 Pennsylvania
Department of Education


Digging Up Your Ancestors at the State Library of Pennsylvania

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State Library of Pennsylvania

History of the Forum Building
<https://pa.gov/libguides.com/c.php?g=1266753>



Education Building, Harrisburg, PA ca. 1931





Photo of Main Library atrium, Education Building, Harrisburg, PA ca. 1931

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Genealogy Library

The Genealogy collection at the State Library of Pennsylvania is a rich store of materials for researchers in family and local history. Local and county histories, city directories, naturalization records, and family histories provide a variety of primary and secondary source materials. Combined with the State Library of Pennsylvania's vast digital collection of Pennsylvania newspapers, the Genealogy collection has resources for genealogists with Pennsylvania ancestors.

[Browse the collection by State](#) | [Browse the collection by County](#)



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State Library vs. State Archives


PA State Library

- www.pa.gov/agencies/state/library.html
- Books
- Compilations of records
- Indexes
- Secondary Sources

PA State Archives

- www.pa.gov/agencies/history/pa-state-archives.html
- Records
- Preservation
- Primary Sources






State Library vs. Historical Societies

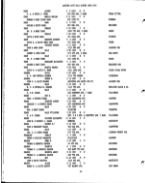

- Broad
- Entire State of Pennsylvania
- Some out-of-state records


- Narrow Geographic Area
- Local resources
- List of County Historical Societies
 - <https://pa.gov/libguides.com/pagenealogy>



Vital Records

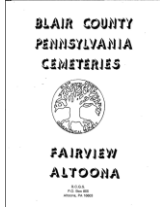
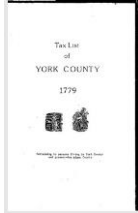
- Birth, Marriage and Death certificates
 - Birth Certificates
 - Ancestry PA 1906-1915
 - PA Birth Indices (PHMC) -1906-1919
 - Name, mother's name, date of birth, place of birth, file number
 - Death Certificates
 - Ancestry Pennsylvania - 1906-1971
 - PA Death Indices (PHMC) -1906-1974
 - Name, date of death, place of death, file number
- Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission
- Recent Birth and Death Records
 - PA Dept. Of Health - Division of Vital Records



County Records Collection

- Varies by county
- Birth registrations
- Cemetery records
- Marriage indexes
- Obituary indexes
- Tax lists
- Pension lists
- Funeral Home Records



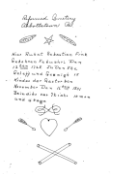
Marriage Records

- Not required before September 30, 1885
- Some counties recorded marriages earlier
- Newspaper announcements
- Church Registers
- Family Bibles
- After September 30, 1885
- Records kept by the county where the marriage took place
- List of PA County Courthouses at PA Unified Judicial System at <http://www.pacourts.us/courts/courts-of-common-pleas/individual-county-courts>

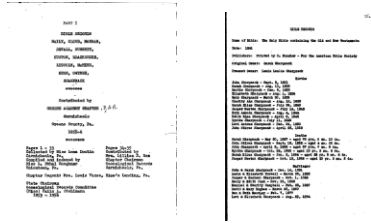


Cemetery Inscriptions

137
 Revised Cemetery
 Abstracts of
 the cemetery of
 FAIRVIEW
 in the county of
 Blair, Pa.
 from 1840 to 1880
 by
 R. S. Hoff

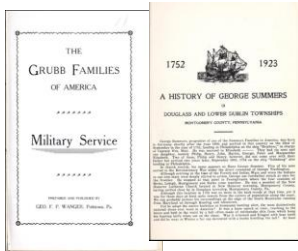


Bible Records



Family Histories

- Secondary source of information
- Facts should always be verified
- Good starting point for genealogical research



