

Genealogy Gems: News from the Fort Wayne Library
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Reflection and Resolve at the Dawn of a New Year
by Curt B. Witcher

A few days before Christmas, I received what has been an annual gift from a good friend. The gift is the same from year to year, yet in so many ways different, fresh, and newly enlightening each time. The gift comes in the form of a Christmas e-letter through which I am honored to share in the challenges and triumphs, as well as in the beauty of many smaller moments of those who are dear in the life of my friend. There is typically a wonderful theme woven through the letter. The full-color pictures inserted into the text blocks and the different fonts add a personal touch that one may not think possible with an electronic communique. I have written many times in this ezine about the importance of writing--the importance of recalling and sharing, and through those two important activities, preserving. We should all be writing annual holiday letters, and more; indeed, quite simply we should all be writing. Make it a New Year's resolution to do so.

One could say that 2012 will be a year of "Come Home to the Great Lakes!"--there are so many exciting conferences and seminars planned, particularly in Indiana and Ohio. The short list is below.

- *Cleveland, OH, Ohio Genealogical Society Annual Conference, April 12-14, 2012. The three-day conference theme is "History and Genealogy: Finding Clues to Ancestral Lives."
- *Fort Wayne, IN, Indiana Genealogical Society Annual Meeting & Conference, Allen County Public Library, April 27 & 28, 2012. Featured speaker: Debra Mieszala.
- *Cincinnati, OH, National Genealogical Society Conference, Duke Energy Convention Center, May 9-12, 2012. The four-day conference theme is "The Ohio River: Gateway to the Western Frontier."
- *Indianapolis, IN, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis Marriott East, July 19-21, 2012. Midwestern Roots 2012: Family History and Genealogy Conference.

With the Great Lakes being so easy to get to from nearly any place in the country, resolve to take

advantage of at least one of these learning and networking opportunities in the New Year. Indeed, with the combination of the above-mentioned marquee events and The Genealogy Center's monthly program offerings, there are plenty of reasons to spend some time with us in 2012.

A few weeks ago, I had an opportunity to participate in a *GeneaBloggers Online Radio Show* that was themed, "Do Books Still Matter in Genealogy?" The quick answer is, YES! (or heck YES! <g>). It is an interesting topic, to say the least, and one about which more than a few people have strongly held opinions. Those opinions span the entire spectrum, from those who advocate that "books are dead" and soon won't be seen (cbw: That will not happen in our children's *children's* lifetimes.) to those who fiercely resist all technological changes. As life has taught us many times, the answer is somewhere in the middle.

I believe it is useful to think of books, flash-drives, DVDs, Blue-ray Disks, hard drives, and web spaces as containers for information. Too often, which container(s) one chooses depends on one's own comfort level with technology. Increasingly, I believe that decision must be based on the intended use of the information, who the likely consumer of the data is, and how the information is going to be preserved and made available long-term. Increasingly, we must be more pensive and less emotional with the decisions we make.

Great examples of appropriate high tech and low tech applications exist. Example One: There are greatly diminished reasons for printed indices. No one "reads" an index, but rather, one looks in an index for a specific piece of data, finds it or not, and moves on. If an index is produced electronically, one can search in a number of different ways--on a number of different fields. In addition, the index can be easily edited and amended, with all that activity being incremental, so that access to the complete content is continuous. The *Genealogy Center's* abstracted obituaries from the "Evangelical Messenger" started out as a few years' worth of data and several thousand entries. Now it currently covers 1848 to 1924 and more than 120,000 entries. The data file is accessed more than three thousand times each month. Example Two: Brewster Kahle, founder and CEO of the Internet Archive, a non-profit organization committed to building an electronic Alexandrian library, sports a bookmobile claiming that it will be "bringing with it the ability to access, download, and print (yes, that's right--print) . . . public domain books currently available online." If there is truly and completely no use for printed books, why is one of the leaders in the online space sporting a device to put paper copies of books into individuals' hands?

I believe there are a number of important concepts we should remember.

1. "Throwing the baby out with the bathwater" has never been espoused as a best practice. Let's not let the existence of new media cause us to automatically discard legacy media.
2. LOCKSS--lots of copies keeps stuff safe. How about it? What does that mean for you?
3. A diversity of media is always a good thing (disk, cloud, drive, and sometimes even paper).
4. When has refreshing been a bad thing? Let's remember to refresh our storage media.
5. "Access makes the heart grow fonder." Preserving data that only you can access is better than not having the data; preserving data in one location where individuals need to physically go to access the data is a lot better; preserving and making the data available to the widest range of individuals on many devices and in nearly infinite locations is best.

Resolve to use this season of giving and getting "gadgets" to engage a contemporary technology, a

device or a program, in both presenting and preserving some of your family history data.

Wishing you every success in your 2012 genealogical endeavors!

Great Register of Voters

by Melissa Shimkus

After the Gold Rush in the mid-19th century, California's population grew exponentially. In an effort to document all males over the age of twenty-one, the state legislature passed the Registration Act of 1866. The data collected in the resulting Great Register of Voters for each county was used to establish election districts and prevent voter fraud, but for family historians, the information can supplement traditional genealogical records.

