



African American Resources

Historical and Genealogical Materials

Please note: This list of records relating to African American records is not definitive. Records description has been ongoing since 1918, and headings have changed over time with changing social and professional standards. Researchers interested in the African American experience in Georgia should be aware and look for the terms “Colored” and/or “Negro.” However, the first consideration in accessing records is provenance, that is, the agency or person creating the document. Therefore, records not specifically labeled or segregated by race may often be pertinent for research.

U.S. Bureau of the Census Population Schedules, 1870-1940

The U.S. Census is usually the starting point for any genealogical research, as (theoretically) all residents of the United States were counted or enumerated.

Slave Schedules, 1850 and 1860:

On these separate Slave Schedules for 1850 and 1860, the name of each slave owner is listed with the number of slaves owned, and number of slaves manumitted (if any). Under the slave owner’s name, a line for each slave shows age, complexion, and sex. Names of slaves were not entered. Available for all Georgia counties.

Georgia State Records

- **Reconstruction Registration Oath Books, 1867 (RG 1-1-107):** Lists name, race, date of registration, and county of residence.
- **Reconstruction Returns of Voters, 1867 (RG 1-1-108):** Lists voter’s number; date of registry; name; number and page in Oath Book; race; time of residence in state, county and precinct within a year; nativity by state or county; naturalization (if any); and remarks (if any).
- **Georgia Archives File II Counties, Subjects, and Names (RG 4-2-46).** Alphabetically arranged within each section. Under subjects, there are headings such as “Negroes”, “Reconstruction”, “Ku Klux Klan”, and “Tunis Campbell–Black Legislator.” These records contain both secondary and primary material.
- **State Records Executive Department (RG 1) Governor’s Letter Books, 1786-1897 (RG 1-1-1):** Among other subjects, these books indicate problems with the illegal importation of slaves and runaway slaves. Check the microfilm card catalog under Executive Dept.
- **Governor’s Subject Files, 1781-1993 (RG 1-1-5):** Chronological. Later material has a variety of subject headings. [Example: In Lester Maddox’s files, there are such subject headings as “Augusta Riot, 1967-70”, “Black Panthers” and “School Desegregation”.]
- **Governor’s Letter Books, 1786-1897 (RG 1-1-1):** Among other subjects, these books indicate problems with the illegal importation of slaves and runaway slaves.



THE GEORGIA ARCHIVES

African American Resources at the Georgia Archives

- **Department of Education (RG 12) Negro Education Division, 1911-ca. 1966**, RG 12-6, : Information on schools constructed with Slater and Rosenwald Funds, Jeanes fund teacher training, One Teacher Experimental Schools, workshops and teacher training programs.
- **Department of Education, Local Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1938-1977**, RG 12-22-64, : African-American schools are listed in separate sections from 1938-1965. Arranged by county, describe each school building, number of teachers, number of employees, number of students in each grade, average daily attendance, budget, and other statistics. An excellent snapshot of schools within the county in any given year.
- **Adjutant General's Office (RG 22) Georgia Army National Guard Miscellaneous Records**, RG 22-1-10 [Note: These records are scattered and do not appear in one single folder.] National Guard Riot Duty, 1900-1945 [Examples: Augusta Riot, 1912; Carrollton Riot, 1901; Racial Disturbance Plans, 1944-1945; Riot Duty, 1943; Statesboro Riot, 1904] Colored Militia Companies, ca. 1870s-1900s
- **General Assembly (RG 37) Summary Committee Reports**, RG 37-8-35 [Example: Report of the American Negro Study Committee, 1970] .
- **Works Progress Administration Records** (RG 44). Most notable in this collection are the WPA surveys of cemeteries, church records, county records, various publications, manuscript collections and the surveys of other states.

County Records

Please note: Many of these records are found in either the Ordinary (Probate) Court or the Superior Court, depending on the county. Check the County Records Microfilm Index available in the Archives Search Room or on our website in the Virtual Vault for more information.

Ordinary Court

- **Marriage Records:** Certificates list the names of the bride and groom, county of marriage, date of marriage, and the name of the official who married the couple.
- **Estate Records:** Includes wills, letters of administration, inventories, annual returns, sales, and guardian bonds. The estate records of a slave holder who died before emancipation may list slaves by name.
- **Apprenticeship/Indenture Registers, 1800-1930:** These records primarily document freedmen, but also document whites, and may be integrated in Probate Court minutes or other records. 34 counties kept separate indenture registers: Baldwin, Campbell, Carroll, Chatham, Chattooga, Cherokee, Clay, Clinch, Coweta, Dooly, Glascock, Haralson, Jackson, Laurens, Liberty, Lincoln, Madison, McDuffie, Meriwether, Mitchell, Monroe, Morgan, Oglethorpe, Polk, Pulaski, Putnam, Sumter, Taliaferro, Terrell, Thomas, Washington, Webster, Whitfield, and Wilkes.
- **Free Persons of Color Registers, 1796-1864:** Registers usually include name, age, occupation (sometimes), property, and white sponsor. Available for 21 counties, and 1 city: Appling, Baldwin, Camden, Chatham, City of Savannah, Clarke, Columbia, Elbert, Emanuel, Hancock, Jefferson, Jones, Liberty, Lincoln, Lumpkin, Morgan, Pulaski, Richmond, Taliaferro, Thomas, Warren, Wilkes.

African American Resources at the Georgia Archives

- **Records of Slave Trials, 1800-1850:** These records may be integrated in regular Superior Court minutes or case files. Some counties kept separate volumes specifically for slave trials. These counties are: Baldwin, Hancock, Jones, Lincoln, Putnam, Screven (plus Trials of Free Persons of Color), Taliaferro (only Trials of Free Persons of Color).
- **Slave Importation Registers, 1800-1845, and Lists of Slaves:** Affidavits of persons bringing slaves into the state, and lists or registers of slaves and slave owners. Available for 12 counties: Camden, Columbia, Elbert, Franklin, Jackson, Jones, Morgan, Oglethorpe, Pulaski, Richmond, Warren, and Wilkes.
- **County Court Records, 1866-:** These courts were established in 1866 to handle civil cases in which the amount in questions was under \$100 as well as misdemeanor/regulatory crimes, previously handled by the County Inferior and Superior Courts. In many counties, these courts were primarily used to try freedmen. Records from these courts are available for 54 counties.

