Research your British ancestors the same way you would research any ancestor

- Start with yourself and work backwards
- Look for clues in basic American records (vital, military, census records, etc.)
- Determine your earliest British ancestor in America
- Figure out where to look for records in home country (England, Wales, Scotland)
- Then use those records to continue your research

*Tip: Look for records that provide specific locations i.e. parish*

While Looking for Clues in American Records, Be Sure to Check:

**Vital Records**

*Includes birth, marriage, and death records*

- May provide birthplace and parents’ names and birthplaces
- Can inform you of spelling variations, especially for anglicized Welsh and Scottish names
- Remember, this information is only as accurate as the informant
- Most states have fairly strict regulations for requesting vital records
  - Check with the Department of Public Health or Vital Records for that state

**US Census Records**

- Census records allow you to follow your ancestor across several decades
  - Compare the same columns for different years to verify immigration or naturalization information provided

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**Death Certificate**

**Benjamin Davies**

- **Died:** 20 Dec 1954
- **Seattle, King, Washington**
- **Father:** John Davies
- **Mother:** Sarah [Unknown]
- **Spouse:** Marion Ruth Davies

*Note: The physical copy of this document might yield further information regarding birth date and place, as well as the same information for his parents; also, some, but not all, states have digital archives online.*
- i.e. the year of immigration provided may vary between multiple censuses, giving you alternative information to try out when searching for immigration records
- Nativity section (i.e. ancestor’s birthplace, their parents’ birthplaces)
- Citizenship section (i.e. dates of immigration and naturalization status)
  - Information from these columns can help direct you to other records, specifically immigration and naturalization records that hold the best clues about their British origin.
  - Take the years they provided for immigration and naturalization as estimates (see 1920 census and naturalization documents below)
- The 1910 Census distinguishes between “Wales Welsh” and “Wales Eng” as birthplace locations, referring to the parts of Wales where either Welsh (along the west coast) or English (along the eastern border with England) was the primary language spoken

1940 – Benjamin “Davis,” 65, living in Seattle, King County, WA; born in Wales, naturalized (no date of immigration or naturalization enumerated in 1940)

1930 – Benjamin Davies, 55, living in Seattle, King County, WA; date of immigration is 1909 (accurate), primary language is English, enumerated correctly as naturalized “Na” (completed in 1924), both parents born in Wales

1920 – Benjamin Davies, 44, living in Seattle, King County, WA; born in Wales, “mother tongue” is Welsh; immigrated in 1900 (actually 1909), naturalized in 1915 (actually 1918; only first papers filed by this date – should be “Pa” here instead of “Na”), both parents born in Wales and speak Welsh

Military Records
Always check for the individual’s birthplace on any record
- Registration
- Muster Rolls
- Pensions
- WWI & WWII Draft Cards
- Compiled Service Records (from the National Archives)

Example: WWI Draft Card

Benjamin Davies

Born: 29 March 1875; 43 years old
Residence: Seattle, King, Washington
Citizenship Status: citizen of Great Britain, Declarant Alien of the United States (meaning he has filed a Declaration of Intent)
Example: June 1863 Civil War Draft Register

Ralph Harron, 40; living in Minersville, Schuylkill County, PA, born in England; Remarks: “Alien”

Other Records
Work hard to exhaust all your resources while using American records before you move forward

- Obituaries
- Probate Records
- Social Security Records
- Family Bibles
- Local Newspapers (especially the local news or “gossip” sections for small communities)

**IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION**

Immigration Records
Use immigration records to pinpoint your ancestors place of origin

- Records from the early 1800s and older may not exist – check regional histories or books that discuss “early settlers” in the area as an alternative resource
- If you’re having trouble locating your ancestor in U.S. passenger lists, check for border crossings from Canada (and potentially Mexico) for those who sailed to Canada before crossing into America
- Colonial immigration records are available in a compilation of information pulled from 500,000 U.S. and Canadian passenger lists from 17th – 19th centuries:
  - *Passenger and Immigration Lists Index*, William Filby (available at CCPL Genealogy)
- Colonial naturalization and denization records are available for specific colonies or in compilations:
  - *Denizations and Naturalizations in the British Colonies in America, 1607-1775* (available at the Midwest Genealogy Center)

Passenger Lists

- Starting in 1820, the US government mandated the use of passenger lists
- Earlier records are typically indexed or in book form rather than digitized
- Prior to 1900s, mostly handwritten and provide less detail
- Names on these manifests were typically as the passenger provided
  - Any name changes, “Americanization,” or significant spelling variations came from the passenger, not the immigration official
Handwritten records are notorious for having questionable transcribing – remember to try spelling variations or browsing and filter options when searching for pre-1900s passenger lists.

