Using the Georgia Archives for Genealogy Research

Jimmy Carter and Lucy Craft Laney Case Studies

By Robin Klemm, Outreach Archivist, Georgia Archives
October 3, 2026



Presentation Introduction

Core question: How did the person you are researching interact with state and local governments?



Start with what you know | **Build the household** | **Locate the family** | **Trace property and estates** | **Look beyond the basics**

Use this as a repeatable research path.
Not all of these records will apply to your search, but they are great starting points.

What do we already know?

Start with birth, parents, and birthplace.

Jimmy Carter



Key Findings:

- Born James Earl Carter, Jr. on October 1, 1924 in Plains, Georgia.
- Parents: James Earl Carter, Sr. and Bessie Lillian Gordy Carter.
- These names, dates, and locations provide starting points for searching census and county records.

Carter, Jimmy by Thornton Utz, 1992.23.0070, Georgia Capitol Museum, University System of Georgia

What do we already know?

Start with birth, parents, and birthplace.

Lucy Craft Laney



Key Findings:

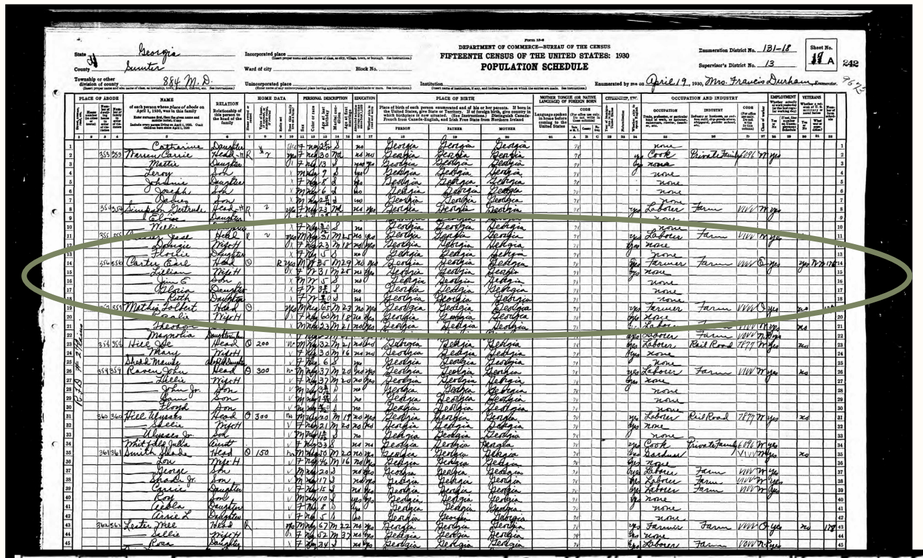
- Born Lucy Craft Laney on April 13, 1854 in Macon, Georgia.
- Parents: David and Louisa Laney.
- Her parents' status as free people of color affects which antebellum and postwar records may document the family.

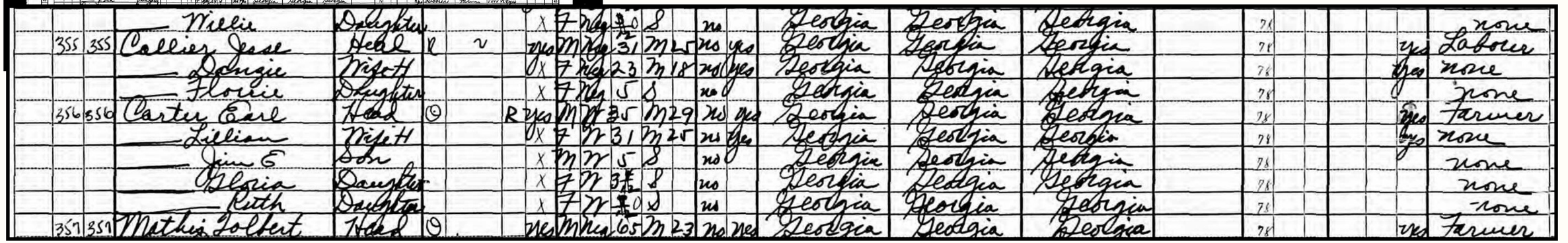
Laney, Lucy Craft by George Mandus, 1992.23.0050, Georgia Capitol Museum, University System of Georgia

Can we locate the family in census records?

Jimmy Carter

Census records help reconstruct household structure over time.





Key Findings:

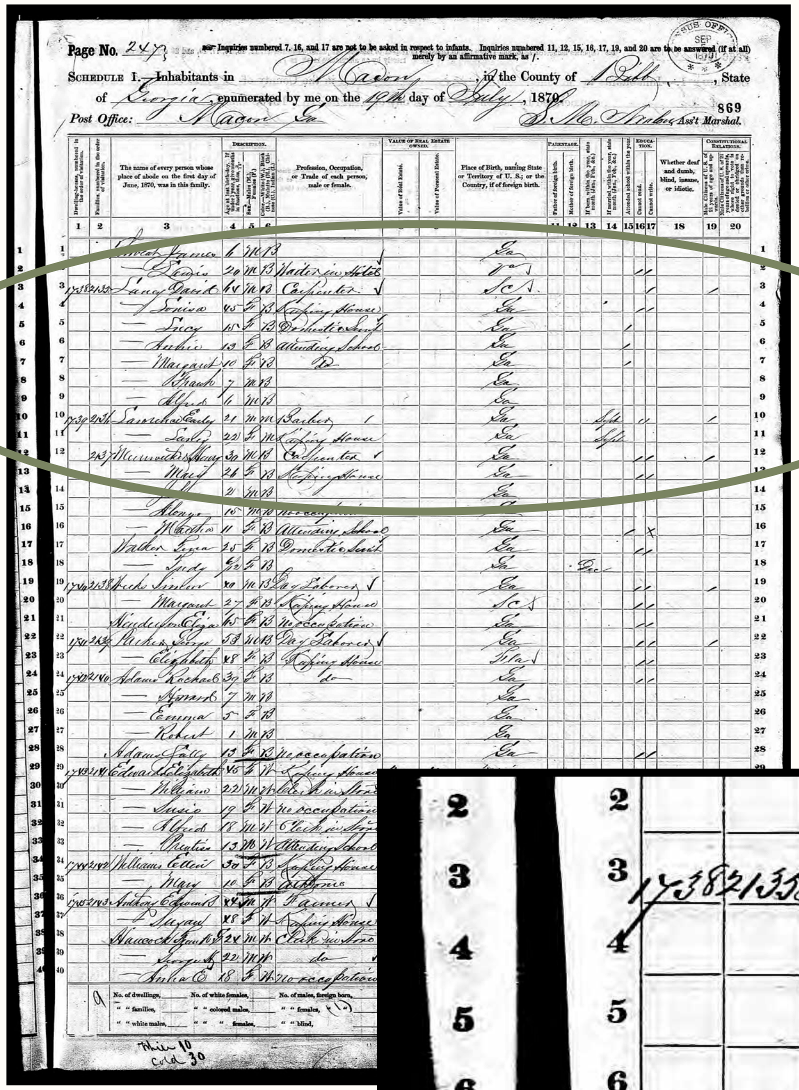
- The 1930 census places five-year-old Jimmy Carter in his parents' household in Sumter County.
- The household identifies his parents and siblings and records ages, occupations, and other family details.
- The census places the family in Militia District 884, giving us a more precise geographic clue for later county research.

