

Genealogy at the Los Angeles Public Library

The History and Genealogy Department has approximately 52,000 genealogy-related titles in its collection. With the exception of how-to books and baby name books, genealogy books are usually reference only and must be used within Central Library. Our books are not sent out on interlibrary loan.

CENSUS RECORDS

The library owns the following federal census records on microfilm: 1790-1900 & 1920—all; 1910 & 1930--partial. The library owns most of the Soundex, many book census indexes, all slave schedules, and several Indian census records.

CITY DIRECTORIES

The library owns *City Directories of the United States*, with more than 5,000 rolls of microfilm covering U.S. cities from 1861-1960. Microfiche directories cover even earlier years. We also have directories in hard-copy format—approximately 1,000 U.S. directories and Los Angeles city directories (1873-1942) both in film and paper. A list of our holdings can be found in our [City Directories Index](https://www.lapl.org/collections-resources/lapl-indexes/city-directories-index): <https://www.lapl.org/collections-resources/lapl-indexes/city-directories-index>

Most of the Los Angeles city and street address directories have been digitized and are available here:

<https://rescarta.lapl.org/ResCarta-Web/jsp/RcWebBrowseCollections.jsp>

FAMILY HISTORIES

Our collection is unique and is not duplicated by any California library; approximately 20% of the collection is not even in the Library of Congress. We regularly solicit family histories from genealogists across the country to add to our collection of approximately 14,000 titles.

HERALDRY AND COATS OF ARMS

LAPL is the only area library to comprehensively collect heraldry. The department maintains a detailed Coat of Arms card index, organized by family name. Two notable book collections are *Enciclopedia Heráldica y Genealógica Hispano-Americana* (Alberto García Carraffa) and *J. Siebmacher's Grosses und Allgemeines Wappenbuch* (Johann Siebmacher). Some titles have color plates.

HOW-TO BOOKS

The department has a comprehensive collection of instructional books, from beginner's manuals to those regarding a specific focus, e.g. *Tracing Your Philippine Ancestors* (Lee W. Vance) or *Using DNA in Genealogy* (Christopher Challender Child). We also have a growing number of e-books available via Overdrive (over 600 titles):

<https://lapl.overdrive.com/search?query=genealogy>

IMMIGRATION RECORDS

The library has passenger arrival lists on microfilm of ships docking in New Orleans, San Francisco, Boston, Baltimore, Ventura, San Diego and Philadelphia. We have records for New York ships (1820-1846). The library has passenger lists for San Pedro/Wilmington/Los Angeles for 1907-1948. The library has on microfilm all available naturalization records for the U.S. District Court for southern California.

LOCAL HISTORIES

These make up a large part of the genealogy collection and include detailed histories at the state, county or town level, and transcribed cemetery and probate records. Search our online catalog at www.lapl.org using the location you're researching as keywords to see what we have.

MAPS

Map resources include a complete set of USGS topographical maps covering the entire U.S. in a 1:24,000 scale. Also there is a large selection of modern-day and historical atlases of the world and United States, Board on Geographic Names gazetteers (910.3 U512) covering countries around the globe, and detailed maps for the World War era in the Army Map Service sets. Local maps include Los Angeles street guides from 1925 on and historic maps dating back to 1859. The library also subscribes to the database *Digital Sanborn Maps (1867–1970)* which you can access from home with a library card.

MILITARY RECORDS

The department owns books containing rosters of soldiers who served in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Civil War. In addition, our History Department contains several hundred regimental histories of military units from World Wars I and II, Korea, and Vietnam.

NAME BOOKS

We have over 1,000 books on personal names, their derivation and meaning.

NEWSPAPERS

The department owns microfilm of all of the *Los Angeles Times* (1881-current), the *Herald Examiner* under its various titles, the *New York Times* (1851-current), the *Times of London* (1788-2008), the *San Francisco Chronicle* (1869-2018) and the *Chicago Tribune* (1849-1998). The library also owns shorter runs of other newspapers, e.g. the *Boston Globe* and the *Denver Post*. Not all newspapers are indexed.

ProQuest databases we subscribe to for the *Los Angeles Times* include digitized, full-page images (*Los Angeles Times Historical Archive* 1881-1996) and text-only displays (1985-current)--both are available to access from home with a library card. ProQuest Newsstand has text-only displays for over 300 newspapers and is available to access from home with a library card. Access NewspaperARCHIVE--a database containing digitizations of more than 2,700 newspapers from more than 700 cities across the nation--is also available from home with a library card. A partial run of the *Van Nuys News* and *Valley News* under various title changes from 1900-1977 (roughly) is found there.

