



Genealogy/Family History Resources at the Pratt/ State Library Resource Center: An Overview

Departments

[African American Department](#) (1st floor, Annex)

What you will find in this department

Approximately 20 guides to doing genealogy research involving:

- persons of African American descent
- genealogies families have published
- histories of relevant events and historic African American neighborhoods throughout the world
- primary resources (e.g., slave narratives, emancipation records, membership lists, cemetery records)
- historical general interest sources (e.g., Flowers of the Forest Black Genealogical journal)

Staff does not conduct genealogy research on the customer’s behalf. However, we will assist customers with locating, choosing, and searching print resources, as well as navigating appropriate databases and web sites.

Web resources (found at www.prattlibrary.org/research/tools)

[African American Genealogy](#)- a web guide that includes many recommended resources available online.

How to contact the African American Department

Phone: 410-361-9287

Email: afm@prattlibrary.org

[Maryland Department](#) (2nd floor, Annex)

What you will find in this department

U.S. census records for Maryland, Baltimore City Directories, and other genealogical resources pertaining to the State of Maryland

See more detailed handout for more information about resources held in the Maryland Department.





Web resources (found at www.prattlibrary.org/research/tools)

[Genealogical Research in the Maryland Department](#) will help you get started on your own genealogical research. It includes information about genealogical resources in the Maryland Department Collection, useful websites, and how the Maryland Department can help you with your genealogical research.

How to contact the Maryland Department

Phone: 410-396-5468

Email: mdx@prattlibrary.org

[Periodicals Department](#) (1st floor, south side)

What you will find in this department

Specializes in looking up death notices and obituaries and maintains a useful collection of historic newspapers (both national and Maryland) available on microfilm or through databases.



Reference requests in the Periodicals Department are limited to death notices, obituaries, wedding announcements, and out-of-state directories. To search for information in the newspapers in our collection, we will need the exact month, day and year of death and/or burial, as well as the last known residence or the place of burial. Sometimes, this information can be found in the Social Security Death Index. We will check the appropriate newspapers five days around the date supplied.

Web resources (found at www.prattlibrary.org/locations/periodicals)

[Newspapers](#) - current and historical newspapers maintained by the Periodicals Department.

[Other Genealogical Resources in the Periodicals Department](#) - in addition to many Baltimore City and Maryland County newspapers, the department maintains out-of-state city directories and a genealogical microfiche collection.

How to contact the Periodicals Department

Phone: 410-396-5451

Email: per@prattlibrary.org



[Social Science and History Department](#) (1st floor, north side)

What you will find in this department

Basic guides to researching your family history, general genealogical directories, genealogical resources for other states, or old maps for locations other than Maryland

Although we do not perform individual genealogical research, staff in the Social Science and History Department will assist you with general guides for researching family history, as well as provide guidance in using appropriate electronic databases and web sites for research. Department staff members provide assistance in locating and using our various genealogical print resources, and can also help researchers in using the map collection.

How to contact the Social Science and History Department

Phone: 410-396-5321

Email: ssh@prattlibrary.org

Databases

Subscription databases are available (for free!) through the Library's website (www.prattlibrary.org) if you have a Pratt Library card.

Accessible outside of the library, using your Pratt library card:

[America's Obituaries and Death Notices](#) - collection of newspaper obituaries and death notices from around the United States. Each obituary or death notice is indexed by the name of the deceased person, to make searching easier and more precise. In addition, the text of each obituary or death notice is searchable, making it easy to find just what you're looking for using a place of residence, occupation, names of family members, or other personal information.

[Baltimore Afro-American](#) - The Baltimore Afro-American was one of the most widely circulated African American newspapers. The paper's contributors have included writer Langston Hughes, intellectual J. Saunders Redding, artist Romare Beardon, and sports editor Sam Lacy.

[Baltimore Sun Historical Archive](#) - contains issues of the Sun from 1836-1990. The database is easy to search and contains images of the paper as it appeared on the date of publication.

[Biography and Genealogy Master Index \(BGMI\)](#) - comprehensive index to more than 10 million biographical sketches in over 1000 current and retrospective biographical dictionaries, covering both contemporary and historical figures throughout the world. Each citation sites the name, birth, and death dates as well as a complete citation for all references.



Heritage Quest - includes over 25,000 family and local histories as well as the Federal U.S. Census from 1790 through 1930. Additionally, this database allows you to search Periodical Source Index (PERSI), which covers genealogy and history periodicals, the Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files, which identifies more than 80,000 American military, naval, and marine officers and enlisted men and The Freedmen's Bank Records, which documents more than 70,000 bank depositors and their dependants.

Historical Newspapers - offers the original news articles exactly as they appeared to the original readers decades ago. The articles are PDF images that can be downloaded, printed or emailed.

This database includes the following newspapers:

- Chicago Tribune - 1849 - forward
- Chicago Defender - 1905 - forward
- The Christian Science Monitor - 1908 - forward
- The New York Times - 1851 - forward
- The Wall Street Journal - 1889 - forward
- The Washington Post - 1877 - forward

These are available individually or in cross-searchable collections.

Sanborn Maps – Maryland - Sanborn Maps were originally created for assessing fire insurance liability in urbanized areas in the United States. The maps are highly detailed and are invaluable for documenting changes in the built environment of American cities over many decades. Today, they are a useful to historical researchers, city planners, preservationists, genealogists, sociologists and those researching urban geography. Our subscription includes the Maryland maps from 1890-1953.

Only accessible in Pratt Library locations:

Ancestry Library Edition - provides instant access to a wide range of unique resources for genealogical and historical research. With more than 1.5 billion names in over 4,000 databases, Ancestry Library Edition includes records from the United States Census; military records; court, land, and probate records; vital and church records; directories; passenger lists and more. These collections are continuously expanding, with new content added every business day.



Guidelines and Policies

There is no charge for research at this time. To mail photocopies, there is a \$2.00 minimum charge for 7 pages or less; every page beyond 7 pages will cost \$0.10 each (\$0.20 for microform prints). Maryland residents will be charged 6% sales tax. Prepayment is not necessary; an invoice is included with any mailing of copies. All checks or money orders should be made out to the Enoch Pratt Free Library.

Monthly genealogy reference requests are limited to 5 specific searches per month. You may request up to 5 per month from all of the categories mentioned in the department descriptions. This means that you can request one person be searched in 5 separate sources or up to 5 persons be searched in a single source. Any combination of the two is acceptable. The following is an example of what a monthly request might look like:

Name	Source	Date
Jane Doe	Obituary	12/18/1877 (Baltimore City)
Jane Doe	City Directory	1884 (Baltimore City)
Jane Doe	Census	1870
Fred Doe	Passenger Arrival	December 1912 (Ireland/Irish)
Bill Doe	Naturalization Index	1890-1900

Please note: If you submit more than 5 items, only the first 5 items on the list will be researched. All other requests beyond the 5 items can be resubmitted the following month.

Please include your mailing address with any communication, as copies may be necessary to answer your question. If you would like your information e-mailed, please include your e-mail address. E-mailed information is generally sent in PDF format.

****Please note: this handout can be viewed online at www.prattlibrary.org/genealogy*