

Genealogy Gems: News from the Fort Wayne Library  
No. 46, December 31, 2007

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Great Old and New Years!

by Curt B. Witcher

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An amazing year is drawing to a close. Back on January 27th of this year, a greatly expanded and completely renovated Main Library opened. All materials available on open shelves, digital microtext scanners, a wireless network, an in-house cafe, and lots of room for researchers are among the many benefits of researching in the new Genealogy Center.

And we're excited about all the attention we have attracted. The Indiana Genealogical Society held one of their largest April conferences at the new Main Library. A few months later in August, along with the Grand Wayne Convention Center we hosted the Federation of Genealogical Societies' national conference. More than 1500 individuals spent the better part of a week enjoying great programs, fantastic camaraderie, super collections and facilities--and we're just getting started! In this issue "Genealogy Gems" you will learn of new program offerings debuting in 2008. Read on--and stay tuned!

When I think about the successes of this past year, I feel compelled to encourage you to take advantage of the many new \*and\* old things that are available to enhance your research efforts.

\*\*The Periodical Source Index (PERSI) has been available as the subject index to the world of genealogical periodical literature since 1987. 2007 saw the uploading of the two millionth subject entry. If you haven't used PERSI in a while, you really need to take another look. What you're not finding in books or online may be waiting for you in the newsletter or quarterly of a genealogical society.

\*\*Two more databases have just been added to the very significant online resources available to researchers who work in our Genealogy Center. They are Footnote.com and WorldVitalRecords.com. Footnote is currently offering more than twenty-two million historical images and growing at a rate of two million images per month. Their unique and comfortable interface and complete indexing of such record groups as the Revolutionary War pension files makes the site a worthwhile stop for any

genealogist. And through the WorldVitalRecords site researchers have access to more than 864,541,789 names in nearly five thousand databases. While one can simply type in "Footnote.com" or "WorldVitalRecords.com" in the browser on any ACPL computer, look for direct links to these sites from the Genealogy Center webpage.

\*\*The WeRelate.org website really took off this year. It is now the largest Genealogy Wiki on the Internet with pages for more than one million people and families. The database of genealogy sites on the web is one of the best around for family historians. A new place index, complete with maps and historical information in many cases, will be a terrific resource to look forward to using in 2008. You can also look forward to the unveiling of a new digital library component on this site in the New Year.

\*\*The new Military Heritage component of the GenealogyCenter.Info webpage is becoming a comfortable place for individuals to have military data posted and to discover the military's contributions to our country from its earliest days to present. Please consider letting us post digital images of some of your family's military documents, medals, and honors.

Reflecting on a waning year and musing about one just dawning, I can't help but spend a few moments thinking about how natural disasters touched so many lives this year. From the flooding that accompanied torrential downpours in the central part of the country to the horrible fires in California, these events disrupted lives, caused huge losses of property, and robbed so many of their precious heirlooms, photograph albums, scrapbooks and other family documents. A good New Year's resolution would be for each of use to consistently deploy the LOCKSS method of data security--Lots Of Copies Keeps Stuff Safe. Make a few DVDs of your genealogical data and share them with family members. Even if those family members say they're not interested in genealogy, ask them simply to hold a copy for you for safekeeping. And if you'd like to share your research with others but don't really have an interest in officially publishing your work, send the Genealogy Center a copy. We'll ensure that it's safe and available for others to use. Remember that you can also post amazing amounts of genealogical data, including uploading GEDCOM files, at WeRelate.org.

From all of us in the Genealogy Center, Happy New Year!

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### Spanish Land Grants in Florida

by Melissa Shimkus

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While Florida was under Spanish rule, the Spanish government established procedures to grant land titles to individuals based on whether they were laborers, soldiers, or aristocrats. First, an individual had to petition the governor of the territory for the land. Then the governor would grant the land to the individual with conditions. A surveyor would interview witnesses to verify information and survey the land. Finally, a land title would be awarded once the governor verified that the individual had satisfied the conditions of the grant.

On March 30, 1822, a territorial government was created in Florida under the United States. An agreement was made with Spain which provided individuals who had received land in Florida from the Spanish government prior to 1818 the right to file claims to their land. A Board of Commissioners for West Florida and a Board of Commissioners for East Florida were established to review the validity of claims and evidence provided.

The Historical Records Survey Program was created by the WPA (Works Progress Administration) to record state and county archives. In Florida, they deciphered and interpreted the archival papers of these Boards of Commissioners, publishing a five volume set, "Spanish Land Grants in Florida" (975.9 H62sp). The first volume features unconfirmed claims, while the other four volumes document confirmed land claims. The records are listed alphabetically by surname. Information found in the claims varies for each case but can include a petition for the land, names of family members, military service information, a survey or plat of the land, depositions of neighbors and family, deeds, and character testimony. Many individuals supplied the documents from their land title petition under the Spanish government.

