This outline describes major sources of information about families from Alaska. As you read this outline, study the *United States Research Outline* (30972), which will help you understand terminology and the contents and uses of genealogical records.

**RECORDS OF THE FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY**

The Family History Library has many of the records described in this outline. For Alaska, the most useful sources at the Family History Library are the U.S. census records.

Some of the sources described in this outline list the Family History Library's book, microfilm, and microfiche numbers. These are preceded by *FHL*, the abbreviation for *Family History Library*. You can use these numbers to locate materials in the library and to order microfilm and microfiche at Family History Centers.
The library's records are listed in the Family History Library Catalog found at the Family History Library and at each local Family History Center. To find a record, look in the Locality Search of the catalog for:

• The place where your ancestor lived:

  UNITED STATES - CENSUS ALASKA - DIRECTORIES ALASKA, SITKA - CEMETERIES

• The record type you want, such as:

  UNITED STATES - CENSUS ALASKA - DIRECTORIES ALASKA, SITKA - CEMETERIES

The section headings in this outline match the names of record types used in the catalog.

ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES

The archives, libraries, and societies listed below have collections or services helpful to genealogical researchers.

Alaska State Archives
141 Willoughby Avenue
Juneau, AK 99801
Telephone: 907-465-2270
Fax: 907-465-2465

National Archives—Alaska Region
Federal Office Building
654 West Third Ave., Room 012
Anchorage, AK 99501
Telephone: 907-271-2441

Genealogical Society of Southeastern Alaska
P.O. Box 6313
Ketchikan, AK 99901

Alaska Historical Society
P.O. Box 100299
Anchorage, AK 99510-0299
Telephone: 907-276-1596
Fax: 907-276-1596
Alaska Historical Collections
State Office Building
P.O. Box 110571
Juneau, AK 99811-0571
Telephone: 907-465-2910
Fax: 907-465-2665

University of Alaska, Fairbanks
Elmer E. Rasmuson Library
310 Tanana Drive
Fairbanks, AK 99775-6800
Telephone: 907-474-7224
Fax: 907-474-6841

Mailing address:
P.O. Box 756800
Fairbanks, AK 99775-6800

Anchorage Museum of History and Art
121 W. 7th Ave.
Anchorage, AK 99501
Telephone: 907-343-4326
Fax: 907-343-6149
The museum has an archive section.

Two helpful guides to Alaska records are:


**Computer Networks and Bulletin Boards**

Computers with modems can be useful tools for obtaining information from selected archives and libraries. In a way, computer networks themselves serve as a library. The Internet, certain computer bulletin boards, and commercial on-line services help family history researchers:

- Locate other researchers
- Post queries
- Send and receive E-mail
- Search large databases
- Search computer libraries
- Join in computer chat and lecture sessions

You can find computerized research tips and information about ancestors from Alaska in a variety of sources at local, state, national, and international levels. The list of sources is growing rapidly. Most of the information is available at no cost.

Addresses on the Internet change frequently. As of April 1997, the following sites are important gateways linking you to many more network and bulletin board sites:

• USGenWeb
http://www.usgenweb.com/
A cooperative effort by many volunteers to list genealogical databases, libraries, bulletin boards, and other resources available on the Internet for each county, state, and country.

• Roots-L
http://www.rootsweb.com/roots-l/usa/
A useful list of sites and resources. Includes a large, regularly-updated research coordination list. For further details about using computer networks, bulletin boards, and news groups for family history research, see the United States Research Outline (30972), 2nd ed., "Archives and Libraries" section.

FamilySearch™

The Family History Library and some Family History Centers have computers with FamilySearch™. FamilySearch is a collection of computer files containing several million names. FamilySearch is a good place to begin your research. Some of the records come from compiled sources; some have been automated from original sources.

BIOGRAPHY

The Alaska Historical Library in Juneau has the best collection of biographical materials. You will also find biographical information in the biographical sections of state, region, and county histories. The Family History Library has a few materials, including the following examples:


CEMETERIES

There is no major statewide collection nor index of cemetery transcriptions for Alaska. Some tombstone inscriptions have been published in periodicals. See the United States Research Outline for suggestions on locating cemeteries and cemetery records.
The Sitka National Cemetery has over 500 graves of military personnel and their families who
 died in Alaska since 1867. A list of the burials is found in the *Illinois State Genealogical Society
 information write to Superintendent, Sitka National Cemetery, P.O. Box 152, Sitka, AK 99835.

**CENSUS**

Federal census records are found at the Family History Library, the National Archives, and other
federal and state archives. The *United States Research Outline* provides more detailed
information about these records.

The Family History Library has the U.S. federal censuses for Alaska for 1900, 1910, and 1920.
The 1890 census has been destroyed. Soundex (phonetic) indexes are available on microfilm for
the 1900 and 1920 censuses.

In addition to the federal censuses, the 1870 and 1880 territorial censuses of Sitka have been
published (FHL film 982047). These censuses include information on the entire household.

Miscellaneous censuses of parts of the Aleutian Islands have been indexed in Ronald Vern
Jackson, *Alaska Census Records, 1870-1907* (Bountiful, Utah: Accelerated Indexing Systems,
1976; FHL book 979.8 X22j).

