



Buffalo & Erie County Public

LIBRARY

RESEARCH YOUR FAMILY'S HISTORY FROM HOME

Tips from the Grosvenor Room
Staff at the Buffalo & Erie
County Public Library

TALK WITH FAMILY

The best place to start is by finding out what is already known about your family's history.

While you are checking in with family members during this difficult time, talk with them about family stories and your ancestry.

WHAT SHOULD I ASK?

Names, dates and locations are key. Once you know where and when an ancestor lived, then you can begin looking for records about them in those locations and time periods.

Write down vital facts such as dates and locations of births, marriages, and deaths.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Check out the following websites for sample family interview questions and tips on interviewing family members:

<https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/blog/genealogy-interview-asking-relatives-questions-grow-your-family-tree>

<https://www.geni.com/blog/30-questions-to-ask-to-draw-out-family-stories-397078.html>

<https://blog.myheritage.com/2017/03/questions-to-ask-your-family/>

USE CHARTS

Using charts is helpful when recording information that your relatives tell you. Here are some free online printable family history charts and forms:

<https://www.ancestry.com/cs/charts-and-forms>

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Genealogy_Research_Forms

<https://www.cyndislist.com/charts/>

CHOOSE A FAMILY LINE TO START WITH

After interviewing family members, choose a family line to start with.

Pick the line that you are most interested in.

BEGIN WITH THE PRESENT AND WORK BACKWARDS

After choosing a family line, start with yourself and move backwards one generation at a time.

When you are researching an individual, start with the most recent information and work backwards.

LEARN ABOUT GENEALOGY

The websites at the following link are good places to learn about genealogy research methods and the records used for genealogy research.

<https://www.buffalolib.org/genealogy/genealogy-websites#Research%20Help>

SUMMARIZE THE FACTS KNOWN

Summarize the facts known about the person that you are researching. Where are there gaps in the information known? Maybe you know a death and birthdate, but don't know a marriage date.

Use the B&ECPL created record selection table to help you learn what records may provide the information needed:

<https://www.buffalolib.org/sites/default/files/special-collections/guides/Record%20Selection%20Table.pdf>

WHERE DO I START LOOKING FOR RECORDS ABOUT MY ANCESTORS?

Ancestry Library Edition (ALE) is a great place to start.

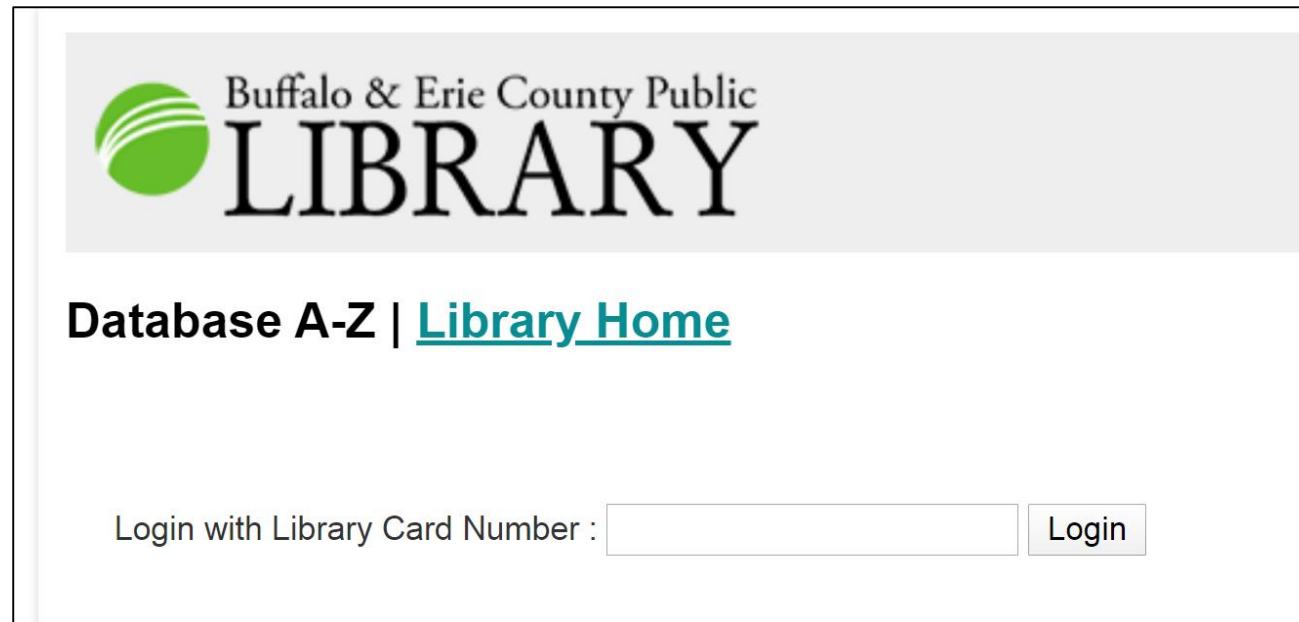
ALE is a genealogy database available to Buffalo & Erie County Public Library card holders. Normally, it is available in-library only at every B&ECPL location.

