



Search Strategies

There are lots of different ways to search on Ancestry.com. Which way is the most effective and efficient to help achieve your goal? Let's take a look.



Have a Goal

If you have a target in mind—someone or something specific you’re looking for—you’ll be better able to choose the type of search you need and formulate that search to achieve your goal.

Global Search

What it does:

A global search searches everything on Ancestry.com that is indexed. It is an efficient search for rich collections that have lots of detail, like census records.

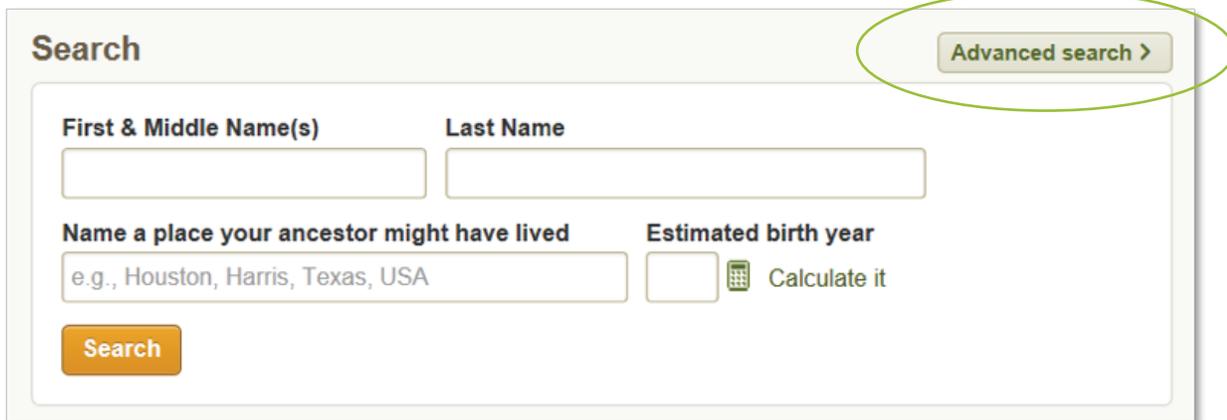
When to use it:

Use a global search when you’re just getting started researching a person or if you want to revisit and see if there are new results for someone you’ve researched in the past.

TWO WAYS TO DO A GLOBAL SEARCH:

• **Using the Search Form**

Start simple with the basic search form on the home page. If you’re seeing too many results, click on the **Advanced search** button and use the additional fields to help narrow your search. *(Remember that you’re searching all of the records on Ancestry.com and trying to match as many of the details you enter as possible. With that in mind, try to include information that is most commonly found in records).*



The image shows a screenshot of the Ancestry.com search interface. At the top right, there is a button labeled "Advanced search >" which is circled in green and has a green arrow pointing to it. Below this is the main search form titled "Search". It contains several input fields: "First & Middle Name(s)", "Last Name", "Name a place your ancestor might have lived" (with the example "e.g., Houston, Harris, Texas, USA"), and "Estimated birth year" (with a "Calculate it" button). A "Search" button is located at the bottom left of the form.

• **Searching from Trees**

Searching from your Ancestry.com tree or from Family Tree Maker puts all of the details about a person from your tree into the search form, so you may see different results than you would from a basic search. Try one search with all of the information and see what rises to the top. Then edit your search by deleting or adding details to target records for that person as a child when they may be living with parents, as an adult with their spouse, or, in the case of women, living under their married name.

Category Search

What it does:

A category search focuses on a particular group of records (e.g., immigration, military, vital records, etc.).

When to use it:

Use a category search when your goal applies to a particular record. For example, you have learned from a census record that your ancestor came over in 1897, and you'd like to find his arrival record. In this instance, you might search the immigration category and maybe even narrow it to passenger lists only. *(Note: If you're searching only passenger lists but not finding your ancestor, don't overlook the possibility that he or she didn't come in via Canada or Mexico. If you're not sure, you'll want to search the higher level to include border crossings.)*

Some categories can be accessed via the **Search drop-down** menu in the navigation bar, and all categories and some subcategories can be accessed via the **Search page**.

