

County of Erie

PEGGY A LaGREE

ACTING COUNTY CLERK

92 Franklin Street, Buffalo, New York 14202

GENEALOGY RECORDS

Genealogy records at the Erie County Clerk's Office may be researched personally during business hours Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to about 4:45 pm. Except as directed below, if you would like a search done for you, please make your request in writing to the Basement Record Room, Erie County Clerk's Office, 92 Franklin, Buffalo, New York 14202. The cost for search is \$10 for every two years per category for a manual search. Copies are \$.65 per page, with a minimum charge of \$1.30.

The following records are available ON MICROFILM ONLY in the "Map Room" at the Clerk's Office, Basement Records:

Birth Records from September 17, 1881 – December 15, 1913 (filing date vs. date of birth) for the City of Buffalo ONLY; Delayed Birth Certificates from 1940 – 1965 (filing date vs. date of birth); No alphabetical indices available.

Birth Records

The Erie County Clerk's Office maintains:

1. Records from September 17, 1881(filing date) to December 15, 1913 for the City of Buffalo ONLY
 - a. Date of birth is within days of filing
2. Delayed Birth Certificates - issued by both the City of Buffalo and State of New York, includes corrected records and Certificates by Affidavit
 - a. The filing dates range from 1940's to 1960's – dates of birth from 1860s.

Copies of birth certificates issued between 1881- 1913 are obtained from the Clerk's Office for genealogical purposes ONLY. The Clerk's Office will not issue a CERTIFIED copy of a birth record because the record is not an official record of the County's.

The Birth Return (record) may indicate:

1. Name of Child;
2. Sex, Color or Race (if other than White);
3. Date of Birth;
4. Place of Birth;
5. Name of Father (and if out of wedlock and name not given, write "OW");
6. Maiden and Full Name of Mother;
7. Birthplace or Country of Father;
8. Birthplace or Country of Mother;
9. Number of this Mother's Previous Children and number then living;
10. Name and Address of Medical attendant; and
11. Date of the Return.

Certificates of Birth may indicate in addition to the information stated above:

12. Residence of mother (street address);
13. If the birth was a plural birth, or premature;
14. Age of father / mother at last birthday;
15. Trade, profession or particular kind of work; industry or business in which work was done; date (month and year) last engaged in this work and total time spent in this work;
16. In addition to the number of children of this mother, the number born alive but now dead, and number stillborn;
17. "What preventive for ophthalmia neonatorum did you use? If none, state the reason therefor."
18. Certificate of Attending Physician or Midwife.

Delayed Certificate of Birth Affidavit contains in addition:

19. Name and residence of Affiant (who also signs the Certificate of Birth);
20. Relationship to person who is the subject of the birth registration.

The **Delayed Birth Certificates** are in the format of an Affidavit, made by a person with knowledge who may have been present at the birth or is the person, him- or herself, upon which the Certificate of Birth is based. The documents appear to be organized roughly by date of birth, i.e. 1866-67, 1870-71, rather than date of filing. Each certificate is numbered consecutively on the Reel; we believe this numbering to be related ONLY to the actual microfilming of the record. The Certificates are records of births from 1864 to 1966, filed between 1940 – and 1965. There are 10 reels (109 – 119) of delayed certificates on location in the Clerk's Office including copies of the original certificates, "retakes" and some classified as "miscellaneous."

Location: Birth Records in Erie County Clerk's Office are maintained by the Basement Record Room in Filing Cabinets in the Microfilm/Map Room and are not indexed alphabetically, but by year (date of filing/birth). The regular Birth Certificate or Return was usually filed within a short time after birth. There are 119 reels (109 of regular birth records and 10 reels of delayed records) on location in the Clerk's Office.

The microfilmed birth records in the County Clerk's Office were renumbered, and will NOT match the index of the City or State Birth Certificates.

