



# Mississippi Resources

## Family History Sources in the Magnolia State

### Mississippi History

Spaniard Hernando de Soto and his men crossed into Mississippi in 1540. Yet long before these first Europeans came, there were Native Americans who existed in area with its gentle climate, fertile soil, and plentiful food environment. Mississippi was home to many tribes; in the early days Mississippi had a larger population of Native Americans than any other state in the Southeast, including the Natchez on the lower Mississippi, the Chickasaw in the north and northeast, and the Choctaw in the central and southern part.



*Community House, Biloxi, Mississippi, located on East Beach Boulevard. The cannons were found in Back Bay and are said to be from the ships of d'Iberville, who founded Biloxi in 1699.*

Mississippi history may be divided into four distinct jurisdictional periods: French Colonial (1699–1763), British Provincial (1763–79), Spanish Provincial (1779–98), and American Territorial and Statehood (1798–present).

With the opening of the territory in 1798, there was a surge of immigration that sparked a recurring division and formation of county boundaries.

The thrust of immigration and settlement pushed the territory toward statehood in 1817. In 1832, through treaties made with the Choctaw and Chickasaw, all land in the present state of Mississippi was opened for settlement. Offering opportunities for a richer life, the divergent cultures from the past came together as one. Cotton became king, and the state of Mississippi flourished at an astonishing pace for decades preceding the Civil War, aided by the labors of many African Americans, both slave and free.

Mississippi voted to secede from the Union on 9 January 1861, putting into motion events that led to Mississippi's involvement in the Civil War. The harsh period of Reconstruction that followed the war left a long-standing bitterness that further strengthened Mississippi's political stand regarding states' rights. Sharecropping sprang into being for African Americans and whites alike, leading once again to an economic dependence on cotton. Mississippi was well into the twentieth century before moving to a more industrialized economy. The records created after 1940 reflect the political, economic, and cultural changes that dramatically altered Mississippi life.

*This section is from [History of Mississippi in the Ancestry.com Wiki](#), and was originally published in [Red Book: American State, County and Town Sources](#).*



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### Significant Dates (through 1969)

- 1540** – Hernando DeSoto’s explorers first entered Mississippi.
- 1699** – Pierre Le Moyne d’Iberville and his brother Jean Baptiste de Bienville built the first European settlement in what is now Ocean Springs.
- 1718** – The first enslaved Africans were brought to Mississippi by the Company of the West.
- 1724** – Bienville enacted the *Code Noir* or the Black Code which required slave owners to provide food and clothing for their slaves and forbade the sale of husbands and wives separately.
- 1729** – French settlers were massacred by Natchez Indians at Fort Rosalie.
- 1763** – With the end of the French and Indian War the French gave up all land east of the Mississippi River except for New Orleans to the British.
- 1779** – Spain declared war on England.
- 1783** – The Revolutionary War ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris which gave half of present day Mississippi to Spain. America gained the northern half of Mississippi.
- 1795** – The Cotton gin was introduced to the Natchez region of Mississippi boosting cotton production and increasing reliance on slave labor.
- 1796** – All resident of Mississippi became U.S citizens except for Native Americans who were considered a separate nation until 1924.
- 1798** – The Mississippi Territory, which included portions of present day Mississippi and Alabama, was established by Congress on April 7, 1798.
- 1801** – The Choctaw Nation ceded over 2 million acres to the Federal government and gained the right to build the Natchez Trace from Natchez to Nashville.
- 1803** – Congress enacted a comprehensive land grant allowing residents who held grants from the Spanish and the British to keep them. Also land offices were opened and were able to award new grants and settle disputes.
- 1814** – The Creeks ceded 23 million acres to the United States. Thousands of immigrants came to the region, leading to the eventual formation of states of Mississippi and Alabama.
- 1817** – Mississippi became the 20th state on December 10, 1817; Natchez was the state capital; the first constitution was written for the state of Mississippi allowing only white property owners or members of the militia the right to vote; the constitution was based on common law.
- 1821** – Jackson was established as the state capital.
- 1822** – At the legislature’s request, Governor Pointdexter wrote the Mississippi code which served as a model for future Mississippi codes.
- 1823** – The *Woodville Republican*, Mississippi’s oldest newspaper was established.
- 1826** – The Mississippi legislature adopted a report that stated although slavery was an evil institution it was a sacred right to hold slaves.
- 1831** – The West Feliciana Railroad which ran 26 miles from Woodville to Bayou Sara, Louisiana was chartered by the legislature -- this railway enabled efficient transportation of cotton from inland to the river; the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians were removed to areas west of the Mississippi River.
- 1832** – Mississippi adopted its second constitution allowing all adult white males to vote.



