

# Ohio Family History Research

## *Class 3: Essential Records*

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### **Ohio Families in Federal Records**

Family historians will find Ohio families in many collections of federal records. Particularly useful federal record types include the census, military records, and naturalization records.

#### *Ohio in the U.S. Federal Census*

The U.S. Federal Census began in 1790, before Ohio became a state. The county of Washington was enumerated in 1800, but no schedules survive for any Ohio counties from 1810. Starting in 1820, Ohio federal census records are more complete. In addition to the federal population schedule, there are also agriculture, industry, and mortality schedules for the years 1850-1880, which are widely available. Federal census records are widely available on genealogy websites including [AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org), [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com), [FamilySearch.org](http://FamilySearch.org), and [FindMyPast.com](http://FindMyPast.com).

There are no state census records.

#### *Ohio in Federal Military Records*

Ohio was not yet settled at the time of the American Revolution. However, many veterans of the Revolutionary War later removed to Ohio and therefore pension records, pension rolls, and bounty land applications may be useful.

Ohio residents participated in all other U.S. military engagements going forward. Records relating to Ohio residents can be found in collections of federal records relating to the War of 1812, Mexican War, Civil War, Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The National Archives (NARA) is the repository for federal military records. Pre-WWI records are held at NARA in Washington, DC and more recent records are held at NARA-St. Louis. For more information on obtaining military records from NARA, see <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/pre-ww-1-records> and <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records>.

Military records vary greatly depending on the military engagement. Typically, federal military records include draft records, enlistment records, muster rolls, and pension records.

## *Ohio in Federal Naturalization Records*

Naturalization records can be key in linking an immigrant to his homeland. Early naturalizations took place at a variety of courts, including local, county, state, and federal. With the creation of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization in 1906, lower courts stopped granting citizenship, though it took several years for the change to be fully enacted. Additionally, the process for naturalization became more standardized with courts across the U.S. using identical forms for the first time.

Naturalization was a multi-step process. After fulfilling the residency requirement (typically five years) the immigrant could declare his intent to naturalize. Two to three years later, he would complete his petition for naturalization, and finally he would take the oath of allegiance and be granted citizenship.

Post-1906 records contain many important details not found on earlier naturalization records, such as the exact place of birth, birthdate, name of the ship, and information about the spouse and children.

For more information on locating naturalization records, see the guide at

<https://www.americanancestors.org/tools/naturalization-records?refreshed=true>.

## **Additional Resources for Federal Records**

Constance Potter, “The 1940 Census Revisited,” *Prologue Magazine* (Winter 2012),

<https://www.archives.gov/files/publications/prologue/2012/winter/1940-census-revisited.pdf>

Jean Nudd, “Using Revolutionary War Pension Files to Find Family Information,” *Prologue Magazine* 47 no. 2 (Summer 2015). <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2015/summer/rev-war-pensions.html>

“The Federal Census: Moving Beyond the Population Schedule,” webinar,

<https://www.americanancestors.org/video-library/federal-census-moving-beyond-population-schedule>

Theodore J. Hull, “The World War II Army Enlistment Records File and Access to Archival Databases,” *Prologue Magazine* 38 no. 1 (Spring 2006).

<https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2006/spring/aad-ww2.html>

Trevor K. Plante, “An Overview of Records at the National Archives Relating to Military Service,” *Prologue Magazine* 34 no. 3 (Fall 2002).

<https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2002/fall/military-records-overview.html>.

“United States Military Records,” [https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United States Military Records](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United_States_Military_Records)

“United States Naturalization and Citizenship,”

[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United States Naturalization and Citizenship](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United_States_Naturalization_and_Citizenship)

“Using the U.S. Federal Census,” webinar, <https://www.americanancestors.org/video-library/using-us-federal-census>

## Vital Records

Vital records such as births, marriages, and deaths are key records for genealogists. These civil records can prove relationships between generations and serve as primary sources for vital dates. What a vital record looks like depends on who created the record and when it was created. Early records typically contain less information than later records and were often recorded in a register or spreadsheet format rather than in certificate form.

Ohio counties began recording births and deaths in 1867, however, compliance was low in the early years. State registration of births and deaths began in 1908. Marriage records can typically be found at the county level from the date of county creation and were registered at the county probate court. State registration of marriages began in 1949.

Online collections of vital records may include one or more of several record types. Indexes contain only the most basic details found on the original record, such as the name, date of the event, and a reference back to the original record (such as a certificate number or volume and page number). Transcriptions contain most of the information from the original record but do not include an image of the original. Original records or images may also be included in some digital collections.

