

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

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FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH GUIDE

This guide includes references to both primary and secondary materials, some of which are available at the Historical Society of Washington, D.C. and others that are available in other local repositories. For related materials, please consult the library's online catalog at <http://www.historydc.org>

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General Information

Family Archives

Gather and preserve family documents and memorabilia, including wills, deeds, photographs, diaries, family Bibles, certificates, diplomas, scrapbooks, wedding invitations, artifacts, etc. Consult immediate and distant relatives for oral history and family tradition. Corroborate family stories with primary sources.

Local Directories

City, business, and social directories provide clues to address, occupation, and family relationships.

Maps

Use addresses from family archives and/or directories to place person or family in geographical context. Real estate atlases help identify churches, schools, and other neighborhood landmarks that may provide clues to a family's associations. Census enumeration maps provide access to non-indexed federal census schedules. (SEE URLs for neighborhood and building history)

Census and Mortality Schedules

D.C. schedules, 1800-1930, are available in the Research Center, National Archives. The Washingtoniana Division, D.C. Public Library holds schedules, 1800-1920. Published indexes for the 1800-1870 censuses are available at the National Archives and Washingtoniana. Soundex microfilm is available at NARA for 1880, 1900 and 1920. Soundex for 1920 and a printed 1910 index are available at Washingtoniana. Enumeration District maps are available for the 1900-1920 census at Washingtoniana, and for the 1880 and 1900 census at The Historical Society of Washington, D.C. The HSW Library also holds the 1880 manuscript census. The 1890 census was virtually all destroyed. Fragments of the D.C. census exist; microfilm available at NARA and Washingtoniana. The 1890 census of Union veterans and widows is available at the National Archives.

Birth/Death Records

Vital Records Division holds birth and death records and indexes for D.C., 1874 to the present. D.C. Archives has original birth records, 1874-1928, and death records, 1874-1931. Some indexes are available on microfilm through LDS Family History Centers, including the DAR Library. Original indexes are not open to the public for searching. For the standard application fee, the Vital Records Division will search a three-year period.

Marriage records

Published indexes to D.C. marriages, 1811-1877, available at Washingtoniana and HSW; draft indexes, 1870-1900, available at HSW; and microfiche index, 1921-1991 at D.C. Archives and the Marriage Bureau. Marriage records 1901-1920 must be searched by year at the D.C. Archives. Name indexes are included at the beginning of record volumes

Divorce records

Contained in D.C. Chancery, 1801-1863 and Equity Court records, 1860-1899; D.C. Court, 1900-present. Some indexes available.

Probate and Related Records

Original wills, 1801-1991, at D.C. Archives; published indexes available for wills, 1801-1950, and probate records, 1801-1852. Original administrative case files, 1801-1879, at Civil Reference Branch, National Archives (RG 21); 1879-1960, D.C. Archives; after 1960, Probate Division of D.C. Superior Court.

Deeds and other land/property records

Recorder of Deeds holds a card index to deeds and other property transfers issued in D.C., 1900-1923 and 1937-present, arranged by square and lot number. Deeds issued prior to 1900 can be located through grantor and grantee name indexes. Deedbooks are available at the National Archives in RG 351. Some name indexes are available on microfilm through LDS family history centers.

Other D.C. government records

Civil Reference Branch, National Archives, holds D.C. District Court records (RG 21), including naturalization records, apprenticeship indentures, and licensing records. Name indexes are available to naturalization and apprenticeship indentures. Record Group 351 includes municipal police personnel files and records of the Board of Children's Guardians (orphan's court). Published indexes are available for apprenticeship and guardianship records; see bibliography.

Church Records

Check with extant congregations or denominational headquarters for defunct churches. Some records may be preserved in a local repository or available on microfilm. The DAR holds some church transcripts. Some published histories and transcripts are available at HSW and DCPL.

Cemetery records

Some tombstone inscriptions and cemetery records have been indexed and published; see bibliography. See also Pippenger's *District of Columbia Ancestors*, which includes histories of some cemeteries and the location of their records, if known.

