

Making the most of WorldCat and Internet Archive while the Library is Closed

I don't know about you, but my research has been greatly challenged by the COVID pandemic. It's starting to get better — some DFW-area libraries are fully open (Frisco, McKinney, Wylie), and some remain partially open (Plano). Sadly, the wonderful genealogy collection at the Dallas Public Library remains closed, and may remain so for a while longer.

During this research down-time, I've been doing some clean-up of my to-do list and research log, and decided I would get creative about finding more available items by using WorldCat. And you probably already know about the rich collection of freely-available digitized books and media on Internet Archive, but did you know that you can also check out some restricted books from the Internet Archive?



Books to Borrow

Books in this collection may be borrowed by logged in patrons. You may read the books online in your browser or, in some cases, download them into [Adobe Digital Editions](#), a free piece of software used for managing loans.

I stumbled upon this feature by trying to track down online versions of some particular indexes, which I'll talk about in a minute, but if you're interested in trying this out, you first need to set up a free account on Internet Archive. Depending on the book formats available, you may also need to download the free Adobe Digital Editions software to view the checked-out items, or extend the loan period. This eReader software allows you to view the encrypted books on PCs, MACs, or mobile devices, and share them between devices.

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To get started, all you have to do first is create your account. If the eReader software is required for viewing, Internet Archive will provide the link for you at the appropriate time.

Setting up your Internet Archive account

1. Open your browser and go to the site <https://archive.org>.
2. Click the SIGN UP button in the upper right corner of the window to create your log-in ID and password, then sign in.

With this account, you'll be able to create lists, mark favorite items, and borrow loanable items.

My search for the NUCMC indexes

Like many of you, I'm looking forward to being able to travel again in search of manuscript collections that could contain information that will help me with my worst brick walls. The major finding aid to locating manuscript collections is the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC), pronounced "nuck-muck."

This is the largest body of data on manuscript collections, hosted by the Library of Congress and included in the online searchable database at <http://lcweb.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/>, however, this database only contains information submitted after 1984.

Beginning in 1959, the Library of Congress began compiling detailed descriptions of manuscript collections held in more than 1300 repositories that submitted data about the collections they held. These descriptions were indexed and cross-referenced in 29 printed volumes (1959-1993). Collectively, these volumes include descriptions of approximately 72,300 collections located in 1406 repositories. All volumes are out of print, but available on microfilm, and the print volumes are available in many large public libraries and university libraries.

Additionally, indexes were created to help researchers locate information from the collections included in NUCMC. Among the most helpful are:


Index to Personal Names in the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections 1959-1984 (Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healey, 1988). [2 volumes]

Index to Subjects and Corporate Names in the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections 1959-1984 (Alexandria, VA: Chadwyck-Healey, 1988). [3 volumes]

Dallas Public Library has both of these indexes in the 8th floor genealogy collection. But what can you do when the library is closed? Check WorldCat to see where other copies might be available! I was hoping to find them at a nearby library that is open, but instead, I found them on Internet Archive.

A title search on <https://www.worldcat.org> for the name index returned several listings. Tip: When this happens, make sure you check all the listings, because I have found that sometimes the repository lists are different within the individual listings. But first, check to see what formats are available.

[Index to personal names in the National union catalog of manuscript collections, 1959-1984.](#)

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Language: English


Publisher: Alexandria : Chadwyck-Healey, 1988.

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Displaying Editions 1 - 2 out of 2

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Index to personal names in the National union catalog of manuscript collections, 1959-1984. --



Publication date 1988
 Topics Manuscripts -- United States -- Indexes, Manuscripts, American -- United States -- Indexes, National union catalog of manuscript collections -- Indexes
 Publisher Alexandria : Chadwyck-Healey
 Collection inlibrary; printdisabled; trent_university; internetarchivebooks
 Digitizing sponsor Kahle/Austin Foundation
 Contributor Internet Archive
 Language English

