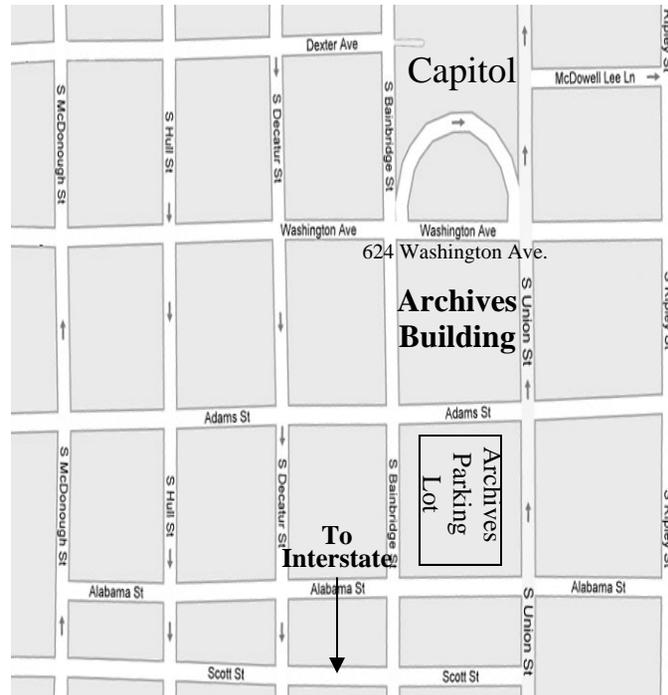
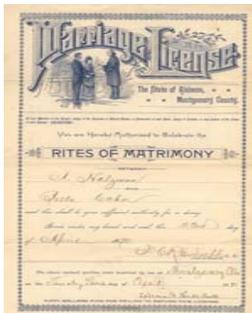


## Begin your research before you visit the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

- Develop a plan of research so you know what information you want to search for when you come to the Archives.
- Begin with yourself and work backwards, recording what you know about each family member.
- Interview older relatives and family friends, sort through family photographs and papers. Ask if relatives have any notes or research that outline the family's history.
- Record and document what you know about each family member. Look for dates of birth and death, where they lived, parents' names, names of spouse and children, and dates and places of marriage.
- Check records at home for information. Family Bibles; birth, death, and marriage certificates; obituaries; school records; letters; diaries or scrapbooks; baptismal or other church records; legal records; fraternal organization records; insurance policies; and even birthday and sympathy cards can be helpful.
- Record the information on an ancestor chart and on family group sheets. Many blank forms are available on the internet.



### Directions:

From I-85 South, take exit 1/Union St. and bear to the right onto Union St. At the 3<sup>rd</sup> traffic light take a left onto Washington Ave. The Archives building is on the left. Metered parking is available on the street. **Free parking is available in the Adams Street parking lot. To proceed to the parking lot from the front of the Archives building, take a left on Bainbridge Ave. and left on Adams St. The parking lot is directly across the street from the Archives/War Memorial building.**

From I-65 North or South, exit onto I-85 North. Get in the far right lane and exit at the Court St. exit. Stay in the left lane on the service road and follow it to Union St. Take a left onto Union St. At the 4<sup>th</sup> traffic light take a left onto Washington Ave. The Archives building is on the left. Follow directions above to parking lot on Adams St.

Alabama Department of Archives and History  
 P. O. Box 300100  
 Montgomery, AL 36130  
 Phone: 334-242-4435  
 Website: [www.archives.alabama.gov](http://www.archives.alabama.gov)

# RESEARCHING YOUR ANCESTORS

at the  
 Alabama Department of Archives and History



### Mission Statement:

*“We tell the story of the people of Alabama by preserving records and artifacts of historical value and promoting a better understanding of Alabama history.”*

## Records to Consult When You Visit the ADAH

- Federal and State Census Records** are where you begin your family history research. The first federal census was in 1790 and is taken every ten years. The latest federal census available to the public is the 1930 census. Work backward through the census records from the most current available. ADAH provides access to all the federal census records for each decade for every state through a subscription to Ancestry.com. Alabama census records are also available on microfilm in the Research Room. Other censuses to check are the state censuses taken in Alabama in 1850, 1855, and 1866; 1850 and 1860 slave schedules; agricultural censuses; and mortality schedules. Working through the census records can help establish where your ancestors lived, when and possibly where they married, how many children they had, their parents' names, as well as other information.
- Local Government Records** are the next type of records to search. These records are available on microfilm in the Research Room for every county in Alabama and include records that date prior to statehood (1819) and as late as the 1950s. The types of records and the dates available vary from county to county. The records may include marriages, deeds, wills/estate case files/inventories, divorce records, guardianship records, and some birth and death registers. The Local Government Records on Microfilm database at [www.archives.alabama.gov](http://www.archives.alabama.gov) lists the records available for each county.



- State Government Records** of potential use to family historians include Confederate pension applications and payment records, Confederate and state military service records, 1867 voter registration records, state prison records, professional licensure files, and state/local official commissions registers. Surname Clipping Files, a large part of which are newspapers clippings and family history information, and Public Information Subject Files, which are arranged by subject, by county; and by military conflict, are also available. State government records are arranged by the creating agency. A listing of these records is available in our on-line catalogue—ADAHCAT—and a complete and detailed listing is available in the Research Room.
- Newspaper Collections** at the ADAH are the most extensive in the state. The earliest newspaper in the collection is dated 1811. A listing of our newspapers, both on microfilm and hardbound, is available in our newspaper databases at [www.archives.alabama.gov](http://www.archives.alabama.gov). Since indices are generally not available for newspapers, it is important to have a fairly specific date or time frame in which to search.
- Private Manuscript Collections** include not only private papers of individuals and families, many with correspondence, diaries and some family Bibles, but also Alabama city directories for many cities, church records, and records of associations and organizations. The strength of the material is from the antebellum and Civil War eras.
- Books** are another great resource when doing family history research at ADAH. The books available in the Research Room include family histories, state, local and county histories for Alabama, as well as for many other states. Each Alabama county has its own shelf with books compiled from various sources such as marriage records, cemetery indices, newspaper abstracts, and census abstracts. Most Alabama counties also have published county histories. Many books are not in the Research Room but our on-line catalogue—ADAHCAT—has a complete listing.

## Visiting the Research Room

The Research Room is located on the first floor of the Alabama Department of Archives and History. Researchers must present a photo id at the reference desk and adhere to rules and regulations governing use. To protect the collections researchers must use pencils and briefcases and other closed bags are not allowed in the Research Room. Complete details are available at [archives.alabama.gov](http://archives.alabama.gov).

**Building Hours:** Monday - Friday  
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Research Room Hours:** Tuesday - Friday  
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Closed state holidays.**

