Miscellaneous Genealogical Records in the Grosvenor Room

- Adoptions
- Border Crossings
- Criminal Records
- Draft Cards
- Land & Property Transactions
- Misc. Erie County Records
- Naturalizations
- Wills & Probate Records

**KEY**

* = Oversized book
Buffalo = In Buffalo Collection in GRO
GRO = In Grosvenor Room
RBR = By appointment in Rare Book Room, 716-858-8900
WNYGS = In Western NY Genealogical Society collection

**Adoptions**

WNYGS Microfilm ML 139, Book 3

*Erie County Records, Adoptions 1857-1876*

Not a comprehensive set of Records

Jewitt, Allen E.

*Adoption's (sic) Recorded in Erie County Hall, Buffalo, 1874-1900*


Buffalo *F129 .B8 C763*
Coppola, Mrs. R. Donald et al, comp.

*Records of the Evangelical Lutheran St. John’s Orphan Home...1865-1961*

Buffalo, NY: Abigail Fillmore Chapter DAR, 1981

For more adoption sources, see these separate research guides:
- Adoption & Orphanage Resources (historic research)
- Adoption Search (for adoptees, birth family)

**Border Crossings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Place(s)</th>
<th>Microfilm Holdings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1902-1954</td>
<td>Buffalo, Lewiston, Niagara Falls, Rochester</td>
<td>WNYGS Microfilm M1480, 162 reels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Criminal Records

Buffalo HV8378 .B9 A1
Buffalo Police Reports, 1873-2002 [gaps]
These reports include details of homicides by police district for the years 1881-1956 and crime statistics.

Local History File

The Local History File is primarily a card index for Buffalo newspapers and periodicals from about 1930 to 1982, with some earlier and later entries. Try these headings: Automobile Accidents, Assault, Crimes and Criminals, Murders, Narcotics, Personal Names, Robberies, etc.

Newspapers

The library carries a wealth of local newspapers on microfilm from the early 1800s to the present. Major crime was often the topic of feature articles, and trial testimony for high profile cases may have been published. Other sections to look at are police and coroner’s reports. A detailed guide to our newspaper collection is available on the library’s website: https://www.buffalolib.org/sites/default/files/pdf/genealogy/subject-guides/Buffalo%20Newspapers%20Web.pdf

-Databases-  https://www.buffalolib.org/content/research

Ancestry Library Edition

Ancestry is a genealogy database that is available for use at all B&ECPL locations. U.S. Federal Census Records, which are taken every ten years, list everyone who lived in the U.S. including prison inmates. The same is true for New York State and other state census records. In 1880, a supplementary federal census schedule collected detailed information on those who were imprisoned at the time the census was recorded.

Several NYS collections of prison records are accessible in Ancestry including:
- New York, Clinton Prison Admission Ledgers, 1851-1866, 1926-1939, and others.
- New York, Discharges of Convicts, 1882-1915
- New York, Executive Orders for Commutations, Pardons, Restorations and Respites, 1845-1931
- New York, Governor's Registers of Commitments to Prisons, 1842-1908
- New York, Prisoners Received at Newgate State Prison, 1797-1810
- New York, Sing Sing Prison Admission Registers, 1865-1939

HeritageQuest Online

HeritageQuest is a genealogy database that is available for use at all B&ECPL locations and from home with a valid B&ECPL card. U.S. Federal Census Records, which are taken every ten years, list everyone who lived in the U.S. including prison inmates. In 1880, a supplementary schedule collected detailed information on those who were imprisoned at the time the census was recorded.

Criminal Resources

GRO Ref. CS21 .F74 2014
Freilich, Kay
Genealogy and the law: a guide to legal sources for the family historian
**Referrals**

**Criminal History Records Search** – New York State Office of Court Administration


**Erie County Clerk’s Office**

92 Franklin St., Buffalo, NY 14202  
716-858-8785  

The Erie County Clerk’s Office has felony conviction records as far back as 1922.