Superior Court

- **County Property Tax Digests, 1789-2001** (RG 34-6-1) and microfilm. All males between the ages of 21 and 60 had to pay a poll tax or head tax. Beginning in 1866, African-Americans are listed separately until the early 1960s. Immediately after the Civil War employers are often listed. Type of taxes paid also indicate occupation and wealth. Pre Civil-War digests indicate number of slaves owned. Digests after about 1930 may not include African-Americans who do not own real property. Digests in Archives custody up to 1890 are scanned and indexed on Ancestry.com. Check microfilm card catalog Tax Digest drawer for microfilm of tax digests not in Archives custody.
- **Deeds:** Generally list the number of acres and the location of the property (either by lot and district number, militia district or by geographic features on the bounds of the property, such as a watercourse). The deed will also include information about the transaction, such as from whom and for how much it was purchased. Most counties have indices to grantor and grantee, also called direct and reverse.

Federal Records

These records are available on microfilm at the Georgia Archives or from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

- **U.S. Adjutant General's Office:** *The Negro in the Military Service of the United States, 1639-1886*. M858. 5 Rolls. (Georgia Archives Microfilm #231/1-5) This microfilm publication reproduces the seven volumes (eight bound parts) of records compiled for publication by the Colored Troops Division of the Adjutant General's Office.
- **U.S. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands:** Georgia Archives only has limited microfilm publications which pertain to Georgia records.
- **U.S. Comptroller of the Currency :** The Freedman's Savings and Trust Company. Georgia Archives only has those microfilm publications which pertain to Georgia records.
- **U.S. Department of the Interior:** African Slave Trade and Negro Colonization, Records of, 1854-1872. M160. 10 Rolls. (GA Archives Microfilm #231/6-15) This microfilm publication reproduces three bound volumes and some unbound records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior relating to the suppression of the slave trade and the colonization of recaptured and free blacks.

African American Resources at the Georgia Archives

- **U.S. Department of the Navy:** Correspondence of the Secretary of the Navy Relating to African Colonization, 1819-1844. M205. 2 Rolls. (GA Archives Microfilm #231/16-17) This microfilm publication reproduces six volumes of correspondence of the Secretary of the Navy relating to African colonization, January 5, 1819-May 29, 1844. Copies of a few documents of later date (August 18, 1856-September 8, 1858) are included.

Manuscripts / Private Papers

These records include private, business, and school records. The collections are indexed by main entry, by geographic location, by subject, by chronological dates, and by the type of forms used (such as diaries, ledgers, etc.). Some collections are available in original format, while others are available solely on microfilm. Manuscript collections are searchable in the book (GIL) catalog.

Other Non-Governmental Material

- **Newspapers:** There are a variety of newspapers available, arranged by city of publication, county of publication, and title of the newspaper. Some examples of newspapers available are *Voice of the People*, 1901-1904, a newspaper published in Atlanta by Bishop Henry McNeal Turner as the monthly organ of the Colored National Emigration Association (GA Archives Microfilm #60/22); and *The Athens Blade*, 1879-1880, which published religious and social news about blacks in Athens and some surrounding counties. (GA Archives Microfilm #91/72)
- **Cemeteries and Churches:** The Archives has a variety of church records available in original format and on microfilm. These collections are available by denomination, by geographic location, and under the subject heading "Afro-Americans--Churches & Synagogues". The researcher should keep in mind that many churches in Georgia had both white and black members, and in some cases, slaves and/or freedmen were not allowed to have a separate church body. Church minutes usually list members, and often indicate race and legal status (free or slave). Church reunion or anniversary pamphlets may be donated to expand this collection.
- **City Directories:** Available mainly for Atlanta (1853-1990), but a few are available for other cities in Georgia. In these directories, there are alphabetical and geographic listings of residents, with the race of the individual noted. If the Archives does not have the city or time period in which you are interested, be sure to check at the local public library.
- **Secondary Sources:** The Archives has books and periodicals on a wide range of subjects in Georgia History.

Streets, David H. *Slave Genealogy: A Research Guide with Case Studies*. Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 1986.
(E185.96 .S817)

Taylor, Frazine K. *Researching African American Genealogy in Alabama: A Resource Guide*.
Montgomery: NewSouth Books, c2008.
(E185.93.A3 T39 2008)

Thackery, David T. *Finding Your African American Ancestors: A Beginner's Guide*. Orem, Utah: Ancestry, c2000.
(E185.96 .T425 2000)

Watson, Dawn. *Slave Importation Affidavit Registers for Nine Georgia Counties, 1818-1847*. Clayton, Ga.: Bone Diggers Press, c2012.
(F285 .W38 2012)

Windley, Lathan A. *Runaway Slave Advertisements: A Documentary History from the 1730s To 1790*.
Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983.
(E446 .W73 1983)

Woodtor, Dee. *Finding A Place Called Home: A Guide to African-American Genealogy and Historical Identity*.
New York: Random House, c1999.
(E185.96 .W69)

Check GIL for more resources.

Published materials for Georgia counties begin at F292.A6. Counties are organized alphabetically.

Other State resources available for Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.



African American Genealogy: Select Print Resources at the Georgia Archives



GEORGIA ARCHIVES
5800 Jonesboro Road
Morrow, Georgia 30260
Tel.: 678-364-3700
www.georgiaarchives.org

Adolphus, Adam L. *African Americans of Washington County, Georgia: From Colonial Times Through Reconstruction*. Saline, Mich.: McNaughton & Gunn, Inc., 2011. **Published with assistance of the R. J. Taylor Foundation.**

(F292.W25 A36 2011)

Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS) *Journal of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society*. Washington, D.C.: Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, 1980-. (E185.96 .A46)

Barrow, Charles Kelly et al. *Forgotten Confederates: An Anthology about Black Southerners*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Heritage Press, c1995. (E540.N3 F67)

Bransom, Marlene Garrett. *Early African American Deaths in the Pittsburgh Courier*. 15 Vols. Apollo, PA: Closson Press, 2011. (F159.P69 N427)

Braxton-Secret, Jeanette. *Guide To Tracing Your African American Civil War Ancestor*. Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, c1997. (E540.N3 B73 1997)

Byers, Paula K. *African American Genealogical Sourcebook*. New York: Gale Research, c1995. (E185.96 .A444)

Cox, Jack F. *The 1850 Census of Georgia Slave Owners*. Baltimore, Md.: Clearfield, Co. Inc., 1999. (F285 .C794)

Evans, E. Raymond. *Contributions by United States Colored Troops (USCT) of Chattanooga & North Georgia During the American Civil War, Reconstruction and Formation of Chattanooga*. Chickamauga, Ga: Beverly Foster, 2003. (E540.N3 E83 2003)

Fears, Mary L. Jackson. *Slave Ancestral Research: It's Something Else*. Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1995. (CS71.M133453 1995)

Flanders, Ralph Betts. *Plantation Slavery in Georgia*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1933. (E445.G3 F62)

