Maryland State Archives

Genealogy research in Maryland
About the Archives

The Hall of Records, predecessor of the Maryland State Archives, was created as an independent agency in 1935, charged with the collection, custody, and preservation of the official records, documents, and publications of the state.
About the Archives

We are the central depository for government records of permanent value—such as land, birth, death, divorce, etc.

The state archives only automatically acquires government created records. Our Special Collections department collects donated personal records.
Primary and Secondary Sources

Primary sources provide a first-hand account of an event or time period. They represent original thinking, and reports or events. These sources are usually created at the time the events occurred, but they can also include sources that are created later.

Ex: Letters, diaries, wills, original court records

Secondary sources involve analysis, interpretation, or evaluation of primary sources. They often attempt to describe or explain primary sources.

Ex: Biographies, general histories
Overview of Collections

Vital Records: Birth, Death, and Marriage

Court Records: Civil and Criminal

Land Records: Deeds, Plats

Military Records

Probate Records: Wills, Inventories, Administration Accounts, Etc.

Legacy of Slavery in Maryland

And more!
Visiting the Archives
September 1, 2021

The Maryland State Archives welcomes both appointments and walk-in visits in our public search room Tuesdays through Fridays from 8:30am to 4:30pm.

While walk-in visits are permitted, appointments are strongly encouraged. Benefits of a confirmed appointment include a reserved desk and computer, direct assistance from an Archivist, reduced wait times, advance retrieval of collection materials, and most importantly, a guarantee that your record will be on site. Request an Appointment.

Please note, we will continue to wear masks for your protection and we ask that you continue to do so as well when visiting the search room.

We are continuing to offer remote service as well, and you may always:

- Place copy orders online. You may order a certified copy of any unrestricted document generally required for legal needs, or an uncertified copy of a digitized birth, death or marriage record for reference purposes.
- Contact us for research assistance or with any questions at msa.helpdesk@maryland.gov or 410-269-6487
- Access digital records from home on our website, including What’s New Online, our training videos, digital resources and research guides providing details on how to find our most searched record types.

Thank you.
Quick Links

- What's New Online
- Visit the Archives
- Guide to Government Records
- For Government Agencies
- Maryland Land Records
- Maryland Manual Online
- Baltimore City Archives
- Get Involved
- Place an Order
- Our Services
- How Do I...

Plan A Visit

Request an appointment so that our staff can best assist you. Appointments are strongly encouraged. Benefits include: no wait time for help or for a workspace; ability to quickly ask an Archivist any questions; and most importantly a guarantee that your record will be on site. Visitors may also walk-in without an appointment.

Planning a visit to the Maryland State Arch...
Yes

- Pencils
- Loose sheets of paper
- Laptops, tablets, phones, cameras (sound and flash off)
- Sweater/Jacket
- Small wallet

No

- Pens and markers
- Binders, folders, notebooks
- Laptop bags/cases
- Food and drink- including gum
- Scanners
- Large coats
- Large bags/purses
Why all these rules?

I'm gonna steal the Declaration of Independence.
Finding Aids and Tutorials
Introduction

To find a record, please note the record must be 10 years old or older, and you will need to use the archives' search room computers. Request an appointment so that our staff can best assist you. Appointments are strongly encouraged. Benefits include: no wait time for help or for a workspace, ability to quickly ask an Archivist any questions, and most importantly a guarantee that your record will be on site. Visitors may also walk-in without an appointment.

What can I do from home?

You can search indexes. If you do not know the location of the Death, then you will want to find the index in order to find the county or city of Death. An index also provides the information needed by our staff to locate your record.

A list of indexes can be found within the Find a Death Record section near the bottom of this page. There are also instructions related to the variations of indexes that you may see.

What years do we have Death records?

We can provide Death records from 1875 (Baltimore City) and 1898 (Maryland Counties) to 2010 depending upon the location of the Death in Maryland. For earlier years, please go to the 'Tips for Hard to Find Death Records' page.

Should I Place an Order or Find a Record myself?

Place an Order

- We are not able to take orders for records after 2010. See note above.

Find the Record Myself

- To find a record, please note the record must be 10 years old or older, and you will need to use the archives' search room computers.

Find a Death Record:

To find a record, you will need to use the archives' search room computers.
Vital Records
What are vital records?

