

50 Top U.S. Centers, Museums, and Libraries for Genealogy Research

When researching your genealogy, it helps to know where documents and other resources are. Here is a list of 50 top institutions in the United States. The list includes museums, genealogy centers, libraries, societies, etc. Visit these websites and the institutions in person if you are able.

Institution and Location	Digital Collection Highlights
Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center - Fort Wayne, Indiana	Periodical Source Index (PERSI); digitized family and local histories; specialized digital gateways for African American, Indigenous, and military research.
American Antiquarian Society - Worcester, Massachusetts	Extensive digital collections of historical newspapers and periodicals; online exhibitions and research tools.
Atlanta History Center - Atlanta, Georgia	Atlanta yearbooks, photos, archives
Bancroft Library - Berkeley, California	Manuscripts and archives strong in western U.S. history, land records, immigration, and family papers important to regional genealogy.
California State Library - Sacramento, California	State archives, county histories, newspapers on microfilm, census substitutes, and California-focused genealogical collections.
Center for Jewish History - New York, New York	Jewish genealogy, community records, manuscripts
Chicago History Museum - Chicago, Illinois	Local Chicago and Cook County records, photographs, directories, and family papers useful for urban genealogy.
Connecticut Museum of Culture and History - Hartford, Connecticut	Recognized as a notable historical society with records for genealogy research.
Daughters of the American Revolution Library - Washington, DC	Extensive genealogical books, DAR membership files, manuscript collections, and specialized resources for colonial and Revolutionary-era research.
Detroit Historical Society - Detroit, Michigan	Detroit photos, oral histories, local history
Detroit Public Library - Detroit, Michigan	On-site access to Ancestry and MyHeritage; digitized historical newspapers like the <i>Detroit Free Press</i> .
Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration - New York, New York	Free online database of over 65 million passenger records and ship manifests for those arriving at the Port of New York, 1820-1957.
FamilySearch Library - Salt Lake City, Utah	World-leading family-history collection: millions of microfilms, books, maps, and extensive digital access to international vital, church, and census records.
Heinz History Center - Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	As an affiliate of the Smithsonian, the Detre Library & Archives has a strong focus on Western Pennsylvania. They provide online access to digital collections, including historic Pittsburgh newspapers, maps, photographs, yearbooks, and finding aids for their extensive manuscript collections.
Historic New Orleans Collection - New Orleans, Louisiana	Louisiana photos, manuscripts, maps, oral histories
Historical Society of Pennsylvania - Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Recognized as one of the most complete genealogy centers in the nation and the largest in the Mid-Atlantic region.
History Colorado - Denver, Colorado	Colorado newspapers, manuscripts, photos
Houston Public Library - Clayton Library - Houston, Texas	Specializes in Southern U.S. records; digital photo archives with African American and Mexican American family collections.
Huntington Library - San Marino, California	Rich manuscript and rare-book collections including family papers, immigration sources, maps and oversized local-history materials.
Indiana Historical Society - Indianapolis, Indiana	Indiana photos, yearbooks, oral histories
International African American Museum - Charleston, South Carolina	Digital archives for African American genealogy; largest collection of United States Colored Troop records outside of NARA.
Kansas Historical Society - Topeka, Kansas	Kansas newspapers, directories, manuscripts

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Library of Congress - Washington, DC	The largest library in the world, with a vast genealogy collection. Much of their collection is digitized and available through their website, including city directories, local histories, newspapers (via Chronicling America), and maps.
Library of Virginia - Richmond, Virginia	Virginia state and local records, wills, land patents, county records, and family papers for colonial and southern research.
Los Angeles Public Library - Los Angeles, California	Online indexes for local genealogy and history; digitized Los Angeles-area city and street directories; large digital map collection.
Massachusetts Historical Society - Boston, Massachusetts	Offers research guides to other institutions, including NEHGS and state archives, for a broad range of genealogical records.
Midwest Genealogy Center - Independence, Missouri	Parent institution of the Midwest Genealogy Center, recognized as one of the largest public genealogy libraries in the U.S.
Minnesota Historical Society - St. Paul, Minnesota	Minnesota newspapers, photos, directories
Missouri Historical Society (Missouri History Museum) - St. Louis, Missouri	Missouri directories, maps, photographs
Museum of the City of New York - New York, New York	NYC photographs, maps, ephemera
National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) - Washington, DC	Extensive digital holdings of U.S. federal records, including census, military service files, immigration and naturalization records, and land records. They have a massive catalog that can be searched online.
National WWII Museum - New Orleans, Louisiana	WWII oral histories, photos, documents
New Bedford Whaling Museum - New Bedford, Massachusetts	Maritime records, crew lists, logbooks
New England Historic Genealogical Society (American Ancestors) - Boston, Massachusetts	A comprehensive collection focused on New England and beyond, with digitized vital records, gravestone photographs, obituaries, and family genealogies. This is a subscription-based site, but many libraries offer free access.
New Mexico History Museum - Santa Fe, New Mexico	New Mexico photographs, manuscripts, local history
New York Genealogical & Biographical Society - New York, New York	Specialized New York-focused genealogies, manuscript collections, and research guides for New York City and state families.
New York Public Library - New York, New York	The Irma and Paul Milstein Division of United States History, Local History & Genealogy has an extensive collection. While not everything is digitized, they provide on-site access to premium genealogy databases like Ancestry and Find My Past. They have digitized city directories, newspapers, and images.
New York State Library - Albany, New York	State records, county histories, census substitutes, manuscripts, and extensive New York-focused vital and land records.
Newberry Library - Chicago, Illinois	Major humanities and local-history collections: published genealogies, local/county records, church records, newspapers, maps, and subscription databases on-site.
New-York Historical Society Museum & Library - New York, New York	New York newspapers, manuscripts, photos, rare books
Ohio History Connection Library & Archives - Columbus, Ohio	Ohio-focused genealogical resources: county histories, newspapers, manuscript collections, and state records.
Oklahoma Historical Society - Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	Oklahoma newspapers, maps, oral histories
Seattle Public Library - Seattle, Washington	Largest collection in the Pacific Northwest; on-site access to Ancestry and FamilySearch Affiliate collections; digitized local newspapers like the <i>Seattle Times</i> .
Smithsonian Collections Search Center - Washington, DC	Cross-museum search, photos, manuscripts, artifacts
South Carolina Historical Society (SCHS) - Charleston, South Carolina	Digitized manuscript collections, images, and oral histories in partnership with the Lowcountry Digital Library; specialized guides for African American and Native American resources.
Tennessee State Library & Archives - Nashville, Tennessee	State vital records, wills, county records, Civil War and military records, and manuscript collections for Tennessee families.
Texas State Library and Archives Commission - Austin, Texas	Digitized Sanborn Maps and county records; Galveston Immigration Database; access to TexShare databases for Texas residents.
University of Cincinnati Libraries - Cincinnati, Ohio	Digitized vital records for Cincinnati and Hamilton County (births, deaths, wills); online access to university yearbooks and student newspapers.
Virginia Museum of History & Culture - Richmond, Virginia	Virginia manuscripts, photos, maps
Western Reserve Historical Society (Cleveland History Center) - Cleveland, Ohio	Ohio family history, local newspapers, photos
Wisconsin Historical Society - Madison, Wisconsin	Wisconsin newspapers, photos, genealogy databases

