

Genealogy Guide to Resources at the Lancaster County Archives



Documents concerning Lancaster County residents have been filed in the Courthouse since the formation of the County in 1729. Since this time there has been a variety of court documents that over time have gained historical significance to researchers. The Lancaster County Archives preserves and makes accessible records that can provide unique information to those with ancestry in Lancaster County. Start with recent family members and work back through time carefully noting each source where you find records. The following records are typically researched for genealogy information but researchers should consult the archives inventory for a more comprehensive listing of potential historical sources.

Deeds (beginning 1729)

Deed Index books within archives begin in 1729 and are an excellent starting point for verifying that your ancestors were indeed in Lancaster County. Deeds typically provide an individual's location, occupation, purchase price of land, and may mention family members. When a deed reference is located all deeds can be viewed via the Recorder of Deeds website: www.lancasterdeeds.com and selecting 'Online E-film Reader.'

Birth Records

There are several series of birth records within the archives before Pennsylvania began maintaining them in 1906. The majority of names within the archives collection of birth records are listed in the Online Indexes. For births beginning in 1906, contact the Pennsylvania Division of Vital Records.

- ❖ Birth Registrations (1852-1855), (1894-1907), (1881-1906 City)
- ❖ Delayed Birth Certificates (c.1870-c.1906)

Marriage Records

Marriages were not recorded until the late nineteenth century in most counties across Pennsylvania. Marriages may provide valuable information such as occupations, parent names, maiden names, and places of births. A father's written consent was required for all individuals applying for a marriage license in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Separate indexes are available for both the bride and groom names.

- ❖ Marriage License Applications (1885-1998)
- ❖ Marriage Registrations (1852-1855)

Court Office, Lancaster County, Penna.

Marriage License Docket.

State of Pennsylvania, }
County of Lancaster, } ss:

And now,
1st 7 1903 Emanuel G Rauch & Lillian B. Owsen
makes application for a license authorizing them to be united in marriage, whereupon said
applicants in answer to questions propounded to them

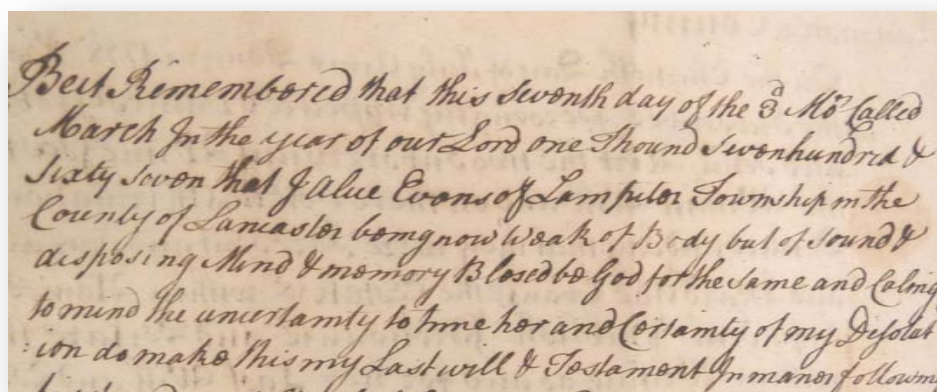
did respectively declare and say:

1st. The said Emanuel G Rauch
What is your age? My age is 26 years.
I was born in Paradise Twp. and reside Paradise Twp.

Death Records

There are a variety of death records within the archives that can provide insight into the lives of an ancestor. Wills are the most common death record but if your ancestor died without a will there are additional sources that can be searched. Check each of the below indexes for potential references. For deaths beginning in 1906, contact the Pennsylvania Division of Vital Records.

- ❖ Wills (beginning 1730)
- ❖ Intestate (without a will) (1753-1970) (recorded in Bond Books)
- ❖ Orphan's Court (1742-1962) (recorded in Miscellaneous Books)
- ❖ Death Affidavits (1874-1978)
- ❖ Death Registrations (1852-1855) (1894-1907)
- ❖ Estate Files (beginning 1902)
- ❖ Inventory (1861-1962)
- ❖ Accounts (1850-1962)



Best Remembred that this seventh day of the 3rd Mo^r called
March In the year of our Lord one Thousand seven hundred &
Sixty seven that John Evans of Lampeter Township in the
County of Lancaster being now weak of body but of sound &
disposing Mind & memory Blessed to God for the same and being
to mind the uncertainty to time her and Certainty of my Defol-
ition do make this my Last will & Testament In manner following

Veteran Burial Records

In accordance with Pennsylvania legislation to provide for aging Civil War Veterans, Lancaster County Commissioners first began providing for the burial of soldiers considered 'destitute' in 1885. Many veteran graves across Lancaster County were inventoried during the Works Progress Administration of the 1930s. Since this time there have been a variety of County records created documenting the burial of soldiers having served in wars from the American Revolution to the Viet Nam War. Veteran burial records may provide valuable information about your veteran ancestor.

Burial of Destitute Soldiers, Sailors and Marines.

In accordance with an Act "Authorizing and requiring the County Commissioners of each county in the State to appoint a sufficient number of suitable persons in each township and ward of their county, to look after, bury, and provide a headstone for the body of any honorably discharged soldier, sailor, or marine who served in the army or navy of the United States during the late rebellion or any preceding war, and shall hereafter die in their county, leaving insufficient means to defray the necessary burial expenses," the undersigned, duly appointed by the County Commissioners of Lancaster County, to attend to the duties enjoined by the Act, in and for East Donegal Township 61 District in said County, and having looked after and buried, as directed in said Act, Addison Benzier an honorably discharged Soldier who served in the Union Army during The Rebellion and died "leaving insufficient means to defray the necessary burial expenses," herewith, as required by law, make the following report: That the said Addison Benzier deceased belonged to Co A 14 Regiment Indiana Vol Infantry

Naturalization Records (beginning 1800)

Prior to 1906, any county courthouse could grant U.S. citizenship. The process of naturalization consisted of filing at least two papers known as the 'Declaration of Intention' and the 'Petition for Naturalization'. After living in the U.S. for two years an immigrant could file their declaration which was their formal oath renouncing allegiance to all other foreign governments. After waiting another three years, an immigrant filed their petition for naturalization. Naturalization declarations and petitions are both available in the archives which provide an ancestor's homeland and original signature. This information is vital to researching your roots in another country.

No. 483 U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR NATURALIZATION SERVICE ORIGINAL 83

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
633844

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof.

State of Penna } In the Common Pleas Court
County of Leicester } ss: of Leicester County

I, Caroline Neumann Sister Mary Bartholomew, aged 30 years,
occupation Housekeeper, do declare on oath that my personal
description is: Color White, complexion dark, height 5 feet 3 inches,
weight 136 pounds, color of hair Black, color of eyes dark brown,
other visible distinctive marks None

I was born in Musbach, Prussia, Germany,
on the 6th day of February, anno Domini 1878; I now reside
at St. Joseph's Convent, Lancaster, Pa.
(Give number, street, city or town, and State.)
I emigrated to the United States of America from Hamburg, Germany; my last

Tips for Searching the Archives

Be sure to check the Lancaster County Archives website for a complete description and inventory of our entire collection. Online indexes for many County records are also on our website and additional indexes are being added as they become available. Remember to search spelling variations since many names were recorded in a variety of ways. Records found within the archives may lead to additional sources of information kept at other organizations.