## Searchable Databases

Recommended databases for Ohio vital records are:

- *Ohio, County Births, 1841-2003*, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1932106>
- *Ohio, U.S., County Marriage Records, 1774-1993*,  
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61378/>
- *Ohio, County Marriages, 1789-2016*, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1614804>
- *Ohio Deaths, 1908-1953* [index and images],  
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1307272>
- *Ohio, U.S., Death Records, 1908-1932, 1938-2018* [index and transcriptions, no images],  
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/5763/>

The FamilySearch guide to Ohio Vital Records contains links to other online vital records databases. The guide can be viewed at [https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ohio\\_Vital\\_Records](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ohio_Vital_Records).

### **Additional Resources**

“Ohio Vital Records,” in *Red Book: American State, County, and Town Sources*,  
[https://wiki.rootsweb.com/wiki/index.php/Ohio\\_Vital\\_Records](https://wiki.rootsweb.com/wiki/index.php/Ohio_Vital_Records)

“Vital Records at the Archives & Library of the Ohio History Connection,”  
<https://ohiohistory.libguides.com/vital>

“Where to Write for Vital Records: Ohio,” <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w/ohio.htm>

### **Tax Records**

Tax records can be useful substitutes to or fill-ins between federal census years, as they place an individual at a specific location at a specific year. Tax records may also provide clues about an individual’s economic status, standing in the community, or movements. Published copies of tax records may be easier to navigate than originals, as alphabetical listings and indexes allow for quicker research and comparison, and can be used to locate original records.

Early Ohio land purchasers who obtained land from the federal government were exempt from taxes for five years and therefore will not show up on early tax lists even if other records document their land ownership and place of residence.

Early tax records are particularly useful in Ohio, as early census records are limited. County-level tax records can be located on FamilySearch.org by entering the county name in the catalog at <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog> and navigating to the “Taxation” subcategory on the county page.

### **Searchable Databases**

*Ohio Tax Records 1800-1850*, <https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasearch/553/ohio-tax-records-1800-1850>. Also available on FamilySearch.org and Ancestry.com.

### **Published Resources**

Esther Weygandt Powell, *Early Ohio Tax Records* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1985).

Ohio Department of Taxation, “Ohio Taxes Through Time,”  
[https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/tax.ohio.gov/communications/publications/annual\\_reports/2003\\_annual\\_report/ohio\\_taxes\\_through\\_time.pdf](https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/tax.ohio.gov/communications/publications/annual_reports/2003_annual_report/ohio_taxes_through_time.pdf).

R.D. Craig, *Resident proprietors of the Connecticut Western Reserve, 1804* (Cincinnati, 1963).  
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/64010>. Also searchable on Ancestry.com.

Ronald Vern Jackson, et al., *Ohio tax lists 1800-1810* ([North Salt Lake, Utah]: Accelerated Indexing Systems International, [1978]). Sometimes cataloged as *Index to Ohio tax lists 1800-1810*.

*The 1812 Census of Ohio: A State-wide Index of Taxpayers* (Miami Beach, Fla.: TLC Genealogy, 1992).

## **Military Records**

Military records are primarily useful for determining an ancestor's military service. However, rosters or rolls may provide details about age, location, and/or occupation and pension files may be useful for locating information about relatives, friends, and neighbors, as well as providing specific details about military service. Regimental and unit histories can provide context, shedding more light on an individual's experience in service.

Military databases typically have a national rather than a state focus. Collections on Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, and Fold3.com pertaining to the United States armed forces will contain details of Ohio residents.

Several books have been published relating to military service by Ohio residents, particularly those who served in the Civil War and World War I. There are some Ohio-specific databases that contain details of military service.

## **Searchable Databases**

*Fold3.com*, <https://www.fold3.com/> [general searchable website for U.S. military records]

*Military Records*, [https://www.ancestry.com/search/categories/39/?searchOrigin=navigation\\_header](https://www.ancestry.com/search/categories/39/?searchOrigin=navigation_header)

*Ohio, Veterans Home Deaths and Burials, 1889-1930*,  
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2205726>

*Ohio, World War I Statement of Service Cards*, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/3010045>

*Official Roster of Ohio Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in the World War, 1917-18*,  
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7895/>. Originally published 1926-1929 as 23 vols.

## **Published Resources**

*The Official Roster of Soldiers of the American Revolution Buried in the State of Ohio* (Columbus, Ohio: F.J. Heer Printing Co., 1929). <https://archive.org/details/officialrosterof1929ohiorich/mode/2up>

Mrs. Orville D. Dailey, comp., *The official roster of the soldiers of the American Revolution who lived in the State of Ohio* ([Greenfield, Ohio: The Greenfield Printing & Publishing Co., 1938]).

*Official Roster III: Soldiers of the American Revolution Who Lived in the State of Ohio* (Ohio Daughters of the American Revolution, 1959). <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/329102>

Ohio Adjutant General's Department, *Roster of Ohio Soldiers in the War of 1812* (Ohio Adjutant General, 1916). <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/2478299>

Sunda Anderson Peters and Kay Ballantyne Hudson, eds., *Ohio War of 1812 Soldiers' Family Groups* ([Fremont, Ohio?]: Ohio Society United States Daughters of 1812, 2005).

