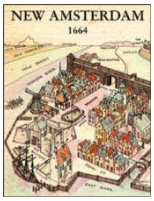
New York Genealogy Research

History

Indigenous people who inhabited the area that is now called New York before European explorers found it:

- Abenaki
- Cayuga
- Erie
- Laurentian
- Mohawk
- Mohican, including Wappingers
- Mohegan, including Montauk and Shinnecock
- Munsee Delaware
- Oneida
- Onondaga
- Poospatuck/Unkechaug
- Seneca

1570 - The Iroquois Confederacy united the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, and Cayuga tribes.
1609 - Henry Hudson explored the river that now bears his name. According to the journal of a crewman, the Europeans had violent interactions with the Native Americans.
1620's:
The Dutch West India Company settled Fort Orange (now Albany) and Manhattan.
English settlers from New England came to Long Island
1626: Peter Minuit purchased Manhattan from Native Americans for sixty Dutch guilders worth of trade goods.
The Indians did not believe that land could be privately owned, any more than could water, air or sunlight. They interpreted the Dutch trade goods as gifts in appreciation for the right to share the land. This misunderstanding was not resolved; the Europeans began forcing the indigenous people out.



1650: A treaty defined the boundary between New Netherland and New England on Long Island. The Dutch claimed the area between the Connecticut and Delaware rivers.
1664: The English overthrew the Dutch and renamed the area New York.
1673: The Dutch reclaimed New York briefly.
1674: The English regained control of New York.

Late 1600's:

- Huguenots settled in New York City, New Rochelle, and elsewhere.
- Ulster-Scots came to the lower Hudson Valley, settling in Orange and Ulster County.
- New York lost two of its original twelve counties to Massachusetts: Cornwall in 1686 (this eventually became land in Maine) and Dukes in 1692.

1700's: The Tuscarora tribe joined the Iroquois Confederacy.
1710 – 1847 Palatine (German) families settled in the Hudson Valley.
By 1776:

- New Englanders had moved into the eastern counties of New York and the lower Hudson valley.
- Native Americans threatened settlement west of the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys.

Revolutionary War:

- Britain occupied New York City and controlled all of Long Island, part of Westchester County. Many loyalists moved to these areas.
- Patriots from Long Island and the Hudson Valley fled to Connecticut. Major battles were fought upstate to prevent the British from taking control of the Hudson Valley.
- Many Native Americans sided with the British during the Revolution.

1788:

- The Reorganization Act divided New York into 120 towns.
- July 26, 1788 – New York became the 11th state to join the United States.

Act of April 9, 1795 - enabled the state government to sell land *back* to Native American people

By 1800:

- The last of the Native Americans had been forced out of the New York City area.
- Small numbers of Native Americans formed reservations on Long Island and in New Jersey

Early 1800's:

- The number of Europeans immigrating to the Port of New York grew dramatically. Others migrated from New England to the Great Lakes and beyond.
- Former Revolutionary War soldiers and their families settled in bounty land established in the central part of New York (Military Tract, Chenango Ten Towns and Boston Ten Towns).
- More immigrants settled the western part of the state (Phelps-Gorham and Holland purchases) and the Old Military Tract and St. Lawrence Ten Towns in the northern part of the state.

1825 - Completion of the Erie Canal enabled travel from New York City to Buffalo. Other canals linked the Hudson River to Lake Champlain and to the Delaware River.

Mid 1800's:

- Many East Coast tribes were forced to relocate west. The U.S. government adopted a policy of assimilation. Native American customs and language were outlawed, forcing native children to attend Indian Boarding Schools which taught American culture and the English language.
- Staten Island, which had been claimed by New Jersey for years, was given up to New York.
- Stage lines and railroads carried migrants, business people and goods across the entire state, stimulating growth of towns and cities along the way.
- Large numbers of Irish and German immigrants came to the port of New York.
- After the Civil War, large numbers of Southerners traveled north to find work.

Vital Records in New York State

Online Indexes of births, marriages and deaths in New York state for various years:

- *FamilySearch.org*
- *Ancestry.com*

Microfiche indexes of vital records at the State Department of Health can be viewed at the **New York State Archives**, at the **Rundel Library** in Rochester, NY, at the **New York Public Library**, and at the **Manhattan Branch of the National Archives.** The indexes include the date, location, and certificate numbers of the records.

