

## FOR THE RECORDS

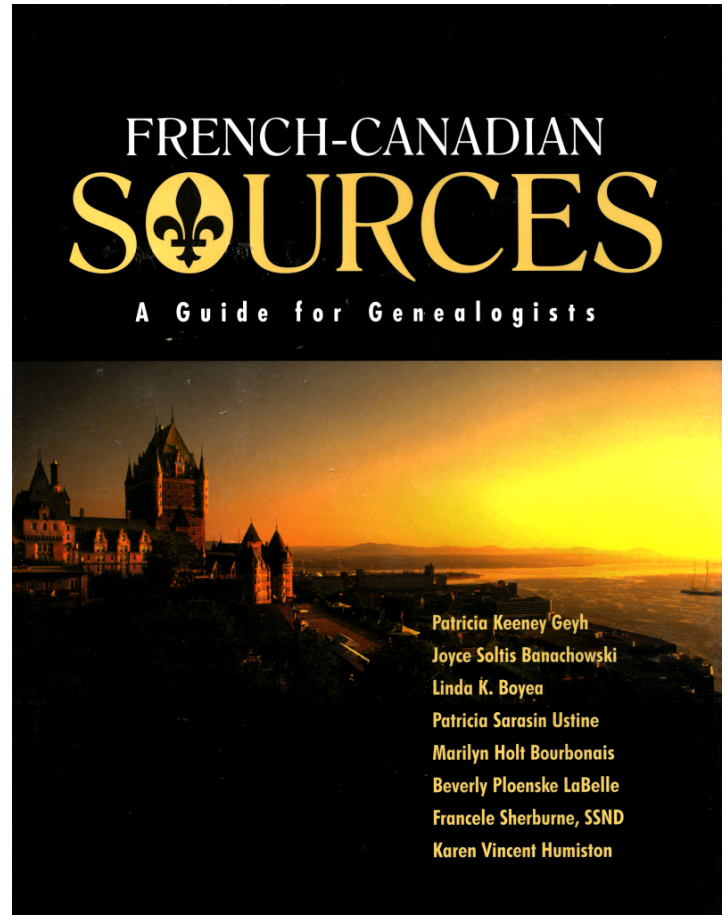
### French North American Research

Researching French North American ancestors can be a rewarding experience with knowledge of the available resources and tools to help with deciphering the French language.

#### Language helps

Multiple French-English / English-French print dictionaries are available for purchase from brick and mortar bookstores as well as from book vendors on the web. There are also many good to excellent digital language resources. [A basic French genealogy wordlist](https://bit.ly/2EpM8wJ) <<https://bit.ly/2EpM8wJ>> is available from FamilySearch for free.

Many public libraries, including St. Louis County Library, subscribe to a database called [Mango Languages](https://bit.ly/3j2oy8y) <<https://bit.ly/3j2oy8y>>, which provides instruction in over seventy languages, including French. In addition, once you have set up an account, Mango Languages will keep track of where you have left off in your lesson and enable you to begin at that place when you log on again. An excellent free online language resource is [Word Reference](https://www.wordreference.com/) <<https://www.wordreference.com/>>. Simply select the language that you want to go to or from, and type in the word or phrase that you need translated. If you do not get the desired results, you can sign up for a free membership and post a query that will be answered by a native, or near native, speaker of French. This is often necessary in the case of colloquialisms or dated expressions. Finally, there is [Google Translate](http://translate.google.com) <<http://translate.google.com>>. Type in the word or sentence that you need translated in the box on the left of the screen, and it will be translated into the language that you select in the box on the right. You can go from French to English and vice versa.



Those inexperienced in French North American research will find published research guides that offer valuable tips and suggestions for genealogical sources.

#### A brief overview of French settlement in North America

Who were the first French people to come to North America and why did they come? The majority were Catholic and were *coureurs de bois* (also written *coureurs des bois*), literally “runners of the woods,” that is, hunters and trappers; *voyageurs* (voyagers), who transported furs along the waterways; soldiers; notaries (recorders of legal proceedings); priests; general adventurers; and of course, the *filles du roi*,

young women sent from France to marry settlers in order to prevent them from marrying Native Americans.

