

Civil Registration

Brazil “How to” Guide, Beginner Level: Instruction

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OBJECTIVE

This guide will teach you about Brazilian civil registration records and how to access them.

INTRODUCTION

Civil registration records, used for genealogical purposes, are vital records of births, marriages, divorces, and deaths created by the government. These vital records are helpful because they document crucial life events. They can be excellent sources of information on names, dates, vital events, and relationships.

INSTRUCTION

Civil registration records were mandated by decree in Brazil on 7 March 1888 although in some areas you may find some as early as the 1860s and 1870s. At times you may need to discover when a town was formed in order to determine which municipality had jurisdiction over an area during a given time period. A town that was recently founded was probably created from a larger municipality. This means that for records of ancestors born before the town was formed you will need to check the larger, older municipality.

Record types

- Births
- Marriages
- Deaths

Information found in the records

Births or *nascimentos*

Births were usually reported by the father of the child, a neighbor, or the midwife within a few days. A search for a birth record should begin with the known date of birth and then searching forward in time, day by day, until the record is found. For example, if your ancestor was born on 25 July 1901, begin you search on that day and continue searching through the month of July and on until the record is located. It might be found within a few days of the actual birth date but in some instances it might be weeks or months. In rare instances, a child's birth might not have been reported. Birth records usually include the following information, except as where noted.

- Day, time, and place (town and address of home or hospital) of birth
- Name of the child

- Parents' names, ages, birthplaces or residences, marital status, and profession
- Frequently, but not always: Names of grandparents
- Frequently, but not always: Number of other children born to the mother

Marriages or *casamentos*

Marriages typically took place in the hometown of the bride and might contain the following information:

- Name of bride and groom
- Marriage date and place
- Parents' names
- In later years: ages, occupations, civil status and residence of bride and groom
- Sometimes: birth places of bride and groom

Deaths or *óbitos*

Death records can be particularly helpful for people who may not have had a birth or marriage record but died during the period when civil registration had begun.

- Name of deceased
- Age, residence, occupation, and cause of death of deceased
- Burial information
- Name of the informant
- If a child, the name of parents and possibly the date of birth
- If an adult, the name of the spouse and possibly the names of parents.

For more information, please read the FamilySearch Wiki article [Brazil Civil Registration](#).

Sample records can be viewed in the FamilySearch Wiki article [Brazil Civil Registration \(FamilySearch Historical Records\)](#).

Locating the records

Civil registration records are kept on a municipal level by local civil registration offices. Records are subsequently sent on to a municipal, district, or delegation office. People from small villages often reported their births, marriages, and deaths to a nearby central municipality office. Many towns in Brazil are very new. If you are not finding records for the city you need, you will have to find out when the city was founded and from which older city it was created. This can be done using either a Google search or by checking the reference books [Cidades e Vilas](#). If you are in the Family History Library, they are located in the Hispanic Reference area on the B1 International floor. If you are elsewhere in the world, you can order a copy on microfiche at your local family history center.

In the larger cities of Brazil such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, among others, there are several registration offices located throughout the city. You will need to know which Civil Registration office your ancestor might have used. The offices often carry the name of the neighborhood in which they are located. They may also have a sub-district or *subdistrito*, or in the case of Rio de Janeiro, a circumscription or *circunscrição* number associated with them. If

you know in which part of the city your ancestor lived you should begin your search in the records of the office nearest their home. If not, you will need to search office by office.

Some civil registration books have indexes in the front or back of them. These indexes are often by the first name of the child. You may have to check every entry in the index if your ancestor had more than one first name. For example, many women had Maria as their first given name but throughout their life they never used Maria but were known by their second given name. The number next to an entry in the index could be the certificate number or the page number. If you are not sure what the number refers to, try checking both the certificate number and the page number.

FamilySearch

Records are available online and on microfilm. Search for the records desired by doing a place search in the FamilySearch Catalog. Civil Registration records will only be found at the city level so make sure you search by the name of the city. If you are unclear on the spelling of the name of the city but know the name of the state, search for the name of the state in a **Place** search and when the results appear, click on the words **Places within** that state. For example, if the city I need is in the state of São Paulo but I am unsure how it is spelled, I can search for the state of São Paulo. In the FamilySearch Catalog I would do a **Place search** for São Paulo and choose the option for Brazil, São Paulo. It is not necessary that you include the diacritics when entering the place name in the catalog. The system will recognize the name of the place with or without the diacritics.

After you have clicked on **Search**, you will see the following. Click on the words that say **Places within Brazil, São Paulo** and a list of cities will appear. You can then choose the name of the city you need from the list that will appear.



In this example, let's say the city we want is Dourado. You would click on the name **Dourado**.

Next, you will click on the entry for **Civil Registration** records.