**CHURCH RECORDS**

Before 1900 the largest religious group in Alaska was the Russian Orthodox Church, which was
introduced to the Alaskan natives in the eighteenth century by Russian fur traders. The early
records of this church are the single most important source of vital records information for the
state. Copies of all surviving Russian Orthodox records (in Russian) are at the Bureau of Vital
Statistics.

During World War II many records of Russian Orthodox baptisms, marriages, and deaths were
sent to the Library of Congress to be translated and indexed. The originals are still there.
Microfilm copies for 1816 to 1936 are on 25 films at the National Archives—Alaska Region, the
Rasmuson Library, the Bureau of Vital Statistics, and the Family History Library (index on FHL
film 944197).

Moravian, Episcopal, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, and other denominations have
more recently established missions, schools, and hospitals in Alaska. The Moravians, the second
largest denomination in Alaska, settled predominantly in Bethel and along the Kuskokwim
River.
Records for all of these groups are at the Bureau of Vital Statistics, but for Catholic and Presbyterian information, write to the local church instead because the Bureau's records are restricted. Most Methodist records are also at the local churches. The Family History Library has a few Presbyterian records.

The Bureau of Vital Statistics collects church records in order to create delayed birth certificates for individuals whose births were not officially recorded. They borrow the original church records to microfilm and return the originals to the church. The staff will do research and make copies for a fee, but requests may be denied if the information is needed for genealogical purposes.

Many denominations have collected their records into central repositories. You can write to the following addresses to learn where their records are located.

**Moravian**

Alaska Moravian Church  
P.O. Box 545  
Bethel, AK 99559

*Headquarters:*  
Bethlehem, PA  
Telephone: 610-867-7566  
Fax: 610-866-9223

**Presbyterian**

Presbyterian Historical Society  
425 Lombard Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19147-1516  
Telephone: 215-627-1852  
Fax: 215-627-0509

**Roman Catholic**

Diocese of Juneau  
419 Sixth Street  
Juneau, AK 99801  
Telephone: 907-586-2227  
Fax: 907-463-3237

Chancery Office  
Diocese of Fairbanks  
1316 Peger Road  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
Telephone: 907-474-0753  
Fax: 907-474-8009
**COURT RECORDS**

**District courts** had jurisdiction over all civil and criminal matters before statehood. Federal district judges were appointed as early as 1884. The entire territory had only one district, administered by a judge in Sitka, until 1903, when three districts were created with judges at Juneau, Saint Michaels, and Eagle City. The fourth district was added in 1909, and the four seats were placed in Juneau, Nome, Valdez (moved to Anchorage in 1943), and Fairbanks.

The areas served by these districts are as follows:

- **Juneau, District 1**: Southeastern Alexander Archipelago and the cities of Ketchikan, Wrangell, Sitka, and Juneau.
- **Nome, District 2**: North, including Nome and Barrow.
- **Anchorage, District 3**: South, including Anchorage, Kodiak, and the Aleutian Islands.
- **Fairbanks, District 4**: Central, including Fairbanks, Bethel, and Toksook Bay.

Since 1959 district court jurisdiction has been limited to minor civil and criminal matters such as issuing marriage licenses and arrest warrants, hearing misdemeanor cases, and acting as the temporary custodian of the property of deceased persons.

**A superior court, a supreme court, and magistrate courts** have also served Alaska since 1959.

The Family History Library does not have copies of any court records from Alaska. The Alaska State Archives has most of the territorial court records (except probate records) for the first
district and some for the second and fourth districts. The archives has the court journals but not the complete case files for the first district.

The case files of the first district, the records of the third district (1900-59), and some miscellaneous records of the other districts are at the National Archives—Alaska Region. Copies of documents not at these two archives can be obtained by writing to the appropriate local clerk's office.

DIRECTORIES

Directories of heads of households have been published for major cities in Alaska. For example, the Family History Library has:

• Fairbanks


• Anchorage


The Family History Library has a microfilm copy of directories of 13 Alaskan towns for 1923-24 (FHL film 934824 item 2).

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

The earliest European inhabitants were Russian fur traders who first came to Kodiak Island in 1783. After Alaska was purchased by the United States, mineral deposits replaced furs as the chief economic attraction.

Juneau and Douglas were gold-mining camps that sprang up in the 1880s, but a greater boom was the Klondike gold rush of the late 1890s. Most of the miners who headed to the Klondike in the Yukon Territory of Canada were Americans, and most of them passed through Alaska. Gold miners founded Nome in 1899 and Fairbanks in 1902. Anchorage was founded in 1915 as the headquarters of the Alaska Railroad, then under construction, and has since become the center of population.

Some people who arrived during the gold rush stayed on in Alaska, but many returned to the “lower 48.” Homesteading was not legal in Alaska until 1898, and those filing homestead claims after that date did not have to remain on the land in order to retain their rights.
The Alaska population has increased steadily since 1929. The Great Depression and World War II brought many people seeking employment. The United States government settled about 200 families from Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin in the Matanuska Valley, fifty miles from Anchorage.

The North Slope oil discoveries of the late 1960s brought another wave of immigration. When Alaska became a state in 1959, half of the state's population had resided in the state less than five years. Many residents were from western states. Only about one-fifth of the white population was born in Alaska.

Native peoples (Eskimos, Aleuts, and other Indian groups) constitute about one-sixth of Alaska's present population. Some records about them are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under ALASKA - NATIVE RACES. Additional records are listed in the Subject Search of the catalog under ALEUTS and ESKIMOS and other Indian tribes and language groups. Other ethnic groups in Alaska include Scandinavians, Japanese, and Filipinos.

