

1681 - 2012



The following guide notes the years and locations of various directories and supporting reference works. For additional listings of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania directories, as well as those for cities such as Camden, Baltimore, and Boston, search our [online catalog](#) <sup>[1]</sup> for "city directories" and the name of the city you seek.

For a general overview of how to use Philadelphia city directories, see Robert Elwood Hoagland's article, "Research Tips: Using Philadelphia City Directories," from *Penn In Hand* <sup>[2]</sup>, vol. IX, no. 4 (Summer 1988). (UPA F 146 .G3)

## Philadelphia City Directories

Many Philadelphia city directories are now [available online via the Internet Archive](#) <sup>[3]</sup>. As of this writing, 69 volumes are available between the years 1785 and 1867. Other directories may be available online through other sources. HSP offers visitors to our library free access to [AncestryInstitution.com](#) <sup>[4]</sup>; [FamilySearch.org](#) <sup>[5]</sup> is free for all users. See an HSP Reference Librarian for further assistance using these resources in the library.

HSP has the following print copies of Philadelphia city directories available for reference purposes in the CDIR section of the Pennsylvania room.

CDIR: 1785, 1791, 1795, 1799, 1800, 1825, 1830, 1833, 1835, 1839, 1840, 1844, 1845, 1847, 1848, 1850, 1857, 1858, 1860, 1865, 1870, 1875, 1880, 1883, 1885, 1890, 1895,

1900, 1905, 1910, 1915, 1920, 1925, 1930, 1935, 1945.

Researchers may make paper copies by using the microform versions of these directories, which are available in HSP's Albert M. Greenfield Microfilm & Media Center:

*Assorted Philadelphia City Directories: 1785-1861* <sup>[6]</sup> (Mfilm XMF Wa .01; drawer 343)

*Assorted Philadelphia City Directories: 1861-1935* <sup>[6]</sup> (Mfilm XR 816; drawers 158-159)

## Specialized Philadelphia Directories

HSP also holds a variety of specialized directories, including:

*The Philadelphia Colored Directory* <sup>[7]</sup>: 1908, 1910, 1914 (Wa .028V)

Philadelphia business directories <sup>[8]</sup>: 1800, 1840, 1858, 1859, 1860, 1867-1868, 1869, 1874, 1876, 1877, 1879, 1880, 1882, 1883-1887, 1897, 1903-1904, 1906, 1908, 1910-1911, 1912, 1913-1915, 1914, 1916, 1917-1918, 1923-1931, 1945, 1949-1950 (various call numbers, including Mfilm E 154.5 .P5; Wa .01; UPA/Ph Hf 5068 .P5 P48; UPA/Ph F 158.5 P39 1886 FOLIO)

Philadelphia industry directories, including *Dalton's Greater Philadelphia Industrial Directory* <sup>[9]</sup>: 1979 (UPA/Ph HF 3163 .P5 D28); *Industries of Pennsylvania, City of Philadelphia* <sup>[10]</sup>: 1879 (UPA/Pam HC 108.P5 E9 1879); *Philadelphia and Her Merchants* <sup>[11]</sup>: 1860 (UPA/Ph F 158.44 .R6 1860); and *Philadelphia and Its Manufacturers: A Handbook* <sup>[12]</sup>: 1858 (HC 108 .P5 F74 1858 2005r).

*A Directory of the Charitable, Social Improvement, Educational and Religious Associations and Churches of Philadelphia* <sup>[13]</sup>: 1903 (UPA/Ph HV 99 .P5 C6 1903)

# Philadelphia Telephone Directories

HSP's collection includes a variety of telephone directories, including:

*Official directory of the Bell Telephone of Philadelphia*: July 1883, January 1888, January 1889, July 1890, January 1891, January 1893, January 1894, April 1894, October 1894, 1900, April 1981 (Wa\* .02V <sup>[14]</sup>) and UPA/Ph F 158.2.B4 1900 <sup>[15]</sup>)

Microform of telephone directories from 1936-1975 (XR 119:1-74); drawers 138-139) and 1987-1989 (XMF Wa .022; drawer 343)

## Philadelphia Society

HSP's holdings include a variety of resources for learning more about prominent Philadelphians, including:

Boyd's Philadelphia Blue Book <sup>[16]</sup>: 1881-1897, 1899-1909, 1911-1914, 1916, 1921 (Wa.126; UPA/Ph F 158.22 .B789)

The Lives of Eminent Philadelphians, Now Deceased <sup>[17]</sup>: 1859 (UPA/Ph F 158.25 .S61)

Polk's Philadelphia Blue Book, Elite Directory and Club List <sup>[18]</sup>: 1924/25, 1926/27 (UPA/Ph F 158.21 .P55)

Social Register: Philadelphia, including Wilmington <sup>[19]</sup>: 1891-1915, 1919-1975 (UPA/Ph F 158.22 .A182)

Who's Who in Philadelphia, 1776-1926; at the Time of the Sesquicentennial <sup>[20]</sup> (UPA/Ph F 158.25.W62 1927)

Various groups also published directories highlighting notable members of their communities, including:

Progressive Italo-Americans including Who's Who in Philadelphia <sup>[21]</sup>: 1925 (F 158.9 .I8 P76 1925)

*The Social Record: The Colored American Blue Book* <sup>[22]</sup>. 1926 (F 158.9.N3 S6x 1926)

*Who's Who in Greater Philadelphia in the Negro Community* <sup>[23]</sup>. 1968 (UPA/Ph F 158.9.N3 W5 1968)

## Philadelphia City Landscape

The city of Philadelphia has changed its borders and renamed its streets on various occasions over its history, with major street renaming efforts in 1858 and 1897.

