

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL RESOURCES

This region covers the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah.

This is a non-comprehensive overview of some record types, resources, and strategies that may be covered on the ICAPGen regional exams. Use it as a starting point to direct your studies and to compile research reference guides.

IMPORTANT RECORD TYPES

Must Know Very Well	Good Working Knowledge	Some Familiarity
<p>Cemetery records</p> <p>Census records (Federal, State and Territorial)</p> <p>Church records (Baptism and christening, Marriage, Burial, Membership, Other, depending on denomination)</p> <p>Land and property records (Patents & Deeds)</p> <p>Newspapers (Obituaries, Legal notices and other articles)</p> <p>Probate records Intestate (administrator, bonds, inventories, settlement, etc.) Testate (executor bonds, wills, codicils, settlement, etc.)</p> <p>Vital records (Birth, Marriage, & Death) Divorce</p>	<p>Census records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special (Military, Mortality, Agriculture, etc.) • Spanish and Mexican <p>City directories</p> <p>U.S. Congressional records (U.S. Serial Set)</p> <p>Family histories and biographies</p> <p>Immigration and migration records (Migration routes, journals and histories of pioneer companies)</p> <p>Histories (Local, County State or Territory)</p> <p>Land and property records (Spanish and Mexican Grants)</p> <p>Maps, gazetteers, and historical geographies</p> <p>Obituaries</p> <p>Periodicals</p> <p>Naturalization records</p> <p>Territorial records</p>	<p>Adoption records</p> <p>Bible records</p> <p>Business/commerce records</p> <p>Court records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil • Criminal • Guardianship <p>Land records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mining records • Water rights <p>Tax records</p> <p>Voting records</p>

NOTE: The exams are open book, including the Internet. Paper and/or digital research reference guides may be used during the test. Digital research reference guides on USB drives will be copied to the facility computer and deleted from that computer at the end of the test session. Research reference guides may also be accessed through a cloud account such as Dropbox, Google, OneDrive, etc.

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RESOURCES

Repositories

Some repositories important for U.S. Southwest genealogical research are shown. You will also want to be familiar with repositories specific to smaller local areas where you do most of your research.

- Archives & Libraries
 - State Archives
 - [The Research Center](#) – Utah State Archives and Utah State History
 - [Online Archive of California](#) Digital resources from California repositories
 - [Colorado State Archives](#) Historical Records Index Search
 - [Nevada State Library, Archives, and Public Records](#)
 - [Arizona State Library, Archives, and Public Records](#)
 - [New Mexico State Records Center and Archives](#)
 - [California State Archives](#)
 - [California State Library](#)
 - [New Mexico State Library](#)
 - [Bancroft Library](#) at University of California, Berkeley
 - [Huntington Library](#) in San Marino, California
 - [Daughters of the Utah Pioneers](#) in Salt Lake City, Utah
 - [Harold B. Lee Library](#), Brigham Young University
 - [Denver Public Library](#)
 - [Family History Library](#) in Salt Lake City, Utah
 - [University of Arizona Special Collections](#)
 - [Cline Library](#) – Northern Arizona University
 - National Archive Branches
 - [National Archives at Denver](#)
 - [National Archives at San Francisco](#)
 - [National Archives at Riverside](#)
- Courthouses (county-level, state, and U.S. District)
 - Arizona Judicial Branch <https://www.azcourts.gov/>
 - California Courts Judicial Branch Home <http://www.courts.ca.gov/>
 - Colorado Judicial Branch <https://www.courts.state.co.us/>
 - Nevada Judiciary <https://nvcourts.gov/>
 - New Mexico Courts, The Judicial Branch of New Mexico <https://nmcourts.gov/>
 - Utah Courts <https://www.utcourts.gov/>

Genealogical and historical societies

- [California State Historical Society](#)
- [Clark County \(Nevada\) Genealogical Society](#)

- [Northern Arizona Genealogical Society](#)
- [Southern California Genealogical Society](#)
- [New Mexico Genealogical Society](#)
- [Hispanic Genealogical Research Center of New Mexico](#)
- [Colorado Genealogical Society](#)

For more see: [FamilySearch Family History Research Wiki](#) and search "[name of state] Archives and Libraries."