Passenger lists for Alaskan ports are not available. More information on U.S. immigration sources is in the United States Research Outline.

GAZETTEERS

Several excellent gazetteers of Alaska have been published. Some of the most helpful are:


GENEALOGY

Most archives, historical societies, and genealogical societies have special collections and indexes of genealogical value. These must usually be searched in person.

Fred Milan and Edna MacLean studied northern Eskimo families and compiled family groups for six generations for 1825 to 1875. Some of this information (including dates and places of birth, sex, and whether full-blooded or part Eskimo) was published in:

*Genealogical Record of Point Hope, Wainwright, and Anaktuvuk Pass, Alaska Eskimo Families 1825-1975.* N.p., 198-. (FHL book 979.8 D2g; film 1035774 item 8.)


An index that gives references to over 1,800 members of the Alaska Pioneer Organization is *A Guide to the Pathfinder: A Monthly Journal of the Pioneers of Alaska, 1919-1926.* This index is available at the Alaska Historical Library.

HISTORY

The following important events in the history of Alaska affected political boundaries, record keeping, and family movements.

1783  Russian fur traders established the first white settlement on Kodiak Island.

1804  Sitka was permanently founded by the Russians. It served as Alaska's capital until 1906, when the capital was moved to Juneau.

1824-1828  In treaties with the United States and Great Britain, Russia agreed to recognize latitude 54° 40 N as Alaska's southern boundary and longitude 141° W as the eastern boundary. Further boundary adjustments between Alaska and British Columbia were made in 1903.

1867  The United States purchased Alaska from Russia.

1884  Congress passed the first Organic Act, providing a governor and federal courts for Alaska.

1896  The Klondike gold strike started a rush to the Canadian Yukon Territory. Gold was discovered at Nome in 1899 and at Fairbanks in 1902.
1912  Congress passed the second Organic Act, establishing Alaska as a U.S. territory and providing for a territorial legislature.

1959  Alaska became a state.


**LAND AND PROPERTY**

The first Organic Act, passed in 1884, extended the laws of Oregon to Alaska. Alaska became a public domain state, in which unclaimed land was surveyed and sold by the federal government. The first general land office was established at Sitka in 1885.

The [National Archives](https://www.archives.gov) has land-entry case files and a card index to 1908 containing only 56 cash entries and 133 homestead patents for the entire state. Patents, tract books, and township plats are at the Bureau of Land Management, 222 W. 7th Ave. #13 Anchorage AK 99513-7599 Telephone 907-271-5555 Fax 907-272-3430 The National Archives—Pacific Alaska Region (Seattle) has copies of the tract books, township plats, and other records of the general land offices. The Alaska State Archives has descriptions and maps of mining claims.

Land that had been transferred by sale or grant to private ownership could be sold again, inherited, lost by foreclosure of a mortgage, or distributed through a divorce. Records of these subsequent transactions, including deeds, mortgages, and other property records, are filed at the office of the district recorder in each judicial district. The Family History Library has not acquired copies of the land records available in Alaska.

**MAPS**

The Family History Library has several geographical and topographical maps of Alaska. Published histories also provide maps of the area.

The Rasmuson Library and the Alaska Historical Library also have helpful collections of maps and atlases. To obtain a free road map, write to the Alaska Department of Highways.
MILITARY RECORDS

The *U.S. Military Records Research Outline* (34118) provides more information on federal military records and search strategies.

Military records are found at the Family History Library, the National Archives, and other federal and state archives. The *United States Research Outline* provides more information about the federal records.

U.S. servicemen have been in Alaska since 1867, when Alaska was placed under the jurisdiction of the War Department. Most of these soldiers were from the lower 48 states. The Family History Library has enlistment registers for the regular army, 1798 to 1914 (FHL films 350307-49). The registers provide the soldier's name, rank, unit, commanders, physical description, occupation, and birthplace. The records are arranged by year and by the first letter of the surname.


**World War I (1917-1918)**

World War I draft registration cards for men age 18 to 45 may list address, birth date, birthplace, race, nationality, citizenship, and next of kin. Not all registrants served in the war. For registration cards for Alaska, see:


To find an individual's draft card, it helps to know his name and residence at the time of registration. The cards are arranged alphabetically by county, within the county by draft board, and then alphabetically by surname within each draft board.

Most counties had only one board; large cities had several. A map showing the boundaries of individual draft boards is available for most large cities. Finding an ancestor's street address in a city directory will help you in using the draft board map. There is an alphabetical list of cities that are on the map. For a copy of this map, see:

World War II (1941-1945)


A national cemetery with about 500 graves is located at Sitka (see the “Cemeteries” section of this outline).

**NATURALIZATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Residents of Alaska became citizens of the United States when Alaska was purchased in 1867 from Russia. Naturalization records for those arriving later have been filed in the judicial districts. Records for some of the districts, 1884 to 1959, are at the Alaska State Archives. Old territorial records of Fairbanks, Juneau, and Nome have been transferred to the superior court. The Family History Library has not acquired naturalization records for Alaska.

