

Washington County Obituary Locator
1790 – 2014
Washington County Free Library, Washington County, Maryland

Acknowledgements

1790-1968

The State of Maryland did not require the registration of birth and death records until 1898. Thus, these vital sources for research are missing. Bill Ridenour's efforts in creating this obituary locator helps to fill this void in Washington County, Maryland source records.

Ridenour spent hundreds of hours at the microfilm reader, starting in 1989, searching through thousands of issues of Hagerstown newspapers to extract the information contained in this book. Up until this year, he typed it all out by hand on a typewriter and periodically presented it to the library in the form of loose leaf notebooks for public use.

Ridenour quickly became adept at the needed skills, after acquiring a computer in 2000, and personally entered these 32,000 names into the computer. This book is the culmination of those eleven years of effort and his dedication brings this valuable asset to life.

Researchers now, and in the future, are heavily indebted to him for these efforts.

In addition, a special note of thanks goes to the *Friends of the Western Maryland Room* for funding the production of this book.

The dedication of Mr. Ridenour to identify and preserve Washington County history is much appreciated and researchers now, and in the future, are heavily indebted to him for these efforts.

In addition, a special word of thanks goes to the *Friends of the Western Maryland Room* for funding the production of this book.

1996-2001

In 1989, Washington County Free Library volunteer, Lea Kersting, began the project of copying and indexing obituaries, covering the years 1989 through 2001, from the two Hagerstown newspapers.

This index, compiled by C. William Ridenour, is a composite of Mrs. Kersting's work. Index entries in this volume refer to the bound copies, compiled by Mrs. Kersting, which include the entire obituary. Users need not refer to the newspaper on microfilm for the years 1989 through 2001.

Thanks go to Mrs. Kersting and Mr. Ridenour for their many hours of hard work. Their efforts have greatly assisted those patrons who are doing family research.

This volume contains an index to obituaries from Washington County for 1790-2014. Over time, each section of years has been accorded its own volume, but this two volume set is an effort to simplify the hunt for genealogists. Without the dedication of two volunteers, we would not be able to present this valuable information to researchers at Washington County Free Library.

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In 1989, Bill Ridenour began indexing the obituaries from the Hagerstown newspapers that were found on microfilm of the old newspapers beginning in 1790. In 2000 he and his wife Helen entered the hand-typed information into a computer and the first volume, Washington County, Maryland Obituary Locator 1790-1943 was published in 2000. Ridenour continued his work and the library was able to publish four more volumes of the index 1944-1968, 1969-1989, 1989-1995, and 1996-2001.

In 1989, Lea Kersting joined to efforts to index the obituaries. Kersting began photocopying the obituaries from the Morning Herald and the Daily Mail covering the years 1989-2001. Bill Ridenour indexed these obituaries, but instead of needing to use microfilm, researchers can refer to the bound print volumes for obituaries from this time period. After 2001, Ridenour shifted his focus to indexing the marriage records from the local newspapers and Kersting took over indexing the obituaries. After 2001, the obituaries were no longer photocopied and users again need to refer directly to the microfilm for copies of obituaries.

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