

County Office of Vital Statistics

(Room 20 – Basement – Civic Center)

P Vital Records (1873 to present):

- City of Syracuse & Onondaga County BIRTHS
- City of Syracuse & Onondaga County DEATHS
- City of Syracuse (only) Marriages (1873 – 1907)
(After 1907, obtain from Village, Town or City Clerk where the original Marriage Certificate was issued.)



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Let's go next door -- to the
Surrogate's Court.

Surrogate's Court Records

Courthouse – Second Floor

- P Probates of Decedents' Estates
 - Letters of Administration (no Will – “Intestate”)
 - Letters Testamentary (Will probated)

 - Guardianships
- P Estate Tax Proceedings
- P Accountings

“Intestate Succession”

Where your property goes, if you die without a Will:

- P Married, no kids – all to spouse.
- P Married, one child – About half each.
- P Married, 2+ children – Spouse about 1/3; balance is distributed equally among living children (through a Guardian, if needed, which may be the surviving spouse).
- P No spouse or kids – goes to parents, if alive; then to your siblings, and their children (your nieces and nephews), and their children.

Surrogate's Court Records
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Probates of Decedents' Estates

Letters of Administration (no Will)
Letters Testamentary (Will
probated)

Guardianships

Estate Tax Proceedings /
Accountings (often very interesting!)

~~~~~ ALL start with a **Petition**

-- Look for it!

- Full Name, date and place of death and residence (if different)
- Sometimes a full family-tree, but at least a listing of the heirs then living, often with their addresses at that time.
- A general listing of the real estate and personal property owned at the time of death.
- Possible information about decedent's business affairs and interests.
- - - (Follow the Money-Trail....)

Intestate Succession:

Where your property goes, if you die without a Will.

Look at who survives as heirs of the Decedent:

Married, no kids – all to spouse.

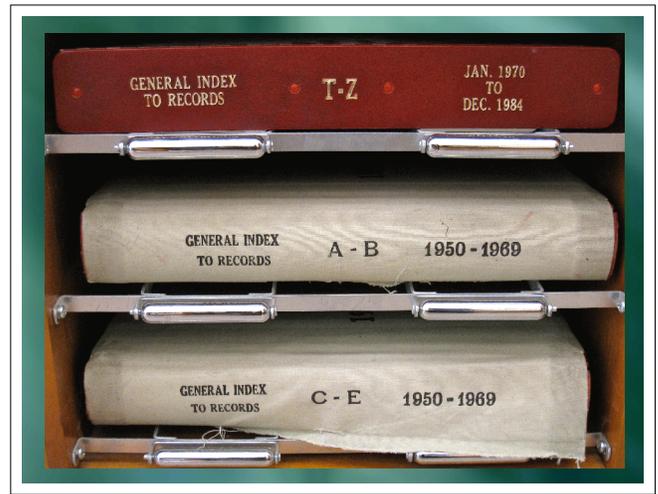
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There are lots and lots of Wills on file here!



The Surrogate's records are accessed in almost exactly the same way as those in the County Clerk's Office.



