

Join us for a  
journey  
through  
history and  
time.  
An Odyssey  
for those  
beginning or  
experienced  
in genealogy.

Inside this issue:

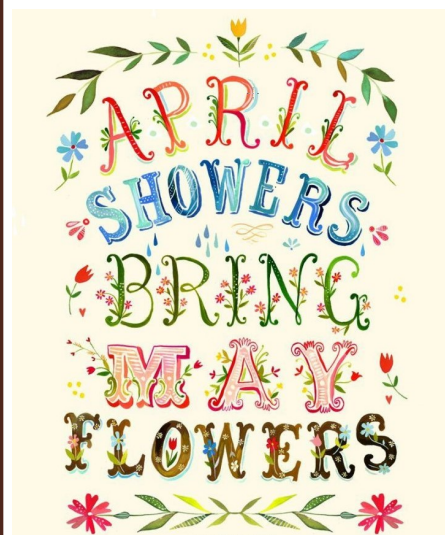
Update from the Club	2
Morgans—Milk Sickness	3
Jasmine Ernest Robinson	6
Library Happenings	8
NEW FEATURE: Local History	9

# Roots and Branches

Volume 19—Issue 3

May 2022

April showers bring May flowers. Some flowers are wonderful and some, not so much. Many of the wonderful May flowers we are all enjoying right now come from the 1950 Census which was released 72 years after it was completed. One thought to keep in mind as you comb through your family history contained within the Census, you might look for neighborhood and the neighbors where your families lived at that period in time. It has been fun to put names to stories heard from family members who were children at the time and talk about memories with neighborhood kids they played with.



One of the downsides to spring flowers emerging, white snake root and milk sickness. Certainly not something we hear much about these days, but milk sickness plagued many early settlers in Indiana, including Nancy Lincoln who was the mother of a future President.

In this newsletter, Karen Zach has written a piece about milk sickness that touches on the local impact and how serious this was at one point in time in our own community. As you read through, if you have memories or stories from your own family, write them down or share them with your family members. Future genealogists will be glad you did.

One last update for everyone, our After Hours events have returned to CDPL. You can come on a Friday evening before the library closes at 5pm and take advantage of the wonderful resources that CDPL has for patrons along with research assistance from the Reference Staff. Stay tuned for more information to come on the library and Genealogy Club of Montgomery County Indiana Facebook pages or give the library a call for more information.

To make an appointment at CDPL to do genealogy research, reach out to Dellie Craig by calling the library at 765-362-2242 or by email at [dcraig@cdpl.lib.in.us](mailto:dcraig@cdpl.lib.in.us). Appointments can be made for up to an hour and a half.

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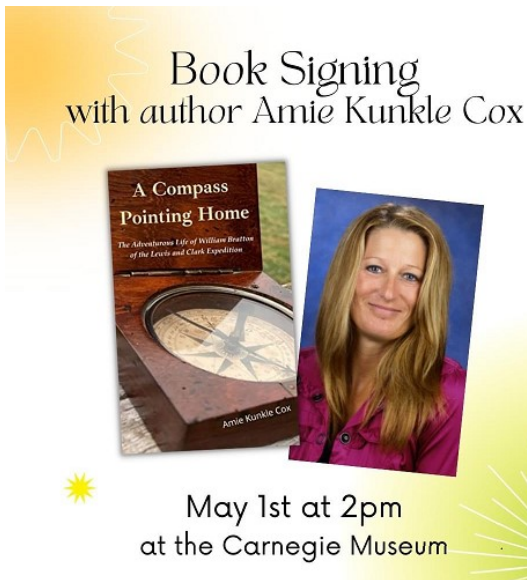
<https://www.facebook.com/Genealogy-Club-of-Montgomery-County-Indiana-Corp-1814527675437018/>

Visit FACEBOOK to learn about Genealogy Club activities, get upcoming meeting info, and make new friends.

## Update from the Club

By Stephanie Simms

Greetings Readers!



**Amie Cox**

Our very own Amie KUNKLE COX has written a book called *A Compass Pointing Home: The Adventurous Life of William Bratton of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*.

The book summary reads: Amidst the wilds of Kentucky in the 1790s, no one was safe. In this untamed wilderness, William BRATTON learned to be a man. He honed his hunting and survival skills and learned a gunsmith trade before he embarked with Lewis and Clark on a westward expedition. His journey to the Pacific Ocean might have been his greatest adventure but it was not his only adventure.

