

Oregon

Research Outline

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This outline describes major sources of information about families from Oregon. 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 few of the records described in this outline. The library's major holdings are census and American Indian records. The library has not acquired microfilms from the county courthouses with the exception of Douglas County.

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. These numbers may be used to locate materials in the library and to order microfilm and microfiche at Family History Centers.

FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY CATALOG

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:

UNITED STATES - CENSUS RECORDS OREGON - NATIVE RACES OREGON, DOUGLAS - VITAL RECORDS OREGON, DOUGLAS, ROSEBERG - CHURCH RECORDS

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

UNITED STATES - CENSUS RECORDS OREGON - NATIVE RACES OREGON, DOUGLAS - VITAL RECORDS OREGON, DOUGLAS, ROSEBURG - CHURCH RECORDS

ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES

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

- Oregon State Archives

800 Summer St. N.E.
Salem, OR 97310
Telephone: 503-373-0701
Fax: 503-373-0953

- National Archives—Pacific Northwest Region (Seattle)

6125 Sand Point Way, N.E.
Seattle, WA 98115

Telephone: 206-336-5115
Fax: 206-336-5112

- Oregon Genealogical Society

223 North A Street—Suite F
Springfield, Oregon 97477
Telephone: 541-746-7924
Mailing address:
P.O. Box 10306
Eugene, OR 97440-2306

- Oregon Historical Society Library

1200 S.W. Park Avenue
Portland, OR 97205-2483
Telephone: 503-306-5240
Fax: 503-219-2040

A helpful guide to the collection at the Oregon Historical Society Library is *Oregon Historical Society Microfilm Guide* Portland, Ore.: Oregon Historical Society, 1973; FHL book 979.5 A3o).

- Genealogical Forum of Oregon, Inc.

2130 S.W. Fifth—Suite 220
Portland, OR 97201
Telephone: 503-227-2398

- Oregon State Library

State Library Building
250 Winter St. N.E.
Salem, OR 97310-0640
Telephone: 503-378-4243
Fax: 503-588-7119

- University of Oregon

Knight Library
Eugene, OR 97403-1299
Telephone: 541-346-1818
Fax: 541-346-3485

- Multnomah County Library

Humanities Division
801 S.W. Tenth Avenue
Portland, OR 97205
Telephone: 503-248-5234

A helpful guide to other Oregon records is University of Washington (Seattle) Library, *The Dictionary Catalog of the Pacific Northwest Collection of the University of Washington (Seattle) Libraries*, 6 vols. (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1972; FHL book Q 979.7 A3w).

To learn more about the history and record-keeping systems of Oregon counties, study the 13 inventories of county archives published by the Historical Records Survey around 1940. Copies of these inventories are at the Family History Library.

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 Oregon 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.

- Genealogy, Libraries, and Historical Collections in Oregon

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~genepool/orgenlib.htm>

e-mail: jrgbun@ix.net.com.com.

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.

BIBLE RECORDS

The *Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Collection* contains some Oregon Bible records. This collection is described in the "Genealogy" section of this outline and is partially indexed by E. Kay Kirkham, *An Index to Some of the Bibles and Family Records of the United States*, vol. 2 (Logan, Utah: Everton Publishers, Inc., 1984; FHL book Ref 973 D22kk v.2; fiche 6089184).

BIOGRAPHY

The best collections of published biographies in Oregon are at the Oregon Historical Society Library and the Oregon State University. The Family History Library also has an excellent collection. Some representative biographical encyclopedias are:

Gaston, Joseph. *The Centennial History of Oregon, 1811-1912*, 4 vols. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1912. (FHL book 979.5 H2g; film 1000359.) Volumes 2 and 3 are biographical.

Carey, Charles Henry. *History of Oregon*. 3 vols. Chicago: Pioneer History Publishing Co., 1922. (FHL book 979.5 H2cc; fiche 6046590.) Volumes 2 and 3 are biographical.

Lockley, Fred. *History of the Columbia River Valley from The Dalles to the Sea*. 3 vols. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1928. (FHL book 979 H2Lf; film 1000362 items 2-4.) Volumes 2 and 3 are biographical.

Portrait and Biographical Record of the Willamette Valley, Oregon. Chicago: Chapman Publishing Co., 1903. (FHL book 979.53 D3p; film 1000365.)

All of these volumes and 43 additional collected biographies are indexed in Patricia Brandt and Nancy Guilford, *Oregon Biography Index* (Corvallis, Ore.: Oregon State University, 1976; FHL book 979.5 D3b index; film 1321470 item 18).

CEMETERIES

The *Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Collection* contains tombstone inscriptions from Oregon cemeteries. This collection is described in the “Genealogy” section of this outline. Another important collection is *Oregon Cemetery Records*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society, 1956-61; FHL book 979.5 V3p; films 824258-59).

Oregon cemeteries are listed in *Oregon Cemetery Survey* (Salem, Ore.: Oregon Department of Transportation, 1978; FHL book 979.5 V34o; film 1033848 item 4; fiche 6051231). This gives the name, size, location, condition, and sexton's or caretaker's address of each cemetery.

CENSUS

Federal

Many 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 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, and 1920 U.S. federal censuses for the state of Oregon. The 1890 census has been destroyed. The 1890 Union

veterans' schedule is available at the Family History Library (FHL [film 338236](#)) and at the National Archives.

Statewide indexes are available for the 1860, 1870, and 1880 censuses in book and microfiche format. A soundex (phonetic) index is also available on microfilm for part of the 1880 and all of the 1900 and 1920 censuses.

Mortality schedules (lists of deaths during the census year) exist for the years 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 censuses. The schedules for the 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 are indexed in book format. The schedules and indexes are available at the Oregon State Library, the Oregon Historical Society Library, and the University of Oregon.

Territorial and State

The 1850 Federal census for the Oregon Territory is available and has been indexed by several compilers. Territorial and state censuses also exist for a few counties for the years 1842, 1843, 1845, 1849, 1852, 1853, 1854, 1856, 1857, 1858, 1859, 1865, 1885, 1895, and 1905.