134 GENERAL INDEX TO RECORDS, COMMENCING JANUARY 1, 1802

| AB<br>CDE | FGH<br>IJK | KL<br>MNO | PQR<br>ST | UVW<br>XYZ | SURNAME | Letters<br>Book | With<br>Recorded<br>Book | Letters<br>Book | Letters<br>Book | Letters<br>Book | Letters<br>Book |
|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|---------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|           |            |           |           | Samuel     | Clark   | 1824            | D                        | E1              | D               | 91              |                 |
|           |            |           |           |            | Clark   |                 | D                        | 191             |                 |                 |                 |
|           |            |           |           |            | Clark   | 1831            | E                        | 160             | AA              | 93              |                 |
|           |            |           |           |            | Clapp   | 1837            | F                        | 321             | AA              | 374             |                 |
|           |            |           |           | William A. | Clark   | 1838            | F                        | 374             | AA              | 388             |                 |
|           |            |           |           | George S.  | Clark   | 1846            | H                        | 414             | OC              | 54              |                 |
|           |            |           |           | Norman     | Clark   |                 | H                        | 420             |                 |                 |                 |
|           |            |           |           | Levi       | Clark   | 1847            | H                        | 455             | OC              | 66              |                 |
|           |            |           |           | Lucy       | Clark   | 1850            | I                        | 291             | DD              | 64              |                 |
|           |            |           |           | Estacy     | Clark   |                 | I                        | 438             |                 |                 |                 |
