



Guide to Genealogical Research

The most popular resources of the Maryland Historical Society are described briefly below. In addition to the information provided below, Henry C. Peden, Jr.'s, *A Guide to Genealogical Research in Maryland* (F187.P34 in the Rhodes Reading Room) is helpful in explaining the different types of sources available to genealogical researchers and where in Maryland one might find them.

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If You Don't Know Where to Start . . .

We suggest genealogical researchers begin by perusing the Library's printed family histories and the research notes submitted by other researchers to the Library's Filing Case A and Genealogical Manuscript Collections, indexed by the Genealogical Index. Sometimes patrons may find that a distant relative has already compiled significant information about their family, thus simplifying future research. Serious researchers should take care to double-check information with other sources if possible, but published family histories can be valuable genealogical aids. The Library's card file indices are a good place to turn to next, especially if the researchers know little beyond an individual's name, because these cards are organized alphabetically rather than by date or county. Once the researchers have discovered some basic information about their ancestors, they can seek documentation through church, county, or other records.

- **Published Family Histories:** Consult the Library's on-line catalogue to identify those histories containing information about particular families. You can also browse through section CS71 (located in the southwest corner of the Rhodes Reading Room and along the hallway leading to the Microfilm Reading Room) to find your family name, but be aware that more information may be contained within a history of another related family.

- The **Genealogical Index** is a card file index to several Library collections, including Filing Case A, the Genealogical Manuscript Collection, some published family histories, city and county histories, and several prominent genealogical journals. The index covers both the major and allied family names; that is physically a folder will be filed under the main name, for example, Abell, but the index will include other family names mentioned in the item, such as Slye or Jarboe. Located in the Lower Genealogy Room (F on the map).
- **Filing Case A**—indexed in the Genealogical Index--includes small groups of unpublished genealogical notes arranged alphabetically by subject and family name. Stored in gray boxes in the Lower Genealogy Room (F on the map). Patrons who wish to examine a particular file are requested to bring the entire box to the Rhodes Reading Room.
- The **Genealogical Manuscript Collection**—indexed in the Genealogical Index--includes letters, notes, documents, genealogical charts, etc. for a select group of families. Obtain call number from index (e.g., G.5001) and request the collection at the reference desk in the Rhodes Reading Room.

Vital and Church Records – births, baptisms, marriages, and deaths

- The **Dielman-Hayward Card File** contains biographical material – births, deaths, marriages – usually culled from Maryland newspapers, beginning in the colonial period and extending through approximately 1990. These cards sometimes contains references to larger items (e.g., newspaper clippings, photographs) stored in vertical files. The Dielman-Hayward card file includes over 400,000 names organized alphabetically. It does contain material for all over the state but tends to be stronger for Baltimore; it is **not comprehensive**. Be sure to check multiple spellings when searching for your ancestor(s). The main card file is located in the Lower Genealogy Room (F on the map), and vertical files can be found in the Upper Genealogy Room (G on the map).
- Somerset County has the earliest civil records of births and deaths for any Maryland county; the Somerset records begin in 1649. These records have been published in *Old Somerset on the Eastern Shore of Maryland* by Clayton Torrence (MF187.S6T68 1992). Early court records also exist for Talbot and Charles counties. The majority of Maryland counties kept some record of births and/or deaths, but these records were by no means complete. When using these records, it is important to remember that many births and deaths went unrecorded because of the considerable travel and expense involved in recording such events. Many of those records that do exist have been indexed and published. Those vital record publications available at the Maryland Historical Society are organized by county and shelved in section MF187 of the Rhodes Reading Room. Books on specific counties are arranged alphabetically by county, beginning with Allegany County in the northeast corner of the Rhodes Reading Room and continuing through Worcester County in the southeast corner. Patrons may browse the relevant shelves or utilize the Library's on-line catalog to locate specific call numbers.
- Church records supplement state and county government vital records. MdHS has microfilm and/or transcripts of the registers of many churches. These registers typically include records of births, baptisms, marriages, and deaths. Many parishes have published indexes, while others are indexed on microfilm. You can determine the availability and location of church records from our church records binders, organized both alphabetically and by denomination (located in

Reference North, E on the map). See also *Directory of Maryland Church Records* by Edna Kanely (Ref. MF189.A1K16) for the records of churches existing in 1987. For churches which no longer existed in 1987, you also can check the first two drawers of the Norris-Harris Church Register Index (see the next entry below) for their records' location. If you know the officiant of a marriage but not the church or religion, the *Directory of Ministers and the Maryland Churches They Served, 1634-1990* (MF180.K16D) can be most helpful in locating additional information.

