

Recommended Online Genealogy Resources

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General Resources

Access Genealogy has one of the largest collections of free online resources for genealogy research in the United States. Among the hundreds of thousands of websites, researchers will find a wide range of records and U.S. history, though their specialty is Native American materials. <https://accessgenealogy.com/>

Cyndi's List is a database with thousands of links, all well organized, and is considered the go-to place for genealogy research. It's basically a card catalogue for genealogy websites. If you're not sure where to look for any particular topic, you can use the categories list or the search bar to find websites related to your topic. The site is free to use though some of the links will be to paid sites. Cyndi uses a dollar sign icon to indicate when this is the case.

<http://www.cyndislist.com/>

Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) collaborates with libraries, archives, and museums across the United States to allow for discovery of materials from the many cultural institutions in America all in one place. Over 47 million images, texts, videos, and sounds can be found at DPLA. All of the materials are publicly viewable though some are still under copyright, but users can easily check the status of materials of interest. This free website provides guides to explain more about how it can help with family history research or other activities. <https://dp.la/>

Europeana displays historical materials from over 4,000 cultural institutions across Europe. Libraries, archives, museums, and galleries share materials such as books, newspapers, music, videos on art, artwork, science, sports, archaeology, and more. Materials are free to use and users are encouraged to share their creative ways of using the materials.

<https://www.europeana.eu/en>

Evidence Explained is an excellent website for learning about sources and analyzing evidence. The forum is quite active with lots of great discussions, which are also shared on social media. The book of the same name is considered a must-have item in any genealogy library.

<https://www.evidenceexplained.com/>

Familysearch is one of the most recommended websites by genealogists of all skills. A free account is required but the site is free to search. <https://familysearch.org/>
Many services are provided, such as:

A database which has many historical records to search or browse.

A catalog of digital books.

A learning center (see Educational Opportunities section).

Their very popular wiki, which contains thousands of articles on many topics and locations, is a highly recommended resource.

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Main_Page

Genealogy Tip of the Day is a useful site with very short tips on all kinds of subjects. Sometimes simple is the most helpful. You can also get tips by email or by “liking” the page on Facebook so it just shows up in your newsfeed. <http://genealogytipoftheday.com/>

Internet Archive/Wayback Machine is one of my favorite sites to use. Free material (out of copyright) of all kinds from books to videos are available here. These are generally available for download in various formats. The census records can be found on this site, though they are not indexed. I’ve also frequently used the Wayback Machine to find archived versions of webpages that are no longer working, though not all websites/pages will be archived. Another feature of Internet Archive is the ability to check out digital books (see Online Books section).

<https://archive.org/>

The Legal Genealogist, Judy Russell: If you need to know anything about laws, courthouses, copyright, ethics, or anything even remotely related this is the place to go and the person to contact. Judy is also an excellent presenter and I usually sign up for any free event at which she’s speaking. Her blog is very popular and her opinion on legal matters, in particular, are highly respected. <http://legalgenealogist.com/>

Library of Congress (LoC) serves the United States Congress, is America’s national library, and oversees the United States Copyright Office. LoC contains over 170 million items from all over the world and in many languages and formats. Materials include oral histories, images, documents, newspapers, sound recordings, maps, and so much more. Many services and resources are provided, such as:

Resources for research

Information about preservation

Veteran’s History Project

Chronicling America (see Newspapers section)

Thomas.gov

<https://www.loc.gov/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library_of_Congress

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Digital_Library

National Archives & Records Administration (NARA) has many resources and tips, and you can order military records through the website. They also do a virtual genealogy fair each year, which is another terrific learning opportunity (see Educational Opportunities section).

<http://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/start-research/>

Books online

Some books can be found online, either in full or as a preview. Many books that are out of copyright (including some town histories!) can be downloaded for free at these websites:

Cyndislist provides links to several more websites at which digital books can be found:

<http://www.cyndislist.com/books/ebooks/>

Google Books: <http://books.google.com/>

Hathitrust is a collaboration of academic and research libraries who provide access to digital materials as much as copyright law allows. Some materials will be limited to member institutions, but many useful materials are available to everyone. <https://www.hathitrust.org/>

Internet Archive has thousands of books that are out of copyright and can be viewed online and/or downloaded for free. <https://archive.org/details/texts>

Internet Archive also loans digital books that are not out of copyright. Create a free account to borrow books: <https://archive.org/details/inlibrary>. Learn more about the process here: <https://help.archive.org/help/borrowing-from-the-lending-library/>

Maps

Atlas Of Historical County Boundaries is an interactive map that allows researchers to view boundary changes over time. Additionally, researchers will find information about chronologies of counties, bibliographic sources, and other information and resources.

