Pennsylvania Research: Four Centuries of History and Genealogy

Class 2: 18th Century, Birthplace of America

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History

- William Penn's influence continued to shape the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania during the 18th century and offer immigrants:
  - Religious freedom, a liberal form of government, affordable land, and a chance at prosperity.
- In 1701, William Penn created a "Charter of Privileges" for the people of his colony that governed how the colony was to be run:
  - American Philosophical Society, "William Penn, Charter of Privileges for the Province of Pennsylvania, 1701"- https://www.amphilsoc.org/exhibits/treasures/charter.htm
- The boundary lines for the state of Pennsylvania remained in dispute throughout much of the 18th century and Connecticut, Virginia and Maryland laid claim to areas now part of Pennsylvania:
  - List of county creations- https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Pennsylvania_County_Creation_Dates_and_Parent_Counties
  - Interactive map of county formations- https://www.mapofus.org/pennsylvania/
  - Genealogical Map of the Counties- https://www.phmc.pa.gov/Archives/Documents/Pennsylvania-Genealogical-Map-Counties.pdf
- Important migratory roadways through Pennsylvania in the 18th century included the Forbes Road, Braddock's Road, and Great Wagon Road:
  - Pennsylvania roads and trials- https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Pennsylvania_Migration

The People

- The major immigrant groups that arrived in Pennsylvania throughout the 18th century tended to affiliate with certain religions denominations:
  - English and Welsh – Society of Friends (Quakers) and Anglican (Church of England)
  - Germans – Lutheran or Reformed Lutheran
  - Scots-Irish – Presbyterian
  - Huguenots – French Protestants
  - Swiss – Mennonites/Anabaptists

Non-Quaker English and Welsh

- 18th century English immigrants were not just Quakers– they were also Anglicans who were members of the Church of England:
  - Christ Church of Philadelphia- https://christchurchphila.org/collections-genealogy/
  - By 1710, there were Anglican congregations in several settlements in present day Berks and Montgomery counties and in 1761, a second church, St. Peter's, was constructed in Philadelphia-
    - Use FamilySearch research wiki to search by county and denomination.
- The Welsh continued to settle on thirty thousand acres of land granted to the Welsh by William Penn, along the Delaware River, in an area known as the Welsh Tract– now in present day Delaware and Maryland:
  - Records for Pennsylvania Welsh immigrants on *FamilySearch*- https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/results?count=20&query=%2Bkeywords%3APennsylvania%20%2Bkeywords%3AWelsh
  - "The Early Welsh Quakers and Their Emigrations to Pennsylvania" in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Vol 17 (1893)* on *FamilySearch.*
- In 1746, Welsh settlers built the Welsh Tract Baptist Church which was prominent in the 18th century:
  - "Records of the Welsh Tract Baptist Meeting, Pencader Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware, 1701 to 1828" on *FamilySearch.*

Quakers

- Quakers had Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meetings:
  - The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) on Arch Street, served as the location for the Friends yearly meeting for much of the early 18th century.
  - Monthly Meetings records included births, deaths, marriages, burials, removals and certificates and Meeting Minutes:
    - A tutorial on how to navigate the *Ancestry* collection "U.S. Quaker Meeting 1681-1935"is available at- https://guides.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/c.php?g=889447&p=6470727
  - Original marriage records are on *Ancestry*- "U.S., Quaker Meeting Records, 1681-1935"
- Special Quaker records collections are at:
  - The Haveford College (Orthodox), Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College (Hicksite), and Bryn Mawr College (Orthodox). Digital records can be found through at the TriCollege Libraries Digital Collections-https://digitalcollections.tricolib.brynmawr.edu
    - Tutorial on how to search for your Quaker ancestors on *Ancestry*- https://guides.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/c.php?g=889447&p=6393965

- Search engine to find and locate manuscript collections in the Tricollege libraries-
https://archives.tricolib.brynmawr.edu
- An explanation of the Quaker Calendar- https://www.swarthmore.edu/friends-historical-library/quaker-calendar
- "A Friendly Glossary" of Quaker abbreviations-
https://www.swarthmore.edu/friends-historical-library/a-friendly-glossary

