



# Clayton Library



Center for Genealogical Research

Introduction to Genealogical Research



## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Houston Public Library's Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research (Clayton Library). Begun as a separate collection in 1921, Clayton Library has become one of the best genealogical libraries in the United States.

The Clayton Library staff are available to help in the use of the library's services, facilities and collection. While the staff cannot do the research for you, our Reference Staff provide assistance in research methods and resources. While visiting the library, please read and observe the information found in the Policies and Information handout. Check at the Information Desk for other handouts available on Clayton Library.

On the Floor Plan notice that the first floor includes the library catalog and CD-ROMS, plus USA, State and Foreign books. Microprint materials and family histories are on the second floor.

## HOW TO GET STARTED

Genealogical research is the process of asking the following five questions over and over again:

1. What do I know about my family?
2. What family do I want to research?
3. What will solve my research problem?
4. Where will I find records?
5. What do I do next?



### 1. WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT MY FAMILY?

Start by filling out the Pedigree Chart. Begin with yourself on number one and continue backward in time. If you don't know exact dates or places, simply provide your best "guesstimate."

### 2. WHAT FAMILY DO I WANT TO RESEARCH?

Select an ancestor about whom you would like to research. If possible, select one who was born before 1930. Work on just one ancestor at a time. Identify what you want to learn, such as where and when the person was born, married or died, served in the military, etc.

### 3. WHAT WILL SOLVE MY RESEARCH PROBLEM?

Documents/sources contain information or evidence to help solve your research problems. Use these to document every fact on your pedigree chart such as names, dates, places, and relationships. Document your family tree with evidence from a variety of verifiable, independent sources. Don't rely on sources, published or otherwise, that cannot be verified. Reliable genealogical research is based on the quality of the evidence gathered, not the quantity.

Evidence is generally divided into two major categories:

*Primary evidence:* Primary evidence is created at or near the time of an event (such as birth, marriage, death or census records) and is based on firsthand knowledge, whether oral or written. Primary evidence is also known as "best evidence."

*Secondary evidence:* Secondary evidence is second-hand or based on hearsay. It is less reliable and best used as a guide to locating records that provide original/primary evidence.

- Information that has been transcribed, translated, abstracted or extracted
- A report by someone who was not witness to the event
- Information drawn from indexes, compiled sources or compendia
- Histories, genealogies, family traditions or legends

A single document may contain both primary and secondary evidence. For instance, the facts in a death certificate listing the name of the deceased with date and place of death written by the attending doctor at or near the time of death are primary evidence. Information on the same death certificate providing the deceased's date and place of birth and names of parents could be secondary evidence if the individual who provided the information did not have first-hand knowledge of these facts.



Also, there can be a variety of records that may provide similar information. If one record is not available, try another. For instance, to get information on someone's death, you might obtain an obituary, probate record, death certificate, a tombstone inscription, church register entries and/or a Social Security Death Index entry.

#### 4. WHERE DO I FIND RECORDS?

For an overview of the resources available at Clayton Library, please refer to the Collection Summary Sheet. The Houston Public Library catalog and the Clayton Library Finding Aids are the tools used to access the holdings of Clayton Library. Houston Public Library's online public catalog system is on the Internet at [www.houstonlibrary.org](http://www.houstonlibrary.org). Our Microprint Finding Aids are found on the Clayton Library homepage. Search by author, title, location, and subject. When you find an entry of interest, copy the complete call number (T123 VA) or cabinet and drawer, format (book, film, fiche and card) author, and title. Look at the floor plan to find the location of the desired material, or ask Clayton Library Staff for assistance.

#### 5. WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

##### ORGANIZE AND RECORD

Carefully record your information on pedigree charts and family group sheets. Keep a full bibliographic citation of all the records you search and copy key documents. Organization and documentation are the cornerstones to successful research. There are many excellent handbooks and forms that show you how to organize and document your family research.

##### EVALUATE

Genealogical research is a continuing process of finding pieces of a puzzle. Analyze and evaluate each new piece of evidence. Ask yourself - Is this information reliable? What pieces of the puzzle are still needed? What research path should I take? Consult our staff for suggestions on what to do next and for research strategies.

#### IDENTIFY SOURCES NOT AT CLAYTON LIBRARY

##### At Home:

Some of your best information may be your own family and home records, such as Bibles; old letters; scrapbooks; diaries; copies of birth, death and marriage certificates; school records; military records; obituaries; deeds and wills. You may need to visit or correspond with relatives in order to locate some of these records or find the cemetery in which your family is buried.

