



Genealogy Research

If you have a particular Washtenaw County local history research request, email oldnews@aadl.org to contact the Ann Arbor District Library Old News team.

Ann Arbor District Library – Genealogy Databases

Ancestry Library Edition aadl.org/research/browse/genealogy

AADL offers the library version of the most popular genealogy website in the world:

Ancestry.com Inc. is a publicly traded Internet company based in Provo, Utah. The largest for-profit genealogy company in the world, it operates a network of genealogical and historical record websites focused on the U.S. and nine foreign countries, including Genealogy.com, MyFamily.com, Footnote.com, ProGenealogists.com, and Rootsweb.com. As of December 2013, the company provided access to approximately 12.7 billion records and had 2.14 million paying subscribers.

Biography & Genealogy Master Index (BGMI) aadl.org/research/browse/genealogy

Millions of Americans have been profiled in collective biography volumes such as *Who's Who in America* and *Women of Science*. The Biography and Genealogy Master Index was begun in the 1970s to index these names to aid researchers. The text has been updated periodically since the first edition appeared in 1980, most recently in 2008. The index, compiled by M. C. Herbert and Barbara McNeil, concentrates heavily on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In addition to providing the individual's name, birth, and death dates (where available), the source document is included. Sources for this index vary from *Who's Who of American Women* and *National Cyclopaedia* to *American Biography* to *Directory of American Scholars* and *American Black Writers*. This database is an essential tool for locating persons who appeared in a "Who's Who" publication in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

HeritageQuest aadl.org/research/browse/genealogy

U.S. Federal Censuses feature the original images of every extant federal census in the United States, from 1790 through 1940, with name indexes for many decades. In total the collection covers more than 140 million names.

Genealogy and local history books deliver more than 7 million digitized page images from over 28,000 family histories, local histories, and other books. Titles have been digitized from microform collections, as well from the American Antiquarian Society via an exclusive partnership.

Periodical Source Index (PERSI), published by the Allen County Public Library, is recognized as the most comprehensive index genealogy and local history periodicals. It contains more than 2 million records covering titles published around the world since 1800.

Revolutionary War records contains original images from pension and bounty land warrant application files help to identify more than 80,000 American Army, Navy, and Marine officers and enlisted men from the Revolutionary War era.

Freedman's Bank Records, with more than 480,000 names of bank applicants, their dependents, and heirs from 1865–1874, offers valuable data that can provide important clues to tracing African American ancestors prior to and immediately after the Civil War.

LexisNexis U.S. Serial Set records the memorials, petitions, private relief actions made to the U.S. Congress back to 1789, with a total of more than 480,000 pages of information.

Popular Genealogy Websites

FamilySearch.org

FamilySearch is a genealogy organization operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is the largest genealogy organization in the world. FamilySearch maintains a collection of records, resources, and services designed to help people learn more about their family history. FamilySearch gathers, preserves, and shares genealogical records worldwide. It offers free access to its resources and service online at FamilySearch.org, one of the most heavily used genealogy sites on the Internet. In addition, FamilySearch offers personal assistance at more than 4,500 family history centers in 70 countries, including the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Library of Congress loc.gov

Wonder about your tax dollars at work? Search this online catalog of pretty much every book there is, along with the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (you may have heard it called “nuk-muk”). Or picture the past with the American Memory digital collection of maps, photos, documents, audio and video on topics from landscape architecture to war. Then check out the Chronicling America newspaper collection chroniclingamerica.loc.gov, which has grown to more than 4.8 million digitized pages, plus a directory of historical US newspapers and archives where you can find copies today.

Castle Garden castlegarden.org

In January, 63,000 new records were added to this searchable database that now totals 11 million arrivals through Castle Garden, America's first official immigration center (it was open in New York Harbor from 1820 through 1892). That makes this pre-Ellis Island immigration collection nearly complete—so if you haven't checked for your ancestors here lately, it's worth another look.

[Ellis Island.org](http://EllisIsland.org)

Still the first place to search for your immigrant ancestors if they arrived on US shores between 1892 and 1924, this database covers 17 million passenger arrivals through the port of New York. You'll need a free registration to view records.

