



## Puerto Rico Research Guide

### ANCESTOR'S BIRTH LOCATION UNKNOWN

**US Census Records, 1910-1940:** For those living in Puerto Rico during this time period the US Census is essential. The census forms are in Spanish but they are the same as their English counterparts. You need to follow the same rules that you would use for US Census research

**Contact Family Members:** If you do not have even a minimal amount of information AND have no idea of where and when to look, you need to contact family members who might have that information. This could be older aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.

**FamilySearch Indexed Records:** Try searching first in indexed records. Try a variety of searches with your ancestor's name, or with the parent's names, or just by the parent's surnames AND using the option to limit locality by the country of Puerto Rico.

### ANCESTOR'S BIRTH LOCATION AND NAMES OF PARENTS, SPOUSE, OR CHILDREN ARE KNOWN

Civil Registration began in 1885 for Puerto Rico. Catholic Church records are also a good choice as they cover all time periods. If you can find the ancestor in both record types, that is best as you will get more information to advance the pedigree.

**FamilySearch Indexed Records:** Try searching first in indexed records as described above.

**FamilySearch Browse Images:** If there are no results from your previous search for your ancestor or any siblings, you will have to browse images for the locality. On the **Search** page, click the **Central American and Caribbean** portion of the map then select **Puerto Rico** from the list of countries. Select a record collection from **Image-Only Historical Records** and browse the collection page-by-page for your ancestor.

**FamilySearch Catalog:** Not all records for Puerto Rico are online, be sure to check the catalog before giving up on finding records. Under **Search** on the home page select **Catalog**. Type **Puerto Rico** and click **Search**. A list of available records will appear. Your search can be localized by selecting **Places within Puerto Rico** at the top and then choosing the exact locality where your ancestor lived.

### RESEARCH STRATEGIES

**Who to Search For?** If you don't know the names of the parents, but you know the name of the spouse and/or the names of some of his children, begin with a marriage search (if they married in Puerto Rico and you know the place). Or begin with a search for the birth/baptism record for one of their children (if you have an approximate birthdate and place).

**FamilySearch Wiki:** Translation, handwriting help, and descriptions of specific record collections can be found on the FamilySearch Wiki. Under Search on the home page selection Research Wiki. Type **Puerto Rico** and click **Enter**. The information on this page will lead you to helpful topics such as **Languages** (under Puerto Rico Background), which includes a list of genealogical terms in Spanish and a letter-writing guide if you need to request documents from Puerto Rico.

**FamilySearch Community:** You can get immediate research and handwriting help from a community of researchers through the FamilySearch Communities. Go to <http://community.familysearch.org/> and click **Groups**. Search for **Latin American Genealogy Research** or **Investigación Genealógica** to find the group for Hispanic genealogical research. While the second group is in Spanish, the members will respond to posts written in English. On the group pages, you can post research questions and upload documents to get translation help.

## FINDING A LOCALITY

For help locating a place in Puerto Rico, try the following sources:

- Google
- Wikipedia (Spanish version works the best)
- Try a keyword search in the FamilySearch Catalog for Puerto Rico Gazetteers.

## IMMIGRATION RESOURCES

- If you are looking immigrants who arrived in Puerto Rico, there are several good books and films in the FamilySearch Catalog under the subject **Puerto Rico Emigration and Immigration**.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

For other online resources please review the Wiki article **Hispanic Genealogy Resources Online**.