



# What's the Difference: NYS and NYC Genealogy

Presented by Susan R. Miller

## Referencing New York

If it is not clear if the reference is to the state or the city, check the question or context.

New York, United States	New York, NY or New York, New York
State of New York	City of New York
New York State	New York City

Also, New York County generates and holds records.

## New York's Key Time Periods

From the perspective of European settlement of what is now New York:

### New York State

Established 1777

Earlier colonial predecessors

British to 1777/1783

English 1664/1674 to 1745

Dutch (West India Company)  
1614 to 1664/1674

### New York City

Modern 5-borough city in 1898

Suspension of city government during  
American Revolution occupation by British

Renamed New York City in 1664

Chartered as New Amsterdam 1653

A chronological snapshot of events that affect records may be found in the New York Family History Research Guide and Gazetteer (NYFHRGG), p. 1-6.

## Maps and map links

*New York Family History Research Guide and Gazetteer*, revised edition 2017; New York: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 2017. Available in print and/or PDF.

[nygbs.org/publications/nyfhrgg](https://nygbs.org/publications/nyfhrgg) Maps inside cover, plus each county guide begins with an original map. Borough Boundary Map: 748. New York City's wards in 1853: 744. (noted by the acronym NYFHRGG below)

Guy Johnson. *New York Province. Map of the country of the VI nations proper with part of the adjacent colonies*. 1771. Digital image. *New York Public Library Digital Collections*.

(<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/96fd0603-9b52-527c-e040-e00a18063f9b> accessed June 24, 2021).

John Montrésor. *Province de New-York : en 4 feuilles*. Digital image. *New York Public Library Digital Collections*. (<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/60632474-21de-a643-e040-e00a18067376>, Accessed June 24, 2021).

*Map of the State of New York: Compiled from the Latest Authorities*. Philadelphia: Thomas, Cowperthwait & Co., 1850. Digital image. *New York Public Library Digital Collections*. (<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47da-f107-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>, accessed 29 June 2021).

Burr, David H. *Map of New York Exhibiting the Post Offices, Post Roads, Canals, Rail Roads &c.* Digital image. *New York Public Library Digital Collections*. (<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47da-f034-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>, accessed July 1, 2021).

New York City Metropolitan Transit Authority. "New York City Subway Map." Direct download of PDF, <https://new.mta.info/map/5256>.

To learn more about New York maps and genealogy, see "New York State Maps and Atlases: Genealogical Research Applications," by Phillip Sutton, an on-demand session for NYSFHC@Home 2021.

## New York City, formerly New Amsterdam

Under the Dutch, the City of New Amsterdam received its charter in 1653, growing up Manhattan Island over time.

URL for image shown depicting New Amsterdam in 1673:

<https://www.newnetherlandinstitute.org/history-and-heritage/digital-exhibitions/maps-of-the-bert-twaalfhoven-collection-at-fordham/the-maps/new-amsterdam-a-small-town-in-new-holland-in-north-america-on-the-island-of-manhattan-renamed-new-york-when-it-became-part-of-the-territory-of-the-english-1702>.

Adams, John Wolcott, *Redraft of the Castello Plan, New Amsterdam in 1660*, 1916. Digital image. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e4-7369-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99> (Proof sheet of plate in I. N. P. Stokes' *The Iconography of Manhattan Island*.)

Manhattan Island and some surrounding island make up New York City as it grows, until New York City annexes land from Westchester County in 1874 and again in 1895.

In 1898 Modern New York City is formed. New York's counties also hold records in addition to the City.

Macy, Harry, Jr. "Before the Five-borough City: The Old Cities, Towns, and Villages that Came Together to Form 'Greater New York'." Published on [newyorkfamilyhistory.org.nyqbs.org/blog/five-borough-city-old-cities-towns-and-villages-came-together-form-greater-new-york](http://newyorkfamilyhistory.org.nyqbs.org/blog/five-borough-city-old-cities-towns-and-villages-came-together-form-greater-new-york)

## Key Records in New York State and New York City

Consider how records were created. Under what law, regulation, or requirement would they have been written down. What agency or organization was the creator. Does that same entity still hold the records, or have they been published.