Most of the extant schedules from 1842-1859 are indexed (FHL film 899786) and published. In most of these censuses only the heads of households are listed. Copies of most are available at the Oregon State Archives and the Family History Library. They are listed in the catalog under OREGON - [COUNTY] - CENSUS.

CHURCH RECORDS

Before 1900 the largest religious groups in Oregon were Roman Catholic, Methodist Episcopal, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Christian (Disciples of Christ).

Some early Episcopal and Catholic records are available at the Oregon State Library. Roman Catholic records for 1838 to 1869 have been published in M. Leona Nichols, *Mantle of Elias, The Story of Fathers Blanchet and Demers in Early Oregon* (Portland: Binford and Mort, 1941; FHL book 979 V26n; [film 372495](#)). An index is at the Oregon State Archives.

The Family History Library collection includes histories of some denominations, such as the Roman Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, and Quakers. The library has few original church records for Oregon.

A guide to help you locate churches and their records is the *Directory of Churches and Religious Organizations, State of Oregon* (Portland: Historical Records Survey, 1940; FHL book 979.5 K24d; fiche 6051178).

Many denominations have collected their records into central repositories. You can write to the following addresses:

Baptist

American Baptist—Samuel Colgate Historical Society
1106 S. Goodman St.
Rochester, NY 14620-2532
Telephone: 716-473-1740
Fax: 716-473-1740
Internet address: www.crcds.edu/ABHSLib.asp

Northrup Library
Linfield College
900 S. Baker
McMinnville, OR 97128-9989
Telephone: 503-434-2262
Fax: 503-434-2566
Internet address: www.linfield.edu/portland

Disciples of Christ

Disciples of Christ Historical Society
1101 19th Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37212
Telephone: 615-327-1444
Fax: 615-327-1445
Internet address: www.discipleshistory.org

Methodist

United Methodist Archives Center
Drew University Library
36 Madison Ave.
Madison, NJ 07940
Telephone: 973-408-3590
Fax: 973-408-3909
Mailing address:
P.O. Box 127
Madison, NJ 07940
Internet address: www.discipleshistory.org

Presbyterian

Presbyterian Historical Society
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
425 Lombard St.
Philadelphia, PA 19147-1516
Telephone: 215-627-1852
Fax: 215-627-0509
Internet address: www.history.pcusa.org

Telephone: 215-627-1852

Fax: 215-627-0509

To locate Presbyterian records, see *Inventory of Church Archives of Oregon Presbyterian Churches: 1968 Arrangement with Indexes* (N.p.: Historical Records Survey, WPA, 1968; FHL film 899323).

Roman Catholic

Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon

Chancery Office

2838 E. Burnside St.

Portland, OR 97214-1895

Telephone: 503-234-5334

Fax: 503-234-2545

Mailing address:

P.O. Box 351

Portland, OR 97214-1895

Internet address: www.usachurch.com/oregon/portland/churches/church_66882.htm

COURT RECORDS

Major courts that have kept records of genealogical value are the following:

Circuit courts have countywide jurisdiction over criminal cases, probate matters, guardianships, and domestic relations.

County courts have countywide jurisdiction in juvenile cases, civil matters under \$500, and probate matters. The Family History Library has a few county court records.

District courts have countywide jurisdiction over minor civil and criminal matters.

Justice courts have concurrent countywide jurisdiction with circuit courts over minor civil and criminal cases.

Supreme Court has the final appellate jurisdiction for the state.

The Family History Library has copies of a few court records, including Douglas County court records (1852-63) and coroner's inquest records (1896-1946). You can obtain copies of court records at the various county courthouses. The Oregon State Archives has files for Clackamas, Lane, Marion, and Wasco counties.

DIRECTORIES

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

- 1863-1935 FHL films 1377327-
- 1923, 1941, etc. FHL book 979.549/P1 E4p

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

Immigrants

In the early 1800s, traders and trappers came into the area from Canada, Russia, Latin America, and the United States. In 1811, John Jacob Astor, an American, established the first white settlement in Oregon. In the 1830s and 1840s, other settlements were created in the Willamette River valley. These settlers generally came from midwestern and eastern states, Canada, and Russia. In 1843, a provisional government was set up by American settlers. In the same year, over 900 more Americans arrived, mostly from Arkansas, Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa.

The Oregon Donation Act of 1850 guaranteed free land to those who settled and cultivated the land before 1855. New settlers surged into the Oregon Territory, primarily from the Mississippi River valley, the Midwest, and the South. Foreign-born immigrants came mainly from Canada, Germany, Scandinavia, England, and Russia.

In 1860, gold discoveries in Idaho made Portland an important trade depot. The completion of the Northern Pacific Railway in 1883 brought many new settlers into Oregon. This was Oregon's first transcontinental rail connection. Later immigrants came from China, Japan, the Philippines, and Latin America.

A helpful source on overland migration is William Adrian Bowen, *The Willamette Valley: Migration and Settlement on the Oregon Frontier* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978; FHL book 979.53 X4b; fiche 6101360).

Records

There are no known lists of passengers arriving in Oregon ports (such as Astoria, Portland, and Tillamook). However, records of ethnic groups and shipping enterprises are available at the Oregon Historical Society Library.

Records of minorities, such as the Basques, Quakers, Swedes, and Chinese, are listed in the catalog under OREGON - MINORITIES. For records of American Indians, see the section "Native Races" in this outline. Some of these tribes are the Cayuse, Klamath, Modoc, Nez Perce, Paiute, Tillamook, and Umatilla.

GAZETTEERS

Several helpful gazetteers of Oregon have been published. Two of the most helpful are:

McArthur, Lewis A. *Oregon Geographic Names*, 6th ed. Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1992. (FHL book 979.5 E2m 1992.)

R. L. Polk & Co. *Oregon and Washington Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1909-1910*. Seattle: R.L. Polk, 1909. (FHL film 1000367.)