Due to COVID-19, ALE is available temporarily from home with your valid B&ECPL library card number.

ACCESSING ANCESTRY LIBRARY EDITION

Input your library card number at the following link:

<http://dbaz.buffalolib.org/dbaz.php>



The screenshot shows the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library website. At the top left is the library logo, which consists of a green circle with three curved lines inside, followed by the text "Buffalo & Erie County Public LIBRARY". Below the logo, there is a navigation menu with the text "Database A-Z | [Library Home](#)". At the bottom of the page, there is a login form with the text "Login with Library Card Number :", a text input field, and a "Login" button.

ACCESSING ALE

Next, choose
Genealogy under
Categories:

Research Databases

Browse resources by name or category, or browse [subject guides](#).

A | B | C | F | G | H | J | K | L | M | N | P | R | S | U

Categories

African American Resources	History
Business	Kid Search
Car Repair	Language
Career & Citizenship	Law and Government
Current Topics	Literature
Education	Magazine and Journal Articles
Español	Newspapers
Foundation Center	Phone Books
Genealogy	Reference
Health and Medicine	

ACCESSING ALE

Select: Ancestry Library

Genealogy

AmericanAncestors

AmericanAncestors is the genealogy database of the New England Historical Genealogical Society. It includes authoritative compiled genealogies, scanned original records, and full-text genealogy periodicals. **Available in-house only at the Central Library's Grosvenor Room.**

Ancestry Library

Provides access to more than 1 billion names. Includes city directories, census records, immigration records and much more. **Available at all library locations. *ProQuest is allowing free remote access during COVID-19.**

FamilySearch.org

A massive genealogy database including digitized genealogical records and full-text genealogy books from all over the world. **Available in-house only at the Central Library's Grosvenor Room.**

HeritageQuest Online

HeritageQuest Online contains U.S. federal census records from 1790-1940, special federal census schedules, over 20,000 local and family history books, over 20,000 U.S. city directories, a genealogical and local history serials index, Revolutionary War Pension Files, Freedman's Bank Records, and select content from the U.S. Serial Set.

