



48

Ancestry.com SEARCH TIPS



12
BILLION
RECORDS
ON ANCESTRY.COM



 **40 MILLION+**
SEARCHES PERFORMED PER DAY

2.1
MILLION
SUBSCRIBERS TO
ANCESTRY.COM-
BRANDED
SITES




2 MILLION
RECORDS ADDED
TO ANCESTRY.COM
EACH DAY

Ancestry.com VITAL STATISTICS

31,000+
DATABASES
ON ANCESTRY.COM




300,000+
DNA SAMPLES
IN ANCESTRY DNA
DATABASE

10
MILLION
DOWNLOADS
OF ANCESTRY.COM
MOBILE APP SINCE
JANUARY 2011

10 PETABYTES
DATA HOUSED ON ANCESTRY.COM



Quick Start Guide

ANCESTRY.COM HOME PAGE

When logged in to your Ancestry.com account, your home page will look something like this. If you have a free account, you'll see a subscribe link at the top of the site and you'll be prompted to subscribe when viewing search results.

1 Log out or access your account information (which includes help unsubscribing).

2 If you have an Ancestry.com family tree, the site automatically searches its databases for records and people that potentially match your ancestors—"hints" indicated by the shaky leaf. Click the leaf to see all your hints.

3 Customize your home page by rearranging boxes and adding elements such as Ancestry.com blog feeds.

4 Use the navigation bar to get to the main sections of Ancestry.com, including the Search page.

5 If you're logged in as an Ancestry.com member, you'll see the Search form right on your home page.

6 Your Shoebox holds records you've saved for later review.

7 From your home page, you also can quickly access your Ancestry.com family tree, if you have one.

8 You can further customize your home page by updating your to-do list and creating Quick Links to favorite pages.

9 Click to access your recently viewed records and repeat your recent searches.

The screenshot shows the Ancestry.com home page for a logged-in user. The page is divided into several sections:

- Navigation Bar (4):** Includes links for Home, Family Trees, Search, DNA, Collaborate, Learning Center, Publish, Shop, Hire an Expert, and NEW GLOBAL RECORDS.
- Search Form (5):** Features input fields for First & Middle Name(s), Last Name, and a location field (e.g., Houston, Harris, Texas, USA). It also includes an Estimated birth year field and a Calculate It button.
- My Shoebox (6):** A table listing saved records with columns for Record, Date Added, and Name(S).

Record	Date Added	Name(S)
1920 United States Federal Census	02 Sep 2013	Owan Dolan
New York, Passenger Lists, 1820-1957	11 Aug 2013	August Berkmeier
New York, Passenger Lists, 1820-1957	13 Jul 2013	Heinr Seegart
- Recent Member Connect Activity (7):** A list of recent actions by other members, such as "LINDA CLARK saved the Millennium File record to Yolande De Coucy." Each entry includes a link to view the record in the user's tree.
- Wilfuer Family Tree (8):** A section for a specific family tree, showing recent activity, a list of family members (Anthony, Earnst Wilfuer, Paulina), and details about the tree (27 people, 0 photos).
- What's Happening at Ancestry.com:** A list of new records added to the site, including "Texas, Naturalization Records, 1881-1992" and "U.S., Naval Enlistment Rendezvous, 1855-1891".
- Follow Us On:** Social media links for Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, YouTube, Tumblr, and Ancestry Blog.
- Customization Options (3):** Includes "Customize your homepage" and "Ancestry.com Blog" (Visit blog).
- Record Collections (8):** A grid of collection categories such as "U.S. Census Records" and "More Collections".
- My To-Do List (8):** A section for creating and tracking research tasks.
- My Quick Links (8):** A list of frequently accessed pages like "Ancestry Card Catalog" and "Military Collection".
- Recent Activity (9):** A list of recently viewed records, such as "1840 United States Federal Census for Edward Thomas".
- Searches:** A section for repeating recent searches.

ADVANCED SEARCH PAGE

Click Search in the navigation bar to go to a form where you can search everything on Ancestry.com at once. The search field settings help you narrow or widen your query to get the best results.

1 The first name default settings find records with the exact name, phonetic matches, initials only, and names with similar meanings or spellings, plus records for which the name is not a strong match, but other criteria are. Narrow to one of these options via the default settings link.

2 The default settings for the Last Name field find the exact name plus phonetic matches and those with similar spellings and meanings. You can choose to search on just one of those options, and/or find Soundex matches on the name.

3 Click to choose a life event for your ancestor, such as birth, arrival or military. Enter the year the event happened. You can expand to range of 0, 1, 2, 5 or 10 years before and after the year you typed, and limit results to exactly that year or range. Begin typing a location to see a “type ahead” drop-down menu of places. Choose the place for the event you specified. Optionally, you can add more events to your search—as many as you’d like.

4 Add a mother, father, spouse, and/or children who should appear with your ancestor in the record you want to find.

5 Adding a related keyword can help the right record rank higher in your results. To further narrow results, you can select a gender and/or enter a Race/Nationality. This field doesn’t seem to work with some databases, but you also can enter a nationality in the keyword field.

The screenshot shows the Ancestry.com search interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Family Trees', 'Search', 'DNA', 'Collaborate', 'Learning Center', 'Publish', 'Shop', 'Hire an Expert', and 'NEW GLOBAL RECORDS'. The main search area is titled 'Search' and includes several sections:

- Match all terms exactly:** A checkbox option.
- First & Middle Name(s) and Last Name:** Two input fields with dropdown menus for 'Use default settings'.
- Any Event:** A dropdown menu with 'Any Event' selected, a 'Year' field with a '+/-' range selector, and a 'Location' field with a trash icon.
- Family Member:** A dropdown menu with 'Choose...' selected, and 'First Name' and 'Last Name' input fields.
- Keyword:** An input field with a dropdown for 'e.g. pilot or "Flying Tigers"', and an 'Exact' checkbox.
- Gender and Race/Nationality:** Two dropdown menus with 'Exact' checkboxes.
- Collection Priority:** A dropdown menu with 'United States' selected, and a 'Show only records from these collections' checkbox.
- Filters:** Checkboxes for 'Historical records', 'Family trees', 'Stories & publications', and 'Photos & maps'.
- Recent Searches:** A list of recent searches: 'edward Tho*', 'edward', 'edward th's', and 'edward th'ss'.
- Explore by Location:** A map of the United States with a list of states below it: Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Vermont, Alaska, Georgia, Maine, Nevada, Oregon, Virginia, Arizona, Hawaii, Maryland, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Washington, Arkansas, Idaho, Massachusetts, Hampshire, Rhode Island, West Virginia, California, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, South Carolina, North Carolina, South Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, New Mexico, Carolina, Wisconsin, Delaware, Kansas, Missouri, New York, North Dakota, USA, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Montana, North Carolina, Tennessee, Ohio, Utah.
- Recently viewed collections:** A list of collections including 'U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918' and '1840 United States Federal Census Wisconsin's gold star list'.
- Special Collections:** A link to '+ Card Catalog'.
- Historical Records:** A list of record types including 'Birth, Marriage & Death', 'Immigration & Travel', 'Military', 'Schools, Directories & Church Histories', 'Tax, Criminal, Land & Wills', and 'Reference, Dictionaries & Almanacs'.
- Family Trees:** A link to '+ Card Catalog'.
- Stories & Publications:** A list of record types including 'Stories, Memories & Histories', 'Newspapers', and 'Periodicals & Magazines'.
- Photos & Maps:** A list of record types including 'Pictures', 'Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers', and 'Special Collections'.

