

# Arkansas Locality Guide

Diana Elder

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## Quick Facts

- Arkansas was part of the land acquired in the Louisiana Purchase, Arkansas became a separate territory in 1819 and achieved statehood in 1836.
- A slave state, Arkansas became the ninth state to secede from the union and join the Confederate States of America.
- Statewide registration of births and deaths in Arkansas did not begin until February 1914. Compliance was not complete for approximately three decades.
- No state censuses, there is an 1814, 1816 and pre 1830 Territorial Tax list to use as a census substitute

## Online Research Guides and Record Collections for Arkansas

[Access Genealogy: Arkansas Genealogy](#): black genealogy, cemetery records, databases, DNA, military records, Native American, vital records

[Ancestry Data Collections](#) (80+ unique)

[Ancestry Wiki Arkansas Family History Research](#) - historical background, etc.

[Cyndi's List: Arkansas Links](#)

[FamilySearch Historical Records](#) (12 Arkansas indexed record collections, 4 browse only collections)

[FamilySearch Catalog](#)

[FamilySearch Wiki](#) - home page, clickable county map and links to record types and more

[FamilySearch Wiki Online Genealogy Records](#) - links to record collections

[FindMyPast Record sets](#) (3)

[LDS Genealogy Arkansas Genealogy: Links to record collections and county links](#)

[Lindpendium: Arkansas](#) has county links as well as many statewide records links

[MyHeritage Collections](#) (2)

[Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness: Arkansas Genealogy](#): excellent information and links for Archives & societies, census records, counties, court records, cemetery records, church records, military records, vital records, volunteer lookups and more

[USGenWeb Arkansas Archives Project](#): search all records in the database

[USGenWeb Arkansas Archives](#) search page, county links

## Research Aids

- [RAOK Volunteers](#): list of individuals and what they will look up
- Rhonda S. Norris, *Arkansas links : a comprehensive guide to genealogical research in the Natural State*, (Russellville, Arkansas : [R. S. Norris], c1999). FHL 976.7 D27n A county-by-county guide to maps, census records, county records, marriage records,

church and cemetery records, military records, city directories, vital records, county histories, land patents, newspapers, and facility addresses.

## Counties

[USGenWeb county archives](#)

"Maps of Arkansas, " *Map of US*, (<http://www.mapofus.org/arkansas/> : accessed 13 February 2017). Interactive map of county formation.

## Maps and Gazetteers

- Arkansas State Archives: [Historic Maps Collection](#): over 4,000 maps, good for very specific
- Pine Bluff Jefferson County Library System: [Arkansas Maps](#): list by date of maps: 1817-2010
- Russell Pierce Baker, *Arkansas Township Atlas: A History of the Minor Civil Divisions in each Arkansas County*, (Hot Springs, Arkansas : Arkansas Genealogical Society, c1984, 1985). [FHL 976.7 E5b](#)
- Russell Pierce Baker, *Arkansas Post Offices from Memdag to Norsk : a historical directory, 1832-1990*, (Hot Springs, Arkansas : Arkansas Genealogical Society, c2003). FHL 976.7 E8br. The publication contains a listing of the 6,500 post offices that were established in Arkansas beginning with territorial times. Many no longer exist and this book gives the name, county, dates of operation, location, and comments about each.
- Louis A. Adams, *Adam's Directory of Points and Landings on Rivers and Bayous in the States of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin*, ( New Orleans : W.L. Murray, 1877). [Digital version at Internet Archive](#)
- Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection: [Arkansas Maps](#)
- "Geographic Information Systems & Maps" *University Libraries* (<http://libraries.uark.edu/GIS/default.asp>: accessed 13 February 2017). Hosted by the University of Arkansas
- "Historic Arkansas County Maps" *My Genealogy Hound*" (<http://www.mygenealogyhound.com/maps/arkansas-maps/arkansas-county-maps.asp> : accessed 13 February 2017). Vintage Arkansas maps by county with settlements within the county. Links to other county helps.
- "Maps of Arkansas, " *Map of US*, (<http://www.mapofus.org/arkansas/> : accessed 13 February 2017). Interactive map of county formation.

## Geography

Arkansas' remoteness had much to do with its geography. Arkansas is in area one-sixth larger than the state of New York, comprising more than fifty-two thousand square miles. The early migration trails across the country tended to go around Arkansas because there were no good

roads, many large swamps, and a lack of bridges to cross the streams, sloughs, and bayous. Arkansas is divided into six natural regions that greatly influenced both early settlement and development of established communities: See [Arkansas Regions](#) on wildernet.com for the below map and explanation of each region.