For naturalization records after September 1906, contact the National Archives—Alaska Region or the local office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

**NEWSPAPERS**

Some newspapers have been published in Alaska, and a few indexes have been compiled. Major research centers have indexes to early papers from Fairbanks, Seward, and Petersburg. The Family History Library has not collected Alaskan newspapers. The library has *The Anchorage Times Obituaries Index, 1915-1980* (FHL fiche 6331408-9).

**PERIODICALS**

A helpful periodical for Alaska research is *North Star Nuggets*, 1975 (published by the Fairbanks Genealogical Society, c/o Betty Feakes, ed., 1552 Noble Street, Fairbanks, AK 99701; FHL book 979.86 B2n; vol. 1 on film 1321462 item 10). Only one volume has been published.

PROBATE RECORDS

Probate records of Alaska were kept by the district courts prior to statehood. The superior court now has jurisdiction over probate matters.

The Family History Library does not have copies of probate records from Alaska. They are available at the archives and offices mentioned in the “Court Records” section of this outline.

VITAL RECORDS

State registration of vital records began in 1913 and was generally complied with by 1945. Birth, delayed birth, marriage, divorce (since 1950), and death records are available from:

Bureau of Vital Statistics
Department of Health and Social Services
P.O. Box 110675
Juneau, AK 99811
Telephone: 907-465-3038

The current fees for obtaining copies of the state's records are listed in *Where to Write for Vital Records: Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Divorces* (Hyattsville, Md.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, March 1993; FHL book 973 V24wv). Copies of this booklet are at the Family History Library and many Family History Centers. Or you can write to the Bureau of Vital Statistics for current information.

FOR FURTHER READING


Eichholz, Alice, ed. *Ancestry's Red Book: American State, County, and Town Sources*. Rev. ed. Salt Lake City: Ancestry, 1992. (FHL book 973 D27rb 1992; computer number 594021.) Contains bibliographies and background information on history and ethnic groups. Also contains maps and tables showing when each county was created.
COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

The Family History Library welcomes additions and corrections that will improve future editions of this outline. Please send your suggestions to:

Publications Coordination
Family History Library
35 N. West Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150-3400
USA

We appreciate the archivists, librarians, and others who have reviewed this outline and shared helpful information.

Alaska Historical Background

History

Effective family research requires some understanding of the historical events that may have affected your family and the records about them. Learning about wars, governments, laws, migrations, and religious trends may help you understand political boundaries, family movements, and settlement patterns. These events may have led to the creation of records that your family was listed in, such as land and military documents.

The following important events in the history of Alaska affected political boundaries, record keeping, and family movements.

1784  Russian fur traders established the first white settlement on Kodiak Island.
1799  Sitka was permanently founded by the Russians. It served as Alaska's capital until 1906, when the capital was moved to Juneau.
1824-1828  In treaties with the United States and Great Britain, Russia agreed to recognize latitude 54° 40' N as Alaska's southern boundary and longitude 141° W as the eastern boundary. Further boundary adjustments between Alaska and British Columbia were made in 1903.
1867  The United States purchased Alaska from Russia.
1884  Congress passed the first Organic Act, providing a governor and federal courts for Alaska.
1896  The Klondike Gold Strike started a rush to the Canadian Yukon Territory. Gold was discovered at Nome in 1899 and at Fairbanks in 1902.
1898  Over 300,000 men were involved in the Spanish-American War, which was fought mainly in Cuba and the Philippines.
1912  Congress passed the second Organic Act, establishing Alaska as a U.S. territory and providing for a territorial legislature.
1917–1918  More than 26 million men from the United States ages 18 through 45 registered with the 1918 Selective Service for World War I, and over 4.7 million American men and women served during the war.
1930s  The Great Depression closed many factories and mills. Many small farms were abandoned, and many families moved to cities.
1941–1945  About 16 million men ages 21 to 35 registered with the Selective Service. Over 16.3 million American men and women served in the armed forces during World War II.
1950–1953  Over 5.7 million American men and women served in the Korean War.
1950s–1960s  The building of interstate highways made it easier for people to move long distances.
1959  Alaska became the 49th state.

Your ancestors will become more interesting to you if you also use histories to learn about the events that were of interest to them or that they may have been involved in. For example, by using a history you might learn about the events that occurred in the year your great-grandparents were married.

**Historical Sources**

You may find state or local histories in the Family History Library Catalog under Alaska or the county or the town. For descriptions of records available through Family History Centers or the Family History Library, click on Family History Library Catalog in the window to the left. The descriptions give book or film numbers which you need to find or to order the records.

**Local Histories**

Some of the most valuable sources for family history research are local histories. Published histories of towns, counties, and states usually contain accounts of families. They describe the settlement of the area and the founding of churches, schools, and businesses. You can also find lists of pioneers, soldiers, and civil officials. Even if your ancestor is not listed, information on other relatives may be included that will provide important clues for locating your ancestor. A local history may also suggest other records to search.

Most county and town histories include separate sections or volumes containing biographical information. These may include information on 50 percent or more of the families in the locality.

In addition, local histories should be studied and enjoyed for the background information they can provide about your family's lifestyle and the community and environment in which your family lived.

About 5,000 county histories have been published for over 80 percent of the counties in the United States. For many counties there is more than one history. In addition, tens of thousands of histories have been written about local towns and communities. Bibliographies that list these histories are available for nearly every state.

