Maryland Genealogy Research

Native American Inhabitants

The area covered by the present state of Maryland was home to: **Algonquian Indians on the Western Shore of Maryland:** This was the primary chiefdom of the *Piscataway (or Conoy)* Indians and their allies, the *Anacostians*, the *Mattawomen* the *Nanjemoy* and the *Potapoco.*

Two independent *Algonquin* chiefdoms lived on the lower Potomac River’s northern shore: the *Chaptico* and the *Yoacomaco.*

The *Pawtuxent, Acquintanack, Mattapanient* and the *Assacomoco* chiefdoms lived along the shores of the Pawtuxent River.

**Algonquian Indians on the Eastern Shore of Maryland:**

The principal chiefdom of the *Nanticoke* lived along the eastern shore from Pocomoke River to the Sassafras River: the *Assateague – the Pocomoke – the Amamesses – the Morumsco – the Acquiantica*

**Iroquoian-Speaking Indians of Maryland:** the *Susquehannock – the Massawomeck – the Tuscarora*

The tribes listed above were also called *Chicacons, Kittamaqundi, Potomac, and Taocomcoes.*

Most Native Americans were forced to leave Maryland during the 1700’s by European colonists. Some were moved to Indian reservations in Oklahoma. Others joined larger tribes, where their descendants still live today.

There are no federally recognized tribes in Maryland today. A *non-recognized* community is:

**Piscataway-Conoy Confederacy**
P.O. Box 1484
La Plata, Maryland 20646

European Colonization

**Before 1632:** Fur traders from Virginia settled Kent Island.

**1632 – 1691:** Land Ownership and Conflicts:

In 1632, the English government granted a charter for a colony between Virginia and what later became Pennsylvania. Proprietary Governorship of the area was given to George Calvert. Because Calvert had converted to Catholicism, he could not hold public office. So the Maryland Charter was issued to his son Cecil, Second Baron of Baltimore.

- In 1634, Leonard Calvert brought Catholic colonists from England aboard *The Ark* and *The Dove.* They landed in March 1634 at St. Clements Island on the western shore of Chesapeake Bay. They named the area Mariland for Henrietta Maria, wife of King Charles 1.
- The Calvert family proprietors (and the Governor's Council) issued land grants to entice settlers to the colony.
- Catholics settled in Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary’s counties. Non-conformists from Virginia settled in Anne Arundel County. Quakers settled in the Chesapeake area.
- The Religious Toleration Act was passed in 1649 to protect immigrating Catholics and Puritans from each other and to create an environment to attract more immigrants. In spite of this law, conflicts between owners erupted into fighting for the next eight years.
- Head Rights were granted between 1634 and 1680. With Head Rights, people paying for the passage of family members, indentured servants, and others, were granted a certain number of acres of land in Maryland.
• Virginia leaders refused to recognize the Maryland charter and continued to sell Maryland land on the Delmarva Peninsula. This resulted in decades of border conflicts, uncertain land and tax claims, and attempts by Virginians to incite Indians against Maryland.

• However, agriculture and trading were established with the help of friendly Native Americans, of slaves from Africa, and indentured servants who worked off their passage to the new land.

• Maryland was also settled by thousands of British convicts who were sent by England to the colony.

• In the 1680’s, Baltimore County was created along the waterways of the Patapsco and Gunpowder Rivers. Because of an uncertain border, records of settlers in western Kent and southern and western Sussex counties in Delaware may be found in Maryland records until the time of the Revolutionary War.

• In 1682, Pennsylvania began to assert ownership of what became Delaware and the northern parts of Maryland. Maryland citizens resisted. Resulting border conflicts were not fully resolved until the Mason-Dixon Line was drawn between 1763 and 1767.

• In 1689, the Protestant Revolution in England spread unrest to Maryland. The Crown overthrew the Proprietary Government. The Anglican Church was established as the state church of Maryland, and the capital was moved to a more central location at Annapolis.

