

Searching Reclaim The Records for Maryland Vital Records

The organization Reclaim The Records (RTR) has acquired all available Maryland vital records and indexes from the Maryland State Archives (MSA) and posted the images on the Internet Archive (IA) website. The RTR site provides tables with links that take you to the correct web pages containing films with images of the indexes and certificates. The following link to the RTR Maryland page gives a very detailed description of the records they obtained. You should read this description first to understand what is available and how to search for a record.

<https://www.reclaimtherecords.org/records-request/31/>

Near the bottom of the page, you will find several tables. You can use these tables to link directly to the appropriate collection descriptions on the MSA site and to the images on the IA site. Some of the indexes and images are also available on the MSA site, but you will find the viewer on the IA site easier to use. However, the MSA site will be used to identify which film number (or file) to look at and the IA site will be used to view the images on the specific film

The first table, **Vital Records & Naturalizations – Basic Indices**, contains links to the available indexes, separated by birth, marriage, death, and naturalizations. Note that there are separate sets of records for Baltimore City and the Maryland counties. The links listed under the **Series** column will take you to the MSA site where you will find the series descriptions and list of records. Immediately underneath the title (such as **Birth Indices**) are links to the IA version of the specific index files for Baltimore and the Maryland counties. These will be used once you know the film number you need to use.

VITAL RECORDS & NATURALIZATIONS – BASIC INDICES				
JURISDICTION	TYPE	YEARS	SERIES	FORMAT
BIRTH INDICES				
 BALTIMORE BIRTH INDEX* & MARYLAND STATEWIDE BIRTH INDEX				
Baltimore City	Births	1875-1941	CM-1134	PDF
* There is no Baltimore-specific birth index for 1942-1949 at the Maryland State Archives.				
Baltimore City	Births	1950-1972	T-1344	PDF
Maryland	Births	1898-1909	SM-199	PDF
Maryland	Births	1910-1951	SM-27	PDF
MARRIAGE INDICES				
BALTIMORE MARRIAGE INDEX* & MARYLAND STATEWIDE MARRIAGE INDEX**				

Figure 1 - Indices Table (note that this is not the complete table)

The second table, Vital Records – Certificates, contains links to the available certificates, separated by birth, marriage, death, and naturalizations. Note that there are separate sets of records for Baltimore City and the Maryland counties. The links listed under the **Series** column will take you to the MSA site where you will find the series descriptions and list of records. Immediately underneath the title (such as **Birth Certificates**) are links to the IA version of the specific certificate files for Baltimore and the Maryland counties. These will be used once you know the film number you need to use.

VITAL RECORDS – CERTIFICATES				
JURISDICTION	TYPE	YEARS	SERIES	FORMAT
BIRTH CERTIFICATES				
 BALTIMORE BIRTH CERTIFICATES & MARYLAND STATEWIDE BIRTH CERTIFICATES				
Baltimore City	Births	1875-[1922]	CM-1135	PDF
Maryland	Births	1898-1910	S-1963	PDF
Maryland	Births	1910-1913	S-1988	PDF
Maryland	Births	1914-[1922]	SM-35	PDF
<i>Maryland birth records are restricted for one hundred years, so more data should become available from the Archives through future Public Information Act requests.</i>				
MARRIAGE CERTIFICATES				
BALTIMORE MARRIAGE CERTIFICATES* & MARYLAND STATEWIDE MARRIAGE CERTIFICATES**				

Figure 2 - Certificates Table (note that this is not the complete table)

The easiest way to explain the process of searching for a certificate is to demonstrate by example. The following three examples will show you how to search for a birth, marriage, and death certificate using the Reclaim the Records tables.

First example – Baltimore city birth certificates

We will search for the birth certificate of Martin Greiner, born in Baltimore in 1917.

Step 1

From the **Vital Records & Naturalizations – Basic Indices** table on the RTR site, under **Birth Indices**, note the row for “*Baltimore City, Births, 1875-1941*” and click on the **CM-1134** link, which will take you to the MSA site describing that series. Scroll down that page to find the year 1917 and note in the rightmost column the citation **CM1134-35**. This indicates that the index for 1917 is on film 35. Note that you can also filter these pages by date by selecting Date for the

column and entering 1917 in the criteria box. Then click on the filter button. Only those items that pertain to that year will be shown.

