

State Archives & Libraries: Free Online Sources

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An impressive amount of state historical books and records are available on free, state-funded websites; however, such sites, often with hundreds of different sources, can be hard to find and complex to use. Usually unknown and therefore overlooked by researchers, these state-supported sites are hidden gems; gold mines of ancestral information waiting to be discovered and used. They are free and paid for by tax dollars; it's time we make more people aware of these valuable resources. This session identifies at least one site for every state and a demonstration of sites from popular states.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

Genealogical Content on State Websites

- Indexes, abstracts or records
- Vital records
- Local histories
- Books and journals
- Biographies
- Military records
- Court records
- Deeds
- Newspapers
- Voter registration
- Photographs and videos

State Agencies Providing Such Websites

- Secretary of State
- Archives or library
- Historical society
- Universities

Searching

- Not user friendly
- Minimal guidance
- Look for “databases” or online/digital collections, etc.
- Indexes vs. images
- OCR issues
- Viewing the images
- Electronic delivery of documents

Cautions for Using State Websites

- Instructions & directions

Filed under. . .
 Indexing issues
 Completeness (or not)
 Changes (content, location, format, indexes, URLs)
 Records vs. Guides, Inventories, Lists, etc.
 Link lists

Local and Municipal Websites

Local government
 Public libraries
 Genealogical societies
 Local historical societies

Directories of Sites

Digital State Archives <https://sites.google.com/site/statearchives/>
 [focus mostly on state archives websites, mentions others]
 71 Digital Portals to State History
<http://blogs.loc.gov/digitalpreservation/2013/09/71-digital-portals-to-state-history/>
 Top 75 State Websites of 2012 [Family Tree Magazine, December issues, many repeats]
<http://familytreemagazine.com/article/top-75-state-websites-of-2012>
 2009: <http://www.familytreemagazine.com/article/95-Best-State-Web-Sites-3> (-4 & -5)
 DeathIndexes www.deathindexes.com
 LinkPendum www.linkpendium.com

State Listing (bold are good examples)

Selected examples of digital records

Alabama Dept. of Archives and History <http://www.archives.state.al.us>
 Civil War soldiers; 1867 voter registration
 Alaska State Archives <http://archives.alaska.gov>
 Naturalization abstracts, 1888-1972; Probate index, 1883-1960
 Arizona Dept. of Health Services <http://genealogy.az.gov>
 Certificates of birth, 1855-1937 and death, 1861-1962
 Arkansas History Commission Archives <http://www.ark-ives.com>
 Indexes to: Deaths & burials, 1819-1920; land 1853-1956; biographies. Conf. pensions
 California Online Archives <http://www.oac.cdlib.org>
 Land Case Files, 1852-1904; dozens of personal & family papers; photographs
 California Digital Newspaper Collection <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc>
 Colorado State Archives <http://www.colorado.gov/dpa/doit/archives>
 County probate & divorce indexes; Historical Records Index (2.5 million entries)
 Connecticut State Library Digital Coll. <http://cslib.cdmhost.com>
 Personal and Family Vital Records; Newspapers; Account books, diaries & journals
 Delaware Digital Archives <http://archives.delaware.gov/exhibits/exhibits-toc.shtml>
 Civil War Records; county naturalization records; photographs
 Florida Memory <http://www.floridamemory.com>
 World War I Service Cards; Confederate Pension Applications; photographs

