

Where to Find Records for Your Family History

[Video Link](#)

This is a complimentary piece to a previous episode called the [Research Plan Checklist](#). In that episode, I created a general list of what records to look for and it served as a quick way to establish a research plan.

In this episode and handout is a list of where to find some of those records. This is *not* a complete list, but some of my favorite locations to find them. Most of these are U.S. based locations but the same could be applied to various countries. Here is where you can find some of those records.

Wills & Probate

Wills and Probate records can be some of the most valuable records you can find. Even if someone died without a will, there might be a probate record, especially if land was part of the estate.

- State Archives – Here is an episode on Genealogy TV about [State Archives](#).
- County Courthouses
- Descendants of the Ancestor

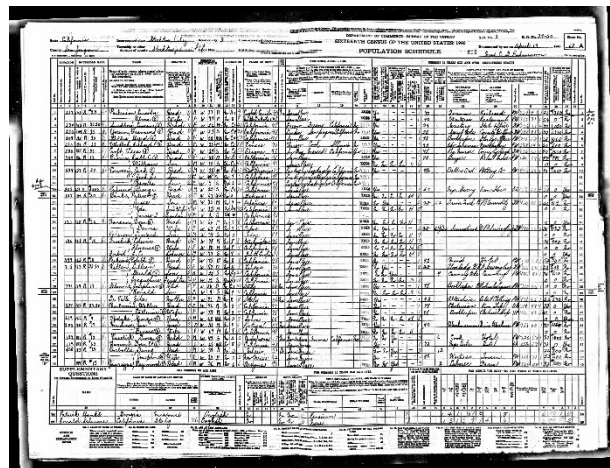


Census

Population schedules are often the most valuable records for genealogists no matter what country you're researching in. While Population Schedules are typically the most popular for researchers, learn about other census records for the area you are researching, such as mortality, slave, and agricultural schedules.

Don't forget state and local censuses. Not every location had them, but many did in between federal censuses.

- National Archives and Records Administration (free)
- Ancestry.com (some free and some paid)
- FamilySearch.org (free)
- MyHeritage.com (paid)
- GenealogyBank.com (paid)



GenealogyTV.org



YouTube.com/GenealogyTV

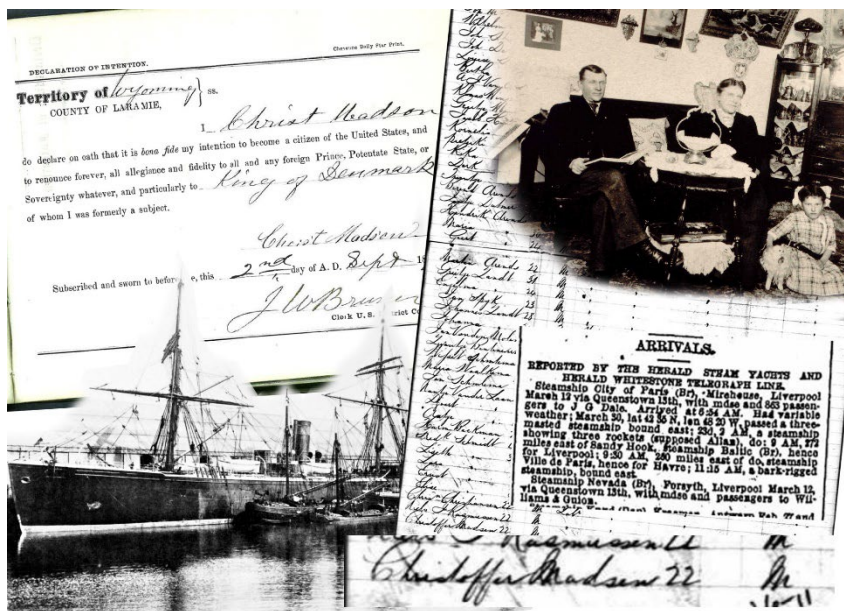
Mortality Schedules

A note about U.S. Mortality Schedules; They list people who died in the previous twelve months from the regular population schedule, so pay attention to the population schedule enumeration date. Per FamilySearch, “Mortality schedules were taken along with population schedules during the 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 censuses, and in six states (Colorado, Florida, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, and South Dakota) in 1885.”

Immigration, Emigration, and Naturalization

Immigration and Emigration are two different things. Immigration is when someone was arriving to a country and Emigration is when someone was leaving. Therefore, you might be able to find both Immigration records in the country they were arriving at and Emigration records in the country they were leaving. Look for both.

In the U.S. to apply for citizenship a person applied for their Declaration of Intention (a.k.a. First Papers) and then had to wait 5 years before applying for their Final Papers or Application for Naturalization. This was often filed in the county where the person lived. Keep in mind, not everyone applied for their second or final papers.

