



Ohio Resources

Family History Sources in the Buckeye State

Ohio History

Ohio is one of the original "gateways to the west." New Englanders, Virginians, Kentuckians, and Pennsylvanians found Ohio to be a land of opportunity. They were joined by Irish, Germans, Italians, and countless others who found chances for a better life.

The opening of the Ohio frontier was filled with skirmishes between whites and Native Americans. The Shawnee, Delaware, Miami, Wyandot, and others had claimed lands in Ohio long before European settlers arrived. Though there was some peaceful trading, the late 18th and early 19th century was punctuated by a series of raids and retaliations.



Ohio is a patchwork of settlement. New Englanders flocked to the northeast part of the state to the counties that had been part of the Connecticut Western Reserve. They also settled in extreme southeastern Ohio around Marietta, due to the massive land purchases by the Ohio Company, a group of Revolutionary War veterans who speculated on land in the area. Virginians were drawn to the southern part of the state, not only by the easy access via the Ohio River and up its tributaries, but also to claim land in the Virginia Military District. People from the Mid-Atlantic region came through the middle of the state by routes such as the National Road and Zane's Trace.

By the mid-1820s, Ohio had started a massive internal improvements program focused on roads and canals. These new roads aided in bringing in people from other states and helping Ohioans get their goods to distant markets. These projects also drew in workers, especially from Ireland and Germany.

Agriculture made up the largest part of the Ohio economy during the 1800s. Coal mining in eastern and southern Ohio was another large industry; many English and Welsh immigrants were drawn to the area seeking work in the mines.

As railroads expanded, so did Ohio's industrial base. Cities such as Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, Dayton, Springfield, and Toledo mushroomed. After the Civil War, newly-freed African Americans from southern states came to Ohio looking for work; many settled in these cities. At the turn of the 20th century, many immigrants from Eastern Europe did the same.

Buckeye trees are prevalent in the state; Ohioans have referred to themselves as Buckeyes since at least the 1840 presidential election. With Ohio's rich history and diverse communities, Buckeyes make wonderful additions to your family tree.



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Ohio Censuses

Most of the 1810 federal census for Ohio has been lost; only the schedule for Washington County survives.

The remaining fragment of the 1890 federal census includes part of Hamilton County. Also, Ohio is included in the surviving portion of the 1890 Special Schedule of Union Veterans and Widows.

The 1870 mortality schedule for Ohio has been lost. Other mortality schedules are missing some counties. Adams through Guernsey counties are missing in 1850 and Green through Wyandot counties are missing in 1880.

Ohio took no state censuses.

Related Censuses Available on Ancestry.com:

- [Selected U.S. Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, 1850-1880](#) (includes the agriculture, industry, and social statistics schedule)
- [U.S. Federal Census – 1880 Schedules of Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes](#)
- [U.S. Federal Census Mortality Schedules, 1850-1885](#)

Population	
1800	45,365
1810	230,760
1820	581,434
1830	937,903
1840	1,519,467
1850	1,980,329
1860	2,339,511
1870	2,665,260
1880	3,198,062
1890	3,672,329
1900	4,157,545
1910	4,767,121
1920	5,759,394
1930	6,646,697
1940	6,907,612
1950	7,946,627
1960	9,706,397

Significant Dates (through 1970)

1782 – In March, a militia out of Pennsylvania killed Christian Delaware Indians at the Moravian mission at Gnadenhutten. In June, Native Americans captured Col. William Crawford, who was leading a raid in the Sandusky area; Crawford was burned at the stake.

1785 – The Land Ordinance of 1785 established how the land in present-day Ohio would be surveyed and sold. The Seven Ranges in eastern Ohio became the first federal land survey.

1787 – The Northwest Ordinance established the Northwest Territory, which included present-day Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota.

1788 – Marietta, Ohio's first permanent white settlement, was founded.

1790 – Josiah Harmar led a militia from Fort Washington (Cincinnati) against Native Americans in western Ohio. Harmar's forces were badly defeated. The action led to heightened tension between whites and Native Americans in the area.



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1794 – Gen. "Mad" Anthony Wayne defeated Native Americans at the Battle of Fallen Timbers near present-day Toledo.

1795 – The U.S. government and several tribes of Native Americans, including Delaware, Shawnee, Ottawa, and Miami, signed the Treaty of Greeneville. Native Americans agreed to cede their lands in roughly the southern two-thirds of Ohio. In return, whites were not to settle north of the treaty line. This provision was largely ignored.

1803 – Ohio became the 17th state on 1 March; Chillicothe was the capital.

1804 – Ohio University in Athens was founded, becoming the first university in the state.

1804 and 1807 – The legislature passed the Black Laws or Black Codes, which required blacks living in the state to prove that they were not slaves and to provide two people offering surety for their good behavior.

1810 – The capital moved to Zanesville.

1812 – The capital moved back to Chillicothe. The state legislature decided that the capital should be more centrally located; Columbus is founded for this purpose.

1813 – The American fleet, commanded by Oliver Hazard Perry, defeats the British in the Battle of Lake Erie.

1816 – The state capital moved to Columbus.

1818 – St. Joseph's in Somerset became the first Catholic church in Ohio.

1825 – Work began on the Ohio portion of the National Road. This greatly aided in the migration of settlers from Pennsylvania, northern Virginia and Maryland. Work also began on the Ohio and Erie Canal, which would eventually aid transportation of goods and people from Lake Erie to the Ohio River.

1829 – The Cincinnati Race Riot erupted as Irish immigrants, who felt threatened by free blacks competing for jobs, tried to destroy black neighborhoods.

