

Genealogy Gems: News from the Allen County Public Library at Fort Wayne
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The Importance of Organization in Pursuing, Preserving and Presenting Our Families' Stories
by Curt B. Witcher

In all the talking, thinking, and writing about family history, disproportionately few pieces and presentations focus on the many aspects, and great importance, of organization. We search for names, we follow shaky leaves, we explore hints, and we download trees, documents, charts and records like there's no tomorrow. We collect photographs, diaries, daybooks, report cards and holidays cards, military certificates and death certificates, and official papers of all kinds. But how organized are we once we have the data? Can we find the information again among all our files? When we are more organized, we do better research; when we are more organized, we better record our findings and stories for the benefit and enjoyment of others; and when we are better organized, we are better prepared to deal with the natural and man-made disasters that too often come our way.

It would be impossible not to have heard anything about the devastating floods and tornadoes that struck large areas of the country consistently in recent years. Again and again, we see homes without walls and contents, papers and photographs strewn for blocks, and in some cases miles. News reports often include pictures of waterlogged cabinets and trunks. News crews capture scenes of victims sorting through ravaged remains for any scrap of paper or shred of photograph they used to have. That should never be us; not today, not ever. If we value our genealogies and family records, our

photographs and unique documents, then we will be organized enough to ensure they remain available to us and our descendants. Extremely close to the time we find a new document, take a new image, or obtain a new photograph, we should create digital back-ups with offsite storage--both physically off site and virtually off site in the cloud. There simply is no reason not to. Be organized enough to do this--every time, right away.

It is truly critical that personal collections of documents and images are intentionally preserved and shared. First, I believe that personal collections of photographs are intrinsically valuable simply because they were made--because the photographs were taken--because the collections exist. The American Association of State and Local History long ago proclaimed that "all history is local." Another way of stating that is history, indeed life, is lived in the small places, in our homes, schools, churches, and family and community gatherings.

Second, the preservation of personal and local photographic collections will be increasingly important as we witness the continued demise of popular print periodicals where once one had a chance of finding images of everyday America, of small-town America, of middle-class America. Couple this phenomenon with increasing numbers of news outlets wanting to create the news rather than report the news, wanting to report on opinion rather than report on facts, and wanting to direct or even orchestrate public perception rather than capture life as it is lived, one can appreciate how personal photographic collections containing real life in family and community contexts are so important. Historians and sociologists continue to expand and enrich our understanding of the past by studying new photographic collections from nearly every decade since the invention of photography to the present. We truly have history in our hands.

Third, technology is burgeoning, opening so many doors for both further research and further enjoyment. We should be very careful about discarding materials initially assessed as having little value. Many individuals are familiar with the exponential advances in facial recognition, progress being made in perfecting "query by image content" programs, and the truly amazing advances in AI applications. Hence, even the proverbial "shoebox of unidentified images" may have brand new life if these images are compared against silos of other photographs. The possibilities are increasingly mind-numbing. What is old could truly be new again.

With online trees and numerous good genealogical data management programs, organizing documents and linking photographs to individuals should be increasingly straightforward and more easily become a part of our routines. In addition, we can consistently strive to make sure our digital photographic images are always in appropriately labeled folders, and those image folders always contain an open-source worksheet or other similar program with the metadata for all the images in the respective folder. Being consistent with image naming conventions also assists in organizing digital photographs.

History is in our hands--making old new again; indeed, it is wise to organize!

FindMyPast Library Edition: Uncovering Its Genealogical Treasures by Kate McKenzie

Here at the Genealogy Center, we are fortunate to have 25 licensed databases available to peruse and explore while you're here. All of these valuable tools hold millions of records, just waiting for you to uncover. FindMyPast specializes in British and Irish heritage while also offering significant resources for other parts of the world. This includes records for other commonwealth countries: Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, as well as collections related to the United States. Our library edition provides free access to its vast digital archive, making it an excellent tool for in-depth family history research.

FindMyPast's collections span centuries, and below are some of the key highlights.

British and Irish Records: As one of FindMyPast's most notable features, British parish records include baptisms, marriages, and burials for many parts of the country dating back to the 1500s. Irish records are more limited. These records are crucial for uncovering family connections before the advent of civil registration in the UK and Ireland.

Along with parish records, other valuable British collections include electoral rolls and directories, records from the national probate calendar, military records, apprenticeship records, and workhouse registers, as well as UK outbound passenger lists, among many others.