## Timeline

- 1541 - June 18 - Hernando de Soto of Spain was the first European to explore Arkansas.
- 1673 - July - French explorers Louis Jolliet and Father Jacques Marquette descend the Mississippi to the mouth of the Arkansas River. Warned by the Quapaw (Arkansas) Indians of hostile tribes farther south they turn back. In July 1674 they turn back north, having reached the Quapaw villages of "Akansae" or "Kappa" near the confluence of the Arkansas and Mississippi rivers.
- 1682 - Mar 13 - Rene-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, reaches the Arkansas on his way to the mouth of the Mississippi. He visits a Quapaw village and claims the land in the name of King Louis XIV.
- 1686 - Henri de Tonti founded Arkansas Post, the first settlement in the lower Mississippi River Valley. It served as a trading post, a way-station for Mississippi River travel, and the home of a Jesuit mission for a few years.
- 1721 - A group of 1,300 half-starved colonists - whites and black slaves - abandons Arkansas Post after John Law's scheme to develop the Mississippi Valley collapses.
- 1762 - France cedes the Louisiana Territory, including Arkansas, to Spain, but French soldiers continue to man Arkansas Post.
- 1803 - The United States purchases the Louisiana Territory from France, which had retaken it from Spain as part of the Treaty of San Ildefonso.
- 1818 - The Quapaw cede their lands between the Red and Arkansas rivers.
- 1819 - March 2 - Arkansas, which has been part of Missouri Territory since 1812, is detached and made a territory. November 20: Arkansas Gazette, the first newspaper in Arkansas, published.
- 1821 - October 25 - The capital moves from Arkansas Post to Little Rock.
- 1822 - March 16 - The Eagle, first steamboat to ascend the Arkansas River, arrives at Little Rock.
- 1830 - May 28 - Congress establishes the boundary separating Arkansas from Indian Territory to the west.
- 1832-1839 - Removal of the "Five Civilized Tribes" of Indians from the Southeast through Arkansas to Indian Territory.
- 1836 - June 15 - Arkansas became the 25th state on June 15, 1836, with Little Rock as its capital.
- 1846 - Disillusioned by the collapse of two state-chartered banks, legislators ratify a constitutional amendment barring any banking institution from being established in the state.
- 1859 - February 12 - Signing of legislation ordering all free Negroes out of Arkansas by the end of the year.

- 1860 - On the eve of the Civil War, Arkansas has a population of 435,450, of whom 111,115 are black slaves and 11,481 are slave owners.
- 1861 -- February - Provisional Confederate Constitution is adopted (Confederate Constitution Day). Arsenal at Little Rock, AR occupied by State Troops
  - - May 6 - A convention votes to secede from the Union and join the Confederacy. The first of some 60,000 Arkansas residents join the confederate troops, but some 9,000 whites and more than 5,000 blacks fight on the Union side during the war.
- 1862 -- Mar 7-8 - Battle of Pea Ridge in northwest Arkansas. A Confederate advance north is rebuffed.
  - - August 2 - Skirmish at Jonesboro, AR
- 1863 -- July 25 - Skirmish at Brownsville, AR and Williamsburg, KY
  - - September 10 - Federal troops occupy Little Rock.
- 1864 -- A unionist convention abolishes slavery in Arkansas and adopts a new constitution for the state.
  - skirmish at Benton, AR and Pleasant Hill, MO
- 1866 - August - Ex-Confederates sweep control of the legislature and pass laws denying blacks the right to sit on juries, serve in the militia, or attend white public schools.
- 1867 - March 2 - Congress passes the Reconstruction Act, which voids the government of Arkansas and nine other southern states.
- 1868 - March 13 - A new constitution adopted by referendum enfranchises Negroes and disenfranchises ex-Confederate soldiers. June 22. Arkansas readmitted to the Union. November. Governor Powell Clayton declares martial law in much of the state; a mostly black militia battles the Ku Klux Klan.
- 1871 - Completion of a railroad between Memphis and Little Rock.
- 1872 - University of Arkansas opens in Fayetteville.
- 1874 -- May 15 - Month-long "Brooks-Baxter War" between rival claimants to the governorship ends when President Ulysses S Grant orders the forces of the former to disperse.
  - - October 13 - Ratification of a new constitution restoring the franchise to all whites and guaranteeing full civil rights for blacks ends the Reconstruction era.
- 1887 - Bauxite discovered southwest of Little Rock; peak output is reached by 1918, by which time almost all US Bauxite is being mined in Arkansas.
- 1891 - Jim Crow legislation segregates railroad coaches and waiting stations.
- 1892 - Adoption of a constitutional amendment imposing a poll tax restricts the electorate.
- 1898 - The Democratic party adopts whites-only primary elections.
- 1899 - Bauxite mining began in 1899 and Arkansas soon led all other states in production.

#### [Important Dates to Remember While Researching](#)

- Louisiana Purchase (May 2, 1803)
- Louisiana Statehood (April 30th, 1812)

- Missouri Statehood (August 10, 1821)
- Arkansas Territory officially recognized (July 4, 1819). Until this date, Arkansas still considered Missouri Territory.
- Arkansas Statehood (June 15, 1836)
- Texas Statehood (December 29, 1845)
- Ordinance of May 1861 (Arkansas Secedes from the Union) Deed numbers of Swamplands & Internal Improvement Lands start over at #1. Swampland deed numbers also start over at #1 again in September 1865, following the Civil War.
- Arkansas Commissioner of State Lands Office officially created (1868). Some deed numbers start over at #1.
- Oklahoma Statehood (November 16, 1907)

## Arkansas Law

- [\*Laws of the Territory of Arkansas ... 1819 and 1820\*](#) (Arkansas: William E. Woodruff, Territorial Printer, 1821)
- [\*Acts ... of the Territory of Arkansas ... 1821\*](#) (Little Rock: William E. Woodruff, Territorial Printer, 1822)
- [\*Acts ... of the Territory of Arkansas ... 1823\*](#) (Little Rock: William E. Woodruff, Territorial Printer, 1824)
- [\*Acts ... of the Territory of Arkansas ... 1825\*](#) (Little Rock: William E. Woodruff, Territorial Printer, 1826)
- [\*Acts ... of the Territory of Arkansas ... 1827\*](#) (Little Rock: William E. Woodruff, Territorial Printer, 1828)
- [\*Acts ... of the Territory of Arkansas ... 1828\*](#) (Little Rock: William E. Woodruff, Territorial Printer, 1828)
- [\*Acts ... of the Territory of Arkansas ... 1829\*](#) (Little Rock: William E. Woodruff, Territorial Printer, 1830)
- [\*Acts ... of the Territory of Arkansas ... 1831\*](#) (Little Rock: Charles Bertrand, Territorial Printer, 1832)
- [\*Acts ... of the Territory of Arkansas ... 1833\*](#) (Little Rock: William E. Woodruff, Territorial Printer, 1834)
- [\*Acts ... of the Territory of Arkansas ... 1835\*](#) (Little Rock: Smith & Reed, Territorial Printers, 1835)

