

**Genealogy Gems: News from the Fort Wayne Library
No. 15, May 31, 2005**

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**Reunions, Summer Projects, and StoryCorp Bring Old & New Excitement
by Curt B. Witcher**

As you read the latest "Genealogy Gems," May is turning into June and Memorial Day weekend is a memory. With the unofficial beginning of summer comes all those wonderful information gathering and researching opportunities. Do you have a family reunion planned for this summer? Are you deciding which libraries, cemeteries, and hometowns you'll visit to complement the online sources you have been using? I certainly hope so! That is often where the fun and excitement of genealogical endeavors really take place!

I am fortunate to be attending another family reunion this July. And though more than six weeks away, I am already feeling a bit behind in my planning. No, I am not talking about travel and lodging details, nor am I really that concerned about the potato salad and bean dishes that actually were decided upon long ago through Christmas greetings. The planning I am concerned about is my planning to harvest the most information from the relatives gathered there. In this age of mega databases and huge digital archives available at the touch of a few keystrokes, I fear many of us don't value "living memory" as much as we should. Many keys to more successful research, and many solutions to seemingly hopeless genealogical problems, rest in the minds or collected family treasures of relatives, both close and distant.

Capturing living memory is an increasing concern in a society where people write dramatically fewer letters than previous generations, save precious few emails as historical family records, and often do not document family traditions and celebratory

events in the same ways as their parents and grandparents. Once captured, the living memory of our families also needs to be preserved for future generations of genealogists. That can be challenging as well. I believe this is a dramatic issue facing early twenty-first century family researchers.

My interest in capturing and preserving living memory was further peaked a few weeks ago when Dave Isay was named ABC News' "Person of the Week." He was singled-out for recognition because of the initiative he started called StoryCorp. StoryCorp is a national project to instruct and inspire people to record each other's stories in sound. It was modeled after the WPA interviewing projects of the 1930s in which everyday Americans had their stories recorded. It is Isay's aspiration, as articulated on his website, that just as the WPA interviews remain the single most important collection of American voices for the 20th century, StoryCorp will build an equally significant collection of early 21st century voices. What a fantastic project for today's researchers as well as generations of genealogists to come!

On the StoryCorp website, <StoryCorp.net>, one can hear clips of stories that have been recorded already, view instructions and step-by-step guides to conducting interviews, and obtain more information about where the two StoryCorp MobileBooths will be over the next several months. At StoryBooths, mobile or otherwise, people can make broadcast-quality recordings of interviews with friends and family members, and even enlist the assistance of a trained facilitator. The American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress has agreed to house and make accessible the recorded archives of the StoryCorp project. See the StoryCorp website for more details on this exciting initiative.

You don't have to wait for a formal program like StoryCorp to come to your area, though, to begin this important activity. The step-by-step guides on their websites, and many other good websites, and the many books and articles about successful interviewing can be utilized any place at any time. Using a digital recorder (sound or sound and picture) to capture reminiscences at family reunions, record interviews you conduct with family members, and document important family events takes advantage of contemporary technology to both preserve and share such recordings. There is no time like the present to get started!

As you are planning your summer fun over the next several months, recall that the Historical Genealogy Department is constantly adding new materials to the department--many hundreds of books and microtext each month. Our searchable databases for Allen County, IN on the FriendsOfAllenCounty.org website also continue to grow. The marriage and obituary databases have been updated through the end of 2004 and through the first quarter of 2005 respectively. And another one half of

one year of surname file entries have been added to the surname file.
[FriendsOfAllenCounty.org/search_gensurnames.php]

We are also very pleased to announce that back issues of this e-zine, "Genealogy Gems," are now available on the library's website. If you'd like to go back and refresh your memory about some collections and resources highlighted in previous issues, look in the "Genealogy" section of the library's homepage under "Publications" or use the following link. <<http://www.acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy/ezine/index.html>>

Recall, too, you have a date toward the end of this summer! Remember? Follow this link just to be sure: <<http://www.indgensoc.org/MR2005brochure.pdf>>

Slave Petitions, Ownership and the Name Game
by Roberta Ridley

Collection Title: Race, Slavery, and Free Blacks; Series I (Legislative Petitions, 1777-1867); Series II, Parts A, B, C, and E (Petitions to Southern County Courts, 1775-1867). Currently the collection consists of 108 microfilm reels.