**New York State Archives**

New York State Education Department  
Cultural Education Center  
Albany, NY 12230  
518-474-6926  

New York State Department of Correctional Services inmate summary cards [ca. 1890-1987] – Catalog number 21833. Restricted for 75 years with some exceptions.  
“Cards typically indicate the inmate name, various identification numbers, date of birth, race, crime(s) of which the inmate was convicted, facility(ies) at which the inmate was incarcerated, parole eligibility date, date of actual parole, date of discharge, and date of maximum expiration of sentence. Only a very few cards list the parents/siblings/spouse and other name aliases of the inmate.” – State Archives catalog

“The records fall into five major functional areas of the criminal justice and corrections system: 1) Arrest and Sentencing; 2) Admission; 3) Classification; 4) Confinement; and 5) Release/Parole.” – State Archives catalog

For more records see: **Wanted! U.S. criminal records: sources & research methodology** by Ron Arons (above.)

**Supreme Court Library**

77 West Eagle Street  
Buffalo, NY 14202  
716-845-9400  

If an individual was convicted of a crime and appealed, the library may have a listing of the appeal.

**Websites**

### Draft Cards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Place(s)</th>
<th>Microfilm Holdings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World War I</td>
<td>Buffalo and Erie County</td>
<td>GRO Microfilm. 32 rolls of film in alphabetical name order for each draft board.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Land & Property Transactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City of Buffalo</th>
<th>Erie County</th>
<th>New York State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GRO Ref. F127 .E6 E73 1981 Witmer, Tobias</td>
<td>1800s to 1830s</td>
<td>1800s-1850s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Erie County, N.Y. Deeds Sold by the Holland Land Co.</strong> Knightstown, IN: The Bookmark, 1859 (reprint 1981)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the names of individuals who purchased lots in the village of Buffalo and the surrounding townships.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An index to early land transactions from the records of the Holland Co. Land Tables. The microfilm of the actual Land Table records are available through LDS Family History Centers and Reed Library at SUNY Fredonia and most have been digitized and are on the New York Heritage website: <a href="https://nyheritage.org/collections/holland-land-company-archives">https://nyheritage.org/collections/holland-land-company-archives</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See above first volume for more information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WNYGS Microfilm ML 140, <strong>Erie County Deed Books #70 and #71</strong></td>
<td>1830s and 1840s</td>
<td>1830s and 1840s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes deeds and land agreements of those individuals who were under contract to the Holland Land Co.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WNYGS Microfilm ML 138 <strong>Chautauqua County</strong> - Deeds and land contracts</td>
<td>Not included</td>
<td>Not included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WNYGS ML 141 <strong>Batavia Land Ledger</strong></td>
<td>Not included</td>
<td>Not included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RBR WNYO 1884.W5 Wilson &amp; Smith <strong>Early Buffalo Land Records</strong> [Buffalo, NY: The Firm, 1884?]</td>
<td>Pre 1884</td>
<td>Not included</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Manuscript of records of the law firm of Wilson & Smith, including legal proceedings concerning real estate.
Land & Property Transactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City of Buffalo</th>
<th>Erie County</th>
<th>New York State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RBR WNYO 1893.E75</td>
<td>Pre 1893</td>
<td>Not included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erie County Guaranteed Search Company</td>
<td>Not included</td>
<td>Not included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title searches of the Sea Wall Strip in the city of Buffalo.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo: Erie County Guaranteed Search Company, [1893?].</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To view original property deeds and land transactions, visit the Erie County Clerk’s Office.

Land & Property Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRO Ref. *CS49 .H38 2003</th>
<th>Hatcher, Patricia Law</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRO Ref. *CS49 .H66 1997</th>
<th>Hone, E. Wade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land and Property Research in the United States</td>
<td>Salt Lake City, UT: Ancestry, ©1997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All deeds and property transactions in Erie County are recorded at the Erie County Clerk’s Office. Deed indexes 1808-1964, as well as deeds from 1808 – ca. 1916 are also online at https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2078654.

Buffalo City Hall has original Buffalo building permits on file. For more information, see these GRO guides:

How to research a Buffalo House: Selected sources in the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
Info on records, resources, databases, websites, and gov’t agencies for residences.

