Genealogy Research in Arizona

Most unique genealogical features:

- There are 21 Indian reservations in Arizona.
- Explored 1540; few setters until 1840.
- Early records in Spain, Mexico, New Mexico.
- U.S. territory after Mexican War 1846-1848.
- 1853 Gadsden Purchase added land south of the Gila River for Butterfield Overland Mail and Southern Pacific Railroad routes.

Arizona Birth Records

No birth records were kept by counties or the state before 1855.
Arizona Department of Health has indexes and images of birth records 1855 - 1939: http://genealogy.az.gov/
FamilySearch.org and Ancestry.com have an index of Arizona births and christenings 1909 – 1917

County Birth Records

In 1855, a few counties began keeping birth records.
In 1909, the state of Arizona required counties to record *all* births in the state. Gradually the counties achieved 100% compliance.

Obtain non-certified copies of birth records from **most County Health Departments** or from the **Department of Health Services**: http://genealogy.az.gov/
Obtain certified (legal) copies of birth certificates from the **Arizona Department of Health Services, Vital Records:** Phone: 602-364-1300 or http://www.azdhs.gov/vital-records

Restrictions on obtaining a birth certificate of a person born within the last 75 years

The person obtaining the certificate must be:

- The person on the certificate
- The parent, spouse, child, sibling, or legal guardian of the person on the certificate
- The paternal grandparent of the person on the certificate (if the father is listed on the vital record)
- Anyone who has legal interest in the certificate

Other Records that may record or refer to a person's birth

- Church records
- Military records
- Obituary
- Funeral Home/Cemetery records
- Bible records
- Censuses
- Social Security Applications

Arizona Marriage Records

- An 1864 Arizona territorial law required County Recorders to keep marriage records.
- From 1891 to 1912, Clerks of the Probate Court issued marriage licenses.

FamilySearch.org and Ancestry.com both have indexes of Arizona marriages for certain years.
The Western States Marriage Index includes some Arizona marriages before and after 1900. Search this index at http://abish.byui.edu/specialCollections/westernStates/Search.cfm

Marriages 1864 to the Present
These records are held at the county Superior Court where they are filed or at the Arizona State Archives.
Order a copy of the marriage application and/or certificate from the Clerk of the Superior Court of the county in which the marriage took place.
Check with the Court for year restrictions on obtaining copies.

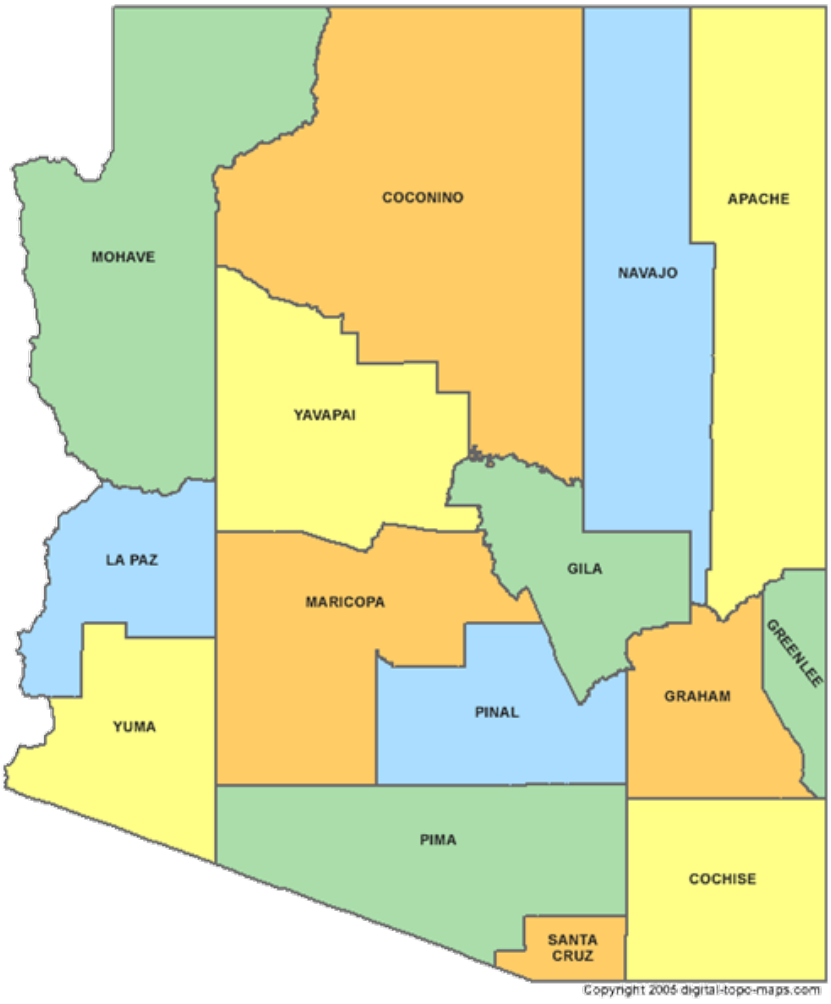
Gretna Greens: When an eloping Arizona couple's marriage is not in their home county, search for it in alternate places like Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada, or Yuma, Yuma County, Arizona.