Garrett-Nelson, LaBrenda. *A Guide to Researching African American Ancestors in Laurens County, South Carolina and Selected Finding Aids*. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2016. (F277.L3 G37 2016)

Killion, Ronald G. & Charles T Waller. *Slavery Time When I Was Chillun Down on Marster's Plantation: Interviews With Georgia Slaves*. Savannah: Beehive Press, c1973. (E445.G3 K5)

Martin, Joann Mitchell. *Slave Bills Of Sale Project*. Atlanta, Ga.: Afro-American Family History Association, Inc., 1986. (E445.G3 S63)

Ports, Michael A. *Georgia Free Persons of Color*. 5 Vols. Baltimore, Maryland: Clearfield, 2015. (F285 .P6 2015)

Potts, Howard E. *A Comprehensive Name Index for the American Slave*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997. (E444 .A45 Suppl. 4)

Rawick, George P. *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*. Vols 12 & 13. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Pub. Co., 1972. (E444 .A45)

Simmons-Henry, Linda et al. *The Heritage of Blacks in North Carolina*. Charlotte, N.C.: The North Carolina African-American Heritage Foundation in Cooperation with The Delmar Co., c1990. (E185.93.N6 H4)

Online Resources for Georgia Archives Genealogical Records

(with focus on African American resources)

Ancestry.com:

(subscription site also accessible in Georgia Archives Research Room and Georgia's public libraries)

U.S. Census, 1820-1940.

- All persons in household listed beginning in 1850 (Freedmen listed)
- All African-Americans listed beginning in 1870
- Relationship to head of household listed beginning in 1880
- Each census tracks different information.

For African-American research:

Separate slave censuses (under Census click All) in 1850 and 1860 list name of slave owner with a separate record for each slave listing gender, age and color (black or mulatto).

U.S. City Directories, 1821-1989: Search>Schools, Directories & Church Histories

Browse this collection for state, city and date coverage

- Gives head of household, may include name of spouse, address, occupation or employer
- Separate entries for wage-earners in same household
- Includes street directory by address

World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918: Search>Military

- Men born between 1872 and 1900 required to register
- Three separate registrations which give different information
- Gives name, address, date and place of birth, occupation and employer, physical description, address of nearest relative, and marital status

Georgia Property Tax Digests: Original Digests up to 1875, plus 1880, 1885 and 1890.

- 1890 was posted first as substitute for **missing 1890 Census**.

For African-American research:

- Pre-Civil War digests list number of slaves owned by taxpayer.
- Immediate post-Civil War digests list names of freedmen and their employers. Some counties continue to list employers in 1890 tax digests.

Central Register of Convicts, 1817-1976: Register of convicts in the Georgia state prison system, including prison farms and work camps

- Gives name, prisoner number (when applicable), received date, sentence, crime, county of conviction, gender, release date.
- May also give date of escape, recapture, type of release.
- Depending on date, different ledgers for felonies and misdemeanors.

Georgia, Returns of Qualified Voters and Reconstruction Oath Books, 1867

For African-American research:

- First official state record giving surnames for African-Americans.

U.S. Colored Troops Military Service Records, 1863-1864: Compiled military service records for United States African-American troops that volunteered to serve with the Union.

- Most records give name of soldier, age, birthplace, enlistment date, enlistment location

Georgia Civil War Correspondence, 1847-1865

- Governor's Incoming Correspondence ("Joe Brown" incoming correspondence),
- Governor's Letterbooks (outgoing correspondence),

Georgia Civil War Correspondence, 1861-1865: Civil War-era correspondence from several series

- Adjutant General's Incoming Correspondence, Adjutant General's Letterbooks.
- Online collection is **Incomplete**.

Georgia Deaths, 1919-1998: Index compiled by Georgia Vital Records Office.

- Gives date of death, county of death, certificate number, race.
-

FamilySearch.org: United States>Georgia. Free. Must register and create a free account to view search results and images.

Georgia Deaths, 1914-1927. Same collection as in Virtual Vault.

- Can search by First Name / Last Name without Advanced Search, but searching is more limited than in Virtual Vault.

Georgia Deaths, 1928-1940. (Certificates in Virtual Vault only to 1930)

- Records indexed, can search by First Name / Last Name, Death Place, Year (Range)
- Indexing not corrected, error rate about 5-7%.

Georgia, County Marriages, 1785-1950. Indexed images of marriage records on microfilm held by Georgia Archives, roughly up to 1900.

- Search by bride, groom, county of marriage, date span (year) of marriage.
- Some gaps in coverage.
- If you are not sure a marriage book has been indexed, search a date span and last name "Smith" or "Johnson."
- Lists bride and groom, county of marriage and date of marriage.
- Marriage book volume number and page not given.
- Marriage records are also in Georgia's Virtual Vault and in Ancestry.com

Georgia Probate Records, 1742-1975. Probate microfilm held by Georgia Archives.

- Not indexed (must browse through images).
- Browse files arranged alphabetically by county and type of record.

For African-American research:

Estate Inventories and Appraisements, Wills, Distributions that list slave names. (Normally does not include surnames for slaves)

Freedmen's Bureau Records. Search>Wiki>Search "Freedmen's Bureau Records" select African American Freedmen's Bureau Records. Scroll down to Searchable Collections on FamilySearch OR Search>United States>scroll to United States Freedmen's Bureau records.

- Indexed collections of a wide range of records including registers, returns and lists; claims records; labor contracts and apprenticeship records; complaints; court records; hospital and medical records; and bank records.
 - Includes browse collections of field office records for each state in which the Freedmen's Bureau operated.
 - Field Office records are listed in the Search section in the records for each state.
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GeorgiaArchives.org: Georgia Archives' website

Virtual Vault <http://vault.georgiaarchives.org/cdm/>
Georgia Archives digital collections

Marriage Records on Microfilm: Search by County drop-down.

- Some gaps in coverage, over 90% complete.
- Not all volumes are indexed. Index within volume is usually groom index only.
- Lists bride and groom, county of marriage and date of marriage.
- Some counties had separate marriage books for whites and blacks. Look for the Colored or African American Marriage books.

County Records Microfilm Index: Search by County drop-down. Card index of Archives holdings of county records on microfilm. Estate records, marriage records, deeds.

- First card for each county lists any courthouse disaster which destroyed records.
- Arranged by court, then alphabetically by record type.
- Estate records are grouped together.
- Some counties had African American specific records, i.e. colored tax digests, slave trials, registers of Free Persons of Color, etc.

File II Names. Search by name.

- Use Advanced Search to search by name. Includes only primary sources (original documents and transcripts).

File II Counties and Subjects. Search by name or by subject.

- Includes important primary source material under subjects Reconstruction and under individual counties.

