

# Researching Roots in Georgia: A Review of Select Resources and Research Institutions

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Genealogy Center

Thursday, June 8, 2023

1. Define your research goal, research project or research question.
2. Compile all the information you have related to the research subject. Create a timeline for your research subject.
3. Determine possible resources and/or research institutions to locate information that will help answer your research question.
4. Learn more about the research location(s) and identify potential resources available that may be able to help answer your research question.

**State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **County:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Ancestry \_\_\_\_\_

2. FamilySearch \_\_\_\_\_

3. State Archives \_\_\_\_\_

4. County Courthouses \_\_\_\_\_

5. County Archives \_\_\_\_\_

6. Genealogical / Historical Societies \_\_\_\_\_

7. Public Libraries \_\_\_\_\_

8. Academic & Special Libraries \_\_\_\_\_

9. National Archives – Regional Locations \_\_\_\_\_

10. Newspapers \_\_\_\_\_

5. Be patient and remember the question – “How do you eat an elephant?” One bite at a time.

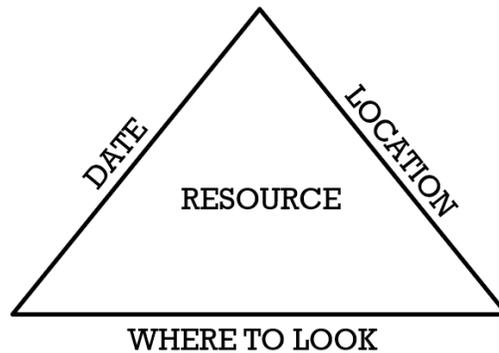
**Notes:**

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### Three Important Factors to Consider

1. Date
2. Location
3. Where to Look



### Date and Location Considerations

- County Creation Dates and Boundary Changes
- Dates municipalities began to record and collect records – large cities versus the state
- Record Loss Events – Courthouse Fires, Natural Disasters, Wars, etc.

### Where to Look Considerations

- Format of the Record – Physical vs Digital
- Changes in the Law which resulted in changes to the keepers of specific the records.
  - i.e. Georgia Inferior Court duties being transferred to Ordinary Court.
  - Ordinary Court being replaced by Probate Court.
- Boundary Changes

### Notes:

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## Select Bibliography

### Print Resources

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Watson, Dawn. *Slave Importation Affidavit Registers for Nine Georgia Counties, 1818-1847*. Clayton, Ga: Bone Diggers Press, 2012.

## Online Resources

### General

Digital Library of Georgia - <https://dlg.usg.edu/>

Georgia Historical Society - <https://georgiahistory.com/>

Georgia Archives - <https://www.georgiaarchives.org/> Visit our YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/c/GeorgiaArchives>) to view recordings of previous programs.

Georgia Open History Library –  
<https://ugapress.org/series/georgia-open-history-library/>

New Georgia Encyclopedia - <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/>

### Church & Bible Records

Georgia Archives Virtual Vault - Select Land/Property Resources

Index to Bible Records on Microfilm (No Images) -  
<https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/p17154coll4>

Index to Church Records on Microfilm (No Images) -  
<https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/churchcards>

American Baptist Historical Society - <https://abhsarchives.org/about/contact/>

Archdiocese of Atlanta - Archives and Records -  
<https://archatl.com/offices/archives/>

The Bremen Museum / Southern Jewish Archives -  
<https://www.thebremen.org/Research/Southern-Jewish-Archives>

*Georgia Baptist History Portal / Research Guide* (Mercer University) -  
<https://mercer.libguides.com/gabaptistresearch>

## **Legal Research**

“Georgia County Records” presented by Georgia Archives Archivist Allison Hudgins. In this presentation learn about Georgia’s historical county courts, some of the types of records each court handled, and how these records can aid your family history research.

<https://youtu.be/DpacgKUCA8l?t=3834>

### *Georgia General Assembly*

Current Georgia Code -

<https://advance.lexis.com/container?config=00JAAzZDgzNzU2ZC05MDA0LTRmMDItYjkzMS0xOGY3MjE3OWNIODIKAFBvZENhdGFsb2fclFfJnJ2IC8XZi1AYM4Ne&crid=dd4d8284-b26a-434e-ae53-531dbc93757b&prid=f3843f6d-05cc-42d9-beb0-c45bdd2589b7>

Current Georgia Constitution -

<https://advance.lexis.com/container?config=00JAAyNDIyN2JjNC04NzBkLTRiNGQtYjcyNC04MjlxYTA1Zml1OGYKAFBvZENhdGFsb2fj2wGx7D8FIWJs9VMmJTxe&crid=54ad7447-d946-448c-82fa-eab313e37135>

*Georgia Legislative Documents* - Digital Library of Georgia -

[https://dlg.usg.edu/record/dlg\\_zlgj](https://dlg.usg.edu/record/dlg_zlgj)

*HeinOnline Database* - includes the historical digest of laws from 1799 - 1933 (paid subscription required).

