

Ancestry.com: It's More Than Just a Shaky Leaf

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Ancestry.com Family: Ancestry Publishing, Ancestry Magazine, Myfamily.com, rootsweb.com, genealogy.com, familytreemaker.com, Family Tree Maker software, heritagemakers.com, mundia.com, genlinbe.se, progenealogists.com, footnote.com (now fold3.com), DNA assets of Sorensen Molecular Genealogy Foundation (now FT DNA), We're Related, archives.com, 1000memories.com, Findagrave.com.

Ancestry.com – Free

- Find free databases: Search > Card Catalog > Type “free” into the keyword box
- Learning Center: Videos, webinars
- Enter and save a family tree (requires email address and password)
- State Guides
- Wiki: The Source, Red Book
- Message Boards

Ancestry Institutional

- Available at local libraries and NARA
- Can print and save record images (free at NARA)
- Some databases and functionality not available

Searching (20 Billion records) in Ancestry.com

- Use “Show More Options” to control search results; specify birth date and lived in location
- Specify other family members; try specifying only first names of everyone in family
- Use wildcard characters
- Be careful not to be overly restrictive. For example, specifying a marriage date will eliminate results without a marriage date; death date will push down census records in the list
- Search within specific collections; search forms are customized to collections

Bibliography

- Ancestry.com History: <http://www.ancestry.com/corporate/about-ancestry/our-story>
- Comparison of Ancestry.com and ALE: http://proquest.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=3028717
- About Ancestry Library Edition: <http://proquest.libguides.com/ancestrylibraryedition>
- Ancestry.com Support: <https://support.ancestry.com/s/>
- Free eBook: <http://ftu.familytreemagazine.com/free-ancestry-search-tips/>

Ancestry Trees

- May contain good clues
- Don't be fooled by the number of trees that have the same piece of information
- Build trees with ancestral family information – Cousin bait
- Share your research – What will happen to your research after you are gone?
- Use hints to “harvest” Ancestry database records and attach them to a tree
- Also use “Suggested Records”

Read (or Watch) More about Ancestry

- Blogs
 - Ancestry.com Blog: <http://blogs.ancestry.com/ancestry/>
 - Russ Worthington: <http://worthy2be.wordpress.com/>
 - Randy Seaver: <http://www.geneamusings.com/>
 - Ancestry Insider: <http://www.ancestryinsider.org/>
- Don't Just be a Searcher, Be a Resercher <https://www.rootstech.org/videos/crista-cowan>
 - AncestryCom YouTube Channel : <https://www.youtube.com/user/AncestryCom>

Search

First & Middle Name(s) Last Name

 Exact Exact

Place your ancestor might have lived Birth Year

 Exact +/-...

Show fewer options Match all terms exactly

Location

 Exact to this place

Exact to...
 This place
 County
 County and adjacent counties
 State
 State and adjacent states
 Country
[About these settings](#)

Collection Focus

Historical Records Family Trees
 Stories & Publications Photos & Maps

[Clear search](#)

Year
 Birth
 Exact

Exact to...
 this year
 +/-1 year
 +/-2 years
 +/-5 years
 +/-10 years

Collection Focus – will boost score of records from that collection

Restrict to: Restricts your search to specific records types (historical, stories & publications, family trees, photos & maps)

Help out your fellow genealogists by entering corrections or alternatives when you know them.

Wild cards: * matches zero or more characters

? matches one character

First letter can be a wildcard

Either the first or the last character must be non-wild

There must be at least 3 non-wildcard characters specified

Exact filters exclude records that don't have or don't index the field results.

Names – spelling in records can vary widely – even within the same document

Clicking on "Exact" allows you to customize how stringent the match should be.

Try searching without a last name to find records that may have the name just plain wrong.

Use "Match all terms exactly" with caution

Requiring family members will exclude US censuses before 1880

Requiring a city for marriages will exclude most non-marriage records

Requiring a death date excludes censuses, marriage records, etc.

Places

Use suggested places (auto-fill).

The place itself scores highest;

then places within the same county;

then places in adjacent county;

then places within state;

then places in adjacent states; then country

"Suggested places" may not include all historic places

Dates - Tied to specific life events. Cannot specify "give me all records between <birthdate> and <death date>". Can use "Any event" in 20-year chunks (+/- 10 years).

Dates within range specified are scored equally

Dates outside the range score lower the further they get from the target range

Checking exact excludes records outside the range, but does not change the scoring for those inside the range.

If you want to boost a specific date's weighting within a range, try adding that date as "Any Event."

Other fields

Keyword – searches all indexed fields, whether or not they show on the search form

Gender – will exclude the opposite gender but doesn't exclude records where gender is unspecified

Race/Nationality – Beware when using because data isn't 100% normalized between databases (e.g., w, white/Caucasian or African American/Negro/colored)

Alternatives and corrections are scored the same as the original transcription, but do not replace the original

User-submitted corrections are identified by the pencil icon

System-generated corrections are bracketed (e.g., maiden names)