GENEALOGY

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 consists of transcripts of Bible, cemetery, church, marriage, death, obituary, and will records. It was microfilmed in 1971 at the DAR Library in Washington, D.C., and is available on 33 reels at the Family History Library (beginning on FHL film 857012). The volumes are generally arranged by county, and many have individual indexes.

HISTORY

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

1800s	At the beginning of the 19th century, Spain, Russia, and England all claimed what is now Oregon..
1811	John Jacob Astor (an American) established a trading post at Astoria. This was the first white settlement in Oregon.
1819	Spain withdrew her claims.
1824-1825	Russia withdrew her claims
1843	A provisional government was established by the first American settlers. About 900 more Americans arrived the same year.
1846	The present boundary between the United States and Canada was established.
1848	The Oregon Territory was created including what is now Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and parts of Montana and Wyoming.
1850	The Oregon Donation Act was passed, which guaranteed settlers land ownership if they would settle on and cultivate land in the territory.
1853	The Washington Territory was organized, reducing the size of the Oregon Territory by about half.
1859	Oregon became the 33rd state.
1883	The Northern Pacific Railway reached Oregon.

A helpful source for studying the history of Oregon is Charles Henry Carey, *History of Oregon*, 3 vols. (Chicago: Pioneer History Pub. Co., 1922; FHL book 979.5 H2cc; fiche 6046590). Volumes 2-3 are collected biographies.

LAND AND PROPERTY RECORDS

Territorial and Land Office Records

Land records during the territorial period, 1845 to 1849, were filed with the territorial recorder. These papers are now in the Oregon State Archives.

The thousands of settlers who arrived in the Oregon Territory between December 1850 and December 1855 were eligible to receive donation land claims. The applications for these free lands may provide birth, marriage, citizenship, and migration information.

Records of the original donation land claims are in the National Archives. Microfilm copies of the records are available at the National Archives—Pacific Alaska Region

(Seattle) and at the Family History Library; *Oregon and Washington Donation Land Files, 1851- 1903* (FHL films 1028543 and 1490152-242). Abstracts with indexes for 1852-1903 are also available at the Family History Library (FHL films 847554-59).

Abstracts of the donation land claims are in *Genealogical Material in Oregon Donation Land Claims*, 5 vols. (Portland: Genealogical Forum of Portland, 1957-1975; FHL book 979.5 R2g; vol. 4 on film 823831 item 7; vols. 1-5 on fiche 6051173). An alphabetical index to the claims is available at the Oregon State Library. A published index to the claims is Oregon State Archives, comp., *Index to Oregon Donation Land Claims* (Portland: Genealogical Forum, 1953-57; FHL film 874373 item 2; fiche 6051271).

Distribution of the remaining unoccupied land was administered by the General Land Office (FHLO) through land offices in Oregon. Most of the local FHLO records are now kept in the National Archives—Pacific Alaska Region (Seattle). Patents and copies of the tract books and township plats are at:

Oregon State Office of the Bureau of Land Management

333 SW 1st ave

Portland, OR 97204

Telephone: 503-808-6002

Fax: 503-808-6308

Mailing address:

P.O. Box 2965

Portland, OR 97208-2965

The original tract books, plats, and land entry case files are at the National Archives.

County Records

After land was transferred to private ownership, subsequent transactions are recorded by the county auditor in the form of deeds and mortgages. These may be obtained from the appropriate recorder or clerk in each courthouse. The Family History Library has not acquired land records from the counties, except for the deed indexes of Douglas County for 1857 to 1974.

MAPS

A statewide collection of maps is Ralph N. Preston, *Historical Maps of Oregon: Overland Stage Routes, Old Military Roads, Indian Battle Grounds, Old Forts, and Old Gold Mines* (Corvallis, Ore.: Western Guide Publishers, 1972; FHL book Q 979.5 E3h).

A useful source on county boundaries is Erma Skyles Brown, *Oregon County Boundary Change Maps, 1843-1916* (Lebanon, Ore.: End of Trail Researchers, 1970; FHL book 979.5 E7b; film 908033 item 2; fiche 6051182).

The Family History Library has a few Oregon maps. Large collections of maps are available at the University of Oregon in Eugene and at Oregon State University in Corvallis.

MILITARY RECORDS

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

Many military records are found at the Genealogical library, the National Archives, and other federal and state archives. The *United States Research Outline* provides more information on the federal records. For Oregon the following sources are also very helpful.

Civil War (1861-1865)

A published roster that provides each volunteer's name, rank, dates of service, place of enlistment, place of birth, age, occupation, and company is M.A. Pekar and Edna Mingus, comps., *Soldiers Who Served in the Oregon Volunteers, Civil War Period, Infantry and Cavalry* (Portland: Genealogical Forum of Portland Oregon, 1961; FHL book 979.5 A1 No. 16 also 979.5 M2p; film 928088 item 8; fiche 6051234).

A published list of deaths reported to the Oregon department of the Grand Army of the Republic is Jane Myers, *Honor Roll of Oregon Grand Army of the Republic, 1881-1935* (Cottage Grove, Ore.: Cottage Grove Genealogical Society, 1980; FHL book 979.5 A1 No. 53).

The Family History Library has an index to service records of Union Army soldiers (FHL film 821947) and a nationwide index to pension records. The actual service and pension records are available only at the National Archives.

Spanish-American War (1898)

A published roster of soldiers that provides name, age, place of birth, occupation, physical description, and service is C. U. Gantenbein, *The Official Records of the Oregon*

Volunteers in the Spanish War and Philippine Insurrection, 2nd ed. (Salem, Ore.: J.R. Whitney, 1903; FHL fiche 6051175).

The Oregon State Archives has the following:

- Early service records from the Indian Wars
- National Guard records through 1920
- Records of the Roseburg State Soldiers' Home
- An index to World War I veterans
- World War I files from the State Historian of the Defense Council (biographical questionnaires)
- Records of the state bonuses and loan applications of World War I veterans

World War I (1917-1918)

World War I draft registration cards for men ages 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 Oregon, see:

United States. Selective Service System. *Oregon, 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 1851979.)

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.)

