

# Intermediate Genealogy:

## Finding and Using U.S. Records for Your Genealogical Research

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# Review of Beginning Genealogy

## 1. Record What You Already Know

Begin With Yourself and Work Back

## 2. Read a How-to Book

## 3. Begin Your Research At Home

## 4. Look for compiled information

## 5. Choose one ancestor to research

## 6. Look for Original Records

- Census Records
- Vital Records (birth, marriage, death)
- Social Security Death Index



# Other U.S. Records



- Probate (Wills)
- Land
- Church
- Cemetery and Burial
- Newspapers
- Federal and Local Tax
- Military
- City Directories
- Immigration/Naturalization

## **For Each Record Type We'll Discuss:**

- What they contain
- Where to find them

# Where to Find Public Records

- **Check books.** Search the LCLS library catalog. Search other libraries through **WorldCat**. Check the LDS Family History Library at [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) for records in books or microform.
- **Check the Internet & computer databases** such as [Ancestry Library Edition](#) (ALE) and [Heritage Quest](#) (HQ).
- **But many records are still held at the local level and you will either have to write to a state, county or township records office to get them (and pay \$) or visit in person.**

# Ancestry Library Edition: Much more than just census images.

AncestryLibrary.com - Search Birth Records, Death Records, Marriage Records and US Census Recor - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Google Go Bookmarks Check AutoLink AutoFill Send to Settings

AncestryLibrary... Laramie County Lib... VDX Web Gateway ... FirstSearch Login S... Managers In Charg...


## Browse by location

**1. Select Region:**

**United States** [UK & Ireland](#) [Europe](#) [Canada](#)  
[Australia](#)

**2. Select State:**

- [Alabama](#)
- [Alaska](#)
- [Arizona](#)
- [Arkansas](#)
- [California](#)
- [Colorado](#)
- [Connecticut](#)
- [Delaware](#)
- [Florida](#)
- [Georgia](#)
- [Hawaii](#)
- [Idaho](#)
- [Illinois](#)
- [Indiana](#)
- [Iowa](#)
- [Kansas](#)
- [Kentucky](#)
- [Louisiana](#)
- [Maine](#)
- [Maryland](#)
- [Massachusetts](#)
- [Michigan](#)
- [Minnesota](#)
- [Mississippi](#)
- [Missouri](#)
- [Montana](#)
- [Nebraska](#)
- [Nevada](#)
- [New Hampshire](#)
- [New Jersey](#)
- [New Mexico](#)
- [New York](#)
- [North Carolina](#)
- [North Dakota](#)
- [Ohio](#)
- [Oklahoma](#)
- [Oregon](#)
- [Pennsylvania](#)
- [Rhode Island](#)
- [South Carolina](#)
- [South Dakota](#)
- [Tennessee](#)
- [Texas](#)
- [Utah](#)
- [Vermont](#)
- [Virginia](#)
- [Washington](#)
- [Washington, D.C.](#)
- [West Virginia](#)
- [Wisconsin](#)
- [Wyoming](#)



**Directories & Member Lists**

- [New York City Directory, 1890](#)
- [Early UK and U.S. Directories](#)
- [more...](#)

**Court, Land & Probate**

- [Texas Land Title Abstracts](#)
- [Middlesex, MA Probate Index](#)
- [more...](#)

**Reference & Finding Aids**

- [Genealogical Library Master Index](#)
- [more...](#)

**Stories & Publications**

**Biography & History**

- [AGBI](#)
- [Slave Narratives](#)
- [more...](#)

**Newspapers & Periodicals**

- [Virginia Genealogical Society Otrly](#)
- [Railway Gazetteer Worldwide](#)
- [more...](#)

**Photos & Maps**

**Photos & Maps** NEW

- [Ancestry Map Center](#)
- [U.S. School Yearbooks](#)
- [more...](#)

**Trees & Community**

- [Ancestry World Tree](#)
- [Message Boards](#)

[list all databases...](#)  
[recent website additions...](#)

Internet 100%

# Probate Court Records



- **Probate**—*legal instruments dealing with the dispersal of the estate of someone who died.*
- **Probate process involves:**
  - Collecting a decedent’s assets
  - Liquidating liabilities
  - Paying necessary taxes
  - Distributing property to heirs

# More About Probate Court

- **Probate court has general power over:**
  - probate of wills,
  - administration of estates, and
  - in some states, is empowered to appoint guardians or approve adoption of minors.
- In certain states Probate Court is or was called **Surrogate** or **Orphan's Court**
- Final document is issued and recorded by the probate court and, if land is involved, with the local land records office.

