Relatives Masked in the Indexes of Ancestry

Debbie Gurtler and Karina E. Morales

FamilySearch
dsgurtler@familysearch.org and kmorales@familysearch.org

FamilySearch and Ancestry.com have collaborated in various projects over the years. Two of the projects of great value for Hispanic genealogy are the Civil Registration collections for Mexico and Puerto Rico. Previously very few of the records of these two collections had been indexed, but by uniting their efforts these two companies have been able to make the records of these collections more easily accessible to the public much sooner. What would have taking more than 20 years to complete was done in less than 5 years. There are no other collections for any other countries in Latin America more complete than these. As in everything, when things are done quickly, sometimes the quality suffers but if you are able to understand the errors that were committed, you can find what you're looking for. Despite it all this is a great achievement.

During the presentation the Ancestry.mx site will be shown. Many of these same suggestions apply to Ancestry.com as well.

Mexico Civil Registration

Collection description

Record types:	Birth, marriage, and death certificates
Quantity of certificates:	~ 72 million
States represented:	Every state with the exception of Baja California Norte, Sinaloa and Tabasco (Some municipalities in other states may also be missing)
Date range:	1857-1987
Notes about the dates included:	Civil registration began in Mexico in 1857. Generally the collection includes births up to 1930, marriages up to 1950 and deaths un to 1987. These dates vary from state to state depending on when the last time records were captured either on microfilm or with a digital camera.

Important: There are some records that Ancestry.com has not indexed but the images of these records are available on FamilySearch.org. For example, there are births for San Luis Potosi up to 1967 and deaths up to 2000 but many of these aren't searchable in Ancestry.com databases – these images can only be viewed on FamilySearch.org.

Date ranges for available indexed records on Ancestry.com

by record type and state

	Nacimientos		Matrimonios		Defunciones	
Aguascalientes	1860	1947	1860	1961	1859	1961
Baja California Sur	1861	1933	1860	1950	1883	1987
Campeche	1859	1921	1860	1921	1860	1912
Chiapas	1861	1930	1861	1952	1861	1987
Chihuahua	1861	1947	1861	1967	1861	1987
Coahuila	1861	1930	1861	1950	1861	1987
Colima	1861	1931	1863	1952	1860	1987
Durango	1861	1930	1861	1951	1861	1987
Federal District	1861	1931	1861	1950	1861	1987
Guanajuato	1862	1929	1866	1929	1862	1930
Guerrero	1860	1947	1863	1954	1860	1987
Hidalgo	1861	1947	1861	1967	1861	1967
Jalisco	1857	1947	1861	1961	1856	1987
Mexico	1861	1939	1861	1939	1861	1941
Michoacan	1859	1934	1859	1940	1859	1935
Morelos	1866	1920	1866	1916	1865	1916
Nayarit	1868	1931	1868	1959	1868	1987
Nuevo Leon	1859	1947	1859	1960	1859	1962
Oaxaca	1861	1930	1861	1950	1861	1987
Puebla	1861	1930	1861	1930	1859	1930
Queretaro	1866	1937	1866	1957	1865	1987
Quintana Roo	1867	1902	1866	1902	1866	1902
San Luis Potosi	1860	1947	1860	1967	1860	1987
Sonora	1866	1930	1857	1950	1862	1987
Tamaulipas	1860	1930	1860	1950	1860	1987
Tlaxcala	1867	1927	1867	1937	1867	1937
Veracruz	1860	1947	1859	1947	1859	1950
Yucatan	1861	1939	1861	1950	1861	1987
Zacatecas	1861	1947	1861	1952	1861	1987