- Also check Departure Passenger Lists for the White Star Line ship company and incoming passenger lists for British ports, example seen below.

**Commonly used arrival ports:**
- New York
- Baltimore
- Boston
- Philadelphia
- New Orleans
- Great Lakes

**New York Passenger Lists**
During the years 1892 – 1924, over 20 million immigrants arrived at New York’s Ellis Island.

- Statistically, the most likely port used – so when in doubt, check New York

**Online Resources for Passenger Lists for New York Ports**
- Castle Garden (arrivals pre-1892)
- Ellis Island (arrivals 1892–1924)

**Example:** *1909 Incoming Passenger List, British Passengers Arriving in Londonderry from New York*

![Image of a passenger list]

**Research Note:** Don’t Forget the Second Page of Post-1900 Passenger Lists

Starting in the 1900s, passenger list forms like the one pictured above had a second page with over twenty additional questions about the passenger.

- These answers provide more contextual information, but some answers may provide clues on:
  - Additional immigration records
  - Relatives already living in the United States
  - The types of records that may be available in their home country (i.e. the questions about stays at institutions, charitable organizations, or workhouses)

**Colonial Immigration Records**
Researching immigrants who arrived in American colonies before 1790 can be difficult, but not impossible.

- More often than not, these records are indexed instead of digitized and are not readily available online

**Passenger and Immigration Lists Index**
“Filby Books” – written by William P. Filby

- Comprehensive index of early passenger lists, 1600s – 1800s
- Arrivals of over 500,000 immigrants to North America and West Indies
- Compilation of source material (books, periodicals, etc.) from repositories all over
Border Crossings

Canada
- From Canada to US: 1895 – 1956 (on Ancestry)
  - US “Ports” include: Idaho, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New York, North Dakota, Vermont, Washington
- From US to Canada: 1903 – 1935 (on Ancestry)
  - Most English, some French

Mexico
- From Mexico to US: 1895 – 1964 (on Ancestry)
  - Manifest cards for temporary visits and permanent residence, applications for border crossing ID cards, traveling US citizens

A Note on Canadian Border Crossings
If you searching for an ancestor you believe to have been an immigrant, but struggle to locate a passenger list for them at an American port, try searching for them in Canadian border crossings. Many immigrants reached America via Canada by sailing there first and crossing the border later.

Example: 1909 Border Crossing for Benjamin Davies (Canada to United States)

Name: Benjamin Davies
Port: Vancouver, British Columbia
Age: 29 [actually 34] years old, single, dry goods salesman, Welsh
Last Residence: Toronto, Canada
Name & Address of closest relative: Bro. [illegible] Davies, Bristol House, R[illegible], Monmouthshire, England
[This location is actually in Wales, though ambiguous at the time]
Date of Arrival: 24 Mar 1909
Previous Visit: 1904–1906, New York; departed 20 July 1906
Birth Place: Swansea, Wales
Colonial Immigration Records

*Researching immigrants who arrived in American colonies before 1790 can be difficult, but not impossible*

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**Naturalization Records**

*Records before 1906 are much less detailed*

**Pre-1906, naturalization records may include:**

- Name, age of immigrant
- Port and date of arrival
- Place of residence
- Country of origin/allegiance

**Post-1906, naturalization records typically include:**

- Name, birth date and place
- Name of spouse and any children, their birth dates and places, marriage date
- Port and date of arrival, name of vessel
- Occupation
- Physical description
- Residence, last foreign address

**The Naturalization Process**

**1790–1906: “Old Law” Period**

- There was no federal oversight over naturalization, each state established its own process
- 5,000 federal, state, and county courts had the authority to grant citizenship, each with their own system

