

The Last Word... Death Records in Genealogical Research

Lyn Gesch, VCGS / Cam. library class, 2/5/14

List of references by topic:

1. **Statewide registration dates** for U.S. states: see ProGenealogists' chart at <http://www.progenealogists.com/unitedstatesvitalrecords.htm>
2. Some **blogs** that discuss privacy restrictions: The Legal Genealogist, <http://www.legalgenealogist.com/blog/category/access/ssdi/>, and Dick Eastman's blog, http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2010/07/maine-now-restricts-access-to-vital-records.html#more.
3. Looking up information on **where to write** for vital records for each state: Centers for Disease Control (CDC), http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2010/07/maine-now-restricts-access-to-vital-records.html#more, Cyndi's List, www.cyndislist.com/us (search by state), USGenWeb, <http://usgenweb.org/> (search by state), FamilyTree Sourcebook (VCGS Sales Table).
4. Finding **digitized and microfilmed records** in the Family History Library catalog: <https://familysearch.org/>.
5. State digitization projects: Missouri State Archives, Death Certificates (pre- and post-1910), Coroner's Inquests, <http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/ordb.asp>, and Joe Beine's Death Indexes website, primarily derivative sources but also has links to records, <http://deathindexes.com/>. *See also Judy's excellent handout on states with vital records online!*
6. Obituaries and death notices in U.S. **newspapers**:
Chronicling America (free online), <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>,
NewspaperArchive (need LAPL card), <http://www.lapl.org/collections-resources/research-and-homework>,
GenealogyBank (\$), <http://www.genealogybank.com/>,
Ancestry.com's U.S. Obituary Collection (\$\$), <http://search.ancestry.com/oldsearch/obit/>,
19th Century Newspapers Collection (Godfrey Library \$), <http://godfrey.org/subscribe.html>.
7. Check FamilySearch catalog and public library catalog in locality for microfilmed newspapers. (Libraries & archives often accept specific research requests—check for policies.)
8. Indexed, digitized or microfilmed **church records** on <https://familysearch.org/>; also check state and local archives, manuscript collections in private and public archives, <http://www.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/>.
9. Read about **funeral records** in genealogical research on the FamilySearch Wiki page, https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Funeral_Home_Records.
10. **Memorial websites**: <http://www.findagrave.com/>, <http://interment.net/>.

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11. **Coroner's inquests**/medical examiner's reports: Check with originating office for policy on release of files; if available, request *entire* file. Family History Library has some inquest records; check for your localities. Also check state and local archives.
12. **Family sources**: Check manuscript collections, <http://www.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/>. Set up an eBay alert for surname or "family Bible" etc., <http://www.ebay.com/>. Use RootsWeb and other message boards to make connections with relatives from other branches of the family tree.
13. **Census mortality schedules** were included in 1850 to 1880 federal censuses (Ancestry.com \$\$, "U.S. Federal Census Mortality Schedules"), <http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=8756>. Some partial collections at free websites are: FamilySearch (1850 only) and www.mortalityschedules.com.
14. **Probate and guardianship** records: FamilyTree Sourcebook (VCGS Sales Table)→write to repository for information on access and fees. Check local genealogy collections or genealogy societies for available indexes. Search the FamilySearch catalog for digitized or microfilmed records.
15. **Military records**: pension files, veterans' home records, national cemeteries: National Archives, for ordering pension records (complete file), <http://www.archives.gov/research/military/genealogy.html> (scroll down to where you see "Pension claim files..."); Ancestry.com, Pension Files, <http://search.ancestry.com/search/category.aspx?cat=129>; Dept. of Veterans Affairs <http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/>.
16. Free access to **SSDI**: Ancestry.com, <http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=3693>, FamilySearch, <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1202535>, Steve Morse's One-Step website, <http://stevemorse.org/ssdi/ssdi.html>.
17. **Free books online** (genealogical publications): Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/>.
18. **Death bed portraits**: <http://lynnwright00.wordpress.com/2012/01/26/19th-century-death-bed-portraiture/>.

What great sites can you add to this list?