William BRATTON worked as a boatman on the Mississippi River when the New Madrid earthquake struck causing the river to briefly run backwards. He served in the War of 1812 and survived the River Raisin Massacre only to become a prisoner of war and marched across Canada in the dead of winter. He carved out a life as a pioneer in Indiana. He was a man of courage, endurance and strength in both body and mind. This is his story.

Amie signed copies of her book on May 1st at the Carnegie Museum. We are all very proud of her. You can check her book out at CDPL, or your local library (request it if your library doesn't carry it), or you can purchase wherever books are sold.

As I look over the 1950 census and begin to see where my family lived at that point in time, I wonder if any of them thought about their future ancestors way in the future of 2022 when this data would be released...probably not. I think about my future ancestors though because I caused a gap that will probably make my ancestors crazy! I was so excited to get my census questionnaire way back in 2000 where I had an actual family of my own to count, that as soon as it hit my mailbox, I swiftly saved it in my scrapbook. I did not think it was a big deal because the enumerators would come around so why not keep the paper copy to show my grandchildren? Some time later, it occurred to me that no enumerators ever came through. Now I have to live with the fact that in 2072, when my children look back at 2000, the first census either of them would ever be reported on, they will find nothing; they will not exist. I am not going to tell them, some secrets are best kept quiet ;)

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of the intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the beauty in others; to leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know that one life has breathed easier because you lived here. This is to have succeeded

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

## The Morgan's Milk Sickness By Karen Zach



**Karen Zach**

Elizabeth MORGAN said, “Nathaniel, do you have to go to the field today?”

“Not necessarily, why?”

“I feel so terrible. My stomach hurts so bad. Two of the children are sick, as well!”

“Have to go slop the hogs and milk the cow, then I’ll be in!”

“Poppa, hurry in – I need you to hold me,” whined their sick son, Billy David.

John went out to do his chores with worry in his heart! Ague had been at their home twice before with fever, chills and stomach troubles, but this seemed so very different, a more distressful, intense sickness. Maybe what worried John the most was that Lizzie asked him to stay in and help with their children.

Although he often loved and held them by choice, his wife had never, ever in their 17 years of marriage, asked him for help and Billy David had never begged to be held. His thoughts during his chores never veered from his wife and sick boys.

Oddly, John didn’t seem ill but more just off a bit. He did complain he couldn’t go to the bathroom and his body hurt. Chores finished, Nathan went into their small, but nice home, Lizzie having decorated it with several family pieces, the rocker her Gpa’ SUMMERS had crafted, several creweled works by her and her mother’s hand. One piece was even brought over from England by her great grandmother RUNKLE, an odd-looking, yet interesting piece of greenery with a glass bottle in the middle. Lizzie had it up on the wall way away from the children, though.

Opening the door, he heard crying. Billy David’s eyes stared straight-up at the ceiling in a daze. Nathaniel David MORGAN sat at the edge of the bed and scooped the child up, producing a wail of pain from his offspring. “I love you, poppa!” Oddly, Nathaniel couldn’t remember if he’d ever told his children he loved them. It was just a given, he thought. Most certainly, now, was the time. “And, I love you too, my precious son!”

They remained there for a long time, as Billy’s fever began to rise. Nathaniel felt a shudder a few times and then Billy David (named for he and his father) grew cold. Nathaniel remained sitting, tears rolling down his cheeks. Barely moving, Lizzie and the others trekked in to see this site. She too cried in deep sobs, not only from her own pains in health but in her heart, too.

“Oh, Nate, I will soon join this darling and John Summers if he continues in his sickness.”

“No! What is this?”

“I don’t know, but I do know that it is our time!” Lizzie had always had a foretelling mind, but he couldn’t let it happen.

“I’m going for Doc Jehu, he’s the best!” John was off. Lizzie remained, of course, trying to hold her son in her own intense pain. Dr. Jehu ADKINS lived near the MORGAN’s and was quite trusted with any type of medicinal aide.

Jehu ADKINS came right back with Nathaniel, pronounced the disease milk sickness and worked diligently with Lizzie, to no avail.

Billy passed on June 21, 1849, Lizzie passed the next day.

## Milk Sickness—cont.

Jehu had an exceptional reputation in the area for milk sickness that was quite prevalent in Jackson Township, Fountain County area. Although two others in the family sickened Doc was there right away and worked with them to get it stopped; however, he was also too late for John Summers who died on a hot, dry July 1, 1849. Nathan's family members lie side by side in the Wolf Creek Cemetery just over the line into Parke County.