**1906: Federal oversight of the process began, establishing the C-File (Certificate File) series**

- Every person naturalized between Sept. 27, 1906, and March 31, 1956, has a Certificate File ("C-File") with USCIS containing a copy of their Certificate of Naturalization
- Beginning in September 1906, all naturalization courts were required to:
  - Issue a Certificate of Naturalization to every naturalized person (and name all members of the primary subject’s family who derived citizenship from his or her naturalization);
  - Create Certificates of Naturalization using standard forms
  - Submit a duplicate copy of every Certificate of Naturalization for filing

**1906–1941: Naturalization was a two-step process intended to take at least 5 years**

- After living in the US for 2 years, an alien can file “first papers” or a Declaration of Intent
- After an additional 3 years, the applicant could then file a Petition for Naturalization
- Both steps did not have to be filed with the same court — typically, whatever court was most convenient
- From 1929-1941, the form also included a photo of the applicant

**Petition for Naturalization**

- Generally, the Declaration of Intent provides more genealogically relevant information for researchers, but in the absence of a Declaration, a Petition for Naturalization does provide some information
  - And a Petition may be used to locate a Declaration for an individual if you find it first
- Naturalization record collections online often have both forms for one individual organized together

**Affidavits of Witnesses**

- On more recent Petitions, witnesses to the information provided by the applicant have recorded their names, occupations, and residences
Exceptions to This Process

“Derivative” Naturalization
- 1790-1922 – wives of naturalized men automatically became naturalized citizens
- 1790-1940 – children under 21 of naturalized individuals automatically became naturalized citizens

Minor Aliens
- 1824 to 1906 – minors living in the US for 5 years before 23rd birthday could file Declaration and Petition simultaneously

Veterans
- 1862 – Honorably discharged could file a Petition without Declaration after 1 year of residence
- 1894 – extended to 5-year veterans of Navy and Marines
- 192,000 veterans naturalized from May 1918 – Jun 1919 without filing Declaration or 5-year residence

Women’s Naturalization Records
- From 1907 to 1922: “...any American woman who marries a foreigner shall take the nationality of her husband...”
- From 1922 on, a woman retained her citizenship unless she formally renounced it
  - Native-born women seeking to regain American citizenship had to file a Petition for Naturalization
  - So many women repatriated following the repeal, that a new form was created in 1936: The Application to Take the Oath of Allegiance to the United States of America

Colonial Naturalization
- British immigrants were automatically citizens of the colonies; all others had a few ways of becoming naturalized citizens of the colonies
- The US Constitution allowed for the establishment of a uniform naturalization process, prior to that each colony had its own and the process and requirements varied from colony to colony

Most of these early records, if they still exist, are indexes in book format:
- Denizations and Naturalizations in the British Colonies in America, 1607-1775; Lloyd DeWitt Bockstruck

Example: Declaration of Intention and Petition for Naturalization for Benjamin Davies
Before Making the Jump to British Records:

- Familiarize yourself with British geography both past and present; get a map if you need one
  - Develop a working knowledge of administrative and ecclesiastical parishes, counties, regions, metropolitan boroughs of London, poor law unions, unitary authorities (Wales and Scotland)
  - Be aware of changes in names, borders, and administration, particularly for Wales and Scotland
  - Utilize gazetteers – encyclopedias of place names (towns, villages, parishes, counties), geographical features (rivers, mountains, population), religious denominations and church jurisdictions
    - Names provided will be the accurate to the date of the gazetteer’s publishing

- What to Know About Your Ancestor First:
  - Have a location, as specific as possible (common names may require a parish-specific location)
    - Keep in mind when looking at locations on records: “British” doesn’t necessarily mean “English” and those living in or immigrating from England aren’t necessarily English (they could be Irish, Welsh, or Scottish who have “assimilated”)
  - Know their full name, including any surname spelling variations
    - For common names, try to have enough additional information (such as parents’ names, spouse’s name, a birth or marriage date, religious denomination, etc.) to help distinguish your ancestor from the others
  - Have an understanding of naming conventions (i.e. Welsh patronymic names; Scottish clan-related surnames)