As for Irish records, Griffith's Valuation and Irish census substitutes, extant for only selected areas, are available along with fragmentary petty sessions court registers, migration and travel registers, and even Ireland dog license registers.

Census Records: Complete UK census collections from 1841 to 1911 provide detailed insights into family households, occupations, and locations. These records are essential for tracing family movements and identifying ancestral communities over time. Irish census records are mostly lost before 1901, and Scottish records are not available on this site.

U.S. Catholic Records: Do you have Catholic ancestors? A standout feature of FindMyPast is its exclusive access to many U.S. Catholic records, one of the most comprehensive digitized collections of its kind. These records include sacramental registers such as baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and burials from selected Catholic dioceses across the United States. Covering a wide range of years—often dating back to the 1700s—these records are particularly valuable for researchers with Catholic ancestors, as they often provide detailed family relationships, including parents and sponsors. FindMyPast has partnered with Catholic dioceses in Chicago, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and others. Explore the website to see if they've partnered with

a Catholic diocese in an area that you're researching.

Getting the Most out of FindMyPast: To get the most out of FindMyPast, explore beyond keyword searches and the records available through their categories under quick links. Take advantage of the 'All Record Sets' feature, which functions similarly to the card catalog on Ancestry or the catalog on FamilySearch. This section lets you browse and search all available collections, including those that are not indexed. By exploring this area, you gain access to a wealth of records you might have otherwise overlooked!

The FindMyPast Library Edition can be accessed here in person at The Genealogy Center on one of our computers, or you can bring your own device and hop on our wifi to use the database. All records are available to peruse, print, and download. FindMyPast offers an unparalleled array of resources for genealogical research, particularly for those tracing British, Irish, and U.S. Catholic roots. Its unique collections and easy-to-navigate interface make it an essential tool for uncovering your family's past.

Unlocking Veterans' Stories: New Website Simplifies FOIA Requests for VA Records by Elizabeth Hodges

Unlocking Veterans' Stories: New Website Simplifies FOIA Requests for VA Records
Family historians and genealogists now have a powerful new tool at their fingertips. The nonprofit group Reclaim the Records has launched www.BIRLS.org, a free website designed to streamline Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for Veterans Administration (VA) records. This user-friendly platform opens up new possibilities for uncovering the military histories of 20th-century veterans—many of whom never saw combat but served during peacetime or support roles that often go undocumented in other record sets.

The site's name, BIRLS, comes from the VA's Beneficiary Identification Records Locator Subsystem—a database that contains basic service information for millions of U.S. military veterans who received VA benefits. While not a comprehensive military service file, a BIRLS record can still provide valuable details, including birth and death dates, dates of military service, and branch of service.

Until now, genealogists who wanted this information had to navigate the complex process of submitting a FOIA request directly to the VA—a task that could be intimidating, slow, and confusing. BIRLS.org makes the process remarkably simple: users fill out a brief online form, and the site generates a pre-filled FOIA request that is automatically submitted to the VA on the researcher's behalf. It even tracks the request's progress and emails the results once they're available, typically within a few weeks.

So why does this matter for genealogy?

Many researchers hit a wall when trying to learn more about an ancestor's military service, especially if their official personnel file (OPF) was lost in the 1973 fire at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis. In those cases, VA records can serve as an alternative source of key details that help flesh out an ancestor's timeline or confirm long-held family stories.

Even for veterans whose records survived, BIRLS can help pinpoint the right years and branch of service—critical clues that can lead to other records like draft registrations, service medals, unit rosters, and pension applications.

The site is particularly helpful for researching veterans of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, and it includes a searchable index of millions of deceased veterans whose BIRLS entries are available under FOIA. However, it's important to understand that the BIRLS index and the free FOIA service offered through BIRLS.org are only available for deceased veterans. Requests for a living veteran's VA file cannot be made through BIRLS.org and be made directly through the VA's official process (see link below). If you're fortunate enough to have a veteran ancestor whose Official Military Personnel File (OPF) survived the 1973 fire at the National Personnel Records Center, you can learn how to request a copy of their file by visiting the link below.

BIRLS.org is just the latest in a series of projects by Reclaim the Records, a nonprofit known for using FOIA and open records laws to obtain and publish genealogically valuable data sets. Their mission aligns perfectly with the needs of today's researchers: more access, fewer roadblocks, and better tools.

For anyone digging into their family's military past—or simply trying to fill in gaps in the lives of 20th-century ancestors—BIRLS.org offers a welcome shortcut to records that were once hard to reach. It's another step toward reclaiming the stories of those who served, whether in combat or in quiet, often-overlooked roles that helped shape our nation's history.