For descriptions of bibliographies for Alaska available through Family History Centers or the Family History Library, click on Family History Library Catalog in the window on the left. Look under BIBLIOGRAPHY or HISTORY - BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Local histories are extensively collected by the Family History Library, public and university libraries, and state and local historical societies. Two useful guides are:


**State History**

United States History

The following are only a few of the many sources that are available at most large libraries:


*Dictionary of American History*, Revised ed., 8 vols. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1976. (FHL book 973 H2ad.) This includes historical sketches on various topics in U.S. history, such as wars, people, laws, and organizations.
Alaska Federal Census Population Schedules, 1880 to 1920

Guide

Introduction

Federal censuses are taken every 10 years. Alaska residents are included in territorial and federal censuses from 1870 to 1880, 1900 to 1920.

For more information about the U.S. Federal Censuses, see Background.

What You Are Looking For

The information you find varies from record to record. These records may include:

- Names of family members.
- Ages of family members, which you can use to calculate birth or marriage years.
- The county and state where your ancestors lived.
- People living with (or gone from) the family.
- Relatives that may have lived nearby.

Steps

These 5 steps will help you use census records.

Step 1. Determine which censuses might include your ancestors.

Match the probable time your ancestor was in Alaska with the census years. This will determine which censuses you will search.

Example of a time an ancestor was in Alaska.

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

 Alaska census years

This person would be included in Alaska censuses from 1900 to 1910.
(The 1890 census was mostly destroyed.)
Step 2. Determine a census to start with.

Start with the last census taken during the life of your ancestor.

The censuses from 1850 to 1920 give more information and include the name, age, and birthplace of every person in each household.

The censuses from 1790 to 1840 give the name of the head of each household and the number of males and females in age groups without their names.

The censuses for 1930 and later are available from the U.S. Census Bureau only.

For ways the census can help you find your ancestor’s parents, see Tip 1.

Step 3. Search the census.

For instructions on how to search a specific census, click on one of the following years:

1870  1880  1900  1910  1920

For information about archives and libraries that have census records, see Where to Find It.

Step 4. Search another census.

Repeat steps 2 and 3 until you search all the censuses taken during the life span of your ancestor. Each census may contain additional information.

If you skip a census taken when your ancestor lived, you risk missing additional information, such as names of in-laws or other relatives who may have lived with or near the family. Those names and relationships may help you identify earlier generations.

For other information about how to search the census, see Tips.

Step 5. Analyze the information you obtain from the censuses.

To effectively use the information from the census, ask yourself these questions:

• Who was in the family?
• About when were they born?
• Where were they born?
• Where were they living—town or township, county, and state?
• Where were their parents born?
• Do they have neighbors with the same last name? Could they be relatives?

For more about comparing information in several censuses, see Tip 3.

Tips

Tip 1. How can the census help me find my ancestor’s parents?

Searching the census taken closest to the time the ancestor married has the best possibility of finding your ancestor and spouse living close to their parents and other family members.
Tip 2. How can I understand the information better?

Sometimes knowing why the census taker asked a question can help you understand the answer. Detailed instructions given to census takers are in the book, *Twenty Censuses: Population and Housing Questions 1790-1980*, updated as *200 Years of U.S. Census Taking*, both by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Tip 3. How can comparing information in more than one census help me?

Comparing censuses indicates:

- Changes in who was in the household, such as children leaving home or the death of grandparents or a child.
- Changes in neighbors. Remember, neighbors might be relatives or in-laws.
- Changes about each individual, such as age.
- Movement of the family within Alaska to a different county or town.
- Movement of the family out of Alaska if the family no longer appears in the census for Alaska.

You will eventually want to know every country, state, county, township, and town where your ancestor was located. You can then check information in other records for those places. A careful check of all available federal census records can help you identify those places.

The ages and estimated birth dates of an individual may vary greatly from census to census. Often ages are listed more accurately for young children than for adults.

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**Background**

**Description**

A census is a count and a description of the population of a country, colony, territory, state, county, or city. Census records are also called census schedules or population schedules.

Early censuses are basically head counts. Later censuses give information about marriage, immigration, and literacy. United States censuses are useful because they begin early and cover a large portion of the population.

**What U.S. Federal Censuses Are Available**

Censuses have been taken by the United States government every 10 years since 1790. The 1920 census is the most recent federal census available to the public; the 1930 census will be released in 2002.

The Alaska 1890 census was destroyed by fire.

**Types of Census Schedules**

The following census schedules are available for Alaska and were created in various years by the federal government:

- **Population schedules** list a large portion of the population; most are well-indexed and are available at many repositories.
How Censuses Were Taken

People called enumerators were hired by the United States government to take the census. The enumerators were given forms to fill out and were assigned to gather information about everyone living in a certain area or district. Enumerators could visit houses in any order, so families who are listed together in the census may or may not have been neighbors. The accuracy of the enumerators and the readability of their handwriting varies.

After the census was taken, usually one copy was sent to the state and another to the federal government. Sometimes copies were also kept by the counties. Few of the state and county copies survived.

When Censuses Were Taken

Census takers were supposed to gather information about the people who were part of each household on the following dates:

- 1790 to 1820: First Monday in August
- 1830 to 1900: 1 June (2 June in 1890)
- 1910: 15 April
- 1920: 1 January
- 1930: 1 April

If your ancestor was born in the census year, your ancestor should be listed only if he or she was born before the census date.