Of course, the soldiers were sent to establish and operate forts. Records of some baptisms, marriages, and burials at these forts may be found in the three-volume set by Faribault-Beauregard, *La population des forts français d'Amérique (XVIIIe siècle)*. To locate the early French forts and other settlements, you will need a good atlas, such as Trudel's *Atlas de la Nouvelle-France* [An Atlas of New France or Canada Gazetteer Atlas].

Other early settlers were religious refugees, such as the Huguenots. These French Protestants were escaping persecution, imprisonment, and death at the hands of the French monarchy and the Catholic Church following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 that had granted religious freedom. Most Huguenots settled along the Atlantic seaboard and were eventually absorbed by the English, while the settlers discussed previously spread throughout Canada, especially along the St. Lawrence seaway, around the Great Lakes and throughout the Mississippi River basin.

In 1755, during the French and Indian War, the French-speaking inhabitants of Acadia (present-day Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island) were expelled. After many years of wandering, these Acadians settled in Louisiana and are the ancestors of the Cajuns. The developed land and farms left behind in Acadia became bounty land for the Loyalists, those Americans who remained loyal to King George, rather than siding with those supporting the American Revolution. The French fleeing slave revolts in Saint Domingue, Haiti migrated to the U.S. beginning in 1791 and settled mainly in New Orleans.

### Sources for researching French ancestors

Begin your research by reading a French North American research guide. Two of the best are *French-Canadian Sources: A Guide for Genealogists* and *Miller's Manual: A Research Guide to the Major French-Canadian Genealogical Resources, What They Are, and How to Use Them*. The St. Louis County Library History and Genealogy Department and many other genealogical libraries also offer collection guides

and finding aids for French North American Research.

Once you are familiar with the available resources, begin your search. As with any type of genealogical research, you want to start with yourself and work your way backward. Locate your birth certificate, your parents' marriage record, their birth certificates, and so on. At some point, depending on where they lived, you are going to run out of the option of locating a birth certificate and will have to rely on city or county birth registers or baptismal records. Since much of French North American research involves Catholic ancestry, you will probably rely heavily on sacramental (church) records, especially baptismal and marriage records. Many are available in print, on microfilm, or digitized online at FamilySearch.org (see especially the *Loiselle Marriage Index*, which includes over one million records, dating from the 17th century), the Drouin Collection on Ancestry.com, and elsewhere. Records will typically give parents' names, including the maiden name of the mother, in addition to the names of the godparents or sponsors. Catholic marriage records will give the maiden name of the bride as well as those of the mothers of both bride and groom.

Notarial, or civil, records are also highly useful in French North American genealogical research. These records include marriage contracts, deeds, contracts, sales of slaves, wills, estates, and more. These can be found in print, on microfilm. St. Louis Deed Records are available on microfilm at St. Louis County Library and have digitized on FamilySearch. Other online sources include "Quebec Notarial Records (Drouin Collection), 1647–1942" at Ancestry.com and the Kaskaskia Manuscripts at FamilySearch.org. [A searchable calendar to the Kaskaskia Manuscripts is also online](https://bit.ly/34hYkKW) <<https://bit.ly/34hYkKW>>.

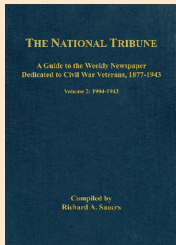
An outstanding resource that brings both sacramental and civil records together in one place is the *Répertoire des actes de baptême, mariage, sépulture et des recensements du Québec ancien* [Collection of the acts of baptism, marriage, burial and the censuses of Old Quebec] published by the Programme de recherche en démographie historique [Historical Demographic Research Program]. Commonly referred to as the PRDH, this 47-volume set covers records from 1621 to 1765. [An online digital version](https://www.prdh-igd.com/) <<https://www.prdh-igd.com/>> charges a fee per match but extends the coverage of the records to 1849.

