

# North Dakota Research Outline

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This outline describes major sources of information about families from North Dakota. 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

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The Family History Library has only a few of the records described in this outline. The library's major holdings of North Dakota records include censuses, cemeteries, histories, and Native American 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.

## FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY CATALOG

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The library's records are listed in the Family History Library Catalog found at the library and at each Family History Center. To find a record, look in the Locality Search of the catalog for:

- The *place* where your ancestor lived, such as:

**UNITED STATES - CENSUS**  
**NORTH DAKOTA - HISTORY**  
**NORTH DAKOTA, CASS - DIRECTORIES**  
**NORTH DAKOTA, CASS, FARGO - CHURCH RECORDS**

- The *record type* you want, such as:

UNITED STATES - **CENSUS**  
NORTH DAKOTA - **HISTORY**  
NORTH DAKOTA, CASS - **DIRECTORIES**  
NORTH DAKOTA, CASS, FARGO - **CHURCH RECORDS**

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

## **ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES**

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The following archives, libraries, and societies have collections or services helpful for genealogical research.

- State Historical Society of North Dakota

North Dakota Heritage Center  
612 E. Boulevard Ave.  
Bismarck, ND 58505  
Telephone: 701-328-2091  
Fax: 701-328-2650

- National Archives—Central Plains Region

2306 East Bannister Road  
Kansas City, MO 64131  
Telephone: 816-926-7271  
National Archives-Rocky Mountain Region  
P.O. Box 25307  
Denver, CO 80225  
Telephone: 303-236-0817  
Fax: 303-236-9297

- North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies

North Dakota State University  
P.O. Box 5599  
Fargo, ND 58105-5599

Telephone: 701-231-8876  
Fax: 701-231-6128

- Department of Special Collections

Chester Fritz Library  
P.O. Box 9000  
University of North Dakota  
Grand Forks, ND 58202  
Telephone: 701-777-2617  
Fax: 701-777-3319

- Germans from Russia Heritage Society

1008 East Central Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58501-1936  
Telephone: 701-223-6167

A helpful guide to several important North Dakota collections is John B. Davenport and Colleen A. Oihus, *Guide to the Orin G. Libby Manuscript Collection and Related Research Collections*, 2 vols. (Grand Forks, N. Dak.: Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, 1975, 1983; FHL book 978.4 A3c).

To learn more about the history and record-keeping systems of North Dakota counties, use the inventories of the Mercer, Golden Valley, and Williams Counties' archives published by the Historical Records Survey around 1940. The Family History Library has copies of these inventories.

## **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 North Dakota 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.

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

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There is no major statewide biographical index or major manuscript collection. Search statewide, regional, and county histories for biographical information. Representative biographical encyclopedias are:

*Compendium of History and Biography of North Dakota Containing a History of North Dakota*. . . . Chicago: Geo. A. Ogle & Co., 1900. (FHL book 978.4 D3c; film 982021.)  
Lounsbury, Clement Augustus. *North Dakota History and People*. 3 vols. Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1917. (FHL 978.4 H2Lc; vols. 1-2 on film 982024; vol. 3 on film 982025.)  
Crawford, Lewis F. et al. *History of North Dakota and North Dakota Biography*. 3 vols. Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1931. (FHL film 1036393.) Volumes 2 and 3 are biographical.  
Aberle, George P. *Pioneers and Their Sons*. . . . 2 vols. Bismarck, N.D.: Tumbleweed Press, 1980. (FHL book 978.4 D3a; film 1035608.) Includes family histories.

## CEMETERIES

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The *Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Collection* contains tombstone inscriptions from some North Dakota cemeteries. This collection is described in the "Genealogy" section of this outline. Some tombstone inscriptions are also published in periodicals. See the *United States Research Outline* for suggestions.

A valuable published collection of tombstone inscriptions is *North Dakota Cemeteries*, 16 vols. Fargo, N.D.: Fargo Genealogical Society, 1972-77, 1986-1995. (FHL book 978.4 V3f; vols. 1-12 on films 928261-62 vols.; vols. 13-16 on film 1320990 items 5-6.)

## CENSUS

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### Federal

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 regarding these records.

The Family History Library has the U.S. federal censuses for the state of North Dakota for 1900, 1910, and 1920. A statewide soundex (phonetic) index is on microfilm for the 1900 and 1920 censuses. The 1890 census has been destroyed. The 1890 union veterans schedule and index are at the Family History Library.

### Territorial and State

North Dakota was included in the 1836 Wisconsin, the 1840 Iowa, the 1850 Minnesota, and the 1860, 1870, and 1880 Dakota Territorial censuses.

Indexes to the censuses of the Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and Dakota Territories have been published in book and microfiche format for 1836, 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880.

Censuses were also taken in 1885 (as Dakota Territory), 1905, 1915, and 1925. These records are at the State Historical Society of North Dakota. The 1885 census is indexed and is at the Family History Library (FHL book 978.4 X22j 1885). It has also been printed in vol. 4 of O.G. Libby, ed., *Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota* (Fargo, ND: Knight Printing Co., 1913; FHL book 978.4 B2h; film 547583 item 2). The census gives the relationship to the head of house, and parents' birthplaces.