Snake-Root

Doc and Nathaniel discussed the sickness, and why some of the children and Nathaniel himself did or did not get the sickness. Doc had his suspicions and was almost 100% sure it was Nate's cow, Sophie's milk. Nathaniel didn't drink milk as it soured his stomach and two of the boys had that problem but Billy David loved it and paid dearly. Lizzie loved it too. Doc told Nathaniel never to drink Sophie's milk and do not eat her meat. Told Nathaniel to clean out the white flowery stalks of the white snake-root plant.

Consumption! A big killer for young and old. Fevers – take a person away in a matter of hours, but milk sickness as you have read was a whole 'nother story.

Surely, in our day and age, "Milk," brings to mind a fresh, white frothy delicious drink meeting with homemade chocolate chip cookies, topping off a breakfast, or adding some Hershey's syrup to it. Only in wild dreams would it produce a fire so intense in the lower portion of your stomach, a constant desire to upchuck, destroy coats of your stomach, completely blocking bowels. Well, add "sickness" behind that beautiful word, milk and that's what ya' had for so many years in Indiana and other states!

The process in a death took about two weeks. Rest in Peace, Lizzie and the boys! It was so hard for this man to raise the other children without a wife. He could take Elijah, James Dudley and Sarah Jane to school but David Runkle had to be taken to a widow lady to care for when his poppa was teaching school. He needed help, and having known but not well, Sarah BOWERS REICHARD SOWERS and she too needing to marry, they wed (then they had my great gpa' when Sarah was 42 and Nathaniel 55). They remained married for 22 years until Nathaniel's passing, Sarah following nine years thereafter, he buried with Lizzie and she with her second husband, Michael SOWERS at Phanel Lutheran Church.

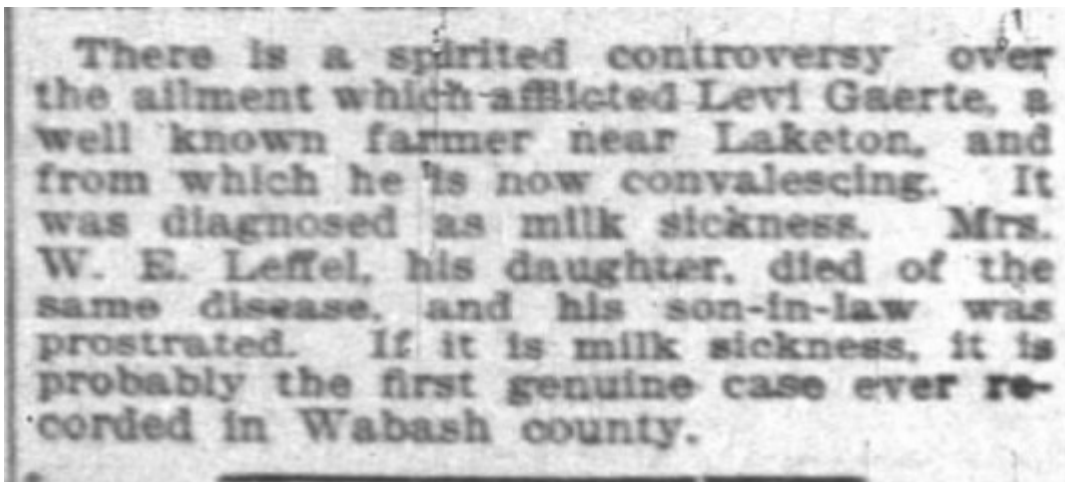
Milk sickness when Indiana was in its infancy with the wild snake roots growing, especially during the hot summer months, was quite prevalent. In fact, Abraham LINCOLN's mother passed from it in 1818. She too, knowing her time was near called her children in and told them to be kind to their father, each other and those in their future. (Jasper Indiana Herald—9 Oct 2018).

Several in her neighborhood also became sick, but it was only the MORGAN's who drank the milk that poisoned their complete systems. Oddly, next door in Montgomery County, the year of the 1850 census tallied four in one family (RUSH in Ripley) of milk sickness, as well as three others in the county. That particular year the killers were fevers and accidents (several burning).

