

How to Begin Genealogical Research

Materials for genealogical research can be found in several of the library's collections. The computer catalog, book/card indexes, online databases, and microfilm catalogs or directories can help locate surnames and places. Additional information is available through Gail Borden Public Library's Genealogy and Local History page, www.gailborden.info/research/genealogy.



Gail Borden Public Library is a designated LDS (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) Affiliate Library. LDS documents and images may be viewed online at Gail Borden Public Library, much as if the researcher was visiting a LDS Family History Center. Access to some images may be restricted due to contractual agreements.

TIPS FOR GENEALOGY RESEARCH

Following these rules can help prevent many issues in future research:

1. Begin with yourself and work backward in time. Start with immediate family and work outward to include extended relatives.
2. Document every piece of information gathered. Take down names of all contacts, relationships, significant events, etc. If searching for a book, record the title, author, publisher, year, page number, call number or anything else that may be relevant.
3. Remember that names can be spelled in various ways; do not ignore unusual spellings.
4. Determine quality of information and the source. Resolve any concerns if documents or information contradict one another.

AT GAIL BORDEN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Where to Begin

- *Genealogy at a Glance* by the Genealogical Publishing Company (2016) 929.1 Genealogy (Genealogy Reference)
- *Genealogy: Family Tree Research Made Easy* by Poppy Sure (2014) 929.1 Sure (Genealogy)
- *Mastering Online Genealogy* by W. Daniel Quillen (2016) 929.1 Quillen (Genealogy)
- *Genealogy Offline: a Beginner's Guide to Finding Family History Records that are not Online* By Claudia Breland (2014) 929.1072 Breland (Genealogy)



How to Organize Your Family History

- *How to Archive Family photos : a step-by-step guide to organize and share your photos digitally* by Denise May Levenick (2015) 745.593 May-Levenick (Genealogy)
- *Mastering Genealogical Documentation* by Thomas W. Jones (2017) 929 Jones (Genealogy)

Elgin Area Memories

Elgin Area Memories is the digital resources collection for local history through Gail Borden Public Library. Many resources previously only available on microfilm or in print can now be accessed electronically through the Elgin Area Memories website, www.gailborden.info/elginareamemories. Electronic access allows researchers from near and far to access many resources 365/24/7, while preserving physically fragile items in our collections. WatchWord magazines, local newspapers, architectural information, and social and religious groups' history can be found in Elgin Area Memories.

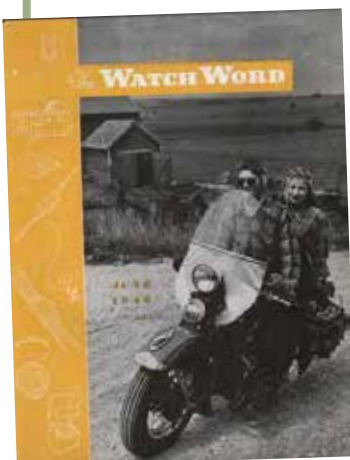


City and County Directories

Elgin City directories from 1875 through the present, and Kane County directories from the middle 1800s are available for use. These directories contain basic names and locations, but may also include memberships in community groups, information on town's histories, and interesting advertisements showing community businesses of the day. Ask a Reference Librarian for assistance as these sources are found in different formats and locations.

Newspapers

Microfilm of some Elgin newspapers from 1845 to the present is available in the microfilm area. An online index of births, marriages, and deaths mentioned in these newspapers between 1845 and 1915 is available at <http://innovative.gailborden.info:82>. The index is not complete though, so narrowing down a date and searching microfilm may be necessary.



The Watch Word

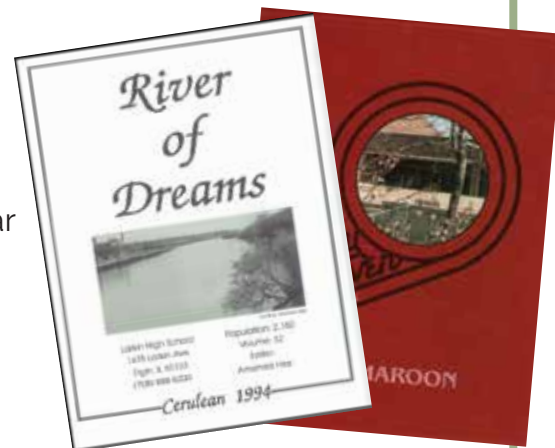
The Watch Word magazine chronicled personal stories, photos, engineering successes, and company news for employees of the Elgin National Watch Company, a leading Elgin employer for over one hundred years. A card index to the Watch Word is located in the genealogy area. The Watch Word was published from 1921 through 1956, except for 1933 through early 1935. Read most issues online in the Elgin Area Memories collection.

www.gailborden.info/elginareamemories. Issues that are not available online can be found in print or on microfilm at the Gail Borden Public Library.