Funeral home records

HSW holds the records of four local funeral homes: Speare, Geier, Taltavull, and Hanlon. A finding aid is available.

Military Records

For national service, obtain unit through published lists of veterans for early wars. 1890 census of Union veterans provides unit; only part of the census exists for D.C. Index available at NARA and DCPL. When ordering military records from NARA, obtain both pension records and military records of active service, when possible. The Military Reference Branch, National Archives, holds D.C. militia records (RG 94) and records of the United States Soldier's Home to 1942 (RG 231).

Educational Records

HSW and MLK hold published histories, public school reports, vertical files, yearbooks, photographs, and copies of oral history transcripts related to the histories of D.C. public schools and local colleges and universities. The Charles Sumner School Archives and Museum is the official archives of the D.C. public schools and holds a variety of records related to their history.

Records of Clubs/Associations

Existing organizations may keep their own archives or may have deposited records in an historical institution. (See HSW Manuscript Guide.)

Newspapers

Source of obituaries, marriage/death notices, and news accounts, but these are more likely to be available for the 20th century. Some indexes available.

FAMILY HISTORY RESOURCES

The following list includes primarily published sources that provide name indexes. The library holds many other resources on local history to provide context for family history research, including prints, photographs, maps, yearbooks, organizational archives and family papers.

Genealogy Guides and Directories

- Guide to the records of your District of Columbia ancestors* (Cook, 1987) **F193 .C56 1987**
District of Columbia Ancestors: a guide to records of the District of Columbia (Pippenger, 1997)
F193 .P55
Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the Government of the District of Columbia (Provine, 1976) **CD3026 .A32 NO.186**
 Fletcher, William P. *Recording your family history: a guide to preserving oral history using audio and videotape.* **CS16 .F54 1989**

Marriage and Death Records (indexes)

- Abstracts of marriages and deaths and other articles of interest in the newspapers of Frederick and Montgomery Counties, Maryland, 1831-1840.* (Moore, 1991) **F187.F8 M67 1991**
Abstracts of marriage and death notices from the National Intelligencer, 1800-1850. (3 rolls of microfilm; index in roll 1)
National Intelligencer Marriage and Death Notices, January 1, 1851 to December 30, 1854.
 (Pippenger, 1999) **F193 .P555 1999**
The Georgetown Courier Marriage and Death Notices, . . . , November 18, 1865 to May 6, 1876.
 (Pippenger, 1999) **F193 .P58 1998**
Blacks in the marriage records of the District of Columbia, 1811-1870. (Sluby/Wormley, 2 vols.)
E185.93 .D6 S58 1988
Marriage licenses of Washington, D.C., 1811-1830. (Wright, 1988) **F193 .M37 1988**
District of Columbia marriage licenses, 1811-1858. (Pippenger) **F193 .P56 1994**
District of Columbia marriage licenses, 1858-1870. (Pippenger, 1996) **F193 .P5623 1996**
District of Columbia marriage records, 1870-1877. (Provine) **F193 .P75 1997**
District of Columbia marriage records, 1870-1900. (Provine, draft copies) **(See Genealogy shelf)**
District of Columbia Interments (Index to Deaths), January 1, 1855 to July 31, 1874.
 (Pippenger, 1999) **F203.1 .W18 P57**
District of Columbia Death Records, August 1, 1874-July 31, 1879. (Pippenger, 1997)
F193 .P57 2000
Prince George's County Maryland: Marriages and deaths in nineteenth century newspapers. (2 volumes; Baltz and Baltz, 1995) **F187.P9 B26 1995**

Newspaper Abstracts

Include news stories as well as marriage and death notices

National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser newspaper abstracts. 1800-1835, 1861-1863
(13 volumes) **F193.D63**

Abstracts of the newspapers of Georgetown and the Federal City ,1789-1799. (Wright, 1986)_
F193 .W75 1986

Wills and Probate Records (indexes)

Index to District of Columbia Wills, 1801-1920. (Provine) **F193 .P76 1992**

Index to District of Columbia Wills, 1921-1950. (Provine) **F193 .P76 1996**

District of Columbia Probate Records, 1801-1852. (Pippenger, 1996) **F193 .P57 1996**

Directories

In addition to the following list of specialized directories, the library holds published histories and archives of various Washington organizations with membership directories and rosters.

