

**Guide to Adoption, Birth, Death, Divorce, and Marriage Information
at the
Idaho State Historical Society Library and Archives**

Researchers experienced with family history, or biographical studies in general, are familiar with the important data contained in a state's vital statistics records, available in Idaho from the Center for Vital Statistics at the Department of Health and Welfare.¹ These records--the official source of data pertaining to births, adoptions, legitimations, deaths, stillbirths, induced termination of pregnancy, marital status, and related information--supply important dates and locations about a specific research subject and often provide clues for further inquiry. However, access to the state's vital statistics records is limited for a specified period of time to the person to whom the record refers or to a member of the immediate family.

While not the official repository for Idaho's vital statistics records, the Idaho State Historical Society Library and Archives (L&A) is often able to provide researchers with similar information from a variety of other sources. The following guidelines are designed to help researchers to identify and gain access to such records at the L&A and to help them find other possible sources of information.

A word of caution is necessary. There are no statewide databases available to provide access to all of Idaho's adoption, birth, death, divorce, and marriage records. Searches for information will often occur in several stages, perhaps beginning with a query to the county of origin, moving on to the L&A, and ending up at the Center for Vital Statistics. Some information, but not all, is available via the World Wide Web or on microfilm available at a Family History Library operated by the LDS Church or a local public library. Researchers are urged to be patient when unraveling the maze of historical records pertaining to adoption, birth, death, divorce, and marriage; the results are generally well worth the effort.

Adoption:

The L&A does not provide access to adoption records, as these records are closed to public inspection.² All inquiries for adoption information should be directed to the county of origin or to the Center for Vital Statistics. The Center for Vital Statistics does maintain a voluntary adoption registry that serves as a confidential cross-reference file of people who are or were the principal parties in an adoption. If there is a match, the individuals will be placed in contact with one another. Contact the Center for further information.

¹ See pp. 4-5 for contact information for all agencies/organizations listed in this guide.

² Idaho Code 39-258, section h

Birth:

Idaho counties began officially recording births in 1907; the State of Idaho assumed this duty in mid-1911. In several instances, the counties did record birth information prior to 1907; in all cases, a local registration officer continues to gather birth information and transmit it to the state registrar of vital statistics. The county recorder at each Idaho county courthouse may have a copy of birth records filed in that county. Most county-level birth registers (usually 1907-1911) have also been microfilmed and are available both at the L&A and at Family History Centers.

Birth certificates maintained by Idaho's registrar of vital statistics become public records 100 years after the date of birth, although certificates "may be issued to any applicant who can show direct and tangible interest in the record" at an earlier date.³ These state-level birth certificates can be obtained only from the Center for Vital Statistics in Boise.

The L&A may also be able to provide access to birth information in other formats, such as church registers and newspaper announcements.

Death:

Idaho counties began officially recording deaths in 1907; the State of Idaho assumed this duty in mid-1911. In several instances, the counties did record death information prior to 1907; in all cases, a local registration officer continues to gather death information and transmit it to the state registrar of vital statistics. The county recorder at each Idaho county courthouse may have a copy of death records filed in that county. County-level death records (usually 1907-1911) have also been microfilmed and are available at the L&A and at Family History Centers.

Death certificates maintained by Idaho's registrar of vital statistics become public records 50 years after the date of death, although certificates "may be issued to any applicant who can show direct and tangible interest in the record" at an earlier date.⁴ Early (1911-1937) death certificates maintained by the registrar have been microfilmed and are available at the L&A and at Family History Centers. A searchable index to state-level death certificates covering 1911 through 1951



The Library and Archives collection includes a large number of books that index a variety of birth, death, and marriage records.

³ Idaho Code 39-270, sections b and e

⁴ Ibid.

is available at the L&A and on the World Wide Web.⁵ Post-1937 death certificates can be obtained only from the Center for Vital Statistics in Boise.

The L&A may also be able to provide access to death information in other formats, such as church registers, cemetery and mortuary records, and newspaper obituaries.