A SAMPLING FROM  
THE PRINT COLLECTION

Shelf life



### The National Tribune Civil War Index



The *National Tribune* was a newspaper established in 1877 for Union Veterans of the American Civil War and their families. The newspaper's initial purpose was multi-faceted: the founder George Lemon wished to influence congress to remedy defects in existing pension laws, to pass new laws equalizing bounties,

mandating pensions for wounded, disabled, injured and the families of deceased soldiers and establish pensions for Mexican War and War of 1812 veterans and their widows. Its scope expanded and by 1882, it was a weekly newspaper, which gave Civil War veterans a place to tell their stories. The Grand Army of the Republic, Sons of Union Veterans, and Women's Relief Corps all received space in the paper. Not limited to Union soldiers, it was also a place for Confederate veterans to express their stories of their service.

Richard A. Sauers has produced three volumes of *The National Tribune Civil War Index : A Guide to the Weekly Newspaper Dedicated to Civil War Veterans, 1877–1943* (R 973.7 S 255N). The first two volumes are a chronological index of articles by issue covering 1877–1903 and 1904–1943. Indexed entries include page and column number, the author's name, unit, title of the article, and a brief note if the subject is not clear from the title. The third volume is four indexes in one: subject, author, author's unit, and units mentioned in the articles. Volume three is perhaps the most useful. For example, if someone were researching the 17<sup>th</sup> Indiana (see [PastPorts, Vol. 11, No.11](#) [Oct. 2018] <<https://bit.ly/3jgrBdv>>), they would discover that the unit appeared in 68 articles, seven written by soldiers serving in the unit, and three that mention Wilder's Brigade, which was part of the 17<sup>th</sup> Indiana.

The National Tribune has been digitized from 1877–1911 and appears in both the Library of Congress's *Chronicling America* database and on Newspapers.com.

The following family *dictionnaires* are also good sources.

- Jetté's *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles du Québec des origines à 1730* [Genealogical Dictionary of Quebec Families from the Beginning to 1730];
- Tanguay's *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles canadiennes depuis la fondation de la colonie jusqu'à nos jours* [Genealogical Dictionary of Canadian Families from the Founding of the Colony to Our Days]
- Leboeuf's *Complément au dictionnaire généalogique Tanguay* [Complement to Tanguay's Genealogical Dictionary]
- The three-volume *Dictionnaire national des Canadiens français, 1608–1760* [National Dictionary of French-Canadians, 1608–1760]
- White's *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles acadiennes: première partie, 1636 à 1714* [Genealogical Dictionary of Acadian Families: First Part, 1636–1714], (two volumes, plus an English supplement).

These sources trace most families back to the time when the immigrant ancestor first arrived in Canada. Some *dictionnaires* are written in a prose format such as Gagné's three-volume *French-Canadians of the West: A Biographical Dictionary of French-Canadians and French Métis of the Western United States and Canada*. This source, in English, is based on *Morice's Dictionnaire historique des Canadiens et des Métis français de l'ouest*. In addition to the *dictionnaires*, check your local library's catalog or WorldCat for compiled family histories and biographies, such as those found in Gérard Lebel's 30-volume set, *Nos Ancêtres*, translated into English by LaForest as *Our French-Canadian Ancestors*.

French surname books will be helpful to use in conjunction with the family *dictionnaires*, biographies, and family histories. They typically explain the origin of the name and the location in France where it occurs most frequently. See especially the *Noms de famille* [Family Names] series published by Archives & Culture, Paris. The issue of names was often complicated by early *coureurs de bois*, *voyageurs*, and soldiers, who gave themselves nicknames. Referred to as "dit names" in French, they oftentimes came to replace their actual surnames. See Quintin's *The "dit" Name: French-Canadian Surnames, Aliases, Adulterations, and Anglicizations* for a helpful listing.