# Two Classes of Probate Records:

- **Testate-**

- Person died leaving a valid will  
(Testator)

- **Intestate-**

- Person died leaving no will  
(Intestate)



# Why Use Probate Records?

- Exist in times and places **earlier than other records.**
- Identify **family relationships** and **verify death dates.**
- **Name spouse** or **past-spouses.**
- **Proof of heirs.**



# Probate Indexes

- **Separate indexes may be available for:**
  - Guardianships
  - Wills or testaments
    - Lists of material goods, including land, houses, farm animals, heirlooms.
- **Estate Proceedings:**
  - Bills of sale
  - Inventory and appraisal

# Where to Find Probate Court Records

- Most wills are registered and filed in the **counties** where they were probated. Look 30 to 90 days after the death of the property owner.
- Some are available on the **Internet** – try [www.ancestrylibrary.com](http://www.ancestrylibrary.com).
- Don't be satisfied with a will abstract and don't stop looking when you find the will – there may be more.

# Land Records



- Land records exist from the very beginning of the first permanent settlements in America.
- In early America the **great majority of free adult males were land owners.**

# Why Use Land Records?

- Place individuals in a particular **place** at a specific **time**.
- Help determine **migration** information such as
  - dates of arrival and dates of departure
- Lengths of residence
- Often list the **spouse**.
- Often state **relationships**.

# Land Records – Patent vs. Deed

- The term patent is the official title to the property.
- Patent indicates the **first sale** of a piece of property.
  - Once a patent is issued, the property becomes part of the “private” or individual sector of land ownership and is **subsequently sold by a deed**.

# State Land States vs. Federal Land States

- **State-Land States:**
  - Land **controlled initially by the individual state**. This includes the 13 original colonies, some of the southern states and Hawaii.
- **Federal Land States:**
  - Lands initially **controlled and dispersed by the United States government** (public domain). These states are in the south, west and mid-west. These are the homesteading states.

# The State-Land States

- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Kentucky
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New York
- North Carolina
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Vermont
- Virginia
- West Virginia



# State-Land States

- Following the Revolutionary War each **state dispersed property within its own boundaries**
- States granted land:
  1. **To raise revenues.**
  2. **In lieu of financial rewards to soldiers.**
  3. **To both accommodate and encourage western migration.**

# State-Land States

- Southern states filed with county registrar of deeds
- Many New England states filed through the town clerk's office
- Usually recorded in the **deed books** of each **county or town**
- Look for:
  - Grantee index**
  - Grantor index**

# Federal Land States

- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Florida
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Louisiana
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- New Mexico
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- South Dakota
- Utah
- Washington
- Wisconsin
- Wyoming

# Federal Land

- Public lands were first introduced in **1785**.
- Given to citizens or intended citizens to:
  - Pay the military (bounty)
  - Generate revenue to help compensate for the depletions of the Revolutionary War
  - Encourage settlement

# Federal Land Records

- Applicants completed a **structured process**.
  - Ultimately the papers were collected into case files and sent to the **General Land Office**.
- **Case files can show:**
  - Places of origin
  - Relationships
  - Naturalization information

# Military Bounty Land Grants

- Given in **lieu of monetary compensation** for military service.
- Given to **entice enlistments** during military conflicts.
- **Citizenship not a requirement** for military bounty land.

