

How Important are European Parish Registers



parish register

In Europe, families resided in the same neighborhood for generations and attended those parishes. These records are golden, because they list baptisms, marriages and mortuaries. The key is to identify everyone with a certain surname in the parish register.

Try and match a name with an old last will and testament. The quest here is to use family group sheets listing families to insure that the names are of the proper generation. Determine an average life-span of the family you are studying and use that as a guide. For example, a possible ancestor listed in the mortuary as having succumbed in 1540, could have been born as early as 1480, if other members of the family were averaging 80 years! Remember, the era of the black plague and certain illnesses which substantially shortened the life-span to about 30 years!

The UK Archives online provides a lot of data. Despite these suppositions, the genealogist should continue to search for more records. Virginia Immigrants Origins of Colonists