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**1839** – A married woman could hold real and/or personal property her own name; slaves owned by a married woman at the time of her marriage and obtained afterward were her separate estate but could only be sold jointly with her husband.

**1846** – A married woman was granted separate use of the real estate she owned at the time of her marriage.

**1861** – Mississippi was the second state to secede from the Union joining the Confederacy; Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi and 5 other southern senators left the U.S Senate; Davis was elected president of the Confederacy.

**1862** – Ulysses S. Grant began a military campaign in Mississippi; 30,000 federal troops marched into Corinth, MI on May 30<sup>th</sup> after it was evacuated by Confederate General P.T. Beauregard.

**1863** – The siege of Vicksburg began on May 18<sup>th</sup>; residents of Vicksburg fled into caves when the Federals began bombing the town; the siege of Vicksburg ended on July 4<sup>th</sup> as Grant's army took the town.

**1865** – The Civil War ended.

**1866** – A fifth of the state's revenues were spent on artificial arms and legs for Confederate veterans.

**1867** – The U.S. Congress rejected the state's reconstructed government and a military government was established.

**1868** – Voters rejected the "Black and Tan Convention," which protected rights of ex-slaves and punished ex-Confederates.

**1869** – A constitution which did not punish ex-Confederates was ratified.

**1870** – Mississippi was the ninth state readmitted to the Union; public education was established.

**1871** – Any property owned by a woman prior to her marriage was considered her separate estate.

**1874** – Blanche Kleso Bruce became the first full-term African American Senator when he was elected by the Mississippi Legislature.

**1884** – Mississippi established the first U.S state college for women.

**1890** – A new state constitution was established.

**1892** – Marriages without licenses were determined to be void; circuit court clerks were required to issue and record marriage licenses.

**1902** – On a hunting trip in Mississippi, President Theodore Roosevelt refused to kill a captive bear that had been tied up for that purpose; a subsequent cartoon that appeared in the *Washington Star* started the Teddy Bear craze.

**1907** – Boll weevils destroyed cotton crops.

**1908** – Prohibition was adopted statewide.

**1920** – Women received the right to vote when the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment was ratified as part of the U.S. Constitution.

**1927** – Thousands were left homeless when over 2.7 million acres flooded in the Mississippi River Delta area.

**1939** – Oil was drilled for in Yazoo County; the *Advocate* a weekly newspaper for black residents was founded in Jackson.

**1954** – Brown vs. Board of Education ruling laid the groundwork for desegregation.



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**1957** – Mississippi created the Sovereignty Commission to fight against the Civil Rights movement; it informed the police about planned marches and encouraged policed harassment of African Americans.

**1962** – The first black student, James Meredith, entered the University of Mississippi.

**1963** – Medgar Evers, leader of the NAACP in Mississippi, was shot to death in front of his home in Jackson.

**1964** – The Civil Rights Act outlawed segregation in public places; three civil rights workers disappeared near Meridian, Mississippi and found dead six weeks later in an earthen dam.

**1969** – Hurricane Camille hit the Gulf Coast killing 256 people in Louisiana and Mississippi.



*Library of Congress, "Cotton gin at Dahomey, Mississippi," print from black and white negative, Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, (<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3b39844> : accessed 3 Jun 2014),  
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### Mississippi Censuses

Federal censuses began for the state of Mississippi in 1820 and continued every ten years thereafter. Some records are incomplete, including 1830 (missing Pike County) and 1860 (missing Hancock, Sunflower, and Washington counties).