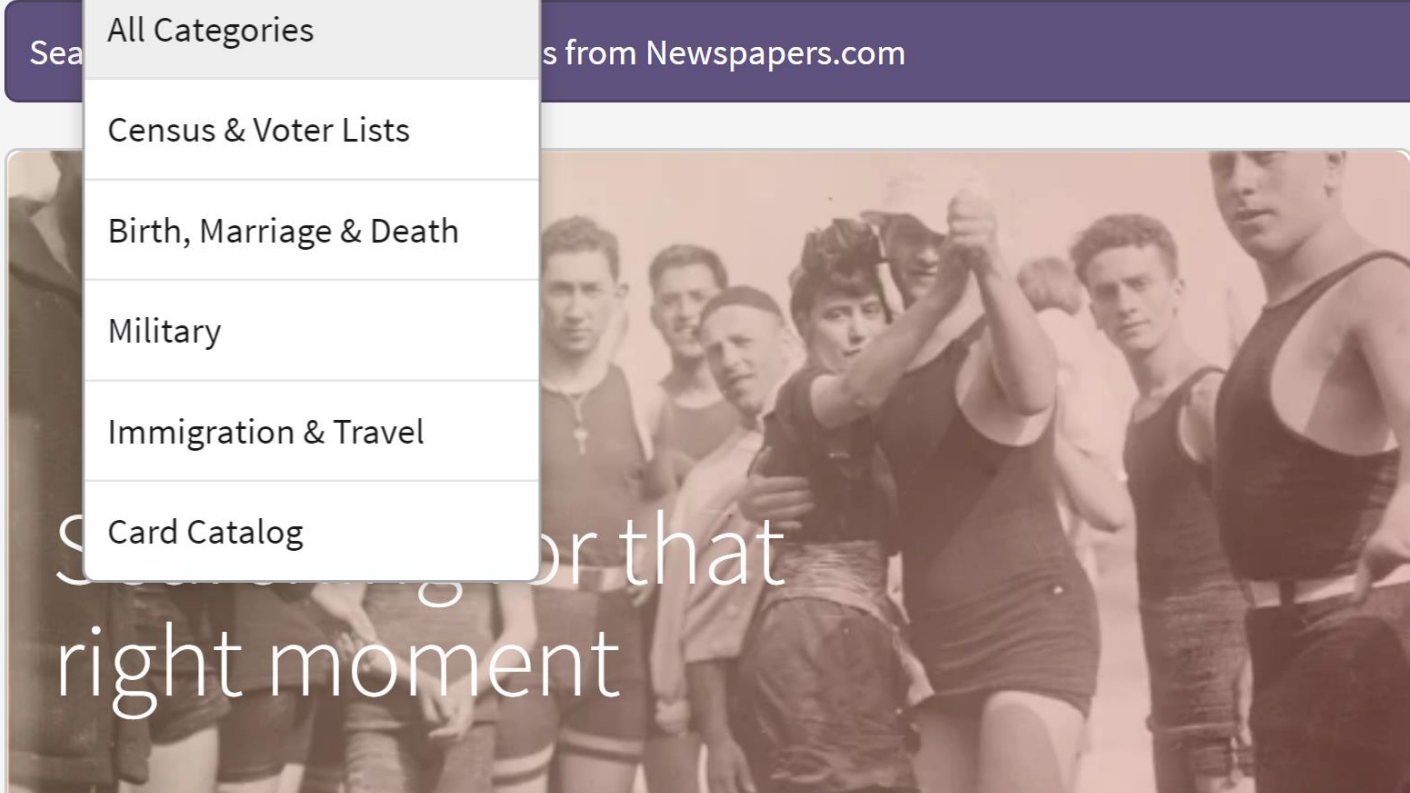
USING ALE

A good place to start is by finding out what records ALE has that pertain to the location where the ancestor that you're researching lived.

To do so, choose the Search menu and click All Categories. Then click the location of interest and peruse the database list.



- All Categories
- Census & Voter Lists
- Birth, Marriage & Death
- Military
- Immigration & Travel
- Card Catalog



Search for that right moment

Start searching billions of records and discover your family's story.

Begin Searching

Receive Records at Home

Send Your Find Home!

Enter your email address and we will send you a link to your personalized Discovery Page where you can view and download all of the great finds you make while here.

[Send document](#)

We value your privacy. [Read our Privacy Statement](#)

