

Abbreviations:

ALE = Ancestry Library Edition

FS = FamilySearch

GR = Grosvenor Room

HQ = HeritageQuest Online

1. **Genealogy Classes (free)** – Live: <https://grosvenorroom.wordpress.com/events/>.
Recorded (Genealogy Programs and Resources Category):
<https://www.youtube.com/@BuffaloErieCountyPublicLibrary/playlists>.
2. **Polish Genealogy guide:** <https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications#8>. Other genealogy guides: <https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications>.
3. **Databases available through BECPL**– Ancestry Library Edition (in-library only);
HeritageQuest Online (from home with a B&ECPL card or in-library). FamilySearch – The GR is a FamilySearch Affiliate Library and have greater access to FS records than from home (must be in the Grosvenor Room for access to the FS affiliate library databases). Information on obtaining a B&ECPL card: <https://www.buffalolib.org/library-cards>.
4. **Buffalo Collection** – Histories of: Erie County cities and towns, churches, clubs, schools, professions, businesses. Other materials: yearbooks, annual reports of clubs and organizations, Buffalo Common Council proceedings, Erie County Supervisors proceedings.
5. **City Directories** – **BECPL has Buffalo 1828-present and other areas across the country.** Like telephone books, but also include profession and may include wife's name and husband's name if the woman is a widow. Business listings, advertisements, address lookup. These help you locate your ancestors. **Once you know where they live, you can find more records about them.** GR List of city directories: <https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications#7>.
 - a. Buffalo, 1832-1913 - <http://www.buffalolib.org/content/digital-collections>.
 - b. **Databases:** HeritageQuest Online and Ancestry Library Edition have many U.S. directories (including Buffalo) for 1861-1960. HeritageQuest can be used at home with a B&ECPL card: <https://dbaz.buffalolib.org/dbaz.php>.

6. **Local History File** – A card file that is a partial index to Buffalo newspapers, local periodicals, scrapbooks, and Buffalo history books. Topics include Buffalo & Erie County people, places, events, and history. The date range is mainly 1920-1982, but other dates too. Some Polish subject headings: Poles in Buffalo; Clubs. Polish; Charities. Polish; Schools. Polish; Pulaski Day; Dyngus Day.
7. **Scrapbooks** – Mainly newspaper clippings pertaining to Buffalo. The Local Biography set includes many obituaries and articles on individuals. Other scrapbooks of interest: churches, clubs, homes, streets, local history, businesses, ethnic groups. See our scrapbook list here: <https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications#scrapbooks>.
8. **Music and Theater Programs** – The GR has a large collection of music and theater programs. The *Famous Visitors File* indexes local performances and visiting performers. See our guides: <https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications#3>.
9. **Grosvenor Genealogy Collection** – Has a large collection of family histories, which may tell you data such as births, deaths, marriages, important accomplishments, education, military service. The collection also includes numerous county and town histories and transcribed records. Locations covered: New York, New England, Middle Atlantic, and some Southern U.S.
10. **Reference Collection** – How-to books on genealogy and local history.
11. **Polish Genealogical Society of New York State Collection** – Many church jubilees, periodicals, and books pertaining to Polish immigrants and culture. www.pgnys.org
12. **Western New York Genealogical Society Collection (WNYGS)** – Vital Index of Early Western New York Settlers (card file covers late 1700s into the 1900s), many records on microfilm, ancestor charts of members, bible record transcriptions. www.wnygs.org
13. **Periodicals** – These often index and transcribe records and offer how-to articles.
14. **County and City Atlases** – May include building/property outlines, building use, and property owner names. County atlases are a good substitute for city directories as most small towns and suburbs were not covered by directories until the 1950s or later. **Sanborn Maps (Buffalo)** are very detailed property maps. They help researchers learn more about their ancestor's neighborhoods. Sanborn Map database (New York State) available from home with a library card. For more information about our map collection see: <https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications#10>.

