

BGB 497 Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey (Part 1)

Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey comprises two series and a total of 47 volumes of material that, as you might suspect, relate to the colonial history of the State of New Jersey. The volumes were published over a 69 year period between 1880 and 1949. There was a time when accessing these volumes required making a trip to a public library that had the physical volumes. Now, all of the volumes are available online in digital format. Here is a list with links.

[Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey](#)

The Family History Library also has links to digitized versions through a page in their [online FamilySearch Catalog](#).

The value of the individual volumes with regards to genealogical research is varied, but the most valuable, and probably the most cited are the volumes in the First Series that form the *Calendar of New Jersey Wills, Administrations, Etc.* This "sub-set" consists of thirteen volumes, numbered First Series, Vols. 23, 30, and 32-42. Each volume is indexed. The original estate records abstracted in this set are housed at Trenton, New Jersey. They do not constitute all of the estate and probate records from New Jersey. Many others are housed in other locations, particularly in county offices. I would suggest utilizing the Family History Library online catalog to find estate records not abstracted in this set. Do a state wide search using [United States, New Jersey, then look under the category Probate Records](#). And also do a search in the individual county of interest. For example - [United States, New Jersey, Monmouth - Probate Records](#). Many (perhaps even all) of these microfilmed records are now available online under [New Jersey Probate Records, 1678-1980](#). There is no search feature for these records, you will have to "browse" through them. They are organized by county and are accessed through the "[Browse through 1,913,824 images](#)" link. In addition, there is a separate set of images from Middlesex County, titled "[New Jersey, Middlesex County Probate Records, 1830-1921](#)." Again, no search engine, but you can browse through the images.

A few years ago I had extracted out every entry from the thirteen volumes in the *Documents Relating...* volumes that cover the will and administration records, that mentioned someone named Brower, Brewer, Bruere, etc. That work is still [available online as a PDF](#).

After the volumes containing abstracts of wills and administrations, the next most valuable volume is [First Series, Volume 22, Marriage Records, 1665-1800](#). This volume, edited by William Nelson, was

published in 1900. It does not include an index as each set of marriage records are arranged alphabetically. The volume opens with an introduction on the custom of marriage and a couple of chapters on marriage laws and the like in New Jersey. This is followed by the book's largest section, "Index to Marriage Bonds and Marriage Records in the Office of the Secretary of State at Trenton." As mentioned, the records here are arranged alphabetically, with each letter of the alphabet divided into a section for males, followed by females. **Brewer** males are found at page 32 , **Brewer** females at page 54. There is one **Brower** male at page 34, and four **Brower** females at page 56. The surnames **Brouwer** and **Bruere** are not found in this index. The New Jersey State Archives (NJSA) has a searchable database of marriage license records. [Here, for example, is a search using Brewer, Elias](#). Individual records can then be selected and copies of the license ordered from the New Jersey Department of State. [This PDF page created by the NJSA provides an overview, and some links, for their collection of genealogical records](#).

The contents for Volume 22 (pages xi and xii) list the other sets of records that are included. They are mostly from the various churches in New Jersey including Dutch Reformed, Baptist, Christ Church, and Friend's Monthly Meeting. There is also six years of Essex County Clerk, and five years of Middlesex County Clerk marriage records. The introductions to each set of records are helpful and should be consulted. As the church records are extracted from previously published records of the various churches, it is always best to go back to the earlier versions and consult them for accuracy.

The remaining 33 volumes of the two series cover varied sets of records and documents. The first two volumes are dedicated to the early colonial period. Other volumes are arranged by the administrations of the various New Jersey Governors. Many of the volumes cover "Extracts from American Newspapers Relating to New Jersey," and they are arranged by years. Each volume includes its own index. The surnames **Brewer**, **Brower**, **Brouwer**, or **Bruere** are absent from volumes 1 through 10.

We will cover the mentions of persons named Brewer, Brower, Brouwer and Bruere, found in the remaining volumes in Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey (Part II).

October 27, 2015

[Brouwer Genealogy](#)