U.S. Public Records

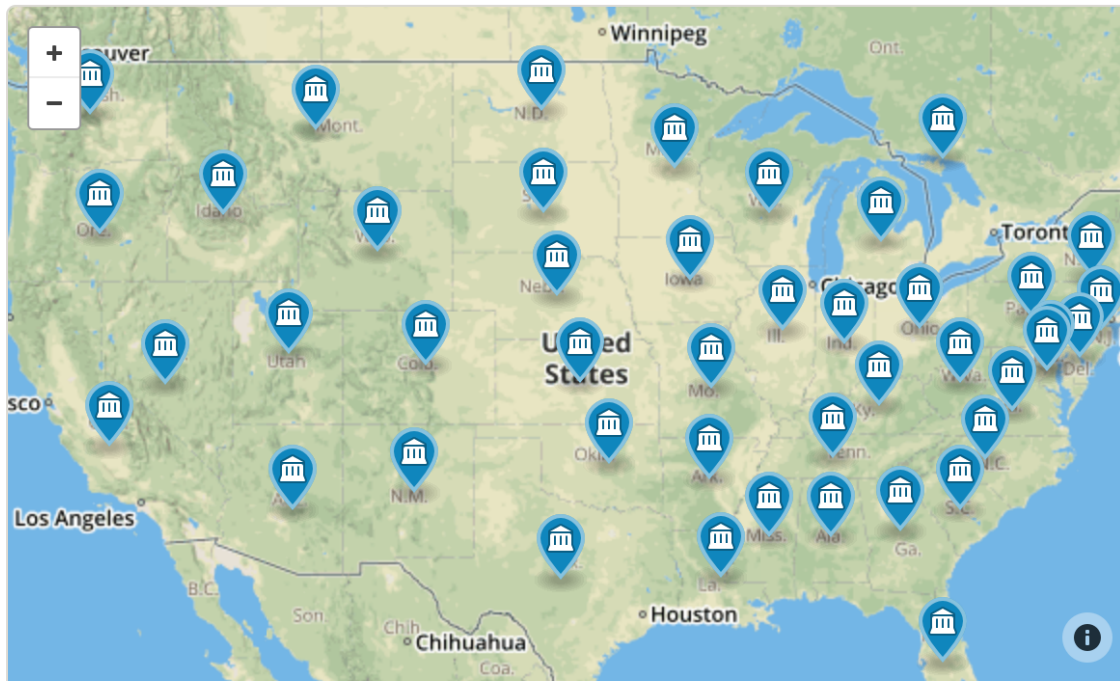
Na
Addr

Source Information:
Ancestry.com.
UT, USA: Ancestry.com
Original data: U.S. Public Records, and C

Description:
The U.S. Public Records are available in all 50 states in

Five Minute Find: Sending Documents Home From the Library
[View Video](#)

Explore by Location



- USA
- Africa
- Asia
- Europe
- North America
- Oceania
- South America

Alabama	Guam	Michigan	North Dakota	Utah
Alaska	Hawaii	Minnesota	Northern M...	Vermont
American S...	Idaho	Mississippi	Ohio	Virgin Islan...
Arizona	Illinois	Missouri	Oklahoma	Virginia
Arkansas	Indiana	Montana	Oregon	Washington
California	Iowa	Nebraska	Pennsylvania	West Virginia
Colorado	Kansas	Nevada	Puerto Rico	Wisconsin
Connecticut	Kentucky	New Hamp...	Rhode Island	Wyoming
Delaware	Louisiana	New Jersey	South Carol...	
District of C...	Maine	New Mexico	South Dakota	
Florida	Maryland	New York	Tennessee	
Georgia	Massachuse...	North Carol...	Texas	

[UK Census Collection](#)

[Canadian Census Collection](#)

[More...](#)

Immigration & Travel

[Passenger Lists](#)

[Citizenship & Naturalization Records](#)

[Border Crossings & Passports](#)

[More...](#)

Military

[Draft, Enlistment and Service](#)

[Casualties](#)

[Soldier, Veteran & Prisoner Rolls & Lists](#)

[More...](#)

Schools, Directories & Church Histories

[City & Area Directories](#)

[Professional & Organizational Directories](#)

[Church Histories & Records](#)

[More...](#)

Tax, Criminal, Land & Wills

[Land Records](#)

[Tax Lists](#)

[Court, Governmental & Criminal Records](#)

[More...](#)

