



# DISCOVERING YOUR STORY

at the

## RHODE ISLAND STATE ARCHIVES

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Rhode Island Department of State  
Nellie M. Gorbea, Secretary of State

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## Welcome from Secretary of State, Nellie M. Gorbea



Rhode Island Department of State  
Nellie M. Gorbea, Secretary of State

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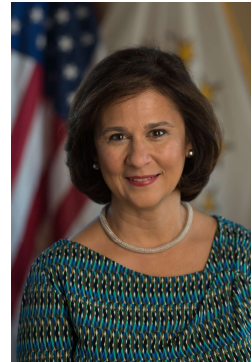
# ABOUT THE RHODE ISLAND STATE ARCHIVES

One of three public facing Divisions within the Rhode Island Department of State:

Elections

Archives, Library & Public Information

Business Services



Rhode Island Secretary of State  
Nellie M. Gorbea

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# OUR TREASURES



More than  
**10 MILLION**  
records



Over  
**THOUSAND**  
online images



Accumulated over  
**380 YEARS**

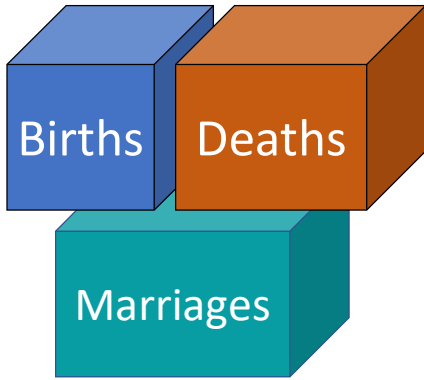
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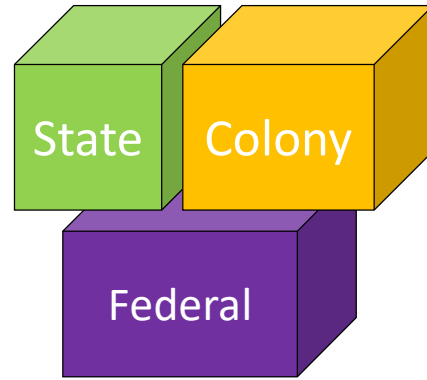


# BUILDING BLOCKS FOR RESEARCH:

## Vital Records



## Census Records



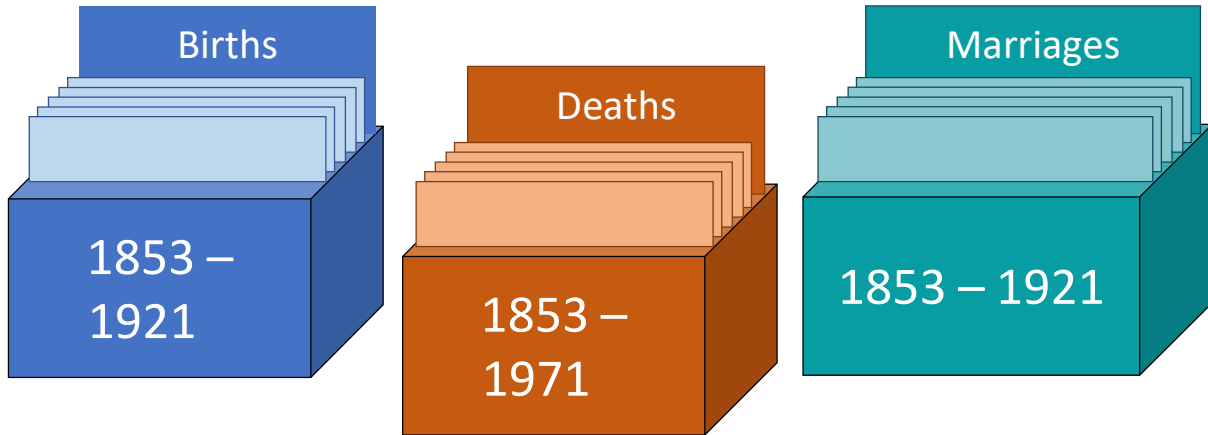
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# VITAL RECORDS AT THE STATE ARCHIVES



