

# Blazing New Trails - Review of the 57th Annual Ohio Genealogical Conference



2018 OGS Conference  
Guide

Review of the 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Ohio Genealogical Society Conference - Blazing New Trails - Columbus, Ohio; April 11-14, 2018.

Having attended my first Genealogy Conference, I felt compelled to write a review and summary of this event.

I have been researching my family lineages for years, beginning as a teen when I took a 4-H project on Genealogy. This has been a life-long interest of mine and this year decided to take my hobby to the next level by attending the 2018 Ohio Genealogical Society's Annual Conference, held this year at the Hyatt Regency in Columbus Ohio.

While I cannot speak of the hotel facilities (having stayed elsewhere), I can review a few of the classes I attended. This event began on Wednesday evening, April 11 with prepaid workshops to any attendee who had registered in advance. I began my conference experience the next day, Thursday, April 12 and proceeded throughout the next three days to attend a total of 19 sessions. Hey, I figured I spent the money to be there for three days, so I would take advantage of as many sessions as possible. Each session lasted one hour with 10 minutes break in between and a 1-1/2 hour lunch break. It was fast-paced with no time for boredom and barely time for coffee breaks.

The event was well planned out, thanks to Conference Chairs, Stacey Adger and Marleen Applegate, and from an attendee point of view, everything ran smoothly with the exception of a few computer glitches (which were rectified quickly by the knowledgeable IT staff on hand).

There was an exhibit hall with organizations from all over Ohio and elsewhere, such as various Ohio County Genealogy Societies, [The OGS](#), several authors of Fiction and Historical Fiction, [“FunStuffForGenealogists”](#) (who gladly took my money), some War Societies, DNA Research, Libraries and Lineage Societies, to name a few.

The conference kicked off with an entertaining keynote session by [J. Mark Lowe, CG, FUGA](#), entitled, “Pistol Packing Grandma.” Apparently, his grandma was a lively woman who, although you wouldn’t know by looking at her, took no guff from anyone, including the two hobo’s caught stealing clothing from the family. It was a great way to start the conference.

Every hour, experts in the field offered us a choice of five different sessions teaching various topics relevant to the study of Genealogy. Some memorable sessions I took were, “A Critical Step in Evaluating Old Documents” by LaBrenda Garrett-Nelson, JD, LLM, CG. She gave valuable insight into the interpretation of old hand-written documents and explained the importance of tracking down original documents rather than settling for the transcription of someone else. Her skills in transcription are incredible. Her website is: [www.LaBGarrettGenealogy.com](http://www.LaBGarrettGenealogy.com).

Another session which left an impression on me was, “Going Wayback: Using the Internet Archive in Your Research,” by Daniel A. Earl, MS. Did you know The Wayback Machine has archived the internet since 1996? Mr. Earl gave an entertaining discussion on all the resources you can find on the internet. He can be found at: <https://familyhistoryguy.weebly.com>

Then there were two sessions by the author, James M. Beidler, on German Naming Patterns and Pennsylvania Taxes and Census Records. Of course, I just had to buy his book, “Trace Your German Roots Online - A Complete Guide to German Genealogy Websites.” It will be an invaluable resource as I dig deeper into my German roots. He has a great website at: <http://www.jamesmbeidler.com/>

Other sessions by knowledgeable speakers gave us insight into resources and documents for finding ancestors that are not commonly thought of, such as, Land Deeds, Probate Court Records, Coroners Inquests, Life Insurance Policies, School records and Immigrant Ship Lists, to name a few. Additional favorite sessions were on [Scotland Resources](#), Becoming a professional Genealogist, [DNA testing](#)

[basics](#) and [Genealogy Strategies](#). I attended far too many great sessions to review them all here.

In addition to the sessions, there were banquets and evening workshops for those who chose to attend.

Overall, I have to say that I thoroughly enjoyed everything about my first conference. It met and exceeded my expectations with the abundant information which was crammed into this three-day event. Anyone interested in going beyond the hobby stage of family research would benefit from attending a conference such as this.

Genealogy conferences are held all over the country. Living in Ohio, I feel lucky that we have the largest State Genealogical Organization in the United States. The library in Bellville is phenomenal. Check it out if you want to learn more about your family history. But be prepared to spend a whole day. It is amazing how quickly time flies when you are lost in the past. [www.ogs.org](http://www.ogs.org)