

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Family Surname Files

A collection of papers including correspondence, newspaper articles and family trees that have been gathered by the Society. They encompass eight full filing cabinets and the index contains over 13,000 surnames. Wills are also included in the Files for the years 1787-1896.

Manuscript Collection

Contains various items, including personal notes, receipts, photos, drawings, bibles, maps, booklets, etc. The index is arranged alphabetically by subject, surname, place name or event.

Photograph Collection

Indexed by subject, our photo collection consists of nearly 10,000 photographs, slides, stereographs, and postcards showing many aspects of life in Luzerne County over the years.

History of Wilkes-Barre and Luzerne County

Edward Phillips

Mr. Phillips spent over 30 years indexing newspapers and local histories, dating from when the colonists first came to the Wyoming Valley to the mid-1950s. This work is arranged in eight volumes. There is a surname index. Each tabbed area is for a particular volume and part. When conducting any type of search each tabbed area must be checked.

City Directories **1871 - 2001**

Contain information such as the head of household, spouse, occupation, address of occupation, and home address. May also note if a woman was widowed.

Maps

Indexed by place name, a few our collection contains are: 1873 Luzerne County Atlas; 1882, 1894, and 1904 Wilkes-Barre Ward maps; 1933 Strudevant Atlas (a fire insurance map); Sanborn Atlases of Luzerne County communities for the early to mid 1900 's

Wilkes-Barre Record Almanac **1886 - 1962**

The Wilkes-Barre Record was one of the local newspapers for the area. The Almanac contained information on Luzerne County for each particular year. The dates mentioned were the year the Almanac was published, however the information contained in them was for the previous year. The following is a sample of the information you will find in a typical year.

- Capital Crimes (1896-1958) – Murders that were committed in Luzerne County along with notes concerning the crime.
- Fatal Accidents (1897-1932) – Residents who met with accidental death other than those in the mines or on the railroads.
- Marriages (1897-1906) – Luzerne County residents who were joined in wedlock and reported the event to the paper.
- Mining Affairs (1899-1962) – A brief synopsis of the different aspects of mining in Luzerne County, often including disasters, records of those killed at various collieries in the county, strikes, anthracite mining statistics and a list of mine inspectors and candidates.
- Railroad Fatalities (1896-1931) – Persons who met with death on the railroads of Luzerne County.
- Death Record (1886-1962) – Any death of a resident of Luzerne County, exclusive of the Hazleton region, 10 years of age and over, that was reported to the paper, can be found.
 - 1886 through 1893, deaths were listed in the local summary section, which was divided into the months of the year.
 - 1894 through 1917, the entries were made for the entire year and alphabetized by the first initial of the individual's surname.
 - 1918 through 1962, when a listing was provided, it was done so in paragraph form for each month.

Families of the Wyoming Valley George Kulp 1885 - 1890

Each of these three volumes contains their own index of biographical sketches. Volume three contains a complete name index to all three.

Genealogical & Family History of the Wyoming and Lackawanna Valleys Hayden and Hand 1906

Two volumes containing biographical sketches of local families. Each volume has its own index.

A History of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, PA Harvey and Smith 1909 - 1930

Volumes I – IV contain histories of the area and events. Volume IV contains a general index for these volumes. Volumes V and VI contain biographies. Volume VI contains a subject index as well a name index.

History of Luzerne County H. C. Bradsby 1893

Part I the history of the area. There is a subject index on page (v) of the contents. A Township and Borough index is located on page (viii). Part II contains biographical sketches. There is a name-by-name index for this volume in a separate book.

Location of Early County Records

- 1752 – 1772 The territory of Luzerne was included in Northampton County
Records can be found in the Court House at Easton, PA.
- 1772 – 1786 The territory of Luzerne was included in Northumberland County
Records can be found in the Court House at Sunbury, PA.

Federal Census 1790 - 1930

Luzerne County 1800 through 1930 on microfilm

The census documents the people living in a particular household in each township of the county and includes names, ages, occupations, and place of birth. The 1790 census is in book form. We also have census indexes, 1800 – 1870, which list alphabetically, the names of the individuals found in the original census record, the county, the city or township and the page on which the name is listed.

- A fire at the Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C., destroyed the **1890 census**.
- The Federal Census is taken every 10 years and cannot be released to the public for 72 years.
- The 1940 census will be available in the year 2012.

The Federal Census is available at your local Family History Center, run by the Church of Latter Day Saints. The Mormons have been gathering genealogical information across the country since 1894. The main facility is located in Salt Lake City, Utah. To find a center in your area, call 1-800-346-6044.

The following records on microfilm were taken from original records held at the Luzerne County Court House.

