SENATOR JOHN HEINZ
HISTORY CENTER
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

# GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY

## CHECK LIST OF BASIC SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The Thomas and Katherine Detre Library & Archives, located on the 6th floor of the Senator John Heinz History Center, is ***the source*** for Western Pennsylvania history. The catalog of holdings can be found at: http://www.heinzhistorycenter.org/libraryArchives. For more information, or to schedule a research appointment, call: 412-454-6364 or email: library@heinzhistorycenter.org.

## 1. VITAL RECORDS

The county courthouse in the record's place of origin generally retains vital records. Early records however, were often created by the family's church before the county or state required them. Birth and death certificates for Allegheny County are now available at Pennsylvania Department of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh for the following dates and locations:

**PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT CARNEGIE LIBRARY OF PITTSBURGH**
**4400 FORBES AVENUE**
**PITTSBURGH, PA 15213**
**512-622-3154**
***http://www.clpgh.org/locations/pennsylvania/***

| DEATH CERTIFICATES | BIRTH CERTIFICATES |
|---|---|
| Pittsburgh: June 1870 – 1905 | Pittsburgh: July 1870 – 1905 |
| Allegheny City: 1876 – 1905 | Allegheny City: July 1882 – 1905 |
| McKeesport: April 1887 – 1905 | McKeesport: June 1892 – 1905 |
| Sewickley: 1894 – 1905 | Sewickley: 1896 – 1905 |
| Allegheny County (deaths reported for estate purposes): July 1874 – 1903 | Wilkinsburg: 1899 - 1905 |
| | Allegheny County: 1893 – 1905 |

### *FOR PENNSYLVANIA BIRTH AND DEATH RECORDS AFTER 1906, CONTACT:*

**DIVISION OF VITAL RECORDS**
**101 S. MERCER STREET**
**P. O. BOX 1528**
**NEW CASTLE, PA 16101**
**724-656-3100**
***http://www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/site/default.asp***

### *OTHER DEATH RECORD INFORMATION*

The Carnegie Library will conduct an obituary search for deaths in the city of Pittsburgh and others cites in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*. There are fees associated with these searches. There are indexes for 1786 - 1913 and 1963 - 1999 on microfilm. For deaths between 1914 and 1967, you must specify the exact date of death.

**PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT**
**CARNEGIE LIBRARY OF PITTSBURGH**
**4400 FORBES AVENUE**
**PITTSBURGH, PA 15213**
**412-622-3154**
***http://carnegielibrary.org/clp/Pennsylvania/***

The Western Pennsylvania Genealogical Society holds the index to Allegheny County Death Records, 1893-1905. The index includes all communities in the county except for Pittsburgh, Allegheny City, McKeesport, and Sewickley.

## 2. MARRIAGE RECORDS

Allegheny County has marriage records from 1885 and some records for Pittsburgh for 1870 – 1879. The Thomas and Katherine Detre Library & Archives has an index to ministers' returns for Allegheny County for 1875 – 1885, and other indexes gleaned from the Pittsburgh Christian Advocate 1834 – 1855, and the Pittsburgh Gazette 1829 – 1833. The Carnegie Library also has an index to newspaper marriage notices from 1786 – 1854, and an Allegheny County Marriage Index for 1885 – 1925.

**DEPARTMENT OF COURT RECORDS**
**WILLS/ORPHANS' COURT DIVISION – MARRIAGE RECORDS**
**1ST FLOOR, CITY-COUNTY BUILDING**
**414 GRANT STREET**
**PITTSBURGH, PA 15219-2471**
**412-350-4180**
***http://www.alleghenycounty.us/wo/***

## 3. DIVORCE PAPERS, 1800 - PRESENT (INDEX)

In Ejectment and Miscellaneous Index in the Civil Division of the Department of Court Records.

**DEPARTMENT OF COURT RECORDS**
**CIVIL/FAMILY DIVISION**
**1ST FLOOR, CITY-COUNTY BUILDING**
**414 GRANT STREET**
**PITTSBURGH, PA 15219**
**412-350-4210/4205**
***http://www.alleghenycounty.us/civil/***

## 4. ESTATE RECORDS

Estate records are indexed under the Russell Code system. [Indexes to Allegheny County Estates for 1788-1971 are available in the Pennsylvania Room (CLP)].

**DEPARTMENT OF COURT RECORDS**
**WILLS/ORPHANS' COURT DIVISION**
**1ST FLOOR, CITY-COUNTY BUILDING**
**414 GRANT STREET**
**PITTSBURGH, PA 15219**
**412-350-4180**
***http://www.alleghenycounty.us/wo/***

## 5. PROPERTY OWNERSHIP RECORDS (DEEDS)

Property Deeds are available from 1789. The Recorder of Deeds Office has two sets of index books, Deeds Direct (grantor/seller) and Adsectum (grantee/purchaser). Deed indexes from 1986 to present are available online.