VITAL RECORDS & NATURALIZATIONS – BASIC INDICES				
JURISDICTION	TYPE	YEARS	SERIES	FORMAT
BIRTH INDICES				
BALTIMORE BIRTH INDEX* & MARYLAND STATEWIDE BIRTH INDEX				
Baltimore City	Births	1875-1941	CM-1134	PDF
* There is no Baltimore-specific birth index for 1942-1949 at the Maryland State Archives.				
Baltimore City	Births	1950-1972	T-1344	PDF
Maryland	Births	1898-1909	SM-199	PDF
Maryland	Births	1910-1951	SM-27	PDF

Figure 3 - Search for birth index

Step 2

Now return to the RTR page and click on **Baltimore Birth Index** under the title **Birth Indices**. That will take you to the IA page with the index record files. Search the thumbnails to find CM1134, roll number 35. It is the one titled “*Baltimore City Birth Index 1914-1922 MSA CM1134 31-40.*” Note that the titles can contain multiple ranges of numbers. Click on the thumbnail to view the images. Next you must select the correct film in the left pane. It is the one with the file name that ends with “00035.pdf”. Click on that link to view the correct film.



Figure 5 - Sample thumbnail

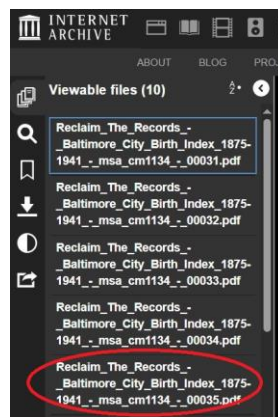


Figure 4 - Sample left panel

Image 5 of this film is the beginning of the alphabetical list for 1917. Note that the surnames are not in strict alphabetical order. The list begins with surnames that start with the letter 'A' and whose next vowel is the letter 'a'. Following that are names with the first vowel 'e', then 'i', 'o', and finally 'u'. Then surnames starting with 'B' are listed in the same order, and so forth. Note also that this index only gives the names of the parents, the date of birth, and the certificate number.

You can also do a text search of this document¹. Click on the magnifying glass icon in the left margin and enter the surname 'Greiner'. The left pane will show one result on image 31. Clicking on that result will take you to that image. In this case Martin and Augusta Greiner had a child born on December 19, 1917. The certificate number was 51082. Make note of that information.