1700’s: In these years, settlers left the Chesapeake region and began building homes among the hills and valleys of western Maryland.

1706: The Port of Baltimore was founded. It became a major center of commerce.

1715: Lord Baltimore converted to Protestantism and restored the proprietorship.

Early 1730’s: Germans from bordering Pennsylvania counties poured into Baltimore and Frederick counties; some Quaker groups came from New Jersey.

Mid 1700’s: More new settlers came from Pennsylvania.

Servants, felons, and Jacobite rebels were sent from Britain. The Jacobites were sold as laborers.

1763 – 1767: The Maryland-Pennsylvania boundary was established by surveying the Mason-Dixon line.

1776: Maryland adopted a Declaration of Rights and a state constitution.

1777: British warships visited the Chesapeake in 1777. Many Loyalists lived among the populace, but no major battles were fought in Maryland during the American Revolution.

1781: Catholics were disfranchised and barred from public office, but Jesuit Fathers continued to quietly serve a growing Catholic populace despite laws forbidding them to celebrate the Mass or perform the sacraments. A number of early Maryland gentry unions occurred through Catholic-Protestant marriages. Some Catholics migrated from St. Mary’s into Kentucky.

Statehood

April 28, 1788: Maryland officially became a state in the Union by ratifying the Constitution.

1791: Maryland ceded sixty square miles for the District of Columbia. As tobacco farming and cotton farming grew in the South, (including Maryland), the African slave trade grew.

1808: Importation of slaves was banned. However, the internal slave trade continued. Many slaves from Maryland were sold to farmers in western states such as Tennessee and Kentucky. By the start of the Civil War the slave trade was the second largest money making enterprise in Maryland.

1812: Maryland was the site of much fighting in the War of 1812.

1818: The National Road was completed in 1818, causing migration westward through and out of Maryland. The building of the country’s first railroad, the Baltimore and Ohio, as well as a canal system along the Potomac River also increased mobility within and out of the state.

1818-1850: The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was built along the Potomac River from Georgetown to Cumberland, Maryland, mainly by Irish workers.

• Miners from Scotland, Ireland, Germany and Wales immigrated to work western Maryland’s coal deposits. The Nativist “Know Nothing Party” was formed to resist this wave of immigration.

• Former slaves like Harriet Tubman and Fredrick Douglas escaped from and through Maryland into Pennsylvania or Delaware. Quakers and others helped runaways on the Underground Railroad.

1851: Baltimore became an independent city and started keeping its own court, land, and probate records.
Civil War: By the start of the Civil War 49 percent of African Americans in Maryland were already free. Although Maryland was loyal to the Union during the Civil War, there was much sympathy for the South in southern Western Shore counties and among the upper classes. Many of them fought for the Confederacy.

Post-Civil War:
- After the war, many African-American Southerners fled to Maryland from their destroyed homes.
- A large influx of Germans and eastern Europeans began to pour through Baltimore, which was a major eastern port.

Early Maryland Churches
Although Maryland was established as a refuge for Roman Catholics from England, most early settlers were Non-Conformists and Protestant.

Quakers settled the Chesapeake Bay area as early as 1657.
The Anglican Church was established as the official church in 1692 and continued as such until 1776. From 1718 to 1776 Catholics and Quakers were disenfranchised, and few of their pre-Revolutionary records exist.
During the 1800’s, most Protestants were Methodists; some were Episcopal and Presbyterian.