- Quakers were staunch pacifist who were against war or armed uprisings.
  - Their faith demanded they support soldiers on both the sides of the war, and many Quakers were arrested, had their land seized, and even exiled to Virginia.
  - Several letters and diaries have been digitized about the Quakers hardships during the Revolutionary War and can be found at- https://www.amphilsoc.org/blog/revolutionary-phl-exiled-philadelphia-quakers-during-revolution
  - See "Quaker Exiled in Virginia" collection-
https://archives.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/resources/hcmc-950-153
- Other Quaker resources include:
  - FamilySearch catalog page for "Pennsylvania Quakers"-
https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/results?count=20&query=%2Bsubject%3APennsylvania%20%2Bsubject%3AQuakers
  - *The Quaker Collection* on *Ancestry*- *https://www.ancestry.com/cs/quakers*
  - *Ancestry* Quaker Resource Guide-
https://www.ancestrycdn.com/mars/landing/quaker/quaker-guide.pdf
  - "U.S., Hinshaw Index to Selected Quaker Records, 1680-1940,"-
https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2705/ and the "U.S. Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy, Vol I-VI, 1607-1943" by William Wade Hinshaw both on *Ancestry*-
https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3753/
  - "U.S., Surname Index to Quaker Records" on A*ncestry*-
https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3042/
  - Quaker Genealogy subject guide on *American Ancestors*-
https://www.americanancestors.org/tools/quaker-genealogy
  - "William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migrations to Pennsylvania," on *Ancestry*-
https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/48457/
  - "Quaker Arrivals at Philadelphia 1682-1750" on *Ancestry*-
https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/48461/
  - The Dictionary of Quaker Biography by Edwin B. Bonner – locate a copy near you on https://www.worldcat.org
  - *Immigration of Irish Quakers to Pennsylvania,* by Albert Cook Myers- locate a copy near you on https://www.worldcat.org

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Germans

- Waves of German immigrants to Pennsylvania arrived between 1708 and1740 and settled primarily in southeastern Pennsylvania:
  - The first wave arrived primarily from the Rhineland and the Palatinate areas, but also hailed from areas in Switzerland and German Denominations included German Reformed, Lutheran, Mennonite and Amish, Dunkard, Moravian, and Roman Catholics.
- The term Pennsylvania Dutch (Pennsilfaanisch Deitsch) refers to the combined unique language and culture of the people:
  - In the 18th century, the word "Dutch" referred to a large area in Europe that included present day Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Austria and Switzerland.
- The Lutheran and Reformed congregations kept pretty good records and church records called registers include births, baptisms, marriages, and burials:
  - "U.S. Dutch Reformed Church Records, 1639-1989" on *Ancestry.*
  - Frederick S. Weiser and Paul Miller Ruff have several books on Lutheran church records.
  - Records are in German, but transcriptions often exist. Use resources like the *German Genealogical Word List* to help you decipher German records- https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/German_Genealogical_Word_List or translators- https://www.deepl.com/en/translator
- Non- British settlers, including German immigrants, had to sign Oaths when they landed in Philadelphia swearing allegiance to King George II and the proprietors of Pennsylvania before entering the city:
  - See *Pennsylvania German Pioneers* by Ralph Beaver Strassburger and edited by John Hinke that contains passenger lists of German immigrants (usually males 16 and older) who landed in the Port of Philadelphia between 1727-1808:
    - All three volumes can be found on Hathi Trust and/or *FamilySearch* and you can search volumes I and II on *Ancestry*.
    - Volume I–A lists =Captain's Lists, B= Oaths of Allegiance to King, C= Oaths Abjuring the Pope
    - Volume 2–Passenger signatures
    - Volume 3– Post-Revolutionary War lists and indices
  - More detailed information can be found at the Pennsylvania Archives- https://web.archive.org/web/20141117021255/http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bah/dam/rg/sd/r26sd.htm#26.36

Mennonite/Anabaptist

- The 18th century wave of Mennonites were mostly Swiss-Germans and they settled mainly in Lancaster and Montgomery counties.
  - Records are scarce because the group was heavily persecuted and killed in their homelands.
  - Try searching collections like the "Lancaster, Pennsylvania, U.S., Mennonite Vital Records, 1750-2014" or "Pennsylvania, Church Records, Adams, Berks, and Lancaster Counties, 1729-1881" both on *Ancestry*.