State government registration of vital records in New York began about 1880/1881.

New York state vital records are located at the State Department of Health with the exception of:

- Vital records of New York City
- Vital records of Albany, Buffalo and Yonkers prior to 1914.

Obtain uncertified copies of birth, marriage and death records from the New York State Department of Health.

New York City Vital Records:
Obtain a copy of a New York City vital record from the appropriate office:

Early vital records of the five Boroughs of New York City (Manhattan, Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens and Staten Island) are housed at **The New York City Municipal Archives**

- **Birth records** through 1909
- **Death records** through 1948
- **Marriage records** through 1949

Later NYC birth and death records are housed at the **New York City Department of Health**.

- **Birth records** dated 1910 to the present
- **Death records** dated 1949 to the present

Later NYC marriage records - 1950 to the present - located at the **borough offices of the New York City Clerk**

Online Indexes of New York City vital records, for varying years:

- *The Italian Genealogical Group* - http://www.italiangen.org/records-search/
- *The German Genealogical Group* - http://www.germangenealogygroup.com/
- *FamilySearch.*org – births, marriages, deaths
- *Ancestry.com* -**$** - births, marriages, deaths – view them free here at the library
- *New York City Marriage Index 1950 to 2017* - index of marriage licenses issued at the New York City Clerk's office 1950 to 2017, with license numbers - https://www.nycmarriageindex.com/

Vital records of Albany, Buffalo and Yonkers Prior to 1914
These cities began recording some vital records *before* 1800.
They kept their vital records until 1914, when they began sending them to the state.

- Obtain copies of Birth and Death records prior to 1914 from the **Local Registrar's offices** of these cities.
- Obtain copies of Marriage records prior to 1914 from the **City Clerk's offices** of these cities.

Other Records of New York Births, Marriages, and Deaths

- The New York State Library has some early church records (births/baptisms, marriages, deaths/funerals) and old cemetery records (deaths) in the "Education, Manuscripts, and History" section.

New York Church History

1600's

- The Dutch Reformed, French Protestant (Huguenot), and Lutheran churches organized first, followed by the Congregational Church (Puritans) and Society of Friends as New Englanders migrated to New York.

1700's

- Many New Yorkers joined both the Baptists and Presbyterians.

1800's

- By the mid-1800s the Methodist Church was predominant; in the late 1800's the Roman Catholic Church became the largest denomination.

New York Church Records

The Wiki on *Family Search.org* lists **locations of archives of some church records**; search for *New York Church Records* in the Wiki.
The New York State Library has some early church records (births/baptisms, marriages, deaths/funerals) and old cemetery records (deaths) in the Education, Manuscripts, and History Sections.

New York Land Records

New York is a State-Land State. It granted its lands to purchasers according to its surveying system.

- Land in eastern New York was granted using the Town System.
- In other areas, land was surveyed as Townships in Counties.

The Town system was used in eastern New York:

- The Town was a geographical unit extending beyond a village to some agreed boundaries with the neighboring towns.
- Groups of men applied to be granted land by the colony or, later, by the state.
- These men, or town proprietors, then surveyed parts of the tract, apportioned out village home sites and field strips for themselves and others, and oversaw the subsequent disbursements of "divisions" of land until all grant land had passed into private ownership (except for the town commons and local government lots).
- As new lands were needed, groups of prospective settlers would petition a colony's government for land to establish a new town.

Records

- Early towns on eastern Long Island recorded their own deeds until the Duke of York's New York proprietary required registration in Suffolk County.
- Northern, central, and western New York counties began recording deeds in the 1790's.
- New York City began recording deeds in 1811.
- Mortgages were recorded beginning in 1753.
- Records of early land *leases* may be found in the private papers of the manorial families who leased their land, for example, the Livingstons, Van Rensselaers, and Van Cortlandts.
- Early land transactions were not all recorded with the government

Land Records at the New York State Archives:

- Microfilms of New York colonial land papers and land patents
- Microfilms of Land patents - also at New York Genealogical and Biographical Society (NYGBS)
- Secretary of State Deeds – also at NYGBS:
    - From colonial times till about 1775, a few more till 1830
    - Mostly property in New York City and adjacent areas
    - Grantor and grantee indexes

Land Records in the County Clerk's Offices:

- Deeds and mortgages with indexes
- Records begin with the year of formation of the county
- Occasionally counties have records of colonial town proprietorships
- Some counties have abstracts of deeds originally recorded in their parent counties

New York Wills/Estate/Probate Records

Indexes to wills, administrations, and guardianships:

- *Ancestry.com - FamilySearch.org*
- New York State Library
- New York City Public Library
- New York Genealogical and Biographical Society:

Records of Wills/Probate Records:

- Prior to 1787, most estate records were handled in New York City, the capital until 1797.
- Before 1787, some wills were recorded in the counties and occasionally in town records.
- County estate records beginning in 1787 are located in the Surrogate's Court Offices.

