

# **GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**

## **HOW TO BEGIN**

Welcome to the Library of Congress and to the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room. Careful and systematic use of the Library of Congress, one of the world's largest and most complex libraries, should help you retrieve the information that may be available about the history of your family.

To compile your family history is to establish a paper trail from yourself backward in time as far as you can go. This trail will consist of documents that tell of events and activities in your ancestors' lives.

Ideally, your first step is to obtain information on doing genealogical research. Most public libraries and large bookstores have good introductory books on research methods. These will specify what records to look for, where to search for them, and what kind of information you can expect to find in a given record or repository.

Your next step may be to interview all the older relatives you can find and to write down what they say, bearing in mind that family traditions become distorted with time, and you will need to verify what you hear.

Documents such as land records, wills, baptismal records, and certificates of birth, death, and marriage pinpoint an ancestor in place and time, and often point out where to look for similar documentation on the preceding generation. For example, your parent's birth certificate may indicate where and when the parent was born and the names of his or her parents (your grandparents). This, in turn, could indicate where and for what approximate time period you can begin your search for your grandparents' marriage records. These records may then provide information on the previous generation, and so on, as far back as the records have been kept.

When these records are lacking you may be able to fill in the gaps with other sources such as family Bibles, obituaries, interviews with relatives, or published information in compiled family histories or genealogical periodicals. Most vital records and other primary sources are available only at the state or local level, in town records and county clerks' offices, and for this reason a library may not be the best place to begin your research.

## **READER REGISTRATION CARD**

As one of the Library's security initiatives, each reader is required to obtain a Library-issued photographic Reader Registration Card in order to use the reading rooms and collections in the Library. Currently, Reader Registration Cards may be obtained at the Reader Registration Station located on the first floor of the James Madison Building, Room LM 140. Readers must present identification that includes a photograph and a current address, such as a driver's license or a passport,

to obtain a Reader Registration Card. These cards are valid for up to two years and may be renewed.

## **LIBRARY RESOURCES**

Some individuals and societies have published vital records in book form, and whenever you are in a library it is a good idea to determine if it has any published records for the areas in which your ancestors lived. Once you have traced your family back several generations you will have many family names that are relevant to your research, and it is usually at this point that a library's genealogical collection becomes most useful. The following types of materials at the Library of Congress and at other libraries may be of value at the beginning of your search as well as later on when your research is further advanced.

### **1. Guides and Manuals**

- Books that explain how to do genealogical research. These can save you much time and expense.
- Manuals on research for a particular ethnic group
- Guides to vital records for states and counties of the United States and for many foreign countries
- Directories of addresses of historical and genealogical societies
- Indexes to genealogical periodicals

### **2. United States City Directories**

If you know that an ancestor lived in a particular city, you may find his or her address and sometimes profession and name of spouse in these directories. Consult with a reference librarian to identify and locate directories in the Library of Congress.

A checklist of *U.S. City Directories on Microfilm in the Microform Reading Room* is found under "Bibliographies and Guides" on the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room home page <<http://www.loc.gov/rr/genealogy>>.

### **3. Census Records and Indexes**

Microfilm copies of the Federal population census schedules are at the National Archives and Records Administration, located on Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., between 7th and 9th Streets. The Library of Congress has certain published census information—the 1790 census, some statewide indexes, and selected published abstracts for individual counties. Two subscription databases at the Library offer digital images of the U.S. Federal census. Check with a reference librarian to identify and locate them.

### **4. Published Genealogies and Town and County Histories**

Published genealogies are the result of research done on given families; published local histories provide useful background information, and in some cases give clues to new directions for research.

## 5. Internet Services

Subscription databases provide new reasons for coming to the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room at the Library of Congress to do genealogy and local history research. Of special interest are *Ancestry Library Edition* and *HeritageQuest Online* that offer digital images of the U.S. Federal census. Further highlights of the former are: an Immigration Collection that includes the New York Passenger Lists for 1820–1891, 1935–1938; the *American Genealogical-Biographical Index*; Civil War databases including the *Civil War Pension Index . . . 1861–1934* and *Civil War Service Records*; the *Social Security Death Index*; and the Massachusetts Town Vital Records Collection. In addition to the digital images of the U.S. Federal census, *HeritageQuest* includes more than 25,000 family and local histories in full image, the *Periodical Source Index*, a comprehensive subject index to more than 6,500 genealogy and local history periodicals, the *Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files*, and the Freedman's Bank Records. Much of the published material is in the Library's collection.