You can explore these changes at the Philadelphia Historic Street Name Index <sup>[24]</sup>, in the maps and other resources presented online by the Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network <sup>[25]</sup>, or by consulting *Change in Names of Streets in the City of Philadelphia, 1897-1930* <sup>[26]</sup> (REF F 158.67 .A1 C43).

The city also renumbered almost all city addresses in 1856, to take effect in 1857. Prior to this date, building numbers ran consecutively with no changes for new blocks. For instance, 146 Chestnut Street was located between 6th and 7th streets. Beginning in 1857, the city renumbered with the same block numbering structure we use today: the 100 block of Chestnut Street is located between Front and 2nd streets, etc.

Philadelphia officials also enacted major renumbering efforts in Kensington and Germantown in the late 19th century. For more on Germantown, see Laura A. Taylor's "An Introduction to Germantown Street Names" <sup>[27]</sup>," Parts 1 & 2; *Germantown Crier*, Vol. 26, no. 4 (Fall 1974): 113-20; and Vol. 27, no. 1 (Winter 1975): 19-27. (UPA/Ph F 159 .G3 T3 1975)

The Philadelphia City Archives provides an overview of all of these changes on its web page about architectural research resources <sup>[28]</sup>.

For more background on the Philadelphia city landscape, you may also be interested in:

*Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*

[29] (RDESK G 1264 .P5 D3 1966)

*Mermaids, Monasteries, Cherokees and Custer: The Stories Behind Philadelphia Street Names* [30] (REF F 158.67 .A1 A45)

*Old Towns and Districts of Philadelphia* [31]  
(UPA/Ph F 158.1 .C58, vol. 4 no. 5)

Wainright, Nicholas B. "Plan of Philadelphia."  
*Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* [32]. Vol. 80, no. 2 (April 1956): 164-226. (UPA F 146 .P65)

Family History &

Genealogy [33]

Philadelphia

Neighborhood History

[34]

Land Records Guide [35]

Federal Census

Records [36]

Vital Records [37]

Architectural

Resources [38]

Getting Started Doing

Your Family History [39]

Philadelphia and

Pennsylvania

Resources [40]

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## Links

[1] <http://discover.hsp.org>

[2] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-141762>

[3]

<http://archive.org/search.php?query=title%3A%28directory%29%20AND%20collection%3A%28philadelphiamuseum>

[4] <http://www.ancestryinstitution.com/>

[5] <https://www.familysearch.org/>

[6]

[http://discover.hsp.org/Search/Results?lookfor=philadelphia+city+directories&type=AllFields&filter\[\]=forma](http://discover.hsp.org/Search/Results?lookfor=philadelphia+city+directories&type=AllFields&filter[]=forma)

[7]

[http://discover.hsp.org/Search/Results?join=AND&bool0\[\]=AND&lookfor0\[\]=Wa+.028V&type0\[\]=CallN](http://discover.hsp.org/Search/Results?join=AND&bool0[]=AND&lookfor0[]=Wa+.028V&type0[]=CallN)

1

[8]

<http://discover.hsp.org/Search/Results?lookfor=philadelphia+business+directory&type=AllFields&submit=F>

[9] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-148213>

[10] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-145220>

[11] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-35712>

[12] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-291934>

[13] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-148339>

[14] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-96352>

[15] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-154292>

[16] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-221994>

- [17] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-35469>
- [18] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-148079>
- [19] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-143821>
- [20] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-38236>
- [21] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-296590>
- [22] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-27547>
- [23] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-35282>
- [24] <http://www.phillyhistory.org/HistoricStreets/>
- [25] <http://www.philageohistory.org/geohistory/>
- [26] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-155449>
- [27] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-38973>
- [28] <http://www.phila.gov/phils/docs/inventor/deeds.htm>
- [29] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-35098>
- [30] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-38431>
- [31] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-35952>
- [32] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.opac.v01-35662>
- [33] <https://hsp.org/collections/catalogs-research-tools/subject-guides/family-history-genealogy>
- [34] <https://hsp.org/collections/catalogs-research-tools/subject-guides/philadelphia-neighborhood-history>
- [35] <https://hsp.org/collections/catalogs-research-tools/subject-guides/land-records-guide>
- [36] <https://hsp.org/collections/catalogs-research-tools/subject-guides/federal-census-records>
- [37] <https://hsp.org/collections/catalogs-research-tools/subject-guides/vital-records>
- [38] <https://hsp.org/collections/catalogs-research-tools/subject-guides/architectural-resources>
- [39] <https://hsp.org/getting-started-doing-your-family-history>
- [40] <https://hsp.org/collections/catalogs-research-tools/subject-guides/philadelphia-and-pennsylvania-resources>