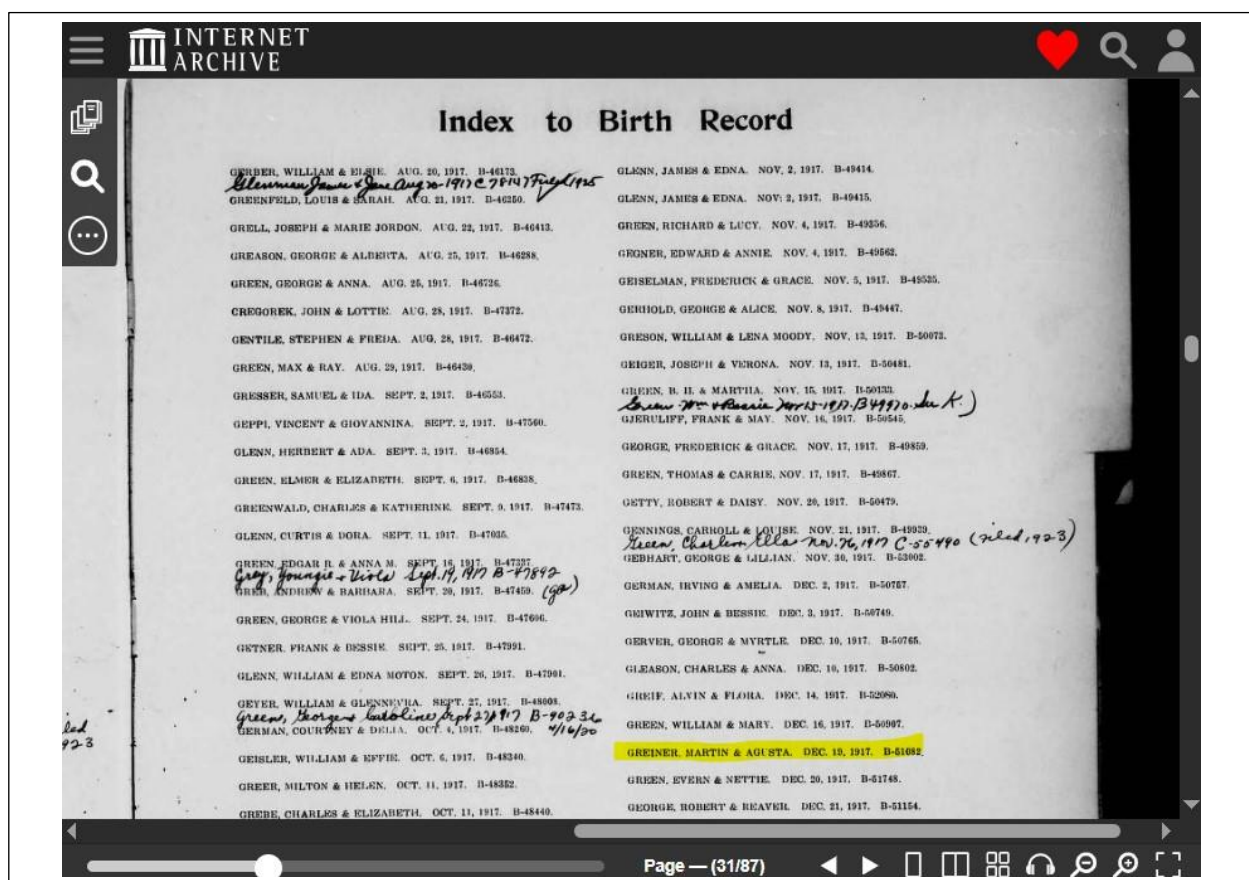


Figure 6 - Internet Archive image viewer

The image viewer has several features that enhance your viewing ability. At the bottom of the screen is a left and right arrow to flip a page at a time. You can also use either the horizontal or vertical slider to move to a specific page. You can select a single, double, or thumbnail view.

¹ Not all index files are text searchable.

There are buttons to zoom in and out and a full screen toggle, which removes some of the header information.

In the left margin are buttons to download a PDF copy of the film, search the text in a record, bookmark a record, adjust the visual aspects, and share the image via social media. Note that not all of the films are text searchable.

VITAL RECORDS – CERTIFICATES				
JURISDICTION	TYPE	YEARS	SERIES	FORMAT
BIRTH CERTIFICATES				
BALTIMORE BIRTH CERTIFICATES & MARYLAND STATEWIDE BIRTH CERTIFICATES				
Baltimore City	Births	1875-[1922]	 CM-1135	PDF
Maryland	Births	1898-1910	S-1963	PDF
Maryland	Births	1910-1913	S-1988	PDF
Maryland	Births	1914-[1922]	SM-35	PDF
Maryland birth records are restricted for one hundred years, so more data should become available from the Archives through future Public Information Act requests.				

Figure 7 - Search for birth certificate

Step 3

Now return to the RTR site and scroll down to the **Vital Records – Certificates** table. Find the row for Baltimore City and the years 1875-1922, then click on the link **CM-1135** to go to the MSA record series description for Baltimore City birth indexes. Again, you need to page through the descriptions to find the month, year, and certificate number of interest. Note that there can be several pages of these descriptive entries. You can filter by year to see the entries for just that year. The one we need in this case is on the second page. Based on the date of December 1917, it could be on either of two rolls - CR 47493 or CR 47494. However, note that based on the certificate number, it will be found near the beginning of roll 47494. Look for the citation number **CM1135-120** for that roll in the rightmost column. The certificate will be on film 120.

Step 4

Return to the certificates table on the RTR site. This time click on **Baltimore Birth Certificates** under the title. There are only three thumbnails on the next page. Since we want roll 120, click on the third thumbnail titled “*Baltimore Maryland Birth Certificates 1914-1922 CM1135 101-150.*” Next you must scroll down in the left pane to find the file with a name ending “CM1135-120.pdf”. Click on that link to view the desired film.

