Ancestry Genealogy Toolkit

ancestry

At Ancestry, we know that researching and crafting your family story requires tools and we're committed to bringing you the best resources possible for free. Whether it's a research form, educational materials, or a community where you can ask questions and share your successes, we've got you covered.

Free Charts & Forms

- Download charts and forms (Ancestral chart, family group sheet, research calendar, research extract, source summary, and correspondence record)
- Download blank census forms

Geographical and Ethnic Helps
- U.S. State Research Guides (Free downloadable PDFs)
- *Ancestry Red Book: American State, County & Town Sources* (Online reference)
- U.S. Enumeration District Maps and Descriptions, 1940 *(Requires free registration)*
- African American Family Research on Ancestry (Free downloadable PDF guide)
- Canadian Research on Ancestry (Free downloadable PDF guide)
- Dutch Research Center (Translation tools)
- French Research Center (Translation tools)
- German Research Center (Translation tools)
- German Research on Ancestry (Free downloadable PDF guide)
- Irish Research in the U.S. and Ireland (Free downloadable PDF guide)
- Italian Research Center (Translation tools)
- Jewish Resources on Ancestry.com (Jewish community locator & name variation tool)
- Spanish-Language Records (Translation tools)
- Swedish Research Center (Translation tools)
- Swedish Research on Ancestry (Free downloadable PDF guide)
- UK and Ireland Research on Ancestry (Free downloadable PDF guide)

Education
- The Ancestry Blog
- 5-minute Finds (Short videos)
- Research Guides
- The Ancestry Wiki
  - *The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy*
  - *Ancestry Red Book: American State, County & Town Sources*
- Genealogy Glossary
- Slideshare
- YouTube
- Our Desktop Education Series on Livestream
- Fishwrap (Newspapers.com blog)
- Fold3 HQ (Fold3.com blog)
- RootsWeb Guide to Tracing Family Trees

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Collaborate
- Ancestry Support Community
- Message Boards
- RootsWeb
- RootsWeb Mailing Lists
- County Look-up

Our Social Network
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Google+
- Instagram
- Pinterest
- YouTube

Miscellaneous
- Soundex Converter. Many databases allow you the option of Soundex searches so that you can grab more phonetically similar variations of the surnames you are researching. Use the Soundex converter to find out the Soundex codes for your family surname variations. That way if one of the variations you have found in your research has a different Soundex code, you'll know you need to search it separately.

BEYOND ANCESTRY

Maps & Geography
- David Rumsey Maps.
- Geographic Names Information System (GNIS). Ever wondered in what county a town was located? Or what cemeteries were in the county in which your ancestors lived? The Geographic Names Information System can help. Enter a town name and its state and you'll be presented with a list of features associated with that town and the name of the county it falls within. Click on a name for geographic coordinates and links to various maps and satellite views of the area.
- Google Maps. Google Maps allows you to view a standard map view, a satellite view, or a view of the terrain. How tall was that mountain that great-grandpa had to traverse to visit the nearest town? Zoom in on the terrain view and it will tell you. Going to visit a library or courthouse for the first time? Google Maps has street view available for a growing number of cities. You can zoom in on an address and see the actual building. Using the rotation arrows you can turn around and look at the other side of the street, move down the street and see landmarks you will be able to use as you navigate your way to the repository. Street view can also enable you to see buildings in your ancestors' neighborhoods that are still standing.
- University of Alabama-Historical Map Archive
- Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection
- Library of Congress: American Memory Collection-Maps

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Census Helps

- <u>Census Abbreviations</u>. Have you ever found a census record written by a guy who clearly had writers' cramp? Beyond really messy handwriting, you may find that enumerators used confusing abbreviations. This website will help you sort out some of the more common abbreviations you'll find.
- <u>Census Enumerator Instructions (IPUMS).</u> Census enumerators were given very specific instructions when it came to recording the answers your ancestors gave. Reading these instructions can be very helpful in more fully understanding the records. This site includes the original instructions for the years 1850-1950.

Miscellaneous

- <u>WorldCat</u>. Looking for more information about a battle in which your ancestor fought during the Civil War? Or perhaps your ancestor was a Philadelphia policeman and you'd like to learn more about the history of that police force. What were the working conditions of the industry in which your ancestors were engaged? The answers to these and many other questions can often be found in publications that might not be in your local bookstore. WorldCat will not only alert you to their existence, but when you enter your zip code it will give you a list of libraries that have those publications in their collection.
- <u>Wikipedia</u>. Ever wondered whether a historic event prompted your ancestors to pick up and leave the country they had called home for generations? Wikipedia can give you some ideas. Search for a year and you'll get a chronology of world events from that year. This free online encyclopedia is a great first step, but you should verify your findings. Although much of what you see will be correct, you will encounter some errors, but use it as a launching point to learn more about historic events that may have impacted your ancestors.
- <u>Google Translate</u>. Your ancestor's non-English records doesn't need to be a brick wall. Use tools like this one to decipher words and create a template of the record form.
- <u>Manifest Markings: A Guide to Interpreting Passenger List Annotations</u>. Ever wonder about the scribblings on passenger lists? This is your guide to deciphering them.
- <u>Old Occupations</u> (USGenWeb). Have an ancestor who was a hatcheler, but no idea what it was? This handy list of old occupations can help you out.
- <u>BehindtheName.com</u>. Find ethnic versions of your ancestors' given names. This is the version most immigrants would have been recorded with in passenger lists. .
- <u>Gravestone Symbolism</u> (Grave Addiction). Images and descriptions of cemetery iconography with meanings.
- <u>Cyndi's List</u>. Still looking for more resources? Cyndi's List has been the family historian's guide to all things family history for more than 18 years.
- <u>Linkpendium</u>. Another fantastic genealogical portal with more than 10 million links.
- <u>WolframAlpha</u>. Wondering how much $1,500 in 1880 would be worth today? This handy computing tool can help. Compute familial relationships, learn about historical events, and more.
- <u>HistoryPin</u> and <u>WhatWasThere</u>. See historic photographs of the places your ancestors lived.
- <u>LibraryThing</u>. LibraryThing allows you to catalog your books online.

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