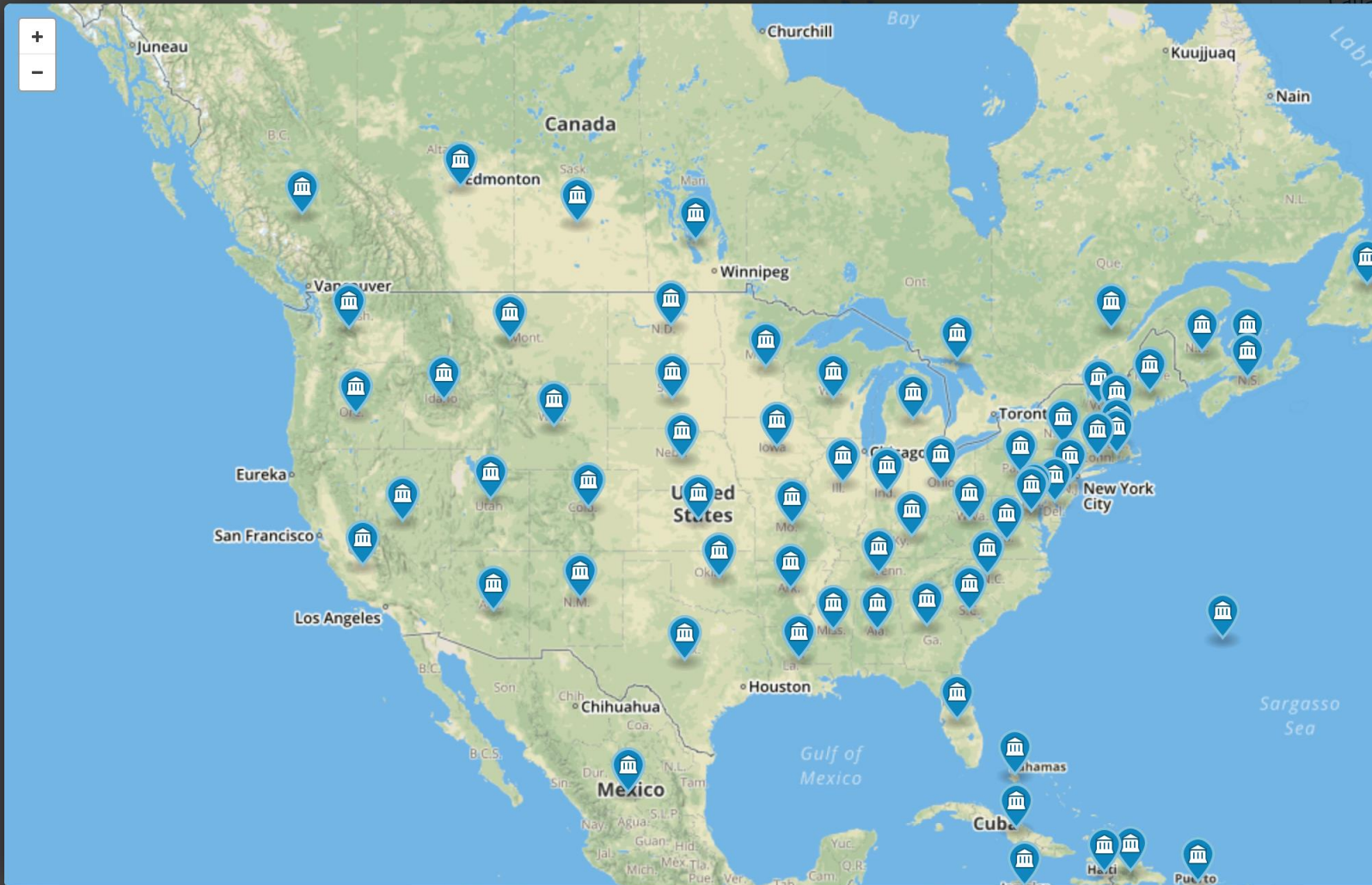
Reference, Dictionaries & Almanacs

[General Reference Materials](#)

[Research Guides & Finding Aids](#)

CHOOSE SEE MORE ABOUT THE CHOSEN LOCATION

Explore by Location



New York ▾

[See more About New York](#)

Results 1-25 of 1,021

Title	Collection ▾	Records
New York, Passenger and Crew Lists (including Castle Garden and Ellis Island), 1820-1957	Immigration & Emigration	82,033,202
U.S. Naturalization Record Indexes, 1791-1992 (Indexed in World Archives Project)	Immigration & Emigration	5,823,338
U.S., World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942	Military	15,292,577
U.S., Quaker Meeting Records, 1681-1935	Birth, Marriage & Death	6,427,235
New York, State Census, 1925	Census & Voter Lists	11,117,985
New York, State Census, 1915	Census & Voter Lists	9,756,993
New York, State Census, 1905	Census & Voter Lists	7,213,631
New York, New York, Extracted Marriage Index,	Birth, Marriage & Death	5,065,035

General Reference Materials

CHOOSE ANY
DATABASE OF
INTEREST TO
KEYWORD
SEARCH IT

New York

Welcome to our New York family history research page. Here you'll find record collections, history, and genealogy resources to help you trace your New York ancestors.

