

Checklist of Common U. S. Records to Use as Genealogical Sources

(Use one checklist per ancestor/family.)

Ancestor's Name _____

Birth/Death Years: _____

TWENTIETH CENTURY

Personal/Family Records

- _____ Bibles
- _____ Journals/Diaries
- _____ Letters
- _____ Baby/Wedding/Scrapbooks
- _____ Photo albums
- _____ Original documents
- _____ Interviews with relatives

State/Local Records

- _____ Birth certificates or registers
- _____ Marriage certificates or registers
- _____ Divorce records
- _____ Death certificates or registers
- _____ Wills/Probates
- _____ Land records (Deeds)
- _____ Tax records
- _____ Voter Registration records
- _____ Court cases
- _____ Cemetery records/Tombstones
- _____ Funeral Home records
- _____ State/Territory censuses
- _____ Maps
- _____ Business records/Publications
- _____ School/University records (applications, yearbooks)
- _____ City directories/Phone books
- _____ *Who's Who*/Biographical/Historical books
- _____ Printed and digitized family histories

Newspapers (Local/Ethnic)

- _____ Obituaries and burial permits
- _____ Articles
- _____ Announcements (marriages, births, deaths, special occasions)

Federal Records

- _____ Social Security Death Index (SSDI) and/or applications

U.S. Census:

- _____ 1940
- _____ 1930
- _____ 1920
- _____ 1910
- _____ 1900

Immigration:

- _____ Naturalizations (after 1906)
- _____ Passenger ship manifests (after 1906)

- _____ Passports and applications (after 1906)

- _____ Immigrant Aid societies

Military:

- _____ World War I draft cards
- _____ World War II enlistment
- _____ World War II draft cards (Old Men's Draft)
- _____ Miscellaneous available records
- _____ Vets. Administration & organizations

Religious Records:

- _____ Births
- _____ Baptisms/Confirmations
- _____ Marriages
- _____ Deaths/Burials
- _____ Membership lists/church or synagogue publications

NINETEENTH CENTURY

Personal/Family Records

- _____ Bibles
- _____ Journals/Diaries
- _____ Letters
- _____ Scrapbooks
- _____ Photo albums
- _____ Original documents

State/Local Records

- _____ Birth registers
- _____ Marriage registers/Bonds>Returns
- _____ Divorce records
- _____ Death registers
- _____ Wills/Probates (inventories/sales/distributions, guardianships)
- _____ Land/Homesteading records (deeds, surveys, patents, grants)
- _____ Tax lists
- _____ Court cases
- _____ Claims for Civil War losses
- _____ Court Order and Minutes books
- _____ Cemetery records/Tombstones
- _____ Funeral Home records
- _____ State/Territory censuses
- _____ Maps
- _____ Business records/Publications
- _____ School/University records (applications, yearbooks)
- _____ City directories



- _____ County histories/Biographies
- _____ Printed family histories
- Newspapers (Local/Ethnic)**
- _____ Obituaries and burial permits
- _____ Articles
- _____ Announcements (marriages, births, deaths, special occasions)
- Federal Records**
- U.S. Census:**
- _____ 1890 (Union veterans & widows)
- _____ 1880
- _____ 1870
- _____ 1860
- _____ 1850
- _____ 1840
- _____ 1830/1820
- _____ 1810/1800
- _____ Special censuses (vary by decade: Agriculture, Manufacturing, Mortality)
- Immigration:**
- _____ Naturalizations/Declarations of Intention/Oaths of Allegiance
- _____ Passenger ship lists
- _____ Immigrant Aid societies
- Military:**
- _____ War of 1812 records
- _____ Civil War enlistment
- _____ Civil War troop records
- _____ Civil War pensions
- _____ Bounty land warrants & patents
- _____ Southern Claims Commission
- _____ Books/articles
- _____ Veterans organizations
- Religious Records:**
- _____ Births
- _____ Baptisms/Confirmations
- _____ Marriages
- _____ Deaths/Burials
- _____ Membership lists/religious publications

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY & EARLIER

Personal/Family Records

- _____ Bibles
- _____ Journals/Diaries
- _____ Letters
- _____ Original documents

State/Local Records

- _____ Birth registers (eastern states)
- _____ Marriage registers (eastern states)
- _____ Death registers (eastern states)
- _____ Wills/Probates (inventories/sales/distributions, guardianship)
- _____ Deeds/land patents/grants
- _____ Tax lists
- _____ Court cases
- _____ Court Order or Minutes books
- _____ Militia records
- _____ Tombstones
- _____ Printed family histories

Newspapers (Regional)

- _____ Articles
- _____ Ads
- _____ Announcements

Federal Records

U.S. Census:

- _____ 1790

Immigration:

- _____ Oaths of Allegiance
- _____ Published passenger ship lists

Military:

- _____ Revolutionary War records
- _____ Revolutionary War pensions
- _____ War claims for damages
- _____ Bounty land warrants and sales of these
- _____ Books/articles
- _____ Veterans organizations

Religious and Business Records:

- _____ Whatever still exists

For all centuries, be open to looking everywhere for records that can assist you in your own search. Everyone's family is different; what works for one person may not work for another. **Remember to always look at documents for siblings, neighbors, and cousins; be alert to friends or relatives who served as witnesses.** You never know where the information is going to turn up. Study your family in the context of its neighborhood. Know the history of the area and of the people who lived there. Look for unique records wherever you can find them; don't be afraid to explore unusual sources to find what you need. Leave no stone unturned when it comes to doing thorough genealogical searches.