### Civil Vital Records

New York State and New York City have separate civil vital records.

Look for government-generated (official) records by checking the years of coverage in the indexes and databases. Many of those are available online (but were not in past years). See the NYG&B subject guide for links: [nygbs.org/new-york-birth-marriage-death-vital-records](https://nygbs.org/new-york-birth-marriage-death-vital-records)

The main coverage for **New York State** starts in 1880/1881. Indexes can be found online. Original records may be requested from the New York State Department of Health or from the local municipality.

- **Deaths 1880–present**
- **Births 1881–present**
- **Marriages 1881–present**

**New York City's** records begin earlier than the state records. Indexes can be found online for publicly available records from the New York City Municipal Archives. Other indexes contain records that are held at the New York City Clerk's Marriage Bureau or at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

- **Deaths 1795–present**
- **Births 1847–present (gaps)**
- **Marriages 1829–present (more starting in the 1870s)**

For in-depth coverage of this topic, see NYFHRGG, chapter 2, and

Goodwin, Aaron. *New York City Municipal Archives: An Authorized Guide for Family Historians*. New York: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 2016.

Available in print or PDF. [nygbs.org/publications/muni](https://nygbs.org/publications/muni)

*New York Birth, Marriage, and Death Records*. New York: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 2017. Extracted from chapter 2 of NYFHRGG, revised edition. Available in print or PDF, [www.nygbs.org/store](https://www.nygbs.org/store).

## Federal and State Census Records

Federal census coverage is the same for the state and city, except a small portion of 1890 survives (parts of the town of Brookhaven (Suffolk County) and the town of Eastchester (Westchester County) and the 1870 federal census.

**1870 federal census:** New York City was granted a second enumeration, taken in late 1870 and early 1871. It is most easily distinguished on Ancestry.com.

<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7163>

The specific Ancestry.com search example shown is

[https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7163/?name=James\\_Murtagh&birth=1846\\_ireland\\_3250&count=50&residence=New+York&residence\\_x=1-O&\\_phtarg=UJz226](https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7163/?name=James_Murtagh&birth=1846_ireland_3250&count=50&residence=New+York&residence_x=1-O&_phtarg=UJz226)

The FamilySearch example show is

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/record/results?q.givenName=James&q.surname=Murtagh&q.birthLikePlace=Ireland&q.birthLikeDate.from=1845&q.birthLikeDate.to=1848&q.residencePlace=New%20York&f.collectionId=1438024&count=20&offset=0&m.defaultFacets=on&m.queryRequireDefault=on&m.facetNestCollectionInCategory=on>

Other lists for New York State include an **index of *The Documentary History of the State of New York*** ([https://www.worldcat.org/title/documentary-history-of-the-state-of-new-york/oclc/1083878654&referer=brief\\_results](https://www.worldcat.org/title/documentary-history-of-the-state-of-new-york/oclc/1083878654&referer=brief_results)), indexed on Ancestry, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/12897>

Other lists for New York City include:

The 1816 and 1819 Jury Census and, and the **1821 Electoral Census**

([https://nycma.lunaimaging.com/luna/servlet/detail/NYCMA-10-10-16-1206204:War\\_d-1?sort=identifier%2Ctitle%2Cdate%2Cvolume\\_number&qvq=sort:identifier%2Ctitle%2Cdate%2Cvolume\\_number;lc:NYCMA-10-10&mi=15&trs=21](https://nycma.lunaimaging.com/luna/servlet/detail/NYCMA-10-10-16-1206204:War_d-1?sort=identifier%2Ctitle%2Cdate%2Cvolume_number&qvq=sort:identifier%2Ctitle%2Cdate%2Cvolume_number;lc:NYCMA-10-10&mi=15&trs=21))

Collection page: <https://nycma.lunaimaging.com/luna/servlet/NYCMA-10-10>

The **1890 Police Census index** on FamilySearch is preferred for the greater coverage and found at <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2381996>. The surviving 894 of 1008 books (88%) are included. Ancestry.com's index is only a portion of the surviving records. Microfilm is available at the NYPL, and through FamilySearch Affiliate libraries to view the digitized microfilm.