Divorce:

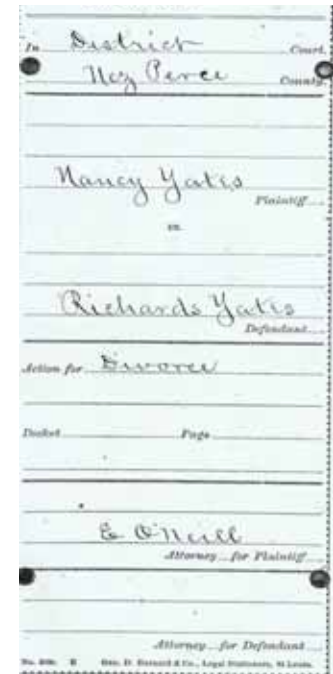
Counties began recording divorce actions from the earliest settlement of the Territory; the State of Idaho assumed this duty in 1947. (A local registration officer continues to gather divorce information and transmit it to the state registrar of vital statistics.) Divorces are civil actions handled by the local district or probate court. Early divorce records are filed by surname while more recent actions are filed by case number, requiring the use of an index. (Most indexes are available at the county of origin, not at the L&A.) The county recorder at each Idaho county courthouse may have a copy of divorce records filed in that county, although in many cases the records themselves have been transferred to the L&A. Many of the early county-level court records - including the Register of Actions, which lists the original complaint - have been microfilmed and are available at the L&A and at Family History Centers.

Divorce certificates maintained by Idaho's registrar of vital statistics become public records 50 years after the date of divorce, although the state can issue a certificate to "any applicant who can show direct and tangible interest in the record" at an earlier date.⁶ These state-level divorce certificates can only be obtained from the Center for Vital Statistics in Boise.

The L&A may also be able to provide divorce information in other formats, such as newspaper announcements.

Marriage:

Counties began officially recording marriages in 1895; the State of Idaho assumed this duty in 1947. In several instances, the counties did record marriage information prior to 1895; in all cases, a local registration officer continues to gather marriage information and transmit it to the



Jacket from an early Nez Perce County (AR 216) divorce action

⁵ See pp. 4-5 for list of pertinent URLs

⁶ Idaho Code 39-270, sections b and e

state registrar of vital statistics. The county recorder at each Idaho county courthouse may have a copy of marriage records filed in that county, although in some cases the records themselves have been transferred to the L&A. Many county-level marriage registers have been microfilmed and are available at the L&A and at Family History Centers.



1884 marriage license from Ada County, Idaho (AR 202) records

Marriage certificates maintained by Idaho's registrar of vital statistics become public records 50 years after the date of marriage, although the state can issue a certificate to "any applicant who can show direct and tangible interest in the record" at an earlier date.⁷ These state-level marriage certificates can only be obtained from the Center for Vital Statistics in Boise.

The L&A may also be able to provide marriage information in other formats, such as church registers and newspaper announcements.

Contacts

Eastern Idaho Obituary Index (This index is an ongoing project of the Idaho Falls Family History Center and includes obituaries from southeastern Idaho and adjoining areas)
<http://abish.byui.edu/specialCollections/fhc/Obit/searchForm.cfm> - website

Family History Library
3676 W. Dorian⁸
Boise, ID 83705
208-338-3811 - phone

Family History Library
35 N. West Temple St.
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3400
801-240-2331 - phone
www.familysearch.com - website

Idaho Association of Counties (links to county websites)
http://www.idcounties.org/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={DA621DF6-70BE-4437-BE02-

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Please note that local branches in the Family History Library system generally do not accept mail.

[B1431FDA93CA](#)} – website

Idaho Death Certificate Index, 1911-1951 (This index was prepared by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and includes the decedent's name, date and place of death, date of birth, and the certificate number)

<http://abish.byui.edu/specialCollections/fhc/Death/searchForm.cfm> - website

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare
Center for Vital Statistics and Health Policy

450 W. State St. First Floor

P.O. Box 83720

Boise, Idaho 83720-0036

208-334-5988 - phone (recorded message)

http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/portal/alias_Rainbow/lang_en-US/tabID_3335/DesktopDefault.aspx - website

Idaho Genealogical Society

P.O. Box 1854

Boise, ID 83705

208-384-0542 - phone

<http://www.lili.org/idahogenealogy/> - website

Idaho State Historical Society Library and Archives

450 N. Fourth St.

Boise, ID 83702

208-334-3356 - phone

208-334-3198 - fax

http://www.idahohistory.net/library_archives.html - website

Western States Marriage Index (This index is an ongoing project of the Family History Center at Brigham Young University-Idaho and includes selected records from Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. Idaho counties are currently complete through at least 1930.)

<http://abish.byui.edu/specialCollections/fhc/gbsearch.htm> - website

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