

# **GENEALOGY RESOURCES IN THE GROSVENOR ROOM**



**GROSVENOR ROOM**  
BUFFALO AND ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
1 LAFAYETTE SQUARE  
BUFFALO, NY 14203-1887  
(716) 858-8900

<https://www.buffalolib.org/research-resources/special-collections>

Updated January 2020

## WELCOME!

The Grosvenor Room (pronounced *GROVE-ner*) is the Special Collections Department at the Central Library and includes local history, genealogy, and music resources. We are the top genealogical destination in Western New York with over 25,000 local history volumes and 5,500 family histories. The focus of the collection is Buffalo and Erie County genealogy; we have some resources related to other New York counties, other states, and foreign countries.

*Collection highlights include:*

- Vital records and resources
- Buffalo newspapers on microfilm, 1842 to the present
- Buffalo city directories, 1828 to the present
- “Local History File,” a unique resource for all things Western NY
- Church and cemetery records on microfilm
- Over 50 genealogical and local history periodicals
- Buffalo history resources: scrapbooks, histories, and maps

## WHEN YOU VISIT:

No appointment or library card is necessary to use the Grosvenor Room. Guests are asked to sign the register, as we appreciate your feedback, and knowing where our visitors are from.

Please note that the items in our Local History & Genealogy collections are for research purposes and may NOT be borrowed or removed from the room.

## POLICIES:

- **NO food or drink** in the Grosvenor Room.
- **Bags and purses MUST be** stored in the lockers at the reference desk.
- Use of **cameras** requires written permission. See a librarian for more information.

## CENTRAL LIBRARY HOURS

MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY: 8:30 – 6:00

**THURSDAY: 8:30 – 8:00**

FRIDAY, SATURDAY: 8:30 – 6:00

**SUNDAY\*: 12:00 – 5:00**

*\*The Library is not open Sundays during the summer; please check the website before your visit: [www.buffalolib.org](http://www.buffalolib.org)*

## CONTACT US

- TELEPHONE: 716-858-8900 (MONDAY – FRIDAY 9:00 – 5:00)
- FAX: (716) 858-6211
- EMAIL: <https://www.buffalolib.org/contact/contact-us>
- WEB SITE: <https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/genealogy>

## GROSVENOR ROOM RESEARCH GUIDES



Start with a guide! Our librarians have created many guides designed to help you use the collection. Each guide highlights specific Grosvenor Room resources as well as websites, organizations, and local institutions.

Printed guides are available at the Grosvenor Reference Desk and are online at:

<https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications>

### Subjects covered:

- **Ethnic Genealogy:** Locate resources specific to locating ancestors with African American, Canadian, German, Irish, Italian, Jewish, Latin American, Native American, and Polish backgrounds.
- **Vital, original records:** Resources for birth, marriage, and death records; death notices and obituaries; church and cemetery records; land and property records, naturalizations, passenger lists, and immigration records.
- **Census:** Details the various indexes and microfilm available for Federal & NY State census
- **Military:** Tracing ancestors involved in major conflicts including the War of 1812, the Revolutionary War, and the Civil War.
- **Directories and Yearbooks:** Detailed listing of city directories, telephone books, yearbooks and alumni directories held in the Grosvenor Room.

## BUFFALO COLLECTION

Our local history collection consists of over 4,000 volumes about people, places, and events in Buffalo and Erie County. Includes the popular **Scrapbook** collection: 400 volumes of newspaper articles, compiled between 1930 and 1975. The scrapbooks are indexed in the Local History File (see below), a starting place for articles on your ancestors.

## CARD CATALOGS

- Local History File: A selective local newspaper & book card index. Can be used to find information on people, places, and events. It includes citations for many obituaries from the *Buffalo News* and the *Courier Express*. Most comprehensive for **1930 to 1982**.
- Grosvenor Genealogy Catalog: Index to published genealogies, mostly Anglo-American, colonial-era families. It also serves as a select index to genealogy periodicals held in the Grosvenor Room Collection. To find individual family histories, search under *Brown Family*, *Jones Family*, etc.