Repositories of Maryland Church Records
- Maryland Historical Society: Baltimore, MD - about 200 indexed transcripts of church records and some original records for various denominations
- Maryland State Archives: Website: www.msa.md.gov - records of Episcopal churches, Roman Catholic churches, and Quakers, the Baltimore and Peninsula Conferences of the United Methodist Church, and records from some Baptist, Lutheran, Evangelical, and Presbyterian churches
- Georgetown University Library: Surviving records of the Jesuit Fathers. University Archivist, Lynn Conway, assists with this collection. Contact: conwayl@georgetown.edu

Records of Maryland Churches in Books
- Quaker Records in Maryland, Annapolis, Md.: Hall of Records Commission, 1966; by Phebe R. Jacobsen
- Directory of Maryland Church Records; compiled by Edna A. Kanley; One volume in two parts. The book includes the names and addresses of about 2,600 Maryland churches, the years that records exist, and the location of original records or copies.
- Inventory of the Church Archives of Maryland: Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Maryland. Baltimore, Md.: Historical Records Survey, 1940

Maryland Birth Records
Indexes of Maryland births:
- Maryland, Births and Christenings, 1650-1995 – FamilySearch.org
- Maryland Births and Christenings Index, 1622-1911- Ancestry.com
- The Maryland State Archives - indexes of some early civil birth records and of some church records

Births 1654 – 1693
Register of Vital Records: In 1654, a new law required Clerks of the County Courts to record the birth date and the names of the newborn children and their parents.
A few of these old registers are extant today:
- Charles County Court 1654-1706
- Somerset County Court 1649-1720
- Talbot County Court 1657-1691
Obtain a copy of a county birth record 1654 – 1693 from the Maryland State Archives.
Births 1694 thru 1864:
No government records were kept. The Clerks of the Protestant Episcopal Church were required to keep records of all births, regardless of the family's church membership. Other denominations also kept some records of births. Copies of Church birth records for these years may be available from the Maryland State Archives.

Births from 1865 thru 1897:
In 1865, Maryland law required county circuit courts to record births. There was low compliance with the law. Churches in this time period still recorded more births than counties. Obtain a copy of a county birth record from the Maryland State Archives. Obtain a copy of a church birth/baptism record from individual Church Archives.

Baltimore City Births from 1875 thru 1972:
Check the online church indexes listed above, the Maryland State Archives church indexes, or the archives of the church which your ancestor attended for a birth record. You can also check the Maryland State Archives for copies of the few county birth records that were recorded.

Maryland Births from 1940 to the present:
The Maryland State Archives has indexes and birth records up to 1978, but they are restricted. Order a copy of a birth record from 1940 to the present for a fee from the County Department of Health or from the Maryland Department of Health and Hygiene.

Restrictions for obtaining birth records of persons born within the last 100 years:
To obtain a copy of the birth certificate for those born within the last 100 years from the government agency, you must be:
• The person on the certificate
• The parents of the person on the certificate.
• Surviving spouse.
• Someone with documented legal custody of the person on the certificate.

Maryland Marriage Records
Online:
• FamilySearch.org and Ancestry.com both have indexes of Maryland marriages
• Washington County, MD, Marriages: PDF images of marriage records from 1886-1970; indexes of marriages from 1861 to 1919 and also from 1927 to 1949 - https://www.washcolibrary.org/?q=marriage-records-pdfs

Marriages before 1777:
Colonial marriages were recorded by the Church of England and other churches. Contact church archives to obtain a copy of a colonial Maryland marriage record dated before 1777. Contact information for church archives is on pages 3 and 4.

Note: The Maryland State Archives have indexes of Marriage records from the 1600's to the 1800's. Visit the Archives to view these indexes.
Marriages 1777 to 1990:
Marriage records are kept by the Circuit Court for each county, beginning in 1777 or at the creation of the county. The county Circuit Court Office will search for a marriage record if you don’t know the exact date.
Obtain a copy of a Marriage Record from 1777 to 1990 for a fee from the County Circuit Court.

