

Genealogy Gems: News from the Fort Wayne Library
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Take a Look Around. . .

by Curt B. Witcher

Many times in our research, we get so focused on a particular ancestor and a specific fact we are trying to discover that we lose context and unnecessarily narrow our resource pool. We should remind ourselves that looking around on a census record for neighbors of an ancestor might provide us with valuable context and help us engage in nearby research, that looking at all the early landowners for a particular area might help us determine a town or village of origin in the old country, and that paying attention to members of specific churches in a geographic area might also provide clues to ancestral origins.

When using online resources, even for the one hundredth time, it can be quite useful to "look around" a bit. You may have already conducted all your online census searching and have concluded that you've found everything there is to find. But, did you know that Ancestry, FamilySearch and others continue to enhance both census images and indexing? There are many similar sites where the posture of "been there, done that!" may leave you missing some key information. The GenealogyCenter.Info website recently added many thousands of images and records to searchable data files and to the "Our Military Heritage" portion of the site. The FamilySearch Wiki and Record Search continue to grow. Even our favorite state or county website is likely adding new content continuously. The Indiana Genealogical Society, as an example, added more than one hundred searchable files to its website in the last year. There is much to discover and use, if we take a moment or two to look around.

Looking around can also help us look forward. And I really urge you to look forward to October of this year and Family History Month 2010. We have planned an extra special Family History Month this year. As we have done the past several years, there will be a family history activity of some

kind taking place every day of the month. This year, as you will read later in this ezine, we have developed general themes for the weeks. In addition, we are offering several very special programs.

First, our third annual Military Symposium will take place October 8th and 9th. Since 2011 begins five years of commemorative activities marking the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, we have engaged the services of Amy Johnson Crow, CG to present a general talk that Friday about military burials and four talks on Saturday on Civil War research. This symposium will definitely be packed with useful information--researching your Civil War soldier online, using state and local records for Civil War research, and taking a look at Civil War veterans post-war and their fraternal organizations.

Second, we are presenting a really fine set of programs at the very end of the month. We have created a "banner" for this neat set of programs called "Start Sharing the News--A Celebration of Collaboration." The events start Friday evening, October 29th, with a dinner event at the historic Baker Street Train Station in downtown Fort Wayne. I will be presenting a program after dinner on "How the Genealogy Center became a National Tourist Attraction." All day on Saturday, October 30th, there are a number of programs focusing on how to collaborate in the family history field and how information can be posted on the web for wider access and enhanced sharing. Sunday morning, October 31st, we will feature a tour of the historic Lindenwood Cemetery.

Finally, each Tuesday afternoon in October, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., we will offer one-on-one research consultations. This is the perfect opportunity to get some professional assistance with a challenging research problem or genealogical brickwall you have encountered. So many times it helps to let a fresh set of eyes look at a research problem with which we are struggling.

In sixty-one days, Family History Month 2010 will start. Support your Genealogy Center and your continuing genealogical education by taking part in a number of activities that month. To do that, you should really start planning today.

Researching Mine Deaths
by Delia Cothrun Bourne

Historically, mining is one of the most dangerous occupations in the United States. From the coal mines of West Virginia to the zinc mines of Oklahoma, fatal accidents claimed the lives of both native-born Americans and immigrants. The Genealogy Center holds a number of sources that describe these calamities and list their victims. The information has been culled from a variety of sources, including the reports of mine inspectors, church records and funeral home ledgers. Following are just a few examples.

Arranged chronologically, with a name index of victims, "Fatalities in West Virginia Coal Mines, 1883-1925," compiled by Helen S. Stinson, (975.4 ST5F), includes the date and cause of accident, the name of the mine, and the names of the victims and their dates of death. Entries also may note each victim's nationality, length of experience, age, marital status, number of dependents, and the amount of insurance carried. Most of these casualties were African-American, but the list also includes Hungarians, Italians, and others. For example, 49 year old W. McGinnis, a Scottish

immigrant with 17 years of experience, was injured and died in the Pocahontas Mine in Wood County. McGinnis left a widow and nine children. An online index is being compiled at <http://pages.swcp.com/~dhickman/wvcmf/wvcmf.html>, but is incomplete at present.