Welsh Research

Civil Records
- Civil registration began July 1837, prior to this date, church records are the best source of information
  - These civil records can be searched on Ancestry in record collections like “England & Wales Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915”
- Census records are grouped with England’s at the National Archives, publicly available for 1841–1911
  - Images of these records for Wales can be viewed on Ancestry and FindMyPast
  - Records for some locations and years of the Welsh Census have been lost or destroyed, check here to see which areas are affected and potential substitutes: www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Wales_Missing_Census_Records
- Wills and Probates dating from 1837-1941 are held at the National Library of Wales
  - You can search their online catalog and their digital collections here: http://discover.library.wales/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=44WHELF_NLW_VU1

Church Records
- Subject to the jurisdiction of the Church of England or the Anglican Church, record availability mirrors that of England’s
- Ancestry has collections of pre-civil registration marriage and christening record indexes based on select church records such as “England & Wales, Christening Index, 1530-1980,” and “Westmorland, England, Extracted Church of England Parish Records”
  - The Card Catalog can be used to search for these collections by typing terms like “Wales” and “church records” into the keyword search box
- The National Library of Wales has original marriage bonds and allegations for marriages in Wales and a surname index to them for the years 1616 through 1837
  - Nonconformist records are also held at the NLW and select records are available on FamilySearch, including their “England and Wales Non-Conformist Record Indexes, 1588-1977” collection
- Various Welsh parish registers are available on Ancestry and FindMyPast

Scottish Research

Civil Records
Civil registration, referred to as “Statutory Registers,” began in 1855
- Civil parishes became known as Registration Districts
- Births, marriages, and deaths were all recorded by district, divorces were not recorded in this way until 1984
- If a child was born out of wedlock, the father’s name was not included in the register unless permission was granted and the father acknowledged the child; such children were registered under the father’s surname with the word “illegitimate” after the child’s name (until 1918)
- These records can help establish information for those born prior to that date such as birth dates, locations, etc.

The Scottish census is available for 1841–1911 online
- Ancestry has transcriptions of the census; ScotlandsPeople has the digitized images
  - both are subscription databases, though Ancestry Library Edition can be accessed for free from a CCPL library computer

Church Records
- Until 1560, the Roman Catholic Church was the state church, few early records survive
- During the 1600s, the state church was the Episcopal Church, few early records survive
- In 1690, the Presbyterian Church was permanently established as the Church of Scotland
- In general, records created prior to the 1700s are limited depending on the parish and burials are inconsistently recorded
  - Cemetery records can serve as an alternative resource
- Nonconformist Denominations include Seceders (Presbyterian, but not belonging to the Church of Scotland) and Dissenters (Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Quaker, Baptist, Methodist, etc.)
  - Records for these groups were either not kept, not well or consistently kept, or do not survive
- ScotlandsPeople is the most significant database for Scottish church records online, but select collections are available on FamilySearch
- For more information regarding the location and availability of records by parish, visit FamilySearch’s Scotland Church Records Union Lists: www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Scotland_Church_Records_Union_Lists

BRITISH CHURCH RECORDS

Anglican Church (Church of England)
State church, established in 1534
- A law passed in 1537 mandated the recording of baptisms, marriages, and burials – in theory universal records should begin (not all records still exist and/or are accessible remotely)
- Priests recorded these events in registers and kept them at the parish level
- In 1598, ministers were required to copy their registers onto parchment – if, for whatever reason, he did not do so, the records for that parish from that time may not have survived
- The majority of these records are handwritten; some of these registers have been digitized and are available online, many (but not all) records have been transferred onto microfilm

Baptism/Christening Registers
- Typically recorded in bound register books with blank pages (all baptisms, marriages, and burials may have been recorded in the same register)
  - Beginning in 1812, preprinted registers were used, with baptisms, marriages, and burials recorded in separate registers
- Information provided includes the date of baptism, child’s first name, surname, both parents’ first names
- Children born out of wedlock may be recorded as “base born son of” and then the mother’s first and last name
Example: 1761 Baptism Register

Marriage Banns

- *Beginning in 1754*, banns of marriage were public intentions to marry, typically read for three consecutive Sundays in advance (*in both the bride and groom's parishes*).
  - This process provided the opportunity for anyone with knowledge of a legal or canonical impediment to the marriage to present that information.
  - From that date, all marriage records were kept in their own register separate from other recorded events.

