

Essential New York City Records: Census, Tax, City, Directories, and others

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand some essential records exist for tracing New York City residents (beyond vital records).
2. Discover online resources to find New York City's essential records.
3. Explore on-site repositories that hold New York City's essential records.

ESSENTIAL NEW YORK CITY RECORDS

In addition to civil vital records, New York City offers numerous other records for tracing families who resided in the area, including State censuses, tax records, city directories, land records, and others. While some of these materials are available online, many are accessible on-site at citywide repositories, including:

New York Public Library (NYPL)
<https://www.nypl.org>

New York City Municipal Archives
<https://www.nyc.gov/site/records/index.page>

New-York Historical Society
<https://www.nyhistory.org/library>

Museum of the City of New York
<https://www.mcny.org/>

Additional citywide repositories can be found in the various county and borough guides in the *New York Family History Research Guide and Gazetteer, revised edition*, available from the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society (NYG&B).

State Census Records

Copies of State census records for present-day New York City areas are located in various locations, including microfilm copies at the New York State Library and elsewhere.

1925

Available areas: Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, and Richmond counties

Online access:

Ancestry.com (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2704/>)

FamilySearch.org (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1937489>)

NEW YORK GENEALOGICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

NEW YORK FAMILY HISTORY SCHOOL

©2023, New York Genealogical and Biographical Society

Essential New York City Records: Census, Tax, City, Directories, and others

1915

Available areas: Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, and Richmond counties

Online access:

Ancestry.com (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2703/>)

FamilySearch.org (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1937454>)

1905

Available areas: Bronx and New York counties

Online access:

Ancestry.com (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7364/>)

FamilySearch.org (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1463113>)

1892

Available areas: Kings and Queens counties

Online access:

Ancestry.com (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3212/>)

FamilySearch.org (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1529100>)

1875

Available areas: Kings and Richmond counties

Online access:

Ancestry.com (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7250/>)

FamilySearch.org (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1918735>)

1865

Available areas: Kings and Queens counties

Online access:

Ancestry.com (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7218/>)

FamilySearch.org (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1491284>)

1855

Available areas: Kings, New York, and Richmond counties

Online access:

Ancestry.com (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7181/>)

FamilySearch.org (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1937366>)

NEW YORK GENEALOGICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

NEW YORK FAMILY HISTORY SCHOOL

©2023, New York Genealogical and Biographical Society

Essential New York City Records: Census, Tax, City, Directories, and others

NYG&B (New York County, Ward 17,
<https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/online-records/collection/new-york-county-ward-17-state-census-1855>)

1845

Available areas: Kings (Flatbush only)

Access:
New York City Municipal Archives

1835:

Richmond

Access:
Staten Island Historical Society (<https://www.historicrichmondtown.org/research>)

1816, 1819, and 1821 Censuses

New York City recorded a census of eligible jurors in 1816 and 1819 and of electors in 1821. Listings for 1816 and 1819 include the name, address, age, occupation, number of inhabitants, and number of jurors for each household. The 1821 electoral census provides the name of the head of the family, street address, and the number of eligible voters.

Indexes are available on *Ancestry.com* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/62021/>) and original materials are accessible at the New York City Municipal Archives (<https://a860-collectionguides.nyc.gov/repositories/2/resources/21>).

1890 “Police Census”

New York City took an additional census in 1890 that included the areas of present-day Manhattan and the western Bronx. Of the 1,008 books recorded, 894 exist. Microfilm of the census is available from the New York Public Library (see <https://libguides.nypl.org/nycpolicecensus> for further details). Digitized images of the surviving census volumes are available on the NYC Municipal Archives digital collections website by following the link in the collection guide: <https://a860-collectionguides.nyc.gov/repositories/2/resources/101>.

Online indexes are available as follows:

- *FamilySearch.org* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2381996>)
- *Ancestry.com* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3519/>) [incomplete]

Essential New York City Records: Census, Tax, City, Directories, and others

Tax Lists

Some tax lists before 1800 exist for areas that comprise present-day New York City. Many have been transcribed in early issues of *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* and can be found using the article and subject index online (<https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/online-records/record-article-title-index>) and are also listed in chapter 13 of *New York Family History Research Guide and Gazetteer, revised edition*, available from the NYG&B.

Queens College Library holds some property taxes for various years, which are available online at *FamilySearch.org*:

- 1790 (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/007716333?cat=247303>)
- 1792, 1799, and 1802 (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/007716332?cat=247303>)
- 1807, 1810, and 1820-1
(<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/007716331?cat=247303>)

In addition, the New York City Municipal Archives holds records for the following:

- Manhattan: 1789–1978/9
- Brooklyn: 1866–1974/5
- Queens: 1899–1987/8
- Bronx: 1897–1961/2
- Richmond: 1899–1978/9

Federal tax records produced from the *Revenue Act of 1861* are also available online:

- *Ancestry.com* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1264/>)
- *FamilySearch.org* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2075263>)

A published list of 1863 taxpayers in New York City, known as *The Income Record*, was released in 1865 and is accessible online (<https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/133212-the-income-record-a-list-giving-the-taxable-income-for-the-year-1863-of-the-residents-of-new-york>).

Additional federal tax records are also available as part of Record Group 58 at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and include assessments lists for the 2nd and 3rd districts, 1914–1917, and a register of employees, from the 2nd district (Brooklyn), 1885–1919.

City Directories

The first directory of New York City residents was published by David Franks in 1786 and included a listing of prominent citizens. Numerous other publishers quickly began producing their own directories by 1789, many of which were published through the early 1900s and gradually included more elements of New York City's population.

Essential New York City Records: Census, Tax, City, Directories, and others

While some city directories for the area are searchable on *Ancestry.com* and similar websites, the collections are incomplete. Instead, researchers can access and browse online images of city directories from the New York Public Library (NYPL) at <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/new-york-city-directories>. The collection also includes several telephone directories for the New York City area. When using city directories, search for relevant addresses and other elements of an individual's life, including religious institutions, schools, social clubs, and other entities.

Land Records

While many New York families rented property from others, land records are an important resource when tracing individuals in New York City. Records exist for Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens at the Office of the City Registrar and Richmond (Staten Island) at the Richmond County Clerk. For land records during the colonial period, refer to chapter 7 of the *New York Family History Research Guide and Gazetteer, revised edition*, available from the NYG&B and published abstracts in past issues of *The NYG&B Record*.

Conveyances, mortgages, and other related records (and their indexes) are accessible through *FamilySearch.org* up through the 1850s and, in some cases, the 1890s. Search the index (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2078654>) and browse by county/borough as needed. This collection does not include records from Queens, which are maintained locally.

Other Records

Numerous other records exist for tracing New York City families. Employ county and borough guides from the *New York Family History Research Guide and Gazetteer*, in addition to the NYG&B's free online articles (<https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/kb/index>) as your search continues.