



St. Joseph County Public Library

Local & Family History e-Newsletter

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Family History Heats Up TV, by [Sara Allen](#)

NBC's celebrity genealogy show [Who Do You Think You Are?](#) returns for its third season on Friday, February 3 (8-9 p.m. ET). The celebrities featured this season will be Martin Sheen, Marisa Tomei, Blair Underwood, Reba McEntire, Rob Lowe, Helen Hunt, Rita Wilson, Edie Falco, Rashida Jones, Jerome Bettis, Jason Sudeikis and Paula Deen. Look for a short promotional video, "Who Do You Think You Are: South Bend" from our department later this year.

A new celebrity genealogy series is also set to begin soon. ["Finding Your Roots"](#) with historian Henry Louis Gates Jr. will launch on March 25 on PBS. This series will feature two stars in each one-hour episode, including husband-and-wife actors Kevin Bacon and Kyra Sedgwick.

Personal Genealogy Consultations @ SJCP L

Want to research your family tree? Need assistance? Stuck at a brick-wall? SJCP L's Local & Family History Services will offer free 30-minute personal research consultations on Thursday, March 15, 22 and 29 (by appt. only). A staff member will look over the information you have and give you suggestions for your next steps. Call 574-235-4181 or email s.allen@sjcpl.org for an appointment. Bring with you all known information about the family line or problem to be researched.

Upcoming Genealogy Fair

Plan to attend the [South Bend Area Genealogical Society's Genealogy Fair](#) on Saturday, March 17 at the Mishawaka-Penn-Harris Public Library in downtown Mishawaka. Mark Middleton will speak on the topics "Scanning Photographs" and "The Latest in Computer Technology." Doors open at 9:00 a.m., with exhibitors available all day. Look for us at the SJCP L table and bring your questions!

Government Restricts Access to the Social Security Death Index, by [Sara Allen](#)

If you use the Social Security Administration's Death Master File (also called the Social Security Death Index or SSDI) for your genealogical research, you may be in for an unpleasant surprise the next time you try to access this data. A recent bill introduced in Congress called the "Keeping IDs Safe Act" and a decision by the Social Security Administration have limited access to this index. Citing rising identity theft and fraud, some citizens and government officials believe the SSDI should be removed from the public domain entirely.

Genealogists use this index to research deceased relatives. Losing access to this information would be a sad loss to

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researchers who may not have any alternate means of finding out the data gleaned from this source. On the other hand, if the index is being used to steal identities, this is a serious situation that does merit further investigation. In my opinion however, allowing individuals and businesses to check the status of a name or Social Security number in a public database seems like it would do more to prevent fraud, than restricting access to this information so that it cannot be verified easily.

In the meantime, genealogists will find that access to the SSDI is now restricted or has disappeared altogether. [Rootsweb](#) website has removed the index from its site. [Ancestry.com](#) is now restricting access to some deaths which occurred within the last ten years. The Social Security Administration itself will be removing 4 million deaths currently listed in the index because of privacy concerns with how they acquired information about those deaths. Read about this decision [here](#). You can still access an uncensored version of the SSDI *for now* at the free [FamilySearch](#) website sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Stay tuned for further developments in this story and feel free to contact your congressman/woman to weigh in on your opinion of this legislation. Furthermore, I would urge you to search for SSDI information for all deceased relatives now while access to this data is still allowed.

On a related note, those of you who regularly order copies of an ancestor's Social Security Application (SS-5) to locate genealogical information should be aware that recently, to protect the privacy of those long-dead, the Social Security Administration started blacking out the names of the person's parents on this application for any person born between 1 and 100 years ago. You can still order copies of this government record, but one of the most significant pieces of genealogical information will be marked out (unless the person was born in 1911 or earlier).

Coming Attractions: 1940 U.S. Census, by [Kevin Wadzinski](#)

April 2, 2012. There aren't many visible signs of its anticipation, like Duke students camping out for basketball tickets, or people having Thanksgiving dinner in the morning so they can be first in line on Black Friday, but there isn't a genealogist whose pulse doesn't quicken at the thought. On that date the 1940 U.S. Census will finally be unleashed. Fortunately, there is plenty of time to get prepared for its publication.

I have read conflicting reports about how this census will be made available. It was reported by the National Archives and Records Administration ([NARA](#)), that the census will only be made available digitally. However, there is a page on NARA's website that links to the [National Archives Trust Fund](#), which has microfilm copies available for purchase. If you have half a million

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dollars lying around, the entire census can be yours! We are not sure yet whether SJCP L will be getting a microfilm copy of Indiana's portion or not. Regardless, the 1940 census will be made available for free via the NARA website first thing on April 2. The catch to this is that there will not be a name index available until [Ancestry.com](#) and [FamilySearch](#) have had the time to produce one. NARA did index the census by state; county; city, town, or minor civil division; and enumeration district. This means that you will have to know where the people you want to search for lived at that time. That, or have unlimited time and patience. [NARA](#) has an excellent guide to getting ready for release day, as well as 1940 census maps to help find the correct enumeration district, and blank 1940 census forms.

With each new census there were usually new questions added, and 1940 is no different. Some new questions asked include: highest grade of school completed; where he or she lived on April 1, 1935; amount of income for the year previous; as well as if the person received 50 dollars or more in income from sources other than their employer. In addition to some new questions for everyone, on each page, two people were asked a set of questions on a supplemental schedule. This was to give a five percent sample of the general population. In this section, veterans were asked what war they served in or whether it was peacetime service only. It also asked if deductions were made for Social Security or Railroad Retirement.

Walking through snowdrifts sure makes April feel like a lifetime away but, as you can see, that might be a good thing. There should be plenty to do to get ready. When April 2 rolls around, and everyone else's initial excitement turns to overwhelmed confusion, you'll be cool as a cucumber, getting results and, probably, lots of questions from the unprepared. Don't worry, Local & Family History Services will be ready to help that day as well!

New Books

Custom Built by McFarlan: A History of the Carriage and Automobile Manufacturer, by Richard Stanley

The Evil That Men Do, by Jeanne M. Dams

In the Family of Trees, by Lori Caskey Sigety

Look to Lazarus, the Big Store, by David & Beverly Meyers & Elise Meyers Walker

Wolf and Dessauer: Where Fort Wayne Shopped, by Jim & Kathie Barron

New Family Map for Indiana; Delaware County

New Family Maps for Illinois Counties; Ford, Jasper, Jefferson, Jersey, Johnson, Lawrence, Randolph, Saline, Stephenson, and White.

New Family Maps for Michigan Counties; Crawford, Lapeer, Oakland, Ontonagon

Cemetery Inscriptions, Stark County, Ohio, Volumes I-VII