

# Access & Preservation in Action: The Archives of Michigan and Seeking Michigan

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## The Archives of Michigan

The Archives of Michigan is the official repository for Michigan's state and local government historical records. It also collects private manuscript records that reflect the history of Michigan, holds the Abrams Foundation Historical Collection, and administers the Seeking Michigan web site ([www.seekingmichigan.org](http://www.seekingmichigan.org)).

Family history research is a core function of the Archives of Michigan. Collections include probate files, naturalization records, tax rolls, cemetery transcriptions, military records, local histories, circuit court case files, prison registries, and other helpful resources.

The Archives of Michigan's family history resources are found in three key components:

Primary sources:

- State government records
- County & municipal government records
- Manuscript collections

Published resources:

- Abrams Foundation Historical Collection
- Books and microfilm covering the Great Lakes, Mid-Atlantic, and New England regions and beyond
- Family history periodicals

Online tools:

- Seeking Michigan – FREE!
- Onsite access to Ancestry, fold3, and American Ancestors

## Seeking Michigan

Seeking Michigan is the Archives of Michigan's digital platform that contains a rich and growing collection of genealogically diverse resources, including:

- Civil War records:  
State-level collection of enlistments, muster rolls, and more for Michigan units and servicemen.
- Death records:  
Michigan certificates from 1897-1952, with index-only data for records less than 75 years old.
- Guides and collections overviews:  
Guides to assist researchers working with local records and topics of interest, including military records, corrections records, and more.
- Main Street photographs:  
Historic images of Michigan cities and villages.
- State census records:  
Surviving population schedules, particularly those from 1884 and 1894.

## Current Projects

The Archives of Michigan is in the midst of several large access and preservation initiatives.

- Naturalization records:  
The Archives of Michigan and FamilySearch, together with assistance from the Michigan Genealogical Council, are partnering to digitize hundreds of thousands of Michigan naturalization records. The index will be completed by the genealogical community and ultimately made available at both FamilySearch and Seeking Michigan, while the images themselves will be available exclusively at [www.seekingmichigan.org](http://www.seekingmichigan.org).

Grab a batch today at FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/indexing/projects>), our project is called “US, Michigan – Archives of Michigan – Naturalization Records, 1812-1985!”

**Please join us in this exciting project!**

- Probate records:  
With a recent change in the state’s records retention schedules, historic probate files from all counties in Michigan will now be transferred to the Archives of Michigan after a period of fifty years.

This massive project – including all of Michigan’s 83 counties – is expected to take ~5-6 years. The new schedule centralizes the process of records preservation in Michigan and puts in one depository the records that had been previously stored across the state. Counties that have already transferred material include Genesee, Jackson, Midland, Monroe, and Wayne.

Moving forward, the Archives of Michigan is partnering with FamilySearch to help get these important records imaged, indexed, and more readily available.