

Genealogy Resources

The following guide gives information on resources for researchers interested in genealogy and local history for the Central Illinois area. Please contact the Library if you have any questions.

Local Genealogy 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

Genealogy Librarian: Meghan Harmon

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 to Wed (10 - 8); Thu (10 - 6); Fri (10 - 1); Sat (10 - 5); Sun (1 - 5 from Oct. to Apr.)

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.lincolnlibrary.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: Mon to Fri (9-5); closed on state holidays and any days the University

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.

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.

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.