

Miscellaneous Genealogical Records in the Grosvenor Room

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoptions • Border Crossings • Criminal Records • Draft Cards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

GRO Ref. *F127 .E6 J48 1984, 2 vols.
 Jewitt, Allen E.
Adoption's (sic) Recorded in Erie County Hall, Buffalo, 1874-1900
 Hamburg, NY: Allen E. Jewitt, 1984

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

Dates	Place(s)	Microfilm Holdings
1902-1954	Buffalo, Lewiston, Niagara Falls, Rochester	WNYGS Microfilm M1480, 162 reels. Also available on Ancestry Library Edition (see Databases below).

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/special-collections/guides-publications#newspapers>

-Databases- <http://dbaz.buffalolib.org/dbaz.php#Genealogy>

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

Arlington, VA : National Genealogical Society, [2014]

GRO Ref. CS21 .R55 2004

Rose, Christine

Courthouse research for family historians: your guide to genealogical treasures

San Jose, CA: Publications, 2004

GRO Ref. CS66.C75 A766 2009

Arons, Ron

Wanted! U.S. criminal records: sources & research methodology

Oakland, CA : Criminal Research Press, [2009]

State by state detailed listings of available criminal records.

-Referrals-

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

General information and application: <http://ww2.nycourts.gov/apps/chrs/index.shtml>

Years covered county by county:

<http://ww2.nycourts.gov/sites/default/files/document/files/2018-02/crimdatachart.pdf>

Erie County Clerk's Office

92 Franklin St., Buffalo, NY 14202

716-858-8785

<http://www2.erie.gov/clerk/index.php?q=records-kept-county-clerk>

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

<http://www.archives.nysed.gov/about/about-contact-us>

Inmate Name Indexes by the New York State Archives –

<http://www.archives.nysed.gov/research/name-indexes-search>

Includes a name search for several New York State prisons. Information that may be found includes inmate name, correctional facility, admission date, discharge date, birth date, places of residence, reference to microfilm where data was found. The timeframe for most entries is 1920s-1950s, but there are some earlier and some later than those dates. The dates are usually reflective of the discharge date.

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

Inmate case files, 1894-2005 (bulk [ca. 1925-1992]) – Catalog number 14610. Some restrictions apply.

"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

<http://ww2.nycourts.gov/library/buffalo/index.shtml>

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

-Websites-

<http://blacksheepancestors.com/> - Provides links and details about historical criminal records.

<https://pacer.uscourts.gov/> - A database of federal case files and docket information. 1980s-present.

Draft Cards

Dates	Place(s)	Microfilm Holdings
World War I	Buffalo and Erie County	GRO Microfilm. 32 rolls of film in alphabetical name order for each draft board.

Also available in the Ancestry Library Edition database. Look for "U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918" collection in the Military section.

Land & Property Transactions	City of Buffalo	Erie County	New York State
GRO Ref. F127 .E6 E73 1981 Witmer, Tobias Erie County, N.Y. Deeds Sold by the Holland Land Co. Knightstown, IN: The Bookmark, 1859 (reprint 1981) <i>Provides the names of individuals who purchased lots in the village of Buffalo and the surrounding townships.</i>	1800s to 1830s	1800s-1850s	Not Included
GRO Ref. F118 .L58 1991 Livsey, Karen Western New York Land Transactions 1804-1824 Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1991 <i>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:</i> https://nyheritage.org/collections/holland-land-company-archives For a video on finding your ancestor's Holland Land Company plot see the Central Library's genealogy playlist at: https://www.youtube.com/@BuffaloErieCountyPublicLibrary/playlists	1804-1824	1804-1824	Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, & Wyoming counties
GRO Ref. F118 .L583 1996 Livsey, Karen Western New York Land Transactions, 1825-1835 Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1996 <i>See above first volume for more information</i>	1825-1835	1825-1835	Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, & Wyoming counties
WNYGS Microfilm ML 140, Erie County Deed Books #70 and #71 • Includes deeds and land agreements of those individuals who were under contract to the Holland Land Co.	1830s and 1840s	1830s and 1840s	Not Included
WNYGS Microfilm ML 138 Chautauqua County - Deeds and land contracts	Not included	Not included	1831 to 1838 Chaut. only
WNYGS ML 141 Batavia Land Ledger	Not included	Not included	1836 to 1838 Batavia only

