

# Harrison County Community Foundation

## Frederick Porter Griffin Fund for Genealogy & History of Harrison County

*The Frederick Porter Griffin Fund for Genealogy and History of Harrison County was established in 2010 by Samuel P. Hays to benefit the Frederick Porter Griffin Center for Local History and Genealogy, which is housed in Harrison County's original Carnegie Library building. Here, Sam shares information about the fund and why he chose to establish it.*

The Frederick Porter Griffin Fund for Genealogy and History of Harrison County provides funds to help the Harrison County Public Library maintain, grow and support the dissemination of its collection of genealogical and historical documents related to Harrison County. As a center for genealogical research, the Frederick Porter Griffin Center for Local History and Genealogy in Corydon provides an archive of family, newspaper and pictorial records, as well as historical and published documents for individuals to use when researching their family histories. It also provides microfilm, plat maps and other resources.

I became interested in genealogy in high school and discovered that my friend, Fred Griffin, was equally interested. Our families maintained family cemeteries and enjoyed researching their ancestors.

Our first big adventure together came in the late 1930s when Fred's Aunt Ollie, who was secretary of the Cedar Hill Cemetery, offered to pay for us to copy the gravestones of the entire cemetery. We completed it in one summer and she paid us \$100 each for the job. The librarian of the Corydon public library took interest in the information we gathered and decided to house it in the library. With these records, the library began to organize its collection of historical and ancestral data.

During this time, genealogy among older people was popular in the Midwest. Many people would come to Corydon seeking information regarding their ancestors. As a lawyer, my father had access to court records and could find answers to their questions. Fred's family owned a dry goods store, and Fred and his father would ask customers about family cemeteries and then gather more historical data for the library records.

A grand opportunity came when the Old Capital Bank was purchased and the new owners chose to close the facility located next door to the library. The library purchased the building for \$1 and converted it into the main branch of the new county-wide system. The original township library building was converted into the Frederick Porter Griffin Center for Local History and Genealogy.

After a stint as a teacher in Paoli, Fred Griffin returned to Corydon in the early 1950s and continued surveying gravestones. He also worked extensively with the ever-growing Harrison County historical society to turn the historical and genealogical collection of the library into a premier research center for Harrison County.

Though I no longer live in Corydon, I too have dedicated much of my adult life to genealogical research and continue to contribute my findings to the Harrison County library. It is with this interest in family genealogy that I established the Frederick Porter Griffin Fund for Genealogy and History of Harrison County to encourage individuals and groups to use the collection at the Frederick Porter Griffin Center to discover their family histories, as well as to add to the historical records available to all who are interested in delving deeper into their ancestral pasts.

