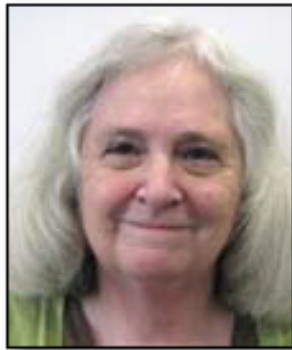


Genealogy Rocks!

BMDs and Church Records

Birth, marriage and death records, (BMDs) and church records are the foundation of genealogical research. These are the records that



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anchor our ancestors in a place and time and help us to make connections between them.

Unfortunately, BMD records are sometimes not easy to find. For later generations, birth certificates, marriage licenses and death certificates are the obvious source of this information, but privacy laws and high prices sometimes make these records difficult to obtain. In addition, many U.S. states didn't begin keeping official birth and death records until the early 20th century. Marriage records were usually kept at the county level rather than the state, further complicating finding them.

If BMD certificates aren't available, what's a genealogist to do? Church records are the obvious an-

swer; most churches kept baptism, marriage and burial records, which are a good substitute for governmental records. The big stumbling block to obtaining church records is figuring out what denomination an ancestor belonged to. Often membership was predicated merely on location; a close church was easier to attend so ancestors didn't bother to travel to another denomination further away.

Church records are kept in a variety of locations and archives, according to denomination. The Family History Library catalog at www.familysearch.org is a good starting point for seeing what church records might have been microfilmed or digitized. If microfilmed records of interest are found, they can be ordered to the local Family History Center. Another good reference for church records is *The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy* edited by Loretto Szucs. This "bible" for family research is available at both the Loveland and Poudre River Libraries.

❖ *Carol Stetser is our society's re-*