FINDING ANCESTORS

IN FORT WAYNE

The Genealogist's
Unofficial One-Stop Guide to the
Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center

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midwestroots.net

Additions, corrections, and comments welcome: librarytraveler@gmail.com
INTRODUCTION

This booklet will help you navigate the Allen County Public Library's Genealogy Center. It's the best single research stop for family historians between Salt Lake City and the east coast, but this is not a normal library! Without a guide you might miss some of its many offerings. I will not list everything it has (here's one good try), but I will show how to find what you need. (If you need to cut to the chase, see the Six Specific Finding Aids, pages 5-10.)

Admit it: you're wondering, “Why is it in Fort Wayne, Indiana?” Good leadership is one reason. A long unique history is another. This river junction was an important place – Kekionga – long before Anthony Wayne or the United States were thought of. It's cosmopolitan: French was a principal language on the street in 1823.¹ And Fort Wayne goes its own way. It still has two daily newspapers. Local sports teams are nicknamed “Mastodons,” “TinCaps,” “Mad Ants” — and, back in the day, “Pistons.” Most of all, Fort Wayne is a can-do town that has chosen to rebuild its public library from scratch twice in the last fifty years. (See Appendix 1 for history.)

The Genealogy Center occupies the northeast quarter of the second floor of the main Allen County Public Library. It holds

• 650,000+ microtexts (mostly microfilm),

• 400,000 books,

• 55,000 city and county directories from more than 3,000 localities,

• 10,000 genealogy and local history periodicals -- the largest such collection in the world, from which the Periodical Source Index is created, and

• a growing on-line presence, including multiple finding aids, dozens of databases, three research portals, digitized records and books, an associated wiki, a monthly e-zine, and a blog. Allen County is ready for whatever it is that libraries are becoming.

The library's coverage centers on Ohio and Indiana and extends outward to all states and many countries. (Some details in Appendix 2.) Although primarily a library rather than an archive, it holds all the standard genealogical record types as well as notable holdings of military records, compiled family histories, periodicals, and National Archives microfilm. Open 65 hours a week, it's staffed by genealogist-librarians who understand the records and the technology for finding them. They include the authors of two books on Indiana research and the only book on Allen County research.2

The Genealogy Center serves the full spectrum of genealogists, from bewildered walk-ins to hobbyists to professionals. I began using it back when my idea of research was photocopying as many derivative sources as possible, and I have benefited over the years from staff members' patiently answering my questions.

I hope this booklet -- written unofficially from a user's point of view -- will help you get the most out of the center. (Corrections and updates are welcome.) This booklet is NOT an introduction to genealogy research; it assumes that you already have some idea of how to proceed in general, and focuses on how to get the most from Allen County's massive resources in particular.

We'll start with on-line planning from home (page 4), then learn how to proceed on site (page 11), so some topics will be mentioned more than once.

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BEFORE YOU GO

BEFORE YOU GO #1: GENERAL ORIENTATION ON LINE

1. The eight-page “About Us” brochure (PDF) gives a concise, detailed inventory of “what's inside,” although some of the numbers are dated.

2. The orientation video offers a good feel for the Genealogy Center. As of early 2013 it was not up to date on the copying situation (see below, p. 17). For a practical local viewpoint, see also this blog post by Tina Lyons.

3. Numerous one-page “pathfinders” and “snapshots” (available in print and on line) list books to consult on particular states and countries, but not much on periodicals or microtext.

4. The free monthly E-zine “Genealogy Gems” describes upcoming events and features a topic or collection in each of its more than 100 issues since 2004. Sign up for email delivery.

5. The Center's blog combines up-to-date news and timeless advice.

BEFORE YOU GO #2: SIX SPECIFIC FINDING AIDS ON LINE

Once oriented, direct your research questions to the six main catalogs or finding aids. Yes, I did say six. They sometimes overlap, but not much. To put it another way, there is no one place where you can search for everything. There's one catalog for books, another for periodicals, another for microtexts (divided into several parts), another for microfilmed newspapers, another for digitized newspapers, and another for databases.
1. Books and printed materials ("SmartCat"). There are two options here:

(a) To search the Genealogy Center holdings only, use either the search button on the Genealogy Center's main page or this link. Your screen or search results will have the heading “GENEALOGY CENTER CATALOG.”

(b) To search all departments of the library, search from the library's main page or this link. Many relevant law, history, biography, and travel books may be held in other departments.

Type in a phrase or click on advanced search. Both versions are called SmartCat. Detailed instructions are here if needed.