Current New York 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

New York Migration Routes

Ellis Island, Castle Garden, etc. Atlantic Coast Ports Lake Champlain Lake Erie Lake Ontario Long Island Sound Hudson River Mohawk River St. Lawrence River Chambly Canal Champlain Canal Delaware and Raritan Canal [1] Albany Post Road Catskill Turnpike Forbidden Path Great Genesee Road Great Shamokin Path Greenwood Road Hudson River Path King's Highway Boston Post Road Lake Champlain Trail Lake Shore Path Lehigh and Lackawanna Paths Minsi Path Mohawk or Iroquois Trail New York Turnpikes Old Connecticut Path

New York Genealogy Research Websites

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

Bolton Historical Society – *WARREN COUNTY, NY:* online databases include birth, marriage, and death, census, military and other records - http://boltonhistorical.org/datalinks/datalinks.html

Geissenhainer Pastoral Records – *NEW YORK CITY*: indexes of baptisms, marriages, and confirmations at St. Matthew's and St. Paul's Lutheran Churches between 1827 and 1879 – primarily German – search the records on the Mid-Atlantic Germanic Society website - https://magsgen.com/cpage.php?pt=34
German Genealogy Group – assistance to researchers of New York and New Jersey German ancestors – online databases of births, marriages, church records, crematory lists, veterans, naturalization records, alien records, etc. - http://www.germangenealogygroup.com/
Italian Genealogical Group – some boroughs of New York City – indexes of alien statements, early birth, marriage, and death records, naturalizations (some from New Jersey), veterans, etc. - http://www.italiangen.org/
Lawrence County Historical Society – links to websites of cemetery inscriptions, newspaper digitizations, vital records and more - http://www.slcha.org/archives/genealogy.php
Livingston County Historian Records Index, New York – index of people who are recorded in census, church, death, ledger, marriage, naturalization, newspaper, poorhouse, and veterans' records - http://www.livingstoncounty.us/index.aspx?NID=515
Long Island Resources – Stony Brook University Special Collections – historical, genealogical including land records, cemetery burials, etc. - http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/libspecial/collections/local
Mattituck-Laurel Library – *SUFFOLK COUNTY, LONG ISLAND, NY:* search Suffolk Historic Newspapers – Long Island Genealogy – Gildersleeve Scrapbooks – city directories - marriage and obituary indexes - http://www.mattlibrary.org/popular-services/local-history/
National Archives, New York City - permanent records created by Federal agencies and courts in New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands - not digitized - https://www.archives.gov/nyc
New England Historic Genealogical Society - records spanning twenty-two countries covering the United States, the British Isles, continental Europe, and beyond, extensive online collections of early American genealogical records, the largest searchable collection of published genealogical research journals and magazines, and the largest collection of U.S Catholic records online - https://www.americanancestors.org/index.aspx
New York City Marriage Index - index to marriage licenses issued at the New York City Clerk's office 1950 to 2017 - https://www.nycmarriageindex.com/
New York Counties Will Testators Index – name search the index of wills or browse by county – www.sampubco.com/wills/ny/newyork.htm
New York Division, National Guard, World War Two - New York men who were federalized in 1940 – names, addresses, unit #, discharge info, notes if wounded or KIA – on New York State Military Museum website: http://dmna.ny.gov/historic/mil-hist.htm, click on 27th Division Men
New York Genealogical and Biographical Society - **$** - digital collections, articles, research aids, webinars, and other tools – https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/
New York Heritage Digital Collections – books, newspaper, photos, letters, diaries, yearbooks, maps, directories, family Bible records, scrapbooks, cemetery records – https://www.nyheritage.org/
New York Public Library - family histories, city directories, projects, mapping tools and publications documenting American history on the national, state, and local levels, including extensive holdings on New York City region – https://www.nypl.org/locations/divisions/milstein
Online County Histories - http://www.learnwebskills.com/family/countyhistories1.htm#il
Peerskill Obituary Index – *WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NY*: index of newspaper obituaries from mid-1800's to the present - http://www.peekskill.org/obituary-index#.W7-bGBBReUn
Queens Library, New York - maps, photographs, manuscripts, **newspapers**, and books that document the boroughs of Queens and Brooklyn, as well as Nassau and Suffolk counties on Long Island - http://www.queenslibrary.org/blog/access-our-archives-online
Rensselaer County Marriages – index of Rensselaer County marriages from 1908 – 1935 - http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nytigs/MarriageIndexPage.htm
Rochester, NY, Church Records – index of records of births/baptisms, marriages, and deaths/funerals of Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, Reformed, Evangelical and Methodist churches for varying years, an ongoing project - https://www.rcip.info/
Rochester, NY, City Marriage Records – search thorough indexes of city marriage records - https://www.cityofrochester.gov/app.aspx?id=8589943531