Moravians

- If your ancestors arrived in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania between 1741 and 1753 they were possibly Protestant dissenters and followers of the German nobleman Count Nicolaus Von Zinzendorf of Saxony, Germany. They ran a successful settlement between 1741 and 1762:
  - Contact the Moravian Archives about records: https://www.moravianchurcharchives.org/about/
  - The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia- https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/mennonites/
- Other German Resources include:
  - Guides to researching your German ancestors are available at *AmericanAncestors*- https://www.americanancestors.org/tools/german-genealogy
  - Also see *AmericanAncestors* "German Genealogy "subject guide- https://www.americanancestors.org/tools/german-genealogy
  - *Colonial Pennsylvania immigrants Freinsheim in the Palatinate* by Annette K. Burgert

Scots-Irish

- The political climate in Ireland brought two major waves of Scots-Irish emigrants in the 18th century, primarily from Ulster in Northern Ireland and major waves occurred between 1710-1776 and 1780-1820.
- They were predominantly Presbyterians escaping religious persecution and poverty.
- Marriage records and meeting records may be the best source of information.
  - "Pennsylvania & New Jersey, Church and Town Records, 1708-1985" on *Ancestry*.
  - Pennsylvania, Lutheran Baptisms and Marriages" on *Ancestry*.
  - "U.S. Presbyterian Records, 1701-1970" on *Ancestry*
  - Consult the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia- https://www.history.pcusa.org
  - *The Scotch-Irish of Colonial Pennsylvania,* by Wayland F. Dunaway

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Huguenots

- French Protestant groups arrived in Pennsylvania after previously escaping religious persecution in Europe and settling in Germany's Palatine region, England, Ireland, and Scandinavia.
- They arrived in the early 18th century and settled primarily in areas that became known as the Oley Valley in Berks County and Pequea Creek in Lancaster County:
    - "Annals of the Oley Valley in Berks County" on *Ancestry*.
- They were often misidentified as Pennsylvania German's because they had a tenancy to assimilated with local German groups:
    - Use the *FamilySearch* wiki or catalog to locate German Lutheran and Reformed Church records.
    - Read local histories in areas where you suspect your French ancestors settled.
    - Willis L. Shirk Jr., *Assimilating into the American Milieu : French Huguenots in Eighteenth-Century Lancaster County*- https://collections.lancasterhistory.org/media/library/docs/edit_vol95no3pp74_85.pdf
    - Join DNA projects on sites like FamilytreeDNA.com.

Record Collections

Vital Records

- Sources for vital information are church records, bible records, and cemetery records:
    - Many records are still undigitized, so contact the local churches or denominational archives regarding their collections.
    - "Pennsylvania, Births and Christening, 1709-1950" and Pennsylvania Civil Marriages, 1677-1950" both on *Ancestry*.
    - Extract of church records in John T. Humphrey's *Pennsylvania Birth Records*- See the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania for list of counties and dates covered-
        - *https://genpa.org/member-collections/john-t-humphrey-pennsylvania-births-books/*
    - "Pennsylvania, Church Marriages, 1682-1976 "on *FamilySearch*
    - Search for your ancestor on Find a Grave and in record collections like the "Pennsylvania Cemetery Records, ca. 1700-ca 1950" on *FamilySearch*- https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/3743478
    - Internment.net- allows you to search by state and county- http://www.interment.net/us/pa/index.htm
    - Contact local historical societies for cemetery transcriptions or other burial record collections.
    - The Tombstone Transcription Project (by county)- http://www.usgwtombstones.org/pennsylvania/pennsyl.html

- Census Records, Tax Lists, and Directories
    - 1790 U.S. Federal Census
    - "Pennsylvania, U.S. Septennial Census, 1779-1863," on *Ancestry*