## CENSUS RECORDS

Census records are the backbone of American genealogical research. The Grosvenor Room has every surviving Federal and State census microfilm for Erie County. In most cases, we have federal census films for the rest of upstate New York as well.



Our separate guide titled **New York Census Microfilms and Indices in the Grosvenor Room** shows specifically what census films and indices we own for New York State.

\*\*\*All Federal census and some NY State years can also be searched online with *Ancestry Library Edition* and *Heritage Quest* databases.\*\*\*

**Ward Maps:** To assist with census research, we have maps depicting **ward boundaries** from 1840 to present. For census-taking purposes, city wards were also divided up into enumeration districts (EDs). The Grosvenor Room has ED maps for Buffalo for 1900-1930.

## CHURCH & CEMETERY RECORDS

Our microfilm collection includes many local church records (mostly Roman Catholic) of baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and deaths. Several churches maintained cemeteries and kept records of burials, and the collection includes these and other cemeteries. Microfilmed records of **Forest Lawn**, Buffalo's largest cemetery, are now in the collection of the Western New York Genealogical Society, located in the Grosvenor Room.



See these separate guides for specifics: **Church Records in Microfilm and Print** and **Cemetery Records for Erie County, NY**.

## CITY DIRECTORIES

Generally published on a yearly basis (with some exceptions) and list every adult resident in the city. Early years usually provide an address and occupation.

We have a complete collection of Buffalo City Directories from **1828** to the present. Most years are available in print in our collection. 1828-1993 are also available on microfilm. In order to preserve the original Buffalo directories, **all photocopying must be done from the microfilm versions**.

Buffalo Directories, 1832-1913 are now available for searching online:

<https://www.buffalolib.org/research-resources/digital-collections>

Many directories can also be searched online with *Ancestry Library Edition* and *Heritage Quest* databases.

We also own some directories from other cities in New York, other cities in the U.S., and Canada. For more information, see our City Directory guides:

<https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications>

**DATABASES:** The Library subscribes to two commercial genealogical databases and a Sanborn map database. All databases can be found on our website:

<http://dbaz.buffalolib.org/dbaz.php>

- **Ancestry Library Edition\***: Includes 450 million census records from the U.S. Federal Census between the years 1790 and 1940, immigration, vital, military, court, church and ethnic records, and nationwide directories.
- **HeritageQuest\*\***: Contains U.S. Federal Census from 1790-1940, genealogies, local histories, city directories, Revolutionary War pension files, Freedman's Bank Records, and the U.S. Serial Set.
- **Digital Sanborn Maps, 1867-1970\*\***: Sanborn fire insurance maps are detailed property and land-use records. Provides access to maps for towns and cities in New York State.

\*Available for use at all Buffalo & Erie County Public Library branches. No at-home use.

\*\* Use at any library or from home with a valid Buffalo & Erie County Public Library card number.

**DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION:** We have a number of D.A.R publications that can help identify a Revolutionary War ancestor:

GRO E202.5 A15

**[DAR] Lineage Books**

Washington, DC: The Society

*166 volumes from 1890 to 1939; Lists those who fought in the American Revolution, the name of the DAR member and her lineage traced back to particular soldier.*

Ref. E255 .D38 2003, 3 vols.

**DAR Patriot Index**

Baltimore, MD: Gateway Press, 2003

*A list of Revolutionary Soldiers verified by the DAR*

Ref E494 .R653 R43 1995

**Index to the Roll of Honor**

Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1995

*Indexes the set of DAR Lineage Books*

\*E202.5 A12, 12 issues per year, 1892 to present

**American Spirit (formerly DAR Magazine)**

*Has a monthly genealogical column*

## ENGLISH PARISH RECORDS (CA.1558 - 1837)

We have an extensive collection of Parish Records from England in multi-volume sets. Information given: baptisms, marriages, and burials with names, dates, parentage, residence, ages, and sometimes relationships. Despite omissions, they are the single most important genealogical source for England because they are the sole written evidence of births, marriages and deaths. See the following resources:

Ref. CS434 .B9

Burke, Arthur M.

