

Ancestry Tips from Christa Cowan Talk 12/8/18

This is not a handout or any product of Christa Cowan's except to be our best recollections from her talk to the VCGS on Dec. 8, 2018. These are notes compiled from the memories of Lyn Gesch, Don and Carley Worth, and contributors from the Wednesday class and are intended only for your personal use. It is also a "living document" and we welcome *your* best memories, additions or corrections!

Tree Tips

Public vs private trees: You can make your tree completely private so that it is not indexed and discoverable (good option when there are many speculative relationships or living people).

Notes are private, comments are public.

Use suffix field of name for short notes, ex., for tentative relationship, put "probable" in suffix field.

Searching from your tree, pros and cons: This type of search includes all the info you have on that person, so best not to use "exact"; may exclude results that don't meet all criteria. Access from the Search button on the upper right hand side of an individual's profile page in a Tree.

Verify what you have learned. Don't adopt info from other trees before verifying the data.

One person attaching a document to a person in THEIR tree can create hints for other people's trees.

Regarding hints (green leaf): Start by looking at the first page or so of hits, look at Community Trees later for more hints.

Use notes to list chronology of sources you have so far and identify what you are missing.

Search Tips

Searches: Wildcards

* = replaces more than one letter

? = replaces only one letter

Can't use at beginning and end but can use beginning and middle, or middle & end.

Need at least three letters with wildcard. [Do they have to be sequential?]

Checking "exact": ex. Fred* → hits on any name beginning with the letters F-r-e-d.

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Searches: Location

Select from drop down list of suggested locations. Ancestry will then look in nearby places.

If you don't select from list, the search engine treats that entry as a keyword search. That may miss some records if the place is wrong [*but could also be a good search if it's a town name that doesn't exist any more!—Note by Lyn.*]

Searches: Hit List / Images

Re ranking results: different weights given to name, birth year, location, source type.

Right click to open records in new tab and not lose your hit list.

Bad handwriting on image: Click on Index.

Corrections to indexing take six weeks to be included in index.

Vertical menu bar on image: full screen, source info, tools, zoom

Searches: Card Catalog

Starting with the card catalog helps you find a specific database and search only within that set of records.

Starting with the card catalog allows you to browse within only a specific set of records if, for ex., an ancestor is not showing up on a search.

Ex. Identify enumeration district in a specific census and browse pages to find name.

Christa has a blog called *The Barefoot Genealogist* with videos on the Ancestry Channel on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/AncestryCom>

Check them out for lots of tips on using Ancestry.com in her own words!