Mortality schedules for the Dakota Territory exist for 1860, 1870, 1880, and 1885. The schedules for 1870, 1880, and 1885 are indexed and are at the Family History Library.

See the section "Native Races" for information on tribal census reports.

## CHURCH RECORDS

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Before 1900 the largest religious groups in North Dakota were Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopal, and Presbyterian churches.

The Family History Library has histories of the Dunkards (Church of the Brethren), Episcopal, Presbyterian, Catholic, and other churches in North Dakota. For Methodists, Presbyterians, Dunkards, and Lutherans you can also consult the various volumes of *The Collections of The State Historical Society of North Dakota* 7 vols. (Bismarck, N.D.:

Tribune State Printers, 1906—; FHL book 978.4 B2h; films beginning with film 1697422).

The Family History Library has very few North Dakota church records. Many denominations have collected their records into central repositories. You can write to the following addresses to learn where their records are located.

## **Lutheran**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
(ELCA Archives)  
321 Bonnie Lane  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007  
Telephone: (847) 690-9410

The Archives has records of many congregations on microfilm. These can be borrowed for a small fee. For a list of church records in their collection as of the 1970's see FHL fiche 6330690-93; the fiche with the North Dakota list is 6330692.

Many Lutheran Church records for Germans from Russia are at:  
North Dakota State University Library  
North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies  
P.O. Box 5599  
Fargo, ND 58105-5599  
Telephone: 701-231-8914  
Fax: 701-231-5632

## **Methodist**

United Methodist Church  
North Dakota Conference  
Wesley United Methodist Church  
1600 4th Ave. North  
Grand Forks, ND 58201

Archives and History Library  
Dakotas Conference  
United Methodist Church  
Box 460  
1331 West University Blvd.  
Mitchell, SD 57301  
Telephone: 605-996-6552  
Fax: 605-996-1766

## **Presbyterian**

Presbyterian Historical Society  
United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.  
425 Lombard St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19147

Telephone: 215-627-1852  
Fax: 215-627-0509

### **Roman Catholic**

Diocese of Bismarck  
Chancery Office  
Box 1575  
Bismarck, ND 58502-1575  
Telephone: 701-223-1347  
Fax: 701-223-3693

Diocese of Fargo  
Chancery Office  
1310 Broadway  
Box 1750  
Fargo, ND 58107  
Telephone: 701-235-6429  
Fax: 701-235-0296

## **COURT RECORDS**

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North Dakota courts that have kept records of genealogical value were established as follows:

*Municipal courts* are citywide courts with jurisdiction over minor criminal cases.

*County courts* have countywide jurisdiction over probates, guardianships, and concurrent jurisdiction with the district courts over minor civil cases and misdemeanors.

*District courts* have countywide jurisdiction over major civil and criminal cases and juvenile matters. They also handle some appeals.

*County justice courts* are countywide courts in counties without county courts. They have jurisdiction over misdemeanors and civil cases.

*Supreme Court* is the statewide appellate court.

The Family History Library does not currently have copies of North Dakota court records. They are at the clerk's office in the various county courthouses.

## **DIRECTORIES**

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Directories of heads of households have been published for major cities in North Dakota. For example, the Family History Library has directories for Bismarck for the years 1938, 1940, 1960, 1965, 1975, 1980, and 1986 (FHL book 978.477/B1 E4p.)

## **EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION**

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### **Immigrants**

Pre-statehood settlers of North Dakota generally came from Norway, Canada, Minnesota, Wisconsin, New York, and Iowa. Important but smaller groups came from Germany, England, Ireland, Sweden, Russia, and the older midwestern states of Michigan, Illinois, and Ohio. Many of the Canadian immigrants were of Scottish descent, and most of those from Russia were of German origin. When North Dakota became a state in 1889, about 70 percent of the total population were either foreign-born or the children of foreign-born parents.

Immigrants from overseas also made up a large part of the second Dakota boom, which lasted from about 1898 to 1915. At the end of this period, Norwegian immigrants comprised about 20 percent of the state population, and ethnic Germans, including Germans from Russia, another 20 percent.

There were substantial numbers of Canadians of English and Celtic origin, Swedes, Danes, Czechs, and many smaller European groups. There also was an important influx of settlers from the other midwestern states during the early twentieth century.

## Records

Most overseas immigrants to North Dakota came through the port of New York or other east coast ports. The Family History Library and the National Archives have U.S. passenger lists or indexes for the years 1820 to 1943, and for Canadian ports, 1865 to 1900. More detailed information on these sources is in the *United States Research Outline*.

Records of ethnic groups, such as Black Sea Germans, are listed in the Family History Library Catalog under NORTH DAKOTA - MINORITIES. An especially helpful book that describes the background and 1965 location of major ethnic groups in most of the North Dakota counties is William C. Sherman, *Prairie Mosaic: An Ethnic Atlas of Rural North Dakota* (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1983; FHL book 978.4 F2s).