6 Choose a country or ethnicity so records from related collections rank higher in your search results. Uncheck boxes for any type of results you don't want.

7 You can repeat a recent search in one click to save time.

8 Use the Explore by Location and Special Collections menus to home in on specific places or record types before searching. Your search options will change based on the databases you're viewing.

Public vs. Private ancestry.com family trees

Posting your family tree on Ancestry.com is a great way to track family details and explore new branches. But should you make your tree public or private? Consider the differences between these options.



PUBLIC

All content in your tree is public, and viewable by anyone who visits Ancestry.com.

EXCEPTIONS: No information about living individuals is public. Private notes are hidden.

You control your trees. You can invite others to view, add to, or edit your trees. You choose contribution level.

You may find others researching the same families, including cousins you haven't met.



PRIVATE

All content in your tree is private. Ancestry.com visitors and subscribers can't see your genealogy.

EXCEPTIONS: Limited details about deceased people still appear in search results, including name, birth year and birthplace (unless you opt out of this).

You control your trees. You can invite others to view, add to or edit your trees. You choose contribution level.



10 Easy Ways to Use Ancestry.com

BY DAVID A. FRYXELL

Try these 10 simple tips to take advantage of the world's biggest family history website.

🔗 WHEN YOU FIRST delve into Ancestry.com <ancestry.com>, the world's largest subscription collection of genealogy databases, it can be a bit mind-boggling. After all, Ancestry.com encompasses some 31,000 databases with more than 9 billion historical records. Subscribers can access all available US census records, from 1790 through the 1940 census, along with many Canadian, English and Welsh enumerations. You'll find military records including databases of soldiers from the Revolutionary War, Civil War and both world wars. Vital records cover many US states, Canada and the United Kingdom, and immigration records range from passenger lists for most American ports to border-crossing files. Plus, you'll find more than 20,000 digitized family and local history books, along with city directories and yearbooks and scanned and searchable newspapers dating back to the 18th century.

Where's an overwhelmed genealogist to start?

To help jump-start your Ancestry.com experience, here are 10 suggestions for tasks you can perform on the site (not all of which even require paying for a subscription). As you work your way through these ideas, you'll uncover even more ways Ancestry.com can help you branch out and document your family tree.

1 Explore what's available for free.

Even though the core of Ancestry.com is its treasure trove of subscriber-only databases, the site also offers a surprising number of free data collections. If you're still debating whether to subscribe to Ancestry.com, trying out its free databases is a good way to get a feel for the site and how it works.



To find the free databases, select Card Catalog under Search on the home page; it's the last item in the drop-down list. Then type *free* in the keyword blank and click Search. You'll see nearly 800 databases you can explore even without paying for access.

Many of these databases, it's true, require a subscription to view full results or the scanned image of the original

record. That's the case with most US census databases, although you can view the 1880 and 1940 enumerations in their entirety for free; you just need to register and create a free account. Yet even those "free" databases in which the complete records are hidden behind a pay wall can provide valuable information. Searching the 1861 English census, for example, will reveal not only whether an ancestor is listed, but also the person's year and city of birth as well as county of residence in 1861.

2 Create or upload your family tree.

There's no charge to create and share your own family tree files on Ancestry.com. You'll get the most out of this experience, though, by subscribing; your subscription will allow you to view the data matches Ancestry.com finds for you as well as see other subscribers' trees that overlap with yours. Ancestry.com hosts some 34 million family trees, containing 4 billion profiles of ancestors, plus more than 115 million photographs, scanned documents and written stories attached to those trees.



To begin, select Start a New Tree under the Family Trees link on the home page; you'll see a rudimentary pedigree chart where you can type in your data. Another option under Family Trees, Upload a GEDCOM, lets you share a GEDCOM file (the universal file format for family trees) you've exported from your genealogy software. Or from the same page, you can upload native file formats created by several genealogy programs: Family Tree Maker (FTW); Family Tree Maker backup file (FBK); Personal Ancestral



TIP: To find all the free databases on Ancestry.com, select Card Catalog under Search on the home page.

Because Ancestry.com's wealth of data can be overwhelming, sometimes the best way to explore its databases is just to dive in and see everything it provides on a given ancestor.

File (PAF); and Legacy (FDB). You can also upload "zipped" GEDCOM and image files (GEDZ). Just browse to the file on your computer, select and upload it, and Ancestry.com will interpret the file and create your online tree.

3 Follow your hints.

Once you've created or uploaded one or more family trees, links to them appear in the Family Trees drop-down menu whenever you sign in to Ancestry.com. Click on one of your trees and you'll see a typical lines-and-boxes view, with each ancestor's name and relevant dates. You may see a leaf icon in the

corner of an ancestor's box; this indicates that Ancestry.com has a "hint" for you—data it's automatically found that may match that ancestor. (A box at the top of the page shows how many hints await your attention.)

To explore these hints, hover over one of your ancestors bearing a leaf icon. You'll see how many hints are available to review ("8 Ancestry hints"). Click this link for a list of the data matches Ancestry.com has identified. You can click on each data source to view that record, or select Review Hint to jump to a comparison between what Ancestry.com has found and what's in your tree. (If the data obviously doesn't apply to

your ancestor, select Ignore Hint to dismiss it.) Check or uncheck these found facts, then pick Save to Your Tree to import the info you've checked.

4

Perform a global search.

Because Ancestry.com's wealth of data can be overwhelming, sometimes the best way to explore its databases is just to dive in and see everything it provides on a given ancestor. You can do this from the home page, where blanks invite you to fill in a first and last name, place an ancestor might have lived, and estimated birth year. You can click to add other life events, as well as other family members, to narrow your search.

If you know a little more about an ancestor, you'll get better results by clicking Show Advanced in the upper right portion of the home page. This links to a page with those options for other life events and family members, plus a drop-down for gender and blanks for race and keyword. (What might you try as a keyword? Consider groups your ancestor might have belonged to, such as Flying Tigers, Elks or Lutheran, as well as occupations and even place names that Ancestry.com doesn't recognize and automatically populate.) Here you can also prioritize or restrict your search by collection (such as English or Jewish) or select only certain types of records.