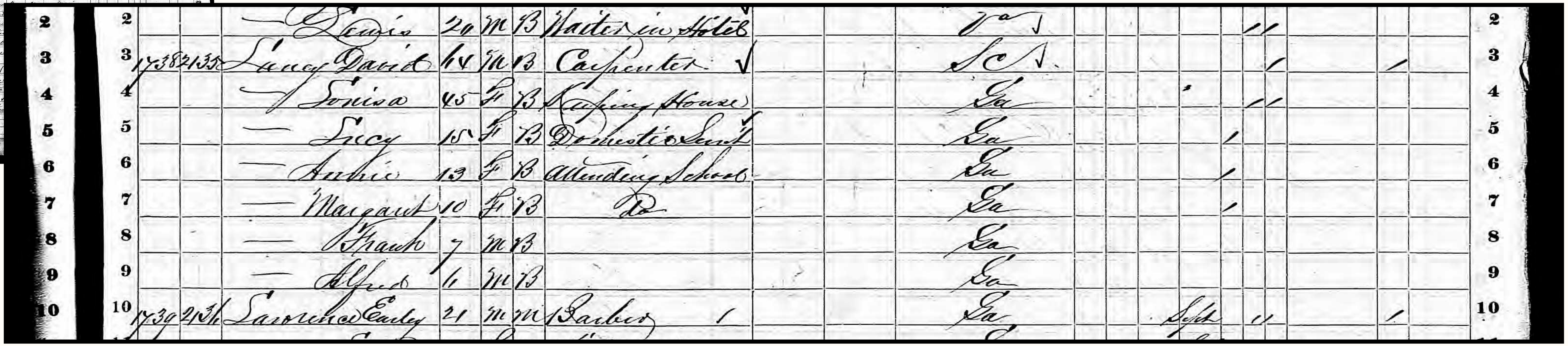
Tip: Use AncestryInstitution.com on-site at the Georgia Archives for free access to their records.

Year: 1930; Census Place: Militia District 884, Sumter, Georgia; Page: 17A; Enumeration District: 0018; FHL microfilm: 2340120, AcestryInstitution.com

Can we locate the family in census records?

Census records help identify household, neighbors, and location.





Key Findings:

- The 1870 census places Lucy Laney in Macon with her parents, David and Louisa Laney.
- The household helps establish Lucy's family structure during her childhood.
- Neighbors and location information provide additional clues for finding the family in tax, land, and other county records.

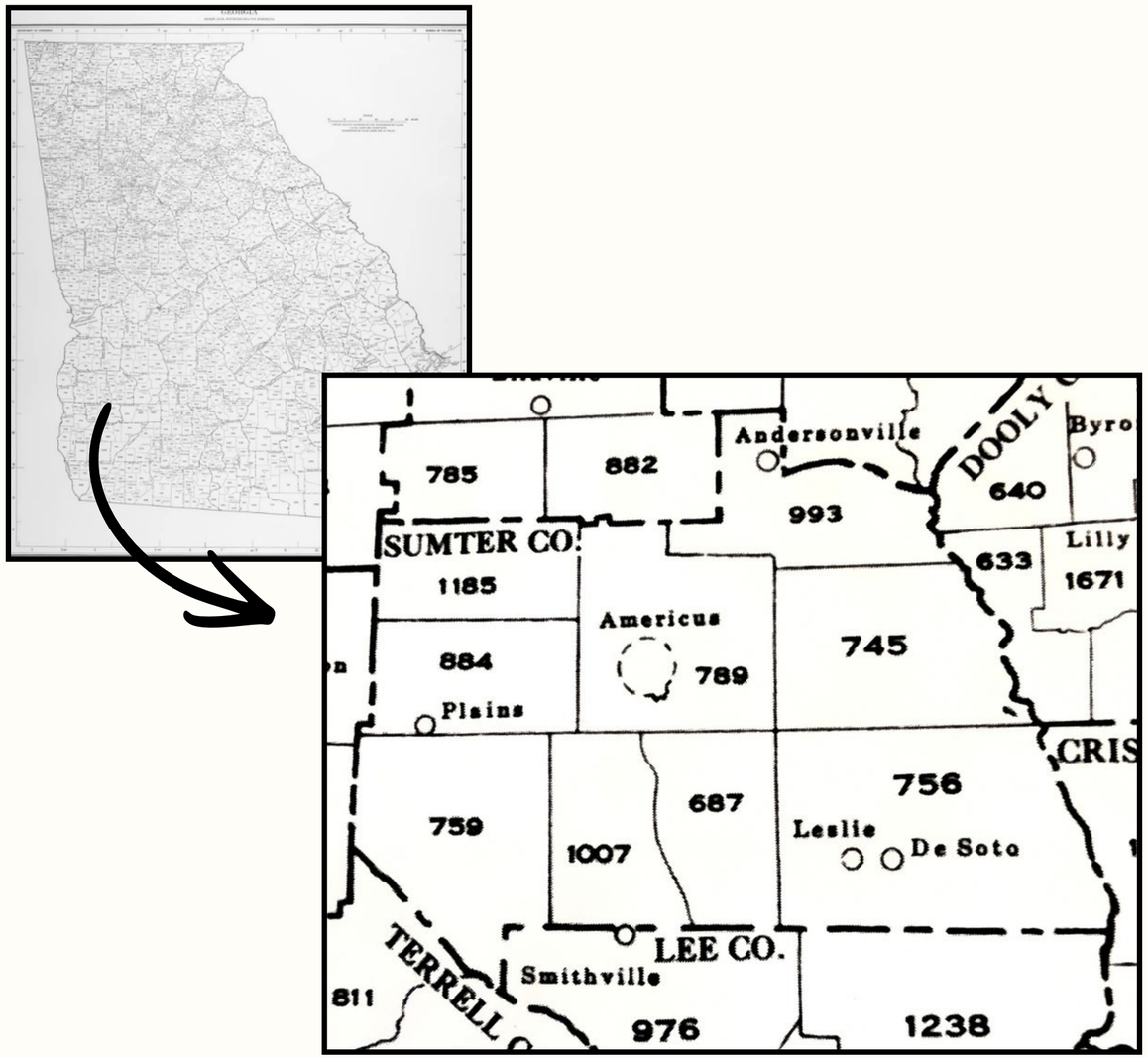
Tip: Try using variations of names or search for neighbors if you're not getting results.

Year: 1870; Census Place: Macon, Bibb, Georgia; Roll: M593_136; Page: 869A, AncestryInstitution.com

Can we establish where they lived?

Move from household names to county and local context.

Jimmy Carter



Key Findings:

- The 1930 census places the Carter family in Militia District 884 in Sumter County.
- Militia districts can help narrow a family's location within a county, especially in rural areas.
- Knowing the county and district helps narrow which tax, land, court, and other local records to search.