# Finding Military Bounty Land Grants

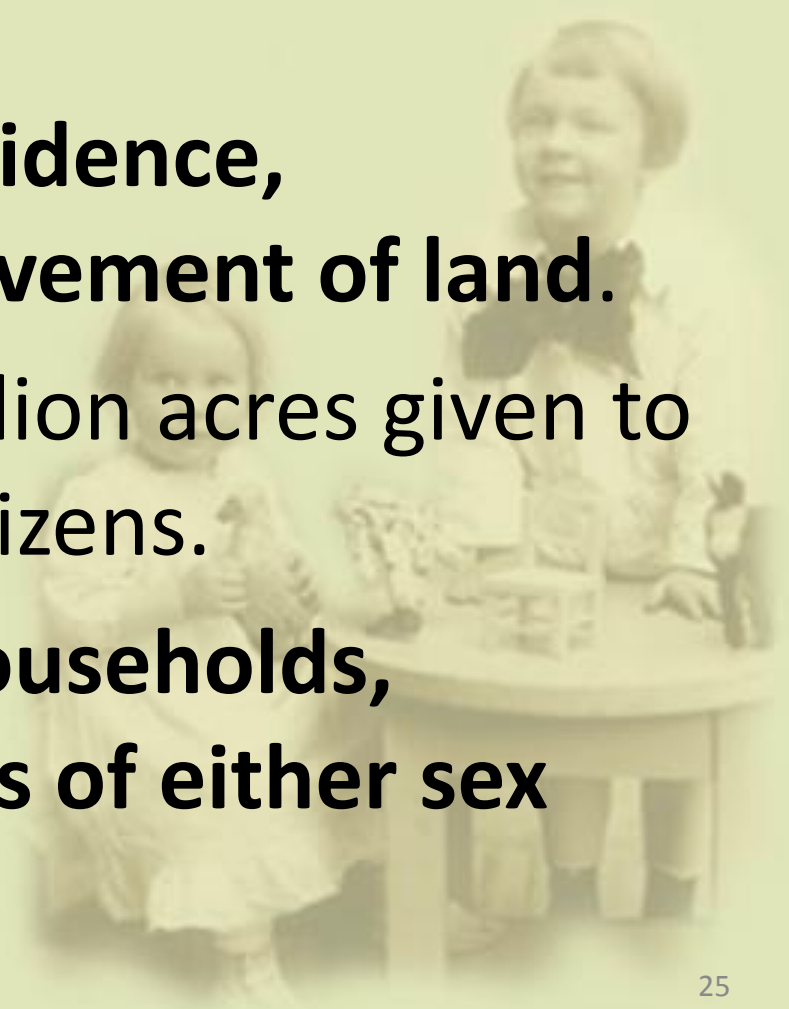
- **All federal military bounty-land records are housed at the National Archives (NARA) in Washington, D.C.**
  - Records were created by two different agencies:
    - **Pension bureau handled the application.**
      - Record group 15.
    - **General Land Office fulfilled the warrant.**
      - Record group 49.

# Finding Military Bounty Land Grants

- **Laramie County Library System (LCLS)** has several **indexes** for the revolutionary war bounty land including.
  - Virgil D. White's Genealogical Abstracts of Revolutionary War Pension Files.
  - Hoyt's Index of Revolutionary War Pension Applications in the National Archives.
- Also check [Ancestry Library Edition](#) and [Heritage Quest.](#)

# Federal Land Records – Homestead Records

- Began in **1862**.
- Required **filing fee, residence, cultivation, and improvement of land.**
- Approximately 285 million acres given to citizens or intended citizens.
- Allotted to **heads of households, widows, single persons of either sex over the age of 21.**



# Homestead Records

- **Genealogical value:**
  - Contain **proof of residence.**
  - Can show **previous residence, port of entry, place of origin.**
  - Final documents show **name, age, marital and citizenship status, postal address and settlement date.**

# Finding Homestead Records



- Try [www.glorecords.blm.gov](http://www.glorecords.blm.gov)
- To order land-entry case files from the Nat'l Archives [www.nara.gov](http://www.nara.gov).
  - You must provide:
    - Name of land office.
    - Land description (township, range, and section).
    - Final certificate number or patent number.
    - Authority under which the land was acquired (homestead, bounty-land warrant, etc.).

# Federal Land Records – Cash Entry System

- **Land ordinance of 1785 opened lands for sale.**
  - 1/7 of land set aside as military bounty lands.
  - Required purchasing large parcels of land at first.
- **Case files:**
  - Are organized by land office.
  - Often contain only receipt.