## Arkansas History

[History of immigration to Arkansas](#) by J.M. Lucey; Article in digitized book, p. 201: "History of immigration to Arkansas, beginning with the year 1673 when the French landed at the Quapaw village and in July of that year built a fort at Arkansas Post. The article includes historical information about the American immigrants, French immigrants and settlers, Spanish immigration and Spanish settlements, German colonies, biographical information on notable Arkansas families, immigration aided by the state government, Polish immigrants, Italian colonies, an Irish colony, Bohemian colonists, Syrian, Slavonian and Greek immigration, and Chinese immigrants. Article covers the years 1673-1903."

## Colonial Era

### French Possession 1673-1766

"During the seventeenth century, French explorers made their way through today's Arkansas. A small French expedition of two canoes from Canada voyaged down the Mississippi River to Arkansas in 1673, led by Jacques Marquette, a Catholic priest, and Louis Joliet, a fur trader. LaSalle's expedition followed nearly ten years later, claiming the land for France. In 1686, Henri de Tonti founded **Arkansas Post, the first settlement in the lower Mississippi River Valley**. It served as a trading post, a way station for Mississippi River travel, and the home of a Jesuit mission for a few years. The French later established several settlements south of the Arkansas Post in 1699, including Natchez and Orleans." (Red book on Ancestry.com)

## Colonial Era

### Spanish Possession 1766-1803

"Prior to France's decisive defeat by Britain in the Seven Years War (or French and Indian War), in 1762 France ceded to Spain both New Orleans and land west of the Mississippi River, which eventually became the Louisiana Purchase. The Spanish began governing the area in 1766, but their authority was not firmly established for several years. **Arkansas Post remained the center of administration for the District of Arkansas, a huge, undefined region, including all of present-day Arkansas and Oklahoma**. The area was supervised by a lieutenant governor at St. Louis. Settlers from the British colonies, preoccupied with severing their ties from the Crown, had not yet broken through the Blue Ridge Mountains to the east. Once independence was won, however, the land formerly held by Native Americans became "fair game" for grants to those who had served their new country well in battle. Because of this, settlers—the majority from Kentucky and Tennessee—began to increase in number, making their homes along the rivers of eastern and southern Arkansas. By 1792, early settlements had cropped up at Big Prairie, near the mouth of the St. Francis River, and present-day Helena, though inhabitants were few." (Red book on Ancestry.com)

## Colonial Era

### U.S. Territorial Period 1803-1836

- Following the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, Arkansas settlements officially came under United States jurisdiction as part of **Louisiana Territory**.
- In June 1812, Arkansas became part of **Missouri Territory** as a result of Louisiana's admittance to the union.
  - The northern quarter of Arkansas was established as part of the New Madrid District in Louisiana Territory. Directly to the south and running to the Arkansas River, an area shaped like a mirror image of Virginia formed the District of Arkansas. Both districts became counties when Missouri Territory was created.
  - The remaining half of Arkansas, located on the southern side of the Arkansas River, was claimed by Native Americans.
    - The Osage and Quapaw had resided in the area from a much earlier time, while the Cherokee and Choctaw received land grants

from the federal government for land in Arkansas, having been forced out of their homelands in the east. Delaware, Shawnee, Caddo, and other native tribes made Arkansas their home.

- The Quapaw claimed the land south of the Arkansas River for approximately 100 miles and indefinitely to the west.
  - The Osage had claimed a large region north of the Arkansas River, and in 1808 ceded land that became part of the District of Arkansas, then still part of Louisiana Territory. Treaties with the Osage chiefs were made again in 1816, 1818, and 1825, resulting in the loss of their Arkansas land and their removal to today's Oklahoma
- Two million acres, situated between the Arkansas and St. Francis rivers, were offered as bounty land for military service in the War of 1812. Each veteran was given a warrant for 160 acres, allocated by a lottery process.
  - An 1818 conference between the Osage and Cherokee met with Major William Lovely, Cherokee agent in Missouri Territory, resulting in the Osage ceding lands they had held in the northeastern section of present-day Oklahoma and a northwestern portion of today's Arkansas, at the time still part of Missouri Territory.
- **Arkansas Territory** was organized from Missouri Territory in 1819 with a little over 14,000 inhabitants, exclusive of native peoples. **All of present-day Oklahoma except the panhandle was included.** Arkansas Post was designated as the capital. Lands formerly belonging to the Cherokee nation were organized as Crawford County. Little Rock became the capital in 1821. As the territory continued to develop between 1819 and 1836, more cession agreements between native tribes in Arkansas and the United States government opened the land to further settlement and eventual statehood.

