



Begin your genealogy using the Houston Public Library and Clayton Library by Irene B Walters

Clayton Library is the genealogy/family history section of HPL, among the top 10 genealogy libraries in America, 1/3 of HPL's special collections, which are the Clayton Library, the Houston Metropolitan research Center/ Texas and Local History Room (HMRC/TXR), and The African American Library at the Gregory School.

Clayton library collects...

- material for every state.
- original and compiled records.
- local, state and federal records.
- material in many formats.
- US historical records from the colonial era to the 20th century.
- foreign historical records from pre-colonial times to the 20th century.

Beginning genealogy

- Start with yourself & work backwards
- Fill out a Pedigree chart
- Fill out a Family group sheet for each couple & their children

Why fill out charts?

- Your chart acts as your map
- Evaluate your chart as you work
- Ask questions
 - Who were the parents, the children?
 - Where were they born, married, died?
 - When were they born, married, died?
 - Did they own or rent land?
 - Did they move, emigrate or naturalize?
 - What historical events happened in their lifetime – wars, land rushes, epidemics, emancipation?

Start at home

- with family
- search for original documents
- use a tracking or filing system

Home Sources

- What is in the attic, the trunk, the bible, the drawer, between book pages, shoe boxes, the safe deposit box?
- Talk to family members about events that took place, find the family member(s) that has/have "stuff"?
- Write down oral traditions
- Get copies of documents & photos

Records to look for in genealogy research

- Census
- Vitals records – birth, marriage, death
- Wills, Probate, Guardianship
- Land – deeds, grants, bounty
- Military records

➤ Immigration & Naturalization

Get a MyLink Card (Houston Public Library card)

Go to the Houston Public Library (HPL) website

- Start by clicking “Research”
- Then click “Genealogy”
- Then choose the resource you want to use

Databases to search

- Ancestry Library Edition -- Usually in library only pandemic access through Dec 31, 2021
- One of the largest genealogy databases in the world
- Has tons of great information
You must evaluate what you find there
Not everything is on Ancestry
- Not everything on Ancestry is correct
- Heritage Quest Online
- Fold3 -- mostly military
- My Heritage Library Edition
- Find My Past -- in Clayton Library use only
- Houston Chronicle Historical Archive 1901-2017

Resources & Information for genealogy

- Clayton Library
- Online sources – HPL – www.houstonlibrary.org
- Other databases, such as newspapers
- Actual record repositories
- Internet sites

Tell your family’s story before it disappears

- Genealogy software
- Shared or shareable database
- Ancestry.com
- FamilySearch.org
- Family newsletter
- Internet
- A blog
- Facebook
- In a book or booklet

Final points to ponder

- Get copies of original records
- Document your sources
- Organize & file from the beginning
- Backup, backup, backup
- Have fun!

Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research | 5300 Caroline | Houston, TX 77004
832-393-2600
cla.reference@houstontx.gov
Tuesday - Saturday – 10 am-4 pm – Open to researchers and telephone reference
Sunday & Monday – Closed