Where to request a deceased veteran's VA records via FOIA:

<https://www.birls.org/>

How to request a living veteran's VA records: <https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records>

How to request military records from NARA:

<https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records>

Vivid-Pix Expands Support for Genealogy and Cultural Heritage Organizations

Vivid-Pix, a company well known for its dedication to memory preservation and photo restoration, is deepening its commitment to the vital work of Societies, Libraries, Archives, and Museums (SLAMs) through an expanded Community Outreach and

Affiliate Program. These initiatives are designed to help SLAMs raise awareness of their work while providing meaningful fundraising opportunities.

For years, Vivid-Pix has supported SLAMs by donating raffle prizes to events across the country. Now, that support is growing. Every year, eligible organizations can receive a full license of the Memory Station Home Edition Software—which includes the popular Restore software and additional tools—valued at \$199.99, to be used as a raffle or door prize.

In an exciting new development, Vivid-Pix is also introducing a Community Prize for larger organizations with over 500 paying members. This generous package, called the Family Matters / Community Bundle (a \$1,499.99 value), includes a scanner, software, and a robust suite of educational and promotional materials. It's a powerful tool to help organizations engage their communities in family storytelling, historical preservation, and intergenerational connection.

The expansion of the program was recently announced at the Indiana Genealogical Society conference at the Allen County Public Library in April, where it was met with enthusiasm and delight. Attendees were excited by the opportunity to access these innovative tools and the potential they bring for outreach and preservation efforts within their own communities.

“All of us in the genealogy community are thrilled about this opportunity,” said Allison DePrey Singleton, President of the Indiana Genealogical Society. “Vivid-Pix has created a program that truly supports societies, libraries, archives, and museums in meaningful ways. It's an incredible gift to our field and a game-changer for community engagement and fundraising.”

To participate, organizations are asked to recognize Vivid-Pix as a major sponsor in their event communications and promotions. Full details and an easy application form can be found at vivid-pix.com/affiliate-program.

This initiative offers an exciting opportunity for SLAMs to build deeper relationships with their audiences while benefiting from cutting-edge tools that support their missions. Whether raising funds, drawing crowds, or promoting historical preservation, Vivid-Pix is helping cultural heritage organizations nationwide continue their invaluable work.

Editor's Note: The two Vivid-Pix Memory Stations in the Genealogy Center are well-used and most appreciated by our patrons. Many thousands of photographs have been scanned for preservation, image correction, and sharing. Some families and small groups of friends have little scanning parties, tackling their binders, bags, and boxes of photographs.

PERSI Gems: Gators!
by Adam Barrone and Mike Hudson

Spring is here which means daffodils and dandelions, bumblebees and baby robins, or at least that's what it means here in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where the Periodical Source Index (PERSI) is created. Back when I was a kid, besides school being out and the weather getting warmer, one of my favorite things about this time of year was when the zoo opened for the season; for a town our size, we have a very good zoo (not to mention an excellent public library and world-class genealogy collection). As it so happens, my only direct experience with alligators came from these trips to the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo in the 1960s-1970s when a massive specimen was on view in the shallow moat surrounding Monkey Island. "He's there to keep the monkeys in line," my mom told me. This Hoosier alligator never moved and he was also missing a leg, so he wasn't much of a sentinel. As far as I could tell, the monkeys ignored him (but they did stay on the island). He has since been replaced by a younger, more active alligator.

Outside of the Zoo, we don't have many alligators in the state, but 96 of these reptiles (or people and things named after 'gators) can be found in PERSI using the "Article Title Keyword Search" function on our website:

<https://www.genealogycenter.info/persi/>

Below is a selection of these articles, A-D:

Aaron Hobbs and Blake Lewis found alligator at Hillcrest Country Club golf course, n.d.
Batesville (IN) Area Historical Society Newsletter, Vol. 12, Issue 4 (Oct 2011)

Albert Delp found 6th alligator, Sugar Creek, West Lebanon news, Attica Ledger
Tribune, Jan. 1937
Illiana Genealogist (Illiana Genealogical & Historical Society, IL), Vol. 51, Issue 1 (Spr
2015)

Albert McCool attacked by alligator, TX, 1951
Texas A.G.O. (Athens Genealogical Organization), Jan 2008

