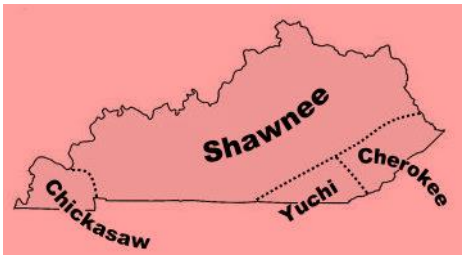
Genealogy Research in Kentucky



The most prominent early Indian tribes in Kentucky were the Cherokee, Chickasaws, Yuchi and Shawnee.
Most of these tribes were eliminated from Kentucky by the early 1800s, either through warfare or by forced resettlement in Oklahoma by the federal government.
No separate U.S. records were kept for people with American Indian blood.

The State of Kentucky was formed in 1792.
Some of Kentucky was formed from part of Virginia. Thus records of early settlers may be in Virginia.

Kentucky Birth Records

Indexes of Kentucky birth records:

- Ancestry.com
- FamilySearch.org

Records

Before 1852, no births were recorded by the counties or the state.

Births from 1852 thru 1910 were recorded sporadically in the counties due to laws that were passed and repealed and varying degrees of compliance.
Some delayed birth records were compiled for this time period.
The *Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives* has microfilms of births in various Kentucky counties for varying years between 1852 and 1910 -

Order a copy of a Kentucky Birth Record from the Kentucky Department of Public Health, Office of Vital Statistics. The office has a few records between 1852 and 1910; most are from 1911 to the present.

Kentucky Marriage Records

Indexes of Kentucky marriage records cover varying counties and years:

- FamilySearch.org
- Ancestry.com
- University of Kentucky website http://ukcc.uky.edu/vitalrec/

County marriage records are the earliest and most complete collection of vital records for Kentucky.
Obtain a Kentucky Marriage Record from the Office of the County Clerk in the county where the marriage occurred**.**
NOTE: Eloping couples went to Mason Co. or Pike Co. to avoid waiting to marry.

Kentucky Death Records

In 1852, Kentucky law required counties to record deaths, although records are incomplete.
In 1911, the state passed a new law requiring registration of all deaths.

Obtain a Kentucky Death Record from the **County Clerk's Office** or from the **Kentucky Office of Vital Statistics.**

