Filling in the Family Tree: Kentucky's Birth and Death Records

Crucial Time Periods

- Prior to 1852
- 1852 – 1910
- 1911- Present
Prior to 1852

No state or local government entity kept birth or death records prior to 1852 in Kentucky
In Lieu Of...

Births

- **Family Bibles**
  - Historical Societies – Kentucky Historical Society, Filson Historical Society (Louisville), local county historical societies

- **Church Records**
  - Protestant churches – Kentucky Historical Society, county historical societies
  - Catholic churches - Diocese Archives (Covington, Lexington, Louisville, Owensboro)
  - Jewish synagogues – American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati

- **U.S. Federal Census**
  - 1850 Census and subsequent Census years
MARTIN F. SCHMIDT RESEARCH LIBRARY

RESEARCHING JUST GOT EASIER.

If you’re digging for your family roots, researching your next book or class paper or just beginning to discover Kentucky History, the Martin F. Schmidt Research Library has resources to help.

Our holdings span all of Kentucky’s 120 counties and include published works, archival records such as manuscripts, photographs, maps, atlases, oral history interviews, and microfilm.

Visit us in person or search our collections online. If you can’t get to Frankfort, contact us about our fee-based research services. Our professional staff can help you navigate our collections to find what you need.

HOURS: Wednesday – Saturday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
ADMISSION: Included in the price of general admission to the Kentucky Historical Society, or free with KHS membership.

Visit the Filson Historical Society

www.filsonhistorical.org

https://history.ky.gov/resources/martin-f-schmidt-research-library/
Research Materials

The Woodford County Historical Society’s genealogy room contains more than 5000 volumes, including books on Kentucky history, family histories, and local records. The society has also acquired a large collection of microfilm from the Woodford County Courthouse.

Books of family genealogy are also part of the library’s collection. These genealogies include families, topics, family trees, photographs, and other information related to tracing family ancestry and genealogies.

More than 1000 microfilm rolls contain information on places, counties, and other Kentucky counties, as well as books on many other states, can be found in the library. We also have microfilm of city directories, newsletters, and other materials related to the local community.

The microfilm and microfiche collections are consulted for research and genealogical information. Documents in our microfilm collection include:

- Church Records:
  - Marriage Records (1800–1875)
  - Cemetery Records:
    - Midway Cemetery (1850–1870)
    - Versailles Cemetery (1850–1995)
  - City of Versailles: Miners Books (1860–1879)

- Deed Books:
  - Woodford County Deeds 1815–1820
  - Woodford County Deeds 1825–1829

- Deed Records:
  - Woodford Co. 1875–1880

- Family History Records:
  - Birth Records:
    - Woodford Co. 1800–1875
  - Death Records:
    - Woodford Co. 1800–1875

- Military Records:
  - Woodford Co. 1862–1865

- Property Records:
  - Woodford Co. 1862–1865

- School Records:
  - Woodford Co.

- Tax Records:
  - Woodford Co. 1865–1875

- War Records:
  - Woodford Co. 1865–1875

- Will Records:
  - Woodford Co. 1865–1875

- Birth Records:
  - Woodford Co. 1800–1875

- Death Records:
  - Woodford Co. 1800–1875

- Marriage Records:
  - Woodford Co. 1800–1875

- Property Records:
  - Woodford Co. 1862–1865

- School Records:
  - Woodford Co.

- Tax Records:
  - Woodford Co. 1865–1875

- War Records:
  - Woodford Co. 1865–1875

- Will Records:
  - Woodford Co. 1865–1875

Archives

Purpose

Archives are collections of records that are maintained for research and educational purposes.

Location

The archives are located at:

1801 South Nursery Street
Lexington, KY 40502

(859) 255-1023

Hours:

Monday to Friday: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Saturday: 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Staff

The staff includes:

- Archivist
- Researcher
- Librarian

Contact Information

Phone: (859) 255-1023
Email: archives@kentuckyarchives.org
Website: http://archives.kentucky.gov

Collections Overview

The collections cover a wide range of topics, including Kentucky history, family genealogy, local history, and political history. The collections include books, manuscripts, photographs, and other materials that are valuable for research and educational purposes.

