

## Guide to Vital Records

- ❖ What is a vital record?
  - A record created by a government authority to record such events like birth certificates, marriage licenses, and death certificates.
- ❖ Where are records maintained?
  - Vital records are kept by many different government agencies. You can find vital records in states, counties, towns, and cities. The Federal government seldom would have created vital records.
- ❖ When and where can a vital record be created?
  - Records are created at or near the time the event took place. You will find the record in the area which the event occurred. For example if you have a relative that was married in Logan, Utah this record would be in which covers the city of Logan.
- ❖ What can you find on a vital record?
  - Vital records usually contain the full name of the individual involved in the event, the date of the event, and the county, state, or town where the event took place. You might find more or less information on different records. For example a marriage license can give the bride and grooms name, also the date and place of marriage.
- ❖ How can you find a vital record?
  1. Select type of record – Birth, Marriage, or Death
  2. Determine the jurisdiction which the record was created in. this should include doing the following.
    - a. Learn if the record is at the state or some other jurisdiction
    - b. Which agency currently houses the document you are searching
    - c. What is the process to obtain a copy
  3. Contact the agency you need to acquire the records this might included
    - a. State Health Departments
    - b. County Clerks office
    - c. State Archives & Historical Society
    - d. Family History Library
- ❖ Evaluate and Record the information you find

For more information go to online resources

- International Vital Records Handbook 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. By Thomas Kemp
- [National Center for Health Statistics website](http://cdc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/w2welcom.htm) http://cdc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/w2welcom.htm
- [Ancestors Television Series website](http://www.ancestors.com) http://www.ancestors.com
- [Familysearch.org research guidance](http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search/RG/frameset_rg.asp) http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search/RG/frameset\_rg.asp