



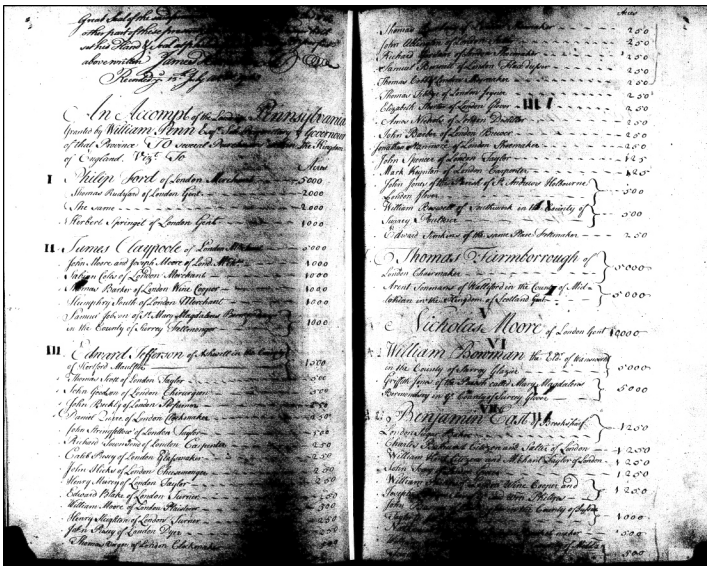
Old Rights | Researching early Pennsylvania

Conducting genealogical research in the colonial United States can be a daunting task for even the most skilled genealogist. At History & Genealogy, we are often engaged with patrons who are attempting to tackle complicated genealogical problems prior to the 1790 U.S. Federal Census. These challenges require using land, probate, tax, or other colonial sources, which do not always follow a concise organizational system. In the case of land title, many genealogists are accustomed to working with more centralized forms of record keeping—Federal Land Office Warrants and Patents, for exam-

ple. In colonial U.S. research, genealogists face a more transitory system of recording in which record keeping was in its infancy, and record types were constantly evolving as new systems were developed.

Pennsylvania has a particularly complex history when it

Above | Map, “Caerte vande Svydt Rivier in Niew Nederland, 1639,” Library of Congress. See “Maps,” p. 7 under “Sources.”



“An Account of the Land in Pennsylvania Granted by William Penn... To Several Purchasers within the Kingdom of England (1681).” See “Manuscripts,” p. 6 under “Sources.”

comes to first title to property, but this complex history also produced a wealth of records. In 1759, record compilers separated early Pennsylvania land titles into two distinct periods: the Old Rights (1609–1732) and the New Warrants (1732–1776). It is highly recommended you consult Pennsylvania Land Records, A History and Guide for Research (R 974.8 M965P) for a more comprehensive history and outline of record sets available from regional archives and repositories. In most cases, the Pennsylvania State Archives in Harrisburg holds the original records. This article will highlight sources available in print in History & Genealogy at St. Louis County Library and online.

Land settlement before Penn

Henry Hudson first explored Godyns Bay in 1609. The Dutch India Company and their rival, the New Sweden Company, sent settlers in the 1630s, who established settlements along the western shore of the bay and river. These were the first European settlements in present day Delaware and Pennsylvania. In 1655, the Dutch sent a military force to seize control of the bay. This resulted in the New Sweden Co. abandoning their settlements, leaving behind only a few hundred Swedish and Finnish settlers. The Dutch divided the area into three regions centering on the settlements of New Amstel, Whorekill, and Upland. Today these are the towns of New Castle and

Lewes, Delaware, and Chester, Pennsylvania.

