

## A Guide to the Genealogical Holdings at The Filson Historical Society

### I. Online Databases

1. *Ancestrylibrary.com*
2. *Fold3* -- Known for its large selection of digitized sources from the Civil War, including service records, photographs, and the Lincoln Assassination papers. Also newspapers from all over the U.S.

These databases are available on the two computer stations in the library; the Filson **cannot** provide remote access to these databases.

### II. Census Records, 1810-1940 (and tax compilations 1790 & 1800)

The first Federal Census was taken in **1790** and has been taken every decade since. **The 1790 and 1800 Census schedules for Kentucky were destroyed**, but have been recreated using tax lists from those years. We have what has been made available for the Commonwealth of Kentucky: **1810 to 1940**. Because of privacy laws, **the Census is only released after 72 years**. We provide access to **Ancestry Library Edition**, which includes indexed census records for the entire country for **1790 - 1940**.

Kentucky Census schedules (1810-1930) are also on **microfilm**. **The schedules for 1810 to 1840 list heads of household only**; other family members are not listed until the 1850 schedule.

**The indexes for 1810-1870 are in book form**. Found in the **Library**, they list the heads of household, the county of residence, and the page number of the schedule on which the family is recorded. These indexes can be found in the 976.9 C396 area in the library.

**The schedules for 1880-1940 are indexed by the Soundex system**. The **Soundex** is a system that assigns a code number to surnames based on the sounds in each name. Each code contains several different but similar sounding surnames. For example, the surnames Filson and Filsinger share code number F425. Within each code number, the cards are alphabetized by the first names of the heads of household.

Our **Soundex** is on microfilm, and the code book is *The Soundex Reference Guide*. For names not listed in the book, **the code number can be constructed using the instruction on page xiii** of the book.

Each **Soundex** card lists the names of family members, their ages, places of birth, county of residence, and the enumeration district, sheet number, and line number on which they can be found. The Census schedules contain more information than is included on the **Soundex** cards. For example, the 1880, 1900, and 1910 Census schedules include places of birth of both parents, and the 1900 and 1910 schedules include year of Immigration to the United States. **There are no general U.S. Census records for 1890**. They were mostly destroyed in a fire, but we have an index book for the **1890 Kentucky Veterans Census**. Some of Kentucky's 120 counties have abstracted their Census records from the federal schedules. These abstracts are bound in book form in the library filed within the county histories. We do not have abstracts for every county, nor for every Census year.

### III. Vital Statistics—Deaths, Births, and Marriages

Vital Statistics Records include deaths, births, and marriages. They are filed either by county or by state. Presented below is each type of Vital Statistics Record we have available.

#### A. STATE OF KENTUCKY VITAL RECORDS

Kentucky began keeping death and birth certificates in **1911**. The **Office of Vital Statistics** in Frankfort has all of the original certificates, and charges a fee for copies. Their address is:

**Office of Vital Statistics**  
**275 E. Main St.**  
**Frankfort, KY 40601**  
**(502) 564-4212**

### **1. Deaths**

We have the **index** to death certificates that covers **1911-2000**; it is on microfiche and on each of the library computers. The index lists the name of the deceased, age at death, county they died in, date of death, certificate number, and the year in which the certificate is filed. We have microfilm copies of the death certificates for **1911-19--**. **The state waits 50 years before they release death certificates to libraries.** Each certificate normally includes the name of the deceased person, date of death, county where died, date of birth, occupation, age at death, names of parents, parents' places of birth, cause of death, and place of burial. Many of these early Kentucky Death records can also be found on **Ancestry**.

### **2. Births**

We have the index of birth certificates for the years **1911-2000**. One index is filed by the child's name and one is filed by the maiden name of the mother. These indexes are on microfiche and on each of the library computers. **The state waits 100 years before releasing birth certificates to libraries.** We refer those who want actual certificates to the **Office of Vital Statistics (see above)**.

### **3. Deaths, Births, and Marriages Before 1911**

The state of Kentucky tried to have the counties maintain Vital Statistics at various times between **1852 and 1910**. We have these records on microfilm. For each county included in these records, there are births, deaths, and marriages. It is important to note that these records were poorly maintained. They were hand-written in ink that has faded, and they are woefully incomplete. Many of these records have been abstracted by the counties and are included in our **Kentucky County Histories**. We do have an index that lists which counties have records for each year. The index is in the library in the **Misc. Section**, and its call number is **016.312 D855**. Many of these records can now be found on **Ancestry**.

