

Check it Out Column for week of October 11-17, 2009

Celebrate Family History Month at the Library

By Kathy Stutzman, Public Relations Manager

October is Family History Month and Warsaw Community Public Library has several family history-related events and activities. And they are ALL free! In addition, WCPL's Indiana Room has many resources to enhance your family history research.

Some of you may have experienced what I did when researching my family history. Between records being lost, courthouses burning down, and family photos unlabeled, missing or destroyed, I had reached a dead end. My grandparents on both sides were deceased, my parents had passed away, and I only had one aunt and one uncle left remaining on my mother's side. My aunt was diagnosed with dementia while uncle was blind. There wasn't anyone left who could assist me in exploring my heritage.

This situation really brought home the importance of taking photos whenever possible (and labeling them), and making planned conversations with relatives to ferret out family information.

WCPL can also help you in your family history quest. During the year, we scheduled a digital photography class that helped participants discover the different ways to upload photos to your computer, the various ways to save photos, the different printers available and more. Earlier this month we had a Genealogy class, helping people to trace their family trees. Hopefully, you were able to attend one of them. Last week, WCPL scheduled an overview of our genealogy collection with a tour of the genealogical resources in the Indiana Room. Those attending learned how to use the microfiche machine and gained insight into the numerous family history and genealogical resources located in the Library.

However, if you missed any of these programs, WCPL still offers some alternatives. Warsaw Library offers several FREE online subscription resources to aid in your research. These include HeritageQuest, which is available both here and at your home, and Ancestry Plus, which is available only at the Library. They are simple to access with a computer. Go to our website, click on "online resources". Select your resource and do the following: In "User Name", type WarsawCPL and in "Password", type in your WCPL library/computer card barcode number. All 14 digits with no spaces. Sit back and watch the genealogy world unfold before you.

In the meantime, here are ten ideas from About.com to celebrate Family History month:

1. Get started on your family tree.
2. Start a family cookbook of heirloom recipes and preserve the memories of favorite meals.
3. Record conversations about the past to ensure family stories will be remembered through the generations.

4. Take a trip to sites of importance to your family such as the old family homestead or houses you lived in.
5. Uncover your health history and potentially save a family member's life in the future.
6. Create a heritage scrapbook showcasing photos, heirlooms and memories.
7. Start a family site or blog. Experiment with facebook.
8. Preserve the photos you do have. Scan them, digitize them, and name the people.
9. Get the next generation involved by allowing them to compile items, do projects.
10. Craft a heritage gift to give to relatives.

Don't wait to get started! Stay informed about upcoming genealogy classes by picking up the monthly calendars placed around the library or by frequenting our web calendar (www.warsawlibrary.com). Click on "events", then "calendar of events". You can look at the recent month or months ahead. For more information or assistance, call us at 267-6011.