

Discover Your Family's Story: At the Wichita Public Library

20 April 2024

The Genealogy / Special Collections Section of the Wichita Public Library is located on the second floor in the Research Pavilion. This is a special collections area, so no food or open drinks allowed while you are using the collection's resources. You may use your phone or camera to take photos of books and microfilm. Our book copier can make digital copies that you can save to your flash drive at no charge. All items in Special Collection are for reference use only and may not be checked out. Some titles are also available in the circulating collection, and if need be, an item may be requested through Inter-library loan for checkout purposes.

The Genealogy Collection has over 46,000 volumes, and covers every state in the nation with very good coverage on New England and the Mid-Atlantic states, and on the Midwestern states where immigrants to Kansas originated. The Kansas Reference Collection has an additional 20,000 volumes and covers a variety of topics on Kansas and the Great Plains. The Foulk American Indian Reference Collection is a growing collection of over 1,000 volumes on history, culture, art, and language of Native Americans. Large number under 970 Dewey number.

Remember that most history is local history. Always check the local library, museum, and archive for local published items, manuscripts, and ephemera, especially for those one-of-a-kind items. Search World Cat <https://search.worldcat.org/> for library materials, and ArchiveGrid for materials found in archives. Many libraries and archives are digitizing their records and placing them online so check their websites for possible resources.

The Dewey Decimal Numbering System is the most common way of arranging books in a public library. Using Dewey Decimal, books are arranged by topic or geographic location. Most follow this common system, but some libraries may use local variations such as alphabetical by state and county.

Common Research Topics for Genealogists

929.1 How to's. May be used by smaller libraries for all their genealogy materials.

280s Church Histories. 400+ volumes. Huguenot Society and their Registers. Hinshaw's Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy. Mennonite Encyclopedia. New Catholic Encyclopedia. Jewish Encyclopedia. Many have biographies of church members.

312 Census Indexes. By state, or county, from 1790 to 1910, where print indexes stop due to size of population.

373 (High school) **378** (College) Yearbooks. Earliest is 1910s. Have photographs and signatures.

641 Cookbooks. Local cookbooks may have names of submitters of family recipes. Trace memberships in churches, women's societies, and organizations.

910s Atlases. Historical Atlas of Kansas. Historical Atlas of Oklahoma.

920s Biographies. Who's Who of Wichita. Dictionary of American Biography. Dictionary of National Biography (Great Britain)

929.4 Surnames. Dictionary of Jewish Surnames. Spanish Surnames in the American Southwest.

929.2 Family Histories. Almost 4,000 volumes. Use cutter of first or most common surname. Example: 929.2 MILLER. Check catalog for surnames using subject search. Example: Maupin Family

Sorted by Geographic Location

United States history is 973. Each region has its own number: New England **974**. Mid-Atlantic **975**. The South **976**. The Midwest **977**. The Plains **978**. The West Coast **979**.

Each state has its own number, which is subset of its region

Each county has its own number, which is subset of its state

Great coverage on New England and Mid-Atlantic states

974.4 Massachusetts – almost 900 volumes

974.7 New York – almost 1,000 volumes

974.8 Pennsylvania – over 1,100 volumes

975.5 Virginia – over 1,600 volumes

Titles Include: The Great Migration. Mayflower Families. Barbour Collection. Settlers of the Beekman Patent. Adventures of Purse and Person. Cavaliers & Pioneers. Hening's Statutes at Large of Virginia.

Good coverage on Midwest states – over 4,000 volumes

977.1 Ohio 770 volumes

977.7 Iowa 230 volumes

977.2 Indiana 570 volumes

977.8 Missouri 1,100 volumes

977.3 Illinois 930 volumes

Good coverage on Kansas (over 3,000 volumes)

Volumes on every county. Western counties may only have a couple of volumes.

Sedgwick 978.186 (200+ volumes)

Sumner 978.187 (40+ volumes)

Cowley 978.189 (40+ volumes)

Kansas Reference Collection

Research for social and historical context for your family

350s Government

800s Literature

500s Plants and animals

900s History

DAR Library Collection

2019 – KSDAR donated their state library collection of over 6,000 volumes
Each book is in the library catalog and marked as being donated by KSDAR
Has a book plate stating donated by KSDAR and possibly earlier plate of first donor
On shelf with similar topics
One-of-a-kind items in Special Collections Storage

Military

Rosters, unit histories, battle histories. Some arranged by state.
973.3 American Revolution 500+. Lists of soldiers, pensioners by state
973.5 War of 1812 100+
973.7 American Civil War 2,300+ War of the Rebellion and Supplement. Southern Historical Society Papers. Encyclopedia of the Confederacy. Southern Bivouac. Confederate Veteran. Roll of Honor. Roster of Union Soldiers. Roster of Confederate Soldiers. History of Pennsylvania Volunteers. North Carolina Troops. Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States.

Europe

941.1 Scotland 80+ volumes.
941.5 Ireland 90+ volumes. The Famine Immigrants
942 England 300+ volumes. Domesday Book
943 Germany 400+ volumes. Germans to America. Map Guide to German Parish Registers. German Immigrants in American Church Records
945 Southern Europe. Italians to America
947 Eastern Europe 100+ volumes. Migration from the Russian Empire. Jewish Yizkor books – memorials of destroyed towns

Storage

Items marked in catalog with location Special Collections Storage
Published pre-1910, in bad condition, or duplicates
Photographs, postcards, maps, manuscript collections, one-of-a-kind items

Databases

American Ancestors in ALL only. Good New England coverage.
Ancestry Library Edition in every library branch. Over 9,000 databases within.
Newspapers.com offers keyword searching of historic newspapers. Has Wichita Eagle and Beacon newspapers from 1870s thru 1922
Wichita Eagle – can access full images (2018-now) from home with WPL card in Newsbank
Use **Kansas State Library Card** at kslc.org to access other genealogical databases like Fold3 (military), Heritage Quest (city directories, census), and Genealogy Connect (books, how to's)

Digital Archives

Can be found on library website under Research >> Local History >> Digital Archives

The web address is: <https://cdm17408.contentdm.oclc.org/>

Digitizing items from public domain or have permission to post.

It's a rapidly growing collection.

Can add items from public to post online. Photographs, diaries, letters, etc.

Examples of digitized items:

U.S.S. Wichita Cruise Book

Covid interviews and surveys – 45 oral history interviews, 89 surveys, 100s of images

DAR booklets – transcriptions, histories

Wichita booklets – histories, advertising brochures

Wichita publication: city ordinances (1900 & 1912) and building codes (1917 & 1925)

Wichita airport – 2 dozen aerial photographs, histories

Wichita park department – 5 dozen photographs, mainly of local schools

Wichita water department – over 4,000 photographs, mainly floods

Wichita Chamber of Commerce – almost 900 photographs, mostly of businesses and events

Sedgwick County books – 1931 Book-o-Maps, 1915 directory of land owners

Wichita history – Downtown Wichita magazine April 1949, Mrs. B. H. Campbell diary 1897

Photographs – digitized over 5,000 photographs and placing them online. Currently adding over

450 portraits with descriptions researched and written by the Wichita Genealogical Society

See also: Wichita Photo Archive, www.wichitaphotos.org or

<https://cdm15942.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15942coll24>

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All web addresses current as of 20 April 2024.