The Race and Slavery Petitions Project has focused on publication of all extant relevant legislative petitions and county petitions from fifteen slaveholding states and the District of Columbia, during the period from the American Revolution through the Civil War. The county court petitions in this collection offer testimony on a broad range of subjects by a variety of southerners. The reports occasionally reveal black genealogical information stretching back to the mid-seventeenth century. They detail how slaves, as chattels, could and often did find themselves sold, conveyed, or distributed as part of their masters' estates. They also reveal the impact of market forces on the slave family, especially as surnames and ownership apply. Every petition in the Series II edition is preceded by a Petition Analysis Record accession number, which identifies the county, state, year, and sequence of the petition within that year.

Accession # 20182803, Franklin County, Alabama reveals that in 1798 Thomas Blount Whitmill, while living in North Carolina wrote a will in which he loaned "six negroes-to-wit: Sam, Eli, Charity, Tempy, Lewey & Molly & their increase during her natural life," to his daughter Elizabeth. If she bore children, they were to inherit the slaves forever; otherwise the slaves were to be divided equally among his other four children. Elizabeth married Arthur S. Hogan and died childless in 1824. Anne S. Bell, last surviving heir to Mr. Whitmill, along with her husband (John I. Bell) sued Mr. Hogan for title to the slaves and their increase in addition to the proceeds from

their hire since Elizabeth's death. The total value of the slaves was estimated to be \$5,550.

This example shows several interesting possibilities for descendants of the slaves and slave-owning families involved. We know that the family names of Whitmill, Hogan, and Bell are connected and that these names are likely connected to the slaves as well. We know that Mr. Whitmill had at least five children and that four died between 1798 and 1824 and that Elizabeth never bore any children. The slaves were born or previously lived in North Carolina and were loaned out to Alabama.

The issues covered in these petitions address casual loss, debt, divorce, distribution of slaves, dower rights, estates, guardianship, hiring out, injunction, marriage, sale of slaves, slave title dispute, and slaves in estate. Printed guides, edited by Loren Schweningen, provide detailed abstracts and indexes to many of the petitions.

A Tremendous Resource: "Ancestors in German Archives: A Guide to Family History Sources"

review by Curt B. Witcher

One of the very best, thoroughly researched, and heavily detailed guides published in the last year in the genealogy field is Dr. Raymond Wright's "Ancestors in German Archives: A Guide to Family History Sources" [Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2004]. Together with students at Brigham Young University and associates working with BYU's "German Immigrant Ancestors" project, Raymond Wright has compiled a worthy tome of nearly 1200 pages.

As Wright so correctly states in the work's prefatory material, the German territories and the German Empire provided more emigrants to America than any other European national entity. Many of us researching our German ancestors are at least intimidated, if not often frustrated, by the challenges of locating German records. This work details the record collections of nearly two thousand national, state, and local government, as well as private, archives in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Collecting and attempting to verify collection descriptions and holdings information for such a large number of record repositories was an enormous task done over a number of years. The first phase of the project involved researchers conducting onsite evaluations of archives throughout Germany. These phase one researchers were looking specifically for records and documents that described members of German families who lived since the Middle Ages. The second phase of the project involved sending detailed questionnaires to all known repositories. Summaries were created

from the returned questionnaires. Searching the Internet for additional information both updated and verified data provided in the returned questionnaires and also provided the research team with information about those archives that did not return their questionnaires. When they were found, published inventories of particular archives were also used to make up for unreturned surveys and enhance data already gathered. After completion of the archives summaries, they were returned to the respective archivists with the request that their staffs proofread them, and make appropriate additions and corrections. Such a thorough process contributes both to the utility and comprehensiveness of this work.