The **Library** contains county records and histories for many of Kentucky's 120 counties. **The counties are arranged on the shelves geographically, and there is an alphabetical list that gives each county's call number.** If you want information on a particular county, look in this area. These records potentially include births, deaths, marriages, wills, cemetery records, deeds, and other various court records.

### **4. Marriages and Divorces**

We have state indexes on **microfiche** for marriages and divorces that cover **1974-1989**.

## **B. LOUISVILLE AND JEFFERSON COUNTY VITAL RECORDS**

The most complete sets of records we own are for the City of Louisville and Jefferson County. Louisville attempted to keep its own death and birth records before the state began its record keeping in 1911.

## 1. Deaths

Death indexes and registers for the residents of the **City of Louisville** are on **microfilm** and **Ancestry** and cover the years **1866-1910**. However, not all deaths are recorded, and deaths of residents of Jefferson County, outside the city limits are not included. The indexes and registers are on separate reels of microfilm. The registers include the name of the deceased, date of death, address, occupation, age at death, marital status, attending physician, cause of death, place of birth, and date and place of burial.

There is a listing of death notices that appeared in the ***Louisville Anzeiger***, a German language newspaper, from **1849 through 1863**. The list is located in the **Library**, call number **976.9911 R371**. The information includes the name of the deceased, age, date of death, and the date the notice was published. The lists are arranged by year and in alphabetical order within each year. The ***Louisville Anzeiger*** is maintained on **microfilm**.

## 2. Births

Birth indexes and registers for the **City of Louisville** are on **microfilm** and cover the years **1898-1910**. Births in Jefferson County, outside the city limits, are not included. The indexes and registers are on separate rolls of microfilm. The registers contain the name of the child, residence, date of birth, gender, race, father and his nativity, mother and her nativity, maiden name of mother, and the name of the physician or midwife who attended the birth.

## 3. Marriages

For Jefferson County, we have marriage licenses for the years **1784-1911**:

- a. **1784-1853** are indexed in **book form** in the **Library**.
- b. **1842-1911** are indexed on **microfilm**. The indexes refer you to a page number in the marriage registers that immediately follow the indexes on each microfilm reel. The marriage registers include the name of the bride and groom, by whom they were married, place and date of marriage, and names of witnesses present. Copies of the licenses are on separate reels of microfilm, usually in order by the date of the license. Many of these records are also on **Ancestry**.

## IV. Funeral Home and Cemetery Records

Genealogists often use cemetery and funeral home records to verify a person's birth and death dates. Funeral home records will usually tell a researcher where a person is buried, the cause of death, and in some instances, the place of birth. We have bits and pieces from several cemeteries in various sources. There is a list of some Jefferson County cemeteries in the library. To find cemetery records in other counties in Kentucky, one must look in the **Kentucky county histories**. Many of the counties have abstracted some of their cemetery records and they are filed with the county records.

### We have the records from a few Jefferson County area cemeteries:

We have a copy of the index of people buried in **Cave Hill Cemetery** from **1849-1998**. This list is in alphabetical order and gives the name, plot number, and date of burial for each person. It is housed in the **Library**. We also have **Cave Hill Burial Registers** for **1879-1920**. The individuals in the registers are filed by date of burial. Use the index first to determine the date of burial, then you can find the correct register. The registers are on L4.

We also have three volumes of the **Eastern Cemetery** records published by the Louisville Genealogical Society. These volumes list the name, plot number, and date of burial for each person. The Eastern

Cemetery records are shelved in the **Jefferson County section of the library**. There is also a set of microfilm for **Eastern, Shardein and Greenwood** Cemeteries.

**Western Cemetery** records are in a database available on the patron computers.

**We have the records of 6 area funeral homes:**

-**Maas Funeral Home** from the **1890s-1920s**. These records started in books then changed to small folders and are all filed by certificate number. There is an index which is kept in the **Closed Stacks** with the books and filing cabinets of folders.

-**McDaniel Funeral Home** from the early **1900s-1980s**. The early records up to 1950 are in alphabetical volumes. Starting in 1954 there are volumes for each year which are alphabetical. These records are kept in our **Closed Stacks**.

-**Pearson Funeral Home** from **1890-1920**. These are filed by date and are kept in our **Closed Stacks**.