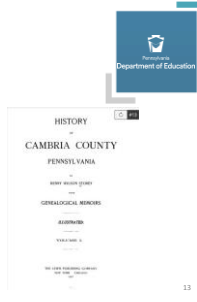
Pennsylvania County Histories

- Biographies of prominent citizens
- Lists of local churches
- Lists of Revolutionary War or Civil War veterans
- Background information about where your ancestor lived
- State Library Catalog
 - Books
 - Microfiche
 - Digital
 - www.pa.gov/agencies/state/library.html
- PA Photos and Documents Collection
 - www.pa.gov
- State Library Digital Collections
 - <https://digitalcollections.state.library.pa.gov/>



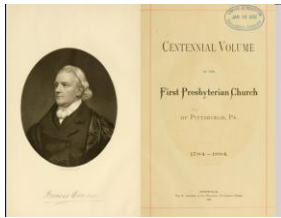
Local Histories

- Church membership lists
- Military rosters
- Early settlers
- Early Businesses
- Early Newspapers



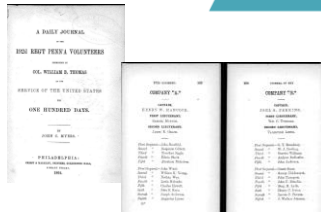
Church Histories

- Records of Baptisms and Funerals
- Histories of Congregations
- Lists of members



Military Records

- Regimental Histories
 - Digital and Print
- Pensions
- Pennsylvania's Published Archives
 - Militia lists
 - Ship Passenger Lists
 - Tax Lists
 - Microfilm and Fd d 3
- US Serial Set
 - <http://www.library.congress.gov/psa/mem.html>
 - www.usss.hq.mil/
 - www.govinfo.gov/
 - www.pa.gov/agencies/ehs/libraries.html



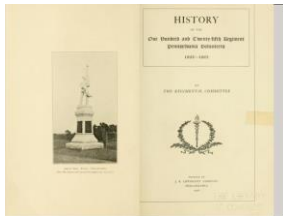
Daily Journal of the 162d Regt., Pennsylvania Volunteers, commanded by Col. William B. Thomas, in the service of the United States for one hundred days / by John C Myers

Pennsylvania Published Archives

- State Library
 - Microfilm
 - Fold 3 – via PA State Archives
- 3rd Series and 5th Series
- Muster Rolls and Pension lists
- Early Marriage Records
- Claims against the Government
- Written accounts of settlers
- Oaths of Allegiance
- Passenger Lists



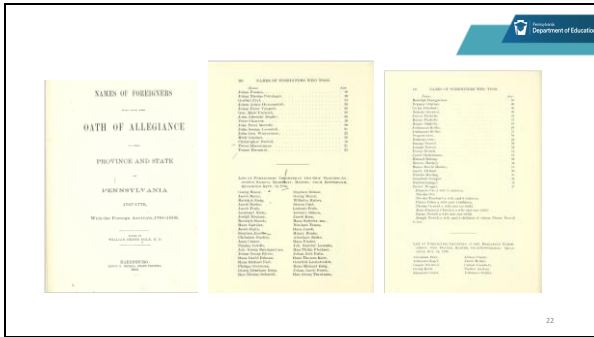
Regimental Histories



Regional Federal Depository Library

- U.S. Serial Set
- Available in microform and online
- Contains the reports, documents and journals of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives
 - Claims against the Government
 - Pension files
 - DAR reports





Pennsylvania City Directories

- Available on microfilm
- Name, address and occupation
- Source of local history information

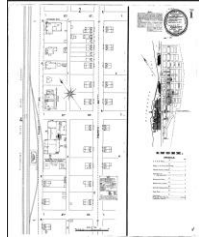
Pennsylvania Newspapers

- Obituaries
- Marriages
- Births
- Employment
- Social Engagements
- Property sales
- Estate information

- All 67 counties
- Oldest on microfilm - 1729
- Oldest print newspaper - 1729

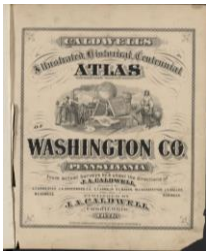
Maps and Atlases

- State Library
 - Sanborn Fire Maps
 - Historical Maps
 - Census Enumeration Maps