Biographical and Business Directories

Includes biographical histories; listed in chronological order of date of publication.

Historical and commercial sketches of Washington and environs. . . (1884; includes information on "leading merchants, manufacturers, artisans and professional men") **F199 .B29**

Brodix's business directory, 1886-1887. **F192.5 .H 1886**

Builders' Exchange hand-book. (1891; includes directory of architects and members of the Builders' Exchange) **HD9715 .U53 B868**

The Washington architects, contractors and builders directory, 1892-1893. **HD9715 .U53 A8**

A history of the city of Washington, its men and institutions. (1903) **F194 .W31**

District of Columbia; Concise biographies of its prominent and representative contemporary citizens... **F193 .D61 1908**

Men of affairs, history makers of today (1912) **F193 .A24**

Distinguished residents of Washington, D.C.: science, art, industry (1916) **F193 .M64**

The first colored professional, clerical, skilled, and business directory of Baltimore City with Washington, D.C. and Annapolis annex. (1918-1919) **F192.5 .B 1918-1919**

The soldier-lawyer directory, February 1920. (D.C. entries, pp. 21-22) **F192.5 .D S41**

Who's Who in the nation's capital (1921/2-1938/9; not available for all years; also on microfilm)
F 193.W6

Prominent Personages of the Nation's Capital (1924) **E176.W3 P94**

Washington Past and Present (1930-1932) **F194 .P96**

Simms' blue book and national Negro business and professional directory. **E185.82 .S592 1977**

Who's Who in Washington (1983-1984 only) **F193 .W62 1983**

City Directories

- 1822, 1827, 1830, 1834, 1846, 1850, 1853, 1855, 1858, 1860 (microfiche)
 1862 – 1901 (available for every year; microfilm)
 1902 – 1935 (available for every year; hard copy; the 1904 C & P telephone directory and 1913 city directory also available on microfilm)
 1936 – 1943 (available for every year; microfilm)
 1948, 1954, 1956, 1960, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1967, 1969, 1970, 1973 (microfilm)

Church Directories

- Where Washington worships: a handbook of the churches of the District of Columbia.* (1917, 1922, 1922, 1925, 1934) These are useful for identifying the location of extant churches and provide more detail than a city directory. **BR560 .W35 W3**
- A Directory of churches and religious organizations in the District of Columbia.* (WPA, 1939) **BR560 .W35 H57**

Government Directories

- List of officers of the Army of the United States, 1779-1900 .* (1900) **U11 .U5 P7**
- National Calendar.* (complete 14-vol. series, 1820-1836; not available for 1825-1827; includes lists of U.S. government employees and foreign diplomats) **F192.5 .F**
- The Washington directory, and congressional and executive register for 1850.* **F192.5 .A 1850**
- Diplomatic List.* (1901-1989, non-inclusive) **F196 .U3**

Social Directories

- Washington Society Directory* (1886 only) **F192.5 .D 1886**
- Washington Elite List* (available for most years 1888-1900; 1901-1907, microfilm) **F192.6 E4**
- Social Register: Washington* (available for several years 1903-1990; see catalog) **F192.6 .A**
- Distinguished residents of Washington, D.C. – Science, Art, Industry.* (1916) **F193 .M64**
- The Preferred list: Washington and Vicinity* (1920) **F192.6 P9**
- Blue Book* (available for most years 1933-1991; see catalog) **F192.6 .B5**
- The Social List of Washington, D.C.* (“Green Book” -- available for most years 1940-1998; see catalog) **F192.6 S6**
- Distinguished Women of Washington, D.C.* (1964) **F193.C6**

Census Records

- 1850 (2 rolls only; no index)
- 1860 (5 microfilm rolls only; no index)
- 1870 (4 microfilm rolls only; no index)
- 1880 manuscript census (1880 census enumeration district map available)
- 1900 census (7 microfilm rolls only; enumeration district map available)

