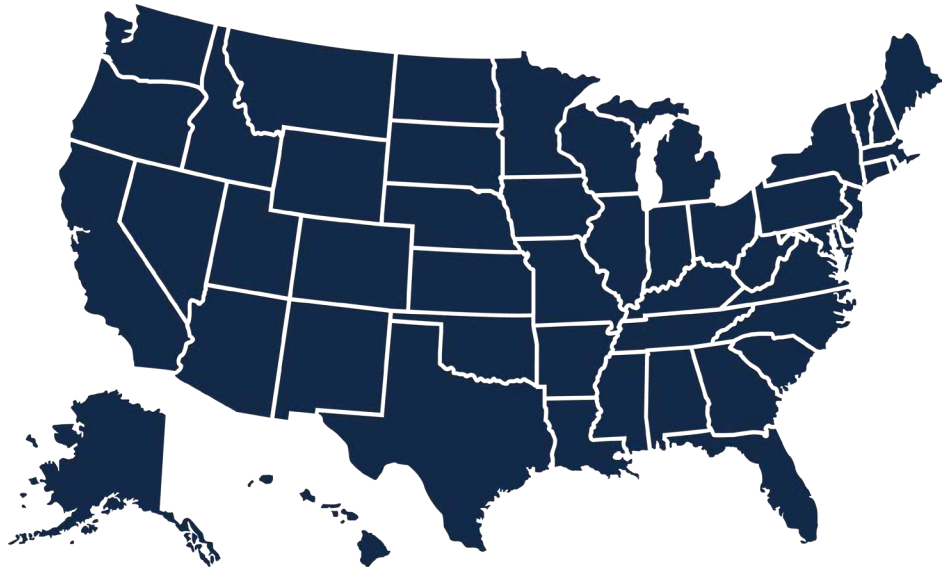


STATE SPOTLIGHT

Digitally Accessing Photographs State by State



Digital photography collections are a wonderful resource for family historians who wish to put a face to a name or to see the building in which an ancestor lived, learned, worshipped, or worked. Images of people, places, and objects can provide context, insight, and clues for further research. Illustrating genealogical compilations with photographs offers visual interest and documentation for current and future generations.

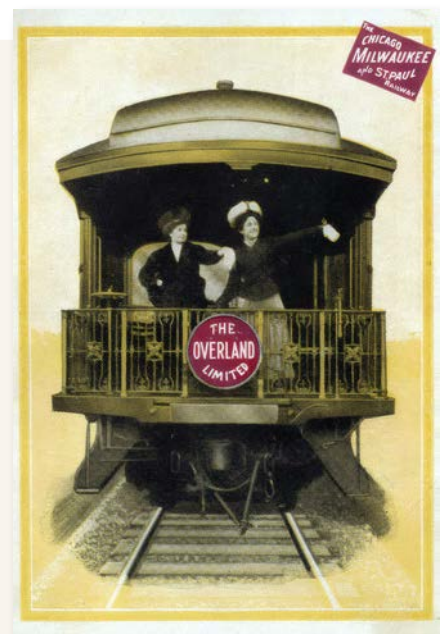
To identify freely accessible photograph collections online, staff members from across American Ancestors contributed to the list below. With the ever-increasing availability of digital images, our compilation is not meant to be all-inclusive but rather intended to highlight collections that we have used while researching and presenting family histories.



Wikimedia Commons is a versatile image collection site with dozens of different image categories. Each state has multiple categories and subcategories, making it likely that you'll find a photograph to fit your needs. When conducting a broad search of an American topic, use "Gallery pages of the United States" for its numerous subcategories and pages. Although "Gallery pages of the United States by state or territory" provides a limited number of images for each state, in total, Wikimedia Commons has over 142 million images as of May 2026. Therefore, Wikimedia Commons can be used as a starting point for a more in-depth investigation, especially since the search bar at the top on the webpage acts like any other search engine and allows you to expand your search horizons.

Matt Macy, Production Coordinator & Vita Brevis Editor

Postcard of the Overland Limited, jointly operated by the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway and Southern Pacific, ca. 1905. Wikimedia Commons.



Kyle Hurst is a Senior Genealogist of the Newbury Street Press at American Ancestors. She and her publications colleagues periodically present a "Writing and Publishing Your Family History" course that features a session on photos and illustrations.