Key Resources:

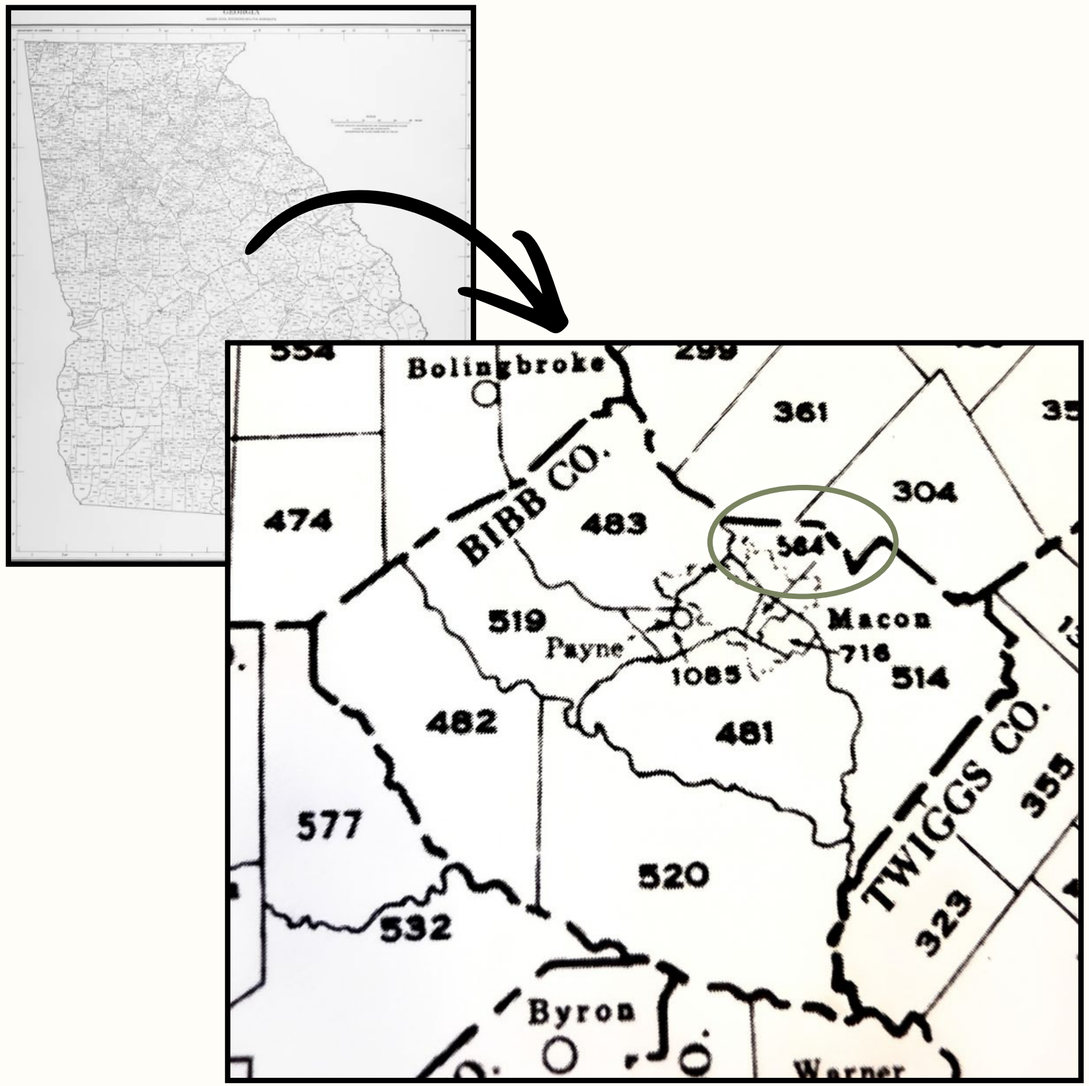
- Virtual Vault
  - Georgia, Minor Civil Divisions - Militia Districts Map
  - Militia District Names

Georgia, Minor Civil Divisions - Militia Districts. omf022, Historic Maps, Surveyor General, RG 3-8-65, Georgia Archives

Can we establish where they lived?

Lucy Craft Laney

Move from household names to county and local context.



Key Findings:

- The Laney family was living in Macon, Bibb County, by 1870.
- Maps and local records help connect the family to the county offices and record series that may document them.
- Place can also point researchers toward nearby churches, schools, courts, cemeteries, and other repositories.

Helpful Resources:

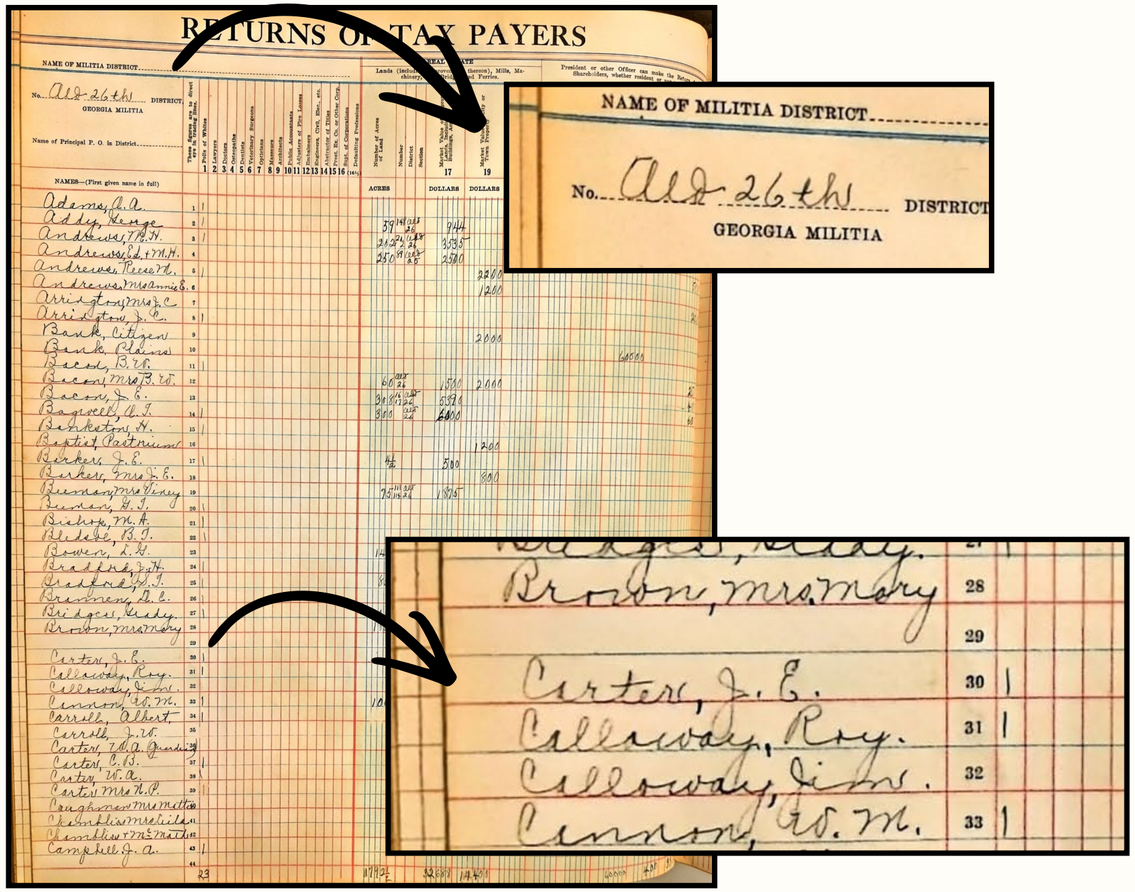
- Historical and Cultural Organizations Directory

Georgia, Minor Civil Divisions - Militia Districts. omf022, Historic Maps, Surveyor General, RG 3-8-65, Georgia Archives

What can tax records tell us?

Tax records can document presence, property, and changes over time.

