

**Genealogy Gems: News from the Fort Wayne Library  
No. 20, October 31, 2005**

**In this issue:**

- \*Family Health History**
- \*Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires**
- \*The WPA's Louisiana Vital Statistics Guides**
- \*Preservation Tip of the Month**
- \*Hotel of the month**
- \*Area Calendar of Events**
- \*ACPL Librarians on Tour**
- \*Driving directions to the Library**
- \*Parking at the Library**
- \*Queries for the Department**

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**Family Health History  
by Curt B. Witcher**

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**In just a few short weeks it will be Thanksgiving and the beginning of the annual holiday season with all its hustle and bustle. In addition to the shopping, parties, and get-togethers, it is good to remember that this season is also a great time to collect and share family stories. Certainly one of the most cherished gifts one can give or receive is a family heirloom along with the story of the people whose lives surrounded it. And if you have thought about giving a family history as a holiday gift, any time in any season is a great time to start!**

**Among the many important benefits of doing one's family history is discovering the details of one's family \*health\* history. With the completed mapping of the human genome and the continuing studies regarding inherited diseases, family health history is very important. The Surgeon General asks that on Thanksgiving Day families across the country start a new holiday tradition--a family health history tradition. With families gathered for a special meal, it is the perfect time to talk about family traits and one's family health history. This initiative was actually started last Thanksgiving. If you need some reasons beyond the obvious of why family health history is important, I thought you'd enjoy the following "Top Ten Reasons."**

**No. 10**

**You likely already use your family's health history more than you think--whether for your children's or grandchildren's school projects, deciding what over-the-counter remedies work for you and your family, or talking to your doctor about a correct diagnosis.**

No. 9

It's a simple yet powerful way to understand your genetic heritage. What illnesses and predispositions your ancestors had may be important for you to know.

No. 8

Everyone has a family history of something--whether type of hair and hair color or predispositions and illnesses.

No. 7

Fort Wayne has one of the best libraries in the country for both genealogy and scientific & medical data.

No. 6

From a medical perspective, knowing your family health history is cost effective. Prevention nearly always trumps cure in cost.

No. 5

Knowing your family health history could save your life!

No. 4

The Surgeon General and the medical community agree that it is very important.

No. 3

Doing genealogy is one of the most popular activities in the country.

No. 2

New tools and resources make it easier and more enjoyable to engage in family history and genealogy.

And the No. 1 Reason!

Everyone's doing it!

Visit the Surgeon General's website for some more information.

<[www.hhs.gov/familyhistory/](http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory/)>

Those interested in Allen County, Indiana research and resources will find two new indices at the FriendsOfAllenCounty website. "Applications for Naturalizations, 1844-1906" and "Persons Exempt from Civil War Military Service, 1862" were just added last week. We invite you to take a look--and wish you a Happy Thanksgiving.

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**Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires  
by Timothy Dougherty**

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In 1914 and 1915, Dr. Gustavus Dyer, Archivist of Tennessee, sent a questionnaire out to all known Tennessee Civil War veterans. In 1920, John Trotwood Moore, Director of the Tennessee Historical Commission, circulated a revised questionnaire. By 1922, some 1,650 had been returned. Collectively, this series of documents became known as the "Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires." Fortunately for the researcher with a Tennessee Civil War veteran, the Genealogy Department owns a microfilm copy of this gem.

The responses of the Federal interviewees are grouped in alphabetical order (by surname) on the first reel, and those of Confederate veterans are arranged in the same fashion on the remaining eight reels.

The veterans interviewed came from all social classes, and answers range from the curt and barely literate to the reflective and erudite. Many questionnaires were returned with appended pages of information.

Legibility of the responses varies. Some are typed and nearly as clear as the day they were composed. Others are more difficult to discern, being in faded ink or pencil, or traced in the shaky scrawl of the aged. Most, however, fall somewhere within these extremes.

The content of the interviews helps paint a portrait of the veteran and his turbulent times. Although not every veteran answered each of the forty-six questions, most seem to have approached the task with some degree of dedication. Questions include age, birthplace, parent's names, and occupation. The interviewee listed the unit with which he served, named those in his company he remembered, and chronicled his experiences during the war. Also included are questions regarding ancestry, schooling and conditions in the community, and sketches of his life before and after the war.

The questionnaires also examine whether or not the parents owned slaves, and probe the general tenor of relations between slave-holding and non-slave-holding families. The responses are an interesting and often contradictory barometer of the times. For example, many of those interviewed reported that slave-holders and non-slave-holders existed in communities on friendly and equal footing. However, some responses drew quite a different picture. In William Landon Babb's own words, for example, "the slave holders was always elevated above the common man," and "always moved in circle to them selvs thinking themselvs on a hiar plane than the laboring man." And his words echo many others.

This collection is a fascinating source for genealogical and historical research. Printed transcripts of the completed questionnaires are also available in five indexed volumes at call number 973.74 T25tenn.

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The WPA's Louisiana Vital Statistics Guides  
by Delia Cothrun Bourne

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The Works Progress (later Projects) Administration was the largest of the New Deal agencies, designed to provide jobs, income, and dignity to unemployed workers during the Great Depression. Its best known accomplishments were the large and small construction projects of the era, which included bridges, buildings and dams. The WPA also employed workers organizing records and histories throughout the United States. One part of this Historical Records Survey cataloged various sources for vital record information, which provided aid to the Social Security Administration, another government agency formed during the same period.

