Family History Month

OCTOBER 2023

THE GENEALOGY CENTER
AT THE ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
The Genealogy Center is delighted to offer daily activities to inspire you to pursue, preserve, and present your family stories. Don’t miss our virtual programs — registration links can be found on the bottom left of the Genealogy Center’s website at genealogycenter.org, under the “Genealogy Events” section. Join us on this exciting journey of discovery and celebration!

To learn more, call The Genealogy Center at (260) 421-1225, or email us at genealogy@acpl.info.
Notable special events for this year’s Family History Month:

THE LEGAL GENEALOGIST
Experience the captivating world of family history with Judy G. Russell, JD, CG, CGL, renowned as the “Legal Genealogist.” Join her in a three-program virtual event to unveil your family’s secrets. Explore legal intricacies in court, land, and DNA research, master advanced U.S. Census investigation, and uncover invaluable insights from records to reveal your family’s narrative. Don’t miss out on this incredible chance to learn from the Legal Genealogist on October 14, from 10 AM to 2 PM, and embark on a captivating historical journey!

GENEALOGY AFTER HOURS
Participate in-person or virtually for an after-hours event! The Genealogy Center will be open an extra three hours on October 27, from 6 to 9 PM. In addition, our genealogy librarians will be accessible on Zoom during this extended period, prepared to handle questions and engage in discussions with patrons hailing from various corners of the world. You’re invited to be part of this unique occasion, whether you choose to visit us physically or connect with us virtually!

IN-PERSON WALKING TOURS
Join us for two captivating in-person walking tours! On October 7, our Genealogy Services Manager, Allison DePrey Singleton, will lead “Cemeteries Are Not Just for Ghosts: Lindenwood Cemetery.” Then, on October 21, Senior Librarian Elizabeth Hodges will guide “From Deed to Discovery: Tracing Williams Woodland Park Neighborhood Home Histories.” Don’t miss these intriguing history and genealogy explorations!

SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES
Participate in our unique social media engagements on Facebook every Sunday, Monday, and Friday during October. You will enjoy Storytelling Sundays, Alliteration Mondays, and Flashback Fridays.
Sunday, October 1

**STORYTELLING SUNDAYS QUESTION**

on Facebook

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Monday, October 2

**MATRILINEAL MONDAY**

on Facebook

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Tuesday, October 3

**THE ROOTS BENEATH YOUR FEET: THE HOMESTEAD ACT OF 1862**

Presented by Jonathan Fairchild

2:30–3:30 pm • Virtual

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Wednesday, October 4

**WEDNESDAYS WITH WITCHER**

Presented by Curt Witcher

2:00–2:30 pm • Virtual

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Which ancestor would you most like to meet and why? Share a picture of them if you have one!

Discovering the maiden names of our female ancestors can often prove to be a challenging task. To assist with your research, we've put together a few tips and tricks that may prove helpful. We encourage you to share any of your own favorite discoveries and research tips in the comments on our Facebook. Let's celebrate the women in our family tree together!

This program gives a focused look on doing genealogical research with the land records of those who settled in the United States under the Homestead Act. The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed individuals to claim 160 acres of American public domain land for free, as long as they lived and farmed on it for five years. Because of the requirements to file claims, extensive records including vital records, immigration records, military service records, and legal records were kept for every single one of these homestead claims. This session will teach attendees about the role the Homestead Act played in immigration, provide information about ethnic and religious homesteading settlement communities, and how to find and utilize Homestead Land Entry Case files and the General Land Office Records. From 1863 through 1986, millions of individuals from across the world staked their claim to “the American Dream” under this law.

**Collecting the Stories of Our Lives: Tips for Recording Oral Histories and Life Stories**

Hear some best practices for interviewing family members, military buddies, high school classmates, and more. Prepare to interview in an enjoyable and meaningful way.
Wednesday, October 4
THE PURSUIT OF FREEDOM IN A ‘FREE’ STATE: THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION’S SIGNIFICANCE TO AFRICAN AMERICANS IN INDIANA
Presented by Dr. Edna Greene Medford
7:00–8:00 pm
Virtual & In-Person

Thursday, October 5
USING DNA TESTING TO LOCATE ANCESTORS BACK IN THE OLD COUNTRY
Presented by Sara Allen
6:30–7:30 pm • Virtual

Friday, October 6
FLASHBACK FRIDAY
on Facebook

Saturday, October 7
CEMETERIES ARE NOT JUST FOR GHOSTS: LINDENWOOD CEMETERY
Presented by Allison DePrey Singleton
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
In-Person Tour at Lindenwood Cemetery

This presentation will focus on the significance of this very important document, The Emancipation Proclamation, for African Americans in Indiana. The Friends of the Lincoln Collection of Indiana are sponsoring this presentation by Dr. Edna Greene Medford, professor emeritus of history at Howard University who specializes in 19th-century African-American history. She is a member of the board of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation and is on the Executive Committee of The Lincoln Forum.