Jimmy Carter



Key Findings:

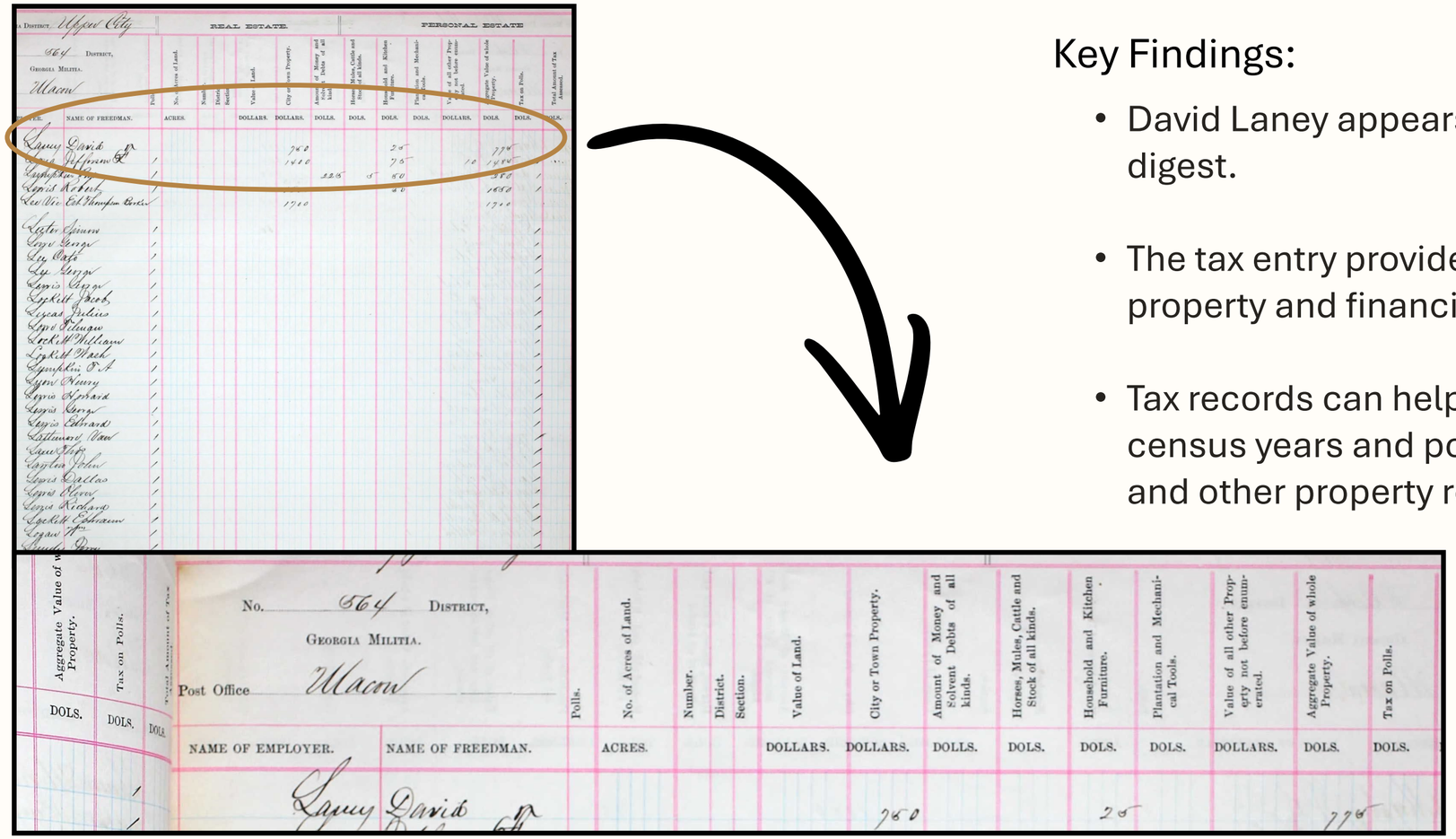
- J. E. Carter appears in the 1920 Sumter County tax digest under the Old 26th District.
- His entry records a white poll, but no real or personal property values are listed.
- Other Carter taxpayers appear in the same district, offering possible clues to extended family and nearby relatives.
- Historical district names and numbers may not match across record types, so maps and contemporary local sources may be needed to connect them.

Sumter County Property Tax Digest, 1920, Old 26th District, Georgia Archives, Revenue - Property Tax Unit - County Property Tax Digests, VOL2 13353.

What can tax records tell us?

Tax records can show property, status, and community context.

Lucy Craft Laney



No. 564 District,

Georgia Militia.

Post Office Macon

Aggregate Value of whole Property.	Tax on Polls.		Polls.	No. of Acres of Land.	Number.	District.	Section.	Value of Land.	City or Town Property.	Amount of Money and Solvent Debts of all kinds.	Horses, Mules, Cattle and Stock of all kinds.	Household and Kitchen Furniture.	Plantation and Mechanical Tools.	Value of all other Property not before enumerated.	Aggregate Value of whole Property.	Tax on Polls.
DOLS.	DOLS.	DOLS.	NAME OF EMPLOYER.	NAME OF FREEDMAN.	ACRES.			DOLLARS.	DOLLARS.	DOLS.	DOLS.	DOLS.	DOLS.	DOLLARS.	DOLS.	DOLS.
	1			Lamy David					760			25			785	

Key Findings:

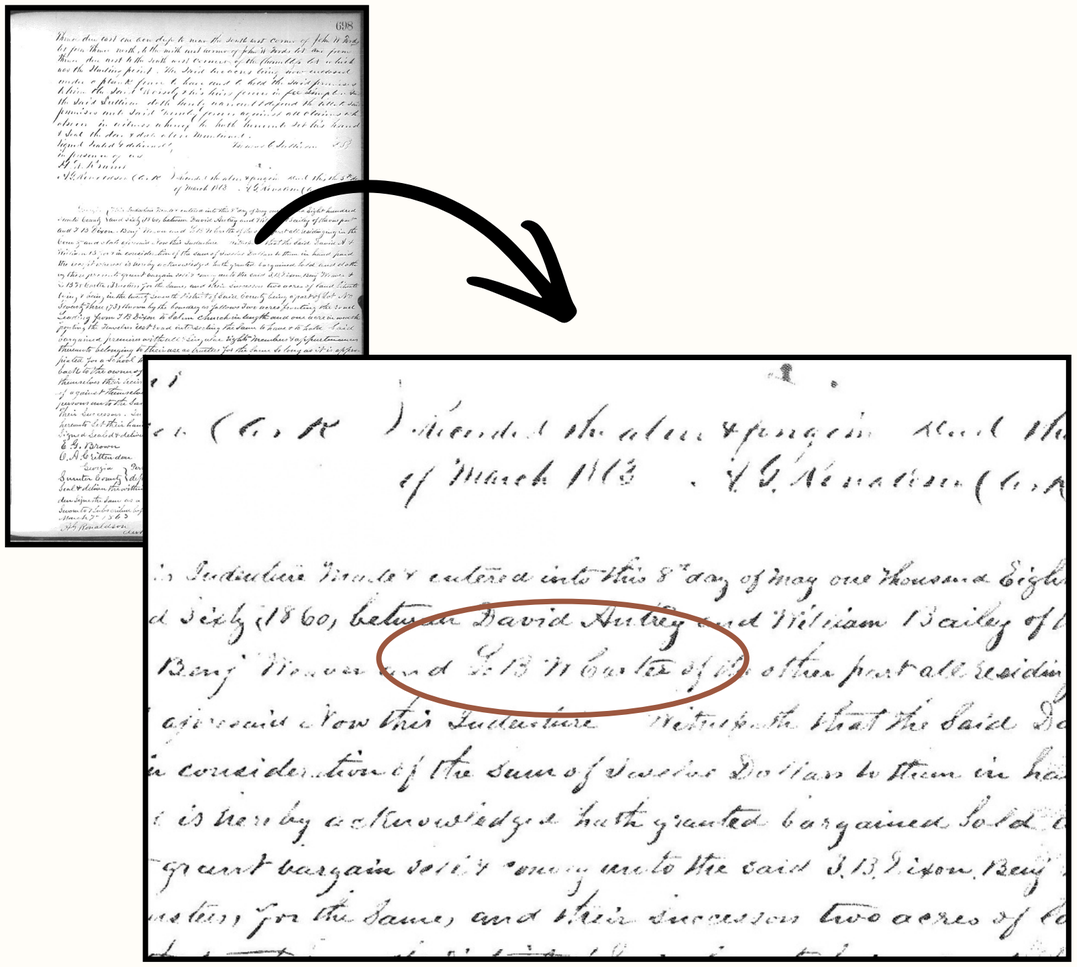
- David Laney appears in the 1885 Bibb County tax digest.
- The tax entry provides evidence of the family's property and financial status after Reconstruction.
- Tax records can help establish continuity between census years and point researchers toward deeds and other property records.