Many periodicals pertaining to French North American genealogical and historical research are available. The main one for French Canada (and of course, many French-Canadians wound up all across North America) is *Mémoires de la Société généalogique canadienne-française* [Memories of the French-Canadian Genealogical Society], published continuously since 1944. For French colonies worldwide, see *French Colonial History*. Articles in *Mémoires* are strictly in French, but some of the articles in the latter publication are in English. For French Colonial North America, see also the Center for French Colonial Studies' *Le Journal*. You should also consult periodicals from former French settlements, posts, or forts where your ancestor lived, such as Detroit, St. Louis, and New Orleans.

Once you have identified your ancestor, you might be interested in knowing more about where he or she lived. Does the community still exist? Have any archaeological digs been done there? French Colonial archaeologists are currently unearthing the French North American past and writing books on their findings. Examples include Nassaney's *Archaeology of the North American Fur Trade*; Kent's *Ft. Pontchartrain at Detroit: A Guide to the Daily Lives of Fur Trade and Military Personnel, Settlers, and Missionaries at French Posts*; Mazrim's *At Home in the Illinois Country: French Colonial Domestic Site Archaeology in the Midwest, 1730–1800*; and *French Colonial Archaeology: The Illinois Country and the Western Great Lakes*, edited by John A. Walthall.

Finally, locate a library or archive with holdings for French North American research. The St. Louis County Library History and Genealogy Department holds an extensive collection of French North American research collections. Collections include the Joy Reisinger Collection of approximately 1400 books and periodicals and the Noel Pion Collection of over 300 marriage *répertoires*,

## Bibliography

Call numbers refer to shelf locations in the St. Louis County Library History & Genealogy Department. Call numbers beginning with "R" are for in-library use only. Circulating copies are noted.

## Print sources

- Beauregard, Martha F. *La population des forts français d'Amérique (XVIIIe siècle) : répertoire des baptêmes, mariages et sépultures célébrés dans les forts et les établissements français en Amérique du Nord au XVIIIe siècle*. Montreal: Bergeron, 1982. R 973 B383P and circulating copy.
- Dictionnaire national des Canadiens français, 1608–1760*. Woonsocket, R.I.: American French Genealogical Society, 2003. 3 vols. R 971.4 D554
- French-Canadian Sources: A Guide for Genealogists*. Orem, Utah: Ancestry, 2002. R 971 F873 and circulating copy
- French Colonial Archaeology: The Illinois Country and the Western Great Lakes*. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1991. R 977.3 F873
- Gagné, Peter J. *French-Canadians of the West: A Biographical Dictionary of French-Canadians and French Métis of the Western United States and Canada*. s.l.: Quintin Publications, 2000. 3 vols. R 970.09 G135F
- Jetté, René. *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles du Québec des origines à 1730*. Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1983. R 971.4 J58D and circulating copy
- Kent, Timothy J. *Ft. Pontchartrain at Detroit: A Guide to the Daily Lives of Fur Trade and Military Personnel, Settlers, and Missionaries at French Posts*. Ossineke, Mich.: Silver Fox Enterprises, 2001. R 977.434 K37F
- Lebel, Gérard. *Our French Canadian Ancestors*, Thomas J. Laforest, trans. Palm Harbor, Fla.: LISI Press, 1993. 30 vols. R 971.4014 L4420
- Leboeuf, J.-Arthur. *Complément au dictionnaire généalogique Tanguay*. Montréal: Société généalogique canadienne-française, 1977. R 971.4 L447C and circulating copy
- Miller, Douglas J. *Miller's Manual: A Research Guide to the Major French-Canadian Genealogical Resources, What They Are, and How to Use Them*. Pawtucket, R.I.: Quintin Publications, 1997. R 971 M647M and circulating copy
- Noms de Famille* series Published by Archives & Culture in volumes covering specific *départements* in France.
- Répertoire des actes de baptême, mariage, sépulture et des recensements du Québec ancien*. Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1980. 47 vols. R 971.4 R425
- Tanguay, Cyprien. *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles*

*canadiennes depuis la fondation de la colonie jusqu'à nos jours.* Pawtucket, R.I.: Quintin-Rock Pub., 1982. 7 vols. R 971.4 T164D

Trudel, Marcel. *Atlas de la Nouvelle-France.* Québec : Presses de l'Université Laval, 1973. R 912.7 T866A