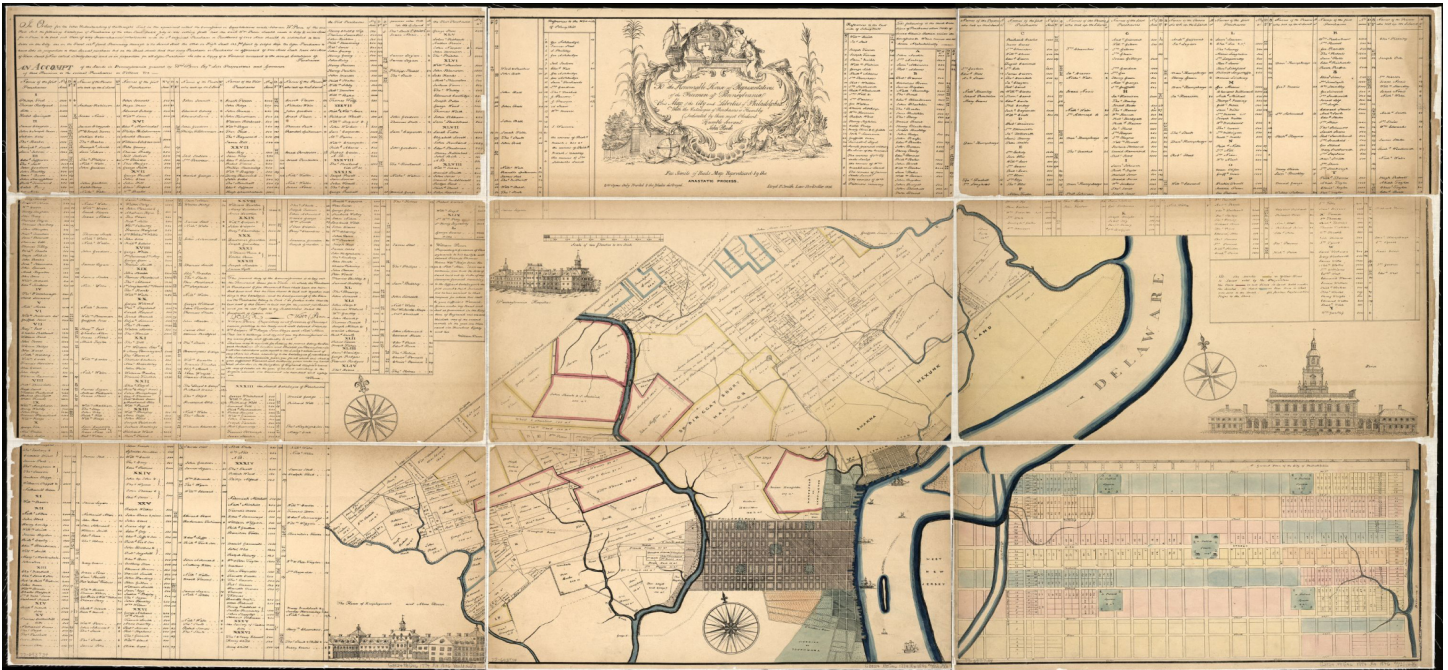
In August 1664, the English seized New Netherland from the Dutch during the Second Anglo-Dutch War. This included the Godyns Bay settlements and the Dutch Fort of New Amsterdam. In 1665, the English renamed New Amsterdam to New York City. In 1667, following the Treaty of Breda, the English renamed Godyns Bay to Delaware Bay. New York’s Royal Governors (Richard Nichols, 1664–1668; Francis Lovelace, 1668–1673; Edmund Andros, 1674–1681) honored the Dutch and Swedish land claims and allowed settlers without official documentation to file claims. The English briefly lost New Netherland in 1673, only to return to power in 1674.

William Penn was granted charter to Pennsylvania by Charles II in 1681 and the Upland district became Chester Co. William Penn upheld the Dutch and Swedish patents. Chester Co. records are found in Pennsylvania Archives, Series 2. Vols. 5 and 7. For those in Delaware, consult the Duke of York Record. Penn required these old settlers to obtain a resurvey and a patent and from them he claimed a quitrent.

William Penn’s proprietorship, 1682–1732

The Pennsylvania charter granted William Penn a proprietorship, that is, sole and unrestricted authority to dispose of and collect quitrents for lands in the Pennsylvania colony, independent of Royal oversight. The charter made Penn the largest landowner in North America. From 1682–1718, Penn and Deputy Gov. William Markham negotiated with the Indians to acquire land from the Delaware River to the Susquehanna River and from Duck Creek to the Lehigh Hills. Penn also purchased lands in what is today Delaware, and his heirs would distribute those lands until the end of the proprietary period (1682–1776). Penn set aside a tenth of the purchases (manors) to ensure the Penn family received a steady income from his proprietorship. On these manors, Penn leased 100-acre farm-sized portions to tenant farmers.