Learn steps to take to utilize your DNA matches (autosomal, Y-DNA) to move your genealogical research back to the old country where the family immigrated from.

Join us for a program at Lindenwood Cemetery that’s suitable for all ages! Discover the basics of cemetery etiquette and participate in a fun scavenger hunt to uncover unique gravestone carvings and symbolism. Learn how cemeteries can be an invaluable resource for family history research, and take part in a brief guided tour of a section of the cemetery. We’ll meet at the Lindenwood Parking Lot located at 2324 W. Main St., Fort Wayne. Please dress comfortably for walking outdoors. We look forward to seeing you there!
Newspapers were like the social media of the day, a place to share and read about society news. What is the most interesting thing that you have discovered about an ancestor within historic newspapers?

Are you looking for hard-to-find genealogy records? The Genealogy Center’s has an extensive collection of microfilm records, covering everything from city directories to newspapers to local histories. Our knowledgeable staff is also here to assist you with any questions you may have. Let’s dive into the past together!

Newspapers provide a window from which to view our ancestor’s world, but have you considered how the rest of the world saw our ancestors? Explore the British Newspaper Archive for American and Canadian gems.

Collecting the Stories of Our Lives: Tips for Writing Our Families’ Stories

Hear some methods and strategies for making writing enjoyable and rewarding. Learn how writing in small bits can result in an amazing story to share with family.

For many, researching before 1870 is a hurdle in African American family history. Learn about sources and strategies to trace ancestors back into the Antebellum Era.
PUTTING THOSE RECORDS TO WORK
10:00–11:00 am
Every document we locate in genealogical research has its clear use: a census record will help us identify family members and trace them over time; a court record will tell us what was happening with that person at that time; a will or probate record will help recreate a family at a specific point in time. But every document we locate can be mined—directly or in combination with other records—for more. Find a deeper richer context for our family members and their place and time.

MORE THAN JUST NAMES: ADVANCED U.S. CENSUS RESEARCH
11:30 am – 12:30 pm
Those every-10-years U.S. censuses are goldmines of names, ages and birthplaces for members of our families. But there’s so much more in the census records if we know where to look—everything from socioeconomic status to crops grown or products made, from school attendance to marriage dates, from physical disabilities to causes of death, from military service to clues that lead us to other sources. Learn how an advanced search of the U.S. census records can add to your family history.

LANDING THE FOURTHS: PROVING A CASE WITH COURT, LAND, AND DNA EVIDENCE
1:00–2:00 pm
The father of Gustavus Boone Robertson (1827 MS-1903 TX) was William M. Robertson (c1795 NC-1864 MS). But who was Gustavus’s mother? No record directly identifies her, but court, land, and DNA evidence combine to prove the case as to the identity of this third great-grandmother and, in doing so, landing the fourths-fourth great-grandparents, that is.
Looking to trace your ancestors’ migration patterns? Check out the wealth of migration genealogy records available at The Genealogy Center! From passenger lists to naturalization records, we have a wide range of resources to help you uncover your family’s migration history. Be sure to explore our catalog and utilize our Periodical Source Index (PERSI) to discover hidden gems related to your family’s story. Let’s discover the journeys of our ancestors together!

Breaking the language barrier is a crucial step in genealogy research, but it can be intimidating. In this presentation, we will explore different techniques and tools that can help you overcome language barriers and make the most of genealogy records in other languages. By learning about the challenges and applying the techniques discussed in this presentation, you can unlock valuable information about your ancestors and build a deeper understanding of your family history.

Among the most frequently asked questions in the Genealogy Center is some form of “where do I go from here?” Simple strategies for continuing our discovery will be shared.
Thursday, October 19

**NAVIGATING FOLD3: YOUR GATEWAY TO RESEARCHING MILITARY ANCESTORS AND BEYOND**

Presented by Elizabeth Hodges

6:30–7:30 pm • Virtual

With a collection of over 500 million indexed and digitized documents, Fold3 stands as an invaluable tool for family historians embarking on a journey to trace their military ancestors. Join senior librarian, Elizabeth Hodges, on Thursday, October 19, as she unveils essential tips and techniques to navigate Fold3.