If your ancestor died in the census year, your ancestor should be listed only if he or she died after the census date.

The census may have actually taken several months to complete and may reflect births and deaths after the census date.

Censuses from 1930 to the Present

U.S. Federal Censuses from 1930 to the present are confidential. The 1930 census will be available in 2002. You may ask the U.S. Census Bureau to send information about:

- Yourself.
- Another living person, if you are that person's "authorized representative."
- Deceased individuals, if you are "their heirs or administrators."

You may request information only for one person at a time. There is a fee for each search. To request information, you must provide the person's name, address at the time of the census, and other details on Form BC-600, available from the U.S. Census Bureau.

For the address of the U.S. Census Bureau, see Where to Find It.

District, Territorial, State, and Local Censuses

District, territorial, state, and local governments also took censuses. Nonfederal censuses generally contain information similar to and sometimes more complete than federal censuses of the same period. Some district and territorial censuses were taken in Alaska from 1870 through 1907. (For more information, see the census section of the Alaska Research Outline.) The Alaska 1900 and 1910 censuses request information on the person's tribe and clan. The 1920 census asks for the person's native tongue.
Alaska became a state in 1959. Alaskan has no state censuses.

District, territorial, state, and local censuses may be available on the Internet, at Family History Centers, at the Family History Library, and in state and local archives and libraries.

**Where to Find It**

**Internet**

Many Internet sites include census records, census indexes, or information about censuses. You may find the following sites helpful:

- Alaska GenWeb and USGenWeb have links to indexes and records and may have links to archives, libraries, and genealogical and historical societies.
- CensusLinks on the 'Net includes links to Internet sites that have United States and Canada censuses and indexes. It includes information about censuses and how to use them, a Soundex calculator, census forms you can print, an age calculator, and more.
- The Archives and Libraries section of the Alaska Research Outline lists Internet addresses for several Alaskan archives, libraries, and historical societies. These organizations may have microfilms and indexes of Alaskan census records, and the Internet sites may list what other records they have.

**Family History Centers**

Many Family History Centers keep copies of some census microfilms. Family History Centers can borrow microfilms of a U.S. Federal Census from the Family History Library. A small fee is charged to have a microfilm sent to a center.

You may request photocopies of U.S. Federal Censuses from the Family History Library. Staff at the Family History Center can show you how to request this service.

Family History Centers are located throughout the United States and other areas of the world. See Family History Centers for the address and phone number of the center nearest you.

**Family History Library**

The Family History Library has complete sets of the existing U.S. Federal Censuses from 1790 to 1920. No fee is charged for using census microfilms in person.

For a list of indexes and other census records, see What to Do Next, and click on Family History Library Catalog in the window to the left. Select from the list of titles to see descriptions of the records with the film or book call numbers. Use that information to obtain the records at a family history center or at the Family History Library.

For information about contacting or visiting the library or a center, see Family History Library and Family History Centers.

**National Archives**

Copies of the existing federal censuses from 1790 to 1920 are available in the Microfilm Research Room in the National Archives Building and at the 13 Regional National Archives. The National Archives has a microfilm rental program for census records. Call 301-604-3699 for rental information. For information on how to order photocopies of census records from the National Archives, click here.
College and Public Libraries

Many college libraries have copies of census microfilms, particularly for their own states. Many larger public libraries have copies of the census soundex and populations schedules. Smaller public libraries may be able to obtain the records through interlibrary loan.

State Archives, Libraries, and Historical Societies

The Archives and Libraries section of the Alaska Research Outline lists Internet and mailing addresses for several Alaska archives, libraries, and historical societies. These organizations may have microfilms and indexes of Alaska census records, and the Internet sites may list what records they have.

U.S. Census Bureau

To request information from the 1930 census and later censuses, you must provide your relative's name, address, and other details on Form BC-600, available from:

   The U.S. Census Bureau
   P.O. Box 1545
   Jeffersonville, IN 47131
   Telephone: 812-218-3300

Genealogical Search Services

Many genealogical search services will search the census for a fee. These sources can help you find a genealogical search service:

   • CyndisList lists many companies and individuals who do research and mentions publications about how to hire a professional genealogist.
   • Advertisements in major genealogical journals may help you find a researcher.
U.S. State Censuses

ALASKA

1870-1907 Miscellaneous censuses of parts of the Aleutian Islands have been indexed Alaska Census Records, 1870-1907

Table 7
US Census Indexes

1870
Enumeration of Sitka

Roll of the native of Saint Paul who shared in the seal catch of 1870

Resident natives of St. Paul taken from Philip Volkov’s lists.

1880
Census of Sitka

1881
Town of Sitka

Special Information: The census of the Indian Village includes the names of the lodge chiefs, and statistics on the number of persons in each lodge.

1885
Cape Smythe and Point Barrow

Special Information: Census of Eskimos at the Cape Smythe village; weights and measures of the Eskimos of Cape Smythe and Point Barrow.

1890-1895 Pribilof Islands

Special Information: Various pagings. Births, deaths and marriages of the Pribilof Islands, 1 June 1892 to 31 May 1893; June 1893 to May 1894; 1 June 1894 to 31 May 1895.

1904
St. George Island

Special Information: Also contains birth and death on St. Island, June Paul 1903 to May 1904, school report.