Example: 1867 Marriage Register

**Married:** 1 June 1867

**Parish:** St. Paul, Deptford, Lewisham, England

**Groom:** Edward William Titchener

**Bride:** Elizabeth Stone

**Fathers' Names:** Edward Titchener; John Charles Stone

**Parish:** Limpsfield, St Peter, Surrey, England

Marriage Licenses

- Licenses were typically applied for instead of a bann for a few reasons:
  - When circumstances made it necessary to marry immediately rather than waiting three weeks for the proclamation of a bann to be completed.
When the bride and groom lived in separate dioceses
- Non-conformists (and some upper class) preferred to avoid the public process of a bann

- The process of obtaining a license generated three separate records:
  - A bond – a written guarantee from the groom and another individual (often a friend or relative of the groom) swearing the union is legal
  - An allegation – filed by the bride and groom detailing their names, ages, and parishes of residence (sometimes includes the names of parent(s) and the location where the marriage will take place)
  - And the license itself – the document the couple presented to the minister performing the wedding (often does not survive, though sometimes found in family documents)

Burial Registers
- Don't provide an exact death date, but you can logically assume the death occurred within days of the burial
- Registers typically provide the name of the deceased, the date of burial, a residence, and a relative’s first name (inconsistently done, usually the spouse’s or father’s name, if living)
  - These can be combined with records like transcriptions of monumental inscriptions or other types of cemetery and burial records to provide more complete information

Example: 1623 Burial Register

Name: Richard Gibson
Buried: 11 Feb 1623
Residence: Southowram, Calderdale, West Yorkshire, England
Parish: Halifax, St. John the Baptist

Additional Information about Church of England Records
- You can search for record collections on Ancestry by entering “Church of England” into the title search box of the Card Catalog
- More information about Church of England registers can be viewed here:

Parish Chest Records
*Records kept in a chest or strongbox by the parish*
- Church of England was required by the Crown to keep all records beyond christenings, baptisms, marriages, and burials of congregants
This includes information regarding the care of the poor, vestry minutes, apprenticeship records, settlement examinations, removal orders, etc.

- Some date as far back as 1500s, but many parishes’ records do not begin until the late 18th century
- The Vestry (composed of church wardens and various notable parishioners) was the forerunner to the town council for an individual parish
  - It had duties and functions both ecclesiastical and civil including the upkeep of local roads, the care of the sick and poor in their community, handling fees for burials, housing, setting parish rates etc.
  - This parish business was recorded in Vestry Minutes books
- Many of these records are available at county record offices, some are available online

**Nonconformist Denominations**

- When civil registration began in 1837, the General Register Office began collecting Nonconformist registers which are now kept at the UK National Archives.
  - Nonconformist birth, marriage and death registers 1567-1970
    - The bulk of this collection covers Protestant and Catholic registers from the 18th and early 19th centuries recorded in England and Wales, but also includes some Quaker, Methodist, Baptist, and others.
  - These registers can be searched and viewed at: [www.thegenealogist.co.uk/non-conformist-records](http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/non-conformist-records) (paid subscription database for UK research)

**Catholic Church Records**

- Between 1581 and 1778, it was illegal to practice Catholicism in England, though some Londoners were exempt (embassies)
  - Because of this, records during this time were often not kept or are no longer extant (with the partial exception of Ireland)
- Instead of parishes, beginning in 1700 the English Catholic church was organized in local missions; a system of diocese and archdiocese did not exist until 1850
  - A majority of the records that still exist were created after 1850
- In general, Catholic baptisms occurred much sooner compared to other denominations, often on the same day or the day after the date of birth

**Quaker (Society of Friends) Records**

- Quakers were the only Nonconformists whose marriages were deemed legal between 1754 and 1837
  - Quaker marriage records are often very detailed (names of both sets of parents and their residences, the addition of any children or grandchildren’s names to the official copy in the register, etc.) and include the names of all witnesses, even those who weren’t Quakers.
- Unlike in the Anglican Church at the time, marriage between first cousins was prohibited by Quakers
- Quaker burials regularly occurred in their own burial grounds or in local orchards and gardens, so it is unlikely a Quaker ancestor will be found in Anglican cemeteries
  - These burials are recorded in both the quarterly meeting records and in the monthly meeting where the burial took place (another might be sent to the home meeting of the individual if different from the aforementioned locations)
  - Rather than a standard burial record, you may instead find instructions for the preparation of the grave of the individual signed off by the meeting’s registrar
- The majority of early Quaker records prior to 1837, such as minute books, digests, and registers, are held by the UK National Archives with records from other Nonconformist denominations; available for view on [www.thegenealogist.co.uk](http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk) (paid subscription database)