## GAZETTEERS

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A guide that will help you identify North Dakota place names is Mary Ann Barnes Williams, *Origins of North Dakota Place Names* (Washburn, N.D.: Mary Ann Barnes Williams, 1966; FHL book 978.4 E5w; film 1036251 item 2).

## GENEALOGY

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Most archives, historical societies, and genealogical societies have special collections and indexes of genealogical value. These must usually be searched in person. A notable genealogical collection is the *Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Collection*. This collection includes transcripts of Bible records, cemetery records, church records, marriages, deaths, obituaries, and wills from 3 counties—Barnes, Burleigh, and Towner.



It was microfilmed in 1971 at the DAR Library, Washington, D.C., and is at the Family History Library (FHL films 859737-40).

Histories of the earliest settlers of North Dakota are in *Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota*, 7 vols. (Bismarck, N.D.: The North Dakota State Historical Society, 1906-1925; Vols. 1-3, 6-7 in FHL book 978.4 B2h; films beginning with film 1697422, vols. 1-7).

A source that lists the names of almost 100,000 French-Canadians who emigrated to the North Central states is Paul J. Lareau and Elmer Courteau, *French-Canadian Families of the North Central States: A Genealogical Dictionary*, 8 vols. (St. Paul, Minn.: Northwest Territory French and Canadian Heritage Institute, 1980; FHL book 973 D2la; fiche 6010503-11).

## HISTORY

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

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|-----------|---|
| 1803-1818 | The United States acquired the southwestern half of North Dakota as part of the Louisiana Purchase from France. The northeastern half was acquired in 1818 by treaty with Britain.                |
| 1812      | The first permanent white settlement in present-day North Dakota was made at Pembina by Scottish pioneers from Canada.  |
| 1861-1868 | The Dakota Territory was organized. Its boundaries were reduced to include the area of the two Dakotas of today when the Montana Territory was created in 1864 and the Wyoming Territory in 1868. |
| 1863      | Free land was offered under the first Homestead Act, but the Civil War and Indian wars delayed settlement.  |
| 1871      | White settlement began in earnest in northern Dakota when railroads reached the Red River from St. Paul and Duluth, Minnesota.  |
| 1878-1886 | The eastern region was settled in the first Dakota boom era.  |
| 1889      | The Dakota Territory was divided, and both North and South Dakota were admitted to the Union.   |
| 1898-1915 | Additional lands were settled in a second Dakota boom. The peak year for new homesteads was 1906.   |

Helpful sources for studying the history of North Dakota are:

Robinson, Elwyn B. *History of North Dakota*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966. (FHL book 978.4 H2r.)

Lounsberry, Clement A. *Early History of North Dakota*. Washington, D.C.: Liberty Press, 1919. (FHL book 978.4 H2L; film 1036397; 1916 edition with biographical volumes is on films 982024-5.)

A bibliography of local histories for North Dakota is included in Daniel Rylance and J.F.S. Smeall, *Reference Guide to North Dakota History and North Dakota Literature* (Grand Forks: Chester Fritz Library of the University of North Dakota, 1979; FHL book 978.4 A3r).

## LAND AND PROPERTY

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When the United States acquired North Dakota, most of the land became part of the public domain. The federal government administered the land through the General Land Office. Available land was surveyed into townships and transferred to private ownership through a process called land entry. The first General Land Office was established at Pembina in 1870. The local land offices kept tract books (recording transactions for each section of land), and township plats (maps of land entries for each township).

Land entry in North Dakota was based either on cash payment for the land (cash entries), or on conditions of settlement (homesteads after 1862). Once a settler completed the requirements for land entry, his case file was sent to the General Land Office in Washington, D.C., where a patent or first-title deed was issued.

To locate the land-entry or homestead case file for your ancestor, you will need to know either the patent number or the legal description (range, township, section of the land). The county recorder of deeds may be able to tell you the legal description of the land from county land records, or you may be able to pinpoint the exact location by searching the entries in the tract book covering the approximate area concerned.

For original patents and copies of tract books and township plats, contact the Bureau of Land Management, BLM, 5001 Southgate Drive, Billings, MT 59101, Telephone: 406-896-5299. The National Archives has the original homestead entry files, cash entry files, tract books, and township plats. See the *United States Research Outline* for address and telephone. Records of the local land offices are also at the State Historical Society of North Dakota. Township plats are also at the North Dakota Water Commission, 900 East Boulevard, Bismarck, ND 58505, Telephone: 701-328-2750, Fax: 701-328-3696.

After land was transferred from the government by sale or grant to private owners, it could be sold again, inherited, lost by foreclosure of a mortgage, or redistributed through

a divorce. These transactions are recorded by the registrar of deeds in each county in the form of deeds and mortgages. The Family History Library has not acquired copies of the land records from the county courthouses in North Dakota.

## MAPS

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The Family History Library has a small collection of maps of North Dakota dating from 1860 to the present. FHL film 002083 contains atlases for the years 1862, 1878, 1884, and 1917, including maps of county boundaries and 1915 city populations. The University of North Dakota in Grand Forks has a large collection of maps and atlases.