### Territorial Records

- The territorial papers of the United States by Clarence Edwin Carter NARA publication MO721 on *Geneanet.org*
  - [Volume 19](#):Papers relating to the Foundation of the Territory of Arkansas, 1818-1819 1 Two: Papers relating to the Administration of Acting Governor Crittenden, July 4, 1819-Dec. 28, 1819 83 THREE : Papers relating to the First Administration of Governor Miller, Dec. 28, 1819-Jan. 3, 1823 . . . 131 FOUR: Papers relating to the Second Administration of Governor Miller, 1823 477 FIVE: Papers relating to the Second Administration of Acting Governor Crittenden, 1823 523 Six: Papers relating to the Third Administration of Acting Governor Crittenden, 1824 585 SEVEN: The Executive Register, 1829-1836
  - [Volume 20](#) : Eight: Papers relating to the Third Administration of Acting Governor Crittenden, 1825 (continued) 3 Nine: Papers relating to the First Administration of Governor Izard, 1825-1828 p.56 Ten: Papers relating to the Second Administration of Governor Izard, 1828 p. 593 Eleven: Papers relating to the Fourth Administration of Acting Governor Crittenden, 1828-1829 p.793 Index p.861

- [Volume 21](#): Symbols p.v Part Twelve: Papers Relating to the First Administration of Governor Pope, 1829-1832 p.1 Thirteen: Papers Relating to the Second Administration of Governor Pope, 1832-1835 p. 485 Fourteen: Papers Relating to the Administration of Governor Fulton, 1835-1836 p.1027 Index p.1259

## Statehood 1836-Present

- Arkansas became the twenty-fifth state in 1836. **Following the Panic of 1837, many people moved into Arkansas from both southern and eastern states.** Men from Arkansas served in the U.S. Army during the Mexican War, some receiving bounty lands prior to 1855. The Gold Rush in California attracted people from Arkansas; most began the trek from Fort Smith.

## Libraries and Archives

- [Arkansas State Archives](#): formerly the Arkansas History Commission "one-stop place for research in Arkansas, plus it has numerous references to the entire South, Civil War, Folklore, Ozarks, Black History, and Religions" (Dollarhide and Bremer p. 17)
  - Search records: county, military, maps, newspapers, land, church, photographs, etc.
  - [Resource guides](#): religion, immigration, multicultural heritage, civil war, African American, WWI, cemetery,
  - [Research services](#): can email requests
  - Online [Arkansas Digital Ark-ives](#): Here you will find digitized documents, visuals, maps, broadsides, pamphlets, and three-dimensional objects significant to Arkansas history and culture, from the holdings of the Arkansas State Archives. New collections are always being added, so check back often to see what's new!
- NEARA [Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives](#): NEARA collects material on a 16-county region in Northeast Arkansas, which includes the counties of: Baxter, Clay, Craighead, Crittenden, Cross, Fulton, Greene, Independence, IZard, Jackson, Lawrence, Mississippi, Poinsett, Randolph, Sharp, and Stone.
- SARA [Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives](#): SARA offers a variety of research resources related to a 12-county region in southwest Arkansas that includes the counties of Columbia, Hempstead, Howard, Lafayette, Little River, Miller, Nevada, Ouachita, Pike, Polk, Sevier, and Union. "references that can solve some of the hardest parts of research in Arkansas -- finding those settlers who came through Arkansas from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Georgie, en route to Texas. Many early records not at Little Rock are here for early Arkansas people." (Dollarhide and Bremer p. 17)
- [Arkansas State Library](#). One Capitol Mall, Little Rock AR; "Arkansiana collection, local and state histories, and genealogy. book collection is probably the best in the state." (Dollarhide and Bremer p. 17)



- [SPECIAL COLLECTIONS University of Arkansas Libraries](#), Fayetteville, AR: "County records, newspapers, manuscripts, church records, Arkansas Collection, Ozarks history, state history, and genealogy" (Dollarhide and Bremer p. 17)
  - [Duplication fees and policies](#)
- Fort Smith Public Library: Local and state history and genealogy references in the "Arkansas Collection". (Dollarhide and Bremer p. 17)
  - [Online Databases at FSPL](#): most not available without access; the following are available from home
    - [The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture](#)
  - [Genealogy Resources](#):
    - indexes to For Smith Cemetery, Birth, marriage, and Death records
    - Will take research requests for \$10 per hour
    - Special collections: funeral home records, city directories, newspapers, family files, DAR collection, Civil War collection and more
- [HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM Marshall, Texas](#): "Many early Arkansas records can be found here for the period right after the war." (Dollarhide and Bremer p. 17)
- [Pine Bluff Jefferson County Library](#): good genealogy collection;
  - newspapers on microfilm dating back to the 1820's
  - obituary index, can request photocopies of obituary records and genealogy books
  - records for the whole state, surname folders, indexes and more
- [Ozarks Genealogical Society Library](#): Springfield, MO: "Genealogies of Arkansas Ozarks families, plus newspapers, family folders, obituaries, cemeteries, and more."(Dollarhide and Bremer p. 17)
  - volunteers will search the OGS and public library materials for \$10 plus copies.
- Craighead County -[Jonesboro Public Library](#): "Good genealogy section, with a good Arkansas collection, Family folders, indexes, periodicals, books, microfilm, and more." (Dollarhide and Bremer p. 17)
- [Torreyson Library](#), University of Central Arkansas: "This library has a solid genealogy collection with many references to Arkansas." (Dollarhide and Bremer p. 17)

## **Genealogical Societies and Publications** (see NGS Guide for more info)

- [Texarkana USA Genealogical Society](#): Bowie County, TX and Miller County, AR records online
- [Arkansas Genealogical Society](#)