1905
St George Island and St Paul Island

1906-1907 St Paul and St George Island
Maps
Computer Resources

**MapQuest Maps**
Summary: Must know address, city, state, and zip code; more recent maps

**Animap**
BYU FHL – on computer
Summary: Has each state with maps. Shows county boundary changes and allows marking of cities and finds distances.

**Google Maps**
Summary: Has address finder, allows keyword searching, and allows street, satellite, or terrain views

**Geology.com Maps**
Summary: Has Relief, Elevation, Drainage, Political and Road Maps for each state.
Alaska Maps Bibliography

All Available at the BYU Family History Library


Map Collection Quarto - G 1530.D45x 1992

**Summary of Book:** Maps with grids. Has index of place names and physical features. Alaska perspectives with public lands and ownership of early native distribution. **Evaluation:** 56 pages plus index.


Map Collection - G 1530.X1 F355 1983

**Summary of Book:** Bibliography of maps which also include some of Russia. **Evaluation:** There are 201 pages with an index.


Map Collection - G 1201 .E6225 k5 1976

**Summary of Book:** Lists of boundary changes. Has 1884 index to cities and towns. Lists historical events (basic historical and political) and early settlements. Has a good bibliography. **Evaluation of Alaska Maps:** pp. 7, 201 and 255. Page 7 gives a brief history of the state. Page 201 is a 1909 map which shows gold and silver loads, and coal and petroleum mines, which would be areas of where towns would be also. Page 255 is a town and county index with population.


Map Collection Quarto - G 1019 .R66 1919

**Summary of Book:** Table of contents and index of maps. Index of war maps, of maps revised in accordance with treaties of peace, of battle maps, of railroad maps, of auto road maps, of subjects, and of illustrations. Has analysis of the nations changed by the treaties of peace, motor car laws in the U. S. and Canada. **Evaluation of Alaska Maps:** pp. 10, 113-114 and 143. Page 10 is a map of Alaska with principle towns and cities. Pages 113-114 show population and physical characteristics, districts and other information.


Mic/Gen Ref and Census Area - G 1201 .F 7 T5 1987

**Summary of Book:** Outlines counties and changes in 10 year intervals. Gives brief history on census, its growth and accuracy. Sources for maps come from state/territorial laws. **Evaluation of Alaska Maps:** pp. 24 - 25. Maps start in 1880 and go through til 1900 and then 1900 through 1920. Shows modern boundaries and changes.
Alaska Statewide Indexes and Collections

Guide

Introduction

In the United States, information about your ancestors is often found in town and county records. If you know which state but not the town or county your ancestor lived in, check the following statewide indexes to find the town or county. Then search records for that town or county.

The indexes and collections listed below index various sources of information, such as histories, vital records, biographies, tax lists, immigration records, etc. You may find additional information about your ancestor other than the town or county of residence. The listings may contain:

• The author and title of the source.
• The Family History Library (FHL) book, film, fiche, or compact disc number. If the words beginning with appear before the film number, check the Family History Library Catalog for additional films.
• The name of the repository where the source can be found if the source is not available at the Family History Library.

What You Are Looking For

• Your ancestor’s name in an index or collection.
• Where the ancestor was living.

Steps

These 2 steps will help you find information about your ancestor in statewide indexes or collections.

Step 1. Find your ancestor’s name in statewide indexes or collections.

On the list below, if your ancestor lived between the years shown on the left, he or she may be listed in the source on the right.

1580–1900s  Ancestral File
             International Genealogical Index
             Family History Library Catalog - Surname Search
             To use these files, click here.
1600–1940 Rider, Fremont, ed. *The American Genealogical-Biographical Index to American Genealogical, Biographical and Local History Materials.* (FHL book 973 D22am ser. 2, vols. 1–186; beginning with film 698167.) The new series now has surnames A to W in 186 volumes and is continuing; the old series has surnames A to Z.

1600–1908 *Index to American Genealogies: And to Genealogical Material Contained in All Works as Town Histories, County Histories, Local Histories, Historical Society Publications, Biographies, Historical Periodicals, and Kindred Works.* Known as Munsell's Index. (FHL book 973 D22m 1984; film 599811 item 2; fiche 6051301.) Supplement 1900–1908 to the Index to Genealogies Published in 1900. (FHL book 973 D22m supp; film 599811 item 3.)


1720–1900 White, Virgil D. *Index to War of 1812 Pension Files.* (FHL book 973 M22i.) Gives the names of wives in many cases.

1800–1934 United States, Veterans Administration. *General Index to Pension Files, 1861–1934.* (On 544 FHL films beginning with 540757.) This is a card index to pension applications of Civil War and Spanish-American War veterans; copies of the original files may be ordered from the National Archives.

1800–1933 United States, Veterans Administration. *Veteran's Administration Pension Payment Cards, 1907–1933.* (On 2539 FHL films beginning with 1634036.) Lists veterans and wives who received pension payments for the Civil War and the War with Spain.


1800–1963 *Cemetery Records: Anchorage, etc. Alaska.* (FHL book 979.8 V22va.)

1800–1881 *Sitka, Alaska, 1881 Census.* (FHL film 982047 item 3.)

1816–1936 *Index to Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths in the Archives of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church in Alaska, 1816–1866.* (FHL film 944197 item 1–3.)

1820–1900 Sprague, D. N. *The Genealogy of The First Metis Nation: The Development and Dispersal of The Red River Settlement, 1820–1900.* (FHL book 971.27 D2s.)

