

Genealogy Gems: News from the Fort Wayne Library
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An Amazing Collection of Collections

by Curt B. Witcher

At first it might sound just a bit silly for me to say that I am continually amazed at what outstanding resources are available for genealogists and family historians here in the *Genealogy Center*. Now I can just hear the some folks immediately quipping back, "Well, of course--you work there!" Stepping back, though, and setting aside my personal and professional interests in the *Center*, the several hundred thousand volumes and the more one half million microtext items bring so much family and local history from across the continent and beyond right to the fingertips researchers here in Fort Wayne that I can't help but be amazed. And seeing many hundreds of new titles added month after month adds to that amazement.

The collection of online databases offered in the *Genealogy Center* is equally amazing. *Ancestry.com* is the world's largest genealogical database. And it grows by many millions of new records and images each week! Many have called it a genealogist's playground as it is such a great place to search for family names across many databases. *HeritageQuestOnline.com* features the "Periodical Source Index" (the largest subject index to genealogical periodical literature in the world compiled right here in Fort Wayne by our *Genealogy Center*) and the "U.S. Serial Set" (an index to hundreds of federal government documents that include names of veterans, pensioners, individuals involved in commerce and banking, and memorials and tributes just to mention some of the records containing individual names) in addition to its other substantial offerings. *Footnote.com* is a relatively new site of history databases that already has millions of record images and a fantastic indexing scheme to provide remarkable access to keystone record groups. The user experience on that site is quite different from other sites in the field--something a researcher should definitely want to explore. *America's GenealogyBank* and *ProQuest Obituaries* are great sites for finding both historical and contemporary obituaries with *America's GenealogyBank* also having many thousands of digitized brief historical works and yet another version of the Social Security Death Index. *NewEnglandAncestors.org* provides great assistance to one researching in New England states with its thousands of databases. One of our newest offerings is

WorldVitalRecords.org. Now being branded as Family Link, their growing collection of searchable databases includes more one billion names in over seven thousand data files. All together, this is truly an amazing collection of databases!

The collection of programs being offered by both the Genealogy Center and the Allen County Genealogical Society easily fits under the banner of amazing. Our local genealogical society provides an excellent program on some aspect of family history research the second Wednesday of each month, September through May. We always list the next couple of society programs, which are held at the new main library, in this newsletter under "Area Calendar of Events." The Genealogy Center now offers a series of programs called "Tree Talks" on the fourth Saturday of each month from March through October. The next three programs are listed further on in this newsletter. In addition to the "Tree Talks" series, our Military Symposium is scheduled for September 26 & 27, 2008 (it's not too early to sign up--details below!) and we are putting the finishing touches on a forthcoming series of skill-building mini-courses. Amazing--simply amazing!

A rich complement to all of the abovementioned collections of the Genealogy Center, researchers also will find one of the most experienced "collections" of family history experts in a genealogical research facility anywhere in the country. Our "collection" of talented librarians can help one begin the research process, get started in a particular era or geographic area, get more comfortable using online resources, get through, over, and around a brick-wall or two, and much more. It's worth your time to engage them if you're not finding what you need or if you're in any way uncertain about how to access information in the center. You may be amazed at the assistance they can provide.

So I trust you will understand that I had to smile when a colleague sent me a link to a KNXV Phoenix, Arizona television broadcast where, in a story about genealogy, the newscaster stated the top three places in the country to engage in genealogical research are the Library of Congress, the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, and our own Genealogy Center in Fort Wayne. That's pretty amazing company! And, as always, I extend an invitation to you to come to the Genealogy Center and be amazed yourself!

Holland Land Company Papers
by John D. Beatty

The Holland Land Company was a stock corporation organized by six Dutch banking houses for the purpose of speculating in lands located in western New York State and western Pennsylvania. After the land became available by treaty in 1797, the company purchased 3.3 million acres west of the Genesee River, which it subsequently had surveyed into townships and ranges, and further into specific lots or parcels of 360 acres. The company appointed land agents, and the land became open for settlement in 1800. Settlers streamed into the area and purchased individual lots at a land office at Batavia. To encourage purchases and to compete with other land companies, the company allowed settlers to buy land on credit by signing articles of agreement, usually requiring a small down payment and outlining the purchase terms, usually completed within eight to ten years. Typically, the company did not issue deeds until the purchase was final, though the company faced pressure to issue deeds for parts of parcels, because settlers demanded the right to vote, which required that they own property.

The records of the Holland Land Company, available on 41 microfilm rolls, are a useful tool for researching settlers in the counties of Allegany, Wyoming, Genesee, Orleans, Cattaraugus, Erie, Niagara, and Chautauqua in western New York from the period of about 1804 to 1840. The archives consist of maps, surveys, meeting minutes, journals, correspondence, account books, reports, and lists or "land tables," containing the names of purchasers. The set is complex and difficult to use, however, and since it contains no comprehensive index, it is challenging even for experienced genealogists. Still, the material is of primary source value and may be worth the effort to retrieve it.

