genealogy and the library. As you can see on this slide, each vertex of the triangle makes a point . . . that is, a point about genealogy. Genealogy is about (1) people, (2) the events in people's lives, and (3) the documents that provide a record of those events. The People are often our ancestors, but sometimes, as today, other people's ancestors. The events in their lives are the

“what, where, and when” we would like to know about. The documents supply the information we are seeking.

Slide 63: *PEOPLE—Events—Documents*

In today’s tour we discovered information about William Gifford, a few of his relatives, and some other people who played important roles in his life. You can see them all on this slide beginning with Elizabeth Smith, Gifford’s first wife, and ending with George Washington, who had to devote a few minutes in 1781 to “the affair of Captain Gifford.”

Slide 64: *People—EVENTS—Documents*

The stops along the tour revealed to us events in these people’s lives. It’s the events that give reality to the names. The documented events prove that these people really existed at a certain time and place. The types of events we discovered today are summarized here.

But I don’t recommend that you spend much time trying to puzzle out this slide. I find Gifford’s story fascinating, and I hope you enjoyed hearing it, but the events and even the people are not what I want you to remember. With all this talk about Gifford and his relatives, I hope you saw what was behind it. Even if you forget all the facts we discovered about Gifford, my talk will have been a success if you remember that we were able to uncover all these facts without ever leaving the library.

Slide 65: *People—Events—DOCUMENTS*

There are, I suppose, societies where genealogy is not dependent on the written word, societies in which the oral transmission of memorized lineages obviate the need for written records; but I think it is safe to say that for us today there is no genealogy without documents. And this brings me to the library. The library with its books, journals, magazines, newspapers, reports, and maps is a portal to the primary historical documents used by genealogists. At the library you will find these documents indexed, abstracted, transcribed, and digitized, and you will find books full of information about people, books such as local histories, family histories, biographical works, and reference compilations of all kinds.

I hesitate to tinker with the library’s tag line, the one you see topping all of our web pages, but I am going take the liberty of showing you a slightly modified version just for today. Please, don’t tell the marketing department about this.

Slide 66: *[Tag Line]*

The New Jersey State Library

Connecting people with information about people through the collections of the State Library

I leave you today with an open invitation to visit the library anytime. Come and explore. There is no telling who you might find there.