Marriages 1990 to Present:
In 1990, the County Circuit Court clerks began sending copies of Marriage Records to the state archives.
Obtain a copy of a Marriage Record from 1990 to the present for a fee from:
• The County Circuit Court Office
• The Maryland State Archives
• The Maryland State Department of Health

Maryland Death Records
1654 – 1694, Colonial Period, County Death Records
In 1654, the Maryland General Assembly required that all burials in the colony had to be reported to the Clerk of the County Court to be recorded. The record usually included the name of the deceased and the date of death.
Surviving County Indexes of Burials are located at the Maryland State Archives - www.msa.md.gov

Obtain a copy of a death record from 1654 - 1694 from the State Archives.
1695 – 1864, Church Jurisdiction of Death Records
In 1695, the Maryland General Assembly transferred the responsibility of recording all deaths to the Protestant Episcopal Church. This included deaths of members of other churches. However, other churches also kept burial records of their members.
The Death Record included the name of the deceased, dates of death and burial.
Contact the Repositories listed below to obtain copies or transcripts of death records.
• Maryland Historical Society: Baltimore, MD - about 200 indexed transcripts of church records and some original records for various denominations
• Maryland State Archives: Website: www.msa.md.gov -Records of Episcopal churches, Roman Catholic churches, and Quakers, the Baltimore and Peninsula Conferences of the United Methodist Church, some Baptist, Lutheran, Evangelical, and Presbyterian Churches
• Archives of specific church denominations – Contact information for church archives is listed above on pages 3 and 4

1865 – 1884, County Circuit Court Jurisdiction of Death Records
In 1865 The Maryland General Assembly required the County Circuit Courts to record deaths. However, very few families complied with this law.
The records were to include the name, sex, age, date of birth, marital status and race of the deceased, the residence and occupation of the deceased, the date and place of death, the cause of death and place of burial, and the names of parents if the deceased was a child.

Obtain a copy of a death record 1865 - 1884 from either the Maryland State Archives, the Maryland Historical Society, or from specific Church Archives.

Online Indexes: FamilySearch.org and Ancestry.com both have indexes of some Maryland deaths from 1877 to 1992.
1898 – 1972, County Death Records
In 1898, the Maryland General Assembly again passed a law requiring counties to record all deaths. Records were then sent to the State Board of Health. By 1914, all deaths were being reported to the counties.

Obtain a copy of a civil death record dated 1898 - 1972 from the Maryland State Archives.

Baltimore City Death Records, 1875 - 1972
In 1875, the Baltimore city council passed an ordinance requiring that all deaths occurring in Baltimore be reported to the city. This continued till 1972, even though the state began recording deaths in 1898!

Copies of Baltimore death records are available from the Maryland State Archives.

1972 – 1994, Death Records at State Department of Health
Beginning in 1972, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene was the only agency to record deaths in Maryland.

Obtain a genealogical copy of a death record from 1969 to the present from the Maryland State Archives.

Obtain a legal copy of a death certificate from 1969 to the present from the Maryland Division of Vital Records (410-764-3036) if you are:
- the surviving relative
- the authorized representative of a surviving relative
- the funeral director in charge of disposition of the body
- an individual who has proven legal need of the record

Search indexes of later county deeds and deed books, an index to land patents (land transferred from the government to individuals), and digital scans of survey certificates on the Maryland State Archives website.

Wills
Records of wills beginning in 1634 are kept in County Registers of Wills and the Maryland State Archives:
Online indexes of Wills:
- FamilySearch.org
- Ancestry.com

Probate Records
County Registers of Wills – Indexes of Probate records
Maryland State Archives - Probate records 1600’s and 1700’s some years
FamilySearch.org. - indexes and images of probate records 1796 – 1940
Ancestry.com – indexes and images of probate records 1635 - 1777

Military Records
Maryland State Archives:
- Indexes of troops in the Revolutionary War
- Rosters of Maryland Union volunteers in the Civil War
- Maryland troops in the Confederate Army