A good place to begin is with Karen Livsey's two-volume "Western New York Land Transactions," which covers the years from 1804 to 1824 and 1825 to 1835 (974.7 L763w). These volumes index thousands of names appearing in the land tables, but they do not purport to index the entire set of records. Livsey gives the name of the purchaser, the date of purchase, the land coordinates, the type of document (which is letter coded), and the inventory number and page. The inventory number is translated into a microfilm roll number through a key in the introduction. These volumes are also searchable online at Ancestry.com.

Another useful companion to the series is the "Inventory of the Archives of the Holland Land Company," compiled by Wilhelmina C. Pieterse for the Municipal Archives of Amsterdam (O16.3333 P61i, microtext guide section). This work provides an item by item inventory of the records, though the references are not directly keyed to the film. The inventory is indexed, but it does not list specific purchasers.

Scottish Roots
by Steven W. Myers

Researchers with any hint of Scottish heritage in their background will find it useful to become familiar with the plethora of genealogical reference books produced by the indefatigable David Dobson. Over the last 25 years, he has combed unusual printed sources, newspaper archives and manuscript collections looking for records that provide linkages between the Scottish diaspora and individual Scottish emigrants and specific places in Scotland.

Conducting an author search for David Dobson in the online catalog of Genealogy Center print publications yields 71 items that represent the fruits of these labors thus far. The wide range of titles reflects the scope of his efforts, from his "Directory of Scots Banished to the American Plantations, 1650-1775" to "The French and Indian War from Scottish Sources." Most of his work focuses on the late 16th to early 19th centuries, supplying the names of specific individuals with links, not just to Colonial America, but to Canada, the West Indies, Latin America, Scandinavia, Poland, Russia, the Baltic States and Australasia, among others. Some volumes focus on links with specific places in America, such as "Scots on the Chesapeake, 1607-1830." Others feature linkages with specific areas in Scotland, such as his multi-volume "Scottish Highlanders on the Eve of the Great Migration, 1725-1775," each volume covering a different county. Dobson also pays significant attention to his Irish cousins with his two series "Scots-Irish Links, 1575-1725" and "Irish Emigrants in North America," each in six parts. Many, but not all, of these volumes are also

searchable online at Ancestry.com.

For those not lucky enough to find their ancestor on a passenger list, Dobson has also compiled several volumes listing voyages of specific ships to America. These could supply a valuable clue in researching family origins and include "Transatlantic Voyages, 1600-1699," "Ships from Scotland to America, 1628-1828" (3 vols.), "Ships from Scotland to North America, 1830-1860," and "Ships from Ireland to Early America, 1623-1850." In addition, Dobson recently produced an important research guide titled "Searching for Scotch-Irish Roots in Scottish Records, 1600-1750." This valuable tool identifies source material in Scottish archives that could help genealogists of Scotch-Irish descent locate their family's place of origin in Scotland. Researchers would benefit from examining Dobson's many existing volumes, as well as keeping an eye out for his regular additions to our online catalog (available at www.acpl.info).

Preservation Tip of the Month

By Becky Schipper

The polystyrene cases in which CD-ROMs & DVDs are sold are acceptable for long-term storage. Jackets made of paper (unless it is acid-free, archival paper), cardboard, PVC, and plasticized polymers are not recommended. Adhesive labels can cause long-term problems and affect the balance of the disk during reading. If you're planning on writing directly on the disk with a felt tip pen and expect to save that disk for a long time, consult the pen manufacturer to see if there are any potential problems with the ink interacting with the surface of the disk. In the event of degradation or if the media begins to become obsolete, the data should be transferred to new media. While there is some debate about how often this transfer really needs to be done, to be safe one should refresh one's storage media every thirty-six to sixty months.

Tree Talks--A Family History Lecture Series

by Delia Bourne and Melissa Shimkus

Continuing our fourth Saturday educational opportunities for researchers is John Beatty presenting "Indiana Church Records" on Saturday, April 26, 2008, 10:00 a.m., in Meeting Room A at the Allen County Public Library's Main Branch. John is a Genealogy Center librarian.

Church records are a significant and little-used resource for genealogical research. John will discuss the different types of records that churches produce, including parish registers, minutes of meetings, and directories. He will illustrate the types of records that exist for various denominations, and through them, provide descriptions of the information these records contain. He will also offer some strategies for locating these records.

Mark your calendars now for the next two Tree Talks lectures which will be "Networking Genealogically on the Internet" presented by Don Litzer on Saturday, May 24, 2008, 10:00 a.m., in Meeting Room A, and "Del.icio.us Genealogy" presented by Sara Patalita on Saturday, June 28, 2008, 10:00 a.m., also in Meeting Room A. (Del.icio.us is a social bookmarks manager--using "bookmarklets," you can add and categorize bookmarks in a new way.)

Military Symposium

by Delia Bourne and Melissa Shimkus

A couple of times each year, the Genealogy Center will present a two-day symposium on selected aspects of historical and genealogical research. The first of these, a "Military Symposium" presented by Marie Varrelman Melchiori, *CG, CGL*, is planned for Friday and Saturday, September 26 & 27, 2008.

