



Database Guide: Ancestry Library Edition

Introduction

Ancestry Library Edition (ALE) is the result of a partnership between MyFamily.com and ProQuest, creating one of the most important genealogical collections available today. It has unparalleled coverage of the United States and the United Kingdom, including census, vital, church, court, and immigration records, as well as record collections from Canada, Europe, and Australia. This collection, with thousands of databases with content from the 13th century to the 21st century and billions of indexed names, is essential to having a broad genealogy and history collection, and its valuable content is a strong complement to *HeritageQuest™ Online*.

The Ancestry Library Edition collection has approximately 4,000 databases including key collections such as U.S. Federal Census images and indexes from 1790 to 1930; the Map Center containing more than 1,000 historical maps; *American Genealogical Biographical Index* (over 200 volumes); *Daughters of the American Revolution Lineage* (over 150 volumes); *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England, 1620-1630*; *Social Security Death Index* (updated monthly); *WWI Draft Registration Cards*; *Federal Slave Narratives*; and a strong Civil War collection. Ancestry Library Edition updates continually, with more indexes and original images added every business day.

Search Tips

Homepage Overview

- **Homepage Quick Search** > Search across all source types by using Historical Records, Stories & Publications, or Photos & Maps search tabs.
- Choose **Broad (i.e. ranked), Exact, or Soundex Search** > Broad is for a general search of items that match or closely match all or some of your search terms; Exact will search for exactly your search terms; Soundex searches for Surname variations and an exact match of all other terms.
- **Search Tab** > Offers more parameters to construct refined search (e.g. specify keyword proximity and source types), access to the Card Catalog and Advanced Search tools, listing of major categories and subcategories, and Browse by Region interactive maps.
- **Charts and forms tab** > Download PDF charts and forms to help you with your research (e.g. census forms per year).
- **Help** > If a question is asked frequently, it will be added – these are monitored and will change to support the user.
- **U.S. Census & More Collections** > Highlights specific content types – U.S. Federal Census, UK census, Birth, Marriage and Death records, Recently Added list, and All Databases list.

Truncation and Wildcard Characters

- * The asterisk is a wildcard that matches zero or more characters. For example, a search on **'sam*'** will bring back results that include **'sam', 'samantha', 'samuel'**, etc. You can also search alternate spellings with the asterisk (*), which represents 0 to 5 unknown characters. The query **Johann*** will search for **Johann** and **Johannes**. A query for **Smel*er** will search for **Smeltzer** and **Smelzer**, among others. Note: you cannot use an asterisk as the first, second, or third character of a search term.
- ? The question mark acts as a single-character wildcard. For example, a search on **'eli?abeth'** will bring back results that include **'elisabeth'** or **'elizabeth'**. Note: You *cannot* use a question mark as the first character of a search term.

To match an exact phrase, the phrase should be enclosed in double quotes. For example, “ ” **“women and history”** or **“The Great War”** will find matches with that exact phrase in them. Note:

Person's names can also be used as keywords. For example, "Martin Luther King, Jr." used as a keyword in the Photos & Maps search tab will retrieve results about King as well as images of landmarks and locations named for him or connected to him historically.

An additional tool to take into account possible spelling variations or errors (whether recorded by the original record-takers or the indexers of original documents) is the **Soundex**. This filter is designed to display results for all names which have somewhat similar pronunciation. To take advantage of this feature, check the box next to "Exact matches only" and an option will appear to change the **Spelling** option on a search template from **Exact** to **Soundex** or on a few pages click on the box next to the word **Soundex** (depending on where on our site you are selecting the Soundex feature). *You should not employ the above truncation symbols in a Given or Surname search when using Soundex.* (See more information below.)

Content Categories

- **Historical Records**
 - Census and Voter Lists
 - Birth, Marriage, and Death records
 - Immigration and Emigration records
 - Military records
 - Court, Land, Wills, and Financial records
 - Directories and Member Lists
 - Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, and Reference materials
- **Stories & Publications**
 - Stories, Memories, and Histories
 - Newspapers and Periodicals
- **Photos & Maps**
 - Pictures
 - Maps, Atlases, and Gazetteers