- The **Norris Harris Church Register Index** contains genealogical information – births, baptisms, marriages, and deaths – from the Library's collection of primarily Anglican/Episcopalian church registers from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Cards are arranged alphabetically. Please note that this index is incomplete but is still often useful in locating vital records. Located in the Lower Genealogy Room (F on the map). Additional guides to church records are located in Reference North (E on the map) and include locations of Maryland church records for all periods and denominations.
- The Rev. Lewis H. Richards Register (MS 690) includes 1,671 marriages performed by the Rev. Lewis Richards, 1784-1820, and another 238 by the Rev. Stephen Hill, 1835-1850. They were pastors of First Baptist Church in Baltimore. A transcription is available in the McIlvain Special Collections Reading Room (L on the map) or online at <http://www.mdhs.org/library/mss/ms000690.html>.
- For deaths in Maryland counties, 1898-1951, and in Baltimore City, 1875-1972, you can use the public computers across from the reception desk to check the state government's online index to death certificates at http://mdvitalrec.net/cfm/dsp_search.cfm . This will not give you the actual death certificate, but it will tell you name and usually age and date of death; it helps to have some idea of approximately which year before you search.
- For deaths since the advent of the Social Security system in the 1930s, you might use the public computers across from the reception desk to check the Social Security Death Index, available from RootsWeb at <http://ssdi.genealogy.rootsweb.com/> .
- Published cemetery records and tombstone inscriptions can provide information about birth, death, marital status, and family relations. These usually are organized by county in section MF187 in the Rhodes Reading Room. See also boxes 27-32 of Filing Case A in the Lower Genealogy Room (F on the map) for photocopies or transcripts of cemetery records, organized by county. The Library also has microfilm of some cemetery records; these can be found by doing a keyword search in the online catalogue for cemetery microfilm.
- The Library owns the records of several funeral homes. The Tickner Collection (MS 2702) consists of 50 volumes that record information on those buried by W. J. Tickner & Sons, 1878-1949, Henry W. Mears & Sons, 1888-1943, and outside funeral homes with whom Tickner cooperated, 1923-56. Care should be taken to note that the first volume from both the Tickner and the Mears records is missing from this collection. Information gathered on each customer includes: age, birthplace, cause and place of death, name and birthplace of the deceased's parents, eye and hair color, height, weight, as well as complete accounting records for the funeral. Each volume is alphabetically indexed by the last name of the deceased. The collection has a card index available in the card catalog in the Microfilm Reading Room (O on the map).

Items from the collection should be requested in the McIlvain Special Collections Reading Room (L on the map).

- Several researchers have compiled indexed lists of marriages and /or deaths based on church records, licenses, and notices in newspapers. Marriage notices sometimes indicate parents of the betrothed. Indices exist for Maryland marriages from 1634 through 1875 (see MF180.M31M213 for example). Obituaries from newspapers often provide general information about an individual, including age, date and sometimes cause or manner of death, occupation, residence, family relations, and church membership. Indices of Maryland deaths are available for 1727 through 1915. Keep in mind that these indices, while useful, are not complete. The Maryland mortality schedules provide an individual's name, age, whether the head of household is married or widowed, birthplace, the month died, occupation, cause of death, and the deceased's color. These cover 1850 (mid-1849 to mid-1850), 1860 (mid-1859 to mid-1860), 1870 (mid-1869 to mid-1870), and 1880 (mid-1879 to mid-1880). The Maryland schedules for 1850 and 1860, as well as other schedules for some counties, have been published (MF180.U58 1850) and others are available on microfilm. Check the online catalogue for availability.

Probate Records

- The *Maryland Calendar of Wills* (MF180.C85), which covers 1635-1777, provides an approximate or specific date of death of an individual and occasionally includes references as to the place of origin and religious creed of the testator and his or her relations. Will abstracts include the date the will was created as well as when it was probated, and often list the deceased's spouse and/or children. Occasionally the record includes information about occupation or residence (e.g., lives in Baltimore town), and sometimes abstracts list tracts of land or specific possessions. Published abstracts of wills exist for some counties and other states as well; check the online catalogue.
- Administration Accounts and Inventories
 - Published abstracts of inventories include lists of the deceased's possessions. Abstracts of inventories are available for the periods from 1674-1777 (see MF180.S628A).
 - Published abstracts of accounts list those individuals to whom money is owed or due from, as well as total debts owed or due. Distribution accounts list those who received a share of the estate, and thus are often helpful in identifying children. Account abstracts are available for the years 1718-1764 and 1771-1777 (see MF180.S628B).