The screenshot shows the Ancestry.com search interface. At the top, the navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Family Trees', 'Search', 'DNA', 'Collaborate', 'Learning Center', 'Publish', 'Shop', 'Hire an Expert', and 'Give a gift'. The 'Search' dropdown menu is open, listing categories: 'Search All Records', 'Census & Voter Lists', 'Birth, Marriage & Death', 'Public Member Trees', 'Military', 'Immigration & Travel' (highlighted), and 'Card Catalog'. Below the navigation bar, the search form includes fields for 'First & Middle Name(s)', 'Last Name', 'Year +/-', 'Location', 'Family Member', 'Keyword', 'Gender', and 'Race/Nationality'. There are also checkboxes for 'Exact' searches and a 'Collection Priority' dropdown set to 'All Collections'. On the right side, there are sections for 'Recently viewed collections', 'Special Collections', and 'Historical Records' with sub-sections like 'Birth, Marriage & Death', 'Census & Voter Lists', 'Immigration & Travel', 'Military', 'Schools, Directories & Church Histories', and 'Tax, Criminal, Land & Wills'. At the bottom, there is a 'Recent Searches' section showing 'dye', 'szucs', '(no name indicated)', and 'ann*'. A green bar with the number '3' is at the bottom center of the page.

Collection Search

What it does:

Ancestry sometimes groups collections that have a common theme and makes them searchable from collection pages. Examples are the Jewish Family History collections, African American Family History collections, Quaker Family History collections, New York's 400th Anniversary, Military Conflicts, Death Records, Passenger Lists, and more.

When to use it:

When your search doesn't necessarily fit a record group, or when you're looking for more information on a particular record type. These pages typically also include links to guidance materials that will help you with your research in that particular area.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS ON ANCESTRY.COM

- [African American Collection](#)
- [Death Collection](#)
- [Drouin Church and Vital Records](#)
- [Immigration Collection](#)
- [Irish Collection](#)
- [Jewish Family History Collection](#)
- [Military Collection](#)
- [New England Collection](#)
- [New York 400th Anniversary](#)
- [The Quaker Collection](#)

Direct Search

What it does:

A direct search allows you to focus your search on one collection, without having to wade through other records.

When to use it:

When you've identified a type of record you need and it is available on Ancestry.com for the place and time when your ancestor would be included.

LOCATING COLLECTIONS TO SEARCH DIRECTLY:

There are two ways to explore Ancestry.com collections and identify records of interest.

CARD CATALOG

The Card Catalog can help you locate collections for the times and places where your ancestor lived. The catalog lets you search for specific collections or use filters to help you get at the content you need.

Searches

- Title search field searches only the titles of collections.
- Keyword search field searches the titles of collections and descriptive materials associated with the collection as well.

Filters

You can filter by:

- Record category (e.g., immigration records; census records; birth, marriage, and death records; etc.)
- Location (country, state, county for U.S.)
- Time period (century or decade)
- Languages

Tip: You can sort results to rank recently updated collections at the top. This is a good way to keep up with the most current offerings for your ancestor's location.

The screenshot shows the Ancestry Card Catalog interface. On the left, there are search fields for 'Title' and 'Keyword(s)', and a 'Search' button. Below these are filter sections: 'Filter Titles' with options like 'Birth, Marriage & Death', 'USA', 'Illinois', and 'Cook'; and 'Filter By Collection' with options like 'Birth, Baptism & Christening', 'Marriage & Divorce', and 'Death, Burial, Cemetery & Obituaries'. The main area displays 'Results 1-14 of 14' sorted by 'Popularity'. A table lists various collections with columns for 'TITLE', 'COLLECTION', 'RECORDS', and 'ACTIVITY'. A tooltip is shown over the entry 'Cook County, Illinois Death Index, 1908-1988', providing details about its publication and update dates, and a description of the database's content. The entry 'Directory of the city of Chicago, Illinois for 1843' is circled in green at the bottom of the list.

TITLE	COLLECTION	RECORDS	ACTIVITY
Cook County, Illinois, Birth Certificates Index, 1871-1922	Birth, Marriage & Death	2,353,078	
Cook County, Illinois, Marriages Index, 1871-1922	Birth, Marriage & Death		
Cook County, Illinois Marriage Index, 1930-1966	Birth, Marriage & Death		
Cook County, Illinois Death Index, 1908-1988	Birth, Marriage & Death		
Cook County, Illinois, Deaths Index, 1878-1922	Birth, Marriage & Death		
Cook County, Illinois Birth Index, 1916-1935	Birth, Marriage & Death		
Cook County, Illinois Marriage Indexes, 1912-1942	Birth, Marriage & Death	674,692	
Chicago Tribune, Obituary Index, 1988-1997	Birth, Marriage & Death	238,764	
Illinois Quaker Records	Birth, Marriage & Death	5,292	
Chicago Sun-Times Obituaries, 1988-95	Birth, Marriage & Death	3,790	
Directory of the city of Chicago, Illinois for 1843	Birth, Marriage & Death	126	

The Card Catalog can unearth collections you might not think to search. For example, the Directory of the city of Chicago, Illinois for 1843, actually includes an obituary page with "Names, places, dates, and ages at death of some of Chicago's Old Settlers, prior to 1843..."

