

New Jersey Research: Four Centuries of History and Genealogy

Class 3: 19th Century Research

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History

Boundary Changes

- To understand boundary changes, see:
 - *The Story of New Jersey's Civil Boundaries, 1606-1968* by John F. Snyder- <https://www.nj.gov/dep/njgs/enviroed/oldpubs/bulletin67.pdf>
 - Interactive map https://www.mapofus.org/_iframe/nj-maps.htm

Industrial Revolution

- First “planned” industrial town in the U.S. was centered in Paterson, New Jersey in Passaic County:
 - Promoted by Alexander Hamilton- the United States first Secretary of Treasury
 - The town was built to harness the power of water to run the industrial center
 - Paterson produced cotton and other textiles, as well as paper, locomotives, and guns. In the 1890, it was known as “Silk City” due to the amount of silk factories in the area
- Immigration helped increase the population in the state to half a million by 1850 and a large portion of these immigrant populations were from Germany, Russia, France, England, Ireland, and Poland
- In 1820 the Morris Canal was built which increased the Irish population in Newark
- In the 1840s and 50s large immigrant populations continued to arrive from Ireland and Germany in search of factory work
- Italian immigrants began to arrive in large numbers after 1861
- As of about 1870, the state started to see an increase in the Black population due to the migration of southern Black workers

Emancipation and Manumission

- New Jersey was the last northern state to pass a law regarding the emancipation of enslaved labor:
 - The law was passed on 15 February 1804 but only called for the “gradual emancipation of slaves”
 - Consult information at Rutgers University to understand slave codes and laws- <http://fas-history.rutgers.edu/clemens/NJLaw/slaverypage.html>
- Search the following records for manumission records:
 - “United States Indenture and Manumission Records, 1780-1939” on FamilySearch



- For Writ of Habeas Corpus filed for emancipation see New Jersey Supreme Court records at the New Jersey State Archives- https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx
- For county specific manumission records see the Research Wiki page “African American Resources for New Jersey” on FamilySearch which include manumission records for Bergen, Essex, Gloucester, Middlesex, Monmouth, Salem and Sussex counties https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/African_American_Resources_for_New_Jersey
- A Writ of Habeas Corpus had to be filed with the court to grant emancipation so also check the New Jersey State Archives database *Supreme Court Case Files, 1704-1844*- https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx

War of 1812

- New Jersey bore witness to several violent attacks against U.S. ships off her own coast, but it was a state divided when it came to supporting President Madison’s declaration of war against Great Britain:
 - For a detailed political account of New Jersey leading up to the war see “New Jersey & the War of 1812” by Harvey Strum- https://gardenstatelegacy.com/files/New_Jersey_and_The_War_of_1812_Strum_GSL41.pdf
- Available records:
 - “War of 1812 Service Records” on Ancestry
 - “War of 1812 Pension Application Files Index, 1812-1815” on Fold3 or “U.S., War of 1812 Pension Application File Index, 1812-1815” on Ancestry
 - “War of 1812 Pension Files” on Fold3

Civil War

- Over 88,000 New Jerseyans fought for the Union in the Civil War and over 6,000 lost their lives even though no major battles were fought in the state and a large portion served in The Army of the Potomac
- New Jersey was a state divided over slavery and to understand conflicting political and social views see:
 - *Remember You are a Jerseyman: A Military History of New Jersey’s Troops in the Civil War* by Joseph G. Bilby and William C. Globe available on Worldcat
- Service and pension records for New Jersey have not been digitized. Consult the following indexes:
 - “U.S. Civil War Service Index – Union – New Jersey, 1861-1865” on Fold3
 - “U.S., Civil War Pensions Index, 1861-1900” on Fold3
 - “New Jersey Civil War burial records, 1800s-1900s” on FamilySearch
- Various indexes for Colored Troops are on Fold3, but try using the FamilySearch collection “United States Civil War Service Records of Union Colored Troops, 1863-1865”
 - Also see the New Jersey State Archives series titled “United States Colored Troops - Service Files, ca 1862-1870s- <https://www.nj.gov/state/archives/sdea4015.html>
- Also consult the searchable databases at the New Jersey State Archives:

- *Civil War Service Records, 1861-1865*- https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx
- *Civil War Payment Vouchers, 1861-1865*- https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx

Record Collections

Primary records for New Jersey have not been shared with free or paid sites like FamilySearch or Ancestry and most records will need to be ordered from the New Jersey State Archives. However, there are several indexes, abstracts, and transcriptions available to help locate primary records. When it comes to New Jersey some records can be scarce and record substitutes are important resources.

Vital Records

During the 19th century, there was no authoritative source in charge of vital records which includes birth, marriage, and death records until 1 May 1848.