As much detailed information as possible was gathered for each record repository. Possible data elements for an archive, in addition to its location, include:

- *jurisdiction of the archive
- *organization of the archive's records
- *published guides or descriptions of collections
- *emigration records
- *records of churches or religious communities
- *records from cities, towns, districts, etc.
- *censuses and similar records
- *military records
- *records from former German jurisdictions now in other countries

The work contains nineteen maps including a "Germany Today" map indicating state boundaries, state capitals, and cities with federal archives and a "German Empire, 1871-1918" map indicating state boundaries and state/provincial capitals. An archives index and a locality index enhance the user's access to the information contained in this work. This is certainly a must have/must consult reference work for anyone researching German ancestry.

HOTEL OF THE MONTH

Each issue we will feature a local hotel, for visitors from out-of-town.

Best Way Inn
5718 Bluffton Road, Fort Wayne
260-747-4950

For those looking for an inexpensive place to stay, the locally-owned Best Way Inn may be a solution. A motel at the airport end of town, it has cable and HBO and a Jacuzzi. There are a number of good restaurants and a grocery store nearby. The library is an easy 15 minute drive. Rooms start at \$30.

AREA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Allen County Public Library
3rd floor atrium display area
Passages: Immigration

Allen County Genealogical Society of Indiana (ACGSI)

<http://www.ipfw.edu/ipfwhist/historgs/acgsi.htm>

Wednesday, 8 June, Annual June Dinner Meeting, will be at the American Legion Post #330, 330 Entrance Drive, New Haven. 6:30 pm. Reservation form was mailed in May and also included in the June issue of LINES. ACGSI doesn't meet in July and August. The meeting schedule will resume in September on Tuesday the 14th.

Computer Users Group

The computer users group will meet again in September.

DeKalb County Indiana Genealogical Society

Monday, 6 June

St. Michael's Cemetery Tour, 6:00 pm

Meet at the cemetery. If it rains, bring an umbrella. If it is sunny, bring mosquito spray. If there is a thunder storm, we will be meeting in the basement of the church. There will be a tour and history of the cemetery. Directions: Take SR 427 north of Waterloo, drive 4.3 miles on CR 39/SR 27 to CR 10. The cemetery is west of the road on CR 10 about 1/4 miles from St. Michael's.

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)

First Wednesday of each month in the Genealogy Department 9am - 3pm.

Expert help from members of the DAR in becoming a member of that organization

ACPL LIBRARIANS ON TOUR

Curt Witcher

15 June: Researching Native American Ancestry, Anderson Public Library, Anderson, IN, 7:00 pm

18 August: Midwestern Roots Pre-Conference, Panel Discussion on "History and Genealogy: Why Not Both?", Indiana History Center (Indiana Historical Society Headquarters), Indianapolis, IN, 6:00pm

27 August: "Your Society Wants YOU! Effective Recruiting Strategies for Genealogical Societies." Ohio Genealogical Society Chapter Management Seminar, Batavia, OH, 1:15pm

7-10 September: Federation of Genealogical Societies Conference, Salt Lake City, UT

9 September: Doing the History Eliminates the Mystery

10 September: Using the Forgotten and Maligned: Key Government Documents for Genealogical Research

Delia Bourne

9 June : Beginning Genealogy/Use of the Historical Genealogy Department, Georgetowne Place Retirement Apartments, 1717 Maplecrest Road, Fort Wayne, 1:00 pm

Steven W. Myers

31 August-6 September: National Institute for Genealogical Studies Research Academy in Salt Lake City--Irish Research

Ryan Taylor

31 August-6 September: National Institute for Genealogical Studies Research Academy in Salt Lake City--English Research

DRIVING DIRECTIONS TO THE LIBRARY

Wondering how to get to the library? Our exciting transition location is 200 E. Berry, Fort Wayne, Indiana. We will be at this location until late 2006. We would enjoy having you visit the Genealogy Department.