**Key to the Ancient Parish Register of England and Wales**

London: Sackville Press, ©1908

CS434 .P3, volumes 30, 50, and 61

George W. Marshall

**Parish Registers: A List of Those Printed**

London: Parish Register Society, ©1900, with two updates

Ref. \*CS435 .Y4 1990z

**Yorkshire Parish Register Index**

[n.p.], 1999?

For names and locations of parishes, see:

Ref. \*G1816 .E42P5 1984

Humphrey-Smith, Cecil

**Phillimore Atlas and Index of English Parish Registers**

Chichester, Sussex, England: Phillimore & Co., ©1984

For background historical information about parishes and other locations, see the multiple-volume series *The Victoria History of the Counties of England* (CS434.V5—Closed Stacks). Search the Library's **online catalog** for the following subject headings: [https://bepl.ent.sirsi.net/client/en\\_US/default](https://bepl.ent.sirsi.net/client/en_US/default)

[*Church*]: [*Name of Parish*] (e.g. *St. Paul (Church: Exeter, England)*)

*Church Records and Registers - England. - [Name of Parish]*

*Great Britain—Genealogy*

## FAMILY HISTORIES

The original Grosvenor Library of Buffalo had one of the largest genealogy collections in the country. The Grosvenor Room inherited this collection and the Grosvenor Genealogy Card Catalog. It includes published family histories as well as miscellaneous material in files on Western New York families and those from various other locales, particularly the New England states.

**IMMIGRATION RECORDS & PASSENGER LISTS:** The Library has few actual, original passenger lists. The collection mostly includes published indexes that provide name, age, occupation, country of origin, name of ship, port of arrival, and date of arrival. These indexes are not comprehensive and do not identify every person who ever came to the United States.



For a list of the specific indexes and lists available, see the separate guide **Passenger Lists: Selected Sources in the Grosvenor Room.**

<https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications>

Comprehensive passenger lists for 1850 and after are available at the National Archives, the New York Public Library's Research Libraries Division, and the LDS Family History Centers.

Many immigration records, including passenger lists and passports, are found in the *Ancestry Library Edition* database.

**NATURALIZATION RECORDS:** The Grosvenor Room does not have any actual naturalization records, but researchers can use this index on microfilm:

Film #1059, 20 rolls  
Western District Court of New York  
**Index to Naturalizations, Sept. 27, 1906 to 1966**

The naturalization records of Erie County residents, 1827-1929, are on file in the County Clerk's office in Erie County Hall.



For more information on naturalization records, see the guide **Miscellaneous Genealogical Records in the Grosvenor Room.**

<https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications>

## LOCAL HISTORIES

The collection includes many histories of villages, towns, cities, and counties in New York State, New England, and the East Coast. Many local histories usually include biographies of settlers and can often provide information on early American ancestors.

Try a Subject search in the online catalog for place names: villages, towns, cities, or counties.

[https://bepl.ent.sirsi.net/client/en\\_US/default](https://bepl.ent.sirsi.net/client/en_US/default)

### Example Searches:

*Rochester (N.Y.)*

*Hampshire County (Mass.)*

*Pittsburgh (P.A.)*

## MAPS & ATLASES

We have numerous atlases covering Buffalo, Erie County, and other NY counties. Others cover the U.S. Civil War, Ireland, Germany, Poland, and Prussia, as well as general world atlases. Many date from the mid-to-late 19th century and can be used to identify local property owners, national boundary changes, or lost villages.

The Grosvenor Room has several early maps of Western New York; of particular interest to genealogists are the Erie County atlases from 1866, 1872, and 1880.



