

## U.S. Vital Records

Obtaining birth, marriage, and death certificates can help determine some of the more significant pieces of information for family history research. The format of these documents may vary greatly based on time and locality. Some of the basic data provided may include the individual's name, spouse's and parents' names, addresses, birthplaces, and occupations, dates and places of the events, and the individual's Social Security number (SSN).

Vital records should be used in conjunction with other documents before reaching solid conclusions. Reported facts may vary, depending on who supplied the information and whether the informant had actual knowledge of the individual(s) described on the document. For instance, it is highly likely that on a marriage certificate the bride and groom supplied the correct information. However, the informant on a death certificate might be a friend who may not be sure of the deceased's parent's names, or a grieving relative who may not be focused on filling out forms.

## Location of Records

Birth, marriage, and death certificates are usually found in a city or county's Bureau of Vital Records or City/County Clerk's Office. Different localities may have various names for these agencies. Older records, as determined by each jurisdiction, may be found in city, county, or state archives, libraries or historical societies. Often you can visit these repositories and perform the research yourself. Many times the records are made easy to find with indexes, some of which are now online. Some repositories, however, only accept written requests, for a small fee.

## Obituary Research

Even a brief obituary or death notice can offer clues and information about an individual's life, including surviving family, occupation, and place of birth. Sometimes a photograph accompanies the article. Once you know the date of death, search for obituaries in local and ethnic newspapers. More and more newspapers are creating online indexes, and online library catalogs are making it easier to locate periodical holdings. The JewishGen databases page, [www.jewishgen.org/databases/](http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/), has a variety of obituary and other indexes from U.S. and foreign periodicals.

## Cemetery Research

Information obtained in cemeteries can lead to a death certificate, as well as being interesting in and of itself. If you know where a relative is buried, the gravestone may include the Hebrew or Yiddish name, birth and death dates, a photo of the deceased, and the father's name. Visiting a cemetery plot may also reveal other relatives who are buried nearby, or within the same burial society. Cemeteries and funeral homes often keep records with additional data. The Jewish Genealogical Society has New York cemetery and burial society information at [www.jgsny.org](http://www.jgsny.org).

## Obtaining Records

Here are some resources that outline what records are available for each state, how to obtain records, and include fees for ordering records:

- Where to Write for Vital Records  
[www.cdc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/w2welcom.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/w2welcom.htm)
- U.S. Vital Records Information (through RootsWeb and Ancestry.com)  
<http://vitalrec.com/index.html>
- VitalChek Network (commercial site for ordering birth, marriage, and death records)  
[www.vitalchek.com](http://www.vitalchek.com)
- Alice Eichholz, editor, *Ancestry's Red Book: American State, County, and Town Sources*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Ancestry, 2004).

Further information on New York City vital records and obituaries is listed below.

## New York City Vital Records

### NYC Municipal Archives

31 Chambers Street, Room 103 (between Centre & Elk Streets)  
New York, NY 10007

(212) 788-8580; Fax: (212) 385-0984

Open Monday to Thursday, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm; Friday, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

<http://nyc.gov/html/records/html/about/archives.shtml>

Vital records are filed and indexed according to the Borough in which the event occurred. The Municipal Archives also has marriage records from the City Clerk's Office: bride and groom indexes, 1908-1951; licenses, 1908-1929.

| MANHATTAN  | BROOKLYN  | BRONX   | QUEENS   | RICHMOND  |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Births</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• July 1847-1848;</li> <li>• July 1853-1909</li> </ul> <p>Deaths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1795;</li> <li>• 1802-1804;</li> <li>• 1808;</li> <li>• 1812-1948</li> </ul> <p>Marriages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June 1847-1848;</li> <li>• July 1853-1937</li> </ul> | <p>Births</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1866-1909</li> </ul> <p>Deaths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1847-1853;</li> <li>• 1857-1948</li> </ul> <p>Marriages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1866-1937</li> </ul> <p>There are separate marriage and death records for Kings County</p> <p>Towns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flatbush, 1847-1851; 1880-1894,</li> <li>• Flatlands, 1880-1895,</li> <li>• Gravesend, 1880-1894,</li> <li>• New Lots, 1881-1886 and New Utrecht, 1880-1894.</li> </ul> | <p>Births</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1898-1909</li> </ul> <p>Deaths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1898-1948</li> </ul> <p>Marriages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1898-1937</li> </ul> <p>The Bronx did not exist as separate Borough until 1898.</p> <p>New York City (Manhattan) annexed the area west of the Bronx River in 1874 and annexed the area east of the Bronx River in 1895.</p> <p>For vital records in those areas after the date of annexation through 1897, request a search of Manhattan records.</p> | <p>Births</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1898-1909</li> </ul> <p>Deaths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1898-1948</li> </ul> <p>Marriages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1898-1937</li> </ul> <p>Pre-consolidation Town and Village vital records, 1847-1849; 1881-1897, and Long Island City, 1871-1897.</p> | <p>Births</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1898-1909</li> </ul> <p>Deaths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1898-1948</li> </ul> <p>Marriages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1898-1937</li> </ul> <p>Pre-consolidation Town and Village vital records, 1847-1849; 1881 - 1897.</p> |

For birth and death records in dates beyond those in the above table, contact:

Office of Vital Records

New York City Department of Health

125 Worth Street

New York, NY 10013

(see links at [www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/vitalrecords/home.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/vitalrecords/home.shtml))

For marriage records beyond the above dates (all boroughs) contact: <http://www.cityclerknyc.com/MarriageBureau/>

NY City Clerk's Office, Marriage Bureau

Municipal Building (at Chambers St & Brooklyn Bridge)

1 Centre St, Room 252

New York, NY 10007

(212) 669-8898 Open Monday to Friday: 8:30 am to 4:00 pm

The City Clerk's Office has indexes, 1908 to the present; applications and licenses, 1930 to the present.