Land & Property Transactions	City of Buffalo	Erie County	New York State
RBR WNYO 1884.W5 Wilson & Smith Early Buffalo Land Records [Buffalo, NY: The Firm, 1884?] <i>Manuscript of records of the law firm of Wilson & Smith, including legal proceedings concerning real estate.</i>	Pre 1884	Not included	Not included
RBR WNYO 1893.E75 Erie County Guaranteed Search Company Title searches of the Sea Wall Strip in the city of Buffalo. Buffalo: Erie County Guaranteed Search Company, [1893?].	Pre 1893	Not included	Not included
To view original property deeds and land transactions, visit the Erie County Clerk's Office			

Land & Property Resources
GRO Ref. *CS49 .H38 2003 Hatcher, Patricia Law Locating Your Roots: Discover Your Ancestors Using Land Records Cincinnati, OH: Betterway Books, ©2003
GRO Ref. *CS49 .H66 1997 Hone, E. Wade Land and Property Research in the United States Salt Lake City, UT: Ancestry, ©1997
<p>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</p> <p>Buffalo City Hall has original Buffalo building permits on file. For more information, see these GRO guides:</p> <p><i>How to research a Buffalo House: Selected sources in the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library</i> <i>Info on records, resources, databases, websites, and gov't agencies for residences.</i></p> <p><i>Buffalo Architecture Research: Selected sources in the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library</i> <i>Info on records, resources, databases, websites, and gov't agencies for non-residence buildings.</i></p> <p><i>Buffalo & Erie County Atlases: Best Bets for Genealogists & House Researchers.</i> <i>The older atlases which show names of property owners are indicated on this handout.</i></p>

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.	
Dates	Description
1808-1843	Book 1: Organization of religious societies; appointments of Deputies, Clerks, Sheriffs; Letters of patents, mortgages, powers of attorney, etc.
1844-1857	Book 2: Establishments of churches, banks, cemeteries; deeds, etc.
1857-1876	Book 3: Army & Navy discharges; Census for Angola, NY 1873; several adoptions.

Naturalization Records

Dates	New York Counties	Description
27 Sept 1906 to 1966	Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chemung, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates	On 20 rolls of microfilm in alphabetical order by surname. No actual naturalization papers, just an index. This is an index to <u>U.S. District Court</u> Naturalization records. The records themselves are not kept locally. Petitions for naturalization, August 1903-March 1938, are online at https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/3023257 . -OR- They can be ordered from the National Archives at https://eservices.archives.gov/ .
1831-1930	Erie	FamilySearch - An Erie County Naturalization index (1831-1930) and some naturalization records (1831-1906) https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/321898
1835-1906	Erie	FamilySearch - Erie County Declarations of Intent. https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/17698
1791-1980	Numerous [Erie County is not included]	FamilySearch – County naturalization records. https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1999177

Naturalization Records Resources

GRO Ref. *CS47 .S96 1998

Szucs, Loreto D.

They Became Americans: Finding Naturalization Records and Ethnic Origins

Salt Lake City, UT: Ancestry, 1998

GRO Ref. *CS47 .N49 1998

Newman, John J.

American Naturalization Records 1790-1990: What They Are and How to Use Them

Bountiful, UT: Heritage Quest, 1998

GRO Ref. CS49 .S28 1997

Schaefer, Christina

Guide to Naturalization Records of the United States

Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1997

GRO Ref. *F118 .N37 1996

Auston, John D., comp.

Naturalization Records in New York State

Hilton, NY: Leaded Pane, 1996

GRO F118 .S36

Scott, Kenneth

Denizations, naturalizations, and oaths of allegiance in colonial New York

Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1975

GRO F118 .S363

Scott, Kenneth, comp.

Early New York Naturalizations...1792-1840

Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1981

Naturalization Records Resources

GRO F118 .S37 1978
Scott, Kenneth, Comp.
New York Alien Residents, 1825-1848
Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Pub. Co., 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 online (2 options below):

1. Family Search <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1920234>
2. Ancestry Library Edition database, "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999."

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

Boston, MA: New England Historical and Genealogical Society, 2002

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

Rev. January 2023