The first image of a certificate is numbered 51006. The certificate images are not searchable. You need to navigate through the pages until you find certificate number 51082. It is on image 80. At this point you can resize the image to fill the screen. You can right click (or Control-click on a Mac) on the image and save it as a JPEG image. It appears that the download function in the left panel will actually download the entire film to a PDF file. You can try that, but it could take many minutes to download a very large file. You can also share a link to the image through email and social media.

Second example – Maryland statewide death certificates

DEATH INDICES				
<u>BALTIMORE DEATH INDEX & MARYLAND STATEWIDE DEATH INDEX*</u>				
Baltimore City	Deaths	1875-1972	CE-42	PDF
Baltimore City	Deaths	1875-1880, 1943-1949	S-1483	Text
Maryland	Deaths	1898-1944	SE-58	PDF
Maryland	Deaths	1945-1968	SE-8	PDF
* There is no Maryland (excluding Baltimore City) death index for 1969-1972 at the Archives. However, statewide death certificates are available for those years, so the certificates can be viewed individually, or refer to the Baltimore County Genealogical Society's death index.				
Statewide	Deaths	1973-2014	SE-151	PDF
Statewide	Deaths	1973-2014	SE-151	Text

Figure 8 – Search for death index

We will search for the death certificate of John W. Hobbs, who died in Maryland in 1916.

Step 1

From the **Vital Records & Naturalizations – Basic Indices** table, under **Death Indices**, note the row for *Maryland, Deaths, 1898-1944* and click on the **SE-58** link. This will take you to the MSA site that describes the death index series. Scroll down that page to find the year range that coincides with the date we are searching. In this case it would be 1914-1923 and the letter H, the first letter of the decedent's surname. Note the citation **SE58-62** in the rightmost column. The index for the letter 'H' is on film 62.

Step 2

Normally you would now return to the RTR site and click on Maryland Statewide Death Index to find that roll in their set of records. However, it appears that they only have rolls 1-20 on their

site at this time. Instead, we can use the index available on the MSA site. Click on the highlighted ‘Details’ on the row we just found, then either select ‘**Scanned**’ or ‘**View as Multipage PDF**’. The PDF file may be easier to navigate, but those files can be quite large.

In either case, the file will be arranged in alphabetical order, so you just need to scan through the file until you find the surname Hobbs, then look for John W. In the PDF version he is found on image 6406. On the scanned version it is image 6480. Note that his date of death was 17 March 1916 and he died in Carroll County. He was white and died at age 78.

Step 3

Now return to the RTR site and scroll down to the **Vital Records – Certificates** table. Under **Death Certificates** find the row for Maryland (not Baltimore City) that includes the date we are searching for. In this case it would be “*Maryland, Deaths, 1910-1951.*” Click on the link for **SE-43** to view the MSA citations for this series. Note that this series has many pages. You can use the filter to enter the year of interest. Otherwise, you must scroll through the pages to find the correct date and county – March 1916 in Carroll County. The entry is on page 17, where we find Carroll County, 03/1916. Note the roll number in the rightmost field. It is SE43-1616.

DEATH CERTIFICATES				
BALTIMORE DEATH CERTIFICATES & MARYLAND STATEWIDE DEATH CERTIFICATES				
Baltimore City	Deaths	1875-1949	CM-1132	PDF
Baltimore City	Deaths	1950-1972	CE-502	PDF
Maryland	Deaths	1898-1910	SE-42	PDF
Maryland	Deaths	1910-1951	 SE-43	PDF
Maryland	Deaths	1951-1969	SE-44	PDF
Maryland	Deaths	1969-1972	SE-45	PDF
Statewide	Deaths	1973-[2012]	SE-46	PDF

Maryland death records are restricted for ten years, so more data should become available from the Archives through future Public Information Act requests.