The record for Guillermo Craig, who claimed ownership of a section of land along the St. Johns River, offers a wealth of information. Guillermo provided details of how he acquired the land and the former owner signed off on the explanation. Three witnesses testified when he met the conditions required to receive the land title. The names and ages of the witnesses are provided. A dispute with James Hall over the land created another entry.

"Spanish Land Grants in Florida" is an informative resource for Florida researchers, which documents the locations, dates, names, and some ages for land owners in Florida when it was transferred from the Spanish government to the United States.

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The World War I Survey: Papers compiled from the United States Military History Institute Collection at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania  
by Delia Cothrun Bourne

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In the early 1970s, the United States Military History Institute conducted a survey of surviving American participants in World War I military activities. The result was more than 5500 questionnaires consisting of answers to 45 questions, dealing with life in camp, duty overseas, and other aspects of service. In 1985, University Publications of America produced 39 rolls of microfilm from this collection, containing what the editors considered the most complete and useful of these files. In organizing this material for microfilming, UPA placed them in sections dealing with boot camp and camp life, the war in France by division, the Occupation, the Versailles Peace Commission, and auxiliary units, including but not limited to troopships, Chaplain Corps, Red Cross, Salvation Army, YMCA, Mexican border and China Expedition. Many respondents added reminiscences, letters, photographs, and other documentary souvenirs. For example, Reel #2 includes 210 pages of letters by Victor W. Jones of Seattle discussing life at Camp Lewis in Washington. On that same reel are nine pages of photographs of men in training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, and of the Hattiesburg Hospital. An examination of the reminiscences and activities included in the resulting collection could fuel a number of sociological studies, but, for genealogists, the big draw is the hope of finding accounts of an actual family member, or another whose experiences were similar.

While there is no name index to the set, an online guide is available at [http://www.lexisnexis.com/documents/academic/upa\\_cis/11499\\_WorldWarI\\_Survey.pdf](http://www.lexisnexis.com/documents/academic/upa_cis/11499_WorldWarI_Survey.pdf) which provides a table of contents, an introduction detailing the scope and history of the survey, and the Reel Index, which lists a few of the respondents by name, and notes which camp or regiment is the

focus of the specific questionnaires, providing frame numbers as a reference point.

Even if a researcher cannot locate a particular ancestor, the files provide a fascinating source for understanding the experiences and feelings of those involved in the war. Additional material contributed by the veteran can supply data about the men with whom the respondent served. Paul E.A. Lehman's detailed questionnaire on Reel #14 contains copies of his daily itinerary and the embarkation passenger list for Company D, 6th Motor Supply Train, 6th Division, which includes the name, serial number, next of kin and address for each man in the Company. The set is filled with such nuggets of genealogical gold, just awaiting the persistent researcher interested in World War I sources.

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Preservation Tip of the Month  
by Becky Schipper

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Far more photo albums are being lost through neglect and indifference than are being saved and preserved successfully. Family albums will bring to life past events and personalities. Every seemingly inconsequential activity that was photographed will bring to light family growth, change and sometimes loss. Old family photo albums are still around in abundance but may fast become a rarity. Reconsider their value as a family record that you can share. Photos can be scanned and placed on DVD or other media formats that would make great gifts.

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New Learning Opportunities

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Now that the Genealogy Center staff has had a chance to settle into our new digs, we are very excited about some new educational opportunities for researchers, in addition to March Madness week (detailed below), and our popular month-long Family History Month events in October.

We figured it's a long time between March and October, so in the mornings of the fourth Saturday of each month, March through October, lectures on some aspect of research will be offered. First up will be "Using Censuses," given by our newest librarian, Melissa Shimkus on Saturday March 22nd. Other dates to watch for are April 26th, May 24th, July 26th, August 23rd, and September 27th. Did you notice that we skipped June and October? That's because we are offering expanded Friday-Saturday Theme Programs on June 27th & 28th, and October 24th & 25th. Keep reading Genealogy Gems for more information.

The other part of our new programming component consists of offering programs on using some of our databases to the groups that arrange their research visit at least two months in advance. Starting in January, when the representative of a visiting group contacts the Genealogy Center, s/he will have an opportunity to schedule a program on Ancestry, HeritageQuestOnline, PERSI, or a combination overview of Footnote.com and New England Ancestors. Call 260-421-1225 or email [Genealogy@ACPL.info](mailto:Genealogy@ACPL.info) to schedule your group and program. It should be one more reason to make The Genealogy Center in Fort Wayne your family history destination.

