

Resources for Records of Enslaved People in Georgia

U.S. Census, 1820-1860.

On Ancestry.com: (subscription pay site, available at Georgia Archives and at public libraries)

- Only head of household listed 1820-1840, others in household, **including slaves**, counted by gender and age range within regular population schedule.
- All white persons in household listed beginning in 1850.
- Separate slave schedules for 1850 and 1860 list slaves under name of owner by age, gender and color (black or mulatto).
- Each census tracks different information.

On FamilySearch.org: United States Census, (1820-1860). Free site. Must register and create a (free) account to view images

Georgia Property Tax Digests

On Microfilm: Card catalog drawer labeled Tax Digests, arranged by county, microfilm of tax digests held by county and by the Georgia Archives.

On Ancestry.com: (subscription pay site, available at Georgia Archives and at public libraries) Search>Explore by Location>Georgia, indexed images of county tax digests held by the Georgia Archives

- Pre-Civil War digests list number of slaves owned by taxpayer.
- Taxpayers are listed in militia district where they lived, often (but not always) in rough alphabetical order

Superior Court Records

On Microfilm: Card catalog drawer of county records, Superior Court records are filed behind blue card. For each county:

- **Deed Records** include slave deeds and marriage settlements which include slaves. There was no law requiring deeds to be recorded.
- **Superior Court Minutes** include
 - Civil cases, lawsuits over debt (over \$100) and over land
 - Criminal cases (Capital cases for slaves and free persons of color tried in Superior Court after 1849)
 - Divorces
 - Early Minutes are often not indexed
 - Civil and Criminal Case files (petitions, warrants, interrogatories, writs of fi. fa., judgments, etc.) for some counties, both microfilm and original

Probate Records

On Microfilm: Card catalog drawer of county records, Estate Records are all grouped together by type of record, Inferior Court and Ordinary Court records are interfiled. The Georgia Archives has microfilm of probate records not available through FamilySearch.

- Estate Records: Inventories and Appraisements, Wills, Annual Returns, Distributions, Sales, that list slaves by name.
- If real property is owned, descendant is intestate and the estate must go through probate whether or not there is a will

Original Estate Records: FindingAids@Georgia Archives, available on Georgia Archives website main page, database of original records held by Georgia Archives.

- Original Wills, Inventories and Appraisements, Annual Returns, Vouchers, Sales, etc. submitted to the Ordinary Court for recording.
- Keyword Search by name.
- Search under County, then Probate Court or Inferior Court. Look for series with titles such as Estate Records, Misc. Records, Case Files.

On FamilySearch.org: Georgia Probate Records, 1742-1990. Free site. Must register and create a (free) account to view images

Georgia Probate Records, 1742-1975. Probate records microfilmed by Genealogical Society of Utah and held by Georgia Archives

- Not indexed (browse images).
- Browse files arranged alphabetically by county and type of record.
- Some counties record multiple types of records in the same book
- Books may have different names in Microfilm Card Catalog and FamilySearch Georgia Probate Record Collection.
- Microfilm Card Catalog has cross-references

Inferior Court Records

On Microfilm: Card catalog drawer of county records, Inferior Court records are interfiled with Ordinary Court records.

Inferior Court records for Ordinary (Probate) Purposes (1789-1851) are grouped under Estate Records. Inferior Court Minutes include:

- Proceedings in estate cases and some estate records
- Minor civil cases, lawsuits of debt (less than \$100)
- Minor Criminal Cases
- Slave Cases
- Often not indexed

Inferior Court Minutes for County Purposes (1789-1868) may include

- Contracts for bridges, courthouses, jails
- Road crews

Some Inferior Court records for Ordinary Purposes on microfilm are also available in the **Georgia Probate Records, 1742-1975 Collection on FamilySearch.org**

Supreme Court Case Records, 1846

Reports of Decisions of the Supreme Court of Georgia

- Published reports of the decisions of the Georgia Supreme Court
- Decisions summarize the original court case and question at law before the court
- Decision will either reaffirm the lower court's decision or send the case back to the lower court
- Many cases involving slaves, some which were not resolved until the 1880s.

Supreme Court Case Files, Record Group 92/1/1

- Papers filed with the court, including bills of exceptions, motions to the courts, and case files from the lower court. Does not include trial transcripts.

Slave Importation Records

On Microfilm: Card catalog drawer of county records

- New county residents required to sign an affidavit listing slaves with Clerk of Superior Court.
- Separate Slave Importation Registers survive for Camden, Columbia, Elbert, Franklin, Jackson, Morgan, Oglethorpe, Pulaski, Richmond, Warren, and Wilkes under Ordinary Records.
- Check Superior Court Minutes for other counties.

Free Persons of Color Registers

On Microfilm: Card catalog drawer of county records.