Buffalo Architecture Research: Selected sources in the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
Info on records, resources, databases, websites, and gov’t agencies for non-residence buildings.

Buffalo & Erie County Atlases: Best Bets for Genealogists & House Researchers.
The older atlases which show names of property owners are indicated on this handout.

Miscellaneous Erie County Records

Erie County Records on WNYGS microfilm reel ML 139. Each book of records has an alphabetical index, which is also printed for ease of use. See binder on top of cabinet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1808-1843</td>
<td>Book 1: Organization of religious societies; appointments of Deputies, Clerks, Sheriffs; Letters of patents, mortgages, powers of attorney, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844-1857</td>
<td>Book 2: Establishments of churches, banks, cemeteries; deeds, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857-1876</td>
<td>Book 3: Army &amp; Navy discharges; Census for Angola, NY 1873; several adoptions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Naturalization Records

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>New York Counties</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27 Sept 1906 to 1966</td>
<td>Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chemung, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates</td>
<td>On 20 rolls of microfilm in alphabetical order by surname. <strong>No actual naturalization papers, just an index.</strong> This is an index to U.S. District Court Naturalization records. The records themselves are not kept locally. They can be ordered from the National Archives: <a href="https://eservices.archives.gov/">https://eservices.archives.gov/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831-1930</td>
<td>Erie</td>
<td><strong>FamilySearch</strong> - An Erie County Naturalization index (1831-1930) and some naturalization records (1831-1906) <a href="https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/321898">https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/321898</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835-1906</td>
<td>Erie</td>
<td><strong>FamilySearch</strong> - Erie County Declarations of Intent. <a href="https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/17698">https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/17698</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791-1980</td>
<td>Numerous [Erie County is not included]</td>
<td><strong>FamilySearch</strong> – County naturalization records. <a href="https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1999177">https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1999177</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Naturalization Records Resources

- **GRO Ref. *CS47 .S96 1998**

- **GRO Ref. *CS47 .N49 1998**

- **GRO Ref. CS49 .S28 1997**

- **GRO Ref. *F118 .N37 1996**

- **GRO F118 .S36**

- **GRO F118 .S363**

- **GRO F118 .S37 1978**
## Wills, Estate Papers, & Probate Records

**Probate records** are court records created after an individual's death that relate to a court's decisions on the estate to the heirs (or creditors) and the care of dependents. This process took place whether there was a will (testate) or not (intestate). Various types of records are created throughout the probate process, including wills, bonds, petitions, accounts, inventories, administrations, orders, decrees, and distributions.

In many instances, these important records are the only known source of information such as the person’s date of death, names of spouse, children, parents, siblings, and in-laws. You may also learn about the adoption or guardianship of minor children and dependents. Additional clues often found in probate records are an ancestor's previous residence, occupation, land ownership, household items, former spouse(s), religion, and military service.

The most important probate records for genealogists are the case files. The case numbers will be listed in the original indexes. The original records are held at **Erie County Surrogate's Court** and can be retrieved for viewing in their office. It usually takes 2-3 days for retrieval.

### WNYGS Microfilm ML183-193
**Surrogate Court Records for Erie County 1800-1929**

**Note:** This is an index, not actual estate papers. See *Government Sources of Vital Records* handout for Surrogate Court information & contact information.

This index and some estate papers (1800-ca.1900) can also be found on online (2 options below):

### Bibliography

- **Buffalo *F127 .E6 S9**
- **Book of Old Records in the Surrogate's Office**, City Hall, Buffalo, N.Y. (1808-1819)
  
  Buffalo, NY: Frances W. Wallace, 1925

- **GRO Ref. *F118 .R44 2002**
  
  Remington, Gordon

- **New York State Probate Records: A Genealogist’s Guide to Testate and Intestate Records**
  

---

Grosvenor Room
Buffalo and Erie County Public Library
1 Lafayette Square
Buffalo, NY 14203-1887
(716) 858-8900
[http://www.buffalolibr.org](http://www.buffalolibr.org)

Rev. December 2018