- **Birth**: Records start in 1875 for Baltimore City, 1898 for the rest of the Maryland counties. For birth records after 1924, contact the Maryland Division of Vital Records.
- **Death**: Records start in 1875 for Baltimore City, 1898 for the rest of the Maryland counties. For Death records after 2011, contact the Maryland Division of Vital Records.
- **Marriage**: Starting date of records varies by county. We have marriage records up to the year 2013. For marriage certificates after 2013, contact the circuit court in the county where the marriage occurred or contact the Division of Vital Records.
Name in Full Edward John Stevens

Town Oxford

County Talbot

STATE MARYLAND

Month Day Year Age M. D. Native of Occupation

May 5 1898 78 1.7 Maryland Farmer

Sex, Male or Female Male

Color

Race

Number of Children living 7

Obituary by James A. Stevens, M.D.

Witnesses

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH.

Health Department, City of Baltimore

Certificate of Death, No. B 3927

Office of Registrar of Vital Statistics, Ward 17

The Physician, who attended any person in a last illness is responsible for the presentation of this certificate, accurately filled out by the undertaker or other person, supervising the burial, within twenty-four hours after the death of said person, or sooner, if requested to do so, under penalty of law.

No Certificate of Burial can be Issued Without a Proper Certificate.

Date of Death, July 22nd, 1898

Full Name of Deceased Edward John Stevens

Sex, Male or Female Male

Age: Years, Months, Days 78, 1.7

Married, Single, Widow or Widower Married

Occupation Farmer

Birthplace in the City of Baltimore

Residence in the City of Baltimore

Race of Deceased White

Place of Birth St. Louis, Missouri

Place of Residence

Place of Death

Cause of Death, Primary Bronchitis

Cause of Death, Immediate Pneumonia

Duration of Last Sickness, 4 weeks

Documented by

Undertaker

Place of Business

Address

Extract from Regulations of the Board of Health to secure a full and correct record of Vital Statistics in the City of Baltimore.

Section 8. And be it further enacted and ordained, That whenever any person shall die in the said city, it shall be the duty of the Physician who attended during his or her last sickness, or the Coroner, when the case comes under his notice, to cause within twenty-four hours after the death, to the Undertaker, or other person supervising the burial, a certificate of death to be filled out, as far as the same can be ascertained, the full name, sex, age, condition (whether married or single) of the person deceased, and the cause and date of death.

Wm. J. C. Buckey Co., City Printers and Stationers.
# REPORT OF MARRIAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Garrett</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Name of Groom</td>
<td>George E. Thomas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>Canonsburg, Pa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Painter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativity</td>
<td>Ca.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any prior Marriage</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If prior marriage, how and when dissolved.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of person consenting when a minor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Bride</td>
<td>Stella Catherine Kacumba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>Castle Shannon, Pa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativity</td>
<td>Va.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any prior marriage</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If prior marriage, how and when dissolved.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of person consenting when a minor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of issue of License</td>
<td>Oct. 11, 1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Ceremony</td>
<td>Oct. 11, 1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceremony Performed by</td>
<td>Winfield S. Patterson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Clerk of Court</td>
<td>Garrett</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

File No. 1878

Department of Health

State of Maryland

County: Garrett

Town or City: Oakland

Name of Groom: George E. Thomas

Age: 22

Residence: Canonsburg, Pa.

Occupation: Painter

Color: White

Nativity: Ca.

Any prior Marriage: No

If prior marriage, how and when dissolved:

Name of person consenting when a minor:

Name of Bride: Stella Catherine Kacumba

Age: 22

Residence: Castle Shannon, Pa.

Occupation: Housewife

Color: White

Nativity: Va.

Any prior marriage: No

If prior marriage, how and when dissolved:

Name of person consenting when a minor:

Date of issue of License: Oct. 11, 1938

County or City of issue: Garrett

Date of Ceremony: Oct. 11, 1938

Performed at: Oakland, Md.

Ceremony Performed by: Winfield S. Patterson

Signature of Clerk of Court: Garrett

County or City: Garrett
Probate Records
What are probate records?

Maryland’s probate records range from major records such as wills, inventories, and accounts to less well known documents such as renunciations, petitions, and indentures. Maryland probate records start in 1634.