Alice the Alligator Girl career note and photograph, 1930s, TN
Connector (Tar River Connections Genealogical Society, NC), Vol. 13, Issue 2 (Spr
2009)

Alice the Alligator Girl on exhibit in Weldon, NC, April 1935
Halifax County (NC) Genealogical Society Newsletter, Vol. 21, Issue 3 (Dec 2010)

Alligator as Native American surname, US
Native American Ancestry Hunting (FL), Issue 7 (Dec 1995)

Alligator attraction, San Jacinto Plaza, 1883-1972
Password (El Paso County Historical Society, TX) Vol. 48, Issue 3 (Fal 2003)

Alligator captured in Anderson, 1922
Gazette (Madison County Historical Society, IN), Vol. 37, Issue 2 (Apr 2004)

Alligator caught in the Illinois River, 1895
Calhoun County (IL) Historical Society Newsletter (Fal 2006)

Blanche Forman with gun and alligator she's killed for eating her chickens, photo, 1910,
FL
Broward (FL) Legacy, Vol. 29, Issue 1 (2009)

Branded Newfoundland, author Lisa Moore's Alligator and consumer capitalism, 1995-
2013
Newfoundland and Labrador Studies, Vol. 28, Issue 1 (Spr 2013)

Brutus de Villeroi's Alligator, the United States Navy's first submarine, 1861
Civil War Historian Magazine, Vol. 4, Issue 4 (Jul 2008)

Citrus College pet alligator Wally kidnapped, n.d.
Glendoran (CA), Vol. 30, Issue 1 (Jan 2012)

Clay Dean of Gators Galore, alligator harvesting, 1989+
Age (Wallisville Heritage Park, TX), Issue 7 (Jul 2021)

Deceased alligator sent to newspaper, editorial comment, Daily Intelligencer item, Jan.
1860
Lookout (Wheeling Area Genealogical Society, WV) Vol. 8, Issue 4 (Dec 1999)

Donald Roebling invents Alligator amphibious tractor, 1935
Roebling (NJ) Record, Vol. 17, Issue 2 (Fal 2003)

Preservation Tips: Identifying Unknown Family Members in Photographs
by Christina Clary

Preserving family photographs is not just about saving the physical item but preserving the family story. This can be challenging when photographs are unidentified. Identifying family members can be a difficult task, but there are ways to approach it.

The Moellering-Miller Photograph & Autograph Book Collection is an excellent example of identification techniques. The collection was loaned to the Genealogy Center in the fall of 2024 to be digitized. It was found in the attic of the former home of Dr. Carl Miller, a Fort Wayne physician who collected photographs primarily of his mother's Moellering family. The Moellerings were a German family who came to Fort Wayne in the mid-nineteenth century, some of whom became wealthy contractors.

Few of the photographs were identified or labelled. A breakthrough came when an identified family portrait of the main Moellering family was found. Using that as a comparison, others were then identified. Staff were able to research the family and reference a family tree to name other people, such as spouses, children, and cousins. Other photographs of various branches were found and used to identify potentially more individuals. Staff also used yearbooks, newspapers, and family histories to assist in the identification process.

When trying to identify people in photographs, there are different clues that can be used. Physical aspects of the photograph, such as the type of backing or signs of deterioration, can help determine the photograph type, narrowing down the date range it was taken. It can be especially helpful when the name of the photographer and the studio address are on it. Researching the photographer and the dates they were at a specific location often refines the date further. It can also occasionally be misleading.

For example, a photograph of a young girl was potentially identified using a photograph from a relative's family tree. However, the photographer data stamped on the card backing did not match the period that corresponded with the girl's apparent age. A closer examination of the original photograph revealed jagged edges, as if it had been cut from a larger one, and the edges of another photograph underneath. This indicated that it had been pasted over another taken later at that studio, explaining the contradictory information.

This was a case where the original photograph was necessary to verify the details. Usually, a high-quality digital copy can be used instead of the original. Using a scan will help preserve the photograph by reducing the need to handle it.

Other clues to help identify people are focusing on facial aspects such as noses, ears, and brow bones, which typically remain consistent from childhood into adulthood. Women's clothing can also assist with dating photographs, as fashion changed more dramatically for women than for men over the decades. Infants and young children were often dressed similarly regardless of gender, so look for other hints such as hairstyles or accessories.

The Moellering-Miller Photograph & Autograph Book Collection can be viewed online in our Community Album. Let us know if you recognize anybody or if someone has been misidentified.

