Genealogical Resources: Dallas History & Archives

A Division of the Dallas Public Library

By Brandon Murray, Librarian
& Sammie Lee, Library Associate
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 to begin the renovation process.
- From April 20, 2015 to March 21, 2016 the division operated out of a temporary 1st floor space with limited resources, as most materials were packed away.
- Over 250 pallets of materials and tens of thousands of reference books were moved back to the 7th floor for our re-opening on August 20, 2016.
- The total renovation project cost was nearly $6 million.
Our Renovation

New Features

- Reorganization of 40,000 sq. ft. floor including increased public usage and meeting space.
- Updated mechanical, electrical, and plumbing.
- New fire suppression systems and controls for electrical and lighting.
- Increased & updated archival storage facilities with high density shelving.
  - Room to grow… Before the renovation, we had trouble fitting new books on shelves. Now we have room to expand for decades.
  - New high density microfilm cabinets and dedicated shelving for ledger books.
  - More space for map collection area as well as more floor space for card catalogs, cabinets, & processing areas.
  - Photo room has increased shelving, a dedicated room for negative storage, new computers & scanning equipment.
Our Renovation

New Features

- Built-in & mobile display cases to exhibit unique collections.
- Added the Kenneth Jonsson Gallery exhibit space to display rare books, artifacts, & art.
- Added the Margaret McDermott Study Room for small class instruction & quiet study.
- Added the Norma & Don Stone Room with technical enhancements ideal for board meetings.
- Added the Digital Interactive Gallery (DIG) for multi-person viewing of the digital collections.
- Refreshed & updated the O’Hara Hall, including a new sound system & banquet furniture.
- New & improved staff area including new office furniture & cubicles.
Our Renovation

The new 7th floor reading room
Our Renovation

The Digital Interactive Gallery (DIG)
Our Holdings

Cataloged Materials

- Over 65,000 books on all aspects of Texas
  - City Directories
  - School Annuals
  - JFK Assassination
  - Church Histories
  - Architecture
  - Education
  - Biography
Our Holdings

Photographs

- Over 1 million images (over 6,000 images in online catalog)
  - Photographic Prints
  - Glass Negatives
  - Plastic Negatives
  - Slides
  - 10,000 visual file image cards in reading room
Our Holdings

Vertical Files

- DFW businesses, clubs and organizations, people, churches, crimes, and more
- Clipping dates from the mid-1950s forward, with a few earlier articles – including articles from the Dallas Morning News, the Dallas Times Herald, and other miscellaneous publications
- Election campaign materials (send us campaign flyers!)
Our Holdings

_serials_

- Approximately 1,500 titles

- Newspapers
  - Current and historical
  - Many Texas cities and towns

- Magazines
  - Current and Historical

_maps_

- Over 7,000 – Texas & Mexico (ca. 1800-Present) Dallas (1846-Present)
  - Land Ownership
  - Streets and Highways
  - Trails and Railroads
  - Murphy and Bolanz
  - Sanborn Fire Insurance
  - …and more…
Our Holdings

-Manuscripts
- Over 500 collections
- Over 4,500 linear ft. of material
  - Pioneer families
  - Architectural
  - Ethnic communities in Dallas
  - Women’s history
  - Council members and mayors
  - Business history
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.
- No tax revenues are used to acquire books for the collection. Fine Books holdings focus on three areas.

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
Our Holdings

Fine Books Division

“Lost Copy” of Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776
Our Holdings

Fine Books Division

- Shakespeare's First Folio, 1623
Frank Reaugh

- Scene on the Brazos, 1893
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.
Documenting Ancestors – Library & Online Resources

Soundex System. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), September 26, 2016:
https://www.archives.gov/research/census/soundex.html

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>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Represents the Letters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>B, F, P, V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>C, G, J, K, Q, S, X, Z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>D, T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>M, N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disregard the letters A, E, I, O, U, H, W, and Y.

