

Between the Stacks

Porter County Public Library System Newsletter
July 2016 August www.pcpls.org

Library Databases - Access Newspaper Archives

Many people think that *ancestry.com* is the only "good" database for genealogy. My personal favorite is "Access Newspaper Archives," available for free to patrons at the Porter County Public Libraries.

Want to find out something about people who previously lived in your house? *Vidette-Messenger*, the main Porter county newspaper, is included from 1927 to 1970's. It is possible to just type in the address in the phrase section and some hits may come up.

If you are looking for obituaries or marriage announcements, they may come up under full name or just with a surname. Also try looking for women using their husband's first names, since in years past, women were referred to as Mrs. John Smith, not Mary Smith. Articles describing a person's military service can also be found.

If your family lived in other parts of Indiana, or even another state, there are many newspapers included. I have found many articles about relatives from Ohio, Missouri, Oregon and Montana.

Sometimes, the relatives would have probably hoped the information disappeared. Like the person who was sent to Federal prison during prohibition for making alcohol. When he was released the newspaper read, "...who has been spending some time in Ohio, has returned home."

We have found stories about weddings that include descriptions of the bridal gown, attendants' outfits, relationships of the bridal party to the couple, sometimes even the gifts they were given.

Often a photo of the bride or the couple is included. Anniversary stories are often written for twenty-fifth, fortieth, fiftieth or later. Some of these stories tell children's names and where they were living at the time.

You may be surprised to find a story about a relative in a newspaper from a different area than where they lived. Like today, some stories were picked up on "the wire" and the same story ran in many newspapers. Sometimes the articles were exactly, word by word copies, but other times the messages got garbled. So it's good to be able to check in several newspapers.

Besides the *Vidette-Messenger*, many years of the *Hammond Times* and a few early years of the *Gary Post* are available. Some suburban Chicago papers, such as the *Southtown Economist*, Blue Island papers and others are available. One of our patrons regularly uses the Logansport paper to find classmates and their families. He has found many articles about events during his school years there.

Since this database uses Optical Character Recognition (OCR), errors do occur. If not enough hits with the correct information are found, suggestions include deliberately misspelling words, or just using surnames.

Some commonly mistaken letters are: rn for m; Capital H and B; Capital S and 8; c and e, r and n; n and ri; h and b. I use H surnames and have often been given words starting with B.

Chris Hough, Genealogy Department

**It's not too late to sign up for
SUMMER READING**

**Adult Program
June 1 - July 30**

**Children's Program
June 1 - July 16**

**Please be aware ...
Demolition for the future
parking lot of the Valpo
branch starts around
Mon., June 27th
*We appreciate your patience!***

Friends of the Library News

Dear Friends,

The library is so much a part of our lives and our communities, but did you ever wonder about where and when libraries started? I never really gave it much thought over the years. The public library was there in Rensselaer when I was growing up. There was one on campus when I went to college at Ball State and at Butler. I made use of the library at St. Joe in Rensselaer when I was home. I even remember that the school librarian at one of the schools where I taught many years ago would order books from the Marion County Library (interlibrary loan) for any of us who wanted them and couldn't get to one of the branches easily. It's just always been a part of my life wherever I lived and whatever I've done. But you know what? I never gave much thought to the history of libraries.

However, while I was moving some things around in a closet recently, I came across a photo album of one of the trips we took with my in-laws. They traveled with us most summers for a number of years and were good sports about where we went. We'd try to pick out a cruise we thought they would enjoy (they really liked cruises). They were fun to do things with, and we'd travel to places none of us had ever been to. One summer we took a cruise around several of the Greek islands. Getting from Indianapolis to Crete via New York was an adventure, as was the cruise itself. But the whole trip was great, and the four of us enjoyed the islands, the Aegean, the people, the food, and the ancient sites.