Another important electronic resource is *ProQuest Historical Newspapers* that offers full text and full image articles from the *Atlanta Constitution*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Chicago Defender*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Washington Post*, dating back to their first issue. For a complete list of the Library's electronic resources for genealogy and local history research look under History, Genealogy & Archives, one of the categories found on Databases and Electronic Resources at the Library Congress: <<http://www.loc.gov/rr/ElectronicResources/>>

## RESOURCES IN THE LOCAL HISTORY & GENEALOGY READING ROOM

### CARD CATALOGS

#### FAMILY NAME INDEX (White labels)

*How to search:* Family name of interest

This catalog is a card index to the published genealogies in the Library of Congress. Entries generally are determined by family names found on the title page (usually no more than three), although many cards for other family names have been added. Some additional access for works published or cataloged between 1968 and 1980 may be provided through the Library's Computer Catalog. For works cataloged by the Library since 1980 the Online Catalog **must** be searched.

**All** genealogies in the Family Name Index are shelved in the stacks and should be requested by filling out call slips and submitting them at the Book Service Desk located near the catalogs.

#### ANALYZED SURNAME INDEX (Green labels)

*How to search:* Family name of interest

This catalog began as a detailed index to selected genealogies published until about 1910. Later, it was expanded to include the biographical sketches found in

approximately 350 county histories. The Analyzed Surname Index was always selective rather than comprehensive, and was never intended to cover every genealogy or county history. The last drawer of this index, labeled "Local Histories Indexed," identifies the county histories that are covered.

**NOTE:** Call numbers found in this index should be verified in the Family Name Index (CS call numbers), or the Local History Shelflist (F call numbers), or the "Local Histories Indexed" drawer.

#### **COATS OF ARMS INDEX** (White labels)

*How to search:* Family name of interest

The Coats of Arms Index provides a guide to illustrations of coats of arms found in books and periodicals in the Library's collections. It covers primarily English and American sources. This catalog should be used in conjunction with two book indexes, Hanns Jager-Sunstenau's *General-Index zu den Siebmacher'schen Wappenbüchern, 1605–1961* (CR1179.S5J3 LH&G DESK) and the St. Louis Public Library's *Heraldry Index*, 4 v. (Z5312.S25 1980 LH&G). This latter work is found on the shelves opposite the reference desk. Siebmacher's *Wappenbuch* covers both noble and non-noble families in all German-speaking areas of central and eastern Europe; the *Heraldry Index* lists over 100,000 coats of arms found in approximately 800 publications.

#### **U.S. BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX** (Pink labels)

*How to search:* Family name of interest

This card catalog, which has no recent entries, provides an index to at least one history for each state and to a few regional histories. It differs from the other card catalogs in that an individual's name (Smith, John) rather than a broad heading (Smith family) appears. The first drawer, labeled "Books Indexed," identifies the histories that are indexed.

**Note:** Call numbers found in this index should be verified in the Local History Shelflist (F call numbers) or in the "Books Indexed" drawer.

#### **U.S. LOCAL HISTORY SHEFLIST** (White labels)

The cards in this catalog are arranged numerically, just as the books are found on the shelves, from F1 to F1000. This approach is by subject and includes those books in the Library of Congress collection cataloged before 1980 that deal with local history of the states (of the United States) and their subdivisions (the towns, cities, counties, and regions). A large white chart, *Guide to Materials in United States Local History*, is located to the right of the card catalog. This chart gives the range of call numbers assigned to each state as well as the number within that range for each of eleven specific subject areas. If you encounter difficulty in finding a particular state or region, ask a reference librarian for assistance.

**NOTE:** This catalog covers only those books classified as U.S. local history (class F); many books of a legal, religious, or social nature, which may be of value to genealogical or local history researchers, are classified elsewhere and can be found by using the Main Card Catalog and the Computer Catalog.

## COMPUTER CATALOG AND REMOTE ACCESS

To locate material cataloged by the Library since 1981, it is necessary to use the Online Catalog. The Library of Congress home page at <<http://www.loc.gov>> and the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room's home page at <<http://www.loc.gov/rr/genealogy>> both provide access to the Library's online catalog. To search for genealogies on the Library's online catalog, use the search term "Family" after the name of the family, e.g., Hill Family. The Library has digitized some of its United States local histories. To view **California as I Saw It: First-Person Narratives of California's Early Years, 1849–1900; Pioneering the Upper Midwest: Books from Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, ca. 1820–1910; and The Capital and the Bay: Narrative of Washington and the Chesapeake Bay Region, ca. 1600–1925**, consult the Library's American Memory project on the Library of Congress home page.

The Local History and Genealogy Reading Room's home page provides general information about the reading room: hours; location; restrictions placed on personal belongings; requirements for reader registration; information about tours; descriptions of the collections; details for presenting gift books to the Library; the full text of the reading room's bibliographies and guides; and links to other Internet sources concerning local history and genealogy.