County Property Tax Digests - 1885 - Bibb, VOL2 6688, vol2: 6688. Revenue - Property Tax Unit - County Property Tax Digests, 034-06-001. Georgia Archives.

Can we trace land ownership?

Jimmy Carter

Land records can connect people to property, neighbors, and family transactions.



Key Findings:

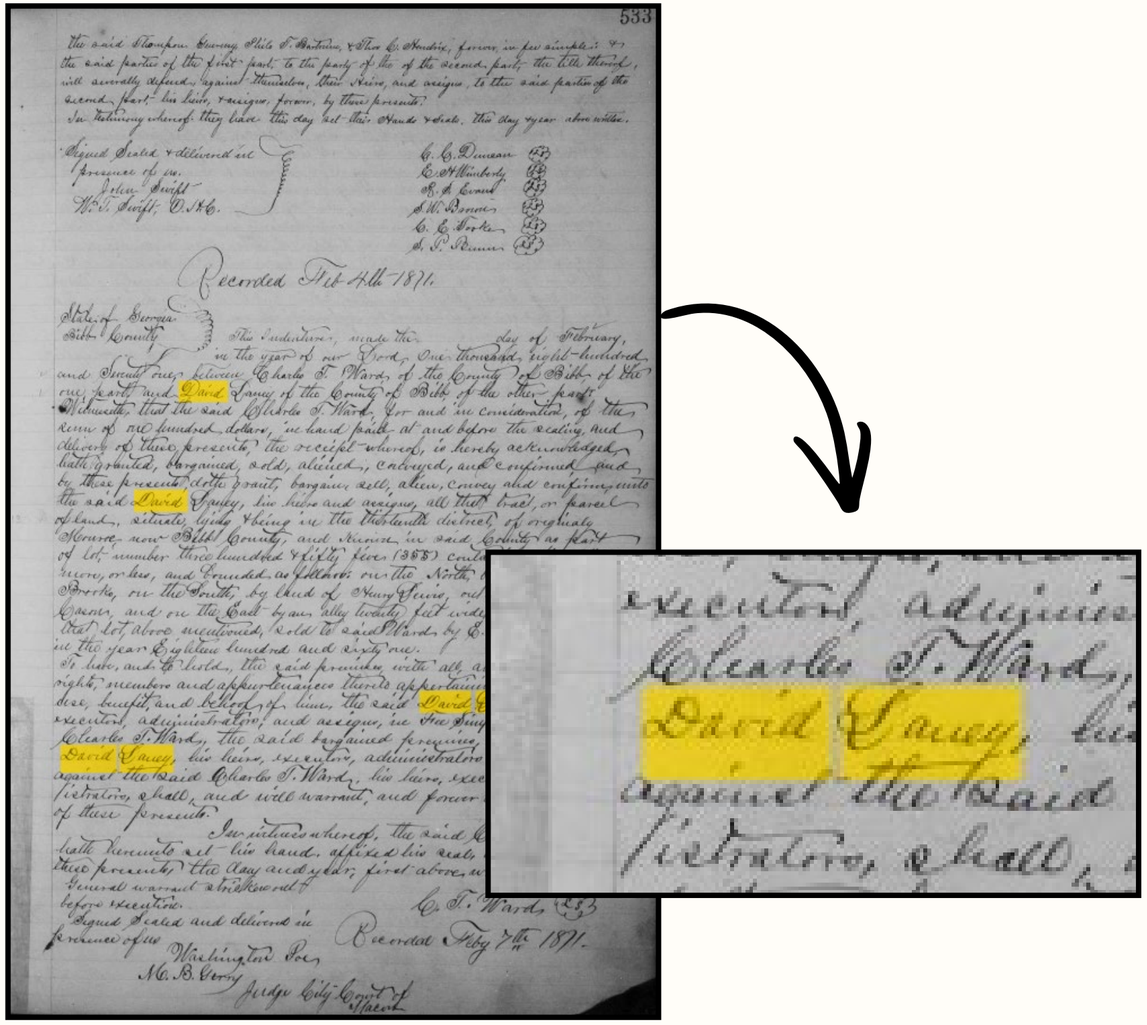
- L. B. W. Carter, identified as Jimmy Carter's great-grandfather Littleberry Walker Carter, appears as a grantee in an 1860 Sumter County deed.
- The deed conveys part of Lot 73 in the 27th District of Sumter County.
- Land records can identify property location, other parties to a transaction, and nearby landmarks or boundaries.
- The grantee index provided the deed book and page needed to locate the full record.

Sumter County Superior Court, Deeds, Book N, p. 698, 1860, Georgia Archives County Records Microfilm, Source No. 240–1.

Can we trace land ownership?

Lucy Craft Laney

Land records can connect people to property, neighbors, and family transactions.



Key Findings:

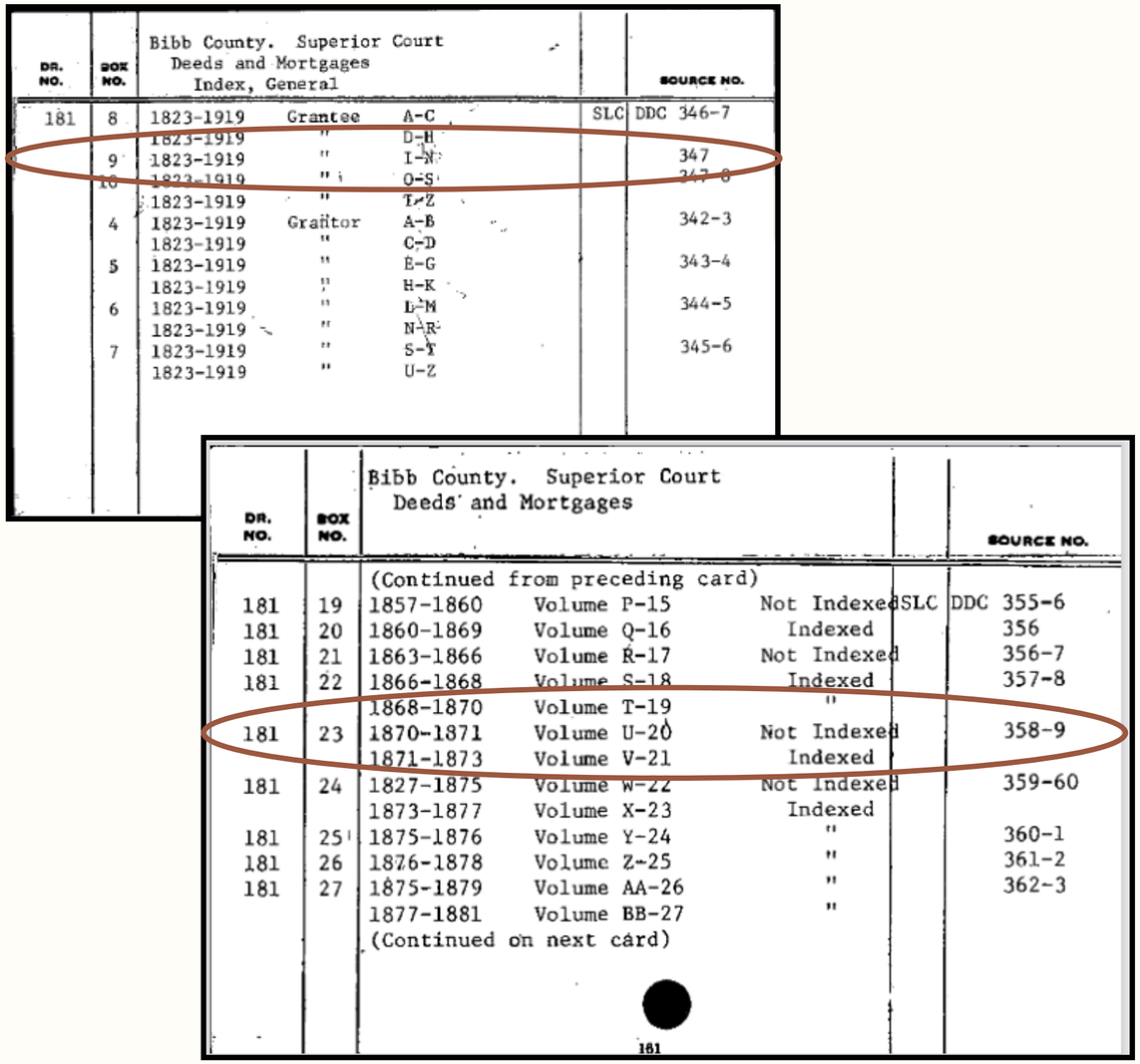
- David Laney purchased five acres in Bibb County from Charles T. Ward for $100.
- The deed identifies the property as part of Lot 355 in the 13th District.
- It names adjoining landowners and describes the property boundaries.
- The deed index provided the volume and page needed to locate the full transaction.

