

BETWEEN THE PAGES

HUNTSVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

THE HISTORY OF PRESIDENTS DAY

DAY *BY RENEE RUTH, IT COORDINATOR*

Presidents Day is an American holiday celebrated on the third Monday in February; Presidents Day 2019 occurs on Monday, February 18. Originally established in 1885 in recognition of President George Washington, the holiday became popularly known as Presidents Day after it was moved as part of 1971's Uniform Monday Holiday Act, an attempt to create more three-day weekends for the nation's workers. While several states still have individual holidays honoring the birthdays of Washington, Abraham Lincoln and other figures, Presidents Day is now popularly viewed as a day to celebrate all U.S. presidents, past and present.

Washington's Birthday

The story of Presidents Day date begins in 1800. Following the death of George Washington in 1799, his February 22 birthday became a perennial day of remembrance.

At the time, Washington was venerated as the most important figure in American history, and events like the 1832 centennial of his birth and the start of construction of the Washington Monument in 1848 were cause for national celebration.

While Washington's Birthday was an unofficial observance for most of the 1800s, it was not until the late 1870s that it became a federal holiday. Senator Steven Wallace Dorsey of Arkansas was the first to propose the measure, and in 1879 President Rutherford B. Hayes signed it into law. The holiday initially only applied to the District of Columbia, but in 1885 it was expanded to the whole country. At the time, Washington's Birthday joined four other nationally recognized federal bank holidays—Christmas Day, New Year's Day, the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving—and was the first to celebrate the life of an individual American. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, signed into law in 1983, was the second.



NEW YEAR RESOLUTION

BY JALPA SHAH, IT COORDINATOR

If you've made a resolution to be more tech-savvy in 2019, sign up for the Huntsville Public Library's computer classes. February's classes will feature intermediate skills and lessons about how computers work. Over the course of five sessions, participants will learn how to save, load, edit, and copy files. The class will also cover how to move files, create nested folders, and find lost folders. These skills are important, especially for people who use their computers to store many files, especially family pictures. Knowing how to properly organize your files means it is easier to find them, and you are less likely to accidentally delete something important. The class will also cover the proper way to download files. Downloading files is an important skill for those who wish to download new programs safely while avoiding illegal downloads. Lastly, the class will cover installing and uninstalling programs such as Antivirus, and other Windows programs. This class is best suited for people who have a working knowledge of the keyboard and mouse, Internet Explorer and File Explorer.

Classes are held in the Computer Lab and are limited to 16 students per class. Classes meet on Tuesdays either from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. or 5 to 6 p.m. You may sign up for one day or multiple days. Please fill out one registration form for the class you wish to start. If you don't have a library card, bring your ID! Adults 17 and older can register for classes. For more information call the IT Coordinator at 936-291-5485.

GENEALOGY COLLECTION: A TREASURE CHEST TO BE DISCOVERED

BY RICHARD LANE,
REFERENCE

Today's computer technologies make the family historian's task easier, at least at the onset of research. A few keystrokes may open up a treasure chest of information. All-too-often modern day researchers soon run into the proverbial "brick wall" and either give up or seek a new path toward their objectives. Fortunately, the Huntsville Public Library and other libraries have had enough sense to keep print materials in their genealogical collections.

Over the past fifty-two years the genealogy collection has grown to include more than 5000 items in print thanks to the generosity of the Walker County Genealogical Society, individual contributors and library purchases. The collection includes maps, local histories, family histories, microfilm records and books in print.

Huntsville is a southern town. Southerners seem to love family history and genealogical research. Settlers began to arrive in large numbers to Walker and surrounding counties in the 1830s. Much of the early migration to Huntsville followed the trails and primitive roads and waterways out of the southern states. The promise of large tracts of land encouraged families to pack up and leave their depleted soils in Arkansas, Louisiana, Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Many arrived in Texas broke with only the bare essentials. They would be Texians brought with them the agricultural practices, building construction techniques and climatic adaptations that made their new environs not only suitable, but desirable.

The focus of collection development in genealogy has been largely on southern migrations. Recent additions include a number of books in print relating the genealogical and historical records of Arkansas, Louisiana, Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee. Not to be overlooked the library has recently purchased and made available a number of genealogical materials for nearby Oklahoma and more distant Ohio, Michigan and Connecticut.



The genealogy collection also contains records of the Great Migration to New England as well as other titles like Early New England Families 1641-1700. The library has bound issues of the New England Historical and Genealogical Record.

Family historians have numerous challenges as they fill in their family tree. The Huntsville Public Library may prove to be a treasure chest. Give us a look. Did you know?

Prince Harry and Meghan Markle are distant cousins. Genealogists have traced their common ancestry to High Sheriff Ralph Bowes (1480 - 1516) of County Durham, England. One of Prince Harry's ancestors, King Henry VIII, in a likely fit of anger had Baron Hussey, Meghan's distant relative, executed. (Or so the story goes.)

Recent advances in computer and DNA technologies have made it possible to discover interesting and amusing links to the past. Family historians and curious neophytes are discovering links to famous and infamous persons of historical interest.