One of the places we visited was the ruins at Ephesus in Turkey. Oh my goodness, it was incredible to walk over the ancient streets of what remains of the city. We were amazed to think that people walked those streets, shopped in the market, visited with friends thousands of years ago. However, one of the most incredible sites

we visited in the city was the ancient library. All that is left is the façade and parts of the walls. We climbed the stairs where we could and took in the view in front of us. Of course, the ancient scrolls are long gone, but what was remarkable to us was the thought that thousands of years ago, people were interested in preserving reading material in a library! How amazing is that? And it wasn't even the earliest library.

After looking over those photos, I decided to do a little research into the history of these buildings and books that we take for granted and give you a thumbnail sketch.

The earliest libraries weren't public libraries; they were specialized libraries that held archives of commercial transactions, inventories, as well as government and temple records. Clay tablets and scrolls made of papyrus were housed there. These "libraries" perhaps date back to 2600 B.C. How's that for amazing? The Library of Alexandria (Egypt) was the largest and most significant library of the ancient world; it was open during the reign of Ptolemy I, and that was 323-283 B.C. The Ephesus library we visited was built to house 12,000 scrolls! There were libraries in Greece and Rome as well as the Muslim lands.

After the fall of Rome and the rise of Christianity, ancient scrolls were stored in monasteries throughout Europe. It was in these buildings that scribes copied the texts in order to preserve much of the ancient classics. Books were rare. In fact, books were often chained to the shelves because the manuscripts (remember--painstakingly copied by hand) were so valuable. With the invention of the Gutenberg press, books became less expensive and a little easier to obtain. As you well know, no one can stop progress, and as the years progressed, reading and education spread throughout Europe. However, if one needed to use a library, a per-

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Join local author **Jeff Manes** for a reading and Q&A session about his work interviewing hundreds of Northwest Indiana residents!

"Manes is the author of three volumes of local history, *All Worth Their Salt: The People of NWI*, and was involved in the documentary *Everglades of the North*.

Wednesday, July 6th at 6:00PM
at the Hebron Public Library

Friends of the Library News

son had to do his reading and research at the library. There was no book check out. European "public" libraries didn't exist until late 19th century.

Fast forward to America.

There actually were some small private libraries in the Colonies. Some wealthy individuals had private collections, as did colleges and churches. (Harvard was founded in 1638 when John Harvard donated about 280 books as well as money to found the college.)

Enter Benjamin Franklin. When he died in 1790, he had over 4,000 books in his own personal library! He started a "subscription library" as a way of sharing books among members of a literary society in Philadelphia known as the Library Company of Philadelphia; books were only available to members who bought stock in the company. A "circulating" library also came into being in the 1700s; this type of "library" could often be found in bookstores or printing shops where the books were "rented" out. The first one was opened in Annapolis, Maryland in 1762. Schools had libraries, too. After all, their students needed material to read and study.

But the first "real" public library (similar to what we're familiar with) is considered to be the Boston Public Library which opened in 1854. Its statement of purpose reads:

"There's a close linkage between knowledge and right thinking; the future of democracy is contingent on an educated citizenry; there's a strong correlation between the public library movement and public education; and every citizen has the right of free access to community-owned resources."

Over the years, the public library idea continued to grow as more and more communities opened buildings to make more books accessible for the reading public. Remember Andrew Carnegie who donated millions of

dollars to establish public libraries in small communities.

Today the public library continues to evolve to meet the needs of its community. It's not only a source for finding the latest best seller, but there are e-books, audio books, and magazines, as well as videos. There are also computers available for patrons to use. Most libraries have rooms available for study or book discussion groups, for knitting and crocheting groups, for club meetings. The list of uses goes on and on. But progress doesn't come cheap. Much of the money used for operation of the library comes from taxes. Most local funds come from property taxes, and those taxes can vary widely from community to community. That's why the Friends of the Library are so important. The budget for the library only stretches so far. Thanks to you, the Friends of the Library help by donating thousands of dollars each year to help the library buy new equipment and pay for special programs.

So think about what it would be like if we had no public library. I can't imagine life without it. Yes, I know it's something we all take for granted, but it's something very precious to all of us. Look how long people have been using some kind of library. Isn't that amazing?