- Publishes the quarterly journal, *Arkansas Family Historian*
- [Arkansas Historical Association](#)
  - Publishes the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*
  - Web page has links to county historical societies
- Green County Historical and Genealogical Society
- Pulaski County Historical Society
  - Published *The Pulaski County Historical Review*
- Saline County History and Heritage Society

## Records

### African American Records

- [African American Research Resources at the Arkansas State Archives](#): books, microfilm, pamphlets, histories, etc. listed by category: histories, education fraternal organizations, funeral home and cemetery records, manuscript collections, military records, newspapers, oral histories, religions and slavery.
- [Arkansas, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1864-1872](#) FamilySearch Collection, browse only by county. The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (often called the Freedmen's Bureau) was created in 1865 at the end of the American Civil War to supervise relief efforts including education, health care, food and clothing, refugee camps, legalization of marriages, employment, labor contracts, and securing back pay, bounty payments and pensions. These records include letters and endorsements sent and received, account books, applications for rations, applications for relief, court records, labor contracts, registers of bounty claimants, registers of complaints, registers of contracts, registers of disbursements, registers of freedmen issued rations, registers of patients, reports, rosters of officers and employees, special and general orders and circulars received, special orders and circulars issued, records relating to claims, court trials, property restoration, and homesteads. This collection corresponds with NARA microfilm publication M1901, Records of the Field Offices for the State of Arkansas, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1872.

### Bible Records

- Bible records index by Sharry Crofford-Gould FHL 973 V2; digitized book available at FH Centers of the FHL
  - This is a surname index to some 3000 family Bibles which were printed in published sources, such as periodicals, books, etc. These published sources came from Arkansas, Texas, Alabama, Virginia, Tennessee, Utah, New York, Washington D.C., South Carolina (actually for Georgia), but may cover a much broader area.

### Cemetery Records

- [Cemetery Research Resources at the Arkansas State Archives](#): list of books, microfilm, etc. available at the AK state Archives

- [Arkansas, Oakland and Fraternal Historic Cemetery Records, 1867-2013](#) FamilySearch browse only collection: Images of cemetery records including burial and lot sales books and 3 x 5 index burial cards.
- [Arkansas Cemetery Records](#) Access Genealogy; listed by county, then name of cemetery. Most are complete indices at the time of transcription
- [Arkansas Gravestones.org](#): website has photos of gravestones from across Arkansas; browse by surname, county or search gravestones
- [Arkansas Gravestones Project](#): the companion website to AK Gravestones.org; clickable map by county, search for cemeteries within a county

### Census Records

- [Arkansas, Compiled Census and Census Substitutes Index, 1819-1870](#) Ancestry collection from the Accelerated Indexing Systems; This collection contains the following indexes: 1819-1829 Tax Lists Index; 1820 Federal Census Index; 1823 Sheriff's Census Index; 1829 Sheriff's Census Index; 1830 Federal Census Index; 1830-1839 Tax Lists Index; 1840 Federal Census Index; 1840 Pensioners Index; 1850 Federal Census Index; 1850 Slave Schedule; 1860 Federal Census Index; 1870 Federal Census Index.
- [Arkansas Census, 1840](#) Ancestry collection: this is an index to the 1840 Census of Arkansas, the first Federal Census taken after Arkansas was admitted to the Union on June 15, 1836. Information in the Census includes, where available, the name of the head of the household, city or county of residence, number of free white males and females by age group, number of free colored males and females by age group, number of persons in each family employed in mining, commerce, manufacturing and trades, etc., pensioners for Revolutionary War or military services, schools, and the number of persons over 20 who can't read or write.
- [Newton County, Arkansas Census, 1900](#), Ancestry, text only collection; transcription of original census records

### Church Records

- [Records of Religion and Spirituality at the Arkansas State Archives](#): pdf of available church records for each county and religion

### Court Records

- [Arkansas State Court Organization](#)
- [Finding Court Records in Arkansas](#)
- [Arkansas Blacksheep Ancestors](#): Free Genealogical Prison and Convict Records, Historical Court Records, Executions, Insane Asylum Records and biographies of famous outlaws criminals & pirates;

### Immigration and Naturalization Records

- [Guide to Immigration Research at the Arkansas State Archives](#): list of books, films, pamphlets, and manuscripts available at the archives.

- [Arkansas, Naturalization Records, 1907-1968](#): Ancestry collection provided in association with NARA. This database includes naturalization records from Arkansas. The Federal District Courts took over the naturalization process in 1906, so the naturalization papers and applications from 1906 onward aren't held in state archives, but at the National Archives.
  - The naturalization records may contain:
    - - Name of individual
    - - Native country
    - - Date of naturalization
    - - Residence
    - - Occupation
    - - Birth date
    - - Date and place of arrival
    - - Children's names
- Index to naturalization records in Arkansas, 1809-1906: FHL Film 1730849; prepared by Immigration and Naturalization Records Indexing Project, Services Division, U.S. Work Projects Administration, Arkansas, one microfilm reel
- [History of immigration to Arkansas](#) by J.M. Lucey; Article in digitized book, p. 201: "History of immigration to Arkansas, beginning with the year 1673 when the French landed at the Quapaw village and in July of that year built a fort at Arkansas Post. The article includes historical information about the American immigrants, French immigrants and settlers, Spanish immigration and Spanish settlements, German colonies, biographical information on notable Arkansas families, immigration aided by the state government, Polish immigrants, Italian colonies, an Irish colony, Bohemian colonists, Syrian, Slavonian and Greek immigration, and Chinese immigrants. Article covers the years 1673-1903."

