



501 Whitaker Street ■ Savannah, GA 31401 ■ Tel 912-651-2125 ■ Fax 912-651-2831 ■ [www.georgiahistory.com](http://www.georgiahistory.com)

## GENEALOGY RESOURCE GUIDE

The GHS Library & Archives holds a vast collection of material useful to genealogists or anyone conducting family history research. Resources such as the U.S. census, vital records, tax records, military records, cemetery records and newspapers are some of the most commonly used material, but keep in mind that information about ancestors can be found in many other places. Researchers will find a broad collection of useful resources for the entire state of Georgia – as well as other southern states.

This is a non-exhaustive list of genealogical resources at GHS. It is designed to serve as an introduction and to identify several categories of resources. For specific titles and shelf locations, as well as to identify additional resources, we suggest you search our online catalog ([www.georgiahistory.com](http://www.georgiahistory.com)) or ask a staff member.

**Ancestry.com:** GHS holds a subscription to Ancestry.com that is available for use in our reading room. Ancestry.com is a resource for a variety of genealogical information including vital records, census records, military records, and immigration records.

**Census Records:** Censuses are available for Georgia and other southern states for the years 1790 (reconstructed), 1820, 1830, 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930. The Georgia federal censuses for 1790, 1800, and 1810 were destroyed by fire. Records are available in print, on microfilm, or by using Ancestry.com.

**Genealogy and Biographical Vertical Files:** These files contain miscellaneous genealogical information, including family trees, Bible records, county cemetery indices and unpublished family histories. Materials have been donated and in some cases the source of information is not available. Indexed by surname.

**Vital Records:** Georgia did not keep a statewide official registry of births or deaths until 1919, or official marriage records until 1805. GHS has some published records of births, deaths, and marriages for Chatham County that **predate 1919**, as well as records, abstracts and indices from other counties. GHS also holds the Chatham County Health Department death cards, 1803-1893, and Chatham County Coroner's Inquests, 1845, 1877-1965. Researchers should search the online catalog for published county records. GHS has an index of Georgia death certificates, 1919-1994, on microfiche.

The City of Savannah Research Library and Municipal Archives holds original Savannah-Chatham County vital records that predate 1919; the Georgia Archives in Morrow also holds microfilm copies of some county records prior to 1919.

Certified copies of vital records **after 1919** can be obtained either from the Georgia Department of Human Resources or the county where the event occurred. Ancestry.com also has a great deal of vital records for Georgia.

**Cemetery Indices:** GHS has printed indices for the four large Savannah cemeteries, as well as records from cemeteries from numerous other counties. Researchers should search the online catalog to identify these items.

**Family Histories:** GHS holds numerous privately published family histories from Georgia and elsewhere. Researchers should search the online catalog to identify these items.

**Military Records:** This can be an excellent resource. GHS holds printed records from the American Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Indian wars of the nineteenth century, American Civil War, and Spanish-American War. Researchers should search the online catalog to identify these items. Ancestry.com also offers a huge database of military records from the Colonial period through 1981.

**Immigration Records:** With a few exceptions, GHS does not have passenger manifests. Occasionally, the shipping news in the newspapers report recent arrivals. We have the print version of the *Passenger & Immigration Lists Index* from the first edition (1981) to the 2007 supplement. This is an ongoing index, giving each individual's name, age at arrival, port of arrival, and date of arrival, as well as the source of the information. There is no cumulative index for these volumes. Ancestry.com offers the same information in a searchable database. GHS also has an index of the records for individuals naturalized in Savannah or Chatham County, 1794-1910 (originals are located at the City of Savannah Municipal Library and Archives).

**Manuscript Collections:** The manuscript collection contains original material ranging from personal papers to photographs to organizational records. Researchers should search the online catalog to find collections relevant to their research.

**Land & Tax Records:** These include print, microfilm, and manuscript sources from Savannah, Chatham County, and other Georgia counties. Researchers should search the online catalog to identify these items.

**Newspapers:** Georgia and Savannah-area newspapers from 1763 to the present are available on microfilm. Indices are available for Savannah newspapers for the periods 1763-1845, 1850-1891, 1891-1895 on microfilm, and June 1929-1985. *Please note: there is no index for the years 1895-1929.*

**City Directories:** Savannah City Directories are available in hardcopy and on microfiche for most years from 1848 to 2001. Information can include name, name of spouse, occupation, and work and home address. Early city directories are available on microfiche for Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, and Charleston, South Carolina.

**Periodicals:** Our periodicals collection contains a wealth of miscellaneous information such as census information, land lotteries, family genealogies, marriage records, etc. Researchers should search the online catalog and consult the periodicals index for title, date, and shelf location.

**Church Records:** GHS has holds the organizational records of several churches. Researchers should search the online catalog to identify these items.

**Wills:** GHS holds few original wills, but we have several volumes of will abstracts and indices from various counties. Researchers should search the online catalog to identify these items.

**Savannah Jewish Archives:** This is a deposit collection housed at GHS. The SJA collection holds personal, organizational, and synagogue records.