

Searching for and Reading Genealogy Books on the Web

Emphasizing websites which contain full-text copies of out-of-copyright books

Google Books

URL: books.google.com/

Coordinating organization: Google

Participating libraries: More than 20 major libraries, including the Wisconsin Historical Society library (see www.google.com/googlebooks/partners.html)

Claimed number of books available: 2,000,000+

Notes: Can search entire collection for words or phrases anywhere / hits are highlighted in context of full page / can download public domain books in their entirety in either PDF or EPUB format / PDF downloads may not be word-searchable / for books not in the public domain, you may see a "limited preview," a "snippet view," or just basic cataloging data / very cautious about books which MAY be under copyright protection

HathiTrust

URL: www.hathitrust.org/

Coordinating organization: HathiTrust

Participating libraries: More than 50 libraries and consortia, including the University of Wisconsin-Madison (including the Wisconsin Historical Society library) (see www.hathitrust.org/community)

Claimed number of books available: 8,881,869 total volumes, 27% of which are in the public domain

Notes: Can search entire collection for words or phrases anywhere / hits are highlighted in context of snippets / most of their material has been initially digitized by the Google Books project / HathiTrust gives preferential treatment to staff and students of their partners (such as being able to download full text PDF files); others can view only one page at a time (WHS staff is likely to be willing to download such a file to a "thumb drive" for any patron) / PDF downloads may not be word-searchable / much more aggressive than Google Books in dealing with books which seem to be in a grey area with regard to copyright protection; i.e., they are braver in terms of making such books available (especially books published between 1923 and 1963 and "orphaned" books) / includes a link to WorldCat, which should facilitate finding a printed copy of a book, should you need one /

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HeritageQuest Online

URL: www.heritagequestonline.com/ (can also access from home without charge from psw.scls.lib.wi.us/resources/genealogy/ if you have a library card at any of the 53 libraries in the South Central Library System [SCLS])

Coordinating organization: ProQuest LLC

Participating libraries: N/A

Claimed number of books available: over 28,000 family and local histories

Notes: Available in Wisconsin History Society library reading room or in any library in the SCLS / can search for people names, place names, or keywords / hits are not highlighted when viewing pages containing the words or phrases searched for / downloads are only available in "browse publications" mode, not in search for people or places mode / downloads are limited to 50 pages at a time / PDF downloads may not be word-searchable

Family History Archives

URL: lib.byu.edu/fhc/

Coordinating organization: FamilySearch, in conjunction with Brigham Young University

Participating libraries: 9 libraries, including the Allen County Public Library, the Family History Library, and the Mid-Continent Public Library (see lib.byu.edu/fhc/ for a full list)

Claimed number of books available: 17,777 items

Notes: Can do full-text search across the entire collection / date of publication not so important for books originally donated to the Family History Library / can download entire books as searchable PDF files / has an advanced search capability / hit list includes a very brief description of each hit / parts of the collections are restricted to BYU students and staff

Internet Archive

URL: www.archive.org/details/texts

Coordinating organization: The Internet Archive, a non-profit organization

Participating libraries: N/A

Claimed number of books available: 2,879,625 items, including 65, 346 items in their Additional Collections/Genealogy section

Notes: Can freely download entire books in numerous formats (searchable PDF, Kindle, Daisy (books for the blind), plain text, etc.) / I have seen a number of post-1923 items on this site in the past / Project Gutenberg, claimed to be the first producer of free e-books, is now a part of Internet Archive

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GenealogyBank Historical Books

URL: www.genealogybank.com/gbnk/books/

Coordinating organization: N/A (a subscription service of Newsbank, Inc.)

Participating libraries: N/A

Claimed number of books available: 11,734

Notes: Primarily limited to books published between 1801 and 1900 (some prior to this date span) / can only view or download single pages

Genealogy Book Links

URL: www.genealogybooklinks.com/

Coordinating organization: ? (a private individual)

Participating libraries: links to content in about two dozen other online book services (see list on "Genealogy Book Links" entry on www.cyndislist.com/books/online-books-ebooks/)

Claimed number of books available: Has information about locations on the web of more than 10,000 digitized books)

Notes: Appears to key off of appearance of surname in cataloging data / links directly to specific book's entry on the referenced service, not just to the service

Open Library

URL: openlibrary.org/

Coordinating organization: The Internet Archive

Participating libraries: N/A

Claimed number of books available: over 1,000,000

Notes: "One web page for every book ever published. It's a lofty but achievable goal." / can search for words or phrases in title or author list, but not in book contents / has option to restrict hits to books available online, but default is to include books under copyright protection as well / will ATTEMPT to guide you to where you can borrow or buy a book which is not available online

I am not sure yet how this website fits into the larger world of Internet Archive

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The Online Books Page

URL: onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/

Coordinating organization: John Mark Ockerbloom, an employee of the University of Pennsylvania, with computer support from his employer

Participating libraries: N/A

Claimed number of books available: Over 1,000,000 books listed; restricted to books which can be downloaded in their entirety without charge

Notes: links to content of other online book services, including HathiTrust and Internet Archive; primary search tools key on title or author; there are also search tools relating to subject or Library of Congress call numbers / be sure to search on the “extended shelves” if first search fails / includes a set of links to more specialized archives at onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/archives.html

Hein Online World Trials Collection

Now being used (sometimes) in UW-Madison’s MadCat / RKL knows virtually nothing about it

General notes:

- Two major libraries which do not make any significant portion of their book collection available online: the DAR Library and the Library of Congress (the [American Memory](#) collection at the LoC is online)
- This outline does NOT consider e-books for sale (Kindle, Nook, etc.)
- My weasel words: this is a “document in progress,” meant to be helpful, not authoritative (some conclusions stated above are based on very small samples) / corrections, additions, and enhancements welcomed (send to rklittle@wisc.edu)
- For an extensive and highly technical discussion of copyright status of publications, see www.hathitrust.org/rights_database
- Most of these projects are still in the process of building their initial collections
- Remember the need for quote marks in many searches (e.g., “Dane County”)
- For a broad overview of the Library of Congress classification outline, see www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsolcco/
- The Wisconsin Historical Society library and the Google Books project: WHS is “four years into a six year contract” / books already digitized include all family histories (books in poor physical condition are an exception in every category listed here), the Native American Section, the African American section, military subjects, most books dealing with religion / in-progress categories include labor history, Wisconsin state documents, and state and local history books / everything digitized by Google then goes on to HathiTrust
- Everything digitized by Google Books so far has been printed material, but they are testing methods for processing microfilm (much like FamilySearch?)
- Note: You may occasionally see links to one of these online e-book repositories in MadCat—usually to Google Books or HathiTrust
- A copyright note: when an out-of-copyright item is republished, the reprint probably gets a brand new copyright, but if the original (if it still exists) it is still in the public domain. Tricky!