Genealogical Resources: Dallas History & Archives (And Beyond)

A Division of the Dallas Public Library
By Brandon Murray, CA
Who We Are…

- The collection of materials at the Dallas History & Archives Division is one of the largest of its kind in the nation. Our holdings span many aspects of the diverse history of not only Dallas and the surrounding area, but the entire state of Texas.

- The Dallas History & Archives Division collects, preserves, and makes available to patrons information in text, graphic, audio, and video formats.

- Please note that because of the many unique and fragile resources in the Dallas collection, no items circulate outside the Library.

- The Dallas History & Archives Division is part of the Special Collections department, which also houses the Fine Books Division.
Our Renovation

Background

❖ The 7th floor of Central Library closed on March 21, 2015 and re-opened on August 20, 2016 after renovation.
❖ Over 250 pallets of materials and tens of thousands of reference books were moved back to the 7th floor for our re-opening.
❖ The total renovation project cost was nearly $6 million.
7th Floor Reading Room
Our Holdings

Cataloged Materials

- 65,000+ books
- City Directories
- School Annuals
- JFK Assassination
- Serials (current and historical)
- Bios

Other Items

- Vertical Files
- Maps and Blueprints
- 475+ Manuscript Collections
- DPL Archive - old photographs, paperwork, blueprints and programs (contact us to donate material)
- Dallas County Court district minutes on microfilm
- *Dallas Times Herald* on microfilm
Our Holdings

Photographs - Over 1.5 million Photographs (~7,000 are in PAC)
Our Holdings

- Manuscripts
- 475+ Collections
  - Pioneer families
  - Architectural
  - Ethnic communities in Dallas
  - Women’s history
  - Council members and mayors
  - Business history

* Dallas Genealogical Society Collection (MA1982.04) - material covers the years 1960 through 2019, with additions being made periodically.
Our Holdings

Fine Books Division

- Dallas Public Library’s Fine Books collection numbers over 2,750 volumes donated by Dallas citizens or purchased with endowment or gift funds.

Fine Books - Areas of Focus:
- History of Printing and the Book
- The History of Ideas - particularly those that have exerted major influence on Western civilization
- Fine Printing - the Art of the Book
Visit Our Division Online

http://dallaslibrary2.org/dallashistory
How Does This Help Genealogists?

❖ A Local Emphasis
❖ While the 8th floor Genealogy Department of the Central Library has been previously rated by a leading family history magazine as one of the top ten genealogy collections in the United States, those researching family histories with strong Dallas and/or Texas connections can benefit from the holdings of the 7th floor Dallas History & Archives Division.
❖ The Dallas Public Library system (as a whole) has a number of useful resources as well.
To successfully document an ancestor, you must know the following:
- Ancestor’s name
- Approximate date of birth and death
- Location where ancestor resided

To find that information, genealogists rely on the following records resources:
- Census & Census substitutes
- Tax Records
- Vital Records
- Cemeteries
- Obituaries
- Marriage Records
Census & Census substitutes:

- The United States Census can identify an ancestor’s residence every ten years from 1790 to 1940 (census records are closed to the public for a period of 72 years). All of the census records for Texas and the United States are on Ancestry.com
- One exception is 1890 due to a fire in the early 20th century which destroyed many of those records.
- 1880 census – started listing family.
- 8th floor also has census on microfilm: 1790-1930.
Documenting Ancestors – Library & Online Resources

- Census & Census substitutes:
  - 8th floor also has Soundex System, which is a coding system for the census used to group people’s last names together based on how they sound.
  - It is useful for names with different spellings.
Basic Soundex Coding Rule

Every soundex code consists of a letter and three numbers, such as W-252. The letter is always the first letter of the surname. The numbers are assigned to the remaining letters of the surname according to the soundex guide shown below. Zeroes are added at the end if necessary to produce a four-character code. Additional letters are disregarded. Examples:

- **Washington** is coded W-252 (W, 2 for the S, 5 for the N, 2 for the G, remaining letters disregarded).
- **Lee** is coded L-000 (L, 000 added).

Soundex Coding Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>M, N</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>R</td>
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Disregard the letters A, E, I, O, U, H, W, and Y.