Bear in mind that some public-domain printed works may have been digitized at Family History Books, Internet Archive, or WeRelate. The entry in the Genealogy Center catalog may include a link to the on-line version, but as of February 2013 this was not always the case. For instance, many years of Vermont Historical Society proceedings had been placed on line, but only four were so noted. A direct search of these three other sites could save a trip.

**TIP:** Searches in these catalogs pick up only some microfilm and microfiche holdings, not all. For instance, a February 2013 search for Cabarrus County, North Carolina, in this catalog produced 13 microtext results, mostly census microfilm. The same search for Cabarrus County records in the microtext catalog (#2 below) produced 39 results, including court, land, probate, school, and vital records.
2. Genealogy microfilm and microfiche in the Genealogy Center only. You can't find these from the main catalog. This treasure trove for those seeking original records cannot be searched globally, but only in each of fifteen categories:

- state,
- county,
- record type,
- international,
- census,
- city and county directories,
- military,
- passenger lists,
- African American,
- Native American,
- Jewish,
- family histories,
- periodicals and newspapers,
- National Archives, and
- miscellaneous.

Be sure to check all categories in which your desired record might fall.

Again, more than 30,000 of these microfilms have been digitized at Internet Archive, but the microtext catalog results do not tell which. And finding the one desired record at Internet Archive can be an adventure in itself.
3. Microfilmed newspapers. In addition to thorough coverage of Fort Wayne, Allen County, and the nearby town of Huntington, plus two titles from Indianapolis, the Genealogy Center also holds of nationally significant microfilmed newspapers. Those seeking other Indiana newspapers not available online should visit the local library or the Indiana State Library in Indianapolis.

National Newspapers on MICROFILM

Atlanta Constitution – June 17, 1868 to January 20, 1885
Baltimore Sun – May 17, 1837 to November 13, 1858
Chicago Tribune – April 23, 1849 to the present
Christian Science Monitor – January 1960 to the present
Cincinnati Enquirer – April 10, 1841 to May 15, 1927
Inter-Ocean (Chicago) – March 27, 1872 to May 7, 1914
Liberator (Garrison) – December 7, 1831 to December 29, 1865
Los Angeles Times – January 1, 1972 to the present
Louisville Courier Journal – November 14, 1868 to December 31, 1900
New Era (Greenville, IL) – October 16, 1847 – December 13, 1847.
New York Age – January 5, 1905 to February 27, 1960
New York Evening Post – November 16, 1801 – December 31, 1851
New York Times – September 18, 1851 to the present
New York Tribune – April 10, 1841 to December 31, 1920
Pittsburgh Courier – March 25, 1911 to December 31, 1987
Pittsburgh Gazette – July 29, 1786 to January 15, 1851
Philadelphia Public Ledger – March 25, 1836 to November 16, 1861
San Francisco Chronicle – January 16, 1865 to December 31, 1985
USA Today – January 1, 1986 to the present
Village Voice – Oct 26, 1955 to the present
Wall Street Journal – July 8, 1889 to the present
Washington Post – July 1, 1904 to the present

International Newspapers on MICROFILM

The Times (London) – January 7, 1785 to December 31, 1987
The Times (Sunday London) – January 7, 1973 to December 31, 1987
4. Digitized Fort Wayne Newspapers, eighteen titles spanning 1845 to 1970, most from the late 1800s. These cover surrounding communities as well – well worth searching for folks in neighboring Indiana and Ohio counties.
5. Periodical Source Index (PERSI) is created at the Genealogy Center itself, and is available there or via Ancestry.com or HeritageQuest. Be aware that not all search engines produce exactly the same results. PERSI indexes names and locations, but only in titles of genealogy and history articles; it is not an every-name index. Remote access to particular indexed articles is available for a fee and time delay.

The Center is the go-to place for all genealogy publications. Recent issues may not be available, however; they may be in the process of being indexed or bound.
6. The Genealogy Center's own collection of free databases. Strictly speaking, this is not a catalog, but it is an important finding aid for a variety of records not otherwise accessible. They can be searched all at once here. As of December 2012, they included well over 100 databases under seven headings:

- Allen County resources,
- Community Album,
- Indiana resources,
- other states’ resources,
- family files contributed by researchers,
- family Bible records, and
- the Genealogy Center surname file with contact information for those patrons who have registered as researching particular surnames since 1998.

In addition, three research portals offer access to sources for important specialties:

- African American Gateway,
- Native American Gateway, and
- Our Military Heritage.
WHEN YOU ARRIVE

WAIT -- DO I HAVE TO GO?

Possibly not. As noted above, the Genealogy Center has had more than 70,000 books, microfilms, and ephemera digitized at Internet Archive, Family History Books, and WeRelate. In addition, the Indiana Genealogical Society maintains a list of researchers for hire, some of whom specialize in research at the center.