**Irish Church Records**

**National Library of Ireland (NLI) Parish Database**

[http://registers.nli.ie](http://registers.nli.ie)

- Includes Ireland and Northern Ireland
Marriage and baptismal records, 1740s - 1880s.
- Covers 1,091 parishes
- Provides interactive parish map
- Nearly 400,000 digitized images of original registers

Church of Ireland (state church from 1536-1869)
- A guide to existing registers and additional genealogy resources are available on the church website (www.ireland.anglican.org)

Quakers
- Records exist from late 1600s to present, available offline through the Dublin Friends Historical Library, (https://quakers-in-ireland.ie/historical-library)
- Limited records are online through www.findmypast.ie (paid subscription website)

Presbyterian
- Mostly in Northern Ireland, congregational records start in early 1800s, kept locally by ministers
- Copies at PRONI – www.nidirect.gov.uk/proni

BRITISH CIVIL RECORDS

Census Records
Taken every ten years since 1801 (with the exception of 1941 due to WWII)
- 1841–1911 are publicly available, more recent censuses are not accessible due to privacy restrictions
  - England and Wales are grouped together
  - Scottish and Irish censuses are held separately (ScotlandsPeople www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk (paid) and the National Archives of Ireland www.census.nationalarchives.ie (free))
  - The censuses for all are available in some form on Ancestry
- 1841 was the first year where the census lists the name of every individual in the household

Example: 1881 England Census
Name: Sarah Duffy, 8
Step-daughter to head of house
Born: Bilston, Staffordshire (mother born in Ireland)
Residence: Bilston, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, England (Parish: St. Mary’s)
Household: Lives with step-father Michael McNicholas, 31, mother Mary, 26 (first married name Duffy), and her two full siblings, Mary A., 5, and
Things to keep in mind when researching with the census in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland:

- Ages may be inaccurate (in general, but also consider that they are asking for age as of last birthday, which can fluctuate depending on where the enumeration falls in relation to their birthday)
- Given names may be inconsistent with names recorded in church or other civil records for an individual
- Names may be spelled as they sound
- Place names may be misspelled
- Compare multiple years of the census to locate family members who may be living apart from the family or have died between censuses
  - i.e. older siblings who have moved out and are living as servants or borders elsewhere in the area
- The 1841 and 1861 censuses are notorious for being difficult to read due to faint and illegible writing

Approach the British census in the same way you would the U.S. census:

- Compare multiple years to glean additional information as the family and the questionnaire changes
- Use clues from the census to locate other records
  - i.e. Using Sarah Duffy's 1881 census (above) to locate her birth father's death record, or Mary Duffy and her first husband's marriage record, or even Mary's immigration information and the records she generated in Ireland where she was born

A guide to Census records can be found here: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/census-records

1939 National Register

- Taken on 29 September 1939, covers the populations of England and Wales
  - Information enumerated is very similar to a census
- 40 million people recorded
  - The record for anyone born less than 100 years ago is closed due to privacy restrictions
  - Includes members of the armed forces on leave and civilians living on military bases
  - Does not include the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, Scotland, or Northern Ireland
- The information recorded was used to create Identity Cards
  - Connected to the issuing of ration books, administer conscription and division of labor, and to monitor population migrations after WWII

The 1939 National Register is available on www.findmypast.co.uk, free to search, but viewing requires a subscription

You can learn more about the 1939 Register by watching www.youtube.com/watch?v=25bGiXLo8Yk

