

WISDEX Source List

WISDEX is a Wisconsin biographical index that is consulted frequently by local history and genealogy researchers. At MPL it is housed in the Frank P. Zeidler Humanities Room at Central Library: [920.0775](tel:920.0775) W332W. Ask staff at the desk to retrieve the index volumes from behind the reference desk for you to consult in the room.

Compiled by Darlene Waterstreet over the course of 25+ years and published by Badger Infosearch in 2002, *WISDEX* indexes 199 separate titles, many of which are multi-volume works, and includes tens of thousands of individual name entries.

CODE LIST

"A code, based on the title of the book, was assigned to each indexed resource. An alphabetical list of all codes appears after the index."

The code list in the print edition of *WISDEX* has been transcribed into this online list and annotated with [CountyCat](#) online catalog links to the sources available in the print collection of MPL, primarily at Central Library. Some sources are not found in MPL's collection as of 2021. Where possible, online full-text versions for sources have been linked instead of or in addition to MPL's holdings information. For the handful of titles not available at MPL or online in full-text, the researcher is invited to consult [Wisconsin Historical Society](#) in Madison, Wisconsin. Other libraries or historical societies around the state may also hold some of these sources, especially those of nearby local or regional interest.

Additional information about *WISDEX* from its Introduction:

"This index covers collective Wisconsin biographical resources. This includes state-wide, regional, and county biographical directories, whether published separately or as part of a history of the given area. It also includes some collections of biographies based on a theme, such as profession. Finally it includes a few sources not originally intended as biographical, if they contain useful biographical data. (This is especially true of sources relating to women and minorities.) Some sources include reminiscences as well as biographies.

Books containing biographies of only one or two people, or devoted entirely to one family, are not included, nor are most materials which are limited to a single metropolitan area. (Milwaukee is the major exception, since it is impractical to separate the city from the county.)

The level of the material ranges from children's books to multi-volume historical sets, and from nineteenth century works to contemporary publications, through the year 2000.

Some of the sources, although covering primarily Wisconsin, do include other individuals. Examples are the inclusion of United States presidents in many of the county histories, and a combination of Wisconsin and Minnesota and/or Illinois residents in some sources. If the biography appears in a covered source, it is usually included in

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the index, whether or not the person was ever a resident of Wisconsin. Any exceptions are noted in the code list.

[WISDEX] is a name index, in which the entries generally appear as found in the resource being indexed. It is not a 'person' index. No attempt was made to differentiate among several people of the same name. This means that if there are a dozen references to 'John Smith,' they may be one person, a dozen people, or anywhere in between. This determination must be made by the researcher, not the indexer.

However, if there were obvious variations of the name for the same person, it seemed reasonable to prevent unnecessary duplicate entries in the index. This could involve differences in spelling, inclusion or exclusion of middle names or initials, etc. Those which, in my judgment (based primarily on birthdates) are different forms of the same name, have been entered with brackets indicating portions of the name that are not identical in every source. For example, 'Robert M[arion] LaFollette, [Sr.]' would indicate that the name appears in various sources with and without both the middle name and the addition of 'Sr.' The use of a spelling variant in the index is not an endorsement of its accuracy, e.g. 'Kadarebe[c]k' indicates that the name appears in various sources with and without the c. It is not meant to imply anything about which spelling is correct. [Note that there may still be cases of similar names which I could not prove were the same person. There are also many similar names which, upon investigation, proved NOT to be the same person.]

Women are entered under their married names, if that could be determined from one of the sources, without cross-references from maiden names. Many sources do not provide the given name of the wife, listing her only as "Mrs. John Smith." In that case, out of necessity the index entry uses the husband's name, e.g. "Smith, John (Mrs.)"

Nicknames or pseudonyms are included only when it was believed the individuals might not be recognized without them.

Occasional entries were found with no given name. These appear in the index with the surname followed by a dash, e.g., 'Smith, --.'

This is NOT an every-name index. The index entry refers to the person whose name heads the biographical sketch, or who is the main subject of the sketch if there is no heading. Sometimes the subject of the sketch is not consistent with the heading (as in county history entries naming a widow and then giving her late husband's biography, or more recent family histories, in which the sketch often deals more with the contributor than with the person purported to be the subject of the biography.) Trying to differentiate in the cases became too subjective, so the index still refers to the name in the heading.

When both the husband and wife's names are given in the headings for family history entries, usually only the husband's name was indexed.

If the researcher finds a surname in this index, but not the desired given name, in addition to checking the relevant entries from this index, it would be advisable to check into the possible existence of an all-name index to that source. Many of these have

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been published by Wisconsin genealogists for material such as county histories which may not have had an all-name index in the original publication.

The index consists of one alphabetical arrangement.

The filing units are surname, given name, and any addition to the given name, e.g. Jr., Sr., etc. So, for example, Little is filed before Littlefield, no matter what the given name, and Thomas is followed by Thomas, Jr., which precedes Thomas A. Multi-word or hyphenated names are filed as one word, e.g. L Ronde, Hein-Schmidt.

Citations to sources appear after the name, using codes and page numbers.

'n.p.' means the source has no page numbers, or has such a mixture of page numbers and/or sections that it is impossible to explain in the citation. '+' refers to unnumbered pages: e.g. '500+' is an unnumbered page after page 500. Sometimes the biographies in these unpagged sources or sections appear in rough alphabetical order, but in a few cases the researcher may have to do some hunting. Fortunately these materials are rare, and usually small.

If the source has multiple volumes with consecutive paging, only the source code and page number are given in the citation. If each volume begins at page 1, but not all biographies are in one volume, only the source and page number are given in the citation, but the volume number is indicated in the code list. If biographies are found in more than one nonconsecutively-paged volume of a set, the volume number is included in the citation, e.g., MILW4."

After using the print WISDEX volumes and noting the names and citations found, consult this source list for links to identify MPL holdings in CountyCat or to make use of available online full-text sources. Again, for the handful of titles not available at MPL or online in full-text, the researcher is invited to consult [Wisconsin Historical Society](#) in Madison, Wisconsin, or other libraries or historical societies around the state.