NATIVE RACES

The Family History Library has histories of the various tribes that have lived in Oregon. The library also has microfilm copies of the Bureau of Indian Affairs' records of births, marriages, deaths, censuses, schools, land allotments, and heirships. In general, these are

for 1877 to 1952 and include records of the Chemawa Indian School, Grand Ronde-Siletz and Klamath agencies, and the Portland Area Office. The original documents are at the National Archives—Pacific Alaska Region (Seattle).

Of special value are the *Family Index Cards, 1938-1950* from the Portland Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (FHL films 1028470 item 4, to 1028471) and *Family History and Medical Data, 1904-1937* from the Klamath Agency (FHL films 1028454 item 2, to 1028455).

A useful guide is Charles E. McChesney, *Rolls of Certain Indian Tribes in Oregon and Washington* (Fairfield, Wash.: Ye Galleon Press, 1969; FHL book 970.1 R659).

Other records are also listed in the Subject Search of the Family History Library Catalog under the name of the tribe, or in the Locality Search of the catalog under the name of the state and various subjects, such as PROBATE RECORDS and LAND AND PROPERTY.

NATURALIZATION RECORDS

In the territorial era, immigrants could apply for citizenship at any U.S. district court. Naturalization records filed as part of the “donation land” laws are at the National Archives.

After statehood in 1859, the circuit court had primary jurisdiction over naturalization. The county clerk served as clerk of the circuit court and kept the records. You can obtain copies of declarations and petitions from the clerk's office in each county. Some naturalization records may also be found in county court journals or U.S. district court records. The Family History Library has copies of some naturalization records for Oregon.

For naturalization records after September 1906, contact the National Archives—Pacific Northwest Region (Seattle) or the local office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The Seattle Branch has records of the U.S. District Court for 1859 to 1970, and the U.S. Circuit Court for 1870 to 1912. The Family History Library has U.S. District Court indexes 1863-1956 and records 1859-1941 (beginning on FHL film 1492135 item 2), and U.S. Circuit Court indexes 1859-1956 (beginning on FHL film 1433979). There is also a published index covering the years 1906-1930, W. David Samuelsen, *Oregon Naturalization Records Index* (FHL book 979.5 P4s).

NEWSPAPERS

The Oregon Historical Society Library, the University of Oregon Library, and the Oregon State Library have some Oregon newspaper files. The Oregon Historical Society Library has an alphabetical card file with abstracts of birth, marriage, and death information from early Oregon newspapers. Some pre-1880 Oregon newspapers are available at the Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley.

The Family History Library does not have copies of Oregon newspapers. The library has copies of published obituaries, such as those from the *Pacific Christian Advocate* (1864-80 on FHL films 369746-47; 1880-1890 on film 365234).

A guide to Oregon newspapers is Rory Funke, *Oregon Newspapers on Microfilm* (Eugene, Oregon: University of Oregon Library, 1980; FHL book 979.5 B3o).

PERIODICALS

The major genealogical periodicals and magazines helpful for Oregon research are:

Beaver Briefs. 1969-. Published by the Willamette Valley Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 2083, Salem, OR 97308. (FHL book 979.53 B2b.)

The Bulletin. 1951-. Published by the Genealogical Forum of Portland, Oregon, 2130 S.W. 5th Ave.—Suite 220, Portland, OR 97201-4934. (FHL book 979.549 D25gf; vols. 10-31 on film 1321467 items 15-19.)

Coos Genealogical Forum Bulletin. 1966-. Published by The Coos Genealogical Forum Library, P.O. Box 1067, North Bend, OR 97459. (FHL book 979.523 B2c; vols. 1-17 beginning on film 1321409.)

Mt. Hood Trackers. 1959-1977. Published by the Mt. Hood Genealogical Forum, P.O. Box 703, Oregon City, OR 97045. (FHL book 979.541 B2t; vols. 3-10 and index to vols. 1-10 beginning on film 1321465 item 7.)

Oregon Genealogical Society Quarterly. 1962-. Published by the Oregon Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 10306, Eugene, OR 97440-2306. (FHL book 979.5 D25o.)

Rogue Digger, 1966-. Published by the Rogue Valley Genealogical Society, 133 S. Central Ave., Franklin Bldg., Medford, OR 97501-7221, Telephone: 503-770-5848. (FHL book 979.527 B2r.)

PROBATE RECORDS

In the territorial era a probate court handled probate matters. A few of the early probate files are now at the Oregon State Archives. Since 1859 the probate judge in each county has had jurisdiction over wills and the disposition of estates. Although some records are in the circuit court, the majority are kept by the clerk of each county court. The Family History Library has many of these records on microfilm.

VITAL RECORDS

County Records of Births and Deaths

While most counties began keeping birth and death records in 1903, some areas started as early as 1854. For example, birth records for Portland begin in 1864 and death records begin in 1862, but they are incomplete. These are available at the Oregon State Archives.

You can write to each county clerk for information. The Family History Library has copies of some county records, for example, Douglas County marriages, 1852 to 1912, and coroner inquests, 1896 to 1946.

State Records of Births and Deaths

Statewide registration of births and deaths began in 1903. The Family History Library has the index to deaths from 1903 to 1970 and has some county birth and death records on microfilm. The original birth and death records are available from the state. To request copies for 1903 to the present, write to:

Oregon State Health Division
Center for Health Statistics
P.O. Box 14050
Portland, OR 97293-0050

Telephone: 503-731-4095

Fax: 503-234-8417

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 Family History Centers. You can also write to the Oregon State Health Division (address above) for current information.

State records are not open to the public. Birth records are available only to the registrant's immediate family. Death records are available to persons with a "direct and tangible interest." In your request, state your relationship to the individual you want information about and your reason.

The Oregon State Archives (see address under "Archives and Libraries" section of this outline) has an index to the state's records of births and deaths from 1903 to 1984. They also have copies of Oregon death records 1903-1946, some marriage records 1849-1935, and a marriage index 1906-1995 (some years missing).

Delayed registration of births began in the late 1930s. To obtain these records write to the Oregon State Health Division. The Family History Library has delayed records for some counties.

