

## ***County Websites: An Overlooked Resource***

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**Note: Not every “county website” is a genealogy site and not every county has a website; even non-genealogy county sites can be worth checking as often there is history included as well as people to contact for information or assistance.**

### **Ways to find county genealogy websites:**

Google the county name, state, and “genealogy” (e.g., Los Angeles, California, genealogy) <[www.Linkpendium.com](http://www.Linkpendium.com)> and click on “Localities, USA” and follow directions from there <[www.Cyndislist.com](http://www.Cyndislist.com)>, go to “Categories,” then to “United States Index” and scroll to desired state, then click on “counties” option and scroll to desired county <<http://usgenweb.org>> and select state from index along left margin; from state site (these are separately maintained so each is unique), locate county search option <<http://stevemorse.org/census/counties.html>> and follow directions

### **To identify county if it is not known**

<<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/>> and scroll down to “Research Templates” (in the left column at the bottom, as of this writing, Jan. 2013); select “United States” to get a “search” box; enter city and state to search for the county

Most state websites (on USgenweb) offer a map of the state, identifying each county; many also provide information re: county formation date and the county from which it was created

### **Note: county websites are operated by volunteers . . . keep this in mind**

If you send something to be posted, know that it may take a long time for that to actually occur.

Generally the webmasters or site coordinators are not available to do county lookups: many do not live in the county in question.

Read all the information about how the site is operated before emailing the coordinator.

Check the “last updated” date (usually at the bottom of each page) to determine if it is an active site.

### **Always bookmark your families’ county sites to return and check on what has been added, corrected, or changed!**

Sometimes, but not always, the changed sections or newly added material is clearly marked.

## **Items often found on county websites**

photos and postcard images  
obituaries, social announcements, and other newspaper articles and advertisements  
atlases, gazetteers, and maps  
churches, fraternal organizations, and schools (types of records varies)  
asylums, homes, institutions, and hospitals  
cemetery records (some with photos of headstones, some with locations, some with epitaphs)  
military records  
information on local businesses (past and present)  
census records (federal, state, and/or local)  
biographies of selected county residents (from varied sources)  
queries, lookup helps, and local “angels” to assist  
contacts for advice  
city directories  
county histories  
links to local libraries, historical societies, funeral homes, and more  
resource list for various local repositories  
locations & hours of operation for court houses, libraries, historical societies, and more  
surname searches – with contacts for others searching your family names  
indexes for vital records, directories, and more  
actual vital records transcriptions  
addresses to write for more information  
local genealogical societies  
landmarks  
tutorials & general “helps” to do genealogy, including forms, links to other genealogy sites, etc.

**County website coordinators are frequently looking for help with information . . .** consider helping out by sending in photos you have of the area, historical data you have on your family’s life in the county, and any other information that might help other researchers (always email the site coordinator before sending materials, however).

**Consider joining an email “list” of folks who are researching “your” county** (RootsWeb hosts a number of these but some county sites have their own).

**County websites can be invaluable . . . even if you think you have tried everywhere to find that elusive ancestor, if you have not checked the county website, you may have missed a fabulous resource. Best wishes on your roots pursuits!**