Genealogy Research in Nebraska

Native Americans Inhabitants

From "*History of Nebraska*" by James C. Olson and Ronald Clinton Naugle, published 1997: "The **Pawnees and their northern relatives, the Arikaras**, lived in the area the longest. They came from the south about four or five centuries ago and established villages along the Platte, Loup, Republican and other central Nebraska waterways. The Pawnees hunted buffalo on the plains and farmed beans, corn and squash.
In the 18th century, the **Omaha, Ponca and Oto tribes** entered eastern Nebraska and lived near the Missouri River. Other tribes, such as the **Teton Sioux (Lakotas), Arapahoes and Cheyennes**, migrated westward from forested areas north and east of the Missouri River.
Altogether, the various tribes living in the Nebraska area may have numbered about 40,000 people in 1800."

European Settlement

Originally part of Louisiana Territory, the area now called Nebraska was purchased by the United States in 1803.
U.S. forts were set up near present day Omaha between 1813 and 1827.
Between 1830 and 1854, Nebraska was named Indian Territory.
Between the 1840's and the 1860's, pioneer wagons heading west passed through the Platte Valley over the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails.
In 1854, the U.S. Congress named it Nebraska Territory. Nebraska conducted territorial censuses in 1854-1856.
In 1863, the first white settler staked a claim near Beatrice using the Homestead Act.
In 1865, workers began building the first railroad to the Pacific coast near Omaha. It was completed by 1869.

Statehood

In 1867, Nebraska became a state.
Nebraska's greatest population growth occurred after the Civil War. Union veterans and other settlers came from eastern states to claim lands available under the Homestead Act of 1862. These settlers generally were from Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, and Missouri.
By 1876, Native American tribes had ceded all their land in Nebraska to the U.S. government.
Nebraska conducted a state census in 1885.

Nebraska homesteading case files have been digitized. Search and view them free at:

- The Homestead National Monument of America near Beatrice
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln libraries
- National Archives and Records Administration research centers

View digitized homesteading records online:

- *Fold3.com*
- *Ancestry.com - Homestead Final Certificate Land Entry Case Files of Nebraska*

Nebraska Birth Records

Online Indexes

Ancestry.com - FamilySearch.org - Rootsweb.com

Pre - 1905 Birth Records - Counties

From 1869 to 1904, a few Nebraska counties recorded some births.
Obtain a copy of a birth recorded before 1905 from the **County Clerk's Office**.
NOTE: Douglas County birth records are located in the **Douglas County Vital Statistics office.**

Pre-1905 Birth Records - Cities

- **Omaha** began recording births in 1869
- **Lincoln** began recording births in 1889.

Contact the respective **City Hall** to request a search and copy of these early birth records

Birth Records 1905 to Present

In 1904, the state began requiring registration of all births. By 1920, most births were being recorded.
Obtain copies of birth records from **1904 to the present** from the **County Clerk's office** or from the **Nebraska Department of Health**.

Nebraska Marriage Records
Online indexes

FamilySearch.org - Ancestry.com

Marriages before 1909

County Clerks began recording Nebraska marriages when counties were formed.
Obtain copies of **marriage records before 1909** from the respective **County Clerk's Office.**

Marriages 1909 to the Present

In 1909, the state began registering births statewide.
Obtain copies of **post-1908 marriage records** from the **County Clerk's Office** or from the **Nebraska Department of Health**.

Nebraska Death Records
Online indexes

Ancestry.com - FamilySearch.org - Online Nebraska Death Records and Indexes

Pre-1904 Death Records - Cities

A few city health departments kept records before 1904

- **Omaha** has death records beginning in 1873
- **Lincoln** has death files beginning in 1889.

Obtain a copy from the respective **City Hall.**

Pre-1904 Death Records - Counties

A few Nebraska counties began recording births and deaths before statewide registration.
Obtain a copy from the respective **County Clerk**.

