

Presenting the Past: Reflections from the Irish Wake

1. How did this wake thing start?

- a. Gaelic League language class
- b. Dublin Irish Festival, static display one-off that took off
- c. Dublin, OH tours
- d. Ohio History Connection—Ohio Village persona

2. Choosing a topic

- a. Interesting to **you**—if you don't care, neither will they, but you still need...
- b. Wide appeal—you might be surprised how popular death is! But it must be presented right; which leads to...
- c. What is your hook? Why should they care?

3. Research

- a. Books, journals (caution)
- b. Internet (WARNING!)
- c. Popular culture (Also warning!)
- d. Personal reports (your own and others)
- e. Oh, the places you'll go!—widen the net—no topic is an island

4. Getting it right—the first three rules of historical interpretation-- Accuracy, accuracy, accuracy!

- a. Reliable sources—primary, secondary, other
- b. Multiple sources—multiple INDEPENDENT sources
- c. Be able to back it up (“That isn't what snuff looks like!”)
- d. Learn from your audience—you aren't the only expert
- e. When can you fudge and how? (short answer—when you tell them you're fudging)

5. Other considerations

- a. First person or third person? (I did or THEY did)
- b. Costuming? (Are you re-creating or merely suggesting?)
- c. Time period—language issues? Other history/culture that needs to be explained?

6. Putting it together—making it “story”

- a. Organize the information—you need a *flow*, be it timeline or other
- b. Tidbits and bobs—what makes it interesting?
- c. 4 parts to make a story—beginning, middle, end and point
- d. Have more than you need or you'll need more than you have
- e. Keep it fresh

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