

VAN BUREN COUNTY GUIDE

ARCHIVES OF MICHIGAN



Van Buren County was originally laid off in 1829 but was later officially organized in 1837. The county coordinates are Range 13 West through 17 West (13W-17W) and Township 1 South through 4 South (1S-4S). Adjacent counties include Allegan (north), Kalamazoo (east), St. Joseph (southeast), Cass (south), and Berrien (southwest). Lake Michigan is on the west border of Van Buren County.

Original records from Van Buren County are available at the Archives of Michigan. The list below is organized by record type; each record type lists specific records, the years of coverage and the record group (RG) number assigned to that collection. More detailed lists of these collections can be found in finding aids at the archives.

Some of the collections below are housed at the Western Michigan University Archives & Regional History Collections in Kalamazoo - these are indicated with a * after the RG number. For assistance with these records, please contact the Western Michigan University Archives directly.

BUSINESS RECORDS

- **Record of ear marks, from 1845 to 1900** – RG 2021-34
- **Record of ear marks (Antwerp Township), from 1841 to 1875** – RG 2021-34
- **Record of estrays & brands (Waverly Township), from 1839 to 1874** – RG 69-41*
- **Record of estrays & marks (Pine Grove Township), from 1851 to 1900** – RG 71-83*

CEMETERY RECORDS

- **Van Buren County files, from 1967 to 1976** – RG 83-53

CENSUS RECORDS

- **Federal census**, from **1850**, from **1870**, and from **1880** – RG 2008-24
- **State census**, from **1845** – RG 80-100

CHURCH RECORDS

- **Church record (Boards of Trustees)**, from **1843 to 1979** – RG 2008-24

COURT RECORDS

- **Chancery case files**, from **1848 to 1880** – RG 68-28*
 - from **1855 to 1885** and from **1923** – RG 70-54*
- **Chancery common orders**, from **1848 to 1870** – RG 59-12*
- **Circuit Court case files**, from **1871 to 1929** – RG 67-53*
 - from **1845 to 1887** – RG 68-28*
- **Civil docket**, from **1847 to 1848** and from **1855 to 1870** – RG 59-12*
- **Civil docket of Circuit Court Commissioner**, from **1889 to 1915** – RG 59-12*
- **Criminal docket (Hartford)**, from **1938 to 1941** – RG 69-40*
- **Justice dockets (Pine Grove Township)**, from **1871 to 1949** – RG 71-83*
- **Proceedings in dower**, from **1847 to 1878** – RG 68-28*
- **Record of guardianship**, from **1845 to 1867** – RG 68-28*

LAND RECORDS

- **Chattel mortgages (Antwerp Township)**, from **1841 to 1875** – RG 2021-34
- **Chattel mortgages (Pine Grove Township)**, from **1853 to 1893** – RG 71-83*
- **Chattel mortgages (Porter Township)**, from **1902 to 1931** – RG 2021-34
- **List of non-resident lands returned to the township for taxes unpaid**, from **1837 to 1840** – RG 68-28*
- **Record of mortgages**, from **1879 to 1916** – RG 69-44
- **Record of sale of real estate**, from **1845 to 1903** – RG 69-44
- **Rural Property Inventory**, from **1936 to 1942** – RG 72-76
- **Statement of lands upon which taxes were unpaid**, from **1838** – RG 69-12*
- **Treasurer's record of tax sales for 1837**, from **1837** – RG 59-12*

MILITARY RECORDS

- **Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) post records**, from **1876 to 1945** – RG 63-19
 - *Van Buren County GAR posts: Post 19 (Bangor), Post 20 (Hartford), Post 23 (Bloomingdale), Post 27 (Decatur), Post 31 (Paw Paw), Post 35 South Haven), Post 49 (Lawrence), Post 59 (Gobleville), Post 196 Lawton), Post 288 (Grand Junction), Post 317 (Mattawan), Post 349 (Kendall), Post 351 (Covert)*

See also Guide No. 4: War Records, Guide No. 7: Post-War Records, Guide No. 4 c: Spanish American War, and Guide No. 4 d: World War I

NATURALIZATION RECORDS

- **Applications to take oath of allegiance**, from **1962** – RG 2005-24
- **Certificate stubs**, from **1908 to 1926** – RG 2005-24
- **Declarations of Intention**, from **1904 to 1963** – RG 2005-24
- **Declaration of Intention & Oath of allegiance**, from **1887 to 1903** – RG 2005-24
- **Naturalization journal**, from **1904 to 1906** – RG 2005-24
- **Notice of application for admission to citizenship**, from **1922 to 1926** – RG 2005-24
- **Petition and record**, from **1907 to 1967** – RG 2005-24
- **Petitions granted and denied**, from **1930 to 1967** – RG 2005-24
- **Repatriations**, from **1941 to 1963** – RG 2005-24

OCCUPATIONAL RECORDS

- **Dentists**, from **1907 to 1979** – RG 2008-24
- **Hearing aid license**, from **1968 to 1976** – RG 2008-24
- **Medical registration**, from **1900 to 1979** – RG 2008-24
- **Nurses registered**, from **1911 to 1965** – RG 2008-24
- **Optometrists**, from **1919 to 1958** – RG 2008-24
- **Veterinary surgeons**, from **1900 to 1973** – RG 2008-24

ORGANIZATION RECORDS

- **Records of Van Buren County Emergency Welfare Relief Commission relating to Civilian Conservation Corps**, from **1934 to 1942** – RG 59-12*

