

RESEARCHING YOUR CASS COUNTY ANCESTORS

Cass County Public Library – Genealogy Branch

THE BASICS

For Cass County

- No known courthouse fires or massive record destruction
- After a period of time, a majority of county records are sent to the Historical Society
 - Cut-off year varies from record to record
- Some departments have *online document search databases* featuring select record collections
 - Some allow copy requests by email
 - Others will still require a visit in person to get copies of records

Getting Started

Consider the terminology the record uses

- Your ancestor might be listed in indexes as:
 - Juror, witness, victim, defendant, plaintiff (criminal/civil court records)
 - Grantor, grantee, executor, administrator (property/land records)
 - Deceased, informant, registrar, undertaker, physician (death registers/certificates)

Reading Original Documents

- Earlier records are often handwritten – typed records start to become common ca. 1940s
- Keep this in mind when using transcriptions and indexes
 - Illegibility may account for spelling variation
 - Information in indexes is ***at least three degrees removed*** from your ancestor
 - 1) the clerk hearing and recording the information in the record
 - 2) the transcriber reading the handwritten information
 - 3) the transcriber recording the information in the index

Reconnaissance is Key

- If you are unsure where a particular record type for a particular time frame is kept, call ahead
 - This will avoid wasting your time and that of others
- Check the Historical Society first for historical records
 - i.e. records dated prior to the early-mid 1900s
 - *An index of records held at the Historical Society available at the Genealogy Branch*

RECORD TYPES AND REPOSITORIES

Cass County Justice Center and Courthouse

The Cass County Justice Center houses:

- Circuit Clerk's office
 - Domestic, civil, and criminal records
- Probate

Court records held in this location include:

- *Domestic*: Dissolution (divorce), paternity actions, modification (name changes)
- *Civil*: Small Claims Court (civil claims up to \$5,000)
- *Probate*: Wills, estates, guardianships, conservatorships

- *Criminal*: all felony criminal offense case records, jury books, trial dockets, miscellaneous papers, etc.

Copy requests can be submitted to the Circuit Clerk's office via email at Cass.Copies@courts.mo.gov

- Current/ongoing cases copy requests get top priority
- Turn around speed depends on how many other requests they have

The Historic Courthouse houses:

- County Clerk's office
 - Election Authority holds voter lists back to 1903
- Recorder's office
 - Real estate/land

Recorder of Deeds

<https://www.casscounty.com/2164/Recorder-of-Deeds>

- Real Estate Records and Indexes
 - Surveys and plats
 - Chains of title (land transaction lists)
 - Deeds, deeds of trust, release deeds, mortgages
 - Federal and state tax liens
- Marriages
- Military Discharge Documents
 - Discharge, separation notice, certificate of service, report of transfer or discharge, including the DD 214
 - Copies can be requested by:
 - the subject, or someone with written authorization from the subject
 - the subject's spouse
 - a relative who is next of kin
 - by court order

Recorder's Document Search

Online database of transcribed real estate and marriage records held by the Recorder's office

<https://cassmo.icounty.com/iRecordWeb2.0/Login.aspx>

- The database will require a login, but you may login as a guest by entering GUEST in all capitals in the username blank and clicking the *Login* button
- When searching: ***at least two characters are required in the last name blank for any search***
- This database contains:
 - Real Estate Records, 1980–Present — *Note*: Real estate records 1940–Present are available in-office, and 1940 and older are held at the Historical Society
 - You can search by first, middle, and/or last name or by the name of the business
 - Filter by grantor, grantee, or both
 - Sort alphabetically, by instrument number, or recording date
 - Marriage Records, 1800s–Present
 - Searchable by first, middle, and last name

County Assessor's Office

<https://cass.missouriassessors.com>

Records generated and held here are more beneficial to present-day users, but the databases may help with property or land research

- Property Tax Records
- Personal Property Inventories
- Real Estate Value and Assessment

Online Databases

<https://cass.missouriassessors.com/search.php>

- Real Estate Search
 - Assessed Property Value
 - Search by: parcel number, deed holder, house number, street name, city, legal description, and lot area
- Personal Property Search
 - Property and Tax Payment History
 - Search by: account number, house number and street name, or name