Collections

Data Collections

New York Census & Voter Lists	
New York, State Census, 1925	11,117,985
New York, State Census, 1915	9,756,993
New York, State Census, 1905	7,213,631
New York, State Census, 1892	3,754,629
New York, State Census, 1875	3,122,735

[View all](#) New York Census & Voter Lists (14)

New York Birth, Marriage & Death	
New York, New York, Marriage License Indexes, 1907-2018	15,554,761
New York State, Marriage Index, 1881-1967	8,054,307
New York, New York, Birth Index, 1910-1965	7,864,162
U.S., Quaker Meeting Records, 1681-1935	6,427,235
New York, Death Index, 1852-1956	5,578,445

[View all](#) New York Birth, Marriage & Death (32)

New York Military	
U.S., World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942	15,292,577
U.S., Army Transport Service, Passenger Lists, 1910-1939	12,889,432
New York, Civil War Muster Roll Abstracts, 1861-1900	520,120
New York, Abstracts of World War I Military Service, 1917-1919	514,859
New York, New York Guard Service Cards, 1906-1918, 1940-1948	286,117

[View all](#) New York Military (32)

Search for historical records for ancestors in New York.

[Search](#)

Select another state or region

USA ▼

New York ▼

Narrow by region

Select a region to view its unique collections.

Albany	104	Niagara	37
Allegany	22	Oneida	71
Bronx	20	Onondaga	86
Broome	22	Ontario	38
Cattaraugus	37	Orange	79
Cayuga	41	Orleans	8
Chautauqua	136	Oswego	19
Chemung	18	Otsego	42
Chenango	11	Putnam	8
Clinton	27	Queens	43

OTHER RECORDS TO START WITH IN ALE

U.S. census records are an excellent place to begin searching.

Federal census records are available every 10 years from 1790-1940 in ALE.

Census records list those living in a household together and data about those individuals.

CENSUS RECORDS

Here is a list of information that you can learn from U.S. census records: <https://www.buffalolib.org/sites/default/files/special-collections/guides/Contents%20of%20the%20US%20Federal%20Census%201850-1940.pdf>

Learn more about the census with these websites: <https://www.buffalolib.org/genealogy/genealogy-websites#Census>

The following is a guide to searching census records in ALE: <https://www.buffalolib.org/sites/default/files/special-collections/genealogy/ancestry/Search%20the%20US%20Census.pdf>

OTHER RECORDS TO START WITH IN ALE

The Social Security Death Index is a good place to learn about modern generations (1936-2014). It often provides a date of death, date of birth, and place of last residence.

Here is a guide to using the Social Security Death Index in ALE:

<https://www.buffalolib.org/sites/default/files/special-collections/genealogy/ancestry/Search%20the%20Social%20Security%20Death%20Index.pdf>

DEATH NOTICES AND OBITUARIES

Once you know a death date, search for an obituary/death notice. Any number of details may be listed in an obituary. Usual details given are close family members' names and places of residence, maiden names of women, places of birth and death, profession, religion/church, place of burial, military information, personal interests, and important accomplishments.

The following sites include free online newspapers or obituary indexes. <https://www.buffalolib.org/genealogy/genealogy-websites#Newspapers>

