

New York State and New York City Birth, Marriage, and Death Records **Susan R. Miller, Director, Publications**

WHAT WE COVERED

1. Two New York vital records systems
2. Modern New York City vital records (bulk 1860s–)
3. Modern New York State vital records (bulk 1880s–)

WHAT ARE VITAL RECORDS

Vital records record the vital events of a person's life: birth, marriage, and death. Civil vital records are created by governments. That is the topic of this session.

NEW YORK HAS TWO VITAL RECORDS SYSTEMS

The two systems are New York State outside of New York City and New York City. For the most part, records are not supuplicated in the two systems.

For information about New York City, see Harry Macy's "Before the Five-Borough City." NYG&B Newsletter (now New York Researcher), Winter 1998. Updated June 2011 and published online. [Click here](#).

NEW YORK CITY BIRTH, MARRIAGE, AND DEATH RECORDS

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYCDHMH)

125 Worth Street • New York, NY

(212) 639-9675 (outside NYC) 311 (inside NYC)

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/services/birth-death-records.page> (additional contact information)

The NYCDHMH creates, holds and corrects recent vital records and holds birth records 1910 to the present and death records 1949/1950 to the present.

New York City Clerk's Marriage Bureau

141 Worth Street • New York, NY

(212) 639-9675 (outside NYC) 311 (inside NYC)

<https://www.cityclerk.nyc.gov/content/marriage-records> (scroll down)

Marriage records older than 50 years are public records and may be ordered either by mail or by appointment from the record office with a fee.

New York City Municipal Archives (Muni)

31 Chambers Street, Room 103 • New York, NY 10007

(212) 639-9675 (outside NYC) 311 (inside NYC)

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/records/historical-records/genealogy.page>

<https://a860-historicalvitalrecords.nyc.gov/digital-vital-records>

MUNI holds early New York City vital records, including birth, death, and marriage records. Online indexes to MUNI's vital record indexes may be accessed on various sites (see below). The certificates for birth, marriage, and death created by the Health Department have been newly digitized. digital images, except for Manhattan death certificates and some marriage licenses may be view online at the Historical Vital Records site and all may be viewed at MUNI on microfilm. Birth, death, and marriage certificates held at MUNI, and corresponding indexes, are on digitized microfilm at the FamilySearch Library (FSL) and FamilySearch Centers (FSC) and can be identified by the online catalog at FamilySearch.org.

Record Type	First Recorded	Bulk Begin	Notes
Death	1795	1810s burial registers begin 1866 in certificate form 1862 Brooklyn in certificate form	Early records in registers with less information.
Marriage	1829 (very few this early)	1866 in certificate form	First records from the NYC Health Department
Birth	1847	1866 in certificate form	1847 records for New York City and some towns in Kings, Queens, and Richmond counties.

NYC VITAL RECORD INDEXES

Several organizations created different indexes. If a record is not found in the first index searched, perform additional searches in other indexes. If the record is found in none of the indexes, it is possible that while the event happened, it was not recorded in an official record.

See “Finding New York Birth, Marriage, and Death Records,” a free guide on the NYG&B’s website: <https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/new-york-birth-marriage-death-vital-records>

MUNI’s Index on the Historical Vital Records Site

The index used on the Historical Vital Records site is an earlier version of the German Genealogy Group’s index (approximately 2021). It was initially created from the 3"x5" index cards, not directly from the certificate images.

German Genealogy Group (GGG) Index

<https://www.germangenealogygroup.com>

While initially created from the 3"x5" index cards by the Genealogical Federation of Long Island,¹ the index is constantly updated and corrected from certificate images. A version of this database is available on www.italiangen.org.

¹ The Genealogical Federation of Long Island includes multiple organizations, including the Italian Genealogical Group, the Irish Family History Forum, the Jewish Genealogy Society of Long Island, and others. <https://gfli.net/member-organizations>

FamilySearch Indexes

The newer FamilySearch indexes all contain “New York City” in the title of the collection. They also cover the registers and certificates and note a certificate or register number.

Birth index: <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2240282>

Death index: <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2240477>

Marriage certificate index: <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2143225>

Marriage license index: <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1618491>

The indexes and images are not included in full-text search.

Ancestry Indexes (\$)

Multiple indexes on Ancestry may be confusing. The birth, marriage, and death indexes noted here are new indexing’s but contain only certificates that are digitized.