|           |            |           |           | George     | Clark   | 1853            | J                        | 205             | A               | 78              |                 |
|           |            |           |           | Chester    | Clapp   | 1854            | J                        | 230             | A               | 85              |                 |
|           |            |           |           |            | Clapp   | 1855            | J                        | 434             | A               | 152             |                 |
|           |            |           |           | William    | Clark   | 1863            | H                        | 56              | C               | 239             |                 |
|           |            |           |           | Sarah      | Clapp   | 1864            | I                        | 333             | C               | 407             |                 |

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INVENTORY OF THE ESTATE OF BENJAMIN CLARK DECEASED

MISCELLANEOUS ORDERS AND DECREES INCLUDING FIDUCIARY SETTLEMENT

| DATE          | FILED | BOOK | PAGE  | BOOK | PAGE | BOOK | PAGE | BOOK | PAGE | BOOK | PAGE |
|---------------|-------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Mar. 3 1832   |       | 3A   | 252   | 3A   | 253  | 3A   | 266  | 3A   | 267  | 3A   | 236  |
| June 13 1838  |       | A    | 66    | BB   | 208  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Aug. 18 1846  |       | A    | 271   | BB   | 332  | BB   | 348  |      |      |      |      |
|               |       |      |       | EB   | 335  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|               |       | A    | 286   | BB   | 345  | BB   | 369  | C    | 460  |      |      |
|               |       | B    | 3     | BB   | 436  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Sept. 22 1851 |       | B    | 44    | C    | 52   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|               |       |      |       | C    | 177  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| May 11 1854   |       |      |       | C    | 187  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Dec. 4 1855   |       | B    | 171   | C    | 309  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| May 11 1863   |       | BB   | C 107 | D    | 103  | D    | 545  | E    | 293  | E    | 68   |
