

The Hoffman Research Library has over 33,000 items to give depth and veracity to your family history research. Here are some categories of materials and formats you will find in our collection.

- **Family histories:** One of the most unique resources of the HRL is its collection of hundreds of individual family histories, published both commercially and by everyday family historians. From Adams to Zimmerman, there may already be a story about your surname on the shelves. Family histories are gathered in classification FH 929.2, arranged alphabetically by last name.
- **Family history newsletters:** Other resources available are newsletters containing valuable family history information created by authors and editors who share unique information on specific and related surnames. We have a number of these targeted publications, interfiled alphabetically with the family histories referenced above.
- **Surname vertical files:** The Library also collects random items (news clippings, obits, etc.) related to individual surnames in file folders called vertical files. They are located in the filing cabinets adjacent to the copy machine, filed by last name.
- **Surname studies:** Another option for surname research is the one-name study. Instead of focusing on one or more related families, a surname study looks at the big picture, examining the origins of the name and its variants and "deviants" anywhere in the world. They typically include bibliographic references to primary and/or secondary sources for these names. Find these special tools filed alphabetically in REF 929.42.
- **Books:** The HRL has acquired or received donations of books on a wide variety of subjects of interest to genealogists. In addition to the above referenced sources, some of the topics include local histories, church histories, heraldry, general how-to research guides, DNA and genetic research, military registers, censuses, birth, marriage, and death registers, as well as background material on specific groups and places. Our large Minnesota collection has general works in addition to special items grouped by counties and major cities. We also have smaller collections for all the other U.S. states and many other nations, which vary in their scope and depth of coverage. The HRL staff and volunteers are in the process of reclassifying all print materials using the Dewey Decimal System.
- **Periodicals:** Back issues of the *Minnesota Genealogist* and other current and archival magazines and newsletters are also part of the HRL collection. These are

not limited to Minnesota, and are issued by state, local, regional, and national genealogy and history organizations.

- **Genealogy-related databases:** MGS and its Library partners subscribe to a selection of the most important online databases for family history researchers. Access is through desktop computers or your own laptops with the special web address provided in the HRL. They cannot be accessed remotely. Databases include Ancestry Library Edition, Fold 3, Newspapers.com, Findmypast, several Swedish databases, John Grenham database, and more.
- **Partner and branch collections:** Though there are resources relating to many global countries in the main MGS-owned collection, a number of our branches and partners maintain their own libraries within the HRL facility. Their members may also be available to help researchers find, understand, and use country-specific materials. Resources may be in the language of origin, and therefore may require translation. These targeted collections include: Canadian, Czech, Danish, German, Irish, Norwegian, Ostfriesen, Polish, Pommern, Romanian, Swedish and Yankee.
- **Maps:** The HRL has large numbers of flat maps (big and small), atlases, gazetteers, and plat maps from a variety of locales. Coverage varies. Look for them at the back of the Library in map cases and on our oversize shelves.
- **Church records and history:** In addition to church commemorative books issued for anniversaries or special events, we also have a collection of church pictorial directories. These are filed with the location of the church. The HRL also has a selection of Catholic parish records from the Archives of the Archdiocese of St. Paul & Minneapolis. These microfilm copies have been obtained by MGS groups over the years and represent only a small part of the total Archives collection. Review the listing of the Archdiocese holdings to understand which records exist and which can be viewed at the Library.
<https://mnngs.org/resources/Documents/Library/Catholic%20records.pdf>
- **Cemetery resources:** Over a decade ago, MGS volunteers undertook a massive effort to compile information about cemeteries from all over the state of Minnesota. These collected materials are shelved with their relevant counties in the MN CO (Minnesota Counties) section.
- **City directories:** Print editions of city directories and almanacs are available for more than two dozen Minnesota cities, reaching as far back as the 1860s. There are also directories on microfiche.
- **Vertical files:** Folders of miscellaneous loose documents, articles, and clippings related to a specific geographical location, family surname, or topic are located in file cabinets in the HRL and noted in the online catalog.
- **Yearbooks:** The HRL has a growing collection of high school and college yearbooks, drawn from Minnesota and adjacent states.

- **Microforms:** Some older collections of data are contained on reels of microfilm or sheets of microfiche. These include census data and Catholic church records. The HRL has a reader/printer for viewing and retrieving information in these formats.

For more information about materials in the HRL collection, see the MGS Collection Development Policy. Here: <https://mngs.org/Policies>

<https://mngs.org/Hoffman-Research-Library>

Contact: LibMgr@mngs.org