Instructions: You must come in person to research the microfilmed records in the Clerk's Office, as there are no available personnel to perform this service. Certificates are available for genealogical purposes if the record of birth has been on file for at least 75 years "and the person to whom the record relates is known by the applicant to be deceased." The time period may be waived, upon request, if the applicant is a descendant or has been designated to act on behalf of a descendant of the person whose record is being requested. Documentation of descendency and, if the record is requested by a third party, proof that the descendant authorized the party to make such application is required. (10 NYCRR 35.5)

Microfilm is stored in the Basement "Map Room" in file cabinets and labeled as Birth Records . The reels may be viewed at the microfilm machines and printed by opening the CapturePerfect application on the computer. When the image is aligned on the screen of the viewer, turn on the Computer and click on the CapturePerfect icon on the desktop. On the top menu bar, click on "Edit;" then click "Scan Page." The image may be darkened or lightened by adjusting the microfilm viewer, then "scan page" again. The image may also be adjusted slightly on the computer screen. Click "File Print" to print the image.

Birth Records may also be researched at the Town or City in which the person was born: For those born in the City of Buffalo, a request may be made by contacting the City of Buffalo, Vital Records, 1302 City Hall, 65 Niagara Square, Buffalo NY 14202.

The City of Buffalo has indexes from 1878 (no certificates), but has certificates from July 1881 forward.

For further information, please go to:

http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/City_Departments/City_Clerk/GenealogyRecordsandResources

In addition, a Microfiche Index to vital records certificates held by the NYS Department of Health is located at Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, Grosvenor Room, 1 Lafayette Square, Buffalo, NY 14203; telephone (716) 858-8900.

Birth Records from December 16, 1914 (filing date vs. date of birth) may also be obtained from the State of New York, Department of Health. Write to Vital Records Section, Certification Unit, PO Box 2602, Albany, New York 12220-2602. (Priority handling is available.) For more information, go to:

http://www.health.state.ny.us/vital_records/

Census Records (City and Town) for years 1850, 1855, 1860, 1865, 1870, 1875, 1880, 1892, 1905, 1915, and 1925.

Information potentially available:

- a. Name of person whose place of abode on date (i.e., June 1, 1850) was in the family;
- b. Gender, age, and color;
- c. Profession (generally, i.e., laborer, mason, sailor, grocer) of male over 15 years of age;
- d. Place of birth (state, territory, county);
- e. If married within the year previous;
- f. If attended school within the year previous;
- g. If over 20 years of age and unable to read or write;
- h. If "deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict" and
- i. A note of the type of record that confirmed the birth, i.e. Baptismal record, family bible.

Location: Census Records in Erie County Clerk's Office are maintained by the Basement Record Room in the File cabinets in the Microfilm/Map Room and are not indexed alphabetically, but by city or town, year and ward number. Ward maps are under the stairway near the In Rem File Cabinets.

Instructions: You must come in person to research the microfilmed records, as there are no available personnel to perform this service.

To search the census records, you must know the individual's name, address, and ward number (numbers 1-13). The records, on microfilm, are indexed by ward only. To determine the ward number, search for the address of the person you are seeking on the ward maps. Each entry on the microfilm Census Record for that ward is numbered in order of the house visited (i.e. the first house visited by the census taker for the year is numbered "1") and family visited. Some dwellings may be multi-family and the number designation of the house will be the same for all, but the number designation of the family will be successive. (i.e., if two families reside at the same abode, one family is designated as "1, 14, or 24" and any others will be numbered consecutively, for example, "2, 15, or 25"). There are no house numbers or street names shown on the census report.

Microfilm is stored in the Basement "Map Room" in file cabinets and labeled as Census Records . The reels may be viewed at the microfilm machines and printed by opening the CapturePerfect application on the computer. When the image is aligned on the screen of the viewer, turn on the Computer and click on the CapturePerfect icon on the desktop. On the top menu bar, click on "Edit;" then click "Scan Page." The image may be darkened or lightened by adjusting the microfilm viewer, then "scan page" again. The image may also be adjusted slightly on the computer screen. Click "File Print" to print the image.

Census records may also be searched at the Buffalo and Erie County Library, Central Branch.

