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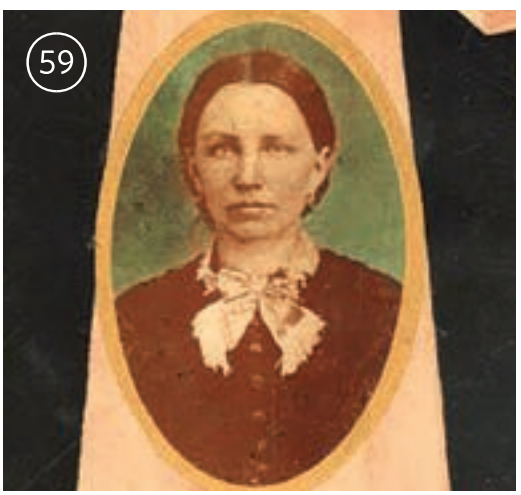

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Family Tree Magazine (ISSN 1529-0298) is published six times per year: January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October and November/December by Yankee Publishing Inc., PO Box 520, 1121 Main Street, Dublin, NH 03444. Vol. 26, No. 2, March/April 2025. Subscription rates: one year, $36. Canadian subscriptions add $8 per year, other foreign subscriptions add $10 per year for surface mail or $35 per year for air mail and remit in US funds. Postmaster: Send all address changes to Family Tree Magazine, PO Box 37900, Boone, IA 50037-0900. Periodicals postage paid at Cincinnati, Ohio and additional mailing offices. Produced and printed in the USA.

familytree MAGAZINE

MARCH/APRIL 2025 / VOLUME 26, ISSUE 2

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P.O. Box 37900, Boone, IA 50037-0900

Visit FamilyTreeMagazine.com for more genealogy information and products.

Family Tree Magazine, published in the United States, is not affiliated with the British *Family Tree Magazine*, with Family Tree Maker software or with Family Tree DNA.

FAMILY TREE MAGAZINE IS A DIVISION OF
YANKEE PUBLISHING, INC:
President and CEO **Jamie Trowbridge**

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out on a **limb**

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When someone finds out

I go to a genealogy conference every year, they give me a quizzical look. "Isn't genealogy about dead people?" they ask. "How can there be *news*?"

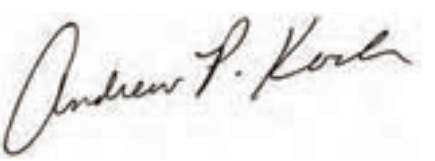
Little do they know about all the exciting tech tools that are announced at each year's RootsTech <www.familysearch.org/rootstech>. These tools change how we learn about our ancestors, as well as how we preserve and share their stories.

The conference also showcases the latest and best strategies for conducting research—a gathering place for some of the brightest minds in genealogy. Even if you can't attend in-person in Salt Lake City, you can take advantage of more than 200 recorded presentations online (page 7) and promotional offers from leading genealogy companies (page 24).

In this issue, we compare and highlight the latest advancements of the largest genealogy websites—Ancestry.com, FamilySearch and MyHeritage (page 14). We covered a similar topic in the August 2000 issue in our first year, making these tips helpful reminders of just how far technology has come in 25 years.

Also part of our 25th-anniversary celebration is this issue's Surnames Cheat Sheet, which addresses common questions about family names—including common myths. Coupled with up-to-date guidance on finding female ancestors (page 50), the guide will help you topple even the most stubborn brick walls in your research.

Genealogy is, ultimately, about "dead people." But it's about the living, too. And the family history community is very much alive.



Web Highlight: 25 Years of *Family Tree*

Highlights: Our 25th Birthday Celebration

<www.familytreemagazine.com/anniversary>

This year marks *Family Tree*'s 25th anniversary—a milestone all the more remarkable when you consider how drastically media has changed in the past few decades.

We kicked off celebrations in our January/February issue by revisiting some topics that we covered in our first year of publication. We continue in this issue with a comparison of genealogy websites (page 14) and a guide to finding Swedish ancestors (page 42); both subjects were covered in our August 2000 issue.

Visit our 25th anniversary landing page throughout the year to see a collection of these articles, plus some of our "Greatest Hits" and a digital version of the "From the Archive" series (page 70).

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5 QUESTIONS *with:*

Daniel Horowitz - *Genealogy Expert, MyHeritage*

FOUNDED IN A LIVING room near Tel Aviv, Israel, in 2003, MyHeritage <www.myheritage.com> has swiftly grown into one of the largest genealogy companies in the world. With a global audience and some 33 billion digitized records, the site has firmly established itself as one of the "Big Four."

Over the past several years, MyHeritage has expanded its offerings from historical records and family trees to DNA tests (2016), photo-enhancement (2020) and -dating (2023) tools, and a sister site offering historical newspapers (OldNews <www.oldnews.com>, 2024). The latest new feature, LiveMemory (see page 6), uses AI to turn still photos into short videos.

We sat down with Daniel Horowitz, a genealogy expert who's been with MyHeritage since 2006. With nearly 40 years of family history experience, Daniel regularly speaks at genealogy conferences and holds a board-level position at the Israel Genealogy Research Association (IGRA) <genealogy.org.il>.

Daniel's interest in family history began with a school project as a teenager—and stories from his grandmother, who survived the Holocaust but lost many family members. He's gone on to participate in crowdsourced digitization and transcription projects, and he maintained the "Searching for my Roots" education guide for 15 years.

Daniel shares his impressions of the genealogy community, and provides a behind-the-scenes look at one of the leading names in family history. Though he declined to comment on any specific upcoming releases from MyHeritage, he notes that the company "develops features that not only enhance the quality of research, but also attract younger generations" through AI, storytelling, and family photos.

1 What trends have you noticed in how genealogists do research?

Everyone starts with pen and paper. But the use of the internet, social media, websites, DNA, and, most recently, AI is something younger people are increasingly adopting.

2 What's an underused feature of MyHeritage?

The Consistency Checker is probably my favorite underused feature, as it provides leads on what might be wrong in your family tree—and yes, there are wrong facts on your tree.

I also have to mention the PedigreeMap <education.myheritage.com/article/how-to-use-pedigreemap>, which gives you both bird's eye and detailed views of the places where your family was born, lived, carried out their activities, and died.

3 You've been with MyHeritage for nearly 20 years. What do you like about working there?

MyHeritage feels like my second home—it's a big family where everyone cares for one another. Additionally, I have the pleasure and honor of seeing what's coming, contributing my input, making requests, and providing feedback on the features being developed.

4 How does MyHeritage acquire new records?

MyHeritage establishes partnerships with libraries and archives to digitize, OCR [enhance with optical character recognition software], and transcribe new materials from around the world. Sometimes, we also connect with owners of large record collections to license or purchase them.

5 MyHeritage continues to develop innovative tools. Where does the tech team get ideas for new features?

Many ideas come from the developers or other employees themselves when they research their own families and use our existing tools. [CEO] Gilad Japhet, a genealogist himself, plays a key role, as he has the vision to foresee what tools can be developed with new technology to benefit the genealogy community. ●

We compare MyHeritage with fellow big genealogy sites Ancestry.com <www.ancestry.com> and FamilySearch <www.familysearch.org> beginning on page 14.

WHAT'S NEW BY ANDREW KOCH

MyHeritage LiveMemory

Above: Original photo
Right: Stills from an animated LiveMemory video

MYHERITAGE ADDED TO ITS LIBRARY of photo tools LiveMemory, which creates five-second videos from still photos uploaded to the site. A later update allows users to select from multiple possible animations: hugging, laughing, dancing and more. LiveMemory builds off the Deep Nostalgia technology launched in 2021 that uses artificial intelligence to generate realistic motion in a photo.

A blog post announcing the new feature <blog.myheritage.com/2024/11/introducing-livememory-bring-your-photos-to-life-in-video> included testimonials from genealogy experts such as Roberta Estes (whose mother is animated to twirl in a floral dress) and Maureen A. Taylor (whose photo subject flashes a peace sign and interacts with a now-barking dog; see above).

As of this writing, the tool is available only in the MyHeritage mobile app. Eligible photos must be within a compatible dimension and less than 20MB in size.

Any user can animate a limited number of photos for free; dedicated Photo plan subscribers can animate 20 photos per year, and unlimited usage requires the Omni subscription.

INTERNET ARCHIVE LOSES COPYRIGHT CASE

In late 2024, an appeals court ruled against website Internet Archive <www.archive.org> in a years-long copyright case. Filed by major US book publishers, the case determined that the Internet Archive unlawfully used in-copyright books as part of its digital-lending program.

The non-profit Internet Archive hosts a variety of digitized books, audio, records and other publications—many of them public-domain and some in partnership with libraries and archives. Through its Open Library, users can borrow materials much like they would from a conventional library.

In the early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic when many libraries and schools closed indefinitely, the Internet Archive temporarily removed borrowing restrictions on its materials (including those still under copyright protection). Though the "National Emergency Library" project lasted just a few months, it triggered a lawsuit from book publishers who alleged the Archive used roughly 33,000 of their copyrighted works without authorization.

The Archive argued that its policy of controlled digital lending (i.e., lending scanned copies of physical books on a one-to-one basis) constituted fair use. The courts disagreed, and the Archive declined to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court.

In effect, the ruling limits what the Internet Archive can make available to its users. The site can still lend out public-domain materials. But publications under copyright protection (likely including even those that have no official digital version) will be removed.

LIVEMEMORY: COURTESY MYHERITAGE AND MAUREEN A. TAYLOR

AMERICAN ANCESTORS: OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

After months of renovation, the Boston-based American Ancestors reopened its facilities in January. On-site resources—which are available to both members and the general public—include the Brim-DeForest Library and the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center. American Ancestors, also known as the New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS), temporarily closed to the public in March 2023.

NEHGS building in Boston

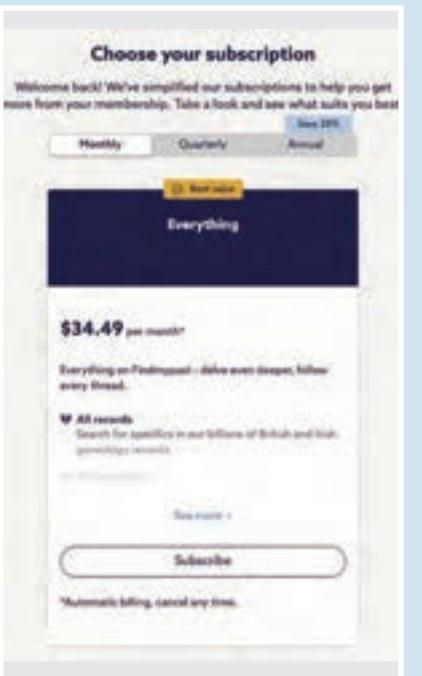
The organization was founded in 1845 and hosts a database of 1.4 billion searchable names. Of note, its ongoing 10 Million Names Project <www.10millionnames.org> seeks to digitize records that document all people of African descent who were enslaved in the United States through 1865.

Learn about the center's in-person events at <www.americanancestors.org/events>.

New RootsTech Sessions

AS OF THIS WRITING, ROOTSTECH 2025 is set to kick off on March 6. The in-person event in Salt Lake City is just part of the fun—FamilySearch also plans to add more than 200 new online sessions to the already extensive collection at <www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech>.

The On-Demand Library boasts more than 1,500 free genealogy videos, some dating to 2019 <www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/search>. Search for relevant videos by keyword, or filter by language, country, speaker and more. See a tutorial for using the site at <www.familytreemagazine.com/libraries-archives/navigating-the-rootstech-on-demand-library>.



CHANGES TO FINDMYPAST SUBS

Subscription website Findmypast <www.findmypast.com> updated its membership options in fall 2024. The site previously offered multiple subscription tiers (each with distinct benefits). But Findmypast now has just one—an "Everything" subscription—with different payment options:

- Month-to-month: $34.49
- Every three months: $89.99
- Annual: $299.99

Users who commit to the year-long subscription receive an additional 15% off as a "loyalty discount." The site continues to offer pay-as-you-go "Micropayments" for individual records.

Findmypast has especially strong records coverage for the United Kingdom. Until this year, the site had exclusive access to the 1921 census of England and Wales. See page 15 for a comparison between Findmypast and the other "Big Four" genealogy websites.

Saving the Stories of the Past

Being the keeper of your family's history is an honor...but sometimes overwhelming. There are so many memories to capture before they fade. Photos and memorabilia to digitize and label. Stories to share with loved ones.

You want to use the best (and easiest!) technologies, but you don't want to keep investing in different tools. Where are you in the following three-step process of saving your stories? Consider our recommendation for a single, easy-to-use system that can help you all along the way.

1. Digitize the stuff. Many genealogists have piles of photos, documents and artifacts that capture the faces, places, and stories of the past. These bring memories back to life and reveal loved ones' personalities. Family documents help build family trees and solve age-old mysteries. But until they're digitized, they can't be easily copied, preserved, quality-enhanced or shared.

Don't let anxieties about which tools to use (and how to use them) sabotage your digitizing goals. One solution, the **Vivid-Pix Memory Station Software**, saves time by working with your desktop scanner or all-in-one printer to add important metadata to your digitized files and embed them with stories—in addition to reviving an image's faded colors and correcting color imbalances.

The Memory Station Software works with most scanners. Or you can purchase the full Memory Station, which bundles the software with a fast, space-saving overhead scanner. With it, you can scan even thick books, 3D objects, and large documents or albums.

2. Record living memories. Chances are you've felt the frustration of studying unidentified family photos. Perhaps as you've sorted through a deceased relative's belongings, you wished you knew what everything was. Even more

By listening to family historians, social and health providers, and leaders throughout many communities, Vivid-Pix invented the patent-pending Memory Station and tools specifically to help connect people to their past – and future.

heartbreaking can be the regret you feel at not having captured their stories in their own voices.

Start capturing what you can now, before more memories fade. And make it easy on yourself. Open your Memory Station Software and pull up an image you've already captured, downloaded, or received from another. Find the person who can best tell the story of that image. (Maybe it's you.) Then hit a button to record an audio narrative that will be saved with the image, so the item and the story behind it are reunited and preserved together digitally.

In the process, you've also captured the speaker's unique voice and turns of phrase—and given them the gift of being heard.

3. Share your family story. Learning about your family's past can be exciting, even empowering. Many genealogists discover a deepened sense of identity and connection, or answers to long-standing mysteries.

It's natural to want to share these insights with your relatives. But the challenge remains: how do you turn all those digitized images and research discoveries into a narrative your family will enjoy?

Again, Memory Station Software has an easy answer. Its Stories feature allows you to string together multiple images and voice recordings into the most common movie format, MP4. It's like creating your own mini-documentary about your family!

Create short stories—with just one or a few images—or longer narratives. The videos are easy to share with relatives via email, video chat, or at your next family gathering. Upload to social media and take your Throwback Thursday posts to a whole new level. You can even customize different versions with special photos and messages just for certain relatives.

Connecting the dots between past and present—and connecting your people to each other—is so much easier when you let Memory Station help you from start to finish. From Missouri, the show-me state? Download a free trial of Memory Station Software onto a Windows computer and create five Stories – you can even fix ten images. No credit card required. Watch quick and easy demonstration tutorials at **www.vivid-pix.com/memorystation**.

The Health and Social Benefits of Family Memories

What if you could fill your free time doing what you love doing and improve your health and well-being. You can!

By Rick Voight, creator of Memory Station and Co-Founder and CEO of Vivid-Pix.

Through our primary research we've seen how people living with dementia can benefit when they talk about the past, especially while looking at photos or other personal items. Participating in guided conversations like this is called Photo Reminiscence Therapy (pRT). It can help reduce loneliness, stress and depression and even improve brain function.

This kind of therapy is affordable, and involves no medication. It's just the kind of resource that our large population of aging adults and their caregivers need. That's why we developed family and continuing education courses, continue our research, and are working hard to make pRT as widely available as possible.

pRT is not just for those with cognitive decline, though. Healthy brains need exercise, too! Reminiscing reaches into our memory banks and activates multiple parts of our brain, releases happy and healthy endorphins, and can improve overall social well-being and interconnectedness in so many ways.

Learn more at www.vivid-pix.com/reminisce *and* www.vivid-pix.com/education.

Rick Voight is a lifelong snapshooter, who's been in the imaging business for a few decades. Founded in 2012, Vivid-Pix invents and harnesses technologies, making it simple for individuals, families, and organizations to relive memories and share stories.

Back in Time

▲ RECENT READS:
The Record Keeper: The Unfolding of a Family Secret

Looking for a compelling read that blends mystery, family history, and genetic genealogy? Check out *The Record Keeper: The Unfolding of a Family Secret in the Age of Genetic Genealogy* (Legacy Book Press LLC), a memoir by family historian and author Allison Barnhart. Her lifelong interest in family history led her to order a DNA test for her father in 2015. The results made them question their heritage and remove an entire branch of their family tree.

Don't miss her website <www.allisonbarnhart.com> featuring "the scrapbook," where you can "connect the story with the visuals and scroll through photos of people, personal belongings, and records mentioned in the book."

◀ ▲ ROAD TRIP:
Mayberry Make-Believe

Many of us grew up feeling like Andy, Opie, Aunt Bee and Barney were part of our family thanks to the highly successful run of "The Andy Griffith Show" from 1960 to 1968 (and the six decades of reruns since). That's why it would have taken more than a goat full of dynamite to keep me from detouring to Andy's hometown of Mt. Airy <www.visitmayberry.com> on my trip to North Carolina to keynote the York County Library genealogy conference. This faux, friendly town of Mayberry features Floyd's Barber Shop, Walker's Soda Fountain, and the courthouse complete with Otis' cell. I enjoyed a long conversation with Wally's Service Station attendant Emmy Smith. Oh, and Goober says "Hey!"

◀ HISTORIC HOTSPOT: Genealogy Carved in Stone

Pioneers who traveled the Oregon Trail typically spent the night at Register Cliff near Guernsey, Wyo. Even today, you can see the names of brave and optimistic souls painstakingly carved into the chalky limestone rock. Most names were chiseled between 1841 and 1869, but some date back to early fur traders. Learn more by watching CBS legend Charles Kuralt in "A Stop Along the Trail" from his 1970s TV series "On the Road" (YouTube: <youtu.be/-EY5RN6scec?si=sbbVtJFuMw-vf25r>) and visit Register Cliff Historic Site <www.nps.gov/places/000/register-cliff-historic-site.htm>.

◀ RESEARCH TIP: Calculating Cousins with FamilySearch

Take the mystery out of determining cousin relationships once and for all using a blog post from FamilySearch <www.familysearch.org/en/blog/cousin-chart>. It's one of the best collections of cousin-calculating tools and methods, and well-worth bookmarking. Choose from the handy visualization chart, the "Cousin Calculator" drop-down menu tool, or a math-based methodology.

▲ RECORD RICHES: The Oldest Docs on Ancestry.com

Ancestry.com's search tools allow you to filter by century and by 10-year increments starting from 1600. But does that mean 1600 is as far back as their records go? Not by a long shot! According to the genealogy giant <www.ancestry.com/c/ancestry-blog/through-the-time-machine-the-oldest-documents-on-ancestry-amu>, deeds from Mühldorf, Germany, are the oldest on the site, with some dating back to 1300. Thanks to state-of-the-art technology, even the oldest documents in poor condition can be legible and searchable! ●

family tree PODCAST

◀ Podcast

Hear more great genealogy finds from Lisa and other experts in our free bimonthly podcast <www.familytreemagazine.com/genealogy-podcast>.

Lisa Louise Cooke is the founder of the Genealogy Gems website and podcast <www.lisalouisecooke.com>, and host of the Family Tree Podcast <www.familytreemagazine.comgenealogy-podcast>.

Heirloom Scouting

David Smith poses in front of a quilt of Scouting memorabilia made for him by his daughter, Clare Long.

An expertly crafted quilt tells of a man's lifelong passion for Scouting.

Scouting is an important part of Clare Long's family story. Her father, David Smith, achieved the top rank of Eagle Scout at the age of 14. Later, as a father and scoutmaster, he shepherded her six younger brothers through their own Scouting experiences.

As the only girl in the family, Long wasn't left out. "I was in Explorer Scouts in the early 1970s, when the Boy Scouts of America opened it up to women," she says. "I was one of the first women, and I went to a camp in Canada."

As her father's 90th birthday approached in 2022, Clare considered how to honor his life. Then she remembered the box of his Scouting memorabilia they discovered when her father downsized to an independent senior-living community.

"He doesn't hang on to a lot, so the fact that he kept it said it meant a lot to him," she says. Her brother Brian, who had taken the box home for safekeeping, suggested she transform its contents into a quilt.

"I've been a sewist for a long time, and I've made a lot of memory quilts from dress shirts and T-shirts," she says. Long, who lives in Westlake, Ohio, is a member of a local quilting guild and a board member of Sew4Service <www.sew4service.org>, a sewing charity.

Despite her experience, Long knew the Scouting quilt would be a challenge. While shut-in during the COVID-19 pandemic, she started sketching out a plan and deconstructing the sashes, uniforms and bandanas. She also used a flag and patches that had never been sewn on.

Long had paper items, too: the Scouting handbook, an Eagle Scout card, and small cards that listed the steps to becoming an Eagle Scout. She scanned them, then used a photo-transfer technique to print them on specialty paper.

The pocket of her father's uniform was one of her favorite details. "I realized while I was sewing that the patches on the pocket would have been hand-stitched

COURTESY CLARE LONG

Long used a photo-transfer technique to include merit badge certificates and other files in her father's quilt.

by his mother, my grandmother Ruth Smith," Long says. "She passed away in November 1947, about a year after he became an Eagle Scout, so I never met her. I felt connected with her when I worked on that."

For a center panel, she chose the large blue piece "Modern Scouting" made by Riley Blake Designs <www.letssew.com/modern-scouting-banner-panel.html> to anchor the design. Coordinated fabrics from that same line fill in the background. Each corner has an applique fleur-de-lis (an emblem of the Boy Scouts of America), and Long also appliquéd her father's name across the top. Embroidered at top-right is the date David became an Eagle Scout, and Long wrote a birthday message on the back next to a reproduction of a newspaper article about David's award.

Long finished the quilt in about two months. She presented it to her father at his birthday party, which was attended by five of her six brothers, along with many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

"The quilt was a total surprise," she says. "He kept looking at it and going over every detail, remembering this and that."

Smith's Scouting uniform pocket became part of the quilt, including the patches that his mother originally sewed on it.

Long embroidered *10-3-1946*—the date Smith became an Eagle Scout.

Sunny Jane Morton is a contributing editor for *Family Tree Magazine*, content manager at Your DNA Guide and industry expert on the giant genealogy websites.

25th ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

THREE'S COMPANY

Which big genealogy website is the best for you? This comparison highlights the features—and billions of records—at Ancestry.com, FamilySearch and MyHeritage.

by SUNNY JANE MORTON

The top three genealogy websites change so quickly that it's nearly impossible to keep up with them. During the time it took to write this article, millions of new records were added to Ancestry.com <www.ancestry.com>, FamilySearch <www.familysearch.org> and MyHeritage <www.myheritage.com>.

In fact, each hosts billions of records.

Billions.

What does that number even mean? It'd take more than 30 years to glance at each of 1 billion records for just one second per record. And at this rate, it would take you about 1,014 years to get through MyHeritage's current collections; 1,800 years to get through Ancestry.com's; and an estimated 1,976 years to finish at FamilySearch. You'd have to live nearly 4,800 years to see them all. (And that's only if they stop adding records now.)