# Federal Land Records – Credit Sales

- Introduced in 1800.
- Gave owner 4 years to pay.
- Extensions were granted almost every year until 1820.
- Abolished in 1820.
- Similar to cash entry system.

# Individual or Private Lands

- If located in federal-land state, will be described by **township, range and section.**
- If located in a state-land state, will retain **metes and bounds.**
- Registered in **deed books at the county recorder's office** or through the **county court clerk.**
  - New England recorded through the **town clerk.**

# Private Land Records

- **Genealogical value:**
  - **Names** of the grantee and grantor.
  - Bordering **neighbors**.
  - **Witnesses**.
  - **Description and acreage**.
  - **Dates** (written and recorded).
  - **Dower release**.
  - **Previous owner's** name.
  - **County and state of residence**.
  - **Signatures**.

# Church Records



- Kept before civil records.
- Like vital records.
  - Report births, marriages and deaths (**baptisms, marriages and burials.**).
- Recorded removal to or arrival from another congregation (migration).
- Recorded confirmations, lists of communicants, and **membership lists.**

# Church Records

- **May be difficult to locate.**
  - Difficulty determining your ancestors religious affiliation.
  - Difficulty locating where that church's records are now.
    - WPA compiled **“Inventories of church archives...”**
      - Excellent for churches and geographic areas they covered.
      - Out of date now.
  - **Many church records have been published or microfilmed.**
    - Check **periodical index** such as **PERSI**. PERSI is available on Heritage Quest at [www.lclsonline.org](http://www.lclsonline.org). You'll need your library card # and PIN #.
    - Check the **LDS Family History Library catalog** at [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org).



# Cemetery and Burial Records

- **Cemetery caretakers usually keep records** of the names and death dates of those buried, as well as maps of the grave sites.
  - They may also keep more detailed records, including the names of the deceased's relatives. Try to go to the cemetery yourself.
- **Note names and dates of others in that plot.**

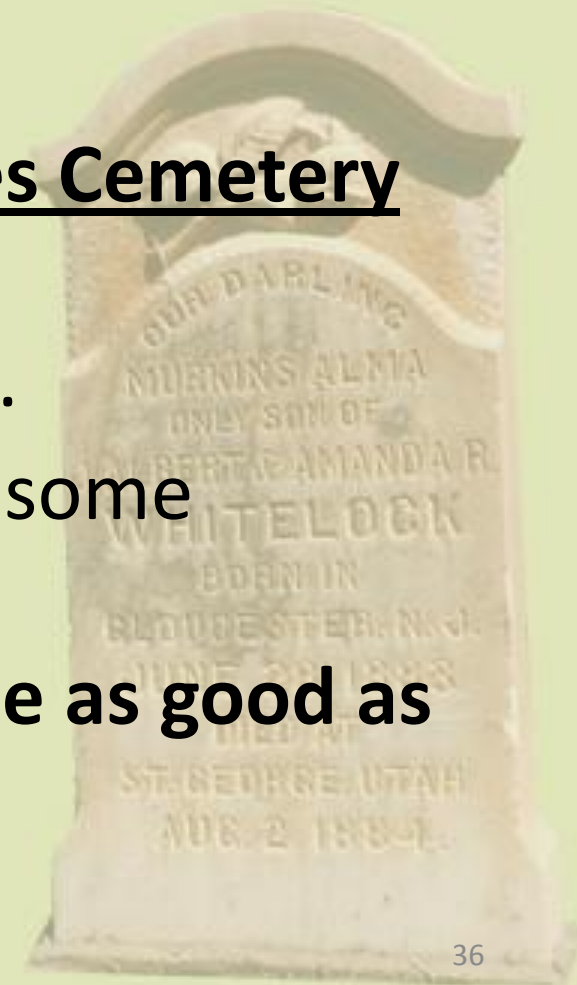
# Cemetery and Burial Records cont.

- **The best place to find cemetery records are in the cemeteries** where your ancestors are buried.
  - Sexton's records.
- **Older records may be found in:**
  - local libraries,
  - archives, or
  - historical societies.



