The Spring 1993 issue, Volume 51, Number 1, launched a new column titled "Lagniappe*/North Caroliniana," compiled by Plummer Alston Jones, Jr. (Al later served as editor of _North Carolina Libraries_, from 2001 to 2005.) The editor's note introducing the column stated that it was to complement North Carolina Books and that it would include reviews of "various non-book formats."

This first column provided a review of PERSI, an index for genealogy and local history published by the Allen County Public Library Foundation, in Fort Wayne, Indiana. PERSI is still online, searchable by name, place, or article keyword: https://www.genealogycenter.info/persi/. Other early articles from the column introduced the State Library's Internet Information Project, described four favorite NC travel and general interest magazines, and reviewed a handful of recordings from the NC Folklife Institute on instructional media for public school lessons on African American and Native American Cultures in North Carolina.

Other the years, Lagniappe has broadened its focus to include online resources, special collections from across the state, and other "extra or unexpected gifts or benefits." We continue Lagniappe with that same aim to uncover new and interesting discoveries for readers of _North Carolina Libraries_.

LEE ALBRIGHT AND HELEN F.M. LEARY

Lagniappe – A New Route into the Old North State: PERiodical Source Index (PERSI)

PERiodical Source Index [annual], 1986- , vol. 1- , edited by Michael B. Clegg et al. Fort Wayne, IN: Allen County Public Library Foundation, 1987- . Prices vary. For particulars contact the address below.

PERiodical Source Index [retrospective]. 1847-1985, 12 vols. to date, prepared by the Staff of the Allen County Public Library Foundation and the Allen County Public Library Genealogy Department. Fort Wayne, IN: Allen County Public Library Foundation, 1988- . $1,400, if ordered before publication of the fourth segment; $1,650, upon completion of publication. For particulars contact the address below.

Bibliography of Genealogy and Local History Periodicals with Union List of Major U.S. Collections, edited by Michael B. Clegg (Fort Wayne, IN: Allen County Public Library Foundation, 1990). viii+ 528 pp. $75. Order books and price lists from: ACPL Foundation, PERSI Project, P.O. Box 2270, Fort Wayne, IN 46801-2270.

PERiodical Source Index's stated purpose, according to its Introduction, is to be a "comprehensive place, subject, and surname index to articles from the broadest spectrum of English-language and French-Canadian genealogy and local history periodicals." The _Index_, popularly called PERSI, is dramatically expanding access to genealogical and local history periodicals, a beneficial revolution comparable to the publication of census indexes.

Contents and Organization
Each index entry includes the following data: title of article (more or less), a code for the journal name (translated in an appendix), journal volume and number, and the month and year of publication. PERSI divides the entries into five major categories: "U.S. Places,"subdivided by state, thereunder by county; "Canadian Places," subdivided by province; "Other Foreign Places," subdivided by country; "Research Methodology"; and "Families." Within four of these categories ("Families" is the exception), entries are further divided into twenty-four sub-categories

according to "record type": biography, cemetery, census, church, court, deeds, directories, history, institutions, land, maps, military, naturalizations, obituaries, other, passenger lists, probate, school, tax, vital records (which includes marriage), voter, and wills. Entries in each sub-category are listed in alphabetical order by the first word of the title. Thus, if one were looking for deed abstracts of Orange County, North Carolina, one would expect to find such an entry under "VS-NC-Orange-Deeds" and, perhaps "a" for "Abstracts" or "d" for "Deeds" or "o" for "Orange," depending on how the author titled the article.

The "Families" category, which is arranged alphabetically by surname, covers "articles on individual families, cemeteries where all people buried have the same surname, a single record about an individual or between two parties, and family Bible records. Family surname journals, queries, ancestor charts, and family group sheets have been *excluded* [emphasis of the reviewers]." An entry whose title includes two or more families is duplicated at appropriate places in the alphabet (e.g., "Alden-Lay-Crysler line, 1620-1988" appears under "a," "l," and "c").

Scheme of Publication

PERSI is being published in three separate but interrelated parts; only parts one and two use the indexing categories described above. The first part is the annual-index series, which began with 1986 and is currently available through 1991 (1992 will be published in 1993, and so on). 1986, however, is the only volume that contains entries from that year alone; later volumes include articles published in any year between the end of 1985 and the volume-title year.

