

Genealogy resources in libraries

WorldCat helpful hints

Libraries house a wealth of unique family and local history archives that support genealogical research. WorldCat represents the collections of the world's libraries, expanded and enhanced through the efforts of librarians, publishers, and individual, regional, and national programs.



What kind of resources can I find in WorldCat?

Through WorldCat, you can identify a vast variety of source materials in libraries, including digitized resources:

- Newspapers from the US and abroad
- Photographs
- Family Bibles, church histories, and records
- Cemetery and burial records
- Civil War and other military records
- Town histories and probate records
- General genealogical resources, such as directories, handbooks, and magazines
- Slavery and antislavery materials, including slave records
- Indexes of births, marriages, deaths, wills, and obituaries
- Microfilmed genealogy and local history collections

In addition to library resources, WorldCat contains millions of records from FamilySearch, a nonprofit family history organization with the largest collection of genealogical and historic records in the world. This gives you depth and breadth into genealogical resources that you won't find anywhere else.

What if I find something that's not in my library?

When you find an item of interest, look at the library ownership information that displays with the WorldCat record. Ask your librarian if interlibrary loan is an option, or ask if the other library could make a photocopy or scan the applicable portions of the material for you. You may also be able to visit the library that owns the material, if it's close enough, to examine the material in person.

Another option is to locate a researcher near the other library who would be willing to visit the library and determine if the material is useful for you.

WorldCat is the world's most comprehensive database of information about library collections. OCLC delivers quality, discoverability, and value. Member libraries provide the foundation. Partners support WorldCat growth.



How do I access WorldCat's genealogical resources?

Ask your librarian how to best access WorldCat. Many libraries provide access to the entire WorldCat database through the FirstSearch® or WorldCat Discovery service. In both services, you can see resources in libraries near you, across the country, and around the world.

Your librarian may also direct you to WorldCat.org™, another way to access the WorldCat database. WorldCat.org searches the entire WorldCat database and shows you which libraries have the resources you're looking for. (Note that only libraries that provide access to FirstSearch or WorldCat Discovery will appear in your list of libraries.)



Helpful hints for searching WorldCat

To get the best results with your WorldCat search, use quotation marks and follow these tips:

- Family names: Enter the family name followed by the word "family," e.g., "marsh family."
- Specific person: Enter the person's full name, e.g., "andrew jackson."
- Organizations: Enter terms to describe the organization, e.g., "presbyterian."
- Geographic locations: For place names within the US, search the place name in combination with the abbreviated and full state name, e.g., "union springs ny" and "union springs new york."

Narrow your search results by:

- Returning to the main search page and entering more specific search terms, e.g., "marsh family bible"
- Including multiple search terms in one search, e.g., "presbyterian" and "baltimore md"

Keep in mind that WorldCat won't search for spelling variants, so try different variations if needed.

Consult your librarian for assistance with your WorldCat searching.

Visit oclc.org/genealogy to learn more.

Find answers to common questions, read success stories, and get advice on how to use WorldCat in your genealogical research.

Because what is known must be shared.®