Some pre-statehood censuses of Mississippi Territory were taken at different intervals from 1798 until 1817. An early census of the Natchez District taken in 1792 from the Spanish provincial records has been printed in Dunbar Rowland, *History of Mississippi, The Heart of the South*, 4 vols. (Chicago: S. J. Clark Publishing Co., 1925). Other censuses from the Spanish colonial period (1784, 1787, 1788, and 1794) can be found in the *Papeles Procedentes de Cuba* (The Cuban Papers) located at the General Archives of the Indies in Seville, Spain. See Roscoe R. Hill, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Documents Relating to the History of the United States in the Papeles Procedentes de Cuba* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1916).

A useful guide to territorial census information is Norman E. Gillis, *Early Inhabitants of the Natchez District* (Shreveport, La.: the author, 1963).

#### Mississippi Census Records on Ancestry.com

- [Mississippi, Compiled Census and Census Substitutes Index, 1805-1890](#)
- [U.S. Census Reconstructed Records, 1660-1820](#)
- [Mississippi, State and Territorial Census Collection, 1792-1866](#)
- [Census records and Cherokee muster rolls](#)

### Mississippi Vital Records

By law, the state of Mississippi was not required to keep birth or death certificates until November 1, 1912.

- [Mississippi State Department of Health – Office of Vital Records](#): Holds records of births and deaths from 1912 and marriages from January 1, 1926 to June 30, 1938, and for January 1, 1942 to present. Marriage records may also be requested from the Circuit Court Clerk in the county where the marriage license was issued. Divorce records are held by the Chancery Clerk in the county where the decree was issued. Contact information for county clerks is provided on the website.
- [Mississippi Department of Archives and History \(MDAH\)](#): The Archives holds Mississippi death records (on microfiche) from November 1912 to 1943.

#### Mississippi Vital Records on Ancestry.com

- [Mississippi Marriages, 1776-1935](#)

<b>Population</b>	
<b>1800</b>	<b>7,600</b>
<b>1810</b>	<b>31,306</b>
<b>1820</b>	<b>75,448</b>
<b>1830</b>	<b>136,621</b>
<b>1840</b>	<b>375,651</b>
<b>1850</b>	<b>606,526</b>
<b>1860</b>	<b>791,305</b>
<b>1870</b>	<b>827,922</b>
<b>1880</b>	<b>1,131,597</b>
<b>1890</b>	<b>1,289,600</b>
<b>1900</b>	<b>1,551,270</b>
<b>1910</b>	<b>1,797,114</b>
<b>1920</b>	<b>1,790,618</b>
<b>1930</b>	<b>2,009,821</b>
<b>1940</b>	<b>2,183,796</b>
<b>1950</b>	<b>2,178,914</b>
<b>1960</b>	<b>2,178,141</b>





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- [Mississippi Marriages, 1826-1900](#)
- [Mississippi Marriages, 1826-50](#)
- [Mississippi Marriages to 1825](#)
- [Marriage records, Marion County, Mississippi, 1812-1860](#)

## Mississippi Military Records

- [U.S., Confederate Soldiers Compiled Service Records, 1861-1865](#) *Free*
- [U.S., Union Soldiers Compiled Service Records, 1861-1865](#) *Free*
- [Mississippi, Confederate Veterans and Widows Pension Applications, 1900-1974](#)
- [Mississippi, Confederate Records, 1889-1942](#)
- [U.S., American Volunteer Soldiers, Mexican War, 1845-1848](#)

## Mississippi Immigration & Travel

- [Mississippi, Naturalization Records, 1867-2008](#)

## Mississippi Land & Wills

- [Mississippi, Homestead and Cash Entry Patents, Pre-1908](#)
- [Land Claims in Mississippi Territory, 1789-1834](#)
- [Mississippi Court Records Index, 1799-1835](#)
- [Mississippi Court Records, 1799-1835](#)
- [Spanish and British Land Grants in Mississippi Territory, 1750-1784](#)

## Other Collections

### City Directories

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.

### **Other Resources**

In addition to the following state-level resources, many counties and towns maintain important genealogical collections in local libraries, genealogical societies, or historical societies, so check for a local resource when researching.

### **Statewide Research Resources**

- [Mississippi Department of Archives and History \(MDAH\)](#): The [Genealogy page](#) contains information on research at the Archives.
- [Mississippi Historical Society](#)



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## Family History Sources in the Magnolia State



- [Mississippi GenWeb](#)
- [The National Archives at Atlanta](#): This facility maintains records from Federal agencies and courts in Mississippi, including census, military, court, naturalization, and immigration records.
- [Bureau of Land Management \(BLM\) General Land Office Records](#): The BLM administers Federal Land for public land states including Mississippi, and maintains records of land patents which granted land from the Federal Government to individuals. Use the Land Patent Search to locate land grants by name. Many record images are available on the web site. See the FAQ for more information on how to locate and use land patents.

