

Introduction to Hispanic Research

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The objective of this class is to learn the basic research steps needed to begin a search for Hispanic ancestors. Among these steps will be: how to identify the locality, what record types are most useful, and how to find help reading Spanish handwriting and understanding the documents.

RECORD TYPES

- Civil Registration
- Catholic Church Records
- Census – Mexico in 1930 (not complete), Argentina in 1869 and 1895
- Border crossings - Mexico to U.S. 1895-1957

CIVIL REGISTRATION – IMPORTANT DATES

Argentina 1881	Honduras 1881
Brazil 1888	México 1857
Bolivia 1940	Nicaragua 1879
Colombia 1865	Panamá 1914
Costa Rica 1888	Paraguay 1880
Cuba 1885	Peru 1886
Chile 1885	Puerto Rico 1885
Dominican Republic 1828	Spain 1869
Ecuador 1901	Uruguay 1879
El Salvador 1879	Venezuela 1873
Guatemala 1877	

INFORMATION FOUND IN THE RECORDS

Births / Baptisms = Nacimientos/bautismos

- Name of child
- Hour, date, and place of birth (Civil Registration), Baptism date (Church Records)
- Names of parents, their marital status, birth place (usually), ages and profession (Civil Registration)
- Names of witnesses, their age, marital status and profession (Civil Registration)
- Birth place and relationship of witnesses, if any (Civil Registration)
- Padrinos - Godparents (Church Records)

Possible additional information

- Names of paternal and maternal grandparents, their marital status, birth place, and if still living

Marriages = matrimonios

- Bride and groom – names, ages, civil status, birth place, residence of bride and groom
- Profession of the bride and groom (Civil Registration)
- Names of parents of bride and groom (normally)

Possible additional information

- Witnesses
- Church marriage date (Civil Registration)
- Other documents about the couple's ability to marry

Deaths / Burials = defunciones/sepulturas

- Date and place of death, age, marital status, and profession (Civil Registration)
- Birth place and/or residence
- Parents' names if not married
- Spouse's name, if married

Possible additional information

- Cause of death (Civil Registration)
- Burial place
- Names of heirs or children, if any and/or if the deceased left a will

Marriage information files = informaciones matrimoniales

- Application and paperwork required to marry, usually has more information than the marriage
- Usually a few days or a few pages before the marriage, often in separate books

Confirmations = confirmaciones

- Name of the parish, date of confirmation
- Name of the child, name(s) of godparent(s)
- Names of parents (sometimes)

FINDING AIDS

- Google Maps
- Gazetteers = diccionarios geográficos
 - Mexico – Antonio García Cubas, *Diccionario geográfico, histórico y biográfico de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos* (Mexico: Antigua Murguía, 1888-1891). FHL INTL 972 E5g. (Ask at the FHL reference desk or find it online through the Wiki page **Mexico Gazetteers**).
 - Spain – Pascual Madoz, *Diccionario geográfico-estadístico-histórico de España y sus posesiones de ultramar* (Madrid: P. Madoz, 1848-1850). FHL INTL 946 E5m (Ask at the FHL reference desk or find it online through the Wiki page **Spain Gazetteers**).
- Ecclesiastical guides = Guías eclesiásticas
 - Parish guides
 - Jurisdictions
- FamilySearch Catalog

LANGUAGE HELPS

- Handwriting help

- <http://script.byu.edu/>
- Reading Spanish handwritten records (online lesson) FamilySearch Learning Center
- Translation help
 - Spanish Genealogical Word List article in FamilySearch Wiki
https://www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Spanish_Genealogical_Word_List
 - Google Translate – <http://translate.google.com/>
 - Hispanic Genealogy Research community in Facebook -
<https://www.facebook.com/HispanicGenealogy>

SEARCH TECHNIQUES

Search for an Individual

1. Go to FamilySearch.org and click on Search
2. Enter a first name and a last name. Even though Hispanics use two surnames, try your searches only with the first surname or the paternal surname because most of the indexed records have only one surname.
3. Use the option to **Restrict records by location** if your ancestor only ever lived in one country.
4. In order to add a specific place you need to Search with a life event. Your best option is **Any**. Using **Any** will give you a lot of results and you won't miss any by narrowing your options to only Births, Marriages, or Deaths. LESS IS MORE!!
5. Click on Search

Note: The only names that will be searched are those already indexed. Many records are not indexed yet so if you don't find anything, try browsing images online. This will require you to know the location where an event took place and an approximate year when the event took place.

Search with a relationship

- Spouse
- Parents
- If you don't get results using first and last names, try searching using only last names.
- Try leaving out the child's name.
- Try searching for the person as an individual, spouse, and parent.

Application of filters

You can filter your results in indexed records by:

- Record type
- Year and/or place of birth
- Year and/or place of marriage
- Year and/or place of death
- Year and/or place of residence

To apply a filter click on the arrow next to the filter you wish to use.

Place

- Choose the geographic region where the event took place.
- Click on the small arrow next to the geographic region and choose the country.

- Click on the small arrow next to the country and choose the state, province, or department. Keep filtering until you get to the place you are searching.

Year

- Click on the small arrow next to the event year you wish you filter for. Choose the century when the event you are searching for took place.
- To narrow the search further, click again on the small arrow next to the century and choose the decade in which the event might have taken place.

Collection

- Click on the small arrow next to the word Collections. Choose the record type you wish.
- You can continue to apply further filters by clicking on the small arrow next to the record type and choosing the specific collection you wish to see.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR SEARCHING INDEXED RECORDS

- Less is more
- By clicking on the small box next to names and/or places you will limit your search to include only those that contain those exact names or places. This limits your results but may be helpful when searching for names that are very common.
- You can use wild card characters to substitute for a letter or group of letters that may be spelled in a variety of ways. For example: You might use Jul* to look for anyone whose name begins with those three letters. Your results might include Julio, Julian, Julios, etc.
- If you don't find the person you are seeking try spelling variations of the first and/or the last name.

BROWSING IMAGES

Many records for Latin America are found in browsable image collections that are not completely indexed. If you're not searching the browsable image collections, you're ignoring a large quantity of records where your ancestors might be found.

1. Go to FamilySearch.org and click on Search
2. Under the section Browse by Location choose the geographic location where your ancestor's event took place.
3. Choose the country.
4. Choose the record collection you wish to search.
5. Click on the words Browse through . . . images
6. Choose the province, region or department.
7. Next choose the city or town.
8. If you were looking for Catholic Church records, your next step would be to choose the parish.
9. Next choose the type of records you wish to browse. Use the arrows to advance the images. You may also advance the images by entering a number in the box next to the word Image.
10. Be sure to keep good notes on which records you have searched by recording your searches on a log or research calendar.