See also this [online Soundex Calculator](https://www.archives.gov/research/census/soundex.html).
Tax Records:

- Generally, tax records are a yearly listing of residence and status and come in to play once locality is established.
- Helpful in determining when a person arrives and departs an area, either by relocating or death. If by death, the next year may reflect the name of the widow.
- Tax records on microfilm are currently housed in the 8th floor Genealogy Department.
City Directories help identify the ancestor’s residence every year.

- The 7th floor Archives Division maintains a collection of telephone, city, and criss-cross directories for cities across Texas, in hard copy and microfilm.
  - Lists ancestor’s residence and occupation. In many cases, the name of the wife is included.
  - Note that it took a year to compile and publish. Therefore 1950 directory reflects information from 1949.
- A complete list of Texas/Dallas city directories holdings is located on the department web page, [www.dallaslibrary2.org/dallashistory](http://www.dallaslibrary2.org/dallashistory)
Older city directories have three types of listings:

- Name (by name of person or business).
- Street (after 1901; arranged alphabetically by street name and then by number).
- Type of business or occupation (i.e. grocers, attorneys, banks, etc.).
City Directories - Be aware of street numbers:
❖ Streets were renumbered at least two times (1891-92 and 1911).
❖ The 1911 directory gives both the old and new numbers.

If the building you are researching pre-dates 1901, find the 1901 directory street listing and note the name of the occupant. Then try to trace the name of the occupant in earlier directories.

When using city directories, refer to beginning of directory for lists of helpful abbreviations, symbols, and demographic information.

Some early directories may even indicate death dates.
Documenting Ancestors – Library & Online Resources

Worley's Greater Dallas City Directory, 1952
### General Abbreviations

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</table>

Worley's Greater Dallas City Directory, 1952
Documenting Ancestors – Library & Online Resources

From 1998 Cole Directory - Denton, Lewisville, & Vicinity
A NUMERICAL DIRECTORY

Arranged by telephone number

Telephone Exchange

Area Code

Exchange Location

DENTON

Area Code 817

1981 EXCHANGE (NEW IN 1986/87)

COMMUNITY DESIGNATION

Year First Listed in Directory

Street Address

New at this address,
but listed previously in our Directory

New Listing that is
also a New Arrival to
our Directory

Telephone Number

Personal or Firm Name

Business Listing

From 1998 Cole Directory - Denton, Lewisville, & Vicinity

Documenting Ancestors – Library & Online Resources
Vital Records:

- Birth and death records in Texas are a “modern” record. Vital records were not required to be recorded prior to 1903, except for a very brief time in the 1870s. Many births and deaths from 1903 up to as late as 1930 were never recorded.
- Some births during this time were later recorded in the late 1930s as Probated or Delayed births. What is available for Texas is located on Ancestry.com.
- Death certificates is a primary source but contains secondary information.
Vital Records:

- Dallas History & Archives Division has indexes to births and deaths in microform.
- To find these records use the following web sites: [www.ancestrylibrary.com](http://www.ancestrylibrary.com) or [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) (set up a user name and password)
Documenting Ancestors – Library Resources

Bureau of Vital Statistics: A New Addition to Central Library Building

(214) 670-3248

For Fee-Based, Same Day Service (by appointment):

- Birth Certificates.
- Death Certificates.
- Birth Abstract (certificates from State records for all births outside of Dallas in Texas).
- Acknowledgement of Paternity.
- Funeral Home Service.
- Notary Service.
Cemeteries:

- Burial records often provide birth and death dates.
- Mortuary records are also helpful.
- A number of Dallas cemeteries have been published.
  - Shirley Remnant Sloat’s book, *Dallas County Records of Interest to the Genealogist at the J. Erik Jonsson Central Library Dallas Public Library System*, to determine what has been abstracted and where it was published. A copy is available at the 7th floor reference desk.
Cemeteries:

- Oakland Cemetery, one of largest and earliest cemeteries in Dallas, is online (www.dallasmugenalogy.org) and on microfilm in the Genealogy Section.