## Land Records

- [Arkansas Land Patents](#) Collection on My Heritage shows land coordinates, date and shows on a map the location of the land patent
- Arkansas Commissioner of State Lands [Historical Documents, Maps, & more](#): great website explains the land grants and acts, then has images of the documents.
- From *The Legal Genealogist*: "[Landing the Records](#)"
- For the [Louisiana Purchase](#), the site includes images of "the original survey field notes of the Louisiana Purchase. These are the actual notebooks that were carried, signed and dated by the surveyors themselves."
- Next are the [Spanish Land Grants](#), including records of the lands granted by both Spain and France from the 1600s to 1803. Images include registers and certificate books.
- The [Military Bounty Lands \(1812\)](#) were lands granted by the federal government to eligible veterans for their service in the War of 1812. The original books, organized by Township and Range, "with name, legal description, warrant number and date of patent," are digitized and available online.

- The [New Madrid Claims \(1815\)](#) stem from an Act of Congress allowing settlers to relocate to other lands if their property had been affected by the New Madrid earthquakes. There's an index to the claims prepared in the 1930s-1940s, and "an alphabetical index to New Madrid claims and Spanish claims that refers you to the correct page number in each journal." Then individual claim records that have been digitized.
- The [Seminary Lands \(1827\)](#) were sold to support universities and, later, common schools. Records include the seminary lands sales book register and plats.
- The [Lovely Donations \(1828\)](#) records resulted from the Cherokee Treaty of 1828 and the resettlement of white settlers from Cherokee lands. "Each head of household displaced by the Treaty was allowed to claim up to 320 acres of new land in the Arkansas territory free of charge." The register of claims has been digitized.
- The [16th Section Lands \(1829\)](#) were "lands that were reserved for the benefit of public schools." The lands were sold and the funds raised dedicated to public education. The records online include "eleven plat books and three patent books. Looking on the plat will show you which patent book contains the patent information. The first image of each plat book will show a diagram of the counties contained in the book and will help by showing what page a particular township and range is located."
- The [Saline Lands \(1832\)](#) were reserved lands that contained a salt spring or brine seep, with the federal government allowed to "lease the springs and property to prospective salt makers with the funds going to improving roads in the territory." By 1847, the federal government was out of the salt business and states were allowed to sell the lands. Records include plats and a sales book.
- The records of the [State Bank Lands \(1836\)](#) include registers and plats reflecting one of the more charged moments of Arkansas economic history: the Real Estate Bank of Arkansas whose activities were marked by "a decade of corruption and accusations regarding who was responsible."
- The [Internal Improvement Lands \(1841\)](#) records include an original record, sales record and plats, together with a newer journal, from lands the Congress allowed Arkansas (and other states as well) to sell for the purpose of making internal improvements.
- The [Swamp Lands \(1850\)](#) records resulted from a federal law that ceded vast amounts of federally-owned swampland to state ownership. "The state(s) then issued patents on these lands (at little or sometimes no cost) on the condition that the lands had to be drained and put back into productive use — presumably for agricultural purposes. Arkansas was the third largest benefactor of this legislation putting over 7.6 million acres into private ownership trailing only Florida (20.3 million) and Louisiana (9.4 million)." Records include entry books, patents, patent books and plats.
- Finally, the [1868 Report](#) was a survey of all of Arkansas's counties including "agricultural yields, transportation methods, type and cost of lands, timber and water prospects, wildlife as well as the general health of the public." Its aim was to attract immigrants to the state; the documents reflect life as it was in 1868 throughout Arkansas.
- It's a great website for Arkansas research overall, well worth the time to read through carefully... and see what you can find on your ancestors who spent time there in the Land of Opportunity.
- [United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800-c. 1955](#) FamilySearch collection, browse only; organized by state, then volume; the books are organized by township number and range number
  - FSWiki ["Tract Books"](#): very helpful article with search strategies

- [Tract Books Coverage Table](#) , FS Wiki, designates the township and range in each volume
- Search Land Patents at [Bureau of Land Management General Land Office Records](#) to obtain Township and Range
  - 8 million successful federal land applications are indexed here
  - 2 million applications were left unfinished or were rejected and not in this database; to locate, a page-by-page tract book search is necessary, then the application can be sent for from the National Archives
- 3,907 tract books containing official records of the land status and transactions involving surveyed public lands arranged by state and then by township and range.
- These books indicate who obtained the land, and include a physical description of the tract and where the land is located. The type of transaction is also recorded such as cash entry, credit entry, homesteads, patents (deeds) granted by the Federal Government, and other conveyances of title such as Indian allotments, internal improvement grants (to states), military bounty land warrants, private land claims, railroad grants, school grants, and swamp grants.
- Additional items of information included in the tract books are as follows: number of acres, date of sale, purchase price, land office, entry number, final Certificate of Purchase number, and notes on relinquishments and conversions. Original documents are located at the Bureau of Land management in Springfield, Virginia.

