



Oregon State Archives
800 Summer St NE
Salem OR 97310
Phone: (503) 373-0701, option 1
Email: reference.archives@sos.oregon.gov
Website: sos.oregon.gov/archives

Vital Records

Birth Records

- Over 100 years old → State Archives
- Oregon did not start officially recording birth records until 1903
- Some City of Portland and some county birth records date back to ca. 1863
- Delayed birth records date back to 1842

Adoption Records

- Restricted access (except adult adoptee)
- Contact the county court where the adoption took place

Divorce Records

- Over 50 years old → State Archives
- Divorce returns (like a receipt) or divorce case files (court records)
- Oregon did not start officially recording divorce records until 1925
- Some county court case files date back to ca. 1852

Death Records

- Over 50 years old → State Archives
- Oregon did not start officially recording death records until 1903
- Some county records date back to ca. 1854

Marriage Records

- Over 50 years old → State Archives
- Oregon did not start officially recording marriage records until 1906
- Some county records date back to ca. 1844

General

- For birth records newer than 100 years old, or for death, marriage, or divorce records newer than 50 years old, contact the Oregon Vital Records Office at (971) 673-1190 or via their website (scan the QR code)



Oregon Military Records



- Check State Archives “State Agency Records Guides” (scan QR code)
- Some of these records have been indexed (see OHRI below)
- For U.S. military service records, see the National Archives website: archives.gov/veterans
 - Records prior to 1917 are kept at the National Archives in Washington, DC
 - Records 1917-present are held at the National Military Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO

County Records

- May include probate and estate records, deeds, assessments, court cases, tax rolls, etc.

Naturalization Records

- Arranged within county records
- May include certificate of arrival, declaration of intention, petition for naturalization, affidavits, certificate stubs

Oregon State Hospital Records

- These records are restricted for 75 years from the date of discharge. However, if the patient has been deceased at least 50 years, the 75-year restriction does not apply.
- Oregon State Archives has some patient case files (some including photographs), commitment papers within county court records, and “insane commitment” records from the Oregon State Hospital. There are also volumes listing admissions, discharges, deaths, and brief patient histories.

Inmate Records

- These records relate to the Oregon State Penitentiary and may include entries from the “Great Registers” dating back to the mid-1800s
- There may also be individual inmate case files (some include photographs) or inmate descriptions

Other Types of Records

- Legislative – history of laws, statutes, and bills
- State Agency – agencies send their permanent records to the Archives

About the Archives

- In-Person Research: By appointment. Email or call to schedule a visit.
- Reference Room Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. (closed for lunch)
- Parking: Parking lot with coin-operated meters; street parking accepts debit or credit cards
- Copies: Staff-made copies are \$5.00 for one page and \$0.75 for each additional page (if any), for each type of record requested. Self-made paper copies on-site are \$0.25 per page.

Website Resources

Oregon Historical Records Index (OHRI) – many older records are indexed and can be searched by name, county, type of record, etc.

Note that not all our records are indexed.



Oregon Historical County Records Guide – where you can find the locations and dates of records, whether at the State Archives or with the county or other repository



Topical Research Guides – learn more about research using different types of records



Records Request Form