Marriage and Divorce Records

Counties began to record marriages soon after they were organized. Some county marriage records date from 1849. Write to the county clerk for information on early records they may have. Beginning in 1906 each county sent copies of the records to the Oregon State Health Division (address above). For records after 1906 you can write to the county clerk or to the state. Records from 1849-1930 are also at the Oregon State Archives (see address under "Archives and Libraries" section of this outline).

Before 1853, divorces were granted by the territorial legislature. These records are now kept at the Oregon State Archives. Divorces that occurred after 1853 were recorded in the circuit court of each county. Records since 1925 may also be obtained from the Oregon State Health Division (address above).

Guide to Vital Records

More information about the history and availability of vital records is in *Guide to Public Vital Statistics Records in Oregon* (Portland, Oreg.: Historical Records Survey, 1942; FHL book 979.5 V2h; film 1036701 item 4; fiche 6051198).

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.



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Oregon 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 Oregon affected political boundaries, record keeping, and family movements.

1800s	At the beginning of the 19th century, Spain, Russia, and England all claimed what is now Oregon.
1811	John Jacob Astor (an American) established a trading post at Astoria. This was the first white settlement in Oregon.
1819	Spain withdrew her claims.
1824-1825	Russia withdrew her claims
1843	A provisional government was established by the first American settlers. About 900 more Americans arrived the same year.
1846	The present boundary between the United States and Canada was established.
1848	The Oregon Territory was created, including what is now Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and parts of Montana and Wyoming.
1850	The Oregon Donation Act was passed, which guaranteed settlers land ownership if they would settle on and cultivate land in the territory.
1853	The Washington Territory was organized, reducing the size of the Oregon Territory by about half.
1859	Oregon became the 33rd state.
1883	The Northern Pacific Railway reached Oregon.
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 Oregon 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 Oregon 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.

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

A helpful source for studying the history of Oregon is Charles Henry Carey, *History of Oregon*, 3 vols. (Chicago: Pioneer History Pub. Co., 1922; FHL book 979.5 H2cc; fiche 6046590).

Volumes 2-3 are collected biographies.

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.



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Oregon Statewide Indexes and Collections

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–present | Ancestral File
International Genealogical Index
Family History Library Catalog - Surname Search
To see these files, click here. |
| 1580–1979 | Oregon Genealogical Society Pedigree Book. (FHL book 979.5/EI D2o, 2 vols.) Gives name and address of the submitter; has about 4,700 names. |
| 1580–1979 | Stahl, Wilma; Irene Dunn; Emily Aulicino. <i>Oregon Genealogical Society Pedigree Book</i> . (FHL book 979.5/EI D2o.) Has about 4,700 names. |
| 1580–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.)
- 1586–1979 McCourt, Martha, and Josephine Fletcher. *Oregon Society of Mayflower Descendants Membership Register*. (FHL book 979.5 C4o.) About 2,800 names.
- 1700–1845 Oregon Genealogical Society. *Oregon Pioneers*. (FHL book 979.5 D2o; film 1697395 item 2.) Persons in Oregon before 1872. About 19,500 names.
- 1700–1976 Brandt, Patricia, and Nancy Gilford. *Oregon Biography Index*. (FHL book 979.5 D3b index; film 1321470 item 18.) Indexes principal persons' names in 32 sources. About 18,800 names.
- 1700–1939 *Oregon Historical Quarterly*. (FHL book 979.5 B2h vols.1–40, 1900–1939; film 1697395 item 2.) Has an every-name index. About 90,000 names.
- 1700–1860 White, Virgil D. *Genealogical Abstracts of Revolutionary War Pension Files*. (FHL book 973 M28g vols.1–4.) Vol. 4 has index to vols.1–3. About 400,000 names.
- 1700–1983 Willamette Valley Genealogical Society. *Eighty-Six Ancestral Charts, 1170 Surnames*. (FHL book 979.5 D2e; fiche 6019902.) About 1,170 names.
- 1700–1878 White, Kris, and Mary C. Cuthill. *Overland Passages: A Guide to Overland Documents in the Oregon Historical Society*. (FHL book 979.5 W2o.) Index to 230 diaries and letters. About 3,300 names.
- 1700–1900 *Biography Card File*. (Not at FHL.) At Oregon Historical Society. You may wish to ask the society to search the index. They also have a Pioneer Card File.
- 1700–1970 *DAR Card File* at the Oregon Historical Society. (Not at FHL.) Indexes the material in the DAR books. You can write for a search.
- 1700–1970 Kirkham, E. Kay. *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 vol. 2; fiche 6089184.) Provides a surname index to the item just below.
- 1700–1970 Daughters of the American Revolution. (Oregon). *Genealogical Collection*. (On 33 FHL films beginning with 857012.) Indexed by surname in Kirkham's book above, and in the DAR Card File index two items above.
- 1700–1990 *Catalog of Manuscripts in the University of Oregon Library*. (Not at FHL.) You can write to the Knight Library to request a search.
- 1700–1984 *Oregon Genealogical Society Quarterly*. (FHL book 979.5 D25o.) There are annual surname indexes.
- 1700–1903 *Year Book of the Oregon and Washington Society Sons of the American Revolution*. (FHL book 979 C4s.) Lists SAR members in 1903 and their ancestors who served in the Revolutionary War. About 135 names.
- 1740–1900 White, Virgil D. *Index to War of 1812 Pension Files*. (FHL book 973 M22i.) Lists soldiers and their spouses. You can write to the National Archives for their pension file. About 150,000 names.
- 1770–1850 Jackson, Ronald Vern, et al. *Oregon 1850 Mortality Schedule*. (FHL book 979.5 X2jr 1850.) About 50 names.
- 1770–1992 Wojcik, Donna M. *The Brazen Overlanders of 1845*. (FHL book 979.5 H2w; film 982206 item 3; fiche 6051286.) Lists early settlers; pages 381–515 list families. About 2,100 names.
- 1770–1954 Corning, Howard M. *Dictionary of Oregon History*. (FHL book 979.5 H26c.) Arranged alphabetically. About 500 names.
- 1780–1860 Jackson, Ronald Vern, et al. *Oregon 1860 Mortality Schedule*. (FHL book 979.5 X2j 1860.) About 400 names.
- 1780–1890 Munnick, Harriet D. *Catholic Church Records of the Pacific Northwest: Missions of St Ann and St Rose of Cayouse, 1847–1888; Walla Walla and Frenchtown, 1858–1872; Frenchtown 1872–1888*. (FHL book 979.5 K2mh vols.1–2.) There are several other volumes in this series. About 10,000 names in several indexes.
- 1789–1896 Oregon State Archives. *Index to Oregon Donation Land Claims*. (FHL book 979.5 R2g index; film 874373 item 2; fiche 6051408 or 6051271.) The land claims were made between 1851 and 1903 and are on FHL films 1490152–242. About 5,800 names.

