

Maryland Vital Records Summary

A guide to understand, access, analyze, or research using birth, marriage and death records in the state of Maryland.

Statewide Registration: Births and deaths begin in 1898; some records since 1640. Baltimore city births and deaths since 1875. Since 1777, county clerks have been required to issue marriage licenses and, since 1865, to keep ministers' returns. Divorce since 1853.

90% compliance: Birth and death by 1898.

Local registration: From 1865 to 1899 some county clerks and the Secretary of the Senate maintained birth and death records. These records are incomplete, and the exact dates of the records vary from county to county. The counties started recording births and deaths in 1898. Baltimore City began recording births and deaths in 1875.

Indexes: The Maryland State Archives has these indexes: *Card indexes of marriages from 1650 to 1695 and from 1777 to 1886* and a series of card indexes to *Baltimore City marriage records for 1777 to 1851*. Both are open to public or searchable by mail request.

Availability: Birth records within the last 100 years may be obtained only by the individual named on the certificate or a parent, legal guardian, or authorized representative. Authorized representatives must submit a court order or a notarized statement signed by either parent or the person named on the certificate. If you write to an archive, a staff member may extract any pertinent genealogical information and send you an unofficial transcript of a restricted record. Records of deaths within the last 20 years are restricted to surviving relatives or authorized representatives.

Cost: (as of 2004) Self service copies at State Archives, \$0.25; search and copy by mail from State Archives, \$10; more recent births and deaths at Division of Vital Statistics, \$12.

Where to write: Official (certified) copies of all birth and death records since 1968 (since 1875 for Baltimore City) can be requested by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope to:

Division of Vital Records

4201 Patterson Ave.

P.O. Box 13146

Baltimore, MD 21203-3146

Telephone: 800-832-3277 or 410-764-3038

Fax: 410-358-7381

State of Maryland Archives

350 Rowe Blvd.

Annapolis, MD 21401

Phone: (410) 260-6429 or (800) 235-4045

FAX: (410) 974-2525

Internet site: <<http://www.vitalrec.com/md.html>>

Indexes on <<http://www.ancestry.com>> of Maryland Marriages, 1667-1899 This database of Maryland marriage records doesn't include the counties of Baltimore, Baltimore City, Charles, Dorchester, Garrett, Howard, and Wicomico. Most records for Calvert and St. Mary's counties were destroyed.

FHL collection: The Maryland State Archives has microfilm copies of the records and most of the indexes. For genealogical purposes, you can obtain the information in the restricted records from the Archives. The Family History Library does not have copies of these records. The Family History Library has microfilm copies from the Maryland State Archives of the early marriage records to the 1850s but does not have microfilm copies of the indexes.

Meyer, Mary K. *Divorces and Names Changed in Maryland: By Act of the Legislature, 1634-1867*. Mt. Airy, Md.: Pipe Creek Publications, Inc. 1991. (FHL book 975.2 V28m; computer number 674027.)

Bell, Annie Walker Burns. *Maryland Record of Deaths*. Annapolis, Md.: A. Bell, 1936. (FHL film 924445 item 2; computer number 263467.) Deaths from court books, 1718-1777.

Notes: Births records are restricted to more than 100 years and deaths to more than 20 years. Extracts (unofficial transcripts) are available from MSA of restricted birth and death records for genealogical purposes. When writing to the Maryland State Archives, you will need to provide the exact date of birth or death to request copies of birth and death records since 1951 (since 1942 for Baltimore City records).

Local Access: You can also write to the county clerk or the Baltimore City clerk for marriage records. The records from 1777 to the present are open to the public without restrictions. However, these offices do not have the statewide indexes that are available at the Maryland State Archives.

Best reference: Meyer, Mary Keysor. *Genealogical Research in Maryland: A Guide*. Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1992. (FHL book 975.2 D27m 1992; computer number 701718.) Pages 16 to 17 have a list of birth and death records.