The second part of PERSI is the retrospective-index series, which covers periodicals published from 1847 through 1985. It will be published in sixteen volumes divided into four segments, with each segment consisting of four volumes: a pair with the spine title "Places" (which include listings in the three "Place" categories plus "Research Methodology"); and a pair with the spine title "Families." Three four-volume segments have been published to date; the fourth is projected for publication in approximately two years. When publication has been completed, a microfiche edition "that cumulates the

information of the four segments into one alphabet" is expected to be available. Also, a series of smaller editions limited to entries pertinent to specific states is being considered for future publication.

The third part of PERSI is the *Bibliography* and presently consists of a single, comprehensive volume. Over 5,400 English-language and French-Canadian periodicals and series are listed alphabetically by title. The *Bibliography* includes periodicals that have not yet been indexed and those for which no indexing is contemplated (family-surname publications, for example). This compilation was the result of cooperation between the Allen County Public Library and ten other major libraries, which are listed with their name codes in the Acknowledgments. Information for each title includes its PERSI code (if one has been assigned) and its subject, frequency, holdings at each of the eleven libraries (by name code), notes, publisher, address, and price and ISSN if known. An extensive volume index provides access by place, family surname, and some subjects (computers, for example, and specific religious denominations, migration, heraldry, and so forth). Of the sixty-six "NC" entries in the *Bibliography*, thirty have been indexed in the current retrospective sets and an additional twenty-seven have been coded for annual indexing, future retrospective volumes, or both.

Using PERSI

Using PERSI to find articles about a particular family is relatively easy as long as the researcher patiently searches all currently available volumes. Using it to find an article about a particular subject is also relatively easy, but finding *all* the indexed articles about that subject can be more difficult. No research tool is perfect; although PERSI comes pretty close, it does throw a few stumbling blocks in the user's path. One is the lack of a coherent plan for "Research Methodology"; another is the inconsistency with which PERSI addresses its growth problems (the annual volumes have tripled in size since 1986 was published).

''Research Methodology" is the major category through which PERSI expects to locate articles about how to find, analyze, and compile genealogical and historical data. Unfortunately, entries within that category are assigned to the same sub-categories used in

"Places" (deeds, vital records, military, etc.) and there are no intervening divisions that correspond to "state" or "county." If the original design had incorporated a series of methodology-specific divisions and sub-categories, the disproportionate use of "other" to categorize 70% to 80% of all "Research Methodology" entries could have been avoided. In addition, the research category could have provided access to the techniques demonstrated in case studies (which now appear only by surname in "Families'') as well as the methodology discussed in sources-oriented articles (which now appear in "Places," usually under "other") by the simple expedient of duplicating the index entries in both places. (Adding a new sub-category in "Places" for "methods/sources" would make such articles more accessible there as well.)

Extraordinary growth, rather than poor design, created part of the problem with "other" and most of the problems with such burgeoning sub-categories as "US-Military" and "US-History." PERSI editors are obviously aware of the difficulty and have begun, wisely, to try to group same-subject entries within each sub-category (e.g., by war under "military" and by alphabetical placement in the others). Unfortunately, the means used to force groupings are inconsistent: a subject-matter keyword was added to the beginning of some titles, others were rearranged in order to begin with a keyword, and most entries still begin with their original first word, which usu-

ally places the entry outside the artificial grouping. Perhaps it is time to expand the entire list of sub-categories, adding not only "methods/sources," but "ethnic/national," "migration," "occupation," "transportation," etc., and keywords under "history" to group articles by century.

Value of PERSI

In spite of its flaws, PERSI is an enormous boon to researchers and to the librarians who try to help them. Although using it well requires practice and persistence, the results are often magical. Researchers now have access to quantities of hitherto untapped resources, and librarians can direct their patrons to helpful material with far greater precision than was formerly possible. The entire research community owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to everyone who had a part in producing this revolutionary set of volumes; they will benefit not only genealogists and local historians, but biographers, sociologists, demographers, geneticists, physicians, psychologists, and countless others.

PERSI in its present form is recommended for purchase by all major libraries, especially those with large genealogical collections or collections oriented toward other kinds of historical research. The proposed state-specific editions of the retrospective volumes (should they become available) are recommended for purchase by smaller libraries and those with Limited resources.

Submission Requirements for *North Carolina Libraries*

Electronic articles can be submitted online at: http://www.ncl.ecu.edu

» To submit you must login; if needed you can register using the link in the header.

» APA or *Chicago Manual of Style*, most recent edition.

» We have a rolling deadline; articles are peer reviewed when received.

» Publication of accepted articles may be in upcoming or future issues.

» For additional information, contact the editor at: editor@nclaonline.org