Ohio Roster Commission, *Official roster of the soldiers of the state of Ohio in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1866*, 12 vols. (Akron: Werner Co., 1886-1895). <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000454243>. Volume 12 includes service in the Mexican War.

Whitelaw Reid, *Ohio In The War: Her Statesmen, General, and Soldiers*, 2 vols. (Cincinnati: The Robert Clarke Company, 1895).

<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000454232>

*The Ohio national guard and the Ohio volunteers* (Cleveland: Plain Dealer Publishing Co., 1901).

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/2549081>

### **Additional Resources**

“Military Records at the Archives & Library of the Ohio History Connection,”

<https://ohiohistory.libguides.com/military>

*Two hundred years: the military history of Ohio* (New York: H.H. Hardesty, 1886).

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/75042>

“U.S. Military Fatal Casualties of the Korean War for Home-State-of-Record: Ohio,”

<https://www.archives.gov/files/research/military/korean-war/casualty-lists/oh-alpha.pdf>

“U.S. Military Fatal Casualties of the Vietnam War for Home-State-of-Record: Ohio,”

<https://www.archives.gov/files/research/military/vietnam-war/casualty-lists/oh-alpha.pdf>

### **Town or County Enumerations**

There are no state censuses for Ohio, however, there are many local enumerations taken at the municipal or county level. These enumerations are typically one of three types:

- Enumerations of soldiers and sailors
- Enumerations of youth or school-aged individuals
- Quadrennial censuses of voters.

Many of these records are available online to browse at FamilySearch.org. Some of these are designated “Census Records” and can be found in the Census category on each county’s catalog page. Records can also be found in the catalog by searching for a particular location along with the keyword “enumeration.” The FamilySearch.org catalog is accessible at <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog>.

A separate list of school censuses and quadrennial censuses is available on the course landing page.

## County Probate Records

Probate records are usually filed at the probate court in the deceased individual’s county of residence. Probate records may include one or more of the following document types: will, letters of administration, inventory, bill of sale, receipts, and settlement accounts. Probate records may be bound into volumes (containing early copies of individual records) or kept as packets, sometimes called “Estate Files,” “Probate Files,” or “Probate Packets.” The latter may include original papers. Not every deceased individual will have probate records.

Probate records serve many functions in family history research. They can act as death record substitutes. They may explicitly name relationships between individuals (“my beloved wife,” “my son,” “my granddaughters,” etc.). They can also offer insight into economic standing as they often contain descriptions of real and personal property.

Probate records can be located in the FamilySearch.org catalog under the “Probate Records” category of a county’s catalog page. Indexes may appear separately in the “Probate Records – Indexes” category. Probate records can also be searched in the Ancestry.com collection *Ohio, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1786-1998* at <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8801/>.

FamilySearch is currently prototyping a searchable database of United States Land and Probate Records. This prototype database, currently called *Full-Text Search* allows probate records and deed records to be searched rather than browsed. It can be accessed by selecting “Try It” under “Expand your search with Full Text” at <https://www.familysearch.org/en/labs/>.

### Additional Resources

“Ohio Probate Records,” [https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ohio\\_Probate\\_Records\\_-\\_FamilySearch\\_Historical\\_Records](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ohio_Probate_Records_-_FamilySearch_Historical_Records)

“Will & Estate Research at the Archives & Library of the Ohio History Connection,”  
<https://ohiohistory.libguides.com/willsandestates>

## County Naturalizations

Prior to 1906, naturalizations were granted by municipal, county, state, and federal courts. These included county, superior, or common pleas courts; state and U.S. circuit and district courts; also municipal, police, criminal, chancery, probate, surrogate, and marine. Paperwork was not standardized, so forms created by different courts look different and may contain different information. A declaration of intention could be filed in one court and a petition filed at another court, perhaps in a different county if the individual seeking citizenship had moved in the interim. The same steps discussed in the section on Federal Naturalizations apply to pre-1906 records as well.

Until 1922, a woman’s citizenship hinged on her husband’s. Therefore, citizenship records for married women are unlikely to exist prior to that date.