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## March Madness--Genealogical Style

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Saturday March 1, 2008: "Beginning Genealogy," Margery Graham, Instructor, sponsored by the Allen County Genealogical Society of Indiana, Meeting Room A. 9:30-10:30: "How Do I Get Started?" 10:40-11:40: "Methodology & Organization." Question and answer session 11:40-12N. Tour of the Genealogy Center at 12:15 pm. Fee \$10. Pre-registration required. Call 260-672-2585 for more information, or use the form at <http://www.acgsi.org/workshop.pdf> to register.

Sunday March 2, 2008: "The Five Forts That Make Fort Wayne." Presented by John Beatty. ACPL Theater, 1-2 PM. John Beatty, bibliographer of the Genealogy Center and co-author of the recent two-volume History of Fort Wayne and Allen County, Indiana, will discuss the five forts that have stood at or near the confluence of the three rivers, from the early 18th century to 1819. We will look at images of some of the people and sites that make up the early history of this region.

Monday March 3, 2008: "Searching Ancestry.com." Presented by Melissa Shimkus. Computer Classroom, 2:30-3:30 PM. Discover the tools to begin uncovering the secrets to your family's past by searching Ancestry.com. Improve your searches and find new strategies to maximize your use of Ancestry. Space is limited. Call 260-421-1225 to register.

Tuesday March 4, 2008: "Fingerprinting Our Families: Using Ancestral Origins as a Genealogical Research Key." Presented by Curt Witcher. Meeting Room C, 1-2 PM. This lecture explores how the concept of "America, the Great Melting Pot" may really be a flawed concept for genealogical researchers, and that identifying the particular ethnic group of one's ancestor or potential ancestor can pay some significant research dividends. Topics covered in this lecture include how to build an historical context for one's ancestor, studying population clusters, paying attention to patterns of all sorts (naming, migration, settlement, etc.), understanding the "push and pull" of migration (i.e. the reasons behind families or individuals migrating), and locating repositories for various ethnic groups' records.

Wednesday March 5, 2008: "Using PERSI at HeritageQuestOnline.com." Presented by Delia Bourne. Computer Classroom, 2:30-3:30 PM. Tips on using the best resource for genealogy and local history periodical research. Space is limited. Call 260-421-1225 to register.

Thursday March 6, 2008: "Ask the Librarian." Meeting Room A, 2:30-3:30 PM. Genealogy Center Staff will discuss and answer questions submitted by customers. To submit a question for inclusion, send to [Genealogy@ACPL.info](mailto:Genealogy@ACPL.info), with March 6, 2008 in the subject line by February 28, 2008. YOUR question could be chosen for discussion!

Friday March 7, 2008: "Not Just Ancestry: Using the Entire Internet for Genealogy." Presented by Don Litzer. Meeting Room A, 10-11 AM. The Internet's potential for family history research is much more than trolling Ancestry.com for names. Some useful data websites are obvious, others mundane. Beyond data, it's often overlooked that the Internet is still at its most powerful in facilitating communication—networking with people and places with research knowledge and access. This program gives you fish and teaches you how to fish: it offers a five-step strategy for successful Internet research, recommends a short list of must-see websites that will give you a core expertise once mastered, and provides numerous examples of how the Internet can advance

your genealogy project.

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#### Librarians on Parade

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Curt Witcher

January 10, 2008 , 8:30A to 4P, Palinet, 3000 Market St., Philadelphia, PA, American Library Association Sponsored Program Genealogy Seminar: "Librarians Serving Genealogists--The Strategies and the Tools."

Feb. 13, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. at the Allen County Public Library's Main Library, 900 Library Plaza. Topic: "All That Other Stuff!: Other Census Records Beyond the Population Schedules."

Mar. 4, 2008 at 1 p.m. at the Allen County Public Library's Main Library, 900 Library Plaza, Meeting Room C. Topic: "Fingerprinting Our Ancestors: Using Ancestral Origins as a Genealogical Research Key."

John Beatty

Mar. 2, 2008 at 1 p.m. at the Allen County Public Library's Main Library, 900 Library Plaza, Theater. Topic: "The Five Forts That Make Fort Wayne."

Delia Bourne

Mar. 5, 2008 at 2:30 p.m. at the Allen County Public Library's Main Library, 900 Library Plaza, Computer Classroom. Topic: "Using PERSI at HeritageQuestOnline.com."

Don Litzer

Jan. 12, 2008 at 2:00 p.m. at Christ Church, Cranbrook, Bloomfield Hills, MI . Topic: "What's in a German Name?"

Mar. 7, 2008 at 10 a.m. at the Allen County Public Library's Main Library, 900 Library Plaza, Meeting Room A. Topic: "Not Just Ancestry: Using the Entire Internet for Genealogy."