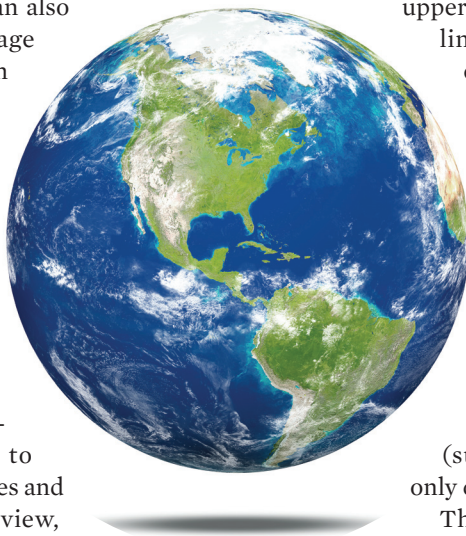
This advanced-search page also offers the option to search just for exact matches.

Use this checkbox with caution, however; you can always choose to narrow your search once you see the results, using the Edit Search button or *r* hot key.

5

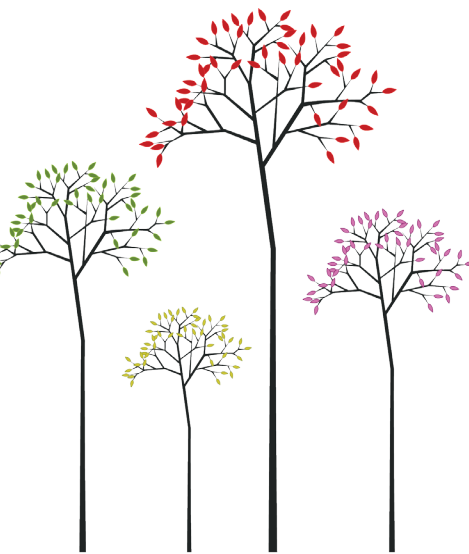
Search by category.

Despite the power of Ancestry.com's global search, sometimes you get better results by searching a single category—zooming in on your ancestor's military or passenger arrival records, for example. To search a single category, select it from the drop-down list under Search. For categories not shown there, such as Schools, Directories & Church Histories, pick Search All Records and then select the category (or subcategory) from the



list on the right side of the main search page <search.ancestry.com/search>.

Another reason to search by category is that these category-search pages present different options. The Immigration & Travel search page <search.ancestry.com/search/category.aspx?cat=40>, for example, lets you specify an ancestor's arrival and departure dates and place of origin—options not readily available on the main search page. (You can, however, add arrival and departure there as life events.) The Military search page <search.ancestry.com/search/category.aspx?cat=39> has a date and location search box set specifically for military service.



6

Explore others' family trees.

The real benefit of sharing your family tree on Ancestry.com is the hope that others tracing your family will do likewise. Family trees are included in the site's global search, but you

can focus on them by selecting Public Member Trees under Search. Results show the basics about an ancestor from each tree, a rating for how closely this person matches your search criteria, and how many sources and attachments accompany the data in the tree.

While unsourced info in others' family trees can provide clues for your own research, it's those with sources you'll



TIP: Use Ancestry.com's My To-Do List to create an online genealogical task list. Use the Add an Item button to begin your list; check off each task when completed.

want to zoom in on. Look particularly in the results list for those that not only have sources (which may be just somebody else's unverified family tree) but that show "attached records." These can be a research gold mine—everything from transcribed wills to pages from family histories. You may even find photos, indicated by a little camera icon.

You can also search just for Public Member Stories submitted along with family trees at <search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=1095>.

7

Connect with cousins.

What if you find someone researching your family, and you want to connect to share information? Toward the top of each family tree page is an Owner icon you can click to view more about the submitter. Depending on the person's settings, you may be able to send an email via Ancestry.com by clicking Contact. You also can read about the person's research interests.

Under Collaborate/Recent Mem-

ber Connect Activity, you can view other Ancestry.com subscribers' activities related to ancestors you may share. If someone has saved a record related to an ancestor in one of your trees, that will show up—along with links to the record and the person's tree.



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8 Find ancestors in the news.

Although other subscription sites now rival Ancestry.com's collection of historical newspapers, it's still a useful tool for beating your brick walls and learning about your ancestors' lives. (Ancestry.com has launched a bigger subscription-based site, Newspapers.com <www.newspapers.com>, that's available to Ancestry.com subscribers at a discounted rate.) To search only old newspapers, go to Search All Records and scroll down to Newspapers under Stories & Publications on the right <search.ancestry.com/search/category.aspx?cat=149>.

Here it's often useful to filter your search by location, using the links at the upper right. Click on USA, for instance, and then select a state and possibly a city in the left-hand links on the page that appears. You also can filter by dates.



9 Scour message boards.

An often-overlooked resource is Ancestry.com's vast array of message boards—"the world's largest online genealogy community," with more than 17 million posts on more than 161,000 boards. This link is located under Collaborate, or you can go straight to <boards.ancestry.com>. These message boards are identical to those on the long-standing free RootsWeb site <boards.rootsweb.ancestry.com>, which is why they represent such a rich resource. Why tackle a genealogy challenge from scratch when somebody may have already solved it here?

At the very least, it's worth checking the boards for all the surnames you're researching, as well as the ancestral places (typically by county) where your family has lived. You can also explore specialized boards devoted to everything from the Crimean War to Australian cemeteries. If you post, use a subject line such as "Harrison family in Ripley County, Ind." That way, other researchers surfing the boards will quickly know whether your most might pertain to their families.



An often-overlooked resource is Ancestry.com's message boards—"the world's largest online genealogy community," with more than 17 million posts on more than 161,000 boards.

10 Save your finds.

Once you've found facts about your ancestors on Ancestry.com, what should you do with these records? Ancestry.com provides several built-in ways to save "hits" related to your family history. First, of course, you can print the records you find—always a good backup. It's a good idea to print both the image of the original record, if available, and Ancestry.com's transcription of it, then staple these together.

It's also easy to save your finds digitally. When viewing a record, click the orange Save button in the upper right corner. This brings up a box where you can choose to attach the record to someone in your tree, store it in your Ancestry.com "shoebox" or save it to your computer's hard drive. (To return later to "shoebox" items, see the list of recent additions and the link to all items at the bottom of your Ancestry.com home page.) An advantage of attaching a record to an Ancestry.com tree is that you can then view it using Ancestry's free smartphone and tablet apps.