2 v. ; 29 cm

v. 1. A-K -- v. 2. L-Z

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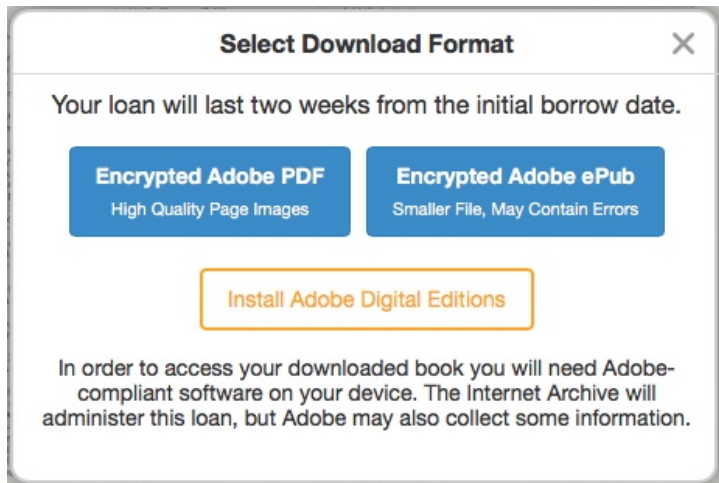
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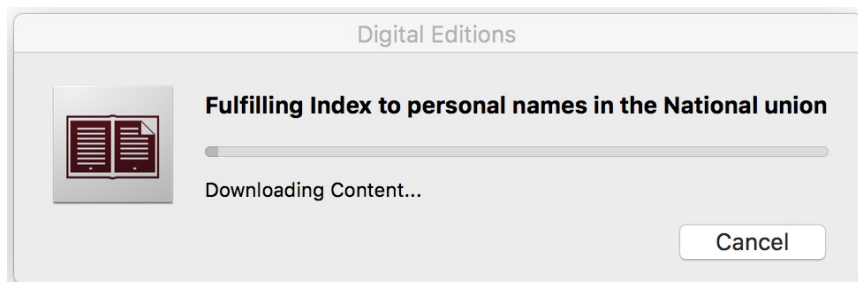
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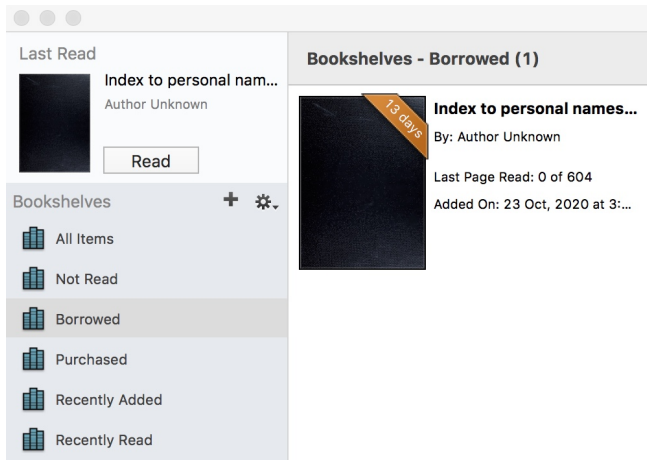
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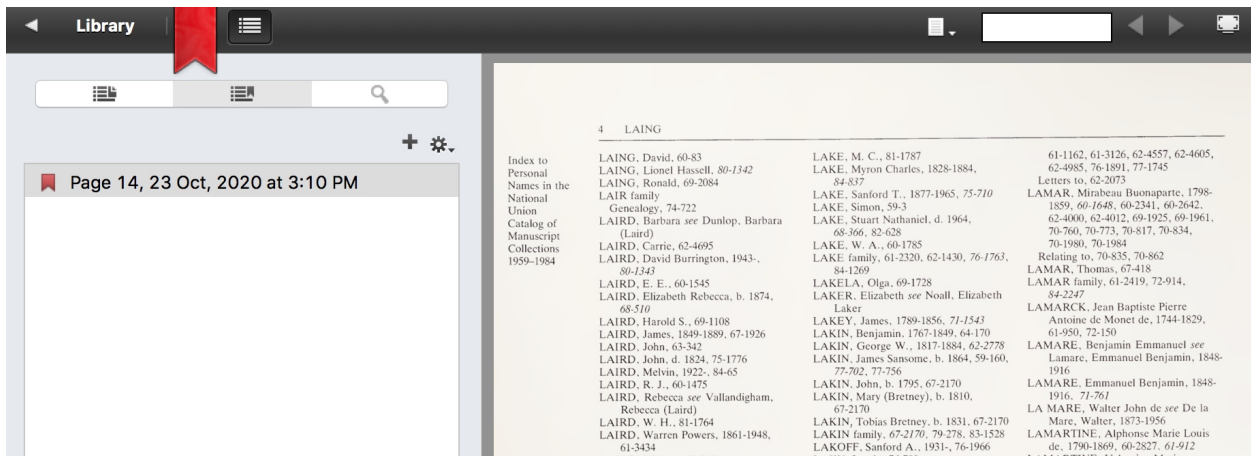
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This item that I checked out turned out to be Volume 2 of the Name Index, however, nothing on the Internet Archive catalog entry indicated this. Volume 2 starts with the name “Laanui, Gideon.” I deduced that the two links on the original WorldCat page were the links to each of the volumes, and this turned out to be correct. You will need Volume 1 to understand the meaning of the index entries.