General Name File: Card index of personal names in state, local and personal records compiled by Georgia Archives staff.

- Choose first letter of surname in alphabet drop-down to search.

Vanishing Georgia. Photographs. Search by County drop-down.

- Use Advanced Search to search by keyword, begin date, subject, etc.

FindingAids <https://find.georgiaarchives.org/>

- Georgia Agency Records
- Search by keyword or by agency name
- Note DOC or RCB number to request records
- Use terms related to African Americans, including slave, negro, colored, Afro-American, black, etc.

GIL: Book & Manuscript Catalog <https://gil.georgiaarchives.org/>

- Includes manuscript collections (non-government records)
 - Published local and county histories, cemetery surveys, newspaper abstracts
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Fold3.com: (subscription site also accessible in the Georgia Archives Research Room)

- Main focus on military records. African Americans served in all the wars fought by United States.
 - Non-Military Records include:
 - African American Collection (Court records for Amistad, and South Carolina Estate Inventories and Bills of Sale, 1732-1872 among other things)
 - Native American Collection (Dawes Packets, Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940, and Eastern Cherokee Applications among other things)
 - Newspapers
 - Town Records
 - Passport Applications
-

Digital Library of Georgia www.dlg.galileo.usg.edu

You can *Browse by Media Type* to find the various types of records available on the Digital Library of Georgia.

- Books
- Maps including Sanborn Fire Maps
- Newspapers (Georgia Historical Newspapers) gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu.
- Oral Histories including *Living Atlanta* oral history collection (from the Atlanta History Center)
- Photographs

Last updated January 2018

Resources for Records of Enslaved People in Georgia

U.S. Census, 1820-1860.

On Ancestry.com: (subscription pay site, available at Georgia Archives and at public libraries)

- Only head of household listed 1820-1840, others in household, **including slaves**, counted by gender and age range within regular population schedule.
- All white persons in household listed beginning in 1850.
- Separate slave schedules for 1850 and 1860 list slaves under name of owner by age, gender and color (black or mulatto).
- Each census tracks different information.

On FamilySearch.org: United States Census, (1820-1860). Free site. Must register and create a (free) account to view images

Georgia Property Tax Digests

On Microfilm: Card catalog drawer labeled Tax Digests, arranged by county, microfilm of tax digests held by county and by the Georgia Archives.

On Ancestry.com: (subscription pay site, available at Georgia Archives and at public libraries) Search>Explore by Location>Georgia, indexed images of county tax digests held by the Georgia Archives

- Pre-Civil War digests list number of slaves owned by taxpayer.
- Taxpayers are listed in militia district where they lived, often (but not always) in rough alphabetical order

Superior Court Records

On Microfilm: Card catalog drawer of county records, Superior Court records are filed behind blue card. For each county:

- **Deed Records** include slave deeds and marriage settlements which include slaves. There was no law requiring deeds to be recorded.
- **Superior Court Minutes** include
 - Civil cases, lawsuits over debt (over \$100) and over land
 - Criminal cases (Capital cases for slaves and free persons of color tried in Superior Court after 1849)
 - Divorces
 - Early Minutes are often not indexed
 - Civil and Criminal Case files (petitions, warrants, interrogatories, writs of fi. fa., judgments, etc.) for some counties, both microfilm and original

Probate Records

On Microfilm: Card catalog drawer of county records, Estate Records are all grouped together by type of record, Inferior Court and Ordinary Court records are interfiled. The Georgia Archives has microfilm of probate records not available through FamilySearch.

- Estate Records: Inventories and Appraisements, Wills, Annual Returns, Distributions, Sales, that list slaves by name.
- If real property is owned, descendant is intestate and the estate must go through probate whether or not there is a will

Original Estate Records: FindingAids@Georgia Archives, available on Georgia Archives website main page, database of original records held by Georgia Archives.

- Original Wills, Inventories and Appraisements, Annual Returns, Vouchers, Sales, etc. submitted to the Ordinary Court for recording.
- Keyword Search by name.
- Search under County, then Probate Court or Inferior Court. Look for series with titles such as Estate Records, Misc. Records, Case Files.

On FamilySearch.org: Georgia Probate Records, 1742-1990. Free site. Must register and create a (free) account to view images

Georgia Probate Records, 1742-1975. Probate records microfilmed by Genealogical Society of Utah and held by Georgia Archives

- Not indexed (browse images).
- Browse files arranged alphabetically by county and type of record.
- Some counties record multiple types of records in the same book
- Books may have different names in Microfilm Card Catalog and FamilySearch Georgia Probate Record Collection.
- Microfilm Card Catalog has cross-references

Inferior Court Records

On Microfilm: Card catalog drawer of county records, Inferior Court records are interfiled with Ordinary Court records.

Inferior Court records for Ordinary (Probate) Purposes (1789-1851) are grouped under Estate Records. Inferior Court Minutes include:

- Proceedings in estate cases and some estate records
- Minor civil cases, lawsuits of debt (less than \$100)
- Minor Criminal Cases
- Slave Cases
- Often not indexed

Inferior Court Minutes for County Purposes (1789-1868) may include

- Contracts for bridges, courthouses, jails
- Road crews

Some Inferior Court records for Ordinary Purposes on microfilm are also available in the **Georgia Probate Records, 1742-1975 Collection on FamilySearch.org**

Supreme Court Case Records, 1846

Reports of Decisions of the Supreme Court of Georgia

- Published reports of the decisions of the Georgia Supreme Court
- Decisions summarize the original court case and question at law before the court
- Decision will either reaffirm the lower court's decision or send the case back to the lower court
- Many cases involving slaves, some which were not resolved until the 1880s.

Supreme Court Case Files, Record Group 92/1/1

- Papers filed with the court, including bills of exceptions, motions to the courts, and case files from the lower court. Does not include trial transcripts.

Slave Importation Records

On Microfilm: Card catalog drawer of county records

- New county residents required to sign an affidavit listing slaves with Clerk of Superior Court.
- Separate Slave Importation Registers survive for Camden, Columbia, Elbert, Franklin, Jackson, Morgan, Oglethorpe, Pulaski, Richmond, Warren, and Wilkes under Ordinary Records.
- Check Superior Court Minutes for other counties.

Free Persons of Color Registers

On Microfilm: Card catalog drawer of county records.

- Free Persons of Color required to register with the county Court of Ordinary
 - Registers usually include name, age, occupation (sometimes), property, and white sponsor.
 - Available for twenty-one counties.
 - Abstracted by Michael A. Ports, check online catalog, GIL.
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Laws

Online: Georgia Legislative Documents (GALILEO):

Keyword-searchable transcriptions of laws passed by the Georgia General Assembly from 1799-1999. There are gaps, in particular 1861-1864 are missing.