**DEPARTMENT OF REAL ESTATE**
**COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING**
**RM. 101, 542 FORBES AVENUE**
**PITTSBURGH, PA 15219**
**412-350-4226**
***http://www.alleghenycounty.us/re/***

## 6. IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION INFORMATION, 1800 - 1916

The Thomas and Katherine Detre Library & Archives have a seven-volume set of the list of applications for naturalization for 1799-1906, compiled by the Western Pennsylvania Genealogical Society. The information in the published volumes is the same as the original record books in the Prothonotary's Office. Additional Allegheny County naturalizations can be found on microfilm #257-284 at the Historical Society. Indexes for naturalizations performed in the District and Circuit Courts may be found on microfilm at Carnegie Library — the actual records are online for a fee at www.footnote.com. For the index to naturalization records after 1906, go to:

**CLERK'S OFFICE**
**U.S. POST OFFICE & FEDERAL COURT BLDG.**
**7TH AVENUE AND GRANT STREET, ROOM 3001**
**PITTSBURGH, PA 15219**
***http://www.alleghenycounty.us/regwills/acgen.aspx***

The Thomas and Katherine Detre Library & Archives have numerous volumes summarizing names of passenger arrivals and departures from various ports in specific years. This information can also be obtained from:

**NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION**
**GENERAL REFERENCE BRANCH**
**7TH & PENNSYLVANIA AVENUES, NW**
**WASHINGTON, D. C. 20408**
**301-713-6800**
***http://www.archives.gov/***

## 7. CENSUS RECORDS

The Thomas and Katherine Detre Library & Archives hold ***indexes*** for each census year for Pennsylvania from 1790 to 1870. More complete census records listing family members are available for Pittsburgh and Allegheny City for 1850 through 1880. There are similar compilations for some western Pennsylvania counties for specific years. The Carnegie Library has indexes for Pennsylvania as well as nearby states. The Carnegie Library also has the Soundex for 1880, 1900, 1910, and 1920 for Pennsylvania. In addition, The Carnegie Library has the census for Pennsylvania on microfilm 1790-1930. Hillman Library has the census on microfilm for select years and localities.

## 8. CHURCH AND CEMETERY RECORDS

The Thomas and Katherine Detre Library & Archives have records from numerous localities in Western Pennsylvania. Some finding aids to these materials can be found on the Historic Pittsburgh website at http://digital.library.pitt.edu/pittsburgh/. Additional church records can be found at the

Western Pennsylvania Genealogical Society, whose collection is house in the Pennsylvania Department, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. Their catalogue is at http://wpgs.library.net/.

## 9. Voter Records

Voter registration records contain voting history, birth dates, and party affiliations.

**Elections Office**
**604 County Office Building**
**542 Forbes Ave.**
**Pittsburgh, PA 15219**
**412-350-4500**

## 10. Public School Records

Persons requesting student information from the Pittsburgh Public Schools must be a student's family member and provide the following information in a written request: name of student, name of school, student's birth date, years of enrollment, signature of the person requesting information, and a daytime phone number of the person requesting information. ***No phone calls.***

**Pittsburgh Board of Education**
**341 S. Bellefield**
**Room # 349**
**Pittsburgh, PA 15213**
**Fax: 412-622-7900**

The Thomas and Katherine Detre Library & Archive have an extensive collection of year books from the region.

## 11. Military Records

The Thomas and Katherine Detre Library & Archives have Civil War records and regimental histories.

***For Pension and Military Records:***

**National Archives and Records Administration**
**Attn: NWCTB**
**700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW,**
**Washington, D.C. 20408-0001**
***http://www.nara.gov/research/ordering/milordr.html***

**The National Personnel Records Center,**
**9700 Page Avenue**
**St. Louis, Missouri 63132**
***http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/***

Scanned images of the Pennsylvania Archives are now available for free at ***www.footnote.com*** . Browse all titles, the click on Revolution 1775-1815, and choose Pennsylvania Archives.

There is also some scanned military information at the Pennsylvania State Archives ARIAS website ***http://www.digitalarchives.state.pa.us/***

## 12. Family Histories

The Thomas and Katherine Detre Library & Archives have many family histories, which include scrap books, photo collections, and family trees, among other important documents.

## 13. County Histories

The Thomas and Katherine Detre Library & Archives have county histories for all counties in Western Pennsylvania, as well as a number of other Pennsylvania counties.

## 14. City Directories

The Thomas and Katherine Detre Library & Archives have directories for Pittsburgh and Allegheny City from 1815 to 1974. These can be searched online at: http://digital.library.pitt.edu/p/pitttextdir/.

## 15. Atlases and Maps

The Thomas and Katherine Detre Library & Archives have an extensive collection of atlases and maps. Some of the maps indicate the original property owners by family name.