Funding

The archives are funded by the state of Kentucky and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The funding is used to support the maintenance of the archives, the acquisition of new materials, and the development of new research projects.

Contact Information

Phone: (859) 255-1023
Email: archives@kentuckyarchives.org
Website: http://archives.kentucky.gov

About

The archives are located in the state capital of Frankfort, Kentucky. The archives are open to the public and provide resources for researchers and educators. The archives also offer educational programs and workshops to help students and teachers learn about Kentucky history.

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Citation

If you use the archives, please cite them appropriately. This will help ensure that future researchers can use the archives as well.
In Lieu Of...

Deaths

- Family Bibles
  - Family Search.org wiki, KHS, local historical societies
- Church Records
  - KHS, local historical societies, Archdiocese Archive records, etc.
- Cemetery and/or Funeral Home Records
  - KHS, findagrave.com, local historical societies, funeral homes
- Obituaries/Death Notices
  - University of Kentucky Microfilm, public libraries, Library of Congress
- Tax Lists to determine possible year of death
  - FamilySearch.org, KDLA
- Wills/estate settlements/administrator and executor bonds
  - FamilySearch.org, KDLA, county clerk’s office
University of Kentucky Libraries
MICROFILM HOLDINGS DATABASE

This site is a database of the University of Kentucky microfilm holdings, including newspapers, manuscript collections, and other primary sources. Not all Kentucky newspapers available are included in this database (e.g., The Courier-Journal and The Louisville Times). For other available Kentucky newspapers, search [UK Libraries Online Catalog](https://ukmfilms.omeka.net/), or consult the UK Libraries Reference Desk.

Accessing the Microfilm

The microfilm is available in the Periodicals Dept at the William T. Young Library or the Special Collections Research Center in the Margaret I. King Library. If you are unable to travel to campus, you can request microfilm through your interlibrary loan department only if you are affiliated with another institution.

Ordering Digital Copies

As of September 1, 2010, University of Kentucky (UK) Libraries will digitize microfilm newspapers and other published materials only if the content is eligible for wider public access. Eligibility is determined by the following:

- Agreement: The publisher has signed an agreement with UK Libraries granting permission to provide online access.
- Date: The date of publication is before 1924 (in accordance with US copyright laws).

Digitized copies of unpublished materials is digitized on a case-by-case basis.

https://ukmfilms.omeka.net/

Owensboro Area
Obituary Index

Kentucky Room staff members have been abstracting obituary information from the Owensboro newspapers since 1977. This online index is added to and updated almost daily. The amount of data abstracted divides the database into three time periods. The following three date ranges show the data listed for each of these periods:

Please choose a date range:

1862 - 1919: Detailed abstracts of obituaries
- Name
- Obituary Date
- Birth Date
- Death Date
- Cemetery
- Cause of Death
- Survivors
- Comments

1920 - 1955: Brief abstracts of obituaries
- Name
- Obituary Date
- Age
- Cemetery
- Birth Place

1956 - present: Detailed abstracts of obituaries
- Name
- Obituary Date
- Age
- Cemetery
- Cause of Death
- Survivors

http://obits.dcplibrary.org/
Any Questions?

1852-1910
**Early Kentucky Birth and Death Records**

*Kentucky was the first state west of the Alleghenies to require registration of births and deaths.*

- **1852-1910** – birth and death records were irregularly kept
  - Sutton Law (Jan. 1852)
    - Required tax assessors in the auditor’s office to register all vital events
  - Sutton Law Repealed (1862)
    - Pressure from the Civil War
  - 1874 – Second law passed requiring birth and death records be sent to the state auditor
    - Repealed in 1878
  - Scattered counties kept records from the 1890s to 1910
  - Four Kentucky cities kept birth and death records separate from the county registers
    - Covington, Lexington, Louisville, Newport

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**Kentucky Ancestry**

*Kentucky ancestry : a guide to genealogical and historical research / by Roseann Reinemuth Hogan. 1992. ISBN 0916489493*
How to Request Records from the Archives

The Archives Research Room at the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives (KDLA) is pleased to announce a new online records ordering system. Customers can now use a credit card to pay for copies of records ordered from KDLA.

