

Van Buren County



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

Here is a listing of original source records available at the Archives for Van Buren County, including the years of coverage and the Record Group number. Finding aids available in the Archives, arranged by RG, give a more itemized listing of each collection.

Several Archives of Michigan collections are housed at the Western Michigan University Archives & Regional History Collections in Kalamazoo, which are indicated below with a #. For assistance with those resources, please check with the staff there: wmich.edu/library/collections/archives.

Businesses

Record of estrays & brands (Waverly Twp.)	1839-1874	RG 69-41#
Record of estrays & marks (Pine Grove Twp.)	1851-1900	RG 71-83#

Held at Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo

Cemeteries

Van Buren County files	1967-1976	RG 83-53
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Census

Federal census	1850; 1870; 1880	RG 2008-24
State census	1845	RG 80-100

Church records

Church record [Boards of Trustees]	1843-1979	RG 2008-24
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Court records

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

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Land

Chattel mortgages (Pine Grove Twp.)	1853-1893	RG 71-83#
List of non-resident lands returned to the township for taxes unpaid	1837-1840	RG 68-28#
Record of mortgages	1879-1916	RG 69-44
Record of sale of real estate	1845-1903	RG 69-44
Rural Property Inventory	1936-1942	RG 72-76
Statement of lands upon which taxes were unpaid	1838	RG 69-12#
Treasurer's record of tax sales for 1837	1837	RG 59-12#

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Military

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

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

Naturalization

Applications to take oath of allegiance	1962	RG 2005-24
Certificate stubs	1908-1926	RG 2005-24
Declarations of Intention	1904-1963	RG 2005-24
Declaration of Intention & Oath of allegiance	1887-1903	RG 2005-24
Naturalization journal	1904-1906	RG 2005-24
Notice of application for admission to citizenship	1922-1926	RG 2005-24

Petition and record	1907-1967	RG 2005-24
Petitions granted and denied	1930-1967	RG 2005-24
Repatriations	1941-1963	RG 2005-24

Occupations

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

Organizations

Records of Van Buren County Emergency Welfare Relief Commission relating to Civilian Conservation Corps	1934-1942	RG 59-12#
# Held at Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo		

Political records

Oaths and bonds (Waverly Twp.)	1842-1892; 1917-1959	RG 69-41#
# Held at Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo		

Poor home/relief

Minutes of Superintendent of the Poor	1912-1939	RG 68-28#
Register of inmates of infirmary	1929-1953	RG 89-517
Register of inmates of poorhouse	1885-1933	RG 89-517
# Held at Western Michigan University Archives, Kalamazoo		

Prison records

* See *Guide No. 3: Correctional Facilities Records*

Probate

Annual and final account	1877-1905	RG 69-44#
Bonds and letters of administrators	1856-1868; 1895-1920	RG 69-44
Bonds and letters of guardianship	1866-1909	RG 69-44
Guardians' account	1905-1911	RG 69-44#
Index to files	n.d.	RG 69-44
Index to probate court cases	n.d.	RG 68-28#
Journal of probate court	1846-1847	RG 68-28#
Orders allowing hearings on claims	1866-1904	RG 69-44#
Orders appointing administrators	1864-1921	RG 69-44#
Orders appointing administrators and guardians	1865-1875	RG 69-44#
Orders appointing administrators and guardians for deceased persons who	1875-1901	RG 69-44

died intestate		
Orders appointing appraisers and commissioners	1890-1913	RG 69-44#
Orders calling for accounting of guardians of funds	1879-1896	RG 69-44#
Orders for hearing final account	1890-1909	RG 69-44#
Orders, miscellaneous	1879-1912	RG 69-44#
Petition for assignment of dower	1896-1906	RG 69-44
Probate calendar	1858-1960	RG 2018-26
Probate case files	1848-1912	RG 68-28
Probate journal	1848-1915	RG 69-44
Proceedings for assignment of dower	1864-1902	RG 69-44
Proceedings of probate court relating to clearance of estates of individuals deceased intestate	1837-1845	RG 69-12#
Record of executors' accounts	1845-1858	RG 68-28#
Record of letters testamentary	1845-1854	RG 68-28#
Record of petition to probate & discharge	1871-1889	RG 69-44
Record of wills	1865-1904	RG 69-44
Tickler of bonds and accounts	1900-1924	RG 69-44#
Warrant and report of commissioners on claims	1877-1885	RG 69-44#

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Tax records

Assessment rolls	1838-1840	RG 69-12
	1854-1920	RG 70-54#
Assessment rolls (Hartford)	1890-1933	RG 69-40#
Assessment rolls (Hartford Twp.)	1855-1899	RG 72-41#
Assessment rolls (Waverly Twp.)	1907	RG 69-41#
Record of school tax	1843-1844	RG 59-12#

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Vital records

Examples of marriage certificates	1845-1900	RG 68-28#+
Record of marriage (Hartford)	1906-1938	RG 69-40#
Register of births (Hartford)	1906-1965	RG 69-40#\$
Register of births (Waverly Twp.)	1906-1943	RG 69-41#\$
Register of deaths (Hartford)	1944-1966	RG 69-40#
Register of deaths (Waverly Twp.)	1901-1952	RG 69-41#

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+ This collection is a small sampling only

\$ Birth records are closed for 100 years

* See also Guide No. 19: Vital Records

Voter records

Register of electors (Hartford)	1878-1946	RG 69-40#
Register of electors (Pine Grove Twp.)	1859-1946	RG 71-83#
Statements in from county canvassers	1837-1898	RG 68-28#

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