

Allen County Public Library Visit Tips

The Allen County Public Library (ACPL) in Ft. Wayne Indiana is the second largest genealogy library in the country. Despite its size and vast collection, the library staff has done an exceptional job of organizing its resources into an understandable and easily accessible collection.

If this is your first visit to ACPL, or you have not yet visited the new library building which opened in 2007, CAGGNI believes you will find the following tips and suggestions helpful. Additionally, since knowledge of what to expect and preparation in advance promises a rewarding experience, we hope these tips will make your visit less stressful and even more successful.

Getting There

- **Location:** The ACPL Main Library is located at 900 Library Plaza, Fort Wayne, IN 46802; Phone: (260) 421-1200
- **Hours:** The library is open Monday - Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.; Friday & Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.; Sunday Noon - 5:00 p.m. Closed Sundays during the summer.
- **Directions:** For directions to ACPL click on the "Location" tab on the Library's homepage. Then click on "Directions" in the white pop-up box which will bring up Google maps with the address of the library already provided.
- **Parking:** If you wish to park at the library, a map showing the locations of the public lots/garage can be found under the "Genealogy" tab; scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on "Our Location", then in the right hand column click on "Parking Info". Parking costs \$7.00 and does not provide for in/out privileges. Payment must be made at the kiosk on the first floor.
- **Handicapped parking:** The ACPL Parking map noted above shows a Handicapped Lot at the corner of Ewing Street and Washington Boulevard. There is also Handicapped parking in the garage underneath the Library which has elevator access. A handicapped placard or license plate is required.

What to Bring

Of course you will bring your personal research tools along with notepaper and writing utensils, but what else might be helpful?

- **Laptop:** If you have a laptop, bring it along. The library has Wi-Fi and you will be able to use your laptop to access the same information you can from the library computers including the library's extensive webpage, subscription databases and catalog without waiting for a library computer to become available.
- **Cable Lock:** Since it is easy to get distracted, the library staff suggests you bring a laptop cable lock if you will be using your computer at the library.
- **Camera:** The library allows the use of digital cameras to "copy" documents.
- **Scanner:** You may also use your personal scanner -- so bring your new Flip-Pal along.
- **Flash Drive:** All public computers have USB ports. Information may be downloaded to your flash drive rather than using the online printer.
- **Identification:** You will need to get a Guest Pass to use the library's computers and identification sometimes is required.
- **Small Paper Pad:** The library does not provide paper to jot notes and call numbers on.

When you Arrive

Make your first stop in the library at the Genealogy Center's *Ask Here* desk on the second floor.

- **Guest Pass:** At the *Ask Here* desk request a Guest Pass which allows you to use the library's computers. They are printed each morning and have temporary library card numbers on them.
- **Book Location Guide:** Pick up the sheet "Location Guide for Books in The Genealogy Center" at the *Ask Here* desk. It provides the stack numbers for materials which are grouped by subject, family histories, periodicals and oversized. Using the guide will make locating materials much easier.
- **Floor Plan:** A printed floor plan of the Genealogy Center is available at the *Ask Here* desk. The floor plan has the stack numbers labeled, so it works in tandem with the "Location Guide" to help you locate books.
- **Reference Librarians:** There is always a reference librarian on duty at each of the *Ask Here* desks. They are all very helpful. Do not hesitate to ask for assistance.
- **Register Your Family Names:** At the *Technology Kiosk* in the second room of the Genealogy Center you have the option to register names you are researching. If you wish to see what names other patrons are researching, go to www.GenealogyCenter.org.

Things to Know - General

- **Photocopies:** Several copiers are available throughout the Genealogy Center. Prints are \$0.10 per page and a "print card" is required which costs \$1.00. However, the \$1.00 can be used to make copies. Only \$1.00, \$5.00 and \$10.00 bills can be used to reload the "print card." No coins are accepted. *ALWAYS PUSH THE "FINISH" BUTTON BEFORE AND AFTER YOU MAKE A COPY.*
- **Book Carts:** Use the small black metal book carts to transport books you wish to consult to the worktables in the reading rooms.
- **Reshelving Books:** The library staff asks you not to reshelve books. Please return books you have used to the wooden carts located throughout the library or to the gray return shelves located at the ends of the stack rows. Since books do not circulate, the Genealogy Department's circulation statistics are based on how many books are reshelved. Information they use to lobby for book and materials budget.
- **Compressed Shelving:** Some of the genealogy materials are stored in high-density or compressed shelving. Just follow the directions at the end of each shelf range to electronically "move" the book stacks. If you are standing between the book stacks, no one can automatically move the shelving stacks.
- **Electrical outlets:** The majority of tables in the Genealogy Center have electrical outlets to accommodate computers and other electrical equipment. Check to verify the outlets have power before getting settled.
- **Microform readers:** There are about 20 excellent microfilm readers and several other types of microform readers available. If assistance is needed, a separate *MicroText Desk* is located near the microform cabinets.
- **Lockers:** The library does not have lockers available for patrons.

Things to Know - Electronic Resources

- **Wi-Fi:** The entire library has free Wi-Fi. Just turn on your computer and from the available wireless networks, click on "ACPL WiFi".
- **Public Library Computers:** There are two banks, approximately 40, of public computers available to users in the ACPL Genealogy Center.
- **Printers:** The library computers are hooked up to printers. There is no Wi-Fi printing from your laptop at this time. You can, however, save images from the databases to a flash drive on a laptop.