Freely accessible digital photograph archives

General United States

Digital Public Library of America

DPLA

dp.la

Flickr Commons

Flickr Foundation

[Flickr.com/commons](https://www.flickr.com/commons)

Library of Congress: Free to Use and Reuse

Library of Congress

[LOC.gov/free-to-use](https://www.loc.gov/free-to-use)

Smithsonian Open Access

Smithsonian Institute

[SI.edu/OpenAccess](https://si.edu/OpenAccess)

Wikimedia Commons

Wikimedia

[Commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Images](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Images)

Digital Library & Archives

American Ancestors

[Digital.AmericanAncestors.org/digital](https://digital.americanancestors.org/digital)

Use advanced search for "photograph" within
Format or Description fields.

Digital Transgender Archive

DTA

DigitalTransgenderArchive.net

Lesbian Herstory Archives Photo Collection

Lesbian Herstory Archives

[LesbianHerstoryArchives.org/collections/
photo-collection/](https://LesbianHerstoryArchives.org/collections/photo-collection/)

Alabama

Alabama Photographs and Pictures Collection

Alabama Department of Archives & History

[Digital.archives.alabama.gov/digital/
collection/photo](https://Digital.archives.alabama.gov/digital/collection/photo)

Alaska

Alaska's Digital Archives

Alaska State Library

Vilda.alaska.edu

Arizona

Arizona Historical Society

Digital Collections

Arizona Historical Society Library & Archives

AZHSArchives.contentdm.oclc.org

Arizona Memory Project

Arizona State Library

AZMemory.azlibrary.gov

Arkansas

Arkansas Digital Archives

Arkansas State Archives

[AR-digital.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/
collection/images](https://AR-digital.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/images)

Bobby L. Roberts Library of

Arkansas History & Art

Central Arkansas Library System

arstudies.com

California

Calisphere

University of California

Calisphere.org

Colorado

Photographs and Moving Images Collection

History Colorado

[HistoryColorado.org/
photographs-and-moving-images](https://HistoryColorado.org/photographs-and-moving-images)

Connecticut

Connecticut Digital Archive

University of Connecticut Library

CTDigitalArchive.org

Delaware

Digital Archives

Delaware Public Archives

Archives.Delaware.gov/digital-archives/#photo

Florida

Florida Memory: Photographs

State Library and Archives of Florida

FloridaMemory.com/discover/photographs

Brewery Gulch in Bisbee, 1890. Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records. History and Archives Division, via the Arizona Memory Project.



You cannot truly get a sense of life in Arizona around the time of its statehood in 1912 without seeing it. The **Arizona Historical Society Digital Collections** has organized their free digital photograph collection into easy-to-browse categories, including postcards. The **Arizona Memory Project** has a substantially larger collection of searchable images, making it the premier statewide digital collection. This site encompasses a broad range of years, including dates prior to statehood. Since the two sites offer unique options, using them together helped me locate images of the law firm buildings, residential neighborhood, and home of Cleon T. Knapp, a former Minnesotan who represented the Calumet and Arizona Mining County in Bisbee.