Mar. 12, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. at the Allen County Public Library's Main Library, 900 Library Plaza. Topic: "What's in a German Place Name?"

Melissa Shimkus

Jan. 9, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. at the Allen County Public Library's Main Library, 900 Library Plaza. Topic: "Doing Research at the ACPL Genealogy Center."

Mar. 3, 2008 at 2:30 p.m. at the Allen County Public Library's Main Library, 900 Library Plaza, Computer Classroom. Topic: "Searching Ancestry.com."

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#### Area Calendar of Events

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Allen County Genealogical Society of Indiana (ACGSI)

Jan. 9, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. at the Allen County Public Library's Main Library, 900 Library Plaza. Genealogy Center librarian Melissa Shimkus will present "Doing Research at the ACPL Genealogy Center."

Feb. 13, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. at the Allen County Public Library's Main Library, 900 Library Plaza. Genealogy Center manager Curt Witcher will present "All That Other Stuff!: Other Census Records Beyond the Population Schedules."

Mar. 12, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. at the Allen County Public Library's Main Library, 900 Library Plaza. Genealogy Center librarian Don Litzer will present "What's in a German Place Name?"

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) "First Wednesday" program of lineage assistance is Wednesday, January 2, 2008, 9 am - 7 pm at the Allen County Public Library's Main Library, 900 Library Plaza, in the Genealogy Center. Expert help from members of the DAR on becoming a member of that organization.

Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society, 302 East Berry, Ft. Wayne, IN

Jan. 6, 2008, 2 p.m., Craig Leonard presents "Wing and Mahurin, Ft. Wayne's Architectural Pioneers"

Feb. 3, 2008, 2 p.m., Rubin L. Brown presents "In Need of Change: Early African-American Doctors in Ft. Wayne"

Mar. 2, 2008, p.m., Gen Dornbush and Jacqui Seals present "Quilting: Art, Politics and Superstitions" (Featuring work by Sisters of the Cloth)

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#### Driving Directions to the Library

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Wondering how to get to the library? Our location is 900 Library Plaza, Fort Wayne, Indiana, in the block bordered on the south by Washington Boulevard, the west by Ewing Street, the north by Wayne Street, and the east by the Library Plaza, formerly Webster Street. We would enjoy having you visit the Genealogy Center.

To get directions from your exact location to 900 Library Plaza, Fort Wayne, Indiana, visit this link at MapQuest:

<http://www.mapquest.com/maps/map.adp?formtype=address&addtohistory=&address=900%20Webster%20St&city=Fort%20Wayne&state=IN&zipcode=46802%2d3602&country=US&geodiff=1>

>From the South

Exit Interstate 69 at exit 102. Drive east on Jefferson Boulevard into downtown. Turn left on Ewing Street. The Library is one block north, at Ewing Street and Washington Boulevard.

Using US 27:

US 27 turns into Lafayette Street. Drive north into downtown. Turn left at Washington Boulevard and go five blocks. The Library will be on the right.

>From the North

Exit Interstate 69 at exit 112. Drive south on Coldwater Road, which merges into Clinton Street.

Continue south on Clinton to Washington Boulevard. Turn right on Washington and go three blocks. The Library will be on the right.

>From the West

Using US 30:

Drive into town on US 30. US 30 turns into Goshen Ave. which dead-ends at West State Blvd. Make an angled left turn onto West State Blvd. Turn right on Wells Street. Go south on Wells to Wayne Street. Turn left on Wayne Street. The Library will be in the second block on the right.

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. Library Plaza will be on the right.

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#### Parking at the Library

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At the Library, underground parking can be accessed from Wayne Street. Other library parking lots are at Washington and Webster, and Wayne and Webster. Hourly parking is \$1 per hour with a \$7 maximum. ACPL library card holders may use their cards to validate the parking ticket at the west end of the Great Hall of the Library. Out of county residents may purchase a subscription card with proof of identification and residence. The current fee for an Individual Subscription Card is \$70.

Public lots are located at the corner of Ewing and Wayne Streets (\$1 each for the first two half-hours, \$1 per hour after, with a \$4 per day maximum) and the corner of Jefferson Boulevard and Harrison Street (\$3 per day).

Street (metered) parking on Ewing and Wayne Streets. 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 garage 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.

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#### Genealogy Center Queries

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The Genealogy Center 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](mailto:Genealogy@ACPL.Info).

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Publishing Note:

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This electronic newsletter is published by the Allen County Public Library's Genealogy Center, 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.GenealogyCenter.Info](http://www.GenealogyCenter.Info). 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](mailto:kspears@acpl.lib.in.us) with "unsubscribe e-zine" in the subject line.

Curt Witcher, editor pro-tem