## **Other Sources of Vital Records and Obituaries for NYC**

By Joy Rich, JGSNY, Editor, *Dorot*

Contact information and web links for major repositories in metropolitan New York: [www.jgsny.org/resource1.htm](http://www.jgsny.org/resource1.htm)

### **NY Public Library, Irma & Paul Milstein Division Of U.S. History, Local History and Genealogy [www.nypl.org/research/chss/lhg/research.html#nyc](http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/lhg/research.html#nyc)**

Birth indexes, NYC DOH (print, microfiche, microfilm)

Bronx: 1888-1982

Manhattan: 1888-1982

Brooklyn: 1898-1982

Queens: 1898-1982

Staten Island: 1898-1982

Marriage indexes, NYC DOH

Bronx brides: 1869-1937 (microfilm)

Manhattan brides: 1869-1937 (microfilm)

Queens brides: 1869-1937 (microfilm)

Staten Island brides: 1869-1937 (microfilm)

NYC grooms: August 1888-1937 (microfilm)

All boroughs, grooms: 1898-1937 (microfilm)

Death indexes, NYC DOH

Brooklyn: 1848-1898 (microfilm)

Manhattan: 1868-1890 (microfilm)

Staten Island: 1847-1897 (microfilm)

NYC: August 1888-1982 (microfilm)

All boroughs: 1888-1967, 1969-1982 (microfilm and books)

### **New-York Historical Society**

[www.nyhistory.org/web/default.php?section=library](http://www.nyhistory.org/web/default.php?section=library)

Birth indexes, NYC DOH (print)

Manhattan and Bronx: 1889-1897, All boroughs: 1898-1905

Marriage indexes, NYC DOH (print)

Manhattan and Bronx: 1889-1897, All boroughs: 1898-1905

Death indexes, NYC DOH (print)

Manhattan and Bronx: 1889-1897, All boroughs: 1898-1905

Many of the indexes at N-YHS are in fragile condition. Photocopies cannot be made from them.

### **National Archives and Records Administration, Northeast Region, NYC**

[www.archives.gov/northeast/nyc](http://www.archives.gov/northeast/nyc)

The birth, marriage, and death indexes do not include NYC or the former City of Brooklyn. The indexes do include, in addition to the remainder of New York State:

Kings County: towns prior to annexation by the City of Brooklyn in the 1880s and 1890s

Queens County: western towns prior to incorporation into the City of New York on January 1, 1898

Richmond County: prior to incorporation into the City of New York on January 1, 1898

Westchester County: portions prior to annexation by New York City in 1895

Birth indexes, NYS Department of Health (DOH): 1881-1931 (microfiche)

Marriage indexes, NYS DOH: 1881-1956 (microfiche)

Death indexes, NYS DOH: 1881-1956 (microfiche)

Searchable database indexes:

Manhattan - Death Index 1891-1900

All boroughs - Death index 1912-1919

All boroughs - Grooms Index 1908-1936

Brooklyn and Manhattan - Grooms Index 1895-1897

Brooklyn, Queens, and Bronx Brides Index up to 1936

## **NYC Birth, Marriage, and Death Records: Online Sources or Where To Find Them**

Online NYC Vital Records & Indexes [www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/nycv-lds.html](http://www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/nycv-lds.html)

NYC vital records indexes search engines: [www.stevemorse.org](http://www.stevemorse.org)

Links to Brooklyn (and Long Island) vital records : [www.bklyn-genealogy-info.com/](http://www.bklyn-genealogy-info.com/)

Births from Queens County Sentinel: [www.nyvaginealogy.homestead.com/QUEENSBIRTH.html](http://www.nyvaginealogy.homestead.com/QUEENSBIRTH.html)

New York Marriage Records: [marriedatabase.com/newyork/marriage-records.htm](http://marriedatabase.com/newyork/marriage-records.htm)

## **Newspapers: Online Sources or Where To Find Them**

Brooklyn Eagle, 1841-1902 (full text): [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/eagle/index.htm](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/eagle/index.htm)

Death notices and obituaries in Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, and Long Island newspapers (older L.I. newspapers also covered Brooklyn and Queens): [www.bklyn-genealogy-info.com/Newspaper/index.html](http://www.bklyn-genealogy-info.com/Newspaper/index.html)

List of Brooklyn & Long Island newspapers: [www.rootsweb.com/~nynassa2/linewspaper.htm](http://www.rootsweb.com/~nynassa2/linewspaper.htm)

NYS Newspapers on Microfilm, NYS Library: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/nysnp/all/city4.htm> (click on a city)  
[www.nysl.nysed.gov/nysnp/county1.htm](http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/nysnp/county1.htm) (click on a county)

NYS Newspapers on Microfilm, all NYS Locations: [www.nysl.nysed.gov/nysnp/city4.htm](http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/nysnp/city4.htm) (click on a city)  
[www.nysl.nysed.gov/nysnp/all/county4.htm](http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/nysnp/all/county4.htm) (click a county)

Newspapers on Microfilm at the Queens Public Library's Long Island Division, including Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens newspapers (Note: Older Long Island newspapers also covered Brooklyn and Queens):

<http://aqua.queenslibrary.org/?q=newspapers%20on%20microfilms>

Queens County Sentinel (abstracted marriage and death names and dates):

[www.nyvaginealogy.homestead.com/mainqueenscountysentinel.html](http://www.nyvaginealogy.homestead.com/mainqueenscountysentinel.html)

Index to the New-York Daily Tribune, 1875-1884, 1895:

[www.loc.gov/rr/news/news\\_research\\_tools/nytribindex.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/news/news_research_tools/nytribindex.html)