

St. Louis Death Registers

Deaths Recorded in the City and County of St. Louis, 1850–1908

In August of 1823 the city of St. Louis, which at the time was an area that includes all of today's St. Louis County, instructed physicians to report to the mayor's office all deaths that occurred within the area. In 1870 there was an ordinance (#7340) instructing the Board of Health to keep a record of all deaths. However, since the penalty for non-compliance was minor, not all deaths were actually recorded.

The records that currently exist do not go back to the early 1800s. With just a few exceptions, the death records that have survived date from August 1850 forward. Prior to February 1860 the death records were actually interment records submitted by cemeteries, and not all cemeteries reported their interments. Beginning in May 1860 the deaths were reported by physicians and/or undertakers. In March 1904 the city of St. Louis began to keep records for those fifteen and younger separate from adult deaths. There were also books of St. Louisans who died in other locations.

In September 1876 the city of St. Louis split away from St. Louis County and the county seat was moved to Clayton, Missouri. In general, if a person died in St. Louis City, his/her death record will be located at St. Louis City Hall in the Recorder of Deeds office. If a person died in St. Louis County **after 1876**, his/her death record should be at the Vital Records Division of the Health Department in Clayton. Early St. Louis County death records are sporadic and those that do exist from the earliest years are included in this database.

It was not until 1910 that the state of Missouri began to require death records. The death records indexed on this CD are those that were kept locally and not at the state level. During 1909–1910 there was a transition period of records that are still unfiled and presently unavailable to the general public.