

Conducting Genealogical Research In the Maryland Department

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The Maryland Department collection contains a variety of resources that are useful in conducting genealogical research. Generally speaking, resources can be viewed as either statewide in scope or focused on specific counties (as well as Baltimore City).

Books

Statewide

This portion of the collection includes books that cover all of Maryland as indexes, bibliographies or directories. Examples include general indexes, Maryland Calendar of Wills, [Archives of Maryland](#) directories of church records, and rosters of those from Maryland who fought in wars from the Revolution through World War II. These sources tend to cover the earlier periods (seventeenth through nineteenth centuries) rather than recent times.

Family history is not collected, though a small number (approx. 200) have been donated to the department and added to the collection.

Most of these resources are non-circulating. Photocopying is permitted from all sources.

County

Books used for researching Maryland county genealogy are geographically uneven. The department endeavors to purchase indexes and useful materials from all counties, but there are a greater number available for some of the state's twenty-four jurisdictions. Researchers can find books on county history, city directories, cemetery and tombstone listings, land patents, wills, selective indexes to local newspapers and obituary indexes, and much more.

Special Indexes

Many of the indexes in the department are useful for genealogical research. Users may find the following helpful:

- Print indexes to the decennial censuses for Maryland from 1790 through 1870
- Census Descriptions of Geographic Subdivisions and Enumeration Districts, 1830-1930 (Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29) NARA Microfilm T778; T1224.
- Index to Maryland Historical Magazine
- Index (Soundex) to Passenger Arrivals at the Port of Baltimore, 1820-1952
- Index (Soundex) to Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Baltimore (City Passenger Lists), 1833-1866
- Index to Naturalization Petitions in U.S. Circuit and District Court of Maryland, 1797-1951 (actual copies of the petitions are available from 1906-1930 only)
- Internal Revenue Assessment Lists for Maryland, 1862-1866
- Compiled Service Records of Soldiers Who Served in the American Army During the Revolutionary War (War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Record Group 93). NARA Microfilm M881.
- Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783. (War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Record Group 93) NARA Microfilm M246.
- Maryland Militia War of 1812. Four volume set compiled by F. Edward Wright.
- Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers (Union and Confederate) Who Served in Organizations from the State of Maryland, 1861-1865
- Selected Records of the War Department Relating to Confederate Prisoners of War, 1861-1865, Point Lookout. (War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109). NARA microfilm M598.
- Applications Submitted by Persons from the South: Maryland, AL-WO, Two or More Name File, and Miscellaneous File (Case Files of Applications from Former Confederates for Presidential Pardons, 1865-1867, Roll 30) NARA Microfilm M1003.
- Maryland in the World War, 1917-1919: Military and Naval Service Records. 2 volumes
- Maryland Historical Society. War Records Division. Maryland in World War II: register of service personnel. 5 volumes
- Index to the Baltimore Sun 1891-1959; 1983-1989 and Evening Sun, 1910-1955
- Index to selected Baltimore newspapers, 1984-1989

Newspapers

The Maryland Department houses one of the largest publicly accessible collections of county newspapers in the state. Newspapers provide access to obituaries or death notices, marriage and birth announcements (though births are infrequently mentioned), social and political events, legal notices, ship arrivals and departures and disasters that identify individuals. Even advertisements can provide valuable information on businesses that were run by ancestors.

The department's collection policy endeavors to maintain many major papers from most counties or regions of the state. About 30 current subscriptions are maintained to Maryland newspapers, but the retrospective collection (most of which is kept in the Periodicals Department on microfilm) contains both the well-known and some of the more obscure titles too.

Biography, Query and Vertical Files

These files, though selective, contain hundreds of thousands of cards that will direct researchers to sources (all of which are available at the Pratt's Central Library location) in various formats. The Query File contains entries on places, events, institutions, businesses, etc. *and people*. The Biography File includes persons and families only. Card entries cover all periods in the state's history and new entries are continually added to the files from a variety of sources.

Many of the query and biography cards refer to the department's extensive collection of vertical files. Over 7000 subjects (many with content in multiple files) in the vertical file cabinets document Maryland and its inhabitants and form the foundation of non-book information in the collection. These files contain articles and ephemeral items (such as pamphlets, brochures, and more) related to the subject of the file.