Figure 9 – Search for death certificate

Step 4

Return to the RTR site and click on **Maryland Statewide Death Certificates** at the top of the **Death Certificates** table. On the next page, search for the SE43 record set that contains roll

1616. The thumbnail is titled “*Maryland Death Certificates 1916-1918 MSA SE 43 1565-2394.*” Then click on that thumbnail to view the list of film rolls.

On the next page, scroll down in the left pane until you find the file name that ends with 01616.pdf. Click on that link to view the images on that roll. The certificates on the film are arranged consecutively by the certificate number stamped on the document. They are in some semblance of date order, but only as the certificates were received. Since the index did not provide a certificate number, you will have to scan the images one by one to find the person of interest. There are only 96 images on this film, so it is not a difficult task. Some films may have many more images.

John W. Hobbs is found on image 34. From his death certificate we find that he died at Springfield State Hospital, in Sykesville, Carroll County and was buried in Howard County. From other sources we know that he was born and lived in Howard County.

Third example – Maryland statewide marriage certificates

We will try to find the marriage record of Melvin M. Griner, who married somewhere in Maryland in 1926.

Step 1

From the **Vital Records & Naturalizations – Basic Indices** table, under **Marriage Indices**, note the row for *Statewide, Marriages, 1914-1930* and notice that there is no link to an MSA series description. It notes that the series SM-1498 has not yet been scanned. However, an RTR

MARRIAGE INDICES				
BALTIMORE MARRIAGE INDEX* & MARYLAND STATEWIDE MARRIAGE INDEX** ←				
* There was originally no Baltimore-specific marriage index for 1914-1940 at the Maryland State Archives, but luckily the Archives has recently completed an in-house indexing project for these years through FromThePage, making them text-searchable. Some independent organizations have also run their own indexing projects; for example, a Baltimore City marriage index for 1915-1919 is available for Maryland Genealogical Society members. ** A statewide Maryland marriage index exists for 1914-1930 (Archives series S-1498), but it is not (yet) scanned, and so it is not available here. UPDATE! The marriage index for 1914-1930 was digitized by researcher Greg Burton at the Archives several years ago, and he has now donated a copy of all the images to Reclaim The Records. While actual marriage certificates since 1941 are available at the Archives as a not-yet-scanned part of the statewide collection, unfortunately no index exists (yet) for the 1941 through June 1951 certificates.				
Statewide	Marriages	1914-1930 (NEW!)	SM-1498 Not yet scanned by MSA	PDF (Male) – Data scanned and donated to RTR by researcher Greg Burton
Statewide	Marriages	1951-1968	SM-223	PDF (Male)
Statewide	Marriages	1951-1968	SM-224	PDF (Female)
Statewide	Marriages	1969-1972	SM-225	PDF (Male)
Statewide	Marriages	1969-1972	SM-226	PDF (Female)
Statewide	Marriages	1973-1989	S-1851	PDF
Statewide	Marriages	1973-1988	SE-163	PDF Supplement
Statewide	Marriages	1990-2013	SE-144	PDF

Figure 10 - Search for marriage index

contributor has uploaded a male index of marriages for that time period. We will use that index to look up the person of interest.

Click on the **Maryland Statewide Marriage Index** link at the top of this section to view the RTR filmed index. Note the first thumbnail labeled “*Maryland Marriages Index 1914-1930 Male MSA S-1498*” and click on that. There are several separate films listed in the left-hand pane. They are organized by the Soundex code for surnames. You will first need to determine the Soundex code for the surname Griner². It is G656. Locate the film name containing that code (ends with G610-H300.pdf) and click on the link.

You must next look through this film to find names with the Soundex code G656. The pages are labeled with the Soundex number in the far-right margin of the page, and also with a handwritten number at the top of the page. The codes are in numeric order, so scan through the images until you find the pages for code G656. They begin on image 132. You must then scan the names on this and following pages to find Melvin Griner. Under each Soundex code section, the names are sorted alphabetically by the given name.

Near the top of a page within G656 you will find his entry. Melvin M. Griner, age 21, white, from New Jersey married Viola Hancock, age 19, from New Jersey on 28 June 1926 in Cecil County. That is the information necessary to search for their marriage certificate. There is no step 2 required for this example.

