

Using DP.LA for Family History Research

Are you a DP.LA user? If not, you should. I find it to be “better than Google” for finding digitized resources owned by libraries, archives, and other similar institutions. In essence, it is like having online card catalogues from hundreds of institutions that I can search for digitized collections and items all at once.

From DP.LA: “*The Digital Public Library of America amplifies the value of libraries and cultural organizations as Americans’ most trusted sources of shared knowledge. We do this by collaborating with partners to accelerate innovative tools and ideas that empower and equip libraries to make information more accessible. We work with a national network of partners to make millions of materials from libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural institutions across the country available to all in a one-stop discovery experience.*”

Here are the partners with the largest collections available to be searched in DP.LA:

- [National Archives and Records Administration - 16,825,453](#)
- [Smithsonian Institution - 6,245,098](#)
- [HathiTrust - 3,033,985](#)
- [The New York Public Library - 2,048,825](#)
- [California Digital Library - 1,996,180](#)
- [The Portal to Texas History - 1,721,093](#)
- [Mountain West Digital Library - 1,094,352](#)
- [Michigan Service Hub - 1,055,574](#)
- [Digital Commonwealth - 925,452](#)
- [Digital Library of Georgia - 812,300](#)
- [Minnesota Digital Library - 804,195](#)
- [Plains to Peaks Collective - 719,577](#)
- [Internet Archive - 648,893](#)
- [Recollection Wisconsin - 635,071](#)
- [PA Digital - 633,403](#)
- [North Carolina Digital Heritage Center - 611,590](#)
- [OKHub - 528,243](#)
- [Missouri Hub - 507,614](#)
- [Indiana Memory - 444,863](#)
- [Empire State Digital Network - 443,200](#)
- [Illinois Digital Heritage Hub - 422,736](#)
- [Sunshine State Digital Network - 304,446](#)
- [Ohio Digital Network - 283,625](#)
- [South Carolina Digital Library - 261,684](#)
- [Biodiversity Heritage Library - 260,114](#)
- [United States Government Publishing Office \(GPO\) - 234,754](#)
- [Digital Library of Tennessee - 143,094](#)
- [University of Washington - 141,873](#)
- [Kentucky Digital Library - 141,677](#)
- [Northwest Digital Heritage - 137,187](#)
- [ARTstor - 134,475](#)
- [NJ/DE Digital Collective - 126,452](#)
- [Connecticut Digital Archive - 120,909](#)
- [Digital Maryland - 112,333](#)
- [David Rumsey - 110,540](#)
- [Big Sky Country Digital Network - 100,655](#)

If you are interested in family history research, check out these categories (or choose your own):

- [Family photographs](#)
- [Family Bibles](#)
- Correspondence, from the [Civil War](#) for example.
- [Local maps](#)
- [Yearbooks](#)
- Military records including [photographs](#) and [service records](#)
- [Oral histories](#)
- [Family History and Genealogy books](#)

From DP.LA: “To find even more historical materials to help develop context, [browse by topic](#). As you discover useful materials, create [lists](#) of items to come back to later without having to repeat your search. “

Searching DP.LA is easy. I use the standard search tools that I use in Google searching. You can narrow the results by selecting on the left hand side of the results page one or more of the following: Type, Subject, Date, Location, Language, Collection, Contributing Institution, or Partner. One technique that I often use is to search broadly, and then enter a minus sign (-) in front of a keyword, eliminate results from specific states, or specific collections.