Here's a quick glance at overall numbers:

- **Ancestry.com** <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/catalog> claims more than 60 billion total records. The top 20 collections account for a third of that total, and are comprised of US city directories, US yearbooks, user-submitted family trees, and newspaper indexes.
- **FamilySearch** <www.familysearch.org/search/collection/list> reports 13.1 billion searchable names from historical records; 5.2 billion unindexed record images; 623,000 name-searchable digitized books; and nearly 1.7 billion names in their community tree. Its largest 20 searchable collections comprise less than 20% of its total content.
- **MyHeritage**'s Collection Catalog <www.myheritage.com/research/catalog> counts 32 billion records. The largest five collections account for nearly 40%: two are family tree indexes and three are newspaper name indexes.

Millions of genealogists—some of them perhaps your relatives—build their family trees on Ancestry.com, FamilySearch or MyHeritage.

This quick top-of-the-charts comparison hints at the different strengths of each site. It doesn't tell the whole story, of course. For that, you need to dig deeper into their historical records; tree-building and photo capabilities; DNA tools; and the cost of using each website.

That's what we'll do in this article. Read on to learn which how these three major websites stack up—and which are best deserving of your time and money.

Across the Pond with Findmypast

Based in London, a fourth website called Findmypast <www.findmypast.com> is especially helpful for those who have ancestry from the United Kingdom, Ireland and places where the British Empire governed. The unique Catholic Heritage Archive collects religious records from select US cities.

Here's how Findmypast compares to the other websites we've talked about in this article.

FINDMYPAST	
<www.findmypast.com/subscribe>	
Total searchable names	12 billion
Records for how many countries	25-plus
Selected geographic strengths	U.S., Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, U.K.
Individual tree or collaborative?	Individual
DNA testing?	None
Per-year access cost*	$299.99, with a 15% discount for renewals

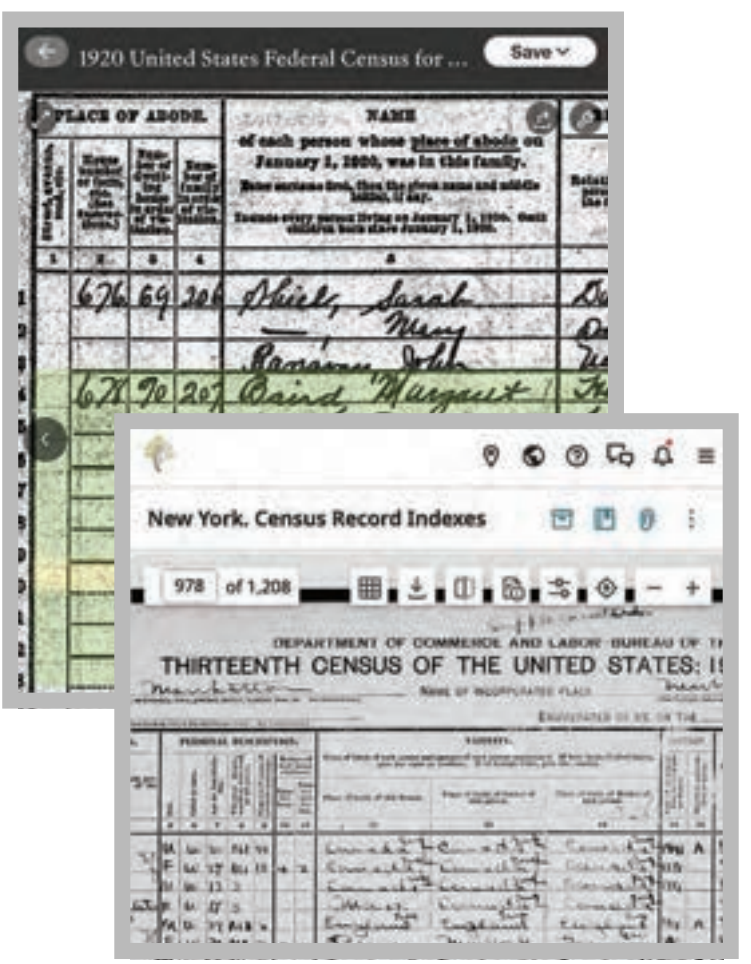
*Findmypast revamped its subscription options in fall 2024 (see page 7). This price is for US subscribers; UK subscriptions cost £199.99. Pay-as-you-go credits are also available.

HISTORICAL RECORDS

When it comes to historical records, who has what? Or more precisely: Who has *where*? You want the website that has the most records about your ancestors in their locations.

Ancestry.com, FamilySearch and MyHeritage all host significant numbers of collections for the United States, Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom and Ireland, as well as Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden.

Record depth isn't equal for each place, though. For example, Ancestry.com and FamilySearch dominate the United States, Mexico and Italy, while MyHeritage and Ancestry.com reign over French records. And each site has its own geographic strengths.



Record view pages at Ancestry.com (top) and FamilySearch (bottom)

FamilySearch: Global Reach

The not-for-profit FamilySearch aims to enable everyone—from everywhere—to research their family history for free. Its founding organization (the Genealogical Society of Utah) began filming records in 1938, and FamilySearch still sponsors an aggressive global digitizing program. This enormous head start explains why FamilySearch collections cover some 200 countries (compared to Ancestry's 88 countries and MyHeritage's 60-plus countries).

FamilySearch prioritizes at-risk records and those most useful to genealogists that are not already available at other websites. Look here for the best (if incomplete) coverage for Africa, Central and South America, South Korea, the Philippines, India and China. Use FamilySearch's full-text search tool to make discoveries in collections that haven't been indexed yet <www.familysearch.org/search/full-text>.

Ancestry.com: United States and More

Like FamilySearch, Ancestry.com is U.S.-based. But as a for-profit company, Ancestry.com has to make money. You can identify its target markets by the country-level subscriptions they offer: the United States, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

In recent years, Ancestry.com has doubled down on its US collections and made an even deeper commitment to diversifying them. New releases include records of Japanese internment, Chinese immigration exclusion, and enslaved Americans. A 2024 agreement with the National Archives will allow for the digitization of WWII- and Korean War-era records; immigration and naturalization collections

tip

Many—but not all—of the millions of records added to the big genealogy websites in the past few years are AI-extracted indexes of record-rich historical newspapers. Use the indexes to identify articles of interest, then view scans of the original pages to see the stories in context.

Records: COMPARED

	ANCESTRY.COM	FAMILYSEARCH	MYHERITAGE
Total searchable names (including records and family trees)	60 billion	66.24 billion (estimate*)	32 billion
Searchable names in trees, including possible duplicates	3.6 billion	1.6 billion	6.1 billion
Records for how many countries?	88	About 200	64
Selected geographic strengths	the U.S., Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, the U.K.	Global, especially the U.S., Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Guatemala, India, Italy, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, South Korea, the U.K.	the U.S., Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain Sweden, the U.K.

*Many of FamilySearch's records are not searchable. This estimate includes the 14.76 billion searchable names from records and the FamilySearch Tree as of this writing, plus average figures for unindexed images and books: 10 names for each of 5.1 billion unindexed images, and 100 names for each of 622,000 books.

from the West Coast; and more Asian American and Native American collections.

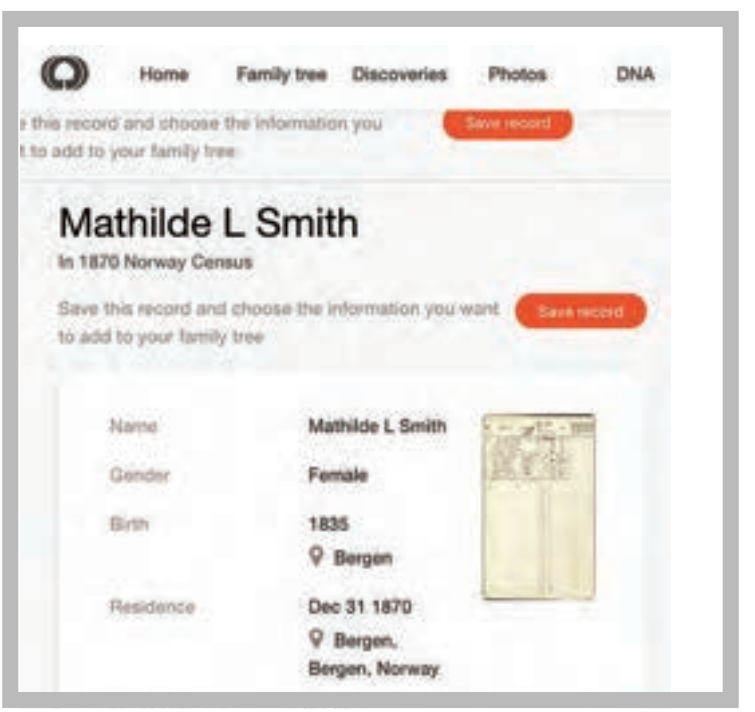
Another development at Ancestry.com has been the AI-assisted creation of enormous indexes of births, marriages, deaths and other name-mentions in newspapers digitized at sister site Newspapers.com <www.newspapers.com>. Ancestry.com subscribers can search the indexes; if you bundle your Ancestry.com subscription with Newspapers.com, you can click through to view newspaper images and attach them to your family tree profiles.

MyHeritage: Looking International

Unlike FamilySearch and Ancestry.com, MyHeritage is not a US company; it's based in Israel. Although it serves English-speaking audiences, MyHeritage primarily focuses on other audiences (and their ancestors' records). This diversity makes it an excellent complement to the other two genealogy giants.

A quick measure of MyHeritage's top regional interests can be taken from the list of languages in which its blog is published: in addition to English and Hebrew, you can read it in Danish (Dansk), Dutch, Finnish (Suomi), French, German, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish. Their collection catalog is packed with records for corresponding places.

MyHeritage has also been integrating historical newspapers indexes into its search experience, thanks to its new website OldNews <www.oldnews.com>. At OldNews, you'll see that same commitment to curating records outside the English-speaking world. (See the January/February 2025 issue for a tutorial.)



Record view at MyHeritage

ONLINE FAMILY TREES

Millions of genealogists—some of them perhaps your relatives—build their family trees on Ancestry.com, FamilySearch or MyHeritage. While some simply copy others' trees or make unsourced claims, many others share priceless photos, documents and stories—items you want to find.

Individual Trees

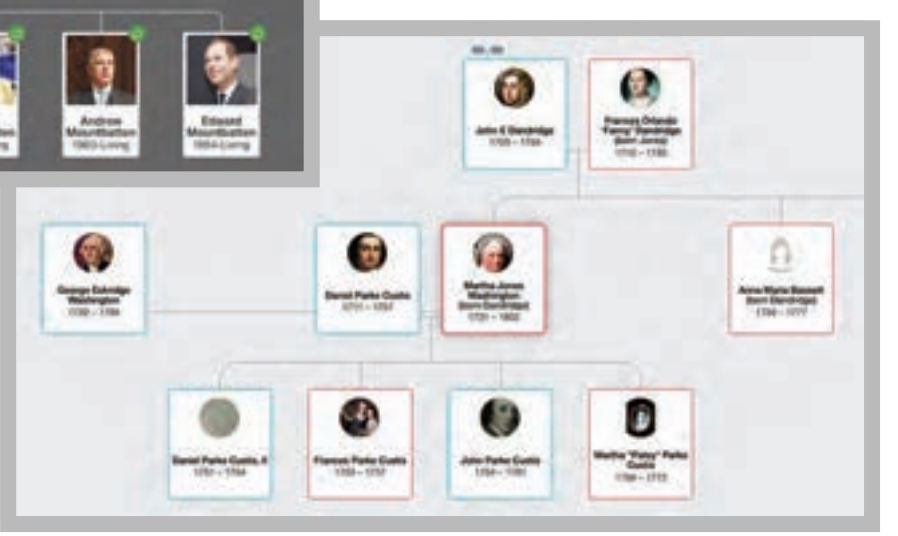
At Ancestry.com and MyHeritage, you build your own individual trees. You can choose for your trees to be public (viewable by others) or private (seen only by you and those you specifically invite). Others can't change your trees unless you allow them.

In return, you can search other people's public trees, too. This may lead to connections with fellow researchers and new information about your shared roots.

MyHeritage hosts about 52 million trees with a total of 6.1 billion names. Ancestry.com more than doubles that tree count, with 131 million trees containing 3.6 billion names. Of course, there's a lot of duplication within and across both sites. But you may also make unique finds at each.

The availability of MyHeritage's website in 42 languages and non-English-language record collections attract users in many languages and many parts of the world. This is an especially good place to look for any "never-left-the-homeland" relatives as well as descendants of branches who left for far-flung places. MyHeritage also imports (and makes searchable) family tree data from FamilySearch, French website Filae <www.filae.com> and others that cater to different regions of the world.

At Ancestry.com, you can name-search separate collections of public and private trees for your relatives. When you find a promising result in a private tree, you can contact the owner for permission to view the entire tree. You can also search indexes to RootsWeb WorldConnect, Geneanet <en.geneanet.org> and GenealogieOnline trees <www.genealogieonline.nl/en> (the latter two are French and Dutch resources,



Above: an Ancestry.com family tree in Vertical view

Right: a MyHeritage family tree, created by users "Adam and Jill"

Family Trees: COMPARED

	ANCESTRY.COM	FAMILYSEARCH	MYHERITAGE
Individual tree or collaborative?	Individual	Collaborative	Individual
Cost	Free*	Free	Free* up to 250 people
Other key features	• Compatibility with Family Tree Maker and RootsMagic • Additional features available with Pro Tools	• Compatibility with Family Tree Maker and RootsMagic • Profiles can be edited by any registered user	• Compatibility with Family Tree Builder • Cross-language support

*Building family trees is free at Ancestry.com and MyHeritage, though you'll need a paid subscription to view most record hints.

respectively). Search all Ancestry.com tree data—even without logging in or purchasing a membership—at <www.ancestry.com/search/categories/42>.

The Singular FamilySearch Family Tree

At FamilySearch, tree-building has a very different structure. The site has just one shared, global Family Tree with 1.66 billion names in it. Ideally, each person who has ever lived only has one profile (or "person page"). Though this hasn't yet come to pass, the emphasis on one-profile-per-person drastically reduces the duplication seen on other websites.

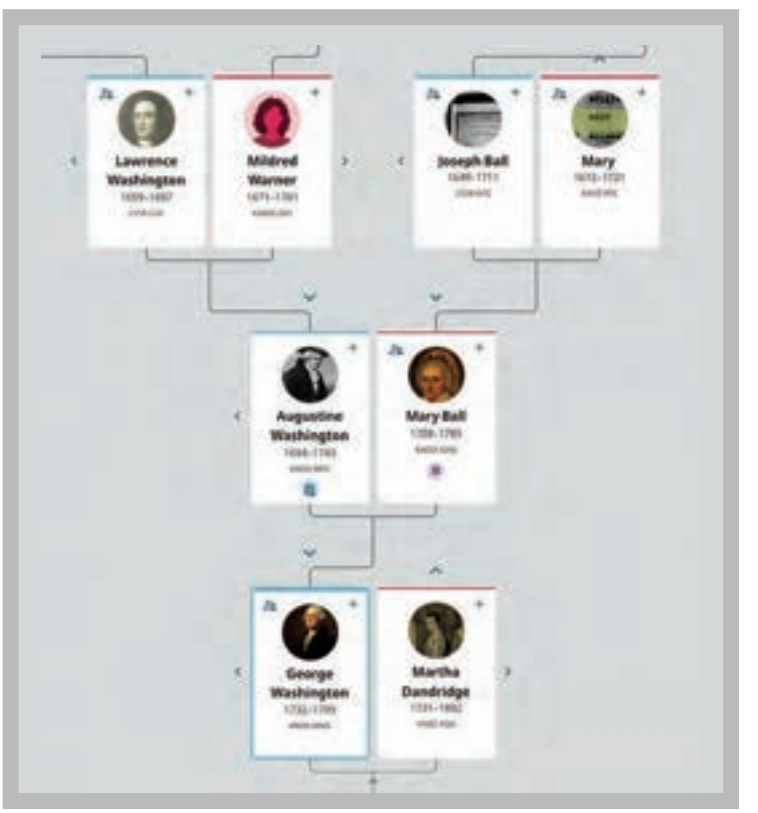
FamilySearch's tree model prioritizes collaboration over privacy. All the information you and others enter about deceased persons is public, viewable and (most critically) editable by anyone. The idea is that multiple descendants entering information about the same person can compare notes and build upon each other's discoveries. Of course, there are pros and cons to this model.

Without logging in, anyone can search the entire tree to see what others have documented about their relatives at <www.familysearch.org/search/tree/name>. With your free FamilySearch login, you can also connect yourself to the tree. Just add yourself and any private profiles for your living parents, grandparents, etc., working backward until you connect to existing profiles for deceased relatives.

Photos and Memories

Public tree profiles are a great place to store digitized photos, documents, and even audio files that you want shared. FamilySearch's free Memories app lets you take photos or record audio files from within the app or import them, then attach them to family tree person pages.

Both Ancestry.com and MyHeritage have tools for colorizing and sharpening images and for creating slideshow-style narratives. MyHeritage's photo enhancements are the most robust: You can have an animated version of a relative's photo narrate their own story and even turn still photos into AI-imagined video clips (page 6).



An excerpt of the FamilySearch Family Tree in portrait view

DNA TESTING

Both Ancestry and MyHeritage sell autosomal DNA tests. Many people test at both companies, or test at Ancestry and transfer their results to MyHeritage. (Ancestry does not accept transfers.) Chances are good that, over time, you'll learn new information from each test and want to take advantage of each site's specific tools.

Ethnicity Reports

AncestryDNA and MyHeritage DNA both provide two-tiered reports of your ancestral origins, based on their algorithms and panels:

- **Ethnicity regions:** The first is a higher-level estimate of your broader or deeper origins. AncestryDNA reports on 168 regions where people lived 1,000-plus years ago <support.ancestry.com/s/ancestrydna-regions>. MyHeritage divides the globe into 79 ethnicities, some location-based and others cultural.
- **Historical populations:** The second report is much more granular and recent—and therefore genealogically relevant. Ancestry's Ancestral Journeys (formerly Communities) and MyHeritage's Genetic Groups <education.myheritage.com/article/genetic-groups-on-myheritage> reveal ties to smaller, specific historical populations that were so cohesive over time that they developed distinct genetic signatures.

Ancestral Regions (ethnicity estimate) report from AncestryDNA

How do these play out in your results? Let's say that both companies define you as Finnish. MyHeritage may also assign you to one of 54 different Finnish Genetic Groups, such as Northern Savonia or Oulu. AncestryDNA, meanwhile, may assign you to one of their 25 Finnish groups, such as Vaasa Coast and Northern Ostrobothnia. These are clues to specific, recent places you should expect to find somewhere on your family tree.

All these estimates continue to evolve. Some people find the updates unnerving. No, you haven't suddenly become "more Scottish" or "less Mexican." Rather, the testing companies are becoming better at distinguishing genetic connections to places and peoples. If you tested a few years ago and haven't looked at your results since, you should.

DNA Matches

Both testing companies provide lists of your DNA relatives (called matches) unless you opt out. Both report how much DNA you share with each match; the length of your longest segment of shared DNA (which has implications for how distantly you may be related); and a list of possible genetic relationships for each match. Both allow you to communicate with your matches through the testing company website.

Additionally, both have robust tools to help you sleuth out your relationships to DNA matches. Provided you have the right subscription, you can view matches' family trees and the amount of shared DNA between your matches. Paying Ancestry.com subscribers can access that site's chromosome painter; MyHeritage's chromosome browser is available to those who tested directly with the site or pay a one-time fee.

DNA Tests: COMPARED

	ANCESTRYDNA	MYHERITAGE DNA
	<www.ancestry.com/dna>	<www.myheritage.com/dna>
Test format	Saliva sample	Cheek swab
Retail price	$99 USD	$89 USD
Availability	122 countries	Globally, except France, Iran, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, North Korea, Russia, Somalia, Sudan and Syria
Ethnicity regions	168	79
Specific, recent historical populations	3,103 Ancestral Journeys	2,114 Genetic Groups
Testers	25 million-plus	8.9 million-plus
Relationship-reconstruction tool	ThruLines*, showing possible descendants of specific ancestors	Theory of Family Relativity, showing possible tree relationships between individual matches
Chromosome tool	Chromosome painter*	Chromosome browser*
Upload raw data	No	Yes

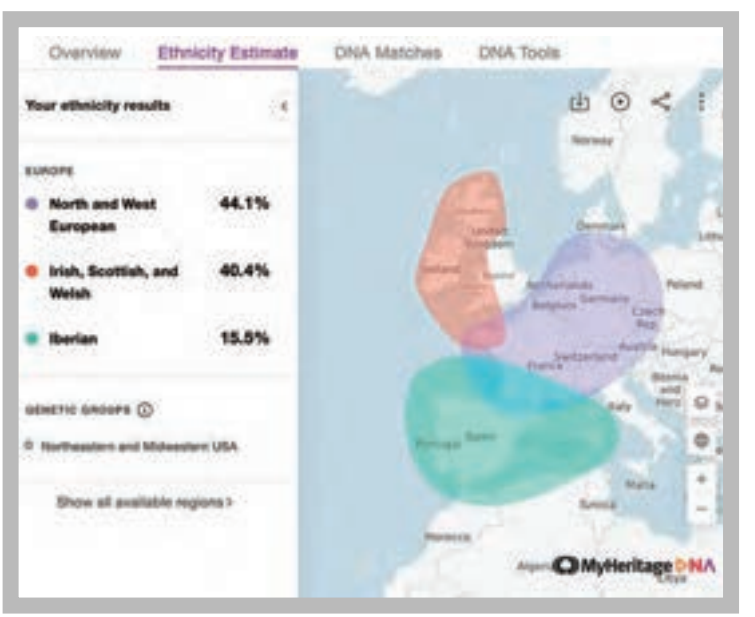
*Requires additional one-time payment or ongoing website subscription

Tree-reconstruction tools

Both MyHeritage and Ancestry offer tools that attempt to build family trees when sufficient data is available:

- Ancestry's **ThruLines** tool shows, by ancestral couple, all other testers who appear to descend from them (and how they descend).
- The **Theory of Family Relativity** at MyHeritage provides possible relationship paths between you and specific matches.

In both cases, the tree-reconstruction tools may use data from your tree at the site, your match's tree and other trees, as well as historical records. (MyHeritage also pulls tree data from the global trees at FamilySearch and Geni <www.geni.com>.) Subscribers can explore the records or tree profiles to verify suggested connections.



Ethnicity Estimate from MyHeritage DNA

Other Tools

Each testing company also has unique premium tools.

- Ancestry's **SideView** technology divides your ethnicity Regions, Journeys and matches in two (for each parent). This

works even without testing your parents, though you must decide for yourself which parent is which.

- MyHeritage's **AutoClusters** tool groups your matches into color-coded networks representing branches on your family tree. This can save you a lot of work!

How do you get access to the premium DNA tools at each company? Those who test at MyHeritage must maintain an ongoing family tree subscription for full access, while those who transfer can pay a one-time fee of $29 per test. (Learn more at <www.myheritage.com/pricing>.)

AncestryDNA testers can purchase a subscription to unlock all the tools, either an AncestryDNA Plus membership or one of the site's record subscriptions. Enhanced DNA matches require the Ancestry Pro Tools add-on. (See <support.ancestry.com/s/article/AncestryDNA-and-Memberships>.)

COST

Speaking of subscriptions, you may be wondering how much it costs to use these record-rich genealogy websites.

As previously mentioned, FamilySearch is always free. You do need to sign up for a free guest user login. Certain record collections may only be accessible in-person at a free FamilySearch Center (find one near you at <locations.familysearch.org>) or, occasionally, from the FamilySearch Library in Salt Lake City.