- ***Birth / Death Records – It was not mandatory to record births or deaths in Luzerne County prior to the state taking over in 1906, therefore a large number of births and deaths were never officially recorded. Utilizing church and cemetery records may be the only documentation you will find prior to 1906.***

Births 1893 through 1905

The county held birth records until 1905. Birth Registration Returns are arranged by year and may contain some or all of the following: name, sex, color, date of birth, place of birth, the number of children the woman had at the time of birth, of them the number of children surviving, father's name, father's age, mothers name, mother's age, where the parents resided, occupation of the father, birthplaces of the parents and the date the birth was recorded. Records after 1905 are maintained by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Division of Vital Statistics.

Delayed Births 1877 through 1905

Act of July 16, 1941 provided an opportunity to register births that had not been previously registered. They are arranged in somewhat of an alphabetical order.

Deaths 1893 through 1905

The county held death records until 1905. The register of deaths are arranged by year and may contain some or all of the following information: name, color, sex, age, marital status, place of birth, place of death, cause of death, if due to an illness then the length of the illness, place of interment, date of interment, occupation, name of parents and the date the death was recorded. Records after 1905 are maintained by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Division of Vital Statistics.

Marriage docket 1885 through 1905

The index provided is arranged alphabetically by the man's surname as well as the woman's maiden name. Next to each of the listings is a license number. By using this number you can then locate the actual marriage license.

** Wilkes-Barre Record - March 9, 1926

An article stating the Register of Wills office discovered that 800 of the 3,600 marriage licenses issued in 1925 were never returned. Letters were sent to the applicants directing them to notify the priests, ministers or justices who married them to return the license at once. The marriage is not considered legal until returned to the Register of Wills office.

Grantor/Grantee Index to Deeds 1787-1907

These indexes are arranged alphabetically. If you knew of the present owner and wanted to know from whom they purchased the property, you would use the Grantee Index. If you knew the name of a property owner and wanted to know to whom the land was passed, you would use the Grantor's Index. The following is a list of the information included in each entry: grantor/grantee's name, volume number, page number, date of deed, date of record, and location of property.

Index to Orphans Court 1787-1866

This index includes the following: intestate (without a will) and testators' (with a will) names, the type of proceedings (ex. Petition for sale, order for sale, return of sale, sale continued, account confirmed, guardian appointed, guardian discharged, citation awarded, proof of contract, sheriffs' return, order to mortgage, petition to mortgage, bond approved and division of personal estate), the year, court docket number and page number.

Some of the Records available at the Luzerne County Court House

Register of Wills Office (Penn Place Annex – 20 N. Pennsylvania Blvd.) 570-825-1668

Births	1893 – 1905
Deaths	1893 – 1905
Wills	late 1700's – Present
Marriages	1885 – Present

Prothonotary's Office (main Court House – 200 N. River St.) 570-825-1745

Naturalization	1830 – 1906 (after 1906, held by U.S. Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization)
Military Discharge Records	up to 1950

Recorder of Deeds Office (main Court House) 570-825-1641

Deeds	1787 – Present
Mortgages	1787 – Present

Orphan's Court (Penn Place Annex) 570-825-1668

Popular Newspaper Holdings on microfilm (a full listing will be added in the near future)

Daily (Monday – Saturday)

Wilkes-Barre Record

27:1 – 27:373

June 1872 – December 1949

Except - 10/04/1938 – 04/04/1939 (Newspaper Strike)

Except - 05/09/1944 – 05/19/1944 (Newspaper Strike)

Times Leader

24:1 – 26:99

December 1907 – December 1949

Except - 01/01/1904 – 03/31/1904 (Unknown)

Except - 10/04/1938 – 04/04/1939 (Newspaper Strike)

Except - 05/09/1944 – 05/18/1944 Newspaper Strike)

Evening News

22:1 – 22:195

November 1884 – April 1939

Except - 10/04/1938 – 04/04/1939 (Newspaper Strike)

Hazleton Papers

32:1 – 35:12

July 29, 1879 – June 30, 1908

Except - 12/24/1879 – 7/23/1880 (Unknown)

1/22/1881 – 12/31/1882 (Unknown)

8/17/1889 – 1/2/1890 (Unknown)

7/1/1891 – 1/1/1892 (Unknown)

6/29/1895 – 6/31/1903 (Unknown)

1/1/1904 – 1/2/1905 (Unknown)

7/1/1905 – 12/31/1906 (Unknown)

Weekly

Sunday Morning Leader

20:1 – 20:10

November 1885 – December 1890

January 1892 – March 1893

Sunday News Dealer

21:1 – 21:10

June 1882 – May 1883

June 1884 – May 1886

June 1887 – June 1897

January 1898 – December 1899

Luzerne Union

5:1 – 5:23

6:6

January 1853 – June 1871

August 1871 – December 1878

October 1879 – September 1884

April 1885 – December 1899

January 1901 – December 1902

January 1905 - June 1907

Mountain Echo

29:1 – 29:16

May 1882 – March 1883

April 1937 – May 1966

Pittston Gazette

28:1 – 28:47

August 1850 – August 1870

March 1872 – June 1874

July 1889 – June 1900

August 1903 – December 1918

July 1921 – September 1921