- Physical collection: interment, lot and section cards:
  - Name, date of birth, death and burial.
  - Next of kin.
  - Extended cause of death (if death was notable).
  - Names of all those buried in the plot.
  - Whether or not there is a gravestone.
  - Obituaries, some with photographs, of all burials in lot.
  - Family tree (limited) information.
Cemeteries:

- Published abstracts for other Texas Counties are on the 7th and 8th floors.
- Other online cemetery resources:
  - [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)
  - [www.billiongraves.com](http://www.billiongraves.com)
Obituaries:

- Modern obituaries are a great source for obtaining information about the deceased. The further back you go, however, information may become less helpful.
- Newspapers are a vital source for birth and death information contained in obituaries. Dallas and other Texas newspapers are maintained on microfilm. A complete list of newspaper holdings is located on the CDH web page, [www.dallaslibrary2.org/dallashistory](http://www.dallaslibrary2.org/dallashistory)
- Obituaries are just a small part of information to be located in newspapers.
- Archives Division vertical clipping files can be useful for obituaries, marriage information, and more...
Documenting Ancestors – Library Resources

Newspapers as a resource:
• Notices of deeds of transfer.
• Probate matters.
• Civil and criminal court proceedings.
• Marriages
• Births
• Anniversaries
• … and more…
• Dallas newspapers pick up information from all over the state.

Funeral Homes as resource:
• Recent obituaries are sometimes published on funeral home websites, rather than the newspaper.
Documenting Ancestors – Library Resources

- The Historical Dallas Morning News
  - A part of Newsbank, Inc., this database has:
    - *The Dallas Morning News* (October 1, 1885 to December 31, 1984)
    - *Fort Worth Star Telegram* (July 2, 1902 to May 31, 1991)
    - *Fort Worth Morning Register* (January 1, 1897 to June 30, 1902) digitized and indexed for easy access.
Marriage Records:

- Best source for learning the female’s maiden name.
  - Dallas County’s index to Dallas marriages, 1846-1963, is located on the 8th floor on microfilm.
    - The date in this index reflects the date the license was issued, not the date of marriage.
  - Marriage records are ONLY at the Dallas County Clerk office on 21st Floor of Renaissance Tower - 1201 Elm Street.
- Marriage Records indexes for most Texas counties are on microfilm on the 8th floor.
- Published abstracts for Dallas County have been published by the Dallas Genealogical Society.
After names have been identified, a locality established, and birth and death information obtained for an ancestor… what next?

Building a more complete picture:
- Land Records
- Probate Records
- Court Records
- Maps
- Published Histories
- Military Records
- Church Records
- Yearbooks
- Serials/Magazines
- Manuscript Collections

Try searching for collateral associations – “A family leaves more records than an individual.”
Land Records:

- Land Grants: see *Texas Land Survey Maps for Dallas County* and *Sam Street’s Map* (available in library catalog). Published land survey maps are available for other Texas counties.
- Deeds: Indexes and early deed records are on the 8th floor
Probate Records:
- Wills and estate case papers, 1846-1900. On microfilm on the 7th and 8th floors.
- After 1900, the indexes are at the County Clerk’s office. The records are located off-site and must be ordered from the clerk and viewed during a second visit.
- During slavery, slaves were sometimes included as property and may have the person’s name.
Court Records:
- All of the following records are currently located on the 7th floor.
- District Court Records: divorces and civil cases; microfilm.
- Naturalizations: Published index; Case Papers, 1872-1912 and Declarations of Intention, 1889-1903 on microfilm.
- Inquest Records, microfilm for each district in Dallas.
- May have death certificate from justice of the peace or a coroner.
Documenting Ancestors – Library Resources – A More Complete Picture

- Published Histories:
  - “Mug Book” histories about Dallas.
  - Family histories and biographies.
  - Historical overviews about Dallas.
  - The same for other Texas Counties.
Military Records:

- Best source for Texas military materials are located on the 8th floor.
- They have National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) records from the American Revolution to the Philippine Insurrection. Starting to get World War I.
- fold3 database available through Dallas Public Library – contains “…military records, including the stories, photos, and personal documents of the men and women who served.”
Church Records:

- Establishing an ancestor’s religion is necessary before a search can begin for church records.
- Not all church records are created equal.
  - If the ancestor is Catholic, vital information is often contained in registers belonging to the diocese.
  - If the ancestor was Baptist, expect to find church histories and records of membership, but very little vital information.
Documenting Ancestors – Library Resources – A More Complete Picture

❖ Yearbooks:
  ❖ May contain early photos of an ancestor.

❖ Serials/Magazines:
  ❖ May have articles about the locality where ancestors lived and events that may have influenced their lives.

