

START WITH THE BASICS

Approach tracing your **British** American ancestors the same way you would approach any other relative. Start with the same information, documents, and techniques you use in all genealogical research:

- Vital Records (birth, marriage, death)
- Federal and State Census
- Personal Records (family bible, wills, letters, etc.)
- Probate/Court Records
- Church Records
- Interview family members

Once you've traced your line back to the *earliest British ancestor in America*, use what you know about that individual to locate records in their home country.

IMMIGRANTS FROM THE UK

England began sending settlers to the New World as early as the 1600s, but difficult living conditions in the United Kingdom during the Industrial Revolution encouraged another significant wave of immigration in the late 1800s. Keep in mind that not all British lines in the U.S. trace back to pre-Revolutionary War.

A Note on Irish Records

Some types of Irish records generated prior to its liberation from the British Empire in 1922 may be included in British records, such as military records. However, for the purposes of this guide we will only address resources for Northern Ireland.



CASS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY GENEALOGY BRANCH

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 CCPL Genealogy's Guide To:

BRITISH ANCESTRY



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Cass County Public Library System

BASIC RECORDS

There are certain types of records that are good places to start for **British** genealogy.

- **Civil Records**
- **Church Records**
- **Census Records**

UK CENSUS RECORDS

England, Wales, & Scotland

As of now, only the 1841–1911 decennial census records have been made public and available online. Similar to the “72-year Rule” used in the United States, the UK Census is subject to a “**100-year Rule**,” wherein census records are not released until 100 years after the year of enumeration. We will not see the US Federal Census of 1950 until 2022, and the same goes for the 1921 Census for England, Wales, and Scotland.

These censuses may list and individuals name, age, sex, marital status, place of birth, occupation, relationship to head of house, and more depending on the year of enumeration.

On most online databases, the census records for England and Wales are typically grouped together while the records for Scotland are separate.

More information on UK Census Records:
www.1911census.org.uk

A Guide to Pre-1841 Census Records:
www.tinyurl.com/pre1841census

ONLINE RESOURCES

Ancestry Library Edition

Census Records, Marriage, Birth, Baptism & Death, Court & Criminal Records, Land & Tax Records, Military Records, etc.

FamilySearch

www.familysearch.org

Records & guides for researching Great Britain, England, Scotland, Wales, & Ireland

Findmypast.com — Paid Subscription

National Archives of the United Kingdom

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records

Discovery Catalogue

<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk>

Holds the descriptions for over 32 million records from more than 2,500 archives. Over 9 million records are available for download.

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland

www.nidirect.gov.uk/proni

National Archives of Ireland

www.nationalarchives.ie

National Library of Ireland

www.nli.ie

National Records of Scotland

www.nrscotland.gov.uk

ScotlandsPeople

www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk

Archives Wales

<https://archives.wales>

CIVIL RECORDS

General Register Office

www.gro.gov.uk

All records of births, marriages, and deaths from 1837 to the present are kept at the General Records Office. Certificates can be requested through their website.

CHURCH RECORDS

Church of England — Parish Records

www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/England_Church_Records

Records include handwritten parish registers of baptisms, banns, marriages, and burials. Parish chest records are also an excellent resource for general information on parish congregants, but many do not begin until the late 1800s.

“Nonconformist” Church Records

www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/England_Nonconformist_Church_Records

Though some Anglican records include people of other denominations, many records are kept separately. This group will include Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, Quakers, and Huguenots.

PROBATE RECORDS

Probate and Wills

probatesearch.service.gov.uk/#wills

This database includes the probate records and wills of individuals who died in the UK from 1858–1996. It also allows you to search for the wills of British soldiers who died while in service between 1850–1968.