White, Stephen A. *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles acadiennes: première partie, 1636 à 1714, en deux volumes.* Moncton, N.B.: Centre d'études acadiennes, Université de Moncton, 1999. 2 vols., plus an English supplement. R 971.5 W588D and circulating copy

Mazrim, Robert. *At Home in the Illinois Country: French*

*Colonial Domestic Site Archaeology in the Midwest, 1730–1800.* Urbana, Ill. : Illinois State Archaeological Survey, University of Illinois, 2011. R 977.3 M476A  
Nassaney, Michael S. *Archaeology of the North American Fur Trade.* Gainesville, Fl.: University Press of Florida, 2015. R 338.3 N265A

Quintin, Robert J. *The "dit" Name: French-Canadian Surnames, Aliases, Adulterations, and Anglicizations,* 2nd ed. Pawtucket, R.I.: Quintin Publications, 1998. R 929.42 Q7D

## Go back to school with your research!

Go back to school with your research using these resources for yearbooks, information, and more.

### Yearbooks

[St. Louis County Library](https://bit.ly/3grKeJA) <https://bit.ly/3grKeJA> and [St. Louis Public Library](https://bit.ly/3aQjyRA) <https://bit.ly/3aQjyRA> both hold yearbook collections. Holdings pertain mostly to St. Louis-area schools but include some from other parts of the country. You can also contact libraries near where an ancestor or relative lived to find additional yearbook collections.

*U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900-1999*, an Ancestry.com database, contains [yearbooks from around the United States](https://bit.ly/34vw4EH) <https://bit.ly/34vw4EH>. St. Louis County Library card holders can temporarily use [Ancestry Library Edition at home](https://bit.ly/3gsJ2pf) <https://bit.ly/3gsJ2pf>.

### Schools of yesteryear

In 1981, the Carondelet Historical Society <https://bit.ly/31nk2vm> purchased the former Des Peres school building, which housed the first kindergarten in the United States. Information and pictures of the restored classroom are available on the Carondelet

Historical Society's website. More information about Susan Blow, the school's founder, as well as related resources is provided by the [State Historical Society of Missouri](https://bit.ly/3hta553) <https://bit.ly/3hta553>.



Due to a lack of funds and teachers, early schools made liberal use of "[student monitors](https://bit.ly/2QiUclO)" <https://bit.ly/2QiUclO>. *Reader's Digest* compiled a list of [surprising facts about schools of the last century](https://bit.ly/31oTn10) <https://bit.ly/31oTn10>. Check out the *Public School Review* article, "[A Relevant History of Public Education in the United States](https://bit.ly/2CTY7SY)" <https://bit.ly/2CTY7SY> about the creation of public schools for more in-depth information on the political and theoretical underpinnings of a now-familiar system.

### Finding school information

City directories are as good a source for finding information about institutions as they are for finding people. You may find the names of instructors, the types of classes offered, and more. Early directories are often available online. St. Louis City directories are available on the Fold3 database and some can be viewed on the [Mercantile Library's website](https://bit.ly/3lbr6mC) <https://bit.ly/3lbr6mC>. [Fold3 can be used at home for free by St. Louis County Library card holders](https://www.slcl.org/content/fold3) <https://www.slcl.org/content/fold3>.

**Periodicals**

*French Colonial History*. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press. R 944 F873

*Le Journal/Center for French Colonial Studies*. Prairie du Rocher, Ill.: The Center. R 973.0441 J86  
*Mémoires de la Société généalogique canadienne-française*. Montréal: Société généalogique canadienne-française. R 971.4 M533

**Online sources**

“French Genealogical Word List” at FamilySearch. [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/French\\_Genealogical\\_Word\\_List](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/French_Genealogical_Word_List)

Mango Languages. <https://mangolanguages.com/>. Available to use for free at St. Louis County Library branches and remotely with a valid St. Louis County [Library Card](#) <<https://www.slcl.org/content/mango-languages>>.

Word Reference. <https://www.wordreference.com>.

