

The Aiken County Library has census, newspaper microfilm, cemetery records, and SC history books for beginning your genealogy research. More advanced research would involve searching the original courthouse deed and probate records at Aiken, Barnwell, and Edgefield county repositories. The following review on material in the Aiken County Library was written for a National Genealogical Society's Home Study course.

Aiken County Public Library

314 Chesterfield St. SW, Aiken, SC 29801

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The Aiken County Public Library is part of the A.B.B.E. (Aiken-Bamberg-Barnwell-Edgefield) Regional Library System. The library occupies a building which dates from 1913 and was formerly a wing of the Aiken Institute, an educational facility in Aiken chartered in 1888. Aiken Institute closed in 1986; the 1913 wing became the library building in 1990.

The second floor reference room houses the library's South Carolina history and genealogical material. It is accessible from the first floor entrance either by stairs or an elevator and is open during regular library hours. Tables and chairs are available for patron's use, however only two electrical outlets are inconveniently located in the room.

The library has 20 public computers with internet access located outside the reference room. Wireless network access is available for researchers who have notebook computers. Photocopiers are available for a charge of \$0.20 per page, and microform reader/printers are available at a cost of \$0.25 per page within the library.

Access is offered to a few internet subscription databases. Of specific interest to genealogists are Ancestry Library and Heritage Quest Online. Both databases must be accessed onsite. Another database of interest is the Aiken Standard Newspaper Archive, which has images of Aiken newspapers from 1871 through 2008, including the Aiken Tribune (1871-1875). There is no internet database access from patron's home computers, nor does the library offer PERSI access.

The library's card catalog is available online at <http://www.abbe-lib.org/aiken/index.asp> and also offers search results from other ABBE libraries. A search under the subject word "genealogy" located 277 items in the Aiken library catalog. The Aiken library can obtain books, audio, and video items but not newspapers from other ABBE libraries through inter-library loan.

The reference room contains an estimated 800-1,000 books and publications. There are no manuscripts or special collections. With the exception of four low cases of South Carolina themed fiction, the contents of the reference room material are nonfiction South Carolina, Aiken and surrounding counties, and local books and records.

Books of South Carolina Colonial records include the "Journal of the Commons House of Assembly 1736-1755" (twelve volumes), various legislative records and biographies of legislators including a two volume set of the "Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives" covering the period from 1692 to 1790.

Church and religious histories are available for both the state and local area. An example is a facsimile edition of the book "Early Methodism in the Carolinas", by author Rev. A.M. Chreitzberg, D.D., originally published in 1897.

The local genealogical society issues a quarterly called the "Aiken-Barnwell Genealogical Society of South Carolina News and Journal". The society's research area is noted in each issue of the Journal – it

covers all of present day Aiken, Barnwell, Allendale, and Bamberg counties. The periodical has a query section but no index. The issue reviewed was the Fourth Quarter 2008 and included a list of member names, addresses and phone numbers.

There is a small selection of town and county histories, including a history of neighboring Edgefield county (citation at the end of report), and a two volume history of Newberry County, South Carolina. Most of the general history books cover the state of South Carolina.

Approximately 75 compiled family lineage books or binders are in the reference room. Six or seven were reviewed but none included citations or documentation. Most of the lineage compilations appeared to be memoirs combined with basic research. Many lack an index, documentation, or even a bibliography.

“The Crofts of South Carolina” is a good example. The Crofts were a prominent local Aiken family who married into several other distinguished SC families during their history. The book traces seven Croft generations. The author does not use standard genealogical numbering or source citations but included a bibliography referencing census, newspaper, church, and court records.

Other books include Confederate soldier indexes and histories of specific regiments. An underrepresented area is resources, indexes, and finding aids for slaves, Native Americans, or ethnic minorities. A selection of Cherokee surname volumes constitutes most of the available information for Native American research.

There are back issues of several broad circulation genealogy magazines but no current issues. Examples include “Family Chronicle” and “Internet Genealogy”. The 2009 NGS conference brochures were well represented.