- **Will**: A document in which a person states what should happen to their property after their death
- **Inventory**: A list of property in a person’s estate when they pass away
- **Administration Account**: Information on who received what from the estate. Often this lists payment of debts and probate fees, but also the names of heirs receiving whatever is left over after the settling of debts.
Probate Records

To find a record, you'll need to use the archives' searchroom computers. Request an appointment so that our staff can best assist you. Appointments are strongly encouraged. Benefits include: no wait time for help or for a workspace, ability to quickly ask an Archivist any questions, and most importantly a guarantee that your record will be on site. Visitors may also walk-in without an appointment.

Introduction

Maryland's probate records range from major records such as wills, inventories, and accounts to less well known documents such as renunciations, petitions, and indentures.

What can I do from home?

You can search indexes. Certain time frames and counties may also have scans of original records available online. After you find the index, record the information it provides and use that information to find the record. Make sure to note all information available in the index.

What years do we have probate records?

From 1634 to 1777, records were kept at the provincial (colonial) level and at the county level. The records we have vary by year, county, and record type. It is important find the index first, in order to then find the record you want.

What do I do if I am unsure of the county?

For a probate record from 1777 and earlier, click on any county name below, and use the indexes. The information you find in the index will provide information about the county. Use that information to find the record.
Land Records
### M Land Rec

**Search Results for:**

- **County:** CA
- **Name:** IS Smith, John
- **Grantor/Grantee** for all dates

Displaying 34 records of 34 total records.

Displaying 1-34 of 34 records.

[NEW SEARCH]

You have 0 record(s) in your marked list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Recorded</th>
<th>Grantor/Grantee</th>
<th>Instrument Type</th>
<th>Book/Page</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<td>1970-09-16</td>
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</table>
degrees east 25 feet with said Brown line; thence north 80 degrees 30 minutes west 207 feet, more or less, being an extension of the centerline course of Siesta Drive; thence south 9 degrees 30 minutes west 25 feet to the place of beginning, containing whatsoever quantity of land it may, and being the same land mentioned and described in a deed from William S. Orme to the said John J. Smith and wife, bearing date the 6th day of May, 1964, and duly recorded in Liber D.R.H. No. 152, Folio 697, among the Land Records for Caroline County aforesaid.
Restricted Records?

- All adoptions occurring after May 31, 1947 are sealed and can only be opened with a court order
- Birth records after 1921
- Records in sensitive conditions
  - Please ask us! We may have these records digitized, or may just need to give you some tips about handling the records before you view them
- Case files with medical information
  - Staff review case files and remove any medical information, sealed envelopes, or banking information before patrons view the file
- Copyrighted items
  - Primarily applies to some photographs or published materials. These items can be viewed. Pictures/copies of these items can usually be taken for personal use, but if you plan on publishing them you’ll need to speak with the copyright holder
Legacy of Slavery
Legacy of Slavery in Maryland

This program seeks to preserve and promote the vast universe of experiences that have shaped the lives of Maryland's African American population. From the day that Mathias de Sousa and Francisco landed in St. Mary's county aboard the Ark and the Dove in 1634, Black Marylanders have made significant contributions to both the state and nation in the political, economic, agricultural, legal, and domestic arenas. Despite what often seemed like insurmountable odds, Marylanders of Color have adapted, evolved, and prevailed. The Maryland State Archives' Study of the Legacy of Slavery invites researchers to explore all of these elements and more within its numerous source documents, exhibits and interactive online presentations.
SEARCH COLLECTIONS

The Beneath the Underground database features entries of over 400,000 individuals including, white and black, slave owners, enslaved and free individuals from primarily the years of 1830 through 1880 to review. Listed below are the record series currently searchable online. Click on the record series name to view the titles available in that record series. Click on the record title for more detailed information on the record series or the individual titles. To search title names and title level description fields, enter your search term(s) in the text box below.

Please note, for the Advanced search leaving the gender box blank may result in additional returns. Female or Male was not always indicated on the document or entered into the database, and limiting a search by gender may block entries where no gender was given. Click Clear to start a new search.
SEARCH COLLECTIONS

The Maryland State Archives presents: Legacy of Slavery in Maryland
An Archives of Maryland Electronic Publication

SEARCH COLLECTIONS

The Beneath the Underground database features entries of over 400,000 individuals including, white and black, slave owners, enslaved and free individuals from primarily the years of 1830 through 1880 to review. Listed below are the record series currently searchable online. Click on the record series name to view the titles available in that record series. Click on the record title for more detailed information on the record series or the individual titles. To search title names and title level description fields, enter your search term(s) in the text box below.