## MILITARY RECORDS

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

Many 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 on the federal records. For North Dakota the following sources are also very helpful:

### Civil War (1861-1865)

An index to service records of Union volunteers from the Dakota Territory is at the library (FHL film 881616). The library also has an index to pension applications, but the actual service and pension records are at the National Archives. A special census was taken in 1890 of Union veterans of the Civil War (FHL film 338218).

### Indian Wars (1798-1914)

The Family History Library has enlistment registers for soldiers who served in the regular army, 1798 to 1914. Many of them served in the western states during the Indian Wars. The enlistment registers provide the soldier's rank, unit, commanders, physical description, occupation, and birthplace. The records are arranged by year and by the first letter of the surname (FHL films beginning with film 350307).

The library also has an index of soldiers who applied for pensions between 1892 and 1926, for service in the Indian Wars from 1817 to 1898 (FHL films 821610-21). The pension records are only at the National Archives.

### Spanish-American War (1898)

A published roster of the First North Dakota Infantry in the Philippine Islands is in Clement A. Lounsberry, *Early History of North Dakota* (Washington, D.C.: Liberty Press, 1919. FHL book 978.4 H2L pp. 577-602; film 1036397).

## **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 North Dakota, see:

United States. Selective Service System. *North Dakota, World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*. National Archives Microfilm Publications, M1509. Washington, D.C.: National Archives, 1987-1988. (On FHL films beginning with film 1819402.)

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:

United States. Selective Service System. *List of World War One Draft Board Maps*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives. (FHL film 1498803.)

A published roster in alphabetical order of soldiers is Brig. Gen. G. Angus Fraser, *Roster of the Men and Women Who Served in the Army or Naval Service (including the Marine Corps) of the United States or its Allies from the State of North Dakota in the World War, 1917-1918*, 4 vols. (Bismarck: Bismarck Tribune Co., 1931; FHL book 978.4 M23a; films 982257-8). In addition to the military information, the soldier's date and place of birth, and parents' nationality are also given.

## **NATIVE RACES**

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About 6,000 American Indians lived in North Dakota in 1910. By 1970 there were over 25,000. The Family History Library has microfilm copies of the Bureau of Indian Affairs records of births, marriages, deaths, adoptions, censuses, schools, land allotments, probates, and miscellaneous records. They are available from about 1872 to 1952 for the agencies at Turtle Mountain, Standing Rock, Fort Totten, and Fort Berthold. The originals are at the National Archives—Central Plains Region:

Records of various American Indian tribes are listed in the Locality Search of the Family History Library Catalog under NORTH DAKOTA - NATIVE RACES and in the Subject Search under the name of the tribe, such as "Sioux" or "Chippewa."

## **NATURALIZATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

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Naturalization records have been filed in the county and district courts of the state. You can write to the clerk of the court and request a search of indexes to certificates of arrival,

declarations, petitions, and final naturalization papers. Due to population changes, the jurisdictions of the courts have varied from time to time. The Family History Library has not acquired these records for North Dakota.

For naturalization records after September 1906, contact the National Archives and Records Administration—Rocky Mountain Region or the local office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The National Archives—Central Plains Region (Kansas City) has a few of the U.S. District Court records from 1892 to 1906.

## **NEWSPAPERS**

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A few newspapers were published in the Dakota Territory in the 1860s, but most began between 1880 and 1910. The Family History Library has not acquired copies of North Dakota newspapers. You may use nationwide lists and inventories to determine the holdings of newspapers in the archives and libraries of North Dakota. The State Historical Society of North Dakota, for instance, has a large collection.

## **PERIODICALS**

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Genealogical periodicals helpful for North Dakota research are:

*The Dakota Homestead Historical Newsletter*, formerly *Bismarck-Mandan Historical and Genealogical Society Quarterly*. 1972-. Published by the Bismarck-Mandan Historical and Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 485, Bismarck, ND 58501-0485. (FHL book 978.477 B2b.)

*Heritage Review*, merged with *Der Stammbaum*, 1969-. Published by the Germans from Russia Heritage Society, 1008 E. Central Ave., Bismarck, ND 58501, Telephone: 701-223-6167. (FHL book 978.4 B2hra.) There is a cumulative index for 1971 to 1978.

*North Central North Dakota Genealogical Record*. 1978-. Published by the Mouse River Loop Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 1391, Minot, ND 58702-1391. (FHL book 978.46 D25n.)

## **PROBATE RECORDS**

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Probate records of North Dakota have been under the jurisdiction of the county courts. North Dakota probate records include docket, guardians records, administrators records, real estate records, personal property records, and claim registers. The Family History Library does not presently have copies of probate records from North Dakota. They are at the clerk's office in each county courthouse.

