

Social Security Death Index

SSDI *

. . . a genealogical resource
for the later 20th century . . .

Genealogy Workshop, Macintosh
Osher LifeLong Learning Institute
University of Delaware

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*officially called the "SS Master File"

Social Security Death Index

- * Index to deceased holders of Social Security Numbers (SSN)
- * Technically: index of terminated Social Security benefit holders
- * = Index of no-longer-current SSNs and holders
- * A public record compiled by our federal government
- * Computerization begins with about 1961/2 records
- * Placed on-line by several entities starting in late 20th century.

What info is in SSDI?

Barebones, but can be very useful

- * Index itself can supply information unknown to you
- * SSD Index contents:
 - Birth date
 - Month and year of death
 - Name at death
 - Social Security number (useful to ask for more information)
 - State where SSN# was issued (youthful residence)
 - Last residence, as determined by zip code of residence or zip code where the death benefit was sent

Usefulness

- * Index can lead to information unknown to you
 - Use date and residence of death to seek death certificate, obit, cemetery record
 - Use birth date & state of issue to seek birth certificate, baptismal record, marriage and children information, etc.
- * If there is a case file associated with the SS recipient, it is destroyed five years after the last benefit is issued. This means that beyond the SS-7 application, the SS "index" does not lead to any further documentation that the genealogist can recover.

The Demise of the SSDI as a Genealogy Resource??

The screenshot shows an article on the About.com Genealogy page. The title is "Genealogy Sites Pressured Into Removing SSDI" by Kimberly Powell, dated December 16, 2011. The article text discusses how GenealogyBank removed social security numbers from their SSDI database in November 2011, and how Ancestry.com followed suit, removing the entire free SSDI database from RootsWeb.com. It mentions that Ancestry.com moved the SSDI database behind their membership wall "due to sensitivities around the information in this database," and that they are removing social security numbers from search results for individuals who have died in the last 10 years. The article also references a report from Scripps Howard News Service from October 2011.

<http://genealogy.about.com/b/2011/12/16/genealogy-sites-pressured-into-removing-ssdi.htm>

ROOTSWEB: SSDI withdrawn -- a sign of current concerns

The screenshot shows the RootsWeb website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Searches, Family Trees, Mailing Lists, Message Boards, Web Sites, and Passwords. Below the navigation bar, there is a message box that reads: "Due to sensitivities around the information in this database, the Social Security Death Index collection is not available on our free Rootsweb service but is accessible to search on Ancestry.com. Visit the Social Security Death Index page to be directly connected to this collection".

Read More

- * Eastman's Genealogy Newsletter by Dick Eastman
http://blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2008/04/using-the-social.html#more
- * Ancestry: below the SSDI search box "About Social Security Death Index"
- * Family Search (Mormons): Wiki page --
https://www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Main_Page
Search for "SSDI," choose "U.S. Social Security Records for Genealogists"
- * About.com -- older article, still useful: "Social Security Sleuthing"
<http://genealogy.about.com/library/authors/ucporter1a.htm>

TO DO!!

**If you have family who died 1961 or later
Who might be in the SSDI (i.e., received benefits)**

For whom you lack such info as

- SS#
- date of birth; residence in early life
- date of death; location of death

**You should find that person in the SSDI NOW.
Next week or next month might be too late.**

Ancestry.com Library Edition
has this database.

Where is the SSDI?

Offered **free** in numerous places

- Ancestry Library Edition: Ancestry.com
- <http://familysearch.org> From home page, [Browse](#) to United States records, [scroll](#) to United States Social Security Death Index
- Family Tree Legends (software co. website)
<http://www.familytreelegends.com/records/ssdi>
- GenealogyBank (pay); SSDI free, weekly update <http://www.genealogybank.com>
- American Ancestors = New England Historical and Genealogical Society - one of U.S. earliest, most significant genealogical societies
<http://americanancestors.org> -- **constantly updated**
- Now Removed & not available: [Rootsweb](#) refers you to Ancestry.com

✳ Some sites do not update SSDI more than every year or so

Typical Record Example



HOME | ABOUT US | SUBSCRIBE

[Back to Results](#) | [New Search](#)

(Result 1 of 1)