For more information on local maps see the guide **Buffalo & Erie County Atlases: Best Bets for Genealogists and House Researchers.**

<https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications>

**SANBORN INSURANCE ATLASES** can be very helpful when tracing local ancestors. These highly detailed maps show buildings, houses, roads, parks, cemeteries, churches, and other structures in Buffalo. Our collection includes staggered volumes 1881 through 1963 in print, plus a 1980s set on microfilm. Sanborn maps for Buffalo and many other cities and towns in New York State can also be accessed through the “**Sanborn maps of New York 1867-1970**” online database.

## MILITARY RECORDS

Resources to help establish an ancestor's military record, including material relating to the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Spanish American War, World War I & II, Korea, and Vietnam. For specific information on these resources, see the following separate guides:



- ✧ *Military History and Records: Selected Sources in the Grosvenor Room*  
[Includes all conflicts except Civil War and War of 1812, see below]
- ✧ *Civil War Genealogy & History for Buffalo & Erie County*
- ✧ *Civil War Genealogy & History for New York State*
- ✧ *Civil War Genealogy & History for States other than NY*
- ✧ *War of 1812 on the Niagara Frontier*

<https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications>

Regardless of where an American ancestor enlisted or fought, official records of a soldier's military service are found in the National Archives. The website of the National Archives provides helpful information about the records research process:

<https://www.archives.gov/research/military>



## NEWSPAPERS

We have many local newspapers on microfilm from 1842 to the present. Selected articles from local papers have been indexed in the Library's **Local History File**. Below are just some of the papers genealogists can search for articles and obituaries:

*Buffalo (Evening) News*—1881 to the present (approximately)\*

*Buffalo Courier Express*—1926-1982

*Buffalo Times*—1883-1939

*Buffalo Volksfreund*—1891-1969 (German-American paper)

*Dziennik Dla Wszystkich*—1930-1957 (Polish-American paper)

For more information on local newspapers, see the guides online:

<https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications>

The Grosvenor Room has a microfilmed collection of **Early American Newspapers** from the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. These newspapers are from several eastern and southern states, including Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont, and Virginia.

## PERIODICALS

The Library subscribes to numerous genealogy and local history related titles, from general interest magazines to the newsletters of local societies and associations. These are just some of the many genealogy magazines and journals that we carry:

\*CS9 .F5, 6 issues per year, 1996 to present

**Your Genealogy Today (previously Family Chronicle)**

*An easy-to-understand how-to magazine for genealogists. Each issue features an article on a different ethnic background, and a regular column featuring web sites.*

CS1 .N567, 4 issues per year, 1870 to present

**The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record**

*Each annual volume has a cumulative subject and surname index; other cumulative indexes on shelf.*

F118 .W46a, 4 issues per year, 1974 to present

**Western New York Genealogical Society Journal**

*Has annual subject and surname index.*

See also these Periodical indexes (next page):

CS1 .P47 1994, 1995

### **Periodical Source Index (PERSI)**

Allen County Public Library Foundation, ©1994, 1995

*An extensive, annual index to the contents of hundreds of local history and genealogy publications.*

*PERSI is now available through Heritage Quest, a genealogical database available at the Library for walk-in and at-home users.*

CS44 .A6, 177 volumes

### **American Genealogical Index**

Middletown, CT: Published by a Committee..., 1942-present

*Indexes published local histories and genealogies by surname.*

Ref. Z5313 .U5D95

### **Index to American Genealogies, and to Genealogical Material Contained in All Works Such as Town Histories, County Histories, Local Histories...**

Albany, NY: Munsell, 1895 and supplement, 1900-1908

## **VITAL RECORDS**

Birth, marriage, and death records provide a wealth of information on our ancestors. The Grosvenor Room has several resources that can help you discover the location of such records.

A good starting point is the **New York State Vital Records Index**, which provides births and marriages from 1881, and deaths from 1880. For privacy, NY State restricts the use of recent records. See our Vital Records guide for more information:

<https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications>

Due to privacy restrictions, researchers may only access the index for births that occurred at least 75 years ago, and marriages and deaths that occurred at least 50 years ago. While this index can identify the date and place of the life event, **actual original records** can be found by contacting the **New York State Department of Health**, or the relevant County, City, or Town Clerk's office.