## **VITAL RECORDS**

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### **Births and Deaths**

In North Dakota, statewide registration of births and deaths began in 1907 and was generally complied with by 1924. You can obtain copies by writing to:

Division of Vital Records  
State Capitol  
600 East Boulevard Ave., Dept. 301  
Bismarck, ND 58505  
Telephone: 701-328-2360

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 973V24wv). Copies of this booklet are at the Family History Library and many Family History Centers. You can also write to the Division of Vital Records office for current information. It has some files dating from 1893 and delayed registrations of births from 1941.

The Family History Library has not copied any of the vital records from the state. An inventory and description of the history and availability of the records is *Guide to Public Vital Statistics Records in North Dakota*, (Bismarck: Historical Records Survey, 1941; FHL book 978.4 V23h; [film 1036526 item 3](#)).

## **Marriages and Divorces**

Statewide registration of marriages began in 1925. You can obtain copies by writing to the division of vital records.

Before statewide registration, individual towns or counties issued marriage licenses and recorded marriages. Write to the office of the judge of the county court or the clerk of the district court for these records. In counties with less than 15,000 population, the judge of the county court serves as the clerk of the district court.

Divorce proceedings are usually kept by the district court for each county. Write to them for copies or information.

## **FOR FURTHER READING**

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For more detailed information about research and records in North Dakota, see:

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**

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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.

## North Dakota 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 North Dakota affected political boundaries, record keeping, and family movements.

1803-1818	The United States acquired the southwestern half of North Dakota as part of the Louisiana Purchase from France. The northeastern half was acquired in 1818 by treaty with Britain.
1812	The first permanent white settlement in present-day North Dakota was made at Pembina by Scottish pioneers from Canada.
1861-1868	The Dakota Territory was organized. When the Montana Territory was created in 1864 and the Wyoming Territory in 1868, Dakota Territory boundaries were reduced to the area of the two present day Dakotas.
1863	Free land was offered under the first Homestead Act, but the Civil War and Indian wars delayed settlement.
1871	White settlement began in earnest in northern Dakota when railroads reached the Red River from St. Paul and Duluth, Minnesota.
1878-1886	The eastern region was settled in the first Dakota boom era.
1889	The Dakota Territory was divided, and both North and South Dakota were admitted to the Union.
1898-1915	Additional lands were settled in a second Dakota boom. The peak year for new homesteads was 1906.
1898	Over 300,000 men were involved in the Spanish-American War, which was fought mainly in Cuba and the Philippines.
1917–1918	More than 26 million men from the United States ages 18 through 45 registered with the 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.
1940–1945	Over 50.6 million men ages 18 to 65 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.



1964–1972 Over 8.7 million American men and women served in the Vietnam War.

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 North Dakota 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 North Dakota available through Family History Centers or the Family History Library, click on Family History Library Catalog in the window to the left. Look under BIBLIOGRAPHY or HISTORY - BIBLIOGRAPHY.

A bibliography of local histories for North Dakota is included in Daniel Rylance and J.F.S. Smeall, *Reference Guide to North Dakota History and North Dakota Literature* (Grand Forks: Chester Fritz Library of the University of North Dakota, 1979; FHL book 978.4 A3r).

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

Filby, P. William. *A Bibliography of American County Histories*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1985. (FHL book 973 H23bi.)

Kaminkow, Marion J. *United States Local Histories in the Library of Congress*. 5 vols. Baltimore: Magna Charta Book, 1975-76. (FHL book 973 A3ka.)

## State History

Helpful sources for studying the history of North Dakota are:

Robinson, Elwyn B. *History of North Dakota*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966. (FHL book 978.4 H2r.)

Lounsbury, Clement A. *Early History of North Dakota*. Washington, D.C.: Liberty Press, 1919. (FHL book 978.4 H2L; film 1036397; 1916 edition with biographical volumes is on films 982024-5.)

## United States History

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

Schlesinger, Jr., Arthur M. *The Almanac of American History*. Greenwich, Conn.: Bison Books, 1983. (FHL book 973 H2alm.) This provides brief historical essays and chronological descriptions of thousands of key events in United States history.

*Webster's Guide to American History: A Chronological, Geographical, and Biographical Survey and Compendium*. Springfield, Mass.: G&C Merriam, 1971. (FHL book 973 H2v.) This includes a history, some maps, tables, and other historical information.

*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.



# FAMILYSEARCH™

## G U I D E

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## North Dakota Statewide Indexes and Collections

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### Guide

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#### 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

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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 see these files, click here.

