



LancasterHistory

Research Guides Death, Probate, & Cemetery Records

Pennsylvania did not have a systematic registry of deaths before 1906. Records of deaths from 1906 to the present are maintained by the [Pennsylvania Department of Health's Division of Vital Records](#). For deaths before 1906, it is necessary to check church or cemetery records or compiled death records. Knowing the township where your ancestors lived or their religious denomination will help to narrow your search. The library holds copies of church and cemetery records from many congregations across the county, but not all. To locate the specific church or cemetery records, use *Churches and Cemeteries of Lancaster County* (LC 310.35 R579), or search by church name in our [collections database](#).

Lancaster County kept a register of deaths (1852-1854 and 1894-1909), as well as death affidavit records (1865-1906, index from 1865-1950); all of which we hold in microfilm copies.

Information concerning an individual's death can also be found in probate records: wills, intestate records, estate inventories, administrator's accounts, and Orphan's Court records. Many of these records can be found by utilizing LancasterHistory's [collections database](#). The library holds microfilm of Lancaster County Will Books from 1729-1908 and an index of wills from 1729-1947. We also have an index of intestate records from 1729-1850, but the Bond Books to which this index refers are held at the [Lancaster County Office of Records and Archives Services](#). [Search the county records](#) holdings in LancasterHistory's Archives for estate inventories and administrators accounts. Our collections also include microfilm copies of Orphan's Court Miscellaneous Books from 1742-1867 and an index from 1742-1891.

We maintain a number of databases and CDs of Lancaster City and County cemetery records and death notices from county newspapers.

Researchers might also consult the below resources that are available onsite in LancasterHistory's Research Center:

18th Century

- Bach, trans., *Death Registers of the Ephrata Cloister* (905.748 JHSCV, v. 21)
- *Burial Book of the Moravian Church, Lancaster, 1744-1821* (284.6 L244)
- Family Bibles at the Landis Valley Museum (microfilm drawer no. 1)



LancasterHistory

- Fulton and Mylin, *An Index to the Will Books and Intestate Records of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 1729-1850: With an Historical Sketch and Classified Bibliography* (LC 352.4 F974)
- Gerberich Tombstone Collection (microfilm drawer no. 1)
- Lancaster County Church Records (Miscellaneous) from 1729 (microfilm drawer nos. 2 and 3)
- *Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Will Abstracts* (929.3 A164 LANC)
- Lancaster County Tombstone Inscriptions (microfilm drawer no. 1)
- Smith and Weiser, trans. and eds., *Trinity Lutheran Church Records, Lancaster, Pennsylvania* (LC 284.1 T832ds)
- Spiese, trans., *Index to Death Records Taken from Pre-1850 German Language Newspapers* (LC 310.5 G373d)
- Wevodau, comp., *Abstracts of Lancaster County, Pa., Orphans Court Records* (LC 974.815 W544)
- Worner Cemetery Collection, 30 volumes (LC 310.35 W919)
- Wright, *Church Records of the 18th Century, Lancaster County* (LC 310.3 W949)

19th Century

- Family Cemetery Records (microfilm drawer no. 1)
- Newspapers from Lancaster City and County (microfilm)
- Wevodau, comp. *Abstracts of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Wills* (1821-1830) (929.3 A164w)

20th Century

- 20th-Century Obituaries Found in Lancaster County Newspapers (Access database; incomplete)
- Newspapers from Lancaster City and County (microfilm)