Cass County Health Department

<https://casscounty.com/2158/Health-Department>

Copies of Missouri birth and death certificates for select years can be requested from the County Health Department (this applies to certificates generated in all Missouri counties, not just for those born in same county in which you are requesting)

- Birth Certificates, 1920-Present (Copies: \$15)
- Death Certificates, 1980-Present (Copies: \$13)
- 1968-1979 available from the Missouri Department of Health
- Death Certificates 1910-1968 online at MDH

Copy requests are best submitted in person

- They can also be submitted by mail with notarized request forms and a copy of your driver's license
- Online requests available through VitalChek: www.vitalchek.com
 - Has an additional fee

Cass County Historical Society

www.cchsmo.org

Research inquiries and copy requests can be submitted to the Historical Society via email at: CCHSMO@gmail.com

- County sends records to Historical Society
 - Cut off date: ca. 1940
- Master Archives Inventory Index (46 Pages)
 - Available at the Genealogy Branch
- Special Record Collections:
 - County School Records (including rural schools)
 - County-wide Obituary Collection
 - Professional Registration lists (chiropractors, dentists, doctors, etc.)
 - Historical Photos (indexed by location and subject)
 - Court Records (court minutes, probate files, fees books, witnesses, etc.)
 - Tax Books, Receipts, Delinquent Taxes, Assessor's Books
 - Chattel mortgages, estray records (helpful for farmer ancestors)
 - Donations of personal records and photos

CCHS Online Archives

- Obituary Collection Index
 - Copies of obituaries can be requested for a \$5 fee
- Marriage Record Index (alphabetically by both bride and groom)

Cass County Public Library – Genealogy Branch

www.casscolibrary.org/genealogy

Special Record Collections and Resources:

- Cass County Newspapers on Microfilm
 - Obituaries
- Newspaper Image Index Project

- An ongoing project indexing all images published in county newspapers on microfilm detailing the name of the paper, the page number, and the subject or caption of the image
- Newspapers covered as of August 2019: *Archie News*, *Garden City Views*, *Pleasant Hill Times*, *Drexel Star*, *Cass County Democrat*
- County Poor Farm Record Collection
 - This collection includes: an index of the County Poor Farm Register, and reconstructed death records, including farm patients and inmates who were later buried in unmarked graves
- Crouch File Research Collection
 - Indexed genealogy research collection containing over 180,000 surnames, local maps, and donated photos
- Donated family histories and research
- County and town histories
- Historical county plat books (1877, 1895, 1912)
- Census, marriage, birth, and deed indexes
- County cemetery records

Cass County Records on Microfilm at the Genealogy Branch:

- County deeds and deed indexes on microfilm
 - Books A-Z, 1-138, Index Books 1-78
- Register of Attorneys, 1835-1965
- Index to Deaths, 1951-1952 (Probate Original Entry Book 78-79)
- Grand River Baptist Church Records, 1844-1960

Copies and Research at the Genealogy Branch

Research inquiries and copy requests can be submitted by email at askgenealogy@casscolibrary.org

- *Black-and-white*: 15 cents/page; *Color*: 75 cents/page
- Microfilmed newspapers and records can be viewed and scanned with one of the multiple viewers in the branch and then saved to a portable storage device or printed

Missouri State Archives

www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources

- Majority of the records are on microfilm
 - Most are not indexed
- Digitized copies of some records can be purchased on CD
- County newspapers on microfilm
- Occupational Registers
 - Missouri State Board for Examination and Registration of Nurses
 - State Board of Osteopathic Education, 1920s-1960s
 - Board of Law Examiners Applications, 1905–

County and Municipal Records for Cass County on Microfilm

www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/county/croll

Index of holdings available online and in the Genealogy Branch

- Execution Dockets
- Circuit Court Records and Probate Case Files
- Deeds, Tax Lists, and Assessment Records
- School Records
- Apprenticeships
- Insane Patients