## GENEALOGICAL INDEXES IN BOOK FORM

Several important published indexes to genealogical materials are located on bookshelves and consulting tables in the catalog area of the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room. The following titles are included:

Barrow's *The Genealogist's Guide*  
Crowther's *Surname Index to Sixty-five Volumes of Colonial and Revolutionary Pedigrees*  
*Genealogical Periodical Index*  
Jacobus' *Index to Genealogical Periodicals*  
Marshall's *Genealogist's Guide*  
Munsell's *The American Genealogist*  
Munsell's *Index to American Genealogies*  
New York Public Library's *Book Catalog*  
Newberry Library's *Genealogical Index*  
*(PERSI) Periodical Source Index*<sup>1</sup>  
Rider's *American Genealogical-Biographical Index*<sup>2</sup>  
Whitmore's *Genealogical Guide*

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<sup>1</sup> Available on *HeritageQuest Online*

<sup>2</sup> Consult a reference librarian if the directions for using this index are unclear. Also available online through *Ancestry Library Edition*.

## PROCEDURES FOR RETRIEVING MATERIAL

### CALL SLIPS

How to Fill Out a Call Slip for a Book

**NOTE:** Any entry in the Online Catalog indicating **Reference-Local History & Genealogy RR**, or any card marked **LH&G**, indicates material that is in the reading room and a call slip is not necessary for retrieval.

Press Firmly When Filling Out Slip.

**STEVENS FAMILY.**

CS71  
.S844  
1976

**Barlow, Claude W**  
John Steevens of Guilford, Connecticut : five generations of 17th & 18th century descendants with surnames Steevens, Stevens, Stephens, Kelsey ... / by Claude Willis Barlow. — Rochester, N.Y. : J. M. Stephens, c1976.  
xv, 225 p. ; 23 cm.  
Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Stevens family. 2. United States—Genealogy. I. Title.  
CS71.S844 1976 929'.2'0973 75-39127  
MARC

Library of Congress 77

Call number

**PRESS FIRMLY**

Call Number  
CS71  
.S844  
1976

**PRESS FIRMLY**

Author  
Barlow

Title (Book/Periodical)  
John Steevens of Guilford, Connecticut

**STAFF USE ONLY**

Deck Att. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Not on Shelf  
 Verify Call No.  
 Clarify Call No.  
 Give Vol. No./Date  
 Folio, Pick Up: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Latest Yr. on Shelf:  
 No Vols. on Shelf  
 Other Location (See Message)  
 Missing in Inventory  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Select desk and fill in desk number

**PERIODICAL VOL. NO. OR DATE**

Periodical Vol. No. or Date

**LEGIBLE NAME AND ADDRESS, OR USER CARD NO.**

Name/User Card No.  
100100

**LH & G READING ROOM**

Address

**STAFF USE ONLY**

Message

**STAFF USE ONLY**

Desk # or Last Name if Hold  
JG 1A

Overnight Request  
Tomorrow's Date:  
Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

How to Fill Out a Call Slip for a Bound Periodical

**WALCOTT FAMILY—PERIODICALS.**

**CS39**  
**.W3418** **Walcott family.**  
Walcot family bulletin. v. [1]- June 1975-  
Southport, [Eng., etc.] M. Walcot  
v. 30 cm.  
Quarterly, June 1975-Mar. 1978; four no. a year, summer 1978-  
"A member of the Federation of Family History Societies."  
Issues for June 1975-Mar. 1977 have no vol. numbering but constitute v. 1.  
Winter and spring 1978/79 combined in one issue.  
Key title: Walcot family bulletin, ISSN 0307-028X.  
I. Walcott family—Periodicals. I. Federation of Family History Societies.  
II. Title.  
CS39.W3418 929'.2'0941 80-648636  
MARC-S  
Library of Congress

PRESS FIRMLY	PRESS FIRMLY	STAFF USE ONLY
Call Number <div style="font-size: 2em; font-family: cursive;">CS39 .W3418</div>	Author <div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-family: cursive;">Walcot Family</div>	Deck Att. No. _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Not on Shelf <input type="checkbox"/> Verify Call No. <input type="checkbox"/> Clarify Call No. <input type="checkbox"/> Give Vol. No./Date <input type="checkbox"/> Folio, Pick Up: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Latest Yr. on Shelf: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> No Vols. on Shelf <input type="checkbox"/> Other Location (See Message) <input type="checkbox"/> Missing in Inventory Date _____
Periodical Vol. No. or Date <div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-family: cursive;">v. 1 1975</div>	Legible Name and Address, or User Card No. Name/User Card No. <div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-family: cursive;">055555</div>	
LH & G READING ROOM Desk # or Last Name if Hold <div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-family: cursive;">JG 35</div>	Address City/State/Zip _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Overnight Request Tomorrow's Date: _____ Last Name: _____	Message _____	