**Researcher Tip:** Compare different vital records to confirm the names of ancestors.

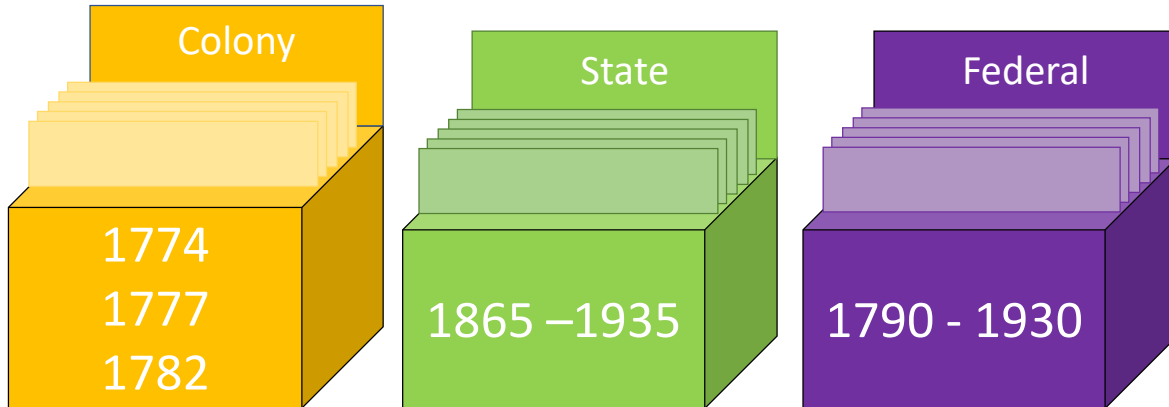
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## CENSUS RECORDS AT THE STATE ARCHIVES



**Researcher Tip:** Information increased over time per census, check multiple years.

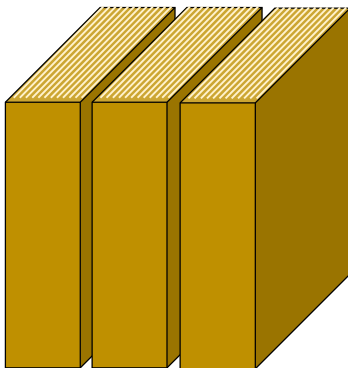
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## CITY DIRECTORIES



Trace back heads of household:

- Provides name and address
- Relationships limited
  - May include wife in parentheses
  - If a widow, deceased husband's name is noted

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## MILITARY RECORDS AT THE STATE ARCHIVES

- Colonial wars and Revolutionary War
- Civil War
- World War I
- Limited records of other wars



## DIGGING DEEPER

- There are no “Naturalization Records” in State Archives.
- Related records are available on microfilm:
  - ✓ Lists maintained by towns
  - ✓ Voter cards
  - ✓ Census records
- Alternate resource: New England Region’s branch of the National Archives and Records Administration, located in Waltham, MA.



## FACT OR FICTION?

- **FICTION** –The belief that names were changed at random at Ellis Island is False.
- **Example:**
  - Vito Corleone? →
  - Vito Andolini?



## COMMON RESEARCH PITFALLS

- Information passed down orally may be based on falsely remembered family history
- Parental birthplaces may be cited incorrectly on death certificates or Census Records
- Names of parents may be cited incorrectly on death certificates



## MISINFORMATION AS A CLUE

- False information on death certificates
  - ***Researcher Warning:*** Names of parents given on death certificates can be false.  
Remember - The information on the record is only as good as the knowledge of the person who provided it
- Another branch of one's ancestry
  - ***Researcher Note:*** there are cases where incorrect information could still offer clues.

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## RESEARCH TIP: Follow The Paper Trail!

Incorrect information can still lead to family discoveries!



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# HANDLING HISTORY: TIPS FOR RESEARCH

- 1 "Off the Shelf" Collections:**  
Do not pull on the headcap of a book when removing it from the shelf.
- 2 Loose Items:**  
Keep materials flat and in their original order. Move materials deliberately to avoid damage.
- 3 Reviewing Materials:**  
Try to handle only blank areas of pages. Use supports for bindings.



Ask us your questions!  
Click the chat button and to send it in.