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Maps and Atlases



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PA Photos and Documents Collection

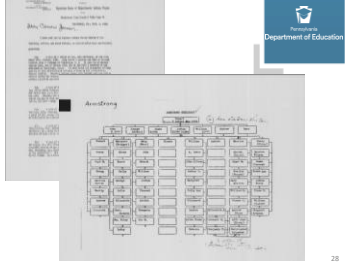
- www.powerlibrary.org
- Pennsylvania Libraries
- Local resources
- Newspapers
- Maps and Atlases



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Surname Files

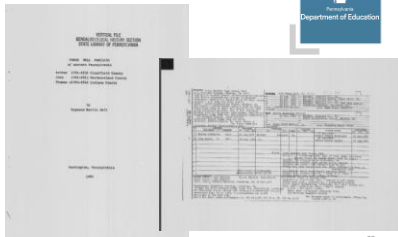
- Genealogical research performed by former State Library staff and researchers
- Contains genealogies and family histories
- PA Photos and Documents – State Library Genealogy Collection
 - Links to each surname included in the Digital Genealogy Resources Libguide
- Microfilm



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Family Histories and Genealogies

- State Library Catalog
- PA Photos and Documents
 - www.paweb.library.org
- Microfilm



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MyHeritage

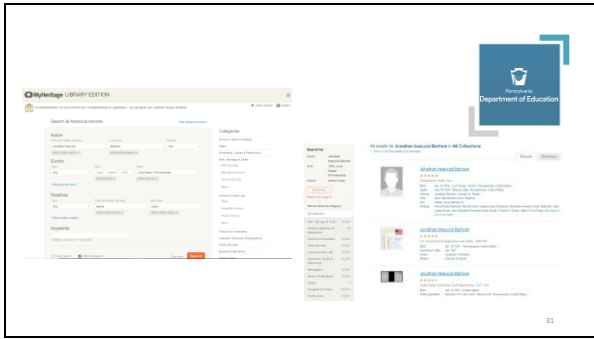
MyHeritage Library Edition
 This multilingual family history research database includes billions of historical documents from 45 countries, millions of historical photos, public records, indexes, and additional resources that span the past five centuries.

- Content includes:
- More than 19.4 billion historical records from all over the world
 - The U.S. federal census (1790-1950) with images
 - The U.K. census (1841-1901) with images
 - Nearly 3 billion exclusive family tree profiles from MyHeritage and Geni
 - More than 816 million US public records
 - Hundreds of millions of Nordic records
 - More than 100 million gravestone photos
 - More than 500 million historical photographs
 - Military records, immigration records and passenger lists
 - Citizenship and naturalization records
 - Directories, guides, references, biographies and yearbooks
 - Government, land and court records
 - Wills and probate records
 - Exclusive databases
 - Additional content under license including Tributes, obituaries, WikiTree, BillionGraves, Canadian Headstones and many others
 - More than 100 million records added every month



- Available to PA Residents at www.paweb.library.org

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State Library of PA Libguides

- <https://pa.gov/libguides.com/>
- Genealogy at the State Library of PA
- American Civil War Resources Guide
- Revolutionary War Era Resources
- Genealogy Research and the Census
- Digital Genealogy Resources at the State Library of PA
- Pennsylvania Newspapers

 A screenshot of the Pennsylvania State Library Libguides website. It features a blue header with the state logo and a navigation menu on the left. The main content area displays search results for 'Genealogy at the State Library of Pennsylvania', listing various digital resources and guides.

State Library Digital Collections

- <https://digitalcollections.state.library.pa.gov/>
- Family Trees
- Historical Newspapers
 - Blair County Whig
 - German Language
- Rare Collections
- State Documents
 - PA Bulletin
 - Pennsylvania Angler
 - Pennsylvania Game News

 A screenshot of the State Library of Pennsylvania Digital Collections website. The page features a header with the state logo and a main image showing rows of wooden bookshelves filled with books. Below the image, there are search filters and a search bar.