At MyHeritage and Ancestry.com, you can create (or upload) a family tree and search records with a free guest login. But most record search results are behind a paywall. First-time

Subscription Costs: COMPARED

	ANCESTRY.COM	FAMILYSEARCH	MYHERITAGE
	<www.ancestry.com/offers/subscribe>		<www.myheritage.com/pricing>
Basic per-year access	$264/year, U.S. Discovery: US records access	Free	Family tree plans: $129 or $209/year Data plan: $189/year
Complete per-year access	$395/year, World Explorer: global records access	Free	$299/year, Complete plan: family trees, data, and photo tools
Additional options	$599/year, All Access: adds Newspapers.com Publisher Extra, Fold3 (military records), Ancestry Family Plan (add additional Ancestry users)	Enhanced access to some collections for members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	$399/year, Omni: adds OldNews, Geni.com Pro, Legacy Family Tree Webinars, unlimited photo scanning

Ancestry.com offers separate rates for monthly and every-six-month payment options. (The prices here reflect the latter.) MyHeritage bills annually, and offers discounts for the first year of subscription.

Website Cheat Sheets

Over the years, we've published dedicated, eight-page cheat sheets for each of the four websites mentioned in this article. Each discusses:

- An overview of key tools and features, from top record collections to DNA tools
- Tips for searching genealogy records and building family trees
- A comparison of subscription options, if relevant

You can find them in print or PDF formats at <store.familytreemagazine.com>. The PDF versions are available as a discounted bundle at <store.familytreemagazine.com/genealogy-websites-cheat-sheets>.

subscribers get substantial discounts; see the table on page 22 for regular subscription prices.

If your budget requires you to limit your subscriptions, consider these options:

- **Get free logins** to Ancestry.com and MyHeritage. Learn about the free versions of the site and watch for discounted offers to try a subscription.
- **Use institutional editions** at a FamilySearch Center or other library near you. Just be aware that you can't build your tree while using an institutional account, and access to some record collections may also be limited.
- **Rotate your subscriptions.** Sign up for Ancestry.com for a month or six months, then try MyHeritage, or vice versa. By the time you cycle back, new collections may be available.

• • •

The reality is this: All three sites are so record-rich and powerful that you won't want to content yourself with using just one. You'll want to know which to turn to first in any given situation.

You literally have billions of reasons to dig in at each one of these giant genealogy websites. And so little time—you'd better get started if you want to finish in less than 4,800 years. ●

Find directories for more articles on each website at <www.familytreemagazine.com/ancestry>, <www.familytreemagazine.com/familysearch>, and <www.familytreemagazine.com/myheritage>.

Sunny Jane Morton, contributing editor at *Family Tree Magazine,* regularly scouts for new user-contributed material at all three of these giants.

RootsTech 2025
SPECIAL PREVIEW

The excitement is building for RootsTech, the biggest gathering of genealogists and family historians each year. In 2025, RootsTech will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, from March 6 through 8. Whether you plan to attend in-person, virtually, or not all, *Family Tree* is pleased to provide you with this preview of special announcements and offers from our advertisers.

Since its first iteration in 2010, the aptly-named RootsTech has been a showcase for both the *roots* of time-tested family history research strategies and the *tech* that makes genealogy more accessible than ever.

The conference draws thousands of attendees each year, as well as the top minds in family history. Companies big and small share their latest innovations at the exhibit hall and through presentations, and even use the event to launch new tools and features.

As of this writing, we're still waiting to learn all that the conference will bring. But here are three early takeaways from the innovations to come out of RootsTech 2025.

1. CELEBRATE WHAT MAKES YOUR FAMILY SPECIAL

No two families are alike, and telling your individual family's story has been a major focus of recent conferences.

Storied <www.storied.com>, a platinum sponsor of RootsTech 2025, pairs accessible family trees with tools for creating rich multimedia narratives that bring stories to life. This innovative platform makes capturing and preserving family memories easy through text, photos, audio recordings and video. Through Sister site NewspaperArchive <www.newspaperarchive.com>, you can uncover the full story of your ancestors' lives in vivid detail. And thanks to a recent partnership with FamilySearch, Storied users can access a growing collection of vital records, immigration documents, and historical resources.

You also want a genetic genealogy tool that can accommodate your family's unique structure, in addition to its stories. BanyanDNA <www.banyandna.com>, officially launched at RootsTech 2024, does exactly that. Its family tree-builder supports a wide variety of genetic relationships—no matter how complex—and can even help you overcome challenges such as pedigree collapse.

Your family's unique circumstances require a unique set of research skills. Connect with a network of genealogy professionals who have exactly the expertise you need through the Association of Professional Genealogists <www.apgen.org>. Each member follows a code of ethics for professional practice and works within established genealogical standards.

The group's newly redesigned directory <members.apgen.org/members/directory/search_

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No two families are alike, and telling your individual family's story has been a major focus of recent conferences.

APG.php?org_id=APG> allows you to filter members by location, expertise (e.g., place or ethnicity), keyword or language. It's so useful that we at *Family Tree Magazine* have used it to identify qualified authors and speakers.

2. RESEARCH RELATIONSHIPS, NOT JUST NAMES AND DATES

For many, connection—not just data—is at the heart of family history. You can use tech tools to explore and document the relationships that bind your ancestors to each other, and you to them.

Studying relationships, including genetic ones, can provide further connection. BanyanDNA's robust and flexible tree-builder can be used to validate your tree and test alternative genealogical hypotheses using real-time solutions and shared-DNA values. Alternatively, you can upload a GEDCOM file, with customized highlighting features that help spot and visualize patterns.

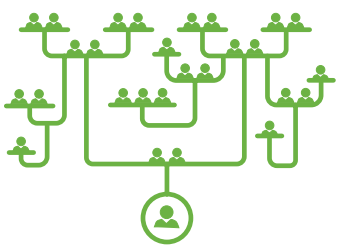
Like DNA, unidentified photos (common in many historians' homes) are often untapped sources for relationships and stories. Related Faces <www.relatedfaces.com> specializes in revealing the mysteries within family photos. Their patented technology analyzes photos, compares faces, and shows similar faces in clear pairings to help you identify unknown people. Your photos then become powerful tools, making your genealogical searches more insightful and exciting. RootsTech attendees receive 20% off their first subscription through April 2025.

Not all important relationships are *genealogical*. Storied allows you to add non-traditional relationships to people in your tree:

THE GENEALOGY CENTER IS NOW OPEN!

UNCOVER YOUR FAMILY HISTORY IN FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

The Genealogy Center at the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana is home to one of the largest genealogy collections in the world. Even better, they offer free, one-on-one help from professional genealogists—making Fort Wayne, Indiana one of the best places in the country to research your family history.



IT'S WORTH A TRIP:

Located in downtown Fort Wayne in a 42,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art facility, the Genealogy Center is just a block from dozens of restaurants, museums, hotels, and other welcoming amenities.

From our top-rated Fort Wayne Children's Zoo and minor league ballpark, to our *USA Today*-lauded food, arts, sports and recreation scene, Fort Wayne is sure to delight the entire family. It's worth the trip!

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VisitFortWayne.com/GenealogyGetaway

> *"I have been there [the Genealogy Center] many times and found a lot of information on different branches of my family. Anyone interested in genealogy research should go there.*
>
> JANICE M.

The Genealogy Center at the Allen County Public Library

900 Library Plaza, Fort Wayne, IN 46802
(260) 421-1225 | Genealogy@ACPL.info
GenealogyCenter.org

VisitFortWayne INDIANA

927 S Harrison St, Fort Wayne, IN 46802
(260) 424-3700
VisitFortWayne.com/Genealogy

neighbors, friends, classmates, pets and more. And StoriedBooks (beautifully crafted, full-color books) depict your family's journey across generations. Unique QR codes provide readers with easy access to digital content.

For many, connection—not just data—is at the heart of family history. You can use tech tools to explore and document the relationships that bind your ancestors to each other, and you to them.

3. TRAVEL FOR FAMILY HISTORY

Though technology has made records easier to find than ever before, many resources can still only be accessed in person. In addition to RootsTech, Salt Lake City is also home to the FamilySearch Library, which usually has extended operating hours during the conference.

Another can't-miss destination for genealogists is Fort Wayne, Ind. Home of the Allen County Public Library and its famous Genealogy Center <www.acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy>, Fort Wayne has the distinction of being one of the best places in the country to research family history. On-site professionals offer free one-on-one consultations and can tap the more than 1 million physical items held by the Genealogy Center. Attractions including the Fort Wayne Zoo and the Fort Wayne TinCaps baseball team make the trip fun for the whole family <www.visitfortwayne.com/genealogy getaway>.

Can't travel yourself? Find a professional "on the ground" who can help you request records, browse archives, or translate foreign-language documents. Look through APG's directory for researchers with the right know-how.

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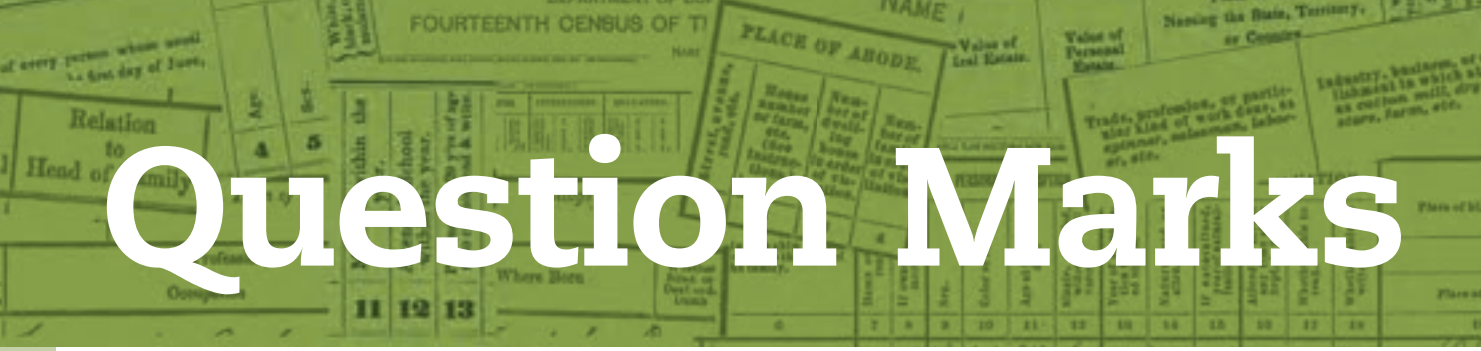
Contact Tim Baldwin:

tim@timbaldwinmedia.com

Find me at the FamilyTree Magazine *booth at RootsTech*



Question Marks

	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	
Names							
Head of household's name	●	●	●	●	●	●	
All household members' names							
Birth information							
Age range: Free white males and females	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Age of all household members							
Birthplace							
Parents							
If parents foreign-born							
Parents' birthplaces							
Parents' language							
Marriage							
Married in the census year?							
Marital status							
No. of years married							
Immigration and citizenship							
Number of aliens (non-naturalized residents)				●	●		
Year of immigration							
Number of years in the United States							
Naturalization status							
Occupation and education							
Occupation, industry and/or trade							
Level of education							
If attended school in past year							
Ability to read and/or write							
Other							
Ability to speak English/mother tongue							
Number of free colored people				●	●	●	
Relationship to head of household							
Occupation, industry and/or trade							
Veteran status						●	
Number of children mothered (both living and total)							

* The enslaved were not mentioned in the US census by name. Look for the formerly enslaved beginning in the 1870 census, or in dedicated slave schedules taken as part of the 1850 and 1860 censuses.

** Most records of the 1890 census have been lost. See <www.familytreemagazine.com/records/census/1890-census-substitutes> for advice on "replacing" the 1890 census using other records.

The US census asked different questions in different years. Learn what details it collected (and when) with this at-a-glance table.

BY THE EDITORS OF FAMILY TREE MAGAZINE

1850	1860	1870	1880	1890**	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
●*	●*	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
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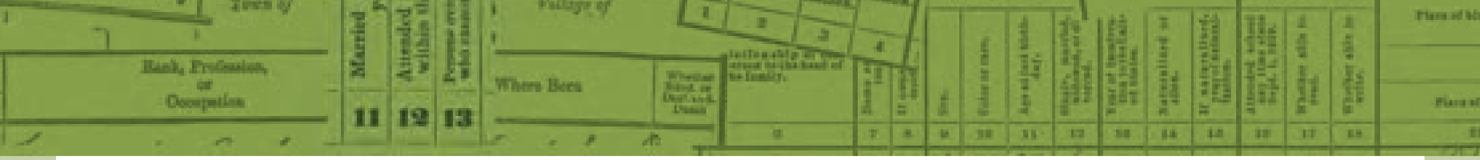
●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
				●	●	●	●	●	●§	
			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
				●		●		●	●§	●§
				●	●	●				●§

§ Question asked only of a subsection of the population, rather than of all respondents.



US Census Checklist

Track which censuses your ancestors would have appeared in—and if you've found them yet!

Find year-by-year guides (including downloadable forms for each census) at <www.familytreemagazine.com/census-records>.

Ancestor Name	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950

RESEARCH GUIDE

LOUISIANA

by ANDREW KOCH

FOR CENTURIES, LEADERS HAVE RECOGNIZED the importance of the land where the mighty Mississippi River meets the Gulf of Mexico. "There is on the globe one single spot, the possessor of which is our natural and habitual enemy," wrote Thomas Jefferson in 1802. "It is New Orleans."

It's not surprising, then, that powers jockeyed over what is now Louisiana: first indigenous peoples, then France, then Spain and Great Britain, and finally the United States. Each resident left its mark on Louisiana, whose rich, diverse Creole character is known worldwide.

Read on to learn how to find your ancestors in the Pelican State.

LOUISIANA: A HISTORY

Indigenous peoples have lived in what is now Louisiana for thousands of years. Around the time of European contact and settlement, notable groups included the Chitimacha, Choctaw, Coushatta (Koasati), Houma and Tunica-Biloxi. All but the Houma are federally recognized tribes today; the Houma are recognized only by the state of Louisiana.

France claimed the Mississippi River Valley as early as 1682, when René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, sailed down the Mississippi River from Illinois. But Spaniard Hernando de Soto, who arrived nearly 150 years earlier, holds the distinction of the first European known to visit what is now Louisiana.

Colonization in the area didn't begin in earnest until the early 1700s, and initial attempts floundered. Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville founded New Orleans in 1718, naming the city for the Duke of Orléans (who was regent to the 8-year-old king of France, Louis XV). The area's population swelled, and Louisiana became a royal colony with New Orleans as its capital in 1731.

New Orleans—near the mouth of the Mississippi River as it enters the Gulf of Mexico—became a crucial port. Fertile lands around the riverbanks were ideal for cultivating indigo, tobacco, sugar and cotton, leading to highly profitable plantations.

The Choctaw name for New Orleans' location, *Bulbancha* ("place of foreign tongues"), could well describe the cosmopolitan population who has lived there over the centuries. French-speaking refugees from British-held Acadia (ancestors of the city's famous Cajun population) arrived in the 1760s. Slavery's prominence led to a large Black population, and Germans settled the "German Coast" in the 1720s and 1730s. The city later attracted emigrants from the Caribbean, particularly during the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804).

Spain and France were allies in the Seven Years' War. After its end, French Louisiana came under Spanish ownership with one exception: West Florida (the "Florida parishes" east of the Mississippi) was given to Great Britain. Spain quietly returned Louisiana to France after a few decades, and Napoleon Bonaparte (preoccupied with conquering Europe) sold it to the United States.

The Louisiana Purchase in 1803 nearly doubled the size of the United States. The newly acquired land was split into two territories: the Territory of Orleans (comprising most of the modern state) and the District of Louisiana (comprising the rest). The former quickly gained a large-enough population to apply for statehood, which it achieved in 1812.

Soon after, New Orleans was the site of a climactic battle with Great Britain.

FAST FACTS

STATEHOOD:
1812

FIRST FEDERAL CENSUS:
1810 (as Orleans Territory)

BIRTH AND DEATH RECORDS BEGIN:
1911 (state)

MARRIAGE RECORDS BEGIN:
from formation (county)

CONTACT FOR VITAL RECORDS:
LA Dept. of Health

Andrew Jackson, unaware that peace with Great Britain had been negotiated two weeks earlier, successfully defended the city from a British assault.

Louisiana was reliant upon the institution of slavery, and New Orleans was a hub of slave-trading. Despite the state's large population of free Blacks, many living there were hostile to slavery's abolition. Louisiana's government voted to secede on the eve of the Civil War. The critical port of New Orleans was captured by the Union in early 1862, then occupied until war's end.

Louisiana was readmitted to the Union in 1868. Postwar Reconstruction temporarily elevated the rights of African Americans. Jim Crow laws passed after the U.S. Army's withdrawal in 1877 ushered in an era of race-based segregation, intimidation, and voting discrimination.

It was in New Orleans in 1892 that Homer Plessy was arrested for boarding a whites-only train car; the Supreme Court ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that the "separate but equal" policy behind the law forbidding this was constitutional. A few years later, the state government added restrictive voting rules—poll taxes, literacy requirements, and a "grandfather clause"—that effectively stripped African Americans of the right to vote.

The state's reliance on agriculture led to bleak conditions in the later 1800s. Discoveries of sulfur and oil—as well as the rise of forestry—helped diversify the state's economy. And Populist politicians like the nationally known Huey Long (who served as Louisiana's governor, then senator before being assassinated) encouraged reforms.

Louisiana is widely known today for its unique cuisine, nightlife and jazz music, as well as a vibrant Mardi Gras celebration that reflects its multicultural heritage.

BAYOU VITALS

Louisiana first required birth and death records in 1911, though it didn't achieve widespread compliance for a few years. Vital events prior to that were generally recorded by religious organizations—notably the Catholic Church, which was most prominent before the Louisiana Purchase.

State law restricts access to civil birth records less than 100 years old and death records less than 50 years old. The department of health <ldh.la.gov/page/request-a-birth-or-death-certificate-1> holds records within those confidentiality windows, then transfers responsibility for them to the state archives <www.sos.la.gov/HistoricalResources/ResearchHistoricalRecords/Pages/OnlinePublicVitalRecordsIndex.aspx>. At the state archives website, you can search record indexes, then request certified copies for a fee.

Each resident left its mark on Louisiana, whose rich, diverse Creole character is known worldwide.

Marriages were documented by individual parishes earlier and with more consistency than births or deaths. FamilySearch holds many marriage records, plus an index from 1837 through 1957 <www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1807364>. Colonial-era marriages may be mentioned in French or Spanish judicial records.

Orleans Parish (coterminous with the city of New Orleans) is a notable exception, keeping birth records as early as 1790. The state archives include early vital records in its collections, though note that individual certificates may not be available. Individual parishes have custody of marriages that took place there, but Orleans Parish marriages are maintained by the state department of health and are subject to a 50-year privacy rule.

COUNTING LOUISIANIANS

Louisiana first appears as Orleans Territory in the 1810 census. Records survive for all but the 1890 census, and are widely available on genealogy websites. Note that French and Spanish placenames and surnames may be misspelled, especially in early censuses.

The state hasn't taken any of its own censuses. However, colonial-era counts (including one from 1799, right on

DOUG HANSGATE ISTOCK

TIMELINE

1541 Spaniard Hernando de Soto reaches the Mississippi River

1682 René-Robert Cavelier de La Salle claims "Louisiana" for France

1718 New Orleans is founded

1731 Louisiana becomes a royal colony

1762 Spain temporarily gains Louisiana

Atchafalaya National Wildlife Refuge

1803
The United States purchases Louisiana from France and forms the Territory of Orleans

1812
Louisiana becomes the 18th state

1815
Andrew Jackson defeats British forces at New Orleans, the last battle of the War of 1812

1861
Louisiana joins the Confederate States of America; it's readmitted in 1868

2005
Hurricane Katrina devastates New Orleans

TOOLKIT

Websites

Cyndi's List: Louisiana <www.cyndislist.com/us/la>

FamilySearch Research Wiki: Louisiana <www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Louisiana,_United_States_Genealogy>

LAGenWeb <www.lagenweb.org>

Linkpendium: Louisiana <www.linkpendium.com/la-genealogy>

Louisiana Digital Library <www.louisianadigitallibrary.org>

Publications

64 Parishes magazine and encyclopedia <www.64parishes.org>

The Historic Indian Tribes of Louisiana: From 1542 to the Present, reprint edition by Fred B. Kniffen et al. (LSU Press)

Historical Atlas of Louisiana by Charles Robert Goins and John Michael Caldwell (University of Oklahoma Press)

History of Louisiana, four volumes by Charles Gayarré (Pelican Publishing)

Louisiana: A History, sixth edition edited by Bennett H. Wall and John C. Rodrigue (Wiley-Blackwell)

Old Families of Louisiana by Stanley Arthur and George Campbell Huchet de Kernion (Clearfield)

Archives & Organizations

Louisiana Historical Society <www.louisianahistoricalsociety.org>

Louisiana State Archives <www.sos.la.gov/HistoricalResources/LearnAboutTheArchives/Pages/default.aspx>

National Archives at Fort Worth <www.archives.gov/fort-worth>

New Orleans Public Library <www.nolacityarchives.org/guide-to-genealogical-materials>

State Library of Louisiana: Genealogy Collection <library.la.gov/resources/louisiana-collection/genealogy>

the cusp of US acquisition) have been published in book format. Ancestry.com has a collection of various French censuses from the early 18th century <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/48009>, and the New Orleans Public Library has a few censuses for that city <archives-nolalibrary.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16880coll95/id/23/rec/1>.

Voter registration books, some dating to the 1850s, contain much of the same information as censuses. The New Orleans Public Library has microfilmed copies of Orleans Parish books <www.nolacityarchives.org/guide-to-genealogical-materials/voter-registration>.

OTHER RECORDS

Find your Louisianian ancestors in these resources.

- **Immigration Records:** Passenger lists were first required by the federal government in 1820. Arrival records from New Orleans are held by the National Archives and searchable at FamilySearch <www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1916009>. They're also available at subscription websites Ancestry.com <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7484> and MyHeritage <www.myheritage.com/research/collection-20413/louisiana-new-orleans-passenger-lists>.

Records of earlier arrivals may be included in publications such as *First Families of Louisiana* by Glenn Conrad (Claitor Publishing).

- **Newspapers:** The New Orleans Public Library holds a large collection of newspapers published in "The Big Easy" and its environs <www.nolacityarchives.org/newspapers-serials/newspapers>. Some microfilmed papers are available to view only by appointment at the library, though digital papers can be accessed online with a library card or at subscription website Newspapers.com <www.newspapers.com>. The library's website has an obituary index covering 1804 to 1972, which is free to search <www.nolacityarchives.org/guide-to-genealogical-materials/obituary-index>.

Find other titles through Louisiana State University <lib.lsu.edu/louisiananewspapers> and the Library of Congress' Chronicling America <chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>.

- **City Directories:** Find directories dating to 1811 through the New Orleans Public Library <www.nolacityarchives.org/city-directories>. Some of them are available at Ancestry.com <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2469>, and MyHeritage also has a large collection of city directories <www.myheritage.com/research/collection-10705/us-city-directories>.

Andrew Koch is the editor of *Family Tree Magazine*.

RESEARCH GUIDE

WASHINGTON

by KATHLEEN L. WEBER

IT'S HARD TO DENY WASHINGTON'S NATURAL beauty. The Cascade Mountains divide the state into east and west, and the Columbia River serves as its southern border with Oregon. The waters of Puget Sound drew early settlement and connect communities to the Salish Sea and beyond, including into Canada and directly to the Pacific Ocean.