- 1700–present [Periodical Source Index \(PERSI\)](#) lists records (by place or surname) that were published in genealogical magazines or periodicals. This resource should not be overlooked. It is available on the Internet through Ancestry.com. (FHL book 973 D25 per, various combined indexes and, annual supplements; [fiche 6016863, 6016864](#); compact disc no. 61.)
- 1700–1981 North Dakota State University Library. *North Dakota Biography Index*. (Not at the FHL.) At the North Dakota State University Libraries. Indexes about 160,000 biographical sketches.
- 1700–1953 North Dakota State University Library. *Pioneer Mothers Project*. (Not at the FHL.) You may write and request a search.
- 1700–1930s North Dakota State University Library. *Historical Data Project Biographies (WPA)*. (Not at the FHL.) You may wish to write and request a search.
- 1700–present North Dakota State University Library. *Germans from the Russian Heritage Collection*. (Not at the FHL.)
- 1700–1987 Miller, Michael M. [Researching the Germans from Russia](#). . . (FHL book 978.4 F23n.) Pages 61–67 and 192–197 list family histories.
- 1700–present Germans from the Russian Heritage Society *Der Stammbaum*. (FHL book 978.4 B2hra.) See cumulative indexes and annual indexes. This is a periodical, formerly the *Heritage Review*.
- 1700–1978 *French-Canadian Families of the North Central States: A Genealogical Dictionary*. (FHL book 973 D2La, 8 vols.; [fiche 6010503–511](#).)
- 1700–1970 [An Index to Some of the Bibles and Family Records of the United States: 45,500 References as Taken from the Microfilm at the Genealogical Society of Utah](#). (FHL book 973 D22kk; [fiche 6089184](#).) See volume 2 for the index, organized by surname.
- 1740–1900 White, Virgil D. [Index to War of 1812 Pension Files](#). (FHL book 973 M22i, vols. 1–2.) Lists soldiers and their spouses. You can request a copy of the pension records from the National Archives.
- 1770–1920 [Census indexes, 1836–1885, 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.
- 1790–1870 Jackson, Ronald Vern, et. al. *North Dakota 1870 Mortality Schedule*. (FHL book 978.4 X2j 1870.) Deaths in the census year, June 1869–June 1870.
- 1800–1880 Jackson, Ronald Vern, et. al. [North Dakota 1880 Mortality Schedule](#). (FHL book 978.4 X2j 1880.) Deaths in the census year, June 1879–June 1880.
- 1800–1885 Jackson, Ronald Vern, et. al. [North Dakota, Dakota Territorial 1885 Mortality Schedule](#). (FHL book 978.4 X2j 1885.) Deaths in the census year of 1884–1885.
- 1800–1890 Helmer, Edith. *1890 North Dakota Special Census: Enumerating Union Veterans and Widows of Union Veterans of the Civil War*. (FHL book 978.4 X22n; [fiche 6100564](#).)
- 1800–1890 Jackson, Ronald Vern. *1890 North Dakota Census Index: Special Schedule of the Eleventh Census (1890) Enumerating Union Veterans and [Widows] of Union Veterans of the Civil War*. (FHL book 978.4 X22j 1890.)

- 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–present North Dakota State University Library. Indexes by county to North Dakota newspapers. (Not at the FHL.) See the Internet site. You can write and request a search.
- 1800–1925 The North Dakota Historical Society. *Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota*. (FHL book 978.4 B2h, 7 vols.; on films beginning with 1697422.) Contains information about the earliest North Dakota settlers.
- 1800–1900 *Compendium of History and Biography of North Dakota Containing a History of North Dakota: Embracing an Account of Early Exploration, Early Settlements, Indian Occupancy, and a Concise History of Growth and Development of the State; Also, a Compendium of Biography of North Dakota*. (FHL book 978.4 D3c; film 982021.)
- 1800–1930 Crawford, Lewis F. *History of North Dakota and North Dakota Biography*. (FHL book 978.4 H2c, vols. 1–3; film 1036393.)
- 1800–1966 Aberle, George P. *Pioneers and Their Sons: One Hundred Sixty-five Family Histories*. (FHL book 978.4 D3a, 2 vols.; film 1035608 items 1–2.) See the indexes to principal persons at the end of each volume.
- 1800–1972 Bismarck-Mandan Historical and Genealogical Society. *The Dakota Homestead Historical Newsletter*. (FHL book 978.477 B2b.)
- 1800–1980 Gray, David P. *Guide to Manuscripts*. (FHL book 978.447/B1 A3g.) Found at the North Dakota State Historical Society in Bismarck, North Dakota.
- 1800–present North Dakota State University Library. *Catalog of Manuscripts*. (Not at the FHL.) You may wish to write and request a search.
- 1800–1984 Davenport, John B. *Guide to Orin G. Libby Manuscript Collection and Related Research Collections*. (FHL book 978.4 A3c, 2 vols.) Lists sources at the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks.
- 1800–present Mouse River Loop Genealogical Society. *North-Central North Dakota Genealogical Record: Quarterly of the Mouse River Loop Genealogy Society*. (FHL book 978.46 D25n.)
- 1800–1865 United States. Adjutant General's Office. *Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations From the Territory of Dakota*. (FHL film 881616.)
- 1800–1890 Jackson, Ronald Vern, et. al. *1890 North Dakota Census Index: Special Schedule of the Eleventh Census (1890) Enumerating Union Veterans and of Union Veterans of the Civil War*. (FHL book 978.4 X22j 1890.) Lists Civil War veterans or their widows who were recorded in the 1890 census.
- 1800–1980s Fargo Genealogical Society. *North Dakota Cemeteries*. (FHL book 978.4 V3f, vols. 1–32; films 928261–262, vols. 1–12.) Volumes 21–32 are indexed by surname.
- 1820–present Death records and index, 1907–present, are at the Division of Vital Records. (Not at the FHL.) You may wish to write and request a search.
- 1820–1900s Great Northern Railway Company. *Index to Personnel Files*. (On 4 FHL films beginning with 1528067.) Alphabetized.