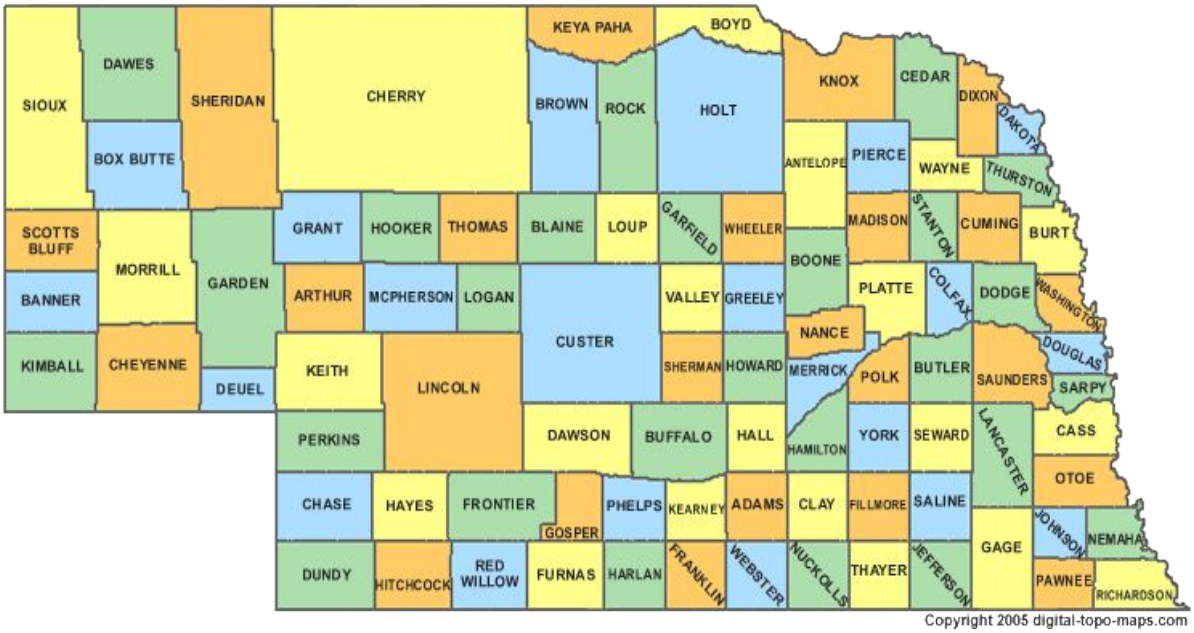
Death Records 1904 to Present

Statewide registration of death records began in late 1904; counties gradually complied.
Obtain a copy of a death record from 1904 to the present from the **Nebraska Department of Health**.

Other Sources of Birth, Marriage, and Death Records:
Church Records - Family Bible Records - Newspaper announcements - Military Records - Will/Probate Records - Obituaries/Funeral Home/Cemetery Records - Wills/Probate Records

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

Nebraska Counties



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Migration Routes

- The Oregon, California, Mormon, and Bozeman Trails: along the Platte River from Nebraska to Wyoming
- Missouri River
- Union Pacific Railroad
- In the 1850's a major port of entry to Nebraska was New Orleans. Steamboats transported settlers and goods up the Mississippi/Missouri river system to Council Bluffs and Winter Quarters (Florence).
- After the Civil War, overseas immigrants landed at New York and other east coast ports, and then traveled overland to Nebraska.

Migration Routes in the Central Plains States -
http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~tqpeiffer/Documents/Ancestral%20Migration%20Archives/Migration%20Webpage%20Folder/Central%20Plains%20States%20Routes.htm

Nebraska Historical/Genealogical Repositories

American Historical Society of Germans from Russia
Beatrice Public Library
Danish American Archive and Library
Mid-Continent Public Library Midwest Genealogy Center
National Archives—Central Plains Region (Kansas City)
Nebraska DAR Collection - Lue R. Spencer Genealogical Library, Edith Abbott Memorial Library
Nebraska State Genealogical Society
Nebraska State Historical Society Library and Archives

Nebraska Genealogical Websites

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

Adams County Historical Society – stories – photos - rural schools - http://www.adamshistory.org/
Omaha Public Library Genealogy databases - *Douglas County, NE* – indexes of births, marriages, and obituaries in the Omaha newspaper, indexes of marriage records or license applications in Douglas, Hall, and Dodge County, NE - http://www.omahapubliclibrary.org/books-and-resources/genealogy

Nebraska State Historical Society – in Search Collections, choose Additional Research Databases, pick the one to search – atlases, cemetery records, city/county directories, military records, prison records, etc. - http://www.nebraskahistory.org/index.shtml#
The History Harvest - digital archive of family histories, artifacts - https://historyharvest.unl.edu/

Nebraska 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/

Nebraska Cemetery Research

Adams County Historical Society –cemeteries, links to burial listing - shttp://www.adamshistory.org/
LINCOLN COUNTY, NE: **North Platte City Cemetery** – search alpha listing of burials, cemetery map
OMAHA, NE: **Forest Lawn Cemetery** – search for burials by last name
SIDNEY, NE: **Greenwood Cemetery** –alphabetical listing of burials by name with date of death, lot and block number – cemetery map - http://www.cityofsidney.org/index.aspx?NID=363

Nebraska 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/

Nebraska Native American Research

Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center – student records, cemetery information, much related to one of the Sioux tribes
Native American Tribes of Nebraska - http://www.native-languages.org/nebraska.htm

Nebraska Newspaper Research

Hall County, Nebraska, Digital Community Archives - view pages of Platte Valley Independent; Grand Island Times; Grand Island Independent; Wood River Gazette; Doniphan Eagle; Staats-Anzeiger und Herald; Wood River Interests; Wood River Sunbeam - http://hallcountyne.advantage-preservation.com/
Ord Quiz* Newspaper Database 1895 – 1980 -** *Ord Township, Antelope County, NE:** select a date of issue, then search the PDF text - http://www.ordlibrary.org/wp/ord-quiz-archives-2/
Nebraska Newspapers: Digitizing Nebraska's History (1860-1922) – search by keyword or by the date of the newspapers of 14 cities - http://nebnewspapers.unl.edu/search/browse/

Information on these pages is courtesy of:

- Family Tree Magazine
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- *Ancestry.com* – Learning Center; *FamilySearch.org* - Wiki