In October 1681, William Penn appointed a Board of Property to oversee the purchase and conveyance of the lands in the province of Pennsylvania. He re-assumed control in October 1682 when he arrived on the Welcome. Penn returned this to the commission’s hands in August 1684.



Map, “To the Honourable House of Representatives of the Freemen of Pennsylvania, this Map of the City and Liberties of Philadelphia with the Catalogue of Purchasers is Humbly Dedicated by their Most Obedient Humble Servant, John Reed.” Library of Congress. See “Maps,” p. 7 under “Sources.”

Early minutes of the Board of Property were illegible. William Henry Egle transcribed the Minutes of the Board of Property of the Province of Pennsylvania; beginning with Book C., dated 13 3rd month 1687 and ending with 30 3rd month 1732. Egles’ original transcription of these minutes originally appeared in Pennsylvania Archives in 1893. The transcription was reprinted as “Early Pennsylvania Land Records: Minutes of the Board of Property of the Province of Pennsylvania.” Images of the original Board of Property Papers, 1682–1850, are available on FamilySearch.

In 1684, the Pennsylvania Board of Property established a four-step process for conveyance of first title to land:

- Warrant to survey—would be issued by the Land office to the Warrantee.
- Survey—conducted and a map showing precise boundaries and usually showing neighboring owners was developed.
- Return to Survey—provided by the Surveyor General to the Secretary of the Land Office.
- Patent—issued once payment received, delivering clear title to the Patentee.

Although there are exceptions, the majority of land titles issued after 1684 will result in these four documents. Many of these documents are available as digitized images on FamilySearch. Do a keyword search in the catalog for “Original Surveys, 1682–1920” and “Patent Books, 1676–1960.” The warrants are filed with the Original Surveys.

First Purchasers

In order to profit from the Pennsylvania endeavor, Penn needed to attract individuals who would agree upon a set of rules and regulations for settlement. His initial land offering was one hundred pounds for the right to survey 5000 acres. Two percent of this right (100 acres) would consist of city lots in what would become Philadelphia, known as Liberty Land. Ninety-eight percent would be surveyed out of the wilderness, or Country Land, of which no more than 1000 acres could be surveyed in one plot. He limited rental opportunities to 200 acres per purchaser. He offered 100 shares to English, Scottish and Irish Quakers. Penn quickly realized few could afford or were willing to pay 100 pounds for such an offer. He expanded the shares to groups of up to 10 purchasers.

