



Research Tar Heel Ancestors Online

Step Aside Rip Van Winkle, NC Leads in Web-Based Genealogical Content

By Diane L. Richard

Early in its history, NC was considered the “Rip Van Winkle” State. Now, with all its internet-based resources, it is at the forefront of internet-based genealogy research! The listed websites are mostly FREE resources, and most are Tarheel home-grown!

NOTE: This is NOT a comprehensive list of online NC research resources. Leverage types of materials/resources listed here for the specific locales and needs of your research.

NOTE: Many resources are listed here and not discussed in the accompanying talk; we’d have to meet for a week to cover all this material.

STATEWIDE

State Archives of North Carolina

Website -- <https://archives.ncdcr.gov/>
History for All the People (Blog),
<https://ncarchives.wpcomstaging.com/>
Facebook Page,
<https://www.facebook.com/NCArchives/>

Finding Aids

- a) Discovery Online Catalog (DOC),
<https://archives.ncdcr.gov/doc/search-doc>, helpful resources,
<https://archives.ncdcr.gov/documents/doc-search-guides>, and FAQs page,
<https://archives.ncdcr.gov/search-catalog/online-catalog-faq>.
- b) Some Private Collections aka Manuscripts are now findable on ArchiveGrid,
https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/?q=contributor:68&sort=title_sort+asc
- c) List of the county codes here,
<http://www.ncgenweb.us/nc-numerical-codes/>.
- d) Online Finding Aids -- encompassing County Records Box Lists, Governors Papers, Military, Organization Records, Private Collections, Records in Foreign Archives and more!
<https://archives.ncdcr.gov/researchers/finding-aids>
- e) Legacy Finding Aids,
<http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/landingpage/collection/p16062coll15/>
- f) Guide to Research Materials in the State Archives of North Carolina County Records (2009), [published online in 2018]
<https://archives.ncdcr.gov/researchers/collections/government-records/county-records-guide>

- g) The Formation of the North Carolina Counties, 1663-1943, David Leroy Corbitt, 1950 [book],
<http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/p16062coll9/id/289952>
- h) Betty Camin’s books,
<https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/search/searchterm/camin%2C%20betty%20j.%22betty%20j%20camin%22/field/creato!all/mode/exact!all/conn/and!all>
- i) Digitized Books via Internet Archive,
<https://archive.org/details/statelibrarynorthcarolina>
- j) TranscribeNC, <https://fromthepage.com/ncdcr-ncarchives>, crowdsourced transcription project. When completed, these digitized/transcribed/searchable items are added to the North Carolina Digital Collections; until then, see what is being worked on in real-time and you can access/search in process materials.
- k) Historically, the SANC catalog did NOT include microfilm, starting in January 2022, a project to include the SANC microfilm “county records” holdings into the catalog started. Check the status here,
<https://ncarchives.wpcomstaging.com/tag/microfilm/> . As of August 2022, 30 counties are done.

Government & Heritage Library -- State Library of North Carolina

Website -- <http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/>
GHL Blog, <http://www.ghlblog.org/>
Facebook Page,
<https://www.facebook.com/ncghl/?fref=ts>

Finding Aids

- a) Catalog, <https://ghl.nccardinal.org/eg/opac/home>

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- b) Genealogy Research, <http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/ghl/resources/genealogy.html>
- c) State Library Card holders (anyone who lives in NC and applies) can access many Online Resources, <https://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/research/online-resources>, including subscription newspapers (see those marked with (\$) under that section), Fold3, Ancestry, American Ancestors (NEHGS), Adams Matthews and its CO5 collection (a must resource for colonial research), etc. As these are contractual resources, what is available is fluid and may change at any time.
- d) LibGuides, <https://statelibrary.ncdcr.libguides.com/?b=g&d=a>
- e) [Online Course] RootsMOOC: An Introduction to Genealogy and Family History, <https://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/ghl/genealogy/roots-mooc>

North Carolina Digital Collections, <http://digital.ncdcr.gov/>

Massive collection of over 90,000 historic and recent photographs, state government publications, manuscripts, and other resources, covering from colonial times to the 20th century. Content is from the State Archives of North Carolina & the State Library of North Carolina. **A must visit website. NOT all collections are searchable.** For some, you can only search on index terms (such as county name, date, etc). Collections include:

- a) 1901 Confederate Pension Applications
- b) Alien Registration and Naturalization
- c) Tax Lists & Records – Colonial & Revolutionary War years,
- d) Troop Returns – Revolutionary War era,
- e) War of 1812 Pay Vouchers
- f) World War I materials -- military and non-military (e.g. Red Cross)
- g) WPA cemetery surveys (c. 1930s)
- h) Session Laws (1817-2011)
- i) Back Archives of “North Carolina Historical Review, from 1967 inception, <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/search/searchterm/1760560/field/identi>
- j) **[NEWER]** General Assembly Session Records
- k) **[NEWER]** Regulator Movement
- l) **[NEWER]** Revolutionary War Era
- m) **[NEWER]** Colonial Court Records
- n) **[NEWER]** District Superior Court Records [existed until 1806, helpful with “burnt county” research]
- o) **[NEWER]** Voter Registration [grandfather clause of 1902-1908]

Digital NC, <http://www.digitalnc.org/> -- Modern records: Yearbooks, Newspapers, City Directories, Memorabilia (ledgers, account books, etc.) & more. Always growing; revisit often!

NCpedia, <http://ncpedia.org/>

Much of the website is based on three iconic NC publications -- The Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, Encyclopedia of North Carolina, and the NC Gazetteer.

North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal, <http://www.ncgenealogy.org/publications/ncgs-journal>

[FREE for NCGS members] – since 1975, has abstracted and transcribed records & shared historical & cultural information that cuts across NC.

Webinars, <https://www.ncgenealogy.org/member-webinars/> -- extensive collection of webinars with a focus on NC topics (members-only except for 2 public webinars)

NCGS Resources,

<https://www.ncgenealogy.org/resources-produced-by-ncgs/> -- unique Revolutionary War, Freedman’s Bank, and more (some members only)

Resources, <https://www.ncgenealogy.org/resources/> (free to the public)

SELECT UNIVERSITY COLLECTIONS

NOTE: Many, many North Carolina-based universities/colleges have online digital collections; check them out!

UNC-CH Wilson Library, <http://library.unc.edu/wilson/>

Extensive collection of local and original documents that range from late 1700s family papers to Slave Narratives and Civil War Diaries to early 20th century African American gospel groups.:

- o Digital Collections, <http://library.unc.edu/services/digitalcollections/> <https://library.unc.edu/wilson/digital-collections/>
- o Finding Aids, <http://library.unc.edu/wilson/research/search/> -- many very detailed finding aids. Digitized content available online will be noted.
- o The Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/beta.html> -- 26 volumes of historical materials which includes content from throughout the country and from several European repositories, covering the earliest days of settlement through the ratification of the US Constitution. It is considered Series 1.

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- North Carolina Maps -- comprehensive, online collection of historic maps.
<http://www2.lib.unc.edu/dc/ncmaps/>
- Finding News Stories: African American Newspapers in North Carolina,
<http://guides.lib.unc.edu/newsStories/AfAm-NC>
- Gilmer Civil War Maps Collection,
<http://www2.lib.unc.edu/dc/gilmer/>
- Ancient North Carolinians,
<http://ancientnc.web.unc.edu/>
- North Carolina History of Health Digital collection,
<https://hsl.lib.unc.edu/specialcollections/nchealthhistory>

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University,

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

Not quite as deep/broad as the UNC collection and you will want to check it out.

- NC Methodist Church Records (1784-1984),
<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/methodistchurch/>
- Digital Durham, <http://digitaldurham.duke.edu/> -- primary sources relating to the history of Durham from the 1870s-1920s
- Behind the Veil – Documenting African American Life in the Jim Crow South,
<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/behindtheveil/>
- Duke, Digital Archives, <https://repository.duke.edu/dc> -- includes African American resources (referenced later), H. Lee Waters Film Collection, private papers, and so much more!

Joyner Library, East Carolina University (ECU),

<http://www.ecu.edu/cs-lib/spclcoll/>

The strength of the Joyner library is its Pitt County and Eastern NC county foci.

- Collection guides,
<http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/special/ead/>
- Digital Collection, <https://digital.lib.ecu.edu/>.
- The Eastern North Carolina Digital Library,
<http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/historyfiction/>
- Verona Joyner Langford North Carolina Collection,
<https://library.ecu.edu/specialcollections/ncc/> which includes the North Carolina Periodicals Index,
<https://digital.lib.ecu.edu/ncpi/> -- includes 68 current and historic publications, most of which are not indexed in standard reference tools and the Eastern Reflector Newspaper Collection,
<https://digital.lib.ecu.edu/collection/easternreflector.aspx> along with Greenville and Pitt County Information,
<https://libguides.ecu.edu/c.php?g=17338&p=96853>

NC State University (NC SU)

- North Carolina Architects & Builders,
<https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/>

MULTI-COUNTY RESOURCES

There are also multi-county and state organizations that can help with cross-county research.