- Records for births:
 - Pre 1848 resources include:
 - “1660-1931 New Jersey, Births and Christenings” on Ancestry
 - “New Jersey, Church Records, 1675-1970” on FamilySearch
 - “New Jersey Vital Records, Historical Society of Pennsylvania” on Findmypast
 - “New Jersey Church Records” on FamilySearch
 - “Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Church and Town Records, 1708-1985” on Ancestry
 - *New Jersey Biographical Card Index* on Ancestry
 - Denominational records available on FamilySearch
 - After 1 May 1848 use the New Jersey State Archive database *Birth Record Search May 1, 1848 – December 31 1922* - https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx
- Records for Marriages:
 - Pre-1848 resources include:
 - “New Jersey, Marriages, 1670-1980” on FamilySearch
 - “New Jersey Marriage Records, 1670-1965” on Ancestry
 - “New Jersey, U.S., Compiled Marriage Records, 1684-1886” on Ancestry
 - You can search and order county clerk marriage records for Burlington, Cumberland, Essex, Sommerset, Sussex, and Union counties via the database *County Clerks’ Marriage Record Search Request* at the New Jersey State Archives- https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx
 - After 1 May 1848 use the New Jersey State Archive databases *Marriage Records May 1848 – December 1900* - https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx and/or *Marriage Record Search: May 1, 1848 – December 21, 1940*- https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx
- Records for deaths:



- Pre 1848 resources include:
 - “New Jersey Deaths and Burials, 1720-1988” on FamilySearch
 - “Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Church and Town Records, 1708-1985” on Ancestry
 - “New Jersey Vital Records, Historical Society of Pennsylvania” on Findmypast
 - *New Jersey Biographical Card Index* on Ancestry
 - Denominational records available on FamilySearch
 - After 1 May 1848 use the New Jersey State Archive databases *Death Records, May 1848 – May 1878*- https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx; *Death Records, June 1878 – December 1900*- https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx and/or *Death Record Search: May 1, 1848 – December 31, 1940*- https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx
 - To understand cause of death see Glossary of Medical Terms used in the 19th century- <http://www.thornber.net/medicine/html/medgloss.html> and/or Old medical terms- <https://fentonhistsoc.tripod.com/id121.html>
- Note: Always check to see what vital record collections are available at the county and town level.

Probate Records

Probate records are one of the most helpful death record substitutes available for early New Jersey research. These include Will, Inventories, Administrations, and Guardianship papers:

- After 1784 and during the 19th century, the Secretary of State handled probate matters for the state of New Jersey and all probate records were sent to Trenton
- After 1804, county surrogate offices started keeping copies of probate records and these may include additional paperwork
 - To understand the laws and legal ramifications see *A Review and Index of Succession Law in the State of New Jersey, Including Statues and Decisions from 1775 to 1905* by Joseph Fitz Randolph- <https://archive.org/details/reviewindexofsuc00rand/page/6/mode/2up>
- The New Jersey State Archives has copies of probate record up to 1901 and most county records from the 19th century. These can be accessed via their database *Probate Record Search Request: ca 1660-1952*- https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx
- Other available resources include:
 - “New Jersey, U.S., Abstract of Wills, 1670-1817” on Ancestry (New Jersey Calendar of Wills) - <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2793/>
 - “New Jersey, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1739-1991” may have original probate files, available on Ancestry
 - “New Jersey Index of Wills, Inventories, etc.” on Ancestry
 - “New Jersey, Probate Records, 1678-1980” on FamilySearch
 - New Jersey State Archive database “Probate Record Search Request: ca 1660-1952”

Court Records

- Estate matters such as partitions of estates, petitions filed against the estate, and guardianship matters were shared by the Orphans’ Court and the county surrogate and records should be in county surrogate court offices:

- Courthouse records can also include tavern, shopkeepers, and peddler licenses, slave births, manumission records and justice of the peace dockets
- Estate matters were also heard by the New Jersey Supreme Court so also see the New Jersey State Archives database Supreme Court Case Files, 1704-1844- https://wwwnet-dos.state.nj.us/DOS_ArchivesDBPortal/index.aspx

Church Records

- 19th century religions that dominated New Jersey included:
 - Catholic, Dutch Reformed, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Society of Friends (Quakers)
 - Consult FamilySearch for different denominational record collections- https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/New_Jersey_Church_Records

Periodicals

- *The Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey* available to view at a FamilySearch Library:
 - See the following index to aid in your search: *The Genealogical magazine of New Jersey Index, the first thirty five years : subject and author index to the articles and contributions in Volumes 1 through 35, 1925-1960* by Donald A. Sinclair at FamilySearch- <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/2142965>
- *New Jersey History* (first 10 volumes were known as the *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society*) available to view at a FamilySearch Library:
 - See the following index to aid in your search: *Subject-index to the thirty-six volumes (1845-1919) of the Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society* by Abraham Van Horn at FamilySearch- <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/2058261>