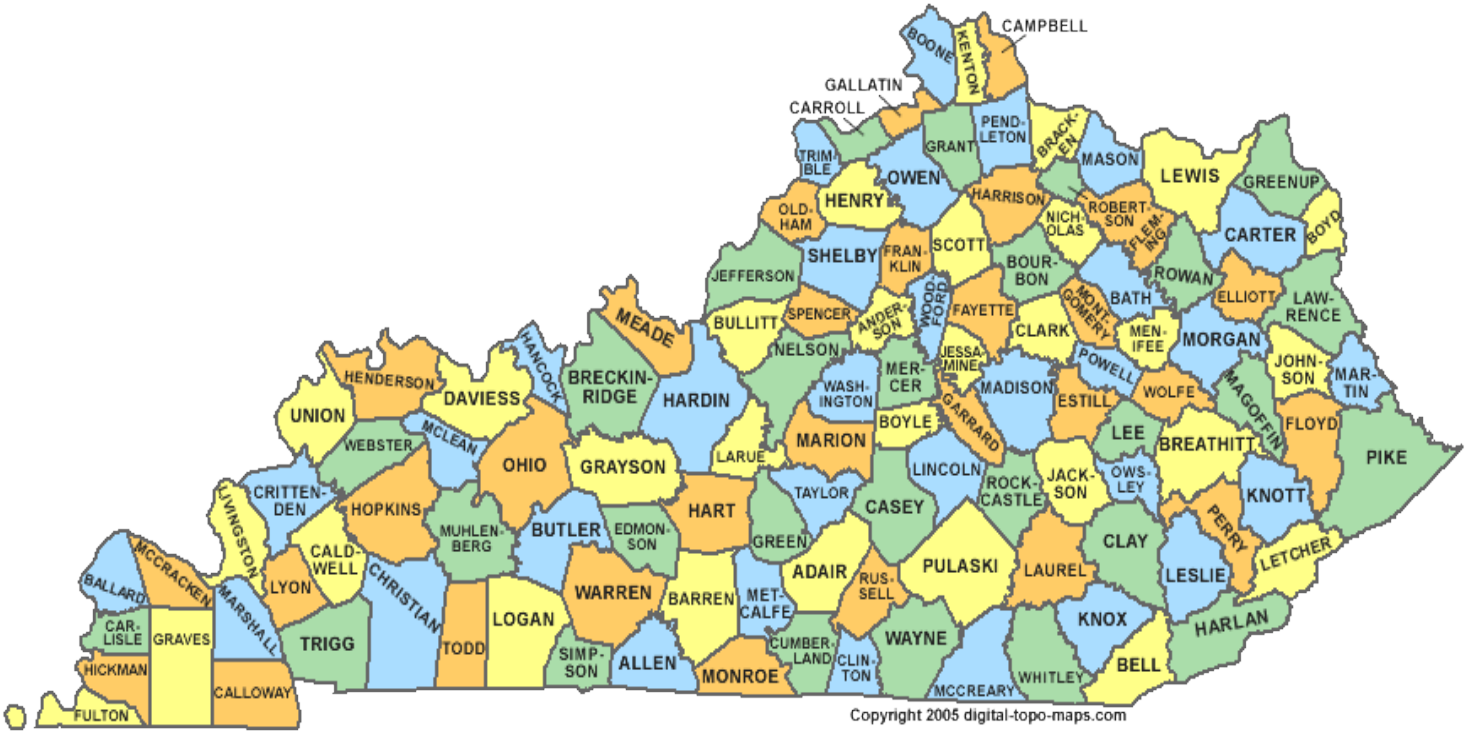
Other Sources of Birth, Marriage, and Death Information:

- Family Bible Records
- Church Records
- Newspaper birth and marriage announcements, obituaries
- Military Records
- Censuses and Mortality Schedules
- Funeral Home/Cemetery Records/Wills/Probate Records

Major Kentucky Genealogical/Historical Repositories

Kentucky Archives & Library Special Collections, Louisville
Kentucky Historical Society
Martin F. Schmidt Research Library, Frankfort
National Archives Southeast Region (Atlanta)
Special Collections Research Center, University of Kentucky

Kentucky 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

Kentucky Migration Routes

Louisville and Portland Canal · Buffalo Trace · Catawba Trail · Cumberland and Great Lake Trail · Cumberland and Ohio Falls Trail · Great Valley Road · Kentucky Road · Maysville Turnpike · Nashville-Saline River Trail · Russellville-Shawneetown Trail · Tennessee, Ohio and Great Lakes Trail · Warriors Path · Wilderness Road · Zane's Trace

Many of the earliest white settlers came down the Ohio River from Pennsylvania or through the Cumberland Gap from Virginia and North Carolina. 70,000 people walked/rode horseback to KY on the Wilderness Road before 1796.

Kentucky Land Records

The KY/TN border was disputed till 1859 - look for family land records in both states.
Kentucky was a "state-land" state, meaning the state government appropriated all land within its borders. Land was surveyed in odd-sized lots in much of the state, but west of the Tennessee River it was surveyed in townships. Several types of land grants were issued in Kentucky. Warrants authorizing surveys of the desired land were issued to persons qualified to receive grants for military service (military warrants) or cash payments (treasury warrants.)

The following databases are available online at the ***Kentucky Land Office*** *website* - http://www.sos.ky.gov/admin/land/Pages/default.aspx

- Virginia Patent Series and Old Kentucky Patent Series.
- Revolutionary War Warrants database.
- West of Tennessee River Military Patents database
- Certificates of Settlement and Preemption Warrants database.
- Virginia Treasury Warrants Register,
- Lincoln Entries database.
- County Court Order Patents database.
- Jackson Purchase database.
- West of Tennessee River Non-Military Patents Database.