Many abstracts and transcriptions of the Great Register are available at The Genealogy Center in print format, and some images of the actual registers are on microfilm. A search of The Genealogy Center catalog using the terms "great register California" reveals more than forty book titles and seven microtext collections. Indexes to and images from the Great Register are also available on Ancestry.com. Basic details provided in the Register include name, age, occupation and place of birth, but other treasures also can be found.

The Great Register pinpoints an ancestor's specific location at the time of registration, for example. When he registered in Los Angeles County in August 1892, Edwin C. Hodgman provided his address and physical description, including height, complexion, eye color and hair color. The questionnaire also asked about distinguishing marks, and Edwin noted that he had no fingers on his right hand. If an individual moved out of the county, notations pertaining to his removal from the Register can help in tracking these migrating ancestors. Lewis Washington Jones, born in Georgia, is one example. He was living in Dent Township, San Joaquin County when he registered in April 1870, but a note states he was removed from the San Joaquin list in June 1871, when he registered in Fresno County.

Voter laws required proof of citizenship, so foreign-born individuals had to provide the date and location of naturalization, as was the case for John Prisk when he registered in Napa County in 1892. A native of England, he stated that he was naturalized April 21, 1870, by the Nevada U.S. District Court. The Register also includes death dates where deceased voters were removed from the list. When Delos Manning registered to vote in August 1866 in San Joaquin County, he was forty-nine years old. He was removed from the list after his death on June 25, 1878.

The Great Register of Voters is a useful resource, providing vital statistics, as well as information about migration and naturalization for ancestors. It is recommended for those researching an ancestor living in California from 1866-1900.

Michigan's Rural Property Inventory - Ingham County

by Cynthia Theusch

Michigan's Rural Property Inventory was a project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) from 1935 to 1942, and was intended to help the State of Michigan establish uniform assessment rates for non-urban areas. WPA workers surveyed 1,500,000 distinct rural parcels of land in 1,249 townships. Rural Wayne County was excluded. The Genealogy Center's microfilm collection contains records of the Rural Property Inventory for the townships of Aurelius (reels 3-4), Delhi (reels 11-17), and Onondaga (reels 5-6) in Ingham County. Each township is accompanied by an index listing the owner, address and section code.

The survey process produced two large cards for each property. The first card provides details about ownership, location, and a physical description of the exterior and interior of the house, as well as a sketch of the house. In addition, there is information about heating, lighting and plumbing. Any additional buildings were described in the Remarks section. The second card contains a sketch of the acreage and information on the land, main building, fences, and other buildings.

For example, in 1936 Mac Vaughn of Mason, Michigan, had 40 acres located in the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 2 in Aurelius Township, and the trading center was Mason, three miles away. The second card includes a sketch of the land, showing three areas of muck, and indicates that 38 of the 40 acres were Class A cropland. There were no farm buildings.

In Onondaga Township, Clifford Hill was assessed for the northern part of the northwest quarter in Section 2, previously owned by B. H. Field. The house was a two-story, wood frame structure with wood siding, built in 1860. It had two covered porches, plastered interior walls with hardwood trim, and pine hardwood floors. Lighting was by oil, heating by stove, and it had no plumbing. There was also a garage with a concrete floor, two barns in poor condition (one built in 1810 and the other in 1870), and a grain barn. Mr. Hill owned 88.03 acres with 3.06 acres occupied by a road. The remaining land was rated Class A cropland and farmstead.

For the State of Michigan, these records provide a wonderful complement to the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, which only covered urban areas, and also give us more details about the house and property than the insurance maps. The Rural Property Inventory can help us visualize and better understand the physical circumstances of our ancestors' lives.

Technology Tip of the Month--The Microsoft Word 2010 Ribbon: References Tab, Part 2
by Kay Spears

We covered the Table of Contents last month. Of the remaining tool groups on the References tab -- Footnotes, Citations & Bibliography, Captions, Index and Table of Authorities -- the group that should be of interest to anyone creating a family history is Footnotes.

Luckily, inserting a footnote or an endnote is made easy for us by Microsoft Word. To add a footnote, place your cursor after the sentence where you want the footnote number to appear. Then, either go to the Footnotes group and click on Insert Footnote or press Alt+Ctrl+F on your keyboard. When you do either of these things, a small superscript number will be inserted in the text at that point and your cursor will move to the bottom of the page, inserting a matching number

under the Separator Line. After you finish typing your footnote text, press Shift+F5 to return your cursor to the spot in your document where the Footnote reference was inserted. Continue typing. As you add more footnotes, Word will automatically number them consecutively for you. If you want to delete a footnote, delete the footnote reference number in the main text. Not only will this delete the reference and the footnote text, it will also renumber all of the remaining footnotes. Endnotes operate in the same way except that the keyboard command is Ctrl+Alt+D.