History Tidbits: Mangiamaccheroni--The Story of Pasta in Naples
by Logan Knight

In the cramped, twisting streets of eighteenth-century Naples, Italy, a traditional food was undergoing a renaissance. That food was pasta. Pasta makes an appearance on dinner plates the world over, but this was not always the case. The story of the rise of pasta is in many ways the story of modern Naples.

Naples in the nineteenth-century seemed much like the volcano, Mt. Vesuvius, that looms over it. Gigantic (the third largest and most densely populated city in Europe), dangerous, and brimming with tension between the rich and poor, Naples was a symbol of what happens when a traditional way of life runs headlong into modernity.

In the past, the diet of Neapolitans had been based off meat and vegetables. One poet even wrote an ode to broccoli: "Oh leaf so tasty! Oh, leaf so sweet! You are our magnet, and our treat." However, the price of these foodstuffs began to rise inexorably, putting them beyond the reach of the desperately poor population. A solution was needed or famine would grip the land.

Pasta had been around since at least the twelfth-century, when Arabs first brought it to southern Italy, but it was little-used because of how expensive it was. In fact, it was reserved for royalty. By the 1700s technical advancements had allowed pasta to be produced very cheaply. It also turned out that the climate around Naples was absolutely perfect for large scale production. Pasta quickly became the primary food source for the poor of Naples.

It was not prepared in a home kitchen. Pasta was a street food. Vendors would haul out giant iron pots and brew it up right there. There was no meat or sauce (too expensive). It might (if you were lucky) be flavored with a little bit of pork grease, a pinch of salt, and some hard-grated cheese. Also, despite how most of us eat pasta today, there were no utensils required.

Naples became known around the world as the home of the Mangiamaccherroni (the macaroni-eaters (all pasta at the time was called macaroni)). It was widely reported on how the peasants would scoop the hot pasta noodles into their mouths with their bare hands and guzzle it down. Surprisingly, this became a spectator sport. Rich visitors would pay the Lazzaroni (beggars) a few coins to watch them eat the street macaroni in this manner. One tourist, a John Lawson Stoddard, recorded his observations on this ugly pastime: "The instant that one wretched man received a plate a dozen others jumped for it; [they] grabbed handfuls of the steaming mass, and thrust the almost scalding mixture down their throats," he wrote. "I had expected to be amused, but this mad eagerness for common food denoted actual hunger."

This "event" became a very popular subject for painters across Europe. There are many works of fine art housed in museums and cultural institutions to this day, which feature a Neapolitan eating macaroni. Later, this subject would prove popular in the field of photography as well. See links here for pictures and photos: <http://fxcuisine.com/Default.asp?language=2&Display=98&resolution=high>
<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/spaghetti-eaten-by-hand-naples>

Even the royals got in on the act. King Ferdinand IV of Naples (1751-1825) was noted for showing he was a real man of the people by shoveling down macaroni by the handful in the royal box at the Real Teatro di San Carlo (the world's oldest continuously

active opera house in the world). When many Neapolitans immigrated to the New World, they brought their pasta with them. The wealth they gained here changed the dish to our American version, usually overflowing with meat and sauce (necessitating utensils).

Eventually, modernity changed the pasta industry of Naples, just like it had brought it into being. Mussolini transferred much of the growing of durum wheat (where much of pasta comes from) to the north. Refrigeration meant that Naples' climate was no longer as important, and the Italian recovery after the Second World War meant that they no longer had to eat just pasta. Even so, the legacy of Mangiamaccheroni lives on for all those who enjoy digging into some delicious pasta.

Genealogy Center's May 2025 Programs

Learning and networking about through the Genealogy Center! Join us for another month of free, virtual and in-person programs!

Thursday, May 1, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. ET "In-Person DNA & Genealogy Interest Group" with Sara Allen - <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/13427227>

Sunday, May 4, 2025 at 2 p.m. & 3:30 p.m. ET "United States Jewish Records" with Ellen Kowitt and the Northeast Indiana Jewish Genealogy Society. An afternoon of important programming: 2 p.m. - Locating Jewish Records in the Golden Medina (Jewish America) 1654 to present & 3:30 p.m. - U.S. Synagogue Records as Genealogical Source. Enjoy one or both - https://neindianaigs.org/upcoming-events/?mc_cid=a31f3c98d0&mc_eid=9ae2911281

Tuesday, May 6, 2025 at 2:30 p.m. ET "Researching Family in the Oldest Record Sets in the United States" with Dave Robison - <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/13552937>

Thursday, May 8, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. ET "Uncovering the Past: Exploring the Canadian Census (1825-1931)" with Lisa Elvin Staltari - <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/13427241>

Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at 2:30 p.m. ET "Using Tax Records to Add Context to Your Family" with Michele Doyle - <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/13427298>

Wednesday, May 14, 2025 at 7 p.m. ET "Migration of African Americans from Alabama to Fort Wayne" with Karen Richards
- https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_xQZkncN_R_y4dTrrCGGnTQ#/registration

A program of the Allen County Genealogical Society of Indiana.