Websites

Many repositories have websites that include some record indexes or images. Volunteer groups and individuals also place useful content online. The following are good starting points to find useful websites.

- [Cyndi's List](#) categories for each of the states
- [Facebook](#) genealogy pages for the region, use search field to locate specific groups
- [FamilySearch](#) Research Wiki article "[United States Genealogy](#)"
- USGenWeb and USGenWeb Archives
- [Linkpendium](#) links by locality for each of the states
- Your favorite search engine

The following is a brief and non-comprehensive list of important region-specific websites.

- [Mountain West Digital Library](#). Digital collections from Utah, Nevada, and Idaho.
- [Western History and Genealogy Collection](#) at the Denver Public Library
- [Rocky Mountain Online Archives](#) Colorado, Wyoming, and New Mexico
- [American Heritage Center](#) Libraries in New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming
- [Center for Southwest Research](#) at the University of New Mexico
- [Center for Southwest Studies](#) at Fort Lewis College, Colorado
- Heritage West digital archives from Western States repositories
- [Autry Museum of the American West](#) includes a research library
- [Western States Marriage Index](#)
- [Arizona Memory Project](#) Digital resource from Arizona repositories
- [Salsa Library Consortium](#) – 7 New Mexico libraries

Finding aids

Finding aids listing the sources that repositories hold are often available online, but not always. Knowledge of such collections not listed online can often be obtained through local experience, visits to repositories, and conversations with local experts.

Book-length research guides

It is recommended that you study some guides on topics such as genealogical research, analysis, writing, and records types. Whether you are an expert or a beginner, reading research

guides for your states, repositories, record types, and topics of interest, will help advance your region-specific knowledge. General guides are so plentiful that any list could quickly go out-of-date and would risk overlooking some. The following list serves as an introduction.

- Spiros, Joyce V. H. *Handy Genealogical Guide to New Mexico*. Gallup, New Mexico: Verlene Publishing, 1981
- Jaussi, Laureen Richardson, Gloria Duncan Chaston, and Laureen Richardson Jaussi. *Genealogical Records of Utah*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co, 1974.
- Beers, Henry Putney. *Spanish and Mexican Records of the American Southwest: A Bibliographical Guide to Archive and Manuscript Sources*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1979.
- Spiros, Joyce V. Hawley. *Genealogical Guide to Arizona and Nevada*. Gallup, N.M.: Verlene Publishing, 1983.
- Parker, J. Carlyle. *Sources of Californiana: From Padron to Voter Registration*. Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1969
- Temple, Thomas W. II. *Sources for Tracing Spanish-American Pedigrees in the Southwestern United States*. Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1969
- Clint, Florence Runyan. *Colorado Area Key: A Comprehensive Study of Genealogical Record Sources of Colorado, Including Maps and Brief History*. Denver: Eden Press, 1968.

The following guides cover all US regions.

- *Becoming an Excellent Genealogist: Essays on Professional Research Skills*. ICAPGen, 2012.
- *Mastering Genealogical Proof*. National Genealogical Society, 2015.
- *The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy*, 4th ed. Genealogical Publishing Co. Inc., 2017.

For more see:

- [FamilySearch Research Wiki](#) and search “[name of state] for Further Reading.”
- If needed, ask genealogists in your community or on social media for additional recommendations.

Flier-length research guides

Flier-length research guides for your area may be available from many organizations, in series such as the following.