<http://publications.newberry.org/ahcbp/index.html>

Cyndislist includes an entire category about maps! Choose your preference from the Category Index (Topographical, Ethnic Group, Military, Fire Insurance, etc.), then explore the links Cyndi has compiled. Some will be free, some will require payment. <https://cyndislist.com/maps/>

David Rumsey Map Collection is a collection of over 115,000 digitized maps (so far!) that range from the 16th–21st century and includes maps from all over the world. A variety of items are included such as atlases, wall maps, school geographies, maritime charts, and manuscript maps. High resolution images are available for viewing, and the site also provides many tools which allow users to interact with the content in a variety of ways. <http://www.davidrumsey.com/>

Library of Congress Map Collections includes thousands of maps from many events, locations, and more. Maps from Sanborn Fire Insurance, Railroads, Civil War, Panoramic (Bird's Eye Views), National Parks, and so much more can be found among the digital collections. <https://www.loc.gov/maps/collections/>

Maine Bird's Eye View Maps 1870-1905 is an online collection of maps that offer a unique view of Maine towns and cities. Materials for this collaborative database were provided by Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education (OML), the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC), and the Maine Historical Society (MHS). <https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/oml-maine-birds-eye-view-maps/>

Maine Historical Maps contains links to various websites that provide historical maps of Maine. Curated by the Maine State Library Genealogy Librarian. https://www.maine-genealogy.net/map_search.asp

Old Maps Online is a collaboration of various organizations and institutions including universities, libraries, museums, private collectors (such as David Rumsey), Geographic Information Systems and technology experts, and others. Search results include links to the organization or institution at which the map is held. <http://www.oldmapsonline.org/>

OnTheWorldMap Website is a collection of free printable maps for traveling or education needs. Though these aren't historic, they can be useful for genealogists who want to explore the areas from which their ancestors came. <https://ontheworldmap.com/>

Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education at the University of Southern Maine contains almost 500,000 cartographic items dating from 1475. More than 75,000 of these items from around the world are freely available for online viewing. <https://oshermaps.org/>

Newspapers

Chronicling America from the Library of Congress is a free resource which includes the U.S. Newspaper Directory, which provides information about American newspapers published between 1690-present, and some digitized newspapers from 1777-1963. Search the digital

collections or check the directory to see what newspapers were available in the locations of interest, including ethnic and religious newspapers, or search by newspaper title. Information includes the date ranges of publication, geographic reach, frequency of publication, and more.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

*"In 2025, Chronicling America will transition to a new interface. Visit the new website for the most recent newspaper additions." "While we are maintaining access to both the new and legacy sites through the end of 2025, after March 1, 2024, we will cease data updates to the legacy site" <https://www.loc.gov/collections/chronicling-america/about-this-collection/> Both links included as the old website might still be easier to navigate while adjusting to the one.

Cyndislist has links to MANY newspaper resources including general resources, ethnic newspapers, farming and agricultural newspapers, religious newspapers, and much more. The site is free to use though some of the links will be to paid sites. Cyndi uses a dollar sign icon to indicate when this is the case. <https://www.cyndislist.com/newspapers/>

Old Fulton New York Post Cards is a free website whose title does not convey all the materials they have available. This link goes to a webpage where one can "Search over 57,255,105 Old Newspaper pages from US & Canada" <https://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html>

Google News Archives contains historical newspapers digitized during a project that lasted from 2006-2011. Newspapers are arranged by title, not location, so it's helpful to know which newspapers were available in the locations being sought (tip – check Chronicling America). Each newspaper indicates the number of editions available and the date range.

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?hl=en>

Gravesite Collections

BillionGraves & Find A Grave are two separate websites which both provide free access to burial & final disposition information around the world. Data and photos are added by volunteers, so not all are online, but there are millions of memorials available. Photos, GPS data, transcriptions, and obituaries are among the information that might be found on these sites. Anyone can create a free account and contribute, or use other features such as creating lists of relevant memorials or requesting photos of headstones.

<https://billiongraves.com/>

<https://www.findagrave.com/>