



Genealogy & Local History Department

Genealogy and Family History Glossary

- **Ancestor:** A person from whom you are directly descended, such as a grandparent or great-grandparent
- **Ancestry:** The lineage or historical descent of a person or family
- **Archivist:** A professional responsible for maintaining and organizing historical records and documents
- **Birth Certificate:** An official document recording a person's birth, including the date, the place of birth, and the parents' names
- **Burial Record:** A document or record providing details about a person's burial, including the date and location
- **Cemetery Plot Map:** A map showing the layout of a cemetery and the location of individual graves
- **Census:** A government survey conducted to count the population and collect details about people's lives, useful for genealogical research
- **Census Schedule:** A detailed form from a census that lists personal and household information
- **Civil Registration:** The system of recording births, marriages, and deaths by a government authority
- **Collateral Line:** Family members who are not directly related to your line of descent, like cousins or aunts
- **Cousin:** A relative descended from a common ancestor but not directly in your line, like the child of your aunt or uncle
- **Crest:** A family emblem or symbol associated with heraldry and ancestral identity
- **Death Certificate:** An official document that records the date, place, and cause of a person's death
- **Deed:** A legal document related to the ownership of property, which may include family details
- **Descendant:** A person who comes from a specific ancestor, such as a grandchild or great-grandchild
- **DNA Testing:** A scientific method to trace ancestry and genetic connections through the analysis of DNA
- **Emigration:** The act of leaving your home country to settle in another, often recorded in passenger lists
- **Estate:** A person's property, money, and possessions, typically detailed in wills and probate records
- **Family Group Sheet:** A document genealogists use to record information about a single family unit, including parents and children
- **Family Tree:** A diagram showing relationships between family members across generations
- **Generation:** A group of people born and living around the same time
- **Genealogy:** The study of family history and lineage

- **Gravestone:** A marker placed at a grave that often includes important genealogical information like names and dates
- **Guardian:** A person legally responsible for the care of a minor or another person, which may be recorded in legal documents
- **Heir:** A person legally entitled to inherit property or titles from an ancestor
- **Heirloom:** An object passed down through generations that may hold family or historical significance
- **Heraldry:** The study and design of family coats of arms and crests
- **Heritage:** Traditions, customs, and cultural history passed down within a family
- **Homestead Records:** Documents related to land ownership, often tied to government land grants
- **Immigration Records:** Official documents that record the movement of people into a new country
- **Intestate:** Dying without a legal will, which triggers specific laws about dividing the estate
- **Kin:** Another term for family members or relatives
- **Lineage:** Direct descent from an ancestor
- **Marriage Certificate:** A document that records the union of two people, listing details such as the couple's names, the date, and the witnesses to the ceremony
- **Matriculation Records:** Enrollment documents for schools or universities, which may contain genealogical information
- **Migration Patterns:** Trends in how families or groups moved geographically over time
- **Naturalization Records:** Papers showing when and how someone became a citizen of another country
- **Obituary:** A written notice of a person's death, usually containing biographical and family details
- **Oral History:** Stories and accounts passed down within a family without being written down
- **Parish:** A local church community, such as a Polish parafia, which will often maintain records of significant life events like marriages and deaths
- **Patrilineal:** Tracing ancestry or family lines through the father's side
- **Pedigree Chart:** A diagram showing ancestors in a direct line that's used in genealogy
- **Probate Records:** Legal documents dealing with the distribution of a deceased person's estate, often listing heirs and family relationships
- **Registry:** A formal record-keeping system for events such as births, deaths, and marriages
- **Repository:** A place where records and documents, like libraries or archives, are stored
- **Settler Records:** Documents detailing the arrival and settlement of people in a specific area
- **Surname:** A person's last name, typically passed down through generations in a family
- **Vital Records:** Official documents recording life events like births, marriages, and deaths

With special thanks to Ms. Jennifer, Zoe, and the afterschool program students