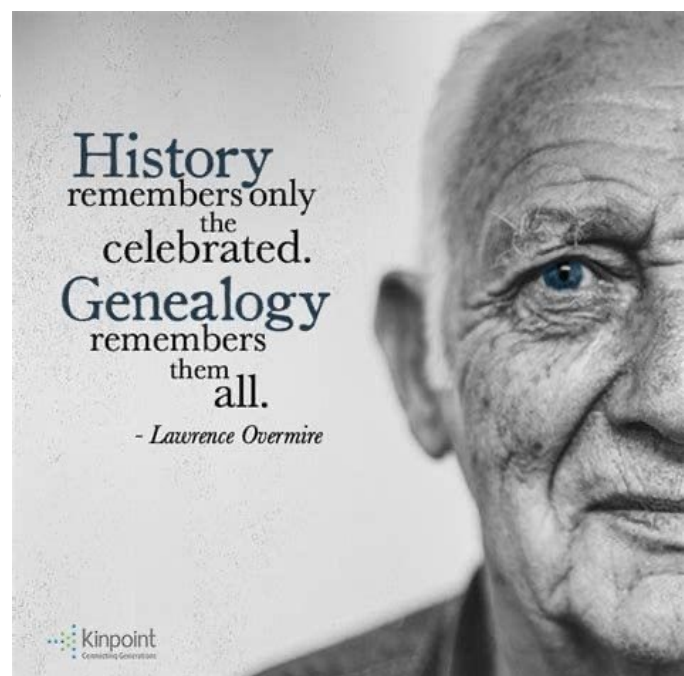
## Milk Sickness—cont.

Snake root was so wild and people didn't know the consequences. It was just something the cows could feed on. By the mid 1840s cows had eaten much of the killer up, farmers were beginning to have their suspicions, thus weeding the plant out and some physicians had created good ways to deal with it – castor oil, whiskey-Epsom salts or whiskey and morphia. Early on in the East it was said that feeding women the plant would indicate a witch if she died but cleared her if she did not! Goodness!

Overall, bovine do not die from the sickness; however, animals feeding from one who dies and has fed on the root usually dies as well. Whole flocks of sheep have died, but usually it does not affect pigs. Purdue experiments noted that “when pastured in cleared land,” cows will not carry the disease but when left to roam where they could find the snake-root, then troubles were ahead! (Rabb, Kate – Indianapolis Star 9 June 1923 p 8).



Throughout the years, beginning about 1850, a few cases cropped up but overall they were few and very far between. In 1926, Indiana had a couple of cases, and the last-ever known case was as late as 1960. As you can see, it was a horrible disease, one with so much mystery and such a horrid way to die. Just stay away from that snake root, okay!!



**Jasmine Ernest Robinson – trailblazer, activist, Radio DJ, Author, Musician, Athlete, Wife and Mother – Inspiration to all who met her.**

Written by Beth Swift

Beth Swift is the Archivist of Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana



We received word here recently of the passing of Jasmine ROBINSON, a woman with a big smile and a bigger heart. Jim AMIDON's notice of her passing was an excellent piece of writing, summing up her life succinctly. I thought I might add to her story by sharing some Archives materials, including her words from the Black Oral History project of the 1980s. Thanks to Bill DOEMEL for reminding me of it!

It is always sad to hear of a member of the Wabash family passing. It so often feels to me like we have lost something big, a piece of our history has gone. This is especially true in the passing of Jasmine ROBINSON, who broke the professional color barrier at Wabash in the 1960's. Wabash had employed other Black women, but they were maids, janitors, or cooks at the fraternities. Jasmine was, however, the first woman of color to work in a professional role in all of Crawfordsville. When Paul MIELKE hired her to work in the computer center here at Wabash in 1963, she was indeed the first woman of color to work professionally here.

**Jasmine Robinson**

In the title, I listed a few of Jasmine's better-known accomplishments. I start with trailblazer, because for all her long life she was busy forging the way for those who would follow. It was in this line that she spoke to classes here at Wabash about what it was like to be on campus during the Civil Rights movement. To elaborate on her perspective, here are Jasmine's own words from a transcript of a Black Oral History project undertaken in the early 1980s. The project looked at Wabash and the Black Experience and there was a second section which was Crawfordsville and the Black Experience. Jasmine, interestingly, could speak on both topics. She was interviewed by her friend Dr. Paul MIELKE of the Mathematics Department in 1982. Here are some details of her life and quotes from the oral history project or Jasmine in her own words.