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- o The "Pennsylvania, U.S. Compiled Census and Census Substitutes Index, 1772-1890" and the "U.S., Census Reconstructed Records, 1660-1820" both on *Ancestry*.
- o Directories were first introduced in the 18th century but are limited to the city of Philadelphia for the years 1785, 1792, and 1793-1922. They can be located on Fold3- https://www.fold3.com/publication/451/city-directories-philadelphia
- o "Pennsylvania U.S. Direct Tax Lists of 1798" on *Ancestry*
- o Pennsylvania, Tax and Exoneration, 1768-1801" both on *Ancestry*.
- o "Secretary of the Land Office. Rent rolls, 1703-1744" -at a local *FamilySearch* center or affiliated library.
- o Pennsylvania taxation resources on FamilySearch wiki- https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Pennsylvania_Taxation

Land Records

- • Often land that was available for purchase was not surveyed, so the full process to purchase land entailed having an:
  - – Application- A request for a survey of the land.
  - – Warrant- an order for the survey to be taken.
  - – Survey- measurements were recorded along with the names of adjoining landowners.
  - – Return of Survey- a complete description of the land surveyed.
  - – Patent- A documents regarding the sale of the land with title.
  - – Deeds- document regarding a sale of land (already surveyed) naming both the grantor and grantee.
- o For applications and warrants - "Pennsylvania, Land Warrants and Applications, 1733-1952" on *Ancestry*.
- o For the surveys, return of surveys, and patent history see "Land Records," at the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, - https://www.phmc.pa.gov/Archives/Research-Online/Pages/Land-Records-Overview.aspx
- o If your ancestors lived in northern Pennsylvania once claimed by Connecticut, records may be in the *Susquehanna Company Papers* on the *Internet Archives-* *https://archive.org/details/susquehannahcomp00susq/page/n485/mode/2up*
- o For early land transactions see "Early Pennsylvania Land Records" on *Ancestry-* *https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/48381/*
- o *Index to old rights in Bucks and Chester Counties, 1682-1761, Pennsylvania Surveyor General* and *Index to old rights in Philadelphia County, 1682-1748, Pennsylvania Surveyor General,* both on *FamilySearch*
- o "Warrant Registers, 1682-1950"on *FamilySearch*.
- o *Pennsylvania Land Records: A History and Guide for Research*, by Donna Bingham Munger

Passenger Lists and Naturalization

- Starting in 1727, all non-British immigrants were required to take an oath to King George II and an Oath Abjuring the Pope before entering the city of Philadelphia:
  - Filby's Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, by William P. Filby on *Ancestry*.
  - For people naturalized between 1740 and 1772 see the collection "Pennsylvania Naturalizations, 1740-73" on *Ancestry*-https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/4259/
  - "A collection of upwards of thirty thousand names of German, Swiss, Dutch, French and immigrants in Pennsylvania from 1727-1776"- https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/10412/
  - "Names of Foreigners Who Took the Oath of Allegiance to the Province and State of Pennsylvania, 1727-1775"- https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/48365/
  - Names of Persons Who Took the Oath of Allegiance to the State of Pennsylvania Between the Years 1777-1789" - https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/48371/
  - Also try searching "Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, 1500-1900s" on *Ancestry*.
- Immigrants that arrived in bondage or as Indentured Servants:
  - *The Complete Book of Emigrants in Bondage, 1614-1775* and *Emigrants in Chains, 1607-1776* on *Ancestry.*
  - Search for your ancestor in the digitized collection at the American Philosophical Society Library- https://diglib.amphilsoc.org/islandora/object/record-indentures-individuals-bound-out-apprentices-servants-etc-and-german-and#page/1/mode/1up
  - Colonial Newspaper "Runaway" notices- genealogybank.com
  - Consult *Runaways of Colonial New Jersey Indentured Servants, Slaves, Deserters and Prisoners, 1720-1781* by Richard B. Marin which includes Pennsylvania runaway notices- locate a copy on- https://www.worldcat.org
  - "Investigating Indenture Servitude: Visualizing Experiences of Colonial America- https://diglib.amphilsoc.org/indenturedata/introduction.html

Military Records

- The first militias were organized in Pennsylvania in 1777 and prior to that, there were no military groups organized under the Penn family:
  - *Colonial and Revolutionary families of Pennsylvania; genealogical and personal memoirs* on *Ancestry*
  - "Officers and soldiers in the service of the Province of Pennsylvania" on FamilySearch- https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/493538?availability=Family%20History%20Library
  - See *FamilySearch* Research Wiki resources- https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Pennsylvania_Military_Records