“Historical Georgia Digests and Codes.” Digital Commons - School of Law, University of Georgia - [https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/ga\\_code/](https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/ga_code/).

*Georgia Government Publications* - <http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/ggp/?Welcome>

Georgia Laws, 2000 - present –

[https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/cgi/ggpd?query=ca:%20\(ga%20l407\)](https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/cgi/ggpd?query=ca:%20(ga%20l407))

House Journals -

<https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/cgi/ggpd?query=ca%3A%20%28ga%20l404%29>

Senate Journals -

[https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/cgi/ggpd?query=ca:%20\(ga%20l402\)](https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/cgi/ggpd?query=ca:%20(ga%20l402))

## Land and Property Research

*Georgia Archives Virtual Vault - Select Land/Property Resources*

Chatham County Deed Books -

<https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/chathamdeed>

Colonial Conveyances –

<https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/test3>

County Records on Microfilm -

<https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/tax>

Index to Georgia Colonial and Headright Plats (No Images) -

<https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/platindex>

Index to County Records on Microfilm (No Images) -

<https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/countycards>

(Note: If you see a resource/card that has SLC in the color before source code, that means the microfilm was filmed by **Salt Lake City** and that record could be available through FamilySearch.org).

*FamilySearch* - <https://www.familysearch.org>

1. Once logged in, click on Search and select Catalog.
2. With Place as your search type, type in the location. Select it from the list.
3. Look for a Land and Property category in the list of subjects.
4. Look for Deeds and Mortgages from the Superior Court of that location.

## Libraries - Public, Academic and Special

*Georgia Public Library Service* - <https://georgialibraries.org>

Find Your Local Library - <https://georgialibraries.org/find-a-library/>

PINES - <https://gapines.org/eg/opac/home>

Genealogy Resources –

<https://georgialibraries.org/archival-services/genealogy/>

Georgia's Treasures –

<https://georgialibraries.org/genealogydocs/gatreasures.pdf>

Auburn Avenue Research Library -

<https://www.fulcolibrary.org/auburn-avenue-research-library/>

Emory University Libraries - <https://libraries.emory.edu/>

Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library -

<https://libraries.emory.edu/rose>

University of Georgia Libraries - <https://www.libs.uga.edu/>

Hargrett Rare Book & Manuscript Library -

<https://www.libs.uga.edu/hargrett/>

## Maps, Boundary Changes and Place Names

*Atlas of Historical County Boundaries* - Newberry Library -

<https://digital.newberry.org/ahcb/>

Bryant, Pat., and Ingrid. Shields. ***Georgia Counties, Their Changing Boundaries***. 2nd ed. / rev. by Ingrid Shields. Atlanta: State Print. Office, 1983. Available on the Virtual Vault -

<https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/adhoc/id/4377/rec/1>

*Georgia Archives Virtual Vault - Select Map Resources*

Georgia Militia Districts Names Notebook -

<https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/adhoc/id/7493/rec/1>

County Maps - <https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/cmf>

Historic Maps - <https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/hmf>

State of Georgia Original and 1895 Counties and Land Lot Districts (Land Lottery Map) -

<https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/hmf/id/53/rec/62>

Georgia, Minor Civil Divisions - Militia Districts -

<https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/hmf/id/47/rec/21>

*Georgia Militia District Maps (USGenWeb - organized by county)* -

<http://www.usgwarchives.net/ga/maps/index.htm>

*Georgia Place Names* -

[http://www.kenkrakow.com/gpn/georgia\\_place-names.htm](http://www.kenkrakow.com/gpn/georgia_place-names.htm)

*Sanborn fire insurance maps for Georgia towns and cities, 1884-1941* -  
[https://dlg.usg.edu/collection/dlg\\_sanb](https://dlg.usg.edu/collection/dlg_sanb) (Note: The Library of Congress  
also has copies of Sanborn Maps -  
<https://www.loc.gov/rr/geogmap/sanborn/>)

## **Newspapers**

*Georgia Newspaper Project* (University of Georgia) has the listing of their  
holdings - <https://www.libs.uga.edu/gnp>

*Georgia Historic Newspapers* - <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>

*Local Newspaper Archives* -

Azalea Regional Library System Newspaper Archives -

<https://azalealibraries.org/home-page/newspapers/>

*Newspaper abstracts books* e.g

Poss, Faye Stone. *Hancock County, Georgia, Newspaper Abstracts,  
Hancock Advertiser, 1826-1830*. Snellville, GA: Poss, 2002.

*U. S. Newspaper Directory, 1690 - Present* - *Chronicling America* (Library of  
Congress) - <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/search/titles/>

This resource allows you to search by State, County, City and  
Ethnicity among other categories.