Jasmine was born on a farm in Putnam County just outside of Greencastle on May 8, 1927, as one of six children, she was the youngest. Living on a farm ensured that there was always enough to eat. When asked about life on the farm and discrimination she responded, "All of our neighbors were white, but we didn't have any problems. We would go to their farm and help them and in return they would come to our farm and help us harvest. We looked at each other as just people."

As a high school student, Jasmine was barred from the local drugstore where there was a soda fountain. Here is her description of that situation, "I noticed it [discrimination] when I entered high school because of the difference in skin color of my sister and myself. Then I was aware of it. She could go into the drugstore and sit down and have a coke and I couldn't because I was darker than she was."

Jasmine came to Crawfordsville in October of 1947 after she married Andy ROBINSON, a local fellow. It took no time before the difference in society was made clear. "I remember distinctly that when we moved here there was a Welcome Wagon...I am afraid they did not welcome us." In addition, it was very difficult to find housing as whites would not rent to people of color. They found one apartment with a Black landlord; however, no children were allowed. As the couple were expecting their first child, it was a short-term solution.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.  
Preamble to the Declaration of Independence

## Jasmine Ernest Robinson-cont.

They found other housing through their church with an unused second floor space in a family home. Their next home was Andy's father's house. When forced to move again, a white friend suggested that perhaps they could build their own home. They applied to a local savings and loan and were denied, despite their excellent credit and job stability. When their friend heard of this, he went to the bank and, "...and after some strong persuasion they gave us a loan (laughs) and we built this house that we are now living in, in 1964." When asked about the sorts of jobs available to her she replied, "I hate to say this, but overt discrimination in employment was a general practice here. Employment opportunities apart from domestic and janitors were few, if any." Jasmine continued that there was, "an unwritten law," that Black women, "... were to be maids and the men were to be janitors." Her first job here in town was at a restaurant, peeling vegetables. She worked at a nursery school and earned money sewing, which continued to be her passion throughout life.

Paul asked her, "Did you ever feel treated as though you were not a person in these jobs?" She answered, "Some people respected me as a person and there were some who didn't and, in those instances, I had to tune them out. I had to work, my husband's paycheck was as small as mine... There were times when one would become depressed because you could not be yourself, you could not express what you felt with white people."

Jasmine continued to seek out opportunities to better her employment and took a class at the Indiana Business School in Lafayette. In the meantime, she continued her quest for a better paying job and despite being turned down at more than one local manufacturer, she was hired at Hoosier Crown, a company that made bottle caps. Asked how she was treated there, "I was the first Black woman to be employed by industry. I am sure management accepted me and I would like to believe most of the employees did also."

Jasmine met Paul MIELKE at an NAACP meeting here in town, she was among the founders of the local chapter in 1959. Paul mentioned that there would shortly be an opening in the Computer Center at Wabash. Jasmine elaborated, "I don't know if I ever told you, but I really didn't believe you (laughs). After eight months of employment at Hoosier Crown, you did contact me and offered me a job in the computer center at Wabash College. I came to Wabash in October 1963."

In another portion of the oral history, MIELKE asked about her relationship with Black students, "I have tried to let them know that we are here, if there was a need that they could call on us. I tried to indicate that if there were dances, and the girls needed a place to stay, they could stay here." There were dinners for all Black students at the ROBINSON home and so many conversations. Andy and Jasmine provided grounding and support.

Jasmine loved music, especially jazz and often wished for an outlet for that music. Not one to sit idly by, wishing for change, she made it happen with a show on the College radio station called Cooking With Jazz where she played her favorite jazz tunes. A catchy name, it was later used as the title of her legendary cookbook featuring many of her best dishes, along with those of others.

[Editor's note: A copy is held here in the Archives, but there is also one available for checkout from the Lilly Library.] Not only could Jasmine "spin the platters" she was also an accomplished musician who played the organ for her church and was the Musical Director there for over 45 years.



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 Jasmine Ernest Robinson-cont
 

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On the list of accomplishments must be her status as a championship bowler. Her love for bowling lasted a lifetime. She was a member of a group of Wabash women who competed on the national level. Jasmine kept bowling until she couldn't but returned to the game in 2014 at the age of 87. Not surprising then that she was added to the local lanes' Bowling Hall of Fame in 1988.

A loving wife to Andy and devoted mother to her two children, Jasmine was an inspiration to anyone who met her. Her dazzling smile, elegant style and unbounded enthusiasm for life were clear for all to see. At Homecoming in 2007, the National Association of Wabash Men honored Jasmine ROBINSON for her service to the College and its students by naming her an Honorary Alumna, the highest honor they can bestow. In addition, the computer center in the Malcolm X Institute is named for her, as a nod to her groundbreaking career and the MXI instituted the Jasmine Robinson Pioneering Woman Award.