Friday, October 20

**FLASHBACK FRIDAY**

Share your favorite memories of the Genealogy Center!

on Facebook

The Genealogy Center then and now.
10:00 am EST
SECRETS TO SUCCESSFUL WRITING & PUBLISHING
Presented by Angela Breidenbach
Executive Director of the International Institute of Genealogical Studies
Gain a solid overview of the real writing world. Learn the “big picture” and key tools to take your writing to the next level. The presentation will explore a variety of important topics including style, editing, building a portfolio, marketing your work, and more!

11:25 am EST
LINKING THE GENERATIONS WITH COURT & LAND RECORDS
Presented by Judy Russell
JD, CG, CGL, The Legal Genealogist
Sponsored by the Texas Research Ramblers Genealogical Society
It’s the single biggest issue genealogists face: how do we connect one generation to the next with reliable evidence? Vital records are excellent documentation, but they often don’t exist for the time and place we’re researching. We must make sure we’re not simply putting people into family lines because they share the same names. Using court and land records, we can often find the evidence needed to link the generations accurately.

12:25 pm EST
VISITING THE HILL COLLEGE TEXAS HERITAGE MUSEUM
Presented by John Versluis
Dean of the Texas Heritage Museum at Hill College
This presentation will showcase the Hill College, Texas Heritage Museum with an overview of the Museum’s Galleries and Collection Division and highlight the holdings in the Museum’s Historical Research Center Division. This center is nationally recognized as a Civil War Repository with an extensive collection of maps, photos, and microfilm. Also available is an archive that contains files of soldiers’ letters, diaries, and unpublished manuscripts from all Texas wars.

1:25 pm EST
GENEALOGY BASICS: START SEARCHING FOR YOUR ANCESTORS TODAY
Presented by Irene B. Walters
Librarian, Family History Research Center at the Clayton Library Campus
Need info on the names, dates, and places your family lived? Interested in finding out how to track down your family stories? Come learn the basics you need to get started! Discover the tools available, starting with home sources and continuing with the types of created records that are useful for genealogical research and where they can be found. Also covered will be ways to stay organized by utilizing paper charts and forms as well as computer software.
2:50 pm EST
TAME THE CHAOS TIGER: ORGANIZE YOUR RECORDS AND RESEARCH
Presented by Susan Ball, President, TxSGS
How many times are the solutions to our brick walls found in records we already have? This presentation starts with taming the physical chaos caused by lack of organization and continues with taming the research chaos caused by poorly defined and overlooked research. Explore templates for organizational tools to help organize information and form a research plan.

3:50 pm EST
UNCOVER YOUR FAMILY’S STORY USING THE PERIODICAL SOURCE INDEX (PERSI)
Presented by Elizabeth Hodges MA, MLSIS, Senior Librarian in the Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center
Free to the public, the Periodical Source Index (PERSI) is the premier subject index for genealogy and local history periodicals, and is produced by the staff of The Genealogy Center. Learn how to make PERSI your new favorite tool in your family history tool box!

4:50 pm EST
PLACING YOUR DNA MATCHES ON YOUR TREE
Presented by Ryan Russell, Genetic Genealogist, Open Door Genetics
When you take a DNA test, you’ll receive a match list of mostly strangers. Who are these people, and how are you connected? This session discusses strategies for identifying your DNA matches and determining your common ancestors. Whether your goal is to collect more information about your ancestors or break through brick walls on your tree, gaining a better understanding of your DNA matches can lead to new discoveries.

5:50 pm CST
CHECKING ON CZECH IMMIGRANTS TO THE UNITED STATES
Presented by Heather Mecham, Research Specialist for FamilySearch
Identifying the town name of an immigrant ancestor is key to discovering Czech roots. Many United States records can reveal an immigrant’s place of origin. This class highlights United States record types key to Czech research. Learn about FamilySearch resources such as Czechia Guided Research which can help locate the correct Czech Archive once a town name is known.
Saturday, October 21

FROM DEED TO DISCOVERY: A WALKING TOUR OF TRACING THE HISTORY OF WILLIAMS-WOODLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD HOMES
Presented by Elizabeth Hodges
10:30 am – 12:30 pm
In-Person Walking Tour

Are you interested in researching your home or your neighborhood? Join senior librarian Elizabeth Hodges for a walking tour of Williams Woodland Park neighborhood homes as we take you on a journey through time to uncover the history of these homes and their residents. From deeds and maps to old photographs and stories, we’ll share the techniques and tools used to trace the history of homes in this area, and reveal the secrets that lie hidden within the walls. Whether you’re a history buff, an architecture enthusiast, or simply curious about the past, this tour is sure to captivate and inspire.