- 1789–1922 [Genealogical Material in Oregon Donation Land Claims](#). (FHL book 979.5 R2g, vols.1–5; film 823831 beginning with item 7; fiche 6051173.) About 35,000 names.
- 1790–1920 [Census indexes 1850–1880 and 1900–1920](#). See What to Do Next, and 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. [Oregon 1870 Mortality Schedule](#). (FHL book 979.5 X2j 1870.) About 500 names.
- 1800–1913 Gurley, Lottie L. [Genealogical Material in Oregon Provisional Land Claims, Abstracted](#) Vols. 1–8, 1845–1849. (FHL book 979.5 R2gL.)
- 1800–1880 Jackson, Ronald Vern, et. al. [Oregon 1880 Mortality Schedule](#). (FHL book 979.5 X2jr 1880.) About 1,840 names.
- 1800–1890 Myers, Jane. *Oregon State 1890 Special Federal Census of Union Veterans [sic] and Their Widows: Eleventh Census of the United States 1890 Schedules Enumerating Union Veterans and Widows of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Oregon*. (FHL book 979.5 X28m.) About 7,000 names.
- 1800–1865 United States Adjutant General's Office. [Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organization From the State of Oregon](#). (FHL film 821947.) Alphabetical. About 1,800 names.
- 1800–1935 Myers, Jane. *Honor Roll of Oregon Grand Army of the Republic, 1881–1935: Death's [sic] Reported in Oregon of Members of the GAR, Extracted From Proceedings of the Annual Encampments of the Department of Oregon, Grand Army of the Republic*. (FHL book 979.5 A1 #53.) Lists Civil War soldiers. About 3,800 names.
- 1800–1865 Pekar, M. A. [Soldiers Who Served in the Oregon Volunteers, Civil War Period, Infantry and Cavalry](#). (FHL book 979.5 A1 #16; film 928088 item 8; 928082 item 6.) For period of 1861–1865. Sometimes gives state of birth. About 2,600 names.
- 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.
- 1800–1890 Smith, Fern. [Genealogical Data Copied from the "Pacific Christian Advocate" \(Published in Oregon\) for the Years 1864–1890](#) . . . (FHL films 369746–747 and 365234.) Year 1867 is missing.
- 1800–1963 *Yesterday's Roll Call: Statistical Data and Genealogical Facts from Cemeteries in Baker, Sherman and Umatilla Counties, Oregon*. (FHL book 979.5 V3g.) Cemetery records. About 6,000 names.
- 1800–1947 [Oregon Cemetery Records](#). (FHL book 979.5 V3p vols.1–2; films 824528 item 3 and 824259.) About 3,100 names.
- 1820–1970 [Oregon Death Records Index 1903–1970](#). (FHL films 1373869–80.) About 28,000 names.
- 1820–1952 United States. Bureau of Indian Affairs. Portland Area Office. *Vital Statistics, 1912–1952*. (FHL films 1028459 item 2; 1028460–461.) Births, marriages, and deaths. About 500 names.
- 1820–1970 United States. Bureau of Indian Affairs. Grand Ronde-Siletz Agency. *Heirship Records, 1887–1930*. (FHL films 1025306–8.) Allotment heirship cards and various probate records.
- 1850–1991 *Obituaries & News Items of People born in 1800's*. (FHL book 979.5 V4o vols. 1–3; film 1697750 item 3–5.) About 5,000 names.
- 1873–1918 Haulsee, W.M. et. al. [Soldiers of the Great War](#). (FHL book 973 M23s; fiche 6051244.) Soldiers who died in World War I, 1914–1918. Vol. 3 has Oregon. About 528 names.
- 1860–1950 United States. Bureau of Indian Affairs. Portland Area Office. *Family Index Cards, 1938–1950*. (FHL films 1028470 item 4 and 1028471.) Two series, A to Z. About 1,000 names.
- 1870–1901 Gantenbein, C. U. *The Official Records of the Oregon Volunteers in the Spanish*

	<i>War and Philippine Insurrection.</i> (FHL fiche 6051175.) Gives name, age, and place of birth. About 1,400 names.
1873–1918	United States Selective Service System. <i>Oregon, World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917–1918.</i> (On 33 FHL films beginning with 1851979.) Men ages 18 to 45 are listed alphabetically by county or draft board.
1900–1945	Leonard, Spencer. <i>A Partial List of Military Casualties and MIAs from the State of Oregon During World War II.</i> (FHL book 979.5 M2h.) Alphabetical. Has indexes. About 700 obituaries.

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 that has the index or collection.

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 your 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 that you're looking for 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 librarian to order a book or microfilm for you through interlibrary loan from another library. You will need the title of the item and 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.

Oregon 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 Oregon Maps: pp. 819-841. 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 Oregon Maps: State historical information, p. 36. Maps: 1860 p149; 1878 p164; 1883 p 194; 1909 p 238.

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

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

Summary: General state information.

Evaluation of Oregon Maps: pp. 258-264. 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 Oregon Maps: pp. 281-288. Shows modern boundaries and changes.