## Searchable Databases

“Ohio, U.S., County Naturalization Records, 1800-1977,”  
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/60096/>

“Ohio, County Naturalization Records, 1800-1977,”  
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1987615>

“Ohio: County Naturalization Records, 1800-1977,”  
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/539/ohio-county-naturalization-records-1800-1977>

## Additional Resources

“Ohio Naturalization and Citizenship,”  
[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ohio\\_Naturalization\\_and\\_Citizenship](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ohio_Naturalization_and_Citizenship)

Marian L. Smith, “Any woman who is now or may hereafter be married . . .”: Women and Naturalization, ca. 1802–1940,” *Prologue Magazine* 30 no. 2 (Summer 1998).  
<https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1998/summer/women-and-naturalization-1.html>

Meg Hacker, “When Saying ‘I Do’ Meant Giving Up Your Citizenship,” *Prologue Magazine* (Spring 2014).  
<https://www.archives.gov/files/publications/prologue/2014/spring/citizenship.pdf>

“Naturalization Record Research,” <https://ohiohistory.libguides.com/naturalization>

“Naturalization Records,” <https://www.archives.gov/research/immigration/naturalization>

## Published Histories and Genealogies

Many town, county, and state histories were published in the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Published histories provide context and help develop a better understanding of a place and time. They may contain details about migration patterns, important dates, boundary changes, church formation and early membership, and other local institutions.

Using published biographical sketches and genealogies may help detail the lives of your ancestors and affiliated families. It may also aid in linking together families as well as differentiating people of the same name. Published genealogies may provide biographical details (such as occupation, place of residence, or educational background) in addition to vital details (such as birth and death dates). Even unsourced or uncited biographies and genealogies can be useful, as they provide clues about people and places that can be used to locate reliable primary sources.

When looking for books containing biographical or family history sketches, look for keywords in the title or subtitle such as: biography, memorial, memoir, portrait, album. Many of these types of books will be arranged at the county rather than the state level.

WorldCat.org, Archive.org, HathiTrust.org, Google Books, and the FamilySearch Digital Book Library are good places to search for county-specific or town-specific history and biography books.

## Published Resources

*Biographical History of Northeastern Ohio* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1893).

<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100734529>

Charles B. Galbreath, *The History of Ohio*, 5 vols., (Chicago: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1925).

<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000235176>

E.O. Randall, *History of Ohio: the rise and progress of an American state*, 5 vols. (New York: The Century History Company, 1912). <https://archive.org/details/@hkirchner/lists/1/history-of-ohio-by-e.o.-randall>

Gertrude Van Rensselaer Wickham, ed., *Memorial to the Pioneer Women of the Western Reserve*, 4 parts (Cleveland, Ohio: The Woman's Department of the Cleveland Centennial Commission, 1896-1897).

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/2719949>.

Henry Howe, *Historical collections of Ohio in two volumes, an encyclopedia of the state*, (Cincinnati: The State of Ohio, 1907). <https://archive.org/details/historicalcollec01inhowe>



Henry R. Baldwin, *The Henry R. Baldwin Genealogical Records*, 67 vols. (Youngstown, Ohio: Youngstown Public Library, 1963).

*Memoirs of the Lower Ohio Valley*, 2 vols (Madison, Wisc.: Federal Publishing Co., 1905). Vol 1:

<https://archive.org/details/memoirsofloweroh01fede/mode/2up>. Vol 2:

<https://archive.org/details/memoirsofloweroh02fede>

Ohio Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, comp., *The Ohio Surname Index* ([Columbus, Ohio]: Ohio Historical Society, 1984). <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/86323>

*The biographical cyclopædia and portrait gallery with an historical sketch of the state of Ohio*, 5 vols., (Cincinnati: Western Biographical Publishing Company, 1883-1891).

<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009833357>

## Physical and Digital Repositories

In addition to the collections and resources listed above, the following physical and digital repositories have relevant collections related to Ohio genealogy.

**National Archives – Chicago** [repository for federal records from agencies and courts in Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin]

7358 South Pulaski Road

Chicago, IL 60629

(773) 948-9001

<https://www.archives.gov/chicago>

Website includes research guides for frequently-requested record types.

**Ohio History Connection** [formerly the Ohio Historical Society, History Center, National Afro-American Museum & Cultural Center, State Archives & Library, and State Historic Preservation Office]

800 E. 17th Ave.

Columbus, OH 43211-2474

(614) 297-2510

<https://www.ohiohistory.org/research/archives-library/>

Website includes research guides.

**Western Reserve Historical Society** [museum, library, and archive dedicated to preserving and presenting the history of northeastern Ohio]

Cleveland History Center

10825 East Boulevard

Cleveland, Ohio 44106

(216) 721-5722

<https://www.wrhs.org/>

Genealogy index and library catalog searchable online. Links to virtual exhibitions accessible at

<https://www.wrhs.org/do-see/exhibitions>.

**Ohio Genealogical Society** [library and archive with 4,000 indexed Bible records, business and funeral home records, high school and college yearbooks, store ledgers, and more]

611 State Route 97 West

Bellville, OH 44813

(419) 886-1903

<https://www.ogs.org/>

Library catalog searchable online and digitized books and manuscripts available to members.

**OhioMemory.org** [digital collections of the Ohio History Connection and partner institutions; contains newspapers, photographs, plat maps, oral histories, fine art, flags, and local history collections]

<https://ohiomemory.org/>