Several digitized area newspapers are now available to access while you're at Central Library via our "Los Angeles Area Historical Newspapers" portal. Titles include the *California Eagle* (1914-1964), the *Daily News* (1923-1954), the *Evening Post-Record* (1896-1936), the *Los Angeles Evening/Hollywood Citizen News* (1907-1970), and a variety of others.

OBITUARIES

Patrons are encouraged to do their own searches for obituaries using the newspaper resources mentioned above, but keep in mind not everyone received an obituary in this large metropolis. The library maintains a Directory of Genealogists who will search for you for a fee--just ask and we can make that available for you.

ONLINE DATABASES

The library offers access to several online databases, such as NEHGS's AmericanAncestors.org, Ancestry.com Library Edition, digitized city and street directories, an LAPL city directories index, FindMyPast, an LAPL Genealogy & Local History Index, HeritageQuest Online, HistoryGeo, Jewish Data, and many digitized newspaper databases. Go to our "Research & Homework" page to see how to access these: www.lapl.org/collections-resources/research-and-homework

PERIODICALS

There are over 700 periodical titles in the genealogy collection. Many are indexed in print format in the department, and many are indexed in PERSI (the Periodical Source Index that is the genealogical equivalent to the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature). PERSI is available via the database FindMyPast, available to use at Central Library.

TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES

The library has microfiche telephone directories of the United States 1976-2005 and many pre-2012 paper directories for major U.S. and international cities. The library owns Los Angeles phone directories on microfiche dating back to 1914.

VITAL RECORDS

The library owns numerous indexes including the California Death Index 1905-1994, California Marriage Index 1949-1986, and death and marriage indexes for Nevada, Texas and other selected states. In addition, there are 200 book indexes to vital records at the county or city level, and many books of cemetery records. Please see our Research Guide "Vital Records" at <https://www.lapl.org/collections-resources/research-guides/vital-records> for more information on how to locate current California Vital Records.

You can access this info on our website at: <http://www.lapl.org/collections-resources/research-guides/genealogy>

Some Resources You Can Use From Home (without a library card!)

- * The Genealogy & Local History Index
- * City and Street Directories (Digitized)
- * City Directories Index
- * California Index
- * Tessa: Photo & Digital Collections
- * Obituary Index

To get to the above online resources:

1. Go to www.lapl.org
2. Hover over “Education & Research” until a blue apron drops down; then click “Databases”
3. Scroll down the alphabetical list and click on the resource’s title

To watch our free genealogy webinar series “Genealogy Garage”:

1. Go to YouTube.com
2. Search using keywords *genealogy garage los angeles public library*

To view our Overdrive e-Media selections, go to *e-media.lapl.org* and type keywords (*genealogy* is a good one!)

Websites for Digitized Books

Books.google.com

Hathitrust.org

Archive.org

Genealogy Gophers (just genealogy books!) <https://www.gengophers.com/#/>

MyHeritage <https://www.myheritage.com/research/collection-90100/compilation-of-published-sources>

Digital Public Library bookshelf <https://dp.la/>

HeritageQuest and Ancestry.com (possibly available via your local library)

Familysearch.org <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/>

Openlibrary.org

World Digital Library: <http://www.wdl.org/en/>

To see if another library has a book you want, try WorldCat: <https://www.worldcat.org/>

Sources of some of the items you saw in the presentation:

“The Downey Block,” Los Angeles Public Library Institutional Photo Collection:
<https://tessa.lapl.org/cdm/ref/collection/photos/id/106892>

“Los Angeles Public (Central) Library building, downtown Los Angeles.” Circa 1936:
<https://dl.library.ucla.edu/islandora/object/edu.ucla.library.specialCollections.losAngelesDailyNews:1927>

“Los Angeles Central Library fire,” 1986:
<https://tessa.lapl.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/photos/id/111047/rec/7>

“Genealogy Department, Los Angeles Public Library,” 1930s:
<https://tessa.lapl.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/photos/id/112790/rec/6>

Feel free to contact me:

Los Angeles Public Library: www.lapl.org

630 W. 5th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90071

History & Genealogy Department (Lower Level 4)

Genealogy Librarian: Julie Huffman, 213-228-7413, jhuffman@lapl.org