

Genealogy Web Sites

Freedmen's Bureau Field Offices Map

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&oe=UTF8&msa=0&msid=110416325353435229667.00045740b293fb14f6f59>

The Newberry Library (Chicago) has mapped the Freedmen's Bureau Field Offices using Google Maps. Officially, this entity was known as the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Land, and was established in March 1865 and formally dissolved in June



1872, although starting in January 1869, most district level Freedmen's Bureau operations were discontinued (reference: NARA Record Group 105 overview, www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/105.html).

The map covers field offices in the District of Columbia and in 14 states, including Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. There are three pages of maps (scroll to the bottom of the list and you will see how to navigate between the pages).

Each entry contains a link to NARA's microfilm guide to the records (e.g., M1909 for North Carolina — Records of the Field Offices for the State of North Carolina, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1872). The NARA microfilm guide is an invaluable resource to learn what extant records there are for each state in this record category. The pop-up box for each

entry also gives the Newberry call number if it holds the records for that office in their collection.

The Field Office records have great genealogical and historical value. They are well worth the effort to search them if your ancestors were freedmen living in one of these areas. Given how little information we can typically find on ancestors who were slaves, you don't want to overlook these records.

Immigration to the United States, 1789-1930

<http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/immigration/>
This is a web-based collection of selected historical materials from Harvard's libraries, archives and museums that documents voluntary immigration to the US from the signing of the Constitution to the onset of the Great Depression. Concentrating heavily on the 19th century, it includes approximately 1,800 books and pamphlets, as well as 9,000 photographs, 200 maps and 13,000 pages from manuscript and archival collections.



You can do a keyword search or browse the collection. When you search, the results are arranged chronologically from oldest to newest. The materials are not limited to English-language documents, though most of the documents are from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Additionally, there is a timeline of key dates and landmarks in US Immigration History that contains hyperlinks to any referenced documents available on the Harvard website. Understanding the entries in this timeline is

important to your understanding of what rules applied at the time when your immigrant ancestor might have become a citizen, for instance.

Even if you don't have immigrant ancestors from the 1800s or early 1900s, it's a fascinating collection to just browse through. And, if you do, it can be very useful. For example, my paternal great-grandparents immigrated in the early 1900s to Salem, Massachusetts. In the 1910 census, they were living in a boarding house near the Custom House. This website contains a report titled "An investigation of housing conditions in Salem, Mass" by Selskar M. Gunn which covers the c. 1911-13 time period — the same time my ancestors were living in a boarding house. At one point, this book mentions "At the Point, 50 per cent of the cellars, 21 per cent of the tenements and practically all the yards (with the exception of the yards of the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Company), were dirty... ." My ancestors worked at that company!

Federal Land Status Records (LSR)

www.glorerecords.blm.gov/LSRSearch/



Land records researchers might be interested to know that most of the Master Title Plats for Colorado, Idaho, Montana, North and South Dakota are available free on the Bureau of Land Management — Eastern States General Land Office Records website. These plats are maps relating to federal government land ownership. They show

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authorization for various uses (such as mining or oil drilling rights), agency jurisdiction and rights reserved to the federal government on private land in a township. Accompanying historical indexes list related actions, such as new or canceled use authorizations. If you have the legal land description and other information from your ancestor's land patent (www.glorerecords.blm.gov/PatentSearch/), you can use a Master Title Plat for that township to see where the property was located.

When using the information from this website, don't forget to check out the map showing the Principle Meridians and Baselines that are mentioned, www.glorerecords.blm.gov/Visitors/PrincipleMeridiansAndBaselines.html.

For example, if you are looking at the Master Title Plat for 48.0N-2.0W, ID, Boise Idaho, you will be able to see Historical Index Pages, Acquired Historical Index Page and Index to Mineral Locations and Contests Page. Or, the Master Title Plat for 16.0N-20.0W, MT gives you the option to also see a MTP Supplemental and a Townsite Plat Sheet. For many locales, there will only be the option to see the Master Title Plat and sometimes, an additional document.

California Digital Newspaper Collection

<http://cdnc.ucr.edu/>

As genealogists, we have a voracious appetite for newspaper access — newspaper articles are a great way for us to add some "color" to the stories of our ancestors,

as well as learn key facts about them.

The California Digital Newspaper Collection offers over 200,000 pages of California newspapers spanning the years 1849-1911: The *Alta California*, 1849-91; the *San Francisco Call*, 1893-1910; the *Amador Ledger*, 1900-11; the *Imperial Valley Press*, 1901-11; the *Sacramento Record-Union*, 1859-90; and the *Los Angeles Herald*, 1905-07. Additional years are forthcoming, as are other early California newspapers: The *Californian*; the *California Star*; the *California Star and Californian*; the *Sacramento Transcript*; the *Placer Times*; and the *Pacific Rural Press*.

To search for relevant articles, you can either do a simple search or a more advanced search — words/phrases, specific newspaper, limited dates, etc.

Papers of the War Department 1784-1800

<http://wardepartmentpapers.org/>

As with several of the other websites mentioned, we are frequently researching history as much as our ancestors. Historical events and geopolitical context set the stage for our ancestor's lives and the ways they may have affected history.

For many years it was thought that a fire in 1800 had essentially destroyed the papers of the War Department. After a multi-year research effort, including visits to more than 200 repositories and the consulting of more than 3,000 collections in the US, Canada, England, France and Scotland, this website has 55,000 documents (in the form of digitized images and searchable metadata) of the early War Department.

These documents are important, as they encompass Indian affairs, veteran affairs, naval affairs (until 1798), as well as militia and army matters.

You have a simple and advanced search option. For a found entry, information on date,

author, recipient, a summary, document format, related places and more is summarized along with a clickable icon to retrieve the associated digital image. Each image is initially shown at less than full size and you can opt for full-size. Additionally, if there is more than one page to the document, appropriate navigation will appear.



With the authors and recipients, and often other names in the document, included in the captured information, this is definitely a website to check out if you know of and/or suspect a Revolutionary War era ancestor. A search on the term "pension" pulled up 52 entries, including a certificate of entitlement, an invalid pension list, a power of attorney to apply for a pension, the discussion of a service record, a certification of discharge and more. This information is invaluable.

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Diane L. Richard is a frequent contributor to Family Chronicle, Internet Genealogy and Discovering Family History.

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