Death and burial records are not available at the Erie County Clerk's Office. You may obtain a Certificate of Death by contacting the City or Town Clerk's Office where the death occurred. Buffalo City Vital Records has Death Certificates for deaths occurring July 1881 to present. (Certificates are available for genealogical purposes if the record of death has been on file for at least 50 years. The time period may be waived, upon request, if the applicant is a descendant or has been designated to act on behalf of a descendant of the person whose record is being requested. Documentation of descendency and, if the record is requested by a third party, proof that the descendant authorized the party to make such application is required. 10 NYCRR 35.5)

The address for your request to the City of Buffalo is Vital Records, 1302 City Hall, 65 Niagara Square, Buffalo, New York 14202.

Burial records may be obtained by writing the cemetery in which the deceased was interred:

Forest Lawn Cemetery, Administration Building, 1411 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, New York 14209; www.forest-lawn.com; for the following cemeteries:

Lakeside Cemetery – Hamburg
Williamsville Cemetery – Williamsville
St. Matthews Cemetery – West Seneca

Catholic Cemeteries of Buffalo, Administrative Office, 400 Elmwood Avenue, Kenmore, New York 14217, (716) 873-6500; www.cathcemsbflo.com; for the following cemeteries:

Mount Olivet – Kenmore
Holy Cross – Lackawanna
Holy Sepulchre – Cheektowaga
Gate of Heaven – Lewiston
Queen of Heaven – Lockport
Assumption – Grand Island

Elmlawn Cemetery Crematory & Mausoleum Inc., 3939 Delaware Avenue, Kenmore, New York 14217, (716) 876-8131; www.elmlawncemetery.com

Mount Calvary Cemetery Group, 800 Pine Ridge Heritage Boulevard, Cheektowaga, New York 14225, (716) 892-6600; www.mountcalvarycemetery.com; for the following cemeteries:

Pine Lawn Cemetery
Buffalo Cemetery
United German and French Cemetery
Ridge Lawn Cemetery
Mount Calvary Cemetery

Concordia Cemetery, located at 438 Walden Avenue at Sycamore, Buffalo. For questions about the cemetery, the association, how to help, or finding more details about those buried there, please write to or call:

Concordia Cemetery Association, PO Box 1773, Amherst, NY 14226,
716-892-2909 (only answered by a person on Saturdays, but there is voicemail)
<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jillaine/concordia/#location>

Other web sites or documents of interest regarding cemeteries in Buffalo:

<https://www.buffalolib.org/sites/default/files/pdf/genealogy/subject-guides/CemeteryRecords2014.pdf>
<http://www.buffalonian.com/history/industry/cemetaries/BUFFALOCEMETERIES.html>
www.findagrave.com

Marriage Records from January, 1837 (*Justice of the Peace*) to April 29, 1935. All other records can be obtained from the City or Town Clerk's Office where the marriage license was purchased. For Buffalo City

records, write to Buffalo City Hall, Marriage Records, 65 Niagara Square, Buffalo, New York 14202. For more information, go to:

http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/City_Departments/City_Clerk/BirthDeathMarriageRecords/MarriageCertificateRequest

The records in the Clerk's Office include two microfilm reels are labeled "Justice Volumes" #1 and #2 and appear to be marriage records maintained Justices of the Peace, for marriages performed between January 11, 1837 and 1867. Each reel contains records for various Justices of the Peace and overlap in time. These records seem to be limited to just these. The index is organized alphabetically for the Groom's name; a separate column lists the bride's name (first name, maiden last name). The Marriage Record will also contain the town or city where the parties reside (the bride is often listed as "of same place"), names of the witnesses, and Justice officiating, and the date of the marriage.

There are several other indices to the records:

Alphabetical Male/Female which will refer to a specific Volume, Record Number and Year;

Alphabetical Index by year which refers to a specific Record Number.

The later records include both the Certificate of Marriage and the License. Where the also contains the Affidavit for License to Marry, the following information is also provided: place of residence, age, race, occupation, wife's maiden name and birth country, number of previous marriages, name(s) of former spouse.

