

# Using Ancestry Library Edition (ALE)

at the Camarillo Public Library

March 12 & 15, 2014

## COME PREPARED:

- You sign up for one hour at a time on the library computers, so make the most of your time by bringing with you the research you've done to date along with a list of your research goals.

## FIRST STEP: GETTING ON A COMPUTER (Options)

- Bring your own laptop from home: WiFi access inside library, no time limit, can save files directly to your computer.
- Borrow a Chromebook from the library's Reference Desk. You'll need your Camarillo Library Card and a Driver's License. Chromebooks can be checked out for the day and for use inside the library.
- Use a library desktop computer on the second floor. You'll need to sign in with your Camarillo library card. You get 60 minutes of time and can extend it with 15 minute increments if no one is waiting for a computer. Bring a thumb drive to download files to take with you. (Chromebooks have USB ports as well.)

## OPTIONAL STEP: GETTING A PRINTER CARD

Before you go upstairs to the computers, you can stop at the Print Station on the first floor (behind and to the right of the Circulation Desk). There you will find the printer card vending machine. Insert \$1.00 and receive a printer card for use at the Print Stations on the first and second floors. You get 5 copies on the first card, and after that each \$1 added to the card gives you 10 copies.

## NEXT STEP: LOGGING IN AND USING ANCESTRY LE

- Use your library card number and PIN number to log in to a desktop computer.
- From the library's homepage click on "Online Research" then "Genealogy" then ALE. (If it takes too long to load, close window and re-open.)

## ANCESTRY LE's HOMEPAGE—WHAT'S THERE:

- Historical records (vital records, census, immigration/emigration, military, schools/ directories, tax/criminal/land, reference)
- Stories and Publications (stories, newspapers, periodicals)
- Photos and maps/atlasses
- Learning Center (how-to articles, Wiki; some features may be blocked)
- Can view public family trees but can't download; can't view OneWorldTree or Private Trees.

## NEXT, TRY A SEARCH:

- At Ancestry's homepage, you will see some search boxes. Click on "Show Advanced" to expand your search options.
- Recommendation: Enter just a few search terms. You can always edit your search with additional terms if needed.
- To keep results from the clutter of user-submitted data (often the least documented), scroll down and select only "Historical Records" (de-select the other categories).
- Then hit the Search button.

## EVALUATING RESULTS:

- Hover cursor over record title hyperlink and a Record Preview will pop up. You can see more indexed information at a glance that helps you identify if this is your ancestor. It saves time in loading images for those records that are clearly not helpful to your search.

- To view images of records that have potential, click on “View Image” or the camera icon and wait for it to load.
  - Image adjustments:
    - The +/- zoom feature is a vertical bar on the right. Scrolling with the mouse wheel moves up and down the page.
    - For hard-to-read images, try “Invert Colors” under “Tools.” You can also rotate or flip images, as necessary.
  - Note every piece of information. Each is a clue for further research. Keep track of conflicting information as you continue to do an exhaustive search of sources.

### TRY FINE-TUNING:

- Exact Match option: The newest search engine has changed the look of Ancestry’s “exact match” options. On the results page, there are sliding bars (top left) that indicate how broad or how narrow your search was for the current results. If you are getting too many results that are irrelevant, you can move the sliding green bar to the right, incrementally, to narrow that particular field. CAUTION: *Make only small adjustments, one at a time, when narrowing your search. Evaluate how the search engine has changed your results to see if further narrowing is even necessary. You don’t want to narrow it so much that it’s dropping what could be useful sources!*
- Wild Card Searches: Helpful for catching misspelled names. An \* replaces more than one character in a name or location, and a ? replaces just one character.
- Change year range: Increase range of years for dates of birth or death, etc., as ages reported in many records could be off by one year or more.
- Add family members: If you are looking for John Smith and have too many results that are hard to evaluate, try adding a family member’s name (someone who would also be on that record) that is more unusual, e.g., Abigail. Finding both John and Abigail would refine your results to more likely candidates.
- “Less is more.” If you have a given name or surname that could be terribly misspelled, try leaving that name out of the search and search only on the other name field. Works best when you are searching just one database for one location, e.g., 1860 U.S. Census in Butler, PA.