Land, Deed, and Tax Records

- Land patent maps include an index of landowners. Land records sometimes show division of property among heirs and thus can be helpful in identifying family relations. The Library owns some original plats, which are indexed by cards found in the card catalogue in the Microfilm Reading Room (O on the map). Request the plats in the McIlvain Special Collections Reading Room (L on the map).
- Abstracted deed records for Baltimore County include the place of residence of grantor(s) and grantee(s) as well their names. Low sale prices for large tracts of land sometimes indicate a relation between the two parties. Such records also exist for Anne Arundel, Dorchester,

Frederick, Prince George's, Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties and cover varying years. They can be found by county in section MF187 of the Rhodes Reading Room.

- Rent rolls: quitrents, semi-annual payments to the Lord Proprietor of Maryland, were required for all property owned in Maryland throughout the colonial period. Because these rents brought in a fair profit for the Proprietors, they were fairly diligent about collection and recording payment in rent rolls or debt books. The Maryland Historical Society's collection includes 28 volumes of rent rolls and 5 debt books in the Calvert Papers, which can be found on microfilm reels 7-13 of MS 174 in Microfilm Cabinet 8 in the Microfilm Reading Room (O on the map). A more complete set of rent rolls is available at the Maryland State Archives. These records can aid genealogists in identifying the approximate dates of an ancestor's arrival in Maryland as determined by land ownership. Often names of heirs (and their relation) may be shown as later possessors of a tract of land. Place names often originated in the Old World and can sometimes provide clues as to a settler's place of origin.
- Tax lists identify the owner of the property, the name of the tract and often the acreage, and the number of white inhabitants. Sometimes these list single men living in a district. The tax list of 1783 is the most complete of Maryland's tax records and is available on microfilm in Microfilm Cabinet 7, third drawer from the bottom, in the Microfilm Reading Room (O on the map). Those for Baltimore and Harford counties have been published. The Federal Assessment of 1798 is also a good source and is available on microfilm in Microfilm Cabinet 7, third drawer from the bottom. Microfilm copies of IRS tax records from 1862-1866 for southern Maryland, the Washington suburbs, Howard County, and Baltimore are available in the fifth drawer of Microfilm Cabinet 7.

Census Records

(released to the public after 72 years; 1930 is the most current)

- The first censuses taken in Maryland which provide useful information for genealogists are the statewide censuses of 1776 and 1778. These include names of heads of household and those eligible for military service. Federal censuses for Maryland from 1790 through 1930 (excluding 1890 which was destroyed by fire) are available on microfilm (Micro 462-1195) and through HeritageQuest, a subscription database available on the public computers opposite the reception desk. For 1890, there does exist a special census of veterans and widows. Slave schedules (1850 and 1860) and mortality schedules (1850-1880) are also available, but please be aware the slave schedules only occasionally give names for the enslaved. The 1880 federal census is available from Family Search on the public computers opposite the reception desk and can be found at http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search/frameset_search.asp.
- Published indices exist for the federal censuses from 1790 through 1860 (and 1870 for Baltimore City and County), although it is important to note that published indices have a high rate of error. These can be found in Reference Room South (C on the map) at call number MF180 for Maryland and call number F for selected states. For most of the remaining censuses, indices are available on microfilm. The 1880 and 1900 censuses utilize the Soundex method of indexing. Instructions on using Soundex indices are available on top of the microfilm cabinets.

- The 1776 Maryland Census (MF180.C293 1776) includes head of household and household members broken down by sex, race, and child/adult; also published in *Maryland Records: Colonial, Revolutionary, County and Church* by Gaius M. Brumbaugh (MF180.B89 1967)
- Not until 1880 did census takers record the relation between household members and the head of household. Census records from 1850-1870 provide names and ages of those living in the household, but other sources are necessary to verify whether a woman is indeed the household head's wife or simply an unwed sister living with him and to determine the relationships between children and adults in the household. Researchers must remember that censuses are incomplete and spelling is often very irregular.

