



Start Hunting!

Six Things to Find in City Directories

1. Your Ancestor. And other family members.

Sure, you're going to look for your ancestor, but look for other family members, too. Some of them may have lived nearby, others across town. Then follow the family year-by-year to note changes in occupation, living arrangements, even deaths of a head of household. Add it all to a timeline so you can keep track of the family's comings and goings.

2. Streets and maps

Street names can change over time – so can house numbers. To get a real look at your ancestor's neighborhood, look for street directories inside city directories. In some cases you may even find maps of the city or town. Street directories will typically give you cross streets, which you can use to orient you on modern day maps. This sample lists the right and left side of the street and the house number that corresponds with each intersection.

417 434 Vandervoort av	risou, bet. Hicks and Co-	65 66 Richards	165 164 Hicks
— — Newtown canal	lumbia, S. to Degraw	109 112 Van Brunt	205 190 Henry
419 456 Porter av	(one block)	Trotter (See Cambridge	251 236 Clinton
453 496 Varick av	Tillary, from Fulton,	pt.)	299 284 Court
495 538 Stewart av	bet. Johnson and Clinton,	Troutman (late Madi-	353 336 Smith
— 576 Gardner av	to 55 feet E. of Canton	son), from Myrtle av.,	413 386 Hoyt
525 573 Metropolitan av	Left. Rt.	bet. Jefferson and Bush-	485 450 Bond
559 593 Scott av	1 2 Fulton	wick av., N. E. to City	— — Gowanus canal
599 638 Seneca av	25 26 Washington	line	543 504 Nevius
— — Newtown creek	49 50 Adams	Left. Rt.	599 560 3d av
Thames, from Bogart,	69 70 Pearl	1 2 Myrtle av	663 624 4th av
bet. Gratian and Varick,	91 90 Jay	23 20 Bushwick av	733 694 5th av
E. to Jefferson	113 112 Lawrence	83 82 Evergreen av	793 752 6th av
Left. Rt.	133 134 Bridge	147 148 Central av	856 810 7th av
1 2 Bogart	153 160 Duffield	205 206 Hamburg	917 870 8th av
35 36 Morgan av	177 170 Gold	267 268 Knickerb'ker av	— — Prospect park
75 † Vandervoort av	197 192 Prince	331 334 Irving av	973 934 Clason av
77 84 Knickerb'ker av	† 208 Fleet pl	397 492 Wyckoff av	1057 1020 Franklin av
109 † Porter av	223 214 Hudson av	437 442 St. Nicholas av	1129 1090 Bedford av
† 134 George	245 234 Navy	481 486 Cypress av	1189 1162 Rogers av
149 † Varick av	268 256 Raymond	525 632 Covert av	1261 1222 Nostrand av
151 162 Irving av	291 282 Canton	541 546 City line	1333 1292 New York av
181 184 Stewart av	Tompkins av., from	Troy av., from Fulton,	1405 1366 Brooklyn av
189 — Jefferson	Fushing av., bet. Marcy	bet. Yates av. and Lewis	1479 1438 Kingston av
	av. and Throod av. S. to		1553 1510 Albany av
			1621 1580 Troy av

Brooklyn, New York, 1877

You may also find a reverse directory that lists residents by address, as well as cross streets. Use these to look through the neighborhood when searching for your ancestor's name just isn't working.

3. Churches and Clerics

Religious records are incredibly valuable for discovering dates, places, and family relationships. And for the years before states were required to keep records of births, marriages and deaths, churches may be the only place to find that information. Use city directories to find the churches nearest to your ancestor. And if you find the name of a cleric on records associated with your family, research the cleric in city directories, too. Use his address and compare it to the address of local churches to determine church affiliation. Also look to see if the directory you're viewing has a list of churches and synagogues that includes the names of clerics.