### Help and Advice

- [Mississippi Family History Research](#)
- [Counties of Mississippi](#)
- [Research in the Deep South](#)
- [Why Southern Research Is Different, Part I](#) and [Part II](#)
- [The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands](#)

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



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## Important Dates for Mississippi Counties

This section is from [Mississippi County Resources](#), part of the [Ancestry.com Wiki](#), and was originally published in [Red Book: American State, County and Town Sources](#).

County	Date Formed	Parent County(ies)	Birth	Marriage	Death	Land	Probate	Court
Adams	1799	Natchez District	—	1802/1866	—	1780	1800	1781*
Alcorn	1870	Tippah/Tishomingo	—	1876/1871	—	1870	?	1881
Amite	1809	Wilkinson	—	1809/1866		1810	1809	1809
Attala	1833	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1892/1892	—	1858	1858	1858
Bainbridge		(renamed Covington)Lawrence/Wayne						
Benton	1870	Marshall/Tippah	—	1870/1909	—	1870	1871	?
Bolivar	1836	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1866	—	1836	1861?	1836
Calhoun	1852	Lafayette/Yalobusha	—	?	—	?	?	?
Carroll	1833	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1834/1915	—	1834	1834	1834
Chickasaw	1836	Chickasaw cession, 1832	—	1863/1863	—	1836	1863	1863
Choctaw	1833	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1881/1881	—	1880	1879	1881
Claiborne	1802	Jefferson	—	1802/1805	—	1802	1802	1805
Clarke	1833	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1853/1865	—	1834	1837	1867?
Clay	1871	(as Colfax; renamed 1876)Chickasaw/Lowndes/Oktibbeha	—	1872	—	1872	1872	1872
Coahoma	1836	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1849/1849	—	1839	1856?	?
Colfax	1871	(renamed Clay, 1876) Chickasaw/Lowndes/Oktibbeha						
Copiah	1823	Choctaw cession, 1820	—	1823	—	1823	1823	1856?
Covington	1819 (as Bainbridge; renamed)	Lawrence/Wayne	—	1904/1904	—	1853	1854	1857
DeSoto	1836	Chickasaw cession, 1832	—	1845/1866	—	1836	1836	1854





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Forrest	1906	Perry	—	1906	—	1906	1906	?
Franklin	1809	Adams	—	1825/1825	—	1842*	1842	1836
George	1910	Greene/Jackson	—	1910/1910	—	1910	1910	1910
Greene	1811	Amite/Franklin/Wayne	—	1874/1910	—	1876	1878	1898
Grenada	1870	Carroll/Yalobuska/Choctaw/Tallahatchie	—	1870/1880	—	1834*	1870	1870
Hancock	1812	Mobile District	—	1853	—	1853	1853	1853
Harrison	1841	Hancock/Jackson/Perry	—	1841/1907	—	1841	1853	?
Hinds	1821	Choctaw cession, 1820	—	1870/1871	—	1870	1823	1854*
Holmes	1833	Yazoo	—	1884	—	1833	1833	?
Humphreys	1918	Holmes/Washington/Yazoo/Sunflower	—	1918?	—	1918?	1918?	1918?
Issaquena	1844	Washington	—	1866	—	1843	1849	1849
Itawamba	1836	Chickasaw cession, 1832	—	1837	—	1836	1854	1854
Jackson	1812	Mobile District	—	1875	—	1875	1874	1875
Jasper	1833	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1906/1906	—	1904*	1904*	
Jefferson	1799	(as Pickering; renamed 1802)Natchez District	—	1805/1869	—	1798	1805	1802
Jefferson Davis	1906	Covington/Lawrence	—	1906/1906	—	1906	1906	1906
Jones	1826	Covington/Wayne	—	1882/1888	—	1828	1894	1857
Kemper	1833	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1912/1912	—	1881	1881	1881
Lafayette	1836	Chickasaw cession, 1832	—	1850/1876	—	1836	1836	1836
Lamar	1904	Marion/Pearl River	—	1903	—	1836*	1901	?
Lauderdale	1833	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1839/1870	—	1837	1849	1856
Lawrence	1814	Marion	—	1818/1910	—	1815	1836	1815
Leake	1833	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1836	—	1834	1852	1844
Lee	1866	Itawamba/Pontotoc	—	1867/1867	—	1867	1867	1867