Bibb County Superior Court, Deeds and Mortgages, Volume U-20, p. 535, Source No. 358-9, Georgia Archives County Records Microfilm. Digital image accessed via FamilySearch.

Key Resources: County Records on Microfilm

Use the Virtual Vault Microfilm Indexes to locate County Records.

Virtual Vault



Bibb County. Superior Court
Deeds and Mortgages
Index, General

DR. NO.	BOX NO.					SOURCE NO.
181	8	1823-1919	Grantee	A-C	SLC	DDC 346-7
		1823-1919	"	D-H		
	9	1823-1919	"	I-N		347
	10	1823-1919	"	O-S		347-8
		1823-1919	"	T-Z		
	4	1823-1919	Grantor	A-B		342-3
		1823-1919	"	C-D		
	5	1823-1919	"	E-G		343-4
		1823-1919	"	H-K		
	6	1823-1919	"	L-M		344-5
		1823-1919	"	N-R		
	7	1823-1919	"	S-T		345-6
		1823-1919	"	U-Z		

Bibb County. Superior Court
Deeds and Mortgages

DR. NO.	BOX NO.				SOURCE NO.
		(Continued from preceding card)			
181	19	1857-1860	Volume P-15	Not Indexed SLC	DDC 355-6
181	20	1860-1869	Volume Q-16	Indexed	356
181	21	1863-1866	Volume R-17	Not Indexed	356-7
181	22	1866-1868	Volume S-18	Indexed	357-8
		1868-1870	Volume T-19	"	
181	23	1870-1871	Volume U-20	Not Indexed	358-9
		1871-1873	Volume V-21	Indexed	
181	24	1827-1875	Volume W-22	Not Indexed	359-60
		1873-1877	Volume X-23	Indexed	
181	25	1875-1876	Volume Y-24	"	360-1
181	26	1876-1878	Volume Z-25	"	361-2
181	27	1875-1879	Volume AA-26	"	362-3
		1877-1881	Volume BB-27	"	
		(Continued on next card)			

181

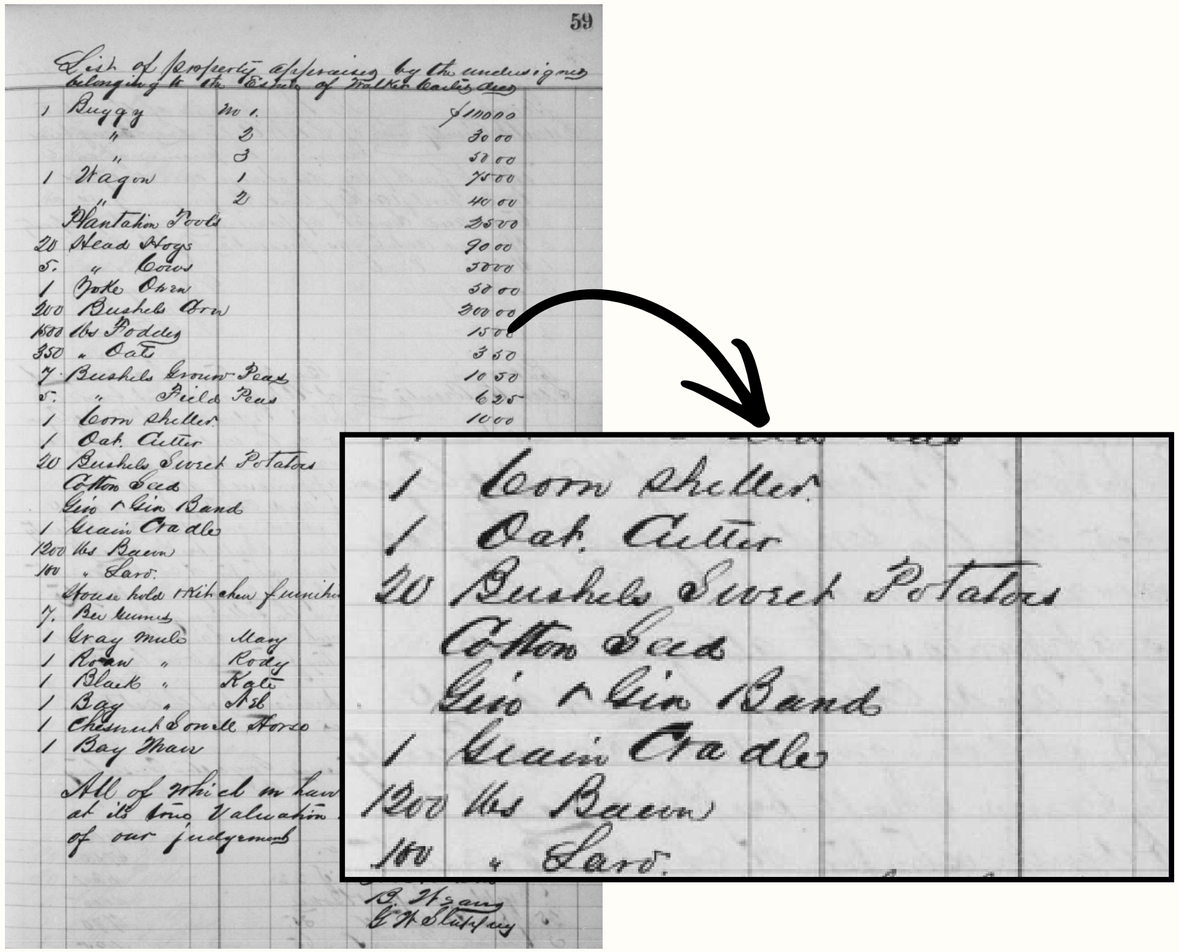
- Use the County Records Microfilm Index to check available years and volumes on microfilm.
- Start with the county.
- Identify the court or office that created the record.
- Note the volume, date range, and source number.
- Use that information to locate the microfilm onsite or determine whether a digital copy is available elsewhere.