- o "Pennsylvania, Oaths of Allegiance Lists" taken between 1777-1778 on FamilySearch
  https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/48371/
- o Revolutionary War pension records and the *Pennsylvania Archives* "Militia and Revolutionary War Lists" on Fold3-
  - We highly recommend ordering the full pension record for your ancestor from the National Archives- https://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/pre-ww-1-records
- If your ancestors were "Loyalist," try-
  - o "Pennsylvania, Supreme Executive Council, Forfeited Estate File, 1777-1790"
    https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/685427?availability=Family%20History%20Library

Court and Probate Records

- Wills and probate records in Pennsylvania are kept at the county level in one of two court offices:
  - o The Register of Wills holds the wills.
  - o The Orphans Court kept records regarding real estate divisions and documents regarding minor children.
- To locate wills and probate records as well as administrations- always try to locate original records when possible:
  - o "Pennsylvania, Wills and Probate Records, 1683-1993" on *Ancestry*
  - o Use the catalog option on *FamilySearch* to search by county and locate the appropriate collection.
  - o Use Pennsylvania USGenWeb Archive to locate surnames in wills and expand families.

Research and Subject Guides

- Pennsylvania Genealogy, AmericanAncestors.org - https://www.americanancestors.org/tools/pennsylvania-genealogy
- Pennsylvania German, AmericanAncestors.org - https://www.americanancestors.org/tools/pennsylvania-german
- Quaker Genealogy, AmericanAncestors.org –
- https://www.americanancestors.org/tools/quaker-genealogy
- *The Portable Genealogist: Pennsylvania Research* via *American Ancestors* bookstore- https://shop.americanancestors.org/search?q=Portable+Genealogist+Pennsylvania
- Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission- https://www.phmc.pa.gov/Archives/Research-Online/Pages/Research-Guides.aspx
- Historical Society of Pennsylvania "Subject Guide: Family History & Genealogy"- https://www.portal.hsp.org/subject-guides/subject-guide-11

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Repositories, Magazines, and other sites

- The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
- Historical Society of Pennsylvania
- Cyndi's List- https://www.cyndislist.com/us/pa/
- ldsgenealogy.com- https://ldsgenealogy.com
- Pennsylvania Genealogy-https://pennsylvaniagenealogy.org
- *The Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine of History and Biography* on Archive.org and *FamilySearch*-https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/97148?availability=Family%20History%20Library
- *Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine* on *AmericanAncestors*

Other Helpful Resources

- Convert between Old & New Style Dates-http://aulis.org/Calendar/Old_%26_New_Style_Dates.html
- Cluster Research Guidance on *American Ancestors*-https://hubs.americanancestors.org/twitter-cluster-and-f.a.n.-reserch
- "Creating a Research Plan for Cluster Research," by Lindsay Fulton-https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFA_IfMsThg
- Ann Lawthers, webinar "Resources for Pennsylvania Resources at Americanancestors.org https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbjDPwC70_0

Published Sources, Indexes, and Guides

- Pennsylvania Genealogy, "Organization of Counties in Pennsylvania," https://pennsylvaniagenealogy.org/statewide/organization-of-counties-in-pennsylvania.htm
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- Willis L. Shirk Jr., "Assimilating into the American Milieu: French Huguenots in Eighteenth-Century Lancaster County, https://collections.lancasterhistory.org/media/library/docs/edit_vol95no3pp74_85.pdf
- Naina Pottamkulam, "Why are the Pennsylvania Dutch called so when they're actually German" 28 May 2020, https://www.iamexpat.de/lifestyle/lifestyle-news/why-pennsylvania-dutch-are-called-so-when-theyre-actually-german
- New River Notes, "History of the Welch Tract Baptist Church," https://www.newrivernotes.com/history-welsh-tract-baptist-church/
- Sarah Sharp, Global Educator for World Heritage Philadelphia, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, "Understanding Philadelphia's global trade network in the colonial period," 24 March 2017, https://hsp.org/blogs/educators-blog/understanding-philadelphia's-global-trade-network-colonial-period
- Michael Schreiber, *Philadelphia's rich maritime history, 29 August 2019,* *https://philahistory.org/2019/08/29/philadelphias-rich-maritime-history/*

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