FINDING YOUR ROOTS IN MÉXICO

BY JOHN P. SCHMAL
HOW DO YOU START OUT?

Ask your relatives for information and documentation, including:

- Names of ancestors and where they came from (hacienda, villa, ciudad, municipio, estado).
- Dates of Birth / Marriage / Immigration (exact or approximate).
- *** The names of siblings, aunts, uncles and neighbors can be very important. Do not disregard them. ***
- Find all family documents available (Baptisms, Birth Records, Border Crossings, Marriage Records, Death Records, Citizenship Papers, Alien Registration).
- What railroad did your ancestors work for?
- Immigration stories of your ancestors.
WHAT RECORDS CAN YOU LOOK FOR?

- Obituaries (in the newspapers).
- Funeral Records (in the mortuaries).
- Cemetery Records (from cemeteries).
- Military Records (State/Federal agencies).
- Social Security Records.
- Passports / Border Crossing Records / Naturalizations / Alien Registration

- Check the FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY CATALOG for the availability of records for a particular location.
- Old Family Records Hidden Away in the Attic May Yield Great Clues.
NATURALIZATION RECORDS

Naturalizations are THE SINGLE MOST VALUABLE SOURCE FOR LOCATING A PLACE OF ORIGIN IN MEXICO. Ancestry.com is one of the best sources, but you may also contact the National Archives on your own. For more info, please see the following link:

http://www.archives.gov/research/naturalization/index.html

Determine which facility you will write to:

http://www.archives.gov/locations/

When writing or emailing them, provide as much detail as possible. Prior to 1906, any "court of record" (municipal, county, state, or Federal) could grant U.S. citizenship.
A naturalization after 1906 will show important information on both the naturalized person, as well as their spouse. His or her children will be listed – and the date and place of the last legal entry into the U.S. will be shown.
NARA: ORDER RECORDS ONLINE


Create your username and password; then you can have staff search for you and have them make reproductions of the records. Reproductions can include:

- Census Pages
- Court Records
- Immigration & Naturalization Records
- Land Files
- WWI Draft Registration Cards
- Military Service and Pension Records
- Native American Records
WHAT BORDER RECORDS ARE AVAILABLE?

Most of the Mexican border-crossing records that have been microfilmed are now available on Ancestry.com or the National Archives!

http://www.archives.gov/research/immigration/border-mexico.html
Nov. 17, 1909
Border Crossing Record for Geronimo Salas

Caution: Mapimi, Durango is his last residence; but Geronimo was born in Sain Alto, Zacatecas. Some border crossing records do give the birthplace.
WHAT IF MY ANCESTORS DID NOT BECOME CITIZENS?

**USCIS Genealogy Program:** A fee-for-service program providing access to historical immigration and naturalization records of deceased immigrants.

https://genealogy.uscis.dhs.gov/

The USCIS Genealogy Program offers two services:

- **Index Search:** USCIS searches its historical immigration and naturalization record indices for citations related to a specific immigrant. Search results (record citations) are returned to the researcher, along with instructions on how to request the file(s) from USCIS or the National Archives. Fee: $20.00.

- **Record Copy Request:** Researchers with valid record citations (USCIS file numbers) may request copies of historical immigration and naturalization records. Fee: $20.00/$35.00 (depending on the record type).
WHAT IF MY ANCESTORS DID NOT BECOME CITIZENS?

Alien Registration Forms completed between August 1940 and March 1944 were microfilmed. USCIS maintains this microfilm containing 5,665,983 Alien Registration Forms (AR-2). Alien Registration forms on microfilm are arranged in numerical order, and are indexed by name, date of birth, and place of birth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1000000 to A5980116</td>
<td>Resident aliens and Delayed registration, Aug 1940-Mar 1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6100000 to A6132126</td>
<td>Railroad workers, 1942-1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7000000 to A7043999</td>
<td>Children under 14 years of age, resident in US (not all children were registered), Aug 1940-Mar 1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7500000 to A7759142</td>
<td>Newly arriving immigrants (Consular registrations), Aug 1940-Mar 1944</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE USCIS GENEALOGY PROGRAM

Records available through the USCIS Genealogy Program include:

- Naturalization Certificate Files (C-files) from September 27, 1906 to April 1, 1956
- Alien Registration Forms from August 1, 1940 to March 31, 1944
- Visa files from July 1, 1924 to March 31, 1944
- Registry Files from March 2, 1929 to March 31, 1944
- Alien Files (A-files): documents dated prior to May 1, 1951
DID YOUR FAMILY WORK FOR THE RAILROAD?