Church Records

Associated Methodist Church (Georgetown) Records, 1828-1929. (MS 13; 1 record book)
 Christ Church (Georgetown) Vestry Proceedings, 1817-1875. (MS 368; typescripts)
 Georgetown Presbyterian Church Records, 1863-1983. (5 rolls of microfilm)
Records of Dumbarton United Methodist Church, 1813-1991. (Donovan) **F193 .D66 1993**
Dumbarton United Methodist Church Collection, 1801-1998. (MS 613)
 St. Mark's Capitol Hill Records (in process)
 Union Methodist Episcopal Church (in process)
 Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church (in process)

Cemetery Records

Historic Graves of Maryland and the District of Columbia, with the inscriptions appearing on the tombstones in most of the counties of the state and in Washington and Georgetown (Ridgely, 1908) **F180 .R55**

Civil War Cemeteries of the District of Columbia Metropolitan Area. (Sluby/Wormley) **E494 .S62 1982**

Selected small cemeteries of Washington, D.C. (Sluby/Wormley) **F193 .S583 1987**

Register of burials of the Joseph F. Birch Funeral Home, 1847-1911, 1899-1938. (Sluby/Wormley; 4 vols.) **F193 .S5837 1989**

Records of the Columbian Harmony Cemetery, 1831-1959 (Sluby/Wormley; 7 vols.) **F193 .S5837 1993**

The transcribed ledger of the Eastern Methodist Cemetery (also called Old Ebenezer), 1823-1893. (Sluby, 1981) **F193 .S584**

Holmead's Cemetery. (Sluby/Wormley) **F193 .S582 1985**

Mt. Zion Cemetery. (Sluby/Wormley) **F193 .S5827 1984**

Records of Payne's Cemetery, 1907-1952. (Sluby/Wormley; 5 vols.) **F193 .S5835 1991**

Presbyterian Cemetery records (Georgetown), Washington, D.C., 1856-1897. (Sluby/Wormley) **F192 .S5837 1990**

The immigrants and their cemetery: the story of Prospect Hill. (Crabill, 1995) A history of Prospect Hill Cemetery Society, 1858-1949; includes name index. **F203.1 .P7 .C62 1995**

The families of Prospect Hill. (Crabill, 1997) Family histories of persons buried at Prospect Hill Cemetery **F203.1 .P7 .C619 1997**

Rock Creek Cemetery, 1822-1906. (Sluby/Wormley, 1992; 4 vols.) **F193 .S5839 1992**

Rosemont Cemetery (formerly Moore's Cemetery). (Sluby/Wormley, 1993) **F193 .S58395 1993**

SEE ALSO: *F.A. Speare Sons Records, 1915-1918* (MS 237)

Funeral Home Account Books, 1891-1973 (MS 348; Includes records of Frank Geier's Sons, Timothy Hanlon, Taltavull, and W.R. Speare funeral homes)

Military Records (indexes)

Maryland and District of Columbia volunteers in the Mexican War. (Wells, 1991) **E409.7 .W45**
List of officers of the Army of the United States, 1779-1900 . (1900) **U11 .U5 P7**

Other Indexes/Finding Aids

Alexandria, Virginia free Negro registers, 1797-1861 (Provine) **F232.A4 . P76 1990**

District of Columbia Original Land Owners, 1791-1800 (Pippenger, 1999) **F193 .P567 1999**

District of Columbia free Negro registers, 1821-1861 (Provine; 2 vols.) **F205 .N4 .P76 1996**

District of Columbia Guardianship Index, 1802-1928 (Pippenger) **F193 .P557 1998**

Indentures of apprenticeship, 1801-1893. (Provine) **F193 .P75 1998**

An index of articles by the Rambler, the Washington Star Sunday magazine, 1912-1926

(Richardson, 1996; 2 vols.) Includes extensive list of names. **F194 .R53**

Registrations of free Negroes, 1806-1863, Prince George's County, Maryland (Provine)

F232.A4 P76 1806-63

SEE ALSO: Index to articles of John Claggett Proctor from the *Sunday Star*, 1928-1952, and indexes to the *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* and *Washington History*.