Digital Library on American Slavery library.uncg.edu/slavery/

Search detailed information on about 80,000 individual slaves, 8,000 free people of color, and 62,000 whites—both slave owners and non-slave owners—extracted from legislative and county court petitions, wills, inventories, deeds, bills of sale, depositions and court proceedings. For slaves, data may include information otherwise lost to the tragic history of slavery, including age, dates of ownership, economic and family information.

Allen County Public Library www.genealogycenter.org/Databases/FreeDatabases.aspx

Not only Indiana researchers should make time for a virtual visit to this library in Fort Wayne renowned for its genealogy collection. Online databases include family histories, Bible records and military files, with special gateways for African-American and American Indian research.

[Bureau of Land Management General Land Office Records](#)

This site now lets you find ancestors' land records using a map interface instead of filling out search criteria. Another map interface lets you plot where each description from a land patent or survey is located so it's even easier to tease out ancestral answers from the more than 5 million land title records, plus survey plats and field notes, found here.

[Civil War Soldiers & Sailors System](#)

With 6.3 million soldiers' names from both sides, plus info on 18,000 African-American sailors, this remains the essential starting place for finding Civil War ancestors. You can click from individual entries to concise regimental and battle histories, and even view all the soldiers in your ancestor's unit.

The USGenWeb Project usgenweb.org

Since 1996, this free, all-volunteer genealogy project has connected state and county websites from coast to coast. Choose a state and then a county, or click the Projects link to also explore special endeavors tackling censuses, tombstones, military pensions and more, including a handsome US Digital Map Library.

[Findagrave.com](#)

Simple to search and constantly growing, this collection of over 100 million grave records may surprise you with how often it solves your genealogy puzzles. Besides searching, you can browse by cemetery to find ancestors buried near your kin. Many records include photos of headstones and family photos.

[Mocavo.com](#)

Like Google but just for genealogy, this simple yet powerful search engine has indexed more than 6 billion names and added the Allen County Public Library's Internet Archive records, the Social Security Death Index and Geni's World Family Tree—and made them searchable with iPhone and Android apps. Basic searching is free, or upgrade to get more power and search fields.

[Rootsweb.com](#)

The grand-daddy of the free Genealogy sites, designed for sharing. A number of Genweb pages are hosted on Rootsweb, but there is more there too. Rootsweb is owned and supported by Ancestry.com, but all content on Rootsweb is free.

Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter <http://blog.eogn.com/>

Though Dick Eastman made his considerable reputation chronicling genealogy technology, that's not the only topic of his newsy blog (also available via email), where you can get the latest on topics from FamilySearch to cemeteries.

Bobbie's Genealogy Classroom barbsnow.net/classnotes.html

Local genealogist Barb Snow's created this AMAZING comprehensive website. A must visit!!

Arlington National Cemetery arlingtoncemetery.mil/GravesiteLocator/GravesiteLocator.aspx

Arlington National Cemetery launched an online database that it hopes will allow "family members and the public to find gravesites and explore Arlington's rich history." Users can locate gravesites, download headstone photos, and get walking directions.

State Websites

ALABAMA

Alabama Department of Archives and History archives.state.al.us

Databases include Civil War service cards and 1867 voter registrations, plus indexes to maps, newspapers, church records and local government holdings. Don't miss the digital archives, where you'll find old photos, the complete four-volume History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography and 119 issues of the Alabama Historical Quarterly.

Encyclopedia of Alabama encyclopediaofalabama.org

A searchable, hyperlinked encyclopedia of all things Alabama, this handsome and speedy site will help you sort out Anniston from Andalusia and explain what became of the Cherokees and Old Cahaba. Image galleries range from rural life to Mardi Gras in Mobile to barbecue.

ALASKA

Alaska Libraries, Archives and Museums lam.alaska.gov

An appropriately big jumping-off point for exploring our biggest state, this site will take you to an index of more than 200,000 articles in Alaska newspapers, lists of collections with finding aids, the multimedia digital archives, and the searchable library catalog and museum collections database.

ARIZONA

Arizona Genealogy Birth and Death Certificates genealogy.az.gov

If only all states followed the vital-records practices of Arizona, where you can search for birth (1855 to 1934) and death records (1844 to 1959), then click to PDFs of the originals.

Arizona Biographical Database lib.az.us/bio/default.aspx

This project of the Arizona State Library lets you search more than 100,000 entries on people in its collection of books, newspaper articles, periodicals, obituaries and vertical files.

