

Searching on Ancestry.com

What is Ancestry?

Ancestry.com is one of the oldest and largest groups of genealogy websites on the internet. It is a “for profit” company. And, yes, it is a group. Besides the Ancestry databases that we’re covering here, they also have:

Ancestry DNA – tests that help you connect with relatives through Ancestry.com, plus learn about your ethnic mix

Ancestry Health – helps track family health conditions

Ancestry Academy – group of courses from genealogy experts on a number of genealogical topics

Archives.com – a genealogy site acquired by Ancestry in 2012

AncestryProGenealogists – a group of professional genealogists in Utah working through Ancestry, offering their services for a fee.

Fold 3 – website with a military emphasis; acquired by Ancestry in 2010; formerly called Footnote.

Ancestry Institution – also called the “Library Edition”

Newspapers.com – spun off from Ancestry’s existing collection of historical newspapers and added to in the last couple of years.

RootsWeb – user-contributed databases; free; acquired by Ancestry in 2000. One of the oldest genealogy websites on the internet

FindAGrave – acquired in 2013 by Ancestry

Discounts are offered at their subsidiary sites like Newspapers.com and Fold3 if one has a subscription to Ancestry.com.

10 million trees; 3 billion records; Not all same as other sites e.g. FamilySearch

A “global” search from the homepage.

Entering in **qualifiers**, such as when born; where born, names of spouse, child, parents, etc.

Using **wildcards** (asterisk or question mark) to replace one or more letters in a name; searching by first name only.

Filter by dates, places, etc. Use range of dates rather than exact;

Records vs Categories – Ancestry will prioritize what they think are most relevant

Hover over list to see the content

Using the **map** to determine databases for certain geographic locations – at the bottom of the page, you can select a state (or country) and you will get a list of databases for that area – at the right you can even see specific databases for a county within that state.

Using the **Card Catalog** – a collection of everything on Ancestry.com. You can try putting in a state, or a county even and see what turns up, or a topic. e.g. “Pennsylvania death” or “Evangelical church”

Hints or suggested records – click on Ancestry’s suggested records on right hand side to see if they match your people.

Explore other peoples’ **family trees**