Next, click on the title of the collection. In this case it is the phrase **Registros Civis, 1891-1995**.


This particular city only has records on microfilm. The next step would be to view the microfilm. Check the list of microfilms and choose the film that best meets your goal. The microfilms can be ordered at most family history centers and are available at the Family History Library. Click on the microfilm icon to the right of the film number and follow the instructions for ordering a copy sent to a family history center near your home.



You may also search for records of a place using the **Keywords** option in the catalog. Please note that the name of the town you are looking for could also be a surname. You may want to include the name of the country, state, or province in the search terms you enter.

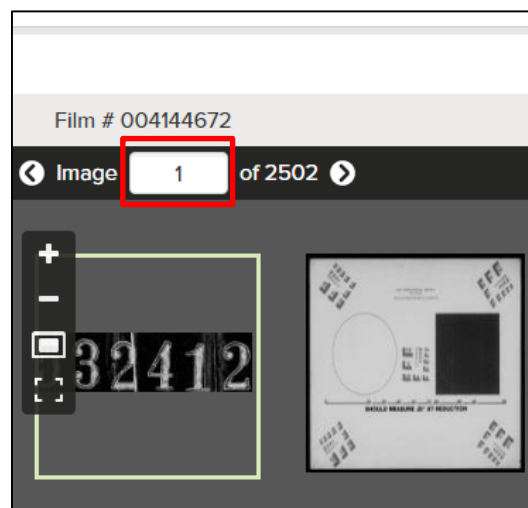
Browse Image Collections

If the Civil Registration records are available online, you will see an icon of a camera. Click on

the icon to open the images on your screen.  See the image below from the catalog entry for Condado, Pernambuco, Brazil for an example of the camera icon.

Before clicking on the camera icon, please note any item numbers associated with the microfilm you wish to view. For example, if you want to view *Casamentos* 1894-1906, it is located in Items 14-16 on the microfilm. You will have to jump ahead in the image set to that part of the film once the images are displayed. You will be able to see the slides displaying item numbers when you view the thumbnail images. The thumbnail images of the film will appear after you click on the camera icon. You can choose to scroll through the thumbnail images or jump ahead by entering an image number. The thumbnails of the microfilm will appear as follows:

To advance within the 2502 images, enter a number in the white box shown below where the number 1 currently appears:



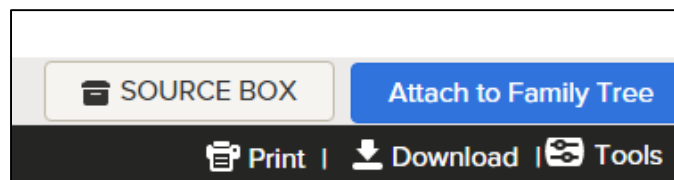
Double click on an image to enlarge it for reading.

To return to the thumbnails, click on this icon,  which appears on the far left side of your screen.

By advancing through the images, you should be able to identify where item 14 begins. See the image below:



Additional viewer options, see below, are located on the top right of the viewer window.



Are there any indexes?

As you scroll through the thumbnails, keep an eye out for indexes. They are usually found either at the beginning or the end of a record book. If you spot an index, check there first for the name you seek. Keep in mind that indexes are commonly organized by the first or given name of the child and children often had multiple first or given names. The number next to the name in the index could refer to a page number and/or a certificate number. If you are unsure how the index is organized, try to locate the first entry in the index. The small letter “v” next to a number is most likely a page number. The “v” stands for *verso*, or the back side of the page.

Browse Image Tools

Attach to Family Tree allows you to attach an image to your ancestor in Family Tree if you are logged in.

Print allows you to print an image. The quality of the printed image will be better if you choose to download the image and then open it in your computer with a program designed to print photos.

Download allows you to download a copy of the image to your computer.

Clicking on **Tools** allows you to make adjustments to appearance of the image. You may adjust brightness, contrast, or rotate the image.

Indexed Collections

If the records have been indexed, making them searchable by name, an icon of a magnifying glass will appear to the right of the film number as in this example from Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil.



When you click on the magnifying glass, you will be taken to a page like the one below where you can search by name.