Ms. Melchiori is an excellent researcher and acclaimed lecturer with a long tenure of service to the genealogical research community. She will begin the symposium with a presentation entitled "Using Records at the National Archives: A Researcher's View," on September 26 at 3pm. This will be followed by research time in the Genealogy Center, where registered attendees may stay researching until the 6:30 p.m. dinner. Friday evening, after dinner at the library, Curt Witcher will speak on the Genealogy Center's "Military Heritage" website.

Saturday morning, the symposium will continue with Ms. Melchiori presenting "If Grandpa Wore Blue: Union Records in the National Archives" and "If Grandpa Wore Gray: Confederate Records in the National Archives." The two morning sessions will end at noon, allowing plenty of research time and an opportunity for individual consultations in the afternoon. Space is limited so one should register early.

Registration (including Friday evening dinner) is \$50 payable to the Allen County Public Library. Information as well as a registration form can be found on our website at: www.acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy/Military%20Symposium.pdf Or you can simply send a check for \$50 with your name, postal address and email address to: Military Symposium 2008, Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center, P.O. Box 2270, Fort Wayne, IN 46801-2270. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 260-421-1225 or Genealogy@ACPL.Info

Librarians on Parade

Curt Witcher

- Apr. 4, 2008, Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library, 200 SE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Evansville, IN. Indiana Genealogical Society's Society Management Seminar
- Apr. 5, 2008, Indiana Genealogical Society Annual Conference, The Centre, 715 Locust Street, Evansville, IN. Topic: "Time for Reaping: Finding & Using Our Ancestors' Death Event Records"
- Apr. 12, 2008, Burlington Public Library, 210 Court Street, Burlington, IA. All day seminar: "Using Military Records for Genealogical Research," "Passenger & Immigration Research," "Using Periodical Literature in Genealogical Research," and "Effective Use of the Allen County Public Library"
- Apr. 18 & 19, 2008, Ohio Genealogical Society Conference, Sheraton Cincinnati North, 11320 Chester Road, Cincinnati, OH. Topics: "Finding the World with WorldCat" and "A New Era of Collections and Services at Fort Wayne's Genealogy Center"
- Apr. 21, 2008 at 7 p.m., Steuben County Genealogical Society, Carnegie Public Library, 322 S. Wayne Street, Angola, IN. Topic: "Using Military Records for Genealogical Research"

Apr. 23, 2008 at 10 a.m., INDIGO (Indiana Gov. Docs. Mtg.), Meeting Room "B," Allen County Public Library, 900 Library Plaza, Fort Wayne, IN. Topic: "Using Government Documents for Genealogical Research"

Apr. 30, 2008, Utah Library Association Annual Conference, Hilton-Salt Lake City Center. Topics: "More Toys and a Bigger Sandbox: Future Trends in Digital Libraries" and "Something for Everyone: Genealogical Reference Services in the 21st Century"

May 27, 2008 at 6:30 p.m., Bluffton-Wells County Public Library, 200 W. Washington St., Bluffton, IN. Topic: "Historical Research Methodology"

May 28, 2008 at 7 p.m., Theater, Allen County Public Library, 900 Library Plaza, Fort Wayne, IN. Topic: Capturing & Preserving Family Memories"

John Beatty

Apr. 26, 2008 at 10 a.m. at the Allen County Public Library's Main Library, 900 Library Plaza, Meeting Room A. Topic: "Indiana Church Records"

Don Litzer

April 12, 2008, Wisconsin State Genealogical Society Gene-A-Rama, The Plaza Conference Centre, 1202 W. Clairemont Avenue, Eau Claire, WI. Topics: "Gem at the Crossroads of America: The Genealogy Center at Allen County Public Library" and "The Mysteries of PERSI: The Periodical Source Index"

May 12, 2008, DeKalb County Genealogical Society, Willenar Genealogy Center, 603 S. Jackson St., Auburn, IN. Topic: "What's in a German Place Name?"

May 24, 2008, Allen County Public Library, Tree Talks Series. Topic: "Networking Genealogically on the Internet"

Area Calendar of Events

Allen County Genealogical Society of Indiana (ACGSI)

Apr. 9, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. at the Allen County Public Library's Main Library, 900 Library Plaza. ACGSI members Adam Barrone, Sue Downey, and Phil Husband will present "Software Available for Doing Genealogy."

May 14, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. at the Allen County Public Library's Main Library, 900 Library Plaza. ACGSI member Marge Graham will present "How to Retrieve Information from Other Sites."

June 18, 2008, Annual Meeting and Dinner, place and time to be determined.

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) "First Wednesday" program of lineage assistance is Wednesday, April 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

Apr. 6, 2008, 2 p.m., Terry Lacy presents "The Artist as Historian: Painting the Wabash & Erie Canal"

May 4, 2008, 2 p.m., Donn Werling presents "Down on the Farm" (Following the lecture, History Center members will be invited to visit the historic Werling farm which dates back to 1856.)

June 1, 2008, 2 p.m., Jim Sack presents "A Most German Town: How Germans Came to Dominate Fort Wayne"

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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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.

Curt Witcher, editor pro-tem