

SPECIAL SOURCES FOR FINDING BIOGRAPHICAL COMPILATIONS

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Censuses, military records, death certificates, funeral notices etc. can provide useful biographical information. However, many sources also exist for identifying articles containing personal data found nowhere else. Perhaps 8,000,000 individual Americans prior to 1930 had articles about their lives in biographical compilations, "mug books," such as the often reprinted volumes by the Goodspeed Company. Sometimes the footnotes in a scholarly biography of a prominent, even though distant, relative will lead to genealogical sources on ancestors you share with that person.

Some 2,000,000 of these biographical sketches, total, are included in our microfiche of K. G. Saur's American Biographical Archives. (the sketches are in alphabetical order.) Many sketches are indexed the Biography and Genealogy Master Index (BGMI) which we have as part of our Ancestrylibrary.com subscription (see below). The Birmingham Public Library has many of the biographical sources cited, including Appleton's Encyclopedia of American Biography (1887-1889). Our book collection on the sixth floor includes many "who's who" books from the 1970s and earlier that contain biographical information on American scholars and prominent women.

INTERNET

Seemingly the most obscure biographies (books on individuals) can be at least identified through the card catalog of the Library of Congress on line or through On-line Catalog Library Corporation (OCLC, available as "First Search" in the Alabama Virtual Library, available in any Alabama Library). Access to the Biography and Genealogy Master Index (BGMI) is available in book and CD-ROM computer disk format. Ancestrylibrary.com includes that resource, the Periodical Resource Index (PERSI), and the American Genealogical-Biographical Index (AGBI), bibliographies that are also available as books at libraries such as the Birmingham Public. Heritagequest offers to libraries access to 25,000 local and family histories (7.2 million pages). Our computers have subscriptions to both Ancestrylibrary.com and HeritageQuest.com.

SOURCES BY STATE OR CATEGORY

Given below are some examples of other biographical indexes. This list is not complete and omits family files and card catalogs that are commonly found in major research libraries and archives. The sources illustrate that this material takes many forms. Individual state archives and libraries should be queried about local sources of biographical information. State guides such as Davis, Tracing Your Alabama past; Davis, Georgia Research; Lipscomb, Tracing Your Mississippi Ancestors; Greene, Nevada Guide to Genealogical Records; and Spivy, Genealogical Research in Ohio provide information on biographical indexes for those respective states. If you include whatever information that you have on the person you seek in your query, frequently the person responding will check for the person you seek. Almost all colleges, universities etc. have biographical files on graduates.

Alabama. The Birmingham Public Library has a typescript index, "Alabama Biographical Sketches," prepared in the 1930s.

Colorado. The Colorado Historical Society has the C. W. A. and other indexes to information on persons in Colorado.

Confederates. The Broadfoot Company's reprint of the series Confederate Military History (1897) includes biographical sketches inserted in the original series after 1900. The Georgia volume alone has more than 600 genealogical/biographical sketches.

Deaf. See the Internet web site DeafBiographies.com.

Federal Sources. Although covering far more manuscript than printed material, a very useful research tool for sources in the National Archives is Genealogical and Biographical Research: A Catalog of National Archives Microfilm Publications (1983).

Georgia. The Georgia Local History and Genealogy Department of the Atlanta-Fulton County Public Library has card catalogs to biographical material on Georgians and on African-Americans.

Local Histories Without Indexes. The Local History and Genealogy Room of the Library of Congress has a card catalog, prepared many years ago of biographical sketches in local history works that have no indexes.

Medical Professionals (chiefly physicians). Indexes to compilations of biographical data on persons in this field including Arthur W. Hafner, Directory of Deceased American Physicians, 1804-1929 (1989); Lisabeth M. Holloway, Medical Obituaries: American Physicians' Biographical Notices. . .before 1907 (1981); and Martin Kaufman, Dictionary of American Medical Biography (1984). The National Genealogical Society, for a fee, provides access to these sources and others, including the American Medical Association Deceased Physicians' File, at its web site. Other

professions are often represented by state compilations but especially clock makers, jewelers, photographers, and artists.

Missouri. The St. Louis Public Library has indexes to biographical material on its past residents. The index can be accessed on its web site. The Missouri Historical Society (St. Louis); State Historical Society of Missouri (Columbia); and the Missouri State Archives (Jefferson City) each also have indexes to biographical materials on Missourians. Many books have been published as biographical reference works on persons in Missouri. We have several of these books in our collection.

New Jersey. See Donald A. Sinclair and Helen E. Maher, A New Jersey Biographical Index (1993).

South Carolina. See Richard M. Cote, Dictionary of South Carolina Biography (1985).

Tennessee. The Genealogy Department of the Memphis/Shelby County Public Library has an extensive card catalog to biographical material on Tennesseans but with a special emphasis on Memphis.

Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Historical Society has a special collection of biographical and subject matter from newspapers than can be accessed through its web site.