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**Subject:** Indiana news - 3 February 2013  
**Date:** Sunday, February 03, 2013 8:20:32 PM

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# Indiana news

3 FEBRUARY 2013

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**Winter** continues to rage fiercely in the Midwest. So we're glad to have some genealogy things to look forward to in the spring - and you can join in on the fun:

- **Saturday, April 6** - Stop by the [Danville Public Library](#) in Hendricks County anytime from 9 am to 4 pm to help us unfold and organize some Hendricks County probate records from the 1800's, part of our continuing efforts to [preserve and digitize this record group](#). To ensure your seat, please [register online](#) or phone the library - (317) 745-2604.
- **Friday, April 26** - Come to the [Lawrence County Museum of History](#) in Bedford from 9:30 am to 4 pm for our [Seminar](#). Topics will include how to preserve photos & documents and a behind-the-scenes look at a digital project about Monroe County.
- **Saturday, April 27** - Josh Taylor (subject of a Q & A in the February issue of *IGS Newsletter* for members) headlines our [Conference](#) at the [Monroe County Public Library](#) in Bloomington. And if you're an IGS member, you'll receive a \$10 discount on registration.

While we're hunkered down inside, have you shared information on your Indiana connections? Our "[Once A Hoosier](#)" project (see the [submission form](#)) collects information on ancestors who were born before 1930 and were in Indiana for some portion of their life (however brief), but who died outside Indiana. Conversely, we have our "[Always A Hoosier](#)" project (see the [submission form](#)), which is for ancestors born before 1930 who were buried in Indiana.

## Positions Open in IGS

There are some openings on the Indiana Genealogical Society's board of directors:

- **Corresponding Secretary** - Responsible for answering the society's correspondence and formatting queries to be published on the IGS blog and in the IGS Newsletter.
- **Treasurer** - Responsible for maintaining the society's finances using QuickBooks software and for filing the necessary paperwork

with state and federal government.

- **Southeast Director** - Responsible for representing the genealogy interests of Dearborn, Decatur, Fayette, Franklin, Jefferson, Jennings, Ohio, Ripley, Switzerland and Union counties (You must be a resident of this area).

Members of the board of directors are expected to attend quarterly board meetings. For more information on any of these positions, please contact IGS President Michael Maben - email [mmaben@indiana.edu](mailto:mmaben@indiana.edu)

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## Evansville Judge Rules Cause of Death Not Public

A circuit court judge in Evansville has [ruled](#) that the Vanderburgh County Health Department does not have to provide the cause of death on the death records it releases to the public. The ruling came in a lawsuit that was filed by the Evansville *Courier & Press* newspaper, which had previously published the causes of death in its public records section. The ruling contradicts an earlier ruling by the Indiana Public Access Counselor and could have a ripple effect, as other county health departments may have policies that contradict state law. The newspaper has an [editorial](#) reacting to the decision and mentioning other threats to public access.

For some background on this particular case, you can read a [May 2012 article](#), in which the reason the health department gives for not providing the cause of death anymore is to save costs.

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## Indianapolis Court Records Index Online

The [Indiana State Digital Archives](#) has added a [searchable index](#) of Marion County court records spanning 1822-1930. The index contains 130,000 entries and includes court cases as well as juror lists and coroner inquests. You can read the Archives' [press release](#) for more information on the scope of the index.

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## Boone County Library is Latest FamilySearch Affiliate Library

The [SullivanMunce Cultural Center](#) in Zionsville, Boone County is the latest Indiana library to become a FamilySearch Affiliate Library. The Affiliate Library designation means that their patrons can now order microfilm from the FamilySearch catalog and it will be delivered directly to the SullivanMunce Cultural Center for viewing.

We first reported on the Affiliate Library program back in our December 2011 e-mail blast; there are now 20 libraries in Indiana participating in the program. We've compiled an [updated list](#) (PDF format) of these Indiana libraries - to find out about Affiliate Libraries in other states, click on the

[FamilySearch Centers](#) tab on the FamilySearch website.

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## Indiana Marriage Index Update

FamilySearch has updated the [Indiana marriage index 1811-1959](#) that is in progress. Entries from Perry County, Pike County, Porter County, Pulaski County and Putnam County have been added; that brings to 54 the total number of counties that are searchable. There are 13 other counties that have digital images of their records available for browsing, but are not indexed.