It should be noted that you need not have been prominent to have been included in these files – they are selective but do include many names you would not normally expect to find in a file of this type.

Directories

The department maintains a sizeable collection of city directories, telephone books, and reverse lookup directories (AKA Criss Cross directories) from around the state, dating as far back as the late 18th century for some areas. Though an index to the collection is not yet available, you can call for availability.

Maps/Atlases

The Maryland Department maintains a collection of over 2500 maps and atlases, dating from 1630 to the present.

Historic maps provide valuable clues when tracking ancestors. Maps that identify ward numbers or election districts are often used in locating census enumerations after 1870. Maps can also show neighborhoods, businesses, and schools, as well as relative proximity from an address to a place of work or worship.

Atlases can take researchers a step farther. The department holds several published for Maryland counties in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Atlases provide more detailed information, including businesses or residences, as well as (in some cases) landowners and the boundaries of their property.

To find more detailed information about a residence or a house, you should also try the Sanborn Map Company fire insurance maps, which are available on microfilm in the department or available online to Pratt library card holders. These were produced and maintained from 1890 through the early 1980s for the entire state of Maryland.

Maps, or portions of maps, may frequently be copied or scanned and sent to other libraries.

Yearbook Collection

The department houses a collection of over 1500 yearbooks from around the state. The collection has been built entirely through donations of personal or family yearbooks. If you would like to donate a yearbook, please email or call the Maryland Department. You can access a list of available yearbooks on the Library's site, at www.prattlibrary.org/yearbooks.

Maryland Photograph Files

This collection is comprised of over 20,000 (mostly) black-and-white photographs and include pictures of places, streets, people, events, buildings, and more. Most of the images center on the 1930s, but there are many that date earlier and a small percentage from after World War II. The Pratt Library does not own the rights to all of the photographs. Formal reproduction (via digital scan) is a fee based service. Check with the librarian about obtaining rights and reproductions.

Web guides

Pratt Subject Guides (<http://www.prattlibrary.org/research/tools/>) have been created by subject specialists to direct users to informative web sites and bibliographies. These guides are kept current by SLRC departments and provide useful up-to-date information for users on a variety of topics. Extensive genealogical information will be found in the *Biography & Genealogy* and *Maryland* sections.

Online Databases at Enoch Pratt Free Library/ Maryland State Library Resource Center

The Library subscribes to many useful databases. Of particular use to genealogy are:

- **America's Obituaries and Death Notices**: From Newsbank, this database identifies death notices from around the country including about 25 newspapers in Maryland. Coverage begins about the year 2000. Available with a Pratt Library card.
- **Ancestry Library Edition**: available for use at any Pratt Library
- **Baltimore Afro-American Historical Newspaper**: Full text of the *Afro-American* from 1893-1988. Available with a Pratt Library card.
- **Baltimore Sun Historical Archive**: Full text coverage of *The Sun* from May 1837 to 1986. Available with a Pratt Library card.
- **Biography and Genealogy Master Index**: Available with a Pratt Library card.
- **HeritageQuest**: Available to anyone with a valid library card in the state of Maryland. Also accessible via Sailor, Maryland's Public Information Network (<http://www.sailor.lib.md.us/>)
- **Proquest Historical Newspapers Online**: Includes New York Times, Washington Post, Christian Science Monitor, Chicago Tribune and Wall Street Journal. Available with a Pratt Library card.
- **Digital Sanborn Maps, 1867-1970**: Includes maps for the entire state of Maryland. Available with a Pratt Library card.

Contacting the Department

Reference staff in the Maryland Department are familiar with the sources mentioned above and are eager to help the public or other librarians gain access to these materials.

If you are unable to come to the Pratt Library to conduct your research, inquiries can be made by phone, mail or email. Questions answered via correspondence may be limited by the number of sources that time allows us to check and copies that can be sent. Please see our genealogical research guidelines (<http://www.prattlibrary.org/genealogy/#guidelines>) for more information. Interlibrary loan requests are invited and books (or appropriate sections from books) that can be copied will be sent.

Copies of this guide can be e-mailed upon request.