View the KDLA Records ordering system here.

Records Request Forms

If you prefer not to use a credit card for the research fee, you can also fill out one of the request forms below and mail it along with a check to us and we will handle your request as soon as possible once we receive it.

Birth Record Request

- For birth records after 1911, please contact the Office of Vital Statistics at (502) 564-4212.
  - (CLICK HERE) for a list of birth records for 1852-1910 available at the Archives, by county.
  - (CLICK HERE) for a list of birth records for 1852-1910 available at the Archives, by city.

Contact Record Request

Civil Case File Record Request

- (CLICK HERE) for a list of names of civil and criminal case files available at the Archives, by county.

Criminal Case File Record Request

- (CLICK HERE) for a list of names of civil and criminal case files available at the Archives, by county.

Death Record Request

- For death records after 1866, please contact the Office of Vital Statistics at (502) 564-4212.
  - (CLICK HERE) for a list of death records for 1852-1910 available at the Archives, by county.
  - (CLICK HERE) for a list of death records for 1852-1910 available at the Archives, by city.
Kentucky Birth, Marriage and Death Records - Microfilm Listing (1852-1910)

**Kentucky Birth, Marriage and Death Microfilm Listing (1852-1910)**

**Allard - Roll #94027:**
- Marriage Records: 1852-1856, 1861, 1874-1878, 1877, 1893-1894, 1906-1908
- Death Records: 1852-1856, 1861, 1874, 1877, 1893-1894, 1906-1908, 1910

**Allen - Roll #94027:**
- Birth Records: 1852-1856, 1861, 1874-1878, 1877, 1893-1894, 1906-1908
- Marriage Records: 1852-1856, 1861, 1874-1878, 1877, 1893-1894, 1906-1908
- Death Records: 1852-1856, 1861, 1874-1878, 1877, 1893-1894, 1906-1908

**Anderson - Roll #94027:**
- Birth Records: 1852-1856, 1874-1878
- Marriage Records: 1852-1856, 1874-1878
- Death Records: 1852-1856, 1874-1878

**City of Louisville**
- Roll #48743 - Index to Births: Book 1 (1876-1884), Index to Births: Books 2-5 (1876-1884), Index to Births: Books 6-9 (1876-1884), Index to Births: Books 10-13 (1876-1884), Index to Births: Books 14-16 (1876-1884), Index to Births: Books 17-20 (1876-1884), Index to Births: Books 21-24 (1876-1884)
- Roll #48740 - Register of Births: Book 1 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 2 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 3 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 4 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 5 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 6 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 7 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 8 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 9 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 10 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 11 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 12 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 13 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 14 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 15 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 16 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 17 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 18 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 19 (1876-1884), Register of Births: Book 20 (1876-1884)
- Roll #48741 - Index to Deaths: Book 1 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 2 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 3 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 4 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 5 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 6 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 7 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 8 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 9 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 10 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 11 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 12 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 13 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 14 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 15 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 16 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 17 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 18 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 19 (1876-1884), Index to Deaths: Book 20 (1876-1884)

**Jefferson County**
- Roll #48742 - Register of Deaths: Book 9 (1876-1884), Register of Deaths: Book 10 (1876-1884), Register of Deaths: Book 11 (1876-1884)
- Roll #48743 - Register of Deaths: Book 12 (1876-1884), Register of Deaths: Book 13 (1876-1884), Register of Deaths: Book 14 (1876-1884), Register of Deaths: Book 15 (1876-1884), Register of Deaths: Book 16 (1876-1884), Register of Deaths: Book 17 (1876-1884), Register of Deaths: Book 18 (1876-1884), Register of Deaths: Book 19 (1876-1884), Register of Deaths: Book 20 (1876-1884)

**Fayette County**
- Roll #48744 - Death Certificates 1877-1897, Death Certificates 1898-1901, Death Certificates 1902-1904