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## Social Security Death Index Update

Judy G. Russell has an [update](#) on her blog, The Legal Genealogist, about efforts to restrict public access to the Social Security Death Index, including a new bill in Congress that would close access for 3 years after a person has died.

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## IGS Database Additions

With the addition of these premium databases to the [Members-Only](#) area, we've hit another milestone - each county has at least 4 databases:

### [County Records:](#)

- Directory of Teachers for Floyd County, Indiana (1936)
  - Directory of Teachers for Martin County, Indiana (1936)
  - Alumni of Peru High School, Miami County, Indiana (1930)
  - Students of Peru High School, Miami County, Indiana (1930)
  - Teachers of Peru High School, Miami County, Indiana (1930)
  - Military Service of Residents of Owen County, Indiana (1775-1848)
  - Residents of Pulaski County, Indiana Who Died in the Civil War
  - Residents of Putnam County, Indiana Who Served in the Mexican War (1846-1848)
  - Early Settlers of Jay County and Randolph County, Indiana
  - Early Settlers of Spencer County, Indiana
  - Early Settlers of Warren County, Indiana
  - Selected Residents of Warrick County, Indiana (1881)
  - Early Settlers of Wayne County, Indiana
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## War of 1812 Pensions Update

--The Federation of Genealogical Societies continues to make progress in its efforts to digitize the pension files of War of 1812 veterans and make them [freely accessible at Fold3](#). The digitizing recently marked another milestone - the files of all veterans with surnames beginning with "A" and "B" are now online; digitizing is underway on surnames beginning with "C".

Donations are still needed to ensure completion of the digitizing - for more information, please visit the [Preserve the Pensions](#) site.

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## County Roundup

Some genealogical and local history news items from around the state:

#### ALLEN COUNTY

--The Fort Wayne-Allen County Health Department has [voted to increase their fees](#) for copies of death records. The cost to get a certified copy of a death record will increase to \$13; the cost for a non-certified copy will increase to \$50 (the fee increase is subject to the approval of the county commissioners). One of the reasons given for the drastic increase in the non-certified fee is the abundance of information available at the Allen County Public Library, as well as the staff time involved in finding the record (by law, certified copies are limited to those who can prove they have a direct interest in the record).

#### CLINTON COUNTY

--The Clinton County Genealogical Society in Frankfort now has a Facebook [page](#).

#### DELAWARE COUNTY

--Students from Ball State University have created a website, [Historic Muncie](#), that documents the historic neighborhoods in the area through text, photos, videos and maps. The National Trust for Historic Preservation's blog also has [details on the project](#).

--Ball State University has [begun digitizing film clips](#) of Muncie news from the 1960's and 1970's. The clips are being put online in their [Digital Media Repository](#).

#### HOWARD COUNTY

--The Howard County Genealogical Society in Kokomo now has a [website](#).

#### LAPORTE COUNTY

--Researchers who visit the [LaPorte County Recorder](#) for old land records and other deeds should be aware - the Recorder's Vault, which was previously open to the public with no restrictions, is now only open on Wednesdays from 8 to 11:30 am and Thursdays from 1 to 4:30 pm. Thanks to Harold Henderson, our Indiana County Genealogist for LaPorte County, for sharing this information.

#### MARION COUNTY

--The grave of Samuel Elbert, an Indianapolis physician who died in 1902, [was finally given a tombstone](#). Elbert is buried in Crown Hill Cemetery; he is believed to have been the first African-American doctor in the state.

--The Indiana Historical Society is [seeking stories and photos](#) about the March 1913 flood in Indianapolis. The information will be part of an upcoming display marking the 100th anniversary of the flood.

#### VANDEBURGH COUNTY

--During construction, an [unmarked cemetery](#) was discovered near the grounds of the former State Hospital in Evansville. [Several remains have been discovered in Evansville](#) in recent years.

--An Evansville newspaper remembers the [Evansville Orphan Asylum](#) and the [Protestant Home](#), which was for the care of the elderly.