- New River Historical Notes,
<http://www.newrivernotes.com/nrv.htm>, covers Ashe, Alleghany, Watauga & Wilkes counties in northwest NC, Grayson & Carroll counties in VA, plus adjacent counties in NC, VA & TN.
- Tar River Connections Genealogical Society covers Person, Vance, Granville, Franklin, Nash, Edgecombe, Pitt & Beaufort Counties. <http://braswell-library.libguides.com/c.php?g=562570&p=3872878>
- Old New Hanover Genealogical Society,
<http://www.onhgs.org/> -- Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover & Pender Counties.

SELECT LOCAL RESOURCES

NOTE: Many, many counties now have online digital collections; check the counties of interest to you!

- Johnston County Heritage Center,
http://www.johnstonnc.com/mainpage.cfm?category_level_id=727 -- Records include: census records, slave name index, cohabitation index, marriage bonds, newspaper obituaries starting in 1801, 1902 voter registration and a list of Confederate soldiers.
- Digital Forsyth, <http://www.digitalforsyth.org/> -- over 12,00 photos!
- Digital Gaston County,
<https://gastonlibrary.libguides.com/digital-gaston-county/home>.
- The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Story,
<http://www.cmstory.org/> - invaluable records
- Kellenberger Room, New Bern-Craven County Public Library,
<http://newbern.cpclib.org/research/resources.html>
Now has a Craven County Digital History Page,
<http://nbccl.org/digital/> with images, documents and more available.
- The Wallace Family, Moore County,
<https://moorecountywallaces.com/> -- this website is really about Moore County (burnt county); anyone with Moore County ancestors should check out. Includes a great collection of maps,
<https://moorecountywallaces.com/browsemedia.php?mediasearch=Map&mediatypeID=documents&tngpage=&tree=Wallace&tnggallery=> and a map of Moore County Landmarks,
<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1dn>

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- [KbmZ8P0Pf4gmY022yhDvLaoVPqgK_1&ll=35.45079940486977%2C-79.59782871599965&z=12](https://www.blogger.com/profile/04481176278686923107).
- Orange County, via Mark Chilton (current ROD), <https://www.blogger.com/profile/04481176278686923107> -- several blogs focusing on records of Orange County. Deeds – Slave Records, History, Court of Pleas & Quarter Session Minutes & more.
- Chatham County Historical Association, <https://chathamhistory.org/Collections-and-Research> and this handy reference guide, <https://dl.icdst.org/pdfs/files4/a9a2ef0d1629dc775a9e710e823000a1.pdf>
- Gateway, collaborative portal focusing on Greensboro & Guilford County, <https://gateway.uncg.edu/home>

Newspapers

- North Carolina Newspaper Locator, <http://cinch.nclive.org/newspaper/> -- database of GHIL-housed newspapers. Not a complete list of all newspapers published in NC.
- DigitalNC [previously mentioned] – extensive collection of unique newspapers and material digitized for Chronicling America is being folded in.
- Index to the [Raleigh] News & Observer, 1926-1992, <http://statelibrarync.org/noi/>
- Chronicling America archive, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/newspapers/north_carolina/.
- Craven County: New Bern Obituary Index 1751-1928 & 1964-2014, <http://newbern.cpplib.org/research/obituary.html>,
- Wilkes Journal Patriot indices, <http://www.wilkescc.edu/default2.aspx?id=638>,
- Union County newspaper indices, http://www.union.lib.nc.us/genealogy_obit.asp, and others.
- Dare County Digital Heritage, <http://darecountynews.advantage-preservation.com/>
- Surry Digital Heritage, <https://surrydigitalheritage.org/> [excellent collection of church records also]
- (\$) Newspapers.com, http://www.newspapers.com/papers/#p_place=NC
- (\$) GenealogyBank, http://www.genealogybank.com/gbnk/newspapers/Northern_Carolina-newspaper-list/
- 19th Century U.S. Newspapers (Gale.com), <http://gdc.gale.com/products/19th-century-u.s.-newspapers/discover/title-list/> [title list in excel format]
- Early American Newspapers, 1690-1922 (Readex), <http://www.readex.com/content/early-american-newspapers-1690-1922-series>
- (\$) NewspaperArchive.com, <http://newspaperarchive.com/>
- Google News Archive, <https://news.google.com/newspapers>.