See also this online Soundex Calculator.
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
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
Documenting Ancestors – Library & Online Resources

Worley's Greater Dallas City Directory, 1952
Look at All the Information You’ll Find in These Pages

A STREET DIRECTORY
Arranged by street and house number
A NUMERICAL DIRECTORY

Arranged by telephone number

Business Listing:
- 1778 @ Longhorn Meet Pick 500 E University MC
- 2062 @ Cookie Commercial 925 S Main 380 FA
- 2066 @ Action Commercial 925 S Main 380 FA
- 2068 @ Cullin Commercial 925 S Main 380 FA
- 2458 @ Cowan Commercial 925 S Main 380 FA
- 2464 @ Brownell 525 S Main 380 MC
- 2924 @ Youngs Young Ctr 525 S Main 380 MC
- 3125 @ Youngs Young Ctr 525 S Main 380 MC
- 3175 @ Potter Engineering 525 S Main 380 MC
- 3195 @ Potter Engineering 525 S Main 380 MC
- 3705 @ Potter Engineering 525 S Main 380 MC
- 3755 @ Preston W Hires 925 S Main 380 MC
- 3800 @ Preston W Hires 925 S Main 380 MC
- 3850 @ Preston W Hires 925 S Main 380 MC
- 4000 @ Cory 21 Oak Dr 1823 Industrial MC
- 4100 @ Cory 21 Oak Dr 1823 Industrial MC

Telephone Exchange:
- 381 EXCHANGE (NEW IN 1988-89)

Area Code:
- AREA CODE 817

Exchange Location:
- DENTON

New Listing that is also a New Arrival to our Directory:
- 0003 @ Scott Sci
- 0004 @ John A Harris
- 0007 @ Copek Oaks Farm
- 0008 @ V L Hays
- 0009 @ Eline L Creamer
- 0010 @ Bob Jones
- 0012 @ Christopher Town
- 0017 @ Larry Arnold
- 0018 @ Mary Fife
- 0019 @ Dora Sizer
- 0020 @ Wilma Johnson
- 0021 @ V K Coleman
- 0022 @ Tye Brown
- 0023 @ E L Stovall
- 0024 @ Nancie Aman
- 0025 @ S Warner
- 0026 @ Lawrence P nan
- 0027 @ Judy Goins
- 0028 @ Charlotte P
- 0029 @ Robert Fife
- 0030 @ Jo Systems
- 0031 @ Dr Jeremiah
- 0032 @ Lewis White
- 0033 @ Action Water W

Street Address:
- 904 C Harmon Ct
- 1867 W Whirlow
- 909 Sunset
- 3834 South Rd
- 820 Hatte
- 625 Roberts
- 310 Brandt
- 216 Brandt
- 3405 W Harms
- 1570 W Harms
- 917 Casson
- 2705 Winchester Ct
- 615 Beaches
- 3420 June
- 9801 Ave
- 1738 Tealor
- 727
- 1106 M

New at this address, but listed previously in our Directory:
- 0003 @ Scott Sci
- 0004 @ John A Harris
- 0007 @ Copek Oaks Farm
- 0008 @ V L Hays
- 0009 @ Eline L Creamer
- 0010 @ Bob Jones
- 0012 @ Christopher Town
- 0017 @ Larry Arnold
- 0018 @ Mary Fife
- 0019 @ Dora Sizer
- 0020 @ Wilma Johnson
- 0021 @ V K Coleman
- 0022 @ Tye Brown
- 0023 @ E L Stovall
- 0024 @ Nancie Aman
- 0025 @ S Warner
- 0026 @ Lawrence P nan
- 0027 @ Judy Goins
- 0028 @ Charlotte P
- 0029 @ Robert Fife
- 0030 @ Jo Systems
- 0031 @ Dr Jeremiah
- 0032 @ Lewis White
- 0033 @ Action Water W

Personal or Firm Name:
- 0043 @ Max Rammel
- 0044 @ Lewis White

Year First Listed in Directory:
- 1988-89

Community Designation:
- See following page for complete list.
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

http://dallascityhall.com/departments/waterutilities/Pages/vital_statistics.aspx

For Fee-Based, Same Day Service:
- Birth Certificates.
- Death Certificates.
- Birth Abstract (certificates from State records for all births outside of Dallas in Texas).
- Acknowledgement of Paternity (by appointment).
- Funeral Home Service.
- Notary Service.
Bureau of Vital Statistics: A New Addition to Central Library Building