Also, Volume 1 was available for 1-hour checkout only. Further exploration of the site revealed that 1-hour checkouts are allowed for items they only have one copy of. At the end of the hour, I was able to immediately check it out again and keep working.

Understanding the Index Entries

RANDOLPH, W. J., 62-4427	RANKIN, Jeanette, 1880-1973, 60-2003, 61-3491, 65-1160, 71-1387, 74-531, 76-1515, 77-243, 77-1977, 79-541, 79-1935, 79-1945, 79-1952, 80-2265, 82-1223, 84-1206, 84-1222	RANSOM, Eliza Taylor, 1867-1955, 61-1671
RANDOLPH, Walter L., 83-94	RANKIN, Jeremiah E., 76-153	RANSOM, Ellene, 1894-1963, 72-1313
RANDOLPH, William, 60-7 Estate of, *61-2451	RANKIN, John, 1793-1886, 82-1789	RANSOM, Elmer, 82-1664
RANDOLPH, William B., b. 1793, 71-1403	RANKIN, John, fl. 1869-1904, of Montana, 78-1649	RANSOM, Epaphroditus, 1799-1859, 60-901, 69-1457
RANDOLPH, William Fitz <i>see</i> Fitz Randolph, William	RANKIN, John Elliott, b. 1882, 59-153, 60-2067, 60-2181, 64-1269, 64-1272	RANSOM, Ezra, b. 1836, 81-1900
RANDOLPH, Wilson Cary Nicholas, 60-43	RANKIN, John G., 69-1979	RANSOM, George B., 72-1734
RANDOLPH, Woodruff, 1892-, 72-1704, 77-276	RANKIN, Lochie, 69-1556	RANSOM, Harry <i>see</i> Ransom, Harry Hunt, 1908-1976
RANDOLPH family, 59-170, 60-13, 60-266, 60-776, 60-2548, 60-3332, 61-1468, 61-2417, 61-2419, 61-2649, 61-3082, 64-997, 64-1031, 66-863, 66-894, 66-1381, 66-1388, 67-770, 67-2146, 67-2196, 69-531, 69-1294, 71-1403, 71-1743, 72-822, 72-1791, 72-1815, 74-1115, 74-1122, 77-1437, 78-1931, 78-2273	RANKIN, Lottie <i>see</i> Fitzhenry, Lottie (Rankin), b. 1876	RANSOM, Harry Hunt, 1908-1976 (b. Henry Hunt Ransom), 70-756, 70-857, 72-710, 75-463, 84-1705
RANDOLPH family, 59-170, 60-13, 60-266, 60-776, 60-2548, 60-3332, 61-1468, 61-2417, 61-2419, 61-2649, 61-3082, 64-997, 64-1031, 66-863, 66-894, 66-1381, 66-1388, 67-770, 67-2146, 67-2196, 69-531, 69-1294, 71-1403, 71-1743, 72-822, 72-1791, 72-1815, 74-1115, 74-1122, 77-1437, 78-1931, 78-2273	RANKIN, Louise (Spieker), 1897-1951, 77-208	RANSOM, John Crowe, 1888-1974, 61-2764, 62-3374, 66-951, 68-932, 69-1637, 69-2083, 70-577, 70-579, 72-1313, 76-853
