

# Hopkinsville-Christian County Public Library Genealogy Toolkit



HOPKINSVILLE - CHRISTIAN COUNTY



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# McCarroll Genealogy Collection

Welcome to the Hopkinsville-Christian County Public Library's McCarroll Genealogy Collection! The Genealogy Collection was established by a perpetual trust in memory of Joe McCarroll by his brothers William McCarroll and Charles McCarroll. They were the sons of Judge Joe McCarroll, a prominent local attorney, and Mrs. Mary Holloway McCarroll.

Our genealogy collection features approximately 5,000 books, including periodicals from various states and counties. We have resources covering 79 of Kentucky's 120 counties and materials from 25 states. Within this collection, you'll find census records, cemetery records, wills, deeds, funeral records, court orders, and tax lists dating from 1783 to today. We also house genealogy society newsletters from several Kentucky counties. Available on microfilm is the *Hopkinsville Kentuckian* paper from 1892-1919 and the *Kentucky New Era* paper from 1872-1983. Valuable online genealogical sources are available when you visit and include subscriptions to Ancestry.com, Fold3, and HeritageHub. Our staff is here to help assist you in discovering the many branches of your family tree. Here are some tips to get you started on this journey!

## Getting Started

### 1. Get Organized and Learn Some Basics

Gathering materials such as notebooks, binders, file folders, and record sheets will aid in keeping your family documents and essential information organized and easily accessible. Record sheets including Pedigree Charts, Family Group Worksheets, and Research Logs are helpful in avoiding duplicate research, identifying unknowns, and maintaining a clear structure for direct ancestor bloodlines. These documents can be found in this toolkit as well as for free on various genealogy websites including FamilySearch.org and Archives.gov. Familiarizing yourself with some basic genealogy terms and methodology will go a long way in knowing where to start and how to navigate inevitable roadblocks. To help with starting your research journey we recommend the works below, all available for check out from our collection, plus many more to explore:

Renick, Barbara. *Genealogy 101: How to Trace your Family's History and Heritage*. Nashville, TN: Rutledge Hill Press, 2003. (HCCPL Call Number: GEN 929.1 RENICK)

Rising, Marsha H. *The Family Tree Problem Solver: Tried-and-True Tactics for Tracing Elusive Ancestors*. Cincinnati, OH: Family Tree Books, 2011. (HCCPL Call Number: 929.1072 R)

Hendrickson, Nancy. *Unofficial Guide to Ancestry.com: How to Find Your Family History on the #1 Genealogy Website*. Cincinnati, OH: Family Tree Books, 2018. (HCCPL Call Number: 929.10073 HENDRICKSON)

Greenwood, Val D. *The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2000. (HCCPL Call Number: GEN 929.1 GREENWOOD)

Morgan, George G. *How to do Everything: Genealogy*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 2012. (HCCPL Call Number: GEN 929.1 MORGAN)

Melnyk, Marcia. *Family History 101: A Beginner's Guide to Finding Your Ancestors*. Cincinnati, OH: Family Tree Books, 2005. (HCCPL Call Number: 929.1072073 MELNYK)

## **2. Start with Yourself and Work Backwards**

To avoid overwhelming yourself, it is best to start with goals, including what you want to know and why, and from there, establishing what you already know. In starting a family tree, there are basic facts to be uncovered. Starting with your personal vital records makes a strong foundation for your research. These facts include vital statistics commonly found on birth certificates, marriage certificates, divorce decrees, death certificates, and court records:

- Full Names (First, Middle, and Last) as well as any name changes
- Dates (Birth, Baptism, Marriage/Divorce, Death, Burial)
- Important Places (City, County, State, Country)

Other basic facts include:

- Education
- Occupations
- Religion and Church membership
- Personal journals

Once you have gathered your vital records and basic information, it is then easier to move on to your 2 parents, 4 grandparents, 8 great grandparents, and so on. Recording all of this information on family charts and research forms keeps information organized and makes clear what is missing. Once you identify gaps, you can expand your search by interviewing relatives.