Google Translate. <http://translate.google.com>.

## History & Genealogy Classes

Classes are free and open to the public, but registration is required. Register at <https://www.slcl.org/events>. Classes will be conducted by Zoom.

**Thursday, Sept. 17, 6:30 p.m.**

### Finding Ancestors in U.S. Census Records

Census records are a basic and essential source for genealogical research in the U.S. Learn how to search census records effectively using Ancestry Library Edition and other electronic databases. | [Register](#)

**Monday, Sept. 21, 6:30 p.m.**

### History and Genealogy in Newspapers

Newspapers are excellent sources of historical and genealogical information, and digitization has made them more widely available. The class will cover 19th-Century U. S. Newspapers, NewspaperArchive, Newspapers.com and St. Louis Post-Dispatch databases. | [Register](#)

**Wednesday, Sept. 30, 6:30 p.m.**

### Discovering Ancestral Military Veterans

Explore strategies for military research in the Fold3 and Ancestry Library Edition databases, as well as in print and internet sources. Prerequisite: Finding Ancestors in U.S. Census Records class or comparable research experience. | [Register](#)

## St. Louis Genealogical Society meetings

Meeting attendance is free and open to the public.

**Saturday, Sept. 12, 10:00 a.m.**

*St. Louis Genealogical Society Monthly Meeting*

### Exploring 1875 St. Louis

Compton and Dry's Pictorial St. Louis is one of the most important maps in American history. Explore the sensations and experiences of life in St. Louis more than 140 years ago. From the city's busy center to its outskirts, past sparkling mansions and congested tenements, surprises wait at every turn! Andrew Wanko, speaker.

The meeting will be conducted on Zoom. Registration is required. Send an email to [programs@stlgs.org](mailto:programs@stlgs.org) by Sept. 9.

**Wednesday, Sept. 16, 7:00 p.m.**

*StLGS German Special Interest Group*

### It's All "Dutch" to Me: A Crash-Course in the Sounds of German

Because German is a highly phonetic language and did not have a regularized spelling system until the 1800s, learning its phonetics can help you navigate difficult documents and dialect issues. This workshop introduces the sounds of German and methodologies for improving genealogical document analysis. Speaker: J. D. Smith

The meeting will be conducted by Zoom. Send an email to [germansig@stlgs.org](mailto:germansig@stlgs.org) for more information.

## Of note

### New online bibliographic guide for Civil War research

History & Genealogy has been working to expand its Civil War resources to include published regimental histories, letters, diaries, memoirs, accounts, action and campaign histories, battle maps, and regional histories related to the Civil War era. An online bibliographic guide is now available to assist researchers in locating information in this substantial collection. The guide, "[American Civil War History & Genealogy Print Collection](https://bit.ly/2Ql6wlw)" <<https://bit.ly/2Ql6wlw>> can be viewed on the library's website.

### SLCL returns to curbside service only

St. Louis County Library has returned to curbside only service. All library buildings are closed to the public until further notice to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Book drops will remain open. All 20 SLCL locations will offer contact free curbside pick-up for patrons to retrieve books, movies and other library materials. Patrons will also be able to request and pick up print-outs. All SLCL branches continue to offer password-free wi-fi that can be accessed from the parking lots. Details about using curbside service, including hours of operation, are available on the [library's website](https://www.slcl.org/curbside) <<https://www.slcl.org/curbside>>. H&G will continue to provide services by phone and email (see sidebar, right) and offer virtual programming.

**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>>.

#### Contact us:

History & Genealogy  
St. Louis County Library  
1640 S. Lindbergh Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63131

314-994-3300  
[genealogy@slcl.org](mailto:genealogy@slcl.org)  
[www.slcl.org/genealogy](http://www.slcl.org/genealogy)

## History & Genealogy services

St. Louis County Library buildings are currently closed to the public because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The following H&G services are available.:

### 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/3jrqrw3j) <<https://bit.ly/3jrqrw3j>>.
- Databases—H&G staff will print out database records if patrons cannot access the database at home.

Please 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](mailto:genealogy@slcl.org).