



Church Records

FINDING AND USING THEM IN GENEALOGY RESEARCH

What's important about Church Records?

- ▶ Contain Vital Records
- ▶ Primary Sources – created at the time of the event by an eyewitness
- ▶ Typically begin earlier than civil records
- ▶ Particularly comprehensive when there is a state church

United States Church Records

Information contained in Church Records varies by denomination, but may include:

- ▶ Christenings/Baptisms
- ▶ Marriages
- ▶ Burials
- ▶ Confirmations
- ▶ Communion
- ▶ Admissions and removals
- ▶ Financial records
- ▶ Sunday School lists
- ▶ Church Censuses
- ▶ Church newsletters

Herrn. Heekmanns Kind <i>Paul eingetaucht</i>	8 Tage	10. Nov. 1873	11. November 1873.
Justine Buerger	49 Jahre	20 Nov. 1873	21 November 1873.
Francis Gauss	36 Jahre	14. Dec. 1873	16 December 1873.
Wilhelm Kielmann	43 Jahre	15. Jan. 1874	18. Januar 1874
Heinrich Buddemeyer	60 Jahre	16 Feb. 1874	18 Februar 1874
Christiane Lehnig	28 Jahre	25 Feb. 1874	26. Februar 1874.
Friedrich Wild	63 Jahre	20 April 1874	22 April 1874.
Jacob Bauer	50	22 Juni 1874	23 Juni 1874.
Bernhardt Schaprows Kind <i>Paul eingetaucht</i>	5 Monate	27 Juni 1874	28 Juni 1874
Friedrich Dillthey	38 J. 6 M.	16. Juli 1874	17 Juli 1874.
Louise Mehl	24 J. 6 M. 11 T.	8 September 1874	9. September 1874.
Sophie Kroll	35. Jahre		

Carl Heinrich	Louis Wild & Catharina Schumanns.	27. Febr. 1870.	4. Juni 1871.	G. Nestel & H. von
Johanne Marie	Friedrich Kemper Catharine Buddemeyer	17. Mai 1870.	5. Juni 1871.	Albertine Buddemeyer Albertine Buddemeyer,
1. Caroline Josephine	Friedrich Buddemeyer Albatine Kubitzy.	28. Nov. 1868.	5. Juni 1871.	Caroline & Papst Kemper
2. Anna Marie	No =	23. Decbr 1870.	5. Juni 1871.	Marie Buddemeyer Catharina Kemper
1. Eduard Heinrich	} Friedrich Wild & } Louise Buddemeyer	12. Oct 1868.	} 5. Juni } 1871.	Friedrich Buddemeyer &
2. Friedrich Wilhelm		7. Sept 1870.		Friedrich Wild, &

How to Locate U.S. Church Records

Some Major Religious Denominations

Anglican	Huguenot	Mennonite
Baptist	Jehovah's Witnesses	Moravian
Buddhist	Jewish	Muslim
Church of the Brethren	Latter-day Saints	Pentecostal
Congregational	Lutheran	Presbyterian
Disciples of Christ	Maronite Catholic	Roman Catholic
Dutch Reformed	Melkite Greek Orthodox	Russian Orthodox
Episcopal	Methodist	Society of Friends (Quakers)
German Reformed		Syriac Orthodox
Greek Orthodox		United Church of Christ

Determine Location and Denomination

- ▶ Obituaries may mention the church where the funeral took place.
- ▶ Marriage record. If your ancestors were married by church authority, it will state the name of the clergyman and sometimes the church.
- ▶ Cemetery they were buried in. Some churches have their own cemeteries. If they were buried in a church cemetery, they belonged to the church at one point.
- ▶ Family Bible might reveal which church the family belonged to.
- ▶ County histories may contain information about the local churches in the area.
- ▶ Check the city directory to see what churches were in the neighborhood. Some denominations had congregations by ethnic type (Irish, German, English, African-American).
- ▶ Some small communities only had one church, so most residents would have attended that church.
- ▶ Your ancestor may have traveled some distance to attend a church in the next town or county, if the denomination was important.
- ▶ If you know your ancestor's country of origin, it can give you a clue as to their religion.

Obtaining U.S. Church Records

- ▶ May be kept at the church itself – contact directly
- ▶ Church archives or denomination headquarters – may be available online
- ▶ Familysearch.org
- ▶ Genealogical or Historical Societies
- ▶ College and public libraries
- ▶ Family History Centers
- ▶ [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United States Church Records#Major Religious Denominations](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Church_Records#Major_Religious_Denominations)

International Church Records

- ▶ Family Search Wiki: https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page
- ▶ If town is known: <https://www.familysearch.org/>
- ▶ Genealogical terms: <https://www.thoughtco.com/german-genealogical-word-list-1421985>

1891. Marriage solemnized at St. Patrick Church in the Parish of St. John Clapham in the County of Surrey

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
321	29 th Oct. 1891	Thomas James Hollis	30	Bachelor	Hammerman	15 St. Hill St	Edward Hollis (deceased)	Sailor
		Ethel Harriet Fryer	32	Spinster	—	15 St. Hill St.	Richard Fryer	Coachman

Married in the St. Patrick Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by Rev or after Banns by me,

This Marriage
was solemnized
between us,

Thomas James Hollis
Ethel Harriet Fryer

in the
Presence
of us,

Rev Richard Fryer
Alice Dale Knapp

CH Coryndon B. K. D.D.
Min.

1891. Marriage solemnized at St. Patrick Church in the Parish of St. John Clapham in the County of Surrey

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
322	29 th Oct 1891	Henry William Hollis	25	Bachelor	Barman	15 St. Hill St.	Edward Hollis	Sailor
		Emma Woodley	24	Spinster	—	15 St. Hill St.	John Woodley	Shoemaker

Married in the St. Patrick Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by — or after Banns by me,

This Marriage
was solemnized
between us,

Henry William Hollis
Emma Woodley

in the
Presence
of us,

William Kneller
Marion Kneller

CH Coryndon B. K. D.D.
Min.