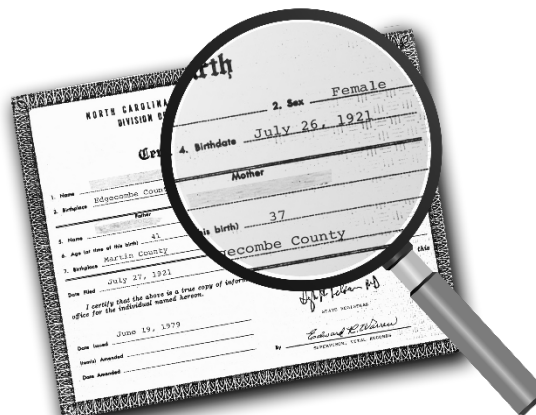


- Ancestry.com (paid)
- MyHeritage.com (paid)
- GenealogyBank.com
- Ellis Island <https://heritage.statueofliberty.org/> (free)
- Ship Images at NorwayHeritage.com
- Naturalization Records may be found at the County Courthouse where the person lived.

Vital Records

Keep in mind that in the U.S. Birth and Death records did not begin until around 1909 – 1920 (depending on the location). Marriage records often go back farther into the 1850's and before (again, depending on the location). When researching before these documents began, seek other forms of evidence of the event in places like cemeteries, church records, and newspaper obituaries.

- FamilySearch.org (free)
- Ancestry.com (paid)
- [MyHeritage](http://MyHeritage.com) (paid)



- County Government (typically fee based per inquiry)
- State Archives (some for older records)
- GenealogyBank.com (Birth & Marriage)

Land & Deed

- County in which the land transferred ownership. Look in surrounding counties too, if there were border changes.
- Some State Archives

Church Records

- Church Archivist
- Denominational hierarchy (depends on the denomination as to their location).
- County Libraries
- State Archives



Directories

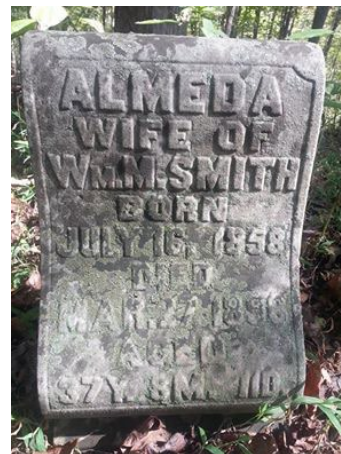
- [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) (free)
- [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) (paid)
- [MyHeritage](https://www.myheritage.com) (paid)
- [GenealogyBank.com](https://www.genealogybank.com)

Newspapers (Obits, Announcements, Marriage, Business, etc.)

- [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com)
- [GenealogyBank.com](https://www.genealogybank.com)
- [Archives.com](https://www.archives.com)
- [Newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com)
- [NewspaperArchive.com](https://www.newspaperarchive.com)
- [ChroniclingAmerica.com](https://www.chroniclingamerica.com)
- State Archives (See [U.S. State Archives Episode](#))
- Some County Libraries
- [MyHeritage](https://www.myheritage.com)
- [StarsAndStripes.newspaperarchive.com](https://www.starsandstripes.newspaperarchive.com)

Cemeteries

- [FindAGrave.com](https://www.findagrave.com)
- [BillionGraves.com](https://www.billiongraves.com)
- [CemeteryCensus.com](https://www.cemeterycensus.com) (Colorado, Illinois, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia as of this publication)



Local Histories

- Local Historical Societies

- [Local Genealogical Societies](#)
- County Library
 - Vanity Books (Late 1800's – mid 1900's depending on location)
- State Archives (See [U.S. State Archives Episode](#))
- State Genealogical Societies (Sometimes associated with the State Archives)
- [Archive.org](#) (a.k.a. Internet Archive)

Manuscripts & Articles

- County Library
- State Archives
- Your Family
- Search Google for Family Websites
- [JSTOR](#)
- [ArchiveGrid](#) (a.k.a. OCLC)
- Local College & University Libraries

Military

- [StarsAndStripes.newspaperarchive.com](#)
- [Ancestry.com](#)
- [Fold3.com](#)
- Veterans Service, Military Records, Unit Info
[Archives.gov](#) (NARA)



National Archives

- [U.S. National Archives and Records Administration](#) (NARA) - [Archives.gov](#) (a.k.a. NARA.gov)