RESEARCH 65 HOURS A WEEK!

The Genealogy Center is open the same hours as the entire library:

• 9-9 Monday-Thursday
• 9-6 Friday
• 9-5 Saturday
• 1-5 Sundays between Labor Day and Memorial Day

The library catalog is open 161 hours a week -- closed for maintenance 2-3 am daily.

All times are Eastern. For specific holiday and other closings, see main web site ahead of time.

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Indiana's second-largest city, Fort Wayne is three hours east of Chicago, three hours southwest of Detroit, and two hours northeast of Indianapolis by car. It's on US 30, US 27, US 24, and Interstate 69. Fort Wayne International Airport is served by Allegiant, American, Delta, and United, with flights to O'Hare, Atlanta, Detroit, Minneapolis, Dallas, and three cities in Florida. The nearest Amtrak stop is 25 miles north in the small town of Waterloo.

WHERE IN FORT WAYNE?

Consult this map for details of one-way streets. The library occupies a city block in downtown Fort Wayne, bounded by Washington, Ewing, Wayne, and a pedestrian mall where Webster used to be. There is on-street parking in a relaxed parallel-parking format (25 cents/hour weekdays, with a two-hour limit, free on weekends and evenings), as well as a parking garage under the library and a lot next to it ($7/day).
“A” marks the spot of the library. Restaurants, hotels, the county courthouse, a botanical conservatory, and a minor-league ballpark are within walking distance. (By the way, leave cell phones behind when visiting the courthouse; they are not allowed.) More tourist information here.

WHERE IN THE LIBRARY?

The Genealogy Center occupies the northeast end of the library's second floor, accessible by stairs or elevator.
BASIC LIBRARY LOGISTICS AND SECURITY

Rest rooms are just outside the Genealogy Center. Food is downstairs at the same (east) end of the first floor, a Dunkin Donuts franchise (including the Friends of the Library used-book store). It's open whenever the library is open, except it closes an hour early Monday-Thursday.
This is a library, not an archive: pens, papers, notebooks, cameras, laptops, briefcases, coats, and jackets are all legal. Food is not. Card holders can check out library books, but nothing from the Genealogy Center. Security gates check for the unauthorized exit of library materials from the Center and again from the library itself. Guard your possessions, especially laptops, as you would in any big-city public library.

As you enter the Center the main “Ask” desk is on your left. Here you can ask questions, pick up maps, and obtain computer passes. If you missed the orientation video on line, you can view it here in the alcove behind the desk.

Beyond the desk, there is a parting of the ways where you can turn left (west) or right (east). Note that on this sign “eastern states” includes southern states as far west as Texas and Oklahoma, and “western states” include Michigan and Wisconsin. See floor plan for the full list.
To the left (west), the first big room contains research tables, copiers, and family histories; behind it, another room has moveable shelving with city directories, western states, international, oversize, and super oversize materials.

Here’s the view back from the far west end, showing moveable shelves on the left.
The right-hand (east) room contains computer stations, research tables, copy card machine, copiers, general genealogy, and eastern (and southern) states.

Once in this room, if you turn right a second time you'll head back south into the Indiana books (on the right here) and the microtext storage cases (on the left here) and the microtext reading area (straight ahead into the darkness – wear layers, it's cold in there).
COPY CARDS ARE CASH

Forget your change purse. Copy cards are mandatory. Bring $1 and $5 and $10 bills to fuel them. Copy machines take only copy cards, obtained and replenished at a central machine in the east room (pictured). If it's not intuitive, staff are happy to help.

**TIP: be sure to hit “finish” after making copies, or the remaining value of your card will be left on the machine for the next lucky person!**

FINDING YOUR FAVORITE MICROTEXTS

At the microtext desk (just to the left of this picture) are binders with lists and maps showing where the various microfilms are located in the banks of numbered cases. Or you can just walk around until you find something – it's pretty amazing!
Digital copying or printing from the microfilm scanner machines in the microtext area is free and requires no copy card. Images can also be downloaded to thumb drives. Be aware that the machines on the end (which accommodate fiches as well as microfilm) are less intuitive to use. There are plenty of old-fashioned crank microfilm machines available if they are to your taste, or if the place is busy.

**TIP:** Do not reshelve books or microfilms. Put used microfilm on the designated table and books on the gray shelves or wooden carts.

**FINDING YOUR FAVORITE STATES' BOOKS**

Either study the floor plan carefully, or ask a staff member or old-timer. Western states and non-US are in the west room: Michigan and Wisconsin, plus Minnesota, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, and everything to their west. All other states are in the east room. To put it another way, the east room has Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, and all states east of them except Michigan.

