

Genealogy Gems: News from the Fort Wayne Library
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In this issue:

- *Telling Our Stories, Treasuring Our Lives
- *Hurricanes
- *Fraternal Herald-Bratrsky Vestnik Death Index - Not Just for Czechs!
- *Technology Tip of the Month--Photo Restoration with Adobe Photoshop, Version 9.02: The Nitty Gritty I
- *Preservation Tip of the Month--Recovering from Disaster Related Water Damage
- *Get Going with WinterTech
- *Area Calendar of Events
- *Driving Directions to the Library
- *Parking at the Library
- *Queries for the Department

Telling Our Stories, Treasuring Our Lives

by Curt B. Witcher

Moments ago, the first International Black Genealogy Summit successfully concluded in Fort Wayne. More than four hundred and fifty attendees from nearly half the states in the union came for three days of research, learning, and networking. The Genealogy Center's extended research hours were a big hit as was our new African American Gateway <www.GenealogyCenter.Info/africanamerican/>, providing attendees with increased opportunities to use the vast resources available for African American research. Throughout the conference, it was clear just how important it is for genealogists to continually put their research in an ethnic context, whether African American, German, Irish, English or one of many others now part of the fabric of America. Too often, genealogists miss important record groups and key sources of information by not keeping an ethnic context in mind.

The keynote speaker at the banquet this past Friday evening was a remarkable researcher, author, and lecturer, Dorothy Redford. She challenged us to "show up for your own history." In articulating the importance of genealogical research endeavors, she asked "if we don't write our history, who will?" And if we relegate our own history to someone else's pen, how do we know it will be accurate? Truly, we can value and treasure our lives by telling our stories--by recording our own histories. And this treasure is *the* gift we can give to our children's children.

Next month, on November 27th, you are invited to participate in the National Day of Listening. On this day StoryCorps encourages all Americans to set aside one hour to record a conversation with a grandparent, neighbor, friend, aunt, or military veteran. Let's use this day to actually do something tangible, something right now, something lasting, so generations from now our stories will be read and our lives treasured.

Hurricanes

by Melissa Shimkus

Placing ancestors in historical context gives researchers a greater understanding of the lives of their forebears and also can provide clues for locating pertinent records. The lives of previous generations may have been touched and shaped by war, disease, natural disaster or other events.

For example, populations living along the Eastern seaboard and the Gulf Coast have been affected by hurricanes for centuries. Today, hurricanes and tropical storms are given names, such as Andrew and Hugo, and closely tracked. But many unnamed storms, such as the 1900 Galveston hurricane, the 1915 New Orleans hurricane and the 1921 Florida hurricane, struck without warning and caused devastation that changed the lives of those who experienced them. The Genealogy Center owns several titles that detail the histories of hurricanes and document their effects on specific areas and individuals.

"Galveston in Nineteen Hundred" (976.402 G13O) was published to pay for schools recuperating from the devastation of the Galveston hurricane. The book describes Galveston, Texas, prior to, during and following the storm, and explains how the hurricane forever altered the landscape of the island and its community. Individual Galveston residents are mentioned throughout the book, such as Clay Stone Briggs who participated in relief work and Mrs. J. Greve and her daughter, Louise, who were among the dead.

Another title, "1938 Hurricane as We Remember It" (974.701 SU2QU), was written as a memorial to the storm that ravaged the towns of Westhampton Beach and Quogue, New York. It includes personal stories of individuals who survived the hurricane, such as Norman Hubbard who was a volunteer in the search for the missing.

Researchers can learn about the Gulf Coast region's historic battles with storms by reading accounts based on newspaper reports and published interviews, such as "The Cedar Keys Hurricane of 1896" (975.902 C32OI) and "Hurricane Audrey" (976.301 C14R). Other titles in the collection, such as "Hurricane Destruction in South Carolina" (975.7 R824HU) and "North Carolina's Hurricane History" (975.6 B262N), detail some of the storms that ravaged the Carolina coastlines from 1667 to 1989 and 1524 to 1996, respectively.

Since the first settlers arrived in America, hurricanes have influenced the lives of those living along the coastlines. Understanding how such natural disasters or other historic events impacted individuals may provide researchers with additional research clues, as well as a deeper understanding of their ancestors.

Fraternal Herald-Bratsky Vestnik Death Index - Not Just for Czechs!

by Delia Cothrun Bourne

Mutual aid societies, also known as benefit societies, have been around for centuries and were the precursors of the insurance industry of today. Often based on a shared occupation, religion, geographic location of origin or ethnic background, these societies provided educational benefits and aided members in time of illness, economic crisis or death. By making regular contributions,

members ensured aid and protection for themselves and their families in time of need.

The Zapadni Ceska Bratrsky Jednota (Western Bohemian Fraternal Association) was one of the many mutual aid societies that sprang up throughout the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries. Organized in 1897, it originally accepted only men of Czech ancestry as members, but quickly changed to accept women, and later removed any ethnic requirement, becoming the Western Fraternal Life Association in 1957. Its monthly publication, "Bratrsky Vestnik," initially was published in Czech, then in a mixture of Czech and English starting in the 1940s, and eventually all in English.

Each issue included a "Payment of Mortuary Claims" list enumerating each death benefit paid. The association kept a card index of these payments and the few obituaries that were published. This index was microfilmed by the Eastern Nebraska Genealogical Society in the early 1990s.