## **Probate & Estate Records**

*FamilySearch.org* -

Search - Records - Find a Collection

*Georgia Probate Records, 1742-1990*

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1999178>

*Georgia Archives Virtual Vault - Select County Resources*

County Records from Microfilm -

<https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/tax>

Index to County Records on Microfilm (No Images) -

<https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/countycards>

(Note: If you see a resource/card that has SLC in the color before  
source code, that means the microfilm was filmed by **Salt Lake City**  
and that record could be available through FamilySearch.org).

Wilkes County Court Records -

<https://vault.georgiaarchives.org/digital/collection/wccr>

### **Societies – Historical and Genealogical**

Georgia Genealogical Society - <https://gagensociety.org/>

Online archives of the *Georgia Genealogical Society Quarterly* (for members only)

Afro-American Genealogical and Historical Society - Metro Atlanta Chapter -

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

Jewish Genealogical Society of Georgia (JGSG) -

<https://www.thebreman.org/Research/Genealogy>

Georgia Archives - Historical Organizations Directory -

<https://www.georgiaarchives.org/ghrac/directory>

### **Vital Records**

Georgia Archives - Vital Records Research Guide -

[https://www.georgiaarchives.org/research/vital\\_records](https://www.georgiaarchives.org/research/vital_records)

State-Wide Vital Records Index - Georgia Government Publications –

<http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/ggp/>

- Accessing State-Wide Marriage, Death and Divorce Indexes Online.
  1. Go to the Georgia Government Publications website above.
  2. Select Author from the dropdown below the search box.
  3. In the search box, type *Georgia. Dept. of Human Resources. Division of Public Health. Vital Records Service.* (Exactly as you see it.) and hit Enter.

#### *Index Dates:*

- a. Death Indexes – 1919 – 1998\*
- b. Marriage Registers – 1964 – 1998\*
- c. Divorce Registers – 1965 – 1998\*

\*Georgia Archives has 1999 on Microfiche.

You should retrieve 154 search results. These results include the Marriage, Death and Divorce index registers.

*Sort by:* Title is the best way to organize the search results. It groups the indexes by type and then lists them in chronological order.

**Notes:**

*Specific Index (i.e. marriage only):* If you only want to pull a specific type of index, i.e. Marriage only, using the drop down under the search box, select Title and type in either “Marriage Register”, “Death Index” or “Divorce Register.” Hit Enter.

*Codes:* The indexes, to save space, used codes to denote responses to certain categories, i.e. county, etc. There are 6 documents out of the 154 total results that discuss the codes. In 1994, the county codes were changed to a three-digit number, replacing the two-digit number. This presentation, *Checking the Indexes: Utilizing the State Wide Vital Records Indexes for Research*, can help demystify the codes -

<https://youtu.be/s0G6rXF3Plw>.



# Georgia's Vital Records

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## Official Records

Officially, statewide registration of births and deaths began in 1919. Death records for 1919 - 1943 are available for research at the Georgia Archives. Death records for 1919 - 1943 are available online. An index to death records is available online for the years 1919 - 1998, and this may be consulted to confirm the exact year of death and obtain the certificate number.

For birth certificates from 1919 - present and death records 1944 - present, contact the Georgia Department of Human Resources at:

Vital Records  
1680 Phoenix Blvd, Suite 100  
Atlanta, GA 30349  
(404) 679 - 4702  
<http://dph.georgia.gov/VitalRecords>

You may also request birth and death certificates 1919 - present from the Vital Records Office in the county where the birth or death occurred. A list of county offices is available online at [www.vitalrec.com/ga.html](http://www.vitalrec.com/ga.html).

## Early Registration

In general, there are no official birth or death certificates before 1919 in Georgia. However, there are some exceptions. The records listed below are available on microfilm at the Georgia Archives and must be used by researchers on-site at the Archives. Most of them are not indexed.

An 1875 act of the Georgia General Assembly mandated statewide registration of births, deaths, and marriages. Few counties complied with this law, and even fewer citizens within those counties reported the required information. This effort for statewide registration of vital records was funded by the legislature for only two years, but some birth records from 1875 and 1876 are available on microfilm at the Georgia Archives. The participating counties were:

Carroll: Birth, 1875; Marriage, 1875; Death, 1875  
Chattooga: Birth, 1875 - 1876; Marriage, 1874 - 1876; Death, 1874 - 1876  
Clayton: Birth, 1875; Marriage, 1875  
Colquitt: Birth, 1875; Marriage, 1875; Death, 1875  
Early: Birth, 1876; Marriage, 1876  
Jackson: Birth, 1875; Marriage, 1875 - 1876; Death, 1875  
Jefferson: Death, 1875  
Lincoln: Marriage, 1875  
Lumpkin: Birth, 1875; Marriage, 1875 - 1876; Death, 1875  
McIntosh: Marriage, 1875; Death, 1875  
Miller: Birth, 1875 - 1876; Marriage, 1875 - 1876; Death, 1875 - 1876  
Muscogee: Marriage, 1876  
Oglethorpe: Birth, 1875 - 1878  
Pulaski: Birth, 1875  
Richmond: Marriage, 1875 - 1876  
Sumter: Birth, 1875 - 1876; Marriage, 1875 - 1876  
Talbot: Death, 1875  
Taliaferro: Birth, 1875 - 1876; Marriage, 1875 - 1876  
Walton: Birth, 1875 - 1876; Death, 1875



**THE GEORGIA ARCHIVES**

5800 JONESBORO ROAD ■ MORROW, GA 30260 ■ TEL: 678-364-3710 ■ [WWW.GEORGIAARCHIVES.ORG](http://WWW.GEORGIAARCHIVES.ORG)

In 1914 the General Assembly vested the State Board of Health with the duty of compiling vital statistics in the state and authorized the establishment of a central bureau of vital statistics. Early registration was scant. The few certificates that were filed with the state were grouped roughly by year as they were gathered together, placed in binders, and stamped with a "file number." To some extent the sequence of the certificates reflects the order in which they were received by the state registrar. These certificates, which principally cover the years 1914 - 1919, were transferred to the custody of the Georgia Archives and have been scanned. They are available on-line at [www.GeorgiaArchives.org](http://www.GeorgiaArchives.org).

Included in the microfilmed holdings of the Georgia Archives are widely-scattered, pre-1919, birth and death records for the localities listed below. These registrations are not to be considered complete for the indicated dates.

Chatham: Death, 1803 - 1847; Myrick Index to Marriages and Deaths, 1733 - 1837  
Clarke: Birth, 1808 - 1852  
Emanuel: Birth, 1822 - 1863  
Greene: Death, 1811 - 1833  
Meriwether: Death, 1890; 1917 - 1919  
Richmond: Birth, 1823 - 1896  
City of Gainesville: Birth, 1865 - 1919; Death, 1908 - 1919

Marriage licenses in Georgia have been required since 1805, although some counties exercised voluntary registration as early as the 1780s. They are maintained by the Probate Court of each county. The fact that marriage records are not at the Vital Records office for any period of time does not mean that they are missing from a county's records. The Georgia Archives has county marriage records on microfilm. These filmed marriage records generally date from the nineteenth century, but the records for some counties may be as current as the 1950s. Contact the Archives to identify the span of dates for specific counties.

## Local Registration of Vital Records Prior to 1919

Vital records were recorded prior to 1919 in the cities of Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, Macon and Savannah. Information on these records may be obtained by using the contact information below. These records are not at the Georgia Archives.

- **The City of Atlanta** (Fulton County) began recording births in 1896 and deaths in 1889. Contact the Fulton County Vital Records Office located at Fulton County Government Center, 141 Pryor Street, SW, Suite 1029A, Atlanta, GA 30303. Tel: (404) 613-1260
- **The City of Augusta** (Richmond County) began recording births in 1919 and deaths in 1904. Inquiries should be made by mail or in person to Richmond County Health Department, Vital Records, 1916 North Leg Road, Bldg. E, Augusta, GA 30909-4402. General questions about copies may be answered by telephone at (706) 667-4335. No records may be released by telephone.
- **The City of Columbus** (Muscogee County) has births and deaths that were reported to the Columbus Health Department beginning in August 1890. Indexes of information extracted from the registers are available in the Genealogy Department of the Columbus Public Library, 3000 Macon Road, Columbus, GA 31906. Tel: (706) 243-2697 Visit Genealogy Department's website for more information - <https://www.cvlga.org/research/genealogy-local%20history>.
- **The City of Macon** (Bibb County) began recording births in 1891 and deaths in 1882. For information, contact Macon (Bibb County) Health Department, 171 Emery Highway, Macon, GA 31217-3666. Tel: (478) 749-0102
- **The City of Savannah** (Chatham County) has birth records beginning in 1890 and death records beginning in 1803. Birth and death registers are available on Ancestry.com. The death records from 1803 - 1890 are at the Georgia Historical Society, 501 Whitaker Street, Savannah, GA 31499. Tel: 912-651-2128. City of Savannah vital records requests should be addressed to the Chatham County Health Department, P.O. Box 14257, Savannah, GA 31416. Tel: (912) 356-2138

## Substitutes for Vital Records

County records, particularly wills and other estate records, are useful substitutes for death records. Pre-1900 county records for the majority of Georgia counties are available at the Georgia Archives. As a substitute for birth records, we recommend a search of federal population schedules (known as census records). Federal census records for Georgia, 1820 through 1940, are available at the Georgia Archives.

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