Find your ancestors in the Evergreen State with this timeless genealogy advice.

WASHINGTON: A HISTORY

Native peoples have lived in what is now Washington for thousands of years. By the time of European contact, notable groups included the Chinook, Nez Perce, Puget Sound Salish, Walla Walla and Yakama. The names of many towns and rivers attest to their presence: Walla Walla and Yakima (referring to those respective peoples), and Tacoma and Seattle (both derived from Puget Sound Salish names). The state is home to 29 federally recognized tribes.

A few intrepid European and American adventurers arrived in the 18th century by land and by sea, in search of a famed Northwest Passage. They found waters full of salmon, forests full of timber, abundant wildlife, wide expanses of open space, rivers for transportation, and communities of Native Americans.

Lewis and Clark travelled west under President Jefferson's discovery mandate, all while recording their observations. In 1805, their path crossed Eastern Washington and along the Columbia River, toward the Pacific Ocean.

The United Kingdom also maintained claim to the broad "Oregon Country," which stretched from the 42nd parallel all the way to the 54th. The Treaty of 1818 allowed joint British-US occupation, though the British Hudson Bay Company was the most prominent force in the region. The British founded Fort Vancouver in 1824 in an attempt to protect their fur-trading interests.

American settlement flowed gradually into the area by the mid-1800s, with pioneers arriving by horseback, then covered wagon, then railroads. The famous Oregon Trail passed just to Washington's south, with some pioneers choosing to settle the northern banks of the Columbia River.

The United Kingdom ceded its claim to Oregon Country south of the 49th parallel in 1846 with the Oregon Treaty. This largely ended tensions between the two powers, though they flared again in 1859 during the so-called "Pig War" in the San Juan Islands.

Congress initially organized the land as Oregon Territory, then spun off Washington Territory in 1853. At the time, it included parts of Idaho and Montana.

Residents initially sought "Columbia" as the name of their new territory, but Congress felt that would cause confusion with the District of Columbia. Ironically, they chose "Washington" instead, in honor of the famous general and president. To distinguish the territory or state from that "other Washington" (the national capital), look for online resources for *Washington state*.

American settlers founded towns on the Puget Sound and near the Columbia River, taking advantage of the area's ample natural resources through logging, fishing, mining and farming. Early standout communities founded in the 1850s include Walla Walla and Port Townsend, plus Seattle and Olympia (the state's capital) along the Puget Sound. Nearby Tacoma was incorporated in 1875.

FAST FACTS

STATEHOOD:
1889

FIRST FEDERAL CENSUS:
1850 (as Oregon Territory);
1860 (as Washington Territory)

BIRTH AND DEATH RECORDS BEGIN:
at formation (county); 1907 (state)

MARRIAGE RECORDS BEGIN:
at formation (county); 1968 (state)

CONTACT FOR VITAL RECORDS:
WA State Dept. of Health

Find your ancestors in the Evergreen State with this timeless genealogy advice.

Encroachment on Native lands (hastened by gold rushes) and broken agreements with the US government led to a series of wars with tribes throughout the 1850s. Territory Governor Isaac Ingalls Stevens brokered treaties with several tribes that confined them to reservations.

Washington gained statehood in 1889—marking an important transition for genealogists from territorial to state records. The new state served as a jumping-off point for gold-seekers to Alaska and the Yukon, drawing a diverse population. By 1890, foreign-born residents (notably from Canada, England, Germany and Scandinavia) made up 28 percent of the population.

Among Washingtonians are many entrepreneurs, with internationally known brands such as Amazon, Boeing, Nordstrom, Starbucks and UPS all being founded in Washington. Famed tech company Microsoft has been headquartered in the state since 1979.

EVERGREEN VITALS

The state first required birth and death certificates in 1907, and the state department of health holds documents created after July 1 of that year <doh.wa.gov/licenses-permits-and-certificates/vital-records>. Prior to that, vital record-keeping was left to individual county auditors. Records are widely available through the Washington State Digital Archives <digitalarchives.wa.gov>.

Marriage records were not required by the state until 1968. Prior to that time, counties documented residents' marriages. The state digital archives hold record images; you'll have access only to indexes for more-recent marriages.

Newspapers often report local marriage licenses issued or wedding festivities, so they can often be a source of additional details. Specific churches may also retain records of marriages, as well as baptisms, and burials. These records are widely dispersed—consult the FamilySearch Research Wiki for suggestions <www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Washington_Church_Records>.

Note that the state digital archives' search form is unforgiving when it comes to name-spelling. When looking for vital records (as well as for other documents in the archives' robust collections), try alternate spellings.

COUNTING ON WASHINGTON

Settlements in modern Washington were enumerated as part of Oregon Territory in the 1850 US census. Washington first appeared as a territory in its own right in 1860. Conducted every 10 years, the US census is widely available on multiple websites, though most records of the 1890 census have been lost.

Washington Territory helpfully kept many of its own censuses, with some places enumerated as early as the 1850s. Counts in 1889 and 1892 can stand in for the lost 1890 federal census. The Washington State Digital Archives, Ancestry.com <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1018>, and FamilySearch <www.familysearch.org> each hold digital copies.

OTHER RECORDS

Find your ancestors in these resources.

- **Court Records:** Courts have been active in Washington since the territorial government was formed, and have heard probate, civil, naturalization and criminal cases. You can find some records at FamilySearch and Ancestry.com; original files are held by the state archives and can be requested for a fee. (Territorial-era cases are called "Frontier Justice" case files.) A court records index for King County, the most-populous in the state, is held by the Seattle Genealogical Society <www.seagensoc.org>.
- **Land Records:** Like most Western states (which are public-land states), Washington had its land distributed by the federal government. Early residents may have received land grants directly from the government, while others took advantage of the Homestead Acts of 1862. The Bureau of Land Management <glorecords.blm.gov> holds land patents for these initial transfers of land. Subsequent transactions (usually between individuals) are recorded by the county in its deed books. Each county has its own policy for if, how and where records are

DREW PAYNE ISTOCK

TIMELINE

1805
Lewis and Clark reach modern Washington on their survey of the West

1818
A treaty establishes joint occupation of Oregon Country between the United States and the United Kingdom

1846
The Oregon Treaty confirms Washington is US territory

1853
Washington Territory is spun off from Oregon Territory

1859
US and British troops both occupy the San Juan Islands in the so-called "Pig War"

Mount Rainier
National Park

1889
Washington become the 42nd state; fires wreak havoc in Seattle, Spokane and Ellensburg

1909
The Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition attracts millions of visitors to the region

1911
Pend Oreille County is created from Stevens County, the last major change to Washington's county borders

1962
The Space Needle in Seattle opens for the Century 21 Exposition world's fair

1980
Mount St. Helens erupts, making international headlines and creating widespread destruction

TOOLKIT

Websites

Cyndi's List: Washington <www.cyndislist.com/us/wa>

FamilySearch Research Wiki: Washington <www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Washington,_United_States_Genealogy>

Linkpendium: Washington <www.linkpendium.com/wa-genealogy>

WAGenWeb <www.wagenweb.org>

Washington Digital Newspapers <www.washingtondigitalnewspapers.org>

Washington Rural Heritage <www.washingtonruralheritage.org>

Washington State Digital Archives <digitalarchives.wa.gov>

Publications

Exploring Washington's Past: A Road Guide to History, revised edition by Carmela Alexander and Ruth Kirk (University of Washington Press)

Historical Atlas of Washington by James W. Scott and Roland L. De Lorme (University of Oklahoma Press)

Washington State Place Names: From Alki to Yelm by Doug Brokenshire (Caxton Press)

Washington's History: The People, Land, and Events of the Far Northwest, revised edition by Harry Ritter (WestWinds Press)

Archives & Organizations

National Archives at Seattle <www.archives.gov/seattle>

Seattle Genealogical Society <www.seagensoc.org>

Seattle Public Library: Seattle Room Collections <www.spl.org/books-and-media/unique-collections/seattle-room-collections>

Washington State Genealogical Society <www.wasgs.org>

Washington State Historical Society <www.washingtonhistory.org/research>

Washington State Library <washstatelib.libguides.com/GenealogyatWSL>

available online; start with FamilySearch and the county clerk's office.

- **Newspapers:** These document life events in different ways than more-traditional records, and often with interesting detail. From a newspaper article, for example, I learned that my great-grandparents' window blew out in May 1915 after a boat full of dynamite mysteriously exploded in Seattle's Elliott Bay.

Free sites include both Washington Digital Newspapers <www.washingtondigitalnewspapers.org> and Chronicling America <chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/newspapers/washington>. Subscription sites include Newspapers.com <www.newspapers.com/?region=us-wa> and GenealogyBank <www.genealogybank.com>.

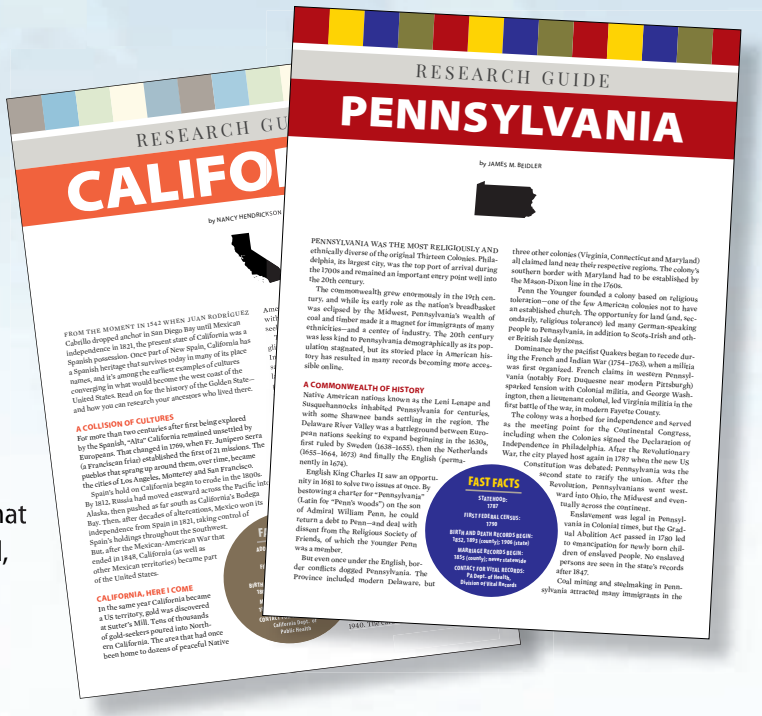
- **Military Records:** Though far from the main theaters of the Civil War, Washington Territory provided volunteers who maintained defensive positions elsewhere. And her residents served in other conflicts, notably the various Indian Wars. The FamilySearch Research Wiki provides a good overview of military record sources <www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Washington_Military_Records>; FamilySearch and the state archives both offer ample sources to explore. The National Archives holds many original military documents <www.archives.gov>.

- **Libraries and Societies:** The Washington State Library <www2.sos.wa.gov/library> is Washington's flagship institution, but several other libraries have statewide coverage. The Seattle Public Library has city directories from across the region, a fabulous map collection, digitized newspapers, and genealogy librarians on staff <www.spl.org/online-resources/genealogy-resources>. And University of Washington Libraries have collected original documents that are open to the public <lib.uw.edu/specialcollections>. Request an appointment ahead of visiting if you'd like help from library staff.

Likewise, historical and genealogical societies around the state can hold valuable resources for your genealogical search. The Seattle Genealogical Society, for example, has a Pacific Northwest (PNW) Special Interest Group that meets virtually each month to share sources, strategies and successes. Run an online search for societies in your area of interest. Or visit Washington Rural Heritage <www.washingtonruralheritage.org>, where groups have uploaded documents and photos.

Kathleen L. Weber's ancestors moved to Washington by 1909. She's done extensive Washington research for her upcoming book *Arrivals: How My Eight Great Grandparents Got to Washington, 1882–1909.* Her specialties include using DNA for US and Irish research, and she's a faculty member of the Seattle Genealogical Society's Beginning Genealogy virtual course. Contact her at the Association of Professional Genealogists <www.apgen.org/users/kathy-weber>.

Find Your U.S. Ancestors



Each state-by-state guide includes:

- **How-to tutorials for finding records**
  Notes on how and when key documents were kept in the state, including vital records, state censuses and land records
- **Historical summaries and timelines**
  Narrative history with special emphasis on events that affected your ancestors, including year of statehood, large migrations, and major border changes
- **Links to key resources**
  Websites, books, and archives and organizations for further research

1 READ AS PART OF *FAMILY TREE MAGAZINE*
Each issue contains two newly updated guides on a rolling basis. Subscribers collect all 52 guides.

2 VIEW ONLINE FOR FREE
<www.familytreemagazine.com/explore-by-state>
New states added each month.

3 PURCHASE & DOWNLOAD PDFS
<store.familytreemagazine.com/genealogy-research-state-guides>
Purchase ($9.99 per guide; $49.95 for full collection) includes perpetual access to the most-recent version of the guide.

RESEARCH GUIDE PUBLICATION HISTORY

State/territory	Most recent issue
Alabama	Jan/Feb 2023
Alaska	Sep/Oct 2022
Arizona	Jul/Aug 2021
Arkansas	May/Jun 2022
California	Mar/Apr 2021
Colorado	Nov/Dec 2023
Connecticut	Nov/Dec 2021
Delaware	Sep/Oct 2024
Florida	Jan/Feb 2022
Georgia	Jan/Feb 2025
Hawaii	Sep/Oct 2023
Idaho	May/Jun 2021
Illinois	Sep/Oct 2024
Indiana	Sep/Oct 2022
Iowa	Jul/Aug 2022
Kansas	Sep/Oct 2021
Kentucky	Jan/Feb 2021
Louisiana	Mar/Apr 2025
Maine	Jul/Aug 2022

State/territory	Most recent issue
Maryland	Nov/Dec 2024
Massachusetts	Sep/Oct 2023
Michigan	May/Jun 2022
Minnesota	Jan/Feb 2024
Mississippi	Sep/Oct 2021
Missouri	Jan/Feb 2022
Montana	Jul/Aug 2023
Nebraska	Jan/Feb 2025
Nevada	Nov/Dec 2022
New Hampshire	May/Jun 2024
New Jersey	Jan/Feb 2024
New Mexico	May/Jun 2023
New York	Mar/Apr 2024
North Carolina	May/Jun 2021
North Dakota	May/Jun 2024
Ohio	Mar/Apr 2021
Oklahoma	Nov/Dec 2024
Oregon	Jan/Feb 2023
Pennsylvania	Jul/Aug 2021

State/territory	Most recent issue
Puerto Rico	Jan/Feb 2021
Rhode Island	Mar/Apr 2022
South Carolina	May/Jun 2023
South Dakota	Nov/Dec 2021
Tennessee	Nov/Dec 2023
Texas	Mar/Apr 2022
Utah	Mar/Apr 2023
Vermont	Jul/Aug 2023
Virginia	Nov/Dec 2022
Washington	Mar/Apr 2025
Washington, DC	Jul/Aug 2024
West Virginia	Mar/Apr 2023
Wisconsin	Jul/Aug 2024
Wyoming	Mar/Apr 2024

UP NEXT*

Kentucky, Puerto Rico	May/Jun 2025
California, Ohio	Jul/Aug 2025
Idaho, North Carolina	Sep/Oct 2025

**Schedule subject to change*

How Swede It Is

Delve into your Swedish heritage with these five key records.

by DAVID A. FRYXELL

Gamla stan ("Old Town") in Stockholm

If you're among the millions of Americans with at least some Swedish ancestry, you're in good company. From Chicago to Seattle, through Minneapolis and the Great Plains, Swedish immigrants laid the rails and broke the sod in America.

Swedish-Americans flew the Atlantic (Charles Lindbergh) and landed on the moon (Buzz Aldrin), made movies (Greta Garbo, Ingrid Bergman, Mark Hamill) and popular music (Harry Nilsson, the Beach Boys' Wilsons), and wrote literature (Ray Bradbury, Carl Sandburg).

The total number of Swedes who left for America over the years was equivalent to about one-quarter of Sweden's entire 1880 population; by 1910, almost one in five of the world's Swedes lived in the United States. More than 100,000 of them lived in Chicago alone, and the Windy City ranked behind only Stockholm as the city with the largest number of Swedish inhabitants.

If your idea of exploring your Swedish heritage is a trip to Ikea, we have good news: It's never been easier to investigate your Swedish ancestors—no little hex wrenches required.

1 EMIGRANT LISTS

Though US passenger records can help establish your ancestors' Swedish origins, they're unlikely to contain the key to unlocking Swedish records: the name of the home parish. Fortunately, Sweden has its own, typically more detailed *emigration* records.

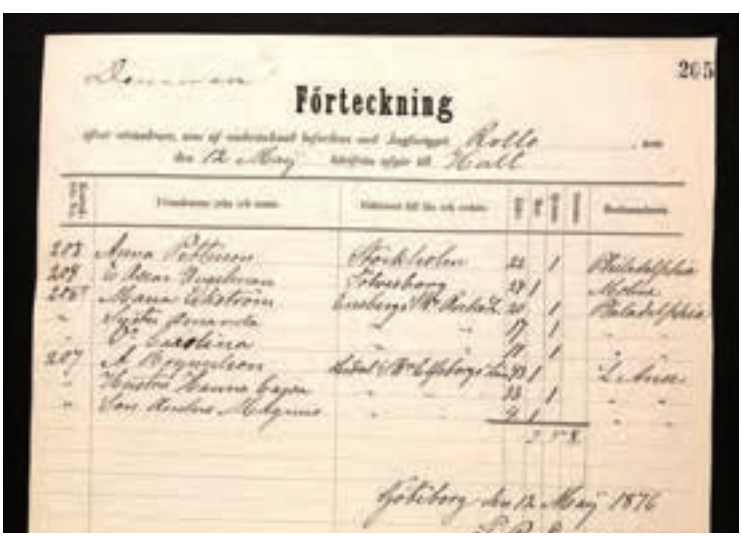
Ancestry.com has a collection of passenger and other records (*Emigranten Populär*),

MIKDAM/ISTOCK

including those from eight Swedish ports <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1189> and a dedicated collection for Göteborg (Gothenburg) <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1910>.

ArkivDigital <www.arkivdigital.net> has the records from the four primary ports: Göteborg, Malmö, Stockholm and Helsingborg. These emigrant records, called Emihamn, were compiled from police records of departing Swedes.

Swedish churches not only tracked emigrants to "Amerika" but also between parishes. Online collections of church records can be searched for these records of persons moving in (*inflyttnings*) and out (*utflyttningslängder*). Ancestry.com has a collection in Swedish <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61085>.


Förteckning

Ship register for the *Rollo*, which launched in 1870

COURTESY DAVID A. FRYXELL

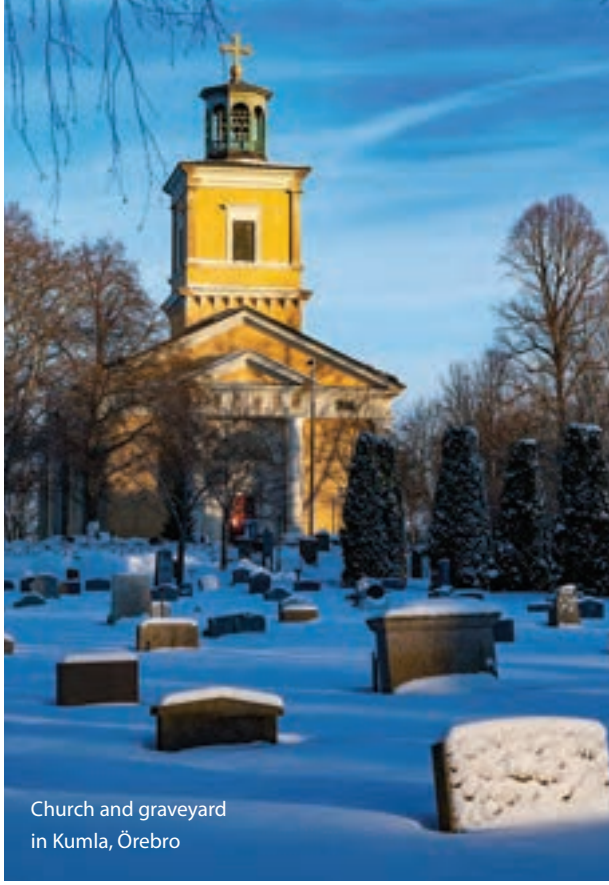
It's also possible Swedish emigrants might have sailed from Hamburg, Germany. Check Ancestry.com for these records <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/1068>. Others left via Copenhagen and can be found in Denmark emigration indexes on Ancestry.com and MyHeritage, or directly through the Danish archives <www.aalborgstadsarkiv.dk/UA.asp?UA=UAProtokol>. Departures from Oslo, Norway, would be recorded in the records of that country's Digitalarkivet <www.digitalarkivet.no>.

When searching for Swedish emigrants, try every possible name variation and use search wildcards when possible. On Ancestry.com, for example, *Jans** will find both Jansdotter and Jansson. Consider that first names might vary, too; Hannah could be Johanna or even Anna. An ancestor's birth date can be the key to finding the right emigrant among many similarly-named Swedes (who may have changed their names in America, anyway).

2 CHURCH RECORDS

Why is it so important to discover your ancestors' parish back in Sweden? Unlike in the United States, where vital records were kept by government authorities, the role of vital recordkeeper in Sweden fell to the established church (the Lutheran Church of Sweden) for centuries. Sweden itself didn't begin keeping civil vital records until 1950.

The oldest Swedish church records (*kyrkböcker*) date from 1608 to 1615. Nationally, the Church laid down regulations for records in 1686; adherence throughout the kingdom was not widespread until the 1720s, however.



Church and graveyard in Kumla, Örebro

Centralized rules for Swedish recordkeeping lagged until about 1860, when standardized printed forms were issued.

Even then, however, records continued to vary from place to place until 1894, when another standardization initiative was implemented. All pre-1895 church books were sent to a regional archive (*landsarkiv*) for safekeeping. If you find gaps in the parish records, these originals likely were lost or destroyed—just in case, though, you can check neighboring parishes.

ArkivDigital boasts the largest collection of Swedish church books, which you can search via a name index. You can also browse 102 million record images there.

JONAS RØNNBRO/ISTOCK; BY-STUDIO/ISTOCK

TIMELINE

1397
Sweden, Denmark and Norway form the Kalmar Union

1523
Gustav Vasa is elected king of a newly independent Sweden, and begins de-emphasizing the role of the Catholic Church in favor of the Lutheran Church of Sweden

1638
Settlers found New Sweden in present-day Delaware; it's conquered by the Dutch in 1655

1686
A new church law requires every parish to keep vital records

1734
New Swedish common law requires estate inventories, among other reforms

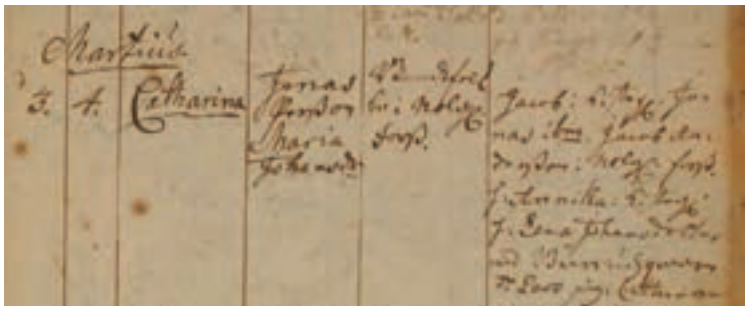
1753
Sweden adopts the Gregorian calendar

Births and baptisms

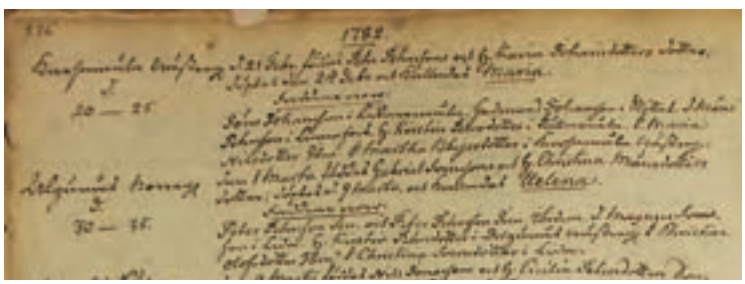
Records of birth (*födde*) typically include the names of parents, christening witnesses, birth and christening dates, and the child's name and birthplace. In early records, the columns show only date (birth/christening), name, name of parent(s) and witnesses.