"Without libraries what have we? We have no past and no future." Ray Bradbury

"Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve, and contribute to improving our quality of life." Sidney Sheldon

(If you're interested in reading more about the history of the public library, check out "How did public libraries get started?" at www.straightdope.com.)

Until next time,

Jeri Fork President, Porter County Friends of the Library

VALPARAISO BOOKSALE

FRIENDS PREVIEW NIGHT

THURSDAY, JULY 21 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM

FOR FRIENDS MEMBERS ONLY. JOIN AT THE DOOR!

PUBLIC SALE

FRIDAY, JULY 22 FROM 9:30 AM - 5:00 PM

SATURDAY, JULY 23 FROM 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM

SATURDAY IS BAG DAY! ALL ITEMS \$3/BAG THE BOOK SALE ROOM UPSTAIRS WILL ALSO BE OPEN!

Starting Point for Genealogy

Saturday, July 9 from 2:00 - 4:30PM

At the Valparaiso Public Library

The Genealogy Department of the Porter County Public Library System is sponsoring a Beginner's Workshop.

The Workshop is for people just starting out tracing their family history as well as for those more experienced in genealogy who want to get better acquainted with the resources available at PCPLS and with what the department has to offer.

Marlene Polster will conduct this free workshop. Registration is required.

Please call (219) 462-0524 ext. 5 to register.

KOUTS

Honoring Indiana Athletes with Kouts' Hall of Fame



PCPLS Book Discussion Groups

BOOKENDS

South Haven @ 7:00 pm

July 25 - *The 100 Year Old Man*

By Jonas Jonasson

August 22 - *The Worst Hard Time*

By Timothy Egan

BROWN BAGGERS

Valparaiso @ 12:00 pm

(Bring a sack lunch.)

July 12 - *The Tiger's Wife*

By Tea Obreht

August 9 - *Thunderstruck*

By Erik Larson

NOVEL IDEAS

Hebron @ 1:30 pm

July 14 - *The Girl on the Train*

By Paula Hawkins

August 11 - *The Book of Speculation*

By Erika Swyler

PAGETURNERS

Kouts @ 7:00 pm

July 28 - *Deep Down Dark:
The Untold Stories of 33 Men
Buried in a Chilean Mine, and
the Miracle that Set Them Free*

By Hector Tobar

August 25 - *A Soldier of the Great War*

By Mark Helprin

Call your local branch to
reserve a book.

Titles are subject to change
due to availability.

BETWEEN THE STACKS

Porter County Public Library System
103 Jefferson Street
Valparaiso, Indiana 46383

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NON PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
VALPARAISO, IN
PERMIT NO. 75



Valparaiso Public Library, 462-0524

103 Jefferson Street
Valparaiso, IN 46383

M-Th 9-9pm; F 9-6pm; Sat 9-5pm

Portage Public Library, 763-1508

2665 Irving Street
Portage, IN 46368

M-Th 9-9pm; F 9-6pm; Sat 9-5pm

South Haven Public Library, 759-4474

403 West 700 North
Valparaiso, IN 46385

M,W 10-9pm; T,Th,F 10-6pm; Sat 9-5pm

Hebron Public Library, 996-3684

201 W. Sigler Street
Hebron, IN 46341

M,W 10-9pm; T,Th,F 10-6pm; Sat 9-5pm

Kouts Public Library, 766-2271

101 E. Daumer Road
Kouts, IN 46347

M,W,F 10-6pm; T,Th 10-9pm; Sat 9-5pm

Mission Statement

We believe that libraries can change people's lives and are a cornerstone of our democracy. The mission of the Porter County Public Library System is to provide all residents of the library district with a comprehensive collection of materials in a variety of media that records human knowledge, ideas and culture and to organize these materials for ready access. The library encourages the love of reading and the joy of learning, and offers the assistance people need to find, evaluate, and use electronic and print information resources that help them live successful and rewarding lives.

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Assistant Director

Phyllis Nelson

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