



Ancestry Basics

Get started with searching

1. Visit ppld.org and click on **Research**, then select **Genealogy**
2. Under **Genealogy Resources**, click on **Ancestry Library Edition**, then click on **Ancestry Library Edition** again

If you access AncestryLibrary from home, you will be prompted to enter your PPLD library card number and PIN.

3. Click on **Begin Searching**

There are three ways to search:

General Records Search

Search billions of records in the AncestryLibrary database using your ancestor's:

- Name
- Life events (places and dates of birth, marriage, death, residence, etc.)
- Family members

Filter searches by record categories, locations, and dates to further narrow your results.

Special Collections / Card Catalog

Every record is part of a collection. Use the **Card Catalog** to view record collection categories (e.g., Immigration & Travel), search for collections by title or keyword, or filter collections by category, location, and/or date. From here, you can search the records within individual collections.

Read the descriptions of record collections to determine if their contents are relevant.

Explore by Location

Select a continent, country, or state to view a list of records for that location. Click on **See more About...** to view records by category, narrow by region, or view additional resources.

The screenshot shows the AncestryLibrary search interface. It includes fields for 'First & Middle Name(s)' and 'Last Name', with an 'Exact...' checkbox. Below these are fields for 'Place your ancestor might have lived' (City, County, State, Country) and 'Birth Year'. A 'Search' button is present, along with a 'Show fewer options' link and a 'Match all terms exactly' checkbox. There are also links for 'Add event:' (Birth, Marriage, Death, Lived In, Any Event, More) and 'Add family member:' (Father, Mother, Sibling, Spouse, Child). A 'Keyword' field is also visible, with a placeholder 'Occupation, street address, etc.'. At the bottom, there are dropdown menus for 'Gender' and 'Race/Nationality', and a list of checked filters: Historical Records, Family Trees, Stories & Publications, and Photos & Maps. A 'Search' button and a 'Clear search' link are at the bottom.

What is AncestryLibrary?

AncestryLibrary is the library's institutional subscription to the world's largest genealogical database, Ancestry.com. AncestryLibrary provides library patrons with access to many of the same records included in an individual paid subscription. This database is accessible from any PPLD library location.

AncestryLibrary vs. Ancestry.com

AncestryLibrary provides access to a variety of U.S. and international record collections. You can also view and search public family trees and message boards and access the Learning Center. You cannot create a family tree using AncestryLibrary.

An individual **Ancestry.com** account provides access to additional collections (varies by subscription level), and allows you to post to public trees and message boards, create a family tree, access "hints," and use the "Shoebox."

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AncestryLibrary Search Basics

Click on **Begin Searching** and enter information such as your ancestor's name, where they may have lived, and birth or death year. Click on **Show more options** to include other life events, family members, gender, nationality, and keywords.

Start Searching

- Start with the information you know. You do not need to fill every search field (the more details you include, the narrower your search results).
- If you are looking for a specific record (e.g., a birth record), select a **Historical Record** type (under **Special Collections**) to perform a more targeted search that excludes other record types.
- Check **Match all terms exactly** to include *only* exact matches (this will exclude similar names, initials, or misspellings).
- Use **Exact...** under a search field to include similar names, a wider date range, or adjacent geographic areas.

From the search results page, you can narrow or broaden your search by:

- Adding, removing, or editing search terms by clicking on **Edit Search**
- Adjusting the **Broad/Exact** sliders to adjust the exactness of the search
- Filtering your search by a specific record **Category, Location, or Date**

Tip! Different types of records contain varying combinations of information. Try searching with more, less, or different information to target records that may have been excluded from your initial search.

AncestryLibrary Features

Home - Return to the AncestryLibrary homepage.

Search - Search for records by category, location, or collection.

Message Boards - Search or browse community posts related to record types, topics, surnames, and locations.

Learning Center - Find **Research Aids** for various record types, ethnic groups, and getting started. View the U.S. state **Map** guide to learn about the location your ancestor lived.

Charts & Forms - View or download ancestral charts, family group sheets, research logs, blank census forms, and other resources to keep organized.

New Collections - Access a searchable list of Ancestry record collections, sorted by most recently updated collections.

Quick Links (on Home page) - Search specific record categories, message boards, and public family trees.

U.S. Census Records (on Home page) - Search specific census years using tailored search forms.

Tip! Names were often misspelled by record keepers and transcribers. Use **wildcards** to replace letters in a search (? to replace a single letter; * to replace zero or more letters). E.g., Sm?th* will match Smith, Smyth, Smythe, Smithers, Smithson, etc. Wildcard searches must include at least three non-wildcard letters.

Learn more about AncestryLibrary

Learning Center

<https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/LearningCenter/>

Ancestry Support - Search and Records

<https://support.ancestry.com/s/search-and-records>

Ancestry Academy

<https://www.ancestryacademy.com/browse>

Ancestry YouTube Channel

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsc0AQkAh_2cQmxqwD6VWRw

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