Viewing Images

- Ancestry will prompt the user to install the Enhanced Image Viewer. The user may bypass this and select to use the Basic Viewer („click here' link at end of paragraph). It is preferable for the library to install the Enhanced Image Viewer on selected or all public computers. Instructions on can be found in the Help section of ALE or by clicking the link on the prompt page after clicking on a "View Original Image" link for the first time during a new session.
- Use the magnifying glass or drop-down box to zoom in and out of the image.
- Image number refers to the page number within the data set that you are looking at.
- „Prev' and „Next' arrows let you scroll forward or backwards to the next page in the census.
- „Print' and „Save' options give the user the opportunity to carry out either of those functions from the library. *It is recommended that the user change the print aspect from Portrait to Landscape when printing census images and that the user Save to a portable flash drive that they carry with them rather than the library computer.*
- The „Share' symbol gives users the opportunity to email a copy of the census record that they are looking at to a friend or family member. For the person receiving the email it will contain a URL that will direct them to a copy of the census record, this *link is valid for 14 days* and there is no cost.

Soundex

Ancestry provides several options for taking into account possible spelling variations or errors as recorded by original record-takers or indexers of original documents. One of the most useful of these is the Soundex. Soundex is a system originally used by the National Archives to index records such as censuses and some passenger arrival (immigration) records. Soundex is based on the sound of a name, rather than actual spelling. This allows names such as **Smith**, **Smythe** and **Smyth** to be seen as the same name, while removing the need to sort through names beginning with **Sm-**. A typical Soundex code begins with the first letter of a name, followed by three numbers. For example, the Soundex code for the name **Wilcox** is W422. The follow letters are always disregarded: **A, E, H, I, O, U, W, and Y.**

The National Archives has provided the following chart for understanding Soundex code:

Number	Letters Represented	Number	Letters Represented
1	B, F, P, V	4	L
2	C, G, J, K, Q, S, X, Z	5	M, N
3	D, T	6	R

By default, all searching on Ancestry is done as a ranked search finding the best matches available based on the information that was entered. To use the Soundex option the user must check the box next to "Exact matches only" and their search will only produce results that match the entered information exactly. Rather than require that members of Ancestry convert names to Soundex themselves, we have provided an option (available on most search templates) for switching the spelling requirements of your search from **Exact** to **Soundex**. Simply locate this option in the upper right corner of the search template and choose **Soundex** from the drop-down option.

Keyword Searching

The Keyword field can be used to search for any word you would expect to be found in the database you are searching. This can include things such as an occupation or a location. You are able to only search for keywords, keeping in mind that if you enter more than one term you will need to use quotation marks to ensure an exact phrase search, such as "The Great War." If you choose to combine a name with a keyword and the database finds a match for the name, but not the keyword, it will not provide the results for you.

Additional Materials

- **Charts & Forms** > This is a useful resource area to help you carry out and record your research. You can download and print out all forms:
 - **Ancestral Chart** > Record your research progress.
 - **Research Calendar** > Track which record sources you have searched and when.
 - **Research Extract** > Summarize information which can't be photocopied or may take a while to digest, for example, deeds.
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- **Correspondence Record** > Note who you have corresponded with, when, why and whether you have had a response.
 - **Source Summary** > Create a quick reference guide to useful sources.
 - **Family Group Sheet** > Allows you to compile information concerning your ancestors as you go through your research.
 - **Census Forms (U.S., UK, & Canada)** > Download the template of the Census forms to see the format, as some are very hard to read.
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- **Ancestry Message Board** > Click the blue **Search** tab from the Homepage (or the Advanced Search link) and look to the Browse section on the right. Under **Trees and Community**, the **Message Board** is a community of millions of family historians from all over the world who are willing to help and share their expertise and research experience. Thousands of messages are posted every day, you can view the messages. You will *not*, however, *be able to post messages here* unless you are also have an individual Ancestry.com subscription which you are able to sign into from this page.
 - **Ancestry World Tree** > Found in the same browse area as the Message Board link, **Ancestry World Tree** is a service where millions of users share their family trees; you can search and download family trees but will not be able to upload your own. **NOTE:** The editors of Ancestry Library Edition do not monitor or edit the content of the Tree. The information found here is mirrored from postings found on the Ancestry.com One World Tree created by the subscribers of Ancestry.com.

Where to find help

Search our Support Center:

<http://www.proquest.com/support>

To access product help and training documentation:

<http://www.proquest.com/go/training>

<http://www.proquest.co.uk/go/training>

By phone

In North America: 800-889-3358

Outside North America: 0880 220 710 (UK only)
+44 1223 271 496 (Outside of UK)