### **Military Records**

- [Arkansas Frontier Forts Prior to 1902](#) list on Access Genealogy of forts by name and location

### **Civil War**

- [Guide to Civil War Manuscript Collections at the Arkansas State Archives](#) The Arkansas State Archives has actively sought to collect document related to the Civil War since the agency's creation in 1905. As a result of more than one hundred years of acquisition, the Arkansas State Archives owns the largest and most comprehensive holdings pertaining to Arkansas in the Civil War available anywhere. This list summarizes some of the holdings available at the Arkansas State Archives. This guide does not include all of the agency's resources.
- [Arkansas Civil War Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, 1861-1865](#) FamilySearch collection with images on fold3
- [Arkansas Civil War Service Records of Union Soldiers, 1861-1865](#) FamilySearch collection with images on fold3
- [Arkansas Ex-Confederate Pension Records, 1891-1939](#) FamilySearch collection includes an index and images of pension records of former Confederate soldiers and widows who resided in the state of Arkansas. These records are the administrative records from the Arkansas State Auditor, which authorized and disbursed pension

payments. Researchers should also check the pension application files which are published on FamilySearch.

- [Arkansas Confederate Pensions, 1901-1929](#) FamilySearch browse only index and images of applications for pensions filed by confederate veterans and widows living in the state of Arkansas. Index by surname.
- [Arkansas, Confederate Pensions, 1901-1929](#) Ancestry browse only collection, organized by surname
- [Arkansas, Confederate Pension Records, 1891-1935](#) Ancestry collection: "This digital database from the Arkansas History Commission (AHC) extracts details on Confederate veterans and widows from Arkansas Confederate pension records from the years 1891–1939."
- [Report of the Adjutant General of Arkansas, for the period of the late rebellion, and to November 1, 1866](#); Digitized book with rosters of Arkansas Militia, disbursements, indexed

Unlike former Union troops, Confederate veterans could not look to the federal government for pensions, whether for disability, age, or service. Most of the former Confederate states eventually passed legislation to provide pensions to veterans residing in their states. Arkansas began providing grants to Confederate veterans in 1891. Widows and mothers of veterans became eligible in 1915.

**Mexican War 1845-1848** [The Mexican War-an Important War for Southern Research - Rick Sayre, NGS 2017.pdf](#)

### World War I

- [Guide to World War I Resources at the Arkansas State Archives](#): list of books, films and more available
- [Arkansas, World War I Discharge Records Index, 1917-1918](#) Find My Past collection;

### World War II

- [Arkansas First Draft Registration Cards, 1940-1945](#) FamilySearch Name index and images of draft registration cards (SSS-1 forms) covering a special classification of individuals born between 1897 and 1928. The collection was located at the NARA SW region in Fort Worth Texas.
- [Arkansas, Second Registration Draft Cards, 1948-1959](#) My Heritage collection;
  - Images of draft registration cards arranged numerically by local board number then alphabetically by surname of registrant. The 4x6 cards (SSS-1 forms) cover a special classification of individuals born between 1922 and 1940. The collection was located at the NARA SW region in Fort Worth, Texas.
  - For additional information about this collection contact the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis. The cards are part of Record Group 147: Records of the Selective Service System, 1926-1975. In August of 2013, the National Archives replaced the ARC – Archival Research Catalog - with the OPA – Online

Public Access. ARC identifiers will still work to access the collections in OPAimages of index cards

- [Arkansas Second Registration Draft Cards 1948-1959](#). Find my Past collection, indexed no images
- [U.S. WWII Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947](#) Ancestry collection for cards filled out by men in Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, and North Carolina aged 18-44.
- [U.S., Alien Draft Registrations, Selected States, 1940-1946](#) Ancestry indexed collection: "With the Second World War already raging in Europe, in September of 1940 Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 into law—the first peacetime conscription in U.S. history. The conscription included both native-born male citizens and aliens between the ages of 21 and 35 residing in the U.S. This collection contains copies of Records Relating to Aliens' Personal Histories and Statements (DSS Form 304), Applications by Aliens for Relief from Military Service, compiled 1942–1946 (DSS Form 301), and related correspondence. These forms were filled out by aliens in the U.S. who were subject to the draft." Includes records from Arkansas
- [Arkansas World War 2 NMCG Casualty List](#) collection on Access Genealogy: Inclusion of names in this Arkansas World War II Casualty List has been determined solely by the residence of next of kin at the time of notification of the last wartime casualty status. This listing does not necessarily represent the State of birth, legal residence, or official State credit according to service enlistment.

### **Multicultural Research**

- [Arkansas's Multicultural Heritage Resource Guide](#): Asian, Eastern Europeans, Hispanic, Italian, Jewish, resources available at the Arkansas State Archives

### **Native American Research**

- [Arkansas Indian Tribes](#) Access Genealogy list of tribes and descriptions
- [Old Settlers Roll](#) Access Genealogy listing of Cherokee still living in 1851
- [1817 Cherokee Reservation Roll](#) Access Genealogy listing of Cherokee claimants applying for a 640 acre tract in the East in lieu of removing to Arkansas.

### **Newspapers**

- [Arkansas Online Historical Newspapers](#): organized by county and city, name of newspaper, coverage and resource
- [Index of Craighead County Deaths & Obituaries from The Jonesboro Sun](#) sponsored by the Craighead County Jonesboro Library; staff members will send up to five obituaries per week

### **Probate Records**

- [Arkansas Probate Records, 1817-1979](#) FamilySearch browse only, organized by county. Collection of probate records, including estate files and other documents



created by the probate courts of Arkansas counties. Probates were generally recorded in the county of residence. This collection covers probate records created 1817-1979, but the content and time period of the records varies.

- [Arkansas, Wills and Probate Records, 1818-1998](#) Ancestry collection, indexed and browseable by county.