RANDOLPH family, 59-170, 60-13, 60-266, 60-776, 60-2548, 60-3332, 61-1468, 61-2417, 61-2419, 61-2649, 61-3082, 64-997, 64-1031, 66-863, 66-894, 66-1381, 66-1388, 67-770, 67-2146, 67-2196, 69-531, 69-1294, 71-1403, 71-1743, 72-822, 72-1791, 72-1815, 74-1115, 74-1122, 77-1437, 78-1931, 78-2273	RANKIN, M. T., 64-1157	As correspondent, 59-18, 61-839, 62-4371, 66-951, 68-976, 69-1633, 70-2, 70-583, 70-2070, 71-1647, 71-1966, 73-59, 74-1145, 80-63, 81-586, 84-586, 84-598, 84-636
RANDOLPH family, 59-170, 60-13, 60-266, 60-776, 60-2548, 60-3332, 61-1468, 61-2417, 61-2419, 61-2649, 61-3082, 64-997, 64-1031, 66-863, 66-894, 66-1381, 66-1388, 67-770, 67-2146, 67-2196, 69-531, 69-1294, 71-1403, 71-1743, 72-822, 72-1791, 72-1815, 74-1115, 74-1122, 77-1437, 78-1931, 78-2273	RANKIN, Mary <i>see</i> Bragg, Mary (Rankin)	Writings of, 70-579
RANDOLPH family, 59-170, 60-13, 60-266, 60-776, 60-2548, 60-3332, 61-1468, 61-2417, 61-2419, 61-2649, 61-3082, 64-997, 64-1031, 66-863, 66-894, 66-1381, 66-1388, 67-770, 67-2146, 67-2196, 69-531, 69-1294, 71-1403, 71-1743, 72-822, 72-1791, 72-1815, 74-1115, 74-1122, 77-1437, 78-1931, 78-2273	RANKIN, May N., 1870-1931, 76-1445	Writings on, 81-382
RANDOLPH family, 59-170, 60-13, 60-266, 60-776, 60-2548, 60-3332, 61-1468, 61-2417, 61-2419, 61-2649, 61-3082, 64-997, 64-1031, 66-863, 66-894, 66-1381, 66-1388, 67-770, 67-2146, 67-2196, 69-531, 69-1294, 71-1403, 71-1743, 72-822, 72-1791, 72-1815, 74-1115, 74-1122, 77-1437, 78-1931, 78-2273	RANKIN, Milledge Theron, 1894-1953, 68-962	RANSOM, John James, 1853-1934, 72-1313
RANDOLPH family, 59-170, 60-13, 60-266, 60-776, 60-2548, 60-3332, 61-1468, 61-2417, 61-2419, 61-2649, 61-3082, 64-997, 64-1031, 66-863, 66-894, 66-1381, 66-1388, 67-770, 67-2146, 67-2196, 69-531, 69-1294, 71-1403, 71-1743, 72-822, 72-1791, 72-1815, 74-1115, 74-1122, 77-1437, 78-1931, 78-2273	RANKIN, Rachel Tomlin, 1841-1932, 72-511	RANSOM, Leander, 68-1388

Names may be followed by birth, death, or flourish dates. Index entries start with the year cataloged followed by the number of the catalog entry. Entries in italics represent main entries under which the descriptions appear or the names about which major portions of the collection are formed. An asterisk preceding a citation number means that there is some doubt as to whether it belongs to the person under whose name it is listed. Following the listings for individual names, there may be a separate listing for the family, so don't forget to look for those if you don't find the individual you are looking for.