I have never had the opportunity to use the Citations & Bibliography, Captions, or Table of Authorities tool groups, so I cannot say how complex these are. I have used the Index group and cannot recommend it to those who want to put an index in their document. It is very complex and confusing; a manual index would be just as informative and a lot less frustrating.

Next month: The Microsoft Word 2010 Ribbon: Mailings and Review Tabs

Quick-Tip of the Month for Preservation--Catalog Family Heirlooms
by Melissa Shimkus

Many families have a tradition of exchanging ornaments during the holidays. These little items are put out for presentation once a year then boxed up the rest of the time. Through the years, memories fade concerning when the ornament was given or why a particular selection was made. To recall these memories, write notes and place them in the storage boxes. These notes provide the date one received the ornament, the giver, the recipient, a description of the item, and an impression upon opening it. Every year, when the boxes are opened, stories can be shared among family of why the items are important and help continue a family tradition.

This can be done with many important items shared among the family. When receiving a family heirloom, ask questions about the item. Some questions to consider are why was the item purchased or created, when was it procured, who was the original owner, and how was it passed down through the family. Write the stories down, so when the collection is passed on to the next generation, the history will be remembered.

WinterTech: Catalog Tour

Does The Genealogy Center's catalog confuse you at times? Do you want to learn how to get it to show you exactly what you need? Learn how to do a search and interpret the results by taking a "Catalog Tour." This program, a continuation of our WinterTech series, will be on Wednesday, January 11, 2012, from 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. in Meeting Room C.

Held in the afternoons on the second Wednesdays, November through February, to coincide with the Allen County Genealogical Society of Indiana's monthly evening meetings, WinterTech expands your knowledge of family history research using technology.

The last WinterTech session will be in February, and will offer a survey of the Origins.net website for British, Irish, and Scots research. For more information, see the flyer at

<http://www.genealogycenter.org/Libraries/Brochures/WT2011.sflb.ashx>. Please call 260-421-1225 or email Genealogy@ACPL.Info to register.

Programming for 2012

In addition to the continuation of WinterTech, The Genealogy Center is planning a full year of opportunities for family history education and entertainment. Our annual "March Madness, Genealogy Style," March 18-24, 2012, will have an ethnic theme this year. Several times in March and early April, we will offer an "Introduction to the 1940 Census," to get you ready to access this new source as it becomes available. Other treats to come include several of our two-day mini-courses, and Family History Month in October. Stay tuned here to "Genealogy Gems," our blog and Facebook pages, and our website to learn dates and times.

Public Computers Unavailable on January 4th

On Wednesday, January 4, 2012, the Allen County Public Library will upgrade its PC Reservation System in order to be compatible with Windows 7. The upgrade requires a public computer outage for the entire day of January 4th. PC Reservation is the software that coordinates the usage on all of the public computers in The Genealogy Center and the Allen County Public Library System. With the upgrade, customers will have improved access to Office products, our databases, and the internet at The Genealogy Center.

If you plan to visit The Genealogy Center on January 4, 2012, please be aware of this outage--we will not have public computer access for the day. It will be a great opportunity, however, to take advantage of the more than one million items in our print and microtext collections. Before you arrive at the Center that day, search our print catalog <<http://smartcat.acpl.lib.in.us/?skin=genealogy&q=Search+the+ACPL+Catalog>> or microtext catalog <http://genealogycenter.info/search_microtext.php> to plan your day of research. Bringing your own laptop, netbook, iPad or other tablet device will enable you to use all the licensed databases as well as the free databases offered in The Genealogy Center through the library's Wifi service.

Fee Change for Computer Prints

Beginning February 1, 2012, computer printouts at the Allen County Public Library will cost 10 cents per page, up from 5 cents. The change will make all copy charges uniform in preparation for the move to a single copy card that will allow patrons to photocopy printed material or to print data they find in a computer search. Photocopy charges have held steady at 10 cents per page for more than 32 years.

Library Closure for Staff Development Day

The entire Allen County Public Library system, including The Genealogy Center, will be closed on

Friday, February 10, 2012 for staff development day. The library and Genealogy Center will open again on Saturday, February 11, 2012 at the regular time of 9 a.m.

Out and About

Curt Witcher

January 7, 2012--Bloomfield Hills, MI. Joint program of the Detroit Society for Genealogical Research and the Oakland County Genealogical Society, Christ Church Cranbrook, 470 Church Street, 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. "And the Rockets' Red Glare: Online Resources for War of 1812 Research."

Area Calendar of Events

Allen County Genealogical Society of Indiana (ACGSI)

January 11, 2012--Allen County Public Library, 900 Library Plaza, Fort Wayne, Indiana. 6:30 p.m. refreshments and social time, 7 p.m. program. Curt Sylvester will present: "Writing a Book Using Family Tree Maker and Microsoft Word."

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

January 1, 2012, 2 p.m. Sara Gabbard will be speaking on, "Mystic Chords of Memory: The Opening of the West in American Memory."

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 *Genealogy Gems* you just received or send an email to kspears@acpl.lib.in.us with "unsubscribe e-zine" in the subject line.

Steve Myers & Curt Witcher, co-editors