To get directions from your exact location to 200 E. Berry, Fort Wayne, Indiana, visit this link at MapQuest:

<http://www.mapquest.com/maps/map.adp?country=US&countryid=250&addtohistory=&searchtab=address&searchtype=address&address=200+E+Berry+St&city=Fort+Wayne&state=IN&zipcode=46802-2706&search=++Search++&finditform=1>

From the South

Exit Interstate 69 at exit 102. Drive east on Jefferson Blvd. into downtown. Turn left on Barr Street to Berry Street. The library is located on the corner of Berry and Barr Streets.

From the North

Exit Interstate 69 at exit 112. Drive south on Coldwater Road, which merges into Clinton Street. Continue south on Clinton, the library will be on your left when you cross Berry Street.

From the West

Using US 30:

Drive into town on US 30. US 30 turns into Goshen Road. Coming up to an angled street (State Street.) make an angled left turn. Turn right on Wells Street. Go south on Wells to Wayne Street. Left on Wayne Street. When you cross Clinton, the library will be on your left on Wayne Street.

Using US 24:

After crossing under Interstate 69, follow the same directions as from the South.

From the East

Follow US 30/then 930 into and through New Haven, under an overpass into downtown Fort Wayne. You will be on Washington Blvd. when you get into downtown. Turn right on Barr Street. Turn left on Berry Street. The library is on your left on Berry Street.

PARKING AT THE LIBRARY

Lot in front of the library, east side

Available for short-term library parking. Limited to one hour.

Tippman Parking Garage

Clinton and Wayne Streets. Across from the library, however the skybridge is NOT accessible. Hourly parking, \$1.25 per hour up to a maximum of \$5.00 per day.

Park Place Lot

Covered parking on Barr Street at Main Street. This lot is one block away from the library. Hourly parking Monday through Friday, 9am to 6pm.

Street (metered) parking on Wayne Street and Berry Street.

On the street you plug the meters 8am - 5pm, weekdays only. It is free to park on the street after 5pm and on the weekends.

Visitor center/Grand Wayne center

Covered parking at Washington and Clinton Streets. This is the Hilton Hotel parking lot that also serves as a day parking garage. For hourly parking, 7am - 11 pm,

charges are .50 for the first 45 minutes, then \$1.00 per hour. There is a flat \$2.00 fee between 5pm and 11pm.

GENEALOGY DEPARTMENT QUERIES

The Historical Genealogy Department hopes you find this newsletter interesting. Thank you for subscribing. We cannot, however, answer personal research emails written to the e-zine address. The department houses a Research Center that makes photocopies and conducts research for a fee.

If you have a general question about our collection, or are interested in the Research Center, please telephone the library and speak to a librarian who will be glad to answer your general questions or send you a research center form. Our telephone number is 260-421-1225. If you'd like to email a general information question about the department, please email: Genealogy@ACPL.Info.

Publishing Note:

This electronic newsletter is published by the Allen County Public Library's Historical Genealogy Department, and is intended to enlighten readers about genealogical research methods as well as inform them about the vast resources of the Allen County Public Library. We welcome the wide distribution of this newsletter and encourage readers to forward it to their friends and societies. All precautions have been made to avoid errors. However, the publisher does not assume any liability to any party for any loss or damage caused by errors or omissions, no matter the cause.

To subscribe to *Genealogy Gems*, simply use your browser to go to the website: www.FriendsOfAllenCounty.org. Scroll down toward the bottom of the first screen where it says, "Enter Your Email Address to Subscribe to "Genealogy Gems." Enter your email address in the yellow box and click on "Subscribe." You will be notified with a confirmation email.

If you do not want to receive this e-zine, please follow the link at the very bottom of the issue of *GenealogyGems* you just received or send an email to kspears@acpl.lib.in.us with "unsubscribe e-zine" in the subject line.

Ryan Taylor, editor