ARKANSAS

Arkansas History Commission www.ark-ives.com

More than just good-looking, this site is home to Civil War records, special sections on black history and folk life, and the Catalog of Arkansas Resources and Archival Treasures, which includes a searchable biographical index and 13,000 images.

CALIFORNIA

Online Archive of California www.oac.cdlib.org

Recently redesigned to take advantage of new technologies, the OAC opens the golden gate to more than 170,000 digital images and documents and nearly 20,000 collection guides.

California Genealogical Society and Library californiaancestors.org

You can search the library catalog and find answers in research FAQs, or search the 350,000 names in the California names index. Get a hit? Just \$10 will buy a lookup in the original source.

California Digital Newspaper Collection <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc>

The California Digital Newspaper Collection contains over 400,000 pages of significant historical California newspapers published from 1846-1922, including the first California newspaper, the Californian, and the first daily California newspaper, the Daily Alta California. It also contains issues of several current California newspapers that are part of a pilot project to preserve and provide access to contemporary papers.

COLORADO

Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org

This outstanding collection lets you browse or search more than 500,000 digitized pages, representing 163 individual newspaper titles published in Colorado from 1859 to 1923. You can search the whole collection or individual titles, and opt to search only articles, pictures or ads.

Colorado State Archives www.colorado.gov/dpa/doit/archives/geneal.htm

A single search here scours nearly 1 million entries, or you can search separately databases including the 1870 Colorado census, penitentiary inmates, Civil War volunteers and birth certificates (after 1900).

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut State Library cslib.org

If you can't find what you need in the digital collections—which include court records, town histories and some vital records—the extensive finding aids will help you dive into records on paper and microfilm.

DELAWARE

Delaware Public Archives archives.delaware.gov

Click on the Digital Archives link to access collections of digitized photos, Civil War records, naturalization records, historical maps and more. Don't miss the probate records database covering 1680 to 1925, tucked away at archives.delaware.gov/collections/probate.shtml.

FLORIDA

Florida Memory Project floridamemory.com

This site, courtesy of the State Library and Archives of Florida, offers a virtual trip to the Sunshine State, with digitized photos, Confederate pension applications, WWI service cards, Spanish land grants and other old documents.

GEORGIA

Digital Library of Georgia dlg.galileo.usg.edu

Walk through this gateway to a million digital objects in more than 200 collections from 60 institutions and 100 government agencies. The collection includes newspapers, books, manuscripts, aerial photos and the New Georgia Encyclopedia. Search or browse by topic, time period, county or other parameters.

Georgia Archives sos.georgia.gov/archives

Search Colonial wills and will books, Confederate pension applications and death certificates (1919 to 1927). Or look for your ancestor or the old homestead in the Vanishing Georgia Photographic Collection of almost 18,000 images.

HAWAII

Hawaii State Archives hawaii.gov/dags/archives

Say aloha to this site's indexes of marriages, divorces, deaths and citizenship papers; guide to Hawaiian newspapers; and digital collections, including passenger manifests, WWI service records, tax assessments and vital records. The latter covers all of Kauai, Molokai and Niihau plus all Maui birth and death records and a few marriage records.

IDAHO

BYU-Idaho Special Collections abish.byui.edu/specialcollections/famhist

Home to the Western States Marriage Records Index, which includes Idaho, this site also hosts Idaho-specific resources, including the searchable state death index (1911 to 1956) and eastern Idaho death records.

ILLINOIS

Illinois State Archives www.library.sos.state.il.us/departments/archives/databases.html

This data-packed site now includes databases of public-domain land tract sales and Illinois servitude and emancipation records. They complement the 11 military-records databases, statewide marriage index (1763 to 1900) and two-part statewide death index (pre-1916 and 1916 to 1950). Still stumped? The guide to the Illinois Regional Archives Depositories will tell you where to look next.

Cook County Clerk of the Circuit Court cookcountyclerkofcourt.org/nr

Don't let the Chicago locus of this site fool you: Many Illinois ancestors who wound up living elsewhere in the state can be found in this searchable archive of more than 260,000—and growing—naturalization records from 1906 to 1929.

