

A Brief History of Wales for the Genealogist

Early Welsh History

- (1000 BC) Hill forts built during Iron Age
- (500 - 100 BC) Celts settle in Wales
- (43 AD) Romans invade Britain
- (78 AD) Romans conquer Wales
- (100 AD) Irish raiders settle southwestern Wales
- (500) Saxons invade Wales
- (516) Battle of Mount Badon stops the aggressive expansion of the Saxons
- (784) Saxon King of Mercia, builds Offa's Dyke as a boundary between England & Wales
- (1040) First Prince of Wales, Gruffydd ap Llywelyn, secures borders
- (1063) English invade; Gruffydd ap Llywelyn killed
- (1066) Normans invade; English King Harold killed; Marcher Lordships on Wales' borders
- (1215) Magna Carta signed
- (1276 - 1277) First Welsh independence war
- (1277) Treaty of Aberconwy signed, ends war; Edward I begins building castles
- (1282 - 1283) Second Welsh independence war
- (1284) Statute of Rhuddlan ends war; Wales now part of England; new counties created
- (1301) King Edward I bestows title "Prince of Wales" upon son, Edward II
- (1349) Black Death sweeps across country, 40% of population died
- (1400 - 1410) Third war of independence led by Owain Glyndwr against England
- (1402) Laws prohibit Welsh from gathering, holding office, carrying arms & living in forts
- (1410) King Henry IV suppresses Welsh rebellion; long war against England ends
- (1455) War of Roses begins in England
- (1485) War of Roses ends; Henry Tudor (Henry VII) is first Welsh King of England
- (1536) Henry VIII enacts Act of Union; begins dissolution of monasteries
- (1563) Bible published in Welsh language

17th -21st Centuries

- (1642) Civil War breaks out in England
- (1644) Battle of Montgomery: first battle during Civil War in Wales
- (1651) Battle of Worcester ends Civil War; Charles I executed; Charles II exiled
- (1750) Industrial Age begins; Wales is largest producer of iron & copper in the world
- (1800) First of great Welsh canals built
- (1811) Wales becomes non-conformist nation, breaks with the Church of England
- (1850's) Coal fields in South Wales developed
- (1867) Great Reform Act gives vote to male householders; Welsh Liberal Party formed
- (1900 - 03) Strike at Penrhyn Slate Quarry longest labor dispute in history; 3000 walk out
- (1916) Lloyd George first Welshman to become British prime minister
- (1925) National Party (Plaid Cymru) promotes Welsh language & political independence
- (1955) Cardiff becomes capital of Wales
- (1984) Year-long miner's strike virtually ends coal industry in the country
- (1997) 1997 Referendum passes, gives Wales assembly in government
- (1999) British P.M. opens Welsh national assembly (1st self government in over 600 yrs)
- (2011) Prince William of Wales marries Catherine Middleton

Source: <http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/europe/wales/ukwtimeIn.htm>

Welsh Genealogical Resources

To begin your search, talk to family members to find out where/when your family lived in Wales and where/when they immigrated to America. Obtain the first name, surname and date of birth, death or marriage of one of your Welsh-born ancestors. Then, go to U.S. sources -- censuses, passenger lists, naturalization records, obituaries and Bible records and work your way back.

Join a local genealogical society and attend programs and workshops on a variety of topics of interest to the family historian. Many societies host a genealogical/historical library staffed by experienced volunteers.

Available Records for English and Welsh Genealogical Research

CIVIL REGISTRATIONS: Civil registration begins in England and Wales 1837 to present.

CHURCH PARISH RECORDS: Selected Parish Registers 16th to 19th centuries. Ancestry.com

CENSUSES: Every 10 years since 1801 (except 1941). Years 1841-1911 available plus 1939 WW2 National Registration. 1811-1831 censuses no longer exist, with a few exceptions

- **General Register Office (GRO)** – <http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/> - part of Her Majesty's Passport Office, maintains the national archive of all births, marriages and deaths dating back to 1837.
- **Ancestry.com** England & Wales, Free BMD Indexes 1837-1915. Birth (1916-2005), Marriage (1916-12005) and Death (1916-2007) Indexes, including Parish. Christening Records 1530-1940. Non-Conformist and Non-Parochial Registers, 1567-1970. Quaker BMD Registers 1578-1837. National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966

Other Resources for Welsh Genealogical Research

- **Archives.com** Welsh Genealogy (Where to start, Tracing Welsh Ancestry, Welsh Genealogy Records) <http://www.archives.com/genealogy/family-heritage-welsh.html>
- **Family Search** - Wales - http://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Wales_Genealogy
- **Genuki** – UK & Ireland Genealogy (**Wales**): <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/wal/> Information and links related to a wide variety of topics and places in all of Wales
- **Beginning Genealogical Research for Wales** <http://www.welshgenealogy.net/welshmis.htm>
- **The National Gazetteer of Wales** <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/geogdata/ngw/home.htm>
- **Welsh Family Crest & Name History** www.houseofnames.com/welsh-family-crest
- **Association of Family History Societies of Wales** <http://www.fhswales.org.uk>
- **Welsh-American Genealogical Society** <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~vtwags/>
- **Welsh Genealogy Net** <http://www.welshgenealogy.net/>