Bibb County Superior Court, Deeds and Mortgages, Volume U-20, p. 535, Source No. 358-9, Georgia Archives County Records Microfilm.

What do probate records reveal?

Probate can identify family relationships and the transfer of property.

Jimmy Carter



Key Findings:

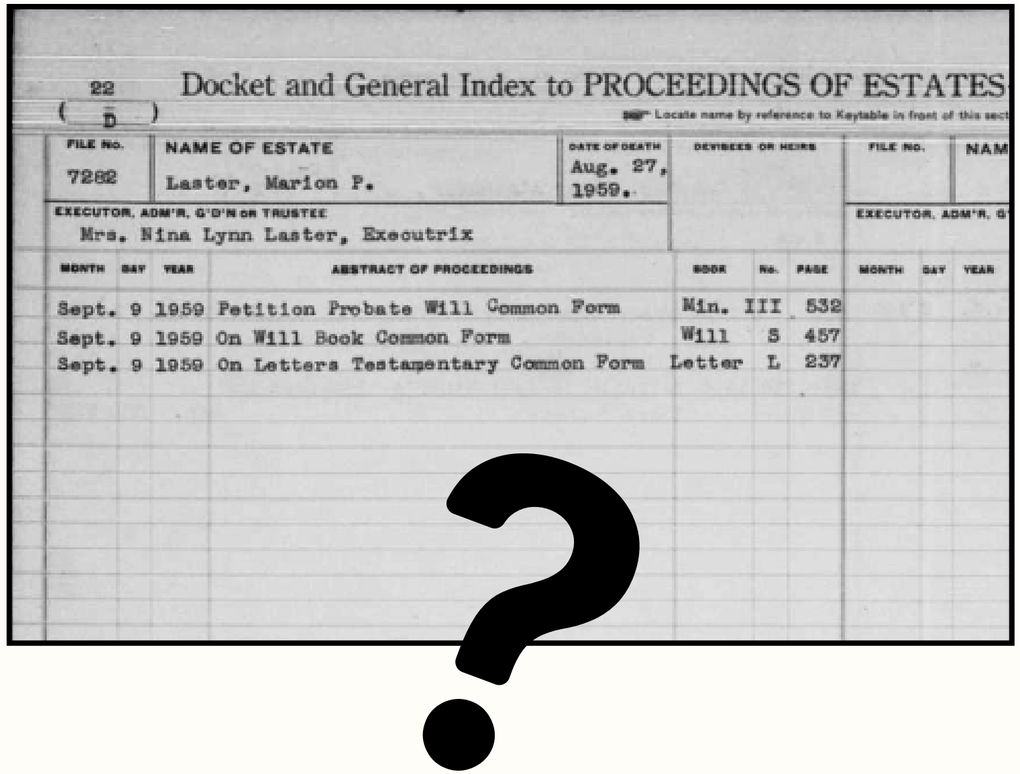
- An estate appraisement for L. B. W. Carter was located in Sumter County records.
- The inventory lists livestock, farming equipment, crops, household furnishings, and other personal property.
- Estate inventories can reveal an ancestor's economic circumstances, occupation, and daily life.

Sumter County Court of Ordinary, Estate Records: Appraisements, Vol. 10, pp. 59–60, Georgia Archives, County Records Microfilm, HL 328–329. Digital image accessed via FamilySearch.

What do probate records reveal?

Probate can identify family relationships, status, and the transfer of property...or not.

Lucy Craft Laney



22 Docket and General Index to PROCEEDINGS OF ESTATES

(D)

Locate name by reference to Keytable in front of this sect

FILE NO.	NAME OF ESTATE	DATE OF DEATH	DEVISEES OR HEIRS	FILE NO.	NAM
7282	Laster, Marion P.	Aug. 27, 1959.			

EXECUTOR, ADM'R, G'D'N OR TRUSTEE: Mrs. Nina Lynn Laster, Executrix

EXECUTOR, ADM'R, G

MONTH	DAY	YEAR	ABSTRACT OF PROCEEDINGS	BOOK	No.	PAGE	MONTH	DAY	YEAR
Sept.	9	1959	Petition Probate Will Common Form	Min.	III	532			
Sept.	9	1959	On Will Book Common Form	Will	S	457			
Sept.	9	1959	On Letters Testamentary Common Form	Letter	L	237			

Key Findings:

- Searches of Bibb County wills and estate indexes did not identify a probate record for David Laney.
- An unsuccessful search does not prove that a record never existed.
- Try alternative spellings, other family members, and additional probate record types.
- When probate records do not answer the question, turn to deeds, tax records, newspapers, and other sources.

Helpful Resources:

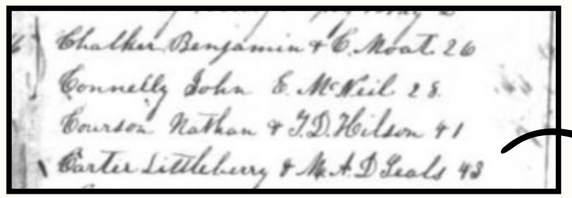
- Georgia Counties: Their Changing Boundaries

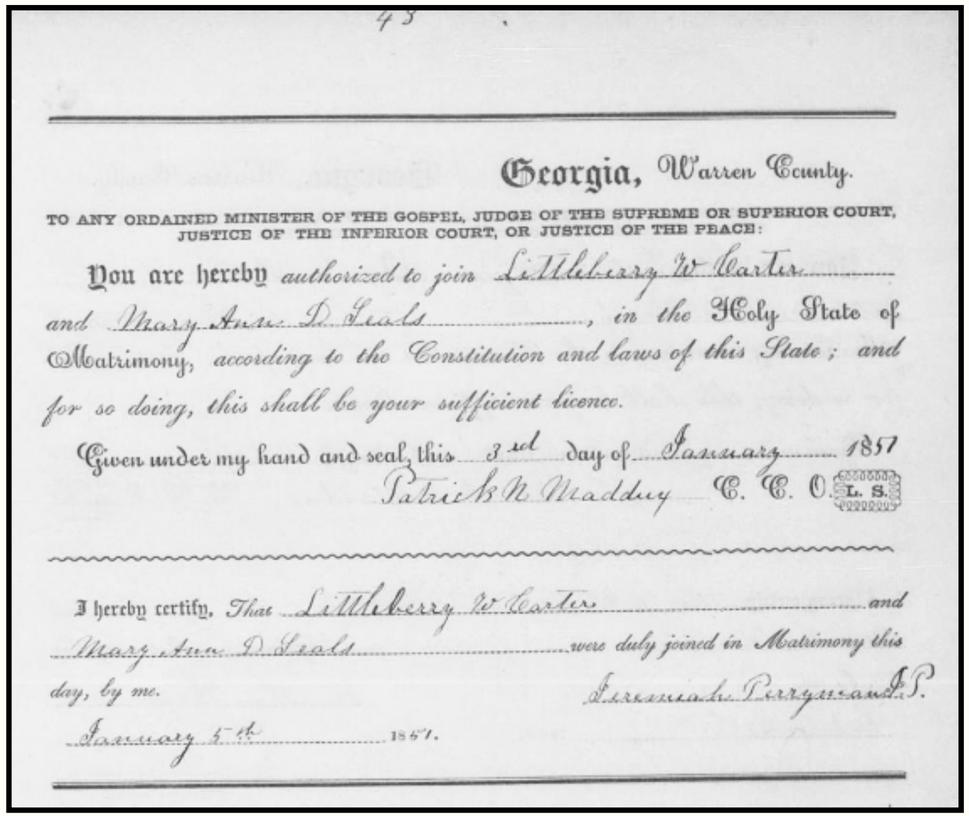
Bibb County Court of Ordinary, General Index to Estate Proceedings. No entry for David Laney identified in the section examined.