For a Valuable Resource for Genealogical Information for Employees After 1936, Contact:

U.S. Railroad Retirement Board
Congressional Inquiry Section
844 North Rush Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611-2092.

For more details, see:
http://www.rrb.gov/mep/genealogy.asp
After you locate **A PLACE OF ORIGIN**, you must learn whatever you can about the place of origin and its surroundings:

- Get a detailed map that shows municipio boundaries to study the surrounding area (**Guia Roji maps recommended** – from Amazon.com).
- Study the area history by checking resources on Amazon.com and Borderlands Books and bookfinder.com using specific key words.
- Check the Family History Library Catalog for the availability of church and civil records.
BE AWARE OF STATE & MUNICIPIO BOUNDARIES

DON’T GET TOO HUNG-UP ON ONE LOCATION: Example: If your ancestors lived in the Ojuelos de Jalisco Municipio, a move of a few miles west would put them in Aguascalientes, a small move north would put them in Zacatecas. And a move to the east would put them in Guanajuato.

Historically, there was a great deal of movement between Ojuelos, Lagos de Moreno and Aguascalientes.
CASE IN POINT: THE EXAMPLE OF HUEJÚCAR (JALISCO)

I’ve known many people who said their ancestors came from Huejúcar in Jalisco. Some of them felt no ties or connection to Zacatecas. But 9.1 miles (14.6 kilometers) north of the city is Tepetongo, which is in Zacatecas. Families in both towns have been interconnected, in spite of the state border between the two.
WHERE TO LOOK NEXT: AN EXAMPLE

I researched families in Villa Hidalgo, Jalisco, but the church records there only went back to 1814. So where do I go next?

Northeast of Villa Hidalgo – Cieneguilla, Aguascalientes records go back to 1716 (no marriages ... it’s part of the Aguascalientes Parish.)

To the southwest, Nochistlán records go back to 1627.

To the south, Teocaltiche records also go back to 1627.
THE “ENCICLOPEDIA DE LOS MUNICIPIOS”

The following link features the individual histories of the 2,439 municipios of the 31 Mexican states.

http://www.e-local.gob.mx/wb2/ELOCAL/ELOC_Enciclopedia

Just pick your state, then go to the municipio of your choice (delegaciones for Distrito Federal).
UTILIZING FAMILYSEARCH.ORG TO FIND YOUR ANCESTORS

BY JOHN P. SCHMAL
THE FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY CATALOG

https://familysearch.org/catalog-search

You can search by the following criteria:
- Place Name (City, Municipio)
- Last Names (Surname)
- Titles (of books or microfilm)
- Authors
- Subjects
- Keywords (you can combine Places and Surnames)

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CAMERON COUNTY: Within each category, you may find resources that will prove to be valuable to your research. Check out every result.

REMEMBER to also search under BROWNSVILLE, CAMERON, TEXAS. Some churches may be listed in the city, but not in the county.
Several churches have operated in Guadalajara for over four centuries, but there is only one civil registry, which commenced registration in the 1850s and 1860s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Results for FamilySearch Catalog</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - Archives and libraries - Directories (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - Archives and libraries - Inventories, registers, catalogs (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - Biography - Bibliography (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - Census (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - Church directories (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - Church history (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - Church records (23)</td>
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<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - Civil registration (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - Colonization (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - Court records (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - Directories (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - Genealogy (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - History - Sources (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - History (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - Land and property (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - Maps (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - Notarial records (59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - Politics and government - 1540-1810 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>México, Jalisco, Guadalajara - Probate records (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE CENSUS: A SNAPSHOT IN TIME

- The census provides A SNAPSHOT of a family at a particular PLACE AND POINT IN TIME.
- Use Ancestry.com, Heritage Quest, Familysearch.org or NARA resources.

When you find where your family lived at a point in time in the U.S., you can contact local resources for more records and you can check the Family History Library Catalog.
SEARCHING FOR EVENTS AT A POINT IN TIME

Local Resources: Libraries, Genealogical Societies, Churches, County Clerks, Cemeteries, Schools, etc.)

