Small Repositories Subject Guide: Genealogy

The genealogy resources available at many small repositories include primary source records, such as membership registers and funeral records; genealogy research papers that were collected by individuals or family associations; and family files maintained by the repositories that consist of alphabetical files on local individuals or families with copies of newspaper clippings, obituaries, family trees, and narrative family histories.

The [Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories](https://hsp.org/pci-sar) (HCI-PSAR), a project of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania with funding from the [Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](https://mellon.org), is uncovering the hundreds of hidden collections held by the many small archival repositories in the five-county Philadelphia area. Some of the collections cataloged in the HCI-PSAR project are summarized in this subject guide, which is designed to facilitate and encourage research at small repositories. The guide is not comprehensive but will serve to highlight underutilized collections and reveal the depth and breadth of resources available at small repositories.

Finding aids to all small repository archival collections surveyed in the HCI-PSAR project are available at our finding aid website, hosted by the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries. Finding aids are being added on an ongoing basis, so check back frequently.

Primary source records
Genealogy research papers
Family files

Primary source records

**Foulke and Long Institute for Orphan Girls records, 1857-1948** (GHS.14)
Germantown Historical Society
4.75 linear feet
The Foulke and Long Institute for Orphan Girls was established in Philadelphia in 1882 for orphaned daughters of soldiers, firemen, and others sacrificed for the public benefit. In 1888, Foulke and Long merged with the Industrial Home for the Training of Girls in the Arts of Housewifery and Sewing. Foulke and Long moved to the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia in 1913, where it remained until the institute merged with the Youth Study Center of Philadelphia in 1960. The Foulke and Long Institute for Orphan Girls records, 1857-1948, are primarily comprised of administrative, financial, and pupil records for the Foulke and Long Institute, with some materials from the Industrial Home for Girls. There are Admission and Dismission Committee records, meeting minutes, account books and ledgers, and many other document types.

**Kimes and Nelson's Funeral Service funeral registers, 1884-1936** (SFAHS.02)
Spring-Ford Area Historical Society
1.5 linear feet
Servicing Spring City and Royersford, Pennsylvania, Kimes and Nelson's Funeral Service was in operation for close to a century, beginning in 1884. The Kimes and Nelson's funeral registers, 1884-1936, consist of 11 volumes, including the first register that cover a 50-year period. Entries include a significant amount of information about decedents, including occupation, birth place, parents' names, and cause of death.

**Pennsylvania Society of New England Women records, 1899-1900** (SM.04)  
Historic Strawberry Mansion  
2.5 linear feet  
The Pennsylvania Society of New England Women was formed in 1899 as a philanthropic and social group for women of New England descent living in Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Society of New England Women records, 1899-1900, contain administrative and financial records of the organization.

**Records of the Grand Army of the Republic, including its various posts**  
Grand Army of the Republic Civil War Museum and Library  
The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was a membership organization for Civil War veterans. Descendants of Civil War veterans are eligible for membership in Sons of Union Veterans (SUV).

**Solebury Township schools attendance registers, 1865-1969** (SOL.01)  
Solebury Township Historical Society  
9.5 linear feet  
Solebury Township in Bucks County, Pennsylvania has had a total of twelve one-room school houses over the course of its history. The first and later best-attended of these, known as Center Hill School, was constructed in 1757 and is believed to be the oldest building in continuous educational usage in Bucks County, and possibly in the state of Pennsylvania. The Solebury Township schools attendance registers, 1869-1969, consist of student attendance lists from schools--including many one-room schoolhouses--in Solebury Township. Solebury Elementary School records comprise well over half of the collection. There are also a few financial records from the New Hope-Solebury School District and a cash book from the Quaker City Justice College (1865-1877).

**Wilson D. Puhl tax collection records, 1934-1942** (LPHS.01)  
Lower Pottsgrove Historical Society  
4.67 linear feet  
Wilson D. Puhl (1906-1977) was tax collector for Lower Pottsgrove Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. The Wilson D. Puhl tax collection records, 1932-1942, are comprised of tax ledgers, receipts for taxes collected, correspondence, financial records, and reports.
Woodlands Cemetery Company records, 1843-2008 [16] (WC.01)
Woodlands Mansion and Cemetery [17]
80 linear feet
Woodlands Cemetery Company of Philadelphia was founded in 1840 to transform a mansion and grounds owned by William Hamilton into a "rural cemetery," with winding carriage-ways and highly individualized monuments. The cemetery is still active as of 2012. The bulk of the Woodlands Cemetery Company records, 1843-2008, is comprised of administrative and financial records of the organization; the collection also contains interment records and architectural drawings of the mansion and property. Most of the administrative and financial records date from the 1960s to 1990s, but the interment records span the life of the Woodlands Cemetery Company.

Genealogy research papers

Dr. John H. Kressman genealogy research files, 1971-2000 [18] (TCPV.06)
The Historical Society of Trappe, Collegeville, Perkiomen Valley [19]
6.5 linear feet
Dr. John H. Kressman (1936-1998) was a teacher, active member of the Lutheran Church, and genealogist. He was president of the Cressman Family Association and editor of its quarterly genealogical newsletter. Around the time of Dr. Kressman's death, the Cressman Family Association had approximately 600 members. The bulk of the Dr. John H. Kressman genealogy research files, 1971-2000, is research notes and correspondence, photocopies of primary and secondary sources, and printed narrative genealogies. There are also a few scrapbooks about family reunions, tours to meet German relations, and family history research.

George F. P. Wanger genealogical research, 1794-1937, 3.5 linear feet [20] (HSMC.23)
The Historical Society of Montgomery County [21]
3.5
George F. P. Wanger, 1863-1938, was an author, historian, and genealogist who published materials relating to his family and to the local history of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. The bulk of the George F. P. Wanger genealogical research, 1794-1937, is comprised of research materials gathered by Wanger while compiling his family history. The collection also includes primary source materials such as marriage certificates and land deeds.

Yost Family Association records, 1812-1976, 1.3 linear feet [22] (HSMC.26)
The Historical Society of Montgomery County [21]
1.3 linear feet
The Yost Family Association was active from 1898 to 1975 in organizing annual reunions, performing genealogical research, and promoting the Yost family heritage. The Yost Family Association records, 1812-1976, is made up of records of the Association, some original Yost family papers, and genealogical research.

Family files

Germantown Historical Society family files, 1864-2012 [23] (GHS.06)
Germantown Historical Society [6]
31.5 linear feet
Germantown, a section of northwest Philadelphia, was settled in the 1600s. It is well known as the site of the first American anti-slavery protest, the Revolutionary War Battle of Germantown, and the National government during the yellow fever epidemic of 1793. The Germantown Historical Society family files, 1864-2012, contains research relating to prominent or long established families in Germantown. It consists primarily of research notes and copies, although there is a small amount of original primary source material in the collection.

Limerick Township Historical Society genealogy research collection, circa 1900-2012

Limerick Township Historical Society

16.5 linear feet

The Limerick Township Historical Society genealogy research collection, circa 1900-2012, is comprised of genealogical resources collected by the Limerick Township Historical Society that relate to local residents: research files on Limerick families, transcribed cemetery records, obituaries/memorial cards, and funeral home records. The collection includes photographs, research notes, ephemera, cemetery records, obituaries, and the records of a local funeral director.

Links