Map Collection on 2nd floor of the old section of HBLL

Loy, William G. *A Preliminary Atlas of Oregon*, University of Oregon, 1972. Map Collection - **G 1490 L9 1972**

Summary: Chronology from 1542 to 1839 with routes of exploration. Chronology of 1841-1968. Lists Native American tribes, as well as evolution of the counties formed and population growth.

Evaluation: Chronologies are brief but good to see and understand more in depth and specific information and dates. Shows trails of different explorers that may help in searching routes of Native Americans, trappers or pioneers.

Phillips, P. Lee. *A List of Maps of America in the Library of Congress*, Washington, 1901.
Map Collection - **G 1100.X1 U65**

Summary: Lists maps by town, county or state - with Canada included, also by land mark (bridge, port etc).

Evaluation of Oregon Maps: pp 641-645. Excellent list of maps to see which lands were given to Native Americans as well as settlers.

Map Collection - Map Cases **G4290-G4294**. Individual maps that illustrate things from military movement to censuses.

Oregon Federal Census Population Schedules, 1850 to 1920

Introduction

Federal censuses are taken every 10 years. Oregon residents are included in territorial and federal censuses from 1850 through 1920.

- 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.

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 Oregon with the census years. This will determine which censuses you will search.

Example of a time an ancestor was in Oregon.
 in Oregon from 1873 [-----] through 1906
 --]-----]-----]-----]-----]-----]
 1850 1860 1870 1880 1900 1910 1920
 Oregon census years

This person would be included in Oregon censuses from 1880 to 1900.
 (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 **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:

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

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 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 Oregon to a different county or town.
- Movement of the family out of Oregon if the family no longer appears in the census for Oregon.

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.

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

Most of the 1890 census was destroyed by 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 (the states are in alphabetical order from L to W). These schedules contain approximately 700,000 names.

Types of Census Schedules

The following census schedules are available for Oregon 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 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 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 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 censuses.
- **Manufacturing or industrial schedules** list data about businesses and industries for the 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 censuses.

How the 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 the 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 the 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 period.

The Oregon Territory was created in 1848. In 1850, an Oregon Territory census was taken. Territorial censuses were taken for some counties in 1842, 1843, 1845, 1849, 1853, 1854, 1855, 1856, 1857, and 1859.

Oregon became a state in 1859. Oregon state censuses were taken in 1892 (Marion County) and 1905 (a few counties). See the census section of the *Oregon Research Outline*, and the Oregon chapter of [Ancestry's Redbook: American State, County & Town Sources](#), for more information.

Territorial, 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.

Where to Find It

Internet

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

- Oregon 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 *Oregon Research Outline* lists Internet addresses for several Oregon archives, libraries, and historical societies. These organizations may have microfilms and indexes of Oregon 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 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 the 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 *Oregon Research Outline* lists Internet and mailing addresses for several Oregon archives, libraries, and historical societies. These organizations may have microfilms and indexes of Oregon 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

OREGON

1845-1857 Indexed. Alphabetical Index of old and new counties at the beginning of the film. Also selected legislative and administrative documents relating to the census.

Census 1845-1857

0899786

OREGON

Bancroft, Hubert Howe. History of Oregon. San Francisco: History Company, 1886-88. **F851 .B22 vol. 29-30**

Braly, David. Indians in Early Day Oregon. Portland; Prineville, OR: Braly Publishing Co., 1980. **F881 .B7**

Dodds, Gordon B. The American Northwest: A History of Oregon and Washington. Arlington Heights, IL: Forum Press, 1986. **F876 .D57 1986**

Dodds, Gordon B. Oregon: A Bicentennial History. New York: Norton, 1977. **F876 D6**

History of the Pacific Northwest: Oregon and Washington. Portland, OR: North Pacific History Co., 1889. **Microfiche Z1236 L5 1971 no. 23405-6 (2 volumes)**

Jacobs, Melvin Clay. Winning Oregon: A Study of an Expansionist Movement. Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1938. **F880 .J24 1938**

Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition. Oregon, A Story of Progress and Development, Together with an Account of the Lewis & Clark Centennial Exposition to be held in Portland, Oregon from June First to October Fifteenth, Nineteen Hundred and Five. Portland, OR: Press of F. W. Baltes and Co., 1904. **F876 .P85**

O'Donnell, Terence. That Balance So Rare: The Story of Oregon. Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1988. **F876 .033 1988**

Polhemus, James Henry. Oregon: Its Resources. Its People, and Its Future! New York: Newcomen Society, 1951. 920 N43 V .11 #35

Twiss, Travers. The Oregon Territory, Its History and Discovery. New York: D. Appleton, 1846. **Microfiche Z1236 L5 1971 no. 15682 also Americana F880 .T97**

Baker County

The History of Baker County, Oregon. <Portland, OR>: Baker County Historical Society 1986. **F882 .B2 H55 1986**

Stewart, Gordon. Baker County Sketch Book. Baker, OR: Baker County Chamber of Commerce, 1956. **F882 .B2 S7**

OREGON

Benton County

Fagan, David D. History of Benton County, Oregon including its Geology, Topography, Soil and Productions, Together with the Early History of the Pacific Coast. Portland, OR: A. G. Walling (printer), 1885. **979.534 F131h**

Clackamas County

Holman, Fredrick V. Dr. John McLaughlin, the Father of Oregon. Cleveland: A. H. Clark Co., 1907. **923.9 M22h**

Johnson, Robert Cummings. John McLaughlin: Patriarch of the West. Portland, OR: Metropolitan Press, 1935. **923.9 M22j**

Clatsop County

Miller, Emma Gene. Clatsop County, Oregon: A History. Portland, OR: Binfords & Mort, 1958. **F882 .C53 M5**

Columbia County

Coos County

Dodge, Orvil. Pioneer History of Coos and Curry Counties, Oregon: Heroic Deeds and Thrilling Adventures of the Early Settlers. Salem, OR: Capital Printing Co., 1898. **Americana F882 . C7 D6 1898**

Mahaffey, Charlotte L. Coos River Echoes: A Story of the Coos River Valley. Portland, OR: Interstate Press, 1965. **F882 C7 M15**