State Archives

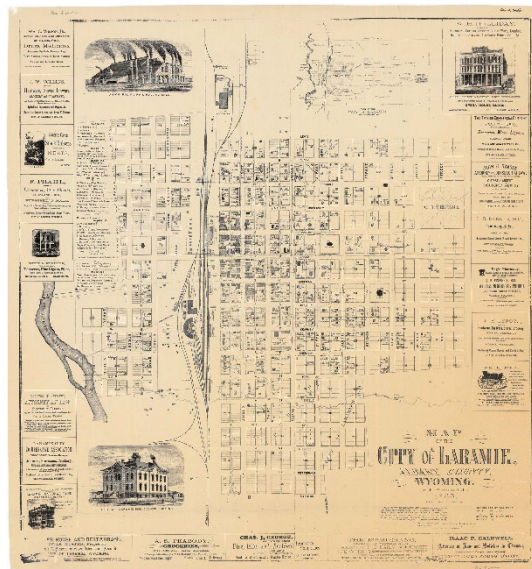
I have created a separate video and document for every state archive in the United States with links to their digital archives online.

- [You can find the video here.](#)
- [You can find the handout here.](#)

Maps

There are hundreds of places to find maps online. Here are a few of my favorite locations for maps.

- [Old Maps Online](#)
- [David Rumsey Map Collection](#)
- [New York Public Library](#)
- [Ancestry.com Maps, Atlases and Gazetteers](#) (paid)
- [Digital Public Library of America](#)
- [Newberry Library Atlas of Historical Boundaries](#)



Occupation

- [City Directories at Ancestry.com](#)
- Trade Associations – Local Libraries
 - [Employment Directories on Ancestry](#)
- Unions – Ancestry.com,
- Newspapers (See Newspaper section)

School

- Yearbooks - [Ancestry](#)
- Family Saved Report Cards
- Honor Rolls – See Newspapers

Tax Records

- Tax or Poll Tax Lists - [Ancestry](#)
- Agricultural Records – In the U.S. the Federal Census has Agricultural Schedules from 1850-1880. Some are on Ancestry and on [NARA](#). If they are not available at NARA.gov, contact the state archives where your ancestor lived..
- Property Taxes – Start with the County where the property was located. Be mindful of border changes.
- Social Security Death Index – [Ancestry.com](#), [FamilySearch.org](#) and all platforms have this record set.

Correctional Institutions

- [Ancestry.com](#)
- Some State Archives

Histories

- Online at National, State, and Local Archives/Libraries
- Personal Websites
- Histories of surrounding counties

Family Histories

- State Libraries
- State Genealogical Societies
- [RootsWeb](#)
- Local Libraries
- Online Platforms (all of them)
- Family Bibles
- Google Searches can sometime point you to family websites.

Evidence Of...

Don't forget you can find "Evidence of..." an event. In some cases this might be the only thing you find. For example, a divorce record is evidence of a marriage, even if you can't locate the marriage license.



Birth

- Birth Certificates (Typically County where the birth occurred.)
- Birth Registries (Often in churches or in the county.)
- Census Records
- Marriage Records
- Divorce (Courts where divorce occurred, Ancestry.com, and some state archives)
- Wills and Probate
- Cemeteries (Tombstone & Office Records)
- SSDI (Social Security Death Index)
- Bible Records (State Archives and Genealogical Societies)

Marriage

- Marriage licenses, Banns, Bonds (typically at county level) can be found on FamilySearch.org (free) and on Ancestry.com and other online platforms.
- Marriage Registries (typically at the church level).
- Military Widows Applications - Ancestry.com, Fold3.com
- Divorce Records – Courts in which the divorce occurred.
- Bible Records (Family, Local Libraries, State Archives)



Death

- Social Security Death Index (SSDI) Ancestry, FamilySearch and all others.
- Death Certificates (County Level)
- Delayed Death Certificates (County Level)
- Pension Records (Depending on the location) Many on Ancestry.
- Cemeteries and Funeral Homes ([Find A Grave](#), [Billion Graves](#), [Cemetery Census](#))

- Obituaries (see newspapers section)
- City Directories (will sometimes list someone as deceased in the first publishing after their death)
- Mortality Schedules (In U.S. only previous 12 months of the census for years 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880). Also, in 1885 for (Colorado, Florida, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, and South Dakota).
 - [Ancestry](#)
 - [FamilySearch](#) (1850 only)
 - [Free Website for Mortality Indexes](#)

Residence

- City Directories – Ancestry.com
- Census Records – All online platforms. It's free at [FamilySearch.org](#) (best viewer) and NARA (challenging to search). Best search functions at [Ancestry](#).

Other Videos and Resources

[How to Research at U S State Archives Digital Collections](#) (Video)

[How to Research U.S. State Archives Handout](#) (Links to ever state archive digital collection, emails and phone numbers)