City and Organizational Directories

- Baltimore City directories provide street addresses and occupations for residents of Baltimore for the years 1796–1964. In some years, the spouse's name is given in parentheses. These directories can often help determine whether certain individuals lived in the same household (e.g., whether a son still lived at home with his father). Baltimore City Directories are available on microfiche for the years 1796-1860 (some missing; also includes part of 1752) and on microfilm for the years 1861-1935 (Micro 1196-1251). Bound versions of some directories for 1936 to 1964 are available in the bookcase at the rear of the Rhodes Reading Room.
- *Social Registers*, or *Blue Books*, are available for Baltimore from 1889 through the present. Check on-line catalog for specific titles and see the reference librarian for assistance.
- Medical directories often list education and sometimes other information about doctors. See the first bookcase by the public computers across from the reception desk for the American Medical Association's *American Medical Directory* from the first edition (1906) through the 27th edition (1979).
- For the later 20th century, the Library has some *Stewart's Criss-Cross Directories* for Baltimore City and County. These are available in Reference Room North (E on the map).

Immigration Records

- For finding immigrants arriving before 1820 in the United States, the best source typically is *Passenger and Immigration Lists Index: A Guide to Published Arrival Records of about 500,000 Passengers who came to the United States and Canada in the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries* (3 volumes plus supplements), edited by P. William Filby with Mary K Meyer (Ref. CS68.P36P). These volumes include the ages and relationships of passengers if available, and entries are cross-referenced with those accompanying the passenger. These records are not completely systematic. If you find your ancestor in the index, you can then try to track down the published or original record either at the Maryland Historical Society or some other institution.
- From 1820 to 1952, the federal government required the captains of ships entering U.S. ports directly from foreign ports to provide lists of passengers on board. The lists typically include passengers' names, ages, and countries of origin (sometimes more specific place names). Passengers travelling together—whether in families or other groups—usually are grouped

together on the passenger lists. Both the Soundex indices and the actual ship passenger lists (Micro 1-50 and 244-393) for the Port of Baltimore are available on microfilm. The indices are divided into two time periods: 1820-1897 (Micro 73-243) and 1898-1952 (Micro 394-436), and directions for using the Soundex system are available on top of the microfilm cabinets. During 1833-1866, captains of ships also had to submit lists of passengers to the Mayor of Baltimore. An index to the Mayor's lists for 1833-1866 is available on microfilm (Micro 51-72); the lists themselves are available on microfilm MS 1382 in Microfilm Cabinet 8 in the Microfilm Reading Room (O on the map). If you know the passenger's arrival date, you can skip the indices and proceed directly to the actual passenger list.

- If you are interested in passengers arriving at other ports, the National Archives has microfilm available. You also may use the public computers opposite the reception desk to access Ellis Island's website at <http://www.ellisland.org>, which has a database of passengers arriving in New York from 1892 to 1924 that is linked to images of the appropriate passenger lists.
- Another source to consider is the published, usually chronological, lists of immigrants to America from specific countries, which have been compiled from a variety of sources. *Germans to America* (Ref E184.G3) is the largest set, covering all U.S. ports to 1890, then just New York after 1890; it is available in the Reference Room South (C on the map). *Italians to America* (E184.I8I844) and various books by Peter Coldham on English-speaking immigrants, such as *The Complete Book of Emigrants in Bondage, 1614-1775* (CS61.C688CO), are available by request at the reference desk in the Rhodes Reading Room; check the online catalogue.
- An index to Federal Naturalization Records (1797-1906) can be accessed via microfilm (Micro 437-461); however, the full records are not available at MdHS but are available at the National Archives.

Military Records

- The Library's collection includes a variety of published military records, such as muster rolls and pension applications, for American wars. Many of the Library's published records are shelved in section MF185 in the Rhodes Reading room, and patrons can search for specific titles using our on-line catalogue. Volume 18 of the published *Archives of Maryland* series (MF176.A67) has Revolutionary War muster rolls. For more detailed information about using Revolutionary or Civil War records at the Maryland Historical Society, please consult the appropriate guide.
- The Library owns a collection of military-related records of interest to genealogists. The Maryland Servicemen Clipping File (MS 2413) consists of news releases and glossy photographs of Marylanders in the US armed forces (1950-1970). Vietnam servicemen are well represented. The material was sent to the Baltimore *News American* by the four military services, the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. The military services prepared news releases on individual servicemen's training, transfer, and promotion and sent these to the servicemen's hometown newspaper for distribution. The *News American* kept the news releases and photographs together and filed them by the serviceman's name. Often included with the news release is the newspaper clipping if the *News American* published it. The type of information given in the news release was the serviceman's name, parents' names, address, schools attended, military training received, promotions, and transfers. There are approximately

10, 250 of these files and the name index has been integrated into the Dielman-Hayward File in the Library.