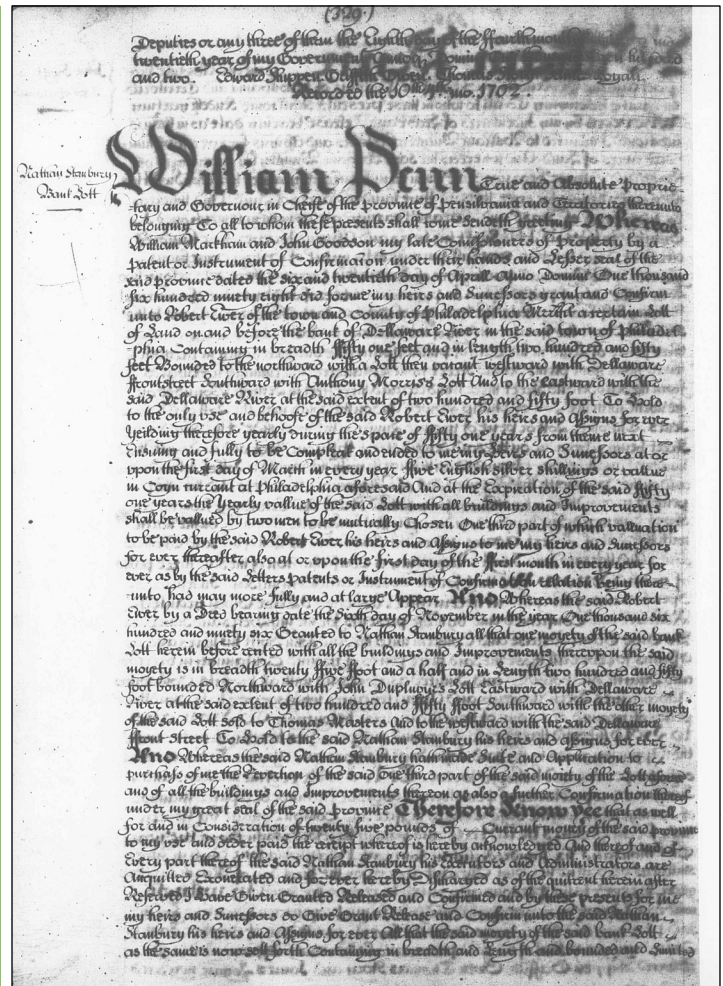
These initial shareholders are known as First Purchasers. The earliest catalog of First Purchasers dates from 25 October 1681 and a copy appears in the 1763 Patent Book AA-5, pgs. 130–39 and available on Family History Library (FHL) film no. 008248624. This catalog includes the first 259 purchasers and accounts for 64 of the initial 100 shares. A second catalog of 53 purchaser groups is found in the Proprietary Papers, Folder 2, Item 4 at the Pennsylvania State Archives and a third catalog of 57 purchasers can be found in Pennsylvania Archives (1)1: 40–46. A complete list of the First Purchasers appears on John Reed’s ...Map of the City and Liberties of Philadelphia... available online from the Library of Congress.

Original Purchasers

Penn over-sold the initial 100 shares and the first Purchaser Lists were expanded to include what Penn termed Late Purchasers. Both First and Late purchasers became known as Original Purchasers and the register of Original Purchasers, compiled in 1759, is available on FHL film no. 1028678, “Original Purchasers, 1683–1702.” It has also been made available online by the [Pennsylvania Historical Commission and Museum](https://bit.ly/2WpoZAR) <https://bit.ly/2WpoZAR>.

Penn granted Original Purchasers land through deeds of lease and release, which conveyed land from the crown to Penn and then to the purchaser. The initial indentures (leases) were drawn up in England and given to the purchaser as a right to land. After arriving in Pennsylvania, each purchaser was responsible for surveying and recording his own indenture (release) as soon as a public registry was established, thus transferring deed and land to the individual. Since not all original purchasers claimed their rights, sale of these rights became profitable, and warrants for original purchases have dates as late as 1794. The land office did not open until January 1684, so the first land patents are from this date. A single book, used to record lease and release entries, is included on Land Office Microfilms 25:33–34 available at the Pennsylvania State Archives. In Philadelphia County, this list was copied and appears as “Exemplifications” in the Family History Library film collection titled “Exemplification record, patent books (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), 1667–1839” on FamilySearch.

The early surveys can be found through the Family History Library catalog on FamilySearch as “Original Surveys,

