

# Linkpendium

LET ME START BY SAYING THAT this is one of my favorite websites for family research! But, it doesn't contain any original data. It is a gateway that hosts a list of links, organized by state and county, of where data and information can be found online. Both free and paid resources are listed. It is a fast and easy way to get a sense of what types of online resources are available for an area.

Linkpendium was developed by Karen Isaacson and Brian Leverich, founders of RootsWeb genealogical community site. Currently, it contains 6,729,343 US genealogy links.

The website has two main sections, Localities: USA and Surnames: Worldwide. Before focusing on the Localities: USA, let's get our feet wet and briefly discuss the Surnames: Worldwide component.

**SURNAMES: WORLDWIDE**  
First, choose the first letter of the surname of interest. Then, you identify the first three letters. You will see a list of the surnames that match your criteria — click on the one that interests you.

You can then click on any of the links to access the referenced material. More about the significance of these results will be explained as we look at the Localities: USA resources in depth.

## LOCALITIES: USA

This is the page where I typically start my use of Linkpendium, <http://www.linkpendium.com/genealogy/USA/>.

We'll use North Carolina as our reference state for our foray into Linkpendium. There are currently 21,271 links included for North Carolina. When you click on North Carolina (or any state), you are then taken to a page that

## Diane L. Richard explains the ins and outs of a powerful research site.

includes:

- Statewide resources
- Independent cities, renamed counties, discontinued counties
- A list of each modern county

For example, for North Carolina, there are several obsolete counties that a researcher needs to

resource collections that cannot be accessed online, but can be purchased.

It is at this point, when I am giving a talk on Internet resources, that I am most often asked, "How is this website different from Cyndi's List?" My answer is:

- They both present information at the state and county level.
- They both organize their information by topics/categories.
- Cyndi's List also presents information that focuses on a topic (e.g. the Civil War) regardless of where, and includes categories of information not explicitly mentioned in Linkpendium.
- Cyndi's List is strongest at the state or topic level.

- Linkpendium is strongest at the county level — the detail at this level is not the strength of Cyndi's List. I consistently find more information on Linkpendium than on Cyndi's List for a county and its resources.

So, if I am truly fishing or want to see if I have exhausted the available online resources, I will check out what is on Cyndi's List. If I am just starting a project and know my target county, I will start at Linkpendium. By the end of a project, I have typically consulted both.

For each topic there is either a visible list of relevant resources (e.g., Bastardy Bonds and Records, Wake Co, 1772-1878), or you will find an entry like "Cemeteries (25)" where the word cemeteries is a hyperlink. This tells you that there are 25 entries for this category and that they are listed on a separate page.

If there are no relevant resources of a particular type (e.g., "Bible Records"), then that category will not be included. This



*Linkpendium offers a wealth of resources for researching counties.*

be aware of. For each of these, the modern county where relevant records may be found are listed.

Now, let's look at Wake County, North Carolina. There are 420 resources listed. These resources are organized alphabetically by topic. Each resource is identified, the source for that resource is given and if it is free, or if payment is required, it's indicated with (\$). The majority of what is listed can be accessed via the Internet, however, there are references to books, CDs and other

makes it easy to interpret what you are seeing — what you see is what you get! Does this mean that if a category is excluded or a resource is not listed that it doesn't exist? No! As with any investigation, the absence of information cannot be interpreted as meaning that it does not exist or that it is not relevant — it only means that it hasn't been found, yet.

Though I find Linkpendium fairly comprehensive, it is not exhaustive. I still check subscription database services, local repositories and societies, Cyndi's List and other online resources I believe can be relevant to my search. And if you know of a link to information that they don't have, at the bottom of almost every page, you will find the option to "Add your favorite websites to this page".

Some of the types of information listed are obvious, but if you look around, you can find useful data in unexpected places. If you are like me, two categories that appear easy to ignore are Projects and Miscellaneous Data. Given the wealth of information in the other specific categories, what can be left? The answer — a lot!

Projects is an area that you do not want to overlook, as it includes links to USGenWeb, American Local History Network, Genealogy Trails History Group and local projects whose goal is to preserve information on our ancestors, typically with free access.

Additionally, under Miscellaneous Data are links to Migrations.org, Free Public Records Directory, and Find County Records as well as more localized projects. Free Public Records Directory and Find County Records are excellent resources to help you in identifying what information is available online from county agencies and

- RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON LINKPENDIUM:**
- Bible Records
  - Biographies, Diaries, Genealogies, Correspondence
  - Blogs
  - Cemeteries
  - Census Records and Indexes
  - Church Records
  - Court and Legal Records
  - Directories
  - DNA Project
  - Estate Records
  - Ethnic
  - History
  - Immigration and Naturalization
  - Introduction and Guides
  - Land Records
  - Libraries, Museums, Archives
  - Lookups
  - Mailing Lists and Message Boards
  - Maps and Gazetteers
  - Military Records and Histories
  - Miscellaneous Data
  - Newspaper Records
  - Obituaries and Funeral Home Records
  - Photographs, Postcards, Historical Images
  - School Records and Histories
  - Slaves and slave owners,
  - Surname websites, obituaries, biographies, *et al*
  - Tax Lists

entities, whether free or paid. Regardless of whether there is information available online, contact information for the agency is provided.

Don't forget to check out Maps and Photographs, Postcards and Historical Images. Many of the entries are part of the American Memory Collection at the Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>.

As you survey the wealth of data available online, you will find wonderful bits and pieces specific to a state or county. Returning to Wake County (NC), we find some of the following Internet-based resource collections, some of which are unique to Wake County and some which are also available for other counties:

- Bastardy bonds (select counties)
- Bird's eye view of the city of Raleigh, North Carolina 1872
- Raleigh City Directory, 1899-1
- An abstract of North Carolina Wills (statewide)
- Dictionary of North Carolina biography index (statewide)
- Cemetery census (select coun-

- ties)
  - News Items & Marriage and Death Notices in Weekly Standard, 1859-1864 (a statewide newspaper published in Raleigh)
  - Denmark
  - Photography of Raleigh
  - North Carolina Echo Project (statewide)
- This also reminds us to not get so focused on the county level that you forget to check out what state resources are listed! For example, for North Carolina, there are resources listed at the state level that were not found in a search for Wake County, and yet contain information relevant to research in that county:
- Lynchings
  - Indian Tribes of North Carolina
  - North Carolina Naturalizations
  - Plantations of North

Carolina

Linkpendium is a website for anyone doing US genealogy — instead of searching blindly around the Internet, check out what is listed here! I start just about any project, whether I am researching a familiar location or embarking on my first foray into a new county, here. I find that I quickly get a sense of what I may or may not find online. I am frequently surprised by what is available online. If resources are not available online, then I have easy access to the contact information for the local libraries, government entities and genealogy societies that are available to assist my research. Linkpendium is one of the few resources that I can say I consult for every genealogy project that I work on.



*Diane L. Richard has been doing genealogy research for over 20 years. She can be found online at [www.mosaicrpm.com/](http://www.mosaicrpm.com/) Genealogy.*