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Quick Search       Advanced Search       Browse Collections       Browse By County

Name: ___________________________ Owner Name: ___________________________

Enslaved Status: 

- ○ Free  ○ Enslaved  ○ Either

Gender: 

- ○ Male  ○ Female  ○ Either

Race: 

- ○ Black  ○ Mulatto  ○ White  ○ Any

Age: ___________________________

Occupation: ___________________________

County: ___________________________ Location: ___________________________

Search all Counties  ▼

Record Type: ___________________________

Search All Records  ▼

Selected Records: ___________________________

Clear After Search  ▼

Search  ▼

Clear
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<tr>
<th>Age</th>
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<th>County</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Relation To Household Head</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Street Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>District 1</td>
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<td>Emma</td>
<td>Smith</td>
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<td>Rockville</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Queen Anne's</td>
<td>Centreville, District 60</td>
<td>Milley</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
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<td>1/2</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Smith</td>
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Special Collections
MARYLAND STATE ARCHIVES
GUIDE TO SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

What's New
- MSA SC 6313: Susan Hadary Collection
- MSA SC 6312: Edward's Baltimore Daily Advertiser
- MSA SC 6311: Frank Tippett Collection
- MSA SC 6310: Robert "Bootsie" Campbell Collection
- MSA SC 6309: Heritage Frederick Collection

Browse Our Collections
Please click here to browse through all MSA Special Collections.

Search Strategies
The Maryland State Archives Guide to Special Collections is a web-based tool to search and browse special collections of map, photographic, newspaper, private, business and religious records. For guidance on researching specific collections, see Additional Search Strategies below.

If you have any questions, please contact msa.helpdesk@maryland.gov.

General Search Tips
- For browsing or simple searches, use Keyword search under Quick Search.
- For more specific searches, use the Advanced Search.
- To navigate directly to a specific collection, series, or item with its collection number, use Collection Number search under Quick Search.
Photographic Archives of Maryland

**GOVERNOR’S OFFICE PHOTO GALLERY**
Showcasing photographs taken at special events around the State of Maryland during the administration of Governor Larry Hogan. For earlier administrations, see below.

**HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF MARYLAND**
Highlighting the photographic collections of the Maryland State Archives. This site includes photographs taken at special events around the State of Maryland during the administrations of Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. and Governor Martin O’Malley.
Browse All Historic Collections

OR

Select a single collection:

- **Mamie Warren Collection** - MSA SC985 - 223 images
  Dates: 1859-1910. Photos of Annapolis

- **Robert G. Merrick Archives of Maryland Historical Photographs** - MSA SC1477 - 1,440 images
  Dates: 1840-1940. Photos from all over Maryland

- **The Annapolis I Remember Collection** - MSA SC2140 - 559 images

- **Governor William Donald Schaefer, Press Office Photographs** - MSA SC4583-8 - 1,452 images

- **Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Press Office Photographs** - MSA T275 - 59,995 images

- **Governor Martin O'Malley, Press Office Photographs** - MSA T3908 - 151,975 images
The Maryland Newspaper Guide identifies what newspaper titles existed in Maryland for a specific time and place. It lists institutions that may have original or microfilm newspaper holdings.

- **By Title**
  View newspapers by title alphabetically.

- **By Date**
  View newspapers by publication dates.

- **By Era**
  View newspapers by publication dates, based on historical timeframes.

- **By County**
  View newspapers by county location.

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GUIDE TO SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Search Religious Records

Search Name By
- Full Name
- First Letter

Denomination
- All

County
- All

Browse

- By Title
View by title alphabetically.

- By Denomination
View by religious denomination.

- By County
View by county location.

Information

About This Guide

The Guide to Maryland Religious Records is not intended to be a complete listing of all religious institutions in Maryland. Instead, it is originally based upon the churches recorded by the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) during a records survey conducted from 1935 to 1941. It has been expanded by later acquisitions from religious organizations to the Maryland State Archives.

Our Guide shows two types of records. Those that are inventoried in the government record series MSA S 1512, HALL OF RECORDS COMMISSION (Historical Records Survey, Churches) 1935-1941 and those in the custody of the Archives' Special Collections. These records are significant since systematic recording of vital records was not established until 1875.
Questions?

Main: (410) 260-6400 - Toll Free: (800) 235-4045

msa.helpdesk@maryland.gov