Each card on the microfilm notes the name of the deceased, date and place of death, lodge number and the year he or she had become a member. Some cards include additional information, such as occupation, age or cause of death. For example, Mary R. Juarez, who joined in 1981, died September 28, 1983, in Cushing, Oklahoma, at age 46. Frank Jesina, a 65-year old salesman and member since 1921, died of heart failure May 5, 1936, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. A death claim was paid for him in June 1936. The microfilm also includes a list of the lodges by number, providing each lodge's name, location, date organized and status in 1991 (active, disbanded or merged). Also provided are lists of the lodges arranged by state. The heaviest concentrations of lodges were in Nebraska (36), Wisconsin (35) and Minnesota (22), but there were five lodges in California, and even one in Fairhope, Alabama, that was still active in 1991.

The Genealogy Center owns this set of seven microfilms (cabinet 66-B-7), as well as a printed copy of the explanatory material and lodge lists titled "Name Index, July 1897-July 1991, Fraternal Herald Bratrsky Vestnik" (973.004 N15). Although this is a wonderful source for Czech relatives scattered across the continent, remember that all comers were accepted in later years.

Technology Tip of the Month--Photo Restoration with Adobe Photoshop, Version 9.02: The Nitty Gritty I

by Kay Spears

The next few articles will cover some basic tools used in photo restoration: contrast/brightness, hue/saturation, feathering, layers and cloning. These tools should be in all photoshop applications, not just Adobe Photoshop. The procedures for using them may vary in each program, but the function of the tools will be the same.

To begin, remember that what you see on the computer screen can be deceiving. There are a number of things working against your eyes - the light coming in the window, the calibration of the computer, and the type of computer used. The same image will appear darker in Windows, lighter on a MacIntosh. Sometimes what you print will not be the same as what you see on your screen, especially if you are trying to restore color photographs. Just remember that each computer is different. And be patient.

When I'm restoring photos in Adobe Photoshop, I always have the Toolbox and Layer palette dialog box open on my work area. The Toolbox has all the mouse/cursor tools on it: zoom, movement, clone, erase, select, crop, etc. The Layer palette dialog box allows you to view and work with different layers. Working with layers is a bit more complicated, but we will do a quick walk-through later.

First, evaluate each photo, deciding what needs to be done. Beginners should start with the simplest fix and work up through the more complex problems. For me, the easiest problem to fix is the faded photograph. Save the scratches, watermarks and cracks until later. To handle fading, Adobe Photoshop provides some Auto correction features: Auto Level and Auto Contrast, located under Image>Adjustments. Just click on them and voila, the image is no longer faded. The limitation with using the Auto tools is that you don't have any control over the amount of fade correction, so learn to use the Brightness/Contrast tool also located under Image>Adjustments. When the Brightness/Contrast tool dialog box is open, make sure you check the preview check box; in fact, make a habit of always checking the preview box for any dialog box that you may use. This allows you to watch the changes as you progress. When adjusting the Brightness/Contrast dialog box, use either the slide bars or type in the numbers. For beginners, play with the slide bars until you are used to them, then click OK. To go beyond the basics, there are also Curves, Shadow/Highlight and Exposure tools.

At this point, I recommend you print the corrected image. If you like the way the photograph looks when printed, save it. Remember, you do not want to overwrite the original image, so use "save as" to save the corrected image in a different file. When I restore an image, I always work from a copy and not the original. You may also want to invest in some gloss or matte finish photographic paper, which can be purchased at Office Depot, Staples or most any craft store. I recommend the finished photograph be printed on a laser printer. Even though the color of a desk jet printer is more vibrant, the laser printer ink is permanent and does not run or spot if any moisture gets on it.

Next article in the Nitty Gritty: Cloning

Preservation Tip of the Month-- Recovering from Disaster Related Water Damage
by Becky Schipper

Most natural or man-made disasters, such as floods or fire, involve water in some manner. Even a small leak from a roof or a water pipe can cause serious damage to a paper based collection. When such a disaster occurs, contact a regional agency, paper conservator, or a cultural institution for assistance if you don't know how to properly dry wet materials. Immediate response within the first forty-eight (48) hours is crucial to the successful recovery of materials and to prevent mold growth. [Source: American Institute for Conservation]

The Indiana State Library <www.in.gov/library/> and the Indiana Historical Society <www.indianahistory.org/> are good resources for conservation and advice.

Get Going with WinterTech

Get your research off to a hot start this winter by attending our WinterTech lectures, at 2:30 PM on the second Wednesday of each month from November through February. Scheduled to coincide with the Allen County Genealogy Society of Indiana's monthly meetings at 7 PM on the same days, the courses will spotlight the various ways technology can enhance your family history quest. On November 11 at 2:30 p.m. in Meeting Room C, Delia Cothrun Bourne will discuss "Newspaper Searching with Ancestry's Historical Newspapers and Newspaper Archive." Local newspapers often included all kinds of local events, such as births, marriages, deaths, court cases, tax lists, and social activities. Come learn about two of the online resources that the Genealogy Center offers for searching newspapers throughout the United States. Future WinterTech classes will feature Melissa Shimkus on "Reading Genealogy Blogs" in December, Cynthia Theusch discussing "Genealogy Software To Record Your Family History" in January, and the "Basics of Scanning Photographs" with Kay Spears in February. Call 260-421-1225 to register, or send us an email at Genealogy@ACPL.Info.

Area Calendar of Events

Allen County Genealogical Society of Indiana (ACGSI)

November 11, 2009, 6:30 p.m. social time; 7 p.m. program. Allen County Public Library, 900 Library Plaza, Meeting Room A. Bill Crane will present "Civil War: First Flag on the Summit."

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

November 1, 2009, 2:00 p.m. - Will Clark and George Morrison will present "The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Plaza."

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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Steve Myers & Curt Witcher, co-editors