

# New York City Research

## Class 2: 18<sup>th</sup> Century

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### History

- French and Indian War
  - a. Atlantic shipping prohibited in 1757 in preparation for attack on Louisbourg, Nova Scotia
- Rebellion/Revolutionary War
  - a. Stamp Act was passed in 1765 by Parliament.
  - b. 1776 – New York declared independence from Britain
  - c. British occupation of New York occurred 1776-1783
  - d. Great Fire of 1766 destroyed one quarter of New York City buildings.
  - e. Mid-August 1783, the British were ordered to evacuate New York.
- Post-Revolution
  - a. New York City served as the capital of the United States from 1785-1790

### Published Guides

- Bailey, Rosalie Fellows, *Guide to genealogical and biographical sources for New York City (Manhattan), 1783-1898* (Baltimore, MD: Clearfield, 1998).
- Goodwin, Aaron, *New York City Municipal Archives: An Authorized Guide for Family Historians* (New York, NY: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 2016).

### Records

- Vital Records
  - The first lists of New York City deaths were for yellow fever victims in 1795.
  - Vital record registration started in 1847. However, not all counties were compliant.
- Religious Records
  - First synagogue built on Mill Street in 1730
  - St. Paul's Chapel built in 1766
  - Trinity Church destroyed in Great Fire of 1766 (rebuilt in 1790)
  - St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery built in 1799
- Census Records
  - 1790 U.S. Census

- First federal census of the United States
  - Head of household named
  - All other household members broken down by sex and age.
- City Directories
  - First directory for NYC was published in 1786.
  - City directories were used to identify the addresses of merchants and other businesses.
  - Available through New York Public Library Digital Collections.
- Probate Records
  - Prerogative Court (1686-1783)
  - Court of Probates (1778-1823)
  - 1787- Surrogate's Court established in each county
  - In 1802 the pre-1787 records of Southern District (New York, Kings, Queens, Suffolk, Richmond, and Westchester) were transferred from Albany to the New York County Surrogate's Court
- Land Records
- Conveyances (1654-1866) organized by county on FamilySearch.org
  - Includes Mortgages
- Old Town Records
  - Volumes of towns that were absorbed into New York City and other counties
  - RG 096 – New York City Municipal Archives
    - Newtown (7 volumes)
    - Jamaica (1 volume)
    - Richmond (2 volumes)
    - Flushing (5 volumes)
    - Westchester (4 volumes)
- Court Records
- Newspapers
  - New York Gazette was first published in 1725
  - New York Weekly Journal started in 1733
  - New York Weekly Post-Boy started in 1743
  - Early American Newspapers, 1690-1876 database
  - Newspaper Abstracts
    - Kenneth Scott, *Genealogical data from The New York Post-Boy, 1743-1773* (Washington, DC: National Genealogical Society, 1970).
- Military Records
  - French and Indian War
  - Revolutionary War
    - Pension Legislation:

- 1776 - Half pay for officers and men disabled in the service and were incapable of earning a living
    - 1780 - Half pay for 7 yrs. to widows and orphans of officers
    - Pensions are available online on Fold3.com and through the National Archives catalogue
  - Loyalist Records
    - United Empire Loyalist Directory
      - Arranged alphabetically by last name
      - Includes details on proven and disproved Loyalists, including details on settlement, original birthplace (if known), family details, and more.
      - If you can prove a Loyalist ancestor, you can apply to join the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada.
- Tax Records
- Passenger Lists
  - Prior to 1820, there were no requirements to maintain passenger lists.
- Naturalization Records
  - Naturalization is the admittance of a foreigner to citizenship of a new country
  - Index to Petitions for Naturalization filed in New York City, 1792-1989
    - Index cards were created for each immigrant that indicate when they naturalized, what court, what country they were from, where they live, and the reference information for where to find the naturalization records.
  - Naturalization Act of 1790
    - Any free, white, adult alien, male or female, who had resided within the limits and jurisdictions of the U.S. for a period of 2 years was eligible for citizenship.
    - Applicant would apply to any court in any one of the states where they resided at least one year.
    - Citizenship was granted to those who showed they were of good moral character and took an oath of allegiance to the Constitution.
    - Children under 21 years automatically became citizens if they had a parent who successfully naturalized.
  - Naturalization Act of 1795
    - Increased period of residence from 2 to 5 years.
    - Applicants were required to declare publicly their intention to become citizens of the United States and to renounce any allegiance to a foreign prince, monarch, state, or sovereignty 3 years before admission as citizens.
    - Immigrants who had any hereditary titles or of the nobility class were also required to renounce that status.
- Passport Applications
  - U.S. government issued passports in 1789
  - First used for merchants that were transporting tobacco between the colonies.

- Required to be a U.S. citizen to have a passport.
  - Details include name of applicant, birth year or age, birthplace, residence, date of application, physical description and more.
  - Early applications are handwritten and may be written by someone else trying to arrange a passport for them to return home.
- **Common Challenges and Strategies**
    - Lack of Vital Records
      - Alternatives:
        - Church Records
        - Newspapers
        - Probate Records
        - Land Deeds
        - Almshouse Records
        - Coroner Records
    - Researching Enslaved Persons
      - Runaway Ads
      - Town Records
      - Land Deeds
      - Probate Records
      - New York Slavery Record Index
    - Military pension and bounty land warrant applications were destroyed by fire at the War Dept in 1800.
      - Papers of the War Department 1784-1800
        - On November 8, 1800, there was a fire at the War Department.
        - Revolutionary War pension applications and bounty land application files were destroyed.
        - A project was started to rebuild the War Department Papers, led by Ted Crackel. The project team visited more than 200 repositories and about 42,000 documents collected and scanned.