Step 3

Return to the RTR main page and scroll down to the Marriage Certificates table. Note the row containing “*Maryland, Marriages, 1914-1930*” and click on the link to **SM-184**. You would normally expect to search for the record that contains the Soundex code G656. It is the one titled “*G652 (M-X) - H163 (A-S)*.” In this case the number of interest will be the film reel, number SR 4485.

Unfortunately, this did not turn out as expected. When I returned to the RTR page to look at the film containing the marriage certificates, I discovered that they are sorted according to the bride’s Soundex code, not the groom’s. We need to find the Soundex code for Viola Hancock, which is H522. Now using the SM-184 series description, look for the film reel containing that code. It is number SR 4489.

Step 4

Return to the RTR page and click on the link to **Maryland Statewide Marriage Certificates** under the **Marriage Certificates** title. There are two thumbnails titled Maryland “*Marriage Certificates 1914-1930 SM184*”, each with a different range of microfilm numbers. We want the

² See this link for determining a Soundex value. <https://stevemorse.org/census/soundex.html>

first one, which contains film 4489. Click on the thumbnail to view the films. You must then select the file with the name ending in “*sr4489.pdf*” in the left pane and click to open it.

Each marriage certificate has the Soundex code for both the groom and bride printed at the top of the certificate. They are arranged alphanumerically by the bride’s code on the right side. Scroll through the film until you begin seeing the code H522. The first such certificate is on image 2139. From that point you must flip through the images one at a time to find the one of interest.

The marriage certificate for Melvin Griner and Viola Hancock is on image 2215. It tells us that they were both from Bridgeton, New Jersey. They were married on 28 June 1926 in Elkton, Maryland. It was the first marriage for both of them. Elkton was well-known at that time as a place for out-of-state couples to obtain a quick marriage without waiting.

MARRIAGE CERTIFICATES				
BALTIMORE MARRIAGE CERTIFICATES* & MARYLAND STATEWIDE MARRIAGE CERTIFICATES*				
Note that marriage records are generally organized by county , and then somewhat-chronologically within each county.				
* Baltimore City marriage certificates for September 1915 through May 1916 are missing from the Archives. Baltimore City marriage certificates from September 1922 through June 1924 exist at the Archives but were not yet scanned at the time we requested copies, and are not included here.				
Maryland	Marriages	1914-1930	SM-184	PDF
Maryland	Marriages	1930-1940	S-1951	PDF
Baltimore City	Marriages	1914-1940 (with gaps): – Sep 1915 to May 1916 not at Archives; – Sep 1922 to Jun 1924 at Archives but not all scanned yet	S-1738	PDF – Gap where Sep 1922 to Jun 1924 files were not yet provided
** The statewide marriage certificates for 1941-June 1951 do exist at the Archives as item S-1772, according to their finding aid, but they have not yet been scanned and so copies are not publicly available yet. Unfortunately, there is also no corresponding marriage index for these years.				
Statewide	Marriages	June 1951-2004 (1989-2004 only available on a per-image basis directly from the Archives; see below.)	S-1864	PDF – Duplicates part of SM-259. We used this series to obtain copies of marriage certificates for 1985-1988.
Statewide	Marriages	June 1951-2007 (1989-2004 only available on a per-image basis directly from the Archives; see below. 2005-2006 also at Archives, see below.)	SM-259	PDF – Our coverage of SM-259 stops in 1985, with some overlap between SM-259 and S-1864.
** Statewide marriage certificates for 1989-2004 are available to researchers directly from the Archives on a per-record basis, but they cannot be given out unless each record’s image first has any Social Security Numbers redacted by Archives staff. These records are legally possible to acquire in bulk, but the redaction work would be expensive, and we opted not to do so. Marriage certificates from 2005-2006 do not have this issue, but we did not receive copies of them from the Archives. They may be available to view digitally if within the Archives building.				
Statewide	Marriages	2007-2013	SE-154	PDF

Figure 11 - Search for marriage certificate

Hopefully these examples will help you to navigate the two websites – Reclaim The Records and the Maryland State Archives. Remember that each set of indexes and records has their own set of quirks. Please be sure to read all the details about each set to ensure that you understand how the records are arranged. Best of luck in your search!