

Researching Catholic Ancestors

Class 3: Sacramental Records

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Sacramental Records:

- Baptism
 - May be the earliest record noting the birth of your ancestor
 - Recorded name and date of baptism, date of birth, parents' names (sometimes maiden name noted for mother), names of sponsors/godparents, and priest
 - Additional notes may be captured next to baptism such as marriage information and potential adoptions
- Reconciliation
 - Also known as confession or penance
- Eucharist/Holy Communion
 - Received at about 7 or 8 years of age
 - Date and name were captured
 - There may be a separate list for adults who received communion after converting
- Confirmation
 - Received between 12 and 16 years old
 - Date and name captured and possibly a sponsor
- Matrimony
 - Includes names of couple being married, names of witnesses and signature of priest
 - Traditionally took place in bride's parish
 - If baptized elsewhere, date and location may be indicated in the margins
- Anointing of the sick
 - Include date of visit, name, whether last rites received or not, location of visit or home address
 - Date of death and cause may be noted
- Holy Orders/Ordinations
 - Priests' records will be located in archdiocese where ordained or where he served
 - For specific orders of priests and nuns, records will be kept in provincial or national houses of the order

American Ancestors Databases

- American Canadian Genealogical Society: Index of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1840-2000 - <https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/8/american-canadian-genealogical-society-index-of-baptisms-marriages-and-burials-1840-2000>
- Massachusetts: Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Records, 1789-1920 - <https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/2726/massachusetts-roman-catholic-archdiocese-of-boston-records-1789-1920>
- Massachusetts: (Image Only) Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Records, 1789-1920 (FREE for guest members) <https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/1708/massachusetts-image-only-roman-catholic-archdiocese-of-boston-records-1789-1920>

Publications

Belmonte, Jeanne. *Using Catholic Records*. (Boston, New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2017) - Call No. CS9 .P676 no. 8

Humling, Virginia. *U.S. Catholic Sources: A Diocesan Research Guide*. (Salt Lake City, Ancestry, 1995)

Morton, Sunny Jane and Harold A. Henderson. *How to Find Your Family History in U.S. Church Records: A Genealogist's Guide: With Specific Resources for Major Christian Denominations before 1900* (Baltimore, Maryland, Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 2019)

O'Toole, James M. "Catholic Church Records: A Genealogical and Historical Resource." *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 132 (1978)

O'Toole, James M. *Guide to the Archives of the Archdiocese of Boston*. (New York, Garland Pub, 1982)

Quintin, Robert J. *Genealogical guide to the Catholic churches of New England*. (Pawtucket, RI, 1994)

Raymond, Stuart. *Tracing Your Roman Catholic Ancestors: A Guide for Family and Local Historians* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire, Pen & Sword Books, 2018)

Websites

American Ancestors – www.americanancestors.org

American Ancestors' Catholic Records Project - <https://catholicrecords.americanancestors.org>

Ancestry - www.ancestry.com

ArchiveGrid - <https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/>

FamilySearch - www.familysearch.org

Findmypast Catholic Heritage Archive - <https://www.findmypast.com/page/catholic-records>

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops - <http://www.usccb.org/>