1) County records (the County Clerk should have births, marriages and deaths – but records before 1910 are probably incomplete).

2) Church records (Look for baptisms of children or marriages of adults).

3) Newspapers (Obituaries / Local Events / Marriage Announcements / Military Service).

4) Library Records (Historical or Genealogical Society Resources and Indices).
PRIMARY SOURCES OF INFORMATION IN MEXICO

You have several primary sources of information through the Family History Library:

- Parish Registers (Registros Parroquiales): Bautismos, matrimonios, confirmaciones, defunciones, padrones (many Mexican records go back to the 1500s and 1600s).

- Civil Records (Registro Civil): Nacimientos, matrimonios, etc. Mexican civil registration began in 1859 but was not fully implemented in some areas until the 1880s.

- 1930 Mexican Census

- Padrón: Some parish records includes a PADRON (a register or census of parishioners receiving the sacraments). This provides a snapshot of the entire parish for a specific year (See the catalog description.)
SEARCHING SCAN FILES

Mexican Historical Record Collections:

https://familysearch.org/search/collection/list#page=1&region=MEXICO

When you find a link that you will have to spend more time with, remember to cut it
and paste into an email and send it to yourself. Keep the links of where you left off
so that you can access that spot quickly.

Mexico, National Census, 1930
https://familysearch.org/search/image/index#uri=https://familysearch.org/records/co
collection/1307314/waypoints

Mexico, Distrito Federal,...Church Records, 1514-1970
https://familysearch.org/search/image/index#uri=https://familysearch.org/records/co
collection/1615259/waypoints
SEARCHING SCAN FILES

You will become more adept at using the scan files with time. You can move one frame at a time or you can pick the image number to move to a specific area within the film. Always consider the number of images vs. the number of years. And indexes may be at the beginning or the end.
DISCOVER YOUR FAMILY HISTORY

https://familysearch.org/

Searching is a skill that develops over time! Don’t be too specific in your requests AT FIRST!

![Search interface](image-url)
RECOMMENDED STRATEGY: THE PARENT SEARCH

Do a search for the children of two parents. Even if you don’t find your ancestor, you may find some of their siblings.

If all four names fail to turn up results, take out one name (such as the mother’s last name, or the father’s first name) and try again.

You may want to try the search without a place for starters, and narrow down the search later.
**RECOMMENDED STRATEGY: THE PARENT SEARCH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Event Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Spouse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jose Cipreano Martinez</td>
<td>Baptisms</td>
<td>19 September 1810</td>
<td>San Francisco De Pozos, Pozos, San Luis Potosi, Mexico</td>
<td>Jose Tomas Martinez, Juana DeDs. Hernandez</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose Higinio Martinez</td>
<td>Marriages</td>
<td>6 May 1847</td>
<td>Celaya, Morelia, Celaya, Guanajuato, Mexico</td>
<td>Jose Martinez, Juana Maria Hernandez</td>
<td>Francisca Saldana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juana Maria Martinez</td>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>1806</td>
<td>El Sagrario, Huajuapan De Leon, Oaxaca, Mexico</td>
<td>Jose Graviel Martinez, Juana Francisca Hernandez</td>
<td>Juan Bautista</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tereza Martinez</td>
<td>Birth</td>
<td>10 September 1855</td>
<td>Sagrario Metropolitan, Oaxaca</td>
<td>Jose Maria Martinez, Juana Hernandez</td>
<td>Severo Diaz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE ABUELOS FACTOR: A FRINGE BENEFIT

After 1800, many churches in the states of Jalisco, Zacatecas, Chihuahua, Aguascalientes and other locations utilized the ABUELOS FACTOR in their baptism records. Many documents of birth/baptism may list:

- Padres (Parents)
- Abuelos Paternos (Paternal Grandparents)
- Abuelos Maternos (Maternal Grandparents)
- Padrinos/Testigos (Godparents/Witnesses – who may be aunts and uncles)
El 14 de septiembre del año de 1690, en la parroquia de San Pedro de los Reloxos, nació el niño Álvaro García, hijo de fray Alonso García y de Francisca de la Cruz. Fue bautizado solemnemente y fue el Santo Ángel y Sargento de la Parroquia que cruzó el día de su nacimiento y esté el sitio de la parroquia en este lugar. En la legítima de ignacio Garcia García y Manuel Martínez, abuelos paternos Pablo García y Manuela García, abuelos maternos San ted Martínez y Fernanda Rubalcaba, padres. Fue el día de los Santos Ángeles, que es un legítimo y espiritualmente fiel. Por que está la firma con el Señor.
RACIAL CLASSIFICATIONS IN COLONIAL MEXICO

- Español / Española: Spanish (or White)
- Indio / India: Indian
- Negro: African / Black
- Mestizo: Spanish – Indian
- Mulato: Spanish – Black
- Lobo: Black (3 parts) – Indian (1 part)
- Coyote: Black (1 part) – Spanish (4 parts) – Indian (3 parts)
- Tresalvo: Spanish (3 parts) – Black (1 part)
- And many more

In some parishes, this classification was done strictly on sight, and not based on knowledge of the person’s pedigree. Many coyotes and lobos may have been at least partly Indian.
The 1744 marriage of Rita’s parents indicates that they were BOTH “MULATO LIBRES” – not Indians.
A 1795 Marriage from La Barca, Jalisco:

Yndio orinº de Yrapuato
An 1817 Baptism from Mocorito, Sonora:

In octubre Diciembre y mil ochocientos diez y siete años,
el Dn. Salvador Julian Moreno, saca Interes en este pueblo, y su donado, Alvarez, libernamente, y jurando sanco de su y honor y santo a una Cristiana y ocho días: en naciendo a Yndio por nombre José Enriqueno Yndio Yaqui, hijo legítimo de Domingo Yndo, y su madre María Veracruz, fue con Yndio Lorenzo y Manuel Bacanea, y María Manuela Bella Yaqui; a quien avver.do el parecier de Espiritual que contraen con la Cristiana, y su padre, y la obligación que tienen en enseñar a la doctrina católica, todo lo que más para ser buen Cristiano, y paz a que conserve.
LOOKING FOR ANCESTORS FROM SPAIN

Does “Español” mean they are from Spain? No, it means they are Spanish – or White. The husband shown below is from Spain:

Originario de los Reinos de Castilla en la Provincia de Guipúzcoa, de la Feligresía de la Villa de Dova, Obispado de Pamplona
DRSW: FOR NUEVA VIZCAYA RECORDS

The "Documentary Relations of the Southwest"

http://uair.arizona.edu/item/79579

You have two options:

1. **BIOFILE:** *Biofile Southwest* is a biographical listing of nearly 20,000 persons living in the greater Southwest and northern “New Spain” in centuries past.

2. **MASTER INDEX:** A computerized guide to several collections of Spanish colonial documents.
Biofile Southwest is a biographical listing of 19,684 persons living in the greater Southwest and northern “New Spain” in centuries past. Each entry is assumed to be a discrete person who is assigned a Biographical Identification Number (BID).
PORRAS, JUAN BAUTISTA DE

BID Number: 4362

Birth: N.D.: SEVILLA, ESPANA

Death: 1667 Nov 15: PARRAL

Ethnicity: ESPANOL

Family: PORRAS, ALVARO DE (F)
        GUTIERREZ, LUISA DE (M)
        PORRAS, MAGDALENA DE (DA)
        FUENTE, MARTIN DE LA (SNL) (HUSBAND OF PORRAS, MAGDALENA DE)

Marriage: N.D.: N.P./HURTADO DE RIVERA, JUANA

Occupation: 1667: PARRAL/MERCHANT, VECINO
            1661 Oct 20: SANTA BARBARA/MINER
            1666 Feb 21: PARRAL/MILITIA (LISTED AS "MAS DE 60 ANOS")

Source: PRIMARY SOURCE, SIGNATURE, WILL AND TESTAMENT

Sources: AZU, FILM 318, PARRAL 1667 A, FR. 588-591

Rights: To request a full text document please contact the original or first location repository; if a citation reads "AZU Film" please submit the citation to Askddt@u.library.arizona.edu or phone 520-621-6438.
PORTILLO, MIGUEL

BID Number: 16100

Birth: 1771: CIENEGA DE LOS OLIVAS (CHIHUAHUA)

Notes: TWENTY-THREE YEARS, TWO MONTHS AND SEVEN DAYS OF MILITARY SERVICE IN FIRST AND THIRD FLYING COMPANIES AND IN THE PRESIDIAL COMPANY OF SANTA FE. PARTICIPATED IN THREE CAMPAIGNS AND VARIOUS SALLIES RESULTING IN DEATHS OF TWENTY-NINE INDIANS OF BOTH SEXES AND RECOVERING ONE-HUNDRED-THIRTY MOUNTS.