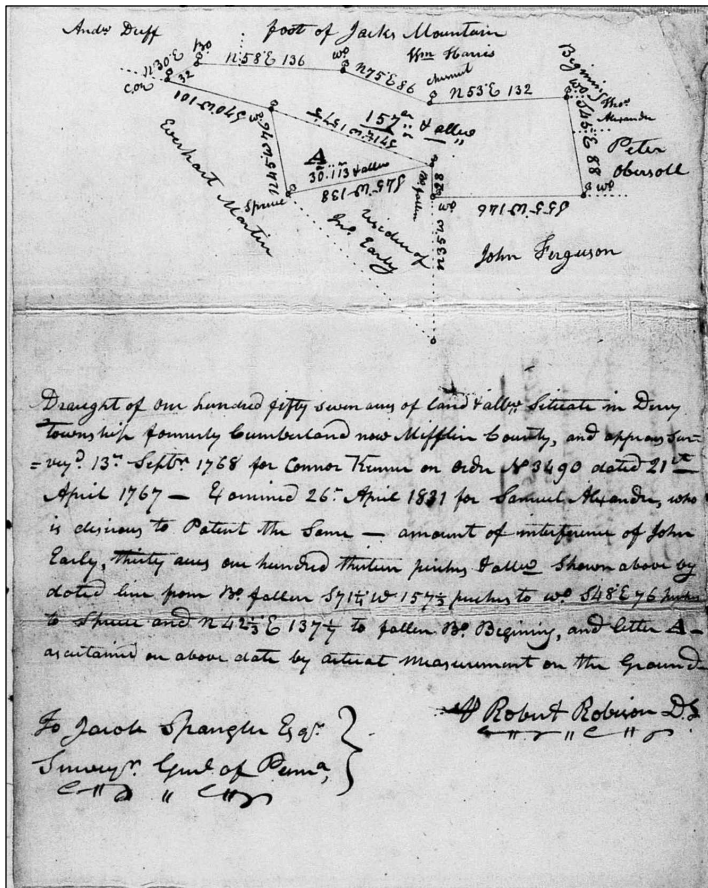


Patent Book entry by Robert Evans. Source: Pennsylvania. “Patent Books, 1676–1960,” Vol. A-2, p. 329. Bureau of Land Records, Harrisburg. FHL microfilm 8546915. Family History Library; digital image 119, FamilySearch.org (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C3QC-XLDQ?i=118&cat=44185>): accessed 15 July 2020.

land from (Original Purchasers, 1683–1702, FHL film no. 1028678).

After Purchasers

Penn did not plan his land title system particularly well and did not take into account that there would be settlers who would not adhere to his system as he conceived it. Penn simply expected that purchasers would either buy rights from him or buy land from First Purchasers (later Original Purchasers) or they would rent manor land from him or rent from Original Purchasers. When William Penn died in July of



Original survey. Source: Pennsylvania. "Original Surveys, 1682-1920," Book D, p. 66. Bureau of Land Records, Harrisburg. FHL microfilm 8510517, Family History Library; digital image 227, FamilySearch.org (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C3S5-VSMY-W?i=226&cat=43569>): accessed 17 July 2020.

1718, his estate went unsettled until 1732. From 1718–1732, no treaties were signed with the Native Americans and no new warrants were issued for lands that were not owned by Original or Under Purchasers. Immigration did not stop and significantly out-paced the land system. Unable to issue warrants for property not held by treaty, the land commissioners handed out “tickets” to property, which had the same validity to order surveys as warrants. These tickets were never returned to the land office. Some After Purchasers bought their land direct from the board of property, from the provincial governor, or purchased land in the proprietary manors. Most After Purchasers would not purchase their land until well into the New Warrant period (1732–1776).

Old Rights

The term Old Rights originally referred to the “rights” held by Original Purchasers. By the 1740s, the land title system in Pennsylvania had grown out of control. The differences between rights and land title was complex, unmanageable, and the records were poorly kept. In 1759, the “Act for Recording all Warrants and Surveys, and for rendering the Real Estate and Property within this Province more Secure” was introduced and passed by the Pennsylvania Assembly. The governor proposed a separate provision creating an “Office for Recording Warrants and Surveys” which removed the responsibility from the Proprietors (Heirs of William Penn). The act was signed into law July 7, 1759 and John Hughes was assigned to the Warrants and Survey’s Office. The Penns objected and took the matter to the King. George II vetoed the act in 1760 but not before Hughes completed the work inventoring, copying, and compiling the original records.

Hughes compiled land titles into two periods: the Old Rights (1608–1732) and the New Warrants (1732–1776). As compiled, Old Rights include original purchasers, Under Purchasers, and After Purchasers from 1608–1732. Warrants and Surveys of the Province of Pennsylvania (R 974.8 W423W) contains transcriptions of the original Warrant and Survey Registers from 1759. “Index to old rights in Philadelphia County, 1682–1748,” FHL film no. 7897665 is available on FamilySearch. Surveys of Philadelphia City Lots which include many of the “Old Rights” purchasers, can be found on FamilySearch as “Philadelphia City Lots, 1682–1790,” FHL film no. 988268 or [from the Philadelphia Historical & Museum Commission](https://bit.ly/2B0YOZJ) <<https://bit.ly/2B0YOZJ>>.

