

COLLECTION OVERVIEW

GENEALOGY AND HERALDRY

I. SCOPE

This overview focuses on holdings of the Library of Congress in genealogy and heraldry. Most of the published material is classified in the call numbers CS (genealogy) and CR (heraldry). Other genealogically significant material is found in the subjects of archival resources, church history, biography, and local history. Important genealogical resources are also found in special collections of microforms, newspapers, maps and atlases, manuscripts, rare books, photographs, and CD-ROMS housed in various custodial divisions of the Library. For the Library's collection policy for the genealogical collection, refer to the Genealogy Collections Policy Statement. Although frequently associated with genealogy, works in the field of local history are treated in detail in a separate Collection Policy Statement on Local History.

II. SIZE

As of an October 2007 count of titles in the Library's online catalog, the CS classification numbered 65,345 titles and the CR classification, 5778 titles. A conservative estimate of the current size of CS and CR would be over 70,000 titles. Of this figure, approximately 50,000 titles are compiled family histories. *City Directories of the United States*, housed in the Microform Reading Room, consists of more than 12,000 reels of microfilm.

III. GENERAL RESEARCH STRENGTHS

The Library of Congress is one of the premier collections in the world of United States and foreign genealogical publications. The Library began its collection as early as 1815 when it purchased the library of Thomas Jefferson. The Jefferson Library included such titles as *Domesday Book*, Sir William Dugdale's *The Baronetage of England*, and *Peerage of Ireland*.

The collection is strongest in United States publications, emphasizing American genealogy, with compiled family histories comprising the majority of works cataloged. The Library also holds foreign genealogies, and researchers doing foreign research will find strong collections for Western Europe, especially the United Kingdom, Ireland and Germany.

In the field of heraldry, the Library's collections are strongest in British and American publications

IV. AREAS OF DISTINCTION

Many resources of significance to genealogists are found in the special collections of the Library. Among these are the Charles Edward Banks Manuscript Collection, housed in the Rare Book and Special Collections Division, comprising 54 uncataloged volumes relating to early Pilgrim families in Massachusetts. The collection is also available on microfilm in the Microform Reading Room.

Primary Source Microfilm's *City Directories of the United States*, housed in the Microform Reading Room, is a microform collection of directories from selected cities and towns, dating from the colonial period to as recent as 1960. These microforms are supplemented by the Library's extensive collection of unclassified city directories in paper.

Land ownership maps, housed in the Geography and Map Division, form a collection of approximately 1500 county maps dating from the early nineteenth century that are both unique and useful for genealogists.

The Hamburg Passenger Lists, housed in the Manuscript Division, consists of 66 reels of microfilm listing passengers embarking for America from the port of Hamburg during the period 1850-1873.

V. ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

The Library of Congress offers electronic resources including Web-based subscription databases of newspapers, journals, books, magazines, manuals, and other materials relevant to genealogical research. Databases, including *Ancestry Library Edition*, *Heritage Quest Online*, *Accessible Archives*, *New England Ancestors*, and *ProQuest Historical Newspapers*, provide enhanced accessibility to the Library's collections and to those of other institutions. These electronic resources supplement the Library's extensive print holdings while adding unique collections, such as unpublished census, vital records, and military records that the Library would not otherwise have available.

Digitized materials on genealogy from the Library of Congress collections include first-person accounts of "*California as I Saw It*": *First-Person Narratives of California's Early Years, 1849-1900*; *Pioneering the Upper Midwest: Books from Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, ca. 1820-1910*, and *The Capital and the Bay: Narratives of Washington and the Chesapeake Bay Region, ca. 1600-1925*, and other resources for genealogy research. In a digitization project funded by the Sloan Foundation, 1,000 family history titles from 1901-1909 were filmed by Internet Archives and will be linked to the corresponding record in the Library's online catalog.

VI. WEAKNESSES/EXCLUSIONS

Despite the Library's efforts to acquire American genealogy on a comprehensive basis, it still lacks many publications. Local libraries and historical societies have extensive collections of limited editions and privately printed titles unavailable here. Privately printed materials are often out of print, which hampers their acquisition.

Significant weaknesses also exist for foreign genealogy and heraldry. The Library lacks many Canadian genealogical publications, compiled family histories (particularly from continental Europe), and books on heraldry from continental Europe (particularly current publications).

Another weakness is in holdings of foreign serial publications. There are a number of major European genealogical periodicals not found in the Library.