Other Swedish birth and baptism records (*födde och döpte*) may have a few more columns or more-formal headings, typically:

- Number
- Name
- Born (month/day)
- Christening (month/day)
- Parents' names and residences
- Witnesses' names and residences
- Conditions



Birth record, 1761



Birth records, 1782

Marriages

Swedish records of marriage (*vigde*) usually include the names and residences of the couples, date and place of the marriage, and sometimes names of their parents.

Columns could be quite varied in Swedish marriage records, but often represented:

- Number
- Date of banns
- Marriage date
- Name and residence of groom and bride
- Remarks (facts about groom, bride's sponsor, inheritance information)

Death register, 1895

Deaths and burials

Swedish death (*döde*) records commonly include the burial place, age at death, cause of death, and last residence and occupation. Standard headings include:

- Number
- Death date
- Name
- Residence
- Age
- Cause of death

COURTESY DAVID A. FRYXELL

1804
The Edict of Inoculation begins widespread smallpox vaccination, leading to a valuable record set

1809
Sweden loses its last holdings in Finland to Russia

1814
Denmark cedes Norway to Sweden

c. 1845
Swedish immigration to the United States begins in earnest after emigration laws are lifted

1867
Crop failures and the *Storsvagåret* (Year of Great Weakness) prompt more Swedes to emigrate

1901
Swedes are required to adopt permanent surnames

1905
Norway gains its independence

1995
Sweden joins the European Union

If your idea of exploring your Swedish heritage is a trip to Ikea, we have good news: It's never been easier to investigate your Swedish ancestors—no little hex wrenches required.

Some death records helpfully give the birth date rather than age, which you can use to quickly scan for an ancestor. You may also find columns that mark married (*gift*) or unmarried (*ugift*).

Other church records

In addition to vital records, the state Lutheran churches recorded when a child—typically as a teenager—was confirmed and ready to receive his or her first communion. These records may list details such as parents' names and residences, and can even partly substitute for birth records when those can't be found.

Swedish confirmation records (*konfirmationslängder*) were not required, however, and some parishes didn't keep them at all. Check online collections of church records, by parish; ArkivDigital and the Riksarkivet (SVAR) <sok.riksarkivet.se> are generally the most complete.

You may also find communion records (*nattvardsgång* or *kommunionlängder*). They can be used as a sort of census substitute, as they show that an individual was in a parish at a particular time. These were often notated in household examination records (see the next section), rather than in standalone records.

Churches also kept track of vaccinations, which were crucial given the ravages of smallpox before a vaccine was made available in 1804. Sweden recorded the shots in household examination books, using a variety of abbreviations: *v*, *vac* or *vacc*, as well as *s* or *sm* for "smallpox."

3 CENSUSES AND HOUSEHOLD EXAMINATIONS

Sweden did not take genealogically useful "censuses" (per se) until recently. But it does have a wealth of annual church records called "household examinations" (*husförhörslängder*) that can be used much like a census. You can also find collections of these clerical surveys online, searchable as though they're true censuses.

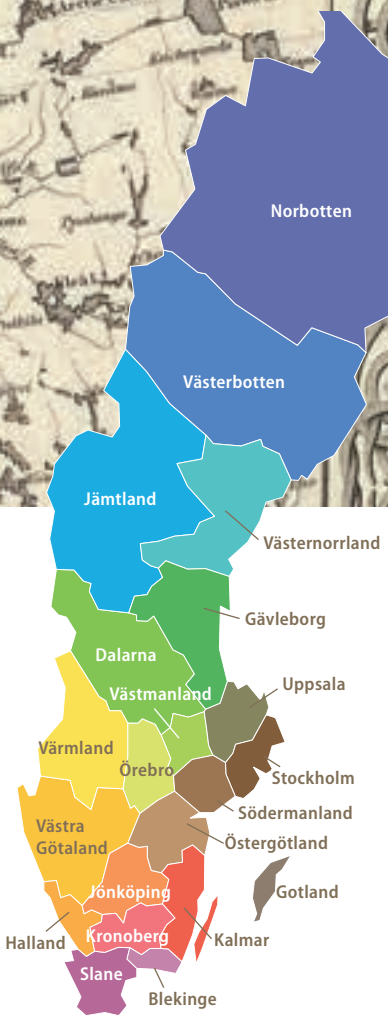
First introduced by Bishop Rudbeckius in the 1620s, surveys listed all the farms in the parish, with names and vital statistics about everyone living there. They even included personal notes (*fräjd*) from the pastor about these members of his flock. Revisions to the forms in 1894 downplayed the counts' religious emphasis.

Household examination books for many parishes date from the 18th century. They update the status of parishioners and their households—all listed by name—and span about five to 10 years per sheet (typically on two facing

Street in Ystad, Scania

MARTIN WAHLBORG/ISTOCK; DAVID RUMSEY HISTORICAL MAP COLLECTION; PYTYCZECH/ISTOCK

Political Jurisdictions of Sweden



Sweden is divided into 25 **provinces (*Landskap*)**, dating from medieval times. Those these no longer serve any administrative purpose, but they're sometimes referenced in records (and many Swedes identify with their traditional province).

The country was also divided into **counties (*Län*)**, established in 1634; see the graphic. Their names, number, and boundaries changed several times through the years; for example, the province of Småland was briefly its own county, but is now divided between the counties of Jönköping, Kronoberg and Kalmar. And at various times, provinces and counties have overlapped and shared names. FamilySearch's Catalog sorts records by counties as they were drawn in around 1875.

Records are often further organized by **parish (*socken*)** within a county. The parish—as the key to church records—is the most important unit for research, though counties are also divided into civil municipalities.

pages). The intervals vary, simply depending on how much space the parish needed before starting a fresh set.

Unlike censuses, household examinations reflect changes within that span as they happened: births, marriages, deaths, and families moving in or moving out. These notations may appear at the far right of the page(s), so be sure to study the entire entry.

As a result, the *husförhörslängd* provides a valuable cross-reference to other Swedish church records for the same parish. A useful strategy, in fact, involves working back and forth between household examination records and church vital records for the same parish.

Make note of the specific location within the parish in which you find a record, so you can more readily find ancestors in the other records. With a little luck, you can trace a family backwards in time—revealing *husförhörslängd* entries, births, marriages and deaths—to the beginning of a parish's written records.

Just as in US census records, however, expect spelling variations and erroneous dates in these Swedish enumerations. The shifting patterns of patronymics versus permanent surnames, as well as the use of nicknames, can also lead to surprises and roadblocks.

Key to identifying your correct Swedish ancestors is a birth date, which follows through from one survey to the next and function almost like a Social Security number in the United States. When forced to browse pages of challenging handwriting, scan for a birth date to help spot an individual in the crowd.

Household examination records are available on several websites, including:

- Ancestry.com <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9731>
- ArkivDigital <www.arkivdigital.net/online/register/population-of-sweden>
- FamilySearch <www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2790465>
- MyHeritage <www.myheritage.com/research/collection-10180/sweden-household-examination-books>
- Riksarkivet (SVAR) <sok.riksarkivet.se/folkrakningar>

tip

Learn the Swedish alphabet, which has three additional letters compared to the Roman alphabet: Å (å), Ä (ä), and Ö (ö). Those three are usually alphabetized after Z in that order, so don't despair if you can't find a name or place beginning with Ä among the other As.

The Top Swedish Genealogy Websites

The free **FamilySearch** site <www.familysearch.org> has millions of Swedish vital records from church books along with nearly 47 million searchable records from household examination books (1880 to 1930—in effect, annual censuses) <www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2790465>. Not long ago, such records could only be painstakingly browsed on microfilm.

The subscription site **Ancestry.com** <www.ancestry.com> has searchable church vital records (by county), some clerical surveys (1880 to 1896 <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9731>), and several essential emigration resources. **MyHeritage** <www.myheritage.com>, also by subscription, has 158 million household examination records <www.myheritage.com/research/collection-10180/sweden-household-examination-books>, church vital records, and several Stockholm-specific collections.

In Sweden, the **Riksarkivet national archives (SVAR)** <sok.riksarkivet.se/specialsok> has digitized church records as well as military and other less-common records. Its census database <sok.riksarkivet.se/folkrakningar>, compiled from household examinations, lets you search any or all years from 1860 to 1930. The site has enough English that you can get by.

However, the most-complete collection of Swedish records overall—in easier-to-read color, with English instructions throughout—belongs to the subscription **ArkivDigital** service <www.arkivdigital.net>. Search by archive (usually at the parish level) or in an ever-growing collection of indexes <www.arkivdigital.net/registers>, including:

- vital records, notably church books
- emigrant records
- estate inventories
- muster rolls
- household examination records from 1800 to 1947

Read an expanded version of this article at <www.familytreemagazine.com/heritage/swedish/swedish-genealogy-records>.

4 LAND AND PROBATE RECORDS

Swedish records of land ownership and usage cover 1570 to the present, and sometimes contain information of genealogical value. Most Swedish land records created before 1875 have not historically been indexed; that year, new records called *lagfartsböckerna* and *inteckningsböckerna* were introduced.

FamilySearch holds land records for many places in Sweden. Try to identify the relevant district court (*häradsrätt*), then drill down in the FamilySearch Catalog <www.familysearch.org/search/catalog> for it and click on "Land and Property." Sweden's national archives has also scanned many of these records. Select the record type on the Databases page <sok.riksarkivet.se/specialsok>; options include land registers (*jordeböcker*, about 1630 to 1750) and land certificates (*lagfartsböcker*, 1875 to 1933).

Probate records—court records that describe the distribution of an ancestor's estate after death—often pre-date even church vital records. In Sweden, an act passed in 1734 made it mandatory to conduct an inventory of a deceased's estate (*bouppteckning*), although only an estimated one-quarter of the population actually did so. The preamble to this inventory can often contain genealogically useful information.

Estate inventories and probate records have been indexed for many Swedish *häradsrätt*, and can be found online at ArkivDigital and the Riksarkivet <sok.riksarkivet.se/bouppteckningar>. These indexes as well as the actual records are organized by district court.

5 MILITARY RECORDS

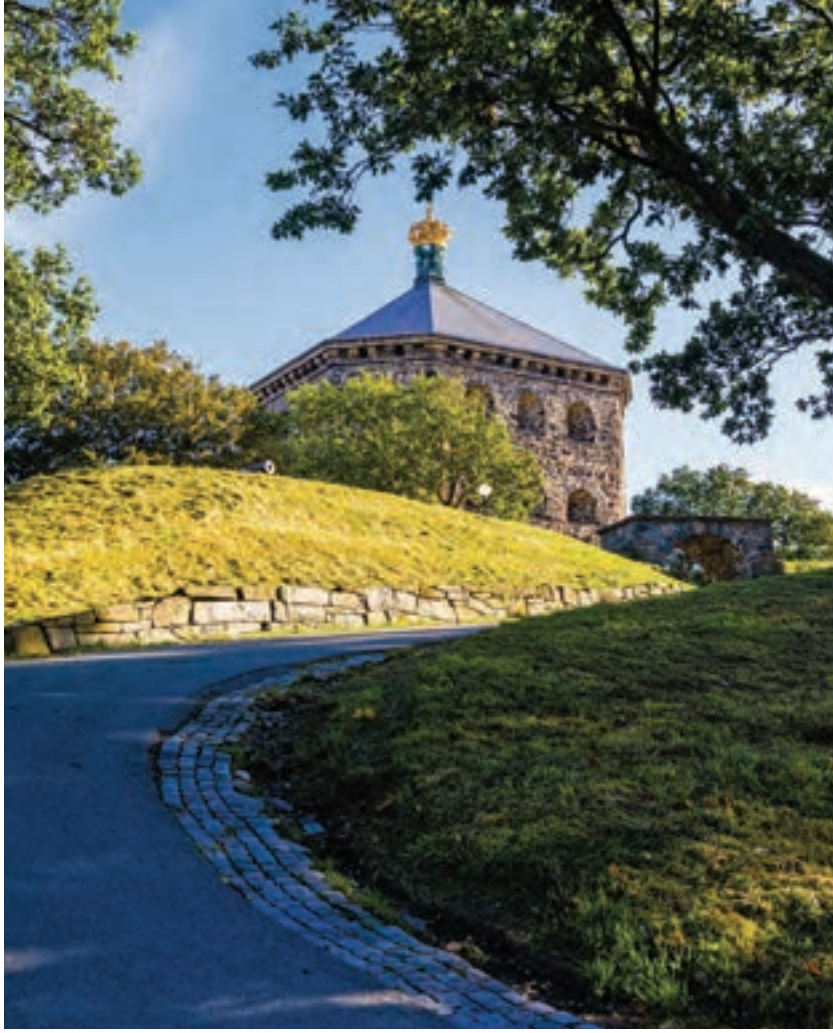
If your ancestors (like my great-great-uncle) served in the military before leaving Sweden, you can easily search for them in the general muster rolls (*generalmönsterrullorna*) at ArkivDigital.

The main index <www.arkivdigital.net/online/register/general-muster-rolls-in-index> includes "allotment" (*indelta*) regiments—essentially, draftees—and enlisted regiments from 1683 to 1883. A "quick find" index <www.arkivdigital.net/online/register/quick-find-for-the-general-muster-rolls> covers only allotment regiments. More-detailed information on soldiers from 1902 to 1950 can be found in a collection of military service cards <www.arkivdigital.net/online/register/military-service-cards>.

Riksarkivet has scanned images of army rolls as far back as the 17th century and muster rolls, organized by regiment <sok.riksarkivet.se/generalmonsterrullor>. You can also search a collection of 500,000 entries in the Central Soldiers Registry <www.soldatreg.se/in-english>, all of which come from the allotment system. Though not complete, the registry covers 1682 to 1901.

• • •

Start your Swedish research with the readily available church records, then supplement with other collections as necessary. You'll be well on your way to finding your Swedish roots and appreciating your heritage—maybe more easily than putting together that Ikea bookcase. ●



Skansen Kronan in Gothenburg

MIKAEL SVENSSON/ISTOCK

Contributing Editor **David A. Fryxell** is the author of *The Family Tree Scandinavian Genealogy Guide* (Penguin Random House).

The Feminine Mystique

Rediscover the lives of the women in your family tree with this advice for overcoming brick walls in female ancestor research.

by GENA PHILIBERT-ORTEGA

When she died in 1958, Alma Clark Chatham was laid to rest in Bellville, Texas, next to her husband, Walter. Her simple grave marker provides her birth and death dates, but just her married name: Mrs. Walter Chatham.

Fifty years after her death, Alma's granddaughter visited the gravesite and asked, "Why is she not laid to rest with her name?" Only the person who bought the marker would know the answer to that question.

References to only "Mrs. [Husband's Name]" are just one of many challenges that genealogists face when tracing women. Contemporary laws impacted women's ability to own property, vote, and partake in the legal and political systems. That means many women were almost invisible in the eyes of the law—and invisible in genealogy records.

Recordkeeping is even more dire for women of color. Enslaved women, considered property, left few (if any) records. And despite the 19th Amendment in 1920, Black women couldn't vote in practice in some parts of the country because of restrictive voting laws. Likewise, Puerto Rican women weren't given the right to vote until 1929; in practice, most still couldn't vote until a requirement on reading and writing was lifted six years later.

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY/UNSPLASH; LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Contemporary laws impacted women's ability to own property, vote, and partake in the legal and political systems. That means many women were almost invisible in the eyes of the law—and invisible in genealogy records.

We need to meet challenges like these by considering location, history and the availability of the records that *were* created. Here are five common obstacles genealogists face when researching women—and how to overcome them.

CHALLENGE #1

I Don't Know Where to Start

You may feel overwhelmed by how much you don't know about a female ancestor. But as always in research, you should *start with what you know*, even if that's not much.

Create a timeline for your ancestor that includes her name and every life event you know about her, even if you haven't fully verified all the facts. Add details about her husband or children, if relevant. This should be a living document, meaning you add information to it as you work. Don't worry that some of the details will need to be corrected later.

As you add information, consider what records you'd expect your ancestor to appear in. For example, say you know that a woman of interest married John Albert at some point after 1850, but you only know her as "Mrs. John Albert." Look for John in the *1860* census and see what details it has about a wife. That, in turn, could lead you to the 1870 census or a child's birth certificate.

CHALLENGE #2

What's Her Name?!?

Maiden names are infamously difficult to learn, and present perhaps the greatest obstacle to genealogists. But a woman's *first* name at birth can also be hard to find.

Fortunately, specific records tend to list a woman by her maiden name. (See the sidebar on pages 54 and 55 for some examples, and this web article for more suggestions <www.familytreemagazine.com/female-ancestors/12-records-for-finding-elusive-maiden-names>.)

Marriage records

A marriage license or certificate includes information about the couple, including the bride's maiden name. A resource such as the FamilySearch Research Wiki <www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Main_Page> will help you determine what records are available. You'll obviously need to search for the marriage record by the groom's name.

Delayed birth records

In the 20th century, new benefits programs (such as Social Security) and forms of identifi-

NATHAN ANDERSON/UNSPLASH

TIMELINE: US WOMEN'S HISTORY

1839
Mississippi is the first state to allow married women to own property in their own name, albeit under the control of their husbands

1848
The Seneca Falls Convention approves a "Declaration of Sentiments" on women's rights; New York passes the Married Women's Property Act, which allows women to own *and* control property

1850
All members of a household are named in the US census, rather than just the head of household

1855
Non-citizen women can become citizens by marrying one or by her husband naturalizing

cation required applicants to have birth certificates. If the applicant didn't already have one—for example, because they were born before vital recordkeeping was mandatory—they could receive a delayed birth record. This would include parents' names and (if she was still alive) an affidavit from the applicant's mother.

Death certificates

In addition to often including a maiden name, these may have named the deceased's parents.

However, biographical details on death certificates are notoriously prone to error, as the informant may not have had firsthand knowledge of the relevant people and events. (And the informant's grief in the moment could affect their accuracy even if they did.) Even surviving husbands might not be able to accurately name his late wife's parents, especially if he never met them.

Obituaries

A woman's obituary may mention her maiden name or specify the name of a parent, brother or unmarried sister. But women may also be included in obituaries for her parents or siblings, providing (if the deceased is her father, brother or unmarried sister) a solid lead for a maiden name.

Take care when viewing obituaries for a woman's mother, though. The mother may have taken a different surname since giving birth to your woman of interest, perhaps because of a remarriage.

Children's birth and death records

These sometimes specifically ask for mother's maiden name. Recordkeeping laws vary by US state, however, so they may not be consistently kept. And different states may have asked for different details.

Military pension records

If a woman's husband served in the military, she may have been eligible to receive a pension. The application required a bevy of supporting documentation, some of which might provide maiden name.

CHALLENGE #3

How Do I Research That Location?

Place is so important to genealogy research. You may have found ancestors in Western states but scratch your head when looking for other lines in a New England town. Those two areas of the country had vastly different histories, settlement patterns, and available records.

GETTY IMAGES/UNSPLASH; LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

1869
Wyoming is the first territory to allow women to vote; upon statehood in 1890, Wyoming becomes the first state with women's suffrage

1907
US-born women lose citizenship if they marry non-citizens

1919
The 19th Amendment gives US women the right to vote in federal elections

1922
A woman's citizenship status is no longer contingent on that of her husband, with one exception: female US citizens who marry non-citizens of Asian descent can still lose their citizenship

1965
The Voting Rights Act outlaws racial discrimination in voting, effectively giving Black women in the South the right to vote

Approach your research as if you were a historian, considering the location and time period your ancestor lived in. Check out the FamilySearch Research Wiki <www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Main_Page> for the state she resided in to learn what's available. The wiki also has pages for specialized research topics, such as African American genealogy <www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/African_American_Genealogy>.

Then, determine where the records are located today. I recommend searching website card catalogs to find records for the time and location of interest. Drill down to country, then state, county and town to see what's available:

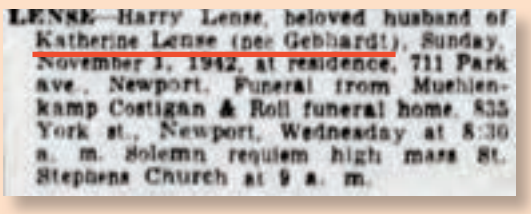
- **Ancestry.com** <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/catalog>**:** Separate fields for Title and Keyword (plus filters by place and record type) give you multiple options for identifying relevant collections. Alternatively, you can filter search results from anywhere in the site by location.
- **FamilySearch** <www.familysearch.org/search/catalog>**:** This includes materials digitized at FamilySearch, as well as those held by the FamilySearch Library in Salt Lake City and its affiliate branches around the world. You can also find collections from a specific place at <www.familysearch.org/search/location/list>.
- **MyHeritage** <www.myheritage.com/research/catalog>**:** Click Refine by Location at left to see options for individual countries or US states, or the search field at top to filter using keywords.

But remember some records—notably, birth, marriage and death certificates—are not online yet. You'll need to do your due diligence to identify and contact archives that hold physical or microfilm copies.

Family Tree also has research guides for all 50 US states, plus Puerto Rico and Washington, DC <www.familytreemagazine.com/explore-by-state>. Each issue of the magazine includes two guides; see pages 33 and 37 for Louisiana and Washington, respectively.

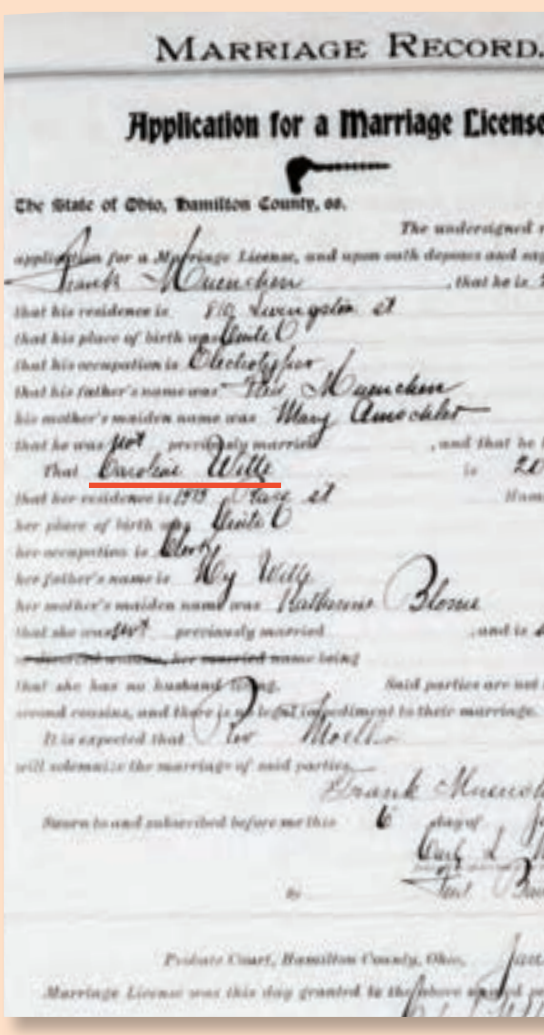
Women in Records

Many records fail to mention women by name. But the following types of records tend to shed more light on their lives and identities.