All these options are easy to use, and that's a good thing. Once you've tried all 10 suggestions for using Ancestry.com

for your search, you'll have plenty of family history finds to save. ■

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CARD CATALOG CRASH COURSE

How do you home in on more ancestor answers?
Follow these tips to master the Ancestry.com Card Catalog.

BY NANCY HENDRICKSON

🔍 **THE GOOD NEWS:** With more than 12 billion records in 31,000-plus databases, Ancestry.com is sure to hold answers to your family tree questions. The bad news: Ancestry.com has more than 12 billion records in 31,000-plus databases. How are you ever supposed to home in on the data specifically about your family?

Indeed, figuring out how to make your ancestors float to the top in that vast sea of data is a frustration of many Ancestry.com users. Sifting through pages of search results can feel much like that old adage: “Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink.”

One secret to success is shrinking that ocean into a small pool that’s easier to wade through—that is, focusing on the records most likely to mention your ancestors. You can do that using the Ancestry.com Card Catalog.

Do you remember the card catalog drawers at the library—the ones where you could look up a single title or find categories of books? The Ancestry.com Card Catalog works the same way. It’s a listing of all the databases on the site,

searchable by title or theme. The card catalog will help you filter searches in a way that’s impossible if you use only the global search.

When you do a global search, Ancestry.com will comb through all of its records trying to find relevant matches—many of which may have no connection to your family. If I do a global search for John Hendrickson, born in Indiana, I get more than a half-million hits. Using the Card Catalog, however, I can find databases specific to my search. For example, I may want to search only a database of Indiana birth records or Indiana marriages. This kind of search is doable using the Card Catalog and its filters.

Keep in mind, though, that the Card Catalog search is a search for a *database*, not a person. Once you find the database relevant to your search, click on the name of the database and from that point, you can do an ancestor search. This Card Catalog crash course from my book *Unofficial Guide to Ancestry.com* (Family Tree Books) will walk you through the steps to master this power-user tip.

CONQUER THE CARD CATALOG

Follow these five tips to home in on the databases most likely to contain information relevant to the specifics of your genealogy research.

1. Open the Card Catalog.

The link to the card catalog is located under Ancestry.com's main menu (gray bar) Search tab. When you hover over the Search tab **A**, a drop-down menu will appear; Card Catalog is the last item in the list. Click Card Catalog to explore the catalog.

The catalog contains a collection of all of Ancestry.com's databases. The catalog has two main columns: The right column lists the names of databases, while the left column has title and keyword search boxes, as well as several filters.

The default view in the right column is a list of databases sorted by popularity. As you can see **B**, Public Member Trees are the most popular, followed by the 1940 and 1930 U.S. censuses. Note that the Records column displays the number of records in the database, and the Activity column indicates if a database has been updated recently.

You can change the default view by clicking the down arrow next to Sort By **C** and selecting to sort by database title, date updated, date added, or record count (which you'll probably never use).

2. Search for databases of interest.

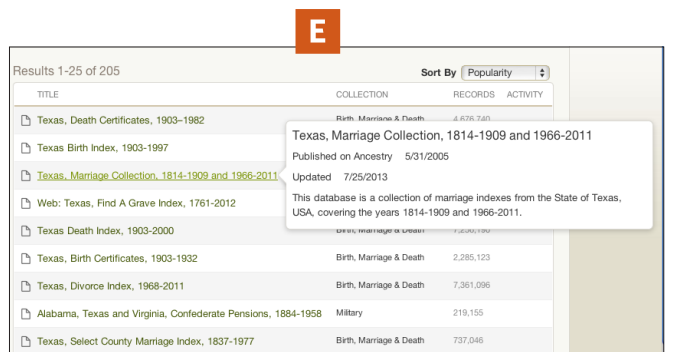
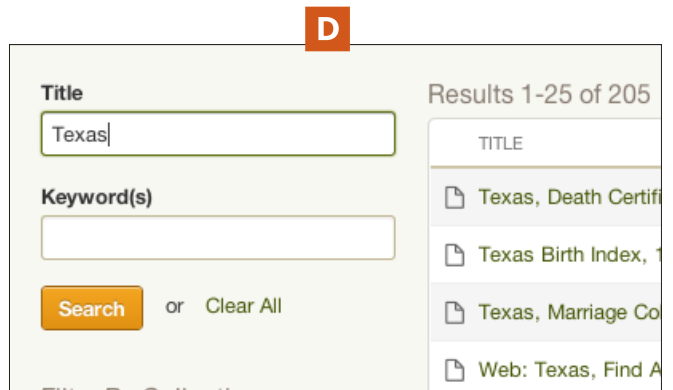
In the left column on the main catalog page, you'll find two search boxes: One is for searching for a database by title, the other by keyword/s. If you want to see all databases specific to one location, you can get a fairly comprehensive list by typing the name of the place in the Title box. Searching for Texas in the Title box of the Card Catalog returned 205 databases **D**.

If you hover your mouse over any title in the results **E**, a pop-up box will give a brief description of the database, including when it was originally published on Ancestry.com and when it was last updated.

If you're unsure how a database might be named on Ancestry.com, use the Keywords search box **F**. For example, one of the people in my family line worked for the railroad, and I wanted to see what kind of railroad-related databases were on Ancestry.com. When I entered railroad in the Keyword box, the search resulted in 65 databases, including employment records and a business directory of principal towns along the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe (A, T, and SF) routes in 1889.

3. Drill down to databases using filters.

Ancestry.com's Card Catalog has four sets of filters in the left column: collection, location, date, and languages. You can use one filter or many filters in combination to narrow your database search. Let's explore each.



TIP: The Card Catalog is available free to non-subscribers. If you're on the fence about buying a subscription, use the catalog to identify databases of interest—then evaluate whether you'll get your money's worth.