##### Other Places:

Excellent information is available in county, state and federal records, many of which are available at courthouses, archives, historical societies and libraries.

##### From Relatives:

Share with your relatives the information you have found and gather any additional information they may have. Talk to or tape record elderly family members several times to gather not only dates and relationships but also anecdotal information and first hand accounts of family history. Collaborate with other family members to write a family history and place it in a library where it will be preserved. Clayton Library welcomes donations of compiled family histories.





# Clayton Library



Center for Genealogical Research

## CENSUS RECORDS

Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research (Clayton Library) has a complete collection of all available Federal census records on microfilm from 1790 through 1930. Indexes and census images are available on the Ancestry and HeritageQuest databases to which the Houston Public Library subscribes; we also have microfilmed Soundex/Miracode indexes for 1880, 1900-1920, and some for 1930, as well as indexes in book form for earlier census years.

## FAMILY HISTORIES

The large family history section is located on the second floor of the main library building, and is arranged alphabetically by the last name of the primary family. Almost all of our family histories have been acquired by donation, and we are always delighted to add to our collection. Family lineage charts and family vertical files are also located on the second floor.

## FOREIGN COLLECTION

Clayton Library has a large foreign collection, comprising both actual records and "How to" books to aid those searching for their foreign immigrant ancestors. Great Britain is represented by such items as Phillimore's Marriage Registers, The Index Library, the Victorian County History Series, and Harleian Society Publications, as well as the Civil Registration Index for England and Wales from 1837 - 1930, on microfiche. Among the German materials are Der Wappenbuch, the Deutsches Geschlechterbuch, and the extensive Map Guide to German Parish Registers series. We own an excellent collection of Canadian materials, including the Repertoire des actes de bapteme, mariage, sepulture, et des recensements du Quebec ancien, and Tanguay's Dictionnaire genealogique des familles canadiennes.

A large number of books on heraldry are also available, including Burke's General Armory and Rietstap's Armorial General.

## LINEAGE MATERIAL

Many patriotic society lineage books are available, such as those of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution and the Founders and Patriots of the Republic of Texas.

## MAPS

Our map collection can be found in the map cabinets on the first floor. These maps include early and more current information. Sources include the atlas to accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 1861 - 1865. Maps can also be found within the book collection and include many of the volumes in Arphax Publishing's Family Maps series.

## MILITARY RECORDS

Clayton has copies on microfilm of indexes to Federal service records from the American Revolution through the Philippine Insurrection, including Registers of Enlistments in the U.S. Army, 1798 - 1914; the General Index to Compiled Service Records of Revolutionary War Soldiers, and the Consolidated Index to Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers. For the Civil War we also have the series Regimental Histories of the American Civil War, on microfiche, as well as the multi-volume series The War of the Rebellion. Clayton has most indexes to Confederate pension applications, and the applications themselves for some states. Indexes for all Federal pensions from 1776 - 1934 can be found in book form and/or on film with Revolutionary War applications on film. The special 1890 census of Union veterans and widows, and some 20th century military records are also available.

04/22/15



### NOTABLE COLLECTIONS

The R. B. Blake Collection, the Nacogdoches Archives and the Laredo Archives for Texas; the Draper Manuscript Collection, with guides; the Barbour, McCubbin, Vosburgh, Hale, and Hollingworth Collections; and Louisiana Colonial Records, are only a few of the special collections available. Clayton Library also has one of the largest microfilmed collections in the country of the Papeles Procedentes de Cuba (Cuban Papers), a collection of documents generated by the Spanish government for the Mississippi Valley, Gulf Coast, and East and West Florida, as well as a substantial collection of Records of Ante-Bellum Southern Plantations, on microfilm.

### ONLINE DATABASES

Houston Public Library subscribes to a large number of genealogical databases. These include Ancestry Library Edition; HeritageQuest; Fold3, and several newspaper databases, amongst others. Many of these databases can be accessed from your home computer, with a Houston Public Library card, but others (notably Ancestry) are only available from a Houston Public Library location.

### PASSENGER LISTS

Filby's Passenger and Immigration Lists Index and many of the sources it indexes, plus National Archives ship manifests, ship passenger indexes through the 20th century, and immigration indexes are a significant part of this collection. Clayton has also begun to collect 20th century border crossing records from Canada and Mexico to the United States.

