



Basic Records Categories Check List

Below is a list of categories and records that are often beneficial in researching family history. This is not the entire list of places you can look. However, it is a helpful reminder of records available to begin your research. Use this checklist for each ancestor to craft your Research Plan. When using this checklist, you are looking for either records or evidence of an event.

Know that records can be indexes or original records. The indexes will lead you to the original records. You will want to seek out the original records whenever possible as they often contain additional information. While this list is written with U.S. records in mind, typically similar records are found in other countries.

Keep in mind you will need to think beyond this list, get creative and seek other records beyond this list.

Ancestors Name: _____ Birth, Marriage or Death Date (circle one): _____

Vital Records

- Birth
- Marriage
- Death

Census

- U. S. Population Schedules (1790-1940)
- Agricultural Schedules
- Slave Schedules
- State/Local Census (when available)

Church/Parish Records

- What Religion? _____
- Baptism/Christenings
- Burials
- Marriages
- Other Ceremonies

Probate/Estate Records (Court records)

- Wills
- Estate/Probate
- Guardian

Land and Property Records (Court records)

- Deeds
- Maps
- Land Grants/Homestead

Additional Court Records

- Divorce
- Tax Lists

Newspapers

- Obituaries
- Marriage Announcements
- Stories

Burial

- Cemetery Records
- Maps

Tax

- Local/County
- State
- Property

Immigration/Emigration

- Passenger Lists
- Immigration and Emigration Records
- Citizenship Records
 - First Papers
 - Final Papers
- Ship Photos
- Passports

Published Directories

- School Yearbooks
- City Directories/Telephone Books
- Neighborhood & Church Directories
- Trade Associations

Military

- Draft Registration Cards
- Enlistment Records
- Military Discharge
- Casualty Lists
- Awards & Decorations
- Pension Records
- Soldier, Veteran & POW Rolls

Maps

- Local/State
- Gazetteers

Services Organizations & Employment Records

- Railroad
- Clubs
- Employment and Pension

Where else can you look?



