

Kentucky Genealogy Research

Special Collections Division
Akron-Summit County Public Library
60 S. High Street, Akron, Ohio 44326
speccollections@akronlibrary.org

The area west of the Appalachian Mountains had been explored by colonists as early as 1654, but the first thorough survey of the Kentucky region took place in 1750. The first pioneer settlement was founded in 1774 at what is now Harrodsburg. Settlers from Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland and North Carolina migrated to Kentucky by way of the Ohio River or the Wilderness Trail of the Cumberland Gap. The land was annexed by Virginia in 1772 and was first part of Fincastle County. In 1776, Fincastle was divided into three counties, and Kentucky County was one of those created. Kentucky achieved statehood in 1792, becoming the 15th state of the United States. Abundant and fertile land for farming as well as bounty land for military veterans brought rapid population growth to the state.

Kentucky's early history as part of Virginia, boundary changes within its 120 counties, and the division of sympathies of its citizens during the Civil War are issues researchers should keep in mind while tracing their Kentucky ancestors.

This guide identifies resources for Kentucky research in Special Collections and other locations.

Vital Records

The existence of early Kentucky vital records is spotty. Kentucky did not require its counties to register births and deaths until 1911 and did not require marriage registrations until 1958. For records prior to these years, contact the Kentucky Department for Library and Archives. Indexes and some scanned images for vital records are also online.

- *Ancestry* (Library edition available for free from any Akron-Summit County Public Library)
- Kentucky Department for Library and Archives <http://www.kdla.ky.gov/home.htm>
- Kentucky Department for Public Health, Office of Vital Statistics <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/vital/>
- *Kentucky Vital Records Index* (University of Kentucky) <http://ukcc.uky.edu/vitalrec/>
- *Kentucky Vital Records Project* <http://kyvitals.com/index.php>
- KYGenWeb - Vital Statistics <http://www.kygenweb.net/vitals/>

Selected Kentucky Resources Available in Special Collections

In addition to this brief list of Kentucky titles, the Special Collections Division has county-specific resources and is always adding to its collection. Please check the library catalog or browse the Kentucky genealogy book section for additional titles.

- Abstract of Early Kentucky Wills and Inventories; Copied from Original and Recorded Wills and Inventories* (1933, rep.1961)
- Atlas of Bourbon, Clark, Fayette, Jessamine & Woodford Counties* (1877, rep.1974)
- An Atlas of Nelson & Spencer Cos., Kentucky* (1882, rep.1986)
- Collins' Historical Sketches of Kentucky: History of Kentucky* (1874, rep.1966)
- A Complete Index to the Names of Persons, Places and Subjects Mentioned in Littell's Laws of Kentucky: A Genealogical and Historical Guide* (1931, rep.1996)
- Early Kentucky Tax Records: From The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* (1984)
- Eastern Kentucky References* (1980)
- Genealogies of Kentucky Families: From the Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* (2000)
- Historic Families of Kentucky* (1889, rep.2002)
- Inventory of County Records of Kentucky* (1974)
- Kentucky: A History of the State*. Some reprinted volumes under other titles. (on spine: *Kentucky Genealogy and Biography* or *History of Kentucky Illustrated*) (1887, reprint vol. dates vary).
- Kentucky Ancestry: A Guide to Genealogical and Historical Research* (1992)
- Kentucky Bible Records*
- Kentucky Cemetery Records* (1960)
- Kentucky Families: A Bibliographic Listing* (1993)
- The Kentucky Gazette, 1787-1800* (1983)
- Kentucky Genealogical Records & Abstracts, 1781-1839* (1997)
- Kentucky Genealogical Research* (1981)
- The Kentucky Genealogist* (periodical, 1959-1986)
- Kentucky Genealogy and Biography* (1970-1980)
- Kentucky Historical Society Register* (periodical, 1964-1985)
- The Kentucky Land Grants: A Systematic Index to All of the Land Grants Recorded in the State Land Office at Frankfort, Kentucky, 1782-1924* (1925, rep.1971)
- Kentucky Marriage Records: From The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* (1983)
- Kentucky Obituaries, 1787-1854* (1977)
- Kentucky Pioneer and Court Records: Abstracts of Early Wills, Deeds and Marriages from Court Houses and Records of Old Bibles, Churches, Grave Yards, and Cemeteries...* (1929)
- Kentucky Pioneers and Their Descendants* (1951, rep. 1978)
- Kentucky Place Names* (1988)
- Kentucky Records: Early Wills and Marriages Copied from Court House Records by Regents, Historians and the State Historian; Old Bible Records and Tombstone Inscriptions* (1926, rep.1965-1972)
- Petitions of the Early Inhabitants of Kentucky to the General Assembly of Virginia, 1769-92* (1914, rep.1998)
- Pioneer Families of Eastern and Southeastern Kentucky* (1957, rep.1973)
- Talley's Kentucky Papers* (1966)
- Talley's Northeastern Kentucky Papers* (1971)

Additional Online Resources

Cyndi's List: Kentucky <http://www.cyndislist.com/ky.htm#>

The Filson Historical Society <http://www.filsonhistorical.org/>

GenForum: Kentucky <http://genforum.genealogy.com/ky/>

Kentuckiana Digital Library <http://kdl.kyvl.org/>

Kentucky County Clerks <http://elect.ky.gov/countyclerks.htm>

Kenton County Public Library (KY) <http://www.kentonlibrary.org/genealogy>

Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives <http://www.kdla.ky.gov/>

Kentucky Department for Public Health, Office of Vital Statistics <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/vital/>

Kentucky Genealogical Society <http://www.kygs.org/>

Kentucky Historical Society <http://history.ky.gov/>

Kentucky Land Office Databases <http://www.sos.ky.gov/land/search/default.htm>

Kentucky Public Library Directory (KDLA) <http://kdla.ky.gov/directory.htm>

KYGenWeb <http://www.kygenweb.net/>

KYGenWeb Genealogical and Historical Societies
<http://www.kygenweb.net/contact/kysocieties.html>

The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Genealogy and Local History
Department <http://www.cincinnati.org/main/genlocal.html>

RootsWeb: Kentucky Message Boards
<http://boards.rootsweb.com/localities.northam.usa.states.kentucky/mb.ashx>