Biographical and Local History Sources

- Published town, city, county, or state histories often have biographical information and can provide other important clues for genealogists. To find them, search the on-line catalogue using the county, city, or town as a keyword, or browse section MF187 in Rhodes Reading Room for published works on specific counties.
- Newspapers may also be a good source of information. There are some indexes to genealogical information in specific newspapers (e.g., *Index to Marriages and Deaths in the (Baltimore) Sun, 1837-1850*) which can be found in section MF187. See the printed guide, available in the rack near the reception desk, or on the online catalogue for a list of our newspapers on microfilm. If you are looking for information on a specific place, organization, or institution, you also might look at our **Subject File**, which has clippings from newspapers and magazines. It can be found in the filing cabinets in the Subject File Room (H on the map).
- The Library subscribes to *Heritage Quest Online*, accessible through the public computers across from the reception desk at <http://www.heritagequestonline.com>. The databases include: census records, the Periodical Source Index (PERSI), and more than 25,000 local and family history books.
- Published miscellaneous genealogical records or research (e.g., *Maryland Genealogies*, Vol. 1-13, compiled by Annie Walker Burns, contain information on early Maryland emigrants as taken from land records identifying the date individuals were transported to Maryland and noting those that were transported with them; MF180.M318) are another source.
- To join the Daughters of the American Revolution or the Sons of the American Revolution, applicants have to prove their descent from a participant in the Revolution. These lineage files can provide a wealth of genealogical information. The DAR publishes the lineages of its members in the *NSDAR Lineage Books*, which can be found in the cabinets to the right of the reception desk. Applications to join the Maryland chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution are available on microfilm for 1889-1984.
- The *American Genealogical and Biographical Index* indexes printed genealogical records and family histories, while the *Biography and Genealogy Master Index* indexes collective biography sources, such as *Who's Who in America* and *Notable American Women*. They can be found in the cabinets to the right of the reception desk. The Library has some of the volumes cited; check the online catalogue for availability.
- The **Wilkins File** is a card index of Marylanders mentioned in several older genealogical collections or histories published with incomplete or non-existent indices (e.g., J.T. Scharf's *History of Western Maryland*, *History of Delaware*, *History of Baltimore City and County*, and *History of Maryland*; G. W. Howard's *Monumental City*; T.J.C. William's *History of Frederick County*; H.D. Richardson's *Sidelights on Maryland History*; G. Brumbaugh's *Maryland Records: Colonial, Revolutionary, County and Church*; M. Ljungstedt's *County Court*

Notebook). Cards are arranged alphabetically by surname and are located in the Upper Genealogy Room (G on the map).

- The **Maryland Historical Magazine Index** tracks names and subjects as they appear in the *Maryland Historical Magazine* from 1906-. The index is divided into two parts: one covers Volumes 1-50 and the other begins with volume 51. The index is in the Upper Genealogical Room (G on the map). Bound volumes of the magazine are on the shelves in the same room. For volumes 1-25, please use microfilm copies (Micro 3031-3035).
- If you are looking for information on Washington-area residents or places, you might use the public computers to search the *Washington Post's* archives online at <http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/washingtonpost/search.html?nav=left> , which include *Post* articles dating back to 1877. You can search for free, but the *Post* does charge for looking at complete articles.

Genealogical Journals – indexed in PERSI

- Current issues of these publications are displayed in the Current Periodicals Reading Room. Consult the on-line catalog for past issues of specific titles.
- Most of our genealogical journals are indexed in PERSI (the Periodical Source Index) available through HeritageQuest on the public computers across from the reception desk.

Maps and Atlases

- There are many atlases available through the Rhodes Reading Room; you can search for them using atlas as a keyword in the online catalogue. The first really good atlases date to the 1870s.
- The Library has Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Maryland, 1883-1970, on microfilm (Micro 1252-1265).
- Our collection of individual maps are available primarily through the McIlvain Special Collections Reading Room (L on the map). There is a list of individual maps available at <http://www.mdhs.org/explore/library/FindMaps.html>.