Pennsylvania Newspapers

- Births, Marriages and Deaths
- Local Businesses
- Local History
- Photographs



Rare Collections



Harrisburg Newspaper Index

- Marriages and Deaths
- 1799 - 1827

CLARK, Frances, Mrs.

Died on Tuesday evening last, in this town, of a consumption, Mrs. Frances Clark, the affectionate consort of Mr. Forbes Clark, in the 24th year of her age. The deceased possessed those female qualifications, which are so conspicuous in a loving wife, affectionate mother, and kind neighbor. Her death, therefore, has caused an irreparable loss.

Dauphin Guardian (Harrisburg weekly), Tuesday, January 12, 1808.



Necrology Scrapbooks

- Obituaries published between 1891 and 1904
- Civil War Veterans



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Genealogical Family Tree of John George Bechtel
 Circa 1865
 Creator: Gilbert, Franklin Bechtel;
 P.S. Duval & Sons Lithograph
 Publisher: P.S. Duval & Sons Lithograph
 Family history dates span from about 1740 to 1865 (1937 with addendum)
 Dimensions: 3' x 28"



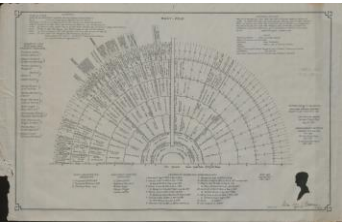

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EISENHART ANCESTRY
 Date: 1962
 Creator: Eisenhart, George W., Jr.
 Publisher: Eisenhart, George W., Jr.
 Contributor: Eisenhart, Willis Wolf; Geist, A. Frank
 Description: Family history dates span from about 1520 to 1962. Command Eisenhart emigrated from Germany to York County, Pennsylvania. Andreas Eisenhart II emigrated from Germany to the Allentown, Pennsylvania area. The family tree provides general notes on the history and origin of the family surname or ancestors of note. The family tree displays a list of names for the family surname, and a brief explanation of motifs.
 Dimensions: 31' x 41"



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Dr. Obed Macy and Lucinda Polk Ancestral Family Record
 Date: 1992
 Creator: O'Gorman, Ella Foy
 Publisher: O'Gorman, Ella Foy
 Description: Family history dates span from 1127 to 1927. Ancestors also lived in California, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, and Massachusetts. The family tree provides general notes on family history and ancestors of note.
 Dimensions: 31 x 20"

Useful Websites

State Library of Pennsylvania Website
<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/state/library.html>

State Library of Pennsylvania – Library Collections (links to our online catalog and our Digital Collections home page)
<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/state/library/general-public.html>

State Library of Pennsylvania Genealogy Libguides
<https://pa.gov/libguides.com/pagenalogy>

State Library of Pennsylvania Libguides List
<https://pa.gov/libguides.com/research>

Power Library (access to MyHeritage and PA Photos and Documents)
<https://powerlibrary.org>


PA State Archives Contact Information
<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/pbmd/pa-state-archives.html>

State Library of Pennsylvania

Hours:
 Tuesday: 10 am – 6 pm
 Wednesday: 10 am – 6 pm
 Thursday: 10 am – 6 pm

Contact Us at:
 Email: pa-reflib@pa.gov
 Phone: 717-783-5950

Website: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/state/library.html>
 Genealogy Libguide: <https://pa.gov/libguides.com/pagenalogy>



State Library of Pennsylvania Reading Room, January 2013



Contact/Mission

For more information on genealogical research, please visit the State Library's website at <http://www.pa.gov/agencies/statelibrary.html>.

The mission of the Department of Education is to ensure that every learner has access to a world-class education system that academically prepares children and adults to succeed as productive citizens. Further, the Department seeks to establish a culture that is committed to improving opportunities throughout the commonwealth by ensuring that technical support, resources, and optimal learning environments are available for all students, whether children or adults.