❖ Manuscript Collections:
  ❖ May contain letters, diaries, & other papers or ephemera.
  ❖ May have information about your ancestor or people who touched their lives or places where they resided.
  ❖ Certain genealogical collections exist within manuscript collections.
Additional Online Resources

Online Databases - Dallas Public Library

Access in the Library only
- Ancestry Library Edition (at home until 12/31)
- American Ancestors
- FamilySearch Affiliate Library Records
- HistoryGeo
- NewspaperArchive

Access from home*
- Fold3
- Genealogy Bank
- Newsbank (Dallas Morning News)
- America’s Obituaries and Death Notices
- Heritage Quest
- Sanborn Maps (Texas)
- Handbook of Texas
- Western & Native American Databases
- Hobby & Craft Reference Center
Additional Online Resources

Dallas Morning News Archive

Welcome Dallas Public Library

Current Events
- Hot Topics

Special Reports
- What's New (October)

People in the News
- Nobel Prize Winners

School and College
- Science

U.S. Presidential Campaign - 2016

Issues in the News
- Bullying Prevention

National Hispanic Heritage Month

World Economics

World Health

Education Around the World

To search, click on an online resource listed below.

Archive of Americana
Published by Readex, a division of NewsBank, Inc.
This family of historical collections contains books, pamphlets, broadsides, newspapers, government documents and more.
- The Historical Dallas Morning News
  Searchable American newspapers enable users to explore America's past. Available here: Selected Historical News

America's GenealogyBank
Quickly find your ancestors in over 300 years of historical newspapers, books, pamphlets and government reports. Search Congressional Serial Set and more. Find obituaries, birth & marriage notices, pension records etc. Read every article or

America's News
With unmatched U.S. news content from local, regional, and national sources, this resource is the largest of its kind. Find newspapers, blogs, journals, newswires, broadcast transcripts and videos. Explore a specific issue or event through the wide variety of viewpoints from across the country on topics such as politics, business, health, sports, cultural activities and more.

Search Shortcuts:
- Dallas Morning News, The
- Access Acronyms
- Access Presidential News
- Access Newsmakers
- America's News Magazines
- United States

America's Obituaries & Death Notices
The largest and most comprehensive collection of newspaper obituaries and death notices. Extensive editorial review ensures accuracy. An easy-to-use interface allows searching by name, date range, or text such as institutional

Welcome Dallas Public Library
Additional Online Resources

- America's Genealogy Bank
  - Conduct genealogical searches with over 300 years of historical newspapers, books, pamphlets, and government reports.
Additional Online Resources

Texas Digital Sanborn Maps

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1892
But wait, there's more!

The Central Library’s 8th Floor - Lloyd DeWitt Bockstruck Genealogy Collection
One of the top 5 genealogy collections in the United States

Collection spans all 50 states and many international locations

New material is added constantly
What they collect:

- Records & record transcriptions
- Guides and how-to resources
- Family and local histories
- Social and ethnic histories
- Military histories
- Primary source material

They offer programs including those in partnership with Dallas Genealogical Society.
Holdings:

- Over 123,000 volumes
- 64,500 rolls of microfilm
- 89,000 microfiche
- 700 maps and charts
- Census on microfilm: 1790-1930. Digital resources like AncestryLibrary edition is available to DPL cardholders remotely through December 31.

- Tax records on microfilm are currently housed in the 8th floor Genealogy Department

- Ed C. Smith Funeral Home (1880-1978)
  - funeral files & ledgers

- McGowan Funeral Home (1956-1995)
  - funeral files
  - indexed on the Dallas Genealogical Society’s website by the society’s African-American Special Interest Group.
8th Floor - Lloyd DeWitt Bockstruck
Genealogy Collection

- Vertical Family Files
  - Family histories and unpublished manuscripts
  - Pages from family bibles
  - Family group sheets
  - Newspaper clippings
  - Photographs
  - Loose papers
Vertical Family Files (Finding Aid)

- Indexed by surname
- Available at reference desk and online

### Index to the Dallas Public Library Surname Vertical Files

Created and indexed by Mic Barnette

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Texas County Tax Rolls

- 1846-1910
- Includes the Republic of Texas
- Great way to locate people between census years

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8th Floor - Lloyd DeWitt Bockstruck
Genealogy Collection

DGS volunteers and resources

- Genealogical advice
- DGS publications & resources available for purchase
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- Questions?
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- stephanie.bennett@dallascityhall.com
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1515 Young St.
Dallas, TX 75201

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Thank you for listening!