Methodist Episcopal (Colored)—
New Bethel, 29 Leopold
Methodist Free—
First, N Union cor Richmond
founded 1866 pastor W J Par-
menter
New Apostolic Church 136 Fillmore
pastor Karl Schenk
Polish National Catholic Church of
StCasimir 40 Ernst org 1907 pas-
tor Steph Stryjewski
Presbyterian—
Presbytery Office 416 Cutler bldg
Rev Frank M Weston, DD ex-
ecutive sec
Brick, N Fitzhugh cor Allen found-
ed 1825 pastor Harold E Nicely,
associate Stanley F Gutellius
Brighton, East av bet Park av and
Winton rd S founded 1817 pas-
tor Geo E Ulp
Calvary, South av cor Hamilton
founded 1856 pastor W Duncan
Gordon
Central, Plymouth av N corner
Church founded 1836 pastor Wm
S Meyer asst pastor Sherman W
Haven

MCCORMAN

Reformed Church in America—
Brighton, Blossom rd cor Arbor-
dale av founded 1892 pastor An-
thony Luidens
First, Main E cor Alexander found-
ed 1852 pastor Garret Hondelink
Second, Scio cor Lyndhurst found-
ed 1886
Roman Catholic—
Diocese of Rochester, Chancery of-
fice 50 Chestnut, Most Rev Edw
J Kearney bishop of Roch, Rt
Rev Msgr Wm H Hart vicar gen-
eral Rt Rev Msgr Wm F Ber-
gan chancellor Rev Lawrence B
Casey and Rev Jas C McAniff
vice chancellors
Church of Our Lady of Good Coun-
sel, Brooks av at Genesee Park
blvd founded 1928 rector Edw T
Meagher
Church of Our Lady of MtCarmel
(Italian) 60 Woodward founded
1909 pastor Chas J Azzi
Church of StTheresa 12 Mark near
Hudson av rector Simeon Kacz-
marek

Rochester, New York, 1943

4. Cemeteries

Check city directories for cemeteries near the homes of your relatives home at the time they lived there. They may point you to burial locations, possibly even a family plot, where you'll find details about more than one family member. This directory from Mobile, Alabama in 1890, gives the locations and even the name of the sexton.

CEMETERIES.

Catholic Cemetery.

On the north side of Davis avenue, be-
yond Three-mile Creek. John Rosette,
Sexton.

Jewish Cemetery.

South side of Virginia, west of Marine
street. Entrance on Virginia. Patrick
McGrath, Keeper.

Magnolia Cemetery.

Located south of Texas, north of Vir-
ginia, and west of Chatham streets. En-
trances head of George and of New Jer-
sey and on Ann and Virginia. Hiram E.
Davis, Keeper.

National Cemetery.

North side of Virginia, between Ann
and Chatham streets. Col. Lucian B.
Gould, Superintendent.

Old Grave Yard.

On Church street, between Government
and Monroe and Bayou and Wilkinson
streets. Entrances on Bayou and Church
and Wilkinson streets. Richard Farrell,
Keeper.

Mobile, Alabama, 1890

5. Advertisements

Look at the ads carefully – you may discover more information about a family member’s business or place of business, names of photographers, banks, organizations and other details that could appear elsewhere in your family’s history. Advertisements were a big source of revenue for directories and this Buffalo directory calls its index of advertisers the “Honor Roll.” Page numbers in the final column will take you directly to the ad.