In *The Bachelor* of March 24, 1988, Jasmine was the subject of a feature called "20 Questions: Jasmine Robinson" she was asked what was the best advice she ever received. Her answer was, "Never get too big to apologize." Asked about her greatest ambition she answered, "I always wanted to be a counselor at a college or university." Based on a lifetime of support, advocacy, and a loving outlook to so many young Wabash men, I would say that she surely achieved it. Godspeed Jasmine ROBINSON.

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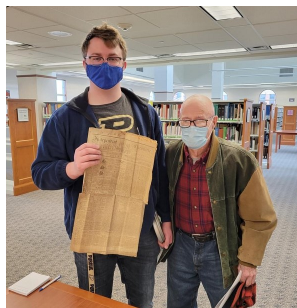
 Library Happenings by Dellie Craig
 

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Dellie Craig  
already here, work

Paul and Candace FEGLEY were in from Anderson, IN. They were researching information on Candace's father Hezekiah. Kiah RECTOR was born here and married Betty MONTGOMERY. Plus, Candace's grandparents, Hezekiah "Kiah" RECTOR and Minnie DOWELL. They are trying to figure out why the RECTOR's moved from Kentucky to Crawfordsville between 1910 and 1917. Was family opportunities, etc.



Bob STWALLEY and his grandson, Sam LOVOLD made a donation to CDPL, an old newspaper called Independent and Universal and Chronical the Advertiser published in Boston, Massachusetts, Thursday April 23, 1795. Vol. XXVII—No 1473



## NEW FEATURE: Local History Collection

CRAWFORDSVILLE  
— DISTRICT —  
PUBLIC LIBRARY



Why does CDPL have such an extensive local history collection?  
Because of our collaboration with **YOU!**

### Would you share?

- Early county photographs, cabinet cards, scrapbooks
- Early letters, diaries, ledgers, and journals
- Information and photos of veterans
- School yearbooks, newspapers, and records
- Church directories, cemetery records

You do not have to part with your originals! We can scan and return photographs and documents. You will have your original plus a backup copy stored at the library and available online.

Thank you for your continued support!

Our extensive collection of local history documents is due in great part to those who make donations to the library.

Consider sharing items you come across in your research; early county photographs, letters, diaries, ledgers, and journals. Any information or photos of veterans that you have. Yearbooks, newspapers, and records, church directories and cemetery records would be accepted.

If you wish to keep your original documents, we can scan images for our digital collection and you can keep the originals.

The Local History and Genealogy collection is part of the Reference Department, and features an online database in addition to the collection located on the 2nd floor at CDPL.

## LOCAL HISTORY & GENEALOGY AT CDPL

The Local History and genealogy collection is a part of the Reference Department, and features a robust online database in addition to the collection located in our building. Local History staff members are available for consultation Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### *Examples of items in our LH collection include:*

- Local yearbooks
- Family histories and research
- Plat maps
- A range of local newspapers on microfilm
- Information about local veterans
- And much more!

### *Genealogical resources offered at CDPL include:*

- Ancestry Library (onsite access only)
- Heritage Quest Online (onsite access only)
- 19th century US Newspapers (onsite access only)
- Fold 3: Search historical military records
- Hoosier Chronicles



Browse our online database at  
<http://history.cdpl.lib.in.us/>

Researchers planning to visit during evening or weekend hours should contact the department a week in advance so that materials may be retrieved prior to their visit. Please contact the Reference & Local History department with any questions or to make a research appointment at 765-362-2242 ext. 118.

**GENEALOGY  
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Find additional  
interesting articles at  
[http://cdpl-  
history.blogspot.com](http://cdpl-history.blogspot.com)

Join us for a journey through history and time



The annual dues of the Genealogy Club of Montgomery County Indiana Inc. for the period October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 are due in September 2021.

They may be given to Dellie Craig at the Crawfordsville District Public Library or mailed to the Club Treasurer, (Amie Cox, c/o CDPL, 205 S Washington Street, Crawfordsville, IN 47933).

You can find current and past Genealogy club newsletters and a membership application on the Crawfordsville District Public Library Website [www.cdpl.lib.in.us](http://www.cdpl.lib.in.us)  
Find us under the services tab and click on Genealogy Club of Montgomery County

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