

Genealogy Resources on Historic Pittsburgh

Saturday, Nov. 13, 2021

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What is Historic Pittsburgh?

- Digital front door for 18 libraries, archives, historical societies, and other organizations in Western PA (www.historicpittsburgh.org)
 - University of Pittsburgh Archives (also the host of the site), CLP, Carnegie Museum of Art, Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Chatham University, Crafton Public Library, Detre Library at the Heinz History Center, Historical Society of Upper St. Clair, Johnstown Area Heritage Association, Mars Area History & Landmarks Society, Monroeville Historical Society, Northland Public Library, Oakmont Carnegie Library, Pitcairn Historical Society, Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Point Park University, Rodef Shalom Congregation
- Many of these organizations are based in Allegheny County, but the site is expanding to include organizations from other counties. Collections from the established organizations in HP are also expanding on a regular basis

Genealogy & Historic Pittsburgh: Where to Start

Highlights takes you to two of the resources the CLP staff recommends most often:

Hopkins Maps & City Directories

[Hopkins Maps](#)

- also referred to as "plat maps"
- document lot & block numbers, what buildings were in a neighborhood, sometimes what businesses were there, and what the buildings were made from; how large they were and who the property owners were (and more)

- Historic Pittsburgh has 47 volumes for Pittsburgh and other communities in Allegheny County starting in 1872 and going up to 1940
 - G.M. Hopkins, publisher, made these kinds of maps in 18 states plus Washington, D.C.; if you are researching in other Eastern seaboard states, it is worth digging around in google for "Hopkins Maps" and the city you need
- Always check the Map Legend to understand each detail map
- To make copies of images, right click and use the Save Image As option from the pop-up dialog box or use your device's Screen Capture feature

[City Directories](#)

- Predecessor of the phone book in 1800s
- Pittsburgh had a number of different publishers that produced directories but the basic information in them remains the same: head of household, address, and often, the head of household's profession
- City Directories track ancestors between censuses
- Directories on Historic Pittsburgh are text-searchable!
- Always read the introductory pages and the end of the directory -- more valuable content
- If your ancestor doesn't appear in a specific year, don't give up
- CLP and other libraries in Pgh have directories on microfilm that have not yet made it to HP, so if the year or town you need is not online, reach out to a library to check

[Book Collection](#)

The book collection represents mostly late 19th and early 20th century books about Pittsburgh history, culture, and society. Most are from Pitt's collection, but there are contributions from other organizations

- Search using the surname of a family or person to see if there is a digitized family history
- Search the name of the neighborhood where they lived

- Many of these titles are out of print or hard to get through ILL, so check here to see what you may have missed

Photo Collection

- What you probably will not find: A photo of your long-lost ancestor or their exact house
- What you will probably find: photos of a street or neighborhood; photos from the time period you're researching (assuming it post-dates the invention of photography)
- Start broad, like with the neighborhood name

Finding Aids

Finding aids are inventories and descriptions of archival, or primary source, collections

- Examples: Family papers and business or organizational records
- Primary source records - letters, diaries, photos, ledgers, lists, memos

Other Materials on Historic Pittsburgh

- [Collections](#) links you to specific collections that are, typically, digital representations of physical materials held by various institutions
- [Exhibits](#) focus on a specific topic, but could contain material from multiple collections, or even institutions

Bonus Non-Historic Pittsburgh Resource

Pittsburgh Historic Maps site uses Hopkins Maps and overlays them one on top of the other to create an interactive historical map of the city.

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=63f24d1466f24695bf9dfc5bf68281>

Questions

About Historic Pittsburgh: <https://historicpittsburgh.org/contact-us>

About CLP Genealogy Resources: padept@carnegielibrary.org