

Keep looking: New records provide new insights

BY SUSAN WEINBERG

AN IMPORTANT LESSON in genealogy research is to continue to check back periodically for new resources. Even though an event may be long past, its records may not be indexed or may not be available because of privacy restrictions until many years later. The method by which information providers obtain documents has changed dramatically and with it the accessibility to the end user. Information once hidden away in dusty files or on microfilm can suddenly be digitized and a click away on your computer.

When I began researching, it was in the world of microfilm. I ordered microfilm from the Family History Library in Utah and scrolled through it at a library of the Church of Latter-day Saints. Because of their belief system, the Mormons made a significant commitment to copying records from around the world and making them available to everyone. In addition to ordering films, I also went to their Utah library annually for a week of research. On each visit I searched in vain for my grandparents' New York marriage record. One day it suddenly appeared on a roll of microfilm almost ninety years after the event. I was stunned and thrilled by the reality of this document that I had begun to doubt existed. Since then, the Family History Library has focused on digitizing records. Many of them can be found on their associated website familysearch.org, with some available only at one of their libraries.

Recently that long-sought record became even easier to obtain. The New York Municipal Archives made a commitment to digitization and in March 2022 announced free access to more than 9.3 million vital records including births (1866–1909), deaths (1862–1948), and marriages (1866–1949). High-quality copies can be downloaded and printed from the site at no charge. Seventy percent of immigrants came into New York. If you had family members who stayed long enough to marry or have children there, you may want to check for records at a860-historicalvitalrecords.nyc.gov/.

Another important resource went online April 1, 2022 — the 1950 census, released 72 years after it occurred. When we consider what we can learn from a census it is important to consider the time period out of which it arose. The early part of the 20th century was an era of immigration and from 1900 to 1930 the census included questions about when people immigrated and about their naturalization status. By the 1940 census we had just emerged from a depression so questions focused on work,

including whether they worked for such agencies as the WPA. By 1950 we had been through a war. Many had been in military service and the economy was booming as veterans returned, often forcing women out the jobs they had assumed. Veterans represented almost half of college admittances as they benefited from the GI bill. It was the beginning of the baby boom, suburbs thrived and white-collar jobs grew. In the 1940 census they asked where the person lived five years earlier; in 1950 they just asked about the prior year. With so many people in the service mid-decade, five years would not have been meaningful information.

So what did the country look like in the 1950 census? Record numbers had moved to the suburbs and 55 percent owned their own home. Women made up 28 percent of the workforce (compare that to 51.5 percent in 2020). Median income was \$3,300.

Just as we moved from microfilm to scans, the process of indexing has also changed. The 2012 census release took four months to be indexed so people could do research by looking up a name. During that period, one could only search page by page looking for specific locations. The time frame for a name index is expected to be expedited for this census. The National Archives will provide the data through the cloud to firms such as Ancestry and FamilySearch for indexing. Ancestry will

create an initial automated index using optical character recognition (AI/OCR) to extract handwritten names. Volunteers will then review the automated index for accuracy. National Archives personnel are taking advantage of crowdsourcing, inviting volunteers to work on the records related to their family and the locations that are important to their story. If you are interested in participating, visit archives.gov/research/census/1950.

Susan Weinberg is a writer, artist, and genealogist, and frequently speaks on topics related to genealogy and artwork. She's president of the Minnesota Jewish Genealogical Society and serves on the boards of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies and the Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest. She creates art in her studio in the California Building in Northeast Minneapolis. For more information, visit studio409art.com or her book site, wespokejewish.com.

16 14-1912

THE CITY OF NEW YORK.
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

STATE OF NEW YORK.
CERTIFICATE AND RECORD OF MARRIAGE
of

Sam Weinberg and *Mary Rothschild*

Groom's Residence	<i>102 Norfolk St.</i>	Bride's Residence	<i>674 Sprague Ave.</i>
Age	<i>24</i>	Age	<i>22</i>
Color	<i>white</i>	Color	<i>white</i>
Single, Widowed, or Divorced		Single, Widowed, or Divorced	
Occupation	<i>Bookbinder</i>	Occupation	
Birthplace	<i>Warsaw, Russia</i>	Birthplace	<i>Vilna, Russia</i>
Father's Name	<i>Meyer</i>	Father's Name	<i>Sklova</i>
Mother's Maiden Name	<i>Scheindel Rubenstein</i>	Mother's Maiden Name	<i>Bela Sklova</i>
Number of Groom's Marriage	<i>first</i>	Number of Bride's Marriage	<i>first</i>

I hereby certify that the above-named groom and bride were joined in Marriage by me, in accordance with the Laws of the State of New York, at *1801 Linden Ave.* (Town) in the Borough of *Brooklyn*, City of New York, this *5th* day of *September*, 1912.

Signature of person performing the Ceremony: *Dr. J. Rakover*
Official Station: *557 Stone Ave.*

Witnesses to the Marriage: *Abraham Schwartz* Residence: *207 Stone Ave.*
Abraham Rakover

16 14-1912

NO DUPLICATED CERTIFICATE WILL BE RECEIVED.

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS
CITY OF NEW YORK

No. of Certificate: *15186*