To obtain retirement benefits, workers had to prove age eligibility, but many Americans of the era had not been issued birth certificates, and would have to obtain a delayed birth record from the county of birth. The WPA workers surveyed and cataloged vital records at the local level throughout the country, then expanded the survey to include church records which could supply dates of births, marriages or deaths. Volumes for some states were published in the late 1930s, but many others were pushed to completion as World War II started to aid in proving the citizenship of workers in war-related industries.

The Guide to Public Vital Statistics Records in Louisiana (976.3 H62g) was published in December 1942, and included sections on births, deaths, marriages, and divorces. Each section included a short history of the record in the state, then a parish-by-parish listing of holdings, indicating years covered, arrangement, index status, and who held the records.

Also published by the WPA at the same time was the "Guide to Vital Statistics Records of Church Archives in Louisiana," volume 1: Protestant and Jewish Churches, and volume 2: Roman Catholic Churches, (976.3 H62gu). The volumes catalog church records including not only baptisms, marriages, and burials, but also lists of members. The listings are organized by town within the parish, then by denomination. Each listing includes the starting dates for the records, location of the church, record custodian at the time, as well as a notation indicating if the church is an African American congregation.

Similar survey lists, also published by the Historical Records Survey, exist for other states, and the Historical Genealogy Department has many of them. Although the information contained in the surveys seems dated after fifty-plus years, knowing that these records existed can aid a researcher in finding records today.

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**Preservation Tip of the Month  
by Becky Schipper**

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ACPL's Preservation Technician Becky Schipper offers advice on conserving your documents:

I was asked how to best store some old family letters. My reply was to store them unfolded in acid-free folders or in Mylar D enclosures. These should be stored in a place with non-fluctuating temperature and humidity. A main floor closet is best.

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**HOTEL OF THE MONTH**

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

**Red Roof Inn**  
2920 Goshen Road, Fort Wayne 46808  
260-484-8641; fax 260-484-3441

The Red Roof Inn is located near exit 109-A on I-69; turn east and the Inn is on the left past the first traffic light. Red Roof Inns are the same across America, with free local telephone calls, voice mail and dataports in all rooms. The Business King Rooms have an enhanced work area, if you intend to collate your work at the library when you go back to the hotel at night. Coffee and newspapers are available in the morning. Children under 18 stay free, if you bring your family along. Restaurants nearby include Bob Evans, Cheddar's, Chili's, IHOP, McDonald's and Olive Garden. The library is about fifteen minutes away. Average rate is \$46.

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**AREA CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

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**Allen County Public Library**  
3rd floor atrium display area  
The Wheels that Won the West

**Allen County Genealogical Society of Indiana (ACGSI)**

Refreshments at 6:30, meeting at 7:00. Questions: contact Marge Graham, 260 672-2585 or [gramar57@aol.com](mailto:gramar57@aol.com)  
Wednesday, November 9, 2005 Aboite branch ACPL: Sue Downey and Ryan Taylor.  
Family Cookbooks: *Gathering, Assembly and Publishing Family Recipes.*

Computer Users Group  
Wednesday 16 November: Aboite branch ACPL, 7:00.

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)  
First Wednesday of each month in the Genealogy Department 9am - 7pm.  
Expert help from members of the DAR in becoming a member of that organization

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#### ACPL LIBRARIANS ON TOUR

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Curt Witcher

2 November: Lutheran Home, Fort Wayne, "Steps to Do Your Family History,"  
1:30P

19 November: Arizona State Genealogical Society Fall Seminar, Viscount Hotel, 4855 E. Broadway, Tucson, AZ, "Using Military Records for Genealogical Research," "Effective Use of the Allen County Public Library," "The Road Not Taken: Mega Internet Sites for Genealogists off the Beaten Path," "Doing the History Eliminates the Mystery!"

Ryan Taylor

9 November: Allen County Genealogical Society of Indiana, Fort Wayne

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#### DRIVING DIRECTIONS TO THE LIBRARY

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

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

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

**From the South**

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

**From the North**

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

**From the West**

**Using US 30:**

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

**Using US 24:**

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

**From the East**

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

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**PARKING AT THE LIBRARY**

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Lot in front of the library, east side of the lot.  
Available for short-term library parking. Limited to one hour.  
There are handicapped parking spots near the door.

**Tippman Parking Garage**

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

**Park Place Lot**

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

Street (metered) parking on Wayne Street and Berry Street. On the street you plug the meters 8am - 5pm, weekdays only. It is free to park on the street after 5pm and on the weekends.

**Visitor center/Grand Wayne center**

Covered parking at Washington and Clinton Streets. This is the Hilton Hotel parking lot that also serves as a day parking garage. For hourly parking, 7am - 11 pm, charges are .50 for the first 45 minutes, then \$1.00 per hour. There is a flat \$2.00 fee between 5pm and 11pm.

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**GENEALOGY DEPARTMENT QUERIES**

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

If you have a general question about our collection, or are interested in the Research Center, please telephone the library and speak to a librarian who will be glad to answer your general questions or send you a research center form. Our telephone number is 260-421-1225. If you'd like to email a general information question about the department, please email: [Genealogy@ACPL.Info](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 Historical Genealogy Department, and is intended to enlighten readers about genealogical research methods as well as inform them about the vast resources of the Allen County Public Library. We welcome the wide distribution of this newsletter and encourage readers to forward it to their friends and societies. All precautions have been made to avoid errors. However, the publisher does not assume any liability to any party for any loss or damage caused by errors or omissions, no matter the cause.

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Ryan Taylor, editor