Card Catalog

Searchable listing of all record collections

C Sort By Popularity

- Database Title
- Date Updated
- Date Added
- Record Count

Title

Results 1-25 of 31,675 **Sort By** Popularity

Keyword(s)

F **B** or

- G** Filter By Collection
- Census & Voter Lists 555
 - Birth, Marriage & Death +1000
 - Military +1000
 - Immigration & Travel 414
 - Newspapers & Publications +1000
 - Pictures 36
 - Stories, Memories & Histories +1000
 - Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers 184
 - Schools, Directories & Church Histories +1000
 - Tax, Criminal, Land & Wills +1000
 - Reference, Dictionaries & Almanacs +1000
 - Family Trees 9

- H** Filter By Location
- Australia 133
 - Canada +1000
 - Europe +1000
 - Mexico 24
 - USA +1000
 - Africa 16
 - Asia 64
 - North America +1000
 - Oceania 162
 - South America 43

- I** Filter by Dates
- | 1600s | 1700s | 1800s | 1900s |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1600s | 1700s | 1800s | 1900s |
| 1610s | 1710s | 1810s | 1910s |
| 1620s | 1720s | 1820s | 1920s |
| 1630s | 1730s | 1830s | 1930s |
| 1640s | 1740s | 1840s | 1940s |
| 1650s | 1750s | 1850s | 1950s |
| 1660s | 1760s | 1860s | 1960s |
| 1670s | 1770s | 1870s | 1970s |
| 1680s | 1780s | 1880s | 1980s |
| 1690s | 1790s | 1890s | 1990s |

- J** Filter By Languages
- German +1000
 - English +1000
 - Spanish 58
 - French 682
 - Italian 110
 - Swedish 25

TITLE	COLLECTION	RECORDS	ACTIVITY
Public Member Trees	Family Trees	2,147,483,647	
1940 United States Federal Census	Census & Voter Lists	134,473,505	
1930 United States Federal Census	Census & Voter Lists	124,963,074	
U.S. City Directories, 1821-1989	Schools, Directories & Church Histories	1,326,371,477	
1900 United States Federal Census	Census & Voter Lists	77,277,539	UPDATED
1920 United States Federal Census	Census & Voter Lists	107,634,003	
1910 United States Federal Census	Census & Voter Lists	93,627,708	
1880 United States Federal Census	Census & Voter Lists	50,480,997	
1870 United States Federal Census	Census & Voter Lists	40,405,477	
U.S., Social Security Death Index, 1935-Current	Birth, Marriage & Death	94,331,881	
1911 England Census	Census & Voter Lists	33,847,692	
1850 United States Federal Census	Census & Voter Lists	20,053,649	
1860 United States Federal Census	Census & Voter Lists	27,483,658	
England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975	Birth, Marriage & Death	192,725,313	
Quebec, Vital and Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1621-1967	Birth, Marriage & Death	14,515,649	
England & Wales, Marriage Index, 1916-2005	Birth, Marriage & Death	63,960,942	
England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915	Birth, Marriage & Death	32,698,349	
1901 England Census	Census & Voter Lists	30,593,753	UPDATED
New York, Passenger Lists, 1820-1957	Immigration & Travel	82,932,428	
1841 England Census	Census & Voter Lists	14,772,291	
England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915	Birth, Marriage & Death	62,793,107	
England & Wales, Birth Index, 1916-2005	Birth, Marriage & Death	71,311,743	
1851 England Census	Census & Voter Lists	16,625,583	
1891 England Census	Census & Voter Lists	27,127,076	UPDATED
Sweden, Church Records, 1500-1941 (in Swedish)	Birth, Marriage & Death	20,779,071	

1 2 ... 11 >

The card catalog will help you filter searches in a way that's impossible if you use only the global search.

■ **FILTER BY COLLECTION:** Collections are the broad grouping of like databases (we'll explore the collections in more detail later on). This filter allows you to find databases that fall into specific collection types. The number by each type of collection represents the number of databases within that collection, not the number of records **G**.

Because so many collections have more than 1,000 databases, you'll probably want to use the collection filter in combination with one of the other filters below.

■ **FILTER BY LOCATION:** The location filter has 10 main geographic areas **H**; once chosen, some of the areas have several subfilters. For instance, if you choose USA as a filter, you'll have the option of filtering further by state. Europe has 35 subsets, including the United Kingdom, which alone contains more than 1,000 databases. Be sure to click each of the major location filters, as some areas are included as subsets in places you may not expect (e.g., you'll find the Federated States of Micronesia as a subset of USA, not in Oceania).

■ **FILTER BY DATES:** You can filter either by a century (1600s to 1900s) or per decade within each century (e.g., 1910) **I**. If you are fairly certain of the decade in which a record will fall, this filter will be a huge help to focus on relevant records.

■ **FILTER BY LANGUAGES:** Ancestry.com has databases in English, French, Spanish, German, Italian and Swedish **J**. If you're doing only U.S. research, you probably won't need to use this filter, but once you get into international records, it's one you may want to employ.

Once you've filtered your search by collection type and then by location and date, you'll be close to finding a database that will return a few dozen, rather than a half-million hits.

I was interested in finding Civil War records for a pesky ancestor. First, I searched for keyword Civil War; that returned 499 databases. Next, I used the filters to chose Military as collection type and USA as location. Why did I filter by location? Because I didn't want British or Canadian civil war records appearing in the search results. Those filters took me down to 378 databases.

I knew via family story that my ancestor was in an Illinois regiment. Under USA, I selected the Illinois subset. This narrowed my search to 102 databases. Still too many to go through easily. Lastly, I filtered by date (1860s), as I knew the Civil War was from 1861 to 1865. I still had 98 databases in the results. What to do?

I went back up to the Military filter and chose the subset Draft, Enlistment, and Service records **K**, one of several subsets of the Military collection (most collections have multiple subfilters like this). With this last filter, I narrowed the databases down to 16—a number I could easily launch and then search.

K

Keyword(s)

civil war

Search or Clear All

Filter Titles

- Military
- USA
- Illinois

Filter By Collection

Draft, Enlistment and Service	16
Casualties	31
Soldier, Veteran & Prisoner Rolls & Lists	35
Pension Records	7
Histories	50
Awards & Decorations of Honor	21
News	1
Disciplinary Actions	3
Photos	4

L

TITLE

Published on Ancestry

U.S., Civil War Draft Registrations Records, 1862-1865

U.S. Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1798-1958

U.S., Returns from Military Posts, 1806-1916

U.S., Registers of Deaths of Volunteers, 1861-1865

U.S., Colored Troops Military Service Records, 1862-1865

U.S. Returns from Regular Army Infantry Regiments, 1821-1916

Draft, Enlistment and Service

Open Link in New Tab

Open Link in New Window

Open Link in Incognito Window

Save Link As...

Copy Link Address

Copy

Search Google for 'U.S., Civil War Draft Registrations Records, 1862-1865'

Print...

Inspect Element

Look Up in Dictionary

Speech

M

Card Catalog

U.S., Civil War Draft Registrations Records, 1862-1865

U.S. Marine Corps Muster Rolls, 1798-1958



TIP: Each time you begin a new Card Catalog search, remember to click the Clear All link located by the Title/Keyword search boxes. Otherwise, the system will remember your filters from the last search and apply them to your new search.

4. Search an individual database.

Once you've filtered down to the databases you want to search, right-click (on a Mac, control-click) your mouse on the title of the database you want to search and select Open in New Tab **L**.

Why not just click on the database name? After your individual database search is complete, you'll want to return to your filtered list to explore the other relevant databases. If you navigate away from your filtered list, you'll have to redo your filters when you're done with your database search. But if you open a database in a new tab, you can just return to the first browser tab containing your filtered Card Catalog list once you've finished searching.