Kentucky Genealogy Research Websites

Note: Check online for the *GenWeb* and *Genealogy Trails* of the county in which your ancestor lived.

Allen County Records – click on database: indexes of births, marriages, deaths including some slaves, Land purchases/Deeds, Wills, Military records, Censuses, and more - http://www.allencountyky.com/
Boyd County Public Library – search databases of obituaries, cemetery burials, marriages, surname index, KY death index for years 2000 - 2012 - http://thebookplace.org/genealogy/databases/
Explore UK - view yearbooks, newspapers, city directories, listen to oral interviews – digital library of the University of Kentucky Special Collections - https://exploreuk.uky.edu/
Filson Historical Society – view images of biographies and memoirs, family papers, diaries, funeral home records
Kenton County Public Library – search databases of cemetery burials, city directories, church, hospital, court, real estate records, newspapers and more -
Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives – vital statistics on microfilm, online BMD indexes for some years
Kentucky Digital Library – read newspapers, maps, oral histories, books **Kentucky Land Office** – search land grants, military land bounty records, etc. - http://www.sos.ky.gov/admin/land/Pages/default.aspx
Kentucky Historical Society Digital Collections - oral histories, manuscripts, photos - https://www.kyhistory.com/
My Genealogy Hound – *biographies* of early citizens extracted from *pre-1900 county histories* of Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee -
University of Kentucky – indexes of KY marriages - http://ukcc.uky.edu/vitalrec/

Kentucky 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 - http://worldmap.harvard.edu/africamap/

AfriGeneas – slave records, death and marriage records, censuses, surnames – chat or send messages to other researchers
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/
Fayette County African American Marriages – search indexes of "Colored Marriages" records in Fayette County, KY, 1866 – 1882 and 1958 - 1968
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/
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/
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
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 -

Kentucky Cemetery Research

Graves County, KY: List of **Graves County Cemeteries** and their locations - links to a few burial listings - http://mayfieldky.gov/cemeteries.php
Kenton County Public Library – search databases of cemetery burials, city directories, church, hospital, court, real estate records, newspapers and more
Kentucky Historical Society Cemetery Search – search index by name and cemetery - http://www.kyhistory.com/cdm/ref/collection/LIB/id/493
Lexington-Fayette Urban County, KY: **Lexington Cemetery** – searchable database of burials -
Lincoln County, KY: **Shelby City African-American Cemetery** – as of Nov. 2013: cemetery is being cleared and graves are being found
McCracken County, KY: **Oak Grove Cemetery** in Paducah, KY – links to alphabetical burial lists and to cemetery maps
Shelbyville, KY: **Grove Hill Cemetery** – search burials by name, click View to access all information
Tennessee Valley Authority Cemeteries – index of over 30,000 graves originally in TN, AL, MS, KY, GA, NC, and VA that were flooded or relocated when the dams were built - https://www.tva.com/environment/environmental-stewardship/land-management/cultural-resource-management/relocated-cemeteries

Kentucky 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/
Kentucky Revolutionary War Warrants – search index - http://apps.sos.ky.gov/land/military/revwar/

Kentucky Native American Research

Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center – student records, cemetery information, much related to one of the Sioux tribes
First People - Links to State Recognized Tribes, sorted by state - http://www.firstpeople.us/FP-Html-Links/state-recognized-tribes-in-usa-by-state.html
Native American Tribes of Kentucky - http://www.native-languages.org/kentucky.htm

Kentucky Newspaper Research

Kentucky Digital Library – read newspaper pages
Kentucky Online Historical Newspapers – names and dates of newspapers, where they can be read online

Information on these pages is compiled from information in:

- *FamilySearch.org* Wiki
- Family Tree Magazine
- *The Weekly Genealogist, NEHGS; Dick Eastman Genealogy Newsletter; Genealogy Gems from the Allen County Public Library*
- *Online Military Indexes and Records* - http://www.militaryindexes.com/index.html