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Leflore	1871	Carroll/Sunflower/Tallahatchie	—	1844/1894	—	1837*	1845*	?
Lincoln	1870	Franklin/Lawrence/Copiah/Pike/Amite	—	1893/1893	—	1894	1893	?
Lowndes	1830	Monroe	—	1830/1881	—	1830	1830	1837
Madison	1828	Yazoo	—	1830	—	1828	1828	1828
Marion	1811	Amite/Wayne/Franklin	—	1812/1908	—	1821?	1812	1812
Marshall	1836	Chickasaw cession, 1832	—	1836	—	1856*	1836	1839
Monroe	1821	Chickasaw cession, 1816	—	1821	—	1821	1825	1825
Montgomery	1871	Carroll/Choctaw	—	1891/1901	—	1871	1872	1872
Neshoba	1833	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1877/1895	—	1835	1837	1859
Newton	1836	Neshoba	—	1872/1876	—	1876	1876	1876
Noxubee	1833	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1834/1834	—	1834	1834	1834
Oktibbeha	1833	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1861/1861	—	1834	1880	1836
Panola	1836	Chickasaw cession, 1832	—	1871/1884	—	1836	1845	1836
Pearl River	1890	Hancock/Marion	—	1890/1909	—	1890	1899	1890
Perry	1820	Greene	—	1877/1892	—	1862	1889	?
Pickering	1799	(renamed Jefferson, 1802) Natchez District						
Pike	1815	Marion	—	1882/1882	—	1882	1882	1882
Pontotoc	1836	Chickasaw cession, 1832	—	1849/1880	—	1836	1836	1872?
Prentiss	1870	Tishomingo	—	1870	—	1836*	1870	1872
Quitman	1877	Panola/Coahoma/Tunic/Tallahatchie	—	1877/1877	—	1877	1878	1878
Rankin	1828	Hinds	—	1828	—	1824	1828	1819
Scott	1833	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1872/1865	—	1835	1835	1867?
Sharkey	1876	Washington/Issaquena	—	1876	—	1876	1877	1877
Simpson	1824	Choctaw cession, 1820	—	1872/1872	—	1872*	1872	1872
Smith	1833	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1912	—	1892	1893	?

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Stone	1917	Harrison	—	?	—	1917?	1917?	1917?
Sumner	1874	(renamed Webster, 1882)Montgomery/Choctaw						
Sunflower	1844	Bolivar/Washington	—	1871/1871	—	1817*	1884	1844
Tallahatchie	1830	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1856/1880	—	1835	1834	1841
Tate	1873	Marshall/Tunica/DeSoto	—	1873/1873	—	1873*	1873	1873
Tippah	1836	Chickasaw cession, 1832	—	1858/1888	—	1836	1855	1849
Tishomingo	1836	Chickasaw cession, 1832	—	1842/1866	—	1836	1836	1856
Tunica	1836	Chickasaw cession, 1832	—	1858	—	1836	1839	1839
Union	1836	Pontotoc/Tippah	—	1878/1892	—	1872	?	?
Walthall	1914	Marion/Pike	—	1914/1914	—	1913	1913	1913
Warren	1809	Natchez District	—	1846/1860	—	1810	1810	1810
Washington	1827	Warren/Yazoo	—	1891/1858	—	1828	1839	?
Wayne	1809	Washington	—	1881	—	?	1879	?
Webster	1874	(as Sumner; renamed 1882)Montgomery/Choctaw	—	1874/1909	—	1873	1874	1879
Wilkinson	1802	Adams	—	1804/1823	—	1803	1808	1822
Winston	1833	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1834/1908	—	1835	1834	1856
Yalobusha	1833	Choctaw cession, 1830	—	1847/1866	—	1834	1834	1834
Yazoo	1823	Choctaw cession, 1820	—	1845	—	1824	1834	1867?