Troy Irish Genealogy Society – *RENSSELAER COUNTY, NY:* Transcription projects: Troy area politicians, business men, service men and women, church members, deaths recorded in newspapers and county records, transcriptions of Troy, Albany and Menands cemetery burials, funeral home records - links to websites of NY church vital records and NY history - http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nytigs/ *SOUTHHOLD TOWN,*
Tompkins County Public Library –Digital Books and Directories include digitized biographies, atlases and maps, indexes of some births, marriages, deaths, and obituaries, inscriptions of burials in 8 towns, central New York County Histories, histories of community organizations and churches, local family narratives and memoirs, town and village histories - http://tcpl.org/local-history/books.php
Troy Irish Genealogical Society Transcription Projects – cemetery burials, church, marriage, death, funeral home, military records - http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nytigs/ProjectsPage.htm

New York African American Research

Access Genealogy – links by state to websites of African American genealogy, cemeteries, and censuses
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/
New York Slavery Records Index - identifies enslaved persons and their owners from 1525 to the Civil War era – index compiled from colonial records, slave trade records, censuses, slave ship records, emancipation records, runaway slave ads, cemetery records and more - https://nyslavery.commons.gc.cuny.edu/
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/

New York Cemetery Research

Cuba Cemeteries – *ALLEGANY COUNTY:* Click *Community*, then *Cemeteries*, then the name of the cemetery: Our Lady of Angels Catholic Cemetery, Cuba Cemetery, or North Cuba Cemetery - http://www.cubany.org/#
Cedar Grove Cemetery - *FLUSHING, QUEENS, NY, NY:* – click the Interment Search link to search by name and burial location or browse by society - click About Us for a map of the cemetery and a list of the societies at the cemetery - http://www.thecedargrovecemetery.com/
Forest Lawn Cemetery Group - *ERIE COUNTY:* database of burials in **Forest Lawn Cemetery** in Buffalo, **Lakeside Cemetery** in Hamburg, **St. Matthew's Cemetery** in West Seneca, **Williamsville Cemetery** in Williamsville, and **Buffalo Cremation** - https://www.forest-lawn.com/genealogy/locate-a-loved-one
Granbury, NY Cemeteries – *OSWEGO COUNTY* – information varies by cemetery – family information and veteran status is included in some indexes – **Granbury Center Cemetery, Merritt Cemetery, Hickory Grove Cemetery** (also called Veeder Cemetery), and **Lewis Corner's Cemetery** - https://towngranby.digitaltowpath.org:10013/content/Generic/View/8
Green-Wood Cemetery - *BROOKLYN, NY, NY***:** search index of over 600,000 burials – http://www.green-wood.com/2010/burial-search/
Greenwood Union Cemetery – *RYE, WESTCHESTER COUTNY:* index of burials includes names, dates of death and burial, section, lot- cemetery map - http://www.greenwoodunion.org/index.php/interment-search
Holy Sepulchre Cemetery/Ascension Gardens - *ROCHESTER, NY* – search burials by name for birth and death dates and a map showing location in cemetery - https://www.holysepulchre.org/locate-a-loved-one/