## **3. Interview Your Relatives**

Relatives and family friends are a great source of information, as elders are likely to remember past generations and may have compiled their own family history research. As it is best to be specific in your questions, included in the research forms of this toolkit are common questions asked during a family interview. It is also important to note that not all family members are willing to discuss difficult memories and it is best to be respectful of their privacy and unwillingness to share. Relatives may also have kept

family documents that will shed light on missing information. These documents can look like Family Bibles, school reports and diplomas, official birth/death certificates, family letters, scrapbooks, photographs, and journals. Remember to make note of full names, complete dates, and small details. As individuals often remember people and circumstances differently, you may hear conflicting stories from relatives and family friends. With detailed notes, you may just be able to uncover the truth and discover something new along the way. Captioning photographs with names, dates, locations, and events is one more step in organizing pedigree charts and timelines.

#### **4. Evaluate Your Information**

Once your pedigree chart is filled with easily accessible information, you can then start asking direct questions that guide your research. To gather basic information, you can utilize:

- Vital records (often not public information but may be accessed through state records by immediate family members)
- City and telephone directories
- U.S. Census records
- Social Security Death Index

You can then use basic information gathered from these sources to further your research with:

- Obituaries, births, and wedding announcements in local newspaper outlets
- Cemetery records and headstone inscriptions
- Wills, land deeds, tax records
- Military service records
- Naturalization records
- Education and occupational records
- Medical records
- Published family genealogies
- Published local histories

#### **5. Visit Libraries, Historical Societies, Genealogical Societies, and Other Repositories**

In addition to the McCarroll Genealogy Collection, there are many other local and state repositories to be visited for additional information, including:

- John L. Street Library in Trigg County
- Todd County Public Library
- Hopkins County Genealogical Society in Madisonville
- Christian County Historical Society

- Pennyroyal Area Museum
- Woody Winfree Museum
- Hopkinsville City Clerk
- Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives
- Kentucky Genealogical Society
- Kentucky Historical Society

## 6. Electronic Resources

More and more resources are becoming available digitally every day across the world. This access opens a wide net of possibilities for research, some resources for getting started include:

- National Archives - Resources for Genealogists
- National Genealogical Society – Getting Started
- Library of Congress – Genealogy: Getting Started Resource Guide

**Free resources** for further research include:

- Ancestry.com Library Edition (in-library use only). This website is free to access and use through the library computers. It contains many records, including newspapers, birth, marriage, and death certificates, obituary records, city directories, court records, land deeds, wills, military records, and census records.
- Fold3.com (in-library use only). This website is free to access and use through our library computers. It houses millions of military records from the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.
- HeritageHub. This website is free to access and use through our website, hccpl.org. It contains obituaries, death notices, and newspaper articles.
- FamilySearch.org. This website contains immigration and Census records as well as allows you to build an electronic family tree to share and connect with others.
- KYGenWeb.net. This website houses genealogical data, including Census records and Family Bibles, from across all counties in Kentucky.
- USGenWeb.net. This website houses genealogical data from across all U.S. states.
- AccessGenealogy.com. This website provides hundreds of links to free genealogy resources, specializing in Native American ancestry.
- Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center. This library provides information on many free databases including African American Gateway, Indigenous Peoples of North America Gateway, Periodical Source Index, Our Military Heritage, and much more. ([Acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy](http://Acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy))