An unusual book is "Chesterfield County, Virginia Uncovered: The Records of Death and Slave Insurance Records for the Coal Mining Industry, 1810-1895," by Nancy C. Frantel (975.501 C42FR). This volume includes lists of slaves leased to mines by their owners. While many slave lists include only the owner's name, this insurance list gives slave names and includes age, gender and the identity of the policy applicant (the slave owner). Appendices include an 1837 list of slaves by owner, and an inventory of slaves sold at an estate sale in the 1810s.

"From Hell to Heaven: Death-Related Mining Accidents in North Idaho," by Gene Hyde (979.6 H993FR) provides historical context in the form of reproductions of safety posters and a glossary of mining terms, along with the expected accounts of mine accidents and deaths.

Men from all over the world and across the United States worked and sometimes died in mines in pursuit of the earth's riches. Information about mine accidents and victims may be found in books in The Genealogy Center collection, in government documents, or in unpublished source material - treasure for the diligent researcher to uncover!

Free Negro Tax Books
by Melissa Shimkus

As early as 1756, the South Carolina General Assembly established a capitation tax, or head tax, on free blacks. In 1804, the state legislature finally fixed the taxable age for these individuals at between fifteen and fifty years. The amount charged varied through the years, but was set at two dollars for most years from 1795 through 1857. It rose to three dollars in 1860 and ended at ten dollars in 1864.

"The South Carolina State Free Negro Capitation Tax Books" collection contains twenty-nine volumes listing free blacks who lived in Charleston, South Carolina in 1811, 1821-23, 1826-27, 1832-46, 1848-52, 1855, 1857 and 1860. The books are organized by year, then the first letter of the surname, and are available on two microfilm rolls in The Genealogy Center.

These volumes were created to monitor those who had paid and those who were delinquent on their capitation taxes. For genealogists, the entries verify that an individual was living in Charleston in a specific year and may allow calculation of an approximate birth year. They also provide other valuable details, such as an individual's state of health and occupation, as well as notations of deaths or migration from the area. For example, Elizabeth Bland Proren was infirm in 1848 and Daniel Johnson was disabled in 1850. In 1823, Sarah Seymour was noted as dead, leading the researcher to look for corroborating records. Richard Savage's occupation in 1823 was given as carpenter. People moving out of the area were documented, such as Marcus Simone in 1823 and William Eden in 1850, both of whom were recorded as living in Georgetown. When individuals reached fifty-one, surpassing the maximum age for the tax, they were noted as "overage." This was the case for Tom Strobel in 1823 and Mary Davis in 1850.

"The South Carolina State Free Negro Capitation Tax Books" are a wonderful source for discovering previously unknown details about free African American ancestors in Charleston, South Carolina.

Technology Tip of the Month--Further Adventures with Adobe Photoshop: The Photomerge Tool
by Kay Spears

Many people have inherited one or two long photographs that are rolled up. These panoramic photographs could be a cityscape, landscape, school class, military unit, or reunion group. Over the years these photographs have probably become brittle and if you try to unroll them, they will start to crack. So, what can be done to unroll such a picture safely and then scan it on a scanner that is too small?

First, start what could be a very long process of relaxing the photo. Methods involving chemicals, water, or steam could be used, but all add moisture to a photograph that is already degrading. I recommend that you DO NOT use any method that is going to add moisture to an old photograph. What I do recommend is this. Cover the photograph with some acid free paper to prevent any scratching, and then gradually add small weights to flatten it, starting at the center, and eventually moving those weights to the edge of the photograph. If you don't have weights, two small books work just as well. Relaxing the photograph with this dry method may take anywhere from two weeks to three months, so you need to be patient, but eventually you will be able to flatten it.

The next step is to scan the photograph. In most cases, the panoramic photograph will be too big for the scanner, so this is one of the few times you will scan a photo in sections. Be sure to have at least an inch of overlapping edge on each section, so that Photoshop can match these overlaps and merge them into an almost seamless image. All sections of the photograph should be scanned at 300 dpi and saved as TIFFs. These files will be large and the merge process uses a lot of memory, so make sure that all the other programs on your computer are off. Otherwise, you may lock up your computer and have to reboot.