Civil Registration

- Universal civil registration began:
  - In 1837 for England and Wales
  - In 1855 for Scotland
  - The universal civil registration indexes for Ireland begin in 1864
    - Non-Catholic registration began earlier in 1845
    - Beginning in 1922 there were two separate General Register Offices: one in Dublin for Ireland, another in Belfast for N. Ireland
- Registration Indexes
  - Birth, marriage, and death registers are most readily available in index form
  - Can be searched and viewed on Ancestry
    - Organized alphabetically by surname, then given name and may provide a variety of information based on the type of index and the time frame:
      - The registration district in which the event was recorded
      - Mother's maiden name may be provided in birth registers
      - Both the groom and the bride's full name is provided on marriage registers
The exact date isn’t given, but the index will tell you the three-month range or the “quarter” in which the birth, marriage or death was recorded

The volume and page number given is the location of the original – you will need this to request a copy of the certificate that will have more detailed information (see below)

Example: Civil Registration Birth Index for Births Registered in July, August, & September of 1860

William Henry Herber, registered in the District of West Ham; Vol. 4a, Page 37 (see certificate below)

Certificates

- For a fee, a certified copy of the recorded birth, marriage, or death can be requested through the General Register Office (GRO) (www.gov.uk/order-copy-birth-death-marriage-certificate)
- A certificate will provide more details than the index – as you can see below
  - This process varies for Scotland: www.nrscotland.gov.uk/registration/how-to-order-an-official-extract-from-the-registers
  - And Northern Ireland: www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/ordering-life-event-certificates

Poor Law Records

- Poor Law workhouses established in 1834 by the Poor Law Amendment Act
  - These workhouses in the UK are similar to county homes or poor farms in the US
  - The workhouse system was abolished in 1930, some workhouses repurposed as Public Assistance Institutions controlled by local county councils
  - Records associated with Poor Law Workhouses include medical records, registers, administration papers – though existing records can be hard to locate
• Each Poor Law Union had its own workhouse
  o Prior to this, relief was provided inconsistently by almshouses, hospitals, poor houses, churches, and orphanages; the quality and accessibility of relief varied by parish
• Orphaned children, the physically and mentally ill, the disabled, the elderly, and unmarried mothers also lived and worked in these workhouses

Learn more about Poor Law Workhouses and their records here: www.workhouses.org.uk

Example: 1883 Order for the Reception of a Pauper Patient

Name of Patient, and Christian Name at length: Charles Edwin Litton
Sex and Age: male, 36
Condition of Life, and previous Occupation (if any): Harness maker
Religious Persuasion, as far as known: Church of England
Previous Place of Abode: 30 Regent Street, Chelsea, England
Parish or Union to which the Lunatic is chargeable: St. Ruth, Chelsea
Nearest Known Relative: Elizabeth Litton, wife [same address]

Military Service Records
• In general, service was through the British military, even for those who were Irish, Scottish, or Welsh
  o Because of this, these service records are held at the UK National Archives, some collections have digital images of the records available for a fee
• Compiled service records and miscellaneous record collections are available across all branches of the military, including:
  o The British Army, Royal Air Force, Royal Marines, Merchant Seamen, wills, medals and honors
  o Online record collections can be searched or browsed (and obtained for a fee) with the catalog here: http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk

A research guide to Scottish military records is available here: www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/guides/military-records
Example: 1867 Continuous Service Engagement (Royal British Navy)

County Records
The majority of court records available to the public are kept at the National Archives

- Petty sessions courts
  - Dealt with minor local matters, presided over by a justice of the peace (now referred to as magistrate courts)
  - Magistrate courts deal with 95% of the less serious “summary” offenses, such as loitering, disorderly conduct, etc., which can be handled without a jury trial
  - Available records include court registers (including juvenile and youth courts), pardons, and bail registers
- Quarter sessions courts
  - Held until 1972, met four times a year, dealt with various offenses
- Assize courts
  - Held periodically until 1972, heard serious criminal cases
- Crown courts
  - Began in 1972 after the abolition of assize and quarter sessions courts, hears serious offenses such as robbery, murder and other indictable offenses; 90 courts in England and Wales
  - Available records include indictments, case files, and transcripts, held at the National Archives
- Coroner’s courts
  - Inquiries held by county coroner, most records are not yet digitized online
Example: January 1, 1861, Epiphany Quarter Sessions, Gloucester

Name: Henry Clarke
Offence: Larceny, previous conviction of felony

Convicted and Sentenced: Imprisonment: 14 days hard labor and at the expiration thereof to be sent to the Reformatory School at Hardwick for 3 years