### TRY BROWSING RECORDS

- On Ancestry’s homepage, click “Show Advanced,” and scroll down till you see the U.S. map and list of states. Click either on the map or the name of the state you want, and Ancestry will list all the databases unique to that location. You will also see a link to all databases that include that location. You can use this as a way to find out if there are specific sources in the Ancestry collection (e.g., if they have vital records or probate records for a particular state), or to search just one collection or database instead of doing a global search through all their databases (e.g., searching in the Missouri State Census Collection).
- Topic searches can be done in the “Stories & Publications” search category (bottom of search form). Use just the Keyword field here and enter your search terms. For ex., searching on the “Battle of Franklin” brings up hits in the Official Records of the Civil War relating to the 1864 battle in Franklin County, Tennessee, with eyewitness reports from military personnel.
- Search the card catalog for available databases on a specific subject area. Use the Keyword field to enter terms to get the most comprehensive results. Click on a database, and read up on where the data comes from by scrolling down to Source Information and the “About…” paragraphs below that.

### ADDITIONAL HELPS

- ProQuest ALE library guides: <http://proquest.libguides.com/ancestrylibraryedition>. Click on “Content Categories”, “Search Tips,” etc.
- Google "Ancestry Library Edition" and "tutorial" to find guides for using this edition of Ancestry. However, they are not updated yet for the newest search tools.

## WHAT'S MISSING in ALE:

- Restrictions due to copyrights...
  - ProQuest's newspapers (includes their "obituary collection"), but there are some recent obituaries available.
  - ProQuest Historical Newspapers
  - ProQuest's G&LH (local history) collection
  - ProQuest's PERSI and Freedman's Bank records
  - Gale Group's Biography & Genealogy Master Index
  - Gale's database of Filby's Passenger and Immigration List Index (*3M+ arrivals*)
  - Historical Land Ownership and Reference Atlases.
- ...and privacy issues
  - No personal profiles, shopping, uploading family tree or DNA profiles, no posting to message boards or emailing tree owners.

## WHAT YOU CAN USE INSTEAD (Free Substitutes):

- Message boards: Go to <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/> on a new tab of the browser. Create an account (click on "Register") and you can interact on message boards & family trees.
- Local histories, PERSI, Freeman's Bank: Use the library's subscription to Heritage Quest (under Online Research → Genealogy).
- Historical newspapers:
  - *Chronicling America* (Library of Congress): <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>.
  - Use your Los Angeles Public Library card (all southern Californians are eligible) to access "Access Newspaper Archive" (under "Research and Homework"): <http://www.lapl.org/collections-resources/research-and-homework/>.
  - Check usgenweb.org, Cyndi's List, and familysearch.org for available newspapers in your localities. Also check online catalogs for local libraries & archives in localities.
  - Also Google your locality and "historical newspapers." Ex. California Digital Collection: <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc>.
- Filby's Immigration/Ship Lists:
  - To check Filby's, ask at your local Family History Center for the CD-ROM version of Filby's *Passenger and Immigration Lists Index*.
  - Remember there are still lots of other ship lists on ALE to explore!
- Land ownership maps:
  - Try Historic Map Works (<http://www.historicmapworks.com/>). Images can be viewed—zoom, and "save picture as" features are functional, but company logo stays on maps unless you purchase them.
    - Steps: Select "Browse," then on next screen select from drop-down menus to get to the state you want. For land ownership maps, uncheck all map types in left frame and select only "Atlas" to start. When results come up (it may take a few minutes), search within results with county name.
  - The Library Edition of Historic Map Works is available at your local Family History Center. Saved images there should be logo-free.
- Finally, a valuable resource for substitute subscription databases is available *on-site* at your local Family History Center. You will find Fold3 for military records, NewspaperArchives for newspapers, Gale Group's 19c British newspaper collection & FindMyPast for British records, World Vital Records for BMD, immigration/ship lists, land & probate, newspapers, biographies, maps, yearbooks (some restrictions apply). They also have ALE & HistoricMapWorks LE.