Biographies

- *A New Jersey Biographical Index: Covering Some 100,000 Biographies and Associated Portraits in 237 New Jersey Cyclopedias, Histories, Yearbooks, Periodicals, and Other Collective Biographical Source Published to about 1980* Donald A. Sinclair available to view at a FamilySearch library
- *New Jersey Family Index: A Guide to the Genealogical Sketches in New Jersey Collective Sources* by Donald A. Sinclair available to view at a FamilySearch library
- *Memorial Cyclopedia of New Jersey* by Mary Depue Ogden available at Internet Archives- <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/174049?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

Land Records

- Land records can include deeds, warrants, surveys, and mortgages and in the 19th century they are still known as Secretary of States deeds:
 - Find land records in Secretary of State records and at the county level in the county clerk's office
 - Use the New Jersey State Archives database, *Early Land Records, ca. 1650-1900* to locate and order land records

Census Records

The 1800, 1810 and 1820 U.S. Federal Census for New Jersey did not survive (except for Cumberland County in 1800) and the 1890 U.S. Federal census was lost in the National Archives fire in 1921. Use census substitutes like non-population census records as well as land, probate, and tax records to place your ancestor in a time and place:

- For existing and lost New Jersey census records see https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/New_Jersey_Censuses_Existing_and_Lost
- For a county-by-county guide to census records consult the Genealogical Society of New Jersey- <https://www.gsnj.org/new-jersey-state-censuses/>
- Other available resources include:
 - *New Jersey Periodicals Register of New Jersey County tax ratables, abstracts and exempt lists, 1773 to about 1889*- locate a copy via WorldCat
 - *New Jersey Tax Lists, 1772-1822* edited by Ronald Vern Jackson available to view at a FamilySearch library
 - “New Jersey Periodicals Register of New Jersey County tax ratables, abstracts and exempt lists, 1773 to about 1889” and “County tax ratable 1778-1832” available at a FamilySearch library
 - “United States Internal Revenue Assessment Lists, 1862-1874” on FamilySearch
 - Also search for tax lists and ratable at the county level via FamilySearch
- Non-population schedules see:
 - “U.S., 1880 Federal Census Schedules of Defective, Dependent and Delinquent Classes” on Ancestry-<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1634/>
 - “U.S. Federal Census Mortality Schedule Index, 1850-1880” on Ancestry-<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3530/>
 - “1850 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedules” on Ancestry-<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8055/>
 - “1890 Veteran Schedule of the U.S. Federal Census” on Ancestry-<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8667/>
 - “U.S., Revolutionary War Pensioners Census, 1840,” on Ancestry-<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7678/>

Immigration and Naturalization

- New Jersey immigrants could have arrived through several different ports including New York, Delaware, and Philadelphia:
 - “Ship Passenger Lists, New York and New Jersey, 1600-1825” on FamilySearch
 - “All U.S. and Canada, Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, 1500-1900” on Ancestry
- Passports were available starting in 1795 and include a date of birth and where they were born:
 - “U.S. Passport Applications for New Jersey, 1795-1925” on Ancestry
- Naturalization records could be in New Jersey on FamilySearch in
 - New Jersey Supreme Court records in “Naturalization Records, 1749-1873; Card Index 1761-1860” on FamilySearch



- “Naturalization Records, 1832-1847, 1852, 1846-1859, 1861-1862” on FamilySearch

Manuscript and Bible Collections

Manuscripts

- *New Jersey historical manuscripts: a guide to collections in the state* by Mary R. Murrin
- *Guide to the Manuscript Collections of the New Jersey Historical Society* compiled by Don C. Skemer and Robert C. Morris
- *A Guide to the Manuscript Collection of the Rutgers University Library* or *A Guide to Manuscript Diaries and Journals in the Special Collections Department, Rutgers University* by Donald A. Sinclair

Bibles

- Major bible collections are located at:
 - New Jersey Historical Society
 - Gloucester County Historical Society
 - Daughters of the American Revolution Library in Washington D.C.
 - Genealogical Society of New Jersey (GSNJ)
- *New Jersey Bible Records: Vol 1, Atlantic, Burlington, Cape May and Gloucester Counties* and *New Jersey Bible Records Vol 2, Salem and Cumberland Counties* both by Anna Miller Watring

Other resources

- The New Jersey State Library has a guide titled “NJ County Offices Resources” with links to searchable indexes and databases at different county offices and can include links for wills, land and naturalization records- <https://libguides.njstatelib.org/genealogynjsl/county>

Research guides and other helpful resources

- “New Jersey Go-To Published Resources” by Kimberly Mannisto available to purchase through American Ancestors
- *Guide to Family History Sources in the New Jersey State Archives, 2nd edition* By Bette Marie Barker, Karl Niederer, Daniel Jones, and Joseph Klett
- Handy New Jersey Genealogy handbook: All You Need to Find Genealogy Resources for New Jersey by Gary L. Morris
- *New Jersey: Digging for Ancestors in the Garden State* by Dr. Stryker-Rodda
- *State Research Guide: New Jersey* by James M. Beidler available from Family Tree Magazine
- “NJ County Offices Resources” with links on how access each county offices resources- <https://libguides.njstatelib.org/genealogynjsl/county>