Refine your search

DECEASED ANCESTOR'S NAME

First Names

Last Names

SEARCH WITH A LIFE EVENT:

Birth

Marriage

Residence

Death

Any

SEARCH WITH A RELATIONSHIP:

Spouse

Parents

Other Person

RESTRICT RECORDS BY:

Location

Type

Batch Number

Film Number

1444425

☐ Lock filters

☐ Match all terms exactly

Update

Reset

Records

Collections

Search Results from Historical Records

1-20 of 21,501 results for Film Number:1444425

Number of results to show: 20 50 75

Preview	Name	Events	Relationships	Details	Image
▶	Luiz Brazil, Pernambuco, Civil Registration, 1804-2014	birth: 2 May 1889 Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil	father: Elesbão Olympio da Silva		
▶	Sebastiana Brazil, Pernambuco, Civil Registration, 1804-2014	birth: 29 May 1889 Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil	father: Manoel Joaquim Bezerra mother: Maria Alves da Paixão		
▶	Luzia Nectarina Brazil, Pernambuco, Civil Registration, 1804-2014	birth: 13 December 1889 Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil	father: Augusto Lourenço da Silva mother: Felismina Nectarina da Cruz		
<div> >Don't Spend a Dime With a FamilySearch Account, you'll always have full access.<div>Get a Free Account</div></div>					
▶	José Vieira Brazil, Pernambuco, Civil Registration, 1804-2014	birth: 6 July 1890 Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil	father: Manoel Ignacio Vieira mother: Adelaide Maria da Conceição		
▶	Jose de Olinda Brazil, Pernambuco, Civil Registration, 1804-2014	birth: 10 January 1892 Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil	father: Joao de Olinda Tavares mother: Jozelina Leocadia Vianna		
▶	Pedro Vianna da Luz Brazil, Pernambuco, Civil Registration, 1804-2014	birth: 29 June 1892 Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil	father: Pedro Vianna de Medeiros mother: Julia Vieira da Luz		
▶	Severino Pacheco de Lyra Brazil, Pernambuco, Civil Registration, 1804-2014	birth: 2 April 1895 Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil	father: Manoel Pacheco de Pacheco de Lyra mother: Luiza Monica Frazão		
▶	José Brazil, Pernambuco, Civil Registration, 1804-2014	birth: 17 October 1895 Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil	father: Guilhermino Ribeiro dosAnjos		

You may now enter **First Names** and **Last Names** to search the indexed records. Once you have entered a name to search click on the **Update** button to search the microfilm.

Search Tips

1. Keep in mind that all the records for that microfilm might not be completely indexed yet. If you don't find the person you are looking for, try browsing the images.
2. Consider the possibility that the date of birth, marriage, or death you have may be incorrect. Try searching a year or two earlier or a year or two later.

3. Try entering less information in the search fields. It's easy to focus the search with so many details that you may miss a record because it doesn't have all those same details.
4. Where available, search indexes first.
5. You should always view the original record as it may contain more information than what was indexed.

Reading the records

The following resources can help you learn how to read and understand the handwritten documents.

- [Portuguese Genealogical Word List](#) in the [FamilySearch Wiki](#). Click on the title of the article to be taken directly to it.
- [Reading Portuguese Handwritten Records](#). This is a series of three recorded lessons that will help train you to read Portuguese records. Click on the title to be taken directly to the lessons.
- For translation help, please consult a good Portuguese-English Dictionary. You may also try the online translation website [Google translate](#).

ACTIVITY

This guided activity is designed to help you become familiar with locating Brazilian Civil Registration records available through FamilySearch. Some will be available only on microfilm, while others will be available online with digital images. Follow the step by step instructions to determine if the records are available on microfilm or online.

A friend has a grandparent who married in Santelmo in the state of Santa Catarina in 1932. Are there marriage records available and if so, in what form?

1. On **FamilySearch.org**, hover over the word **Search** and click on **Catalog** when the drop-down menu appears.
2. In the **Place** search, start entering **Santelmo**. When options begin to appear, click on the option **Brazil, Santa Catarina, Santelmo**.
3. Click on **Search**.
4. Click on the words **Brazil, Santa Catarina - Civil registration**.
5. Click on the words **Registros civis: Caçador, 1926-1997**.
6. In the notes (**Notas**) section, we read the following: **Records of Brazil, Santa Catarina, Civil Registration are available online, click here**. This indicates that the images are available online. **Don't click on the link at this time**.

7. Read the **Notes** and the **Film Notes** sections in order to answer these questions.

What other municipalities or cities are included in these records?	Caçador
What was the previous name of Caçador?	Rio Caçador
What other locality is included besides Santelmo and Caçador?	Taquara Verde
Which film number covers marriages in Santelmo for the year 1932?	2075614
What is the Item number to get to the marriages?	Item 9
If you wanted a marriage record earlier than 1931, which two other microfilms should you try first?	Because Santelmo is included in the records of Caçador and Taquara Verde, both of these places are close to Santelmo. If you needed a marriage record earlier than 1931 you should try either of these localities. For Caçador you could use microfilm number 2075614, Item 8. For Taquara Verde you could use microfilm number 2075637 Items 7-10.
Because these microfilms are online, you would click on the camera icon to view the images. How many images are available when you click on Casamentos 1931-1934 for Santelmo ?	Click on the camera icon next to the microfilm to open the image viewer. There are 3198 images.
In what image does Item 9 begin?	Either scroll through the images or jump ahead to discover the beginning of Item 9 in image 1649.