| Sept. 26 1864 |       | C    | 170   | DD   | 161  | DD   | 197  | DD   | 214  | B    | 57   |
|               |       |      |       | B    | 114  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|               |       | D    | 37    | B    | 392  |      |      |      |      |      |      |

Let's look for our ancestor, "Benjamin CLARK."

Note that Letters were issued in 1831.  
- Deed recorded in Book E, at Page 160.

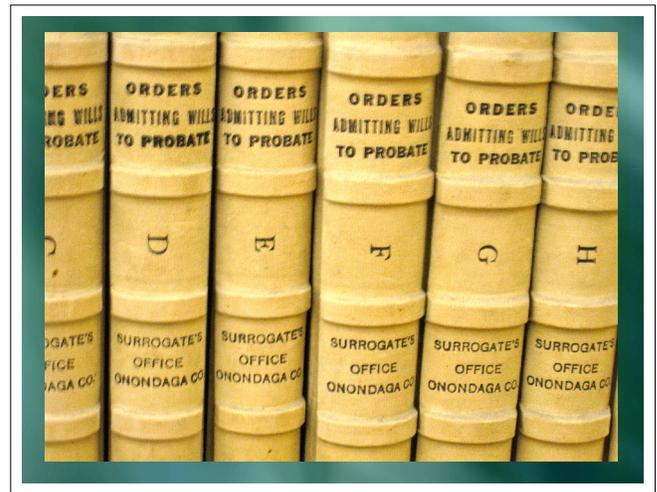
Letters are recorded in Book AA, page 93.

- also note the darkish line, which goes to the next page... (next slide)

Wow -- More information.

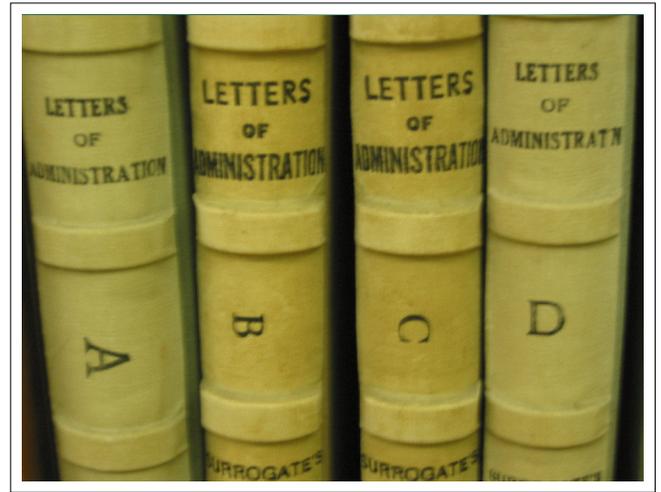
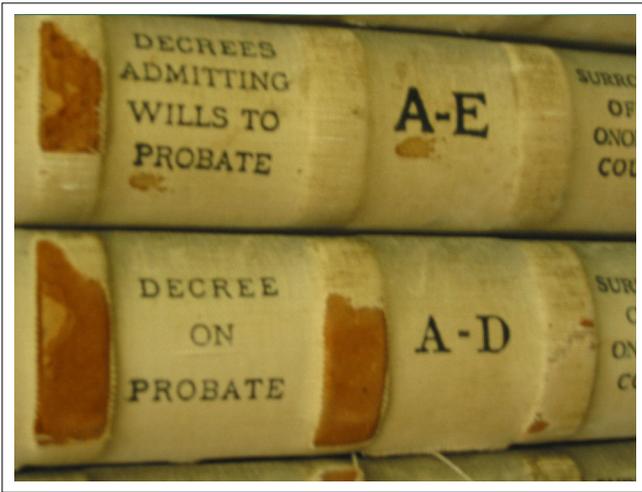
- Inventory of the Estate was filed.  
- Many other documents were also filed, mostly in Book 3A-- worth checking.

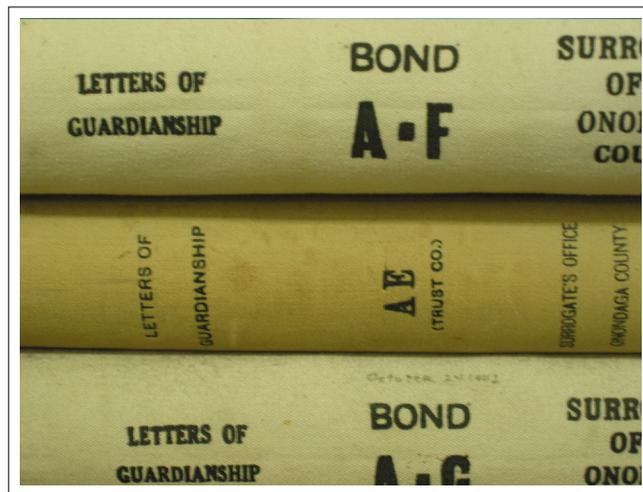
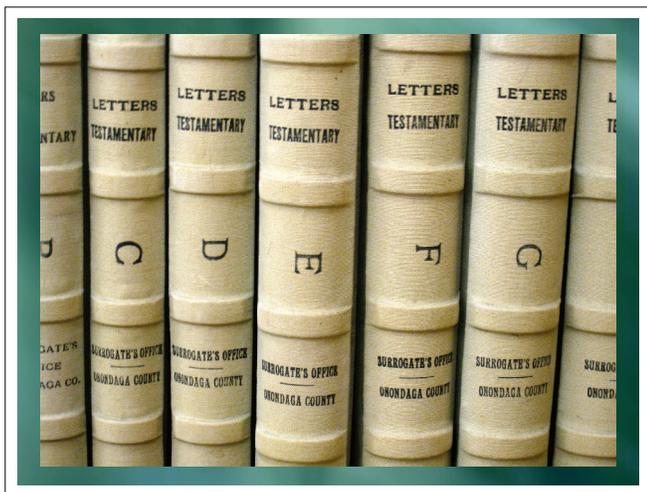
- It may mean that the Heirs had a fight over distribution, or something else which required the Court's attention to resolve.



An "Administration" of an Estate is done where there is no Will.

- The Heirs would file a Petition to have someone appointed to handle the affairs of the decedent, and distribute the property to the heirs in the proper proportions.





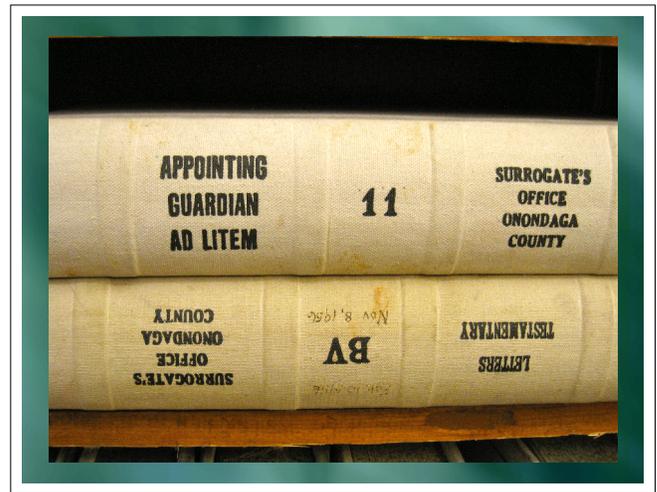
### "Letters of Guardianship"

- Many orphans, unfortunately, in the 1800s.
- Bonds were often required to ensure that minors actually had some property to receive once they turned 21 years old....



"Index of Taxable Transfers of Property". . . .

"We're from the Government, and we're here to help you...."



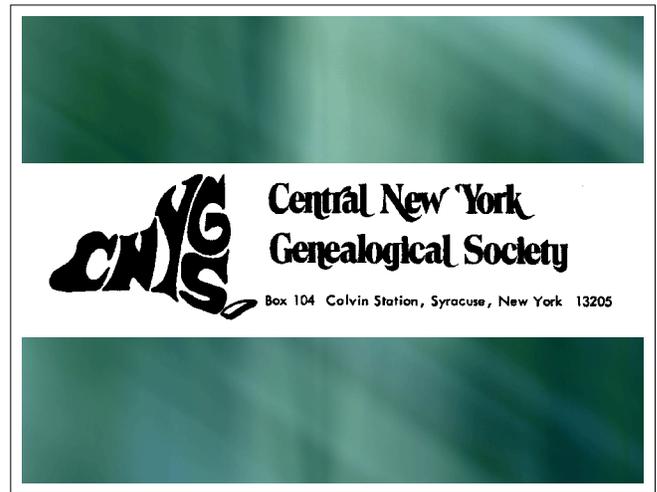
Orders of the Surrogate Judge, which appoint someone to be the Guardian ad Litem of a child, usually, during the proceeding.

## Why Surrogate records can be important:

**Joshua Williams of Verona - Will -**

dated 8 Dec 1834, probated 28 Sep 1835,  
mentions:

- Sons: Harrison, William, David, Francis,  
Clark, Alfred, and Edwin;
- Daughters: Esther, Susan, and Margaret;
- Executor: his wife, Sarah.



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What a treasure -- from the early  
1800s!

Thank you!