Other Mexico Collections on Ancestry.com

Name of the collection	Record type	Number of records
Mexico, Select Baptisms, 1560-1950 (in Spanish)	Birth, marriage & death	123,727,841
Mexico, Select Marriages Index, 1556-1989 (in Spanish)	Birth, marriage & death	21,249,762
Mexico, Select Deaths, 1680-1940 (in Spanish)	Birth, marriage & death	842,801
Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas, Mexico, Selected Parish Records, 1751-1880	Birth, marriage & death	113,767
Mexico, Find A Grave Index, 1800s-Current	Birth, marriage & death	20,588
1930 Mexico National Census (in Spanish)	Census & voter lists	12,875,759
Border Crossings: From Mexico to U.S., 1895-1964	Immigration & travel	5,807,437

Types of errors in the Mexico Civil Registration Indexes

The most common errors are as follows:

- Name indexed incorrectly
- Wrong name indexed
- Name omitted
- Surname indexed as a given name
- Given name is indexed as a surname
- Letters are indexed incorrectly

Solution: Be creative in your searches

- Search using only the given name and surname of one of the parents
- Search using only the surname of the principal person and the given names of the parents
- Search using the exact date and surname in the event place
- Search using only the parents' names and not the name of the principal person
- Search using a wild card character (*) – the asterisk can be using in place of a letter that might typically be read incorrectly by indexers

Example of searching using a wild card character:

The name of the mother is Aurea Alba. In some search results she appears as Anrea Alba. The letters "u", "v" and "n" are often misread by indexers. In this case the search shown below is for the children of Aurea Alba, but because of the common error in the way her name is indexed, an asterisk should be used to substitute for the "u". By using the asterisk the results will include the names Aurea, Anrea, Andrea and any other names that begin with "A" and end with "rea." See the example below.

Madre	A*rea	Alba

The most commonly confused letters in the indexes are found in this chart.

a for o (especially if it follows an "i")	j, t and f are all similar
d for the letters ol	L for S, E or G
g for s	M for ll or Al
h for s or b	n for r
j for i	t for s

For more information, please visit this site:
https://script.byu.edu/SiteAssets/resources/Spanish_Extraction_Guide-Chapter_3-1.pdf

Puerto Rico Civil Registration

Record types:	Birth, marriage, and death certificates
Quantity of certificates:	~5.4 Million
Municipalities represented:	All are included but the certificates for the municipality of Canovanas appear with the name of the municipality of Loiza.
Date range:	1885-2001

Notes about the dates included:	Civil registration was implemented in Puerto Rico at the beginning of 1885 but some municipalities began registering births, marriages, and deaths earlier. There are also cases in which life events which took place before 1885 were recorded after civil registration was implemented. Generally, the collection includes births up to 1930, marriages up to 1950, and deaths up to 1994-2001. These date ranges vary by municipality.

Types of errors in the Puerto Rico Civil Registration Indexes

The most common errors are the following:

- The name of the father was omitted
- The name of the mother was omitted
- The surnames of the parents were omitted

Solution: Be creative in your searches.

- Search using the surname of the principal person and the given names of the parents
- Search using the surname of the principal person and the name of the mother
- Search using a wildcard (*)
- Don't forget about the "y". For example, Dionicio Mercado y Aviles

Other Puerto Rico Collections on Ancestry.com

Name of the collection	Record type	Number of records
1910 United States Federal Census	Census & Voter Lists	93,627,708
1920 United States Federal Census	Census & Voter Lists	107,684,890
1930 United States Federal Census	Census & Voter Lists	124,964,074
1940 United States Federal Census	Census & Voter Lists	134,484,648
Puerto Rico, Social and Population Schedules, 1935-1936	Census & Voter Lists	1,724,638
Puerto Rico, Passenger and Crew Lists, 1901-1962	Immigration & Travel	2,378,523
Puerto Rico, Registro Central de Esclavos, 1872 (in Spanish)	Census & Voter Lists	20,058
Puerto Rico, Records of Foreigners, 1815-1845 (in Spanish)	Immigration & Travel	18,708
U.S., World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942	Military	10,453,097
U.S. World War II Navy Muster Rolls, 1938-1949	Military	33,039,901
Puerto Rico, Special Censuses, Agricultural Schedules, 1935 (in Spanish)	Wills, Probates, Land, Tax & Criminal	52,065