LENNE—Harry Lenne, beloved husband of Katherine Lenne (nee Gebhardt), Sunday, November 1, 1942, at residence, 711 Park ave., Newport. Funeral from Muehlenkamp Costigan & Roll funeral home, 835 York st., Newport, Wednesday at 8:30 a. m. Solemn requiem high mass St. Stephens Church at 9 a. m.

Obituary for a husband, 1942. Courtesy Newspapers.com

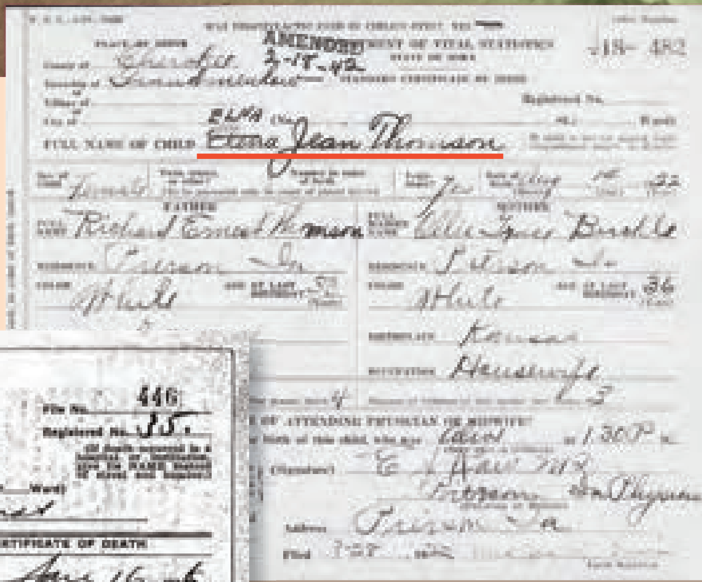


MARRIAGE RECORD.

Application for a Marriage License

The State of Ohio, Hamilton County, ss.

Marriage certificate, 1904. Courtesy Andrew Koch



AMENDED

FULL NAME OF CHILD

18- 482

Delayed birth certificate, 1922. Courtesy FamilySearch

Death certificate of an adult child, 1926. Courtesy FamilySearch

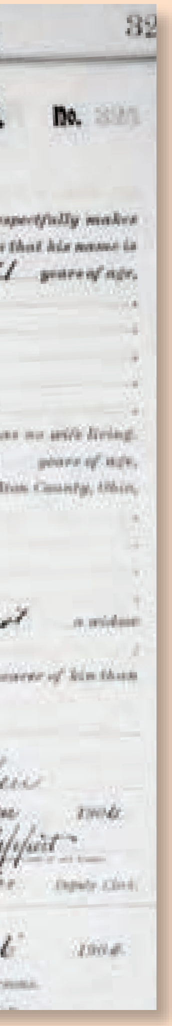
COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

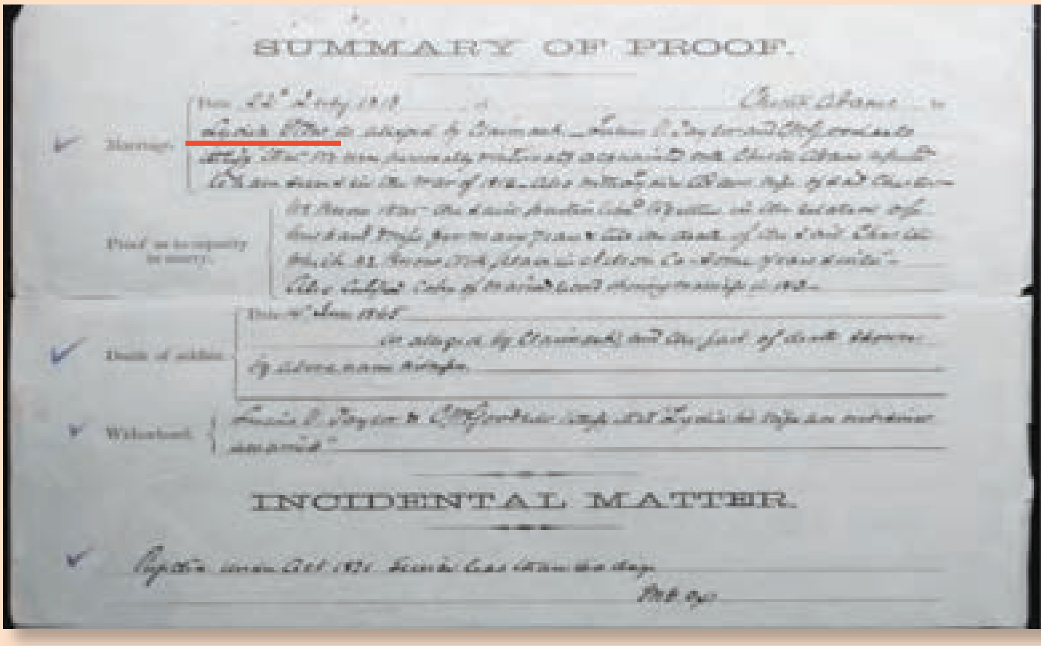
446

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH



Military pension record supplement, 1871. Courtesy Fold3



SUMMARY OF PROOF.

INCIDENTAL MATTER.

CHALLENGE #4

She Disappears Between Census Years

You found her in 1900, but not in 1910. Where did she go?

A lot can happen in 10 years. Families move, couples marry, and people die. For women in North America who typically change their surname upon marriage, she may seemingly vanish without a trace.

Searching by family member

How do you find her? Use what you know to your advantage. Consider details about her from the previous census: What was her name? Who was she living with? And what other biographical details do you have about the household?

Next, think about alternative terms to search for. We usually default to searching by a person's full name, birth year, and location. But instead, you could search by the name of a relative (Was the woman living with a child?) or just by first name and birth year (Did she marry/remarry and have a different surname?). You can also toy with "exact" matches in databases, allowing you to account for misspellings or name variations.

Browsing images

In other cases, you'll need to browse records, rather than relying on keyword searches. Use a site's record-viewer to drill-down to the enumeration district where you think your ancestor lived, then page through records image by image. This may take quite some time in a large city. (Find tips here <www. familytreemagazine.com/records/census/browse-census-records>.)

Considering deaths

As previously indicated, it's also possible your woman of interest died between the census years. Look for her in death indexes and collections of death certificates for that place and time, or peruse burials at sites like Find a Grave <www.findagrave.com>. Run a name search in historical newspapers for obituaries or death announcements.

You have an extra resource if you're researching the 1850 through 1880 censuses: mortality schedules. These log deaths that occurred within the year preceding the census, and are available at Ancestry.com <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3530>.

Before you "kill her off," though, look for other records that might mention a woman in those in-between years: city directories, other newspaper announcements, or state censuses.

CHALLENGE #5

Why Isn't She in That Record?

Great! You've found a record of your ancestral family. But that elusive woman isn't listed. What gives? As we've already discussed, perhaps the woman died before a census was taken. But another

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY/UNSPLASH

possibility is that she was staying with a family member when the enumerator arrived.

Learning about how and why a record was created can also be enlightening. Perhaps a woman isn't in a record because she's not *supposed to be*.

For example, she wouldn't appear in voting lists before women in that state had the right to vote. Women living in California could vote beginning in 1911 (pre-dating nationwide women's suffrage in 1920), but my female ancestors in Texas could not. Other local issues—such as poll taxes and a woman's own feelings about suffrage—might have hindered her voting.

City directories, too, often only mentioned women by their husbands' names. Read the introductory pages of a directory to understand how residents were mentioned. Perhaps the directory was only to include heads of household by name.

For more articles on finding the women in your family, see <www.familytreemagazine.com/female-ancestors>.

• • •

Finding female ancestors can be tough, but not impossible! As these tips have demonstrated, there are several steps you can take before giving up on a mystery woman.

What about "Mrs. Walter Chatham"? I learned her long-lost name by first researching her husband. I had his birth and death dates, which I used to find his entry in the 1950 census. There was his wife, Alma. ●

Gena Philibert-Ortega is an author, researcher, and instructor specializing in the social history and material culture in telling women's stories. She holds master's degrees in Interdisciplinary Studies (Psychology and Women's Studies) and in Religion.

LOOK FOR STORIES WITHIN RECORDS. You can "read between the lines" when reviewing documents to better understand the hows and whys of your ancestor's life events. Divorce records (page 60), for example, might list the cause of separation—even the name of the person with whom a spouse was unfaithful. Proceedings might also be mentioned (even sensationalized) in newspapers, which contain a host of other stories about families and their communities (page 66). ●

PATPITCHAYA/ISTOCK

Precious Metal

A memorial photo with gold backing presents a mystery.

Front

Back

1 This memorial piece was found in the possessions of reader Sherry Conway's grandmother, Willie Abbott (1887–1964). The challenge is figuring out who's being mourned and a time frame for the item. "In loving remembrance of our beloved" was a formal way of expressing loss common during the Victorian (1837–1901) and WWI (1914–1918) periods.

2 These round enameled photos with a stand on the back were popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Photographers made copies of photos on special paper, then transferred the image to a metal backing available in a variety of shapes and sizes. (See another example at <www.familytreemagazine.com/photos/a-two-part-italian-photo-mystery>.) The process allowed for the addition of decorative elements like color (in this case, black), a banner and text.

3 The young woman's fringed neck scarf and drop earrings suggest the photo dates from the early 1870s. Relatives often chose an individual's best (or possibly only) photograph for use in memorial pieces and on gravestones.

4 The fashion also implies a birth time frame: She looks about 20 or 25, putting her birth year in the early 1850s. Estimating a person's age can be difficult, so determining who's depicted relies on finding appropriate matches in the family. Looking at the reader's family tree suggests Willie's grandmother (Isabella Tittle, born between 1850 and 1854) as a candidate. Reaching out to other descendants might yield a photo that could confirm the match. ●

Have a photo mystery you'd like Maureen to investigate? Email FamilyTree@Yankeepub.com with your photo, any details you know about it, and *Photo Detective* in the subject line, and your question may be selected for a future issue.

Maureen A. Taylor is the author of *Family Photo Detective* (Family Tree Books).

Divorce Records

They're called *vital* records for a reason—those birth, marriage and death records that are such critical pieces in the puzzle of an ancestor's life.

But as genealogists, we shouldn't overlook the wealth of family history information set out at another critical juncture in the lives of so many of our forebears: a marriage ending in divorce.

Divorce records are often harder to find than other genealogical resources, meaning many family historians put off looking for them. But this article will show why you shouldn't delay even a moment longer.

In this article, we'll look at the promise of these records, as well as the challenges to finding them and alternate records that can clue us in to a divorce in the family.

CLUES IN DIVORCE RECORDS

A divorce record is a genealogical treasure chest, containing not just family details but also stories and maybe even juicy scandal. At a minimum, a divorce certificate or entry in a divorce register will set out:

- Husband's full name
- Wife's full name (including maiden name)
- Birthdates or ages of the parties
- Residence of the parties
- Date and place of marriage
- Number of children
- Which spouse is seeking divorce, and on what grounds
- Date and place the divorce was granted

Some divorce records contain much more detail: what name the divorced wife (and her children) assumed after proceedings, the marital misconduct that resulted in the divorce, and the names and birthdates of the couple's children. Some adultery cases even name names—that is, they identify the person with whom the offending party had an affair. The possibilities are endless, and you won't know in advance how much detail is in a divorce file.

DIVORCE RECORD COVERAGE

Terminology

First, "divorce" could refer to two different types of relief. The proceedings came in two basic flavors, though it can be challenging to discern one from the other in records:

- **Absolute divorce** or (in the language of the law) "divorce *a vinculo matrimonii*," which terminated all aspects of marriage and granted at least the innocent party the right to remarry
- **Divorce from bed and board** (officially, "divorce *a mensa et thoro*"), which is similar to a modern legal separation in allowing parties to live separately and manage their own finances, but not marry again

Divorce Laws

Another challenge to researchers is that divorce records (like other vital records) were kept by individual states, who set their own laws about when and how records were kept. States also determined under what circumstances divorces could be granted in the first place. For example, New York was the last state to allow no-fault divorce (in 2010), and South Carolina's state constitution long forbade divorce altogether.

Differing divorce laws between states may have encouraged residents to travel to seek divorces in states with laxer laws. These jurisdictions came to be known as divorce meccas, beginning with Indiana in the 1850s and ending with Nevada and Alabama as late as the 1960s. It wasn't until states started making no-fault divorces available in the 20th century that divorce meccas fell out of use. By 1900, one out of every 500 US marriages ended in divorce.

Fortunately, though, divorce records were among the earliest records in the United States. The Massachusetts Bay Colony Court of Assistants granted one Mrs. James Luxford a divorce 3 December 1639, after proving she wasn't the *only* Mrs. James Luxford.

Jurisdictions

By law, those seeking divorce in early America generally had to petition the state or colonial legislatures. Over time, this responsibility passed to judicial officials in individual counties.

These processes created distinct types of records that are accessed differently today. (See the next section.) Early divorces will be recorded in the proceedings of legislatures, while later divorces are included in county court records.

ACCESSING DIVORCE RECORDS

Legislative Divorces

Legislative divorces were documented in four basic forms:

- a **petition** from the aggrieved party, which sets out their reasons for divorce

- a **private bill** introduced by a local legislator
- **legislative proceeding records** that document how the bill moved through the legal process, from debate to voting
- **entry in the statute books** if the divorce was granted—functionally, a legislative act proclaimed just for that couple's benefit

The state archives or historical society typically hold surviving legislative records, the most important of which are legislative petitions for divorce. The National Archives has a list of state-level archival repositories at <www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/state-archives.html>.

Online access to these records varies widely. One standout is the Library of Virginia's collection of 26,000 petitions <lva-virginia.libguides.com/petitions>. The Wisconsin Historical Society, meanwhile has a more-modest 2,500 petitions dating from 1836 to 1891 <content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/petitions>; only a few-dozen were related to divorce.

Published journals often recorded the legislature's debates and votes. States have digitized some of these (for example, the New Jersey State Library's *Journal and Minutes of the Legislature* <www.njstatelib.org/research_library/legal_resources/historical_laws/legislative_journals_and_minutes>. Others are available through Google Books <books.google.com>, HathiTrust <www.hathitrust.org> and the Internet Archive <www.archive.org>.

Court Divorces

Judicial divorce records follow the format of court records: **docket books**, **minutes**, **case files** and more. FamilySearch <www.familysearch.org> has microfilmed court records for many places (even from colonial times); run a Catalog search for the county where the action occurred, then look at subsections for Court Records or Divorce Records. Additionally, some states have compiled **divorce indexes**, some of which are searchable.

States began requiring **divorce certificates** and/or **divorce registers** by the early 20th century. These were filed in a central office, usually the state vital statistics registrar. These only have the "bare-bones" facts of the divorce: identities of the parties, dates and places of divorce, and so on. Though they won't contain records of the court proceeding, they can clue you to the existence of a case.

Some of these are available online, such as Ancestry.com's collection of post-1918 Virginia divorce certificates <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9280> or FamilySearch's collection of mid-20th-century records <www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/655313>.

Record Loss and Privacy Laws

Natural disasters and other courthouse losses have long threatened records, resulting in their not surviving or being digitized. Legislative records may not have been retained at all, or were discarded shortly after. Other record sets simply haven't been microfilmed or digitized yet, requiring you to pursue in-person research.

Compounding these problems is that divorce records in some jurisdictions are sealed for a period of years. These privacy laws restrict access to only the parties themselves until a certain number of years have lapsed.

This will vary from state to state. California, for example, is an open-records state, with divorce records available like any other. Virginia closes divorce records for 25 years; other states seal them for 50 or even 100 years.

Even in states that have liberal public-access rules, documents in a divorce case (especially those involving children or marital misconduct) may be sealed by the court.

Fast Facts

Coverage: Varies by state divorce laws, but generally documented from the mid-1800s

Jurisdiction where kept: By state or colonial legislatures, then by county courts

Key details: Names, ages/birth dates, and residence of parties; date and place of marriage; number (and possibly names) of children; grounds for divorce; when/where the divorce was granted

Alternates and substitutes: Censuses, marriage and death records, newspapers, pension records

DIVORCE RECORD SUBSTITUTES

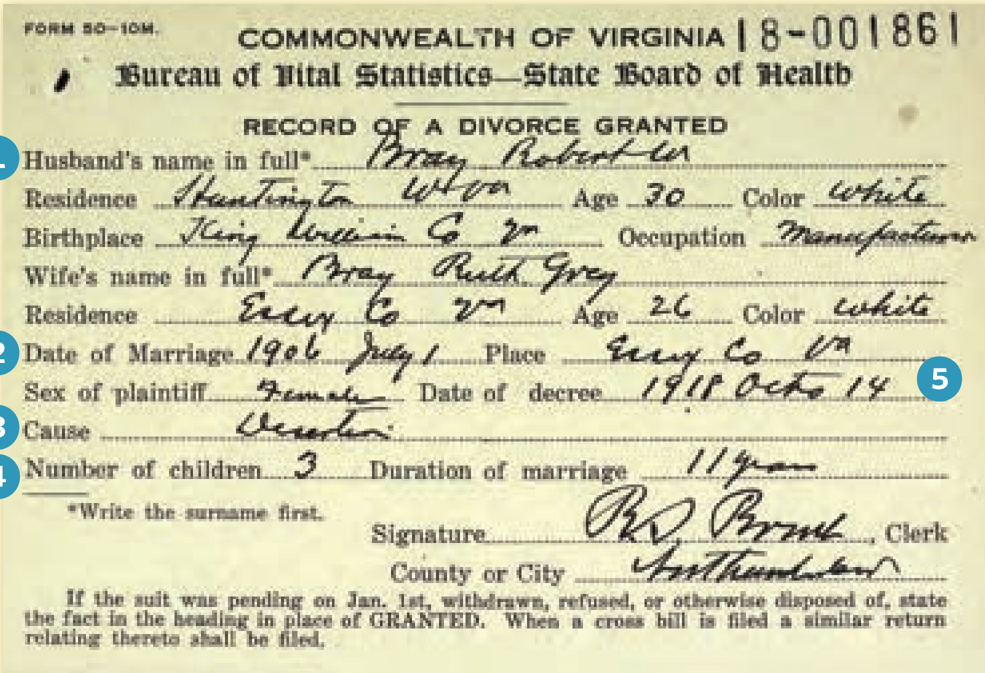
What else can we look at to either alert us to a divorce or document its details? Many documents can allude to divorces.

Censuses Every US census since 1880 has asked for marital status (see page 30), including widowed or divorced. The 1950 supplemental questions included how many years the person had been divorced.

Death Certificates: Standard-form death certificates as far back as the early years of the 20th century often asked whether the deceased was single, married, widowed or divorced. Death certificates were generally filed at the state department of health or vital statistics, and older records turned over for preservation to state archives or historical societies.

Many death records have been digitized and may be available at FamilySearch or even at a state archives website. Others, however, are available only as official state

At a Glance: Divorce Records


FORM 50–10M. COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA 18-001861

Bureau of Vital Statistics—State Board of Health

RECORD OF A DIVORCE GRANTED

Husband's name in full* Bray Robert W

Residence Huntington W Va Age 30 Color White

Birthplace King William Co Va Occupation Manufacturer

Wife's name in full* Bray Ruth Grey

Residence Essex Co Va Age 26 Color White

Date of Marriage 1906 July 1 Place Essex Co Va

Sex of plaintiff Female Date of decree 1918 Octo 14

Cause Desertion

Number of children 3 Duration of marriage 11 years

*Write the surname first.

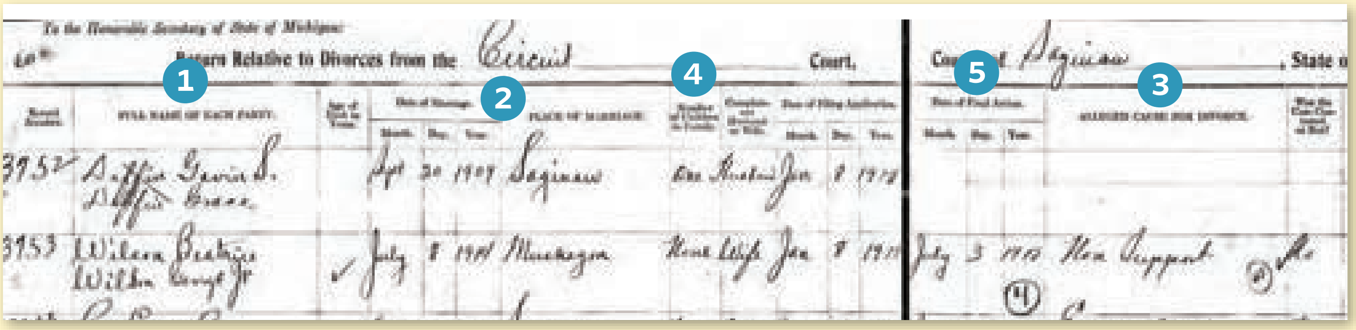
Signature ______ Clerk

County or City Northumberland

If the suit was pending on Jan. 1st, withdrawn, refused, or otherwise disposed of, state the fact in the heading in place of GRANTED. When a cross bill is filed a similar return relating thereto shall be filed.

Divorce certificate from Virginia

Citation: Virginia State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, "Divorce Record no. 18-001861," Robert W. Bray-Ruth Grey Bray, 14 October 1918; imaged, "Virginia, U.S., Divorce Records, 1918–2014," Ancestry.com (https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9280/ : accessed 13 January 2025).


To the Honorable Secretary of State of Michigan:

Return Relative to Divorces from the Circuit Court, County of Saginaw, State of

FULL NAME OF EACH PARTY. | PLACE OF MARRIAGE. | ALLEGED CAUSE FOR DIVORCE.

Divorce register from Michigan

Citation: Mich. Department of Community Health, "Divorce Summary Register for Saginaw County (1918)," 60; imaged, "Michigan, U.S. Divorce Records, 1897–1952," Ancestry.com (https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9092/: accessed 13 January 2025).

1 Divorce records list the names of both parties—often including a wife's maiden name.

2 Date and place of marriage suggest where you should look for more records.

3 "Causes" (i.e., reasons) for divorce include "desertion," "non-support," and "extreme cruelty," and may reflect what issues were legal grounds for divorce at the time. These records also indicate which spouse initiated the proceedings.

4 References to children can encourage you to look for records of them—potentially under different surnames.

5 Records may have separate fields for date of application and date of divorce decree.

Find *Family Tree*'s best articles on birth, marriage, death and divorce records at <www.familytreemagazine.com/vital-records>.

records and subject to state privacy laws. The websites of the appropriate state office will set out the limitations applicable to the records and the procedure for ordering them.

Home Sources: One of the best sources for any kind of family information, of course, is the family file cabinet or even Grandma's attic. Copies of divorce orders or certificates are usually among the papers a family will file away and keep. It's also a good idea to ask older relatives what they know about divorces in the family.

Marriage Records: Both civil and church records of marriages set out information about the prior marital status of the parties. Marriage licenses often required disclosure of any prior marriage and how that marriage came to an end. Some church records will also note prior marriages of spouses, including an indication of whether death or divorce terminated the earlier marriage.