Walker County Genealogy Society Winter Lock-In
The Huntsville Public Library & Walker County Genealogical Society will host the annual Genealogy Winter Lock-In from 12:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 17 at the Huntsville Public Library. Beginners and longtime researchers are all invited. Society Members will be available to assist in all areas of research. Bring all your paperwork! A light lunch will be provided by the Society. Register online here at myhuntsvillelibrary.com or contact Mary Kokot, Adult Services Coordinator, at 936-291-5471 for more information.



CHILDREN'S Programming

Mother Goose Lapsit

Mondays, 10:30 AM

Ages 5 and under

Story Time

Tuesdays 5:30 PM,

Wednesdays & Fridays, 10:45 AM

Ages 5 and under

Homework Help

Wednesdays, 4:30 PM

Teen Film Club (PIZZA&MOVIE)

Venom

February 14, 4:30 PM

13-17 years old only

Family Movie Night

Small Foot

February 1, 5:30 PM

For all ages

ADULT Programming

intermediate Computer Classes

Tuesdays, 11 AM & 5 PM

Registration Required

Chronic Pain Workshop

January 14- February 25

Mondays, 1 PM

Ancestry.com

February 21, 5:30 PM

Health & Genealogy

February 26, 4 PM

Estates & Genealogy

February 27, 10 AM

Scanning Documents

February 13, 1 PM

DNA

February, 20, 1:30 PM

Sittercise

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 AM

Book Club at the Huntsville Public Library

Before We Were Yours

February 14, 10:30AM

Searching FamilySearch.org

Thursdays, 11 AM

Registration Required

Spanish Classes

Wednesdays, Beginners, 1PM,

& Intermediate, 5 PM

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SUMMER READING PROGRAMS



BY RACHEL MCPHAIL, CHILDREN'S COORDINATOR

Every year libraries across America host summer reading programs, a reading initiative that encourages children to read books for prizes. Some libraries like this one offer the program for adults. Why are libraries so invested in these programs? According to the American Library Association, librarians believe that the program provides encouragement for kids to develop a lifelong habit of reading. The Summer Reading Program is also a way to entice reluctant readers to pick up a book. Furthermore, reading over the summer can help children on break from school retain their literacy skills? This reading program can also generate interest in the library with people who are not familiar with library services.

Summer reading programs are not a modern invention. Library Journal described the first American summer reading programs in the late 1890s with the Cleveland Library League. According to a graduate paper by Stephanie Bertin from the University of North Carolina, Librarian Linda Eastman created a list of the "best books suitable for children" and distributed it to the area schools in June. She reported an increase in library attendance and circulation in the summer months following her lists. In 1897, she created the Cleveland Children's Library League. Basically, the library purchased one thousand new juvenile titles and created the league as a means to teach children to take proper care of books, bring new users to the library, and help children find good books. Publicity for the library was a significant goal. As the league grew to over 12,000 members, Eastman developed book clubs which were overseen by adults or teenagers, passed out bookmarks that explained book care, and the league started to meet year round rather than in just the summer. At this point, the focus shifted more towards reading. However, the library promoted the program heavily during the summer months as a way to keep children occupied during the summer months and "off the streets." Children were encouraged to write down their six favorite titles to share with other young readers, a precursor to the reading logs that many libraries still use today.

Eastman's ideas proved popular, and within a year six other libraries adopted similar programs that promoted library services and books that were treated properly. The impact on children's reading and book selection was an afterthought at this stage according to Bertin.

The summer reading program was adopted over the country with libraries favoring various trends in different years in different parts of the country. Here are some interesting trends Bertin writes about. It is important to remember that various libraries adopted various trends at different times.

Other names include "reading clubs" or "vacation reading programs."

- Librarians visited playgrounds to tell stories and read books.
- Librarians published lists of recommended books for children. Some librarians only allowed children to read these books for the summer reading program. Some allowed free choice.
- Public recognition was often a prize (completion certificate, special recognition at school, and name in newspaper) or a sticker.
- Librarians advocated for children by changing lending policies for the summer to allow children to check out more books at a time.
- Libraries collaborated with schools since librarians and teachers noticed greater reading scores and larger circulation numbers following the summer program.
- Some libraries required written tests, oral reports, or papers be turned in.
- Some libraries had the goal of increasing circulation, promoting the library, or teaching children how to pick quality literature. Some critics complained that children were too focused on the process or the reward of summer reading and not the actual reading.
- Historical events such as the Great Depression and World War I had significant impact on summer reading programs such as limiting supplies that a library could use or changing the theme from the previously popular world travel to all things American.
- In the 1950s librarians started offering summer reading programs for young adults. 1960s librarians were encouraged to embrace short, simple programs as people were concerned that children's leisure time was already too structured. Previously, library programs were intended to occupy children's time. 1970s programs featured less reading by having children tend vegetable gardens, play softball, skateboard, learn to cook, and run races with library staff. Popular culture icons such as superheroes and Star Wars influenced summer reading themes.
- In the 1980s some libraries had children read books for the prize of earning time on the library's computers. In the 1990s, several articles were written questioning whether prizes were necessary. The critics stated that since rewards are often associated with something unpleasant, prizes are teaching children that reading is not something to be enjoyed.

It is interesting to note that summer reading programs have various trends with ideas coming in and out of popularity. Technology, social values, and current events definitively shaped the way libraries offered summer reading programs to their communities. The Huntsville Public Library is pleased to offer another summer of reading. Our program will begin Saturday, June 1 with more details to come.