Some people open new windows on their browser instead of opening a new tab. When you're constantly opening different windows, it's easy to lose track of where you are. With tabs, all of the pages you're working on are in a single window, making it easy to move back and forth between tabs as you explore various databases or websites **M**.

Now that you've opened a new tab, go ahead and search the database just as you would when using the global search. Note, too, that each database will have search boxes unique to that database. For example, when searching the Civil War Draft Registration Records, congressional district is one of the search fields—a parameter not available in the global search.

5. Explore “non-people” databases.

You may be wondering why you'd want to work with a database that wasn't specific to an ancestor. Don't worry—there's a method to my madness.

Some collection types aren't indexed by people's names. These include maps, atlases, ships (under immigration) and historical postcards (under pictures). Don't dismiss such collections because they lack ancestor names: These materials can have great value to you, especially when it comes to learning more about the places and times in which your ancestors lived.

Do you remember the keyword search for railroads I did to find databases? The business directory along the A, T, and SF routes listed places in Missouri, including my hometown of St. Joseph. Although I didn't have family living in town in 1889, they were in the nearby countryside. Skimming through the businesses gave me quite a sense of what my

family would have seen when they went to town.

And because the businesses in this directory have business names and addresses, I could use Google Maps or Google Earth to “fly over” and see if any still exist. The biggest surprise to me? The fact that so many businesses back then no longer exist today (at least not in a large city), including the:

- horse shoer
- confectionary
- boot maker
- blacksmith
- cornice maker
- piano maker
- fish market (although we do have one here in San Diego)

Even more surprising was the number of saloons. I guess they were the Starbucks of the 1880s.

The postcard collection is another of the not-to-be-missed “non-people” databases. Search the Card Catalog by location and also by keyword. In my case, I searched for Missouri with keyword St. Joseph and found several old postcards, including a great linen one of the Pony Express Motel, where my dad installed a new heating system sometime in the 1940s or early 1950s.

GET ACQUAINTED WITH CATALOG COLLECTIONS

Ancestry.com has 11 main collections along with several subsets of those collections. Here's an overview of the types of databases you can expect to find in each.

1. Census & Voter Lists

As you might expect, this collection includes all of the census databases, including ones from the United States (federal and state), the United Kingdom, and Canada. You'll also find databases relative to Australia, Europe, Mexico, Africa, Asia and Oceania. There's some crossover, as the Oceania subset has similar databases to those in the Australia subset.

Be a creative investigator when selecting databases, and don't forget to read the database description before deciding it's not one you want to search. For example, one database in this collection (subset Africa) is titled Slave Registers of former British Colonial Dependencies, 1812-1834. You might think this collection of more than 2 million records relates only to Africa. But if you read the description, you'll find that many of the records are from the Caribbean. Following the outlawing of the slave trade from Africa to the British colonies, registers were done of so-called “legal slaves,” who had been traded prior to the Abolition of Slave Trade Act (1807).

Finding this database under Africa is a reminder to search outside of the collection or subset you think is logical—and to use keywords as filters. (This database is also listed under Census & Voter Lists in Europe).

As you might imagine, US censuses are among the most popular databases in this collection. If you sort the Census & Voter Lists collection by Record Count instead of popularity,



you may be surprised to see the 1940 census has the second highest number of records, topped only by the London, England, Electoral Registers, 1832-1965.

TRY THIS: In the Census & Voter Lists collection, right-click (on a Mac, control-click) the 1940 U.S. census and look for your own family. Depending on your age, you may find your parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles.

2. Birth, Marriage & Death

Vital records are favorites among genealogists because one record can hold many clues. A marriage record, for example, can contain the name of the bride's father, age of bride and groom, the county where the marriage took place, and the name of the minister and witnesses. A death certificate, likewise, is filled with family tree information. Not only can you learn the cause of death, but certificates frequently give the maiden name of the deceased person's mother, as well as place of birth, attending physician, and length of illness. It was only through a death certificate that I learned the maiden name of my great-grandfather's mother.

Ancestry.com's Birth, Marriage & Death collection has three major subsets:

1. Birth, Baptism & Christening
2. Marriage & Divorce
3. Death, Burial, Cemetery & Obituaries

Each of these collections comprises more than a thousand

databases. If you filter by Canada, you'll also have the option of filtering further by province. Quebec has the largest number of databases, some available only in French.

TRY THIS: Filter the Birth, Marriage & Death collection down by USA and 1600s, and you'll find some amazing records dating back to 1620 Massachusetts as well as mid-17th century birth, death and marriage records from several of the Colonies.

3. Military

The Military collection has nine subsets, running the gamut from enlistment and pension databases to photos and histories. If you're a Civil War buff or researcher, the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies 1861-1865 (located in Histories) make for fascinating reading. Reading about Civil War engagements in their real-time historical context will give you a sense of what it must have been like—a very different feel than our being removed 150 years plus. In the Photos subset, you'll find an eclectic blend of image databases, including some with headstone photos in a few national cemeteries. Imagine my surprise to find a headstone image for my great-great-great-grandfather John Knox, a Union soldier buried in the Marietta (Georgia) National Cemetery.

Of course, if your main interest is in finding service records for your ancestors, the Military collection is the best place to begin your search.

TRY THIS: In the Military collection, select Draft, Enlistment, and Service, and then filter the location to USA, and then state, as well as filter by the date. This will give you the best option for quickly finding databases to search. If your search comes up empty-handed, deselect some of the filters.

4. Immigration & Travel

With more than 400 databases, this collection is the place to begin your search for an immigrant ancestor. Along with passenger lists, border crossings, and passports, you'll also find databases of ships' pictures, and citizenship and naturalization records.

There are some amazingly early records, including those from the 1600s such as Virginia Immigrants, 1623-1666, Directory of Scots Banished to the American Plantations, 1650-1775, and Passengers and Ships Prior to 1684. If you have ancestors who immigrated to Canada and then to the United States, remember to filter for both USA and Canadian databases.

Do you remember my suggestion to search via more than one filter if you don't find a database where you think it should be? An example is the passenger list of the people who sailed on the Titanic. As the voyage originated in England, you might think that's the only place you'll find relevant databases. Not so.

Five Steps to Ancestral Immigration Records

I knew my great-grandmother Mary Eckstrom (Maria Ekström back in Sweden) had immigrated to America about 1875, based on her 1900 census listing. But I'd struck out trying to find her. Could Ancestry.com help solve this puzzle?

1 In Ancestry.com's main Immigration and Travel Advanced search form, I entered the information I was most sure of, typing the name Mary used in Sweden and presumably on her first US records. I entered my best guess of her birth year, plus 1875 for the migration date—but I didn't check Exact for either, to see what Ancestry.com would come up with. (Selecting male or female from the Gender drop-down box at the bottom of the search form can dramatically focus your finds, though some passengers may have been mistakenly miscategorized.)