- **USB Ports:** All library computers have USB ports. If you forget your flash drive, you may purchase one at the first floor checkout desk.
- **Public Computers contain:** Windows 7; MS Office 2010 including Access, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, Word, and OneNote; IM Clients including AIM express, MSN web messenger and Yahoo web messenger; and Internet Explorer 8 and Firefox web browsers.
- **Scanners:** Eight public digital scanners are available in the Genealogy Center on the second floor near the *MicroText* area. You can scan an image/document and then email the resulting digital file to your email account or save these scanned images to your flash drive. There is no charge for the use of the scanners.

Restrictions:

- **Genealogy Center Materials:** All resources of the Genealogy Center must be used in the Center and may not be taken to other parts of the library to be photocopied or scanned. Materials may not be checked out or sent via interlibrary loan to other libraries.
- **Public Computers:** A public computer can be used with a valid ACPL card or Guest Pass. There are no time restrictions on use. If you see a message that time is "expiring" from the computer you can make a request to extend it.
- **Food and Drink:** No food or drink is allowed in the Genealogy Center.
- **Cell Phones:** All cell phone calls should be taken in the Great Hall as a courtesy to other researchers.

Unique and Special Collections at ACPL

- **Genealogical Periodicals:** The Center holds the largest English-language genealogy and local history periodical collection in the world with more than 6,200 current subscriptions and more than 10,000 titles. Individual articles can be accessed through a variety of indexes including the PERiodical Source Index (PERSI).
- **City Directories:** The Genealogy Center has more than 48,000 R. L. Polk directories for cities throughout the US. Many directories for smaller cities and rural areas produced by other publishers, as well as a substantial number of micro-published city directories, are also available.
- **Family Histories:** A collection in excess of 55,000 volumes of compiled genealogies representing research on many North American and European families is available in the Center.
- **US Local Records:** More than 210,000 printed volumes are testimony to the Center's efforts to comprehensively collect US genealogy and local history publications. County and town histories, vital, cemetery, church, court, land, probate and naturalization records are available for numerous US counties.
- **Census Records:** The library has many census records not available on Ancestry.com, primarily state census schedules taken between census years and non-population schedules like agricultural, manufacturing, etc., Additionally, they have all surviving 1790-1930 population schedules.
- **Newspaper Collection:** A microfilm collection covering large city newspapers with various date coverage for 17 US states; a comprehensive collection of Indiana newspapers; and, underground newspapers from the late 1960s covering 37 US states and several international locations.
- **International Records:** The Genealogy Center is also home to a significant collection of resources from Canada, British Isles, and Germany. Printed sources for other countries are limited mainly to guidebooks and references on European nobility and heraldry.

Preparing for the Visit from Home

The ACPL has created an excellent online presence and provides multiple ways to prepare for your visit from home. Take the time to explore each of these resources prior to your trip.

- **Genealogy Brochure:** The ACPL has put together an 8-page PDF guide to its genealogical collections and it may be viewed and printed by going to <http://www.genealogycenter.org/pdf/AboutUsBrochure.pdf>
- **Online Catalog:** Make use of ACPL's online catalog to determine what resources may be of use to you. The online catalog is accessible from the homepage as well as from <http://www.genealogycenter.org>.
- **Genealogy Center Homepage:** ACPL librarians have created a Genealogy Center webpage which includes information about planning your research trip, a calendar of genealogical programs, access to online databases and links to other resources available through the library. <http://www.genealogycenter.org/Home.aspx>
- **Video Tour:** A 15-minute video overview of the facility and orientation of its resources is a great way to start for those who have not been to the library before. <http://www.genealogycenter.org/Services/Orientation.aspx>
- **Online Resources/Electronic Databases:** Review the list of electronic databases available at the library and select which ones you may wish to access during your visit. Some databases of interest are (*Fold3*)/(*Footnote*), *Ancestry.com*, *New England Ancestors*, *HeritageQuest Online*; *Origins Network: British, Irish & Scots*; *Archives Unbound* and *Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A Transition Archive*, *Newspaper Archive* and *ProQuest Super Newsstand (including 1,200 full-text searchable newspapers)*. These can only be accessed within the library.
- **Pathfinders:** Or "Snapshots" for all US States and several Canadian Provinces provide a selective list of titles which may be useful in your research. <http://www.genealogycenter.org/Pathfinders/Snapshots.aspx>
- **ACPL Blog:** The Genealogy Center has its own Blog. Several times per week, posts are added providing general genealogical information. Check it out prior to your trip, perhaps new acquisitions will be highlighted. It can be viewed at: <http://www.genealogycenter.org/Community/Blog.aspx>
- **Library Electronic Newsletter:** A free monthly subscription called "Genealogy Gems: News from the Fort Wayne Library" is available to anyone interested. It lists information about the department's collections and useful research tips. Back issues of the Newsletter may also be viewed. It requires you to provide your email address which they state on their website will not be shared with any individual or group. <http://www.genealogycenter.org/Community/E-zine.aspx>
- **Website:** Spend some time looking through ACPL's entire website at <http://www.acpl.lib.in.us> for many additional resources

Amenities

- **Cafe:** The Library has a *Dunkin Donuts* within the facility. It is open Monday - Thursday, 6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.; Friday 6:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.; Saturday 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.; and Sunday 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- **Twice Sold Tales Bookstore:** The shop sells used books at bargain prices. Open the same hours as the library
- **Jeffery R. Krull Gallery:** Exhibit changes every 4-6 weeks. Open the same hours as the library, admission free.
- **Local restaurants:** A 1-page PDF map identifying local "eateries" is available at <http://www.genealogycenter.org/pdf/Eateries%202011.pdf>

If you take time to prepare in advance, you will have a more enjoyable visit. You will also have a much better chance of success. Good hunting!

August 2, 2012