For other life records sources see our separate guides:



### **Vital Records in the Grosvenor Room**

**Miscellaneous Records in the Grosvenor Room** (Includes resources for adoptions, border crossings, draft cards, land & property records, naturalizations, and wills & probate records.)

<https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications>

## **INTERNATIONAL SOURCES**

Our genealogy resources for other countries consist primarily of “how-to” books that can provide references to resources for a particular area. Most of the collection focuses on the Western and Eastern European countries that many Buffalonians' ancestors came from: Germany, Ireland, Italy,

and Poland. The collection also includes books on researching ancestors from Canada, South America, Africa, and Asia. See a librarian for further international sources for records.

## **PARTNER COLLECTIONS**

The Grosvenor Room also houses the collections of two local genealogical societies. These collections provide unique resources that supplement the Library's holdings:

**The June P. Zintz Memorial Library of the Western New York Genealogical Society (WNYGS)** is a collection of over 3000 books, 700+ rolls of microfilm, many periodicals and card catalogs. A repository of genealogical information on early settlers of WNY, primary focus is the 8 counties of WNY: **Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans and Wyoming**. There are also resources on greater NY, New England, as well as many other states and other countries. The Society's collection includes the following:

- Ancestor charts and family group sheets of members
- Atlases, Gazetteers
- Bible records
- Birth & Marriage records
- Cemetery & Church Records
- Census records
- Family Histories
- Immigration resources including *Germans to America*
- "How-to" books
- Local histories
- Periodicals
- Vital Index of Early Western New York Families

WNYGS volunteers may be on duty in the Grosvenor Room;

**For more information on WNYGS see:** <http://www.wnygs.org/>



**The Michael Drabik Memorial Library of the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State (PGSNYS)** is a reference collection of approximately 300 titles of materials pertaining to Poland and a variety of Polish American topics. Many of the books are written in Polish. The Society's collection includes the following:

- Bibliographies
- Church histories
- "How-to" books: Polish genealogy, general genealogy
- Immigration/emigration materials
- Periodicals
- Histories of Polish towns/villages/regions, culture, literature, description and guidebooks, social life and customs
- Polish Americans: history, culture, social life and customs

**For more information on PGSNYS see:** <http://www.pgsnys.org/>

Where Else Can I Research My Family?	Resources Available
<p><b>Family History Centers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS)</b>            1424 Maple Rd.            Williamsville, NY 14221            (716) 688-2439</p> <p>S-4003 Baker Rd.            Orchard Park, NY 14127            (716) 662-3117</p> <p>Note: Assistance is available only for in-person research. No telephone or mail inquiries accepted. Call ahead for hours.</p> <p><a href="https://www.familysearch.org/en/">https://www.familysearch.org/en/</a></p>	<p>The LDS has census, church, cemetery, and many, many more microfilmed records of genealogical value for Erie County, as well as records for other states and even <u>other countries</u>.</p> <p>Records can also be requested from the huge collection of the main Library in Salt Lake City.</p> <p>LDS Family History Centers are free and open to the public, regardless of your religion. There is no proselytizing on the premises.</p>
<p><b>Buffalo History Museum Research Library</b>            1 Museum Court            Buffalo, NY 14216-3199            library@buffalohistory.org            716.873.9644 x 306  <a href="http://buffalohistory.org/Learn/Research-Library.aspx">http://buffalohistory.org/Learn/Research-Library.aspx</a></p>	<p>Has early marriage notices up to 1880 on microfilm from Buffalo newspapers, Death index covering Erie County prior to 1880 with selected notices after 1880, church &amp; cemetery records, Sanborn maps &amp; other atlases, and much more.</p>
<p><b>Buffalo City Hall</b>            Vital Records, Room 1302            65 Niagara Square            Buffalo, NY 14202            (716) 851-5431  <a href="https://www.buffalony.gov/276/City-Clerk">https://www.buffalony.gov/276/City-Clerk</a></p>	<p>Recent Buffalo Vital records:            Births 1916-present, Marriages 1908-present, Deaths 1945-present.</p>
<p><b>City of Buffalo Inactive Records Center</b>            85 River Rock Drive, Suite 301            Buffalo, NY 14207            (716) 877-0636 or (716) 570-8721  <a href="https://www.buffalony.gov/296/Records-Management">https://www.buffalony.gov/296/Records-Management</a></p>	<p>Early Buffalo Vital Records:            Births 1878-1915, Marriages 1877-1907, Deaths 1852-1944.            Please call before arriving to verify staff is on site.</p>
<p><b>Erie County Clerk</b>            92 Franklin Street            Buffalo, New York 14202            (716) 858-8785            ErieCountyClerkOffice@erie.gov  <a href="http://www2.erie.gov/clerk/">http://www2.erie.gov/clerk/</a></p>	<p>Census for dates 1850 to 1925, Births that occurred in the City of Buffalo from September 17, 1881 to December 15, 1913, Marriages from 1878 to April 29, 1935 and Naturalizations that occurred in Superior, County or Supreme Courts from 1827 to 1929.</p>