Missouri Digital Heritage

www.sos.mo.gov/mdh

- Missouri Land Records (*with Cass County Records*)
 - Swampland Patents
 - Tax Deeds Purchased/Assessed, 1847-1878
 - Township School Land Patents
- Death Certificates, 1910-1968
- Birth, Stillbirths, and Deaths, Pre-1910
 - Birth and Stillbirths: 2,545 records
 - Deaths: 727 records
- Cass County Plat Book, 1877 (digitized)
- History of Cass County and History of Cass and Bates Counties (digitized)
- Missouri State Penitentiary Records
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps
 - Harrisonville, Belton, Pleasant Hill, Garden City

Missouri State Historical Society

<https://shsmo.org>

Research requests can be submitted using a form on the website: <https://shsmo.org/research/request>

Resources include:

- Digitized plat books
- Digitized photograph collection
 - Searchable by keyword
- Newspapers on microfilm
 - Index of all Cass County newspaper titles available at:
<https://shsmo.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/newspapers/counties/cass.pdf>
 - Missouri Digital Newspaper Project: Pleasant Hill Leader, 1869–1873 viewable online at:
<https://shsmo.org/collections/newspapers/mdnp>

CONTACT INFORMATION

Cass County Circuit Clerk

www.casscounty.com/2207/Circuit-ClerkCourts

Telephone: 816-380-8227; 816-380-8500

Email: Cass.Civil@courts.mo.gov; Cass.Copies@courts.mo.gov; Cass.Criminal@courts.mo.gov;
Cass.Domestic@courts.mo.gov

Address: 17th. Judicial Circuit, 2501 W. Mechanic St., 1st Floor, Harrisonville, MO 64701

Recorder's Office

www.casscounty.com/2164/Recorder-of-Deeds

Telephone: 816-380-8123

Address: 102 E. Wall St., Harrisonville, MO 64701

County Clerk/Election Authority

www.casscounty.com/2210/County-ClerkElection-Authority

Telephone: 816-380-8102

Address: 102 E. Wall St., Harrisonville, MO 64701

County Assessor

<https://cass.missouriassessors.com>

Telephone: 816-380-8400

Address: 2733 Cantrell Rd., Harrisonville, MO 64701

County Health Department

<https://casscounty.com/2158/Health-Department>

Telephone: 816-380-8425

Address: 300 South Main St., Harrisonville, MO 64701

Missouri Department of Health – Bureau of Vital Records

<https://health.mo.gov/data/vitalrecords/index.php>

Telephone: 573-751-6387

Email: VitalRecordsInfo@health.mo.gov

Mailing Address:

Bureau of Vital Records

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

930 Wildwood Drive, Jefferson City, MO 65109

Cass County Historical Society

www.cchsmo.org

Telephone: 816-380-4396

Email: CCHSMO@gmail.com

Address:

Cass County Information Center

ATTN: Cass County Historical Society

400 E. Mechanic St., Harrisonville, MO 64701

Cass County Public Library – Genealogy Branch

www.casscolibrary.org/genealogy

Telephone: 816-884-6285

Email: askgenealogy@casscolibrary.org

Address:

Cass County Information Center

ATTN: Cass County Public Library – Genealogy Branch

400 E. Mechanic St., Harrisonville, MO 64701

Missouri State Archives

www.sos.mo.gov/archives

Telephone: 573-751-3280

Email: archref@sos.mo.gov

Address: 600 W Main St., Jefferson City, MO 65101

Missouri State Historical Society

<https://shsmo.org>

Telephone: 800-747-6366

Email: contact@shsmo.org

Mailing Address: 605 Elm Street, Columbia, MO 65201

Visit the library's locations page (www.casscolibrary.org/locations) for CCPL Genealogy's location, contact information, and hours of operation.

Information regarding our digital collections, access to online databases, submitting inquiries, and more, can be found on Cass County Public Library's Genealogy Resources page, located here: www.casscolibrary.org/genealogy

Send Research Inquiries to:

askgenealogy@casscolibrary.org

Cass County Public Library – Genealogy Branch
400 E. Mechanic St. Harrisonville, MO – 816.884.6285