### PERIODICALS

Over 3,000 titles are owned, including complete sets of major titles such as The American Genealogist, National Genealogical Society Quarterly, and New England Historical and Genealogical Society Quarterly. Many of these periodicals are indexed in PERSI, the Genealogical Periodical Annual Index, and Donald Lines Jacobus' Index to Genealogical Periodicals.

### STATE AND COUNTY RECORDS

Clayton Library has many state and county resources available both on microprint and in book form. These include state and county histories, as well as abstracts of records such as wills, deeds, marriages, court minutes, vital records, church and cemetery records and colonial collections. Our collection includes many original records on microfilm and microfiche, including indexes and records such as tax, probate, marriage, and court records and nineteenth and twentieth city directories for major US cities.

### VERTICAL FILES

Although Clayton Library no longer actively collects vertical file material, we have a large number of vertical files, in the following categories:

- Family (on the 2nd floor, arranged alphabetically by family name)
- The next four categories are on the first floor:
- Foreign, State, USA, Society

Houston Public Library Catalog is the primary access to Clayton Library holdings and is available at [www.houstonlibrary.org](http://www.houstonlibrary.org)

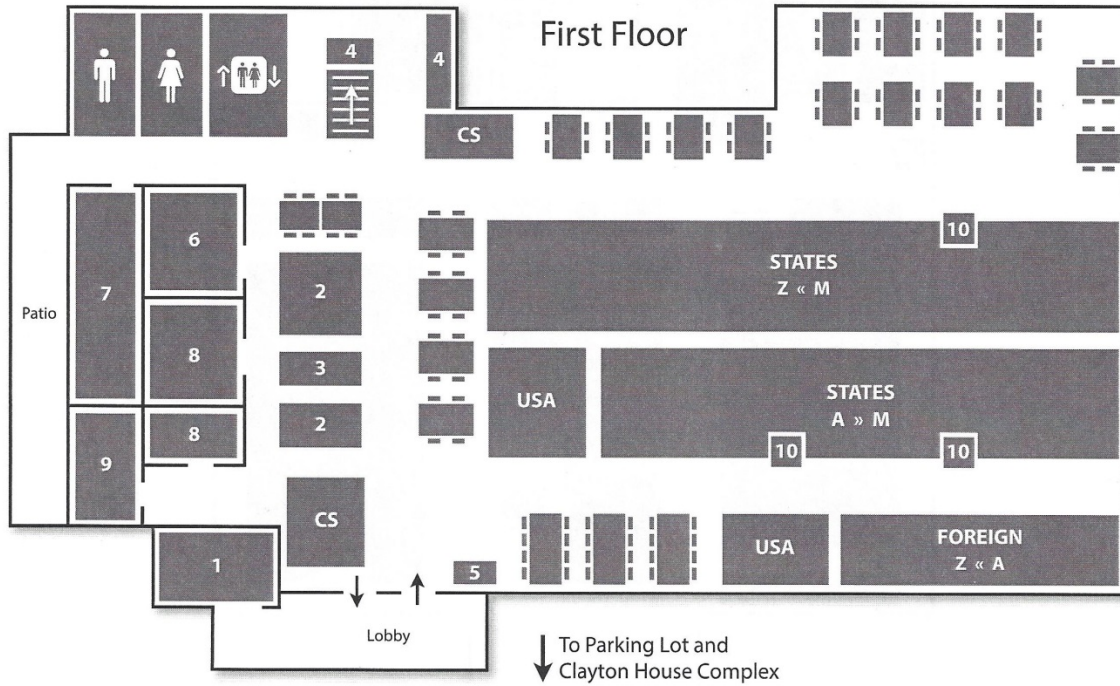
Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research  
5300 Caroline, 77004 | 832-393-2600  
[www.houstonlibrary.org/clayton](http://www.houstonlibrary.org/clayton)