Maynard T. Doherty: Social Security Death Index (SSDI) Death Record

Name: Maynard T. Doherty
State of Issue: Illinois
Date of Birth: Tuesday July 20, 1909
Date of Death: May 1988
Est. Age at Death: 78 years, 9 months
Last known residence:
City: Park Ridge
County: Cook
State: Illinois
ZIP Code: 60068
Latitude: 42.0122
Longitude: -87.8435

Continue Discovering Your Family's Past

Use these links to continue exploring the **Doherty** family history:

- [Doherty family obituaries in Illinois](#)
- [Doherty family in Historical Newspapers](#)
- [Search all of GenealogyBank for the Doherty family](#)

from <http://genealogybank.com>

Search Charts a

Census & Voter Lists

Birth, Marriage & Death Page Tools

View printer-friendly

Request copy of original application

Click here for help generating a letter

from ancestry Library Edition

First & Middle Name(s) Last Name
Maynard Doherty

Restrict to exact Restrict to exact

View Record	Name	Birth Date	Death Date	Last Residence (City,County,State)
View Record	Maynard T. Doherty	20 Jul 1909	May 1988	Park Ridge, Cook, Illinois

Social Security Death Index about Maynard T. Doherty

Name: Maynard T. Doherty
SSN: 343-09-7787
Last Residence: 60068 Park Ridge, Cook, Illinois, United States of America
Born: 20 Jul 1909
Died: May 1988
State (Year) SSN issued: Illinois (Before 1951)

Source Citation: Number: 343-09-7787; Issue State: Illinois; Issue Date: Before 1951.

Source Information:
Ancestry.com. Social Security Death Index [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2011.
Original data: Social Security Administration. Social Security Death Index, Master File. Social Security Administration.

Description:
The Social Security Administration Death Master File contains information on millions of deceased individuals with United States social security numbers whose deaths were reported to the Social Security Administration. Birth years for the individuals listed range from 1875 to last year. Information in these records includes name, birth date, death date, and last known residence. [Learn more...](#)

Suggested Records

These records may also be relevant to **Maynard T. Doherty:**

- Maynard Doherty Cook County, Illinois Death Index, 1908-1988
- Maynard Thomas Doherty Cook County, Illinois, Birth Certificates Index, 1871-1922
- Maynard Doherty 1910 United States Federal Census
- Maynard Doherty 1920 United States Federal Census

from ancestry Library Edition

Social Security Administration
Office of Earnings Operations
FOIA Workgroup
300 N. Greene Street
P.O. Box 33022
Baltimore, Maryland 21290

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear Freedom of Information Officer,

I am writing this request under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. Section 552. I hereby request a copy of the SS-5, Application for Social Security Card, or a corresponding NUMIDENT printout (see below) for the following individual:

Doherty, Maynard
343-09-7787
Birth: 20 Jul 1909
Death: May 1988

This individual is deceased, having been listed in the Social Security Administration's Death Master File. I understand the fee for this service is \$27 for copy of original SS-5 application OR \$16 for copy of an abbreviated NUMIDENT printout when the Social Security Number is provided. I am requesting a (circle one: SS-5 copy OR Numident printout) Included is a check for \$_____ made out to the Social Security Administration to cover any administrative costs required by this request.

Please respond to my request upon receipt of this initial correspondence. Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Sincerely,

Family Tree Legends: <http://www.familytreelegends.com/records/ssdi>

AMERICANANCESTORS.ORG (New England Historical and Genealogical Society) (membership) --offers SSDI for free

Congressional Action May Shut Public Access to SSDI in Near Future

<http://www.legalgenealogist.com/blog/2012/02/16/ssdi-genealogys-public-enemy-no-1/>

Part 2 of Social Security Research: Send for a Person's S.S. Application

Beyond the information in the index, you may learn more from the person's Social Security Application. (Until recently, a new worker had to apply for an SS card.)

These applications contain much person information --in particular, names of parents which may not be obtainable in any other place.

Unfortunately, since at least November, the S.S. Administration has redacted (blocked out) the names of parents of any SS applicant born in the last 100 years on the premise that the parents might still be alive. If you can prove the parents are deceased, their names will not be redacted.