PLACE PAGES

State resource pages (and equivalents for some foreign countries) are also available and can be accessed from the **Search** tab. Click the **Search** tab and then scroll down to the map in the lower-left corner of the page. You'll find links to collections unique to that state, listed by category.

Search

Match all terms exactly Recently viewed collections [See More](#)

First & Middle Name(s) Last Name

Use default settings ▼ Use default settings ▼

Any Event ▼ Year +/- Location

Use default settings ▼

Exact

➕ Add the events (birth, marriage, death, and more)

Family Member First Name Last Name

Choose... ▼

➕ Add family members (mother, father, spouse, siblings, children)

Keyword Exact

+g pit or "Thing Tiger" ▼

Gender Race/Nationality

— Select — ▼ — Select — ▼ Exact

Collection Priority

All Collections ▼ Show only records from these collections

Historical records Family trees

Stories & publications Photos & maps

Search Hide Advanced Clear Form

Recent Searches

Open | Save | (no name indicated) | Add

Explore by Location

USA, UK & Ireland, Europe, Canada, Australa & NZ

United States

Recent additions include

- 1940 United States Federal Census - New
- 1930 United States Federal Census - Updated
- U.S. City Directories (beta)

Alabama Florida Louisiana Nebraska Oklahoma Vermont
 Alaska Georgia Maine Nevada Oregon Virginia
 Arizona Hawaii Maryland New Hampshire Pennsylvania Washington
 Arkansas Idaho Massachusetts New Hampshire Rhode Island West Virginia
 California Illinois Michigan New Jersey South Carolina Wisconsin
 Colorado Indiana Minnesota New Mexico North Carolina Wyoming
 Connecticut Iowa Mississippi New York South Dakota Tennessee USA
 Delaware Kansas Missouri North Carolina Texas
 District of Columbia Kentucky Montana North Dakota Utah
 Ohio

References, Dictionaries & Almanacs

General Reference Materials
 Research Guides & Finding Aids
 Dictionaries & Encyclopedias
 More

Family Trees

Public Member Trees
 More

Stories & Publications

Stories, Memories & Histories
 Newspapers
 Periodicals & Magazines

Photos & Maps

Pictures
 Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers

Special Collections

New York 400th Anniversary
 African American Collections
 Jewish Family History

[View all in Card Catalog](#)

A complete listing of collections browsable by title, location, and date

Search > USA > Missouri

Missouri

Welcome to our Missouri family history research page. Here you'll find record collections, history, and genealogy resources to help you trace your Missouri ancestors.

[Collections](#) [History](#) [Resources](#)

Data Collections

Missouri Census & Voter Lists

Missouri, State Census Collection, 1844-1881	315,589
U.S. Census Reconstructed Records, 1660-1820	171,563
Missouri, Jackson County Voter Registration Records, 1928-1956	61,961
Missouri, Compiled Census and Census Substitutes Index, 1830-1870	52,451
Missouri Mortality Records, 1850 and 1860	2,060

[View all Missouri Census & Voter Lists](#)

Missouri Birth, Marriage & Death

Missouri Marriage Records, 1805-2002	5,968,951
Missouri, Death Records, 1834-1910	752,904
Missouri Birth Records, 1851-1910	668,370
Missouri Still Birth & Miscellaneous Records, 1805-2002	214,105
Missouri Marriages to 1850	126,161

[View all Missouri Birth, Marriage & Death](#)

Missouri Military

U.S., Confederate Soldiers Compiled Service Records, 1861-1865	2,049,383	FREE
U.S., Union Soldiers Compiled Service Records, 1861-1865	837,569	FREE
Missouri, Confederate Pension Applications and Soldiers Home Applications	27,874	
Missouri State Office, Political and Military Records, 1810-1820	25,022	

Search for historical records for ancestors in Missouri.

Search

Select another state or region

USA ▼ Missouri ▼

Narrow by county

Select a county to view its unique collections.

Audrain	10	Lafayette	3
Barry	1	Lincoln	2
Barton	1	Linn	5
Bates	2	Livingston	13
Benton	2	Maries	1
Boone	4	Marion	3
Buchanan	10	McDonald	2
Caldwell	3	Miller	2
Callaway	10	Moniteau	4
Camden	1	Monroe	1

Contact us at

1-800-ANCESTRY (1-800-262-3787)

9am-11pm ET daily