- Free Persons of Color required to register with the county Court of Ordinary
 - Registers usually include name, age, occupation (sometimes), property, and white sponsor.
 - Available for twenty-one counties.
 - Abstracted by Michael A. Ports, check online catalog, GIL.
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Laws

Online: Georgia Legislative Documents (GALILEO):

Keyword-searchable transcriptions of laws passed by the Georgia General Assembly from 1799-1999. There are gaps, in particular 1861-1864 are missing.

- Search by Basic Search or Boolean Search (and, or, not). Limit search results to year span.
- Slave laws, manumissions
- Laws of free persons of color
- Name changes, relief bills, divorces, incorporations

Acts of the General Assembly of Georgia (Georgia Session Laws), published compilation of laws passed during each legislation session, available at the Georgia Archives.

Colonial Records of Georgia

Online: <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000530729> Free.

- Legalization of slavery, vol. 25
- First comprehensive Georgia slave law, vol. 18, pp. 102-144

Digests, Compilations, and Historic Georgia Codes

Online: University of Georgia Law Library, http://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/ga_code/
<http://libguides.law.uga.edu/c.php?g=177153&p=1164400> Free.

- Download in different formats, including color or black and white pdf.
- Watkins' Digest, 1800, first published digest of Georgia laws to 1800, includes 1770 slave law which was in effect at time of publication. Repealed laws are cited but the text is not included. Arranged chronologically, subject index.
- Compilations are all laws passed within 10-year period (1812 Compiled Laws=1800-1810, 1821 Lamar's Compilation=1810-1820, 1831 Dawson's Compilation=1820-1830).
- Prince's Digest, 1837, is arranged by topic, citations to date of passage and to earlier digests, with subject index. Local Acts indexed to earlier compilations.
- Hotchkiss's Digest, 1845, is arranged by topic, has subject index, and includes some citations to English statutes.
- Cobb's Compilation, 1859, is arranged by topic, includes all laws from 1765, includes passage dates and cross-references to later amendments, and a subject index.
- 1860 Code is first Georgia Code authorized by the Georgia General Assembly. Published after Georgia seceded from the Union, so includes the Confederate Constitution. Organized into Titles by subject or area of the law. Clear and concise, but does not use verbatim wording of legislation. No citations or dates of passage.

Newspapers

From Digital Library of Georgia <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>. Microfilm of Georgia Historic Newspapers scanned and OCR'd Free. Legal notices for estate and sheriff's sales, accounts of trials. Milledgeville newspapers follow the legislature in session, with bills introduced and passed, and editorials regarding bills.

- Augusta, Milledgeville, Savannah, Columbus and Macon newspapers
- Keyword Search or Browse by Title and Date
- Browse Issues by Date (Expand All) to determine if an issue was available for scanning.
- OR Search University of Georgia's online catalog (GIL) for microfilm holdings of specific titles to determine if an issue was available for scanning.

From GeorgiaArchives.org: Georgia Archives' website

Virtual Vault <http://vault.georgiaarchives.org/cdm/>

Georgia Archives digital collections

FileII Names. Search by name. Records from many sources filed together by name for easy access.

- Use Advanced Search to search by name. Includes only primary sources (original documents and transcripts).

Central Register of Convicts, 1817-1976: Register of convicts in the Georgia prison system, including prison farms and work camps

- Gives name, prisoner number (when applicable), receive date, sentence, crime, county of conviction, gender, release date.
- May also give date of escape, recapture, type of release.
- Depending on date, different ledgers for felonies and misdemeanors.

Finding Aids

County Records Microfilm Index: Search by County drop-down. Card index of Archives holdings of county records on microfilm. Estate records, marriage records, deeds.

- First card for each county lists any courthouse disaster which destroyed records.
- Arranged by court, then alphabetically by record type.
- Estate records are grouped together.

General Name File: Card index of personal names in state, local and personal records compiled by Georgia Archives staff.

- Choose first letter of surname in alphabet drop-down to search.

Church Records Microfilm Collection: Search by Denomination drop-down. Card index of Archives holdings of church records on microfilm.

- Arranged by denomination, then by name of church.
- County where church is located is noted on card

Maps

Historic Map Collection: Collection of historic maps of Georgia and the Southeastern U.S. and reference maps on historic topics.

- Search by keyword or click on Browse All button on top menu bar to retrieve entire collection.
- Includes Georgia Militia Districts map published by U.S. Census Bureau in 1952
- Includes State of Georgia Original and 1895 Counties and Land Lot Districts, color outline map of areas distributed by headright and different land lotteries.

County Map Collection: Search by County drop-down. Collection of historic county maps of Georgia. All maps are post-Civil War, no maps from slavery era.

- Includes at least one map from each county.
- Includes maps from the first comprehensive survey by the state Surveyor General, 1867-1870, where maps have survived.
- 1867-1870 maps of from land lottery counties include district and lottery numbers.