2 After hitting Search, at first I was disappointed. But Ancestry.com's results are only as good as the data you enter. I'd forgotten to type *Sweden* in the Origin field, thinking I'd covered that by saying she was born in Sweden. So my top results were German women who immigrated in 1886. Not my Maria. "Maria Esterman," the first 3-star entry, was clearly a miss, too. But hold on: Further down the list, what about Maria Ekström, born about 1856, arrived May 12, 1876 (not 1875, but

our ancestors weren't always precise about dates they gave the census enumerator)? Plus she's even from the right county, Örebro.

Don't despair if the first few results from a general search fail to match your ancestor. Keep scrolling down and add your intelligence to that of the software search engine. I wouldn't have thought to be so specific as Örebro, for instance, but once I spotted it among the results I knew I had my great-grandmother.

3 Not all Ancestry.com immigration databases are linked to images of original records, but this transcription gave me the crucial information I needed: Mary has arrived in Philadelphia, not New York, and left Sweden in 1876, not 1875.

4 Refining my search to add the exact migration year and place of arrival, I now got the Swedish emigration record plus Maria's Philadelphia passenger list as my top two hits.

5 Picking the Philadelphia link, I could click to an image of her original arrival record. And look who's listed right after her: sisters Amanda and Caroline. The sisters traveled from Sweden to England to book passage to America, a common pattern.

» David A. Fryxell

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If you filter by Europe/England, you'll find databases for:

- crew records
- deaths at sea

A filter by Ireland returns the database:


- outward passenger list

A filter by Canada returns:

- deaths at sea (more than one hundred of the dead are buried in Halifax, Nova Scotia)

A filter by USA returns:

- *Titanic* Survivors, Carpathia Passenger List, 1912 (delivered survivors to New York)

 **TRY THIS:** Clear all of the filters you may have set on a previous search. Select the Immigration & Travel collection. Using filters, see if you can find what database includes the records for Joseph E. Brooks' (born in 1861) naturalization record. (Hint: He lived in Chicago).

5. Newspapers & Publications

In this collection, you'll find newspapers, magazines and other periodicals (publications issued at regular intervals, like journals). This is the collection where you'll find obituaries from the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand. If you've never done obituary research, you're in for a treat. Obits can include:

- name of the deceased
- name of spouse, children, and grandchildren
- name of children's spouses
- date and place of birth
- death date, place and cause
- education
- name of cemetery
- occupation
- education

Newspapers on Ancestry.com are primarily from the United States, and include many small-town and special-interest

papers. If you had Irish ancestors who came to America during the potato famine, you might find them in the database titled *Irish Relatives and Friends*. This was a weekly newspaper published in New York City beginning in 1849 (the height of Irish immigration). In this collection you'll also find such items as birth, marriage and death announcements; Stars and


Stripes (military); and African-American newspapers. If you filter by periodicals, you'll find journals of German genealogy and genealogies of Virginia families.

 **TRY THIS:** Can you find a listing in the magazine/periodical filter that's written in Dutch and is a family magazine? (Hint: Once you find a magazine in Dutch, use Google Translate <translate.google.com> to translate the title.)

6. Pictures

I touched on the Pictures collection earlier, referencing the postcard database. But there's much more to investigate. Although the number of databases is relatively small, the number of photos within them is not. The U.S. School Yearbooks database alone contains more than 220 million records. Although I'm not in the yearbook database, I did find my brother Mark. It was fun to save the image and email it to him—I'm sure after all these years, his yearbook has gone the way of his lost baseball cards.

If you filter this collection by the location of Europe, you'll find a beautiful collection of United Kingdom and Irish historical postcards. A favorite is the interior of Westminster Abbey, taken during the Coronation of King George V. The Pictures collection is really a hodge-podge of images, so make liberal use of the keywords search box.

 **TRY THIS:** In the Pictures collection, filter pictures by USA and see if you can find the database that has an 1884 image of a cotton plantation. (Hint: Use *plantation* as a keyword. Did you remember to clear all of your previous filters?)

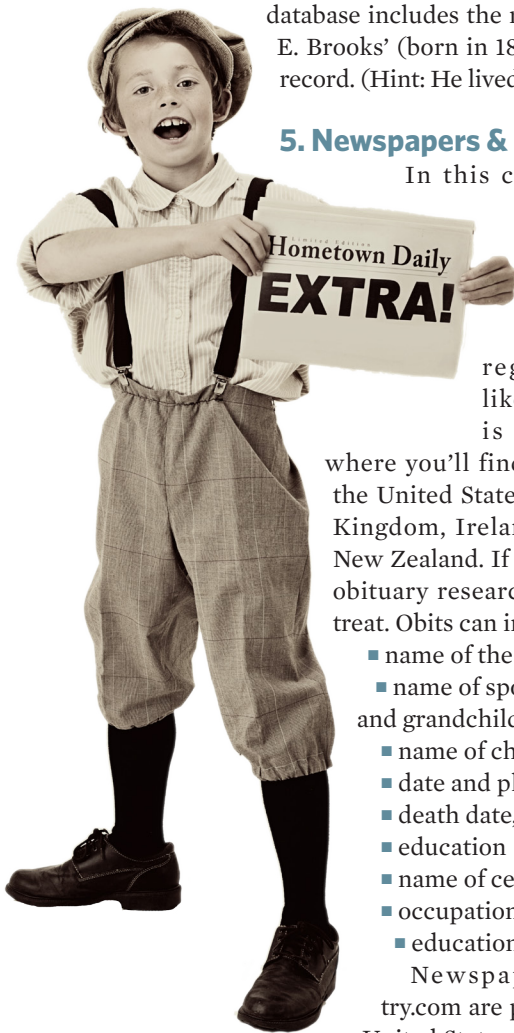
7. Stories, Memories & Histories

While we love discovering names and dates, nothing can take the place of stories. Knowing that great-great-grandpa Steve Snow migrated from North Carolina to Missouri is one thing; finding a story about his beekeeping was quite another.

This collection is among my favorites, because it contains so many county histories, which capture stories, biographies, maps and statistics of a county's early days. This could include the county's geographic, industrial and agricultural makeup, as well as biographies of early settlers. If your ancestor was among the first to settle a county, you'll likely find him mentioned in a county history. Remember, though, that a county history was often written 100 years or so after the county's founding, so be sure to verify the information.

Included in the Stories, Memories & Histories collection are family genealogies, history of organizations (check out New York Hebrew Orphan Asylum Records, 1860-1934), oral histories, military histories, and stories of nobility, royalty and heraldry. The latter contains databases of all things royal, including Burke's Peerage and the "Virginia Heraldica," a database of Virginia families that were allowed a coat of arms.