Newspapers: These are rich resources for evidence of divorces, both in their news columns and in the sections for legal notices. The details of a juicy divorce often made page one in the local newspaper, while even a routine divorce filing might be recorded in a column on "this week's action in the courts." Moreover, court actions often required notice to other parties and to the public so the legal notice columns are worth reviewing as well.

Pension Records: These may disclose that an applicant (or his spouse) had been divorced, as well as provide a recitation of marital history. In some cases, the records may disclose the conflict between a current and a former spouse.

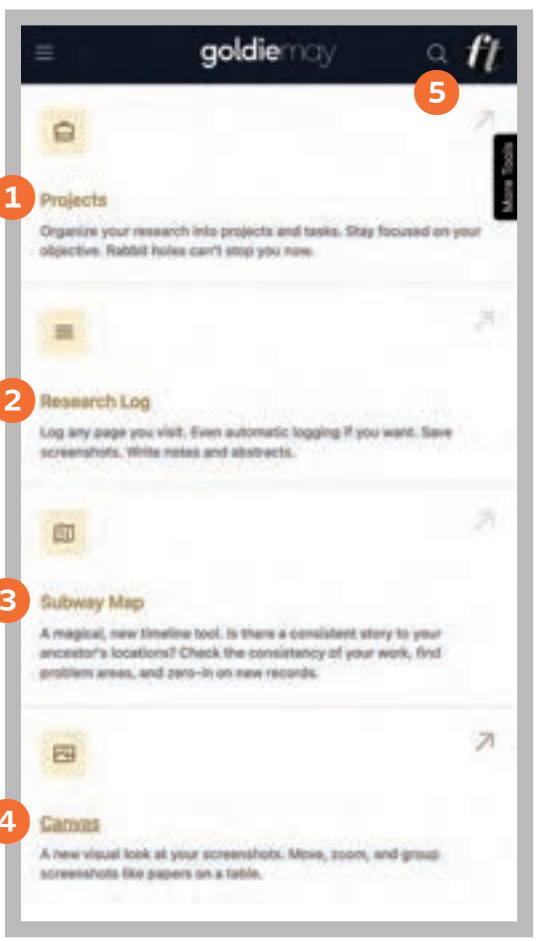
Another type of pension—known as the mother's pension—is also worth a look. This document is available only in some states and time periods (between the late 1800s and the adoption of welfare in the early 20th century). It was intended to keep mothers together with their children in their own homes using some small public assistance. In most cases, widows and divorced women were both eligible, and both were required to set out information as to when and where they were married and how the marriage ended. ●

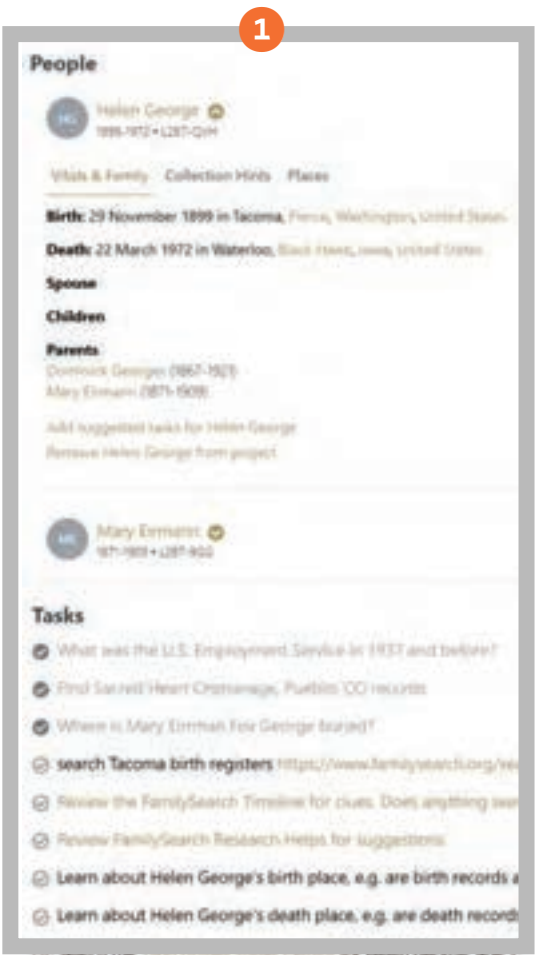
Judy G. Russell, CG, CGL is an internationally known lecturer and award-winning writer who provides expert guidance through the murky territory where law and family history intersect <www.legalgenealogist.com>.

Using Goldie May as a Research Aid

Are you ready to replace your hodgepodge genealogy notes with a powerful tool for organizing research, analyzing results and even finding records? **Goldie May** <www.goldiemay.com> is a Google Chrome extension that works as a kind of virtual assistant with your favorite genealogy websites or software. With it, you can keep notes, define and track progress on projects, and easily navigate to important bookmarks on websites such as FamilySearch <www.familysearch.org> and Ancestry.com <www.ancestry.com>. Install the Goldie May extension from the tool's website for free. Log in to your FamilySearch or Ancestry.com account and click the puzzle piece to get started, then find Goldie May under the puzzle piece icon on Chrome. (This tutorial mostly covers the plug-in's tools for FamilySearch.)

Sunny Jane Morton





1 Under Projects & Tasks, I organize each of my research questions into a dedicated project, which only takes about 20 seconds to create. Then I dump in my clues and add notes about ongoing research and future leads.

Of note, you can add quick links to relevant FamilySearch person profile pages. Under People, use a person's name or FamilySearch ID. Click the drop-down to see a summary of their life details without having to open a new window.

Under Tasks, you can add individual to-do items—those "side quests" you want to address as steps toward your main question or goal. You can check them off when you've finished them, or add other users as collaborators to share the workload.

You can even create tasks while still on FamilySearch, without having to switch between windows. Right-click a link, then select Goldie May > Add Task to Project from Link. (This also works for highlighted text.)

2 Under Research Log, track online research and record findings—both positive results with a like and negative results (i.e., what you *weren't* able to find) with a dislike.

Entries can include comments, abstracts, citations and screenshots. You can turn on automatic logging, helpful if (like me) you have 15 different browser tabs open at any given time.

3 The Subway Map is a powerful tool for visualizing where family members lived over time, including compared to other relatives. You can add or remove relatives (who are each indicated by a different-colored line),

tip

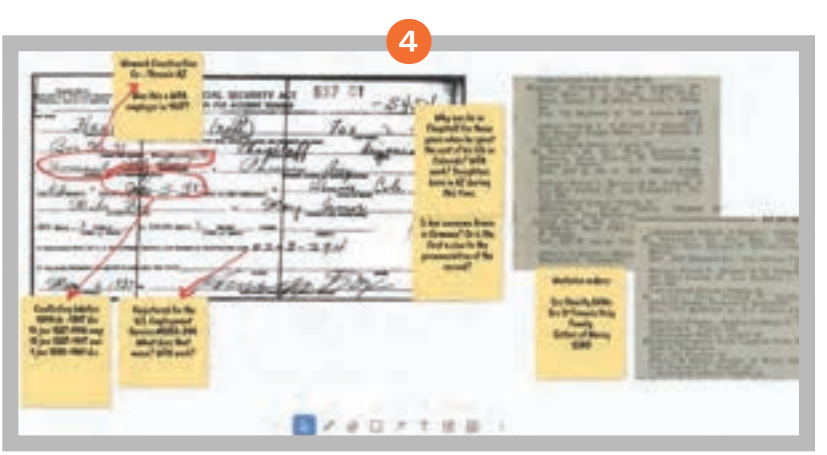
The features discussed here are free, though the tool offers paid subscriptions <www.goldiemay.com/#tier-plus>. If you like the tool, consider upgrading for additional features such as automatic citations and jumping back and forth between censuses.

and even overlap with record hints at major websites. The latter includes bars for digitized newspapers available for that time and place.

The option for Boundary Changes adds grey vertical bars to indicate county shifts, imported from Historical Atlas of County Boundaries.

4 The Canvas tool is a visual workspace that allows you to create virtual sticky notes and add them to screenshots—without the mess you'd see with a physical system. You have one canvas available per project.

5 Click the magnifying glass to search the catalogs of multiple genealogy websites for record types, locations or even specific newspaper titles. Additional suggestions can take you to record-finding resources at FamilySearch and Ancestry.com. ●



Saving Newspaper Clippings

FACING PAGE: READY ELEMENTS/PIXABAY; SCISSORS: LORENCIUSIS/PEXELS; PHONE: EVGENIY ZIMIN/ADOBE STOCK; COUPLE: PRIVATE COLLECTION; CLIPPINGS, LEFT TO RIGHT: PRIVATE COLLECTION; FTM COLLECTION; PUBLIC DOMAIN VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS; FTM COLLECTION; NEW YORK CLIPPER, PUBLIC DOMAIN VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

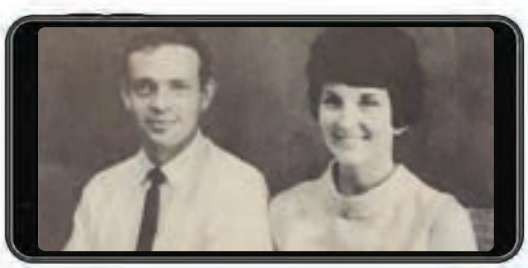
1 Identify obituaries. Newspaper offices called it the "morgue": the file cabinet of clippings of obituaries and notes about local citizens and events. Genealogists often inherit a similar clip file, a kind of "personal morgue." News clippings carry all kinds of news: births, marriages, death, new jobs, military postings, graduations, and community events. Unfortunately, these clippings are doomed to disappear as the toxic newsprint deteriorates and crumbles to dust.

2 Replace with copies. Typical newspapers are printed on cheap, wood-pulp paper that begins to degrade as soon as the ink is dry. The acidic nature of newsprint taints anything it touches through acidic migration. Swap out original articles in scrapbooks, family papers, or the family Bible with copies to preserve the clipping's context without endangering other files.

tip

Images of clippings add historical and cultural interest to written family histories. Photo software can sharpen text and add a vintage tint for your slideshow or photo book.

3 Avoid laminating newspaper clippings or enclosing in clear self-adhesive packing tape. These permanent solutions will damage and eventually destroy the article. Likewise, deacidification sprays or homemade solutions need regular renewal and are not the best way to preserve newsprint.



4 Store individually, and digitize. Place clippings inside an archival plastic sleeve, or inside an acid-free file folder with buffered paper between items. Clippings can be digitized with a flatbed scanner or digital camera. Most flatbed scanners offer an option for "Descreening," which minimizes the small dots used in the original printing. This is especially helpful to refine noisy photos often included with obituaries and wedding articles.

Scanning can also automatically crop and sharpen the image to be print-ready. If you use a digital camera as your scanner, take time to correct the white balance and crop the image to the article's margins.

5 Use a consistent, easily remembered naming system for your clippings. Many news archives use a lengthy filename that includes a brief title, newspaper name, date, and page; for example: *Local_Banker_Dies_Colorado_Springs_Tribune_09_Mar_1915_p10*. You may already have a file-naming system that can be adapted to include news clippings.

6 Create a clippings box. Place the original clipping against a sheet of acid-free paper inside an acid-free page protector. Use the paper to add notes about the clipping and the digital file name of your scanned image. Create an index sheet for the front of the file.

7 Cite your sources. Include the title of the article, full name of the newspaper, city and state, day of the week and date, page number and column. Undated clippings should include any available information such as article title and date, with a note about inferred information, such as town or newspaper.

Denise May Levenick
aka The Family Curator <www.thefamilycurator.com> is the author of *How to Archive Family Keepsakes* (Family Tree Books).

Q How can I find out more about an ancestor who emigrated from Ireland to Colonial Virginia?

A Your ancestor would have arrived long before official immigration records. But you might have luck in Ancestry.com's "Irish Emigrants in North America" <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61849>, collected from two pamphlets recording about 1,000 early Irish immigrants. Most entries include date of birth, name of ship, occupation in Ireland, reason for emigration, date of arrival and sometimes place of origin in Ireland. If your ancestor came to Virginia as an apprentice, you could check another Ancestry.com collection <www.ancestry.com/search/collections/3111>.

For other passenger lists, the best bet is the Immigrant Ships Transcribers Guild <www.immigrantships.net>, whose 26 volumes document many 18th-century arrivals. Crucially, however, most of these early records lack specifics on parish of origin.

If you *are* able to uncover the parish, the National Library of Ireland's collection of Catholic registers (browse-only <registers.nli.ie>) dates to the 1740/50s in some city parishes. The subscription RootsIreland <www.rootsireland.ie>, home to 23 million records from 34 county genealogy centers, has some of the same records and is searchable.

You can also try the National Archives <genealogy.nationalarchives.ie>, home to marriage records, crew lists, will registers, tithe applotment books, pensioner records, Catholic convert rolls and more.

Q My third-great-grandfather was born in Santo Domingo in 1781. Are there any genealogy resources available in what is now the Dominican Republic?

A You could start at the free FamilySearch site's collection of Dominican Republic Catholic Church records, starting in 1590 <www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1918910>. FamilySearch also has individual collections of burials, baptisms and marriages. These and other collections are also available on the subscription sites Ancestry.com, MyHeritage <www.myheritage.com> and American Ancestors <www.americanancestors.org>.

Depending on how long your ancestor stayed in the country, you might also find him in FamilySearch's Dominican Republic civil registration records <www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1619814>, which began in the early 1800s. Note that genealogy records there are kept in 32 different administrative districts, each of which has its own entry in the FamilySearch Wiki; the Distrito Nacional, Santo Domingo, is at <www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Distrito_Nacional_or_Santo_Domingo,_Dominican_Republic_Genealogy>.

You can find more Dominican Republic resources at the Ancestors of Paradise site <www.ancestorsofparadise.com/dominican-republic-genealogy>, one of our 101 Best Websites. Because Santo Domingo was occupied by French-controlled Haiti from 1795 to 1804 and 1822 to 1844, you might also check those resources <www.ancestorsofparadise.com/haiti-genealogy>.

Q My wife's mother and father were both adopted in Massachusetts. How can we access adoption records?

A After 1851, the responsibility for Massachusetts adoptions was transferred from the General Court (the state legislature) to each county's probate and family court.

Several counties have transferred these files off-site, though records from other counties—especially those less than 100 years old—may still be at the courthouse. The state's Registry of Vital Records and Statistics (RVRS) only holds adoption birth records from 1931 to the present.

Massachusetts restricts access to adoption records, though the rules are no longer based on year of birth. Eligible applicants include the of-age adoptee mentioned in the record and the adult child of a deceased adoptee, meaning your parents (or, if they're deceased, your wife) can apply. (Others will need a court order.) For instructions, fees and an application for ordering from the RVRS, see <www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-a-pre-adoption-birth-record>. ●

David A. Fryxell *is the founding editor of* Family Tree Magazine. *He now writes and researches his family tree in Tucson.*

Have a question you'd like David to answer? Email FamilyTree@Yankeepub.com with *Now What* in the subject line, and your question may be selected for a future issue.

Searching Griffith's Valuation

One of the most important resources for 19th-century Irish genealogy is Griffith's Valuation, a property tax survey carried out between 1848 and 1864. Also known as the Primary Valuation of Ireland, it's a partial substitute for 19th-century Irish census records, most of which have been lost.

Back in 2013, we ran a tutorial for searching this valuable record set for free at the Ask About Ireland website <www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation>. You can still access this database, created by a concerted effort among public libraries, local museums and archives to digitize Irish cultural resources.

Cover of the March/April 2013 issue of *Family Tree*

Griffith's Valuation lists only those who owned or leased land, so it's like a head-of-household census. But it covers about 80 percent of the population and every parish, including more than 1 million dwellings.

Follow these six steps to find your Irish ancestral roots in its pages:

1 ENTER A FAMILY NAME

From the home page, scroll down and click Griffith's Valuation. (Or visit the website directly.) Enter a last name in the Family Name box and click the Search button.

The results will give you a sense of the name's geographic distribution. For uncommon names, you might identify a locality to focus your research. For example, a search for *McMorris* reveals 36 matches, including several in the parish of Donaghedy in County Tyrone.

Try different spellings and forms of the same name, with and without the prefix *Mc, Mac* or *O'* (with and without the apostrophe): *O'Donnell, Donnell, Donald, McDonald and MacDonald.*

Check the Include Similar Names box to find matches on names that contain your query—for example, Donnell, O'Donnell, McDonnell and Donnelly with a search for *Donnel*.

2 NARROW RESULTS USING A PLACE OR FIRST NAME

A search on the family name *Brennan* produces 6,700 matches, but you get only five hits when you add the first name *Ambrose*. Similarly, you'll get 1,256 matches on the last name *Grant*, but only 30 in King's County (Offaly).

Bernard "Barney" Clark, an Irish immigrant who settled in Minnesota, placed an ad in the *Boston Pilot* in 1867. He was trying to find his siblings "Bridget and James Clark, from the town of Belinaa, parish of Killmore, county Cavan."

A search on the last name *Clark*, with the box checked to Include Similar Names, produces 7,800 matches—mostly spelled Clarke. Specify County Cavan and the parish of Kilmore, and you get 11 matches.

3 SEE DETAILS

Click a link in the Details column to view more information, including the townland. (An Irish parish might contain 25 to 30 townlands.)

The first four occupiers, two Bernards and two Michaels, all lived in the townland of Bellananagh. The Bernard Clark mentioned in the previous step emigrated before Griffith's Valuation was published, in 1857 for this part of County Cavan. But these four Clarkes were surely close relatives.

4 VIEW THE ORIGINAL IMAGE

Back on the results page, click an icon in the Original Page column. You can right-click (on a Mac, control-click) to zoom in or print the image.

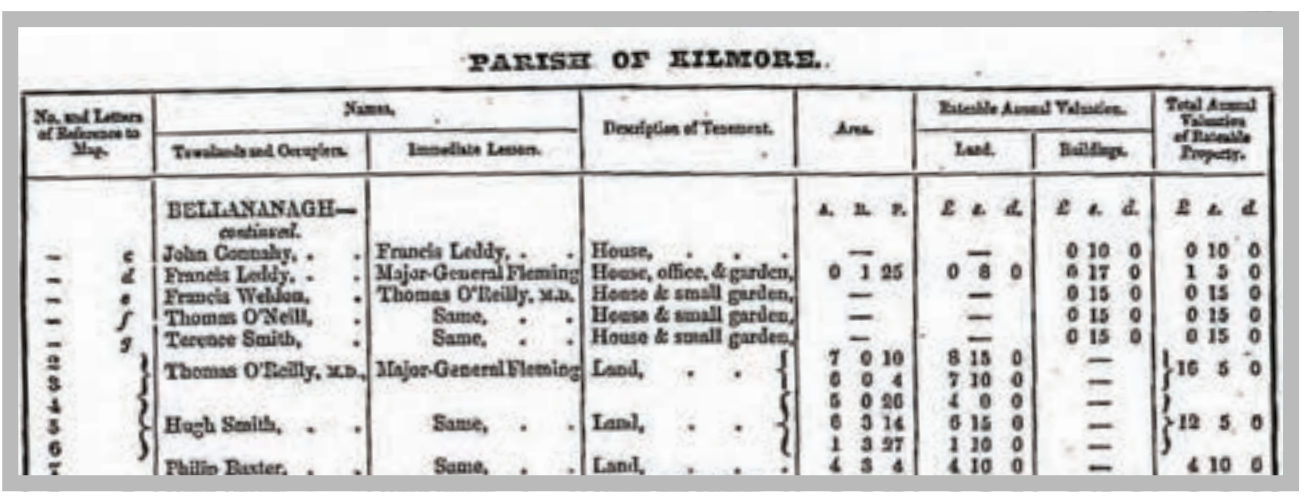
The first occupier in the town of Bellananagh is Bernard Clarke, who lived on Granard Road. The Immediate Lessors column shows that he leased the property from Major-General Fleming.

The next column, Description of Tenement, says, "House, offices and yard." The term "office" was used to describe a farm building such as a stable or a cow barn. If no house is mentioned, the occupier lived somewhere else.

For more from *Family Tree*'s archive, sign up for our Plus membership, which includes access to PDF back-issues <store.familytreemagazine.com/plus-membership>.

Left: Gruffith's Valuation page at Ask About Ireland

Below: Entry in Griffith's Valuation, showing the heads of household in Kilmore parish



PARISH OF KILMORE.

No. and Letters of Reference to Map.	Names. Tenants and Occupiers.	Names. Immediate Lessors.	Description of Tenement.	Area. A. R. P.	Rateable Annual Valuation. Land. £ s. d.	Rateable Annual Valuation. Buildings. £ s. d.	Total Annual Valuation of Rateable Property. £ s. d.
	BELLANANAGH—continued.						
— c	John Connaky,	Francis Leddy,	House,	—	—	0 10 0	0 10 0
— d	Francis Leddy,	Major-General Fleming	House, office, & garden,	0 1 25	0 8 0	0 17 0	1 5 0
— e	Francis Weldon,	Thomas O'Reilly, M.D.	House & small garden,	—	—	0 15 0	0 15 0
— f	Thomas O'Neill,	Same,	House & small garden,	—	—	0 15 0	0 15 0
— g	Terence Smith,	Same,	House & small garden,	—	—	0 15 0	0 15 0
2	Thomas O'Reilly, M.D.,	Major-General Fleming	Land,	7 0 10	8 15 0	—	16 5 0
3				6 0 4	7 10 0	—	
4				5 0 26	4 0 0	—	
5	Hugh Smith,	Same,	Land,	6 3 14	6 15 0	—	12 5 0
6				1 3 27	1 10 0	—	
7	Philip Baxter,	Same,	Land,	4 3 4	4 10 0	—	4 10 0

The area, if indicated, is given in acres, roods and perches. There are 40 square perches to a rood, and four roods to an acre.

The next two columns show the Rateable Annual Valuation of land and buildings. The total in the last column—4 pounds 10 shillings—indicates the income Bernard Clarke's property could be expected to produce in a year. That figure was used as the basis for local taxation.

5 PLACE IT ON THE MAP

Click the map icons to see a map as a pop-up or in a new window. (It's easier to navigate around the map in a new window.)

The website lays an historical Ordnance Survey map over a modern interactive map. You can zoom in or out, and use the slider to alternate between historical and modern.

6 ADD TOWNS

View a town plan by clicking Show Towns, then the house icon. Zoom in to see street numbers.

Return to the Griffith's Valuation page image (no. 4). The first column refers to the number that you'll see on the map. Bernard Clarke lived at 23 Granard Road, along with other residents numbered from 1 to 16.

Congratulations! You've now pinpointed an ancestor's home with Griffith's Valuation. ●

Rick Crume, March/April 2013

Rick Crume is a contributing editor of *Family Tree Magazine* and specializes in online research, genealogy software, DNA testing and British genealogy.

DNA Q&A

Testing Hair Samples

Q Can you do a DNA test on hair?

A The short answer? Yes. I was successfully testing hair in the late 90s.

However, the question isn't really "Can hair samples be used for DNA tests?" Since you're reading this magazine about family history, your question is more accurately "Can hair samples be used for DNA tests for *genetic genealogy research*?" Again, the short answer is yes.

That still doesn't capture the full story, though. What you really want to know is "Can *the lock of my great-grandmother's hair that I found in an old cedar chest* be used for DNA tests for genetic genealogy research?"

And the answer to that, my dear genealogist, is probably not. Or at least, not right now.

Four—maybe five—obstacles interfere with your success:

1. Sample source: Most genealogists have cut hair, not the root itself. Cut hair is just dead cells, meaning it is much more difficult to get DNA from.

2. DNA type: Even with the root of the hair, you can usually test only mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) from hair samples. mtDNA traces the direct maternal line, making it helpful in some specific genealogy scenarios, but not universally as applicable as autosomal DNA.