Military Indexes on Ancestry.com: Revolutionary War Records, Union and Confederate Service Records
Military Indexes on FamilySearch.org: Union and Confederate Service Records
Migration Routes
Bank Road · Braddock's Road · Chesapeake and Ohio Canal · Fall Line Road · Gist's Trace · Memacolinis Path · Great Indian Warpath · Great Valley Road · King's Highway · Maryland Road · National Road · Cumberland Road · Old Northwestern Turnpike · Baltimore and Harrisburg Railway · Baltimore and Ohio Railroad · Atlantic Coast Ports · Potomac River · Southern Road

Historical/Genealogical Repositories
Maryland State Archives - vital, ethnic, military, probate and land records, family history, slavery, historical maps
Maryland Historical Society
MD University of Maryland Libraries
George Peabody Library (John Hopkins University Library)
Enoch Pratt Free Library – Maryland and African American genealogical resources
Baltimore City Archives - Baltimore City government records –including vital records
Maryland Genealogical Society
Maryland State Law Library
Washington County Historical Society Genealogical Center

Current Counties

The Atlas of Historical County Boundaries – Interactive maps and text covering the historical boundaries, names, organization, and attachments of every county, extinct county and unsuccessful county proposal from the creation of the first county through December 31, 2000. - http://publications.newberry.org/ahcbp/index.html

Maryland Genealogy Websites
NOTE: Look for the GenWeb or Genealogy Trails of any county in which your ancestors lived.


Bible Records, Maryland Room, Talbot County Library – family names listed in Family Bibles at library - http://www.tcfl.org/mdroom/genealogy/bible.html

Biographical Sketches of Distinguished Marylanders – eBook - http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hx2pfi;view=1up;seq=5

Black Sheep Ancestors, Maryland – index of court, prison and convict records

Digital Maryland – Civil War Records, diaries, oral histories

Maryland Genealogical Society – search databases of some church baptisms and marriages

Maryland Historical Society: Online Collections – family papers, manuscript family histories

Maryland Land Records Retrieval - access to all verified land record instruments in Maryland - https://mdlandrec.net/main/index.cfm


Maryland State Archives – Click on Digital Resources to search Baltimore death record indexes, state land records, historical newspapers and find a link to Archives of Maryland Online - https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/homepage/html/digital.html


The New Early Settlers of Maryland – index of settlers who are named in the Maryland land patent volumes from 1633-1683 and one land warrant volume from 1681-1685 – refers to microfilm reels at Maryland State Archives – http://earlysettlers.msa.maryland.gov/

Washington County, MD, Marriages: PDF images of marriage records from 1886-1970; indexes of marriages from 1861 to 1919 and also from 1927 to 1949 - https://www.washcolibrary.org/?q=marriage-records-pdfs

Maryland African American Research

Access Genealogy – links by state to websites of African American genealogy, cemeteries, and censuses

AfricaMap – track the slave trade with historical overlays and geographical data - https://worldmap.harvard.edu/africamap/

AfriGeneas – slave records, death and marriage records, censuses, surnames – chat or send messages to other researchers


African American Cemeteries Online – indexes of burials in Maryland African American cemeteries

Digital Library on American Slavery – search database of slave petitions, runaway slave advertisements, bills of sale, transatlantic slave trade database; this compilation of various online collections started with a focus on records in North Carolina but the information includes people in all 15 slave states and Washington D.C.; more records are currently being digitized - http://library.uncg.edu/slavery/

Digital Maryland – African-American funeral programs, lists of enslaved people


Free African Americans in the Southeast - Free people of color in the colonies of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Maryland, and Delaware – a few families in Illinois, Tennessee and Indiana - http://www.freeafricanamericans.com/
**Geography of Slavery Advertisement Database** – keyword searches of advertisements for runaway slaves and indentured servants from newspapers in Virginia & Maryland from 1736-1803 – [http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/exist/runaways/xquery.xsp](http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/exist/runaways/xquery.xsp)

**International African American Museum** - African American funeral programs, obituaries, marriage records, photos, historical documents and family histories – military records of the U.S. Colored Troops are currently being digitized - [https://cfh.iaamuseum.org/records/](https://cfh.iaamuseum.org/records/)

**Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery** - search thousands of “Information Wanted” advertisements taken out by former slaves in all states searching for family members lost by sale, flight, or enlistment – the collection currently includes newspapers from 1853 to 1911 - [http://www.informationwanted.org/](http://www.informationwanted.org/)

**Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Baltimore** – One of Baltimore’s largest African American cemeteries – alphabetical index of burials includes personal information, photo if available, cemetery map – [http://mountauburn.msa.maryland.gov/cityofthedead.aspx](http://mountauburn.msa.maryland.gov/cityofthedead.aspx)


**Slave Confederate Payrolls** - digitized payrolls list names of slaves of 10 southern states who worked for the Confederate Army and whose pay went to their masters - [https://catalog.archives.gov/search?q=719477](https://catalog.archives.gov/search?q=719477)

**Slave Voyages** - the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* documents vessels along the Atlantic slave routes from 1514 to 1866; *Intra-American Slave Trade Database* documents vessels traveling between the Atlantic and Pacific ports ranging from the United States to Brazil; the *African Names Database* gives names, ages, possible origins of slaves liberated from captured slave ships between 1808 and 1862 - [https://www.slavevoyages.org/](https://www.slavevoyages.org/)

**Maryland Cemetery Research**


**HAGERSTOWN, MD: Rose Hill Cemetery** – alphabetical lists of burials which include names; birth, death, and burial dates; section & lot - [http://rosehillcemeteryofmd.org/genealogy-search/](http://rosehillcemeteryofmd.org/genealogy-search/)

**Maryland Gravestone Cemetery Project** – search or browse over 7,000 burials in Maryland - [http://marylandgravestones.org/](http://marylandgravestones.org/)

**Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Baltimore** – One of Baltimore’s largest African American cemeteries founded in 1872 – alphabetical index of burials includes personal information, photo if available, cemetery map – [http://mountauburn.msa.maryland.gov/cityofthedead.aspx](http://mountauburn.msa.maryland.gov/cityofthedead.aspx)

**The Tombstone Transcription Project, Maryland** – burials in various cemeteries categorized by county - [http://www.usgwtombstones.org/maryland/annearundel.html](http://www.usgwtombstones.org/maryland/annearundel.html)

**Maryland Military Research**


**Grand Army of the Republic Records Project** – developing database - histories of posts, reports of officers and members if available, search by state - [http://suvcw.org/garrecords/](http://suvcw.org/garrecords/)

**Pt. Lookout POW Cemetery** – names of the prisoners buried there - [http://www.plpow.com/POWDead.htm](http://www.plpow.com/POWDead.htm)

**Vietnam Memorial Wall, Veterans, Maryland** - index of veterans from MD listed on the Wall - [http://www.vietvet.org/statewall/maryland/md.htm](http://www.vietvet.org/statewall/maryland/md.htm)

**Maryland Native American Research**


**Native American Tribes of Maryland** - [http://www.native-languages.org/maryland.htm](http://www.native-languages.org/maryland.htm)
Maryland Newspaper Research

Digital Newspapers, Maryland Archives – search or browse various newspapers, various years -
http://speccol.mdarchives.state.md.us/pages/newspaper/digitized.aspx

Maryland Online Historical Newspapers

EBooks

The Founders of Maryland – eBook – includes African Americans -
http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=miun.aaw1054.0001.001;view=1up;seq=5

Men of Maryland, Volume 1 – biographies of Maryland Citizens, eBook – includes African Americans -
http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nc01.ark:/13960/t46q2gf49;view=1up;seq=1

Men of Maryland, Volumes 3 and 4 – biographies of Maryland Citizens, eBook -
http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433081816682;view=1up;seq=9

Information on these pages is compiled from information in:

• Wikis on FamilySearch.org and Ancestry.com
• Family Tree Magazine
• Dick Eastman Genealogy Newsletter
• Genealogy Gems from the Allen County Public Library