Factors of Use:

- Involves Fees & requests must be in writing and with proper photo identification.
- Death records are available for deaths that occurred within the city of Dallas from April 1983 to present.
- Confidential records may only be released to a qualified applicant - person named on the record, a member of the immediate family. All other applicants must provide a notarized letter of authorization from an immediate family member and a copy of their valid photo ID.
Bureau of Vital Statistics: A New Addition to Central Library Building

Factors of Use (Continued):

- Legal representatives or legal guardians must provide legal documentation (such as contracts, or court order documents) that demonstrates a direct, tangible interest in the birth certificate.
- Birth records are available for births that occurred anywhere in the state of Texas for the years of 1926 to present. Default for requesting birth certificate is certified copy of birth facts, i.e., (short form birth certificate/abstract).
- Long form birth certificate which includes the parent’s date of birth, must be specified request, and they can only provide long form birth certificate for births that occurred within the city of Dallas from April 1983 to present.
Cemeteries:
- Burial records often provide birth and death dates.
- Mortuary records are also helpful.
  - Ed C. Smith Funeral Home Records located on the 8th floor.
- 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.
  - Oakland Cemetery, one of the largest and earliest cemeteries in Dallas, is online (www.dallasi genealogy.org) and on microfilm in the Genealogy Section.
Cemeteries:

- Published abstracts for other Texas Counties are on the 7th and 8th floors.
- Other online cemetery resources:
  - www.findagrave.com
  - 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
- 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.
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.
- Marriage Records were long kept by individuals counties, but there was not a requirement to keep a copy on record at the state level in Texas until 1967.
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.
Documenting Ancestors – Library Resources – A More Complete Picture

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.
Maps:

- Maps database on the Archives Division webpage, www.dallaslibrary2.org/dallashistory
- Murphy & Bolanz maps also on webpage.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, on microfilm and one of Dallas Public Library’s databases
Documenting Ancestors – Library Resources – A More Complete Picture

Maps database on the Archives Division webpage, www.dallaslibrary2.org/dallashistory
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

- Marion Butts “Lens on Dallas”
- Photo Galleries
- Oral Histories
- Audio
- Transcripts
- Maps
- Searchable Database
- Digitized Content
- Other Dallas Public Library Web Resources
- Online Databases
  - Dallas Morning News Archive
  - America’s Genealogy Bank
  - ...and more...
Additional Online Resources

Oral Histories
- Audio
- Transcripts
Additional Online Resources

Online Databases - (Some descriptions taken from Dallas Public Library Database webpages)
Additional Online Resources

Dallas Morning News Archive
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
Additional Online Resources

- American Ancestors (library only)
  - Resources of the New England Historic Genealogical Society.

- America's Obituaries and Death Notices

- Bibliography of Native North Americans
  - "...bibliographic database covering all aspects of native North American culture, history, and life."
American Indian Histories and Cultures

"...Manuscripts, artwork and rare printed books dating from the earliest contact with European settlers right up to photographs and newspapers from the mid-twentieth century."
The American West

"Sourced from the Everett D. Graff Collection at the Newberry Library, Chicago, 'The American West' allows browsers to explore tales of frontier life, Pioneers, Wild West shows, the Gold Rush, vigilantes and outlaws. Document types include: manuscripts, trade cards, wanted posters, photographs, claim certificates, news sheets, rare printed works, brand books, broadsides, correspondence, diaries, directories, journals, pamphlets, periodicals, and artworks."
Additional Online Resources

- **Handbook of Texas**
  "'An encyclopedia of Texas history, geography, and culture...'"

- **HeritageQuest**
  "Combines digital, searchable images of U.S. federal census records (1790 - 1930) with the digitized version of the UMI® Genealogy & Local History collection."

- **Marquis Who's Who (library only)**
  "1.3 million biographies of notable men and women in all fields of endeavor from around the world."

- **ReferenceUSA**
  "Millions of US/Canadian business and residential records."
Contact Us

Dallas Public Library
Dallas History & Archives Division
1515 Young St.
Dallas, TX 75201

214-670-1435 | texas@dallaslibrary.org
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