IDENTIFYING YOUR CATHOLIC ANCESTORS
GENEALOGY WORKSHOP SERIES
SESSION 1

BASICS OF GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH - SEPTEMBER 12TH, 11-12
Welcome to the first session of a 6-week Zoom collaboration between:

- The City Archives & Special Collections at New Orleans Public Library
- Office of Archives and Records of the Archdiocese of New Orleans
- New Orleans Catholic Cemeteries

Today we will cover the basics of genealogical research—first generally, then within the context of Archdiocesan records.
WELCOME!

- Please make a note of any questions you have during the presentation and reserve them until we open the Chat function at the end.
  - We will address the content of this presentation only. If your question pertains to a future presentation, please save it!
  - We will get to as many questions as we can by 12:15.
- Recordings of each session will be made available on the "Programs and Presentations" page at [archives.nolalibrary.org](http://archives.nolalibrary.org) on the Tuesday following, so don't worry if you can't write as fast as we talk! You will be able to view the presentation again any time on our YouTube channel.
SESSION MATERIALS AND RECORDINGS

archives.nolalibrary.org:

Click this link to get to the program materials and video.
MEET OUR PRESENTERS

- **Kimberly Johnson** is the Senior Processing Archivist/Records Analyst for the Office of Archives and Records at the Archdiocese of New Orleans, where she helps manage conservation and preservation of historic and current records. She holds a Masters of Arts in History and is a Certified Archivist.

- **Heather Veneziano** is the Director of Public Engagement and Development for New Orleans Catholic Cemeteries, as well as an architectural historian and cultural heritage advisor with the preservation firm of Gambrel & Peak. She holds a Masters of Fine Art and a Masters of Preservation Studies.

- **Katie Vest** is the Research Archivist for the Office of Archives and Records at the Archdiocese of New Orleans; in addition, she researches and translates genealogy requests in French, Spanish, Italian, and German. She holds a Masters of Arts in History with an emphasis in Public History.

- **Amanda Fallis** is a Librarian and Archivist in the New Orleans City Archives & Special Collections at NOPL, where she works with genealogical and municipal government records. She holds a Masters of Library and Information Science and is a Certified Archivist.
INTRODUCTION TO GENEALOGY RESEARCH

Topics:
- What is genealogy?
- Advice for beginners
- Research and recordkeeping
- Advanced tips and tricks for genealogy research
WHAT IS GENEALOGY?

- What is genealogy research?
- Why do we conduct genealogy research?
ADVICE FOR BEGINNERS

- Gather all the information you already have and put it down on paper.
- Interview all the family members you can and record what they remember about the family.
- Join a genealogical society or similar group to make contacts and talk to like-minded people.
- Explore the Internet!
RESEARCH AND RECORDKEEPING

- Begin all searches with a clear goal in mind
  - For example, determining your great-great-grandmother’s birth date, or finding the names of great-grandparents on your father’s side.

- Keep Track of your research
  - Who, what, where and when

- ALWAYS cite your source
  - Website address ("URL")
  - Repository and collection description
  - Date you found it
RESEARCH AND RECORDKEEPING

- Be open to alternate spellings, dates, and information. Records have changes and errors that you can learn to anticipate, particularly with names and spelling.

- Ages and birth dates may often vary by a few years. Don’t discredit a person born within 5 years of the date you expect.

- The records you find in modern day have been through many hands and transcribed many times, almost like a game of telephone through the decades and centuries.
RESEARCH AND RECORDKEEPING

- Records do not always exist. Natural disasters, wars, and historic misplacement can all lead to gaps in records.
- People of color will face unique challenges in genealogical research due to slavery and other historic structural racism that affected both access to and the quality of records.
Databases and other resources can only give you what they have, not what you think the record should be.

- Avoid doing a general search on the home page.
- Avoid filling out every box on a database search screen.
- Learn the record collections offered by each database, so you know where to start a search.
ADVANCED TIPS AND TRICKS

- Read the **collection information**. You will not find a birth certificate in a death index, or a World War II draft card in the Civil War collection.
- Try broadening your search geographically. Look for records from adjacent locales.
- Look up local libraries and genealogy societies in places you are searching.
ADVANCED TIPS AND TRICKS

- *A rose by any other name…* Names aren’t always correct in records. Be very flexible!
  - Spelling: Christina, Kristina, Christine
  - Married vs Maiden: Mrs. Joseph Benoit
  - Nicknames: Joe, Tony, Ed, Sissy
  - Full Name: Joe Benoit, Joseph Benoit, Joseph A. Benoit, Joseph Alcide Benoit
  - Self Identified vs. Legally Identified
Advanced Tips and Tricks

- **Wildcards & Truncation Symbols for Databases**
  - Use * to replace up to 5 characters in a word – e.g. JOHN* to retrieve JOHN, JOHNS, JOHNSON, etc.
  - Use ? to replace only one character – e.g. CH?N for CHAN, CHEN, CHIN
ADVANCED TIPS AND TRICKS

- Learn about the institutions and government agencies in your area, and if they carry the records you seek.
- Learn how vital records (birth, marriage, death) are kept in the state you are interested in.
- Google! Use Google and common sense to find resources online.
- For example, USGenWeb is a large volunteer website that contains genealogical information from across the country!
SACRAMENTAL RECORDS

- Immigration Patterns
- Linguistic Practices
- Community Development
- Ethnic Origins
- Social History
- Family History
- Cultural Diversity
BAPTISM