# Clayton Library

Center for Genealogical Research



**CS** Customer Service

**1** Lockers

**2** Computers

**3** Reference Materials

**4** Maps

**5** New Books

**6** Copy Room

**7** Snack Room

**8** Conference Room

**9** Manager's Office

**10** Atlas Stand

**Elevators**

**Men's Restroom**

**Women's Restroom**

**Stairs**

**USA** USA & Regional Books

**STATES** Research Books Alphabetical by State

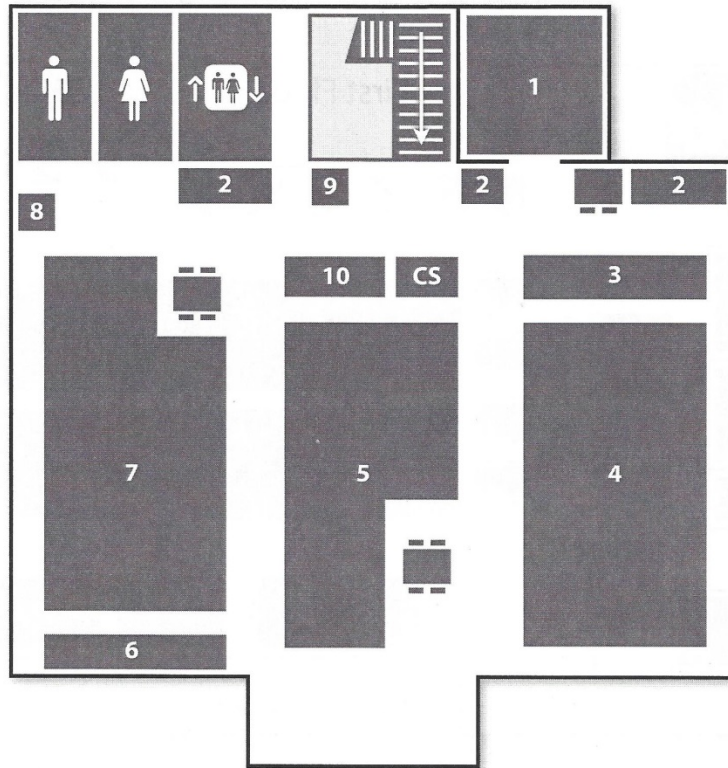
**FOREIGN** Research Books Alphabetical by Country





04/22/15





## Second Floor



1	Copy Room	6	Funeral Home Records	CS	Customer Service
2	Family Files & Bible Records	7	Microfilm & Microfiche Readers		Men's Restroom
3	Census Indices	8	Microfiche Files		Women's Restroom
4	Family Histories	9	Atlas Stand		Elevators
5	Microfilm Files	10	Reference Materials		Stairs

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# Clayton Library



**Bring the Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research (Clayton Library) to your inbox. Subscribe to our e-newsletters.**

## **Clayton Town Crier AND the Clayton Extra!!!**

The Clayton Town Crier, a quarterly newsletter, offers insight into the exciting family history research resources available at Clayton Library. The timely and easy-to-read information is delivered quarterly to anyone interested in information from one of the ten best genealogical research facilities in the United States (Family Tree Magazine 2010).

The Clayton Extra, a monthly newsletter, announces the classes for that month and provides any other information that may affect the library users during that time period.

You are invited to receive FREE subscriptions to newsletters at  
<http://houstonlibrary.org/learn-explore/readers-link/newsletters-all-interests>.

Susan Kaufman, Manager of the Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research, states, "We see these newsletters as an important part of our outreach to the genealogical and Houston community. These newsletters will serve as a first step in their genealogical research for many library customers by informing them about the Clayton Library collection and event information before they come in person to browse the shelves or attend a training event. It will also keep all of our dedicated genealogical researchers well informed about the new tools Clayton Library offers for them."

### **How to subscribe to these exciting e-newsletters**

The Houston Public Library invites you to subscribe to these newsletters and any of our other newsletters that interest you. Visit <http://www.libraryaware.com/1224/subscribers/subscribe>, select the newsletters you want, provide your name and email address. After you confirm your e-mail address, we will deliver the first issues to your inbox. To subscribe to the Clayton Town Crier, click the box "Genealogy." For the Clayton Extra click the box "Genealogy: Clayton Extra".

If you have any questions, please contact the Houston Public Library at 832-393-1313 or the Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research at 832-393-2600.

Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research  
5300 Caroline, 77004 | 832-393-2600  
[www.houstonlibrary.org/clayton](http://www.houstonlibrary.org/clayton)



04/22/15



# START YOUR GENEALOGY AT

Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research

PART OF THE HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

## FIRST STEPS

### STEP 1



#### GATHER WHAT YOU HAVE:

- Search for documents at home.
- Ask family for any research or documents they may have.

### STEP 2



#### ORGANIZE:

- Identify your vital information (birth, death and marriage). Then identify vital information for your parents, grandparents and other generations in your family.
- Fill out a pedigree chart.

### STEP 3



#### DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW:

- Who are you researching?
- What do you want to know about them?
- Where and when are you researching?

Once you have completed these three steps, you can then review various sources that can help you learn more about your family history!