- Georgia Digital Library <http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu>
Colonial wills; Confederate records; county tax digests; death certificates, 1919-1927
- Hawaii State Archives Digital Collections <http://archives1.dags.hawaii.gov/gsd/cgi-bin/library>
Genealogy Index; Vital Statistics records to 1929; Land index to 1918
- Idaho State Historical Society <http://history.idaho.gov/searchable-indexes>
1890 reconstructed census; naturalization records; Biographical Index
- Illinois State Archives www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/home.html
Indexes to deaths to 1950; marriages to 1900; veteran's records; county probate indexes
- Indiana State Digital Archives <http://www.indianadigitalarchives.org>
Naturalization Records; Military Records; Prison Records;
- Iowa, University of Digital Library <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/>
County atlases; U of Iowa yearbooks; Civil War diaries and letters
- Kansas Historical Society http://www.kshs.org/portal_genealogyKentucky
Newspapers; Military (Civil War to Vietnam); Marriages, 1854-1861; 1895 census
- Kentucky Dept. of Libraries & Archives <http://kdla.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx>
Confederate pensions
- Kentucky, University of <http://ukcc.uky.edu/vitalrec>
Indexes to: Deaths, 1911-1992; Marriages, 1973-1993; Divorces, 1973-1993
- Kentucky** Digital Library <http://kdl.kyvl.org> Newspapers; historical books
- Louisiana Sec. of State (Historical Resources) <http://www.sos.la.gov/HistoricalResources>
Indexes to passengers, 1851; deaths, 1906-1962; Orleans births to 1912 & mgs to 1962
- Maine State Library (Maine State Documents) <http://digitalmaine.com/books>
Town, family histories, gov't documents, etc. See also <http://mainegenealogy.net>
- Maryland Archives of, Online <http://aomol.msa.maryland.gov>
City directories; provincial land & probate; biographies; newspaper; early settlers
- Massachusetts State Archives <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcidx.htm>
Indexes to births, marriages & deaths, 1842-1910; Boston arrivals, 1848-1891
- Michigan History Foundation (Seeking Michigan) <http://seekingmichigan.org>
Death records, 1897-1920; State censuses, 1827-1894; Civil War service records
- Minnesota Historical Society (Research) <http://www.mnhs.org/research>
Indexes to births, 1900-1934 & deaths, 1904-2007; state census; veterans' graves
- Mississippi State Archives (Digital Archives) http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives
Tax rolls, 1818-1902; World War I service cards
- Missouri** Digital Heritage <http://s1.sos.mo.gov/mdh>
Death certificates, 1910-1961; Births & death records; 115 county histories;
- Montana State Library: Montana Memory Project <http://mtmemory.org>
County histories; Livestock brands/ marks, 1873-1980; Military enlistments, 1890-1918
- Mont. State Genealogical Society: <http://montanamsgs.org> State Death Registry Index to 2002
- Nebraska State Historical Society <http://www.nebraskahistory.org>
Indexes to County Atlases, Civil War veterans; Prisoner records, 1870-1990; Tract Books
- Nevada State Library and Archives <http://nsla.nv.gov/> [Research Databases]
Nevadadigitalarchives.org temporarily off line; "moving to a new location."
- New Hampshire County Registries of Deeds <http://nhdeeds.com>
Images of deeds to the present for most counties
- New Jersey** Div. of Archives & Records Mgt <http://www.nj.gov/state/archives/index.html>
Index to death records, 1878-1890; marriages 1666-1799 & 1848-1878; 1885 census

- New Mexico Archives Project <http://www.usgwarchives.net/nm/nmfiles.htm>
Death index, 1899-1949
- New York State Archives http://nysa32.nysed.gov/a/research/indexes/index_universal.shtml
Civil War Soldiers; Index to military patents and other various collections
- North Carolina, State Library (Digital Collections) <http://digital.ncdcr.gov>
Alien Reg. and Naturalization; Newspapers; Bible Records; Marriage & Death notices
- North Dakota, State Historical Society of <http://history.nd.gov/archives/dr databases.html>
Indexes to naturalizations, biographies, 1885 census, obituaries; deaths to 2011
- Ohio History Connection <https://www.ohiohistory.org/learn/archives-library/family-history>
Death index, 1913-1937; Newspapers
- Oklahoma Historical Society <http://www.okhistory.org/research/genealogy>
Indexes to Oklahoma City deaths, 1908-1926, 1890 census; military deaths, 20th century
- Oregon Secretary of State (Archives) <http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/databases/index.html>
Early Oregonians (all by 1860); Historical Records Index (606,000 entries)
- Pennsylvania State Library <http://www.portal.state.pa.us> > State Library > Digital Collections
Documents Collection; Genealogy Collection; Historical Newspapers
Also: State Archives > Digital Copies of Documents
- Rhode Island State Archives (Digital Content) <http://sos.ri.gov/archon/index.php>
R I Births Index, 1800-1855; War casualties; Out of state deaths, 1900-1955;
- South Carolina Dept. of Archives & History <http://scdah.sc.gov/Pages/default.aspx>
Online Records Index: Wills, 1782-1855, Confederate veterans, land grants 1784-1868
- South Dakota Digital Archives <http://sddigitalarchives.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm>
Cemetery record search; Biographical File & Index; Naturalization Index;
- Tennessee State Library & Archives <http://www.tn.gov/tsla/index.htm>
Nashville directories, 1853-1881; Death indexes, 1908-1912, 1914-1933; Legislative acts
- Texas State Library & Archives Commission <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us> [Online Collections]
Index to Confed. pensions; Republic claims, also passports; Adj. Gen. Service Records
Also see: Portal to Texas History <http://texashistory.unt.edu/>
- Utah** State Archives <http://www.archives.state.ut.us>
Birth certificates, 1905-1913; Death certificates, 1904-1964; County marriages
- Utah Division of State History: Burials <http://heritage.utah.gov/history/cemeteries>
- Vermont State Archives <http://vermont-archives.org>
Index to Manuscript Vermont State Papers
- Virginia**, State Library of <http://www.viriniamemory.com>
Biographical sketches; Land patents & grants, 1692-1862; Deaths, 1853-1896; Military
- Washington State Archives - Digital <http://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov>
Indexes to births, 1891-1929, deaths, 1891-2000, marriages to 2004; naturalization
- West Virginia Archives: History Center <http://www.wvculture.org/history/history.html>
Certificates for birth, 1852-1912, marriage, 1799-1970, death, 1853-1962
- Wisconsin** Historical Society <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org>
County histories; pre-1907 vital records; biography index; Civil War roster
- Wyoming State Archives <http://wyoarchives.state.wy.us>
Death records 1909-1939 (A-E); newspapers (pre 1923);