Religion

NOTE: Many, many religious denominations operating in NC have archives, seek these out for the religion of interest to you.

- Religion in North Carolina Digital Collection, <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=z5eqMotaVQec.k4lJnY-r2TUg> -- access to publications of & about religious bodies in NC including local church histories, periodicals, clergy biographies, directories, etc.
- Inventory of Church Archives of North Carolina, Historical Records Survey of NC, 1940, <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001962978>
- Baptist -- Z Smith Reynolds Library, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC), <http://zsr.wfu.edu/special/collections/nc-baptist-historical-collection/>
- Records of the Moravians in North Carolina, <https://moravianarchives.org/records-of-the-moravians-in-north-carolina>
- List of Pastors and Ministers, <https://www.ourfamtree.org/records/ministers.php> ==> search on NC under state; over 12,000 entries. Check website for other resources.
- Quaker Records, Hege Library, Guilford College, <https://library.guilford.edu/archives/quaker>

Land

- NC Land Grant Images and Data, David M McCorkle, <http://www.nclandgrants.com/> -- part of North Carolina Historical Records Online (NCHRO) – new content coming early 2023.
- Early North Carolina/Tennessee Land Grants @ the Tennessee State Library and Archives, <http://www.tn.gov/tsla/history/guides/guide10.htm>
- A Brief History of the Granville District and Land Grants, Jim Wiggins (Chatham County Historical Association), 2009, <http://www.chathamhistory.org/granville/Granville%20Brief%20History%20DWP%20Edit%20mod12Mar09.pdf>
- Ancestry.com (\$) North Carolina, Land Grant Files, 1693-1960, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/60621/> [fully searchable – land grant shucks; see NC Land Grant Images and Data for Patent Books]
- Moore County, interactive Land Grant Map (for more Moore County resources check elsewhere in this

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handout),

<https://moorecountywallaces.com/Webfiles/MCW%20Deedmapper.html>

- Register of Deed (ROD) offices house county land records – some provide online access:
 - Duplin – slave & free, BMD, land, land grant map collection, etc., <http://rod.duplincounty.org/>,
 - Mecklenburg – BMD & land, <http://meckrod.manatron.com/>,
 - Wake – ALL deeds & indexes & historical maps <http://services.wakegov.com/booksweb/genextsearch.aspx>.
 - Many more have digitized indexes and/or deeds (real estate conveyances) freely available
 - As Long As the Grass Shall Grow, Buncombe County ROD, a history of Cherokee land cessions and the formation of Buncombe County, <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/e9913eb717dc4e68aeb7a7c7d3f42c3/print>

African American

- Preliminary Guide to Records Relating to African Americans in the North Carolina State Archives, AIC 17, Office of Archives and History, 2002, <http://www.ncdcr.gov/Portals/26/PDF/findingaids/Circulars/aic17.pdf>
- Free African-Americans of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Maryland and Delaware, <http://www.freeafricanamericans.com/>
- How to: Finding Slave Records, State Library of NC, <http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/ghl/resources/genealogy/slaverecords.html>
- Guide to African American Documentary Resources in the Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC, <http://blogs.lib.unc.edu/afam/>
- Guide to African-American Documentary Resources in North Carolina, Timothy D Pyatt, editor, University Press of Virginia, 1996, <http://www.upress.virginia.edu/epub/pyatt/>
- Digital Library on American Slavery, <http://library.uncg.edu/slavery/petitions/history.aspx> – Legislative petitions, Runaway Slave Ads, Bills of Sale (aka Slave Deeds), etc.
- American Slavery Documents, via Duke University, <https://repository.duke.edu/dc/americanslaverydocs> [also check out John Hope Franklin Research Center, <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/franklin/>]

Revolutionary War

- Check other resources mentioned
- J.D. Lewis Carolana.com, <https://www.carolana.com/NC/home.html> -- especially

strong for Revolutionary War research though covers other aspects of North Carolina history.

- Southern Campaigns Revolutionary War Pension Statements & Rosters, <https://revwarapps.org/> -- not just NC and many North Carolinians are included.