FOR MORE ALE SEARCH TIPS AND ADDITIONAL LIBRARY GENEALOGY DATABASES

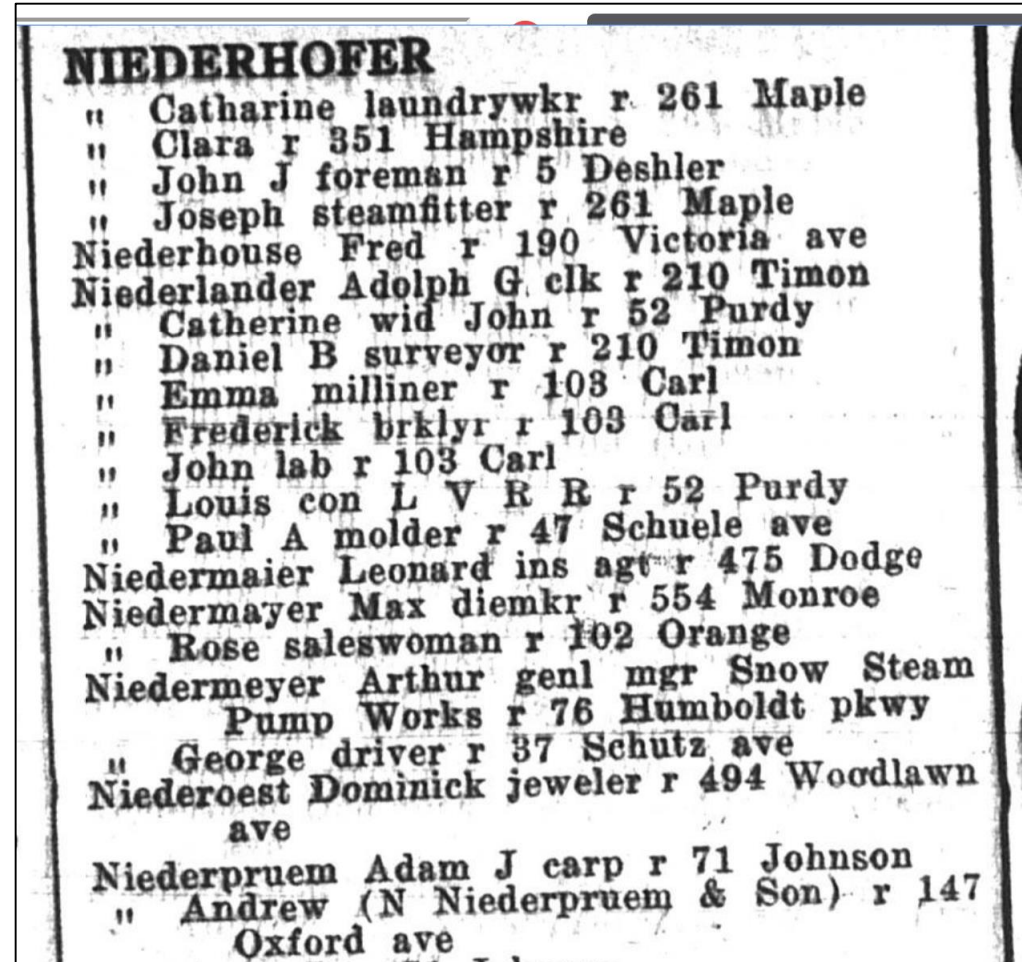
See the Grosvenor Room's database web page for more guides to searching ALE and for information and guides on other genealogy databases available for use from home through the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library.

<https://www.buffalolib.org/genealogy/genealogy-databases>

CITY DIRECTORIES

City directories are similar to phone books, but provide additional details. In addition to address and phone number, they provide profession, whether their home is owned or rented, and they sometimes list a spouse's name.

Look at the first page of the name listings to find the abbreviations necessary to understand the entries.



ACCESS TO CITY DIRECTORIES

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library has digitized Buffalo city directories from 1832-1913. They are available online for free: <https://nyheritage.org/collections/buffalo-city-directories>

ALE and HeritageQuest Online (HQ) include many city directories for all over the U.S. Buffalo city directories are included for most years from 1860 through 1960.

HQ is a database accessible from home with a valid B&ECPL library card. Here is a guide to accessing HQ: <https://www.buffalolib.org/sites/default/files/special-collections/genealogy/heritageQuest/Access%20HQ.pdf>

The following is a guide to using city directories in HeritageQuest Online. The same search methods can be used in ALE:

<https://www.buffalolib.org/sites/default/files/special-collections/genealogy/heritageQuest/Books%20in%20HQ.pdf>

VITAL RECORDS

Birth, death, and marriage records are key genealogical documents. Most Western New York vital records are not online, but indexes for numerous years are. The following guide provides information on where to find online (and offline) Erie County and New York State vital records and indexes:

<https://www.buffalolib.org/sites/default/files/special-collections/guides/VitalRecordsGro.pdf>

B&ECPL'S DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library has digitized several collections which are applicable to genealogy research. Some of those items include newspapers, city directories, photographs, and Erie County Poorhouse records.

<https://www.buffalolib.org/research-resources/digital-collections>

FOR MORE WEBSITES AND GUIDES

Grosvenor Room staff have put together a detailed collection of genealogy research guides. They are online at the website below. The guides include resources available in the Grosvenor Room as well as databases and websites that you can use from home.

<https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications>

Also available on the Grosvenor Room website are a collection of free genealogy websites by topic:

<https://www.buffalolib.org/genealogy/genealogy-websites>