

Social Security Death Index Social Security Claims & Applications Applying for the Original SS-5

Revised 24 Nov 2023

[VIDEO LINK](#)

The Social Security Administration was created in 1935. Your ancestors may have filled out an application to apply for a Social Security card shortly thereafter leaving records for us to find. The **Social Security Death Index** was created in 1962. While many records are available from 1935 forward, most records are found after 1962. These records are available for genealogical research for free.

The **Social Security Death Index** and the **Social Security Claims and Applications Index** can be some of the most important documents that we can find when researching our family history. Applying for the original application (SS -5) is incredibly important when researching our family history as it provides additional information the indexes do not. You will always want to dig into the original records, whenever possible.

When searching for your ancestors using the Social Security records, you will find two record sets. One is the **Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014** and the other is the **Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007**. You will want to use both indexes, as they provide a little different information.

Social Security Death Index (SSDI), 1935-2014

The **Social Security Death Index (SSDI)** can be found in several places and are free to research. They can be found on Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, MyHeritage.com, and FindMyPast.com. This is where you will want to start and collect data found for your ancestor. You will want to **note the Social Security Number** before moving on to the next step.

Additionally, the Last Residence is not always the last address of your ancestor. It could be that of the person filing the claim or settling the estate. Either way, it may provide clues.

The screenshot shows a record entry for a person named Frances Madsen. At the top, a green checkmark indicates the record has been saved to a family tree. Below this, there is a placeholder for an image with the text "No Image Text-only collection". To the right of the image placeholder is a table of personal information. Below the table are three action buttons: "Request copy of original application" (checked), "Add or update information", and "Report a problem". At the bottom right of the record entry are "Save" and "Cancel" buttons.

Name:	Frances Madsen
Social Security Number:	5-3261
Birth Date:	17 Aug 1880
Issue Year:	1966
Issue State:	California
Last Residence:	90814, Long Beach, Los Angeles, California, USA
Death Date:	15 Jan 1972



Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936 – 2007

This database picks up where the SSDI leaves off. You also want to search this index for additional information. Make sure to match the Social Security numbers from the SSDI. To ensure you have the right person. Only Ancestry has the Social Security Claims and Applications Index. Here you will also want to note the Social Security Number and extra notes at the bottom for variations of the ancestor's name (especially for women).

✓ Saved to: Madsen, Herman Miller in tree "HENLEY - KNOX Family Tree 2015 USE THIS ONE" Remove

GENEALOGY OF ENGLAND AND WALES
No Image
Text-only collection

[Add or update information](#)
[Report a problem](#)

Name:	Herman Miller Madsen
Gender:	Male
Race:	White
Birth Date:	25 May 1880
Birth Place:	Laramie, Wyoming
Father:	Christop. en
Mother:	Laura Nelson
SSN:	568160560
Notes:	May 1937: Name listed as HERMAN MILLER MADSEN

[Save](#) ▾

Where to find the Social Security Death Records on Ancestry

On **Ancestry**, click the Search tab at the top of the home page, drop down to Card Catalog, and do a Keyword search for "SSDI." You will find both record sets (**Social Security Death Index** and the **Social Security Applications and Claims Index**). Search for your ancestor after 1935 in both record sets. [This direct link will take you there on Ancestry.](#)

On **FamilySearch** go to the Search tab at the top, drop down to records, in the lower right corner search in the "Find a Collection" field for "United States Social Security Death Index." [This direct link will take you there on FamilySearch.](#)

On **MyHeritage**, login, click Research tab at the top of the page, drop down to Collection Catalog, in the upper right corner search "Social Security Death" and both record sets will pop up. [This direct link will take you there.](#)

What Other Records Can You Obtain?

- Earnings Reports
- Original Applications
- Claim File

To learn more about these records, [go to this link](https://ssa.gov/foia/#), (ssa.gov/foia/#) scroll down and open the "Searching for a deceased person's records?" Tab.

Note: There are fees involved in requesting these additional records above.

Links to Request Forms

- [Request Form for Social Security Earnings Information](#) See section 2A (on the 3rd page) for request limitations.
- [Request Form for Original Application \(SS5\) by Mail](#)
- [Request for Social Security Information Online](#) (More challenging with the new website).

Applying for the SS-5 (Original Application)

You may want to apply for the [original application](#) your ancestor filled out when they applied for a Social Security card. Recent changes with the FIOA website may look different than what is pictured below.

In fall of 2023, the website to request records moved to [HERE](#). As of the time of this writing, some links were not updated and ran me around in circles. It might be easier to [request by mail](#).

Replies may take several weeks to several months depending on the backlog of requests.

The information found on the SS-5 can add to the facts for your ancestor, especially if their parents are listed.

In most cases you will find:

- Name at the time of application
- Address. (Note: The date of the application pins your ancestor in a place in time.)
- Employer... and address
- Age
- Birthdate
- Place of birth
- Father
- Mother
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Date of employment

Addition Resources and Links:

- [2021 Genealogy TV Video about the SSDI & Applications and Claims Index](#)
- [More about the Social Security Death Administration Records](#)
- [Social Security Records on Ancestry](#)
- [SSDI on FamilySearch](#)
- [Social Security Applications and Claims on MyHeritage](#)
- [SSDI on MyHeritage](#)