Birth certificates: <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61779>

Marriage certificates: <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9105>

Death certificates: New York, New York, U.S., Index to Death Certificates, 1862–1948
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61778>

Marriage licenses: New York, New York, U.S., Marriage License Indexes, 1907–2018
<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61406> (see also Reclaim the Records)

The collections using “extracted” in the title are not recommended; use the GGG indexes instead.

MyHeritage Images and Indexes (\$)

A completely new indexing of certificate images was completed by MyHeritage in the past few years (see the first three links). The advantage of these databases is that they includes the images, meaning there is no need to visit Historical Vital Records when a result is found. Additional marriage licenses indexes are also available.

Birth index and records: New York City Births, 1866–1909,

<https://www.myheritage.com/research/collection-20810/new-york-city-births-1866-1909>

Death index and records: New York City Deaths, 1866–1948,

<https://www.myheritage.com/research/collection-20808/new-york-city-deaths-1866-1948>

Marriage certificates and licenses index and images: New York City Marriages, 1866–1949,

<https://www.myheritage.com/research/collection-20807/new-york-city-marriages-1866-1949>

Marriage license index only: New York City Marriage License Index 1908–1972,

<https://www.myheritage.com/research/collection-10459/new-york-city-marriage-license-index-1908-1972> and New York City Marriages, 1950–2017,

<https://www.myheritage.com/research/collection-10540/new-york-city-marriages-1950-2017>

Reclaim the Records Indexes

New York City Geographic Birth Index

<https://archive.org/details/nycgeobirthindex>

The NYC Marriage Index

<https://www.nycmarriageindex.com/>

<https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/tracing-your-new-york-ancestors-nygb-registration>

NEW YORK STATE VITAL RECORDS

New York State Department of Health (NYSHD)

Albany, New York

https://www.health.ny.gov/vital_records/genealogy.htm

The NYSHD holds the official birth, marriage, and death records for the state. For genealogical copies, the wait time is extremely long. Therefore, it is recommended that records be obtained from the local municipality. Check with the town, city, or village clerk (except with the county clerk for Chemung, Monroe, Onondaga, and Tioga).

Reclaim the Records Indexes

Reclaim the Records obtained several indexes critical for finding state vital records, including a recent release of the New York State Death Index on:

<https://www.newyorkdeathindex.com/search>

Other indexes include:

Buffalo (New York) Death Index, <https://archive.org/details/buffalodeathindex>

New York State Birth Index, <https://archive.org/details/nybirthindex>

Yonkers death indexes (Filter for Yonkers)

https://archive.org/details/Yonkers_NY_Deaths_-_1884-1889

Ancestry Indexes (\$)

Ancestry indexed the microfiche indexes from the New York State Health Department in three collections, and added Albany, Buffalo, and Yonkers records to some.

New York State, Birth Index, 1881–1942,

<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61667>

New York, U.S., Death Index, 1852–1956,

<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61535/>

New York State, Marriage Index, 1881–1967,

<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61632/>

FamilySearch Indexes

Several older indexes exist on FamilySearch, therefore, look at the updated date information for the newest collections.

New York, Birth Indexes outside of New York City, 1881–1942

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/collection/4460198>

New York, state death index: Collection Record, 1880–1956,

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/collection/2803479>

New York, Yonkers, birth and death registration and indexes: COLLECTION RECORD, 1875–1916, <https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/collection/4116431>

A DEEPER LOOK

For a deeper look at vital records, including in the colonial period, see the following resources.

Online overview with links

Finding New York Birth, Marriage, and Death Records

<https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/new-york-birth-marriage-death-vital-records>

“Before the Five-borough City: The Old Cities, Towns and Villages That Came Together to Form 'Greater New York'”

By Harry Macy Jr. <https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/knowledgebase/five-borough-city-old-cities-towns-and-villages-came-together-form-greater-new-york>

New York Family History School

On-demand courses to complete at your own pace (\$).

<https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/new-york-family-history-school>

New York State Research Fundamentals, <https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/new-york-state-research-fundamentals-registration>

New York City Research Fundamentals, <https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/new-york-city-research-fundamentals-registration>

Tracing Your New York Ancestors with the NYG&B (Free),

<https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/tracing-your-new-york-ancestors-nygb-registration>

New York Family History Research Guide and Gazetteer

NYG&B (New York: NYG&B 2017)

<https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/new-york-family-history-research-guide-and-gazetteer>

New York City Municipal Archives: A Guide for Family Historians

By Aaron Goodwin. (New York: NYG&B, 2025)

<https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/new-york-city-municipal-archives-guide-family-historians-enhanced-edition>