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Genealogy Notes from Emily, October 2013

Emily Schroeder
Maine State Library

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emily.schroeder@maine.gov



Websites to Remember:

- MSL Genealogy - www.maine.gov/msl/services/genealogy/index.shtml
- Vital Records Researcher Card- www.maine.gov/dhhs/forms.shtml
- MSL Classes- www.maine.gov/msl/services/classes.shtml
- Maine Genealogical Society- www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~megs/index.html

Maine State Library
64 State House Station
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What Death Leaves Behind... Not Necessarily Ghosts!

Greetings, and Happy Fall! Halloween will soon be upon us, which may help direct our thoughts to ghosts and cemeteries, and in a more serious vein, our ancestors. In this edition of the newsletter, we'll begin a brief look at death records.

Your first task is to find the date and place of the person's demise. This can be most time-consuming, but there are sources available, depending on the time period, of course. If you're fortunate enough to have a family Bible, at least some births, marriages and deaths will have been recorded very close in time to the events themselves, and perhaps even by witnesses. In the genealogical world, this is as good as it gets, with a few possible exceptions: naming of parents and/or spouse, place, and, particularly in the case of death, the cause. Cause is rapidly becoming important as we try to piece together health histories and prepare for a congenital disease or condition to arrive on our



doorstep. The recording of deaths began in larger cities in the U.S. early in the 1800s, and became a part of statewide record-keeping. This mandatory reporting varied by state; for Maine, the year it began was 1892. (To check on other states and U.S. territories, go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w.htm>.) As time went on, more details were kept, resulting in our current death certificates.

Our own Maine State Archives has a "Death Database" which lists those who have passed on in Maine, beginning in 1960. Each entry gives the date and place of death, and may include the death certificate number. Just go to: <http://www.maine.gov/sos/arc/>, and find the link in the left-hand column. Other sources for death dates going further back, and beyond Maine, include Ancestry.com (for the Social Security Death Index), FamilySearch.org, and, not to be missed, Joe Beine's "Online Searchable Death Indexes and Records", at: <http://www.deathindexes.com>.

Once the date has been determined, you're just a step away from discovering more about the family, through any probate records, obituaries or death notices. Published family histories can be very helpful as well. More to come...

Love Genealogy? Join the Club!

During one of our recent classes an enthusiastic group made a great suggestion: let's start a genealogy club! So, that's just what we're going to do! The plan I have is to meet monthly and talk about particular topics of interest, including speakers not limited to myself. We'll have

some refreshments and a bit of in-person networking, as we share our common goal in finding our origins. Nothing is written in stone at this point, but we will be having a start-up meeting on Wednesday, November 20th, from 2-4PM right here at the State Library.

This is a 3rd Wednesday, and I've already heard about a conflict, so we hope to find a better day for future meetings. Please mark your calendars and join us for this new adventure! Bring your neighbors, in-laws and cousins, as well as your ideas for a successful genealogy club!