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## Welcome to the Georgia Historical Society's Research Center

The Georgia Historical Society (GHS) was founded in 1839 to collect, preserve, and share Georgia history. This document is intended to provide you with an overview of the resources available at the GHS Research Center. This is not an exhaustive list of all GHS resources. For specific titles and shelf locations, as well as to identify additional research resources, we suggest you search our Research Center catalogs at [www.georgiahistory.com](http://www.georgiahistory.com) or ask reference staff for further information.

Photocopy request slips for non-archival materials are located next to the computer at the Reference Desk; prices range from .50 cents to \$2.00 depending on the size of the original and type of copy requested (GHS members receive a 10% discount). Digital cameras (including phones and other devices) are only allowed at the reserved Archives table. Inquire with reference staff about our Digital Camera Policy before using your digital camera or electronic device. Also, please note the GHS collection does not circulate; all materials must be used on site. Good luck in your research and please do not hesitate to ask reference staff for further assistance.

**Archival Collections:** GHS archival collections contain original material ranging from personal papers to photographs to organizational records dating from the 17th-21st centuries.

- Search the Research Center Catalog or Archival Collection Finding Aids Database to find collections relevant to your research topic. Collection numbers are prefixed with an "MS" to indicate archival material. Collections are described in the series of blue binders located on the shelves across from the Reference Desk or electronically in the Finding Aids Database. Finding Aids provide detailed information regarding specific collection content to help researchers determine whether or not the collection is of use.
- To request materials be retrieved from the archives, please submit a request form (located at the Reference Desk) to a reference staff member.

**Books:** GHS's collection contains thousands of books on Georgia, southern history, biography, genealogy, etc.

- Books are cataloged and searchable in the Research Center Catalog. Once a book has been identified in the catalog, note the location (*Main* or *Rare*) and the Call Number. If the book is in the "Main" collection, it is available for browsing in the reading room. The shelving arrangement begins upstairs at the south-east corner of the building and continues alphabetically around the upper mezzanine following the Library of Congress Classification System.

- To request a “Rare” book be retrieved from the archives, please submit a request form (located at the Reference Desk) to a reference staff member. Be sure to note the author, title, and call number on the request form.

Census Records: United States Census records are available for Georgia and other southern states for the years 1790 (reconstructed), 1820, 1830, 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930. The Georgia federal censuses for 1790, 1800, and 1810 were destroyed by fire. Records are available in print, on microfilm, or via GHS’s subscription to Ancestry.com (available at the public computers).

- Georgia county census indexes are also available at the Research Center. Each index includes the county abbreviation and census page number for listed individuals. After obtaining the county abbreviation and census page number, consult the black binder labeled “Census on Microfilm” to get the microfilm reel number for the listing you seek.
- Copies can be obtained at the microfilm machines for \$0.25 cents per page. Reference staff can provide change and any assistance you may need with the machines or locating reels of microfilm.

Georgia Historical Quarterly: Published since 1917, this scholarly journal provides article-length coverage on all varieties of Georgia, Savannah, and southern history. The entire series is located in the library alcove across from the Savannah Newspaper indexes and available online via JSTOR.

- Search JSTOR ([www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org)) or the two-volume print index located in the reading room which lists subjects alphabetically and includes names, places, eras, and events as well as author and article-title listings. Note the published index only covers issues from 1917 to 1976. All issues are searchable in JSTOR up to the most recent three years.

Maps: The GHS collection of maps includes significant resources detailing both the development of the state of Georgia and the nation.

- Maps are cataloged and searchable in the Research Center Catalog. Search for the subject “Maps” to see individual maps and archival collections containing maps.
- To request a map be retrieved from the archives, please submit a request form (located on at the Reference Desk) to a reference staff member. Additional secondary source maps (the *Waring Maps*) are housed in the reading room in a map case and available for browsing.

Newspapers: Georgia and Savannah-area newspapers from 1763 to present are available on microfilm. Printed indexes for Savannah-area newspapers are available for the periods 1763-1844, 1850-1891, and June 1929-1985. Indexes for 1891-1895 are available on microfilm. Indexes for Savannah-area newspapers do not exist for September 1895-May 1929. GHS does, however, have the newspapers for these non-indexed years on microfilm.

- Consult the index for your subject or name of interest, and note the three-letter newspaper abbreviation and date listed for the reference. Then, utilizing the binder labeled “Newspapers on Microfilm” determine which reel of microfilm holds the newspaper you seek.

- Copies can be obtained at the microfilm machines for \$0.25 cents per page. Reference staff can provide change and any assistance you may need with the machines or locating reels of microfilm.

Periodicals: The GHS library houses over 300 periodical titles dating from the mid-18th century to the present including scholarly history journals from each of Georgia's neighboring states. Many early titles relate to agricultural endeavors, for example the *Southern Cultivator*, as well as general interest publications like *The Gentleman's Magazine*.

- Many periodicals are cataloged and searchable in the Research Center Catalog, but not all of them. An alphabetical index by title to all of our periodicals is located above the blue binders in the shelving unit across from the Reference Desk. Location information is provided there.
- To request a title that is listed as located in the "stacks", please submit a request form (located on the corner of the Reference Desk) to a reference staff member.

Vertical Files: These can often be the best place to begin for general research needs. The files can hold newspaper clippings, pamphlets, student papers, and research notes. We have files for Subjects (includes buildings, events, eras, and locations), as well as Biographies and Genealogies.

- Each series of vertical files has its own index located in green binders opposite from the Reference Desk. Consult the index first to determine if we have a file related to your research subject. If your subject appears, notify reference staff and the file(s) will be pulled for you.

Vital Records: Georgia did not keep a statewide official registry of births or deaths until 1919, or official marriage records until 1805. GHS has some published records of births, deaths, and marriages for Chatham County that predate 1919, as well as records, abstracts, and indexes from other counties. Vital records may be available for other counties and locations, please search our Research Center catalogs for specific holdings or ask reference staff for further information. You may also search Ancestry.com's vital records databases. GHS subscribes to Ancestry.com and is accessible from the Research Center public computers. Savannah's Research Library and Municipal Archives also holds a series of ledgers that contain chronologically arranged lists of birth, marriage, and death records for approximate dates 1898-1916.

- An index to Georgia death certificates for 1919-1994 is available on microfiche. Other death information is available in the Main book collection: *Early Deaths in Savannah, Georgia, 1763-1803: Obituaries and Legal Notices* (Call Number F294 .S2 E37), the *Register of Deaths in Savannah, Georgia* series (Call Number F294 .S2 R35) for dates 1853-1938, as well as in multiple cemetery indexes at call number(s) F294 .S2 B65; C37; L28. GHS also holds the *Chatham County Health Department Death Cards, 1803-1893* (MS 1712) and *Chatham County Coroners Inquests 1845, 1877-1965* (MS 5125).
- Marriage records are available in the Main book collection for dates 1748-1877 in *Marriages of Chatham County, Georgia* (Call Number F292 .C37 M37, volumes I & II). For dates 1964-1971 and 1973-1992, please see our microfiche holdings.