-**Schildt Funeral Home** from the **1890s-1920s**. These records are filed alphabetically and are kept in our **Closed Stacks**. (note: the books for the letters O, P, Q, and R are **missing**)

-**Manning Funeral Home** from **1918 to 1953 (1947 missing)** filed by date of death and are kept in the **Closed Stacks**.

-**Barrett Funeral Home** – from **1919-1998**. See manuscript catalog for details.

**V. Military Records**

Military records are useful for finding ancestors, especially if you are interested in joining a patriotic society such as the SAR, DAR or Colonial Dames of America. Any actual service records for a soldier will be found in Washington D.C. at the **National Archives**:

**National Archives and Records Service**  
**7th & PA Ave. NW**  
**Washington D.C. 20408**  
**(202) 501-5500**

The records we have are either indexes or abstracts. The two wars our patrons tend to be most interested in are the Revolutionary War and the Civil War. We have records for both. Here are a few popular items.

**A. Revolutionary War**

We have ***Pension File Abstracts for the Revolutionary War***. These records are in a 4-volume set in the **Library**. The call number is **973.34 W588**. Each entry includes the name of the soldier, pension file number, when he enlisted, where he fought, and if the information is known, his wife, and children.

We have the ***Service Record Index for the Revolutionary War***. This index lists name, rank, regiment, and state or colony in which he fought. The call number is **973.34 W488s**, and it is filed in the **Library**.

**B. Civil War**

We have the *Reports of the Kentucky Adjutant General for the Civil War*. There are 2 volumes for both the Union Army and the Confederate Army. These records list the volunteers who served in Kentucky Regiments, their ranks, where and when they mustered into service, and where and when they mustered out, whether they died or were wounded, and other information. There is an alphabetical index in the back of each volume. The Union army's call number is **973.7469 L752**, and the Confederate army's call number is **973.7469 K37c**. These records are in the **Library**.

The Filson also has the *Compiled Service Records* for several Union Cavalry Regiments from Kentucky. These records are on **microfilm**.

There is a bound volume entitled *1890 Kentucky Veterans Census Index*, call number 976.9 C396 1890. This index corresponds to several rolls of microfilm that give information about Civil War Veterans still living in 1890, such as: regiment, rank, dates served, and any disability incurred.

We have *The Roll of Honor*, which lists the names of soldiers who died while serving in the Union Army, and are buried in 74 national cemeteries as well as 250 local and post cemeteries. A surname index to the first 27 volumes was published in 1995 making the series more accessible. In 1996 a volume entitled *The Unpublished Roll of Honor* was released. This is a compilation of thousands of names of Union soldiers who were sent home to recover from disease or injury and died while at home. Their deaths were not listed as war-related until years after the Civil War had ended. They are included in *The Unpublished Roll* along with the names of Union soldiers buried in two national cemeteries that were overlooked when the original *Roll* was published. These are Ball's Bluff National Cemetery and Grafton National Cemetery. All these works are filed under call number **973.741 U58q**.

### C. Other Military Records

There is a book entitled *Kentucky Soldiers of the War of 1812* that lists the men who served, their rank, and their units. We also have a book entitled *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Kentucky, Mexican War Veterans*. It contains names, ranks, units, and information about those who died or were wounded.

## VI. Immigration and Naturalization

Looking for Immigration and Naturalization records can be an important step when compiling a family history. We have some passenger lists and Immigration records for ports of entry throughout the United States, as well as some of the Naturalization records for Louisville.

### A. Passenger Lists

The list below includes only a few of the many passenger lists we have in The Filson Library. **For a more complete look at the number of passenger lists the library has, check the online catalog:**

- The set *Germans to America* covers the years **1840 to 1897**. This set of records includes passenger name, ship, port of departure, port of entry in the United States, date of arrival, age, gender, occupation, and will frequently list the province and village in Germany, and destination. Each volume has its own alphabetical index. These books are shelved in the **Closed Stacks**.
- For people looking for Irish ancestors, we have a set called *The Famine Immigrants* that covers the famine years in Ireland, **1846-1851**. The information in this set of records includes passenger name, age, gender, occupation date of departure, port of departure, and the name of the ship. Each volume has its own alphabetical index. These books are shelved in the **Closed Stacks**.

- The ***Passenger and Immigration Lists Index*** includes over 2 million names, their ages, ports of entry, dates of entry, and the source in which the names can be found. The sources are indicated by code numbers, and the key to these codes is in the front of each volume. **To find out if we have any of the books listed in these indexes, one needs to check the online catalog.** The volumes are arranged alphabetically by name. These volumes are shelved in the **Closed Stacks**.