Arizona Death Records

Arizona has death records dating back as early as 1844.
State law required the recording of death certificates in 1909.

Arizona Department of Health has indexes and images of Death Records 1870 – 1964: http://genealogy.az.gov
FamilySearch.org has an index and images of deaths from 1870 – 1951.
Ancestry.com has indexes of deaths from 1910-1911 and 1933-1994.
Arizona **Department of Health Services** houses death records from 1844 through the present year.
Obtain a copy of a death certificate of a person deceased at least 50 years from the **Department of Health Services**, http://genealogy.az.gov/.

Arizona Counties:



The Atlas of Historical County Boundaries – Interactive maps and text covering the historical boundaries, names, organization, and attachments of every county, extinct county and unsuccessful county proposal from the creation of the first county through December 31, 2000. - http://publications.newberry.org/ahcbp/index.html

Arizona Migration Routes: Colorado River · Little Colorado River · Gila River · Beale Wagon Road · Butterfield Overland Mail · Honeymoon Trail · Juan Bautista de Anza Trail · Old Spanish Trail · Route 66 · Atlantic and Pacific Railroad · Santa Fe Railway · Southern Pacific Railroad · Texas and Pacific Railway

Arizona Prison Records:

Historical Prison Register - Alphabetical name list of inmates received prior to 1972 - https://corrections.az.gov/historical-prison-register-a

Inmate Datasearch - searchable database of information relating to inmates interred from 1985 to the present – https://corrections.az.gov/public-resources/inmate-datasearch/using-inmate-datasearch

Colonial Land Grants

In the late 1600's, Spain was the first country to authorize land grants in what is now Arizona. Spain first granted land to mission governors for the building of missions. The Spanish governor made a peace agreement with the indigenous Apache tribes in which the Apache lived in "peace camps" and Spain supplied the Apache with beef, blankets and guns. Then Spain granted land to more settlers who set up ranches and mining operations.

After Mexico wrested ownership of the land from Spain in 1821, Mexico authorized more land grants to settlers. However, Mexico could not afford to continue supplying the Apache with food and supplies, so the Apache resumed raiding ranches for food. By the time American settlers arrived in the area in the 1850's, earlier land grants had been abandoned.

Surviving records of Spanish Land Grants are stored in the Arizona General Land Office.

Libraries and Archives

The following archives, libraries, and societies in Arizona have collections or services to help genealogical researchers:

Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records, Genealogy Collection – https://www.azlibrary.gov/

Arizona Historical Society – www.arizonahistoricalsociety.org/

Arizona State University, Archives and Special Collections – historical collections - https://www.asu.edu/lib/archives/

Mesa Family History Center: https://www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Mesa_Family_History_Center

Public Libraries in Arizona – Listing of county, city, and local Libraries for all of Arizona. Many have local histories and genealogies - www.publiclibraries.com/arizona.htm

University of Arizona Libraries - http://new.library.arizona.edu/

Arizona Genealogy Research Websites

NOTE: Look online for the *GenWeb* or *Genealogy Trails* of any county in which your ancestors lived.