- Search by Basic Search or Boolean Search (and, or, not). Limit search results to year span.
- Slave laws, manumissions
- Laws of free persons of color
- Name changes, relief bills, divorces, incorporations

Acts of the General Assembly of Georgia (Georgia Session Laws), published compilation of laws passed during each legislation session, available at the Georgia Archives.

Colonial Records of Georgia

Online: <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000530729> Free.

- Legalization of slavery, vol. 25
- First comprehensive Georgia slave law, vol. 18, pp. 102-144

Digests, Compilations, and Historic Georgia Codes

Online: University of Georgia Law Library, http://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/ga_code/
<http://libguides.law.uga.edu/c.php?g=177153&p=1164400> Free.

- Download in different formats, including color or black and white pdf.
- Watkins' Digest, 1800, first published digest of Georgia laws to 1800, includes 1770 slave law which was in effect at time of publication. Repealed laws are cited but the text is not included. Arranged chronologically, subject index.
- Compilations are all laws passed within 10-year period (1812 Compiled Laws=1800-1810, 1821 Lamar's Compilation=1810-1820, 1831 Dawson's Compilation=1820-1830).
- Prince's Digest, 1837, is arranged by topic, citations to date of passage and to earlier digests, with subject index. Local Acts indexed to earlier compilations.
- Hotchkiss's Digest, 1845, is arranged by topic, has subject index, and includes some citations to English statutes.
- Cobb's Compilation, 1859, is arranged by topic, includes all laws from 1765, includes passage dates and cross-references to later amendments, and a subject index.
- 1860 Code is first Georgia Code authorized by the Georgia General Assembly. Published after Georgia seceded from the Union, so includes the Confederate Constitution. Organized into Titles by subject or area of the law. Clear and concise, but does not use verbatim wording of legislation. No citations or dates of passage.

Newspapers

From Digital Library of Georgia <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>. Microfilm of Georgia Historic Newspapers scanned and OCR'd Free. Legal notices for estate and sheriff's sales, accounts of trials. Milledgeville newspapers follow the legislature in session, with bills introduced and passed, and editorials regarding bills.

- Augusta, Milledgeville, Savannah, Columbus and Macon newspapers
- Keyword Search or Browse by Title and Date
- Browse Issues by Date (Expand All) to determine if an issue was available for scanning.
- OR Search University of Georgia's online catalog (GIL) for microfilm holdings of specific titles to determine if an issue was available for scanning.

From GeorgiaArchives.org: Georgia Archives' website

Virtual Vault <http://vault.georgiaarchives.org/cdm/>

Georgia Archives digital collections

FileII Names. Search by name. Records from many sources filed together by name for easy access.

- Use Advanced Search to search by name. Includes only primary sources (original documents and transcripts).

Central Register of Convicts, 1817-1976: Register of convicts in the Georgia prison system, including prison farms and work camps

- Gives name, prisoner number (when applicable), receive date, sentence, crime, county of conviction, gender, release date.
- May also give date of escape, recapture, type of release.
- Depending on date, different ledgers for felonies and misdemeanors.

Finding Aids

County Records Microfilm Index: Search by County drop-down. Card index of Archives holdings of county records on microfilm. Estate records, marriage records, deeds.

- First card for each county lists any courthouse disaster which destroyed records.
- Arranged by court, then alphabetically by record type.
- Estate records are grouped together.

General Name File: Card index of personal names in state, local and personal records compiled by Georgia Archives staff.

- Choose first letter of surname in alphabet drop-down to search.

Church Records Microfilm Collection: Search by Denomination drop-down. Card index of Archives holdings of church records on microfilm.

- Arranged by denomination, then by name of church.
- County where church is located is noted on card

Maps

Historic Map Collection: Collection of historic maps of Georgia and the Southeastern U.S. and reference maps on historic topics.

- Search by keyword or click on Browse All button on top menu bar to retrieve entire collection.
- Includes Georgia Militia Districts map published by U.S. Census Bureau in 1952
- Includes State of Georgia Original and 1895 Counties and Land Lot Districts, color outline map of areas distributed by headright and different land lotteries.

County Map Collection: Search by County drop-down. Collection of historic county maps of Georgia. All maps are post-Civil War, no maps from slavery era.

- Includes at least one map from each county.
- Includes maps from the first comprehensive survey by the state Surveyor General, 1867-1870, where maps have survived.
- 1867-1870 maps of from land lottery counties include district and lottery numbers.



Documenting Family History in Georgia

How to Begin

Before you begin

When compiling a family history, remember that any piece of information—oral or written—that links a name, place, and date together may help you in establishing kinship lines. As you begin to gather data, record it on preprinted forms (ancestral charts and family group sheets) or use one of the many commercial computer programs available.

For each ancestor, you will wish to determine as much of the following as possible: birth place and date; parents; when and where they attended churches, synagogues, and schools; occupation; when, where, and to whom married; names of children and when and where children were born; death date, death place, and burial place.

When planning a research trip, arrange the information you have gathered and develop a plan of research. Know for whom you are looking and the type of information you are seeking. Research facility hours are subject to change. Before making a research trip, always check the hours of any repository you wish to visit. Usually this information is available on their website and telephone.

Steps to Follow

1. Start with “known” information: record all relevant information about yourself, your parents, and grandparents. Remember: start recent, THEN work backward.
2. Begin a pedigree, or “ancestry”, chart and maintain it as you gather information. Using a pencil will make later corrections or additions much easier. Record additional information for each family on a family group sheet.
3. Search the U.S. Census. Beginning in 1790, the census has been taken every 10 years. Census records are available through 1940. The census is the building block of genealogical research. Unfortunately, the 1790, 1800, 1810, and 1890 Federal census records for Georgia are not available. You can use tax digests from those time periods to locate ancestors. Census records are available through Ancestry.com and other sources.
4. Get birth, death, and marriage certificates. These all contain vital information on your ancestors. Some are kept by the state Vital Records department and others are with the Archives.
5. Look for estate records which may confirm dates of death and family relationships when there are no birth or death certificates (in Georgia, generally before 1919).
6. Locate church records (baptismal, birth, death, marriage, membership), which often contain revealing information.
7. Search for birth, marriage, and death notices in local and regional newspapers. Many are located on microfilm in the archives and at the University of Georgia Library. Regional newspapers have been scanned and are available through the Digital Library of Georgia.
8. Look for family genealogical folders, family Bibles, and published family histories.
9. Check county histories for information on prominent families within the county.
10. Make a trip to the city/county where your ancestors lived to see if there is a local archive/historical society/special library collection which might contain records pertinent to your research.
11. Try an on-line search to see if there is information on your family line done by others. ALWAYS VERIFY THE INFORMATION YOU FIND ONLINE!