Mount Lebanon Cemetery - *GLENDALE, QUEENS, NY, NY:* click the *Interment Search/Genealogy* section of the website to search by name and burial location, or to browse by society – cemetery map – click *About Us* for a list of societies, synagogues, and family circles - http://www.mountlebanoncemetery.com/
New York Gravestones – search or browse over 83,000 gravestones in all counties - http://newyorkgravestones.org/
Oakfield Town Cemeteries - *GENESEE COUNTY:* **Reed and Cary Cemeteries** – indexes of burials and of plot owners – cemetery maps - http://townofoakfieldny.com/town-cemeteries/
Park View Cemetery – *SCHENECTADY COUNTY:* click *Search a Grave* and view the burial index – http://parkviewcemetery.org/search-a-grave.aspx
Prospect Cemetery - *JAMAICA, QUEENS, NEW YORK, NY:* inscriptions transcribed by Josephine C. Frost in 1910 - https://archive.org/details/inscriptionsfrom00frost
Salem Area Cemeteries – *WASHINGTON COUNTY, NY:* search burial indexes for cemeteries in Salem, Hebron, and Fair Haven plus a few nearby cemeteries in Vermont - http://www.slibrary.org/cemeteryarchives
St. Joseph's Cemetery – *WATERFORD, NY:* index of interments from 1862 to 2013 - http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nytigs/StJosephsCemetery_Waterford/StJosCem_WaterfordIntroduction.htm
Temple Hill Cemetery – *GENESEO, LIVINGSTON, NY: s*earch the burials database, including name, birth and death dates, veteran status, notes, and grave location - http://www.templehillcemetery.com/index.asp
Vale Cemetery – *SCHENECTADY COUNTY, NY: Browse* or *Search* the index of burials – burial location on cemetery map included - http://www.valecemetery.org/records-research
Victor Village Cemetery – *ONTARIO COUNTY, NY*: click on *Index* to view names, tombstone inscriptions, row and tombstone numbers - http://www.victorny.org/index.aspx?NID=150

New York 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/

New York Native American Research

Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center – student records, cemetery information, info about Lakota, Ojibwe, Seneca, Oneida, Cherokee, Apache, Cheyenne, and Alaska Native tribes - http://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/
First People - Links to State Recognized Tribes, sorted by state - http://www.firstpeople.us/FP-Html-Links/state-recognized-tribes-in-usa-by-state.html
Native American Indian Language & Culture in New York; NYS Language Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network at New York University - http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/xr1/Language_n_Cultural_Awareness/NativeAmericanCultureLanguageNY2-27-13.pdf
Native Languages of the Americas: Native American Cultures: type the name of a state in the search bar for information about indigenous peoples living in that area – http://www.native-languages.org/home.htm

New York Newspaper Research

Columbia Spectator – browse or search issues of this college newspaper from 1877 to 2001, ongoing digitization to make available all issues to the present - http://spectatorarchive.library.columbia.edu/
Old Fulton NY Postcards – search over 47,000,000 historical newspaper pages published between 1795 and 2007 - more papers being added daily - http://fultonhistory.com
Lansingburgh, NY Death Notices – index of death notices in 10 Lansingburgh newspapers from 1787 to 1895 – click on Projects, then on Death Notices - www.troyirish.com
Liberty Register – *SULLIVAN COUNTY, NY:* search or browse a digitization of *The Liberty Register* 1878 – 1979 published by the Liberty Public Library - http://liberty.advantage-preservation.com/
NYS Historic Newspapers - search entire collection of newspapers from all counties or browse papers geographically - https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/
New York Times Archives – search articles published from 1851 to the present – http://www.nytimes.com/content/help/search/archives/archives.html

Staten Island Newspapers – links to websites that have digitized the *Richmond County Advance*, *The Staten Island Leader*, *Staten Island Magazine*, and *The Richmond County Mirror, Richmond County Sentinel, the Richmond County & S.I. Gazette, Richmond County Free Press, the New-York Mirror & Weekly Mirror, and the Staten Island Transcript* - https://sites.google.com/historicrichmondtown.org/si-newspapers/s-i-papers

Information on these pages is courtesy of:

- *Ancestry.com* – Learning Center; *FamilySearch.org* – Wiki
- Family Tree Magazine
- New York State Dept. of Health; New York City Municipal Archives; New York City Dept. of Health websites
- *The Weekly Genealogist, NEHGS – Dick Eastman Online Genealogy Newsletter - Genealogy Gems*
- "*Native American Indian Language & Culture in New York*" - NYS Language Regional Bilingual Education Resource