The cost is \$5 per record.

Location: Marriage Records in Erie County Clerk's Office are maintained by the Basement Record Room on microfilm in a locked Side Room. Several indices exist; a search may be made by name which will refer to a second microfilm Reel by volume and "page."

Availability of Records: Certificates are available for genealogical purposes if the record of birth has been on file for at least 50 years "and the person to whom the record relates is known by the applicant to be deceased." The time period may be waived, upon request, if the applicant is a descendant or has been designated to act on behalf of a descendant of the person whose record is being requested. Documentation of descendancy and, if the record is requested by a third party, proof that the descendant authorized the party to make such application is required. (10 NYCRR 35.5)

Divorce Records from the early 1800s to the present. Divorce records are sealed for 100 years pursuant to New York State Law and may be obtained only by parties to the action or their respective attorneys. A Certificate of Disposition may be obtained to prove the entry of the Judgment which must be accepted by the Social Security Administration or other governmental entities. **Divorce Certificates** may also be obtained from the State of New York, Department of Health. Write to Vital Records Section, Certification Unit, PO Box 2602, Albany, New York 12220-2602. (Priority handling is available.) For more information, go to:
http://www.health.state.ny.us/vital_records/divorce.htm.

Some limited information may be available upon proof of death of the concerned parties:

In order to provide you with an **uncertified copy** of a **marriage record or an abstract of a marriage record**, you must provide a signed, sworn, and notarized statement indicating that you know that the parties to the marriage are deceased and that the information is being sought for genealogical research only and will not be used for commercial or profit making purposes. You must also provide payment of the applicable statutory fees. It is recommended that you provide a copy of each of the deceased party's death certificate.

All uncertified copies, abstracts or information issued for genealogical research purpose will be clearly marked with statement: "For genealogical purposes only."

Deeds from early 1800s. You must come in person to research by Grantor or Grantee name, as there are no available personnel to perform this service.

Military Discharges from March 8, 1919 to current. Records may NOT be searched by the public. The record contains the name and address of the person discharged; Branch Service Serial Number; grade and division of service; date and place of separation; date and place of birth; military history (date of induction, date of active service; battle and campaigns; decorations and citations); immunization records; reason for separation; pay data; and insurance notice.

Naturalization Records from 1827 to 1929. Records filed between 1887 and 1929 will include Superior, Supreme or County Court records, i.e., a copy of the Declaration of Intent, Petition, Oath, and Order of the Court. The documents will often include name of the applicant, date of naturalization, country of allegiance, and names of witnesses. Some records contain name and residence, age, date and place of birth, physical description, spouse and child(ren), last foreign residence, when and how the immigrant entered the United States (vessel, bridge, etc). Prior to 1922, wife and child(ren) automatically became citizens through the naturalization of the husband and parent.

Supreme Court naturalization records have been scanned and are available on public computers in the office.

Some records of arrival between 1891 and 1897 can be researched at the Port of New York or certain other Ports of Entry. For records of arrival prior to 1891, write to the Central Reference Section, National Archives, Washington DC 20408, or go to www.archives.gov.

Records of persons naturalized by the United States District Court, Western District of New York are located at the United States Court House, 68 Court Street, Buffalo, New York 14202.

Records of persons naturalized between September 27, 1906 and April 1, 1956 may be obtained from the Immigration and Naturalization Service at <http://www.uscis.gov> by searching "Genealogy" or by emailing: Genealogy.USCIS@dhs.gov. General information may be obtained by writing to: Information and Customer Service Division MS 2260, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services, 11 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20529-2260.

Additional Genealogy Records and Resources may be found at
http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/City_Departments/City_Clerk/GenealogyRecordsandResources
<http://search.ancestry.com>
<http://FultonHistory.com>
Western New York Genealogical Society: <http://www.wnygs.org/>

Local Genealogists:

John Sly
PO Box 343
East Aurora, New York 14052
JohnSly1@juno.com
716 652-8725