Old Rights claims continued well into the 18th century and as far west as Mifflin County. All an individual needed to do was produce a Deed of Lease and Release or a Special Warrant from William Penn to claim Old Rights.

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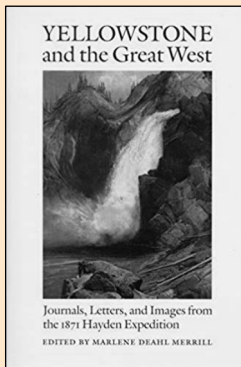
A SAMPLING FROM
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Shelf life



Yellowstone and the Great West

In 1869, Charles Cook, David E. Folsom, and William Peterson formed an expedition to explore the region we now know as Yellowstone National Park. Both Cook and Folsom kept journals



of the expedition and attempted to publish them, but the stories of the place seemed too fantastical and were rejected by all the eastern publishers.

The following year, Henry Washburn, Nathaniel P. Langford, and Lieutenant Gustavus C. Doan mounted another foray into the area following the route of the earlier group. After the expedition, Langford set out on a

series of speeches in the east talking about the area. The audiences, however, were extremely skeptical.

The US Congress, in 1871, appropriated \$40,000 for a scientific expedition to establish the truth about the area. Ferdinand Hayden became the leader of the survey. The expedition ultimately led Congress to create Yellowstone National Park to preserve the area for future generations.

Hayden assembled a group of that included botanists, cartographers, geologists, meteorologists, mineralogists, ornithologists, and zoologists. Together they brought scientific legitimacy to the reports of the expedition. Additional party members, photographer William Henry Jackson and painter Thomas Moran, used their talents to provide visual evidence to a skeptical establishment.

Marlene Deahl Merrill, in *Yellowstone and the Great West: Journals, Letters, and Images from the 1871 Hayden Expedition* (Call no. R 978.752 Y43) combines elements from a number of the journals kept by expedition members and edits them into a coherent whole. This makes the entire expedition accessible to readers nearly 150 years later.

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Maps

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Finding sources for Missouri research online



Although COVID-19 continues to limit in-person services, libraries, archives, and local societies continue to provide resources online to help researchers. Explore these Missouri links below, or search for websites of analogous organizations in other states.

■ [Missouri Digital Heritage](#)

Missouri Digital Heritage hosts numerous databases appropriate for both general genealogy and niche situations through a combination of indexes and direct record access. Highlights include death certificates, land and court records, Union Provost Marshal Papers relating to the Civil War, and the survey of St. Louis created by Antoine Soulard (the *Registre d'arpentage*). URL: <https://www.sos.mo.gov/mdh/>.

■ [Missouri Historical Society](#)

An increasing amount of material in the Missouri Historical Society's collection is online. Search the online catalog to plan a future visit, or view select records, photographs, and object images directly from your home. Use the Genealogy and Local History Index to search addresses, businesses, and names. URL: <https://mohistory.org/society>

■ [State Historical Society of Missouri](#)

The State Historical Society of Missouri makes several resources available on their website, including digitized newspapers, maps, past issues of the *Missouri Historical Review*, and databases such as the Ramsay Place Names File. URL: <https://shsmo.org/collections/digital>

■ [History & Genealogy at St. Louis County Library](#)

History & Genealogy has many indexes for records and local history books, as well guides to sources and other helpful information. Try searching for names of St. Louis-area ancestors using the [search box on the library's home page](https://www.slcl.org) <<https://www.slcl.org>>. Matches will appear under the "Genealogy" heading on the results page. Researchers

can browse indexes and other aids manually on the [Indexes, Finding Aids and Guides](https://www.slcl.org/finding-guides) <<https://www.slcl.org/finding-guides>> page.

Missouri newspapers are available on newspaper databases available through St. Louis County Library, including Newspapers.com, Newspaper-ARCHIVE.com, Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers, and others. St. Louis County Library card holders living in the metropolitan area can access most newspaper databases at home. View a list of library database for genealogy online <<https://bit.ly/32vjcxw>>.