Criminal Records
- These records include gaol and prison registers, Quarter Sessions criminal registers, convict transportation registers (to both Australia and America)
  - Inmate records often provide a detailed description and a photo of the individual
  - These records can help establish your ancestor's location, may provide information similar in detail to a census record
  - Availability of criminal records varies for location; record collections (i.e. England & Wales, Criminal Registers, 1791-1892) are available on Ancestry, FamilySearch, and FindMyPast

Example: Gaol Register
Name: Patrick Lemon
As stated by prisoner:
Parish and County where born: Dublin, Ireland
Trade or Occupation: none
Education: R&W [can read and write]
Religion: R.C. [Roman Catholic]
Age: 24 years
Complexion: Fresh
Eyes: Brown
Hair: Dark Brown
Height: 5 ft, 9 inches
Make: Ordinary
Observations: D on left side, altered into a flag. The red marks denote the alterations [a drawing of the mark described here is under Marks on Person]
Other Court Records Resources
- Published court records are available at the Family History Library or by searching for copies of those titles held at other libraries through WorldCat (www.worldcat.org)
- Family History Library holdings on FamilySearch: (https://familysearch.org/catalog/search – Enter England (or Ireland, Wales, Scotland) into Place search form and locate England – Court Records in results for book titles)

Databases and Repositories

National Archives of the United Kingdom
Home Page: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk
Record Collection Catalog: http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk
Research Guides: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides

General Register Office (GRO)
Home Page: www.gro.gov.uk/gro
Order and Search for Records Online: www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/default.asp
FAQs: www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/most_customers_want_to_know.asp

Welsh Genealogy Resources
National Library of Wales (Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru)
Home Page: www.llgc.org.uk
Search the Archives: www.llgc.org.uk/en/discover/search
Submitting Research Inquiries: www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=147

Scottish Genealogy Resources
The Scottish Genealogy Society: www.scotsgenealogy.com

National Library of Scotland
Home Page: www.nls.uk
Family History: www.nls.uk/family-history
FAQs for Scottish Research: www.nls.uk/family-history/questions

National Records of Scotland
Home Page: www.nrscotland.gov.uk
Ordering Certificates: www.nrscotland.gov.uk/registration
Research Guides: www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/guides
Researching Online: www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/researching-online

ScotlandsPeople (paid subscription database)
Home Page: www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk
Subscription fees: www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/content/our-charges

Irish Genealogy Resources
Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI)
Home Page: www.nidirect.gov.uk/proni
Search General Records Office of Northern Ireland (GRONI): [https://geni.nidirect.gov.uk](https://geni.nidirect.gov.uk)
About the PRONI eCatalogues: [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/about-proni-catalogues-and-ecatalogue](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/about-proni-catalogues-and-ecatalogue)

**Irish Ancestry Database (Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs)**
Home Page: [www.irishgenealogy.ie/en](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie/en)
Search Church Records: [https://churchrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords](https://churchrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords)
Search Civil Registrations: [https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/civil-search.jsp](https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/civil-search.jsp)

**Additional Resources**

**FindMyPast** (paid subscription database)
Home Page: [www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com)
Subscription fees: [www.findmypast.com/pay](http://www.findmypast.com/pay)

**The Genealogist** (paid subscription database)
Home Page: [www.thegenealogist.co.uk](http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk)
Subscription fees: [www.thegenealogist.co.uk/compare](http://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/compare)

**The British Newspaper Archive** (paid subscription database)
Home Page: [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)
Subscription fees: [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/account/subscribe](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/account/subscribe)

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Visit the library’s locations page ([www.casscolibrary.org/locations](http://www.casscolibrary.org/locations)) for CCPL Genealogy’s location, contact information, and hours of operation.

Information regarding our digital collections, access to online databases, submitting inquiries, and more, can be found on Cass County Public Library’s Genealogy Resources page, located here: [www.casscolibrary.org/genealogy](http://www.casscolibrary.org/genealogy)

Send Research Inquiries to: [askgenealogy@casscolibrary.org](mailto:askgenealogy@casscolibrary.org)
Cass County Public Library – Genealogy Branch
400 E. Mechanic St. Harrisonville, MO – 816.884.6285