## Vital Records

### Birth Records

- [Arkansas Vital Records](#) has birth records dating from February 1, 1914 through the present. There are a limited number of birth records available prior to 1914. Those records were filed with Arkansas Vital Records after 1914. We also have original copies of some Little Rock and Fort Smith births dating from 1881. Cost of a birth record is \$12.00; births released to relatives or representatives. Births over 100 years may be released to the public.
- [Arkansas Births and Christenings, 1812-1965](#) Familysearch index, not complete for any particular place, region or time period
- [Arkansas, Sebastian County Births and Deaths, 1877-1963](#) FamilySearch collection: Records of births and deaths from Sebastian County, Arkansas, 1877-1929. Also includes death records from Fort Smith, 1945-1963. This collection is part of a cooperative indexing project with the Central Arkansas Genealogical And Historical Society.

### Marriage Records

- [Arkansas Vital Records](#) has marriage records dating from January 1917. Marriages occurring before that date are not recorded in this office. Arkansas Vital Records does not have the actual marriage license or divorce decree. If you want a copy of the actual license or decree you must contact the County Clerk or Circuit Clerk office where the marriage or divorce was recorded. Arkansas Vital Records issues a certified copy of the coupon of marriage or divorce in paper form which is accepted by all state and federal government offices. Cost is \$10 per copy.
- [Arkansas County Marriages, Coverage Table](#) (FamilySearch Historical Records)
- [Arkansas Marriages, 1837-1944](#) FamilySearch name index to marriage records from the state of Arkansas; Microfilm copies available at the FHL; some years missing; check the coverage table against the file folders in browse only; organized by county, alphabetically
- [Arkansas Marriage Index, 1933-1939](#) FamilySearch index from the Arkansas Vital Records Division, Index by Ancestry.com

- [Arkansas, County Marriages Index, 1837-1957](#) Ancestry collection, from FamilySearch, from Arkansas Courts of Common Pleas and County Clerks,
- [Arkansas Marriages, 1779-1992](#) Ancestry collection; index from Hunting for Bears; not all counties included, coverage list included at bottom of information
- [Arkansas Marriages to 1850](#) Ancestry collection; index from Jordan Dodd, Early American Marriages: Arkansas to 1850; text only collection
- [Arkansas Marriages, 1851-1900](#) Ancestry collection: index from Jordan Dodd; list of counties and FHL film numbers to look at original data
- [Arkansas Marriages, 1820-1949](#) Ancestry collection from Hunting for Bears; not all counties included, coverage list included at bottom of information

### Divorce Records

- [Arkansas Vital Records](#) has divorce records dating from January 1923. Divorces occurring before this date are not recorded in this office. Arkansas Vital Records does not have the actual marriage license or divorce decree. If you want a copy of the actual license or decree you must contact the County Clerk or Circuit Clerk office where the marriage or divorce was recorded. Arkansas Vital Records issues a certified copy of the coupon of marriage or divorce in paper form which is accepted by all state and federal government offices. Cost is \$10 per copy.
- [Arkansas Divorce Index, 1923-1939](#) FamilySearch index of divorces from the Arkansas Genealogical Society. Index by Ancestry.com.

### Death Records

[Death certificates available from the Arkansas Dept of Health](#) \$10 each Arkansas Vital Records has death records dating from February 1, 1914 through the present. There are a limited number of death records available for deaths occurring between 1881 and 1914 in Little Rock and Fort Smith. The Arkansas History Commission keeps an alphabetical listing of deaths in Arkansas dating from 1914 through 1949, but they do not have the actual death records.

You may search and order Arkansas death certificates from 1935 to 1961

- [Arkansas Death Index, 1914-1950](#): FamilySearch index from the Arkansas Division of Vital Records, index by Ancestry.com
- [Arkansas Death Index, 1914-1950](#): Ancestry index
- [Arkansas Deaths and Burials, 1882-1929; 1945-1963](#) FamilySearch Name index to death and burial records from the state of Arkansas. Microfilm copies of these records are available at the Family History Library and Family History Centers. This set contains 10,447 records. Due to privacy laws, recent records may not be displayed. The year range represents most of the records. A few records may be earlier or later.

# Tax Records

## State

Arkansas tax records, 1821-1884, Microreproduction of originals housed at the Arkansas State History Commission, Little Rock, Arkansas. Most years [digitized at FamilySearch here.](#)

Teeples, Gary Ronald and Jackson, Ronald Vern, *Arkansas tax Lists, 1819-1839* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Accelerated Indexing Systems, 1930). available at the FHL - [catalog](#)

## Federal

Internal revenue assessment lists for Arkansas, 1865-1866 : National Archives microfilm publications, pamphlet accompanying microcopy no. 755 available at FHL - [catalog](#)

Internal Revenue assessment lists for Arkansas, 1865-1874 : annual, monthly and special lists - [digitized at FHL here](#)

## Tax records indexed as a census substitute:

[Arkansas, Compiled Census and Census Substitutes Index, 1819-1870](#) Ancestry collection from the Accelerated Indexing Systems; This collection contains the following indexes: 1819-1829 **Tax Lists Index**; 1820 Federal Census Index; 1823 Sheriff's Census Index; 1829 Sheriff's Census Index; 1830 Federal Census Index; 1830-1839 **Tax Lists Index**; 1840 Federal Census Index; 1840 Pensioners Index; 1850 Federal Census Index; 1850 Slave Schedule; 1860 Federal Census Index; 1870 Federal Census Index.