- Family Tree Magazine's [State Research Guides](#) various series on states (\$)
- Legacy Family Tree's [Legacy QuickGuide™](#) series on states (\$)
- The In-Depth Genealogist's [In-Brief Research Guides](#) series on states (\$)
- [National Genealogical Society](#) “Research in the States” series (\$)
- Ancestry.com state research guides

STRATEGIES FOR U.S. SOUTHWEST RESEARCH

- Know the date vital statistics were first recorded for each state in the region and the laws that affected their recording. In Arizona, for example, an 1864 territorial law required county recorders to keep marriage and divorce records. From 1891 to 1912, clerks of probate courts issued marriage licenses. Marriage and divorce records in Arizona are maintained by the Clerk of the Superior Court in the county where the event occurred. They are not available from the Office of Vital Records. There is no statewide registration of marriages in Arizona.
- Search all applicable census records to find complete families, and know what years the Spanish, Mexican, territorial, and state censuses are available.
- Learn the jurisdictional history for the U.S. Southwest, including boundary changes and dates of Spanish, Mexican, U.S. territorial, and United States federal governance. Know where the records for these various periods can be found.
- Understand the holdings of the National Archives regional facilities in the Southwest (Riverside, San Francisco, Denver) and how they might be used by a genealogist.
- Settlers in the Southwest interacted with the federal and territorial government in various ways, including land distribution and disputes, mining claims and water rights, dealings with Native Americans or Indian reservation agencies, military enrollment for brief periods of Indian Wars, and dealings with military forts. Determine how an individual might have interacted with the federal government and then search the NARA regional facilities' catalogs for relevant record groups. Search the index to the Congressional Serial Set for petitions, acts, bills, and committee reports that resulted.
- Understand what kinds of census substitutes are useful for this region, such as voter registrations in California, Arizona, Nevada, school censuses in Colorado and Arizona, taxes and city directories in all states in the region. Use these to create a timeline for an individual or family and then determine when vital records began to be kept in those localities.
- Newspaper records are important for the U.S. Southwest region. Know how to find and use the digital newspaper projects for each of the states. Use newspaper articles to add to the timeline for an individual in a locality. If researching an ethnic group, learn which ethnic newspapers existed for that group.
- Across California, New Mexico, and Arizona, be aware of the Spanish and Mexican Land Grants and how ownership of the land was determined when the region was ceded to the United States. Understand the role of Private Land Claims, and the basics for determining what the boundaries of the original ranchos were.
- While you will not be required to demonstrate Native American research methodology, you should know which tribes were native to different states, and their interactions with the non-Native population influence the records in the area.

STRATEGIES FOR UNITED STATES RESEARCH

In addition to the strategies specific to this region discussed above the strategies below apply to all US regions.

- Use original records, when possible, created at the time of the event. These might be found at various jurisdictional levels (such as town, county, state/province, federal/national).
- Understand your family in historical context, including wars and jurisdictional boundary changes. To learn about these important elements, see *FamilySearch* Family History Research Wiki article [United States History](#) and the state links for each state in your accreditation region.
- If indirect evidence is used, assemble it correctly to support your conclusions. If needed use the *FamilySearch* Family History Research Wiki article, [United States Record Selection Table](#) for further research suggestions to locate other records and evidence that might aid your research and form conclusions.
- Evaluate each record. Resolve any conflicting information. Correlate findings.
- Substitute records might be used when there is a lack of records or record loss. An event might be recorded in multiple ways. For example, a marriage might be recorded civilly, by the church, or in a newspaper. Each should be checked.
- Source each event in each person's life. Capture the information about each source to facilitate proper citation when writing the report.
- Keep a research log of all records searched, including any searches for which nothing was found.
- Verify generational links.
- Understand applicable economics, religion, ethnicity, prejudices, and laws. For example: Know availability of records for major religious denominations in each state.
- Watch for persons with the same name (e.g. parents with the same name on a census or other record). Consider all variants of spelling for the name along with ways a name could be misspelled when searching indexes and online resources. See *FamilySearch* Family History Research Wiki article [Name Variations in United States Indexes and Records](#) for suggestions.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR U.S. SOUTHWEST RESEARCH

For the U.S. Southwest some basic Spanish language skills are required. It is important to be able to identify a Spanish document (birth, baptismal record, marriage, or death/burial record) and be able to abstract important genealogical data such as name, parent's names, dates, places, etc.

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