THE GEORGIA ARCHIVES

Documenting Family History in Georgia

Governmental Records

City halls, county courthouses, and state archives provide a wealth of information for the genealogist. In Georgia, most of the official records with genealogical value are created at the county level. Among the county records of particular interest to the genealogist are:

Probate Court

(formerly known as Ordinary or Inferior)

- Marriages
- Estate records (wills, letters of administration, inventories, annual returns, sales, and guardian bonds). Many, though not all, of Georgia's estate records are now available through the FamilySearch.org collection "Georgia Probate Records, 1742-1990."

Superior Court

- Deeds
- Criminal and civil cases, including divorces
- Property tax digests
- Registers of physicians, dentists, lawyers, and other professionals authorized to practice in a given county.
- Voter registration lists (sometimes found under the Probate Court)

Most pre-1900 Georgia county records (except for civil and criminal case files) are available on microfilm at the Georgia Archives. Many probate and marriage records are also available online through FamilySearch.org. With a few exceptions, notably tax digests and some marriage records, county records created after 1900 are not available for research at the Georgia Archives.

Information or copies of post-1900 records may be obtained by visiting the courthouse or by directly writing county officials (judge of Probate Court or clerk of the Superior Court).

Birth and Death Records

With a few exceptions, there are no birth and death records in Georgia prior to 1919. For more specific information, please see the Georgia Archives information sheet, "Georgia's Vital Records."

Georgia Archives Research

The Georgia Archives is the official repository for permanent records created by the various branches of state government. The Georgia Archives also has some county records and private records of individuals and organizations that related to state and local history. Some genealogically significant sources are:

- **County records:** Pre-1900 records of Superior Court and Probate (formerly Ordinary or Inferior) Court for most of Georgia's 159 counties are available on microfilm. Original records for some counties include marriage certificates and case files from the superior and inferior courts.
- **State government records:**
 - Confederate Pension Applications (available in Georgia's Virtual Vault),
 - Executive Department Incoming Correspondence,
 - Department of Revenue Tax Digests (1874-1890 available online at Ancestry.com),
 - Death Certificates (available online in FamilySearch.org and in Georgia's Virtual Vault),
 - File II Names (original records available online in Georgia's Virtual Vault),
 - Colonial and Headright and Land Lottery Grants and Plats,
 - Headright and Bounty Documents (available online at FamilySearch.org),
 - Central Register of Convicts (available online at Ancestry.com).
- **Books:** Family histories, local histories, out-of-state material, indexes to various records such as census records and cemeteries; search the Archives online book catalog (GIL).
- **Vertical Files:** Family folders, military records, church and cemetery files.
- **U. S. records:** Census; Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands; Confederate Service records (also available online through fold.3.com); Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- **Newspapers** (microfilm only, spotty selection)
- **Private manuscript collections:** Letters, diaries, account books, organizational records, Bible records, and church records, collection descriptions available through the Archives online book catalog (GIL).

Documenting Family History in Georgia

Research from Home

Georgia's Virtual Vault

Many valuable records from the Georgia Archives have been digitized and hosted online in Georgia's Virtual Vault at <http://cdm.georgiaarchives.org:2011/cdm/>. Useful genealogy collections include:

- Colonial Wills
- Confederate Enlistment Oaths & Discharges
- Confederate Pension Applications
- County Tax Digests (1785-1799)
- File II Names
- Georgia Death Certificates and Georgia Non-Indexed Death Certificates (1919-1930)
- Marriage Records from Microfilm

Genealogy on the Internet

When using the Internet for research, it is crucial to understand that much of the information available on the Internet is **not verified**. In other words, you need to treat your research through the Internet as a secondary source, much as you would a published book. The reliability of the information is equivalent to that of any published source—excellent to poor—and should be used as clues to guide you to the primary, or original, record that would substantiate the genealogical information. If the primary or original record is available online, review that record to make sure that information has been correctly indexed and transcribed or that important information has not been omitted. It is extremely important to notice who is creating and displaying the information. Is it the official page for a historical society, or is this the contribution of an individual? Traveling from link to link can sometimes take you to sites where it may not be clear who the author is.

In addition to the Georgia Archives web site and Georgia's Virtual Vault, some basic, general reference sites and sites with original records relevant to Georgia genealogy that may prove helpful include:

- **Digital Library of Georgia:** <http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu>
- **Georgia GenWeb Project:** <http://thegaproject.org>
- **National Archives at Atlanta:** <http://www.archives.gov/atlanta>
NARA Atlanta Finding Aids: <http://www.friendsnas.org/findingAids/index.html>
- **The Georgia Genealogical Society:** <http://www.gagensociety.org>
- **Ancestry:** <http://www.ancestry.com> (subscription required)
- **FamilySearch:** <http://www.FamilySearch.org>

Oral Interviews

Interviews with family members can be a valuable source of information, from family names to dates and locations which may be helpful for narrowing your research. Ask general questions, but let your relative do most of the talking. Question gently, especially when interviewing older relatives who are sharing their life story with you. Transcribe all audio and video interviews (remember that magnetic and digital media are not permanent).

Collecting Information from Home

Get as many names, dates, and places as possible. Review documents and photographs in your family's possession and make notes about all information you discover (be certain to cite the source).

- Bible records (these often note births, baptisms, marriages, and deaths)
- Letters, birthday, sympathy, wedding, and other occasion cards
- School report cards and diplomas
- Membership cards and certificates for clubs, lodges, and other organizations
- Insurance policies
- Marriage, death, and divorce records
- Previously compiled family history

Local-Area or Community-Based Research

Resources focused on a specific geographic area or community may provide other valuable information. Some of this information may also be found in published books or on microfilm at the Georgia Archives.

- Church and synagogue records, including minutes and membership lists (view the “Church Records Microfilm Collection” in the Virtual Vault for a list of the Georgia Archives church records)
- Cemetery records and tombstones (the Georgia Archives has many published resources)
- Public libraries (usually have a local history room)
- Historical and genealogical societies

Ready to Begin? Plan your research strategy.

- Oral interviews
- Home-based research
- Fill in genealogical chart with the names, places, and dates that you know
- Begin your records research with the most recent U.S. census record available for the family you are researching. The 1940 census is the most recent census available for the public use. Georgia census records, 1820 through 1940 (except for the 1890 that was destroyed) are available at the Georgia Archives, National Archives, and many public libraries, either on microfilm or in a digital, online format. For more information on census records, please see the Georgia Archives information sheet, “Using the Federal Census in Georgia.”