1825–1985 Bradbury, Connie. *Alaska People Index.* (FHL book 979.8 D32b.)

1825–1975 *Genealogical Record of Point Hope, Wainwright, and Anaktuvuk Pass, Alaska Eskimo Families.* (FHL book 979.8 D2g; film 1035774 item 8.)

1830–1920 Statewide census indexes 1870–1880, 1900, and 1920. In the window to the left click on *Family History Library Catalog.* Then select CENSUS or CENSUS - INDEXES from the topics that are listed.

1840s–1960s *Cemetery Records of Alaska.* (FHL book 979.8 V22v.)


1867–1986  Anderson, Thayne I. *Alaska Death Listing for Cemeteries, Pioneer Home, and Hospitals.* (FHL book Q 979.82 V3a; film 1321491 item 7.)

1878–1918  United States Selective Service System. *Alaska, World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917–1918.* (On 4 FHL films beginning with 1473296) Men ages 18 to 45 are listed alphabetically by county or draft board.


1903–1930  *Index of Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Divorces in Fairbanks, Alaska Newspapers, 1903–1930.* (FHL book 979.86 V22i.)

1905–1964  Mac Lean, Edna. *Genealogical Record of Barrow Eskimo Families.* (FHL fiche 6331386.)


For ideas on ways your ancestor's name might be spelled by indexers or in collections, see Name Variations.

**Step 2. Copy and document the information.**

The best method is to:

- Make a photocopy of the page(s) with your ancestor's name.
- Document where the information came from by writing the title, call number, and page number of the index or collection on the photocopy. Also write the name of the library or archive.

**Where to Find It**

**Family History Centers and the Family History Library**

You can use the Family History Library book collection only at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, but many of our books have been microfilmed. Most of our films can be requested and used at our Family History Centers. To locate the address for the nearest Family History Center, click here.
For information about contacting or visiting the library or a center, see Family History Library and Family History Centers.

**Libraries and Archives**

You may be able to find the books at public or college libraries. If these libraries do not have a copy of the book you need, they may be able to order it from another library on interlibrary loan.

To use interlibrary loan:

- Go to a public or college library.
- Ask the librarian to order a book or microfilm for you through interlibrary loan from another library. You will need the title of the item and the name of the author.
- The library staff will direct you in their procedures. Sometimes this is free; sometimes there is a small fee.

You can find addresses and phone numbers for most libraries and archives in the *American Library Directory*, published by the American Library Association. The *American Library Directory* is available at most public and college libraries.
**ALASKA**

**All Available at the BYU Family History Library**


Corser, Harry P.  *Seventy-six Page History of Alaska*.  <S.n.: s.l.>, c1927.  F 904.5 .C67x (Special Collections: Americana)


**Afognak**

**Aleutian Islands**


**Anaktuvuk Pass**

**Anchorage (Municipality of)**

Arctic Villiage

Atka

Auke Bay

Barrow

Belkofski

Bethel

Bristol Bay (Borough)

Drummond, Don E. *Paugvik: a Nineteenth-Century Native Villiage on Bristol Bay, Alaska*. Chicago, IL: Field Museum of Natural History. GN 2 .F4 new ser. no. 24

Cordova


Douglas

Fairbanks


ALASKA

Ft. Richardson

Haines (Borough)

Ikogmiut

Juneau (Borough)


Karuk

Kenai Peninsula (Borough)


Ketchikan (Borough)

Killisnoo

Knik

Kodiak

Kiukpak

Last updated 4/03
Kuskokwim

Matanuska-Susitna (Borough)

Metlakatla

Nome


Harrison, Edward S. Nome and Seward Peninsula; A Book of Information about Northwestern Alaska. Seattle, WA: E.S. Harrison, 1905. F 912 .S3 H3 also Fiche Z 1236 .L5 1971 no. 16131


Nuchek

Nushagak

Palmer

Petersburg
ALASKA

Point Borrow

Point Hope

Pribilof Islands


Seldovia

Seward


Sitka (Borough)

Andrews, Clarence L.  The Story of Sitka; The Historic Outpost of the Northwest Coast, the Chief Factory of the Russian American Company.  Seattle, WA: Press of Lowman and Henford, 1922.  F 917 .S6 A7 also Fiche CS 43 .G46x LH 11609


Skagway-Yukutat

Southeast Fairbanks

St. George

St. Michael

St. Paul

Unalaska

Last updated 4/03 5
VALDEZ CORDOVA


WAINWRIGHT

WRANGELL-PETERSBURG

YUKON-KOYUKUK


YUKATAT
Other Sources to Check for General County/Local Histories


Halverson, Frank Douglas and Eva H.T. Halverson.  *County Histories of the United States Giving Present Name, Date Formed, Parent County, and County Seat*.  [Salt Lake City, 1937].  **E 180 .H35**


Other Resources for Alaska Research

Alaska Historical Society
http://www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org/index.cfm

Cyndi’s List Alaska links
http://www.cyndislist.com/ak.htm

Alaska State Library Genealogy Resources
http://library.state.ak.us/pub/online/akgene.html

Alaska Genealogy Research Primer
http://genealogy.allinfoabout.com/states/alaska.html

Alaska Genealogical and Historical Societies
http://geneasearch.com/societies/socak.htm