**WHAT TO DO NEXT**

After you have filled out the call slip with information from the catalog card or computer, select a vacant desk, fill in the desk number and your Reader Registration Card number, and submit the slip at the Book Service Desk. Be prepared to show your Reader Registration Card to the attendant. Either the volume will be delivered to your desk or the call slip will be returned with a report in the lower right corner. If you are not using a desk, mark the slip "Hold" and the book will be held under your name throughout the day at the Book Service Desk. **Books may not be removed from the reading room.**

## WHAT IF YOUR BOOK IS “NOT ON SHELF”

Your call slip may be returned with a report that the book is “not on shelf” (NOS). There are many possible reasons for this response. A reference librarian can help you review the call number and bibliographic information for accuracy, completeness, and legibility, or determine if the book is in a reference collection or on microfilm. To inquire further, consult Book Service personnel, who will ask you to submit an online request for titles not on shelf. The address for submitting online special search requests is as follows: <[http://www.loc.gov/rr/cmd/specialsearch\\_pub\\_form.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/cmd/specialsearch_pub_form.html)>.

## MAY BOOKS BE RESERVED?

You may reserve five books for three days by obtaining yellow slips from the Book Service Desk, filling out and inserting them in the books to be reserved, and shelving them on the reading room’s Three-day Reserve shelves. **Reference books may not be reserved.**

## PHOTOCOPYING

Photocopying machines and a copy card machine are located in the rear of the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### FINDING AIDS

The reference staff of the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room has prepared a number of bibliographies and guides that are useful for researchers. The following items are available in the reading room and are also accessible from the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room home page <<http://www.loc.gov/rr/genealogy>>:

*African-American Family Histories and Related Works in the Library of Congress*  
*Afro-American Genealogical Research*  
*Danish Immigration to America: An Annotated Bibliography of Resources at the Library of Congress*  
*East Central European Genealogy and Local History: Sources for Research*  
*Four Hundred Years of American Life and Culture\**  
*Genealogical Periodicals in the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room: A Guide for Research*  
*Genealogical Research at the Library of Congress*  
*German Immigrant Arrivals: Resources in the Library of Congress*  
*Guides to Genealogical Research*



*Handbooks for Foreign Genealogical Research: A Guide to Published Sources in English*  
*Heraldry: A Selected List of References*  
*Hispanic Local History and Genealogy in the United States*  
*Immigrant Arrivals: A Guide to Published Sources*  
*Searching for Female Ancestors: A Selected Bibliography\**  
*A Select Bibliography of Works at the Library of Congress on Norwegian-American Immigration and Local History*  
*Sources for Research in English Genealogy*  
*Sources for Research in Irish Genealogy*  
*Sources for Research in Scottish Genealogy*  
*Sources for Research in Welsh Genealogy*  
*Surnames: A Selected List of References about Personal Names*  
*Swedish American Genealogy and Local History: Selected Titles at the Library of Congress*  
*Telephone and City Directories in the Library of Congress: A Finding Guide*  
*U.S. City Directories on Microfilm in the Microform Reading Room\**

In addition, *Generations Past: A Selected List of Sources for Afro-American Genealogical Research* (Z1361 .N39L34 1988), and *Irish Genealogical Office Manuscripts: A Guide to the Microfilm* may be consulted in the reading room.

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\* Titles with asterisk are only available online.

## **MANUSCRIPTS**

Various manuscript collections that have genealogical research value may be examined in the Manuscript Reading Room, 1st floor, Madison Building. Consult a reference librarian in the Local History and Genealogy Reading Room for assistance in identifying potentially useful manuscript materials.

## **MAPS**

The Geography and Map Reading Room, Basement, Madison Building, has a collection of maps from all time periods covering all geographic areas. Reference assistance in determining geographic boundary changes is also available.

## **MICROFORMS**

Most microforms are viewed in the Microform Reading Room, 1st floor, Jefferson Building.

## **NEWSPAPERS AND CURRENT PERIODICALS**

All newspapers, including those on microfilm, and many periodicals published within the past year are served in the Newspaper and Current Periodical Reading Room, 1st floor, Madison Building.

## **RARE BOOKS AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

The word "Office" or "Toner" appearing on some catalog cards refers to the Rare Book and Special Collections Reading Room, 2nd floor, Jefferson Building.

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