Always remember to cite the source for all information. A photocopy of a document is of little value unless you know where the original is located. We recommend the following formats:

- **For original governmental records:** Series Title, Record Group numbers, Name of Institution.
For example: *File II Names, RG 4-2-46, Georgia Archives.*
- **For private papers:** Collection Title, Accession Number, Name of Institution.
For example: *Henry Dickerson McDaniel Family and Business Papers, ac 1966-0400m, Georgia Archives.*

For citations of published, microformat, or electronic materials, we recommend you consult the following:

- *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Need more help?

If you need more help, we invite you to visit the Georgia Archives, where we will be happy to assist you with your research.

Please check our website for updated hours and directions. The Archives is closed for most federal and state holidays, which may also be found on our website.

At this time, we have no mail reference services. Brief factual questions and questions about Georgia Archives holdings may be submitted through our Ask an Archivist web form.

Ask an Archivist web form: http://georgiaarchives.org/research/research_services

Reference phone: 678-364-3710

Research guides: http://georgiaarchives.org/research/research_help

GIL (Georgia Archives Book Catalog): <http://gil.georgiaarchives.org/>

Georgia Archives Finding Aids for State Records: <https://find.georgiaarchives.org/archon/>



Georgia's Vital Records

Official Records

Officially, statewide registration of births and deaths began in 1919. Death records for 1919-1942 are available for research at the Georgia Archives. Death records for 1919-1941 are available online. An index to death records is available online for the years 1919-1998, and this may be consulted to confirm the exact year of death and obtain the certificate number.

For birth certificates from 1919-present and death records 1943-present, contact the Georgia Department of Human Resources at:

Vital Records
1680 Phoenix Blvd, Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30349
404-679-4702
<http://dph.georgia.gov/VitalRecords>

You may also request birth and death certificates 1919-present from the Vital Records Office in the county where the birth or death occurred. A list of county offices is available online at www.vitalrec.com/ga.html

Early Registration

In general, there are no official birth or death certificates before 1919 in Georgia. However, there are some exceptions. The records listed below are available on microfilm at the Georgia Archives and must be used by researchers on-site at the Archives. Most of them are not indexed.

An 1875 act of the Georgia General Assembly mandated statewide registration of births, deaths, and marriages. Few counties complied with this law, and even fewer citizens within those counties reported the required information. This effort for statewide registration of vital records was funded by the legislature for only two years, but some birth records from 1875 and 1876 are available on microfilm at the Georgia Archives. The participating counties were:

Carroll: Birth, 1875; Marriage, 1875; Death, 1875
Chattooga: Birth, 1875-76; Marriage, 1874-76; Death 1874-76
Clayton: Birth, 1875; Marriage, 1875
Colquitt: Birth, 1875; Marriage, 1875; Death, 1875
Early: Birth, 1876; Marriage, 1876
Jackson: Birth, 1875; Marriage 1875-76; Death, 1875
Jefferson: Death, 1875
Lincoln: Marriage, 1875
Lumpkin: Birth, 1875; Marriage 1875-76; Death, 1875
McIntosh: Marriage, 1875; Death, 1875
Miller: Birth, 1875-76; Marriage, 1875-76; Death, 1875-76
Muscogee: Marriage, 1876
Oglethorpe: Birth, 1875-78
Pulaski: Birth, 1875
Richmond: Marriage, 1875-76
Sumter: Birth, 1875-76; Marriage, 1875-76
Talbot: Death, 1875
Taliaferro: Birth, 1875-76; Marriage, 1875-76
Walton: Birth, 1875-76; Death, 1875



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In 1914 the General Assembly vested the State Board of Health with the duty of compiling vital statistics in the state and authorized the establishment of a central bureau of vital statistics. Early registration was scant. The few certificates that were filed with the state were grouped roughly by year as they were gathered together, placed in binders, and stamped with a "file number." To some extent the sequence of the certificates reflects the order in which they were received by the state registrar. These certificates, which principally cover the years 1914-1919, were transferred to the custody of the Georgia Archives and have been scanned. They are available on-line at www.GeorgiaArchives.org.

Included in the microfilmed holdings of the Georgia Archives are widely-scattered, pre-1919, birth and death records for the localities listed below. These registrations are not to be considered complete for the indicated dates.

Chatham: Death, 1803-1847; Myrick Index to Marriages and Deaths, 1733-1837
Clarke: Birth, 1808-1852
Emanuel: Birth, 1822-1863
Greene: Death, 1811-1833
Meriwether: Death, 1890; 1917-1919
Richmond: Birth, 1823-1896
City of Gainesville: Birth, 1865-1919; Death, 1908-1919

Marriage licenses in Georgia have been required since 1805, although some counties exercised voluntary registration as early as the 1780s. They are maintained by the Probate Court of each county. The fact that marriage records are not at the Vital Records office for any period of time does not mean that they are missing from a county's records. The Georgia Archives has county marriage records on microfilm. These filmed marriage records generally date from the nineteenth century, but the records for some counties may be as current as the 1950s. Contact the Archives to identify the span of dates for specific counties.

Local Registration of Vital Records Prior to 1919

Vital records were recorded prior to 1919 in the cities of Macon, Savannah, Atlanta, and Augusta. Information on these records may be obtained by using the contact information below. These records are not at the Georgia Archives.

- **The City of Atlanta** (Fulton County) began recording births in 1896 and deaths in 1889. Contact the Fulton County Vital Records Office located at Fulton County Government Center, 141 Pryor Street, SW, Suite 1029A, Atlanta, GA 30303. Tel: 404-613-1260
- **The City of Augusta** (Richmond County) began recording births in 1919 and deaths in 1904. Inquiries should be made by mail or in person to Richmond County Health Department, Vital Records, 1916 North Leg Road, Bldg. E, Augusta, GA 30909-4402. General questions about copies may be answered by telephone at 706-667-4335. No records may be released by telephone.
- **The City of Macon** (Bibb County) began recording births in 1891 and deaths in 1882. For information, contact Macon (Bibb County) Health Department, 171 Emery Highway, Macon, GA 31217-3666. Tel: 478-749-0102
- **The City of Savannah** (Chatham County) has birth records beginning in 1890 and death records beginning in 1803. Birth and death registers are available on Ancestry.com. The death records from 1803-1890 are at the Georgia Historical Society, 501 Whitaker Street, Savannah, GA 31499. Tel: 912-651-2128. City of Savannah vital records requests should be addressed to the Chatham County Health Department, P.O. Box 14257, Savannah, GA 31416. Tel: 912-356-2138