SSA site re history of the SS Application has a sample blank form, and the instructions given to applicants:

<http://www.ssa.gov/history/ssn/ss5.html>

In the words of the Social Security Administration:

"Please Note: We will not disclose information about any person in our records who is under 120 years old, except in those cases where we have acceptable proof of death (e.g., death certificate, obituary, newspaper article, or police report).

Also, under our current policy, we do not release the parents' names on an SS-5 application unless the parents' are proven deceased, have a birth date more than 120 years ago, or the number holder on the SS-5 is at least 100 years of age."

A blogger comments: So, for example, if you wanted to obtain a copy of the original SS-5 submitted by a person born in 1920, because you don't know anything about the person's parents, you won't be able to learn that information because the SSA assumes the parents of that person are alive and most likely over 113 years old!

Oldest person in U.S. would now be 119 (2010 data):

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_the_verified_oldest_people

Mail request form for someone's SS# Application is SSA- 711

The person's SS# Application is his or her form SSA- 7

* \$27 if you know the SS#.

* \$29 if they search by name (SS# unknown).

Go to SSAAdmin site and read instructions:
http://www.ssa.gov/foia/html/foia_guide.htm

SS Admin now has an on-line request system. You can choose to order a photocopy of the full SS# application or a computer extract [transcript] for less \$. In cases where last names may be often miswritten, ordering the copy is the better choice -- except for the redaction issue.

Note: You can still order by mail, using check, Money Order or credit card.

Example: SS# application

- Full name
- Full name at birth (including maiden name)
- Present mailing address
- Age at last birthday
- Date of birth
- Place of birth (City, county, state)
- Father's full name "regardless of whether living or dead"
- Mother's full name, including maiden name, "regardless of whether living or dead"
- Sex and race
- Ever applied for SS number/Railroad Retirement before? Yes/No
- Current employer's name and address
- Date of application
- Applicant's signature
- Father's full name "regardless of whether living or dead"
- Mother's full name, including maiden name, "regardless of whether living or dead"

A useful and up-to-date web page for SS- 7 ordering how-tos is at "Italian Genealogy Online"

http://www.angelfire.com/ok3/pearlsofwisdom/ssn_app_request.html

<http://www.fgs.org/rpac/ssdi-call-to-action-kit/>

Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) Call to Action

RECORDS PRESERVATION AND ACCESS COMMITTEE

A joint committee of the Federation of Genealogical Societies, the National Genealogical Society, and the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies.

HOME ABOUT RPAC PUBLICATIONS RPAC STRATEGY SSDI CALL TO ACTION KIT STATE LIAISONS

Mission Statement

To advise the genealogical community on ensuring proper access to historical records of genealogical value in whatever media they are recorded, on means to effect legislation, and on supporting strong records preservation policies and practices.

SSDI Call to Action Kit

Record Preservation and Access Committee

Your help is needed to help **Save the Social Security Death Index (SSDI)** as an accessible resource for the genealogical community and others. Here are ways that you can help:

- Educate yourself on why saving the SSDI is so important to the genealogy community!**

- Please see the **SSDI FAQ** at <http://www.fgs.org/rpac/2012/02/08/ssdi-frequently-asked-questions-faq%E2%80%99s/>.
- Watch the video of the **2 Feb Hearing before the Social Security Subcommittee of the House Ways & Means Committee** found at http://waysandmeans.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=28&clip_id=153. For a glimpse of the Administration's vision of genealogical access to the SSDI, focus on the five minute segment beginning with Congressman Marchant's question to SSA Commissioner Astrue near minute 25 and ending with the completion of the Commissioner's answer to the Chairman's follow-up question at 31:00. If you are on the fence about signing the RPAC petition, this should be required reading.
- View the **Got Records? Threats to Genealogy Records Access** video at http://broadcast.fds.org/elearning/PHD/Community/Jan/Community/Jan_Meisels_Alfen

Pages

- About RPAC
- Publications
- RPAC Strategy
- SSDI Call to Action Kit
- State Liaisons
- State Liaisons - Roster

Recent Posts

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- Submissions for the Record
- Social Security Subcommittee of House Ways & Means-2 Feb Hearing
- NEW! SSDI Call to Action Kit
- SSDI-Their Vision for OUR Future
- Now Available: Got Records?