

New York Research Essentials

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Foundational Records: Vital Records and State Census

NYG&B has a free guide to vital records (<https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/new-york-birth-marriage-death-vital-records>), and much more detailed information in NYFHRGG, in its vital records book, and in Goodwin (all in Selected Resources below). New York has two vital records jurisdictions, unlike all other states. New York City's vital records are not, for the most part, duplicated at the state level. For exceptions regarding duplicates, please see references.

New York State Vital Records

New York State holds vital records for 1880–1881 to present at the New York State Department of Health. However, New York State does not have vital records for Albany, Buffalo, or Yonkers before 1914.

Indexes are available on free and subscription websites as follows. Microfiche indexes at the eleven New York repositories may also be helpful.

Free indexes are found here:

- NYS Death Index 1880–1956, <http://archive.org/details/nydeathindex>, (courtesy of Reclaim the Records)
- NYS Death Index 1957–1968, <http://health.data.ny.gov/Health/Genealogical-Research-Death-Index-Beginning-1957/vafa-pf2s> (provided by the NYS Health Department)
- NYS Birth Index 1881–1942, <http://archive.org/details/nybirthindex> (courtesy of Reclaim the Records)
- NYS Marriage Index 1881–1967, <http://archive.org/details/nymarriageindex> (courtesy of Reclaim the Records)

Subscription database indexes searchable by name on Ancestry.com

- New York State, Birth Index, 1881-1942, <http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=61667>
- New York State, Death Index, 1957-1968, <http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=61668>
- New York State, Marriage Index, 1881-1967, <http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=61632>

New York City Vital Records

Modern vital records are found at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the New York City Clerk's Marriage Bureau.

Public vital records are available from the New York City Municipal Archives (MUNI), which holds birth records up to 1909, marriage records to 1949, and death records to 1948.

Free database indexes:

- (all religions/ethnicities from the card indexes, not from certificates)
<http://germangenealogygroup.com>, <http://italiangen.org> and onsite

From certificates:

- NYC Births, 1846-1909, <http://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2240282>
- NYC Marriage Records, 1829-1940, <http://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2143225> (bulk to 1937, for Health Dept. certs.)
- NYC Municipal Deaths, 1795-1949, <http://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2240477>

From licenses:

- NYC Marriage Licenses Index, 1950-1995, <http://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2727138>

Image only indexes:

- NYC Marriage Index 1908–1995, <http://archive.org/details/nycmarriageindex> (courtesy of Reclaim the Records)

State Census Records

New York's surviving state censuses range from 1825 to 1925. Only 1915 and 1925 exist for all 62 counties. New York State Archives holds the 1915 and 1925, but earlier state copies of censuses burned in the 1911 State Capitol/Library fire. State censuses from 1855 to 1925 record every name and the relationship to the head of household. Indexes are found on FamilySearch and Ancestry.com. Agricultural and industrial schedules can provide exceptional detail.

FamilySearch microfilmed many surviving copies of the 1825–1845 state censuses, and the digitized copies are coming online, e.g. those for Cattaraugus and Steuben counties. Use the FamilySearch Wiki (http://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/New_York_Census) for links to additional New York state censuses.

Online Resources: *The Record*, *New York Knowledge Base*, and other Tools

Published quarterly since 1869, ***The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society Record*** has been preserving and documenting peer-reviewed genealogical work for nearly 150 years. The compiled genealogies, rare original record transcriptions, case studies, biographies and other articles are some of the most under-utilized but powerful resources for researchers looking into their New York roots. Not only are there over 1 million names in the pages of *The Record*, articles written on time periods, locations, or subjects similar to your interest can provide guidance, commentary, and suggestions that cannot be found anywhere else.

Every issue of *The Record* is available on the NYG&B website – issues are fully searchable, and a number of useful indexes that allow you to search and browse for articles based on subject, location, and author.

- *The Record* Digital Archive (<http://nygbs.org/elibrary/record>): Search or browse every issue of *The Record*
- Worden's Every Name Index to *The Record* (<http://nygbs.org/wordens-every-name-index-record>): Search an every-name index to *The Record* (free and open to the public) and see what volume and page number of *The Record* it appears on.
- *The Record* Map Search (<http://labs.nygbs.org>): Search an index of *Record* article titles and relevant locations, and view the results displayed on a map.
- Overview of all indexes to *The Record* (<http://nygbs.org/blog/have-you-explored-these-indexes-nygb-record>): A blog article detailing each of the indexes to *The Record* and how researchers may leverage each one.

New York Knowledge Base (<http://nygbs.org/new-york-knowledge-base>) is the NYG&B's repository of useful articles on all aspects of New York State research. The Empire State can be challenging, but our 200+ expert-authored guides are here to provide useful insight, commentary and guidance on navigating New York State research.

Included are online guides to researching in each of New York's 62 counties. These guides contain links to all crucial repositories, many online record sets, and selected bibliographies that will be invaluable to the researcher focusing on any county in New York State.

NYG&B Online Records (<http://nygbs.org/new-york-records-online>). In addition to the digital archive of *The Record*, the NYG&B has over 75 other online record collections, many of which cannot be found elsewhere. Notable collections include:

- New York State Religious Records (1639-1914)
- Cemetery Record Abstracts
- Will & Probate Records
- The New York Times Obituaries Index
- New York City Newspaper Abstracts
- Naturalization Records

The NYG&B has a growing number of digitized records that are planned to be placed online throughout 2019 and beyond.

Expanding Your Search: Newspaper, Deeds, and Probate Records

New York's land and probate records are not always a straightforward resource for genealogists. Begin by carefully reading the appropriate chapters in *The New York Family History Research Guide and Gazetteer*, in addition to resources in the New York Knowledge Base at newyorkfamilyhistory.org. Resources for newspaper, deeds, and probate records include:

New York Probate Records on Ancestry and FamilySearch (gathered from microfilmed materials at county courthouses throughout New York state). Be sure to browse Ancestry's collection in addition to conducting a name search.

New York Land Records on FamilySearch (<http://familysearch.org>). Nearly all of New York's 62 counties are included in this free collection. An important tip: Pay careful attention to a record's description to ensure you know what you are actually searching and remember – there are nearly *always* more records offline.

Western New York Land Transactions by Karen E. Livsey (published by the Genealogical Publishing Company in 1991) provides names of purchasers, lot number, lot location, date, and reference details to the original papers of the Holland Land Company.

Old Fulton New York Post Cards (<http://fultonhistory.com>) has indexed more than 41.4 million newspaper pages, including many from areas across the state of New York from 1795 to the 21st-century. Materials are searchable through an OCR-based index, though some phrase searching and other tools is possible. The website is free, and visitors are able to search, view and download actual images of newspaper pages as needed. Use Fulton Search (<http://fultonsearch.org>) for an alternative search experience.

New York Heritage Digital Collections, a research portal developed through the Empire State Library Network (<http://newyorkheritage.org>) provides access to digital collections from libraries across the state of New York.

Selected Resources for New York State and City

Dollarhide, William. *New York State Censuses and Substitutes*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2005.

Goodwin, Aaron. *New York City Municipal Archives: An Authorized Guide for Family Historians (NYCMA:AGFH)*. New York: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 2017.

New York Birth, Marriage, and Death Records. New York: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 2018.

New York Family History Research Guide and Gazetteer. New York: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, revised edition 2017.

Wilcox, Jane E. "New York City and State Governmental Vital Records and Alternates." Lecture at NGS Family History Conference, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, May 7, 2016.
<http://www.4getmenotancestry.com/talks>