## SOURCES



### GOVERNMENT

Official government records are an excellent source for genealogy research. Some useful government records are listed below.

- Birth Records
- Marriage Records
- Divorce Records
- Death Records
- Tax Records
- Property Records
- Court Records

### CENSUS

Since 1790, the United States provides a census of its population every ten years and this information can provide additional assistance in your research.

- Names of other household members
- Ages and birthplaces
- Residence or occupation
- Immigration and citizenship details
- Marriage information
- Military service

### FAMILY DOCUMENTS

Family or personal papers may include records that can span multiple generations. Ask your family if they have any of the documents listed below.

- Letters
- Legal documents
- Photographs
- Memorabilia
- School Records
- Written Accounts



## INTERVIEW FAMILY



Interviewing your family is a great way to learn more about your family. Here is a list of some possible questions. A recording device is useful so that you don't miss important information.

- Were you named after anyone?
- What were your parents' names?
- What do you remember about your childhood home?
- What did your home look like?
- In which room did most family activities take place?
- What was your neighborhood like?
- What did you do for fun when you were growing up?
- Tell me about your parents.
- What kind of people were your ancestors?
- What do you remember most about them?
- Was anyone in our family famous or notorious?
- What do you remember about the family stories?
- How did the family earn money?
- Who worked?

## WEBSITES

The websites listed below provide additional genealogy information.

### **WWW.FAMILYSEARCH.ORG**

The largest genealogy library in the WORLD offers name searches, digital records, online books and more!

### **WWW.GENEABLOGGERS.COM**

This web ring of genealogists and family historians features a genealogy "blog roll" with over 3,000 family history related blogs.

### **WWW.CYNDISLIST.COM**

Don't know where to look? Try Cyndi's List; a directory to genealogy based internet sites. This family history directory has hundreds of categories to choose from!

### **WWW.FACEBOOK.COM**

Believe it or not, Facebook can help you find family, in addition to friends! Search "genealogy" and click on "find all pages named genealogy", find one applicable to you and join a group. You might find someone working on the same family!

Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research | 5300 Caroline, 77004 | 832-393-2600

#### Library Hours:

Sunday & Monday - Closed | Tuesday 10 AM – 6 PM | Wednesday 10 AM – 8 PM | Thursday 10 AM – 6 PM | Friday 10 AM – 5 PM | Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM

If you have a special physical or communication need that may impact your participation in any of these activities, please contact the library staff prior to the program to discuss accommodations. We cannot ensure the availability of appropriate accommodations without prior notification of need.

Linking YOU to the World  
[www.houstonlibrary.org](http://www.houstonlibrary.org)



03/26/15



- Begin with what you know.
- Fill out the chart as completely as you can.
- Estimate dates and places, if necessary.
- If you do not have enough information, you may want to talk to a relative.

## PEDIGREE CHART

Chart No. \_\_\_\_\_

Person Number 1 on this chart is the same as No. \_\_\_\_\_

On chart No. \_\_\_\_\_

Person 1 (Male): Born: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Marr: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Died: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Person 2 (Female): Born: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Marr: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Died: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Person 3 (Male): Born: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Died: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Person 4 (Female): Born: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Marr: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Died: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Person 5 (Male): Born: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Died: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Person 6 (Female): Born: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Marr: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Died: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Person 7 (Female): Born: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Died: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Person 8 (Male): Born: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Marr: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Died: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Person 9 (Male): Born: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Died: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Person 10 (Female): Born: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Marr: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Died: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Person 11 (Male): Born: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Died: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Person 12 (Female): Born: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Marr: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Died: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Person 13 (Male): Born: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Died: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Person 14 (Female): Born: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Marr: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Died: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Person 15 (Male): Born: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Died: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Person 16 (Female): \_\_\_\_\_

Person 17 (Female): \_\_\_\_\_

Person 18 (Female): \_\_\_\_\_

Person 19 (Female): \_\_\_\_\_

Person 20 (Female): \_\_\_\_\_

Person 21 (Female): \_\_\_\_\_

Person 22 (Female): \_\_\_\_\_

Person 23 (Female): \_\_\_\_\_

Person 24 (Female): \_\_\_\_\_

Person 25 (Female): \_\_\_\_\_

Person 26 (Female): \_\_\_\_\_

Person 27 (Female): \_\_\_\_\_

Person 28 (Female): \_\_\_\_\_

Person 29 (Female): \_\_\_\_\_

Person 30 (Female): \_\_\_\_\_

Person 31 (Female): \_\_\_\_\_