Thursday, May 15, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. ET "Using Kindred Box to Preserve Your Story" with Jack Hamilton - <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/13552978>

Saturday, May 17, 2025 at 2 p.m. ET "Research Tools & Tips: No Ancestor Left Behind - Searching Non-population Census Records" with Roberta Ridley of the African American Genealogical Society of Fort Wayne

- https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ICrv7e7zQ0-mzMbChIOkHQ

This program is being offered both virtually and in the Discovery Center of the Genealogy Center

Tuesday, May 20, 2025 at 2:30 p.m. ET "Evaluating Published Family Histories" with John D. Beatty - <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/13427455>

Thursday, May 22, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. ET "Mapping Your Family History" with Susie Wickman - <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/13427504>

Tuesday, May 27, 2025 at 2:30 p.m. ET "Tracing Your Ancestors at Library and Archives Canada with Marie-Eve Robert - <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/13427813>

Thursday, May 29, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. ET "The Basics of Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy" with Jennifer Wiebe - <https://acpl.libnet.info/event/13427852>

Please register in advance for these engaging programs.

Genealogy Center's May 2025 Program Callout

Sunday, May 4, 2025 at 2 p.m. & 3:30 p.m. ET, the Northeast Indiana Jewish Genealogy Society and Ellen Kowitt are providing an afternoon of great programming for those engaged in Jewish genealogical research! There will be two highly informative session. Enjoy one or both by registering at: https://neindianajgs.org/upcoming-events/?mc_cid=a31f3c98d0&mc_eid=9ae2911281

***2 p.m.: LOCATING JEWISH RECORDS IN THE GOLDEN MEDINA (JEWISH AMERICA) 1654 - PRESENT – This lecture explores techniques and websites for finding Jewish genealogical records, including vital records, mohel registers, hospital records, and organizational materials. Examples from repositories like American Jewish Historical Society, American Jewish Archives, state archives, FamilySearch, and WorldCat are included.

***3:30pm: US SYNAGOGUE RECORDS AS A GENEALOGICAL RESOURCE – Join our session to explore synagogue records and understand their genealogical value. Shul Records America, a JewishGen tool from 2022, makes finding these records easier by identifying over 800 collections in 80 repositories, with 20% linked to digitized materials. This tool helps preserve crucial records as synagogues merge or close. ---Ellen Kowitt is the founder of Sole Searching Genealogy & Historical Research and speaks nationally on Jewish genealogy basics, research methods, and Holocaust history in Ukraine. You can find her work in Family Tree Magazine and Avotaynu. Ellen is dedicated to her craft, having completed the ProGen study program and serving in various volunteer roles, including as JewishGen USA Research Division Director. In 2022, she launched Shul Records America, aiding in synagogue records research.

Visit www.EllenKowitt.com to learn more.

Staying Informed about Genealogy Center Programming

Do you want to know what we have planned? Are you interested in one of our events, but forget? We offer email updates for The Genealogy Center's programming schedule. Don't miss out! Sign up at <http://goo.gl/forms/THcV0wAabB>.

Genealogy Center Bits-o'-News

Have you visited the Allen County Public Library's online merchandise store? You really need to check it out--we think you will enjoy the offerings! There is a special Genealogy Center section of the store with some pretty cool items. Prepare for the spring conference season by ordering some Genealogy Center merch today! <http://acpl.dkmlgo.online/shop/category/4726261?c=4726261> An added benefit is that your purchases support the Friends of the Allen County Public Library, and they in turn support the Genealogy Center.

Genealogy Center Social Media

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GenealogyCenter/>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/genealogycenter/>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ACPLGenealogy>
Blog: <http://www.genealogycenter.org/Community/Blog.aspx>
YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/askacpl>

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 302. 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 312. 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 \$95.

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. The meters take credit cards and charge at a rate of \$1/hour. Street parking is free after 5 p.m. 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 5 p.m. and 11 p.m.

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.