# More Cemetery Records

- The **American Blue Book of Funeral Directors** lists cemeteries by location.
  - We also have the **United States Cemetery Address Book**.
- No records for family cemeteries.
- Most other cemeteries maintain some records.
- **Funeral director's records may be as good as official records.**



# Cemetery Records on the Internet

- **Interment.net** at [www.interment.net](http://www.interment.net)
- **Cemetery Junction** at <http://daddezio.com/cemetery>
- **The USGenWeb** [www.usgenweb.org](http://www.usgenweb.org) and **WorldGenWeb** [www.worldgenweb.org](http://www.worldgenweb.org)
- **Tombstone Transcription Project** at USGenWeb [www.rootsweb.com/~cemetery](http://www.rootsweb.com/~cemetery)

# Newspapers

- **Look for newspapers from the geographical area where your ancestor lived.**
  - Obituaries.
  - Marriage and engagement.
  - Birth announcements.
  - Probate court proceedings (legal notices).
  - Notes of thanks following a death.
  - News items.
- **Most states have on-going newspaper digitization projects.**

# Newspapers

- **Most old newspapers are on microfilm and can be found at most state libraries in the U.S.**
  - Most are available through **interlibrary loan (ILL)** for viewing at your local library.
  - Ask about it the next time you are in your library.
  - Also check **Ancestry Library Edition.**

# City Directories

- **After 1800.**
- **Aid in locating ancestor in place and time.**
- **Aid to finding ancestor in censuses (exact address).**
- **Later city directories list:**
  - People in household.
  - Occupation.
  - Show when children leave the household.
  - Show year of death.
- **Many are available on Ancestry Library Edition. Also check local libraries.**

# Military Records

- In general the U.S. **National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)** in Washington D.C. has records for those serving in the United States military from **1775 to ~1917.**
- The **National Personal Records Center (NPRC)** in St. Louis, MO has records from **~1912 to the present day.**

# More about Military Service Records



- **Colonial wars (1675-1763).**
  - More historical than genealogical.
  - **Most rosters and rolls have been published and are available in libraries.**
- **Revolutionary and Post Revolutionary (1774-1848).**
  - Records not destroyed by fire are at the National Archives.
  - Mostly are **rosters and rolls of soldiers** serving in the Continental Army and militias.

# Revolutionary War Records

- **Revolutionary war records.**
  - Contain more genealogical data than colonial records.
  - **Indexed and microfilmed.**
    - Available at the **National Archives and regional branches.** There is a NARA branch in **Denver.**
    - And at the **LDS Family History Library.**
    - Also check the Internet and computer databases like **Ancestry Library Edition** and **Heritage Quest.**
- **Three types of records.**
  - Pensions.
  - Bounty-land warrant applications.
  - Military service records.

# More Revolutionary War

- **Revolutionary War pension application files** have been microfilmed by the National Archives and are **available at the Family History Library** in Salt Lake City.
- Also see [Heritage Quest](#) and [Ancestry Library Edition](#) for **Revolutionary War Pension File** information.

# Civil War Records

- Some 2.8 million men served the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War (1861-65):
  - The [Civil War Pension Index](#) is available at [Ancestry.com](#) and [Ancestry Library Edition](#) and is one of the best places to start looking for Union soldiers.
  - The **Family History Library** ([familysearch.org](#)) in Salt Lake City also has the complete collection of index cards on microfilm.

# Civil War – Confederate Records

- NARA does not have pension files for Confederate soldiers. **Pensions were granted to Confederate veterans and their widows and minor children by the states** of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia; these records are in the [state archives or equivalent agency](#).

# Military Service Records cont.

- **Spanish-American war to present (1898---**)
  - Service records restricted to immediate family.
    - Right-to-privacy laws (75 years).
  - **Housed at National Personnel Records Center**  
**St. Louis, MO.**
    - Fire in 1973 destroyed millions of records.

# World Wars I and II

- **World War I draft registration cards.**
  - Required **males between 18 and 45** to register.
  - Are available from the National Archives and the Family History Library and on ***Ancestry Library Edition***.
- **Discharge records for World Wars I and II are on file at the local county courthouse.**
  - Some have been microfilmed by the **Family History Library** (in Salt Lake City) and can be borrowed.