Arizona Birth and Death Certificates –print or download images of birth certificates 1855 to 1943 and death certificates 1870 to 1968 - http://genealogy.az.gov/

Arizona Memory Project – maps, historical newspapers, oral histories - http://azmemory.azlibrary.gov/digital

Digital Arizona Library – access to Arizona memory project, search historical newspapers, maps - https://www.azlibrary.gov/dazl

Immigrant Ships Transcribers Guild - Over 12,000 Passenger Lists in 13 "Volumes" (databases)

Online County Histories - http://www.learnwebskills.com/family/countyhistories1.htm#il

Western States Marriage Index – over 900,000 pre-1900 marriage records in Arizona, Idaho and Nevada counties, some records into the 1930's or later http://abish.byui.edu/specialcollections/westernstates/search.cfm

Arizona African American Research

AfricaMap – track the slave trade with historical overlays and geographical data - http://worldmap.harvard.edu/africamap/

AfriGeneas – slave records, death and marriage records, censuses, surnames – chat or send messages to other researchers - http://afrigeneas.com/

International African American Museum - African American funeral programs, obituaries, marriage records, photos, historical documents and family histories – military records of the U.S. Colored Troops are currently being digitized - https://cfh.iaamuseum.org/records/

Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery - search thousands of "Information Wanted" advertisements taken out by former slaves in all states searching for family members lost by sale, flight, or enlistment – the collection currently includes newspapers from 1853 to 1911 - http://www.informationwanted.org/
Slave Voyages - the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* documents vessels along the Atlantic slave routes from 1514 to 1866; *Intra-American Slave Trade Database* documents vessels traveling between the Atlantic and Pacific ports ranging from the United States to Brazil; the *African Names Database* gives names, ages, possible origins of slaves liberated from captured slave ships between 1808 and 1862 - https://www.slavevoyages.org/

Arizona Cemetery Research

Arizona Gravestones.org – name search of burials in Arizona – http://arizonagravestones.org/
Historic Cemeteries of Arizona – listing of cemeteries in Arizona – http://www.azhistcemeteries.org/AZCems.htm
MESA, AZ: **Mesa Cemetery** – search the Deceased Name Search Listing - http://mesaaz.gov/residents/mesa-cemetery/find-a-grave
TEMPE, AZ: **Double Butte Cemetery** – alphabetical list of names and other headstone information, also tables of burials by section – location of burial information for unmarked graves - http://www.fhsa.org/butteCemetery.phtml

Arizona Military Research

Grand Army of the Republic Records Project – developing database - histories of posts, reports of officers and members if available, search by state - http://suvcw.org/garrecords/

Arizona Native American Research

Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona - current information about Native American tribes located in state of Arizona - http://itcaonline.com/?page_id=8=
American Indian Tribes and Communities in Arizona – history, links to current Indian communities and tribes in Arizona - http://arizonaexperience.org/people/indian-tribes-and-communities

Arizona Newspaper Research

Arizona Digital Newspaper Program – read digitizations of 50 Arizona newspapers - http://adnp.azlibrary.gov/cdm/search
Arizona Online Historical Newspapers – names, years published, location of websites to read historical newspapers - https://sites.google.com/site/onlinenewspapersite/Home/usa/az
Arizona Obituary Archive - http://obits.arizonagravestones.org/
Chronicling America - read issues of some Arizona newspapers online - http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/newspapers/?state=Arizona&ethnicity=&language

Information on these pages is compiled from information in:
Family Tree Magazine
The Weekly Genealogist, NEHGS; Eastman Online Genealogy Newsletter; The Genealogy Newsline