- GenealogyTrails.com. This website is run entirely by volunteers who transcribe thousands of historical documents from obituaries to voter registrations.
- New York Public Library Digital Collections. This library provides digitized materials featuring photographs, maps, prints, and much more from across the U.S. (Digitalcollections.nypl.org)
- Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc. Passenger Search. This website allows you to search millions of records from those who arrived through the Port of New York from 1820 to 1957. (Heritage.statueofliberty.org)
- Genealogy.com. This website allows you to view and comment on family trees, and search data collections and search tips.
- CyndisList.com. This website maintains links to a vast number of genealogical research sites.
- AmericanAncestors.org. This website offers free limited access to resources from church records to vital records as well as educational resources for genealogy topics.
- Legacy.com. This website houses obituaries from the last 20 years.
- Cemetery resources:
  - Findagrave.com
  - American Battle Monuments Commission (Abmc.gov)
  - Billiongraves.com
  - Interment.net
  - Nationwide Gravesite Locator (Gravelocator.cem.va.gov)
- Black American Genealogy Websites
  - Digital Library on American Slavery. This website has compiled personal information for thousands of individuals, including enslaved peoples and free people of color. (dlas.uncg.edu)
  - National Museum of African American History and Culture-Freedmen's Bureau Search. The Freedmen's Bureau Search Portal provides access to the millions of records created by the United States Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, containing information about formerly enslaved African Americans. (Nmaahc.si.edu)
  - International African American Museum Center for Family History. The Center for Family History provides information on conducting research on enslaved ancestors as well as maintains a searchable archive of primary source material from enslaved peoples and free people of color. (laamuseum.org)
  - Afrigenes.org. This website is devoted to African American genealogy, providing access to various records and resources as well as community message boards and chat groups.
  - ReclaimingKin.com. This website provides research tips, tools, and resources for finding enslaved ancestors.

- African-American Genealogy Group of Kentucky. This website offers educational tutorials on getting started and additional resources for further research. ([aaggky.org](http://aaggky.org))
- Native American Genealogy Websites
  - National Indian Law Library. This library provides a research guide to tracing Native American family roots as well as an extensive list of resources. ([narf.org/nill/resources/roots](http://narf.org/nill/resources/roots))
  - Bureau of Indian Affairs. This federal agency provides resources in tracing Native American ancestry as well as information about enrolling in a federally recognized tribe. ([bia.gov](http://bia.gov))
  - National Archives. This agency provides access to American Indian and Alaska Native records as well as resources for research. ([archives.gov/research/native-americans](http://archives.gov/research/native-americans))

**Subscription-based resources** for further research include:

- Newspapers.com. This website houses over one billion newspaper pages from across the world.
- GenealogyBank.com. This website houses newspaper articles, obituaries, Census records, and Social Security Death Index records.
- HeritageQuest.com. This website provides family histories and indexes to genealogy articles.
- MyHeritage.com. This website offers searchable historical records and allows you to create an extensive family tree and connect with others.

## **7. Keep an Open Mind**

Our ancestors were just like us so expect to see wild accomplishments as well as mistakes and regrets. The journey to discovering your family tree is incredibly rewarding but requires patience and perseverance. Always remember to organize your records, practice good research habits, and make detailed notes so you can compare information you collect and are not doubling back on resources you have already exhausted. Lastly, consider publication or donating a copy of your findings to us so we can share your family tree with your curious descendants!

## Glossary of Genealogical Terms

**Ancestor:** A person from whom you descend; grandparents, great-grandparents, 2nd great-grandparents (also called great great-grandparents), and so forth.

**Antebellum:** Before the American Civil War.

**Census records:** An official count of the population in a particular area. The census generally collects other information including, names, ages, and race.

**Collateral line:** Line of descent connecting persons who are not directly related but share a common ancestor, such as aunts/uncles and cousins.

**Common ancestor:** Person through whom two or more persons claim descent or lineage.

**Descendant:** Descended from an ancestor—children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and so on.

**Family group sheet:** A form that records genealogical information about a single family.

**Family pedigrees:** A diagram that uses standardized symbols to indicate relationships between family members.

**Family histories:** A record that details the basic genealogical facts about generations of a particular family.

**Indentured servant:** Person who is bound into the service of another without pay for a specified period.

**Maiden name:** A woman's surname before marriage.

**Pedigree chart:** A diagram that uses standardized symbols to indicate relationships between family members.

**Primary source:** Records created at the time of an event.

**SSDI (Social Security Death Index):** An index of Social Security Death records. Generally, this includes names of deceased Social Security recipients whose relatives applied for Social Security Death Benefits after their passing.

**Surname:** Last name, family name.

**Vital records:** Birth, marriage, death and divorce records.

See [Ancestry.com Glossary of Genealogical Terms](https://www.ancestry.com/glossary) for a more extensive list.