



# United States Research: Mid-Atlantic Overview

Tim Bingaman, AG®

## Overview

Delaware, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania which make up the Mid-Atlantic region are defined by one item, a lack of early vital records. Because of the wealth of information not everything is included in this handout. It is strongly encouraged individuals visit or search the following:

- FamilySearch Library Catalog: <https://www.familysearch.org/catalog/search>
- FamilySearch Research Wiki: [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main\\_Page](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page)
- FamilySearch Historical Records: <https://www.familysearch.org/search>
- Ancestry.com: <https://www.ancestry.com/>
- State and Local Archives, Public Libraries and other repositories as necessary

## Key Records

### Census Records

- Delaware: 1800-1940; No state census
- New Jersey: 1830-1940; State censuses exist
- New York: 1790-1940; State censuses exist
- Pennsylvania: 1790-1940; No state census

#### **New York State Census**

Surviving State Census for some counties: 1825, 1835, 1845, 1855

Surviving State Census for most counties: 1865, 1875, 1892, 1905, 1915, 1925

#### **New Jersey State Census**

1855 Missing: Burlington, Cape May, Mercer, Middlesex, Ocean and Salem

1865 Missing: Cape May, Mercer, Morris, Ocean, Somerset, Warren

1875 Missing: Sussex, Essex

1885, 1895, 1905, 1915: All Available

#### **Sites**

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

## Vital Records: Birth, Marriage, Death

For this handout a vital record will be defined as a birth, marriage or death which has been generated by a government office. Good vital records for the Mid-Atlantic region generally begin in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Some of the records are online but many still reside in local repositories and one must send for the record.

- Delaware Public Archives: <https://archives.delaware.gov/guide-to-vital-statistics-records/>
- Delaware Office of Vital Statistics: [dhss.delaware.gov/dph/ss/vitalstats.html](http://dhss.delaware.gov/dph/ss/vitalstats.html)
- FamilySearch Wiki: [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Delaware\\_Vital\\_Records](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Delaware_Vital_Records)
- Delaware Birth Records:  
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/294972?availability=Family%20History%20Library>
- Delaware Marriage Records:  
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/784218?availability=Family%20History%20Library>
- Delaware Death Records:  
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/786107?availability=Family%20History%20Library>
- Delaware Death Records:  
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/784075?availability=Family%20History%20Library>
- New Jersey Marriage Records:  
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/264302?availability=Family%20History%20Library>
- New Jersey index to records of births, marriages, and deaths, 1848-1900:  
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/312728?availability=Family%20History%20Library>
- New York Death Index:  
<https://archive.org/search.php?query=New%20York%20death%20index>
- Pennsylvania, Birth Certificates, 1906-1910:  
<https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=60484>
- Pennsylvania, Death Certificates, 1906-1966:  
<https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=5164>
- Pennsylvania, County Marriages, 1885-1950  
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1589502>

## Church Records

The United States is a country of religious diversity. Unlike many other countries, there has been no “state church,” except for a few periods in some of the early colonies. Church records in the United States began in the early 1600s. Sometimes church records are the only records containing birth, marriage, and death. Therefore, they are a valuable substitute when vital records do not exist.

Your ancestor may have changed denominations for reasons of convenience or conviction. When the family moved to a new community, they may have started attending a church located there, or they may have changed denominations by conversion.

- Delaware Church Records:  
[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Delaware\\_Church\\_Records](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Delaware_Church_Records)

- New Jersey Church Records: [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/New\\_Jersey\\_Church\\_Records](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/New_Jersey_Church_Records)
- New York Church Records: [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/New\\_York\\_Church\\_Records](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/New_York_Church_Records)
- Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Church and Town Records, 1669-2013: <https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=2451>
- Pennsylvania Church Records: [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Pennsylvania\\_Church\\_Records](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Pennsylvania_Church_Records)

## Land Records

Land records are a valuable resource for the Mid-Atlantic region. They will include a description of the land being sold or purchased but may also include the name of a spouse, children's names and other clues to make family connections. These records are generally located at the county level but there are times when a search of the state level is necessary.

- Delaware Land Records: [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Delaware\\_Land\\_and\\_Property](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Delaware_Land_and_Property)
- New Jersey Land Records: [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/New\\_Jersey\\_Land\\_and\\_Property](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/New_Jersey_Land_and_Property)
- East Jersey Deeds, 1667-1783: <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/136233?availability=Family%20History%20Library>
- West Jersey Deeds, 1677-1854: <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/252452?availability=Family%20History%20Library>
- New York Land Records: [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/New\\_York\\_Land\\_and\\_Property](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/New_York_Land_and_Property)
- Pennsylvania Land Records: [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Pennsylvania\\_Land\\_and\\_Property](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Pennsylvania_Land_and_Property)  
<http://www.phmc.pa.gov/Archives/Research-Online/Pages/Land-Records-Overview.aspx>
- Pennsylvania Copied Surveys, 1681-1912: <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bah/dam/rg/di/r17-114CopiedSurveyBooks/r17-114MainInterfacePage.htm>

## Probate Records

Probate records are court records created after an individual's death that relate to a court's decisions regarding the distribution of the estate to the heirs or creditors and the care of dependents. This process took place whether there was a will (testate) or not (intestate). Various types of records are created throughout the probate process. These may include bonds, petitions, accounts, inventories, administrations, orders, decrees, and distributions. These documents are extremely valuable to genealogists and should not be neglected. Probate records are essential for research because they often pre-date the birth and death records kept by civil authorities.

- Delaware Probate Records: <https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=9044>
- New Jersey Probate Records: <https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=8796>
- New York Probate Records: <https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=8800>
- Pennsylvania Probate Records: <https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=8802>
- FamilySearch Library Catalog: check the county level where the ancestor died

## Newspapers

Newspapers can be a good source of family information. Along with birth, marriage and death notices, newspapers may also tell family stories not known by members of the family. Not all newspapers are online. To access papers which are not online visit a local library, genealogical or historical society where the family lived. Papers that are not online are generally stored on microfilm and sometimes reading the entire newspaper is necessary. By reading the newspaper you may get a sense of the environment in which your ancestor lived.

- [news.google.com/newspapers](https://news.google.com/newspapers) (free)
- [newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com) (\$)
- Genealogy Bank (\$)
- Newspaperarchives (\$)
- Chronicling America (free)
- New York: <http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html>