- 1820–1900s Northern Pacific Railway Company. *Index to Personnel Files*. (FHL films 1528069–071.)
- 1850–1898 Lounsberry, Clement A. *Early History of North Dakota: Essential Outlines of American History*. (FHL book 978.4 H2L; film 1036937.) Pages 577–602 list Spanish-American War soldiers, 1898.
- 1873–1918 Hauslee, W. M. *Soldiers of the Great War*. (FHL book 973 M23s; fiche 6051244.) Volume 2 lists North Dakota soldiers who died in World War I, 1914–1918.
- 1873–1918 Fraser, G. Angus. *Roster of the Men and Women Who Served in the Army or Naval Service Including the Marine Corps, of the United States or its Allies from the State of North Dakota in the World War, 1917–1918*. (FHL book 978.4 M23a; films 982257–258.)
- 1873–1918 United States Selective Service System. *North Dakota, World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917–1918*. (On 30 FHL films beginning with 1819402.) Men ages 18 to 45 are listed alphabetically by county or draft board.
- 1880–present *Marriage Records and Index, 1925–Present*. (Not at the FHL.) These records are at the State Department of Health. You may wish to write and request a search.
- 1907–present *Birth Records and Index, 1907–Present*. (Not at the FHL.) These records are at the State Department of Health. You may wish to write and request a search.

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 of copying information 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.

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## Where to Find It

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### 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, you 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.

# 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.



## North Dakota Maps Bibliography

Andriot, Jay. *Township Atlas of the U.S.* McLean, Virginia, 1991.  
Rel/Fam Hist Ref - **G 1201.F7 A5 1991**

Summary: Shows "minor county subdivisions" maps start after 1930 and are provided by the Bureau of the Census. Census county subdivisions or minor civil divisions. Does not include Hawaii or Alaska.

Evaluation of North Dakota Maps: pp. 725-758. General history of counties with precincts, census county divisions, public land surveys and townships.

Kirkham, E. Kay. *A Genealogical and Historical Atlas of the United States.* Utah: Everton Publishers, Inc. 1976.

Rel/Fam Hist - **G1201.E6225.K5 1976.**

Summary: Shows changes in boundaries in the United States from colonial days up to 1909. Civil War maps and information.

Evaluation of North Dakota Maps: State historical information, p. 33. Maps: 1909, 235.

Mattson, Mark T. *Macmillan Color atlas of the States.* Toronto: Simon Schuster Macmillan, 1996.

Rel/Fam Hist Ref - **Quarto Shelves G 1200.M4 1996**

Summary: General state information.

Evaluation of North Dakota Maps: pp. 237-243. General state information includes; Maps with highways, climate & environment, history & important events, population & government, ethnicity & education, economy & resources.

Thorndale, William and William Dollarhide. *Map Guide to the U.S. Federal Censuses, 1790-1947.* Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1987.

Rel/Fam Hist - **G1201.F7 T5 1987**

Summary: 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 North Dakota Maps: pp. 259-266. Shows modern boundaries and changes.

**Map Collection on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the old section of HBLL.**

Map cases - G4170-G4174. Shows state maps with county boundaries etc.

Plamondon, Martin II. *Lewis and Clark Trail Maps*, Washington State University Press, Pullman, Washington. 2000.

Map Collection Quarto - **G1417.L4 P5 2000** (vol. 1&2).

Summary: Cartographic reconstruction of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Evaluation: Excellent if you would like to know trails on which ancestors may have traveled. What direction they might have gone, especially in the Dakotas.

Donovan, Mark P. *Historical Atlas of Chronology of County Boundaries, 1788-1980*. Boston, Massachusetts, 1984.

Map Collection - **G1201 .F7 H58x 1984 vol. 5**

Summary: Shows county boundaries.

Evaluation: Gives brief county histories/chronologies (i.e. when created etc).



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## North Dakota Federal Census Population Schedules, 1860 to 1920

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### Guide

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#### Introduction

Federal censuses are taken every 10 years. North Dakota residents are included in territorial and federal censuses from 1840 through 1920.

- The 1790 through 1840 censuses give the name of the head of each household. Other household members are mentioned only by age groupings of males and females.
- The 1850 census was the first federal census to give the names of all members of the household.

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.

