

FAQ

1. How can I start a genealogical search knowing only my family name?

In order to search the Civil Status records, it is necessary to know not only the year, but also the place of origin. In the absence of other clues, it is advisable to try to find out in which municipalities a particular surname is common, by browsing the name databases from the Civil Status registers that can be queried in the [Search by Name](#) section or by searching other databases, such as:

- [Mappadeicognomi](#);
- [Cognomix](#);
- [Contacognome](#) by Pagine bianche;
- [Family Search](#).

Only once you have identified the municipalities in which the surnames you are looking for appear, then you can query the Portal's database or write to the individual State Archives or even directly to the Civil Status Offices of the municipalities.

For further information and tips on how to carry out a genealogical search, please refer to the [Tools](#) section of the Portal.

2. From what year is it possible to consult Civil Status registers in Italy?

The Civil State was introduced in Italy from 1806, following the annexation of many regions to the French Empire and with the introduction of the Civil Code, and remained in force until 1815.

For the former Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, roughly corresponding to present-day Southern Italy, and for the Duchy of Modena and Reggio, the Civil State has been in existence since 1809. In Sicily, it was only introduced in 1820.

In the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, with the Restoration, a mixed system was implemented: with the *motu proprio* of 18 June 1817, the Office of the Civil Status was established, a central body dependent on the Secretariat of Royal Law with the task of coordinating and supervising the work of the parish priests and registrars in matters of Civil Status and the management of the relative documents in the territory of the entire Grand Duchy of Tuscany. The same thing happened in the Kingdom of Sardinia as of 1837 with the introduction of the 'Regulations for the keeping of registers to ascertain Civil Status' annexed to the patent letter of 20 June.

It is only from 1866 to the present that the Civil State source has continuity in all Italian regions and provinces.

Naturally, in the regions acquired to the Kingdom of Italy after Unification, the Civil Status series began after 1866: for Lazio and Rome from 1870, from 1871 in Veneto and Friuli (except the former Austrian area), in Trentino-Alto Adige from 1918, i.e. at the end of the First World War.

3. Who keeps the Civil Status records published in the Ancestors Portal?

The Ancestors Portal, promoted by the [Direzione Generale Archivi](#) (DGA) and managed by the [Istituto Centrale per gli Archivi](#) (ICAR), was created with the aim of making the enormous heritage of the Civil State funds, and not only, preserved in our State Archives usable on the web.

The Civil Status records digitised, thanks to an agreement signed in 2011 with Family Search, and published online do not generally belong to the historical archives of the municipalities but are, for the most part, the second copy of the registers sent by the municipalities themselves to the territorially competent court.

After the period stipulated by the rule, the Courts more or less regularly transfer the Civil Status registers to their respective State Archives along with their own documentation. Since 2001, the supervision of the Civil Status has been devolved to the Prefectures, and the original second copies of the registers have since then been transferred to them.

In the [Browse the Archives](#) section, it is possible to check the documentary holdings of the Civil Status fonds stored in the various state archives.

4. What can I do if in the Portal I find images of Civil Status registers for the municipality but not for the years that would be useful for my genealogical research?

In this case, the consistency of Civil Status records for those years in the relevant State Archives should be checked in the [Browse the Archives](#) section.

If the Institute keeps records for those years but is not yet listed in the [Search registries](#) section, it is likely that the records are being digitised or published.

If the State Archives do not keep records for those years, it is necessary to go directly to the historical archives of the municipality.

5. What should I do if I cannot find images of the Civil Status registers for the municipality in the Portal that would be useful for my genealogical research?

In this case, the presence of the documentation of the municipality in question and its correspondence with the relevant State Archives should be checked in the [Browse the Archives](#) section, also using the search engine by municipality.

If the Institute keeps the records for that municipality but is not yet listed in the [Search registries](#) section, it is likely that the registers are in the process of being digitised or published.

If the State Archives do not keep records for those years, it is necessary to go directly to the historical archives of the municipality.

6. What can I do if I find an inaccuracy in the database in [Search by Name](#)?

In this case, you can write to the [Editorial Office](#), which will check the report and amend the database accordingly.

7. What can I do if in [Search registries](#) find that a page of a register or an entire register is missing?

Not all the documentation kept in the State Archives has been preserved in complete series and there may be gaps that are almost always reported in the inventories.

In this case, if it is not explicitly stated in the introduction of the presentation of the images themselves, it is necessary to contact the State Archive that preserves the documentation directly, in order to verify it (you can find the contact details of the preserving institution in the [Browse the Archives](#) section).

8. How can I participate in the Ancestors project? How can I contribute to increasing the database in Search by Name in the Portal?

To take part in the project, all you need is a computer connected to the internet, a minimum of available time, and of course the desire to try your hand at reading documents from the past.

It will therefore be possible to choose any of the Italian projects on the [Family Search](#) website, some of which are promoted directly by the respective State Archives.

To start indexing, you need to register and open a [free account](#).

9. Is it possible to index the Civil Status registers of the municipality where I live?

It is necessary to check the [Family Search](#) site for the current presence of indexing projects related to the locations you indicate.

In this case, you can start indexing by clicking on 'Start indexing'.

You can contribute at any time, working remotely, with maximum flexibility and no time constraints.

To start indexing, you need to register and open a [free account](#).

10. How can I obtain a certified copy of the documentation published on the Portal?

In order to obtain an authentic copy of the documentation identified in the Portal, it is necessary to contact the State Archives that hold the documentation identified in the Portal: contact details can be found in the [Browse the Archives](#) section.

Certified copies, also called true copies of the original, are copies of deeds of which an authorised public official attests, under his own responsibility, that they conform to the original (see Art. 18 Presidential Decree 445/2000).

With regard to the tax aspects, it must be remembered that certified copies of administrative documents are subject to stamp duty, unless the use for which the copy is requested (and which must be made explicit by the user) is among those for which exemption is provided. The current text of the table in Annex B) to Presidential Decree No. 642 of 26 October 1972 indicates the uses for which stamp duty exemption is provided for.

11. What do I have to do to be able to publish an image of the documentation on the Portal?

In order to be able to publish an image of a document on the Portal, it is necessary to notify the State Archives that hold the identified documents.

On the official websites of the respective State Archives you will find specific indications on how to obtain authorization and how to make the communication.

12. Is it possible to share the story of one's genealogical research and family history by publishing it on the Portal?

If the Portal has been helpful in your genealogical research and has contributed to the retrieval of information about your relatives, you can tell the story of your ancestors and your personal research experience by enriching it with photos of your family, and you can see it published in a subsection of [Family Stories](#) in order to share it with other Portal users.