## B. Naturalization

The length of time it takes to become a citizen has varied since 1740. **From 1802 to 1906, the person had to reside in the United States for three years before he could declare his Intent to become a citizen, and five years before he could petition the court for Naturalization.** There was a requirement of one year of residency in the state in which the petition for Naturalization was filed. In 1906, the time period for declaring intent to become a citizen was reduced to two years and was waived in 1918.

Prior to 1906, many Declarations of Intent to become a citizen stated the town or village of birth, while Petitions only stated the country of birth. The Declarations of Intent are not indexed but often can be found by looking at the records for the Petition for Naturalization.

We have copies of some of the Louisville and Jefferson County Naturalization records, which verify when a person received their citizenship. While many of the older court records are missing and presumed destroyed, The Filson Library has much of what is still available. Naturalization records are on **microfilm**.

We have an alphabetical index for all the early Naturalizations that occurred in Louisville and Jefferson County. The index covers the years **1811-1913** and it is on **microfilm**. The index gives the name of the person Naturalized, the court in which the person was naturalized, and the page and book number or letter in which the record can be found.

Any court with a clerk was allowed to naturalize people. Often, many different courts for any given county processed naturalization records. For Louisville and Jefferson County, we have **Louisville Police Court records**, some **Jefferson County Court records**, some **Jefferson County Circuit Court records**, and some **Common Pleas Court records**.

- The **Police Court** records include the years **1836-1897**. These records were filed in books that were labeled either by number or by letter. Of the letter books, **the only two that still exist are C and J**. These books are in the **Closed Stacks** and staff can retrieve them for you. The **numbered** books are on **microfilm**. These records include: date of naturalization, name, nationality, country from which emigrated, place of birth, year of Immigration, port of entry, and age at naturalization.
- The **Jefferson County Court records** include the years **1780-1906**. These records contain both Intents and Petitions to become a citizen and are on **microfilm**.
- The **Jefferson County Circuit Court records** include the years **1897-1913**. These records include: the name of the person, country from which they emigrated, year they arrived, and the port in which they arrived. These records are on **microfilm**.
- The **Jefferson County Common Pleas Court records** contain Petitions for Citizenship from **October 31, 1893 to October 5, 1897**. These records are on **microfilm**.

## VII. Church Records

Church records are often a good source for the time periods between census years. We have a good collection of church records, however we **do not** have records for every church or even every denomination.

### A. Father Lyons Collection

This is a collection of Catholic church records from many Kentucky counties. These records are in book form and are located in the library within the corresponding county. For example, Father Lyon's records for **Marion** county will be in the same area as the rest of the **Marion** county items.

### B. German Church Records

We have records for several of the **German** churches in **Louisville**. The churches included in these records are: **Bethlehem U.C.C** (United Church of Christ), **Christ Evangelical, St. John's, at Pond Settlement, St. John's Evangelical, South Louisville Reformed(Lynnhurst) U.C.C., St. Luke Evangelical U.C.C., St. Matthew's U.C.C., St. Paul's Evangelical U.C.C, St. Peter's Evangelical U.C.C., Salem U.C.C., Zion U.C.C., and Flat Rock (Pleasant Grove Baptist)**. These records are all **on microfilm**.

### C. Other Church Records

Some of the **Calvary Episcopal**, and **Christ Church Cathedral** records are also on microfilm. The manuscript department also has some records for **St. John's Episcopal, St. Paul's Episcopal, and First Unitarian** churches.

## VIII. Family Files and Histories

### A. Family Files

The family files contain letters and ephemera that patrons have sent to the library over the years. These letters often contain questions about certain family lines, or may contain information a researcher has chosen to share with the public. We have over 4,000 of these surname files. There is an alphabetical list of these files on both patron computers in the and on our website. Once you have found the files you want to see, you fill out the names on your registration sheet and a staff member will retrieve the files for you. **Each person is limited to three files at a time.**

### B. Family Histories

Many genealogists will publish their research in book form. We have over 5,000 published family histories. These books are shelved in the **Closed Stacks**. Once you have looked up the **Call number and written it on your registration form, a staff member can retrieve the book for you.**

While some researchers can find information on their families in these sources, **most people should not count on being able to find an entire line of their family in a book on the shelf.** We also strongly suggest that you **check any information you do find in a book or in one of the family files.** Unless photocopies of death and birth records or other primary sources document the information, you have no way of verifying that the information is correct.