

Kansas Historical Society

State Archives & Library Guide to Using the Research Room



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State Archives & Library—Guide to Using the Research Room

We welcome your visit to the State Archives & Library research room!

When you arrive

- Please check in at reference desk (directly inside doors)
- First time visitors will need to read our researcher policy and present a photo ID to register for a research card
- Research cards expire annually on June 30
- Please store belongings—purses, backpacks, cell phones—in the locker room
- Coin operated lockers are available (quarters available at reference desk)
- Research papers, notebooks, and computers are allowed in research room. For security reasons, reference staff will ask to look through your materials at the end of your visit.
- Electrical outlets and wireless internet available

Using our collections

Most of the areas where our collections are stored are not open to the public. The following will help you access the items you're looking for. Please note that we do not check out these materials for removal from the research room.

- Search our card or online catalogs to identify the call numbers for the items you need.
- Fill out a call slip for each item. Our reference staff will be happy to help if you need assistance.
- Give the completed call slips to the retrieval desk staff person, who will bring the items to you at the tables in the middle of the room.
- You may request photocopies of pages from books or other paper items at the retrieval desk. Staff members will make the copies for you.
- If we have a large number of photocopy requests, it may be necessary to mail your copies after you leave. We can also email you digital copies of the materials.
- We allow the use of digital cameras without flash. Please ask staff members first for instructions on handling the materials while you photograph them.

Our catalogs

The following information will help you navigate our catalog system:

- The cards for printed material, manuscripts, maps, and photograph collections are in separate catalogs. Each card catalog includes author, title, and subject cards interfiled alphabetically.
- Card catalog drawers come out of the cabinets so you may sit at the tables to look through the cards.
- Cards were not added to the catalogs after 1994. To find material cataloged since 1994, use our online catalog system, ATLAS, which we share with other Topeka libraries.
- Computer terminals in the research room allow access to ATLAS and internet resources, including Ancestry.com. Our databases web page lists all our online indexes to collections.

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Books and magazines

The card catalogs for books and magazines are located behind the reference desk. The blue-labeled drawers contain Kansas history, places, and people. The white-labeled drawers (or general catalog) contain U.S. and world history and family histories. It is best to check both catalogs if you are looking for genealogical material.

Manuscript collection

The manuscript collection card catalog is also behind the reference desk in the red-labeled drawers. Here you will find information about our manuscript holdings, which includes items such as diaries, church, business records, and personal papers of Kansans throughout the state's history.

Photograph collection

The photograph collection card catalog is located in the research room across from the reference desk and is divided into two parts. The catalog on the left is older. The items here are being re-cataloged and put into the newer file, which is on the right. Both sets have green-labeled drawers. Be sure to check both catalogs when looking for photographs. They are categorized by geographic location, subject, and photographer. Some of the photographs have been digitized and can be viewed on kansasmemory.org.

When you ask to see photographs we will bring you up to 20 envelopes at a time and ask you to keep them in the original order. We will give you gloves to use while handling photographs. Nearly 5,000 photos are also available to view on microfiche.

Map collection

The yellow labeled catalog drawers contain the map collection card catalog. Maps are cataloged by place [e.g., Nemaha County] or topic [e.g., Oregon Trail] and then listed in chronological order. There is a separate drawer near the bottom of the cabinet for creators of maps that is arranged alphabetically by surname.

Microfilm

Our microfilm collections are self serve and include library, manuscript, and State Archives microfilm, census microfilm, and Kansas newspapers. The following may be of assistance in accessing these collections.

- Our research room staff can help you find the microfilm roll numbers using the card catalog, our website, and ATLAS.
- Please pull no more than three rolls of microfilm at a time.
- We have 34 microfilm readers available for your use. There are also five microfilm printers.
- Please search for articles on a reader, then move to the printers to make copies.
- The printers cost \$.25 per page and are self serve. Change is available at the retrieval desk.
- You can also make good copies from the microfilm readers with your digital camera.
- When you are finished using a roll please return it to the cart by the microfilm volunteer's desk.
- Most of our microfilm collection is available for interlibrary loan. You may find an "out-box" in the drawer if a roll is on loan to another library.

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Library, manuscript, and State Archives microfilm

The microfilmed library, manuscripts, State Archives and local records collections are shelved in the first and second bays. Library material (LM numbers) includes books, city directories, and some military records. These items are indexed both in the library card catalog and on ATLAS. Manuscripts that have been microfilmed include diaries and business records. All of these records are cataloged in ATLAS.

State Archives microfilm includes material from state agencies as well as county and city records. For information on state records holdings, ask a reference staff member for printed guides or a search of the State Archives database, which is not available to the public. The guide to county records on microfilm is arranged alphabetically by county.

Census microfilm

Censuses for Kansas are available on microfilm and on Ancestry.com on the computers in the research room. The Kansas census microfilm guide is arranged by year, then alphabetically by county. Indexes on microfilm are listed at the beginning of each year.

The Kansas Historical Society has a complete collection of U.S. census records on microfilm for 1790-1850. The guide for out-of-state census microfilm is arranged by year, then alphabetically by state and county. Printed census indexes are on the census index table beside the microfilm volunteer's desk.

Kansas newspapers on microfilm

Kansas newspapers on microfilm are the largest collection in the research room. All our newspaper microfilm is listed in our newspaper database. A select group of our newspapers has been digitized and can be viewed on the Chronicling America web site. All of the African American newspapers in our collection have been digitized by Newsbank, Inc. Internet access is available in our research room.

Open reference

Just inside the door to the research room is a magazine stand that contains some recent periodicals. They range in topic from genealogy to Kansas history to historic preservation.

The shelves along the side of the research room contain indexes and general reference material. There are guides to some State Archives & Library collections. Genealogical guides include:

- The Source
- Map Guide to the U.S. Federal Censuses, 1790-1920
- Germans to America series
- The Irish Famine Immigrants series
- Filby's Passenger and Immigration Index
- American Genealogical and Biographical Index

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State Archives resources

State records are the largest part of our collections. The following may be of assistance in accessing this collection:

- Most of the State Archives materials have not been microfilmed.
- There are some guides to state records on the open reference shelves in the middle of the room.
- Ask a staff member to search an internal database of state records holdings.
- Online resources include KSCPACe (Kansas State Publications Archival Collection) for recent publications by state agencies.

Staff assistance

Our reference staff members will be happy to help you throughout your visit to the research room. Individuals in need of access assistance or auxiliary aids and services are asked to contact the Historical Society prior to their visit.

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