Buffalo, New York, 1939

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Honor Roll

Page numbers below refer to Buyers' Guide

Name	Est.	Business	For Further Information See—	Page
Abbott Coal & Coke Co.	1934	Coal	left bottom lines and	45
**Abstract Title & Mortgage Corp.	1886	Abstracts		2
Aze Parts & Service	1938	Automobile Repairers		11
*Acme Pattern & Machine Co., Inc.	1906	Pattern Makers		134
*Acme Shale Brick Co., Inc.	1914	Brick and Tile Manufacturers		26
**Adam, J. N. & Co.	1871	Department Store	left side lines and	50
**Adam, Meldrum & Anderson Co.	1867	Department Store	left top lines and	51
***Aetna Casualty & Surety Co.	1850	Insurance	left side lines and	99
Allen Street Hardware Store	1926	Hardware	left bottom lines and	79
*Allen-Wales Adding Machine Agency	1902	Adding Machines	left bottom lines and	3
*Alling & Cory Co.	1898	Paper		133
All-Weather Roofing Co., Inc.	1920	Roofers	Page A and	154
*American Rescue Workers, Inc.	1896	Social Service	left bottom lines and	162
Amherst Memorial Co.	1930	Monuments	right side lines and	121
Anchor Concrete Products, Inc.	1936	Concrete Products		36
*Anderson, S. A., Inc. Florists	1892	Florists		67
Ark Builders' Supply Co., Inc.	1933	Builders' Supplies		27
Arka Herbs, Inc.	1931	Herbs	left side lines and	79
*Armstrong-Roth-Cady Co., Inc.	1901	Insurance	right top lines and	92
Arlas Electro Plating Service	1934	Platers		186
Aurex Buffalo Corp.	1939	Hearing Aids		79
B & G Laundries, Inc.	1931	Laundries	left side lines and	105
*Baker, Nelson P., Inc.	1907	Taxicab Service		171
***Beals, McCarthy & Rogers, Inc.	1826	Hardware	left top lines and	73
***Beck, Magnus Brewing Co., Inc.	1855	Brewers	right side lines and	24
Bell Radio & Television Co.	1938	Radios		142
Ben Tire Service	1917	Tire Dealers	right bottom lines and	174
Benedict's Hygrade Gulf Service	1937	Service Station	right bottom lines and	160
*Bennett Homes & Lumber Co., Inc.	1902	Lumber		113
*Berger, L. L., Inc.	1905	Women's Apparel	left side lines and	179
*Besser's, Inc.	1897	Stationers		166
Bertinger Coal & Coke Corp.	1925	Coal	right side lines and	40
*Biede Bros.	1911	Electrical Appliances	right side lines and	62
Bio-Lac, Inc.	1939	Dairy Products	right and left bottom lines and	49
Bison Builders' Supply Co., Inc.	1924	Builders' Supplies		27
**Bison Lumber Co., Inc.	1866	Lumber	right top lines and	109
*Black, John H. Co.	1896	Brick Manufacturers	right top lines and	26
*Black Rock Pattern Works	1915	Pattern Makers		134
Black Rock-Riverside Savings and Loan Associations	1889	Savings and Loan Assn.		157
*Blanchard Lumber & Mill Co., Inc.	1903	Lumber		113
*Brady, E. L. & Son	1882	Funeral Directors		71
*Brock, Claude C.	1914	Printer		140
Buffalo Black Top Pavements, Inc.	1933	Paving Materials		134
***Buffalo Bolt Co.	1860	Bolt and Nut Mfrs.	right side lines and	21
Buffalo Brick Corp.	1927	Brick Manufacturers	right bottom lines and	26
Buffalo Business Federation, The	1924	Civic Association	left side lines	
Buffalo Catering Co., Inc.	1915	Caterers		32
***Buffalo Chamber of Commerce	1844	Civic Assn.	left top and bottom lines and	5
***Buffalo City Cemetery, "Forest Lawn"	1864	Cemetery	left side lines and	48
**Buffalo Co-Operative Stove Co.	1884	Stove Manufacturers		170
***Buffalo Courier-Express, Inc.	1834	Newspaper		123
*Buffalo Crushed Stone Corp.	1904	Builders' Supplies		28
*Buffalo Envelope Co.	1888	Envelope Mfrs.		64
**Buffalo Evening News	1880	Newspaper	right top lines and	124
*Buffalo Fire Office, Inc.	1899	Insurance and Real Estate	Pages 90 and	91
***Buffalo Foundry & Machine Co.	1845	Founders		115

*Each star indicates 25 years in business.

6. Historical Information

City directories often included histories of the area, some with images of the city, too. That same Buffalo directory from 1939 includes an Introduction that spans 21 pages with photographs of the city and its landmarks, and sections on early history and settlers, historic sites, street names, statistics, and more. There are even sections outlining the history of several ethnic groups in Buffalo (Polish, German, Italian, Irish, and Jewish). All of this can give you a little more background on your family and their home life.

Get more tips on using U.S. City Directories Collection on Ancestry.com in our video. [Click here to start watching.](#)