If you have Ellis Island ancestors, don't miss New York City, Ellis Island Oral Histories, 1892-1976, a database of 2,000 first-person accounts. Turn on your computer speakers and enjoy the tales of long-ago arrivals to America.





8. Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers

In case you're wondering about the difference in these three, a gazetteer contains geographical and statistical information about an area, a map is simply a map, and an atlas is a collection of maps.

When I travel, I like having a gazetteer with me because it has the most comprehensive information on the terrain. It also shows all of the little back roads that you'll never find on a map—and when you're searching for a long-lost cemetery in the boondocks, you need all the help you can get.

This map collection contains more than one hundred databases, with a balanced selection for Europe and North America with maps spanning the 1500s to present day. There are about four times more gazetteers than maps and atlases in the collection, with the earliest U.S. maps dating from the 1500s. A boon for anyone doing land research, this collection contains historical land ownership maps, as well as indexes of early landowners.

If you have United Kingdom ancestry, be sure to search through the old land maps and gazetteers—it's always an aid when you're trying to guess where the family might have moved during their "missing" years. A favorite of mine is the Atlas of London and Suburbs, 1917.

TRY THIS: In the Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers collection, use the Maps & Atlases collection filter and the Europe location filter to see if you can find the 1904 tour guide of Italy from the Alps to Naples. If so, can you find the chapter on cycling through Italy?

9. Schools, Directories & Church Histories

This collection has five subsets:

- City & Area Directories
- Professional & Organizational Directories
- Church Histories & Records
- School Lists & Yearbooks
- Telephone Directories

If someone in your family was listed in a directory, it's possible you'll find them in one of these thousands of databases. For best results, make wise use of filters.

If you've never used a city directory, you're in for a treat. A city directory is an alphabetical list of people in the area along with their address and occupation—a lot like the phone book before telephones became ubiquitous. Listings provide each resident's name, address and phone number.


City directories also can include names and addresses of churches, cemeteries, a short historical overview of the town, and (occasionally) a local map.

Select the Professional & Organizational Directories to find ancestors who may have belonged to specific group, such as physicians, civil servants, baseball players, Irish flax growers—an eclectic group, to be sure. The depth and breadth of this category is a bit mind-boggling, so take some time to filter through the options to see if you can find any databases that might include someone from your family tree.

Use Church Histories & Records to find gems such as the Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy, as well as various church records of births, baptisms and marriages. Some of the UK parish records date to the 1500s.

I covered school yearbooks earlier, but want to note that school lists are a bit different; these can include alumni lists, state wards, teacher rolls and orphan schools. If you know the place and approximate date (by decade), you may be able to filter down to the most relevant databases for searching.

If one of your research problems is finding a place that no longer exists, check out the Geographic Reference Library within the Reference, Dictionaries & Almanacs collection.

 **TRY THIS:** Pick the City & Area Directories filter, then select the appropriate geographic filters for a place your ancestors' lived. Can you find a city directory for their town covering the time they lived there?

10. Tax, Criminal, Land & Wills

While genealogists rely on researching census, birth, death and marriage records, legal documents are probably among the least explored. Too bad, as they can contain a wealth of information about the family, including interesting family dynamics such as who was left out of a will.


The Bank & Insurance Records subset of this collection includes the Freedman's Bank Records, 1865-1871 database. This is an invaluable resource for anyone searching African-American ancestors, as it contains a wealth of personal information.

The Freedman's Savings and Trust Co. was established so former slaves would have a place to save their money. Information available on these records give the name, birth year and age of the account holder, as well as the names of their spouse and parents, where they lived, and the name of their children and their siblings.

If you filter by Tax Lists, don't miss the invaluable Griffith's Valuation, considered to be one of Ireland's premier genealogical resources. The database references approximately 1 million individuals who occupied property in Ireland between 1848 and 1864, and is often used as a substitute for destroyed Irish census records.

The Wills, Estates & Guardians subset contains extracts of wills and probate records. Some records include a transcript of the will itself. In some cases, the will also includes information about land, such as property boundaries.

If you're unsure which database might help in your search, do a quick run-through of each category in the collection.

 **TRY THIS:** Have a family story of American Indian roots? Pick the filter for Tax, Criminal, Land & Wills, then Court, Governmental & Criminal Records, followed by the location filter for USA. Look for the databases titled U.S., Native American Applications for Enrollment in Five Civilized Tribes, 1898-1914. Commonly called the "Dawes Rolls," these records document membership in the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Seminole tribes. Can you find any ancestors in this database?


11. Reference, Dictionaries & Almanacs

This collection is like having the best genealogy reference library on your own computer. Dictionaries & Encyclopedias is a catchall category ranging from geography to English and Welsh surnames to early settlers of Maryland. Again, this is a collection you'll want to filter by keyword.

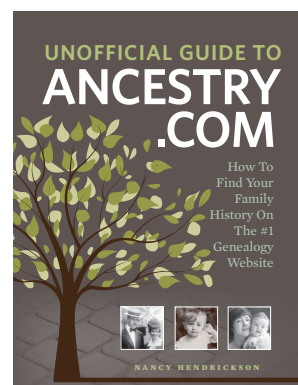
If you're struggling to locate a place that no longer exists, check out the Geographic Reference Library. You can use it to locate nearly any town, city, county or other populated place in the United States. As Ancestry.com states:

"This infobase includes two of the most significant U.S. gazetteers currently available in electronic form, the 1854 New and Complete Gazetteer of the United States and the new American Genealogical Gazetteer. This combination now makes it possible to find both old and new place names practically instantaneously. With more than one million entries in this infobase, many forgotten or hard to find places will be found again."

Using a combination of filters and keywords, I found a database titled Missouri History and searched for the town where my ancestors settled in 1836: Lone Jack. The dictionary contained several references to the Civil War battle fought there, along with a mention of my ancestors in conjunction with the settlement's early days. To find the Lone Jack reference, I clicked Dictionaries & Encyclopedias, then selected the database of Missouri History, and then used a keyword search. When I searched for *Lone Jack* in the main Dictionaries & Encyclopedias Keyword box, I got zero hits. If at first you don't find what you're looking for, be willing to dig deeper.

 **TRY THIS:** Within the References, Dictionaries & Almanacs collection, choose the Dictionaries & Encyclopedias filter. Look for a database titled History for your state (like the Missouri History database I used), then search for your hometown. What interesting tidbits did you discover? ■

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NANCY HENDRICKSON is the author of the *Unofficial Guide to Ancestry.com* (Family Tree Books) and a contributing editor of *Family Tree Magazine*.



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