



THE OREGON  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
FOUNDED 1898

## Biographical Research

The Oregon Historical Society's Research Library has a wide array of biographical and genealogical resources. The following list of the most frequently consulted research tools should serve as a good starting point.

**Biography Card File.** Produced in the 1930s, this indexes the following materials:

- Local, state, and regional histories and published biographical resources in our collection at the time the index was completed;
- Birth, death, and marriage citations from roughly a dozen and a half western Oregon newspapers covering the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries;
- Our 350+ volume collection of scrapbooks created by the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.);
- Indian War Pension Papers filed by veterans or by heirs of those who fought in the territorial Indian Wars (1847 – 1879).

**Vertical File Index.** A topical access point to folders of newspaper clippings, magazine articles, flyers, brochures, and pamphlets related to certain persons or families. Genealogy files will often include biographical sketches, obituaries, or family trees.

**Online Public Access Catalog.** Try searching for the family's surname, either as a title keyword or as a subject heading. The Dewey Decimal call number range for family histories is 929.2.

**Pioneer Card File.** Information on these cards comes from three main sources:

- Transcribed questionnaires issued to pioneer descendants at annual Oregon Pioneer Association meetings by George Himes, Secretary of the Association and of the Oregon Historical Society, for the purpose of compiling a Register of Pioneer Families. Surviving questionnaires and the Pioneer Register are now housed in the Research Library, as Mss 419 and Mss 420 respectively.
- Notes taken by Judge Charles H. Carey, one-time president of the Historical Society and author of several histories of the state;
- Materials donated to the Historical Society by the Lane County Pioneer Association.

**Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) Card File.** An index, by surname, to a variety of genealogical works transcribed and published by the Oregon chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution, including cemetery records, court documents, and pioneer reminiscences.

**Donation Land Claims.** An index to the approximately 7,000 land claims filed under the federal government's Donation Land Act (1850 – 1855). Entries are listed by surname of claimant or witnesses to the claim, and include brief biographical information taken from the claim form, such as dates and places of births, marriages, and arrival in Oregon, and names of spouses. (REF 929.3 G286g; 4 volumes and index, supplemental fifth volume, with information on claimant's spouses)

**Census Records.** In addition to Provisional and Territorial Government Census records for the years 1842 – 1859, the Research Library has the United States Federal Census for the years 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930; Soundex indexes for 1880, 1900, 1910, and 1920; and Special Schedules of the 1890 Federal Census enumerating Union veterans of the Civil War and widows of Union veterans on microfilm. The reels are located in the first three drawers of the microfilm cabinet next to the reference desk.

**Provisional and Territorial Papers Index.** Housed in Drawers 109 – 147 of the Research Library's card catalog, this surname and topical index covers an 80-reel microfilmed edition of the Papers of the Oregon Provisional and Territorial Governments, spanning the years 1843 to 1859. A guide to the contents of each reel is available in the Research Library.

**Oregon Historical Society Quarterly.** The Society's publication of record, which began in 1900, has been completely indexed through the year 2000.

**Oregon Pioneer Association Transactions.** Published yearly from 1873 – 1928, and indexed from 1876 to 1925, the Transactions are an invaluable source for biographical and genealogical information. (REF 979.1 Or3).

**Indexes to *The Oregonian*.** Portland's largest newspaper, *The Oregonian*, has been indexed several ways over the years:

- 1850-1909. This 7-volume index, prepared under the direction of the Departments of History, Education, and Economics at the University of Oregon, only includes items "relating to state and local affairs." (REF 979.1007 O166u)
- 1850-1910. Harvey Scott's single-volume *Memoranda* reflects his years as editor of *The Oregonian*, and provides better coverage of individual names. (REF 979.1007 O166s)
- 1904-1910; 1914-1929. Full indexing supplied by the paper. Obituaries are separated between "Deaths-Local" and "Deaths-National." Note that the volume for 1916 covers only the first part of the alphabet, and that indexes for the years 1917-1918 were never published. (REF 979.1007 O166o)
- 1920s-1984. Compiled by the Library Association of Portland, this microfiche subject index also includes references to citations in the *Oregon Journal*, *Portland Telegram*, *Business Journal*, and *Willamette Week*.
- 1985-1992. These years have been indexed online by the Oregon State Library ([www.osl.state.or.us/home/orind.html](http://www.osl.state.or.us/home/orind.html)).