■ [St. Louis \(City\) Public Library](#)

St. Louis Public Library has a number of digital collections for local and genealogical research on their website. See the *Post-Dispatch* obituary index, plat maps in the Maps of Missouri collection, and photographs from iconic events such as the 1896 tornado and the Pageant and the Masque of St. Louis. URL: <https://cdm17210.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/>

■ [Midwest Genealogy Center](#)

Search multiple indexes at once using the Midwest Genealogy Center's "Genealogy Quick Look" search. Significant indexes include newspaper and U.S. Railroad Retirement Board pension claims. Records from family bibles, cemeteries, a church, and the Independent Order of Odd Fellows make up some of the items available in their digital collections. URL: <https://www.mymcpl.org/genealogy>

■ [Springfield-Greene County Library](#)

Springfield-Greene offers employee cards of Frisco Railway workers after 1940 and employee magazines. Other important resources include regional periodicals, obituaries, and items of local historical interest such as the Turnbo Manuscripts, a collection of hundreds of stories of early Ozark settlers. Photos of the Ozarks during the COVID-19 pandemic is a new digital collection offered by the library. URL: <https://thelibrary.org/lochist/digitalarchive/>

Of note

History & Genealogy launches virtual programming

Video tutorials

H&G is developing concise online tutorials to help researchers. The first two tutorials can now be viewed on the [St. Louis County Library YouTube Channel in the History & Genealogy playlist channel](https://bit.ly/2CqIgmU) <<https://bit.ly/2CqIgmU>>.

■ Introduction to Ancestry Library Edition

Learn how to logon with you St. Louis County Library card and start searching for your ancestors.

■ Locating St. Louis Archdiocesan Parish Records Online

Are you looking for ancestors in Catholic Church records? This tutorial will show you how to use History & Genealogy's online guides to identify your ancestor's church and start researching its records online.

Genealogy classes on Zoom

Learn genealogy in classes conducted by H&G's expert staff without leaving your home. Classes begin in August. Registration is required. Register using the links below or visit <https://www.slcl.org/events>.

■ Wednesday, Aug. 12, 6:30 p.m.

Who Were my Ancestors? Beginning Genealogical Research

If you have little or no research experience, this is the class for you. Learn about the genealogical research process and the many resources available in History & Genealogy at St. Louis County Library. [Register now.](#)

■ Saturday, Aug. 22, 10:00 a.m.

Library Skills for Genealogical Research

Libraries offer essential tools for researching your ancestry. Learn how to search online library catalogs, obtain materials from distant libraries, locate periodical articles, and use the library's in-house guides. *Prerequisite: Who Were my Ancestors? Beginning Genealogical Research class or previous research experience.* [Register now.](#)

Remote access to Ancestry Library Edition extended

St. Louis County Library is able to extend remote access to the Ancestry Library Edition database through August 31. St. Louis County Library card holders living in the metropolitan area can access the database by logging on through the library's [database page](https://bit.ly/30kiUXD) <<https://bit.ly/30kiUXD>>.

Election day library closures

The History & Genealogy Department will be closed on Tuesday, Aug. 4 and Tuesday, Nov. 3 to accommodate public access to the polls in the Headquarters building.

H&G seeks periodical back issues

The History & Genealogy Department is filling gaps in its periodical collections and is seeking copies of the magazines and quarterlies listed below. Please contact H&G at genealogy@slcl.org if you have copies to donate.

American Spirit (DAR), vol. 153:4 (July/Aug. 2019) and vol. 153:5 (Sept/Oct. 2019)

Ancestry, vol. 22:2 (March/April 2004) and vol. 22:3 (May/June 2004)

The Bulletin (West Central Kentucky Family Research Association), vol. 42:3 (2009) and vol. 44:1-2 (2011)

Family Tree Magazine, vol. 21:2 (March/April 2020) and

PastPorts is published by History & Genealogy at St. Louis County Library, located on Tier 5 of Library Headquarters.

