

Genealogy Resources

Local Archives and Collections

Opal Lee Chatham History and Genealogy Room

Inside the Chatham Public Library (606 East Spruce Street, Chatham, IL)

Hours: Mon to Thu (9 - 8); Fri (9 - 5); Sat (9 - 4)

Phone: (217) 483-2713

The Opal Lee Genealogy Room provides access to genealogy research databases, a Chatham obituary database, microfilm readers, Sangamon County histories, Sangamon County cemetery locations and lists, census records, marriage records, family and oral histories, and more. Although the collection is primarily focused on Chatham history it is also useful for researchers interested in other parts of Sangamon County.

Sangamon Valley Collection

Inside Lincoln Library on the third floor (326 South 7th Street, Springfield, IL)

Hours: Mon - Sat (10 - 5); Weds evenings until 8

Phone: (217) 753-4900

The Sangamon Valley Collection provides in-depth resources for the study of Springfield, Sangamon County, and the eleven adjacent counties. It includes photographs, city and county directories, high school yearbooks, city and county documents, long-range planning reports and surveys, and maps. The SVC also maintains unique collections of genealogical materials from Springfield businesses, organizations, and families; these resources are non-circulating and must be requested from storage, but a guide to the special collections can be found at <http://www.lincolnlbrary.info/research/svcManuscripts.html>

Illinois Regional Archives Depository (IRAD) at UIS

<http://library.uis.edu/archives/irad.html>

Inside Brookens Library at UIS on the second floor (1 University Plaza, Springfield, IL)

Hours: by appointment only

Phone: (217) 206-6520

The Illinois Regional Archives Depository (IRAD) at UIS contains county and municipal records from 1817 onwards, for 14 central Illinois counties. These records include Circuit and Chancery court records, wills, poll books, deed records, tax records, birth/death/marriage/divorce records, naturalization papers, cemetery records, and school records. Researchers can email or phone IRAD staff to have them do a search of the archive's holdings for a particular subject or person; for more information on requesting from IRAD, visit their website.

Local Archives and Collections, cont.

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

112 North Sixth Street

Hours: Mon to Fri (9 to 4:30)

Phone: (217) 558-8844

The ALPLM has a variety of resources available for genealogists and local historians. Although most of these resources are only fully accessible inside the library, the ALPLM's website provides basic information on its holdings that can help researchers pinpoint the materials they are looking for in the library. The links below outline some of the genealogical resources available at the ALPLM.

- **Newspaper Holdings:** The ALPLM has more than 5,000 newspaper titles preserved on microfilm, including newspapers from every Illinois county and historical newspapers dating back to the early 18th century. These holdings are cataloged at <http://www.illinois.gov/alplm/library/collections/newspaper/Holdings/Pages/default.aspx>.
- **The Oral History Program:** The ALPLM has a large and well-organized oral history collection, containing interviews with a broad range of participants throughout Illinois. The collection is organized into several areas of focus, including Agriculture in Illinois, Family Memories, Illinois Statecraft, Immigrant Stories, and Veterans Remember. Audio for the interviews is available online, and many of the interviews also include transcripts and photographs.
<http://www.illinois.gov/alplm/library/collections/oralhistory>
- **Surname Index:** Allows you to search for mentions of a particular surname in biographical directories, county histories, and encyclopedias. <http://www.illinois.gov/alplm/library/genealogy/directories/Pages/surnameindex.aspx>

Free Online Genealogy Resources

USGenWeb Project

Overall website:<http://usgenweb.org/>

Illinois website:<http://www.illinoisgenweb.org/>

Sangamon County website:<http://sangamon.illinoisgenweb.org/>

The USGenWeb Project is a nationwide volunteer effort to establish free website for genealogical research in every county and every state. The project provides links to state and local genealogical resources, and in some cases contains scanned and/or digital transcripts of historical documents that may be of interest to genealogical researchers.

Free Online Genealogy Resources, cont.

Cyndi's List

<http://www.cyndislist.com/>

Cyndi's List is a categorized and cross-referenced index to genealogical resources on the internet. It serves as a good starting point for conducting genealogical research, and contains guides to resources on a variety of topics, ranging from region-specific resources to resources organized by occupation.

AccessGenealogy

<http://www.accessgenealogy.com>

AccessGenealogy is a free site with links to different unique resources, including military records, old letters, and Native American documents. They all have a collection of over 600 cemetery transcriptions from across the U.S., where volunteers have walked through cemeteries and transcribed grave information to the internet.

Family Search

<http://familysearch.org>

FamilySearch is a massive--and free--genealogical site that helps connect genealogical researchers across the country. Search through microfilmed records online, look through photographs that other researchers have uploaded, upload/"tag" your own family photos to make them accessible for other genealogy researchers, and create your digital family tree. This and other group tree sites should be used with caution. ALWAYS confirm the next generation with original source documents such as wills, census records, vital records and deeds.

Find A Grave

<http://findagrave.com>

Find A Grave is the world's largest collection of online cemetery readings. Over 226 million records from locations across the globe have been added since it was created in 1995. This database is searchable by name, dates of birth or death, and location.

Randy Majors

<http://randymajors.org/township-range-on-google-maps?loc=true>

In order to find a deed or land record on many sites township, range, and meridian information is needed. This site lets you use Google Maps to locate land, place a pin and obtain that data instantly. It only works for land that was surveyed using the rectangular method. Areas with the metes and bounds system are not locatable on this site.

Free Online Genealogy Resources, cont.

Bureau of Land Management

<https://glorerecords.blm.gov/search/default.aspx>

This site allows users to search by land location (again, for rectangular survey only). Search results will yield the date, price per acre, total cost and number of acres for original land purchases from the United States government.

National Archives and Records Administration

<http://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy>

NARA has TONS of information. It takes a while to learn to navigate the site, and this page is a good starting point. You can order original pension files from veterans, ship passenger lists, find information on historical buildings, obtain and order information from all Presidential libraries, and much more. They also have printable forms for all censuses, which are useful for analyzing records.

Illinois Secretary of State (formerly Cyberdrive Illinois)

<http://www.ilsos.gov/departments/archives/databases/>

The office of the Secretary of State has searchable databases for many vital, military, and land records. Not all counties have been added to the website, but most are available.

Google Books

<http://books.google.com>

Many county history books have been digitized and made available through Google. This is useful if you know the rough dates an ancestor lived in a location. If their bio is in the history book, details can often be found that lead to the next generation.

Long Island Genealogy Date Calculator

<http://www.longislandgenealogy.com/birth.html>

When a gravesite has the death date and the age - no birth date - all is not lost. This site allows you to input both and quickly calculates a birth date from the information, saving much time and avoiding potential mistakes.