**TIP:** Bound volumes are organized by the Dewey Decimal System, in which counties are listed alphabetically under AAA.A01 and cities under AAA.A02. For example, books and periodicals about Santa Clara County, California, are at 979.401 SA68. Those pertaining to the city of San Jose in that county are at 979.402 SA58. Don’t miss out! Always check both locations.

**ON-LINE RESEARCH IN THE LIBRARY**

As of March 2013, the Genealogy Center makes the following on-site-only databases available for use in the center: Ancestry.com, AmericanAncestors.org, fold3.com, HeritageQuestOnline, Origins Network for British and Irish, ProQuest's African American Heritage, and four Gale Cengage databases on the Civil War, War of 1812, evangelism in Africa, and “Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A Transnational Archive.”
CITY DIRECTORIES CAN BE IN THREE PLACES

Perhaps contrary to expectations, older city directories are more likely to be on microfilm, newer ones in print form. City directories may be found in:

1. **Microtext** (usually pre-1961), or

2. **The regular bookshelves** by location, as in the case of Fort Wayne, or

3. **The moveable city-directory shelves** at the west end of the west wing (mostly post-1961). The pre-1961 physical directories here may or may not overlap with the microfilmed ones. For instance, the 1926 directory of Kent, Ohio, on these shelves is not microfilmed. Some cities have both physical and microfilm directories for certain years. These moveable shelves are marked by Dewey Decimal numbers, so speed your search by learning your state's number. *(Click on your target state's “snapshot”).*
Cardiovascular health tip: Yes, you will cover some ground to check both the microtext directories (southeast end of the east room) and the physical volumes (west end of the west room), but you know this collection of directories is worth it.

**TIP:** If you're not finding a small city of interest, note that in the microtext cabinets most states have a few reels of film from the early 1900s that are labeled only with the name of the state and a distinctive multi-digit number. These are films of directories from various small cities and towns, usually only a year or two of each, with no complete runs. There is no label or index telling which towns and years are included. *I have provided town and year indexes and citations on my web site for these reels for Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan,* but many more need to be done, not to mention the farm directories.

**PERIODICALS CAN BE IN FOUR PLACES**

1. **Bound,** in volumes filed with books covering the location (be it city, county, or state). Some may contain their own every-name indexes (more detailed than PERSI), whether by issue, volume, or year.

2. **Loose,** as shown below, filed in boxes alphabetically by title along the east edge of the east room. If you turn right at the entry desk and go straight to the far wall, you'll find them.

3. **Oversize,** shelved at the south end of the east edge of the east room, after the end of the regular alphabet of unbound titles.

4. **Unavailable,** when current and recent issues are being indexed or bound. Ask to be sure.
The Genealogy Center is a Family History Library affiliate, so FHL microfilms can be borrowed on-line for a fee for viewing at the Center. But some films are already at the Center on indefinite loan. They are not catalogued, and occupy their own drawers next to the general microtext area (in the right-hand column of drawers in the photo). Can they help you? The best approach is to visit the Family History Library catalog, learn the numbers of the films you need (and whether they have already been digitized), and check for the relevant numbers at the Genealogy Center -- either on line (my web site has a list of them by number as of mid-October 2012) or in person.

OVERSIZE AND SUPER OVERSIZE

If you can't find a book, check the oversize and super oversize shelves on the south side of the far west room. Or think ahead: if the catalog's detailed description says your book is over 30 centimeters, check these shelves first!
“WPA” COUNTY RECORD INVENTORIES

Sometimes it helps to know where the records were 75 years ago! Inventories of records held by many counties were created by the Historical Records Survey in the 1930s, part of the federal government’s Works Progress Administration, which created useful jobs during the Great Depression. The Genealogy Center holds these compendiums (some not formally published) for all 92 Indiana counties; for more than 20 counties in each of the states of Illinois, Minnesota, Ohio, Texas, Vermont (cities/towns/villages by county), and Wisconsin; and for many locations in other states. Search the main catalog for “Inventory of County Archives” and the state. To get an idea of the information these inventories contain, consult the Genealogy Center’s digitized inventory for Allen County, Indiana.

INVENTORY OF THE COUNTY ARCHIVES
OF INDIANA

Prepared by
The Historical Records Survey
Division of Professional and Service Projects
Works Progress Administration

NO. 46. LA PORTE (LA PORTE)

Indiana Historical Bureau
Indianapolis
1939
LAW

Some law books are in the Genealogy Center, but many more are outside of it, at the opposite (west) end of the library's second floor in Business Science Technology. Most in BST pertain to United States or Indiana law. Recent volumes are on the right-hand wall as you enter BST. For old volumes, turn left twice and walk all the way back (east) to the moveable shelving on the left. Indiana local laws, session laws, and compiled statutes are available, as well as treatises such as George A. Henry's two volumes published in 1912 on “the probate law and practice and the laws of succession of the state of Indiana.”