THE ABILITY TO TRACE YOUR FAMILY HISTORY THROUGH CATHOLIC RECORDS IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE THAT PERPETUATES FAITH BEING PASSED FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT.
MARRIAGE

THE ABILITY TO TRACE YOUR FAMILY HISTORY THROUGH CATHOLIC RECORDS IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE THAT PERPETUATES FAITH BEING PASSED FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT.
FUNERAL

THE ABILITY TO TRACE YOUR FAMILY HISTORY THROUGH CATHOLIC RECORDS IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE THAT PERPETUATES FAITH BEING PASSED FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT.
BURIAL

THE ABILITY TO TRACE YOUR FAMILY HISTORY THOUGH CATHOLIC RECORDS IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE THAT PERPETUATES FAITH BEING PASSED FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT
AVAILABLE SERVICE

- Genealogical Research
  - Locate and Translate
  - Dual Citizenship
  - Cemetery Research
    - Whom to Call for Cemetery Records
- Other Historical Research
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civil Parish</th>
<th>Church, Hospital, Convent, School, or Cemetery</th>
<th>Baptisms</th>
<th>Marriages</th>
<th>Funerals/ Burials</th>
<th>Notable Information</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blessed Sacrament School</td>
<td>1953 - 1973</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Charity Hospital - St. Vincent Chapel</td>
<td>1836 - 1994</td>
<td>1840 - 1875</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Corpus Christi</td>
<td>1916 - 1936</td>
<td>1916 - 1934</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cemetery</td>
<td>Start Year</td>
<td>End Year</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Louis Cathedral</td>
<td>1720</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>1720-1730 marriage book includes marriages at Biloxi, Yazoo, Fort St. Louis and Natchez.</td>
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<td>Missing baptism years: 1720-1728, 1734-1743</td>
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<td>Incomplete baptism years: 1729 - 1730</td>
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<td>Missing marriage years: 1734-1758, 1769-1770, 1772-1773, 1775-1776</td>
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<td>Incomplete marriage years: 1720, 1771, 1777</td>
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<td>Missing funeral years: 1735-1771, 1844 -1907</td>
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<td>Incomplete funeral years:1724, 1728-1730, 1734, 1772, 1776-1784, 1790</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Louis Cemetery No. 1</td>
<td>1729</td>
<td>1933</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1720</td>
<td>1944</td>
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<td>1724</td>
<td>1936</td>
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<td>Some are death records, some are interments. Gaps: 1840 - 1857. Early books includes some entries for St. Louis No. 2 and Bayou Cemetery.</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Louis Cemetery No. 2</td>
<td>1840</td>
<td>1956</td>
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<td>Some are death records, some are interments. Gaps: 1841-1842, 1851-1856, 1878-1880. Only a few entries for 1857, 1859, 1860, 1861, 1862, 1863, 1867, and 1868.</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Louis Cemetery No. 3</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<td>Some are death records, some are interments.</td>
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SEARCHES WE ARE UNABLE TO FULFILL

- A list of everyone in a grave or all tombs associated with a specific surname.
  - Historically records were not created in a way that allows us to know everyone who is a tomb. Burials were recorded, in general, according to cemetery and date, often without an index.

- A family tree.
  - You have to request each record separately, which will allow you to grow your family tree one record at a time.

- Everything you can find on a person or family.
  - No database of all our sacramental records. Each sacrament is held in a separate book and sometimes at different churches.

- Looking to see if a record is there before you send in request form.
  - The fee for genealogical requests is for the research. You do your own research in our sacramental books. Digital scans and indices on our website up to 1815, more on this in session 4.

- To be fair to everyone who is requesting research, we limit researchers to four mail in requests at a time.
  - When those requests are complete and have been received by you, feel free to request four more.
Gaps and causes of gaps

I. Detailed list on Books Held by the Office of Archives and Records document

II. Also found in our publication Archdiocese of New Orleans Sacramental Records Volume 1 - 4 more information in session 4

III. Fires, floods, war, epidemics

IV. Other damage

Absence of data
INK ISSUES
Some baptisms entries have additional information such as:

- Place of birth
- Date of birth
WHAT CEMETERIES DO WE OPERATE?

- St. Louis Cemetery No. 1
  St. Louis Cemetery No. 2
  St. Louis Cemetery No. 3

- St. Roch Cemetery No. 1
  St. Roch Cemetery No. 2

- St. Joseph Cemetery No. 1
  St. Joseph Cemetery No. 2

- St. Patrick Cemetery No. 1
  St. Patrick Cemetery No. 2
  St. Patrick Cemetery No. 3

- St. Vincent de Paul No. 1
  St. Vincent de Paul No. 2

- St. Charles Cemetery – Luling, Louisiana
QUESTIONs?

- **Question / Chat guidelines:**
  - Only submit **questions** via chat—please keep it clear of conversations or crosstalk.
  - Submit only **one** question per participant.
  - Make sure your question pertains to the information presented **today**.
  - We will get to as many questions as possible by **12:15**.
  - Please feel free to **contact** any of us if we don't get to your question today!
JOIN US FOR SESSION 2

Requesting Genealogy Records
–
September 19th 2020

Contact Us:

City Archives and Special Collections
New Orleans Public Library
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archivist@nolalibrary.org
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New Orleans Catholic Cemeteries
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