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## Civil War in the News

--Dick Eastman's newsletter [has a review](#) of a book, *Life in Civil War America*, that has compiled helpful information to researchers looking to find out more about the era - everything from schooling to money and slang.

--FamilySearch has added a free [tutorial](#) about learning about your Civil War ancestors who served in the Union. The tutorial includes a video, slides and handout, and was given by Jean Wilcox Hibben.

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## Jasper County Marriage Index

Jasper County (county seat Rensselaer) is in the northwest part of Indiana. Workers from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) compiled an index to the county's marriage license books for 1865-1920; this index is available on microfilm as well as in book form.

When it comes to online resources, if you or your local library have access to Ancestry.com, their database "Indiana, marriage collection, 1800-1941" includes this 1865-1920 index.

Unfortunately, Jasper County is not one of the counties indexed in FamilySearch's [Indiana marriage index 1811-1959](#), and the digital images available for browsing in this database do not include Jasper County. But FamilySearch has digitized a [Jasper County marriage index 1920-1957](#), which was compiled by local DAR and SAR members.

Copies of marriage records can be requested from the [Jasper County Clerk](#).

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## Indiana Digitized Newspapers on Google

Google had an ambitious project to digitize historic newspapers and add them to its [News Archives](#). Sadly, that project has been abandoned, but what it accomplished is still on the site - just not easily accessed. Jose A. Munoz has a [blog](#) that has done a great job of making the digitized issues more easily accessible, by compiling a list of the states and towns where these newspapers were published (Google only has them listed by title), as well as their links for easy browsing. We've taken his listing of the Indiana newspapers and enhanced it by adding the counties - view our [Indiana digitized newspapers list](#) (PDF format). Keep in mind that newspapers often included items from across the region, as well as their particular town and county.

Google also digitized issues of [The Freeman](#) spanning 1888-1915. Published in Indianapolis, this newspaper had items on African-American residents from across the state. Similarly, if you have interest in German ancestors, Google digitized issues of the German-language weekly [Taglicher Telegraph \[The Daily Telegraph\]](#) spanning 1865-1907, which was published in Indianapolis.

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## Research Tip: Enumerations of Congressional Township Schools

The December 2012 issue of *Indiana Genealogist* included an 1850 enumeration of a school in District 2, Township 30 North, Range 2 West, in Pulaski County (thanks to Janet Onken for sharing this!). We identify our ancestors geographically by the town and the civil (named) township they lived in; however, when Indiana became a state in 1816, schools (and the people who were responsible for overseeing them) were identified by Congressional township, not by civil township. That's why it's important to look at plat maps and land descriptions in deed books to figure out what Section, Congressional Township and Range our ancestors were associated with.

Enumerations of these Congressional township schools can be found in Indiana as early as the 1830's. Some enumerations only included the names of the taxpayer (parent) and the number of school-age children in their household; others, like the Pulaski County enumeration we mentioned, actually listed the children by name and age - a wonderful resource for tracing families before the 1850 census.

These school enumerations were done by township trustees and given to the county auditor. At one point, the county auditor was also to file a report with the State Superintendent of Schools. So these enumerations may be found at various places on the township or county level (if they survived). The Indiana State Archives has some of the records of the State Superintendent of Schools. And some of these enumerations may have been donated to the Indiana Historical Society or the Indiana State Library's manuscript collections.

NOTE: It wasn't until the school law of 1852 that Indiana switched from the Congressional township to the civil township as the basis for a school district. That's when township trustees and other elected officials in the township were given the extra duty of being the school board for their township.

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## Legal Terms Explained: Desperate Debts

If you're looking at a court record and it refers to someone having "desperate debts," these are debts that cannot be paid - there aren't enough assets to cover them, even if they are sold. In an estate, the creditors are paid first, and only if there is anything left over will the heirs receive a distribution. That's why many estate cases were often labeled as "insolvent" when they were closed, with the creditors receiving only a fraction of what they were owed by the deceased.

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## Do-It-Yourself Digital Preservation

If you're considering scanning some of your own documents and photos, you may want to read the Library of Congress' [blog post](#) for some tips, including the different file formats and how/where to store the files. The National Genealogical Society's blog also has a [related post](#) mentioning specific scanners and how to find reviews of them.



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