

Genealogy Gems: News from the Fort Wayne Library  
No. 23, January 31, 2006

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News for the New Year

by Curt B. Witcher

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The New Year often brings new things to our homes and our lives—and it is no different here at the Allen County Public Library. Thanks to the dedicated work of Allen County Genealogical Society volunteers, there are two brand new databases at FriendsOfAllenCounty.org. The first database is an abstraction of the earliest D. O. McComb & Sons funeral home records, 1926 to 1950.

<[friendsofallencounty.org/search\\_mccomb.php](http://friendsofallencounty.org/search_mccomb.php)> It was quite a job to abstract the information from microfiche and accurately key the data for publication. It is so very important to have the early records of this family-owned funeral home as a part of the complement of early twentieth century Allen County, Indiana, record indices available to researchers.

The second database is an 1883 burial list found in and abstracted from the "Fort Wayne Daily Sentinel" by Donald Weber. <[friendsofallencounty.org/search\\_burials1883.php](http://friendsofallencounty.org/search_burials1883.php)> Though civil birth and death registration was officially required in most Indiana counties beginning in 1882, and a bit earlier in cities like Fort Wayne, researchers are well aware that many individuals in the early decades simply did not get registered. Having burial lists compiled from funeral home records, as this list was, helps genealogists fill-in those early gaps which complement newspaper obituaries and published death notices.

Finally, more than thirty thousand obituaries have been added to the Fort Wayne and Allen County area obituary index. <[friendsofallencounty.org/search\\_obits1900.php](http://friendsofallencounty.org/search_obits1900.php)> These obituaries represent most of those published in the last quarter of 2005 as well as a very substantial number of obituaries not yet uploaded for the 1988 through 1994 time period.

The department continues to engage in reconnaissance work to ensure that the more than one hundred and fifty years of obituaries for this area are referenced as completely and accurately as possible.

New for the New Year is a "genealogy tee-shirt" being sold by the Friends of the Allen County Public Library. The attractive casual wear sports a bright tree with the slogan "Branchin' Out" and the library's name. The cost is \$15 plus Indiana sales tax. If you're looking for that special something for the genealogist in your family, or your genealogist friend, you won't want to miss this unique item. For an ordering address, simply click on the following link. <[www.acpl.lib.in.us/aboutus/bookstore.html](http://www.acpl.lib.in.us/aboutus/bookstore.html)>

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Captured at Sea and in Ports Abroad  
by Roberta Ridley

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"Registers of Applications for the Release of Impressed Seamen 1793-1802" is among the one-reel wonders of the microfilm collection that may contain a missing piece to your ancestral puzzle.

From the end of the American Revolution until the conclusion of the War of 1812, the U.S. government was concerned with the impressment of seamen on American ships and with their repatriation. American seamen were essentially being kidnapped by the British (and occasionally the French or Spanish) and detained or forced into service in foreign navies. "If the impressment occurred within a foreign port, masters of U.S. ships were to 'make a protest' to the American consul. If the impressment occurred on the high seas, it was to be reported to the collector of customs at the first U.S. port at which the vessel arrived." The vessel master's protest stated the name, place of residence and citizenship of the person impressed or detained, the manner of the impressment, and by whom it was made. An account of these impressments or detentions was to be submitted to the Secretary of State.

This reel contains four volumes of registers relating to applications for release of impressed seamen and covers an inclusive date span of July 19, 1793 through May 1, 1802. The substantive content varies. Volumes 1, 3, and 4 include an index arranged roughly alphabetically by the first letter of the seaman's surname. Volume 2 is arranged chronologically by date of the application for release. The information provided about each seaman may include: native state, American ship from which he was taken, the British ship on which he was carried off and the name of its captain, date of impressment, evidence of citizenship, and result of the application.

Was a seafaring ancestor really lost at sea, or captured and taken into government service with the British or the French? Continue your missing ancestor search in the single reel on impressed seamen. (Microcopy # M-2025 Roll 1)

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The Belfast Newsletter and Index 1737-1800

by Steven W. Myers

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Most genealogists have looked in an old newspaper to record the valuable information connected with an individual's marriage notice or obituary. Some have even gone so far as to read through all the local items in a town newspaper covering many decades, in order to glean a wide variety of otherwise unknown details about their ancestral families—illnesses, accidents, house fires, visits by relatives, school awards, membership in local organizations, business advertisements and the prices of everyday household items. This type of search has been made easier for many localities with the advent of computer indexing and the internet. Even our foreign research efforts can benefit.

The Belfast Newsletter is one newspaper that should be of interest to anyone with Scots Irish ancestors living in Northern Ireland in the latter half of the eighteenth century. While only about one quarter of the issues published from 1737-1750 have survived, the run from 1750-1800 is nearly complete. Published three times weekly, the papers are full of local news items that may provide a vital clue in otherwise difficult Irish research. As an example, ship captains occasionally published signed testimonials from satisfied passengers they had already landed in North America, sometimes leaving the only surviving written record of such a passage.

An index to The Belfast Newsletter by John C. Greene, covering 1737-1800, is available here on microfiche and provides access to nearly 300,000 news items and ads. Every significant word and date was indexed. Researchers may check this microfiche index by personal name, place name, subject, and ship name or for advertisements. An online version of this index allows wildcard searching and is available free at [www.ucl.ac.uk/bnl/](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/bnl/) Users are reminded that Irish place names were not yet standardized at that time, and are cautioned to check spelling variations of both personal and place names they are seeking.

Brief abstracts of referenced news items can also be viewed free on the website, but sometimes are a bit cryptic. Fortunately, the Historical Genealogy Department also owns copies of the original newspapers, dating 1737-1800, on 45 reels of microfilm. Visitors may make photocopies of the original text for items they have identified in the indexes, or just enjoy browsing a contemporary Irish newspaper that can help provide historical context for their searches. Those with ancestors from Counties Antrim and Down, or the neighboring region, will find this source fascinating and particularly useful.

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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:

A method of preserving brittle or acidic documents is to photocopy the item onto acid-free, alkaline-buffered paper. Photocopying will preserve only the contents of the document. If the physical object itself is valuable you may want to encapsulate it in Mylar. Encapsulation is reversible. Encapsulation materials and acid-free, alkaline-buffered paper are available from most suppliers of archival materials.

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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.

Don Hall's Guesthouse Hotel

1313 W. Washington Center Road Fort Wayne IN 46825

phone (260) 489-2524; toll-free 1-800-348-1999

FAX: 260-489-7067

The Guesthouse is locally-owned, one of a chain of Don Hall's restaurants. In addition to the food, the Guesthouse is a substantial hotel, visible from I-69 (use exit 111A north and turn right onto Washington Center Road). It offers upscale rooms and facilities, including a pool, exercise room and two restaurants. Other restaurants are nearby and the staff will be glad to direct you to the various Hall's restaurants in Fort Wayne, one of which is only two blocks from the library. Those arriving in Fort Wayne by air can be met by the Guesthouse van. The library is an easy fifteen-minute drive from the Guesthouse. Rooms start at \$89.

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### AREA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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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)

February 8, Dupont branch ACPL: Don Litzer, "Not Just Ancestry—Learning About Genealogy and the Internet, A four-step strategy for success."

Computer Users Group  
Wednesday, February 15: 7 PM at Aboite Library

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  
February 18 Youngtown, AZ: West Valley Genealogical Society, Arizona--all day workshop.

Don Litzer  
February 8 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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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.Info](mailto:KSpears@ACPL.Info)> with "unsubscribe e-zine" in the subject line.

Ryan Taylor, editor