

Employee Spotlight – Eastern Regional Branch Volunteer Duane

Contributed by Allie Honican, Graduate Intern with the Eastern Regional Branch and Digital Archives

Duane has been volunteering at the Eastern Regional Branch for 11 years – yes that's 11 years! He is an extremely valuable member of our team. Consistency is key and Duane has mastered it, rarely missing his weekly Wednesday volunteer day. He also brings doughnuts with him, which keeps the hungry college kids happy! Duane is interested in genealogy and also volunteers with the Eastern Washington Genealogical Society to help others when they hit dead ends or don't know where to find more information. We are so lucky to have Duane as a volunteer, and hope we can get at least 11 more years with him!



AH: How long have you been volunteering at the Washington State Archives, Eastern Regional Branch?

D: After attending the Grand Opening of the Digital Archives on Oct. 4, 2004, I thought it might be an interesting place to spend some volunteer time. I started "showing up for work" on November 2, 2004, so it's been 11 years and counting.

AH: What is your favorite thing about volunteering here?

D: Over the years, it has been the continuing interaction with the Student Interns. I think it helps to keep "old fogeyism" at bay.

AH: What was your job before you became a volunteer?

D: I hired on with Pacific Northwest Bell as an Installer/Repairman. Transitioned to the Toll (long distance) department and then Central Office Technician. My career there involved transitioning through three generations of technology: Electro-Mechanical, Analog Electronic and finally Digital Switching. Ended my Telephone career as Central Office Manager over Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho.

AH: Where did you grow up?

D: Geographically, In the Lewiston/Clarkston Valley. I attended Clarkston schools for 12 years and after a 5 year break in the USAF, I attended Lewis-Clark State College and obtained degrees in History, Social Science and Electronics. Mentally, I'd like to think I'm still growing.

AH: What are your hobbies outside of volunteering at the Eastern Regional Branch?

D: Genealogy, Old Radios/Electronics-stuff a person can still work on. Traveling.

AH: How long have you been researching your family's genealogy?

D: Didn't really start until after retiring in 1999. That was after I'd visited a lot of the places that I didn't know my ancestors were from.

AH: What is the most interesting information or document you have found while researching your genealogy?

D: My Paternal ancestors came from Germany as converts to the Mormon faith in the 1860s. There was some Polygamy that complicated the tree somewhat. That all came to an end when my Great Grandfather fell in with an Irish Catholic family. A far flung Uncle (married to a not so far flung Aunt) actually owned the Bee Hive House in Salt Lake City for a time (Brigham Young's Home and Utah Governors House). Never can tell what you'll run into.

List your favorites:

Book: Too many. Currently reading "Spring of Gladness", a limited edition history of my ancestors that homesteaded in the Sun Valley, Idaho area.

Movie: Action Movies--you know, machine guns, bombs, nature gone crazy with maybe a little romance thrown in to spice it all up.

Food: Not Spam--unless it might be on a Pizza. Filet Mignon smothered in mushrooms. German Chocolate cake, Banana Cream Pie--there's a trend there.

Vacation destination: Actually been there? China. Wish list? Dubai

Season: Winter--don't have to mow lawn.

Sport: Probably football.

Historical event: Probably the Civil War or WWII. One I was around for, the other I wasn't.