# Types of Tax Records

- **Personal Property tax lists**
- **Tithables**
- **Poll Lists**
- **Land Tax Lists**
- **Rent Rolls**
- Tax records can be found in **county courthouses, state archives, books, Internet databases, FHL etc.**

# Why Use Tax Records?

- Trace a family's migration
- Indicate the amount and type of property owned.
- Determine birth and death dates.
- Used in conjunction with other records, determine the parentage of a female and/or the date of a marriage.

# Tax Records – Federal Tax

- **Federal direct tax to raise money for armies.**
  - **1798 French war** direct tax on real property and slaves.
    - Only pieces survive.
  - **War of 1812** (1814-1816).
    - Even fewer lists survive.
  - **Civil War direct taxes.**
    - Income taxes.
    - Property taxes.
    - License fees.
    - National archives microfilmed.

# Tax Records – County Taxes

- **Poll tax lists.**
  - Colonial and antebellum counties usually taxed free adult males (poll or head tax) when the young man reached 18 or 21 and ceased when the man reached 50 or 60.
- Search county **poll tax lists** and **property tax lists.**

# Immigration Records



- **From the earliest colonial period until approximately 1820**, immigration records were kept by the colony or state where the port was located.
  - The immigration records that exist for this time can be found in either the **port city or in the archives for that state, usually located in the state's capital.**

# Immigration Records

- **Two types of federal immigration records have been kept since 1820:**
  - **Customs passenger lists**
    - From 1820 until approximately 1891.
  - **Immigration passenger lists**
    - From 1906 until 1957.
  - Each of these lists provides valuable information about our immigrant ancestors.

# Immigration Records cont.

- **Federal immigration records** are in the **National Archives in Washington, D.C.**
  - Copies of some of these records are also located in the **regional branches of the National Archives.**
- Many records have been indexed and microfilmed and are available.
- We have **Filby's Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, 1538-1940.**
- Some immigration records can also be searched through databases such as **Ancestry Library Edition** or through other **Internet websites.**

# Naturalization Records

- Naturalization is the process by which an alien becomes an American citizen
- From the first naturalization law passed by Congress in 1790 through much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an **alien could become naturalized in any court of record.**

# Naturalization Records



**Most people went to the court most convenient to them, usually a county court.**

- A few **State supreme courts** also naturalized aliens, such as the supreme courts of Indiana, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, New Jersey, and South Dakota.
- Aliens who lived in large cities sometimes became naturalized in a **Federal court**, such as a U.S. **district court** or U.S. **circuit court**.
- **Before 1906, there was often very little data in these records.**

# Where to Find Naturalization Records

- Between **1868 and 1906** naturalization matters were within the jurisdiction of the **U.S. District court or the district or supreme courts of the territories.**
  - Recorded by the **clerk of the court.**
- **Pre-1906** Naturalization records may be found at the local county courthouse, county or State archives.

# Recent Naturalizations

- In **1906** congress created the **Immigration and Naturalization Service** (now called the **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service**).
- For naturalizations that took place **after 27 September 1906**, download Form **G-639** at:
- **[www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-639.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-639.pdf)**

# The Naturalization Process

- There are **three steps to the naturalization process**:
  - **Declarations of intention** (or first papers) (most data).
  - **Petition** (second or final papers).
  - **Certificates of naturalization issued.**

# Naturalization Process cont.

- Naturalization process took a **minimum of 5 years**.
  - **After residing in the United States for 2 years, an alien could file a "declaration of intent"** (so-called "first papers") to become a citizen.
  - **After 3 additional years**, the alien could "petition for naturalization."
  - After the petition was granted, a certificate of citizenship was issued to the alien.

# Additional Sources

- Agriculture Society Records
- Association Records
- Biography Indexes
- Deeds
- Employment Records
- Insurance Records
- **And more** (use your imagination/creativity)

# Thanks for Attending

- Please consider:
  - checking out a **genealogy how-to book (929)**
  - researching in our **Genealogy room.**
  - accessing **Heritage Quest** from our website
    - [www.lclsonline.org](http://www.lclsonline.org) you'll need a **LCLS library card** number and a PIN (default PIN is **wyld**).