IMAGES

- Flickr, State Archives of North Carolina, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/north-carolina-state-archives/> -- massive collection of over 116,000 images!
- North Carolina Postcards, https://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/nc_post
- North Carolina Collection Photographic Archives, Lous Round Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill, <https://library.unc.edu/wilson/photos/>
- see DPLA
- see DigitalNC

FAMILYSEARCH, <https://www.familysearch.org/en/>

- Do catalog search for county of interest
- Bastardy bonds and records (NC), 1736-1957, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/766391>
- NC Revolutionary Pay Vouchers, 1779-1782, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1498361>
- Estate North Carolina Estate Files, 1663-1979, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1911121>
- NC, State Supreme Court Case Files, 1800-1909, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1878751>
- NC County Records (select counties), <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1916185>
- NC, Discharge and Statement of Service Records, 1940-1948, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2053639> → currently encompasses up through at least Iredell; counties in alphabetical order
- NC, World War I Service Cards, 1917-1919, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2568864>
- CRX (refers to provenance of records), <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/2246878?availability=Family%20History%20Library> [not organized by county] [not indexed/ searchable; browsable]
- NC, Voter Registration Records, 1868-1898, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/3326982> [only searchable; no direct access to any digitized images except via county collection]

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- Check for other collections for a dedicated class/type of records.

LIBGUIDES

- State Library of North Carolina, <https://statelibrary.ncdcr.libguides.com/EverythingNC>
- UNC Chapel Hill, <https://guides.lib.unc.edu/WilsonGenealogy>
- Finding NC Ancestors, Gaston Public Library, <https://gastonlibrary.libguides.com/finding>

PODCASTS/VIDEOS/E-MAGAZINES, ETC.

NOTE: Many, many organizations, counties, libraries, repositories, and more have produced these type resources; search for them!

- Connecting the Docs podcast (State Archives of North Carolina), <https://ncarchives.wpcomstaging.com/connecting-the-docs-podcast/>
- Connie Knox, GenealogyTV – NC-based, <https://genealogytv.org/>
- Lisa Lisson, Are you My Cousin? (via FB), https://www.facebook.com/pg/areyoumycousin/videos/?ref=page_internal
- State Library of North Carolina (YouTube), <https://www.youtube.com/user/statelibrarync/videos>
- Virtual Regulator Symposium, via Alamance battleground, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7-wBGWzxYY&t=21s&ab_channel=AlamanceBattleground [program by Mark Chilton includes some illustrative and helpful maps]
- Let's Talk North Carolina Genealogy! Renate Yarborough Sanders & Taneya Koonce, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuxcLe8A1AXkxiQatNQI47A/playlists>
- High Point Library, Heritage Deep Dive, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYcGCd4FJ9RCtw5aBBSswLA>
- Carolina Chronicles (2 issues) Jack Fryar, <https://www.yumpu.com/user/jackfryar>
- Museum of the Albemarle, <https://www.youtube.com/c/MuseumoftheAlbemarle>

FREE ONLINE RESOURCES WITH EXTENSIVE NC COLLECTIONS

- HathiTrust, <https://www.hathitrust.org>
- Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/index.php>
- Archivegrid <https://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/>
- Jstor (<https://www.jstor.org/>)
- Digital Public Library of America (<https://dp.la/>)
- British History Online (BHO), <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/>; almost 1000 references to "North Carolina" [https://www.british-](https://www.british-history.ac.uk/search?query=%22north%20carolina%20)

[history.ac.uk/search?query=%22north%20carolina%20](https://www.british-history.ac.uk/search?query=%22north%20carolina%20)

- **GATEWAY SITES – NOT NC SPECIFIC**
- WorldCat, worldcat.org – massive library catalog
- Linkpendium, <http://www.linkpendium.com/> -- a 10,000,000+ resource directory – search for county of interest
- The Ancestor Hunt, <https://www.theancestorhunt.com/> -- links to resources such as newspapers, yearbooks, church records, and much more
- **[NEW]** Visualizing 200 Years of U.S. Population Density, <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/visualizing-200-years-of-u-s-population-density/> -- reinforces NC NOT the place to be early on!
- Digital Public Library of America (DPLA), <https://dp.la/search?q=%22north+carolina%22> -- over 36 million images, texts, videos, and sounds from across the U.S.

SPEAKER AUTHORED RESOURCES

- NCGS Journal editor since 2016
- Archives.com – not all are NC and many NC examples are included, <https://www.archives.com/experts/richard-l-diane/>
- Select Articles published in Internet Archive (ongoing) and Family Chronicle/Your Genealogy Today (ceased publishing in fall 2020), http://mosaicrpm.com/experience/published_articles
- YouTube available videos, <https://www.youtube.com/c/DianeRichard>

IMPORTANT NOTE:

URLS were current as of when last checked. If not working, search to see if website still exists. If not, put the URL in Wayback Machine, <https://archive.org/web/>, to access an archived version of the sought after website.