Peterson, Emil R. and Alfred Powers. A Century of Coos and Curry. Portland, OR: Binfords & Mort, 1952. **F882 C7 P4**

Walling, A. G. History of Southern Oregon. Portland, OR: A. G. Walling, 1884. **F876 . W3**

Crook County

An Illustrated History of Central Oregon. Spokane, WA: Western Historical Publishing Co., 2 1905. **Americana F876 .133 1905**

OREGON

Curry County

Dodge, Orvil. Pioneer History of Coos and Curry Counties. Oregon: Heroic Deeds and Thrilling Adventures of the Early Settlers. Salem, OR: Capital Printing Co., 1898. **Americana F882 C7 D6 1898**

Peterson, Emil R. A Century of Coos and Curry. Portland, OR: Binfords & Mort, 1952. F882 C7 P4

Walling, A. G. History of Southern Oregon. Portland, OR: A. G. Walling, 1884. **F876 W3**

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Vaughan, Thomas, ed. High & Mighty: Select Sketches about the Deschutes Country. Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society, 1981. **F882 .D45 H53**

Douglas County

Beckham, Stephen Dow. Land of the Umpqua: A History of Douglas County. Roseburg, OR: Douglas County Commissioners, 1986. F882 D7 B43

Walling, A. G. History of Southern Oregon. Portland, OR: A. G. Walling, 1884. **F870 W3**

Gilliam County

An Illustrated History of Central Oregon. Spokane, WA: Western Historical Publishing Co., 1905. **Americana F876.133 1905**

Grant County

Harney County

Adams, Golden V., comp. Harney County, Oregon Cemetery Records. Provo, UT: 1975. **929.3795 Adl7h 1975**

OREGON

Brimlow, George F. Harney County, Oregon. and Its Range Land. Portland, OR: Binfords & Mort, 1951. **F882 .H37 B7**

Hood River County

Jackson County

Walling, A. G. History of Southern Oregon. Portland, OR: A. G. Walling, 1884. **F876 W3**

Jefferson County

Josephine County

Walling, A. G. History of Southern Oregon. Portland, OR: A. G. Walling, 1884. **F876 W3**

Klamath County

An Illustrated History of Central Oregon. Spokane, WA: Western Historical Publishing Co., 1905. **Americana F876 .133 1905**

Gray, Edward. An Illustrated History of Early Northern Klamath County Oregon. Bend, OR: Maverick Publications, 1989. **F882 .K4 G7x 1989**

Lake County

An Illustrated History of Central Oregon. Spokane, WA: Western Historical Publishing Co., 1905. **Americana F876 .133 1905**

Lane County

Moore, Lucia W., Nina W. McCornack, and Gladys W. McCready. The Story of Eugene. New York: Stratford House, 1949. **F884 .E9 M66**

Velasco, Dorothy. Lane County: An Illustrated History of the Emerald Empire. Northridge, CA: Windsor Publications, 1985. **F 882 L2 V45 1985**

Lincoln County

OREGON

Hays, **Marjorie** H. The Land That Kept **Its Promise**: A History of South Lincoln County. Newport, OR: Lincoln County **Historical** Society, 1976. **F882 L6 H39**

Hodges, M. Constance. Lords of Themselves. <Eddyville, OR> : Delcon Historical Publications, 1978. **F882 L6 H6**

Linn County

Malheur County

Gregg, Jacob R. Pioneer Days in Malheur County. Los Angeles: Lorrin L. Morrison, 1950. **F882 M2 G7**

Malheur Country History. Malheur County, OR: Malheur Country Historical Society, 1988. **Quarto F882 M2 M34 1988 (2 vols.)**

Marion County

Steeves, Sarah H. Book of Remembrance of Marion County Oregon Pioneers, 1840-1860. Portland, OR: Berncliff Press, 1927. **F882 M3 S8**

Morrow County

Multnomah County

Polk County

Smith, John E. Bethel, Polk County, Oregon. Corvallis, OR: Gazette-Times, 1941. **F884 .B4 S5**

Sherman County

An Illustrated History of Central Oregon. Spokane, WA: Western Historical Publishing Co., 1905. **Americana F876 .133 1905**

Due, John Fitzgerald. Rails to the Mid-Columbia Wheatlands: The Columbia Southern and Great Southern Railroads and the Development of Sherman and Wasco Counties, Oregon.

Washington: University Press of America, 1979. **F882 S2 D84x 1979**

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French, Giles. The Golden Land: A History of Sherman County, Oregon. Portland, OR: Oregon Historical Society, 1958. **F882 S5 F7 1958**

Tillamook County

Boge, Lila V. Cooper. Tillamook Lest We Forget. <Tillamook? OR: Tillamook County Pioneer Association, 1979> . F882 T5 T535

Umatilla County

Gilbert, Frank T. Historical Sketches. Portland, OR: Printing House of A. G. Walling, 1882. Quarto **F897 .A18 G4**

Pendleton, Oregon: A History, 1880-1955. **F884 .P39 P56x**

Union County

Hug, Bernal D. History of Union County, Oregon. La Grande, OR: Eastern Oregon Review, 1961. **F882 .U5 H8**

Wallowa County

Wasco County

An Illustrated History of Central Oregon. Spokane, WA: Western Historical Publishing Co., 1905. **Americana F876 .133 1905**

Due, John Fitzgerald. Rails to the Mid-Columbia Wheatlands: The Columbia Southern and Great Southern Railroads and the Development of Sherman and Wasco Counties Oregon. Washington: University Press of America, 1979. **F882 S2 D84x 1979**

Nelson, Marshall. Shadows of Yesterday: The Saga of Wasco County. The Dalles, OR: 1954. Hafen 979.5 A1 #41

Washington County

OREGON

Wheeler County

An Illustrated History of Central Oregon. Spokane, WA: Western Historical Publishing Co., 1905. Americana F876.133 1905

Yamhill County

Yamhill County Historical Society. Old Yamhill: The Early History of Its Towns and Cities. Lafayette, OR: Yamhill County Historical Society, 1976. F882 .Y2 043x 1976