Armed with this information, I proceeded to scour both volumes of the name index and record every item listed for the names I'm researching.

Now I was ready to try to track down the some of the manuscript descriptions.

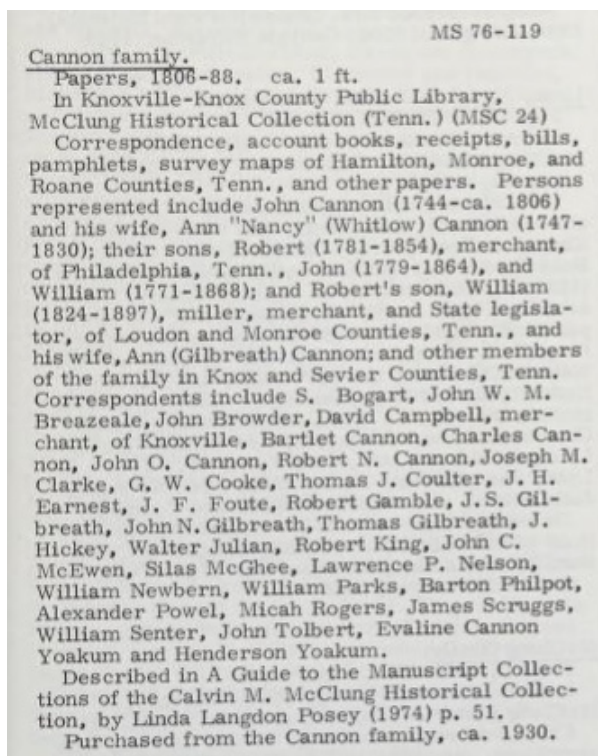
Finding the actual NUCMC Volumes

When I was viewing the original Name Index catalog entry on Internet Archive, I noticed at the bottom of the screen, under Similar Items, several volumes of the NUCMC.



These turned out to be the individual volumes of the NUCMC! It was available for download or viewing online.

One of my index entries for the Cannon family was 76-199. This is the description of the manuscript collection in the NUCMC volume.



The Subject and Corporate Names Index

Internet Archive did not have this index, so I went back to WorldCat. After viewing several of the entries, I found that HathiTrust has a searchable version of Volumes 2 (H-O) and 3 (P-Z), but no Volume 1 (A-G). You can find them at <https://www.worldcat.org/title/index-to-subjects-and-corporate-names-in-the-national-union-catalog-of-manuscript-collections-1959-1984/oclc/681184994?referer=br&ht=edition>

I searched for “Arkansas Post” and got the following results. I would need to record these items in a research document and consult the printed version of the index. If you have specific subject terms, you might find this helpful. On the other hand, browsing a subject index would probably be more helpful in your research.

Showing 1 - 3 of 3 Results for **Arkansas AND Post**

[Broaden your search to find pages having just one or more of your terms.](#)

Page 244 - 4 matching terms

Page 74 - 2 matching terms

Page 484 - 2 matching terms

I use WorldCat and Internet Archive often in my research, but was happy to discover the ability to check out books from Internet Archive! I wish you the best of luck with your research, and hope you discover many hidden treasures!

Theresa Howell Bio

Theresa Howell is a native Texan who started her genealogical pursuit with the search for her birth parents more than 20 years ago, and she hasn't stopped since. Her research has taken her to repositories throughout the United States, especially in her home states of Texas and Oklahoma. She currently focuses her research on the Mexican period of Texas and early 19th century Oklahoma and Arkansas in addition to other southern states. Theresa holds a Master's degree in Library and Information Science from Drexel University, and a Certificate in Genealogical Research from Boston University. She is a former board member of the Dallas Genealogical Society. She retired in 2019 and now devotes as much time as possible to traveling in her RV, researching, and writing.

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