[Current and past issues can be downloaded from the web](http://www.slcl.org/pastports) <<http://www.slcl.org/pastports>>.

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vol. 21:3 (May/June 2020)
German Life, vol. 24:2 (Aug./Sept. 2017), vol. 24:3 (Oct./Nov. 2017), vol. 24:4 (Dec./Jan. 2017-18), vol. 25:1 (June/July 2018), vol. 26:1 (June/July 2019), vol. 26:2 (Aug/Sep 2019), vol. 26:3 (Oct./Nov. 2019), vol. 26:4 (Dec./Jan. 2019)
Kentucky Explorer, vol. 19:5 (Nov. 2004), vol. 19:8 (Feb. 2005), vol. 19:9 (March 2005), vol. 19:10 (April 2005)
New York Genealogical and Biographical Record, vol. 149:1 (2018)
New England Historical Genealogical Register, vol. 172:686 (Spring 2018)
St. Clair County (IL) Genealogical Society Quarterly, vol. 42 (2019), all issues
William and Mary Quarterly, vol. 58:1-4 (2001)

Staff changes in the History & Genealogy Department

Larry Franke retired on Friday, July 10 after 20 years of service to St. Louis County Library. Larry was hired as Librarian Assistant in the Special Collections Department (now History & Genealogy) in October 2000 and was promoted to Reference Librarian after completing his MLS degree at the University of Missouri in 2004.

Before joining SLCL, Larry was for many years an educator, teaching French in the Francis Howell School District and ESL classes at Parkway and Mehlville School Districts, the English Language School in University City, and for Berlitz.

Larry taught many genealogy classes during his long career at the library and was instrumental in expanding the variety and depth of History & Genealogy programming. He has also been a frequent and popular presenter at local and national genealogical conferences. Larry was responsible for managing and expanding H&G's periodical collection, supervising book donations to the NGS Collection, and writing book notes for *NGS News Magazine* and the *StLGS Quarterly*.

Part-time Library Assistant Mary Furay resigned effective Saturday, July 18. Mary worked at the Thornhill Branch before joining the H&G staff in Sept. 2018. Among her accomplishments has been to begin a project to index baptisms recorded in St. Louis Catholic Churches.

History & Genealogy services

The following services are available while H&G is closed:

Photocopies

H&G can provide photocopies, prints, or digital scans of many library materials, including:

- Books and periodicals—up to 30 pages from one book or one article from a single journal issue. Staff can also photocopy or scan tables of contents and index pages.
- Microfilmed records—A list of microfilm available in the H&G collection can be [viewed online](https://bit.ly/3jrqw3j) <<https://bit.ly/3jrqw3j>>.
- Databases—H&G staff will print out database records if patrons cannot access the database at home.

Researchers should use the [online lookup request form](https://bit.ly/2UQXJKE) <<https://bit.ly/2UQXJKE>> and be as specific as possible when submitting requests.

Print collection

One-third of the books in H&G's collection—more than 27,000—can be checked out. The entire collection is included in the library's [online catalog](http://webpac.slcl.org) <<http://webpac.slcl.org>>. Books with call numbers that do not begin with "R" are available to check out. Patrons can request books online or by calling 314-994-3300. A limit of two H&G books may be checked out at one time.

Research guidance

H&G staff members can provide research assistance over the phone or by email. Researchers whose information needs cannot be met in this way may schedule an appointment for a face-to-face meeting with an H&G librarian.

Book-a-Genealogist

Researchers who would like in-depth assistance can schedule a phone consultation with an H&G staff member. Requests can be made using the online [Book-a-Genealogist form](https://bit.ly/3fQbB0r) <<https://bit.ly/3fQbB0r>>.

Database access

Most library databases can be used at home by St. Louis County Library card holders living in the metropolitan area. The Ancestry Library Edition database, normally restricted to in-library use, can be accessed remotely on a temporary basis. [View the list of genealogical databases on the library's website](https://bit.ly/37GRbTF) <<https://bit.ly/37GRbTF>>.

For more information, please contact the History & Genealogy Department at 314-994-3300 or genealogy@slcl.org.