Please dress comfortably for walking outside. Meet at Templo Aposento Alto Church located at 307 West Woodland Avenue, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Sunday, October 22

STORYTELLING SUNDAYS QUESTION
on Facebook

Write about an ancestor who made a significant contribution to their community. What did they do, and how did it impact others?

Monday, October 23

MONUMENT MONDAY
on Facebook

Tuesday, October 24

BLACK AND WHITE AND READ ALL OVER: DELVING INTO AFRICAN AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS
Presented by Allison DePrey Singleton
2:30–3:30 pm • Virtual

When researching African American family history, an often-overlooked resource are the African American newspapers. Accessible Archives African American Newspapers and ProQuest African American Historical Newspapers are two online databases that provide access to a wide range of historical newspapers that focus on African American history and culture. These databases are valuable resources for scholars, researchers, and anyone interested in exploring the history of African Americans in the United States.
Wednesday, October 25

**WEDNESDAYS WITH WITCHER**
Presented by **Curt Witcher**
2:00–2:30 pm • Virtual

**What Do I Do With All My Stuff?!: Organizing to Preserve & Pass Down**
Glean some tips for organizing what you have spent a lifetime gathering so it is appreciated and preserved for your descendants and interested others. We may be in more trouble than we think!

Thursday, October 26

**HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN FUNERAL PRACTICES**
Presented by **Todd Harra**
6:30–7:30 pm • Virtual

Are you curious to learn more about the funeral and mourning practices of your ancestors? Why do we embalm the deceased? Why are funerals so expensive? Is there a reason coffins are shaped the way they are? Where does the tradition of viewing the body come from? Ceremonies for honoring the deceased are crucial parts of our lives, but few people know where our traditional practices come from—and what they reveal about our history, culture, and beliefs about death. Author of the book “Last Rites,” Todd Harra will explore the history of American funeral customs— where they came from, what they mean, and how they are still evolving.

Friday, October 27

**FLASHBACK FRIDAY**
on Facebook

**The Genealogy Center then and now.**
Share your favorite memories of the Genealogy Center!

Friday, October 27

**SCANAPALOOZA SPONSORED BY VIVID-PIX**
Presented by **Curt Witcher and Rick Voight** of Vivid-Pix
2:00–5:00 pm • In-Person

Join Curt Witcher of Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center and Rick Voight of Vivid-Pix as they guide you through the process of starting your genealogy journey, initiating photo organization, scanning and revitalizing your cherished photographs, and mastering the art of sharing significant family narratives.
Join us in-person OR virtually for an after-hours event! The Genealogy Center will extend its physical hours for an additional three hours, welcoming visitors. Additionally, our genealogy librarians will be available on Zoom during these extended hours, ready to address inquiries and engage in conversations with patrons joining us from around the globe. We welcome you to participate in this special event, either by visiting us in person or connecting with us online!

Friday, October 27
6:00 — 9:00 pm
Virtual OR In-Person
Sunday, October 29
**STORYTELLING SUNDAYS QUESTION**
on Facebook

Monday, October 30
**MEDICAL MONDAY**
on Facebook

Tuesday, October 31
**SÉANCES AND SPIRITS: A SPOOKY LOOK AT THE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY SPIRITUALIST MOVEMENT**
Presented by **Genealogy Staff**
2:30–3:30 pm • Virtual

What is your favorite place to do genealogy research and why?

Medical records can offer a unique perspective on your family’s health over generations, shedding light on the various medical conditions, treatments, and challenges that your ancestors faced. While obtaining such records can be challenging due to privacy regulations and the passage of time, they can be valuable additions to your genealogical research. Here’s a deeper look at genealogy medical records.

Are you curious about the otherworldly beliefs and practices of your ancestors? Join our senior librarians for an informal conversation and Q&A session as we delve into the history of the spiritualist movement of the 19th and early 20th century. We’ll explore the history and mysterious practices of spiritualism, including the famous séances where participants attempted to communicate with the dead. Join us on this journey of discovery and exploration into the world of historic spiritualism and the occult, as we discuss the mysteries that continue to fascinate and captivate us to this day.
The Genealogy Center at the Allen County Public Library

Allen County Public Library
900 Library Plaza
Fort Wayne, Indiana, 46802
(260) 421-1225
genealogy@acpl.info
www.genealogycenter.org

Visit us during regular library hours for full access to our physical and digital collection. Our staff is available to assist with your family history research.

Monday–Thursday
9:00 AM – 9:00 PM

Friday–Saturday
9:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Sunday
12:00 – 5:00 PM