15. Vital Records –

- a. **New York State Vital Records Index** – This is available through ALE and some years are on microfiche in the GR. Index to NYS births, deaths, marriages. Does not include NY City and its boroughs. Buffalo, Albany and Yonkers are not included until 1908 for marriages and until 1914 for births and deaths. The date range is 1881 until NYS required waiting periods. There is a 50-year waiting period for marriages and deaths. 75-year waiting period for births. Provides the date and town of birth/death/marriage. Then you can order the record from the town where the event occurred, or the New York State Vital Records Office (takes a few years for genealogical request processing).
- b. **Erie County** - Erie County marriage records, 1877-1935; Buffalo Justice of Peace records, 1837-1876; Buffalo birth records, 1850-1913 (not indexed, very few records before 1878).
- c. **Erie County Medical Examiner Records** - Erie County Medical Examiners' records, October 1878 – June 1902. Inquests were not performed for everyone who passed away. Most of the deaths in this record set are unexpected deaths such as those that resulted from an accident. May include: name, age, place of birth, marital status, residence, how long resided in city, occupation and place of employment, date and time of death, place of death, cause and circumstances of death, place of burial, physical description, personal belongings (with deceased at time of death), undertaker.
- d. See our Vital and Related Records for Buffalo and Erie County guide for more information: <https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications#13>.
- e. See our tutorial on New York State vital records here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1huCngiDCZw>.

16. Church and Cemetery Records – Mostly for Erie County. Major cemetery collections: Forest Lawn Cemetery, Pine Hill, Holy Cross. Major church record collections: numerous Catholic, Lutheran, and Episcopal. Some were filmed by WNYGS and not available for research elsewhere. Great for timeframe before vital records were kept and for finding foreign places of birth. Guide to GR cemetery and church records: <https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications#6>.

17. Newspapers – Buffalo early 1800s to the present, some ethnic specific, some for suburbs (Amherst, Hamburg, Kenmore, Springville). *Dziennik dla Wszystkich*, 1930-1957 (Everybody's Daily). *Am-Pol Eagle*, 1960-present. See our newspaper guide for a

comprehensive look at our collection: <https://www.buffalolib.org/sites/default/files/special-collections/guides/Buffalo%20Newspapers.pdf>.

18. **Census Records** – Available 1790-1950. *Library has:* Microfilm: U.S. Federal Records, 1790-1930, for Western New York Counties and New York State Census, 1825-1925, for Western New York Counties. Entire United States available in ALE and HQ (1790-1950). See our census records guide for a comprehensive look at our collection and links to online records: <https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications#5>.
19. **Passenger Lists** – Published passenger lists: *Germans to America, Migration from the Russian Empire*, others. ALE: has foreign and U.S. passenger lists as well as Canadian border crossings. These may include detail such as where born, foreign residence, nearest relative in old country, date of birth. See our passenger list guide for a comprehensive look at our collection: <https://www.buffalolib.org/special-collections/guides-publications#8>.
20. **Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007**. Birthdates, death dates, residence, birthplace, parents' names. In ALE.
21. **B&ECPL's Digital Collections:**
- a. **Summary** – Buffalo city directories (1832-1913, Newspapers (Buffalo, Elma, Grand Island, Lackawanna), scrapbooks, photographs of Buffalo, atlases, diaries, and more!
<https://www.buffalolib.org/research-resources/digital-collections>
 - b. **Buffalo's Neighborhoods: Exploring Our Migrant & Immigrant Heritage** – Partnership between the B&ECPL and local genealogical societies, which includes historical documents, maps, and images relating to Buffalo's neighborhoods.
 - c. **Erie County Poorhouse Records** – 15 ledgers, 1829-1952 (gaps) include persons received (including discharge details), deaths, coroner's reports, and children bound out. Online: <http://digital.buffalolib.org/collections/show/5>.
22. **Visiting the Grosvenor Room** – The GR has some **different policies** than the rest of the Central Library: www.buffalolib.org/content/grosvenor/visiting-us.

The Grosvenor Room, Central Library

1 Lafayette Square, Buffalo, NY 14203

(716)-858-8900 / <https://www.buffalolib.org/research-resources/special-collections>

M-Th, 8AM-7PM / F-Sat. 9AM-5PM /

Sun. 12PM-5PM (during the school year)

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[February 2023]