

# Online Resources for Colonial American Research

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## GoogleBooks

<http://books.google.com>

The world's largest search engine invested considerable efforts in creating an online digital collection of the world's printed resources. GoogleBooks contains references to thousands of books relating to genealogy and includes many downloadable eBooks for works that are out of copyright.

Some books have been carefully scanned and indexed, allowing users to search or browse through their pages. Some books can also be downloaded and saved to portable devices, such as an iPad or a tablet. For the most part, GoogleBooks contains works that are in the public domain, including many old local histories and compiled genealogies.

Many of the works found on GoogleBooks come from leading libraries, who were originally part of the Google Books Library Project which included Harvard University, the New York Public Library, Stanford University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Oxford.

## Internet Archive

<http://www.archive.org>

Holds digitized copies of genealogical and historical books key for researchers. Significant genealogical libraries, such as the Allen County Public Library (ACPL), actively make their collections available for inclusion into the Internet Archive.

Materials are scanned and run through an optical character recognition (OCR) program, which transfers pages into a text format. As a general rule, the text is not edited or adjusted in any way before being added online. For this reason, many errors in characters and words appear, which prevents the resources of the Internet Archive from being fully searchable through Google and other search engines. Users can view books online or download entire publications in a variety of formats including PDF, Kindle, text, HTML, and others.

## Early American Newspapers

Database

*Early American Newspapers, Series 1* (part of American's Historical Newspapers, 1690-1876) contains actual images of newspapers from the colonial period. The database allows users to search by place of publication, subject, actual text, date of publication, or by newspaper title. Hundreds of newspapers are fully searchable within the database.

Like other databases, *Early American Newspapers*, is generally available at major universities and libraries, as well as through memberships to some genealogical and historical organizations. It is important to know that the collection is generally part of a larger series titled *American Historical Newspapers* and is often not called *Early American Newspapers* in reference and finding aids.

When searching in newspapers remember to pay careful attention to advertisements, notices, and other features that may contain information regarding an ancestor's daily activities. Be sure to use newspapers printed in the area(s) where your ancestors lived to help determine historical contexts or discover further information regarding their lives.

## **AmericanAncestors**

<http://www.americanancestors.org>

The official website of the New England Historic Genealogical Society, *AmericanAncestors.org* contains over 110 million names including vital records, wills, census, and other records. The website contains over 3,000 individual databases, including:

### *The Great Migration Project*

This online collection works to identify Europeans who settled in New England before 1633. Entries include pertinent genealogical information as well as other historical information.

### *The Register (1847-present)*

The website includes fully searchable images of *The New England Genealogical and Historical Register*, the oldest genealogical publication in the United States. *The Register* contains thousands of transcribed records and compiled genealogies of New England ancestors.

## **Colleges and Universities**

Websites from colleges and universities often provide key resources for genealogists. These records typically cover materials beyond those who actually attended an institution. Selections from multiple collections are beginning to appear online. For example:

### **Yale University Manuscripts and Archives**

<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

### **Sample Collections**

#### **Family Papers**

Yale University holds a vast number of family papers, including many prominent colonial families including the following: Frost, Winthrop, Strong, Day, Abbot, Burr, Johnson, Bushnell, Hinckley, Gilbert, Johnson, Payne, Norris, and many more.

### **Connecticut Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection**

An artificial collection of material relating to the cities and towns of Connecticut, containing printed material, legal records, military papers, and miscellanea. Specific items include: deeds, indentures, leases, military commissions, enrollment lists, record books, and muster rolls.

### **Genealogical Manuscripts Collection**

An artificial collection of manuscript and printed genealogical material and genealogies on Connecticut area families, ca. 1600-1980.

### **Office of Alumni Records, Yale University, genealogical records**

The records consist of material documenting families of Yale alumni.

## **State Archives**

Some state archive websites provide significant online collections for colonial research. Some examples include:

### **Georgia State Archives**

< <http://cdm.sos.state.ga.us:2011/cdm/>>

Online collections from the Georgia State Archives are included in "Georgia's Virtual Vault" and contain early wills, some land records, maps, tax records, family collections, and other unique content for genealogists. Collections can often be searched by keyword, though some can only be downloaded as PDF files.

### **Library of Virginia [Virginia Memory]**

<<http://www.virginiamemory.com/collections/>>

A leading digital repository, Virginia Memory offers visitors a variety of access points to their online collections, including browsing by topic, locality, or subject. Collections include newspapers, photograph collections, maps, chancery records, broadsides, Civil War materials, religious petitions, and others. The collection also includes the "Lost Records Localities Digital Collection," an initiative to identify (and place online) materials from general records considered to be "lost" due to destruction.

### **Maryland State Archives**

< <http://www.msa.md.gov/>>

As part of their online collections, the Maryland State Archives include the Archives of Maryland < <http://aomol.net/html/index.html>> which provide online collections from a variety of key sources including: early state records, legislative documents, military records, probate records, court records, and other resources. Some specific collections require a username and password, which can easily be obtained via e-mail at no charge. Online materials also include selected digital collections from Special Collections including admiralty records and other specialized records.

### **New Jersey State Archives**

<<http://www.nj.gov/state/archives/>>

Digital collections from the New Jersey State Archives include several key databases for genealogical research including Marriage Records (1665-1799) and 1848-1878, Death Records (1878-1888), Proprietary Warrants & Surveys (1670-1727), Revolutionary War Damages (1776-1782), Legal Name Changes (1847-12947), Supreme Court Case Files (1704-1844), the 1885 Census, and other records.

are divided into topics such as politics, transportation, people, military, and legal.

### **Pennsylvania State Archives**

<[http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/state\\_archives/2887](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/state_archives/2887)>

Online collections from the Pennsylvania State Archives contain scanned copies of land records including warrant registers, warrantee township maps, original purchases, registers, patent indexes, and a handful of other resources. These records are not fully indexed and are typically browsed page-by-page on a county level. Some military records can be found through the Archives Records Information Access System (ARIAS) including militia officers index cards, and other materials.

### **South Carolina Department of Archives and History**

<<http://archives.sc.gov>>

Online collections from the South Carolina Department of Archives and History include Conference Pension Applications, Grand Jury Presentments to the General Assembly, Colonial Plats, Will Transcripts, Militia Enrollments, and other important materials.

### **State Archives of North Carolina**

<<http://www.archives.ncdcr.gov/projects.htm>>

Digital collections from the State Archives of North Carolina include maps, family papers, newspapers, and other records that can be useful for researchers. Collections are keyword searchable, but can also be browsed by time period and include materials from the Library of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources.

### **Vermont State Archives**

<<http://vermont-archives.org/>>

Online collections from the Vermont State Archives include an online version of the NYE index, which encompasses a detail index to the Vermont State Papers manuscripts (records from the Vermont State Archives).