SPECIAL TIMES: EVENTS, CLASSES, SERVICES

The library hosts numerous conferences, including the Federation of Genealogical Societies 21-24 August 2013.

Ongoing classes are given by library staff on almost all imaginable topics, especially in March and October. Visit the “Events” section on the Genealogy Center's home page.

The Photocopy Exchange Project: If you donate a book you have written or compiled, the Genealogy Center will bind two copies of it, one for their shelves and one for you.

A FEW GOODIES YOU MIGHT MISS IF YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THEM

This list is just a teaser. Be sure to check the center's “About Us” booklet or back issues of the Center's monthly e-zine for more information.
Manuscripts in microtext (mostly):

More than 1,000 National Archives microfilm titles including records of the Southern Claims Commission, Freedmen’s Bureau, ship passenger lists from ports major and minor, and military records including indexes to service, pension, and bounty land records.

Early American original sources in the Draper Manuscripts (microfilm, book form – now also on line at FamilySearch.org).

Papers and letters of American Home Missionary Society and others (microfilm).

Crossing borders:

Quebec’s Drouin Collection (2000+ microfilms of church registers and notarial documents – info on indexes here).

Some 16,000 volumes of local history British Isles, and GRO office indexes from 1837.

German gazetteers.

Vermont and Mexican border crossings.

Czech mutual aid society death cards (microfilm).

Hayes’ Irish index to manuscript sources, 11 volumes (microfiche).

Out West:

23 volumes of Arizona Pioneer Stockmen Assn. histories.

Cherokee records in Oklahoma 1868-1906.

Resources in Depth:

US census agriculture schedules for 20 states (microfilm).

State and local censuses for 25 states (microfilm).

Sanborn fire insurance maps for six states.


Connecticut’s Barbour and Hale collections (compiled vital and cemetery records, microfilm).
New York “red books” with county-by-county resource inventories made in the 1980s (books).

Lincoln:

The Lincoln Financial Foundation “Lincoln Collection in Indiana” is housed at the library. As of early March 2013, more than 1850 photographs and illustrations were on line at http://contentdm.acpl.lib.in.us/cdm/search/collection/p15155coll1/page/1

. . . and no matter how much you find, there is probably more. Keep asking and good luck!

WAIT, THERE’S MORE!

APPENDIX 1. GENEALOGY CENTER HISTORY IN BLOG FORM

History of the Genealogy Center in thirteen illustrated blog posts from the Center in 2011-2012:

Part 1 1904
Part 2 1965
Part 3 1965
Part 4 1967
Part 5 1968
Part 6 1970s
Part 7 1971
Part 8 1979-81
Part 9 1990
Part 10 1990s
Part 11 2001
Part 12 2006
Part 13 2007
APPENDIX 2. STATES FOR WHICH ACPLGC HAS MOST HOLDINGS
all figures as of February 2013

Top ten states in rank order. Each of these ways of measuring a library’s holdings has problems, and of course some states are older or more populous than others. Remember that success in genealogy research depends on finding a particular record, not general statistics. These numbers will change, as the Genealogy Center acquires more than 1,000 new physical items every month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>State 1</th>
<th>State 2</th>
<th>County/City in Microtext Records</th>
<th>PERSI Articles HeritageQuest</th>
<th>Books (shelf feet)</th>
<th>City Directories (shelf feet)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>IN</td>
<td>OH</td>
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<td>MA</td>
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<td>VA</td>
<td>NY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CREDITS

p. 2 East entrance to library. Karen’s (*/*<*) photostream
http://www.flickr.com/photos/rowdydogs/8281202821/ per Creative Commons.

pp. 5-9 screen shots, p. 11 map, and p. 12 floor plan courtesy Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center.

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3 ACPLGC count: number of items reported in search of microfilmed state and local records by state. “Item” can refer to one or more reels of film.
4 ACPLGC count: number of items reported in search of microfilmed city directories by state. “Item” can refer to one or more reels of film.
5 My count: number of state subdivisions in search of microfilmed city directories by state.
6 HeritageQuest count: number of articles reported from PERSI search by state. Ancestry search numbers differ.
7 My count: shelf-feet of physical books. Not all shelves are full.
8 My count: shelf-feet of physical city directories. Not all shelves are full.