1833 – Oberlin College was founded, becoming the first college in the U.S. to admit both men and women. Oberlin was also one of the first colleges to admit African-Americans.

1835-1836 – The state of Ohio and the Michigan Territory disputed their boundary. Though known as the Toledo War, no battles actually occurred. In the end, Ohio was granted the land in dispute (including the port at Toledo) and Michigan received the Upper Peninsula.

1842 – The Wyandot, the last remaining Native American tribe in Ohio, ceded their remaining land in the state.

1849 – Most of the Black Laws were repealed. However, blacks still could not vote or serve on juries.

1849 – A cholera epidemic in Cincinnati killed 8,000 people. Cholera hit other portions of the state as well, including Columbus.

1851 – Ohio enacted a new state constitution, which enabled voters to elect the governor, judges and other officials. District courts were added. It also changed the eligibility to vote to white men who had lived in the state for at least one year.

1851 – Construction began on the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad. It was the first railroad in the state whose primary purpose was to transport passengers rather than freight.

1861-1865 – Ohio contributed more than 300,000 men to the Union forces; this number was surpassed only by New York and Pennsylvania. In addition, Generals Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan were all from Ohio.



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1863 – Confederate General John Hunt Morgan swept through southern Indiana and southern Ohio. The Battle of Buffington Island became the only Civil War battle fought on Ohio soil.

1867 – Birth and death records started being recorded in county Probate Courts.

1870 – Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College was founded. It was later renamed The Ohio State University.

1913 – Storms swept across the Midwest. The Flood of 1913 devastated many towns in Ohio, including Columbus, Dayton and Marietta. Over 400 people in Ohio died.

1930 – The Ohio Penitentiary Fire killed more than 320 people, most of them inmates.

1970 – Ohio National Guard members killed four students at Kent State University.

Ohio Vital Records

Civil birth and death records began to be recorded at the county level in 1867. These are recorded in the Probate Court of the county where the birth or death occurred. Note: most death records in this time period do not list the names of the parents. Statewide registration of births and deaths began in December 1908. Civil marriage records begin with the creation of the county. They are recorded in the Probate Court of the county where the license was obtained, though many early marriages performed by circuit riders were recorded in whatever county the minister decided to record them.

Ohio Vital Records on Ancestry.com

- [Ohio, Birth Index, 1908-1964](#)
- [Ohio, Births and Christening Index, 1800-1962](#)
- [Ohio, Deaths, 1908-1932, 1938-2007](#)
- [Ohio Marriage Index, 1970, 1972-2007](#)
- [Web: Ohio, Find A Grave Index, 1787-2012](#)

Other State Resources

- [Ohio Historical Society](#)
 - [Collections and Archives](#)
 - [Ohio History Central](#) (online encyclopedia of Ohio history)
 - [Ohio Memory](#)
- [Ohio Genealogical Society](#)
 - [Chapters of OGS](#)
- [Columbus Metropolitan Library: Local History & Genealogy](#)
- [Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County: Genealogy and Local History Department](#)
- [Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center](#)
- [Western Reserve Historical Society](#)
- [OHGenWeb](#)
- [The Official Ohio Lands Book](#) by George W. Knepper. This free PDF from the Ohio Auditor of State is an invaluable guide to understanding Ohio's many land surveys.



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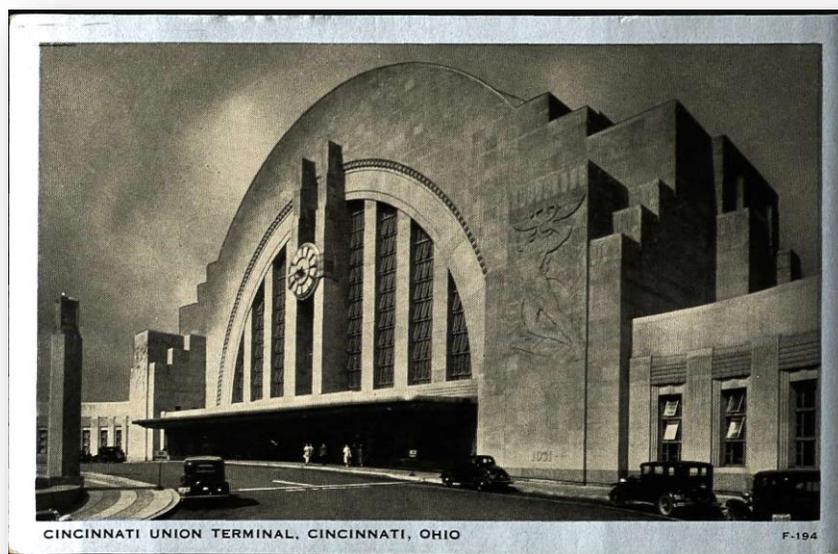
Other Collections

- [Ohio, Naturalization Petition and Record Books, 1907-1946](#)
- [Ohio Soldiers in WWI, 1917-1918](#)
- [Ohio, Tax Records, 1800-1850](#)
- [U.S., Indexed County Land Ownership Maps, 1860-1918](#)
- [U.S., Indexed Early Land Ownership and Township Plats, 1785-1898](#)
- [U.S National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, 1866-1938](#) (includes the Central Branch National Home at Dayton)
- [U.S. City Directories, 1821-1989](#) (Use the browse box in the upper right corner to determine what directories are available for your ancestor's area. If they lived in a rural area, check to see if that area was included with a larger city in the vicinity.)

Help and Advice

- [Ohio Family History Research](#)
- [Ohio County Resources](#)
- [Map of Ohio](#)

[View all Ohio collections on Ancestry.com](#)



"Cincinnati Union Terminal, Cincinnati, Ohio" from "U.S., Historical Postcards"