In Photoshop go to File>Automate>Photomerge. The Photomerge dialog box will open. Now click Browse and find the folder that contains the images that you want to merge. Hold your shift key down and select all of the images you want to merge. (For this to work, assign consecutive file names such as Smith1, Smith2, Smith3.) Click Open. The image files should now be listed in the dialog box. Click OK. When you do this, your computer monitor will become animated as it goes through the process of opening all of the files, so don't be alarmed. Eventually, a preview screen with the merged images will open. If everything looks good, click OK. This step may take a few minutes and your computer monitor will become animated once again, but eventually you will see the finished merged image.

Now all you need to do is save it. I always save mine as a TIFF. What you will have is the panoramic view digitally recorded.

Next: TIFF or JPEG

Preservation Tip of the Month--More "Care" of Photographs
by Curt Witcher

Last month, my colleague shared some advice about caring for your photographs. We know how important photographic images are to our family stories, and we all have a strong interest in making sure those images survive long beyond our lifetimes. In addition to caring for the physical photographs, there are ways of employing technology to assure the images are well preserved and available for future generations of family members.

Digitizing and sharing photographic images is an important 21st century way of preserving photographs. Many are familiar with the acronym LOCKSS, which stands for "lots of copies keeps stuff safe." Today it is relatively easy and virtually free to digitize photographs and make them available in a number of formats and places. First, if several family members are working on the genealogies of related lines, suggest that all researchers make a digital copy of all their photographs and share those on DVDs or flash/jump drives with all other interested family members. Doing that helps protect against a disaster wiping-out a valuable collection.

Next, look for opportunities to contribute photographic images to virtual web sites. If you have pictures of tombstones, contemplate contributing them to the "Find-A-Grave" website. Consider creating a family page for yourself on WeRelate.org--it won't cost you a cent. Create a family photograph album for yourself on Flickr, and then invite family members to view and contribute. Investigate contributing photographic images to a virtual community album that the local library or historical society might be hosting in the area where your family lived.

There are many ways we can employ ever-advancing technology in the care of our photographs.

Genealogy @ Night

Our summer series concludes on Tuesday, August 17, at 6:30 p.m. when Dawne Slater-Putt presents "Cataloging 3-D Items & Heirlooms." Learn ways of recording information about three-dimensional objects so that future genealogists can enjoy not just the artifacts, but the history and special stories that go along with them. Look for more information at our Website www.acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy/programs.html and register via email to Genealogy@ACPL.Info or by phone at 260-421-1225. Join us for this last blast of summer!

Genealogy Center Mini-Course: Beyond the Basics

The popular mini-course, "Family History: Beyond the Basics," will be offered September 17 & 18, 2010. Instructors Margery Graham, CG and Steve Myers, MLS will share their knowledge as well as guide tours of the Genealogy Center and provide assisted research and personal consultations. "Family History: Beyond the Basics" will cover the following topics.

Day One:

Session 1: Problem Solving: Breaking through Brick Walls in Your Research - Every family historian eventually encounters obstacles in their research that seem insurmountable. Learn some basic strategies for tackling these so-called "brick walls" that can lead you to genealogical breakthroughs.

Session 2: Probate Records - Learn how to find and use wills, administrations and guardianships, as well as the other "goodies" contained in probate records.

Session 3: Land Records and Tax Lists - Learn the basics of land descriptions and how deed and land grant records, as well as associated tax lists, can all help advance your research.

Day Two:

Session 4: Military Records - Following an overview of military record sources, learn the basics of researching ancestors who served in the American Civil War (1861-1865) and in the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783).

Session 5: Church Records - Learn how to identify, locate and use these important sources of early birth, marriage and death information for a time period that pre-dates government registration of so-called "vital records."

Session 6: Tracing Your Ancestors Across the Atlantic - Learn how to find and use the many sources that bear on this crucial research step. Naturalization records, passenger lists, European emigration records and other sources will be discussed.