INDIANA

Indiana State Digital Archives indianadigitalarchives.org

The fruit of 15 years of work by Friends of the Indiana State Archives volunteers, this site now boasts nearly 2.5 million searchable records, with more being added. The latest addition is a database of more than 213,000 Hoosier Civil War records.

Allen County Public Library genealogycenter.info

Although renowned for its general genealogy collection, this library in Fort Wayne is also a treasure trove for hometown and home-state researchers. Statewide databases include county courthouses, WWI deaths, African-American settlements, orphans and pre-1882 deaths.

IOWA

Iowa Genealogical Society iowagenealogy.org

This active genealogy group has provided county-by-county research guides, an alphabetical index of pioneer ancestors, a list of available naturalization papers and more.

Iowa GenWeb Project iagenweb.org

While all the state sites in the USGenWeb Project usgenweb.org are useful, this Hawkeye State project goes way beyond the usual links to county pages. Check out the many special projects, including the family group sheet collection, gravestone photo project, transcribed history books and state censuses, Civil War and WWI compilations, newspaper clippings, and WPA graves registration survey.

KANSAS

Kansas State Historical Society kshs.org/genealogists/index.htm

This site features a number of searchable databases, including indexes to the 1895 Kansas census, biographical sketches and obituaries, physicians and midwives, fraternal order death notices, military records and pioneer women's stories.

KENTUCKY

Kentucky Historical Society history.ky.gov

Search the Kentucky cemetery records database—hundreds of thousands of names transcribed from gravestones across Kentucky—or explore oral histories and “Kentuckiana” on this well-designed site.

LOUISIANA

Louisiana State Archives sos.louisiana.gov/tabid/88/default.aspx

Look on the left under the Research Library link for a database of Confederate pension applications (a whopping 49,000 names indexed from 152 rolls of microfilm), plus death records (mostly 1911 to 1956), Orleans parish births (mostly 1819 to 1907), Orleans parish marriages (1870 to 1957) and some passenger manifests.

Louisiana Biography and Obituary Index neworleanspubliclibrary.org/obits/obits.htm

This 10-year project of the New Orleans Public Library makes accessible the contents of alphabetical card files of more than 650,000 names found in New Orleans newspapers from 1804 to 1972 and biographical information published in older Louisiana collective biographies. For just \$2, you can order copies of whatever you find in the index.

MAINE

Maine State Archives maine.gov/portal/facts_history/genealogy.html

A new “Archives Interactive” feature lets you search to see if the record you want is in the collection, then click to order a copy. More searchable indexes cover marriages (1892 to 1996, with a gap from 1967 to 1976) and deaths (1960 to 1996).

Maine Memory Network www.mainememory.net

This lovely site aims to be “Maine’s statewide digital museum.” It includes a community heritage project and a comprehensive guide to Maine’s history that draws on more than 200 organizations and archives statewide.

MARYLAND

Archives of Maryland Online aomol.net

Land records here date from 1658. You’ll also find probate records as well as service records from the Revolution and Civil War (both sides). Don’t miss the Early State Records link, which includes digitized microfilm of newspaper pages, not all of them “early.”

Western Maryland Historical Library whilbr.org

Digitized coverage includes the Civil War in Maryland, city and county directories, tax rolls and even old scrapbooks.

MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts Archives www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcidx.htm

This site offers indexes to birth, marriage and death records from 1841 to 1910, plus an ongoing project to index more than 1 million immigrants who came through the Port of Boston between 1848 and 1891.

MICHIGAN

Michigan Genealogical Death Indexing System www.mdch.state.mi.us/pha/osr/gendisx/index.htm

GENDIS, from Michigan’s Division of Vital Records and Health Statistics, provides complete transcriptions of 170,000 death records covering 1867 to 1884. Records include the name, date and place of death, age, marital status, cause of death, occupation and parents’ names and residences.

Seeking Michigan seekingmichigan.org

A relatively new star in the state-sites firmament, this site is not only good-looking and easy to use but packed with data, most notably a searchable database of nearly 1 million Michigan death certificates (1897 to 1920) transcribed in full detail. You also can explore Civil War photographs and records, WPA property descriptions, oral histories, maps and more.