## Published Sources, Indexes, and Guides

Boyer, Carl, *Ship Passenger Lists, New York and New Jersey, 1600-1825* (Newhall, California: Carl Boyer, 1977). Available online at <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/326620-redirect>.

Farrell, Charles. "Index to Matrimonial Actions, 1787-1840, New York County Clerk's Office." *NYG&B Record*, vol. 129, no. 2 (1998), 81-88. [NYG&B e-Library]

Flick, Alexander Clarence, *Loyalism in New York During the American Revolution* (Columbia University Press, 1901). Available online at <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/283823-loyalism-in-new-york-during-the-american-revolution>.

Morris, Richard B., *Select Cases of the Mayor's Court of New York City, 1674-1784* (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1955). Available online at <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/854396-select-cases-of-the-mayor-s-court-of-new-york-city-1674-1784>.

"*New York City Deaths.*" *NYG&B Record*, vol. 81 (1950 no. 3: 146-155, no. 4: 203-206. [NYG&B eLibrary]

Scott, Kenneth, *Genealogical Data from the New York Post-boy, 1743-1773* (New York, NY: National Genealogical Society, 1970). Available on Archive.org at [https://archive.org/details/genealogicaldata0000scot\\_y0z9](https://archive.org/details/genealogicaldata0000scot_y0z9)

Scott, Kenneth, *New York City Court Records, 1760-1797: Genealogical Data from the Court of Quarter Sessions* (Washington, DC: National Genealogical Society, 1983).

Scott, Kenneth. "New York City Quarter Sessions Court Minutes, 1722-1742," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (Mar. 1982):27-36; Vol. 70 (1982):103-111. Digital version at [National Genealogical Society website](#).

*New York Marriages Previous to 1784: A Reprint of the Original Edition of 1860 with Additions and Corrections* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1968).

Scott, Kenneth. *New York Marriage Bonds, 1753-1783* (New York, NY: Saint Nicholas Society of the City of New York, 1972).

Stillwell, John E., *Historical and Genealogical Miscellany: Data Relating to the Settlement and Settlers of New York and New Jersey* (New York, NY: 1903).

Sypher, Francis J., Jr. *Minutes of Coroners Proceedings City and County of New York, John Burnet, Coroner 1748-1758* (New York, NY: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 2004). [NYG&B eLibrary]

## Websites

[AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org)

- Abstracts of Wills, Admins. and Guardianships, 1787-1835 - <https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/7/new-york-abstracts-of-wills-admins-and-guardianships-1787-1835>

- AJHS Selected Insolvent Debtor's Cases, 1787-1861 - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1614/>
- New York Genealogical and Biographical Record - <https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/437/new-york-genealogical-and-biographical-record>
- Marriages in the Reformed Dutch Church, 1639-1801 - <https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/473/new-york-ny-marriages-in-the-reformed-dutch-church-1639-1801>
- Parents and Witnesses at Baptisms in the Reformed Dutch Church, 1731-1800 - <https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/469/new-york-ny-parents-and-witnesses-at-baptisms-in-the-reformed-dutch-church-1639-1730>
- Record of Burials in the Dutch Church, 1727-1803 - <https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/526/new-york-records-of-burials-in-the-dutch-church-1727-1803>

#### Ancestry.com

- 1790 United States Federal Census - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/5058/>
- Inhabitants of New York, 1774-1776 - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/49200/>
- New York Colonial Muster Rolls, 1664-1775, Vol. 1 - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/48344/>
- New York Colonial Muster Rolls, 1664-1775, Vol. 2 - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/48600/>
- New York, New York, U.S., Almshouse Ledgers, 1758-1952 - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/62048/>
- New York, U.S., Index to Petitions for Naturalization filed in New York City, 1792-1989 - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7733/>
- UK, American Loyalist Claims, 1776-1835 - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3712/>
- U.S., Passport Applications, 1795-1925 - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1174/>

#### FamilySearch.org

- Assessment Rolls, (New York City, New York), 1699-1734 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/256619>
- Manhattan Death Registers, 1795-1865 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/190306>
- Muster Rolls of New York Provincial Troops, 1755-1764 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/2534660>

- New York City, New York Genealogy - [https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/New\\_York\\_City,\\_New\\_York\\_Genealogy](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/New_York_City,_New_York_Genealogy)
- New York, County Naturalization Records, 1791-1980 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1999177>
- United States Census, 1790 - <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1803959>
- United States Passport Applications, 1795-1925  
<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2185145>

#### Other Web Sites:

- Chronicling America - <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>
- Daughters of the American Revolution Genealogical Research System (GRS) - [www.dar.org/grs](http://www.dar.org/grs)
- Fold3 - [www.fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com)
- Kings County, NY 1738 Census - <http://bklyn-genealogy-info.stevemorse.org/Census/1700/1738.Census.Kings.html>
- National Archives – [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)
- New York City Municipal Archives Digital Collections - <https://nycma.lunaimaging.com/>
- New York Genealogical and Biographical Society - <https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org>
- New York Public Library Digital Collections - <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/>
- New York Slavery Records Index - <https://nyslavery.commons.gc.cuny.edu/>
- Papers of the War Department 1784-1800 <https://wardepartmentpapers.org>
- Sons of the American Revolution Patriot Research System - <https://www.sar.org/patriot-research-system>
- Trinity Church Wall Street (Digital Churchyards & Registers) – <https://trinitywallstreet.org/history-archives/churchyards-registers>
- United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada Loyalist Directory <http://www.uelac.org/Loyalist-Info/Loyalist-Info.php>