This course will be in Room BC of the Main Library, 900 Library Plaza, Fort Wayne, Indiana. The registration fee for the "Family History: Beyond the Basics" mini-course is \$50. Checks should be made payable to "ACPL Foundation" and mailed to: Genealogy Center, Allen County Public Library, P.O. Box 2270, Fort Wayne, IN 46801-2270. Mini-course attendance will be limited, so register early to avoid disappointment. Additional information and a workshop schedule will be posted soon on our Web site at www.acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy/programs.html.

Coming Soon: Family History Month 2010

A great month of events is in the works for your genealogical pleasure. This year, each week will highlight a specific aspect of research, with General Week, October 1st through 9th; Preservation Week October 10th through 16th; Technology Week, October 17th through 23rd; and Dead Week, October 24th through 31st. Other highlights include One-on-One Consultations every Tuesday and the annual Military Symposium on October 8th & 9th as well as the Cemetery Seekers' "Start Sharing the News" dinner at the Baker Street Station on October 29th, presentations on October 30th, and Lindenwood Cemetery Tour on Halloween. Add to all that the traditional Midnight Madness Extended Research Hours on Friday, October 29th. We anticipate an exciting month and hope you'll join us! Watch our website www.acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy/programs.html for more information.

Help Us Keep and Tell Our Stories

by Curt B. Witcher

To acquire, process, maintain, and provide access to hundreds of thousands of records, documents, and publications is a significant undertaking in any economic climate. In today's economic climate, the challenge is even greater as traditional tax-based funding sources are decreasing dramatically. Help us keep and make available the records that both document our heritage and assist with our stories by supporting the Genealogy Center Endowment Fund. One hundred percent of the money donated to this endowment supports the collections and activities of the Genealogy Center. And it's easy to contribute. Go to <www.ACPL.Info>, click on the "Support Your Library. . ." link in the bottom right corner, then click on "Donate to the ACPL Foundation," and fill out the secure form, choosing "Genealogy Center" from the list of giving options. If you prefer a more traditional payment method, checks to the ACPLF--Genealogy Endowment can be sent to Allen County Public Library, P. O. Box 2270, Ft. Wayne, IN 4680-2270. Thank you for helping us provide the best for you.

Librarians on Parade in August & September 2010

Curt Witcher

August 18-21, 2010, Federation of Genealogical Societies annual conference, Knoxville, TN. Four presentations: "SOS! SOS! Saving Our Societies: Answering Our Distress Beacons," "The Dollars and Cents of Fundraising," "Being a Leader in Your Society: Tactics and Techniques," and "Marching On: The Allen County Public Library's 'Our Military Heritage' Project."

September 8, 2010, Allen County Genealogical Society, Allen County Public Library, 900 Library Plaza, 6:30 p.m. refreshments, 7 p.m. program. Presentation: "What's New . . . In Online Resources at the Genealogy Center."

September 18, 2010, Florida Genealogical Society (Tampa) Fall Seminar, University of South Florida, Marshall Student Center, Room 2708, all day seminar. Presentations: "Using Military Records for Genealogical Research," "Using Church Records in Your Genealogical Research," "Doing Effective Genealogical Research in Libraries," and "Mining the Motherlode: Using Periodical Literature for Genealogical Research."

September 25, 2010, Elwood Pipecreek Genealogy Society, Family Life Center, 2535 Main Street, Elwood, IN, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Presentations: "Using Military Records for Genealogical Research," "An Ancestor's Death-A Time for Reaping," and "Historical Research Methodology."

Dawne Slater-Putt

August 17, 2010, Allen County Public Library, 900 Library Plaza, Fort Wayne, IN, Meeting Room A, 6:30 p.m. Presentation: "'Cataloging' 3-D Items & Heirlooms"

Area Calendar of Events

Allen County Genealogical Society of Indiana (ACGSI)
Next meeting--September 8, 2010

Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society, 302 East Berry, Ft. Wayne, IN
Lecture series will resume in the fall.

Driving Directions to the Library

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.

Parking at the Library

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.

Genealogy Center Queries

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.

Publishing Note:

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.

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"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.

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Steve Myers & Curt Witcher, co-editors