MINNESOTA

Minnesota Historical Society www.mnhs.org/genealogy

Start with the indexes to births (1900 to 1934, plus selected pre-1900 records) and records from death cards (1904 to 1907) and death certificates (1908 to 2001), plus the Minnesota state census records from 1865, 1875, 1885, 1895 and 1905. But don't overlook the building and house histories, guide to place names, maps and searchable photo collection.

Minnesota Discovery Center mndiscoverycenter.com/research-center

This new umbrella site incorporates the Iron Range Research Center, whose searchable genealogy database includes births, marriages, deaths, mine accidents and more. You also can search digital archives of manuscripts, photos and government documents.

MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Department of Archives and History mdah.state.ms.us

A rich collection of historical photos and more than 2,400 old maps add luster to the state archives' online catalog and wealth of finding aids.

MISSOURI

Missouri Digital Heritage Initiative sos.mo.gov/mdh

The Missouri State Archives has long excelled for its online offerings, including more than 185,000 searchable pre-1910 birth and death records plus death certificates (1910 to 1959, linked to a digitized image of the original), military records of 576,000 Missourians, 93,104 naturalization records (1816 to 1955) and 35,500 land patents (1831 to 1969). This umbrella site adds a wide range of special collections, photographs and old newspapers to what was already an outstanding Show Me State site.

Missouri History Museum mohistory.org/genealogy

Use the Genealogy and Local History Index to search the library and research center's holdings by personal name, business name or even street address. You can then request a photocopy of whatever record you find referenced in the index. Coverage is strongest for St. Louis.

MONTANA

Montana Historical Society Research Center mhs.mt.gov/research

Established in 1865, the Montana Historical Society is one of the oldest institutions of its kind west of the Mississippi River, but its website shows everything's up to date in the Big Sky State. You can explore the multimedia Montana Memory Project, contribute to the Montana History Wiki and search the research center's online catalog.

NEBRASKA

Nebraska State Historical Society nebraskahistory.org

Read up on Cornhusker history with the help of an online index to Nebraska History magazine and other publications dating to 1885, plus selected fully illustrated articles. Other databases cover Civil War veterans, select city directories, prison records, place names, WWI draft registrations and some cemeteries.

NEVADA

Nevada Census Database nvshpo.org

Now a link at the State Historic Preservation Office's site, this free database serves up 310,000 entries from all extant Nevada enumerations from 1860 through 1920.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire Division of Archives and Records Management www.sos.nh.gov/archives

Not your typical collection of research resources, the online offerings at this site include the complete New Hampshire state papers as downloadable PDFs plus several collections of land-survey records. You'll also find guides to the archives and to New Hampshire genealogy research.

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey State Library www.njstatelib.org/NJ_Information/Digital_Collections

Revolutionary War and Civil War records stand out here, along with a history of African-Americans in New Jersey and The Origin of New Jersey Place Names.

NEW MEXICO

New Mexico Genealogical Society www.nmqgs.org

Celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2010, the society excels in guiding researchers through the Land of Enchantment's genealogical maze. Site visitors will find a wealth of how-to articles, an index to and sample articles from the society's magazine, New Mexico Genealogist, and exhaustive coverage of church records in the state.

NEW YORK

New York State Archives www.archives.nysed.gov/a/research/res_topics_genealogy.shtml

Most notable for its database of more than 360,000 New York soldiers in the Civil War, this site also is packed with tips and links. Check out the probate records pathfinder for step-by-step assistance in finding where your Empire State ancestors' records are hiding.

New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center dmna.state.ny.us/historic/mil-hist.htm

This unusual site devoted to New York's military history recently unveiled 53,671 digitized pages of New York National Guard records, including 197 issues of the New York National Guardsman magazine.

NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina State Archives archives.ncdcr.gov

Click on Online Projects to explore a big collection of Tar Heel State maps, photos, the North Carolina Newspaper Digitization Project and especially North Carolina Family Records Online. The latter includes family Bibles and indexes of marriage and death announcements appearing in five North Carolina newspapers from 1799 to 1893.

NCGenWeb Project www.ncgenweb.us

Another standout from the USGenWeb Project, this North Carolina site offers a wealth of extras. The maps tracing the state's confusing county formations are a must-bookmark, and the Digital Bookshelf ncgenweb.us/nc/bookshelf is a nifty guide to digitized titles of interest to Tar Heel State researchers.

NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota State University Institute for Regional Studies library.ndsu.edu/archives/biography-genealogy

Search the statewide North Dakota Biography Index, 212,000 naturalization records, the 1885 Dakota Territory census, obituaries from the Fargo Forum newspaper and indexes to Cass County marriages, divorces and probate cases. "Fact pages" will help you start your North Dakota research.

North Dakota Department of Public Health Public Death Index secure.apps.state.nd.us/doh/certificates/deathCertSearch.htm

How does lightly populated North Dakota have two of the top state sites? We're guessing that the long winters provide plenty of time to transcribe data. Here you can search death certificates from 1881 on.

OHIO

Ohio Historical Society www.ohiohistory.org/resource/archlib

Search the catalog of 230,000 items in the society's library, or research your Ohio kin without leaving home using digital resources such as the index of death certificates (1913 to 1944), War of 1812 roster, and online index to admission records from the Boys Industrial School (1858 to 1944) and Girls Industrial School (1869 to 1943).

Ohio Memory www.ohiomemory.org

This digital history storehouse lets you explore 75,000 primary sources from 330 repositories, including grave registration cards, WWII oral histories, deeds and military records. You can search all collections or browse by subject, place or contributing institution.

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma Historical Society okhistory.org

Visit this site sooner rather than later (sorry) for its online Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia and extensive research guides. Search the 1890 territorial census, 1896 applications for enrollment, Dawes Final Rolls, obituaries and Smith's First Directory of Oklahoma Territory.

OREGON

Oregon State Archives arcweb.sos.state.or.us/banners/genealogy.htm

Search for surnames in the Oregon Historical Records Index, then see what other finds await using the Oregon Historical County Records Guide, with maps, histories and record inventories for all 36 counties, and the Provisional and Territorial Records Guide to the archives' own holdings.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania State Archives www.digitalarchives.state.pa.us/archive.asp

Perhaps ironically for the state Quakers founded, the highlights of the Archives Records Information Access System here are military records. You can research many Pennsylvania soldiers from the Revolutionary War to the Spanish-American War, plus WWI medal applications.

Historical Society of Pennsylvania www.hsp.org

Although not strictly genealogical, this site nonetheless has plenty to offer, including several exhibits covering a range of topics, from the immigrant experience to ethnic wedding traditions to leading abolitionists. A wealth of catalogs and finding aids will lead you to the right stuff in the society's non-digitized collections.

RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island Historical Society rihs.org

Search the catalog, or get up to speed on Rhode Island genealogy with the in-depth research guides found at rihs.org/refservices.htm. Also check out the link to the in-progress Rhode Island Historical Cemeteries website rihc.info, where you can search or browse cemetery records.

SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina Department of Archives and History archives.sc.gov/genealogy

It takes a little clicking to discover the true richness of this site. Don't miss the maps tracing the convoluted formation of the Palmetto State's counties or the guides to genealogy resources. Definitely look at the goodies under the On-Line Records Index button, which takes you to archivesindex.sc.gov and more than 300,000 items (many with images), including records of Confederate veterans (1909 to 1973), criminal court records, state land-grant plats, legislative papers, and will transcripts (1782 to 1855) and even 2,662 school insurance photos (1935 to 1952).

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota Department of Health apps.sd.gov/applications/ph14over100birthrec/index.asp

Nearly 200,000 South Dakota births are searchable here, including many delayed birth certificates issued for folks born before statewide registration began in 1905.

South Dakota State Historical Society history.sd.gov/archives/genealogists.aspx

Find your prairie ancestors with the help of the searchable index to naturalization records, the cemetery records search, databases of Civil War veterans in the 1885 census and guide to prominent South Dakotans (1897 to 1930). Other resources show what records are available for each county and what newspapers have been microfilmed.

TENNESSEE

Tennessee State Library and Archives www.tn.gov/tsla/collections.htm

Besides finding aids and research tips, this site contains databases such as Death Notices in Nashville Newspapers 1855-1907, indexes to death records (1908 to 1912 and 1914 to 1931), Confederate pension applications and guides to Tennessee place names and post offices.