Connect with KDLA
1853 Birth Record

- Date of Birth
- Name
- Sex
- Condition
- Place of Birth
- Name of Father or Owner of Child
- Maiden Name of Mother
- Color of Child – White, Black, Mulatto
- Residence of Parent
- Remarks
1903 Birth Record

- Date of Birth
- Name
- Sex
- Born Alive or Dead
- Place of Birth
- Name of Father
- Maiden Name of Mother
- Color of Child – White, Black, Mulatto
- Birth Place of Father
- Birth Place of Mother
- Residence
- Remarks
Delayed Birth Certificate

- Issued by the Office of Vital Statistics
- Information such as affidavits, federal and school census records, family Bible entries used to support date of birth
- Birth year as early as 1850s
- Indexing available for all certificates issued – call the Office of Vital Statistics or KDLA for assistance.

1852 Kentucky Death Record

- Name of Deceased
- Age
- Sex
- Condition (single, married, widowed)
- Occupation
- Residence
- Place of Birth
- Name of Parents or Owners of Slaves
- Place of Death
- Time of Death
- Cause of Death
1852 Kentucky Death Record

- Name of Deceased
- Color
- Age
- Sex
- Condition (single, married or widowed)
- Occupation
- Date of Death
- Cause of Death

1874 Kentucky Death Record

- Place of Birth
- Residence
- Place of Death
- Name of Parents
- Birth place of Parents
1874 Kentucky Death Record

Order with debit/credit card

PDF - Mail with check/money order

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- Birth Record Request
- Civil Case File Record Request
- Criminal Case File Record Request
- Death Record Request

For more information, please contact the Office of Vital Statistics at (502) 564-1372.

Research Room Hours: Open to the public, Monday - Friday
9:00 am - 4:00 pm ET

Research Room staff available by phone, Monday - Friday
8:00 am - 4:30 pm ET

300 Coffee Tree Road
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
Email: KDLA.archives@ky.gov
Phone: (502) 564-1372
Toll Free: (800) 688-7000

Connect with KDLA
Fees

Billing (In-State Patrons)

In-state customers must submit a $15.00 non-refundable search and copy fee with each genealogical reference request. A check or money order should be payable to the Kentucky State Treasurer. Do not send cash.

Billing (Out-of-State Patrons)

Out-of-state customers must submit a $15.00 non-refundable search fee with each genealogical reference request. Staff will not undertake any research unless this fee is prepaid. Check or money order should be payable to the Kentucky State Treasurer. Do not send cash.
Kentucky's Vital Statistics Law, enacted by the General Assembly in 1910, provides for and legalizes the registration of births and deaths.

Current law began in 1911.

- 100 year waiting period for births
- 50 year waiting period for deaths

Birth records 1911-present only available at the KY Office of Vital Statistics - $10.00

Death records 1967-present only available at the KY Office of Vital Statistics - $6.00
1919 Kentucky Death Record

- Name of Deceased
- Color
- Age
- Sex
- Condition (single, married, or widowed)
- Occupation
- Date of Death
- Cause of Death
- Place of Birth
- Residence
- Place of Death
- Name of Parents
- Birth place of Parents
- Undertaker
- Funeral Home Information
- Burial / Internment
- Informant
- Injury
ancestry.com
Border Counties

Office of Vital Statistics
275 E. Main St., 1E-A
Frankfort, KY 40621

(502) 564-4212

https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/vsb/Pages/default.aspx
The Office of Vital Statistics

Who We Are

The Office of Vital Statistics collects, preserves and protects certificates for all births, deaths, marriages, divorce and stillbirths and issues certified copies.

The branch records and provides for each person born in Kentucky a means of establishing legal identity, age, parentage and nationality. It also makes available a legal document of the date, place and cause of every death occurring in the state and provides a central repository for records of certain other vital events.

Finally, the branch augments and supports the planning, management and evaluation of human resources programs and other agencies through the collection and analysis of vital statistics data.

The branch includes the Registration and Amendment Section, Certification Section, Administrative and Quality Assurance Section and Data Surveillance Section.

Any Questions?