Yearbooks

High School yearbooks from the local area are available for viewing on-site:

- Elgin High School – *The Maroon* – 1912 through current year
- Larkin High School – *The Cerulean* – 1963 through current year
- South Elgin High School – *The Vortex* – 2006 through current year



STATE AND NATIONAL RESOURCES AND RECORDS

Federal Censuses and Indexes

Federal censuses, taken every ten years, and state of Illinois censuses, taken in 1855 and 1865, are available on Gail Borden Library microfilm records. These, and additional records for other years, are available through Heritage Quest and Ancestry Library subscription databases at the library. Sections of Federal censuses for the local Kane County area, are available for the years 1880 through 1900 and 1900 through 1930.



Illinois	1850	...
Illinois	1860	...
Illinois	1870	...
Illinois	1880	...
Illinois	1890	...
Illinois	1900	...
Illinois	1910	...
Illinois	1920	...
Illinois	1930	...

Vital Records

Vital records include birth certificates, marriage licenses and applications, and death certificates. They are usually the most reliable records one can obtain. Most vital records in Illinois are kept at the county and state government levels. The Illinois State Archives website has several vital records databases available for free.

<http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/services.html>

For other vital records, including specific cemeteries, search the subject "registers of births" in the library catalog. Several print directories offer names and addresses of vital record sources elsewhere:

- *International Vital Records Handbook* by Kemp (2013) 929.1 Kemp (Genealogy Reference)



Military Records

Many guides and Indexes of military records are located in Genealogy Reference, too many to mention here. Other records are available online through Ancestry Library edition. The National Archives holds Federal military service records from the Revolutionary War to 1912 in the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C. Military records from WWI - present are held in the National Military Personnel Records Center (NPRC), in St. Louis, Missouri. State militia records are available by contacting the

appropriate state archives. See a Reference Librarian or an Elgin Genealogy Society volunteer for assistance with these searches.

- *Mastering Census and Military Records* by W. Daniel Quillen (2012) 929.10285 Quillen (Genealogy)

Passenger Lists, Immigration Records, and Naturalization Papers

Finding an ancestor's name on a passenger list and in immigration and naturalization records is often vital to discovering that ancestor's town of origin. These books offer strategies for finding ancestors in immigration records. Ancestry Library Edition has over 200 indexed passenger list databases. Other published compilations of passenger lists are located in the genealogy collection. These are the most often used:

- *American Settlements and migrations: a primer for genealogists and family historians* by Lloyd De Witt Bockstruck (2017) 929.1072073 Bockstruck (Genealogy)
- *Guide to Naturalization Records of the United States* by Christina Schaefer (1997) 929.1 Schaefer (Genealogy Reference)



- *Passenger and Immigration Lists Index; A Guide to Published Arrival of about 500,000 Passengers who came to the United States and Canada in the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries* (1981) 929.373 Passenger v.1-v.3 (Genealogy Reference)
- *They Came in Ships: A Guide to Finding Your Immigrant Ancestor's Arrival Record* by John Colletta (2002) 929.1 Colletta (Genealogy)

Periodical Source Index

Heritage Quest's PERSI Archive database provides an index of genealogical magazines and newsletters ranging from 1800-2009. Find information on people and places via keyword search and record type – Biographies, Cemeteries, Church, Court, Deeds, Directories, History, Institutions, Land, Maps, Military, Naturalization, Obituaries, Passenger Lists, Probate, School, Surname, Tax, Vital, Voter, Wills. To access, go to www.gailborden.info click research then databases and log-in with your library card number. If desired article is not owned by Gail Borden Public Library, an Interlibrary Loan request can be made in person or online.

Write or Visit Relatives

Living relatives often possess information a beginning genealogist would never suspect existed. Grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles, cousins and second cousins should be asked what they know of the family's history.

Download the FamilySearch Memories app to help capture precious family moments. The free app is available at <https://www.familysearch.org/campaign/mobile/memories>.

Chapters four through ten of *The Essential Guide to Unpuzzling Your Past* (Genealogy 929.1 Croom) offer useful hints and numerous sample questions relatives can be asked.

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Main Library
 270 N. Grove Ave.
 Elgin, IL 60120
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www.gailborden.info