# Free Internet Resources:

## **Buffalo News Death Notices**

Death notices are online free for 90 days, then transferred into a fee-based archive. The archive is searchable back to Sept. 11, 1997.

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/local/new-york/buffalo-obituaries>

## **BuffaloResearch.com**

Family history research in Buffalo, Erie County, and Western NY, with hundreds of useful links.

<http://www.buffaloresearch.com>

## **Cyndi's List**

Huge compilation of genealogy websites on different countries and types of records.

<http://www.cyndislist.com>

## **Dates of First Vital Statistics Records in the Towns and Villages of Erie County**

Gives first dates for which civil birth, marriage, and death records exist in each town or village.

<http://www.wnygs.org/erie-vr.html>

## **Ellis Island Records**

Records of over 22 million immigrants who arrived at Ellis Island between 1892 and 1924.

<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/passenger>

## **Erie County Cemeteries, Past and Present**

Includes a growing list of tombstone inscriptions and internment lists, all contributed by volunteers.

<http://www.members.tripod.com/~wnyroots/>

## **Erie County, NY GenWeb Site**

A starting point for genealogical research in Erie County.

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~nyerie>

## **Family Search**

A database of census, vital, military and other original records. Search the online catalog to find materials at your local LDS Family History Center.

<http://www.familysearch.org/>

## **Find a Grave**

A searchable website of user-entered information from gravestones around the country.

[www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)

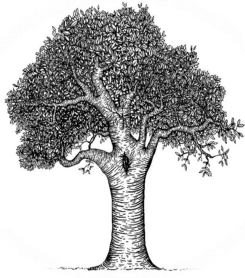
## **Fulton History**

Independent site of digitized newspapers from across New York State, including Buffalo. Search by keywords, names, places, and years published in the article.

[www.fultonhistory.com](http://www.fultonhistory.com)

For more online resources, see our more detailed list:

<https://www.buffalolib.org/genealogy/genealogy-websites>



**GROSVENOR ROOM**  
BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
1 LAFAYETTE SQUARE  
BUFFALO, NY 14203-1887  
(716) 858-8900

## **CONTACT US**

- TELEPHONE: 716-858-8900 (MONDAY – SATURDAY 9:00 – 5:00)
- FAX: (716) 858-6211
- EMAIL: <https://www.buffalolib.org/contact/contact-us>
- WEB SITE: <https://www.buffalolib.org/research-resources/special-collections>



## **CENTRAL LIBRARY HOURS**

MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY: 8:30 – 6  
**THURSDAY: 8:30 – 8**  
FRIDAY, SATURDAY: 8:30 – 6  
**SUNDAY\* 12 – 5\***

*\*The Library is not open Sundays during the summer; please check the website before your visit:  
[www.buffalolib.org](http://www.buffalolib.org)*

Revised January 2020