Occupation: 1812 Dec 31: SANTA FE (PRESIDIO)/DON, (SECOND) ALFEREZ

1788 Oct 24: N.P./SOLDADO

1797 Nov 10: N.P./RIFLEMAN (CARABINERO)

1798 Jun 01: N.P./CABO

1800 Jan 01: N.P./SARGENTO

1809 Jan 26: N.P./ALFEREZ

Source: PRIMARY SOURCE

Sources: AZU FILM 2182, SANM REEL 17, FR. 0339, 0647.
MADRIGAL, MARIA PETRA

**BID Number:** 4895

**Birth:** 1761: CHIHUAHUA

**Ethnicity:** CRIOLLA

**Family:**
- SOLTERO, JUAN JERTRUDIS (DA) (AGE 15)
- SOLTERO, MARIA FRANCISCA (DA) (13)
- SOLTERO, JOSEPH (SN) (11) (SERVANT)
- SOLTERO, ANTTONIO (SN) (AGE 9)
- SOLTERO, GERONIMA (DA) (AGE 7)
- SOLTERO, JOSEPH DE JESUS (SN) (AGE 5)
- SOLTERO, JOSEPH FRANCISCO (SN) (AGE 3)

**Marriage:** N.D.: N.P./WIDOW

**Notes:** ALL MESTIZOS, SINGLE, NATIVES OF PARRAL

**Occupation:** 1788: PARRAL, SANTA ROSA (RANCH)/NONE

**Source:** PRIMARY SOURCE

**Sources:** AZU, AHP, FILM 318, PARRAL 1788 A, FR. 156-167
Searchable Spanish Mission Records (Arizona, Sonora):
http://home.nps.gov/applications/tuma/search.cfm

**Personal Information**

**Surname:** Martinez  
**Given Name:** Josefa  
**Place of Birth:** San Xavier del Bac  
**Date of Birth:** 08/15/1815  
**Sex:** F  
**Place of Death:** San Xavier del Bac  
**Date of Death:** 08/15/1815  
**Race or Tribe:** Papago  
**Residence:** Tumacácori  
**Burial Place:** San Xavier del Bac  
**Cause of Death:**  
**Order:**  
**Title:** Mujer de Juan Ignacio Zuñiga  
**Translation:** (Spanish - son of Martin)

**Notes:** She received catechism and baptism prior to her marriage to Juan Ignacio Zuñiga. After receiving the necessary Christian education, she was baptized at the age of 40 years old. The date of her death is not identified in her burial record.

**Event Relationship [4 Records]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event ID</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Event Date</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4609</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>06/01/1803</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4971</td>
<td>Baptized</td>
<td>05/28/1803</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ONLINE RESOURCES

Huntingon Library Early California Population Project:
http://www.huntington.org/information/ECPPlogin.htm

Mexican Search Databases:
http://mexicangenealogy.info/8-websites-where-you-can-find-your-mexican-ancestors/

Nuestros Ranchos: Zacatecas, Jalisco, Aguascalientes Message Board:
http://www.nuestrosranchos.com/
ONLINE RESOURCES

Los Bexarenos Genealogical Society presents “A Guide to Beginning Hispanic Genealogy” (by Jesse Rodriguez) at:

http://www.losbexarenos.org/Guide.pdf

Los Bexarenos Publications:

http://www.losbexarenos.org/publications.htm

John Schmal Genealogical Guides and Historical Information:

http://www.somosprimos.com/schmal/schmal.htm
http://www.houstonculture.org/mexico/states.html

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ASSISTANCE IN TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION

Consult the online “Spanish Records Extraction Manual,” (126 pages), available at:

REFERENCES


Familysearch.org

Documentary Relations of the Southwest

Mission 2000 Database