What other records fill gaps?

When the main record path thins out, broaden the search.

Jimmy Carter


Chalker Benjamin & C. Moat 26
Connelly John & McNeil 28
Courson Nathan & J.D. Wilson 41
Carter Littleberry & M.A.D. Seals 43


43

Georgia, Warren County.

TO ANY ORDAINED MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, JUDGE OF THE SUPREME OR SUPERIOR COURT, JUSTICE OF THE INFERIOR COURT, OR JUSTICE OF THE PEACE:

You are hereby authorized to join Littleberry W. Carter and Mary Ann D. Seals, in the Holy State of Matrimony, according to the Constitution and laws of this State; and for so doing, this shall be your sufficient licence.

Given under my hand and seal, this 3rd day of January 1851

Patrick M. Maddry C. C. O. L. S.

I hereby certify, That Littleberry W. Carter and Mary Ann D. Seals were duly joined in Matrimony this day, by me.

Jeremiah Perryman J.P.

January 5th 1851.

Key Findings:

- Littleberry W. Carter married Mary Ann D. Seals in Warren County on January 5, 1851.
- The marriage record confirms the couple, date, and county where the marriage occurred.
- Following the family beyond Sumter County led to another useful county record.
- This Warren County marriage book is digitized from Georgia Archives microfilm and is available through the Virtual Vault.

Helpful Resources:

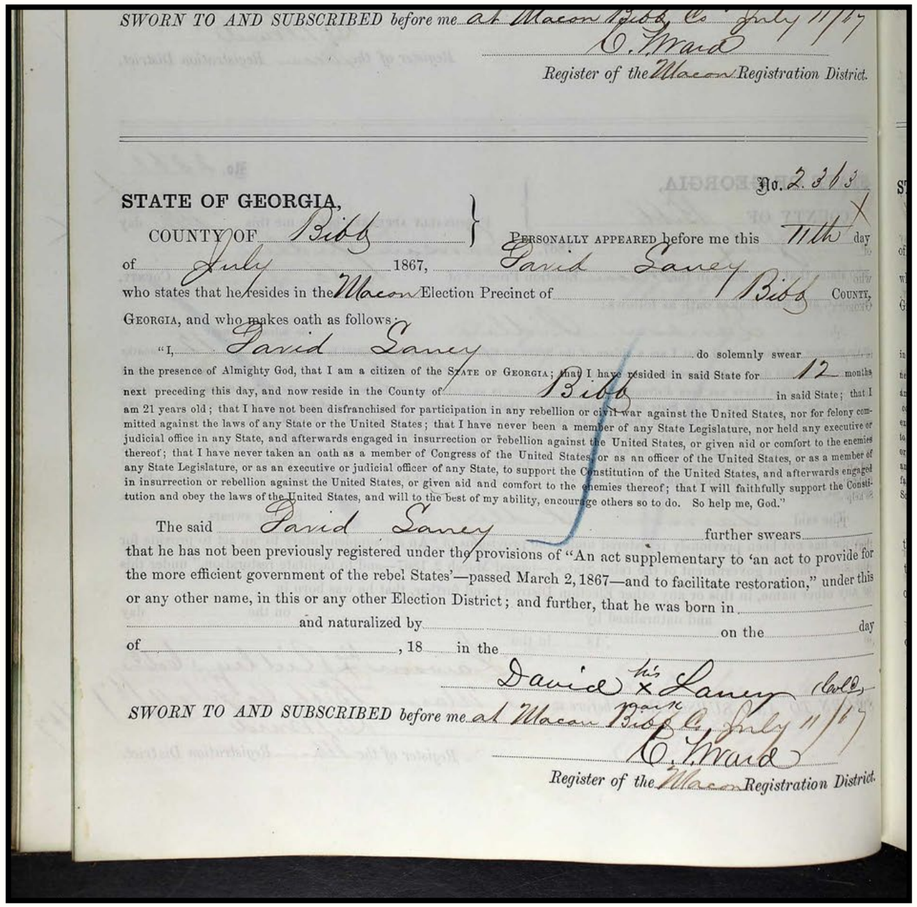
- Military records
- Newspapers
- Additional county records

Warren County Marriage Book, 1848–1873, Littleberry W. Carter and Mary Ann D. Seals, January 1851, MFL 439, Georgia Archives.

What other records fill gaps?

When the main record path thins out, broaden the search.

Lucy Craft Laney



SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED before me at Macon Bibb Co. July 11/67
C. Ward
Register of the Macon Registration District.

No. 2363

STATE OF GEORGIA,
COUNTY OF Bibb } PERSONALLY APPEARED before me this 11th day
of July 1867, David Laney Bibb COUNTY,
who states that he resides in the Macon Election Precinct of
GEORGIA, and who makes oath as follows:

"I, David Laney do solemnly swear
in the presence of Almighty God, that I am a citizen of the STATE OF GEORGIA; that I have resided in said State for 12 months next preceding this day, and now reside in the County of Bibb in said State; that I am 21 years old; that I have not been disfranchised for participation in any rebellion or civil war against the United States, nor for felony committed against the laws of any State or the United States; that I have never been a member of any State Legislature, nor held any executive or judicial office in any State, and afterwards engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof; that I have never taken an oath as a member of Congress of the United States, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State Legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, and afterwards engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or given aid and comfort to the enemies thereof; that I will faithfully support the Constitution and obey the laws of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, encourage others so to do. So help me, God."

The said David Laney further swears
that he has not been previously registered under the provisions of "An act supplementary to 'an act to provide for the more efficient government of the rebel States'—passed March 2, 1867—and to facilitate restoration," under this or any other name, in this or any other Election District; and further, that he was born in
and naturalized by on the day
of , 18 in the

his
David × Laney (colld)
mark

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED before me at Macon Bibb Co. July 11/67
C. Ward
Register of the Macon Registration District.

Key Findings:

- David Laney appears in a Reconstruction Registration Oath Book for District 22, covering Bibb, Monroe, and Pike Counties.
- The oath places him in a specific place and political moment after the Civil War.
- Reconstruction-era voter registration records can help document African American men who may be less visible in earlier government records.
- Records of free people of color and Reconstruction records can help bridge the gap between antebellum and postwar research.

Helpful Resources:

- African American Historical and Genealogical Resources at the Georgia Archives

GOVERNOR - EXECUTIVE DEPT. - RECONSTRUCTION REGISTRATION OATH BOOKS - District 22 - Bibb, Monroe, and Pike Counties, VOL2 3134, vol2: 3134. Governor - Executive Dept. - Reconstruction Registration Oath Books, 001-01-107. Georgia Archives.

Where does the Archives trail end?

Good genealogy also means knowing when to move to another repository or source.

Georgia Archives can help you:

- Identify record groups tied to state and county government.
- Use census, maps, tax, land, probate, and local records together.
- Build a documented path from one clue to the next.

The trail may continue with:

- Digital Library of Georgia for digitized newspapers and collections.
- Georgia Public Library Service and local libraries for local history.
- Courthouses, churches, cemeteries, schools, and historical societies.

The Georgia Archives may not hold every answer, but its records can help point the way forward.

Using the Georgia Archives for Genealogy Research

Thank you! Questions?

Robin Klemm
Robin.Klemm@usg.edu



Submit specific questions about our collection or your research to our Ask an Archivist webform on GeorgiaArchives.org.