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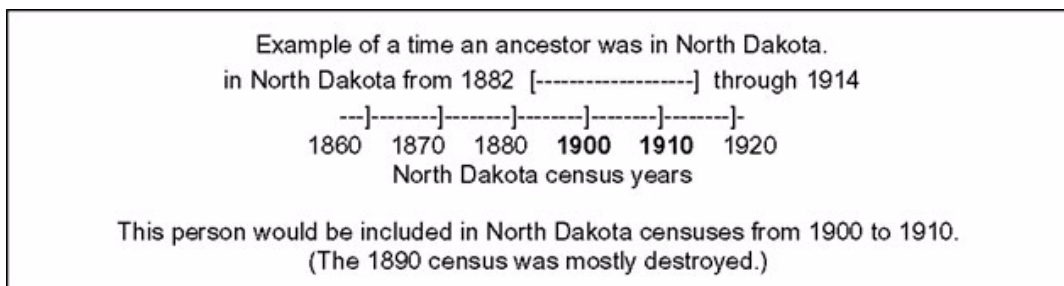
### Steps

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These 5 steps will help you use census records.

#### Step 1. Determine which censuses might include your ancestors.

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



## Step 2. Determine a census to start with.

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

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

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

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:

1840 1850 1860 1870 1880  
1890 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? (Birthplaces are shown in censuses for 1850 to 1920.)
- Where were they living—town or township, county, and state?
- Where were their parents born? (Birthplaces are shown in censuses for 1880 to 1920.)
- 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

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### 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 to 1980*, updated as *200 Years of U.S. Census Taking*, both by the United States 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 North Dakota to a different county or town.
- Movement of the family out of North Dakota if the family no longer appears in the census for North Dakota.

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.

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

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## Background

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### 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. In 1885 the federal government also helped 5 states or territories (Colorado, Florida, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Dakota Territory) conduct special censuses.

The 1890 census of North Dakota was destroyed in a fire. However, portions of a special schedule taken in 1890, of Union Civil War veterans and their widows, have survived. The surviving 1890 veterans' schedules cover Washington D.C., half of Kentucky, and all of Louisiana through Wyoming (states are in alphabetical order from K through W ). These schedules contain approximately 700,000 names.

## Types of Census Schedules

The following census schedules are available for North Dakota 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.
- **Mortality schedules** list those who died in the 12 months prior to the day the census was taken, for the 1860, 1870, 1880 and 1885 censuses.
- **1890 veterans' schedules** list Union veterans from the Civil War or their widows who were living in 1890.
- **Agricultural schedules** list data about farms and the names of the farmers for the 1870 and 1880 censuses.
- **Manufacturing or industrial schedules** list data about businesses and industries for the 1870 and 1880 censuses.

## 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: June 1 (June 2 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 for only 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*.

## Territorial, State, and Local Censuses

Territorial, state, and local governments also took censuses. Nonfederal censuses generally contain information similar to and sometimes more than federal censuses of the same time period. The North Dakota area was included in the following territorial censuses:

- 1836: Wisconsin Territory
- 1840: Iowa Territory
- 1850: Minnesota Territory
- 1860, 1870, and 1885: Dakota Territory

North Dakota became a state in 1889. State censuses were taken in North Dakota in 1905, 1915, and 1925.

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

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## Where to Find It

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### Internet

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

- North Dakota 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 with 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 *North Dakota Research Outline* lists Internet addresses for several North Dakota archives, libraries, and historical societies. These organizations may have microfilms and indexes of North Dakota census records, and the Internet sites may list what 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, 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, 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 *North Dakota Research Outline* lists Internet and mailing addresses for several North Dakota archives, libraries, and historical societies. These organizations may have microfilms and indexes of North Dakota 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  
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.

For more information, see [Hiring a Professional Genealogist](#).

## U.S. State Censuses

### NORTH DAKOTA

The Collections of the State Historical  
Society of North Dakota

978.4 N81

1836

The first census of the original counties of Dubuque and Demoine (Iowa) taken in July, 1836. Comprising the present states of Iowa, Minnesota and part of North and South Dakota.

ANOTHER FILMING

1022202 item 1-2

0989450 item 2

1885 (Dakota Territory)  
Census 1784-1787

Microfiche  
Card 1 of 1

1885 (Dakota Territory)

Microfiche Card #

Bowan County

1

Buford County

1

Dunn County

1

McIntosh County

1

McKenzie County

1

Mercer County

1

Mountraille County

1

Oliver County

1

Renville County

1

Stanton County

1

Towner County

1

Villard County

1

Wallace County

1

Ward County

2

Wells County

2

Wynn County

2

THIS PARTICULAR CENSUS IS ON MICROFICHE. PLEASE HAVE AN  
ATTENDANT HELP YOU LOCATE THEM.

## **NORTH DAKOTA**

Oihus, Colleen A. A history of coal mining in North Dakota, 1873-1982. Grand Forks, ND : North Dakota Geological Survey, 1983. **TN 805 .N67 O33x 1983**

Mekeel, H. Scudder. A Short History of the Teton-Dakota. Bismarck: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1943. **Microfiche E99 .T34 M45x**

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## Other North Dakota Resources

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<http://www.lib.ndsu.nodak.edu/>

North Dakota State Archives Genealogy Resources

<http://www.nd.gov/hist/sal/gen.htm>

Cyndi's List Genealogy Links

<http://www.cyndislist.com/nd.htm>

North Dakota Rootseeb Resources

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~ndgenweb/>

FamilySearch Wiki

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