Substitutes for Vital Records

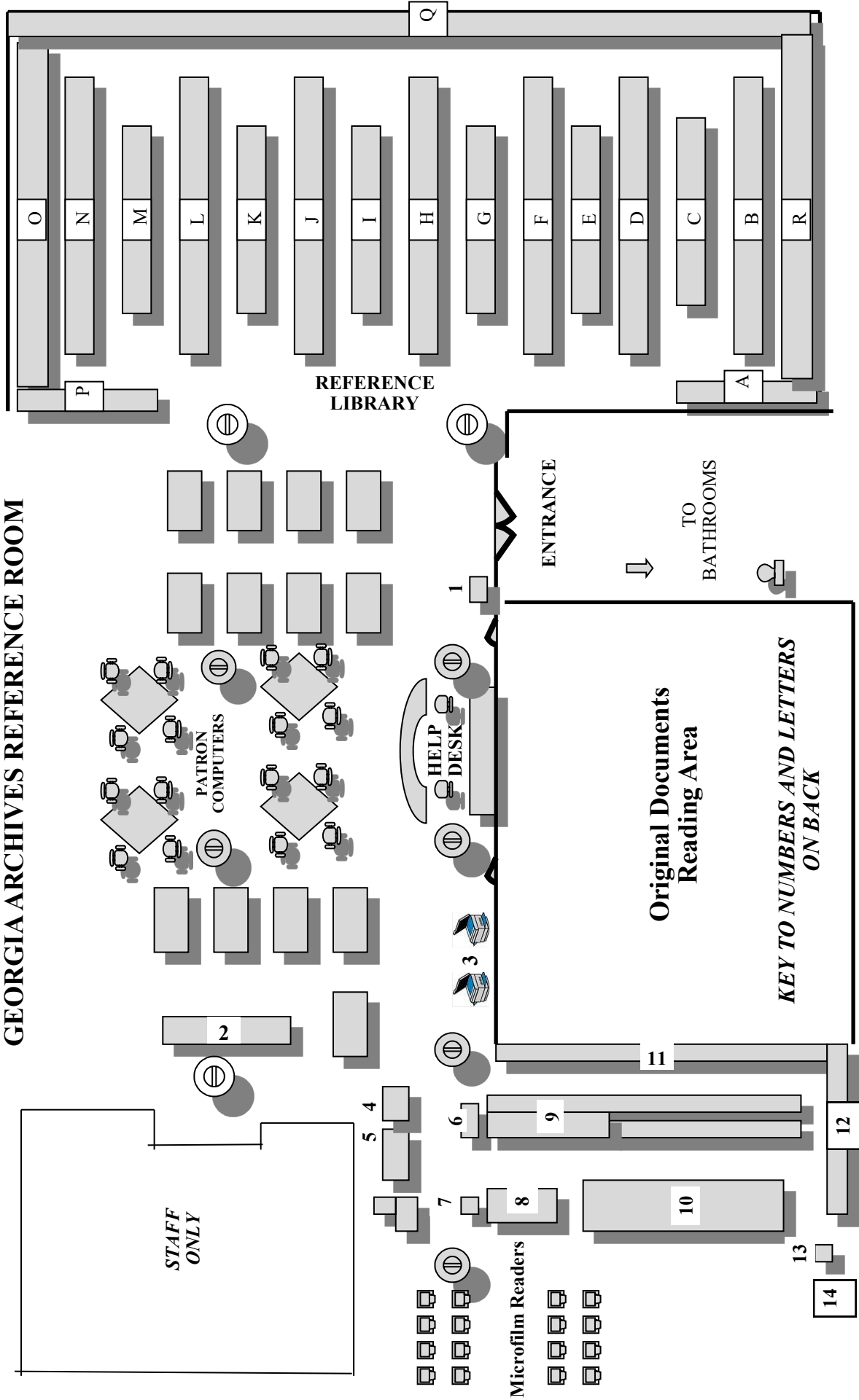
County records, particularly wills and other estate records, are useful substitutes for death records. Pre-1900 county records for the majority of Georgia counties are available at the Georgia Archives. As a substitute for birth records, we recommend a search of federal population schedules (known as census records). Federal census records for Georgia, 1820 through 1940, are available at the Georgia Archives.

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THE GEORGIA ARCHIVES

GEORGIA ARCHIVES REFERENCE ROOM



GEORGIA ARCHIVES REFERENCE ROOM

REFERENCE LIBRARY KEY

Library of Congress classification system

- A. Books on Georgia law; Georgia Code; Georgia Constitution
- B. Books on Religion; Genealogy; Ship passenger lists; Published Family Histories
AN2-CS 71.C317 1987
- C. Published Family Histories
CS 71.C321-CS 71.D743 1951
- D. Published Family Histories;
CS 71.D 747 1972—CS 71.R82 1996
- E. Published Family Histories
CS 71.R825 1911-CS 71.S955 1975
- F. Published Family Histories; Native American History; Quaker/Huguenot Genealogy;
African American History; National D.A.R.
CS 71.S962 1975- E 203.Z8
- G. Revolutionary War; New England States; War of 1812
E 204.L53-E 415.9.K57 S8
- H. Civil War; Virginia
E 415.9 T6 S8-F 226.S82 1996 v.2
- I. Virginia; North Carolina
F 226.V88-F 253.O4
- J. North Carolina; Georgia Books; Georgia Counties (Gilmer)
F 253.R37- F 292.G3
- K. Georgia Counties (Glynn-Muscogee)
F292.G5-F 292.M9 W7
- L. Georgia Counties (Newton); Southern States; Southern biography and history
F 292.N4 B76 v.1-HC 108.V29S5
- M. Georgia Organizations; Georgia State Government; Georgia Statistical Register
HD 62.6.F37-Ref JK 4330.A3
- N. Federal Law; Genealogical Research; Genealogical Periodicals
JK 4330.A3 1927-Per E 185.96.A43
- O. City Directories; Oversized books; Bound Periodicals
- P. Georgia D.A.R. collection
- Q. Bound Periodicals; Georgia Published Laws
- R. Georgia House & Senate Journals; Published Laws; Georgia Reports

REFERENCE ROOM MAP KEY

1. “New Book” display cart
2. Side one: Census indices and land lottery books Side two: Printed descriptive inventories
3. Photocopiers
4. Map case—Georgia counties
5. Reference table: Large/Small Print photographic reference; county record binders; tax digest finding aid; guide to Garrett Necrology
6. Manuscript collection inventories
7. Atlas stand
8. Microfilm card catalog/General Name File
9. Microfilm cabinet 1
10. Microfilm cabinet 2
11. Family Folders/Genealogical Folders
12. Subject Files/Pamphlets
13. Historic Map card file
14. Microfiche: tax digests; marriage index; divorce index; death index.