

Conducting Genealogical Research In the Maryland Department



The Maryland Department collection contains a variety of resources that are useful in conducting genealogical research. For the most part, these aids can be viewed in two ways; those that are statewide in scope and those that focus on specific counties. Non-book materials supplement the cataloged collections and provide a valuable addition for the beginning or experienced genealogist.

Books

Statewide

This portion of the collection includes books that cover all of Maryland as indexes, bibliographies or directories. Among the sources statewide in scope the user will find 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 as a group tend to cover the earlier periods (seventeenth through nineteenth centuries) rather than recent times. Family history is not collected, though through gifts over the years there are approximately 200 family histories that are in the catalog and others are accepted as they are received.

Most of these works are non-circulating, though a small number of circulating copies of selected works have been acquired. Photocopying is permitted from all sources.

County

The 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 clearly a greater number available for some of the state's twenty-four jurisdictions. While the collection centers on county history, which can be valuable in distinguishing surnames and locations, there are many other works that identify ancestry from a known county. These include, but are not limited to, city directories, cemetery and tombstone listings, land patents, wills, selective indexes to local newspapers and obituary indexes. The Maryland Department maintains a significant collection of early telephone books from all across the state- both counties and cities are represented. There are also a growing number of school yearbooks from around the state, particularly from the Baltimore area. County specific sources should be used in conjunction with statewide sources, but remember that there will be more or less of substance depending on the county in need.

Special Indexes

Many of the indexes in the department relate to genealogical work, and, there are others that supplement this type of work very well. 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, 1906 –
- 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
- Telephone Directories – database of hard copy directories, including dates, held in the Maryland collection.
- Ephemera Collection – database which provides access to a collection of miscellany which may include, but is not limited to, posters, letters, photographs, menus, programs and other interesting items.

Newspapers

The Maryland Department houses one of the largest publicly accessible collections of county newspapers in the state. Newspapers are a rich source of information when conducting family research. You can search for obituaries or death notices, marriages and births (though births are infrequently mentioned). It may also be useful to scan newspapers to locate 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 collection policy of the department endeavors to maintain many major papers from most counties or regions of the state. About thirty current subscriptions are maintained to Maryland newspapers (list available on Maryland Department website), but the retrospective collection contains both the well known and some of the more obscure titles too.

Biography, Query and Vertical Files

Those who use the collection in person or make requests via correspondence should be sure the department's query and biography files are checked. These files, though selective, contain hundreds of thousands of cards that will direct the searcher to sources in various formats. Many of these sources are outside the Maryland Department so that the entries actually point to resources in other Pratt departments thereby giving the user additional citations without actually having to go to the other areas of the Library. 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 will 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. The department also accepts articles and ephemeral items related to families or individuals for the vertical file collection.

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.

Maps/Atlases

Maps can provide valuable clues when tracking ancestors. In Baltimore, Nineteenth century street maps are frequently used to identify ward numbers that are necessary in locating census enumerations after 1870. Similarly, county maps will depict election districts for the same purpose. Maps can assist in showing neighborhoods, businesses and relative proximity from an address to a place of work or worship.

Atlases may take the searcher a step farther. There were a number of these published for many Maryland counties in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition to showing election districts, atlases provide more detailed information, including businesses or residences. Many historical atlases clearly identify 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 on microfilm in the department or available online to Pratt library card holders and cover map volumes produced from 1890 through the early 1980s for the entire state of Maryland.

The Maryland Department maintains these atlases (many of which are on microfilm so that they may be copied) along with a Maryland map collection that includes over 2500 maps dating from 1630 to the present. Maps, or portions of maps, may frequently be copied or scanned and sent to other libraries.

Maryland Photograph Files

When attempting to find pictures of a place or street, perhaps a person who was notable in some way (business owner, elected official, socialite, etc.) the Maryland Department photograph files should be considered. Over 20,000 black-and-white photographs comprise this collection. Most of the images center on the 1930s, but there are many that date back to the early years of the century and a small percentage from after World War II. The Pratt Library does not own the rights to all of the photographs; local institutions or photographers have given many. Formal reproduction (via digital scan) is a fee based service that the Library offers. 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* guides.

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 their 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.