POLITICAL RECORDS

- **Oaths and bonds (Waverly Township)**, from **1842 to 1892** and from **1917 to 1959** – RG 69-41*
- **Record of official oath of townships officers (Porter Township)**, from **1845 to 1891** – RG 2021-34

POOR HOME / RELIEF RECORDS

- **Minutes of Superintendent of the Poor**, from **1912 to 1939** – RG 68-28*
- **Register of inmates of infirmary**, from **1929 to 1953** – RG 89-517
- **Register of inmates of poorhouse**, from **1885 to 1933** – RG 89-517

PRISON RECORDS

See also Guide No. 3: Correctional Facilities Records

PROBATE RECORDS

- **Annual and final account**, from **1877 to 1905** – RG 69-44*
- **Bonds and letters of administrators**, from **1856 to 1868** and from **1895 to 1920** – RG 69-44
- **Bonds and letters of guardianship**, from **1866 to 1909** – RG 69-44
- **Case files**, from **1839 to 1960** – RG 2022-10
- **Estate index**, from **1925 to 1972** – RG 2022-8
- **General index**, from **1848 to 1948** – RG 2022-8
- **Guardians' account**, from **1905 to 1911** – RG 69-44*
- **Index to files**, not dated – RG 69-44
- **Index to probate court cases**, not dated – RG 68-28*
- **Journal of probate court**, from **1846 to 1847** – RG 68-28*
- **Orders allowing hearings on claims**, from **1866 to 1904** – RG 69-44*
- **Orders appointing administrators**, from **1864 to 1921** – RG 69-44*
- **Orders appointing administrators and Guardians**, from **1865 to 1875** – RG 69-44*
- **Orders appointing administrators and guardians for deceased persons who died intestate**, from **1875 to 1901** – RG 69-44
- **Orders appointing appraisers and commissioners**, from **1890 to 1913** – RG 69-44*
- **Orders calling for accounting of guardians of funds**, from **1879 to 1896** – RG 69-44*
- **Orders for hearing final account**, from **1890 to 1909** – RG 69-44*
- **Orders, miscellaneous**, from **1879 to 1912** – RG 69-44*
- **Petition for assignment of dower**, from **1896 to 1906** – RG 69-44
- **Probate calendars**, from **1858 to 1960** – RG 2018-26
- **Probate case files**, from **1848 to 1912** – RG 68-28
- **Probate journal**, from **1848 to 1915** – RG 69-44
- **Proceedings for assignment of dower**, from **1864 to 1902** – RG 69-44
- **Proceedings of probate court relating to clearance of estates of individuals deceased intestate**, from **1837 to 1845** – RG 69-12*
- **Record of executors' accounts**, from **1845 to 1858** – RG 68-2*
- **Record of letters testamentary**, from **1845 to 1854** – RG 68-28*
- **Record of petition to probate & discharge**, from **1871 to 1889** – RG 69-44
- **Record of wills**, from **1865 to 1904** – RG 69-44
- **Tickler of bonds and accounts**, from **1900 to 1924** – RG 69-44*
- **Warrant and report of commissioners on claims**, from **1877 to 1885** – RG 69-44*

- **Wills, from 1855 to 1918** – RG 2018-138

TAX RECORDS

- **Assessment rolls, from 1838 to 1840** – RG 69-12
 - from **1854 to 1920** – RG 70-54*
 - from **1855** – RG 2021-34
 - from **1963 to 1964** – RG 2019-142
- **Assessment rolls (Antwerp Township), from 1869 to 1881** – RG 2021-34
- **Assessment rolls (Arlington Township), from 1961** – RG 2021-34
 - from **1967** and from **1974** – RG 2019-142
- **Assessment rolls (Hamilton Township), from 1973 to 1976** – RG 2019-142
 - from **1974** and **1977** – RG 2021-34
- **Assessment rolls (Hartford), from 1890 to 1933** – RG 69-40*
- **Assessment rolls (Hartford Township), from 1855 to 1899** – RG 72-41*
- **Assessment rolls (Lawton), from 1918** – RG 2023-63
- **Assessment rolls (Waverly Township), from 1907** – RG 69-41*
- **Record of school tax, from 1843 to 1844** – RG 59-12*

VITAL RECORDS

- **Examples of marriage certificates, from 1845 to 1900** – RG 68-28* +
- **Record of marriage (Hartford), from 1906 to 1938** – RG 69-40*
- **Register of births (Hartford), from 1906 to 1965** – RG 69-40* #
- **Register of births (Waverly Township), from 1906 to 1943** – RG 69-41* #
- **Register of deaths (Hartford), from 1944 to 1966** – RG 69-40* #
- **Register of deaths (Waverly Township), from 1901 to 1952** – RG 69-41*

+ *This collection is a small sampling only*

Birth records are closed for 100 years

See Guide No. 19: Vital Records

VOTER RECORDS

- **Election register (Porter Township), from 1882 to 1920** – RG 2021-34
- **Register of electors (Antwerp Township), from 1859 to 1918** – RG 2021-34
- **Register of electors (Hartford), from 1878 to 1946** – RG 69-40*
- **Register of electors (Pine Grove Township), from 1859 to 1946** – RG 71-83*
- **Statements in from county canvassers, from 1837 to 1898** – RG 68-28*

CONTACT INFORMATION

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