



# The Genealogy Society of Southern Illinois

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[www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ilgssi](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ilgssi)

## NEWSLETTER

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### **41<sup>st</sup> Annual Family History Conference**

Conference speaker Thomas MacEntee lived up to advance billing at the annual GSSI Family History Conference held August 9 at John A. Logan College. Informed and insightful, he addressed central concerns of beginning and advanced genealogists with humor and compassion. His professional background includes teaching desktop computer technology to both federal government and private sector employees, thus he was well positioned to begin a never ending quest for his family's genealogy in the early 90's. He now shares his genealogical research skills and knowledge nationally through a variety of forums.



The wide range of information presented in four lectures Saturday can be reduced to a mantra: "organize." MacEntee followed his own advice by providing a syllabus so concise and well organized it could be used as a guide for future research.

Explaining why researching family history can be expensive as well as obsessive, MacEntee opened the day with "7 Habits of Frugal Genealogists" and enumerated 15 habits and practices to grow information while limiting costs. He provided a resource list of sites for obtaining discounts and savings but cautioned against being "overzealous" in trying to save money.

The second lecture was tailored for those researching Illinois Ancestors. Tips included: understand history and why ancestors came to Illinois; be prepared with research tools; use a research log; record sources; realize about only 5% of records used by genealogists are on line; visit archives and libraries; and develop a network by attending genealogy meetings and conferences. Special "tips and tricks" for Illinois genealogy were helpful as was a list of websites relevant to Illinois research.

“Internet Archive: A Gold Mine for Genealogists” was MacEntee’s most technical discussion. He explained the Internet Archive as a “non-profit, Web-based, digital library offering storage of, and access to digitized materials” and then presented a detailed on-line lesson on how to use it. The scope of the topic was amazing and will not be summarized here. Hopefully a program on the “Internet Archive” can be provided at a regular GSSI meeting in the future.

Finally, Thomas MacEntee concluded the 2014 Conference with “10 Ways to Jumpstart Your Genealogy.” He mentioned several reasons genealogists may “get in a rut,” be overwhelmed, or simply tire of the “genealogy merry-go-round.” A prescription to help the jaded or discouraged included goal setting, change, networking, education, advice, limits, organization, getting out, and feeling better about one’s self. MacEntee’s observations on the importance of attending genealogy society meetings and conferences in order to socialize, learn new things, and network seemed to validate efforts of the membership to continue GSSI. Some years ago, we began to hear that with “on line genealogy,” genealogy societies were not needed as in the past. When a professional such as Thomas MacEntee, master of the internet, recommends genealogy societies for various purposes, one is inclined to continue and value membership.

## More on the Conference

My thanks to Dorothy Rudoni for the above excellent report on the conference program. There were 90 attendees this year, and conference coordinator Diane Anderson reports that evaluations were very positive. One wrote "I thought the speaker was one of the best. He made all his sessions very interesting & informative & asked for questions & comments in each one. He was very down-to-earth and really kept the audience paying close attention to what he was saying. I could have listened to him 5 hours longer."



The Book Fair had fewer vendors than last year, but business was brisk at the GSSI table. Sale of our publications, CD's, and used books brought in over \$850. We especially want to thank Mary Ellen Young for donating many books and journals from her personal library to GSSI. Among them were valuable out-of-print county histories which we sold at silent auction at the conference. The remainder will find their way to the shelves of the GSSI Collection at John A. Logan College Library.

Ed O'Day, Newsletter Editor pro tem

## Report from the Webmaster

The GSSI pages at Rootsweb were still off line when my wife and I went on vacation in June. I'm not sure when the problem got fixed, because our cruise of Norway took us north of the Arctic Circle and out of internet range, but everything was working properly by the time we returned in July. On July 1 PicoSearch went out of business. That cost-free search engine which we had been using on the GSSI website for years was particularly useful for finding an [obituary](#) among the thousands of such records that Darrel Dexter has transcribed. We have replaced PicoSearch with FreeFind, but users should be aware that the new search engine accurately reports the webpage on which an obituary appears, but it does not pinpoint the exact date on which an obituary was published. Since most of Darrel's obituary transcriptions are posted on line by year, many of the pages are quite long, so finding a specific entry on a page could become tedious and time consuming.

However, once referred to the correct obituary page by FreeFind, a secondary search using the search feature in your web browser ("Ctrl+F" in Chrome, Firefox or Internet Explorer) should quickly take you to the exact obituary. We recognize that this two-step process is a bit cumbersome, but it is the best GSSI can do using a free search engine.

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### Other News of Interest

- Did you know that AARP members can request a discount at Ancestry.com? It is necessary to call Ancestry and ask for the discount when joining. The discount is not retroactive, so if you are already an Ancestry subscriber be sure to call and request the discount before your membership renews automatically at full price. (With thanks to conference speaker Thomas McEntee for this tip.)
- Blogs as a mode of sharing genealogical information and advice have become increasingly popular in recent years. Most are written by individuals, but many institutions and societies are now joining in the conversation. [VitaBrevis](#) from the New England Historic Genealogical Society and the National Archives blog [NARAtions](#) are cases in point. NARAtions has a current article about the transfer of additional records to the [National Archives in St. Louis](#), which is the national repository for all Federal military and civil personnel records.
- The Illinois State Genealogical Society will be holding its annual Fall Conference at the Hilton Garden Inn in O'Fallon on October 24 & 25. For program details and registration information visit the [ISGS website](#).

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**The next GSSI Newsletter will be published in October.**  
**Send queries or news items to the editor at [ilgssi@gmail.com](mailto:ilgssi@gmail.com).**