Meaghan E. H. Siekman, Senior Genealogist of the Newbury Street Press

Georgia

Vanishing Georgia

Georgia Archives: Virtual Vault

Vault.GeorgiaArchives.org/digital/collection/vg2

Hawaii

Photograph Collection

Hawai'i State Archives

DigitalArchives.Hawaii.gov/browse/parent/ark:70111/0gvR

Idaho

Digital Library of Idaho

University of Idaho

DigitalLibraryofIdaho.org

Illinois

Illinois Digital Archives

Illinois State Library

IDAIllinois.org

Indiana

Indiana Memory

Indiana State Library

Digital.library.in.gov

Iowa

Digital collections on Flickr

State Historical Society of Iowa

flickr.com/photos/shsi-library/albums

Collections are browsable but not searchable

Kansas

Kansas Memory

Kansas Historical Society

KansasMemory.gov

Kentucky

Faces and Places: Northern

Kentucky Photographic Archives

Kenton County Public Library

FacesandPlaces.KentonLibrary.org

Louisiana

Louisiana Digital Library

Louisiana Digital Consortium

LouisianaDigitalLibrary.org

Maine

Early Maine Photographs,

Maine Memory Network

Maine Historical Society

EarlyMainePhotos.MaineMemory.net

Maryland

Digital Maryland

Enoch Pratt Free Library/Maryland State Library

Resource Center

DigitalMaryland.org

Massachusetts

Digital Commonwealth

Boston Public Library

DigitalCommonwealth.org

Michigan

Michigan Memories

Michigan Service Hub

MichMemories.org

Minnesota

Collections Online, Gale Family Library

Minnesota Historical Society

MNHS.org/search/collections

Minnesota Digital Library

University of Minnesota

MNDigital.org

Mississippi

Mississippi Digital Library

MSDigLib.org

Missouri

Missouri Digital Heritage

Missouri Secretary of State

SOS.mo.gov/mdh

Montana

Montana History Portal

Montana State Library

MTMemory.org

Nebraska

Nebraska Memories

Nebraska Library Commission

NebraskaMemories.org/cdm

Nevada

Online Collections Database

Nevada Historical Society

NevadaHistory.PastPerfectOnline.com/photo

Search or browse photos

New Hampshire

Collections Catalog

New Hampshire Historical Society

NHHistory.org/research/collections-catalog

Search or browse photos

New Jersey

Digital Jerseyana Collection

New Jersey State Library

hdl.handle.net/10929/113279



Arlington Hotel in Hot Springs, ca. 1920. University of Arkansas at Little Rock Center for Arkansas History and Culture.

ARKANSAS

The Arkansas Digital Archives and the Central Arkansas Library System provide access to a wide variety of historic Arkansas photographs. Both can be browsed in a variety of manners (i.e., by subject, year, location) or searched by keyword. While researching a family from Hot Springs, where several generations worked in local hotels, I used both collections to find contemporary images of the hotels, as well as downtown street scenes. Together, these collections helped illustrate the family's story in a meaningful way.

Hallie Kirchner, Senior Genealogist

New Mexico

New Mexico's Digital Collections

University of New Mexico University
Libraries
EContent.unm.edu

New York

Digital Collections

New York Public Library
DigitalCollections.nypl.org

New York Heritage Digital Collections

Empire State Library Network
NYHeritage.org

North Carolina

North Carolina Digital Collections

State Archives of North Carolina and
Library of North Carolina
Digital.ncdcr.gov

North Dakota

Digital Horizons

DigitalHorizonsOnline.org

Ohio

Ohio Memory

Ohio History Connection and
State Library of Ohio
OhioMemory.org

Digital Cincinnati Library

Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library
Digital.CincinnatiLibrary.org

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Digital Prairie: Images of Oklahoma

Oklahoma Department of Libraries
DigitalPrairieOK.net/images

Pennsylvania

POWER Library: PA Photos and Documents

State Library of Pennsylvania
PowerLibrary.org/collections

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Photograph Collection

Digital Collections at Providence Public Library
ProvLibDigital.org/collection/002-03-06

South Carolina

Digital Collections

University of South Carolina Libraries
Digital.library.sc.edu/collections

PENNSYLVANIA

The **POWER Library** (PowerLibrary.org/collections) offers a statewide database of photos and documents from unique collections in libraries across Pennsylvania.

The archive allowed me to locate photos of the Gateway Clipper Fleet, Fallingwater, Horseshoe Curve, and Johnstown's Inclined Plane, and to browse for photos in local newspapers such as the *Sewickley Herald* and books such as *The Bridges of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County*. These images brought my childhood in Western Pennsylvania to life.

Ellen (Teasley) Maxwell, Production Design Director



This photo, "The Melon Eaters," available on the POWER library website, was taken in the early 1920s in Elk Lick Twp., Somerset County, Pennsylvania. Reprinted with permission of The Springs Museum, Springs, Pennsylvania.

South Dakota

South Dakota Digital Archives

South Dakota State Historical Society
HistSD.access.preservica.com

Tennessee

Tennessee Virtual Archives

Tennessee State Library & Archives
Teva.contentdm.oclc.org

Texas

Texas Digital Archive: Prints and Photographs Collection

Texas State Library and Archives Commission
TSL.access.preservica.com

Utah

Digital Collections

Utah State Historical Society
History.Utah.gov/digital-collections

Vermont

Digital Vermont

Vermont Historical Society
DigitalVermont.org

Virginia

Library of Virginia Digital Collections

Library of Virginia
LVA.Virginia.gov/collections/digital-collections

Washington

Digital Collections

University of Washington Libraries
Content.lib.washington.edu

West Virginia

Digital Collections & Exhibits

West Virginia & Regional History Center,
West Virginia University
[WVRHC.lib.wvu.edu/collections/
digital-collections](http://WVRHC.lib.wvu.edu/collections/digital-collections)

Wisconsin

Recollection Wisconsin

WiLS (formerly Wisconsin Library Services)
RecollectionWisconsin.org/formats/photographs

Wyoming

Historic Photograph Collection

Wyoming State Archives
SPCRPhotoCollection.wyo.gov

Puerto Rico

Historic Photograph Collection

University of Puerto Rico (UPR) collection
Digital Library of the Caribbean
DLoC.com/collections/iupr
Search or browse photos