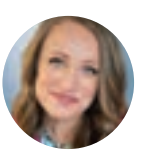
3. DNA quality: Nowadays technology has advanced far enough to make it possible to extract autosomal DNA from a hair shaft. This is a *big deal*. But remember that hair is dead cells, so the DNA within those cells degrades even as technology improves. So we can never expect to get the kind of DNA samples we do from other sources.

4. Laboratory/database relationships: I know what you're thinking: I don't care if my great-grandmother's DNA profile isn't perfect! It's way better than what I have, let's do it! But even if you could get her DNA extracted, you'd also need a lab that analyzes the specific markers we use for genetic genealogy. Only a handful of companies do, and an even smaller subset of them would accept hair-sample DNA.

5. Consent (maybe): Genetic genealogy companies require consent from the sample-provider. Your great-grandmother cannot give that, nor can you (unless you're her legal heir). This is a sticky issue that will need to be addressed as technology makes this kind of testing more feasible.

Those five reasons don't even include cost—yikes!

At this point, you're better off testing other, living relatives using conventional methods. In a great-grandmother's case, that means testing many second cousins to create a kind of reconstruction of her DNA profile. ●



Diahan Southard is founder and CEO at Your DNA Guide <www.yourdnaguide.com>, where she makes DNA education fun and accessible.

familytree MAGAZINE

CHEAT SHEET

SURNAMES

Understanding & Researching Family Names

By the Editors of Family Tree Magazine

Common Origins of Surnames

PLACE NAMES

A person may have adopted a surname based on the description of a nearby place, or their place of origin. This could have been a local landmark (like a hill, valley, river or even tree) or a town, region or country's proper name. For the former, make sure you consider how a name might have been translated to or from an original language. Some examples include Moore (a moor or bog), Torres (Spanish for "tower") and Li (Mandarin Chinese for "plum" or "plum tree"). Look for suffixes—like *-ton* in English and *-er* in German or Ashkenazi Jewish names—that indicate someone came from another place (e.g., Berliner for someone from Berlin).

OCCUPATIONS

Somewhere up in your family tree might be a person who practiced a trade corresponding to the name he adopted. Smith (i.e., a craftsman, such as of iron or tools) and Miller (i.e., a person who operates a mill that grinds grain, corn or wheat) are two of the most common surnames in the United States today. Keep in mind that, as with surnames based on place names, occupation-based surnames may need to be translated from the original language for you to derive meaning. For example, surname Müller (or Mueller) doubles as the German word for miller. Other examples include Baker, Cooper (a barrel-maker) and Patel (from a Gujarati word for landowner).

PATRONYMS

Family names may have sprung from the father's given name. Different cultures have different traditions, and they typically involve adding prefixes or suffixes to the name of the father (or other ancestor): *-son* or *-s* in English (Johnson, "son of John"; Edwards, "son of Edward"); *-sen* or *-datter* in Scandinavian languages (Johansen, "son of Johan"); *O'-* in Irish (O'Neill, "grandson of Neil"); *-guez* or *-quez* in Spanish (Rodríguez, "son of Rodrigo"); and *-czyk* or *-wicz* in Polish (Adamczyk, "son of Adam").

NICKNAMES

These may derive from characteristics used to describe a family member, perhaps their appearance (hair or eye color, size or complexion), financial status, habits or even personality. Examples include Brown, Young, Stark (German for "strong"), Campbell (from the Gaelic *cam* and *béul,* meaning "crooked mouth") and Kim (from the Korean *gim*, meaning "gold" or "iron").

Learn more about where your surname comes from at <www.familytreemagazine.com/names/surnames/understanding-surname-origins>.

TIPS FOR RESEARCHING COMMON NAMES

1 **Include middle name.** Not all records have this information, but (when they do) this extra detail might help distinguish your Mary *Elizabeth* Smith from Mary *Margaret* Smith. If you're lucky, your ancestor's middle name might be more unusual than her last—particularly in communities that used a mother's maiden name as the child's middle name.

2 **Filter by life events.** Use relevant details like birth year to narrow your search and evaluate possible record matches. There may be thousands of Thomas Joneses, but there are significantly fewer Thomas Joneses who were born in Kentucky in 1880.

3 **Search with relatives.** A mention of a parent, sibling, spouse or child might help your ancestor stand out in records. (Hopefully, that relative had a more unusual name!) Also look for wider clusters of extended family members, friends, and neighbors who may have lived or traveled alongside your ancestor instead of his similarly named fellow countrymen.

4 **Look for places.** Examine records at the county (or even city) level with an open mind regarding names. Perhaps your ancestor was included in a record at the right place and time, but under the wrong name. Likewise, carefully evaluate any possible name matches in places you don't have reason to believe your ancestor visited or lived in.

5 **Create a timeline of your ancestor's life.** Write down all you know about where your ancestor was, and when. This will help you assess whether a record containing your commonly-named ancestor could be the right fit based on what you know about where he was living or working at the time. Keep in mind ages, too—your Elizabeth Williams probably wasn't giving birth to a child at age 55, nor at age 8.

6 **Study all people in the town who had that name.** Research other families in the area who had the same (or similar) names. By knowing who they were and what they were up to, you can more easily distinguish their activities from your ancestor's. They might even be relatives of your target family.

7 **Take advantage of misspellings.** Think about possible variations of your ancestor's name, and search by them as well. Loosen a site's "exact match" filter feature to include more potential matches, such as those that "sound alike."

8 **Broaden your search. Leave no stone unturned!** Look for your ancestor in oft-forgotten places such as city directories, yearbooks, tax records, land records and newspapers. Details you find there might flesh out your timeline of his life, or help you identify him in more conventional records.

9 **Consider context.** Your ancestor might technically be in the same place and time as a match, but his social circumstances preclude him from being the right fit. For example, if you know your John Smith declared bankruptcy in 1851, he probably wouldn't have been the same John Smith who bought a huge plot of land in 1852.

UNUSUAL SURNAMES: BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE

Having to spell out your odd surname may seem like a pain today. But because searching ancestors who had common surnames can be such a challenge, consider yourself lucky if your ancestors had an oddball name like Loughty or MacQuoid. These individuals will much more easily stand out in a crowd.

In fact, there may be so few people in a country or region who had that surname that you can research *everyone* who had it, many of whom could be relatives. That "cluster research" method

has a lot of upside for your own ancestor's family tree, and will help you separate your Loughtys from others.

One potential complication of unusual surnames: spelling variations. Use the search strategies mentioned in this cheat sheet to nail down records with names that have been misindexed or just plain misspelled by record-keepers.

Name changes can also prove vexing. Families coming to the United States may have "Americanized" their names to blend in with their new community. Look to immigration and naturalization records to find original names.

For more things to consider when researching rare surnames, read <www.familytreemagazine.com/names/surnames/unusual-last-names>.

TUTORIAL: SEARCHING RECORDS USING NAMES

1 **Experiment with name-matching search filters.** Ancestry.com, Findmypast and MyHeritage each offer additional search options that broaden or narrow the scope of name searches. You can instruct the engine to include only results that match your search term exactly, or results that are phonetically similar to your terms. These can be useful if you're not certain of a surname's spelling in a record, or for identifying multiple records of the same person that might spell a name differently:

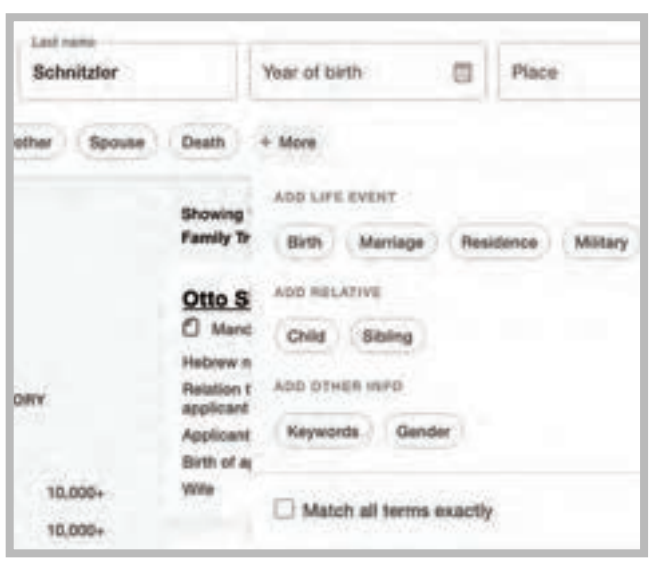
- **Ancestry.com:** "Sounds like" covers phonetically similar names, while "Similar" encompasses names that are spelling variants. "Soundex" (more on this below) covers spelling variants identified by that system.
- **Findmypast:** "Name variants" is a built-in feature that identifies possible misspellings or common nicknames.
- **MyHeritage:** "Match name exactly" and "Match all terms exactly" (under the "More" menu) allow you to limit results. MyHeritage also supports cross-language search, so results will include (for example) names written in multiple alphabets.

Ancestry.com "Exact" search options

2 **Use wildcards.** When supported by a site's search engine, wildcards will take the place of a letter (or multiple letters), opening up your search results. A question mark (?) represents a single letter, while an asterisk (*) takes the place of multiple (or even zero) characters. So a search for *Henders?n* would include results for both Henders**o**n and Henders**e**n. A search for *Henders*n* would include both of those, plus Henders**yn**n. Note that wildcard searches might not turn up Soundex matches, and you'll need to include at least a few non-wildcard characters in searches.

Findmypast "Name variants" search option

3 **Track and try spelling variants.** Especially for hard-to-spell names, record every possible variation of your ancestor's last name, then search each in the database in turn. The Surname Variant Chart in this cheat sheet will get you started. The record-keeper who wrote your ancestor's name may have spoken a different language than your ancestor, so pay special attention to how a name would have sounded to a non-native speaker of the language.



MyHeritage's "Match all terms exactly" search option

4 **Understand Soundex.** Linguists developed various "Soundex" systems to categorize phonetic sounds from different languages. Genealogists adapted the Soundex to group surnames by how they sound, rather than how they're spelled. Then they created indexes and finding aids for records using the Soundex. Though keyword searches have made the Soundex somewhat obsolete, the Soundex can still be useful when searching offline records. And Ancestry.com includes Soundex among their search options for surnames. (MyHeritage once had options for multiple, including the Daitch-Mokotoff system that's especially useful for Slavic and Yiddish surnames.)

SURNAME VARIANT CHART

If you're not having luck finding records of your ancestors, consider the possibility that their name was mistranscribed or misindexed in online databases. Record possible misspellings or alternate spellings of your ancestor's surname using the form below, then search for those variations. View and download a free, typable version of this form at <www.familytreemagazine.com/freebie/surnamevariantchart>.

SURNAME				
PLACE OF ORIGIN				
PHONETIC VARIANTS				
POSSIBLE VARIATIONS INTO ENGLISH				
SURNAME SUFFIXES (*-son*, *-datter*, etc.)				
OTHER SPELLINGS/ VARIANTS				

What You Can Learn From DNA

DNA CAN

- **Connect you with DNA relatives,** potentially including those who have the surname you're studying. Your autosomal DNA matches through services like AncestryDNA <www.ancestry.com/dna> and MyHeritage DNA <www.myheritage.com/dna> may reveal the test taker's real name, as well as surnames in the family tree attached to their results. Tools like shared surnames (see below) and suggestions for genetic family trees make it even easier to identify potential shared relatives.
- **Reveal more about paternal roots.** Since surnames usually follow male lines, Y-DNA tests (which also follow male lines) can give you information about that one line (your father, your paternal grandfather, your father's paternal grandfather, and so on).
- **Help you find surname studies.** These are groups of people dedicated to studying one family name, usually based on Y-DNA results. Family Tree DNA hosts more than 11,000 studies run by volunteers <www.familytreedna.com/group-project-search>, and you can learn more about surname studies at <www.familytreemagazine.com/names/surnames/making-matches>.

DNA CANNOT

- **Determine ancestral surnames.** Your test results, by themselves, cannot tell you what surnames your specific ancestors had, nor can they build out your family tree. They only give information about DNA that you share with others in the company's DNA database.
- **Pinpoint ancestral locations,** nor trace the geographic locations of surnames. At present, ethnicity estimates do not contain enough precision to tell you what town or state your DNA came from. And tools for determining whether DNA came from your maternal or paternal line likewise only report on ethnicity, not specific place.

tip

DNA can be a powerful tool, but it can only give you certain pieces of information. Right-size your expectations before taking a DNA test (or having someone else test).

Y-DNA

Y-DNA tests offer a unique perspective on your family's genetic history, and can be particularly useful for identifying surnames that (as so many do) have passed down paternal lines.

Any Y-DNA matches will share a common ancestor with you along strictly paternal lines. Although Y-DNA results can't distinguish *how* you and your matches are related, they're still useful for identifying possible relatives—many of whom might share the surname you're looking for.

Y-DNA tests examine DNA markers on the Y chromosome, which is passed down from father to son. As a result, only genetic males can take Y-DNA tests. But women can have brothers, fathers or paternal uncles take a test.

Family Tree DNA <www.familytreedna.com/products/y-dna> is the only of the large companies to offer a Y-DNA test. Y-DNA tests tend to be more expensive than autosomal tests, and Family Tree DNA offers tests with several levels of detail.

Shared Surname Tools

MyHeritage DNA's Shared Ancestral Surnames tool between two matches
(Names have been removed from this image out of consideration for users' privacy.)

Some testing companies allow you to attach a family tree to your autosomal DNA results. If you and your matches both take advantage of this feature, you'll be able to identify branches of your family trees that might overlap based on how you fit into them and the amount of DNA you share.

Included in those results (such as at AncestryDNA and MyHeritage DNA) are surname tools that identify what names appear in both you and your match's trees. Surnames listed here don't necessarily indicate shared relatives, but they do give you a clue about where to start searching for your most recent common ancestor.

SURNAMES AND ETHNICITY

Every culture has its own naming traditions, and your surname can give you clues about your paternal line's ancestral origins. Enter your target name into a surname database like the ones listed in the Resources box. Then use the websites and books below to learn more about your ancestor's surname and its meaning and prevalence.

Ethnicity	Websites	Books
African American	• **"Tracing Your Roots: Were Slaves' Surnames Like Brands?"** <www.theroot.com/tracing-your-roots-were-slaves-surnames-like-brands-1796141007>	• ***Black Names in America: Origins and Usage*** by Newbell Niles Puckett (G.K. Hall)
British	• **"The 25 Most Common Surnames in Britain"** <www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/25-common-surnames-britain-family-history-university-west-england-bristol-uk-a7423196.html> • **British Surnames** <britishsurnames.co.uk> • **Historic UK Surnames** <www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/Surnames>	• ***A Dictionary of English and Welsh Surnames With Special American Instances, two volumes*** by Charles Wareing Bardsley (Clearfield Co.) • ***Dictionary of English Surnames*** by R.M. Wilson and P.H. Reaney (Oxford University Press) • ***The Surnames of Wales: For Family Historians and Others*** by John and Sheila Rowlands (Genealogical Publishing Co.)
Chinese	• **"101 Most Common Surnames in China and Their Meanings"** <www.improvemandarin.com/most-common-chinese-surnames>	• ***Chinese Names: The Traditions Surrounding the Use of Chinese Surnames and Personal Names*** by Russell Jones (Pelanduk Publications) • ***In Search of Your Asian Roots: Genealogical Resources of Chinese Surnames*** by Sheau-yueh J. Chao (Clearfield Co.)
German	• **Geogen** <geogen.stoepel.net> • **"What Does Your German Last Name Mean?"** <www.thoughtco.com/german-surnames-meanings-and-origins-1420789>	• ***Dictionary of German Names***, second edition by Hans Bahlow and translated by Edda Gentry (University of Wisconsin Press) • ***A Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames*** by Lars Menk (Avotaynu)
Irish	• **Irish Ancestors** by John Grenham <www.johngrenham.com> • **Mapping Irish Surnames** <storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/a3b90776f4cd4052bf19e097da898f36> • **"Old Irish-Gaelic Surnames"** <freepages.rootsweb.com/~mallorybrody/genealogy/Eire/irenames.htm>	• ***The All New Surnames of Ireland*** by Edward Neafsey (Irish Genealogical Foundation) • ***Clans and Families of Ireland: The Heritage and Heraldry of Irish Clans and Families*** by John Grenham (Wellfleet Press) • ***Genealogist's Master Guide to the Various Spellings of Irish Names*** by Michael C. O'Laughlin (Irish Genealogical Foundation) • ***Special Report on Surnames in Ireland*** by Robert E. Matheson (Genealogical Publishing Co.)
Italian	• **"Italian Naming Traditions and Their Ramifications"** <www.italiangenealogy.com/articles/italian-culture-traditions/italian-naming-traditions-and-their-ramifications> • **Italian Surnames** <www.italyheritage.com/genealogy/surnames>	• ***Our Italian Surnames*** by Joseph G. Fucilla (Genealogical Publishing Co.)
Jewish	• **"Is My Surname Jewish"** <www.thoughtco.com/is-my-surname-jewish-3972350>	• ***A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Kingdom of Poland*** by Alexander Beider (Avotaynu) • ***A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames from the Russian Empire*** by Alexander Beider (Avotaynu)
Norwegian	• **"Understanding Norwegian Naming Patterns"** <norwegianridge.com/2011/07/10/understanding-norwegian-naming-patterns>	• ***A Handbook of Scandinavinan Names*** by Nancy L. Coleman and Olav Veka (University of Wisconsin Press)
Polish	• **"Naming Customs Found in Poland"** <sites.rootsweb.com/~polwgw/naming.html>	• ***Polish Surnames: Origins and Meanings, second edition*** by William F. Hoffman (Polish Genealogical Society of America)
Spanish	• **"Most Popular Hispanic Last Names and the History Behind Them"** <www.fortlewis.edu/life-at-flc/clubs-organizations/el-centro/culture/popular-spanish-last-names-research>	• ***Hispanic Surnames and Family History*** by Lyman D. Platt (Genealogical Publishing Co.)

TIPS FOR RESEARCHING MAIDEN NAMES

1 **Search *around* your female ancestor.** Look for her marriage certificate using her husband's name, and check her children's birth, baptism, marriage and death certificates for any mention of a maiden name. Likewise, search obituaries and probate records of her relatives (especially parents and siblings) for clues. And find her in pre-marriage census records using her father's name or that of any brothers.

2 **Look for in-laws in census records.** Pay special attention to any relative in a census record who has a different surname from the rest of the family they're living with. Women may have lived with their sibling or parents after being widowed or divorced. Or if a man is head of household and you see someone in the family listed as his mother- or father-in-law, that person's last name is likely his wife's maiden name. Keep an eye out for families living in the same area over multiple censuses as well.

3 **Pay attention to record witnesses.** Aunts and uncles (i.e., siblings of the parents) are often named godparents. If you see one listed on a child's baptism certificate, investigate their last name as a possible maiden name for your ancestor.

4 **Take hints from unusual middle names.** Some people used the mother's maiden name as a middle name for children.

5 **Prioritize marriage records.** We've got a list of records likely to contain maiden names in the top-right of this page, but your first stopping point should be any marriage documentation for your woman of interest. Remember that marriage records came in many forms: certificates, banns, bonds and more.

6 **Don't forget family keepsakes.** Baby books, family Bibles, correspondence and other items passed from one generation to the next may include at least off-the-cuff references to a woman's maiden name. Cookbooks, in particular, were often passed from mother to daughter and may include important names that were scribbled in the margins of recipes.

7 **"Test out" a maiden name.** Even if you haven't found definitive proof that a surname belonged to your female ancestor, do a few searches as if it were. What records or details start to fall into place? Can you find records that confirm or refute your theory?

8 **Research in cemeteries.** Grave markers themselves are somewhat unlikely to include a married woman's maiden name. But look for the word *née* (French for "originally called") preceding a name on a tombstone—that will be the woman's maiden name. Women may also be buried in a family plot or otherwise near their birth relatives. Find additional clues in burial records and funeral home records.

9 **Record women by their maiden names.** Once you've found a woman's maiden name, make sure you refer to her by that name in her family tree profile. This will prevent you from losing or forgetting the name, as well as make it easier for record-hint software to find possible matches for her under that name. You can either add the married name as an alternate, or the program will automatically include record hints for the woman under both her married and her maiden names.

Spanish-speaking cultures traditionally give children two last names: the first from the father's surname, and the second from the mother's maiden name. Sometimes the order is reversed, but this naming pattern is a boon for genealogists.

RECORDS LIKELY TO INCLUDE MAIDEN NAMES

- birth certificates, both of the woman and her children
- baptism records, both of the woman and her children
- marriage certificates, both of the woman and her children
- marriage banns
- anniversary announcements in newspapers
- military pension records of her husband, especially if she was a widow
- divorce records
- court records
- death certificates of the woman, her spouse and their children
- wills and probate records, both of the woman and other family members
- obituaries, both of the woman and other family members
- family Bibles
- family stories and correspondence

Evaluating Myths about Surnames

- **Names were *not* changed at Ellis Island.** Passenger lists were created before people embarked from their home country, then *checked* by US officials at port of arrival. Some people chose to change their names to sound more "American"/English after the fact.
- **Coats of arms or family crests are *not* passed down by surname.** These are granted only to specific individuals, and there are strict rules about which of that person's descendants can inherit them. As a result, most knick-knacks with supposed coats of arms are not based in historical fact.
- **Not all people with the same surname have recent shared ancestry.** Surnames (even those in the same geographical area) may have been adopted independently of each other, or translated from a different language.

The registry room of Ellis Island, present day

- **Surnames of the formerly enslaved came from multiple sources,** not just the name of their most recent enslaver. Some selected a surname they'd already been unofficially using for generations, while others picked a name that honored an individual (such as Washington, for the first US president).

Surname Mapping

Geogen Absolute Map of Germany for the surname Schmidt

Some databases offer surname maps, a visual tool that communicates the distribution of surnames in a given place (usually a country). These can be helpful starting points if you know your ancestor's surname, but not the exact country or region where your ancestor came from.

Forebears <forebears.io/surnames> and Geneanet <en.geneanet.org/surnames> both have surname maps and indicate which countries have the most prevalent occurrence of the name, and FamilySearch <www.familysearch.org/en/surname> generates a meaning as well as three countries where the name is prominently found according to the FamilySearch Family Tree.

Geogen <legacy.stoepel.net/en> and Irish Ancestors <www.johngrenham.com> have maps of German and Irish surnames, respectively. Surname Maps in Europe <www.surnamemap.eu> has data on several European countries, and the FamilySearch Research Wiki has a directory <www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Surname_Distribution_Maps>.

RESOURCES

Websites

Ancestry.com: Surnames <www.ancestry.com/learn/facts>

Behind the Name <surnames.behindthename.com>

Cyndi's List: Surnames, Family Associations & Family Newsletters <www.cyndislist.com/surnames>

Family Tree DNA Group Projects <www.familytreedna.com/group-project-search>

***Family Tree Magazine*: Surnames** <www.familytreemagazine.com/surnames>

FamilySearch: Surnames <www.familysearch.org/en/surname>

Findmypast: Surnames <www.findmypast.co.uk/surname>

Forebears: Surnames <forebears.io/surnames>

Geneanet: Origin of Last Names <en.geneanet.org/surnames>

MyHeritage: Surnames <lastnames.myheritage.com>

Surname Maps in Europe <www.surnamemap.eu>

Books

Dictionary of American Family Names by Patrick Hanks (Oxford University Press)

Surnames and Genealogy: A New Approach by George Redmonds (Federation of Family History Societies)

Nicknames Past and Present by Christine Rose (CR Publications)