Tennessee Virtual Archive teva.contentdm.oclc.org

This highly visual virtual vault is strongest in Civil War materials, including maps, photos and letters. Other collections showcase historical maps, Tennessee in WWI, early 1900s schoolhouses, Fisk University and old postcards.

TEXAS

Texas State Library and Archives Commission

tsl.state.tx.us/arc/genfirst.html

Helpful guides to Lone Star State records and resources here complement 54,634 Confederate pension applications, indexes to republic claims and Texas adjutant general service records (1836 to 1935) and Confederate indigent families lists.

Texas State Historical Association tshaonline.org

Search for all things Texas in The Handbook of Texas Online, or peruse 100 volumes (with indexes) of the Southwestern Historical Quarterly.

UTAH

Utah Death Certificate Index archives.utah.gov/research/indexes/20842.htm

Search death certificates from 1904 to 1958. Each links to an image of the original.

Cemetery and Burial Database history.utah.gov/research_and_collections/cemeteries

A perfect complement to the death certificate index is this searchable database of Utah burials. You can search for a person's name or for a cemetery.

Utah Digital Newspapers digitalnewspapers.org

Still another reason to wish you had Utah ancestors is this ambitious site serving up versions of more than 40 digitized newspapers ranging from the 1850s to the 1970s.

VERMONT

Vermont Historical Society vermonthistory.org

Find the resources you need to start your Vermont ancestor search here. You can view an index to Civil War manuscripts, read articles from Vermont History, peruse Sanborn fire insurance maps (membership required) and see where city directories are stashed in area libraries.

VIRGINIA

Virginia Memory www.virginiamemory.com/collections

This roundup of digital collections from the Library of Virginia ranges from Revolutionary War bounty land warrants to questionnaires completed by Virginia WWI veterans. Recent additions include “cohabitation registers” for married former slaves and old photos from Fairfax County.

Virginia Historical Society vahistorical.org

Digital collections that include maps, 19th-century photos and other artifacts supplement a wide range of finding aids.

WASHINGTON

Washington State Digital Archives digitalarchives.wa.gov

This great site keeps getting better, with dozens of records being added every month. More than 90 million records have been preserved here, with more than 28 million searchable online and many, including vital records, censuses, military records, land records and naturalization papers, linked to digitized originals.

Historic Newspapers in Washington www.sos.wa.gov/history/newspapers.aspx

Another ambitious digitization project, this site aims to put online historical newspapers from the state library’s collection of more than 40,000 microfilm reels. The ever-growing collection, concentrating on the 19th century, can be searched by personal names.

WEST VIRGINIA

West Virginia Archives and History www.wvculture.org/history/archivesindex.aspx

Key among the attractions at this site is the Vital Research Records Project, which is placing birth, death and marriage certificates online. You can search the records and view scanned images of the originals.

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin Historical Society www.wisconsinhistory.org/genealogy

This website would make our list for its Wisconsin Genealogy Index alone: You can search more than 150,000 Wisconsin obituaries and biographical sketches published before 1999, as well as 1 million births, 400,000 deaths and 1 million marriages registered before September 1907. But that's not all. You also can explore Badger State history in Civil War records, photos and eyewitness accounts of historic events.

WYOMING

Wyoming Newspaper Project wyonewspapers.org

Given the late start and privacy restrictions on Wyoming's vital records, newspapers may be your best bet for finding Equality State kin. This database contains all the newspapers printed in Wyoming between 1849 and 1922—more than 900,000 newspaper pages converted from microfilm to digital format. You can browse or search the collection by date, county, city or newspaper name. Once you've found an article of interest, you can search the text to locate a name or keyword quickly.

Tip: If you can't visit your ancestor's state archives in-person, find out whether you can borrow materials or order photocopies through interlibrary loan. Many archives offer research services for a fee, or you can hire a local researcher to do lookups for you.

What do States Hold?

While genealogical resources in state archives, libraries and historical societies vary from state to state, you can expect to find records such as these at the state level:

- vital records
- wills and probate records
- court records
- military records (perhaps a surprise, but keep in mind that state governments used to raise regiments)
- early land records
- legislative and other government records
- records of orphanages, asylums, prisons and other state institutions
- state censuses
- naturalization records

Nongovernmental resources, such as these, often wind up being collected at the state level, as well:

- old newspapers
- city directories
- biographies
- historical maps and photos
- oral histories